

## EarlyJ's Shinshinim Program Information for the 2026-27 School Year

We are excited to announce that EarlyJ is now entering the second year of our Shinshinim program, which brings Israeli young adults to Bay Area preschools for a year of cultural engagement and community building. This program continues to be fully funded by EarlyJ. Below, you will find updated program details, an overview of the Shinshinim role, and an invitation to join us for an information session where we will share expectations, benefits, the selection process, and next steps.

Please note that **all preschools, including those currently hosting a Shinshin, will need to reapply for the upcoming year.** Acceptance is limited and not guaranteed, as placement decisions will be based on fit, preparedness, and capacity.

### Introduction to Our Partnership

EarlyJ, in partnership with JAFI (The Jewish Agency for Israel), is pleased to continue this meaningful initiative for the 2026–2027 school year. Each Shinshin will be placed with two preschools, creating a shared opportunity for collaboration, cultural exchange, and enriched learning environments. EarlyJ will once again fund all aspects of the program.

This initiative provides children and educators with a chance to learn from the energy, creativity, and cultural insights of these talented young Israeli volunteers.

### What Are Shinshinim?

Shinshinim are Israeli high school graduates who spend a year volunteering in Jewish communities around the world before beginning their military service. They are selected through a comprehensive assessment process that evaluates their maturity, leadership potential, and ability to serve as positive role models for young children.

### What Can the Shinshinim Bring to the Preschool?

A Shinshin's presence elevates the preschool experience in many ways, including:

- **Cultural Enrichment:** Introducing Israeli culture through Hebrew language exposure, music, stories, arts, traditions, and holiday celebrations.
- **Language Exposure:** Engaging children with basic Hebrew words, songs, games, and informal conversation.
- **Interactive Learning:** Supporting dynamic, hands-on, and play-based activities that enrich curriculum and bring fresh perspectives to the classroom.
- **Role Modeling:** Promoting values such as kindness, social responsibility, creativity, and community engagement.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the Shinshinim

Shinshinim focus on supporting early childhood educational experiences through:

- Facilitating Hebrew language exposure in age-appropriate ways
- Leading cultural activities rooted in Israeli traditions
- Assisting educators with interactive and creative learning opportunities

Shinshinim supplement the work of preschool educators. They are not classroom leads and work only under staff supervision.

## Program Limitations

To ensure clarity of expectations, please note:

- **Time-Limited Service:** Shinshinim serve for one school year.
- **Language Barriers:** Some Shinshinim may still be acquiring English language fluency.
- **Required Oversight:** They must work under the supervision of preschool staff and a JAFI Hub professional and are not intended to independently lead or manage classrooms.
- **Age Group Focus:** A majority of the Shinshin's time with children should be with ages 3-5 years.

## Professional Training Provided by JAFI

All Shinshinim receive extensive professional preparation, including:

- Early childhood education best practices
- Developmental understanding of young children
- Strategies for creating engaging environments
- Training in age-appropriate activity planning

This training equips them to make a meaningful contribution in preschool settings.

## Responsibilities of Participating Preschools

Participating preschools will be expected to:

1. **Create a Supportive Environment:** Staff must be prepared to collaborate with and mentor the Shinshin.
2. **Assist with Orientation:** Help the Shinshin integrate into the school community and daily routines.
3. **Provide Supervision:** Ensure staff are available to guide, oversee, and provide feedback.

4. **Secure Host Families:** Each preschool is responsible for identifying and supporting host families for the Shinshin.

## Hosting Family Responsibilities

Shinshinim live with local host families, generally for three to four months at a time. Host family responsibilities include:

- Offering a welcoming home with a private bedroom and shared meals
- Helping the Shinshin adjust to life in the community
- Providing a supportive family environment during their service

## EarlyJ's Role and Funding

EarlyJ proudly funds one hundred percent of the Shinshinim program costs, allowing preschools to participate without any financial burden. This is currently the **only** Shinshinim program that focuses exclusively on early childhood education, bringing Shinshinim full-time to Jewish preschools.

## Conclusion

As we enter the second year of this program, we are thrilled to continue strengthening Jewish early childhood education through cultural exchange, relationship building, and immersive learning experiences. Hosting a Shinshin offers children unforgettable cultural enrichment and helps our preschools model deep and joyful connections with Israel.

We look forward to your participation and to receiving your application for the upcoming year.

## Information Session

Please join us on December 17th at 8:30am for a Zoom information session to learn more about the program, its benefits, logistics, preschool selection, and to have all your questions answered.

To receive the Zoom link, please RSVP here: <https://wkf.ms/48IDgmm>

## Application

To apply for the EarlyJ Shinshinim program for the 2026-27 school year, please complete the application using this link: <https://wkf.ms/49ld5bY>  
Applications are due by January 15, 2026.