



*Inspire our hearts to understand, to think, to listen, to learn,*

*And to teach, to safeguard, and to do, and to establish all teachings of your*

*Torah with love. And light up our eyes with your Torah...*

*Ahavah Rabbah, daily liturgy*

Netivot Shalom is guided by these visions articulated in the above prayer, Jewish values, developmentally appropriate practices, and the goals of anti-bias education.

**L'Havin (to Understand):** We value and respect every member of our community. We strive to make every family feel welcomed by creating an environment where families are seen, respected, informed, and contributing members. We partner with families to best understand their needs, values, and traditions.

**Lishmoah (to Listen):** Through an emphasis on listening and respecting one another—our children, families, and staff build a cohesive community where we celebrate our differences and value each person as a unique individual.

**Lilmod (to Learn):** We use developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum to build on children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. We strive to provide an engaging, stimulating program that meets the needs of the whole child.

**Lishmor (to Safeguard):** Our preschool provides a safe, warm, nurturing environment where children develop emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically. The environment embodies the values of Congregation Netivot Shalom, which is a conservative, egalitarian, and progressive community.

**La'asot (to Do):** Our shul and preschool take a proactive role in pursuing social justice and equity. Through a developmentally appropriate lens, we work with children to equip them with the foundational skills to recognize prejudice and discrimination and to stand up for themselves as well as others.

At Netivot Shalom, we strive to provide a high-quality, play-based early childhood education program where the Jewish curriculum is built around the interest of the child. We see children as curious, competent, and capable humans. We believe children learn through active exploration and interactions with adults, other children, and the environment.

We accept and respect each child's differing levels of ability, development, and learning style. Our program provides opportunities for each child to master tasks that are appropriate to their individual level of development. We believe our role as Jewish early childhood educators is to encourage exploration and growth in a well-equipped environment that is stimulating, safe, consistent, and nurturing.

We promote the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development of children and a commitment to parent involvement and family education. Our school is accepting of families of all religions, races, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. We encourage families of every background to apply, knowing our kehillah (community) is strengthened by its diversity.

## **Our Core Values**

We have five main Jewish values that we rely on at the Netivot Shalom to help us maintain a warm, nurturing, and successful program. They help define the pro-social behaviors that are at the core of our teaching practices and interactions with members of our community.

- Kehillah (pronounced "keh-HE-lah"), Community: As Rabbi Hillel once said, "Do not separate yourself from the community" (Pirkei Avot 2:5). At the Netivot, teachers work to build relationships with parents so that they have a comprehensive understanding of the child. We achieve this by providing engaging experiences for families both in and out of the classroom.
- B'tzelem Elohim (pronounced "beh-TSELL-em eh-low-HEEM"), Created in the image of God: Every member of every family that walks through our gate has their own set of interests, opinions, and strengths. We believe in honoring those traits and celebrating our holy uniqueness. As we get to know the individuals in our community, we provide materials and emergent activities that inspire awe and wonder.
- Kavod (pronounced "kah-VOH-d"), Deep Honor/Respect: We believe that in order for children to be academically ready, they also need to know how to be kind, tolerant, and capable of solving their own problems. We believe that children can learn to engage with peers and the environment in a kind and respectful way.
- Shomrei Adamah (pronounced "shown-RAY ah-dah-mah"), Guardians of the Earth, As a green certified program, we are committed to caring for the earth by teaching sustainable and waste reduction practices, as well as sourcing many of our materials from local reuse businesses.
- Shalom Kitah (pronounced "sha-LOM key-TAH"), Peaceful Classroom: We believe in providing an environment that is stress-free and one in which children can learn about regulating their own bodies. We strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment.