



8215 Old Georgetown Road – Bethesda, Maryland 20817
(301) 652-8569 x107 – www.bethelpreschool.org

Dear Prospective Beth El Preschool Parent,

We are delighted to provide you with information about the 2023-2024 school year!

Beth El Preschool (BEPS) is a play based, parent co-operative Jewish preschool located in downtown Bethesda. The children at BEPS are encouraged to explore their environment, make discoveries, ask questions and gain competence through a variety of child centered, hands-on experiences.

BEPS offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum that promotes growth in all areas of a child's development: cognitive; language; physical; social-emotional; and spiritual. By integrating Jewish customs and traditions, values, holidays, songs and dance throughout our program, we foster a strong, positive cultural identity and love for being Jewish.

At BEPS, parents are actively involved in the preschool community, both inside and outside of school. During the school day, teachers and parents work together to provide a loving and nurturing environment through co-oping; outside of school, parents support the children in their learning by facilitating programming through participation on parent committees. Through social events, tzedakah programming, community partnerships and holiday celebrations, our community orientated school environment promotes life-long connections with other families at Beth El.

Learn more about Beth El Preschool by visiting www.bethelpreschool.org, attending an upcoming Open House, scheduling a private tour, or reaching out to us with any questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Lauren

Lauren Hirt
Preschool Director
laurenhbeps@gmail.com

Ali

Ali Lackey
Curriculum Director
ali.beps@gmail.com

Overview of Programs

Beth El Preschool offers fun, stimulating and engaging learning opportunities for children ages 15 months to five years. Our developmentally appropriate, child focused classes center on the following six areas of curriculum: Approaches to Learning & Play; Language Development; Cognitive Development/Academic Readiness; Health & Physical Development; Social-Emotional Development; and Judaism & Spirituality. We provide a balanced program that includes individual, small group and large group activities; free and structured play choices; and a mix of teacher directed and child initiated activities. Judaism is infused into all of our classrooms regularly, with a schoolwide focus on holidays, Shabbat and tikkun olam (repairing the world).

Mazel Tots

A baby and toddler program that meets one day per week for group play, songs, dancing, art and more. Children must be accompanied by an adult. *This class is for children who are 15-24 months when classes begin in September and feeds into the Twos program the following school year.*

Tiny Twos

Toddlers attend class two days per week with a parent or caregiver to explore, play, sing, dance and learn to socialize with other toddlers. Parents and caregivers attend class with the children in the fall and transition out in January. *This class is for children who turn 2 years old from September 1, 2023 to February 28, 2024 and feeds into the Twos the following school year.*

Twos

Two-year-olds learn how to separate from parents and caregivers, build relationships with teachers and play alongside other children. Throughout the year, children are introduced to and begin to learn about holidays and other concepts through play, music and hands-on activities. We offer two options for our Twos: 3 days per week and 5 days per week. *This program is for children who turn 2 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.*

Threes

Three-year-olds learn about friendship and independence and build their problem-solving skills. Children further explore and learn about the Jewish and secular holidays that were introduced previously and begin to learn pre-academic concepts that will carry over into the next year. Our Threes classes are five days per week. *This program is for children who turn 3 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.*

Pre-K (Fours)

Four-year-olds deepen their understanding of Judaism and explore the Torah with Parsha Lady, while continuing to develop a wide variety of skills, including pre-academic math and literacy skills. Children participate in a wide variety of play-based activities that will prepare them for a smooth transition to Kindergarten the following year. Our Pre-K classes are five days per week. *This program is for children who turn 4 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023*

2023-2024 Program Offerings

Baby & Toddler Classes

Child's age Sept. 1, 2023	Birthday Information	Program	Days/ week	Core Hours	Optional Programs	Co-op Options
15-24 months	Children turn 1 from September 1, 2022 to May 30, 2023.	Mazel Tots	1	9:30am - 10:45am	N/A	N/A*
18-24 months	Children turn 1 from September 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023.	Tiny Twos	2	9:30am - 11:30am then extends to 9:15am - 12:00pm	N/A	N/A*

* These programs do not have a co-oping component. In Mazel Tots, a parent/caregiver attends all year; in Tiny Twos, a parent/caregiver attends for the first half of the school year.

Preschool Classes

Child's age Sept. 1, 2023	Birthday Information	Program	Days/ week	Core Hours	Optional Programs	Co-op Options
2 years	Children turn 2 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.	Twos	3 or 5	9:15am - 12:00pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Sagol Kahol Yarok
3 years	Children turn 3 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.	Threes	5	9:15am - 12:00pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Varod Sagol Kahol Yarok
4 years	Children turn 4 from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.	Pre-K (Fours)	5	9:15am - 12:00pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Varod Sagol Kahol Yarok

Overview of Co-op Options

Varod (Pink): Families co-op approximately every other week for a total of 18 co-op days per year.

Sagol (Purple): Families co-op approximately once per month for a total of 9 co-op days per year.

Kahol (Blue): Families co-op approximately once every other month for a total of 5 co-op days per year.

Yarok (Green): Families do not regularly co-op, but are invited to 2 Shabbat co-ops and their child's birthday.

Overview of Optional Programs

Early Bird**	Monday – Friday	8:00am - 9:15am
Lunch Bunch	Monday – Friday	12:00pm - 1:00pm
Enrichment***	Monday – Thursday	1:00pm - 2:15pm

**Subject to minimum enrollment and availability.

*** Enrichment is offered for children in the Twos program for Session 3 only (late winter through Spring).

Parent Participation at BEPS

At Beth El Preschool we pride ourselves on the many ways families can be involved in their child's education, both inside and outside of school. Strong parent participation is one of the very special things that sets BEPS apart! Read on to learn more about how you can be involved in your child's early childhood education.

Participating in School: Co-oping

WHO can co-op?

Parents are the primary co-ops at BEPS. Over the course of the school year, parents may send in a substitute co-oper a certain number of times, based on their family's chosen Co-op Option. Please refer to the chart on the following page for more information.

WHAT does co-oping mean?

Co-ops are an extra set of eyes, ears and hands during the core school morning. As a co-oper, you assist the teachers with the smooth functioning of the classroom, from set-up to clean-up and everything in between!

WHERE does co-oping take place?

Most of your time co-oping will take place in your child's classroom. However, you will also spend time on the playground and depending on when you are at school, you may have the opportunity to visit the indoor playroom, the sanctuary, the chapel or even the Beth El library!

WHEN does co-oping happen?

Co-oping dates are spread out throughout the school year. How often and how many times a family co-ops depends on their chosen Co-op Option. Please refer to the chart on the following page to learn about the four Co-op Options available.

WHY does BEPS have co-oping?

The purpose of co-oping at BEPS is to:

- allow parents to actively participate in their child's early childhood education;
- provide the opportunity for parents and teachers to get to know one another; and
- to build community among parents, children and families within the preschool.

HOW does co-oping get scheduled?

Co-op dates are scheduled for half of the school year at a time. Shabbat and Birthday co-op dates are pre-assigned by the school and parents sign up for the remainder of their co-op dates. There is flexibility built into the co-op schedule; parents are able to swap dates with one another and take into account their personal, work and family schedules.

Co-op Options for Twos, Threes & Pre-K (Fours)

We offer four Co-op Options to best meet the needs of our families, including a new option for the 2023-2024 school year that falls between our former Traditional Co-op and Non Co-op options. The table below outlines each option, including the number of co-op days per year, the number of substitute co-ops allowed and which programs are eligible for each option. (Mazel Tots and Tiny Twos do not include a co-op component and therefore are not included in this chart.)

Co-op Option	Co-op Days Per Year	Approximate Monthly Commitment	Eligible Programs	Substitute Co-ops
Varod: Pink (formerly Co-op Plus)	18	2x per month	Threes & Pre-K	4
Sagol: Purple (formerly Traditional Co-op)	9	1x per month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	2
Kahol: Blue (new Co-op Lite)	5	1x every other month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	1
Yarok: Green (formerly Non Co-op)	0-3*	0x per month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	0

*Non Co-op Families do not co-op regularly, but are invited to co-op on two Shabbats and for their child's birthday if they would like to do so.

Participating Out of School: Parent Board & Committees

All families at Beth El Preschool (regardless of co-op status) serve either on the Parent Board or on a Parent Committee. This aspect of parent participation plays an important role in building our preschool community and supports the learning that happens during the school day.

The Parent Board

The Parent Board is made up of 12-15 preschool parents who meet monthly and is led by the Parent Board Chair. The Parent Board oversees the Parent Committees and ensures the smooth running of many social, holiday and fundraising events throughout the school year.

Parent Committees

The Parent Committees include Special Events, Holiday celebrations, Tzedakah (charity) Programming, Teacher Appreciation, Class Representatives and more. Most committees meet once early in the school year to get started and then only as needed throughout the school year.

FAQs about Parent Participation

What are the main responsibilities of the co-oper?

- To arrive before school starts at 9:00am to help your child's teachers set up for the day;
- To assist with classroom projects, games and activities throughout the morning;
- To help set up and clean up snack, as well as classroom art projects;
- To help supervise children on the playground;
- To help facilitating hand-washing and assist teachers with taking children to the bathroom;
- To read books, play with the children and participate in any special activities; and
- To stay until 12:15pm to help transition from morning dismissal to Lunch Bunch.

How are co-op dates chosen?

Co-op dates are scheduled by class, with some dates pre-assigned (Shabbat and Birthday co-ops) and the rest of the dates selected by each family. Scheduling is done through an online scheduling program or an app. (Currently we use Remini.) Families are asked to spread out their co-op dates throughout the school year and not to schedule more than one co-op in a calendar week.

I will have two kids in preschool and I want to co-op but I am concerned about the time commitment. What should I do?

Plenty of families have two preschoolers at one point or another and are able to co-op! You can combine any of the available options based on your children's classes, but here are few options to consider for families who want to co-op in two classes:

- 2 Sagol Co-ops = 18 total co-ops = co-oping approximately every other week.
- 2 Kahol Co-ops = 10 total co-ops = co-oping approximately every 3-4 weeks.
- 1 Sagol Co-op + 1 Kahol Co-op = 14 total co-ops = co-oping approximately every 2-3 weeks.

Do I have to co-op in the classroom?

If you are on the fence about co-oping we encourage you to ask questions so we can help you figure it out! Our new Kahol Co-op is a great fit for families who cannot commit to co-oping monthly but who want to participate in the co-op program. We do understand that for some families, BEPS is a great preschool choice but the co-oping just does not work. In this case, we offer Yarok Co-op, which includes no regular co-oping and up to three co-op dates for the whole school year. Please note that the Yarok Co-op Option is limited to a maximum of 25% of families across each grade level.

Is co-oping limited to one parent per child?

No! It is up to each family to decide, but all parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in co-oping if possible.

Can I change my family's Co-op Option if I want to?

Yes! Should you need to change your Co-op Option during the school year, we will work with you to make it happen, as we understand that sometimes life brings changes (new job, new baby, new house for example) and sometimes these changes necessitate or allow for a change to your Co-op Option.

What if I can only co-op on a certain day of the week?

Unfortunately we cannot guarantee parents the ability to co-op only on a certain day of the week, as the co-op schedule needs to work for all families in the class. That being said, it is usually not a problem if you schedule some or most of your co-op days on a certain day of the week, as long as it's not Fridays. Fridays are preassigned so that all families have the opportunity to participate in our weekly Shabbat celebrations.

How do I join the Parent Board?

The Parent Board is slated annually in April for the following school year. Announcements are made in February/March to the full parent body of the upcoming school year seeking those interested in serving on the Parent Board; the slate is voted on at the April Parent Board meeting. New parents who are joining the school are welcome to join the Parent Board.

How are Parent Committee assignments made?

Parents are asked to fill out a form in late Spring to select their top three choices for committee assignment. The Parent Board Chair and/or Vice Chair carefully assign parents to committees, taking into account their preferences as much as possible.

Can you give an example of what a typical family's committee obligation would be?

Families are asked to help plan and execute a Shabbat dinner, a holiday celebration, a fundraiser or a tzedakah collection. Each family's participation is usually structured as a one-time event, i.e., a specific Shabbat Family Dinner or a Tzedakah Collection for a particular month.

I will have two children in preschool. Do I join two committees?

Each family serves on the Parent Board or on one committee, regardless of the number of children enrolled.

I have extended family in the area. Can they be part of my child's preschool experience?

It is wonderful to have grandparents or other special family members nearby. While extended family is not permitted to co-op regularly (they can serve as your "substitute co-ops"), grandparents and other extended family members are invited to various preschool programs throughout the year. In-school opportunities include Grandparents Day and Ta'am Shel Shabbat; Out-of-School events include High Holiday services, Family Shabbat dinners and various social events.

Preschool Community Events

Below is a taste of some of Beth El Preschool's most popular parent led events.

Family Shabbat Dinners

Musical evenings to welcome Shabbat with songs, blessings, dinner and a themed dessert with the Beth El community.

Parent's Night Out

Take a break from the bedtime routine to get to know the other grown-ups at BEPS.

Coffee Socials

Jump start the morning with coffee and socializing at morning drop-offs.

BEPS Bash

Partnering with a book vendor and local businesses, families (and friends) can shop for gifts before the holidays; a portion of the proceeds is donated back to the preschool.

Monthly Mitzvahs

Committees of parents organize a monthly Tzedakah activity or charity drive for a non-profit that is meaningful to them.

The Big Event

Beth El Preschool's biggest fundraiser of the year, which raises funds for school improvements. It's a kid-free night to hang with parents, spend time with teachers and bid on an auction item (or five!).

BEPS Book Club

Read, listen or watch a parent-picked book, and then gather to discuss (or just hang out).

And More!

In addition to many more parent-led programming, Beth El Preschool partners with Congregation Beth El to sponsor holiday and social action events throughout the year.