



Early Childhood Center
Parent Handbook
2018-2019
5778-5779

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WELCOME TO OHR CHADASH ACADEMY

Mission Statement

Ohr Chadash Academy (OCA) empowers students to develop Yirat Shamayim, refined middot and a lifelong love of learning to support them as they grow into confident, competent and creative contributors to the Jewish community and society at large.

Educational Environment: Our highly motivating, Torah-driven curriculum emphasizes the inherent kedusha of both Judaic and general studies. We ensure that each individual student accesses a carefully designed, experiential learning process. We seek to instill an appreciation for and commitment to a life of Torah, Mitzvot and productivity.

Community: We provide a respectful, vibrant and secure atmosphere through the professionalism of our teaching staff with the collaboration of our families and administration. We cultivate and nurture relationships in our school community and actively encourage students to benefit from the world and contribute to its development. We emphasize the central role of Ahavat HaBriot and love of each and every Jew.

Israel: Our school extends beyond Baltimore to all of Klal Yisrael. We explore and foster deep and personal relationships with Am, Eretz and Medinat Yisrael through study of and connection to culture, history and Hebrew language. We believe in the religious significance of the modern State of Israel and incorporate programming to celebrate and commemorate noteworthy events.

HALACHIC QUESTIONS

All halachic *questions* involving the school are to be directed to the Administration. The Administration will, at their discretion, consult with the school's Orthodox rabbinic authority, Rabbi Marwick, before making a decision. The decision of the Administration is final.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

At Ohr Chadash Academy, all areas of the curriculum — from Chumash to Science — share a unified goal: to discover the kedusha (holiness) inherent in every aspect of Hashem's world. Every educational discipline has its place in Hashem's world, and OCA is committed to achieving excellence in all areas of the curriculum so that students are equipped to connect with the aspects of Hashem's world that speak most personally to them. OCA also instills a sense of social responsibility in its students, creating future leaders who not only take and benefit from the world, but also contribute to its development. Specifically, our Early Childhood Center (ECC) program focuses on social-emotional growth, self-awareness, and how we interact with others.

Ohr Chadash Academy provides a respectful, secure and vibrant atmosphere through the professionalism of its teaching staff and the collaboration of its families and administration. OCA extends beyond Baltimore to all of Klal Yisrael. OCA explores and fosters deep and personal relationships with Am, Eretz and Medinat Yisrael through study and connection with culture, history and Hebrew language. OCA believes in the religious significance of the modern State of Israel and incorporate programming to celebrate and commemorate noteworthy events.

Ohr Chadash Academy provides valuable creative, athletic, academic, and social forums that will positively motivate the students toward personal expression. Within this environment, each student has the greatest possibility of reaching his/her potential.

Ohr Chadash Academy faculty and staff are completely committed to its student body. Truly, as a school, we welcome you, we embrace you, and we are here for your success!

Please utilize this Parent Handbook as a reference and a guide to the ECC-OCA policies and procedures. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us with questions or comments about your school experience.

You have our best wishes for a wonderful year of learning!

Rabbi Moshe Margolese, Principal
Mrs. Terri Rosen, President
OCA Board of Directors

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Address: Ohr Chadash Academy of Baltimore
7310 Park Heights Ave, 2nd floor
Baltimore, MD 21208

Website: www.ohrchadashbaltimore.org

Phone: 410-316-9056 ECC office
410-999-2200 OCA main office

ADMINISTRATION

Administration

Rabbi Moshe Margolese	Principal
Mrs. Rachel Lasson	Office Administrator
Mrs. Leah Golfeyz	ECC Director
Mrs. Tamar Schulman	Assistant ECC Director

Office Staff

Mrs. Becky Reeves	Director of Admissions
Mrs. Devora Cohen	Controller

A completed faculty and staff list will be sent home separately.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

During arrival and dismissal times, teachers need to give their full focus and attention to the children. Therefore, the ECC administrators ask that all discussions and concerns be addressed via email or calling the ECC office to schedule a mutually convenient time to speak or meet. Please drive slowly and cautiously.

Arrival

Morning carpool:

Carpool drop off for ECC 3s and 4s classes begin at 8:05 a.m. The doors will not be open for students to enter the building prior to this time. Parents must supervise their children outside before 8:05. Teachers will be outside at 8:05 a.m. to escort the children inside. Children generally transition to the school day more easily when parents leave quickly after drop off.

Children in the ECC 2s must be brought directly to their classroom by a parent or designated driver.

Drop off begins at 8:05 a.m.

If you are pulling up to drop off your child, please do so by carpool spot numbers 1-15. If you are parking to bring your child into his or her classroom, please park in front of the playground in spots 16-23.

Late Arrivals

Morning carpool ends at 8:20 a.m.. At this time, teachers begin the morning activities in the classroom. Therefore, they will not be outside the building or in the hallways to escort the children into the classrooms.

After 8:20, the doors to the ECC will be locked. Please use the buzzer to be admitted into the building and come to the ECC office to sign your child in. Afterwards, parents will be responsible to bring their child to the classroom and help unpack his/her belongings.

Dismissal

The ECC 3s and 4s children will be outside waiting in their appropriate zones by 3:30 p.m. on Monday – Thursday and 2:20 p.m. on Friday. Parents of ECC 2s children must come to the ECC playground every day to sign out their child. In case of inclement weather, parents may have to come into the building to sign out their child.

Parents who have students in parking spot numbers 53-86 must come to the sidewalk to pick up their child. All students must be signed out by their designated carpool drivers.

Children will only be allowed to leave with parents or individuals with whom parents have given written, authorized consent. If you need to update or change authorized individuals, please contact the ECC office. Any unfamiliar individual, even with written consent from parents, must be prepared to show ID. Elementary school children may not pick up their ECC siblings. Middle school children may pick up their siblings with prior written permission.

Students who are not picked up by 3:40 p.m. will be brought to the Stay & Play program. *Parents will be charged \$20 per child for the first hour (3:40 - 4:30 p.m.) and \$15 per child for the second hour (4:30-5:30 p.m.). If a parent picks up a child in the middle of an hour, he or she will still be responsible to pay for the full hour. On Fridays or early dismissal days, parents will be charged \$20 per child after 2:30.

*If your family is in a carpool, the carpool driver will be responsible for the Stay and Play fee.

If you need to make any last minute carpool changes, please notify the ECC office as soon as possible.

Stay and Play:

OCA offers many wonderful after school activities until 5:30 p.m. Please contact rlasson@ohrchadashbaltimore.org for more information or to register.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Keeping your child healthy is important to us. Children who are not feeling well should not be sent to school as germs are shared quickly among children and could potentially infect other children.

You can help us keep all our children healthier by observing the following rules. Please keep your child home if s/he has:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees F
- Nausea or vomiting
- Heavy nasal discharge or constant cough
- Diarrhea
- Communicable or contagious illness (i.e. strep, hand/foot/mouth, flu, pink eye etc.)
- Untreated parasitic conditions such as lice, pin worm, or scabies
- Lethargy or inability to participate in class activities

Per Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) policy, if your child has fever or two or more bouts of diarrhea, you will be asked to pick up your child immediately. Children waiting to be picked up due to an illness will wait in the ECC office until picked up. **Your child must be symptom free and/or fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.** In addition, OCA will use their discretion to ask a child to leave school early if he/she does not seem to feel well, needs a medical evaluation and/or treatment, as well as ask for follow up from a doctor's appointment.

Per MSDE policy, your child's sheet and blanket will be sent home weekly to be washed to help maintain cleanliness in our ECC. Please return the cleaned sheets the next school day.

The school will have lice checks throughout the year. If your child is found with lice, he/she will be asked to go home immediately and will not be able to come back to school without verification that the lice has been completely removed.

Any absence due to illness of three or more days will require a doctor's note for your child to be allowed back in school.

Medication

Maryland State regulations require that in order for medication to be administered at school, a Medication Consent Form **for each medication given** must be completed and signed by the parent(s) and physician. This regulation includes nonprescription medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), diaper cream, eye drops, throat lozenges, etc. to be provided by the parents. The medication must then be provided to the school in its **original container**. Parents will be notified in all cases of serious injury requiring first aid.

If you have administered any medication or cream before your child comes to school, please let the ECC office and your child's teacher know. Should the need to administer acetaminophen become necessary before 11:00 a.m., the parents will be contacted to ascertain that a dosage was not administered to the student prior to school. **No student will be permitted to self-medicate.**

Any medication sent into school **MUST** be given to the ECC office with proper documentation.

Medical Forms

All medical forms must be completed before the beginning of the school year.

Basic Self Care Items

Per MSDE policy, the ECC staff can only apply basic care items as a preventative measure. Once using basic care items is no longer preventative (i.e. using diaper cream on an existing rash), a medication consent form must be filled out and signed. (See above).

Toilet Training

OCA's ECC encourages parents to begin the toilet training process before entering the ECC 3s class. Nevertheless, the staff of OCA understand each child develops at his/her own rate, and the teacher and parents will work together when each child is ready. Per MSDE regulations, individual toilet seats are not permitted in school.

Vaccinations/Immunizations

All children attending OCA need to be up to date on their vaccinations. Documentation must be provided before the start of school indicating that vaccinations are current. If there are medical reasons as to why vaccinations are not up to date, proper documentation needs to be provided to the school with a date as to when vaccinations will be given. Maryland State Law requires that all children attending school have their immunization certificates on file at school. Please review the chart below. The number in the box is the number of doses required for that vaccine based on the CURRENT law requirements.

Vaccine	DTaP/DTP/ DT/TD	Polio	Hib	MMR	Varicella (Chickenpox)	Hepatitis B	Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV)
doses for 2-5 years old	4	3	at least one dose given after 12 months of age	1	1	3	1

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in school is important for a student's development and personal growth. Excessive absences disrupt a child's learning and prevent consistency necessary for appropriate development. Arriving to class in a prompt manner is not only important for the individual student, it also helps maintain a regular classroom environment and minimizes distractions.

Absence and Lateness

Per MSDE policy, medical absences of three or more consecutive days will require a physician's note. If your child will be absent from school for reasons other than illness, please let the ECC office know.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

All children should come to school dressed in weather and size-appropriate, clean clothes.

Please send in a complete LABELED set of seasonal, size-appropriate change of clothes (including undergarments and socks) to be left at school.

Our teachers provide many hands-on, multisensory, messy activities for the children to enjoy. Although smocks are generally used, please understand that a child's clothes may get ruined. Please dress your child accordingly.

School T-Shirts

School t-shirts are a great way to show school spirit and are recommended on school spirit days (including Rosh Chodesh) and other special days. School t-shirts are required on all school field trips. School t-shirts can be purchased from the OCA-PTA in the office. If a child comes to school on a trip day without his/her OCA t-shirt, he/she may be given a new shirt to wear and parents will be charged \$10.00.

Shoes

Due to safety concerns, open back shoes and "croc" are not acceptable in school. Sneakers or closed toe shoes are required daily. The children play daily on the playground and closed shoes can help avoid injuries. **Additionally, please send in a pair of rain boots to be kept in the children's cubby.**

Boys

Boys ages 3 and above are encouraged to wear a kippah/hat and tzitzit at all times.

Girls

Girls are encouraged to wear leggings, tights, pants, or shorts under their skirts/dresses. This helps protect them on the playground and while playing.

Dress-up Days

Special days may be designated by the administration or by individual teachers. The staff of OCA's ECC encourage you to help your child participate according to the specific activity.

Toys

OCA strongly encourages toys to stay at home. Toys that come to school may get lost or broken, upsetting your child. Each ECC classroom is equipped with carefully thought out supplies to promote a certain type of play. At times, bringing in other toys may promote a type of play and interaction which is not appropriate in our classroom setting. Please note, if you do send in a toy, the school will not take responsibility for the item.

LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found bin is located next to the front doors of the ECC. Please check it regularly to claim your child's items. Any unclaimed items will be donated or discarded before winter break and after the last day of school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Oheb Shalom, Learning Ladder, and OCA will all be in communication on the conditions of the streets and parking lot in bad weather. The administration will make the final decision about school closings and late openings. Parents will be notified by email and/or text of any delays.

Emergency Text Alerts

If you would like to sign up to receive emergency text alerts (for school closings, etc.) from Ohr Chadash from your cell phone, please text "OCA" to: 292929.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are celebrated differently in each class. If parents choose to celebrate in school, please follow these guidelines:

 Birthday celebrations must be scheduled with the teacher. Parents should make arrangements with the teacher at least 1 week in advance.

 No home baked goods are permitted. Snacks must have an acceptable kosher certification and be nut free (see Kashrut).

 If you are making a birthday party out of school, you may have your child's teacher distribute invitations as long as all students in the class are invited. Class lists and parent information may be accessed on Parentlocker.

 OCA promotes healthy eating habits. Please use discretion when bringing in birthday treats for the class.

SAFETY

Emergency Procedures

OCA is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors.

OCA is housed in a public building, and therefore, security is VERY important. The following are the precautionary guidelines that OCA employ in order to ensure the safety of OCA students:

 All OCA faculty and staff must wear an OCA badge at all times.

 The doors to the school building must remain closed after 8:20 a.m. and visitors must be buzzed into the building, sign in at the ECC office, and may be asked to show ID.

 Teachers will not release any students to an unauthorized individual.

 All visitors must sign in and out at the office and wear a visitor's badge.

 Parents who come to pick up their children early must sign out the student at the ECC office.

Fire Safety/Emergency Drills

In compliance with Baltimore City Fire Department regulations, OCA will conduct fire drills each month. Each classroom has an exit plan displayed. Students are taught appropriate procedures and proper decorum for a fire drill.

Child Abuse Policy

OCA supports Maryland State Law to protect the welfare of all children. Maryland law requires any school personnel to report suspicions of child neglect or abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS). The goal is to help maintain and strengthen the child's family and to receive necessary support if needed.

Appropriate Use of Social Networking Tools

Parents should not post pictures/videos from Storypark without the explicit permission of the teachers and the other class parents. We strongly encourage you to ask other parents before posting pictures from school events which may include their child on any form of social media.

Please be mindful that your posts on social media remain respectful of OCA, its faculty, and its families. If a concern arises, please feel free to call or email a school administrator.

FIELD TRIPS/SPECIAL EVENTS

During the course of the year, for educational as well as for extracurricular purposes, OCA students take field trips. Field trips are a key component to the experiential learning that OCA strongly encourages. OCA encourages hands-on parent involvement with the students. A great way to achieve this is through special activities. As needed, the ECC will ask for chaperones.

CURRICULUM

The ECC promotes the development of the whole child and fosters individuality by using a developmentally appropriate, child-directed curriculum. It is conscientious of each individual child's different needs, interests, and developmental levels. Our general studies goals and objectives are similar to those of the Creative Curriculum, an MSDE approved curriculum for children ages 2-5. The ECC uses some materials from Creative Curriculum, as well as many other researched-based methodologies. Through an integrated approach of Judaics and general studies, our curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development, including social- emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development.

During the early years, children need to have many opportunities to play and interact with real objects, people, and experiences. Research has shown these are prerequisites for learning and developing concepts such as early literacy and numeracy skills. The ECC uses a variety of multisensory teaching methods and tools to ensure that our environment is stimulating and relevant to the growth and potential of each child. Our classrooms are equipped with centers and materials that encourage open-ended exploration. Each ECC classroom has areas including but not limited to dramatic play, art, blocks, library, science, and math (manipulatives).

The curriculum of each class includes (and is not limited to) developing an age-appropriate exposure of:

ECC 2s: Tefillah, Chagim, Shabbat, Jewish Themes, Israel, colors, shapes, counting, books, community helpers, animals, science, and nature.

ECC 3s: Tefillah, Parshah, Chagim, Shabbat, Brachot, Alef-bet, Ivrit, Jewish Themes, Israel, colors, shapes, community helpers, animals, early literacy, early numeracy, science, and nature.

ECC 4s: Tefillah, Parsha, Chagim, Ivrit, Brachot, Alef-bet, Ivrit, Jewish themes, Israel, community, animals, early literacy, early numeracy, science, and nature.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Moving and Grooving: Jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping, balancing, and singing are only a few of the gross motor skills the children enjoy in Moving and Grooving. This special allows the children to have opportunities to develop the large muscle movement and hand eye coordination. Moving and Grooving is offered in each class once per week.

Gross Motor room: Rainy days? Snowy days? No worries! As a special, or on days where the children are unable to go outside, the children will enjoy movement activities in the Gross Motor room. The Gross Motor Room equipment includes stepping stones, scooters, hula hoops, bean bags, parachutes, jump ropes, moonbounce, and more. These materials help to develop large motor skills.

Music: The children experience a range of musical instruments and songs during music, singing along to a variety of beats and rhythms. Music is offered in each class once per week.

Oneg Shabbat: Building a sense of community, the entire ECC gathers together on most Fridays of the year to sing and celebrate in preparation for Shabbat. Each class takes turns performing a song for the other classes. The children also often hear stories or parsha relates ideas.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

OCA partners with Baltimore City/County Private Schools and other private organizations to assess and provide for special education and related services (i.e speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy). Please speak to the ECC Director for specific questions and concerns.

OCA also partners with SHEMESH to receive behavioral support and consultation for teachers and families, as needed. The ECC also partners with the Jewish Community Services (JCS) to provide social and emotional support as needed.

FOOD

Kashrut

OCA maintains a high standard of kashrut so that the entire OCA community can readily participate in all activities and celebrations. All food brought into the school must have proper rabbinical supervision. Questions about food products and acceptable kashrut standards should be directed to the school office or the Va'ad HaKashrut of Baltimore. If food sent into school is not acceptable according to OCA standards, the product will be sent home and you will be informed.

When planning an event (ie birthday party) in your child's class, please check if anyone has allergies or keeps cholov yisrael and plan accordingly. **No homemade baked goods are allowed.**

OCA is a nut-free school. This includes any snack items that may contain peanuts or tree nuts. You may send in snacks that say, "are processed in a facility made with nuts." If there is a question about a product, please call the ECC office.

Lunch/snacks

OCA provides milk and one snack daily. Please send in a nutritious lunch with your child each day, containing

at least 5-6 food items. Children may bring in dairy, pareve, or meat items in their lunch. Glass bottles or glass containers are not allowed in OCA. Unless there is a special circumstance, discussed with your child's teacher or an administrator beforehand, kindly refrain from sending candy or sweets into school.

PARENT/STUDENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of every child.

You can expect on-going communication with teachers regarding student progress, class projects, and how parents can be supportive from home. You will also receive weekly communication from the teacher.

Please communicate with teachers if there are any changes at home or within the family (i.e parent out of town, family illness, moving to a new house). These changes can impact your child's behavior and it is helpful for the school to be informed so that the staff can best help your child. The ECC staff will respect your confidentiality.

If a parent needs to reach a teacher during the school day, please email or call the office. Please do not text or call teachers during the school day. Teachers are **NOT** expected to return calls, emails or texts during the school day. Teachers will communicate with parents via phone calls, emails, newsletters, Parentlocker, and Storypark.

If parents have a question or concern about their child, the first line of communication should be reaching out to their child's teacher. If further support is necessary, please be in touch with the ECC Director.

Ohr Chadashot/Parentlocker

The school newsletter, Ohr Chadashot, is produced bi-monthly and is one of the school's vehicles of communication with parents. Please make sure to fully read its contents since it contains relevant and timely information.

Parentlocker is our online platform to communicate with parents. You will receive weekly updates from your child's teacher. Daily updates from the school will also be sent out as needed. Every Sunday, you will receive an email with events/reminders for the coming week. Please check your email daily to ensure that you receive all important communications. Parentlocker can be accessed at [www.https://www.parentlocker.com/go/](https://www.parentlocker.com/go/).

Storypark

OCA wants you to "experience" the everyday joy and activities your child participates in. Storypark is an online tool where teachers regularly post pictures or videos of the children in action Storypark can be accessed at <https://www.storypark.com>. Parents will be given more information in order to create an account. If you have any difficulty signing up, please contact the ECC office.

As a reminder (see Appropriate Use of Social Networking Tools), parents are **not** permitted to post any downloaded pictures/videos from Storypark of teachers and/or other children on social media.

REPORT CARDS/PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Twice times per year, ECC 3s and 4s parents will receive a report card with their child's progress. Parents will receive an email notification when they can access the report card online through Parentlocker.

There will be three scheduled conferences throughout the year. These conferences provide an opportunity to discuss the progress of your child. OCA encourages you to take advantage of this opportunity to collaborate with your child's teacher and hear about his/ her progress. Parents may also arrange appointments at other times to discuss specific concerns. The dates of parent teacher conferences can be found on the school calendar.

Each child at Ohr Chadash is a S.T.A.R.

S – Stays Safe

T -Treasures Torah

A - Aims High

R – Respects Oneself and Others

GUIDING BEHAVIOR/BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

OCA's ECC is committed to making the educational experience enjoyable and safe for all students. The ECC implements strategies to redirect, model, and use positive reinforcement to create a safe learning environment. The staff of OCA believes that all students have the right to be safe from the fear of physical or verbal abuse from their classmates. At times, teachers may need to provide natural consequences in order to help guide a child's behavior. The ECC's classroom behavioral modification is designed to be a tool for support and inclusion of all students, not one of removal and isolation. Any child who requires further intervention may be brought to an administrator. When necessary, a behavioral plan may be put in place with collaboration from the teachers, administration, parents, social worker, and/or behavioral consultant.

Under no circumstances is it permitted for a staff or faculty member to hit, yell at, or leave a child unattended. Even while guiding behaviors and dealing with challenging situations, each staff member is committed to treating each child with respect, dignity and courtesy.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

OCA-PTA

OCA is very lucky to have an active OCA-PTA. The OCA-PTA raises money, coordinates class parents, plans family and community events, and promotes camaraderie amongst our families. Please be aware and participate in the various PTA activities throughout the year and show your support by becoming a member. Membership costs \$36 and includes a free OCA t-shirt. OCA encourages our ECC parents to be involved by calling 410-999-2200 or emailing ocapta@ohrchadashbaltimore.org.

Ohr Chadash Academy admits students of the Jewish faith. Ohr Chadash Academy admits 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. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, employment, admissions policies, scholarship, or athletic or other school-administered programs. Children applying to Ohr Chadash Academy must be of the Jewish faith. Appropriate developmental, emotional, and educational benchmarks are expected. Ohr Chadash Academy accepts children with special needs, but they are reviewed on an individual basis to determine if our school is equipped to handle their learning disability or exceptionality. Ohr Chadash Academy endeavors to educate and develop well-adjusted, wholesome, happy young people in the path of Torah, complimented by an excellent General Studies education.