

Peace Garden Preschool & Kindergarten

Gan Neve Shalom

FAQs

This program is modeled on the home environment and family experience. The classroom is warm and inviting and the group size (maximum of 10 children) provides diversity while retaining intimacy. The group size allows the children to receive the attention they need and alleviates stress that can be prevalent in a larger group setting. The children become like family to one another; everyone learns to play together and inclusivity is the rule. All children and their differences are respected.

Our vision is to partner with you as parents, to create caring, loving human beings who will make a difference in our world. I empower children to realize their importance as valued members of society who can, even at their young age, participate and positively influence our community. This is modeled in the classroom community through a curriculum that focuses on the importance of our relationship with each other and our connection to all living things. Children care for the environment through gardening, recycling, and generally being responsible for themselves and the way they impact mother earth. We function as a family. While each individual is valued, the focus is on the good of all.

Spiritual Connection

Children are naturally connected to spirit and enthusiastically respond to celebrating the magic of life. This connection manifests through the experience of taking time for reverence, expressing gratitude, and giving. We learn compassion for one another through truly listening and take care of each other. We say blessings daily to develop gratitude for all that we receive. Children learn awareness and consciousness through their experience together.

Is religion part of the curriculum?

Spirituality is the core of the program. The universal values embraced by most spiritual traditions, such as giving and gratitude, are imparted

to the children throughout the day. There is absolutely no dogma. There is diversity and respect for all spiritual paths

If religion is not taught, how does Judaism influence the program?

The values of giving and gratitude are modeled through the celebration of Jewish festivals, as is the spirit of community and reverence for nature. Holidays are celebrated in a developmentally appropriate way with a simplicity that suits children of this age. The focus is experiential with joyous participation.

Is this program right for my child if we are not Jewish?

Our school is inclusive and respectful of all spiritual traditions and welcomes children of all spiritual paths and backgrounds. Children who are not Jewish receive the gift of insight into another tradition. The universal teachings and values serve to enhance and support each family.

How do I know if this program is the right choice for my child?

No preschool or preschool teacher is perfect. However, a preschool experience can be a perfect fit for your child.

I have 20 years as an experienced early childhood educator and 23 years as a mother. While the process of finding the “right preschool” may seem overwhelming, this process can be simplified by asking yourself the following questions:

- ♥ Does parent/teacher communication feel relaxed?
- ♥ Do I resonate with the teacher’s viewpoints and values even though they may be new to me?
- ♥ How does the indoor/outdoor environment feel? Is it warm and inviting?
- ♥ Is the teacher the kind of human being that I would like my child to be influenced by?

♥ Does the teacher exhibit grounded knowledge and deep understanding of children and their developmental stages?

Philosophy

Through years of guiding and observing young children's development, I have come to learn first hand, as documented by the leaders in child development research, that young children are about creativity and imagination. Through their creative play they are exploring and understanding the world around them. They are working out their fears and gathering tools for life. The best possible way to serve them is to honor and respect exactly where they are and allow them to express themselves fully. The Gan is child-centered, which means that my role is to stand back and allow the blossoming of the children with as little interference as possible. When the play flows naturally, I am in the role of an observer. I am there as a support and guide to help them work out the social challenges that arise so that all the children feel included and respected. The beauty of a child-centered program is the empowerment the children experience through the feeling of ownership that develops as they create community each day.

Teacher/child ratio

As a teacher with years of experience in diverse classroom size, I have created this program with specific purpose: to create an environment that mimics a large family with many siblings. While children's true needs are always met, they do not always get what they want. They learn patience, independence, and the importance of learning to help one another. They learn to be grateful for what they have.

Discipline

I believe when a child's true needs are being met, when they are receiving the attention the need and are being heard – it is their natural inclination and desire to get along peacefully rather than choosing conflict. The children receive clear boundaries and discipline is firm and loving. I provide them with the tools they need to work things out with one another.