



## **Family Handbook 2022-2023**

Temple Ohav Shalom Center for Early Learning

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## Contact Information

### Center for Early Learning

8400 Thompson Run Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101

(412) 369-0900 ext. 120

[center@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:center@templeohavshalom.org)

(703) 283-1974 (cell)

[ajacobs@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:ajacobs@templeohavshalom.org) Amy Jacobs, Director

### Temple Ohav Shalom

(412) 369-0900

(412) 369-0699 (fax)

[rabbi@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:rabbi@templeohavshalom.org) Rabbi Jeremy Weisblatt

[jleicht@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:jleicht@templeohavshalom.org) Jackie Leicht, Temple Administrator

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# WELCOME TO TOSCEL

Where the love of learning begins.

The Temple Ohav Shalom Center for Early Learning (TOSCEL) is an early childhood program that is guided by Jewish and universal values and inspired by the philosophy of Reggio Emilia schools. We are proud of our commitment to supporting and welcoming all families into our community with warmth and joy.

Children learn and grow through play. With this belief to guide us, we fill each day with activities that foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Our programs are built upon one another through a developmental approach that focuses on the whole child. Beginning with our My Grown-up and Me (0-24 months) program and continuing through the Afternoon Explorers (3.5 years old-Kindergarten) program, each day includes creative play, small and large group activities, art exploration, and much, much more. At TOSCEL, children and families find a warm, nurturing environment where a love of learning is established and nurtured. Age and developmentally appropriate programs, creative and caring staff, ideal teacher-to-child ratios, and a home-like, comfortable facility ensure a positive, first formal education experience.

## Communication

An open line of communication between caregivers and educators is imperative to the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Please keep your child's educators informed of any concerns that may arise regarding your child. All information will be kept confidential and will help us to provide a nurturing environment where your child can grow and learn.

If you have not already, please download Brightwheel as an open line of communication to TOSCEL staff throughout the school day. Information in Brightwheel will contain classroom pictures, highlights, snack lists, a TOSCEL calendar, TOSCEL policies, curriculum information, and downloadable forms, among other items.

While TOSCEL may share pictures in Brightwheel of your child and their classmates, please do not post pictures of other students on any social media platform.

## Preparing for the Day

Children should arrive at TOSCEL dressed in play clothes and comfortable, well-fitted, closed-toe shoes (to help prevent shoes from slipping off and/or children from tripping). To prepare for the day, please ensure your child has the following labeled\* items:

- A backpack.
- A refillable water bottle.
- A complete change of clothes (shirt, shorts/pants/skirt, socks, underwear, and shoes) in their backpack.

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- Weather-appropriate outerwear (i.e., snow boots, rain boots, winter coats, raincoats, etc.).
  - A supply of diapers, pull-ups, and wipes (please refer to "Diapering" for additional information).
  - A lunch, if participating in Afternoon Explorers, Lunch Bunch, or Summer Camp. (please refer to "Lunches" for additional information).

\*All items should be labeled with your child's name. Any lost and found items will be kept in the director's office and will be donated at the end of the school year.

## **Arrival**

Students may arrive at TOSCEL 10 minutes prior to their scheduled start time. Please enter the building using the education entrance (located on the left side of the building), unless otherwise instructed. The education entrance door is locked and monitored via intercom/video feed. If a staff member is not stationed inside of the entrance, please use the intercom and someone will be able to assist you.

As an additional health and safety measure, you may be asked to complete a Health Screening form prior to arrival and/or a temperature check upon entering the building.

Please check in using the Brightwheel "check-in" feature. If the Brightwheel check-in capability is unavailable, please use the paper sign-in sheet located in each classroom.

Upon arrival to the classroom, please assist your child in hanging up their coat and backpack, as well as washing their hands. If there is a line for the classroom restroom, a larger restroom is located in the hallway at the back of the education wing, next to the Toddler Classroom.

## **Dismissal**

All children will be released from the education entrance. Please stand outside and staff will dismiss children one-by-one to a parent or guardian. Please have your ID and phone (or another device with Brightwheel) accessible. You will use the Brightwheel "check-out" option at dismissal. If the check-out option is unavailable, please sign out using a paper form.

Please make every effort to be on time for dismissal. If you will be late, please send a message in Brightwheel.

If someone on your emergency contact form will be picking up your child, you must provide written permission via Brightwheel or complete the Verbal Release of a Child form during drop-off. The pickup person must present a photo I.D.

## **Weather Related Closures/Delays**

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In the event of inclement weather, TOSCEL will follow the North Allegheny School District (NASD) delay and closure schedule. If there is a delay for NASD due to snow or poor road conditions, TOSCEL classes will begin at 10:00 AM and end at the regularly scheduled time. If NASD has a delay due to a low wind chill factor, TOSCEL will begin at the regularly scheduled time. Information regarding NASD closures/delays can be found on their website at [www.northallegheny.org](http://www.northallegheny.org).

## Snacks/Lunches

Snacks are provided by parents/guardians on a rotating weekly basis. Classroom educators will provide a list of recommended snacks for your assigned week(s). Snacks should be low in salt, fat, and sugar, and include an ingredients label. Snacks must **not** contain:

- Peanuts or tree nuts of any kind. No nut butter (almond butter, peanut butter, etc.). Examples of tree nuts include (but are not limited to) almonds, macadamia nuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts, hazelnuts, etc.
- Any item with the warning "packaged in a facility that processes peanuts or tree nuts."
- Any food considered a choking hazard, such as whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, fruits containing pits, and popcorn.
- Any character packaging (i.e., Disney characters, Paw Patrol, Scooby-Doo).
- Pork products or shellfish, in accordance with Temple Ohav Shalom policy.

Any child attending Afternoon Explorers, Toddler Lunch Bunch or Summer Camp, must bring a packed lunch. In addition to the above restrictions, lunches must be packed in a labeled lunchbox and contain napkins, utensils, and an ice pack (if needed). Lunches will not be refrigerated or microwaved.

## Drinks

A labeled, refillable water bottle should be provided daily. Water bottles will be refilled throughout the day, as needed. Please let us know if you forgot to bring a water bottle, and we will provide one for your child to use throughout the day.

## Payments

### Financial Details

Enrolling a child in one of our preschool programs involves payments of a \$75 registration fee and tuition. Prices vary by the child's age and the program in which they are enrolled. Below are the prices for our programs, which run from late August/early September through the following end of May.

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Credit is not given for vacation periods or absences. In the event that TOSCEL needs to close for longer than a 10-day consecutive period (including but not limited to a medical emergency, inclement weather, or building issues) a credit will be applied to your account.

TOSCEL participates in a tuition assistance program facilitated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. We are currently working on establishing an internal scholarship fund that should be available to families for the 2023-2024 school year.

There is a \$50 discount per payment for siblings. There are 3 payment plans that allow you to pay in 1, 4, or 10 payments. Tuition is paid on or before the date of your payment plan, or subject to a 10% late fee. The first tuition payment includes a one-time \$40 Activity Fee. All classes are contingent upon meeting minimum enrollment requirements. If any classes do not meet minimum enrollment requirements, your registration fee and any other fees will be refunded.

## **Preschool Registration, Cancellation, and Refund Policy**

**Registration and Enrollment** – You can register for TOSCEL’s Preschool Program online by logging on to <https://www.centerforearlylearning.org/2022-2023-registration.html>. Once the session is full, any new registrants will be placed on a waitlist. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis. TOSCEL always holds the right to cancel any session due to insufficient enrollment. Tuition must be paid by the deadline(s) indicated in the tuition agreement.

**Cancellation & Refund** - For TOSCEL to process a refund, we must receive a written email to [center@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:center@templeohavshalom.org) no later than August 28, 2022. If we receive your written email on August 29, 2022, or later, refunds will be made after a \$125 processing fee has been deducted. Monthly tuition rates are based on the yearly cost of tuition. There is no reduction in tuition due to holidays, school breaks, illness, Covid, school closings by the TOSCEL Steering Committee or the TOS Covid Committee, or natural disasters. Other tuition refunds will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Every parent is responsible for reading this website and by nature of the enrollment of their child at TOSCEL agrees to this policy.

**Note:** Registration fees are non-refundable and are not deducted from your tuition payments.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

### **Birthdays**

Every attempt will be made to celebrate a child's birthday during their birthday week (this will also likely be one of your assigned weeks to provide classroom snacks). Please follow the above

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"snack" guidelines when choosing an acceptable birthday treat for their celebration. Any birthday party invitations distributed at TOSCEL should be inclusive of all classroom students.

## **Shabbat**

Every Friday morning, we mark the end of the school week by celebrating Shabbat. Our Shabbat celebration includes lighting candles (LED), blessings, singing songs, and sharing a special snack of challah and grape juice. Parents/caregivers will be invited to attend occasionally throughout the school year.

## **Holidays**

TOSCEL is an early education program based on Jewish values, and as such, we incorporate Jewish holidays into your child's curriculum. We also focus on inclusion and diversity and practice a "Celebrate, Investigate and Discuss" curriculum regarding all other holidays. If you have questions regarding additional holidays, please contact the director.

# **HEALTH & SAFETY**

## **Managing Difficult Behavior**

At TOSCEL, our goal is to provide a safe environment in which children can develop skills that will enable them to handle frustrations and conflicts as they arise. Our educators will encourage children to discuss conflict and think about solutions, as well as provide an organized classroom with clear rules and expectations which is necessary for children to feel safe and comfortable. Some of the techniques we use to manage difficult behavior are making eye contact, calmly communicating clear rules, providing choices, and teaching diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and grounding techniques.

## **Health Forms**

A copy of your child's health record, completed by your pediatrician, is due by the first day of school. Please email ([center@templeohavshalom.org](mailto:center@templeohavshalom.org)) or mail the form to TOSCEL, prior to the first day of school. In order to protect other students and staff members, all age-appropriate vaccinations are required, except in the event of a medical exception. See also the COVID-19 vaccination policy located at the back of the handbook.

## **Illness**

Please keep your child home if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- Fever (100.4 or higher).
- Chills
- Cough

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- Shortness of breath
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Congestion
  - Excessively runny nose
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Frequent sneezing (unrelated to allergies)
  - Unidentified rash
  - Red eyes or eye discharge
  - Sore throat

Please also refer to the additional COVID precautions at the back of the handbook.

You will be contacted to pick up your child if they become ill during their time at TOSCEL. Until your arrival, every effort will be made to keep them as comfortable as possible and away from other students. If for some reason you can not be reached, TOSCEL will begin to contact those on your emergency contact form.

## **Antibiotics**

Please do not send your child to school with an infection unless they have been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.

## **Injuries**

All minor injuries including bumps, lumps, scrapes, and bruises will be cared for by a staff member trained in first aid. If emergency first aid is required, staff members will provide first aid and contact 911. Injuries will be documented via an incident report based on severity. Examples of injuries requiring documentation are insect stings, sprains, bleeding wounds, head injuries, etc... Incident reports will be presented to caregivers to review and sign within 24 hours of the injury. A copy of the incident report may be provided to the caregiver upon request.

## **Notification of Illness/Health Concerns**

To ensure the safety of students and staff members, please notify the director of TOSCEL immediately (via Brightwheel) if your child or household is experiencing an issue with a communicable disease, easily transmissible disease or other issue that may be easily spread in an early education setting. Examples include, but are not limited to, COVID-19, pink eye, strep throat, chickenpox, influenza, bed bugs, fifth disease, hand-foot-mouth disease, head lice, measles, mumps, etc. In an attempt to mitigate risk, health concerns may be communicated to parents/guardians of TOSCEL students but will remain confidential.

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## Health Related Closures

Credit is not given for vacation periods or absences. In the event that TOSCEL needs to close for longer than a 10-day consecutive period (including but not limited to a medical emergency, inclement weather, or building issues) a credit will be applied to your account.

## Medication

Medication may be administered to your child under the following conditions:

- The medication is in its original container, with the child's name and instructions clearly marked.
- A parent or guardian has completed a Medication Log as permission to administer medication.
- Parents/guardians and the child's physician have completed an [Allergy Action plan](#) or [Asthma Action Plan](#) for any child requiring the use of an EpiPen, inhaler, or any other rescue medication and have provided that medication to the school.

## Sunscreen

Parent/guardians should apply sunscreen prior to drop-off. If there is a need to have sunscreen reapplied throughout the day, you must provide the sunscreen with your child's name clearly marked. In addition, a completed [Permission to Apply Sunscreen form](#) is required.

## Toilet Learning

Children are ready for toilet learning at a range of ages. We feel strongly about supporting the autonomy of our children; therefore, children do not need to use the toilet to be enrolled in any of our programs at TOSCEL.

We do, however, ask that caregivers provide diapering supplies so that diapers can be changed as needed. So that we may best support your family, please let us know if you are working on transitioning from diapers and we will encourage the use of the toilet. We will encourage toilet learning at diaper changes or do our best to accommodate toileting using a schedule that you request.

We will also encourage self-help skills once toilet learning has been fully accomplished: pulling underwear and pants up and down, wiping, flushing, and washing hands.

## Diapering

If any child has sensitivities to diapering products, that information must be communicated to staff at enrollment. If a caregiver requests an additional application of diaper rash cream, a

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[Permission to Apply Diaper Rash Cream](#) form must be completed with clear instructions. In addition, the diaper cream must be clearly labeled with the child's name.

If your child wears a diaper or pull-up, please ensure that they arrive at TOSCEL with a clean and dry diaper or pull-up. Staff members will change diapers as needed, including 10-15 minutes prior to pick-up. Each early education room has a designated changing area, which will be sanitized between changings.

Caregivers are expected to provide a supply of diapers, wipes, and any other products necessary for diaper changes throughout the school day. Educators will notify caregivers when they are running low on diapering supplies. Each child's diapering supplies will be placed in their own individual tote or cubby (provided by TOSCEL) and labeled with the child's name.

Families may choose to use either disposable diapers or cloth diapers (without pins). If you choose to use cloth diapers, you must:

- Provide a labeled, clean cloth diaper wet bag (a cloth diaper wet bag is a reusable, waterproof, and leak-resistant bag that is made to contain dirty cloth diapers). Diapers will be placed in the wet bag without any rinsing or shaking after each change. In addition, the wet bag must have a loop, so it can hang on a hook near the changing table.
- Take the wet bag home each day and supply a clean wet bag to school each morning.
- Families must ensure an adequate supply of cloth diapers, which should be affixed to outer coverings and ready to use.

If a child does not have the supplies necessary for a cloth diaper change, a disposable diaper will be provided.

## **Transitioning to Underwear**

TOSCEL will support the transition to underwear by giving additional reminders to use the toilet (especially at diaper changes and during transitions) and by supporting any positive reinforcement used at home (i.e., sticker charts).

We expect the following achievements to be made at home before a child attends TOSCEL in underwear:

- Arrive at TOSCEL having used the toilet at home that morning
- Arrive dressed for success - no belts, overalls, onesies, or tights. As well as having several complete changes of clothing at school including socks, underwear, and footwear
- 90% plus success rate at home for at least one week.
- Ability to hold urine for at least one hour.
- Three consecutive bowel movements on the toilet at home.

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If your child has an accident, it will be addressed as discreetly as possible. Please understand that if, after multiple urine accidents or one bowel movement accident, an educator may determine that a diaper or pull-up may be more appropriate to finish out the day.

## Building and Physical Safety

### Weapons

Weapons of any kind, including, but not limited to; guns, knives, mace, bear spray, etc. are not permitted on Temple property. If a weapon is discovered on the premises, the Director or designee will immediately notify the local police by calling 911.

### Building Security

**Do not, under any circumstance,** open the door for an unknown or unexpected person. Contact staff or the Director immediately if you see a suspicious person on the premises.

When entering the building, please do not allow other people to enter the building behind you unless they are another caregiver or staff member who is known to you.

## SPECIAL COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

### Definitions

- **PCR Test-** Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) is a test to detect genetic material from a specific organism, such as a virus. The test detects the presence of a virus if you have the virus at the time of the test. The test can also detect fragments of the virus even if you are no longer infected.
- **Antigen Test-** Antigen Tests detect specific proteins on the surface of the coronavirus. They are sometimes referred to as rapid diagnostic tests because they can take less than an hour to get the test results. These tests identify when you are the most contagious.
- **Isolation-** Used to separate people with **confirmed or suspected Covid-19** from those without Covid-19. People who are in isolation should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, or wear a well-fitting mask when they need to be around others. People in isolation should stay in a specific “sick room” or area and use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- **Quarantine-** A strategy used to prevent transmission of Covid-19 by keeping people who have been in close contact with someone with Covid-19 apart from others. Stay home and away from other people, wear a well-fitting mask, and obtain a test if you start to develop symptoms.
- **Exposure-** Contact with someone infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, in a way that increases the likelihood of getting infected with the virus.
- **Close Contact-** Someone who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more

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over a 24-hour period. For example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes.

## General Guidelines

- Any staff or student with signs of respiratory illness (cough, sore throat, runny nose) will be asked to stay home. The student may return to school once symptoms cease OR once a negative Covid-19 PCR or antigen test is obtained.
- Staff and families are responsible for contacting the Director of Early Learning as soon as anyone in their household tests positive for Covid-19 or if they have had confirmed close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- Staff and families will be notified immediately via Brightwheel if there are any confirmed cases of a student or staff testing positive for Covid-19.
- If there is a confirmed case of Covid-19, the classroom that was exposed will close for 5 days at which time any asymptomatic children and staff may return to school with a negative Covid test. Caregivers who do not wish to test their child(ren) must keep their child(ren) home for 10 days at which time they may return to school.
- Only parents, caregivers, people offering outside services, and essential workers will be allowed in the TOSCEL area during school hours.
- Every attempt will be made to schedule non-essential visitors outside of school hours.
- All water fountains will be closed, and water bottles from home will be filled either at the sink or from a filtered water container.
- All persons aged 18 and older must be fully vaccinated (including booster) to enter the building.
- All adults are required to wear face masks while on the premises; cloth masks are not permitted. This includes those who come into the building for pick-up and drop-off, visiting/support staff, professionals, and other workers.
- Siblings of children who were directly exposed to Covid-19 in the classroom do not need to test *unless* the sibling who was directly exposed to Covid-19 has tested positive.
- TOSCEL Leadership reserves the right to close a classroom or the school at our discretion. In the event of a closure, virtual preschool may be offered in lieu of in-person classes to maintain connections with our students and to provide continuity.

## Masking

- Students under the age of 2 years are not required to wear a mask.
- When masking, masks must be well-fitting and may be surgical, KN-95, N-95, or similar. Cloth masks are permissible if they are well-fitting.
- If a student is unable to mask or is unfamiliar with masking, please inform the Director of Early Learning to discuss options.
- Staff will model mask-wearing, use social stories and puppets to talk about masking, and gently guide the children in keeping masks on properly. We have also worked closely with families who express concern or a challenge with their children adjusting to masks and have had great success.
- Children may have breaks from masks during the day during snack and outdoor time, and other times if they express the need to take a break.

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- Masking is optional outdoors.

### **Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures**

- Parents will maintain an appropriate social distance of at least 6 feet with other families during pick-up and drop-off.
- Children will wash their hands as soon as they enter the classroom. Caregivers may wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.

### **Classroom Operations**

- Each classroom will spend as much time outside as possible.
- Handwashing and hand sanitizer use will occur throughout the day, including but not limited to: entering the classroom, after blowing nose/picking nose/sucking thumb, after using the bathroom, before and after snacks/lunch, before and after outside time, before and after sensory play.
- Students will socially distance themselves as much as possible.
- Used/mouthed materials will be placed out of reach of children and will be cleaned at the end of the day.
- Toys/stuffed animals from home will be permitted if needed, but are generally discouraged.
- High-touch areas will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day.

### **Sick Policy**

- Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher, nausea/vomiting, and/or diarrhea will not be allowed in the building until symptoms have been gone for 72 hours without the aid of medication.
- If a student or staff develops symptoms (fever, chills, shortness of breath, new cough, or new loss of taste or smell ) during the school day, they will be immediately isolated. Parents must come to pick up their child immediately after being contacted by TOSCEL staff. Staff will be immediately sent home and required to take a PCR or Antigen test (provided by a pharmacist or doctor). Tests may be obtained at local pharmacies including [CVS](#), [Rite Aid](#), [Walgreens](#), [MedExpress](#), local community health and wellness centers, your pediatrician, or from [Curative](#).

### **Returning to School After Travel**

- Following international travel, children will need to be quarantined for 5 days and provide a negative Covid-19 test to the Director of Early Learning.
- Any person who declines to test following international travel must not return to school for 10 days following reentry to the country with the day of the return counted as “Day 0”.
- Following domestic travel, families may return to school without a Covid-19 test if the area traveled to was in a “LOW” rate of transmission level. If the area traveled to was in the “MEDIUM” or “HIGH” rate of transmission level a 5-day quarantine period and a negative Covid-19 test will be required.

### **Additional Information**

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- The CDC has a Covid-19 Viral Testing Tool to aid in decision-making in the event of exposure or close contact. The Viral Testing Tool can be found [here](#).
  - The policy outlined in this document will continue to be evaluated. TOSCEL reserves the right to augment, revise, or amend this document at its discretion. The guidelines will be reviewed and updated as the CDC and OCDEL update their guidelines.