



Parent Handbook

Temple Beth Ami Nursery School

14330 Travilah Road

Rockville, MD 20850

301-762-5594

www.tbans.org

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Introduction to Temple Beth Ami Nursery School

Our Mission: Joyful Jewish Learning

Our Philosophy: We are a welcoming and inclusive Reform Jewish community, where passionate teachers nurture and enrich the lives of our children and families in a joyful learning environment.

At Temple Beth Ami Nursery School, children acquire skills for positive, life-long social and emotional development. Teachers encourage curiosity, questioning, and a love of learning so that each child builds a solid foundation for continued school success.

As a learning community of educators and parents, we teach by providing children with opportunities to interact, explore and problem solve through intentional and creative play.

Our History: Temple Beth Ami founded a school for young children in 1989 and fondly called it Temple Beth Ami Nursery School, reflecting our connection to the larger congregation and our priority of providing a nurturing, warm, and intimate Jewish setting for our children. We stay true to our roots and core values, but we frequently reflect on the program and update the curriculum to meet the ever-changing needs of our community and to ensure children's readiness for later schooling.

You can read more about our history on the website.

We have adopted a nickname, using the acronym of our full name. You will often see and hear "TBANS," pronounced T-bans.

Our Curriculum: In 2018, TBANS created our "Framework for Early Education" to express our specific goals for TBANS students and to delineate the skills that we work to help each child build during their time in our school, as they prepare for future social and academic success. TBANS Framework for Early Education may be viewed on our website and in our office.

Contact Information

Temple Beth Ami Nursery School
14330 Travilah Road
Rockville, MD 20833
301-762-5594 (8:30 am – 3:00 pm)
Temple Beth Ami Main Office: 301-340-6818 (9:00 am – 6:00 pm; Friday till 3:00 pm)

Nursery School Staff

Paula Sayag, Ph.D., Director
Ellen Bortz, Special Projects Coordinator
Jill Finci, Administrative Assistant
For biographies of each of our teachers, visit

301-762-5594
pls@bethami.org
eeb@bethami.org
jaf@bethami.org
www.tbans.org.

TBANS Parent Committee

TBANSPC@bethami.org

Temple Staff

For personal and religious questions:

Rabbi Gary Pokras
Rabbi Baht Weiss
Cantor Larry Eschler

rgp@bethami.org
rbw@bethami.org
cle@bethami.org

For membership questions:

Janice, Rosenblatt, Executive Director
Diane Ferraro, Membership Director

jsr@bethami.org
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For bookkeeping questions:

Esther Abelson
Joanne Diamond

est@bethami.org
jd1@bethami.org

For Temple-wide and Family Programs:

Shelly Gordon

slg@bethami.org

Outline of Our Daily Schedule

7:30 am	Optional "Early Arrival" available with prior reservations. Supervised free play time.
9:30 am	The school day officially begins. Teachers welcome children into their classrooms and help them follow their established routine to prepare for the day. Teachers then encourage children to engage in a variety of small group activities with peers. Teachers facilitate the use of the instructional materials to support the development of emotional, social, and intellectual skills.
10:00 am	Classes meet to discuss the schedule of the day. Teachers share new concepts and plans. Books, songs, and movement and language games enhance the experience. The focus is on interacting appropriately and communicating effectively in a large group to build community and provoke curiosity.
10:20 am	The majority of the educational program may include, but is not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Movement classes focusing on self-control, body awareness, coordination, and endurance▪ Music classes focusing on language development, auditory discrimination, following directions, and cultural awareness▪ Discovery Room with activities for sensory regulation and body control▪ Expert visits from Temple staff, parents, and others to supplement areas of study▪ Outdoor experiences focusing on nature exploration and large muscle exercise▪ "Ride Room" time (particularly in inclement weather) for different large motor training▪ Story time focusing on listening, comprehension skills and vocabulary building▪ Literacy experiences, including Handwriting Without Tears activities for 4-5 year olds▪ Art experiences focusing on creativity, risk-taking and perseverance▪ Dramatic Play focusing on promoting imagination and social skills▪ Puzzles and manipulatives focusing on small motor development and problem-solving▪ Building with blocks and other intricacies focusing on planning, creating, and team work▪ Snack time
12:00 pm	Lunch time
12:30 pm	A closing routine ends the core school day for Bet classes (2-3 year olds) Optional "Rest and Play" available Monday – Friday, 12:30-2:30
1:00 pm	A closing routine ends the core school day for Gimel classes (3-4 year olds), Monday-Friday A closing routine ends the core school day for Dalet classes (4-5 year olds) on Monday, Thursday, Friday Optional "Afternoon Activities" available, 1:00-2:30
2:30 pm	A closing routine ends the core school day for Dalet classes (4 year olds) on Tuesday and Wednesday All "Afternoon Activities" are dismissed

School Calendar

Visit <http://www.bethami.org/education/nursery/201-pages/education/tbans/630-nursery-school-calendar> for a complete calendar. This calendar may be printed or downloaded. Scheduling is subject to change, and the calendar is up-dated regularly, so check back frequently.

Jewish Practices

Temple Beth Ami Nursery School enjoys sharing our Jewish heritage and traditions with our families. Early exposure to our special customs lays the groundwork for developing a Jewish identity. In early childhood, Jewish experiences basically revolve around the holidays, as we share each holiday's stories and morals, songs, foods, and rituals. In addition, we recite prayers before we eat, at both snack and lunch time. We also share the Hebrew language with our children by introducing them to everyday words (such as water and milk, body parts, and numbers); we want children to understand that there is a language other than English that Jewish people use and that it is a modern language that they can use.

Shabbat is celebrated each Friday morning in school. Most Fridays, classes celebrate in their individual classrooms. Once per year, each family is invited in to the classroom for their child's special Shabbat. Once per month, we host our "Community Ta'am Shel Shabbat" (Taste of Shabbat) in the Sanctuary, and parents are welcome to join us; on these days, families enter the Temple through the Main Entrance and are greeted by teachers in the lobby.

Temple Beth Ami does not celebrate non-Jewish holidays with origins in other religions, including Halloween, Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, or Easter. TBANS does celebrate uniquely American holidays, particularly Thanksgiving.

Inclusion

At Temple Beth Ami Nursery School, we value the unique qualities that each child brings to our community. We do everything we can to create a learning experience that recognizes individual differences among children, while maintaining an intentional play-based educational approach. Our goal is to be a fully inclusive school, though there may be children who are not best served by our approach or structure. Our school staff and parents work together to determine the best placement for each child.

"Keshet," which means "connect" in Hebrew, is our program for providing support services for children. Professional therapists in a variety of fields provide consultation and intervention services to teachers, parents, and children. Keshet services are provided at no additional charge, though private evaluations and treatments are also available for fee.

TBANS is committed to building open communication and partnerships between our school, families and any outside providers supporting our students so that we can most effectively meet the needs of each child. We expect parents to inform their child's teachers of any services the student is receiving, and we welcome and encourage those providers to visit our school to observe the child in their classroom setting.

All children at TBANS, with or without special needs, are honored by our policy that states that the welfare of the classroom as a whole takes precedence over the needs of an individual child. That is, a child with special needs may require and receive extra time and attention from the teachers, but this cannot be out of balance with the needs of the class as a whole.

Our program and our commitment to serving diverse learners in our community continues to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

Admissions

Registration begins in January for the following school year. Applicants register online through our website. Temple members and current students receive priority enrollment initially, and then enrollment opens to the public. Classes are filled first-come, first-served. Enrollment continues as long as spaces are available. Registration details are announced in December.

Temple Beth Ami does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

Payment Policies

At the time of enrollment, all outstanding financial obligations must be fulfilled and payment is required for a non-refundable application fee and non-refundable tuition deposit. The tuition deposit is applied to the final tuition installments.

TBANS Parents who are also members of Temple Beth Ami will pay for nursery school in ten (10) equal monthly installments, July through April, as delineated on their Temple bill.

TBANS Parents who are not members of the Temple may pay for nursery school in either of two ways:

1. Two (2) equal payments: the first due no later than August 15, and the second due no later than December 15.
2. Ten (10) equal monthly installments, due July through April, made through Direct Debit or Credit Card (credit card fees apply).

All Temple accounts must remain current for a child to remain enrolled in School.

Tuitions and fee schedules are available online and in the school office. There are no refunds, unless a family moves out of the area or the school and parent agree that TBA is unable to provide the best educational program for the child.

Scholarships

The Joel Blue Scholarship Fund was established to support families attending our school. Applications for scholarship funds are distributed in June, and awards are announced in July. Contact the school office for an application. If you would like to donate money to increase the impact of this fund, please contact the Temple's Main Office.

Licensing

Temple Beth Ami is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education to operate a Child Development Program, and by Montgomery County Health and Human Services to operate a Private Educational Institution.

Temple Beth Ami adheres to all regulations established by our licensing agencies, including:

Parents' Guide to Regulated Child Care: This document must be made available to all parents. <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/parentbrochuremsdedecember2007.pdf>

Required Forms: Children may not attend school without required forms on file, including a Health Inventory and Emergency Contact Information. In addition, Temple Beth Ami requires several additional permissions which must be kept in a child's file to ensure the proper functioning of our daily routines.

Safety Procedures: All doors remain locked, and parents must request entry through the front school entrance only. If no one is available to answer the school door, then parents must enter the building through the Main Temple Entrance.

Temple Beth Ami emergency preparedness is regularly reviewed by the Security Department of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and by Montgomery County Police. The Emergency Plan is up-dated annually. Safety drills are conducted at least monthly.

Medication Administration: Parents must sign and submit a "Medication Authorization Form" to allow school staff to provide any prescription or over-the-counter medicines to children. Any medication to be given to a child in school must first be administered at home, and then must be provided to the school in the original manufacturer's container. Prescription medications must have a standard pharmacy label stating name, dosage and expiration date.

Reporting of Suspected Abuse and Neglect: All educators are required by law to report any suspicion of physical, mental or sexual abuse or neglect to the Office of Child Protective Services. Once a report is made, staff members are required to cooperate with any investigation undertaken by authorities.

Clothing

Good early childhood education requires freedom of movement and independence. Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that fits properly and can get messy. Children who are potty trained should wear clothes they can manage independently (such as pants with elastic waist bands). Children should always wear (or bring) a pair of sneakers. Clothes will often get dirty with mud, paint, markers, clay and more, so clothes should be washable. Don't send your child to school in anything that you would be upset to have ruined.

An extra set of clothes, including underwear and socks, must be kept in the classroom. To be usable, these clothes should be replaced as the child grows and the seasons change.

Children should dress appropriately for the weather. With rare exception, children go outside every day. Children's clothes should all be labeled clearly, so lost articles may be returned.

Food Policy

Temple Beth Ami provides a snack each day, and parents provide lunch. Sometimes teachers use food during educational experiences with children.

Temple Beth Ami Nursery School strives to be a nut-free facility. Staff will not provide any foods that contain nuts. Parents should not send any foods to school that contain nuts. This policy applies to peanuts and all tree nuts including pecans, pistachios, almonds, pine nuts, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts and brazil nuts.

Snacks may include crackers, pretzels, cereal, cheese, and/or fruit. Milk or water is offered. On Fridays, children are offered challah and grape juice.

Our school follows the religious dietary guidelines of Temple Beth Ami. Lunches from home may include meat or dairy products. No pork or shellfish is allowed. Our Rabbis prefer that you do not mix meat and dairy products in the same meal.

Teachers may cook with their classes. Any food shared in classes will adhere to the nut-free policy and Temple dietary policy described above.

Parents of children with any food sensitivities must notify the school of their child's restrictions prior to the start of the school year. Notification is provided through the online registration questionnaire and the medical forms. Parents will meet with TBANS staff prior to the start of the school year to confirm any necessary individualized procedures for ensuring their children's safety in school. Parents will communicate with their child's teacher regarding food intake whenever necessary to ensure the child's safety.

Though Temple Beth Ami Nursery School strives to be a nut-free zone, the entire Temple building cannot be designated as such. Please review the Temple food policy at www.bethami.org for guidelines at other Temple events.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated in the classroom, and each class has their own special traditions (crowns, songs, etc.). Parents can coordinate with their child's teacher to confirm the details of their child's classroom birthday celebration. The school provides a special food treat (often a popsicle or cookie) for the entire class in honor of the child's birthday.

Invitations to private birthday parties may only be distributed through tote bags if every child in the class receives an invitation.

Health Policy

Each child must have a Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care Health Inventory, dated within one year, on file in the school office in order to attend school.

Parents should notify the school by phone or email any time a child is absent due to illness. Children may return to school when they have been free of fever and any form of stomach upset for 24 hours without the aid of medication, and when they have been taking any prescribed medicine for a minimum of 24 hours. A child returning to school after an illness must have regained the strength and stamina necessary to fully participate in all school activities.

Notices will be sent home to all class parents when information provided about a child's health may be instructive for others watching their own children for signs and symptoms of contagious illnesses.

When a child has lice, the child must be treated and all nits and bugs must be removed. If a child is treated by a professional lice remover, then the child may return to school with the permission of the professional. If a child is treated by the parents, then the school will check the child's head to clear them for reentry to school. Other parents will be notified so they can check their own children, and the classrooms will be cleaned appropriately.

Screen Time Policy

Temple Beth Ami Nursery School does not provide children access to any electronic devices. The classrooms do not have TVs, computers, or phones for children's use. Screen time is not allowed during class time. On occasion, as it contributes to the curriculum, teachers may share information found on the internet with the class.

Photography

As part of our program, we routinely take pictures of children participating in classroom activities and special programs, so we can share this documentation of learning with families and with our greater community. We ask parents to support our efforts and to grant permission to display pictures in our classroom online journals, as well as around our building and in public places including print media, advertisements, our website, or platforms like Facebook. Parents indicate their willingness to allow the use of photos of their children during the registration process.

Parking and Carpooling

TBANS asks parents and caregivers to legally park cars and walk children to and from their classroom at the beginning and end of the day. This plan eases the transition from home to school, and it allows for enhancing our sense of community. Teachers and parents exchange greetings, parents chat, and families connect.

Although parents and teachers share greetings each morning and afternoon, please remember the door to the classroom is not an appropriate place for extended conversations.

Parents designate the people allowed to pick up their child at the end of each day. If there will be any change to the expected procedure, parents must notify school in writing (or by email). We will not release any child to any person without a note from parents.

Parking is allowed in designated spots in the Temple parking lot only. Parking is forbidden along the curbs, in handicapped spots, or clearly marked reserved spaces.

TBANS will operate a carpool line on inclement weather days when our school opens on time, but MCPS has a delayed start.

Playground, Discovery Room, and Ride Room

The Playground, Discovery Room, and Ride Room are for use by teachers and classes only for educational purposes. Parents and children may use the playground from 9:00-9:30 am and 2:30-3:00 pm, Monday-Friday. Parents are solely responsible for carefully supervising their children and ensuring their safety. Families' use of the equipment is at their own risk. Families must replace all equipment used before leaving the area.

Toileting

Children attending TBANS are not required to be potty trained, and staff will change heavily soiled diapers as needed. Teachers are willing to work with parents to help assess a child's readiness and support potty training methods and schedules. Our teachers have potty trained many children over the years, so please seek and follow their advice. Parents and teachers work together to determine when a child is ready to wear underwear to school.

Children who are in the midst of potty training should come to school with multiple sets of extra underwear and clothes, not just the one required change of clothes.

Discipline Policy

Conflicts naturally occur as children relate to each other in a group setting, and discipline provides an opportunity for growth and learning. To that end, Temple Beth Ami teachers actively engage children in thinking about and discussing positive behavior in developmentally appropriate ways that facilitate children's success. Teachers use many techniques when dealing with conflict situations, including:

- Limit setting: Children are given clear, concise and consistent rules to guide their behavior. Boundaries and expectations expand as children grow.
- Modeling: Adults clearly demonstrate compassionate, caring behaviors that provide examples for children to follow. Children are *shown* expected behaviors.
- Generating Options: Children are given tools to settle conflicts.
- Delayed Involvement: Teachers give children time to work through their own problems, but are always available to engage with the children if they cannot yet reach a solution independently.
- Identifying/Interpreting/Validating: Teachers clarify difficulties and facilitate problem solving to help children learn to express and understand their feelings and frustrations, as well as those of other people.
- Redirection: A request to stop a negative behavior comes with a suggestion for an appropriate replacement behavior.

- Natural consequences: Teachers explain and reinforce natural consequences as they occur. Children see the results of their own behavior and begin to modify it accordingly.

Challenging behaviors that fall outside of developmental expectations include:

- Any physical aggression that puts another person at risk of being hurt, such as biting, spitting, scratching, hitting, pushing, or throwing objects.
- Any behavior that disrupts the flow of the classroom and consistently takes a teacher away from the other students, such as screaming, destroying property, or running away.

When these challenging behaviors continue despite consistent implementation of the techniques listed above, parents will be contacted to discuss strategies and consider next steps. The professional staff is committed to open and honest communication, and we expect that parents will take an active role in helping us collect all relevant information pertaining to their child. In some cases, parents may be advised to seek outside professional support in order to promote their child's development. In rare cases, after all of the above avenues have been explored, a child may be asked to leave the school. In that case, we will make every effort to help the family find a more suitable placement and help ensure a smooth and positive transition for the child.

Inclement Weather Policy

Use the following information if you think school may have an alternate schedule because of snow or other emergency situations. For information on closings, check your email for announcements from Temple Beth Ami, check the "indicator lights" on our website, and listen to local media for information on Montgomery County Public Schools decisions.

Closings: Temple Beth Ami Nursery School will adhere to Montgomery County Public School's decision to close for the first two days of a weather incident. Beginning on the third day, Temple Beth Ami will make an independent decision based on the condition of our facility. Check your emails for updates.

Delayed Openings: If Montgomery County Schools have a delayed opening, Early Arrival will begin one hour late at 8:30 am. TBANS regular classes will start *on time* at 9:30 am.

On MCPS Delayed Opening Days, we will provide drop off service at the entrance to the nursery school from 9:20-9:40. If you choose, you may drop off your child at the entrance, and our staff will escort your child to class. Please take advantage of this option only if your child is ready to exit your car into the hands of a TBANS staff member without difficulty that will hinder the flow of traffic.

Early Dismissal: If Montgomery County schools announce an unscheduled early dismissal due to weather or other emergency conditions, all TBANS classes will end at 1:00, and no Afternoon Activities will be held. Aftercare may stay open till 5 pm at the latest, conditions permitting. Please stay attune to email for updates.

We ask that you always use your judgment when weather is inclement. If you feel that driving is hazardous, please stay home.

Parent Involvement

Parents' primary responsibility is to partner with teachers in the best interest of their child. Please maintain ongoing conversations with teachers to exchange ideas about your child's progress in open and respectful dialogue. Following are additional ways for parents to get involved at TBANS:

Classroom Participation: Parents are invited into their child's classroom for special events which include Shabbat celebrations, challah-baking, Passover celebrations, and more. Events vary by age so they are developmentally appropriate and educationally beneficial. Some events require a caregiver's participation, while others are optional. Event schedules are distributed as early as possible so parents may plan accordingly.

School-wide Events: Parents are welcome to join us for our monthly Community Shabbat. Age groups enjoy Tot Shabbat dinners, and Gimel and Dalet parents are invited to "Curriculum Night" in the winter. Parent Committee asks parents to volunteer at their school-wide events, such as the Hanukkah Parties, Purim Carnival and Shop and Eat Your Heart Out.

Parent Education: TBANS Teachers, Director, and consultants provide a variety of opportunities for parents to explore parenting issues and early childhood education. Parents are encouraged to let staff know what information and guidance they desire, and TBANS will find relevant and helpful resources.

Stay Connected: Join TBANS_Talk, our parents' list serve, by sending an email to TBANS_TALK-subscribe@yahogroups.com. Like "Temple Beth Ami Nursery School" on Facebook, as well as "TBANS Parent Committee"

Parent Handbook continues on the next page with TBANS Communications Policy

Communications Policy and Guidelines

Communication Between Teachers and Parents

Emails are the most common form of communication between parents and teachers. Your classroom teachers will provide you with the best email address to use to reach them.

- Emails may replicate information sent by handout for emphasis, provide reminders of classroom activities, or announce new and upcoming opportunities.
- Parents should read all emails received and provide any requested responses.
- Teachers will respond to any emails in a timely fashion. Except on rare occasions, teachers do not pay attention to or respond to email during the school day while they are teaching.
- During school hours, if parents need to notify teachers of any changes in a child's routine (due to illness, carpool changes, or other), please contact Jill Finci, TBANS Administrative Assistant, at jaf@bethami.org, 301-762-5594.

Shutterfly is used to share weekly Journals comprised of two parts: a note from the teacher(s) sharing the story of the week and pictures of the children participating in classroom experiences to illustrate that story. Every weekend you will receive an email notification that there is a new Shutterfly Journal entry available for your review.

- Please be aware that the notes often include important reminders.
- We appreciate your feedback. Shutterfly provides a space to "comment" on the note and on the pictures. Let us know if you found something particularly interesting, important, funny or helpful.
- Only parents of children in the classroom and TBANS staff members are included as members of the Shutterfly site.

Phone Calls. Teachers may call parents on occasion to share information about their child's participation in the classroom. If you want to arrange a time to talk with your teachers by phone, please email them and schedule a mutually convenient time.

Handouts are sent home to parents by way of folders in the tote bags. Handouts may promote classroom, school, or Temple-wide events. Handouts are distributed as needed, and as such do not follow a regular schedule. Some handouts will require an action (e.g., field trip permission forms). Parents should check the folder daily.

Drop Off and Pick Up are times for parents to talk with each other and arrange play-dates, review all the bulletin boards and white board notes, or give teachers quick notifications of any updates regarding your child's well-being (such as changes in sleep patterns or potty training).

- It is not a time to have more significant conversations about your child's developmental progress. If you would like further information about your child, please email teachers to schedule another, more confidential and calmer time to talk. Teachers are focused on the children during drop-off and pick-up times.

In-Person Meetings. Teachers will schedule parent-teacher conferences twice per year. You will be alerted in advance to schedule your meeting via email.

- You are welcome to schedule meetings outside of parent-teacher conferences to meet with teachers to discuss your child's educational progress. Email your teacher to arrange a time.

Texts. Teachers do not personally text parents.

Communication Between TBANS Administration and Parents

Email is used to send notifications concerning important changes in the school schedule, including snow days, other emergency closures, or carpooling and parking adjustments.

“TBANS Monthly Thoughts” is the school-wide electronic newsletter that you will receive at the beginning of each month, September - May. The newsletter includes school highlights, information about upcoming events, explanations of our educational experiences, links to relevant articles, and more.

Facebook. Like our school's page at facebook.com/TempleBethAmiNurserySchool/

- On our Facebook page, you will find photos of special school experiences, announcements of big events, and even links to informative articles on effective parenting.
- Many teachers have personal Facebook pages. Each teacher establishes their own practices with regards to sharing their personal page. Your teacher will notify you of their individual policy.

TBANS website is tbans.org. In addition to general school information, you will find a Google calendar with all school dates as well as fliers and announcements for special events that you may link to your own calendar.

Registration Information is sent electronically. Once you register for school, you will receive two very detailed emails which require careful attention and action: the first in May, which includes required health and emergency forms, and the second in August, which includes class lists. Parents must complete all requested forms before the school year begins.

Routine changes in a child's schedule due to illness, carpool adjustments, vacations, etc. should be emailed or called in to Jill Finci, TBANS Administrative Assistant, jaf@bethami.org, 301-762-5594. The office will inform your child's teachers. Please do not email or text the teachers with this information.

Communication Between Temple Beth Ami and Parents

As parents in our school, you are welcome to participate in the larger Temple Beth Ami Community. You may stay abreast of happenings using these four resources:

TBANS_Talk is a parent listserv including many alumni of TBANS. Parents share community resources, such as recommendations for nannies, doctors, and repair services.

“Up To The Minute” is a weekly e-blast of all Temple events.

Chadashot is the Temple newsletter mailed to your home monthly, including schedules of all Temple events and news of Temple Committee activities.

TBA website is bethami.org and provides comprehensive information about the Temple.

This Parent Handbook of Temple Beth Ami's Nursery School includes the major policies and practices of the school. By enrolling your child in TBANS, you are agreeing to abide by these guidelines. All questions may be referred to TBANS Office.