



1300 Grand Ave, Piedmont, CA 94610



(510) 547-2424 x214



www.happytogetherpreschool.com

Parent Handbook

Updated 9/19/2011

MISSION

happytogether Preschool is an intimate, nurturing program for 2-5 year olds grounded in a play-based, emergent philosophy. We develop children's emotional literacy by emphasizing principles of self-expression, connection and well-being. The school is inspired by Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication and infused with the latest scientific research on developing people's capacity for compassion. Children's world view is expanded by immersing ourselves in Jewish cultural traditions and Spanish language activities.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATIONS

The htP school day is from 8:30am to 1pm or 8:30am to 2:30pm. Parents can elect to enroll their children two, three, or four days a week. htP follows a year-round schedule, beginning in September and ending in August of the following year.

AGES OF CHILDREN ACCEPTED FOR CARE

htP is a program designed for children between 2 years, 0 months and 5 years, 8 months old. Any exceptions for allowing children older than 5 years, 8 months to attend htP will be made on a case-by-case basis.

ENROLLMENT

htP is open to all, provided that we believe we can meet the child's needs. This is determined on a case by case basis. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, or political belief.

Offers are made on a first-to-apply, first enrolled basis, with attention given to establishing balance and diversity in age, gender, race, and family structure. Enrollment priority is given to Piedmont residents, Kehilla Community Synagogue members and families who have had another child attend the school previously. Children of staff are also given priority.

We are closely associated with Kehilla Community Synagogue, and after graduating from Happy Together, child are welcome to go on to Joyfully Jewish. This is Kehilla's Kindergarten Jewish enrichment program which takes place at Kehilla every other Sunday from September to June. For more information, please contact Kehilla's School Director.

Our program is open to families of any religion or those not dedicated to any religion at all. Our Jewish curriculum focuses on the culture, traditions, and history of Judaism, presented through cooking, art, music, and other activities. Additionally, the Jewish component of our curriculum is one of several main foci; the other two are Spanish and social and emotional development.

New Enrollment Procedures

1. Call or email us for information about htP and to schedule a School Tour. Then, visit our website to download an application, our current tuition schedule, and a parent handbook.
2. Once you have attended a School Tour and we have received your application, you will be contacted regarding a time for a classroom visit with you and your child(ren), if there is space available.
3. On the day of the visit, and during a post visit phone conversation, the director and/or teachers will talk with your family and answer questions you may have.

4. If we are confident about being able to meet your family's needs, we will contact you to schedule an Orientation Meeting, at which you will be able to register your child by filling out an Admission Agreement and giving us a Tuition Deposit of \$1,000 (which is applied to the last months' tuition installments). The deposit can be paid in one lump sum or it can be divided into two or three payments.
5. Parents will receive a copy of the Admission Agreement signature page signed by the school with a copy of their check as a confirmation of their enrollment.
6. Along with the Admission Agreement form, parents will receive a packet of Admission Forms for their child. We would like these filled out either at the meeting, if time permits, or at least a month before your child begins school. In our effort to comply with State Licensing, we will not allow a child to start school until all paperwork is complete (except the Physician's Report Form, which we expect to receive within 30 days).

Return Enrollment Procedures

1. We will announce to parents when our re-enrollment period is beginning. If you are planning to re-enroll your child for the next school year, you will need to fill out a new Admission Agreement form to secure your child's spot.
2. No new deposit is needed. The original deposit submitted during the initial enrollment will be applied to the last months of the next school year.
3. If you are changing the days and times you want your child(ren) to attend, please communicate with the Admissions Coordinator. If we do not hear otherwise, we will assume you are keeping the same schedule as you have currently.

TUITION AND OTHER COSTS

See Tuition Schedule.

SCHEDULE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES

8:30 - 10:15am	Center-based Inside Play
10:15 - 10:30am	First Circle Time
10:30 - 10:45am	Snack
10:45 - 11:45am	Outside Play
11:45am- 12:30pm	Center-based Inside play with new activities
12:30 - 12:45pm	Lunch
12:45pm - 1pm	Second Circle Time
1 - 2:30pm	Inside-outside Flow

YEARLY CALENDAR

Each year, htP creates a new school calendar which includes holidays and staff development days. The calendar will be available at the school and will be emailed to you at the beginning of the school year.

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

htP generally follows an emergent curriculum philosophy: that is, the interests and questions which emerge from children are what we follow up on and become the content of the "curriculum".

However, we also see the curriculum as a collaboration and a negotiation between the teachers and the children. There, we may also offer subjects of study at times during the year. Some topics we may introduce are:

Me and My Family

Children will introduce us to the most important people in their lives through pictures. We'll read books about the different kinds of families people have, in all of their diversity.

Community Helpers

We will learn about the communities we live in and the key roles played by the inhabitants. We learn our addresses. Visitors may include people such as a firefighter or a doctor.

Festivals of Light

During this month of holidays, we invite parents to share their family traditions with the class. We may learn about the meaning and origin of holidays such as Hannukah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

Spring Planting and the Life Cycle

We learn about the life cycle of a seed by planting and tending a plant. We will also tend to silkworms, tadpoles, or other animals to watch the stages of life in animals.

ONGOING ENRICHMENT

Spanish

Using songs, rhymes, stories, and games we will introduce children to Spanish language in playful ways.

Jewish Cultural Traditions

We do fun activities with children which expose them to the rich cultural traditions of Judaism through art, cooking, stories, and more!

HTP'S APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

At htP, our intention is that children will care for all people, animals, and things in our school. All of the guidance we provide children is motivated by this intention. Young children are in the process of learning how their behavior affects others. Many of the things they do are common for the age or developmental level of the child.

Teachers help guide children toward behavior that meets the most needs at the least cost. Some of the techniques teachers will use are: modeling the desired behavior, redirection, having routines, and conflict mediation.

If children are hurting themselves, other children, animals, or things, they may be stopped and temporarily removed from the group. In Nonviolent Communication, or NVC, this is called "protective use of force." A teacher may sit with the children and give them an opportunity to express their feelings and what they are wanting. The children's feelings are accepted, and the teacher and children will discuss other ways to channel their impulses

If teachers are not attaining the effectiveness they'd like with this procedure, they will call a conference with a child's parents or guardian. If it seems to the parents/guardians or teachers like it could be helpful, a child specialist may be brought in to observe the child and offer insight.

If, after all of these steps are taken, the resulting situation is not perceived as workable by the teaching staff, the Director may elect to terminate enrollment.

Children shall be free of any form of discipline that violates his or her rights. Children shall not be disciplined using corporal or unusual punishment or subject to any practice which is mentally abusive.

DIAPERS AND TOILET LEARNING

At htP, we welcome children who are in diapers. We ask that, on the first day of school, parents of a child in diapers bring a pack of disposable diapers and wipes labeled with the child's name. We will bag any soiled clothes and place them your child's cubby. For health and safety reasons, we ask that soiled clothes be taken home that same day.

Our bathroom is located just down the hall from our classroom. When we are in the bathroom with children, we ensure children's safety by keeping the door open at all times. Our changing facilities for children in diapers are located in our bathroom.

Children who are learning to use the toilet benefit from our intimate group size and low teacher to child ratio. htP will collaborate with you once your child has been successfully using the toilet at home. We can come up with a plan which we will then carry out at school while you are taking steps at home.

Keeping clothing simple for the child by putting on elastic waist pants and other clothing your child can get off easily can support your child's ease in the toilet learning process.

FIELD TRIPS

We will take walking field trips to parks and other local attractions. You will be asked to sign a walking field trip authorization form when you enroll. Please note that we will not take walking field trips with children until they are 3 years old.

When we take driving field trips, we will send home an authorization form for that specific field trip. We will leave from the school, and parents will be the drivers. All parents who drive on field trips will be expected to have a current driver's license and auto insurance coverage. We will not take driving field trips with children until they are 4 years old.

Parents are encouraged to participate in field trips to enjoy a shared experience with their child and support children's safety.

You will be informed of a driving field trip at least 2 weeks prior to the event in order to sign a permission slip for your child's participation. If you can help, you can sign up on the sign-up sheet in the classroom. We also ask for parent/guardian and others to help us in the supervision of children when we are on field trips. We request that you supervise the children assigned to you, knowing their whereabouts during the entire outing. Teachers do not drive on field trips.

BIRTHDAYS

You may send a treat for the children to share in celebration of your child's birthday. We encourage parents to attend their child's birthday celebration, if possible.

When choosing birthday treats, we hope that you will select items which are made from whole, local, and organic ingredients as much as possible. In support of children's health, it is especially important to us that the treats be free of trans fats, natural and artificial colors and flavors, MSG, and high fructose corn syrup. Many times, some of our children have food sensitivities. We will let you know about these so you can consider leaving them out of whatever food you provide for your child's birthday.

Also, in an effort to be as inclusive as we can, we ask that invitations to private parties are mailed when not inviting all of your child's classmates. If inviting the whole class, distributing invitations via family folders or cubbies is welcome.

SNACK AND LUNCH

We ask families to provide their children with a snack and lunch each day. To support clarity during our meal times, please label each container with your child's name, and the word "snack" or "lunch". The children will be encouraged to eat their snack at our first food break, and lunch at the second. To contribute to your child's health, we encourage whole, nutritious (ideally locally grown and organic) food and an avoidance of foods heavy in refined sugar.

We always have food on hand so that if a child has not brought enough food with them for the day, she or he can eat from our supply.

Due to the set up of our facility, it is not convenient for us to warm up or cook the food you send.

We've noticed that children tend to observe what their peers bring for lunch, and a child with a sweet can be a stimulus for disharmony among the others. For the sake of ease among teachers and children alike, we ask that treats be saved for after school.

Also, we'd like for families to be aware that there might be individuals in the class who have severe allergies, which can cause life-threatening symptoms in some people. If it comes to our awareness that we have a child with a peanut allergy in the class, we may ask families to strictly avoid putting any peanuts or peanut butter in their child's lunches.

ALLERGIES AND SPECIAL DIETS

We provide careful attention to the needs of children with food allergies or specific dietary restrictions. If your child falls into this category, we request that you let us know at the time of registration. At the beginning of every school year, we compile an allergy and special diet list. If your child's dietary needs change during the course of the school year, we expect that you'll let us know right away.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

We ask that you keep your child at home if she/he experiences any of the following conditions or symptoms. We hope to get "on the same page" with parents/guardians, but if parent and teacher are not in agreement, a teacher may insist that child be kept home to protect the health of the other children.

4. Fevers. In case of of fever, we insist that child be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.
5. Antibiotics. If your child is taking antibiotics, we ask that he/she have been taking them for at least 24 hours before coming back to school.
6. Coughs. Consist or croupy coughs may indicate infection or a contagious agent. Please take your child to her/his physician before returning to school.
7. Intestinal Illnesses. When your child has intestinally related symptoms such as diarrhea or vomiting, please keep her/him home until the symptoms are gone. It can not only be uncomfortable, but could also indicate a virus or a contagious illness.
8. Rashes. Before sending your child to school with a rash, we'd like her or him to be examined by a doctor to rule such things as chicken pox, impetigo, or other bacterial or viral organisms, as well as the possibility of any infectious diseases.
9. Pink Eye. If your child has a form of "pink eye", please have her or him return to school only after eyes have been treated and are clear. If you use antibiotics, this can take 24 hours after beginning treatment.
10. Pain.
If your child complains of pain in the ears, throat, or abdomen, please have them examined by their pediatrician to rule out a contagious illness before bringing him or her to school.
11. Respira
tory Illnesses. Children with runny noses will not necessarily be excluded from school. However, if the discharge is deemed too profuse to be handled by normal wiping by the teacher, we ask that the child stay at home. Also, please keep your child home if runny nose is accompanied by fever, sore throat or ears, persistent cough or irritability.
12. Head
Lice. If you child contracts head lice, please keep your child at home and contact us right away. You can get rid of them using a special shampoo and by doing certain procedures at home. We will be willing to take your child back at school once he or she is free of all lice and nits.
13. Chicken Pox. If your child has chicken pox, we ask that she/he stay at home until all of the pox have scabbed over and she/he is feeling better.

MEDICATION POLICY

If your child is to receive any medications at school, we ask that a Medication Record form be completed. You may get this form from your child's Teacher or Director. No medication will be administered to any child until this form is completed. Non-prescription medicines may be administered without approval from the child's doctor, but we ask that parents provide written approval and instructions for giving it. The medicine will only be given if the instructions are in accordance with the product label directions. Medications are kept out of reach of the children, in a medical lock box. No medications are to be kept in a child's cubby or lunch box. A teacher will note the time medication was given on the Daily Sign In/Out sheet.

In cooperation with the licensing requirements, we will only administer medication to your child provided that the instructions from a child's parent/guardian are in agreement with the label directions.

CLOTHING

We help children grow in their ability to take care of themselves by asking them to put on and remove clothing independently. To this end, we encourage parents to buy clothing and shoes which are easy for their child to take on and off. Please talk to a teacher for suggestions. We also prefer that children wear clothing they find comfortable and which is OK to get dirty.

Please label each garment with your child's name or initials in indelible ink on the label. If the garment does not have a manufacturer's tag, we suggest using fabric tape. We would like it if you could err on the side of dressing your child warmly- we'd prefer to have a child pull off an unneeded layer than be without a sweater when cold. While we use washable paints, there may be times when some art product does not come out of a piece of clothing. For this reason, we emphasize functional clothing which can stand some wear and tear.

It is our intention that children will have an extra set of clothing at school at all times. Please check your child's cubby daily for soiled clothing and replace the next day. We keep extra clothing on hand which we will use if your child doesn't have any of their own at school.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Emergency Treatment

In case of accidental injury (including dental) or the onset of serious illness, we will call 911, then make an immediate attempt to contact a parent/guardian. If we can't reach you, we will leave a message. Then we will call the people listed as the child's emergency contacts. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The Director or Teacher In Charge will make all decisions about the care of the child.

The staff will care for minor injuries or health conditions, and notify the parent when the child is picked up. If conditions necessitate that the child be taken home, parents and other persons listed on the child's Emergency Form will be called.

Emergency Policies and Procedures

We take the ideas of fires and earthquakes seriously. We have fire and earthquake drills two times per year. We want the children to know exactly what to do and how to respond in the case of an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, we will contact the parent/guardian. If we cannot get through to you, we will leave a message and call the people on your Emergency Contact form.

If an ambulance is required, we will call one immediately. We will ask that you (or ultimately your insurance carrier) pay for this expense. We will administer CPR and First Aid when it is called for.

Our emergency information and policies are posted in the school. We have a three day supply of food, water, and emergency equipment for staff and children. Should we need to evacuate, our designated emergency site is at a private residence of a person who is a member of Kehilla Community Synagogue. The address is: 9 Arbor Rd, Piedmont, CA 94610

HTP'S COMMITMENT TO INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In choosing all materials, furniture, and play equipment for htP, we consider potential health effects on children and staff and the impact on the environment. To this end, as much as possible, we use natural materials which do not off-gas. This includes having solid wood cabinetry, a marmoleum floor, and odor free painted walls. We are also committed to the credo of: recycle, reduce, reuse. We strive to purchase items which are previously owned or sustainably harvested, and which consist of recyclable materials.. We frequent stores such as the East Bay for Creative Re-use. We recycle as much as we can, and teach the children how they can help.

CUBBIES AND FAMILY FOLDERS

Your child will have a cubby, a place to store his/her belongings, such as extra clothes, lunch boxes, and jackets. Please check your child's cubby daily for any clothing that needs to be washed. We ask that your child have a clean set of clothes (including underwear and socks) at school at all times.

Family folders are where you'll find all correspondence from htP, including bills and announcements. We also ask that you return forms and put your monthly tuition checks into the folder labeled "Inbox". Please check your folder daily!

ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL

We would like to support you and your child's transition to htP. We can arrange a day for you to visit with your child before he/she begins with us. You can also spend time in the classroom during the first few days or weeks of school. Due to space limitations of our classroom, we request that parents stay in a designated chair while spending time with their child. A staff member can show you where an unobtrusive place to sit might be. Some children take longer to adjust; in those cases, we recommend an incremental approach which we can explain to you.

An Incremental Approach

Sit in a corner of the classroom. Read, write, do some work. Give your child hugs and support as needed, and encourage your child to turn to teachers for help. Leave the room once or twice to use restroom, etc... This will help child get used to you leaving and coming back. When you leave, tell your child you will be back in a few minutes.

When you leave the classroom for the day, tell your child when you will be returning to pick them up, and use a goodbye ritual (e.g. a hug or a wave). Once you tell your child you are leaving, leave the classroom without delay even if your child cries or protests. We will comfort your child until she settles and will call you if we cannot console her after 30 minutes. During the first few days, stay within 15 minutes of school in case we call and ask you to return.

Sample Transition Period

1st day: parent stays until snack (10:30). Returns at lunch time (12:30) and takes child home.

2nd day: same as first day.

3rd day: parent stays until snack, and returns at 1pm.

4th day: parent drops child off in morning and returns at 1pm.

ARRIVAL AND PICK UP

Arrival

Class hours begin at 8:30am. We encourage children to be brought to school no later than 9:30am to support greater ease in integrating into play with their

peers. We ask that you call the school if your child will be absent or arrive later than 9:30.

When you need to leave your child, we will help comfort him/her and will call you if he/she cannot be consoled. You can always call us to see how your child is doing.

We recommend that when you do make your exit, you tell your child that you will be back, engage in a goodbye routine you have established, and walk briskly to the door.

We strongly urge parents to avoid socializing and talking on cell phones in the classroom, where it can be a distraction to children and take up space in our precious and limited play area. We also discourage socializing in the hallway by the administrative offices. Please use the Kehilla lobby, where there are couches and chairs, or the backyard for your phone and live conversations.

Pick Up

The preschool day is over at 1pm or 2:30pm. If you know you are going to arrive after that time, we ask that you call the school as soon as you can so we can reassure your child. We request that you have two or more people you arrange in advance as back-up, who you can call and ask to pick your child up if you will be detained. Please include these people's contact info on your emergency form.

Any parent/guardian who arrives more than five minutes after 1pm or 2:30pm more than once will be asked to conference with us so we can problem-solve together. Because the school has no provision for care after 2:30, consistently arriving after this time poses a challenge for us. If a good-faith attempt at problem-solving does not help the parent to arrive at the designated pick up time, we may choose to end the preschool contract with the family.

It supports us as teachers when parents leave with their children within ten minutes of having arrived for pick up. We have a limited amount of time in which to clean up and plan our curriculum once the children have gone. You are always welcome to sit in the Kehilla lobby and chat with other parents while you supervise your children. Out of consideration for the Kehilla staff who are working, please refrain from socializing in the hallway.

Procedure for Having Someone Else Pick Up Your Child

The easiest way to have someone other than the parent/guardian pick up a child is to list the person on your emergency form.

However, if you want someone not listed on your emergency form to pick up your child, please follow one of the following procedures. With both procedures, for security reasons, we will check an I.D. with a photo of the person who wishes to pick the child up.

A. Bring a signed and dated note authorizing us to release the child to the designated person.

or

B. Call the school and authorize the release of the child to the designated person. We will verify that you have just called by calling you back.

Parking

Please park in Kehilla's parking lot, and then enter htP through the backyard entrance. To help keep children safe, remember to hold their hands or pick them up when in the parking lot.

We have a legal agreement with residences on Fairview Ave, the street that runs behind Kehilla, that we will refrain from parking on Fairview Ave. Please only park on Fairview if you require handicapped access to the classroom.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT PROCEDURE

For liability reasons, it is of utmost importance to us that parents/guardians sign their child in whenever she/he arrives at school and sign their child out at the end of the day. We ask that you use your full legal signature and record the time of day. If a parent or guardian picks the child up from the center, and returns the child to the center the same day, we ask that the parent/guardian still sign the child in and out.

TOYS FROM HOME

We have found that a toy from home can be the stimulus for conflict among the children, and also can get lost or broken during the course of the day. In the interest of more ease and harmony, we ask that your child leave items at home. Under special circumstances, when a child does bring a toy from home, they will be asked to keep the toy in their cubby.

HTP COMMUNITY LENDING LIBRARY

To support everyone's growth and learning in the fields of parenting, early childhood education, and communication, we have a lending library. We request that people borrow books from the parent lending library for a maximum of eight weeks. Please write your name, date, the title of the book, and your phone number in the Library Binder. The system is self-monitoring: those who wish to borrow a book that someone has not returned can call him or her. If a book is lost or ruined, we ask that a replacement copy be purchased. Parents who wish to donate a book to the lending library can speak to the director.

SCHOOL ROSTER

Every year we will have a school roster which will list personal contact information for our current families. Please let us know if you do not wish to be included in this roster. We will ask you to tell us this on one of the forms you will fill out when you enroll.

ADDRESS CHANGES

We would appreciate it if you would notify us whenever you have a new address or new home or work number. Please also let us know whenever there are any changes on the Emergency Form as well.

KEHILLA MEMBERSHIP

htP families are free to choose whether or not to join Kehilla. Because htP is closely associated with Kehilla, Kehilla members will get a discounted rate for tuition. For information on how to become a member of Kehilla contact the Kehilla office at 510.547.2424 or visit www.KehillaCommunitySynagogue.org.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

To help keep our program affordable, we rely on parent/guardian participation. During the school year, we ask for 15 hours of volunteer time from each family (7 hours for single parents). These hours can be fulfilled a variety of ways, from mending doll clothes to nurturing our plants to joining us for a work day. Please see the Volunteer Binder in the classroom for ideas. After completing hours, we expect that you will record the hours on your family's form in the

binder. Any parent who volunteers in the classroom, including acting as a substitute teacher, will be asked to provide a Health Screening Report, including a test for TB. We ask that this be submitted before the parent begins the volunteer work.

OUR STAFF

Staff members are knowledgeable in child development and have experience working with children. They have, or are receiving, training in Nonviolent Communication (NVC). The teachers, understanding the reasonable expectations at various ages, implement a curriculum which enables a child to maximize her/his potential emotionally, physically, and cognitively. With the knowledge of NVC, teachers have positive communication and conflict mediation skills to bring to parents and children. We work closely with parents offering conferences once a year. We are also available to discuss problems, concerns, or your child's progress on an as-needed basis. Consultants, workshops, conferences and staff meetings provide teachers with ongoing opportunities for professional growth.

All hTP teachers and the Director keep current with their CPR training by taking a refresher course every year, and a First Aid class every two years. As mandated by State Licensing, all of our staff have cleared a background check and have been fingerprinted.

Both male and female staff partake in all teaching duties, including diapering, toileting, and changing of clothes with children.

COMMUNICATION

hTP teachers would like to hear about any out of the ordinary changes in your child's life so we can accommodate and support him or her accordingly. For example, we'd like to know if big changes are happening, like a separation or a move, as well as "little" changes, like a child is taking medication at home or there is a sick pet.

Our classroom phone is: 510-547-2424 x214. Our cell phone, in case we are out in the patio, on a field trip, or if you wish to reach us outside of school hours, is 510-882-5748.

Be sure to read our blog at www.happytogetherpreschool.wordpress.com. We update it weekly with a preview of each week's activities. We also send out occasional announcements over email.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL

Important items to have ready for school include:

- o Snack and Lunch for your child (remember to label snack container). Some parents choose to put an ice pack in the lunch bag to keep food chilled.
- o Set of extra clothing (remember to send clothes you won't mind getting dirty). Please include underwear, socks (with rubber grip on the bottom), pants, and a shirt.
- o For children wearing diapers: pack of disposable diapers and wipes.
- o For a complete list, review the document "What to Bring: A first Day Checklist". You will receive this during your Orientation Meeting.

STATEMENT OF HOW WE HOLD OUR POLICIES

All of our policies are written with the intention to meet our needs regarding the functioning of the school. In alignment with our philosophy, we are sometimes open to negotiation. If you find you are unable or unwilling to agree with a policy, we hope you will come talk to us. In many cases, we are willing to discuss alternative strategies that may work for both parties.

UNDERSTOOD, CONSENTED, AND AGREED TO:

X _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

X _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date