

Temple Emanuel Early Childhood Development Center

# Family Handbook

School Year 2022-2023



Temple Emanuel ECDC  
1250 Bower Hill Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
412-279-7687

Kate Louik, Director [klouik@templemanuelpgh.org](mailto:klouik@templemanuelpgh.org)  
Ellen Drook, Assistant Director [edrook@templemanuelpgh.org](mailto:edrook@templemanuelpgh.org)

## **Family Handbook (rev 7/19/22)**

### **Welcome!**

Temple Emanuel has offered high quality early childhood programming for more than 60 years. At ECDC we welcome families and children from diverse ethnic, national, racial, and religious backgrounds.

Our intention is to provide a warm environment where children can socialize, learn, and thrive. Temple Emanuel ECDC is influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach. The key feature is a collaborative curriculum built upon the natural themes that arise in our environment – whether by children, teachers, parents or events –with skill development carefully embedded throughout the day.

### **Our Fundamental Values**

The Reggio-inspired approach resonates with our fundamental values, both Jewish and universal.

- Kavod—Respect of self and others
- Kehillah—Community
- Simchat Limud—Joy of learning
- Hachnasat Orchim – Welcoming
- Tzedakah -Sharing with others

### **Our Guiding Principles**

- Socialization and self-regulation are the foundation for healthy development and school readiness.
- Pre-academic skill acquisition is embedded in all activities.
- Art and music are integrated into daily school life.
- Hands-on investigation and open-ended exploration provide the foundation for learning.
- Our immediate and natural environment offers unlimited opportunities for learning.
- Collaboration among children, teachers, parents and school community is critical to the success of the learning process.
- Problem solving is exercised when children have the opportunity to initiate ideas and experiment.
- Close observation ensures that topics will be based on the interests of the children and relevant to the school community.

### **Your School Experience**

#### **In the Classroom**

At ECDC we offer programming for children aged 2 to 6. With small class sizes and student to teacher ratios, we support the individual needs and development of children.

Our morning program offers children the opportunity to play and learn together in a collaborative environment where educators support and guide children in their exploration and discovery. Children participate in class meetings, build social skills, learn to be part of a classroom community, and develop Kindergarten Readiness skills. Our Reggio Emilia-inspired approach

means that our content is targeted to the interests and wonderings of the learners in the classroom. Children at ECDC participate in Art and Music programming that enriches and extends their work in the classroom. They also have opportunities to learn from the rabbinic staff at Temple Emanuel.

ECDC's Kindergarten Enrichment program is a complement to local half-day kindergarten programs. Children benefit from child-centered, inquiry and project-based learning in a small group environment. Kindergarten skill building is embedded into classroom content with plenty of opportunities for self-guided exploration and play with peers.

### **School Calendar**

The 2022-2023 calendar can be found online at:  
<https://templeemanuelpgh.org/ecdc/calendar/>.

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

For the safety of our community, the following traffic pattern has been implemented. Parents will enter at the traffic light and make two right turns to follow the road in front of Temple Emanuel and will continue around to the rear in one traffic line.

### **Food Policy**

Snacks—Snack items such as crackers will be provided by the school. Snacks will be plated for each child by a teacher wearing gloves. Children should bring a clean and filled water bottle with them to school each day. ECDC staff and educators are mindful of students with allergies and/or food sensitivities and are happy to work with families to provide safe options for children.

Lunch—Lunches at ECDC are an optional add on for children ages 3-6. Lunch provides an opportunity to gather and socialize with others. Healthy habits and conversational skills are practiced in a relaxed setting. Families provide packed lunches for their children. Lunch boxes should be clearly marked with the child's first and last name. *Please note that lunches should **not** include any foods that contain peanuts or tree nuts.* If you include sunbutter in your child's lunch, please label it as such. Important texts in Jewish tradition prohibit eating certain foods including pork (bacon, sausage, pepperoni, etc) and shellfish (shrimp, crab, etc). While individual practices vary, we ask you to *refrain from sending pork or shellfish to Temple in keeping with this cultural norm.*

Birthdays and Holidays—Please do not send food to school for special occasions. We welcome your participation in other aspects of celebration and invite you to coordinate with your child's teachers to make the occasions special and meaningful for your child and their classmates.

### **Dress and Belongings**

- Please provide an extra set of clothing in a baggie with your child's name and replace items as needed. Your child should come to school daily with a water bottle that is thoroughly rinsed, washed, and refilled. Be certain that the water bottle is clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Your child should be dressed in play clothes and sturdy, close-toed shoes. Clothing should allow freedom of movement and maximum independence with toileting. Sandals, dress shoes and long dresses tend to impede movement or cause safety hazards.

- Please dress your child according to the weather and send hats and gloves/mittens on a daily basis throughout the cold season. Outdoor clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

## **Holidays**

We want to introduce you to the Jewish holidays that we celebrate at ECDC. Our aim is to celebrate holidays by focusing on central values and customs such as foods that we can enjoy together. We celebrate in the classroom and in our music program where songs reflect the season and holiday themes. Throughout the year we invite you to celebrate with us and to share customs and stories of the holidays observed in your homes.

Throughout the year –

At school we say a blessing before eating:

*Baruch atah Adonai elohenu melech ha-olam ha-motsi lechem min ha-arets*

Shabbat – On Fridays we welcome Shabbat with songs of gratitude, peace and community. We enjoy a special snack of juice and challah.

Rosh Hashanah - We welcome the year with apples and honey signifying a good, sweet year.

Yom Kippur - We talk about ways of being a good person and friend.

Sukkot - We learn appreciation for fruits, vegetables and the harvest and enjoy picnics in our outdoor Sukkah.

Hanukkah – Our older children learn the story of Hanukah. We all enjoy customs including lighting the menorah, playing dreidel and eating of latkes.

Tu B'Shvat – A holiday similar to Earth Day, Tu B'Shvat is a time to celebrate and respect the earth's bounty. We often enjoy foods that are customary in Israel, such as dates and pomegranates.

Purim – Queen Esther is the hero of the Purim story. We make noisemakers, wear costumes and have a carnival to celebrate the saving of the Jewish people from Haman. We make Purim baskets filled with hamantashen (cookies), candy and fruit for our neighbors who live in Concordia.

Passover – Passover is a major Jewish festival celebrating freedom from slavery in Egypt. We celebrate at school, as in our homes, with a special seder (ritual meal) where together we eat matzo (unleavened bread) and charoset (an apple mixture), symbols of the holiday.

## **Communication**

At Temple Emanuel ECDC our aim is to develop partnerships with families built on a foundation of mutual respect. The ECDC Director maintains regular communication with families and welcomes your questions and suggestions.

Our primary means of communication is through Brightwheel. Parents and families can expect regular updates from their child's educators, including photos and documentation of the life of the classroom. Brightwheel offers a messaging feature which is a helpful means of staying in

contact with your child's educators as well as ECDC administrators. Information regarding special events, school closures, and other important information will be sent through the Brightwheel messaging system.

Designated conference dates are scheduled once per year with your child's teacher. However, ongoing communication is foundational to support the child's education and development. It is important for teachers and parents to establish two-way communication from the beginning of the school year. We encourage you to reach out at any time. Likewise, ECDC teachers will regularly reach out to you to communicate concerns and progress.

Along with pediatricians, early childhood educators play an important role in referring families for additional support. Additional services are available through two main networks:

**Early Intervention** is offered through the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers for children under the age of three and by DART, a service of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit starting at age three. Children may be screened in each developmental domain. If a child qualifies, therapists (such as speech and language therapists) may come to the home or school for a specified period per week.

**Behavioral health** is offered by social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and developmental pediatricians. After an evaluation, treatment recommendations are made. Treatment may be in the form of weekly (outpatient) therapy or more intensive ("wraparound"), where therapeutic support is offered in the home and school setting.

Children who qualify for early intervention or behavioral health services will have an Individual Family Service Plan or an Individual Education Program. The ECDC Director and classroom Educators will participate on the team with you to ensure that the goals and strategies are implemented and to communicate progress in an ongoing manner.

### **Family Participation**

Temple Emanuel ECDC is built upon collaboration among teachers, children, and families. We invite families to participate in the everyday life of school both by frequent communication with the teacher and by sharing ideas, talents, and interests.

ECDC values a community made up of families with a wide range of cultures and languages. We invite you to share information about your family that will help us to better understand your child and enrich our school life. Likewise, we ask you to let us know how we can best offer a welcoming and inviting school environment for your family.

As ECDC family members, we also invite you to participate in Parent Teacher Partnership. In collaboration with the ECDC Director and Educators, PTP plans and offers a wide range of opportunities including social gatherings, teacher appreciation efforts, fundraising events, school projects, and policy discussions.

### **Policy Overview**

The ECDC Advisory Board meets once a month to stay current and for any needed policy review. The Advisory Board consists of the ECDC Director, ECDC Assistant Director and Temple Emanuel members including a liaison to the Board of Directors of Temple Emanuel. Parents and Teachers are represented on the Advisory Board. The PTP Coordinator sits on the Advisory Board as a liaison with the wider ECDC community.

ECDC is licensed by the PA Department of Human Services. Regulations governing child care centers may be found at this link.

<http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3290/chap3290toc.html&d=>

Questions may be directed to the ECDC Director or to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (Western Office), 11 Stanwix Street, Room 240, Pittsburgh PA 15222; 412-565-5183

### **Community Resources**

Below is a list of trusted services within our community. We are happy to provide a list of additional resources as needed.

#### Alliance for Infants and Toddlers

The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers provides service coordination for families of children in Allegheny County receiving Early Intervention birth to three years of age. 412-885-6000 [www.afit.org](http://www.afit.org)

#### DART Preschool Early Intervention

DART provides free screening to identify developmental needs and provides early intervention services at no cost for eligible children in Allegheny County starting ages 3-5. 412-394-5904 [www.qiu3.net](http://www.qiu3.net)

#### Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh offers a wide range of services including child & family counseling and physical, occupational and speech therapies. The Child Development Unit offers comprehensive assessment of developmental delays. Please see [www.chp.edu](http://www.chp.edu) for more information.

#### South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM)

SHIM offers assistance with basic needs such as food, clothing and utilities as well as career counseling and family support services. 412-854-9120 [shimcares.org](http://shimcares.org)

### **Ways to Support ECDC**

We greatly appreciate donations of time and funds to enrich our program at ECDC. Donations to one of the funds benefitting Temple Emanuel ECDC can be made online at <https://www.templeemanuelpgh.org/give/online-donation-form/>.

#### Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP)

At ECDC we have an active PTP which conducts fundraising, special events and school projects throughout the year. Funds are used to enhance school programming. The PTP invites parents to participate in shared leadership of our school community.

#### Jeanne Glasspool Fund

The Jeanne Glasspool Fund of Temple Emanuel is used to purchase special equipment, repairs and maintenance of the classrooms, indoor gym and the playground.

#### Nan Simon Fund

The Nan Simon Fund is used for ECDC staff training and for technology in the classroom.

#### Martha Klein Lottman Family Fund

The Martha Klein Lottman Family Fund was created to support our participation in the Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative. Our work with JECEI facilitated ECDC's transition to a Reggio-inspired approach. The Lottman Fund continues to support Professional Development and educator compensation.

#### Iris Harlan Library at Temple Emanuel ECDC

The Iris Harlan Library enriches our classrooms with high-quality children's literature ensuring that our collection reflects diversity in our community. We envision a library that supports a community of belonging – where children see themselves and their families represented and celebrated.

#### United Way

We are a United Way Choice Contributor agency. Please think of us when contributing to the United Way. United Way funds are used to supplement scholarships available to families facing financial hardships. We appreciate your donations and thank you in advance.

#1250695 must be marked to designate your donation to ECDC.

Note: The Temple Emanuel tax identification number is: EIN 25 – 1029716.

### **Safety and Security**

Temple Emanuel works in partnership with the Mt. Lebanon Police and other regional authorities to provide a safe and secure environment. Measures in place include:

- A locked building with fob entry by staff at programmed times
- A buzzer system for entry monitored by video
- Double doors between the school and the rest of Temple Emanuel secured with access by code for authorized persons
- A playground secured by fencing and a lockable gate
- Annual safety and fire safety training for staff offered by the Mt. Lebanon Police and Fire Departments
- Regular fire and evacuation drills as regulated by PA Department of Human Services
- Annual Pediatric First Aid and CPR training in accordance with PA Department of Human Service regulations
- Emergency kits for each classroom which include lockdown and evacuation tools and emergency contact information for each child
- A Blue Point System with 16 pull stations to alert building inhabitants and regional authorities of an active threat
- A (green) Medical Alert pull box located in the central ECDC hallway dispatching an ambulance in case of serious illness or injury

### **Health Policies**

#### **Shared Responsibility Statement**

*On behalf of our Temple Emanuel Community and in the spirit of Kehillah -*

Our commitment to one another is heightened in this time of the coronavirus pandemic. To protect our collective health and safety and minimize risk of exposure and infection within our school community, we ask our teachers, students and family members follow CDC and ACHD guidance to protect themselves and our community.

We understand that risk can only be minimized, not eliminated, and we appreciate your diligence in maintaining these safeguards. We will keep you informed of all matters impacting the health of our community and of new guidelines as conditions evolve.

**Please see our Policies and Procedures document for a complete outline of our Covid Safety Plan and information regarding child illness.**

**Required Forms**

An updated Child Health Report is required on an annual basis. Please note that ECDC requires all immunizations, including an annual influenza vaccine, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Additionally, families must submit an Agreement/Payment form and an Emergency Contact Form (completed through Brightwheel) annually. Copies of these forms are available on our website at <https://templemanuelpgh.org/ecdc/ecdcfamilies/ecdc-forms/>.

**Program Information and Fees**

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Fees</b>
Twos	9:00-11:30 AM	Tuesday/Thursday	\$220/month \$1980/year
3-Day Threes	9:00-11:30 AM	Monday/Wednesday/Friday	\$280/month \$220/year
5-Day Threes	9:00-11:30 AM	Monday-Friday	\$450/month \$4050/year
4-Day Fours	9:00-11:30 AM or 12:30-3:00 PM	Tuesday-Friday	\$365/month \$3285/year
5-Day Fours	9:00-11:30 AM or 12:30-3:00 PM	Monday-Friday	\$450/month \$4050/year
Transition	9:00-11:30 AM or 12:30-3:00 PM	Monday-Friday	\$450/month \$4050/year
Kindergarten Enrichment	12:30-3:00 PM	Tuesday/Thursday	\$220/month \$1980/year
Lunch (ages 3-6)	11:30 AM-12:30 PM	Monday-Friday You may select 2-5 sessions per week depending on your child's schedule	\$30 per session/month

**Tuition Payment Policy**

Families must complete our Agreement/Payment form at the time of enrollment. Tuition is charged for the previous month on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Scholarships**

ECDC families who meet income eligibility have access to two streams of scholarship funding through the state Education Improvement Tax Credit program. Families with preschoolers (starting at age three) and with maximum household income of \$90,000 plus \$15,608 per child may qualify.

- Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, an administrator of the state scholarship monies accepts applications in winter for the following school year.
- GEM Scholarship Fund accepted applications in the winter for the following school year.