

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **WELCOME TO THE SARI ISDANER EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER!**

We are very excited to welcome you and your child(ren) to our school. The guidance provided in this handbook is intended to help you navigate our policies and procedures and provide you with information that is relevant to your child's early learning success. Safety is our top priority, and each of our staff is following guidelines that integrate Covid-19 safety measures, with day-to-day preschool life. Early childhood is a very special time, and we make every effort to fulfill and enrich your child's life with opportunities for self-expression, hands-on experiences, and opportunities for learning.

Our philosophy is based on the Creative Curriculum; children learn through play. In this manual, you will find guidance on many topics. Our goal is for all children to be in a learning environment conducive to their individual success in all areas of development. As the school year begins, and as we move through the year, it is important to read this parent handbook to have awareness of our policies. Please keep this document handy, as it will help guide you through health policies, lunch procedures, classroom curriculum and more.

Thank you for being part of our community and our school, and we encourage you to become an active participant in your child(ren)'s education. We believe that a strong partnership between parents and staff remains vital to a child's success in school. We look forward to getting to know you and your family and having a continued connection as your child(ren) grow and develop.

### **THE PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP**

Your child's success in our program depends on an ongoing partnership between you (the parents/caregivers), and our staff. Your child's teacher plays a very significant role in your child's everyday life. We encourage parents to inform teachers of any changes in your child's personal life, such as the birth of a sibling, moving to a new home, upcoming vacation, a divorce or a death, or an illness in the household. Any change, positive or negative, can affect a child's environment or routine, and it can impact their participation and relationships at school. Knowledge is power, and if we are kept up to date, we can best approach your child with compassion and understanding.

If you feel the teachers are not addressing your concerns, please reach out to our administrative team to help resolve any issues. We foster cooperation among parents/caregivers, teachers, and administrators. You are also always welcome to let the teacher know when you are pleased with your child's progress, as it will show the teacher that you value their contribution to your child's development.

#### **How do we keep you as the parent/caregiver informed?**

We keep you informed about our school activities through:

- Monthly newsletters and Friday updates
- Daily reports via Tadpoles (our electronic communication system)
- In-person and Zoom opportunities
- A teacher/parents/caregivers conference held once a year in the winter. While we hope this will take place in person, please stay tuned for the most current approach which will keep health and safety as a priority

## CONTACT US

Feel free to e-mail or call us with any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sari Isdaner Early Childhood Center at the Katz JCC  
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[katzjcc.org/ECE](http://katzjcc.org/ECE)

### **ECE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF DIRECTORY**

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

To ensure the safety of your child and to help us maintain consistency and organization, please adhere to the following policies.

### **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

We ask parents to respect and adhere to the assigned drop-off and pick-up times daily, with special consideration for medical appointments or unique circumstances.

Each child will be released only to the child's custodial parent(s), or person(s) authorized in writing by the custodial parent(s) to take the child from the Center. In case of emergency, the parent must email and call the school and give identifying information on the person picking up the child. Any unfamiliar person picking up the child will be asked for identification. Legal documentation must be supplied to the JCC in the event of special situations.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access to a child by a court order, the Center shall secure documentation to that effect and maintain a copy on file. If teachers have any questions concerning the person picking up the child, they will call the parents. If unable to contact parents or guardians, the child will not be released.

Written procedures to be followed by staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appear(s) to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual. The procedures shall require that:

1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent, or an alternate person(s) authorized by the parent(s)

### **LATE PICK-UP**

We will not leave a child unsupervised at any time. The Katz JCC asks that parents pick up their children promptly at the end of their school day barring any unforeseen emergency (traffic not included). If the parent or other person designated to pick up the child is going to be late, the school expects that contact will be made between the person and the early childhood department. There will be a late fee applied to your account for perpetual lateness. We completely understand there are extreme exceptions such as weather, traffic issues, etc. The Early Childhood director will use discretion to determine these situations and act accordingly.

### **SWITCHING DAYS FOR PART-WEEK CHILDREN**

Please note that we will do our best if/when you need to add time or days to your child's schedule. In all cases a director must give permission to do so to be sure that the classrooms remain in the correct teacher to child ratio when adding these students. We will try to be flexible when you need EXTRA time, always keeping in mind the state guidelines for teacher to child ratio. There will be no "make-up" days when the school is closed for holidays, vacation days, or unexpected sick days. Thank you for your understanding.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Every effort will be made to keep the school open. In the event of a school closing or delay, families will be notified as quickly as possible. While we know it can be frustrating, Government closures or inclement weather are beyond our control. When weather is the factor, we take every aspect into account when making our decisions. The top consideration will always be safety for staff and families. When the JCC is closed for an emergency, we are unable to guarantee any changes in schedule/days, any make-up days, or reimbursement for any days missed. Thank you for your understanding.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is our objective to foster self-esteem, self-regulation, self-direction and cooperation. Positive redirection, and logical opportunities for children to problem solve and make choices are the means of fostering all the above. In the event that a child requires discipline by a teacher, the following philosophy shall be followed:

- The methods of guidance used shall be positive, consistent with the developmental needs of the children, and applied with the full knowledge and understanding of the parent(s).
- There shall be NO use of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse/neglect or exploitation.
- Discipline shall not be associated with the withholding of emotional responses or stimulation and shall not require the child to remain silent for extended periods of time.

Any acute disciplinary problems should be discussed with the director and the parents.

### **Dismissal from the program:**

The director reserves the right to cancel any child's enrollment or dismiss a child from the program if we feel that every effort has been made to offer support, and we are still not able to find a healthy arrangement. We will offer families as much notice as possible to find another school, with a minimum of 10 days.

\* Our Expulsion Policy is included in your parent packet and requires your signature as per state regulations.

## MEDICAL FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION POLICY

All children entering the Sari Isdaner Early Childhood Center must have an up-to-date immunization record on file prior to admission. If your child is 6 months to 5 years old, they must have an annual influenza vaccine by November 1 of each new school year. Each child also needs an updated Universal Health Form each year. If you do not comply with these deadlines, your child will be excluded from being a part of Early Childhood. The immunization record must include:

- Name of child
- Name of parent/guardian
- Child's birth date
- Vaccine administration dates
- Date of issue
- Name and address of physician

Parents are required to provide updated immunization records each time their child receives a vaccination. There are no medical/religious exemptions.

### Our school policy states:

- Children who are ill must be kept at home until they are free of fever and symptoms (without fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours. If your child is seen by their pediatrician, a note must be provided stating that the child is safe to return to school and no longer contagious.
- If a child has 2 or more watery diarrheas in one school day, they will be sent home. Diarrhea and vomiting, whether viral or food related, are a cause for concern. Children should remain out of school for at least 24 hours after symptoms subside.
- **Our school's definition of 24 hours means one full day out of school and symptom free. For example: if a child is sent home any time on a Tuesday, they may not come back to school until Thursday at the earliest. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need clarification at any time.**

## LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families: Manual of Requirements; Pages 67 & 68. A center serving well children shall not permit a child to remain if they present with any of the illnesses or symptoms of illness specified below:

- Any symptom of COVID-19
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to looser consistency within a period of 24 hours or bloody diarrhea
- One or more episodes of vomiting within a period of 24 hours
- Elevated oral temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or over or axillary temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult rapid breathing or severe coughing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a health care provider
- Mouth sores with bleeding
- Stiff neck

Once a child is symptom-free, or a health care provider indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to themselves or to other children (**and** the child is 24 hours symptom free defined as at least one full day out of school), the child may return to school.

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **State of New Jersey Department of Health**

Below are some of the most common symptoms & exclusions for Early Childhood:

- Conjunctivitis
- Gastrointestinal Illness
- Fever (Only)
- Hand Foot and Mouth (coxsackie virus)
- Impetigo
- Pink or red conjunctivae with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye.
- Frequent loose or watery stools (2 above normal for that child). One or more episodes of vomiting within a period of 24 hours
- Axillary temperatures over 100.4 degrees
- Fever, sore throat, ulcers in the mouth and blisters on hands and feet
- Small, red pimples or fluid filled blisters with crusted yellow scabs
- Diarrhea: until stools are contained in the diaper or toilet trained children no longer have accidents using the toilet.
- Vomiting: until symptoms have resolved (minimum of 24 hours)
- Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication

## **COVID-19 MANAGEMENT**

As this is an ongoing and ever-changing situation, please see attached addendum for the most recent guidance from NJ child care licensing and the CDC.



## MEDICATION

The school will administer medicine to a child only if the parent gives the medication in its original package (with direction of administration on the prescription) to the teacher and signs an authorization form stating the type of medication, reasons for giving it and instructions for administering. We DO NOT administer over the counter drugs. If needed, over the counter medicines need to be transferred to a prescription requiring:

- Doctor's prescription/note, along with the child's name, prescribed dosage and time interval dosage with the actual times indicated by your child's doctor, indicating that the medication is needed to be given to the child during their hours with us.
- The teacher & parents/caregivers will initial the form each time the medicine is administered.
- No medication will be administered on an "as needed" basis (except for emergency medication for asthma, EpiPen). Our staff cannot make the decisions about whether or not medicine is to be given.
- No medication can be given to a child that is "hidden" within a bottle or cup.
- All medications are kept out of the reach of children in a locked container.
- Insect repellent may be used with written parental permission on children older than 2 months once per day.
- ALLERGIES: Please indicate your child's allergies on the enrollment/intake forms. We are happy to work with you in ensuring your child is safe in our care. If it is a life-threatening allergy, we will need specific information and an action plan on treatment in case of contact as well as the appropriate supplies (for example an EpiPen).

**We have several children with very severe allergies in our school. Therefore, as a school, we are NUT AWARE (Please do not send any nut butter products).**

**We will also consider any other severe allergies such as egg or wheat, and we might need to label individual classes as "Egg Free" to ensure safety for all. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.**

## FOOD

The JCC follows kosher dietary laws and we ask that you bring only dairy (no meat) products into the school. Some suggestions for acceptable foods include: Tuna Fish • Fish Sticks • Eggs • Cheeses • Cream Cheese • Jelly • Yogurt • Pasta • Pizza (Cheese Only) • Vegetables • Salads • French Toast Sticks • Soy Burgers or Soy Nuggets • Fruit

All lunches must be age appropriate.

Any questions regarding acceptable food products to bring to school should be directed to the Early Childhood Office. The school is “nut aware” which means we do not serve any foods or snacks containing nuts. Parent(s) sending nut butter substitutes for lunch must include a note stating that it is the Nut Free peanut butter. We ask that you refrain from sending in any of these foods or snacks as well. Popcorn, grapes and hard pretzels will not be served to children under 4, due to choking hazards. Children are given healthy snacks daily which may include raisins, pretzels, graham crackers, cheese crackers, wheat thins, vanilla wafers, apples and bananas and more. On special occasions, we make fruit salads or bake “sweets.”

## WALKING PERMISSION

The school follows N.J.A.C. 3A:52 which requires parental permission for trips around the Katz JCC building, including, but not limited to; walking to playground areas, and other designated areas for participation in a variety of programs. N.J.A.C. 3A:52 requires us to specifically notify you that we have a swimming pool on the premises and that the children may be participating in activities near water two or more feet in depth.

## INTERNET & CELL PHONE POLICY

Staff must adhere to the internet and cell phone policy concerning social media. Our Internet Policy was approved by the Katz JCC Board of Directors, for distribution to all employees and volunteers. The policy states the following:

- No use of internet, whether by e-mail, blogs, or any website, as a vehicle for gossip, rumors or derogatory comment regarding the JCC Early Childhood School or the Betty and Milton Katz JCC. To the extent within your control, you must not allow pictures or videos of yourself to be downloaded to sites on the internet, or to otherwise use the internet or e-mail in a manner that would be considered unprofessional or lewd, or that would tend to compromise your ability to be considered a positive role model for your children. Under no circumstances should a picture ever be published of a student or their family on the internet or pictures sent via cell phone, e-mail or instant message without the authorization of the Early Childhood Director. If you currently have any material on the internet that you think is in violation of this internet code of conduct it should be removed immediately.

## ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

In case of an accident, we will first try to notify the parents/guardians, emergency contacts; ECE directors and teachers and assistant teachers are certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation. Should emergency action be needed, staff will provide immediate care; call EMS (911) and call the parents/guardians. A staff person will accompany the child (if permitted by EMS) and EMS to the hospital when necessary. Emergency Medical Forms- Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions that require medication or technology support) are on file with the teacher.

Staff will contact you when your child receives any minor injury that requires more than slight attention so you will be aware of the accident. An accident report will be filled out by your child's teacher and signed by an administrator. A copy of this will be both emailed to you, and kept in their file

- All staff members must use barriers such as gloves when bodily fluids (i.e. blood) are involved.
- Fully equipped first aid kits are taken with each group when they leave their classroom and are readily available in classrooms.
- Liquids and foods hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach.

## BIRTHDAYS

Families celebrate children's birthdays in different ways, and some do not celebrate birthdays at all. We try to recognize and respect these differences. We are also aware that a little bit of excitement goes a long way in groups of young children. We intentionally keep birthday observances low key. If you would like your child to celebrate a birthday, we welcome you to bring in store-packaged, individually wrapped, kosher cupcakes, cookies, donuts or other treats to share with the class. Other acceptable suggestions are Entenmanns, TastyKake or animal crackers.

Please plan with your child's teacher in advance and remember that any items to be shared with the class need to be marked with a kosher symbol and be nut free. Please do not send in any home-baked items. We also ask that you limit the birthday celebration to the special treat and do not send paper goods, party hats, favors, balloons or goody bags. Invitations to birthday parties are to be mailed to your child's classmates. Please do not use the cubbies for this purpose unless all classmates are invited. A roster with student names, telephone numbers and addresses are available upon request from the ECE registrar.

### **CLOTHING AND BLANKETS**

We encourage children to be active, explore their environment and participate in art projects. This means they get dirty. Please dress your child comfortably in clothes that are easily laundered. It is difficult for a child to play freely if he or she is worried about getting messy. For safety purposes, children should wear sneakers or closed toe shoes with rubber soles daily. Please send in a shoebox and a complete set of labeled clothing suitable for the season. Please include: one pair of socks, one pair of pants or shorts, one set of underwear and at least one shirt. Masks are welcome, as we hope to make all families feel comfortable.

### **NOTE: ALL ARTICLES OF CLOTHING AND BEDDING MUST BE LABELED**

If a child brings home a set of soiled clothing, please replace the extra set the next day. In the winter, please send gloves, hat and boots, as we enjoy outdoor play whenever weather permits. Please label all items. Please dress your child appropriately for the current weather.

Children attending full day care may keep a labeled blanket at school for naptime. It will be sent home for laundering every week.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY & AIR QUALITY PROCEDURES**

Outdoor play is an important element of the Early Childhood Program. Children will play outdoors daily. Children benefit from experiencing many kinds of weather conditions and The American Academy of Pediatrics supports outdoor play even in cold weather. Layering your child's clothing is desirable during cold weather, so they may adjust clothing to maintain a comfortable body temperature. When outdoor opportunities for large motor activities are not possible because of environmental conditions (below freezing temperatures, head index above 90 degrees, etc.), similar activities are provided inside.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME**

We request that you do not send personal items from home, unless they are for "share day" purposes.

### **TOYS – SANITIZING**

Any toys that have been placed in the mouth or touched by bodily fluids are washed in soap and water, rinsed, sanitized and air dried.

### **TRAFFIC AND SAFETY IN THE PARKING LOT**

The JCC provides services for children daily. We ask everyone who uses our parking facilities to drive slowly, as children walk through our lots to enter the building. Please do not park in the handicap or reserved spots, or crosswalk spot in front to pick up and drop off your child unless you are authorized to park in these spots. Please refrain from talking on your cell phone when pulling in and out of parking spots as it is a distraction and there are many children crossing.

### **SUPERVISION**

Children are always supervised by staff. Children are not out of sight or sound at any time.

### **FIRE DRILLS AND LOCK DOWN DRILLS**

According to our Licensing Rules and Regulations, fire drills are conducted once a month. A record of the fire drills is kept with the date, time, number of staff and children as well as how long it takes. All fire drills must be completed within three minutes. We are required to conduct two lock-down drills each year. A record of the lock down drill is kept with the date and how long it takes for the children and staff to get their "Safe Place."

## INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAMS

The goal of our programs is to give your child a wonderful experience in a caring, nurturing environment. Each day our loving, creative staff will guide your child through a multitude of early childhood experiences. The morning hours include play, circle time, stories, music activities, gross and fine motor skills and many early learning activities. The afternoon hours include lunch, sleep/rest time, play and a variety of enjoyable experiences. Jewish programming at your child's level is also an important part of the program. Our goal is to have the utmost communication – using the Tadpoles Communication System – with each parent while providing a safe, nurturing environment for your child to grow and develop. Each child has a daily log within our Tadpoles Communication System and parents will receive an electronic daily report. Please provide the teacher with your child's schedule.

Before arrival, please advise the teachers of your child's daily information, i.e., the last time they were fed and the time they woke up etc. into your child's daily log on Tadpoles. This information will help us to keep your child on their own schedule. Also, be sure to inform the caregiver of any important information necessary for their daily routine i.e., change in sleeping or eating habits, or person picking up. Parents should not try to prevent the child from crying at all. Your child needs to express their feelings and it is best to say goodbye and give a kiss as you leave the drop-off area. You can always call the office to check on your child during the day.

## SAFE SLEEPING

We observe the practice of Back to Sleep in the infant room, for the safety of your baby. Infants must be placed on their back during nap time unless otherwise ordered by a physician. According to the NJ State Licensing Regulations, we are unable to permit pillows, quilts, comforters, mobiles, stuffed toys or other soft items for the crib. Nothing is permitted in the crib with your child, and we are not permitted to swaddle or use any type of swaddle blanket (sleep sacks are permitted). Please note that our cribs do not have sides that drop.

Once your child is in the toddler program and napping on a cot, you may bring in a small blanket and a 'lovie' if your child needs a comfort item from home. In accordance with the State of N.J.A.C. 3A:52 to enhance our requirements for health and safety for infants and toddlers by: prohibiting the use of blankets and bumper pads for children under the age of 12 months during rests; prohibiting swaddling of children; removing bottles; cups and pacifiers when children are crawling and walking; ceasing the use of pacifier straps and attachment devices.

## **CLOTHING**

Please bring the following on the first day school, and PLEASE label everything.

### **INFANTS:**

- 1 crib sheet to fit cribs 24'x38'

### **TODDLERS:**

- Underwear (if applicable)
- 1 crib sheet for rest time on a cot

### **INFANTS & TODDLERS:**

- Bibs
- Socks
- 2 or 3 changes of clothing (seasonal)
- A jacket for cooler weather
- One baby picture of your child & one current picture of your child
- Disposable diapers and wipes

## **CUBBY CHECK**

If we send home your child's clothing, be sure to send new clothing the next day. All soiled clothing or cloth diapers are placed in a plastic bag and sent home. Linens go home on your child's last day of the week and we request that you launder and return to school the following week.

## **DIAPERING**

We follow state procedures posted in all classrooms that have diapering. Diapers are changed every 2 hours or when diaper is soiled or wet and after naps and documented on our Tadpoles Communication System. Trash cans have lids to keep children away from materials inside. The staff discards diapers and contaminated materials into a securely tied, plastic bag and put in a closed container. Changing tables are exclusively used for diapering purposes only. If cloth diapers are used, they must have an absorbent waterproof lining.

## **FOOD**

Infants are fed the items you send from home, according to their individual schedules. If your toddler arrives at school before 8:30am, a light breakfast is available, i.e., cold dry cereal (or whatever you send in with them). Please send a dairy lunch (no meat, please), fruit (ready to eat), yogurt, etc. for lunch. Please do not send in any raw carrots or popcorn. Also, grapes must be cut in half. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided each day. Water is provided at all times as needed.

## INFANTS

### NURSING MOMS

Our program supports nursing. If sending frozen milk, it must be labeled with child's name and the date. Staff will gently mix the milk before feeding. Although it may be difficult, we urge you to get your nursing baby accustomed to taking a bottle before they begin day care. It will really help make for a smoother transition.

### ITEMS NEEDED:

- 3 or 4 plastic bottles (never glass)
- Formula (enough for the day) – must come to the center in factory sealed containers and be prepared as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Juice (no more than 4 oz. daily)
- Teething foods
- Baby cereal (we have Cheerios)
- Sippy cup when ready (labeled with your child's name)
- Spoon and bowl if necessary (labeled with your child's name)

Per New Jersey Child Care Licensing all bottles and sippy cups that are brought into the center must be labeled with your child's first and last names. Bottles must be labeled with the date. These same bottles and sippy cups need to go home daily to be sterilized. (Bottles should be refilled with formula, breast milk or cow's milk.) We ask that all parents put the completed labels on before you arrive as teachers are often busy with the other children in the class. Bottles are warmed in crock pots in water that is no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than 5 minutes. No milk can be warmed in a microwave. Staff will discard formula or breast milk that is served but not finished or is out of the refrigerator for 1 hour. When children are ready to transition to a cup, staff and parents will consult together. Children are then offered liquids in a cup. All children are held during bottle feeding, as per state regulations. Bottles are never propped. Children may not walk or crawl around with bottles or cups. They may not have bottles or cups in their cribs. Please take cups, spoons, bowls and bibs home each day to be properly washed and sterilized and return in lunchbox.

Staff will cut foods into pieces no larger than  $\frac{1}{4}$  "for infants and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " for toddlers. Solid foods and juice are not offered to infants under the age of 6 months, unless parents and their health care provider recommend this in writing. We do not feed cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months.



### **CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR ALL ECE CHILDREN**

We emphasize the following skill areas in our curriculum:

- Social/Emotional Skills
- Literacy and Language Development
- Listening Skills
- Visual Discrimination Skills
- Large Motor Skills
- Manipulative and Fine Motor Skills
- Social Studies and Community
- Art
- Music and Drama
- Math Concepts
- Science and Technology
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)

### **TO MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. Teacher/child ratios meet or are better than the state guidelines.
2. Rooms, equipment and materials are routinely inspected and kept in clean working order.
3. All staff is trained in appropriate methods of preventing illness and maintaining a safe environment.
4. Children are never left unattended, and always within sight and sound supervision.

### **TO PROVIDE A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAM THAT OFFERS CHILDREN CHOICES IN A SUPPORTIVE AND STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT.**

1. Environment, routine, materials, and equipment are used as resources for activities that are appropriate to the developmental levels and individual learning styles of the children.
2. Activities are designed at appropriate developmental levels to build self-esteem, and to encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving.
3. All children are encouraged to explore a variety of individual and group options so that all children can experience roles and feel free to experiment with all materials, equipment and toys.

### **TO PROMOTE THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD**

1. The environment is conducive to developing relationships with other children and adults. Cooperation efforts, mutual respect, appreciation of diversity, and shared leadership characterizes all activities.
2. Emotional security grows as each child is guided in self-knowledge, self-acceptance and pride in individual accomplishments. Children are also helped to maintain a comfortable separation from their parents as they join in activities that promote a sense of competence and autonomy.
3. Social skills are developed under the guidance of the staff that helps set the stage for problem solving, cooperative play, and shared responsibility.

### **TO PROMOTE COGNITIVE GROWTH**

1. Activities involving communication, literacy, math, science, music, drama and art are offered at appropriate developmental levels to foster each child's growth and competence.
2. Children are encouraged to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings as they expand their understanding of the world and to represent these ideas to others cerebrally, graphically, and through dramatic play.
3. Children are encouraged to explore new materials, investigate new areas, and develop confidence in their ability to process and integrate new knowledge.
4. Listening and thinking skills are naturally developed through story reading and conversations. Children are read stories daily and we encourage parents to continue this activity at home.
5. Children are given the opportunity to make choices as they solve problems, join in activities and plan their day.

### **TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Physical development is promoted through daily structured and choice activities, such as playground, movement activities and gym.
2. Fine motor development is promoted by the inclusion of manipulative and age- appropriate tools.

### **CURRICULUM LEARNING EXPERIENCED**

#### **ART**

Mediums of all types provide an opportunity for the child to experience satisfaction with manipulation, experimentation, and exploration of the medium, and provide outlets for the expression of ideas, feelings and emotions.

#### **DRAMATIC PLAY**

This enables the child to re-enact the experiences in his/her world to understand and explore their meaning. With the help of props such as dolls, and other items, a child may explore being a parent caring for a baby, or an astronaut on the moon. Children can express their new knowledge and use their new vocabulary through Dramatic Play.

#### **CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT**

Young children are in the process of forming many concepts about their world. The teacher provides experiences in relevant areas of interest to expand each child's knowledge of cognitive skills, language, curiosity, and problem-solving skills.

#### **LARGE AND SMALL MOTOR ACTIVITIES**

Climbing, running, pushing and pulling are a few of the large muscle activities encouraged by the availability of slides, balance beams, and various climbing apparatus. Activities such as cutting and pasting, art activities, puzzles, and other manipulative materials, provide opportunities for the practice and development of small motor skills.

## **MUSIC**

Opportunities include singing, rhythms, listening, rhythmically moving, experimentation with various instruments, and creation and interpretation of music.

## **EXPERIENCES WITH LITERACY**

Provide books, child-dictated stories, discussions, puppets, storytelling, and many experiences with printed materials which aid in a child's development and help him/her learn about the world.

## **SCIENCE AND MATH**

Experiences offer the child first-hand opportunities for scientific discovery and an understanding of number and quantity. Such experiences include cooking activities, planting seeds, counting, sorting and numerous others.

## **BLOCKS**

Provide opportunities for beginning math, engineering and science experiences.

## **JUDAIC**

Children will have the daily opportunities to learn about their Judaic heritage through stories, songs, games, art, creative play, cooking and weekly Shabbat celebrations.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Children have daily opportunities (weather permitting) to play outdoors on the playgrounds. The playgrounds are designed for climbing, balancing, running, exploring, sliding, bike riding and other gross motor activities. In addition, the preschool playground has play stations to enhance outdoor exploration and imagination.

## **HOLIDAYS**

While we celebrate cultural diversity and various national and Jewish holidays, we do not participate in the celebration of Halloween, Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, or Easter. Please refrain from sending in cards or candy related to these holidays for distribution while in our school. The following are brief explanations of the Jewish Holidays we celebrate weekly and during the school year. See the calendar for Jewish Holiday closings.

### **SHABBAT**

The Jewish Sabbath starts at sundown every Friday and lasts until sundown on Saturday. In many Jewish homes the tradition of lighting candles and saying prayers to welcome the Sabbath are observed. Although Shabbat lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, all the children in our program join on Friday mornings to celebrate the coming Shabbat. Each preschool classroom enjoys challah (twisted bread) and "wine" (water).

### **ROSH HASHANAH**

This two-day holiday is the Jewish New Year and usually falls in September. It is a time of personal reflection of our past and future behavior. The children enjoy apples and honey, which are symbolic for a sweet new year.

### **YOM KIPPUR**

This is the most solemn holiday of the year – the Day of Atonement. It is an adult fast day and a day of prayer. We discuss with the children how to be their very best.

### **SUKKOT**

This holiday recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in sukkots (booths). It is also a harvest holiday symbolized by the Lulav (palm branch) and Etrog (citron) which are intricate parts of the celebration. We decorate our Sukkah with fruit and greenery and enjoy our snack in the Sukkah.

### **SHEMINI-ATZERET**

This holiday occurs on the eighth day of Sukkot and is considered a holiday itself. It is a solemn day with special prayers of rain (geshem).

### **SIMCHAT TORAH**

On this joyous holiday, we complete the reading of our Torah for the year and immediately start reading the Torah all over again. This is a happy holiday for children as they march around the JCC singing songs and carrying flags.

## **HANUKKAH**

“Festival of Lights” celebrates the Maccabean victory, when brave Judah Maccabee and his small band of followers saved the Jewish Nation from the Syrians. For the eight days of Hanukkah, the menorah is lit to recall their rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people. At school, we light the menorah and say the blessings, prepare potato latkes (pancakes), as well as other special activities.

## **TU B’SHEVAT**

On Tu B’Shevat we celebrate the New Year of the Trees. Trees are a symbol of life, a symbol of Jewish people. Children may plant trees, as well as collect money for trees in Israel and sample a variety of fruits and “nuts”.

## **PURIM**

Purim is the jolliest of all holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her uncle, Mordechai, saved the Jews of Persia from Haman. This day we eat hamantaschen (triangle shaped cookie), which the children enjoy making. During the reading of the Megillah, the children make loud noises by shaking groggers and stamping their feet whenever the name Haman is read. The children send Mishloach Manot (gifts) to be shared with friends and the less fortunate.

## **PASSOVER**

Passover (Pesach) commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt, and the Exodus following them. The Seder is a special family occasion. Prayers and songs from the Haggadah (the story of Passover) are read, and certain foods are eaten. The best known of these is matzah or unleavened bread.

## **LAG B’OMER**

This holiday celebrates Jewish survival. At school, we celebrate with outdoor activities.

## **YOM HA’ATZMAUT**

Yom Ha’Atzmaut is the Independence Day of modern Israel. We celebrate by learning songs and making Israeli flags.

## **SHAVUOT**

A thanksgiving and harvest feast, which also commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

More detailed information about your child’s classroom activities for these holidays, as well as activities which expose your child to Jewish values, will be in the monthly newsletter and daily communication.

We are truly honored that you have chosen our school for your child's early learning experience. Being a part of their journey is a blessing, and the partnership between staff and families is very important and valued.

Always remember:

Your child is perfect just the way they are.

Do not compare them to others, instead let's help them each be the person they were meant to be.

No two children are alike, thank goodness... embrace their differences and encourage their individuality.