
Parent Handbook

Mildred and Jess
Fisher Early
Childhood Center

Gan HaYeled at Adas Israel

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PHILOSOPHY

Here at Adas Israel's Mildred and Jess Fisher Early Childhood Center (Gan HaYeled), we believe that a partnership between the child, the family and the school is crucial in providing the best early childhood program. We believe each child is a competent unique individual. Our warm, nurturing and accepting environment is child-centered and designed to meet the needs of all our children to help them grow and develop at their own pace and their own way. Our curriculum focuses on the four domains of development: cognitive, social/emotional, language and physical growth. A number of opportunities, both secular and Judaic, with art, dramatic play, block building, science, music, cooking, literature, and, of course, interacting with one another, are part of our everyday environment as our children learn, grow and explore their world. Our children also develop an intense feeling of pride in their Jewish heritage as they observe and participate in Jewish customs, rituals and holiday observances. As early childhood professionals, we look forward to working together with families to provide the best possible program for our students and families.

GOALS

- Provide an atmosphere for supporting confident and competent children
- Provide opportunities for children to be with other children in settings conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships
- Provide creative and enriching experiences that contribute to the development of the child
- Provide opportunities for meaningful growth activities that are based on the child's individual needs, interests and abilities, and that will build important foundations for future language and reading skills and academic pursuits
- Provide a warm atmosphere in which positive Jewish experiences occur for our children and their families every day
- Provide support and opportunities for parent involvement within the school

OVERVIEW OF OUR SCHOOL DAY & OUR CURRICULUM

We are a developmental school with an emergent curriculum using the Reggio Emilia philosophy and other play-based approaches as a basis for our curriculum. Our day is designed to provide a variety of positive and enriching experiences.

Play: Our children have plenty of time to play with each other and experiment with the many creative and manipulative materials available in each room and on the playground.

Socialization: We help children learn to cooperate within a group, to problem solve and to accept guidance from their teachers. We help build their self-esteem by empowering them to do tasks at which they can succeed, and we help them to be accepted by their peers and feel part of a group. We provide a free-flowing, relaxed atmosphere, within carefully defined limits, balancing structured and unstructured activities.

Judaic Program: Early Jewish identity is an important part of our program. We are sensitive to the various levels of observance of our families. Through song, art and cooking our children learn about the Jewish holidays and traditions and our homeland, Israel. We also offer a number of special Judaic programs for our families throughout the year.

Art: Every day the children have an exposure to a variety of materials to create their own artwork. Emphasis is on the learning process of creating rather than the finished product.

Movement: Weather permitting, the children play outdoors every day. Our playground equipment affords the children the ability to utilize both physical and social skills. Large muscle coordination is developed through running, jumping, balancing, climbing and cycling activities that are available.

When weather conditions do not permit outside play, the children are able to ride bikes and use other special indoor equipment in the Cohen Hall Gan space. For our younger students, we also have an indoor playroom equipped with mats, slides, a fleet of riding vehicles, a foam climbing locomotive, and a mini-trampoline.

Our movement teacher meets weekly with each class to enhance motor skill and spatial relationship development.

Music: Music is an important part of our program. Musical instruments are in every room and the children engage in a number of musical activities including singing,

dancing and dramatics. In addition to our monthly resource music class, the entire school enjoys singing together during our weekly Friday *Shabbat Sing* celebration.

Literacy: Each room has a center with a variety of quality children’s literature and a soft place to sit and read books. There are numerous times throughout the day when children can read a book or be read to by one of their teachers. Children participate in writing activities with classmates and build their pre-literacy skills from the moment they enter with coloring, painting, introduction of new vocabulary, dramatic play and more. Classes also have the opportunity to visit the Adas library and have story time with the Adas librarian.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics): Taking walks, learning about animals and plants, and observing our environment are just a few examples of the many ways we teach science concepts. Children are innately curious and learn best by doing. We follow their interests, expand upon them, and provide as many relevant first-hand experiences as possible. Children construct, manipulate and explore their ever-changing environment facilitated by the attentive staff. We also have a special STEAM teacher and program to deepen the STEAM work both in the classroom and in the STEAM studio.

Readiness: Our children develop and improve their language, reading, and math readiness skills, foundations for future learning, by using a variety of materials including flannel boards, pictures, puppets, blocks and manipulatives.

Snack and/or Lunch: A nutritious snack is served each morning and afternoon. From setting the table to serving foods to cleaning up, our children are actively involved in the process. They socialize, discuss table manners and nutrition, and develop good eating habits.

ADULT-TODDLER/NANNY-TODDLER “KANGAROO” CLASSES

Our Adult/Toddler program is uniquely designed for adult caregivers (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other loving adults in child’s life) and toddlers, beginning at 18 months. The class meets once a week; each session includes various adult/child activities and informal parenting discussions. Both adult caregivers and their toddlers enjoy this special time together. A similar class is offered for nannies and toddlers.

CLASS SIZE AND RATIOS

We believe that quality education is dependent upon the interactions between the children, family and staff. With this in mind, we keep our class sizes small and staff/child ratios are maintained at all times. There is a maximum of 12 children in our 2 morning, 3 morning, young student 5 morning, and young full-day classes with a teacher/child ratio of 1:4. There is a maximum of 14 children in our 5 morning and older classes with a teacher/child ratio of 1:7.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

We believe that parents and teachers are partners in a child’s development and, therefore, communication between parents and the school staff is vital. Please come to us with any questions or concerns. We do care and we will listen. Regular parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled twice/year (except for January Two’s classes). These conferences will include a written report for each child. Please feel free to contact your child’s teacher at any time. Please note, however, that teachers do not check their emails or text messages regularly during the school day while they are working, so time-sensitive communication should be sent through the Gan office.

Our teachers are very open to talking with you about your own child and will inform you of appropriate times to reach them at home. You may also phone the school and leave a message. When sending notes to your child’s teacher, please put them in your child’s school bag and let a staff member know to look for them.

Please inform the school if a special family situation arises during the school year. This could include a new baby in the family, separation, divorce, serious illness, loss of a parent or grandparent or an extended trip by one or both parents. By informing the school, we will be better able to help your child through a difficult or stressful situation. In keeping with the best interest of the child, it is the school’s policy, in situations of separation or divorce, to inform both parents of all information and programs related to the child, unless there is a court order stating otherwise on file at the school.

You are welcome to visit the Adas Israel Gan HaYeled lending library right outside the Early Childhood Developmental Support Coordinator's office. Here you will find many current books on parenting, family life, Jewish holidays, the education of young children, and special needs such as help for single parent families, preparing for a new sibling, coping with death, etc. You may borrow what you like and we encourage you to suggest additions to our collection. You are also welcome to use the Adas Israel synagogue library on the third floor of the building.

DISCIPLINE

Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled is dedicated to providing the best in early childhood education for young children. Our policy is to ensure a safe and secure environment for each child. Positive age-appropriate discipline methods are incorporated into our program. Children need limits so they can feel protected. Through positive guidance they learn that certain types of behaviors are not accepted.

Our goal is to help each child achieve self-discipline. Children are encouraged to use language to resolve conflicts whenever possible or they are redirected to alternate activities. Cooperation between parents and our staff is vital in guiding the social and emotional development of our children. If an undesirable behavior continues, the teacher will contact the parents to discuss joint methods of addressing the problem. If a behavior problem becomes severe or potentially dangerous, parents may be required to remove the child from school until a plan of action can be decided. Parents should understand that Gan HaYeled has complete discretion to remove a child on the recommendation of the professional staff.

ENDOWMENTS

Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled has a number of endowment funds that have been established to enrich our program. They include the *B'Yachad* Special Needs Endowment Fund, the Doris Herman Teacher Recognition Fund, the Dr. Stanley Kirsten Endowment Fund, The Julius and Dorothy Lazarus Fund, the Leonard S, Melrod Memorial Endowment Fund, the Shelley Remer Gan HaYeled Enrichment Fund, the Susan Isen Staff Educational Fund, and the Anne Kampelman Wiederkehr Cultural Arts Endowment Fund. From programming to professional development these funds support and enrich our program in a variety of ways. We are extremely grateful and appreciate the support and generosity of so many families.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

The Gan has an Open Door policy and parents may visit the school and their classroom at any time. We encourage as much family participation as is possible in our school. We welcome any contribution parents can make to benefit and enrich our programs. If you are willing to share a hobby, a talent, or a pet that may be of interest to two, three or four year olds, let us know. By driving on field trips, you will not only enjoy seeing the outside world with us, you will also have an opportunity to be with the teachers and other children and parents in your child's class. You are also invited to join us for our *Shabbat Sing* and *simcha* (joyous occasion) celebrations. Coming into the classroom to share yourself with the children allows you to enhance our program even more directly. Check with your child's teacher to see how you can help. Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled is your school too!

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an exciting part of our creative program. Periodically, our classes will go on field trips to highlight various aspects of their curriculum. Teacher communication will indicate how the trip connects to the curriculum when communicating details to parents. Adult volunteers may be needed for transportation and supervision of the children. -Parent participation makes these special experiences possible and gives parents an opportunity for active involvement in their children's experiences here at the Gan. For children requiring extra support, a parent may be required for them to participate.

Individual permission slips will be sent home for each field trip requiring any kind of transportation. Three weeks' notice will be given unless an unusual opportunity arises at the last minute. Many trips will be on foot while others will be by rented bus, Metro/Metrobus or parent-driven cars. Preference will be given to bus over train when possible. Please know that Adas Israel, its representatives or agents, are not liable for any injury incurred during the trip. To ensure the safety of each child, every Gan child participating in a field trip using cars must have a car seat. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the car seat for his/her child. There must be a seatbelt for each passenger and children are not to sit in the front seat of a car that has an airbag. Staff will carry first aid supplies, emergency contact numbers and a mobile phone on each trip. Staff members are not allowed to transport children in their personal cars on field trips or at any time unless a private arrangement exists. Suggested maximum number of non-walking trips is one/month for three's and four/year for two's.

Please note: Situations such as weather, current events, or WMATA alerts can impact plans. If a trip is canceled, parents will be notified as soon as possible. On trips, class

rules should be followed. Chaperoning parents may neither take their children on “individual outings” away from the group nor give permission for children to do anything that in any way contradicts the direction of the teaching staff.

For our students under three, trips are taken only when the teachers feel all of the children are able to follow directions and stay with the group. The exception to this is often in the fall when classes will visit a farm if sufficient parent volunteers are available to help. For children under three, one adult hand/child is required.

GAN HAYELED ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Gan HaYeled School Advisory Committee recommends policies and standards for Gan HaYeled. It acts as a liaison between the school and the Adas Israel Board of Directors and advocates the cause of Jewish education to the membership of the Congregation. The chairperson of the Gan HaYeled Advisory Committee reports to and is a member of the Adas Israel Board of Directors. Membership to the Gan HaYeled Advisory Committee is open to anyone who is a member of Adas Israel, has had a child in the Gan for at least one year, and commits to being on the committee for an entire year.

GAN PARENT ASSOCIATION

We are delighted with the continuation of our exceptional parent organization here at Gan HaYeled. We thank this enthusiastic and energetic group for all of the fine efforts at fundraising, but mostly, for the strong support of our Adas Israel’s Gan HaYeled program. Everyone is encouraged to join as the GPA makes a special contribution to our school. The GPA enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning at the Gan while giving parents a number of social opportunities to enjoy at the same time.

HEALTH/SAFETY

Your child’s health and safety are a matter of great importance to us. Adas Israel is a smoke-free facility and steps are taken to provide a healthy environment free of occupational and environmental hazards for our children, families and staff. Even so, Adas Israel is a large facility and not fully designed with small children in mind. For this reason we require children to be supervised in the building at all times. Children must be walked into the building by an adult and should be supervised throughout the building and grounds. They also should be accompanied by an adult when they ride in elevators.

We are happy to provide health or allergy related accommodations for your child, and can do so only after consultation and collaboration with your child's pediatrician, allergist, or other specialist.

Please know that all child and family information is kept confidential here at school and only shared with the parents of the child, appropriate Gan HaYeled Staff members, DC Department of Health, and emergency response personnel. If custody is an issue, we must have a notarized court order on file outlining the custody arrangement.

Upon enrollment, you must have on file the following DC Department of Health forms:

- Child Health Certificate, which includes up-to-date immunization information, TB and lead testing and a current, within one year, medical exam
- Registration Record
- Authorization for Child's Emergency Medical Treatment
- Oral Health Assessment Form for children three years and older

As a preschool with Jewish values, we follow *Pikuach Nefesh* which states it is a person's duty as members of society to protect all of its members. Therefore, the DC immunization schedule must be met by all children enrolled at the Gan. In cases where a delayed schedule is recommended by the physician, a note from the physician is required, along with a projected schedule of immunization. In cases where a physician has determined that a child cannot receive one or more vaccinations for medical reasons only, we require a doctor's note confirming this. **The Gan will not accept other waivers for the vaccination schedule.**

Please note that there are two separate sets of rules for health forms the Gan must follow:

- For the physical exam: the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) requires that all children have an annual medical exam (and, once they are three years old, an annual oral health exam). A form submitted is not necessarily sufficient for the entire school year. You will receive an email alerting you when your child's medical and oral health exams will expire in the next two months. Please schedule appointments to minimize the time between expiration of old exams and new exams.
- For the immunization schedule: This is set by the Centers for Disease Control and the DC Department of Health. DC requires all enrolled children to adhere to the schedule precisely. If your child becomes overdue for any immunizations, you will be contacted by the school and required to have them administered as quickly as possible.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school of any changes (i.e. phone numbers, allergies) that may arise during the school year. In case of an emergency, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital.

Please be sure to inform the school:

1. If your child is taking any medications
2. If your child has a contagious illness
3. If your child has a health condition which may require emergency treatment while in school.

Please note the DC Department of Health Medical Authorization Form must be completed by a parent and the child's physician before staff can administer any type of medication to children. The Gan office has this form.

If you have any doubts about your child's state of health in the morning of a school day, please keep your child at home. We will send your child home if he or she is unable to participate in our program because of illness. Frequent coughing and a fresh discharge from the nose are reasons for your child to stay at home. We all suffer by coming in contact with blossoming colds, etc. and a feverish child belongs at home.

Any child who is exhibiting the following symptoms will be sent home. Any child who has experienced any of these symptoms within the previous 24 hours will not be permitted to return to school without written permission from a licensed healthcare practitioner.

- a fever (100.1° or greater)
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- sore throat with swollen glands
- eye drainage with thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
- pink eye (colored/crusty drainage, eye pain, and/or redness of the eye)

Head lice occur commonly among children. It is not a reflection on a child's hygiene, living conditions or cleanliness. Any child identified with head lice will be sent home from school **immediately** and children's heads must be checked by school personnel before being readmitted to school. To be readmitted the child's head must have been appropriately treated and all nits removed. The Director also has the discretion to approve school personnel and parent volunteers to check children's heads at the beginning of the school year, after winter and spring breaks or when lice is suspected or reported in a class. **We encourage parents who have a child with head lice to inform the school and classmates. The sooner lice presence is detected, the less chance there is of it spreading.**

To help us reduce the risk of transmission of infectious illnesses we require that all children and adults wash their hands on arrival each day. Proper hand washing includes using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands together for 10 seconds, rinsing; drying hands with a paper towel, and, if needed, using a paper towel to turn off the faucet. The use of alcohol-based hand rubs in lieu of hand washing is not recommended for early education and child care settings. Parents should supervise their child's hand washing before bringing them to the classroom.

Allergies and Medical Alert Situations:

Please be sure to inform the classroom staff if your child has any allergies or medical concerns. A complete allergy list will be provided to each teaching team, which includes children's names and allergies. Every effort will be made to keep this list confidential. Medical conditions will ONLY be shared as necessary to maintain the health and safety of the individual child.

Life Threatening Allergies:

We have had an increase in the number of children with life threatening allergies. To provide a safe environment for a child with a life threatening allergy, the child's family must follow these procedures:

- The parent must give the teacher a list of foods the child CAN eat.
- Parents need to sign off on each box of food here at the Gan before the child can have that food. Ingredients change and the parent must take on this responsibility.
- The parent is to send in foods for special occasions that can be kept on reserve for when there is an unusual snack or celebration.
- A note must go home to all families in the class notifying them about the life-threatening allergy. Both the teacher and parent need to preview the note before it is sent out.
- A medication form for the Epi-Pen or Auvi-Q must be kept on file in the office.
- One Epi-Pen or Auvi-Q will be kept in the office and one also in the classroom. Epi-Pens/Auvi-Qs will be taken on field trips.

Suspicion of Child Abuse and Neglect:

The District of Columbia law requires that suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect be reported immediately to the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline, 202-727-0995. According to law, in order to act in the child's best interest, authorities will be called without notification to parents.

HOLIDAY AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The cycle of the Jewish year offers many opportunities for holiday celebrations, whether these are held within a single classroom, enjoying the hospitality of a neighboring class or several classes, or with Adas Israel Senior Fellowship.

Additionally, many parents have asked us how they can celebrate a birthday or other such *simcha* (joyous occasion), such as the birth of a new family member, among friends at Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled. We feel it is important to help children understand that we want to share happy occasions with our friends and give of ourselves to honor such events. You may spend the morning in school and, if you like, your child may bring a snack, puzzle, new book or something for him/her to share with the class. It's the thought that counts! If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, please make arrangements with your child's teacher one or two weeks in advance.

Please remember that all snacks brought in for the class must abide by the kashrut guidelines and our Peanut/Nut Free Policy. We encourage families to consider the nutritional quality of the food they bring for birthdays and to think creatively about birthday and *Shabbat* celebrations. We discourage parents from sending sugary snacks and desserts.

When planning home birthday parties, since many of our families observe *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* (holiday) days (*Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, the first two days of *Sukkot*, *Shemini Atzeret*, *Simhat Torah*, the first two and last two days of *Pesach*, and *Shavuot*), we strongly urge our families not to have birthday parties on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov* days (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown for *Shabbat* and sundown to sundown for *Yom Tov*). In order to be inclusive of all of our families, we do not allow birthday party invitations to be distributed at school for parties planned on *Yom Tov* days or *Shabbat*.

Determining who and how many children to invite to a birthday party is always a difficult decision. Do keep in mind the feelings of your child. While some children love a large gathering with lots of noise and hoopla, for others, especially younger children, a few close friends and family sets just the right tone. It is important to remember that the party is for your child. However, also keep in mind that young children's feelings are easily wounded. Thinking that he/she may have been the only one excluded from a party can be quite devastating for any child. At the Gan, we will only send invitations out at school if the entire class is invited.

Please note here at Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled we will not observe All Saint's Day (Halloween), St. Valentine's Day, or St. Patrick's Day.

KASHRUT

As the synagogue and the school observe the dietary laws of Kashrut, all food brought into the building must be Kosher according to the standards of the Conservative Movement.

1. No meat, poultry, or shellfish may be brought into the building.
2. Permitted foods must be dairy or parve. (Parve means those foods which contain neither dairy nor meat. Examples of parve foods include fish, eggs, pasta, fruit, and vegetables).
3. All snacks for the class must be prepared in school or purchased. All baked and processed foods (breads, cookies, cake, chips, cereals etc.) must bear a kashrut symbol, indicating that the product was prepared under rabbinic supervision. Homemade foods and baked goods are not permitted.
4. All beverages are acceptable. However, only kosher grape juice (such as Kedem) may be used for the *Kabbalat Shabbat* program.
5. Cheese and dairy must have a kashrut symbol.
6. All fruits and vegetables are acceptable. These should be cut at school.

All foods must comply with our kashrut and nut policies.

All lunches should be packed with an ice-pack if needed.

We are not able to heat/re-heat any lunch foods for students. Please use a thermos if the food should be served warm.

In accordance with our emphasis on healthy eating, we encourage you to refrain from sending in “sweets” or desserts.

Snack and Lunch Suggestions

Sandwiches:	Thermos items:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bagel/pita with hummus, sprouts, tomatoes• Bagel with avocado• Bagel with Tuna• Bagel with Lox• Tuna with crackers• Soy-butter/sunflower seed butter sandwich• Soy meat sandwiches• Quesada with cheese/rice etc• Tuna melt• Egg salad• Grilled cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mac and cheese or other pasta• Minestrone soup• Vegetarian soup/oyster crackers• Tofu, rice and soy sauce• Pasta salad• Cheese ravioli/noodles in tomato sauce• Cut-up cheese or veggie pizza• Veggie chili• Soy chicken nuggets/ soy dogs, etc• Falafel Balls• Fish sticks

<p>Fruits and veggies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut up fruit with yogurt • Veggie sticks with hummus dip • Fruit salad (strawberries, blueberries, plums, etc). • Celery with cream cheese or soy-butter/sunflower seed butter • Raisins and dried fruit • Chick peas • Cottage cheese and fruit • Edamame • No-sugar added applesauce 	<p>Other ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • String cheese • Hummus • Dry cereal • Yogurt • Cheese and crackers • Hard boiled eggs • Cottage Cheese • Quiche • Gefilte fish (or other fish)
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LUNCH BUNCH/ENRICHMENT

As an optional extension of our morning program, we offer a Lunch Bunch/Enrichment program Monday through Friday until 2:50. In this program, the children eat together in a relaxed atmosphere, play outside on the playground and do special activities such as cooking, creative arts, sports and science. Children need to bring a dairy or parve lunch and a drink (please refer to our kashrut and peanut/nut policies in this handbook). Registration for Lunch Bunch is on a yearly basis. However, some afternoon sessions are available on a per diem basis if arrangements are made in advance with the Gan office. Please call at least one day ahead to check for space availability. *Please note that we do not refrigerate or microwave lunch foods. Please pack ice-packs for cold items or hot items in thermoses as necessary.*

LOST ITEMS

We will keep a box of lost and found items. Please label: all coats, sweaters, mittens, boots etc. with your child's name. Also label all toys, books, tapes, etc. brought to school for sharing. Twice a year, unclaimed items are donated to charity.

NAP POLICY

In our full day program, Gan HaYeled provides at least two hours of rest time for all children every day. We do so both to remain in compliance with Licensing and NAEYC requirements, but also because we are aware of the many physical and emotional benefits of napping and it is always our goal to do what is best for the children. To this end, all classes follow the same nap time regulations:

- Nap time for all children at the Gan begins between 12pm-1pm and ends no earlier than 2pm-3pm. Some classes may allow the children to sleep later if it appears that the majority of children need the extra sleep.
- The following guidelines are based in consultation with Sleep Specialist, Whitney Roban, PhD of Sleep-Eeez.
 - o All 2-year-olds need a nap (2 hours)
 - o Most 3-year-olds need a nap (1-2 hours)
 - o Some 4-year-olds need a nap (30 minutes-1hour)
 - o A few 5-year-olds need a nap
- All children are required to spend at least 30 minutes resting quietly on their cots
- After 30 minutes, any children who are still awake will have the option to either read quietly on their cots or join other children in an area of the room where they can continue to play quietly off their cot. Staff will note wake up times so that parents can maintain consistency and aim for a bedtime that falls within the recommended timeframe (5 hours after wake).

We recognize that every child has different developmental needs, and each family has different scheduling needs. As with all aspects of our program, we work in close partnership with families to make sure we meet the needs of each child, the class as a whole, the teachers, and the families.

In the event that a family does not want a child to nap, teachers will follow the following procedure:

- The child will be required to spend 30 minutes resting quietly on his or her cot.
- The teachers will not rock the child or in any way, beyond the setting of the classroom, individually encourage the child to sleep. Nor will teachers actively keep a child awake, as doing so in a school setting is not developmentally appropriate.
- If the child falls asleep during the 30 minute rest period, he or she will be allowed to sleep for 30 minutes, since anything less than 30-minutes is considered non-restorative. Upon waking, the child will be able to play quietly on their cot or in designated part of the room for awake children.

For those children who have a hard time falling asleep, teachers will attempt to help them by gently rocking them or rubbing their backs or hair unless families request that we do not.

As children grow over the course of the year, their napping needs often change. Teachers and families will work together, through ongoing communication, to adjust to these changes within the context of the Gan nap policy.

All families, faculty, and children who are not napping, are asked to maintain quiet in the Gan to the best of their abilities during nap time. Families who need to pick up a child during nap time must, except in case of emergency, communicate with the teachers at drop off so that the child can be placed strategically in the classroom so as to avoid waking up other children. Families who need to drop a child off during nap time can do so during the second hour and a half.

NEWSLETTERS AND BULLETINS

Your child's teacher will be sending home a special calendar each month. Highlighted will be the Jewish holidays, *Shabbat* and special snack schedules, field trips, birthdays, Family *Shabbat* Services and other special events. Class newsletters will also be sent home to keep you informed of happenings in your child's class.

The school and the Gan Parent Association send out *Ma Hadash* (What's New), our bi-weekly e-mail update. In it you will find school, Gan Parent Association, and Adas Israel synagogue updates, as well as information on our various programs and activities and community programs of interest.

Also, look for the Gan HaYeled bulletin board in the ground floor hallway across from the Puppies classroom. On it you will find various announcements and notices. In addition, Adas Israel's monthly **Chronicle** newsletter has information on many events of interest to Gan families.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT WITH OUR GAN STAFF

It is important that our staff maintain appropriate relationships and boundaries with Gan families. Occasionally parents will ask a staff member to transport a child home and/or babysit. While parents can arrange for a staff member to transport a child home from the Gan, staff members are not allowed to babysit for children in their class. Please note, transporting and babysitting of Gan children are private transactions between the staff and the parent.

PARENT EDUCATION

Together, the school and the Gan Parent's Association plan several daytime and evening parent education programs each year. Various early childhood experts are invited to address our parent body on issues such as child development, discipline, and school readiness. Articles and parenting information are also sent home through the teachers, the school and the *Ma Hadash* newsletter. The Gan website has resources from schools which recruit Gan students.

Our extensive orientation program helps our children and their parents become familiar and comfortable with the Gan before school even begins. In the beginning of the summer, several parent socials are held so that parents can meet, in an informal setting, with the director of the school, the co-presidents of the GPA and other new parents. At the end of summer, just before school begins, an evening Parent Orientation Meeting is held for parents to meet their child's teachers, see their child's classroom and meet fellow class parents. In addition, a preschool visit is also scheduled for the child and parent(s) to come to school to meet the teacher and to see the classroom before the opening of school.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

For reasons of safety, we urge you to use extreme caution and lots of patience while driving in the school parking lot. Please drive 5MPH and be prepared to stop if necessary. **Use of cell phones while driving in our lot is prohibited.** Please do not park in a handicapped space unless you are entitled to the spot. There are a number of people who use our building that need these spots. To ease the congestion in the parking lot, parents are encouraged to use the Kiss and Ride line (available from 8:50 am - 9:10 am) but are also welcome to park their car and walk their child directly into the building.

We will not release your child to anyone without parent authorization. You are asked to inform us of the names of the adults picking up your child from the Gan. If there are any changes because of a play date, or for other reasons, we must have a written note. The note must specify who is taking the child at dismissal. Please call us during school hours if there are any changes during the day. All carpool drivers should be notified as well. Identification will be requested from the person picking up your child.

Parents involved in carpools, as well as those who are able to drive on field trips, are to notify their car insurance companies so that adequate coverage is assured.

During carpool times, all cars **must** use the Porter Street exit when leaving the parking

lot.

Parking:

All cars in our lot must be registered and need to have an Adas Israel decal parking permit. If you need to come into the building, please park in the spaces available. Never leave your car in the traffic lanes and **PLEASE NEVER** leave a car with the motor running or a child unsupervised in a car, even for a moment. Due to the limited number of parking spaces, cars cannot be left in our lot to use Metro or any other public transportation.

Please inform all housekeepers, grandparents and anyone else who might be transporting your child to school of these procedures.

Arrival:

Arrival begins at 8:50 am and you may use the Quebec Street entrance, Exit A (Gan lot by guard station) or Exit B (Gan lot by Kay auditorium).

If you choose to use the Kiss & Ride line, our staff members will be there to help the children in and out of the cars. For arrival, we will be using the back nursery school doors adjacent to the Kay Auditorium (Exit B). Our staff members will be there between 8:50 and 9:10 each morning. All children are to exit from the passenger side only. The Kiss & Ride is optional. Parents are also welcome to park their car and walk their child directly into the building.

Afternoon Dismissal:

Our Kiss & Ride is also available at 11:50 am and 2:50 pm dismissals at the Kay Auditorium exit. A staff person will be there to help your child into the car. In order to ensure children are buckled correctly, teachers may not buckle children into car seats. Parents are asked to ensure their children are properly secured before leaving the parking lot. To ease congestion in the upper hallway, all parents who pick up children directly from the Cohen-Wolpe Gan Space classrooms are to go to the classrooms and exit by the lower outside door. All other children will be taken to the first floor hallway for noon dismissal and to the Gildenhorn Foyer for afternoon dismissal. Dismissal for our morning classes begins at 11:50 am and at 2:50 pm for afternoon classes.

Evening Dismissal:

Kiss & Ride is not available for our evening dismissal. Parents/caregivers must park and come into the building to pick up their children after 3:05pm.

PEANUT/NUT FREE POLICY

We strive to be a peanut and tree nut free school. Foods containing peanuts, or any tree nuts ([click here to see a complete list of tree nut allergens](#)), including coconut, are not allowed in the Gan. We ask that parents do not send in peanut butter in any form. Peanut butter, or any nut butter, sandwiches will not be allowed for lunch. (Soy butter and sunflower seed butter are fine. Please label these so we know they are safe.) Foods that have an allergen warning on their label such as “may contain traces of peanuts,” “processed in a plant that also processes nuts,” or “manufactured on shared equipment” are not allowed in the Gan. Parents must follow this policy when sending in individual lunches or class snacks. Please note, staff cannot be responsible for reading labels and a child with peanut or nut allergies must have all foods approved by a parent before a staff member will be able to serve that child any food.

PHOTO POLICY

Gan HaYeled teachers take many photographs during the course of the school day. These photos are used in documenting work in the classroom, reflection on work with students, and to share classroom happenings with parents and families. All families are required to provide photo permission for their child to attend the Gan. The possible permissions are:

- (Standard permission) You may use my child's photos on the Gan website, Adas/Gan newsletters, and in the media (online and in print) – No children’s names are ever used on public sites.
- (Restricted permission) Please limit my child's photos to sharing only with the class and in internal documentation
- (No permission) Please do not photograph my child at all

Teachers will post photos taken at school on password-protected photo sharing sites such as Shutterfly or Snapfish. Parent **may not** repost school photos on their own photo-sharing sites, social networks or email these pictures, even to other family, unless **their child is the only child depicted in the photo** or the parents receive **explicit** permission from the parents of other children to share the photos. As we do have a number of parents who have restricted their photo permissions, we ask all parents to please err on the side of confidentiality and not share Gan photos.

PRIVATE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

School personnel take great care in filling out requested student private school recommendation forms. A minimum of two weeks must be given to the staff to complete the form. Private school deadlines are followed and, unless there is a waiver, forms are strictly confidential. Adas Israel dues and Gan tuition must be current before recommendation forms can be mailed.

REGISTRATION

For the past several years, Adas Israel's Gan HaYeled has experienced a very large number of applications. Registration is in January for the following school year. Priority enrollment will be offered to Adas Israel members, children already enrolled in Gan HaYeled, siblings of children enrolled in any of the Adas Israel schools and returning Gan families. Gan HaYeled is an inclusive school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression in admission of children.

REQUESTS FOR CLASS PLACEMENTS

The school goes through a very thoughtful process for each child's placement, looking both at the interest of the individual child and the class. Although we do our best to honor as many requests as possible, please know that many factors go into forming classes such as gender ratios, chronological and developmental ages of the children, recommendations from current staff, friendships from previous years, and individual characteristics of the children and the staff. We care about each and every child and work to find the best possible placement for everyone.

1. If you have a specific request – whether it is for a particular teacher or for your child to be with or not with a specific child – please send an email to the director. Requests will be kept confidential.
2. Please fill out a separate request for each child.
3. **Please note: you do not NEED to submit a request!**

ROSTER

The school provides a roster with names, addresses, phone numbers and one e-mail address for all students. Please note that this roster is only to be used for school and synagogue distribution.

SCHOOL HOURS

Our regular school day begins at 8:50 am. Morning classes end at 11:50 am, afternoon classes are held until 2:50 pm, and full-day classes end at 6pm (5pm on Fridays/holiday eves). Our extended days for Lunch Bunch/Enrichment are until 2:50 pm. Our “Early Bird” session starts at 8:00 am on school mornings throughout the school year. This program is only available through prior arrangement. Our staff has responsibilities both before and after these sessions and it is important to adhere to these times in order for our school day to go well.

At the Gan we try to live our values. This includes *kavod*, respect, for all members of our community. One way that families show *kavod* to our teachers is by their promptness in picking up their children at the end of each day. Whether your child’s class ends at 11:50am, 2:50pm, or 6pm, it is important that you or your child’s caregiver arrive promptly. Teachers have other obligations after classes end, and it’s important that their time and needs are respected. To this end, we have implemented the following late pick-up policy:

- For 11:50am and 2:50pm dismissals, there will be a 10-minute grace period for pick up. Families picking up children after 12pm and 3pm, respectively, will be fined as follows:
 - First offense: \$15 for the first 10 minutes, \$2 each additional minute thereafter. Payment will be due immediately upon billing; registration for the following year and the release of school recommendations will be contingent on paid fines. For each additional late pick up, the charge will be \$15 for the first 10 minutes, and the per-minute charge will double for each occurrence (i.e. on the 2nd late pick up, a family would be charged \$15 for the first 10 minutes, and \$4 for each additional minute. On the 3rd occurrence, this would increase to \$8 each additional minute). *All times are based on the clock in the Gan office next to staff mailboxes.*
- For 6pm dismissal, there is no grace period because the Gan closes at 6pm. Families picking up children after 6pm will be fined as follows:
 - First offense: \$15 for the first 10 minutes, \$2 each additional minute thereafter. Payment will be due immediately upon billing; registration for the following year and the release of school recommendations will be contingent on paid fines. For each additional late pick up, the charge will be \$15 for the first 10 minutes, and the per-minute charge will double for each occurrence (i.e. on the 2nd late pick up, a family would be charged \$15 for the first 10 minutes, and \$4 for each additional minute. On the 3rd occurrence, this would increase to \$8 each additional minute). *All times are based on the clock in the Gan office next to staff mailboxes.*

Families picking up late will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of the pick-up time when they arrive for their child. Should your child not be in the classroom, look in the Gan Office for late pick ups.

We will be flexible regarding emergency situations. Families found to be habitually late (five or more times) are not showing *kavod* to Gan staff, and may be asked to leave the Gan community.

SECURITY

The Adas Israel House, Grounds and Security committee oversees the security for the entire synagogue, including Gan HaYeled. In addition to physical adjustments such as cameras throughout the synagogue, window security protection for Quebec Street classrooms and security guards stationed at entrances to the building and parking lot, there are also numerous emergency procedures in place to protect our children and staff. Each Gan class is equipped with emergency supplies and practices fire drills, lock down drills and shelter-in-place drills. We realize that communication is vital and we will do our best to reach each of you as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. The synagogue and school voice mail messages will be updated, our emergency e-mail system will be put in place, and arrangements have been made with the answering service to serve as an off-site emergency phone number. In addition, the Gan offers text and email emergency messaging to families and caregivers.

SHABBAT AT THE GAN

Although *Shabbat* does not begin until Friday evening, we prepare for its arrival by lighting candles with the children every Friday. Twice a year parents are asked to participate in our Gan *Shabbat HaMishpacha*, the Gan Family *Shabbat*, on Friday. Your child's Gan *Shabbat* is such a special time and your involvement in this program adds a special dimension to this eagerly anticipated weekly highlight. We ask that you bring, if possible, your own candlesticks, wine cup and other *Shabbat* items to share with the class, as well as a challah (see Kashrut). The school will provide the kosher grape juice.

All parents are encouraged to join us for our special *Shabbat Sing* sing-a-long held each Friday at from 11:20-11:40am.

SIGN IN/ DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

As required by licensing, all children must be signed into and out of school each day by an authorized person. Please notify your child's teacher as well as the Gan Director, Assistant Director, and Office Manager of pick up changes/authorizations. This is to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Children arriving before 8:50 am will be signed into Early Bird and the Early Bird teacher will sign them into their regular classes. Children dropped off and picked up from Kiss & Ride will be signed in/out by the teachers bringing them to/from the school. Please be sure that all adults dropping off or picking up your child are familiar with the sign in/out procedure.

SNACK/ LUNCH FOODS

We feel that nutrition education, interesting and tasty snacks, and participation in the preparation of foods are extremely important to each child's growth and development. We provide a morning snack such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, cereal, crackers and/or soft pretzels. We serve 1% milk Monday thru Thursday and Kedem grape juice each Friday as part of our Gan Shabbat snack. In addition, water is always available.

The Gan strives to develop a sense of community and we have incorporated two special programs by which parents can share family traditions with their child's class. Our Nutritious Snack program involves parents sending in a nutritious snack once or twice a year for the class. For our *Kabbalat Shabbat* program, parents rotate "bringing in" *Shabbat* with the *Shabbat* blessings and a special *Shabbat* snack. What a treat it is to see the faces of our children on the days it is their turn to be the nutritious snack or *Shabbat* child of the week!

All snacks must abide by the kashrut guidelines and our Peanut/Nut Free Policy. We encourage families to consider the nutritional quality of the food they send for both individual lunches and communal snacks and to think creatively about birthday and *Shabbat* celebrations. We discourage parents from sending sugary snacks and desserts. Examples of healthier snack options include yogurt, fruit, vegetables, cheese, whole wheat crackers (with no trans-fats), no sugar added applesauce and no sugar added fruit cups. Children younger than four years cannot be given food larger than can be swallowed whole by them. Examples of food that is not safe include popcorn and chunks of raw carrots. Grapes, grape tomatoes, and hot-dogs must be cut in half (long-ways) or quartered for children younger than four.

Please note that we do not refrigerate or microwave lunch foods. Please pack ice-packs for cold items or hot items in thermoses as necessary.

SNOW/ INCLEMENT WEATHER

The Gan follows the inclement weather policy of the DC Public Schools and the Federal Government. Please listen to the radio and/or television for announcements. Information can also be found on the DCPS and OPM websites. We will also send email/text announcements and put closing information on our website.

1. If D.C. Public Schools **or** the Federal Government is closed, we are closed.
2. If D.C. schools **or** the Federal Government have a delay, we will open at 10:00 am.
3. If D.C. schools **or** the Federal Government announce early dismissal, please come to the school ASAP to get your child.

On days that Montgomery County Public Schools is closed and DC Public Schools are open, the Gan will be open. However, staff will use their discretion and err on the side of safety in deciding to come to work. Classes will likely be combined to meet the needs of the Gan community.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Our school is very fortunate to be able to offer a number of services to all our children - typically developing children and our children with special needs. In addition to our experienced and trained teaching staff, a number of educational specialists are part of our Gan team. All specialists are available to observe children and consult with teachers and parents when appropriate.

Our Early Childhood Developmental Support Coordinator is also available to work in classrooms to facilitate social development. She observes children in our classes and meets with parents and staff to make, when necessary, various suggestions and referrals. The Developmental Support Coordinator also works closely with the speech pathologist and occupational therapist that are available on site to our families and staff. The speech pathologist and occupational therapist observe and screen children who have been referred by parents.

Through the Jewish Social Service Agency's Synagogue Liaison Program, the Gan is also able to provide the services of a social worker twice a month. The social worker is available to both staff and parents to discuss such issues as parenting concerns, arrival

of a new sibling, aging parents, divorce and dealing with the death of a loved one.

With the generous support of both synagogue members and Gan families, the B'Yachad Special Needs Endowment Fund was established and enables us to meet the needs of all our children, typically developing and children with special needs.

The Gan is also affiliated with the Federation of Greater Washington's Department of Jewish Life and Learning. With this affiliation, various services such as workshops, educational courses and a resource center are offered to both our parents and faculty.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/RECOGNITION

Professional growth is a vital part of our excellent early childhood program. In 1993, under the leadership of Christie Weiner and Richard Paisner and with the support of a number of parents, the Doris Herman Educator Recognition Endowment Fund was established. This award recognizes excellence in teaching and the importance of professional development. Contributions made to the fund supplement the income from the endowment allowing for sponsorship of a specific professional development program.

TOILETING

The Gan does NOT require children of any age to be toilet trained in order to attend. The toilet training process typically begins at home although we will alert you if we see signs of interest here. Once you have seen success with regularity, the classroom staff will follow through using similar techniques and language to that which you are using at home. This requires consistent and ongoing communication with your teachers. It is important that the classroom has an ample supply of underwear and clothing changes while training is in process. Children should wear clothing that is easy for them to take off (e.g. sweatpants, elastic waist bottoms) while they are learning to use the toilet independently. If your child uses pull ups, you should use a brand with Velcro® rather than sealed sides.

Below are some signs of readiness that indicate your child may be ready to start training at home:

- Shows an interest in the toilet.
- Stays dry for longer periods of time.
- Indicates an awareness that they are urinating and/or defecating.
- Does not like to keep wet or soiled diaper on.
- Is able to pull down and pull up pants.

- Expresses interest in underwear.

Training can be supported at school when:

- Accidents at home are becoming less frequent (1-2/day)
- Child indicates the need to use the toilet either by going to it independently or telling someone.
- There is some consistent success using the toilet. This includes urinating and/or defecating, wiping themselves, flushing the toilet and washing hands.

Every child is different and will experience the toilet training process in his/her own way. Gan staff, including your teachers, our Early Childhood Developmental Support Coordinator, and our Jewish Social Service Agency social worker are available to help you understand if your child is showing signs of readiness and how to navigate this process successfully.

TUITION

An advance tuition payment of \$250 is due at registration with a second payment of \$1,000 due by April 1. The tuition balance can be paid in full or in two payments with 50% of the balance due July 1 and the remaining balance due December 1. A generous discount is given to Adas Israel synagogue members and there is also a discount available to Gan families who are members of another synagogue. Please note our billing is computerized and reflects the total yearly tuition. Requests for alternative billing (payment plans) must be made to the synagogue's accounting department. Adas Israel reserves the right to discharge a child whose tuition fees are past due and whose family has not made an effort to resolve the situation.

At this point we are unable to make automatic deductions from your checking account for families who have requested payment plans. We recommend setting up a recurring automatic bill pay.

In a case a student needs to withdraw, ninety days' notice is required. If a student withdraws before the 90 days and we are able to recoup the tuition loss by enrolling another student, a prorated refund will be given to the family. If this is not feasible, we are unable to refund tuition, but will not seek collection on unpaid tuition for the remainder of the year.

VISITORS

The Gan has an open door policy and we encourage parents and other family members to come and be a part of our program. What a treat for everyone when a grandparent or two are able to join us for our Friday Gan *Shabbat* snack or any other special or non-special occasion. We also love when our Gan graduates come to visit when they are off from school. Please note that these arrangements must be made prior to the visit and for the benefit of our current children we must limit these visits to only one Gan graduate per class. Visits must be limited to ninety minutes on any given day. Due to licensing and insurance regulations, a parent or other guardian must remain in the building during these visits.

WHAT TO WEAR

Think of your child's comfort; provide simple clothing that is free from complicated fasteners. Think of messy art materials and other messy activities; provide clothing that is washable. Children are encouraged to wear smocks when using any paints, clay etc. However, it is inevitable that children will get paint stains on their clothing. Although our paints are advertised as being washable, unfortunately, the paints do not always wash out.

Think of the changeable weather (the sun may be bright and warm at 9:00 am, but at 10:00 am it may turn cold and cloudy); dress your child appropriately. It's easy to remove an unneeded item. Although there is some shade on our playground, it is recommended that parents apply sun screen or sun block on their children March thru November.

Since we try to go outside each day, please provide warm clothing, jacket, hats, gloves, mittens and snow pants during cold weather, so that your child will be comfortable when we are outdoors. Children play on the climbing equipment and we request no open sandals or dress shoes. Sneakers are best. Drawstrings on the hood and neck of jackets, sweatshirts and coats are a hazard if they become caught on an object. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has recommended that hood and neck drawstrings be eliminated from children's clothing.

Please label all clothing with your child's name.