Childhood has ways of seeing - hearing - thinking 
and feeling peculiar to itself.
Nothing can be more foolish than to substitute our ways for them.
— Jean Jacques Rousseau

The Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Programs

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Dear Families,
Welcome to the Bertha Alyce and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood Schools. 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 handbook 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 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,

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PURPOSE
The purpose of education at the Evelyn Rubinstein Jewish Community Center of Houston (JCC) Bertha Alyce Early Childhood School/Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood School (BAECS/EBECS) 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.

OUR PHILOSOPHY
It is our belief that young children learn through direct and concrete experiences with the support and guidance of the unique people in their lives. Individual needs and differences are valued as they promote tolerance and respect for the diversity found within our communities and society in general.

We provide continuing exploration, experimentation and discovery which encourages the children to think, reason, and question through intentional activities planned by the teachers and activities that emerge from the interests and needs of the children and families.

MISSION STATEMENT
The Early Childhood Schools of The Jewish Community Center of Houston are institutions of learning influenced by the Jewish heritage and dedicated to principles of social justice, respect for diversity and valuing the uniqueness of each person. The primary focus is placed upon all needs of young children and their families and all those who touch their lives each day.

It is our belief that by meeting the need for “neighbor” within our community, we are responding to a basic need in all human beings, parent and child alike.
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
Our facility 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. All lead teachers have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent (at least 12 hours of college 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 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 30 hours of professional development each year as well as CPR and Pediatric First Aid training.

OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING
We provide 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 loving, responsive, consistent care and education to their children. 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 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 he/she becomes a competent individual, increasingly independent in action and thought as he or she acquires 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 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, 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 to include 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, social, emotional and physical development.
- Uses Rice Literacy Project and Handwriting Without Tears and Developmentally Appropriate Practices 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. This can be observed in interactions as well as evident in equipment and materials.
- Is primarily “child-centered” and emergent. Activities, materials, and themes are “driven” by the developmental needs of children in the classroom as well as their interests. Input into the curriculum also comes from children’s families and the community. The teacher capitalizes on these and uses them as an avenue 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 attempt to scaffold with them.
- 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, 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**

Children begin acquiring language from infancy by listening to the sounds of the voices and observing the print that is present in their environment. 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.
OUR APPROACH TO LITERACY
Our approach to literacy development is based on Rice Literacy Project, Handwriting Without Tears 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.

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 use)
• 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, 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 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, and so on
• 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 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 as well as taking nature walks and participating 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 chances to take initiative, experience success in performing difficult tasks, and figuring 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 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 schedule; reinforcement of positive behaviors; ignoring negative actions; providing activities that are of interest to the child; or anticipating problems and eliminating them before they occur and using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behavior. We emphasize helping children solve problems themselves. We help them identify the problem and generate possible solutions and to find mutually satisfying solutions.

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 and gains 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. Regular written and/or verbal communication is maintained with parents, and conferences and family meetings are scheduled throughout the year. These conferences serve many purposes from simple information sharing to active problem solving regarding disturbing or difficult behaviors. Teachers and parents work together to find a consistent approach; this sometimes means changing a routine or approach at home or at the JCC, or trying a new technique, but always maintaining open lines of communication.
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 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, refusal to follow directions or observe classroom rules.

Parents are expected to meet with teachers and/or the EC 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 ASSESSMENT: METHODS AND PROCEDURES
Our teachers and directors of the Early Childhood Programs use a variety of formal and informal measures to assess routinely 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.

USE AND PURPOSE
We use 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
Our program uses Teaching Strategies GOLD which is a system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. It is based on 38 objectives for development and learning that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the state early learning guidelines. Teaching Strategies GOLD helps teachers create a developmental profile of each child to answer the questions, “What does this child know? What is he or she able to do?” It supports teachers through every step of the ongoing assessment cycle, helping teachers understand what to focus on, why it’s important, how to gather and interpret assessment information, and how to use that information to plan meaningful learning experiences. It can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills.

Within the first three months of enrollment at the JCC, the overall development of your child will be assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD and/or PEDS. The same rating scale will be used continuously throughout your child’s attendance in our program. Any developmental “red flags” or 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 PORTFOLIOS
Assessment portfolios consisting of work samples, observations, anecdotal records, Teaching Strategies GOLD online 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 updated regularly during the year. The assessment portfolios will be shared with the family at parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring and as requested 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 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 Family Information 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.

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) and introduce Jewish values at the child’s developmental level. Foods appropriate to Jewish holidays are prepared by and eaten by the children. The music program emphasizes songs in Hebrew and English 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.

We observe Laws of Kashrut at the BAECS/EBECS. 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.

KEY HEBREW WORDS WE USE
Jewish Values Vocabulary (adapted from The Jewish Parent’s Almanac by Rabbi JulieHilton 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 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 demonstration of care and concern for other people.

JEWISH HOLIDAYS
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 to 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 the Shabbat (Kabbalat Shabbat) at school each Friday morning. 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 good-bye. 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 enjoy apples and honey, which are symbolic of hope for a sweet year. The shofar (ram’s horn) is shown and heard.

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.

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.

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).

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 8 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 which families are encouraged to attend.

TU B’SHAVAT
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 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 for materials in the classroom. We 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 hamantashen (triangular-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 Mishloah 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. Also 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.

BLESSINGS OVER FOODS

BREADS
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheenu Melech
Ha-Olam ha-motzi lechem mim ha-aretz.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

CRACKERS, CAKE, COOKIES, SNACKS, ETC.
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheenu Melech
Ha-Olam boray minay mizonot.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of various kinds of foods.
FOODS OF THE TREE
Apples, Pears, Oranges, Etc.
Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech
Ha-Olam boray p’ri ha-aytz.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,
creator of fruit of the tree.

FOODS FROM THE GROUND
Potatoes, Carrots, etc.
Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech
Ha-Olam boray p’ri ha-adama.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,
creator of fruit of the earth.

GRAPES, WINE & GRAPE JUICE
Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech
Ha-Olam boray p’ri ha-gafen.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who creates fruit of the vine.

MEAT, EGGS, POULTRY, DAIRY AND FISH
Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech
Ha-Olam sheh hakol ni-he-yeh bidvaroh.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,
by whose word all things come into being.

HEBREW VOCABULARY

COUNTING: 1 TO 10
1 - Achát
2 - Shtáyim
3 - Shalosh
4 - Arba
5 - Chamesh
6 - Shesh
7 - Shéva
8 - Shmoneh
9 - Tésha
10 - Éser

COLORS
Lavan - white
Shachor - black
Yarok - green
Tzahov - yellow
Varod - pink
Choom - brown
Katom - orange
Segol - purple
Kachol - blue

GREETINGS
Bóker Tov - Good morning
Érev Tov - Good evening
Láyla Tov - Good night
Toda raba - Thank you
Shalom - Hello; good-bye; peace

FAMILY MEMBERS
yélad - boy
yalda - girl
Éma - Mother
Ába - Father
sába - grandfather
sávta - grandmother
ach - brother
achot - sister
mishpacha - family
PROGRAM ORIENTATION

ACCREDITATION/LICENSING
BAECS and EBECS are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. BAECS and EBECS both participate in Texas Rising Star programming, schools of excellence. BAECS is also 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 713.940.3009, child abuse hotline at 1.800.252.5400, and TDFPS website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

ADMISSION POLICIES
The JCC Early Childhood Programs do not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, sex, national origin, or disability. You must be a member in good standing of the JCC in order to participate in the BAS/EBECS. Preference for admission will be given as follows:
1. Children currently enrolled
2. Siblings of children presently enrolled
3. Siblings of Center members’ children who completed the JCC program
4. Children of current Center members
5. Children of new Center members

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

ENROLLMENT
JCC Early Childhood Family Handbook is on the JCC website, or a copy can be requested from the BAECS/EBECS 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
• Parent’s standing orders for non-prescription topical medications
• 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, and
  - 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.*

**REGISTRATION**

Registration for the following school year and summer sessions takes place in late January early February. After the “in-house” registration period for families already enrolled in the program, “open” registration begins for families on the waiting list. Registration fees and last the months tuition for Infant Care programs are due upon registration and are non-refundable. The registration process is complex involving 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. The program understands individual preferences for specific classrooms/group and/or teachers, but the center is not always able to honor such requests or cannot guarantee the placement of teachers or teaching teams prior to the start of the school year or summer program. While the bulk of the registration process is completed through the forms provided by the center and returned by the parent, 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.

**INTAKE INTERVIEW***

All new students of the JCC Early Childhood Schools must schedule an Intake Interview with a consultant from Jewish Family Services. A questionnaire will be sent to you in advance and must be completed and brought to the interview at Jewish Family Services. We require the child and his/her mother and father to attend the interview. Information obtained at the time of the interview will be shared with the Director and proves to be helpful when determining classroom placement and teacher assignment to meet the individual needs of the child and the group.

**TUITION/FEEs PAYMENT POLICIES**

Tuition must be paid by electronic funds transfer (EFT). A payment form must be completed authorizing monthly tuition charges to be paid by EFT. EFT drafts will be processed no later than the 16th 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 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.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Limited funds are available based on financial need. Applications are available on line at www.factstuition.com. Most funds are allocated in the spring prior to the new school year, which begins in June.

**FUNDING**

The BAECS/EBECS is funded by tuition and in part by the United Way of Greater Houston.

**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 - 5 years of age. Children are grouped according to age and developmental level. The teacher-child ratio varies according to age. All classrooms have a lead and assistant teacher or co-teachers. The staff-child ratio and group size are based on NAEYC Accreditation Criteria.

Each classroom is staffed with a lead teacher and an assistant teacher who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. The goal for all classes is continuity of relationships between teaching staff and children and 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 ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect children's well-being.

Children who are enrolled part-time (8:30 AM–2:45 PM) stay with the same teachers in the same classroom throughout the day. Those enrolled for full-time (7:00 AM to 6:00 PM) will be combined with children in their age group for early stay (7:00 AM to 8:45 AM) and late stay (4:15 PM to 6:00 PM). One room in each age group is designated for early stay and one for late stay. The early stay is staffed by teachers from your child's age group. A consistent afternoon teacher is with the late stay group along with teachers from the age group.

We use the NAEYC Teacher-Child Ratios within Group Size as a guideline for teacher-staff ratio and group size.

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 with the teachers some simple words and phrases to use in conversations while the child is in our care.

SAFETY/SECURITY/ACCESS
The safety and security of children is our top priority. All doors remain locked. Only individuals with children in our program, prospective parents, and special visitors are allowed admittance to our department. 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.

Surveillance cameras outside 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. In some cases it is not clear when assistance is needed so please let the teacher know if help is required. Sometimes parking may be difficult because of the many activities at the JCC. There is 10-minute drop-off parking in the front of the Early Childhood entrance as well as other visitor parking.
At no time will any vehicle be permitted to park in a handicap designated space unless vehicle bears 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 not transporting children in the front seat of any vehicle.

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

Please do not allow your child to run away from you during arrival and departure. Keep in mind that the parking lot is nearby and can be very dangerous for children without an adult. The JCC will make every effort to work with any special needs (such as physical limitations) or circumstances of families during arrival and departure. Please contact the Early Childhood Office if you need assistance, and we will make every effort to accommodate your request. **For the safety of our children, you are expected to refrain from talking on your cell phone and from exceeding the posted speed limit of 5 MPH while driving in the JCC parking lot.**

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 the A wing, please refrain from bringing your older child into the classroom.

**With the exception of infants in the Birds, Ladybugs, Bunnies and Lambs who are on an individualized schedule, we encourage you to drop off your child by 9:00 AM, before the class morning meeting. Arrival after 10:00 AM should be only if there is a special circumstance, in which case please contact the Early Childhood Office.**

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 prior to 8:30 AM if you are sending breakfast. We stop serving breakfast at 8:00 AM. Snacks are served between 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM. If your child is going to arrive at 8:00 AM or after, please serve breakfast before bringing your child to school.
- Arriving by some classes’ morning meeting at 9:30 AM. 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.
- Let a teacher know if you need help when you are ready to say good-bye to your child

Additionally, as we are establishing routines for the children that help them feel more secure and competent, please take your visits with other parents outside of the classroom. If you would like to stay in the classroom and visit, we will ask for you to help with an activity.

Arrival and departure can be hectic, confusing times for parents, children, and teachers. Although communication is very important, we ask that parents refrain from lengthy conversations with teachers and understand when teachers need to end a conversation in order to tend to and supervise the children. Extended discussions between parent and teachers should be reserved for telephone contact, parent-teacher conference, or at a scheduled time when the teacher is not responsible for the supervision of children.

The policy for release of children is as follows:

1. 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).
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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.

Because the staff must continue to assume supervision of your child until you and your child leave the playground or classroom, you should indicate the departure as the time you actually depart with your child and not the time you arrived to pick up your child or the scheduled departure time.

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. See Tuition/Fees Policies for information about late pick-up fees.

**SEPARATION PROCEDURES**
Separation can be a difficult time for children, the following outlines how we will assist at drop off:

- Teachers will step in as needed
- When the parent is ready the teacher will be ready to assist
- They will engage the child in an appropriate activity
- We ask that you tell your child you will be back later
- A conference will be held to discuss next steps if separation continues to be difficult for the family
- The following outlines procedure for separation from the class due to illness while waiting to be picked up:
  - Teachers will explain to the child what is going to happen and who will be picking them up
  - The child will be taken to the front office where they will remain with a familiar adult until they are picked up

**LATE FEES**
Late pickups will be charged $1 per minute for the first 5 minutes and $5 per minute thereafter. You will receive an invoice for the late fee and this must be paid by cash the following day. Excessive tardiness can lead to increased late fees.

**NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES**
Please notify the Early Childhood Office if your child is not coming to school for any reason. 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 will be a $35 processing charge per change.

**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.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL**
A minimum of 30 days' notice to the director 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. Families will be financially responsible for the remainder of the school year for any withdrawals made between March 1st and the last day of school. In addition, we will help you and your family with the transition. Our teachers are highly skilled in assisting a child and their classmates with the upcoming separation. This transition time is important for the child's development.
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 administration/staff
• 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
The Early Childhood Department recognizes that any child at any time may have “special needs” due to family emergencies, divorce/separation, moving, illness, allergies, 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 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 can be also arranged as needed throughout the school year.

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 if other concerns arise. Costs of specialized consultants are the responsibility of the family.

Families are expected to complete medical alert forms annually for severe allergies and other medical conditions that require close monitoring by staff which include instructions for any of the child’s special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g. asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).

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 assess the needs of your child while in our care so that we can better meet the special needs of your child. 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.

Specialized consultants, including speech, occupational, and 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 only with written parental permission and payment made directly to the therapist by the child's parents. 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 under our care. The Director has contact information for several Houston 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.

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.

+++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. 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 can be purchased through the Early Childhood office. 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 the week for laundering.

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 checked every two hours when children are awake and when they awaken and are changed when they are wet or soiled.

“Pull-ups” are discouraged because they give mixed messages to children.

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.

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 ISSUES
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 BAECS/EBECS records and 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 pickup a child on a regular basis or for a special occasion. Any court orders must be submitted to the EC office with highlighting of 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.

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 additional 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 policy to insure birthday celebrations are a positive experience for every child. To avoid hurt feelings, we have adopted the following guidelines:

- 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.
- 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 as well as 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 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.

Each child must bring daily a ziploc 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 to donate for 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
Please note that JCC teachers are not allowed to baby-sit for you.

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 two-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 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 the child from his/her classroom, not the enrichment class, if the enrichment class instructor has transported him/her 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. 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.

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellants due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellants containing DEET can be used with parental permission (only for children older than two months). If you prefer, you can provide alternatives with written permission for use. Staff can apply 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.

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.

PETS
Pets from home should not be brought to school for a short visit unless it is cleared with the teacher in advance (making sure that there are not any children present with allergies to the animal) and the animal is in good health, current on all vaccinations, and under the care of a veterinarian who can document that the animal is suitable for contact with young children. Pets may only stay for the sharing time with the child’s parent supervising the animal the entire time.

Reptiles such as snakes, turtles, and lizards and amphibians such as frogs and toads, are not permitted as classroom pets or for visits to the classrooms.
SAVE AND SEND
We can use items you no longer need such as: 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.

SCREEN TIME
Computers are available in the Pre-school, Pre-k and Stars classrooms. Children may use the computer for 20 minutes twice a day.

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.

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 Camp Bami will participate in instructional swimming classes as part of the summer program. Children will go to the pool 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 completed and signed by the supervising teacher and the director 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. 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.

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.

There are three kinds of child abuse:
• Physical abuse - inflicting bodily injury on a child (beating, burning, etc.)
• Sexual abuse - using a child in or exposing her/him to sexual activities, with or without the child’s consent
• 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

FOOD ALLERGIES
See Nutrition/Snacks/Lunch section for information about food allergies.

HANDWASHING
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 that plan to stay longer than a brief departure must also wash your 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 Bertha Alyce and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood Schools do 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 programs encourage you to follow all car safety guidelines by using seat belts for all passengers, appropriate car seats an/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.
• All toys, paints, and other materials used at the Bertha Alyce and Ellen Boniuk Early Childhood Schools 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 lobby.

HEALTH/ILLNESS: CHILD INCLUSION/EXCLUSION
One of the most serious challenges facing group care for young children is preventing illness. 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 until you pick him or her up. If possible, 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 aspirin or aspirin substitute is administered for fever prior to coming to school. The program reserves the right to require a doctor’s statement before the child can be re-admitted.

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 1 9 (5th disease) and others as recommended by the Texas Department of Health.

An ill child must not be brought to school 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 100.1 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, however, this may not always be possible, depending on the situation.

Parents of children with chronic symptoms of colds and/or allergies, including significant mucus, 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. The director has the final decision as to whether a child will be excluded from school activities.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS/MEDICAL RECORDS

Within the first week after 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)
• 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.
• In the case which your child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) your child will be excluded promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in our program.
• We will only accept medical waivers for immunization.
MEDICATION

If your child requires medication, deliver the medication directly to the teacher, along with a completed medication form (which may be obtained from the front office). To insure the safety of all children, never put medication in your child’s bag or lunch box. Medication may not be placed in a bottle or cup to be given at school.

In order for our staff to administer medication, both written permission from the parent/legal guardian AND the licensed health provider for prescription AND over the counter (OTC) medication must be provided. Upon enrollment, you are welcome to have your licensed health care professional complete a non-prescription medication form to indicate which OTC medications and the appropriate dose that may be given to your child. Alternatively, the licensed health provider’s office may give instructions by fax to our program staff, which will be documented in their file. Prescription medications will be administered only when the medication is in the original container labeled with the child’s name, date, directions and physician’s name. The medication must be in the original prescription container with prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication as well as directions for administration and storage.

OTC medication will be administered only if it is in the original container and will be administered only according to label directions. When the label states “children under 2 (or 6) years, consult a physician,” the proper dose of the medication must be indicated in writing by your child’s licensed health provider. OTC medication must be labeled with your child’s first and last name.

No medication will be administered to a child without written permission of the parent on the JCC Medication Authorization form. Teachers will document each dose of medication given and will keep all medications in a locked container and inaccessible to children at all times. The JCC will not give fever-reducing medications to reduce or mask a child’s fever. (Children with a temperature over 100.1 degrees will be sent home.) It is the parent’s responsibility to retrieve the medication at the end of the day.

If your child requires individualized medical attention such as a nebulizer treatment for asthma, a daily on-going medication, or other special treatments, you must provide the program with a written individualized medical action plan from the prescribing healthcare provider. 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.

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.

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.

All meals served to your child will be brought to school by you. We do not prepare and serve food on our campus. Nutrition policies and suggestions are based on guidelines of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

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 1/2 of their daily food needs.” (See Appendix A, “Food Guidelines” in our Family Handbook.)

NAEYC suggests that the program should make recommendations to families for nutritional content, portion sizes, and nationally recommended limits on juice, sugar, sodium, and saturated fats.

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”.

What to avoid bringing (because they are high in sugar, fat, and/or additives):
- Fruit snacks, fruit roll ups – Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  - 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®
  - (See exceptions below)
- Soda, Kool Aid, sports drinks, etc.
  - Water and milk are the best beverages for your growing child.

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
- Pudding cup
- Goldfish crackers
- Fruit snack made with 100% real fruit such as Fruit leather
- Granola bar (without icing, coating, or drizzle)
PEANUT/TREE NUT-FREE SCHOOL POLICY

We are built on a foundation of love that honors the goodness and unique gifts of every child. We have had a number of students with severe peanut allergies. As a school dedicated to the some of the youngest members of our community, we understand that many of our students are not old enough to make sound decisions when it comes to what should go into their mouths and are less able to manage their allergies. And while our staff does an amazing job of cleaning and wiping down playing surfaces, toys, and chairs, there may be some children within our school who could have a serious allergic reaction from contact with even a microscopic amount of the offending foods. There are many instances where children use common space within our building and it is because of this that we have decided to make our school a **Peanut/Tree Nut-Free School**.

We ask that no peanuts or tree nuts be brought into our school. Foods sent in for snack, lunch, or any class event (including parties, field trips, etc.) should be carefully checked to make sure they are peanut/tree nut-free. Families can help ensure that our school stays peanut/tree nut-free by reading packaging labels and reminding children not to share food with other children at school. We need to make sure that there is little opportunity for a child to be exposed to foods that could harm him/her.

For your reference we have compiled a list of items (below) that should not be brought in to school. All of this information is available on our website for you to refer to throughout the school year.

We appreciate your cooperation with this policy. The sacrifice of not having nuts or nut products in the school is a small one to make compared to the consequences a child with severe allergies could face. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Bonnie Kasner.

**Please do NOT send any of the following to school:**

- Peanut butter or any other nut butter including Nutella
- Crackers with peanut butter filling
- Any muesli bar, biscuit or other product that list nuts as an ingredient
- Trail mixes with nuts, granola bars with nuts, or dried fruit with nuts
- Cereal with nuts (EG: Honey Nut Cheerios)
- Nuts in salad
- Candy or cookies containing nuts
- Loose nuts of any kind (peanuts, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, walnuts, mixed nuts, coconut, pecans, pistachios, etc.)
- Anything cooked in peanut oil that has been cold pressed, expelled or extruded
- All nut pastes (EG: Almond paste)
- All nut extracts (EG: Almond extract – used in making various cookies)

Please make sure that you always check the labels on the food you are sending in to school. The FDA requires all manufacturers to list on their label if peanuts and/or tree nuts are in their product. If it says peanuts/tree nuts are contained in the food, consider it a banned item. Remember – manufacturing processes change, so a food that was safe, may not continue to be. It’s still important to read the ingredient label each time you purchase a food.

Food labels that say: “May contain or contain peanut or tree nuts” are **NOT OK** to bring to school to eat. Examples: **Quaker Granola Bars S’mores flavor: May Contain Traces of Peanuts**.

Food labels that say: “Processed in a facility that also processes peanuts & nuts” are **OK** to bring to school for personal consumption.
BREAKFAST POLICY
Children who arrive between the hours of 7:00 AM and 8:00 AM may bring breakfast. Please label it with your child’s full name and send proper utensils. Because the emphasis is on nutrition, please do not send candy, cookies, or chips for breakfast. If you are sending syrup or other condiments, please send them in a closed container because they can be messy. This is a kosher facility and we do not allow pork products of any kind, such as bacon, ham or sausage, on the premises.

LUNCHES
The lunch and snack program has both learning and social components and is an integral part of the day. We will inform you if your child needs more or less food. All children staying past 12:00 Noon, will need a lunch, snacks and a drink with the utensils they will need for the day. All snacks and lunches are brought from home. With the exception of children aged 0-15 months the following are the food safety requirements:
• We do not heat food, this should be brought in a thermos
• Food must be in a thermal lunch box
• There should be plenty of ice packs surrounding the food

FOOD SAFETY
Parents should cut foods into pieces no larger than 1/4 -inch square for infants and 1/2 -inch square for toddlers/twos and threes.

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
• Whole grapes
• Raw chunks of carrots, vegetables or meat larger than can be swallowed whole
• Popcorn
• Raisins, Craisins® and other dried fruit
• Raw peas

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
With your permission, the food allergy information will be posted in the classroom. Dairy-free tables are provided in the classroom as needed and we adhere to a no-nut policy.

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.

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 as 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 the A wing 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 name and date
• 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
• Breastfeeding education and resources in the community are available upon request

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 NAEYC guidelines that we must adhere to for infants less 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 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 are not allowed.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION
We believe that direct, effective communication is at the heart of a stimulating, safe, caring program for young children. Communication between the home and school provides a better understanding of each child's needs, and development, and ensures success for every child. 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 cubby, reading classroom documentation, notes and newsletter from the teachers. Please let know if you want any additional information.

If you have questions concerning 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 or Assistant Director to discuss a solution to your concern.

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.

COMMUNICATION VIA LOOPS2GO EMAIL
We will utilize the email system on Loops2Go 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 us 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.

In every classroom, each child has a labeled cubby. Messages, flyers, artwork, and classroom information sheets will be placed in your mailbox. It is your responsibility, 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.

NEWSLETTERS/FLYERS
Newsletters and/or flyers will be sent home to keep you informed of program activities, reminders, and other information. We feel that it is very important for each parent to stay informed!

FAMILY BULLETIN BOARDS
Information including lesson plans, daily schedules 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. Please check regularly for current information.

FAMILY/TEACHER CONFERENCES
A “meet the teacher” night is scheduled at the beginning of the year for you to become more acquainted with your child's teacher, ask questions and become more familiar with the space your child will be spending the year in. 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.

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 ECDC 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 encouraged to volunteer at least 10 hours each year. We strongly urge you to fulfill this golden opportunity for a mitzvah.
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Early Childhood Committee (“ECC”) and all subcommittees are composed of lay people who may or may not have a child attending the JCC Early Childhood Schools. The Early Childhood Development Committee (“ECDC”) strives to enhance the educational experiences of the children by providing a vital link between the community and the administration. The ECDC is held accountable to the JCC Board of Directors, offers input to the Preschool Director, conducts fundraising activities for school needs, organizes volunteers for various functions, develops new programs and monitors existing programs.

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 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.

CHAVERIM

Chaverim means “friends” in Hebrew or chaver, friend. The purpose is to provide each new family with a mentor, guide, and friend to help them as they navigate the many wonderful opportunities of our program: from being a room parent to helping with a classroom party, from fundraising to planning the Shabbat Dinner, or just acclimating to a new school environment. New families will be contacted by a family who has been in the program to welcome you and help you learn more about our program.

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 “From the Desk of Bonnie.”

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.

CONSULTANTS

In addition to the teaching staff, several consultants provide expertise and consultation to the administrative staff. A social worker from Jewish Family Services is appointed to the JCC Early Childhood Schools. She meets weekly at the JCC Early Childhood Schools to observe children and classes. She assists teachers in developing various plans to better meet the needs of a specific child or group.

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.

Screenings for preschool and pre-kindergarten programs are conducted in the fall by trained specialists. This evaluation screening is included in your registration fee. The information is compiled and distributed to you as soon as possible. When a follow-up is indicated, a meeting can be scheduled between the specialists, preschool staff and parents to review findings and discuss appropriate action. The screening results merely indicate that an area of development is on age-appropriate skill level, requires future monitoring and/or a more thorough evaluation. For the children who require professional guidance in reaching the age-appropriate skill level, we will provide space for specialists to meet with your child. Should professional guidance be required, the child’s parents are financially responsible for the additional services and should contract directly with the specialist. Very often, the preschool staff can work directly with the specific child during ongoing activities (i.e. Physical screened privately, you are responsible for providing written results to the Office by November.)
## Appendix A - Nutrition Guidelines

### Meal Pattern Chart for Infants

**CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERN FOR INFANTS**

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<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch/Supper</th>
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<td><strong>Infants</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth through 3 months</td>
<td>4 to 6 fluid ounces (fl oz) breast milk(^1,2) or formula(^3)</td>
<td>4 to 6 oz breast milk or formula</td>
<td>4 to 6 oz breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months through 7 months</td>
<td>4 to 8 fl oz breast milk or formula 0 to 3 tablespoons (Tbsp) infant cereal</td>
<td>4 to 8 oz breast milk or formula 0 to 3 tbsp infant cereal</td>
<td>4 to 8 oz breast milk or formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 months through 11 months</td>
<td>6 to 8 fluid ounces (fl oz) breast milk or formula 2 to 4 tbsp infant cereal</td>
<td>6 to 8 fl oz breast milk or formula 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 1 to 4 tbsp fruit and/or vegetables</td>
<td>2 to 4 fl oz breast milk or formula or fruit juice(^4) 0 to 1/2 slice break or 0 to 2 crackers(^5) 1 to 4 tbsp fruit and/or vegetables(^6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Breakfast**

**CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERN FOR INFANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>1 year through 2 years</th>
<th>3 years through 5 years</th>
<th>6 years through 12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk (fluid milk)</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable or Fruit or Juice(^7)</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^1\) It is recommended that breast milk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months.

\(^2\) For some breast fed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered, with additional breast milk offered if the infant is still hungry.

\(^3\) Infant formula and dry infant cereal shall be iron-fortified.

\(^4\) Fruit juice shall be full-strength

\(^5\) Bread and bread alternates shall be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour.

\(^6\) A serving of this component shall be optional

\(^7\) If you are serving juice: Try not to serve juice to meet the fruit/vegetable requirement too many times throughout the day. It may fill up the children and take the place of other needed nutrients.
Grains/Breads
a serving is a bread or bread alternate and/or cereal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>1 year through 2 years</th>
<th>3 years through 5 years</th>
<th>6 years through 12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bread, enriched or whole-grain</td>
<td>1/2 slice</td>
<td>1/2 slice</td>
<td>1 slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal, enriched or whole-grain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold dry cereal(^a)</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot cooked cereal</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked pasta or noodle products</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplement (Snack)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>1 year through 2 years</th>
<th>3 years through 5 years</th>
<th>6 years through 12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk (fluid milk)</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat or Meat Alternate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, poultry, or fish (cooked, lean meat without bone)</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg (large)</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked dry beans or peas</td>
<td>1/8 cup</td>
<td>1/8 cup</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>2 Tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts and/or seeds(^g)</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>1/ oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, plain or sweetened(^h)</td>
<td>2 oz</td>
<td>2 oz</td>
<td>4 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable or Fruit or Juice</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grains/Breads

\(^a\) If you are serving cold dry cereal for breakfast:
For ages 1 and 2 years, serve: ½ cup (volume) or 1/3 oz (weight), whichever is less. For ages 3 through 5 years, serve: 1/3 cup (vol) or ½ oz (weight), whichever is less. For ages 6-12 years, serve: ¼ cup (vol) or 1 oz (weight), whichever is less.

\(^g\) If you are serving nuts and seeds for a supplement (snack):
For determining combinations:
1 oz of nuts or seeds = 1 oz of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish.
Tree nuts and seeds that may be used as meat alternates are listed on page 34.
CAUTION: Children under 4 years of age are at highest risk of choking. For this age group, USDA recommends that nuts and/or seeds be ground or finely chopped and served to children in prepared food.

\(^h\) Commercially prepared yogurt is now permitted as a meat/meat alternate. You may serve 4 oz (weight) or ½ cup (volume) of plain, sweetened, or flavored yogurt to fulfill the equivalent of 1 oz of the meat/meat alternate component. For younger children, 2 oz (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) fulfills the equivalent of ½ oz of the meat/meat alternate requirement.
### 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

### Cereal, enriched or whole-grain

- 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1 year through 2 years</th>
<th>3 years through 5 years</th>
<th>6 years through 12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk (fluid milk)</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3/4 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat or Meat Alternate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, poultry, or fish (cooked, lean meat without bone)</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>1 1/2 oz</td>
<td>2 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>1 1/2 oz</td>
<td>2 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg (large)</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked dry beans or peas</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>3/8 cup</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters</td>
<td>2 Tbsp</td>
<td>3 Tbsp</td>
<td>4 Tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts and/or seeds</td>
<td>1/2 oz</td>
<td>3/4 oz</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, plain or sweetened</td>
<td>4 oz</td>
<td>6 oz</td>
<td>8 oz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vegetable or Fruit or Juice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1/4 cup</th>
<th>1/2 cup</th>
<th>3/4 cup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Lunch or Supper

**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

---

11 If you are serving juice: Try not to serve juice to meet the fruit/vegetable requirement too many times throughout the day. It may fill up the children and take the place of other needed nutrients.
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 certified dietician.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAN PROTEINS</th>
<th>WHOLE GRAINS</th>
<th>FRUITS &amp; VEGGIES</th>
<th>BEVERAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve at least 1 oz of any of these:</td>
<td>Serve at least ½ slice or ¼ cup of any of these:</td>
<td>Serve at least ¼ cup of any of these (or other fruits &amp; vegetables not listed):</td>
<td>Serve at least 2 oz (¼ cup) of any of these:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tip:</strong> Try to choose proteins with less than 7 grams of fat per serving.</td>
<td><strong>Tip:</strong> Look for foods to say “100% whole wheat” to be sure you are getting the grains and fiber you need.</td>
<td><strong>Tip:</strong> Fresh or frozen is best. Look for canned fruits packed in “100% juice” or “unsweetened”.</td>
<td><strong>Tip:</strong> Limit fruit juice consumption to 4 oz per day. It’s better to eat fruits instead of drinking them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Cheese
- 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
- Corn

- 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

- 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. 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 meat or dairy.)
The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston is home to innovative programs that meet the challenging needs of our growing community.

For 75 years, the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center has provided social, recreational and education programs for people of all ages.