



"Where children love to learn and learn to love"

Hillel Preschool Handbook

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Welcome to Hillel Preschool!

This handbook was written to give you some essential information that will ensure that you and your child(ren) have the best experience at Hillel.

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

Our school is an environment of warmth and care. We seek to ignite a spark in each child so they will begin a lifetime passion for learning by exposing him/her to the highest level of secular education. In addition, in each child will be able to take pride his/her Jewish heritage and receive the opportunity to become acquainted with Jewish values and ethics.

Our Goals:

- ❑ Teach Judaism in such a manner that all children feel comfortable regardless of home religious observance.
- ❑ To fully develop the abilities and talents of each child so that they will be confident, compassionate, and responsible citizens with a passion for knowledge and personal growth.
- ❑ To cultivate a sense of wonder and curiosity in the children about themselves and the world beyond the classroom.

At our preschool we believe that an effective school is based on a philosophy of partnership. Our staff is a partner to every parent; with each partner bringing something to the relationship. Our teachers bring knowledge of child development, the skills to create a warm classroom atmosphere and the ability to implement an early childhood curriculum. In turn, parents contribute a unique wealth of information about their child. Through this partnership our pre-school will provide the level of education that will enable your child to excel in any elementary school and develop a sense of self-esteem, Jewish pride and responsibility.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR SCHOOL:

Teaching young children is a creative process. Our primary goal is to help young children use the environment productively and become capable learners – developing the skills and resources that will enable them to make sense of the world and succeed in it. This can not be done by simply reacting to what happens each day. The Hillel Preschool director and teachers have developed a curriculum that addresses all areas of a child's development: socio-emotional, cognitive and physical. Our program provides the framework for dealing with practice situations; teaching your child how to interact with materials, their peers and adults.

Curriculum:

The curriculum emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration. Opportunities are provided for children to choose from a variety of activities, materials and equipment with time to explore through discovery and involvement. Adults facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the children's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking.

- We believe that learning should be fun, active, and engaging. We emphasize the development of the whole child. Fostering connections between home, school, and community. Hillel promotes learning both in and out of the classroom.
- We recognize that children learn in different ways. We strive to create multi-sensory, investigative, imaginative learning opportunities that meet the needs of various learning styles
- **We believe that all children can and will succeed at Hillel.**

Centers:

Our classrooms revolve around activity centers and circle time. The three and four year old classrooms have seven centers: the block corner, the dramatic play corner, the manipulative toy center, art center, science and math center, the library corner, the Judaic table and the outdoors. Our two year old classroom is arranged similarly with the emphasis on play-oriented centers. These centers are designed to allow the children to have choices and to actively explore.

Our teachers have specific objectives for each Center. The block center will develop your child's understanding of basic math concepts. As your child learns that putting two triangles together forms a square; his teacher will be there to analyze their new discovery. At the manipulative tabletop center, the children will hone their fine motor skills with the use of various manipulative, puzzles and pegs. Over the course of the year, as the children's skills increase, new manipulative are brought out to challenge them to reach the next level.

At the art center colors will be explored. Your child will discover, by her own brush, that mixing blue and yellow makes green. The teacher will then encourage her to explore other color mixtures. In the library corner reading readiness is studied. The children are read to individually as well as in group settings. This promotes discussion and reading comprehension.

The Judaic corner will introduce various ceremonial items to the children. Before Rosh Hashana the children will taste apples and honey, touch and try to blow a real shofar, and flip through an interactive holiday touch and feel book. The teacher will discuss how nice it is to have special sweet foods on a holiday.

Each center, with the teacher's guidance, helps the child's socio-emotional, cognitive and physical growth. While participating in these activities, each child will have opportunities to:

- ❑ Play with his/her peers and alone
- ❑ Share and take turns
- ❑ Explore and discover
- ❑ Learn new concepts, ideas and tasks
- ❑ Develop creativity
- ❑ Expand interests and abilities
- ❑ Learn about the world around him/her
- ❑ Develop gross and fine motor skills
- ❑ Learn and practice the social skills needed to make friends and play/work co-operatively
- ❑ Construct with materials that may otherwise be unavailable
- ❑ Use "messy" art materials
- ❑ Learn from others while broadening his/her horizons
- ❑ Develop a healthy sense of self-worth as well as respect for others.

Specialty Program:

Music:

We will have a music teacher who will provide musical instruction to our classes. Ms. Sarah Rosner will be singing, clapping, shaking and jumping to favorite childhood songs as well as rock, jazz, classical and contemporary music for children. Educational songs, call and response, silly songs, chanting and traditional songs provide a wide range of musical and rhythmical experiences. Ms. Sarah will present lessons about instruments, composers and music from different cultures to promote listening skills and music appreciation. The children have the opportunity to create their very own instruments as well.

Judaic Studies:

Our Jewish curriculum will concentrate on a modern approach to holidays, mitzvot, and the Torah portions. The children will be involved in a variety of hands-on Jewish experiences, from singing Hebrew songs to Jewish themed art projects and activities.

- ❑ Mitzvah Notes: Children bring in written notes that recall helpful or kind things they have done. Parents can write about a new skill that their child has acquired, or a good deed they have done, or a special guest their child welcomed into their home. The Mitzvah notes are an excellent tool for positive reinforcement because they are read aloud in the classroom.

- ❑ Tzedakah: An important part of our program is to develop an awareness and commitment to share with others who are less fortunate. We encourage you to send a penny with your child each day to put in the Tzedakah (charity) box.
- ❑ Shabbat Party: Each Friday, the entire school gathers together for a Shabbat party. All the classes join together for this weekly Shabbat experience promotes a sense of community and celebration for our students. The children sing along to popular Jewish songs, role play as *Ima* and *Abba*, complete with candle-lighting, drinking grape juice and of course, tasting the Challah bread.

Classroom Management:

The goal of classroom management is to help the child become self-disciplined. This is viewed as an integral part of educating the young child. Discipline at Hillel Preschool will take the form of positive classroom management. We recognize that children are unique individuals who behave and learn in different ways.

The school strives to help the child become self-controlled, that is, to help him/her to experience the intrinsic pleasure in appropriate behavior as opposed to “behaving” just to please adults. We encourage children to be independent and to solve their own problems. The teacher will lead the child to this point gradually, offering assistance and modeling along the way. The school takes into consideration behavior that is typical and developmentally appropriate and provides developmentally appropriate equipment, materials and activities. Expectations are stated in the positive form, such as “Please walk” versus “Don’t run.”

The teaching staff uses meaningful and descriptive praise. Teaching staff speaks to the behavior, not the child; e.g. “Hitting hurts. Let’s find another way to solve this problem,” instead of “You are a bad child for hitting.” The child is allowed to experience the natural and logical consequences of his/her behavior whenever possible. For example: the natural consequence of playing too roughly with friends is that they will not want to play with you. The logical consequence of spilled paint is that you need to help clean it up. A natural consequence requires no outside involvement. A logical consequence needs an adult to follow through.

If necessary, in order to prevent a child from hurting himself or others or from doing damage to equipment, a teacher may calmly, but firmly, hold a child to prevent such harm. The child will be held as lovingly as possible with a helpful attitude rather than a punishing or admonishing one. The child is allowed to express anger, frustration, sadness, hurt or fear – all of which are honest, healthy emotions. “Sit and watch” is used after other management techniques have been tried. During “sit and watch,” the child sits on a chair within sight of the teacher. The child may determine when he/she is ready to get up, or short (2 or 3 minutes) time limit may be set. In rare cases, a child

will be asked to leave the classroom and sit in the office for a short time, always supervised.

Suggestions for Helping Your Child:

- ❑ Set a reasonable bedtime for your child
- ❑ Allow sufficient time for breakfast and morning routines so that your child will arrive at school feeling relaxed and secure.
- ❑ Help your child separate by setting up a routine for departure and maintaining that routine. Prolonged goodbyes are difficult for the child.
- ❑ Inform the teacher if there is something at home that might affect your child.

PICK – UP AND DROP – OFF INFORMATION:

- ❑ Hillel's core hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00am– 1:00pm. Early drop begins at 7:30 am and last pick-up is at 5:30 pm. (Please check for availability; the late-stay program is dependant on the number of children enrolled.) Afternoon Adventures is from 1:00pm to 3:30pm.
- ❑ Morning drop-off is from 8:55am to 9:05am. Please escort your child to his/her class and sign your child in. Our teachers are experienced in handling those moments when your child just doesn't want to say good-bye. Most children do very well once engaged and busy with classroom activities. Please do not linger in your child's classroom past 9:05am.
- ❑ Pick-up is 1:00 pm for a standard pre-school day. If picking up your child early call ahead of time to have your child ready for you rather than disturbing the class. Pick-up for Afternoon Adventures is 3:30. Pick-up for Aftercare is 4:30 and 5:30 pm.
- ❑ If a parent knows that they will be late to pick up their child we request they call the office as early as possible. If you are late in picking up your child, please be aware that after 10 minutes you will be charged \$5.00. Late fees after the 10 min grace period will be \$1.00 per minute. Late fees apply to 1:00 pick-up, as well as afternoon (3:30) pick-up
- ❑ Afternoon Adventures and after-care is a curriculum based program that offer relaxed, flexible, fun-filled activities in a loving atmosphere. The program is loosely structured, but closely supervised. A snack and drink are provided.
- ❑ If you wish to have your child stay until 3:30 one afternoon as a drop-in, the procedure is as follows: Please check with the Director (even if you have checked with your child's teacher) to ascertain that there is a space. There is a form to be filled out that must be signed by the Director. Also, you must leave payment before the drop-in day. Please refer to the form for payment fees and options. You may leave a note on either office door, or call the office at 846-2449. We will notify the aftercare teachers.

FOR YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL:

- ❑ Completed enrollment forms including emergency contact information, health forms, tuition payment, etc. Some of these forms are required by the State and must be filed before the student can attend school.
- ❑ Any medications (must fill out permission forms, and any doctor orders must be on file. Please note: Sunscreen and insect repellent are considered medications.
- ❑ Complete change of clothes (yes, underwear & socks too!) in a labeled bag.
- ❑ If your child stays past 1:00pm, please bring a sheet for naptime. This is a sanitation requirement. Even though each child will have his/her own assigned mat for school, we must have a clean sheet to use as a mat cover (crib sheets and toddler bed sheets are a great size for this. Blankets can be used as well, but not as a substitute for the mat sheet. All naptime items will be sent home each Friday to be washed.
- ❑ For those still working on potty training, you must supply diapers and wipes.
- ❑ Remember to label ALL items with child's name: clothes, lunch boxes, utensils, sippy cups, sheets, blanket, etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- ❑ Please dress your child for active play and learning with casual, washable clothes and sturdy, rubber-soled closed toed and closed back shoes (no flip flops). If your child is using the toilet, you can help foster independence by avoiding complicated belts or buckles.
- ❑ Our teachers will be happy to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress with you. Parent/teacher conferences are an opportunity for parents and staff to discuss the development of each child. Please be sensitive to your child's feelings and refrain from discussing concerns or issues at pick-up or drop-off. The teachers are still supervising children and are not available for an impromptu conference.
- ❑ You will receive a weekly newsletter on Friday describing your child's activities. A monthly pre-school calendar of upcoming events and general school information will be sent home periodically. We hope this will keep you informed and involved in all aspects of school programming.
- ❑ A further way to stay involved is to join our school board. The board meets once a month (usually the 1st Tuesday evening of the month.) As a board member you will have the opportunity to make a difference to your child's school. You may be involved as a general member and have the option of focusing on a specific interest you may have. Event planning and Fundraising are the two main focuses of the board. You may be voted in to the board at any time during the year; however, officer elections occur in April.

- ❑ Here at Hillel Preschool, your ideas and input are an invaluable way to make our school even better. The Director will meet with you to hear your feedback and suggestions of what would make our school an even more wonderful one.
- ❑ Your child's safety is of paramount importance. If someone other than a parent is picking up a child from school or changing a pick up time, a written note must be given to the office. This note should state who will be picking up the child and be signed by the parent.
- ❑ Each child is encouraged to celebrate their birthday in school. Classroom birthday parties should be arranged in cooperation with the teacher at least one week in advance. The school will provide a cake and decorations. Parents are invited to the party and are asked to provide a penny for charity for each child in the class. A birthday is a nice time to donate a gift for the class in honor of this special day (i.e. book, puzzle, toy). If you would like to donate an item, the teacher can give you ideas of what the class would enjoy.

NUTRITION:

- ❑ Pack a healthy, dairy or pareve (not meat) lunch. Smaller portions of a variety of food (vegetable, fruit, sliced bread, tortilla, cheese, yogurt, tuna) give children that mid-day boost they need. Childcare regulatory agencies require that children be offered a nutritionally balanced meal, even if that meal is provided from home. Each lunch should have protein (i.e.; cheese, yogurt, fish, eggs) vegetable, fruit, and either bread, pasta, rice, cereal, or crackers. Although we do not allow children to share food, please protect those with allergies by labeling your child's lunch clearly. We do have very limited refrigerator space, which we will use for holding snacks, so if your child's lunch needs to be kept cold, please use pre-frozen ice packs in their lunchboxes.
- ❑ Pack a light, nutritious snack containing a dry snack and a fruit or vegetable. In order to accommodate the individual children's different dietary needs, habits, and dinner times, we ask that the parents provide a morning snack for their child. This is a short break to hold back any early tummy rumblings. We will be happy to refrigerate any snack that needs to be kept cold. Hillel will provide your child with water at this time as well. For those students staying past 1:00pm, Hillel will provide a small snack.
- ❑ Please have food items ready to eat – peeled, cut up, etc.
- ❑ We ask that you send in any utensils that your child may need.
- ❑ Please note that we will be unable to heat or microwave your child's lunch. We do know that children often do not eat all these things, but we would like to you to keep offering a wide range of healthy items, in small amounts, to encourage healthy eating habits. A list of lunch ideas and suggestions is attached as an addendum to this handbook. In order for you to make note of how much your child has eaten for lunch, and which

foods your child is most enjoying, we will help your child pack up his/her remaining lunch.

- ❑ When we introduce a new snack at school, we often cut it into very small pieces and offer the children a “no thank you” taste. If they like it, they can have second servings. Usually most of the children ask for seconds!
- ❑ Please have your child finish eating breakfast at home. It is very disruptive to have children come into the classrooms eating breakfast.
- ❑ It is imperative that you remember our school has a **NUT AWARENESS Policy**. The added vigilance is due to the fact that we currently have a child whose allergy to nuts is severe. Lunch snacks (and granola bars) should be checked to ensure that they are completely nut free.
- ❑ We are preparing to make our preschool peanut free within the next couple of years. This year the Super Star class will be a peanut free class. Next year the Torah Tykes and Super Star classes will be peanut free. We will continue to phase in a class each year until the entire school is peanut free. Please be aware of this and make appropriate adjustments to your child’s lunch habits. If you need help or suggestions for alternative lunch foods please let the Director know.

HEALTH:

Your child’s health is important to us. Here are some proven guidelines to help you determine when to keep your child home:

- ❑ If the child has had fever in the last 24 hours
- ❑ Fussy, cranky, generally not him/herself.
- ❑ Symptoms of communicable diseases: sniffles, red eye, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain.
- ❑ Too sick to participate in all activities – indoor and outdoor
- ❑ Undiagnosed rash
- ❑ Severe cough
- ❑ Unmanageable runny nose with discolored mucus
- ❑ Taking an antibiotic within the first 24 hour period.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be notified in order to make arrangements for your child to be picked up.

After a recovery from an illness, a child may tire more easily, especially in a class setting. We ask that children do not return to school unless they are able to actively participate in normal school activities.

Medications:

If medication is required during school hours, it must be dispensed from the office. It will be stored in a locked box and be given at the appropriate time. We cannot dispense medications without written parental consent, and for some medications we may ask for instructions and/or action plan from your child’s pediatrician. Note: Creams, sunscreen, and bug repellent are considered medications.

Toilet Training:

So that we may do our part to support your child's progression through toilet training, please come to the office prior to sending your child to school in underwear.

Emergency:

In the event of an emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

1. An attempt will be made to notify the parents.
2. An attempt will be made to notify the emergency contact.
3. An attempt will be made to notify the child's physician.
4. If necessary, EMS will be called to check and treat the child. (This can result in the child being transported to the emergency room).

Accident Report:

All efforts will be made to keep your child from getting hurt, but boo-boos happen. We will write out an accident report, signed by the teacher on the day a child gets a minor bump or scratch.

Discipline Policy:

The discipline policy form must be read, signed, and returned to Hillel before a child can attend school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

- ❑ On the FIRST DAY of inclement weather we follow the same decision as the Wake County School System.
- ❑ Any subsequent day of bad weather we will make our own decisions about delays and early closings. A phone tree will be established (if possible); e-mails will also be sent to all parents providing an address.
- ❑ Announcements about Hillel Preschool will be made on WRAL and WTVD TV inclement weather listing services.

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

There are four options:

- ❑ FACTS: the form must be completed and returned to the preschool office by July 1.
- ❑ Postdated checks (10 of them)
- ❑ Paid in full with a 5% discount.
- ❑ Pay by credit card (through pay pal) each month with a 2% service charge.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE:

- ❑ Please visit www.hillelpreschool.org for current information.
- ❑ All questions regarding tuition, school policy, state licensure and any required forms should be directed to Mrs. Elie Estrin, Director. Her e-mail address is: director@hillelpreschool.org and the office phone is 919-846-2449

- For parents new to our school, we will be happy to partner you with a buddy parent. It can be helpful to have another parent show you the ropes as you transition into our Hillel family. Of course, Mrs. Estrin will be happy to help you with any questions as well.

(Parent Handbook Addendum # 1)

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2008-2009

(may be subject to change)

Aug 18-22	Staff development	
Aug 21	Parent orientation	7:30pm -8:30pm
Aug 24	Student orientation	3:30pm - 4:30pm
Aug 25	First day of school	
Sept 1	Closed	Labor Day
Sept 29	Early Closing 12:00pm	Erev Rosh Hashana
Sept 30-Oct 1	Closed	Rosh Hashana
Oct 8,9	Closed	Erev Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur
Oct 13	Early Closing 12:00pm	Erev Sukkot
Oct 14,15	Closed	Sukkot
Oct 20	Early Closing 12:00pm	Hoshana Raba
Oct 21,22	Closed	Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah
Nov 4	Open School Night	7:30-8:30
Nov 11	Closed - Teacher wk day	Veteran's Day
Nov 19	Parent Teacher Conferences	After 5:00pm
Nov 26,27,28	Closed	Thanksgiving
Dec 22 - Jan 2	Closed	Winter Break
Jan 16	Shabbat Donuts with Dad	9:30am
Jan 19	Closed	Martin Luther King Day
Feb 2	Closed -Teacher wk day	
Mar 10	Special Activity Day	Purim
Mar 16	Closed -Teacher wk day	
April 7-17	Closed	Pesach/Spring Break
May 8	Shabbat Muffins for Mom	9:30am
May 13	Parent Teacher Conferences	After 5:00pm
May 25	Closed	Memorial Day
May 29	Closed	Shavuot
June 9	Last Day of School	Graduation ceremony /Picnic
June 10-12	Teacher workdays	

(Parent Handbook Addendum # 2)

Student Essentials To Be Brought In At Orientation

Toddler Room (Ages 2-3) Essentials

- a change of clothing in a labeled zip lock plastic bag
- completion of all necessary preschool forms & notarized form
- child's health form
- immunization form
- 2 boxes of baby wipes (We will ask for more on an as needed basis)
- 2 container sanitizing wipes (must say: kills 99.9% of germs)
- a weekly supply of diapers
- 2 box tissues
- nap time essentials if your child stays for the afternoon - easy to fold blanket and something small soft & cuddly or small pillow
- 1 box Band-Aids
- a recent photo of your child
- a recent family photo
- hat for outdoor play

Preschool Room (Ages 3-5) Essentials

- a change of clothing in a labeled zip lock plastic bag
- completion of all necessary preschool forms & notarized form
- child's health form
- immunization form
- nap time essentials if your child stays for the afternoon - easy to fold blanket and something small soft & cuddly or small pillow
- 2 box of baby wipes
- 2 box of tissues
- 1 box Band-Aids
- a recent photo of your child
- a recent family photo
- hat for outdoor play

Hillel Preschool Lunch Ideas

Dairy or Pareve Only - No meat lunches allowed. Please do not send in any candy. Remember, we are a “nut aware” school. No peanut/nut products allowed. Should you have any further questions, feel free to speak to your child’s teacher or director.

Sandwiches:

- Cream cheese
- Tuna fish
- Jelly
- Egg or egg salad
- Margarine
- Peanut butter substitute: Sunbutter*

*Sunbutter is a peanut butter substitute which is made of sunflower seed, and is available for purchase at your local grocery store.

Drink:

- Juice, milk or water

Treat:

- Bread sticks
- Graham crackers
- Pretzels
- Pudding
- Jello

Fruits and Vegetables:

- Sliced cucumbers
- Sliced tomatoes
- Celery sticks
- Melon cubes
- Fruit cups
- Apples
- Applesauce
- Grapes (cut please)

General:

- Yogurt
- Sliced cheese
- String cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Macaroni and cheese
- Bagel pizza
- Rice cakes

Notification of Changes in Child's Records

Please keep this form with your handbook and our program calendar. If a change occurs that should be noted on your child's records, please complete this form and bring it to the Director's office as soon as possible. It is imperative that we keep all our records updated so that you can be contacted in case of emergency.

Child's Name _____ Today's Date _____

Please make the following changes to my child's records

_____ change _____ of _____ address

_____ change of home telephone number

_____ change of father's work telephone number

_____ change of father's cell phone number

_____ change of mother's work telephone number

_____ change of mother's cell phone number

_____ change or addition to persons who child may be released (Name, Address & Tel. #)

_____ change in marital status or living arrangements

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____