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Zlata's Garden

Organically Grown Jewish Education

**PARENT HANDBOOK
AND
ENROLLMENT CONTRACT**



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Letter From the Director:

Dear Parents,

We are excited to announce the start of another stellar year of Jewish education here at Zlata's Garden. We just can't wait to greet all our students and to see the joy on their faces as they come in to our program this fall!

At Zlata's Garden, our goal is to create the most ideal atmosphere for children to learn, grow, and thrive! While much of our focus is the academic and developmental education of our students, of equal importance is their emotional health and feelings of security and wellbeing. While working to develop these core skills for all students, Zlata's Garden's will also foster a love and connection to our Torah, Jewish Identity and love for others.

Our staff, directors, parents, and students are all part of the team. We truly succeed when we are all working together toward the same goal.

Please read through all the important information below. Please fill out, sign, and submit the contract and all forms as soon as possible so that we can guarantee your spot for the coming year.

Looking forward to an incredible year of learning and growing together!

Morah Nechamie Geisinsky

Director, Zlata's Garden



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Our Mission:

Every child is a unique blossom, as fragile as it is beautiful. When properly provided for and nurtured, each one in their way, they can bloom into a lovely and strong blossom and add their beauty to the entire garden. This is the philosophy and commitment of **Zlata's Garden Early Childhood Experience**. Named after the iconic early childhood educator Mrs. Zlata Geisinsky ob"m and continuing her legacy of individualized attention and loving education, our entire focus is the individual child and helping them blossom through love and attention.

Our Philosophy:

We firmly believe in providing a strong foundation of Jewish heritage, traditions, and values to complement the other educational skills that we will be teaching. Taking to heart the eternal insight of the Torah in it's statement: "Educate a child in their way, even as they become older they will not stray," Zlata's Garden deeply appreciates the incredible impact of implanting a sense of love and ownership for their beautiful heritage in our students at a young age. The connection to Judaism that they will develop will stay with them their entire lives. Toward this end, a robust focus on daily Jewish living and an awareness of Shabbat, the holidays, and Jewish values is interwoven throughout the curricula. We also incorporate a Hebrew immersion element into our program, where a member of our staff will be speaking to them only in the Hebrew language. This serves to make our students confident and familiar with the language at the center of our tradition.

Our Methodology:

Seamlessly blending age-old traditions and values with the latest insights in education and pedagogy, we have crafted a highly successful approach to learning. We allow the natural curiosity and desire of a child to learn to take the lead in their educational exploration, our staff guide the child rather than direct them. This allows for the learning process to be more organic while at the same time providing the proper progress of informational and developmental skills that will give our children the necessary head start for life. Each member of our staff is hand-picked for their early childhood educational experience and their enthusiasm for imparting knowledge and personal attention.



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Age Groups:

Seeds: 2 years

Buds: 3 yrs old

Blossoms: 4 yrs old

Seeds Daily Schedule Outline:

8:00-9:00 Early Care/Free Play

8:45-9:00 Greeting students and parents

9:00-9:30 Free Play/Art Exploration/Sensory Exploration

9:30-9:45 Tefilah/Prayers & Songs/Judaic circle time

9:45-10:00 Snack/Judaic story/diaper check

10:00-10:15 Free Play/Table Activity

*Monday & Tuesday - General Studies project time

*Wednesday & Thursday Judaic project

*Friday-Challah Baking

*At the beginning of the year, use this time to teach students how to use materials appropriately

10:15-10:45 Outdoor Play/Sports

10:45-10:55 Wash hands/diaper check- table activity if indoor play

*Handwashing routine: finger play songs at table while kids wash. Then kids grab a book and go to sit on the carpet.

10:55-11:10 Calendar/Circle time/General Studies

11:10-11:30 Free Play/Prepare for lunch

11:30-12:00 Lunch

12:00-12:30 Diaper changes/prep for Naptime

12:30-2:30 Naptime

2:30-2:45 Snack /Diaper check/Free Play

2:45- 3:15 Storytime/Hebrew Immersion

*Monday & Wednesday – Curriculum based songs and stories

*Tuesday & Thursday – Hebrew Immersion songs and stories

3:15-3:30 Pack up/Dismissal

3:30-4:00 After Care/Art Exploration/Sensory Exploration

4:00-4:30 Outdoor Play/Free Play inside

4:30-5:00 Snack/Pack up and get ready to go home



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Seeds Supplies List:

- ☞ A supply of disposable diapers and wipes
- ☞ 2 full changes of labeled clothing in labeled Ziploc bags
- ☞ Crib sheet and crib-size blanket and a pillow
- ☞ Prepared Dairy or Parve lunch in a container your child can eat from
- ☞ Sippy cup for water (we will refill with filtered water throughout the day)
- ☞ Bottle or sippy cup for milk to be kept in the refrigerator
- ☞ A family picture (4x6) we can place in our room for the children to look at and talk about

Optional Items:

- ☞ Pacifier (in a Ziploc bag with your child's name on it)
- ☞ Diaper cream
- ☞ Sunscreen

Buds Supplies List:

- ☞ 2 full changes of labeled clothing in labeled Ziploc bags
- ☞ Cot sheet and pillow
- ☞ Prepared Dairy or Parve lunch in a container your child can eat from
- ☞ Bottle or sippy cup for milk to be kept in the refrigerator
- ☞ A family picture (4x6) we can place in our room for the children to look at and talk about

Blossoms Supplies List:

- ☞ 1 full change of labeled clothing in labeled Ziploc bags
- ☞ Cot sheet and pillow
- ☞ Prepared Dairy or Parve lunch in a container your child can eat from
- ☞ Bottle or sippy cup for milk to be kept in the refrigerator
- ☞ A family picture (4x6) we can place in our room for the children to look at and talk about



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Enrollment Contract

Family Name: _____

Students	Age as of 9/1	Days/Hours (ex. 5 days, full day)	Tuition	Adjustments	Total

I/we ask Zlata's Garden to reserve a place for the upcoming school year for the above named child/children. I/we agree to the annual tuition listed above. I/we understand that this signed enrollment contract, an enrollment deposit of \$200 and one month's tuition is required to hold a place for our child/children. It is further understood that the \$200 deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the student's account upon enrollment. I understand that my obligation for the academic year is unconditional and that no portion of any fees, paid or outstanding, will be refunded or waived, notwithstanding the subsequent absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from Zlata's Garden of the students named on this contract, except as described in the 'Withdrawal and Refund Policy' below.

Tuition Payment Plans: You may pay your tuition in full or in 10 equal payments. If you choose to pay in 10 equal payments, you will need to provide an automatic payment method (Credit Card, ACH, etc) your monthly installment will be automatically charged to the payment method on the 1st of each month. A 3.5% surcharge will be added to your total to cover the processing fee.

- Payment by Check: Checks should be made payable to "Zlata's Garden"
- Payment by Credit Card: **PLEASE NOTE: There will be a 3.5% fee added to any payment by credit card.** Please complete the below credit card authorization. Please indicate annual or monthly payment option.
- Full Tuition Payment
- Monthly Tuition Payment (according to the schedule above.)



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Terms, Policies, and Agreements:

Withdrawal and Refund Policy:

Please notify the office by e-mail or in writing of the reason for withdrawal. I/we understand and agree that if I/we cancel enrollment, I/we are financially responsible for and agree to pay tuition charges accordingly:

Withdrawal October 1st or later I/we are responsible for the full year tuition including any outstanding tuition. Zlata's Garden reserves the right to consider mitigating circumstances that may be cause to adjust these obligations.

If any deposit or tuition payment is not made one the due date, I understand that that this might be considered grounds for being subject to exclusion from school.

I/we understand and agree that Zlata's Garden may pursue legal action to collect any unpaid tuition and fees and in the event of such legal action, I/we will be responsible for all Zlata's Garden's expenses and costs of collection, including reasonable attorney's fees.

Communication

We use the Playground platform for management and regular communication. We will also be sending a weekly update email. However, we are open for direct communication between the educators and the parents if the circumstances call for it. In case of a health question or problem, the school should be able to contact you directly and immediately. Emails We communicate school information to parents primarily via email. Note – If you have not received an email from us this summer around mid-August, welcoming you to the school that means that you are not on our email listing. Please notify us to be added on the list serve. If you need to meet with the director, you can call or email Nechamie, to schedule an appointment that is mutually convenient. When communicating with the teachers we ask parents to understand that the beginning and close of the school day is a busy time for teachers and therefore not recommended as an opportunity for discussing serious issues. To privately communicate with your child's teacher, please leave a phone message at 301-913-9777 or send the teacher a note via email to info@alefbetmontessori.org

Inclement Weather Delays & Closures

Our school follows the Montgomery County Public Schools for closings and late openings on the first day of snow only. After that if there are additional snow days, parents will receive a notification by 7:15 am or as soon as the action for the school has been determined. In the case of an early dismissal, the staff will also attempt to notify all parents/caregivers by phone.

Health & Forms

In compliance with Maryland law, our program is required to have a health inventory form, emergency contact information and immunization log for each child attending the class. In the absence of these forms, the child cannot be admitted to the class. The forms have to be in the office before the first day of school.

Sick Policy – 24 Hours Rule

If your child is sick with a fever (a 100 or over is considered fever), vomiting or diarrhea please check with your pediatrician when the child can attend school again. Make sure your child is free from fever or other related symptoms for at least 24 hours before returning to school. In the case of Conjunctivitis or "Pink Eye," we require that the child remain at home for a full 48 hours after being on medication before returning to school.



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Children who are deemed too sick to be in school will be sent home. If parents cannot be reached, a person noted on the Emergency Forms will be asked to pick up the child. If a child must be isolated from other children due to illness, he/she will be kept in a quiet area of the classroom on a rest mat.

All contagious diseases must be reported to the Director and the other parents will be notified. We must ask for each and every parent's cooperation with issues which are extremely important for the wellbeing of all. The following situations will at all times require a child to not be permitted into class or for the child to be picked up: 1. any fever (a 100 or over is considered fever) 2. any unidentified rash 3. drainage from the eyes or nose which is greenish in color 4. diarrhea or persistent cramping 5. vomiting 6. infected skin patches of any nature 7. dark urine/blood in urine or bowel 8. sore throat or trouble swallowing 9. severe coughing 10. difficulty breathing 11. any unusual behavior that might be associated with illness

Medication Administration

We prefer not to give any medications to our students. If your child must have medication, State law mandates a doctor's permission in writing. A Medication Permission form may be obtained from the office. You must give the prescription medication and the form to the Executive Director for the medication to be put in a locked box in the kitchen. Please send any approved medication in its original prescription container. We will not administer nonprescription drugs of any kind (including cough drops and vitamins).

Allergies

Help us accommodate children with allergies - please check with your child's teacher before bringing in any class snacks that are not on the approved snack list. Our program provides daily snacks for the children and therefore you must inform us if your child has any allergies regarding food and beverages of any kind. Under no circumstances shall any staff member administer any type of antihistamines with or without a doctor's permission. Please write a list of any allergies and give it to the school for us to keep on file and inform the Executive Director and your child's teacher.

Head Lice

Head lice infestations are a recurring issue in childcare centers everywhere. Head lice can be extremely inconvenient and time-consuming to treat, and can cause discomfort, but they do not cause or spread disease. Head lice occur in people of every age, social status and income and should not be a cause for guilt, embarrassment, or anger. They do not indicate a lack of cleanliness or poor care of your child, and are simply an inconvenience that must be dealt with. We follow the most current recommendations of the county Health Department in these situations. Prevention: Head lice infestations can be prevented if children refrain from sharing hairbrushes, combs, and hats. Hairbrushes and combs at school are for personal use only.

If live lice or nits are observed on a child at school, we will contact parents immediately and the child must be picked up and taken home to be treated before he or she can return to school. All school families will be informed that lice have been observed, and all children may be checked for lice as the situation warrants. Children returning to school after lice treatment will be checked by staff. If lice or nits are found again, the child will be sent home as before. If lice or nits are found, it is best practice to continue treatments for up to 3-4 days. It takes usually one or two weeks before all lice is gone.

Diaper Changing

Our Diaper Changing policy follows the strict rules of the Office of Childcare (MD State Dept. of Education). Changing diapers is done by our staff and Hand Washing policy is adhered to strictly.



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Dress Code

In a school environment, children play outdoors, indoors and get very busy. Please send your child with clothes and shoes that are easy to wash and take off. Expensive shoes can be ruined! Fancy slippers can get lost. Keep them at home. We ask that families respect the Jewish standards of our program and dress their children in a fashion that echo these values.

Discipline Policy:

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief, Zlata's Garden uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management techniques.

WE DO:

- > Communicate to children using positive statements.
- > Communicate with children on their level.
- > Talk with children in a calm quiet manner.
- > Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- > Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- > Praise and encourage the children.
- > Reason with and set limits for the children.
- > Apply rules consistently.
- > Model appropriate behavior.
- > Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
- > Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
- > Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- > Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
- > Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
- > Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- > Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.



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WE DO NOT:

- > Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
- > Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
- > Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
- > Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
- > Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.
- > Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
- > Embarrass any child in front of others.
- > Compare children.
- > Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
- > Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
- > Allow discipline of a child by other children.
- > Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Conferences will be scheduled with parents if particular disciplinary problems occur. If a child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then the Director has the right, after meeting with the parents and documenting behavior problems and interventions, to terminate school services for that particular child. Note: If, at any point, there is an indication/suspicion that a child may have special needs, Zlata's Garden will inform the child's family and make contact with county services for assessment and assistance.

Screen Time Policy:

Zlata's Garden has a no screen policy. Children are immersed in activities that are engaging without screens. Please read the information below from American Academy of Pediatrics:

"Problems begin when media use displaces physical activity, hands-on exploration and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Too much screen time can also harm the amount and quality of sleep. Organizations like Common Sense Media can help parents evaluate media content and make decisions about what is appropriate for their family."

Among the AAP recommendations:

- For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting. Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing.
- For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.
- For children ages 6 and older, place consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.



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- Designate media-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.
- Have ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

Potty Training Policy

Usually parents start training their children at 2 or 2 & ½ years old to use the potty. This is an important stage in a Toddler's independence activities. Being potty trained not a requirement for our 2 year old group. However, Potty Training is a requirement for ages 3 and up. At the beginning of the year, the child is expected to begin potty training, although it is not required that the child master it. The child can wear pull-ups and change into underwear at school. As long as the child has begun with the training, the school staff can help in the training.

Even though children are toilet trained, they still may have occasional accidents. It is important to have a change of clothing for them that are appropriate for the weather.

Materials/Toys from Home

We have found that items brought from home can get lost or broken and it can cause bad feelings among the children. Parents please do not allow your child to bring toys to our program. If your child wishes to bring in an educational book, game or other item, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

Nutrition & Kashrut

We strive to educate our children at an early age to learn good nutritional habits and ask parents to provide nutritious and wholesome food for snacks and lunches. The school provides healthy snacks for the children consisting of water, crackers, cheese, chumus, eggs, yogurt, seeds, fresh and dry fruits and vegetables. Parents will be asked to sign up for one or two dates during the school year when they will provide the weekly snacks for the classroom. We do not allow children to share lunches for various reasons (allergies, food restrictions, etc...). We ask that you do not include candy, soda, and foods of that nature.

Packed lunches must be dairy or parve. We would like to keep a "common ground" as a basic rule which makes it possible for every family at the school to feel comfortable. Therefore, kashrut standards are maintained throughout the program. For that purpose, items such as challah for Shabbat or birthday cupcakes, must be bought in a kosher store such as: Sunflower Bakery, Moti's Market, Simply Kosher, Shalom Kosher Market, The Kosher Pastry Oven, Shaul's Kosher Market, and Goldberg's Bagels (for challah). Packaged items must have a reliable kosher sign (see snack list for acceptable kosher signs). Please also follow these rules when hosting a class Birthday party at home, so that you can include all children. For this reason as well, party invitations may be distributed at our program only if the entire class is invited to ensure that all children feel comfortable and respected.

Security Policy

The front entrance door is locked at all times even during morning drop off and afternoon pick up times. All visitors are let in by a staff member. Upon entering or leaving the school, parents need to make sure the door is closed behind them.



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The playground is behind our facility. During the morning outdoor playtime, there will be staff members outside with the children. If one or more children need to be escorted inside, such as to go to the bathroom, the other staff members will remain on the playground and one will go with the children and return with them to assure their whereabouts.

Unknown visitors to our school should understand that they will be asked to "sign in," stating name, address, reason for visit and show proof of ID with photo and or driver's license.

Emergency Preparedness

Our school is taking part in the national effort to be ready for emergencies. FEMA has recently published a full guideline called "Are You Ready?", an in-depth guide to citizen preparedness. This is an informative guide for times of natural emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and more, including Technological Hazards and Terrorism. Being prepared can reduce fear and anxiety.

It is highly recommended that all families print out a copy of Emergency Contact Numbers that can be found under this section of Parents Page and keep it next to your phone. More info can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's website www.ready.gov or by calling 1-800-be-ready for printed information.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency/Service	Telephone Numbers
Emergency Services	911
Emergency Operations – County Cert:	240-777-2300
Health Department	240-777-3986
Suburban Hospital	240-826-6000
Local Office of Child Care	240-314-1400
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Utilities – Water	1-800-828-6431
Utilities – Electric (PEPCO)	202-833-7500
Utilities – Gas (Washington Gas)	1-888-941-4328
Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Radio Stn.	WTOP 103.5 FM, WGOP 540 AM, WYKS 93.9
Program Director – Nechamie Geisinsky	718-909-7812
Chabad Director – Rabbi Sender Geisinsky	240-370-8819

Emergencies

All full-time staff members are trained in child CPR/First Aid. When your child has an emergency or is ill, a staff member will notify you immediately. We will make all attempts to contact you immediately to review or discuss a plan of action. Please be sure all your student forms are updated and current, including all phone contacts.

Reporting of Child Abuse

Any staff member of our program who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect, or has observed the child being subject to circumstances or conditions which could result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report such observations to the county department of human services or local law enforcement. Parents suspecting any type of abuse can make reports through the same agency or local law enforcement. The reporting agency is Child Protective Services 240-777-4417



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Evacuation Policy

Please be informed of the following procedures for the unlikely event of an emergency that requires evacuation of the School. Staff members will take the first aid bags, Emergency Forms, Attendance Sheets and evacuate the children to the parking lot.

Leaving Zlata's Garden

Please be advised that no child will be released to someone other than their parents without a written authorization. Parents can submit a release form that includes the names of your child's caregiver and others you have authorized to pick up your child at our program on a regular basis. Please keep the form updated. If someone other than those authorized on the form will be taking your child home, please alert the staff with a written note that includes the name of the person that will be picking up your child from school along with contact information for that person.

Outdoor Walks and Field Trip Permission:

I/we understand and agree that in order to be able to enjoy short walks outdoors as well as to participate in field trips, my child may occasionally be taken off the school premises. They will be constantly monitored by a sufficient number of professional staff and direct contact info of an accompanying liaison will be provided to the parents. (For field trips that require transportation parents will be notified in advance and asked to sign a permission slip.)

Photography and Privacy Policy:

I/we understand and agree that photographs taken of my child at Zlata's Garden and general but not specific information may be published on school publications including but not limited to the newsletter, website, or materials related to fundraising or public relations.

Please take the time to read through, fill out, and sign all the forms that are appended to this contract and submit in the necessary time frame.

The signatures of parents/guardians who bear custodial and financial responsibility over the enrollee is required.

Father's/Guardian's Name _____

Father's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Mother's/Guardian's Name _____

Mother's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____