



PARENT HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to serve as an agreement between families and our school to ensure a safe, successful, and memorable experience.

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PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

The Michael-Ann Russell JCC Early Childhood Academy is a learning community devoted to providing a stimulating environment that promotes the development and meaningful relationships under the umbrella of Jewish values and traditions.

The vision of the Early Childhood Academy program is to create a child-centered, Jewish environment where children can grow and mature at their own pace. We aim to help children recognize and realize their full potential as learners while helping them build self-esteem and confidence. Our ideal is to provide surroundings where children can become well-adjusted, independent people who discover the true beauty of their uniqueness as individuals.

We work together with families to facilitate children's development as critical thinkers, problem solvers, citizens, and active members of their communities. Respect, cooperation, empathy, tolerance, and creativity are values that sustain our daily work with children and families.

Educational Philosophy

Our children will be embarking on long-term investigation projects. A project Approach is an in-depth study of a particular topic. Projects will cover all areas established by Creative Curriculum, such as language, mathematics, drama, blocks, music, outdoors, and, specifically in the Pre-K 4 classes, projects will follow VPK standards. This approach also applies to our Judaic curriculum.

What are the benefits of applying the Project Approach in early childhood education? Research shows that the Project Approach promotes intellectual development by engaging young children's minds in observing and investigating selected aspects of their environment. It teaches children to make a hypothesis, predict, monitor, and engage in higher-level thinking skills.

We follow the Creative Curriculum that outlines seven learning content areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Technology, and Processing Skills. We also follow Letter Links, the High Scopes early literacy curriculum.

In addition to our use of the Creative Curriculum, we now include some elements of the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, which is considered best practices all over the world. This approach encourages independent thinking in children and creativity, communication, and expression of their feelings. Parents and teachers are considered partners and guides who help facilitate the exploration of children's interests.

Jewish Curriculum

Jewish holidays, culture, concepts, and traditions are themes that are continually present in each class. Holidays are introduced at the child's level of comprehension. The children prepare foods appropriate to each holiday with an emphasis on individual tastes and textures. Arts and crafts projects decorate the rooms and give our hallways an all-over holiday feeling. The music program includes holiday songs in Hebrew and English. The importance and beauty of our Jewish heritage are evident with appropriate blessings at snack time, lunch, holidays, and Shabbat. Our school Shabbat celebration is a weekly highlight, where we can join together in the spirit of Am Yisrael--Jewish Peoplehood. The Jewish calendar is a major component of our school year, and much of the classroom schedule revolves around our holiday celebrations. Special events, such as the "Shofar Factory," "Matzah Factory," "Chanukah Lights Party," and the "Pizza in the Sukkah" are enhancements the children enjoy. We offer Hebrew classes once a week as part of our enrichment classes.

JCC early childhood programs are the largest platform of Jewish early childhood education in North America, touching thousands of young lives annually. Recognizing that reach and responsibility, we have created the Sheva Center, an innovative approach to early childhood education, empowering teachers and directors, and positioning JCC early childhood education centers as examples of excellence.

Sheva, which means seven in Hebrew, is a powerful number in Jewish thought and practice. The Sheva framework employs seven core principles of early care and education and contemporary and ancient texts, using seven Jewish lenses to reveal universal values. Sheva classrooms weave these values throughout their educational day.

By partnering with affiliated JCCs through the Sheva Center, we can best support their early education professionals in promoting and sustaining the best in early childhood Jewish education and engaging families on their Jewish journeys. A team of ten Sheva faculty—experts in early childhood Jewish education, family engagement, Jewish life and living, and other related specializations—assist our two full-time professionals in guiding JCCs. They all provide on-site and virtual consultations tailored to the needs of each school.

In order to continually measure success, we are assisting six lab communities within JCCs, which will create learning opportunities and materials as a means of testing and evaluating the work in the seven core elements of Sheva through a progressive lens. These JCCs will also continue to strengthen their early childhood centers with serious and regular professional development of educators and administrators.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center (MARJCC) and its Early Childhood Academy are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, guests, and staff. To ensure everyone's safety and security, the JCC requires individuals using the facilities or participating in our programs to conduct themselves in a considerate and responsible manner and respect the rights and dignity of other members, guests, and staff.

The MARJCC reserves the right to enroll members and families who embrace the mission, vision, policies, and procedures adopted by the MARJCC, including our commitment to diversity, respect for individual differences, and Jewish values. Failure to adhere to MARJCC principles may result in immediate suspension or dismissal from the MARJCC without a refund. We urge you to review the following information closely with your child(ren).

All members, guests, and staff using the facilities or participating in our programs are expected to abide by the following policies:

Behavior Standards

Treat fellow participants, staff, supervisors, guests, public/private property, and the environment with the utmost respect. Every participant is expected to exercise goodwill towards others, our activities, and our facilities. Courtesy and respect are requirements of the MARJCC community. Disorderly conduct will not be tolerated; a member or guest who displays inappropriate behavior may be removed from the premises.

Behavior by children, adults, and guests that is strictly prohibited includes:

1. Using offensive or generally inappropriate language, including harsh verbal comments or improper gestures, is strictly prohibited.
2. Keeping hands and bodies to one's self is imperative. If physical contact is made with another person, it must be both welcomed and appropriate. Teasing, horseplay, pushing, kicking, hitting, and fighting are strictly prohibited.
3. Bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment are strictly prohibited.
4. Verbal or physical threats, taunting or abuse toward another individual, and threatening to do bodily harm to an employee, visitor, or fellow parent/guardian are strictly prohibited.
5. Taking part in physical acts of a sexual nature, engaging in sexual harassment, or offending others with words or indecent exposure is strictly prohibited.
6. Damaging, destroying, or vandalizing MARJCC property is strictly prohibited.

7. Aiding in the unauthorized entrance of any person, sharing membership cards to gain access to the facility, or unauthorized access to programs, services, or classes is strictly prohibited.
8. Using fireworks, firearms, toy guns, or weapons of any kind at the MARJCC is strictly prohibited.
9. Bringing or using any illegal drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or intoxicants of any kind on the MARJCC campus is *strictly prohibited*.
 - Smoking, vaping, the use of e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco inside the building or outside on the grounds of the MARJCC is strictly prohibited. The MARJCC and its property are smoke-free environments.
 - Selling, distributing, dispensing, possessing, using, trading, offering for sale, or attempting to buy illegal or prescribed drugs, or otherwise engaging in the illegal use of drugs is strictly prohibited.
 - Consumption of alcoholic beverages on the MARJCC property (unless approved for special events) is strictly prohibited.
10. The use of cell phones while in the locker rooms is strictly prohibited at all times.
11. The unauthorized recording of other members, staff, children, and program participants is strictly prohibited.
12. Any behavior that endangers the life, safety, health, or well-being of others is strictly prohibited.
13. Loitering, causing annoyance or alarm to other members or staff on the MARJCC property is strictly prohibited.
14. Solicitation, gambling, proselytizing, or panhandling of any kind on the MARJCC property is strictly prohibited.
15. There is a zero-tolerance policy for theft at the MARJCC.

Supervising Minors

1. Children under the age of ten years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian while at the MARJCC or must be registered in and under the supervision of a JCC program while at the JCC. Everyone age ten and over must be prepared to always show a valid picture ID or their JCC membership card while on campus.
2. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for their children's behavior while using the MARJCC facilities and/or participating in MARJCC programs.

Social Media

The MARJCC strictly prohibits any abusive, threatening, profane, or harassing communication made in person, via e-mail or text/voicemail/phone or other written or verbal communication.

When utilizing social media platforms such as “WhatsApp,” “Instagram,” “Snapchat,” and other venues that are public vehicles of speech and photos alike, rules exist that we must all (children and parents) recognize, understand, and follow. There will be consequences when these rules are not adhered to and respected. Please note the following rules:

- a. One may not promulgate negative, unkind comments about participants, parents, or MARJCC staff on social media.
- b. One may not post photos of another parent(s)' child(ren) on social media without consent.
- c. One may not “condemn” the MARJCC or its policies or staff decisions on social media. Any concerns that you may have regarding these matters must be made through the appropriate channels so they can be addressed fairly, appropriately, and effectively for everyone involved.

Parking

Parking is available to members and guests free of charge. The Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center is not responsible for theft of items left in vehicles or damage to any vehicle parked in its lot. Overnight parking is strictly prohibited; vehicles parked overnight may be towed at the owner’s expense.

Access

Upon entering the MARJCC, each person must swipe their membership card at the front desk or sign in as a guest, following our visitor management protocol.

1. Non-members must provide a photo ID to the MARJCC front desk representative. Visitors will receive a visitor sticker to wear while at the facility.
2. Everyone must adhere to the posted schedules for the usage of all the MARJCC facilities, including the fitness center, public areas, pools, tennis courts, etc.

Membership Suspension or Revocation

Membership may be suspended or revoked based on the severity of the violation. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Executive Officer or his designee when behavior is contrary to the interests, purposes, good and welfare of the agency or is determined to violate the rules and regulations of the MARJCC.

A suspended or terminated member remains liable for all dues and other indebtedness incurred before suspension or termination of the membership. Refunds will not be issued for suspended or terminated memberships.

The MARJCC reserves the right to deal with violations of the MARJCC Code of Conduct at our discretion at any given time, including, but not limited to, refusal of service, removal from MARJCC property, suspension and/or revocation of membership privileges, and facility access.

The MARJCC reserves the right to update the MARJCC Code of Conduct without advanced notice to MARJCC members, guests, and staff. Updates to the MARJCC Code of Conduct will be displayed at each entrance to the facility and published online at **marjcc.org/codeofconduct**.

Usage of any MARJCC facilities, participation in MARJCC programs, and access to MARJCC property constitutes the agreement to abide by the MARJCC Code of Conduct.

ECA PROGRAM HOURS

PROGRAM HOURS:

School: (M-TH) 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(F) 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Morning Carpool: 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Carpool One: 2:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Extended Day Carpool: (M-TH) 4:45 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(F) 4:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

DROP-OFF and PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Daily Sign-In and Sign-Out

All children must be signed-in in the morning upon arrival and signed-out at the time of pick-up. Please do not sign in or out in advance.

We will not release a child:

- To anyone whose name does not appear on the child's record as an authorized pick-up person, or if specific notice has not been given for the day of dismissal.
- To anyone other than an adult, even if they are a child's sibling.
- To anyone appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or intoxicated through the excessive use of legal or illegal drugs.

Please be sure that anyone taking your child from the academy in a car has a properly installed car seat. All unfamiliar faces will be asked to show picture identification. The parent is obligated to buckle the child into the car seat due to liability issues. We appreciate your cooperation, as the safety of our children is our primary concern.

Parents must follow the drop-off/pick-up instructions. Currently, parents are expected to carpool and not walk their children into the class. Failure to comply with this may result in termination of School.

Extended Hours

Extended Day is offered for Pre- K and Kindergarten (3:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.) for additional cost.

Late Pick-Up Fees

ECA closing time is at 5:30 pm. Parents are expected to pick up their children and leave the campus by 5:30 pm. If a parent is late to pick up their child, an additional fee of \$2 per minute (after 5:30 pm) will automatically be applied to your account.

If we receive an emergency call that you will be later than 3:15 p.m. to pick up your child, you will be charged \$25.00, the one-day afternoon late fee for Extended Day. Children whose parents are repeatedly late in picking them up at 3:15 p.m. will be automatically enrolled in the Extended Day program.

If a parent/guardian has not arrived to pick up a child and the parent/guardian has not notified MARJCC staff, efforts will be made to contact the parent/guardian, as well as the emergency contact by phone. If the child has not been picked up within 30 minutes of "closing time" by either parent/guardian, emergency contact, or designated authorized pick-up person, MARJCC staff, in keeping with MARJCC policy, will contact the Florida Department of Children and Families.

IMPORTANT:

Please have your child at school on time. We begin teaching at 9:00 a.m., and it is disruptive to the teacher and the class when children are dropped off late.

Rest Time

Rest time for the children is right after lunch. The customary sleeping position for crib infants is on their back. If you express a desire to have the baby sleep in an alternate sleep position, a child's physician's note must be submitted. A light receiving blanket in the crib is not acceptable; however, a sleep sack is permitted. Pre-K 4 and Kindergarten students do not take a nap.

Extended Day Enrichments Classes

Our JCC offers after-school enrichment programs beginning at age 3. These classes include soccer, basketball, gymnastics, tennis, swimming, art, Rikudim, theatre, and more. There is an additional charge for these enrichments. If children are enrolled in our Extended Day program, we will drop them off at their class and pick them up after it is over with no charge other than that for the class itself. JCC Pre-K 3, Pre-K 4, and Kindergarten students registering for the enrichment classes, not in our Extended Day program, will be offered Transportation to Enrichments at an additional fee.

Please note that all children participating in enrichments that end at 5:00p.m. or later MUST be picked up by parents since our carpool starts promptly at 4:45 p.m.

School Closings

Parent packets include a copy of the current year's school calendar. The calendar indicates the days we will be closed as well as upcoming special events. Closings due to weather conditions are explained in this handbook under the section "Evacuation Procedures."

Mini-Camps and No-School Holidays

Mini-camps will be available during winter and spring break for an additional cost . You will receive a calendar indicating dates when ECA is closed and a mini - camp is scheduled. For information and fees, please call the ECA office on ext. 151.

BEHAVIOR

Potty Training

As we all know, toilet training is an essential part of child development, and we are prepared to help your child with it. Pre-k 2 (2-years-old) classrooms are equipped with classroom bathrooms; Toddler classes are not.

Before beginning to toilet train your child, parents must communicate with the teachers and find signs of readiness. Some examples are: the child is uncomfortable when wet/dirty; shows interest in going to the bathroom; can be dry or clean for a couple of hours, among others. As parents and teachers, our primary goal is always to help a child succeed. Asking a child to begin toilet training before they are ready often leads to frustration and failure.

If you wish to begin training your child, please be sure to tell the Head Teacher, so she will be able to reinforce your efforts. Children in the learning process should bring several extra pairs of underwear (training pants) and two complete clothing changes (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear). Toilet accidents will be dealt with in a calm, pleasant, and casual manner. Please do not send your child wearing overalls, belts, onesies, and snap-legged pants, as it is difficult for children and teachers during toileting times.

If a child soils their underwear due to a bowel movement accident, the following procedure will be followed: Feces will be disposed of in the toilet if it is formed enough to fall into the toilet without touching. If it does not come out this way, the soiled clothing with feces will be immediately placed in a plastic bag, sealed, and sent home. According to State health and licensing requirements, soiled clothes will not be cleaned or rinsed out.

Children are expected to meet the developmental milestones of their age. In case of a delay, a child may not be able to continue in our ECA. **All children entering PK3 must be fully potty trained.**

Policy on Biting

The "act of biting" is a natural act of toddlers whom cannot talk yet. We understand that the issue is unsettling to our children, and parents. Although we strive to keep our children safe and happy, biting sometimes occurs. When it does happen, our first concern is that the child who has been bitten be given first aid immediately. The child who bites is "redirected" to an activity and spoken to in a quiet but firm manner about "not hurting our friends." Then, both sets of parents are notified.

If the child continues to bite, the parents are called in for a conference with the Director and the child's teachers. The parents may be advised to seek professional help in dealing with the challenge, and the parents, along with the professionals, will work together to help the child. Continued biting may result in the child's suspension from the program.

All children have moments in their lives when they find they cannot cope. Striking out is instinctive and the only way the child knows to help themselves. It is our duty to teach them socially acceptable ways of dealing with anger and frustration. We ask parents to be understanding and patient. Our goal is to enable them to grow and be able to remain in the classroom. Often, working through an inter-disciplinary approach with other professionals, teachers can help the disruptive child move through the stage and conquer the misbehavior. This may take a few months, but the learning process is healthy and productive.

If a child's behavior is disruptive, a conference will be arranged between the teacher, Director, and parent. Goals will be discussed, and a timeline proposed to help modify the behavior. Working together, most children respond to consistent guidance and structure. If a child's behavior is unacceptable and endangers either themselves, peers, or staff, the child's parent will be contacted immediately and may be asked to pick up their child.

The Michael-Ann Russell JCC Early Childhood Academy hires experienced and qualified teachers. However, if our staff feels that your child is having difficulty within the structure we provide, we reserve the right to require that you engage a qualified behavioral specialist. They will perform observation and implement behavior modification programs with staff and your child. If, after the implementation of said procedures, your child continues to have difficulty being successful, we may recommend that you seek the further services of an outside clinician to observe your child in the classroom setting at the family's expense.

The success of our program is dependent on parents' participation and cooperation. It is an expectation that parents will work with the ECA staff as part of a team. When it is deemed necessary, the parents, at the parents' expense, will be asked to provide a one-on-one assistant for their child for us to safely and successfully meet that child's needs.

If outside professionals are deemed necessary, the family is expected to act within two weeks to seek an appointment with a professional. If parents are unwilling to fully commit to early intervention believed necessary by the Early Childhood Director and Support/Inclusion staff, failure to contact outside help after a consensus is reached will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Discipline

In every school, rules and regulations are established for the safety and well-being of all. Teachers have the responsibility of maintaining a suitable environment for learning.

Effective and assertive discipline is based on respect, honesty, trust, caring, and love. We do positive discipline to help children develop and internalize self-control, self-respect, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-determination. Teachers will redirect inappropriate behavior and will remind children to make good choices. The result of a "good discipline approach" is a child who learns to conduct themselves in a socially acceptable way.

When your child experiences difficulty in the classroom, the staff will work with your child and help them use appropriate words to solve the problem. The Early Childhood staff works at positively reinforcing acceptable behavior. In an extreme circumstance of unacceptable behavior, the child may be removed from the situation or group activity. The teacher will explain why they were removed from the group and work out solutions to prevent the recurrence of inappropriate circumstances or behavior.

Making "good choices" in behavior and language is stressed. If there is a continuing problem, the ECA Director will be asked to evaluate the situation and, if necessary, suspension of the child from the program may occur.

Our discipline and guidance policy is not tied to food, toileting, or playground time. Corporal punishment is neither practiced nor tolerated. We encourage parents to discuss any questions they may have with the ECA Director that is not clearly understood. Communication and consistency in discipline between home and school are essential to a child's healthy development.

Visiting Specialists

All observations, assessments, or visits by outside therapists MUST be coordinated with the Early Childhood Director in order to take place. Any paperwork that parents request to be completed by our staff MUST also be coordinated through the Early Childhood Director. While we understand the need for confidentiality in these matters, with the parent's permission, we would expect that the therapist would give us some information regarding the assessment of the child or suggestions on how to help the child. If no information is forthcoming, we will require a conference with the parents to discuss our role in helping this child. In addition, a form must be completed and submitted by the family granting permission for the specialist to observe or work with your child.

HEALTH

Health Protocols

The MARJCC is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, guests, and staff. The MARJCC reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who fails to comply with safety protocols, policies, and procedures in place to protect the health and well-being of all.

The MARJCC maintains the right to update or change any health protocols at any time to ensure the safety and well-being of all members, guests, and staff. Please be sure to follow all posted rules, as these rules are current. These rules are strictly enforced, and noncompliance could result in termination of membership.

Medical Forms and Vaccinations

ALL CHILDREN ATTENDING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY MUST BE FULLY IMMUNIZED ACCORDING TO DCF REQUIREMENTS. WE DO NOT ACCEPT EXEMPTION FOR IMMUNIZATIONS.

Medical forms are required by the Florida Department of Children and Families and are obtained at the doctor's office. Our school is required to strictly adhere to the expiration dates. The physical examination form expires after two years. The immunization form usually expires when a new immunization is due, and the doctor sets the date. A new medical form must be submitted to our office no later than the date of expiration of the form already on file. Parents are urged to follow this DCF policy, and NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND BEGINNING ON THE DAY AFTER EXPIRATION. CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT SUBMITTED NEW FORMS MUST PRESENT A LETTER FROM THE DOCTOR STATING THE REASON WHY AND WHEN UP-TO-DATE FORMS WILL BE SUBMITTED.

Sick Child

Parents are advised to keep their children home if they are not feeling well. We are not equipped to care for sick children. While we know that it is inconvenient for you to stay at home with your ill child when you need to be at work, our classrooms are equally inconvenienced when our staff becomes sick and stays at home.

Early signs of a cold (nasal discharge, cough, sneeze), a fever, sore throat, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, contagious disease (pink eye, strep infection, head lice, etc.), or extreme tiredness are signs that require the child to stay at home.

A fever of 99.5 degrees or higher requires that a child remains at home until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours. A child who leaves school with a fever should not return the following morning, even if the fever is gone. Please do not send your child to school after giving fever-reducing medication. We will call you when the fever reappears.

A child with flu-like symptoms can return to school after being at home for at least 24 hours, provided the child has been symptom-free for 24 hours. Your child may return earlier than 24 hours with a note from the doctor confirming that they are non-contagious and well enough to attend school. If you take your child to the doctor to determine whether or not the problem is contagious, please bring a note from the doctor stating what the problem is, that it is not contagious and when the child can return to school. If being treated for infectious disease, a child MUST bring a note from the doctor stating what the problem is and that it is okay to return to school. If the doctor wishes to fax a note, our fax number is 786-629-0319.

If your child has contracted head lice or contagious disease, please notify the school as soon as possible. We will notify other parents to be aware and on the lookout for symptoms that may appear.

Dispensing Medication

We observe very strict rules regarding dispensing medication, and we cannot administer fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol or similar over-the-counter medications. We know that giving your child Tylenol in the morning before school will lower the fever. THAT DOES NOT MEAN THE CHILD IS WELL. It only means that the temperature has been temporarily lowered and will rise again in a few hours. PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD IF THEY REQUIRE TYLENOL OR SIMILAR MEDICATION TO CONTROL THEIR FEVER.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you immediately to pick them up within 30 minutes. It is the parent's responsibility to keep work numbers and emergency contacts up-to-date.

If a child requires prescription medication, the JCC adheres to the Florida Department of Children and Families rules.

- A. PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION is to be brought to the child-care facility by the parent. It must be in the original container, show the date purchased, the name and phone number of the physician, the child's name, name of the medication, and shall write directions for administration on the label. Please include the proper implement or spoon for dispensing liquid medicines.
- B. We will provide the parent with the proper form, which must be completed and signed. This form shall have all medication, stating the name of the medication, the time it is to be given, and the dosage. The teacher will sign each time a dose is given.

NOTE: We are not permitted to apply any topical cream or lotion without your written permission. If you want your child to have sunscreen applied, please do so before bringing them to school. Also, you must sign a form if we are to apply diaper cream. Without the signed form, we are NOT permitted to apply any diaper cream.

Please do not put medication in a child's lunchbox or backpack -- any child could take it accidentally and become ill. It must be given directly to the teacher.

COMMUNICATION

We believe that open communication between the school and the parents is very important. To ensure that you and your child have a great preschool experience, it is essential that communication with your child's teacher becomes imperative. If you need to set up an appointment or phone call with your child's teacher, please call 305-932-4200, Ext. 151. We also use the Remini application where parents and teachers have daily communication.

Every Friday, you will receive an email with the following week's Lesson Plan and Notes from your child's teacher. ITC children will receive Daily Reports, and all teachers will post pictures, videos and will send you important information through the **Remeni application**.

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice during each school year, in December and May, by appointment only. The "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" is used to assess the child's progress. Parents are welcome to set up additional conferences with the teacher when needed.

Parent/Teacher Individual Meeting

We would like to know as much as possible about your child in order to give them the best possible care and education. To do so, you must schedule a "story-gathering" meeting with their head teacher prior to the date when your child begins attending. If you and the teacher cannot meet before your child's starting date, you must schedule that meeting for no later than two weeks after they begin.

Photographs

Please do not take pictures of any of our students to post on any social media site other than your own child. Parental consent is required to post a child's photo.

Social Media

Classes may create their WhatsApp class group. The goal of these groups is to create a sense of a classroom community (playdates, birthdays, etc.). The room parents will remind parents of special events, activities, etc., through the chat.

We object to using this platform to negatively criticize anyone at our Academy, or anywhere else, for any reason, including children, parents, other members, staff, and administration. Please note that the MARJCC will not be responsible for rude, harassing, bullying, or stressful entries in any way.

PARENTS' INVOLMENT

This committee of volunteer parents enhances the program and curriculum of the Michael-Ann Russell Early Childhood Academy by assisting the director and teachers to make this school the best possible place for children to learn and grow. PACT raises funds for the little extras that add so much to our programs and develop family activities and educational programs. A few times each year, PACT asks parents to show their appreciation for the teachers. All parents are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Room Parent

The room parent's primary role is to motivate the other parents to join your classroom community. These are some of the room parent's responsibilities:

- Transmit any information from the teachers to the parents (special activities, supplies needed, etc.) via WhatsApp chat.
- Reminding parents of important upcoming events (school functions, holidays, end-of-year teachers' gifts, etc.)
- Organizing a teacher's birthday celebration at the class (teacher gift, cake, flowers, etc.)
- Contacting parents to volunteer time for events such as the Annual Book Fair, Teacher Appreciation Days, Graduation Committee, etc.
- Create a sense of community in the classroom (playdates, meeting at the park, etc.)

UNIFORM

ALL CHILDREN MUST WEAR A SCHOOL T-SHIRT EVERY DAY.

Monday through Thursday=T-shirt

Friday= kippah (for boys)

All items brought from home must be labeled with your child's name in permanent black ink, including clothing, bottles, pacifiers, lunchbox, backpack, etc.

If your child comes on any day wearing something other than a school uniform, a new shirt will be given to your child and you will be asked to pay for it. Long pants, shorts, and skirts may be of your choosing.

Please bring your child to the academy fully dressed each morning, including school uniform shirt, pants, shorts, skirt, shoes, and socks. The teachers are not responsible for dressing the children in the morning. Dress your child in appropriate play clothes. Remember that children are encouraged to explore, to be curious, and to be creative. Spills and spots are inevitable (even when wearing a paint smock). Dress your children in clothing that is easy to remove to facilitate independent toileting. (Overalls, outfits with shoulder straps, and zippered pants are difficult for children to open and interfere with independent bathroom training.) Clothing with elastic waistbands is much easier and helps children to feel independent and "grown-up."

Shoes should be sturdy and suitable for climbing and running. Sneakers with socks are preferred. Sandals are not permitted. Flip-flops and plastic jelly shoes are not allowed as sharp objects can cut through them. Water shoes are not safe for outdoor play and are allowed only during water play or swim time. Children should wear socks every day. A labeled smock or large shirt for art projects must also be sent in on the first day.

For non-toilet trained children, a labeled change of clothes (two changes) in a labeled plastic bag, disposable diapers, and wipes are necessary. For newly trained children, please send several pairs of underpants or pull-ups to school the first day and replace them as needed. If we need to use your child's extra clothing, wash and return it the following day.

FOOD

All food that is sent to our Academy must be Kosher dairy or Kosher parve. No meat or meat products are permitted. Products with the appearance of meat, but not meat, must be in the original closed container showing Kosher mark and ingredient list. Due to our adherence to the dietary laws, the Early Childhood Academy does not serve milk. Parents wanting their children to have milk can send it from home, and it will be served during the day.

Kosher healthy snacks (e.g., cereal, graham crackers, pretzels) will be served each morning and afternoon. Children enrolled in Extended Day Care will receive an additional snack.

Children can either bring lunch from home or participate in the P.A.C.T. lunch program. If you send lunch from home, please send your child to school each day with a nutritious lunch, drink, and labeled lunch box. Following our Kashrut policy, PLEASE DO NOT SEND BEEF, POULTRY, PORK, SHELLFISH, OR ANY PRODUCTS CONTAINING THESE ITEMS. WE ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO SEND IN WARM LUNCH IN A THERMOS. THIS WILL MINIMIZE THE HANDLING OF FOOD BY TEACHERS.

Our lunch program serves healthy food and fresh fruit daily. All fresh vegetables and fruits are Kosher. Snacks to share in the classroom must be healthy, kosher, and in their original closed container. No candy is permitted at any time. Each classroom has a refrigerator for storing perishable lunches.

Water

We encourage children to drink water throughout the day. Please send in a zippy cup for Infants and toddlers and a water bottle for older children.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The Michael-Ann Russell JCC has been designated as a “smoke-free environment.” Please help us keep it that way by not smoking on the premises.

SAFETY

There are times when severe weather conditions do not permit us to open or remain open at our academy. We had a good example of these conditions when our academy was forced to close because severe stormy weather caused a tornado to hit some of our grounds. As a result, we lost trees, fencing, and electricity and water. Please understand that the law regarding early childhood centers requires closing our academy if there is no electricity or water.

Evacuation procedures

FIRE DRILL – Fire drills are held each month to ensure the safest and quickest way to evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

SEVERE STORM – If there is enough warning time before an expected storm, parents will be called to pick up their children. If not, teachers will go with children to an emergency evacuation place, away from outside doors and windows, until the storm has passed.

HURRICANE – Hurricanes always provide us with advance notice. Our policy is to follow the directive of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. If the public schools are closed, we will be closed as well.

PLEASE WATCH YOUR TV WEATHER REPORTS FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND WEATHER UPDATES.

SECURITY LOCKDOWNS – Our Director of Security meets with our teachers at least once each year to review security and evacuation procedures. Additional meetings are held as needed. Classrooms practice classroom lockdown to acquaint children with the process and help ease their fears in an emergency.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN, NO ONE WILL BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE CAMPUS, AND NO ONE WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE. PLEASE OPEN YOUR “REMINI” APPLICATION TO VIEW IMPORTANT OR URGENT MESSAGES. CHILDREN WILL ALL BE IN A SAFE PLACE.

FIRE DOORS – Every classroom and our school hallway has a fire door leading to the outside. This door is for emergency exit only. PLEASE DO NOT ASK OUR TEACHERS TO PERMIT YOU TO USE THE EMERGENCY EXIT OR OPEN THAT DOOR FOR ANY REASON THAT IS NOT A TRUE EMERGENCY. We also ask that you not use the emergency exits located in the hall.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Licensing and Accreditations

The Michael-Ann Russell JCC Early Childhood Academy is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Our facilities and programs are inspected regularly by the Department of Children and Families, the Early Learning Coalition, the Fire Department, and the Florida Department of Education.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

The MAR-JCC Pre-K 4 has been designated as a VPK provider (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten). This program ensures that the highest Pre-K 4 educational standards are being met by following the State of Florida Department of Education. The children's progress is checked throughout the year, and parents are advised of their child's development.

The VPK program is sponsored by the State of Florida Department of Education, and they pay a portion of the tuition for each child registered in the program.

Staff

Each classroom has a head teacher and at least one assistant teacher. They have been selected from the area's most experienced, knowledgeable, and caring DCF-approved professionals. Our staff has been trained and certified by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Every head teacher and assistant teacher has completed the Early Childhood courses required by DCF. Most have already completed the Child Development Associate program; others are currently working towards completion. Our staff continues each year to increase their education through seminars specifically designed to enhance their professional skills and knowledge in early childhood education and development. Keeping up with new teaching strategies and raising academic standards is our priority.

Class Placement

We are unable to accommodate individual requests for class placement with a particular teacher or friend. When a new school year begins, the former teacher and the ECA Director discuss each child's placement, and recommendations are made based on that conversation and the years' experience. The final decision is based on staff evaluation primarily.

Babysitting and Individual Tutoring

MARJCC enforces a policy of disallowing our staff from after-hours employment by parents of our students. While we acknowledge why you might prefer to employ our staff, please understand that confidentiality and liability are factors for us. If you must hire our, please submit a "Hold Harmless" form, which will release the MARJCC from all liability for any occurrence during our staff's after-hours employment by you at any location. Please note,

any discussions involving other staff members, families, or other students can result in loss of employment for the staff member.

Reporting Child Abuse

The State of Florida Department of Children and Families mandates that Early Childhood personnel report suspicious physical and/or behavioral indicators of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment in accordance with s. 39-201 of the Florida Statutes. Reports will be made to the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System at 1-800-96-2873. All reports are confidential.

Birthday Parties

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school. Only the birthday child's teachers and classmates can attend the classroom party. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance.

If you bring refreshments, all baked goods and food must be accompanied by a receipt from an approved Kosher bakery or have a Kosher designation on the package label. Home-baked goods are not Kosher merely because they have a Kosher sign on the ingredients and are not permitted to be brought to the ECA and shared with other children. It is the policy even if your house adheres to the Kosher dietary laws.

NOTE: No lit candles are permitted in the classroom for any reason. No outside entertainment is allowed for birthday celebrations.

Invitations to parties outside of the school will not be distributed unless the entire class is invited. Make other arrangements if this is not possible. We don't want any hurt feelings. Your child's teacher can provide the children's names in the class, but we do not give the home or email addresses or telephone numbers. If a larger party is desired, the MARJCC rents spaces at the facility for birthdays and other occasions.

If a parent wants to give goodie bags, all party favors and bagged items MUST be approved by the Director for safety and age appropriateness. No food of any kind is permitted in the goodie bag, and no candy is allowed to be given to the children.

Toys

Please do not permit your child to bring toys, jewelry, or other valuable items from home. Neither the MARJCC nor the ECA will be responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items. Small toys, such as action figures and cars, get lost easily, and often children do not wish others to touch them. There are times when a child needs a favorite object, such as a blanket or doll, for comfort. This we understand. They will be encouraged to leave it in their cubby.

Please do not allow your child to bring toy guns, knives, or weapons to school. They will be confiscated immediately. This type of play is discouraged. Our school promotes peaceful

behavior, where people can work through situations by listening, sharing, and caring. Exposure to violent characters and toys sends a conflicting message to our children.

Live Animals in the Early Childhood Academy

We all agree that dogs are adorable, but we do have children and staff in this academy who are allergic to animals, as well as some who are afraid of them. We also know that the actions of even the cutest and tamest of animals are unpredictable. For these reasons, **NO LIVE ANIMALS ARE PERMITTED IN THE ECA, EXCEPT THOSE THAT ARE KEPT AS PETS IN THE CLASSROOMS.** Please do not try to bring your pet into the building. You will not be permitted to do so.

Television Policy

Our program does not encourage the use of television in the classroom. Educational videos may be watched related to the topic the class is learning. All television time must be pre-approved by the Director.

Thank you, again, for choosing the Early Childhood Academy at the Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center/Sanford L. Ziff Campus. Together, we will make your child's learning and growing fun and safe.