AKIBA YAVNEH ACADEMY
בית ספר עקיבא יבנה

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Early Childhood Program
Operational Policies Addendum

2026-2027 School Year

Akiba Yavneh Academy
12324 Merit Drive, Dallas, Texas 75251
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This document should be read together with the 2026-2027 AYA Student & Family Handbook.

Purpose and Family Partnership

Akiba Yavneh Academy believes in a close and harmonious relationship between home and school. Such cooperation helps each child derive the utmost from the school experience. Our ECP is grounded in the belief that every child is capable, curious, and full of potential, created B'Tzelem Elokim, in the image of G-d. We work in partnership with families to create a supportive, welcoming, and safe environment that nurtures social-emotional growth, joyful learning, exploration, and discovery.

The AYA Student & Family Handbook contains school-wide policies that apply to Early Childhood. This addendum provides the ECP-specific procedures families need for daily operation and Texas Child Care Regulation.

1. Licensing, Enrollment, and Policy Information

The Akiba Yavneh Academy Early Childhood Program is licensed by Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation. Families may review the center's current permit, required postings, inspection history, and the Texas Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers as provided by law.

- Families must complete all enrollment, health, emergency-contact, custody, medication, allergy, and authorization forms required for their child before care begins.
- Parents are responsible for keeping contact information, medical information, emergency contacts, and authorized pickup information current in AYA Connect.
- Parents will be notified in writing of material changes to ECP operational policies before the changes take effect, except when an immediate change is required to protect health or safety.
- The annual school calendar identifies school closures, holidays, professional-development days, early dismissals, and other days when care is unavailable.

2. Procedures for Release of Children

The safety of our children is of utmost importance. A child will be released only to a parent, legal guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian.

- If a child will be picked up by someone other than the family's regular pickup person, the parent must submit a Blue Note or use another school-approved communication method before dismissal.
- All persons picking up children must present valid identification upon request. Staff may delay release while identity or authorization is verified.
- Court orders or custody restrictions must be provided to the school in writing. AYA will follow the most current enforceable order on file.
- AYA will not release a child to a person who appears impaired or unable to provide safe care. Staff will contact another authorized adult and may contact law enforcement or emergency services when necessary.
- Children brought before their enrolled care hours or left after those hours are the responsibility of the parent unless the child is registered in an approved extended-care program.
- Late pickup may result in fees and administrative follow-up. Repeated late pickup may affect continued enrollment.

3. Parent Access, Participation, and Concerns

Parents are welcome to visit our school. We maintain an open-door approach in the ECP and welcome parents during regular hours of operation, while maintaining campus security and the privacy and safety of all children.

- All visitors must check in at the Welcome Center, follow identification and badge procedures, and comply with current campus health and safety requirements.
- Visits may not disrupt classroom care, compromise another child's privacy, or interfere with emergency or security procedures.
- Classroom volunteer opportunities, family celebrations, conferences, and other school activities provide additional ways for parents to participate in the program.

- The first school contact for a classroom concern should generally be the classroom teacher. If the concern remains unresolved, the parent should contact the ECP Director.
- If a family and teacher cannot reach a resolution, the ECP Director will facilitate a meeting. The Co-Head of School may be involved when additional support is needed.
- Translation assistance will be arranged when needed so families can participate meaningfully in communication and planning.

4. Health Checks, Illness, and Exclusion

A child who is in good health has a distinct advantage when starting school. ECP staff observe children at arrival and throughout the day for signs of illness, injury, or changes in behavior that may affect the child's ability to participate safely.

- Staff observe for fever, unusual lethargy, breathing difficulty, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, eye or nasal drainage, visible injury, or other signs that a child may be ill.
- A child with a fever of 100.4°F or higher must remain home and may return after being fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- A child who has vomiting or diarrhea must remain home until free of symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- A child may be excluded when a condition prevents comfortable participation, requires more care than staff can safely provide without compromising the care of other children, or poses a risk of spreading harmful disease.
- Rashes, eye drainage, significant nasal drainage, croup, strep throat, and other communicable conditions may require medical clearance or review by the school health office before return.
- When a child becomes ill at school, the child will be made comfortable and supervised away from unnecessary exposure to others. The parent, guardian, or other authorized person will be contacted promptly for pickup.
- Families will receive information about significant communicable-disease exposure as required, including symptoms, transmission, and reasonable control measures, while individual confidentiality is protected.

5. Medication, Special Medical Procedures, and Emergencies

- All medications must be accompanied by the required medication authorization form and any healthcare-provider instructions required for administration.
- Medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's first and last name. Prescription medications must include the prescription label and applicable dosage, storage, and expiration information.
- Medication should be delivered to the school health office. Medication that must remain immediately available, such as epinephrine or an inhaler, will be stored according to the child's individualized health plan.
- Parents of children who require special medical management procedures must meet with the school health office so appropriate written procedures, training, and emergency plans can be established.
- In a medical emergency, parents will be contacted immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, AYA may contact the child's emergency contacts, physician, emergency responders, or an appropriate medical facility.
- Staff will provide first aid within the scope of their training and will call 911 when emergency medical care is needed.

6. Immunizations and Health Documentation

- Children must have current health records and immunization documentation on file before attending, subject to exemptions permitted by Texas law.
- Emergency information and vaccination records must be updated as required.
- Families must notify the school in writing of allergies, medications, vision or hearing concerns, special health conditions, and other information that may affect care.
- Required vision, hearing, tuberculosis, or other health documentation will be maintained in accordance with Texas requirements.
- Health and safety records are treated as confidential and are shared only with persons authorized by the parent, staff who need the information to care safely for the child, and regulatory authorities as permitted by law.

7. Discipline and Guidance

AYA encourages children to develop self-discipline grounded in Jewish ethics, positive self-image, and derech eretz. The goal of ECP discipline and guidance is to teach new skills, strengthen relationships, and limit suspension and expulsion whenever possible.

- Treating each child with dignity.
- Setting clear, consistent, and fair limits.
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirecting children to more appropriate behavior and giving specific instructions.
- Listening to children discuss their feelings and frustrations.
- Guiding children to solve conflicts with developmentally appropriate support.
- Patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale.
- Using visual routines, social stories, environmental adjustments, and other positive supports when helpful.

Under no circumstances will there be harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of a child. Discipline may never include physical punishment, psychological abuse, humiliation, threats, coercion, withholding food or toileting, or punishment connected to sleep.

- Examples of prohibited physical punishment include shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, pulling hair or ears, rough handling, or requiring prolonged inactivity.
- Examples of prohibited psychological abuse include shaming, name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at a child, threats, frightening a child, ostracism, or withholding affection.
- Physical restraint may be used only when necessary to protect a child or another person from immediate harm and only in a manner permitted by law and school procedure.

8. Ongoing Behavioral Concerns, Suspension, and Expulsion

When behavioral concerns continue, AYA uses a collaborative, progressive process focused on understanding the function of the behavior, adjusting the environment, supporting the child, and partnering with the family.

1. Teachers and administrators document concerns, review patterns, and assess classroom routines and environmental factors.
2. Positive supports may include an individualized plan, visual routines, social stories, changes to materials or room arrangement, additional adult support, or other developmentally appropriate strategies.
3. Parents are kept informed and may be invited to a conference with teachers and the ECP Director.
4. With parent permission, school-based or outside specialists may observe the child and help develop or revise a support plan.
5. Temporary suspension may be used when repeated behavior places the child, other children, or staff in danger, or when the program cannot safely maintain care while a plan is being developed.
6. As a condition of continued enrollment, the school may require reasonable professional intervention, additional supports, or an aide when necessary for safe participation.
7. The Director and family will review whether AYA can continue to meet the child's needs within the ECP setting.
8. If the family does not participate in the support process, necessary safety supports cannot be provided, or AYA determines that another setting is needed, the school may terminate enrollment and will offer reasonable assistance identifying resources or an alternative placement.

Immediate removal may occur when continued attendance presents an imminent risk to the child, other children, or staff.

9. Safe Sleep and Rest

Nevatim infants nap according to their individual needs. Older children who remain for the afternoon have a scheduled rest or nap period appropriate to their age and classroom routine.

- Unless otherwise ordered in writing by a physician, infants younger than 12 months are placed on their backs to sleep in an individual safety-approved crib with a firm, tight-fitting mattress and fitted sheet.
- Pillows, quilts, comforters, blankets, sleep-positioning devices, stuffed toys, bumper pads, and other soft or loose items are not permitted in cribs or infant rest equipment.
- Approved infant sleep sacks or clothing designed for sleep may be used when appropriate and should be lightweight enough to avoid overheating.
- AYA does not swaddle infants or use swaddling blankets.
- A sleeping infant found in a car seat, swing, bouncer, or other sitting device will be moved to an approved sleep surface as soon as safely possible.
- An infant who independently rolls may remain in the position assumed after being placed on the back.
- Alternative sleep positioning requires written healthcare-provider instructions that meet licensing requirements.
- Bedding for children using cots or nap mats is sent home regularly for laundering according to classroom procedure.

10. Meals, Snacks, and Food Service

Good nutrition is basic to a child's health and learning. All food brought to or served at AYA must follow the school's kashrut requirements.

- Lunches brought from home must be dairy or pareve. Meat may be served only when provided through an approved school caterer or school-sponsored event.
- Children may not share lunches or snacks brought from home.
- Food and beverage containers brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and, when required for safe storage, the date.
- Food requiring cold storage must be packed with an appropriate cold source unless the classroom has designated refrigeration for that item.
- Staff and children wash hands before and after meals and snacks, and staff follow safe food-handling procedures.
- Food for young children is prepared and cut in a developmentally safe manner. Choking hazards are restricted according to age and licensing requirements.
- Food is never used as punishment or withheld as a behavior consequence.
- Families must provide current allergy and feeding information. A healthcare-provider-completed allergy or emergency plan is required when applicable.

Infant Feeding

- Parents of infants provide breast milk or formula and infant food according to the child's written feeding instructions.
- All bottles and infant food must be labeled with the child's full name and date.
- Bottles are never propped. Staff partner with families so feeding reflects each infant's nutritional needs and developmental stage.
- Solid food is not placed in a bottle unless specifically ordered by a healthcare provider in writing.
- Bottle warming, storage, use, and disposal follow current licensing requirements and the child's feeding plan.
- Microwaves are not used to heat children's bottles, drinks, lunches, or snacks.

11. Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity and Extreme Weather

Children have daily opportunities for movement and active play. Outdoor experiences are an important part of ECP learning and are offered whenever conditions are safe.

- Students participate in outdoor activities except when conditions such as freezing temperatures, dangerous heat, lightning, unsafe surfaces, poor air quality, or other environmental hazards create a health or safety risk.
- During smog or other significant air-pollution alerts, children remain indoors until conditions improve.
- When outdoor time is limited, teachers provide developmentally appropriate indoor movement experiences.
- Children have access to shade and water as appropriate. Families should provide clothing and outerwear suitable for the weather.
- A complete seasonal change of clothing should be kept at school.

- Children should wear secure footwear appropriate for active play. Classroom teachers may provide additional guidance for mud, water, or special outdoor experiences.
- Hard balls, bats, toy swords, and other pointed or unsafe objects may not be brought for playground use.

12. Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

- Families are encouraged to apply sunscreen before school during hot or high-exposure weather.
- Staff may reapply sunscreen to children older than 6 months when written parent permission is on file and the product is appropriate for the child's age.
- When public-health authorities recommend insect repellent because of insect-borne disease risk, parents are encouraged to apply it before school.
- Staff may apply parent-authorized insect repellent to eligible children in accordance with the product label, licensing requirements, and school procedure.
- Products must be provided or approved in the manner required by the program, remain in their original containers, and be clearly labeled for the child when individually supplied.

13. Inclusive Services and Children with Additional Needs

AYA seeks to understand and support each child's individual abilities, developmental profile, family culture, home language, health needs, and learning needs. Families are important partners in planning appropriate supports.

- Parents should share relevant diagnoses, developmental concerns, allergies, medical needs, equipment needs, therapies, and existing support plans before enrollment or as soon as the information becomes known.
- With written parent permission, the ECP may collaborate with school specialists, counselors, therapists, healthcare providers, and outside professionals.
- Classroom routines, materials, schedules, and the environment may be adapted to support meaningful participation when reasonable and appropriate.
- Staff receive information and training needed to implement approved supports safely.
- When AYA cannot safely or appropriately meet a child's needs within available staffing, facilities, or program capacity, the Director will meet with the family to consider additional services, supports, or transition to another setting.

14. Emergency Plans and Parent Notification

AYA is committed to providing a safe and secure environment on the Schultz Rosenberg Campus. Practicing for emergency situations is one way we prepare.

- AYA maintains written procedures for fire, severe weather, lockdown, evacuation, relocation, sheltering, medical emergencies, and reunification.
- Staff are trained in their responsibilities and participate in required emergency drills.
- Children remain supervised and accounted for throughout drills and emergencies.
- Emergency contact and attendance information accompany groups when relocation is required.
- Parents will receive emergency information and reunification instructions through the school's designated communication systems, which may include text, email, and phone.
- Security-sensitive lockdown details are provided to staff and emergency personnel and are not published in this addendum.

15. Preventing and Reporting Abuse and Neglect

All ECP staff are mandated reporters and receive annual training related to preventing, recognizing, and responding to abuse and neglect of children.

- Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400.

- Online reports may be made through the Texas Abuse Hotline for situations that do not require an immediate emergency response.
- If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Texas law requires a person who suspects child abuse or neglect to make a report. School employees may not delegate that legal responsibility.

16. Child Care Regulation and Minimum Standards

- Texas Child Care Regulation: 1-800-862-5252.
- Parents may review the Texas Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers and AYA's licensing and inspection information through Texas Health and Human Services.
- Required licensing notices and the center's permit are posted or otherwise made available as required.
- Parents may contact Child Care Regulation directly with questions or concerns about licensed child care.
- The area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is designated a gang-free zone under Texas law, and certain criminal offenses may carry enhanced penalties.

17. Water Activities

- ECP may offer water-table play, sprinkler play, splash activities, or other approved water experiences when appropriate.
- Written parent permission will be obtained for water activities as required by licensing and the child's enrollment forms.
- Swimming pools, wading pools, or aquatic playgrounds are used only when specifically planned and operated in compliance with applicable supervision and safety requirements.
- Families will receive advance information about clothing, towels, and any additional permission required.

18. Parent Acknowledgment of Written Operational Policies

By signing below, I acknowledge that I received or was given electronic access to the 2026-2027 AYA Student & Family Handbook and this ECP Operational Policies Addendum. I understand that together these documents contain the written operational policies listed below.

Parent Initials	Written Operational Policy Received
_____	Discipline and guidance
_____	Suspension and expulsion
_____	Emergency plans
_____	Procedures for conducting health checks
_____	Safe sleep
_____	Procedures for parents to discuss concerns with the director
_____	Promotion of indoor and outdoor physical activity, including criteria for extreme weather conditions
_____	Procedures for parents to participate in operation activities
_____	Procedures for release of children
_____	Illness and exclusion criteria
_____	Procedures for dispensing medications
_____	Immunization requirements for children
_____	Meals and food service practices
_____	Procedures to visit the center without securing prior approval
_____	Procedures for supporting inclusive services
_____	Procedures for contacting Child Care Regulation, the Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline, and accessing minimum standards

Child(ren) Name(s)	
Parent/Guardian Printed Name	
Parent/Guardian Signature	
Date	

Director or Designee: _____ Date: _____