B”H

Hebrew Academy Preschool

Infant Center Program Guide

August 2026

ADMINISTRATION

Rabbi Yitzchok Newman/ Head of School
Rebecca Coen/Principal
Chanie Perelmuter/Director of Preschool
Akane Everitt/Assistant Director of Preschool

Welcome to The Hebrew Academy Preschool Infant/Toddler Center

The infant and toddler years are an extraordinary time—full of wonder, discovery, and important developmental milestones. At The Hebrew Academy, we are honored to be part of your child's early journey.

Our dedicated staff is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where your child can grow, explore, and develop at their own pace. We recognize that every child is unique, and we take pride in supporting each child's individual needs and interests.

We value the partnership we share with our families and believe that open communication is key to your child's success. We look forward to getting to know you and celebrating the small and big moments of your child's development together.

Thank you for choosing to be part of our community. We're excited to learn and grow alongside you and your child!

Components of the Infant /Toddler Program

Our Infant/Toddler Program serves children from 3 months to 24 months of age and is designed to provide a nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment during this critical stage of growth. We are licensed to care for up to 12 infants and 12 toddlers at a time.

To ensure individual attention and safety, we maintain a low child-to-adult ratio of 4:1, with a team of experienced teachers, assistant teachers, and aides. Our staff adheres to strict state safety and supervision guidelines, creating a secure, responsive setting where each child is supported in developing trust, confidence, and a strong sense of self.

How to Reach Us

Chanie Perelmuter Director 949-745-9821
Janette Chavoya - Teacher jchavoya@hacps.org
Mahogany Casellas - Teacher mcasellas@hacps.org

During Program Hours, to reach a staff member regarding any urgent needs, please call 714-863-0757. For all non-urgent needs, please contact one of the Infant Teachers via email (listed above). You should expect a response within 24 hours or less.

Forms and Records

Before admission, parents must complete an application, including state and medical forms. Parents or guardians must sign an agreement indicating the fees and payment schedule, which is based on an annual fee divided equally over ten months. Some required forms are mandated by the Department of Social Services Licensing Division; failure to complete these forms may result in citations.

If any information changes during the year, such as phone numbers or emergency contacts, parents must notify the school promptly.

The Daily Schedule

Our daily schedule serves as a flexible guide to help organize routines and activities that support each child's development. Since infants follow their own biological rhythms, they are fed, changed, and put to sleep according to their individual needs.

As your child grows and becomes more accustomed to the group setting, routines may begin to shift to align with the classroom flow—especially for toddlers who begin to follow more structured patterns.

You may notice changes in your child's sleep patterns, appetite, or activity levels during the transition to group care. This is a normal part of adapting to a new environment, and staff will support your child every step of the way.

Typical Day

Infants and toddlers thrive on consistent routines. Meals are served as follows:

- **Breakfast:** 9:00–9:30 AM
- **Lunch:** 11:00–11:30 AM
- **Snack:** 2:00–2:30 PM

Children arriving after **9:15 AM** should eat breakfast at home, as staff begin transitioning to diapering, naps, and play by 9:30 AM.

Nap times vary by age and individual needs. Older infants generally nap between **9:00–11:00 AM** and **1:00–3:00 PM**, while younger infants (around 3 months) follow individualized eating and sleeping schedules. As children approach toddler age, we help them gradually transition to a more structured routine.

Please do not bring your child after 11:00 AM, as late arrivals disrupt nap schedules and the calm environment needed for all children in care.

Infants

Young infants are fed on demand, following their individual feeding schedules. As they grow and begin to eat solid foods, their feeding times will gradually align more closely with the group's mealtime routine.

If your child requires a special formula or food due to a medical condition, a doctor's note is required. Families are welcome to provide breast milk, which will be safely stored and served according to licensing guidelines.

As your baby develops, they will begin exploring "finger foods" and practicing with infant utensils. When your child is ready to try cereals, jarred foods, or table foods, please let your child's teachers know what foods have been introduced and are safe to serve.

Important: Always introduce new foods at home first and wait at least three days before adding them to your child's classroom food list. This helps ensure any allergic reactions can be monitored in a familiar setting.

Dropping Off and Picking Up

Daily Routine
Please try to drop off and pick up your child around the same time each day. This helps your child adjust to group care more easily by developing a routine. The preschool is open from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM (4:00 PM on Fridays)

SIGN IN / SIGN OUT
All parents must park their cars in the lot or on Willow Lane and walk to the preschool to drop off and pick up their children. The sign in and out sheet is outside your child's classroom.

SIGN IN: Find your child's name. Sign your **full name** - ***no initials please*** (state law) - and time.
SIGN OUT: Find your child's name. Sign your **full name** and time in the second box. A new sheet will be present every day.

Arrival and Departure Times
If you are going to bring your child to school much earlier or later than usual, please let the staff know ahead of time so that the room is properly staffed for your arrival.

Please bring your child to the Infant Room each day in a clean diaper and with some food (or milk or formula) in his/her stomach. We cannot guarantee that a staff person will be available to feed and/or diaper your child immediately upon arrival.

Pick Up by Person Other Than a Parent

Please let the staff know if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child. This person needs to be on the child's list of people allowed to pick up the child or if this is just a one time pick up we have a short form for you to complete. Let staff know the approximate time this person will arrive, and please tell the person who is picking up to bring a photo ID as staff *will* ask unfamiliar individuals for identification.

If someone who is not listed comes to pick up your child and we have no note/message, and cannot reach you, we will refuse to release your child.

Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 10, including siblings. In order for us to legally stop a non-custodial parent from taking a child, a copy of the court order must be on file.

Late Pick Up

If you pick up your child after 5:00 P.M. you will be charged a **$5 per minute per child late fee.** Out of respect for the staff and their time, please call if you know you are going to be late.

If we have not heard from you and cannot reach you by 15 minutes after the program end time, your emergency contacts will be called.

If we have still not heard from you or your emergency contacts and cannot reach you by 45 minutes after the program end time, the Huntington Beach Police will be notified.

It is understood that conditions beyond one's control exist. If these conditions arise, you must notify the school as soon as possible, and make arrangements for your child to be picked up. **Continued late pick up *may* result in the termination of your registration.**

Absence

If you will be going on vacation, please let the staff know the dates your child will be gone so we can staff the room appropriately. If your child is ill, please call and let us know. **It is extremely important to let us know if your child has a contagious illness. The ECC is required, by law, to post information regarding all communicable diseases to which children have been exposed.**

Security

The Hebrew Academy has a key card security system installed. As you understand, the security system will only work if we are all (staff and families) diligent. It is imperative that anyone dropping off or picking up your child from the building have a key card.

Visitors to the Infant Room

Parents are always welcome to visit the Infant Room, as we maintain an open-door policy for families of children currently enrolled in our program.

If you plan to have a family member or friend visit your infant, please notify us in advance and provide written permission for their visit. Approved visitors may come at any time, but to respect the children's routines, visitors are not allowed to wake sleeping children, enter the nap room, or change the child's schedule. We recommend that visitors call the Infant Room before arriving to help staff prepare for their visit. For individuals who will be visiting regularly, please request an additional key card to ensure smooth and secure access.

Please understand that our staff are often busy with feeding, diapering, and other care tasks, so it can sometimes take a moment to answer the door. Your patience is appreciated.

Calendar

Little Gan is closed on all major legal and Jewish Holidays. There are no make-up days. If students are absent there are no makeup days.

Infant Center Calendar - August 2026 to June 2027

Thur. Aug. 13 -Tue. Aug. 26	ALL SCHOOL CLOSED
Tue. August 25,	Preschool Orientation 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Wed. August 26	First day of School
Mon. Sept. 7	**All school closed** - Labor Day
Mon. Sept 21	Yom Kippur - All School Closed
Tue. Oct 27	Picture Day
Wed. Nov 25	All school closes at 2:00 PM
Thur. & Fri. Nov. 26 & 27	**All school closed** - Thanksgiving
Tue. Dec 1	Picture Retake AM-All school closes at 3:30 - NO DAYCARE PD
Wed. Dec. 23 - Fri. Jan. 1	**All school closed** - Winter break
Mon. Jan. 4	School Resumes
Mon. Jan. 18	**All school closed** for Students - PD for Staff
Mon. Feb. 15	**All school closed** - Presidents Day
Thurs. & Fri. April 22 & 23	Passover - All School Closed
Mon. May 31	**All School Closed - Memorial Day**
Fri. June 11	**All School Closed - Shavuot**
Wed. June 16	Last day of school - All School closes at 11:30 - No Daycare
Mon. July 5	**All School Closed - July 4th observed**
Wed. August 11	Last day of School / Kiddy Camp
August 12- August 25	**All School Closed**
Wed. August 26, 2027	**First day of school**

The Infant room opens at 7:30 and ends at 5:00. (The late fee after 5:00 is $5.00 per minute.)

Feeding and Supplies

Bottle Feeding
At Little Gan, your child may be fed using a bottle, whether with formula or breast milk. For safety, all bottles must be made of plastic. Please label **all parts** of your child's bottle (except the nipple) with their name and the date to ensure that no items are mistakenly shared with other children.

Breast Milk
Please express breast milk into labeled bottles, placed in a separate container, and bring them to school each day. **All breast milk bottles must include your child's name and the date.** Bottles will be stored in your child's designated spot in our refrigerator. We strongly support breastfeeding and encourage parents to acclimate their infants to bottles well before starting group care, as not all babies easily transition to bottle feeding. Ready-to-feed plastic bottles are required. Per licensing standards, bottles containing breast milk will be sent home unwashed daily, as staff are not permitted to have direct contact with breast milk.

Formula
Please prepare your child's bottles at home and send them in a labeled lunchbox each day. These will be stored in your child's designated refrigerator space. We recommend keeping a backup supply of formula and an extra bottle in your child's cubby for emergencies. Note that bottles prepared at home will be sent home unwashed, following licensing guidelines.

Juice
To prevent baby bottle tooth decay, staff are not allowed to serve juice from bottles. Unless specifically recommended by a pediatrician (such as for severe constipation), we only serve water and milk.

Bottle Warming
Microwaves are never used to warm bottles. Instead, bottles are warmed safely by placing them in warm water or using a bottle warmer.

Solids
While we do not require staff to feed solids, pediatricians recommend introducing solids around six months to help infants feel fuller longer, and we fully support this. Please introduce any new foods at home for at least three days before requesting we serve them, to monitor for allergic or adverse reactions.

Baby Food
If your child does not finish an entire container of baby food in one sitting, we will serve the remaining portion from a bowl to keep it fresh.

Finger Foods
When your infant is ready to start finger foods (typically between 7 and 9 months), please bring labeled food containers with your child's name and date clearly marked. Your child's designated eating spot is also labeled.

Encouraging infants to self-feed, including using utensils, is essential for developing independence and fine motor skills. We support and promote self-feeding, though consistent practice at home will help your child learn this important skill more quickly.

Diapering and Supplies

Disposable Diapers
Disposable diapers are required for all infants in the Infant Room. Staff typically change each child's diaper every two hours and immediately after a bowel movement. If your child is sleeping, diapers will be changed upon waking. Diapers will also be changed after stroller rides, once your child returns to the Infant Room. Please bring a supply of diapers in the appropriate size for your child. When more diapers are needed, staff will notify you on the Daily Sheet. If you change your child's diaper while at school, please follow state licensing sanitation procedures.

Diaper Wipes
Please provide a large refill package of diaper wipes to remain at school with your child. We will send home a note when it's time to replenish the wipes.

Diaper Rash Ointment
If your child requires diaper rash ointment, please bring a labeled tube or container (with your child's full name) to keep in the Infant Room.

Clothing and Supplies

Please provide **three sets** of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks, to be kept in your child's cubby. Be sure to label all clothing items with your child's full name. If your child's clothes become soiled during the day—due to meals or diaper leaks—staff will place the items in a plastic bag and send them home.

While the Infant Room staff tries to make sure that your child stays clean during the day, please note that it is an important part of a child's development to explore and get messy. Hands-on activities are essential at all stages of a child's life. Consequently, staff recommends sending your child in clothing that stands up to a little wear and tear. Infant clothing may become stained.

Outdoor Attire

To protect your child during outdoor activities, please send a hat for sun protection. If you would like your child to wear sunglasses, please send those as well. Additionally, please provide sunscreen with **at least SPF 45**, clearly labeled with your child's full name.

Preparing Your Infant for Group Care

To help make your child's transition to group care as smooth as possible, here are a few helpful tips:

Socialize Your Baby
Introduce your baby to family members, other children, friendly adults, or babysitters. This exposure will help your child feel comfortable and look forward to social interactions with others.

Sleep
Encourage your baby to become accustomed to sleeping amidst everyday sounds such as conversation and music. In group care, some infants may nap while others are awake and engaged in activities, so helping your child adapt to different environments can ease this transition.

Becoming Familiar with Bottle Feeding
If you are breastfeeding, it is important to acclimate your baby to bottle feeding before starting group care. Not all infants take to the bottle easily, and introducing bottles well in advance increases the likelihood of a smooth transition at Little Gan.

Please note: **If your infant begins care and refuses to take a bottle, we may need to ask you to pick up your child or come to the center for feedings until your baby becomes comfortable with bottle feeding.**

Infant Room Curriculum

Our infant classroom offers activities tailored to meet the developmental needs of each child. We focus on four major developmental areas: **Cognitive and Language Development**, **Social Development and Group Play**, **Gross Motor Skills**, and **Fine Motor Skills**. Children have the opportunity to explore and learn in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment.

Social Development and Group Play
Group play at this stage involves nonverbal social interaction. The goal is to have fun, learn how to relate to others through play, and develop early

motor and social skills. While sharing is an important social skill, it typically develops later than infancy. However, we begin laying the groundwork for this skill in the Infant Room.

Gross Motor Development

Gross motor skills involve the use of large muscles. Activities encouraging large muscle movement support important brain development. Examples include crawling, walking, climbing, large block play, and music and movement both indoors and outdoors.

Balance is foundational to all large muscle movements; games such as tiptoe walking, rocking, or walking with an object on the head help build postural awareness.

Eye-foot coordination, which helps prevent tripping, develops through dancing, clapping, and rhythm activities.

Motor planning is the brain's ability to organize movement sequences, often subconsciously.

Spatial awareness is the understanding of body position and how objects relate in space. It is encouraged through activities like crawling through tunnels, climbing into boxes, and navigating obstacle courses.

Fine Motor Development

Fine motor skills focus on strengthening and coordinating the small muscles of the hands and feet. Children learn how much pressure to apply for different tasks through playing with interactive toys. Hand-eye coordination develops through activities like throwing and catching or using cause-and-effect toys.

Cognitive and Language Development

Infants begin recognizing their names and understanding basic concepts such as objects and food. They start to grasp pronouns like me, you, him/her, and possessives such as yours and mine. They also learn appropriate social cues, like when an activity is allowed or when it should stop. Sensory activities stimulate brain development, and music encourages memory, imagination, and language growth. Our staff reads to children and encourages tactile play, nurturing, and exploration, all essential for healthy development.

Baby Sign Language

In the Infant Room, we teach infants basic signs to communicate their needs and reduce frustration. Once your baby can wave goodbye, they can learn signs for common words such as milk, eat, more, all done, please, and thank you. Please ask your child's primary caregiver if you have any

questions about baby sign language.

Primary Care Groups
Little Gan uses a continuity of care model. Research shows that infants and toddlers benefit from having a consistent caregiver, which provides a sense of security and encourages exploration. Your child will be assigned to a primary care group led by a dedicated teacher to support their learning and development with warmth and consistency.

When Your Child Is Ill

To maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff, we ask for your full cooperation with the following illness policy:

At Home

- Please **check your child's temperature before coming to school** each day.
- Keep your child home if they exhibit any signs of illness, including:
  - A temperature of **100.4°F or higher**
  - Excessive **coughing**, **sneezing**, or **runny nose**
  - **Vomiting** (more than twice in 24 hours and not due to a known condition)
  - **Diarrhea** — defined as:
    - Stool not contained in a diaper
    - Diarrhea causing accidents in toilet-trained children
    - More than two stools above the child's normal frequency while at school

Children must be **symptom-free for at least 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing or symptom-masking medications before returning to school.

While at School

- If your child shows signs of illness during the school day, they will be separated from the rest of the children and you will be contacted. **You must pick up your child within 30 minutes.**
- Children sent home for vomiting, diarrhea, or certain other symptoms may require a **doctor's note to return**.

General Guidelines

- Children must be well enough to **fully participate in group activities**.

- If a child requires care that would **prevent staff from safely caring for the rest of the group**, they must stay home.

Please Note:
We understand it can be difficult to miss work or arrange care, but we urge families **not to send a borderline-sick child to school** in hopes they will be fine. This often results in further illness and potential spread to others. Proper rest and care at home can often **shorten the duration** of the illness and help protect the health of the entire classroom. Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care.

Medication in the Infant Room
If your child requires daily medication, it is preferable that you administer doses at home before arrival and after pick-up. However, we understand that sometimes medication administration during school hours is necessary. Our Infant Room staff follows strict guidelines to ensure your child's health and safety, and your cooperation with these rules is essential.

Authorization
Parents must complete a **Prescription Medication Authorization/Administration Form** for each medication and each illness episode. This form is valid for two weeks from the date of completion. Forms are available in the classroom and office upon request.

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications

- Medication must be in its original container with a pharmacy label that clearly shows the child's name, date range for administration, medication name, dosage, instructions (matching the parent's request), prescribing doctor or nurse practitioner's name, and pharmacy contact information. This label serves as the physician's or nurse practitioner's order.

- Sample medications require a doctor's written prescription. Medications are only to be given to the child named on the container; siblings or twins cannot share medication.

- Parents/guardians are asked to give as many doses as possible at home.

Nebulizer Treatments
By law, nebulizer treatments are limited to two per day in the childcare setting. If a child continues to experience wheezing or respiratory distress after treatment, they will be excluded from care until the condition improves.

Documentation and Return
All medication given in the Infant Room will be documented on the Medication Authorization/Administration Form. Medication will be returned to parents at the end of the two-week authorization period.

Administering First Aid and Emergency Care

We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children in the Infant Room. All staff members are trained in CPR, first aid, and emergency procedures (such as fire or earthquake response), and at least one trained staff member is always present.

Emergency Contact Information
Emergency contact forms must be completed and signed at enrollment. Children cannot attend the Infant Program without a completed emergency contact form on file.

Minor Injuries
For minor injuries, staff will provide appropriate first aid and notify a family member.

Major Injuries
If a child sustains a major injury requiring medical attention, staff will immediately contact a family member to arrange necessary treatment.

Emergencies
In an emergency requiring immediate medical care, staff will call 911 first, then notify a family member as soon as possible. Emergency medical personnel will determine the appropriate course of action. Treatment will be provided at the nearest available facility. Families are responsible for all medical expenses incurred.

Toddler Development

Exploration and Language

As infants enter the toddler years, they begin to perceive themselves as separate from other people. They are beginning to become more independent and able to do things for themselves. They are rapidly developing expressive language and becoming better able to convey their likes and dislikes.

Tantrums and Biting
The gap between what a child wants to do and what the child is capable of doing can lead to frustration and tantrums that are common during these years. It can also result in biting.

A Note to Parents About Biting

Biting is a common and developmentally typical behavior in infant and toddler programs. While it can be upsetting for everyone involved—children, families, and teachers—it is a natural part of early childhood development and not a reflection of parenting or care quality.

Why Children Bite
Infants and toddlers may bite for many reasons, including:

- Sensory exploration
- Teething discomfort
- Overstimulation or frustration
- Communication challenges
- Crowded spaces or conflict over toys
- Cause-and-effect learning

Repeated biting can become a learned behavior if it consistently achieves a desired result, which is why we respond calmly and intentionally.

How Staff Respond

- Immediate Action: The child who bit is gently but firmly removed from the situation without added attention or emotion. Our focus is on comforting the child who was bitten.

- Redirection: The child who bit is redirected to another activity and spoken to in age-appropriate language about what happened.

- Observation & Prevention: Teachers observe the circumstances around the biting incident to identify patterns or triggers. A staff member may closely shadow the child to prevent future biting incidents through early redirection.

Working with Parents
We value open communication and will discuss biting incidents with parents. Together, we can support your child's social-emotional development by reinforcing non-biting behaviors at home and at school.

Environment & Support
We create an environment designed to reduce overstimulation and crowding and promote positive interactions. We also work with children to develop language and conflict-resolution skills as they grow.

Toilet Awareness in the Infant Program

In our infant program, which serves children from infancy through age two, we do not expect children to be potty trained. Children at this age are still developing the body awareness, language, and muscle control needed for successful toilet learning.

However, we believe that early toilet awareness can begin through consistent routines and positive, low-pressure experiences. Our focus in this age group is not on potty *training*, but on building a healthy foundation for when children are developmentally ready.

Here's what that looks like in our classroom:

- We talk with children during diaper changes using simple words like "wet," "dry," and "clean."
- We provide a calm, respectful diapering routine to help children feel safe and cared for.
- If a child shows natural curiosity about the toilet, we support that interest gently—without pressure.

Guidelines for Early Potty Training Attempts

Some families begin introducing potty training at home around age two. If you are considering this, we ask that you speak with your child's teacher and the director first, so we can work together on a developmentally appropriate plan.

Before we begin any potty training at school:

- Your child should show **clear signs of readiness**, such as:
    - Staying dry for longer stretches
    - Communicating needs with words or gestures
    - Showing interest in the toilet or potty routines
    - Demonstrating the ability to sit on a toilet or potty seat

- Your child must complete at least **three successful days of potty training at home** before transitioning to underwear at school.
- Please provide **two full changes of clothes**, including socks and shoes, in case of accidents.

If your child experiences multiple accidents each day or appears frustrated or resistant, we may recommend pausing and trying again when they are more ready. Children will **never be punished or shamed** for accidents, and we are committed to supporting each child at their own pace.

Our Philosophy:

Toilet learning is a shared journey between school and home. We believe it should be child-led, respectful, and built on communication and trust. Our goal is to support every child with encouragement, consistency, and care—without rushing the process.

Assessments & Parent Conferences

To monitor each child's growth in all areas of development—cognitive, physical, social, and emotional—Little Gan conducts regular assessments. Conferences are scheduled as needed. If you would like to schedule a conference at any time, please reach out to your child's primary caregiver.

Fire & Earthquake Drills

Regular drills are conducted to ensure quick and safe evacuation, with the goal of clearing the building within two minutes. Teachers train children on proper procedures during these drills.

Security Lock-Down Drills

The school follows a security lock-down plan. Teachers are trained in these procedures, and drills are conducted periodically throughout the year.

In an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, parents can call the designated out-of-state contact number (718-604-1292) to receive information about their children.

Publicity

Photos and names of children may occasionally be used in school publications (e.g., newsletters, brochures, videos, or the school website). If you prefer that your child's image not be used, please notify the Director in writing.

Pets

Due to allergies and health regulations, pets are not allowed in the Infant Room.

Cell Phone Policy

To support meaningful drop-off and pick-up routines, we ask that all phone calls be made outside the preschool facility. Being fully present helps ease transitions and supports your child emotionally.

HEBREW ACADEMY PRESCHOOL

Hebrew Academy Infant Center

August 2026

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO THE HEBREW ACADEMY PRESCHOOL OFFICE BEFORE YOUR CHILD BEGINS SCHOOL OR AT ORIENTATION

I have read the Hebrew Academy Parent Handbook and understand that I must abide by the guidelines and expectations of the Hebrew Academy Preschool to ensure my child's continued enrollment in the program.

Name of Student:_____

_____ _____

Parent or Guardian and Date Signed

_____ _____

Parent or Guardian and Date Signed