



PARENT HANDBOOK 2025/2026

Midbar Kodesh Temple
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Dear MKT ECC Families,

Thank you for choosing Midbar Kodesh Temple Early Childhood Center (MKT ECC) for your child's preschool experience. It is my honor to welcome you to our community for the 2025–2026 school year.

As educators dedicated to the field of early childhood, we understand what young children need most to thrive. Our unique learning environment is designed to support the developmental needs of children growing up in today's world. MKT ECC educators nurture children's natural curiosity and build upon it—encouraging exploration, discovery, and new ways of thinking. We see each child as capable, competent, and full of potential, and we place the child at the center of the learning process.

Our educational approach is rooted in a play-based, interactive curriculum that supports children's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth. Classrooms are designed to inspire—offering opportunities for collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving. These skills lay the foundation for long-term academic and life success.

At MKT ECC, we are also deeply committed to guiding children to become compassionate and respectful citizens of the world. We help children develop a strong sense of self, alongside empathy and connection to others, through intentional community-building. These values are woven into our rich Jewish curriculum, which offers meaningful exposure to culture, traditions, and timeless wisdom.

At our core, we believe in each child's capacity to grow and flourish. We are honored to partner with you in nurturing your child's independence, identity, and lifelong love of learning. Thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift—we look forward to sharing in this joyful journey together.

Warmly,
Sandi Cramer
ECC Director

Our Mission

Midbar Kodesh Temple Early Childhood Center offers a dynamic, play-based curriculum enriched with academic experiences that nurture the whole child. Our teachers educate with love and care, fostering each child's sense of social responsibility—to themselves and to those around them. This approach is rooted in our unique Jewish curriculum, which honors Jewish culture, values, and traditions. We support children in developing a strong sense of identity by encouraging self-expression and empowering them to explore their full potential in a meaningful, engaging environment.

Our Objective

Our deeply rooted sense of community and welcoming learning environment are designed to nurture each child's confidence, curiosity, and individuality. We aim to inspire a lifelong love of learning while helping children grow into compassionate, respectful individuals who contribute positively to their communities—and to the world.

Midbar Kodesh Temple Contact Information

ECC Staff		
Sandi Cramer (ECC Director)	(702) 454-4848 ext:300	sandi@midbarkodesh.org
Cheryl Orsini (ECC Coordinator)	(702) 454-4848 ext:301	mktecc@midbarkodesh.org
Office Staff		
Rabbi Bradley Tecktiel	(702) 454-4848 ext:100	btecktiel@midbarkodesh.org
Shannon Paine-Ayala	(702) 454-4848 ext:202	shannon@midbarkodesh.org
Marci Altman (Projects & Special Event Director)	(702) 461-7740 ext:200	marci@midbarkodesh.org
Marc Grisar (President):		mgrisar@midbarkodesh.org
Cindy Goussak (Past President/Volunteer/Comm.):		cgooussak1996@gmail.com

I. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Midbar Kodesh Temple Early Childhood Center (MKT ECC) welcomes students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. MKT ECC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or other school-administered programs.

II. SCHOOL HOURS

Half Day: 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Full Day: 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Please note: 8:00 a.m. arrival is available for walk-in only. Carline begins at 8:30 a.m.

Optional Before Care: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Optional After Care: Monday–Friday, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

III. ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

- Morning drop-off begins at 8:00 a.m. Parents, guardians, caregivers, or individuals listed on the Child's Record Sheet may either walk students in between 8:00–8:45 a.m. or use the carline between 8:30–9:00 a.m.
- If using the carline, a staff member will come to the vehicle to assist your child out of their car seat. The parent/guardian or authorized individual must remain in the car during carline drop-off.
- Half-day pick-up begins at 12:30 p.m. All half-day children must be picked up by 12:45 p.m.
- Full-day pick-up begins at 3:45 p.m. All full-day children must be picked up by 4:00 p.m.
- During pick-up, staff will bring your child to the vehicle. The parent/guardian or authorized individual must exit the car to safely buckle the child into their car seat. All children must be secured in weight and age appropriate car or booster seats. MKT ECC staff will not release a child to any adult who does not have a properly installed safety seat.
- A \$20 late fee may be applied for children who are dropped off or picked up late without prior notice. Late arrivals must walk their child to the front door. If you are running late due to unforeseen circumstances, please call the office at 702-454-4848—in those cases, no additional charge will be applied.
- Students will only be released to parents, guardians, caregivers, or individuals listed on the Child's Record Sheet. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE NOT LISTED. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.** It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all individuals authorized for pick-up are listed on the Child's Record Sheet. If the Director or staff member does not recognize the person picking up, they will request photo identification to verify identity. You may update your approved pick-up list at any time by submitting a signed note with the new authorized names.

IV. TRANSPORTATION

MKTECC does not provide transportation services. Children must arrive and depart using personal vehicles. At this time, MKTECC does not offer field trips.

V. ATTENDANCE

Planning, preparation, and staffing are based on our weekly schedule. **If your child is absent on their regularly scheduled day(s), make-up days or drop-ins are not available.** Tuition will continue to be charged for all enrolled days, including time away for travel.

Accurate attendance records are critical in the event of an emergency or evacuation. In accordance with Nevada State Early Childhood Licensing regulations, attendance must be accurately maintained and will be recorded by school staff.

If your child will be out for an extended period, please notify the school office by emailing mktecc@midbarkodesh.org or calling (702) 454-4848.

VI. TUITION

Fees are outlined in the enrollment packet. Tuition is billed annually at the beginning of the school year. If you prefer to pay your Early Childhood Center (ECC) tuition in 10 equal installments, a credit card must be kept on file with the bookkeeping department. Payment may be made via check, ACH or bill-pay, and received by the 20th of each month, July through April. If payment is not received, the card on file will be charged.

If tuition is not paid in full for the new school year, your first payment is due by July 20. This payment should include the Placement Fee (\$250), Material Fee (\$225), and the Security and Campus Enhancement Fee (\$600) if they have not already been paid.

A 3% surcharge applies to all credit card transactions. You may choose to pay your tuition each month by check, ACH or bill-pay, to avoid the credit card surcharge; however, a credit card must still remain on file in the office.

A 5% discount is available for siblings (applied to the lower tuition amount), as well as for military families and first responders.

Parents who wish to withdraw a student during the school year must provide written notice to the ECC Director at least one month in advance. All tuition and fees owed through the final enrollment date are due at the time of notification. Payment will cover all school days up to and including the student's final day, regardless of the withdrawal date.

VII. CLOTHING

Families are encouraged to dress children in comfortable, washable "play clothes." Our daily activities involve messy play, and while we use "washable" paints and markers, clothing may still become stained. Please save special or delicate outfits for home.

Children should be dressed in clothing that allows them to fully enjoy their school experience without worry about getting dirty or wet. Outfits should be easy for children to put on and take off independently, supporting their growing self-help skills.

Please label all garments clearly. While we do our best to keep track of belongings, MKT ECC cannot be responsible for lost clothing or personal items.

VIII. DIAPERS

Diapers are permitted in our Metukeem (18-month) and Dubonim (2 year) classrooms. Parents are responsible for providing and regularly restocking diapers and wipes for their child.

Diaper Changing Guidelines:

- Diapers will be changed every two hours or as needed.
- Teachers will wash their hands prior to each diaper change.
- Gloves must be worn during every diaper change.
- The changing table will be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Teachers will wash their hands again after each diaper change.
- Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and sent home at pickup.
- Children will never be left unattended during diaper changes.

IX. TOILET TRAINING GUIDELINES

When a child has been dry during diaper changes for three consecutive days and begins showing signs of recognizing the need to use the toilet, parents may choose to transition to pull-ups or training pants. Successful toilet training is most effective when parents and staff work as a team, communicating regularly and supporting each other's efforts. Staff will follow these toilet training guidelines:

- Children will be encouraged to use the toilet through positive reinforcement.
- Children will not be forced to sit on the toilet for extended periods.
- Children will never be punished for accidents or for wetting/soiling their clothing.
- Children will never be left unattended on the toilet or in the bathroom.
- Teachers will assist children in washing their hands with warm water and soap after each use.

Please note: Children entering the Pilonim class (age 3) must be fully potty trained. Pull-ups are not permitted in the Pilonim classroom.

X. AFTERNOON REST PERIOD

Children enrolled in full-day programs will have a scheduled daily rest period. Per state licensing requirements, all children must participate in at least 30 minutes of rest time each day.

For children who nap, cots or mats will be provided, but families must supply a labeled blanket and pillow. We also recommend sending a small sheet. All rest items must be taken home each Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday. Children are welcome to bring a comfort or "security" item, such as a special blanket, to help them rest more easily.

For children who no longer nap, the rest period will consist of 30 minutes of quiet time. During this time, children will be encouraged to lie down quietly and may look at or read books.

XI. HOLIDAYS

We observe the following holidays:

National Holidays

Labor Day
Nevada Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving
Family Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth

Jewish Holidays

Rosh Hashanah
Yom Kippur
Sukkot
Simchat Torah
Passover
Shavuot

Please note: Valentine's Day and Halloween are not celebrated at our school due to their religious origins. **For a full list of holiday observances and school closures, please refer to the annual school calendar.**

XII. FOOD AND PERSONAL ITEMS IN SCHOOL

All personal belongings and food must be clearly labeled with your child's full name.

Kashrut

As a Jewish preschool operating within a synagogue, we follow kosher dietary guidelines. This means:

- **All lunches must be dairy or vegetarian.**
- **Do not send any meat, chicken, pork, or shellfish products.**

Food Allergies

MKT ECC is a peanut and tree nut-free environment. This means the following:

- Do not send peanut butter or peanuts in lunches.
- Do not send tree nuts (including cashews, almonds, pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, or products like Nutella).
- Sunflower seed butter is acceptable.
- Students will be taught not to share food under any circumstances.
- Parents of children with allergies must notify both the classroom teachers and the Director so appropriate precautions can be taken.

Lunches

- Please send lunch in a labeled lunch box or bag.
- Provide a labeled water bottle, which will be refilled throughout the day.
- Please limit the number of individual containers—Bento boxes are preferred to avoid misplaced lids and parts.

- We do not microwave or heat any food items.

We reinforce healthy eating habits in the classroom and ask that families support this by packing nutritious, balanced meals. Please avoid sending highly processed or sugary items, and send only water as a drink. Suggested lunch components include:

- A protein
- A fruit
- A vegetable
- A carbohydrate

Snacks

- Full-day students must bring two snacks per day.
- Half-day students must bring one snack per day.

As a reminder, all meals must be free from meat, chicken, pork, shellfish, and nuts.

XIII. BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are special milestones in a child's life, and we love celebrating them at school! Our goal is for each child to feel recognized and celebrated by their teachers and classmates. Please contact your child's teacher in advance to schedule a birthday celebration.

Families are welcome to celebrate in meaningful, non-food ways—such as donating a book to the classroom library, reading a story, or doing a simple craft with the class. Birthday snacks are not permitted at this time.

When planning a birthday party outside of school, we encourage families to be as inclusive as possible by inviting the entire class. Out of respect for those who observe the Sabbath, we kindly ask that parties not be scheduled during Shabbat hours (from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday).

XIV. COMMUNICATIONS

At MKT ECC, we view ourselves as partners in your child's growth and development. Open communication between parents, teachers, and the Director is essential to creating a positive and supportive school experience. Prospective parents are invited to tour our Campus by scheduling an appointment.

Families are invited to participate in school activities and religious celebrations where students are involved or performing. We also welcome parents on campus for special events, including Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conferences, and other community engagements throughout the year.

If you have a question or concern about your child, we encourage you to first reach out to your child's teacher(s). If additional support is needed, please contact the Director. Maintaining respectful and appropriate communication is critical to the safety and well-being of our school community.

Please note: Inappropriate adult behavior—including unwanted physical contact, yelling, or the use of foul language toward ECC staff or children—will not be tolerated and may result in immediate dismissal from the program without a tuition refund.

Procare: Childcare Management and Communications Platform

MKT ECC uses Procare as our Childcare Management and primary communications platform. This suite of tools not only tracks attendance and child records, but it also makes it easier than ever to share daily dialogue between school and parent. Through Procare, we can share daily activities, photos, videos, class newsletters, and individualized messages. Each family, upon enrolling with MKT ECC, will receive an invite to enroll with the Procare system.

Weekly Information

Your child's teacher(s) will share information via Procare, as well as post classroom updates and photos on the private class Facebook page. Please be sure to request access to this page to stay connected.

Monthly school-wide communications will be sent via email through Procare. Note synagogue based communications, as related to MKT ECC, may also be sent via Constant Contact. Please be sure to check your email regularly and keep your contact information up to date with the front office.

XV. SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR AND DEVELOPMENT

At MKT ECC, we strive to create a learning environment that nurtures all areas of development—intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social-emotional. Our goal is to support children's growth while fostering a love of learning and a joy for coming to school.

Our low child-to-teacher ratios allow educators to form meaningful relationships with each child and tailor learning experiences to meet individual needs in a safe, supportive environment. Teachers use ongoing observations and conduct biannual norm-referenced assessments to inform instruction and support developmental progress.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held for all students in both the fall and spring. Families will receive sign-up information in advance to choose a time that best fits their schedule. During conferences, teachers will review student progress and discuss strengths, areas of growth, and individual goals. We believe children thrive most when there is a strong partnership between home and school.

Physical Behavior

In the event that a child engages in aggressive or disruptive behaviors—including, but not limited to, hitting, biting, scratching, spitting, yelling obscenities—that interfere with the safety or learning of others, the family will be notified. The family will work collaboratively with the teachers and ECC Director to develop a supportive action plan.

At the school's discretion, a child may be referred for a developmental evaluation by an outside specialist. Evaluations and related services (such as one-on-one aides, occupational therapy, or

speech therapy) will be pursued at the family's expense. MKT ECC will partner with families and outside providers to determine and implement appropriate accommodations.

In such cases, following recommended support services is required for continued enrollment at MKT ECC. If the child requires more support than the school can reasonably provide—or if a family is unable or unwilling to follow through with recommended services—the school reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program without a tuition refund.

Biting Policy

We recognize that all children develop at their own pace, and that biting is a common and developmentally appropriate behavior in the early preschool years. Before language skills are fully developed, young children often express themselves physically. Biting, pushing, and other physical behaviors may also signal frustration, over-stimulation, or communication delays. If a child bites another child, the following steps will be taken:

- The incident will be documented
- The parents/guardians of both children will be notified
- The identity of the biter will be kept confidential

Teachers will treat these incidents as teachable moments, helping children learn empathy and appropriate ways to express feelings. Books and developmentally appropriate tools may be used to support this learning.

If biting or physically aggressive behaviors occur regularly (e.g., more than once per week, or consistently week to week) or cause significant harm, the teachers and Director will meet to develop a developmentally appropriate Action Plan. In some cases, the Director may determine that it is in the best interest of the child and the classroom for the child to be sent home for the remainder of the day.

In rare circumstances, the school may request withdrawal of a child from the program due to:

- Continued biting or physically aggressive behavior that does not improve over time
- A final incident in a series of behaviors that jeopardizes the safety and well-being of the child, other students, or staff

XVI. HEALTH

All staff members at Midbar Kodesh Temple Early Childhood Center are certified in CPR. While we strive to create an inclusive environment, MKTECC is not currently equipped to provide specialized support for children with disabilities.

Illnesses

We do not accept ill children at school. A child may be sent home if they exhibit any of the symptoms listed below. Per Nevada Health Department Regulation Standard 3.065, a child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. The following symptoms require a child to remain at home:

- A fever of 100°F or higher
- Vomiting within the previous 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the previous 24 hours, including recurring episodes at school

- Heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- Constant cough or sore throat; appearing generally unwell
- Skin rash (excluding diaper rash)
- Head lice
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Symptoms of any communicable disease

After an illness, a child may return to school once cleared by a doctor or if it is determined that the illness is not contagious. A doctor's note may be requested. If your child is not well enough to fully participate in the daily routine—including indoor and outdoor play—they are not yet ready to return to school.

Note: These protocols do not apply to COVID-19. COVID-related cases will be assessed on an individual basis.

We understand that sick days can be difficult for working families and recommend having a backup care plan in place. Please keep in mind that sending a sick child to school puts other children and staff at risk.

Tuition is not reimbursed for sick days, and no make-up days are provided.

Wound Care Policy

Open wounds are not permitted on campus unless completely covered with a proper dressing/clothing. A doctor's note is required to return to school with a covered wound. If wound care or dressing changes are needed during the school day, the child should remain at home, as staff are not trained in wound management.

This does not apply to minor scrapes (e.g., playground abrasions) that require a simple bandage. If a child or parent is unwilling to keep an open wound covered throughout the day, the child must stay home until the wound is healed.

First-Time Preschool Students

It is normal for children in their first year of preschool to experience frequent colds and mild illnesses. Though inconvenient, this is a natural way for young immune systems to strengthen. Most families find the number of illnesses declines after the first year.

COVID-19 & Respiratory Illness Protocol

The CDC updated its COVID-19 guidance in March 2024 to align with its flu and RSV protocols. MKT ECC follows these guidelines:

Children should stay home if they are showing respiratory virus symptoms not explained by another cause. Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Fatigue
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Headache

Children may return to school when both of the following are true for at least 24 hours:

- Symptoms are improving overall
- The child has not had a fever and is not taking fever-reducing medication

If a child returns to school and then develops a fever or worsens, they should stay home again until the above criteria are met.

Communicable Illnesses

If your child is diagnosed with any communicable illness—including but not limited to:

- COVID-19
- Head Lice
- Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease
- Strep Throat
- RSV
- Influenza
- Whooping Cough
- Measles
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Please notify the office immediately.

If a child exhibits symptoms at school that suggest a communicable illness, families will be called to pick up the child immediately and seek medical evaluation. Returning to school will require a doctor's clearance note.

While illness is a natural part of childhood, student safety is our top priority, and we appreciate your cooperation in keeping our school community healthy.

Medications

MKT ECC has a NO MEDICATION POLICY. We are unable to administer any medications on campus—including over-the-counter items such as Tylenol, antihistamines, medicated ointments, or antibiotics. Students may not self-administer medications.

Exception: If a child is at risk for a severe allergic reaction, an EpiPen may be kept on-site and administered if needed. Please work with the office to ensure proper documentation is in place.

Accidents

In the event of an accident or injury:

- Parents will be notified immediately
- A designated individual on the Child's Record Sheet may be contacted for pickup if needed
- An Incident Report will be completed and sent home, with a copy kept on file

For any injury requiring professional medical care, emergency services will be contacted and your child will be taken to either:

- The facility designated on your Emergency Treatment Form, or
- The nearest hospital emergency room

Please ensure your emergency contact information is up to date at all times.

XVII. SAFETY & SECURITY

The doors to both the school and the synagogue are locked at all times to ensure the safety of all students and staff. In the event of an evacuation, MKT ECC will follow its Emergency Plan, and all students will be escorted to Merrill Gardens Senior Apartments, located directly across the street. Parents will be notified via email or text with information regarding the safety and location of their children.

Emergencies

Emergency preparedness is a top priority at MKT ECC. We have developed a comprehensive Emergency Plan, which is reviewed annually. To ensure readiness:

- Fire drills are conducted monthly
- Disaster drills are conducted quarterly

Parents will receive an email notification after each fire and disaster drill to stay informed. In the event of a medical emergency, all efforts will be made to contact the child's family as quickly as possible. In any emergency, only adults listed on your emergency contact form will be permitted to pick up your child. Please ensure all emergency contact information is kept current and up to date.

Communication During Emergencies

Parents will be notified of any emergencies through email or other secure electronic communication systems. The Director and classroom teachers maintain parent contact information—including email addresses and phone numbers stored securely on their phones—to be used in case of an emergency.

XVIII. TELEVISION

We understand that families do not send their children to school to watch television. However, there may be occasions when short, age-appropriate videos are used to enhance the curriculum or support a specific lesson or theme. When videos are shown, teachers will inform families in advance to ensure transparency and alignment with our educational goals.

XIX. PESTICIDES

Midbar Kodesh Temple ECC uses chemical air fresheners, disinfectants, and non-toxic insecticides on the premises as part of our regular monthly maintenance. All products used are selected with consideration of safety in an early childhood environment.

XX. SMOKING

Midbar Kodesh Temple and the Early Childhood Center are completely smoke-free environments. Smoking is strictly prohibited on all school and synagogue property, both indoors and outdoors.

XXI. PROVISIONS

In accordance with state regulations, the name, business address, and business telephone number

of any individual who holds legal or administrative responsibility for the facility must be provided to all parents of enrolled children and to the Division. Additionally, the licensee of the facility is required to notify both the Division and all parents of any significant changes to the services offered by the school.



Please sign below and return to school for our records.

I, _____ have read the Parent Handbook and agree to follow the policies as set forth within.

Please initial the acknowledgments below:

_____ I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Food and Personal Items in School section, and agree to follow all kashrut and food allergy guidelines.

_____ I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Health Policies section, and agree to follow all guidelines regarding illness and medication.

_____ I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Attendance Policies section, and agree to follow all guidelines regarding absences. I understand that make-up days are not offered for missed attendance.

Students Name

Parent Signature

Date

Lead Teacher Signature

Date

ECC Director Signature

Date