



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Parent Guide

February 6, 2025



Vision Statement

At JCC Chicago Early Childhood, your child is at the center of all we do.

Children are cherished and valued for their sense of wonder and curiosity. We foster learning, inquiry and growth through our curriculum that emerges from their questions, explorations and experiences.

Families are welcomed and encouraged to be actively engaged in their child's early learning. We guide, support and value our partnership with parents.

Educators are devoted to excellence and actively support the unique development of each child. We serve as role models for children, partners for parents, and inspiration for each other.

Communities are built upon respect, trust, communication and shared experiences. We embrace each family's diversity and recognize that each JCC Chicago school is reflective of the community it serves.

We provide the foundation for children to develop and grow while bringing Jewish values to life.

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Welcome

Welcome to JCC Chicago Early Childhood. During the year, we will partner with you to create a solid foundation for your child's future learning success— socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically, and spiritually. JCC Chicago will provide a foundation for academic successes, nurture your child's unique learning style, interests and abilities, create a safe place for fun and positive social experiences, engage parents as partners and foster an enriched Jewish identity in an inclusive environment.

We believe that children learn best in a safe and secure environment, from caring staff who consistently act with warmth and support in all parts of a child's day. By employing the most qualified educators, applying an innovative curriculum, designing state-of-the-art classroom environments, and consistently listening to the needs of our families, we hope to ensure that you always feel welcome, comfortable, and respected. Understanding that children develop and learn in the context of their families and communities, JCC Chicago educators establish relationships with families that increase their knowledge of children's lives outside the classroom. Together, parents and staff create an educational bridge for children, which nurtures and challenges them to grow and develop in their first formal learning experience.

This JCC Chicago Early Childhood Parent Guide has been designed to clearly describe JCC Chicago's Early Childhood program, policies and the myriad of details that contribute to making each day as safe, pleasant and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for a reference.

We understand that choosing your child's early childhood education experience is one of the most important decisions that you will make. We look forward to creating wonderful new memories with your family; together we will celebrate your child's next milestones.

Thank you for choosing JCC Chicago Early Childhood.

About JCC Chicago

Founded in 1903, JCC Chicago served the needs of the burgeoning population of Chicago's Jewish immigrants, and over a century later, JCC Chicago is making an impact in the lives of individuals, families and the community at large through its high-quality life-enriching programs and services. Across multiple early childhood learning centers, full-service community centers, day camps, Camp Chi overnight camp, and countless other programs and services happening outside the walls of our buildings, JCC Chicago welcomes people of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds and provides innovative programs designed to meet the needs of everyone from infants to adults. Through a mix of formal and informal education, recreational and cultural activities, JCC Chicago celebrates learning and brings Jewish values to life every day, ensuring the strength and continuity of the Jewish community.

About JCC Chicago Early Childhood

JCC Chicago Early Childhood is staffed by caring, dedicated early childhood professionals serving young children (from 6 weeks through five years of age) and their families each year through a continuum of innovative programs.

These programs include Adult/Child classes, Infant/Toddler Care, Full and Half Day Preschool, Enrichment classes, and Preschool Summer Camp.

Licensing and Standards

DCFS

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licenses all JCC Chicago Early Childhood Programs. In addition, the City of Chicago also licenses all JCC Chicago Early Childhood sites located in the City of Chicago.

Curriculum

JCC Chicago Early Childhood's philosophy and curriculum is based on a combination of several components that include: cutting-edge brain research, developmentally appropriate practice, Illinois Early Learning Standards, the guidelines of NAEYC (the National Association for the Education of Young Children), Social Emotional Learning, educational inspiration from Reggio Emilia, Italy, and the integration of secular and Jewish learning. JCC Chicago Early Childhood prepares children for their next formal educational step and helps children achieve their full potential by focusing on social, emotional, cognitive, fine and gross motor, language, and spiritual development.

Infant/Toddler Curriculum – 6 wks-23 mos

Seven curriculum goals have been developed for infants and toddlers based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

- **Cognitive Development** - Children acquire thinking skills, gain an understanding of basic concepts and relationships, apply knowledge to new situations, and develop strategies for solving problems.
- **Emotional Development** - Children learn about their feelings, communicate a broad range of emotions through gestures, sounds and words, as they grow.
- **Jewish Development** - Children develop Jewish identity and become part of a community. They learn about Jewish people, objects, holidays, values and practices.
- **Language Development** - Children learn how to communicate, express needs and thoughts, respond to verbal and nonverbal commands, and communicate through language.
- **Physical Development** - Children learn body awareness, develop gross motor skills, develop fine motor skills, coordinate eye and hand movements and develop self-help skills.
- **Self-concept Development** - Children learn about themselves, feel valued and secure in their relationships, feel competent and proud about what they can do and feel supported as they express their independence.
- **Social Development** - Children learn about others, develop trusting relationships with nurturing adults, show interest in peers, demonstrate caring and cooperation and practice roles and relationships through imitation and play.

Experts agree that children are born ready to learn. That is why we believe it is never too early to begin developing a child's Jewish identity. Just as children who are introduced to books and reading at an early age will look forward to story time, children who have listened to Shabbat songs, and tasted grape juice and challah will begin to associate joy and sweetness with Judaism.

Preschool Curriculum – 2-5 yrs

In the preschool classroom, children will experience nine different content areas identified to build knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for kindergarten readiness and later school success. These content areas are derived from the Illinois Early Learning Standards as well as the guidelines of the NAEYC.

- **The Arts** - Dance, music, dramatic play, drawing, and painting
- **Fitness and Well-Being** - Healthy kosher snacks, exercise, and time outdoors
- **Jewish Learning** - Jewish values and practices, holidays, Hebrew vocabulary, Israel, Shabbat and Torah

- **Literacy** - Vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, letters, words, print, comprehension, books, and other texts
- **Mathematics** - Numbers, patterns and relationships, geometry and spatial awareness, measurement, data collection, organization, and representation
- **Science** - The physical properties of objects, living things, and the earth and the environment
- **Social and Emotional Development** - Making friends, solving problems, sharing, expressing feelings and thoughts, respecting others, following routines
- **Social Studies** - How people live, work, get along with others, shape and are shaped by their surroundings
- **Technology** - Tools, machines, materials, techniques and sources of power that make work easier and solve problems

JCC Chicago educators integrate this curriculum content into a combination of meaningful learning activities that address the unique needs of each child. In addition, our educators use every learning experience as an opportunity for expressing and imparting Jewish values and traditions.

The preschool day is filled with what we call “teachable moments,” opportunities to tease out a fact, practice a skill, encourage appreciation, or introduce a new word. Connecting Jewish words, objects or values with your child’s natural curiosity is a simple extension of this process. As a result, children gain a deeper sense of their Jewish identity and an awareness that they belong to a diverse and dynamic Jewish community.

Families are Welcomed

Parent Participation

Parents and educators may look at young children’s learning from different perspectives, but we share a common goal: making sure that children engage in meaningful experiences. We believe one way to foster children’s learning is through building a partnership between families and JCC Chicago Early Childhood. We have found that the foundation for good parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication, mutual respect and building on opportunities to discover what is best for each individual child.

Communication

JCC Chicago places a strong emphasis on family involvement by encouraging frequent communication. To keep you informed about daily and weekly events and activities, we distribute electronic newsletters through an app known as **Remini**. You will also receive director's messages, and notes about your child's educational experience. Documentation is posted in the classroom and around the school to make the children's learning visible. Newsletters and documentation are a great opportunity to talk to your child about the week's activities, learning new skills, friends and other "happenings" in your child's day.

If you have questions or concerns about your child or a classroom issue, please set up a time to discuss it with your child's teacher. Open, respectful communication often clarifies a situation before it becomes a problem. The JCC Chicago Early Childhood Director is always available to discuss your questions and concerns.

Parent-Teacher Conversations

When meeting with family members, JCC Chicago Early Childhood strives to accommodate parent schedules and will provide a comfortable environment in which parents are invited to ask questions and collaborate with staff. Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conversations occur in the Fall and Spring. Parents or educators may request additional discussions at any time throughout the year. Educators and parents together will share observations and discuss each child's progress and future goals.

Communities are Built

Family Involvement Group (FIG)

All JCC Chicago families are invited to join the Family Involvement Group (FIG). This group is made up of committed parents interested in helping to build a strong community and enhance the educational values our educators and staff bring to the programs each day. FIG participants represent JCC Chicago in the community, ensure that programs respond to local needs, plan special projects and teacher appreciation events, and offer programming suggestions.

Room Parents

Being a Room Parent is a terrific way to get to know your child's educators and classmates and to get involved in your child's JCC Chicago experience. Room parents work with educators to arrange or provide for those extra touches that help make the year special and serve as a liaison between educators and parents.

Social Services

The mission of the Social Services Department is to support the right of each child to play and learn in an inclusive environment, consistent with the best interests of everyone involved. We help parents and educators in identifying and celebrating each child's unique characteristics and contributions to the classroom community. We work with staff, families, and outside therapeutic professionals to foster the home-school connection, provide consistency, and high-quality learning experiences. We believe early identification and intervention are key to long-term developmental growth and success, and we see it as our responsibility to help develop each child's strengths while supporting them in reaching their fullest potential.

Celebrations

Holidays

Each Jewish holiday receives special attention at JCC Chicago. We look forward to making these celebrations special for the children and will also offer your family some activities to extend Shabbat and the holidays at home.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions for your child and important milestones to observe in the classroom. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a celebration. Whole fresh fruit or vegetables are encouraged to model healthy eating habits and to be inclusive of children with food allergies. Goody bags and balloons are not allowed.

DCFS Licensing Standards prohibit any home-prepared goods in JCC Chicago Early Childhood programs.

Educators are Devoted

JCC Chicago Early Childhood is dedicated to sustaining excellence and supporting innovation in early childhood education through the preparation, support, and continuing growth of JCC Chicago early childhood professionals. JCC Chicago provides ongoing professional development for all staff and regularly reviews our curriculum.

The Director and staff of each of our JCC Chicago Early Childhood Programs are experienced, professional educators with academic degrees in Early Childhood Education or related disciplines. JCC Chicago Educators and Directors work together to provide children with the best possible educational experience and families for a true promise of quality.

Your Child's Day

Appropriate Clothing

Your child will paint, color, play and eat, so please send them in comfortable, easy to wash clothing. Dress for mess! Clothing should also be easy for your child to manage in the bathroom. Your child should have shoes appropriate for running and climbing. Weather permitting (temperature above 20 degrees) we play outside everyday, so please dress your child in appropriate outerwear (jacket, hat, mittens, scarf, boots, snow pants). Please label everything!

Extra Set of Clothing

On the first day of school, please send an extra set of labeled clothing that includes underwear, shirts, pants and socks in a plastic Ziploc bag clearly marked with your child's name. Please check periodically to make sure your child's extra set of clothing is the correct size and appropriate as seasons change, and children grow.

Toilet Readiness

JCC Chicago Early Childhood understands and values the unique development of each child and recognizes that children meet milestones at their own pace. In order to consider a child toilet-trained, the child will need to have an entire weekend (or equivalent number of days) without any toileting accidents. After an accident-free weekend, once parents communicate with teachers, the parents may opt to send a child to the program in underpants. Following this transition, if a child has three days with two or more toileting accidents in a given week, staff will resume the use of a pull-up or diaper during the child's time at the program. Staff will simultaneously arrange a meeting with parents to discuss next steps to continue to support the child with the toilet training process while in attendance at our program.

Toys from Home

We recognize that some children may need to bring a comforting object to help ease the separation process from home to school. If this is a helpful strategy for your child, you must leave the item at school so it can be cleaned/laundered overnight and is available for them upon arrival. Toys for other purposes are not allowed at school, as it can create confusion for children who are developing group sharing skills. JCC Chicago provides a wide variety of fun materials for children to play with and explore. Children should only bring in special toys when requested by their educators for show and tell. ***Toy guns, war toys or other toys of destruction are not allowed in the school.***

JCC Chicago Policies

Admissions

JCC Chicago Early Childhood welcomes all children and extends equal admission opportunities to all families.

Class Placement

JCC Chicago Early Childhood reserves the right to determine the appropriate class placement of children.

Inclusion Statement

JCC Chicago Early Childhood recognizes every child as an individual. Together with our directors and educators, our team of Social Services professionals partner with families whose children will benefit from early intervention and other supports. As such, JCC Chicago supports the rights of every child to play and learn in an inclusive environment, consistent with the best interests of school and classroom communities. We work with parents, caregivers and specialists to foster the home-school connection and provide consistency and high-quality learning experiences for each child. If our current, standard staffing is not sufficient to meet the needs of a child, home and school will work together to determine what additional in-school support is needed. Please note that the family will be financially responsible for additional or dedicated staff support.

Pick-up Procedures

JCC Chicago has developed arrival and pick up procedures that are designed to ensure your child's health and safety, while also meeting DCFS requirements. If there is a change in custody or guardianship, we will require legal documentation of any changes in routine.

Pick-up

Please note that the adult picking up must have a photo ID and be on the Authorization for Pick Up form. If there are any changes, you must let the school know in writing by email.

Late Pick Up

The primary responsibility of the JCC Chicago is your child's protection and wellbeing. Therefore, the following policy has been set in place if you do not pick up or arrange for someone to pick up your child at the designated, agreed upon time.

- JCC Chicago will attempt to reach all emergency contact numbers, including parents or guardians at home, work, and cell phone followed by emergency contact numbers as provided by parents.

- It is your responsibility as parents or guardians to keep JCC Chicago informed of any changes in the emergency contact numbers.
- In the event that you have not notified us about a late pickup, after 3 unsuccessful attempts to reach all of your contact numbers and one hour has elapsed, JCC Chicago will call outside authorities such as the police.
- A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed if you are up to 10 minutes late and an additional \$2.00 for every minute thereafter until your child is picked up and signed out. This fee will be doubled on Fridays and early holiday closings.
- Under all circumstances, the staff of JCC Chicago shall not hold your child responsible in any way for the late pickup, and discussion of this issue will only be with the parent or guardian and never with your child.

Health and Medical

Enrollment and Medical Forms

All enrollment forms including the medical form (signed by your child's physician) must be completed and returned to the JCC Chicago Early Childhood site before your child begins in our program.

State licensing guidelines require that we have an accurate medical history and current record of immunizations on file, including a TB and lead screening test. For children entering our program for the first time, a TB test (only required for children in high-risk groups) and medical examination must be completed no sooner than six months before starting the program. The medical examination should be updated yearly by your child's physician.

In addition to state requirements, we may request other pertinent medical information that will enhance our understanding of your child's needs. All such information is strictly confidential and will not be shared with outside parties unless written consent is provided.

Please notify us immediately by email if there is any change in your home address, home or cell phone numbers, employment, emergency contact information, authorized persons for pick up or pediatrician name and phone number.

Communicable Diseases Policy

Please notify us when your child is ill with any suspected or diagnosed case of a contagious or communicable disease. The Illinois Department of Public Health mandates reporting of certain illnesses. Examples of reportable

illnesses include: Covid-19, food borne illnesses originating from the center, measles, meningitis, smallpox, whooping cough, and rabies. When notified, we will be on alert and watch for similar symptoms in other children. If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, we will send a note home to advise you, so you

are alerted to the symptoms as well.

Illness Occurrences while at JCC Chicago Early Childhood

When a child becomes ill while at school, parents are notified immediately so that arrangements can be made to have the child picked up **within the hour**. If a parent is not immediately available to pick up the child, another authorized family member or caregiver will be called.

Diagnosed Contagious Illnesses

Children may return after 24 hours of normal body temperature, if they are symptom-free, or their symptoms have significantly improved, without medication. Symptoms of illness after 24 hours will be monitored for improvement. Children may be asked to be picked up if symptoms have continued or are not showing significant improvement. Below is a list of common illnesses; please contact your Director regarding your diagnosis and date of return.

- **Head lice:** may return when your child is nit-free
- **Whooping cough (pertussis):** may return after 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed
- **Molluscum contagiosum:** If your child is diagnosed with molluscum contagiosum, the school must be notified. Sores must be covered by either clothing or liquid bandaids
- **Chicken Pox:** may return after your physician has cleared your child with doctor's note
- **Diagnosed Conjunctivitis (pink eye):** may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Diagnosed impetigo:** may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Diagnosed Strep throat:** may return 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Diagnosed Ear infections:** may return when symptom free and able to participate in program
- **Hand Foot and Mouth:** Children diagnosed with hand, foot, and mouth disease must be free of new blisters and open lesions before being allowed to return to school. In addition, your child must be 24-hour fever free without fever reducing medication.

For respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV, the CDC now recommends going back to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When resuming normal activities, consider taking extra precautions over the next 5 days, such as masking while indoors.

General Symptoms Without Diagnosis

A child will be excluded from the program if one or more of the following conditions are present:

- An illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- An illness that calls for greater care than staff can provide, compromising the health and safety of other children
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, muscle or body aches
- Heavy clear or green nasal discharge
- Headache
- Persistent cough
- Sore throat
- Mouth sores associated with the child's inability to control his or her saliva, until a physician or the local health department states that the child is noninfectious
- Vomiting 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined by a physician to be due to a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Diarrhea
- Rash with fever or behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness to be noncommunicable

If your child has a cold, continuous runny nose, or just appears to be ill while at school, you will receive a call to pick up your child. JCC Chicago Early Childhood reserves the right to confer with your pediatrician when we have concerns or questions about your child's health and attendance at a JCC Chicago Early Childhood Center.

Physician's Note

Required for readmission in the following instances:

- After an absence due to an illness of five or more days duration.
- After any length of absence due to a reportable communicable disease as defined by The Illinois Department of Public Health and enforced by the Chicago Department of Health.

- In specific instances where symptoms have been associated with Covid-19 or diagnosed contagious illnesses. JCC Chicago Early Childhood will not accept a physician's note from a family member who is a licensed medical professional. Please consult with a non-family member for matters related to your child.
- This letter must be on your Pediatrician's office letterhead and signed by a medical professional.

Medication

If your child needs medication (prescription or over the counter) administered at JCC Chicago, the following procedures are required:

- A doctor's note, on letterhead or prescription, including instructions, must be sent for any over-the-counter or prescription medications.
- Completion of a Medication Consent Form.
- Medication container must have the original label with the child's name clearly displayed.
- Medication must be in a safety cap container.
- Medication must have a current expiration date (one month for antibiotics and one year for other medications).
- In the event that your child requires an Epi-Pen, please complete an Emergency Health Plan form, a Medication Consent Form, and provide a current picture of your child for identification purposes.

Immunization Policy

IL Dept. of Children and Family Services requires all licensed programs to have a policy in place regarding immunizations. For each child enrolled in JCC Chicago Early Childhood programming, the parent (or legal guardian) must provide a current immunization record appropriate for the child's age and a

health form signed by the child's physician or health department representative prior to the first day of the program. If the physical condition of the child is such that any one or more of the immunizing agents should not be administered, the examining physician (DO, MD), advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant responsible for the performance of the health examination shall endorse that fact upon the health examination form. No other exceptions to scheduled immunizations are permitted within JCC Chicago Early Childhood programming. It is the responsibility of the parent (or legal guardian) to update their file when the health records change. JCC Chicago requires evidence of immunization against diseases including polio, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, HIB, hepatitis B, and varicella.

Accidents/Emergencies

In the event of a serious accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent or, if necessary, a designated caregiver. If we are unable to reach a parent or caregiver, we will attempt to contact the relative or friend alternate listed on the child's JCC Chicago Emergency Card. If necessary, we will also call 911.

Until the arrival of a parent, relative or friend alternate, or paramedic, the JCC Chicago Early Childhood Director will assume responsibility for the child and make all decisions regarding the child's care. Parents are expected to assume responsibility for any resulting expense. JCC Chicago Early Childhood will retain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

JCC Chicago does not provide medical insurance coverage for accidents or injuries that occur while attending or participating in any activity at/or sponsored by JCC Chicago.

Behavior Philosophy and Policy

In JCC Chicago Early Childhood classrooms, Directors, families and staff work together to teach core Jewish values and instill the importance of being kind to yourself and others. We strive to set reasonable limits for children and provide positive guidance and feedback.

JCC Chicago's Early Childhood staff uses a positive approach to discipline by modeling pro-social behaviors, teaching problem solving skills and fostering independence. Staff work hard to create an environment where children feel respected, valued and supported.

JCC Chicago Early Childhood does not use negative discipline methods or corporal punishment.

Additional Resources

Our team of Licensed Early Childhood Social Workers and Professional Counselors are an invaluable resource to parents, educators and directors. They provide guidance and support for our classrooms in an effort to help enhance the educational and psycho-social development of the children and ensure that they are each working toward reaching their full potential.

The Social Services Staff are committed to partnering with parents and educators to differentiate curriculum based on the individual unique needs of each child and to support families in addressing the common challenges that may occur while raising young children. The Social Services Staff provide educational trainings for families and educators and act as a liaison between parents, outside service providers and JCC Chicago personnel to provide consistency and foster a positive home-school connection.

Close communication with parents is essential to providing quality Early Childhood care and education. If staff feels that a child should be evaluated by outside professionals to gather more information about a child's needs and learning style, referrals and recommendations will be made to parents. Once this occurs, it is JCC Chicago's expectation that parents will share information regarding the evaluation so that we can work together to achieve agreed upon goals.

If after working with a child and their family, a child appears to need more than our staff can reasonably provide or the child is a safety risk to self or peers, JCC Chicago Early Childhood staff will work together with appropriate specialists to determine the child's needs, identify the setting and services most suited to meeting those needs and assist the family in finding an alternative placement.

About Biting

JCC Chicago recognizes that biting for children under 3 years old is a typical developmental behavior, and we will work with families to support them and their children throughout the process. Children in our programs will always be treated with respect and dignity, and the identity of either party will not be disclosed, so as to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all children involved.

Biting may occur for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, teething, coping with a challenge, trying to fulfill a need, experimenting with cause and effect, impulsivity, lack of language or skill, attempting to connect with someone, and seeking sensory input.

In an effort to keep all children safe, if your child bites twice in one day, you will be asked to pick them up. This is because their behavior is communicating to us that they are having difficulty remaining regulated in a group care setting, and this will allow them the opportunity to reset and return the next day.

If biting becomes chronic, as defined by the child being sent home twice in one week or biting that occurs for three consecutive days (or at the discretion of the School Site Director and Social Worker), teachers will begin documenting and looking for patterns for two full weeks (of bites and attempted bites). Consideration will be given at the start of the school year, taking in to account holiday closures, and allowing children time to acclimate to the routine of their classroom. The Social Worker will work with the teachers and family of the child who is biting to create a plan that may include:

- Responding to patterns and triggers documented by the staff (i.e., If all bites take place before breakfast, we may offer food earlier to the child).
- Creating a social story for the child to use at home
- Separating the class into smaller groups when able
- Adding more sensory activities if identified as calming

- Providing deep input and heavy work to the child
- Offering chewies, fidgets, and flexible seating options
- Collaborating with parents to provide consistency around language and responses
- Partnering with parents to secure outside professional therapeutic services for the child

After two weeks of tracking and implementing various strategies from above, if we don't see a decrease in biting with preventative supports in place, JCC Chicago will provide a floater or facilitator, if they have one available at that time, to further support the child and the classroom in navigating peer interactions in a prosocial way. This does NOT guarantee that bites will not occur. During this time, documentation will continue, to evaluate whether incidents of biting or attempted biting are decreasing.

If after six weeks, the child is still consistently requiring additional support, the family of the biter will be asked to work with EC leadership to help find a 1:1 at the expense of the family until the behavior subsides.

Please note that these situations are nuanced and complex, and that we take many factors into consideration as we strive to balance supporting the needs of each child and maintaining the safety of the entire classroom community. Ultimately, JCC Chicago reserves the right for each Site Director to use their discretion on how best to proceed.

For more information on biting, please visit:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/toddler-biting-finding-the-right-response/>

Positive Guidance and Philosophy

In JCC Chicago Early Childhood classrooms, Directors, families, and staff work together to teach core Jewish values and instill the importance of being kind to yourself and others. We strive to set reasonable limits for children and provide positive guidance and feedback. JCC Chicago's Early Childhood staff believe that behavior is a child's form of communication, and it is up to the adults in their world to try and understand what they are communicating so we can address the underlying meaning of their behavior.

JCC Chicago Early Childhood uses a positive approach to discipline by modeling pro-social behaviors, teaching problem solving skills, and helping students navigate peer interactions and conflict resolution. Staff work hard to create an environment where children feel respected, valued, and supported. JCC Chicago Early Childhood does not use negative discipline methods or corporal punishment.

Behavior- Resources and Protocols:

Our team of Licensed Clinical Social Workers are an invaluable resource to parents, educators, and directors. They provide guidance and support to our classrooms to enhance the educational and psycho-social development of the children and ensure that they are each working toward reaching their full potential. The Social Services Staff are committed to partnering with parents and educators to differentiate curriculum based on the unique needs of each child, and to support families in addressing the common challenges that may occur while raising young children.

The Social Services Staff provide educational trainings for families and educators and act as a liaison between parents, outside service providers, and JCC Chicago personnel to provide consistency and foster a positive home-school connection. Close communication with parents is essential to providing quality Early Childhood care and education.

JCC Chicago Early Childhood recognizes that development takes place over a continuum and that no two situations are the same. With that in mind, we partner with our Social Services Team to address the unique needs of each child, implementing interventions and differentiating activities as needed. Should a teacher or parent have any behavioral or developmental concerns, the protocol for accessing Social Services is as follows:

- The Teacher or parent informs the Director of the specific situations or behaviors that they have a concern about, including documented examples, what they have already tried, and any communication they have had with one another.
- The Director will request documentation and will observe in the classroom to ensure Early Childhood best practices are in place and being used consistently and appropriately.
- If best practices are demonstrated and a concern persists, the Director informs Social Services. Within two weeks, the Social Services Team member will review the documentation and observe in the classroom at least two times, in order to make recommendations for additional strategies and accommodations, and to model implementation of such techniques.
- As the experts on their children, JCC Chicago will also begin a conversation with the child's family to learn how the child presents in other environments and to find out if they have strategies to share that are effective. Families are our partners and should be used to collaborate on best next steps to take.
- Following consultation with Social Services, all recommended strategies and accommodations will be implemented consistently for 2 full weeks. For physical behaviors, an A-B-C (Antecedent, Behavior, Conclusion) chart or checklist is compiled for documentation and data. This internal information will be used to identify patterns and triggers, to inform interventions and next steps, as well as for communication with the child's family.

- After tracking is complete, a team meeting will be held with the family to discuss concerns, share documentation and observations from the home and school environments, strategies implemented, and make recommendations for internal and external supports that could benefit the child. Meetings will typically include a classroom Teacher, Director, and Social Worker.
- If behavior is a safety issue and interventions are not minimizing occurrences, if and when available, a temporary floater will be put in the room for up to 6 weeks for either a) those specific identified times in which the behavior tends to occur, or b) during children's awake hours if the behaviors are not limited to specific identifiable times. The floater is to provide additional support to the class while the family pursues recommended services (e.g., outside evaluations, therapies). A modified schedule for the child may be recommended during this time.
- If the child continues to exhibit unsafe behaviors that are not developmentally appropriate (e.g., a 4- year-old biting vs. a toddler biting), resulting in physical injuries of staff and/or peers as demonstrated by daily incident reports, the family will be supported in finding a 1:1 aide/paraprofessional (that will be provided at their expense) or a more appropriate placement for the child.
- Children will be monitored as they acclimate to their new routines and given time to adjust before making referrals or addressing the need for additional support. If staff feels that a child should be evaluated by outside professionals to gather more information about their needs and learning style, referrals and recommendations will be made to parents. Once this occurs, it is JCC Chicago's expectation that parents will pursue services and share information regarding the evaluation, so that we can work together to achieve agreed upon goals. If this collaboration does not occur, and challenges still persist, JCC Chicago Early Childhood reserves the right to terminate services.
- If after working with a child and their family, a child appears to need more than our staff can reasonably provide or the child is a safety risk to self or peers, then JCC Chicago Early Childhood staff will work together with appropriate specialists to determine the child's needs, identify the setting and services most suited to meeting those needs, and assist the family in identifying potential alternative placements.

Please note that these situations are nuanced and complex, and that we take many factors into consideration as we strive to balance supporting the needs of each child and maintaining the safety of the entire classroom community. Ultimately, JCC Chicago reserves the right for each Early Childhood Site Director to use their discretion on how to best proceed.

Nutrition and Kashrut

Nutrition

Life-long eating habits are formed between the ages of one and five years, which makes proper nutrition for young children a very important task for parents and caregivers. It is the goal of JCC Chicago to promote good eating habits in the following ways:

- Demonstrating the enjoyment of eating nutritiously.
- Weaving nutrition education into the daily curriculum.
- Having children choose food from a selection of nutritious choices and develop the skills to serve themselves.

JCC Chicago provides nutritional snacks that follow Jewish dietary laws as well as the USDA's recommended guidelines including dairy products, fruits, vegetables and whole grain products.

Kashrut

All food brought into JCC Chicago by a parent which will be shared with other children, must be in original, unopened containers and marked with a kosher symbol. Please become familiar with appropriate kosher symbols found on a wide variety of food items. Here are some accepted kosher symbols. Note that the letter "K" is not an acceptable kosher certification.



Send food with your child only on special occasions that have been coordinated with your child's teacher. For questions concerning lunch catering at Full Day Preschool, please call your Early Childhood Director.

Food Allergies

Please be sure to notify us if your child has any food allergies. We will post a sign in the classroom, add your child's name and photo to our allergy list and monitor snacks and treats. ***We are a nut free facility.***

Age Policy

A child must meet the minimum age requirement for a program. JCC Chicago reserves the right to determine appropriate class placement for children.

Program rates are determined by the age of the class, based on the JCC Chicago academic calendar, not by the individual age of each child. If your child is new to JCC Chicago programs, you must bring a certified copy of their birth certificate to verify age.

Photo Policy

JCC Chicago may video or photograph participants enrolled in programs, classes and events or while enjoying JCC Chicago facilities. These photographs are for JCC Chicago publications, flyers, publicity efforts, brochures, web use, other electronic communications or video usage. However, for JCC Chicago Early Childhood, a program permission form must be signed to allow a child's picture and name to be used for publicity purposes by JCC Chicago. This policy is mandated by DCFS. All photos and videos are for JCC Chicago use and become the sole property of JCC Chicago. Please contact the Program Director for photographic exclusions for your child.

Safety and Security

The safety and security of children is our top priority. JCC Chicago has completed an intensive evaluation of all of our safety and security measures with the help of local and national government and police authorities. As a result, we have implemented permanent security systems at each of our JCC Chicago locations that include:

- Surveillance cameras, recording systems and monitors at strategic places throughout the building and outdoor areas.
- Signage that will alert all visitors that the premises are under surveillance.
- Emergency alarms that are connected directly to police authorities.
- Limited access and locked entries equipped with electronic controls.

JCC Chicago's security system provides a high level of protection that creates a visible deterrent and prompts quick action in the event of danger signs. In addition to these obvious measures, there are less apparent aspects of security in place as well. For our Early Childhood programs located in facilities other than JCC Chicago, we work with the property owner to ensure a high level of safety and security that meets JCC Chicago requirements.

All JCC Chicago staff are carefully screened and undergo background checks. They also receive training in security and safety measures and scenarios including possible medical issues, severe weather conditions, and the oversight needed of children and adults while in our care and supervision.

JCC Chicago also maintains excellent working relationships with local governments including police and emergency personnel. Not only do these municipal personnel keep a watchful eye on our sites and grounds, they alert us to any security information, issues and threats that could affect us.

Additionally, we are in regular communication with state and federal agencies that monitor national and world events and who advise us if circumstances warrant any upgrade or modification to our security systems and procedures.

These procedures were not prompted by any specific threat to JCC Chicago, but rather as part of our ongoing efforts to improve our systems as needed. We know that our JCC Chicago families recognize the importance of these measures.

Pesticides

JCC Chicago Early Childhood uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program supervised by our maintenance staff in cooperation with pest control specialists utilizing a variety of non-chemical methods as well as pesticides, when needed. Parents and guardians will receive written notification at least two business days prior to application in the event that pesticides are deemed necessary. Pesticides are not applied when children are present and toys and other items mouthed by children are removed prior to spraying. Records of inspection and materials data safety sheets are available on site.

No Smoking

JCC Chicago Early Childhood provides a healthy environment and has adopted an Agency wide non-smoking policy which prohibits any form of tobacco from use in our buildings or on our grounds.

Radon Testing

Per Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, radon testing is to be completed by an approved laboratory every three years. If indicated, mitigation plans must be written and implemented to ensure that levels are within acceptable limits. All mitigation plans and results are posted in the facility office.

Lead Testing

Per Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, all sites must be screened to ascertain that the lead levels in water meet or exceed acceptable standards to protect the health and safety of our participants. If indicated, mitigation plans must be written and implemented. Once mitigation plans are complete, lead testing is repeated in six months and again in one year until 2 consecutive tests are obtained within prescribed limits. All mitigation plans and results are posted in the facility office.

Emergency Procedures

If evacuating the building becomes necessary due to the threat of fire, bomb scare, or other building emergency, the following procedures are followed:

- All children will be evacuated through the nearest exit and will be escorted to a safe distance from the building.
- Children will remain outside of the building until the fire/police department informs us that it is safe to reenter.

When instructed by the proper authorities, children will be escorted back into the building. Parents will be notified about all evacuations in writing.

- Fire drills are practiced monthly
- Tornado drills are practiced twice yearly

In the event of an emergency closing that may prevent your JCC Chicago center from opening, you will receive a phone call or electronic notification confirming this information. Please check the website for additional information.

No Weapons Policy

JCC Chicago Early Childhood strictly prohibits possession of any weapons by patrons or employees while on our property.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In an effort to protect the health, safety and best interests of each child, JCC Chicago is mandated by law to report any suspected cases of abuse and neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Payment

All accounts must be current (including services offered by any JCC Chicago or department, etc.) at the beginning of a program session and must remain current through the duration of the program. Should the participant's account be past due, as of the first day of a program session, the participant may, at JCC Chicago's discretion, be prohibited from beginning the program. Should the

participant's account become past due during the course of a program session, the participant may, at JCC Chicago's discretion, be removed from the program until such time as the participant's account is paid in full.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable, non-transferable one-time registration fee is required for all new students and new siblings of current students. There is no registration fee for a returning student.

Prorating

Fees cannot be prorated for participant absence from scheduled class sessions. Refunds or credits are not given for illness, vacation or temporary childcare arrangements.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation notices must be received at least 30 days prior to the last date of attendance. All cancellations must be made in writing to the Early Childhood Site Director. Payments made prior to the cancellation notice will be retained and payment obligations will continue until 30 days prior to the last date of attendance.

Your registration fee is non-refundable.

For EC/Camp combo program cancellation, you may incur additional fees as combo pricing will no longer be valid and you will be responsible for the balance.

Thank you for partnering with us on your child's Early Childhood education. We are here to assist you in any way possible. Please feel free to contact customer solutions at support@jccchicago.org with any comments, suggestions or questions regarding registration.

Release of Records

In the event that a parent needs to obtain a copy of their child's file and attendance record, the request must be done in writing and be accompanied by a copy of the requestor's state issued identification for verification purposes. Records will only be released to a parent or guardian as indicated on the child's registration form. Please note that it may take a minimum of two weeks to process the request depending on the amount of information needed.

Discontinuation of Services

If we determine that continued participation in JCC Chicago programs or services is not appropriate, JCC Chicago reserves the right to discontinue services. In such circumstances, any unused portion of program fees paid to date will be refunded. JCC Chicago reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons not limited to the following: failure to observe the rules of JCC Chicago as outlined in the Parent Guide and Code of Honor, special needs of a child that cannot be adequately met with current staffing, physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by adult or child, or non-payment of fees.

Refunds

In a circumstance where services are discontinued by JCC Chicago, any unused portion of program fees paid to date will be refunded. JCC Chicago reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons not limited to the following: current staffing limitations, physical and/or verbal abuse of staff by adult, or non-payment of fees.

JCC Chicago reserves the right to adjust the handbook based on current guidelines and in compliance with DCFS standards, CDC, Illinois Department of Health, and County Health Departments.

JCC Chicago Early Childhood Locations

Bernard Weinger JCC*

300 Revere Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
224.406.9200

Jacob Duman Early Childhood Center at Lake County JCC*

23280 N. Old McHenry Road
Lake Zurich, IL 60045
847.901.0620

JCC Chicago Early Childhood at Am Shalom

840 Vernon Avenue
Glencoe, IL 60022
847.835.0008

JCC Chicago Early Childhood at Beth Emet*

1224 Dempster St.
Evanston, IL 60202
847.763.3571

Bernard Horwich JCC*

3003 West Touhy
Chicago, IL 60645
773.761.9100

'Z' Frank Apachi*

3050 Woodridge Lane
Northbrook, IL 60062
847.272.8707

Florence G. Heller JCC*

524 West Melrose Street
Chicago, IL 60657
773.938.8340

* summer programming
typically available

jccchicagoearlychildhood.org

JCC Chicago is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring a strong and vibrant Jewish life and community for generations to come.

JCC Chicago is a partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community. ©2024 JCC Chicago

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