

8 WEEKS TO PRE-K

Early Childhood Center



A CARING AND CREATIVE COMMUNITY



We Are A Learning Community

Rooted in Jewish culture and values, our early childhood center engages children, families and early childhood professionals of all backgrounds and beliefs in an atmosphere where all people feel welcome and connected. The power of unity and the comfort of belonging sets the tone for lifelong interactions and commitment to others.

Early childhood education is more than just preparing children for future success in school. It is about honoring the process of childhood, holding sacred space for it and supporting every child in realizing their potential.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe children are unique, naturally curious and capable learners. Our teachers and children together build a foundation for independent thinking, problem solving, compassion and being resilient members of our community.

We follow a play-based curriculum that is child-led. Children learn best through play – developing physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. It is how they learn about themselves, other people and the world around them. Play reflects the natural rhythms of children’s concentration and curiosity. It is through play that children develop the skills that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

Relationships are critical in helping all individuals feel safe in order to learn and grow. Our school operates as a “school family” in which adults and children alike support and care for one another.

We value families as primary caregivers. We partner with them in supporting the growth and development of their children.

Our educators are collaborative learners and innovators who nurture kindness and teach and model essential self-regulation skills. They are empowered to be thoughtful and intentional caregivers while they facilitate engaging environments and experiences. We provide ongoing professional development opportunities that support and increase foundational knowledge of early childhood theory, deepen teaching practices, and foster reflective and adept mindfulness.

We create learning environments that are safe, nurturing and inclusive for children, staff and families. We consider the classroom environment to be “the third teacher” and recognize it for its potential to inspire. With students, we co-construct indoor and outdoor learning spaces that promote curiosity, collaboration, communication, learning and care for community.

Family engagement builds a healthy school community. Our center provides programs that strengthen family connections with our school and to other families. A large array of social, recreational and educational programs for adults and families are offered throughout the school year.



WE HONOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES





OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

Our Early Childhood Program is grounded in the principles of **Conscious Discipline**, a social and emotional philosophy that increases a teacher's skill set for self-management and classroom leadership.

Conscious Discipline provides a relationship-based model of classroom management with the "school family" at the core of the program. It is supported by the following three tenets:

- 1. Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others.** Our teachers maintain a sense of calm and well-being even when children cannot. Adults who manage their own anger and frustration teach children emotional self-management skills and provide them with a healthy model to emulate.
- 2. Connectedness governs behavior.** Our school structures and routines strengthen our family atmosphere and enrich children's classroom experiences. Structure brings order to a classroom by helping children anticipate what comes next. Rituals bring warmth and connection to a classroom by emotionally connecting children to their school experiences. At school, children begin to appreciate how pleasurable it is to play and work with others.
- 3. Conflict is an opportunity to teach.** While most people instinctively try to avoid conflict at school, we see conflict as an opportunity to teach children missing skills. With ongoing support, practice and coaching, children gain the confidence to approach conflict directly and learn to see it as a manageable part of daily life.

THE VISION OF OUR PROGRAM IS
INSPIRED BY THE SHEVA FRAMEWORK



Children are Natural Learners

Our teachers inspire children to question their world and to appreciate multiple perspectives.

Early Childhood Leadership as Visionaries

Our directors work with parents, teachers and The J's leadership to cultivate a diverse and vibrant learning community.

Early Childhood Educators are Professionals

Our educators are lifelong learners always engaging in professional development.

Families as Engaged Learners

Our families are valued, appreciated and supported by ongoing activities that strengthen our school community.

Environments as an Inspiration for Inquiry

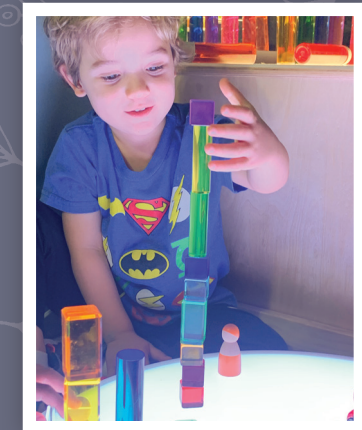
Our classrooms provide spaces that provoke children's wonder, curiosity, intellectual engagement and creative expression.

Discover CATCH as *Sh'mirat HaGuf*

(taking care of our bodies)
Our wellness curriculum supports children's physical activity and knowledge about healthy eating.

Israel as the Story of the Jewish People

Our educators create a connection with Israel through classroom activities and holiday celebrations.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



JEWISH VALUES AND HOLIDAYS

EMBRACING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Mandel JCC offers a program that enhances a child's view of Jewish identity. We do this through a variety of "hands-on" experiences, including weekly Shabbat celebrations and Jewish holiday explorations.

Children who are not Jewish are acknowledged for their beliefs and can use their Mandel JCC experience to learn about other cultures. Mutual respect and understanding are cornerstones for a successful future. The whole school comes together every Friday to celebrate Shabbat as a "School Family."



SEVEN
JEWISH
LENSES

התעוררות
Hit'orerut • Awakening
(Amazement and
Gratitude)

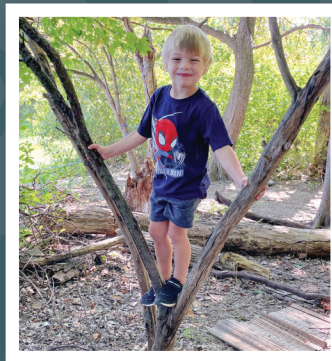
ברית
B'rit • Covenant
(Belonging and
Commitment)

קדושה
K'dushah • Holiness
(Intentionality and
Presence)

מסע
Masa • Journey
(Reflection, Return
and Renewal)

צלם אלהים
Tselem Elohim
Divine Image
(Dignity and Potential)

תקון עולם
Tikkun Olam •
Repair the World
(Responsibility)



CREATE INVITING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
FOR ENRICHING EXPERIENCES

Mandel JCC Campus

Our location within the Mandel Jewish Community Center enhances the opportunity for unique teaching and learning experiences. Our children are able to observe and interact with the multigenerational member base. Whether exploring our campus or engaging in gross motor play in our 4-court gymnasium, learning opportunities are created every day in unique ways.

CLASSROOMS

Inquisitive minds, rejoicing spirits and active bodies. Our early childhood classrooms are inspiring spaces that encourage children to move, explore and experiment. Our classrooms support children's active engagement, initiative and independence. Self-selected play, combined with teacher-directed experiences, empowers children's developmental and emotional growth.

OUTDOOR SPACES

For children, play is learning. There is no better space for that to happen than the outdoors in nature. At The J we have many outdoor spaces that provide different experiences for the children in our care. In addition to two traditional playgrounds – one for infant/toddlers and one for preschool/Pre-K – our students enjoy, explore and learn in our wooded area, in the Stanley I. & Hope S. Adelstein Children's Garden, and while playing on our field or exploring the walking path around The J.

OUR ENRICHMENT SPACES AND EXPERIENCES

Infants have the opportunity to use a gross motor space appropriate to their developmental age and stage. Our 3 and 4 year olds participate in our American Red Cross instructional swim program with their Mandel JCC classmates. Children are invited to participate in music and movement specials.



EARLY CHILDHOOD MAKER STUDIO

PLAY-BASED AND CHILD-LED LEARNING

The studio space – inspired by contemporary research regarding young children and the foundational first five years of life – provides numerous opportunities for creative thinking and exploration of materials in an environment that fosters real-life problem-solving among peers. Studio projects begin with teachers observing and asking children about a topic of interest or a pattern observed in their play. Based on children's responses, teachers introduce materials, questions and invitations that provoke children to further explore the topic. The studio is an extension of our classroom learning spaces for children and teachers alike. It allows for longer lasting projects, messier investigations and for educators to work with smaller groups of children in a more intentional way.





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