

# The kindergarten code of ethics

## **Introduction**

In June 2017, the Early Childhood Education Department at Kibbutzim College took on the mission of drafting a code of ethics for kindergartens in Israel and a plan for its implementation. The initiative was supported by the The Council for Higher Education and became the flagship venture of the college for the academic years of 2017-2019. Staff members, students and kindergarten teachers joined hands in this venture.

We believe any kindergarten contains relationships, which should be established based on core values and principles of an ethical code. These relationships can be between children, staff members (kindergarten teachers, educators, medical/emotional assistants, additional teachers, after-school daycare educators, educational consultants, psychologists, paramedics), parents and other stakeholders (such as employers – municipalities, Ministry of Education, private kindergarten owners; supervisors, instructors, and other professionals who enter the kindergarten, such as technicians, security guards, catering personnel, and more).

Education professionals face ethical dilemmas on a daily basis. Hence, we believe it is crucial to draft an organizational ethical code, which will serve as guidelines for anyone who is involved in the kindergarten's everyday life, while taking into account the perspectives of all stakeholders and focusing on the children as the center of attention.

This code was drafted based on an in-depth commitment to children in Israeli kindergartens. As part of the process, we consulted with children and studied their perspectives. The Israeli education system strives to guarantee the best infrastructure and conditions for inclusive, egalitarian, and best practice education for every girl and boy, according to their developmental stage.

We pledge to promote the wellbeing of every girl and boy while considering all stakeholders, as we view the kindergarten as a community that allows children to meet various people. We believe that every person who enters the kindergarten takes part in guaranteeing the quality and enrichment of children's education.

We further believe that the code will elevate the professional status of kindergarten teachers both internally and externally, taking another important step in upgrading the position of education professionals in kindergartens.

This is the second version of this code. The first version was inspired by the code of ethics of Early Childhood Australia, which was first drafted in 1988 and was updated as a third version in 2016. The second version of our code, which appears here, was written after further deliberations with the help of The Jerusalem Center of Ethics. We wish and hope that the Kindergarten Code of Ethics will be further studied and improved over the next few years, after being implemented by education professionals in Israel.

**Ethics does not tell us what is allowed or prohibited  
(We have laws and regulations for that), it tells what is right.**

**Ethics requires discretion, and it is aimed at answering the following question:  
What is the right way for people to treat each other?**

### **Core values and principles**

We strive to create mutual trust, respect, appreciation of role and profession among all kindergarten stakeholders, while highlighting partnership, best communication practices and transparency.

All stakeholders should focus on what is best for the children and strive to create the best possible educational climate, which will allow every child to grow, both as an individual and as part of the group.

- **Human Dignity** - any person who enters the kindergarten must be respected as a human being. The environment in the kindergarten must serve as infrastructure for an equal and containing treatment of everyone.
- **The Child's Best Interest** - will be the core consideration of every activity and design, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which have been adopted by Israel in 1991.
- **Multi-culturalism** - the children, the educational staff and other people in the kindergarten sometimes represent different cultures, which can enrich the contents but also raise conflicts and dilemmas. The staff will be alert to any opportunity to discuss these issues and develop the sensitivity of all stakeholders to multi-culturalism and its implications.
- **Integrity and Professionalism** - the staff will always maintain their integrity and act according to their professional training and experiences, while leaning new lessons all the time.
- **Shared Responsibility** - the cooperation between all stakeholders reflects the shared responsibility for the children's development and wellbeing, and the creation of a strong and conscious environment in terms of community, society and education.
- **Transparency and Best Communication Practices** - we view the kindergarten as one circle among many in the child's environment. To ensure best educational practices, we will create mutual relations between all circles while ensuring transparency and best communication practices.

### **The Children:**

- Our kindergarten will be managed based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Israeli law. We will strive to guarantee equal rights to all children regardless of their religion, culture, gender or special needs, for the wellbeing of every boy and girl.
- We will try to avoid any experience of rejection, discrimination, alienation or marginalization. We will provide our students with significant and enriching curricula based on our professional knowledge and skills and strive to form challenging and educating experiences for all children, to encourage their joy of learning and doing.
- We will provide the children with a physically and emotionally safe environment, which will be based on attentiveness and openness, so we can provide each and every child with the appropriate space for learning and development.

### **The Staff:**

- Every staff member in our kindergarten is equally valuable as a human being with varied and unique knowledge, values and culture. We will strive to respect and accept one another, coordinate our expectations and hold an ongoing open discourse, to create a comfortable, nurturing work environment, based on friendly relationships, to ensure our kindergarten is managed in the best possible way.
- We acknowledge the fact that each and every member of our staff is meaningful as an educator, regardless of the amount of time they spend in the kindergarten. We will strive for everyone to act based on their knowledge, training and experience while maintaining their integrity, for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- We assume our staff is multi-cultural and encourage a climate that acknowledges and accepts every culture and custom.

### **The Parents:**

- We will strive to create trust among all stakeholders. We will encourage the creation of a relationship based on mutual trust and honesty, knowing that we are doing our best for the benefit of the children.
- We will strive to create full cooperation between all parties and encourage respectful relations between parents and staff members and among parents. We will acknowledge the unique nature of every family, respect it and act accordingly.
- We will strive for mutual transparency and constantly encourage each other to share and provide relevant information regarding every boy and girl, to facilitate the best possible learning processes and constantly improve them.

### **The Community:**

- The kindergarten is part of a community, and we will strive to enhance the involvement in this community. This way, we will turn the kindergarten into a cultural and educational focal point in the community.
- We will get to know the local communities and organizations. We will create curricula that reflect these encounters to promote the learning, development and wellbeing of all stakeholders.
- We will connect the kindergarten to various entities in the community to expand our educational experience and enrich our kindergarten.

### **Digital communication:**

- We all agree that anyone who uses digital media to communicate kindergarten-related issues does so at their own risk. Anyone must take into account the risk of violating the privacy, reputation or intellectual property of any stakeholder, now or in the future.
- We agree that all stakeholders will act according to this code, while protecting and respecting everyone's freedom of speech.
- We will respect the right of every stakeholder to privacy and discretion.

**Every kindergarten or a kindergarten cluster are welcome to explore the suitability of the suggested code of ethics to their own being, and change it if necessary, to allow the code to serve its purpose: help decision-making in conflicting situations.**