



Gan Chaya Esther Preschool

295 S. Locust St. Denver, CO 80224

Parent Handbook

“A stimulating Jewish environment for children ages 2.5-5 that is warm, loving and supportive of the child’s learning priorities.”

The Gan Chaya Esther Preschool
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Handbook Index

Page 3	Introduction & Welcome
Page 4	Mission Statement, Philosophy, Preschool Experience, Non-Discrimination -Inclusion Policy
Page 5	Staff, Curriculum & Lesson Plans
Page 6	Learning Centers, Operating Hours
Page 7	Unique Programming, Parent Involvement & Open Communication, Center Evaluations, Conferences
Page 8	Grievances, Health Policies
Page 9	Head Lice, Lunch & Nutrition
Page 10	Tuition Payments, Late Fees, Withdrawal Policy
Page 11	Change of Schedule, Student Orientation, Discipline Policy
Page 12	Potty Training Policy, Biting Policy, Child Abuse & Neglect, Releasing of Child, Drop Off & Pick Up
Page 13	Clothing
Page 14	Toys from Home, Rest Time Essentials, Children's Playground Rules, Birthdays, Separation Anxiety
Page 15	Significance of Student Punctuality, Respect
Page 16	Substitutes, Severe Weather, Going Green, Summer Program

Addendums

Page 17 Addendum # 1	10 Simple Suggestions
Page 18 Addendum # 2	Lunch Ideas
Page 19 Addendum # 3	How Children Learn Through Play
Page 20 Addendum # 4	Be An Involved Parent!
Page 21 Addendum # 5	Daily Schedule
Page 22 Addendum #6	Essentials to Bring To Orientation

*Attached is the Calendar! Please familiarize yourself with it!

Introduction & Welcome

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gan Chaya Esther Preschool! Serving the educational needs of children two to five years old, we look forward to opening up new worlds for your child in fun and stimulating ways. I am pleased that you have chosen our school as a home away from home for your child. Here at Gan Chaya Esther Preschool, we are committed to creating a warm, friendly and happy environment for your child, while assisting your child in developing a strong positive awareness of his/her Jewish identity. Along with Judaic themes and holidays, the curriculum at the Gan Preschool will expose the children to a wide range of experiences including art, movement, early literacy, math skills, blocks and dramatic play, which are all integrated into our hands-on learning centers.

When dropping off your child, you will find caring teachers who, above all, will shower the children with love and affection. We offer a creative Jewish learning atmosphere where your child's individual style of learning will be valued and nurtured. We will encourage your child to explore their world, to learn to be part of a group, and to solve problems in a constructive manner. Learning at our school is self-rewarding, joyous and non-competitive.

I have prepared this handbook to help ease any anxieties you may have and to assure you that your child is in good hands. To help your child get ready for preschool, please take the time to carefully read this handbook, which contains updated and pertinent information as well as a school calendar and other addendums. This booklet has information and answers to parents' most common questions, and you will want to keep it handy and refer to it as needed.

Nothing, of course, takes the place of direct contact between you, me and the rest of the school staff. I invite you to call me at the school to discuss ANY questions or uncertainties regarding your child's preschool education whenever you feel it necessary. Please note that we have an open door policy which entitles parents to visit at any time, and we encourage parents to participate in our special family events, which further enhance the home – school connection.

I look forward to a fully cooperative relationship and a very successful school year.

Sincerely yours,

Rivka Sirota
Preschool Director

Gan Chaya Esther Preschool's Mission Statement

- To educate your child in a creative, supportive, and warm Jewish environment so that your child will not only learn about life as a Jew but will learn to love it too!
- To nourish and stimulate your child's learning priorities as we develop cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills, encouraging your child in becoming a well-rounded and self-confident individual.

Gan Preschool's Philosophy

Gan Preschool is a state licensed preschool serving the educational needs of children 2.5 to five years old. Our mission is to provide a warm and happy Jewish environment where your child's unique style of learning and developing is valued and nurtured. Through song and dance, stories and discussions, the precious legacy of their uniqueness as Jews is transmitted. Our approach allows us to offer a stimulating environment where your child will be encouraged to develop intellectually, emotionally and physically. A day in the life of a Gan Preschooler is truly an adventure! Backed by all the latest research and educational trends, the children enjoy a play-based curriculum. As children move through their environment, they are encouraged to explore, to manipulate, to experiment, to create, to problem solve and to interact socially through group activities and dramatic play. Our classroom environment follows the Creative Curriculum, which fosters a hands-on approach to learning and discovery. Our low student-teacher ratio ensures that each child receives individual and caring attention. Each of our children are seen as an individual, and thus given the respect and attention needed to develop and grow. Learning styles and individual interests are respected and addressed as teachers plan for the educational experience that will take place. As the magical years of early childhood are respected and honored, children build a strong sense of self, which the children take with them far beyond their early childhood years. Yet, most importantly, at the heart of the program, is our desire to nurture in our children a concern, kindness and sensitivity for their fellow human beings.

The Preschool Experience

Your child's preschool experience includes: Judaica, pre-math skills, reading readiness, dramatic play, sensorial exploration, art and music. Our rich and meaningful program provides a healthy mix of structured time and free play to encourage proper growth in cognitive, physical and social areas. In our multi-age program we provide both stimulation and challenge and are supportive of each child's own learning priorities. Staff-student ratio for the preschool class is 1:10.

Non-discrimination / Inclusion Policy

Gan Chaya Esther preschool values and supports the rights of all children, regardless of ethnicity, religion, national origin, and diverse abilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that programs make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and/or chronic illness. Chabad will consider each case individually and comply with the requirements of the ADA. It is the policy of the school that we may reserve the right to require an evaluation of any child who we believe is having significant difficulties functioning within the classroom. If we are unable to meet your child's needs, we

have the right to request additional support, which may include occupational, physical or speech therapists and/or a shadow, at the parents' own expense.

Our Staff

Our staff is made up of teachers, all of whom are chosen for their professionalism, as well as, their caring and compassionate personalities. Our teachers delight in unlocking your child's natural curiosity through providing the stimulation necessary for an experiential learning process. Our staff participates in annual in-service training in order to remain abreast with the latest trends in early childhood education. In addition, to keep our staff updated, we have monthly staff meetings, which are usually held on Tuesday mornings from 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. All our lead staff members have a degree, or are working towards a degree, in the field of early childhood education. At the beginning of each school year, our staff is trained in CPR, first aid, and in the use of a fire extinguisher.

Curriculum and Lesson Plans

Teachers prepare weekly lesson plans that include age appropriate activities that encourage and support children's physical health, social & emotional skills, language, literacy and communication skills, gross and fine motor skills, interest in nature and science and cognitive development. In addition, guidelines set in The Creative Curriculum for toddlers and preschoolers are followed and implemented in our classrooms. Numerous skills are developed when children are "playing" in learning centers. Judaic themes and holidays are also incorporated daily. A weekly lesson plan is posted in each classroom. Parents are encouraged to review the posted lesson plans.

Learning Centers

Your child will have a choice of activities in which to participate each day. Creative art, science & discovery, early math, family living, fine motor, building blocks, and sensory activities are examples of the activity centers available for your child. Because we believe that play is a child's greatest learning experience, our approach allows children to choose from a wide range of activities set up within the classroom setting.

As the art center is popular among the children, we wish to convey an important aspect of our philosophy. We do not do the work for the children. You will need to accept your child's artwork as he or she completed it. The work will not be teacher-fixed. This way, children are able to work freely and develop a personal pride in their works of art. Your child will be coming home with lots of artwork, and although you may choose to only hang up a few pieces, please acknowledge your child's effort and appreciate the vast opportunities provided to expand and enrich your child's creativity and fine motor skills.

Operating Hours

The Gan Preschool's operating days and hours are: Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. A morning schedule is suggested for children entering our program. For a child who is experiencing a first-

time exposure to a preschool, parents or guardians should consult with the director about the child increasing attendance one additional hour each day. Once the child is fully adjusted to the scheduled routine, it will be much easier for him/her to handle a full day schedule.

Upon arrival please accompany your child and greet the teacher. **We ask that you do not arrive before 8:55am**, as teachers are involved with preparation and are not ready to give the children their full attention. Being punctual to school is imperative and will assure that your child will have ample time to cultivate friendships, build self-esteem and enjoy the various learning centers before joining the morning group time. Gan Preschool is an educational center, rather than a babysitting service, and your promptness to school not only assures maximum growth, but also demonstrates respect for the staff who work tirelessly to help each child reach their fullest potential. Furthermore, a late arrival disrupts the classroom, and hinders our ability to provide a top-notch experience for your child. Hence, **we request that all students should arrive no later than 9:10am**. Providing a timely and structured evening and morning schedule will help your child be well prepared for an exciting and enriching day of school. If you arrive after 9:10am, please avoid interrupting the teachers and students who are actively engaged in learning activities, and quickly sign in and share a quick good-bye hug with your child.

There is early drop off available if needed. Please speak to the director.

Our Unique Programming

- 1) **Judaica:** Every morning children enjoy a special Judaica group time. At this time, children are warmly welcomed by our Judaica Specialist and Preschool Director, Rivka Sirota. Prayer songs, along with a Judaic theme or Jewish holiday, are discussed in a cheerful and stimulating manner. Songs, crafts and movement activities highlight the Judaica group time.
- 2) **Mitzvah Notes:** Your child learns the importance of performing good deeds and Jewish traditions. As we read your Mitzvah notes during group time, we seek to cultivate an appreciation for positive behaviors displayed at home. This connection between the home and school is as simple as writing a Mitzvah Note. Mitzvah Notes can always be found near the sign in sheet.
- 3) **Music:** Children will be exposed to various instruments and songs integrated in the curriculum.
- 4) **Birthdays:** Monthly class celebrations are held to honor the birthdays of our young students. Our teachers will be happy to have you come for lunch or snack, and read a story.
- 5) **Challah Baking & the Celebration of Shabbat:** To celebrate the coming of the Shabbat, each Friday a special Shabbat atmosphere is created. The first activity on Friday mornings is always Challah baking. We also gather for a special group time where we sing Hebrew songs and Shabbat songs, bringing a special excitement into the class.
- 6) **Jewish Holiday Family Celebrations:** Prior to Jewish holidays, parents and extended family are encouraged to join our school for a fun-filled holiday experience, which includes a holiday presentation by the children, as well as an array of hands-on activities which will create memorable moments that you share during this quality time with your child. All holiday events are marked on the school calendar.
- 7) **Character Development:** Character development is an essential component of our program, and is part of both the written and unwritten curriculum. Teachers will extend themselves to help children

understand and manage their feelings, teach friendship skills, promote cooperation and strive to create a caring classroom that values and supports every child. When parents work hand-in-hand with the staff to help their child build character development, we are assured that children will be well rounded and well equipped for kindergarten.

Parent Involvement & Open Communication

Open communication between parent and teacher is essential. Your child will benefit tremendously from this communication. Avenues for communication and parent involvement are provided in the following manner:

- 1) Weekly emails with pictures, will acquaint you with what has been taught in class, and will also include a calendar for the upcoming month. This is our way of informing you of special classroom activities. It is also our way of informing parents of important information. Monthly letters from the Director will include pertinent information about school events and administrative updates.
- 2) Email is the best mode of communication with the preschool director. For important messages or a quick reminder, please share with us your preferred mode of communication i.e. home telephone, cell phone, email, cell phone text or notes in your child's lunchbox.
- 3) Take the time to greet and talk with your child's teacher. If you would like to have more than the normal short chat, please feel free to set up a suitable time to talk when the teacher can give you her undivided attention.
- 4) A bulletin board is available with announcements for you to view and read. Please take the time to scan the parent bulletin board regularly to keep informed of upcoming happenings or announcements. In addition, weekly lesson plans are posted for your review.
- 5) Parent involvement increases the success of our preschool. The registration packet includes a volunteer form that should be submitted with your registration form. In addition, if you have a talent, skill or occupation that would interest preschoolers, please let us know.

Center Evaluations

Twice annually, parents will be given the opportunity to evaluate our program, and its ability to meet your child's needs. These evaluations are very important to us, and we encourage you to promptly complete and submit the form when it is received. Your feedback helps us to set goals to further improve our early childhood learning center.

Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are held in November and May. At these conferences we will update you of your child's growth in all facets of child development. Parents are given a 15-minute meeting, and if, after the fifteen minutes, you feel you need more time, please let the teacher know you would like to schedule a second conference. If we feel it appropriate to have your child evaluated by an outside professional, parents or legal guardian will receive a written notice requesting parental consent. Although we have two conferences scheduled throughout the school year, please feel free to arrange a meeting whenever an individual concern arises. Following each conference, parents or guardians will sign a document indicating that a conference has taken place and that clear goals have been set.

Grievances

Please realize that to voice your concern is perfectly okay, and all we request is that it be done respectfully. When you come into the classroom to drop off, pick up or visit, please remember to keep the greetings and update short. To contact a teacher or the director to speak with them or set up a meeting, parents are encouraged to leave a message, or send an email. Please do not engage in lengthy conversations with the teacher while she is responsible for working with the students. The teacher's primary job is to care for the children and their safety by providing the students with undivided attention. Should you have any questions regarding your child's class that you feel should be dealt with immediately, please contact either your child's Teacher or preschool director.

Health Policies

The health of your child is important to you as well as to our staff. It is your responsibility to determine that your child is physically well enough to come to preschool. **If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep your child home:**

- **Child has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period**
- **Child is within the first 24-hour period of taking an antibiotic**
- **Child has a colored nasal discharge**
- **Child has a constant cough**
- **Child has a cold with discharge that requires attention in excess of three times in 20 minutes.**
- **Child has symptoms of a possible communicable disease (pink eye, diarrhea, flu)**
- **Child is fussy, cranky, or tired and generally not behaving in normal disposition**

Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness. Please notify the school at once if your child does have a communicable disease. **Keeping your child at home will allow your child to recuperate with quiet rest and your special TLC. In addition, it will protect the well being of other children and our staff members, who are very dear to the children. A child who had a communicable illness may return to school with a doctor's note, or until symptoms are no longer present.** If your child becomes sick during school hours, exhibits any of the aforementioned symptoms, or is just not feeling up to par and not enjoying the day, we will set up a safe and comfortable isolated area where your child can rest until you arrive. For the safety and wellness of other students and staff, parent or guardian must pick up the unwell child immediately. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contact on your registration form will be called. Gan Preschool does not routinely administer medicine, creams or lotions. Most medications can be given to a child in the morning, after school and before bedtime. Under certain circumstances, and with parental and / or doctor authorization, medication may be administered. Forms for this purpose will be available through the director. When medication is given at school, please realize that for safety it will be kept in a locked cabinet, and that only the lead teacher or the director will administer the medication.

At enrollment we must have on record a current health form and immunization record, which

your child's doctor should complete. It is imperative that you immediately notify the school regarding changes in your home telephone, cell phone, or work number. In the event of an emergency it will enable us to contact you immediately. If deemed necessary by the attending teacher and/or director, paramedics will transport a child to an appropriate health care facility. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any incurred expense. If your child receives a minor injury or bruise at school, we will wash the wound, apply a band-aid, and provide extra tender loving care. An Incident Report will be completed by the witnessing teacher, which will need to be signed by the teacher, the parent, and the director. At times, if a child reacts dramatically (lots of crying for example), the teacher will make an earnest attempt to call the parent during a quiet moment or break. Please realize, that by state law we are unable to apply any first aid cream, Neosporin or anti-itch cream.

Head Lice or Body Infestations

Head lice or other infestations are generally not a threat to our health, but can be a nuisance. When the school is aware of lice or other bodily infestations, a letter (and email) informing parents will be sent out immediately. Control of head lice or other infestation is a shared responsibility of both parents and the school. Parents can help limit the problem by checking their child's head regularly. If lice or nits are found, the school **MUST** be notified. A child who has had head lice will be permitted to return following a treatment and lice check by the Preschool Director or her agent. A child must be free of nits (even dead ones), prior to his / her return to school. Our state laws mandate that parents show verification that an initial treatment has occurred and that a second treatment will take place 10 days later.

Lunch & Nutrition

Please pack a nutritious lunch and carefully select your child's foods. We recommend that you place an ice pack in your child's lunch box. **Please send in a lunch made up of the four food groups** (even if your child doesn't like a certain category). By observing others healthy eating habits we can help your child model proper and healthful eating habits. Since you provide your child's lunch, we rely on you to help us adhere to the kosher dietary laws. **Please send only dairy or pareve lunches. No meat or poultry lunches will be allowed. As we try to encourage proper and healthful eating habits, please do not send any candy or high calorie treats. Sticky fruit snacks such as fruit roll up, gushers or the like should not be sent in. If you decide to send in a cookie for dessert, please remind your child to eat it only after all the healthy food has been eaten.** Please note that when we have our unannounced state mandated observations and inspections, professionals actually make note of how many kids have milk to drink, and how many children's lunches contain all four food groups, and we get graded accordingly. An addendum to this handbook lists lunch suggestions. So that you will have an idea of how much your child has eaten for lunch, and which foods your child is most enjoying, we will help your child pack up his/her remaining lunch. All foods and drinks sent to school in its original store packaging should have a kosher symbol. Kosher symbols include: OU, OK, triangle K, star K or just a K. Questions regarding kosher symbols should be brought to your child's teacher and/or director.

Snacks

Morning snacks are provided by parents. During the morning learning center time and in the afternoon children will have a chance to take out their snack from their lunchbox.

Tuition Payments

The annual tuition fee is paid in one, two or ten installments from August 1 through May 1. Together with this information packet, you should receive a tuition payment plan form, which must be submitted to the office prior to enrollment. For any check not honored by the bank there will be a \$35.00 fee.

Tuition installments, if you choose to take advantage of them, are due on the 1st of each month. If the installment is not received on the 5th, there will be a \$25 late payment fee. If tuition is not received by the 10th, enrollment will be terminated. If your child's enrollment is terminated, you will need to pay the enrollment fee of \$250 again to re-enroll your child. Please note that the tuition is an annual fee and there are no credits or make-up days for illness, holidays or family vacations.

At Gan Preschool we strive to maintain professional and ethical standards, and in all fairness, we cannot allow make-up days for one child and not another. Please understand, that your request for make up days will be denied. Also, prior to enrolling, carefully review the preschool calendar, making note of the days our school is not in session, and have backup childcare plans if necessary. (Our school is out of session for the following Jewish and legal holidays: Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Shimini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, MLK Day, Presidents Day, Passover/Spring Break, Shavuot and Memorial Day.)

Late Fees

Pick up times are at 12:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. We realize that emergencies and/or heavy traffic occur at times. In such cases where a parent is late, a ten - minute grace period will be given at no additional cost. After 12:40 p.m. or 3:10 p.m., there will be a five - dollar late fee charged for every 5-minute interval. This fee should be given directly to the teacher who has stayed late with your child. **Please understand that the 10-minute grace period is merely a gesture and should not be steadily utilized as 10 more minutes of childcare.** It is during this time that our teachers are paid to tidy up their classroom in preparation for the next day. **Parents who are late more than three times in a single month, will lose the 10-minute grace period, and late fees will be applied from dismissal time.**

Withdrawal Policy

We will make every effort to see that your child's needs are being nurtured each and every day. If, however, you choose to withdraw your child from our program, you are required to give the school two weeks advance notice in writing. If you fail to give us a month notice, you will be responsible for the following month's tuition. Refunds are not given under any circumstances.

Change of Schedule

If a parent should desire to change a student's schedule in any way, whether it is to add days or an afternoon, it is necessary for the parent to speak with the director and/or secretary a few days in advance, and make the necessary payment for the change in schedule. The director or secretary will inform the teacher of changes you have made to your child's schedule.

Student Orientation

On the Sunday prior the beginning of the school year, a special parent and child orientation will be held. Parent / guardian and child will meet the teachers, receive a classroom tour and do a short art project. Children registering mid-year will be given a designated orientation schedule. If your child speaks another language at home, at orientation kindly provide us with a list of commonly used words in your child's natural language. This will assure that a child whose second language is English will feel embraced and nurtured.

Underage Child Policy

If your child is under 2 ½ years old and you would like to have an introductory period one month prior to enrollment, you are welcome to bring your child 2 hours per day, 3 days a week while you are in the building. You will not be charged during this introductory time.

Discipline Policy

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. To accomplish our goal the following techniques are used on a daily basis:

- 1) Prevention & Positive Reinforcement: Providing a daily routine, a sense of security and constantly praising and reinforcing appropriate behavior.
- 2) Setting Limits: Simple rules are established and consistently followed. A poster with five simple class rules is always displayed in the classroom.
- 3) Problem Solving: We encourage the child to verbalize and use logical reasoning and consequences as the means of solving the problem at hand. Problem solving by giving a choice to the child who is experiencing a difficulty allows the child to be part of the decision-making process and usually yields positive results.
- 4) Removing Child From The Situation: After all positive techniques have been tried, the last alternative is to remove the child from the situation until the child has relaxed and calmed down and is capable of returning to the group cooperatively.

When behavior problems occur, we will look at our routines, the environment and individual needs of the child to help overcome the behavior. Our teachers are trained to use a calm tone of voice, and to avoid giving negative attention to a child. Children at Gan Preschool will not be subject to physical discipline or discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening, and discipline is never associated with food, rest or toileting.

Your child is expected to meet an acceptable standard of behavior as set by the teacher. If your child's behavior falls below standard, you will be informed. If after a reasonable period of time a child is not able to adjust to the demands of the group, the class schedule, or if there are special needs that Gan Preschool is unable to meet, we may ask for additional support including but not limited to, professional observation, and a referral to a speech, physical, behavioral or occupational therapist, and/or a shadow,

which will be at the parents' own expense. Parental consent for a professional observation and referral will be maintained in the child's file.

Potty Training Policy

When you feel your child is able to make the transition to be fully potty trained, schedule a time to discuss this with your child's teacher, and we will arrange for your child to go to the bathroom on an hourly basis. To assure success, it is imperative for parents to implement a similar potty training plan at home. From our past experiences we have seen this plan boost self-confidence and attain potty training success.

Biting Policy

Biting can be a form of expression in children who have limited verbal skills. Some young children may use biting when angry or frustrated. While it is considered typical behavior for young children, it is detrimental to the safety and well being of the children in the classroom. Hence, if a child bites one time, the teacher or director will contact the family in order to implement a plan that would prevent further incidents from taking place. If repeated biting incidents occur, we may ask for a shadow or temporary withdrawal from the program.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All Gan Preschool staff members are required by law to report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect allegations are reported to a Central Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). If a parent suspects child abuse or neglect by a staff member, please notify the director immediately. Parents may also contact the child abuse hotline directly.

Releasing Of A Child

Children are released only to their parents or to the custody of persons stated in writing on the child's registration form. It is imperative that you notify the school in writing if someone else will be picking up your child. Our staff has been instructed to ask for photo identification to release a child to someone we did not personally meet.

Drop Off & Pick up

When bringing or picking up your child, please park your car in a parking space. Children should not be allowed to run in the parking lot or the school building, and should be brought into the classroom with a parent. The parent or guardian who brings and takes the child into the classroom must sign the child in and out on the attendance roster placed at the entrance to each classroom. Signing in and out is as simple as noting the time of your arrival and departure and placing your signature next to the time. This is a safety measure we strictly adhere to, and we request your full cooperation.

In the best interest of your child's social, emotional and cognitive growth, it is essential that your child be prompt to school. An early bedtime routine will assure that there is no power struggle or excessive rushing in the morning, and that your child has adequate time to eat breakfast.

During drop off and pick up please understand that the care of the children is the teacher's first and foremost responsibility. Please respect the teachers by keeping the morning and afternoon "chit chat" to a minimum so as not to distract the teacher from her primary responsibility of caring for the children. Should you at any time wish to have a longer talk with a teacher, please ask the teacher to set up a suitable time to discuss any question or concern.

During pick up and drop off times, parents should be fully focused on their child, his/her day, and have a brief exchange with the teacher. To promote this concept we are making the hallway and classrooms a **NO CELL PHONE ZONE! Parents are the child's first teacher, and your child craves your full attention.** Please honor your child, and honor his/her education, by refraining from using your cell phones during pick up and drop off. Of course, in the car, we encourage you to talk to your child about the various activities, songs and social interactions that took place during the day.

Clothing

Children should wear clothing that is appropriate for floor activities and messy art. Although we use washable paints and markers, please don't send your child in clothing that would disappoint you if it gets dirty. Also, be sure your child's clothes are easily managed during toileting. Hard to close snaps, belts, one-piece outfits and overalls that have buckles should be avoided. A young child's self esteem is enhanced when he or she can be independently successful.

Since children enjoy running and playing on the outdoor playground, we discourage children from wearing flip-flops, crocs or sandals that do not provide adequate support. In addition, children get frustrated when mulch gets stuck in their sandals. We strongly advise parents to make sure their child is wearing socks and tennis shoes even during the summer season. Children love the freedom and gross motor opportunity that they gain from outdoor play, and by wearing a strong closed shoe (sneaker), we can bolster this wonderful opportunity. Velcro shoes are not mandatory, but for the younger child, it increases self-esteem as they master the ability to put on their shoes, and eases the job for the teacher, as shoelaces seem to always untie. As a safety precaution, all children will be required to wear a hat during outdoor play. Please make sure to bring a hat that can stay in school. Label all hats, sweaters, and clothing that stay in your child's cubby or on the classroom hooks. Labeling will assist the teachers in determining ownership of clothing.

Toys From Home

We have found that toys from home are hard to share and create a great distraction to the class atmosphere, which requires concentration and promotes learning. When your child has a cherished item, suggest that it be left in the car seat or at home. The teacher may notify you of a show & tell schedule. However, even during show and tell, the school policy is that children share something educational rather than a toy, which can create jealous feelings amongst fellow classmates. Please **don't send a**

television or movie super hero toy, even if you think it's educational. This encourages excessive talk about the latest TV shows and movies and often times, can lead to aggressive behaviors in the classroom.

Rest Time Essentials

For students who stay until 3:00 p.m., parents must send in a crib sheet, small soft blanket and soft doll or animal in a small canvas bag that fits our small rest time essential drawers. Bulky pillows, blankets or stuffed animals will be sent home. This bag is brought to school on Monday mornings and is sent home on Friday to launder.

Children's Playground Rules

For safety and for the benefit of the children, we have established a few playground rules, which we would like you to review with your child. These rules are listed outside on the playground and are referred to by the staff as they provide gentle reminders to the children about our rules.

1. Hands to yourself.
2. Mulch, wood pieces, or branch sticks stay on the ground. (No playing with mulch or sticks)
3. Walk around the swing area.
4. Fence is not for climbing.
5. Help clean up.
6. Sand stays in the sand table (water/water table).
7. Feet first on the slide.
8. The water fountain is only for drinking water.

Birthdays

At Gan Preschool birthdays are celebrated once a month. The dates for these monthly birthday celebrations are set at the beginning of the school year. Many parents have come in for lunch, to spend time with their child, read a book to the class, and take memorable photographs. **To honor their child's birthday, parents are encouraged to donate a book, puzzle, gift certificate or game to the classroom.** Monthly birthday celebration dates are enumerated in the school calendar. Please note that we do not allow party bags with candy, gifts and trinkets to be distributed at the school.

Separation Anxiety

Please understand that it is very common for children who are new to the preschool experience to display signs of separation anxiety. Our goal is to help you and your child go through the initial transition comfortably and to help your child learn to say goodbye. Although there is no substitute for parental love, a child should learn that after a parent leaves a teacher is there to provide a nurturing environment. If a child is crying uncontrollably for one half hour, we will call you. At drop off parents are always welcome to stay in the classroom for a few minutes; however, after saying a final good-bye, you are welcome to relax and enjoy a cup of coffee in the social hall or relax with a book from our Judaic library. Additionally, if a child has a difficult time separating from one parent, you may want to try to have another parent or relative drop off your child. Also, for children having separation difficulty, we

recommend a gradual transition of slowly increasing hours and picking up a bit earlier for the first few days. Often, after the parent leaves, the child becomes absorbed with toys and the environment and is free of any apprehension. Having a family photo brought into school on the first day of school, helps us bridge the school - home connection. Parent and student orientation, held prior to the onset of the school year (and arranged before school hours for new students entering mid-year) allows the child to acclimate to the room and the teacher, assists in creating a strong foundation of trust and comfort. All parents must say goodbye to their child and tell them when they will return. Parents should not sneak out in order to prevent a child from crying at that moment. Leaving without saying goodbye may be easier for the parents than leaving when the child is crying, but it is not easier for the child. It may cause a sense of fear, and instead of the child interacting and engaging in activity, the child may be all-absorbed with checking the window or door and keeping a close eye on the eagerly awaited return of the parent.

The Importance of Arriving at School on Time

One of the biggest obstacles we face at our preschool is educating parents about the importance of arriving on time for school. The doors to the classrooms open at 9:00 am. At 9:10 am, the children transition to large group circle time. Our schedule provides 10 minutes for the children and the teacher to settle in, greet one another, talk about anything on their minds as well as put their belongings away.

Circle time is important because this is a time the entire class is actively engaged with one another. The teachers use the opportunity to talk about upcoming events in the classroom as well as to introduce new concepts and lessons. It also allows the student to communicate in a large group and is an important part of our routine, activities.

When a child enters the classroom during circle time, it creates a huge disruption for both the teacher and the other children who are actively engaged in the classroom activities at the time.the focus is now on the one child arriving late and not the teacher who is trying to conduct group circle time activities.We have found that when children arrive on time, they are much more relaxed and eager to participate throughout the day... The examples and lessons that parents are teaching their children lay the foundation for the rest of their school years and life.

Suspension /Expulsion Policy

If we are experiencing challenging behaviors with a child, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher and director will meet to discuss the behaviors
2. The teacher and director will meet with the parent to discuss the behaviors and create a plan
3. A mental health consultant will come to work with the school and the child
4. Every effort will be made not to suspend or expel the child

Respect

Please respect the religious nature of our school in the following ways:

- Remind anyone who brings or picks up your child to refrain from displaying any non-Jewish symbol.
- Please respect our Jewish organization and avoid coming to GAn Preschool in immodest and very revealing clothing (show of midriff, undergarments or cleavage).

- Although our preschool calendar respects the legal holidays, we are a Jewish preschool and would like to request that our parents help remind their children that Halloween and other non-Jewish holidays are not celebrated at Gan Preschool.
- Review and respect our kosher policy, and if you have any questions, they can be directed to the teacher or director. Let us address your questions and assure that there is a mutual understanding.
- As Shabbat (Saturday) is a special day on the Jewish calendar, when organizing a birthday celebration to which preschool friends are invited, please refrain from planning a Saturday / Shabbat birthday celebration.

Your respect is essential in allowing us to fulfill our goals, and we thank you for your cooperation.

Substitutes

From time to time, when our teachers are out sick or take a family vacation, it is necessary for us to secure a substitute. If you would like to assist in this capacity, please speak to the Preschool Director about completing the 45-hour online computer training and a background screening. Once you complete these prerequisites, you can be on the substitute list even after your child graduates from our program. Substituting is a paid position.

Responding to Emergencies Policies:

Lost Children Policy:

In case of lost children, G-d Forbid, we immediately call 911, notify the parents and continue looking for the lost children, while securing the children in our presence.

Fire / Bad Weather Drills

Fire / Bad Weather Drills must be executed once a month. Staff must also know how to use the fire extinguishers. We will review their use at orientation at the beginning of every school year. In case of fire, the procedures will be as follows:

- 1) Students line up and the teacher leads her class out while they hold a rope when exiting the building. The teacher makes sure to take your attendance sheet.
- 2) Children and staff walk outside; staff take attendance. Thereafter, all will walk across the parking lot and cross the street. The teacher will stay with the children until instructed by the Program Director. Parents will be called and advised to pick up their children immediately.
- 3) Safety is of utmost importance. A regular pace should be maintained, but running should not be permitted. Watch for cars, and stop walking when a car passes by.
- 4) Each teacher is required to discuss/reinforce these procedures with his/her class by September 15th.

- 5) Follow evacuation exits on the charts in your room. Preschool class' first evacuation route would be to exit from the front door and go out towards the parking lot. The alternative would be to evacuate through the preschool door that leads towards the hallway and go outside from there.
- 6) In the case of a blackout, alternative lighting (flashlights) are located on the filing cabinet, near the first aid.
- 7) If phone lines are down, an alternative number will be used- Rivka's cell phone: 720-233-9503.

Disasters / Severe Weather/Tornados

- 1) In case of a tornado watch, staff will be informed and remain indoors. If a tornado strike is imminent, stay away from the windows, and remain in the interior areas of the buildings, such as hallways and bathrooms. Crouch down on the floor with the children, put your hands over your head if possible and remain calm.
- 2) In cases of lightning storms, all staff and children must remain indoors.
- 3) In cases of severe weather such as: hurricane warnings, tropical storm or flood watch, the center will close when the public schools or county offices close. Staff will be kept informed and parents will be notified. Parents will be told to keep themselves informed throughout the day and to be prepared to pick up their child within 1 hour of school closings and hurricane warnings.

Reunification Site

In the event of an emergency where we are forced to vacate the preschool, we will reunify at Site A, Rivka Sirota's residence. Parents will be either called or texted if an emergency happens where we are forced to leave the preschool. We will walk the three short blocks to this site with the children.

Evacuation of Children with Disabilities

If there is a child with disabilities, the Director will pick up the child and evacuate the child to a safe place with the other children.

Natural Disaster School Closures

Please realize in the event of a snow storm, hurricane or other natural disaster, our school will follow the closures set by the Denver County Public School Board. If the school phone line goes down, alternate numbers to call are 720-233-9503 (Rivka Cell) or 303 437 4728 (Rabbi Cell). Each month at preschool we have a fire drill, where we practice vacating the building quickly and efficiently.

Inclement Weather

Children do not go outside if the temperature is over 95 degrees F. If it is between 90-95 degrees F, time will be restricted and the children will be kept to shady areas. If it is below 25 degrees F, children will not go outside. Temperatures between 25 and 30 degrees F will result in potentially shorter amounts of time outside.

Dangerous or Threatening Situations/Lock Down

- 1) In case where a threatening person is in the area of the center, all staff will be notified and everyone will remain indoors; all doors will be locked, the police will be notified and staff will follow instructions of local law officials.
- 2) If a parent becomes threatening while at the school, the police will be called and all staff will follow the instructions of the Program Director and local law enforcement.
- 3) In cases of a dangerous animal on the center property, all staff will be notified and remain indoors until the animal has been removed or leaves the premises. No staff member or child shall touch the animal (examples but not limited to: snake, rodent, cat, dog, raccoon).
- 4) Any other threatening situation will be handled by the Program Director based on the specific threat. Staff will be immediately informed of all procedures that need to be followed to insure the safety of everyone.

Complaint Policy

Complaint about child care included in the staff and parent handbooks:

To file a complaint about this facility contact:

The Colorado Department of Human Services

Office of Early Childhood, Division of Early Care and Learning

1575 Sherman St.

Denver, CO 80203-1714 or call 303.866.5958 or 1800.799.5876

Our licensing report is available upon request.

Transporting Children

There is no transporting policy as we don't transport children to or from school or anywhere else. Our policy is no field trips, television, or video viewing. Any special activities will come to the school.

Going Green

In an effort to teach children to appreciate the beautiful world we live in and to preserve its natural resources the following is a list that will prevent unnecessary wastefulness and encourage appreciation of nature.

- When coloring children will be encouraged to use both sides of the paper.
- The classroom will have a recycling bin for plastics and paper, and the helping friend on Friday

will take home the bags to recycle.

- Lights will be turned off when children leave the classroom and go to the playground.
- We recommend that lunches be sent in reusable / washable containers.
- Small washcloths can be placed in a child's lunch box in place of the paper towels used as a placemat and a napkin.
- The Judaic Tu B'shvat – Jewish Arbor Day unit will bring added focus on efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle and appreciate the world around us.
- The preschool garden and occasional nature walks point out the beauty of nature.
- Raising butterflies teaches children about the natural eco-system
- Fewer lunch box notes and reminders will save paper, and email will be used for reminders.



Gan Chaya Esther Preschool

295 S. Locust St. Denver, CO 80224
Tel: (303) 355-8223 or (720) 233 - 9503

(Parent Handbook Addendum # 1)

10 Simple Suggestions for Parents To Help Make Preschool A Happy Experience

- 1) See that your child has **sufficient rest and sleep**. The National Sleep Foundation recommends 11-13 hours for preschoolers (ages 3-5).
- 2) To make your child more comfortable, provide **simple clothing that is free of complicated belts** and closures.
- 3) Since children get very involved with their art projects, please provide **clothing that is washable**.
- 4) Please understand the validity and **significance of play**, and the importance of what is learned.
- 5) Keeping in mind our playground, please provide clothing and shoes that are sturdy. **Flip flops, crocs and shoes without a back, do not allow the child to enjoy outdoor play to its fullest. Wearing socks will assure that mulch and dirt do not bother your child while playing on the playground.**
- 6) Send your child off to school in a happy frame of mind by **showing interest** in what your child does at school and what your child is learning.
- 7) **Encourage your child to talk about what he/she did in school**. When receiving an answer like “I don’t know” or “nothing”, you can prompt your child by asking more specific questions. (What did you eat for lunch? What song did you sing at group time? Etc...) The weekly “Peek At The Week”, will help you know what questions to ask your child.
- 8) Encourage your child to frequently **wash hands** to ward off the spread of germs.
- 9) **Get involved**, volunteer your time, and assist with special events, teacher appreciation, chair a fundraiser, share a professional interest or hobby with our school. Parents who volunteer are known to positively affect their child’s success in school.
- 10) Get to know your child’s teacher and **keep open communication** throughout the school year. Please remember that when parents and preschool staff work together, we can help your child develop to his or her full potential.



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Gan Preschool Lunch Ideas

(Parent Handbook Addendum # 2)

Lunch & Snack Ideas

- Dairy or *Pareve Only - No meat lunches allowed.
- Please do not send in any candy or sticky fruit candy (fruit leather, fruit by the foot, etc.)
- Any packaged product sent in your child's lunch box must have a kosher symbol. Should you have any further questions, feel free to speak to your child's teacher or director.
- If you decide to send in a cookie dessert, please remind your child that this should be eaten only after all the healthy food has been eaten. If a power struggles presence itself, we may suggest that you refrain from sending in a cookie or nosh food.
- We recommend that you place an ice pack in your child's lunch box.

Sandwiches:

Cream cheese
Tuna fish
Jelly
Egg or egg salad
Margarine
Peanut butter

Fruits and Vegetables:

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

General:

Yogurt
Sliced cheese
String cheese
Cottage cheese
Macaroni and cheese
Bagel pizza
Rice cakes
Bread sticks
Graham crackers
Pretzels
Granola Bar
Pretzels
Raisins, Craisins

Drink: Milk, water or juice

*Pareve means a food that has no dairy or meat derivative example fruit, veggies, pb, jelly, rice cakes, pretzels etc.

Note: A small D after the Kosher symbol, means that the food item is dairy and is acceptable as well.





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(Parent Handbook Addendum # 3)

How Children Learn Throughout Their Day

Blocks Center

- size and shape differentiation
- spatial relationships
- structural balance

Science Area

- cause and effect
- measurement
- exploration

Library

- reading readiness
- communication and language skills
- memory skills
- proper book handling

Snack & Lunch

- etiquette and manners
- social interaction
- self-help skills

Writing / Art Center

- visual perception
- creativity
- colors
- fine motor skills

Pre-Reading/Math Center

- basic numeric concepts 1-10 / 1-100
- complete a task and self esteem
- letter sounds / phonetic awareness
- Matching and classification

Table Toys - Center

- eye-hand coordination
- complete a task - self –esteem
- physical dexterity

Dramatic Play Center

- social and verbal skills
- creativity and imagination

Circle Time

- listening skills
- increase of attention span
- routines and songs
- self-esteem

Music & Movement

- physical balance
- rhythm

When Work Is Play, Children Learn All Day!

(Parent Handbook Appendix)

Be An Involved Parent!

Parental involvement is key to your child's preschool success.

- Read all emails and correspondence.
- Be prompt to school.
- Keep an open line of communication with the staff.
- Attend all parent-teacher conferences. (Nov, Jan, & May)
- Participate at our holiday family celebrations.
- Attend Parent Night.
- Volunteer and help us improve our school.
 - Assist with children's garden
 - Offer to assist by picking up wood scraps from Lowes or Home Depot.
 - Assist the teacher with cut-outs.
 - Offer to help us with handiwork, painting etc.
 - Assist with periodic re-mulching on the playground
 - Assist with Chanukah staff appreciation
 - Assist with end of year staff appreciation
- Make a donation (from teacher's wish list) in honor of your child's birthday.
- Welcome prospective parents to join us at holiday events.
- Help us grow by kindly assisting us with referrals.





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(Parent Handbook Addendum # 6)

Daily Schedule

9:00 – 10:15	Arrival & Learning Centers
10:15 - 10:45	Judaica Group Time
10:45 – 10:50	Hand Washing
10:50 - 11:20	Outdoor Play
11:20 – 11:30	Hand Washing, (Short / Transition to Lunch) Group Time
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch (Hand Washing)
12:00 – 12:30	Learning Centers - 12:30 pm Dismissal for Half Day Students
12:30 – 1:00	Hand Washing, Outdoor Play
1:20 – 2:15	Hand Washing, Rest Time
2:15 – 2:45	Rest Time Clean Up & End of Day Special Activity or Outdoor Play
2:45 – 3:00	Story Time
3:00	Time To Go home!

Notes:

- Wednesday: Music @ 2:00p.m.
- Friday: Challah Baking & Shabbat.
- Please note that the schedule is flexible and is subject to minor adjustments based on the needs of the students.



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Student Essentials to Be Brought In At Orientation

- A change of clothing in a labeled zip lock plastic bag – ALL LABELED
- Completion of all necessary preschool forms *
- Child's health form *
- Immunization form *
- Nap time essentials if your child stays for the afternoon – **a crib sheet, small easy to fold blanket and something small soft & cuddly – to fit into small canvas bag,**
- 2 boxes of tissues
- A recent photo of your child
- A recent family photo
- Hat for outdoor play
- For younger students in diapers:
 - Supply of diapers
 - 2 boxes of baby wipes (We will ask you to replenish on an as needed basis.)
- Any supplies you'd like to donate - Ideas: colored pencils, water colors, chalk, bubbles, balls, hoola hoops, construction paper, dry erase markers, Crayola markers, play dough etc. Plants and herbs for our school garden are always appreciated; however, we request that you speak with your child's teacher to determine what is most necessary.

Notes:

- 1) (*)Denotes that child cannot attend without having these forms on file.