

PARENT
HANDBOOK
2019-2020
ALEPH BET PRESCHOOL

www.alephbetpreschool.org



■ WELCOME

- 2 Vision
- 2 Staff
- 2 School Hours

■ THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

- 3 Transition to School
- 3 What to Bring
- 3 What to Wear
- 3 Required Documents
- 4 Drop Off and Pick-up
- 4 Late Pick-Up Policy
- 4 Authorization for Pick-up

■ CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 Shabbat Celebrations
- 5 Rosh Chodesh
- 5 Shelee Shelach
- 4 Mitzvah Notes
- 5 Stretch-N-Grow

■ BIRTHDAYS AND FIELD TRIPS

- 6 Birthdays
- 6 Field Trips

■ SNACK AND LUNCH

- 7 Snack
- 7 Lunch
- 7 Allergy Policy
- 7 Shared Treats

■ COMMUNICATION

- 8 Communication Folder
- 8 KAYMBU - A communication app for parents and teachers
- 8 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 8 Financial Questions
- 8 Judaic Questions

■ SPECIAL CARE AND EMERGENCIES

- 9 When Your Child is Sick
- 9 Medications
- 9 Emergencies
- 9 Child Abuse
- 9 Toilet Training

■ OTHER INFORMATION

- 10 Weather Policy
- 10 Security Policy
- 10 Board of Directors

■ LICENSING

- 11 Licensing Information for Parents

■ ALEPH BET PRESCHOOL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

- 12 Exemption
- 12 Qualifications of Personnel
- 12 Description of Facilities
- 12 Enrollment Capacity
- 12 Food Service
- 12 Health Requirements for Staff
- 12 Public Liability Insurance

Welcome to Aleph Bet Preschool!

We are pleased that you have chosen us as a “home away from home” for your preschooler. We at Aleph Bet Preschool are proud to offer a creative Jewish environment where your child’s individual style of learning is valued and nurtured. We encourage your child to explore the world, to learn to be part of a group, and to solve problems in a constructive manner. Learning is self-rewarding, joyous, and non-competitive.

At the Aleph Bet Preschool your child will be offered a comprehensive secular curriculum, which includes reading readiness, concepts in numbers, science, and social studies. In addition, your child will be exposed to a rich and meaningful Jewish program consisting of Jewish holidays, traditions, and the Hebrew alphabet and language. All are taught through our Montessori-inspired classrooms.

Parents and guardians should carefully read the operating procedures in this handbook. It is also important that you, as parents, become personally involved in our school. We welcome your suggestions, comments, and constructive criticism, as well as your financial and moral support.

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 trip, save useful objects for our arts and crafts, and, in general, become part of our preschool family.

OUR VISION

The premiere Montessori-inspired preschool for children of all Jewish backgrounds.

OUR ADMISSION POLICY

Our admission policy assures that all Jewish children are accepted without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin.

STAFF

The Aleph Bet Preschool is staffed by trained early childhood professionals.

The staff is sensitive to the needs of the children and their families and has a strong commitment to quality Jewish education.

The staff meets regularly to discuss curriculum, plan programs, and share and exchange ideas in order to uphold the high standards of our program. Staff development is on-going throughout the year.

SCHOOL HOURS

Preschool

9:00am - 12:30pm

9:00am - 1:30pm

9:00am - 3:00pm

Child Care

8:00am - 9:00am

3:00-4:00 p.m. (Mon. - Fri.)

4:00-5:00 p.m. (Mon. - Fri., except Fridays Nov. 8 - Feb. 28, 2020)

Transition to School

In order to help children adjust to school, we ask that parents not prolong their good-byes. However, it is very important that parents do not leave without telling their children good-bye, and reassuring them that they will return. Arriving to school on time is another important component that ensures a smooth separation and transition.

During the first week, Aleph Bet uses a Phase-In schedule that helps the children acclimate to school. The schedule will be mailed to parents prior to the first day of school.

What to Bring

Please bring the following items by the first day of school.

Labeled items:

- Napping - Cot size sheet, blanket, and small pillow (optional)
- Slippers
- Art smock with sleeves or oversized t-shirt
- Diapers and Wipes (if not yet potty trained)
- Complete change of clothes (in a zip lock bag)
- Kippah for all boys 3 years old and older

Handmade knitted large Kippas can be purchased in the school office for \$10 or you can order online at Kippah.com or skullcap.com. Please leave one Kippah at school.

Non-Labeled items:

- 1 box of wipes for all children
- Zip lock bags (girls - gallon size, Boys - quart size)
- 3 rolls of pennies for Tzedaka

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, flip-flops, or crocs do not work well on the playground. Jewelry (real or play) should not be worn at school.

Children may choose to keep a pair of slippers at school to be worn indoors.

Required Documents

In order to comply with State Licensure, we must have the following documents prior to the first day of school. Documents may be uploaded to the website, emailed, dropped off or mailed in.

- Current Physician's Medical Form, including Immunizations
- The child's birth certificate (new students only)

Drop Off

Drop Off is at 9:00 a.m.

Being on time for drop off and pick up greatly assists children in their transition from home to school and back. The front door of the school will be open from 9:00 to 9:15 a.m., after which someone from the office will walk your child into the classroom. Parents will not be allowed in the classroom after 9:15 a.m. additionally, unless your child is signed up for early care, the front door will remain locked until 8:55 a.m.

Late Pickup Policy

Please pick up your child on time! If you have an

emergency that will prevent you from picking up your child on time, **please call the office** at 804-740-2000 X 1 to alert us as soon as possible so that we can reassure your child. In non-emergency situations, if a parent is more than ten minutes late, please pay our “emergency after care” fee of \$10.00 per hour or partial hour.

Authorization for Pick-Up

Your child will only be released to the adult whom you have designated on the online registration form. If there is a change, parents must call or send a note informing the school. If the person is unknown to our staff, a picture ID will be required.

Shabbat Celebrations

Observing Shabbat is a special part of each week. Please refer to the Website for details and schedules of our weekly Shabbat parties and Shabbat Together events.

Rosh Chodesh

The first day of every Hebrew month is called Rosh Chodesh. Every month we will celebrate the new month by singing special songs, getting a treat and learning about the holidays and Mitzvot of that month. Children should wear their Aleph Bet T-shirts to school on Rosh Chodesh. Dates for Rosh Chodesh are on the School Calendar.

Shelee Shelach

For Primary Class Only

Each child will take turns bringing home the Shelee Shelach* bag. Please help your child pick out a special toy or item that he or she can bring to school in the Shelee Shelach bag to share with the class. This gives each child the opportunity to express him or herself in front of a group, and to share a special toy from home. Toys will be returned at the end of the day.

At no other times should children bring toys to school. Toys get lost, may break, and cause problems.

**Shelee Shelach means "It's mine, it's yours."*

Mitzvah Notes

For All Classes

Mitzvah notes are read during Hebrew Group Time throughout the week. It is a great way to reinforce good behavior and boost your child's self esteem. Anything your child is "working on" can be written in the mitzvah note, such as potty training, using words, helping around the house, etc. Please send a mitzvah note in your child's folder at least once a week. Blank mitzvah notes will be sent home periodically. Extra mitzvah notes are available at the school entrance. At the end of the year, you will receive a collection of mitzvah notes.


Stretch-N-Grow



Every Wednesday beginning in November, all of the children will participate in this unique guest program that teaches children about basic fitness and a healthy lifestyle. In Stretch-n-Grow, the coach will teach the children through music, songs, and age-appropriate aerobic exercises that emphasize stretching and flexibility. The children will also learn how to make healthy food choices, about safety in different situations, the importance of good hygiene, and that being physically fit is FUN!

Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in a very special way at the Aleph Bet Preschool. Each birthday child will receive drawings from their classmates. Other activities will make this day a memorable time for your child.

For boys who are turning three, we ask that the family bring a kippah to school to present to their son during the birthday celebration. Handmade knitted large Kippas can be purchased in the school office for \$10 or you can order online at Kippah.com or Skullcap.com

Any additional party activities, cake, or goody bags, must be arranged in cooperation with the school at least two weeks in advance. All refreshments brought for the celebration must be certified Kosher with 

, , or . Items can only be Parve, NON DAIRY. Arrangements can be made to pre-order Kosher cupcakes through the school for a fee of \$15.00. An order form is available on the website.

If you wish to distribute invitations at school for a party you are having at home, please note:

1. Everyone in the class needs to be invited.
2. The party can't be on a Shabbat or any Jewish holiday.

Field Trips

Information about school-wide field trips will be sent out well in advance. Parents will be asked for help with driving and chaperoning.

Snack

Please pack all snacks separately from lunch, in bags labeled with your child's name. Please pack one snack if your child goes home at 12:30 or 1:30. Please pack two snacks if your child stays until 3:00, and three snacks if your child stays later. All snacks should be nutritious, such as fruits, vegetables, pretzels, or cheese. No Candy, please!

Lunch

Please send in a nutritious Parve (non-meat) or Dairy lunch. Food should be ready to eat, with no preparation required. Water is provided.

► Allergy Policy

While we have no known food allergies among our students this year, we are mindful of the possibilities. Therefore, children may only eat the food that has been sent from their own home. They may not

share food at snack or lunch times. Food provided by the School or by the families for Shabbat parties, birthday parties, or other occasions will be checked against any updated allergy information provided by parents to the School. Please alert the school if your child develops an allergy during the school year.

Shared Treats

All foods brought to the school for Shabbat Party, birthdays, or other occasions must be certified Kosher and Parve. Foods that are Kosher but marked with a D or Dairy are not for sharing. All foods must bear one of the following Kosher symbols:



If you have any question about a Kosher symbol, please contact the school.

Communication

It is very important that the lines of communication between the school and parents always remain open. If you are concerned about your child in the classroom, please talk to the teacher. If this is not satisfactory, or if you have a question about any other aspects of our overall program, please do not hesitate to talk to the director. If you wish to meet with her, please call to set a time. We will always try to be available to you. Likewise, if the teacher has a concern, she will get in touch with you.

When you are experiencing changes at home of any kind, it affects the child and his or her behavior. Small changes can have big effects since their perception is different than an adult's. Please use your judgement and make us aware of what goes on at home so that we can support your child.

In addition, please notify the office of any changes in your contact information, your emergency information, or your child's health.

Communication Folder

Plastic pocket folders are provided for daily use to facilitate communication between parents and teachers. Please check your child's folder daily for any notes and flyers **from** the school. Please send any notes **to** the school in this folder.

KAYMBU – a communication app for parents and teachers

KAYMBU is a communication tool between teachers and parents. Through KAYMBU you will receive a weekly update and some day-to-day communications about your child. KAYMBU is a secure application for iPhone, android or web browser and will help both parents and teachers document your child's year at Aleph Bet. Please look out for an email invite to this application which will also provide more information.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be held twice during the school year, one in the Fall, and one in the Spring. Please refer to the school calendar for the dates. Notices will go home and the on-line sign-up will be made available a couple of weeks prior to the conferences.

Financial Questions

For financial questions or requests, please email billing@alephbetpreschool.org

Judaic Questions

As part of Chabad of Virginia, Rabbi Kranz is available at all times to serve your Jewish needs. Whether it is a question of mezuzahs, Kashrut, or where to buy good Jewish books, the Rabbi can help. Please feel free to call upon him as needed. He can be reached by calling 804-740-2000, ext. 3 or rabbikranz@chabadofva.org.

When Your Child is Sick

To ensure the health and well-being of all the children in our school, and reduce the spread of illness, we strictly enforce the following policies:

1. A child who has a fever (temp. above 100.4°F) or is otherwise ill (vomiting, pain, diarrhea, frequent coughing, excessive nasal discharge, conjunctivitis, head lice, impetigo, etc.) must be kept home.
2. If your child is not feeling strong enough to play outside, he/she is not well enough to attend school.
3. Before a child returns to school following an illness, please note the following:
 - Mood, appetite, behavior and activity have returned to normal;
 - The child must be free of fever for a minimum of 24 hours;
 - Antibiotics, if prescribed, must have been used for a full 24 hours;
 - Vomiting and/or diarrhea must have been resolved for a full 24 hours;
 - Frequent or productive cough and/or excessive nasal discharge must be resolved;
 - Pain (earache, sore throat, etc.) must be resolved.

Medications

- Any medications to be administered by the school must be handed directly to the teacher or to the office staff with a completed medication authorization form.
- Medication authorization forms are available on the website or in the office.
- Medication Authorization forms MUST be signed by the child's physician when:
 - the parent's instructions do not match the package instructions for any over the counter medication;
 - an Epi-pen or Nebulizer has been prescribed;
 - any prescription or over the-counter medication is to be given for more than 10 school days;

- All medications MUST be in the original container with the prescription label.
- All staff members who administer medication have been trained and certified to do so.

Emergencies

All of the staff at Aleph Bet Preschool have been trained and certified in CPR and First Aid. In the event of an emergency, the school will call 911 and the parents. Please notify the school with any change in your emergency contact information or instructions.

Child Abuse

All cases of suspected child abuse and neglect will be reported to Child Protective Services. All cases will be brought to the attention of the Director who will make the official report. Virginia State Law mandates this process.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a joint effort between home and school, and open communication is essential for your child's success. Therefore, when you are ready to start the process, please communicate with your child's teacher in advance and remember:

1. Please use **training** underwear.
2. Please send in at least 4 extra changes of clothes.

Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, a message stating the status of school opening will be sent through KAYMBU after 7:00am. If there are severe weather conditions during school, a message will be sent out through KAYMBU to announce early dismissal.

Security Policy

Safety is paramount at Aleph Bet Preschool and therefore we have developed robust emergency protocols. We have coordinated with local police and fire departments, local Jewish agencies, the FBI and U.S. Department of Homeland Security to establish safe practices in the event of an emergency.

- Access to our school is through a secure entrance. Each guest is screened carefully.
- Children are only released to those persons listed on the release form completed by

parents.

- All staff members undergo background checks and fingerprinting.
- A teacher in each classroom carries an emergency call button that activates an emergency response.
- We have evacuation and emergency response systems in place, and conduct regular fire, safety lockdown, and evacuation drills.

Board of Directors

The Preschool Board of Directors was formed to assist in current and future planning of the school. This includes recruitment, fund-raising, budgeting, and educational training. The Board also assists the director with administrative decisions. All parents are invited to attend. Please contact David Galpern, MD, MBA, Board President at 347-564-7333 or DrGalpern@gmail.com.

Licensing Information For Parents About Child Day Programs

Aleph Bet Preschool is a registered licensed Preschool with the Virginia Department of Social Services. The Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law. In compliance with the Code of Virginia, the Aleph Bet Preschool is exempt from licensure and is classified as a Religiously Exempt Child Day Center.

This is an actual license which requires us to follow all of the rules set forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services. For more information, contact the Aleph Bet Preschool.

A child day center conducted under the auspices of a religious institution shall be exempt from the licensure requirements of the Code, but shall comply with the provisions of this Code, including:

- Staff to child ratios
- Staff age and health requirements
- Staff criminal background checks

In addition, the Center shall establish and implement procedures for:

- Meeting applicable fire, health, and building codes
- Handwashing by staff and children before eating and after toileting and diapering
- Appropriate supervision

- Daily simple health screening and the exclusion of sick children
- Presence of staff trained and certified in first aid, CPR, and medication administration
- Ensuring that all children are in compliance with immunization guidelines
- That all premises accessible to the children are safe
- Ensuring that all staff members are able to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.2-1716 of the code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the following Regional Office of Social Services:

Central Regional Office
1604 Santa Rosa Drive
Suite 130
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5008
(804) 662-9743

The Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law. The statements below meet requirements of the exemption law.

Exemption

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, the Aleph Bet Preschool is exempt from licensure and is classified as a Religiously Exempt Child Day Center.

Qualifications of Personnel

Trained early childhood professionals staff the Aleph Bet Preschool. The staff is sensitive to the needs of children and their families, and is committed to a quality Jewish education. The staff meets weekly to discuss curriculum, plan programs, and share and exchange ideas in order to uphold the high standards of our programs. Staff development is ongoing throughout the year.

Description of Facilities

The Aleph Bet Preschool is located at 212 N. Gaskins Road in West End Henrico County. The children enjoy the home-like setting they experience in our three classrooms, library, and kitchen. Each day, the

children spend 30 minutes of their morning in active play outside on the playground, enjoying the swings and the climbing equipment.

Enrollment Capacity

The maximum number of children that the Aleph Bet Preschool will enroll is 45.

Food Service

The Aleph Bet Preschool does not intend to provide food service. The parents provide a mid-morning and afternoon snack. Children are to bring a dairy or Pareve lunch from home.

Health Requirements for Staff

The exemption law's requirement is that our staff be certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Documentation is on file at school.

Public Liability Insurance

The Aleph Bet Preschool is covered by public liability insurance, which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of the school as a result of negligence.