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EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

THE GAN CHAMESH HANDBOOK

2026-2027
5786-5787

**GAN
CHAMESH**

WELCOME TO GAN CHAMESH

Dear Gan Chamesh Parents,

It is with heartfelt warmth and great anticipation that we welcome you to the Gan Chamesh family. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning to continue your child's journey, we are truly honored to partner with you in these foundational years.

At Gan Chamesh, we view early childhood as a special and formative time, where the seeds of wonder, identity, and Middos take root. Inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy and deeply grounded in Torah values, our educational approach is both child-centered and purpose-driven. We aim not only to teach but to inspire—to cultivate within each child a meaningful and enduring connection to learning, Torah, Mitzvos, and Yiddishkeit.

We are dedicated to nurturing the whole child—spiritually, physically, intellectually, creatively, emotionally, and socially. Every aspect of our environment is intentionally designed to support exploration, self-expression, and growth. We view each child as capable, curious, and full of potential, and we strive to instill within them confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of self.

Our educators are more than teachers; they are passionate, devoted partners in your child's growth. They guide with insight, model with sincerity, and create learning experiences that are rich with purpose and discovery. Each classroom is a vibrant, nurturing space where children feel respected, valued, loved and inspired.

We believe deeply in the power of partnership with parents. You are your child's first and most influential teacher, and together we create a meaningful bridge between home and school. Open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals are the foundation of our collaboration, and we look forward to building strong and trusting relationships with each of you.

As we begin this new school year together, we are filled with a sense of excitement and pride. May it be a year of growth, connection, Nachas and meaningful milestones for your child and your family.

With sincere appreciation and warmth,
Susy Adler and Suzanne Wallin
Directors
Gan Chamesh Early Childhood Center



STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

At Gan Chamesh, we welcome families from all walks of life into a nurturing, engaging environment where each child's uniqueness is celebrated. Our mission is to instill a love for Torah, a passion for learning, and a joyful connection to Jewish life. We believe that children learn best by doing. Our hands-on, play-based approach allows children to explore the world, their heritage, and their values through meaningful, age-appropriate experiences. Whether discovering the sweetness of honey, listening to the sound of a Shofar, or engaging in creative expression, children are active participants in their learning.

☀️ OUR PHILOSOPHY IS GUIDED BY SEVERAL CORE BELIEFS

The home is the cornerstone of a child's development—we strive to partner with families in every child's growth. Loving, trusting, and respecting each child lays the foundation for them to do the same for others. A positive self-image, a safe and joyful environment, and teachers who serve as role models are essential. Play is the work of children, and through it they develop curiosity, confidence, and critical thinking.

GAN CHAMESH

📅 CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

At Gan Chamesh, we follow the principle: "Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand." We educate each child "Al Pi Darko"—according to their individual path.

🌿 REGGIO-INSPIRED LEARNING

Gan Chamesh draws inspiration from the Reggio approach to education and from our knowledge of developmentally appropriate educational practices. Accordingly, our curriculum is based largely on students' interests and curiosities. We enthusiastically embrace one of the most important tenets of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education- that the environment is the third teacher. Children thrive and develop most optimally in a beautiful and real environment with natural materials that reflect their interests, and work while also reflecting the ambiance of home.

At Gan Chamesh, we don't just teach—we inspire. We guide each child to discover, explore, and grow in a joyful Jewish setting that prepares them for a lifelong love of learning.

🎨 OUR COLORFUL SCHOOL

To make arrival at school fun, easy and educational we have designated a color for each classroom. Your child's class will be known by its color (e.g. the Red Room, the Green Room). Welcome signs, sign in charts, cubbies and most labels will reflect the color of the room so it will be clear and easy for children to find the corresponding color.

⚙️ S.T.E.A.M. INTEGRATION

Our S.T.E.A.M. curriculum—Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math—introduces children to essential current thinking skills through hands-on experiences such as block play, building, water exploration, and open-ended art. These activities enhance creativity, critical thinking, and cognitive growth.

🔑 KEY LEARNING GOALS

Our curriculum supports the development of:

Cognitive skills: problem-solving, memory, sequencing, classification

Academic foundations: Aleph Beis, print concepts, numbers, literacy

Motor development: fine/gross motor, coordination, self-help

Social-emotional skills: self-concept, socialization, independence

Creative expression: art, dramatic play, music

Jewish identity: love for Torah, holidays, Mitzvot, and values

👩👦 OUR CURRICULUM FOSTERS DEVELOPMENT ACROSS SIX KEY AREAS:

S.P.I.C.E.S. – Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional, and Spiritual.

It is built around monthly themes that weave together Jewish holidays, Torah values, and real-life experiences through disciplines such as art, music, science, math, drama, and literacy. Children are encouraged to explore through a blend of child-initiated and teacher-guided activities.

LOCATIONS AND ENTRANCES

1. Woodmere Location

 748 Central Avenue (corner of Linden Street)

Drop-off via Linden Street: Recommended route: Go up Pine Street and down Linden Street → This helps avoid dangerous turns and illegal parking. Alternative parking: Available directly on Central Avenue.

2. Cedarhurst Location

 74 Maple Avenue

Important: Observe Enter and Exit signs. Traffic flow: Note the traffic flow as there is only a one-way entrance – follow posted directions carefully.

ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

CARPOOL & DROP-OFF OPTIONS

Carpool schedules & procedures will be provided by your class teacher on the first day of school. A staff member will be outside from 9:00–9:20 AM daily to assist with drop-off.

ARRIVAL GUIDELINES

School opens at 9:00 AM. Children who arrive after carpool time must be escorted by an adult to the classroom.

Arriving at 9:00 AM helps ensure the children have a smooth transition to the day and participation in free choice time for socialization and individual attention.

DISMISSAL GUIDELINES

School ends at 3:00 PM. Dismissal starts at 2:45 PM – prompt pickup is required. If running late unexpectedly, call the office ASAP to inform staff and reassure your child.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP PROCEDURES

If someone not on your Authorized Pick-Up List is picking up your child, make sure to let the teacher know ahead of time. If it involves pick-up on the current day, please notify the office.

AFTER-SCHOOL PLANS

Please make sure your child knows their after-school plans in advance. Children feel more secure when their routine is clear.

PARTNERING HOME AND SCHOOL

ORIENTATION – MEET THE TEACHERS NIGHT

An Orientation for parents will take place early in the school year at Chabad, 74 Maple Ave. It will begin by an address from the Directors. You will then have a chance to meet your child's teacher.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Open communication between parents and teachers is essential. While drop-off and pick-up times are not ideal for in-depth conversations, you're welcome to arrange a convenient time to speak with your child's teacher. You may do so in person or on the phone. Teachers will keep you informed throughout the week via WhatsApp about classroom activities. This helps you stay connected and spark meaningful conversations with your child about their day.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Formal parent-teacher conferences are offered annually, following careful observation and assessment of your child's development. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity to discuss your child's growth and progress.

Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time during the year at the request of either the teacher or the parent, especially if there are specific concerns or questions.



The Gan Chamesh P.T.A. organizes events throughout the year. We encourage parents to get involved in our P.T.A. We look forward to greeting you as a volunteer and working together with our parent body to create the most meaningful P.T.A. activities.

VISITORS

The staff welcomes interesting visitors (i.e. doctors, musicians, artists) to the school, who talk with the children about their professions, interests, or hobbies. Please inform us of any such people you know and would like to recommend, as the children will enjoy their participation in the program.

MITZVAH MOMENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

MITZVAH NOTES

Please send a Mitzvah Note periodically. This is a note that tells something special your child has done. The Mitzvah Notes are read aloud in the classroom during circle time. Children really look forward to hearing what their parents have to say.

TZEDAKAH

Part of your child's program at our school is to develop an awareness and commitment to share with others who are less fortunate. Your child's teacher will inform you of the specific Tzedakah procedures for the class.

SHABBOS PARTY

Friday is a very special day at Gan Chamesh. We organize a Shabbos Party for the children and enjoy Challah and a special treat. Every week a different boy and girl will be chosen to be the Ima (Mommy) and Abba (Daddy) and will be responsible for bringing in a small Kosher/Pareve/Pas Yisroel snack for the class. At times, each class will be invited to another class at Gan Chamesh; they will be the "Shabbos guests" of the class they will be joining for the Shabbos party, thereby encouraging the Mitzvah of Hachnosas Orchim in a real and meaningful way.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are so special to a child. In Gan Chamesh, we encourage children to celebrate their Jewish/Hebrew birthday. Your child's teacher will be in touch with you to arrange when it will be. At Gan Chamesh, we strive to celebrate birthdays around the child's accomplishments, growth and unique personality and character traits. As part of the celebration, we encourage parents to bring a gift for the class in honor of their child's birthday. Parents often donate a book, puzzle or game to the classroom. If you wish to donate an item, teachers can give you ideas of what the class would enjoy. Tzedakah for the children to give at the party and a birthday cake or cupcakes can be brought in to be shared with the class.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

ALLERGY ALERT

 PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE A NUT AWARE SCHOOL.

Nuts of any kind are not permitted.

LUNCH

We ask you to please send in a nutritious lunch with your child Monday through Thursday. We do offer you the opportunity to sign up for a Pizza Lunch option on Mondays. If any item in your child's lunch needs to be refrigerated, please let the teachers know. When sending a snack along with your child's lunch, we encourage you to choose a healthy snack. Some suggestions for nutritious snacks are: fruit salad, melon balls, fruit and cottage cheese, fruit bars, raw vegetables and dip, carrot cake, apple cake or muffins, granola cookies, cornmeal muffins, etc. Chewing gum is not allowed in school. As a SAFETY precaution, please make sure all round foods that are choking hazards are sent in sliced down the middle.

SNACK

One daily nutritious snack is provided by the school which includes rice cakes, whole grain crackers, pretzels and oat cereal etc. Each teacher will also implement a Healthy Snack rotation, where children will be delegated specific days throughout the year to bring in a fresh fruit or vegetable to share with the class. Water is provided for each child to drink at snack, and throughout the day.

KOSHER STANDARDS

All foods must have reliable kosher certification.

All dairy products must be Cholov Yisroel and baked products must be Pas Yisroel.

CANDY POLICY

In an effort to provide students with the healthiest environment possible, we are encouraging families to provide healthier treats for Shabbos Party and refrain from actual candies. Even though they will occasionally be served by the school at significant celebrations, we are trying to move away from serving them on a weekly basis. Some suggestions are: Popcorners, rice krispie treats, chips, pretzels, potato/veggie flutes, tortilla chips and salsa, popcorn (when age appropriate), chocolate coated rice cakes, corn pops, fresh fruit and vegetables etc.

POLICIES

HEALTH AND SAFETY

HEALTH POLICY

We trust you to use your best judgment when assessing your child's health. If your child appears unwell, please keep them home. However, if the teaching staff determines during the school day that your child is ill, you will be contacted and expected to pick them up promptly.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

If your child exhibits any of the following, they must stay home. They may also be sent home if the following symptoms occur at school: Fever of 100°F or higher, eye inflammation, vomiting, diarrhea, any communicable disease or unidentified rash.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

After an infectious disease, a doctor's note is required stating your child is fit to return.

Children must be fever-free and on antibiotics (if prescribed) for 24 hours, and free of diarrhea for 24 hours before returning.

REPORTING ILLNESS

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, inform the school immediately so other families can be alerted. Please also inform the school if your child will be absent for several days.

MEDICATION POLICY

No medication will be administered at school, except in emergencies (e.g., Epi-pen). If medication is needed during school hours, a parent should come in person to administer it or keep the child at home until treatment is no longer needed.

ADDITIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

To help us care for your child effectively, please provide us with relevant information, such as: Allergies, special dietary needs, sleeping habits or any ongoing medical concerns.

PARENT ABSENCE

If for any reason, parents will be away from home for an extended period, please notify the school in advance. This is especially important in sensitive situations, such as hospitalization or other events that may be emotionally upsetting to the child. When teachers are aware of these circumstances, they can offer added support and help ease your child's distress during the school day.

DISENROLLMENT POLICY

In the event that a situation arises in which a child can no longer continue at Gan Chamesh, our office staff will contact you to discuss an appropriate plan of action.

SNOW DAYS

In case of school closing due to the weather you will get a WhatsApp from the school and or the classroom teacher before 8:00am.

All policies align with NYC Department of Health and Office of Children and Family Services guidelines, and have been reviewed by pediatric professionals.

HEALTH, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS

At Gan Chamesh, teachers continuously monitor each child's development. If any concerns arise, we will contact you to collaborate on the best course of action, including referrals to professionals, if needed. We are committed to working closely with families every step of the way.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Our approach to behavior management is rooted in positive reinforcement and preventative discipline. For ongoing or harmful behaviors, we partner with families to create a personalized support plan. Our goal is always to nurture emotional growth and help every child succeed in a respectful, caring environment.

BITING POLICY

Teachers will be in touch with you about the biting policy if the need arrives.

TOILET TRAINING

At Gan Chamesh, we understand that toilet training is a developmental process, and every child progresses at their own pace. Our approach is compassionate and supportive, in close partnership with families.

For 2-Year-Old Classes: Teachers follow scheduled changing and bathroom times. Staff do not apply any ointments or creams, including over-the-counter or prescription products.

For 3-Year-Old Classes: Parents are encouraged to work on toilet training over the summer, so children can participate independently during the school year. Teachers will work with families if additional support is needed.

We suggest that the children in the 3-year-old class be toilet trained by the return from Chanukah vacation.

Resources and guidance are available to support your efforts.

LICE POLICY

If nits or lice are found in a child's hair, the child must be picked up immediately.

Reentry to school is permitted only after a thorough re-check confirms that the child is completely lice- and nit-free.

SAFETY AT GAN CHAMESH

Safety is our highest priority. We maintain clear, practiced procedures to ensure the well-being of every child. Teachers explain procedures in an age-appropriate manner to help children feel safe and prepared.

Fire Drills are conducted regularly throughout the year.

Shelter in Place and Emergency Plans are in effect in the event of: Severe weather-related emergencies and G-d forbid the unlikely presence of an intruder. Each site has a designated safe relocation area nearby, where children will be taken if needed.

We will always communicate with parents in the event of any emergency.

GAN CHAMESH IS UNDER A DAY CARE LICENSE

As we continuously strive to provide the best care possible for your children, we are proud to tell you that our early childhood program is licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services. We are committed to following their regulations and high standards to ensure safety, good health and wellbeing of each child. We welcome the periodic visits of the OCFS representative who oversees that all areas of proper childcare are in place at all times. If you have any questions regarding our license, please don't hesitate to call us or contact OCFS directly.

NYS Office of Children & Family Services: 631-240-2560

Childcare Complaint Line: 1-800-732-5207

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 1-800-342-3720

DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily Schedules vary a bit from room to room, but generally, a day proceeds as follows:

9:00-9:15	Arrival, Greetings, Informal conversation
9:15-10:00	Discovery time
10:00-10:20	Clean up and Snack
10:20-10:45	Circle time/Davening
10:45-11:30	Center time
11:30-12:00	Active play (indoors or outdoors)
12:00- 12:30	Washing hands, Lunch and Conversation
12:30-12:45	Story Time
12:45-1:15	Quiet time and Rest
1:15-2:00	Work/Play area Small group project time
2:00-2:20	Music/Movement/Creative Dramatics
2:20-2:30	Discussion of day's activities and planning for next day
2:30-2:45	Preparation for dismissal and greeting parents
2:45-3:00	Dismissal

APPAREL NEEDS

1. Please send a weather appropriate complete, labeled change of clothing (i.e. socks, underwear, shirt, and pants/skirt.)
2. Please keep in mind that your child will be engaged in messy/sensory play, floor activities and water play. Play clothes are a must. Please send along a smock or an old large shirt for painting.
3. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. A label on coats, hats, scarves, mittens and boots minimizes loss and confusion.
4. All boys over the age of three are encouraged to wear Yarmulkes/Kippot every day to school. Please send a Yarmulke/Kippah labeled with your child's name.
5. After the winter break, it is a good idea to check your child's box to make sure the extra clothing still fit and is weather appropriate.
6. Please send a rest mat. The Health Department requires that the children use a standard vinyl rest mat, (red/blue) 1" or 2" thick, 24" W and 48" L. (Please note that the Green Room does not need mats.)
7. If necessary, please send along diapers, pull-ups, wipes, disposable gloves and a box of tissues for your child. It will be kept in his/her cubby. Please replenish the supply when necessary.

CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO BRING INTO THE CLASSROOM

- Please bring the following items to school on the morning of the children's Orientation
- A complete change of clothing (please label the clothing by writing your child's name on each item.)
- A box of tissues
- A packet of baby wipes
- 2 recent photos of your child and a family photo
- For boys – A Yarmulka (please label it with your child's name)
- A 1" thick red/blue vinyl mat (NOT Green Room)
- Diapers, if necessary
- A box of disposable gloves
- Tzedakah money-2 rolls of pennies
- A 1 ½" WHITE binder (NOT Green Room)
- Hand soap (which does not say to keep out of reach of children)
- A box of gallon size Ziploc bags
- A box of 2 gallon size Ziploc bags

BEAUTIFUL JUNK WANTED

Help us enrich our creative and science programs by donating everyday items that can be transformed into treasures!

We welcome donations of everyday items to support creativity at Gan Chamesh!

Suggested supplies include brown paper bags, toilet paper and paper towel rolls, beads, buttons, sequins, ribbons, egg cartons, flowers (fresh or dried), dried plants, cellophane, shiny gift wrap, chocolate boxes, confetti, doilies, feathers, fuzzy paper, rocks, shells, seeds, animal pictures, lace, netting, velvet, silk, leather, felt, burlap, milk cartons, newspapers, magazines, crepe paper, shirt cardboard, spools, wires, and styro-foam trays or blocks.

Before discarding something, please check with us—it may become part of a beautiful classroom creation! Thank you for supporting hands-on learning and artistic exploration.

GAN CHAMESH CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS



**LITTLE
ARCHITECTS**



TRIKE-A-THON



**GRADUATION
PARADE**



**HAKOFOS WITH
THE RABBI**



LITERACY



**ROSH CHODESH
SING-A-LONG**



**CHANUKAH
EXPERIENCE**



MOCK WEDDING



WATER DAY



LAG B'OMER



**GRAND G.C.
CHALLAH BAKE**



TRAVEL-MANIA



BIKKURIM



BOX WEEK



HEALTH WEEK



FUNNY HAT DAY



**PURIM 5 SENSES
CARNIVAL**



PAJAMA DAY



MODEL SEDER



**TU B'SHEVAT
FAIR**



DRESS UP DAY



TZEDAKAH DAY



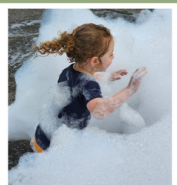
**MATZAH
BAKERY**



TWIN DAY



PETTING ZOO



MESS DAY



**ROSH HASHANA
FAIR**



FEELINGS



**YETZIAS MITZRAIM
EXPERIENCE**



**YOM KIPPUR
SHOE STORE**