School Handbook
August 2025 – July 2026

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A program of the

Jewish Federation
OF GREATER CHATTANOOGA

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GENERAL STATEMENT

This manual summarizes the general policies and procedures of Aleph Bet Children's Center, a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga, at the Jewish Cultural Center of Chattanooga. Aleph Bet Children's Center serves children from ages two through pre-K.

We embrace a broad, interdisciplinary curriculum that is socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children. Through active, hands-on learning experiences, such as art, music, movement, math, science, literature, celebrations and more, children have fun while exploring and making sense of the world and people around them. The children also explore Judaism through singing, dancing, painting, cooking, storytelling, and imaginative play.

Our early childhood staff has created a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment in which children can feel safe to develop their own abilities. We encourage *independence* and allow children to make choices while fostering self-esteem by allowing children to learn and succeed at their own pace. We also facilitate cooperative learning whereby children work together with friends to reach their goals.

Our developmental philosophy emphasizes problem solving, conflict resolution and social/emotional learning so that children are prepared for their future in school and in life. The program is centered on the philosophy that a young child develops best when parent, child and teacher work together as a team.

We believe that parents play an integral part in our early childhood program, and your involvement is always encouraged whenever possible. Throughout the year, parents are invited to a variety of special events, celebrations, holidays, and Shabbat (Sabbath) observance. Parent participation in the educational process is an important ingredient in your child's growth and development.

MISSION AND GOALS

Aleph Bet Children's Center aims to provide an educational, interactive and developmentally appropriate preschool program that is enriched by Jewish traditions and values and implemented by a trained, dedicated, and nurturing staff. To this end, the following goals have been set forth:

- To support the child's social and cultural identity through an experiential approach to Judaism, and to promote respect for cultural diversity within and outside Judaism
- To foster the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development by organizing the child's learning experiences
- To nurture the child as an active learner
- To provide opportunities for language and literacy in both English and Hebrew
- To encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts
- To create an environment where the child feels safe and valued and where his/her physical needs are met.

ABSENCES

Aleph Bet provides a wonderful opportunity for children to build their skills and establish new relationships with other children and adults. These relationships thrive when children are consistently in school. In the event that your child will miss a day or more of school, please contact us through the Brightwheel App, at alephbet@jewishchattanooga.com, or call 893-5486 by 8:30 a.m. Aleph Bet does not offer refunds for days a child is absent.

ALLERGIES

It is the highest priority that Aleph Bet keeps all of the children safe. Aleph Bet works hard to ensure that we can accommodate allergies or dietary requests and requires paperwork in order to do so including permission to administer medication letter (if needed) and medical form which is included in the yearly enrollment application. If your child requires an EpiPen on site, Aleph Bet needs a letter and action plan from your child's physician. Due to the increasing number of preschool children with severe, possibly anaphylactic allergies to peanut/tree nut and peanut/tree nut products, Aleph Bet Children's Center is a nut-sensitive zone (See Food Policy for detailed information). A picture of children with allergies or special dietary needs will be posted in the classroom. **Families must notify Aleph Bet in writing of all medical and food allergies.**

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aleph Bet believes that all children have the right to play and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. If behavioral expectations are consistent and reasonable boundaries are put in place by supportive care-givers, we can minimize the occurrence of bullying. It is important therefore that we have a clear written policy to promote this belief. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. No one person or group, whether staff or child, should have to accept this type of behavior. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at Aleph Bet.

Although bullying in the strongest context of the word does not generally occur at Aleph Bet, it is recognized by experts that preschool children are developing their personalities and friendships, as well as exploring boundaries and appropriate behavior, which can result in conflict and clashes of personality. Care-givers minimize occurrences by being observant, proactive and recognizing problematic situations. Fully understanding each child and observing them helps with the positive reinforcement approach Aleph Bet uses. If any level of bullying is suspected, observed, or reported, the matter will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly, and all parties will be supported appropriately and fairly. This will involve working towards a shared understanding of the causes of the behavior. Aleph Bet staff understand that all behavior is a form of communication and should be recognized as such. Matters will be documented as necessary and reported to the director and/or parents if deemed necessary.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behavior. It can be:

- PHYSICAL: child may be kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- VERBAL: Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, taunting, or signaling out
- EMOTIONAL: A child can be bullied simply by being excluded by those they believe to be their friends.

AS A PARENT

- Look for unusual behavior in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school or they may regularly say that they feel ill when they previously looked forward to the school day
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone and who they have spent their time with
- If your child encounters any problems at Aleph Bet, inform the classroom teacher and center director IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child to seek help from a teacher, rather than fight back physically or do things that may result in them getting in trouble as well.

AS A CHILDCARE CENTER

- We aim to provide an enabling and proactive environment in order to minimize opportunities for bullying

- Use any opportunity to discuss the appropriate way to behave towards each other, such as circle time, unit topics, during free play, when going outside, snack time etc.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary in a POSITIVE AND CALM MANNER.
- The staff will continue to have a firm but fair approach to behavior management. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand. At their core, we will use the rules to reinforce the value of kindness
- Do not use teaching materials or equipment which gives negative views of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender, etc.
- Encourage children to discuss how they treat other people, how to form positive attitudes towards others, and exploring what friendship means
- Encourage children to treat everyone with respect and kindness
- We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from Aleph Bet.
- Have suitable staff training to continue personal development within behavior management both on an individual and group basis.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED

We will support children by following these six steps of conflict resolution:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any harmful actions
2. Acknowledge all children's feelings
3. Gather information from all parties
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas and solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow up support

We will speak openly with families in order to formulate a mutual agreement regarding action to move the situation forwards in a way which meets individual needs. If necessary, outside agencies will be contacted in order to support the setting, child, and care-givers.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The hours of operation for each day are fixed and determined by the universal time on cell phones (iPhone). No child will be accepted earlier than 7:30 a.m. and all children must be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m.

After closing time, a late pick-up fee of $2.00 per minute/per child will be charged. Frequent tardiness will be addressed by the Director. If late pick-up fees occur, they will be added to your Brightwheel account and should be paid within 3 days. Please remember that we are paying our teachers for staying past 5:30. **As a courtesy, please send a message through the Brightwheel app if you expect to arrive after closing time.**

In order to give your child the best chance to fulfill their potential, we recommend the following transitions:

DROP-OFF

Children may be dropped off starting at 7:30 a.m. Snack time will begin around 9:00 a.m. All structured learning time begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. As not to disrupt classroom dynamics, we ask that you please try to be on time every day. We understand that tardiness will occur on occasion; we hope you will make every effort to keep lateness to a minimum. *Special exceptions should be arranged through the Director or your child's teacher (e.g. medical appointment, regular therapy sessions).*

Some children and parents have difficulty separating at drop off. It is important to have a positive attitude about the school so that your child will too. It is helpful to direct your child to an activity in the room or to a teacher. When it is time to leave, give your child a hug and quick goodbye. The teachers are trained to engage your child and start developing a relationship of trust and security.

PICK-UP

In order not to interrupt sleeping children, we ask that children are picked up before or after rest time unless there is a special appointment (e.g. doctor). Please consult your child's classroom schedule or check with your teachers for natural

transition times. **For the safety of each child, photo identification will be required of all persons listed on the student release form other than parents.**

SIGN IN/OUT

To ensure safety, all children must be brought into Aleph Bet Children's Center, signed in through the Brightwheel App and personally placed in a staff member's care. Aleph Bet does not accept legal responsibility for any child who is not signed in and personally placed in a staff member's care.

- Parent/Guardian can use the Aleph Bet provided ipad in lobby or their own cell phones
- Please communicate with your child's teacher any special information and/or pickup arrangements, OR message them through the Brightwheel app.
- Only those adults authorized by the parent/guardian in writing will be permitted to take the child from school. An adult is defined as any person 18 years of age or older. If the guardian forgot to enclose such a written permission form for someone that is not on the Student's Authorization Pick up Form, the parent should email the Director to give written permission.
- Parents are asked to return to the designated location to pick up their children, sign out through the Brightwheel App and notify the assigned staff member.
- Before your child is signed in and once your child is signed out, you are responsible for supervising your child **while on Aleph Bet property. For your child's safety, children are not allowed to wander unattended in the classrooms, hallways, or parking lot.**

<u>BIRTHDAY PARTIES</u>

When planning a birthday party outside of school, we encourage you to schedule the party on a day other than Shabbat (Saturday), or a Jewish holiday. If a birthday is also to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is invited, families may place invitation in children's mailboxes. If the entire class is not invited, the invitations must be mailed.

<u>BITING</u>

Biting is part of a natural development stage that some children go through. When a child hurts another child, we will first attend to the child who has been injured. We will then speak to the other child. In the case of a bite that breaks the skin, we will contact parents of both children. A written incident report will also be sent home. **Should there be a consistent pattern of biting, parent/guardian must meet with teacher and director to discuss the best way to help the child break the habit.**

CALENDAR

Aleph Bet Children's Center and the school offices are closed on the following days:

- Professional Development Days (various, throughout the year)
- Conferences (up to one day)
- Labor Day
- Rosh Hashanah (up to two days)
- Yom Kippur (up to one day)
- Sukkot (up to two days)
- Shmini Atzeret (up to one day)
- Simchat Torah (up to one day)
- Winter Break (including **at minimum** Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day
- Thanksgiving (three days – Wed, Thurs, Fri)
- Passover (up to first two and last two days)
- Memorial Day
- Shavuot (up to two days)
- Independence Day

If a national holiday falls on a Saturday, then Aleph Bet will be closed the previous Friday. If a national holiday falls on a Sunday, then Aleph Bet will be closed the following Monday.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Classroom helpers are used in preschool programs to strengthen the relationship between home and school. Families have an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of their children's school experience and simultaneously assist the teachers. Families who are interested may sign up to assist in their child's classroom or with the Director.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE

The staff uses positive guidance techniques, including: logical or natural consequences applied in problem solving situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior rather than competition (calm, safe space), comparison, or criticism. In the event of excessive aggressive behavior that threatens the safety and security of our children and/or staff, other measures may be taken including asking a parent to pick up child for the remainder of day.

Prevention & Positive Reinforcement: Providing a daily routine, a sense of security and constantly praising and reinforcing appropriate and positive behaviors.

Setting Limits: Simple age-appropriate rules are established and consistently followed.

Problem Solving: We encourage the child and help them verbalize and use logical reasoning and consequences as the means of solving conflicts.

Remove Child from Situation: After all behavior management techniques have been utilized, the last alternative is to remove the child from the situation.

Sent home for the day and/or Suspension: When all other discipline techniques have been attempted and are not effective, it may become necessary for a child to leave Aleph Bet for one or more days. Behaviors that may be viewed as grounds for these actions include:

- Physical violence resulting in injury, OR continuing after attempts by staff to intercede, redirect, or discipline
- Attempts to encourage others in destructive behavior, continuing after attempts by staff to intercede, redirect, or discipline
- Any action that requires the rest of the children present to be removed from the space for their own safety
- Required one-on-one attention from a staff member for longer than 10 minutes

If a guardian is called for any of the listed reasons, children must be picked-up within one hour of a disciplinary call. Failure to pick-up within one hour may result in suspension for their next scheduled school day. We strive for open communication and to be teammates with each family, so we will request a parent-teacher conference after any such call. Four disciplinary calls within one month may result in a one-week suspension. All reasons for being sent home or suspended are at the discretion of the Director.

Aleph Bet strictly prohibits the following methods of discipline from staff and parents on the premise:

- Corporal punishment of any kind.
- Shaming, threatening, or verbal abuse.
- Withholding food or rest.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the potty.
- Punitive isolation.

CUBBIES

Each child has a special place for his/her belongings. This cubby will hold a jacket, **small** naptime blanket and crib sheet and change of clothes. All bedding should fit in your child's naptime box. **Kindly limit the items in the cubby to true necessities**. Since most children share a cubby, **please do not leave backpacks at school.** Napping supplies should be taken home and washed weekly, and returned to school the following week.

CURRICULUM

Aleph Bet's curriculum is play-based. Each teacher tailors the class schedule and lesson plans by themes according to the age group, interests, and goals of the class. Our curriculum is guided by the TN-ELDS (Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards) and thoughtfully planned by your child's teacher. Aleph Bet enrichment includes Hebrew language and a variety of topics designed by staff that may include cooking, sports, dance, music, Spanish, etc.

DATA PRIVACY

All records concerning your child (enrollment forms, immunizations, observations, written reports, etc.) are confidential. Any and all information in the records will be accessible to you, Aleph Bet or Jewish Federation staff as needed, agencies related to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and person(s) or agencies designated by the state licensing boards to review our records for licensing purposes. The Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network may be called to assist with certain situations and will access records on a case-by-case basis. Relevant information may be shared with a collection agency, as per situations outlined in the Tuition section.

DISMISSAL POLICY

A child may be dismissed from Aleph Bet Children's Center for the following:

- Non-payment of tuition after 20 days.
- Behavior-If after a reasonable amount of time, a child continues to have difficulty following the classroom rules, the classroom schedule, or is unable to adjust to the demands of the group, parents may choose or be asked to withdraw their child.
- Failure to provide or renew your child's immunization record can be cause for dismissal. This information is required for State licensing.
- Lack of cooperation with Aleph Bet's efforts to resolve differences or to address behavioral issues disruptive to normal class functioning.
- Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats toward children, staff, or other parents.

All reasons for dismissal are at the discretion of the Director.

DONATIONS

As a non-profit organization, Aleph Bet always appreciates donations, which are tax deductible. As your child develops physically and mentally, please consider whether outgrown books or toys that are in great condition may be appropriate for use at Aleph Bet. Monetary donations may also be made to Aleph Bet as a tribute, in honor of a person or occasion, or as a gift to purchase classroom equipment and supplies.

DRESS CODE

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and appropriate shoes (**no open-toed shoes**). Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. Although we use washable art supplies, please do not send your child in clothing that would disappoint you if it gets dirty or stained. Hard-to-close snaps, belts and overalls that have buckles should be avoided especially during potty training. Shoes will built-in skates or spins are prohibited. Fashion boots, sandals, and crocs are strongly discouraged as they pose a safety hazard in the classroom and on the playground.

Children's names should be placed on all clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all possessions and clothes. Please dress your child for the weather. At least one set of extra clothing should be kept in each child's cubby or classroom. Update this extra set according to the season and your child's growth. Children in the process of potty learning should keep *at least* two sets of extra clothing (especially pants, underwear, and socks). An extra pair of shoes is also recommended during potty training stages.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Families are required to sign an authorization on the emergency information form in the yearly enrollment application giving the Director and/or staff permission to act in a child's best interest for emergency medical treatment. It is Aleph Bet Children's Center policy to contact the parents/guardian first. If the parents/guardian cannot be reached, the school will attempt to reach the emergency contact persons listed on the emergency-medical authorization before staff assumes responsibility for medical care, other than administering first aid. In the event of an emergency, 911 services will be used. Children may be taken to the nearest hospital for emergency medical care (Park Ridge East). Parent/Guardian will assume financial responsibility for the emergency vehicle, doctor, and hospital fees.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, Aleph Bet and Jewish Federation staff will adhere to the multi-hazard emergency plan. It is the policy of the Jewish Cultural Center (Federation and Aleph Bet) that if there should be an emergency or disaster situation, all staff, visitors, and children will evacuate the building immediately and will report to The First Church of the Nazarene (5455 North Terrace Road). A roll call of staff and children will take place to ensure everyone has safely left the building and reconvened Church of the Nazarene. Aleph Bet families will be contacted once everyone is safe. Aleph Bet parents/authorized adult may pick their children up at Church of the Nazarene. In the event of fire or any other dangers, the children will be evacuated immediately to a safe distance away from the building. Fire evacuation routes are posted in the main school entrance as well as in each classroom.

As required by Tennessee Code relative to child care agencies (Title 71-Chapter 3-Part 5), Aleph Bet will conduct at least one (1) fire drill month and at least one (1) drill other than fire every month and will maintain documentation for a minimum of one (1) year.

ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Consideration is given to applicants in the following order: current children in school-year program, siblings of current children in school-year program, children who are eligible for the Jewish Early Childhood Initiative, siblings or children of alumni of school-year program, children whose families are registered donors of the Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga (JFGC) for the past two out of five years, children of Aleph Bet teachers and Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga staff, and children in the community at large. Aleph Bet Children's Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. Children between the ages of two to pre-K, may be enrolled in the Aleph Bet Children's Center. A child must be the appropriate age by August 15 of the current school year to pre-register for the

school program. All children must be at least two years of age before starting at Aleph Bet. Any child turning 2 after August 15th may be eligible for enrollment at their birthday **if space is available.** They may choose to register at the beginning of the year and "hold" their spot, however if the 2-year-old classroom begins to fill, the family will be required to pay full tuition rates immediately in order to keep the spot secure. In general, children remain with the same classroom throughout the school-year; however, exceptions may be made based on our waiting list and the age/maturity of the child.

A non-refundable registration fee (per family) of $100 must accompany all applications before they can be processed. A yearly registration fee per family is due with preregistration forms. A $100 holding fee will be charged for children who do not attend during the summer, but wish to return in the fall if space is available. **As of July 1, 2013, all child care agencies are required to put a child at the top of the agency's waiting list if the child has at least one (1) parent or legal guardian that serves on active duty in the armed forces of the United States.**

Paperwork to be completed prior to start date:

1. Online pre-registration form
2. Aleph Bet Children's Center Full Registration Packet
3. Health History Checklist
4. Personal Safety Curriculum Notification Form
5. Preschool Tennessee Day Care Immunization Certificate (from your child's physician) or approved physician's note detailining medically required delayed/missing vaccinations
6. **For children under 30 months of age, the guardian shall provide proof of a physical examination within three (3) months prior to admission, signed or stamped by a physician or health care provider.**
7. Additional paperwork may be required for children born outside of the U.S., Canada, and Japan.
8. (If applicable) Court documentation of divorce decree that outlines custody and visitation.
9. (If applicable) Forms relating to payment plans/schedules for families receiving outside assistance (scholarship, certificate, etc.)

FUNDRAISING

To avoid charging higher tuition or additional fees, Aleph Bet relies on community fundraisers to help finance our operating budget. We encourage all families to participate in our fundraising efforts and ask family/friends to support our program.

THE GOLD SNEAKER PROGRAM

The Gold Sneaker Initiative was developed to enhance policy related to physical activity and nutrition within licensed child care facilities across Tennessee.

Physical Activity Policy

- **Policy 1.1:** Children ages 12 months or older attending a full day program shall be offered at least 60 minutes of ***physical activity*** per day, either indoors or outdoors. Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of such activities. For children ages three and older, this physical activity must be a balance of free play, teacher-directed activities, and music and movement. This must be documented in the daily schedule and on lesson plan forms.
- **Policy 1.2:** Viewing of television, videos and other visual recordings shall be limited to no more than 60 minutes per day of educational programs or programs that actively engage child movement. Children attending less than

a full day program shall be limited to a proportionate amount of such viewing. This shall be stated in the individual child care facility's policies.

- **Policy 1.3:** Children shall not be allowed to ***remain sedentary or to sit passively*** for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. This shall be stated in the individual child care facility's policies.
- **Policy 1.4:** Child care facilities must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and is never used negatively or to control behavior. This shall be stated in the individual child care facility's policies.

Nutrition Policy

Nutrition standards will be enhanced by including additional nutrition policies that must be addressed in order to earn Gold Sneaker recognition:

- **Policy 1.5:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including ***breastfeeding***. Staff will be sensitive to breastfeeding mothers and infants, and their eating patterns. Each infant will have a feeding plan on file, which is completed by the parent/parents and facility as a team to address their unique feeding patterns.
- **Policy 1.6:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including ***adequate time for meal consumption***. Adequate time for meals and snacks will be allowed for all children, and will be included in classroom schedules.
- **Policy 1.7:** Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including appropriate ***portion sizes***. Appropriate portion sizes will be assured through staff training and adherence to portion sizes as found in child care licensing regulations.
- **Policy 1.8:** All eating opportunities should consist of a respect for the child and promoting a ***positive attitude toward food***. Food shall never be used as rewards or punishment for children. This shall be stated in the individual child care facility's policies.

Tobacco Policy

In order to ensure a healthy environment for all children the following tobacco policy must be adopted by the facility to earn Gold Sneaker recognition:

- **Policy 1.9** Child care facility campus shall be tobacco free. This shall be stated in the individual child care facility's policies.

Enactment of Policy

Participation in the Gold Sneaker Initiative is voluntary and is open to any licensed child care facility in Tennessee. All policies shall be stated in the individual child care program's policies and a copy shall be provided to the Department of Health for maintenance of the Gold Sneaker recognition. Child care programs that implement these physical activity, nutrition and tobacco policies and include staff in training will earn a "Gold Sneaker" award which designates them as a "Gold Sneaker" child care program. Such designation can be used for marketing purposes for the child care program, and local organizations will encourage parents to select such programs.

Gold Sneaker Documentation

Programs desiring "Gold Sneaker" designation will provide to the Department of Health the following documentation annually:

- A copy of the program's policies clearly stating Gold Sneaker policies 1.1-1.9.
- A copy of the daily schedule and a weekly lesson plan form for each classroom of children ages 12 months and older with documentation of 60 minutes per day of physical activity as stated in Gold Sneaker policy 1.1.
- A copy of the feeding plan form in use by the program demonstrating compliance with Gold Sneaker policy 1.5
- A copy of the daily schedule for all classrooms documenting adequate time for meals and snacks as stated in Gold Sneaker policy 1.6.
- Documentation that the director (if center-based program) and teaching staff have completed Gold Sneaker training. If the program is a family or group child care program, the provider must provide documentation of completion of training. Information on training for the Gold Sneaker initiative will be available at http://health.state.tn.us/goldsneaker.htm.

HEALTH POLICY

In order for us to admit a child into Aleph Bet Children's Center each child is required to have a Tennessee Child Health Record, and a Tennessee Certificate of Immunization completed by the child's physician submitted to the school office. Furthermore, a medical emergency form must be in the school's files before the child can be admitted. Only those children who are physically able to participate in the program without risk to themselves or others will be admitted. Please see immunizations section for more information about required vaccinations.

For the protection of all children at Aleph Bet Children's Center, children should not be sent to school sick. Children should be kept home if they develop any of the signs or symptoms of a contagious disease. This includes the following:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in preschool activities, including lethargy, behavioral changes, or difficulty breathing.
2. Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide.
3. Respiratory Illnesses & Colds: If mucus is profuse and cannot be controlled by normal wiping, the child will be excluded at Aleph Bet's discretion. A child will also be excluded if the runny nose is associated with a fever, ear infections, infected throat or persistent cough.
4. Fever of 100 degrees or higher
5. Vomiting. If a child begins vomiting at school, the child will be sent home immediately, as vomiting diseases spread very easily among young children.
6. Diarrhea (three or more loose stools). If a child develops diarrhea at school, the child will be sent home immediately, as diarrhea diseases spread very easily among young children.
7. Mouth sores not associated with drooling.
8. Rash, until a physician's note has determined it is not a communicable disease
9. Purulent Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
10. Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment
11. Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment.
12. Head Lice until after proof of treatment and all live bugs are removed. Children will continue to be monitored by staff for nits and parents will be notified and children sent home if live bugs re-emerge.
13. Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
14. Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
15. Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics.
16. Hepatitis A virus until one week after onset of illness, after immune globulin has been administered.
17. Meningitis, until doctor has approved child to return to school.
18. Food borne Outbreaks (food poisoning)
19. Haemophilus influenza Type B or H1N1

Children must be kept at home for a minimum of 24 hours (or as recommend by a physician) with the above symptoms/illnesses before returning to school. In the case of a suspected or confirmed contagious disease, rash or continuing symptoms, **a doctor's note may be required before your child is permitted to return to Aleph Bet**.

In the event of a vaccine preventable disease outbreak in Chattanooga, unvaccinated children or those on a delayed vaccination schedule may be required to stay home for the safety of child, their family, and the school population. A doctor's note may be required for unvaccinated/delayed schedule children to return to Aleph Bet.

In the event of a community/national/international pandemic, additional guidance will be provided as to health policies, absences, and possible school closures.

Additionally, families should consider keeping their children at home, under observation, if they exhibit any of the following unusual behavior:

- Child is crankier or cries more than usual
- Child is less active than usual
- Child feels general discomfort or seems unwell
- Child experiences a significant decrease of appetite

Children may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours **without the use of medication.**
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all school activities.

THE FINAL DECISION ABOUT WHETHER A CHILD MUST STAY HOME OR WHETHER THEY CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL IS MADE BY THE DIRECTOR OR STAFF MEMBER IN CHARGE.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Holiday celebrations such as (but not limited to) Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover are held during the school year. Families are always welcome to attend these celebrations, even if your child does not attend school when a celebration is scheduled. Aleph Bet Children's Center does not celebrate Halloween, Valentine's Day, Christmas, or St. Patrick's Day.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All children are required to have a Tennessee Certificate of Immunization showing completion of all required vaccines, including: Hib, PCB, DTaP or DT, IPV or OPV, HBV, Hepatitis A, MMR, and Varicella. Throughout the year, if your child receives any immunizations when they go to the pediatrician for a wellness check-up, **please provide Aleph Bet office with the updated immunization information.** This information can also be faxed to 423.493.9997. **Per state regulations, our records must be maintained and up to date. The health department checks files on an annual basis for compliance.** While not currently required, we highly encourage all children to receive the annual flu vaccine. It is possible that this, and/or other seasonal immunizations may become required for attendance at a future date.

CHILDREN WITH EXEMPTION TO IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIREMENTS

Medical – Physician (MD, DO) or department Public Health Nurse authorized to indicate specific vaccines medically exempted (because of risk of harm) on the new form. Other vaccines remain required. The medical reason for the exemption does not need to be provided.

Religious - Aleph Bet Children's Center does not accept children with a religious exemption to immunizations.

Please review Health Policy for additional information pertaining to non-vaccinated/delayed vaccinated children.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER CHATTANOOGA

The Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga builds and fosters a strong unified Jewish community and strives to ensure its well-being and continuity locally, in Israel, and throughout the world. Aleph Bet Children's Center is a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga. The Aleph Bet Children's Center Advisory Committee serves as a liasion between Aleph Bet and the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation. The committee oversees the operating budget, supports the work of the staff, attends Aleph Bet programs, and provides situational guidance as needed. The Jewish Federation Board of Directors reviews and approves the annual operating budget as well as policies that affect the community.

JUDAICS

Jewish learning is an integral part of Aleph Bet Children's Center program. Appropriate blessings are said before meals. Hebrew language is used in the classroom, as well as taught by the *shaliach* (Israeli emissary) weekly during the school-year. Hebrew is introduced through songs, numbers, letters, objects, games, and stories.

Judaic concepts are introduced through:

- Cooking
- Art
- Dramatic Play
- Stories

- Weekly Shabbat and Havdalah celebrations
- Holiday Games
- Music and singing
- Dance and movement

HaMotzi (Prayer done before eating):
Weekday HaMotzi (recited before lunch)-HaMotzi lechem min ha-aretz. We give thanks to G-d for bread, our voices rise in song together as our joyful prayer is said. Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam,ha-motzi lehem min ha-aretz. Amen.

Shabbat:
The Jewish Sabbath, or Shabbat, starts at sundown every Friday and lasts until sundwn on Saturday. Although the Jewish Sabbath starts Friday evening, all the children in our program join together on Friday mornings around 9:00 a.m. to celebrate the coming Shabbat. When possible, we invite members of the Jewish community to sing Shabbat songs or tell a story during this special time together.

Havdalah:
Havdalah marks the end of Shabbat, and the start of a new week. At Aleph Bet, we celebrate Havdalah every Monday morning with a special snack, blessings, and encouragement to start the new week with a fresh, open heart and mind.

MEDICATION:
Medication will be administered to children only with a signed authorization. Prescription medication for an individual child must be kept in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label, which shows the prescription number, date filled, doctor's name, directions for use, and child's name. Medication will be kept out of the reach of children. Expiration dates of medication must be current. We reserve the right to dispose of expired medications. **A medical action plan from your child's doctor will be required for all children with EpiPens, emergency inhalers, or other emergency medications**. Over the counter (OTC) medications will not be administered, with the exception of pain associated with teething, and topical creams/ointments for bug bites, diaper rash, or non-contagious skin conditions. Staff will administer no more than the dosage of medication printed on the label based on child's age/weight. Any noticeable adverse reaction to the medication will be reported to the family. **Do not medicate a child before school to mask a fever or other symptoms.**

NUTRITION POLICY:
As a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga, Aleph Bet adheres to the Jewish dietary laws and serves only vegetarian, pareve (non-dairy) or dairy foods for snacks. **No pork or shellfish is allowed in the children's lunches. Due to a high number of allergies, no peanuts, tree-nuts, or nut- based milks are served at Aleph Bet or allowed in children's lunches.**

Aleph Bet Children's Center will provide:
- A morning and an afternoon snack.
- 2% milk at lunch or oat milk for children allergic to dairy/milk.

We ask that children **not bring any food into the classroom except at lunchtime or if a special snack is needed. According to the state health laws, no food that is served to students or placed in mailboxes may be prepared at home.**

Families provide:
- A nut-free, healthy lunch that meets the recommended guidelines and is packed in an insulated lunch box or Thermos. We have listed many vegetarian protein options below. Teachers are happy to reheat food in the microwave, if sent in a microwave-safe container (no plastic bags or glass) and doesn't take longer than one minute to prepare. If your child requires different milk than served, it should be sent daily with your child's lunch.

Choosing **one** from each of the following columns will create a lunch that meets approximately 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowances for children. Keep in mind that even too much healthy food can encourage over-eating so when packing your child's lunch, think, "Is this how much food *they need*, or how much food *I need?"* It is not generally advisable to serve children "diet foods," such as those pre-packaged foods labeled as low-fat, or with sugar substitutes. We request that you leave sugary snacks, fruit juices and desserts at home. Children lay down for rest immediately following lunch and the extra sugar can make it difficult for their bodies to get the break they need. Please consult your pediatrician or visit www.choosemyplate.gov for additional information about your child's specific needs.

Protein	**Grains**	**Fruits** (½ cup)	**Vegetables** (½ cup)
Cottage cheese (6 oz.)	Wheat bread (½ slice)	Apple slices	Frozen vegetables
Soy Butter (3Tbs)	Wheat thins (¼ cup)	Banana	Cucumber slices
Veggie Dog (1 ½ oz.)	Goldfish (¼ cup)	Strawberries	Baby carrots
Veggie Nuggets (1 ½ oz.)	Triscuits (¼ cup)	Mixed Berries	Sweet Potato
Veggie Burger(1 ½ oz.)	Pita chips (¼ cup)	Applesauce	Bell Pepper
Cheese Cubes (1 ½ oz.)	Wheat Tortilla (1 small)	Mandarin oranges	Edamame
Yogurt (6 oz.)	Wheat Pita (½ loaf)	Cuties (mini oranges)	Beets
Beans (½ cup)	Whole-grain pasta (¼ cup)	Pineapple	Green beans
Eggs (1 egg)	Brown rice (¼ cup)	Grapes	Tomatoes
Fish (1 ½ oz.)	Dry cereal ($^1/_3$ cup)	Kiwi	Squash
Hummus (3Tbs)		Dried fruit	Pasta sauce
Sun Butter (3Tbs)			Avocado

Allergies/Dietary Restrictions:
See page four for more information about allergies

ORIENTATION
At the start of each school year, Aleph Bet Children's Center offers a Family Welcome Night, an orientation/open house, for new and returning families to meet other families and classroom teachers. All families are encouraged to attend.

PACIFIERS
If your child requires a pacifier to nap please notify the teacher and place the pacifier in a labeled baggie each day (Red Room only). In order to prevent the transmission of germs and to promote language development and proper dental health, a child will only be permitted to use a pacifier during naptime and we will wean them off it as soon as possible.

PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION
Open communication between the parent and teacher is essential. We rely on and provide a few different avenues of communication including app based messaging, email, texting, Facebook, direct mail, newsletters and memos. Parents/Guardians may contact Aleph Bet Children's Center at 893-5486 or 493-0270 ext. 18 for the Director.

Brightwheel App
All parents/guardians are required to download and activate the Brightwheel app on their mobile device(s). This app is used daily to sign your child in/out of school, as a direct messaging option between the school and home, for any emergency alerts, and may also include updates to our calendar and information about upcoming events.

Additional Communication Methods
Weekly emails, memos, yearly surveys, and monthly newsletters will keep you informed about curriculum or planned changes affecting children's routine care and changes in personnel. Updated schedules, calendars and information may be found on our website, www.aleph-bet.com.

In an effort to reduce waste, Aleph Bet will minimize the use of paper communications. Aleph Bet will use app-based messaging and email as our main sources of communication to families. Weekly eblasts with information and reminders will be sent out on Fridays. Special announcements are sent as needed. All Aleph Bet families are to provide a current e-mail address. We ask that you read our emails in a timely manner. In case of weather related emergencies or other situations requiring immediate attention, parents will be informed via app-based messaging.

Teachers are pleased to exchange daily greetings or brief chats with parents. If additional time is needed, the teachers will gladly schedule a meeting time. The preschool and its employees will always maintain confidentiality of all information. Formal conferences are an opportunity for you and your child's teacher to discuss the development of your child. We encourage you to attend these triannual conferences.

During operating hours, parents shall be permitted immediate access to their children. Aleph Bet may place reasonable restrictions on access by any parents as needed to limit disruption of the children's routine.

PARENT GROUP ASSOCIATION
The Parent Group Association (PGA) meets on occasion throughout the year to discuss school events, fundraising, classroom learning environments, teacher appreciation, outreach and more. There is no fee to join the PGA.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY
Aleph Bet reserves the right to take photographs and videos of classrooms, children, and events. Videos and photographs may be used for education, promotional, archival, website, and fundraising purposes, with prior authorization.

REPORT ABUSE AND NEGLECT
Policies
Child abuse is defined by state law, but generally includes (1) non-accidental physical injury, (2) sexual contact or exploitation, (3) neglect, and (4) emotional distress. The state of Tennessee defines abuse as inflicted by an adult. Prior to starting a paid position with Aleph Bet Children's Center, a background check must be conducted on candidates. This background check includes but is not limited to civil and criminal checks. The background check is done by a private firm.

1. All employees and volunteers (those volunteering more than 36 hours a year in the classroom) must be finger printed and have a background check conducted through the State of Tennessee.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual abuse or physical abuse will not be employed nor serve in a volunteer capacity of any type.

Every person in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous. - See more at: www.tn.gov/dcs/article/reporting-abuse-faq#sthash.rT6C1Y0v.dpuf

Aleph Bet is required to offer an annual abuse awareness program for children three and older.

SCHOOL HOURS
Monday Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. See calendar for specific closings.

SCHOOL-YEAR PROGRAM (1st week of August – May; (see below for Summer)

All families in the Red and Yellow Rooms may choose to send their child two, three, four, or five-days a week. Children enrolled part-time must attend the same days weekly. Parents may choose specific days of the week they want their child to attend, pending availability. All children enrolled in the pre-K program (Blue Room) attend 5 days a week to best prepare for kindergarten.

SUMMER PROGRAM (Camp Aleph Bet, June, July and – sometimes can go into early August depending on calendar; NOTE – Summer Program ends on the Friday before Hamilton County Schools begins)

Summer time options depend on the number of children enrolled in the school. Space permitting two, three, four, or five day programs are available to all children. Drop-in and weekly enrollment may also be available if space allows. Parents will be notified of all of the summer options during summer registration. Preference is given to children enrolled five days a week, year-round.

SEVERE WEATHER CLOSINGS

Severe weather conditions may result in delayed opening, early dismissal, and/or closing. In the event of a delay, early dismissal, or closure, Aleph Bet will notify parents via the Brightwheel app. Parents picking up their children during inclement weather are strongly encouraged to remain in the building until it is safe to depart. Parents are required to stay on premises until after a tornado warning has expired. When the school is closed for inclement weather a notice **will not** be placed on the school doors. Aleph Bet is not part of the Hamilton County school district and does not follow the same closure/delay schedules.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

For the health and safety of the children and staff, the Jewish Cultural Center and Aleph Bet Children's Center are smoke-free environments. This includes all tobacco, e-cig, and vape products. Smoking/vaping is prohibited while in the parking lot, and areas surrounding the playground.

SNACKS

A morning and afternoon snack are provided to your child daily. We ask that your child finish eating all food prior to arriving at Aleph Bet. If your child is still finishing their breakfast upon arrival, we ask that you take a few minutes and sit with them in the parking lot or hallway table while they finish eating any food brought from home (no nuts). Children arriving after snack has started may not be served. Due to state guidelines of sanitation and supervision, food will not be served to individual children outside of designated times. If your child has a medical need for additional snacks/meals, documentation from your pediatrician is required, and a schedule may be set to accommodate.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We recommend that only photographs of **your** child be placed on social media sites (including Facebook, Instagram, etc.). For privacy reasons, we ask that you do not post group pictures/videos taken at Aleph Bet events or programs, or that you receive permission from all families represented in said photos.

STAFF

Our early childhood staff is comprised of nurturing and caring individuals who receive continuous in-service training. All of our staff is carefully chosen based on the special qualities, experience and talents that they have to offer the children at Aleph Bet. They are responsible for ensuring children's healthy development and learning, while striving to achieve an optimal balance between children's self-initiated learning and adult guidance and support. Each classroom offers a low teacher-child ratio, which enables students to receive the individual attention they deserve.

All staff members hold CPR certification and are First Aid trained through an American Red Cross approved association. All staff members are fingerprinted, and a criminal background check is run on each employee prior to hiring.

STATE OF TENNESSEE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Aleph Bet Children's Center adheres to the regulations of the Tennessee Department of Human Services' Division of Child Care Licensing. Aleph Bet updates policies and practices when revised or approved by the State of Tennessee DHS. Under Tennessee's Child Care Report Card System, every licensed child care agency must undergo an annual evaluation

and post a report card of the results. Agencies are required to post their report card with their renewal license where parents can clearly see them. The Report Card system is mandatory for all licensed providers. The Star-Quality Child Care Program is a voluntary program that recognizes child care agencies that exceed minimum licensing standards. These agencies can receive a rating of one, two, or three stars. Aleph Bet participates in the Star-Quality Child Care Program and is proud to have received a three star rating each year we've participated in the program.

TITLE VI

TITLE IV is a Federal law, which is part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin in programs that receive Federal financial assistance. It is illegal for any division or contractor affiliated with the Tennessee Department of Human Services to withhold or refuse, benefits, services, or funding based on race, color, or national origin. House income level or resources may affect participation in some DHS benefit programs. Certain programs may also require evidence of citizenship for eligibility.

TOILET TRAINING

We understand that toilet training is an individualized process, and this is not a requirement to attend Aleph Bet Children's Center. When your child is ready, we work closely with the parent and child to toilet train in a consistent, encouraging and calm manner. A child may be ready to toilet train if he or she:

- Can sense that the bowels are full
- Can let you know he/she needs to use the potty
- Understands what is expected
- Cooperates with the request
- Verbalizes discomfort with wet or soiled diapers.

Reminders and encouragement to use the bathroom are provided throughout the day. We celebrate success and keep a positive attitude. Parents should follow a similar schedule at home. Children and parents need to understand that "accidents" will happen. Children are never reprimanded emotionally, physically, or verbally for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. Please provide at least two complete changes of clothing.

TOYS

Aleph Bet has wonderful educational and age appropriate toys for your child to play with throughout the day. Please leave toys, including jewelry at home, as they can easily get broken or lost.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the families. All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by their families or adults (18 or older) authorized by their families. Should a child be left beyond 5:30 p.m. a late pick up fee of $2.00 per minute/per child will be billed. If this becomes habitual, the fee may be increased.

TUITION

Tuition is based on the school year (52 weeks per year), regardless of the number scheduled and/or attended days each month, and is broken down into monthly amounts. **There are no refunds or credits for illness, holidays (Jewish or secular), inclement weather days, family vacations, temporary absence as a result of disciplinary action, breaks or scheduled school closings.** Tuition is due monthly. All families are required to use the Brightwheel App; payment information MUST be added to your Brightwheel account, either banking information for ACH (routing and account number) or credit/debit card. Brightwheel will automatically charge your account on the 1st of each month. If you've set up ACH bank transfers to pay tuition/fees there are no additional fees. If you choose to use a credit card to pay tuition/fees, your account will be charged an additional 2.9% to cover fees incurred by Aleph Bet. ***If you choose to opt-out of Brightwheel payments (which we STRONGLY discourage), you will be responsible to pay by cash or check by the 1st of each month.*** IF later than 5 days, $100 late fee will be added. Balances overdue by more than 10 days may result in the student being dismissed from the program and the account may be turned over to a collection agency for non-payment. A $100 non-refundable deposit is required for new families enrolling in order to secure a child's spot at Aleph Bet. A small yearly fee is charged for returning families to secure a space for the summer and upcoming school-year.

Tuition Rates – June through July 2025

5 days per week	$1,225/month
4 days per week	$1,100/month
3 days per week	$990/month
2 days per week	$750/month

Tuition Rates – August 2025 through July 2026

5 days per week	$1,260/month
4 days per week	$1,135/month
3 days per week	$1,020/month
2 days per week	$775/month

There is a **10% multi-child discount** applied to additional children's rate. If children in family do not enroll for the same number of days per week, the discount will apply to the lower rate.

Multi child, promotional, and other discounts are not available to any family with an account which is overdue by more than 10 days, regardless of payment plan. Those discounts may again become available if the account is brought into good standing.

All fees and tuition must be paid by the 1st of each month.

A *one-month* written notice of withdrawal before the child's expected termination date is requested (i.e. notification by Oct.1 for Nov. 1 departure). A full month's tuition for the following month is required if Aleph Bet is not given proper notice (regardless of termination date). Once a child withdraws, a new application must be submitted and accompanied by the required registration fee for the child to re-enroll. Exception: If a child is withdrawn from the program (by request of the director or guardian) as a result of repeated disciplinary action, the family will only be responsible for the current month's tuition. Any deviation in payment requirements as set forth in this section requires the approval of the school Director. Failure to meet any previously agreed-upon payment schedule without prior arrangement will result in cancellation of registration or termination of services.

Tuition Assistance
Families who receive assistance for childcare tuition (state certificate, scholarships, foster family, etc.), will be required to complete additional paperwork, outlining a payment schedule. All appropriate documentation from the assisting entity (state, outside corporation) must be on file by the child's start date.

TZEDEKAH
The Hebrew word tzedekah literally means righteousness and refers to giving charity. A tzedekah box is located in each classroom and the director's office. Children are invited to bring in a few coins from home to place in the tzedekah box. At the end of the year, Aleph Bet will choose an organization or cause to donate the money collected.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS
All visitors must check in at the school office. Due to state regulations concerning class size and teacher ratio, it is not possible for children to bring friends to class. **Volunteers do not count towards staff:child ratios.**

Siblings of children are allowed in classrooms during drop off and pick up only and *must* be accompanied by a parent/guardian at all times.

WEAPONS
Weapons including guns, firearms, knives, etc. are prohibited from school property.

2025/26 School-Year & 2026 Summer Camp

*Subject to change. Families will be notified of any modifications to the school calendar.

Professional Development/ Prepare for School Year (Closed)	Monday, August 4- Wednesday August 6
First Day of 2025-2026 School Year	**Thursday, August 7, 2025**
Labor Day (Closed)	Monday, September 1
Rosh Hashanah (Closed)	Tuesday, Sept. 23 & Wednesday, Sept. 24 (Jewish New Year)
Yom Kippur (Closed)	Thursday, October 2 (Day of Atonement)
Sukkot (Closed)	Tuesday, October 7 & Wednesday, October 8 (Feast of Booths)
Shmini Atzaret (Closed)	Tuesday, October 14 (Eighth Day of Assembly)
Simchat Torah (Closed)	Wednesday, October 15 (Rejoicing with the Torah) School
Portrait Day	TBD
Fall Program and Luncheon	TBD
Thanksgiving (Closed)	Wednesday, November 26 - Friday, November 28
Christmas, Winter Break (Closed)	Wednesday, December 24 – Friday, December 26
New Year's Holiday (Closed)	Thursday, January 1, 2026
Professional Development (Closed)	Monday, January 19 (MLK Jr. Day)
Professional Development/ Parent/Teacher Conferences (Closed)	Monday, February 16 (President's Day)
Spring Fling Program	TBD
Passover (Closed)	Thursday, April 2 and Friday, April 3
Passover (Closed)	Wednesday, April 8 and Thursday, April 9
Year-End Program (and Last Day)	**Thursday, May 21 (Tentative)**
Shavuot (Closed)	Friday, May 22
Memorial Day (Closed)	Monday, May 25
Professional Development/ Prepare School for Summer (Closed)	Tuesday, May 26 – Friday, May 29
First Day of Camp Aleph Bet	**Monday, June 1, 2026**
Independence Day (Closed)	Friday, July 3
Last Day of Camp Aleph Bet	**Friday, July 31**
Professional Development/ Prepare for School Year (Closed)	Monday, August 3- Wednesday August 5
First Day of School-Year (2026-27)	**Thursday, August 6, 2026**