

# BEPS

## Beth El Preschool

Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County  
8215 Old Georgetown Road – Bethesda, Maryland 20817  
(301) 652-8569 x107 – [www.bethelpreschool.org](http://www.bethelpreschool.org)

Dear Prospective Beth El Preschool Parent,

Thank you for your interest in Beth El Preschool. I am delighted to provide you with information about the 2024-2025 school year!

Beth El Preschool (BEPS) is a play based, parent co-operative Jewish preschool. 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, 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 reading through the admissions packet, attending an Open House, scheduling a private tour, or reaching out to us with any questions. When you are ready to fill out an application, click [here](#). Please note that the priority deadline for application is Friday, December 1, 2023. On behalf of the entire preschool staff, I look forward to meeting you soon!

*Lauren*

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# Overview of Programs

BEPS offers fun and engaging learning opportunities for children ages 15 months to five years. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum focuses on six areas: 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 choice and structured play choices; and a mix of teacher directed and child initiated activities. Judaism is infused into all of our classrooms, with a schoolwide focus on holidays, Shabbat and tikkun olam (repairing the world).

## Tot Shabbat

Celebrate Shabbat with your baby or toddler at our weekly musical program. *This program is free of charge and is open to all!*

## Mazel Tots

A baby and toddler program that meets one day per week for play time, music, dancing, art, snack time and more! Children must be accompanied by an adult. *This class 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 children. Parents and caregivers attend class with the children in the fall and transition out by early winter. *This class feeds into the Twos program 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.

## 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 meet five days per week.

## 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 variety of play-based activities that will prepare them for a smooth transition to Kindergarten the following year. Our Pre-K classes meet five days per week.

# 2024-2025 Class Offerings

## Baby & Toddler Classes

Child's age Aug. 31, 2024	Birthday Information	Program	Days/ week	Core Hours	Optional Programs	Co-op Options
15-24 months	Children turn 1 from Sept. 1, 2023 to May 30, 2024.	Mazel Tots	1	9:30 am – 10:45 am	N/A	N/A*
18-24 months	Children turn 1 from Sept. 1, 2023 to Feb. 29, 2024.	Tiny Twos	2	9:15 am – 11:15 am then extends to 9:15 am – 12:00 pm	N/A	N/A*

\* No co-oping component; In Mazel Tots, a parent/caregiver attends all year; in Tiny Twos, for the first half of the year.

## Preschool Classes

Child's age Aug. 31, 2024	Birthday Information	Program	Days/ week	Core Hours	Optional Programs	Co-op Options
2 years	Children turn 2 from Sept. 1, 2023 to Aug. 31, 2024.	Twos	3 or 5	9:15 am – 12:00 pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Traditional Co-op Co-op Lite Non Co-op
3 years	Children turn 3 from Sept. 1, 2023 to Aug. 31, 2024.	Threes	5	9:15 am – 12:00 pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Co-op Plus Traditional Co-op Co-op Lite Non Co-op
4 years	Children turn 4 from Sept. 1, 2023 to Aug. 31, 2024.	Pre-K (Fours)	5	9:15 am – 12:00 pm	Early Bird Lunch Bunch Enrichment	Co-op Plus Traditional Co-op Co-op Lite Non Co-op

## Overview of Co-op Options

**Co-op Plus:** Families co-op approximately twice per month for a total of 18 co-op days per year.

**Traditional Co-op:** Families co-op approximately once per month for a total of 9 co-op days per year.

**Co-op Lite:** Families co-op approximately once every other month for a total of 5 co-op days per year.

**Non Co-op:** Families do not co-op regularly, but are invited to two Shabbats and their child's birthday co-op.

## Overview of Optional Programs

Early Bird\*\* Monday – Friday 8:00 am - 9:00 am

Lunch Bunch Monday – Friday 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Enrichment\*\*\* Monday – Thursday 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm

\*\*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 we pride ourselves on the many ways families can be involved in their child's education, inside and outside of school. Strong parent participation is one of the very special things that sets BEPS apart.

## Participation at 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-op 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-op, 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 the full year at the start of the school year. 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 can 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:

Co-op Option	Co-op Days Per Year	Approximate Commitment	Eligible Programs	Substitute Co-ops Allowed*
Co-op Plus	18	2x per month	Threes & Pre-K	4 per year
Traditional Co-op	9	1x per month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	2 per year
Co-op Lite	5	1x every other month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	1 per year
Non Co-op	0-3**	0x per month	Twos, Threes & Pre-K	0 per year

\* A substitute co-oper is any non-parent co-oper, including a grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, babysitter, nanny or au pair.

\*\*Non Co-op families do not co-op regularly, but are invited to co-op two or three times during the school year, including two Shabbats and their child's birthday, if they would like to do so.

Note: Mazel Tots & Tiny Twos are parent/caregiver participation classes; families do not co-op.

## Participation Outside of School: Parent Board & Committees

All families at BEPS, regardless of co-op option, 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. The Board is led by the Parent Board Chair and Vice 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, Tzedakah, 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 9:00 am 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 facilitate 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 12:15 pm 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 preassigned (Shabbat and Birthday co-ops) and the rest of the dates selected by each family. Scheduling is done through [signupgenius.com](https://signupgenius.com). Families are asked to spread out their co-op dates throughout the school year.

## 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 Traditional Co-ops = 18 total = co-oping approximately every other week
- 2 Co-op Lites = 10 total = co-oping approximately every 3-4 weeks
- 1 Traditional Co-op + 1 Co-op Lite = 14 total = 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! Co-op Lite is a great fit for families who cannot commit to co-oping monthly but who want to participate in the co-op. We understand that for some families, BEPS is a great preschool choice but the co-oping does not work. In this case, we offer Non Co-op, which includes no regular co-oping and up to three co-op dates for the whole school year (two Shabbats and a Birthday co-op). Please note that the Non 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 over the course of the school year.

## Can more than one person co-op at a time?

Only one person may co-op in a class on any given day. More than one co-oper at a time can be overwhelming in the classroom. Parents are welcome to split the morning if they would like to.

### **Is there any training required in order to participate in co-oping?**

Yes! All parents in co-oping classes (Twos, Threes and Pre-K) must participate in Abuse & Neglect Training for Volunteers every three years; All new co-oping families must also participate in general co-op training. Details are shared prior to the start of the school year.

### **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 home 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. We also encourage you to co-op on a variety of days of the week so that you experience the different activities your child's class participates in on different days.

### **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 over the summer 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 parents' 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?**

No! Each family serves either on the Parent Board or on one committee.

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

It is wonderful to have grandparents and other special family members nearby. While extended family members may not co-op regularly (they can serve as your "substitute co-ops"), they 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 and fundraisers.

# Preschool Community Events

Below is a taste of some of Beth El Preschool's most popular parent led events. Each year we plan a mix of events that includes some of these favorites, plus some new ones!

## Family Shabbat Dinners

Join other families with young children to welcome Shabbat with songs, blessings and dinner.

## 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.

## Monthly Mitzvahs

Participate in monthly Tzedakah activities and charity drives that are meaningful to our community.

## The Big Event

Stay tuned for details about Beth El Preschool's biggest annual fundraiser! The Big Event raises funds for school improvements and is a kid-free night to hang out with other parents, spend time with teachers and bid on lots of wonderful auction items!

## BEPS Book Club

Read, listen or watch a parent-selected book, then gather to discuss (or just hang out)!

## Congregation Beth El Programs

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

# Overview of BEPS COVID-19 Protocols

## Important notes about our 2023-2024 COVID-19 Protocols

- These protocols are current as of the start of the 2023-2024 school year.
- Our full COVID-19 policy can be reviewed at [bethelpreschool.org](http://bethelpreschool.org) under Health & Safety.
- Our policies have evolved as the COVID public health situation has evolved; Therefore current protocols differ from previous protocols and future protocols will likely vary, as well.



## COVID Vaccination Policy

Congregation Beth El's vaccination policy states that all those eligible for vaccination must be vaccinated to enter the building. This policy includes all children ages 6 months and older, as well as all BEPS staff, parents, caregivers, service providers and visitors in the preschool.

### Response to Positive Cases: Protocol for staff, children and co-ops who test positive

- They must stay home from school through Day 5\*.
- They may return to school on Day 6\* if they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication and symptoms have improved.
- A negative test is not needed to return to school.
- There are two masking options when returning to school Days 6-10:
  - Option 1: The individual will wear a mask indoors at Beth El Days 6-10\* and social distance when eating; no additional testing will be required.
  - Option 2: The individual may “test out of masking” by following these guidelines:
    - They must take two antigen (rapid) tests 48 hours apart, with the first test taking place no earlier than Day 5\*.
    - If tests on Days 5\* and 7\* are negative, they may remove their mask on Day 7\*.
    - If either test is positive, they may test again on Day 9\*.
    - Please note that the individual must be masked at Beth El on Day 6\* regardless of the test result on Day 5\*.

*\*Day 0 is the day someone tests positive for COVID or the first day of symptoms. The next day is Day 1.*

### Response to Exposure: Protocol for staff, children and co-ops who are a close contact:

- If the individual is Asymptomatic:
  - They do not need to quarantine, mask or test.
  - If symptoms develop within 10 days of exposure, the individual should follow the protocol below for symptomatic close contacts.
- If the individual is Symptomatic:
  - They must stay home while sick (this is inline with our general sick policy, as a sick child or adult should not attend school).
  - They should test with two antigen tests taken 48 hours apart or a PCR test.
    - If the tests are negative, they may return to school when fever-free for 24 hours without medication and symptoms have improved. They do not need to mask.
    - If either test is positive, they must follow the above protocol for a positive case.

**Close contact = Someone who is within 6 feet of a COVID positive person, for 15+ minutes within a 24-hour period, within 48 hours of a positive test.**