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Professional staff of early childhood educators • Small class sizes • Keystone STARS regulated center

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## **2011-2012 Parent Handbook**

**JCAL Academy  
2120 Oregon Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
(717)560-7572  
[jcalacademy@lancasterjcc.org](mailto:jcalacademy@lancasterjcc.org)**

## Welcome

We welcome you and your child to the JCAL Early Childhood Program!

To ensure that your child will receive the maximum benefits of our program, we want you to understand our philosophy, goals, procedures and policies. Please read your Parent Handbook carefully and keep it handy for reference during the school year. After you are finished reading, please remember to sign the "I have read and understand the JCAL Handbook" form at the end and return it to the JCAL Preschool director prior to the beginning of the school year. We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your child!

## Philosophy

Our program is designed to nurture the inquisitive, outgoing spirit in children. Our primary concern is to create an environment for the child to explore with members of his/her peer group, to develop skills in navigating his/her world, and to promote self-esteem. All activities are planned to meet these goals and are geared toward the child's demonstrated interests.

## Curriculum

Our program uses Creative Curriculum. The philosophy of *The Creative Curriculum*® is that young children learn best by doing. *The Creative Curriculum*® is built on theories of development in young children, that all children learn through active exploration of their environment and therefore the environment plays a critical role in learning. The goal of the *Creative Curriculum* is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners by actively exploring their environment.

The curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development: **Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical and Language**. The planned activities for the children, the organization of the environment, the selection of toys and materials, planning the daily schedule and interacting with the children, are all designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the curriculum and give your child a successful year in school. All lesson plans and activities are also aligned **Pennsylvania's Early Learning Standards**, ensuring your child is receiving a quality education prior to starting elementary school.

## Class Options

### Toddler

These classes offer an introduction to Preschool. Parent participation is an integral part of helping young children feel comfortable as they make the transition from home to school. Gradual separation fosters trust in their teachers, which enables them to explore and learn.

Children do not need to be toilet trained to enter this program, as we recognize that all children reach this marker of development at their own pace.

9:30-12:00 M/W/F

9:30-12:00 T/Th

Optional Toddler Lunch Bunch from 12-12:30: A chance for toddler to stay and have lunch with teachers and friends.

## Preschool

Children in the preschool will begin to develop a sense of independence through self directed tasks and activities. Ongoing development of fine and gross motor skills, self help skills (pouring, dressing, cleaning up, etc.), and cognitive development (introduction and reinforcement of numbers, letters, shapes, colors, calendar, etc. ) will enhance the child's sense of self. Children are encouraged to interact with peers as well as play independently. Understanding the concepts of sharing, following directions, and respect for others will begin to develop as the children explore their classroom environment.

9:30-12:30 T/Th, M/W/F or M-F

## Pre-Kindergarten

The pre-k program is designed to blend academic and social interaction through language arts, literature, beginning math skills, creative arts, music, science and cultural activities. Problem solving, beginning reading skills, and following directions are some of the goals. Children will continue to learn about themselves and their surrounding environments in a safe, nurturing and encouraging place. They will be encouraged to share, interact with peers and teachers, and respect themselves, others, and their environment. This experience is designed to prepare children for success in kindergarten.

9:30-12:30 M/W/F or M-F

## Transitional Kindergarten

Our Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program allows parents to give the gift of time to their children. This program is a full day program for Kindergarten aged children who would benefit an extra year to grow and mature. Our curriculum is the best of both worlds. The children continue grow through *The Creative Curriculum*® building confidence, social emotional skills, and a love of learning. In addition, the children receive more structured instruction in the subject areas through *Kid Writing*, *Scott Foresman Reading* and *Everyday Mathematics*. The children also have the opportunity to do our enrichment program in a mixed age group setting giving them the opportunity to be peer leaders in the school.

Children will be ready for Kindergarten or First Grade depending on the child's individual readiness.

9:30-3:30 M-F

### Enrichment Programs

#### Enrichment Classes 12:30-2:00

Each day after Preschool ends, a variety of classes are offered to enhance your child's day. The 2011-2012 enrichment classes are as follows (subject to change):

**Little Explorers** (2-3 year olds) Geared for the toddler and young preschooler. Programming will have more time for play within the special program. Children will also have the ability to rest prior to enrichment if needed.

12:30-1:00 Quiet Activities

1:15-2:00 Activities

- Monday** **Music**—explore various styles of music and movement through play
- Tuesday** **Beautiful Books**- projects that inspire a love of reading
- Wednesday** **Art** – big messy fun, a variety of mediums are explored and inner artists are encouraged to blossom.
- Thursday** **Yoga**- developing body awareness, self-control and relaxing techniques to help in life today and in the future.
- Friday** **Fitness Fun**- plays cooperative games, sports while developing body coordination and team work.

**Big Discovery** (3-5 year olds) Geared for older preschoolers. Programming will be a little more structured and activities will be more advanced than Little Explorers.

12:30-1:00 Recess Time

1:00-2:00 Activities

- Monday** **Beautiful Books**- projects that inspire a love of reading
- Tuesday** **Yoga**- developing body awareness, self-control and relaxing techniques to help in life today.
- Wednesday** **Fitness Fun**- learn about health, nutrition while getting fit and having fun.
- Thursday** **Theater**- discover your dramatic side as you act, sing and dance in two productions!
- Friday** **Art**- develop fine motor skills and creativity as they explore various mediums and artistic styles.

**Before Care and After Care** 8:00-9:30am/2:00-4:00 pm

Before and after care is an opportunity for further social interaction through structured playtime. Children will have planned activities, as well as the opportunity for further outdoor exploration time.

#### Home to School Transition:

We strive for every child to have a smooth transition from home to school. We offer a back to school night in August prior to the start of school for each child to meet their teachers, friends and see their classroom. We ask parents to complete a Getting to Know You form about their child, so teachers and staff know about your family and your child prior to school starting. You can also elect to have a "Getting to Know You" meeting with the child and parents as well. Please contact the director if you are interested.

#### Transitioning to a new class:

Typically, we do not transition children to another school in the middle of the year. However, sometimes it is in the best interest of the child to move up to the next room. This decision will be made collaboratively by the parents, teachers and preschool director. Transitioning will be a gradual process where the child will visit the new classroom several times before officially moving into the new classroom.

#### School Delays

We will follow Manheim Township School District's delay schedule. If MTSD closes due to weather, there is no Preschool or Afternoon Enrichment.

In the event of a MTSD two hour delay, JCAL Academy will be delayed by 3 hours starting at 12:30 and going to 3:30. There will be no enrichment that day. There will be no supervised lunch time on that day. There will be no before school care, but we will have afternoon care. Kindergarten should report to class at 12:30 as well.

#### Policies and Procedures

**Tuition:** Tuition can be made in monthly payments either by check or credit card. If you would like us to do automatic credit card payments, please fill out authorization form and submit to the front desk. Please make all payments through the front desk. Please include the child's name on your checks in the memo line. The preschool director will provide monthly invoices for you to keep track of your payments. All payments are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month August through April. A 10 percent tuition deposit is due by June 15<sup>th</sup> to reserve your spot for the upcoming school year. Playgroup will be billed monthly. Please complete an enrichment /playgroup contract for enrollment in either program. **Any drop-ins for enrichment or playgroup must be pay for that day at the front desk.**

### **Changes to Programming**

Any and all changes in your child's programming are to be requested in writing, and submitted for approval to the Preschool director. For example, if you wish to change the number of days your child attends classes, or wish to add or subtract enrichment classes, please be sure to submit these wishes in writing, so that we can keep track of our children and of program payments and refunds. You are allowed one change of schedule per school year. Additional Schedule changes will be charged an administration fee of \$10 per change.

### **Refund Policy**

Two weeks written notice is required for early withdrawal from Preschool itself or from any other preschool programming. Current tuition must be paid up-to-date, and you will then be charged for an additional month's tuition. This charge helps to keep the Preschool fiscally sound, as our budget is based on all children being enrolled for the entire semester. Anything previously paid which exceeds that amount will be refunded. Please allow at least 30 days for a refund check to be issued.

Please see the director for copies of your child's records. Records will be released to parents directly or to the school or institution of your choice with signed parental consent.

### **Dropping Off**

Once the lobby door is opened, parents and caregivers are to escort their child to his/her classroom no earlier than the start of class. Classrooms will open at that time. Prior to that time, teachers are preparing for the day's activities and may be in and out of the classroom. Children may not be unattended at any time in the building or on the grounds of the JCC. Children may not ride the elevator without an adult on board.

### **Picking up**

Children will be picked up upstairs at the Preschool. At the close of the morning session, JCAL Academy staff will unlock and open the security door. We ask that parents refrain from entering the Preschool area until that time. It is very distracting to children, and then to teachers, to see or hear their parents waiting in the hallways, thus interrupting the closing of our day. Only adults listed as authorized to pick up on the Emergency Contact Form will be allowed to pick up your child. Please remind them to have identification with them, so we are able to ensure your child's safety.

**Late Pick Up:** Please call the school to notify us if you cannot arrive at your scheduled pick up time. You will be billed in half hour increments at the drop-in rate which is \$4.00/half hour. The first half hour will begin at 5 minutes after pick up time. Half hour increments will not be prorated.

**After Hours Fee:** The school closes at 4 pm. Arrival after 4 pm will be charged at \$1.00 per minute based on the school clock.

### **Carpooling/Play dates**

If your child is going home with another student, a note must be brought in to inform the teacher(s). No child will be released from our care without a written request from the parents. Please let us know of babysitters, caregivers, friends, grandparents or relatives who will be picking your child up on a regular basis. Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the Parental Consent/Emergency Contact Form. Please make children aware of who is taking them home.

Labeled car seats may be left downstairs in the front hall at your own risk.

### **Traffic Patterns**

Feel free to park in designated parking areas. Please adhere to handicapped and no parking signs. Please do not double park in front of the building, as it becomes a safety hazard for our children and a headache for other drivers. Parking in the fire lane is strictly prohibited.

### **Backpacks and Schoolbags**

Children should come to school with a backpack or schoolbag (large enough to fit a folder), clearly labeled with their name, to put their finished work and school communications in. Please check your child's bag each day for completed projects and artwork.

### **Quiet Time/Rest Time**

If a child is tired, we have nap cots available for use. If your child attends Little Explorers Enrichment we have a quiet activity time each day for the child to rest and play quietly before enrichment. Please bring in a labeled small blanket or towel for them to use during that time.

### **Toys**

While we recognize that all children adore their toys, please refrain from bringing toys to school. Personal toys can cause a distraction for the children as well as a problem if the toys are lost or broken. If your child has a lovey that they are attached to, they can bring them to school at the beginning of the year. The teachers will work with the student to detach from the lovey in sensitive and developmentally appropriate way. Many times children will be able to keep their lovey in their cubby and get it only when they feel sad or upset.

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Teachers want to be in close contact with you, but talking to parents during class time takes the teacher away from the children. Please contact the teachers through the Preschool office phone or by email. Each classroom has a separate email address. The teachers will give you their email at the beginning of school.

Parents will also receive weekly newsletters highlighting what was accomplished that week, as well as what to expect for the upcoming week, including events and dates to remember.

Parents can see daily activities highlighted on white boards on each classroom door. Parents will also see reminders on the teacher's parent communication bulletin boards.

Toddler parents will receive daily notes about their child's day including diapering/potty times, snack and activities. Preschool and Kindergarten parents may elect to receive daily notes, please contact your child's teacher to make those arrangements.

#### **Clothing/Diaper Policy**

Comfortable clothes that can get messy are recommended for everyday use. Children will be taking part in outdoor, down on the floor, and messy art activities. ***Please do not dress them in clothing that, if ruined, will upset them or you.***

Please send in an extra set of clothing for your child, labeled with their name, to be kept in their cubby. Please include seasonally appropriate clothes (tops, bottoms, underwear, socks). Check this box throughout the year, and please remember to replace any items that may have been used.

Since we do go outside, your child will need gloves, hat and jackets when the weather gets cold. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. We will go outside most days, unless conditions become hazardous or unsafe in any way.

Parents of children who are not toilet-trained must provide a labeled supply of diapers and wipes to be kept in the classroom. If children are in the process of potty training, please make sure that we are provided with ample clothing changes for possible accidents, or pull-ups/training pants where appropriate.

#### **Sunscreen Policy**

Please apply sunscreen at home prior to coming to school. If your child stays all day and needs it reapplied, please bring in a bottle with your child's name on it and sign the sunscreen permission line of our emergency information form.

#### **Birthdays**

We love the opportunity to celebrate important milestones with your child, including birthdays. We welcome parents or caregivers to join in the celebration and add to the festivities. Contact your child's teacher if you plan to come in or are sending something in, so that teachers can make the appropriate arrangements. Please give us notice if you are sending in a special treat. We have several children who have food allergies, and would like to make sure these children are not left out of special birthday treats. This notice gives us time to prepare an alternative snack.

#### **Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled in November and April. Parents will be notified and sign-up sheets will be made available for dates and times. Day and evening options will be offered to try to meet the needs of parents. At these times, teachers will discuss your child's progress, review assessment tools, and address any questions or concerns you might have.

If you feel you need to meet with your child's teacher before or in-between these scheduled times, please contact the individual teacher to set that up.

#### **Child Assessment:**

We use several tools to track your child's progress and development. We use observations of the children, the Creative Curriculum Learning Objectives and Continuum and the PA Early Learning Standards to monitor your child's development. Twice a year, we complete Child Service Reports highlighting your child's development per state regulations. We also use the Ages and Stages tool to screen children for any possible developmental delays. We are not equipped or qualified to diagnose your child. That must be done by a physician. All children are screened within 45 days of entry to JCAL Academy for your benefit.

#### **Kashrut Policy for JCAL Preschool**

As part of the Preschool/Kindergarten being housed in a Jewish Center, and in order to promote Jewish values, we have opted to keep lunchtime at the Preschool kosher-dairy.

What this means is that under these specific dietary laws, certain foods are prohibited. Only dairy or non-meat meals will be permitted. When packing your child's lunch, please keep this in mind. We are able to heat lunches up if needed. However, please keep in mind the length of time required for heating and cooling for the item. This time needs to be kept to a minimum, so your child has enough time to eat. Here are some great ideas of items that you can pack in lunches:

- Bagels and cream cheese
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Cream cheese and jelly
- Cheese and crackers
- Cheese cubes/string cheese/cheese sandwich
- Tuna
- Egg salad
- Vegetable soup or other non-meat soup
- Pasta (noodles/mac and cheese - no meat sauce)
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Salad

Raw veggies  
Fruit salad  
Yogurt  
Pizza without meat topping

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We want this to be a positive educational experience for all children. Please see the preschool director if your child has specific, documented food allergies which would make it impossible to adhere to these requirements, or would require a special menu.

### **Allergies**

Please be sure to list any allergies your child may have on the medical forms provided. The director will make sure that any pertinent information is passed on to your child's teacher. It is our policy to post severe allergies in the child's classroom notifying teachers, staff, and other families of the allergy.

### **Accident Policy**

Accident forms will be filled out for any injury that occurs at school to keep you informed and so that you can watch for any delayed symptoms or reactions that may occur.

### **Sick Child Policy**

Please keep your child home if he/she displays any fever, vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose with a discolored discharge, or symptoms of any communicable diseases such as pink eye or chicken pox. As a general rule, if your child does not seem himself/herself, is not feeling well, is out of sorts, please do not send him/her to school.

Children who are sent to school with any of these symptoms, or who develop them during the school day will need to be picked up immediately. If you receive a call to come and pick up your child due to illness, it is expected that you will do your very best to get to school as soon as possible, for the comfort of your child and others. It is unfair for a sick child to have to suffer through his/her school day when not feeling well and also unfair for his/her classmates to be exposed to the illness.

Communicable diseases or any questionable condition will require a doctor's note stating the date the child will be allowed to return to school. A child must be fever free with the aid of medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Other illnesses that require an antibiotic, the child must be on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

Please call the Preschool office to let us know if your child will be absent, so that his/her teacher can be notified, and so that we can keep our records current.

### **Hand washing**

Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent most illnesses. Please have your child wash his or her hands at drop off. There are sinks in the bathroom as well as in the common area, and some of the classrooms. Child will wash their hands during the school day after toileting, before eating, before and after messy play, and after outside play.

### **Health Records**

We require a health physical for each child annually. We disperse these at the beginning of each school year. However, if your child is not due for a physical at that time, please have your doctor complete the form or check with the preschool director to see if your child's physical on file is up to date. **Physical forms must be in no later than 30 days after enrollment.**

### **Medication**

Arrangements must be made with the director for any non-prescription medication to be administered to your child at any time during school hours. All non-prescription medications must be provided from home. Prescription medications may be administered, but require current instructions including dosage and times, from the treating physician.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips for students will be conducted at various times throughout the school year. Permission to participate will be gathered individually for each trip through a parent permission slip.

Children from our toddler class must be accompanied by a parent (for a one-to-one ratio) in order to join us for field trips.

If you chose not to send your child on a field trip, please do not send him/her to preschool that day. There are no teachers in the building, as they are all required to attend the field trip in order to provide proper supervision and safety for those students on the trip.

### **Discipline Policy**

The teachers at the Preschool use a variety of age appropriate methods in order to maintain control of their classrooms. All of these methods are used in a gentle and nurturing way and adhere to best practices in the field of early childhood education.

### **Request for copies of IEP**

If your child receives services in which an IEP is written, please provide us with a copy of his/her most recent IEP so that we may best serve your child's needs and actively participate in the goals set forth by the IEP.

**Transfer of Records**

As your child moves to a new educational setting, we are happy to provide any information that you request. Simply fill out the "Record Transfer Request" form and we will send all requested documents in a timely manner.

**Continuous Quality Improvement/ Keystone STARS**

JCAL Academy is always striving to improve the quality of our programming. If you ever have any concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact the preschool director. We also have a suggestion box located at the tops of the steps in the school. We participate in Keystone STARS, the states quality initiative for Early Childhood Education programs. Keystone STARS provides standards, professional development, resources, and funding to centers across the state of Pennsylvania. We are currently a STAR2 which means our staff must complete additional professional development each year, use the Early Learning Standards for planning and assessment of the children, and provide quality and safe learning environments just to name a few of the standards.

**PTO**

JCAL Academy's PTO is very involved in the success of our school. They meet every second Wednesday of the month right after drop off. They plan special activities for the children, help with Shabbat, and do fundraising for the school. Please contact the preschool director if you are interested in participating in this great organization or stop in at the next meeting.

**Community Resources**

Lancaster County has many agencies and resources for families. We have listed a few for your use.

CCIS of Lancaster County

Phone: (717) 393-4004

Toll-Free Phone: 1-800-937-4546

United Way of Lancaster

<http://www.uwlanc.org/>

United Way LINC at 717.291.LINC (5462)

Success by Six

Judi Anderson

Director of Education

717.394.0731

[anderson@uwlanc.org](mailto:anderson@uwlanc.org).

Early Invention/ Lancaster Lebanon IU 13

[www.iu13.org](http://www.iu13.org)

717-606-1601

CHIP- Child's Health Insurance Program

<http://www.chipcoverspakids.com/>

WIC

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>

Lancaster County Autism Mommies

[www.lcamonline.org](http://www.lcamonline.org)

Sweet Pea Project

[www.sweetpeaproject.org](http://www.sweetpeaproject.org)

Aaron's Acres

<https://www.aaronsacres.org/>

Child Care Consultants/ South Central Regional Key

[www.childcareconsultants.org](http://www.childcareconsultants.org)

LAAEYC- Lancaster Area Association for the Education of Young Children

<http://laaeyc.org/>



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Professional staff of early childhood educators • Small class sizes • Keystone STARS regulated center

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, have thoroughly read and understand the JCAL Parent Handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures found within the handbook as long as my child is a student at JCAL Academy.

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(Signature)

(Date)