



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FAMILY HANDBOOK**

Welcome to the JCCSF Early Childhood Education (ECE) Family Handbook. This guide is designed to help you prepare for and successfully navigate your preschool experience with us at Brotherhood Way Preschool, Helen Diller Family Preschool and Rosenberg Early Childhood Center.

### **OUR MISSION & PRINCIPLES**

#### **ECE VISION STATEMENT**

##### **JCCSF Preschool: Where Learning Begins**

Our vision is to be an innovative early childhood education program where children, families and educators collaborate to create enriched learning experiences. Our preschoolers delight in discovering an early love of learning at one of our three preschools.

#### **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

We are a community of learners with children, families, and educators as partners in joyful experiences that encourage the development of knowledge and self-esteem. Our early childhood centers are inspired by the principles of the **Reggio Emilia Approach** and guided by **Jewish values and culture**. The fundamental premise on which we build our program is that children learn through play and play is the essential vehicle for how children understand their world. We see children as competent, strong, inventive, and full of ideas. We provide opportunities for learning, exploration, creativity and self-expression based on the idea that children have the interest and the potential to construct their own knowledge. We strive to establish a nurturing and inclusive community that focuses on the whole child so that social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs can be met with sensitivity to individualized abilities and learning styles. Our goal is to create an environment where each child develops a greater sense of self, respect for others and a lifelong love of learning.

#### **STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity and support the full inclusion of all children—given differences in culture, family structure, language, racial identity, gender, abilities and disabilities, religious beliefs, or economic class.

— adapted from NAEYC Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education and are fundamental ideas of the educational experience. Although these principles are presented one by one, together they form an integrated, coherent philosophy.

**The Image of the Child:** All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their own learning, engaging in social interaction and in negotiating with everything that their environment brings to them.

**The Role of the Teacher:** Teachers listen to and observe children closely to plan and proceed with each day's experiences. They use the understanding they gain to act as a resource for the children. Teachers ask questions, discover the children's ideas, hypotheses, and theories, stimulate thinking, and provide occasions for discovery and learning. The role of the teacher is to be a learner along with the children as they co-construct the learning experience and explore together. Teachers consider themselves researchers and partners in learning.

**Relationships:** Learning is based on relationships between teachers, families, and children in their environment. Together, they co-construct knowledge in the context of the school.

**Environment:** The environment is warm and welcoming and fosters the children's ability to make choices, problem solve, master skills and develop relationships. The environment is used as a third teacher and makes children's learning processes visible.

**Family Engagement:** Families are an essential component of a successful preschool program. We invite you to not just be part of the parent council but to support classroom experiences, celebrations and school events. Families are an essential part of the community of learners which includes children, teachers and our community.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration among children, teachers and families, based on mutual respect, is a key element of our program. Children, teachers and families are equal partners in creating joyful experiences that encourage the development of knowledge, self-esteem and a deep commitment to the community. Working together at every level enhances and enriches the opportunities for learning and discovery.

**Documentation:** Observing children in action and documenting what they are learning is an important way to create ideas for projects as well as to make learning visible. Teachers and children create many forms of documentation, such as panels, binders and journals. Using many kinds of media, these items contain explanations and analysis of the process, photos, transcriptions of the children's remarks and discussions, and symbolic representations of the children's ideas. Documentation provides opportunities for teachers, children and families to revisit and reflect on their experiences.

**Projects:** Short- and long-term projects are initiated to serve as in-depth studies of concepts, ideas and interests that arise within the group. Project ideas originate as the children and teachers construct knowledge together. Children may choose from many kinds of materials to enhance their creativity. Projects can last from a few days to several months.

## **YEARLY INTENTION**

Intention, or kavanah in Hebrew, emphasizes the importance of bringing focused and directed awareness to one's thoughts and actions. In Jewish tradition, kavanah is considered essential to the fulfillment of mitzvot (commandments). The Talmud, a central rabbinic text in Jewish law and tradition, teaches that "one who recites prayers without kavanah is like someone who presents an empty vessel" (Berakhot 34a). This calls us into genuine focus and intention to connect with Jewish teachings and traditions so that they may set the foundation and allow us to build with the children.

Declaring an intention for the school year is a tool used to help educators define their direction when developing an evolving and growing curriculum. It is our way of making it public that we have chosen to have a specific focus for the year and provides a way to connect to others. Intention is a term borrowed from the Reggio Emilia approach to support educators to take a closer look at how we organize, facilitate and articulate our focus in the classroom. In addition, this intention creates a culture for the school year and a lens through which to view our work and professional development.

Teachers will first explore this intention during professional development weeks then will revisit throughout the year in team meetings, individual meetings, all-staff meetings, and teachers' yearly evaluations. We look forward to the many varied questions our educators will choose to explore this year around our Intention and plan on sharing our learning with our community. We are very enthusiastic about this process as it challenges us as staff and motivates us as learners alongside the children.

## **PRESCHOOL STAFF**

Our ECE program is delivered by excellent staff who are recruited for their commitment to our philosophy and methods, knowledge of early childhood, professionalism and warmth. Our staff consists of site directors, lead teachers, teachers, associate teachers, assistant teachers, and specialists. Most staff members have a bachelor's degree and the early childhood education units (classes) applicable to their job designation. We strive to maintain a ratio of one staff person for every six children in our preschools. Many of our staff hold California Child Development permits.

**Specialists:** Our program engages specialists in the areas of gardening and nature, music, art, and movement that work with the students each week. In addition, our Senior Jewish Educator works with our staff and children on a regular basis to develop and learn our Jewish values and content.

With ongoing mentorship and professional development, the Jewish Education team develops activities and curriculum to enhance our staff's knowledge and delivery of Jewish content and to deepen our families' engagement with Judaism and the Jewish community.

**Safety:** All staff are certified in pediatric CPR, first aid and infectious disease prevention. All our staff are fingerprinted, pass a background check, and provide a medical certification that they are in good health and capable of performing tasks related to teaching and childcare.

**Professional Development:** Teachers are provided with robust professional development throughout the year. Our program closes for two days annually for teachers to work on the program intention for the year and two full weeks before the school year begins. Teachers are also given opportunities to go to conferences and workshops that focus on the Reggio Emilia approach, teaching strategies, skill-building, and Jewish curriculum. Each preschool also holds all-staff meetings, teaching team meetings and individual teacher meetings during the week.

Each preschool also maintains relationships with many outside specialists including psychologists, speech, occupational and physical therapists to support your child. We may refer your family to an outside specialist during the school year to support your child's success at school.

### **JEWISH VALUES IN THE ECE PROGRAM**

The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education and the JCCSF's approach to Judaism are mutually reinforcing. Reggio Emilia frames the multiple ways we support and encourage children to explore their environment and identify themselves as capable, caring citizens of the world. The JCCSF's core values are drawn from our engagement with wisdom culled from millennia of Jewish civilization, which encourages compassion and respect, lifelong learning, responsibility and social justice.

Both emphasize the need to focus on the whole child, which includes seeing the child in the context of their primary relationships and as deeply integrated into their environment. Reggio Emilia and our core Jewish values encourage open-ended questioning, "doing" and "becoming" over "knowing" and "classifying."

The Sheva Middot (described below) support our perspective on pluralism, collaboration and personal responsibility and our holistic approach to well-being. They also serve as touchstones, grounding us in our values throughout the day.

### **THE SHEVA MIDDOT**

When the JCCSF's remodeled facility was dedicated in 2004, it included a bold statement in the form of a 30-foot wall inscribed with the core values that guide our mission.

These are known as the Sheva Middot (Hebrew for "seven values").

תורה // TORAH – Asking questions of, and seeking guidance from, traditional sources of wisdom to support our quest to be our best selves and make positive change in the world. Engaging in lifelong learning, encouraging questions and celebrating discovery.

העולם תיקון // TIKKUN HA-OLAM // Repair of the World – Doing our part to make the world a better place. Cultivating a sense of social responsibility and fostering personal resiliency.

צדק // TZEDEK // Justice – Pursuing social justice and critical inquiry. Practicing self-reflection and honesty and assuming positive intent.

רוח // RUAH // Spirit – Being open to inspiration, to greater consciousness, to transformation and to experiencing awe. Prompting wonder and curiosity and encouraging creative expression and deep play.

רעות // RE-UT // Friendship – Giving and receiving support, compassion and love. Nourishing health in relationships and becoming skilled in conflict management.

אורחים הכנסת // HAHNASAT ORHIM // Welcoming Guests – Being a good host and a good guest. Making room for others and gathering for celebration and commemoration.

ישראל כלל // KLAL YISRAEL // Inclusivity – Experiencing the feeling of belonging to a community. Connecting over commonalities and developing an appreciation for diversity.

## **JEWISH HOLIDAYS**

As human beings, we experience and organize time in many ways, directing our awareness to both the preciousness and the passing of moments. In our ECE program the primary ways we mark time include (but are not limited to): celebrating holidays (Jewish and national) and birthdays, observing changes in the seasons and other natural phenomena, developing daily routines and documenting our work over the course of the school year.

Learning about and celebrating Jewish holidays is an integral part of our community experience at the preschools and as part of the wider JCCSF community. It brings us into conversation with Jewish values, history and each other.

The rhythm of Jewish life is deeply influenced by the cycle of the Hebrew calendar:

- The week: Sunday – Friday is considered the workweek
- Sundown Friday – sundown Saturday is called a day of rest – Shabbat, a 25-hour sabbath day. A time to set aside as different and replenishing
- Holidays (“holy days”): including both “major” and “minor” (see below)
- The year: The Hebrew calendar is “lunisolar” – it is based on the cycles of the moon. But, to ensure that the agriculturally based holidays would occur in their proper seasons, the lunar calendar is adjusted to match up with the solar cycle.

In our ECE program, we typically focus on the following Jewish holidays, identified by their Hebrew names and by JCCSF holiday shorthand (for short descriptions of each, see the Appendix ):

### **Weekly:**

Shabbat  
Havdalah

### **September to December:**

Rosh Hashanah – *Reflect & Renew*  
Yom Kippur – *Fast & Forgive*  
Sukkot – *Dwell in Joy*  
Simchat Torah – *Unwind & Retell*  
Hanukkah – *Share the Light*

### **January to June:**

Tu Bishvat – *Nourish Your Roots*

Purim – *Make Some Noise*  
Pesach (Passover) – *Reimagine Freedom*  
Shavuot – *Rewind & Retell*

Consistent with the Reggio Emilia approach, groups of students investigate Jewish time by responding to “provocations” inspired by holiday themes, which allows for a holistic integration of holidays into the year’s emerging curriculum.

As an example, a widely recognized theme and symbol of Hanukkah is light. This past year, one class – after investigating the holiday through song, story and play – expressed interest in light and shadows, winter darkness and cycles of the moon. The teachers expanded the discussion to the concept of an inner light that motivates us to bring warmth into places and lives that would like a bit of brightening, just as the candles of the Hanukkah menorah (candelabra in English or Hanukkiyah in precise Hebrew) increase light at the darkest time of year.

## **SHABBAT**

In Jewish time, the week is organized into six days of work (weekdays) and Shabbat, a 25-hour “day of rest” that starts on Friday at sundown and ends on Saturday after sunset. Celebrated as both relaxing and delightful, Shabbat is time set aside on a weekly basis to rest and unplug, to hang out and enjoy the company of others.

For Shabbat to feel special and, at the same time, part of our weekly routine in ECE, we mark its arrival on Fridays with rituals that include candle lighting, drinking grape juice, eating challah bread and lots of singing. We invite families and caregivers to join our celebration of Shabbat each week which happens in different ways at each school.

## **HAVDALAH**

In the same way that we mark the arrival of Shabbat with ritual, we also mark its departure and the start of a new school week with ritual. Havdalah (a Hebrew word that means “making a distinction or separation,” in this case distinguishing Shabbat from the rest of the week) eases the transition back to school on Monday mornings.

## **HOLIDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

Many national holidays are marked throughout the year with an emphasis on the aspects of these holidays that are most relevant to the children. In keeping with our commitment to hachnasat orchim (welcoming guests) – our practice of radical inclusivity – there are also opportunities for the children to experience secular and cultural holidays from other traditions. These are usually selected for their relevance to our community’s families and teachers and/or the course of study during any given year.

As a Jewish preschool, our main holiday celebrations revolve around the Jewish calendar rather than the secular calendar. We explore through song, art, history, food and ritual the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, Tu Bishvat, Purim, Passover and Shavuot.

While many other holidays are not celebrated at school, please be assured that a child’s discussion about any home celebration is always a welcome topic in the classroom and will be treated with

interest, curiosity and respect. Families are welcome to share their holidays or celebrations with us and we can work together on how to share these traditions in your child's classroom.

There are two holidays – Halloween and Valentine's Day – that have a long history of being considered "out of bounds" for Jewish institutions like JCCs. Ostensibly, this is because they have "religious" origins (pagan in the case of Halloween and Christian in the case of Valentine's Day). While there is significant debate about the connection to other religious traditions, the way they are marked in America today is completely secular. That said, while we respect the individual families and staff members who choose to mark these holidays, as an institution we have not yet found a way to make them work in our communal context. While Halloween brings many fun traditions, the violent or scary imagery with which it can be associated is not consonant with our goal of building a warm, supportive environment. And while Valentine's Day might seem to fit well with our value of re-ut (friendship), the social pressures often associated with it (even in preschool) make us reluctant to introduce the practice of communicating our feelings in that context. These are "live" issues for us and part of our discussions around an evolving understanding of what it means to be a Jewish American institution in the Bay Area in the 21st century.

We request that you support our efforts to maintain our policy of not observing these two holidays (no costumes, no decorations, no candy, etc.) in our classes. Informal discussions of trick-or-treating, like discussions of Christmas, vacations to Disneyland, and other exciting events in the lives of our children, will not be stifled in any way, and any group discussion is at the discretion of the teachers.

We are always happy to answer questions related to these holiday policies or to discuss our values and policies more broadly. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with the preschool staff or JCCSF leadership.

More detailed information about our Jewish education can be found in the Appendix and many other topics, can be found on [www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com). We also encourage you to speak directly with Rabbi Batshir Torchio, the JCCSF's Senior Educator ([btorchio@jccsf.org](mailto:btorchio@jccsf.org)) or the Site Directors about additional opportunities for Jewish learning (formal, informal, virtual and personal).

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

### **GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR**

Our educators interact with the children in our program with compassion and respect. Building a strong social-emotional foundation for children is one of the most important goals of our program. Teachers strive to guide children's behavior in a supportive, positive and non-punitive manner which then leads to the development of empathy, self-control and self-esteem and establishes a positive and successful learning environment. We believe that children are here to learn about positive social behavior, care of materials, safety, voice control and appropriate ways to express feelings.

Teachers facilitate the development of social skills, self-control and self-regulation in children by using positive guidance techniques. We encourage expected behavior, redirecting children to more acceptable activities, setting clear limits and intervening to apply consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior. Our expectation of children's behavior is age-appropriate and respectful of their developing capabilities.

Staff interacts with the children in a calm and supportive manner, intervening in firm but friendly ways, to educate them and guide their behavior.

We provide an environment that supports children's independence and decision-making skills. In addition, staff encourages and teaches the children to practice conflict-resolution skills to help them work through issues when they arise. Children are provided with the tools they need to resolve conflicts, with staff modeling the behavior, encouraging children to talk to one another, helping children arrive at a resolution and supporting them so that the resolution works in an age-appropriate way, as this will vary between 2- and 5-year-olds.

Young children, due to their developmental age, are not capable of understanding the consequences of many of their behaviors. Therefore, children need to be encouraged to make good choices and to be prevented from harming themselves or others. This can best be accomplished through close supervision, gentle guidance, and most importantly, redirection through connection. Children in our program are never forced to eat snacks or lunch, to sleep, to sit still or to use the bathroom. We utilize a myriad of techniques to encourage children to do these things but never by coercion, threat or demand.

Children need to learn to identify and express their feelings. However, often this requires the caregiver to acknowledge the child's response to the situation and help him/her use appropriate strategies. For example, if we see a child about to hit another child for taking a toy away, we will prevent that child from hitting the other and say, "It looks like you want to keep the truck," and provide an alternative to hitting. We will also help the child understand the other child's point of view. "I see that Tommy is playing with the truck you had. It looks like he wants it too. Can you tell him that you are playing with it?" Through this method, children can begin to learn about the intentions of others and ways we hope to prevent one child from hurting another and at the same time help that child to learn to identify feelings and verbalize expectations.

Small children are very egocentric. As a result, they are not yet capable of understanding the concept of sharing and taking turns. Therefore, it is our responsibility to lend guidance through redirection to other activities when conflict situations occur. Some strategies we use are to help children vocalize their needs by modeling, we encourage them to ask a peer for a turn when they're done with a material of interest and then help them find something to do while they wait. Please talk to your child's teachers for more details.

Children require ongoing guidance and support as they learn about themselves and others. Working with challenging behaviors is a process of teaching rather than punishment and control. Children are reminded of what TO DO, rather than what NOT TO DO. For example, instead of, "don't run," children are told, "Please walk to the door." Through this strategy: (1) children know what you expect, (2) a more positive classroom climate is promoted, and (3) children and adults form supportive relationships.

An additional strategy used with older preschoolers is to help them learn how to solve their own problems and resolve conflicts. Teachers provide support and guidance as children develop and practice these skills.

Teachers use their first names with the children, there is no need to require your children to call teachers using "Miss, Ms, or Teacher" but if your family prefers to do so, then of course please do.



## CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

During the first five years of life, children are just beginning to learn how to handle their own intense emotions and adapt to the behavioral expectations of society. As families and teachers know, this process takes a lifetime to master. We understand that children will have challenging behavior from time to time.

In the JCCSF ECE Program, we define challenging behavior as any behavior that:

- Interferes with children's learning, development and success at play
- Is harmful to the child, other children or adults
- Puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure

This behavior can be direct (e.g., hitting, pushing, biting, kicking) or indirect (e.g., teasing, ignoring rules or instructions, excluding others, name calling, destroying objects, having big temper tantrums).

Our educators see working with all children's behavior as an integral aspect of their job. We accept that young children will sometimes display their emotions or try to achieve their goals in unproductive ways. That is simply part of being young. Much of children's most valuable learning, especially in a group setting, occurs during behavioral problem-solving. The approaches we use vary by age group, but have the following elements in common:

**Adults model positive behavior.** We show that we can accept, control and express feelings in direct and non-aggressive ways; we let children know that we are not afraid of their intense emotions and will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from them.

**Teachers design the physical environment to minimize conflict.** We provide multiples of toys and materials for groups of children, define classroom and outdoor areas clearly to allow for both active and quiet play, and strive to maintain an appropriately calm level of stimulation.

**Teachers maintain age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior.** We attempt to minimize unreasonable waiting and transition times and limit the length of large group and teacher-directed activity times according to children's developmental levels. We give children large blocks of uninterrupted time during which to make their own activity choices.

**Teachers establish simple rules, or expectations, for the classroom community.** Older preschool children participate in this process early in the school year. When issues arise, adults and children can reference the "Be safe, Be kind, Be respectful" guidelines as reminders about what kinds of behavior facilitate life in a group setting.

Adults closely observe and supervise children's activities and social interactions. With our high ratios of adults to children and our emphasis on attentive observation, we can often intervene to guide children before situations escalate.

Adults help children verbalize their feelings, frustrations, and concerns. The educators will help children describe problems, generate possible solutions, and think through the logical consequences of their actions. The children will hear their teachers describing actions, problems, solutions, and logical consequences. The adult role is to be a helper in positive problem-solving. We want children to value

cooperation and teamwork. We help them to learn peaceful, productive approaches to interacting with peers.

Children whose behavior endangers others will be supervised away from other children. This is not the same as the practice of using a “time out” for a child. An adult will help the child move away from a group situation. The child will then process the problem verbally with the staff member and any other concerned parties. An adult will stay close to any child who is emotionally out of control and needs private time to regain composure. This could be as simple as saying “let’s take a break” or “take five” or “let’s all take a knee.

Guidance will always be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is inappropriate. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened or subjected to physical punishment or verbal or physical abuse by any staff member, student, or volunteer working in the JCCSF ECE programs. Every member of the professional staff understands and follows our approach as well as the standards on guidance and management in our California State Licensing Regulations. We work intensively with our staff so that they also understand and employ this guidance approach.

When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others or property, or significantly disrupts the program, we will work with a child’s family to find solutions, up to and including referral for outside services or in extreme cases, exclusion from the program.

### **How We Work with Families and Children Who Show Challenging Behaviors**

When children show behavior that’s challenging, there are steps teachers will take to best support the child. Helping families understand and support their child is one of our most important jobs. These are the steps teachers will take when working with a child showing this type of behavior.

1. Observe the child for at least a week and keep a running record of the specified behavior; making sure to note what happens before, during and after the behavior. This will help identify patterns.
2. The teaching team will meet with the administration and share the observations. In this meeting, ideas will be generated such as adapting the environment, schedule, and teaching strategies to best meet the child’s needs.
3. New strategies will be implemented for 2 weeks and then re-evaluated. During this time a specialist may observe to give feedback.
4. If the behavior continues then teachers will schedule a meeting with the family in collaboration with the site administration.
5. Strategies will be discussed with the family and an action plan formed. One month will be set as a follow-up meeting to determine if outside support is needed. Both teachers and a site administrator will be a part of these meetings.
6. If it’s decided a child needs outside support, families will be given a referral and supported through the process by the teaching team and administration.
7. If children receive therapy while enrolled in preschool, the teaching team and specified site administrator will work with the therapist to provide best strategies in school for the child. This may include on- or off-site meetings, phone calls or written summaries. Site administration will provide support for teachers to participate in these meetings.

It is our intent to work together with families to promote a positive experience for their child. However, we do realize that there may be circumstances that keep a child from being capable of fully participating in a group program and recognize that the program may not be equipped to deal with all circumstances underlying certain behavioral issues. There may be instances when a child is removed from the program if a child's behavior isn't changing and we cannot support the child successfully.

### **COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHILDREN, A FAMILY PARTNERSHIP**

Our intention is to build a strong relationship with families as we work closely with your child during their time in our program. We will communicate confidentially with you about your child's experiences at preschool, and the teaching staff will share observations, insights and recommendations with you as appropriate. We will partner with each family to support their child's physical, cognitive and emotional development during these important preschool years. To best meet the needs of your child and family, your participation and collaboration is of utmost importance. Family engagement creates an essential bond between home and school. With the help and support of families, the preschool experience is even more meaningful and rewarding.

Conversations happen daily between teachers and families during drop-off and pick-up. Longer conversations are best had in scheduled meetings and can be scheduled throughout the school year as questions and concerns arise. If you need a spontaneous off-the-floor check-in, just let your teacher know to talk to the site leadership and it will be arranged.

On your end, we strongly urge families to check in with teachers regularly and keep your child's teaching team informed about significant life events, such as the birth of a baby, a family death, serious illness, sibling rivalries, divorce, a move from crib to bed, getting their own room, taking away pacifier, these are just some of the life changes that if we know about, enables us to help your child work through their emotional adjustment.

### **FAMILY/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Formal family/teacher conferences are conducted yearly and are an integral part of families' involvement in their child's school life. We strongly encourage all families to participate in their children's conferences. During the conferences, teachers will discuss how your child functions in the preschool environment, their relationships with materials and with other children and adults, information pertinent to your child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development, and additional behavior that should be shared and explored. The teacher will also ask for your perceptions, expectations and insights into your child's behavior and personality. Conferences will be offered either in person or via Zoom. If families have two households, they can have separate conferences upon request.

### **FAMILY/TEACHER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

Each preschool site has different opportunities for dialogue between teachers and adults as they explore and discuss what the children are doing in their classrooms. These events provide a time for conversation between families and teachers about what the children are learning and experiencing. They enhance the collaboration between school and home and continue to build relationships between families, teachers and children. Teachers will share the nature of the work that they are doing with the children and discuss ways that families can support that work at home, and families can share their

families' and children's interests at home. This engagement serves as a vehicle to strengthen the relationships between the school and our families, to build community within our school and to create new possibilities for the children. We highly encourage every family to participate in these events, in the case a family cannot make it, families can send in another adult family member or family friend. Please note that these events are for adults only and we ask all families engage actively while attending.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

Families are invited to volunteer their time in the classroom in a variety of ways. From field trips to book reading, to helping make and bake challah, teachers provide a wealth of experiences for families to participate in. Participation is always voluntary, however highly encouraged. Family members are also invited to volunteer, we welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles and even older siblings for the right activities. Teachers will post opportunities well in advance for optimal planning.

## **DOCUMENTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING**

There are a variety of documentation strategies we utilize to communicate to our family community about children's learning. Documentation makes learning visible to adults and children. We use documentation as an essential form of communication, it helps promote individual learning within a group as well as learning by the group. Documentation provides a way for children to revisit and interpret their learning experiences and to reflect on how to develop their experiences and inquiry further. Documentation offers a simultaneous opportunity for teachers to learn, for children to reflect and for parents to understand. Documentation can be found on the walls of the classroom and in daily emails and online journals.

### **Onsite**

You will find general family information posted in a designated area in each preschool site and classroom. The sign-in space always has up-to-date information for families, please take the time to check in with this area daily. You will also notice classroom documentation on the walls, and you are encouraged to read these descriptors of the children's learning alongside your children so they can explain to you from their perspective what the documentation is all about.

In our preschool program, each child has a portfolio. The portfolio can be one of two things, it is either a collection of the child's work, kept in a binder that moves with the child throughout their time at the preschool, or it may be a yearly photobook which documents the child's growth, learning, project work (including photos of artwork). Portfolios are comprised of actual artifacts that children produce as they work and are another form of documentation. They chronicle life in the preschool and present a unique path of progress for each child. A child with two households will have two portfolios made for them.

### **Online Platform**

We provide a private and secure app and website for our preschool communities. This communication tool enables families to readily access information securely and efficiently and will be the primary source of information from the program. It is critical that at least one family from each family sign up. Information about how to register will be distributed to families before each school year. Please keep this information updated. We use this to contact families in the event of an emergency.

Each site includes key information like class pages with written journals and photographs, sign-up for parent/teacher conferences, information about classroom volunteer opportunities, notes from our art and nature/garden resource teachers, our family directory, the preschool calendar, and teacher photos and bios. It also includes information about the program's philosophy and vision, Reggio Emilia guiding principles, Jewish values and holidays, the yearly intention, important dates, the Family Handbook and the roster of Parent Council members and roles.

Teaching Teams will post regular updates about the class interests, inquiry, projects and experiences via this platform. To learn about what your child does during the day it's imperative that you keep up with these posts, you will learn a great deal about what is happening in the classroom and be able to make more home to school connections for your child. These entries tell a story and highlight what the children are learning. These are written collaboratively by the teaching team. The administrative team and parent council will also use this platform for communication.

### **TEACHERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO FAMILIES**

Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.

As professionals, we shall not engage in or support exploitation of families. We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain or enter into relationships with family members that might impair our effectiveness working with their children.

(NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment, Revised April 2005)

### **PARENT COUNCIL**

Each preschool has a Parent Council that is open and welcoming to every parent. The purpose of the Parent Council is to build community among our families and to encourage involvement in various site-specific activities. Each Parent Council meets on a regular basis throughout the school year, facilitated by a leadership group with chairpersons and committees. They organize, promote and encourage parent participation at each site and arrange holiday, educational and social activities throughout the year in conjunction with preschool staff. The Parent Council also plays an active role in coordinating fundraising events for both all-site and site-specific programs. We encourage all families to participate actively in parent council events and roles. At the beginning of each year a one-time fee is asked of each family to support all parent council events.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Every donation made to our Early Childhood Education Campaign makes a difference. Participation in the annual Preschool Giving Campaign is an investment in our teachers, students, and programs. Your gift has a direct impact by funding teacher professional development to maintain a high standard of education; and providing financial aid to ensure a socio-economically inclusive school where children flourish. Over the years, the JCCSF has provided more than \$400,000 of financial aid to families. Living in one of the most expensive cities in the world, many in our community struggle to afford the fees necessary to participate in our programs. That is where the Preschool Giving Campaign comes in. It is

through parents' generosity that we can continue to provide excellent education and ensure our programs stay accessible to a wide range of families. Our goal is 100% participation from the ECE parent community. This demonstrates our collective dedication to the school sites, and it helps inspire other funders. We will be kicking off our fundraising campaign at the beginning of October through December 31.

**Corporate Matching:** Did you know that most corporations have a matching program? When making your gift, remember to ask your company about this opportunity to double your impact!

**Gifts of Stock:** Your gift of appreciated stock that has been held for more than one year will benefit the JCCSF and may save you capital gains taxes and provide a variety of other tax benefits.

**Donor-Advised Funds:** A donor-advised fund (DAF) is a type of giving program that allows you to combine the most favorable tax benefits with the flexibility to easily support the JCCSF.

**Foundation Gifts:** If you and your family know of – or are connected to – any family and corporate foundations where giving priorities are aligned with the JCCSF ECE program, please contact us!

Contact Rachel Jacobs at [rjacobs@jccsf.org](mailto:rjacobs@jccsf.org) or at 415.697.3426 for any questions regarding the ECE campaign or our fundraising efforts.

## **DONATING SUPPLIES**

Please check with your child's teacher or the site director before bringing items to school in order to find out which materials could be put to good use.

We can always use new and unusual art materials, papers and any type of natural materials for our art explorations. Our materials library includes buttons, ribbons, cards, spools, yarn, wood, corks and many other items.

We also welcome donations of books, dramatic play props (dress-up costumes, jewelry, purses, shirts and ties) and kitchen equipment (in good condition).

## **ENGAGING PRESCHOOL STAFF FOR CHILDCARE OUTSIDE OF PRESCHOOL**

We recognize that quality childcare can be difficult to secure in San Francisco. Families will sometimes want ECE program staff to act as occasional babysitters.

Please note the following policies. We request that:

You do not hire staff from your child's current classroom. We understand that your child may have a connection with their current teacher. Please be mindful that this blurs boundaries and limitations and can make things more challenging for all parties involved.

All arrangements for childcare be made outside of staff work hours via private email or phone calls.

You review the acknowledgment form in the enrollment packet that states that the JCCSF is not responsible for the behavior of our staff members when they are under your personal employment.

## **HEALTH POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **PHYSICAL EXAMS**

Prior to the first day of school, all children must have a physical exam and, to comply with California state regulations, the physician's report must be on file. Children MUST be up to date on all immunizations, including diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP/DTaP), polio (OPV or IPV), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), meningitis and haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), hepatitis B and varicella/chicken pox. TB test must be current. See your child's physician for more information on these vaccinations, screening tests and tests.

## **EMERGENCY & CONSENT FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT FORMS**

Families must complete both the Identification and Emergency Information and the Consent for Medical Treatment forms before school begins and update them yearly so staff will be prepared for any emergency involving your child.

## **ILLNESS IN CHILDREN**

The frequency and severity of illness in your child can be greatly reduced by your cooperation in keeping your child at home when he or she is not well. To protect the health of other children and our staff, California state licensing requirements prohibit us from allowing any child showing definite signs of illness to come to or stay at school.

Colds, represented by runny nose, coughing and sneezing, are especially endemic in preschool groups. Often the ill child who touches their nose and mouth and then touches other children or surfaces, such as bathroom fixtures, tables, countertops and materials, transmits the cold. Six or seven respiratory infections per year for the preschool child is not uncommon. This cycle can be reduced through proper hygiene and keeping your child at home until they are well.

As your child is learning to become independent in the early childhood years, it is an important time that we all teach proper hygiene – for example, to wash hands thoroughly before eating, after using the toilet, after outdoor play, after covering up a cough or sneeze, and after blowing or wiping the nose. Teachers will be supporting children to learn these important skills as well.

Watch for early signs of illness and keep your child at home if they are sick. A day or more at home, in a low-key setting with appropriate medical attention, can speed recovery and reduce the chance of rebound infection and susceptibility to other illnesses. If you are uncertain about these signs of illness or when to have your child return to preschool, please contact your site director.

Early Signs of Illness (Children exhibiting these signs should not attend preschool.)

- Flushed or unusually pale face
- Watery or inflamed eyes
- Persistent coughing or sneezing
- Excessively runny nose
- Soreness or dryness in the throat
- Fever (100 degrees or above)
- Vomiting (as a result of illness)
- Diarrhea

- Unusual body rash that is rapidly spreading
- Beginning of ear infections
- Conjunctivitis (“Pink Eye”)

*Reminder: To protect the health of the other children, the staff is not permitted to allow any child showing definite signs of illness into school unless cleared by the child’s pediatrician, with written confirmation. Teachers will do a “health check” on each child as they enter the classroom and if symptoms are evident, may ask you to take your child home. The above symptoms are ones that guide the preschool’s decision to send children home.*

## **ILLNESS & REPORTING EXPOSURE**

If your child becomes ill at preschool, we will notify you at once and expect you or your designated emergency contact to pick up your child as quickly as possible. The preschool will provide a place for your child to rest until he or she is picked up. As a rule, we will call families if a child is “off” or unable to participate in regular activities.

If you suspect your child has been exposed to or diagnosed with any contagious disease (e.g., chicken pox or measles), please inform the site leadership at once so that we may watch for symptoms and warn other families. Medical alerts for contagious diseases will be sent quickly as possible and families will be notified of potential exposure. We will not disclose the name of the child.

California state licensing requires that we keep a record of all contagious illnesses, and we must inform them about specific illnesses. We also send out Health Notices to alert families when a contagious illness is present in the classroom. We ask families to please contact the school immediately when your child has been diagnosed with one of the following contagious illnesses:

- Campylobacter
- Chicken pox
- Conjunctivitis
- COVID-19
- Coxsackie virus (hand, food and mouth disease) “Slap Cheek”
- Giardia Roseola
- Hepatitis
- Impetigo
- Lice
- Measles (red measles, 7- to 10-day measles)
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- Ringworm
- Rubella (German measles, 3-day measles)
- Salmonella
- Scabies
- Scarlet fever
- Shigella Pinworms
- Strep throat



## WHEN CHILDREN MUST REMAIN HOME

The list below outlines when children should be kept at home and when they can return to school. Children will also be sent home when these illnesses are present at school.

**Chicken Pox:** Lesions must be totally scabbed over before children can return to school; no ooze. Lesions will typically scab over and dry around 6-7 days after initial outbreak.

**Cold:** Children should not attend if they are coughing and sneezing excessively and if their mucous is not clear (yellow or green mucous may indicate infection). We ask that you use judgement when sending your child to school with excessive coughing or sneezing. If we feel that your child is not able to keep up with the normal flow of the day, or impacted by their overall health, we will send your child home.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** 24 hours after treatment, and the eye must be totally cleared up; no ooze.

**COVID-19:** For the most up-to-date information, [visit this page](#).

**Coxsackie:** Children can return to school 48 hours after fever and blisters have subsided.

**Diarrhea:** Children must remain home for 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea. And will be sent home after their 2nd case of diarrhea in a school day.

**Ear Infections:** or illnesses requiring antibiotics, 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.

**Fever:** 100 degrees or above. Children must stay home 24 hours after fever is gone, without the aid of medication.

**Impetigo:** or other contagious rashes, 48 hours after medication is started; everything is scabbed over, no moist areas or oozing.

**Lice:** After treatment and all eggs are removed; children must be nit free. We must have verification that the child received treatment (invoice from nit service or box top from treatment)

**Ringworm:** Children can return to school 48 hours after medication has been started.

**Strep Throat:** Children can return to school 48 hours after medication is administered.

**Unusual Rash:** must receive clearance from pediatrician to attend school.

**Vomiting:** Children must remain home for 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting and must have consumed and kept down two full meals. Children will be sent home if their vomiting seems to be due to illness.

In some cases, children will be sent home if they are unable to participate in a normal school-day routine despite a lack of clear illnesses from the above list. When a child is behaving unusually it typically indicates illness is coming.

Families will be expected to pick up a sick child within 30 minutes of being contacted.

## MEDICATION

In accordance with our licensing requirements, we are required to adhere to the following procedures when dispensing prescription medication:

If your child requires medication at preschool, you must fill out a Request to Give Medication form available in the preschool administrative office or classroom. This form can only be completed by the child's family member(s) listed on their intake forms.

You must give the completed form and medication to the classroom teacher, and they will verify the instructions do not conflict with the label directions as prescribed by your child's physician.

The medication must come to preschool in the original bottle labeled by the pharmacy with:

- Child's name
- Date of prescription
- Prescribing physician's name and phone number
- Directions for the administration of medication; i.e., dosage and times

The medication will be put into a labeled zip lock bag with your child's name and classroom and then placed in the school's designated area, inaccessible to children. Teachers will maintain a copy of the Medication Form in the classroom and the teacher will oversee administering the medication and completing the required documentation. In the case of a substitute teacher, then medicine will be administered by the site leadership (Director, Assistant Director, Administrator). Teachers are required to return all unused medication. All documentation pertaining to the administration of medication will be retained in your child's file.

**We do not administer non-prescription medication unless it is authorized by the child's physician and follows the same medication administration protocol. We will not administer any medication without the required documents and information, as we are not permitted to give a child medication that is not prescribed by a doctor.**

Families are instructed not to put any medication, including vitamins, in their child's lunch box, cubby or pocket, or to give any medication to their child to give to their teacher or to self-administer.

## SUNSCREEN POLICY

According to the United States Food and Drug Administration, sunscreen has been ruled as an over-the-counter medication and therefore, we must comply with the licensing regulations pertaining to nonprescription medication. Sunscreen may be administered without the approval or instructions from your child's physician if all the following conditions are met:

The child's authorized family member must complete a Sunscreen Permission Form that gives written approval and instructions for the administration sunscreen. Teachers will receive a list of all children who have Sunscreen Permission slips on file and a copy of the Permission Forms.

The written directions must be in accordance with the product label directions on the container.

A copy of the form shall be kept in the child's file and in the classroom.

All sunscreen containers must be labelled with the child's name and classroom.

Sunscreen may not be shared or administered to any child who does not have a permission form on file.

Families are asked to apply sunscreen on their child in the morning and we will reapply throughout the day.

If you have any questions regarding our medication policies, please check with your Director.

### **ALLERGIES & ASTHMA**

It is extremely important that you include in your child's health documents if your child has any dietary restrictions, food allergies, or asthma. Due to the confidentiality mandate of the Department of Social Services, we will not release this information. Children with asthma should have an asthma plan submitted with their licensing paperwork. Children who have an epi-pen must also have a plan in their file for when and how to use it.

The ECE program is NUT FREE. We do not allow nuts or nut products of any kind at our preschools – this includes nut-milk. Please do not send your child to class with nuts in any form in their lunch. The nut-free policy also applies to birthday treats, special snack items, potluck meals, Shabbat dinners and any other time when food will be served.

### **INJURIES & ACCIDENTS**

Minor Injuries: Minor injuries will be immediately treated at preschool with an appropriate cleansing measure, water or ice as necessary, bandages and ample amounts of comfort and kindness. At pick-up, staff will inform families about what transpired via an Incident Report form. Families will be contacted directly whenever there is an incident that leaves a mark or bruise or if there is any cause for concern and always with a head injury or bite. Details will also be noted in the Incident Report that is sent home.

Major Injuries: If a child is seriously injured at preschool, the following steps are taken immediately:

- If the injury is life-threatening, staff will call 911 and notify family or other adult emergency contact.
- If the injury is not life-threatening, the family or adult named on the child's emergency card is contacted and requested to immediately take the child for medical care.
- If no designated adult can be reached, the site director and/or staff will contact your child's doctor for directives.
- An incident report will be completed by the staff and accompany your child home.

### **SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

#### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS**

Routinely scheduled fire, earthquake, evacuation and emergency drills are conducted at each preschool.

The JCCSF follows the emergency procedures developed by local and state agencies. We have equipped each preschool with emergency kits that include a flashlight, batteries, transistor radios, first aid supplies and additional supplies determined by our security staff. Each preschool site also stores nonperishable food supplies and water. There are always staff members who are currently certified in CPR and first aid.

**Fire Plan:** In the event of a fire, children will be evacuated to a safe space; families will be contacted if we are not able to safely return to the preschool site in a timely fashion. Each preschool has a designated location to bring the children in case of fire or other emergencies that require evacuation.

**Earthquake Plan:** Children learn earthquake safety measures through shelter-in-place drills that are conducted annually, including how to drop and cover, get under tables with their backs to windows, and hold on to a table leg while protecting their heads. If children are outside, they gather in a safe area of the play yard.

Following an earthquake, when it is safe, we will assemble in the most suitable area, account for all children and give care and comfort as needed. Staff will stay with children until a family or other authorized person arrives. We will assist children and families so that everyone can leave the premises as safely as possible.

We urge each family to make a written plan of exactly what you will do in case of an earthquake that occurs when you are in separate locations.

## **SECURITY**

The JCCSF is committed to providing a safe and secure facility. Our dedicated security team has systems in place that provide procedures for all security concerns. In addition, all staff are trained to remain alert, follow safety and security procedures, and report any concerns to the appropriate security official. Your child's safety and security are our number one priority.

As part of these safety measures, each site is accessible only with a designated access card and/or fingerprint scan. Please see the site-specific drop-down menus below for more information about access cards and/or fingerprint at your preschool site. As part of our overall security plan for the preschool, we will remove access to the schools between sessions, to specific cards when they are reported lost, or when a family leaves the school. If your school uses the card access system you may be asked for identification before access to the school is granted. The preschool and security staff are instructed to ask for ID from any guest whom they do not recognize or know by sight to be authorized to pick up a child.

Your children's safety is always our top priority. As we've communicated from time to time, we have a robust security plan, which was developed in cooperation with law enforcement and security professionals. Our ability to keep our security measures effective depends on your being part of the security team – your help and cooperation are essential. Here are a few things you can do to help make security as effective as possible:

- Please always use your access card and/or fingerprint when entering.
- Please do not share your access card with anyone who is not registered with your site as authorized to drop off or pick up your child. Make sure that adults who are authorized to pick up

your child have the access card or have their fingerprint access enrollment at the beginning of the school year.

- Please also make sure that adults who are authorized to pick up your child on your behalf know that they should be prepared to show their ID if asked.
- Please do not “hold the door” (or gate) to allow in other guests. We recognize that this may run counter to what is ordinarily considered polite, and we are asking for your understanding of this policy and support of one another in following it.
- If you have forgotten your access card, or there is an issue with your fingerprint access, please do not ask other families to let you in. Instead, please speak directly with the preschool staff.
- Be sure to close the door or gate after you enter and exit.

And as always, you can help us through your vigilance. If you observe anything that makes you feel suspicious or concerned, please let the staff know right away. We are continually revisiting and revising our safety procedures with the JCCSF security team and with our preschool staff in order to provide a safe and secure facility. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our security, please contact your site director who will put you in touch with our Head of Security.

### **SMOKE/POOR AIR QUALITY**

At the JCCSF we use and continually monitor AIR NOW as our gauge to measure the AQI. It is the site that the SF Department of Public Health recommends that schools and other businesses use. We never want to close our schools and really consider that action a last resort. Once the AQI gets above 200 we lean towards closure if it will minimize the need to be outside.

Our considerations for a closure are many:

- The need to provide timely notification to staff and families early in the morning, or preferably, the day before. If we can decide before people leave their homes, that is a consideration.
- We consider the safety of both children and staff and consider both the interior air quality in our facilities but also the expected pathway people take to get to the JCCSF. The environment in the classrooms can be controlled through keeping windows and doors closed and using a filtering system. The challenge is that we also consider the impact on staff of coming to work in an unhealthy environment as well as staff and children standing outside during drop-off and pick-up.
- We have different decision timelines – determining if we are going to open school for the day and then if we are going to keep the school open once children have arrived. The opening decision has a greater impact on staff and is more driven by the AQI. Keeping the schools open during the day will have a different decision point since the children are in the classrooms but we still have to account for staff going home and standing outside during pick-up time.
- If preschool is in session at a time when the AQI requires closure, we will notify families and provide care until you can pick up your children.
- When we operate our schools (or any other public facing activity) we have staff that must work outside, like security or facility staff. A closure will reduce the need for our staff to be outside and this is a consideration we take into account.

We will use the following criteria:

**YELLOW** – Unusually sensitive people (51 – 100 AQI) should consider reducing prolonged outdoor recreation.

- ECE minimizes outdoor activity.
- Fans/Filters turned on.

**ORANGE** – Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101 – 150 AQI): limited or no outside time; we may close exterior doors and windows and use fans and air filters to circulate air.

- ECE keeps children inside.
- Doors/windows are closed.
- Fans/Filters on.

**RED** – Unhealthy (151 – 200 AQI): school closure possible based on forecast, duration of AQI levels and other environmental considerations.

- ECE closure monitored.

**PURPLE** (or higher) – Very Unhealthy (200+ AQI): school closure likely until AQI is consistently below 150.

- After 2 hours of AQI of 200+ school closure considered.
- After 2 hours of AQI at 250+ school is closed until AQI is under 200 for two hours.

Families and staff will be notified before 10:00 pm or between 6:00 – 7:00 am.

Site Directors will contact staff and families using email, phone trees and other messaging applications. The JCCSF is in the process of implementing an organization-wide emergency communications system and protocol.

## **MANDATED REPORTERS**

In the state of California, all professionals who care for children are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and, as such, are required by law to report “reasonable suspicion” of child abuse to either a law enforcement agency or a county child protective agency. This law was created to protect children and to provide services for families. Child abuse and/or neglect are any actions or inactions that result in the harm or potential risk of harm to the child and include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and verbal abuse and physical neglect. Child abuse must be reported when a legally mandated reporter, such as a member of our teaching staff, has knowledge of actions, or observes a child in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment, and is lead to suspect child abuse.

The JCCSF Claude & Louise Rosenberg Early Childhood Education Program staff is experienced and trained in assessing situations that may lead them to make a child abuse referral, which include, but are not limited to, the following: physical indicators of abuse, behavioral/psychological indicators displayed by the child during their time at the preschool, environmental problems, families’ suspicions and statements made by the child. When a staff member observes and determines that there is sufficient cause to suspect a child is being abused or neglected, California state law mandates that we report our concerns to Child Protective Services (CPS) of the San Francisco Department of Social Services. CPS will determine whether this is a reportable incident that requires follow-up investigation by their agency.

State law further mandates that families may not be notified first to prevent possible concealment should concerns be legitimate.

JCCSF ECE staff are not allowed to contact minors outside of the program; communication with the participant's parents is permitted if initiated by the parent.

## **MANAGING THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **ABSENCES**

If your child is absent from preschool because of an illness or a vacation, please contact your classroom via the online communication system, email or phone. You may call the main number or your classroom directly, if applicable. Messages may be left 24 hours a day on the main telephone line.

### **SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT PRACTICES**

Every child MUST be signed in and out each day by an adult who has been previously and officially authorized to do so by the family. Each site has different styles of sign-in, please adhere to your site-specific requirements. Families will be contacted and asked to return to the center if a child has not been signed-in or signed-out. State licensing sets and enforces this policy in their yearly site visits. Both the full signature (initials are not sufficient, and the signature must be legible) and the time of sign-in/sign-out must be included. This is a safety precaution. In case of emergency, the sign-in sheets enable us to know which children are in our care. PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO SIGN IN OR OUT.

If for any reason your child is being picked up by anyone not previously authorized, please put that information in writing with your signature and inform the office. No emailed authorizations will be accepted. If there is a question, the person signing out the child will be asked to show a picture ID, which will be checked by staff. Families are strongly encouraged to keep this list updated as we are not allowed to let a child go home with someone not on this list.

### **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

Each preschool has a specific routine for drop-off and pick-up. Please see the site-specific drop-down menu below for the details for your preschool site.

### **CLOTHING**

Children should come to preschool in clothing that is appropriate for the day's activities and weather. Given the unpredictable climate in San Francisco, we suggest that children be sent to preschool with a sweater or light jacket even on hot days. We go outside on rainy days, so please send your child in appropriate rain gear and boots on these days or you may keep a set at school. Children should be dressed in clothes that allow them to be creative and give them the freedom to explore their world. Preschool activities are very messy; clothing should be appropriate so that children can work freely with all types of materials, such as water, sand, dirt, mud, paint, glue and clay. Children are offered smocks when participating in messy activities although they are not required to wear one to participate.

**Shoes:** Children should wear shoes that are appropriate for active play. Children are not required to wear shoes outside on the property at each site.

**Extra Clothes:** Each child should have at least one (1) full change of clothes (including underwear and socks), labelled with first and last name, stored in their cubby. Please check your child's extra clothes periodically to make sure they still fit and are seasonally appropriate. Teachers will remind families when extra clothes are needed.

## **FOOD & NUTRITION**

### **JEWISH KASHRUT FOOD POLICY**

We ask you to observe our Jewish kashrut (kosher) policy by not sending pork or shellfish in your child's lunch. All other foods are acceptable. Further, all of our preschools are NUT FREE, so please do not send your child to school with nuts in any form in their lunch.

Lunch and snack are not only times to eat, but also an opportunity for children to socialize with their friends and engage in meaningful conversations and reflections with their teachers. Each preschool serves a morning snack and full day programs also offer an afternoon snack. These snacks are simple and nutritious, such as whole wheat bread, bagels, crackers, fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods, as well as water. Each snack is required by the State licensing regulations to offer at least two food groups. We make every effort to order healthy food and will order organic if possible, within our budget.

We ask that families send their children to preschool with a nutritious lunch, as well as a water bottle to be left onsite for the week. Please remember to bring the water bottle home over the weekend to be thoroughly cleaned, and then bring it back again on Monday. Please do not include sugary items (including juice) in your child's lunch. Families should note that teachers will not monitor the order in which children eat their lunch, if you prefer a child not to eat something until "last" we ask that you leave it at home. And as always, please label all items with your child's first and last name.

We ask you to observe our Jewish kashrut (kosher) policy, which means no pork or shellfish. All preschools are NUT FREE, so please do not send your child to school with nuts in any form in their lunch. This is subject to additional allergies depending on the needs of the children.

In an effort to develop children's self-help skills, please provide small pieces of your child's favorite foods. Leftovers in tightly lidded plastic containers or thermoses, sandwiches, yogurt, macaroni and cheese, cheese sticks, fruits and vegetables are some suggestions for lunches. We are unable to accommodate heating up or refrigerating items in your child's lunch. Please plan accordingly with a thermos or ice pack.

**In consideration of the health and safety of all children, please adhere to the following program food safety policy:**

**For children who are under 4 years old: grapes, mini carrots and full-size carrots need to be cut into small pieces in your child's lunch. We will not serve intact grapes, raw carrots or popcorn to the children in these groups.**

We request that families follow this practice when bringing in birthday snacks or any other food items for the children in these preschool classrooms.



## **BIRTHDAYS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

**In-Class Celebrations:** For birthdays or other celebrations, we invite you to bring a special snack for your child's class, please let the teachers know ahead of time when and what you'll be bringing. We encourage you to send healthy food, such as fruit and vegetables, bagels and cream cheese, fruit breads like banana or pumpkin, or similar treats. Additionally, please check with your child's teacher regarding allergies in the classroom before bringing outside food. Please do not bring any foods that contain nuts, as our preschools are NUT FREE.

Please do not send in goodie bags or plan on hosting a party inside the classroom. We will honor children on their special day but all birthday party activities and gifts should take place outside of school hours.

## **NAP/REST NEEDS**

Any child napping at one of our preschools needs a sheet and blanket, or a small child's bedding/sleeping bag which must fit inside their cubby. Small pillows are optional. This includes any child enrolled for the full day at any of our programs. All items need to be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. Bedding will be sent home each Friday and should be laundered and then brought back to preschool on Monday.

State licensing requires each child enrolled in a full day program to rest on their individual cot for 30 minutes. Children who aren't asleep after 30 minutes will be permitted to draw and read on their cot for an additional 30 minutes after which they will be permitted to get up and engage in quiet indoor activities.

Out of respect for the child, teachers cannot accommodate individual requests to keep children "awake" during this time.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are intended to expand children's knowledge of the world around them and their place within it and provide them with experiences outside of the school environment.

Throughout the year, individual classrooms may take walks in the neighborhood and trips into the community. Field trips that require public transportation will require an additional permission slip beyond what was included in the registration packet.

Families or other adults may be asked to accompany our teachers and children on field trips. All such participation will be arranged with the classroom teachers.

Responsibilities for adults on field trips include:

- Supervision, facilitation, and attention to children's needs
- Support for teacher, and responsiveness to teacher requests
- Assistance in maintaining safety and order

## TOILET LEARNING

Our ECE program supports children in all phases of toilet learning and follows these guidelines. Please refer to these guidelines as you start to work with your child on toileting. Please partner with your child's teachers for this process to be successful.

**Diapers:** We do not require that children learn to use the toilet for participation in our program. If your child is in diapers, we request that you please bring disposable diapers and wipes for your child. Your child will be changed/checked every two hours throughout the day, teachers will keep a record of these changes.

**Toilet Learning:** Families of children who are learning to use the toilet should work with teachers to establish consistency between home and school. Here are our guidelines for toilet learning:

When is a child ready for toilet learning? There is no set age at which toilet learning should begin. The right time depends on your child's physical and psychological development. Between 18 and 24 months, children often start to show signs of being ready, but some children may not be ready until 30 months or older. Your child must also be emotionally ready. They need to be willing, and not fighting the process or showing signs of fear. If your child resists strongly, it is best to wait for a while. It is best to be relaxed about toilet learning and avoid becoming upset. Remember that no one can control when and where a child urinates or has a bowel movement except the child. Try to avoid a power struggle. Children at the toilet learning age are becoming aware of their individuality. They look for ways to test their limits. Some children may do this by holding back bowel movements.

Keep in mind that regardless of the age at which children start learning to use the toilet, most achieve full bowel control between 3 and 5 years of age. When the time is right, the child will show clear signs of readiness. What families and teachers must do is trust them and be patient. When the child is truly ready, physically, mentally, emotionally and socially toilet training will happen rapidly.

Adults need to remember that toilet training is a learning process. No amount of punishment or reward can make a child go to the bathroom. There are certain battles that we can win but toileting isn't one of them. Therefore, our flexibility and patience are the key to successful toilet-training.

School is such an exciting and distracting place that, when families begin toilet learning with the child, we suggest the first big push comes over a weekend at home. After two promising days at home, we try it at school. Remember that learning to use the toilet is something families do with a child, not to them. The adult's commitment to being sensitive, paying attention and planning ahead are vital parts of this process.

- Look for most of the following signs that your child is ready:
- Your child stays dry at least 2 hours at a time during the day
- Your child is dry in the morning and/or after nap
- Bowel movements become regular and predictable
- Facial expressions, posture, or words reveal that your child is about to urinate or have a bowel movement
- Your child can follow simple instructions
- Your child can walk to and from the bathroom

- Your child can undress self (pull own pants up and down and pull-ups or underwear up and down)
- Your child seems uncomfortable with soiled diapers and wants to be changed
- Your child asks to use the toilet or potty chair; shows an interest in flushing
- Your child asks to wear grown-up underwear

Stress in the home may make learning this important new skill more difficult. Sometimes it is a good idea to delay toilet learning in the following situations:

- Your family has just moved or will move in the near future
- You are expecting a baby or you have recently had a new baby
- There is a major illness, a recent death, or some other family crisis

*However, if your child is learning how to use the toilet without problems, there is no need to stop because of these situations. Keep in mind that regression is normal and children will resume their learning as long as we're all patient, calm, reassuring and supportive.*

General Guidelines we follow for Toilet Learning:

**Timing:** Children are observant, and most youngsters know what a toilet is used for long before they learn to use it. To help the child make the connection between the toilet and the urge to go, we will suggest a try whenever a bowel movement is expected- for instance, after snacks or lunch. A couple of minutes is enough time for a child to sit on the toilet; if nothing is accomplished, the child can get up and try again at another time. All children, toilet-learning are not, are encouraged to use the bathroom every 2 hours.

**Process:** We start with getting the pants down. It's best to dress a child in easy-to-remove clothing so they are able to pull down and pull up with no or little help. We then move on to sitting still on the toilet seat so the child is able to concentrate. It's important to follow the child's lead, taking our time and praising each success along the way without overdoing it. Accidents are common and when they do occur, clean up matter of factly and then move on to something else.

**Cleaning up:** All children must be taught careful wiping techniques before they can toilet on their own. Girls are taught to wipe from front to back to prevent bacteria from entering the urethra and causing an infection. All children and teachers need to wash hands with soap and water after every visit to the toilet.

Some children become anxious about flushing. They may be frightened by the running water or troubled by the thought that a part of their bodies is being flushed away. We try to explain that we need to flush so the toilet is clean for the next person who might use this toilet. If the child still seems upset, we will flush it later after the child has left the bathroom. It's important to remember that bowel movement should never be referred to as "dirty" or "yucky" because the child may feel demoralized by such comments.

**Accidents:** Accidents are no big deal. Like every new skill a child learns, toileting requires time for experimentation, practice and learning. We keep the mop handy and try to stay outdoors or on vinyl floors. The flooding stage doesn't last too long, especially if the child still wears a diaper for naps. Children are sometimes very distressed over accidents and need adult reassurance that they can learn

this, just as they learned to climb a new slide or hook wooden trains together. Cleaning the floor and letting the child change their own clothes helps them to feel they can manage their own needs, even when things don't quite go to plan. We help your child by letting them know we have faith in their abilities to help themselves.

### **BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME TO SCHOOL**

We provide a variety of wonderful educational materials at school. [We ask that toys and other objects from home remain at home except as discussed below.](#) Please be mindful that any time items are brought to school, there is the risk of loss or damage.

The JCCSF is not responsible for replacing lost or damaged items.

**Project Work:** Children may bring in special family artifacts, photos, items from nature, souvenirs from a trip or other objects that relate to their classroom project work. We offer many opportunities for the children to express themselves and engage in dialogue and exchange with their peers. Our educators will guide the children to talk about their special objects in meeting times and small-group times and teachers will notify families via email about these requests.

**Books:** We try to create classroom libraries with classics of children's picture books and literature. We welcome your additions but ask that you enjoy Disney, superhero and movie or TV show titles at home.

**"Lovies":** Children may want a transitional object from home and so they may bring a special stuffed toy, blanket or any small item which will comfort them while at school. We suggest families label these special items and consider buying a second one just for school.

### **LOST & FOUND**

Please label any and every item that you send to school with your child's name. When we find unlabeled articles, we place them in the Lost and Found container at the preschool. If your child has lost something, please check the container. Unclaimed items in the Lost and Found will be donated.

### **NO-DOG POLICY**

Based on the State of California Community Care Licensing Division requirement, NO dogs will be allowed in any JCCSF preschool site at any time. Those families who bring their dogs to a preschool at arrival or dismissal time must keep them in the car or tied up away from the perimeter of the preschool. No dogs may be tied up in the driveway at the Helen Diller Family Preschool, in front of the brick wall at the Rosenberg Center or near the front gate of the Brotherhood Way Preschool. This excludes service animals.

### **TRANSITIONING TO PRESCHOOL**

For preschool children of all ages, transition to preschool is a process, and each child has their own unique timing in making a comfortable adjustment. We also recognize that this transition is often difficult for parents and children. All staff members are available to assist families, as well as children, during the beginning days of preschool. Please ask for assistance or advice any time!

Our educators will work closely with each family, guiding families to make the transition to preschool a positive and successful experience. Teachers may ask families of children new to our program to stay with their child at preschool for a period that is determined on an individual basis. During this process, teachers will direct families regarding timing and appropriate interactions with their child, taking into consideration the needs of the child and the needs of the group. Families and teachers will work together to implement a plan for a successful separation.

Families of two-year-olds may be provided with a transition schedule prior to the start of the school year. This schedule will include shorter visits with smaller groups of children on the first few days of school. (Helen Diller Campus only)

While some children are ready to say goodbye and are comfortable letting you leave on the first day; for most children, however, the process is more gradual. Because we understand that the process of comfortable separation is not “one-size-fits-all”, we encourage you to follow these recommendations:

**Model for your child how to handle the separation process.** Your own feelings are probably the most important factor in how your child handles separation. The more relaxed, calm and confident you are the better for your child.

**Prepare your child before entering the classroom** by discussing what they might like to do, who they will see, etc. Ask them these questions –this helps them to visualize the experience more than just listening to you; and helps make it more concrete.

**Send your child to school with a favorite stuffed animal or book** – this brings some of home into school.

If you stay in the classroom, please **sit at the children’s level and encourage your child’s participation in all school activities** by modeling your own participation.

**Encourage your child to go to the teachers with any needs or questions.** This will help them to know and trust their new teacher.

**Show your child where you will be while he or she is in class.** It helps children to have a picture of where you are.

**Always say goodbye.** This is very important! It may be tempting to sneak out when your child is settled, but your child needs to trust that separation is a safe experience. Sneaking out creates great anxiety for your child and always prolongs the separation process. Create a special routine that will help your child prepare for your goodbye. Also, let a teacher know you are leaving before stepping out.

**Communicate frequently with your child’s teacher** and the Director. This will help you to feel comfortable with the separation process

The most effective approach to the first days of preschool is to bring your child into the classroom and stay until he or she has had a chance to explore a bit and, preferably, has found an appealing activity. Then tell your child that you are leaving and will be back to take him or her home. Give your child a warm hug and kiss and a cheerful “goodbye,” and then walk confidently out the door. For almost all children, the most difficult part of this transition is watching their family leave, so saying a quick goodbye is the best way to support your child.

Children who attend Visiting Day and our back-to-school playdate the Sunday before school often have a more successful transition into the program.

#### **ITEMS TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL**

- Water bottle
- Family photo 4x6 – for the classroom to post (emailed to teachers)
- Extra clothes
- Sunscreen
- “Lovey”
- Nap items
- Diapers/wipes if applicable
- Lunch

**Don’t forget to label everything!** [www.namebubbles.com](http://www.namebubbles.com)

#### **FLOW OF THE SCHOOL DAY** (varies by site)

- Welcoming Families/Morning Exploration
- Morning Meeting/Snack/Facilitated Small Group Learning/Outside Play/ Specialists
- Lunch and Transition to Rest
- Rest/Nap offered
- Afternoon Meeting/Snack/Focused Explorations/Specialists
- Outside Play and Exploration

#### **NAVIGATING THE KINDERGARTEN PROCESS**

When you are ready to navigate the kindergarten process, we are here to partner with you every step of the way. There will be numerous options for you to consider, public, independent and parochial. Many families decide to pursue several of these options.

We work closely with all families to support the kindergarten process. We ask families to work closely with your Director, Assistant Director, and teachers because they know your child best and they will guide you with the initial steps. Additionally, we offer several excellent Kindergarten Workshops throughout the school year to provide you with information on both the public and private school application process, tours, child interviews, and the acceptance process. The workshops will also include panel discussions with families of children in public, parochial and private schools, providing an overview of their experiences and recommendations. We will send out information about the workshops prior to the start of the school year. These offerings can also be found online via the Kindergarten Resource page.

Should you choose to apply to one of the Bay Area private schools, one of the prerequisites is that the preschool completes a kindergarten evaluation form on your child’s behalf. This evaluation form is prepared by JCCSF ECE staff (classroom team and administrators partner on this project).

The process to request a kindergarten evaluation is as follows:

**Fall Process: September to Mid-November**

1. Families receive a kindergarten evaluation form from the prospective school or online from the school website.
2. Families turn in kindergarten evaluation form(s) to the main office with the top portion completed by a family or guardian, including an original signature, as soon as possible so teachers can have time to prepare these thoughtfully.
3. Each preschool office sends completed evaluations directly to the prospective school.
4. When following the fall process, all kindergarten evaluations will be received by the prospective schools on or before the first week of January, or in accordance with earlier deadlines. Sibling and legacy kindergarten evaluations must be turned in two weeks prior to the prospective school's deadline.
5. If you are requesting a kindergarten evaluation during the fall process, a member of your child's teaching team will fill out this document on your child's behalf.

**Out-of-Cycle Process: After January**

1. Families receive a kindergarten evaluation form from the prospective school or online from the school website.
2. Families turn in kindergarten evaluation form(s) to the office with the top portion completed by family or guardian, including an original signature.
3. We will submit the recommendation directly to the prospective school within two weeks of the date we receive the request, not including any school closures (holidays, summer breaks, etc.). If you are requesting an out-of-cycle kindergarten evaluation we will do our best to make it possible, but cannot guarantee, that members of your child's teaching team will contribute directly to the recommendation.

**ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**REQUIRED REGISTRATION FORMS FOR EACH SCHOOL YEAR**

All families registered in our ECE program receive an enrollment packet that includes the following forms required by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division and the JCCSF.

These forms must be completed in full and returned to your preschool office before your child may start the school year:

- Identification and Emergency Information
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Personal Rights Form
- Child's Pre-Admission Health History – Family's Report
- Physician's Report

- Notification of Families' Rights
- Family and Social History Form
- Transportation and Field Trip Permission and Release of Liability
- Allergy Information
- Sunscreen Waiver Form
- Outside Employment of JCCSF Staff – Family Acknowledgement
- Caregiver Background Check Process

Please let your preschool office know of any changes during the school year in address, phone numbers, allergy information or other important information. It is **extremely important that your child's emergency card be kept current** (including any changes in persons permitted to drop off or pick up your child).

## **ENROLLMENT CONTRACTS & FEES**

**Returning Families:** Each returning family must complete an Enrollment Agreement and a non-refundable deposit. This enrollment contract is generally sent out electronically in February.

A child's place in preschool cannot be held unless paid in full or unless the regular monthly fees are paid. If your child is enrolled in a JCCSF preschool, a requested leave of absence for any reason will not hold your child's place, unless you continue to pay the regular full tuition. Siblings of current families will be enrolled alongside returning families.

**New Applications:** We welcome families and children into our ECE program each year during our fall application season. Admissions to our three preschools are managed centrally by our ECE Business Office and the site directors. We are also able to bring new children into our program on a space-available basis at other points during the school year.

More information about admissions policies and procedures is available from our ECE Office and site administrators.

A combination of the following criteria, not in any particular order, may be used by the site director to determine admission to the program and class placement:

- Age and gender of child
- Siblings: JCCSF preschools have a policy that siblings of children previously or presently enrolled in the program have priority for admission
- Post-tour questionnaire
- Center Membership and participation in JCCSF activities, classes and programs
- Involvement in the Jewish community and support of the JCCSF's mission and goals

## **WITHDRAWING FROM THE ECE PROGRAM**

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**



We recognize that occasionally families will need to leave preschool prior to the end of the school year. The withdrawal process is indicated in the Enrollment Agreement that all families complete when accepting a space. As stated in the Enrollment Agreement, withdrawal after July 1 requires a 30-day written notice sent by email to the ECE business office at [preschool@jccsf.org](mailto:preschool@jccsf.org). The \$600 deposit is not refundable regardless of the time or reason for the child's withdrawal.

If you are paying by installment, you will be responsible to pay, and agree to pay, the next two scheduled monthly installment payments after the date of the withdrawal notice is received. These payments will automatically be drawn from your bank account through the bank draft plan.

If you notify the ECE office that you will be withdrawing in writing on or before the 15th of the current month, you will be responsible for the installment payment due on the 15th of the month. If you notify us after the 15th of the month, you will be responsible for installment payment due on the 15th of the following two months, as the installment payment for the current month will have already been drafted from your account.

If you pay in full, the JCCSF will refund to you all prepaid, but unapplied amounts after deducting an amount equal to the amount that would be due if you paid by monthly installments.

The JCCSF ECE program maintains a policy of NO REFUNDS. However, if you apply for financial assistance and the final award does not permit you to enroll in the program, your enrollment deposit will be refunded.

#### **TERMINATION FROM THE ECE PROGRAM**

It is a rare occurrence that a child is asked to leave the program. However, the following circumstances may lead to termination after discussions have occurred between the ECE program and the family:

- Failure to meet financial obligations
- Failure to comply with school policies as outlined in the Family Handbook
- Refusal to cooperate with staff or school administration when health and/or safety of any child or staff is jeopardized
- Repeated hostile or abusive behavior toward staff or children
- Inability of the school to meet the physical and/or psychological needs of a child or family

If, after school begins, the site director requests that your child be withdrawn, the JCCSF reserves the right to not issue a refund.

#### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Jewish Community Center of San Francisco and its facilities are open to the entire community. We have a scholarship fund designated to provide opportunities for those families unable to pay full fees to participate at reduced rates. Financial assistance requests are handled confidentially. Awards are made in the spring, after a family has completed the admissions process and submitted a financial aid application and deposit. Awards are granted by a financial aid committee, which is comprised of

administrators and accounting personnel of the JCCSF. The JCCSF Early Childhood Education Program relies on community and foundation fundraising to meet the budget requirements for a program of this stature.

### **LICENSING STATEMENT**

The California Department of Social Services (DSS) licenses each of our JCCSF preschools. DSS has the authority to interview clients and inspect client and facility records without prior consent. The agency has the authority to observe the physical condition of your children, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement. You have the right to call or write to this licensing agency if fault is found in the operation of this facility or the treatment of your child.

The telephone number for Community Care Licensing is 650.266.8899.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Claude & Louise Rosenberg Early Childhood Education Program**

3200 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94118

Katie Quinn

Chief Program Officer of Family Life Programming

415.276.1513 | [kquinn@jccsf.org](mailto:kquinn@jccsf.org)

Rabbi Batshir Torchio

Senior Jewish Educator

415.292.1210 | [btorchio@jccsf.org](mailto:btorchio@jccsf.org)

#### **Brotherhood Way Preschool (License #380500086)**

655 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco, CA 94132

Fax: 415.333.4682 | [brotherhoodway@jccsf.org](mailto:brotherhoodway@jccsf.org)

Edna Vaknin

Site Director

415.802.1533 | evaknin@jccsf.org

Arianna Carino

Administrative Assistant

415.333.4289 | acarino@jccsf.org

**Helen Diller Family Preschool (License #3884001263)**

3200 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94118

Fax: 415.276.1553 | helendiller@jccsf.org

Karla Cianci

Site Director

415.276.1572 | kcianci@jccsf.org

Karyn Kahn

Assistant Site Director

415.697.3437 | kkahn@jccsf.org

Carly Freeman

Administrator

415.276.1538 | cfreeman@jccsf.org

**Rosenberg Early Childhood Center (License #380504700)**

325 Arguello Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94118

Fax: 415.386.1149 | rosenberg@jccsf.org

Kelly Dotson

Senior Site Director

415.386.4990 | kdotson@jccsf.org

Mo Graham

Assistant Site Director

415.697.3434 | mgraham@jccsf.org

## **APPENDIX**

### **UNDERSTANDING JEWISH HOLIDAYS AT THE JCCSF**

Students, families, and JCCSF staff engage in all of these holidays in creative and expansive ways, both in the classroom and in the broader community. Reggio Emilia and Jewish wisdom help inspire and guide the way we “do Jewish” joyfully at the JCCSF.

#### **ROSH HASHANAH: REFLECT & RENEW**

Rosh Hashanah, literally “the head of the year,” is the start of a 10-day period of personal reflection called the “Days of Awe,” which ends with the most solemn (and yet strangely uplifting) day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur (“Day of Atonement”).

Rosh Hashanah arrives with much fanfare. The shofar (a musical instrument usually made from the horn of a ram) is blown every day for a full month before the holiday starts. The piercing cry of the shofar begs us to rethink the past year, release our regrets and set new intentions. Its call goes out to arouse us to the inspiring possibility of change.

One of Rosh Hashanah’s core concepts is teshuvah, which literally means “turning,” as in, turning away from negative habits or attitudes. Through self-evaluation, discoveries are made, and one begins “doing teshuvah,” which requires action. We reach out to old friends and family for a check-in, and apologies are made where needed with the hope that forgiveness is granted.

#### **YOM KIPPUR: FAST & FORGIVE**

Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, is observed 10 days after Rosh Hashanah – the holiday that initiates the Jewish New Year. It is the culmination of an intense period of self-evaluation, restitution and renewal. It is also a fast day; and as such, it is one of the few truly ascetic Jewish practices. In denying the body, however, one is encouraged to take extra care of the soul.

#### **SUKKOT: DWELL IN JOY**

Sukkot is a Jewish holiday celebrating the fall harvest and commemorating the 40 years of wilderness wandering that the ancient Israelites endured after escaping slavery in Egypt.

Sukkot begins five days after Yom Kippur and lasts a full week. It marks a change in the communal mood from the solemnity of Yom Kippur to “the time of our greatest joy” (as the holiday is also known). Some of the joy is a response to the catharsis that Yom Kippur is intended to bring. The focus during Sukkot is on the celebration of life, nature’s bounty and gathering in community.

The primary ritual of Sukkot is the construction of a sukkah (temporary hut) to eat – or live – in during the weeklong festival. Whether or not you have a sukkah, the custom of inviting guests to share time and/or a meal is an integral part of the holiday.

### **SIMCHAT TORAH: UNWIND & RETELL**

Capping off the weeklong celebration of Sukkot is a separate holiday, Simchat Torah. The name means “Rejoicing in Torah,” and it is a “modern” holiday (from the Middle Ages). In its narrowest meaning, Torah refers to the Five Books of Moses. Traditionally these books are read in weekly installments over the course of a year, and this holiday marks the completion of the cycle (and the immediate launch into the beginning all over again!).

Simchat Torah is typically celebrated by parading Torah scrolls around the synagogue (and sometimes into the streets) accompanied by singing and dancing.

### **HANUKKAH: SHARE THE LIGHT**

Today, Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and nights at the beginning of winter (in the Western Hemisphere). The focus is on bringing light into darkness – literally and metaphorically – and the importance of fighting for your beliefs and values.

Hanukkah traditions include nightly candle lighting using a special nine-branched menorah (hanukkiyah). One candle (called the shamash) is set apart because it is there to help light the others. Starting with one lit candle, a candle is added each night until all eight are lit.

Other Hanukkah traditions include communal singing, playing games with a spinning top called a dreidel, eating fried foods (in honor of the miracle of the oil!) such as potato pancakes, called latkes, and giving small gifts to children.

### **TU BISHVAT: NOURISH YOUR ROOTS**

Being attuned to the seasonal changes in the natural world is part of the Jewish holiday cycle. Just as the last holiday celebrated – Hanukkah – marked the depths of winter, Tu Bishvat is a Jewish holiday that draws our attention to the first signs of spring (in the Western Hemisphere).

In Israel, Tu Bishvat signals the end of the heavy winter rains. Sap rises in trees and the first almond blossoms appear. These signs of rebirth indicate the beginning of spring and a new cycle in the life of fruit trees.

Over time, this date, with meaning only for farmers in Israel, became a minor holiday for Jews everywhere. It is a day celebrating the Jewish people’s connection to the Land of Israel and to the trees that grow all over the green earth. Tu Bishvat is celebrated by planting trees, eating fruit and nuts that grow in Israel and holding a Tu Bishvat “Seder” (paralleling the ritual meal that is held on Passover, called a seder), with four cups of wine and an opportunity to sing, discuss and, of course, eat.

It is also appropriate to enjoy trees in other ways, such as taking a walk through a forest or park or learning about trees and how to nourish and protect them.

### **PURIM: MAKE SOME NOISE**

The Torah (Hebrew Bible) is an anthology that contains works in many different genres, and the story of Esther, which is read at Purim, itself reads like a fairy tale. The main characters show up ready for adventure: the brave queen (Esther), the ditzy and drunken king (Achashverosh), the utterly evil villain (Haman), and his nemesis, the clever and cool good guy (Mordechai).

Celebrations of Purim often include costumes and masks (Esther had to hide her identity as a Jew when she became queen), noisemakers (to drown out the name of Haman), public readings of the Book of Esther, gifts of money to the poor and gifts of baked goods to neighbors.

Over the years, Purim carnivals have become standard fare as family-friendly entertainment for the holiday.

### **PESACH (PASSOVER): REIMAGINE FREEDOM**

Passover is called by two names: Pesach and Hag Ha'Aviv. Pesach – literally “passed over” – recounts the miraculous and history-altering liberation story of the Israelite people from Egyptian slavery. Hag Ha'Aviv – “the spring holiday” – indicates the triumphant return of the agricultural season’s bounty and beauty, held back by many months of cold weather.

Whether in the realm of narrative (Pesach) or the natural (Hag ha'Aviv), Passover invites us to witness the breaking free of the positive potential of our world.

The hallmark of the holiday has become a festive ritual meal called a seder. On the first two nights, family and friends gather, in homes, synagogues, JCCs and pop-up restaurants, to be inspired by the Haggadah, an ancient and ever-expanding compilation of texts and songs, to have an intentional conversation about the Exodus from Egypt and the meaning of freedom now in our lives.

### **SHAVUOT: REWIND & RETELL**

Exactly seven weeks after Passover, the next major event on the Jewish calendar is the holiday of Shavuot (“The Feast of Weeks” in English, a.k.a. “Pentecost” in Greek), a celebration of the spring bounty – new fruit, fresh dairy products and an abundance of flowers. Shavuot has ancient agricultural roots in the celebration of the late spring grain harvest in Israel and was later linked to a climactic event in the Biblical narrative when Moses received the 10 Commandments on the top of Mount Sinai.

In our time, the most prevalent Shavuot activity is to study Torah all night – from dusk to dawn – alone or in groups. This kabalistic/mystical rite is called Tikkun Leyl Shavuot.

It is also customary to read the Biblical story of Ruth during the holiday, probably because the story takes place during the spring harvest in Israel and Ruth’s many righteous deeds are meant to inspire readers to recommit to their own relationship to Torah. There is a long-standing tradition of eating dairy products (cheesecake and cheese crepes, called blintzes, are particularly popular in North America).

## **BROTHERHOOD WAY PRESCHOOL**

### **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

Brotherhood Way Preschool opens at 8:00 am for children who are enrolled in the year-round program. The preschool day begins at 9:00 am for the 9-month program, after the classroom has been prepared and the teaching staff is ready for the children's arrival. Families bring children to the classroom to hang up coats and deposit lunch boxes. Staff will be greeting children and guiding them to a morning classroom experience. If you have a brief question or important information to share about your child, please write it in the daily notebook for the teacher near the sign-in sheet. Teachers are available to either return phone calls or set up special conferences with families after 1:30 pm.

Dismissal time for the 9-Month Program is 1:30 pm. Full Year Program provides care until 6:00 pm. Families need to come into the preschool by 5:50 pm to have enough time to gather their children's belongings before leaving the facility. It is extremely important to both your child and the school that you arrive on time for pick-up. Please note that any pick-up after pick-up time will be subject to a late fee of \$1 per minute that the family is late.

We request that families leave the classroom promptly, as the rooms are needed for the full-day program. The playground is available only to children (along with staff) enrolled in the full-day program.

Short-term parking is available at Lake Merced Church of Christ and Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, west of the preschool on Brotherhood Way during the drop off and pick-up times.

### **SCHOOL ACCESS**

The main gate at Brotherhood Way is accessible only with a coded Employee Badge which will grant access to the school from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm for teaching staff. The access of this badge will be removed whenever the badge is lost, stolen, or the employee is no longer working at Brotherhood Way Preschool. Whenever an employee badge is lost or stolen it must be reported to school and JCCSF security management so that the badge access can be removed and a new employee badge can be made. If a lost badge is found before a new one is made, access can be restored to the old badge without issue.

At the beginning of the school year, each family will be given two badges (also referred to as keycards) for their use to enter the school grounds from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Families may request an additional keycard from the school administrative assistant should they need one. If a keycard is reported lost, please direct the reporting party to the school administrative staff so that the lost keycard can be deactivated and a new one can be requested if desired.

**If you forget your access card, please be prepared to show your photo ID to the security guard at the main gate before access is granted to the school.**

## **HELEN DILLER FAMILY PRESCHOOL**

### **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

Helen Diller Family Preschool begins at 9:00 am. Families are assigned a drive-through time between 8:45 – 9:10 am. AM Care is available at 8:10 am but families need to bring children directly into the school to drop off. The school day ends at 3:00 pm with drive-through assigned times from 2:45 – 3:15 pm. Afternoon PM Care runs from 3:00 – 4:55 pm. You are always welcome to walk your child into school, beginning at 8:45 am for the AM program, or 2:45 pm for the PM program.

The morning preschool day ends at 3:00 pm and the afternoon program ends at 5:00 pm. Please note that any pick-up after these times will be subject to a late fee of \$1 per minute that the family is late.

Instructions for drive-through are posted on the online communication app and available in the preschool office. Please be sure to review these instructions carefully, as each class has specific drop-off and pick-up times and locations.

**If you are using the Walnut Street drive-through area during pick-up or drop-off, either on foot or in a vehicle, you may only enter from Walnut Street.** Exiting by vehicle is made by a right turn onto California Street, while pedestrians may exit either onto Walnut Street or onto California Street.

### **SCHOOL ACCESS**

All families will be enrolled in the fingerprint access system on either Visiting day or their first day of school. This enrollment will be conducted by security staff and school administrative staff members. There are three different access points to the preschool: the second-floor preschool wing, the third-floor preschool wing, and the gate at drive-through off Walnut Street. Fingerprint access will be operational during preschool hours. Separate access is used during the school year and Summer Camp. **We ask that only persons who are on your child's approved pick-up list be brought to enrollment days.**

There are three different access points to the preschool: the second-floor preschool wing, the third-floor preschool wing and the gate at drive-through off Walnut Street. The Walnut Street access will only be available during normal drive-through drop-off or pick-up times.

## **ROSENBERG EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER**

### **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

The Rosenberg Early Childhood Center opens at 8:00 am, and children need to be brought into the building, into their assigned classroom, where families must sign their child in for the day. Each classroom should be accessed by the front door closet to their classroom, this may be the library door or the main front door. Children deposit their belongings in their cubbies and then can take part in the morning experiences that are provided in each classroom. Families should be encouraged to create a morning routine for this transition to support their separation from their child.



The preschool closes at 6:00 pm, and families need to come into the preschool by 5:50 pm to have enough time to gather their children's belongings before leaving the building. Please note that the preschool day ends at 6:00 pm, and any pick-up after this time will be subject to a late fee of \$1 per minute that the family is late.

Families may park in the white zone in front of the preschool, as it is designated as a drop-off and pick-up zone, but only for 10 minutes. If you plan on spending time in the preschool at drop-off or pick-up time, we encourage you to park elsewhere to free up space for families doing quick drop-offs and pick-ups. Families attending Shabbat, Field Trips or volunteering in the classroom should not park in the white zone.

### **SCHOOL ACCESS**

The front gate to Rosenberg is accessible only by a designated security-access card assigned to each family. The gate remains locked 24 hours a day. Families will be given two cards upon enrollment. (One additional card per family may be requested.) If you lose a card please inform school staff immediately so that it can be deactivated. If you later find a card that was previously thought to be lost and has been deactivated, that card can be reactivated. We ask that all families leave the access cards with school administrative staff when their child/children will no longer attend the school. These cards are only active during school business hours.