

Shames JCC Early Childhood Center  
**COVID-19 Policies and Procedures**  
**As of July 24, 2020**

*This is a “living” document. Policies and procedures may be updated or changed in reaction to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our community.*

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## **Acronym Key:**

CDC: Centers for Disease Control

NYSDOH: New York State Department of Health

DOH: Westchester County Department of Health

OCFS: New York State Department of Children and Family Services

## **COVID-19 PREVENTION**

In accordance with the guidelines from the CDC, NYSDOH, DOH, and OCFS, several measures will be implemented to limit exposure to COVID-19.

### **Daily Health Screening**

All parents must complete and sign a Health Screening Attestation Form (one time, prior to the beginning of the school year). Required by the JCC's licensing agency OCFS, this form allows parents to conduct their own daily health screening of their child. This form will be provided in our back-to-school packet which will be sent home prior to the first day of school.

Once this form is submitted, all parents must complete a health screening for their child(ren) EACH school day. The health screening asks four basic COVID-19 screening questions: does your child have fever, have they been exposed to COVID-19, do they have current symptoms, and have they tested positive COVID-19? If the answer to any of the health check questions is "yes," they MUST keep their child home from school. If the responses to all questions are "no," their child(ren) may attend school that day. The health screening will be provided electronically so parents can easily fill it out each day using a smartphone or computer.

Upon arrival at school each day, teachers will conduct a no-touch temperature scan of each child.

As required by OCFS, teachers will also be required to conduct their own daily health screening and scan their own temperature when taking attendance.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (Masks, gloves, clothing)**

The latest guidelines from the CDC and NYSDOH require that masks be worn by teachers and staff at all times. The guidelines state that the use of masks by teachers is required in public indoor spaces including hallways and when in classrooms with children.

Children who are 3 and 4 years old may wear a mask, but are not required to do so. However, a mask must be sent to school with your child.

Teachers will be required to wear oversized shirts over their clothing. These shirts will be laundered daily.

Teachers will be asked to wear gloves when in contact with any shared items or frequently touched areas. Gloves will also be worn when changing children and assisting children during snack and lunch times.

All teachers and staff will be trained prior to the start of school to safely put on, take off, clean, and discard Personal Protective Equipment.

## **Personal Items**

As per CDC guidelines, children must leave a pair of shoes at school. Each day, upon arrival, children will be asked to change their shoes and wear “school shoes” while on site. Children will switch shoes once again at the end of the day prior to dismissal.

Backpacks and water bottles will not be permitted at school. Children may use a disposable paper bag to carry needed items to school. Water and environmentally-friendly disposable cups will be made available to children for drinking throughout the day.

Lunch boxes will be allowed in school to carry lunch and snack and they can be stored in our refrigerator. Staff will wipe down each lunchbox both before and after meals.

We will speak to families directly who have questions and concerns about how we will handle epi-pens or other required items.

## **Handwashing**

Handwashing with soap and warm water will become an integral part of each classroom’s daily routines. It will be our goal to make it as fun as possible, and teachers will sing handwashing songs throughout the school day.

Teachers and children will be required to wash their hands upon arrival in the classroom, between all program activities, after returning from outside play, before and after eating, and other times throughout the day as is sensible.

Although handwashing is the preferable mode of hand hygiene, hand sanitizer will be available throughout our early childhood building and campus. Every effort will be made to ensure that CDC requirements (60% alcohol, no methanol) and the Environmental Protection Agency's guidelines for healthy sanitizers for children are met. Hand sanitizer will be kept out of reach from children when not in use, and application will always be supervised by teachers.

### **Physical Distancing**

The Shames JCC's Legacy Building will be exclusively dedicated to early childhood programming with extremely limited access for anyone other than the staff and children enrolled. Creation of this self-contained early childhood "bubble" on the Shames JCC's main campus will enable us to prioritize and promote the health and safety of children and staff in the program.

In adherence of CDC and NYSDOH guidelines, social distancing measures will be implemented, though it will be done in ways that are developmentally appropriate and possible for preschool age children.

Teachers will implement distancing practices in classrooms and hallways, especially while taking children to the bathroom, hand washing, and lining up children to go outside and for dismissal.

Age appropriate signage and pictures will be used to help reinforce distancing practices in the classrooms and hallways.

Classrooms will be reconfigured to allow for more space between children and teachers as they interact and engage.

For children who will be staying for extended day, their rest mats will be placed farther apart than usual to promote safe distancing while resting.

Lunch and snack will be served in individual classrooms (the same classroom in which the children attend class) or at our outdoor picnic tables. Teachers will sit with children at the tables to enable good conversation, model mealtime skills, and replicate a family meal at home. Teachers will closely supervise children to ensure they are not sharing food or touching each other's food during mealtime.

## **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

Cleaning and disinfecting will be intensified in our program. A daily Cleaning and Disinfecting Log will be completed by our maintenance team in accordance with all CDC and NYSDOH requirements. Areas required to be routinely cleaned during the day are classrooms, common areas, bathrooms, kitchens, and all outdoor play areas. A checklist of items within each area of the program is included on this Cleaning and Disinfecting Log and must be marked off as they are disinfected. These include the cleaning of floors, sinks and faucets, counter tops, tables and chairs, classroom furniture, door handles, light switches, toys, outdoor play equipment, and trash cans.

We will utilize cleaning solutions identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19 and safe to be used around children.

Cleaning and disinfecting will occur in classrooms throughout the day while children are outside for learning and playground time, as well as during rest times. Other areas, such as outdoor play areas, will be cleaned while children are in classrooms. Rigorous cleaning of all areas will occur at the end of each school day.

Mixed use spaces will continue to be used, but will be thoroughly disinfected and allowed to dry between each class's use. Our facilities staff will be on hand and notified of classroom schedules so that they may thoroughly disinfect all surfaces and materials with time allowed for surfaces to dry between use.

Class schedules in mixed use spaces will be staggered to allow for thorough cleaning.

Cleaning supplies will be available for teachers for cleaning shared and frequently used surfaces in the classrooms.

Both the CDC and NYSDOH guidelines state that toys and materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used in preschool settings.

- Any toys that children place in their mouths will be put aside until they can be properly cleaned. Teachers will be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child's mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils.
- Toys in the classrooms will be rotated frequently, so the toys can be cleaned throughout the day.
- Machine washable cloth toys may be used by only 1 individual child at a time.

- Sensory materials, dress up clothes, and other classroom materials that are difficult to disinfect will be put away or individualized for each child in the class. For example, each child will have their own labeled baggie of playdough, sand, and art materials to use throughout their time at school.
- Children's books, like other paper-based materials are not considered a high risk for transmission of the virus and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting.
- For classes with rest time, children's bedding will be kept separated and in individually labeled bags and placed in the child's cubbie. Rest mats will be labeled for each child and cleaned daily. Bedding will be sent home to be laundered weekly.

## **General Shames JCC Policies**

In addition to Early Childhood COVID-19 Policies and Procedures, and to ensure the health and safety of all participants, every person that enters our campus must strictly adhere to JCC COVID-19 Policies and Procedures. To review the Shames JCC COVID-19 Policies and Procedures, [click here](#).

## **COVID-19 EXPOSURE & DIAGNOSIS**

### **Sick Policies**

If there is a contagious illness that is diagnosed by a doctor in a particular classroom, such as strep throat or conjunctivitis, families will be notified by email.

If a child presents with fever and/or exhibits symptoms associated with COVID-19, as listed on the daily health screening questionnaire, they must stay home and not return to school for 72 hours after symptoms resolve without medical intervention.

If a child presents with fever and/or exhibits symptoms associated with COVID-19 after arriving at school, a caregiver will be contacted to pick the child up. If a child goes home due to illness, the family would need to follow the "72 hour without medical intervention" policy cited above.

Children who present with fever and/or exhibit symptoms associated with COVID-19, must provide a doctor's note before returning to school. Subject to and consistent with applicable law, The Early Childhood Leadership Team reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to at any



time exclude children and/or staff from the program based on legitimate concern about risk to communal health and welfare.

Staff members must follow the same sick policies.

The following policies are based on CDC, NYSDOH, and OCFS Mandatory Screening Guidelines.

- In the event that a parent of a child must be isolated because they have tested positive for, or exhibited symptoms of, COVID-19, the parent cannot drop-off or pick-up their child.
- If a parent-- who is a member of the same household as the child-- is exhibiting signs of COVID-19 or has been tested and is positive for the virus, an emergency contact authorized by the parent must come pick up the child. As a “close contact,” the child must not return to school for a quarantine period of 14 days.
- If a parent-- who is a member of the same household as the child-- is being quarantined as a precautionary measure without symptoms or a positive test, the child as “contact of a contact” may return to school.
- If a child becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 and/or tests positive, the child must quarantine and may not return to, or attend, school until after a quarantine period of 14 days is complete.

If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in the school--staff or participant--CDC, NYSDOH, and OCFS regulations require that we IMMEDIATELY notify the state and local health department and seek their guidance.

Anyone who has come into direct contact with someone who tests positive will be called and should contact their healthcare provider and the Westchester County Department of Health and follow their directions. The school will notify families that a positive case has been identified in the school via email, and parents from the affected class will be called.

## **COVID-related Closures**

Our approach to implementing a COVID-related closure rests on state and local regulations, CDC guidelines, and input from the JCC's team of early childhood professionals and other leaders. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in the school--staff or participant-- the CDC and DOH recommends that we close for 2 to 5 days for cleaning and disinfecting. The school

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may be reopened pending permission from the Westchester County Department of Health and in consultation with our healthcare consultant.

Our approach to children's ongoing learning, as well as JCC financial credit, depends on the scope and duration of the COVID-related closure.

For purposes of these policies, "consecutive school days" are sequential days of scheduled early-childhood engagement. For example, a Friday and a Monday are considered "consecutive" school days. In the event that there is a scheduled holiday or conference day, the days immediately before and after are considered "consecutive school days."

- In the event of classroom and/or building closure for up to 2 consecutive school days: Children and staff in the impacted classroom and/or all children and staff (as may be applicable) will stay home. For families, no distance learning will be scheduled and there will be no JCC credit; the approach is similar to a "snow day." Staff will be working and may connect by phone and/or other technology to coordinate and develop go-forward plans.
- In the event of classroom and/or building closure for more than 2 and up to 10 consecutive school days:
  - Children and staff will transition from in-person to distance learning. On-line/remote programming, both live and static, will begin to be delivered no later than the 3rd consecutive school day of any COVID-related closure.
  - All early childhood classroom teachers and floaters will be retained and will participate in the creation and/or delivery of their classroom's online and remote learning.
  - There will be no JCC credit.
- In the event of classroom and/or building closure for 11 or more consecutive school days:
  - Distance learning will continue.
  - At least one teacher from each classroom will be retained and will participate in the creation and/or delivery of their classroom's distance learning.
  - For the 11th and following consecutive school days of classroom and/or building closure, families will receive JCC credit in the following amounts. Families with children enrolled in a half-day program, will receive \$10 credit per



child, per consecutive day that their classroom/the building is closed. Families with children enrolled in a full-day program will receive \$20 credit per child, per consecutive day that their classroom/the building is closed. Any and all JCC credit will be calculated and communicated at the end of June 2021. No credit shall be issued to any family unless and until their total fees have been paid in full.

## PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT

### Outdoor Learning

**Outdoor learning will now be a major component of our early childhood program.** When weather permits, most of the day will be spent outdoors.

Our field, garden, and two playground spaces, will be used to accommodate safe, distanced outdoor learning. In addition, we will expand the use of our expansive property to include outdoor classrooms in spaces that were previously unused.

Most of what we do indoors will be done outdoors: art, music, literacy, math skills, science, and sports. We will also enhance our curriculum to create outdoor-specific learning opportunities so children learn about nature and the environment in a hands-on, interactive way.

Even when the weather outside is not “perfect,” children will be asked to wear weather-appropriate clothing to continue outdoor play adventure.

### Schedule

In order to maximize our health and safety protection efforts, and consistent with CDC recommendations, the JCC's early childhood program has streamlined its offerings. These are the only schedule options available at this time. *Please note, for all schedules, times noted are approximate and will shift slightly to accommodate staggered drop-off and pick-up times. Additionally, all schedules are subject to minimum enrollment.*

1. Full day 4's, M - F from 9 AM to 3 PM
2. Half day 4's M - F from 9 AM to 12 PM
3. Full day 3's, M - F from 9 AM to 3 PM
4. Half day 3's, M - F from 9 AM to 12PM

Subject to minimum enrollment, the JCC may be able to offer early drop-off (7:45 AM to 9:00 AM) and late stay (3:00 PM - 4:30 PM) care for families who request it.

## Grouping

The number of children in each of our classrooms will be limited to allow for distancing based on CDC and OCFS guidelines and children will be grouped with the same children and teachers throughout the school day. At maximum, based on enrollment, no more than 15 children will be placed in one group.

- Children will be grouped with children who have a similar daily schedule and efforts will be made to ensure that the children have friends and teachers who they are familiar and comfortable with.
- Classes will not intermingle on the playground or for any special school activities.
- Children will be brought straight to their classroom at the beginning of the day and will remain with their class and teachers throughout their time at school.
- Children who are enrolled in early drop-off and/or late-stay will be grouped with other children following the same schedule.

## Arrival & Dismissal

The CDC, with backing from DOH and OCFS, requires us to exclude all non-essential visitors on site. Therefore, curbside drop-off and pick-up will be implemented this year and parents and caregivers will not be permitted to escort their children inside. Arrival and dismissal times will be staggered to accommodate all of our families so children can leave their vehicles with calm and ease.

As we determine the number of classrooms this summer and as we get closer to the beginning of the school year, a curbside drop-off and pick-up schedule will be emailed to all families.

## Separation

For children, separation anxiety is a natural part of going to school. We find that a child's response to separation is often unique to personality and temperament. Some children easily adapt to new situations while other children do not.

Remember that this year will not involve a regular transition to school. Your family likely encountered difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic. You likely managed a lot of stressors—balancing work and family demands, financial concerns, worries about illness. Even

very young children sense when there is stress in the household. Your child has managed this period of confusing changes and now they are encountering yet another big transition—school. Stress adds up and our resilience can be run down over time. Your sensitivity and patience are key ingredients for helping your child make this a successful change. It's difficult to know how children will respond to school after months of quarantine and uncertainty.

As previously mentioned, the CDC, with backing from DOH and OCFS, require us to exclude all non-essential visitors on site. Therefore, children will be required to separate and to make this difficult transition to school without the on-site help of parents and caregivers.

Once your child is enrolled in our program, we will reach out to you (during the week of August 17th) to develop an individualized transition plan based on your child's specific needs. For some, we may recommend using Zoom or Facetime to set up virtual school visits before the first day. For others, we may suggest virtual visits with teachers.

There is also much parents can do to aid in the transition to school. As early childhood educators with much experience dealing with preschool age separation anxiety, we recommend the following alternatives and suggestions for making the transition easier:

- Role-play with your child about what might happen. Think of some of the possible questions your child might have before the role-play so you'll be prepared.
- Read books about going to school like: *Arthur Goes to School*, *Kindergarten Kids*, *The Kissing Hand*, *Owl Babies*, *I Love You All Day Long*, and *Llama Llama Misses Mama*.
- Once you do say goodbye at drop-off, say "goodbye" once and avoid additional goodbyes. This creates confusion and can make it more difficult for children to settle into the school routine.
- Before you leave your child at school, be lovingly firm. Give your child a hug goodbye. Let your child know how much you love and miss them and look forward to seeing them later. You might say, "Mom loves you and will miss you today, but when I pick you up after school I'll be so happy to see you. I can't wait to hear about all the fun things you did today."
- Remember that an easy or difficult time saying goodbye is not a reflection of your bond with your child.

## **Food policies**

As per CDC guidelines, all lunches and snacks for our children must be brought in from home. Food must be “kosher-style dairy” meaning no meat or shellfish.

Lunch boxes will be allowed in school to carry lunch and snack and they can be stored in our refrigerator. Staff will wipe down each lunchbox both before and after meals.

Also, as per CDC guidelines, lunch and snack must be served in the same class groups that are organized for the rest of the day and tables should be at least 6’ apart. Therefore, lunch and snack will be served in individual classrooms (the same classroom in which the children attend class) or at our outdoor picnic tables. Teachers will sit with children at the tables to enable good conversation, model mealtime skills, and replicate a family meal at home.

Teachers will closely supervise children to ensure they are not sharing food or touching each other’s food during mealtime.

## **Closure Curriculum: At-home Learning**

In the event of classroom and/or building closure for more than 2 and up to 10 consecutive school days, children and staff will transition from in-person to at-home learning.

At-home learning will involve a combination of both virtual and hands-on learning, supported by carefully chosen materials in “take-home packets.”

In the last several weeks and months, our staff have become educated with regard to best practices for at-home learning of preschool age children. We have prepared a curriculum to support all areas of children’s development and learning styles and are confident that we can provide top-notch alternatives to in-person learning. Our at-home learning program will offer online sessions with classroom teachers, supported by current, relevant materials in “take-home packets” which will be provided immediately (same day) if the need for closure arises.

At-home learning necessitates partnering with families to ensure that the children have plenty of non-screen time to play, move their bodies, and explore. Therefore, we have created an at-home learning schedule that provides families with options for participation as well as time to prepare in advance and coordinate caregiver schedules.

All teachers and Early Childhood directors will meet every Sunday during periods of closure to prepare a menu/schedule of learning engagements for the upcoming week that families and

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children can choose to do, each one clearly linked to our standards along with the descriptions of the related learning objectives and skills. These 'menus' will be emailed to families and will be created to encourage children to share about themselves and their families at home. The schedules will include a daily Zoom session, but will also include daily static content of worksheets and materials that support and coincide with the topics covered in the class Zoom sessions. Some of the curriculum areas that can be covered are number concepts, letter recognition, shapes and colors, science experiences and experiments, and literacy activities that might include responsive journaling and extending of stories.

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