

Meet Our Director & Specialists!

Director, Early Childhood Programs



Rene Shiohama

Rene joined Temple Rodef Shalom Early Childhood Center (formerly Temple Rodef Shalom Nursery School) in 2009 as an assistant teacher. In 2010 she became a lead teacher and was able to teach for all the age groups over many years. She has attended many Reggio Emilia conferences and attended classes expanding her knowledge in the Reggio Emilia Philosophy. In 2017 she became the ECC Director and traveled to Reggio Emilia, with 3 educators from TRS and 50 educators from the DMV, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Israel. In Italy she was able to study at the Malaguzzi Centre, a place to learn and discuss the nature of this educational culture. In 2020 our school expanded to include a Kindergarten curriculum, and Rene proposed to change the name of the school to Temple Rodef Shalom Early Childhood Center.

Rene observes each child through a lens of potential and growth with the belief that each child has a voice that can be articulated in different ways: through play, paint, drama, music, words, clay, and actions.

Rene grew up in Los Angeles, California where she received her Bachelor's of Arts from UCLA and her Master's Degree in Child Development from Antioch University. Rene's mission is for the children of the ECC to love school and her passion is to provide an enriching foundation for every child's early childhood years.

Early Childhood Education Specialist



Jessica Salen, Ph.D.

Jessica Salen is a developmental psychologist with over 30 years of experience working with children from birth to age 5. She has been with TRS ECC for over 10 years! Jessica trains and supports our teachers in creating and implementing developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms. She meets with teachers on a regular basis and is a resource in every classroom. She has also taught our parent-child classes!

Occupational Therapy



Becca Berick, MOT, OTR/L

Becca is a pediatric occupational therapist with over 13 years of experience working with children and their families in schools and clinics. She has expertise in treating young children who have difficulty keeping up with their peers in play, regulating their bodies for different activities, and confidently building independence with daily routines. Becca cultivates connections with each child for a foundation of meaningful and successful work. She approaches her work from a neurodiversity-affirming lens and believes strongly in the beauty and joy that our diverse selves bring to world.

The preschool years are a time of rapidly developing independence and sense of self. At TRS ECC, Becca works in close partnership with teachers and families to identify areas of challenge and tools to support children in building their confidence and success in navigating their expanding world.

Speech and Language



Anne Niez, MS, CCC-SLP

Anne Niez is a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist with over 10 years of experience. She has expertise in evaluating and treating young children with a variety of speech and language needs. Anne enjoys working as a team with parents and teachers to collaboratively support speech and language development.

Tremendous communication growth occurs during the preschool years and early support can be transformative. At TRS ECC, speech and language therapy is provided within the natural school environment to support generalization of skills and create modeling opportunities for teachers. Anne provides feedback to teachers on how to facilitate communication throughout the day and is continuously in contact with parents. Therapy targets may include areas such as speech sounds, language, fluency, and social communication.