

# **Family Handbook**

**Our Mission:** 

To encourage and support the success and well-being of each child by nurturing and celebrating their growth and greatness!

# Our mission is to nurture each child's curiosity, creativity, and independence in a safe and joyful environment.

# **WELCOME**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gani Preschool! We are pleased that you have chosen our school as a home away from home for your child. Here at Gani Preschool, we are committed to excellence in all areas, and we strive to create a warm, friendly, and happy environment for your child while imbuing them with a love of learning.

Our educational philosophy follows the Reggio Emilia approach with Montessori elements. This means we are child-centered and use experiential learning in a relationship-driven environment.

The curriculum at Gani Preschool will expose your child to a wide range of experiences; including art, music and movement, pre-reading & writing skills, science, and early math skills, all integrated in our hands-on learning approach. In addition, your child will explore the Jewish culture, holidays, and the Hebrew alphabet. We give special focus to the children's social emotional and friendship skills to set them up for real life success in their family and community!

Our caring educators will celebrate each child and recognize them for their greatness. We offer a creative and vibrant learning atmosphere where your child's style of learning will be valued and nurtured. We will encourage your child to explore the world, to be part of a group and to solve problems constructively.

To help you and your child get ready for preschool, please take the time to carefully read this handbook as it has important information and answers to common questions. We look forward to a cooperative learning experience and a very successful school year.

Sincerely yours, Devorah Levin

Director M.Ed.,ECED M.S., SLP

# **I.Our Philosophy**

Judaism teaches that the formative years of early childhood are vitally important. A child is viewed as a seed that we nurture with the utmost care since the seed's every experience will shape and color the quality of its matured self.

As a Reggio-inspired school, we view our children as collaborators, who are competent, curious, inquisitive, and creative. We recognize that each child has their unique needs, interests, and passions and that they are each endowed with "a hundred languages" through which they can express their ideas. The teacher acts as a facilitator: connecting, observing, guiding, and actively engaging in the child's learning.

Gani Preschool believes in an experiential and intentional approach to teaching and learning. This approach fosters children's intellectual development as they are encouraged to explore their environment and express themselves creatively through words, movement, drawing, painting, playing, and other natural modes of expression. We strive to create an environment that acts as the "third teacher" where children can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and valuable social-emotional and friendship skills for a successful and meaningful life.

# **II.Tuition**

Non-Refundable Registration Fee: \$100

Our tuition is determined by registration date:

Registrations completed prior to June 1, 2025:

Monday-Friday | 9:00 am-4:00 pm | \$1820/month (includes daily lunch & snacks)

Early care:

Monday-Friday | 8:00am-9:00am | \$260/month

Aftercare:

Monday-Friday | 4:00 pm-5:00 pm | \$260/month Monday-Friday | 5:00 pm-6:00 pm | \$260/month

Registrations completed June 1, 2025 and later follow the updated tuition schedule:

Monday-Friday | 9:00 am-4:00 pm | \$1890/month (includes daily lunch & snacks)

#### Early care:

Monday-Friday | 8:00am-9:00am | \$270/month

#### Aftercare:

Monday-Friday | 4:00 pm-5:00 pm | \$270/month Monday-Friday | 5:00 pm-6:00 pm | \$270/month

#### **Core Program:**

If your child is not registered for extended care but you need to use this service occasionally, you may call Devorah in advance to verify that space is available. The drop-off rate for extended care is \$15/hour. There are no discounts for half-hours or quarter-hours.

The yearly tuition amount can be spread evenly over 10 monthly payments. Tuition is not prorated for shorter months or vacation, illness, and so forth; the same amount is due each month. There are no refunds for days missed due to illness or family vacations. Payments are processed on the Remini platform and can be made straight from your bank account for a \$1 fee each month or using a credit card which includes a processing fee.

# **III.Arrival and Dismissal**

#### Drop-Off:

School begins at 9:00 am (and at 8:00 am for children attending early care.) Please park and come inside through the preschool entrance to drop off your child. Please be sure to check your child in on the Remini app. Teachers arrive early to prepare class materials. If you arrive early, please remain outside the classroom with your child until class begins. We like to greet the children warmly and individually at the start of the day. Our greeting time extends until 9:15 am. After that, we start activities and the focus of the staff is on the group as a whole. For your child to have that warm one-on-one beginning, please arrive on time. If you are late, we will do our best to smooth the way, but please understand the limits of the situation.

We've found that children begin their day in the best way when drop-off is positive, quick, and consistent. At Gani Preschool, drop-off takes place at the gate, where teachers are ready to greet your child warmly and help them transition into their day.

To support your child's confidence and independence:

- Please keep good-byes short and upbeat. A cheerful hug, smile, or wave helps your child feel secure and ready for the day ahead.
- Prolonged or emotional farewells can make separation harder for your child. Trust that once you go, our teachers will guide your child smoothly into the classroom.
- If your child is having a harder morning, know that this is normal. With your consistent, calm good-bye, they'll adjust more quickly and settle into play and learning.

Your partnership in creating a smooth, positive start at drop-off sets the tone for your child's entire day.

#### Pick-Up:

Dismissal time is 4:00 pm (and 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm for children registered for aftercare.) **Please be sure to sign your child out on the Remini App.** Please arrive on time. Should you find yourself in an emergency, please reach out to let us know that you are delayed. Your child will only be released to a parent or an adult designated by the parent in writing. If there is a change in the child's normal pick-up procedure, please let the director know as soon as possible. If you are late picking up your child, there is a \$1/minute late fee or the \$15/hr aftercare fee, whichever is less for you!

<u>Early Fridays</u>: During standard time/winter months, Fridays end at 3:00 pm to wind down the week and welcome in Shabbat. We provide aftercare until 4:00 pm. If you need care beyond 4:00, please speak to the director.

#### Absence:

Please let us know as early as possible if your child will be absent. If your child has an infectious illness that requires us to warn other families, please inform us of this. If your child will be away for personal reasons (travel etc.) please let the director know in advance. There are no refunds for absences

#### Calendar, Holidays, and Days off:

Please review the Gani Preschool Calendar (attached at the end of the handbook.) This will allow you to plan for the days we are not in school. Although we take off for some Jewish Holidays, we make up for it with a later end date, and by taking off less at other times. There is no credit for days when school is closed; this is averaged into the tuition cost and balances out with the longer months. For the longer Jewish holidays, we are open as a special holiday camp-style program for a separate fee.

# **IV.Communication between Parents and School**

A child's educational journey encompasses the unique qualities of their family as an integral part of the learning experience. In our pursuit of excellence, we welcome your questions, concerns, suggestions, and ideas. We aim to keep you fully informed and updated with the happenings of the school, your child's class, and their development in particular. We do this via:

\*Remini app: The Remini app will provide you with a window into your child's time at preschool and will help us share their process of learning through pictures and documentation that are posted each day. The app will also be used to send out messages, reminders, and updates to all the parents.

\*Mitzvah Notes: Gani Preschool teachers are trained in the Nurtured Heart Approach and see great things in your child! Your child will receive a mitzvah note each day from their teacher that highlights them for their greatness. Please take the time, whether it is in the car, around the dinner table, or during their bedtime routine to read your child's mitzvah note aloud and celebrate them with a moment of focused eye contact and a proud smile!

\*Newsletters: Each week, the children bring home a newsletter with pictures and a synopsis of all they've learned that week. The teachers work hard to create intentional experiences for the children in a variety of learning categories, including social-emotional skills, language & literacy, math, science, art, music & movement, Hebrew, and Jewish themes and stories.

\*Parent-Teacher Conferences: These conferences are held once a year as an opportunity to discuss your child's growth and to receive an in-depth view of your child's progress.

\*Family events: Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations are held throughout the year. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow Gan Preschool families and create a sense of community.

\*Teacher Communication During school hours: Our teachers are completely involved with supervising and engaging with the children, and will therefore be unable to respond to any calls or texts. If you need to get an important message to your child's teacher during the day, please call the director.

We understand that you may want to hear about your child's day at pick-up, and the teachers will attempt to be available to provide a brief overview. However, please understand that pick-up time can be hectic, and the supervision and safety of the children are the priority. If you have any concerns about your child that require further discussion, please reach out to the director to set up a time to meet.

Open communication with parents is extremely important to us, and the director is always happy to hear from you and help ensure that you and your child have the best possible preschool experience.

Director cell number: (650) 561-6013 Email: devorah@chabadpaloalto.com

#### Important:

Please advise the teachers if parents are going to be away from home for any length of time. This is especially important if the absence is caused by unexpected conditions, such as hospitalization, which may be upsetting for your child. When teachers are aware of such conditions, they can be of great support and help in alleviating your child's distress.

# **V.School Food Program**

We are excited to have a delicious and nutritious lunch program at Gani Preschool! Hot kosher lunches are served daily, as well as morning and afternoon snacks. The meals are kid-friendly, well-balanced, and 100% kosher. (Menu attached at the end.) Our snacks are healthy and filling.

## **VI.General Information**

#### **Our Staff**

Our incredible Early Childhood staff attends professional development trainings throughout the year. Our staff are trained in positive discipline including the Nurtured Heart Approach and Conscience Discipline. They are knowledgeable in age-appropriate curriculum and passionate about each child's happiness and success. They are trained in the Reggio Emilia approach which prioritizes the child at the center of all learning and values the process of building friendship and community.

#### What to bring to school each day

Spill proof water bottle (Water bottles may remain in school for the week and be taken home on Friday to be cleaned.(These 2 are easy to clean, spill proof and clear so teachers can ensure children are drinking <a href="https://a.co/d/6hoLgfU">https://a.co/d/6hoLgfU</a> or <a href="https://a.co/d/6hoLgfU">https://a.co/d/hG66jSn</a>)

#### **Clothing**

Please send your child dressed appropriately for the weather and preschool! Keeping a light sweater at school is helpful, in case your child is ever chilly. We do a lot of painting and provide plenty of sensory material for the children to discover and feel, such as creams, water, sand, putty, etc. We encourage the children to explore and get messy. Please do not send your child to school in special clothing and accessories you do not want ruined or misplaced. We also ask you to please send your child in clothing that encourages toileting independence. Elastic waist pants are encouraged for children learning to use the toilet, as well as for children who have difficulty with belts, buttons, overalls, etc. Shoes must be supportive, and conducive for active play. As your child is learning independence, see if you can get your children shoes that they can learn to put on by themselves, such as shoes with velcro as opposed to shoe laces. Please send an extra pair of labeled clothing to be kept at school.

#### **Clothes for school**

Please send one change of clothes sealed in a ziploc bag to be kept in your child's cubby in case of an accident. If your child has an accident and uses their change of clothes, please send a new change of clothes to school. When the weather gets chilly, beginning on October, please send a sweater to school that can be kept at school. This way, if it ever gets chilly, your child has a sweater to wear outdoors. Please send a pair of boots and a raincoat when it rains so your child can get into rain gear and enjoy the outdoors.

#### **Toys and Items from Home**

We ask that children not bring toys from home. We may have special "Show and Tell" days for your child to bring something from home to share with their friends. A "Stuffie" for rest time is welcome if your child would like. We do love books. Your child can bring a book from home for us read together and take back home at the end of the day.

#### **Rest Time**

The children have a daily rest period. We provide cots. Please send your child with a preschool sleeping bag special for cots. Please take it home on Fridays to be washed, and returned to school on Mondays. (This rolled up mat is great, <a href="https://a.co/d/dFErsAU">https://a.co/d/dFErsAU</a>)

If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal that they enjoy using while resting, please feel free to send that to school. Other than that, we have a "no toys from home" policy except for special show & tell days. A child who cannot sleep will be provided with quiet, restful activities.

#### **Photographs and Videos**

A fundamental component of the Reggio approach to education is documentation. Pictures and videos taken during class or special events are valuable tools for education, including for internal program evaluation and training purposes. Gani Preschool shares many pictures with preschool families on Remini. Pictures may also be used on our website and social media. Please let the director know if you would not like your childs photo shared on our website/social media.

#### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special occasion at Gani Preschool! If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at preschool, Gani Preschool offers a \$50 birthday package that includes cupcakes for everyone, and a new book for the class library that will be labeled with your child's name and a birthday message. You are welcome to bring anything extra (besides food) to add to the festivities such as special paper goods, party favors, etc.

A note on the class gift: Birthdays are a special time to reflect and show gratitude for all the blessings in our lives. To teach our children how to express gratitude on their special day, it has become a tradition for the birthday child to present a new book to add to the class library. These gifts are treasured in the classroom and bring such pride to the children in whose honor they were purchased!

#### **Enrichment/Field Trips**

We offer special enrichment activities throughout the year that enhance the learning and understanding of a theme or area of interest the children have. Our main emphasis is on bringing experiences to our center such as baking, sports coaching, special music activities, etc. We offer a variety of special visitor talks, for example,

the fire department comes to talk about safety with the children. We will communicate these events through Remini and newsletters. On occasion, we may take field trips in the community. If a field trip is planned, each parent will need to complete a field trip permission form specific to the trip. The cost of the field trip will be processed through Remini.

#### **Injury**

Visual observation of all children is maintained at all times by Gani Preschool staff members. At no time is a child ever left alone. In case of simple injury, we will perform routine hygienic measures such as washing wounds and applying bandages. An accident report will be filled out and sent to the parents through the Playground app. In case of a medical emergency, a parent (or other emergency contact if the parent cannot be reached) will be called and will be asked to take responsibility for obtaining the necessary medical treatment. If circumstances require immediate or professional care, 911 services will be called. We will respond as necessary until emergency services arrive. We will not transport children to an emergency facility. Parents are responsible for all fees related to the transport of their child to a medical facility.

#### **Health Procedures**

All children must have a copy of their immunization record and a well-child check from their physician at the time of registration. These forms expire and have to be renewed, usually at the time of your child's annual doctor's visit. If your child is ill, please be considerate and do not send them to school. Illness includes heavy nasal discharge, severe rashes, a constant cough, fever, or vomiting. Please keep your child home for 24 hours after the fever subsides. If your child becomes ill, gets a fever, or develops symptoms in school, we will call you to pick up your child..

If lice are found on a child at the center the child's parent will be called and asked to pick their child up. This policy allows the parent to treat overnight. We highly recommend that parents bring their child to be professionally treated. The day following treatment the child will be re-examined and admitted if no-live lice are present.

Should your child need medication administered at the center, including prescription medications, inhaled medications, and Epi-pens, Gani Preschool needs written authorization from you and the doctor on the required forms. Medication must be brought in the original container.

During the summer months, parents must apply sunscreen to their child BEFORE bringing their child each day.

#### **Toilet Learning**

Children do not need to be able to use the toilet independently to enter our program. Once a child is ready, our teachers are happy to help facilitate toilet learning, but most of the process must be done at home. A child who needs regular reminders and does not initiate trips to the bathroom is still at the beginning stages of training and may need to be in a pull-up at school. Please bring a package of pull-ups to school.

When it is clear that your child is mostly toilet ready, but still having accidents, they may need to put a pullup over their underwear after their first accident. This helps contain the accident while still allowing them to have the experience of underwear and what an accident feels like. As they become proficient at using the toilet, we can remove the pull-up. Use of diapers or pull-ups is recommended during nap time if your child

wears a diaper/pull-up during the night. The teachers will be available and helpful during this process, but will not hover or push children. All children will be instructed and assisted in washing their hands after using the toilet.

#### **Guidance and Discipline**

Gani Preschool's daily schedule, curriculum, classroom arrangements, and staff members are chosen to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences, including respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children. The teacher's response to a child's behavior will focus on redirecting the inappropriate actions and offering alternate choices. We are proud to be a Nurtured Heart School and teachers proactively recognize and celebrate each child when things are going right as well as when they refrain from breaking the rules. We are also trained in Conscience Discipline, which empowers each teacher with practical tools to help children regulate themselves and create a "school family" environment.











# ••• MENU •••

	BREAKFAST 9:30AM	LUNCH 11:45AM	SNACK 2:15PM
MON	CHERRIOS & MILK OATMEAL BANANA	MEATSAUCE & SPAGHETTI ROASTED POTATOES BROCCOLI APPLES	CRACKERS EGGS SNAP PEAS BANANA
TUE	KIX & MILK SCRAMBLED EGGS CLEMENTINES	PIZZA PEPPERS GRAPES	PRETZELS HUMMUS CARROTS CLEMENTINE
WED	CHEERIOS & MILK OATMEAL BANANA	CHICKEN RICE CUCUMBER APPLES	POPCORNERS AVOCADO BANANA
THU	CHEX & MILK SCRAMBLED EGGS CLEMENTINE	CHEESY PASTA CARROTS, PEAS, & GREENBEANS GRAPES	CORN THINS CHEESE STICKS PEPPER CLEMENTINES
FRI	CHEERIOS & MILK OATMEAL BANANA	CHALLAH ROLLS CUCUMBER, TOMATO TUNA AND EGGS APPLES	RICE CAKES CREAM CHEESE BANANA

\*Menu subject to change.



## CALENDAR 2025 - 2026

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**AUGUST 18** School Begins



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September 1 Labor Day Break

September 23, 24 Rosh Hashana Break



SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 1 3 4 9 10 11 5 6 7 8 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

October 2 Yom Kippur

October 7, 8 Sukkot Break

October 14, 15 Simchat Torah Break



SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 1 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

November 26, 27 & 28 Thanksgiving Break

CEMBER 2025

SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

December 29 - Jan 2 Winter Break (Optional Winter Camp Program)

December 14 - 22 Chanukah



SPECIAL DAYS



SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 2 1 3 9 10 5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

January 1 New Years Break

January 19

MLK Day Break

SU MO TU WE TH FR SA EBRUARY 2026 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

February 2 Tu B'Shvat

February 16 President's Day Break

SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

March 3 Purim



April 2 - April 9 Passover Spring Break



May 5 Lag BaOmer

May 22, 23 Shavuot Break

May 25 Memorial Day Break

SU MO TU WE TH FR SA 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

June 5 Last Day of Preschool

June 8 Gan Camp Begins

I have read and understand the terms of the Gani Preschool handbook.
Signature: