



Bender Early Childhood Center

# **Bender JCC Early Childhood Center Family Handbook 2016-2017**



**Bender JCC  
Preschool**

6125 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852  
301-348-3839  
[benderjccgw.org](http://benderjccgw.org)

Dear Families,

*Bruchim HaBaim!* Welcome! We are so happy that you have chosen to send your child to the Bender Early Childhood Center (ECC) at the Bender JCC. With the completion of the second phase of our renovations, we have a new preschool hallway and reception area, our downstairs classrooms have a fresher look, and we have added an atelier (art studio), a new toddler room and a staff room. As you will see from the new windows in our reception area, we have begun work on our natural play space. Parents were involved in the design process and we are excited about parents helping us create the landscape after the major construction has been completed. In our preschool we believe that, as children and as adults, we are all changing and growing. This value of change and growth is now reflected even in our preschool setting. We are excited for you to be a part of this important next phase in the life of our preschool.



In our ECC, children and families grow and learn together in a welcoming and nurturing Jewish setting. Our talented and caring staff members are dedicated to getting to know your child and nurturing their cognitive, social and emotional growth. You are invited to be a part of your child's vibrant classroom experience and share in our dynamic community events. Please check the updated 2016-2017 school calendar and save the dates so you are able to join your child and other families for these important celebrations. Our updated website, [benderjccgw.org](http://benderjccgw.org), is also an important source for information throughout the year.

This handbook has been created to answer your questions regarding the policies and procedures of our ECC programs. The handbook is also a guide to how we create a structured, safe and respectful school community. Please take a few moments to read through the handbook and refer to it as needed.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org) or visit the ECC office.

L'hitraot,

**Ora Cohen Rosenfeld**  
**Director of Early Childhood Education**  
**Bender JCC**

General Information .....	4
Who's Who? .....	4
Contact Us .....	4
Classroom Names and Ages .....	5
Hours of Operation .....	5
Program .....	6
Mission, History and Values .....	6
We Are a Sheva School .....	7
In the Classroom .....	8
Flow of the Day .....	8
Roles of the Teacher.....	9
Role of the Family .....	9
Role of the Environment .....	9
Good Mornings and Goodbyes .....	10
Napping and the No-Nap Room.....	11
The Classroom and Beyond .....	12
The Center .....	12
Our Staff.....	12
Specialists .....	12
Families.....	13
Early Childhood Parent Committee (ECPC) .....	13
Field Trips.....	13
Shabbat and Havdalah .....	13
The Outdoor Classroom.....	14
Swimming Pool .....	14
Communication .....	14
Director .....	14
Accounting .....	14
Teachers .....	15
Issues, Concerns or Feedback.....	15
Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences .....	15
MSDE Screening Requirement .....	16
Absences and Family News.....	16
Room Parents.....	16
HoliDaycare and Kid Coverage.....	16
HoliDaycare .....	16
KID Coverage .....	16
Holiday Schedule .....	17
Policies.....	17
Program Changes .....	17
Medical and Health .....	17
Medical Forms .....	17
Allergy Policy .....	18
Illness Policy .....	18
Medication Policy.....	20
Handwashing Policy .....	20
Sunscreen Policy .....	20
Discipline Policy .....	20
Biting Policy .....	21
Exclusion from Preschool.....	22
Reporting Abuse Policy .....	22
Late Pick-Up Policy and Fees.....	22
Clothing Policy.....	22
Diapering and Toilet Training Policy .....	23
Personal Items from Home Policy.....	23
Babysitting Policy.....	23
Food Policies and Information .....	23

<b>Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws)</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Allergies</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Breakfast</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Lunch</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Snack</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Birthdays</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Emergencies, School Closings, Safety and Security</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>National Emergencies</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Inclement Weather Policy</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Security</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Parking Lot</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Carpool</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>List of What Families Must Provide</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Blessings That We Say at Preschool</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Holidays</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Jewish Holidays</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Other Holidays</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Kashrut Certifications</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Acknowledgment of Receipt</b> .....	<b>29</b>

## General Information

### Who's Who?

#### **Ora Cohen Rosenfeld—Director of Early Childhood Education**

*Contact Ora for:*

School policies

Overall school communications

If, after speaking to the appropriate staff member, an ongoing issue needs resolution

#### **Sandy Lanes—Curriculum Director**

*Contact Sandy for:*

Curriculum Questions

Teaching staff issues

#### **Debbie Kivitz—ECC Office Manager**

*Contact Debbie for:*

General Preschool information

Enrollment issues

Changes in children's hours; adding a drop-in

#### **Administrative Assistant**

*Contact for:*

General preschool information

ECPC requests

Carpool changes and dismissal changes

Child pick-up arrangements

#### **Gayle Elster—Learning Specialist**

*Contact Gayle for:*

Support to families and staff regarding children who have specific challenges in the classroom or different learning needs

### Contact Us

**Email** preschool@benderjccgw.org

**Phone** 301-348-3839

**Address** 6125 Montrose Road, Rockville, MD 20852

**Snow Line** 301-348-3839

**Emergency** In case of an emergency, call the Front Desk at 301-881-0100. Ask the Front Desk to page the preschool with information on how to contact you.

## Classroom Names and Ages

### **Aretz Classrooms** (Land Animals)—2-year-olds and 2-year-olds turning 3

- Dubim-Bears
- Arayot-Lions
- Peelim-Elephants
- Shualim-Foxes
- Soosim-Horses
- Kofim-Monkeys

### **Mayim Classrooms** (Water Animals)—3-year-olds turning 4

- Dagim-Fish
- Tzavim-Turtles
- Meduzot-Jellyfish
- Dolfinim-Dolphins

### **Shamayim Classrooms** (Sky Animals)—4-year-olds turning 5

- Yanshufim-Owls
- Nesharim-Eagles
- Yonim-Doves

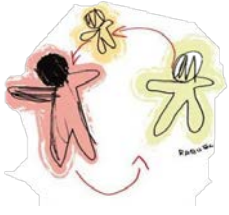
### **Toddlers age 18-24 months** Pandot – Pandas

## Hours of Operation

We offer hours to fit families' different needs.

**It is very important that every child arrives on time by 9:15am** for the core school hours so that children can orient themselves each day and do not miss key moments in the flow of the day.

<b>Full-Day Preschool</b>	7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
<b>Half-Day Preschool</b>	9:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
<b>Fours Program</b>	9:15 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
<b>Early Day AM</b>	7:30 – 9:15 a.m.
<b>Extended Day PM until 4</b>	12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.
<b>Extended Day PM until 6</b>	12:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.
<b>Fours Extended Day PM until 4</b>	2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.
<b>Fours Extended Day PM until 6</b>	2:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.
<b>Toddlers</b>	7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.



## Program

### Mission, History and Values

#### **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to serve the early childhood needs of the Jewish community and the community at large by providing a nurturing environment where each child is accepted for him or herself. We seek to enhance each child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development through our emergent and negotiated curriculum with an emphasis on Jewish values.

#### **OUR HISTORY**

Our preschool has been a part of the Bender JCC since its inception and has served children age 2 through 6 for the past 40 years in this building. Our school began as Ganon Gil, a garden of happiness. In 2015 we were given a new name, the Bender ECC, thanks to a generous gift from the Bender Family Foundation. While we have remained true to our mission of bringing Jewish education and experiences to our children and families, our new name reflects the evolution and development of our preschool throughout the years in the area of best practice and bringing a progressive approach to preschool education. As a community of learners, our staff continues to reflect and study, so that we are best able to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of our children.

#### **HOW WE LEARN**

At the Bender JCC Preschool, we are proud to be inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to teaching. Recognized as a model of excellence in early childhood education, and named as one of the "Ten Best Schools in the World" by Newsweek magazine, schools in Reggio Emilia are based on a strong image of the child as competent, full of potential, and active in constructing knowledge through interactions with others and the world around them.

With a focus on children's thinking, the rich curriculum in our school is based on long-term projects that emerge from the children's questions and interests, inspiring inquiry, investigation, and collaboration. Together, children, teachers and families are partners in research, as they look for materials and resources to help them answer their questions, build on their theories, and make their understandings visible through the Hundred Languages, the myriad of ways that the children can represent their thoughts and ideas. Academic areas such as literacy and numeracy are integrated into project work and daily routines, making them relevant and motivating for the children.

#### **LEARNING AND LIVING JEWISH VALUES**

Based on the theories of Jewish Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, which focus on the importance of the social context of learning, the values of the Reggio Emilia approach are consistent with Jewish values like questioning, reflecting, caring, collaboration and community. While we cannot duplicate this approach as it is unique to the culture from which it evolves, we find inspiration in its belief in the power and value of children.

## We Are a Sheva School

Sheva, the Hebrew word for the number seven, is the name of the JCCs of North America's Learning Framework. It signifies the seven core elements of exemplary early childhood practice. It is deeply rooted in the latest research in child development as seen through a Jewish lens. We are a Sheva Learning Community because our core values are reflected in the Sheva construct. These values guide all that we do.

### **Children as Constructivist Learners**

Children are natural learners. A Jewish expression of values emphasizes that teachers inspire children to question their world and appreciate multiple perspectives. Based on an image of the child as a competent and capable learner full of potential, teachers and children engage in research as a way of co-constructing knowledge. When children are agents of their own learning, they build lifelong critical thinking skills and are more deeply invested in the process.

### **Early Childhood Directors as Visionaries**

Visionary leaders galvanize a process for creating and living a shared vision for the school. Inspired by the richness of our Jewish expression of values, we work with families, teachers and lay leadership to create an environment that cultivates a diverse and vibrant community. While all ECE directors serve their communities, JCC ECE directors must be visionary leaders focused on nurturing the minds, souls and hearts of children and their families.

### **Early Childhood Teachers as Professionals**

At the JCC, educators view themselves as lifelong learners, constantly engaging in the pursuit of learning opportunities, as prized by our Jewish tradition. The combination of education, experience and passion enriches the lives of educators, children and families. We listen with the understanding that the relationships between school leadership, colleagues, children, families and community members depend on the richness of each conversation.

### **Families as Engaged Partners**

We view family engagement as essential to building a healthy school community. Every early childhood program includes family events, newsletters and committees. JCC early childhood centers go beyond this to actively listen to and incorporate parents' perspectives into how we think about teaching and learning. JCCs support and encourage families' Jewish journeys.

### **Environments as Inspiration of Inquiry**

Early childhood programs are rich with materials that inform, instruct and engage children. Our vision for the early childhood learning environment suggests an intentional place for children that provokes wonder, curiosity, intellectual engagement and creativity with endless possibilities. Children and families approach the environment with questions. Attention is given to indoor and outdoor classrooms and common spaces to create community, build connections, and encourage and support opportunities for Jewish living.

### **Discover CATCH as Shmirat HaGuf (taking care of our bodies)**

To help address the nation's critical obesity problem, JCC Association, in collaboration with the University of Texas School of Public Health and its CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program, has created "Discover: CATCH Early Childhood." Based on a foundation of



Jewish values, “Discover: CATCH Early Childhood” nurtures a love of physical activity in children age 3 to 5 years, and encourages them to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

### Israel as the Story of the Jewish People

For thousands of years without the benefit of modern technology, Jews managed to create powerful images and representations of Israel as a place that most Jews had never seen or experienced. A Jewish child was born into a relationship with the Israel of the imagination, which was fostered by linking that place to everyday actions and rituals, to significant events in the flow of the year and of life, and to communal myths and memories. Israel thus permeated the lives of Jews, visited and revisited in the mind throughout the course of a lifetime. When such images of Israel were vivid in the hearts and minds of parents, a connection to Israel could be transmitted at an early stage and in a natural way to young children. Now that such images have become less a part of most parents’ reality, educators are called upon to make up the difference at the crucial developmental stage of early childhood.

*When we are curious about a child's words and our responses to those words, the child feels respected. The child is respected. "What are the ideas that I have that are so interesting... I must be somebody with good ideas."*

*- Vivian Paley*

## In the Classroom

### Flow of the Day

Our classrooms open at 7:30 AM with open-ended activities and guided play. At 9:15 AM, the core program begins for all classrooms. While each teacher structures the day to best reflect the rhythm of the individual class community, every classroom will typically incorporate the following during the core preschool hours:

- Community Meeting (planning with the children, topic study discussions, open-ended sharing, discussions of Jewish topics, stories, songs, games)
- Choice Time (art studio, construction, dramatic play, science and nature investigation, books, literacy/message center, cooking)
- Small Group Work (collaborative project work)
- Snack (may be a separate activity, or incorporated into Choice Time)
- Outdoor Classroom—nature, outdoor explorations, games, gross motor play
- Reflection Meeting (discuss day’s work and future plans)
- Lunch

The Toddler daily schedule will be shared by the teacher at Back to School Night.

The core program for our Aretz and Mayim Program ends at 12:30 PM. At 12:30 PM children who are enrolled in the half-day program are brought to the front of the JCC for carpool. The children in our full-day Aretz and Mayim Program nap from 1 to 3 PM in their own classrooms.

The children in our Shamayim program finish lunch at 1 PM, then continue their learning. From 1:30 to 2:30 PM, the children are engaged in small-group work in order to delve more deeply into topic studies. A short rest time is scheduled at 2:30 PM.

Children who stay for the late afternoon have a second snack, go outside, and engage in planned activities to extend the learning day.

## **Roles of the Teacher**

- co-explore the learning experience with the children
- provoke ideas, problem solving, and handling conflict
- take ideas from the children and return them for further exploration
- organize the classroom and materials to be aesthetically pleasing
- organize materials to help children make thoughtful decisions about the media
- document children's progress: visual, videotape, tape recording, portfolios
- help children see the connections in learning and experiences
- help children express their knowledge through representational work
- form a "collective" among other teachers and parents
- have a dialogue about the projects with parents and other teachers
- foster the connection between home, school and community

## **Role of the Family**

Families are a vital component in the Reggio philosophy and our school. Parents/guardians are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. Teachers respect parents as each child's first teacher and involve them in every aspect of the curriculum. Families are encouraged to participate in different ways in the life of the classroom.

We ask that you:

- attend Back to School Night
- read all email communications, the wipe-off board outside the classroom, and the ongoing projects sheet outside every classroom so that you have a full vision of the life of the classroom and can contribute your thoughts and ideas
- communicate any concerns with the lead teacher and ask questions
- add your perspective to our long-term projects
- share any ideas or connections you hear from your child that you find interesting
- share your skills and talents
- participate in classroom activities
- reach out to other families and create new relationships
- chaperone field trips and special events
- send in interesting materials for the class to use
- bring in additional changes of clothing, diapers, etc., as necessary

## **Role of the Environment**

In our approach, inspired by Reggio Emilia, the environment is considered "the third teacher" and recognized for its potential to inspire children. We strive to create spaces in which every material is intentionally chosen, and every area is evolving to encourage children to delve deeper into the investigations of their theories. We look for ways that the space can encourage collaboration, communication and exploration, and ways for the children to make their thinking visible. You may notice that the walls, furniture and carpeting are kept neutral in order to highlight the work of the children. You may also notice that the materials are open-ended in order to encourage creative thinking. Most materials are either made of wood, recycled, are real-life props, or are found in nature.

## **Good Mornings and Goodbyes**

The preschool is open from 7:30am to 6pm, Monday through Friday. The core day for the Aretz and Mayim program begins at 9:15am and ends at 12:30pm, and for the Shamayim Program begins at 9:15am and ends at 2:30pm. TK/K begins at 9:15am and ends at 3pm. Extended day options are until 4pm and 6pm.

**Please arrive to school by 9:15am when the core day begins. Not only are late arrivals disruptive, but it is very difficult for children to enter a group that is already engaged in an activity.**

### **Separation:**

Children sometimes have difficulty with separation at drop-off. Please know that this normal and we have the experience to help ease you and your child through this time. You should create a goodbye ritual with your child and stick to it—maybe one kiss, and one high-five. You may want to bring a comfort item from home for them to hold. Always make sure to say goodbye and do not sneak out. Do not ask your child for permission to leave. Be confident, but friendly about leaving. It is important that you show them that you believe in their competence and that they will be okay. If your child cries or clings, prolonging the good-bye will only make it harder for you and your child.

We are there to help during these transition times to comfort your child once you leave. We offer comforting words such as, “I know it’s hard to say good-bye.” We will hug them and then work to engage them in a fun activity. Once you have gone through your good-bye routines a few times, your child will get to know what to expect and the good-byes will be less difficult. After a short period of time, your child’s anxiety about you leaving ends quickly after you leave. Should this not be the case, we want you to know that we would call you to let you know how he/she is doing.

Your child will pick up on your confidence about having chosen a good place for him/her to be while you are away. Good feelings are contagious.

### **Pick Up:**

At the end of the day, as children are picked up and the number of children decreases, the Mayim classes may combine together and the Shamayim classes may combine together for their activities. **When you arrive after 4pm, please check with the front desk for the location of your child’s class.**

If the child is being picked up by anyone other than the expected driver or there is a change in his/her schedule for the day, please be sure that the office and teacher are informed of the change in writing. Make sure that your child’s emergency card includes all the names of authorized pick-up persons. Children will not be dismissed to any person who does not have permission to pick them up without a note, email, or phone call from the parent/guardian. Please send an email to [preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org) and cc the teacher if there are different pick-up arrangements. All persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least 16 years old.

For those picking up, please note the following:

- **Please be sure to sign your child out each day. We must have the adult's signature on our sign-out records.**
- When you are ready to leave, please make sure that you tell your child's teacher that you are leaving.
- We want to ensure that the children in our care are well supervised; therefore, when you arrive to pick up your children, please plan to sign them out and then leave the program areas, such as the classroom or playground, soon thereafter.
- Once a child is signed out, the person picking them up must supervise them. Do not walk away or leave them in the classroom or on the playground.
- If a class is involved in a lesson, please attempt to pick up your child as quietly as possible so as not to interrupt or distract the other children.
- Please keep conversations with staff brief when dropping off or picking up so that they may properly supervise the children. If you wish to discuss an issue regarding your child, please email the lead teacher to set up a phone or in-person conference.
- If you bring a sibling to the preschool during drop-off or pick-up, please keep her/him under your direct care and supervision. Children may not linger in the halls or classrooms without the adult who is picking up.

Carpool:

Within a few weeks after school begins, you will receive notice that the 12:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. carpool will begin. Once this starts, children dismissed at 12:30 p.m. and those children remaining after 5:45 p.m. will be brought to the front door of the building for carpool. Carpool participants should line up in the front driveway, and your child will be brought to you. Please remain in your car and follow the directions of the carpool facilitator.

Lateness:

Adults who are picking up should be on time for dismissal. Imagine how a small child feels when all the other children have been picked up and he or she is still left. If you find you will be unavoidably delayed, email us at [preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org) or call 301-348-3839. If you are running late, you may do drop-in care or be charged a late fee (See Late Pick Up Policy and Fees section). If you find you are continually late, please consider changing your child's program to extend his/her day. That way, you will not incur a build-up of late stay charges.

Drop-In Care:

If you wish to extend your child's day beyond the program for which you are registered, you must email your request to the ECC office, and fill out a drop-in care form.

### **Napping and the No-Nap Room**

Because we are licensed by the State of Maryland, we must provide children in our Aretz and Mayim programs the opportunity to nap every afternoon. Many children reduce or eliminate their napping time when they turn three, and we have created a space for children who no longer nap. It is the policy of our preschool that we do not wake sleeping children nor prevent children from sleeping who are clearly fatigued. All children must be on their cots for approximately 30

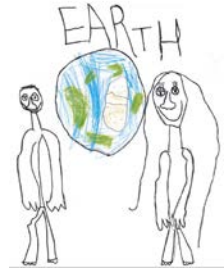
minutes for rest time and if they remain awake, they are invited to play in another location for the duration of nap time.

In the no-nap room, which is overseen by our staff, there will be free play and some structured activity time, such as cooking, science and yoga.

## The Classroom and Beyond

### The Center

We are so fortunate to have access to the wonderful Bender JCC facility, which includes a gymnasium, art and dance studios, walking paths, and large grassy areas. The multigenerational and multicultural community at the Bender JCC enhances our children's learning experiences.



### Our Staff

It is our priority to employ experienced and talented staff members who meet our high standards. We provide ongoing professional development to support our staff in remaining lifelong learners. The ECC program is a professional educational setting and sets clear standards and expectations for all teachers and staff members. Throughout the year, staff members receive formal and informal observations, opportunities for professional growth and constructive feedback. While we are proud of our talented and hardworking staff, there are situations when a staff member's contract must be terminated or not renewed for the coming school year. The decision for a staff member not to continue in their position can be for either personal or professional reasons. Details of the termination are governed by the protocol of human resources and are not shared with the public by the school or the Bender JCC. We will inform families of these changes as appropriate.

At times, it is necessary to have substitute teachers take the place of one of the adults in the classroom. Our substitute teachers are interviewed by the director and are fingerprinted, just like all of our staff members are. They are provided with a staff handbook and given an orientation to our school's policies and procedures. When one team member in a classroom is absent, the other staff member assumes the role of leading the class for that day. Our policy is that two teachers from the same shift in a classroom may not take leave at the same time; however, sometimes an emergency situation arises where that may happen, in which case we will assure that an experienced person who is familiar with the children in that class is in the room that day. When a long-term substitute is required, families will be alerted in as timely a manner as possible.

### Specialists

We offer a variety of specialized activities for each class. In addition, school-wide special programs are scheduled throughout the year. We also work with the different departments of the Bender JCC to make use of the wonderful facilities available to us. We currently offer music for all our classes. A Hebrew/Israel specialist will join our Shamayim and TK Program for enrichment opportunities. Families are welcome to join us for *Shabbat Sing*, led by our music teacher, on Friday mornings. Please ask your classroom teacher about your child's *Shabbat Sing* time. We also have an art studio where teachers can bring small groups of children to work on projects. To further enrich the classroom, we have a part-time atelierista, a studio and materials expert, which is a key component of a Reggio-inspired program. The atelierista works

with staff and children to bring a deeper understanding of materials to the classroom project work. TK will have additional specials such as science, sports and swimming lessons.

## **Families**

Together we are better! We take the idea of a partnership with our families very seriously. It is only through the strong partnership of the home and school that a child can have the richest preschool experience. Families are asked to read the class and school newsletter so they can better discuss with the children the different topics they are studying and share with the teachers thoughts and observations. Families are invited to school and class celebrations and events so that the home/school connection is strengthened. Communication is essential to a strong home/school relationship. Teachers can be available throughout the week to speak to the parent/guardian on the phone or meet in person if there is a concern. Please inform teachers about children's interests and comments related to classroom projects as well as about family members' skills and talents that can be shared with the class.

## **Early Childhood Parent Committee (ECPC)**

The ECPC's function is to advise and support policies and procedures for the ECC programs. The ECPC Executive Board is responsible for fundraising and planning *Tzedakah* (charitable) projects and special events for the school. The ECPC holds meetings every other month that are open to all families. Please feel free to participate in the meetings, as your input is important. Notices will be sent home regularly inviting you to upcoming ECPC meetings.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips can be a valuable part of the learning experience. Periodically, classes go on field trips to highlight various aspects of their curriculum. Children in these classes must have a signed field trip permission form. Parent/guardian volunteers are needed for supervision of the children and sometimes for transportation. While family participation makes these special experiences possible, it also gives families an opportunity for active involvement in the preschool. When on field trips, please follow the instructions of the teachers. Please do not purchase anything, including food, for your child or any other children while on these trips.

## **Shabbat and Havdalah**

Although *Shabbat* does not begin until sundown on Friday, we anticipate its arrival by kindling the *Shabbat* candles with the children during Friday morning snack time. To join us for your child's *Shabbat*, please see the sign-up sheet on the family bulletin board by each classroom. The teachers will provide more details of ways to participate in this special occasion.

Children are encouraged to bring a couple of coins for *Tzedakah* (charity) on Fridays. In the past, the money the children collect has helped to feed needy families in the US and Israel, support cancer research, purchase toys for sick children at NIH and much more.

*Our goal is to build an amiable school where children, teachers, and families feel at home. Such a school requires careful thinking and planning concerning procedures, motivations, and interests.*

*--Loris*

*Malaguzzi,  
founder of the  
Reggio approach*



All are welcome to join us for *Shabbat* Sing in the lobby atrium. Please check with your teacher for times.

Every Monday morning, the whole school joins together to celebrate Havdalah, a ceremony to welcome the new week. Families are welcome to join us for this celebration in the social hall at 9:45am.

### **The Outdoor Classroom**

We have two lovely playgrounds, as well as many areas around the JCC, for our children to learn outdoors—fields, gardens, hills and our back patio. This year, one of our playgrounds will be recreated as a natural playground. Our goal is to involve the children in diverse, and possibly messy, outdoor experiences every day, even when it is cold, hot, raining or snowy. We will stay out for shorter periods on these types of days, but it is important that children are sent with weather-appropriate clothing every day. Every child should have snow boots and warm coats for snowy weather, and raingear for rainy days.

**You are asked to keep a pair of rain boots in school at all times.**

### **Swimming Pool**

Our preschool is enriched by being in the Bender JCC setting, where we have access to wonderful resources, such as the indoor and outdoor pools. In the winter, our students are invited to register for individual or group swim lessons as an after-school activity. During the regular school year, our TK students will have swim lessons during class time. During the summer months, students in our Mayim Program (3 year olds turning 4) and in our Shamayim Program (4 year olds turning 5) have instructional swim. Our youngest students in the Aretz Program (2 year olds and 2 year olds turning 3) have free swim in the wading pool each day.

Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives.

—Thomas Berry

## **Communication**

### **Director**

The director is available to families daily, including during morning drop-off and afternoon/evening pick-up times. She believes in an open-door policy for sharing feedback, both positive and negative. Please do not hesitate to speak to Ora about any issue so that she can attempt to resolve it. She sends information out primarily by email and makes every attempt to do so in a timely manner.

### **Accounting**

Debbie Kivitz, our office manager, handles the financial aspects of the school in concert with the Bender JCC accounting office. Please contact the school office at [preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org) if you:

- Have a billing question
- Would like to change your child's program. If you choose to decrease hours, there is a \$25 charge. You must give 30-day notice in writing.

- Need drop-in care (the form is on our website)
- Need a receipt for tax purposes or dependent care, although first, please try logging into your online edge account at [benderjccgw.org](http://benderjccgw.org) and you can print all your receipts

## Teachers

We encourage families and teachers to keep open lines of communication throughout the school year. Each teacher has a personal Bender JCC email address and will send out communications to you. Families may contact teachers via email at this address. Teachers are required to check their email at a minimum of once a day. Please be sure that your teacher has your correct email address. Please be aware that our teachers are taking care of your children and may not be able to respond to emails during the day. If you require a quick response, contact the ECC office at [preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org) or Debbie at 301-348-3839. If it is an emergency and the office staff is unavailable, please call the JCC front desk at 301-881-0100 and ask that they contact the preschool. To ensure maximum supervision for our children, please do not call your child's classroom directly.

Teachers will be writing daily emails to keep you informed about the work going on in the classroom, as well as to get your input on ongoing projects. Each daily email will include the thoughts and pictures of different children each day. The daily email will give you a sense of the thinking of the children and teachers and a glimpse into some part of the children's day. Outside every classroom is a wipe-off board where teachers will share important information such as where the class is located, any special events, who is substituting in the room, and updates about class projects.

Important information concerning your child can be gained through informal conversations between families and staff. Please remember, however, that the teacher cannot talk at length with families either in person or on the phone when the program is in session. Brief messages pertaining to the child's daily care may be written in a note to the teacher. Families may request informal conferences to take place either on the phone or in person.

## Issues, Concerns or Feedback

If you have an issue or concern, you are encouraged to address problems in a direct way with the person or people with whom you are having a challenge. If you have been unsuccessful in reaching resolution in talking with a classroom teacher, you are encouraged to speak to the Preschool Director. If you require further assistance, please speak to the Chief Operations Officer or the Chief Executive Officer.

We are all part of one community and we therefore have responsibilities to one another. We ask that you provide feedback in a productive manner and refrain from engaging in conversations or behaviors that undermine the integrity of the school. We also ask that you not approach the child or parent of a child who has had a dispute with your child; this can lead to an escalation of the issue. Please trust the school to intercede on your behalf.

## Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences

Parent/guardian teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. Teachers will prepare a written conference form based on developmentally-appropriate objectives. See the 2016-2017 school calendar for scheduled time periods. Teachers will post conference sign ups outside the



classroom or use GoogleDocs to schedule conferences. Families or teachers may request additional informal conferences if necessary.

## MSDE Screening Requirement

Maryland State Department of Education has implemented a new state regulation for all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs. Effective July 1, 2016, all children up to kindergarten entry attending regulated care and early childhood educational programs will need to have a developmental screening conducted. Parents will be informed when the screening occurs and will be contacted if the screening score indicates whether additional services are appropriate.

## Absences and Family News

We care about your child and family! Please send an email to your child's teachers as well as the preschool ([preschool@benderjccgw.org](mailto:preschool@benderjccgw.org)) to let us know if your child will be absent, or if there is any good or bad news that we should know about. We love to see new baby photos!

## Room Parents

We need you! Please consider volunteering to be a room parent. It is a great way to get to know other families and to make a difference in the school. Room parents serve as an important point of contact for the families in your child's class. You will receive help from the room parent coordinator! Please let your child's teacher know at the Open House or Back to School Night if you are interested.

## HoliDaycare and Kid Coverage

### HoliDaycare

- **For students in both 10-month and 12-month program:** HoliDaycare is offered on certain Jewish holidays when the preschool is closed, but the Bender JCC building is open. The hours for HoliDaycare are 9am-5pm and the cost per day is \$80. Registration is online. HoliDaycare is only available to children currently enrolled in the Bender JCC preschool. Space is limited. **There are no refunds due to illness or absence.** Current school staff will be supervising HoliDaycare. HoliDaycare will be available on the following dates:
  - Sukkot: Monday, October 17
  - Sukkot: Tuesday, October 18
  - Shemini Atzeret: Monday, October 24
  - Simchat Torah: Tuesday, October 25

### KID Coverage

For students in the 10-month program who wish to attend school during vacation for the 10-month program while the full-year program is still in session. Ten-month students will be placed in their current classroom if they are in a classroom that is open full year. Ten-month students who are in classrooms that are open only 10 months will be placed where space is available in their age group. The hours for Kid Coverage are 9am-5pm and the cost per day is \$80. Registration is online. Space is limited. **There are no refunds due to illness or absence.**

Kid Coverage is available on the following dates:

- Winter Break: December 26-30

- Passover Break: Monday, April 10-18

## Holiday Schedule

Please see the Preschool website for full school calendar:

<http://www.benderjccgw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2016-2017-Calendar-for-Online-7.29.16.pdf>

## Policies

### Program Changes

According to the terms of enrollment, 30-days written notice is required for preschool schedule changes. If prior written notice is not given, you will be responsible for the month's tuition. You will need to fill out an automatic payment form.

A \$25 fee will be assessed for each credit card payment or EFT that is denied. It is the parent's obligation to notify the preschool of any changes in their credit card or EFT account.

There is a \$25 service fee to downgrade your child's program to fewer hours.

## Medical and Health

### Medical Forms

Medical and immunization forms completed by your child's physician must be on file in the school office prior the first day of school. All children should have the following immunizations:

- 4 DPT
- 3 Polio
- 1 MMR
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 1 Hib and 1 Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- All children entering TK/K are required to show proof of an additional measles booster.

If your child, regardless of age, does not have these immunizations, your child's physician must submit a written explanation. In addition, the following forms must be on file:

*Two signed Emergency Forms, Family Information Form, and Child Information Form.*

For the health, safety and welfare of both staff and students, the Bender Preschool program follows all the State of Maryland vaccination requirements for students entering our program. Documentation of compliance with these requirements shall be provided to the Center for all students upon entry to the ECC. The Center will monitor ongoing vaccination compliance for children 18 months to 5 years who are enrolled in the ECC. This follows the standards and policies of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and the American Council on Immunization and Prevention. There are no religious or personal exemptions to this policy. Medical exemptions will be reviewed by the director of ECC with medical consultation, as necessary.

In addition, all families must submit written documentation of a blood-lead screening. **All information is confidential and will not be released to outside sources without written approval from parents.**

## Allergy Policy

After all children have enrolled, but prior to the first day of school, all physicians' medical reports and health history forms will be reviewed. Parents of children who have any allergies are asked to complete the allergy protocol form, even if the allergies are not life threatening.

<http://www.jccgw.org/early-childhood/preschool/forms-parent-info/>

A master list of those children with allergies, including a photograph, will be created and placed in every classroom. Parents/guardians of these children are required to provide the following:

1. Photograph of child (for the master allergy list referenced above)
2. Two copies of an allergy treatment protocol from the child's physician, which includes the particular child's unique history of symptoms and reactions – one will be posted in the child's classroom and the other will be kept in the master student folder
3. A bottle of Benadryl (to be kept in the administrator's office) with dosing instructions
4. Two EpiPens (if prescribed by the physician) – one will be kept in the administrator's office as a back-up and the second will be kept by the staff person in charge of the child (wherever the allergic child goes, the EpiPen goes, kept safely by the adult in charge)
5. All food the allergic child will eat during any given day—including lunches, snacks and celebration treats (ex: a treat for a birthday celebration)—will be provided by families for their child if they are not able to eat the food provided by the school

Children with allergies will not be permitted to start school until all medical forms and a physician's allergy treatment protocol have been received by the office. An earlier deadline will be set for these children due to the need for creating the school/classroom plan explained below and for staff and education. A school/classroom plan will be developed for the child with allergies based on the information provided by physicians and families. This plan will be tailored and individualized to the specific needs of the child.

- All staff in charge of a child with allergies will be provided with specific information and/or training regarding the child's allergies and treatment plans (ex: how to administer an EpiPen).
- Staff will maintain current certification in first aid and CPR.
- The school will maintain properly stocked and readily available first aid kits.
- A letter will be sent out to all families in a classroom where a child with allergies has been identified outlining the responsibilities of the classroom community to assure the health and safety of this child.
- Staff will be responsible for assuring that families and classmates follow through on the identified accommodations.

## Illness Policy

Illness is difficult for everyone, especially when a child is in a preschool program or child care center. Whether to keep a sick child home is not always a straightforward matter. However, the dilemma is certainly lessened if families and other care providers agree upon certain guidelines. The Bender JCC's specific policies are based upon the general understanding that ill children should be kept home if they are:

- **Contagious** and their presence at the preschool presents a significant health risk to other children.

- **Disruptive** to the staff's ability to tend to other children. The preschool is not designed to care for ill children, and the extra attention required by sick children can compromise the routine care of others.
- **Miserable.** Illness can make a child feel miserable. If the emotional needs of the child cannot reasonably be met because of illness (despite the staff's best efforts), the child should be kept at home.

The burden of deciding when a child cannot attend preschool due to illness falls on families. In situations when a child's degree of contagiousness is not clear, families should seek advice from their pediatrician. Some medical problems, such as allergy and asthma, can be difficult to distinguish from infectious disease. In these situations and others, written documentation may be required from a pediatrician.

Families are expected to honor the following guidelines in good faith for the health and well-being of their own child and others. Flagrant or repetitive disregard of these guidelines may jeopardize your child's future participation in the school. Although it is unrealistic to completely prevent the spread of infection in a school setting, exclusion of a contagious child can lessen the chance of others being infected. While we are sympathetic to the challenge of having to miss work or leave work because of a sick child, there are times that your child may have to be kept home due to illness. We ask for your partnership in keeping our school healthy.

In deciding whether or not to keep your child home, the following guidelines should be applied:

- Fever  
Fever (defined as rectal temperature higher than 100 degrees after one minute, or axillary temperature higher than 99 degrees after one minute) results in exclusion until free of fever for 24 hours. **Children who are sent home with a fever one afternoon may not return to school the following day.**
- Runny Nose, Conjunctivitis, or Cough  
If there is "excessive" nasal discharge, "significant" eye discharge or "frequent" coughing, then the child should be excluded until symptoms have "improved significantly"—that is, less nasal discharge, no significant eye discharge, less frequent cough. If the child has a history of asthma or allergy, respiratory symptoms may not indicate contagiousness; however, these children are at increased risk of infection, and a pediatrician may need to clarify each situation or give general assessment guidelines to the family and this Center for that child. When prescribed, antibiotic treatment by itself does not guarantee prevention of spreading illness. Symptoms must be improving if one is to assume that the infecting bacteria are not resistant to antibiotic treatment. The nature or character of the nasal discharge or cough is an unreliable indication of contagiousness. Minor nasal congestion or cough should not result in exclusion.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea  
Vomiting and diarrhea generally indicate an active intestinal infection. Diarrhea is best defined as a significant increase in frequency over normal. The child with an intestinal tract infection may return to the Center if there is no vomiting for a minimum of 24 hours, the frequency of stools is returning to normal and he/she is generally feeling well. Children who vomit during the night for other than allergy or food-related issues should be kept home, even if they appear well. When children are sent home with this condition, they cannot return to school the following day and must meet the conditions stated above.
- Strep  
Strep infection results in exclusion. It may be diagnosed either by a rapid strep test or an overnight culture. If there was concern enough to perform a strep culture, then the child should be withheld from the Center until results are known. The child with strep may return to the Center only after taking an antibiotic for a minimum of 24 hours and he/she is fever free with significant improvement in all symptoms. Some strep infections take longer than 24 hours to respond to antibiotics—if the child is not better after 48 hours, the question of antibiotic resistance should be raised.
- Head Lice.  
The school staff has the right to examine any child suspected of having head lice. If there is a suspected infestation, the school has the right to send the child home immediately. A child will not be readmitted to the

program until his/her hair has been thoroughly washed with a prescribed shampoo and all eggs/nits have been combed out. Exclusion will continue until the child is nit-free. Families who find an infestation must notify the classroom teacher or director so appropriate steps can be taken to prevent further spread.

- **Hand Foot and Mouth Disease**

Children diagnosed with HFMD may return to preschool after being fever free for 24 hours and the skin or mouth are free of open blisters. For more information, see <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hfm.html#>

## **Medication Policy**

Medication by prescription or purchased over the counter will not be administered without a signed physicians medication form (on school website) on file in the school's office.

<http://www.jccgw.org/early-childhood/preschool/forms-parent-info/>. All medications must remain in their original containers.

## **Handwashing Policy**

Handwashing is very important in the prevention of spreading illness. We ask that you help your child wash hands upon arrival at school every morning. We wash hands before eating or handling food and after using the toilet or having a diaper changed. According to our state licensing, we may not use hand sanitizer on the children.

## **Sunscreen Policy**

We feel it is important to take children outside every day and therefore we ask families to apply sunscreen each morning before school. Staff will reapply sunscreen throughout the day only if the form required by Maryland State Licensing has been signed in advance. Staff will provide the form at the start of the school year and it is also available in the school office.

## **Discipline Policy**

Young children are learning how to be with others in the world and at times have mistaken behaviors. Impulse control is a major area of growth and learning for children. Some learn immediately how to direct their anger or frustration in productive manners and some require more time to learn to control these impulses. We believe that children learn by being involved in the process of resolving conflicts, by learning to express their feelings with words, and by thinking about what it means to be part of a community. We work to create a culture of empathy and understanding. Learning not to hit or bite is part of what children have an opportunity to practice in school.

- We require that all staff provide a positive model of behavior by treating children, families and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We ask that all families and visitors who enter our school help support the guidance of children by providing a positive model of behavior, as well.
- We require all staff to use positive strategies for handling conflict by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development, such as prevention, redirection, providing choices or conflict resolution
- When children behave in unacceptable ways, we help them to see what was wrong and how to cope more appropriately.
- We do not have children say "I'm sorry" after a harmful action. Young children do not have an adult understanding of what sorry means and may not really feel sorrow over what they did. Being sorry means contemplating the impact of what they have done and feeling regret for having done it. Simply saying "I'm sorry" can become a magic

incantation of absolution for some children, as though the words alone are enough to free them from the responsibility for and consequences of their choices.

- We do not use any punitive strategies such as “time out,” and never send children out of the room by themselves.
- We never use physical punishment or touch children in punitive ways.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children’s behavior.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out, threaten, bribe or humiliate individual children or groups of children.
- We work with families to address recurring misbehavior, using objective observation records to help us respond appropriately.
- Our learning specialist provides support to staff and families regarding behavioral and developmental issues.
- Details of any events in which a child hurts another person are brought to the attention of the director and are recorded in an incident report. The family of the child who is hurt will be informed of the situation on the same day. The privacy of all children involved in any such incident will be preserved. Not all incidents require an incident report for the child who hurt the other, unless this behavior is purposefully aggressive or part of pattern of behavior.

### **Biting Policy**

Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all toddlers and two-year-olds bite, biting is considered a normal stage in child development. Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. When a child is bitten, that child is immediately comforted and cared for. The biter is told firmly, but without anger, something like, “Teeth are not for biting. Biting hurts very much.” The teacher encourages the child who was bitten to express his/her feelings to the other child. “It hurts” or “Don’t bite me” are sentences the teacher might model for the child to repeat.

Families are informed about what happened by receiving an incident report on the day of the incident for each child involved. If a child has bitten or been bitten before, each family must be called. After three incidents, or if the child is older than the developmentally-expected age for biting, then the staff, in cooperation with families and possibly outside professionals, will meet to formulate a plan of action with set goals to modify the child’s behavior. If the biting continues, a child may be asked to leave the program until this behavior is resolved.

## **Exclusion from Preschool**

There are occasions when the preschool is unable to support the needs of a child or a family. These situations include learning or behavioral challenges that impact the child's learning and/or impacts the classroom in an ongoing manner. Before a final decision is made on the part of the preschool, there is ongoing communication involving the teachers, parents and health professionals, if needed.

## **Reporting Abuse Policy**

In Maryland, the child abuse law mandates that educators who suspect a child is being mistreated must report the matter to Child Protective Services. Any person who in good faith makes a report of abuse or neglect is immune from any civil liability or criminal penalty.

## **Late Pick-Up Policy and Fees**

All children have a designated pick-up time. In the event you are late, your child will not be left unattended; however, a late fee will be imposed on families who are more than 5 minutes late or if you are late on a regular basis. Please call the school office at 301-348-3839 if you expect to be late. The family will be charged \$5 for the first 5 minutes after 6 p.m., or the time your child's program was scheduled to end, or portion thereof; \$1 for each additional minute after the first 5 minutes. **This policy also applies to early dismissal days.** Late fees are to be paid directly to the staff person on duty at the time of pick up. If a family is late in picking up their child more than three times, the child's continuation in the program will be re-evaluated.

## **Clothing Policy**

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and closed-toe rubber-soled shoes that fit well. Daily activities include active and messy play, and they should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes or their safety. It is best not to dress your child in jewelry as it can be a safety concern. Please consider your child's skills at dressing and undressing for the bathroom when dressing for school. Outdoor clothing, including boots, should also be easy for children to manage.

We go outside almost every day, so please dress your child appropriately. If your child is too sick to go outside, they are considered too sick to be at school. Each child is asked to keep a pair of rain boots in their cubby for rainy day play.

Please write your child's name on all sweaters, jackets, coats, hats, scarves, caps, snow pants, boots, mittens, extra clothing, etc. with a permanent marker.

Each child needs to have at least one extra set of clothing at school in case it becomes necessary to change. Please bring a complete change of clothing to keep at the school, labeled with your child's name. Please be sure to supply a new change of clothes every season. If your child comes home wearing these extra clothes, please send a new set to school the next day. Children who are potty training may need to keep multiple sets of spare clothing in school.

## Diapering and Toilet Training Policy

Children do not need to be toilet trained in order to attend the preschool. If your child wears diapers, you must provide diapers and wipes and replenish when needed. When a child demonstrates an interest in using the toilet, center staff will work collaboratively with families to assist with the toileting training process. If your child does have a toileting accident, soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag and placed in your child's cubby for you to take home. Please send in another extra set of clothing the next day.

## Personal Items from Home Policy

We believe in the importance of children sharing what is important to them with their friends and teachers. Teachers will allow children to bring special items from home, but may set some limitations about the sharing of these items during the day. Check with your child's teacher about the policy of each individual classroom. The class policies may change if issues arise. The following general guidelines apply:

- No toy weapons!
- If toys become an object of disruption or conflict, children will be asked to stow them in their cubbies.
- Your child's teacher may limit the sharing of special items to specific times of day or areas of the classroom.
- **The Bender Preschool is not responsible for lost or damaged personal belongings.** Encourage your child not to bring items that are precious, or that your child cannot bear to share. Be sure to label all personal items!

## Babysitting Policy

Staff members are not permitted to babysit for families who have children in the staff person's class or age group. Families who hire any of our staff members to babysit or drive their children are required to sign a release form. Please see the director for this form. The Bender JCC does not authorize or take any responsibility for work done by our staff outside the Center.

## Food Policies and Information

### Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws)

The Bender JCC and ECC observe the laws of *kashrut*.

**NO MEAT OR SHELLFISH MAY BE BROUGHT INTO THE SCHOOL.**

Any food product sent to school for class consumption must bear a supervised *kashrut* seal. A plain K or P (*pareve*) will not be accepted. No home-baked items may be brought to school, except for individual lunches. Check with the school office if you have any questions. We appreciate your cooperation and adherence to these policies.

**Families are asked not to bring food for a class birthday celebration. Classes will be making a special treat in the classroom for each child's birthday.**

When planning classroom celebrations outside of school, please be sensitive to the fact that many of our families observe the laws of *kashrut* and that some children may have food allergies.



## Allergies

While our school is not designated as nut free, we do make all attempts to serve only nut-free items. In addition, some of our classrooms have been designated as nut free. The teacher will inform you if your classroom is nut free and there will be a sign posted in the classroom. If the room is nut free, you may not send peanut butter and other nut products for lunch. If a child in the classroom is diagnosed with a nut allergy during the school year, the room will then be converted to a nut-free classroom and families will be notified that nut products will no longer be allowed in the classroom. It is the policy of the school, whether it is a nut-free room or not, that children are not allowed to share food. Any foods you bring into the classroom for a whole class treat should be nut free.

## Breakfast

Children who arrive between 7:30 and 9am are welcome to bring a healthy breakfast with them to eat in their morning classroom.

**Please do not send children to school with candy/lollipops/gum/soda.**

## Lunch

**Children may only bring dairy or vegetarian lunches.** Lunches will be refrigerated in the classroom. Teachers are happy to heat up food as necessary. Milk or water will be offered to your child with their lunches. No candy, please.

The ECPC provides lunch three days a week as a fundraising program for our school and as a convenience for our families. Registration takes place after the start of the school year and again mid-year. Lunches, which are kosher and dairy, include choices such as pizza, tuna and macaroni and cheese. Payment for lunches is nonrefundable.

## Snack

Nutritious snacks are provided each day, one around 10am and one around 3pm. Snacks typically consist of a produce and a carbohydrate, such as cereal, milk and bananas. A weekly snack menu hangs on the snack shelf near the office.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are important celebrations in the lives of the children and their families. Each classroom will create rituals for birthdays. Together, the class will bake or cook a special treat in honor of each child's birthday. A birthday committee of children will create a special gift to honor the birthday child. Families are encouraged to be a part of the celebration through reading a story or doing a special activity, or just being present for the celebration. **Due to kashrut and allergy issues, families are asked not to bring any snacks to celebrate the birthday.** Balloons, goodie bags and candy are not permitted.

Our children come from varied religious backgrounds. In an effort to make everyone comfortable, please refrain from hosting and inviting children to birthday parties on *Shabbat* (Saturdays). At-home birthday party invitations will be gladly distributed by teachers if the whole class is invited and the party does not take place on *Shabbat*.

# Emergencies, School Closings, Safety and Security

## National Emergencies

In the event of a national emergency, your child will be well supervised at all times by Bender JCC staff. You may call the school office at 301-348-3839 for instructions. If you are unable to get through, please come to the Center to pick up your child. You can be assured that your child's safety is our first priority and he/she will be well taken care of.

## Inclement Weather Policy

The Bender JCC makes every effort to remain open during inclement weather. In the event of a weather delay or closing, we will send a mass email. Please see codes below that address specific weather situations. Please watch local news, call 301-881-0100, or visit [benderjccgw.org](http://benderjccgw.org) for updates. Information will be updated as weather conditions require.

**CODE BLUE** School is delayed, Center will open on time.

**CODE YELLOW** School is closed, Center will open on time.

**CODE ORANGE** School is closed, Center has a delayed opening.

**CODE RED** School is closed, Center is closed.

## Security

When you become a member of the Bender JCC, you will be issued a picture ID badge. Please have your card with you at all times. You will need to scan this badge upon entering the building and the early childhood wing. If someone who is not a member, such as a nanny or a grandparent, will be dropping off or picking up your child on a regular basis, go with them to the membership office to get them a non-member's badge.

For security purposes, all families must enter and depart through the front door of the Bender JCC. While this can be an inconvenience, the safety of the children is our top priority. Please do not open the door for any person you do not know, as this compromises the safety of our children. It is every family's responsibility to carry their own Bender JCC ID with them while in the Center.

## Parking Lot

There is a great deal of traffic in the Bender JCC parking lot. For the safety of our children, it is vital that families follow these rules:

- Keep your eye on your child in the parking lot at all times.
- Never park in a spot that blocks another car.
- Never park in the fire lane.
- Use extreme caution when driving in the parking lot.
- The 20-minute parking spots in front of the playground are for pick-up and drop-off only.
- You may not leave your car parked at the Bender JCC parking lot when you are not using the Center.

## Carpool

Submit a written list of your child's carpool (including all drivers) to his/her teacher during the first week of school. Carpools should not begin before the second full week of school so that the children have the chance to get used to the routine of drop-off and pick-up. When participating in carpool, please note the following:

- The carpool gate does not open until 12:25 PM or 5:40 PM, and 2:55 for the TK/K, so please do not come earlier and block JCC parking lot traffic.
- Stay to the right when you pull into the driveway.
- Pull to the front as the traffic moves forward.
- Please do not hold conversations with teachers or other families; it holds up the carpool line. Be sure to sign the sign-out sheet the teacher will have with her/him.
- Please do not leave your car unattended.
- If you are late, please contact the front desk at 301-881-0100. Please remember that there is a late fee that must be paid to the person in charge of carpool.

## Appendix

### List of What Families Must Provide

- A healthy lunch daily (dairy or vegetarian—no meat or shellfish). No candy or gum.
- A healthy breakfast if your child arrives before 9:15 AM and hasn't eaten at home
- Diapers, wipes, creams for all children still using diapers
- Extra clothing (replaced immediately after used)
- Sunscreen
- Rain boots to remain in child's cubby
- For children in Aretz and Mayim classes, napping items such as a pillow and blanket. We provide cots and sheets.
- For children in the Shamayim classes, a small rest mat such as:  
[http://www.amazon.com/Kindermat-Basic-Red-Blue-19/dp/B00117WS0E/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1437256777&sr=8-1&keywords=rest+mat](http://www.amazon.com/Kindermat-Basic-Red-Blue-19/dp/B00117WS0E/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1437256777&sr=8-1&keywords=rest+mat)
- A love item, if needed, for soothing your child

### Blessings That We Say at Preschool

- **MEZONOT:** Blessing for food that is made from grain but is not bread: *Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam borei minei mezonot.* Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who creates various kinds of sustenance.
- **HAMOTZI:** Blessing for bread: *Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.* Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.
- **HAGAFEN:** Blessing over grape juice or wine: *Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri hagafen.* Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.
- **PRI HA-AITZ:** Blessing over fruit: *Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri ha-aitz.* Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.
- **PRI HA-ADAMA:** Blessing over vegetables: *Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri ha-adamah.* Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.
- **SHABBAT CANDLES:** *Baruch atah A-donay, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik neir shel Shabbat.* Blessed are you, Lord, our G-d, King of the universe, Who sanctifies us with his commandments and commands us to light the candles of Shabbat.

## Holidays

We are pleased to offer a children's program which is rich in Jewish culture, tradition and values. At the Bender JCC Preschool, we celebrate all of the Jewish holidays as well as Thanksgiving, Presidents' Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. We do not celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day or Easter. The Jewish holidays are an integral part of our program. We celebrate Jewish holidays through hands-on sensory experiences. To promote our core value of community, families are invited to join the children for *Shabbat* celebrations and special family events.

### Jewish Holidays

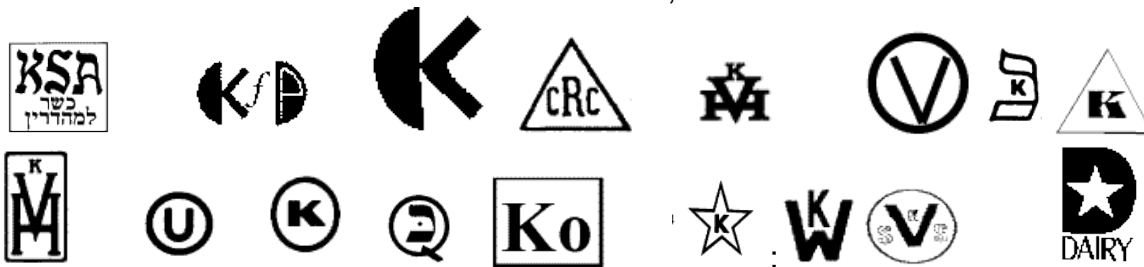
- **Shabbat:** The Jewish Sabbath starts at sundown every Friday and lasts until sundown on Saturday. It is written in the Torah that G-d created the world in six days and rested on the seventh...giving us Shabbat. In many Jewish homes, candles are lit to welcome the Sabbath. Each classroom has a Shabbat celebration on Friday mornings with *challah* (twisted bread) and "wine" (juice). Each age level also participates in *Shabbat Sing* with our music teacher in the lobby atrium. Families are welcome to attend Shabbat Sing.
- **Rosh Hashanah:** This two-day holiday is the Jewish New Year. It is a time of personal reflection of our past and future behavior. The children enjoy apples and honey, which are symbolic of hope for a sweet year.
- **Yom Kippur:** This is the most solemn holiday of the year—the Day of Atonement. It is an adult fast day and a day of prayer. We discuss with the children how to be the best we can be.
- **Sukkot:** Sukkot recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in *sukkot* (booths). It is also a harvest holiday symbolized by the *Lulav* (palm branch) and *Etrog* (citron). We decorate our *Sukkot* with fruit, and enjoy a snack in the Center's *Sukkah* in the front of the building.
- **Simchat Torah:** On this joyous holiday, we complete the reading of our Torah for the year and immediately start reading the Torah all over again. This is a happy holiday for children as they march around the Bender JCC singing songs and carrying flags.
- **Chanukah:** The "Festival of Lights" celebrates the Maccabean victory, when brave Judah Maccabee and his small band of followers saved the Jewish people from the Syrians. For the eight days of *Chanukah*, the *chanukiah* (an eight-branched candelabra) is lit to recall the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people. At school, we light the *chanukiah* and say the blessings, prepare potato *latkes* (pancakes), and enjoy other special activities.
- **Tu B'Shevat:** On *Tu B'Shevat* we celebrate the New Year of the Trees. Trees are a symbol of life, a symbol of Jewish people. Children do some planting and sample a variety of fruits.
- **Purim:** *Purim* is the jolliest of all the holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her uncle, Mordechai, saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the Prime Minister, Haman, to destroy them. We eat *hamantaschen* (triangle-shaped cookies). During the reading of the *Megillah*, the children make loud noises by shaking *groggers* (noise makers) whenever the name Haman is said. The children prepare *mishloach manot* (gifts) to be shared with friends and the less fortunate.
- **Passover:** Passover (*Pesach*) commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt, and the Exodus following them. The *Seder* is a special family occasion. Prayers and songs from the *Haggadah* (the story of Passover) are read, and certain foods are eaten. The classes will prepare their own model *seders* and invite families.
- **Lag B'Omer:** This holiday recalls the struggle of the Jews to regain their independence as a Jewish nation. Today, the holiday celebrates Jewish survival. At school, we celebrate with outdoor activities.
- **Yom Ha'Atzmaut:** *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* is the Independence Day of modern Israel. We celebrate by making gifts for Israel and presenting them to the JCC's Israeli emissary.

## Other Holidays

Diversity is an important value in our school and we respect the many different cultures, religions and life choices that exist in our community. While we do not celebrate Christmas and other religious holidays that are not part of the Jewish tradition, we do encourage children to share family traditions and rituals, whatever the religion or culture. In our school we do not celebrate Halloween, St. Valentine's Day or St. Patrick's Day, but we also do not discourage children from participating outside the school day. Mothers' and Fathers' Day present a challenge in trying to create a setting which acknowledges diversity and the need to be sensitive to all families. There are many different family structures where there may not be a father or mother present. We have children who have experienced the death of a parent, families where there has been difficult divorce situations, families where the main caregiver is a grandparent, single-parent families, and children from same-sex couples. In order to be sensitive to our community, we have Thank You for Taking Care of Me Day. In this way, we acknowledge that there are many people in a child's life with whom the child has a special bond. On this day, children may create a gift or card for those special people.

## Kashrut Certifications

The following symbols of kosher supervision can be found on products which may be used in the Center. For more information about *kashrut*, visit [www.kashrut.com](http://www.kashrut.com).



## Acknowledgment of Receipt

I have received a copy of the Bender ECC Program Family Handbook for the school year 2016-2017. I understand that I am responsible for all the information contained in it effective immediately.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Please sign and return by Sept. 1, 2016*