

GAN YELADIM



Parent Handbook

2023-2024 / 5783

Introduction & Welcome

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Gan Yeladim! Serving the educational needs of children 2-5 years old, we look forward to opening up new worlds for your child in fun and stimulating ways. We are pleased that you have chosen our school as a home away from home for your child. Here at Gan Yeladim, we are committed to creating a warm, friendly and happy environment for your child, while assisting your child in developing a strong positive awareness of his/her Jewish identity. Aside Judaic themes and holidays, the curriculum at the Gan Yeladim will expose the children to a wide range of experiences including art, movements, pre-reading & writing skills and early math skills, which are all integrated in our hands-on learning centers.

When dropping off your child, you will find caring teachers who, above all, will shower the children with love and affection. We offer a creative Jewish learning atmosphere where your child's individual style of learning will be valued and nurtured. We will encourage your child to explore the world, to learn to be part of a group and to solve problems in a constructive manner. Learning at our school is self-rewarding, joyous and non-competitive.

We have prepared this handbook to help ease any anxieties you may have and to assure you that your child is in good hands. To help your child get ready for preschool, please take the time to carefully read this handbook, which contains updated and pertinent information. As this booklet has information and answers to parents' common questions, you may want to keep it handy and refer to it as needed throughout the year.

Please volunteer your time and services whenever possible. If you have a particular field of expertise, offer to share it with our children on occasion. Join us on a field day trip, save useful objects for our arts and crafts and become part of our preschool family.

Nothing, of course, takes the place of direct contact between you, and the teachers. You are invited to call me at the school office to discuss any questions or uncertainties regarding your child's preschool education whenever you feel it is necessary.

We look forward to a fully cooperative relationship and a very successful school year.

Sincerely yours,

Morah Devorah Halperin

General Information

Location and Entrance

Gan Yeladim Playgroup is located at the Chabad Center 4457 Crackersport Rd. in Allentown.

For the Safety of our children, this door will remain closed and locked during school hours (8:00am—5:00pm). If you need to go the office or need access to the building during school hours, you must use the bell and wait to be identified and allowed into the building.

To contact us:

Phone: 610-351-6511

Email- Morahdevorah@chabadlehighvalley.com

Address: 4457 Crackersport Rd. Allentown, Pa. 18104

Website: www.chabadlehighvalley.com

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to educate your child in a creative, supportive and warm Jewish environment so that your child will not only learn about life as a Jew but will learn to love it too!

We aim to nourish and stimulate you child's learning priorities as we develop cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills so that your child will be a well-rounded and self-confident individual.

PHILOSOPHY

Gan Yeladim playgroup serving the educational needs of children ages 2 -5 years. We provide a warm and happy Jewish environment where your child's unique style of learning and developing is valued and nurtured. Through song and dance, through stories and discussions, the precious legacy of their uniqueness as Jews is transmitted. Our approach allows us to offer a stimulating environment where your child will be encouraged to develop intellectually, emotionally and physically. Our low student-teacher ratio ensures that each child receives individual and caring attention. Each of our children is seen as an individual, and thus given the respect and attention needed to develop and grow. And finally, underpinning all of this, at the heart of the program, is our desire to develop in our children kindness, sensitivity and concern for their peers.

SCHOOL HOURS of OPERATION

Our school hours are as follows:

Full day program: Monday -Friday 9:00-1:00

3-day program Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00-1:00

EXTENDED EARLY & AFTER CARE HOURS: available from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

Must register in advance.

Holiday hours may vary. See enclosed school year schedule.

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

Gan Yeladim Playgroup offers a creative balance between Judaic and secular studies. Our admission policy assures that all Jewish children are accepted without regard to race, color, and national and ethnic origin.

There is a non-refundable \$150.00 registration fee that will be applied towards your first monthly payment. Complete registration form and submit to the preschool office with deposit.

CHILD ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Applications are accepted throughout the year if there is availability. If we are at capacity you can choose to be placed on a waiting list for an opening if another student withdraws or for the following year. Applications must be accompanied by current immunization records and non refundable registration fee.

TUITION

3 day/half day program	\$350.00 per month
Five day program	\$450.00 per month
Extended early/after care	\$5/ hour or monthly fee

Please remember, no Jewish child will be turned away due to lack of funds. Please ask us about scholarship availability.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

It is very important to the success of our program that you drop off and pick up your children on time so that your child does not miss any of our scheduled activities or cause any disruption in our daily schedule.

We ask that students should not arrive at school before 8:55 a.m. As teachers are involved with preparation and are not ready to give the children their full attention. Teacher supervision will only be available after 8:55 am

- If parents need to drop off students before the 9:00 a.m. arrival time, **they are asked to enroll their students in the Before School Care Program.**
- Students are not allowed in the building in the morning unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.

When a child is late and is walked in by the parent, the teacher will greet the child and parent. However, we encourage the parents not to engage in lengthy conversation with the teacher as this takes precious time away from the children.

DROP OFF & PICK UP DETAILS

Please pick up your child on time. Children have an inside clock and expect to be picked up at a certain time. When the first parent comes the other children start looking for their parents. When you are late this causes your child undue stress.

Please notify us in advance if you plan a late pick up and we will adjust the monthly tuition fees accordingly.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DISMISSAL

Your child will only be released to a parent or an adult designated by the parent in writing. If there is a change in the child's normal pick up procedure, please make sure the teacher knows.

Should you find yourself in an emergency, please call the school to let us know that you are delayed.

Absence

Please let us know as early as possible if your child will be absent on a given day.

THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL

In order to help children adjust to school, we ask the parents not to prolong the good-bye. Help your child separate by setting up a routine for departure and maintaining that routine. It is very important that parents never slip away without telling their children good-bye and reassuring them that you will return.

WHAT TO BRING

Please bring the following items the first day of school:

- * Backpack (to be brought home everyday)
- * for children staying for after care- blanket and sheet for mat
- * Snack and Lunch (see suggested list)
- * roll of pennies for tzedaka
- * Diaper and wipes for child who is not toilet trained

- * 1 complete change of clothing: shirt, pants, skirt, underwear and socks (in a labeled Ziploc bag.) **Please label each piece with a permanent laundry marker. The school cannot be responsible for unlabeled clothing.**

Other than these items, **please leave extra toys and snacks AT HOME.** Please do not allow your child to bring any personal toys, gadgets or any other belongings to school. If you feel it is absolutely necessary for your child to have a pacifier along at school, please speak to the teacher directly. **It is best if these items are left at home and not taken away before entrance to the school,** as this may cause your child to start the day in an unsettled way.

WHAT TO WEAR

In order for your child to have the most fun at school your child's clothes should be comfortable, washable and easy to take off for toileting. Also, rubber soled and tennis shoes are best. Sandals and jellies are not encouraged because stones from the playground get in them. Jewelry (real or play) should not be worn at school. Please do not send your child to school in clothing that cannot get dirty.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

The curriculum that Gan Yeladim Playgroup will be following is unique because of its special blend of secular and Judaic programs. The activities are all challenging and fun and promote the child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth as well as their curiosity and exploration.

A sample of our daily schedule is as follows:

(The schedule varies according to group level)

9:00-9:45	Centers (theme related manipulative, individual projects/ open time)
9:45-10:00	clean up, toilet and washing hands
10:00-10:15	Circle time (Davening, Tzedaka, Parsha and Jewish holidays calendar, weather, theme of the week)
10:15-10:30	Snack Time
10:30-10:45	Specialties (Israeli dance/Hebrew, music together, gym)
10:45-11:00	Gross Motor Activity (Phys. Ed. - Organized Wide Activity)
11:00-11:15	Outside play
11:15-11:35	Fine motor activity (arts and crafts)
11:35- 11:50	ALEF BET Curriculum/ theme activity/ Story time
	Toilet and wash for lunch
11:50-12:15	LUNCH
12:05-12:20	Open time/Clean up
12:20-12:30	Manipulative and ABC
12:30-1:00	Clean up and get ready to go home

OPEN TIME/CENTERS

Every day, for 40 minutes, the children can choose which areas they wish to play and learn. Center activities include:

- Science center/Exploration
- Blocks & Building center

- ✿ Art center
- ✿ Music center
- ✿ Library/Listening center
- ✿ Dramatic Play
- ✿ Gross motor development

TZEDAKAH (CHARITY)

Part of your child's learning experience at our school develops the desire to share with others who are less fortunate. Please leave a supply of pennies at the school; we will let you know when you need to send more.

ACADEMIC SECULAR CURRICULUM

Our Curriculum concentrates on reading readiness, concepts in numbers and math, science and social studies (age appropriate)

JUDAIC CURRICULUM

The Judaic curriculum is complete, fun and enlightening. Each week, the children's highlight is their Shabbat party. The children delight in braiding their own challah. Daily, the children give Tzedakah, say their brachot (blessings), and proudly show off their mitzvah notes to their classmates. The Judaic curriculum includes praying each morning and learning the Jewish holidays and songs. Learning the aleph bet will include letter recognition and sound alongside a mitzvah and middot learning series.

MITZVOT AND MIDOT ALEPH BET

This syllabus integrates learning the Hebrew Aleph Bet with a character education program as part of our daily curriculum. Alongside learning letter recognition and sound, it incorporates virtue/character education into lessons for each group daily including but not limited to *respect, integrity, loyalty, honor, compassion, honesty, courage, perseverance, and responsibility*. As each letter is introduced, a Mitzvah or Middah and Jewish hero [beginning with that new letter] are presented as well, defining the theme of the week in all activities and specialties.

LIVING WITH THE TORAH

The Torah portion of the week is experienced and relived in the classroom, with specialties and at play and is an important part of the weekly schedule with concentration on various special Jewish heroes. These integrated activities give the children a personal

connection to their Jewish heritage.

SPECIALTIES

Gan Yeladim playgroup is proud to offer the following specialties:

Music- Music together

Hebrew & Israeli Dance

Storytelling

Gym- Parkettes

Cooking and Science

STORY HOUR BY ABBA & IMMA

Our ABC enrichment program is designed to involve the *Imas* and *Abas* (or grandparents) in helping us learn our letters and enjoy reading.

Twice a month a different parent will be invited to delight their child's class with 30 minutes of book reading and letter enrichment time. This can include a story, craft or any other activity that the parent wishes to share. Of course, your child's teacher is available for suggestions.

Please let us know if there is a specific time you would be available.

This is now on hold due to Covid.

MITZVAH NOTES

We have a beautiful mitzvah tree in our classroom. Please send frequent Mitzvah notes about your child's good behavior that will be read at Circle time. This is an easy way to show your child how proud you are of what they do and their good behavior. The Mitzvah notes are a sure way to reinforce their learning experience.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

If a teacher finds a child with special concerns, whether they are of an academic or social-emotional nature, special care will be taken by the staff to find ways to remedy the situations and to provide special supports that allow the child to develop the skills that need to be strengthened.

When the school feels that, despite concerted efforts, its own internal resources are inadequate to meet a child's needs, the parents will be asked to provide their child with the professional help necessary to guide the school in meeting these needs.

SNACK AND LUNCH

Please make sure that your child has had breakfast before coming to school. This will enable your child to have the energy needed to fully participate in school activities

SUGGESTED LIST OF SNACKS

- * Rice cakes
- * cereal (without milk)
- * Fruit
- * Pretzels
- * crackers
- * vegetables
- * raisins and dried fruit

Please let us know if your child has an extreme dislike or allergic reaction to certain foods.

WE ARE NOW A PEANUT FREE FACILITY!

LUNCH

Please send a *pareve* or **dairy kosher** lunch with a drink. Some ideas for lunch:

- * carrot sticks
- * celery sticks
- * fruit, fresh or canned
- * American cheese or cheese sticks
- * sandwiches (tuna, peanut butter, mayonnaise, cheese, pizza bagel, apple butter)
- * hard boiled eggs
- * yogurt
- * pasta/macaroni and cheese

SHABBAT PARTIES

Each Friday we celebrate the coming of Shabbat with a Shabbat party. Your child will participate in Challah Baking, lighting Shabbat candles, making Kiddush, and enjoying special treats which are provided by the Shabbat *Abba* or *Imma*. The designated *Abba* and *Imma* will be assigned in the previous weekly newsletter to bring in a special treat for the class. We suggest that you let him or her dress in semi-festive clothing.

PARENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are requested to bring their children to school on time in order not to miss out on any part of our scheduled program. Please make sure to **read all notices** that are sent home and that your child is prepared for any special activities. Also, please make a special effort to read all information in the weekly newsletter, as there are very important notices posted.

We welcome parent involvement and input. All your efforts can only enhance our school.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is most important to an educational organization. Please feel free to contact the school with any matter that requires clarification. Please discuss any questions or concerns with your child's teacher and then, if necessary, with the director. We regularly post pictures on our parents only WhatsApp group.

Please keep us Informed:

- Please share any information with the teachers regarding changes that may adversely affect the child. When teachers are aware of such situations as a parent's absence, hospitalization etc. they can often be of great help in alleviating the child's stress and providing the child with extra attention.
- Please keep us informed of departures from routine i.e. parents out of town, other people caring for the child, different home setting, changes of your address, telephone number, etc. This is critically important in case of an emergency.
- Please be supportive of our teaching staff! They are dedicated, caring professionals. Your support and respect help them provide a quality education for your child. If you have a concern or suggestion, please schedule a time to talk. If you have a thank you or some positive comments, please pass it on to our teachers! They welcome your feedback!

Parent Involvement:

ON HOLD DUE TO COVID

Parents are welcome to visit and observe at any time. We encourage you to get involved with the school and to work with us to provide the best experience for your child. Here are some ways in which you can help:

- Let us know about any special problems or concerns.
- Volunteer to help with special programs.
- Contribute dress up clothes and art supplies such as boxes, containers, scraps, baby food jars, Styrofoam trays, cardboard rolls from toilet paper and paper towels, etc.
- Your questions and concerns are important to us. We will be happy to schedule a conference time so that you can share them with us.
- Parent volunteers are an integral part of a successful school. Please indicate an area in which you would like to assist by filling out the parent volunteer signup sheet at the beginning of the year. You will be contacted with further details, dates and times for volunteering. We ask that each parent sign up for one or more of these choices.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

No staff member or children shall come to school if they exhibit signs of communicable illnesses. Parents of children that have been exposed to a disease will be notified of exposure. The preschool will send home notes with the date and type of exposure. If your child becomes ill at school, you or your alternate emergency person will be called to pick up your child immediately. Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to any communicable disease. Our policy is to never administer medicine, vitamins, or special medical diets to any child. This should be administered by a parent only.

If a child exhibits any of these symptoms, he or she will be sent home.

Diarrhea (more than once)	severe coughing
Difficult, rapid breathing	<u>consistently clear, dripping nose</u>
Ear ache	Yellowish skin or eyes
Conjunctivitis	Temperature of over 99 degrees F
Stiff neck	Lice, scabies or other parasites
Vomiting	

IN CASE OF ILLNESS please do not send your child to school if he or she:

- * has had fever during the previous 24 hours
- * has heavy nasal discharge or constant cough
- * has symptoms of possible communicable disease
- * is not well enough to play outdoors.

MEDICATION

If your child needs medication during the school day, the school will administer medication only with medication in the original container with child's name, date and dosage/directions along with a copy of the original prescription, Doctor's note, parent permission slip and the medication sign in sheet and tag.

Staff will contact you when your child has any minor injuries that require more than tender loving care, so you can be aware of the incident. An accident report will be filled out and filed for our records, with a copy sent home to the parents.

In the event of an emergency or accident, we will immediately administer first aid if necessary, and call 911 as a medical resource and follow their instructions.

The enrollment/emergency authorization forms and emergency cards must be completed before your child begins her/his first day. It is imperative that you include any medical forms or necessary information.

In case of a major injury, the staff will notify:

- * parents
- * child's doctor (if parents cannot be reached)
- * Your designated (on emergency card) alternate contact.