

ALEPH ACADEMY HUNTSVILLE  
ROCKET CITY'S JEWISH PRESCHOOL



**PRESCHOOL**  
**HANDBOOK**  
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# NOT YOUR ORDINARY CHILDCARE

Welcome to the Aleph Academy Huntsville Family! We are thrilled that you have selected our program for your child.

As you are likely aware, Aleph Academy is an intimate Jewish preschool. Our goal is to provide your child with a warm and nurturing environment where he/she will be introduced to Jewish values and traditions, discover the joys of learning, and become gently acquainted with formal education preparing them for the transition into elementary school.

We see each child as a unique and precious gift entrusted into our care. This concept is what governs our school's educational approach. We place a special emphasis on each individual child and on encouraging and supporting their innate inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge. We are devoted to helping your child learn socialization skills, build self confidence, and teach the preliminary skills to independently explore and experience the world around them.

Aleph Academy is committed to helping your child be the best individual they can be. When dropping off your child, you will find a caring staff, who above all, will shower your children in love and affection. In addition, he/she will be exposed to a rich and meaningful program consisting of Jewish holidays, traditions, and the Hebrew alphabet and language. All of the above is taught through experiences, music, art, and creative play.

Again, welcome to our family! Our school is a place where parents and the entire family play an integral role in the educational process. Through holiday celebrations, social activities, and educational discoveries, your family will become a significant part of our Jewish preschool community.

Looking forward to a wonderful year,

Mushka Cohen  
Director

## Philosophy

We believe ...

- that loving, trusting, and respecting each child makes that child capable of loving, trusting and respecting others.
- that each child should be guided and encouraged to have a positive self-image.
- that children need a nurturing, safe and happy environment, which promotes their natural curiosity and desire to learn.

· that play is the work of children and through it children explore the world around them by using their senses.

· that children deserve to have teachers whose values enable them to be excellent role models.



# OUR APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

Based off the data taught through  
Conscious Discipline..

Aleph Academy Preschool uses Conscious Discipline as our discipline policy. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary self regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning, school culture and discipline. It helps teachers and administrators build schools based on the internal resources of safety, connection and problem solving instead of external rewards or punishments. It is based on brain research that indicates our internal states dictates our behavior. Its goal is to provide systemic changes in schools by fostering the emotional intelligence of teachers first and children second. Simply put, as we become more emotionally intelligent, we are better equipped to create positive, healthy educational climates that help create and maintain optimal learning states. The three core components of Conscious Discipline are:

**SAFETY**, through self-regulation, enhances adults' and children's ability to recognize and manage physiological and emotional upset.

**CONNECTION**, through creating a compassionate School Family culture, motivates adults' and children's willingness to engage in healthy relationships, help each other be successful and change perceptions about conflict.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING**, through changing our response to conflict and upgrading social-emotional skills, boosts adults' and children's ability to adapt to changing situations.

With these components, everyday events and conflicts become opportunities to teach life skills. The social-emotional curriculum does not come from prescribed sequential lessons added to core standards; the curriculum emerges from daily challenges, acts of kindness, academic struggles, interpersonal conflicts, chronic rule breaking and celebrations. Our social –emotional curriculum shows up in a math lesson, in the cafeteria, on the bus or when a pet dies. Every person in the school becomes more resilient as he adapts rapidly to the needs of himself, others, circumstances and challenges in order to make wise personal choices.

Seizing conflict as an opportunity to teach life skills is integral to Conscious Discipline. When a child acts in hurtful ways, this provides the feedback that more practice or additional social skill instruction is needed. Attempting to remove daily conflict through administering rewards or punishments removes the opportunity for teaching social skills lessons in context. It forces schools and teachers to add yet another prescriptive curriculum to an already full workload.

# POLICIES / PROCEDURES

## Absences / Vacations / Holidays

No credit for tuition is given if a child is absent due to illness. No tuition credit will be given for holidays, snow days, when the school is closed, or for family vacations. Please notify the school if your child will be absent from school for any reason.

## Unscheduled School Closing

Inclement weather or an unforeseen emergency may cause the school to close. This decision will be made only as a last resort with the health and safety of students and staff as the primary consideration. This decision will be communicated to parents via email, text or phone calls. Aleph Academy typically follows the Huntsville City School System in terms of closings.

## Clothing and Supplies

- Children should come dressed appropriately for a day of fun, wearing comfortable clothing that will be able to withstand a day's activities of painting, outdoor play, or other potentially messy activities.
- It is best to send your child in sneakers or rubber soled shoes. Sandals or other open toed shoes are not encouraged because sand and stones from the playground may cause discomfort and/or injury.
- Children must dress appropriately for the weather. Clothing should fit properly and allow for easy and full participation in all activities. Please include hats, mittens, and scarves in cold weather. We go outside daily, except in cases of very severe weather.
- Please bring two changes of clothing for your child to be left at school for the year. This clothing should be placed in a zip-close bag, with your child's name clearly written on the front. Please remember to include socks and several pairs of underwear. We will return the clothing to you at the end of the school year. Please label all clothes with your child's name.
- For those children wearing diapers, parents must provide all necessary supplies such as diapers, wipes, and ointments, ALL LABELED WITH YOUR CHILDS NAME. We will not use any other child's ointments on your child. The staff will notify you when the supply is getting low.
- Sunscreen—In the spring and summer, please be sure to put sunscreen on your child BEFORE coming to school. We will reapply when necessary only with a signed sunscreen consent form provided in the registration pack. Please provide your child with a bottle of sunscreen labeled with his/her name.
- To help us teach your child the concept of tzedakah (charity and kindness), please send a roll/bag of pennies or other coins to school.

- Please DO NOT send toys from home. Personal toys can create conflicts, and we cannot be responsible for their return. However, if something from home will help ease separation, or if your child is insistent, try sending in something that everyone can enjoy, such as a book. If your child has a toy that you would recommend we buy, feel free to suggest it to us.

- EVERY item that you bring should BE LABELED with your child's name.

- If your child is missing a change of clothes we will not leave your child without clothes. We have a clean, generic supply of clothing which we will use if necessary. Please return it to us the next day.

It is your responsibility as a parent to make sure that your child has the proper supplies at all times. When you are notified by the teacher that additional supplies are needed, please be prompt in providing them. This is not only for the benefit of the teacher, but also for the comfort of your child.

### **Birthday parties in school:**

At Aleph Academy, we celebrate your child's Hebrew Birthday. Children love to celebrate their birthdays at school and we recommend a party in class. You may bring a special snack for the occasion. Any food brought into the school must be certified kosher and approved by the director. Loot bags, balloons and party favors are not allowed. Please contact your child's teacher at least one week in advance so that a mutually convenient time and date can be arranged.

### **Birthday parties outside of school:**

If you plan on having a private birthday celebration for your child outside of school please be sensitive to your child's classmates. Invitations for birthday parties held outside of the school will not be distributed in school.

### **Mealtime**

Lunches are sent from home. Children sit around tables and enjoy their own lunch.

Lunches at Aleph must not contain any meat. Recommended lunch guidelines include protein (eggs, cheese, tuna, etc.), fruit & vegetable (or 2 fruit or 2 vegetables), carbohydrate (bread, cereal, pasta, crackers).

Mid-morning snacks are provided by the school. If your child has special dietary needs/restrictions, please consult with the director. She will be happy to work with you to make sure your child is served appropriate foods.

# ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

OUR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES ARE PUT INTO PLACE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH OUR PROCEDURES.

## DROP OFF

01.

Our typical school day begins at 9:00 A.M. We encourage you to use the carpool line. Carpool begins at 8:50 and typically ends around 9:15. If you choose to walk your child in, please park in one of the designated spaces. This is for the safety of our children.

Please Note: No child should be dropped off at the front door on their own.

## PICK UP

02.

Pick up is at 1:00 pm. It is very important to your child that you arrive on time. Young children get nervous very easily if there is an unexpected change in their daily routine. If you know you are going to be late, please notify the school immediately so that we can notify your child's teacher and reassure your child.

## DISMISSAL POLICY

04.

At no time and under no circumstance will a child be released to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up that child. It is your responsibility to list on the Pick Up Form all the people who are authorized to pick up your child from school. If you plan on having your child picked up by someone who is not listed on the Pick Up Form, you must give us written consent at the beginning of the day and notify both the Director and one of your child's teachers.

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## LATE ARRIVAL/PICKUP

03.

We urge you to be prompt and arrive on time. It is disruptive to the class and to the teachers if you come late in the morning. In addition, your child will adjust better if he/she begins the day together with the rest of the class. If you are late, walk your child into the building and a staff member will then walk your child to their classroom.

1:00 carpool begins at 12:55 and runs until 1:10. If you have not picked up your child by 1:15, they will be placed in After Care and you will be charged accordingly. We will attempt to reach the emergency contact numbers indicated on the Emergency Form.



# POLICIES CONTINUED

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## Saying "Goodbye"

For children who are new to the preschool experience, it is very common for them to display signs of separation anxiety. Our goal is to help you and your child go through the initial transition comfortably. If after a parent leaves, their child is crying uncontrollably for more than one half hour, we will call you. Parents are always welcome to stay in the classroom, however, after saying a final good-bye, please leave the classroom and come relax in the open spaces of our facility. Additionally, if a child has a difficult time separating from one parent, you may want to try to have the other parent drop off your child. For children having separation difficulty, we recommend picking them up a bit earlier for the first few days. Most times, after the parent leaves, the child becomes absorbed with toys and the environment and is free of apprehension.

## Fire Drills

Fire drills are held quarterly throughout the school year. The teacher trains the children in the proper procedure for executing the school fire drill. If your child has sound sensitivities, please let us know.

## Visitors

The staff welcomes interesting visitors, such as doctors, musicians and artists, to our program. Visitors talk with the preschoolers about their professions, hobbies or interests. Please inform us if you know of such a person.

## Shabbat Party

Shabbat Parties will be held every Friday in each class. The Shabbat Party begins at 12:30. In order to help our classes prepare, we ask that parents please wait until 12:30 to join the Shabbat party.

Children will have rotating turns being Imma or Abba each week. Parents and grandparents are invited and encouraged to come and join the children during this time.

### Show and Tell

Your child may be chosen for Show and Tell on one or more occasions during the year. Your teacher will let you know when your Show and Tell time is, and what the theme for Show and Tell may be. Please refrain from sending in toys or special things on other days.

### Mitzvah Notes

Please send Mitzvah notes. You are not required to send one every day. Children are very excited about having a Mitzvah note to share. This is a note that tells something special, a kindness, a good behavior that the child has done. Mitzvah notes are read each day at circle time and then put on the mitzvah tree. The children really look forward to hearing what their parents have to say and sharing events at home.





# THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL

Open communication between the school's Director, teachers, and parents is an integral component of Aleph Academy. During the orientation process, please give us your impressions of your child: personality, his/her likes, dislikes, pertinent health information, etc. Throughout the school year, please communicate to the school any changes in your child's attitude towards school.

In turn, the staff will share with you the experiences they have with your child during the day. Newsletters will be sent home weekly to share with you what your child has been doing during the school day.

## CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENT

It is very important that we know of any changes taking place in your child's environment. The birth of a baby, change of babysitter, or family crisis can greatly affect your child's behavior in school. The more informed that we are, the more we can do to offer extra support and understanding to your child during unusually stressful times.

## CONTACTING TEACHERS

If you feel the need to talk to your child's teachers at any time, please call the school and leave a message for her. She will return your call at her earliest convenience. Mushky is also always available to speak with you. Please respect the teachers by keeping the morning and afternoon "chit chat" to a minimum, so as not to distract the teacher from her primary responsibility of caring for the children. Should you at any time wish to have a longer talk with a teacher, please request from the teacher to set up a suitable time to discuss any questions or concerns.

We ask that you do not text your teacher during school hours. If there is something you need to communicate, please contact Mushky, and she will pass the message along. This is important as we want our teachers to focus on your children, and not on their phones. You may contact Mushky any time throughout the day.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

We have two Parent-Teacher Conferences during the year, one around December, and one around May. These conferences are not mandatory, but are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child as well as to receive an in-depth view of child's progress.

## Partners for Your Child's Health

Aleph Academy believes that the school and parents are partners in your child's growth and development. We encourage parents to partner with us in promoting lifelong health for your child with good nutrition and physical activity at home. It is important for children to get a good night's sleep and to come to school well rested. Periodic updates on our health and wellness plan will be provided in emails and at parent meetings.

### Minor Injuries:

We do everything in our power to keep your children safe when they are in our care.

During the course of play it is normal for children at this age to get some bumps and bruises. We will fill out an "Ouch Report" and do our best to contact you if your child has a minor incident so you are not taken by surprise when you pick him or her up. It is left to the discretion of the staff to monitor incidents and use their professional judgment to determine the type of care necessary.

### Major Injuries:

In a case of emergency where circumstances require immediate or professional attention, 911 services will be called. We will respond as necessary until emergency services arrive. Child will be accompanied by a staff member. Parents are responsible for all fees related to the transport of their child to a medical facility.

### Illness:

If your child becomes ill during the course of the day we will contact you. In that event pick up your child as soon as possible. We do not want other children to become sick as well. Children with a fever of 100° or more will be sent home. The child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

Please keep your child home if they experience any symptoms of illness until their health restores.

## Medical Exam / Immunization Requirements

By law, each child is required to have an annual complete physical examination, signed and dated by a physician. No child will be permitted to attend until his/her form is on file and all immunizations are up to date. Parents are responsible for updating the information as needed. Vaccination exemptions are accepted pursuant to Alabama Health Department.

### Topical Non-Medicated Physical Barriers:

Physical barrier lotions, ointments and creams such as sunscreen, bacitracin, insect repellent, and diaper ointments are generally not medications. We allow these to be applied as long as the consent form is completed. Under the Baby Douglas Act passed by the Alabama Legislature in 2004 we must have written permission from a parent to administer either prescription or nonprescription medication. This includes EpiPens and asthma medication. Medications should be in the original container and clearly labeled.

# HELPFUL TIPS

SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS TO  
HELP MAKE PRESCHOOL A HAPPY  
EXPERIENCE

1) See that your child has sufficient rest and sleep – usually 12 or 13 hours is recommended.

2) To make your child more comfortable, provide simple clothing that is free of complicated belts and closures.

3) Since children get very involved with their art projects, please provide clothing that is washable.

4) Please realize the validity and significance of play, and the importance of what is learned.

5) Think of outdoor play. Parents should provide clothing and shoes that are sturdy. Flip flops and shoes without a back, have a tendency to fall off, and do not allow the child to enjoy outdoor play to its fullest. Wearing socks will assure that mulch and dirt do not bother your child while playing on the playground.

6) Send your child off to school in a happy frame of mind and show interest in what he/she does at school and what he/she is learning.

Please remember that when parents and preschool staff work together, we can help your child develop to his or her full potential.



7) Encourage your child to talk about what he/she did in school. When receiving an answer like “I don’t know” or “nothing”, you can prompt your child by asking more specific questions. (What did you eat for lunch? Who did you sit near at snack time? What song did you sing at group time? Etc...)

8) Encourage your child to frequently wash hands to ward off the spread of germs.

9) Get involved, volunteer your time, and share a professional interest or hobby with our school. Parents who volunteer are known to positively affect their child’s success in school.

10) Get to know your child’s teacher and keep open communication throughout the school year.

# MEET THE TEAM



**MUSHKA COHEN**

**Director**

Mushka is the founder and Organizational Director of Aleph Academy with experience in early childhood education. She has knowledge in Behavioral Sciences, Child Engagement and Judaic Studies. As a mother herself, she is passionate about positive parenting and innovative, quality education for young children.

**LEAH HOROWITZ**

**Co Teacher**

Hi, my name is Leah Horowitz (Morah Leah) and I'm really excited to teach in Aleph Academy! I grew up in California and spent a year in Israel post high School studying Judaics. I've taught in Jewish preschools in over 10 states and love that I have been able to combine my passion for teaching with travel! Looking forward to meeting your children and be a part of their learning and growth.



**NANCY GLASGOW**

**Lead Teacher**

Nancy holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She has been a dedicated teacher for 35 years holding certificates in three states. Nancy taught grades from Pre-K to 5th, but her passion lies in the early years of children's development. She is married to her loving husband Steve, who also grew up in Huntsville. Nancy loves to read, garden, volunteer for animal rescue groups, and spend time with her family. Her motivation is to provide a healthy, safe, and fun learning environment for your loved ones.

# WHAT WE VALUE

The things we believe  
about our children.

Learning is their journey.

Let them navigate.

Push them to explore.

Watch them discover.

Encourage their questions.

Allow them to struggle.

Support their thinking.

LET THEM FLY!



# ALEPH ACADEMY HUNTSVILLE

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