



# Parent Handbook



Dear Parents,

Welcome to BJBE's Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center. On behalf of the Board of Directors of BJBE, the Clergy and Professional Staff I am pleased to welcome you and your children to our school and our wonderful BJBE community.

Entering preschool is an important milestone in the lives of children and parents. BJBE's Early Childhood Program fosters a vibrant and innovative Jewish learning community where child-focused exploration, creative problem-solving and collaboration inspire activities and curriculum. Our safe, nurturing and stimulating environment is designed to facilitate social, emotional, physical, intellectual and Judaic growth and development.

BJBE believes that children learn best through play. Children have the freedom to explore their environment and enhance their individual skills while building a solid community with their classmates and teachers. We pride ourselves on building relationships with all families. Our doors are always open as we relish the partnership we develop with families as we work together in the education and nurturing of the children in our program.

Judaism is intertwined into all areas of classroom life. Jewish values, the study of Torah and songs fill our classrooms. Our school provides children a chance to learn about and celebrate Judaism, laying a lifetime foundation of joyful Judaism; we pride ourselves in molding children into *ōmenschesō*.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to our school. In it you will read about our philosophy, programs, policies and procedures. It is yours to use as a reference guide throughout the year. Should a question or concern ever arise, feel free to contact the Chava Center office. The teachers and I are always available to talk with you.

I look forward to sharing together this learning journey,

*Susie*

Susie Wexler  
Director

## **BJBE Clergy and Professional Staff**

### *Rabbis*

Karyn Kedar, Senior Rabbi

A. Brian Stoller, Associate Rabbi

### *Cantors*

Jennifer Frost, Senior Cantor

Rayna Green, Assistant Cantor

### *Professional Staff*

Arlene Mayzel, Executive Director

Sandy Robbins, Director of Education

Kelly Goldberg, Youth and Family Engagement Director

Susie Wexler, Director of BJBE's Early Childhood Program at The Chava Center

### *Office Staff*

Sarah Duffin, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

Larisa Rozman, Accounting Manager

Debbie Heywood, Assistant to the Director of Education

Elaine Wexler, Assistant to the Executive Director

Leslie Block, Assistant to the Cantors

Chime Costello, Assistant to the Senior Rabbi

Dianna Scott, Events Coordinator

## **Philosophy**

BJBE's Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center provides a safe, developmentally appropriate environment that meets the physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of young children and their families. Through developmentally appropriate practice and current research, our staff provides an opportunity for growth for each child within a nurturing and supportive framework. Each child is respected as an individual, whose individuality is celebrated.

Three tenets guide our educational practice.

1. Children in our school enjoy attending school; the process of learning is fun and engaging. Children develop an image of themselves as capable, effective learners.
2. Children view themselves as members of a community where each individual is valued; meeting one's own needs and those of others is integral. Children develop an image of themselves as kind, caring people.
3. Judaism is seamlessly woven into the school day in a fun and thought-provoking way. Children develop an image of themselves as Jews aware of and enjoying traditions.

### **Our program is founded on the belief in:**

- A high quality, professional nurturing staff
- Age appropriate, inspiring curriculum
- Effective, timely communication
- A safe, spacious and inviting physical environment

### **We accomplish our goal by:**

- Developing patterns of learning and problem solving
- Building a positive self-image and a strong Jewish identity
- Developing self-reliance, empathy and concern for others
- Developing an ability to cooperate with others
- Optimizing individual growth

The preschool years are formative years, the time when behavior patterns, value systems and attitude emerge. We provide individualized attention for all of our students creating opportunities for growth, celebrating accomplishments and preparing for academic and social success.

Each family comes to school with a unique set of experiences, feelings and characteristics. It is our desire to be responsive and helpful and to actively assist you with any questions or concerns. We are here for you as well as for your child. Please remember that open communication between parents and staff is the key to a successful early childhood experience. Visits to the classroom are welcome, and encouraged.

Reform Judaism is infused into every aspect of our school program. Celebrating Shabbat and Havdallah as a community each week, exploring the holidays, and exposure to Hebrew bring Jewish values into the classroom. Early childhood is the ideal opportunity to lay a foundation of joyful Judaism for the child and their family. Families are invited to participate in congregational events as we join together at BJBE to form a Jewish community.

## **Curriculum**

BJBE's Early Childhood Program at The Chava Center uses a developmental approach; children's play activities are viewed as indispensable precursors to the academic activities of elementary school. A child learns through play. Through play, children learn to be part of a group, to share and to become friends. We place emphasis on helping children learn the skills necessary to socialize in a group of peers. These skills include self-advocacy, patience, verbalizing, resilience, negotiation and problem-solving.

In play, children experience the freedom to try new ideas, practice skills, and imitate adult roles. All learning is based on this fundamental ability. Therefore, our environment is carefully planned to foster discovery, learning and exploration.

Math, science, literacy, music, and art are integrated into various themes, both Jewish and secular. Through cooking, sorting, matching, counting games and cause and effect experimentation children are exposed to the concepts of science and mathematics. Reading, drawing, storytelling and vocabulary development drive literacy awareness. Students are offered fine and gross motor activities on a daily basis. Through thoughtful planning of age appropriate activities we address the development of the whole child ó social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual.

At BJBE we are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. Children are active participants. Projects and units of study begin with invitations to explore. Teachers observe and question children about the topic of interest. Through an interactive process between children and teachers, additional materials and opportunities deepen the exploration. Reflection, curiosity, and documentation are integral pieces of learning.

## Daily Schedule

It is important for your child to arrive at The Chava Center on time each day. Timeliness helps promote structure for the children and ensures a smoother transition into the day. Daily activities include the following:

### Circle Time

In this carefully planned activity, children come together as a classroom community. Teachers use this time to provide information about the daily schedule. Children have an opportunity to express ideas and discuss life events. The learning is developmentally appropriate, and may use a calendar to explore concepts of counting and sequencing, a sharing of information that will further develop vocabularies using puppets, felt board stories, songs, acting, finger plays, storytelling and organized games and an exploration of the Jewish holidays.

### Free Play or Free Choice Time

Children gain independence through free play. **Research shows us that this part of the morning is crucial.** During this time children enjoy individualized attention, with teachers observing and interacting with the children as needed. Children are also able to develop and practice their socialization skills. Each classroom has a Science Center, Manipulatives, Puzzles, Blocks, Dramatic Play, a Library and an Art Studio. Having clean up once free play is over emphasizes order, limits and respect for the environment and others while encouraging cooperation and responsibility.

### Gross Motor Activity Time

Children enjoy the Chava Center's outdoor equipment and indoor multi-purpose room facilities. We provide bikes, balls, parachute activities and relay races in the multi-purpose room. These activities stimulate the development of gross motor skills.

### Snack

Children help set tables for snack. It is a time to socialize and develop healthy habits such as hand washing before eating. The children learn to clean up after themselves when they are finished. We are a **NUT FREE** school. Please read labels carefully when you purchase food for the classroom for your child's birthday or your child's lunch. State law requires that all food served be pre-packaged and unopened. No homemade baked goods are permitted.

## Early Childhood Programs offered at the Chava Center

**Parent/Tot:** This program offers toddlers the opportunity to learn and explore in an environment that enhances all areas of development including social/emotional, cognitive, fine and gross motor. The structure of the class gives toddlers a "snap-shot" of the preschool experience. This weekly seventy-five minute class weaves Judaic values, traditions and songs into each class session which includes a short circle time for songs, finger-plays and instruments, and time to explore all learning areas of the classroom including art, dramatic play, manipulatives, and block play, sensory and gross motor activities.

*\*Parent-Tot is DCFS license exempt because parents remain with their children throughout the class for the entire year.*

**2 Year Old Program** (2 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>) With a trusting relationship between students and teachers providing a foundation for exploration, this introduction to school program allows for growth and development of socialization and independence in a warm and nurturing environment. Activities are designed to stimulate curiosity and engage early learners based on best practices in early childhood research. The morning's structure allows for a circle time, free play, fine and gross motor activities that encourage developmentally appropriate growth. Jewish holidays, customs and traditions are explored including weekly Shabbat celebrations with challah-baking, visits to the sanctuary, song sessions and traditional blessings.

**3 and 4 Year Old Preschool Programs:** These programs foster independence and encourage creativity in a warm, nurturing and supportive environment. Teachers develop a child-inspired curriculum in the classroom while integrating all areas of development including social/emotional, cognitive, fine and gross motor into the routine of the morning. The children act as explorers in the learning process and create ongoing individual and group projects. Children in these programs receive all readiness skills to assure a successful transition to kindergarten. Children continue to build on their prior knowledge of Jewish holidays, customs and traditions, and celebrate Shabbat each week by baking challah, visiting our clergy in the sanctuary and singing and reciting the traditional Sabbath blessings.

*3 Year Old Program – 3 Year's Old by September 1<sup>st</sup>*

*4 Year Old Program – 4 Year's Old by September 1<sup>st</sup>*

## **Lunch and Enrichment**

Extend your child's day in a warm, nurturing and enriching setting. Children may participate in a variety of classes led by Chava Center staff and community programs, with the opportunity to register for new offerings each semester. The lunch and enrichment program is available for our drop-off 2-, 3- and 4 year-old programs.

2 year-olds may extend their day until 1:00 pm. 3, 4 and 5 year-olds may extend their day until 1:00 pm with lunch or 1:45pm with an Enrichment class.

## **Your Child at School**

### **Separation**

Separating from loved ones is a difficult transition at every stage of life. For young children, this can be especially unsettling as it might be their first experience with separation from parents and caregivers. Children will read their parents for emotional cues on how to react to this novel situation. Parents set an important example by showing their children that they approve of school, teachers and the positive experience that school will provide. Your positive attitude makes it easier for your child to relax in a new environment. Beginning preschool is a big step in the family's development, and bring many emotions to parents. Communicate your concerns openly to your child's teachers.

All children new to BJBE's Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center will experience a home visit by their teachers. Making a connection in a safe, familiar environment allows children and parents to begin to develop a trusting relationship with teachers. Teachers will contact the family to identify a convenient time for this half-hour interaction just prior to the start of attendance. Meet and Greet allows parents to come to school with their children for a short play session just before school begins in the fall.

Each child's response to separation is as unique as the child themselves. While some children may transition with little challenge, others may take more time. Teachers will partner with parents in deciding when it is appropriate for the parent to leave the room. Be prepared to be on call the first week of school, should your child have difficulty leaving you. It is not uncommon for children to have late reactions to separation, or challenges following a change in a family's situation (a new baby, a move, a parent travelling, etc.). These are all normal responses to a new situation. Staff are available to provide support for students and parents alike.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

When arriving at school, please walk with your child to the classroom door and wait in the hall until the teachers welcome you and your child into the classroom. Children should not be unsupervised at any time. Classroom doors are opened at 9:00 each morning; prior to that, teachers are preparing for the day. Please assist your child in washing his/her hands before engaging in play; this will help keep unwanted germs out of our building. **State law requires that children be signed in and out of the classroom each day with the time noted;** please sign your child in and out each day on the sign-in/sign-out form. Teachers will not release your child to anyone other than those individuals designated on the form in your child's file. Written permission from a parent required to have your child to go home with anyone not on the permission form. This note must include the name of the person picking up your child, the relationship to your child, their telephone number and your signature. The staff will check a photo I.D. to verify their identity.

Please be prompt picking up your child. Teachers have other responsibilities after class. If you find that you are unavoidably delayed, please make every effort to contact BJBE (the main office or Chava Center office) so we can reassure your child and plan to care for him/her until your arrival.

## **Attendance**

If your child is sick or will be absent for another reason, please call the office on the day of the absence. Information about pre-arranged absences, such as out-of-town trips, should be given to the teacher in advance.

## **Key Cards**

Parents are provided with one key card that allows access to the back (west) door of BJBE and the preschool entrance. If you should lose a key card please let us know. This is important for maintaining the security of the building. Replacement cards cost \$10.00. For security purposes, please do not hold the door open for anyone you do not know personally.

## **School Clothes**

Please send your child to school in play clothes! We suggest clothes that encourage independence. Avoid back zippers, difficult snaps, or hard to manage belts in favor of items that are comfortable and easy for a child to manage. While we provide smocks for painting and messy activities, they do not protect everything, and are not worn during hand washing and pouring. Have at least one full set of extra clothing available for your child. For safety, we request that children do not wear open-toes shoes. **Please label all clothing!**

We play outdoors during the entire year unless there is precipitation or temperatures below 20 degrees, or there is a health risk as defined by local health officials. During winter months, children should bring a full set of labeled snow gear: snow-pants, waterproof boots, hats, scarves, and waterproof mittens each day.

A complete set of clothing, labeled and in a ziploc bag (also labeled) must remain at school. Please check periodically to make sure your child's extra set of clothing is the correct size and appropriate as seasons change and children grow.

Children must bring a backpack each day, one they can easily open and close, for schoolwork.

### **Birthday Parties**

Birthdays are very special events for the young child. Parents are invited to share this day with their child's class. Consult with your child's teacher in advance to make classroom celebration plans. In accordance with state licensing laws, food prepared at home is not allowed.

Parents want to plan birthday celebrations with the best interest of the child in mind. Children will be able to celebrate their birthday with every member of the class during the school day. It is developmentally appropriate to have fewer guests. Invitations should be mailed rather than distributing them at school.

In honor of your child's birthday, parents can purchase a book to be added to the class library. This reinforces the concept of tzedakah (righteous giving) at this special time when children themselves are receiving gifts from others. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions of book titles that will help to enhance the classroom collection.

### **Room Parents**

Being a room parent is a great way to get involved at BJBE. Each class can have two room parents. Room parents assist the teachers in organizing class celebrations and the coordination of special supplies. They also deliver important information to each family, such as school cancellations, calendar changes or planning educational field trips.

## Health and Safety

### Health Forms

**A medical report must be on file at BJBE before your child's first day of school.**

This report must be dated within six months of enrollment and signed by the examining physician and the parents. The results of the TB test must be recorded and dated. A lead screening test is required. Please note there is a section that the parent must complete and sign. When your child receives new immunizations, you must provide a signed statement from the physician indicating the type of immunizations and date. If a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition or family's beliefs, then the school must have a document from a licensed health professional. For school purposes, this medical report will be valid for one year.

Please inform the office and your child's teacher in writing of any allergies or conditions requiring special care during school hours.

Your child's medical form, as well as the other forms you completed concerning your child and family, is kept in a confidential file in the Early Childhood Director's office. It is only available to the director, teachers and regulatory authorities, such as DCFS.

### Illness at School

If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called and asked to take your child home. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed on the emergency form will be called. It is important that the phone numbers listed for these emergency contacts be kept up to date. Please include cell phone numbers if possible and inform us if there is a change. In the event of an emergency, the staff will call the paramedics. A staff member will accompany any child transported to the nearest trauma center hospital. Any expenses incurred for the emergency medical treatment are the responsibility of the family.

### Absence Due to Illness

If your child is not well enough to play both indoors and outdoors on any given day, please keep him/her at home. Please call the school if you know your child will not be coming to school. As a general rule, consider how you would want other parents to send their child to school when making a decision about attendance. Children **may not** attend school if they have:

- A fever within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours

- Signs of an upper respiratory infection, such as heavy nasal discharge and sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose and excessive fatigue.

Please DO NOT bring your child to school unless he/she has exhibited absolutely no symptoms for the 24 hours immediately preceding the next school day.

## **Contagious Diseases**

Please notify us as soon as possible if your child has a contagious disease or condition, such as lice, strep throat, chicken pox, hand, foot and mouth or conjunctivitis. If there is an incidence of a contagious disease in your class, you will be notified.

If head lice is reported, head checks will be performed on all the children in that classroom early in the day. We will take appropriate measures in the classroom to quickly stop the possible spread of lice. All children must be nit free to attend school. If lice and/or nits are found on your child's head, you will be asked to pick up your child from school and administer the appropriate treatment.

## **Medication**

The Chava Center will only administer prescription medication to a child if it is accompanied by a written authorization from a parent and a written order signed by a physician (the physician's name on the original pharmacy container will suffice). Prescription medications must be sent in the original pharmacy container with the child's name, physician's name, name of medication and specific instructions for its administration.

Please notify the staff if any medication, including Tylenol, has been given to your child prior to entering school.

## **Pest Management Plan**

BJBE incorporates integrated pest management procedures for control of pests to ensure the health and safety of children, staff, and all others using our building and grounds. Integrated pest management addresses the prevention of pest problems through natural, nontoxic measures. Integrated pest management relies primarily on nontoxic cultural and natural agents and only uses chemical pesticides when necessary. BJBE contracts with Orkin Commercial Services, and receives routine treatments every third Wednesday of the month.

## Landscaping Maintenance

Families will be notified by e-mail when any pesticides or products are used on BJBE premises.

## Tuition and Fees

A tuition schedule is listed on the bottom of the Chava Center application. The tuition represents the total academic year. The \$250.00 deposit which you submitted with your registration is non-refundable and is applied towards tuition. If a payment plan is required, it can be arranged through temple administration on an individual basis. Refunds are not part of our policy but in extenuating circumstances a determination will be made by temple administration. All financial transactions will be handled by the temple administration.

<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Day, 2 Year Old Program	T/TH	9:00-12:00pm*	\$2,750	*end time is 11:30am through 10/30/15
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Day, 2 Year Old Program	M/W/F	9:00-12:00pm*	\$3,350	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Day, 3 Year Old Program	T/Th/F	9:00-12:00pm	\$3,800	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Day, 3 Year Old Program	M/T/TH/F	9:00-12:00pm	\$4,450	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 day, 3 Year Old Program	M-F	9:00-12:00pm	\$4,975	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jr Kindergarten Program	M-F	9:00-12:00pm	\$4,975	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Day, Jr Kindergarten Program	M/T/TH/F	12:15-3:15pm	\$4,450	

## Age Requirements

- 2 Year Old Program: 2 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.
- 3 Year Old Program: 3 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.
- Junior Kindergarten: 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

## Calendar

A calendar of key dates is provided at the start of each school year and is available online. We follow Deerfield Public School holiday and vacation schedule. In addition, we are closed for all major Jewish holidays, following Reform Jewish practice.

## **Insurance Coverage for Children**

We provide public liability insurance in the amount as required by the state.

## **Discipline Policies and Procedures**

The environment is the third teacher in the classroom according to the Reggio-Emilia approach to early childhood education. Spaces are established to minimize potential disciplinary challenges. Children of all ages need clearly articulated limits. They learn that certain types of behavior are not acceptable. At the BJBE Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center, staff members use positive language, reinforce appropriate behaviors, and state expected behavior. Children are redirected when appropriate. Children are given alternatives and choices. Natural consequences are used as an educational tool. The safety of the children is of paramount importance. No child will be allowed to hurt himself, others, or the school property. When all of the above have been tried, a "break" (sitting quietly to calm down no longer than one minute per year of age) will be used. Parents will be kept informed if this occurs on a consistent basis and a meeting will be scheduled to develop a plan of action.

The following are the steps taken when a child's behavior may cause harm to themselves or others:

1. A child who is disruptive will be redirected to a more appropriate activity.
2. If the behavior persists, "break time" will be used to avoid interfering with the other children.
3. At a quiet moment, the teacher will sit down with the child, define the problem behavior, and give the child acceptable alternatives to the problem behavior. Motivation will also be discussed.
4. If it becomes necessary, teacher and parents will meet to develop a plan of action.

## **Discharge Procedures**

Every effort will be made to meet the individual needs of each child in our program. In the rare situation where the BJBE Early Childhood Center at the Chava Center is unable to meet the child's individual needs, the child demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, the child shall be discharged from BJBE's Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center.

In all instances, when the director decides that it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, the child's and parent (s)'s needs shall be considered by planning with the parent (s) to meet the child's needs when he or she leaves the facility, including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

## **Effective Ways For Parents to Negotiate Difficulties and Differences**

- Immediately bring your concern to the attention of your child's teachers
- If your issue has not been resolved, bring it to the attention of the director of the Chava Center
- Finally, if your issue is still not resolved, bring your concern to the attention of BJBE's Director of Education, Sandy Robbins.

## **Consultation**

The BJBE ECC utilizes the services of a consultant with expertise in child development. The consultant observes periodically in the classroom. If a child is evidencing one or more behavioral difficulties or developmental lags, we believe in early intervention. Parents are always informed and asked permission prior to involving the consultant for an individual observation. Should the need arise; the consultant could meet with the staff as well as the parents. Information about any child is held in the strictest confidence.



Please acknowledge receipt of this handbook by detaching, signing and returning this page to the Director of the Early Childhood Program.

I have received and read the BJBE's Early Childhood Program at the Chava Center's handbook.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date