

PROJECT OF KINGS BAY Y



# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2017-2018**

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## Welcome to JCC Brooklyn in Clinton Hill

We are very pleased that you have chosen our program for your child! Drawing inspiration from Jewish values and culture, we aim to nurture the growth of the whole child in a caring, loving environment. We are looking forward to a rewarding journey together as your child grows as a unique person and a cherished member of our school community.

In order for us to ensure a smooth and effective program the JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill Early Childhood Program has compiled the following policies and procedures for parents. We ask for your full cooperation and support by reading and complying with these policies.

## Required Paperwork

The following forms and conditions must be met before beginning the school year:

- Financial obligations as agreed to in the JCC Brooklyn/Kings Bay YM-YWHA Contract must be met in full.
- An up-to-date medical form with a full immunization record must be on file. JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill cannot accept students that are not fully vaccinated.
- 2 completed emergency cards (updated each year).

## Educational Philosophy

JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill is a loving and caring community that embraces all families in our community. We are dedicated to providing our students with a learning environment that nurtures their growth, curiosity and self-esteem. Our aim is to provide opportunities for children to develop a lifelong passion for learning, to get to know and love themselves as individuals and as members of a caring, cooperative learning community.

We are a progressive school grounded in the philosophy that children learn best through play. Our lively, hands-on curriculum is developed through direct observation of students' interests and individual needs. Through explorations both indoors and outside of our classrooms we engage children's curiosity, imagination and their five senses. In partnership with families, we strive to provide opportunities for each child to develop cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally at a rate that is most appropriate for him or her.

## Jewish Life

JCC Brooklyn is a pluralistic Jewish Community Center located in three physical sites (Windsor Terrace, North Williamsburg and Clinton Hill) as well as in pop-up spaces. We are inspired by Jewish values and ideas and we welcome all families regardless of background.

Our signature programs in Jewish Child Care, Pre School, After School, Summer Camp, Family and Holiday Community Programming are the building blocks for young families to make new friends, connect to a community and craft their own path. Individuals and families of all backgrounds are welcome.

A joyful introduction to Jewish life, culture and holidays is part of each child's experience at JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill. Children become familiar with songs, customs and stories to expand their knowledge of holidays and Jewish values. The joy of Shabbat is shared by our whole school together each Friday (parents always welcome!).

The curriculum at JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill will convey a sense of Jewish identity through the day-to-day inclusion of:

- Jewish values - guiding children on the path to being warm, creative and accepting human beings.
- Building community - knowing, caring for, celebrating and supporting our neighbors and friends.
- Family time - enhancing family rituals of story sharing, cooking, eating and finding things to wonder about together.
- Jewish culture - learning about holidays and celebrating through stories, songs, art projects and dramatic play.
- Israel - learning about the Jewish ancestral homeland as a modern example of creativity to help others.
- Shabbat - reflecting on the week gone by and looking ahead to the adventures of the future.

Children of all ethnic and religious backgrounds are welcome to enroll, and differences in their backgrounds are recognized and respected. While Christmas, Easter, Halloween and Valentine's Day (as well as other non-Jewish holidays) are not celebrated at school, please be assured that a child's mention of any home celebration is always a welcome topic in the classroom and will be treated with respect and interest.

## Your Child's First Days at School

Starting school is a big step for a child. Adjusting to new places, people and routines is a process of developing trust in his or her teachers and the school environment. Support from parents and familiar caregivers, is an integral part of the process.

Our policy is that the adjustment period to school (or Phase In period) is a gradual one. We ask a parent or caregiver to plan to stay with their child in school for as long as the teachers and director, along with the parent, determine it may be necessary. We have found through experience that a slow, gradual separation is best for both parent and child.

### Phase In

Your child's first days at school are the Phase In period. The length of acclimating to school depends on your child's age group, class schedule and individual needs. We feel that this gradual beginning gives each child a chance to get to know his or her teachers, the classroom and its routines, and to feel comfortable in their new group setting in an atmosphere of trust.

We ask that each parent (or close relative or caregiver) be prepared to stay with his or her child during the Phase In period. Please make arrangements for other children in the family since the school cannot accommodate brothers and sisters during this time. We appreciated your cooperation during this period. It often causes inconvenience to families, but the results will be worth your efforts.

Please note that Phase In begins BEFORE the beginning of the school year, during a special classroom visit that will be scheduled by your child's teachers. During this classroom visit your child will be the focus and you should save any questions you have for our Parent Night, which will also take place during this week. During this time you will also find out which Phase In Group your child will be a part of for the first day of school.

## The School Day

To meet the growing needs and interests of our infants, toddlers and preschoolers, the daily program includes a variety of activities including:

Art Activities	Dramatic Play	Outdoor/Gym Time
Games	Water/Sand Play	Blocks
Music	Dance	Manipulative Play
Circle/Story Time	Science Explorations	

### Age Appropriate Math and Literacy Experiences

A typical day might be:

8:30 - 9:30 - Free Play/Work Time includes the use of materials and equipment in the room, work on special projects, cooking, art, etc.

9:30 - 10:00 - Circle Time during which the group can gather to discuss plans for the day, read a story, sing a song, or share talk about experiences at home or in school.

10:00 - 10:30 - Visiting the Gym or "Specials" (Art, Music, Yoga)

10:30 - 10:45 - SNACK

10:45 - 11:30 - PLAYGROUND

11:30 - 12:00 - Circle Time or short Work Time

12:00 - Dismissal for Half-Day friends

12:00 - 12:45 - LUNCH

12:45 - 1:45 - REST or Quiet Play

1:45 - 2:00 - SNACK

2:00 - 2:45 - Free Play/Work Time

2:45 - 3:00 - Goodbye Circle

3:00 - Dismissal for Full Day friends

Your teachers will have your child's daily and weekly schedule posted in their classroom for your reference.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Children should be brought to school and picked up promptly. Please bring your child to the classroom and pick her or him up from there unless you are participating in our Early Bird or After Care programs. Be sure to make verbal contact with a teacher at drop off and to sign your child out at pick up times. If someone new will be picking up your child, be sure to notify our staff. **YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN A USUAL CAREGIVER WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT.** If your plans for the day change, please call the school to make arrangements.

## **Visitors and Special Guests**

Visitors are welcome. Sometimes an out-of-town relative comes to visit and your child is anxious to show off his/her school. We would be pleased to plan a visit if you notify us in advance.

In addition, we welcome parents and family members to participate in special events, birthdays and to volunteer their time in the classroom. These visits should be arranged in advance with your child's teacher.

## **Class Parents**

Your teachers will request that one or more of the parents in your class function as Class Parents. Class Parents are helpful to teachers with communication to other parents about general upcoming events, needs in the classroom and times when volunteers may be required.

## **JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill Parent Committee**

The JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill Parent Committee is a working group of parent volunteers and staff dedicated to advancing the quality of the Early Childhood Program at JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill. The committee organizes, helps to plan and participates in a variety of school and community wide events and fundraisers.

## **Clothing and Cubby Items**

Please see that all clothing, shoes, boots, sheets and blankets are CLEARLY LABELED so that they can be easily identified. Outer clothing should have hooks so that children can hang it in their cubbies.

When soiled clothing or sheets and blankets are sent home, please launder and send back replacements on the next school day. Full day students' sheets and blankets will be sent home periodically.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of sending your child to school in simple, washable clothing. It is inevitable that clothing gets dirty when children play. It is also extremely important that fastenings be simple enough to encourage your child's independence in toileting and dressing

Your child's cubby should always be stocked with:

- Diapers and wipes (if not toilet trained)
- 1 sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 change of underwear
- 1 pair of pants
- 1 shirt
- 1 pair of socks
- 1 pair of extra sneakers
- 1 sheet and blanket for full time children (crib size sheets fit our rest mats very well).

## **Bringing Toys to School**

If your child needs to bring her/his favorite toy to school, we do not object. Some children need the comfort of a special toy from home to help them make a comfortable adjustment to school.

If your child asks to bring toys to school which are not essential to his/her adjustment, we ask you to dissuade him/her since problems sometimes occur: other children may want to play with the toy, toys can get lost, misplaced or broken at school.

Costumes, as well as guns and war toys are not permitted in school. For very young children the line between reality and pretend can be blurred and we find that these toys encourage reenactment of "action" media which can lead to play that is too rough. A young child can have trouble following the routines of the day while dressed in a costume, as well.



## **Snacks, Lunch and Food Allergies**

JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill will provide water and a snack in the morning (and afternoon for full day children). Challah and grape juice will be served on Fridays. Snack is also served during our after care session, 3:00-6:00PM.

Lunch should be sent to school in a clear, labeled "Ziploc" baggy. All lunches are refrigerated, so we ask that you refrain from using lunch boxes, which are much heavier and take up more space in our refrigerator. If you have included a thermos of pre-heated food, please let the teachers know and it can be kept out of the refrigerator on top of his/her cubby.

If your child has any allergies, please notify the school immediately so appropriate precautions can be taken to keep allergens away from your child. Our school is a PEANUT-FREE school and we ask that you substitute almond butter or another nut butter if your child's favorite food is a PB&J sandwich.

In order to keep or administer any emergency medications (including Benadryl, EpiPens or a nebulizer) our school is required to have instructions signed by your child's doctor.

There may be children in our school with life-threatening allergies. Please wash your child's hands (and face if necessary) each day UPON ENTERING the building and refrain from eating or drinking in the hallways and common areas of our school.

## **Birthdays**

A birthday party at school is a very important occasion in the life of your child. All children look forward to this event with great anticipation. What makes it special is not so much the party food but rather that it is her/his day, and the attention is focused on her/him. We ask that you bring in a cupcake (or other small treat) for each child with a candle for the birthday child. Please be sure that each treat is the same and refrain from choosing more than one color. Every child will have an opportunity to celebrate a birthday in school. Teachers will be happy to arrange "special day" celebrations for children with summer birthdays. Please make arrangements for a celebration with the teachers ahead of time and check for allergies to specific foods.

## **Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. These conferences are for parents only and provide an opportunity to sit down with your child's teachers to discuss progress, interests, friendships and goals for your child. If you wish to discuss something of immediate importance, please be sure to call or email for an appointment. We are ALWAYS happy to arrange the time to discuss your child with you.

One caution - Please DO NOT engage the teachers in conversation when class is in session especially during arrival and dismissal times. Their responsibility at this time is to the children. We have found that discussions about a child are best held when the child is not present.

## **Support for Students with Special Needs**

Children learn and grow in their own individual ways. We strive to make the classroom a place of exploration, challenge and success for all of our students. In some cases, Special Education evaluations and/or services are recommended. Services may include Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy or the assistance of a SEIT (Special Education Itinerant Teacher).

If a child in our school receives special education services, an educator from the team is selected to be the "team leader". In this role he/she will schedule meetings for all parents and educators, ensure that communication is maintained, and monitor progress toward educational goals. Please provide your child's teachers and the school director with any documentation you have (IEP, etc) to support us in specifically tailoring the classroom activities to your child's individual needs and strengths.

## **Health and Illness**

All children are required to have a physical examination by their own physician prior to the start of school.

A Department of Health Form is provided to each family in their enrollment packet. This must be filled out by your child's doctor and returned prior to the beginning of school. **YOUR CHILD CANNOT BE ADMITTED ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL WITHOUT THIS COMPLETED HEALTH FORM.** Please print doctor's name, address and telephone number. Dates, names and types of inoculations, boosters and other immunizations must be indicated by your doctor.

Please notify the school if your child is out because of illness. Your child should be kept home if he/she shows any sign of illness and should come back to school only when he/she can participate in the full program of his/her class both indoors and outdoors. We have no provisions for caring for children who are sick.

If your child has had an illness lasting more than one week and has been seen by a doctor, he/she is required to have a doctor's written consent to return to school.

When your child has been ill with a fever, she/he may not return to school until free of fever without fever-reducing medicine for a minimum of 24 hours.

In case of contagious disease or exposure to contagion (i.e. chicken pox, pink eye, stomach virus, lice) parents are asked to notify the school at once, even if this occurred during vacation periods within the school year.

Parents will be notified by the school when a child in the class has a contagious disease.

The school will notify you if the teacher observes that your child has become ill during school hours, and cannot fully participate in class activities. You will then be expected to arrange for your child to be picked up and taken home promptly.

If your child has lice (or nits), he/she will not be allowed to remain in school. Teachers will do periodic head checks as prevention, but you are advised to keep a close eye on the situation at home.

Pink eye is another highly contagious infection. Children with this condition will not be admitted to school until the eye is clear of redness and discharge. A doctor's note is required in order for the child to return to school.

If your child has a rash of unknown origin she/he must be seen by a physician. A doctor's note saying that the child is not contagious is required in order for the child to come to school. Only in this way can we hope to avoid outbreaks of chicken pox, scarlet fever and other diseases with symptomatic rashes.

A doctor's note is required before a child who has been suffering from diarrhea returns to school.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

Young children are in a process of learning how to communicate with others and express their feelings. Often behaviors that are viewed as undesirable are a communication from a child about something that they want or need. Our goal regarding behavior management is for children to develop increasing self-control, self-confidence, and to form satisfying relationships with peers and other members of the community. To this end, teachers will focus on positive behaviors and reinforce these as often as possible. Classroom environment and routines will be age-appropriate in order to foster a joyful experience for each child, which is conducive to positive behaviors. Along with positive reinforcement, teachers will redirect children as needed to help them make good choices. Teachers and children together will create class rules (e.g. keep hands and feet to our own bodies) in order to make the classroom environment safe and respectful for all. This process of creating and referring to class rules helps children to understand the expectations for behavior.

We endeavor to understand, along with the help of parents, a child's experience of being in school and we will to the extent possible modify the classroom to accommodate child's needs. Inappropriate behaviors will be responded to firmly and consistently with the aim of child developing increasing self-control. At all times children will be treated with love, care and respect.

Child will be directed to a "rest spot" when teachers determine that a child needs to "take a break". Examples of times when a child needs to take a break include engaging in aggressive behaviors and not responding to redirection by teachers. The rest spot is not punitive: instead it is a cozy quiet place that provides a moment to take a breath and reset. Children will be in the rest spot for a maximum of one minute per year of age. Before rejoining the group a teacher will speak with the child to make sure that the child understands the behavior expected of him/her.

If child's behavior disrupts the functioning of the class, the child may be removed from the class until she/he is ready to rejoin the group in a productive way. In this case child will always be in the company of another teacher or staff person.

Parents will be called in the case of behaviors such as hitting and biting. Parents of recipients of hitting and biting will be called. Teachers will communicate with parents in case of disruptive or harmful behaviors and together we will develop a strategy to address these behaviors. If needed, parents may be advised to have a specialist observe child for possible support services. If, after our school has made efforts to accommodate a child, the child's behavior continues to disrupt class or the child continues to harm other children the child will be asked to leave the school.

Children will always be treated with respect. Any form of corporal punishment, abusive language, withholding or threatening to withhold food or access to bathroom, shaming of child, isolating child or other punitive actions are prohibited.

## **Safety and Emergencies**

We take the utmost care to prevent emergencies from occurring. However, in the rare event of an emergency it is important that our families know what to expect.

### **Emergency Cards**

Each family will be asked to complete two emergency cards. In the event of any emergency or illness you will be called. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts indicated on your cards will be called and asked to come to pick up your child. Bearing that in mind, be sure that your emergency contacts are close enough to respond quickly to an emergency.

### **Illness or Injury to A Child**

Parents will be contacted to bring a child home promptly if emergency medical care is not deemed necessary. A sick or injured child will be transported to the hospital for emergency care if required. If it is necessary to call 911 for emergency personnel, parents will be called immediately afterward once help is on the way.

### **Missing Child**

Our teachers take tremendous care that no child is ever left unattended. To prevent any confusion, children are not released to their caregivers or parents until they have been signed out in the class attendance book. In the event that is realized a child is missing in the building we will lock the door to prevent anyone from leaving until the child is located.

During class trips, teachers constantly count (and recount) the children in their groups. If it is ever discovered that a child is missing on a trip, children will be re-grouped and the immediate area searched for no longer than 3 minutes before calling 911 and alerting appropriate site authorities. The school director and parents will be called immediately after 911. The group will remain with one teacher while chaperones and staff conduct a search until the child is found.

### **Evacuation of the Building**

Our school conducts fire drills during the school year in order to ensure that our staff and students know how to evacuate safely and quickly. In the event of an actual emergency, staff will evacuate children as planned moving them down the block past the school building. In cold weather, if possible children will enter the lobby of one of our neighboring buildings. In the event that it is not safe to stay in the immediate vicinity, JCC Brooklyn Clinton Hill has an arrangement with P.S. 56(located at 170 Gates Avenue)to allow our students to wait there until they can be picked up by a caregiver or parent. In this event, families would be notified after evacuation was safely completed.