

חנוך לנער על פי דרכו...

According to Their Way



About me and how I started According to Their Way:

My name is Yocheved Waxman or Morah Yocheved. I have worked in the education field for more than 15 years in a variety of jobs, including tutor, consultant/trainer, teacher and SEIT (special education itinerant teacher). I love working with children- I always have- and have enjoyed working in a variety of positions which have enabled me to work with children in different ways.

My time in the education field also involved many interactions with parents, and it is mostly because of things that I heard parents say, or that I saw happening, that I became interested in opening my own program. I kept hearing of parents' frustrations with finding good schools for their children. Many schools focused on only certain developmental areas or had teachers who didn't know how to assist students who were more energetic or had difficulty following directions. Some schools focused heavily on academics, even for three year olds, while in other programs, children were left to play by themselves most of the time while teachers were busy with other things. As I heard these and similar stories over and over again, I couldn't help but wonder if there was something I could do to make things better for both the parents and their children. And so, after some time, According to Their Way – Al Pi Darco was born. *According to Their Way*- according to the way that children learn best based on their interests, abilities and personalities. According to Their Way was designed to be a school where children would be accepted for who they are, while being encouraged to grow and become even greater. A school where the teacher would know how important the different aspects of child development are and focus on all of them. A school where children would learn by being children, by engaging in activities that are developmentally appropriate and interactive, activities

that stimulate their minds and bodies. Welcome to According to Their Way - על פי דרכו (Al Pi Darco)!

Registration and Enrollment:

Thank you for expressing an interest in our program. The first part of our registration process includes an in person meeting with you, your child and myself at According to Their Way. This gives you the opportunity to view the school, see how I interact with your child and discuss any questions that you may have. After this meeting, assuming that all parties agree that this school is a good fit for your child, you will be sent a contract for our program. Registration is not considered complete until you have submitted a deposit and the completed contract, and received written confirmation regarding your child's enrollment. In addition, you will need to complete and submit an enrollment packet, which you should receive over the summer.

In order to enroll in the 3K program offered through the Department of Education (DOE), you will need to apply directly with them, through one of several different methods. After confirming your program choice, you will need to submit additional paperwork and documentation. This documentation will include two proofs of address, as well as your child's birth certificate and updated medical form. You will also need to complete paperwork packets from the DOE and the Family Child Care Network. 3K enrollment with the DOE will not be considered finalized until both packets and all documentation has been received and reviewed and you have received written confirmation of your registration in the 3K program.

Our Philosophy/About According to Their Way:

At According to Their Way, our first priority is to the children in our care. We first ensure the safety of the children and then focus on how we can help them grow and develop to their full potential. To do so, we focus on the needs of each child and look at them as unique beings with differing interests, abilities, talents and personalities. To best help our children grow, we focus on all the areas of development, rather than just a few; this way, none of our children's needs are neglected, chas v'shalom, and the greatest degree of progress can occur.

Areas of development that we focus on include:

Communication – gestures, speech and language development, vocabulary, how to politely ask for items or help, communicate appropriately with adults and peers.

Cognitive/academic skills – shapes, colors, counting, numbers, letters, aleph beis, beginning reading skills, comparisons (big vs small, tall vs short) and categories.

Judaic/Jewish concepts – Shabbos, yomim tovim, parsha, aleph beis, brachos, middos and Ahavas Hashem (a love for Hashem).

Social-emotional skills – understanding and dealing with emotions, taking turns, playing nicely with their peers and helping others. When children become upset, whether due to a disagreement over toys or something else, they will be emotionally supported, encouraged to express themselves in a safe and healthy manner and will be redirected as necessary. Some of the methods and tools utilized to assist with this include a comfy corner, a calm down spot and an emotion chart.

Gross motor skills – balancing, running, jumping, hopping and climbing. While these may sound like unusual things to focus on, they are important aspects of a child's development. These are skills that are necessary for children to be able to independently move around and to play on their own or with others. These activities can also help to strengthen their muscles, making it easier for them to sit upright or in a chair for longer periods of time (things that will become more necessary as children get older).

Fine motor skills – scribbling, pouring, tearing, cutting, squeezing and manipulating small objects. All of these things help children develop greater control of the muscles in their hands and fingers, which are necessary for future skills, such as cutting with scissors, tracing and writing.

Daily living skills – toileting, hand washing, independently eating (with utensils where appropriate) and dressing.

Children learn best when engaged in activities that are developmentally appropriate. For us, this means that our children learn by playing with toys and each other, through songs and stories, through interaction with their teacher and peers and with a variety of stimulating materials.

Our Activities:

Arrival/free play – upon arriving, all children will put away their belongings, use the restroom and be given the opportunity to play with a variety of toys. These activities will encourage the development of fine motor skills, communication, social skills and

daily living skills, as well as give students the opportunity to become familiar with classroom routines.

Breakfast and lunch - Breakfast is served shortly after the children arrive, providing them with a healthy and tasty start to their day. Lunch is provided daily, with a milchig/dairy or pareve lunch served on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while a fleishig/meat meal is provided on Tuesday and Thursday. In addition to being an important part of the day in regard to nutrition, meals also create an opportunity for children to learn to make brachos, feed themselves, use utensils, ask for help/items and clean up after themselves. There's a lot that children can learn while eating!

Morning Circle – During this time, we will sing songs and discuss concepts relating to the current theme or other cognitive skills sets. Circle time gives students a chance to learn and interact as a group, improve their communication skills and gain new knowledge.

Story Time – Story time takes place daily. Story time can focus on academics and cognitive skills, or on social skills, dealing with emotions, middos and the parsha. Story time provides children with a chance to interact and become familiar with books and reading. It encourages a love for reading and helps to build vocabulary, general knowledge and beginning reading skills.

Outside play - Children will have the opportunity to play outside daily, weather permitting. During this time, they will be able to ride on bikes, push a "lawn mower", play on the slide and engage in other outdoor activities in our backyard. These activities will help the children improve their motor and social skills in different ways than when playing possible indoors.

Snack - Snack time is a time for kids to have a tasty or healthy snack and to work on skills like helping to serve the snacks, making brachos, eating neatly and cleaning up. Meals and regular snacks are provided for the children, and as such, we ask the parents not to send in snacks, except for special occasions, like shabbos parties and birthdays. While we understand that your child may have favorite foods that you would like to send in, we have found that children bringing snacks from home tends to lead to jealousy and injured feelings. If you have a specific concern in this area, please contact me directly.

Center Time - Playing with toys can help to develop better fine motor control, visual-spatial awareness, social skills, imaginative play and self-help skills. Center time provides children with opportunities for learning and engagement, as well as more ways in which to explore newly learned concepts. In addition to the regularly available toys, children will be able to play with special toys, interesting books and art projects and materials relating to the theme or concept that they are learning about, such as feelings, health and hygiene, transportation, yomim tovim and hakaras hatov.

Shabbos Party - On Fridays, the children at According to Their Way will “prepare” for Shabbos. They might make decorations for Shabbos, “light” Shabbos candles, “make kiddush”, sing some Shabbos songs and enjoy a pre-shabbos snack.

Rest time - During this time, all of the children will be able to rest on cots in the play area, under the supervision of the teacher and/or assistant. If a child is really not tired, they will not be required to attempt to sleep, but will instead be able to rest or sit quietly with a book/toy on their cot after some time has passed.

Music – During music time, children will be able to dance, play with instruments, sing and engage in fingerplay songs. Through the use of rhymes, repetition and engaging songs and lyrics, children will learn about rhythm, counting, general concepts, yomim tovim and our themes.

Exercise – During exercise time, children will learn about the different ways they can move their bodies – in different directions, at different speeds, through controlled vs. erratic movements, by following someone else's lead or setting their own, just to name a few. They will learn that different body movements can help them to calm down or get out excess energy. Some examples of movements including stretching, hopping, running and breathing exercises.

Free Expression – Although children at this age are too young to express themselves through writing, they can express themselves in other ways. Free expression is a time when the children in the class can show what they've learned throughout the day, what they remember or what they're thinking about, by playing with play-doh, coloring or doing art projects. Engaging in these activities also gives children a chance to work more extensively on fine motor skills through the medium of play.

Goodbye Circle – During this time, children will have a chance to review the day's events and discuss them to the best of their abilities. They will also sing some songs and say goodbye to their friends until the next day. While engaging in these activities, the children will be working on following directions, recalling concepts, interacting with their peers and communication skills.

Daily Schedule:

8:00-8:20am	Arrival/free play
8:20-8:50am	Breakfast
8:50-9:10 am	Morning circle time and story time
9:10-10:10 am	Outdoor play
10:10-11:30 am	Center time
11:30-12:00 pm	Lunch
12-1:00 pm	Nap
1-2:00 pm	Center time
2:00-2:20 pm	Snack
2:20 pm	End of 3K programming
2:20-2:50 pm	Afternoon circle time and davening
2:50-3:10 pm	Music/exercise
3:10-3:45 pm	Free expression/sensory play/art
3:45-4:00 pm	Pack-up/Dismissal
4-5:00 pm	Late pickup

Regular hours are M-Th 8:00am – 4:00 pm, F 8:00 am – 2:30 pm. Please note that while the school is open until 2:30 pm throughout the year, when Shabbos starts before 5 pm, we request that parents pick up their children by 1:30.

Late pick-up is offered M-Th 4:00-5:00 pm, for an additional fee. If your child is not picked up by 5:00 pm, or no notice has been given by the parent(s) regarding late pickup, all efforts will be made to reach the parents. By 5:10 pm, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child.

Calendar:

Thurs	September 6, 2024	1st day of school- half day (12pm dismissal)
Wed	October 2, 2024	Erev Rosh Hashanah – Early Dismissal
Thurs & Fri	October 3 & 4, 2024	Rosh Hashanah – School Closed
Fri	October 11, 2024	Erev Yom Kippur- Early Dismissal
Wed	October 16, 2024	Erev Succos - Early Dismissal
Thurs – Fri	October 17 - 25, 2024	Succos Break - School Closed
Thurs & Fri	November 28 & 29, 2024	Thanksgiving Break- School Closed
Mon	December 30, 2024	5th day of Chanukah - School Closed
Fri	January 17, 2025	Professional Development - School Closed
Mon - Fri	January 20 - 24, 2025	Mid-Winter Recess - School Closed
Mon	February 17, 2025	President's Day - School Closed
Thurs	March 13, 2025	Ta'anis Esther- Early Dismissal
Fri	March 14, 2025	Purim - School Closed
Fri	March 21, 2025	Professional Development - School Closed
Wed	April 9, 2025	Early Dismissal
Thurs - Mon	April 10 - 21, 2025	Pesach Break & Isru Chag - School Closed
Fri	May 9, 2025	Professional Development - School Closed
Mon	May 26, 2025	Memorial Day - School Closed
Mon & Tues	Jun 2 & 3, 2025	Shavuot- School Closed
Mon	June 9, 2025	Professional Development - School Closed
Thurs	June 27, 2025	Last Day of School

Parent School Communication:

At According to Their Way - Al Pi Darco, we value the input of our parents and would love to have the chance to communicate with you on a regular basis regarding your child's needs. In order to best facilitate this, we encourage the use of texting, WhatsApp and e-mail. If you prefer to communicate via phone, the best time to do so is from 8-9pm. Calls received after 9pm will not be returned until the next day; likewise, other forms of communication will not receive a response until the next day.

In case of an emergency, please use the word "URGENT" as the first word in your subject line or message when texting, messaging or e-mailing. While I cannot guarantee an immediate response, depending on the time that your message is received, I will reply as soon as possible.

Snow Days:

When the Department of Education is closed due to inclement weather, According to Their Way - Al Pi Darco will also be closed. As per regulations, a brief virtual session will be available for the students on that day.

Birthday Parties:

We celebrate the children's birthdays either on their birthday, or on another day that is convenient to both the parent(s) and the class. Parents may send in decorations and snacks, as long as the snacks are: peanut free and kosher pareve or kosher cholov yisroel. Please be aware that we are a **peanut free school** (due to severe allergies) and do not send in anything with peanuts or peanut derivatives (peanut

butter, peanut oil, etc). Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions you might have regarding these requirements.

Generally, birthday parties will take place towards the end of the day, around 3:15. While parents may attend their child's party, under the condition that they are not ill in any way, additional family members are only allowed on a case by case basis, with prior written approval.

Illnesses/Attendance:

Please do not send your child to school if he any of the following, as he will not be allowed to attend:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- 2 or more instances of diarrhea in a row
- Vomiting
- Communicable diseases such as covid, chicken pox, impetigo, hand foot and mouth disease (also known as coxsackie), pink eye (also known as conjunctivitis), or strep throat
- An unexplained rash
- Ringworm

If your child develops one of the above mentioned conditions, he will be sent home early. If you are called to pick up your child, please do so as soon as possible. If you are unable to be reached by phone, those on your emergency contact list will be called to pick up your child in your stead. This is for your child's sake so that he can be supported and treated as quickly as possible, if necessary, and to prevent others from becoming ill as well.

Just as you want us to be concerned about your child's safety, we must be concerned about the health and well-being of the other children in our program. Because of this, we request that you not send your child to school until he has been symptom free or non-contagious for 24 hours. If your child is sent home, or stays home, due to a communicable disease, please keep him home until he is no longer contagious and has a doctor's note stating the same.

All NYS health guidelines are subject to change. Should the guidelines be amended, parents will be notified in writing.

Medication:

While we can apply topical non-prescription ointments or sprays to your child's skin as needed, we are legally not allowed to provide them with any over the counter or prescription medication, except for a few specific exceptions. These include nebulizer medications, epi-pens or epi-pens in conjunction with diphenhydramine (with a prescription). If your child requires medication, you can choose to give him the medication at home or have a close relative come to the school to administer the medicine. In this case, a close relative is considered a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling or first cousin, ONLY. Any other relative will not be allowed to provide medication according to NYS regulations.

Child Safety Concerns and Regulations:

Per New York state law, I am a mandated reporter. As a mandated reporter, I am required by NYS to report to Child Protective Services if I have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been maltreated, abused, or is in danger of becoming maltreated or abused.

Likewise, if you have serious concerns regarding your child's safety while at According to Their Way, or while in the care of someone else, you may report it to Child Protective Services, so they can look into the situation and intervene, if necessary. Their phone number is 1-800-342-3720. Alternatively, if you have concerns or complaints about any childcare program, you can call the Office of Children and Family Services' Complaint Line at 1-800-732-5207 or 311.

For those interested in the specific regulations governing child care programs in NY, they may be found at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regulations/416-GFDC.pdf>

Evacuation/Fire Drills:

Throughout the year, we will practice what to do in case of a fire, chas v'shalom, or other emergency that necessitates evacuating According to Their Way. This is done to ensure the safety of your child, so that, in the event that something does happen, all of the children will know what to do and not become overly frightened or confused. Please be aware that this is a legal requirement from NY state and the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene to help ensure your child's safety.

Modifications and Updates:

According to Their Way - Al Pi Darco reserves the right to modify our policies or any aspect of this handbook and will notify parents via email, text or other form of communication when doing so.