

Dear Parents,

It is with much excitement and great privilege that I have the opportunity to compile an updated handbook for you this year. The Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre Nursery School is one of the premier synagogue preschools on the South Shore of Long Island. It is an honor for me to continue again this year as the Early Childhood Director.

Much of what you will find in this handbook is both a philosophy and protocols on which I have built on, and some that are brand new. First I would like to acknowledge that we are honored that you have chosen our preschool program for your child. It is our goal to provide you and your children with a quality education in a warm, secure, happy, nurturing, and challenging learning environment. Young children are constantly growing and developing. The HERJC staff understands this process and works to meet the goals of each child in all areas of growth and development: cognitive, physical, spiritual, social, and emotional.

Our well-equipped classrooms encourage children to try new experiences which foster their self esteem and increase social skills. Our classroom goals are to enhance literacy through a play-oriented developmentally appropriate environment. Play provides children with opportunities to learn, problem solve, experiment, act out roles and fears, develop social skills, and develop pre-reading and pre-writing skills. These skills are all needed as a foundation to build on in their later school years. By integrating the secular and Judaic aspects of life into our curriculum, children learn to be comfortable and familiar with their own practices. Early warm Jewish memories that encompass Jewish practice help pass the foundation of Judaism from one generation to the next.

Our goal is to make you and your child feel comfortable and at home in our school. We are always here to work with you and share our knowledge of your children's growth and development. We believe each child is special in his or her own way, and we strive to build on that to develop each child's self-esteem. We welcome you warmly to our school and hope you will view us as extended family. My door is always open to you all. We thank you for allowing us to share these precious years with your child.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Karp  
HERJC Early Childhood Director

# I. WELCOME

## Our Staff

Our Staff has been selected based on their experience, training, and love for working with young children. Our qualified teachers bring to the school creativity and enthusiasm, and provide a positive, secure environment for your children. Their Judaic knowledge and love for Jewish holiday celebrations and Shabbat is impressive.

HERJC is fully licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services and the State of New York (OCFS) and accredited by the voluntary registration of non-public schools through the State University of New York.

## Programs

We offer Mommy and Me classes, Stepping Up Classes (for young two's), Toddler Classes (2 year olds), Nursery (3 year old), and Pre-K (4 year old). Every class has opportunities each day to have specialty classes which further enrich the classroom programming. We provide Music, Creative Movement, Art Exploration, Fitness, and our very special Shabbat programs. We believe children learn best through these multi-sensory experiences.

In addition there are many After- School programs, 2 year old Lunch Bunch (1 hour extension), as well as 3 and 4 year old After-School classes in Art, Science, Cooking, Soccer, Puppetry and Cooking.

## School Hours

Mommy and Me's: one day a week, Stepping Up: 2, 3 or 5 mornings, Toddler: 3 or 5 mornings, Three Year Old: 3 or 5 days a week, Four Year Old: 5 days a week.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Parents are expected to walk their child into school in the mornings. Teachers or assistants from your child's class will also be waiting to greet you at the door. You can give your child over to his or her assistant teacher to be walked to his or her classroom if you wish. Arriving on time ensures that your child will transition easily to his or her classroom routine. Please do not linger at the door as that will only make your child's transition to school more difficult.

Dismissal will take place outside your child's classroom (or from the playground – weather/schedule permitting). Please do not go into the classroom before dismissal time. If your child needs to be picked up earlier, please let us know, by coming to our office in order to sign your child out. Early dismissal can be disruptive to the children in the class and the classroom routine. Please arrive early or on time and **wait outside your child's classroom** until his or her teacher dismisses the class officially. Please do not peek into the classroom at this time or wave to your child through the door because this is disruptive to the teacher's dismissal routines. It is important that you arrive on time for dismissal to

ensure that your child is not anxious about your coming back and is then not anxious about returning to school.

On your Emergency Authorization Form you have designated those people authorized to pick up your child at dismissal, should you not be available. Any changes in your usual routine must be provided to us in writing at the beginning of the day. **Unfamiliar adults (even those on your emergency authorization forms) picking up your child will be asked to show photo identification. Please understand that this is in the best interest of you child's security.**

## **Separation**

We at the HERJC Preschool are aware of the many emotions that will accompany both you and your child during the next few years. Your child will be feeling both reluctance to leave your side, as well as excitement and a desire to explore his or her new school. Please be assured that these concerns are both normal and healthy

Separation can often be a difficult experience for children as well as parents. In order to ease separation difficulties, we encourage a gradual parent-child separation process especially in our toddler classes. In some cases, separation will take easily, while for others it can be more difficult. Each child reacts differently to new surroundings and unfamiliar children and teachers.

The Stepping Up and the Toddler classes will have scheduled adjustment days at the beginning of the school year which you will be informed about. If your child needs more time to adjust we might at the teacher's request ask you to stay a little longer. We understand separation may be difficult for the parent as well as the child. Please speak to your child's teacher or to Cheryl for help with separation.

There will be one adjustment day at the beginning of the school year for nursery and Pre-K classes. The first day will have shortened sessions. This will enable each child to gradually adjust to a new situation. You will be notified of the exact schedule before school begins.

We are here to help ease the transition from separation to independence. The following are some tips to help with separation:

1. Talk to your child a little bit before coming to school. Use simple sentences to describe what he or she might do at school. Provide some mental preparation.
2. Reassure your child that "mommy or daddy always comes back at the end of the school day."
3. Arrange your child's morning schedule so he or she has enough time to eat, dress, and go to the bathroom. This way your child will be relaxed and ready for a successful day.
4. Arrive at school a few minutes before dismissal so that you are waiting for your child. If your child needs to wait for you, this can produce anxiety, especially in the beginning of the school year.
5. If your child appears anxious about the first day of separation, show him/her where in the building you will be waiting for him/her.

6. Greet your child with a big hug and kiss. Acknowledge how proud you are of him/her and how grown up he or she is.
7. Acknowledge something positive or enjoyable that happened at school.
8. Talk about your day. Be sure to keep it simple and uneventful so that your child does not feel as though they are missing much.
9. Remember transitions are usually harder on parents. Even if you have to leave your child crying after some adjustment time, try to keep in mind that by the time you have left the parking lot your child has calmed down and is adjusting to his class routine. We will be in touch with you if needed.
10. At times children have delayed separation anxiety. The first week children might seem unaffected by the separation. After some time they might cry or have a delayed reaction to the separation. This is normal behavior for young children and should be dealt with in the same way we do with their initial separation.

### **Parent Communication**

Ongoing communication between the home and school always provides a better understanding of each child's needs, development, and progress and insures optima success for every child.

We are lucky that we are able to have daily interaction with parents. This allows parents to hear all the "little things" that go on in class. We can keep you informed of any unusual behaviors or specific incidents concerning your child. Remember our door is always open to you. Our parent/teacher conference, held once a year, is another way that we share your child's growth and progress with you. We would be happy to discuss anything at all with you; however, in the best interests of all the children, we ask that you allow us the opportunity to discuss your child with you, in private. We would be happy to call you at home, at any time, or discuss your child with you outside the classroom environment.

Sometimes it is necessary for additional conferences to take place between parents, teachers, and the director to resolve classroom and/or behavioral issues. A number of possible options will be explored at these conferences to address these situations. In the case of continual disruptive behavior by a child that impacts negatively on other children's nursery school experience, the teachers and director may recommend various options including but not limited to a special schedule that allows for the child's day to be shorter, encouragement of an evaluation for the child which might result in outside services being provided in the classroom or the hiring of a shadow at the parent's cost, or having the child be withdrawn from HERJC Preschool.

#### **YOU CAN HELP US KEEP COMMUNICATIONS STRONG BY:**

- Notifying us if changes are happening at home that may affect your child at school, such as a death of a loved one, an imminent move, birth, family vacation, or a parent away on business.
- Notifying us if your child has come down with a communicable disease.
- Informing us of anything that may be helpful in making the most of your child's nursery school experience.

## II. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### School, Snacks, Lunch, and Parties

In keeping with the tenets of Conservative Judaism, please understand that Shabbat and Kashrus observances are very important. All food brought into the school for lunch, parties and celebrations must have a kosher certification (please ask Cheryl if you need any help or clarification). Our children come from many different neighborhoods, and varied backgrounds of observance

### Allergy Alert

We are a peanut and tree nut free school. Please do not send your child with peanut butter or any peanut or nut products. Snacks will be provided at school to ensure that they're peanut-free. If you send in lunch for your child, please only send lunch and a drink. Snacks of fruits or vegetables are acceptable.

### Snack

The school provides healthy snacks each day. Some examples are fruit, vegetables, cereal, crackers, pretzels, apple juice, or water.

### Lunch

Some classes eat lunch in school. If your child does, he or she should bring a kosher dairy lunch, with a drink. Children are **NOT** allowed to bring meat sandwiches to school. The PTA has arranged optional lunch programs. You can sign your child up for PTA lunch at the beginning of the school year.

### Birthday Parties

Birthday parties and big sister/brother celebrations of a new sibling are always a fun way of sharing happy times together with the class. All food brought for a party must come from a KOSHER source approved by the school. **We cannot accept home baked treats from anyone's home. Everything brought in for the party must also be peanut-tree nut free (as well as manufactured on peanut tree nut free equipment) Please do not send goody bags.** Please speak to your child's teacher in advance of the special day to make the appropriate arrangements. At home birthday invitations will be distributed by the teacher if the whole class is invited.

### Shabbat

Each week our classes celebrate Shabbat both in the sanctuary and in their classrooms. The children quickly learn the rituals and blessings associated with Shabbat. During the school year families are invited to come in to share this special day with their child. Each class will have a sign-up sheet outside their door at parent orientation where you will have the opportunity to sign up to celebrate Shabbat with us. The Shabbat spirit at HERJC is a very special experience. We look forward to having you join us to share it.

## **School Wide Events**

During the course of the year we celebrate many special occasions together. We try to provide as much advanced notice as possible. Many events are listed on the beginning school calendar. Events that you might be invited to might include our Family Shabbats, Chanukah celebrations, Teddy's Night Out, Shake a Lulav with Lori, Model Seders, and family education events. Please check your child's backpack daily for further information.

## **III. SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Equipment and Dress**

To enable your children to participate fully in all activities, please send them to school in comfortable and washable clothing appropriate for play with paint, markers, glue, and sand. Remember that paint may not always wash out completely. Even though we use smocks, spills do happen. If children must worry about keeping their clothing clean, it will interfere with their full participation in the educational and creative activities of the school day.

We ask that you dress your child in clothes that are free of complicated fastening, such as hooks, buckles, belts, and zippers. During the period of time in your child's life when he or she is learning to be independent in toileting, it's especially important to avoid overalls. Pants should be easy to pull up and down

Shoes that fasten (buckle, Velcro, or tie) and are rubber soled is preferred for school. Shoes should feel fit and be appropriate for running and climbing. Please avoid sending your child in sandals, thongs, or jellies or "crocks." Socks should be worn at all times.

Each child should have a complete change of clothing in school including shirt, socks, pants, underwear, and a sweatshirt with the name marked. Make sure this outfit will be good in any weather. Please put this in a labeled shoe box.

All other garments such as mittens, sweaters, and boots should be marked with the child's name. You can't imagine how many children come in with the same jacket in the same size and color. If you use boots in the snow, please send a pair of shoes or sneakers to wear inside school. It is much more comfortable for the child and is safer in active play like climbing.

We will go outside even in cold weather. Please dress your child for the day's weather as if he or she were going outside to play.

### **Toys and Other Special Things**

Children love to bring items from home to school. Sometimes bringing a special toy from home eases a child's separation anxiety. Throughout the year we encourage the children to bring objects to school that they have found on family trips or walks in the neighborhood. Sharing these objects with the class initiates discussions and develops observation skills. Please help us by supporting our thoughts on guns, war toys, superheroes or other toys of destruction. These items may not be brought to school. We thank you for your cooperation.

Please be sure that your child's treasures are labeled with his or her name so that they will not get lost. Please do not send in expensive toys, gum or candy, good jewelry **OR ANYTHING YOU DO NOT WANT LOST OR BROKEN.**

## IV. MEDICAL MATTERS

### Important Health Information

When a child develops symptoms of illness while in our care, parents will be notified immediately and are responsible for picking up their child. The child will be provided with a place to rest quietly on his or her own mat in view of and under the supervision of staff until the child is picked up. Parents will be called first. If they are not available, we will contact the adults on the emergency contact form. Please fill out your emergency forms carefully and update us with any changes. There is nothing more frustrating than having a child who is not feeling well and parents or contacts that cannot be reached.

We care for well children only. We ask that you do not compromise the health and safety of others. Please keep your child home if you observe (or if your child complains about) one or more of these symptoms:

Fever (of 100 degrees or more)	Abdominal pain	Upset stomach
Vomiting	Diarrhea	Sore throat
Earache	Heavy nasal discharge	Reddened eyes
Crusty eye discharge	Uncontrollable coughing	Wheezing
Irritability, persistent coughing	Un-diagnosed rash (except diaper rash)	

### Notification of Contagious Illness

If your child develops a contagious illness (strep, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc.), please notify Cheryl at the school office. This way we can alert the other parents of your child's group to watch for the symptoms. Children returning to school from a lengthy contagious illness must be well enough to participate in all outdoor involved activities. A doctor's note must be submitted to us upon the child's return to school.

### Emergency Medical Attention

If emergency medical attention is required, the school will notify the parent and family physician. If you are unavailable the school will initiate emergency care. Please fill out your emergency numbers carefully. Please include parent's work numbers, cellular phones, beeper numbers, as well as an adult friend or family member who is able to come quickly if necessary.

### Medicine

It is the school policy **NOT TO DISPENSE ANY MEDICATION.** Please do not send your child to school with prescription or over the counter drugs. The only exception is the emergency medicine required by an allergic child. The NYS regulations pertaining to the administration of medication require a MAT certified staff member to administer any medications. We have many MAT certified trained staff members. If your child requires this type of emergency allergy medication: antihistamines, inhalator, or epi-pen, please speak

to Cheryl to obtain the three forms (Physician's orders, prescription, and parental consent) that are required to remain on file in school. Please make arrangements to give your child any other medications at home.

### **Hand washing**

At the HERJC Nursery School, we have a strict hand washing policy. We have found that adherence to this policy has greatly reduced the spread of infection in our school. All children, upon entering the building, must wash their hands before entering the classroom. We will continue to wash the children's hands throughout the day. Your adherence to this policy is greatly appreciated. We would also appreciate it if you would kindly toilet your child before entering the classroom.

### **Lice**

In order to keep our facility lice free, we have adopted a NIT free policy. Any child with nits or live lice will be sent home. Please help us by notifying us if your child contracts lice. We need to work together to keep our children NIT FREE.

### **Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse**

According to the laws of the State of New York, all of our teachers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. This means if there is a suspicion that children is being abused, the teacher will notify Cheryl Karp, the director, and follow the school's protocols for the mandated reporting of child abuse.

### **Medical and Authorization Forms**

It is required that each child entering our school have a complete medical examination, dental examination, and medical authorization form. These forms with immunization record and medical recommendations will be filed in the school office. Please have your physician fill out those forms before parent orientation. You will receive your child's medical form prior to the beginning of school. New York State will not allow children to be admitted without a medical form. A complete confidential intake form is a helpful tool for the teacher. It enables you to answer questions and provide important information, and any special needs or conditions you need to share with the teacher about your child.

Any child who is not immunized because of the parent's genuine and sincere religious beliefs may be admitted if the parent signs a consent form to this effect.

## **V. SECURITY**

### **Security**

Our doors are locked at all times. Parents can gain access into the building by purchasing an access control device in the front office. All monies for the access control device will be refunded when the device is returned at the end of the school year. We ask you to be cognizant of those around you when entering the building. Do not hold the door open if you

do not know the person behind you. When in doubt, do not use your access control device, but use the phone to call the nursery school office. We need your utmost cooperation to keep our children safe. Please be aware that our building is monitored 24 hours by a video camera.

### **Procedures for School Closings**

The school procedure in the event of a snow storm is as follows. If it is necessary to close school before the beginning of the day, your child's teacher will call you. Please leave the phone free so we can contact you. Please listen to the school closings on WBLI radio or on the web at [www.newschannel12.com](http://www.newschannel12.com). If the Lynbrook School District is closed, then we are closed as well. If you have not yet been contacted and think school is closed please call your class mother or the school phone at 599-1169. There will be a message about the school closing.

In the event of a severe snow that occurs during the school day, the following is our procedure. If we must close early we will call all parents to come and pick up the children. If you are NOT home, or are unreachable and the weather becomes very bad, PLEASE CALL US at 599-1169 or 599-2634.

Hopefully we will not need these plans, and we will be able to keep to our regular schedule. With everyone's cooperation we will make it through the school year safely together.

### **Fire Drills**

A surprise fire drill will be held every month in accordance with state requirements. It is most important that even the youngest child understand the emergency procedures. These drills will use both primary and secondary exits.

## **VI. PARENT – SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

### **Parent – School Communication**

There are many times when we have important school information, teacher requests, or special events notification to send home. Please check your child's bag daily for notes.

### **Daily Notes Home**

When asked the question "What did you do in school today?" many children will answer "Nothing." In order to keep you posted on what is really going on in school we constantly send notes about what is going on in school.

### **Precious Moments**

The school newsletter is published monthly. It includes happenings in your child's class, a note from the director, specialty program reports, a school calendar update and school information.

## **Parent – Teacher Conferences**

Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held once a year in January by appointment. January conferences will be held during the school day, and no classes will be in session that day. If the school has a situation, or problem concerning your child, we will contact you immediately. If at any time during the year you have any questions or problems, please call the school. Cheryl will be happy to speak with you. If you need to speak to your child's teacher, she will return your call after class hours. Our first responsibility is to the children. Please understand that teachers cannot take calls during class time, unless it is urgent.

## **Web Information.**

Please feel free to visit our Synagogue website at [www.herjc.org](http://www.herjc.org). Do not forget to add your name to our contact list so you can be informed of Synagogue events.

## **PTA**

Our school is very lucky to have a wonderfully involved and active PTA. Please join the PTA by paying your dues at parent orientation. Volunteers are warmly welcomed. The PTA serves two equally important functions: It allows you to connect with other HERJC parents and it provides special "extras" for our school. Some of the past accomplishments of PTA include: sponsorship of hearing and speech screenings and the Playing it Safe program, entertainment in the form of concerts, magicians, puppet shows, carnivals, and visiting animal shows, after-school family programming, teacher recognition luncheons, PTA brunches, parent and child events, Chanukah and year-end gifts to all our students, new equipment in the playground and indoor gym, a laminating machine, and a digital camera and printer. We thank the PTA for all their hard work and generosity on behalf of our preschool.

## **Registration and Financial Information**

Tuition is annual and due in the following manner: A non-refundable, nontransferable deposit upon registration. The balance of the tuition is paid in two installments: September 1, and January 1. School must be paid in full by January 1<sup>st</sup> in order for you to register your child for the next school year. The final tuition payment must be made before January 2009 in order to insure the continuity of your child's school year. Please feel free to contact Eva, our bookkeeper (599-2634) or Cheryl Karp with any questions or concerns regarding your child or any school policies. The HERJC Early Childhood office can be reached at (516) 599-1169.