



***TORAH TOTS ACADEMY  
PARENT HANDBOOK  
2024 - 2025***

## *Mission Statement*

The Maurice A. Halperin Torah Tots Early Childhood Center is a place where children ages 20 months–5 years receive an exciting, creative, and nurturing experience that will provide them with the foundation to grow educationally, socially, and spiritually. We offer small classes with excellent teacher/student ratios, a professional staff of early childhood specialists, and a modern facility equipped with the most educationally sound early childhood equipment. Most importantly, your child will receive a well-rounded, enriching education, filled with Jewish traditions and customs intertwined with a wide array of academic subjects, personal development, values, socialization, and learning skills.

## *Philosophy*

*The Maurice A. Halperin Torah Tots Early Childhood* is an intimate school that welcomes each child regardless of background or affiliation. The goals of Torah Tots are to preserve and nurture the innate love of learning in each child, to provide each child with a strong foundation for future learning, to honor the uniqueness of each child, and to ignite a spark in each child to lay claim to his/her Jewish heritage.

Torah Tots prides itself on having a highly professional staff of Early Childhood specialists. The teachers are chosen not only for their teaching skills but also for their love of children and their nurturing qualities. Classes are kept small to ensure that the teachers have plenty of interaction with each child. Our modern facility holds all the most educationally and developmentally sound equipment and materials.

The day in the life of a Torah Tot is truly an adventure. Backed by all of the latest research on brain development and learning, the children experience a play-based curriculum. As they move through their environment the children are encouraged to explore, to manipulate, to experiment, to create, to problem-solve, and to interact socially through group activities and dramatic play. The centers that are arranged by the teachers build a foundation for future academic learning by fostering literacy and providing hands-on opportunities for uncovering math and science concepts. Jewish traditions and customs give the days their flavor with song, dance, ritual, and the acting out of Torah tales.

What makes Torah Tots so special is our belief that each child is a special gift. We believe in child-directed, teacher-guided curriculum. Learning styles and individual interests are respected and addressed as teachers plan for the educational experiences that will take place. As this magical time of early childhood is honored and respected, the children feel safe to express themselves, knowing their voices will be heard. This acceptance of each child builds a strong sense of self that the children take with them in life beyond Torah Tots.

We believe that, like the children, Torah Tots is an ever-changing, ever-growing entity. Our teachers and staff, through workshops and in-house training, are constantly discovering new ways to provide the best experiences for their students.

## *Goals:*

Torah Tots seeks to create a stimulating and enriching educational environment for each and every child. The school is devoted to helping children learn socialization skills, building their self-

confidence, and teaching them the preliminary skills to explore and experience the world independently from their parents. Our goal is to provide children with the early foundation and framework to prepare them for the transition to elementary school. In addition, we seek to ignite a spark in each child to lay claim to his Jewish heritage and commit him or her to a lifetime passion for learning.

## *History of Torah Tots Academy*

Rabbi Moishe and Rivkah Denburg moved to Boca Raton in 1989 with their young son, Yossi to establish Chabad of Boca Raton. After opening a synagogue in their two-bedroom apartment and founding a Hebrew School in a storefront they began offering programs for the wider Jewish community. After renting space for almost 10 years for the synagogue, in 1999, land was purchased to build a center. The center was completed in 2000. Rivkah began teaching Mommy and Me classes for several years for children ages birth through 3. Upon observing the local early childhood centers in the area, Rivkah decided to begin an early childhood center at Chabad of Boca. Along with her colleague, Chani Bukiet, Torah Tots was created. During the first year, 2004, there were 10 students. Over the years, the program grew and added classes. The philosophy of the school always focused on a hands-on playful learning environment. Over the years, through professional development, Rivkah implemented a lot of approaches including being inspired by the Reggio Emilia. Conscious Discipline, by Dr. Bailey drives the social/emotional curriculum of the school. Staff and parents alike are trained in these methods. The school boasts a natural playground to facilitate the outdoor learning that Torah Tots is known for. The school currently serves over 100 students.

## *Admissions Procedures*

We are thrilled that you considered Torah Tots Academy to meet the early childhood education needs for your child! Choosing a school that supports Jewish values and teachings is one of the most significant decisions your family will ever make. We are confident that you will be pleased with the quality and dedication of our staff, the curriculum, and our outstanding facilities.

Torah Tots Academy welcomes all families to be part of our community. It is our policy to not discriminate based on race, sex, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, or physical or mental disabilities unrelated to the ability to work or enjoy the benefits of the school's programs, facilities, or services.

## Curriculum

Torah Tots follows *The Creative Curriculum* by Diane Trister Dodge. Our comprehensive and developmentally appropriate program is designed to promote each child's intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. All games and activities are skill-based and goal-oriented, so that the children are growing with everything that they do.

### **INTELLECTUAL:**

We encourage the children to develop self-motivation, active investigational skills through questioning, exploring, and observing, and the thinking and problem-solving abilities needed to thrive in a world of challenge and competition. Children are surrounded with books, literacy experiences and exposure to the alphabet to prepare them for pre-reading and the reading that follows.

### **SOCIAL:**

We encourage each child to work and play with others, to develop language communication skills, to respect the rights and privacy of their peers, and most of all to develop feelings of kindness, courtesy, helpfulness, and acceptance.

### **PHYSICAL:**

Children are provided constant opportunities to develop their small and large muscle skills, to develop finger strength and dexterity, and arm-eye and body coordination. Additionally, we have on staff a P.E. specialist who does a weekly program with our 2-4 year old classes.

### **EMOTIONAL:**

Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-concept, to understand the difference between right and wrong, and to develop responsibility. They are encouraged to recognize that people are different and to be accepting of others and we help them learn and practice appropriate ways to respond to others and to express their feelings constructively. **Conscious Discipline is a program that is used at Torah Tots. It focuses on interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, and classroom structure to create a school family within each classroom**

### **INTEGRATING TRADITION AND JEWISH PRIDE:**

Lesson plans at Torah Tots are built around the events influencing the children at the time that they are being taught. Weather changes, special animal habits, national celebrations, and holiday seasons all determine what will be brought into the classroom at any particular time of the year. All these are laced into the general curriculum to allow the children to learn from what is going on around them.

The children experience all the Jewish holidays through art, song, dramatic play, language, and literacy. Torah stories are learned and dramatized in weekly parsha plays.

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AS TO STUDENTS:**

Our school admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students. We do not discriminate or

terminate any student based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of the educational and admission policies, scholarships and loan programs, and any school-administered programs. Parents are obligated to respect school policies regarding kashrut and other Jewish rituals.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS:**

We're building big things together and we greatly value your input. When challenges arise, parents are expected to follow the appropriate escalation path. We ask parents to commit to working collaboratively and respectfully with teachers to reach a solution. For most concerns, including academics, social-emotional learning or community issues, direct your concerns to your teacher or Rivkah Denburg, Director of Torah Tots, at [director@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:director@halperintorahtots.com) or Yocheved Shapiro, our curriculum and child services coordinator at [yochevedshapiro@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:yochevedshapiro@halperintorahtots.com). Our Director of Operations, Jen Biggs is available to answer your general school questions as well. Her email is [missjen@halperintoratots.com](mailto:missjen@halperintoratots.com). For questions regarding tuition accounts, please contact our Financial Administrator, Pam Turk at [pamturk@halperintorahtots.com](mailto:pamturk@halperintorahtots.com) or 561-504-0902.

### **Staff Hiring**

All applications are reviewed without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status. Torah Tots employees must have basic knowledge of Jewish laws, customs, holidays, and prayers in order to achieve our curriculum goals.

### **Getting Ready For School**

Some suggestions to help your child get ready for school:

- Make sure they are well rested
- Allow lots of time for personal routines, a good breakfast and a pleasant, safe ride to school
- Talk/sing with your child on the way to school – this is a great way to develop literacy skills!
- Have a cheerful, positive attitude as your child leaves you, either at home or at school
- Inform the teacher if there is something going on at home that may affect you child
- Encourage your child to talk about school by asking specific questions, such as “What color did you paint with today?” or “What was snack today?” rather than “What did you do at school today?”

### **Separation and Phase-In**

A child's attachment to his/her parents is natural, therefore separation, especially if it is for the first time, can be a difficult process. It is necessary for a child's healthy development that he/she learns how to say goodbye to his/her parents. Children must learn that there are other caretakers (their teachers) who love them and will nurture them while their parents are away. To ease the difficult process, parents and teachers need to work together to build a foundation for positive experiences at school.

This foundation begins at the *School Phase-In*. The **\*\*Phase-In** period is an orientation period, where each class has an abbreviated schedule and parents spend time with their child in the classroom. The time parents spend in the classroom is used to play with their child, to assist them with classroom routines, and help the child establish a relationship with the child's teacher. The amount of time a parent must spend in the classroom is dependent on the age and grade of the child and prior experience separating from parents. Some of the time spent in the classroom is also at the discretion of the teacher, as she might make a judgment call if more or less time is needed for a particular child.

**\*\*All parents must say goodbye to their children and tell them when they will return. Parents may NOT sneak out in order to prevent the child from crying at that moment.** *Leaving without saying goodbye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying but is **not** easier for the child. Their tears are symbols of their attachment to you, and they must be allowed to express their emotions. Children will be comforted by their teachers. Leaving without saying goodbye can also make separations more difficult because a child will fear the unexpected departure and try to keep a close eye on his/her parent. This fear will prevent him/her from engaging in play or interacting with teachers and other children. Children must trust their parents and when they learn the tangible process of separation, this helps them to do so.*

### **Books Can Help!**

Picture books about the beginning of school can help to ease your apprehensions and open a channel of communication about school between you and your child—and what a wonderful habit for life! Story characters modeling a successful adjustment to school help children, as well as parents. These books reinforce positive feelings about school and are helpful long after the first day.

*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

*Will I Have a Friend?* By Miriam Cohen

*Best Friends* by Miriam Cohen

*Every Morning at Play Group*, a Sesame Street Golden Book

*I Have a Friend*, a Sesame Street Golden Book

*I Go To School* by Rikki Benenfield

Our local libraries also have many book suggestion titles.

### **Communication and Parent Participation**

**Communication:** Open communication between the school's director, teachers, and parents is an integral component of Torah Tots. We strongly believe that cooperation and communication between the staff and parents is in the best interest of the children and provides the right support for them to flourish. Our school teams want to be reliable and accessible to families. To best support that goal, our teachers will make an effort to return messages and emails within two business days for all questions, and within one business day for time-sensitive questions. We are also happy to set up times to talk. Please use the **Kaymbu** app for all ongoing communication. **Kaymbu** is the primary communications tool used by teachers and Torah Tots Academy staff to keep you informed about what's happening in your child's classroom. Pictures and news of the week will be shared daily on **Kaymbu**. Please make sure that all information is current on your child's **Kaymbu** profile. It is important that all changes are updated such as phone, email, and

allergy information. We appreciate that parents understand that teachers need evenings, weekends, vacations, and professional development time to recharge and return fully energized to work with your children.

**For day-of or urgent messages, please call the school office 561-241-6257.**

To facilitate this, we offer the following:

- **Orientation process** – *During this time please give us your impressions of your child: personality, his or her likes, dislikes, pertinent health information, etc.*
- **Parent Information Board** – *Make sure to visit our bulletin board at the entrance of the school for important information and upcoming events.*
- **Torah Tots Website** – *All school information including calendar, and upcoming events, will be posted on our website and will be updated regularly.*
- **Transitioning:** *Each year your child is placed in their appropriate age group and will remain with that group through the year. To learn more about separation please see "Separation & Phase In".*
- **Social Media:** *You can get news and information about the school on Facebook at **Torah Tots Early Childhood Center** on Instagram @torahtotsboca*
  
- **\*\*Parent Involvement** – Parents are our most treasured resource in the education of our children. We encourage your involvement in our special events throughout the year. Some of the events include our annual fundraiser, parent lectures, Shabbat, and holiday parties. We invite you to come and read a book, supervise an art project, and share a special skill (such as playing a musical instrument or assisting with the cooking project) whenever possible. Look for the signup sheets in your child's class early in the year. If it is not possible for parents to participate in the classroom directly, there are other activities that could be done at home that would be very helpful, such as gathering recycled materials for crafts or props for the housekeeping area, making phone calls, etc.
  
- **\*\*Parent Organization:** All parents are welcome to join T.O.D.A.H., our parent organization. Meetings and functions will be held throughout the year. We are sure that the involvement of the parents in the school will prove to be invaluable in enhancing our program. Some of the events involved will include our annual Sukkot party and Harvest Feast to name a few.
  
- **Conscious Discipline:** Torah Tots follows the Conscious Discipline method by Dr. Becky Bailey. Conscious Discipline is a social-emotional learning program and classroom management program. It's based on brain research and social cognitive theory, and helps adults shift from fear to love when helping children through conflict. It also teaches adults how to structure environments instead of trying to control children.
  
- **Observation and Assessment:** Torah Tots is a part of the Strong Minds Network of Palm Beach County. As part of this program's ongoing quest for excellence in early childhood education, we use the COR Assessment Kayambu app to observe and assess our student's development in the following domains: social emotional, physical, language, literacy, math, and cognitive skills. Research-based objectives are at the heart of everything we do, and they define the path teachers take with the children in their classrooms. They inform every aspect of teaching,

include predictors of school success, and are aligned with state early learning guidelines and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The objective for development and learning spans from birth through third grade. They enable teachers to see children's development and learning along a progression across the whole of the early childhood years. Our teachers observe students throughout the week using anecdotal records, pictures, and videos to track their development. Progress is shared at Parent Teacher Conferences.

**\*\*Parent-Teacher Conferences:** There are two parent-teacher conferences during the year, one in December and one in May. These conferences, which both mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend, are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child and to receive an in-depth view of your child's progress. We will be holding these conferences as noted on the calendar. Parents will have the opportunity to sign up online for a scheduled time.

**Student Evaluations:** It is the policy of the school that we may reserve the right to require an evaluation of any child whom we believe is having significant difficulties functioning in the classroom. We also reserve the right to require additional support if we are unable to meet any child's special needs in the classroom. Additional support may include occupational, behavioral, physical, and/or speech therapists, and /or registered behavior therapists, at the parents' own expense. Our school administrator may refer therapists to parents and services may be held on our campus during school hours.

**Open Door Policy:** We have an open door policy as far as visiting school is concerned. We do ask, however, that visitation not take place during the first month of school to allow for all adjustments. Although we do encourage visitations, we suggest that the frequency of visits does not interfere with the operation of the classroom and your child's adjustment. Parents are asked to make an appointment with the director to observe their child's classroom. When visiting the classroom, we ask that you remember to please not engage in conversation with the teacher when she is working with the students. Her job at that point is to be with the children. If the administrator feels that a visit from the parents interferes with the students' progress at school, a visit will not be advised.

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

**Changes in Student Information:** Any change in telephone number must be updated on your child's **Kaymbu** profile as soon as the change is made or email/call the office.

**VPK:** For the EC 4 class, please note that the VPK tuition is subject to your submitting the proper VPK documentation, and abiding by the VPK policies and Procedures regarding attendance. VPK payments are dependent on a child's attendance in school. **If a child has excessive absences, and VPK deducts any monies from our payment, you will be billed accordingly.**



## Arrival and Dismissal

- **Drop Off:** Our school day begins at 9 am. Parents are asked to walk their children into their classroom using the gate entrance. Parents must sign in via the class iPad/**Procare** app. Children must be received by their teacher. We cannot assume responsibility for a child who has not been turned over to a teacher. Drop-off is between 8:55 and 9:00 am. Please do not drop off before this time, as the teachers will be preparing their classrooms for the day. Our greeting time extends until 9:10. Please keep your children off the playground before the start of school. It is best they arrive clean and ready to learn. After that we start activities, and the focus of the staff is on the group as a whole. For your child to receive this warm one-on-one moment, it is important that you arrive on time. Drop-off will be at the classroom door. For safety purposes and a smooth transition, we ask parents not to enter the classroom.
- **On-Time Arrival:** Being on time with your child will enable them to have a smooth transition to their school day. Arriving late is disruptive to the classroom routine. At this time, the teachers are engaged with the children and need to focus on their needs. When coming past 9:15 am, please bring your child to the office where he/she will be brought to the classroom by a staff member. The cut off time for dropping off a child in the morning is 11:00 am unless you have a commitment e.g. doctor appointment, bris etc.
- **Dismissal Procedure:** We have three dismissal times during our school day: 12:30 pm for half day 2's (dismissing at the Red Gate), 1:00 pm for half day 3's (dismissing at the Red Gate) and the other is at 3:00 pm (2:30 pm every Friday). All classes dismissing at 3:00 pm will be from a carpool line, which forms at the synagogue entrance 10 minutes before dismissal time. You will drive up, and a teacher will bring your child to you. **Please do not use your cell phone during the carpool.** Please remain in your car and do not approach the synagogue door to get your child. You will then be asked to sign your child out and then the teacher will help your child into your car.
- **Car Seats:** Florida law requires that children under 5 be either in a car seat or a booster seat that is appropriate for their age and weight (**see the last page of Parents' Manual of School Policies**). Please do the right thing for your child and go out and purchase a car seat or booster and make sure that you and your spouse and other relatives have one too.
- **Late Pick-Up:** If you know that you are going to be detained, please notify the office immediately so that we can notify your child's teacher and reassure your child. Parents are asked to pick up their children on time on a regular basis. Once the carpool line ends, the children will be brought to the office after the 12:30 and 1:00 pm dismissal or placed in aftercare after the 3:00 pm dismissal (2:30 pm Friday). Please call and let the office know if you will be more than 10 – 15 minutes late at pickup time. Pick-up that is 10 minutes or more after dismissal time will be considered late pick-up and will be charged the aftercare fee of

\$18 per hour (pro-rated).

- **Pre-Care/After-Care:** We will be offering pre-care at 8:00 am and after-care until 4:00 pm or 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday, 3:30 pm or 4:30 pm on Friday for those who have pre-registered. Your child should be picked up at the after-care classroom (TBD). *Additional fees will be charged (\$ 1.00 per minute) and will be added to the late fee of \$15 if you pick up after the aftercare hours.*
  - **After-School Enrichments:** Torah Tots offers after-school enrichments for EC3 and EC4 students at an additional cost throughout the school year. Students must be fully potty-trained to participate. Enrichments may include gymnastics, sports, art, Ivrit, yoga, and Karate and will be offered Monday-Thursday from 3:00 pm-3:45 pm. Registration takes place during the month of August for the September-December session and in November for the January-June session.
- **Outer Doors:** The outer doors of the classrooms facing the parking lot are not to be used for drop off or dismissal. These doors are used as fire exits only and for the safety of the children, they are not opened during the day.

### *Health, Safety and Discipline*

1. All the children are **required** to have a current health and immunization form filled out by the child's physician, dated no more than 6 months prior to the beginning of school. **NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL WITHOUT THESE HEALTH FORMS.**
2. **For all new students enrolled in Torah Tots:** Our school is required by Florida law to collect and keep on file vaccination records signed by a local doctor. Please send your child's current health and vaccination forms to the school office: [office@halperintorah tots.com](mailto:office@halperintorah tots.com). The law does provide exceptions in rare medical conditions. Torah Tots will require students to be fully vaccinated before beginning school. We understand that there are students who are unable to receive vaccinations due to family medical history and/or vaccine injuries or serious complications. Students with medical exemptions will be allowed. In certain circumstances, a child will be allowed to attend with a religious exemption as per the Director's discretion.
3. **Hand Washing:** Frequent hand washing with soap and running water is necessary to prevent disease. Children and adults need to wash their hands upon entering the classroom, before preparing or eating snacks, after handling animals, coming in from the playground, toileting, coughing, and wiping noses.

4. You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust that you will not bring a sick child to school. **Keep your child home if they have:**

- Two or more episodes of vomiting or loose bowels/diarrhea within a period of 24 hours. Child must be symptom free 24 hours to return to school.
- Sore throat or constant cough.
- Elevated temperature over 100 degrees within 24 hours. **Your child should be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to school.**
- Red eyes with a discharge often a sign of conjunctivitis and highly contagious
- Skin rash (excluding diaper rash) lasting more than a day
- A runny nose especially with green mucus
- Within 24 hours of receiving an antibiotic for a contagious condition
- Been fussy cranky or out of sorts for the past 12 hours
- Had very little sleep the night before

In case of a contagious disease or rash, please notify the school at once. All parents will be notified by the school via the **Kaymbu** app when a child in the group has a contagious disease so you may check with your physician. If your child should contract a contagious disease or rash, we must have a note from his/her doctor stating that the child is in good health and no longer contagious before being re-admitted. **As a courtesy to your child's classmates, please do not attend out-of-school celebrations or weekend parties with any of the above symptoms.**

- If your child is found to have head lice, you will be called to pick him/her up so that the appropriate treatment can be administered. Upon returning to school, an administrator must check your child to ensure that all lice and nits have been removed. For your child to return to the classroom, a note from a professional lice check company must be presented to the teachers. Children will be periodically checked for lice and nits.
- Please be aware that to protect our children, our teachers are required by Florida law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.
- No bottles are allowed to be brought into the classroom. Sippy cups are allowed. Pacifiers are allowed for naptime.
- Please be aware that the temporary care of ill children will be kept separate from the other children in the school.

### **Allergy Lists:**

Parents are asked to disclose any allergies their child has on their Kaymbu profile and list the protocol if a child ingests or is exposed to an allergen and has an allergic reaction. A doctor's note with instructions needs to be submitted to the school and kept in the classroom.

### *Illness or Injury in School*

In accordance with Palm Beach County regulations, Torah Tots is restricted to treating wounds or injuries with ice, soap and water and Band-Aids only. Should other injuries occur, parents will be notified immediately, and/or paramedics will be summoned.

These restrictions will also prevent the school from issuing medications such as Tylenol, etc. Parents may come to school to do so. The school does not administer the initial dosage of a medication. Parents will be summoned to take their child home should the student feel unwell and therefore be sure that the children are healthy before sending them to school.

Each student file must contain a signed and notarized Emergency Form. This form, in addition to providing emergency and medical alert information, also grants Torah Tots the parents' authorization to act as their agent in procuring appropriate medical or surgical services should the need arise.

### *Medication*

Only prescription medicine for allergies or in the event of an emergency will be dispensed by Torah Tots staff. The name of the doctor, child, and medication directions for administration shall be written on the label. All medication shall be in the original prescription container. All medicines that are brought in by parents are stored in a locked refrigerator, cabinet, or container and are inaccessible to the children. A written request signed by the parents and doctor shall accompany the medication stating the time and amount of dosage and the name of the medication to be given to the child. Torah Tots shall record the name of the child, medication, date, time, amount, and method of dosage administered. All medication will be checked for the expiration date. This Medication Log shall be initialed by the adult who administered the medication. Please make sure to fill out the medication permission form at the office.

Over the counter medications may only be administered at our school if a dated doctor's note is submitted with detailed instructions of how and when the dosage is needed.

### *Topical Non-Medicated Physical Barriers*

Physical barrier lotions, ointments, and creams such as sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper ointments are generally not medications. At Torah Tots we allow these to be applied as long as the non-medication form is completed.

### *Biting*

There are many reasons children may bite. Sometimes the biting is related to teething. Sometimes toddlers use it to express feelings they can't express with words yet. We have seen children bite when they are frustrated, and we have seen them bite in the excitement of a happy moment. No one can predict which children will bite, but we are ready to help children who do bite learn other behaviors. We are also ready to give treatment, sympathy, and advice to children who are bitten.

## **Biting Procedures:**

1. After a child bites one time, the family of the child who bites will be contacted as well as the family of the child bitten. We ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home. Children who bite in our program do not necessarily bite at home. But if your child is biting in both places, it is important for all of us to be consistent in dealing with it. Communication is very important to help your child stop biting.
2. If repeated biting incidents occur, the director will meet with the parents in order to implement a plan that would prevent further incidents from taking place. This plan will include making changes in the classroom environment. At times when all efforts made by the school do not result in a change in the biting pattern, measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of the children in the class. These may include a “shadow” at the parent's own expense or temporary removal from the program.

You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting so that it will end as quickly as possible. We will support your children whether they bite or are bitten. We want the best for all the children in our school.

## **Fire Drills/Lockdown**

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year. The teachers will instruct the children on the proper procedure for evacuating the school safely and quickly. **Lockdown drills will be held three times during the year.**

### **FIRE:**

- See the Fire Drill plan posted in each room.

## **Hurricanes and Community Emergencies**

Our school generally follows the emergency plans set by Palm Beach County Public Schools. We will always try to notify you personally of emergency information or you may call the office directly. In the event the school is closed due to natural disasters such as weather (i.e. hurricanes, etc.) and/or weather-related damages to the school, there will be no make-up days.

## **Emergency/Evacuation Plan**

- To evacuate the school building, the children will be taken into the main building (synagogue) into the Caryl Rothman Library (“shelter in place”).
- During a bomb threat that does **not** involve a vehicle, the assembly area for Torah Tots is located at the first median in the parking lot (300 yards from the building).
- During a bomb threat that involves a vehicle, the assembly area for Torah Tots is located at the main area behind the dry cleaners (1000 yards from the building).

- The secondary assembly area is located at the golf course behind the Torah Tots playground. To ensure people are not exposed to danger while evacuating the building, a secondary assembly area is required should a suspect vehicle be parked in the primary assembly area.
- Emergency provisions will be kept in a backpack located in each classroom. This “Emergency Backpack” will include the following items: a flashlight, first aid kit, water, snacks, and a class list with emergency phone numbers.
- A member of the Board of Directors who lives near the school will serve as an emergency contact. She has access to Kaymbu for the children’s and staff’s emergency information. The Preschool Director will be responsible for calling the Board Member if an evacuation is necessary.

***No one is to re-enter the building until the Fire Department gives the all-clear signal.***

In the event that the phones are not operating during an emergency at Torah Tots, we will communicate through walkie-talkies or cell phones.

### **ANTICIPATED HURRICANE/TORNADO OR NATURAL DISASTER:**

- Parents will be messaged via the **Kaymbu** app and will be expected to reach the school for pickup within 30 minutes.
- If the child is not picked up within 30 minutes, the office staff will call the second contact on the emergency form. That person must arrive within 30 minutes.
- If the parent cannot arrive within 30 minutes, the parent must call the second contact.

### **LIGHTNING:**

- The children will be brought indoors, and teachers will take a head count.
- Electrical appliances will not be used.
- Children will not sit near windows, doors, or sinks.
- Dismissal during lightning: For the safety of our children and staff when we are dismissing from the synagogue foyer, we will keep the children in the dismissal area until it is safe. If any parent wishes to pick up their child, please park and come in the front doors of the synagogue to get them.

***For any emergencies, contact Rivkah at 561-526-5738 or Rachel at 754-368-0632.***

### **Discipline/Guidance**

Our philosophy does not consider a child good or bad. There is safe and unsafe behavior. We never use physical or verbal responses that would demean a child. An explanation of safe behavior is given, and appropriate choices are offered to empower the child. We stress the

importance of respecting the person and property of our peers and can enjoy our class to the fullest when we do not hurt anyone physically, emotionally, or by taking away other's property. Our discipline policy is defined as guidance and teaching with an emphasis on mutual respect. This method teaches natural and logical consequences for misbehavior instead of the use of punishment. As a result, the child gains self-esteem and cooperation skills. See page 6 for more information on our Conscious Discipline method.

### *What To Send With Your Child*

**Clothing:** When choosing your children's school clothes, please keep in mind that easy, comfortable, and washable clothing is best. Choose simple and practical clothing that is free from complicated fastenings and easy to handle in the bathroom. Even though Torah Tots uses washable paints, art projects, and materials can be messy, even for those children who wear smocks. We do offer smocks, but many children do not feel comfortable wearing them. **They will get messy and dirty at school!** Outdoor play can be tough on clothing, so please choose attire that is sturdy. **Please label all your children's clothes with his/her name.** For safety purposes, children should wear sneakers daily. Please do not send your child in flip-flops, crocs, or slippers.

**Change of Clothes:** Please send to school with your child a full change of clothes, marked with your child's name. The clothes will be kept in your child's cubby for use as needed. If your child has an accident, please wash and return a change of clothing for the following day.

**Supply List:** A list of items that your child will need for the first day of school will be posted online at [www.halperintorah tots.com](http://www.halperintorah tots.com) and can be found under the heading of **Parents**. The lists are specific to each class, so please be sure to check the list for your child's grade.

**Toys From Home:** We ask that you leave your child's toys at home. Children are often very possessive of personal toys and will not share them easily or they become very upset when lost or broken at school. We welcome stuffed or soft animals, soft dolls, and blankets for naptime. We have found that television or movie superhero toys based on aggressive and violent stories can lead to the same kind of behavior in the classroom and often do not promote the Jewish ideals that we teach. If you have a book or a music CD that may be of interest to all the children, please feel free to bring them to class.

**Tzedakah:** Teaching our children values and learning that it is their responsibility to help those less fortunate is part of our morning routine. Please send in a bag with an assortment of coins that will be used to give Tzedakah daily. When it is empty, we will ask for a refill.

### *Field Trips*

Torah Tots does not take children off campus for field trips. In house field trips are done in our social hall.

## *Snack and Lunch*

**Special Diets & Food Allergies:** If your child has any special dietary needs, please consult with the director. She will be happy to work with you to make sure your child is served appropriate food.

**Lunch and Snack:** Please provide your child with a nutritious kosher **dairy or pareve** morning snack, lunch, and drink daily. Kosher products bear the symbols: "OU", "OK", "Star K", "Kof K", or "ORB". We'll be glad to help with any kashrut questions. Please label lunch box, thermos, utensils, and containers. We do not permit children to exchange or share food items. We are striving to ensure that the children at Torah Tots always have nutritious food items. Please include protein (fish, eggs, cheese, yogurt, etc.), fruit or vegetable, and carbohydrate (bread, cereal, pasta, and crackers). Please do not send in any candy or sweets, or any food that contains artificial food coloring with your child. Grapes should be cut in half when sent with your child for either lunch or snack (whole grapes are a choking hazard). Children in the full-day program should bring an afternoon snack from home.

Our synagogue caterer is working on a program to offer lunch for purchase directly through CEK Caterers at a kiosk in the building or an online order menu. Catering staff will deliver lunch straight to your child's classroom. This lunch option is not provided by the school, it is a way for the parents to order lunch from the caterer. More information will come for the caterer.

**Snack Menu:** Monday through Thursday, our morning snack is cereal, rice cakes, whole grain saltines, whole wheat pretzels, and fresh fruit in season. If your child is gluten-free, please send in a snack labeled with his/her name that we can substitute. On Friday we serve challah and grape juice.

## *Birthdays in School*

**We love to celebrate birthdays!** At Torah Tots we learn about our Hebrew birthdays, as well. Our celebrations are small-scale and will take place after lunch. Please inform your teacher of your birthday plans ahead of time so that she can plan accordingly. We look forward to having our parents participate in the fun!

### **Guidelines for birthday treats:**

- 1. Sweet Treat:** The school will have black and white cookies available to purchase for your child's birthday celebration. Please contact the office **two weeks** prior to arranging the party. Cakes or cupcakes from a bakery and pizza are no longer permitted.
- 2. Decorations:** You may supply special cups and napkins.
- 3. Favors and Gifts:** Please do not distribute birthday favors or treat bags. Instead of these, we suggest that you present the class with a gift for the classroom in honor of your child's birthday from the class wish list.



**4. Parties outside of the school:** Invitations to a party outside of the school may be distributed in school only if all the children in the class are invited. We recommend strongly not to hold birthday parties on Shabbat or Jewish holidays so that all children can attend. Also, please be aware that some children follow strict kosher dietary guidelines outside of school. This is a great opportunity to teach your child about consideration and thoughtfulness.

### **Holidays, Family Vacations, Schedule Changes & Early Withdrawal**

**Credit for Illness and/or Family Vacation:** Every child is enrolled for the entire school year. Since most of the school's costs are fixed and do not vary according to daily attendance, the school cannot issue refunds or credits for illness, holidays, or family vacations.

**Make-Up Days:** Make-up days are not available.

**Early Withdrawal:** In the event of early withdrawal, you are responsible for a pro-rated amount of tuition, plus 30% of the annual tuition. The enrollment fee is non-refundable.

**Schedule Changes:** If you make a change in your child's schedule after the first day of school, there will be a \$ 75 administrative fee.





**Holidays:** Check the school calendar for any school closings and events. Notices will be sent out in the event of any changes to the calendar.

### **Updates**

This handbook may be updated at any point during the school year. Parents will receive any update by email through *Kaymbu*.

# CHAMPIONS FOR SAFETY!

Fits your child. Fits your car. Used correctly, every time.

13 YEARS	SEAT BELT	 <b>SEAT BELT</b>	<p>A child should remain in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember, a child should ride in the back seat if younger than 13 years old.</p> <p><i>A seat belt will restrain a child safely in a crash once they are big enough for the lap belt and shoulder belt to fit properly.</i></p>			
12 YEARS			 <b>BOOSTER SEAT</b>	<p>In Florida, children ages 4 and 5 must be in a separate carrier, integrated child seat, or booster seat.</p> <p>Once a child outgrows the forward-facing car seat, it's time to travel in a booster seat, and should always be in the back seat. If the vehicle does not have a backseat, the booster seat should be used with the air bag turned off.</p> <p><i>A booster seat positions the seat belt properly so that the lap belt lies snugly across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt lies across the shoulder and chest.</i></p>		
11 YEARS				 <b>FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT</b>	<p>A child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer.</p> <p>Keep a child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. If the vehicle does not have a backseat, the forward-facing car seat should be used with the air bag turned off.</p> <p><i>A forward-facing car seat has a five-point harness and tether that limits a child's forward movement during a crash.</i></p>	
10 YEARS					 <b>REAR-FACING CAR SEAT</b>	<p>A rear-facing car seat is the best seat for a child under age 2 to use. Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing a child to be rear-facing for a longer period of time. If the vehicle does not have a backseat, the rear-facing car seat should be used with the air bag turned off.</p> <p><i>A rear-facing car seat has a harness and, in a crash, cradles and moves with a child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.</i></p>
9 YEARS						<p>REAR-FACING CAR SEAT</p>
8 YEARS	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT				
7 YEARS						
6 YEARS	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT				
5 YEARS						
4 YEARS	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT	FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT				
3 YEARS						
2 YEARS	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT				
1 YEAR	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT				
BIRTH	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT	REAR-FACING CAR SEAT				

To set an appointment at a local FHP station and have a certified Trooper help inspect a seat, visit [flhsmv.gov/childsafety](http://flhsmv.gov/childsafety).

8/1/2024