



# JEMS Preschool

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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# WELCOME

Dear Parents,

Welcome to JEMS Preschool.

As a progressive Jewish preschool, we are committed to building a strong educational foundation for our children, through play, social collaboration, and exploration. We strongly believe in fostering the natural curiosity of children as a means to inspire learning.

Children learn and grow in an environment of relationships and high quality interactions between adult caregivers and young children which are the building blocks for children's growth and development both now and in the future. That's why we've created a center with highly qualified adults, considered partners in your child's learning, who know how to make children feel safe, nurtured and encouraged to explore the world around them. Similarly, it is our priority to work with you to tailor your child's experience in our program to meet the needs of your child and your family.

We pride ourselves on being a learning organization that is constantly seeking to improve the quality of care and learning we provide. We hope that the strength of our relationship with you will allow you to freely share your observations, thoughts, and feedback; our commitment to you is that we will act upon what you share in a continuous effort to create an optimal early childhood program for our community.

Here's to a year of smiles and celebrating new milestones!

Yours,

Chana Esther Freund

*Preschool Director*

# OUR MISSION

JEMS Preschool seeks to create a stimulating and enriching educational environment for each and every child. Our center is devoted to helping children learn socialization skills, building their self-confidence and teaching them the preliminary skills to explore and experience the world independently from their parents. In addition, we seek to spark in each child a curiosity about Judaism, and share the special values of our Jewish heritage. Through the dedication of our teachers, we seek to commit each child to a lifetime passion for learning.

# PHILOSOPHY

Decades of research show that early childhood is a period of great promise and that children's early relationships and experiences lay the foundation for learning and development across the life course. JEMS Preschool seeks to partner with your family to lay the strongest possible foundation for your child, stimulating their social, emotional, moral, and intellectual development from the moment they arrive in our Center each day. Our educators are focused on building warm and nurturing relationships, interacting in a supportive and responsive manner, and creating experiences that allow your children to explore and learn about the world around them safely and creatively.

We value the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge. Every child brings with them deep curiosity and potential and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it.

As a Jewish educational center, moral values of Judaism are woven naturally through all of our disciplines so that they become both a meaningful and treasured part of our children's lives.

# OUR STAFF

Our staff is made up of educators, all of whom are chosen for their professionalism, as well as their caring and compassionate personalities. They are warm, loving and responsible. They delight in unlocking your child's natural curiosity and providing the stimulation necessary for an experiential learning process. As a learning organization, our staff receive ongoing training and professional development to build on our existing practice and ensure that we are continuing to offer a high-quality early childhood program that meets and exceeds the needs of the children, families, and community we serve. Additionally, all of our staff hold First Aid and CPR credentials and have all necessary certifications mandated by the ELC.

# TAPPING INTO THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Recognizing that every child learns through different means of stimulation, we strive to incorporate as many diverse experiences as possible throughout our day.

Every day, children are taken outside to play and explore.

We also have a variety of special activities taking place throughout the week:

**Kidokinetics** is a fun and engaging physical education program that introduces children to a wide variety of sports and movement skills.

Led by trained coach Mell, classes focus on building coordination, confidence, and a love for active play. Our goal is to promote healthy habits through age-appropriate, non-competitive activities.

**Drums** Danit or Shir will spend time with our children playing with drums as they discover beats, rhythms and the different sounds and tunes of instruments. What a fun way to incorporate language, culture and gross-motor development all in one!

**Music & Movement** Morah Heli will sing and dance with the children both in Hebrew and English, using a variety of props and musical instruments.

**Yoga** Tiffany our Yoga instructor will help the children with breathing exercises, mindfulness, sound and rhythm, stretch muscles, and learn new moves while building a strong body, cooperative skills and self-confidence.

**Shabbat Party** On Friday, the children will bake challah and will enjoy a Shabbat Party, teaching the children about the beauty of Shabbat with an exciting and interactive Shabbat Table. Parents are invited to join the

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We would love to help celebrate your child's birthday. All birthday celebrations should be arranged with your child's teacher prior to the party. All refreshments brought for the celebration must be certified kosher and pareve. We do fruit cakes to encourage healthy snacks and the children love it. Goody bags should contain toys/ games and not candy. Our teachers will be more than happy to help you plan for your party. Invitations for birthday parties held outside of the school can only be handed out in the school if:

- All your child's classmates are invited
- The party will only be serving kosher food.

- The party is not held on Shabbat.

## Physical Activity

There will be physical activities that are athletic in nature taking place both indoors and outdoors. They include but are not limited to running, jumping, bike riding and riding cars in the playground. Children will participate in gross motor activities for at least 40 minutes twice a day.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

- School is open from 8:00AM to 5:00PM
- Regular school day is from 9:00am - 3:30pm, and until 2:30pm on Fridays.
- Early drop off is available from 8:00 AM for an additional fee.
- After care is available from 3:30-5:00 pm Monday through Thursday and from 2:30 – 4:30 on Fridays.

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

### CARPOOL SYSTEM:

If you don't want to get out of your car in the morning and would like us to take your child out of the car for you, please pull up to the front of the school along the carpool line and a teacher will be waiting to receive your child. Carpool runs from 8:50 am until 9:05am.

### WHEN YOU BRING YOUR CHILD INSIDE

Arrival Procedure: An adult must bring each child out of the car to their teacher. Teachers will be outside greeting the children. Please do not send your child down the walkway alone. If you choose to park and come into the school, please ensure you park in a legal spot and not along the carpool line.

Please make sure you give your child over to his or her teacher, and that the teacher knows that s/he arrived. The children need the full attention of the teachers. Morning drop off begins at 8:50 am.

Please don't drop your child into his/her classroom earlier than this time. The teachers need this time to arrange the classroom and prepare for the day. If you require earlier drop off you may utilize the early care which begins at 8:00am

No child will be released for pick up to a person not authorized by the child's parent.

## **TARDINESS AT PICK-UP TIME**

Afternoon pick up is from 3:15 - 3:30pm. There is a carpool system at this time where your children will be brought to the car for you in the carpool line.

Late pick-ups are difficult for children and unfair to staff; please be sure to be prompt. If you arrive after 3:30 pm, your child will be brought to aftercare and you will be charged for use of aftercare. The fee for aftercare is \$15 per day.

## **CHANGE OF DISMISSAL PLANS**

If your child's end-of-day arrangements are different from the usual, be sure to call the office or send in a written note (email is fine). We will do our best to accommodate.

## **WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS IN SCHOOL**

Clothing: please always have two full changes of clothing at school. Please label everything – every child is assigned their own cubby but this will help the teachers keep things organized and efficient.

Please do not send your child to school in clothing that cannot get dirty.

Diapering: Every toddler should have a supply of diapers and wipes sufficient for several weeks in school, to be replenished as needed.

Bedding: Every child needs a Kid Nap Mat. These can be purchased on amazon. The bedding will be sent home weekly to be laundered.

## **FOOD**

Healthy and nutritious snacks and Lunches are provided daily. Breakfast will be given to the children at 9:30am. Lunch at 12:00pm and afternoon snack is served at 2:45pm. All the food is catered by Lasco Kosher catering and is glatt kosher. No outside food is allowed in school. All lunches have been reviewed by a nutritionist for their nutritional value and have been approved by the guidelines of the state.

The children will be provided with water or milk along with their meals. A menu will be sent each month.

# SECURITY

For your child's safety, all doors to the preschool will be locked during school hours. There will be a security guard on site screening all visitors and patrolling the property.

# COMMUNICATION

We strongly believe that smooth communication between school and home is in the best interest of children, staff, and parents. Keep us informed -- If both parents are out of town, the school must be informed. As with all changes in pick up and drop off arrangements, we ask that you please notify us in writing (texting or email is great). It is also extremely helpful if you let us know when things are unusual at home – stress can come from even positive situations, and teachers who are aware of the home situation are better able to help the children. The following policies will facilitate this:

a) Teachers will communicate with you through the Playground app. This will include a short synopsis of your child's day, including pictures and videos. You can respond to this app if you have any questions or comments, which the teacher will receive and can respond back to you. These broadcasts are not groups and all conversations that take place will be between you and the teacher only.

b) Talk to us: Call us at the office (954) 372-3455 or call/text Chana Esther with any concerns you may have. Please save my number to your phone – , as we will be using whatsapp as a means of communication and you will only be able to receive these notices if you have my number pre-saved.

c) Absences: It is very important that you let the office or teacher know if your child will be absent.

d) Illness: If your child has an infectious illness that requires us to warn other families, it is important that you inform us of this.

e) Suggestions: We are a learning organization and want to hear what's working for you and what's not. Please put your thoughts, comments, and ideas in writing and share them with us at any time.

f) Email: Email is an easy way for our office to send important reminders- Admin@jemspreschool.org. Please make sure your email address is on file with us.

g) If either Mom or Dad has a special talent they would like to share with us, please speak to Chana E. We encourage parent involvement in our school and enjoy these special visits!

# CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

A positive interaction between staff and child is the guiding philosophy at JEMS Preschool. The staff at JEMS will always treat each child with courtesy and respect, be sensitive to the child's individual needs, and support the development of self-esteem, self-expression, autonomy, social competence and school readiness. The staff will provide positive and consistent care, express warmth to individual children through behaviors such as holding, social conversations, eye contact, eye-level communications, and so on.

Staff will provide children with opportunities to develop age-appropriate social competence skills, develop ways of expression of emotions, and self-help skills. Staff will encourage children's efforts, work and accomplishments, offering opportunities to make choices and decisions.

Conflicts and frustrations are part of normal child development, and learning how to deal with conflicts and frustrations requires acquisition of skills. The staff at JEMS are trained to observe and anticipate situations ("triggers") that elicit inappropriate behavior. "Triggers" will be eliminated, if possible. Staff will make every effort to recognize and reinforce a child's appropriate behavior, set clear and consistent limits, redirect when necessary, and help the children develop positive strategies for resolving conflicts. If it is safe and appropriate, staff will ignore negative behavior as much as possible, allowing children to practice their social skills. Staff will intervene to stop children from hurting each other, themselves, or from destroying the environment. In addition, children will practice verbalizing feelings, role-playing, and discussions. Where appropriate and feasible, children will participate in discussing and establishing "our good class rules." Children will also be taught that "taking a break" is a good way to calm down and reflect on behavior. "Taking a break" will be used as a last resort to help a child, and will not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age. When a child will "take a break" it will always be within an educator's view.

At no time will children be reprimanded through any type of negative punishment, confinement or restraint, such as: threats, humiliation, physical or verbal abuse, neglect, spanking, confining to an object (a swing, high chair, crib, play area, or any other piece of equipment) in lieu of supervision. There will be no type of physical punishment. JEMS does not suspend children from the program as a form of punishment. Suspension or termination from the program may be used if the safety of the child or the safety of other children cannot be guaranteed (or as described in the Termination and Suspension Policy.)

Children at JEMS will never be deprived of outdoor time, or denied food as a method of punishment. There will be no forced feeding, and there will also be no punishment for problems regarding soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. JEM strives to achieve a pleasant, warm and caring atmosphere for children and staff. Methods of discipline, or child guidance, are used to maximize growth and development of a child, to protect the safety of the individual child, the safety of the group, and the safety of the staff. Likewise, staff will consult with other educators in



search of methods to best meet children's individual needs, and communicate various options with the child's family.

## **BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY POLICY**

At JEMS Preschool, the safety and well-being of all children and staff are our highest priorities. If a child exhibits behavior that poses a danger to themselves, their classmates, or their teachers, the child will not be able to return to school until a written plan is developed and approved. This plan will outline strategies and supports to help the child succeed safely in the classroom environment.

Our goal is always to partner with families to create the most positive and supportive path forward for every child.

### **BITING**

Biting can be a form of expression in children who have limited verbal skills. There are many

reasons why a young child may bite. Some children may bite when they are teething or to express what they cannot verbalize— such as feeling frustrated or excited. While it may be considered typical behavior for Toddlers, our teachers are prepared to help children with this behavior and to create a plan to prevent it from occurring again. The Director and teachers will try to determine the cause of consistent biting, and develop a plan which we share with parents. The safety and well being of our children is priority.

Biting Procedures:

1. If a bite does occur, teachers immediately help and reassure the child who was bitten. Affected area will be washed with soap and water.
2. After a child bites one time, the families (of the child who bit and of the child bitten) will be contacted by the teacher or director.
3. If repeated biting incidents occur, the director will meet with the teachers and parents in order to implement a plan that would prevent further incidents from taking place. These may include a “shadow” at the parents’ own expense. The safety of our children is of utmost importance to us.

## **TOILETING AND DIAPERING PROCEDURES**

We do not require a child to be toilet trained in order to participate in the toddler programs, and the timing for initiating toilet training is up to parents to determine. There are, however, certain guidelines that we must follow in order to fulfill our mandate to provide a quality program for all of the children.

- A child is considered to be trained when they initiate trips to the bathroom, and go almost every time they initiate the trip. However, a child who needs regular reminders is still at the beginning stages of training, and should still be in a diaper in school. (Of course, even after a child is trained, occasional accidents do happen, and when they do we treat them in a calm, matter-of-fact manner that preserves the child's self-respect).
- We are in the bathroom very often for hand washing. Children are asked if they need to use the bathroom. We encourage them, but we will not force the issue.
- We assure you we will work with you to help train them. No one person has all the answers, but if you feel like you are not getting anywhere please remember every child functions differently and what is good for one is not necessarily good for another.
- The staff will check children's diapers on a regular basis, and change diapers as needed. A change of clothing is kept in each room. In the event that a child soils his clothing or sheets, he will be changed into his spare set of clothing and the dirty items will be tied in a sealed bag to be sent home.

## HEALTH

Our primary consideration is for the well-being of all students and staff. In order to keep everyone safe and healthy, please:

Keep your child home if he or she has:

- Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours
- More than one episode of vomiting within a period of 24 hours
- Elevated temperature over 100.5 F within 24 hours
- Red eyes with a discharge –often a sign of conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), and highly contagious. When these symptoms accompany a non-contagious condition, we must have a doctor's note.
- Skin rash, excluding diaper rash, lasting more than one day
- Runny nose with green mucus
- Began an antibiotic for a contagious condition less than 24 hours ago.

Please call school when your child is absent due to illness. If your child becomes ill in school, we will call you. If we can't reach you, designated emergency numbers will be called. Any other

arrangements for the care of a sick child must be given to the office in writing. The school reserves the right to determine if a child is well enough to be in school.

**Allergies:** If any child has a serious food allergy, that child's classroom will be free of that food. You will be notified if your child's class has any allergy restrictions.

**Managing Infectious Disease and Infection Control:** In the event that a communicable disease is identified at JEMS, parents will be notified, and proper procedures will be followed. Staff is trained in infection control procedures and follows proper procedures. Guidelines are followed for proper hand washing, sanitizing of surfaces, sinks, bathrooms, and toilets.

## MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

**Supervision:** Supervision is critical to keeping children safe. Staff will appropriately supervise children in order to ensure their safety and health at all times.

## MEDICAL FORMS

Your child's health and vaccine forms must be uploaded to the playground app. The health form must indicate a physical exam by a doctor within the last year. And vaccine forms must be up to date. If your child is not up to date on their vaccines, an exemption form must be obtained in its place. By ELC regulation, current forms must be on file in order for children to be present in school. Please help us keep your child's emergency form up to date by informing us in writing of any changes, including and especially changes in emergency contacts and their telephone numbers.

## Medication Administration

### Topical Ointments and Sprays:

Topical ointments and sprays such as petroleum jelly, sunscreen, diaper rash ointment and insect repellent will be administered to the child with written parental permission. This form needs only to be filled out once, and we will keep it in your child's file.

## REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All staff members are required by law to report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect allegations are reported to the Central Abuse Hotline at 1 800 962 2873. If a parent suspects child abuse or neglect by a staff member, please notify the director immediately. Parents may also contact the child abuse hotline directly.

## **NON DISCRIMINATION/ INCLUSION POLICY**

JEMS Preschool values and supports the rights of all children, regardless of ethnicity, religion, national origin, and diverse abilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that programs make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and/ or chronic illness. JEMS will consider each case individually and comply with the requirements of the ADA.

## **CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

We maintain an individual written record for every child in our care. These records include the information that parents complete at enrollment, as well as progress reports, incident reports and other documentation regarding your child's care. You are welcome to view your child's file at any time. Progress reports will be completed every six months and shared with you. At this time, we will offer an opportunity to meet and discuss your child's progress.

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Only authorized staff members are permitted to see information on a child. For viewing or release of information to any party other than teaching staff, parents must provide a signed, written statement of consent. Parents may obtain the child's record or the transfer of the child's record upon written request at any time.

## **SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRAL POLICY**

In the event that the Director or the parents express a concern about a child's development or behavior and suggest further evaluation, either party may initiate a referral. Should JEMS make such a suggestion, or be requested to make a referral, parents will be required to sign consent prior to such contacts. The school maintains a list of current referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services. Documentation of all contacts and outcomes will be kept in the child's file. All actions taken will always be with the best interest of the child in mind.

## **EMERGENCY POLICIES**

**Evacuation drills are performed and recorded monthly, following ELC regulations. In the event of an emergency the following measures will be taken:**

- 911 will be called;
- Attendance will be taken before evacuation and immediately after evacuation;
- Under **no** circumstances will any child be left without a caregiver's presence;
- In the event of a medical emergency, an authorized staff person will call 911 before contacting the parents.
- Parents are required to provide us with cellular phone numbers;
- Every effort will be made to reach parents before emergency contacts are activated; In case of evacuation parents will be notified of the location of the children. Please read the following Emergency Evacuation Contingencies Plan carefully:

### **Emergency Evacuations Contingency Plan**

JEMS Preschool is connected to the emergency 911 system and receives “reverse notifications.” In the event of a natural disaster, emergency authorities will provide information on when to evacuate, and the location of the evacuation shelter. Escape routes are posted at each classroom, and were approved by the Fire Department.

In the event that JEMS needs to evacuate due to site-related problems, it will promptly notify the emergency authorities after the facility has been evacuated. Families will also be notified by calling the Cell Phone: We recommend that every child have another school parent, other than their own, who is authorized to pick him or her up in the event of an emergency.

## **TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION**

JEMS strives to help every student reach his or her potential in a meaningful way. Difficulties may arise, but JEMS will make every effort to avoid measures of suspension or termination. Director and teaching staff, with the collaboration of the parents, will follow procedures to meet the specific needs of every child enrolled in our program. Procedures will include, but not limited to:

- Hold meetings with parents to discuss the issue at hand,
- Offer options to resolve the problems; either in school or with outside resources,
- Make referrals for evaluations, diagnostic, or therapeutic services,
- Invite supportive professionals for in-school advice/diagnosis/training for both the family and educators.
- Teachers and support personnel will develop a plan for behavioral intervention to assist children in growth and development in school.
- A plan for behavioral intervention will likewise be developed to be implemented at home (charts, stickers, etc.)
- Maintain accurate documentation of all meetings and conversations with parents.

Undesirable, but JEMS reserves the right to terminate or suspend a child from the program under any of the circumstances described below:

- All reasonable efforts to provide for the child were exhausted;
- The health and safety of the child (and the other children) at the school cannot be assured;
- The child's developmental needs are not being met, therefore the child can no longer benefit from the program;
- The parent is delinquent in payment of tuition and fees, and repeated efforts to resolve the matter have failed.
- Non-compliance of parents to school policies, procedures, and regulations as described in this Handbook and other school policies.
- If a parent opts to withdraw their child from the program and later decides to reenroll, the child and siblings will not be accepted back into the program.
- JEMS Preschool has the right to terminate any enrollment of a child for any reason. No Tuition monies will be refunded.

In the event that termination is imminent, parents will be notified at a face-to-face meeting and in writing of the reasons for termination or suspension. JEMS will create a termination plan to prepare the child for termination or suspension from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand it. JEMS may also choose to reinstate enrollment under the conditions reached by the Director and the parents in an agreement for a "Plan of Action."

## FEES AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition and Fee Schedule for JEMS is set by the Board in accordance with the provisions of the annual budget. The preschool Administrator collects all fees and tuition.

Parents must enroll for not less than one school year or for the balance of the current school year if enrolled after the beginning of the school.

- The Director, in consultation with the Board, reserves the right to terminate enrollment for reasons of non-cooperation, delinquency in payment of fees and tuition, or inability of a child or parent to adjust to the school program.
- In the event of an unexpected medical situation or permanent removal from the community, we require 30 days' notice after which the remainder of tuition will be refunded.
- In the event of late admission, JEMS reserves the right to adjust tuition and fees.

### Registration

A registration fee must be paid upon the enrollment of each child.

### Absences

There is no tuition credit in the event of being absent.

### Payment in Case of Withdrawal from Program

Each child is enrolled for the entire school year or for the balance of the school year. No refund can be given for reasons other than the serious illness of the child. The board will determine the amount of refund.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child in our program and to the JEMS Preschool family!

**Chana E. Freund**

*Preschool Director*