

# Parent Handbook

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## Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center



United Hebrew Congregation

Revised 2021



## **Contact Information**

Lauren Lourie  
Director of Early Childhood Engagement

[llourie@unitedhebrew.org](mailto:llourie@unitedhebrew.org)  
314-434-3404

Rabbi Brigitte Rosenberg  
Senior Rabbi

[brosenberg@unitedhebrew.org](mailto:brosenberg@unitedhebrew.org)  
314-469-0700

Cori Neidenberg  
Director of Congregational Life

[cneidenberg@unitedhebrew.org](mailto:cneidenberg@unitedhebrew.org)  
314-469-0700

Phil Frischer/Sheryl Bauer  
President and President Elect of United Hebrew

[president@unitedhebrew.org](mailto:president@unitedhebrew.org)  
314-469-0700

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# **ABOUT US**

## **HISTORY**

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In the late 1970s Rabbi Jerome Grollman and United Hebrew Congregation's Board of Trustees realized there was a need to provide an enriching Jewish early childhood educational program within the walls of the synagogue. In 1979 the school opened as United Hebrew Preschool with three classrooms for children 2 ½ to 5 years old. Over the years, the school has expanded and in 1990, with a donation from the Spielberg family, became the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center (SSECC). We now care for children as young as 6 weeks and educate children through pre-kindergarten, while operating as a full-time, year-round childcare center.

## **MISSION**

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A child enters into the human race with an unlimited capacity for growth and an unquenchable desire to learn. It is the goal of the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center to stimulate the development of a creative, questioning, self-directing individual.

A Jewish child enters our congregation with an unlimited arsenal of tools, which can be used to help that child begin to develop a positive feeling toward a Jewish heritage. It is the goal of the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center to provide an atmosphere and specific activities, which will nurture that effect. It is also the goal of the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center to reflect the warm feelings of this congregation toward tradition and the basic assumptions of Reform Judaism as outlined by the clergy and the Board of Trustees.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

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The individual growth goals are as follows and should enable the child to:

1. Develop and maintain a positive self-image about his/her own abilities to create and to learn, concurrently working so that the child recognizes, in a positive manner, his/her position as a member of a core family and ability to be a part of the Jewish community.
2. Expand awareness of the world around them through sensory experiences, which are prerequisites for developing concepts and solving problems.
3. Develop oral language skills of both English and Hebrew through listening, speaking, and dramatic play. Learn to express feelings in appropriate ways, verbally and non-verbally. Learn Hebrew prayers and words revolving around everyday objects should be considered part of the appropriate language skills.
4. Develop maximum physical growth and health through motor activities and proper nutrition.
5. Develop the ability to relate to peer group and others.
6. See himself/herself as part of a larger community, inspired by Jewish teaching and Jewish tradition, which has specific values that express respect and concern for the rights and property of others.
7. Become self-directing, with the ability to use self-discretion, by providing the child with opportunities to explore, create, and make choices.

## **INCLUSION STATEMENT**

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The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center recognizes the need for and supports early intervention, and makes every effort to address the concerns of families with children with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, etc.). The SSECC supports the right of each child to play and learn in inclusive early childhood programs, consistent with the best interests of all involved. We will work with families and specialists to provide proper care and education for each child with our current staffing. If the current staffing is not sufficient to meet the needs of a child, then the family will be consulted about providing additional support staff that meets the standards of the SSECC. Any I.E.P. or other behavior plans need to be shared with the director and will in return be shared with the appropriate staff members. A copy of these documents will be placed in your child's SSECC file. The director and appropriate staff will need to be involved in any ongoing I.E.P. meetings in order to best serve your child.

# OUR PROGRAM

## SEQUENCE OF CLASSES

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Chai ("Life") Starts at 6 weeks

Garin ("Seeds") Age varies; children are ideally walking or very mobile

Kee Tov ("It is Good") Age group: near/around 18 months – 24 months plus depending on birthday

Tov ("Good") Age group: near/around 2 years old by July 31

Chalutzim ("Pioneers") Age group: near/around 2 ½ years old by July 31

Chaverim ("Friends") Age group: 3 years old by July 31

Shalom ("Peace") Age group: 4 years old by July 31

## ENROLLMENT

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Enrollment procedures begin in January/February. Registration is accepted on a first come, first served basis. Priority is given to currently enrolled students, United Hebrew members, siblings of enrolled students, and then enrollment is open to the community.

Registration is complete when accompanied by the application and the registration fee of \$200. There is no credit for **School Year** (interim days are not included in tuition) families for vacations, holidays, illness, early withdrawals or school closing due to inclement weather, nor will make-up days be scheduled. **Year Round** (August 1 – July 31; ALL interim days are included in tuition) families are entitled to two weeks' vacation, and up to two weeks of vacation days has already been calculated into the monthly tuition. There is also no credit for **Year Round** families for holidays, illness, early withdrawals or school closing due to inclement weather, nor will make-up days be scheduled.

## SIBLING DISCOUNT

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The eldest child in a family will receive a 10% discount on monthly tuition.

## ADMISSION POLICIES

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The admission policy of the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center is non-discriminatory with respect to race, religion, sex, or national origin. All classes are formed based on the child's age as of **July 31**. This is in accordance with the age guidelines of the State of Missouri Department of Education.

Class placements are determined by the following criteria:

- First come, first served according to date of application and deposit
- Birthdate
- Recommendations of teacher
- Compatible combination of ability levels in the group
- Emotional and social needs of individual children
- Gender mix in the group
- 3 vs. 5 day attendance

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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The SSECC operates Monday-Friday, between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., except on national and Jewish holidays

## **Tuition Payment**

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Tuition is on a monthly basis and is due on the first of each month via the brightwheel app. Tuition not received by the seventh of each month will be assessed a \$35 late fee.

## **EXTRA CHILDCARE OPTIONS**

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Situations may arise where you may find yourself in a childcare bind and we'd like to assist you in any way possible by having extra childcare options. Below are the additional childcare options we offer here at the SSECC.

- **Early Care** – Monday through Friday, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. **Cost: \$12 per morning.**
- **Lunch Bunch** – Monday through Friday, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Children bring lunch and have a supervised play period. **Cost: \$10 per day.**
- **Afternoon Program** – Monday through Friday, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. Children eat lunch (brought from home), have playtime, and enjoy a rotation of activities. **Cost: \$30 per day.**
- **Late Care** – Monday through Friday, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Cost: \$10 per hour or \$6 per half hour. Late pick up after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$1 per minute.**
- **Interim Days** – Days when school is NOT in session, but you need childcare. **Cost: \$31.50 for 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. / \$63.00 for 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

### **How to sign up:**

1. Email the director, Lauren Lourie, to check for availability. She will let you know if we can accommodate your request for extra childcare. If we are able to accommodate your request, extra childcare will be billed and paid via brightwheel.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

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Library Time is scheduled for each of our preschool classes. Children in Tov and above will sign out library books to take home on a weekly basis.

Music: Our music specialist teaches both secular and Jewish music, three times per week. The children learn holiday songs, prayers, and traditions while singing along to traditional and non-traditional tunes. Sessions include both vocal and instrumental music.

Yoga is a structure of physical exercise that unites the mind, body, and breath in an enjoyable way for children. Each practice contains breathing exercises, warm-up activities, yoga poses, games, relaxation, and more. The benefits of yoga for children support positive and challenging paths for all their activities in school, sports, and play.

Science: Children are natural scientists. Science will give the children a perfect opportunity to explore concepts and skills that will deepen their understanding of the world around them. In science the children will be involved with hands-on experiments, make observations, predictions, be encouraged to reflect with open-ended questions, and problem solve.

Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming Shabbat) is celebrated every Friday during the school year from 11:30 a.m. – noon with prayers and music. Our rabbis delight the children with opportunities for learning Jewish values and traditions. Children are encouraged to bring a nonperishable food item or paper product to donate to the Jewish Food Pantry for tzedakah (charity). During the year, each child in Chalutzim, Chaverim, and Shalom is assigned to be Shabbat King or Queen and his/her family is invited to join in their child's classroom at 11:00 a.m. for Shabbat blessings and a story. The school community will then come together for services at 11:30 a.m. in the Spielberg Chapel.

Clergy Corner: Rabbi Rosenberg, Rabbi Bellows, and Cantor Eichaker take turns meeting with the students on Fridays. Clergy Corner happens twice a month. Our United Hebrew Clergy takes this time to get to know the students while engaging them in a fun lesson about Judaism.

All Family Shabbat is celebrated twice a year. All Family Shabbat is a time for students to enjoy our Shabbat service with all members of their families. We invite grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, etc. to join us for our Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 11:30 a.m.

Grandparents/Special Friends Day will hopefully be celebrated in person. We invite all Grandparents/Special Friends to come enjoy a day in the life of an SSECC preschooler.



## **CURRICULUM**

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At the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center the curriculum is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and promotes positive outcomes for all children.

- Children are active and engaged
- Goals are clear and shared by all
- Curriculum is research based
- Valued content is learned through investigation and focused, intentional teaching
- Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences
- Curriculum is comprehensive in scope and sequence
- Missouri standards validate curriculum's subject-matter content

Research concerning early literacy has had a significant impact on the approaches we use to teach in our early childhood program. The theory of early literacy developed through research from such diverse fields as child development, psychology, education, linguistics and sociology. Early literacy envelops the thought that the development of early reading takes place within the child. Literacy refers to the interrelatedness of language – speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The concept of early literacy encompasses the following features:

- Learning to read and write begins very early in life.
- Reading and writing develop concurrently in young children.
- Literacy develops from real life situations – authentic reading and writing experiences are embedded in play for a meaningful purpose.
- Children learn to read and write through active engagement.
- Being read to plays a special role in the development of the young child.
- Learning to read and write is a developmental process. Children pass through the stages in a variety of ways and at different ages.

When the environment presents books, paper, and pencil activities for young children, it is found that they display a natural affinity for them. Activities are open ended so that children may build upon the knowledge already acquired. This point of view assumes that when a child arrives at school he already knows a great deal about language and literacy. The role of the teacher in the print-rich classroom becomes one of setting up the environment to support self-generated, self-motivated and self-regulated learning. The early literacy educational approach is consistent with best practices recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and other guidelines for the developmentally based programs.

## **ASSESSMENT PLANS**

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### Purposes and Uses of Assessment

- Identifying children's strengths and needs
- Improving curriculum and teacher effectiveness
- Communication and collaborating with families
- Screening for developmental progress or developmental delay

### Procedures of Assessment

- Children will be assessed by the classroom teacher during the school day
- Written assessment of preschool children will be documented twice annually
- Assessments will be used for informing instruction
- Children's assessment records are not released without written consent of parents
- Parents may review assessment tools through the director's office

### Tools and Methods of Assessment

- Tools will coordinate with curriculum
- Information will be used for planning instruction
- Methods will be sensitive to diverse cultures
- Instruments will be developmentally age-appropriate
- Assessments will be conducted in the child's classroom.

## **DIAL -4 SCREENING**

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We will screen children who will be turning four and/or five this school year using the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL -4). Children will receive scores in the following areas:

- Motor
- Cognitive
- Speech/Language
- Self-help
- Social/Behavioral

The function of the DIAL-4 is to help us determine if your child's skills are appropriate for his/her age or if further testing may be needed. The DIAL - 4 is a screening instrument that can flag potential delays. It is a standardized tool that is normed based on age to a national group of typically-developing children that match your child's age. The scores reflect your child's performance on the day of the screening and are not necessarily an indication of future development.

You will be notified of your child's results at parent teacher conferences, unless we have concerns – in which case, you will be notified prior to conferences. We will not share your child's specific results with anyone outside of our school without your consent.

## **Outside Referrals**

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The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center consults with Jewish Family and Children's Service (JF&CS). Referrals can also be made to outside agencies besides JF&CS which include The Belle Center, First Steps, and Special School District (SSD). These agencies provide evaluations, counseling and other services to families and children.

# COMMUNICATION

## COMMUNICATIONS

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1. Our main tool for communication is via Brightwheel. Teachers will communicate via the app to let you know about your student's day, behaviors, lessons, etc. Please communicate with teachers via the messaging feature on Brightwheel.
2. All messages to students during the school day are handled through the school office or through Brightwheel.
3. Requests for additional parent-teacher conferences (outside regularly scheduled conferences) should be made in writing, via message through Brightwheel, or by telephone to the school office (314-434-3404).
4. A teacher's private time after school hours should be respected. If you call or text a teacher and he/she is unable to speak or respond at that time, please respect the teacher's need to return your call or respond to your text at another time. If the need does arise to contact a teacher or administrator not at school, please call or text between the hours of 8:00 am and 8:00 pm, except in the case of an emergency.
5. In observance of Shabbat and other Jewish holidays, staff members have been asked not to make school-related phone calls, emails, and texts on Friday night, Saturday, or any Jewish holidays. We ask that you respect our observance by not making calls to teachers at home at those times as well.
6. If a family problem arises which will affect your child's attitude, performance, or emotional disposition at school, such as death or illness in the family, parent absence, separation or divorce, please notify your child's teacher, the director, and/or rabbis immediately. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, subject to the SSECC's policies related to child abuse or neglect and urgent safety concerns. This information will be treated confidentially and will only be shared with those who have a need to know and in accordance with the school's policies related to child abuse or neglect and urgent safety concerns.
7. **If a question or problem concerning your child is not resolved after contacting the teacher, please contact the director. In matters concerning your child, your first contact should be the teacher, then the director, and then, if the matter has still not been resolved to everyone's satisfaction, to Cori Neidenberg (Director of Congregational Life), Rabbi Rosenberg, or the president of the congregation, here at United Hebrew.**
8. Our main method of communication throughout the school year is via Brightwheel. Please be sure to check your Brightwheel App daily and read it carefully for any important information it might contain. Other important communication can also be found on our Facebook page.

## PARENT COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND PRAISES

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The SSECC director, teachers, and staff are here to provide quality early education and positive learning experiences for each child at our school. It is very important that we maintain open communication so that we may be aware of all concerns. If you have concerns, please let us know as soon as possible, in a respectful and private way so that we can address them. Please do not wait until the school year is nearly over to express your concerns. It is also important that we hear about what pleases you. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and necessary for a happy, safe environment for all of us.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. During this time, your child's teacher will share specific information with you about your child's development and his/her progress toward the curriculum goals in the school. Teachers and/or the SSECC director are available to meet with families at any time during the year should you have any concerns about your child. The teachers and/or director will also notify the family if it is believed that special circumstances or problems are affecting the child. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher to schedule any additional conferences that you feel may be necessary.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We maintain the highest standard of confidentiality with regard to student records. The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center keeps the following information for each child in a locked room or on a password-protected computer. Access to a child's file is granted only to the rabbis, director, and the child's teachers except in the case of access due to compliance with a subpoena, court order, or at the direction of law enforcement.

- Academic records
- Health information and accident reports
- Parent-teacher conference reports
- Outside testing and evaluations (if applicable)

The following individuals have access to the above items as specified below:

- Teachers have access to their own students' academic records, including any written assessments or testing reports
- The rabbis and director have access to all children's complete records
- The director will determine who else needs to see health information
- Families have access to any information in their own children's records with the exception of evaluation or recommendation forms for which parents have signed a waiver

Children's records will be used only to help the director, rabbis, and teachers determine the best educational practices for a particular child, to meet state guidelines, or in the case of medical need.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

In the event that the SSECC needs to be closed due to an emergency situation or inclement weather (we do not necessarily follow the Parkway or Rockwood school districts), the school will make the decision and notify you in the following ways:

1. You will receive a notification via brightwheel.
2. An email will be sent via constant contact.
3. SSECC Facebook: If our school is closed for any reason, it will be posted on the SSECC Facebook page.

If conditions are extreme, they may be posted the night before the closing, but this would be only in unusually severe weather.

## **CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

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The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood center is committed to protecting all students. If the student does not live full time with both natural parents, evidence of custody must be presented to the director. A copy of the custody decree with the judge's signature and court seal will be maintained in the director's office and/or the child's permanent folder. The guidelines of the custody decree with respect to school issues, including education and health decisions and obtaining records, will be strictly enforced. Without court documents with a judge's signature and official seal, students will be released to either parent.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

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In an effort to protect the well-being and safety of children, the State of Missouri requires anyone who suspects child abuse and/or neglect to report it to the proper authorities. The SSECC staff are all mandated reporters. The school staff is trained to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. All suspect indicators will be documented and reported. The school is required by law to cooperate with any investigations of child abuse and neglect. Parents seeking information regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect may contact the director. The phone number to the child abuse hotline is 1-800-392-3738.

# **SSECC Parent Board**

## **Parent Board**

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The purposes of the SSECC Parent Board are to:

- Assist the administration and faculty in advancing the objectives of the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center;
- Encourage, promote, and coordinate parents' volunteer efforts in various school related activities in order to enhance the student experience;
- Offer support to the administration as a talent/skills resource;
- Provide a communication link among parents, administrators, faculty, members of United Hebrew Congregation, and students, in order to promote a heightened sense of community;
- Provide financial support for SSECC Parent Board activities and projects, which support and enhance the educational goals and student welfare.

# HEALTH

## ILLNESS

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When a child becomes ill at the SSECC, parents are notified immediately so you can make arrangements to have your child picked up within the hour. Please note that the Department of Health has changed some of the symptoms regarding keeping/sending your child home.

**The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services mandates that children with any of the following symptoms be kept at home. If your child develops such symptoms during the day, you will be called to pick up your child.**

- More than one (1) abnormally loose stool;
- Red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing—especially important in infants under six (6) months of age
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Tears, redness of eyelid lining or irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- An infected skin patch—crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Fever over one hundred one degrees Fahrenheit (101°F) by mouth or one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) under the arm or temporally
- Headache and stiff neck
- Vomiting more than once
- A child is in the contagious period of a disease
- Severe itching of the body or scalp or scratching of the scalp which may be symptoms of lice or scabies

For the health and safety of all those here at the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center, **children must be fever and symptom free for 48 hours without medication before returning to school.** Please note that these are general policies, however, it is at our discretion when a child may return to school.

Please notify the school office if your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease so that we may take proper precautions in terms of cleansing of rooms and notification of staff and/or parents.

For the safety of all children, failure to comply with the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center's Illness Policy may jeopardize your child's enrollment. **Please note that it is up to our discretion to send children home sick or allow children to return to school. It is helpful to have a doctor's note after your child has been home ill.**

❖ **COVID Protocols in place. Please check there for more health information**

## **MEDICATION**

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If your child needs medication (prescription or over the counter) administered at the SSECC, the following procedures are required:

- All medication shall be given to a child only with the dated, written permission of a parent, stating the length of time the medication may be given.
- Prescription and nonprescription medication shall be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, instructions for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages, and the physician's name. Sample medication provided by a physician may be used.
- All medication shall be stored out of reach of children or in a locked container.
- Medication shall be returned to storage immediately after use.
- Medication needing refrigeration shall be kept in the refrigerator in a container separate from food.
- Unused medication shall be returned to the parent or disposed of immediately after it is no longer needed.
- The date and time(s) of administration, the name of the individual giving the medication and the quantity of medication given shall be recorded promptly after administration. This form shall be filed in the child's record after the medication is no longer necessary.

In addition to the above information, the following medication guidelines apply:

- The SSECC staff will not administer the first dose of any medication.
- A signed note from your child's physician must be presented in order to administer any over the counter drugs on a regular basis.
- Staff designated to administer medication may not have had previous medical training.
- For medication which is to be given regularly for greater than one month, each time medication is sent; it should be only a one-month supply.
- All discontinued or unused medication must be picked up by the parent/guardian or will be disposed of by the SSECC staff within five (5) days after the administration period has ended.
- Based upon official policy of the American Medical Association, medication orders from the child's parent who is a licensed health care provider will not be accepted.

## **INJURY**

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In the event of a serious injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent or, if necessary, a designated caregiver. If we are unable to reach a parent or caregiver, we will attempt to contact a relative or friend alternately listed on the child's emergency contact form.

If necessary, we will also call 911. Until the arrival of a parent, relative, other designated caregiver, or paramedic; the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center director will assume responsibility for the child and make all decisions regarding the child's care. For all injuries or other incidents, parents will be required to sign a report of the incident at the time of pick up.



## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

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Satisfactory health, immunization and information records in accordance with the Missouri Department of Health must be submitted before any child may enter school. Medical exemptions or delays signed by a doctor are accepted. If your child is overdue for any immunizations, parents must notify the school office in writing of the date/time of the appointment for the child as a condition for remaining in the program. Doctors' offices have the State of Missouri immunization form. For more specific information, please contact your health care provider.

Immunizations required by children in childcare facilities:

- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib): age younger than 5 years only (this requirement resumed following suspension during a national Hib vaccine shortage 2008-2009)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV): age younger than 5 years only
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (1 dose of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Varicella (1 dose or history of disease)

# **THE DAILY EXPERIENCE**

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

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At the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center, young children learn self-control, self-help skills, ways to get along with others, and routines. The director, teachers, and parents work together to set reasonable limits, encourage children to engage in desired behaviors, and teach children how to make healthy decisions. Criticizing, discouraging, creating obstacles and barriers, blaming, shaming, using sarcastic or cruel humor or using physical punishment are negative disciplinary methods. **The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center does not use negative disciplinary methods.**

The SSECC uses **Dr. Becky Bailey's *Conscious Discipline*** as a positive approach to discipline. *Conscious Discipline* is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. This approach to discipline increases children's self-esteem, allows children to feel valued, encourages children to feel cooperative, motivates children to change strategy rather than to blame others, and helps children to take initiative, relate successfully to others, and solve problems. The SSECC's goal is to create an environment that allows all children to develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own behavior, while ensuring the safety of all children. The SSECC teachers communicate their behavioral expectations in a language that children are able to understand in order to redirect inappropriate behavior. In an effort to support the emotional development of children, limits are set in a calm and reasonable manner. If you would like to know more about *Conscious Discipline* and Dr. Becky Bailey's approach, there are books in the director's office that you may check out.

## **BEHAVIOR POLICY**

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If a child displays ongoing disruptive behavior (including biting), and/or a staff member has to consistently alter the day-to-day programming of the class in order to address the behavioral or educational issues of a particular child, the following procedures will take place:

1. The director will contact the parents or guardians to schedule a meeting to develop a formal behavior modification plan. This meeting must occur within 72 hours of the request. At this meeting, an individual behavior plan will be developed to address the issues. This plan will include a timeline for implementation, including an established date to reassess the behavior.
2. The director will contact the parents to reassess the behaviors as outlined during the initial meeting.
  - a. If the behavior has not resolved, a secondary meeting will be required.
  - b. It may be determined that outside assessment or a shadow is required. If the SSECC determines that additional staff is required, the family will be financially responsible.
3. Should a behavior continue to be unresolved, children may be suspended and/or excluded from the program.
  - a. It will be up to the director to make this determination.
  - b. In such circumstances, the parent/guardian may be called to pick up the child from the center.
  - c. Tuition during the time of a suspension will NOT be credited. Suspension may vary from a few hours or longer, up to and including dismissal from the program. It is our hope that such an event will not occur.

## **BITING/HITTING**

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Current research suggests that biting/hitting may be a normal developmental phase for infants and toddlers, but when it happens, it can be scary and frustrating for everyone involved. Because of the developmental nature of most biting/hitting, experts stress that biting/hitting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or teachers.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting/hitting seriously. Our staff members quickly remove the aggressor from the situation without dramatic movements, attention, or an emotional response that could provide negative reinforcement to the aggressor. For example, parents and caregivers may tell the biter that “biting is not OK,” “I can’t let you hurt your friends,” etc. Toddlers in particular may not understand time-out, but caregivers need to make sure that the aggressor is not near other children until he or she has calmed down and can be redirected to other play.

Overall, we strive to main positive relationships with parents during biting/hitting outbreaks, to keep parents informed of the strategies being employed, to empathize with parents of both aggressors and victims regarding their feelings, and to communicate to parents that staff training and intervention efforts are occurring to remedy the problem. Guidance to children who bite/hit should be provided with the goal of helping children develop inner control of their feelings and actions. A quick and consistent response at home and in the center can help children who bite/hit learn to express their feelings in words so that they can become better able to control their behavior. A written report is completed for any **biting** incident and parents of both children are informed. Names of children who bite are not shared.

## **ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT POLICY**

All accidents and incidents will have written reports which are completed in the Brightwheel App. If the accident or incident is minor, you will be notified when you pick up your child. We will call parents about any significant accidents or incidents. If the director determines that the child needs medical attention, you will be informed during the initial contact by phone.

## **TOILETING AND TOILET TRAINING**

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. As toilet training is a complex process, there are many issues families and caregivers must consider before and during the process of toilet training for it to be a successful experience for everyone. Our philosophy on toilet training is to respect each family's tradition while referencing suggestions and guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and other research-based organizations. We recognize that children develop at different rates, and that they will achieve bladder and bowel control when they are developmentally ready. The initiation of toilet training should always be based on the child's developmental level rather than on the child's age. Initiating toilet training before the child is developmentally ready can create stress and anxiety for the child and the family, and increase the length of time it takes to train the child. Based on this information, we ask you to consider the following signs to determine whether or not your child is ready:

The child:

- Can and will communicate his/her need to eliminate
- Follows simple directions
- Remains dry for at least two hours at a time during the day
- Is dry after nap time
- Has regular and predictable bowel movements (some may have bowel movements every day and some may have them every 2-3 days)
- Walks to and from the bathroom, pulls down own pants and pulls them up again
- Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers
- Seems interested in the toilet
- Has asked to wear grown-up underwear

If the child has most of these skills, then he/she is probably ready to start toilet training. If the child does not have most of these skills or has a negative reaction to toilet training, wait a few weeks or months until most of the skills are present. Starting too soon can actually delay the process and cause tears and frustration. Toilet training is much easier when the child is ready.

When a child shows beginning success in the home environment, we will support his/her family's efforts and incorporate potty training within the limitations of the particular group. Teachers will provide regular and consistent opportunities for the children to use the restroom in support of parents' efforts. It is important that the teachers and families stay in communication during the entire process of toilet training to ensure the child's success.

## **TOILETING AND TOILET TRAINING**

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We recognize that sanitation and safety are important in the process of toilet training and for children who are already trained. The early childhood program follows these procedures regarding safety and sanitation in classrooms:

- Child size toilets are used in all restrooms.
- Potty chairs and seats are not used and should not be brought from home. The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages the use of potty chairs and seats in early childhood program settings because sanitary handling is difficult.
- The toilets and restrooms are cleaned when the seat or area is visibly dirty and at least once daily.

## **DIETARY POLICIES**

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The Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center, while not a kosher facility, will endeavor to serve and ask parents to send in only kosher-style food. In accordance with United Hebrew Congregation policy, no pork or shell-fish is allowed to be served in the building. While the school and congregation will not serve milk and meat together, you are allowed to send it in for your child's breakfast/lunch.

When we are in session during Passover, additional dietary restrictions will apply. Parents will be notified of specific foods that are permitted and provided with menu suggestions.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

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Due to the dramatic increase in nut allergies over the last few years, as well as the sudden, unanticipated onset of symptoms, the SSECC requests that you do not send in food/snacks that contain peanuts or tree nuts, peanut or tree nut products, or foods cooked in nut oils. We are a nut-sensitive school, which means we take every precaution possible to eliminate nut products on campus. However, the SSECC is not responsible or liable in the event of an injury to a child caused by inadvertent exposure to a food to which he or she is allergic. Parents of children with allergies should work in consultation with their child's medical providers and the school to coordinate the best environment for their child. When providing a special snack for your child's class, please keep this policy in mind.

If your child has any type of allergy – food or other allergen – we want to collaborate with you to meet his or her needs. To accomplish this, we must have an Allergy Action Plan each year, or whenever information about the child's allergies changes, whichever is more frequent, completed and signed by the physician or medical provider who treats your child's allergies. This form can be obtained from the school office. The completed form will be kept on file in the office. Once the form is completed, we would like to schedule a meeting with the child's parents and teachers in order to discuss the plan. We request that medications are given to the director to be kept in the office in case of emergency.

At times we have children with very severe, life-threatening allergies. These allergies can be so severe that if the child comes in contact with the allergen, he/she will have a serious reaction. Some of those allergens are: milk and other dairy products, nuts and other nut products, fish, eggs and egg products, wheat, and soy. For more information, visit Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org). If parents suspect their child has severe allergies, they should have the child tested and then present the results to the school office so that we can institute an allergy action plan in conjunction with the child's family and medical providers.

If your child is in a class with a child(ren) with a severe, life-threatening allergy, you will receive communication about this at the beginning of the year from the director and/or teacher. We will ask for your assistance in limiting the possibility of contact with the allergen(s) the child or children **must avoid**. Should you have questions after receiving this communication feel free to contact the director. The SSECC makes its best efforts to protect children from accidental exposure to items to which they are allergic but cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

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Children will be served a mid-morning snack each day provided by our parents. Each child will bring home an individualized “Snack Calendar” provided by his/her classroom teachers to inform you of when it is your turn to provide snack. All snacks served during the school day should be store-bought and nut-free. In order to comply with legislation passed by the Missouri Department of Health regarding communicable diseases, we must adhere to the following policy: *All food sent from home to be served to the children for snack, birthday treats, etc. must be either baked and boxed by a commercial bakery or purchased commercially prepackaged (such as Hostess or Little Debbie treats).* Please stay away from cupcakes, donuts, and cookies with frosting and/or chocolate except for special occasions. Specific details will be sent home with students the first week of school. Each class will receive its own specific list of suggested snacks and those snacks not permitted due to allergies.

Please provide a healthy, nutritious lunch and a drink each day. If your child’s lunch needs refrigeration, please place a frozen “cold pack” inside the lunch box. We are unable to refrigerate or heat foods in the classroom. (The exception to this is in our Chai/Garin classroom). Please remember to include any needed utensils. Please do not send pop-top cans, soft drinks, or candy. Limit any foods that are high in sugar or fat and send only 100% juice (rather than fruit flavored drinks). Also remember that our congregation policy does not allow pork or shell-fish in the building.

If your child will be staying for late care (3:00 – 6:00 p.m.) please send an additional snack for your child to eat around 3:30/4:00 p.m.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

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Birthdays are important milestones for young children. When your child is having a birthday, your snack day for that month will be scheduled on or near that day. The school will send out invitations through backpacks only when the entire class is invited to a birthday party. Any other communication going into backpacks must be approved by the school director.

At the Saul Spielberg Early Childhood Center we celebrate Jewish and secular American national holidays (i.e., Thanksgiving, Independence Day, Presidents Day, etc.). We do not celebrate holidays considered secular by some, such as Halloween and St. Valentine’s Day. While students are welcome to speak of their experiences at home with these holidays, we do not mark them within the school.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

Children need to play outside for proper development of gross motor skills and to enjoy fresh air and sunshine. All students have recess/playground time daily unless one of the following conditions is present:

- Severe weather alert
- Active rain, thunder, or lightning
- Ozone alert
- Environmental alert (high level of pollution or temporary substance in air)

A member of the administrative team will inform teachers of severe weather alerts. As a rule of thumb, please send appropriate outerwear for the day, as children will go outside daily if the temperature is above 32° and below 95°. (Some of our older classes may go out for a shorter period of time if the temperature is below 32°.) If you believe your child is unable to play outside for one day, it is advisable to keep him/her at home that day.

## **CHILDREN'S PERSONAL ITEMS**

A goal of early childhood is to develop group-sharing skills. Toys from home create confusion for children over ownership of personal items. Therefore, we request that all toys and playthings be left at home. The SSECC provides a wide variety of engaging materials and many opportunities for sharing. Some exceptions to this policy include show and tell at circle time or help with separation and adjustment. At the beginning of the year, some children may need to bring a meaningful toy from home as they make their separation adjustment to school. Please discuss any exceptions with your child's classroom teacher. We cannot accept responsibility for breakage or loss of items brought from home. Guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction are not allowed in the school for any reason.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

Please send your children to school comfortable and ready to play and learn. Dress your child in practical, comfortable clothes and shoes. Do not send them in party-type clothing or other clothing you do not want ruined. Early learning can be messy!

For safety purposes, please send your child in shoes that have a firm bottom and both a closed toe and closed heel. Shoes with open toes or heels, with or without socks are unacceptable. Shoes with soft bottoms soles are not acceptable to wear to school. This includes sandals, clogs, etc. Tennis shoes or other rubber-soled shoes are best.

Send a complete change of clothes, including socks and two changes of underwear (for those who are toilet trained) to be kept at school in your child's cubby. As the weather turns colder, you will be asked to send another set of clothes appropriate for cooler temperatures. Remember to label everything.

If your child uses diapers, you will be asked to supply diapers and wipes. (If you wish to use cloth diapers, they must have an absorbent inner lining, completely contained within another covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of anything. Both the diaper and outer covering are changed as a unit. Cloth diapers will be sent home in a plastic bag, without being rinsed).