

**Block and Dreeben
School for Young Children**



**Family
Handbook**

Revised June 2019

Table of Contents

Program Overview

1	Purpose
1	Philosophy
2	Goals and Outcomes for Children
2	Goals and Outcomes for Families
2	Our Faculty
2	Our Approach to Learning
3	Our Curriculum Framework
4	Our Approach to Creativity
4	Our Approach to Language Acquisition
4	Our Approach to Literacy
5	Our Approach to Mathematics
6	Our Approach to Science
6	Our Approach to Physical Development
6	Our Approach to Social and Emotional Development
6	Our Approach to Assessment: Methods and Procedures
7	Assessment Use and Purpose
7	Assessment Portfolios
7	Parental Input
8	Our Approach to Discipline and Guidance
9	Our Approach to Biting
9	Challenging Behavior
10	Judaica
10	Jewish Values Vocabulary
11	Jewish Holidays
13	Other Holiday Information
14	Holiday Experiences
14	Blessings
15	Sheva

Program Orientation

16	Accreditation/ Licensing
16	Membership
17	Admission Policies
17	Registration
17	Enrollment
18	Tuition/Fees Payment Policies
18	Financial Assistance
18	Funding
19	Calendar
19	Hours, Days, and Months of Operation
19	Grouping
19	Home Language
20	Safety/Security/Access
20	Arrival and Departure
21	Parking
21	Late Pick Up Fees
22	Notification of Absences
22	Change of Schedule
22	Drop-in Childcare/Extra Hours
22	Extended Day Options
22	Address, Telephone, or Work Changes
22	Weather-Related School Cancellations
22	Withdrawal from the School
23	Termination of Enrollment
23	Operational Policies
23	Special Needs
24	Special Needs Due to Family Circumstances
24	Infant Care
25	Naptime/Sleeping Arrangements
25	Diapers
25	Toileting and Toilet Learning
26	Child Custody
26	Confidentiality

Program Policies And Procedures

27	Anti-Violence Policy
27	Celebration of Birthdays
27	Cell Phones
27	Clothing
28	Community Involvement
28	Employment of JCC Teachers
28	Enrichment Classes/Private Lessons
29	Field Trips and Transportation
29	Outdoor Play
29	Personal Items from Home
29	Save and Send
30	Special Events
30	Transitioning to Kindergarten
30	Visitors
30	Volunteers
30	Water Activities

Health / Medical

31	Accidents/Emergencies
31	Child Abuse and Neglect
32	Hand Washing
33	Health and Safety Tidbits
33	Special Needs Related to Health
34	Health/Illness: Child Inclusion/Exclusion
35	Immunization Records/Medical Records
35	Medication
36	Sunscreen and Insect Repellant
36	Sanitation and Cleaning
37	Smoking

Nutrition

37	Nutrition Policies: Snacks/Lunches
39	Food Safety
40	Children with Food Allergies
41	Children with Disabilities

- 41 Children with Individual Dietary Requirements
- 41 Infant/Toddler Feeding Information

Home / School Communication

- 42 Procedure for Negotiating Difficulties Between Families & Program Staff
- 42 Communication Via Email
- 42 Message Board
- 42 Family Mailboxes
- 43 Messages from Home
- 43 Family Bulletin Boards
- 43 Family/Teacher Conferences
- 43 Social Media

Family Involvement

- 43 Families as Partners
- 44 Family Meetings/Workshops
- 44 Parents Assisting Learning (PAL)
- 44 Room Parents
- 44 Fundraising
- 45 Program Evaluation

Auxiliary Services

- 45 Precious Minds, New Connections (Parenting Program)
- 45 Referral/Community Resources
- 45 Resource Library
- 45 Speech/Hearing/Vision Screening
- 45 Recall Notices

Appendixes

- 46 Appendix A: Nutrition Guidelines
- 47 Appendix B: Munch, Munch, It's Time For Lunch!
- 50 Appendix C: Food Pouch Information

Hillel says: "Do not separate yourself from the community..."

Pirkei Avot 2:5

Dear Families,

Welcome to the JCC Block and Dreeben School for Young Children. It is our goal to provide a safe and nurturing environment where your child can grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Our program is designed for creative learning, which will stimulate and challenge your child's natural curiosity and inquiring mind.

Please read this family manual carefully so that you will become more familiar with our early childhood program policies and procedures. We look forward to working with you and hope you will become actively involved in our program. We strive to build positive relationships and partnerships with you.

We look forward to a wonderful year and welcome you to our Barshop JCC early childhood community---your home away from home! We are here to answer questions and concerns, so please feel free to stop by or call us anytime.

Sincerely,

Lisa Guerrero
Director, Early Childhood Services

guerrol@jcc-sa.org

210-302-6849

Calla Pfeifer-Campos
Assistant Director, Early Childhood

camposc@jcc-sa.org

210-302-6845

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of education at the Jewish Community Center Block and Dreeben School for Young Children (referred to hereafter as the JCC) is to develop young children's minds, bodies, and emotions, as well as to produce individuals who are self-directed, lifelong learners by:

FOSTERING - Jewish identity through an experiential approach to Judaism.

GENERATING - a relaxed Jewish atmosphere, which provides openness, spontaneity, creativity, joy, and love.

PROVIDING - an array of stimulating activities to promote aesthetic and cultural awareness, language development, academic readiness, motor development, and social skills.

ENCOURAGING - independence, self-confidence, respect for others and a sense of belonging and sharing in a group.

OFFERING - loving support to each child and each family through a positive, reciprocal relationship based on trust and respect.

PHILOSOPHY

- We believe early childhood experiences provide the foundation for one's lifetime. Therefore, we provide individualized experiences based on authentic assessment to promote optimal social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual development of each child.
- We believe each child, family, and staff member is unique. Therefore, individual needs and differences are valued in order to promote tolerance and respect for the diversity found within the JCC and in the larger society.
- We believe a child's self-perception is influenced by the attitudes of significant others in his/her life. Adults involved in the child's life are viewed as partners and are encouraged to participate actively in the educational experiences of the child and the school community. Therefore, the JCC strives to promote a positive and accepting environment for children, families, and staff to work together and feel supported and nurtured.
- We believe a young child learns about his/her environment through direct and concrete experiences. Therefore, the JCC provides on-going opportunities for discovery, exploration, and experimentation to encourage children to think, question, and reason through intentional activities planned by the teachers, activities that emerge from the interests and needs of the children and families.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

We provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials that emphasize concrete experiential learning in order to achieve the following goals:

1. Foster positive self-concept.
2. Develop social and emotional skills.
3. Develop cognitive skills by encouraging children to think, reason, question, problem solve, and experiment.
4. Encourage language and literacy development.
5. Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.
6. Enhance physical development and skills.
7. Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts.
8. Develop appreciation and knowledge of Jewish customs, traditions, and values.
9. Develop respect for social and cultural diversity.
10. Be responsive to individual family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language as well as to the individual learning needs of each child.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

1. To feel supported in terms of your individual family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language.
2. To partner actively with our staff in facilitating your child's learning.
3. To develop or enrich your understanding and appreciation of Jewish cultural traditions, values, and celebrations.
4. To have the opportunity to volunteer and participate in our early childhood educational programming.

OUR FACULTY

The JCC is staffed by early childhood professionals. Our faculty is sensitive to the needs of children and families and is committed to high-quality Jewish early childhood education. Most lead teachers have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent (at least 12 hours of college in early childhood education/child development). Many lead teachers hold Associate Degrees or higher in Early Childhood Education. Most assistant teachers have coursework in early childhood education/child development, or a related field, or are enrolled in a college or university early childhood education or child development program. Teachers regularly attend educational workshops and professional development sessions, receiving a minimum of 24 clock hours of professional development each year as well as CPR and Pediatric First Aid training.

OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING

The JCC provides a supportive, nurturing environment that promotes the emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and spiritual development of young children. We work in partnership with families to provide consistent care and education to their children in a loving, responsive manner. We strive to incorporate family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language into our curriculum, based on information provided in the Child and Family Profile and other input from families.

Our program serves as a laboratory for the growing child's experiments in the mastery of new skills.

Our program encourages active exploration of the environment, from the youngest child learning to crawl across open floor space to the oldest child investigating the physics and chemistry of the world around him. We promote curiosity, individual interests, creativity, and the development of self-esteem through play, the vehicle by which children learn and develop. We facilitate a child's development as she becomes a competent individual, increasingly independent in action and thought, acquiring new skills and knowledge. We view each child as unique and plan for individual needs. In addition, we help children gain an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and we create a setting in which children can participate in cooperative, noncompetitive play.

The environment is set up to be cozy and welcoming as well as stimulating and challenging. Each classroom has its own arrangement of areas and materials, and has a daily schedule and routines that are designed to suit both individual and group needs. Within this framework, children have many choices. There is time to be active, time to relax, time to explore outdoors, and time inside. Self-directed activities and materials are available, as are specially prepared ones.

Problem solving, experimentation, and social interactions are encouraged through daily use of developmentally appropriate materials and activities. These may include blocks, dramatic play, water and sand, art, cooking, music, movement, group times, manipulatives, math, science, outdoor play, caring for animals, books, and language experiences.

OUR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Our curriculum:

- Encourages the development of the “whole” child by including the domains of cognitive (early literacy, early mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and appreciation for the arts, health and safety, and social studies when age appropriate), language, and social, emotional and physical development.
- Uses early learning standards (from the *Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines* and the *Texas Infant, Toddler and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines*) to plan activities for both the individual child and the class. Standards are incorporated into play, exploration, projects and studies, and large and small group times.
- Presents the developmental (cognitive, social, emotional, physical) and content-based (literacy, math, science, etc.) domains in an integrated manner.
- Reflects diversity (gender, age, language, and abilities) and is culturally sensitive and responsive of individual family’s values, beliefs, and home language. Diversity can be observed in interactions and is evident in equipment and materials.
- Is primarily “child-centered” and emergent. Activities, materials, and themes are “driven” by the developmental needs and interests of children in the classroom. Input into the curriculum also comes from children’s families and the community. The teacher capitalizes on these and uses them as avenues for intentional teaching. Project work is valued and encouraged.
- Is play-based with large blocks of time allocated to children’s self-initiated learning choices, which include creative expression and play. The schedule provides opportunities for small-group and large-group activities as well as individualized instruction.
- Provides materials and experiences that are presented in an organized learning environment (both indoors and outdoors) to include learning centers for preschool children and learning

zones for infants and toddlers. Children freely explore and experiment with materials and other children as well as with teachers who facilitate and participate in learning.

- Uses assessment and curriculum goals and objectives that are interrelated and viewed as a “Curriculum Braid” that weaves together early learning standards, activities and materials, and observation and assessment.

OUR APPROACH TO CREATIVITY

Our teachers provide an environment that supports creativity by providing a large variety of open-ended materials, ones that lend themselves to various uses. We emphasize process, not product. In the process, the child can learn to experiment, explore, discover, enjoy sensory experiences, communicate, relive experiences, and work out fears. Any end product is usually secondary to the enjoyment of doing the activity for a young child.

OUR APPROACH TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Teachers promote language acquisition by conversing with children during their play, regular routines, and at mealtimes. Experiences with books, flannel boards, discussions, puppets, storytelling, and other activities aid in the child's language development, help him/her learn about the world, and promote an early appreciation of literature.

We work with children and families to reflect the languages spoken by families in our program. We acknowledge and support children’s home language and culture.

OUR APPROACH TO LITERACY

Our approach to literacy development is based on the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement. A continuum of reading and writing development is used as goals of literacy instruction.

We will work with each child based on his/her developmental needs; some children will master skills earlier; some will need more time to develop these skills. Our primary goal is to develop a love of reading and writing while nurturing each child’s development in a positive and supportive manner.

In Phase One of literacy development, awareness and exploration are the goals. In this phase, children explore their environment and build the foundation for learning to read and write. At the JCC, teachers:

- Share books with children and model reading behaviors.
- Talk about letters by name and sound.
- Establish a literacy-rich environment (labeling items in the classroom, having a variety of books).
- Re-read favorite stories.
- Engage children in language games (silly songs and finger plays).
- Promote literacy-related play activities (using items such as magazines, notepads and pencils in dramatic play).
- Encourage children to experiment with writing.

In Phase Two of literacy development, experimental reading and writing are the goals. In this phase, children develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing. At the JCC, teachers will:

- Encourage children to talk about reading and writing experiences.
- Provide many opportunities for children to explore and identify sound-symbol relationships in meaningful contexts.
- Help children to segment spoken words into individual sounds and blend the sounds into whole words.
- Frequently read interesting and conceptually rich stories to children.
- Provide daily opportunities for children to write (writing name, inventive spelling of words, journal writing).
- Help children develop a sight vocabulary (word bank).
- Create a literacy-rich environment for children to engage independently in reading and writing (materials which promote literacy development throughout the classroom).

In Phase Three of literacy development, early reading and writing are the goals. In this phase, children begin to read simple stories and to write about a topic that is meaningful to them. At the JCC, teachers:

- Support the development of vocabulary by reading daily to the children, transcribing their language, and selecting materials that expand children's knowledge and language development.
- Help children build lists of commonly used words from their reading and writing.
- Model strategies and provide practice in identifying unknown words.
- Read, write, and discuss a range of different text types (poems, informational texts, narratives).
- Give children opportunities for independent reading and writing practice.

OUR APPROACH TO MATHEMATICS

The following fundamental mathematical concepts and skills are integrated into our curriculum, based on the developmental needs of each child:

- One-to-one correspondence (understanding that one group has the same number of things as another)
- Number sense and counting (the connection between quantities and counting)
- Sets and classifying (things that can be put together in a group based on a common criteria such as color, size, shape, or function)
- Comparing (finding a relationship between two things or sets of things on the basis of a specific characteristic or attribute such as size, height, or number)
- Shape (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, rhombus, and ellipse)
- Space (position: on-off, over-under, in-out, above-below, etc.; direction: up-down, forward-backward, around-through; distance: near-far, close to-far from; organization and pattern: arranging things in a pattern until they fit or until they please the eye; construction: change the size and shape of the space to fit what is needed for things)
- Parts and wholes (understanding the idea that some things are made of special parts, that sets of things can be divided into parts, and that whole things can be divided into smaller parts)

- Ordering (higher level of comparing – placing things in a sequence from first to last)
- Patterning (making or discovering patterns such as sequence by color or number, patterns in nature, and patterns in movement, such as clapping or marching)
- Measurement of volume, weight, length, temperature, and time (introducing measurement using informal tools such as nonstandard units and estimation).

OUR APPROACH TO SCIENCE

The science curriculum is based on a “wonder why” approach. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment in a hands-on environment that encourages the discovery of cause and effect. They are encouraged to investigate how the world works and to learn to take responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment. The following basic science process skills are introduced to allow children to gain new information through concrete experiences:

- Observing – using the senses to gather information about objects or events.
- Comparing – looking at similarities and differences in real objects.
- Classifying – grouping and sorting according to properties, such as size, shape, color, use, etc.
- Measuring – quantitative descriptions made by an observer either directly through observation or indirectly with a unit of measure.
- Communicating – communicating ideas, directions, and descriptions orally (or in written form) such as pictures or graphs so others can understand.

OUR APPROACH TO PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

We promote gross motor development by giving children opportunities to use their large muscles in a variety of ways such as crawling, walking, running, jumping, and hopping. We have state-of-the-art playgrounds with equipment and activities which promote the development of competence and confidence in each child’s use of their body. Additionally, children experience dance and movement, take nature walks and participate in parachute activities and playing ball.

We promote fine motor development by providing numerous activities such as finger painting, playing with play dough, cutting with scissors, working puzzles, stringing beads, building with blocks, drawing and “writing”.

OUR APPROACH TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We support a child’s developing sense of self. We provide a nurturing environment of encouragement and genuine respect so that children are able to develop confidence and competence by being given opportunities to take initiative, experience success in performing difficult tasks, and to figure things out for themselves. We encourage children to learn self-help skills such as serving their own snack and milk, dressing and undressing, toileting, washing hands, and cleaning up after themselves. Developing these skills adds to the child’s feelings of accomplishment and self-worth.

OUR APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The faculty use a variety of formal and informal measures to routinely assess the growth and physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of your child. Teachers receive on-going professional development on the use of assessment procedures, including interpretation of the results

as well as the conditions under which children are assessed. Assessment will occur within the natural setting of the classroom and the playground. The information from the rating scales, assessment portfolios, parent input and screenings for the children will be integrated with the curriculum goals and lesson planning to support individual learning styles and needs.

Our program uses the *Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development*. Within the first three months of enrollment at the JCC, the overall development of your child will be assessed. The same rating scale will be used continuously throughout your child's attendance in our program. Any developmental "red flags" or any concerns indicating possible delay determined from the assessment will be discussed with you. The teachers or the Director will make recommendations and/or assist the parents or guardians with professional contacts for further assessment. Each child's individual records will be confidential and will be kept in a locked area.

ASSESSMENT USES AND PURPOSE

The JCC uses assessment for the following purposes:

- To describe the developmental progress and learning of children.
- To improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment.
- To identify children's interests and needs.
- To identify children who may require intervention and arrange for developmental screening and referrals for diagnostic assessment.
- To communicate with families.
- To plan program improvement.

ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

Assessment portfolios consisting of work samples, observations, anecdotal records, *Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development* data, Individual Planning Profile (IPP), and other methods to assess and record development and abilities, will be kept by the classroom lead teacher each year for each child and will be updated regularly during the year. The assessment portfolios will be shared with the family at parent-teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring and upon request at other times during the year. A written report will be given at the parent-teacher conferences. The assessment portfolios are kept in a locked closet in the classroom and will be passed on to the child's next teacher at the beginning of each school year.

PARENTAL INPUT

Parents are given the opportunity to provide their input regarding your child's interests, strengths, and emerging abilities at the beginning of each year on the Child and Family Profile Form. Additionally, parent input is encouraged throughout the year. Input from parents is combined with information obtained from the assessment portfolios to guide the teachers in planning activities to meet the individual developmental needs and interests of your child and to determine the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

OUR APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Like all aspects of child development, emotional development progresses in stages; time and maturity are needed for children to develop emotional mastery and behavioral control. Our goal is to help children develop independent, responsible, and caring behavior and to develop positive self-esteem.

Our teachers help children find constructive ways to express needs and feelings, ways that are reasonable for particular levels of social competence and maturity. Because a young child does not yet understand the consequences of behaviors, we provide appropriate limits. This allows children to explore with confidence, knowing that an adult will protect them against injury. These limits match the level of development and the individual needs of each child; they are simply and consistently stated, along with an explanation of what the child is supposed to do and a reason why the behavior in question is unacceptable.

There are many strategies a teacher may use when a child exhibits challenging behaviors. Effective techniques may include:

- Redirection to a different activity
- Problem solving and negotiation
- Restructuring the classroom space or schedules
- Reinforcement of positive behaviors and ignoring negative actions
- Providing activities that are of interest to the child
- Anticipating problems and eliminating them before they occur

We help children learn to solve problems themselves by teaching them to identify the problem and generate possible solutions to find a mutually satisfying resolution.

Children learn to express their feelings and ideas as well as to listen to others as they express themselves. Depending upon the age and the individual, this may mean more facilitation on the part of the teachers. Gradually, as a child matures, the responsibility for managing behaviors transfers from the adult to the child as he/she gains more competence in handling his/her own problems, gaining more self-control.

We recognize that at times, a child can exhibit certain behaviors at school and others at home; the demands on a child in a group setting are often very different from what is required at home. Families are asked to keep teachers informed about routines at home and any changes that may occur in the child's home life (i.e. divorce, separation, death of a family member or pet, deployment, etc.) that may affect a child's behavior. Teachers and parents work together to find a consistent approach; this sometimes means trying a new technique or changing a routine or approach at home or at the JCC.

In the event a child's behavior is out of control and requires one-on-one attention, the child's parent will be contacted immediately, and the parent may be asked to pick up their child. A meeting with the parent, the Director, and classroom teacher will be held to discuss the child's behavior and strategies to deal with those behaviors before the child may return to the program.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

If a child is engaging in continual challenging behavior, the teacher will consult with the Director. For children with persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals work together as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. Examples of challenging behaviors include physical aggression (hitting, biting, shoving, whacking with toys), relational aggression ("You can't play with us", verbal bullying), tantrums, whining, testing limits, or refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

Parents are expected to meet with teachers and/or the Early Childhood Director to work with the program to help your child overcome challenging behavior. **In the event that the child's behaviors do not improve, a family may be asked to withdraw the child from the program.**

OUR APPROACH TO BITING

Many pre-verbal children go through a stage of biting. They bite for many reasons such as:

- Lacking the language skills necessary for expressing important needs or strong feelings like anger, frustration, joy, etc. Biting is a substitute for messages the child can't yet express in words.
- Are experimenting to see what will happen.
- Are over-tired.
- Are teething.
- Have a need for oral stimulation.

We recognize that biting, while it may not be acceptable, is normal and natural for toddlers and is not unusual for two year olds and preschoolers. It frequently occurs in groups of children just on the verge of fluent language.

When a biting incident occurs:

- Staff will carefully monitor children.
- Staff will model appropriate gentle behavior and pro-social play, encouraging children to use words.
- Staff will quickly respond with a clear message to the biter: "No! I won't let you bite. Biting hurts!" Tone of voice, body language, and facial expression all will clearly express disapproval. Staff will recognize the biter's feelings: "I know you are angry, but I can't let you bite."
- Staff will comfort the "bitee" with ice, a Band-Aid (if necessary), and TLC until the child is ready to return to play.
- Staff will suggest age-appropriate alternatives to biting behavior. "Next time, say MOVE, please!" The seriousness of the incident may need to be reinforced: "No! It's not funny. Biting hurts. No biting."
- Parents of both children involved in the incident will be notified.

Biting is a part of the young child's normal developmental process. We take a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach. Each biting situation will be handled in the manner outlined above. We will not discuss personal information with any parent about a child other than their own. Biting is an upsetting, but *normal*, part of many children's development, and we ask you to trust that each biting

incident will be handled in a developmentally appropriate and professional manner. Any concerns of the family should be handled by talking to the teacher and/or the Director.

- A meeting with the parents of the biter, the Director, and teacher will be arranged to discuss strategies to help the child, if needed.

JUDAICA

As our program is grounded in Judaism and the Jewish religion, these themes are present daily in the classroom. We observe Jewish holidays, follow the laws of *Kashrut* (Kosher dietary laws), learn about Israel, and introduce Jewish values at the child's developmental level. Foods appropriate to the Jewish holidays are prepared by/for the children and eaten by them. The music program emphasizes songs in Hebrew and English and are related to Jewish themes. Children will be introduced to a simple Hebrew vocabulary, such as colors, numbers, and names of animals. The visual environment is created by posters, photographs, and objects that reflect our Jewish traditions. Teacher-made and commercial materials and games related to Jewish themes are integrated into daily activities. A Judaic resource teacher works with each class regularly to provide materials and activities that focus on Jewish customs, traditions, and values. To strengthen family life, the parents are invited to join the children in the celebration of each holiday.

Laws of *Kashrut* are observed at the JCC. The following policies apply:

- No pork, ham, bacon, lard or shellfish products are permitted at any time.
- Lunches should be either dairy or meat. The two may not be served together in the same meal. (For example, if you send a meat sandwich, do not include cheese or yogurt in the same meal.)
- Tuna fish, salmon and other non-shellfish items may be served with dairy.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are considered kosher.

JEWISH VALUES VOCABULARY (adapted from *The Jewish Parent's Almanac* by Rabbi Julie Hilton Danan)

Tikkun olam: a Hebrew phrase that means "repairing the world" (or "healing the world") which suggests humanity's shared responsibility to heal, repair, and transform the world. Examples of how we practice **tikkun olam** in our program include: teaching not to be wasteful of resources, recycling, and eating fresh, non-processed foods.

Mitzvah (plural: mitzvot): often translated as a good deed. However, **mitzvah** literally means a religious commandment, imperative, or duty.

Tzedakah: comes from the root **tzedek**, meaning justice and righteousness. Although tzedakah is often translated as "charity," it has the wider connotation of giving back, or doing justice. Giving **tzedakah** is a mitzvah (commandment; good deed; obligation); we are commanded to help, not just asked to because it is a nice thing to do. Giving **tzedakah** is the just and right thing to do, and includes giving money, clothing, food, and time. Each Friday, we collect **tzedakah** during our Kabbalat Shabbat celebration. Please send a donation for your child to participate in giving **tzedakah**.

Mensch: (Yiddish) what a human being is meant to be like – a person of integrity and honor. A **mensch** is someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character. The term is used as a high compliment, expressing the rarity and value of that individual's qualities.

Hesed: kindness, compassion, loving-kindness, or giving love. **Hesed** is more than an attitude; it always implies action known as **gemilut hasadim** (deeds of action), such as welcoming guests, visiting the sick, as well as simple, everyday demonstrations of care and concern for other people.

Sh'mirat HaGuf: taking care of our bodies through physical activity, nutrition and rest.

JEWISH HOLIDAYS

At the JCC, we observe and celebrate many Jewish holidays by explaining the holidays in an age-appropriate manner, learning about the key messages of each holiday, and eating foods associated with the holiday.

SHABBAT

The Jewish Sabbath starts at sundown every Friday and lasts until sundown on Saturday. It is written in the Torah that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh...giving us Shabbat. In many Jewish homes, the traditions of lighting candles and saying prayers to welcome the Sabbath are observed. Although Shabbat lasts from sundown Friday to Saturday night, we celebrate the welcoming of Shabbat (*Kabbalat Shabbat*) at school each Friday morning or afternoon. Traditional blessings are said over the candles, grape juice, and *challah* (twisted bread), and special songs are sung. **Children are encouraged to bring a small donation for the class *tzedakah* collection each Friday.** Each class will choose a special project to benefit a specified recipient.

When three stars appear in the sky on Saturday night (about an hour after sunset), Shabbat is over. *Havdalah* is the ceremony with which we transition from Shabbat to the rest of the week. We celebrate *Havdalah* on Monday morning. Just as we welcome Shabbat with candles and grape juice, so, too, we usher Shabbat out with of cup of grape juice and a braided candle with three wicks. Instead of *challah*, however, we now bless and savor *besameen*, sweet spices, as we try to hold on to the sweetness of Shabbat, even as we bid it goodbye. With blessings and songs, children gather to let go of Shabbat and move into a brand new week.

ROSH HASHANA

This two-day holiday is the Jewish New Year and is a time of personal reflection of our past and future behavior. The children bake round *challah* and enjoy apples and honey, which are symbolic of hope for a sweet year. The *shofar* (ram's horn) is shown and heard. **(The school and JCC are closed for both days of this holiday)**

YOM KIPPUR

This is the most solemn holiday of the year - the Day of Atonement. For adults, it is a day of fasting and a day of prayer. We discuss with the children how to be the best we can be. **(The school and JCC are closed for this holiday)**

SUKKOT

The "Feast of Tabernacles" recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in *sukkot* (booths). It is also a harvest holiday symbolized by the *lulav* (palm willow, myrtle) and *etrog* (citron). We decorate our *sukkah* with fruit and greenery and enjoy our snack or meals in the *sukkah*. **(The school and JCC are closed for the first day of this holiday)**

SHEMINI – ATZERET

This holiday occurs on the eighth day of Sukkot and is considered a holiday in itself. It is a solemn day with special prayers for rain (*geshem*). **(The school and JCC are closed for this holiday)**

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, sing, and carry flags.

CHANUKAH

"The 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 Chanukah, the *chanukiah* (a nine-branched candelabra, often referred to as a menorah) is lighted 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 *chanukiah* and say the blessings, prepare potato latkes (pancakes), play the *dreidel* game, and participate in other special activities. The children will participate in the "Chanukah Experience" through a special hands-on activity that explains this holiday. Each class has a Chanukah party that families are encouraged to attend.

TU B'SHEVAT

On *Tu B'Shevat* we celebrate the new year of the trees. The Jewish calendar, with all its holidays, is tied to the cycle of growing things. As Jews, we have a kinship with trees, especially fruit trees. There are two *mitzvot* and two Jewish values connected to this holiday. *Bal tashcheet* means "do not destroy" and *tikkun olam* means "repair the world". We emphasize recycling, caring for animals, and caring for materials in the classroom. We plant trees or other plants, collect money for trees in Israel, and sample a variety of fruits and nuts that are grown in Israel.

PURIM

Purim is the most festive of Jewish holidays. Purim commemorates the story of Queen Esther and her Uncle Mordechai who saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the Prime Minister Haman, who sought to destroy them. This day we eat *hamantaschen* (triangle-shaped cookie with filling inside, modeled after the triangle hat Haman purportedly wore), which the children enjoy making at school. The children are encouraged to come in costume to school for this holiday. During the reading of the *Megillah* (a scroll of the Book of Esther), the children make loud noises by shaking *groggers* (noisemakers) and stomping their feet whenever the name Haman, the villain, is read. The children send *Mishloach Manot* (gifts of at least two different kinds of food such as *hamantaschen*, candy, nuts fruit and juice which are send by our families) to be shared with friends at the Jewish Campus. Additionally, we share and care during Purim by providing gifts of money or material donations such as canned food for the Food Bank (*Matanot l'evyoneem*: sending gifts to the poor).

PASSOVER

Passover (*Pesach*) commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt and the subsequent Exodus. *Pesach* centers around family and friends, and children learn about the traditions, ceremonies, and customs of this joyous holiday. The Seder is a special family occasion; prayers and songs from the *Haggadah* (the story of Passover) are read, and special foods are eaten during the holiday. The best known of these foods is matzah, or unleavened bread. Your child and his/her classmates will prepare Passover foods and experience the story of Passover through a hands-on "Passover Experience."

During this 8-day holiday, only foods kosher for Passover are served in our school. Bread and bread products are not allowed to be sent to school during Passover. More details will be shared close to the holiday each year. **(The school and JCC are closed for the first and seventh days of this holiday)**

LAG B'OMER

This holiday recalls the struggle of the Jews to regain their independence as a Jewish nation. The Romans ruling Palestine banned the study of the Torah and Jewish literature. Jews continued to learn and study in secret. They studied in caves and forests, under the pretense of hunting and hiking. Today, however, the holiday celebrates Jewish survival. At school, we celebrate with outings and hearing Torah stories.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Yom Ha'Atzma'ut is the independence day of modern Israel. We celebrate by playing games, learning songs and Israeli dances, hearing stories about Israel, making Israeli flags, and preparing Israeli foods.

SHAVUOT

Shavuot, a thanksgiving and harvest feast, commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Known as the "Feast of the Weeks," Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. It is a custom to decorate the house with plants and flowers. (The green recalls the green mountain of Sinai where Moses received the Commandments, as well as the fruits of the ancient harvest festival.) We eat dairy foods, such as blintzes, because the words of the Torah are like milk and honey. **(The school and JCC are closed on the first day of this holiday)**

Please check the current school calendar for specific dates of when the Jewish holidays occur.

OTHER HOLIDAY INFORMATION

More detailed information about your child's classroom activities for the holidays, as well as activities which expose your child to Jewish values, will be sent home. Please feel free to join us for all holiday festivals!

We celebrate national holidays such as Thanksgiving and the local holiday of Battle of the Flowers, but holidays that have their roots in faiths other than Judaism **including Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter are not be observed at the JCC.**

HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES

Children participate in special “Holiday Experiences” (Chanukah, Passover, and Shabbat). Parent volunteers act out parts of each story as children rotate from station to station while singing related songs and participating in hands-on-activities. Children learn concepts most effectively through hands-on activities, and so as they participate in the story, it becomes real and tangible to them.

BLESSINGS

Blessings are said in Hebrew before snack and lunch. Below are the blessings for food, Shabbat, and meal times.

All regular Hebrew blessings start with the same six words:
Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech HaOlam...
which means: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe

And these are the endings which are added, depending on the food:
Borei p’ri ha’adama (Who creates the fruit of the earth)
Borei p’ri ha’eytz (Who creates the fruit of the tree)
Borei miney mezonot (Who creates various kinds of foods)

Shabbat

The teacher lights the candles and the children recite the traditional blessings:

(Candles)

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohaynu Melech HaOlam, Asher Kid’shanu
B’Mitsvotav V’Tzivanu Lihadleek Ner Shel Shabbat.*

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us by your commandments and permits us to kindle the lights of the Sabbath.

(Grape Juice)

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohenu Melech HaOlam, Boray P’ri HaGafen.

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

(Challah)

Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohenu Melech HaOlam, HaMozi Lechem Min HaAretz.

Blessed are you, O Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Weekly Shabbat is celebrated in the classroom and once a month we gather as a community to celebrate a school wide Kabbalat Shabbat. Families are encouraged to join as we sing, dance, give Tzedakah, and recite the blessings together. Afterwards, everyone returns to their classrooms for challah and grape juice.

Lunch time Blessing: Hamotzi

HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz. We give thanks to G-d for bread; our voices rise in song together as our prayer is joyfully said. *Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohenu Melech HaOlam, HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz.*

Amen.

SHEVA: EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Our program is part of the new signature Jewish Community Center Association (JCCA) program for early childhood centers known as *Sheva*. This early childhood learning framework is shaped by the latest brain and child development research. In Hebrew, Sheva means ‘seven’, and titling the program Sheva is a nod to the significance this number has in Jewish tradition. Sheva is comprised of seven core principles that work together to encourage participation of all members of the early childhood program—the director, the teachers, the children, and the families.

1. Children as Constructivist Learners

Children are natural learners. A Jewish expression of values emphasizes that our teachers inspire children to question their world and appreciate multiple perspectives. Based on an image of the child as a capable and competent learner full of potential, teachers and children engage in research as a way of co-constructing knowledge. When children are agents of their own learning, they will build life-long critical thinking skills and are more deeply invested in the process.

2. Early Childhood Directors as Visionaries

The program directors inspire a shared vision for the school based on Jewish values. We create, share, and foster a vision for the school that focuses on nurturing the minds and hearts of children and their families.

3. Supporting Early Childhood Educators as Professionals

At the JCC, our teachers view themselves as lifelong learners, constantly engaging in the pursuit of learning opportunities, prized by our Jewish tradition. The combination of teachers’ education, experiences, and passion enrich the learning of young children and their families. We provide time for teachers to study and learn.

4. Seeing Families as Engaged Partners

We view family engagement as key to building a healthy school community. Our program offers opportunities for families to volunteer, to participate in family events, and to attend parenting classes. We go beyond this to actively listen to and incorporate parents’ perspectives into how we think about teaching and learning. Families are invited to partner with us in the education of their children. We support parenting by viewing families as competent thinkers, by offering insight into our educational philosophy, and by celebrating Jewish life together.

5. Using Environments as Inspiration for Inquiry

Our classrooms, hallways, and indoor and outdoor spaces invite and spark curiosity and wonder for our children. Our vision for the early childhood learning environment suggests an intentional place for children that provoke a sense of wonder, curiosity, intellectual engagement and creativity with endless possibilities. Attention is given to indoor and outdoor classrooms and common spaces to create community, build connections, and encourage and support opportunities for Jewish living.

6. Discover CATCH as Shmirat HaGuf (taking care of our bodies)

Research shows that children are able to learn and play in more meaningful ways when they eat well and get enough activity; therefore, we nurture a love of physical activity and we encourage children and families to develop healthy eating habits. The JCC Association in partnership with the University Of Texas School Of Public Health and its CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) has created Discover: CATCH. At the JCC we promote a lifetime of healthy diet and exercise.

7. Israel as the Story of the Jewish People

We celebrate everyday life through a Jewish lens and create meaningful images about Israel, allowing ancient and modern Israel to come alive through music, dance, stories, food, and real-life connections with children across the sea.

Teachers as Learners

All full-time JCC early childhood teachers study Jewish text monthly. Traditional Jewish texts and Jewish values are explored which benefit not only the children but the teachers themselves. During each session, a value is studied with supporting text. Teachers begin by exploring texts in pairs called chavruta, a traditional mode of Jewish learning. By asking questions about the meaning of the texts, teachers are then able to begin to explore how these teachings are relevant to themselves personally and as early childhood professionals. Then time is spent discussing how these teachings can be applied to the children and families in their classrooms through books, music, activities, and discussions.

Examples of the universal we study through a Jewish lens include:

- Wisdom
- Honoring others
- Dignity
- Responsibility
- Free will
- Kindness
- Peace
- Friendship
- Community
- Tradition
- Respect for God's creations

Environmental awareness

PROGRAM ORIENTATION

ACCREDITATION/LICENSING

Our program is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Families may review a copy of TDFPS Minimum Standard Rules and the most recent licensing inspection report upon request. Parents may contact the local licensing office at 210-337-3399, child abuse hotline at 53-ABUSE, and TDFPS website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Our program has been accredited by NAEYC consistently since 1993. Accreditation by NAEYC represents the consensus of the early childhood profession regarding the definition of a high quality group program for young children. A copy of the *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria* can be obtained from the office or you can navigate to the following web address to view them: <http://goo.gl/L9n9nn>. Parents may also review the program and classroom portfolios required for accreditation.

MEMBERSHIP

Although you do not have to be Jewish to enroll in our program, membership to the JCC in a Family Category (Family or Family Plus) is required.

ADMISSION POLICIES

The JCC School for Young Children does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, sex, national origin, or disability. You must be a member in good standing of the Barshop JCC in order to participate in the Block and Dreeben School for Young Children.

Preference for admission will be given as follows:

- Children currently enrolled
- Siblings of children presently enrolled
- Siblings of Center members' children who completed the JCC program
- Children of current Center members
- Children of new Center members

A waiting list is maintained to fill any openings that become available.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the following school year takes place in late January and early February. After the “in-house” registration period for families already enrolled in the program, “open” registration begins for new families. Registration fees are due upon registration and are non-refundable.

A combination of factors taken into consideration when placing children in individual classrooms. These factors include but are not limited to: chronological age, appropriateness of a class based on developmental and readiness factors, teacher recommendations, number of days enrolled and/or schedule desired and days available. Although there may be individual preferences for specific classrooms/group and/or teachers, the program is not always able to honor such requests. The Director will contact individual parents to discuss any special circumstances, individual scheduling concerns, developmental placements, or specific situations before the registration process is completed. Parents should also notify the Director of any special circumstances, scheduling concerns, or special needs, in writing, with their registration materials.

ENROLLMENT

A JCC Family Handbook is on the JCC website or a copy can be requested from the EC office. Upon enrollment of your child, you must sign a form stating that you have read the handbook and that you agree to abide by the policies set forth. This form must be returned to the Early Childhood Office within one week of enrollment.

The school will schedule one or more orientation time(s) for you and your child to visit his/her classroom and meet the teachers, as well as a parent meeting to acquaint you with the program’s goals, policies, and activities. Additionally, families are asked to schedule a “Get Acquainted” meeting with the Early Childhood Director as well as your child’s teachers.

By the first day of school, each student must have on file in the Early Childhood Office the following completed and signed forms:

- Enrollment
- Emergency cards (2)
- Medical information with current immunizations, statement of recent examination by a

- physician, and non-prescription medication
- Confidentiality statement
- Special health information
- Discipline and guidance
- Individual and family profile
- If applicable, any court orders pertaining to the life of the child, such as visitation.

Your child's health and safety records are maintained in one central location in our facility. The contents of your child's file are confidential, but are immediately available to:

- Administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records,
- The parents or legal guardian,
- Regulatory authorities, on request

Required paperwork must be submitted in order for your child to attend our program.

Our staff will review records at least quarterly to ensure your child's records are current. Parents must provide, in writing, to the Early Childhood Office any changes to the enrollment information and any updates of immunizations that occur during the year.

TUITION/FEES PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition must be paid either by credit card or electronic fund transfer (EFT). A payment option form must be completed authorizing monthly tuition charges to be paid by credit card or EFT. Credit cards will be charged on the first of the month, and EFT drafts will be processed no later than the 5th of the month. **No refunds are given for missed days, including vacations.**

You will be notified within the first week of the month if your credit card or EFT was denied. You will have five business days to clear the account balance, or your child will not be allowed to continue in the program.

Please see the **Extended Day Options** for information regarding early/late/extra day options.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Limited funds are available based on financial need. Applications may be obtained in the Early Childhood Office and submitted to the Early Childhood Director. Most funds are allocated in the spring prior to the new school year, which begins in June.

FUNDING

The JCC School for Young Children is funded by tuition and in part by the United Way of San Antonio and the Jewish Federation of San Antonio.

CALENDAR

Our program year is June through May. A yearly calendar that indicates holidays and professional development days is provided.

HOURS, DAYS, AND MONTHS OF OPERATION

The program is open Monday through Friday from 7 am to 6 pm. Full-time or part-time hours are available. The program is open year round. A calendar listing program closings is provided.

GROUPING

Our program enrolls children 6 weeks - 4 years of age. Children are grouped according to age and developmental level. We use the NAEYC *Teacher-Child Ratios within Group Size* as a guideline for teacher-staff ratio and group size.

Each classroom is staffed with a lead teacher and an assistant teacher who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. The children stay with their designated teachers and group for the entire school year from June through May. The goal for all classes is continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children and continuity among groups of children and their families, with children staying together as a group with the same teachers for at least 10 months or more. The teachers provide on-going personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care, as needed, to protect children's well-being.

Children who are enrolled part-time (9 am to 3:15 pm) stay with the same teachers in the same classroom throughout the day. Those enrolled for full-time (7 am to 6 pm) may be combined with children in their suite for early stay (7 am to 8:45 am) and late stay (4:15 pm to 6 pm). One room in each suite is designated for early stay and one for late stay. The early stay is staffed by teachers from your child's suite. A consistent afternoon teacher is with the late stay group along with teachers from the suite.

To facilitate children's transition from one teacher to another, from one group to another, or from one classroom to another, time is allowed for "move up" days. These occur one week before the actual move to the new classroom. For children moving to a new program, opportunities are provided for them to visit their new school. Children who join the program during the year have opportunities to visit the classroom before their initial start day.

HOME LANGUAGE

The JCC will make every effort to work with families that speak a language other than English in the home and/or are bilingual. If needed, a teacher that speaks fluent Spanish can join in with the teacher or Director for the enrollment process, parent-teacher conferences, and other meetings as needed, and written materials will be provided in Spanish when available. If translations are needed to understand school communications, we will make every reasonable effort to find a translator in the designated language.

Families that speak languages other than English or Spanish are encouraged to share some simple words and phrases to use in conversations with the teachers while the child is in our care. Teachers will make an effort to provide visible signs of the home language throughout the classroom through books and other relevant materials. The teacher will model appropriate use of English and provide the child with opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary and language.

SAFETY/SECURITY/ACCESS

The safety and security of children is our top priority. All doors and gates remain locked. Only individuals with children in our program, prospective parents, and special visitors with permission are allowed admittance to our department. Parents are given an access code to open the first set of double doors and early childhood staff open the second set of doors for you to enter the school.

Visitors must sign in and out and wear a visitor badge. Unknown individuals will be asked to show picture identification and to state the purpose of their visit before gaining admittance. Entry to our program is through the front entrance only. **Please do not hold this door open for others who are not known to you.** Surveillance cameras both indoors and outdoors are provided to monitor the doors and the facility. Additionally, drugs, firearms, weapons, and other items deemed dangerous are not permitted on the premises at any time.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

We strive for arrival and departure time to be a pleasant transition for you and your child. Teachers are eager to help with this and will assist you in the transition. Because we believe daily communication is an essential ingredient to the success of your child's experience, we ask parents and carpool drivers to park their cars and walk children to and from classrooms

Each child must be accompanied to, and picked up from, his/her classroom by an adult who is responsible for insuring that a staff person is aware of the child's arrival as well as his/her departure. Children must be brought to their classroom only through our secured front entrance. **The adult accompanying child must record child's arrival and departure times on the sign-in/sign-out sheet provided and sign initials or name.**

If you have a child in Suite 6 or 7, please refrain from bringing your older child into the classroom.

With the exception of infants in Suite 6 who are on an individualized schedule, we encourage you to drop off your child by 9:15am, before the class morning meeting. Arrival after 10am should be only if there is a special circumstance, in which case you should contact the Early Childhood Office to let us know.

To provide a consistent and positive learning environment for your child, please help us by:

- Helping your child wash his/her hands upon arrival.
- Helping your child put his/her belongings in the cubby.
- Arriving by 8:15am if you are sending breakfast (which we stop serving at 8:30am). Snacks are served between 9:30-10am. If your child is going to arrive at 8:30 or after, please serve breakfast before bringing your child to school.
- Most preschool classes have a "morning meeting". This meeting is to discuss the day's events and reinforce expectations of the classroom community. It is beneficial for all children to be a part of this daily meeting. Check with your child's teachers about the time of their meeting.
- Letting teachers know if you are ready to say good-bye to your child and need their help.

The policy for release of children is as follows:

- A child is released only to a parent or an adult designated in writing by the parent (on emergency card or letter written by parent).
- If you authorize an individual not listed on your emergency card to pick up your child, please complete the "Permission Slip for Release of Children", which can be obtained in the Early Childhood Office.
- If a person authorized to pick up a child is unknown to the staff, the staff will require the picture identification on the person's driver's license and will record the license number.
- If a parent calls to authorize the emergency release of a child when note or fax is not possible, we will verify that the caller is actually the parent.

Please be on time to pick up your child at his/her scheduled departure time. Children become anxious and worried when they are not picked up promptly.

LATE PICK UP FEES

Our program is open to serve children and their families from 7:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. It can be upsetting for children to be left in school after their scheduled hours. **Please allow enough time at the end of the day for traffic, for parking, to pick up your child and leave by closing time.**

You will be charged a late pick up fee of \$10 for the first 5 minutes or any fraction thereof, beyond scheduled departure time, plus \$2 for each additional minute. If you have more than one child in our program, all children must be picked up by their scheduled departure times.

Your account will automatically be charged for late pick up fees, which will be processed every Friday. Excessive tardiness may lead to increased late fees or termination of enrollment in the program.

PARKING

There is 10-minute drop-off parking in the front of the Early Childhood entrance as well as other visitor parking. Sometimes parking may be difficult because of the many activities at the JCC.

At no time will any vehicle be permitted to park in a handicap-designated space unless the vehicle bears a permit issued by Texas Department of Public Safety. The JCC encourages parents to follow all car safety guidelines by using seat belts for all passengers, appropriate car seats and/or booster seats for young children and by not transporting children in the front seat of any vehicle.

For the safety of our children, while driving in the JCC parking lot, you are expected to refrain from talking on your cell phone and from exceeding the posted speed limit of 5 mph.

Do not leave children unattended in a parked car, and do not leave the car idling when you are dropping off or picking up your child. Do not leave purses or other valuables in your car.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES

Please notify the Early Childhood Office if your child is not coming to school for any reason, and let us know if your child has any contagious illness. There are no make-ups for absences.

CHANGE OF SCHEDULE

Any changes in schedule must be submitted to the Early Childhood Office, in writing, with a change of schedule form. A minimum advance notice of two weeks is needed to **decrease hours**. There is a \$35 processing charge per change.

For families who commit to a consistent year-round (12-month) schedule with **no changes**, we are pleased to offer a special discounted monthly tuition rate. Keep in mind that families selecting this rate are locked in for a full 12-month period (June – May). Any changes will require a change of schedule form to be submitted with the appropriate fee, and tuition will revert to the standard rates.

DROP-IN CHILDCARE/EXTRA HOURS

As a convenience to parents, we offer, in addition to contract care, drop-in childcare on a space-available basis for children enrolled in our part-time program. Space permitted, your child may stay extra hours when the following procedures are followed:

- Check with Early Childhood Office for space availability.
- Pay drop-in fee on the day services are rendered.

EXTENDED DAY OPTIONS

Extended day options for children on a part-time schedule are offered on a limited, space-available basis. Reservations must be made a **minimum** of 24 hours in advance. The cost is \$9 per hour or any portion thereof. For those needing early or late stay who are not able to give a 24 hour notice but at least a one (1) hour notice, the charge for each hour, or portion thereof, is \$12. The fee will be charged to your account.. Check with the office for the cost of extra days. Contact the Early Childhood Office between 7 am – 6 pm for reservations.

ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, OR WORK CHANGES

Any changes in address, telephone number, work location, e-mail address, or emergency contact information must be reported promptly to the Early Childhood Office and changed on your child's emergency information card. Changes must be initialed and dated by the parent.

WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

We usually follow the Northeast Independent School District in closing for inclement weather. However, you should check our website or call our early childhood office phone (210-302-6846) to hear a message. Additionally, we will send a text message through our Remind system to notify parents.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL

A minimum of 30 days' notice is required to withdraw your child from the program. You will be responsible for paying one full month's tuition following your notice of withdrawal from the program. Tuition will not be prorated for a partial month. Withdrawal forms are available in the Early Childhood Office.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

A family may be asked to leave the program for any of the following reasons:

- Determination that the program cannot meet the needs of the child or family.
- Lack of cooperation between parent and faculty and/or administration.
- Inability of parents/guardians to adhere to JCC/Early Childhood policies and or procedures.
- Inability or unwillingness to adhere to payment plans.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to operational policies or the enrollment agreement. A copy of the updated operational policies must be signed and dated by each family.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Our goal is always to create a successful experience for every child. Some children come to our program with identified needs in specific areas of growth – social, physical, and language. For other children, developmental needs may emerge after they have been with us.

Studies have shown how intervention in these formative years positively impacts growth and development. We recognize and embrace the value of early intervention and of providing necessary supports, whether they are formal (therapeutic) or informal. It is not the intent of our program to label or diagnose children. When a teacher or a parent has a concern about a child's development or behavior, we take their concerns seriously. It is our responsibility as early childhood professionals to advocate, when needed, for the children and parents in our program. We know how important these first years are and want to be as inclusive as possible. However, in some cases, we are unable to meet the needs of some children. In every case, we always have your child's best interest at heart.

The teacher and Director will make recommendations for appropriate professional referrals to you if your child requires further screening for possible developmental delays, challenging behaviors, or other concerns. Costs of specialized consultants are the responsibility of the family.

Parents of children with identified disabilities or special learning needs are expected to share the Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs)/ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and/or any other specialized learning plans or recommendations from the child's doctor, therapist, or school district. This information, together with input from the parents, will be used to help us plan individualized learning activities and to assess the needs of your child while in our care so that we can better meet a child's special needs. Likewise, the JCC Early Childhood Director and/or teachers will provide, with written parental permission, information to therapists, doctors, school districts, and/or private schools about the behavior and abilities demonstrated by a child while in our care and/or copies from the child's assessment portfolio.

With written parental permission and with payment made directly to the therapist by the child's parents, specialized consultants, including speech, occupational, physical therapists and other professionals, as needed, are welcome to arrange with the Director to observe the child while at the program and to use a classroom or meeting room to provide therapy for the child on-site at the JCC. The therapist must sign the child out for therapy and sign back in to the classroom after therapy sessions. Therapists or specialized consultants may obtain information from the teacher about the

child and/or review the child's assessment portfolio only with parental permission. In addition, teachers and/or the Director will meet with the parent and therapist to determine the needs of the child while in our care. The JCC staff welcomes the input of specialized consultants in helping us meet the special needs of a child in our care. The Director has contact information for several San Antonio agencies, consultants, and therapists that the center has worked with in the past as well as others that can provide support services for children with special needs.

The Early Childhood Department attempts to be inclusive of all children. The program will work as best as possible with families with children with identified disabilities and/or special learning or developmental needs by making developmentally appropriate placement, adjusting staffing patterns or schedules, providing additional staff training, and/or modifying the physical environment within reasonable limits. The reasonableness of the adjustments needed for the specialized needs of the individual child, in addition to meeting the needs of all the children enrolled, will be considered seriously by the Early Childhood Director. Should accommodations be made to include a child with special needs, parents will be responsible for additional costs beyond those included in the school's tuition. The JCC may be unable to accommodate the special needs of all children.

The success of our program is dependent on parent's participation and cooperation. It is an expectation that parents will work with our faculty as part of a team. Parents are expected to participate in meetings and to collaborate on strategies that can help their child be successful in our program. When it is deemed necessary, the parents, at the parents' expense, may be asked to provide a one-on-one assistant for their child in order for us to safely and successfully meet that child's needs. If parents are unwilling to fully commit to early intervention deemed necessary by our faculty, termination of services may be required.

SPECIAL NEEDS DUE TO FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

The Early Childhood Department recognizes that any child at any time may have "special needs" due to family emergencies, divorce/separation, moving, illness, etc. The program requests that parents keep the classroom teachers and/or Director informed of any situations that may be upsetting to the child or may be causing disruption in the child's regular routine or typical behavior. The program welcomes the input and suggestions of families in such instances, to help us better meet the needs of your child and family. Conferences with the Director and/or classroom teachers may also be arranged as needed.

INFANT CARE

Our infant program is based on individual needs of each baby. Parents and caregivers plan together so each child's needs are met. Families must bring all items needed for your child, including diapers, food, and change of clothing, bottles, and formula. Please label all items with your child's first name and initial of last name. For children not yet ready for table food, you must provide written feeding instructions that are signed and dated. This must be reviewed and updated every 30 days until the child is able to eat table food.

Infants 12 months and younger are put to sleep on their backs. This policy is based on The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) the current research, which indicates a reduction in the number of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) cases in children who sleep on their backs.

Additionally, **pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items are not allowed in cribs for infants younger than twelve months. Swaddling is not allowed in group care.** Sleep sacks without a swaddle top are allowed. After being placed down for sleep on his/her back; infants may then be allowed to assume any position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

See section on Nutrition Policies for information on feeding.

NAPTIME/SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

All children are required to rest for a period of time as mandated by TDFPS Minimum Standards. The children have participated in a busy morning filled with numerous activities, and all ages need time to relax their bodies. Early risers and non-nappers will be provided quiet activities, such as books or puzzles, after approximately 30 minutes of rest/quiet time. All children (except those sleeping in cribs) must furnish their own cloth nap mats, which should be purchased through the Early Childhood office. Due to limited storage space **nap mats not purchased from the JCC may not exceed the size of 52"X 22"**. Blankets and "snugglies" may also be included for the child's comfort and warmth. Mats and blankets will be sent home at the end of each week for laundering or as needed.

DIAPERS

Disposable diapers and cloth diapers are allowed. **Each diaper must be labeled with your child's name or initials.**

The following applies to cloth diapers:

- The diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine.
- Both the diaper and the outer covering will be changed as a unit.
- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- An appropriate bag must be available which contains the odor from the soiled diapers.

Please bring an ample supply of diapers for your child; we will let you know when the supply is running low. Please label each diaper with your child's first name or initials. All diapering supplies must be stored in a place inaccessible to children, so please give them to a teacher rather than putting them in your child's bag or cubby.

Please bring your child to school with a clean diaper, and, in turn, we will send your child home in a clean diaper. Diapers are changed when they are wet or soiled, are checked when children awaken from nap, and are checked every two hours when children are awake.

TOILETING AND TOILET LEARNING

Teachers will work with families whose child is showing signs of readiness to learn to use the toilet. **Before your child begins the process of toilet learning at school, set up a meeting with your child's teachers to discuss your child's readiness and to develop a mutual plan of action. This is the best way to ensure your child's success.**

Children who are in the toilet learning process should bring several extra pairs of underwear and at

least two complete changes of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear). Toilet accidents will be handled in a calm, pleasant, and casual manner. Information about toilet learning will be provided upon request. "Pull-ups" are discouraged because they give mixed messages to children.

Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces will be placed in a bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

CHILD CUSTODY

We require documentation regarding which parent has legal custody in the case of separation or divorce. If there is no legal documentation, then both parents have the right of access to Barshop JCC records and to pick-up of their children. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide legal documentation verifying custody arrangements. Custodial parents are responsible for notifying the JCC, in writing, of any special circumstances with regard to the rights and obligations of the non-custodial parent. This includes providing written permission for the non-custodial parent to pick-up a child on a regular basis or for a special occasion. Any court orders must be submitted to the EC office, highlighting areas which are relevant to the child and school. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We take confidentiality seriously at the JCC, and all staff and board members abide by the regulations specified in §746.601 by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (Child Care Licensing) and in the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct*. A copy of both resources can be obtained from the school office. We will not only make every effort to protect the confidentiality of your child and family, but also the confidentiality of every other child, family, and staff member of the JCC.

The content of your child's health and safety file is confidential, but is immediately available upon request to:

- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Administrators and teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to assess the records
- Regulatory authorities

Confidential files, including enrollment, medical, and incident forms, and other records of each child, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the main office. Parents must grant written authorization for files to be reviewed by JCC Early Childhood staff, representatives from licensing, and the health department or for NAEYC accreditation. In addition, permission must be granted on the Permission to Access Files Form to other individuals, such as therapists or other specialists, who may have access to your child's files. A copy of this authorization is kept inside the child's individual file. Each child's current ongoing Assessment Portfolio consisting of work samples, anecdotal observations, notes, developmental screenings, and/or checklists will be kept locked in the child's current classroom.

At times other schools, therapists, and/or other professionals may request information about your child as part of an enrollment process or while providing care for your child/family. Such information will only be provided with written permission from the parent or guardian.

PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICY

In an effort to reduce violent or aggressive play, toys, clothing, and paraphernalia that instigate aggressive play may not be sent or worn to school. These items include, but are not limited to: toy weapons and war figures. Please use your best judgment when dressing children and purchasing lunch boxes and backpacks.

CELEBRATION OF BIRTHDAYS

It is our practice to insure birthday celebrations are a positive experience for each child. Guidelines for birthday celebrations include:

- We will make your child's birthday, or the day closest to his/her birthday, special at school with a snack-time celebration. The class will sing "Happy Birthday" to your child, and a special birthday crown will be made for your child to wear. Your child will be assigned snack on that day.
- **Please remember that cakes and other sweets are not served in our program. Please send fresh fruits and/or vegetables.**
- Parents are invited to attend snack time celebration. Birthday plates and napkins may be brought; however, we ask that you do not bring decorations, balloons, party favors, etc. For ideas for birthday snack, please see the Director.
- If you have a birthday party outside of the school for your child, you may distribute invitations in the school mailbox **only if each child in the class is invited.**
- If you are interested in donating a children's book to our early childhood library in honor of your child's birthday, a special bookplate will be placed inside the book with your child's name inscribed. Another way to provide your child the experience of giving, not just receiving, on his/her birthday is to donate a gift to the class from the classroom's wish list. All the children can watch your child open that gift during the snack time celebration and then enjoy the gift together in the classroom.

CELL PHONES

To promote effective communication between families and our program staff and to enhance your interaction with your child, cell phone use is not allowed in the Early Childhood hallways, classrooms, or playgrounds. Use of cell phones while driving in the JCC parking lot is also prohibited.

CLOTHING

Children should dress in comfortable, durable and washable clothing. Clothing that is easy to put on and take off encourages independence at toilet time.

Our program promotes exploration and direct experiences of many kinds. These kinds of experiences can be messy, and even though we use washable paint and shirts or smocks to protect clothing, spills and stains may still occur. Please keep this in mind when selecting your child's clothing for school.

Rubber-soled athletic shoes are best for active young children. Boots with slippery bottoms can be hazardous, sandals (*including croc-style*) get sand or rocks stuck in them, and dressy shoes may be

slippery; therefore, **please send your child in only closed toe, closed back, rubber soled shoes.** “Squeaky” shoes are not allowed.

Every day, each child must bring a tote bag with his/her name clearly marked and containing a complete change of clothes. We have very limited extra clothing in reserve. If your child uses any items from the JCC, it is essential to wash and return them the following day. Outgrown clothing for donation to our reserve is always welcome. **All articles of removable clothing (jackets, sweaters, hats, etc.) should be marked clearly with the child's name.**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Families are encouraged to work together with your child to participate in and support community improvement or advocacy projects. We plan outreach projects that staff, children and families can support together such as collecting food for the Food Bank, donating class Tzedakah funds to community organizations such as Wildlife Rescue or the Children’s Shelter; or donating gently used toys or clothing to other organizations.

EMPLOYMENT OF JCC TEACHERS

Upon request, we provide a list of teachers who are available to “baby-sit” after hours and during program closures. **Please note that your child’s current classroom teachers are not allowed to baby-sit for you.** However, you may make arrangements with a teacher in your child’s suite.

The JCC is not responsible in any way for such babysitting arrangements if you hire a staff member to provide any child care service that is not during normal operating hours on the campus. The staff member is not an agent or employee of the JCC, but is providing the service to you as an independent contractor, and the JCC has no responsibility for any actions of the staff member in this capacity. Arrangements must be made during the teacher’s free time, not while the teacher is supervising children. Please respect this policy!

The JCC works very hard to recruit and retain qualified early childhood staff for our program. We strongly discourage families from hiring our staff away from our program. Please respect the needs of all of our children and families, and do not put your individual needs over the needs of the program.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES/PRIVATE LESSONS

Our enrichment program offers a variety of special interest (**afternoon only**) classes held weekly for children ages three-and-a-half to five years. These classes are in addition to our regular school day and extended day programs. Additionally, if you enroll your child in private lessons such as piano or swimming, you must schedule the lesson after afternoon naptime.

Please consult the JCC Program Guide or the “Center Peace” for a description of the classes and fees.

Children are taken to and from the special class by the enrichment class instructor, who must sign them in and out of their classroom. Families must pick up children from their classroom, **not** the enrichment class, if the enrichment class instructor has transported them to the class.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

Occasionally, we plan field trips for 3-year-olds and older to visit sites that are relevant to the classroom program. Parents will receive a permission slip to be signed and returned. Parents are needed to help supervise on field trips. Please let your child's teacher know if you are able to accompany the class. You will then need to obtain from the Front Desk and fill out a form allowing us to seek a criminal background check before you may volunteer. Because parents provide additional supervision on field trips, other arrangements should be made for younger siblings.

Field trip transportation is usually rented buses or vans which are licensed and insured in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Proper child safety restraints are required for all children. You are responsible for providing an appropriate car seat for your child.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important element of the program. Children will play outdoors daily, weather, air quality, and environmental safety permitting. Children benefit from experiencing many kinds of weather conditions. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports outdoor play, even in extremely cold weather. In extremely hot weather, outdoor play is limited, and drinking water is offered frequently to the children. If conditions prevent outdoor play, similar large motor activities will be provided in the motor skills room or the gym. Ample clothing should be provided by families in case of cold weather. Layering your child's clothing is desirable during cold weather, so he/she may adjust clothing to maintain a comfortable body temperature.

Our playgrounds offer shade as well as sun. Children should wear sun-protective clothing, such as hats or sunglasses, and sunscreen or sun block. Sunscreen or sun block with UVB/UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher can be applied to exposed skin with written parental permission. Parents should apply sunscreen or sun block for the morning outdoor play and request in writing for your child's teachers to reapply before the afternoon outdoor play.

PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

Children may bring from home personal items that are necessary for their security during special times of the day such as separation from parent and naptime. They will be asked to keep such items in their cubby when not necessary for their security.

Please leave toys at home. It is difficult to share favorite toys and sad when they are broken or lost. However, we encourage children to bring books, pictures, or other items that have educational value, especially those things related to the current theme.

Candy, gum, toy weapons, and any toys that promote violence are not allowed at school at any time. Children may bring money only on Friday for Tzedakah.

SAVE AND SEND

We can use items you no longer need such as: toys and books in good condition, outgrown clothing and socks, dramatic play props (phones, dress-up costumes, jewelry, purses), pots and pans, spools, yarn, buttons, ribbons, yogurt containers, paper towel rolls, baby food jars, greeting cards, picture calendars, magazines with good full-page photographs, such as "Texas Parks and Wildlife". Other items may be required during the year.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our program will schedule special activities and events throughout the year. Because of the varied days of attendance of the children, some activities may take place on a day your child is not in attendance. In these cases, your child is welcome to participate in the special event if accompanied by you or another adult. Some of the special activities/events include: puppet shows, community visitors, field trips, Chanukah party, "Passover Experience," Purim carnival, and the Fiesta parade.

TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN

To assist your child and family in the transition from our pre-kindergarten program to kindergarten we do the following:

- Provide basic general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and program options for local public and private schools.
- Encourage parents to attend kindergarten "round-up" and/or other orientation sessions that are planned for incoming children and parents.
- Discuss child care options for after school hours and school breaks.
- Read books to the children that discuss changes and moves.
- Invite a kindergarten child or older sibling to visit the class and talk about school.
- Role play using a "prop box" of items that allow the children to role play being in kindergarten.
- Practice specific school procedures and routines.

VISITORS

Families of children enrolled in our program are welcome visitors at the JCC at all times to observe, to eat lunch with your child, to volunteer to help in the classroom, or to share a special talent with the children. We encourage families who want to visit with each other to do so in our hallway sitting area or in the campus foyer. Families should check in with the office if they are visiting their child during school hours.

Family members and friends who are unfamiliar to the staff should check in with the office and obtain a visitor badge when visiting the center.

All visitors that will be eating or interacting with the children or staying in the classroom or on the playground for more than a couple of minutes must wash their hands upon arrival.

VOLUNTEERS

According to TDFPS, any individual who volunteers regularly in our Early Childhood Program (more than once a month) must submit required information to our Early Childhood Office. Please pick up a Volunteer Packet if you plan to volunteer regularly or assist on a field trip.

WATER ACTIVITIES

During the summer months, children who are in Rooms 1, 4A, 4B, 5A, and 5B will participate in instructional swimming classes as part of the summer program. Based on age, children will go to the pool two, three, or five days a week. Water safety instructors and lifeguards provide instruction. Additional lifeguards are positioned on the side of the pool to oversee the children.

All children may periodically participate in water splashing activities.

HEALTH / MEDICAL

ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES

Accidents/First Aid: Teachers are certified in Pediatric First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Should emergency action be needed, staff will provide immediate care, call EMS, and call the parent and the child's physician.

Staff will attempt to contact you when your child receives any injury that requires more than "a hug" so you will be aware of the incident. A written report will be given to you or placed in your mailbox reporting the nature of the accident as well as the first aid given. If the injury requires medical attention by a health care professional, your signature will be required on the report within 48 hours of the incident.

Emergency evacuation: Our program conducts fire drills monthly, severe weather drills quarterly. If an evacuation is ordered by the local fire or police department, the JCC reserves the right to follow the evacuation and transportation orders to the emergency location determined by the authorities. Under certain circumstances, we will evacuate to **Christian School at Castle Hills** located at 2220 NW Military Hwy (210-878-1070). Parents will be notified of the location.

In the event the Center must be evacuated due to the threat of fire, bomb scare, or other building emergency, children will be evacuated through the nearest exit and will be escorted to a safe distance from the building. Children will remain outside until the fire/police department informs us that it is safe to reenter. Parents will be notified about all evacuations. We ask that all parents sign up for the Remind system to receive these notifications in the most timely manner.

Emergency preparedness: We have a plan to deal with such emergencies as fire, severe weather, intruder, chemical spill, and this plan is available upon request in the Director's office. In the event of an evacuation, please know that there is the possibility that staff will have to use personal vehicles for this purpose. Great precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of your child.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following information concerning child abuse and neglect is provided for your review. We are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The program is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect. You will be notified if your child is questioned as part of the investigation.

We have procedures in place that states how we deal with a staff member accused of abusing or neglecting a child in the program. These procedures protect both the rights of the accused staff person and the children in the program.

There are three kinds of child abuse:

1. **Physical abuse** - inflicting bodily injury on a child (beating, burning, etc.)
2. **Sexual abuse** - using a child in or exposing her/him to sexual activities, with or without the

child's consent

3. **Emotional abuse** - demanding that the child do more than he/she is able to do, severely criticizing or humiliating her/him for not living up to a demand, or placing upon the child such unclear requirements that the child cannot understand what he/she is supposed to do

There are at least two kinds of child neglect:

1. **Physical neglect** - failure to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; failure to provide adequate education, guidance or supervision
2. **Emotional neglect** - failure to give a child the love and affection he/she needs

Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect of a Child*

- The JCC is committed to compliance with the Texas law on reporting abuse and neglect of children. The law requires any person – including personnel at a school or childcare facility – who has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person – whether a parent, a JCC staff member, or anyone else – to make a report to the appropriate authorities, Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is in bad faith. The program is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse or neglect.
- This report must be made immediately when and no more than 48 hours after, a person first suspects abuse or neglect. The report should reflect the person’s belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected, and should also include the name and address of the child and of the person responsible for the care, custody or welfare of the child, and other pertinent information about the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect of the child.
- It is a criminal offense under Texas law to knowingly fail to make a report of abuse or neglect. In most cases, the identity of the person making the report is confidential, and a person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect or who testifies in the legal proceeding is immune from civil or criminal liability. There is no immunity, however, for a person who reports his or her own abuse or neglect of a child or who acts in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

HAND WASHING

All children must wash their hands upon arrival to the classroom. Throughout the day, children and staff wash their hands according to posted guidelines (using soap and water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, dry hands and use a paper towel to turn off faucet) before all snacks and meals, after toileting/diaper changes, after playing outside, before and after water play and other times as needed such as after nose wiping, and coming into contact with any bodily fluids.

Parents or visitors who plan to stay longer than a brief departure must also wash their hands according to posted hand washing guidelines.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TIDBITS

For the health and safety of children, families and staff, we ask for your help with the following:

- The JCC Block and Dreeben School for Young Children does not allow smoking, drugs, firearms, or weapons of any kind in the classrooms, playgrounds, or in the JCC Building.
- For the safety of children, please do not bring cups of coffee or other hot beverages, even those with a lid, into the classrooms or playgrounds.
- Our program encourages you to follow all car safety guidelines by using seat belts for all passengers, appropriate car seats and/or booster seats for young children and not transporting young children in the front seat of any vehicle. Our office can provide you with additional resources on car safety guidelines by request.
- The staff uses latex gloves for changing diapers and when administering first aid involving blood. Please let the teachers know if your child is allergic to latex products.
- All toys, paints, and other materials used at the Block and Dreeben School for Young Children are lead-free.
- Our program receives updates of toys and/or foods recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission which is posted in the notebook in our entry.

SPECIAL NEEDS RELATED TO HEALTH

Families are expected to complete medical alert forms annually for severe allergies and other medical chronic conditions (e.g. asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary conditions, seizures, diabetes, or other ongoing health issues) that require close monitoring by staff for any period of time.

Additionally, parents/caregivers must meet with the Director and classroom teacher to discuss the child's specific needs with specific written instructions for care. See Nutrition/Snacks/Lunch section for information about food allergies.

HEALTH/ILLNESS: CHILD INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

One of the most serious challenges facing group care for young children is preventing illness. Children may be evaluated upon arrival to ensure they are healthy and able to participate in the program.

The staff strives to maintain the highest standard of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures are followed and taught to the children. Toys that are mouthed, eating surfaces, and diaper equipment will be sanitized between children's use.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your help for this. **Do not bring ill children to the Center. If your child becomes ill, you will be contacted immediately. You are expected to pick him/her up within the hour.** If an illness prevents your child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, then the child will be made comfortable in a location where she or he is supervised by a familiar caregiver until you pick him or her up. The child will be located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Your child must be fever- and symptom-free for 24 hours or have a note from his/her doctor stating the condition is non-contagious. Children who have diarrhea or vomiting must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the program. No child may attend if fever reducing medication is administered for fever prior to coming to school. The program reserves the right to require a doctor's statement before the child can come back to school.

Please notify the school if your child has contracted a contagious disease such as "pink eye," head lice, ringworm, chicken pox, etc. You will be notified by e-mail (Health Alert) of the presence of a diagnosed contagious illness in your child's classroom or suite, such as conjunctivitis, Parvovirus B 19 (5th disease) and others as recommended by the Texas Department of Health.

A child must not be brought to school, or will be sent home, if one or more of the following exists:

- If fever lowering agents such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen have been administered in the past 24 hours (Your child must be fever-free WITHOUT MEDICATION for 24 hours before returning to school.)
- An illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in classroom activities, including outside play during normal weather conditions.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- In the past 24 hours, the oral temperature was 100.4 degrees or greater, rectal temperature was 101.4 degrees or greater, or armpit temperature was 99.4 degrees
- Two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Two or more episodes of diarrhea or loose, watery stools in the past 24 hours
- Rash with a fever, discharge from the eyes, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior changes or other unusual signs, until medical evaluation indicates the child can be included in classroom activities
- The child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease, including, but not limited to: chicken pox, mumps, measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, fifth disease, strep throat, lice, conjunctivitis, or pink eye. Until medical evaluation determines that the disease is no longer communicable and the child is able to participate in classroom activities, please allow your child to recuperate at home.

A child without outward symptoms may also be sent home if it is determined that the child is not feeling well (i.e. lethargy, general malaise).

In the event due to medical conditions, your child is unable to play outdoors, a note from a health professional must be presented to the director. The note must indicate the reason and time period for this restriction. Our program will make every effort to accommodate this request, but it is not always possible.

Parents of children with chronic symptoms of colds and/or allergies, including significant mucous, may be asked to have their child examined by a physician to rule out any infection.

You know your child better than anyone. If your child has a loss of appetite, shows unusual signs of listlessness, irritability, or fatigue, your child may be coming down with an illness and should be kept

home. Many illnesses are infectious. Please do not send your child to school if you suspect your child may be getting sick.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS/MEDICAL RECORDS

Before your child begins the program, and as age-appropriate thereafter, the following information is required:

- **Health records must document the dates of services to show that your child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.** (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/2/385.full>)
- All children are required to have all recommended immunizations.
- A signed statement from a licensed health care professional who has examined your child within the past year, indicating your child is able to take part in the school program. Results of health examinations must show up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
- If your child is overdue for any routine health services, you must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition for remaining enrolled in the program.

MEDICATION

If your child requires medication to be given at school, deliver the medication directly to the teacher, along with a completed JCC Medication Administration Authorization form (which may be obtained from the EC office or your child's teacher).

Prescription medication will be administered only when it is in the original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, date, prescribed directions, expiration date, and health provider's name.

The medication will be administered only as stated on the label's directions and only with a Medication Administration Authorization form signed by the parent.

Nonprescription medication/Over the Counter (OTC) and homeopathic remedies will be administered only if in the original container, with an expiration date and **accompanied with a signed note from the physician indicating the appropriate dosage and instructions, and how long to administer the medication for any single illness or condition or recurrence of that illness or condition. Additionally, the Medication Administration Authorization form signed by the parent is also required.** OTC medication must be labeled with your child's first and last name.

The licensed health provider's office may give instructions to the program staff by telephone, or the instructions may be faxed to (210) 408-2341.

- To ensure the safety of all children, never put medication in your child's bag or lunch box.
- Teachers will document each dose of medication given on the Medication Administration Authorization form and will keep all medications in a locked container that is inaccessible to children at all times. Medication which must be refrigerated is stored in the Staff refrigerator in the Staff Lounge.

It is the parent's responsibility to retrieve medication at the end of the day.

If your child requires individualized medical attention such as a nebulizer treatment for asthma, epi-pen, a daily ongoing medication, or other special treatments, you must provide the program with a written individualized medical action plan from the prescribing healthcare provider. The action plan must include details of the specific circumstances and specific instructions for individual dosing of the medication.

Additionally, you must meet with the Early Childhood Director or Assistant Director and your child's teacher to discuss the medical action plan. Our program may not be able to accommodate children with certain medical conditions.

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

- Non-prescription skin protectants and cosmetics such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream, lotion, lip balm, and toothpaste only require parental/guardian consent.
- Medication may not be placed in a bottle or cup to be given at school.
- The JCC will not give the first dose of any medication and will not administer fever-reducing medications to reduce or mask a child's fever.
- Medication that is administered only twice a day should be done at home, before and after the school day.

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLANT

Applied skin protection must be either **non-aerosol** sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission to do so).

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellants because of a high risk of insect-borne disease, repellents containing DEET should be used, but requires parental permission (only for children older than two months of age). If you prefer, you can provide alternatives with written permission for use. Staff can apply **non-aerosol** insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission. All insect repellent and sunscreen must be kept in a locked cabinet in the classroom and cannot be kept in your child's cubby or bag.

Products that combine sunscreen and insect repellent are not allowed.

SANITATION AND CLEANING

The classroom floors and bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized by Campus Operations on a daily basis every evening. The carpets in all classrooms are cleaned monthly or sooner, if needed. Teaching staff sanitize the classroom tables, furniture, sinks, faucet and toilet handles, and other areas of the classroom on a daily basis and as needed throughout the day. Toys and mouthed items in the infant and toddler rooms are washed and sanitized daily with a diluted bleach solution. Washable toys, pillows, etc., are washed in the preschool classrooms periodically.

Using the model of Integrated Pest Management, the JCC makes every effort to prevent children from

being exposed to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests, such as insects, rodents, and weeds, under some circumstances the pesticides may also pose a hazard to children and staff. To minimize potential exposure of children and staff to pesticides, pest control practices will involve a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods.

A licensed exterminating company treats the facility and playgrounds with pesticides for common household pests on a monthly basis. The treatment is always done after school hours and under the supervision of a Campus staff member. Further information about the pesticides and treatment schedule can be obtained from the Campus office if requested.

SMOKING

Smoking within the Campus building is prohibited at all times. Smoking outside the building is permitted in designated areas only. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

NUTRITION

NUTRITION POLICIES: SNACKS/LUNCHES

Nutrition education is an important aspect of our program. Our goals are to increase the children's acceptance of a wide variety of foods and to promote good eating habits for optimal development. Good eating habits are formed early in life. With proper direction and continued reinforcement at home, children learn that eating nutritiously leads to a healthy, happy lifestyle.

The program serves meals and snacks at regularly established times. Meals and snacks are at least two hours apart but not more than three hours apart.

Nutrition policies are based on guidelines of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and a registered dietician.

TDFPS policy states, "Each child in care for four to seven hours must be served one meal and one snack, equal to 1/3 of their daily food needs." A child who is in care for more than seven hours must be offered "two snacks and one meal, equal to ½ of their daily food needs."

(See Appendix A, "Food Guidelines" in our Family Handbook.)

The CACFP requires the following portions for 2 of the components for snacks:

- ½ cup milk (we serve milk at morning and afternoon snack)
- ½ cup fruit or vegetable
- ½ oz. equivalent grain (whole)

As part of our Sheva program, we participate in *Discover Catch*, which is a program designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices. Foods are divided into two categories: **GO Foods** and **WHOA Foods**. These categories are a general guideline for children and their families to learn how to make nutritious choices. **GO Foods** are healthier and **WHOA Foods** are less healthy. The goal is to increase consumption of **GO Foods** and decrease the consumption of **WHOA Foods**. A healthy understanding of foods in the diet does **NOT include the concept of "good" foods versus "bad" foods. Healthful eating occurs when a person eats mostly GO foods of average portion sizes and eats WHOA Foods less often and on special occasions.**

GO Foods include foods high in nutrients and low in unhealthy fats and added sugars, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grain foods and unflavored low-fat milk.

WHOA Foods include foods higher in unhealthy fats, and/or added sugars and highly processed foods.

In our program we have divided WHOA foods into **WHOA at School Foods** and **WHOA at Home Foods**.

Whoa at School Foods (One of these can be sent along with a well-balanced meal):

Along with a well-balanced meal, if you want to send a “treat” (that is low in sugar and/or fat), try **one** of the following:

- Vanilla wafers
- Graham crackers
- Animal crackers
- Fruit-flavored yogurt
- Flavored rice cakes
- Dehydrated fruits (banana chips, apple chips, peach chips, dried apricots)
- Baked chips such as baked potato chips, baked Sun chips, baked pita chips, or baked veggie chips
- Jell-O cup (sugar free)
- Pudding cup
- Goldfish crackers
- Fruit snack made with 100% real fruit such as Fruit leather
- Granola bar (without icing, coating, or drizzle)
- Food pouches*Appendix C

Whoa at Home Foods: What NOT to bring (because they are high in sugar, fat, and/or additives):

- Fruit snacks, fruit roll ups,:
Taste great, but they’re not really fruit and contain lots of added sugar.
- Prepackaged, prepared meals (such as Lunchables) or meals from fast-food restaurants:
These foods are convenient but lack nutritional value and are high in fat, sugar and additives.
- Flavored milk (chocolate, strawberry, vanilla):
Milk is great, but the flavors are just added sugar.
- Sugar-coated cereals:
If there is a cartoon character on the box, it’s probably unhealthy.
- Sweets — candy, cookies, cake and snack cakes, pastries, or chocolate such as Nutella®
- Soda, Kool Aid, sports drinks, etc.:
Water and milk are the best beverages for your growing child.

Remember our expectation is to provide children with healthy choices. Please send **Go Foods** for your child’s lunch and **only one Whoa at School Food** if you want to send a treat. Please do not send any **Whoa at Home Food** to the JCC.

To assist you in providing for your child's daily food needs and to help plan healthy, nutritious lunches for your child, see Appendix A: Nutrition Guidelines and Appendix B: Munch, Munch, It's Time for Lunch.

Snacks

For children in all classes except those in rooms 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B, parents are assigned to provide a morning snack approximately one time per month. This is a time for your child to be "snack leader" and participate in the sharing of food with his/her classmates. This snack must be fresh or frozen fruits or vegetables with enough to provide each child at least 1/2 cup (1 cup for 4 year olds). This applies to birthday snacks as well. **Birthday cakes and other sweets are not allowed at school and should be reserved for your own family celebrations.**

Be sure to wash all fruits and vegetables you send for snack to avoid possible exposure to pesticides. You can take the opportunity to educate your children about the importance of doing so.

Except for children in rooms 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B, an afternoon snack after naptime will be provided by the program. Examples of items served include: humus and whole wheat pita, mixed vegetables, edamame, whole wheat bagels with cream cheese, multigrain cheerios, and graham crackers with peanut butter. Milk is served for both morning and afternoon snack. A late afternoon snack, which will consist of a few crackers is served within three hours of the after nap snack.

All snacks served are recorded on a posted classroom calendar each day. Parents may request a copy of the snack calendar.

Lunches

When packing lunches, please keep these guidelines in mind:

- Please send frozen gel packs or a frozen juice box in an insulated lunchbox to keep foods that must be kept cold from spoiling. These foods include: meat, poultry, fish, egg, milk, cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit or vegetables, or opened cans of fruit or pudding.
- Send lunches that do not require warming. Foods requiring warming should be heated at home and sent in a small thermos.
- All foods and beverages must be sent to school in a labeled bag or lunch box. Children are not allowed to share foods from their lunch.

Lunch suggestions will be provided in newsletters throughout the year or by request to the Director.

FOOD SAFETY

The following foods present a choking hazard and **should not be sent** at any time for children under the age of 4 years:

- Chips
- Nuts or peanuts
- Popcorn
- Raw Peas
- Hard pretzels
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter (including dipping cups of peanut butter)
- Raw chunks of carrots, vegetables or meat larger than can be swallowed whole
- Raisins, Craisins® and other dried fruit

**Hot dogs, cherry tomatoes, grapes must be diced.

Parents should cut foods into pieces no larger than ¼ -inch square for infants and ½ -inch square for toddlers/twos and threes.

Laws of Kashrut are observed at the JCC. The following policies apply:

- No pork, ham, bacon, lard or shellfish products are permitted at any time.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are kosher.
- Lunches should be either dairy or meat. The two may not be served together in the same meal. (For example, if you send a meat sandwich, do not include cheese or yogurt in the same meal.)
- Tuna fish or salmon may be served with dairy.)

Children are not permitted to crawl or walk around with food, bottles or sippy cups and will be asked to sit at a table to finish their food or drink.

CHILDREN WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

All meals and snacks must be provided from home for children with food allergies. With your permission, the food allergy information will be posted in the classroom. Peanut free tables are provided in the classroom as needed.

As required by the licensing standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children requiring dietary considerations (such as food allergies) must have a written statement from the child's physician or a registered dietitian stating which foods that must be avoided and suggesting alternatives. The staff will post the food allergy/sensitivity, nutritional needs, or other medical needs of the child for all staff caring for the child to review only if written permission to do so has been given by the parent. With severe food allergies, such as that to peanuts, a letter to all families in that room will be sent out to advise them of the severe allergy and to ask for them to take it into consideration when preparing their own child's snacks and lunches.

If your child suffers from severe food allergies, you are strongly advised to send foods from home

that you deem safe for your child's consumption. Every effort will be made to ensure that your child is not exposed to foods to which he/she is allergic.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with special feeding needs will be handled on an individual basis as the family and program develop an appropriate plan.

CHILDREN WITH INDIVIDUAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

If your child has any dietary requirements which are not medical by nature, such a vegetarian or vegan, please discuss your preference with the EC Director and your child's teachers to establish a plan of action.

INFANT/TODDLER FEEDING INFORMATION

Families with children in rooms 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B should send enough food each day to provide your child with two snacks and lunch and ample bottles or sippy cups of milk and/or juice.

We support breastfeeding by:

- Accepting, storing, and serving expressed human milk for feedings.
- Accepting human milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's full name and the date and time that the milk was expressed
- Storing breast milk in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months
- Gently mixing, not shaking, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk
- Providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding
- Coordinating feeding with the infant's mother

Infants and toddlers will be held if unable to hold their bottle on their own or provided their bottle while sitting, as accreditation guidelines do not permit children to have bottles while laying down.

The following are licensing and accreditation guidelines that we must adhere to for infants younger than 15 months:

- Bottles and feeding schedules provided to the teacher must be updated at least monthly.
- Bottles will only be warmed with tap water or a bottle warmer; a microwave is not allowed for warming bottles or infant food.
- Cow's milk should not be sent for children younger than 12 months; only whole cow's milk or breast milk should be sent for children 12 – 24 months of age.
- Written dietary instructions from the child's doctor must be provided if the child is to continue on formula or other alternatives to milk after 12 months of age.
- Bottles cannot contain any medication or solid foods unless the child's doctor provides written instructions to do so.
- The teachers will discard after one hour any formula or human milk that is served but not totally consumed or refrigerated.

- Solid foods and fruit juices should not be sent for infants younger than six months of age unless that practice is recommended by the child’s healthcare provider and approved by families.
- Only **100% fruit juice may be sent**, and the amount to be served is limited to no more than four ounces daily.
- Sweetened beverages, not including 100% fruit juice, should not be sent.
- **Glass bottles must have sleeves.**

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We believe that direct, effective communication is at the heart of a stimulating, safe, caring program for young children. We will make every effort to communicate effectively and regularly with you about your child and program information. **We are counting on you to stay informed by checking your emails from our program, checking your child’s mailbox in the hallway, and by reading classroom documentation, notes, and newsletters from the teachers.** Please let us know if you want any additional information.

Please understand that we avoid transferring calls to your child’s classroom during the day because we want the teachers attending to the children rather than talking on the phone. We will give them your message or check on your child. Teachers will return your call during the children’s naptime or during their planning time.

Please return calls from the school as soon as possible. Early Childhood Office number (210) 302-6846.

PROCEDURES FOR NEGOTIATING DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN FAMILIES AND STAFF

If you have concerns about day-to-day operations, the program, or your child's care or education, we expect you to discuss them with your child's teachers at an appropriate time and setting. Open, respectful communication often clarifies a situation before it becomes a problem.

If a resolution cannot be reached with your child’s teacher, parents are then expected to speak with the Early Childhood Director (Lisa) or Assistant Director (Calla) to discuss a solution to your concern.

COMMUNICATION VIA EMAIL/REMINDEE

We will utilize email or “Remind” to communicate with you to keep you informed about program information such as school events, illnesses, volunteer opportunities, and information about the curriculum and nutrition. You will receive updates from our school regularly. Although teachers may send emails to you about class information, please do not expect them to reply to questions through email. Please communicate with them directly or by phone. Please be sure to sign up for “Remind”.

MESSAGE BOARD

Please read daily messages on the dry-erase board at the Early Childhood entrance and on your child’s classroom door.

FAMILY MAILBOXES

In the Early Childhood wing hallway, mailboxes are provided for each family (filing boxes with labeled

folders). Messages, flyers, artwork, and classroom information sheets will be placed in your mailbox. It is your responsibility, as well as the responsibility of the carpool parent, to check these files and take the messages home daily. Please recycle unwanted flyers after reading.

Please do not distribute flyers, letters, or advertisements without approval of the Early Childhood Director.

MESSAGES FROM HOME

All important messages (a change in schedule, a different person picking up your child, child going with a friend, etc.) **must be in writing, dated, and signed.**

FAMILY BULLETIN BOARDS

Information including lesson plans, daily schedules, snack menus, and other relevant information will be posted in your child's classroom and/or on the door of the classroom. Additionally, an information bulletin board is in the hallway above the parent mailboxes. Please check regularly for current information.

FAMILY/TEACHER CONFERENCES

"Get Acquainted" conferences are held annually by phone with your child's teacher prior to your child entering a new classroom. Conferences with the teacher will be scheduled in the fall and spring to discuss your child's development and progress. Teachers are willing to schedule additional conferences upon request.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Families may not post on the internet or any social media site (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) information about other people's children who attend the Block and Dreeben School for Young Children, including the names of such children, photographs or videos of children taken at the school, or any other identifying information. Families must inform family members who may attend school events and functions (e.g., grandparents) of this restriction, and understand that it is your obligation to ensure their compliance. That this policy is established solely for the safety and well-being of the children in the program. **Failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of your child's enrollment in our program.**

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

FAMILIES AS PARTNERS

Family involvement is essential to the success of our program. Families are encouraged to take an active role by sharing your ideas, energy, and support. You are given opportunities during the year to volunteer in a variety of ways such as: serving as a PAL member (see below), being a Room Parent, assisting with special events, making learning games for classrooms, assisting on field trips or in classrooms, helping with fundraising projects, painting, etc. Your willingness to help will enhance the quality of our program. **Each family is expected to volunteer at least 10 hours each year.** We strongly urge you to fulfill this golden opportunity for a mitzvah. A notebook will be kept in the Early Childhood office to log volunteer hours. All families who volunteer 10 hours or more will be recognized at the end of the year.

According to TDFPS, any individual who volunteers regularly in our Early Childhood Program (more than once a month) must submit required information to our Early Childhood Office. Please pick up a Volunteer Packet if you plan to volunteer regularly or assist on a field trip.

Families' schedules and availability are considered when planning events. Families are encouraged to give input regarding policies and procedures to the Early Childhood Director. An orientation meeting is held during the summer to familiarize families about opportunities to serve on the PAL Committee (Parents Assisting Learning) or to become a Room Parent.

FAMILY MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

Family meetings and workshops on child-rearing and other subjects relevant to your child's development will be scheduled throughout the year. Information of dates, times, and topics are distributed through email or published in the "Center Peace". Parents are strongly encouraged to take advantage of parent education opportunities. Parenting workshop attendance also counts towards your 10 volunteer hours.

PARENTS ASSISTING LEARNING (PAL)

The PAL (Parents Assisting Learning) committee consists of parents of children who are enrolled in the JCC School for Young Children. The purpose of PALs is to provide support for school projects, fundraising, and other activities that all serve to enhance the most successful early childhood environment possible. Each year parents are invited to volunteer on this committee.

ROOM PARENTS

Room Parents play an important role in helping in the classroom. Some responsibilities include: communicating with parents about upcoming classroom events, organizing sign-up sheets for classroom parties and the Teacher Appreciation Lunch*, and volunteering in the classroom and getting others to volunteer as needed.

Parents are asked to sign up to volunteer to help teachers coordinate special activities such as holiday parties, cooking projects, and field trips, as well as obtaining volunteers as needed. Room parents are encouraged to organize a fall and spring class gathering outside of school hours to give families the opportunity to get together. Possible activities include meeting at the JCC pool, going to the zoo, coordinating a Shabbat Dinner, or meeting at a local park. A room parent meeting is held in the summer to discuss responsibilities

*Each suite is assigned to a specific month to provide a "Teacher Appreciation" lunch for the early childhood staff. This is coordinated by the Room Parents in each suite who choose a menu and create a sign-up sheet for parents to bring items.

FUNDRAISING

We ask families to support our Teacher Enrichment Fund by fundraising throughout the year in a variety of ways. Our Teacher Enrichment Fund helps cover the costs for our teachers to participate in professional development, such as attending conferences, workshops, and college classes.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Annually, families will be asked to evaluate the program's effectiveness in meeting their needs. Please take time to complete the evaluation; your input is very important in helping us make improvements. We publish information about the findings of the survey in an email.

AUXILIARY SERVICES

REFERRAL/COMMUNITY RESOURCES

We maintain a current list of child and family support services available in the community (e.g., mental health, behavioral issues, nutrition, parenting programs, early intervention-special education screening and assessment services). Upon request, we share the list with you and assist you in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support your child's and your family's well-being and development. The Jewish Family Services is a valuable resource to our program.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

The JCC Early Childhood Department maintains for our families a resource library with books and videos concerning Judaism, child development, child rearing, toilet learning, discipline, siblings, dealing with death, etc. Parents are encouraged to check out any books or videos that may be helpful.

SPEECH/HEARING/VISION SCREENING

All children who turn four years of age by September of each school year are required by the State Health Department to have a hearing and vision screening by a licensed physician, qualified professional or certified screener. A record of the screening must be turned into the Early Childhood Office.

A licensed speech and language pathologist will be at the JCC in the fall to screen children's speech and hearing. Forms will be sent to parents explaining procedures and costs. You may choose to have your child screened at school or to have it done privately. If you choose to have your child screened privately, you are responsible for providing written results to the EC Office by November.

A volunteer group will be at the school to do vision screening in the fall, at no cost.

RECALL NOTICES

Our program receives Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) product recall notices, and we post them in a notebook which is kept in the Early Childhood hallway beneath the school bulletin board.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Nutrition Guidelines

Meal Pattern Chart for Infants			
CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERN FOR INFANTS			
Ages	Breakfast	Lunch/Supper	Snack
Infants Birth through 3 months	4 to 6 fluid ounces (fl oz) breast milk or formula	4 to 6 oz breast milk or formula	4 to 6 oz breast milk or formula
Infants 4 months through 7 months	4 to 8 fl oz breast milk or formula	4 to 8 oz breast milk or formula	4 to 8 oz breast milk or formula
	0 to 3 tablespoons (Tbsp) infant cereal	0 to 3 tbsp infant cereal	
		0 to 3 tbsp fruit and/or vegetable	
Infants 8 months through 11 months	6 to 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) breast milk or formula	6 to 8 fl oz breast milk or formula	2 to 4 fl oz breast milk or formula or fruit juice
	2 to 4 tbsp infant cereal	2 to 4 tbsp infant cereal; and/or 1 to 4 tbsp meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, cooked dry beans or peas, or 1/2 to 2 oz cheese; or 1 to 4 oz cottage cheese, cheese food, or cheese spread; and	0 to 1/2 slice bread or 0 to 2 crackers
	1 to 4 tbsp fruit and/or vegetables	1 to 4 tbsp fruit and/or vegetable	

Meal Pattern Chart for Young to Adolescent Children

Breakfast			
CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERN FOR CHILDREN 1 TO 12 YEARS OF AGE			
Ages	1 year through 2 years	3 years through 5 years	6 years through 12 years
Milk (fluid milk)	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Vegetable or Fruit or Juice	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grains/Breads			
<i>a serving is a bread or bread alternate and/or cereal:</i>			
Bread, enriched or whole-grain	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cereal, enriched or whole-grain			
Cold dry cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
Hot cooked cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked pasta or noodle products	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Supplement (Snack)			
Ages	1 year through 2 years	3 years through 5 years	6 years through 12 years
Milk (fluid milk)	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup
Meat or Meat Alternate			
Meat, poultry, or fish (cooked, lean meat without bone)	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Cheese	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Egg (large)	1/2	1/2	1/2

Cooked dry beans or peas	1/8 cup	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Nuts and/or seeds	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1/ oz
Yogurt, plain or sweetened	2 oz	2 oz	4 oz
Vegetable or Fruit or Juice	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Grains/Breads			
Bread, enriched or whole-grain	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cereal			
Cold dry cereal	1/4 cup	1/3 cup	3/4 cup
Hot cereal	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked pasta	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Lunch or Supper			
Ages	1 year through 2 years	3 years through 5 years	6 years through 12 years
Milk (fluid milk)	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
Meat or Meat Alternate			
Meat, poultry, or fish (cooked, lean meat without bone)	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz
Cheese	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz
Egg (large)	1/2	3/4	1
Cooked dry beans or peas	1/4 cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Nuts and/or seeds	1/2 oz	3/4 oz	1 oz
Yogurt, plain or sweetened	4 oz	6 oz	8 oz
Vegetable or Fruit or Juice	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Grains/Breads			
Bread, enriched or whole-grain	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cooked cereal grains, enriched or whole-grain	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked pasta	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup

APPENDIX B: MUNCH, MUNCH, IT'S TIME FOR LUNCH!

With all the day-to-day chaos of life, it can seem daunting to set aside time to plan for healthy eating. By following these guidelines, you can be sure your child is getting all the nutrients they need and also save yourself some time when shopping and planning for school lunch. These guidelines are based on Texas Department of Family and & Protective Services (TDFPS) Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers and the recommendations of a certified dietician.

Go Foods

Choose at least one or two items from each of the following categories to make a delicious and healthy lunch!!

LEAN PROTEINS Serve at least 1 oz of any of these:	WHOLE GRAINS Serve at least ½ slice or ¼ cup of any of these:	FRUITS & VEGGIES Serve at least ¼ cup of any of these (or other fruits & vegetables not listed):	BEVERAGES Serve at least 2 oz (¼ cup) of any of these:
Tip: Try to choose proteins with less than 7 grams of fat per serving.	Tip: Look for foods to say “100% whole wheat” to be sure you are getting the grains and fiber you need.	Tip: Fresh or frozen is best. Look for canned fruits packed in “100% juice” or “unsweetened”.	Tip: Limit fruit juice consumption to 4 oz per day. It’s better to eat fruits instead of drinking them.
Cheese Peanut butter Almond butter Cashew butter Turkey Chicken Tuna or other fish Eggs Vegetable-based meat substitutes Tofu Tempeh Seitan Beans (black, pinto, kidney, lima, etc.) Garbanzo/chickpeas (hummus)	Sliced bread Sandwich flats English muffins Tortillas Pita Rice cakes Crackers Bagels Rice (Brown is best) Pasta (Whole wheat is best) Quinoa Barley Couscous	Apple slices Orange wedges Bananas Strawberries Blueberries Blackberries Cantaloupe Watermelon Grapes (cut) Plums Pears Peaches Apple sauce Carrots (shredded or cooked) Tomatoes Edamame Celery (cut) Leafy greens (spinach, kale, turnip, mustard) Radishes Broccoli Cauliflower Cooked peas Green beans Asparagus Zucchini Eggplant Squash Sweet potatoes	Milk (white is best) -Whole if < 24 months age - 1% or skim if > 24 months age - avoid flavored milks such as chocolate & strawberry Water 100% pure fruit juice - Avoid juice drinks or fruit flavored drinks such as punch 100% pure fruit & vegetable juice blends 100% pure fruit juice and water blends

Important Lunch Guidelines

Don't forget your cold packs to keep those cold foods cold!

Be sure to check the expiration dates on perishable foods.

The Laws of Kashrut are observed at the JCC:

- No pork, ham, bacon, lard or shellfish products are permitted at any time.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are kosher.
- **Lunches should be either dairy or meat. The two may not be served together in the same meal.**

(For example, if you send a meat sandwich, do not include cheese or yogurt in the same meal. Tuna fish or salmon may be served with meat or dairy.)

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) states, "Each child in care for four to seven hours must be served one meal and one snack, equal to 1/3 of their daily food needs." A child who is in care for more than seven hours must be offered "two snacks and one meal, equal to ½ of their daily food needs." (See Appendix A, "Food Guidelines" in our Family Handbook.)

Additionally, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that a registered dietitian should evaluate the menus for nutritional content: portion sizes, nationally recommended limits on juice, sugar, sodium, and saturated fats and procedures for food brought from home.

Based on the guidelines of TDFPS and NAEYC, recommendations of a registered dietician, and recommendations from our PAL committee, the following guidelines are being instituted to promote the health of each child who attends the Block and Dreeben School for Young Children.

Whoa Foods at Home

Please do not send the following items (because they are high in sugar, fat and/or additives):

- Fruit snacks, fruit roll ups
- Prepackaged, prepared meals (such as Lunchables®) or meals from fast food restaurants
- Nutella® Products
- Flavored milk (chocolate, strawberry, vanilla)
- Candy
- Cookies (See exceptions below)
- Cake and snack cakes
- Pastries
- Soda, Kool Aid®, sports drinks, etc.
- Sugar-coated cereals

Whoa Foods at School

Along with a well-balanced meal, if you want to send a "treat" (that is low in sugar and/or fat), try **one** of the following:

- Vanilla wafer cookies
- Graham crackers, animal crackers and Goldfish® crackers
- Fruit/flavored yogurt
- Flavored rice cakes

- Dehydrated fruits (banana chips, apple chips, peach crisps, dried apricots)
- Baked chips - such as baked potato chips, baked Sun Chips®, baked pita chips, or baked veggie chips (**only for children 4 years or older**)
- Jell-O® cup (sugar free)
- Pudding cup
- Fruit leather (100% fruit)
- Granola bar (without icing, coating, or drizzle)
- Food pouches

Food Safety (Based on NAEYC Standards)

The following foods present a choking hazard and **should not be sent** at any time for children under the age of 4 years:

- Hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds)
- Hard pretzels or popcorn, chips
- Whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter (including dipping cups of peanut butter)
- Nuts or peanuts
- Dried fruit (raisins, dried cranberries)
- Raw peas
- Raw chunks of carrots, vegetables or meat larger than can be swallowed whole

Parents should cut foods into pieces no larger than ¼-inch square for infants and ½-inch square for toddlers/twos and threes.

Appendix C: Food Pouch Information

*Why the use of pouches is limited and are included as a Whoa Food at School:

- It is pureed and semi liquid. This means the child sucks and swallows their meals rather than bites, chews and then swallows. A whole range of oral skills can be bypassed because of this.
- If used all the time, pouches can and do promote aversion to lumps. Babies need to progress steadily from purees to mash, lumps and finger foods. When not challenged to chew their food they often gag and refuse to eat anything other than soft purees.
- They don't encourage the child to pick up their food and play with it. This is a vital part of learning about food and how to eat it.
- The child can't see the food in the pouch so they don't know what they're eating. This means they can't and don't make choices about what to eat and how to eat it.
- Pouches tend to be sugar rich. They don't include the roughage and fiber which gives the feeling of fullness. Essentially, high concentrations of fructose (sugar) are eaten in a short period of time.
- Pureed food tends to sit on the teeth and doesn't have the abrasive quality of chewed foods. That means there's an increased risk of tooth decay, particularly for kids who suck on pouches for long periods of time.
- They mostly come in combinations such as vegetable/fruit combos so individual foods can't be tasted on their own. The potato morphs into the pumpkin which melds into the squash – you get the idea.
- They don't help kids to link food with its origins. It's one thing to see a banana being peeled and mashed and another to see a screw cap turned on a foil packet.