



Parent Handbook 2020–2021

Penn Family Early Childhood Center
50 East 87th Street
New York, New York 10128
(212) 369-2600, x150
ECCOffice@pasyn.org

Dear Families:

Welcome to the 2020–2021 school year at the Penn Family ECC at Park Avenue Synagogue! We feel blessed to include your family in our community and are looking forward to experiencing the joy of learning with your children. We know that your commitment to our program takes on a new meaning this year as health, safety, and security weigh heavily on all of our minds. Rest assured, we are collaborating with the synagogue to ensure that procedures and protocols are presented and followed. The fluid communication and trust between administration, educators, and parents has always been critical to our mission as a school. However, now more than ever, we are asking for everyone to be part of one team, united in both educating our students and keeping them healthy.

Please take time to read this handbook carefully, even if you are a returning parent, as there are a number of new policies. If you have any questions about the content of the handbook and the changes associated with COVID-19 policies and procedures, please [contact me](#) or our Associate Director, [Pam Schaner](#).

The Penn Family ECC is a community of actively engaged parents who care deeply about their children and their early education. Our parent body is nimble and creative. I look forward to a year of great parent involvement. As always, I am excited for you to get to know one another and to collaborate to enhance your children's school experience. By now, you have received a parent questionnaire written by our Parent Association chairs Stefani Wiener and Jodi Milner. We hope this helps direct ways that you can personally become involved in our community.

As soon as you finish reading this handbook, please fill out the [Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form](#) on our website. Share the handbook with all adults who care for your child and do not hesitate to reach out to me or to Pam Schaner with any questions or feedback.

Best,



Pamela B. Schwartz
Director, Penn Family ECC

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IMPORTANT DATES

Thu / Sep 3 / 6:30 pm / Separation Meeting	Thu / Nov 19 / Parent Conferences / SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon / Sep 7 / Labor Day / SCHOOL CLOSED	Mon / Nov 23 / 9:00 am / Green Room Class Visit
Wed / Sep 9 / First Day of School	Tue / Nov 24 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee
Fri / Sep 18 / Erev Rosh Hashanah / SCHOOL CLOSED	Thu / Nov 26–27 / Thanksgiving / SCHOOL CLOSED
Fri / Sep 25 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee / Pamela B. Schwartz	Tue / Dec 8 / 9:00 am / Red Room Class Visit
Mon / Sep 28 / Yom Kippur / SCHOOL CLOSED	Fri / Dec 11 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee
Fri / Oct 2 / Erev Sukkot / SCHOOL CLOSED	Mon / Dec 14 / Hanukkah Celebration / 1:30–2:00 pm / Red Room
Mon / Oct 5 / Sukkot Celebration / 9:00–9:30 am / Blue Room	Mon / Dec 14 / Hanukkah Celebration / 2:00–2:30 pm / Blue Room
Mon / Oct 5 / Sukkot Celebration / 12:30–1:00pm / Yellow Room	Mon / Dec 15 / Hanukkah Celebration / 11:30–12:00 pm / Orange Room
Tue / Oct 6 / Sukkot Celebration / 9:00–9:30 am / Green Room	Tue / Dec 15 / Hanukkah Celebration / 1:30–2:00 pm / Green Room
Tue / Oct 6 / Sukkot Celebration / 11:30 am–12:00 pm / Purple Room	Wed / Dec 16 / Hanukkah Celebration / 11:30–12:00 pm / Purple Room
Wed / Oct 7 / Sukkot Celebration / 9:00–9:30 am / Red Room	Wed / Dec 16 / Hanukkah Celebration / 12:30–1:00 pm / Yellow Room
Wed / Oct 7 / Sukkot Celebration / 11:30 am–12:00 pm / Orange Room	Dec 21–Jan 1 / Winter Break / SCHOOL CLOSED
Fri / Oct 9 / Erev Shemini Atzeret / SCHOOL CLOSED	Tue / Jan 5 / 9:00 am / Yellow Room Class Visit
Mon / Oct 12 / Columbus Day / SCHOOL CLOSED	Fri / Jan 15 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee
Thu / Oct 22 / 9:00 am / Blue Room Class Visit	Mon / Jan 18 / MLK Day / SCHOOL CLOSED
Fri / Oct 23 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee	Thu / Jan 21 / Penn Family ECC Benefit
Tue / Nov 3 / Election Day / SCHOOL CLOSED	Fri / Jan 22 / Play Sessions / SCHOOL CLOSED
Tue / Nov 10 / 6:30 pm / Curriculum Night / Red, Green, Blue	Tue / Feb 2 / 9:00 am / Purple Room Class Visit
Tue / Nov 17 / 6:30 pm / Curriculum Night / Orange, Yellow, Purple	Fri / Feb 12 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee
Feb 15–19 / Presidents Week / SCHOOL CLOSED	Wed / Apr 28 / Special Visitors Day / 11:30–12:00 pm / Purple Room
Tue / Mar 9 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee	Wed / Apr 28 / Special Visitors Day / 12:30–1:00 pm / Yellow Room
Thu / Mar 16 / Parent Conferences / SCHOOL CLOSED	May 17–18 / Shavuot / SCHOOL CLOSED

Wed / March 17 / Pesach Seder / 1:30–2:00 pm / Red Room	Fri / May 21 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee
Wed / Mar 17 / Pesach Seder / 2:00-2:30 pm / Blue Room	Tue / May 25 / End-of-Year Celebration / 2:00–2:30 pm / Blue Room
Thu / Mar 18 / Pesach Seder / 11:30–12:00 pm / Orange Room	Wed / May 26 / End-of-Year Celebration / 1:30–2:00 pm / Green Room
Thu / Mar 18 / Pesach Seder / 1:30–2:00 pm / Green Room	Thu / May 27 / End-of-Year Celebration / 11:30 am–12:00 pm / Orange Room
Tue / Mar 23 / Pesach Seder / 11:30–12:00 pm / Purple Room	Mon / May 31 / Memorial Day / SCHOOL CLOSED
Mar 24–Apr 2 / Passover Break / SCHOOL CLOSED	Wed / June 2 / End-of-Year Celebration / 12:30–1:00 pm / Yellow Room
Tue / Apr 6 / 9:00 am / Orange Room Class Visit	Thu / June 3 / End-of-Year Celebration / 11:30 am–12:00 pm / Purple Room
Thu / June 3 / End-of-Year Celebration / 11:30 am–12:00 pm / Purple Room	Fri / June 4 / LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
Fri / Apr 16 / 9:15 am / Parent Coffee	
Fri / Apr 23 / 5:00 pm / Penn Family ECC Family Shabbat Dinner	
Mon / Apr 26 / Special Visitors Day / 1:30–2:00 pm / Red Room	
Mon / Apr 26 / Special Visitors Day / 2:00–2:30 pm / Blue Room	
Tue / Apr 27 / Special Visitors Day / 11:30–12:00 pm / Orange Room	
Tue / Apr 27 / Special Visitors Day / 1:30–2:00 pm / Green Room	

CLASSROOM EDUCATORS & SCHEDULES

Classroom	Educators	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
Orange	Stephanie Grossman - Head Gaby Baker - Assistant Purdelle Hilaire - Assistant	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 12:00 pm Fri 11:50 am
Purple	Danielle Feldstein -Head Maggie Eigen-Senior - Associate Saunsia D. Lewis – Associate TBD	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 12:00 pm Fri 11:50 am
Yellow	Elisheva Davidman-Head Lizzie Goodwin-Assistant Joanna Kleinhaus -Assistant Hayley Barusek-Assistant Stacey Tsigos-Assistant	Mon–Fri 9:10 am	Mon–Thu 1:00 pm Fri 12:00 pm
Red	Katie Levine-Co-Head Morgan Rapaport-Co Head Michelle Stein-Assistant	Mon–Fri 9:20 am	Mon–Thu 2:00 pm Fri 12:00 pm
Green	Rachayl Reznik-Head Kyra Matsil-Associate Deborah Simon -Assistant	Mon–Fri 9:20 am	Mon–Thu 2:00 pm Fri 12:10 pm
Blue	Alissa Schulman-Head Rachellie Friedman-Senior Associate Deborah Haber-Assistant Morgan Flyer – Assistant	Mon–Fri 9:20 am	Mon–Thu 2:30 pm Fri 12:10 pm

OTHER PENN FAMILY EDUCATORS & STAFF

Mentor Educators

Dana Fine
Ethel Olken

Specialists (see also p. 27)

Movement Educator: Naoko Moriyama-Robbins

Principal Music Educator: [Josh Rosenberg](#)

Occupational Therapy Consultant: Stephanie Bronstein, OTR/L

Social Work Consultant: Lauren Macchio, LCSW

Speech and Language Consultant: Keren Erieh, MS, CCC-SLP

Administration

Director: [Pamela B. Schwartz](#), x152

Associate Director: [Pam Schaner](#), x156

Administrative Asst: TBD

Administrative Asst: TBD

Note: staff may change at the discretion of the administration at any point in the school year.

2020–2021 TUITION FEES

Days & Times	Deposit	Total Tuition
Mon–Fri, 3 hours/day	\$10,000	\$ 29,709
Mon–Thu, 4 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$ 31,969
Mon–Thu, 5 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$ 35,269
Mon–Thu, 5.5 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$37,702

Tuition rates and length of school days are subject to change each school year.

ADMISSIONS AND CONTRACTS

Once you sign a contract with the Penn Family Early Childhood Center, you are committed to the full tuition for the school year and cannot sign with another ISAAGNY institution unless you agree to pay both tuitions in full.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The primary goal of the Penn Family Early Childhood Center is to facilitate, strengthen, and encourage the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and Jewish life of young children. The program teaches the whole child by providing activities that emphasize literacy and language (reading readiness); math; science; and motor skill development (fine, gross, and graphomotor), including dramatic play, cooking, music, movement, woodworking, art, and block building.

We strive to provide a program that is developmentally appropriate for every child. We believe that young children learn best through play and that the educators' primary role is to support a child's play so that it becomes as constructive and elaborate as possible. The program offers many opportunities for play and active exploration within a clearly defined, challenging, non-competitive, and nurturing environment. Play is balanced with educator-directed learning moments. Skills spiral throughout the years, and those emphasized are carefully selected with developmentally appropriate goals in mind.

At the Penn Family ECC, we believe that each child is unique, with his or her own individual pattern and timeline of growth as well as his or her own individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both our curricula and our interactions with children respond to these individual differences. We believe that children are born with a built-in capacity for growth and that they naturally seek stimulation and variety. Young children learn best through concrete experiences and active participation.

Oral language development is at the core of all our curricula, both secular and Judaic. We work with each child to meet them where they are in their language development and to enhance and enrich their ability to receive language and to express themselves. As educators, we know that these skills form the foundation of all later learning. Through rich language and literacy activities, we provide students with the experiences they need to be ready to learn.

Children in our program learn about their Jewish identity and, through this learning, they take pride in it. We teach them through daily experiences, rituals, and traditions that define us as a community. Children recite *brakhot*, listen to Torah stories, and celebrate Shabbat and holidays. As a community, we aspire to connect our students to Israel and its importance to our people. Children as young as two learn about the land of Israel through concrete visual, auditory, and tactile experiences. Our social-skills curricula reflect the Jewish values of *b'tzelem Elohim*, (respecting and tolerating all God's creatures), *hesed* (showing kindness), *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), *bal tash'hit* (not wasting), *haver tov* (being a good friend), *tzedakah* (giving), *hakhnasat or^him* (welcoming guests), *bikur ho^lim* (visiting the sick), and *hakarat hatov* (noticing the good; expressing gratitude and thanks).

We are a community that listens. We invite communication from parents to help us know the developmental capacities of their children, and we share ideas and knowledge with parents to help them understand and support their children's intellectual, social, and physical growth at home.

We encourage parents to take part in school and synagogue life in a variety of ways both in and out of the classroom. In the classroom, parents share celebrations, parent-educator conferences, and activities such as cooking. Outside the classroom, parents volunteer to help in a myriad of ways, including serving as class representatives, designing and editing the annual yearbook, and planning events such as the Penn Family ECC Winter Benefit, Tikkun Olam initiatives, and our participation in Vicki K. Wimpfheimer Mitzvah Day.

PARENT/FAMILY CONDUCT

The connection between home and school is of paramount importance in the Penn Family ECC philosophy. We believe in maintaining a strong partnership with the parents and caregivers of the children in our school, and we consider this relationship sacred.

Children learn the most from the adults whom they love and admire. Our behavior as parents and educators affects our children in profound ways. We have included this code as the standard that parents in our community believe in and model.

Penn Family ECC PARENT/FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT

By signing the Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form on the PAS website, I acknowledge and agree that as parent of a child in the Penn Family ECC:

- I will treat other parents and children with kindness and respect.
- I will treat all educators and members of the Penn Family ECC staff with kindness and respect.
- I recognize that our school is an inclusive environment and that we have children of varying social, emotional, physical, and cognitive abilities.
- I will direct all constructive comments and feedback to educators and administration first.
- I will stay abreast of all communications sent by the Penn Family ECC and by the synagogue at large.
- I will adhere to the Penn Family ECC mission of teaching and modeling Jewish values.
- I will follow the rules and guidelines related to health and safety established by Penn Family ECC to keep my community healthy.
- I will exercise patience and offer generosity of spirit for the Penn Family ECC and PAS administration as we institute new procedures to keep our community healthy.

JEWISH VALUES

Teaching Jewish values is at the core of our mission at the Penn Family Early Childhood Center. As children grow and develop, these values remain an integral part of their lifelong learning journey. We encourage all who enter our space to embrace these values and to live and learn according to their spirit.

- ***B'tzelem Elohim*** – all creatures are created in God's image, showing tolerance and respect towards others
- ***Hesed*** – showing kindness
- ***Tikkun Olam*** – repairing the world
- ***Bal Tash'hit*** – not wasting
- ***Haver Tov*** – being a good friend
- ***Tzedakah*** – giving
- ***Hakhnasat Orhim*** – welcoming guests
- ***Bikkur Holim*** – visiting/calling those who are not feeling well
- ***Hakarat Hatov*** – noticing the good; expressing gratitude and thanks

At the Penn Family ECC, we are committed to teaching these values and helping you to find space to discuss them at home.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

1. *Widening Your Child's Circle*

The transition to school is a major part of the curriculum during your child's first years as a student. Coming to school is one of the early steps in the lifelong process of separation.

It can be difficult for a young child to be in an unfamiliar setting, with unfamiliar adults and children, where there are new and different ways of doing things. It takes time for two-, three-, and four-year-olds to develop trust in new adults and feel comfortable in a school environment.

One of our primary goals is to help the children make an easy transition from home to school. We want them to discover that school is a happy, safe, interesting place to be. All of the children will have a gradual phasing-in period during the first weeks of school. *Due to COVID-19, we are slowing down this period for the children and decreasing the size of the phase in groups to ensure that the children, educators, and caregivers can get used to the altered arrival procedures.*

While we cannot allow parents to attend school at any time during COVID-19, we will still maintain our mission to work collaboratively to help your child. Please exercise patience, as the phase-in process may be longer than typical. We want to have the children enter in small groups so that we can give them as much attention as possible. When needed, we will use technology to enable you and your child to view each other through Zoom and FaceTime.

Each child goes through separation in their own way. We believe strongly in meeting the children where they are and helping from that place. We care for each child and each family individually and with great sensitivity. There is a wide range to children's responses, and there is no "norm." It is not a race, and we will help each child and each family according to their needs.

Lauren Macchio, LCSW, our Social Work Consultant, leads a meeting just before the start of the school year on how to help children begin school and transition. This year, we anticipate that all parents might want to attend. This meeting will take place on Thursday, September 3 at 6:30pm via [Zoom](#). We encourage all parents to attend.

2. Home and Classroom Visits

COVID-19 Related Policies:

In an effort to keep educators and students as safe as possible, we will not be conducting home and class visits this year. Instead, educators will schedule a couple of one-on-one Zooms and outdoor meetings with your child. During these sessions, a parent should be with the child,

helping them form initial relationships with their educational team. This is a wonderful time for the educators to show children how they look in their PPE and for children to hear the sound of their voices. We will introduce the children to the classroom and routines.

3. Toileting

We accept children into our twos classes who are not fully toilet trained. We ask that training is underway for children who are entering our young threes program (9:00 am–1:00 pm). We recognize that this is a process led by the child with the appropriate support from grown-ups. Educators and staff are available to provide support throughout this process.

Please send your child to school every day wearing either a diaper, a pull-up, or underwear.

B. CLASSROOM GROUPINGS & HOURS

The names and age ranges of our classrooms are subject to change each school year.

Class	Monday–Thursday	Friday
Orange: Young 2s	9:00 am–12:00 pm	9:00–11:50 am
Purple: Older 2s	9:00 am–12:00 pm	9:00–11:50 am
Yellow: Young 3s	9:10 am–1:00 pm	9:10–12:00 pm
Red: Older 3s/Young 4s	9:20 am–2:00 pm	9:20 am–12:00 pm
Green: Young 4s	9:20 am–2:00 pm	9:20 am–12:10 pm
Blue: Older 4s & Young 5s	9:20 am–2:30 pm	9:20 am–12:10 pm

C. SCHOOL HOURS

1. Arrival and Dismissal Policy

A child’s arrival at school sets the tone for the day. We strive to create a warm and safe arrival and dismissal for all of our students. We ask that you adhere to our policies and procedures in order to keep the flow of these moments fluid and secure.

a. Arrival

As we shared, arrival will look different this year due to COVID-19. Please see the process below:

- It is important to follow the staggered times we have established to keep traffic flowing and to keep the children calm and safe.
 - Orange and Purple Rooms: Arrival 9:00 am
 - Yellow Rooms: Arrival 9:10 am
 - Red, Green, and Blue Rooms: Arrival 9:20 am

*Please make every effort to be on time. If you are not, please call the office to share your time of arrival.

- Up to two hours before your child and their caregiver arrive to the 87th Street building, both individuals must complete **a health screening**.
- Once inside the vestibule, we ask you to say goodbye to your child and wait as they walk through the kiosk for a second health check that will take their temperature.
- An educator from your child’s classroom will be there to warmly welcome your child. At that point, we ask you to leave the vestibule area.

b. Dismissal

Each classroom dismisses at a designated time. *This year, all educators will escort their students down to the PAS Lobby vestibule for dismissal. We will be signing out each child upon dismissal. It is essential that you document each individual responsible for picking up your child and introduce them to your educators.*

2. Strollers and Scooters

Due to COVID-19, we will not have any stroller or scooter storage inside or outside of the building.

3. Documentation and Security

Educators will record children’s arrival times every day. *As stated above, this year we will sign out each child individually.*

4. Times and Locations

Arrival Times

Orange and Purple Rooms: Arrival 9:00 am
 Yellow Rooms: Arrival 9:10 am
 Red, Green, and Blue Rooms: Arrival 9:20 am

Dismissal Times

Classroom	Monday–Thursday	Friday
Orange Purple	12:00 pm	11:50 am
Yellow	1:00 pm	12:00 pm
Red	2:00 pm	12:00 pm
Green	2:00 pm	12:10 pm
Blue	2:30 pm	12:10 pm

5. Dismissal Changes

We will be providing a form of identification to families only to be shared with adults authorized for pick up. Any change in who will pick up your child requires written permission. Please email ECCOffice@pasyn.org no later than the start of school on the day of the change. Please CC

your classroom educators so that they will not be surprised at pickup time. If at all possible, we would like to be introduced ahead of time to anyone who will pick up your child.

We do not accept dismissal changes during the day. Because classes move about during the day from their classroom to the roof and the library, educators may not be able to retrieve phone messages right away. Exceptions will be made only in emergencies.

6. Stair-Walking Program

Due to COVID-19, we will all be walking the stairs this year!

D. AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. Playdates

To avoid possible misunderstandings, we require that both families involved in a playdate tell us in writing on the day of the playdate. If we do not receive notes from both families, we have to call both families to confirm the arrangements, which is an inconvenience to all concerned.

Please make sure your child understands each day's afterschool plans, as children worry if they are uncertain about what's happening. Please do not phone the school to make afterschool arrangements except in case of an emergency.

The Penn Family ECC encourages a policy of inclusion when you are scheduling playdates. Please consider all students in the classroom pod when making playdates throughout the year.

2. Penn Family ECC Afterschool Enrichment Classes

We offer a wide variety of afterschool enrichment classes, described on [our website](#). Afterschool enrichment classes typically run for the fall semester from October to February and for the spring semester from February to May. There are no afterschool enrichment classes held when school is closed.

We ask for your patience as we acclimate to new COVID-19 policies and procedures. We will consider our afterschool enrichment classes after one month of school.

a. Playscape

Children who are dismissed at 2:00 pm (Red and Green Rooms) and who are enrolled in an afterschool class beginning at 2:30 pm will participate in Playscape between school and afterschool. During this time, Penn Family ECC educators serve snacks and occupy children with storytelling, play, and song.

We ask for your patience as we acclimate to new COVID-19 policies and procedures. We will consider our afterschool enrichment classes after one month of school.

b. Afterschool Dismissal

Dismissal procedures for afterschool enrichment classes require that the adult who picks up a child sign him or her out, the same as for dismissal at the end of school.

We ask for your patience as we acclimate to new COVID-19 policies and procedures. We will consider our afterschool enrichment classes after one month of school.

E. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

You must complete the [Emergency Information Form](#) with caregivers' home, work, cell, and emergency phone numbers (relative or friend) in order for your child to attend school. Be sure to notify us of any changes during the year.

We will always take all necessary measures to protect your child's safety and well-being. In an emergency, we will attempt to contact you immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call the other people you have specified. Please let them know you have designated them to make decisions in case of an emergency. Please also make sure we have all necessary information regarding allergies and special health needs.

In the event an emergency requires us to leave the building, students and staff will walk to the Park Avenue United Methodist Church, located at 106 East 86th Street between Park and Lexington Avenues.

Our staff orientation in August includes an exhaustive safety training with our security company. We have monthly fire drills as a whole school and as individual classes throughout the school year. Educators also participate in lockdown drills when the children are not in the building.

Snow Day and Inclement Weather Policy

The Penn Family ECC follows the lead of NYC public schools in closing due to inclement weather. When NYC public schools are closed, we are closed; when they are open, we are open. You will receive an email and/or text alert advising you of school status when there is a closing due to weather.

F. HEALTH PROCEDURES

1. Medical Forms

The NYC Department of Health, Bureau of Day Care requires that each child have a recent complete age-appropriate medical examination prior to the start of school. No child can be admitted to school unless this exam is completed.

- In accordance with Department of Health policies, your child's pediatrician must complete both the student health form and the EpiPen Consent Form.
- If your child is under a physician's care for a special health issue, is taking medication, or has allergies, be sure to note these items on the health form. Please also have your doctor complete both the Allergy/Special Health Care Plan and the Medication Consent Form. You will need to return these forms to the Penn Family ECC office.
- All immunizations should be up to date. In accordance with the Department of Health mandates, all children are required to have a flu shot by December 31, 2020. We must have a doctor's record that your child has received the flu shot by the above date. Please complete this Influenza Vaccine Record or have the physician note it on your child's health form.

2. Handwashing

Frequent handwashing is the best way to avoid the spread of infectious diseases. At school, we emphasize the importance of handwashing by having children wash hands when they arrive in the classroom in the morning, before and after eating, after toileting, and after playing outside. Please team with us by washing your own hands when you enter a classroom, and consider following the same guidelines at home to reinforce this behavior.

Due to the incidence of COVID-19, we will be handwashing more often than typical. Each time the children exit and enter their classroom pod, they will be required to wash their hands.

3. Absences from School

Please call or email the Penn Family ECC office in the morning if your child will not be coming to school. Let us know immediately if your child has a communicable disease such as conjunctivitis, impetigo, strep throat, etc., so we can notify parents of exposed children.

4. Colds and Respiratory Infections

During their first years of school, most young children are quite susceptible to colds and respiratory infections. An ill child is not only contagious to others, but is usually unhappy in school. A child who is not functioning at his or her usual level will become frustrated more easily and will not have a satisfying day. If a child is ill or becomes ill at school, educators will call parents to take the child home. Please make all efforts to pick up your ill child quickly.

Children who are especially susceptible are at risk of developing a more serious or longer-lasting illness from a child who is mildly ill, so be extra cautious when deciding whether to keep your child home, especially when you think they *might* be coming down with something. It is during the early stages of an illness that a child is most contagious. Everyone will appreciate your consideration in this area.

5. Returning to School after an Illness

A child who has had a fever may not return to school until they have maintained a normal temperature without medication for at least 24 hours. Children who come to school are expected to participate in all class activities including outdoor play, which we have all year long, including on cold winter days. The classrooms go outside if it is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer. A child who cannot participate in all indoor and outdoor activities is not well enough to return to school. In the long run, children miss less school if they have ample time to rest and recuperate before returning to school.

We also advise waiting 24 hours after a child has had a stomach bug if it included vomiting or diarrhea. We follow protocol aligned with the DOH to sanitize affected areas after a communicable disease has been identified.

These policies have never been more essential than during the pandemic. In order to keep all children and staff safe, please adhere to [these guidelines](#). Additionally, please follow our COVID-19-related illness policy and procedures. A child who is displaying a concerning symptom may be asked to go home and visit your pediatrician at the discretion of PAS. It is good practice to take your child's temperature before leaving the house.

6. Medications

Apart from EpiPens, educators are not permitted to administer any medication, including sunscreen and any other type of lotion. If necessary, a parent can come to the school at the proper time to give medication. Alternatively, the child should be kept at home while such treatment is necessary. The only exceptions are for a child in anaphylactic shock who has a complete EpiPen Consent Form from the DOH on file or a child with a known allergy or special health need who has a complete Medication Consent Form on file. In the case of an existing allergy or special health need, the only individuals permitted to administer medication are Pamela Schwartz and Pam Schaner.

In accordance with Department of Health policies, every child must have a complete [EpiPen Consent Form](#) on file stating that our staff may administer an EpiPen in case of emergency, even if your child does not have a diagnosed allergy. This form must be completed by your doctor and a hard copy must be returned to the Penn Family ECC office before your child can start school. Each member of our staff will be trained in administering an EpiPen.

7. Lice

A professional lice treatment company visits our school several times a year to check our students for lice. Children with lice and/or nits are sent home and may come back to school only when their heads are clear of lice and nits. Children must present themselves to the Director or Associate Director of the Penn Family ECC for a final check in order to have permission to return to class. Letters are sent to all parents in a classroom where lice or nits have been found.

We follow protocol aligned with the DOH to clean affected areas after lice have been found. This includes but is not limited to temporary removal of carpets and upholstered furniture.

G. CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES

1. What to Wear to School

Please dress your child in clothes that are appropriate for playing and working in school. We like to say that our students “Dress for Mess.” Clothes should be comfortable enough to allow freedom of movement and casual enough that paint spills, glue smears, and dribbles from snack are not a problem. Long skirts or dresses and flip-flops or open-toed sandals can be hazardous during outdoor play, leading to accidents during running and climbing activities. We ask that children always wear rubber-soled, closed shoes (front and back) in school, as well as for outdoor play. Shoes that stay securely on the feet, such as sneakers, will allow children to climb on our equipment safely.

When purchasing pants, dresses, boots, snow pants, sneakers, coats, etc., please keep in mind that independence is one of our goals for the children. Please select clothing that is easy for the children to maneuver by themselves, remembering that buttons and belts can prove most difficult for a child who needs to use the bathroom in a hurry.

Whenever there is rain or snow, be sure your child wears boots or waterproof footgear and brings a pair of shoes to change into for indoor time. We do not allow children to use umbrellas, and we ask that you do not leave an umbrella in your child’s cubby. We often play in the snow, so children need snow clothing. In winter, we recommend each child have snow pants, a hat, snow boots, and waterproof mittens that can either be clipped onto cuffs or sewn to a length of ribbon or elastic that is put through the sleeves of the jacket. Leaving an extra pair of mittens in your child's cubby is a good idea.

Children may not come to school in costume clothing (masks, cowboy boots, super-hero capes, etc.) unless there is a designated “dress-up day.” We discourage wearing jewelry because children cannot play freely with clay, play dough, water, and finger-paint if they are wearing bracelets, rings, or watches.

Finally, please label all items. We do our best to maintain a lost and found and ask that you check it periodically.

MASK WEARING

All adults must wear masks all day long inside of Park Avenue Synagogue. All children in the Penn Family ECC must wear masks until they are inside of their pods. They do not have to wear masks when playing outdoors.

*However, we are **strongly** encouraging all children to wear their masks throughout the day in order to keep their bodies and their friends bodies healthy and safe.*

2. What to Keep in School

Please bring a complete change of clothing on the first day of school. Include underwear, socks, shirt, long pants, and a sweatshirt, and remember to label each piece. Place the items in a box in your child's cubby. It is important that all of your child's things be labeled with their name, including coats, hats, boots, mittens, etc., not only in case of loss, but because children are not always sure of which things are theirs and the educators have no way of knowing. Your help in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

After winter vacation, check to make sure that the extra clothing in your child's cubby still fits and is seasonally appropriate. When wet clothes, towels, or blankets are sent home, please send back replacements the next day. The school provides smocks for the children.

At least once a month, we have Rainbow Time and the children wear their Rainbow Time t-shirts. We leave this shirt in their school cubby.

3. Rest Time

The Department of Health requires that the classes that meet from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm have rest time. We supply the required rest mats for these children. In addition, the DOH requires that a towel be used beneath each child's head or face while resting.

We will provide yoga mats to each child for rest. These will only be used by the individual child and will be stored inside each child's individual cubby.

H. TOYS AND OTHER ITEMS FROM HOME

We respect each child's needs, and while there are times when we make exceptions, our goal is to have no toys from home brought to school. We ask that you help us reach this goal. The appropriate treasure from home may help ease the transition from home to school, but other toys can cause sharing issues, overstimulation for the group, competition, or distress if they are lost or broken. Should your child bring a toy from home, our educators will ask the child to keep

it in his or her cubby for the day.

Toy guns, hand-held computer games, TV or movie items (action or superhero figures, Disney characters), Barbie dolls, jewelry, gadgets, money, etc. are never appropriate at school. Gadgets tend to get broken, money is often lost, and guns and other "war" toys are not conducive to the kind of play we strive to develop in school. Our classrooms are all equipped with educationally rich manipulatives and props to keep your children productive during the day.

Please do not permit your child to wear sunglasses to school unless there is a medical reason.

Finally, we cannot be responsible for any item brought to school. If you have any questions about or issues with this policy, please tell your child's educator so that we can come up with possible solutions together.

I. FOOD

1. Good Nutrition

We are working to develop healthy, nutritional food habits for our children. We are careful about the products we purchase, and we know that you are, as well. The exploration and preparation of both familiar and new foods is part of our weekly curriculum.

Due to the increasing number of children with severe nut allergies, food brought for lunch, healthy snacks, birthdays, cooking projects, and holiday celebrations must be peanut-, tree nut-, and nut-based-derivative-free to ensure the safety of all our children. Please note that we might need to ask further food modifications based on the allergy profile of specific children. However, due to other functions in the building, we are not a peanut- or nut-free institution. Rather, we are *nut-aware* throughout the synagogue.

We do not permit gum or candy in the classroom or anywhere in the building. Please do not send any of these to school for snack, lunch, or an afterschool treat. If you bring a treat for your child at pick-up time – even a healthy treat – please refrain from giving it to your child or any siblings until you are completely out of the building.

2. Jewish Dietary Laws/Kashrut

We strictly observe the laws of kashrut in the synagogue and our school. This applies to snacks, lunches, and special treats for birthdays. Our school kitchen is dairy, so food brought into the school must be dairy or pareve. Because many of our families follow kashrut at home, please be considerate when planning functions with other families from school.

3. Lunch

Children in our 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and 9:00 am to 2:30 pm classes are required to bring a dairy or vegetarian lunch (tuna sandwich, SunButter & jelly, bagel & cream cheese, etc.). Within these guidelines, please give your child the food he or she most enjoys. A sandwich or yogurt, raw vegetables, and a piece of fruit are all that is necessary. Please do not send junk food such as potato chips, chocolate pudding, filled or iced cakes.

If some portion of your child's lunch needs to be kept cold, please put a small cold pack in your child's lunch box. We always provide water to drink at lunchtime.

4. Healthy Snacks

Due to COVID-19, we will provide all snacks this year. Please make sure child attends school with a labeled water bottle.

J. CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

1. Parent Attendance Events

There are designated moments throughout the year when we ask one or two parents to attend an event. Check the Penn Family ECC calendar for the dates for your child's class, and datebook:

- One-on-One Zooms with Educators and Outdoor Meetings
- First Day of School (for all new students) – until your child enters the building
- Sukkot Celebration – *virtual*
- Hanukkah Celebration – *virtual*
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (two per year) – *virtual*
- Pesach Celebration – *virtual*
- Penn Family ECC Community-Wide Shabbat Service and Dinner – *virtual*
- Class Visit (20 minutes, one morning per year per class) – *virtual*
- Shabbat (when your child is Child of the Week, once per year per class) – *virtual*
- End-of-the-Year Class Celebration – *virtual*

2. Holidays

We celebrate Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover. Depending on the school calendar, we also celebrate Rosh Hashanah, Simhat Torah, Tu BiShvat, Yom HaAtzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day), Lag BaOmer, and Shavuot. We do not celebrate Halloween, Valentine's Day, Christmas, or Easter. We also do not celebrate Mother's Day or Father's Day.

We believe that each family is unique and teach children that there are multiple ways to be part of a family. In embracing the diversity of family structure in our school, we choose not to celebrate a day for specific family members. Rather, we celebrate families all year round. As a school and a synagogue, we strive to be an inclusive environment. We send home holiday information letting you know what the children have learned so that the conversation can

continue at home.

3. Penn Family ECC Special Days

a. Child of the Week

We know that children look forward to their birthdays, and we certainly want them to feel celebrated on their special day. However, not every child's birthday falls during the school year, and we feel strongly that all children at the Penn Family ECC should experience the same type of celebration.

After much thought and with considerable success, we have adopted the experience of Child of the Week. Instead of having parents come to celebrate their child's birthday, we will invite you to join the class virtually one Friday for Shabbat when your child has been selected as Child of the Week. Everyone will have a turn to be Child of the Week.

Child of the Week dates are not related to children's birthdays. Rather, at the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to sign up for a Friday Shabbat celebration. Your child will be the Child of the Week in his or her classroom during the week leading up to your visit. The class will recognize the Child of the Week in multiple ways. When you come on Friday, virtually, you will not only be celebrating Shabbat, but also celebrating your child! Please make sure to mark the date on your calendar.

On your child's actual birthday, the class will acknowledge your child in small but important ways. These acknowledgements will differ by class and be developmentally appropriate for the children. *During the pandemic, parent participation will be virtual.*

b. Special Visitors Day

This year, we will host our third annual Special Visitors Day, when children can bring up to four special adults to school with them. We will enjoy a festive time together virtually. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and special friends are welcome.

c. Rainbow Time

Each month, the Penn Family ECC comes together as a school community. We invite members of the clergy and Josh, our Principal Music Educator, to join us in song and celebration. We often review what the children have learned about secular and Jewish holidays. Most importantly, we delight in being together! We ask that the children celebrate by wearing their Rainbow Time t-shirts. *During the pandemic these will be virtual.*

4. Birthday Parties

We ask that you not plan birthday parties on Shabbat or on any other Jewish holiday. As a

respectful Conservative Jewish community, all parents adhere to this policy.

Because it is often difficult for a young child to be the center of a great deal of attention, the smaller and simpler the party, the better. If you invite children from your child's class, please include either the entire class or all the children of one gender. This will help prevent hurt feelings that are inevitable when some children are excluded. In addition, please do not distribute party invitations in school or bring a birthday gift for another child to school.

K. FACILITIES

No Smoking

Park Avenue Synagogue is a smoke-free environment. There is no smoking permitted in the school hallways, elevators, classrooms, or any open areas at any time.

L. PENN FAMILY ECC LIBRARY

The Penn Family ECC is blessed to have its own library, managed by one of our educators, Stephanie Grossman, who is a head teacher in the Orange Room. *Once we acclimate to the school year, we will inform you about library practices aligned with COVID-19 policies and protocols.*

M. SCHOOL CONSULTANTS

We have a team of specialists who help us better understand child development in general and our children on an individual level:

- Social Work Consultant: Lauren Macchio, LCSW
- Occupational Therapy Consultant: Stephanie Bronstein, OTR/L
- Speech and Language Therapy Consultant: Keren Erieh, MS, CCC-SLP

Our consultants work in the school every week, with some additional times as needed. These consultants observe the children and work with the educators. Workshops with the consultants for educators and parents will be arranged throughout the year. In addition, the consultants will be available to our families for individual conferences on a one- or two-time basis. If you want to meet with one of them virtually, schedule an appointment through the Director or Associate Director. *During the pandemic, our consultants will observe virtually and advise accordingly.*

You must complete the [Parent Consent Form](#) which gives permission for these consultants to work with your child on a regular basis.

N. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

1. Classroom Involvement

Educators welcome planned, virtual participation from parents, including cooking, reading stories, doing art and science projects, sharing special talents, helping on class trips, and more. Parents are invited and encouraged to visit their child's classroom virtually at least once per year.

2. Home-School Communication & Educator-Parent Relationships

a. Staying Informed

It is very important that you keep us apprised of any changes in your child's daily life or family circumstances over the course of the school year. A new caregiver, a parental trip, an illness or death in the family (including of a pet), and any changes in living arrangements or work schedule could affect a child at school and the content of a child's play. We can support the child much more successfully if we are aware of such events. We strive to answer all emails within 24 hours, and we send a weekly newsletter with updated information every Wednesday.

b. Weekly Reviews

Each Friday, your classroom educators will email you a weekly review to let you know what activities your child's class has done during the week and to suggest follow-up conversations and activities to do at home. Once a month, the weekly review will be enhanced with photos. (Weekly reviews take the place of the "rainbow reviews" of previous years.) *During the pandemic, we recognize that parents and caregivers are not entering classrooms physically. We will be revisiting homeschool common practices.*

Additionally, this year, you will receive slides each day to document what is transpiring inside the classroom. This will be important if your child is learning virtually.

c. Check-In Calls

Educators make check-in calls to families at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. During these calls, educators share children's areas of strength, as well as areas that children are working on. These calls are great opportunities for you to share feedback with your educators about your child's progress. Educators rotate who calls each family so that you can build rapport with all of the faculty members on your team. You will receive an email to sign up for a time in advance of your check-in call.

d. Notices and Letters

We send almost all communications home via email so that they do not get lost. Please be sure to add pschwartz@pasyn.org, pschaner@pasyn.org, and ECCOffice@pasyn.org to your approved list. Your classroom educators will also have an email address (e.g. blueroom@pasyn.org). We will occasionally send something home in hard copy by putting it in your child's backpack. Please check your email for messages from the Penn Family ECC every

day and make sure that whoever picks up your child makes a habit of checking his or her backpack each day.

Every Wednesday, the Penn Family ECC emails a newsletter full of important information, including upcoming events, reminders, and more.

e. Social Boundaries with Penn Family ECC Staff

- We ask that current Penn Family ECC families do not contact educators or administrators through social media. Staff are not permitted to accept friend requests from current families on social media websites.
- Please do not contact educators or staff on their personal cell phones.
- Educators at our school are professionals and should not be asked to babysit or tutor after school, on weekends, or over vacations for current Penn Family ECC children or their siblings. Educators are not permitted to work for parents or to attend any social functions with parents in any capacity outside of school.
- We permit, but do not encourage, families to make gifts to educators. Gift cards are permitted, but cash gifts are not.

3. Contact Information

Each class will receive a list of contact information for the students in their class. Beyond this list, we do not disseminate information regarding any other students.

4. Parent-Teacher Conferences

There are two parent-teacher conferences during the year for each child. Schedules will be arranged via an online signup. The purpose of the conferences is for parents and educators to share their knowledge of the child in order to facilitate the child's development. School is closed on conference days. Please plan your schedules in advance to arrange alternate care for your child on those days and to set aside time for your conference.

Please note that in addition to the scheduled conferences, you may arrange additional online meetings whenever you feel the need. Informal exchanges at arrival and dismissal times are valuable, but it is often a difficult time for the educators to give you their full attention.

Impromptu conversations with educators during arrival and dismissal also tend to bring up sensitive topics when "little ears" are listening. Please be sensitive; email or call your educators instead, and make appointments for meetings so that you can have uninterrupted time with the educator or director.

5. Widening Your Child's Circle (transitioning to school) and Curriculum Meetings

Before the beginning of the school year, we hold a meeting for parents of new students to discuss issues of separation with our Social Work Consultant. While the meeting is geared toward

parents in the Orange, Purple, and Yellow Rooms, all parents of new students are welcome. *This year, due to COVID-19, we encourage all parents to attend.*

Separation Evening with Lauren Macchio, Social Work Consultant

Thu / Sep 3 / 6:30 pm / Separation Meeting

Zoom

At the beginning of the school year, we invite you to attend an online curriculum night to learn more about the academic and social aspects of a day in your child's classroom.

Curriculum Night

Tue / Nov 10 / 6:30 pm / Red, Green, Blue

Tue / Nov 17 / 6:30 pm / Orange, Yellow, Purple

O. ADMISSIONS PROCESS TO ONGOING SCHOOLS: "EXMISSIONS"

An evening meeting in the late spring will be devoted to a discussion of the general process of ongoing school admissions. In June or early fall, parents will have individual meetings with the Director followed by ongoing communication and support.

In keeping with our Parent/Family Code of Conduct (p. 11), we expect parents to respect each other's privacy during the process of applying to kindergarten. We ask that you keep all conversations confidential and that you do not question any of your peers about their choices.

P. PARENTS ASSOCIATION (ECCPA)

We have an active Parents Association, and the work parents do is greatly appreciated by our staff and administration. We hope that you will become involved in the Penn Family ECC's PA, which will enable you to make new friends and become an integral part of the school. PA initiatives include our Winter Benefit, the synagogue's Vicki K. Wimpfheimer Mitzvah Day, tikkun olam, mishloach manot (packages the children make on Purim), and class projects.

In addition to PA committees, each class has parent representatives who serve as liaisons between the class families and the school. They keep parents informed of school functions and assist classroom educators with various activities. These classroom representatives are an invaluable resource to our school.

Stefani Wiener and Jodi Milner are the co-chairs of the Parents Association this year. If you have not yet done so, fill in the questionnaire that the PA sent in August to give them an idea of how you would like to help. In the fall, we will update you with a list of committees and chairs. We

look forward to your help and involvement in making 2020–2021 another successful year at the Penn Family ECC!

PA DUES

PA dues for this year are \$325. These dues go toward educator gifts for Hanukkah and at the end of the year, life cycle gifts for families and staff, library totes, Rainbow Time t-shirts, mishloach manot, memorabilia, and the yearbook.

Q. GIFT POLICY

Our educators and staff are supremely dedicated, and we understand that parents often want to acknowledge their hard work. We use the PA dues collected at the beginning of the year for this purpose. We give generous monetary gifts around Hanukkah and at the end of the year, and parents coordinate art projects to express gratitude at these times. We also use PA dues to make gifts in honor of births, weddings, and other life-cycle events. We strictly prohibit parents from giving teachers gifts at Hanukkah or during the holiday season, and we also prohibit any type of group collection during the year to acknowledge life-cycle events.

We encourage families to write letters on behalf of their educators at the end of the school year. These letters will be added to their staff files. They are incredibly meaningful and provide important information during educator evaluation times. At the end of the year, we permit *but do not encourage* families to give gifts to educators at their own discretion. Giving cash is not allowed, but gift cards are permitted.

R. WAYS TO GIVE AT THE PENN FAMILY ECC

Tzedakah

Ongoing, typically on Fridays before Shabbat celebrations

Each class regularly collects money for Tzedakah. The children count the money and assist in purchasing items at the grocery store for the PAS Food Pantry, which is run by PAS teens. They collect the Penn Family ECC food contributions and distribute them to families in need through the Food Pantry. *During the pandemic, our students will not be going grocery shopping with tzedakah. We are working with Rachel Sherman, Director of Youth Programming and Engagement, to reevaluate ways to collaborate with PAS teen food pantry.*

Penn Family ECC Gift of Books

Ongoing

We invite parents to donate books to our school library and/or classroom libraries, especially in honor of a child's birthday or other special moments, such as the birth of a sibling. Once you have bought a book, please bring it to the office for your child to place a bookplate inside.

Tikkun Olam

Ongoing

On Read Across America Day, children come to school in their pajamas and celebrate the joy of reading. They are asked to bring a pair of new pajamas and a new or gently used book for children in need. Read Across America Day is held every year on March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday. Other drives may be added during the year based on units of study in the classroom. One year we had a shoe drive because a child suggested it after studying shoes.

Penn Family ECC Winter Benefit

January 21, 2020

A highlight of the year and a fun community-building celebration, this benefit is an important fundraiser for the Penn Family ECC. A ticketed event, the night includes food and drink, as well as an auction, raffle, and other opportunities to give.

Penn Family ECC Yearbook

End of the year

Jewish tradition teaches that once you have done something three times in a row, it becomes a commitment. This year, we will produce our third *Rainbow Connection* school yearbook documenting the year in pictures. While the yearbook will be provided as part of your PA dues, we will be asking all parents to participate by placing an ad for their child(ren) in the yearbook. We look for 100 percent participation!

Penn Family ECC Family Shabbat Service and Dinner

April 23, 2020

We will come together as a Penn Family ECC community to celebrate Shabbat and eat Shabbat dinner.

In Conclusion

As soon as you have finished reading this document, each parent must fill out the **Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form** on our website. Please also share this handbook with all adults who care for your child.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or to Pam Schaner, Associate Director, with any questions or feedback. We look forward to a wonderful school year working together with you as a Penn Family ECC parent community!

Pamela B. Schwartz

Director, Penn Family ECC