HEA Preschool

*Playful Learning, Building Community*

# Family Handbook


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***Updated September 2026***

**Welcome to the Hebrew Educational Alliance Preschool!**

Welcome to HEA Preschool! We are honored that you have chosen to be part of our community. Our goal is to partner with you and your family throughout your child's early childhood journey, creating a foundation for lifelong learning, growth, and connection.

At HEA Preschool, we offer high-quality half-day and full-day programs within a warm, enriching Jewish environment. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing atmosphere where children develop a positive sense of self and grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially.

Our play-based educational approach fosters creativity, self-expression, curiosity, and exploration. Through thoughtfully designed experiences and ongoing professional development, our teachers recognize and celebrate the uniqueness of every child, helping each one build confidence, independence, and a strong sense of accomplishment.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child. We are excited to partner with your family and look forward to a wonderful year of learning, discovery, and growth together.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information or policies outlined in this handbook, please do not hesitate to reach out. This handbook is provided electronically to all families, and printed copies are available upon request. We are always happy to discuss any topic not covered here.
Once again, thank you for being part of the HEA Preschool community.

We look forward to watching your child learn, grow, and thrive during their time with us. Together, we are creating a meaningful and joyful journey for every child.

Warmly,

Dani and Jamie
Co-Directors

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## Philosophy and Vision

The HEA preschool is a warm and inclusive second home for our families, one rooted in Jewish values and traditions and guided by best practices in early childhood education.

We value learning and investing in extraordinary educators. We do this through competitive compensation, professional development, and support.

We recognize each child as a capable and valued member of our community. Our educators provide a safe, emotionally supportive setting to encourage playful inquiry and ensure our children gain the skills necessary to become lifelong learners.

We believe that children, families, and educators should work in partnerships to create an environment filled with love, exploration, and wonder. Through collaborative learning, we provide engaging outdoor and indoor spaces which foster creativity and imagination and support children's growth.

We welcome and encourage families to connect with one another, to build lifelong relationships and to meaningfully engage in the HEA programs and in the broader Jewish community.

Our vision statement was confirmed on May 1, 2019, through the work of our Leadership Team, comprised of educators, parents, staff and clergy. Our vision is aspirational and will move us into the future, setting standards for excellence in our school. We welcome new, current, and past families to join us on our journey. Our vision is reviewed annually by the Preschool Leadership Team.

We use the Colorado shines quality indicators, NAEYC standards as well as standards developed for Excellence Jewish Early Childhood Education Centers as a guide for best practices in our school. As of December 2024, HEA preschool received a level 5 Colorado Shines rating. This handbook is one component of the rating process which we expect to be recertified for in the coming years. In our handbook, you will find highlighted notations that indicate specific quality indicators from Colorado Shines.

## Contact Information

While we hope this handbook and our website, www.headenver.org/preschool will be informative and helpful, we are always happy to provide clarification or additional

information. Never hesitate to give us a call or send an email and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

| WHO | WHY | HOW |
|---|---|---|
| Jamie Lambert<br>Co-Preschool Director | Any reason; Enrollment, tuition, concerns | 303.758.1462<br>Jlambert@headenver.org |
| Dani Wynn<br>Co- Preschool Director | Any reason; Forms, Brightwheel, Judaic programming and concerns | 720.390.4436<br>Dwynn@headenver.org |
| Rabbi Sarah Shulman | Any | Rabbishulman@headenver.org |
| Steve Levine<br>CEO/Executive Director | Any | steve@headenver.org |
| Mallory Bustow<br>Director of Education and Lifelong Learning | To continue with our religious school program, HEART K-12 education or Adult Education | mallory@headenver.org |
| Amy Karp<br>Director of Engagement | Membership inquiries, small group connections | amy@headenver.org |
| Yuri Tavbin<br>Director of Operation | Building and Security | yuri@headenver.org |
| Grant Rudzik | Safety and Security Director | grant@headenver.org |
| Crystal Haug<br>HEA Accountant | Financial Statements | crystal@headenver.org |

**Our Educators and Teacher Child Ratios**

To promote the formation of strong emotional bonds between children and caregivers, at least two staff are assigned to each classroom as primary teachers. Our classroom teachers are asked to make a minimum commitment of one school year as they are critical to the success of their classroom community. **COS 4.5** **.** We also keep children in the same classroom for a minimum of one school year (August-May) with their peers. As a component of our licensing requirements, we may ask families in our infant and toddler programs to sign additional documents allowing children above 36

months to be in our toddler rooms or children over 18 months in our infant classrooms.

Our teachers have strong educational backgrounds, and we value their many years of experience. We ensure that all educators in our school create and maintain personalized Professional Development plans. Individual plans will inform and align with our school's growth plan. This may include course work, annual conferences, monthly staff meetings and teacher in-service days, or programming provided by the Denver Early Childhood counsel. Educators are encouraged to utilize available opportunities to maintain the yearly state requirements for continuing education. **COS 1.13 a and b**

We currently maintain ratios at or below NAEYC and Colorado Licensing standards and see this as an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program, Appropriate teacher-child ratios can promote stronger teacher-child relationships, improve child outcomes, and enhance the overall experience for both the teacher and children. Enrollment is evaluated yearly for quality, staffing and financial sustainability. Our floating teachers support classrooms to cover breaks, allow for teacher planning time and support lower classroom ratios. **COS 4.3abc**

Below are the NAEYC Standards:

| Age Category | Ratio | Maximum Class Size* |
|---|---|---|
| Infant (Birth–15 months) | 1:4 | 8 |
| Toddler/Two (12–36 months) | 1:6 | 12 |
| Preschool (30 months–5 years) | 1:10 | 20 |
| Kindergarten (Enrolled in any public or private kindergarten) | 1:12 | 24 |
| **School-Age (Kindergarten- third grade) | 1:15 | 30 |

*If your program is above the maximum class size then you will receive a no rating for that item.

**Curriculum**

Our approach to learning is a result of careful and detailed planning in accordance with the best available knowledge of child growth and development. We have intentionally designed our program to meet the needs of individual children, while promoting continuous growth in social-emotional, intellectual, physical and creative development. We use a play-based curriculum rooted in developmentally appropriate practices that align with the *Colorado Early Learning Development Guidelines*.
Our approach is child-centered and inspired by philosophy of Reggio Emilia which emphasizes exploration, discovery, and hands-on learning through play. Teachers observe and interact with children to extend their learning, ask open-ended questions, and introduce new concepts in ways that feel relevant and exciting.
Each classroom will have time for free play, where classroom materials and toys are available to the children. We provide a large variety of constructive, dramatic, and

open-ended materials to facilitate play in different ways for each age group. Having uninterrupted blocks of time to play helps children build stamina and attention and find new ways to collaborate and engage with their peers.
Additionally, the HEA Preschool's program emphasizes the development of a positive Jewish identity through experiences involving Shabbat, Jewish holidays, blessings, culture, and Jewish values.
Other program highlights include:

- Weekly Shabbat Sing with Rabbi and staff, join us Fridays at 9:15am **COS 2.4**
- Music time for each age group with our musical director
- Experienced teaching staff and an active parent committee
- Synagogue wide family programming
- Parent Education Series/Parent Tot classes (varies year to year)

At HEA Preschool we value the trust our families place in our educators to care for and educate young children. As such our staff regard children as capable and create classroom culture that responds appropriately to the emotions, curiosities, and behaviors of young children. **COS 2.10b**

**Schedule**

Each classroom creates their own schedule to adapt to the needs of their age group. In our infant classroom, children may have bottles, meals, and naps and at various times of the day to be most responsive to their needs. Our other age groups follow a regular schedule that includes free play, outdoor time, snacks, lunch and rest time. We try to go outside in all types of weather and have opportunities for gross motor play indoors.

**Parent Communication and Family Partnerships COS 2.11**

We see family partnerships as key to the success of our program and want to give all families the opportunity to be informed, collaborate, and involved in our school. Effective communication between teachers and family units is essential to your child's education. We offer a variety of ways to communicate with families. For regular communication with your children's teachers, we use our app **Brightwheel**. Teachers will document activities in the classroom and upload photos regularly where you can see your child's play and details about any special activities they may be doing in their classrooms. Infants and toddlers will also have their daily diaper changes/naps logged here.
In addition to using brightwheel for daily attendance and required forms by licensing, we will also message here first to contact families for any time sensitive communication (pick up times, child sick etc) Please be sure we have current contacts for you and your emergency contacts. **COS2.2,COS2.3**
While teachers are available to welcome families and check in briefly during transition times (drop off and pick up), we ask that parents make the time to set up a meeting (via email, phone call, or in person) for more in depth conversations so that the time will not be interrupted and teachers can remain available to all children and families during these transitions.
We also communicate regularly through School Newsletters to provide important Preschool information as well as HEA family events that are posted on our website.

As we all work collaboratively to create an excellent school experience for our children and families, we welcome and collect parental feedback around school policy and procedure. When evaluating school needs regarding school hours, program offerings, fundraising, parent feedback and involvement are invited. The results of parent surveys are shared either through email, newsletters, parent portal (like Brightwheel) or personal one on one conversation. Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) will be conducting an annual family survey to gather information on their experiences with family engagement. The inaugural survey will occur in the spring/summer of 2027.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:**
We offer conferences both in the Fall and in the Spring. Parents are invited to sign up for a 20 to 30-minute conference with their teachers. This is a personal one-on-one meeting with parents and their child's teacher to discuss their preschool journey that includes growth and development, formal and informal assessments and observations, and address any upcoming transitions. At the end of the conference, Parents will provide a signature on their conference form with the information that was discussed at the time. A copy will be made to be sent home and one for their child's file. If the need arises for additional meetings, a teacher or parent can request, and we will arrange a time and space to meet. **COS 2.7**
Below are some ways for our families to be involved in the larger school community.

- **Parent Ambassador/PTO**

Any school parent can fill this role, duties may include connecting with a new school family, organizing an event inside or outside of school, collecting funds for teacher appreciation, creating a meal train for a family.

- **Leadership Team** (created within collaboration with Admin and PTO)

The Leadership Team is one of the many ways we invite parents to dialogue, discuss and learn together as we make goals to advance our school. We do ask that interested participants make a one-year commitment to the group and attend meetings regularly. The work of this group informs and creates our Quality Improvement Plan that is shared with all staff, families, and stakeholders. This is an on-going Improvement plan that can be updated throughout the year. You can click here to be directed to the document. **COS 3.1b**
If you are interested in being a part of our leadership team, please reach out to Dani Wynn at dwynn@headenver.org or Jamie Lambert at jlambert@headenver.org for more information. **COS 2.11**

- **School Volunteers**

Our teachers are open to having parents volunteer or visit our classrooms for a special activity if they are interested. Reasons to volunteer may include sharing talent or expertise, a special project, or simply reading a favorite book. Please coordinate with your classroom teacher and school administration to volunteer. While we love parent visitors, we are unable to accommodate additional siblings and/or friends during class time (classroom parties are an exception). This is due to the state regulations concerning class size and child ratio.

**Supporting Families and Transitions COS 2.9a**

To support families and children through common early childhood transitions we offer the following guidance. If at any time your family experiences other transitional events, a move, a new baby, loss of a loved one/pet, change in family structure, parental employment, etc. please share with your teacher/administrative team. Knowing this information can help teachers better support your child's emotional needs and bring in stories or other relevant ways to talk with your child about these changes. If you are needing additional support, the HEA Rabbi and CEO are available. You may reach out to them by phone or by email and schedule an appointment.
We recognize the transitions from home to school are a big adjustment for young children and each child may will adjust to school differently and saying goodbye can be hard for both parents and children.
To best support children feeling comfortable transitioning to school, prior to enrollment families are invited to visit the school and classroom by appointment. We also offer an open house at the beginning of each school year for children to visit their classroom for a short period of time. This time provides the parents with a preview of some of the activities their child will be involved in daily, as well as giving an opportunity for open communication between the parent and teacher regarding the care of the child.
On your first day, you may drop off your child at school at their scheduled start time. We have found that it helps if you establish a routine for school days. Children thrive on consistency and preparation. When your child is greeted by their teacher, a quick and sweet goodbye is perfect. Children becoming emotional at drop off is very common and teachers are available to support families to develop a plan for successful separation. We are also happy to update on brightwheel as your child settles into their routine. Connecting with your child about any photos posted is a great way to build a connection between home and school.

**PreK to Kindergarten:** To assist parents, Pre-K teachers will encourage parents to arrange visits to the elementary school their child will be attending in August. Due to the number of different elementary schools HEA children attend, we are unable to arrange Kindergarten school visits. However, teachers will urge parents to act as advocates for their children. The Spring parent conference provides assessment information which can be shared with the kindergarten teacher. Parents whose child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be persuaded to schedule an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) transfer meeting in April or May with the receiving elementary school. Teachers will give advice on how parents can help their children and themselves cope with anxieties related to the preschool to kindergarten transition.
Many of our students continue to Denver Jewish Day School. DJDS invites all families to visit and attend family events and programming. We can also connect families with alumni families attending another local public and private schools.
Our Pre-K teachers plan several activities for the children to help prepare them. Such activities include reading books about kindergarten, dramatic play designed to address the changes and emotions of beginning a new school, building skills around

independent work, stamina for a full day of learning, navigating a larger building, and celebrating the time spent at HEA.

**Transitioning to another program**: Children also transition out of a school for multiple reasons, such as the family moving to a new area or because a child will be going to kindergarten. This type of transition can also be stressful for a child and for families. To support the child's transition to a new program, we offer exit conferences between families and program teachers upon request and can share data and communication between programs if authorized. We also have informational documents that we can provide you with to help your child with the transition.

**Potty training**

While potty training may occur at different ages for each child, research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. We believe that the key factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership to best support the child.

Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they show an interest or curiosity in the process. In our older toddler classrooms, teachers may start by offering children who are interested a chance to sit on the potty during regular diaper changes.

Our teachers are experienced and attuned to the children's needs in this area are available to partners and share resources with parents as they begin this process. While accidents are very common at first, if we notice a child having a consistently difficult experience over several weeks, we will communicate with parents and may request a return to pull ups or diapers to best support their child at school.

For each child who is learning to use a toilet, the child's individual developmental abilities and needs must be accommodated. There must be no attempt to toilet train children until they can communicate or otherwise indicate need, help manage their own clothing, and access toileting facilities.

**Social and Emotional Development**

We believe in the importance of school as place for social and emotional development and recognize that young children are constantly learning new skills and ways of communicating their needs and relating to others. We help children develop independence and responsibility through reinforcement of positive behavior at school and with their peers. We also integrate this into our curriculum through stories, songs and daily routines that can help children identify emotions and remind them of expectations. We establish consistent, age-appropriate limits and intentionally set up our routines and environment to best support the development of the children in each classroom.

We model behavior with our youngest children such as using gentle hands and asking for a turn in sharing materials. We strive to state expectations in a positive, respectful manner: "Blocks are for building." "Use your inside walking feet." "Sand is for digging." "Use your words to tell your friends what you want." We work with

families to address any challenging behaviors that are common in our toddler and preschool classrooms and share strategies to support children's emotional regulation. We also work with children to develop problem solving skills. We try to allow older children to settle their own differences as much as possible while observing and monitoring what is taking. We will help children develop the vocabulary that they might use to solving a problem: "Let her know you are still using that" Tell him you don't like it when he hits you." "Ask her if you can have it when she's done" When a child has been hurt by another child, we talk with both children. We help children become aware of others' emotions and the impact of their behavior. Using phrases such as "Look at your friend, how do you think he feels? What could you do to make him feel better?" The teacher will offer suggestions if necessary and support repairing of the relationship. Teachers may ask a child to take a break from a specific play area or suggest time in a cozy area of the classroom with books to help regulate the child's emotions. We see families as partners as partners to best support children who may be exhibiting challenging behaviors and refer families to other resources if necessary.

**Early Intervention and Special Needs COS 2.15/2.16**

HEA Preschool is an environment that strives to accommodate the needs of all children. Families with children with special needs are welcome to apply for enrollment. In some cases, the administrative staff, consulting with Nurse consultant, and/or our Special Education consultant will determine if we are able to meet the child's needs and if the child will benefit from our program. While we understand that a Jewish education is deeply meaningful to families, there may be situations in which we are not able to fully meet a child's needs within our program. Regardless of enrollment, the HEA Jewish community warmly welcomes all families to participate in family programs and community events.

We believe that early intervention is the key and are committed to identifying developmental issues that may affect a child's success in school and later in their adult life. We encourage parents to communicate any developmental concerns they are seeing at home as they have a special understanding of their children's unique qualities and characteristics, such as temperament, strengths, and interests. Those insights are valuable and add important information that will help us as teachers and professionals better meet the needs of your child and family. Early Intervention Colorado provides evaluations for children ages 0-3 to address any developmental concerns.

HEA preschool will collaborate and partner with outside agencies as services such as sessions with speech therapists, physical therapists and occupational therapists can occur at school. This may include children enrolled on dual programs or receiving services within or outside of school. A release of information agreement will be given to all parties involved.

Each child who has identified special needs and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) must provide a copy of the plan to HEA Preschool prior to enrollment. This form must be filled out by Part B or Part C agency staff or physician and clearly state a child's diagnosis, special instructions for care,

and necessary medication. The parent is responsible for providing this form to the Director prior to enrollment.
If a teacher notices behavioral or other concerns with a child during class time, the teacher will contact the director for support. The director will make a classroom observation to decide the next steps. Recommendations might include classroom adjustments, a meeting with parents, asking parents to contact their pediatrician and/or ChildFind, having an outside observation, etc.

Child Find is part of Colorado's system for identifying children ages 3-5 who may have a delay in development. If a young child is not meeting typical developmental milestones, or someone is concerned about the child's growth or learning, child find teams will evaluate how the child plays, learns, speaks, behaves, and moves. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if there is a significant delay or if there is a need for early intervention or special education services. Evaluations conducted by Child Find teams are at no cost to parents.

In the Denver Metro area ChildFind is associated with your local school district and/or county. Denver County contact 720-423-1410. Additional resources are available upon request. **COS 2.15/2.16**

**Universal Pre-K (UPK) Policies**

1. Healthy Development & Child Screenings

*To support your child's healthy development, our program coordinates developmental speech screening services to students in enrolled in Prek. Screening takes place within the first 3 months of school with Speech Therapist, Heidi Solomon. If your child is younger than Prek, and would like resources for the following Screenings, please contact Dani or Jamie directly or see the resource guide at the end of the family handbook.*

- Developmental or Health Screenings
- Vision, Hearing, or Dental Screenings
- Social-emotional, Cognitive, or Language Screenings
- Mental Health or Special Education Referrals
- Translation Services

2. Family and Community Engagement

*We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher. Our program is committed to partnering with you in the following ways:*

- Language Support: We provide opportunities to utilize interpreters or other language resources as needed to ensure clear communication.

- Cultural Sharing: We invite and encourage you to share your home's cultural and social practices within our classroom community.
- Goal Setting: We will partner with you to set individual learning and development goals for your child.
- Program Decision-Making: We offer opportunities for families and community partners to engage in our program's operational decision-making processes.
- Transitions: We will actively involve you in your child's transitions between classrooms or when moving to a new school.
- Feedback: We value your perspective and provide opportunities for you to give feedback on the quality of program-family and program-staff interactions.

3. Annual CDEC Family Survey

*Each spring, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) conducts an annual family survey. You will be notified of the opportunity to participate and share your experiences regarding your meaningful and culturally appropriate involvement in our program, as well as the healthy development supports provided.*

## Enrollment

We offer the following schedules for our classrooms:

Full day Program: 9:00am- 3:30pm
Half day Program: 9:00am-12:30pm
Before Care: 7:30am- 9:00 am
After Care: 3:30pm–4:30pm

**PreK:** 5 days in our half day program, 3 full days, or 5 full days
**Infants**: 5 days per week in our full day program
**Toddlers/3s-** Enrollment for 2 day programs (T/Th), 3 days (M/W/F) or 5 days is available.

Please refer to the school calendar for school events, closings, non-student days and holiday closings. The preschool is closed for ALL MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS. The calendar is subject to change with advanced notice to families.
Enrollment for the August to May school year starts in the late winter prior. HEA Preschool is open to all regardless of race, sex, national origin, or religion**.** All enrollments, including re-enrollment, are based on availability, and not guaranteed. Applications for admission will be sent out to all interested parties.

**Please note:** *Members of the HEA are given priority status when registration begins in January. Next registration opens for currently enrolled, non-HEA member families. We will then open registration to the public after these two enrollment periods*

To enroll your child in the HEA Preschool program, please complete the online registration process through ShulCloud. You will need to create an account. Your

registration is not complete until the registration fee and monthly tuition payment have been received. These fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. Enrollments are accepted in the order in which they are received. When your application has been reviewed and your child has enrolled, you will be sent an electronic invitation to complete the required documentation and some hard copy of information. The required documents include Health forms, Release forms, and a developmental questionnaire. Every section must be completed on each form and returned prior to your child's attendance at our school.

**Schedule Changes and Withdrawals**

In the event it becomes necessary to withdraw or change your child's schedule, notice must be given to the Preschool Director one month in advance. Tuition will be charged for one month after the date of notification of withdrawal or change. The rate charged for this month will be the higher rate if decreasing the child's enrollment. No withdrawal credits are given for the month of May or August. Initial enrollment is for the entire school year. Monies may not be transferred to other departments in the synagogue. If for any reason we can no longer provide the services we have promised, we will give two weeks' notice to allow families to make other arrangements.

Occasionally, schedule changes may need to be made by families. One schedule change per school year may be made with no fee assessed. Additional changes will incur a processing/bookkeeping fee of $15.00. There is no processing fee charged for drop off scheduling. All schedule change requests must be received in writing/email. If you have any questions regarding fees, schedule changes and/or withdrawals from the school please contact the Director immediately.

***HEA Preschool reserves the right to ask that a student not return to our school. This will only happen after extensive observation of the child and consultations with parents have occurred. ***

**Weather Closure Policy:**

The HEA Preschool closes for inclement weather when we feel that our staff and families are unable to safely arrive at school. We use Cherry Creek and Denver Public Schools as guidelines and reserve the right to remain open or closed based on the needs of our school population. We will inform families on Brightwheel. On days when Cherry Creek or Denver have delayed openings, we will open at 9am to ensure our staff can arrive safely. Please take safety into consideration when coming to Preschool.

If we have a non-weather-related closing, we will contact families to notify them of closing and circumstances. In a situation that requires an early release or closure of the HEA Preschool, you will be contacted by the Preschool. Children will be supervised by Preschool staff until they are released to designated authorized people. Though rarely utilized, we have included five days into our regularly scheduled school year for these circumstances and only days that extend past these five will be made up at the end of the school year if applicable.

**School Tuition and Fees**

An annual registration fee plus one month's tuition is due with the application. These deposits are not refundable or transferable. Tuition rates vary by schedule and are available on our website.
Some months of school are shorter than others due to the Jewish or secular holidays and scheduled school closings. Tuition is based on a full school year including all scheduled closings and five additional non- scheduled closings (for emergency use only) and is then divided into ten equal monthly payments, August through May. No tuition credit is given for personal absences or vacations. Classes continue to meet during these times, and the HEA Preschool is not responsible for these absences.
*HEA Member* rates for the school year will be given to all HEA members in good standing who are considered "full" members of the Hebrew Educational Alliance Synagogue.
Tuition is payable in advance and due on the 1st of each month. Tuition is considered late on the 10th of the month, and a $25.00 late fee will be assessed. An additional $25.00 will be charged each month until your balance is up to date. A $30.00 processing fee will be assessed on any returned checks.

- It is important that your tuition account be kept current as delinquent or past due accounts may be cause for disenrollment of your child. The HEA Preschool will notify you 5 business days prior by email, phone, or mail if this action is taken, to allow you to bring your account current. Reasonable collection costs, research fees and legal fees shall be added to your account balance if legal action is required.

**Financial Aid and scholarships**

Various funders contribute to our scholarship funds and changes year by year. HEA, HEA Sisterhood and Jewish Colorado contribute significantly to Preschool scholarships. Additional funding comes from a generous grant from the Buell Foundation and continues today thanks to the generosity of donors to Jewish Colorado's Annual Campaign. Tuition assistance from this fund may be available to those who qualify. All Scholarship or Financial Aid requests should be made through the Preschool office. All applicants will be required to apply online through FACTS. FACTS is a company that is solely dedicated to working with schools to help recognize the financial assistance needed by families applying for scholarships. Applicants must submit all requested information by the deadline established. If you do not complete it in full by the deadline, you cannot be awarded funds from JEWISHcolorado.
Due to limited funds available, the application does not guarantee that you will be awarded a scholarship. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need. Please contact the Preschool Director if you have any questions.

**Immunization Policy**

Colorado law requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed childcare centers to be vaccinated against certain diseases unless they have a medical or non-medical* exemption on file (Colorado Board of Health rule 6 CCR 1009-2).
***Effective starting in 2019 HEA Preschool no longer accepts personal and religious exemptions*.** Medical exemptions will still be accepted. If your child is on a delayed schedule, you will need a note from your physician stating the medical necessity for the delay.
In each child's file, we maintain both electronic and paper records of the following:

- Child's enrollment form for current school year
- Signed Family Handbook
- A Developmental form
- A current medical form signed by your doctor.
- An Immunization form signed by your doctor.
- Allergy and Asthma Action plan if it applies, signed by the doctor.
- A signed current release form if there are therapists that visit the school (OT, PT)

To attend the HEA Preschool Program, you must authorize "Emergency Medical Treatment" with a current digital signature in the Brightwheel enrollment application.

**Health and Illness policy**

Children are the happiest and most successful at school when they feel well, have full bellies, and have a good night's sleep.
There are three main reasons to keep children at home:

- Your child does not feel well enough to take part in normal activities. For example, your child is overly tired, fussy or will not stop crying.
- Your child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
- The illness is on the "How sick is too sick" list* and staying home is recommended.

If you child has a fever, diarrhea, flu-like symptoms, severe cough, a rash with fever, vomiting, strep throat, or a vaccine preventable disease you should seek medical care and keep them home.
If your child is unable to participate in all daily activities, including outdoor play, they should remain at home, as we do not have the facilities or staff to keep them separated from their classes for extended periods of time. If your child has received any medication prior to attending school, please notify the Preschool office staff or your teacher.
Please contact us if your child is missing school due to illness. If warranted, the school will post a notice informing parents that their child may have been exposed to a particular illness. State law also requires HEA Preschool to report any cases of chicken pox, measles, or pertussis to the county health department.

This information is intended for educational purposes only. It does not take the place of your doctor's care and advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. The information should not be used in place of a visit, call or consultation or advice from your doctor or other health care provider. We reserve the right to request a doctor's note to return to school depending on the severity and length of your child's illness.

**Accident and Injury Procedures:** If a child has a minor scrape or bump, the staff will wash the injury, apply ice if necessary, and give TLC. An injury report will be made, where it will explain the details of the injury. It will then be signed off by the Director. A picture will be taken of the document and then uploaded directly to

Brightwheel so that parents can view it immediately. The hard copy will be placed in the child's file, located in the office. Parents will be notified immediately if there is a more serious injury, as will emergency personnel if needed. All staff are trained in first aid and emergency responses.

**Sunscreen** -According to the State of Colorado regulations we must have written permission and instructions for applying sunscreen prior to outside play. Children should arrive with the first layer of sunscreen applied. If you would like us to re-apply sunscreen, please complete the section of the release form provided to you. You will need to supply your child with sunscreen because of possible allergies. Please make sure this is labeled with your child's first and last name.

**Allergies**

If your child has any known allergies, please notify the preschool immediately. We also ask that you provide an Allergy Action Plan for your child and any prescribed medication. It is also important to add any allergies to your child's Brightwheel dashboard. Every classroom has an allergy list to ensure that no matter who is in the classroom (teachers, floaters, subs, volunteers and directors/admin) is safe. Due to allergies, we cannot permit pets in our Preschool.

We do not restrict nuts from our facility; however, we may request parents to avoid certain allergens in specific classrooms. We may also make sure children who bring allergens are seated at separate tables. We will communicate this in individual classrooms.

***We are required to have these forms on file by the first day of school by the State of Colorado Department of Human Services. If your child's file is incomplete, your child will not be allowed to attend class until we have received all the required forms***.

**Medication**

In accordance with state regulations, all prescription, and non-prescription medications to be administered to children in the Preschool will be administered by trained staff only. Parents or guardians must provide the school with a written order from the prescribing doctor that meets all state requirements and written parental/guardian consent. If your child needs to be given intermediate, on-going, or single dose medicine, please notify the school Director or the Assistant Director so that we may provide you with all the needed requirements. For the safety of all children: **under no circumstances should a child have accessible medication in the building**, this includes lunch boxes, backpacks, and personal drink or food items. The medication we administer must come to us in the original sealed packaging, including the box. Failure to provide necessary medication may result in a 911 call and the cost associated with emergency medical treatment.

**Sign in/out Requirements**

It is **required** by our early childhood license that children must be **signed in and out** of the classroom daily by an authorized adult. Attendance is now taken through the Brightwheel application. Please be sure to add all authorized pickups and provide them with the necessary information for drop-off and pick up**.** This allows us to confirm attendance, identify the number of children in the classroom in case of

emergency, and inform us when and by whom your child will be picked up at dismissal time.
Children will only be released to parents or to people that parents/guardians have listed on the Release Authorization form in the child's folder. We must have written authorization for any changes. If there is any change, a parent must call the Director to authorize the change. We will also ask for identification of the person picking up a child for whom we do not recognize.
Please note all visitors to the school will be required to check in at the Preschool office before entering the preschool classroom areas.
**The HEA Preschool is licensed and inspected by the State of Colorado.*

**Arrival:**
Except for students enrolled in early care (drop in between 7:30-9) Preschool classes start at 9:00 a.m. It can be difficult for an individual child to join a group when other children are already involved in play, so we ask parents to drop off as close to 9am as possible. For children who are potty trained, please ensure your child has gone to the bathroom before joining their peers. All children should wash hands upon arrival. Please communicate with teachers if your child will be arriving later in the morning or has a scheduled appointment. We request that your child try to arrive by 11:30 to ensure participation in the classroom routines for rest and lunchtime. Please note that children who arrive after **11:30 a.m.** may not be permitted to attend school that day, as late arrival can be disruptive to the classroom schedule and daily routines.

**Departure:**
The pick-up times are 12:30pm, 3:30pm and 4:30pm, depending on your enrollment. You may pick your child up earlier if needed, please just send a message on brightwheel so teachers know! It is important that you pick up no later than these scheduled times. Our staff have additional responsibilities that they must attend to such as cleaning up the classroom, transitioning to enrichment, breaks, late care, and planning time.
We will offer a one-time grace period of 5 minutes with a warning. After that, there is a $2.00 fee for each minute you are late. If you know you are running late, please call the office so we can accommodate accordingly. Because we understand that there may be unavoidable delays that parents cannot control, we will record and waive the fee the first time a parent is late. While calling the office is greatly appreciated, it does not excuse the fee assessed. You will be given a written warning; then we will automatically assess any late pick-up fees and add them to your monthly billing.

***As per Colorado State Human Service Regulations:*** If a child is not picked up from the Preschool after closing at 4:30pm, and reasonable attempts have been made to reach <u>all</u> contacts listed by the parents/guardians on the Information sheet provided to the Preschool, our staff will contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, as required, for further instructions as to the wellbeing and safety of the child.

**Field Trips:** Notification of an excursion off (only walking around surrounding grounds at HEA) the HEA property will be posted on the daily sign in sheet by the teachers

prior to the excursion. Parental authorization forms will be verified prior to any excursion by the teachers. The HEA Preschool does not offer field trips or events that require school vehicular transportation arrangements

**School Safety Protocols**

Safety is important not only in the school classrooms and playground but also extends outside to our parking lot. Please spend a few minutes acquainting yourself with these important safety guidelines.

**Parking Lot and Outside the Building**

- Please DO NOT leave your child or infant unattended in the parking lot. It is against the law to leave a child in a car unattended. If you have a sleeping or sick child, ask another parent or friend to watch your child while you are dropping off or have them bring your child into the school and sign them in.
- Please drive to the right and drive out to the left.
- Please be sure to park only in designated parking spaces. Do not park in handicapped or reserved spots.
- Please drive very slowly through the lot (5 MPH). Children can easily run between cars.
- Please hold your child's hand when walking through the parking lot and talk to your child about parking lot safety.
- Please supervise your children when they are playing on "the hill". Make sure your child is always visible and quickly accessible; Teachers and staff are not responsible once you have signed your child out.
- The garden areas in the front of the building should not be considered a play area for young children like the bricks and rose bushes; stones can all pose as hazards to a child. Please DO NOT ALLOW your children to play in this area.
- Please accompany your child if they need to return to the building. Children will not be allowed to be unsupervised in the building.

**Inside the Building**

- We have a secure building. Please do not let someone you do not recognize enter the building with you. **Effective May 2026, HEA hired Safety and Security Director Grant Rudzik (previously employed by citadel) to be the preschool's security guard, 7:30am-4:30pm**
- Children must be dropped off at the classroom and signed in by a designated adult or guardian; older siblings that are under the age of 18 may not pick up or drop off children.
- It can be very busy during drop off and pick up times. Children should at no time be without an adult. Please remember that your child should always remain with you to prevent getting lost or hurt.

**Emergency Responses**

The HEA Preschool regularly performs fire/tornado/situational drills and training with staff and the children. During these drills children are always supervised. Preschool staff members receive regular training in CPR, First Aid, Universal Precautions, and Emergency Response.

The supervision and safety of your children always is very important to us. Staff members regularly verify that all children are present throughout the day, especially during transition times (moving from classroom to classroom, bathroom, and outdoors). If for some reason a child becomes separated from their group, the staff members will quickly re-verify, advise the Director and the Assistant Director who will assist in verification, and will then contact the parents and necessary authorities.
If an emergency were to occur within our school regarding the safety of your child, you will be contacted by the Preschool office staff via a text message alert from your Brightwheel app.
Policies and procedures for different events are found in our Emergency Response Handbook. In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, parents will be called by HEA Preschool staff and reunited with their parents at Thomas Jefferson High School: 3950 S. Holly Street Denver, CO 80237.

**Clothing/Supplies**

As a play-based preschool, children often engage in sensory play and explore different art mediums. While we use all non-toxic art materials and use smocks, please expect that your child's clothing may get dirty or wet while they are at school. Children should be dressed in comfortable weather, appropriate clothing where they are able to move freely and easily dress or undress for toileting. We kindly ask that you send your child in CLOSED-TOE shoes. Flip Flops and sandals are not recommended. Nothing is more upsetting than wasting outside time because they are constantly dumping out sand, rocks, and tire bits from their shoes.
We ask parents to please provide 2 (or more if potty training) complete sets of labeled clothing to leave at school. In your child's cubby, there is a space for a shoe boxed size container to keep these supplies. Parents are expected to bring in their own containers and as the weather changes change out clothes or add to your child's box.
We also request appropriate and **LABELED** outdoor clothing. Children need and crave outdoor play. We go outside EVERYDAY unless it is below 20 degrees or above 90 degrees. The children may not spend their entire scheduled classroom time outside, but we do our best to give them some time outdoors.

**Other supplies:**

- We recommend a backpack or bag to send home artwork, any soiled clothing, or other supplies
- Crib sheet and blanket for those who are attending the afternoon program. Each child is **REQUIRED** by the state of Colorado to have these items. They will be sent home EACH FRIDAY to be washed and returned.
    - If your child is entering the infant room, a mini crib sheet is required to fit a mattress size 24x38x3. Children under 1 may not use blankets, however sleep sacs are allowed. Pacifiers are allowed- but they must not have an attachment (lovie or a strap)
- Diapers/wipes and diaper cream for those in the younger programs. Teachers will communicate with the parents when supply is low.
- Please bring a labeled water bottle each day

**Lunch and food policies**

HEA requests families send 2-4 healthy snacks, water bottles and a daily dairy lunch. Children will have the opportunity to eat morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack if enrolled.
The food provided to children must meet the nutritional guidelines set by the USDA for 2/3 of daily nutritional needs. If children do not have adequate lunch and snacks, supplementation with be offered. If you forget to send your child with lunch and are unable to have one to school before lunch, please let the Director know. HEA will provide a healthy lunch for $5.
Please note no meat products or shellfish are allowed in the classrooms. We do not require individual lunches to be Kosher or nut free. Speak with your child's teacher and/or the Director if you need food suggestions
While your child is at HEA Preschool, their health and wellbeing are of utmost importance and food accounts for over 50% of choking episodes. Choking can be prevented. As our partner you can help by following these simple guidelines from healthychildren.org
*Due to different personal levels of Kashrut and food allergies, children are not permitted to share food brought for lunch times.*

**Birthdays**

Celebrating birthdays can be a joyous occasion for children. We encourage families to speak with your classroom teachers to decide how to celebrate at school.
Non-food ways to recognize your child's special day might include donating a new book to your classroom library, or a parent joining for a special activity. Parents are welcome to coordinate a time with the teachers to visit and Grandparents are also welcome! Your child will also be recognized the week of their birthday at our Friday Shabbat Sing.
With the guidance of your classroom teacher, food may be brought in. Home-baked products MAY NOT be brought into the classroom Your teacher will communicate any allergies or dietary restrictions and the number of children in class. The treat must be in the original sealed packaging with an approved hechsher on the package. Please see the office for a list of approved hechshers (kosher symbols). **We do not accept K or triangle K.** If you are unsure or have questions, please speak with the Director. Click here to see acceptable Kosher Symbols. A quick consultation with the teachers or preschool office can help you when making your choices and can offer friendly suggestions.
Please keep in mind when planning your child's birthday party outside of school, many of our families observe Shabbat from Friday to Saturday evening.
We request that all invitations to parties are sent by email or mail. Please do not distribute them in your child's classroom. Please stop by the office for an updated classroom list.

**Staff Babysitting**

From time to time, families may choose to arrange babysitting or childcare with members of our teaching staff outside of school hours. These arrangements are private agreements made directly between families and staff. While we understand the value of continuity of care and the strong relationships that develop between

teachers and children, we ask that all families keep in mind that our teachers' primary professional commitment is to their role within the school. School responsibilities, schedules, and well-being must always come first.
Babysitting arrangements should not interfere with a teacher's performance, availability, or responsibilities at school. Additionally, all communication, scheduling, and payment for these services should be handled directly between the family and the staff member, and not through the school. We also want to emphasize the importance of confidentiality.
Teachers are not permitted to discuss or share information about other children, families, or staff members in any setting, including during private babysitting arrangements. This expectation helps maintain trust, professionalism, and the privacy of our entire school community. We appreciate your respect for our teachers' time, boundaries, and dedication to our program

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

As caregivers for your children, we are legally responsible to report all suspected child abuse or neglect. As part of the required on-boarding process, all staff must complete courses that provide guidelines and education about child abuse and neglect prior to the start of employment. According to the State of Colorado and Denver County Regulations we will report any suspicion of child abuse. We will report to the Colorado Division of Child Care, Human Services. As part of our registration package, you will receive some "reporting abuse or neglect" and/or "making a complaint" documentation. The following numbers may be used for reporting.

Child Abuse Hotline: 720-944-3000
Colorado Division of Child Care: 303-866-5958

**TO FILE A COMPLAINT ABOUT THIS FACILITY**

Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Childcare
1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203
Or Call:303-866-5958 or 800-799-5876

**Connecting Families to Resources and Services**

Hebrew Education Alliance's vision is to "Inspire Lives of Meaning," and we strive to maintain camaraderie amongst our congregants who are vibrant, committed, and curious.

Families experience well-being when all family members are healthy, safe, and financially secure. When families face challenges in one or more of these areas, their ability to support children's outcomes and school readiness can be affected.
Our program is committed to helping families connect with community- based services, training, and information and resources. For example, if your family is experiencing trauma and needs the support of a community-based resource or service, we can help identify available services. Services may focus on family needs such as health care, housing, job, and food assistance. We can also provide you with information on a variety of topics, including child development, nutrition, parenting and, among other topics, discipline. and connect you with that service.

The Denver Early Childhood Council has compiled an updated Denver Area Resource guide that may be helpful for families. This and additional resources are also posted on our preschool page. - **COS 2.14/5.1 and 5.2**

Click on topic to go to options online or scroll down and find specific resources links under the topic heading.

**General**
**Bed Bugs**
**Blood/Plasma Donation**
**Child Welfare**
**Domestic Violence**
**Education**
**Email**
**Employment/Unemployment**
**Ex-Offender Resources**
**Food/Nutrition**
**Health**
**Health Insurance**
**Housing/Shelter**
**Identification**
**Immigrants and Refugees**

Law/Legal
LGBT
Pregnancy/Birth Control
Senior Resources
Services to Immigrants and Refugees
Sexual Assault/Abuse
Shelters
Sign Language/Hearing Impaired
Substance Abuse/Treatment
Teens
Transportation
Veterans

**General Crisis** If you do not know where to begin getting mental health, substance use or emotional help for yourself or someone you know—start here. We provide confidential and immediate support, 24/7/365. If you are in crisis or need help dealing with one, call this toll-free number **1-844-493-TALK (8255)** or text TALK to 38255 to speak to a trained professional.

**311 Denver** non-emergency help is a phone call away.

**Mile High United Way's 2-1-1** Mile High United Way concentrates on helping people of all ages and in all stages of their lives. Search for resources in your area by zip code or dial 2-1-1, a multilingual service available 24 hours a day.

**Colorado PEAK** PEAK is an online service for Coloradans to screen and apply for medical, food, cash, and childcare assistance programs.

**State of Colorado** Official Colorado State government website.

**City of Denver** Denver city government official web site.

**Denver Human Services** Denver Human Services provides both assistance services and protection and prevention services to Denver's most vulnerable residents. Assistance programs are provided to eligible Denver residents in financial need and include federal food, cash and medical benefits, as well as childcare, child support, energy,

rental and burial assistance, all designed to help families and individuals toward financial self-sufficiency.

**Denver Residents Resources** A-Z lists all City and County of Denver departments and the services they offer.

**Benefits.gov** Designed to help citizens find out what government benefits they may be eligible to receive. Links to benefit programs for all types of people: elderly, veterans, low-income citizens, students, farmers, parents, disaster victims and many more.

**Urban Peak** Assisting young people to overcome poverty and homelessness by offering services and support to become self-reliant adults.

**Bed Bugs**

**Bed Bug Fact Sheets** Fact sheets for consumers and business managers and owners, available as pdfs for easy printing. In English and Spanish.

**Bed Bug Information from the Environmental Protection Agency** Comprehensive information for consumers covering inspection, treatment, facts, myths and how to get quality help.

**Bed bug information from Medline Plus** Bed bug information in English and Spanish.

**Blood/Plasma Donation**

**CLS Plasma** Find the CSL Plasma Center closest to you.

**GRIFOLS Plasma** Locate a center near you.

**Child Welfare**

**Report on Child Abuse** Information and telephone number.

**Domestic Violence**

**Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence** There are crisis lines throughout Colorado or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

**Mile High United Way's 2-1-1**

**Education**

**Colorado Department of Education**

**Focus Points Family Resource Center**

**Employment/Unemployment**

**Colorado Unemployment Insurance** Provides temporary and partial wage replacement to workers who have become unemployed through no fault of their own.

**Denver's Office of Economic Development** Assists workers with resume preparation, training, and more. Youth opportunities, too.

**Denver Public Library's Job Help Resources**

**Free to Learn** Denver Public Library resources for people who have spent time in prison or jail.

**Reintegration and Employment Services for Former Offenders** St. Francis Center Employment Services provides employment, career and education services.

**Food/Nutrition**

**Food Bank of the Rockies**

**Denver Food Pantries**

**Hunger Free Colorado**

**Metro Caring** *Offering free food delivery for high-risk individuals during the COVID pandemic.

**Denver Human Service's SNAP Into Health**

**Volunteers of America** Meals on Wheels and more.

**TEFAP: The Emergency Food Assistance Program** For public or private nonprofit organizations as well as individuals.

See also:

**National School Lunch Program**

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** (formerly the Food Stamp Program)

**WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)**

**Health COS 5.1b, 5.2b**

**Getting Help & Insurance** Referral services, low-cost clinics, government programs and more.

**Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Healthcare**

**Inner City Healthcare**

**Denver Health**

**Colorado Division of Aging and Adult Services** Information and referral, financial and medical support, affordable housing, employment, nutrition, advocacy, legal, transportation and more.

**Denver Public Library Health Resources** Health resources on a variety of topics for all age groups.

**Health Insurance COS 5.2b**

**Colorado's Child Health Plan Plus** A low-cost health insurance program for uninsured Colorado children ages 18 and under whose families earn or own too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance.

**Getting Help & Insurance** Referral services, low-cost clinics, government programs and more.

**Medicare and Medigap Insurance** What it is and how to buy it.

**Workers Compensation Information Center** Online publications and guides, attorney list, medical topics, frequently asked questions and more.

**State of Colorado Division of Insurance** Consumer information and support on all kinds of insurance, including Medicare, Long Term Care, HMO's, prescription drug benefits and more. See also **Senior Healthcare / Medicare**.

**Housing/Shelter**

**Colorado 211** Search for resources in your area by zip code.

**Denver Housing Authority, Section 8** The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher ("HCV") Program is a federal program that provides rental assistance to very low-income families (i.e. families with incomes below 50 percent of area median income).

**Energy Outreach Colorado** Provides home energy assistance to low-income Coloradans

**LEAP** Short-term, temporary financial assistance to help low-income Colorado residents pay winter home heating costs.

List of Shelters in **Denver** and **Aurora**

**Urban Peak** If you are a youth ages 15 up to age 20 in need of immediate overnight shelter services, please contact 303-974-2908.

**Identification**

**Division of Motor Vehicles** Driver's License and ID Card Center: Apply, Reinstate, Renew or Update. **Online Services**

**Colorado Legal Services ID Project** Applicants may apply by phone at 303-837-1313 or online at **applyonlinecls.org**.

**St. Francis Center**

**Immigrants and Refugees**

**List of reliable resources for immigrants, refugees, and asylees in the Denver area:**

**Immigrant Resource Guide (English)**
Guía de Recursos en Denver para Nuevos Americanos (Spanish)
የ Denver የመረጃዎች ጽሁፍ (Guide) ለአዳዲስ አሜሪካውያን (Amharic)
دليل موارد دنفر الخاص بالأميركيين الجدد (Arabic)
HƯỚNG DẪN VỀ NGUỒN LỰC TẠI DENVER CHO NGƯỜI MỚI ĐẾN HOA KỲ SINH SỐNG (Vietnamese)
Hagaha Khayraadka Denver ee Ameerikaanka Cusub (Somali)

**More Services to Immigrants and Refugees resources**.

**Law/Legal**

**Denver Police Department**

**Colorado Courts** The website of the Colorado Judicial Branch.

**Colorado Consumer Protection**

**Colorado Legal Services** Coloradans can find self-help legal information, free or low-cost legal service providers, court information and other resources.

**Colorado Public Defender** Provides criminal defense representation for indigent Colorado residents accused of a crime.

**Landlord/Tenant Disputes** HUD: Colorado Tenant Rights, Laws, and Protections

**LGBT**

**LGBT Colorado - The Center**

**Pregnancy/Birth Control**

**Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains**

**Denver Health**

**Inner City Health Center** Provides clinical health services for the uninsured and underserved. If you need health care, including medical, dental, or behavioral health services, we encourage you to just come.

**Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Healthcare**

**Gabriel House Project** The Gabriel House Project is an outreach ministry of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Denver committed to helping pregnant women and families with young children in need.

**Senior Resources**

**Back To Work 50+** Connecting struggling Americans 50+ with information, support, training, and employer access.

**Network of Care** Find local services from the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

**Colorado Crisis Services**
If you don't know where to begin getting help with a mental health, substance use or emotional concern for yourself or someone you know—start here. Confidential and immediate support, 24/7/365.

**Safe2Tell Colorado**
Anonymously report anything that concerns or threatens you, your friends, your family or your community.