



Preschool Parent Handbook

2024-2025

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Overview

Mission Statement

JEWELS' mission is to provide a nurturing and educational environment to children of all abilities with an emphasis on the inclusion and custom-tailored learning experience for children with or without special needs. JEWELS offers an equal opportunity to all children, regardless of their ability level. Children will receive the most beneficial academic, social, and life skills necessary for future success.

Philosophy Statement

JEWELS Inclusive School provides a high-quality childcare and inclusive education program in a safe and nurturing environment. The educational program promotes the positive growth and development of the whole child regardless of their development growth through a child-centered and developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports a young child's optimal learning and development. JEWELS school requires all students to live their lives according to the Torah.

JEWELS provides a childcare and education program for your children. The staff values parents as partners in education and operates in this partnership with parents for the well-being of their child. This is done by establishing open communication and cooperation between home and school and by celebrating the diversity and uniqueness of each family. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in school activities as often as possible.

JEWELS provides a stimulating school environment and works collaboratively with the JEWELS therapy center and other community programs. These collaborations provide multiple opportunities for families and staff members to benefit from a wide range of programs and services within the JEWELS community.

JEWELS strives to provide ongoing staff development that meets individual and center needs. The staff works collaboratively to ensure the program is progressive and embraces best practices. On-going professional development is supported through multiple learning opportunities at JEWELS and in the early childhood community.

Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- 1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- 2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:
 - i) Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
 - ii) Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
 - iii) Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the practice of educating and involving children with special needs in classrooms and everyday activities of their typically developing peers. Inclusion helps to foster a role of leadership in many children, while encouraging others in their challenges, through positive peer encouragement. The inclusive preschool setting is beneficial for all children involved, as it models diversity, compassion, teaches that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and embraces the meaning of true friendship.

JEWELS

- Supplemental therapeutic services: including special education, and physical, occupational, and speech therapies.
- Offering small class sizes and custom-tailored curricula to meet the needs of each student, and low student-to-teacher ratio.
- Structured environment
- Qualified pediatric therapy staff

Days/Hours of Operation

Our hours are from Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. On Friday, JEWELS ends at 2:00 pm. Between November 10th through and including April 12th, school will be dismissed at 1:00 pm on Fridays.

Extended Hours

Early Drop off is available Monday - Friday 8:30 am-9:00 am for an extra \$1,000 per year. Late stay is available from 3:00 pm until 4:00 pm on Monday - Thursday for \$1,600 per year. Preregistration is required. To add extended care onto a typically scheduled school day you must notify the office to request an extended-care add-on, to determine if there is availability, the cost is \$10 per day. If this need becomes more frequent, parents will be contacted about enrolling for permanent extended care enrollment.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Drop off begins at 8:55. For the safety of all children, parents are required to either bring their child to the classroom or the child can be taken to the classroom by a JEWELS staff member. In order to ease congestion in the parking lot and speed up drop off and pick up, a JEWELS staff member will be available to walk students to and from their cars from 8:55 to 9:20. After this time, parents are required to bring their child in to school. Students in the early care program will be picked up by their teacher and brought to their designated classroom. Teachers will need authorization to release a child to someone other than the parent or guardian. If a staff member does not know the adult picking up the child, identification is required to assure that the adult is the person for whom the parent has given permission. If someone claims that they are to pick up the child and there has been no notice from the parents, teachers may not release the child until the parent has been reached and arrangements have been made.

A 10-minute grace period for pick-up can be made without charge. After the grace period a \$10 aftercare charge will incur.

All children are required to be transported to and from school in appropriate car-seats/booster seats. Parents must assure that even if someone other than the parent is picking up a student the correct car-seat/booster must be used.

Classroom

Equipment and materials in classrooms are developmentally appropriate, clean and safe. Objects and activities are chosen to suit individual and group needs according to each class's daily schedule. Classrooms are designed to allow children

access to toys and objects that provide manipulation, socialization, creative play, sensory exploration, exploration of art, music, science, and language.

Supplies

All supplies should be labeled with your child's name. JEWELS is not responsible for unlabeled lost items. There are many toys at JEWELS so please leave your child's personal play items at home. We make an effort to go outside whenever the weather allows. Please dress your child with appropriate outerwear.

Meals and Snacks

Please provide a lunch each day for your child. Food should be ready to serve, i.e. cut up, mashed, stirred, etc. Please do not send any glass containers. Milk and water will be provided at lunch time and snack time. In an effort to encourage healthy eating habits, please provide a healthy morning snack each day.

Nap/Quiet Time

There is nap time/quiet time scheduled every day for the Ruby, Topaz, Emerald and Pearl Classes. If children do not sleep, they are encouraged to rest quietly. Any articles that make nap time more comfortable for your child are welcome and can be stored at JEWELS. Please send in a crib sheet and small blanket (see supply lists). The linens will be sent home each Friday to be laundered.

Teacher Qualifications

Each class has at least one teacher with a master's degree in special education. Our highly qualified teachers surpass the requirements of Baltimore County for licensed day care. In addition, all staff must pass a background check administered by the Criminal Justice System and fulfill all the requirements of Office of Childcare. We have the opportunity to be very selective of the staff we choose for our program and are fortunate to be able to offer you a highly qualified team.

Individualized Approach

Each Preschool child will be given developmental screenings yearly. These assessments help teachers to custom tailor your child's learning experience to their individual strengths and needs. The developmental nature of our preschool program is such that every child is welcomed at their current developmental level. With the aid of experienced special educators and the availability of on-site pediatric therapists, each child is motivated and challenged to fulfill their full potential.

If your child qualifies for IFSP or service plan services from the city or county, your child can receive those services in JEWELS. If you currently have an IFSP or service plan, please share it with the JEWELS office: office@jewelsschool.org. If your child may qualify for city or county services, our staff will be happy to acquaint you with the process of setting up an IFSP or service plan for your child. JEWELS will help support the goals of the IFSP or service plan to ensure the most positive outcome for your child and family.

Curriculum

At JEWELS, we use a variety of state approved, developmentally appropriate curricula to build a foundation of learning in each classroom. Currently, the Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) or Ages and Stages (ASQ), are being implemented in our program. By aligning learning goals with state developmental standards, and enriching our days whenever possible, our classrooms will provide an environment that is both engaging and stable for our students, filled with learning experiences in a warm Jewish atmosphere.

Ruby and Topaz classes:

- The Creative Curriculum

Emerald and Opal classes:

- Introduction to Yesodos Kriah
- The Investigator Club Curriculum
- Phonemic Awareness for Young Children
- Second Step Social Curriculum for early learning

Pearl Class:

- Yesodos Kriah
- The Investigator Club Curriculum
- My Math- Pre K
- Wilson's Foundations Curriculum
- Phonemic Awareness for Young Children
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness
- Zones of Regulation
- We Thinkers- A Social Thinking Curriculum
- Scholastic "My Big World"

Technology Statement for JEWELS School

Technology includes computers, phones, TV, movies and electronic games, photo frames, iPads and other handheld devices. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting a child's use of technology or "screen time" to no more than

one or two hours a day. At JEWELS School, occasional use of technology is limited to educational computers and iPads, accessing web pages to enhance the learning occurring in the classroom, looking up answers to questions, and from time to time, watching educational videos and photo screens. In adherence to MSDE Childcare Regulations, screen time is not used for children under the age of 2. For children older than age 2, screen time will not exceed 30 minutes per week.

Class Sizes

For an optimum learning experience, JEWELS offers small class sizes, with lower student-to-teacher ratios than are required by the state of Maryland. This offers more individualized attention to your child.

Health & Safety

JEWELS values the safety of your child. Our building is secure, and we will monitor who drops off and picks up your child. Only authorized persons have access inside the hallways of our school. Emergency contact forms and immunization records must be submitted prior to your child's first day of school. All children must be up to date and current on all their vaccinations.

Please help us keep all the children healthy by keeping your child at home if he/she exhibited fever, vomiting, or diarrhea symptoms within the past 24 hours. Also, if he/she seems unwell or unable to participate in daily routines. Children can return to school 24 hours after symptoms and fever subside.

JEWELS Behavioral Policy

All children should experience success. Positive guidance techniques will be used at JEWELS to encourage desirable behavior and support the achievements of the children. JEWELS provides a nurturing environment with consistent, age-appropriate limits, both in the classroom and outdoors on the playground. Most behavioral issues are minimized in this atmosphere and alternative methods are used to address and redirect inappropriate behaviors.

If a behavioral problem occurs, the JEWELS staff will strive to help the child learn problem-solving skills and take responsibility for his/her actions. In cooperation with the parents, the following techniques will be used to help children develop personal responsibility and self-discipline.

Redirection

An alternative behavior is offered to a child engaged in undesirable behavior. The basic goal is to take a child's attention from a difficult

or challenging situation and focus on a situation that produces immediate and appropriate satisfaction. For example, a new activity is suggested, a different toy is presented, or a different play partner is proposed.

Logical consequences

JEWELS staff may impose logical consequences as a result of inappropriate behavior. The consequence is related to the misbehavior and involves no moral judgment on the part of the adult. For example, a child may need to wipe up the floor after pouring water from the sink onto the floor. As a result of cleaning up, a favorite activity may be missed by the child.

Ignoring a behavior

Ignoring a behavior or not paying attention to the anti-social act of a child can be effective in certain situations. Often, a child will stop inappropriate behavior if no one is paying attention to him/her. This will be used if a child will not physically hurt him/herself or anyone else.

Verbal Intervention

JEWELS staff may discuss inappropriate behaviors with the children and give (age appropriate) reasons why certain behaviors are not acceptable. At the same time, staff will encourage children to think of alternatives to their behavior that would be more appropriate. If the children are unable to suggest alternate behaviors, staff will help them in this process. Emphasis will be given to the fact that the behavior (not the child/children) is inappropriate.

Take a Break

A child may be asked to leave the group and go to an area of the room with a calmer and more relaxed atmosphere. When he/she has regained composure and has determined that he/she is ready to return to the group (and has verbalized to the best of his/her ability how to handle the situation in a more pro-social manner), he/she can return to the group.

Reassessing Placement

If a child's behaviors are aggressive to their peers, a behavior plan will be implemented. If aggressive behaviors develop into a chronic pattern, endangering self or others, the child's ability to remain in our

inclusive program will be reassessed. If a child is displaying persistent, unacceptable behavior, the staff will take steps to help the child gain self-control. If the behavior continues, the staff person will consult with fellow staff members and/or the director to develop alternatives for helping the child gain acceptable control of his/her behavior. If the problem persists, a staff person will contact the child's parent for suggestions on measures to take to extinguish the behavior. The parent will be informed that if the measures do not work, the child may have to be removed from the program. The goal is to help the child strengthen his/her skills of self-control. Separating the child from the group is a final step that would be taken after other measures have been tried. If the child cannot resort to behavior that ensures his own and the safety of others in the center, and/or the smooth operation of the program; the parent will then be called and asked to pick the child up from the program. If the problem persists, a decision will have to be made regarding the child remaining in JEWELS.

Communication

Parents and teachers are partners in the education of children. While the school environment provides formal education for students, parents are the ones who, on a daily basis, teach their children in a myriad of ways and, thus, are our partners in education. Working together is essential for the child's growth. JEWELS strives to maintain a trusting and loyal relationship with all parents, in our programs. Information that is shared with employees will remain confidential. It is our desire to keep the lines of communication open with all parents. This is accomplished in a variety of ways at JEWELS.

- **Teachers & Therapists**

Your child's teacher and therapist will contact you at the beginning of the year to introduce themselves and a preferred method of communication will be set up (email, written notes or phone calls). Additionally, we encourage parents to schedule some time to observe therapy sessions in school. This will ensure collaboration and carry over at home.

Teachers will send written communication or make phone calls to the parents on a regular basis. Please be sure to check your child's correspondence notebook nightly. In the Preschool classes, you will receive a daily note that details the events and activities that your child participated in. Parents should use the correspondence notebooks to write messages to teachers and therapists. Messages

can also be left for teachers and therapist by calling or emailing the school office.

- **School Office**

Please call or email the school office with your comments and concerns at (410)-415-3515 or office@jewelsschool.org.

- **Newsletters**

Every class sends home a weekly newsletter to keep you up-to-date on class accomplishments and activities. The newsletter also keeps you informed about upcoming events and programs and other valuable information. Additionally, there is a school newsletter provided periodically to keep you informed about school affairs and give you a better picture of what is going on in the rest of the school.

- **Conferences**

Conferences can be requested by the parent or teacher if either party feels there is a need.

- **Personal Learning Plan Meetings (PLP)**

PLP meetings are a process where staff and parents come together to create the student's individual program. Times are coordinated and schedules are adjusted to arrange the best possible time for the parents and staff. Meetings will be held on Monday, November 20th, in February (by phone) and on Wednesday, May 22nd.

- **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, school closings or delays, you will receive a text message. Text @jewelsscl to 81010 to sign up.

Grievance

If any parent, employee, or board member has a concern that they do not want to bring to the attention of the school administration, Rabbi Moshe Hefter has been designated as the ombudsman for JEWELS. He can be reached at 718-290-4099.

Medical Emergencies

If a child is injured at JEWELS, the teacher in charge shall administer first aid. Most injuries can be easily handled with first aid kits stocked in JEWELS. Following care of the child, the staff member will then complete a detailed incident report with a copy sent home. The parent will be notified by phone if the injury may need medical attention.

Therapeutic Services

Therapeutic Services are available on-site through the JEWELS Pediatric Therapy Clinic. The following services are provided by experienced and professional therapists: occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy. Patient therapy forms are available on the JEWELS website for your convenience. Feel free to contact the JEWELS therapy clinic staff to schedule an evaluation or to get more information. During the summer months, (re) evaluations will be scheduled.

Our staff will be happy to arrange a meeting and take time to discuss with you your child's individual needs and goals.

Contact Information

Address:

31 Walker Avenue
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Phone:

(410)415-3515

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(443)459-9550

Email:

office@jewelsschool.org

Shuli Bamberger- School Director- sbamberger@JEWELSSchool.org

Sara Handler- Therapy Coordinator- shandler@JEWELSSchool.org

Hadar Lavi- Therapy Administrative Coordinator- hlavi@JEWELSSchool.org

Iris Piekarcz- Special Education Supervisor

Website:

www.JEWELSSchool.org