



ECC Parent Handbook 2023-2024



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ECC Office

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Enrollment forms and schedules are available on our website www.comsynrye.org. Click on “**Early Childhood Center**” to reach our home page. Then select “**Information for Families**” for the drop-down.

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The ECC is licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services. License Number: 00232415DCC.

Educational Philosophy

The Community Synagogue Early Childhood Center (ECC) does not embrace any one particular educational philosophy. Rather, we draw upon a variety of educational viewpoints and ideas to best reach the following goals and objectives for our students:

- **To help each child make a smooth transition from home to school and discover that school is a happy, safe, and interesting place.** *We view the initial separation process as vitally important in setting the tone for the child's school year. His/Her willingness to try new things and to test out new ideas and relationships can be greatly influenced by a successful transition.*
- **To provide a variety of stimulating opportunities, situations and materials for on-going exploration and discovery in all curriculum areas while attending closely to the child's own choices and interests.** *We believe that when the child's own interests and strengths are supported, he/she becomes more flexible and open to new experiences.*
- **To give each child a positive self-concept.** *A child who is self-confident and believes she can learn is much more likely to learn. We encourage each child to be proud of herself, her family, and her background. We create an inclusive learning environment in which all children learn to respect themselves and one another.*
- **To enable each child to develop a healthy balance between emotional expression and emotional control.** *We believe that in order to learn the social skills of sharing, taking turns, listening, leading, and following, each child requires many examples of caring for others and being cared for, listening to others and being listened to, sharing time playing and having fun with others. We seek opportunities for children to successfully negotiate the difference between their individual desires and those of their peers.*
- **To meet the needs determined by each child's physical development.** *We help children develop healthy attitudes about their bodies, to learn to take care of themselves and to acquire healthy eating patterns. We provide multiple opportunities for children to develop and strengthen large and small motor coordination, providing additional support as necessary.*
- **To model the values we teach in our interactions with children, amongst our staff and with our parents.** *We understand that children will follow our lead. We strive to be mindful of how we treat one another in order to provide real-life examples of the kind, caring, respectful individuals we believe all children can be.*

Policies & Procedures

Special Needs

Children of all abilities will find a welcoming environment at the Community Synagogue Early Childhood Center. We maintain an open line of communication with the Special Services provided by school districts in the area. We can provide help and support when testing of a child is warranted. We welcome early intervention in our classrooms. SEITS (Special Education Itinerant Teacher), occupational therapists and speech therapists work one on one with a child in his/her classroom. These services are provided by either the school district that you live in, or by private agencies that the parents have hired. Teachers, parents, and early intervention specialists schedule mandatory meetings during the school year to discuss a child's progress.

Jewish Learning

The learning experience at the ECC is enhanced by and grounded in Judaism. Recognizing that each family brings its own unique background to the ECC Community, we offer the opportunity to experience Judaism in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. Jewish values are at the core of our program and are integrated into the classroom. In addition to celebrating the holidays, children participate in tikkun olam, doing their part to repair the world through a variety of age appropriate social action projects. Social action and charity, social justice and kindness toward others are universal values interwoven into all learning at the ECC.

At every age, Jewish ritual permeates the school experience. The Jewish holidays provide a rhythm to the school year with each Jewish holiday studied and celebrated. Music, storytelling and art projects all play a role in holiday observance. The children will hear Bible stories from a Jewish perspective, sing songs in both Hebrew and English and learn some basic short prayers.

Separation and Adjustment

Separation is a major part of adjustment during your child's year in school whether the child is two, three, four years old, or Pre-K. We handle this with sensitivity, geared to the individual child and his/her family.

It can be quite difficult for a young child to be left with new adults and children in an unfamiliar setting where there are new and different ways of doing almost everything. It is similar to being on your own in a foreign country when you do not speak the language. It can take quite some time for two, three, and even four-year olds to develop trust in new adults and to feel comfortable in a new environment.

Our primary goal is to help your child make a smooth and gentle transition from home to school and discover that school is a happy, safe, and wonderful place to be.

We ask that you or a caregiver be available for several weeks for the 2-year old. The 3-year-old child also will need support the first week to 10 days, especially if he/she is new to the school. The 4-year-old and Pre-K usually adapt within a week - but there are always exceptions, and we ask that you be prepared to stay if necessary.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up – See addendum

Specific drop-off locations will be established based on the child's class and if they have a sibling in the school. You will be notified of your child's drop off location and time during your parent orientation meeting in the September.

ECC staff will be waiting outside the designated classroom or drop-off locations of the school each morning from 8:40-9:15 am to greet the children and conduct health checks.

Parents need to arrive on time during their child's designated time slot. If you need to miss the time slot you will be provided an alternative drop off time and place.

Families may pick-up their children directly from the classroom or outdoor tent area. Please note, if your child is going home with someone other than a parent/guardian, we must have permission in writing.

Car Pooling

If you have arranged a car-pooling group, please give a written car pool schedule to the Director and classroom teacher as soon as possible.

For safety's sake, please check doors, seat belts, and car seats when driving with children. **New York State recommends that children be restrained in a car seat/booster seat until they are at least 8 years old.**

Be sure to notify your child's teacher if there will be any change in your schedule--a child will not be released to another adult without a WRITTEN NOTE OF PERMISSION.

Note - In driving any carpool, it is wise to check your personal car insurance to note proper coverage for additional passengers.

Family-School Communication

Teachers will check their emails at 8:30am and then again at 11:30am for any messages you have sent during the morning. Teachers will respond to you at those times if necessary.

You can always contact a teacher if it is an emergency by calling the school number 967-7698 or the Synagogue number 967-6262. You can also email the director at doberlander@comsynrye.org

It is important that you keep us informed of any changes in your child's daily life or family circumstances over the course of the school year (i.e. a new baby sitter; a parental trip, an illness or death in the family – even that of a pet, and any changes in living arrangements or work schedules).

All of these may affect the child's attitude toward school and content of her/his play. We can support the child more successfully if we are aware of such events.

It is imperative that we have a written note when there is a change of address, home telephone number or work telephone number. This is for your child's safety in case it is necessary for the school to reach you in an emergency.

Compliant Policy

It is our desire that all concerns be addressed and an understanding reached. If there is a problem regarding your child's classroom experience, we ask that you first approach your child's teacher directly by making an appointment. Drop-Off and Pick-Up times are hurried and not suitable for adequately addressing concerns. If you are not satisfied with the resolution of the problem, we then ask that you inform the Director who will help to resolve the issue.

Please contact the ECC Director if you have any concerns regarding administrative or policy issues. If there is a serious issue that must be addressed, the ECC Council will be brought into the discussion. It is our experience that most concerns can be resolved quickly with open communication.

ECC Council

The ECC Council provides a forum to explore new ideas, help enhance successful programs and create needed policies and practices. The Council is also a place for parents and staff to address any issues or concerns they may have. The Council is comprised of ECC Parents, alumnae and staff members.

The President of the ECC Council for the 2023-2024 school year is Michelle Weiss, she may be reached via email at weissm16@gmail.com

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Information Cards

It is essential that we have on file emergency cards with current phone numbers for the following: home, business for parents, cell number, caregivers' numbers, emergency numbers (grandparents, other relatives or close friends), and your child's pediatrician. Please print all requested information on the emergency cards. Additionally, if you know that you are some place at the same time every week you can put that number down, (e.g. Tennis on Thursdays at 10:00 A.M. at Sound Shore Tennis and the telephone number.) Please be certain that the people you list as emergency contacts are in the Rye area and that your children know them. (An emergency number in Long Island or Stamford, CT is UNACCEPTABLE.) Before turning in your child's emergency card, please be sure that you sign and date the authorization on the reverse side.

Emergency Preparedness Kit

In the event of an emergency that requires us to keep the building closed and the children safe inside, all students must have an Emergency Preparedness Kit on site. Please clearly label with your child's name a 1-gallon zip lock baggy with the following items:

- 3 small plastic bottles of water
- 3 peanut-free snacks that your child likes to eat that have a good shelf life (cereal, breakfast bars, etc.)
- diapers (if necessary)

Snow or Other Weather-Related Emergency

The ECC abides by the decision made by the Rye City School District to either close school or issue a delay. You will be informed by 7:00 a.m. directly by your teacher as well as by email from the Director. The ECC will inform News 12 and you may hear a recorded message after 7:30 a.m.

Fire Drills and Lock Downs

The ECC will conduct monthly fire drills. The drills are designed to prepare children for a calm and organized exit of the facility in the event of a real fire. Any time a fire alarm sounds in the building, it will be treated as a potential emergency with the efficient evacuation of the facility as the goal. Lock downs are practiced as a precaution with children in their room and doors locked.

It is important that parents and caregivers understand that our teachers and staff have been trained to evacuate and account for all the children in a calm and orderly manner. **Should an emergency occur during drop off or pick up times, when parents and caregivers are entering and leaving the building, the following emergency procedures are used:**

- Children attending classes on the first floor exit the building from their classrooms and assemble in the playground.

- Children attending classrooms on the second floor exit the building from the nearest staircase. The Tigers and Penguins exit via the back staircase to the playground. The Pre-K, Frogs and Fish exit via room 109 to the playground.
- If the nearest exit is blocked due to an emergency, the teachers will take the children to the designated “secondary exit.”
- If you are already at your child's classroom when an alarm is sounded we ask that you exit the building with your child's class. This helps us to account for the children once we are outside and provides the opportunity to help the teachers exit the children.
- **If you are outside the building you may not enter while an evacuation is in progress.**
- If you are within the building but have not yet reached your child's classroom you must exit immediately through the nearest exit door.
- It is important to remember that the teachers have been trained to safely exit your child from the building as quickly as possible via the nearest exit. Once outside, you will be informed to where you may pick up your child.

Please review this information and pass it on to everyone responsible for transporting your child to or from school. Working together, we can ensure that everyone, both adults and children, is safe in our community.

Evacuation to a Safe Location

The City of Rye, Midland School, the Rye Recreation Department and the Community Synagogue have arrangements, that in case of an emergency evacuation by either party we will use each other's facilities. We would contact you if such an emergency takes places.

Health Related Issues

Health Forms

All forms are due **by August 1st**, 2023. Your child will not be permitted to attend school unless a correctly completed medical form is on file in the office. As per New York State regulation, your child's examination must be within the child's last birthday year to be accepted by the ECC. Please make sure your child's name is on the form before you give it to the doctor. The written statement from the health care provider must also state whether the child is a child with special health care needs and if so, what special provisions, if any, will be necessary in order for the child to participate in the ECC. All children must have received age-appropriate immunizations in accordance with New York State Public Health Law.

Your child's regular pediatrician must fill out medical forms. New York State requires that each child have a lead screening test and Hepatitis inoculations. Please put the results on the medical form or add an additional paper with the results. **The doctor must sign the medical form. The school must be told of any medication your child is taking during school hours.** *A log is kept in each room; please fill it out when your child is on medication.*

Special Health and Medical

If your child has an allergy of any kind, you will need to let us know. New York State regulations now require that all children with a known allergy must complete an *Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan (OCFS – 6029)* even if they are not at risk of anaphylaxis. This form is filled out by the parent and **does not** require a doctor's signature.

In addition, if it is necessary that any medication(s) be kept on hand within the school, i.e. EpiPen, Benadryl etc. we must have a *Medical Consent Form (OCFS- LDSS 7002)* **completed and signed by your child's pediatrician.** The ECC is prohibited from accepting any medication without this document. Also, please know that this form expires and must resubmitted every six months for children under 5 years old.

If your child suffers from **asthma** you will be asked to complete the *NY State DOH Asthma Action Plan*. This form is also completed and signed by your pediatrician.

Finally, if your child needs any special non-medical care within the school please complete an *Individual Healthcare Plan (OCFS-7006)*. This form **does not** need to be signed by your doctor and is required if:

- Your child receives therapy services within school
- Needs application of diaper ointment, sunscreen etc. (supplied by parent).
- Has suffered an injury and must follow a special protocol while healing.

COVID Policy and Recommendations

While the ECC strongly recommends all children be vaccinated for COVID-19, at this time it is not required. For the time being the ECC will be practicing the health and safety guidelines provided to us by the CDC and our licensor OCFS. A copy of the most current guidelines can be found on the CDC website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html> Please know that all ECC staff are encouraged to be vaccinated and to receive the booster when needed. Mask wearing is optional for both staff and students unless one is directly exposed. We ask everyone to do their best to keep our community safe. If your child has COVID symptoms please test.

Illness and Returning to School

Please notify us when your child will be out for more than one day. Let us know immediately if your child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, lice, COVID etc. or any condition that we might be able to stop from spreading. Please DO NOT send your child to school with a fever, when she/he is starting a cold (this is the contagious period), or if she has been sick the night before (even if she seems fine in the morning). A fever, frequent coughing, vomiting, excessive nasal discharge, pain, or diarrhea requires 24-36 hours to insure recovery or no illness. If a child at Community Synagogue ECC exhibits any of these symptoms we will call you to pick the child up IMMEDIATELY. This is for everyone's benefit. If we work together and adhere to these standards and recommendations, the children will benefit.

Children returning to school after an illness must be well enough to participate in ALL activities, including going outdoors. There must be a note stating the reason for absence. Any child who been to an Emergency Room or has been absent from school due to surgery, stitches, or broken bones, must have a note signed by the doctor permitting the child to come back to school with full activities allowed. Please try to keep siblings who are ill and home from their school out of our school also.

In cases where COVID-19 is suspected and has not been ruled out, children generally must remain home until they are symptom-free. Decisions on returning to school should be made based on advice from your child's physician, and in communication with the ECC director. Written clearance must be provided by your child's physician.

If a teacher or director feels your child is not well enough to be in school, they will ask you to take your child home. In addition, children sometimes begin to feel sick as the day progresses. If your child becomes ill during the day, a teacher will call you, we will remove your child from their classroom, and they will need to be picked up. It is imperative that you be available at one of the phone numbers you have given us during the school day. If you or your caregiver are reachable only by cell phone, please make sure that your phones are turned on and easily accessible.

School Illnesses and Injuries

Any time a teacher calls a parent to pick up their child due to illness or injury the parent or emergency contact person, is required to come and get their child at school immediately. This is for the health and safety of all children enrolled in the ECC.

Children must stay home and/or will be sent home if they have any of the following:
Children experiencing any of these symptoms will not be allowed in the school.

- **Fever:** Children will not be permitted to be in school with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Children may not return to school until they are 48 hours fever free without medication.

- **Diarrhea:** Children who have had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.

- **Vomiting:** Vomiting one or more times in 24 hours or if they are exhibiting other symptoms of illness. If a child throws up at school we will ask you to pick up your child and require that they are vomit-free for 24 hours before returning to school. If there is an outbreak (defined as two or more cases in the same classroom within the same week) we extend the period of time before a child can return to school to 48 hours symptom free.

- **Rashes:** Rashes that are open or oozing, spreading quickly, or a rash with fever or behavior change. If a child develops a diaper rash that is open or oozing, a doctor's note will be required to apply diaper cream. We may request that a doctor's note be provided saying that the child's rash is not contagious and they are permitted to attend school.

- **Coughing:** Severe uncontrolled coughing, rapid and difficulty breathing, or wheezing.

- **Children with confirmed illnesses,** such as strep throat, etc. may return to school with a doctor's note, 24 hours after starting antibiotics and being fever free. Children will still be sent home if they have any visible signs of illness.

Lice

Please be sure to check your child's scalp every day. If we all work together as a community, we can prevent an outbreak from getting started. Please know that siblings attending the elementary schools can also be the source of lice. It is a good idea to keep an eye on everyone in your household. If you suspect that your child has lice, call your child's doctor for further advice. When your child comes back to school make sure that the teacher or Director has given the okay for him/her to return.

- If a child shows signs of having lice (frequent scratching, complaints of itchy scalp/head, redness behind ears or back of neck) we will check the child as best we can. If we suspect that the child has lice we will inform the parent and send the child home.
- Once alerted, the parent must have the child checked by a nurse, pediatrician or professional lice remover before returning to school.
- If the case is confirmed by a healthcare provider PLEASE inform the ECC immediately and keep your child at home until they have been cleared as "nit free". It is always best to treat everyone in the family should one case be found.
- When a family reports a lice case to us, we let the families know in that class, and the teacher bags all necessary equipment in the class for 2-3 weeks.

Lice continued

Additional ECC Precautions include:

- Rugs are vacuumed daily.
- We do not share combs, brushes and or other personal items.
- When a child has been diagnosed with lice, all soft play items (such as stuffed animals) and dress up clothing are removed from that classroom.
- As an extra precaution we provide separate, labeled bags, lined with plastic for each child's jackets, hat, scarfs etc. Please help our teachers by placing your child's clothing in their bag during drop off.

Child Maltreatment

In accordance with New York State Law, **this school reports all instances of suspected child maltreatment.** Please be assured that **strict confidentiality will be maintained** and families will be supported during the process. The child abuse hotline telephone number is (800) 342-3720

Behaviors & Development Policies

Biting

Many pre-verbal children go through a time of biting. They bite for several reasons.

1. They find the impulse to bite as a natural defense when cornered, not having yet mastered more refined ways of defending and protecting themselves and expressing their wants.
2. The immediate effect of the bite may be gratifying, both sensually and dramatically.

For some toddlers and pre-schoolers, biting is a normal; natural, and not an unusual response. It frequently occurs in groups of children just on the verge of fluent language.

However, **biting is a serious issue**. The following outlines the steps that will be taken in the event a biting incident has occurred.

- Staff will respond, when the biting occurs, with a clear message to the biter and comfort the child who has been bitten.
- Staff will educate the children on the dangers of biting and alternatives to biting behavior.
- The parents of a child who bites and the parents of a child who is bitten will be notified via a “Biting Incident Report” completed by the teacher.
- Parents are expected to cooperate and assist the school with behavior modifications and alternative reaction responses.
- If all efforts have been exhausted and the biting behavior persists, there may be no recourse other than withdrawal from our program.

Toileting

We view toilet learning as part of a developmental process that occurs within the context of a close care-giving relationship. Children enrolled in the two-year-old class do not have to be toilet trained, but we urge you to provide support and encouragement to your child so that she/he will use the toilet at the time s/he enters the 3-year old program. We request that a child entering the three-year old program be out of diapers by January of the school year. Our three-year-old classrooms are not equipped nor staffed according to Health Department regulations to provide changing and cleaning soiled children on a regular basis. In these cases, a parent or caregiver will be called to change a heavily soiled child. Our teacher’s attention to the entire group and respect for the boundaries of the children’s privacy are considerations that lead us to encourage the children to clean themselves after toileting. For occasional wet underwear, teachers will help the children change their clothing. All four-year olds and Pre-K students must be toilet trained when they enter the school in September. We define toilet trained as being able to participate in two weeks of school without an accident of wetting/soiling their clothes.

Discipline Policy

We utilize an awareness-based solution for teaching children self-regulation, discipline and social emotional skills. Teachers and assistants do their best to connect with each student as an individual. Teachers then use conflict and misbehavior as learning opportunities for the children. Students learn to cooperate and problem-solve, ultimately creating their own safe learning environment. Children will be taught assertiveness, kindness and helpfulness with a focus on safety. Children who misbehave will learn how their behavior affects their own safety or that of their classmates. They will be shown and taught how to better control their own behavior and emotions. Depending on the situation, a child may be asked to sit out of an activity.

Napping Policy

As per our school license, we are required to offer all children appropriate rest and quiet periods that are responsive to individual and group needs. When appropriate, children will be offered the opportunity to sit quietly or lie down to rest on individual mats in the classroom. Mats are provided by the school and sanitized following use. School staff provide supervision that is in licensing compliance for teacher-to-child ratios. Children may bring a "lovey" from home for use during rest periods. Supervised, quiet activities are made available to children who require some quiet time, but not necessarily rest time.

Planning for the School Year

Clothing

All clothing should be labeled with first and last name.

Dress your child comfortably. Use washable play clothes. Children should be dressed in clothes they can handle themselves and that will not cause them to worry if they dirty them. (Velcro sneakers, elastic waist pants, no belts, etc.)

Sneakers/rubber-soled shoes are preferable. All clothing should be easy to get on and off in order to encourage your child's growing independence in toileting and dressing. PLEASE AVOID items that cannot be undone easily: body suits, jump suits, overalls, boots and shoes that DO NOT FIT, party dresses, party shoes.

Winter Time: We do go outside. Mittens, hats, scarves, boots, and snow pants are required.

Make sure your child wears boots or waterproof footwear whenever there is snow. It is helpful to label right and left boots. Umbrellas are not permitted to remain in school. Mittens should be clipped onto cuffs or sewn to a length of elastic, which is then put through the sleeves of the coat or the jacket.

Please do not send your child to school with drawstrings on shirts, jackets or pants. These are likely to become caught on something and become a safety hazard.

Please bring these items, **ALL LABELED**, in a shoebox (2-year olds) with your child's name written in large letters (3- and 4/5-year olds only, put belongings in a clear plastic bag):

- **1 change of underwear**
- **1 shirt**
- **1 pair of pants**
- **1 pair of socks**

Be certain the extra clothes fit and that they are clothing your child is willing to wear. After the winter break it is a good idea to check your child's bag to make sure the extra clothing is your child's current size.

Personal Belongings Your child may bring a book or toy to share or to show. Please mark your last name on items brought from home. If a possession is precious or valuable to your child, it is better to keep it at home. SHARP OBJECTS SUCH AS TOY CANES, UMBRELLAS, SWORDS, and GUNS ARE NOT PERMITTED. Chewing gum and candy are also not permitted. Wholesome treats to be shared by the entire class are most welcome. If your child is having breakfast "on the run", please do not bring any food or drinks into the school. Please have your child finish before entering the building or leave it in the car. **All children should have some kind of backpack** to bring notices and arts and crafts projects home. Please check your child's bag daily for any notices.

Outdoor Play

Children benefit from fresh air and exercise as well as from experiences in the natural world; therefore outdoor play is written into our daily schedule as weather permits. Children are not taken out in downpours, storms or at temperatures when wind-chills are dangerous. **Children are to be dressed and prepared to be out of doors each day.** Please send proper attire to school. Occasionally a parent may request that a child be kept inside. The Early Childhood Center does not have staff on duty to supervise children whose parents request that they remain indoors.

Birthday Parties

We celebrate each child's birthday in school. However, it is not always possible to have your child's party on the day of her/his birthday because of scheduling conflicts. In order for the teacher to plan appropriately please discuss your child's birthday at least 2 weeks ahead of the date you would like to have the party. You are welcome to provide a special treat for the occasion. Please be aware that children in your child's class might have an allergy to certain foods. Please ask the teacher about allergic children before bringing in any food.

We do not distribute party invitations in school regardless if the entire class is invited, nor do we distribute gifts for another child. Parents like to monitor invitations with the option of declining without upsetting the child. Thank you for your sensitivity in this area.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

There are scheduled parent-teacher conferences during the year. The purpose of these conferences is for parents and teachers to share their knowledge of the child in order to facilitate development. You are welcome to request a conference with your child's teacher at any time. However, please do not engage teachers in prolonged conversations during school hours. Feel free to consult with your child's teacher or with the Director if any problems arise. The school will help you find appropriate special services if there is a need. We consult with the teachers, superintendents, and special education teachers in several school districts to provide us with guidance. All discussions are held in the strictest confidence.

Field Trips

During the school year, the 4/5-year old classes may take a field trip. You will be notified in advance of such occasions. We require assistance in the form of volunteer drivers /chaperones for these trips.

Enrichment

The ECC is proud to offer a variety of theme-based after-school programs which further enrich the in-school curriculum, as well as provide a longer school day for those children and parents who want and/or need it.

Enrichment programs run from 11:45 pm until 2:00 pm. Students staying for after-school enrichment bring their own lunch to school (except on those days when you may buy lunch if you wish) and will eat lunch together. The ECC provides lunch 4 days a week for an additional charge: Monday – pizza, Tuesday – pasta, Wednesday – chicken fingers and Thursday – Macaroni & Cheese. We also provide a fruit or vegetable, water and a dessert.

All children must be toilet trained to participate in this program. Parents/guardians may register their children for whichever of these programs they wish at the beginning of the school year, or do it on an as-needed/wanted basis week by week. If there is room, the decision to send a child for afternoon enrichment may even be made that very same day. This program is designed to be fun, educational and flexible.

To participate – please download the Enrichment Enrollment form from our website or pick one up from the ECC office.

Shabbat

One of the highlights of our program is our school wide Shabbat celebration. Every Friday morning the children participate in the full Shabbat experience, complete with candle lighting, Shabbat prayers over challah and juice and a beautiful tradition-the blessing of our children. All the classes meet every Friday morning on the Blue Rug (this year we will not have access to the Sanctuary) to participate in a joyful observance of Shabbat lead by the Rabbi and Cantor with music and lots of singing. Parents are invited to join their children in our 3, 4 and pre-K programs, celebrating birthdays, are honored with a special blessing and song. We want everyone to be comfortable during this service. It is not necessary to know or say the prayers when you are on the bima.

The ECC also arranges for families to purchase a challah on Fridays to bring home each week to continue the celebration of Shabbat. ***Challah order forms are available on the ECC website or the ECC Office.***

Parent Involvement

There are many opportunities for parent involvement in the Early Childhood Center. Parents are encouraged to take part in the life of the school in a variety of ways; through in class visits, ECC sponsored parent workshops, Shabbat and a variety of holiday celebrations. In addition, parents and guardians have the opportunity to become even more involved in our community by becoming active in our Parent Association.

These are just a few ways of getting involved:

- **Become a Class Parent** – help coordinate parent assistance in holiday parties, facilitate class gifts, and organize parents to provide transportation for class trips and assist with the class Sharing Shabbat.

- **Get involved in the Parent Association** - chair a committee to help spearhead one of the many social, educational and/or fundraising activities sponsored throughout the year or simply volunteer to become a Host Family, work a shift at the book fair, bring a dessert for Pajama Night, attend a sponsored lecture, or gather your friends to shop at Boutique Night. There are many different ways to get involved. We will hold a morning meeting in the fall or contact the current Parent Association chair to find out more.
- **Help Tend the ECC Vegetable Garden** - our garden is always in need of help with weeding and harvesting. Please see the Director if you are interested in helping out.

If you have a special area of interest or expertise that you would like to share, please let our staff know. Our parent body is a rich source of talent, energy and creativity. We value your input, suggestions, and assistance.

Finally, the school and the staff appreciate and welcome any assistance that parents and friends can give to the school. Suggestions are always welcome. Working together, we can look forward to a rewarding and fulfilling year for both, you and your child.

Dale Oberlander
Director
Early Childhood Center