

*Aleph Academy*  
Rishonim & Ketantanim Classrooms  
Supplemental Information

Welcome to the toddler program! Ketantanim and Rishonim have their own unique set of policies and procedures in addition to those in our Parent Handbook.

### **What's in a Name**

There was much thought and attention put into the naming of our classrooms. Rishonim means “firsts” as this is the first time children will be joining a school environment. We know this is a big milestone for your child and your family and hope to support you on this exciting journey. Ketantanim means “little ones”. The young children in our Rishonim and Ketantanim classrooms bring a lot of joy to the rest of our school.

### **Joining the Program**

Children must be a minimum of one years old to start our program. Additionally, they must be able to walk and to eat solid foods. Ketantanim and Rishonim are part of a larger preschool program and we understand that different children will be ready at different times. Most children join between 15-18 months of age or older. To make sure that your child is ready for our program, please read through these policies and pay special attention to our Developmental Readiness Checklist. These developmental milestones were chosen with your child's safety in mind. All children must reach these milestones prior to entering our program.

### **Intake Meeting and Playdate**

Prior to your child's first day, parents and child join us for a one hour playdate and intake meeting where we will go over the developmental readiness checklist and make sure your child is ready for our program. There will be time to observe your child in our classroom as well as answer any questions that you may have.

### **Adjustment Period**

There is a normal transition period that happens as children leave their familiar home environment and start school. We will do our best to support your entire family during this transition process and trying to customize each child's first days at school to work best for both the child and family. Since the Ketantanim and Rishonim children are integrated into a larger educational facility, we understand that not all children may be ready for this big step. The first month of attendance will be used to assess your child and make sure that our program is a good developmental fit. If we feel that your child is not yet ready for our program, we will create a plan with you for integrating your child back into our program at a later date.

### **Extended Care**

The social-emotional development of your child is of utmost importance to us. Some young children have difficulty staying at school for long periods of time. Any Ketantanim or Rishonim child who wants to join our before care or after care programs needs to get pre-approval by the Administration. Administration will consider the social-emotional readiness of the child before making the decision.

### **Small Group Size**

Research studies on infant and toddler care have shown that small group size and good ratios are key components of quality care. Our ratio for our toddlers is 1:4 as this allows for more personalized care of your toddler's needs. Our pricing for the toddler program reflects this personalized learning environment.

### **Sibling Discount**

The 5% second child sibling discount will be applied to the tuition of the eldest sibling attending Aleph.

### **Primary Care Model**

Relationships are the key to quality care. The primary teacher establishes an environment in which meaningful and lasting relationships can develop for the children and their families. To support the teacher as primary caregiver, all Aleph staff will be asked to interact with the Rishonim and Ketantanim children so that if the teacher is absent, children will already have familiarity with their substitute.

### **Outside Time**

Weather permitting; the Rishonim and Ketantanim children will be taken outside daily. However, if it is unsafe to do so, children will be taken to another area of our facility other than their usual room for a part of the day to provide a change in their physical surrounding and to increase opportunities for social interaction.

### **Curriculum**

At this age, children learn best through play and exploration. The room sets a strong foundation for life by supporting exchanges with friends, giving the children freedom and safety to move and explore, and helping them develop meaningful relationships.

During indoor exploration time the teacher will engage and interact with the children; encourage physical development and coordination with individual and group activities; help develop the large muscles of the body which are important for climbing and walking; and encourage the children to interact socially through play, using language and solving problems using materials and equipment that are age appropriate.

### **Walking**

All children need to be proficient with their walking skills as they will be joining the other children outside during Outdoor Exploration. In the case of an emergency where we need to evacuate the building, children will need to be able to exit our facilities with minimal assistance.

### **Feeding**

Upon entering our program, children need to be able to eat all solid foods on their own as they are provided with the same food as the rest of our school. We will assist your child with eating and cutting by sitting with them while they are eating. *Please be aware that we do not use highchairs for feeding.* Children eat at the table while sitting on special toddler sized

chairs with high sides to prevent tipping. We do not allow any outside food brought into Aleph Academy except for whole fresh fruit for special occasions (birthdays).

### **Breastfeeding**

We support and promote breastfeeding as we understand its importance to child growth and development. Our Ketantanim room is set up with that in mind and has both a freezer and refrigerator to accommodate your storage needs. You are welcome to breastfeed your child in the classroom; if you would like a privacy screen, please let us know. You also have access to a private space in the café room with comfortable seating and a privacy screen.

All breast milk left at school must be properly labeled with your child's name and date of expression. Please use 1-3oz. bags to minimize waste. Breast milk in our fridge goes home nightly; milk in the freezer is good for up to three months. Any breast milk that is left out at room temperature for longer than 30 minutes will be discarded.

If you would like to breastfeed your child as a bonding ritual at pick up, please arrive at least a half hour early. This gives you sufficient time to spend with your child since our facility closes promptly at 5:30p.m.

### **Bottles and Formula**

Parents supply milk or formula for their child's daily needs. Each bottle must be labeled with the child's name and date of preparation or date and time that the milk was expressed. Bottles will be stored in our fridge prior to its use. We will be happy to use our bottle warmer to warm your child's bottle before feeding. Any milk left out of the fridge for an hour or longer will be disposed of. Used bottles will be rinsed and put in your child's bag to be sent home daily. Please make sure to wash and disinfect them at home. Any milk left in our fridge at the end of the day will be disposed of.

As per recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics, we recommend transitioning your child to a "sippy" cup, in place of bottle feedings, no later than the age of 18 months. We will be happy to support you with this transition. As children age out of a bottle, to promote healthy eating habits, we ask that the sippy-top cup or water bottle only be filled with water.

### **Naptime**

Rishonim and Ketantanim children sleep on toddler sized cots specifically designed for children aged 12 months and up. We have two types of cots- one has a mesh netting like a porta-crib and the other is just a toddler size version of what our older children use. Based on the development of the child, we determine which one will be used. The goal is to have the child sleep in a cot to support the home transition of moving a child from a crib to a toddler bed. Children who join our program must be developmentally ready to nap on a cot. Sleep sacks are discouraged as they can limit movement in the event of an emergency. Please send your child with a crib size sheet, blanket and special lovey for naptime.

## **Moving Up**

Since we believe in the peer cohort model, children will stay with their group of friends in the Rishonim or Ketantanim room until the end of the school year. Current children are given priority for a spot in the next classroom. The transition is done as a group within the context of a warm and loving environment supported by our staff.

## **Annual Review of Policies**

All policies relating to the Rishonim and Ketantanim classrooms will be reviewed annually. We always value your input and encourage you to share any thoughts or suggestions that you may have. Please remember that these are specific policies for our Rishonim and Ketantanim groups. All other policies are in effect and can be found in our Parent Handbook.

## **Developmental Readiness Checklist**

*Does your child do the following?*

- Says 4 or more words in addition to Mama and Dada
- Walks on own on all surfaces
- Sits in a chair
- Eats all table foods
- Feeds self
- Follows simple directions (sit down, come here, etc.)
- Responds to own name
- Falls asleep independently

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