

Parent Information Handbook



Michael R. Lutz Family Center

Jewish Council for Youth Services
957 W. Grace Street
Chicago, Illinois 60613
773-281-2533 www.JCYS.org

Philosophy

The philosophy of this center is developmental. Our programming consists of developmentally appropriate activities for your children. Our highest priorities are self-esteem, socialization, problem solving skills, multi-cultural awareness, and of course Judaica. Emphasis is placed more on process than product (activity rather than project). Reading, music, art, dramatic play and creative explorations make up a large part of the curriculum.

Curriculum

Our curriculum, based on the concept that children learn best through play, allows for free play periods during which the children choose from many available options how best to spend their time, as well as more structured group times for stories and singing, playground time, snack, arts and crafts, cooking, science activities, and group games.

Because we want to help your children develop the skills necessary for later school achievement, our curriculum encourages independent thinking, developing close and meaningful relationships, learning from mistakes, and decision-making.

All rooms participate in the Jewish holiday curriculum. Jewish holidays and customs are explored from a cultural point of view; through music, cooking activities, stories, and crafts, children begin to appreciate Jewish culture and identity. The Jewish Sabbath is celebrated every Friday morning with songs, snacks, and special customs. We are very proud of the Jewish component of our program and the excellent response it has received from our Jewish and non-Jewish families.

Fundraising

The JCYS Michael R. Lutz Family Center needs your participation and support of scheduled fundraisers throughout the year. We work very hard to offer a quality program for the children and their families, but, of course this requires a great deal of money. We use the money we raise to assist families with scholarships and also to purchase new supplies and equipment. Our Parent Committee is largely responsible for our fundraisers and will welcome your help.

Some of the fundraisers that we hold each year include wrapping paper sales, Family Fun Day, Adbook and we always welcome monetary gifts as well as in-kind donations of materials and equipment for the center.

Parent Involvement

We invite your interest and need your involvement in both the JCYS Agency and the Michael R. Lutz Family Center. Parents and family members are welcome to chaperone on field trips, visit for birthday celebrations, and help out with family programs and fundraising.

Parents may also become involved by joining our Agency's Board of Directors or the Center's Parent Committee. You may ask the Director for additional information on volunteering for either of these groups.

Security

Your child's safety is our priority. We will not release a child to anyone that is not listed on the authorization for pick-up form. Please keep this form up to date. If you authorize someone who is not on the list to pick up your child you should send us a signed note with the name of the person picking up, and any details we might need to know. We will ask individuals for a picture ID (i.e. State ID or Drivers License) to confirm their identity.

It is a DCFS licensing regulation that every child must be signed in and out when they are dropped off or picked up from the center. The sign out sheets are posted on the Parent Information Bulletin Board. You should sign your name and list the time of day on this sheet next to your child's name on the sheet.

If an emergency ever causes the JCYS Michael R. Lutz Family Center to evacuate our premises, our designated emergency site is Gill Park located at 825 W. Sheridan. (Broadway & Sheridan)

Attendance

Regular attendance is encouraged because it will help children to develop a sense of belonging and ease their adjustment into the classroom routine. In case of illness or extended absence, please notify us by calling the office at 773-281-2533 by 9:00 a.m.

Arrival

Children may arrive anytime after 7:30 a.m. Cold cereal is served to children who want breakfast up until 8:15 a.m. Children should enter through the main entrance at the corner of Sheffield and Grace up until 8:30 a.m. After 8:30 children should go directly to the outside entrance of their classroom. Children should arrive by 9:00 a.m. It is difficult not only for your child, but also for those already involved in program if children arrive later in the morning.

Pick-Up Times

Children enrolled for our half-day program should be picked up promptly by 12:30 p.m. and full day children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.

Late Policy

There is a fee charged if you pick your child up after the designated time. The first quarter hour or any portion thereof is a \$10 fee. Each additional quarter hour or portion thereof is \$10. So for example if you are 20 minutes late the fee will be \$20. Payment is required at the time of pick-up and may be paid in the office. Please call in advance if you know that you are running late.

Parking

When you are dropping off and picking up your child please use the loading zone in front of the Center if possible and pull all the way up so that others can use the loading zone as well. If the loading zone is full, attempt to park legally. If you cannot find a space, remember to turn on your hazard lights and quickly come in and pick up your child. We are not responsible for tickets and cannot get tickets "fixed".

Program Changes

There will be a \$25 service fee for any changes of program in your child's schedule (i.e. changing the days or times your child attends).

Termination

The first two weeks of your child's enrollment is considered a probation period. If, during these two weeks, we feel unable to meet his/her needs, your child's enrollment may be terminated without notice. If at any subsequent time we feel that a child's safety and well-being cannot reasonably be assured or if his/her behavior compromises the safety or well-being of other children, staff will meet with the parent/guardian and attempt to correct the problem, often suggesting that the family seek outside professional assistance. If a solution cannot be found, the child's enrollment will be terminated at the director's request.

Payments

We accept payments in the form of personal checks, money orders, or personal checks. There is a \$25 service fee on all returned checks. Services may be terminated for participants who carry an unpaid balance of tuition or camp fees.

Refunds and Cancellations

Deposits and registration fees are refunded only if your child is not accepted into the program. In the event of cancellation, 30 days advance notice must be given in writing to the office stating the last day of attendance. Payment must be made for the month of the child's withdrawal regardless of the number of days the child attends during that month.

Deposits, registration fees, and payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

A child cannot "switch days" due to illness and refunds will not be made due to vacations, illness or Center closings due to circumstances beyond our control.

Birth Certificates

JCYS and the Department of Children and Family Services would like to make you aware of The Missing Children Records Act which mandates that every student have a certified birth Certificate or equivalent documentation on file before the child is enrolled.

Vision and Hearing Screening

Our DCFS Licensing Standards now requires that every child age 3 and above have an annual vision and hearing screening. The results will be included in the students file.

Telephone messages

On occasion, there is no one in the office to answer the phone. Please leave any message on the answering machine and we will respond to your call promptly.

Conferences

The teachers look forward to sharing information with you and answering questions about your child's progress. Optional parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled two times during the school year. Such conferences will be set up at the request of the parent, teachers, or director. Additional conferences will be scheduled as needed. Informal phone conferences may be arranged whenever you feel the need simply by calling the office and leaving a message for your child's teacher. She will return the call at her earliest convenience. Parents may arrange a private conference with the director at any time by calling the office to set up an appointment.

Emergency Closing (Snow Days)

During the winter months, it may become necessary to close the center due to weather conditions. You will be notified by telephone and or email if we intend to close the Center. Please make sure that your correct email and phone numbers are on file.

Clothing

Children should come to school in clothes which are appropriate for active and frequently messy play. Also, as there will be outdoor play every day (except on days that it is pouring rain, or the temperature is sub-zero) it is important that children are dressed to play outdoors in the weather. Children should wear raincoats, mittens, boots, hats, scarves or whatever the weather dictates. They should be prepared to play outdoors every day.

EVERYY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A COMPLETE CHANGE OF CLOTHING AT THE CENTER, INCLUDING OUTER CLOTHES, SOCKS, SHOES & UNDERWEAR. These extra clothes should be brought on the first day of school in a plastic bag, which can be hung on a hook and marked clearly with first and last names. Make sure to replace any clothes that are sent home promptly.

Diapers/Toilet Training

If your child is not yet toilet-trained, please bring an entire package of diapers on the first day of school. You will be notified by your teacher when the supply runs low so that you can bring a new package of diapers. As your child begins toilet training, we will work in coordination with you to make the transition as easy as possible. We encourage you NOT to push your child to become toilet trained. It is our philosophy that when children are ready, they will train quite easily if there is not a lot of tension, pressure, and undue significance attached to the process. Each child is an individual and will be ready in his/her own time.

Sunblock

Please supply us with a bottle of sunblock and label it with your child's name. We will apply it as needed when we are on the playground.

Food

IMPORTANT! We are a peanut/tree nut free school. We also serve Kosher style meals and snacks.

Food allergies can be life threatening. Therefore, for the safety of our children we have made the Michael R. Lutz Family Center a “peanut-free” school. No food containing nuts may be brought into the school at any time. This includes, peanut butter sandwiches, muffins, trail bars, breakfast cereal or products containing peanut oils. If you have questions about a snack or treat you would like to bring for the children please call the office in advance and we will do our best to answer your questions.

Children arriving before 8:15 a.m. may have breakfast at the center. Breakfast consists of cold cereal and milk.

A morning snack is served to all rooms. This snack typically consists of fresh fruit and milk or a cooking project the children have completed in the classroom.

A nutritious hot lunch is catered in daily and served at noon. This lunch is “Kosher style”. It is our policy not to serve milk and meat products together and we do not serve pork products. You will receive a menu from the catering company every three months.

We ask that you do not bring food and snacks from home to the center unless it is for a special occasion such as a birthday. We encourage you to select birthday treats from a list we will provide of healthy treats. We will of course make exceptions if your child has food allergies or special health issues.

Birthdays

We encourage you to bring a treat and/or spend some time visiting in the room in honor of your child's birthday. Please notify your child's teacher in advance so that they can plan the day, and make the most of your visit. If you would like to bring a special treat in honor of your child's birthday consider healthy alternatives to cupcakes such as fresh fruit, a fruit smoothie, gogurts, veggies with dip etc.

Please be aware that it is a DCFS licensing regulation that all treats must be store bought and in the original sealed package. We cannot serve anything that is homemade.

Baby-sitting

It is our policy that JCYS staff is not allowed to work for or baby-sit for families currently enrolled in JCYS programs because it causes a conflict of interest.

Rest Period

As required by licensing regulations, all children will have a supervised rest period. This rest period takes place between approximately 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The older children are not expected to rest for as long as the younger ones

Toys From Home

Children enjoy bringing toys from home and often derive a sense of security in doing so. Please limit your child to one toy per day and be sure that your child's toy is labeled. We ask that you do not bring war toys and weapons and avoid toys with many small parts.

Discipline

One of our goals is to help your child learn to deal with anger and frustration in appropriate ways. Although every situation will be treated individually, some of the ways we might assist children to behave appropriately are: redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems, conflict resolution, encouragement of appropriate behavior, setting of consistent and clear rules, and offering opportunities for the child to make restitution (clean up a spill, work things out with a friend, etc.) Occasionally, a child may need to be separated from the group or a short period of time. Learning appropriate ways to disagree is a healthy and important part of the maturation process. At no time will we use physical punishment or negative methods that might frighten or humiliate a child.

Newsletters and Communication

You will receive monthly e-newsletters from the Michael R. Lutz Family Center, which will include information and details regarding upcoming events, school news, articles about parenting, and educational materials on Jewish Holidays and traditions. You will also receive periodic flyers and memos and statements via email. **Please be sure to thoroughly read all written communication sent to you via emails. Check your family file in your child's classroom every day for teachers notes and artwork.**

Recycling

As part of an ongoing effort to help the children develop an awareness of and sensitivity to the world around them, we are recycling here at the center. We recycle all of our own plastic milk containers, paper and juice cans as well as other recyclable materials. We have discussions with the children about recycling and waste. We readily accept donations of computer paper, drawing paper or other items you may have that we can use in our art centers.

Pesticide Policy

We would like to make you aware that we use a licensed Pest Control company as required by our licensing standards through the Department of Children and Family Services. Pesticides are only used if absolutely necessary and are applied when no children are present.

Field Trips

Several field trips will be planned throughout the year for the older children. Parents will receive notice of these field trips in advance. We will contact you if we are in need of additional chaperones for these trips.

Because of the safety and liability issues involved, the youngest children will not participate in field trips. We reserve the right to determine which trips are age-appropriate for which rooms. Occasionally, the youngest children will take nature and exploration walks around the block to take advantage of beautiful weather, but they will not board buses or venture far from our premises.

Bus Rules

When we use buses for our field trips, we make sure that the bus has seatbelts and that the children are safely buckled in with no more than two children per seat. No food or beverages are consumed on the bus and the buses are radio equipped for safety.

Cell Phones

We try to make our school all about the children. Please remember that when you enter the school you should be ready to greet your child and not be on your cell phone. Finish your call in the car or outside the building before you enter.

Social Media & Website

In an effort to communicate with current and prospective parents we use a facebook page and our website to post information about events at the school along with other important information. Please like our facebook page and check out our website. There will be links to these sites on emails that are sent from our office.

Specific Disease Exclusion Guidelines

Chicken pox 7-10	Child may return after all the blisters have dried into scabs; about days after rash onset.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Bacterial - Child may return 24 hours after treatment begins.
Hand, Foot & Mouth enough be present).	Child may return after fever has been gone for 24 hours and is well to participate in normal daily activities (sores may be present).
Hepatitis B behavior, or	No exclusion is necessary unless infected child exhibits biting has open sores that cannot be covered.
Impetigo bandages, for at least 24 hours.	Child can return after all sores are healed or can be covered with or after the child has been treated with antibiotics
Head Lice nits are	Child may return after treatment is completed and no live lice or seen.
Measles	Child may return 5 days after the rash appears.
Oral Herpes (cold sores)	No exclusion necessary.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Child may return 5-7 days after antibiotic treatment has begun.
Pinworms	Child may return after treatment has begun.
Ringworm	Scalp; Child may return 24 hours after treatment begins. Body; Child may return after treatment begins.
Rubella (German Measles)	Child may return 5 days after rash returns.
Scabies	Child may return 24 hours after treatment begins.
Strep Throat (Scarlet Fever)	Child may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment.
Yeast Infection number of infants	No exclusion necessary, unless there are an unusual (Thrush) infected.

General Guidelines

The health department lists the following guidelines for exclusion from day care.

- Fever** **Child may return after being fever free for 24 hours.** Child should remain home if axillary (under arm) or oral temperature is 100 degrees F.; Rectal temperature 101 degrees F. or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash. **A child should not return to school if Tylenol or other fever reduction medicine is necessary to keep them fever free.**
- Respiratory** Child should stay at home if they experience difficult or rapid breathing or sever coughing. If child has a high pitched croupy or whooping sound after he coughs or if the child is unable to lie down comfortably due to continuous cough.
- Diarrhea** Child should remain at home if they have two or more episodes of diarrhea within 24 hours or if they have an increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.
- Vomiting** Child should remain at home if they have had two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- Eye/Nose** A child should remain at home if thick, green or yellow mucus or pus is draining from the eyes or nose.
- Sore Throat** A child should remain at home if they have a sore throat, especially if a fever is present or if their neck glands are swollen.
- Skin Rash** A child should stay home if they have an undiagnosed rash or if the rash is contagious.
- Itching** Child should stay home if the child has persistent itching or scratching of the body or scalp.
- Unusual Color** A child should stay home if eyes or skin are yellow (jaundice) or if their stool is gray or white or if their urine is dark or tea colored. These symptoms may be signs of hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician.

Plan for the Administration of Prescribed Medication

JCYS – Michael R. Lutz Family Center will administer prescribed medication only according to the following guidelines:

1. Medication for acute and non-infectious and/or contagious illness, must be documented by a letter from the prescribing physician. This letter must include the name and dosage of the medication, the condition for which it is being prescribed, and possible side effects. This letter must be signed and dated by the physician and the parent.
2. The medication must be in the original container and the quantity on hand cannot exceed the total prescribed dosage.
3. Medication given for a period of two weeks or more is considered chronic medication. Parents/Guardians of children on chronic medication are required to secure a letter from the prescribing physician and permission from the Chicago Department of Health before the procedure can be considered as ongoing. This letter from the physician shall include a statement identifying the effects to be watched for.
4. Preparations such as, but not limited to, vitamins, iron, and non-prescriptive acetaminophen (Tylenol) cannot be administered by the center without a letter from the prescribing physician.
5. Medications will be stored in the adult bathroom medicine cabinet or the refrigerator if necessary.
6. The child's classroom teacher(s) will be responsible for administering medication and will keep a written record of the schedule of administration.

A child who remains ill or is suspected of having an illness may be isolated from the group until removed from the center.

1. A parent or guardian or emergency contact named will be notified immediately of illness, accident injury, or unusual change in the child's condition.
2. A physician's certificate will be required for re-admission after absence due to an illness of five or more days (such as chicken pox) or who are returned after 24 hours with medication for contagious disease.
3. Children with acute illness cannot return to the center until they are without fever for 24 hours.

Policy and Procedures for the Care of Children Involved in a Serious Emergency

When a child is injured or becomes ill while at the JCYS Michael R. Lutz Family Center, our first consideration is to insure the health and safety of the child. The following is an explanation of the procedures we generally adhere to in the event of a medical emergency. However, depending on the specific situation, staff may depart from these procedures if it is determined by staff to be in the best interest of the child.

1. When a child becomes seriously ill or injured, the paramedics will be called immediately so that medical attention and assessment can be obtained.
2. The parents will also be contacted immediately. If neither parent is available, the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration will be contacted, including the physician named on the registration form.
3. If the parent or emergency contact is reached, they will be apprised of the situation, including the paramedic's recommendation for treatment.

If the situation is not considered to be life endangering by the paramedics, the parent or emergency contact will be given the following choices:

1. The child will be moved to the nearest approved hospital by the paramedics (accompanied by the teacher or director of the Center). The nearest hospitals to the center are Illinois Masonic, Louis Weiss and Thorek Hospital. The parent or emergency contact will meet the ambulance at the hospital emergency room; or
2. A private ambulance will be called, at the parent's expense, and the child will be taken to the hospital of the parent's choice (accompanied by a teacher or the center director). The parent or emergency contact will meet the ambulance at the emergency room; or
3. If the parent or emergency contact can reach the Center within approximately 10 minutes and the paramedics agree to stay on the premises until the parent or emergency contact arrives the child will be released to the parent or emergency contact and the child's care will then be the responsibility of that person; or
4. If the parent or emergency contact cannot or does not arrive within 10 minutes or the time allotted by the paramedics, the paramedics will take the child to the nearest approved hospital (accompanied by a teacher or the center director). When the parent or emergency contact arrives at the center, they will be informed as to where the child has been taken.

If, in the sole opinion of the paramedics the situation is considered to be life endangering, the paramedics will secure treatment for the child as they deem necessary. (In a severe emergency, paramedics are usually instructed by their supervisor to take a child to Children's Memorial Hospital, but the decision is not usually left to the parent.) The parent or emergency contact will be informed as to where the child will go and meet the ambulance at the hospital emergency room.

1. If a parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, the paramedics will secure treatment for the child at the nearest hospital. Efforts to reach a parent or emergency contact will continue until contact is made.

The Jewish Holidays

An introduction to Jewish culture, holidays and traditions is explored as an on-going part of the educational program at JCYS Lakeview Family Center.

Shabbat - Although Shabbat (or the Sabbath) lasts approximately from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, we celebrate the Sabbath at the Center every Friday morning. All rooms get together for a Shabbat program. They light candles, recite traditional blessings and sing songs. On Shabbat the children enjoy Challah bread and grape juice for their morning snack.

Rosh Hashanah - The Jewish year begins with Rosh Hashanah which usually falls in September on the first day of Tishri in the Jewish calendar. 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. At this time, we discuss the nice things we can do for others during the New Year.

Sukkot - The "Feast of Tabernacles" recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt the Promised Land when they lived in tents and booths, or Sukkot. The harvest season is symbolized by the Lulav (palm branch) and Etrog (citrus). During this week at the center, we decorate our Sukkah with fruit and greenery, and enjoy our snacks outdoors. Parent volunteers are needed in putting up our own Sukkah on the playground.

Simchat Torah - On Simchat Torah, the reading of the Torah is completed, then immediately begins again with Genesis. This symbolizes the fact that the study of the Torah has no beginning and no end. The children parade their holiday flags and symbols.

Chanukah - "The Festival of Lights" celebrates the Maccabean victory, when brave Judah Maccabee and a small band of followers saved the Jewish nation from the Syrians. For eight days each year, the Chanukah Menorah, or eight-branched candelabra, is lighted to recall their re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people.

Tu B' Shevat - (Israeli Arbor Day) On Tu B'Shevat we celebrate the New Year of the trees and our own belief in the future of the world. As Jews, we have a kinship with trees, especially with fruit trees. Trees are a symbol of life, a symbol of the Jewish people. We eat dried fruits and plant trees in honor of the holiday.

Purim - Purim is the happiest of all the holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the Prime Minister, Haman, to destroy them. We eat Hamantashen, a pastry in the shape of a three cornered hat, which the children enjoy making at the center. The children are also encouraged to wear costumes to our Purim Carnival in celebration of this happy holiday. We also collect food to give to the poor in honor of this holiday.

Passover - (Pesach) Passover 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 are read at a seder, and special foods are served. One of the best known foods is the Matzah or unleavened bread. Our lunch and snack menus are adjusted during Passover in observance of this holiday.

Shavout - Shavout, a thanksgiving and harvest feast, also commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. It is a custom to decorate the house with plants and flowers -- greens recall the green mountain of Sinai where Moses received the Commandments. We enjoy sweets with our friends.

Although we do not celebrate Christmas or Easter, we will celebrate Thanksgiving, Halloween, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Valentine's Day, and Earth Day.

Family Events

There will be several family events over the course of the school year. We encourage all of our families to join in the fun. The children enjoy having you at school and you'll enjoy the opportunity to meet the other parents and take part in the festivities. These events, such as our Chanukah Party, Passover Seder, Shabbat Dinners and end of year celebrations will be publicized through the center bulletins before the date of each event.

Verification of receipt of parent handbook

Parent/Guardian name _____

Parent/Guardian name _____

Child(ren)'s Name _____

I/we certify that we have received a copy of the JCYS Michael R. Lutz Family Center Parent Handbook.

Signature of parent/guardian _____ date _____

Signature of parent/guardian _____ date _____

Please return this signed form to the office. This will be placed in your child's student file.