



Shomrei Emunah Preschool
A play-based, integrated curriculum

Do children learn anything academic in a play-based curriculum?

Absolutely! Research proves that the skills learned in a play-based early childhood center build a stronger foundation for later learning than those programs that use materials and methods that are not developmentally appropriate, such as drills and worksheets.

What is a play-based curriculum?

“We must pause to remember that childhood play is a very intellectual activity overflowing with opportunities for problem solving and creativity.”- Lisa Murphy, early child specialist
Play is the primary way in which children explore and learn about their world. A play-based curriculum develops a child’s physical, social-emotional, and creative development. Our teachers set out materials where children can encounter new experiences, try on new roles, and are stimulated to ask questions, problem solve, and socialize with their peers. Through play, children test boundaries, learn to empathize and navigate social situations with friends, and learn quite naturally from their environment and teachers. The learning that results from play is a rich and necessary part of a strong early childhood education.

What does an integrated curriculum mean?

We are a Jewish preschool, and as a result, we integrate Jewish values, holiday, and Hebrew language throughout our daily curriculum. Students sing songs in Hebrew, experience Jewish life and the cycle of the year, and play with Jewish ritual objects in their classrooms. Jewish life is presented as joyful and alive, and we experience the wonder of Jewish life each and every day. We explore math and science concepts even through a Jewish lens when we count Chanukah candles, create patterns with dreidles, and even discuss “What’s Jewish about butterflies?” as we watch them grow in our classrooms.



Our 2's...

- ✧ Learn that a classroom is a safe and fun environment
- ✧ Develop relationships with classmates and teachers, learning how to navigate social situations, navigate rules, and make friends.
- ✧ Express themselves through art, music, and movement as they develop creativity, freedom of expression, and fine tune their gross motor skills. Students enjoy weekly specials, including music, gymnastics, and library.
- ✧ Develop their passion for literacy as they explore books throughout the day, honing their listening skills as books are read aloud. Students also learn to associate letters, printed words, and photos as they make early reading connections.
- ✧ Build their vocabulary and expand their social skills as teachers draw upon their natural desire to express themselves and be heard.
- ✧ Make choices throughout their daily routine, allowing them to build confidence and assert their growing independence.
- ✧ Are responsible! Children hang coats in their cubbies, take a tissue from the box, and clean up toys around the room.
- ✧ Learn to take turns and practice kindness. Sharing is not developmentally appropriate at this age, and we encourage our 2's to take turns. Learning to share will come later.
- ✧ Play enthusiastically. They make choices, explore new materials, sing songs, and hug their friends. Our 2's are developing crucial skills to support the foundation of learning for years to come.
- ✧ Exercise their gross motor skills in the gym and on the playground, refining their ability to throw a ball, balance on a piece of equipment, and pedal a bike.
- ✧ Develop their fine motor skills when they manipulate puzzle pieces, hold a paint brush, or pick up a crayon. We craft activities that will create successful students down the road, who can successfully navigate classroom tasks.



Our 3's...

- ✧ Are encouraged to be independent. They take responsibility with classroom jobs, are encouraged in a positive and patient way when toilet training, and learn the cause and effect of their actions. Our 3's are empathetic and continue to work with their teachers to negotiate skills that will help them be good friends and caring classmates.
- ✧ Are curious! We use the 5 senses to explore a topic, discovering the way the world works and learning by using our whole bodies!
- ✧ Practice hand-eye coordination, when children learn to button a button or unzip their jacket.
- ✧ Read books aloud and independently as a part of their daily routine. We point out words we recognize, circle letters we know around the classroom, and practice pre-writing skills when we draw a picture or find our name posted around the room.
- ✧ Play with the alphabet! Early literacy is fun, and we go "fishing" for magnetic ABC's, bring in objects from home that begin with a letter of the alphabet to share with our friends, and so much more!
- ✧ Explore early math and science concepts when they follow a recipe, pour and measure water in the water table, and experience a variety of sensory activities to introduce students to cause and effect, magnetism, sequencing, patterns, and more.
- ✧ Discuss similarities and differences. We sort, compare, and contrast. We record our observations with the help of a teacher.
- ✧ Sing songs, which help us to develop our musicality, auditory skills, and hand-eye coordination (when we practice movements tied to a song).
- ✧ Are encouraged to freely express themselves through art, exploring preferences to color, texture, and different art mediums.
- ✧ Speak about numbers, colors, and shapes in their everyday conversation. Our teachers will push students to notice these elements throughout the day, encouraging conversations about the way in which our world is constructed.



Our 4's...

- ✧ Read aloud each day and are encouraged to look at books independently. Students often take turns reading aloud their favorite books to one another. We provide a “print-rich” classroom, exposing students to alternate print forms, such as magazines, food containers, and even keyboards.
- ✧ Are encouraged to take an interest in reading and writing. Paper, pencils, and journals are always available. Our 4's will practice writing or drawing, and teachers will dictate a caption or story beneath a child's drawings, letters, and words. Our classroom is filled with word labels, to encourage students to associate objects with printed words. ABC's are reinforced throughout the year.
- ✧ Practice forming letters and words in creative ways. We trace letters in sand, use chalk, and sign in every day by writing our names on a chalkboard. We make shapes of letters with our whole bodies! We copy words from sentence strips and form them on our own using different mediums, such as yarn, straws, and crayons.
- ✧ Increase our phonetic awareness, playing creative games to discover similar sounds, rhymes, and counting syllables.
- ✧ Incorporate the natural world in their daily explorations. We collect treasures on nature walks, make observations as the seasons change, grow plants on our windowsill, and ask questions and explore answers about the world around us.
- ✧ Experience science and math in natural ways, when we sort tangrams, use a scale to balance objects, and devise experiments with magnets, water, sand, and more! Our 4's create sequences, observe patterns, and discuss similarities and differences.