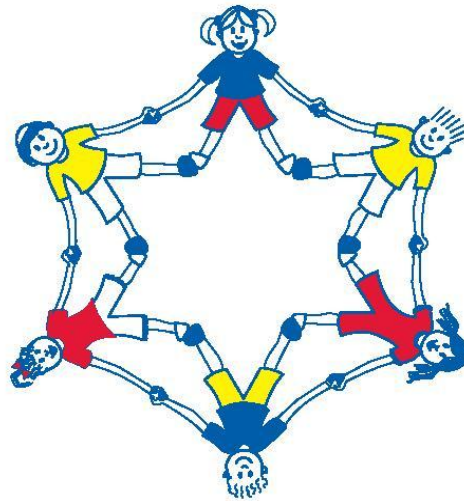


THE JOAN LEVIN SCHOOL *of Early Childhood Education*

HANDBOOK
2011-2012
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Shalom! Welcome to The Joan Levin School of Early Childhood Education at The Jewish Center. This Handbook is designed to give you an in-depth look at our school and to guide you through our program. I invite you to visit our school while it is in session for a tour of the facilities and to meet the staff if you have not already done so.

If you are a family who has already enrolled your child in our program, I hope you find this Handbook useful as a reference guide to your child's school experience.

B'Shalom,

Gayle Wagner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE #
AIMS AND GOALS	1-2
ATTENDANCE, ILLNESS AND ALLERGIES	25-27
BATHROOM PROCEDURES	29
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS, HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS	19-20
CLASS REPRESENTATIVES	13
CLASSES AND AGE REQUIREMENTS	2-3
CLOTHING	30
COMMUNICATION & CONFERENCES	23
COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF MEMBERS AND PARENTS	23-24
COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM	5-8
CURRICULUM	4
DISCIPLINE	20-21
DONATIONS	30-31
4-5 YEAR OLD FULL DAY	3
EARLY MORNING DROP OFF	5
EXPULSION POLICY	21-22
EXTENDED DAY	8
FEE AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE	32
FIELD TRIPS	24
FINANCIAL AID	12
FIRE DRILLS	25
FUNDRAISING	30
GOVERNANCE	12
CHALLAH DELIVERY SERVICE	19
INTRODUCTION	1
KASHRUT REGULATIONS	16-17
LATE PICK UP FEES	10
LATE PICK UP PLAN	10-11
LUNCH	17
MORNING DROP OFF CLASS PROCEDURE AND CLASSROOM ROUTINES	5-6
NAP POLICY	9
ORIENTATION	4-5
PARENTS ASSOCIATION	12
PAYMENT	9
POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	27-28

REGISTRATION	3-4
RELEASE OF CHILDREN	11
SCHOOL WIDE SHABBAT AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION	18
SECURITY SYSTEM	11-12
SHABBAT PARENTS	18
SCHMOOZE TIME CAFE	14
SNACKS	14-15
SNOW POLICY	28
STAFF	3
SUGGESTIONS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CLASSROOM ENJOYMENT	13-14
SUMMER PROGRAM	31
SUPPLIES	30
TOURS OF THE SCHOOL	4
TZEDAKAH AND MITZVOT	31
VISITORS	25

THE JOAN LEVIN SCHOOL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The Joan Levin School, licensed by the State of New Jersey, was started by a group of parents who wanted a Jewish preschool program for their children. Founded in 1982 with one class of twelve children, the School now has approximately 75 children in six classes.

Jewish tradition places a high value on the social, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of children. We have developed a curriculum designed to reflect these concerns. The school day includes free play, both inside and outside; art class; craft projects; language arts; science; music; and reading and math-readiness activities. Jewish values, customs, holiday traditions, storytelling and Hebrew language are interwoven into the entire curriculum.

We believe an early childhood education program should provide a warm and nurturing environment in which each child is free to explore his or her unique talents, abilities, and interests. The children are exposed to a stimulating environment that fosters social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth. We feel it is important to aid the young child in developing a good self-image, self-confidence, and the ability to work and play well with others.

Our school encourages parental involvement in their child's early education experience. Parents and teachers gain valuable insights and techniques from each other and at the same time share their talents and interests to maintain the excellent quality of education known to The Jewish Center. School becomes a shared experience which we hope will continue throughout each child's educational journey.

AIMS AND GOALS

It is our intent, as an early childhood educational facility, to provide each child with the best possible tools for self-discovery and the understanding of his/her environment. The goals of our school are:

1. To provide an environment which will serve as a foundation of concrete Jewish experiences, knowledge of the Jewish way of life, values, customs, traditions, and involvement in the synagogue, which learning in later years can be built upon.
2. To explore, discover and build upon the child's physical and intellectual abilities.
3. To instill a positive self-image in the child.
4. To promote concern for others and feelings of mutual respect.
5. To foster in the child positive and cooperative social behavior.

6. To nurture within each child respect and love for his/her family.
7. To stimulate imagination and curiosity.
8. To expose each child to new experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

CLASSES AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

Please be aware that each school district in our area may have a different cut-off date for kindergarten entry. Our entry date for each class level coincides with that of the Princeton Regional School System.

Class assignments are made by the teachers and the School Director by the last week in July prior to the start of each school year. It is not the policy of the School to allow parents to request or select a teacher or class assignment for their child for any of the classes.

The School is composed of five age groups: A young toddler class beginning mid-year for 12-24 months, a toddler class 18-24 months; a 2 ½ - 3 year old class, a 3 - 4 year old class and a 4 - 5 year old class.

The Young Toddler class: K'Tontonim (littlest ones), 12-24 months, is a five month class beginning in January-May. Children and a parent or caretaker meet once a week on Wednesday from 9:30-10:30. The class is taught by our Director. The goal of this class is to provide a first time social gathering in our school for both child and adult. Children must be 12 months by January 1.

The Toddler class: Yad B'Yad (Hand in Hand), Children and a parent or caretaker enroll for this 1½ hour program which meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 - 10:45 a.m. The class is led by two teachers. The goal of this program is to provide a safe, warm and nurturing class in which new friendships for both toddlers and adults are formed. Mobile younger siblings of enrollees are not permitted to attend the class. Toilet training is not required. Children should be one by March 1 of the year of entry. During the second semester, a Gradual Drop-Off is put in place, with a full Drop Off occurring after Spring Break on Tuesdays and from 9:15-10:00 on Thursdays, at which time you will join your child for a class Shabbat celebration. This Drop Off process is to prepare these students to enter a 2 ½ or 3 year old class the following September. A parent or caretaker is still responsible for bathroom needs and must remain at the school during class time.

The 2 1/2 to 3 year old class: These classes are for those children who are two years of age by May 31 of the year of entry; they need not be toilet trained to attend. Children in this class have an option of attending the program for two days per week (Tuesday and Thursday), three days per week either (Monday, Wednesday and Friday or Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) or a five day option (Monday-Friday).

The 3 to 4 year old class: Children in this class have an option of attending the program either three days per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) or all five days per week. Children must be three by September 30 of the year of entry. Children should be toilet trained.*

The 4 to 5 year old class: These classes meet Monday through Friday. Children must be four by September 30 of the year of entry and must be toilet trained*. Children in our pre-k classes have a full day on Monday and Wednesday with dismissal at 2:25 p.m. Dismissal on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday takes place at 12:55 p.m.

* Toilet trained means that they no longer wear diapers or "pull-ups," can consistently verbalize their need to use the bathroom and tend to their toileting needs independently.

STAFF

Each class has a head teacher and one or two assistant teachers (depending on class size) or co-head teachers. The head and co-head teacher(s) plan, organize, and develop the children's daily schedule according to the goals and guidelines of the curriculum. Almost all head and co-teachers are licensed in early childhood and/or education. Some have Master's Degrees or postgraduate credits in education. Assistant teachers have a variety of backgrounds including college degrees.

Our ECE Director, Gayle Wagner, has a BA Degree in Art and Education. She has been in the field of Education for many years. Gayle taught Art in the public school system before choosing to teach pre-school aged children in a Jewish environment. It is in the early education field that Gayle has focused her energies since 1997.

Our staff is supportive and well trained and has been selected for their knowledge of child development and curriculum planning as well as for their enthusiasm and love of children.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the upcoming school year begins on the first school day in the month of December for in house students. Open enrollment begins the first day back from winter break in January. The exact deadline is printed on the application and must be received in the office on the designated date in order to receive our early tuition rate given to in house families. There are benefits to registering early as our tuition rates are presented in tiers and will increase based on time of registration.

At the time of registration, you will receive two copies of an enrollment contract. One copy of the contract should be retained for your records and the other sent to The Jewish Center with the appropriate deposit by the required date.

Any child not admitted to the ECE due to limited space available in a class can be placed on a waiting list. Children will be admitted to the school from the waiting list as space becomes available. Applicants from a previous year's registration are not carried over to a new registration year.

We encourage all families to become congregants of The Jewish Center. Although membership in The Jewish Center is not an absolute prerequisite to enrollment in the school, non-members may be disadvantaged if a limited number of spaces are available. Please keep in mind also, that as a member of The Jewish Center you would receive a 10% discount off your school tuition. There is no discount for the K'tontonim class. No family who wants to join The Jewish Center will be denied membership because of an inability to pay. The Administrator of The Jewish Center will be able to discuss financial arrangements with you if you would like to join the synagogue.

TOURS OF THE SCHOOL

You are encouraged to have a tour of the school while it is in progress prior to registration, particularly if you are new to the area or this is your first child you are enrolling in our school. Tours for parents usually begin in November and continue throughout the school year. Please phone the office at 609-921-7207 during the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. to set up an appointment.

CURRICULUM

Children are full of wonder and curiosity. At The Jewish Center, the environment is the curriculum. The social and physical world invites many possibilities for stimulating creative development. The surroundings are designed to make children want to explore and discover.

Our philosophy is to take a whole child approach to the curriculum and the environment. We try to integrate the child's cognitive, emotional, physical and social growth.

The room is carefully prepared with interest areas to stimulate a joy for learning and to enable children to gain confidence by succeeding. Through a balance of individual and group play, free choice and structured learning, we hope to foster responsibility, self-discipline and confidence. Under no circumstances are toy weapons of any kind permitted.

All of the classes learn about and celebrate the Jewish holidays. Reading and math readiness activities, as well as science, art, small and large motor skill activities, are an integral part of the curriculum.

Copies of our Curriculum and Goals are made available to you.

ORIENTATION

In order to make the transition to school an easy one for you and your pre-schooler, there is an orientation process composed of, a Back-to-School Night for parents, an Open House for both students and parents, as well as a Gradual Start for the 2 ½ to 3 year old students.

The **Back-to-School Night** is usually the first event of the school year, held on an evening prior to the start of school. It is a chance for parents to meet one another and to meet the teachers with whom their child will be spending the school year. Teachers will speak about the daily routine, planned units and answer questions. This evening is for parents only.

The **Open House** is traditionally held on a day prior to the first day of school. Children and parents are invited to spend time in the classroom getting to know the teachers, the classroom environment and the children in the class.

The **Gradual Start** is the way the children entering the 2 ½ - 3 year old class begin their school year. For the first day, half of the children in the class come to school from 9:00 - 10:15 a.m. and the other half from 10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Easing the children into school with a shortened day and with half of the class in attendance at one time, helps the children feel more comfortable with both the classroom atmosphere and their teachers. Teachers, in turn, have more time to spend getting to know the children on an individual basis. The second day the class will meet together from 9:00-11:00. There after the students follow a regular schedule from 9:00-11:55 a.m. If a child requires more time acclimating to school the teacher will discuss this individually with the parent/s. Parents of a 2 ½ -3 year old child are asked to remain on the premises during the Gradual Start days.

Prior to the start of school, when circumstances permit, all parents will receive a phone call from one of their child's teachers. Parents can share any information they think would be important for the teacher to know about their child, thereby giving teachers a chance to learn more about the child. A list of the children in your child's class will be sent to you early August should you want to arrange some play dates with his/her future classmates. During the summer, we send each child a picture of the class teachers so that the faces become familiar to the child.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

EARLY MORNING DROP OFF **8:30 - 9:00 A.M., MONDAY - FRIDAY**

Children may be taken to a designated room in the school building for quiet activities before regular school hours. They will be supervised by a staff member who will escort each child to his/her classroom at 9:00 a.m. Only toilet trained children may attend this program. Parents are requested to place lunch boxes, water bottles, school bags, coats, etc. in their child's designated classroom area prior to bringing their child to the Early Drop Off Room. There is an additional cost for this program (see Fee and Payment Schedule for rates), but pre-registration is not required.

MORNING DROP OFF PROCEDURE & CLASSROOM ROUTINES **9:00 A.M. - 11:55 A.M.**

1. **Arrival:** Children should arrive promptly at 9:00 a.m. The teachers have a daily routine planned for the children. Late arrivals not only disrupt the class but also

prevent the latecomer from fully participating in the daily classroom activities. Children are usually disappointed when they miss an activity due to a late arrival and it also makes it harder for the child to interact with those already in the flow of the morning.

Parents are responsible for seeing that their child and other children in their charge reach the correct classroom. For safety reasons, children should not enter the classroom until the teachers open the door at 9:00 a.m. to greet them. Parents should assist with the removal of any coats, boots, snowsuits, etc. when this clothing is necessary, as well as with the placement of lunchboxes in the designated area. It is our schools policy that you take your child and any other school child in your care to use the bathroom prior to the start of their school day.

Upon arrival at the School, parents should say good-bye to their child(ren) at the classroom door, where teachers will be ready to welcome them. The staff does expect that some children will cry. However, the teachers have found that the crying time is shorter when all parents leave promptly. For this reason, it is the school's policy that parents not enter the classroom at arrival time. The School Director will be available if you would like to phone the office or have her phone you to find out how your child is progressing in class. A staff member will contact the parent of a child who is unduly upset for an excessive length of time.

2. **Free Play:** During this time, children are free to choose from a variety of activities. The materials in the classroom have been carefully selected to enhance both large and small motor development, cognitive skills, and creative play.

One of the major goals we have for our pre-schoolers is for them to develop an understanding of society, the world and the people in it. Pretend play allows children a chance to create a world based on what they understand and where they can be in control of the results. They begin to develop the skills necessary to function as a member of a group, negotiate team work and leadership. As they assume various roles, they have a chance to walk in other people's shoes, helping them to see another's point of view and understand another's feelings. Pretending is a safe haven where children can release anger and confront and overcome fears without risk. Children strengthen their problem solving skills, expand their vocabulary and acquire new skills while practicing old ones. The creativity involved with pretending allows a child to dream and to experience adventure and excitement without leaving familiar surroundings. It also provides an opportunity to relive and savor happy moments in their lives like a family vacation or a party.

Based on the theory that children learn through play, classroom routines encourage active involvement and meaningful experimentation and reinforcement. Schedules are designed which balance structure and free choice as well as active and quiet times.

3. **Art:** Creative expression, a variety of artists and the use of different media are explored. In addition, projects are most often coordinated with a story, unit of study, specific artist or the celebration of a Jewish holiday.

4. **Clean Up:** The children are responsible for cleaning up the toys with which they have played. Putting away the toys involves matching and sorting as well as

classification skills. This activity helps children develop a sense of responsibility and order.

5. **Circle Time**: During circle time, some activities presented and discussed are: good morning songs, the calendar, the weather, helper of the day, poems, "share and tell" and the weekly theme. Children learn to pay attention in a group setting, learn self-composure and practice speaking and listening skills. In our older classes, the Hebrew names of the days of the week, month and year are taught.

6. **Snack Time**: Each child puts on a kippah (skull cap) and together the class recites the appropriate Hebrew blessings before eating. Snack time is a social time for the children where good manners are promoted. Each family provides snack for the class on a rotating basis.

7. **Quiet Time**: On some days, there is a short quiet time during which the children may listen to music or browse through a book of their choice.

8. **Story Time**: The teachers read aloud to the children each day. The stories are typically related to the unit of study.

9. **Math, Reading-Readiness, and Science Activities**: Children have "hands on" experiences counting, matching and sorting objects. Simple science experiments enhance some units. Experience charts and stories, letter and sound recognition and other pre-reading and math skills are integrated into the schedule.

10. **Music**: Songs, body movement and use of rhythm instruments are part of our music and dance time. The children are exposed to a variety of musical experiences by our music specialists: the Cantor of The Jewish Center, a secular music teacher, classroom teachers and the School Director.

11. **Large Motor Activities**: Daily play periods are scheduled year round on our playgrounds. It is, therefore, necessary to dress your child accordingly. Boots, mittens, hats (and sometimes snow pants) are needed in the winter months. All outerwear should be labeled with your child's name. When weather restricts our outdoor playtime, the synagogue social hall is available to us for physical activity outside of the classroom. In addition to daily play, a fitness instructor from My Gym conducts classes twice a month.

12. **Optional Lunch**: (12:00 - 12:55 p.m. Monday - Friday). During this time, the children enjoy having lunch with their friends, followed by a variety of activities all supervised by the classroom teachers. There is an additional charge for participation in the lunch program (see Fee and Payment Schedule for rates). Children wear a kippah (skull cap) during this time and say the appropriate blessings prior to eating. The children in the 2 ½ to 3 year old classes may begin staying for lunch the first week of October. If your child's teacher feels your son or daughter is not yet ready to stay for lunch she will discuss this with you prior to that date.

13. **Dismissal**: Children are dismissed promptly at 11:55 a.m. unless they are staying for lunch and/or Extended Day. Dismissal after lunch time is at 12:55 p.m. Parents who do not pick up their children on time will be billed accordingly to our late pick up

fee. Particularly at the beginning of the school year, you are encouraged to arrive five minutes prior to dismissal time for the emotional comfort and security of your child.

14. **Full Day 4 year old Program:** All children in the 4 to 5 year old classes stay in school until 2:25 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays for supplemental activities. The cost of lunch is included in the tuition for these two days per week. Children may then join the Extended Day Program at 2:30 p.m. if parents so wish. Some of the supplemental activities are: a six week class called "I'm Safe and Sure", usually presented during the winter by the Camp Fire Girls Association; a special science program from Mad Science; SAVE, a program presented by our local animal shelter and every Monday, the celebration of Havdalah, learning about the Torah portion of the week and shira (singing) with the School Director.

AFTERNOON EXTENDED DAY (OPTIONAL)

Children must be toilet trained to attend.

Care is available on the following days and hours:

Monday through Thursday 1:00 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.

Friday 1:00 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

The Extended Day Program meets in a designated room on the first floor of the School building. It is a loosely structured afternoon with free play both indoors and out, arts & crafts, stories and games. A light snack is provided. There is an additional charge for participation in the Extended Day Program. (See Fee and Payment Schedule for rates.)

You must sign your child up on the Extended Day Sign In Sheet located in the main hall each day you are using the service. It is your responsibility to notify your child's teachers every day your child is signed up for the Extended Day Program, so that the teachers can escort your child to the appropriate location.

If your child's name is not on the Extended Day sign in sheet and you have not arrived to pick up your child, they will still be taken to the Extended Day classroom for late pick up and you will be charged accordingly. (See late pick up fee pg. 14). We will make every effort to try and contact you after these 15 minutes to see what your intent is. After 15 minutes, your child will be placed on the Extended Day list and you will be charged a late fee plus the Extended Day fees. Please remember it is your responsibility to sign your child up if your intent is they remain after school for Extended Day. Their teacher and your child should know where they are to go when class is dismissed. Your child may become upset if you are not there for pick up and they did not know they were going to Extended Day. Keep in mind they are expecting you to be there. Occasionally it may happen where you call the school and we have to relay the message to your child but this is much better than us not knowing and you expecting us to figure out that they are to remain after school in Extended Day. Please make every effort to call the school before 12:30 if you want your child to attend Extended Day and you have not signed them up. We understand that sometimes you simply can not help being late. Kindly call the school as soon as possible so we are able to prepare your child for their late pick up.

NAP POLICY

A rest time for those students staying in Extended Day beyond 3:00 p.m. will be provided. Individual mats will be used for each child. **Parents are required to place a small lightweight blanket (please label blanket) in their child's backpack for use on the mat.** The rest period will last one-half hour, during which time story books are available and soft music played.

PAYMENT OF TUITION, FEES AND OPTIONAL PROGRAMS

In order to maintain high standards, quality programming and excellent teachers in our School, we rely upon the prompt payment of tuition and Jewish Center dues. We hope you understand that the following policies have recently been implemented with much reluctance. They are, however, necessary because of chronic difficulties with collections and non-payment of monies owed.

The first semester's tuition will be billed on June 1, as well as all current financial obligations to The Jewish Center and must be paid in full by July 15. If payment is complete, you will receive a registration packet shortly after this date with your child's class placement and a class list.

If you are in arrears in your financial obligations to The Jewish Center, you will not receive your school information packet until your obligation has been met.

Tuition for the second semester is billed on November 1 and due by December 1. If you are in arrears in your financial obligations to The Jewish Center, your child will not be admitted into class when the second semester begins.

Of course, the Finance Department is happy to make arrangements for quarterly payments of tuition and dues or to assist you in any way if you have extenuating circumstances. Please call Amy Rubin at 609-921-0100, Extension 205, to discuss the matter with her.

All Early Drop Off, Extended Day, late pickup fees and daily lunch time services will be charged from The Jewish Center on a monthly basis according to the Fee and Payment Schedule. **Your child may not participate in these services if we do not have a credit card number on file.**

There is a \$220 facility fee per child each year. You will find this fee divided evenly in each semester's bill.

A challah charge of \$25 a year per family covers the cost of the classroom Shabbat celebration and is delivered directly to the class each week.

LATE PICK UP FEES

If your child is not scheduled to stay for lunch, pick up time is 11:55 a.m. If your child is not signed up to stay for Extended Day or an Enrichment Class, pick up time is at 12:55 p.m. A late fee will be applied if picking up past these times.

Late pick up fees also apply to Extended Day and Enrichment Class pick up times which varies. Be sure to check scheduled times of these programs.

If you arrive 1-15 minutes after the designated times mentioned above to pick up your child, you will be billed at the rate of \$6.00.

The late pick up fees were designed and implemented by the School Committee of The Jewish Center to discourage parental lateness at pick up time. Late pick up fees will be charged to your credit card account. Remember that late pick up fees apply to any school program. It is in recognition of fairness to our staff, many of whom have other commitments after school program hours.

However, we do realize that emergency situations sometimes occur. If you do have an emergency and your child is not registered to stay for an after school program, you should try to phone the school office at 609-921-7207, so that your child can be properly cared for. This will also allow a staff member to explain your delay to your child to alleviate any concerns he/she might have.

In most instances, an Extended Day staff member will notify you verbally that you are late, so that you can check the exact time together. You will be charged accordingly.

If you are in charge of picking up several children from different classrooms, please allow yourself sufficient time to gather the children and all their personal belongings.

LATE PICK UP PLAN

Because we are a licensed child care center, we are required to comply with regulations from the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). The following is excerpted from the Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers and is The Jewish Center's policy. This plan will be followed in the event that the parent(s) or other person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up the child or is late in picking up the child at the time of the center's daily closing.

1. The child shall be supervised at all times.
2. Every effort is made by School staff members to contact the custodial parent(s) and/or other person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to care for the child.
3. Whenever the custodial parent(s) and/or other person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up the child one hour or more after closing time, and provided that the staff members have been unable to make other arrangements for returning the child to his/her custodial parent(s), a School staff member shall call the division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (800-792-8610) to seek

assistance in caring for the child until his/her custodial parent(s) or other person(s) authorized by the custodial parent(s) is available to care for the child.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the School Director, and/or staff member, the child would be placed in risk of harm if released to such an individual, the following procedure will be put into effect:

1. The child will not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members will attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternate person authorized by the child's parent(s).
3. If the center is unable to make arrangements, a staff member will call the DYFS 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

If you will not be picking up your child on a regular basis (i.e., if you are part of a carpool or a caregiver picking up the child), you are responsible for letting the teacher know, in writing, who is allowed to pick up your child at dismissal. One note at the beginning of the school year with your signature listing the days and the names of the people who are authorized to take your child is sufficient.

Any time your child is going home with a person other than one listed as a regular carpool person, you must give your child's teacher a dated and signed note to that effect.

Many families have childcare workers who pick up their child at school. It is strongly recommended that you bring this person to school either for the Open House or on the first morning of school to introduce him/her to your child's teachers so that the face becomes familiar to the staff.

If you are a custodial parent and your former spouse does not have permission to pick up your child at school, you must notify your child's teachers and the School Director in writing. In addition, if there is information that you do not want relayed to your former spouse about your child, you must convey this to your child's teachers and the School Director in writing.

SECURITY SYSTEM

In 1991, a security system was installed at The Jewish Center through fundraising efforts by our school families. Both doors leading into the school building are kept locked except in the morning from 8:50 - 9:15 a.m. when the School Director stands at the door furthest from the playground to welcome you and your child to school.

There are two ways to enter the building when it is locked. Proceed to the main door furthest from the playground. When you are facing the door, you will notice two key-

pads at the right. The silver colored pad has numbers on it. When you enter the five-digit security code that you will receive at the Back to School Night, the door will unlock for five seconds. This is the easiest and most convenient way for you to enter the building. If you forget your code number or a non-school family is picking up your child, please instruct him/her in the following procedure:

1. Press the key pad (the one without the numbers).
2. Listen for a beep and pull the door toward you to enter. If you do not hear a beep, it means that no one is in the office to admit you. If you repeat this procedure and still do not hear a beep, you must cross the courtyard, go the Synagogue office and ask one of the secretaries for assistance. In either case, please make sure that the door is closed behind you and that you do not allow anyone to follow you into the building.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is available for school tuition as well as for The Jewish Center membership to families who qualify. Only Jewish Center congregants are eligible for financial aid. For more information about financial aid, please phone The Jewish Center at 609-921-0100 and speak with the administrator who will be able to expedite matters for you.

If a school family is receiving financial aid for tuition and one parent is not working or attending school, the school child/ren may not attend the Early Drop Off or the Extended Day Program. It is felt that if money is available, it should be applied to the morning tuition.

GOVERNANCE

The Joan Levin School is governed by The Jewish Center School Committee. The Committee is responsible for the school's policies, procedures and curriculum. The program is administered by the School Director under the supervision and guidelines of the School Committee.

PARENT ASSOCIATION

Our Parent Association is vitally important to the smooth functioning of our School. The Parent Association welcomes you to participate in your child's early educational experience. The officers and members of our Parent Association are expected to commit themselves to upholding the ideals of the school and The Jewish Center. It is dedicated to helping the school achieve its goals and to develop in our children a sense of pride in themselves, their heritage and commitment to Jewish ideas, values and to their community.

The school welcomes your involvement and encourages you to take the initiative in participating and in donating your talents to the association. The Parent Association expects that each family will volunteer five hours of their time during the course of the year at our various school functions. In your school packet, you will find a Parent Association sign up sheet for all school activities and volunteer opportunities.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Each class has a representative who:

1. Acts as a liaison between the parents, the staff and the school Parent Association
2. Sets up the snack schedule for the year
3. Sets up a email/ telephone chain so that information can be relayed easily among the parents (i.e., inclement weather, recruiting extra drivers for field trips)
4. Is responsible for monetary class collections (i.e. teacher gifts, school activities P.A. dues, etc.)
5. Helps coordinate field trips, when applicable

The name of your child's class representative can be found on the first page of the Friend Finder which will be distributed by the end of September.

SUGGESTIONS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR ENJOYMENT WHEN VISITING/VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Be on time. In fact, come five or ten minutes prior to the starting time of the activity. It is easier for you to wait for us to begin an activity rather than for the children to wait for you. Please understand that if you are late, we will do everything possible to delay the activity, however due to time constraints this is not always possible.
2. It is preferable to leave mobile younger siblings at home with a caretaker or other family member. Sharing babysitting duties with another family will allow you and other parents to fully participate in the activities. You will need both of your hands and eyes to really help with your child and his/her classmates. If you are diverted by your younger child, you cannot fully focus on your preschooler who will really want your undivided attention. In addition, you will not be of help to the teacher who is counting on you to assist her.
3. Expect that your child might not be at his/her best on the day you participate in classroom functions. It is very common for children to act out for your benefit. If this is the case, you should be prepared to leave earlier than expected and possibly take your child home with you. Discuss with the teachers what they think might work best.
4. Remember that you are there to help with other children and should expect to share yourself with the entire class.
5. Everything that goes on in the classroom should be kept confidential. For example, if a child is receiving support services such as speech therapy in the classroom, that is not information that should be shared with other parents. Likewise, if a child is misbehaving, do not report it to the child's parent. It may just be an anomaly for that particular day and time. Many times, when parents report to other parents, the message is incomplete and causes needless worry and anxiety.
6. Please realize that although the teachers might enjoy chatting with you, they must focus on the children. They are not being rude if they cannot carry on a sustained

conversation with you during class time. Their job is to be attentive to the children and their needs. Bear in mind that the teachers are not at liberty to discuss other children's situations or behaviors with you, as this would be unprofessional.

7. For the safety of everyone, hot beverages are not allowed in the classroom.

SCHMOOZE TIME CAFE

The Joan Levin School presents speakers at an informal Schmooze Time Cafe held throughout the year. Programs are offered on childrearing practices, health and psychological issues, Jewish holiday preparations and information, school issues, CPR classes, etc. All parents are invited to attend these informal sessions. Refreshments are served. You are encouraged to suggest topics for discussion as well as speakers to the School Director.

SNACKS

Parents are asked to provide snacks for their child's class on a rotating basis throughout the year. A snack schedule will be distributed for each class at the start of the school year. Along with the snack and beverage, parents are asked to provide sealed packages of 5 ounce cups, napkins and plates during their allotted snack period, usually a week at a time. We also ask that you provide proper utensils (knives, forks, etc.) for the cutting or spreading of certain snacks where necessary. You will be advised by the classroom teacher as to what is needed each week.

If you have difficulty delivering juice or water to the school during the week, please note that the school building is open on most Sundays from 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. You can bring these items to the school office and label it with the appropriate class name. You should also leave a note for your child's teacher in their mailbox, located in the Teacher's Room on the main floor of the school, indicating that snack has been delivered. .

Parent participation makes it possible for the children to enjoy a variety of fresh and wholesome foods during the year. There are two requirements for snacks brought to The Jewish Center: **They must be kosher - either dairy or pareve (contains neither meat nor dairy products), and they should be healthy.** We strongly encourage you to purchase snack foods that are made in Israel as a way of showing support for the country. Shop Rite, located on Route 130 and also in the Mercer Mall, has a large kosher department with many Israeli brands.

Pareve snacks include pre-cut fruit and vegetables. **Please do not include grapes (unless cut into quarters), marshmallows, carrots, popcorn, nuts, hard candies, lollipops, or any other potential choking hazard foods in your child's lunch.** Dairy snacks include anything prepared with milk or a milk product - butter, cheese, etc. Crackers and other baked goods can fall into either category, but they can also be non-kosher if they contain animal fat as many packaged baked goods do. Thus, it is important to read labels carefully when shopping for school snacks. Packaged foods carry symbols indicating whether they are kosher, kosher (dairy), or kosher (pareve).

The most common symbols are U and K, often followed by the word "dairy," or the word "pareve." When in doubt about the ingredients of a product, read the ingredient list. Any products made with animal fat or lard are not kosher. Please check carefully. Baked goods can be made at home if they contain only pareve or dairy ingredients. Fresh kosher baked goods can be purchased at McCaffrey's Supermarket bakery department in the Princeton Shopping Center or at Shop Rite.

On the first day of school, there will be a posted list of foods to which children in the class are allergic. Please avoid these foods for snack. If your own child is allergic to a particular food or drink, please discuss this with their teachers and recommend a substitute food or beverage and be sure that you have indicated any food allergies on your child's medical and emergency forms.

Some of the favorite snack items as well as appropriate quantities are:

Water or Juice - Per Day

Water wins hands down as the favorite; Kedem or other kosher grape juice on Shabbat. Note that the very large size bottle (128 oz.) does not fit in our refrigerator and therefore, we would prefer the smaller size bottles (64 ounces).

Snack Foods - Per Day

Apples, bananas, oranges - ½ per child

Strawberries - 3 to 4 per child

Any other fruit such as cantaloupe or watermelon - 4 pieces per child

Crackers - 1 box

Mini bagels (with ½ lb. cream cheese and/or margarine) - 1 per child

We would prefer fresh fruits and vegetables to boxed goods. Any combination of the above items, as well as other items your child enjoys eating, are always welcomed and appreciated.

For your interest: There are several explanations of the Jewish concept of Kashrut. The Hebrew root "Kashar" has the intrinsic meaning of "proper, fit, appropriate." The basis of Kashrut is a biblical injunction (Leviticus 11:2-43), which has had a variety of interpretations throughout history. Some scholars explain it as an indication of respect for the sanctity of life and nature. Some explain it is a fierce rejection of the cultic rituals of the ancient Canaanites. Some interpreters see health concerns as the basis of Kashrut. Still other scholars say that, by observing the laws of kashrut, we are exercising self-control, setting limits and disciplining ourselves.

KASHRUT REGULATIONS FOR THE JEWISH CENTER

Since Biblical times, the Jewish People have always believed that Kashrut is an important value. The laws of Kashrut were first described in the Torah and then developed in Rabbinic texts. Throughout our history, we Jews have taken one of the most basic things we do as human beings and raised it to a level of sanctity. Just as we begin and end our meals with blessings to remind us that eating is a religious act, so, too, we have certain standards of what food is acceptable and what is not acceptable. An equally important standard is that we want everyone to feel comfortable in our community, especially when it comes to eating in our Synagogue. Therefore, the Religious Affairs Committee, in consultation with Rabbi Feldman, has established these regulations for Kashrut at The Jewish Center. We established these standards as a way of helping people understand the importance we give to Kashrut and we do so in a way that helps everyone feel comfortable with our standards.

We also see this as an opportunity to educate members of our community about the laws of Kashrut and the meanings of the laws. We hope that many people will take advantage of the educational opportunities we will all have in the coming months toward that goal. Any questions about these standards should be directed to Rabbi Feldman.

1. Only meat products purchased from and delivered by one of our acceptable kosher caterers may be brought into the synagogue building. No other meat products may be brought into the kitchens, social hall, lobby or any other part of either building. This includes individual lunches for our students.
2. All products brought into The Jewish Center must carry a symbol of Kashrut supervision such as U or K. This applies to all dairy products, cake mixes, etc. Major supermarkets in our area have extensive kosher sections including the Kosher Experience at Shop Rite on Rt. 1. There are also many places to buy kosher baked goods including the ACME in East Brunswick. For more information about where such products can be bought, please contact The Jewish Center Main Office.
3. All fresh fruits and vegetables are acceptable in The Jewish Center.
4. Only kosher fish may be brought into the building. Acceptable fish includes tuna, salmon, flounder, lox and sole.
5. When a meal is being prepared in one of the two kitchens, please do not use the other kitchen unless absolutely necessary. It is much safer to do all work for a particular meal in the appropriate kitchen.
6. If you would like to bring baked goods into the building, we ask that you purchase these baked goods at an acceptable bakery. If they have been baked in someone's home, they should either be baked in a kosher oven or in disposable pans using disposable utensils. Please bring these utensils with you to serve them at The Jewish Center. Please do not use our utensils for these baked goods.

These standards apply to the school building and the main building as well as all parts of the building including the kitchens, the social hall, the lobby, the libraries, offices and all classrooms.

All matters of Kashrut at The Jewish Center, including questions, clarifications and other issues should be brought to Rabbi Feldman's attention. Thank you for your assistance.

LUNCH

If your child is staying for the 12:00 to 12:55 p.m. lunchtime, kindly provide him/her with a kosher dairy or pareve lunch. Please do not send any meat or meat products even if they are kosher (i.e., kosher salami, bologna, chicken, turkey, etc. are not permitted).
Sample Lunches: * peanut butter & jelly * cottage cheese * any hard cheese * pasta * yogurt * quiche * salad * tuna fish * eggs * bagels, crackers, rice cakes, * etc., or any bread made with vegetable shortening.

While the teachers are responsible for deciding when lunchtime will occur, your child has the responsibility to decide how much to eat. No child is forced to eat and no child is denied food as a method of discipline. We encourage the children to save their lunch snack for after they have finished their sandwich or lunch item. The staff will make every effort to wrap up and send home any uneaten food so parents can see how much a child has eaten.

In our desire to promote sustainability and to do our share to minimize recycling, please follow these few steps:

- 1. Reusable lunch boxes or bags, with the child's name on it are favored over throw away bags.**
- 2. Sippy cups, thermoses or reusable drinking container should be used in place of juice packs or disposable water bottles.**
- 3. Containers are preferred to Ziploc bags and will be returned in the child's lunch bag daily.**
- 4. Real eating utensils, in place of disposable cutlery are encouraged and will be returned daily.**

***Please remember to label everything with your child's name. We thank you for your efforts and for setting a good example for our students.**

Parents have the option of prepaying for lunch for the year at a discounted rate. If you do not want to choose the prepaid lunch option, your child is still welcome to stay for lunch at any time. This service will be charged to your credit card monthly. However, the fee charged will be at a slightly higher rate than the prepaid rate.

SHABBAT AND SHABBAT PARENTS

Each Friday, we celebrate the arrival of Shabbat here at school. The children get ready for this weekly celebration by "cleaning" the tables, chairs, toys and "straightening up" the room. In addition, parents are asked to complete a Mitzvah Gram every week for their child, indicating a good deed their child has done. The teachers read the Mitzvah Grams to the class so everyone can hear the mitzvot. Children are encouraged to give tzedakah. (See "Tzedakah")

Children are chosen on a rotating basis to say the appropriate blessing over the candles, wine and challah. Our challah delivery service will provide each class with their weekly Shabbat challah so the snack parent does not have to make a special trip to the store for this item. (Please see section on "Challah Delivery Service"). Shabbat parents are invited to participate in classroom activities for the morning. The children truly treasure the times when their mom and/or dad, relative and/or family friend are the Shabbat guest(s). If you cannot attend on your scheduled Friday, please let the teacher know in advance. Parents of a 2-1/2 to 3 year old student in T'chelet are invited to join their child's class for Shabbat beginning in January when the children are better acclimated to visitors in their classroom. YBY Children will celebrate Shabbat on Thursdays.

The Rabbis and the School Director enjoy shira (Hebrew for "singing") with the children. Songs and prayers often revolve around Shabbat or a holiday.

All 3 and 4 year old classes have a Shabbat mascot in the form of a stuffed animal. During the year on a rotating schedule the children get to bring the Shabbat mascot home for the weekend. Each mascot will arrive in a Shabbat Bag, in which there is a miniature set of Shabbat items and challot to help you with your in-home Shabbat celebration along with the appropriate blessings. **It is very important that you keep the items in the Shabbat Bag together and monitor your child or children when using and playing with it. The challot are yours to enjoy with your Shabbat meal. Kindly return the mascot and all the other Shabbat items when your child returns to school after the weekend. Please do not keep it longer than expected; it is your responsibility that it be returned on time.** If you inadvertently misplace the Shabbat Kit, you will be assessed for a replacement.

SCHOOL WIDE SHABBAT AND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Once per month, all classes meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary to celebrate the arrival of Shabbat and to honor the children who have a birthday in that particular month. The appropriate Shabbat blessings are recited and the Rabbis bless the birthday children. ***The birthday children are encouraged to bring a small gift in honor of their birthday** (e.g. crayons, a book, game or puzzle). This gift will be sent to various worthwhile organizations that help those in need. We hope that this project will make children aware of those less fortunate than they and give our children a chance to do a mitzvah. Our school wide celebration also includes "shira" (singing) with the School Director and a brief Shabbat service including a Torah parade and story. All parents, particularly those whose children are celebrating a birthday, are invited to attend.

CHALLAH DELIVERY SERVICE

For your convenience and to encourage you to celebrate Shabbat at home, there is a weekly challah delivery service to the school. Twice a year, you will receive a form in your mailbox on which you can order challah for your personal use at home. Challah you order for home use will be placed on your child's coat rack for pick up, saving you a trip to the bakery. The challah delivery service is also a fundraiser for our school. Challah orders must be submitted by the date on the form and will be delivered to you on Wednesdays.

Challah for the classroom Shabbat celebrations are ordered for each classroom. Each family will be billed in September a \$25 challah fee per child for the year.

High Holiday challah delivery is also available each year. Those order forms along with your weekly Shabbat order forms are sent home in your school packet every August.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS, HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Parents may provide special treats such as cupcakes, mini muffins or cookies for birthday celebrations. Please arrange birthday treats with the teacher in advance of the day and please consult with your child's teacher for any classroom allergies.

Invitations to a child's private birthday party, thank you notes and all personal mail may not be distributed in school mailbags unless the entire class is included and it is **not held on Shabbat or a Jewish holiday.** In addition, any information about secular activities may not be put in mailbags or posted on our bulletin boards. If a child misses a birthday party, **please do not send him/her to school with a present for the birthday child. It upsets children not receiving gifts and also puts the staff at risk in case the present is inadvertently misplaced or damaged.** For in-class birthday celebrations, rather than sending in party favors for each child, parents are encouraged to donate a favorite book or toy to their child's class or make a donation in honor of your child to one of the school funds. Bookplates on which your child's name can be inscribed are available in the school office.

Birthday parties held on Shabbat or a Jewish holiday are discouraged. Many families send their child to The Jewish Center's school precisely because it is "Jewish," that means Jewish life and particularly Shabbat are revered. Birthday parties on Shabbat conflict with the message they are given in school.

A heightened sensitivity to the Jewish traditions of our students should be your guideline when planning any celebration outside of school. Creating an environment beyond the classroom that signals the inclusive community we seek to be will not isolate any families because of religious beliefs and practices.

Everyone can play a part in bringing the school community closer to that ideal. As parents, you are active participants in creating the environment for The Jewish Center community that does not define itself exclusively within the hours of the school day and the boundaries of the school building.

You are also strongly encouraged to invite everyone in your child's class to out-of-school celebrations such as birthday parties. Preschool children talk about their birthday parties and it is hurtful to those children who are excluded.

The holidays of Halloween and Valentine's Day are not observed at The Jewish Center. Therefore, your cooperation is requested in not sending in cards or candy items on those days.

All Jewish holidays are celebrated. Appropriate songs, games, stories, art projects and instruction in customs and special foods for the holiday will be integrated into the curriculum surrounding each observance. Non-religious national holidays, such as Thanksgiving, are also observed.

If a special school event takes place on a day that your child does not usually attend school, you and your child may come to school for the duration of the event provided that he/she is accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times. Announcements of such school events will appear in the Director's weekly bulletin and additional notices to parents.

DISCIPLINE

Our goal is to encourage positive and cooperative behavior among the children. Therefore, discipline is an important part of the learning experience at a childcare environment. It helps children learn self-control and respect for others. The atmosphere of respect is preserved between the adults and children and between the children themselves. We try to assist each child in reaching his/her full potential by creating appropriate boundaries. Children need limits for safety's sake and for a feeling of security. They must also feel free to express frustration.

Teachers are expected to let students know what their expectations are for their behavior. Whenever possible, they will try to explain the reasons for classroom rules and procedures.

If a child misbehaves, the teacher will try to change his/her behavior using various approved means. The means may vary according to the situation and the child involved. A child may need to be distracted, redirected or removed from a problem situation.

On occasion, a teacher may need to stay with a child to monitor his/her behavior. Sometimes a child may require encouragement and/or reinforcement to change his/her behavior. In other instances, a child may need to be removed from the situation. No child will ever be left unsupervised or made to feel ashamed because of their behavior.

A positive school experience is important for the students, parents and teachers. Inappropriate activities which negatively affect the school and its enrollees will not be tolerated and may be grounds for discontinuing enrollment in the school.

If there are persistent and/or serious behavior problems, parents will be asked to confer with the teacher(s) and/or the School Director and members of the School Committee. The problem(s) will be discussed and a plan will be agreed upon to correct

the situation. Every effort will be made to help the child become a cooperative member of his/her class. If the teachers and Director feel that our school cannot meet the needs of the child for any reason, we reserve the right to require that the child be removed from the school.

The Jewish Center may also discontinue your child's enrollment at any time it determines that your child is not benefiting from the program or that a parent or a child's behavior is detrimental to the well-being of the other students, parents or teachers.

We strive to teach our children to live in this world peacefully. Because we feel so committed to this philosophy, play toys resembling weapons are not to be brought into school. In fact, we discourage students from bringing in any toys from home, unless directed by the teachers for a specific lesson. This reduces the risk of lost or broken toys. Thank you for your cooperation.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, sometimes there are reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from our school.

Immediate Causes for Expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.

Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.

Child's Actions for Expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrolled tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Schedule of Expulsion

If after the remedial actions below (see Proactive Actions That Can be Taken In order to Prevent Expulsion) have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the

parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the school.

The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.

The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the school.

The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care. Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the school.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED

If a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding the school's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the school.
- Questioned the school regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other childcare arrangements.

Proactive Actions That Can Be Taken In Order to Prevent Expulsion

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team, if applicable.

COMMUNICATION AND CONFERENCES

On a regular basis, the staff provides information on the children's activities as well as school announcements.

Posted outside each classroom on a sheet of paper called "Look What's Happening," will be a brief weekly outline of the classroom lessons. This information can be used as a conversation starter with your preschooler. It also serves as a way of letting parents know about the focus of the day's activities. Please understand daily schedules are subject to change at any given moment to accommodate our students. Therefore, the teachers may not be able to complete all activities on the "Look What's Happening" sheet. You will receive a weekly review from your child's teachers which will highlight the completed activities of the class.

Also posted outside of each classroom is a white board. Upon pick up time each day, you will find one to two points of interest completed in your child's class that day to initiate conversation at home.

The School Director writes a newsletter to help parents keep track of all the important events, activities and news at the school. It provides a brief summary of holidays, reminders, information about upcoming activities, changes of scheduled dates and reports on some of the many interesting things happening in the classrooms. Parents are encouraged to give the Director any information for publication that they feel will be helpful for other parents to know. This newsletter will be emailed to you every Friday during school or on the last day of each week if there is a shortened week. **PLEASE BE SURE TO READ IT or let us know if you are not receiving it.**

In the event of a concern or problem, open communication with the classroom teacher is encouraged. Please discuss the situation with the teacher first, and if this does not prove satisfactory, then please see the Director.

Conferences between the teacher and parents will be scheduled in the fall and upon request by the teacher or the parent in the spring. Teachers are available for conferences by appointment whenever a parent or teacher feels the need.

Teachers find it important to be kept informed of any significant changes in a child's health status or the home environment situation as these things often affect a child's behavior.

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF MEMBERS AND PARENTS

As the parent of a preschooler, you might, from time to time, need to speak with your child's teacher about a special concern. All of our teachers are most willing to confer with you. The best procedure to follow is to give your child's teacher a note (when your child is dropped off in the morning) stating two or three days and times when it would be convenient for the teacher to either meet with you or to schedule a phone conference. The teacher will get back to you at her earliest convenience.

Please do not engage the teacher in any lengthy conversations at the beginning or end of the day because she must be concentrating on the children as they enter and leave the classroom. If your concern cannot wait and you feel it is urgent to speak with the staff member immediately, please come to the office to ask the Director if she could go to your child's class for a few minutes so that the teacher may step out of the room to confer with you.

On occasion, it becomes necessary to activate your class phone chain. Under no circumstances should phone calls or other school business be conducted on Shabbat or any Jewish holiday. Phone calls after 9:30 p.m. are also discouraged.

FIELD TRIPS

Through the year, field trips supplement the curriculum. Walks throughout the neighborhood familiarize the children with the changing seasons and are occasions for collecting seasonal "specimens" to be used in art projects or displays. Trips to places of interest in and around the Princeton area are planned throughout the year. Notification and permission slips will be sent home prior to these trips.

Parent volunteers assist with driving and supervising on class outings. Drivers must hold a valid New Jersey drivers license and car registration and be insured for not less than \$100,000 per person; \$300,000 per accident; and \$50,000 for property.

New Jersey law requires that all children weighing 80 pounds or less and under 8 years old be in an approved car seat and placed in the back of the car. No child going on a class field trip will be permitted in a car without a car seat.

Only parents of children enrolled in the school may drive on field trips. If there are not enough drivers, the field trip will be cancelled.

Siblings are not allowed on class trips that you are chaperoning. If you volunteer to chaperone please make accommodation for your other children.

Here are some suggestions that will help keep everyone safe on a field trip:

1. Make sure to read the directions prior to your departure from school. If you are not clear on something, please ask the teacher.
2. Get the phone number of your destination as well as the teacher's cell phone number in case you get lost and have to pull over to call for directions.
3. Count heads! You are responsible for the children you have driven. Make sure to keep them with you or in eye contact at all times.
4. If you have to take a child to the restroom or you need to use the restroom, please notify at least one of the teachers. This way, she will not be looking for you or the children in your care.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are held once per month for all classes. This is in accordance with fire department regulations.

VISITORS

Throughout the year, performers are invited to the school to supplement units of study and/or for entertainment. Parents and siblings of enrollees are invited to attend these programs provided additional space is available.

From time to time, school children have out-of-town relatives or friends staying with them or older siblings who are on vacation from their own school. For insurance reasons, it is the school's policy not to permit un-enrolled children under the age of sixteen into the classroom unless that child is accompanied at all times by an adult.

Parents are encouraged to visit the school at any time during the hours of operation. They may observe program activities without having to secure prior approval. However, we request that parents with children in the younger classes not visit during the first few months of school as visitors may upset the children during their adjustment period.

ATTENDANCE, ILLNESS AND ALLERGIES

Regular attendance is an important factor in your child's adjustment to school. There are times when travel or other circumstances interfere. If these absences are anticipated, please notify your child's teacher in advance. It is not necessary to notify the school for non-contagious minor illnesses.

However, with all that you do to maintain good health, children are still going to become ill. In their best interest, as well as those of the other children and adults, your child will need to be kept home until his/her good health has returned. **Children must be fever free for at least 24 hours prior to returning to classes. This also applies to cases of diarrhea and vomiting.** If the teacher is aware of any of these illnesses and the child is returning to school prior to the 24-hour period, the teacher will ask that the child be taken home. As a carpool parent, please be aware of this responsibility and do not bring any child to school who is ill.

If a child becomes ill in school, the parent(s) will be phoned and asked to take the child home. If a parent is not available, the person listed on the emergency contact form will be phoned. Therefore, it is crucial for you to list only local people on the emergency contact card (i.e., **someone who could be at The Jewish Center within 15 minutes of being phoned**) to come to pick up an ill child. It is your responsibility to update the emergency form if you change jobs, get a new phone number or have a new emergency contact, etc. Please notify the office and your child's teacher as to any changes.

Please report any contagious condition such as chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis or head lice (which occurs among all school populations) to the

Director immediately so that other parents can be informed of possible exposure. Your child's name will not be mentioned.

The following will be done if a child has an open cut that needs attention:

1. The attending person will wash his/her hands with soap and water.
2. The cut will be washed with soap and water.
3. If necessary, a band-aid will be put on the cut.

We do not have a nurse or physician on staff. Our teachers are CPR certified.

We will not dispense ANY medication, which includes ointments, creams, lotions, etc., to the children. Please do not send any medication to the school for your child to self-administer. If medication is required, please see Director for further clarification on this matter.

Because of the limitations already imposed by the necessity of maintaining a kosher facility coupled with the possibility of requests for accommodations for children with various food allergies, such as milk, fish, chocolate, nuts, peanuts, eggs, etc., it is not feasible for The Jewish Center to create a total ban on a specific food to which a child may be allergic. Even if such a ban were circulated, we would not be able to monitor the ban completely in the school building as it is used after school hours and thus, enforcement could not be guaranteed. There are, for example, products that contain food traces that are not so labeled. Consequently, alternative safeguards must be arranged. We are an allergy sensitive school and we will make every effort to accommodate your child.

If your child requires the use of an Epipen because of a food or other allergy, please take note of The Jewish Center's policy:

1. The family must provide two Epipens, one to be kept in the Director's office and one for the child's classroom backpack.
2. The school staff is trained in the use of the Epipen through our CPR certification however, the parent should review the procedure with the teacher.
3. The family must periodically ascertain that the Epipens are in place and currently effective.
4. A parent or caregiver must accompany the child on all field trips or the child must remain at home.
5. The family of an allergic child is to discuss their child's allergies with their classroom teachers and provide a list of safe foods that can be enjoyed by all. We will do our best to accommodate you but there may be a time that we ask you to provide us with something special for your child. All cookies and cakes for school wide events are bought being allergy sensitive and are nut free to the best of our knowledge.

6. The child may stay for lunch only upon agreement between the family and the staff at The Jewish Center.

While not peanut free, or food allergy specific, again, we are allergy sensitive.

The staff will try, to the best of their ability, to keep the aforementioned child from ingesting or contacting foods or other substances known to contain any components of the allergen. In the event of an adverse reaction, someone on staff will administer the Epipen and summon professional help. While it is not possible to have a peanut free room during school hours, we are capable of providing a peanut free table in an individual classroom if need be. Again, please speak directly to your child's teachers should this need to be arranged.

The officers and staff of The Jewish Center disclaim any liability and responsibility for any damages, monetary or otherwise, that could be incurred by the aforementioned child or family if there is an adverse outcome or reaction, as we are not medically equipped to deal with a severe allergy.

The officers and staff of The Jewish Center do not want to exclude your child from our school. However, we trust that you will appreciate that in view of the extraordinary risks that severe allergies impose, as a religious institution running a school, we must try to protect both your child and The Jewish Center, its staff, those who may volunteer their time and energy as officers, class parents, or event helpers who try to be good samaritans in case of an accident. We will do our best, but we cannot assume any liability.

POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend school. If such symptoms occur at the school, the child will be removed from the classroom, and you will be called to take him/her home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated temperature
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Skin rashes lasting longer than 24 hours
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood in urine
- Fresh colds
- Continuous running noses

Once the child is symptom-free or has a physician's note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, he/she may return to the school.

Table of Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others:

<u>Respiratory Illnesses</u>	<u>Gastrointestinal Illnesses</u>	<u>Contact Illnesses</u>
Chicken Pox**	Giardia Lamblia	Impetigo
Hemophilus Influenzae	Hepatitis A*	Lice
Measles*	Salmonella*	Scabies
Meningococcus*	Shigella	Pink Eye
Mumps*		
Strep Throat		
Tuberculosis*		
Whooping Cough*		

*Reportable diseases that will be reported to the health department by the school.

**Note: If your child has chicken pox, a doctor's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the School. A note from the parent is required, stating either that at least six days have elapsed since the onset of the rash or that all sores have dried and crusted.

If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the school, you will be notified in writing.

SNOW POLICY

In general, if there is a delayed opening for the Princeton Regional Schools, our school will open at 10:30 a.m. If the Princeton Schools are closed, our school will be closed. In such cases, your class email/phone chain will be activated. However, the school Director and the School Committee reserve the option of canceling classes when they feel that the weather and/or the roads are especially precarious.

If it starts to snow heavily during school, parents are strongly urged to pick up their child(ren) immediately. You may call the office at 609-921-7207 to see what is "happening." Parents of children who are scheduled to remain for Extended Day should be available by phone in case we need to reach you for an early closing.

Announcements of school closing and delayed openings can be heard on WHWH (1350 AM), WPST (97.5 FM) AND WKXW (101.5 FM). You will want to listen for **Princeton Regional School information.**

BATHROOM PROCEDURES

The 2 ½ - 3 year old classes: Children need not be toilet trained. Parents are responsible for providing sealed packages of diapers, wipes and at least two extra complete sets of clothing. **Children should not wear "pull ups" in lieu of diapers or underpants.** It makes the changing process quite difficult and long, most often requiring the child to be completely undressed from the waist down. If your child is in the process of being toilet trained but continues to have two or more accidents per week for more than a two-week period, the school's policy is that the child must come to school in a diaper, not underpants. This policy has been established for health reasons (i.e., so that the carpet and chairs remain unsoiled). Please bear in mind that the child who uses the toilet at home in a familiar environment might not do so at school, where he/she is involved with other children or activities. A child is not considered "trained" until she/he can consistently verbalize a need to go to the bathroom and tend to his/her toileting needs independently.

All 3 - 4 year old and 4 - 5 year old classes: Children should be toilet trained to attend these classes. This means that they no longer wear diapers and they can consistently verbalize their need to use the bathroom and tend to their toileting needs independently. Teachers will assist a child in pulling his/her pants down and up. The children should be encouraged at home and are encouraged at school to learn how to wipe themselves. The teachers will not provide aide with this procedure but will verbally assist the child. The Director is on hand should further assistance be needed.

If your child is in one of these classes, it is recommended that you give your child's teacher a phone number where you can be reached during the day and that you not be further than a 10 or 15 minute drive from The Jewish Center. **You will be phoned in the event of an "accident" and will be responsible for coming to The Jewish Center to change your child on any day this occurs throughout the year.** Our teachers are not responsible for changing your child if an accident occurs. If you live more than 15 minutes away, please inform your child's teacher and the Director. It is important that if you are not available during school hours that you have an emergency contact able to arrive within 15 minutes to change your child if need be or please notify the Director if this is a concern for you.

If a child in any of these classes has frequent (two or more "accidents" in one week) and/or recurring accidents, the parent may be asked to keep the child at home for a short while to work on toilet training. This procedure will be worked out by the family involved, the teachers and the School Director. **A child still having frequent accidents will not be allowed to stay for lunch or participate in any after school programs.**

Helpful Hints: Pull-on pants are the easiest for the children. One piece snowsuits, overalls, zippers, snaps, suspenders and belts make the process difficult for everyone.

***Please note that no child is made to feel embarrassed at any time should an accident occur. They are treated respectfully and with care.**

CLOTHING

During the day, the children have lots of opportunities to get dirty, whether it be through art, outdoor play, or even while eating. Because children seem to gravitate toward messy activities, you are urged to dress your child in washable, comfortable clothing. The staff will take all precautions to try to keep the children's clothing from getting dirty by putting smocks on them during art. However, the school cannot be held responsible for clothing that becomes stained during the day.

We strongly encourage all children to wear shoes that stay on their feet securely with laces, buckles, or velcro. Rubber soled shoes such as sneakers are recommended. **Flip flops, clogs or other backless shoes are dangerous for the children when they climb stairs, are on the playground equipment or participate in our gym program. Please avoid putting these types of footwear on your child for school.**

SUPPLIES

A plastic or paper bag containing at least one complete (including socks, underwear, shirt and pants) season appropriate change of clothes (two are preferable, including underwear) should be provided to be left at school in case of "accidents." If these extra clothes are used, please supply a substitute set by the next day. Please label everything.

FUNDRAISING

The school depends on fundraising among the parents to enrich our school equipment and furnishings. We welcome your participation. Through our fundraising efforts, we have purchased equipment for our playground, installed the security system, furnished each classroom with a library, provided school-wide entertainment and support scholarship funds.

The main fundraiser for the school is the Gift Boutique/Silent Auction held every fall.

DONATIONS

If you are looking for a way to mark a special occasion (such as the birthday of a child or a wedding anniversary), to honor someone (a family member or a teacher) or memorialize a loved one, please consider making a donation to one of these funds--earmarked to benefit the school:

1. The Audrey and Ken Gould Scholarship Fund. Money donated to this Fund provides financial assistance to defray the cost of school tuition to TJC members.
2. Cy and Jackie Meisel Nursery Scholarship Endowment Fund. Money donated to this Fund provides financial assistance to defray the cost of school tuition to TJC members.

3. The Early Childhood Educator's Enrichment Fund. The Staff continues to learn all the time in order to provide the best possible education for your child. Your contributions to this Fund will ensure the continuing education of our teachers.
4. The Joan Levin School. This general fund is used to purchase equipment, secure educational programming and/or supplies for our school and children in order to further provide and enrich our school.
5. The ECE Playground Fund. This fund will be used to purchase equipment and to maintain our playground.
6. The ECE Hebrew Immersion Fund. This fund will help secure the future of Daber Ivrit and provide those students with additional Hebrew programming.

TZEDAKAH AND MITZVOT

Tzedakah means more than charity. It literally means justice. At school, we stress the importance of contributing to worthy causes.

Tzedakah is collected on Thursdays in the 2-day classes and on Fridays in all other classes.

Children may bring any denomination of coins or bills to be placed in a classroom Tzedakah box. The money is then donated to various charitable organizations such as Jewish Family and Children's Service, Hadassah, Jewish National Fund and United Jewish Appeal to mention a few. Each year we also pick a new cause to contribute to as well. The school also participates in various food and toy drives and works on various mitzvah projects.

Some classes bake a casserole once per month to be delivered to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Teachers will post the needed ingredients which parents can volunteer to supply.

(Please see "Shabbat and Shabbat Parents and School Wide Shabbat and Birthday Celebration" for additional information about mitzvot.)

SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM

A camp program called "Machaneynu (Our Camp)" is offered during the summer. Information is available to parents in February.

You are encouraged to call the school if you have any questions regarding anything mentioned in this handbook.

**The Joan Levin School of Early Childhood Education
Price List**

2011-2012

<u>Description</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	Fall Semester Amt Billed: 6-1-11 Due: 7-15-11	Spring Semester Amt Billed: 11-1-11 Due: 12-1-11
<u>TUITION FEES</u>			
Deposit	\$750.00		
Facility Fee	\$220.00	\$110.00	\$110.00
5 Day: 3-4 yr old*	\$6055.00	\$3027.50	\$277.50
3 Day: 3-4 yr old*	\$4120.00	\$2060.00	\$1310.00
5 Day 2 ½-3 yr old*	\$6130.00	\$3065.00	\$2315.00
3 Day 2 ½-3 yr old*	\$4185.00	\$2092.50	\$1342.50
2 Day 2 ½-3 yr old*	\$2890.00	\$1445.00	\$695.00
5 Day 4-5 yr old*	\$7410.00	\$3705.00	\$2955.00
2 Day Yad B' Yad*	\$1195.00	\$597.50	\$497.50
K'tontonim (Spring Semester)*	\$260.00		\$260.00
<u>LUNCH FEES</u>			
Lunch (per day)**	\$9.00		
Lunch Plan- 2 Days	\$385.00	\$192.50	\$192.50
Lunch Plan- 3 Days	\$580.00	\$290	\$290
Lunch Plan- 5 Days	\$965.00	\$482.50	\$482.50
<u>OTHER FEES</u>			
Early Morning Drop Off (per day)**	\$7.50		
Late Pick-Up	\$6.00		
Extended Day	\$9.00/hr		
Challah (billed in September)	\$25.00		

***Members receive 10% discount off Tuition Fees**

****Per day fees are billed once a month**