



# Early Childhood Center

Jewish Community Center  
of Greater Ann Arbor

## Parent Handbook

2024-2025



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### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

This handbook describes policies and procedures for times of normal operations. Some policies and procedures are frequently updated and are communicated in separate documents as addenda to the Parent Handbook.

### **Mission Statement Jewish Community Center**

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, “the J,” strives to embrace and involve the entire Jewish community to build Jewish pride and continuity through excellence in programming and a welcoming community campus.

### **Mission Statement Early Childhood Center**

The mission of the JCC Early Childhood Center is to provide a safe, warm, child-centered Jewish learning community where children and adults explore ideas and solve problems together. Adults build on children’s individual strengths so that children can realize their full potential. Our goal is to nurture a sense of justice, compassion, and caring for the welfare of others in all children.

### **Philosophy**

- We believe that children are powerful, competent, and capable of solving problems and expressing intentions.
- We believe that children construct their own knowledge when they interact with people, concepts, and the world around them and by manipulating a diverse variety of materials.
- We believe that adults play a critical role in children’s learning, by supporting their efforts to explore ideas and solve problems, by scaffolding children’s ability to express their ideas and reflect on their experiences, and by establishing a positive climate for learning.
- We believe that learning is a social process, in which meaningful interactions among the adults and children in the classroom give children the opportunity to learn from the strengths and interests of their peers and teachers.
- We believe that early childhood education has a crucial role in developing the important values of a sense of justice, compassion, and caring about the welfare of others.

## **Programs**

### Infants (ages 2 months to 1 year)

This program is designed to meet the social, emotional and cognitive needs of developing Infants. Infant care is highly individualized, as infants have very different care needs from one another throughout the day. Our staff provides a warm, loving and positive environment. They attend to the individual needs of each child with attention, nurturing and comforting. In this environment, infants begin to develop a sense of trust and a secure environment from which to explore. The teacher to child ratio in our infant program is 1:3.

### Waddlers – (age 12 months)

In this program, toddlers (AKA mobile infants, waddlers, etc.) are first introduced to group routines. Our toddler program offers a gentle transition from the individual nature of infancy, to the joy of being part of a group. As waddlers, the children's needs (such as napping and bottles) are still met on demand, but the children also start to naturally move towards doing these things at the same time. Toddler teachers design materials and experiences around the strong sensory-motor needs of this age group. The teacher to child ratio in this room begins at 1:3, and then increases to 1:4 once everyone is a year old.

### Toddler - (age 18 months)

In this program, toddlers are solidly operating as a group. Toddler teachers engage children in group activities, planning around the rapid development this age group experiences. Regular predictable parts of the day, such as small and large group times, become part of the normal daily routine. The teacher to child ratio in our toddler program is 1:4.

### Young Twos (age 2)

Our Older Toddler (AKA two year old) program allows ample time for the children to use their newly gained large and small muscle skills. This age group is known for an explosion of language skills, and a heightened awareness of peer activities. Through exploration and carefully planned group activities, the children are able to further develop their language and social skills while becoming more independent. The teacher to child ratio in our older Toddler program is 1:4.

### Older Twos (age 2 1/2)

This unique age group shares the characteristics of both toddlers and preschoolers. Like toddlers, they are impulsive, and benefit from a smaller group size and more individual attention. However, like preschoolers, they are able to predict, develop new knowledge independent of their sensory experiences, and reflect on their learning activities. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher to child ratio in the Zebra room is 1:4. However, as the children mature, they benefit from a slightly larger group, leading to a 1:5 teacher to child ratio as the year progresses.

### Preschool (ages 3 to 5)

To meet the developmental and educational needs of children 3-5 years old we have created a unique program to: learn about basic Jewish Holidays and rituals, encourage thinking and problem – solving, develop an appreciation of books, reading and math skills, continue to develop social and self- help skills, and encourage kindergarten-readiness skills.

## Daily Activities

While the daily routine is different for each age group, there are certain common features for all age groups:

- Time to work in for small groups on activities initiated by a teacher (Small Group Time)
- Time for large group activities initiated by a teacher, such as music and movement (Large Group Time)
- Time for children to make their own choices (Work Time)
- Outside Time
- Meal Times – Snack and Lunch
- Rest Time

### Here is a sample of a daily routine:

8-9:00	Arrival.
9:00	Greeting Time
9:15	Small Group Time
9:30	Snack Time
9:45-10:45	Work Time (including planning and recall times in preschool programs)
10:45	Large Group Time
11:15	Outside Time
12:00	Lunch (usually earlier in toddler classrooms)
12:45	Morning-only children depart. (Last chance to pick up before 3pm)
12:45	Transition to rest time.
1:00-3:00	Rest Time (children can be picked up after this period)
3:15	Snack Time
3:30	Large Group Time
3:45	Work Time
4:45	Outside Time
5:30	ECC Closes.

### Attendance Blocks:

To ensure adequate staffing, we ask that each family pick a block of time in which your child will attend (8am-5pm; 8:30am-5:30pm, or 8am-5:30pm). We reserve the right to charge a \$2/day extended day fee for children selecting the 8am-5:30pm block of time. To ensure smooth entry into the classroom, we recommend dropping off your child no later than 9AM. Drop off and pick up between 12:45pm and 3pm is very disruptive to our classrooms' rest time. Therefore, pickup during these times is available for special circumstances only with advance notice.

### Enrichment Classes (ages 3 to 5)

These optional classes are available in the afternoon, between 1pm and 3pm. Offerings may include but are not limited to:

- Sports
- Outdoor Games
- Story stretchers
- Cooking
- Yoga
- Dance
- Gymnastics
- Art

### Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled on an individual class basis. Parents will always be notified in advance of a field trip. We use the AATA bus and occasionally school buses when transportation is needed. Field trips via bus are only for preschool rooms. Younger classrooms may venture as far as the Mallet's Creek branch of the AADL, which is close to the JCC.

### Rest Time

Days are busy here at the ECC, and children receive a tremendous amount of stimulation during the morning hours. State licensing regulations state that children younger than school-age who are in care for six or more hours a day must be provided with an undisturbed opportunity to rest. For details on rest time for different age groups, please see our expanded Rest Time Policy on page 13. See your child's classroom's welcome packet for information on what to bring for Rest Time.

### Pick up & Release of children

Children will be picked up from their classrooms. Anyone entering the JCC who is unknown by front desk staff will be asked to show picture identification by our Security Guard or front desk staff. Children may be released to other adults only if that adult's name is on the authorized pick-up list or permission has been given in writing by a parent. A driver's license or other picture ID will be requested by staff. Please inform your designated pick-up person of our identification requirement.

### Late Pick-up

A late fee of \$2 will be charged for every minute past the child's designated pick-up time that a parent or guardian is late in picking up a child. The late fee is to be paid directly to the waiting staff person at time of pick-up or billed to your account. Frequent late pick-up could result in termination of services.



## **Admission**

The JCC Early Childhood Program welcomes children of all backgrounds and abilities.

### *Preference for admission will be given as follows:*

1. Children currently enrolled who completed their contracts
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled
3. Children on the waiting list
4. Children of JCC members
5. Children of families who are members of affiliated Jewish institutions.
6. Children new to the program

A waiting list is maintained to fill any openings that become available during the school year. Placement is at the discretion of the Early Childhood Director.

### *To enroll your child in the JCC Early Childhood Center you need to:*

- Fill out an application form and provide an \$150 application fee
- At time of acceptance of spot, provide a non-refundable deposit of \$1500 that will be applied toward your child's final month of tuition when the necessary notice in writing has been provided.
- Provide acknowledgement of enrollment and acceptance of ECC policies and procedures (generally done via electronic form)
- Become a member of the Jewish Community Center.

### *Leave of Absence (children who will be gone for at least two full calendar months)*

Families sometimes travel throughout the year. To help these families, they can apply for a Leave of Absence. During the leave, families are responsible for tuition equal to two days per week to guarantee their space when they return. A schedule reduction fee applies.

### *Semester Leave*

Our semester leave policy is meant to meet the needs of academic/teaching families whose employment responsibilities change on a semester basis. Families taking a seasonal leave may reserve space in the program with the payment of a monthly space-holding fee of 25% of their child's regular fee per month.

### *Increase to Schedule*

Occasionally, child care needs change throughout the year. If space is available, a child's scheduled days may be permanently or temporarily increased through the ECC office. Adequate notice (see below) of schedule increases is required.

### *Decrease to Schedule*

#### ***The following guidelines will apply:***

For the first schedule decrease in a program year, a \$100 schedule reduction fee will apply. For each additional schedule decrease, the fee will increase by \$50 (the second decrease will be \$150, the third \$200, etc.)

- Notice of changes: Due to our billing process, one calendar months' notice of schedule reductions and one week's notice of schedule increases is required.
- Schedule decreases must be made for a minimum of two calendar months.

- Schedule decreases will only apply to full calendar months; we are unable to accommodate partial months.
- Please note that, whether the decrease be temporary or permanent, ability to return to the previous schedule is dependent on space availability and is not guaranteed.

### Termination of Services

There are a number of ways to end your child's enrollment at the ECC:

- The end date of the enrollment agreement indicates the termination date of services (unless parents complete the re-enrollment process conducted in the spring.)
- Transition to the JCC's Camp Raanana
- Parents may voluntarily withdraw their child prior to the end of the enrollment agreement with 60 days' written notice prior to June 1st. Your deposit will be applied to the final month(s). If proper notice is not given, you will forfeit your deposit and are still responsible for payment through your child's final month of attendance.

### Disenrollment

We will do everything possible to avoid a child's disenrollment from the center. However, there are circumstances in which this action becomes necessary. Here are some examples:

- Non-payment of tuition.
- A parent/guardian fails to abide by Center policies, or the requirements imposed by our state licensing agency, or requires us to perform actions that depart from our philosophy.
- If we are unable to meet a child's needs in the context of our program, after working with a family to take constructive steps to finding a solution, suspension or disenrollment may be necessary.
- Abusive behavior by a parent/guardian toward Center children, staff, or others in our building.

### Extra Days (When available)

Families with partial week schedules may arrange extra days ("drop-ins,") by contacting the ECC office ([eccoffice@jccannarbor.org](mailto:eccoffice@jccannarbor.org)). Drop-ins will be approved if space is available. Payment for extra days will be billed based on the child's tuition rate (see application for these fees). Note: afternoon drop-ins are only permitted as an addition to attendance in the morning. In addition, if space allows, you may request to "swap" a day of regular attendance during the same week. A small fee will apply (See application for fees). Swaps will not be allowed for closures for national holidays

We prefer drop in requests be made at least 24 hours in advance. The office will respond to requests during normal business hours (9am to 5pm). Same day requests will not be considered until 9am. We generally will not be able to consider drop in requests until a month in advance due to the possibility of permanent schedule changes or new enrollments. It is expected that extra days will be requested on an occasional basis. If you require frequent changes in days or hours, we request that you change your child's enrollment to better meet your needs.

### Weather

In case of severe weather, the ECC will follow this procedure:

- We will utilize Ann Arbor Public Schools closing decisions as a guide but not the only determining factor in what the JCC decides to do. The JCC will make its own independent

decision if weather is an issue and will alert all by 6:30 a.m. of our intentions if we are delayed or closed due to weather. If you do not hear from us by 6:30 a.m., assume we are proceeding with our normal opening schedule.

- If the JCC management determines that conditions are not safe for staff or children to travel, the JCC will close for the day and announcements will be made via email, autodialer, and on local news websites, televisions stations, and radio stations. These days are considered acts of nature and no tuition adjustments will be made.

#### Vacations, Holidays, other closures

The JCC Early Childhood Center is closed for national and Jewish holidays (see calendar on our website). In addition, ECC has one week off in December for winter break, up to 1 week in August/September for building cleaning, as well as one day each spring and the day before Thanksgiving for Professional Development. Tuition is calculated on an annual basis, and has been divided into monthly installments for parents' convenience. No reimbursements are given for days off, due to either center closure or child's absence.

### **Financial Aid**

#### Criteria

The JCC uses the Federal Poverty Guidelines and Federal Poverty Level (FPL), updated each year, as the baseline for determining financial aid. Applicant AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) must be at or below 250% FPL to qualify, although extenuating circumstances will be taken into account.

#### Required Documentation:

- Federal Tax Returns: All signed copies of the most recent Federal Tax returns and attached schedules are acceptable.
- Foreign Tax Returns: If you or your spouse filed a foreign tax return you must submit a signed copy of the most recent returns.
- Documentation of any other sources of financial assistance, or the lack thereof. (e.g. a statement from the University of Michigan financial aid office with the amount of any childcare subsidy awarded.)

Applicants must submit copies of these documents to the JCC in person or via email to [financialaid@jccannarbor.org](mailto:financialaid@jccannarbor.org)

#### Deadlines:

- March 15 - returning and new families
- June 1 - new families enrolling after the March 15 date

Application and required forms may be found on the ECC website at <https://ecc.jccannarbor.org/applying/financial-aid/>

## **Screening of staff and volunteers**

### Staff:

All childcare staff members in the state of Michigan are required to submit to screening via fingerprinting using the Michigan Childcare Background Check Program. Fingerprints are checked against State and Federal databases. The system designates candidates as employable or not employable according to state guidelines.

### Volunteers:

Volunteers at the JCC Early Childhood Center are never to have unsupervised contact with children. Volunteers fall into two categories: short-term and long-term. Short-term volunteers spend less than four hours/week in consecutive weeks in contact with children in the ECC. Short-term volunteers, such as parents, do not have to be screened. Long-term volunteers spend more than four hours/week in consecutive weeks in contact with children in the ECC. Long-term volunteers must submit documentation of a negative TB test.

## **Outdoor Play**

An important part of our daily program is outdoor play. The children get many benefits from the fresh air and exercise. This is the time for them to develop their gross motor skills by running, jumping, climbing, and riding various riding toys.

All children are expected to go outside. If children are too ill to play outside, they are too ill to be at the JCC. If there is a medical exception, please bring a doctor's note of explanation. Clothing needs for outdoor play change seasonally. See our list of clothing needs throughout the year in the Forms and Information section on our website.

### *Sunscreen*

During sunny warm weather, it is recommended that parents both leave sunscreen in their child's classroom and apply an all-day waterproof sunscreen to their child in the morning. The sunscreen left in the classroom will be used for "touch-up" on especially vulnerable areas (ears, nose,) and for afternoon application.

### *We go out to play during all seasons, with the following exceptions:*

- Extreme cold:
  - Infants (0-12 months) go outside when the temperature is above 20 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Toddlers (12-36 months) go outside when the temperature is above 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Preschoolers (3-5 years) go outside when the temperature is above 0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Elevated AQI numbers. We will follow EPA guidance regarding appropriate outdoor activity levels. For children with respiratory issues we will refer to their asthma actions plans.
- Rain. (unless it is a really comfortable summer rain!)

## **Items from Home**

Children often want to bring a treasured item from home. These are sometimes used by the child as objects of security. All items must be labeled in some way. Please point out to your child that the staff cannot be responsible for keeping track of these items. We request that your child not

bring toy weapons under any circumstances. Toys from home should fit in your child's backpack.

### **Discipline Policy**

The ECC uses a problem-solving approach to potential discipline issues. When children find themselves in difficult situations our staff has an opportunity to teach them how to solve their own problems. When children have the opportunity to work through difficult situations they are able to see how things work. They will also begin to see things from more than one perspective and develop self-confidence. Teachers are encouraged to interact with children rather than manage them. When teachers notice a problem situation they will sit down with child or children, give children a chance to use their own problem-solving skills. If other children are involved they will refer one child to another, listen to conflicting viewpoints and calmly assist with unresolved problems. We never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. We never use threats or derogatory remarks, and do not withhold nor threaten to withhold food, outside time, or participation in learning activities as a form of discipline.

### **Diapering & Toileting**

- Diapers, wipes and ointments are to be provided by parents and replenished periodically. Diapers are checked regularly and will be changed when soiled or wet.
- Parents choosing to use cloth diapers must supply an adequate daily supply, as well as a wet bag for storage of soiled diapers.
- Diapering will be done in a designated diapering area which will be cleaned before and after each change with soap, water, and bleach solutions.
- Toilet training will be planned cooperatively between the parent and the child's primary caregiver so that the toilet routine established is consistent between the child's home and the Center. Please see our Toilet Training Policy on page 15 for more details.

### **Consistency of Care**

We strive to assure that children have consistent caregivers throughout the day, week, year, and over the course of multiple years. This consistency is critical for developing the emotional attachments that are so valuable for children's emotional well-being and cognitive development. We make every effort to ensure classroom teaching teams remain consistent for the duration of the child's time in the classroom, typically from June to June. In the case of teachers absence and resulting substitute coverage, measures are taken to minimize the number of teachers children work with each week.

### **Confidentiality**

All information concerning individual children is kept on file in the main office, on password protected local computers and on SSL encrypted remote servers. All financial information pertaining to individual families is kept in a computer file in the office of the Finance Director. People who have access to a child's files include: the ECC Director and Assistant Director, the child's classroom teachers, the child's parents, and the child care Administrative Coordinator. Only the Financial Director and the family have access to a family's financial information. Files must not leave the Front Office as long as a child is enrolled in School. Whereas we respect the confidentiality of children's health assessments, these must be reviewed by our licensing agency,

the Michigan Department of Human Resources. Files or information from the file may be released to schools or other agencies only with a signed parental consent form. Information about a child or his family is confidential and may not be shared with other families.

### **Communication between Parent and School**

Communication between the Center and parent is an important part of forming a partnership. When communication is a two-way channel strong partnerships are formed and your child will really benefit.

- Remind is a messaging service that allows you and your child's teachers to communicate quick messages with you via notification, email, or text without the use of cell phones. Please create an account with "Remind". You can do this on the website, or download the App from the Apple Store or Google Play. Once signed in, you will be prompted to search for your child's school (JCC of Greater Ann Arbor) and enter a classroom code for your child.
  - Bunny: @bunny35
  - Duck: @duck35
  - Lamb: @lamb35
  - Zebra: @zebras35
  - Giraffe: @giraffe35
  - Kangaroo: @kanga35
- Remind should be used only for messages that can be answered with one or two words or a thumbs up or down symbol. Remind does not lend itself to substantial responses.
- Substantial messages for teachers should be in e-mail form. Email allows for teachers to take the time to do any research or consultation necessary to address concerns or questions.
- Teachers will regularly post stories, anecdotes, and pictures on CORAdvantage, our child documentation application. You will receive a notification when a new story about your child has been posted. Feel free to respond!
- Children under 2.5 years of age will receive a report created using Daily Note via email at the end of the day. This report will include information about food, bottle/milk intake, naps, and other relevant topics.
- Throughout the year, parents and teachers will have information to share about children, school and family. A change of routine at home or at the Center, conflicts with another child, or a particularly amusing anecdote may all warrant a brief conversation. It is important to discuss these topics when all children are out of ear-shot. If a teacher is unable to leave their group at drop-off or pick-up time, you may call the front desk to leave a message and a teacher will return your call as soon as possible.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on a regular basis. You will be notified by your child's classroom teachers about scheduled conference times. Parents are also welcome to request a parent-teacher conference at any time.
- Classroom teachers will send home a brief newsletter weekly or bi-weekly, depending on your child's age group. The newsletter will give families an overview of the week and any announcements for the next week. All-school emails are also sent out on a regular basis. Children under two-and-a-half have daily reports sent home as well.

### **Developmental Assessment and Screening**

The ECC uses CORAdvantage to assess children's continuing development. The stories, anecdotes, and pictures that teachers post serve several purposes:

1. Ongoing illustration of children's experience in the classroom.
2. A basis for making plans for children's activities in the classroom, leading to an overall more responsive program.

Teachers are trained in how to write learning stories and provide analysis of child development illustrated by these stories. Teachers are trained to use the HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) categories as a tool for analysis. Teachers are able to get a full picture of a child's development after 3-4 months of documentation via CORAdvantage.

The ECC uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire on occasion to developmentally screen children in our care. These questionnaires are a screening tool only, and are used only to flag potential areas for further evaluation. Teachers are also trained in the scoring and analysis of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, as completed by the parents.

### **Absence**

If your child will not be attending school because of illness, a family vacation or any other reason, please email ([eccoffice@jccannarbor.org](mailto:eccoffice@jccannarbor.org)) or send a Remind to Peretz, Emily, and Susan. For planned absences, you may instead fill out the google form on the parent section of our website.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are an important and valuable component of our program and your participation ensures an educational experience where home and school cooperates in the best interest of the child.

Parents can participate by:

- Chaperoning on field trips (preschool rooms)
- Volunteering to be a class parent
- Joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA)\*
- Sharing your passions and expertise with the children and/or the teachers.
- Joining the Steering Committee\*\*

\*Our PTA consists of the ECC Director, PTA chairperson, teachers, classroom parents from all of our rooms, and all interested parents. The PTA's function is to discuss and plan appropriate family programs, fundraising projects, and general policies of the program.

\*\*The Steering Committee may consist of the ECC Director, experts in the field of Early Childhood Education, JCC board members, teacher representatives, current or former parents, and interested community members. The function of this committee is to discuss long range goals, and to help set policy.

### *Classroom Visits*

The ECC operates with an Open Door Policy. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit their children in our program at any time and to take an active role in the daily routine of their child.



Prospective parents and their children are welcome to tour and visit our center at their convenience during center operating hours. Appointments are not necessary and center personnel encourage visiting the program. It is recommended that tours not be given from 1-3 p.m. while the children in attendance are resting. However we will give tours during that time if requested.

### **Grievance Policy:**

Your feedback is critical to our process of self-improvement. Therefore any/all feedback is greatly appreciated and can be made to the Early Childhood Director/Assistant Director. If you feel that there is a problem concerning the program, or a member of our staff, please follow the steps as listed:

1. Speak with your child's teacher
2. Give your child's teacher time to follow up
3. If you feel your concerns have not been addressed, please make an appointment to personally speak with the Directors.
4. If you feel that the Early Childhood Director has not addressed your concerns, please make an appointment to speak with the JCC's Executive Director.

Note: To respect the confidentiality of all parties, grievances should not be discussed with any party not directly involved with the resolution of the grievance.

### **Food & Nutrition Policy**

The ECC is committed to providing a safe and educational environment for children. The following food policy was adopted by the Early Childhood Center Steering Committee in July of 2012 and is in accordance with the nutritional practices suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as the United States Department of Health & Human Services' Dietary Guidelines for Children. The policy aims to ensure that children at the ECC will be fed healthy foods and will learn good habits about eating and nutrition.

#### *Kashrut*

The JCC is a dairy building. Snacks served out of our kitchen are kosher. On a very rare occasion we are unable to source a snack with the appropriate hechsher (these are not served from our kitchen.) If you would like more information about the kashrut status of our snacks, please contact us and we would be happy to share hashgacha information with you.

#### *Milk*

Milk is served as a beverage once or twice a day, with meals and/or non-dairy snacks at the ECC. The ECC will provide up to 8 oz of milk daily. If your child needs milk in bottles or more frequently than at meals/snacks, please provide milk for your child. Calder Dairy supplies our milk, which is delivered weekly. Whole milk is served to children from 12 months to 24 months. Fat-free or low-fat milk is served to children older than 24 months. All food and beverages that will be used on more than one day must be brought in unopened and then disposed of within a week. (Families who provide milk alternatives should bring the containers unopened and plan on bringing a new container each week.)



### *Foods that are NOT Permitted in the Center*

No meat or shellfish products are permitted in the center. Products made from fish with scales and gills are permissible. NO NUT PRODUCTS ARE PERMITTED in the ECC. This means no peanuts or peanut derivatives (such as peanut butter) and no tree nuts or tree nut derivatives. For our purposes, Coconut is considered a fruit rather than a tree nut.

### *Bringing Food in for the Class*

Due to licensing restrictions and the prevalence of food allergies and other dietary restrictions, we do NOT allow outside food to be brought into the classroom to be shared with other children. Exceptions to this rule exist for birthdays and other very special celebrations ONLY. Before choosing what to bring for a celebration, you MUST consult with your child's classroom teachers so that we can include children with allergies and other food restrictions in the celebration. Items brought to school for these occasions MUST be either unopened, packaged food with ingredients labeled or fresh uncut fruit. If you choose to bring baked goods, they must be small portions (mini-cupcakes, 2-bite brownies, etc.)

We do not want to have to upset you or your child by sending away other special treats that he/she prepared with you for the classroom, so PLEASE keep this policy in mind.

### *Snacks*

Snacks make up an important part of a child's nutrition. Given the small size of children's stomachs, they cannot eat enough food at meals alone to sustain their high-energy needs. As a result, they need to eat smaller portions more frequently. Experts indicate that most children should eat three meals and two or three healthy snacks each day. Children frequently help prepare and serve snacks and are encouraged to develop an interest in healthy foods. The ECC provides a morning and an afternoon snack to all children. Our current snack menu may be found online. If your child has any dietary restrictions, work with your child's teacher to store a small amount of alternative snacks in the classroom, as the snack menu occasionally changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

### *Timing of Snacks*

We recognize the importance of spacing out children's food intake throughout the day. As a result, we try to ensure that snacks are offered at least 2 hours before and after meals. Toward that end, we typically offer our morning snacks around 10 a.m. and our afternoon snacks around 3:30 p.m.

### *Type of Food*

The ECC is committed to offering children a variety of snack foods while ensuring that they develop healthy eating habits. Toward that end, we provide healthy snack foods that are a good source of nutrients as well as calories. We strive to provide snacks from all five of the major food groups including the grain group; the vegetable group; the fruit group; the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts group; and the dairy group. We have regular two-week rotating snack menu, which is emailed out at the start of the year, can be emailed again upon request, or downloaded from our website.

*Portion Size*

Experts suggest giving children less than you think that they will eat and encouraging children who are hungry to ask for more. This teaches the children to self-regulate and not over-eat. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends beginning snacks by serving one tablespoon of food for each year of a child’s age. In accordance with that recommendation, we begin snack time by serving each child an appropriate, pre-measured amount of food. Children can then ask for more if they are still hungry.

*Choking Hazards*

We only feed children food that is cut into sizes appropriate for their respective ages and are mindful to avoid any potential choking hazards. Should a parent send a child with a food that is a known choking hazard for that age group, teachers will refrain from serving that item and send the food back unopened.

*Lunch*

Children may bring lunch or participate in our optional hot lunch program. As emphasized above, all lunches must be meat-free and nut-free. Families choosing to participate in our hot lunch program may pre-order lunches for their children on a monthly basis. You need not provide drinks. The JCC will provide milk or water to children along with their lunches.

Refrigerators are available to cool home lunches. We cannot heat home lunches. If you would like a portion of your child’s lunch to be served warm, please send in a thermos

*Suggestions for Lunch (without meat or nuts):*

Raw vegetables and hummus	Cottage cheese & fruit	Tuna/egg salad	Hummus and Pita
Vegetable salads	Yogurt & fruit	Soy Nut or Sunflower seed butter sandwiches	Vegetable & cheese in pita
Fish sticks	Bagel & cream cheese	Pasta	Hard boiled eggs
String cheese			

*Holiday-Related Food Activities*

Every Friday, we have a Center-wide Tot Shabbat during which the children eat a piece of challah and drink a small cup of grape juice. Each room in the Center prepares challah at the end of each week for the children to bring home. In addition, there are occasionally food-related events to celebrate Jewish holidays. For example, the children often sample different kinds of fruits as part of the festival of Tu b’Shevat. The children eat apples and honey to bring in a sweet new year during Rosh Hashanah. Whenever there is food related to a holiday, we try to educate the children about the meaning of the food and its connection to the holiday.

### Mother's Milk, Formula, and Baby Food

Licensing requirements for formula and food for infants and toddlers are as follows:

1. Breast milk, formula, milk, or other beverages provided in a same-day supply shall be furnished daily in either of the following:
  - a. Clean, sanitary, ready-to-feed bottles or beverage containers.
  - b. A clean, sanitary, beverage container. The beverage shall be poured into a clean, sanitary bottle or beverage container before each feeding.
2. Breast milk, formula, milk, other beverages, and food furnished in a same-day supply shall be covered and labeled with the child's first and last name, the date, and contents. Breast milk must also include the date and time expressed.
3. Any food or beverages furnished in a same-day supply shall be returned to the parent at the end of the day or discarded.
4. Milk, other beverages, and non-perishable food items may be furnished in a multi-day supply in an unopened commercial container.
5. Milk and other beverages (such as soy or goat's milk) furnished in a multi-day supply shall be labeled with the child's first and last name and the date of opening and shall be returned to the parent or discarded 7 days after opening.
6. Non-perishable food items furnished in a multi-day supply shall be labeled with the date of opening and when applicable, the first and last name of the child for whom its use is intended.
7. Beverages and food shall be fed only to the child for whom the item is labeled.
8. Breast milk, formula, and milk shall be refrigerated until used. Unfinished and unrefrigerated formula or breast milk must be discarded after one hour.
9. Other perishable beverages and food items shall be refrigerated or otherwise kept at a safe temperature until used.
10. Frozen breast milk can be stored at the ECC for up to 14 days. It must be brought in frozen and stored in an appropriate container labeled with name and date.

When children switch to milk, the following rules apply:

- Whole milk is served to children from 12 months to 24 months. Fat-free or low-fat milk is served to children older than 24 months.
- Milk is served as a beverage once or twice a day, at designated meal and/or snack times. It is served in an age appropriate cup and should not be used as a substitute for food. If the child requires more milk than this, parents may send extra from home.
- All food and beverages that will be used on more than one day must be brought in unopened and then disposed of within a week. (Families who provide milk alternatives should bring the containers unopened and plan on bringing a new container each week.)

### **Special Day Celebrations**

Families celebrate their children's birthdays in different ways. The ECC recognizes and respects these differences. We are also aware that a little bit of excitement goes a long way in groups of young children. We intentionally keep birthday observance low-key.

We encourage you to consult with your child's teacher to make birthday arrangements for either a birthday treat or a non-food-related activity. (Children love it when a parent donates a book to the classroom and comes to read it to the class on the child's birthday!)

Before choosing what to bring for a celebration, you **MUST** consult with your child's classroom teachers so that we can include children with allergies and other food restrictions in the celebration. Items brought to school for these occasions **MUST** be either unopened, packaged food with ingredients labeled or fresh, uncut fruit. If you choose to bring baked goods, they must be small portions (mini-cupcakes, 2-bite brownies, etc.). **NO OTHER FORM OF OUTSIDE FOOD WILL BE PERMITTED FOR ANY SPECIAL DAY CELEBRATION.**

Unless all children in the child's class are going to be invited, please do not distribute party invitations at the Center. Over the years, we have seen too many children and parents with hurt feelings when parents have invited some, but not all, of the children from a classroom.

### **Allergy Policy**

We recognize the importance of carefully supervising children with food allergies. The children's safety is always our first priority. The administration, staff, and teachers have had training about how to handle children with food allergies and what to do in the event of an allergic reaction, and we have developed detailed protocols for handling food allergy issues in the classrooms.

If your child has a food allergy, please indicate the type of allergy, the symptoms of an allergic reaction, and the medical response required (e.g. Benadryl or epinephrine) on your enrollment forms. Most allergists will provide their patients with an allergy action form that contains this information. If you have an allergy action form already, please attach a copy of it to your enrollment papers. Once you have told us that your child has a food allergy, a member of our staff will contact you to discuss what accommodations need to be made to ensure that your child is safe.

Whenever there is a food allergy in the classroom, our teachers work with the child's parents to ensure that the eating environment is safe for that child. When necessary, we provide separate dishware and silverware for children and have separate cleaning processes to ensure that there is no cross-contamination with known allergens. We require all children to wash their hands at the beginning of the day as well as after snacks and meals. When there is a food allergy in the room, we send materials home to other parents (a) to inform them that there is an allergy in the room and (b) to educate them about how they can pack lunches that minimize the risk of exposure to an allergen. We also make seating arrangements at lunch to ensure that a child with allergies is not exposed to known allergens.

We have a policy of including all children in our classroom activities and pride ourselves on making the environment accessible to and fun for all of the children. As a result, we limit the number of food-related activities and work with parents to ensure that when food is going to be in the room, kids with allergies are safe and not excluded from classroom activities.

## **Health and Illness Policy**

Our program supports health and wellness in an environment designed to ensure children are able to participate healthily, happily, and wholeheartedly in the activities of the ECC.

Classrooms are cleaned and sanitized by teachers on a daily basis. Nighttime janitorial staff follows the NAEYC cleaning and sanitization table when cleaning the entire Center.

When a contagious illness has been diagnosed by a medical professional, the illness, signs and symptoms, treatments, and precautionary steps to avoid spreading the illness will be shared with the classroom community via email. Only the illness will be communicated; family and children's confidentiality will be maintained. When your child has a contagious illness, notify the teachers and/or ECC office.

Our approach to illness is that if a child is well enough to be in the Center, he/she is well enough to go outdoors and participate in all activities. However, if your child has an existing health condition that requires limited participation in certain activities, a doctor's note should be kept on file. We have this policy so that we are able to maintain low teacher: to child ratios throughout the day.

For the safety and well-being of the children, families, and staff, it may not be appropriate for an ill child to remain at the Center. The following are some indicators of illness:

- Significant changes in a child's activity level or behavior that prevents the child from comfortably participating in routine activities while at the Center.
- Symptoms of illness, such as excessive coughing, breathing difficulties, diarrhea, vomiting, loss of appetite, etc.
- Significant change in how the body temperature feels to the touch or the child's appearance comments or complaints from the child indicating illness

We urge you to observe your child and not to bring him/her to the ECC when an illness appears to be starting or is in progress. Parents are encouraged to develop networks so that they will have "emergency backup" child care when needed.

Please come quickly when we call to inform you that your child is sick. If a child is sent home for a possible contagious illness we may require a note from your doctor stating that your child is no longer contagious before your child may return to school. Children should return only when they are well enough to participate fully in the program. If an antibiotic has been prescribed for your child, he/she must be on the antibiotic at least 24 hours before returning to school, unless otherwise indicated by your doctor (in the case of an ear infection, a child may return after being on medication for 12 hours, as long as there are no signs of discomfort or fever.)

If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be sent home. Your emergency card must include current information about where parents can be reached and the person(s) authorized to pick the child up in case of illness. Carefully consider your emergency contacts, making sure that someone is reachable in case of emergency.

### Immunization

Upon enrollment, children must have had at least one dose of each immunization as specified by the Department of Community Health. At the start of enrollment children must be certified as

up-to-date on immunizations. The only exception to this policy is in the case of a Medically Contraindicated vaccination exemption, for children who are medically unable to be vaccinated on schedule and have proper documentation from a physician. In the case of a local outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, children with incomplete vaccination records showing any symptoms may be requested to be removed from care immediately until cleared by a doctor.

#### Physical Exam

At the start of initial enrollment, we require a physical evaluation signed by a licensed health care provider. This evaluation must be within the last 3 months for infants, 6 months for toddlers, and one year for preschoolers.

#### Medication

Written permission is needed for staff members to give medication to children using a Special Instruction Sheet for Medication, which can be found in the ECC office or on the ECC website. All medication shall be in its original container, stored according to instructions, and clearly labeled for a named child. Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given according to those instructions. If the label is missing, you may have your doctor's office fax us a medication permission form. Non-prescription medication must be accompanied with specific instructions for use. ALL medications and accompanying forms must be given directly to the ECC administrative staff. Non-rescue medications will be kept in the ECC office. Rescue medications such as inhalers or epi-pens will be passed on to classroom teachers and stored with classroom emergency supplies. Medication forms will be reviewed regularly, and parents may be asked to provide new updated forms.

#### Conditions for Exclusion due to Illness:

##### *Fever:*

Fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4° or higher, as measured with a temporal thermometer. Children may not return to the center until fever is no longer present for 24-hours, without the use of fever-reducing agents.

##### *Vomiting:*

Caregivers will be careful that vomiting is not mistaken for "spitting up" or other mild digestive disturbance. Keep your child home until the longer of these two conditions apply:

1. There has been no vomiting for 24 hours
2. The child can hold down two meals without vomiting,

##### *Diarrhea:*

Children, especially infants, may have incidents of diarrhea that are not necessarily a sign of illness. There are three conditions under which diarrhea would require exclusion.

1. Frequent loose stools (3 in an hour period)
2. Diarrhea that leaks out from diapers and clothing. In this case diarrhea presents a health hazard regardless of the cause.
3. Diarrhea combined with other symptoms.

Children may return to care when symptoms resolve (resolution is defined as normal frequency and close to normal consistency of stools)

*Rash:*

Any illness involving a rash is to be checked by a physician. The child should stay at home until the rash has resolved, or your child's physician indicates that the rash is not contagious. Exceptions to this are rashes from known causes, such as allergic reactions or diaper rash.

*Pink-eye and like diseases:*

Red eye with pus discharge is highly contagious and is to be checked by a physician. If your doctor decides that your child needs treatment with antibiotic eye drops your child may not return to school until he/she has been on drops for greater than 24 hours. Otherwise your child must stay home until symptoms resolve or he/she is cleared to return by your doctor.

*Head Lice:*

Although head lice are not dangerous, they are easily transferred from child to child. Therefore we require a child to be lice and nit free before returning to school. Manual removal of lice and nits is the only way to be sure that lice and nits are no longer present.

*Respiratory Illnesses:*

The CDC is now grouping a number of illnesses under the heading "Respiratory Illnesses" and providing blanket guidance regarding exclusion from and return to care. These illnesses include those caused by the following viruses: COVID, Influenza (A and B), and RSV. Children with respiratory illnesses may return to care when, for at least 24 hours they:

- Are fever-free without fever-reducing medications. AND
- Symptoms are getting better overall AND
- They will not have a "bad day"

*Other Illnesses/Conditions:*

Exclusion will be required for a number of other illnesses when symptoms are identified at the ECC. Guidance on conditions requiring exclusion is provided by the Washtenaw County Department of Health. We may issue addenda to this policy in case of new conditions.



## **Rest Time Policy**

We believe that children in child care for a significant time of day must have time to rest. Children's time at the ECC is highly stimulating; more so than their average day at home. Rest time allows a child's brain to process the morning's experience, to rest and grow as well as give a child's body time to recharge. For effective rest, children must have a relaxing environment free of distractions in which each child has their own sleeping space. Children in the care of the JCC ECC's full day program are given the opportunity to rest / sleep every day after lunch time, roughly around 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Below, please find the guidelines we follow when it comes to rest/nap time within the different age groups. Note: some of these ranges overlap; rest needs change not only according to chronological age, but also when major development is occurring, and according to the maturation of a cohort of children.

### Infants

Children sleep on demand. Infant schedules are highly individualized, as their needs are changing rapidly.

### Under 18 months

Children have the opportunity to sleep on demand. However, in order to limit distractions, maximize the opportunity for group times, and help children move to a group routine, the teachers will attempt to condense rest times into one or two "regular" naptimes based around the schedules of the children. One of these times may be in the morning.

### 18 - 30 months

Children are given the opportunity to rest/nap for 2.5 hours. The lights in the classroom are turned off for 2.5 hours or until most children are awake. As children wake up and it is clear that their nap is over and that they aren't going back to sleep, children who are not developmentally able to be considerate of their sleeping peers may leave their classroom to allow other children time to sleep.

### 30-42 months

Children are given the opportunity to rest/nap for 2 hours. The lights in the classroom will be turned off for at least 2 hours. After an hour of rest, children who are awake are supplied with quiet activities on their cot.



### Preschool Rooms

Children are given the opportunity to rest/nap for 2 hours. The lights in the classroom will be off for no more than 2 hours. After 45 minutes, children who are awake are supplied with quiet activities on their cot. After 1 hour, children who are awake may leave the room to engage in activities elsewhere in the center.

Parents and Teachers should consult with one another about children's sleep patterns, in order to best meet the needs of the children in our care. In conjunction with these consultations, we may be able to limit the amount of help we give children to fall asleep, and the length of time they sleep. Note: these guidelines may be superseded due to unexpected child supervision needs.

## **Toilet Training Policy**

### *What We Believe*

- Children must be emotionally and physically ready to toilet train
- Children need to feel successful in their toilet training journey. When children feel they are failing, they regress.
- Accidents are a natural and expected part of toilet training.
- Toilet training efforts are most likely to be successful when children are not undergoing any other major change (such as transitioning classrooms, moving houses, switching from a crib to a bed, expecting a new sibling, etc.).
- Offering an element of child choice and control is an essential part of a child's success.
- Consistency and communication between home and school is a necessity.

### *Toilet Training Signs*

Major signs that a child is ready to begin toilet training include:

- Showing an interest in using the toilet
- Noticing when his or her diaper is wet/soiled
- Expressing discomfort in a wet or soiled diaper
- Ability to stay dry for extended periods during the day (approximately two hours)
- Able to pull pants up and down
- Uses words or signs to indicate that he or she needs to use the toilet

When a child is showing readiness in most of these areas, we are ready to start toilet training!

### *Our Strategy*

- We will start with a conversation between the child's teacher(s) and parent(s). This conversation might be initiated by the parent or by the teacher. During this conversation, we will talk about methods, consistency between home and school, and steps we can and cannot take during the toilet training process.
- We will encourage the child to sit on the toilet at scheduled diaper changes. This may happen before the "formal" toilet training process begins, as it may be one of the first signs of readiness. We will encourage a child to sit, but we will not force a child.
- As a child begins to use the toilet successfully, we will talk with the parent about next steps. These next steps may include increasing opportunities to try the toilet (between scheduled diaper changes), using pull-ups and/or underpants under a diaper, instituting a rewards system for toilet success (such as stickers or small treats,) or doing short periods of time in underpants. (Pull-ups may be an appropriate intermediate step) These next steps will be determined jointly between the teacher(s) and parent(s).
- After a child is both consistently using the toilet successfully and staying dry for extended periods of time, we then recommend the switch to underpants. This switch should be done at home first, as that is where the child is most comfortable. We recommend doing this over the weekend or a holiday, to give the child time to get comfortable at home in underpants first. A teacher may recommend making the switch to underwear, or the parent(s) may discuss making the switch. Either way, the parent(s) and teacher(s) should communicate about when this is happening.

- We understand that accidents will happen. If and when accidents occur, children will be supported and reassured. We will not punish or shame a child for having an accident. We recommend sending lots of spare clothes -- pants, underpants, and even socks and shirts -- in case of accidents.
- In keeping in line with our belief that children should feel successful on this journey, if a child is having multiple accidents and showing signs of frustration, we will put the child back in a diaper in order to limit feelings of being unsuccessful. If this happens, we will continue to treat the diaper as underpants (suggesting the child keep it dry and use the toilet) and we will be happy to try underpants again the next day or when everyone feels ready to try again. Moving back to a diaper is NOT a failure.
- We want a child to have as much control as possible over his or her toilet training process. Thus, we will ask and encourage a toilet training child to do as much of it as possible by themselves (pulling pants up and down, flushing the toilet, washing hands, and if still in diapers, taking off wet diapers, etc.). Additionally, we will (with adult supervision) ask children who have had an accident to change his or her wet clothes. While we will offer/recommend children use the toilet, we will never force them if they insist they do not have to.
- Naps -- It often takes children longer to gain bladder control while asleep than while awake. Just as we watch for children to remain dry for periods of time before making the switch to underwear, we will also look for children to wake up dry from nap for several days before making the switch to underwear at nap time. This may happen at the same time as making the switch to underwear (if the child has been waking up dry from nap consistently before making that switch) or the child may continue to use diapers or pull-ups at nap while wearing underwear the rest of the day.
- A note on toilet rewards: We believe that this is the one area where rewarding a child may have great benefits. Based on a parent's preference, we are willing to do small rewards or treats (such as stickers, fruit snacks, M&Ms, or jelly beans) for toileting success. These rewards should be provided by the parents, and stay in line with the JCC food policy (no meat, nuts, or choking hazards). This is not a necessity; if parents choose not to offer rewards we will continue to toilet train without rewards.

### Some Other Guidelines

- Movable potty chairs can only be used in a designated bathroom/diaper room. (This is due to licensing and health code requirements.)
- Children must wear underwear and bottoms. (This is because the danger of urine or feces ending up on the floor poses a health risk to the other children.)
- If a child does have an accident, they must change out of wet/soiled clothing immediately. (This is due to licensing and health code requirements.)
- We will ask a child to try the toilet approximately every hour and a half to two at the beginning. Asking more frequently than that interrupts too much of the child's play, and doesn't allow for a smooth activity period for either the child who is toilet training or the other children in the class. If a child initiates a request to go more frequently than that, however, it will be honored.

- We use only positive reinforcement methods. (Any shaming or punishment goes against our beliefs and philosophy).
- A child will only be asked to sit on the toilet for as long as he or she is willing. (Forcing a child to sit goes against our beliefs and philosophy).

## **Abuse and Neglect Policy**

Michigan law provides for the reporting to the Department Human Services (DHS) when there is a reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. Child care personnel are mandated reporters. The ECC takes very seriously the trust that families place in us when enrolling their children in our school. Essential to that trust must be a parents'/guardians' belief that the ECC considers physical, sexual, or emotional abuse intolerable and that immediate action will be taken if such an allegation is made.

Parents/guardians should be assured of the following procedures in the event of an allegation of child abuse or neglect:

- Any observation/incident that results in the suspicion of abuse or neglect will be reported immediately to the Director.
- The alleged victim will be of primary concern regarding safety, protection, and comfort.
- The director, in concert with the Executive Director of the JCA, will determine what action should be taken.
- If it is determined that a report is warranted, the accusation, suspicion, or risk of harm will be reported immediately to the DHS abuse and neglect hotline
- The ECC will cooperate fully with any institutional abuse investigation.
- The ECC will act responsibly when the investigation is over to ensure that all children in our program are protected.
- The director will keep the JCC Executive Director and board president apprised of the status of the allegation.
- If it is determined that a report is not warranted, the observation/incident will be documented, and the director will report back to the initiator the rationale for this decision.