**Caring Companions**

To meet the needs of students who require one-on-one assistance in order to have a successful experience in the Emanu El Youth and Family Education Program, we have developed the position of Caring Companion. The Caring Companion is a “shadow teacher”, responsible for working with one student, assisting that student with class work as well as social integration. In most cases, the Caring Companion is one designated teacher, usually but not always, a teen. In some cases, when a student reacts negatively to having one teacher assigned to him/her, an “informal” Caring Companion will be responsible for monitoring the student. The informal Caring Companion will often be a responsibility that various teachers on the team take on for limited times and on a rotating basis.

**Prior to the start of the school year:**

* Caring Companions will receive their assignments from the Director of Youth and Family Education.
* The Student Services Coordinator will provide each Caring Companion with information about his/her student as well as techniques and approaches that have been successful in the past. This information is gleaned from conversations and data provided by the previous Caring Companion, parents, and educators at other institutions who know the child.
* The Student Services Coordinator will assist Caring Companions in contacting the student’s family and setting up at least one informal meeting before the first session of the program.

**During the school year:**

* The Student Services Coordinator will check in with the Caring Companions on a weekly basis.
* Through conversations with the Caring Companion, Lead or Havurah Teachers, the Student Services Coordinator will find out how the student did that week, what strategies were used, what worked and what didn’t.
* The Student Services Coordinator will contact the children’s adults at least every two months to discuss their view of the students’ progress and satisfaction with the program and to ascertain whether what we are doing is consistent with what is being done at school and at home.
* The Student Services Coordinator will convey all relevant information to the Caring Companion and other teachers.
* If specific concerns arise, the Student Services Coordinator will contact the student’s adults immediately and stay in touch on a more frequent basis.

**If a Caring Companion will be absent:**

* The Caring Companion should inform the student’s family, the other teachers, and the Student Services Coordinator as far in advance as possible.
* Based on each situation, either the student will not come that day or someone else will be designated to be the student’s Caring Companion for the day.
* The team must have a back-up plan for the student in the event that the Caring Companion is unexpectedly absent.

**At the end of the school year:**

* Caring Companions will debrief their experience with the Student Services Coordinator and together they will determine whether the Caring Companion will continue in that role for the coming school year.
* Caring Companions will inform the Director of Youth and Family Education of their teaching preference for the following year.