



**Westchester Jewish Center**

**Early Childhood Center**

**Handbook**

**2025-2026**



Director - Ann Pardes: 561-400-7361 or [ann@wjcenter.org](mailto:ann@wjcenter.org)

Assistant Director - Carol Meyers: 914-260-4091 or [carol@wjcenter.org](mailto:carol@wjcenter.org)

Administrative Assistant – Sarah Silver [sarah@wjcenter.org](mailto:sarah@wjcenter.org)

WJC Office: 914-698-2960

ECC Office: 914-698-2767

Fax: 914-698-3610

# **Welcome**

Welcome to Westchester Jewish Center Early Childhood Center (WJC-ECC)!

We look forward to providing a very enriching and rewarding educational experience for every child while developing an appreciation and respect for Judaism. We hope that this handbook helps you to better understand the purpose and operation of our school. When you enroll in the ECC you get much more than preschool, you become part of a caring community. Below are some important people at WJC-ECC.

Role	Name	Email
Rabbi	Jeffrey Arnowitz	<a href="mailto:rja@wjcenter.org">rja@wjcenter.org</a>
Assistant Rabbi	Cornelia Dalton	<a href="mailto:rabbidalton@wjcenter.org">rabbidalton@wjcenter.org</a>
Cantor	Ethan Goldberg	<a href="mailto:cantorecg@wjcenter.org">cantorecg@wjcenter.org</a>
Education Director	Aleza Kulp	<a href="mailto:edudir@wjcenter.org">edudir@wjcenter.org</a>
Congregation Program Coordinator	Aleza Kulp	<a href="mailto:edudir@wjcenter.org">edudir@wjcenter.org</a>
Executive Director	David Goldstein	<a href="mailto:David@wjcenter.org">David@wjcenter.org</a>
Congregation President	Yale Zoland	<a href="mailto:yzoland@gmail.com">yzoland@gmail.com</a>
Early Childhood Committee Chair	TBD	
ECC Auxiliary Chair	Amanda Wasserstrum	<a href="mailto:wjcparents@gmail.com">wjcparents@gmail.com</a>
	Nicki Valvano	<a href="mailto:wjcparents@gmail.com">wjcparents@gmail.com</a>

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to be a place of belonging, caring and sharing – inspiring vibrant Jewish and community spirit, nurturing individual potential, respecting diversity and celebrating life.

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of our early childhood program is that the young child can develop a strong self-image through the use of positive reinforcement in a curriculum that enhances cognitive, physical, social, listening and language skills as well as moral growth.

- We value children... for their individuality, their extraordinary wealth of inborn abilities and potential, their strength and creativity. Children are active participants in the development of their identities, autonomy and creative intelligence.
- We value staff... for their vision, their delight in children, their skill, dedication, knowledge and commitment to families.
- We value families... for their bonds and traditions, their commitment to career, home and community, and their visions for their children's education.

Parent and teacher partnerships are fundamental to the foundation of our school community. This reciprocal relationship is built on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Our collaboration enables an effective communication network that enriches the growth, care and development of children.

## **INTENT AND PURPOSE**

WJC-ECC offers a range of programs for young children. We provide a developmentally appropriate program that supports children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth through varied experiences and activities.

In our developmentally appropriate program, we view children as capable and respect them and their individual needs. The program is implemented for each class depending on the age of the children and their interests. The curriculum stimulates their natural curiosity as they explore new ideas. Children receive a solid Jewish foundation including holiday celebrations, community Shabbat and classroom Shabbat experiences.

The days are structured to provide ample opportunities for busy time and quiet time, indoor time and outdoor time. A small teacher to student ratio assures that every child gets the individual attention he or she deserves and is given a safe and secure environment.

## **Program Description**

The following is a list of class days & times offered for each ECC age group.

### Babies and Bagels

A free program for newborns up to 12 months old. Each child must be accompanied by an adult for music, exploration and play. Contact [Carol@wjcenter](mailto:Carol@wjcenter) for more information and to sign up.

### Little Ones & Friends

The Little Ones & Friends program is offered for children and their parent/caregiver to attend together on Fridays from 9:15 – 10:30.

2 Year Olds	Monday - Friday	9:00am – 11:30am
3 Year Olds	Monday - Friday	9:00am – 12:00pm
4 Year Olds	Monday - Friday	9:00am – 12:00pm
3 & 4 Year Olds – Extended Day	Monday- Thursday	12:00pm – 2:30pm

In addition to experiencing a variety of learning opportunities in the classroom, each 2's, 3's, & 4's class participates in a Music, Phys Ed, Yoga, Woodworking, Nature and more.

Extended Day programming is offered to students in the 3s & 4s Monday - Thursday. Children eat lunch in their classroom and have an enrichment activity. Please see our website for program choices and descriptions of classes for Extended Days.

Happy Fit is offered on Fridays from 12:00-1:00pm through an independent vendor. Registration information is sent via e-mail from Happy Feet Soccer.

## **OUR GOAL**

Our goal is to prepare each child for success in both religious and secular studies. Our developmentally appropriate program provides a balance between preparing for the future (intellectual development) and living fully in the present (social-emotional development). The balance that is created is different for every child on the basis of the child's academic needs, temperament, environment, and family's needs. Children learn through discovery, multi-sensory, child-centered, organized experiences and rich adult-child interactions.

Our goals for each child are to:

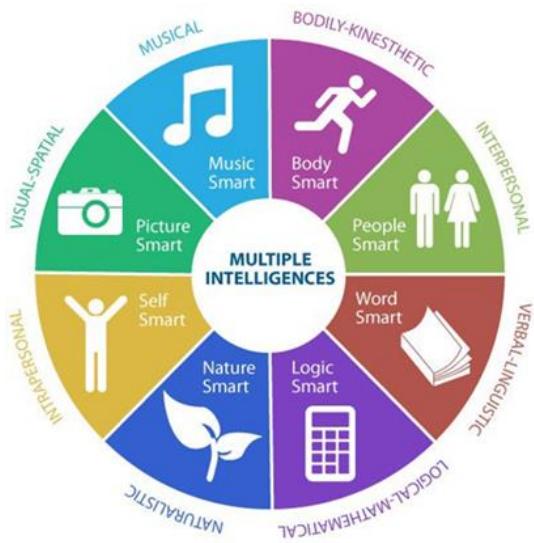
1. Develop positive self-esteem
2. Foster emotional well-being
3. Adjust to routines and transitions
4. Foster independence and self-direction
5. Stimulate curiosity
6. Encourage listening, language and literacy skills
7. Develop gross and fine motor skills and control
8. Enhance cognitive development
9. Develop critical thinking skills
10. Encourage social interaction
11. Gain an understanding of Judaism while respecting cultural diversity
12. Participate in an enjoyable and meaningful early childhood experience

Goals are achieved through a variety of hands-on activities and experiences that address the whole child and seek to make learning fun. Our professional staff ensures that individual needs are met and nurtured in a warm, loving and supportive environment. The children attending our Early Childhood Center also develop an awareness of and a positive feeling towards Judaism. This is best demonstrated in the pride taken when saying the blessings or when participating in holiday celebrations. In addition, the classes are taught through a curriculum that emphasizes the similarities between people and minimizes the differences whether they are due to race, religion, age or disability. All our children learn to develop a sense of independence and self-confidence beginning at the youngest level. Our hope is that every child leaves our school with a solid foundation on which knowledge and positive self-esteem can grow and flourish in kindergarten and beyond.

## **THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES APPLIED IN THE CLASSROOM**

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed by Dr. Howard Gardner in 1983. His Theory of Multiple Intelligences investigates human nature, particularly how human beings think. Howard Gardner's work around multiple intelligences has had a profound impact on thinking and practice in education.

The theory of multiple intelligences is very important for the future of children. This theory shows that there are many ways that children learn and interpret information. For example, a child who is more highly bodily kinesthetic would rather be participating in activities where he/she can move around such as the playground than an activity where he/she is less mobile such as listening to a story.



This theory points out is that there are strengths to each and every child (McCormick, 2007). Each child has his or her own sense of intelligence and it is important that the teacher brings those out in each of them. According to Gardner, there is no way to think of a person as being smart or not smart (McCormick, 2007). Each person has their own sense of intelligence and it is incorrect to say one is smarter than the other. All children have a sense of intelligence in their own area. It is the role of the classroom teachers to engage in careful observation of each child in order to determine how each child will best learn.

### **Curricular Benchmarks**

The WJC- ECC curriculum recognizes that each child develops at his/her own pace within a set of norms. As a guiding measure, we have developed a set of expectations for child development within each age group. The following benchmarks will help parents and caregivers understand the learning goals and aspirations for each year at the ECC.

#### **Twos**

- Enjoys coming to school
- Separates from parent or caregiver at child's own pace with gradually increasing comfort
- Develops trusting relationships with teachers
- Develops language and communications skills that allow child to express thoughts, feelings, and needs
- Progresses in the ability to self-regulate and assert independence
- Explores the environment by using a range of materials and toys in a curious and comfortable manner
- Develops self-help skills, which may include toilet training, hand-washing, and dressing independently
- Listens and participates at the appropriate times during stories, songs, and other "circle-time" activities
- Develops social skills including: taking turns, participating in group activities, attending to others' feelings, and sharing

- Plays solitarily while progressing toward parallel and cooperative play
- Begins to initiate and accept social overtures with peers
- Engages in pretend play
- Begins to identify colors and shapes in the context of symbolic representation

### **Threes**

- Enjoys coming to school
- Feels increasingly comfortable separating from parents and caregivers
- Develops trusting relationships with teachers
- Increases mastery of meaningful language/communication with both adults and peers
- Increases ability to self-regulate and assert independence
- Improves in understanding and implementation of self-help skills
- Engages increasingly in parallel and cooperative play
- Develops special friendships with children in the peer group - initiating and accepting social overtures
- Feels comfortable playing alone or in groups
- Develops increased facility with writing implements, scissors, art, and building materials
- Begins to draw shapes and images
- Develops play "narrative" that goes beyond exploration of materials and toys and has meaning assigned to use of materials and toys - gradually incorporating peers into pretend play
- Listens and participates at the appropriate times during stories, songs, and other "circle-time" activities
- Engages in discussions about stories and is able to assign meaning to drawings and writings
- Begins to understand numbers and 1:1 correspondence
- Increases awareness of symbolic representation
- Develops increasing confidence and ability with gross motor activities
- Identifies colors and primary shapes
- Recognizes initial letter of his/her name
- Begins to understand the differences between yesterday, today & tomorrow

### **Four**

- Enjoys and is comfortable in school
- Separates from parents and caregivers easily
- Develops trusting relationships with teachers
- Plays cooperatively with peers in self-directed play as well as in group activities
- Understands and follows classroom routines and behavioral expectations
- Independently handles most self-help matters
- Solves problems independently and with peers
- Regulates behavior the majority of the time by utilizing verbal and social skills
- Develops interest in speaking, reading and writing
- Increases interest in listening to stories and poems, and producing own stories and writings

- Demonstrates increased facility with writing and drawing implements as well as scissors and tools, usually showing hand preference
- Begins to write and draw shapes and symbols
- Recognizes own written name
- Learns the days of the week and months of the year
- Participates easily in discussions, adding own thoughts comfortably
- Increases understanding of numbers and counting, while 1:1 correspondence becomes more consistent
- Creates symbolic drawings and representations on a more frequent basis
- Takes on various roles in dramatic play and invents varied scenarios
- Begins to make hypotheses regarding observations
- Becomes agile on playground equipment and increases gross motor development

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Required Forms**

In addition to the registration materials all children must have the following required forms before school begins:

1. Current Medical Exam - a copy of the school health record will satisfy this requirement
2. Signed form stating that you will abide by the rules in the handbook
3. Emergency Card
4. Dismissal Form
5. Student Profile Form
6. Photo Release Form
7. **Allergy/Emergency Medication Form (if applicable). All paperwork and medication must be received before the first day of school.**

### **Class Placements**

A child's class placement is determined by the Director. The following are just some of the criteria considered when creating classes:

- Age
- Gender
- Personality
- Learning style
- Teacher-Child compatibility
- Teacher-Child ratio
- Recommendations from current teachers
- Friends from previous classes
- Overall needs of the school
- School District (4s Only)
- Room Capacity

### **Separation**

The process of separation is tailored to meet the needs of individual children and families. Children's reaction to separation can range from a child who is able to comfortably say good-bye on the first day of school, to a child who clings to a parent and requires more time. So, what can you expect during the first days of school? There will probably be a range of reactions and emotions. You may be able to say a quick goodbye and leave the building. You may be able to say goodbye but need to remain in the building in case your child becomes upset or you may need to remain in the classroom for a part of or for the whole day, etc.

At WJC, we believe that successful separation is a process whereby children learn to develop trust and are more able to have a positive classroom experience. We do not strive for the most expedient separation process.

You and your child's teachers will work as a team to develop the best plan of action for a successful separation process. Communication is key.

### **Tips for a successful separation**

1. If your child demands your attention, try to redirect him/her to the teachers. Offer a few words or a hug, but keep your interactions with your child to a minimum so that he/she learns to trust the teachers.
2. NEVER sneak out of the classroom without saying goodbye to your child. Always tell your child you are leaving and when you will be back (i.e. after story time, after lunch). Then, be sure to return at that time.
3. When you say goodbye to your child, always exude confidence and trust in the teachers. If you express any ambivalence, your child will sense it, making the separation process much more difficult.

Always feel free to give us a call later in the day to check on your child's adjustment. Should you wish to remain on the premises, you are welcome to relax in our lobby. Once separation has been established, always remember to pick up your child from school on time. They look forward to seeing you at dismissal time.

### **Starting School**

Starting school is an important time for young children, their families and their educators. The transition to school sets the tone and direction of a child's school career. It is essential that the transition to school occurs in such a way that children have a positive view of the school and a feeling of competence as learners. Starting school means becoming part of a group including the other students and the teachers. The teachers will take the time to get to know each child personally. The children will begin to form relationships with the other members of the group.

We want each child to have the opportunity to feel comfortable and secure in school.

We want the teachers to have the opportunity to get to know the unique qualities of each child, their needs and their special personalities. This will help children and teachers form an attachment and create a trust between them.

Research has proven that the best way to do this is to start children in a program for short periods and gradually move them into the regular schedule. We have designed a transition program for age group. Naturally, we look at each child as an individual and if anyone needs more time we gladly work with you.

Education is a joint venture between the school and the home. You can support our transition program by properly preparing your child for school.

- Young children always feel more comfortable if they know what to expect. Before the new school year begins, please explain to your child how their daily routines will change.
- Try getting up earlier a couple of days before the new school year begins and explain why you are doing it. This may prevent your child from being confused, groggy or cranky on the first day of school.

- Reading books with children is a great way to introduce any experience. They can see how other children beginning school have the same feelings of uncertainty and how they overcome them. The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn and Will I Have a Friend? By Miriam Cohen are two favorites.

Please let us know if there is any way we can be of help to you in this process.

### **What to Bring the First Day of School**

When your child comes to school the first day please have him/her bring the following:

- A complete change of clothes – including season appropriate pants, shirt, socks and underwear. Please remember to update as the seasons change and **LABEL ALL ITEMS**
- One photograph of child and one photograph of child with family.
- Diapers & wipes (if applicable for your child).
- One clear plastic box (shoebox size) labeled with your child's name, to store the above items in their cubby.

### **Toys**

Our program provides appropriate toys and games; therefore, we discourage children from bringing toys and games from home. The staff respects that your child may feel more comfortable, especially at the start of the school year, by bringing a "special item" or transitional toy from home; however, we ask that toy guns, mouth toys or oversized items be left at home. If toys are brought to school, the staff cannot be responsible for loss or damage, and we do not want your child unnecessarily upset.

There will be times children bring a book or photos to school to share with their friends when the items from home relate to topics or units that the class is studying. It is acceptable for children to share with their classmates in this manner; however, we are not responsible for valuable or fragile items.

### **Clothing**

Dress for success - your child should always come dressed in practical, comfortable and washable clothing. It is important that the children be able to manage their own clothing as this encourages independence, especially when your child is in the process of mastering toileting skills. Please remember to label all clothing, lunch boxes and backpacks. There are many children attending school, so it is important that all belongings are clearly labeled.

Outdoor play encourages climbing, running and jumping. These activities are important for large muscle development. It is important, as the weather gets colder, to dress your child appropriately: hats, mittens, boots and snow pants. Fresh air and movement are important daily needs for children. Please leave at school or send appropriate outdoor clothing, as we venture outside daily. Be aware that weather conditions vary and may change over the course of the day.

### **Footwear**

Rubber sole shoes or sneakers are preferable for safety in indoor and outdoor play. We suggest your child wears comfortable, supportive shoes so that he or she can walk, run, jump and climb with ease. Due to safety concerns, please **DO NOT** send your child to school in open toe or open back shoes such as sandals, flip flops or crocs. If your child wears rain or snow boots to school, please bring a change of footwear to wear while in school.

## **Outdoor Play**

Playing outside is not only fun for your children, it is also a crucial part of healthy growth and development. The safety of your children is the priority of the leadership of the ECC. On days when weather conditions do allow for outdoor play, we utilize the many indoor spaces for gross motor play.

## **Rain Policy**

The children may play outdoors in light rain when the temperature is comfortable. During this time, the children will explore nature, splash in puddles and investigate what happens when their surroundings become wet.

Please send your children to school prepared with rain boots and a waterproof jacket to wear during outdoor rain play.

## **Cold Weather & Snow Policy**

The children will play outside in cold weather. The leadership of the ECC takes the wind chill factor into account when determining whether it is safe for the children to play outdoors.

Because the temperature at morning drop-off may vary significantly from the temperature when the first class of children go outside, the ECC Director checks the temperature a few minutes before the first group of children are scheduled to go outside to determine whether it is safe for the children to play outdoors, again taking the wind chill into account. On days when the temperature is below 30 degrees, or when the wind chill is making the outdoors feel particularly frigid, the children will spend less time outdoors than usual. For example, their teachers may take them for a short walk around the property or may shorten their time on the playground, thus allowing them to get fresh air, while limiting their exposure to colder temperatures.

Please send your children to school with warm jackets, hats, gloves and snow pants. On days when it is snowing and school is open, we may go outside! Please send your children to school with snow pants and snow boots. (Please remember that snow pants may be used for warmth, and not only on days when it is snowing.) Feel free to store an extra set of snow pants and snow boots at school to ensure that your child is prepared to play in the snow or cold weather at all times.

With respect to all inclement weather policies, we will exercise our best judgment to ensure that your children's health and well-being are protected at all times.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Calendar**

Whenever possible, the WJC-ECC follows the Mamaroneck Public School's vacation and holiday schedule. Because we are a Jewish Preschool in a Conservative synagogue, we also follow the Jewish calendar. School calendars will be emailed home before the start of the school year and will be updated as necessary. It is also posted on the WJC Website. **No matter the holiday schedule or time off from school, each year we strive to have approximately the same number of school days.**

### **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

All students must be accompanied to WJC-ECC and escorted to their classroom by a parent or caregiver. It is important that all children arrive safely and promptly.

Parents must notify the school if their child will be absent or late. It saves considerable time and worry if we are aware of any changes to the normal schedule. This can be done via email or by calling the school office.

Only an authorized adult may pick up a child. An authorized adult is one whose name is written on the child's dismissal form. Children will not be released to any other person. Parents and caregivers are to remain outside the classroom until the teacher opens the door for dismissal. If someone other than a parent or authorized adult will be picking up a child, a handwritten note or email from the child's legal guardian will be the only acceptable form of release.

We would like to stress the importance of PROMPT departures. Children may become anxious when parents/caregivers are not there at dismissal. Late departures make it difficult for teachers to complete their necessary work before they leave for the day.

### **Tuition**

Registrations are completed via Shul Cloud. There will be no refunds for vacation or illness. Deposits for ECC Tuition and Extended Day Tuition are non-refundable. Payment plans are available to families. For more information, please reach out to Sarah Silver at [Sarah@wjcenter.org](mailto:Sarah@wjcenter.org).

### **Discipline**

We believe that discipline should be positive and based on respect, honesty, trust, caring and love. We define discipline as that which we do for and say to children to help them develop and internalize self-control, self-respect, self-esteem, and self-awareness. The result of our approach is a child who learns to conduct himself/herself in a socially acceptable manner. The following is the discipline model our ECC uses:

- Always serve as a role model and reinforce positive behavior.
- No staff member will ever use corporal punishment.
- We are fair, firm, and consistent.
- We address the behavior, not the child.
- Food is never used to extinguish negative behavior or reinforce positive behavior.
- We encourage conflict resolution by voicing the "hurt" child's feelings followed by the "hurting" child's reconciliation.
- We redirect negative behavior by removing a child from a situation and providing an alternative activity (i.e. sand, play dough) as a cooling off period.
- We never force a child to offer an apology.
- We document a child's behavior. The observed behavior is documented in terms of the child's words or actions, when and where it occurred, and we try to determine a pattern of behavior.
- A parent conference may be necessary. This documentation is a necessary and useful tool if we need to meet with you.
- Conferences or discussion about a child's behavior shall take place without the child present.
- The Early Childhood Director is informed of all of the above.

### **Bitting/Hitting Policy**

Biting and hitting can be a form of expression in children, especially those children who have limited verbal skills. Biting and hitting are powerful ways to exhibit control and release frustration. Studies show that by the age of three, almost all biting and most hitting behaviors disappear. While biting and hitting are considered typical behavior for young children two years of age and younger, it is detrimental to the safety and well-being of children and staff in a classroom setting.

The following biting and hitting policy refers to all children enrolled in our ECC program. Each case will be handled on an individual basis and at the discretion of the Director.

1. After a child bites or hits one time, the teacher will contact the parents of both the biter/hitter and the recipient. The Director will be informed of the incident. An incident report will be completed and you will receive a copy.
2. If the child bites or hits a second time, the same protocol will follow.
3. If the child bites or hits a third time, the same protocol will be followed, and a parent may be required to pick up their child from school.
4. After a third incident, a conference will be necessary (teacher, parents & Director) and a corrective plan of action (Behavioral Plan) will be put into place.
5. A referral for outside professional services may be necessary.
6. In extreme cases, a child may need to be withdrawn from the program for a period of time.
7. In all instances, the goal is to extinguish the negative behavior so that the child and his/her classmates can participate in a positive school experience.

### **Behavioral Plan (Sample)**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ TEACHERS \_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT'S PRESENT \_\_\_\_\_  
REASON FOR CONFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_  
PLAN OF ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCUSSION \_\_\_\_\_  
STAFF AGREE TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
PARENTS AGREE TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
REFERRALS MADE: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOLLOW UP DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Photography**

Photos of children will be posted daily on Remini, a safe & secure app for parent communication. From time to time, we would like to display photographs of the children doing various activities on WJC's website, our bulletin boards and include them in email notices to you as well. This will give you the opportunity to see your child/children in action while they are in their classroom busy at work and play. No personal or identifying information will be included with any pictures posted on the website. If you do not wish photos of your children to be displayed or emailed, or if you have any questions or concerns about this, please let the Director know.

## **Health & Illness**

We are committed to the health and safety to the entire WJC Community. Sick children may not attend WJC-ECC.

## **Communicable Disease Policy**

Based on state licensure requirements, we are unable to provide care for children with the following conditions:

1. Diarrhea
2. Severe coughing/unusual coughing sounds
3. Difficult or rapid breathing, wheezing
4. Yellowish skin or eyes
5. Redness of the eyes, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
6. Temperature of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit
7. Infected skin patch(es), unusual spots or rashes
8. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stools
9. Evidence of lice/nits, scabies/nits, or other parasitic infestations
10. Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
11. Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
12. Body aches, headaches, upset stomach
13. Vomiting Cold accompanied by yellow or green mucus or excessive discharge
14. Lethargy or crankiness
15. Any behavior characteristics not typical for your child

Should your child become ill while at school, you will be contacted immediately, and arrangements must be made to pick up your child from WJC. It is advisable to have a back-up plan in mind for those unexpected illnesses. Ill children will be isolated from the other children and may rest in a quiet area, supervised by a staff person until someone arrives to pick them up. At no time will a child be left unattended.

The comfort of every child is of primary importance to us. If, in our teachers' opinion, your child is too sick to remain in school (showing signs of any of the above conditions or symptoms), we will call you, your caregiver, or the emergency contact person to come pick up your child immediately.

Additionally, if your child is not permitted to go outdoors, we must ask you to kindly come early and pick him/her up from school, as we are unable to have one teacher stay indoors with one child.

## **Children may be readmitted:**

1. With a physician's statement indicating that the child is free from communicable disease.
2. If vomiting, and/or diarrhea has not occurred within the last 24 hours while on a normal diet.
3. If the temperature has been normal for 24 hours, without medication.
4. When rash or other condition has been medically treated or diagnosed.
5. After a specific contagious disease has been confirmed by a physician, the child has no symptoms and is under the appropriate treatment.

### **Medical Forms**

A current medical and immunization record is required for all children **prior to the first day of enrollment at WJC-ECC**. A medical form must be updated annually by your child's physician.

### **Medication**

WJC-ECC will not administer any medications, prescription or over-the-counter, to the children unless parents fill out a form giving us permission. This includes diaper cream and sunscreen. In cases of severe allergies, our staff has been trained to administer EPI PEN. We will require paper documentation for all emergency medications.

We ask that you apply sunscreen prior to your child's arrival at school.

Please email or text your child's teacher if your child was given medication prior to the beginning of the school day. It is important for the teachers to be aware of any possible side-effects or symptoms.

### **Allergies**

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any allergies the child may have to food and/or insect bites or if your child has asthma. WJC-ECC is **nut-controlled** and does not serve or allow any food containing nut products in the classrooms. It is important to note that Westchester Jewish Center is not a nut-free building. Please help us by not sending food items that may contain nut products to school. **Please refrain from sending Hummus.** Many children are allergic to sesame.

### **Toilet Training**

WJC-ECC views toilet training in much the same way as we do other learning tasks: children should not feel pressured or be rushed before they are ready. We believe there are individualized rates of development and accomplishment among children, especially with toilet training. Once toilet trained, staff will assist your child with wiping when necessary. Please provide the wipes. We find toilet paper alone is not enough to ensure your child is clean.

Children are not required to be toilet trained. Diapers are changed as needed throughout the school day. We ask that you keep an ample supply of diapers and wipes in your child's box and refill as necessary.

We also encourage you to inform the teachers when you begin toilet training your child at home. This way we can work together toward successful potty training.

### **Child Abuse**

In accordance with provisions of Section 432 of the New York State Social Services Law, the staff and director of childcare centers are mandated reporters to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register. Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, a report will be made. The director of WJC ECC will handle the report of the abuse.

## **Safety**

LATE ARRIVALS (after 9:15) MUST CALL THE ECC OFFICE OR TEXT THE DIRECTOR. WE WILL ALERT OUR SECURITY GUARD OF YOUR ARRIVAL TIME.

### **Main Office 914-698-2767**

Cell Phones to call or text

- Ann - 561-400-7361
- Carol - 914-260-4091

## **Building Security**

WJC is secured and staffed with guards from an independent security company. Security guards are posted at entrances on the Upper and Lower Level entrance. WJC has installed a security system which enables the guards, Ann and Carol to have the ability to monitor the playground and many parts of the interior and exterior of the building.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Parents will be called immediately if their child is ill and in an emergency. Please see that all records are kept up to date, so that we are able to contact you. If the staff is unable to reach you, they will proceed with obtaining medical attention as they deem appropriate.

## **Fire Safety & Emergency Procedures**

Fire drills are held on a monthly basis and lock down drills (AKA Shelter in Place) are conducted a few times a year. Our Primary evacuation site is the Sarah Newman Nursing Home, located at 845 Palmer Avenue in Mamaroneck.

## **Snow Closing Policy**

The ECC will close when weather conditions make driving dangerous. Our closures often coincide with the Mamaroneck Public School system except in the case of a two-hour delay. If the Mamaroneck Schools are delayed by two (2) hours, our ECC will be on a 1-hour delay. All children will begin at 10:00am.

School closings and delays are announced via email and posted on Remini. In cases of inclement weather, please check your email by 7am.

On days when the weather deteriorates after school has begun, the decision may be made to close school early. In that case, every parent or caregiver will be notified by email, we will post on Remini, and staff will remain at school until all children are picked up.

## **Parking**

Parking safety is important to all of us here at WJC. Any parking lot is a source of danger to young children, so please enter and leave our parking lots with extreme caution, and always obey the 5 mph speed limit signs.

Please make sure you, or the person dropping off or picking up your child(ren) at WJC, park only in **designated spaces** in the school parking lot. **Parking in fire lanes or other reserved areas such as handicapped spaces is prohibited.** Illegally parked cars make it dangerous for children to cross the street with their parent or caregiver. Illegally parked cars obscure visibility and block access to the crossing area. In addition, illegally parked cars prevent access of emergency vehicles to the building. In the event of an accident or injury, cars parked illegally, i.e. in fire lanes, could prevent a police car, ambulance or fire truck from reaching the building.

Always hold your child's hand when going to and coming from your car. Do not let your child

run ahead of you as this presents a danger from cars moving in and out of parking spaces.

We recognize the social nature of drop-off and pick-up but ask that you please do not stand in the parking lot conversing with other adults unless your child is seated safely in the car or you are holding his/her hand.

### **Snacks, Lunches and Kashrut**

At WJC, Kashrut is strictly observed. All food served or brought into school, must be Kosher. All food products must be clearly marked with one of the following kosher symbols:



Families will need to pack a healthy snack for their child every day. We encourage you to avoid snacks that are high in sugar, salt or artificial flavorings.

At times you may be asked to bring in food to share, please do not peel, cut, cook, or bake foods at home. Additionally, there is no need to shop in the "Kosher" section of the grocery store, there are many kosher items located throughout the store such as pretzels, crackers, whole fruits and veggies, which are all favorites in the classrooms.

Popcorn and grapes have caused children to choke, please do not send them to school.

Please do not send hummus to school as many children have an allergy to sesame.

"Kid Approved Foods"

Yogurt, cheese sticks, applesauce, veggies & cream cheese/salsa/guacamole, fruit, whole grain crackers w/cream cheese/sun butter/Wow butter, veggies & salad dressing/cream cheese, dry cereal and raisins/craisins, cottage cheese & fruit/veggies, mini rice cakes, Pirate's Booty, graham crackers, veggie booty, animal crackers.

**Please note: We are a nut-controlled school. All nuts (including peanuts & tree nuts) cannot be brought into our school.**

Once Extended Day begins for our 3 & 4-year-old children, we request that you send a dairy or pareve lunch (no meat) in a clearly labeled lunch box. Please prepare and wrap each lunch so your child can manage it by him/herself. If you send something like soy nuggets or sunflower butter, please label it. Uneaten foods will be sent home.

If your child has any special dietary requirements or food allergies, please inform your child's teacher. Additionally, you are welcome to provide snack alternatives for your child as long as it meets the standards of Kashrut. We cannot accept any homemade bake goods or food prepared in your home.

### **Conferences & Communication**

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled two times during the school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. The purpose of these meetings is to create a mutual understanding of your child and his/her needs. Children are not permitted to attend these Parent-Teacher conferences. Conferences will take place in the evening on Zoom.

Additionally, teachers may schedule conferences as they feel it is necessary, and parents are encouraged to bring concerns about their children directly to the teacher and to the Director. Should you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please email the teacher or call the ECC office, and the teacher will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to talk. We appreciate you not approaching the teacher while they are supervising the children in their activities or during drop-off and pick-up times.

It is very important that parents inform the teacher and/or Director of any significant changes that may occur in the normal routine at home. We want to be as sensitive as possible to each child and his/her family. The more we know about your children, the more effectively we will be able to care for them.

Efficient parent and school communication is vital to our success. We will be using "Remini," a secure communications platform and application to share information with our families. Remini is an application you can access from your computer or download to your smartphone or tablet/iPad. It enables teachers, administrators and families to share photos, messages, newsletters and much more to tell the story of your child at our school. Before school begins, you will receive an informational e-mail and an invitation to join your child's class. Simply accept the invitation and you're automatically connected to Remini. You will be able to invite other family members to join so they can see all the wonderful experiences happening in your child's class.

### **Individual Needs**

All children develop, grow, and learn in a variety of ways. Our ECC staff is committed to identifying and working with these individual differences as children move along their developmental path.

WJC ECC welcomes and supports outside professionals working with our children in the classrooms. Parents are responsible for informing teachers and the Director about specific arrangements that have been made. Teachers make every effort to attend Early Intervention and CPSE (Committee on Pre-School Special Education) meetings in the school district for the children in their classroom.

Strict confidentiality will be assured in all of these areas. Most importantly, please inform the teachers at the beginning of the school year if your child is already being evaluated or receiving services.

### **Special Celebrations**

#### **Birthdays**

We are thrilled to celebrate your child's birthday in school and encourage the child's family to attend as well. Please notify your child's teacher a week in advance to arrange a suitable date and time. We are happy for you to bring in a kosher, nut-free packaged treat such as cookies or cupcakes for your child's class to enjoy during snack time that day. However, we ask that you not send in party decorations or party favors as we like the birthday celebrations to be about the child, not the goodies.

A birthday party outside of school is a happy occasion. Since our ECC is housed in and supported by a Conservative Synagogue, many of our families observe Jewish dietary laws and do not travel on Shabbat or other religious holidays (Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot). Parents are asked to schedule birthday parties at times, and with appropriate menus, to accommodate children from families with all levels of observance. We cannot serve any foods baked at home. All treats must be in original packaging, clearly labeled with a kosher symbol and ingredients list.

We also suggest that kindness and consideration for others be shown when birthday lists are planned. It is natural that children and their parents feel a sense of rejection and sadness when they are excluded from a class birthday celebration. We thank you for your sensitivity in these areas.

### **Shabbat**

Our classes celebrate Shabbat each Friday. Welcoming the Sabbath is an important ritual for the children in each classroom.

Upon enrollment in our ECC, every child will receive a "It's a Challah Day" Shabbat shirt. We ask that every child wear his/her shirt to school on Fridays in order to encourage school spirit & a festive Shabbat.

### **Tzedakah**

The giving of Tzedakah is considered to be equal to all of the commandments in the Talmud. In Hebrew the word tzedek means justice or fair treatment. It is believed that Tzedakah is something we do as a responsibility toward God and our fellow human beings, not just out of the goodness of one's heart.

As part of our Shabbat celebration each Friday morning, children bring in Tzedakah. Tzedakah teaches the value of sharing with others who are less fortunate. We suggest putting loose change in an envelope so your child can "donate" it to their class Tzedakah box each week. We periodically donate the Tzedakah to charities and organizations locally and in Israel.

### **Hanukkah**

Hanukkah is a time for celebration. Parents, grandparents and caregivers are invited for latkes, applesauce and soufganiyot. We will sing songs and tell the story of Hanukkah.

### **Class MatzaTizer Party**

Classes celebrate Passover in their room by trying matzah with different toppings. We will have a group sing-along the Friday before Passover, at 9:15 during Community Shabbat.

### **Parent Participation**

#### **WJC ECC Parent Auxiliary**

WJC ECC is a place where your children spend a lot of time and we encourage the parents to get involved. There are many opportunities for parents to participate in the classroom as well as in the community by supporting the WJC ECC Parent Auxiliary.

The ECC Auxiliary organizes fundraising activities and special events throughout the school year that not only financially support ECC interests, but also exist as social functions for parents. Included among the great events are Meet & Greet, New Parent Cocktail Party, Challah delivery, Family Shabbat Services and Dinners, Individual Class Parents' Nights Out.

Being a part of the WJC ECC Parent Auxiliary is a great way to get involved in the ECC and make an impact on your child's ECC experience. It's also a good way to meet other ECC parents and have a great time for a good cause – our children's first educational experience.



175 Rockland Ave  
Mamaroneck, NY 10543

Please sign below to confirm you received and read the WJC School Handbook 2025-2026. Please email this form to [Sarah@wjcenter.org](mailto:Sarah@wjcenter.org).

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_