



Parent Handbook 2023–2024

Penn Family Early Childhood Center

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New York, NY 10128

212-369-2600, x150

ECCOffice@pasyn.org

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2023–2024 school year at Penn Family ECC at Park Avenue Synagogue. As summer draws to a close, we hope that your family spent quality time together and with dear friends. We have all learned to savor these moments and to make sure that we do not take a second for granted.

Please take the time to read this Parent Handbook in its entirety. We recognize it is dense, and we know that the more parents partner with the school on policies and procedures related to our students and educators, the more successful our year together will be.

We are proud that, in partnership with our families, we have always put our community's safety as our highest priority. We continue to maintain COVID-19 policies, which are updated on a regular basis. Here is the most recent [COVID policy chart](#).

Even if you are a returning parent, it is important to read this handbook and share it with caregivers and other grown-ups who will be coming to Penn Family ECC, as there are several new policies. If you have any questions about the content of this handbook, please feel free to contact me at pschwartz@pasyn.org, or our Associate Director, Pam Schaner at pschaner@pasyn.org.

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 in important ways that enhance your children's school experience. By now you have received a parent questionnaire written by our Parent Association chairs: Courtney Tofsky and Debra Konstadt. 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 Acknowledgment Form on Remini. 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

Mon / Sep 4 / Labor Day / OFFICES CLOSED	Mon–Fri / Dec 25–Jan 5 / Winter Break / SCHOOL CLOSED
Thu / Sep 7 / 6:30 pm / Your Child’s Transition to School / Lauren M. Evening	Mon / Jan 15 / MLK Day / SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon / Sep 11 / First Day of School	Tue / Jan 16 / 9:00 am / Red Room Class Visit
Fri / Sep 15 / Erev Rosh Hashanah / SCHOOL CLOSED	Tue / Feb 13 / 9:00 am / Yellow Room Class Visit
Fri / Sep 22 / 9:15 am / Welcome Coffee	Mon–Fri / Feb 19–23 / Presidents’ Week / SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon / Sep 25 / Yom Kippur / SCHOOL CLOSED	Fri / Mar 1 / ALL DAY / Read Across America
Fri / Sep 29 / Sukkot / SCHOOL CLOSED	Tue / Mar 5 / Parent Conferences / SCHOOL CLOSED
Tue / Oct 3 / Sukkot Celebrations / Orange, 11:30 am; Purple, 12:30 pm; Green, 2:00 pm	Tue / Mar 12 / 9:00 am / Purple Room Class Visit
Wed / Oct 4 / Sukkot Celebrations / Yellow, 12:30 pm; Red, 1:30 pm; Blue, 2:00 pm	Tue / Apr 9 / 9:00 am / Orange Room Class Visit
Fri / Oct 6 / Shemini Atzeret / SCHOOL CLOSED	Mon / Apr 15 / 6:30 pm / Kindergarten Info Session
Mon / Oct 9 / Columbus Day / SCHOOL CLOSED	Wed / Apr 17 / Passover Celebrations / Orange, 11:30 am; Purple, 12:30 pm; Green, 2:00 pm
Tue / Oct 24 / Curriculum Night & Parent Cocktails 6:30 pm / Red, Green, Blue	Thu / Apr 18 / Passover Celebrations / Yellow, 12:30 pm; Red, 1:30 pm; Blue, 2:00 pm
Tue / Nov 7 / Curriculum Night & Parent Cocktails 6:30 pm / Yellow, Purple, Orange	Mon–Fri / Apr 22–May 3 / Passover Break / SCHOOL CLOSED
Wed / Nov 8 / 9:00 am / Blue Room Class Visit	Tue / May 14 / Special Visitors Day / Orange, 11:30 am; Blue, 2:00 pm
Fri / Nov 10 / Carol Hendin Professional Development Day / SCHOOL CLOSED	Wed / May 15 / Special Visitors Day / Yellow, 12:30 pm; Red, 1:30 pm
Sun / Nov 19 / Vicki K. Wimpfheimer Mitzvah Day / ALL DAY	Thu / May 16 / Special Visitors Day / Purple, 12:30 pm; Green, 2:00 pm
Wed / Nov 22 / NOON DISMISSAL	Mon / May 27 / Memorial Day / SCHOOL CLOSED
Thu–Fri / Nov 23–24 / Thanksgiving / SCHOOL CLOSED	Fri / May 31 / 5:30 pm / Penn Family ECC Family Shabbat Dinner
Wed–Thu / Nov 29–30 / Photo Day	Mon / Jun 3 / End-of-Year Celebration / Orange, 11:30 am; Red, 1:30 pm
Mon / Dec 4 / Parent Conferences / SCHOOL CLOSED	Tue / Jun 4 / End-of-Year Celebration / Purple 12:30 pm, Blue 2:00 pm
Thu / Dec 7 / 9:00 am / Green Room Class Visit	Wed / Jun 5 / End-of-Year Celebration / Yellow 12:30 pm, Green 2:00 pm
Wed / Dec 13 / Hanukkah Celebrations / Orange, 11:30 am; Yellow, 12:30 pm; Green 2:00 pm	Wed / Jun 5 / Last Day of School
Thu / Dec 14 / Hanukkah Celebrations / Purple, 12:30 pm; Red, 1:30 pm; Blue, 2:00 pm	

CLASSROOM AND SCHEDULES

Classroom	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
Orange	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 12:00 pm Fri 11:50 am
Purple	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 1:00 pm Fri 11:50 am
Yellow	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 1:00 pm Fri 11:50 am
Red	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 2:00 pm Fri 12:00 pm
Green	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 2:30 pm Fri 12:00 pm
Blue	Mon–Fri 9:00 am	Mon–Thu 2:30 pm Fri 12:00 pm

*Educators to be disseminated on August 30, 2023.

OTHER PENN FAMILY EDUCATORS AND STAFF

Support Educators

Errin Landberg
Emely Rodriguez
Kelly Singer

Mentor Educator

Dana Fine

Education Coordinator

Rachayl Reznik

Administration

Director: Pamela B. Schwartz, pschwartz@pasyn.org, x 152
Associate Director: Pam Schaner, pschaner@pasyn.org, x156
Office Coordinator: Danette Watson, dwatson@pasyn.org, x150
Administrative Assistant, Kevin Siguencia, eccoffice@pasyn.org x151

Specialists

Movement Educator:

Principal Music Educator: Cantor Arielle Reisner

Israeli Culture and Hebrew Language Educator: Raz Betser, PAS

Junior Schlichah (Israel Emissary)

Occupational Therapy Consultant: Stephanie Bronstein, OTR/L

Social Work Consultant: Lauren Macchio, LCSW

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

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

2023-2024 TUITION FEES

Days and Times	Deposit	Total Tuition
Mon–Fri, 3 hours/day	\$10,000	\$33,500
Mon–Thu, 4 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$36,000
Mon–Thu, 5 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$40,100
Mon–Thu, 5.5 hours/day Fri, 3 hours	\$10,000	\$42,500

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

ADMISSIONS AND CONTRACTS

Penn Family Early Childhood Center is committed to including families of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Should your family need financial assistance to meet the terms of a student contract, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Cohen, Director of Membership at Park Avenue Synagogue, at scohen@pasyn.org.

Once you sign a contract at Penn Family Early Childhood Center, you are committed to the full tuition for the school year and cannot sign with another Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY) institution unless you agree to pay both tuitions in full.

The deposit paid in January for returning students and in March for new students is non-refundable. Penn Family ECC reserves the right to dismiss any student if their family's financial obligations are not met in time.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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

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

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 and developmentally appropriate. Additionally, listening and observing play becomes an essential springboard for classes to select an area to study through the Project Approach.

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 using language. 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 being Jewish. We teach them through daily experiences, rituals, and traditions that define us as a community. Children recite *brakhot* (blessings), listen to Torah stories, and celebrate Shabbat weekly and holidays as they occur. As a community, we aspire to connect our students to Israel and its importance to our people. Children as young as 2 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* (righteous giving), *haknasat orhim* (welcoming guests), *bikkur holim* (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 the life of the school and the synagogue 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 Penn Family ECC's Winter Benefit and Tikkun Olam initiatives, which includes our participation in Vicki K. Wimpfheimer Mitzvah Day.

PARENT/FAMILY CONDUCT

The connection between home and school is of paramount importance in our school's philosophy. We believe in maintaining a strong partnership with the parents and caregivers of the children in our school and 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 Acknowledgment Form on Remini, I acknowledge and agree that as a parent of a child in Penn Family ECC:

- I will treat other parents and other children with kindness and respect.
- I will treat all educators and members of 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 communicate all constructive comments and feedback directly to educators and administration.
- I will stay abreast of all communications sent by Penn Family ECC, and by the synagogue at large.
- I will adhere to 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 Penn Family ECC and PAS administration.
- I will help to create a safe space for conversations regarding topics surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion that will take place in the classroom.

JEWISH VALUES

Teaching Jewish values is at the core of our mission at Park Avenue Synagogue 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 and respect toward others
- ***Hesed*** – showing kindness
- ***Tikkun olam*** – repairing the world
- ***Bal tash'hit*** – not wasting
- ***Haver tov*** – being a good friend
- ***Tzedakah*** – righteous 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 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

The transition to school is a major part of the curriculum during your child's first year at school. 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 new adults and children. It takes time for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds to develop trust in new adults and to feel comfortable in a school environment.

One of our primary goals is to help children make the transition from home to school. We want them to discover that school is a safe place to be joyful, play, learn, and make new friends. All the children will have a gradual phasing-in period during the first weeks of school. This schedule will be communicated at the end of August/beginning of September.

Each child goes through separation in their own way. We believe strongly in meeting the children where they are and working with them at that entry point. We care for each child and each family individually and with great sensitivity. There is a wide range in children's responses as they transition, and there is no "norm." It is not a race, and we will help each child and each family.

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 manage the transition. Typically, the meeting is focused on children who have not been to school before, but all parents, guardians, and caregivers are welcome to attend. This meeting will take place on Thursday, September 7 at 6:30 pm at PAS.

We require one parent guardian on the first day of school for each first-year student. After day one, your team of educators will collaborate with you to determine your child's needs, and after day one, a caregiver may come to support the children.

2. Classroom Visits

This year, we will invite all students to visit their classrooms prior to the first day of school. Teams of educators will reach out to families to schedule times for the end of August and beginning of September.

3. Toileting, Hitting, and Biting

We accept children into our 2s classes who are not toilet-trained. We ask that training is underway for children who are entering our young 3s 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 guidance throughout this process. Our philosophy on toileting mirrors that of meeting all developmental milestones. This is done on a child’s own timetable. Underwear is for everywhere. Children are ready to wear underwear when they can toilet in all places: home, school, and elsewhere. **We ask that each family send their child to school every day wearing either a diaper, pull-up, or underwear. Children may not come to school without wearing one of these options under their clothing.**

Hitting and Biting

As early childhood educators, we recognize that young children test the world around them. That can mean that they bite or hit others. This is within the realm of behaviors that we expect to observe in early childhood. When these behaviors do occur, we are very clear and firm with children. We share that they hurt others and that they are not safe. This usually extinguishes the behavior.

We will call home whenever a child bites or hits. We will call the child who did the biting or hitting and the child that was bit or hit. We will never share the names of the people involved to respect the confidentiality of each child.

When children continue to bite and hit despite these reminders, we see this as a pattern. This pattern may reflect the need for intervention of various types. In these moments, we will reach out and team with families to ensure that children always get what they need.

In rare occasions, children face moments that are heightened in nature. We maintain the philosophy at Penn Family ECC that we are here to keep your child and all of the children safe. If we feel that the former is jeopardized in any way, we will reach out to the family to strategize how to best support their child.

When a child bites or hits in the class, we ask families to trust that the administration is helping and intervening, and we ask families, as mentioned in the Parent Code of Conduct, to remain respectful and caring. We meet each child where they are and give everyone what they need.

B. CLASSROOM GROUPINGS AND 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/ Young 3s	9:00 am–1:00 pm	9:00–11:50 am
Yellow: 3s	9:00 am–1:00 pm	9:00–11:50 am
Red: Older 3s/Young 4s	9:00 am–2:00 pm	9:00 am–12:00 pm
Green: PK 1	9:00 am–2:30 pm	9:00 am–12:00 pm
Blue: PK 2	9:00 am–2:30 pm	9:00 am–12:00 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 our students. We ask that you adhere to our policies and procedures to keep the flow of these moments fluid and secure. Children will not be permitted into the building prior to 9:00 am. Please also take note of Friday dismissal times. The goal is to minimize bottlenecks, so please communicate these times to anyone picking up your child on Fridays.

1. Dismissal

Each classroom dismisses at a designated time. All vaccinated adults who are permitted for pickup will need to show identification through Remini.

Any change in who will pick up your child requires written (email) 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 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. These changes can also cause undo disruptions to a child's routine. Exceptions will be made only in emergencies.

2. Strollers and Scooters

For the 2023–2024 school year, we will require families who need to store their strollers and scooters during the day to utilize the new storage area (in the coat closet) on the Lobby level. All strollers must be folded. Please make sure that the stroller can be folded AND whoever is bringing your child to school knows how to fold the stroller. We will not allow unfolded strollers to be stored at school. Please note that starting this September, strollers and scooters will NOT be permitted to be parked outside the building.

3. Documentation and Security

PAS and Penn Family ECC require individuals to show proof of vaccination by uploading their vaccine card to Remini for entry into the building for arrival and drop-off.

4. Using Remini

Remini is a user friendly and multipurpose application for data collection, sharing, and storage. Remini is designed to help bridge the gap between families and educators while simplifying the way we share information with each other. We utilize features such as daily photo blogs, student form collection, sign-ups for events, and a more streamlined and safer drop-off and pickup process. Other features we are excited about include assessment tools and digital portfolios. Remini offers training and support for all families and educators and is best known for its personalized customer service. Remini has been vetted by the greater Park Avenue Synagogue from a security standpoint and is used by preschools all over Manhattan.

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 may worry when they are uncertain about their afterschool plans. Please do not phone the school to make afterschool arrangements, except in case of an emergency.

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

2. Penn Family ECC Afterschool Enrichment Classes

We offer a wide variety of Afterschool Enrichment classes that typically run for the fall semester from October to January and for the spring semester from February to June. There are no Afterschool Enrichment classes held when school is closed.

Elisheva Davidman will continue to coordinate our Afterschool Enrichment Program. You can reach her at eccafterschool@pasyn.org. We continue to plan for Penn Family ECC educators to lead several classes. Any classes led by outside vendors will be taught by educators who are fully vaccinated.

3. Afterschool Dismissal

Dismissal procedures for afterschool enrichment classes mirror that of regular dismissal. All children require a fully vaccinated adult to pick up the child in the building and sign out using appropriate procedures.

E. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

You must complete the Emergency Information Form on Remini with parents'/guardians' home, work, cell, and emergency phone numbers (relative or friend) for your child to attend school on the first day. Be sure to notify us of any changes during the year.

We will always take the 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 your emergency contacts. Please let these people know that you have designated them to make decisions in case of an emergency. Please also make sure we have all necessary information regarding any allergies and special health needs your child may have.

In the event an emergency requires us to leave the building, students and staff will walk to the Church of the Heavenly Rest located on Fifth Avenue between East 89th and East 90th Streets.

Our Staff Orientation in August includes exhaustive safety training with our security company, Security USA. We have monthly recorded 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

We typically follow New York City Department of Education rulings on school closures and, as of now, plan to do so in the coming school year.

F. HEALTH PROCEDURES

1. Medical Forms

The NYC Department of Health, Bureau of Day Care requires that each child have a recent 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 (DOH) policies, your child's pediatrician must complete **both the student health form and the EpiPen Jr Consent Form**. These forms can be found on Remini to download and print. Once completed by your pediatrician please upload the document back on Remini.
- If your child is under a physician's care for any special health issue, is taking any medication, or has any allergies, be sure these items are noted on the health form. Please also have your doctor complete both the Allergy/Special Health Care Plan and the Medication Consent Form and return these forms to Penn Family ECC office.
- All immunizations should be up to date. In accordance with the DOH mandates, all children are required to have a flu shot by December 31, 2023. 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. This form can be found to download and print on Remini. Once completed please upload the form in Remini.

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 their 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.

3. Absences from School

Please call or email 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. We also advise our maintenance team to come and sanitize a room once a communicable disease is found.

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 also 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 every effort to quickly pick up your ill child.

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.

4. Fever, Vomit, and Diarrhea

We consider a fever 99 degrees Fahrenheit and above. Should we detect a fever in your child, your child needs to remain at home for 24 hours fever free, unassisted by medication, before returning. The same policy is true for vomit and diarrhea.

Additionally, there are certain communicable diseases such as coxsackie that require your child to remain out of school during the contagious period. We ask that you strictly adhere to this to keep our community safe and healthy.

5. Vaccination

With the vaccination approved for all individuals, we require all adults in the building to be vaccinated prior to beginning their employment. All students must also be fully vaccinated prior to the start of school.

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 on file from the DOH, 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 DOH policies, **EVERY** child must have a complete EpiPen Jr 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 is for the rare possibility that a NEW severe allergy is developed during the school day. This form can be found on Remini to download and print. It must be completed by your doctor who must upload the form back to Remini 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 (before school and after each school vacation) 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. To be clear, we have a NO NIT policy, which means that if a child has an egg present, they are asked to go home and retreat. Children must present themselves to the Director or Associate Director of Penn Family ECC for a final check to gain permission to return to class. Letters are sent to all parents of children in classrooms where lice or nits have been found.

We follow protocol aligned with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

to clean affected areas after lice have been present. 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 snacks 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 safely climb on our equipment.

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 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, superhero 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 fingerpaint 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.

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 your child's things be labeled, 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.

Please be sure to bring multiple, comfortable masks to school each day. We recommend keeping them in a labeled plastic bag.

After winter vacation, check to make sure that the extra clothing in your child's cubby still fits and is seasonably 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 DOH 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. Please send in this item labeled for your child to use. We will send it home weekly to launder.**

H. TOYS AND OTHER ITEMS FROM HOME

We respect each child's needs, and while there are times when we make exceptions, we ask that toys from home stay at home. Please 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, handheld 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 engaged productively 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 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 and to ensure the safety of all our children, food brought for lunch, healthy snacks, birthdays, cooking projects, and holiday celebrations must be peanut-, tree nut- and nut-based-derivative-free. Note: We may need to ask for 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 items to school for snacks, lunch, or as an afterschool treat. If you bring a treat for your child at pickup 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. Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws)

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 a dairy kitchen. Food brought into the school must be dairy or pareve. Because many of our families follow *kashrut* strictly at home, please be considerate when planning functions with other families from school. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions regarding *kashrut*.

3. Lunch

Children in our 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, 9:00 am to 2:30 pm classes, and those who attend our Lunch Bunch classes are required to bring a dairy or vegetarian lunch (tuna sandwich, sun butter and jelly, bagel and 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

As part of our snack policy, we invite parents and children to take turns bringing a healthy snack to share with their class each Monday. Your child's educator will post a sign-up sheet sometime in the fall. We suggest that you bring something you and your child have chosen and prepared together.

Suggestions:

- Vegetables (celery, carrot sticks, red or green peppers, cucumbers, broccoli)
- Fresh fruits (apples, pears, bananas, strawberries, melons, apricots, pineapple)
- Kosher cheese, kosher yogurt, apple sauce

Please check to see if anyone in the class has any food allergies. If you have any doubts about what to bring, the educators will be happy to make additional suggestions.

J. CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

1. Parent Attendance Events

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

- Class Visits
- First Day of School (for all new students)
- Curriculum Night
- Sukkot Celebration
- Hanukkah Celebration
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (two per year)
- Pesach Celebration
- Penn Family ECC Community-wide Shabbat Service and Dinner
- Class Visit (20 minutes, one morning per year per class)
- Shabbat when your child is Child of the Week (one per year per class)
- Read Aloud (one per year)
- End-of-the-Year Class Celebration

***We ask that attendance is limited to two adults and that you find alternate arrangements for siblings.**

2. The Synagogue and the Clergy

Being part of a synagogue is a central part of our school. Each classroom team works closely with the clergy and staff at PAS to help connect our children to the synagogue at large. We welcome you to reach out to clergy and staff for any reason and to include them in your children's lives, and to receive guidance on the Jewish Life curriculum.

Clergy will join each class for Shabbat celebrations on Friday and join in morning *tefillah* when possible. You will receive a schedule of which clergy member will join your class and when.

CLERGY			
Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove	Rabbi	ecosgrove@pasyn.org	x120
Rabbi Neil Zuckerman	Associate Rabbi	nzuckerman@pasyn.org	x124
Rabbi Shayna Golkow Zauzmer	Assistant Rabbi	sgolkowzaumer@pasyn.org	x123
Cantor Azi Schwartz	Cantor	aschwartz@pasyn.org	x125
Cantor Mira Davis	Cantorial Fellow	mdavis@pasyn.org	x117
Cantor Arielle Reisner	Cantor Educator	areisner@pasyn.org	x134
Sierra Fox	Cantorial Intern	SFox@pasyn.org	

3. Holidays

We celebrate Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover. Depending on the school calendar, we also celebrate Rosh Hashanah, Simchat 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 teaches 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 in our weekly newsletters sharing what the children have learned so that the conversations about holidays can continue at home.

4. 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 birthday. However, not every child's birthday falls during the school year, and we feel strongly that all children at Penn Family ECC should experience the same type of celebration.

At Penn Family ECC, the children experience "Child of the Week." Instead of having parents come to celebrate their child's birthday, we will invite you to join the class one Friday for Shabbat when your child has been "Child of the Week." Everyone will have a turn to be "Child of the Week."

Parent/Guardians are welcome to attend Child of the Week for their child. The invite does not extend to siblings or extended family members.

"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. Over the course of the week leading up to your visit, your child will be the "Child of the Week" in his or her classroom. The class will recognize the "Child of the Week" in multiple ways. When you come on Friday, 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. Each classroom acknowledges birthdays in different developmentally appropriate ways. Please do not bring gifts or treats that day.

b. Special Visitors' Day

This year, we plan to host an in-person Special Visitors' Day, when children can bring up to four special adults to school with them. We will enjoy a festive time together. There are many options for special visitors in our students' lives. While Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are welcome, we also welcome caregivers and special friends. On this day, we do not allow parents or siblings (who are children) to attend as special visitors. These will take place in May, and if you have any questions regarding who can visit, please feel free to address administration.

c. Rainbow Time

Each month, Penn Family ECC at PAS comes together as a school community. We invite members of the clergy and Chris, our principal music educator, to join us in song and celebration. We often review what the children have learned about holidays, both secular and Jewish. Most importantly, we delight in being together! We ask that the children celebrate by wearing their Rainbow Time T-shirts.

This year, we will be adding All School Shabbat and Havdallah once a month. Stay tuned for these dates. They will happen directly after drop off in the Sanctuary.

d. Birthday Parties

We ask that you not plan birthday parties on Shabbat or on any other Jewish holiday. As a respectful Conservative Jewish community, we expect all parents to adhere to this policy.

If you plan a birthday party for your child, please do so with the spirit of community in mind. We ask that you remain inclusive in your efforts.

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

Penn Family ECC is blessed to have its own library. Each classroom will have a scheduled time each week to visit the library and check out books. At the beginning of the school year, each child will receive a personalized tote for carrying library books home and bringing them back to school. Parents will have the opportunity to sign up to read to their child's class during library time once during the school year.

M. SCHOOL CONSULTANTS

We have a team of specialists who help us better understand child development in general and our children more specifically:

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 all the children and work with all the educators. Workshops for educators and parents with said consultants will be arranged throughout the year. In addition, our consultants will be available to our families for individual conferences on a **one- or two-time basis**. All communication with our consultants goes through educators and administrators. If you want to meet virtually, schedule an appointment through the Director or Associate Director.

Should you hire consultants privately or through the DOE, our consultants are happy to consult with these individuals. Further, it is critical that our educators are in touch regularly with them.

You must complete the Parent Consent Form on Remini, which gives permission for these consultants to observe your child and provide feedback on a regular basis.

This year, we will continue our work with our math consultant, Jessica Soodek and John Gentile on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-creating safe spaces in the classroom for conversations and questions.

N. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

1. Classroom Involvement

Educators welcome planned participation from parents, including reading stories, cooking, art and science projects, sharing special talents, helping on class trips, etc. Parents are invited and encouraged to visit their child's classroom once per year. Additionally, older siblings enjoy visiting to read or play with students on days they do not have school, but we are in class. Again, an older sibling is welcome to come once a year to participate in such activities for one hour at a time.

2. Home-School Communication and 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 may 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. Reviews

Each day, educators will post a relevant photo and/or video with a caption, which gives insight into the post. This could be a photo of a sustainable art project in progress or a video of a *tefillah* song. On Fridays, educators will post a "Week-in-Review," which will summarize the themes and activities of the week and touch on educational theory. This can include songs, concepts, or skills learned, and should include ask-about's to generate conversation.

We will use Remini to share these reviews as well as photos of the classroom community.

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 the faculty on your team. You will receive an email to sign up for a specific 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 email

list. Your classroom educators will also have an email address, e.g. blueroom@pasyn.org.

Every Wednesday, Penn Family ECC emails a newsletter full of important information including upcoming events, reminders, etc. The best way to stay abreast of what is happening in Penn Family ECC is to regularly read these communications.

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 Penn Family ECC families on social media websites.
- Please do not contact educators or staff on their personal cell phones or through personal emails. This puts our educators at risk for disciplinary action.
- 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.
- Educators, administrators, consultants, and staff are strictly prohibited to work for Penn Family ECC families in any capacity outside of the school (e.g., tutoring, babysitting, etc.)

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 online sign-up at least two weeks in advance. You will receive notice regarding the sign up to ensure availability. 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. All parent-teacher conferences are held ONLY in person.

Please note that in addition to the scheduled conferences you may arrange additional 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: Instead, e-mail or call your educators to 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

As previously mentioned, before the school year begins, 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.

The Transition to School with Lauren Macchio, Social Work Consultant, will take place the evening of Thursday, September 7, at 6:30 pm at PAS.

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

6. Curriculum Night & Class Cocktail Parties

This year we have made the decision to merge these two important evening events. After the class curriculum nights, parents will come together for cocktails and mingling.

Tue / Oct 24 / 6:30 pm / Curriculum Night / Blue, Green, Red
Tue / Nov 7 / 6:30 pm / Curriculum Night / Yellow, Purple, Orange

O. ADMISSIONS PROCESS TO ONGOING SCHOOLS: "EXMISSIONS"

An evening meeting in the spring, April 15, 2024. will be devoted to a discussion of the general process of ongoing school admissions. In June 2024 or early fall, parents will have individual meetings with the Director followed by ongoing communication and support. Any questions or concerns regarding applying to schools beyond Penn Family ECC should be addressed directly to Pamela B. Schwartz, Director. Educators should not be responsible for conversations regarding this matter.

In keeping with our Parent/Family Code of Conduct (p. 13), 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 ECCPA, 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.

Debra Konstadt and Courtney Tofsky are the co-chairs of the Parents Association this year. If you have not done so, fill in the questionnaire that the PA sent in June 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 2023–2024 another successful year at 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

We are currently revising this policy and will be speaking about it during Orientation in September 2023.

R. WAYS TO GIVE AT 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 Penn Family ECC food contributions and distribute them to families in need through the Food Pantry.

Penn Family ECC Literacy Initiative:

Throughout the year, we will be finding ways to make an impact on expanding access to literacy throughout our city. We recognize the privilege of being immersed in a literacy-rich environment, both at school and at home. Penn Family ECC honors Read Across America on Friday, March 1.

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.

We will continue our exciting venture of “Book of the Month.” These books will reflect our work on creating safe spaces for conversations and questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Park Avenue Synagogue Gala:

A highlight of the year and a fun community-building celebration, the benefit is an important fundraiser for 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 fifth “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 forward to 100 percent participation.

Penn Family ECC Family Shabbat Service and Dinner:

We will come together as a Penn Family ECC community to celebrate Shabbat and eat Shabbat dinner, Friday, May 31, 2024.

IN CONCLUSION

As soon as you have finished reading this document, each parent must fill out the Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form on Remini. 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