



# 2024-2025

# Family Handbook

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Jewish Community Alliance, 8505 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32217-3564  
904/730-2100 ext. 235

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## **WELCOME!**

Thank you for choosing the Jewish Community Alliance (JCA) and welcome to the Early Childhood Education (ECE) department! At Michele Block Gan Yeladim (pronounced *Gahn Yella DEEM*, Hebrew for Garden of Children), our goal is to provide you and your child with the best possible early learning experience. You have chosen a school with a proven track record of excellence. Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool & Kindergarten has been accredited by NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) since 1991. Your children have some of the finest early childhood educators in the area to nurture and guide them as they develop self-esteem, confidence, skills and friendships. To ensure a smooth transition into the new school year, please take time to read the information in this orientation packet regarding our philosophy, goals, programs, policies and procedures. Please call the office if you have any questions or concerns. We are partners with you in the education of your child and look forward to our mutual collaboration and cooperation.

*Please note: Our school policies may change as we continue to implement health and safety guidelines in accordance with the CDC and Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).*

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At Michele Block Gan Yeladim, we recognize that children are on a journey of growth, discovery and exploration. We see children through the Jewish lens of Tzelem Elohim - Divine Image. They bring with them understandings, relationships and experiences. We know them to be curious, highly creative and born communicators.

We strive to be the spark that inspires the child as we partner with them to construct opportunities for them to reach their highest potential. We use a constructivist approach that is inspired by the teaching and learning in Reggio Emilia, Italy. This approach is an inspiring method for early childhood education which values the child as strong, capable, and creative – full of wonder and knowledge which drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it.

Enrollment in school is open to all children regardless of race, religious affiliation and ethnic origin. JCA membership is not required to participate.

## **JCCs of NORTH AMERICA EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK - SHEVA**

At the core of our work are the seven ("sheva" in Hebrew) Jewish lenses, which provide an ethical model for living. These lenses articulate the approach to our work. They inspire as much as they inform. They ideally manifest daily in each of our classrooms in the ways in which we structure our time, our curricula and our classrooms; the quality of our relationships with our students, our educators, our host institutions; and the partnerships we forge with the families in our communities. They improve and sharpen our vision and enable us to see the world more clearly and in a particularly focused way.

"Judaism is not exclusively a matter of the "what" or "when" in the world of ritual and faith but includes the deeper matters of the "how" and the "why" of the totality of our lives and our relationships to the world as a whole. It welcomes diversity, inclusion, reflection and innovation.

The framework is built on seven core elements of early childhood education. It is influenced by multiple philosophies of early education and the most recent and highly regarded research on children's learning, brain development and understanding of the needs of 21st century families."

*- excerpt taken from Programs and Professional Development handbook from the Sheva Center, pg. iv*

## **GOALS**

1. To continuously attend to the needs of each individual child, helping them feel safe and comfortable throughout the day.

2. To develop in each child independence, confidence and a feeling of self-worth as an individual and as a member of the school family.
3. To stimulate each child's curiosity, sense of wonder and motivation to learn about the world around them by establishing an age appropriate, hands-on and engaging environment.
4. To develop in children a social responsibility by educating goodwill, kindness and helpfulness towards others and respect for the environment.
5. To develop in children a love for music, art and drama.
6. To foster in young children and their families a sense of Jewish identity and an understanding of and a respect for the Jewish religion and culture.
7. To prepare our children for continued academic success in the areas of cognitive, physical, emotional and social development through language, listening, visual discrimination, large and small motor skills, math and science.
8. To build relationships with families by supporting and nurturing their efforts to provide the best possible environment for their children.

### **ORIENTATION**

**Parent Orientation** - Thursday, August 15, 2024, 5:30 – 7 pm

**This is an Adult only evening.**

**Student/Teacher Meet and Greet** – Friday, August 16, 2024

Please bring your child for a brief meet and greet any time between 11 am and 12 pm.

**Family Social** – Sunday, August 18, 2024 – 10 am – 11:30 am

The Student/Teacher Meet and Greet is an excellent opportunity for your child to meet his/her educator in an informal setting before our school year begins. Please bring the required labeled cubby items with you (supply lists are posted on the JCA website). You will receive an introductory letter from your child's educator a few days before the meet and greet. In addition to getting to know the educators, your child may become accustomed to the classroom.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES and GUIDELINES**

To ensure the safety of your child and to help us maintain consistency and organization, please adhere to the following policies and guidelines.

### **ACCIDENT PROCEDURES**

In case of an accident, we first try to notify the parents/guardians and emergency contacts. If it is impossible to reach any of the above, we will transport according to the emergency form listings if necessary. Extreme emergencies may dictate other procedures deemed in the child's best interests. Whenever a child is injured, regardless of the seriousness of the injury, a parent or guardian will be required to sign an accident form on the day the incident occurred.

Always make sure you contact the office when any of your contact information changes. An update form is available in the office and can be emailed to you as well.

## **ALLERGIES**

In compliance with health and safety regulations, families are required to notify the school in writing of their child's allergies and dietary restrictions. Please indicate on your Medical Emergency Form if your child has allergies. We are happy to work with you in ensuring your child is safe in our care. If it is a life-threatening allergy, we need specific information on how to treat in case of contact as well as the appropriate supplies (for example an Auvi-Q or EpiPen Jr) and a completed Severe Allergy Release Form located in the form section of this handbook. You are also required to provide the office with an Emergency Care Plan from your physician. All EpiPens are logged in at the office and noted whether the location of the pen is in the office, needs to be in the classroom or always needs to be carried with the educator. Parents are responsible for monitoring expiration dates. An adult trained, including educators, in the use of an epi pen must be on-site whenever your child is present.

Please note that due to multiple students with life threatening nut allergies, our school policy is to be NUT FREE (peanuts and tree nuts). Tree nuts include walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachio and Brazil nuts. If your child stays for lunch, please choose one of the several alternatives to peanut butter including Soy Wonder (Publix) and WOWBUTTER (<http://www.soybutter.com/>), the Sneaky Chef made with legumes and peas (<https://www.thesneakychef.com/>) and Sunbutter (<http://www.sunbutter.com/>) made from sunflower seeds. If your child has a severe allergy, please complete the "Severe Allergy Release Form," and make sure your child's educators have written instructions on storage requirements, when and how to use the EpiPenJr or Auvi-Q.

## **ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS**

Educators continually assess each student in our program to monitor their strengths, learning styles, needs and interests. Educators compile portfolios on each child and complete observations and developmental checklists at least two times per year to review your child's progress. Parents have the opportunity to contribute and give input on their child's assessment. The Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) is required to be completed at the beginning and toward the end of the school year for each child according to the exact age of the child at the time it is administered. Formal conferences occur twice per year, but parents may request a conference at any time to raise questions or concerns about how the assessment methods will meet their child's needs.

Throughout the year, outside organizations such as Vision is Priceless (children ages 3 and older), BrainWorks Therapy (by educator request with parent permission) and Hope Haven provide screenings and/or observations at the JCA. You are notified and need to give permission for your child to participate in these screenings.

Assessments are used as tools for educators to plan challenging and stimulating activities for the students. The assessment we commonly use is completed over a period of time and is not used as a one-day test. If an educator sees that a student has not mastered a particular skill, or that the skill is just beginning to emerge, then activities are planned to give that student more opportunities to master that skill. Assessments are completed throughout the year or whenever a parent requests one.

All student assessments are confidential and are only shared with the parents, pertinent staff, and support personnel in relation to the student.

## **BABYSITTING/NANNYING**

The educators in our program are professionals. As such, we expect all teachers, observers, interns and other student participants in our program to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which reads "We shall not use our relationship with a family for private advantage or personal gain or enter into a relationship with family members that might impair our effectiveness in working with children."

The JCA Code of Conduct precludes educators from being alone off campus with children they meet in JCA programs. This includes babysitting, nannying, sleepovers and inviting your child to their home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrative

approval. If families offer currently employed faculty members employment, the JCA reserves the right to withhold childcare and education services.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Everyone wants to be remembered and cherished on the special day that they were born. Children love to hear about the journey from their birth to the present day. They want to hear stories, look at photos, and remember wonderful memories. They want to know how cherished they are, and how our life and world is better because they were born into their family and now belong to our class. Birthdays at Michele Block Gan Yeladim are inspired by the Montessori celebration of life. Each child is honored in a special celebration called "*The Birthday Walk*" or "*Walk around the Sun.*" We invite parents to share in this important occasion by helping their child select photographs from each year of their life and by helping them prepare a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. These milestones are shared as the child walks around the "sun," one time for each year celebrated. The walk around the sun allows the children to act out the passage of time in a concrete way. Parents are invited to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child.

Families are welcome to bring in fresh fruit to share with their child's class. Because many children have allergies or dietary restrictions and we are continually striving to promote healthy eating habits, our school has made the decision to no longer accept sweets to share for birthdays.

Please do not provide balloons (choking hazard) or party favors. Written invitations to birthday parties are only distributed through cubby baskets/backpacks when the ENTIRE class is invited. Please make other arrangements when this is not possible. It is not recommended to invite educators to your child's birthday party.

## **BITING**

Especially in young children, biting is a common behavior. Until a child has gained sufficient verbal skills, biting can occur regularly. When biting happens, it can be scary, frustrating, and stressful for the children involved and the adults. We do our best to provide an environment where minimal biting occurs, but it is an unavoidable consequence of being in a group setting. Each situation is handled with sensitivity on a case-by-case basis. If your child is bitten or bites at school, an incident report is filled out and you are required to sign the form. Educators contact the parents of the child who bit and the child who was bitten; however, names are not disclosed. The educators and director will monitor the frequency and severity of bites. If the biting persists, our next step is to have the educators and administration meet with parents to work together to find strategies to help the child who is biting work through this phase. One strategy may be the hiring, at the parent's expense, of a shadow to prevent further incidents. In extreme cases of high frequency and severity of bites or noncompliance with agreed-upon strategies, we may ask parents to withdraw the child from the school.

## **BUILDING SECURITY AND ACCESS**

Access to the JCA facility is through the main entrance where a name badge or photo ID must be presented prior to being allowed into the building. Name badges are scanned at access points to gain entrance into the preschool. If for some reason a badge is forgotten, there is an intercom at the main entrance of the school, and an administrator will respond. Only students may enter through the awning area during carline. This door is locked and alarmed at all other times. All adults must pass through the main entrance of the agency.

## **CARLINE DROP OFF and PICK UP and CAR SEAT REQUIREMENTS**

If your child participates in the carline drop off and pick up or is a member of a carpool, please furnish the office with the names of all the children in the carpool, and the days on which the different drivers pick-up. If your child is to go home with any adult other than yourself, written permission is preferred, along with a brief description or photo of the person (if unfamiliar to us) and their vehicle and must be sent to school each time.

When driving the children, please use appropriate seatbelts, car seats or boosters, and place all children in the back seats. Florida law requires children ages 5 and under to be secured properly in a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device. [Florida Law-Child Restraints](#) JCA educators cannot put children into cars without car seats. If there is not a car seat in your car, you will be asked to park and walk in to sign your child out.

When using the carline for pickup, please pull up a car length ahead of the awning to provide additional space. Also, please be cautious of the awning when driving tall commercial vehicles. See "Drop Off and Pick-Up Procedures" for more information about carline.

## **CELL PHONES**

For your child's safety and well-being, **please do not use your cell phone while picking up or dropping off your child in the car line.** The parking lot is a very busy, potentially dangerous place and your child deserves your complete attention at that time. All children enjoy an undistracted and loving "good-bye" at drop off and a warm greeting at pickup. Please know that your child will not be taken from your car or placed in your car if you are on the phone. To keep the car line moving, please stay off your phone during those times. Thank you for your assistance in keeping your child safe.

We kindly ask you to refrain from using your cell phone inside the school, especially in classrooms. Your child deserves your attention while you are walking them in or out of the school. If you are helping in a classroom and you need to take a call, please step out of the classroom.

## **CLOTHING**

Your child should wear comfortable play clothes, socks and closed-toe shoes. We ask that the children wear clothes in which they can play freely. Please make sure your child(ren) are dressed in clothes that can get dirty! Send a labeled bag containing a complete seasonal change of labeled clothing, including socks and underwear if applicable. Accidents do happen!

## **COMMUNICATION**

We maintain a strong belief in the value of good and open communication. Two-way communication is very important, and we have an open-door policy where you are welcome any time. We also encourage you to come to the office to speak with us or to arrange a conference with your child's educator if you feel it is needed. Our educators assess children throughout the year. Input from home observations aids the assessment process, therefore we encourage and value your participation. Please let us know if your family requires translation or interpretation services as we have the resources available. Office hours are generally from 7:30 am - 6:00 pm. At carpool times (9:00 am and 3:30 pm) our office staff are making sure your children are safely taken from and to your car. Please try to visit the office at least ten minutes before or after those times.

Parent to Administration communication is very important, and we encourage parents to call at any time to discuss their children with our educators. If you drop off your child before 9:00 am and you have specific instructions about their day, please write a note. Your note will be given to the appropriate educator and your instructions can be clearly communicated.

We encourage families and educators to keep open lines of communication throughout the school year. Each educator has a JCA email address and will send out communications to you using email or Kaymbu. Educators are not allowed to share personal phone numbers with families. Families may contact educators via email, Kaymbu or through the office. Educators are required to check their email at a minimum of once a day. Please be sure that your educator has your correct email address. Please



be aware that our educators are taking care of your children and will not be able to respond to emails during the day. If you require a quick response, contact the ECE office. If it is an emergency and the office staff is unavailable, please call the JCA front desk and ask that they contact the preschool.

Written Communication: Once a month, you receive an electronic newsletter from the ECE office and a calendar/newsletter from your child's educator. Please notify the office if you are not receiving this information.

Kaymbu: This is an iPad-based app that is used to send communication from individual classrooms to parents via email. Busy Bees and Grasshoppers typically get daily notes and older age groups receive weekly emails with photos, text and sometimes videos.

Telephone: Your call goes to voicemail if no one is in the ECE Office to answer. Our number one priority above all others is your child. We may be in the classroom, on the playground or elsewhere in the JCA attending to the needs of the children. If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a voicemail at extension 235 and we will contact you as soon as possible.

If you need to reach a faculty person immediately at any time regarding your child in our care, please follow these guidelines:

Call 730-2100 and enter a Michele Block Gan Yeladim extension:

Office Administrator	235
Program Coordinator	259
Associate Director	256
Director	242

If no one answers, press "0" for the receptionist.

Tell the receptionist you were not able to get through and need to speak to someone in the Michele Block Gan Yeladim Office.

Ask the receptionist to use the walkie-talkie to page an ECE representative on channel two.

Parent to School - Please write us a note or send us an email about changes relating to any of the following items: Your child's home routine (i.e., parents traveling, grandparent moving in, etc.), address, email address or phone numbers (including cell phone carrier), emergency contacts, babysitters or nannies and medical conditions. Hand this note to a faculty member. Because of the busy nature of carline, we advise against verbal messages and instructions at that time.

Parent to Educator - Please refrain from conferencing with your child's educator in the carline or during class time. There are scheduled conference times during the year. If you visit your child's classroom (which you are always welcome to do), we ask that you not engage in conversation with the educator when she is working with the students. Their job at that point is to be with the children. Please do not discuss sensitive issues with your child's educator in front of your child. Little ears can pick up so much! You can always call the office and have your child's educator return your call while not hands on with the children.

Conflict Between Adults - While every effort is made to meet the needs of children, parents and faculty members, we realize that from time to time a conflict may occur between parents, educators and administrators. The following process is followed should a conflict occur:

- Step One – A respectful discussion is held between the people directly involved at a time and place that assures privacy and enough time for a thorough resolution to take place.
- Step Two – If resolution is not found at the first meeting, a second meeting is held with the Director for the purpose of creating a plan for resolution and a timeline for extended success.
- Step Three – If the conflict is not resolved according to the timeline, adjustments may be made to the plan, and an additional timeline be established, or
- Step Four – If at any time the director determines that resolution is not possible, she will consider one of the following for immediate actions:
  - Removal of the child from the classroom
  - Withdrawal of services from the school
  - Suspension of the faculty member until disciplinary steps can be taken
  - Involvement of the CEO

Grounds for determining that a resolution is not possible include but are not exclusive of the following:

1. Any person involved displays inappropriate behavior such as shouting, accusing, name-calling, swearing or physical assault
  2. Any person involved refuses to follow the prescribed process
  3. Any person involved jeopardizes the process by spreading information concerning the conflict to those outside the immediate conflict or those involved in the resolution of the process
- We provide a safe, secure environment where children learn to respectfully resolve conflicts that naturally occur in a school environment.

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

We maintain a current list of child and family support services available in the community. If at any time, you need information on health services, mental health, nutrition, special education screening, subsidized childcare, etc., please see your child's educator or someone in the ECE office.

## **CONFERENCES**

Conferences with your child's educator are scheduled twice during the school year. Please check your newsletters for the dates and more information about signing up for specific times. Educators will be scheduling conference times. During your conference, you are shown some of your child's work and discuss your child's progress.

Between conferences, please feel free to contact the educator whenever you have a special concern. We are always available to you over the phone or virtually. We want you and your child to have the best possible school experience.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Please know that all personal forms, information and screenings are confidential and kept in a locked file in the early childhood office. Only administrators, educators, parents or legal guardians and regulatory authorities such as DCF can access these records. Individual screening results are used to help us plan curriculum experiences and promote optimal development for your child.

## **CURRICULUM PLAN**

As a community of learners, we are always engaged in studying, analyzing and reflecting to continue to bring research based best practices to our families. Using elements of an Inquiry-based approach, we encourage learning through exploration and discovery. Students have opportunities to ask questions and test theories. We nurture each child's interests while using methodologies that foster learning.

Experiences are play-based and all hands-on. Each student reaches their potential in scientific discovery, problem solving and critical thinking in a physically and emotionally safe, nurturing environment. Our educators intentionally guide students as they explore, learn and document using the project approach.

Students develop a solid foundation for success in school and life. Early learning curriculum-based partnerships with The Jacksonville Symphony, Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, MOSH and The Jacksonville Zoo provide our students with the unique opportunity to learn.

The integrity of the curriculum and its implementation is overseen by the Pedagogical leader. The curriculum focuses on skill development that is appropriate to each age group within the program. Some skills are applicable to all ages whereas others only apply to one or two age groups. The structure of our curriculum ensures continuity in skill development from year to year, contributing to smooth program transitions. Our curriculum goals and objectives align with the assessment of a child's progress.

Units, topics and the project approach are used as planning tools for the faculty and help enhance real-life experiences for the children. As the children grow and develop, so do their cognitive

abilities. Children apply their emerging skills in informal, open-ended activities which improves their understanding of the world they live in.

Our school uses research-based programs to enhance our curriculum, such as *The Creative Curriculum*® which helps educators build children’s confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills, and promote positive outcomes. Lesson plans are connected to age-appropriate skill building.

Our Kindergarten program uses a balanced literacy approach with guided and structured reading using Reading Wonders and Foundations®. Kindergarten also uses Eureka Math® to connect mathematical concepts to the real world in ways that build student confidence and help students achieve true understanding.

Curriculum information is available for each age group. Please contact the Early Childhood office if you would like one for your child’s age group.

We work to seamlessly weave Jewish values into our daily life at school, we emphasize the following skill areas in our curriculum:

*Social/Emotional Skills*

*Literacy and Language Development*

*Listening Skills*

*Visual Discrimination Skills*

*Large Motor Skills*

*Manipulative and Fine Motor Skills*

*Social Studies and Community*

*Art*

*Music and Drama*

*Math*

*Science and Technology*

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Discipline Policy**

*One of the primary goals of this policy is to maximize the learning of appropriate skills including safety and respect for oneself and others. Another goal of this policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures.*

At Michele Block Gan Yeladim, we advocate the use of positive guidance and reinforcement. All children are expected to behave in a manner that is acceptable to our classroom standards. Positive reinforcement is used as much as possible when children are behaving in an appropriate and safe manner. Positive guidance educates children to solve their problems, rather than punishing them for having challenges they cannot solve. Guidance educates children to learn from their mistakes rather than “disciplining” children for the mistakes they make.

If a child behaves in an unacceptable manner, he or she is redirected, shadowed or is given a break from the activity with the help of an educator and if appropriate, a replacement behavior is taught. Positive guidance/reinforcement is used as much as possible when the child is behaving in an acceptable manner. Time out is not effective in modifying behavior. There are no time-out chairs in classrooms. Educators never use threatening or derogatory remarks and do not withhold nor threaten to withhold food or outdoor play as a form of discipline.

Unacceptable behavior is defined by Michele Block Gan Yeladim as that behavior which is disruptive to the group during a structured activity time, or that behavior which may be harmful to the children or which is disruptive to the group, behavior that compromises the safety of the group, or behavior which

may be harmful to themselves or another child. If a child continues to be disruptive or harm others, the school reserves the right to dismiss that child from the program.

The following process is followed before exclusionary measures are considered:

1. The student's educator identifies any areas of concern based off observations and developmental assessment and communicates concerns to the ECE director and/or other appropriate administrators.
2. Consultations with the Director and a Hope Haven representative to adjust practices and implement new strategies to foster success.
3. The educator, with the director or other appropriate administrators, talks to the parents to determine if the parents have similar concerns at home.
4. Parent/Guardian consent for observation is obtained.
5. Hope Haven is contacted with an observation scheduled.
6. Peer observation and documentation occurs.
7. Administrative observation and documentation.
8. Hope Haven, the educator and usually the administrator meets with parents to make recommendations.
9. Evaluation and placement are done as a team.

If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program offers assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

Techniques may vary with each situation; however, physical punishment, inappropriate language or manner, psychological abuse, and/or coercion should never be used and are never acceptable. Please see below for examples of these prohibited practices.

**Examples of physical punishment:** Shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

**Examples of psychological abuse:** shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, and/or \*seclusion.

**\*Seclusion:** "the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out." (H.R. 7124, 2018)

**Examples of coercion:** rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); \*physical or \*mechanical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

**\*Mechanical restraint:** "the use of devices as a means of restricting a student's freedom of movement." (H.R. 7124, 2018)

**\* Physical restraint:** "a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual's arms, legs, torso, or head freely, except that such term does not include a \*physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint." (H.R. 7124, 2018)

**NOTE:** The use of a "physical escort" as defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion.

**Physical escort:** "the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location." (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Section 2.8 of the Department of Children and Families Child Care Facility Handbook requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary and expulsion policies used by the facility.

## DONATIONS/SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

We proudly accept any contributions that you, your friends or your relatives wish to make. Contributions are a special way to express appreciation or sorrow, remember a birthday, an anniversary, a birth or recognition of accomplishment. Contribution forms are available in the office, and one is included in the back of your orientation packet.

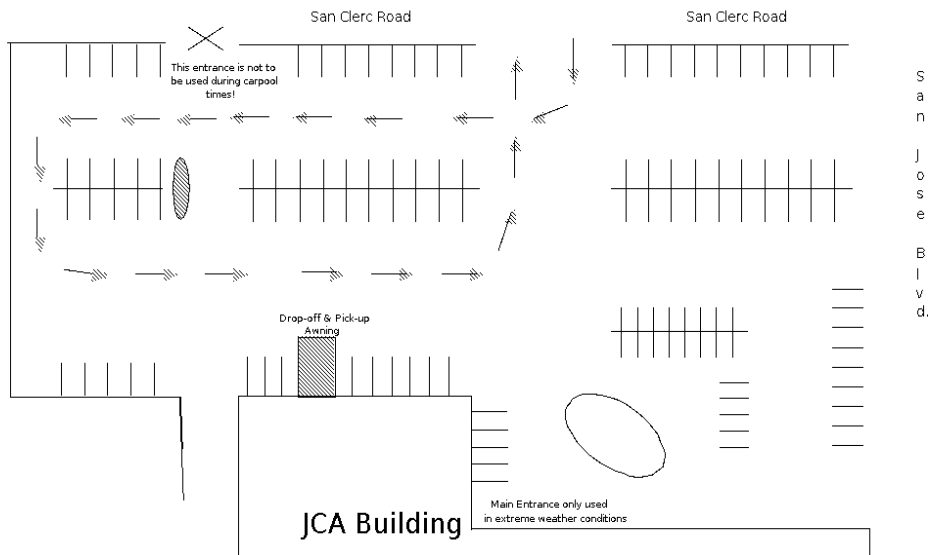
An acknowledgement is sent to the appropriate party stating that a contribution has been made and acknowledgement is also made in the preschool newsletter and the monthly JCA Alliance News.

## DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

1. Morning Carline Drop-Off: ECE Office employees greet your students arriving by car from 8:50 am until 9:10 am (or when the carline ends), and children are taken to their classrooms. Once the doors are closed, carline is over. You will need to walk your child in through the front entrance of the JCA. Busy Bees must be walked in by their parents. They are too young to safely participate in carline. Only students may enter through the awning area. All adults must pass through the main entrance to the agency. **To keep the carline moving efficiently, please do not get out of your car and walk your child to the awning.** If you have more than one child to drop off, you may get out of the car if the staff need help. The awning door is locked and alarmed. During regular carline times, the alarm is disarmed.
2. All children arriving before 8:55 am should be brought to their child's classroom.
3. Children arriving before 8:55 am must be registered for 7:30 am or 8:30 am drop off.
4. For students enrolled to begin at 7:30 am, please know the opening educators are not scheduled to be in the classroom before that time, and the doors leading into the school cannot be accessed before 7:30 am. Many educators arrive early to prepare the classroom, gather supplies and set up provocations/invitations to play. Please enter the classroom at 7:30 am, not before, so that the educators may prepare the room.
5. Young children require routine for healthy development. A late drop off can be disruptive to the classroom and have a negative effect on the child's whole day. Cut-off time for dropping off your child in the classroom is 9:30 am. If your child will be late due to an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, you must notify the office prior to 9:30 am. If this courtesy is abused with daily late calls, late arrivals will not be granted. Children with doctor/dentist appointments can be dropped off as late as 10:30 am, but the office must be notified ahead of time, and a doctor's note is required. Messaging on Kaymbu is not an acceptable way to call in late. **After 9:30 am, the educators and children have already started the day and are engaged in their morning activities. To minimize interruptions, please bring your child to the office to check in, and someone will walk your child to their class. Our office number is 904-730-2100, x235.**
6. For 3:30 pm dismissal, we bring the children to the end of the awning and buckle them safely in your car as you come through the carline. Whoever is picking up the child must sign their child out on the attendance sheet indicating the time. Under no circumstances will we release a child to anyone under the age of 16 or to anyone who is not designated by you as authorized to remove your child from the program. We always ask for identification when we are not familiar with the person authorized to pick up your child. **Our educators cannot put children in cars without a car seat.**
7. For the safety of all the children and because dismissal time can be hectic, please remain in your car and do not walk to the awning or double doors. If you are unable to wait in the carline, please walk in through the main entrance of the JCA and pick up your child from their classroom.
8. Please do not get out of your car to talk if you are in the line. This helps dismissal go as quickly as possible.
9. Please refrain from using your cellphone or portable devices to talk or text during carline times. The parking lot is busy, and your child requires your full attention during drop-off and pick-up.

10. If it is not raining, the first car in line must pull up two car lengths past the awning. If it is raining, the first car should be in line with the awning.
11. If your child is to go home with any adult other than yourself, written permission is preferred, along with a photo or a brief description of the person (if unfamiliar to us) and their car. Please tell the person picking up your child that they need to display a photo ID and sign out your child on the attendance sheet.
12. Any time you pick up your child, please be sure that you verbally notify your child's educator or a faculty person your child is leaving and sign them out on the attendance log in the classroom.
13. Please enter the parking lot entrance closest to San Jose Boulevard. Using the entrance further from San Jose Boulevard creates a safety hazard by forcing cars to stick out onto San Clerc.
14. Idling vehicles are discouraged in parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. Children are never to be left alone in vehicles unattended for any reason.

\* Note: When using carline for pick-up **please pull up a few car lengths past the awning** (unless it is raining.)



## **ENRICHMENT CLASSES**

The JCA offers a wide array of enrichment classes during the 9-month school year. Classes typically include dance, music, sports, yoga, art, swimming, cooking and much more. These classes take place after the regular morning classes and require an additional fee. Enrichment classes typically fill quickly so please register early. Registration begins as soon as the information is distributed via Program Guides or posted online at [www.jcajax.org](http://www.jcajax.org). Typically, the instructor for the enrichment class comes to your child's class, picks them up and brings them to enrichment classes. If you prefer to bring your child yourself, you must notify the office of your choice as well as the enrichment instructor. Also, if you sign up for an enrichment class less than three business days prior to the start of the class, please call the ECE office and let us know in which class you have enrolled your child.

Please note that all enrichment classes other than cooking classes are offered by other departments at the JCA. Theater, dance, sports and swimming are facilitated by the directors of those departments. Children attending enrichment classes after their scheduled departure from school are signed out of our program for the day and will need to be picked up directly from the class. If they are not picked up on time from the class, the instructor or director from that department will call you. They will not return to our program.

## **ENROLLMENT/EMERGENCY FORM UPDATE**

A blank Enrollment/Emergency Update form is in the office to record any information that may have changed since you first enrolled. Please make sure you date the form and submit only the information that has changed to the ECE office.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

We may bring in-house resources into the facility to be enjoyed by all age groups. These are designed to enhance our curriculum. Classes may travel by foot if walking to camp Tomahawk or the Temple. You are notified, as far in advance as possible, when your child is scheduled to take a trip or attend an in-house resource. If a trip is scheduled on days for which your child is not registered, he/she is always invited to join the trip if accompanied by an adult, but you must notify the office in advance to make sure there is space. Please make other arrangements for siblings. Field trips in the community are planned for our kindergarten class.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Scholarship applications are available through the administrative office. Distribution of scholarship money is based on financial need as well as availability of funds. All applications for financial aid are confidential and should be filled out completely with attached supporting documentation and handed in to the Accounts Receivable Assistant of the JCA by March 15, of the preceding school year.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

All families are expected to comply with financial policies set forth in this packet and on the financial contracts. We are happy to work with you if you require a special payment plan, but any deviation from the standard plan requires the completion of a Payment Plan Application (available in the Program Registrar's office). For your convenience, the JCA does accept payment by Visa, MasterCard and American Express. All charges for morning snack, school t-shirt, field trips, educator appreciation, on site theatre productions, etc. are covered by the resource fee that you pay at the beginning of the year.

## FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted once a month as required by law. Children are made aware of the need to practice exiting the building safely.

## FOOD POLICIES

1. **Water:** Please send in every day a LABELED (first and last name) reusable cup or water bottle for drinking use throughout the day. Please choose non-spill cups with a straw or narrow spout to encourage proper muscle development for speech articulation. Due to state requirements, this cup is sent home at the end of each day to be washed/sterilized. *It is the parent's responsibility to clean and sanitize cups before returning the following day.* Baby bottles are not allowed.
2. **School Snack Program:** A morning kosher snack is provided to all children. Nutrition is part of our daily program. Our snacks offer grains, vegetables, fruits and dairy products. We do not attempt to fill up your child. It is the aim of the nutrition program to introduce children to a variety of foods.
3. **Good Nutrition:** Because good nutrition is an important part of our program, we suggest that you strive to pack nutritious snacks and lunches representing a healthy and balanced diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables are always a great choice (we call them "Go!" foods) and ideally should represent half of the food provided in your child's lunch. Processed food containing lots of chemicals and sugar are "Whoa!" foods. We can eat them but not a lot. Please refer to this website that helps determine our guidelines for the amount and types of food we provide for snack: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/index.html> **Fast food is not permitted at school.** If you forget your child's lunch, we can provide a Sunbutter sandwich and fresh fruit.
4. Parents are asked to pack a nutritious lunch free from soda, candy, chocolate and other foods containing high amounts of sugar. Your child should help pack the lunch, so they have some say as to what they would like to eat. This lunch should contain an item from each food group (protein, grains, vegetables, fruits). Your child will bring home food that is left over. This will help you to know the quantity and desirability of food eaten. Children, like you, get tired of eating the same things over and over. Please encourage children to try a variety of new foods for lunch.
5. **Snack for Children with Food Allergies:** Children with food allergies who cannot participate in the snack program must bring a daily morning snack. Please note that our school has a **NUT FREE (peanuts and tree nuts)** policy when choosing a snack for your child. Tree nuts include walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios and Brazil nuts. We do not provide afternoon snacks, unless the children are participating in a cooking project that afternoon. If your child stays for lunch, he or she may eat what is left over from their lunch for afternoon snack or pack a separate snack. Kindergartners staying past 3:30 pm do not need an afternoon snack; it is provided for them.
6. **Kosher Symbols:** Keep in mind our dietary standards and only purchase those packaged products bearing symbols that are shown on the next page. If you need more guidance, please ask. We are happy to help.
7. **Food Allergies:** Please note that due to multiple students with life threatening nut allergies, our school has a NUT FREE (peanuts and tree nuts) policy. If your child stays for lunch, please choose one of the several alternatives to peanut butter including WOWBUTTER (<http://www.soybutter.com/>) and Sunbutter (<http://www.sunbutter.com/>). Please be respectful of this policy and contact the ECE office if you would like more information. Some classrooms may be whole egg free. If your child is in one of these classrooms, please only send in products where the egg is baked into the food and refrain from sending in hard boiled eggs or egg salad.



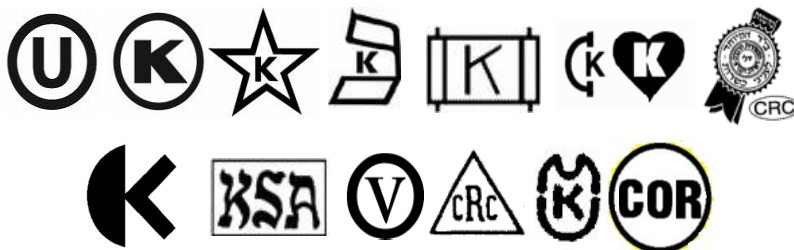
8. **Choking Hazards:** All food sent to school should be pre-cut for the younger children, and age appropriate. Be sure to include all utensils. Unsliced hot dogs, hard candy, popcorn, unsliced grapes and other foods that are common causes of choking are NOT permitted.
9. **Storing Lunches:** Unless there is a dedicated refrigerator in the classroom, lunches are not refrigerated. Please use an insulated lunch box and freezer pack if your Grasshopper, Teddy Bear, JK or Kindergarten student needs any food items to stay chilled. Most classrooms do not accommodate refrigeration. Please pack proper insulation in your child’s lunch box/thermos for items that need to stay warm/cold.

### **FOOD POLICIES: KOSHER GUIDELINES**

The following dietary guidelines are observed in the ECE department. Please ask for help in the ECE office if you have any questions. Any food handled in our kitchens or provided by the ECE department for our programming will follow these guidelines:

1. Please do not send in meat products of pork origin.
2. Shellfish is not permitted. Tuna or any type of fish or eggs (if there is no whole egg allergy) are fine and may be combined with dairy products.
3. Meat and milk products must be packed separately and not eaten together for the same meal. For example, a turkey sandwich is fine but not a turkey and cheese sandwich. A turkey sandwich is fine with juice or water, but not with a container of milk. However, you may send dairy products for snack time and meat products for lunchtime, but they must be packed in separate containers.
4. Packaged foods sent for snacks and lunches must be marked with an accepted kosher symbol. Lunchables are not kosher and typically not nutritious.
5. Fresh fruit may be sent in for birthday celebrations or special events. Because many children have allergies or dietary restrictions, and we are continually striving to promote healthy eating habits. We no longer serve sweets for these occasions.
6. Always check the package label for the seal or sign of certification. Not all runs of a given product are necessarily kosher. Sometimes certification is discontinued unexpectedly. In some lines, only certain flavors or varieties are kosher.
7. Fresh fruits and vegetables are always fine.
8. Snacks and lunches sent from home are to be packed in closed containers or bags.
9. Please clearly label your child’s lunch box or bag on the outside.

The following symbols are acceptable:



## FOOD POLICIES: HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR PASSOVER

During Passover, Michele Block Gan Yeladim is only open for 12-Month students. Packing lunches and snacks for your child to eat can be challenging. However, some grocery stores including Publix, Winn Dixie and Trader Joe's offer a vast array of items that are kosher for Passover including cereals, cookies, crackers, chips and more. All kosher items labeled with a "P" for Passover are fine during this time. Fresh fruits and veggies are always great and dairy products like yogurt and cheeses are fine unless combined with meats.

Children typically enjoy many things on matzah (the traditional unleavened bread eaten for the duration of Passover). A few of the favorites are plain or flavored cream cheese; WOWbutter and jelly; hummus; tuna fish; buttered with cheese slices; egg salad (if there is not a whole egg allergy in the classroom), etc. You could also pack some of these items separately and your child may break their matzah and "dip." Foods to avoid are refined wheat or leavened bread products.

## HEALTH, EMERGENCY, and the FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)

Contained in your registration packet are Medical Emergency form, Permission Form, "Know Your Child Care" pamphlet and the Michele Block Gan Yeladim Discipline and Expulsion Policy Acknowledgement. All required health and immunization forms are due on or before your child's first day of school and must remain current. **Children without current forms will not be allowed to start/remain in school.** These forms are provided by your child's physician. Please be aware that there may be children in our care that do not have current immunizations due to a medical exemption. **Religious exemptions are not accepted.** The ECE office strives to notify you in advance before your child's health forms expire; however, it is your responsibility to make sure we have current forms. This is a DCF requirement, and there are no exceptions.

Annually, during the months of August and September, we are required by DCF to provide families with information detailing the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus. *The Flu, A Guide for Parents* will be available on the JCA website under Parent Resources and in the office. A signature of acknowledgement will be required.

Annually, in the months of April and September, we must provide families with information regarding the potential for distracted adults to fail to drop off a child at school and instead leave them in the adult's vehicle upon arrival at the adult's destination. The *Distracted Adult Flyer* will be available on the JCA website under Parent Resources and in the office. A signature of acknowledgement will be required.

Please be aware that all faculty and staff are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse in accordance with Florida statutes.

## HOLIDAYS

While we celebrate cultural diversity and various national and Jewish holidays, we do not participate in the celebration of Halloween, Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day or Easter. Please refrain from sending in cards or candy related to these holidays for distribution to the children while in our school. See the attached calendar for Jewish Holiday closings.

## HOPE HAVEN SERVICES

Through the generosity of the David Stein Foundation, Michele Block Gan Yeladim is pleased to offer services free of charge to our students and families during the 9-month school year. Services include pro-social skills, behavior modification and classroom observations with recommendations. In addition, Hope Haven may also provide free parenting seminars and faculty in-services. Referrals are made from parents and/or educators. A referral form is included at the end of this packet. Please read, sign and return the form to the ECE office.

## **HURRICANES, FLOODS, COMMUNITY EMERGENCIES, OR UNPLANNED CLOSINGS**

In the event of severe weather, community/national emergencies or utility outages, the JCA may need to close our programs. For severe weather, we close according to the following criteria:

\* 9-month Preschool or Kindergarten Students – If Duval County Public Schools close for severe weather, Michele Block Gan Yeladim's 9-month preschool and kindergarten programs will also close.

\* 12-month Year-Round Students - Even if Duval County Public Schools close for severe weather, assume that the JCA will be open for services unless one or more of the following conditions exist:

- 1) No utilities (water and/or electric is out)
- 2) A state of emergency is called (requiring the closing of local businesses)
- 3) Weather conditions inhibit adequate staffing of the program

In the case of severe weather conditions and the 12-Month program remains open, it is imperative that parents, guardians or emergency contacts are reachable by phone in case of loss of utilities or worsening conditions. Please know that our phone system requires electricity to operate, and loss of electricity would result in an inability to reach the JCA by phone. In this case, you would be contacted by an ECE representative by cell phone.

In the case of an emergency evacuation during school hours, parents are contacted by cell phone with specific instructions on safely reuniting with their child. Children will only be released to contacts listed on the child's emergency contact list with proper identification.

## **INSECT REPELLANT**

If you use an insect repellant, public health authorities recommend repellents containing DEET. It should only be applied once per day. If it must be done at school, we require written permission from the parent or guardian, the repellant must be in its original container, and your child's name must be on that container. Please use the "Authorization for Non-prescription Topical Cream" form available in the office.

## **JEWISH ENVIRONMENT**

Michele Block Gan Yeladim uses Jewish values as a means of guiding curriculum and programming in a way that applies cross culturally to families of different faiths and backgrounds. Through the traditions of our heritage, we explore Judaism while learning how to appreciate cultural diversity. Students celebrate the Sabbath (Shabbat) and other holidays. They are taught awareness through core values such as Tzedakah projects (charitable giving) and Mitzvot (doing good deeds).

## **LEGAL CUSTODY NOTIFICATION**

In compliance with Florida State Statutes, we require documentation regarding which parent has legal custody in the case of separation or divorce. If there is no legal documentation, then both parents have the right of access to JCA records and pick-up of their children. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide legal documentation verifying custody arrangements. Custodial parents are responsible for notifying the JCA, in writing, of any special circumstances regarding the rights and obligations of the non-custodial parent. This includes providing written permission for the non-custodial parent to pick up a child on a regular basis or for a special occasion.

## **LIBRARY**

The Michele Block Gan Yeladim Library holds over 7,000 hardcover books. Currently the library is used primarily by educators for story time and checking out books and story kits for their classroom use. Students and families are welcome to check out books. We operate on the honor system and do not send out reminders to return books.

## MEDICATION

Medication is administered only when accompanied by a properly completed medication authorization form including the child's name, name of medication, time and amount of dosage and parents' signature. Forms are available in the office. Medication must be in its original container. Prescription medication must have a label stating the name and contact information of the physician and/or pharmacy, child's name, name of the medication and medication directions. All prescription and non-prescription medication must be dispensed according to written directions on the prescription label or printed manufacturer's label and maintained at the appropriate temperature. All medication is stored in a locked area or out of reach of any child.

No medicine can be given after the expiration date on the label. Parents are responsible for noting expiration dates and disposing of expired medication and providing new medication. Medication cannot be added to juice, milk, etc. Over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Motrin, etc., are not administered by school employees. If your child needs such drugs, he/she is not well enough to be at school.

## NAP POLICIES

Sleep is an important part of healthy growth and development. Regular naps provide predictable routines and help children cope with the stimulating activities in a school setting. They lead to optimal daytime functioning. Sleep helps prepare children to attend to new experiences, positively engage with others and build memory and attention skills.

***All Busy Bees, Grasshoppers and Teddy Bears staying past 12:00 pm nap or lie down for quiet time. We do not keep children awake during naptime if they want to sleep.*** Please remember to send in a labeled crib sheet and blanket or any "loveys" that help your child feel more comfortable during this time. If your child uses a pillow, please make sure that it is airline size or smaller. We do not have the room to store regularly sized pillows. All nap items are sent home at the end of the week for parents to launder and return at the beginning of the next week.

## PARENT & ME

During the 9-month school year, our Parent & Me program offers a variety of classes that are free and open to the community. We encourage all families to take advantage of these classes and invite friends. The classes do require registration through the JCA website at [www.jcajax.org](http://www.jcajax.org)

## PARENTING INFORMATION

In addition to the information that you receive from your educators, the JCA has Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. There is a Facebook page: [JCA Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool and Kindergarten](#) where occasional photos and information are listed. If you would like to join this official school page, please make a request. Articles relating to various parenting issues are also available. If you desire articles or information on other subjects at any time, please ask your child's educator or the office. Parenting seminars are offered throughout the year either during the evening hours or weekday mornings. Please check your monthly newsletter for more information.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In the process of learning, the educators, parents and children are viewed as collaborators. We view the parent as an essential resource to the child's learning. The exchange of ideas between parents and educators is vital in creating a more positive and productive learning environment. Michele Block Gan Yeladim has a track record of strong parent involvement. We recognize the significant role that families play in the livelihood of the school community. Parents help with fund-raising activities which are vital to our program, and we encourage everyone to help in some way. All funds raised by the Parents belong to the school and are turned over to the head of school. No separate bank accounts will exist.

Additionally, our educators encourage parent participation and will ask you to volunteer throughout the year. Your help is always needed and appreciated. We encourage families to contribute to the school's decisions about their child's goals and plans for activities and services. Sometimes we get our best ideas from parents.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION and FEEDBACK**

During each school year, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating all aspects of the program. If it is an accreditation year, you may be required to fill out two questionnaires. Survey results are reported in the schoolwide newsletter. If you have concerns at any time during the year, please do not hesitate to call an appropriate faculty person. Your feedback is extremely important to us! Supervisors cannot be everywhere all the time and we count on our families to let us know if something needs correction.

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

- When there is suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the employee/program volunteer to whom it has been reported (or by whom it has been observed) will immediately begin the reporting protocol. If the employee/program volunteer is unsure how to proceed they should discuss with their supervisor regarding their suspicions and together they will determine what the course of action should be.
- In the event the reported incident involves a JCA employee or program volunteer, the JCA Chief Executive Officer (or other staff person) will immediately remove the person from all activities involving children. The JCA Chief Executive Officer may reinstate the employee when allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer of the JCA.
- Once a suspicion of child abuse or neglect is suspected/observed, and a JCA Staff Member/Volunteer, determines a report needs to be filed on behalf of the child, the **mandated reporter\*** will immediately notify the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System at 1-800-962-2873. Once a JCA Staff Member/Volunteer files a report, they are to report to their immediate supervisor who will notify JCA senior administration of the situation.
- Staff who report suspicions of child abuse/neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone, unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm.

### **RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

#### Rights

- Parents can ask questions about their child's progress and meet with their child's educator
- Parents can ask questions about the school policies and procedures
- Parents can be informed about school events and activities
- Parents can be involved in their child's learning by attending parent conferences and other opportunities provided by your classroom educator

#### Responsibilities

- Be available to talk to your child's educator about their progress and issues and events that come up
- Be on time in dropping off and picking up your child
- Expect your child to go outside every day. Dress your child appropriately for the weather
- Provide the necessary items for your child - extra clothing, diapers, wipes, etc.

- Keep child home (or see a doctor) if they are sick

### **SCHOOL HOURS/LATE FEES**

The minimum preschool length day is from 9:00 am until 12 noon. Kindergarten hours are from 9:00 am until 3:30 pm. If you drop off early or pick up later than your scheduled time, you will be charged accordingly. We encourage punctuality and thank you for your cooperation in this area. This enables us to keep our adult-to-child ratios low.

Although we try to be as flexible and understanding as possible with unusual circumstances, there is a late fee of \$5.00 per every 15 minutes that you arrive past your scheduled pick-up time. For example, if your child is scheduled for pick-up at 3:30 pm and you arrive at 3:40 pm, you are charged \$5.00 (\$5.00 for each 15 minutes you are late). After 6:00 pm, the late fee is \$1.00 per minute. For example, if your regular pick-up time is 6:00 and you arrive at 6:15, you are charged \$15.00. If you are late more than three times during the school year, the late fee doubles each additional time it occurs. For example, if you are supposed to pick up at 6:00 pm and you arrive late for a fourth time at 6:20, your late fee is \$40, if it is your fifth time and you arrive at 6:20, the fee is \$80 and so on. Please let the office know about extenuating circumstances. Excessive late pick-up may result in dismissal from the program. Dismissal is up to the ECE Director's discretion. Children arriving earlier than their scheduled time are subject to the above fee.

### **SICK/HEALTH POLICIES**

Parents, or designated caretakers of children who exhibit ANY of the following symptoms will be called to come to the JCA to pick up their child within one hour:

- Fever of 100 degrees and above
- Diarrhea (**after 2 loose stools within the day, you will receive a phone call/after a 3<sup>rd</sup> loose stool your child is required to go home**)
- Vomiting
- Abnormal behavior

1. Please do not bring your child to our facility with any of the above-mentioned symptoms. If you have any doubt about your child, please keep your child at home. It is unfair to healthy children and educators to expose them unnecessarily to illness. Please be considerate of our community. Once a virus begins in a group, it becomes very difficult to control.

**Fevers – Children sent home with a fever are not allowed to return to their program the following day. In addition, they must be fever free (under 100) without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. The number of days missed for fevers may vary depending on the duration of the fever. The requirement is that children must be fever free for 1-full school day without the use of medication.**

**For example, if your child has a fever midday on Monday, they must remain home on Tuesday and would be allowed to return to school on Wednesday morning (no mid-day drop offs) if they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours.**

2. Although the presence of a runny nose, clear or colored, may appear ominous, exclusion from school is not necessary unless accompanied by any of the symptoms listed above.
3. Please alert the office when your child develops a communicable disease (Covid 19, chicken pox, strep throat, pinkeye, flu, head lice, etc.) so that we can notify the other families of a possible exposure date. All names are kept confidential. Knowing what is going around in a class will help in early treatment and possibly slow or stop the spread of infection.
4. We understand that it is sometimes difficult for working parents to arrange for their sick children, however, the JCA program is for **WELL CHILDREN** only. *We are not set up to care for sick*

*children. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to have advance alternative plans to provide for their sick children.*

5. Children Becoming Ill in School - If a child begins to display symptoms of illness, including fever, coughing, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, lethargy, rash or other symptoms, s/he will be removed from the classroom. We will have a designated and staffed separate room for children identified with any signs of illness. Parents are required to pick up ill children immediately. Emergency contacts are called if your ill child is not picked up within 60 minutes.
6. Diarrhea: Children are sent home for the following:
  - Children in diapers: stool is not contained in the diaper
  - Children in underwear: diarrhea is causing "accidents"
  - Children whose stool frequency exceeds 2 stools above normal per 24-hours for that childIf you must pick up your child for any of the above reasons (day 1), your child is required to stay home the following day (day 2) and may return on day 3 if symptom free.
7. Vomiting: Children are sent home for vomiting unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable/non-infectious condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.  
**Children sent home for vomiting must stay home the following day.**
8. Children with head lice, eggs or nits are not permitted in the program. Children with any of these present, even after treatment, will be asked to leave immediately. We ask affected families to follow the treatment protocol outlined by the Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/>. If your child has been treated chemically, there is still evidence of activity (lice, eggs or nits present), and the recommended time between chemical treatments has not elapsed, you must treat again with a natural remedy for lice (such as "Zero Lice" which contains tea tree and Eucalyptus oils and is available at your local health food store) and be free of evidence of activity before returning to school. Eggs and nits require manual removal after treatment. Please visit the Center for Disease Control website and follow the treatment protocol. Contact the ECE office if you need a printout of the procedures. To contain any outbreak, affected children AND enrolled siblings must be checked by ECE office staff and totally free of evidence before returning to the classroom that day as well as continue to be checked every other day for a 10-day cycle and be evidence free each time to remain in school.
9. If your child's physician or dentist has ordered a special medical management procedure for your child, an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever your child is present.
10. If there is a vaccine-preventable disease that occurs in our program, any children who are under immunized will be promptly excluded from the program. Under immunized children are those who have not received the recommended number or types of vaccines for their age according to the current national and local schedules (AAP).

### **SMOKING**

The JCA facility, outdoor playground, parking lot and courtyard areas are entirely smoke and tobacco free. This includes e-cigarettes. Please refrain from smoking on JCA property as well as at any Michele Block Gan Yeladim sponsored event or activity.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS and ADA COMPLIANCE**

Our facility is ADA Compliant, and we do our best to make reasonable accommodations to our program so that all children can participate. We welcome all children who apply for admission if space is available. If your child has special needs or you have any questions about whether your child fits into our environment with reasonable accommodations made, please meet with the school director prior to

the beginning of school. We urge parents to advocate for their children; ultimately, we believe it is up to the family to make the primary decision about services that their child needs. In many cases, we provide information about programs and services from other organizations. Our special needs policy is as follows:

Definition - A child with special needs is defined as one whose developmental progress does not fall within the range expected for the child's chronological age or when development in any of the following areas appears to be atypical: cognitive, speech/language, gross and fine motor, social/emotional, self-help or behavioral.

Procedures - The JCA will attempt to meet the needs of children identified as having special needs in the regular classroom, whenever possible or deemed appropriate. All actions will be at the discretion of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Director in consultation with other special needs professionals including:

A parent interview

An observational screening of the child

Contact with other professionals involved with the child (i.e., early intervention program, preschool special needs educators, and therapists)

Demonstration that the child has the ability to participate and cooperate as a part of the preschool/kindergarten program for the great majority of the program time with appropriate program modification and support.

The ECE Director and/or designees closely monitor a child accepted into the program assessing whether the criteria can be achieved, or other adjustments need to be made. The ECE faculty assumes a proactive role to ensure that a child's placement within the program is successful and benefits the child.

If, after meeting with the parent(s), observing the child in a Michele Block Gan Yeladim setting and/or conferring with the appropriate professionals, it is deemed that the best interests of the child would be served elsewhere, the child may be denied admission or removed from the Michele Block Gan Yeladim program. Michele Block Gan Yeladim may then recommend that the parents pursue a more intensive or specialized service, including early intervention or preschool special needs programs.

The JCA recognizes that, due to the nature of young children and early childhood development, a child's special needs may not be identified before the child is enrolled in the ECE program. As a result, the JCA may be the first to inform a parent that a child requires evaluation by a child study team or physician for further information regarding development. In such instances, an effort will be made to maintain the child at the JCA and to continue to provide service within the ECE program unless it jeopardizes the health and safety of others in the program.

The JCA reserves the right, after meeting with the parent(s) and conferring with the evaluating professionals, to refer a child for more intensive or specialized services, or for early intervention or preschool special needs services in the best interest of the child. They may also recommend the child to be present in the program only with a trained paraprofessional or credentialed private contractor. The JCA may allow a parent to employ a credentialed private professional at the sole expense of the parent or guardian. The sole purpose of this employee is to focus on their child, and it is understood they are not involved with any other children in the early childhood program and will not interrupt normal program activities. The JCA reserves the right to supervise and evaluate the private professional ensuring that they adhere to all policies of the JCA. For each classroom, the JCA reserves the right to limit the number of children requiring a paraprofessional to one child. All paraprofessionals hired privately by parents must complete DCF required background screenings and paperwork.

In the event that a child is identified as having special needs after the school year begins and there is already a child with a paraprofessional assigned to the classroom in which the newly identified child is placed, the ECE Director may determine that a change in classroom placement is necessary in the best interest of a child or the program.

The Purpose of a Paraprofessional - Providing a paraprofessional ensures the health and safety of a student who is integrating into our school environment that is designed for children who are typically developing. A paraprofessional will ease the transition into our curriculum by facilitating one-on-one



assistance when necessary. The ultimate goal of the paraprofessional is to extinguish the need for their services.

Role and Function of a Paraprofessional - A paraprofessional is in the classroom because there is a child with special needs present. Having a paraprofessional allows the Educator to focus on the whole class without significant disruption. The role of the paraprofessional is defined by the ECE Director or designee in cooperation with the parents and Educator based upon the child's behavior manifestations and needs. The paraprofessional is utilized to help the child with special needs integrate into the school environment but does not take the place of the Educator. They are for the benefit of the individual child and not the class. Paraprofessionals are asked to sign an agreement prior to working at the JCA. There is only one paraprofessional per class. The paraprofessional is hired, given general school training and supervised by the JCA. In some situations, the parents may be permitted to employ a private paraprofessional. This permission is granted solely by the Executive Team of the JCA based on a recommendation by the Early Childhood Director. If granted, the paraprofessional must meet established JCA criteria of educational degrees, professional training and experience.

Paraprofessional Financial Terms and Conditions - The parent(s) are financially responsible for covering the cost of the paraprofessional including any training specific to their child's situation. When the parents hire the paraprofessional privately, it is the sole responsibility of the parent to pay for that professional directly and ensure they attend the program according to the schedule that has been established in coordination with the Early Childhood Director. If there is a problem with attendance, the JCA reserves the right to ask the child not to attend without the presence of the paraprofessional. When possible, the school may seek grant money or money through private donors to help reduce the cost of a paraprofessional to the parent(s). If we are unable to secure grant money or donors, the parents are responsible for the total cost.

## **SUNSCREEN**

Sun-protective clothing and applied skin protection, or both with UVA and UVB protection of SPF 15 or higher is recommended. We require written parental permission (please use the *Authorization for Application of Non-Prescription Topical Cream* form available in the office) to apply it. The sunscreen must be in its original container with your child's name written on it. Spray sunscreens are not allowed due to presenting a slippery safety hazard on the floors.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Our school supports the use of innovative technology in the school environment. We demonstrate the best developmentally appropriate practices, strengthen connections between home and community and enhance documentation methodology. Educators use iPads to efficiently capture classroom activities for internal documentation and secure sharing with families.

## **TOILET LEARNING**

Fully mastered toileting skills are required for the following programs and activities in the Early Childhood Department: Teddy Bears, Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten, enrichment classes for those age groups, field trips off premises and instructional swim during summer camp. Fully mastered means that your child can indicate to the educator that he/she needs to use the toilet in advance of going; that your child is able to undress themselves enough to use the toilet; and that your child is able to use toilet paper and/or flushable wet wipes effectively when needed. We are happy to help younger age groups with mastering toilet learning and there are many books and resources on this topic available in the school library.

## **T-SHIRTS**

All students at Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool and Kindergarten will receive a school T-shirt. Please have your child wear this T-shirt to school on Fridays for Shabbat and on field trips where applicable.

## **VISITORS**

We welcome visitors to our program. If you want to bring a visitor, please check with the ECE Director in advance. You must have prior approval. Visitors who have frequent or extended contact with students are required to submit to a background screening.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Our school relies on the support of volunteers. Studies show that students with parents or guardians who are involved in their child's school have a more successful educational experience. Your willingness to support the JCA Early Childhood department is needed and appreciated. When working with children, volunteers must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled educating staff at all times. Volunteers do not work alone with children. To assist your involvement, the JCA ECE department agrees to support you as a volunteer by providing the following:

Assistance in becoming a volunteer.

1. Specifically defined responsibilities of each volunteer opportunity.
2. Opportunities for personal and professional growth through relevant training opportunities.
3. The opportunity to participate in virtual programs, events, open houses.
4. Satisfaction derived from helping to set the direction for a program that makes a difference.
5. Appreciation for your various contributions to the organization.

As a member of the JCA/ECE volunteer community, you are expected to participate to the best of your ability in the following ways:

1. Be a responsible, model citizen using good judgment that reflects well upon the JCA/ECE.
2. Choose volunteer opportunities and attend any required sub-committee meetings. Read materials in advance.
3. Contribute intellectually. This may mean serving on a sub-committee as needed.
4. Understand and abide by the JCA and ECE policies.
5. Participate in professional development sessions.
6. Advocate for ECE and the JCA
7. Join social media platforms to promote and portray the JCA and the ECE department in a positive light.



## Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool Toilet Training Policy

Children enrolled in our Teddy Bear classes or older must be toilet trained before entering these programs. Children must be wearing underwear. While occasional accidents are expected, a child having accidents daily is not considered toilet trained, nor is relying on wearing pull ups.

### **A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:**

- Communicate to the educators that he/she needs to go to the bathroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

### **Why do children have to be toilet trained before they begin our three-year-old program?**

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups, and our older classrooms are not equipped with a diaper changing table/station or diapering supplies.
- When an educator is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it takes time away from the classroom experience and removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

We understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the educators will help children change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

We ask the children many times throughout the day and before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. As with all activities, an educator will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Our educators are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently. Send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

**A child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.**

After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the skill needs to be addressed.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the skill is not mastered by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day; and if not mastered by day three, the child will have to work on attaining this skill at home for at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool setting is time consuming, and this time that educators spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time that they are not spending interacting with children and facilitating the curriculum in a safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of children and staff at Michele Block Gan Yeladim Preschool.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

**PLEASE SIGN AND DATE BELOW INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED & REVIEWED THE MICHELE BLOCK GAN YELADIM PRESCHOOL TOILET TRAINING POLICY:**

**I HAVE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED THE MICHELE BLOCK GAN YELADIM PRESCHOOL TOILET TRAINING POLICY:**

**CHILD'S NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT'S SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_



Consent Form  
Ages & Stages Questionnaires®<sup>®</sup>, Third Edition (ASQ-3™)

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

Child's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

If born prematurely (3 or more weeks before due date), number of weeks premature: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the information provided about the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®<sup>®</sup>, Third Edition (ASQ-3™), and I understand the purpose of this program. I agree to have my child participate in the screening/monitoring program. I will fill out questionnaires about my child's development and promptly return the completed questionnaires.

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Parent or guardian's signature

Date



**Jewish Community Alliance &  
Hope Haven Children’s Clinic &  
Family Center Authorization Form**

Through the generosity of the David Stein Family Foundation a grant to Hope Haven Children’s Clinic and Family Center will again directly benefit the Early Childhood Department of JCA. For the school year 2024-2025, we will participate in a collaborative program with Hope Haven whereby their professional staff will be providing various support services to our faculty, your children, and to you, our parents. This is truly a unique opportunity for the JCA.

Hope Haven is a multidisciplinary center that serves children in Jacksonville by providing medical, clinical, social, educational and psychological services. During the next school year, Hope Haven will provide us with a variety of support that will greatly enhance the educational and professional aspect of the Early Childhood Department.

This year’s program includes:

- ❖ Pro-Social skills tutoring and classroom resource
- ❖ Observations of individual students and whole classrooms
- ❖ School visits by Hope Haven’s Educational Consultants. Either the classroom educator or the parent may initiate these school visits. Hope Haven Consultants develop appropriate follow up strategies with the classroom educators and parents.
- ❖ Parenting seminars and faculty in-services

For your child to participate in any of these programs after initiation by you or your child’s Educator, please complete this form and return it to the Early Childhood Office.

Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

- \_\_\_\_\_ I give my child permission to participate in Pro-Social skills tutoring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my child to be observed in the classroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to my child’s classroom Educator to consult with Hope Haven about my child when deemed appropriate and in my child’s best interest (All age groups).
- \_\_\_\_\_ I further grant my permission for Hope Haven and the school personnel to mutually share relevant educational information and records.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## 2024-2025 Enrollment Form Continued Student Health Information Access

In order to maintain our National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, we are required to have the information below completed for your children's file.

The following individuals are authorized to have access to my child's health information:

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Adult's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Adult's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Adult's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: X \_\_\_\_\_



Release Form  
For Children with Severe,  
Life Threatening  
Allergies

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I/we have abided by the requirements of the JCA to provide a detailed written explanation and description of my/our child's allergy and the procedures to follow in the event of a reaction. I/we have given the necessary written authorization and medical supplies to the JCA, and my child will wear a medic alert bracelet.

While I/we understand the JCA will act responsibly to ensure my/our child's severe allergy condition is responded to in the appropriate manner, by my/our signature below, I/we release the JCA, its officers, directors, employees, agents, contract instructors, any of its program participants from any and all responsibility or liability to our child/us for injuries that might be sustained while participating in programs at the JCA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Guardian Name  
(Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Guardian Name  
(Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature









## Acknowledgement Form

The Michele Block Gan Yeladim Family Handbook is available on-line or in print version for parent/guardian reference. The handbook includes information on policy, procedures, rights and responsibilities.

By my signature below I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Family Handbook.

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Parent/Guardian Name  
(Please print)

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Child(s) Name

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date