

# Robert J. Wilf Preschool and Kindergarten at the Kaiserman JCC 2023-2024 Parent Handbook



A GREAT PLACE TO GROW



Kaiserman JCC  
Wynnewood, PA

# THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM

What is the Creative Curriculum?

- Thematic approach to teaching and learning
- Designed to support children's natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity.
- Based on well-known theories of child development.
- Offers children the opportunity to work in depth, giving them the time, they need to reflect, consolidate and transfer their learning.

Our curriculum identifies goals in four areas of development:

**Social/emotional:** to help children develop independence, self-confidence, and self-control, follow rules and routines, make friends, and learn what it means to be part of a group.

**Physical:** to increase children's large muscle skills – balancing, running, jumping, throwing, and catching – and use the small muscles in their hands to do tasks like buttoning, stringing beads, cutting, drawing, and writing.

**Cognitive:** to acquire thinking skills such as the ability to solve problems, to ask questions, and to think logically – sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, and making patterns – and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.

**Language:** to use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose.

## FIRST TIME SAYING GOOD-BYE

When your child goes to preschool, they are taking a “big step” toward independence.

Many children have difficulty separating and feel anxious about their new environment. The separation may well have the same effect on you! It is important to have a positive attitude to convey the expectation that your child will have a wonderful time at preschool. When leaving your child at school, it is helpful to direct him/her to an activity in the room or to a teacher. Give him/her a clear goodbye. The teachers will take over and engage your child and start developing a relationship of trust and comfort. No matter how tempting it might be to slip out unnoticed, you will violate your child's trust if you leave without saying good-bye.

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Early Care 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM  
Regular day 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM  
Half Day dismissal 12:30 PM  
Late Care 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

If a substitute is picking up, your child will not be released without notice from a parent. Even with consent, if the Director or teachers are not familiar with that person, they will be asked to show I.D. when meeting them for the first time.

## PARKING LOT SAFETY

- Please drive slowly around the building; do not exceed 10 mph.
- Please be mindful of children during preschool arrival and dismissal.
- Please drive slowly around the building; do not exceed 10 mph. Follow directional arrows.
- Be careful when passing vehicles.
- Only Park in LEGAL parking spots.
- Only use the designated handicapped spots if you have the appropriate placard.
- Do not leave your car motor running and unattended for any reason
- When parking, be mindful to only use one spot

## TOYS FROM HOME

Although toys from home are discouraged, we realize some children may need a toy from home to make entry into the classroom easier. If your child brings something from home, the teachers will, at some point, suggest that your child put the toy in their cubby. Toy weapons and valuable toys should not be brought to school. Please make sure the toys are labeled with your child's name.

## NOTES HOME

Please be sure to check your child's bag regularly for notices. You will also receive emails from school with important information and weekly newsletters. Newsletters will have a link to a weekly photo album

## CONTACTING THE PRESCHOOL

The administration and teaching staff are empathetic to your concerns. However, teachers need to give the children in their care undivided attention; they are not always able to leave the classroom to speak on the telephone. Please refrain from texting or calling teachers on their cell phones during the school day. If you need to contact your child's teacher or have a message passed along, please call or email the school directly.

Director, Amy Foster:  
610-896-7770 x 118  
610-585-2419 (Cell phone)  
[afoster@phillyjcc.com](mailto:afoster@phillyjcc.com)

Assistant Director, Natalie O'Brien:  
610-896-7770 x 119  
[nobrien@phillyjcc.com](mailto:nobrien@phillyjcc.com)

Director of Teaching and Learning:  
[erezavker@phillyjcc.com](mailto:erezavker@phillyjcc.com)

You will receive weekly emails from teachers letting you know what happened in class that week and what to expect the following week.

## TEXT MESSAGING

We use a text messaging communication tool. This helps us connect instantly with parents through quick, simple text messages. We will use this as a way of communicating anything important.

## LATE ARRIVAL

Infants, Toddlers, Two's and Three's: We request children be dropped off no later than 11:00 AM so as not to disrupt the children who are already in school getting ready for lunch and nap.

## CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

Washable play clothes that can get messy are best! Clothing that is easy to manage in the bathroom makes preschool children more independent.

Please label everything your child wears or brings to school.

Please send in a full set of extra clothes to be kept in a labeled container in your child's cubby.

## POTTY TRAINING

Please understand teaching staff cannot potty train your child. Children are all individuals and will train at their own rate. If you are working on this at home, discuss your child's toilet training progress with teachers. They can work with you to encourage your child. Fully trained children use the toilet for both bowel movements and urination and can verbally state the need to use the bathroom.

Please do not send your child to school in underwear until they are able to do all the above. If your child has several accidents each day, they are not fully trained. If you have any questions, feel free to talk to your child's teachers or the Directors.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent – Teacher conferences are held in January for 3's, 4's, and K's only. School will be closed on this day. Your child's teacher will assign a mutually acceptable time for your conference during the day.

Please be aware that you don't have to wait for conferences to find out how your child is doing. Your child's teacher will be happy to discuss your child's progress with you at any time during the school year. Please call to set up an appointment or phone conference.

## VOLUNTEERS

The Child Protective Services Law requires all volunteers who are "responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children" to submit 3 background checks before being allowed to volunteer. The law defines direct contact as the "care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children." The background checks must be reissued every 36 months. This law applies to anyone spending time in the classroom and responsible for children as a volunteer or on field trips as a chaperone. This law does not apply to parents who are coming in to celebrate birthdays, nurse babies, read a book to the class, drop off or pick up children or bring something like a forgotten lunch box. Please see the Preschool Office for directions on how to apply for these clearances.

# LUNCH & SNACK

## **Nut Free**

There are children in our Preschool who are medically diagnosed with severe food allergies - peanuts and tree nuts. For the safety of these students, our school is a "nut-free school". When you send lunch or snacks for your child or anything for the class (for your child's birthday, special program, etc.) please avoid all food products that contain any tree-nuts, peanuts and peanut oil as ingredients.

While peanut butter is an obvious food that contains peanuts, you may be surprised at the variety of items that use peanut oil or are prepared in the same facility as other items with peanut products. These too can pose life-threatening situations. Please be aware of labels. When in doubt about a particular product, please ask.

## **Kashrut**

The Preschool classrooms 2 years and older follow the Kashrut policy of the Kaiserman JCC. All food brought into the school by parents must be dairy or vegetarian, and all of the food supplied by the school will be strictly kosher. All foods that are shared in class and school activities must have a kosher symbol on them. This policy reflects a sensitivity to and awareness of the diverse practices within the Jewish community. *The Nursery and Toddler classrooms are not required to follow the same Kashrut policy as young children.*

The health and wellness of children is the most important aspect with regard to nutrition. If you make a mistake and pack the wrong item in your child's lunch, you will be reminded of our Kashrut policy. We will make every attempt to feed your child something else but if we cannot, your child will be given the food you provided. If your child has a dietary issue that requires specific consideration, please let us know. We will make accommodations for your child.

## BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. Please notify the teachers one week in advance so that they may set aside time in their schedules for the celebration. All treats must be nut free and Kosher and cannot be home baked. Please do not send birthday invitations for distribution by the school unless you are planning to invite the whole class. We do not want anyone's feelings to be hurt. Please be mindful that many families observe the Sabbath and would not be able to attend a birthday party scheduled on Saturday.

## PIZZA FUNDRAISER

On Wednesdays, we offer a pizza lunch fundraiser. The cost is \$5 per lunch. Children get sliced veggies, a fruit cup or applesauce and pretzels or a cookie. The pizza is kosher and is provided by Shalom Pizza.

## SHABBAT

Every Friday, the school comes together to create a special "Shabbat Feeling" and welcome the Sabbath. This is a fun weekly program that include singing, music, dancing and blessings.

## KESHET

Keshet is a weekly class run by the Israeli American Council (IAC) and includes fun and interactive activities that celebrate the Hebrew language and Israeli culture. Children learn about Jewish customs, traditions, holidays, and they develop a connection to the Land of Israel and its people. Tzedakah and Mitzvot, charity and kindness are two major concepts that guide our Jewish learning. This class is for Threes, Fours and Kindergartens.

## J-Play

Infants, Toddlers and Two-year-olds have J-play every week. J-Play provides an atmosphere of exploration, creativity and socialization. This is an integral program for the healthy emotional and physical development of our children. Class structure includes themes, songs, physical activity and socialization.

## Gym

Children two-years-old and older will have physical education class once a week. Physical education releases energy, and builds muscle strength, coordination and flexibility. It also helps develop gross motor skills. Please be sure that your child is wearing sneakers and appropriate clothing for active movement. Children will not be able to participate without the appropriate clothing and sneakers.

## Music

Each week the children will have a special music class. Guitar, songs, finger plays, rhythm instruments and active movements are all part of this wonderful class. Most importantly, children will gain an appreciation and love for music.

## Class Trips

Our kindergarten classes will periodically take class trips. We will use the JCC vans whenever possible. Parent chaperones may be needed and will drive separately. We will also take walking trips to explore our own community and have special programs come here to our school.

## SECURITY CAMERA

To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors, as well as the security of our facility, the JCC and the Robert J. Wilf preschool and kindergarten is equipped with a 24- hour video surveillance and recording system. Security cameras are in our classrooms, and throughout the building.

## EMERGENCY CARE

In case of emergency, the school will call you and the Lower Merion Police. Paramedics will take the child to Bryn Mawr Hospital or Lankenau Hospital. Your signed Emergency Medical Release Form assures that emergency care may be given if needed. We will, of course, call you immediately so you can meet your child and a staff member at the hospital. Please be sure that your telephone numbers are always kept up to date in the Preschool Office. No child will be allowed to start the school year without completing the schooldoc account.

## BITING / INJURIES

When a child hurts another child, we will first attend to the child that has been hurt and then speak with the other child. In the case of a bite or an injury where we must apply first aid, we will call the parents of both children. A written incident report will also be sent home.

Should there be a consistent pattern of biting that goes beyond age-appropriate behavior, we will meet with the teachers, director and parents in order to create a behavior management plan. In extreme cases, if biting continues after interventions, it may be decided that this is not the appropriate environment.

## SNOW EMERGENCIES

If we have a delayed opening, close early, or if we are closed due to dangerous weather conditions, parents will first receive an e-mail and text message as early as possible with all pertinent information. This information will also be on our web site [www.phillyjcc.com](http://www.phillyjcc.com). Additionally, I will report our status to KYW News Radio, 6 ABC, FOX 29, CBS Philly, and NBC 10.

Our school's name is *the Robert J. Wilf Preschool & Kindergarten* and that is the name that will be used to communicate information about our school. Alternately, we may be listed as *Jewish Community Center – Kaiserman* or *Kaiserman JCC*.

**KYW News Radio** - Listen to KYW NEWS RADIO 1060AM. School alerts are listed by number. Our School Closing Number is 404

**6 ABC** Go to [abclocal.go.com/wpvi](http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi) - Click "school closing" tab on the left - school alerts are listed by state (PA, NJ and DE) and in alphabetical order.

**FOX 29** Go to [www.myfoxphilly.com](http://www.myfoxphilly.com) - Click "Check Reported School Closings, Delayed Openings" - School alerts are listed alphabetically.

**CBS 3** Go to [philadelphia.cbslocal.com](http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com) - Click "School Closings" - school alerts are listed by county and name alphabetically or you have the option to view the list by school closing number.

**NBC 10** Go to [www.nbcphiladelphia.com](http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com) - Click "Weather" tab, then the "School Closing Alerts" tab - Schoolalerts are listed alphabetically.

## HEALTH

Young children have frequent colds and other viral illnesses. Please keep in mind that the first 24-48 hours of a disease are usually the most infectious. If a communicable illness or disease should arise in our school, we will let the families know via e-mail, but we will maintain the privacy of any family involved. Please notify your child's teacher whenever there is a diagnosis of a communicable illness. We have a better chance of controlling the spread of an illness if we are alerted early.

If your child should become ill at school, a staff member will call you to assess the situation and inform you of your child's current condition. If it is decided that your child is too sick to stay in school, you will be expected to pick him/her up as soon as possible. Please be sure that all telephone numbers are updated

# WHEN CAN YOUR CHILD RETURN

If your child has any of the following ailments, your child should be fever free and symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

**Bronchiolitis / Bronchitis**

**Common Cold**

**Coxsackie Virus Infection** (HAND-FOOT-MOUTH)

**Croup**

**Ear Infections**

**Gastroenteritis**

**Impetigo**

**Influenza**

**Rashes / Hives**

**Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)**

**Strep Throat**

**Vomiting / Diarrhea**

**Fever** - A child with a fever of 101 or higher should stay home until fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours.

**Head Lice** - All nits must be removed before the child can return to school. Upon their return, the child's scalp will be inspected by a staff member.

# IMUNIZATION POLICY

All children entering the Robert J. Wilf Preschool and Kindergarten must have an immunization record on file prior to admission. We will accept the Department of Public Welfare Child Health Report form given to all parents, signed and dated by the physician or a copy from the physician's office.

Parents are required to provide an updated health report in accordance with the following schedules:

- At least every 6 months for child under 12 months of age.
- At least every 12 months for a child older 12 months of age.

Parents are required to provide updated immunization records each time their child receives a vaccination. There are no religious exceptions to our immunization policy. Medical exemptions are decided on a case-by-case basis.

# CHILD HEALTH REPORTS

Parents must upload a copy of the child's health report to Schooldoc. It must be signed by a physician, physician's assistant or a CRNP. The signature must include the individual's professional title.

The health report must include the following information:

- Name of child
- Child's birth date
- A review of the child's health history.
- A list of the child's allergies.
- A list of the child's current medication and the reason for them.
- An assessment of an acute or chronic health problem or special need and recommendations for treatment or services, including information regarding abnormal results of screening tests for vision, hearing or lead poisoning.
- A review of the child's immunized status according to recommendations of the ACIP.
- A statement of the child's medical information pertinent to diagnosis and treatment in case of emergency.
- A statement that the child is able to participate in childcare and appears to be free from contagious



# TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD



## SCHOOL

### Plan Ahead:

Get things ready for school the night before, see that your child gets to bed early, and take time for a nutritious breakfast. Sleepy, hungry, or rushed children can't function happily in a setting that requires a great deal of energy!

### Learn the Curriculum:

Find out what's happening in the classroom and supplement it with family experiences. Be sure to read the weekly newsletters and flyers that come home. Your child's teacher will be happy to give you ideas to support your child's learning at home.

### Encourage Risk-Taking, Expect Mistakes:

It takes immense patience to allow children to learn at their own pace and through their own mistakes. Studies show that healthy families tend to support their children without removing obstacles from their lives that foster growth. We seek to find a balance between offering children challenging experiences and opportunities to gain confidence in mastering skills with a respect for their individual rate of development.

### Talk to Your Child About the day:

Create a special display area in your home for schoolwork and projects to emphasize the value you place on your child's creations. But remember, some of the best experiences your child has at school may not take place on paper. Listen well.

### Participate in Parent Activities:

The Robert J. Wilf Preschool and Kindergarten PTO can suggest many ways you can get involved in preschool events. This involvement will help you build a supportive network of friends!

### Read to Your Child:

Reading to your child improves language skills, awakens the imagination as no television show or video game can, and prepares your child to become an enthusiastic reader. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions of age-appropriate books.

### Keep Communication Lines Open:

Communicate calmly and clearly with your child's teacher when problems regarding your child or other children arise. It is important to model appropriate conflict resolution and communication skills for children, but is best to ask for an appointment to discuss difficult issues when

children are not present. If matters are not resolved after speaking to the teacher, you are encouraged to speak with the preschool director.

### Give Your Child Time to Play:

So often we rush children through childhood with little time for play or quiet thought. Allow unstructured play in those busy schedules and encourage quiet reflective times. And, because parenting is such a stressful job, take a break once in a while yourself and join right in on the fun!

# THE HOLIDAYS

The Kaiserman JCC is a place for the Jewish community to gather and celebrate Jewish festivals and holidays. An elementary introduction to the history of the holidays and their traditional rituals will be explored in the preschool. Concern for Jewish culture will be an ongoing part of the educational program. Throughout the year we will send home further explanation of the holidays. The following is a brief overview:

**Sabbath** - Although the Sabbath lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, we celebrate the Sabbath at school during our “snack time” every Friday. All classes get together for a Shabbat Sing-along. In each classroom, the teacher lights the candles, and the children recite the traditional blessings.

On Shabbat, the children enjoy challah (twisted egg bread) and juice.

**Rosh Hashanah** - The Jewish year begins with Rosh Hashanah on the first day of Tishri in the Jewish calendar. The children enjoy apples and honey, which are symbolic of hope for a sweet year.

**Yom Kippur** - This is the most solemn holiday of the year, the Day of Atonement. At this time, we discuss the nice things we can do for others during the New Year.

**Sukkot** - The Feast of Tabernacles recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in tents and booths. The harvest season is symbolized by the Lulav (palm branch) and Etrog (citrus). During this week at school, we decorate our Sukkah with fruit and greenery and enjoy our snacks outdoors.

**Simchat Torah** - This holiday is associated with Sukkot. Throughout the year, passages of the Torah are read aloud in the synagogue. On Simchat Torah the reading of the Torah is completed and immediately begun again. This symbolizes the fact that study of the Torah has no beginning and no end. Children are given the honor of being called to read the Torah alongside adults. Children also join adults in carrying Israeli flags in a series of seven processions.

**Hanukkah** - The Festival of Lights celebrates the Maccabean victory when Judah Maccabee and his small band of followers saved the Jewish nation from the Syrians. For eight days each year, the Hanukkah menorah, or eight-branched candelabra, is lit to recall the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people.

**Tu B'Shevat** - (Israeli Arbor Day) On Tu B'Shevat we celebrate the New Year of the Trees and our own belief in the future of the world. As Jews, we have a kinship with trees. Trees are a symbol of life and a symbol of the Jewish people.

**Purim** - Purim is the most joyous of all holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her Uncle Mordecai saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the Prime Minister, Haman, to destroy them. On this day, we eat Hamantaschen, which the children enjoy making at school. The children are encouraged to come to school in costume for this happy holiday.

**Passover** - Passover (Pesach) commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt and the Exodus following them. The Seder is a special family meal. Prayers and songs from the Haggadah are read and certain foods are eaten. The best known of these is matzah or unleavened bread. Your child and his/her classmates will prepare their own Seders.

**Shavuot** - Shavuot, a thanksgiving and harvest feast, also commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Known as the Feast of Weeks, Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. It is customary to decorate the house with plants and flowers.