



# Parent Handbook

**2016-2017**

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*[www.JEWELSchool.org](http://www.JEWELSchool.org)*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview .....	Page 3
Days/Hours of Operation .....	Page 4
Drop off and Pick up .....	Page 5
Classroom.....	Page 5
Supplies.....	Page 5
Meals and Snacks .....	Page 5
Nap Time .....	Page 6
Teacher Qualifications .....	Page 6
Individualized Approach .....	Page 6
Curriculum.....	Page 6
Technology Statement.....	Page 7
Classroom Materials.....	Page 7
Class Sizes.....	Page 7
Health & Safety .....	Page 7
Behavioral Policy.....	Page 8
Communication .....	Page 9
Grievence .....	Page 10
Medical Emergencies .....	Page 11
Therapeutic Services.....	Page 11
Tuition, Fees and Payment.....	Page 11
Important Contact Information .....	Page 12

## **Overview**

### **Mission Statement**

JEWELS' mission is to provide a nurturing and educational environment to children of all abilities with an emphasis on the inclusion and custom-tailored learning experience for children with or without special needs, JEWELS offers an equal opportunity to all children, regardless of their ability level. Children will receive the most beneficial academic, social, and life skills necessary for future success.

### **Philosophy Statement**

JEWELS Inclusive Preschool provides a high quality child care and inclusive education program in a safe and nurturing environment. The educational program promotes the positive growth and development of the whole child regardless of their development growth through a child-centered and developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports a young child's optimal learning and development.

JEWELS Inclusive Preschool provides a child care and education program for your children. The staff values parents as partners in education and operates in this partnership with parents for the well-being of the child. This is done by establishing open communication and cooperation between home and school and by celebrating the diversity and uniqueness of each family. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in school activities as often as possible.

JEWELS Inclusive Preschool provides a stimulating school environment and works collaboratively with the JEWELS therapy center and other community programs. These collaborations provide multiple opportunities for families and staff members to benefit from a wide range of programs and services within the JEWELS community.

JEWELS Inclusive Preschool strives to provide ongoing staff development that meets individual and center needs. The staff works collaboratively to ensure the program is progressive and embraces best practices. On-going professional development is supported through multiple learning opportunities at JEWELS and in the early childhood community.

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion is the practice of educating and involving children with special needs in classrooms and everyday activities of their typically-developing peers. Inclusion helps to foster a role of leadership in many children, while encouraging others in their challenges, through positive peer encouragement. The inclusive preschool setting is beneficial for all children involved, as it models diversity, compassion, teaches that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and embraces the meaning of true friendship.

## **JEWELS Inclusive Preschool**

- Supplemental therapeutic services: including special education, physical, occupational, speech therapy and social work.
- Offering small class sizes and custom-tailored curricula to meet the needs of each student
- Lower student-to-teacher ratio
- Structured environment
- Flexible scheduling options
- Supplemental enrichment activities: music, gymnastics, cooking, art, computer technology
- Qualified pediatric therapy staff
- JEWELS classes:

Ruby	2 year olds	
Topaz	2 year olds (half day)	
Emerald	3 year olds	
Pearl	4 year olds	
Sapphire	5-7 year olds	Self Contained Class
Diamond	5-8 year olds	Integrated

## **Days/Hours of Operation**

Our hours are from Monday through Thursday, 9:00am until 3:00pm. Early drop-off is available starting at 8:30am. On Friday, JEWELS ends at 2:00pm. Between November 11, 2016 and March 17, 2017 school will be dismissed at 1:00pm on Fridays.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up**

For the safety of all children, parents are required to either bring their children to the classroom or the child can be taken to the classroom by a JEWELS staff member. In order to ease congestion in the parking lot and speed up drop off and pick up, a JEWELS staff member will be available to walk students to and from their cars. Students in the early care program will be picked up by their teacher and brought to their designated classroom. Teachers will need authorization to release a child to someone other than the parent or guardian. If a staff member does not know the adult picking up the child, identification is required to assure that the adult is the person for whom the parent has given permission. If someone claims that they are to pick up the child and there has been no notice from the parents, teachers may not release the child until the parent has been reached and arrangements have been made.

A 5-minute grace period for pick-up can be made without charge. After the grace period aftercare charges will be incurred.

All children are required to be transported to and from school in appropriate car-seats/booster seats. Parents must assure that even if someone other than the parent is picking up a student the correct car-seat/booster will still be used.

### **Classroom**

Equipment and materials in classrooms are developmentally appropriate, clean and safe. Objects and activities are chosen to suit individual and group needs according to each class's daily schedule. Classrooms are designed to allow children access to toys and objects that provide manipulation, socialization, creative play, sensory exploration, exploration of art, music, science and language.

### **Supplies**

All supplies should be labeled with your child's name. JEWELS is not responsible for unlabeled lost items. There are many toys at JEWELS so please leave your child's personal play items at home. We make an effort to go outside whenever the weather allows. Please dress your child with appropriate outerwear.

### **Meals and Snacks**

Please provide a lunch each day for your child. Food should be ready to serve, i.e. cut up, mashed, stirred, etc. Please do not send any glass containers. Milk and water will be provided at lunch time and snack time. In an effort to encourage healthy eating habits, please provide a healthy morning snack each day.

### **Nap/Quiet Time**

There is nap time/quiet time scheduled every day for the Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald and Pearl Classes. If children do not sleep, they are encouraged to rest quietly. Any articles that make nap time more comfortable for your child are welcome and can be stored at JEWELS. Please send in a sheet and small blanket (see supply lists). The linens will be sent home each Friday to be laundered.

### **Teacher Qualifications**

Each class has at least one teacher with a Masters Degree in Special Education. Our highly qualified teachers surpass the requirements of Baltimore City for licensed day care. In addition, all staff must pass a background check administered by the Criminal Justice System and have classes in CPR and First Aid. We have the opportunity to be very selective of the staff we choose for our program and are fortunate to be able to offer you a highly qualified team.

### **Individualized Approach**

Each child will be given developmental screenings yearly and a required kindergarten-readiness test before leaving for elementary school. These assessments help teachers to custom-tailor your child's learning experience to their individual strengths and needs. Because of the developmental nature of our preschool program, every child is welcomed at their current developmental level. With the aid of experienced special educators and the availability of on-site pediatric therapists, each child is motivated and challenged to fulfill their full potential.

### **Curriculum**

At JEWELS, we use a variety of developmentally-appropriate curricula to build a foundation of learning in each classroom. Currently, the Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) as well as Ages and Stages (ASQ) are being implemented in our program. From 2 years through age 8, our students are nurtured and educated on every developmental level. Using research and routine based curricula, our teachers will form the foundation for their teaching concepts. In the Ruby Room, we are using The Creative Curriculum. In the other classes, we will be following The Investigator Club Curriculum. Both of these curriculums are approved and recommended by the State of Maryland. By aligning learning goals with state developmental standards, and enriching our days whenever possible, our classrooms will provide an environment that is both engaging and stable for our students, filled with learning experiences in a warm Jewish atmosphere.

## **Technology Statement for JEWELS School**

Technology includes computers, phones, TV, movies and electronic games, photo frames, iPads and other handheld devices. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting a child's use of technology or "screen time" to no more than one or two hours a day. At JEWELS School, occasional use of technology is limited to educational computers and iPads, accessing web pages to enhance the learning occurring in the classroom, looking up answers to questions, and from time to time, watching homemade videos and photo screens. In adherence to MSDE Childcare Regulations, screen time will not exceed 30 mins per week.

### ***Classroom Materials:***

*The Investigator Club curriculum* provides a basic structure for a developmentally appropriate program. The curriculum focuses on the environment because young children learn best through active interactions with the physical and social environment. Materials are selected to enhance the program and be developmentally appropriate, accessible and reflect the child's interest and abilities. Each classroom has manipulatives that are nature and science related, to encourage interest in our world and science. By continually changing and enriching the environment, teachers can support learning and creativity in children. Children are encouraged to ask questions and explore. This in turn enhances their ability to solve problems, recognize cause and effect relationships, and plan. Children are encouraged to try out their ideas, experiment, and use materials creatively. They use songs, storytelling, language, games, cooking projects, blocks, manipulatives, and other creative materials in more sophisticated ways as they get older and are given time to develop their own unique themes of play.

### **Class Sizes**

For an optimum learning experience, JEWELS offers small class sizes, with lower student-to-teacher ratios than are required by the state of Maryland. This offers more individualized attention to your child.

### **Health & Safety**

JEWELS values the safety of your child. Our building is secure and we will monitor who drops off and picks up your child. Only authorized persons have access inside the hallways of our school. Emergency contact forms and immunization records must be submitted prior to your child's first day of school.

**Please help us keep all of the children healthy by keeping your child at home if he/she exhibited fever, vomiting, or diarrhea symptoms within the past 24 hours. Also, if he/she seems unwell or unable to participate in daily routines. Children can return to school 24 hours after symptoms and fever subside.**

### **JEWELS Behavioral Policy**

All children should experience success. Positive guidance techniques will be used at JEWELS to encourage desirable behavior and support the achievements of the children. JEWELS provides a nurturing environment with consistent, age-appropriate limits, both in the classroom and outdoors on the playground. Most behavioral issues are minimized in this atmosphere and alternative methods are used to address and redirect appropriate behaviors.

If a behavioral problem occurs, the JEWELS staff will strive to help the child learn problem-solving skills and take responsibility for his/her actions. In cooperation with the parents, the following techniques will be used to help children develop personal responsibility and self-discipline.

**1. Redirection**

An alternative behavior is offered to a child engaged in undesirable behavior. The basic goal is to take a child's attention from a difficult or challenging situation and focus on a situation that produces immediate and appropriate satisfaction. For example, a new activity is suggested, a different toy is presented, or a different play partner is proposed.

**2. Logical consequences**

JEWELS staff may impose logical consequences as a result of inappropriate behavior. The consequence is related to the misbehavior and involves no moral judgment on the part of the adult. For example, a child may need to wipe up the floor after pouring water from the sink on to the floor. As a result of cleaning up, a favorite activity may be missed by the child.

**3. Ignoring a behavior** or not paying attention to the anti-social act of a child can be effective in certain situations. Often, a child will stop inappropriate behavior if no one is paying attention to him/her. This will be used if a child will not physically hurt him/herself or anyone else.

**4. Verbal Intervention**

JEWELS staff may discuss inappropriate behaviors with the children and give (age appropriate) reasons why certain behaviors are not acceptable. At the same time, staff will encourage children to think of alternatives to their behavior that would be more appropriate. If the children are unable to



suggest alternate behaviors, staff will help them in this process. Emphasis will be given to the fact that the behavior (not the child/children) is inappropriate.

**5. Take a Break**

A child may be asked to leave the group and go to an area of the room with a calmer and more relaxed atmosphere. When he/she has regained composure and has determined that he/she is ready to return to the group (and has verbalized to the best of his/her ability how to handle the situation in a more pro-social manner), he/she can return to the group.

**6. Reassessing Placement**

If a child's behaviors are aggressive to their peers, a behavior plan will be implemented. If aggressive behaviors develop into a chronic pattern, endangering self or others, the child's ability to remain in our inclusive program will be reassessed. If a child is displaying persistent, unacceptable behavior, the staff will take steps to help the child gain self-control. If the behavior continues, the staff person will consult with fellow staff members and/or the director to develop alternatives for helping the child gain acceptable control of his/her behavior. If the problem persists, a staff person will contact the child's parent for suggestions on measures to take to extinguish the behavior. The parent will be informed that if the measures do not work, the child may have to be removed from the program. The goal is to help the child strengthen his/her skills of self-control. Separating the child from the group is a final step that would be taken after other measures have been tried. If the child can not resort to behavior that ensures his own and the safety of others in the center, and/or the smooth operation of the program; the parent will then be called and asked to pick the child up from the program. If the problem persists, a decision will have to be made in regard to the child remaining in JEWELS.

**Communication**

Parents and teachers are partners in the education of children. While the school environment provides formal education for students, parents are the ones who, on a daily basis, teach their children in a myriad of ways and, thus, are our partners in education. Working together is essential for the child's growth. JEWELS strives to maintain a trusting and loyal relationship with all employees and families in our programs. Information that is shared with employees will remain confidential. It is our desire to keep the lines of communication open with all parents. This is accomplished in a variety of ways at JEWELS.

- **Teachers & Therapists**

Teachers and therapists will send written communication or make phone calls to the parents on a regular basis. Please be sure to check your child's correspondence notebook nightly. Each day you will receive a daily note that details the events and activities that your child participated in. Parents should use correspondence notebooks to write messages to teachers and therapists. Messages can also be left for teachers and therapist by calling the school office.

- **School Office**

Please call the school office with your comments and concerns at (410)-415-3515.

- **Newsletters**

Every class sends home a weekly newsletter to keep you up-to-date on class accomplishments and activities. The newsletter also keeps you informed about upcoming events and programs and other valuable information. Additionally, there is a school newsletter provided periodically to keep you informed about school affairs, and give you a better picture of what is going on in the rest of the school.

- **Open School Night**

An Open School Night evening is scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 PM. Parents will meet the classroom staff and get an overview of what the classroom and program will consist of for the school year.

- **Conferences**

PT Conferences will be announced. Additional Conferences can be requested by the parent or teacher if either party feels there is a need.

- **Personal Learning Plan Meetings (PLP)**

PLP meetings are a process where staff and parents come together to create the student's individual program. Times are coordinated and schedules are adjusted to arrange the best possible time for the parents and staff.

- **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, school closings or delays, you will receive a text message.

## **Grievance**

If any parent, employee, or board member has a concern that they do not want to bring to the attention of the school administration, Moshe Hefter has been designated as the ombudsman for JEWELS. He can be reached at 718-290-4099.

### **Medical Emergencies**

If a child is injured at JEWELS, the teacher in charge shall administer first aid. Most injuries can be easily handled with first aid kits stocked in each classroom. Following care to the child, the staff member will then complete a detailed incident report with a copy sent home. The parent will be notified by phone if the injury may need medical attention.

### **Therapeutic Services**

Therapeutic Services are available on-site through the JEWELS Pediatric Therapy Clinic. The following services are provided by experienced and professional therapists: occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy. Patient therapy forms are available on the JEWELS website for your convenience. Feel free to contact the JEWELS therapy clinic staff to schedule an evaluation or to get more information. During the summer months, (re) evaluations will be scheduled.

### **Tuition, Fees and Payment**

A Registration fee is due and payable at the time of enrollment. Families pay tuition on a monthly basis with tuition fees due on the 20th day of the previous month. ( August 20<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> ) Payments are processed via tuition express.

### **Tuition Rates**

AGE (S)	(M-F)
2 years (half day)	\$450 per month
2 years	\$800 per month
3 years	\$800 per month
4 years	\$950 per month
Sapphire Class	\$1200 per month
Integrated Class	\$1200 per month

- **Extended Hours**

Extended hours are available Monday- Friday 8:30am-9:00am for an extra \$60 per month. Preregistration is required.

- **Sibling Discount**

A Sibling Discount is available, deducting 5% off your total full tuition.

- **Scholarships**

Scholarship forms are available upon request.

### **Important Contact Information**

For more information about the JEWELS Preschool, call 410-415-3515 or email [sbamberger@JEWELSchool.org](mailto:sbamberger@JEWELSchool.org).

Our staff will be happy to arrange a tour of our facility and take time to discuss with you your child's individual needs and goals.

Preschool Coordinator: Shuli Bamberger      [sbamberger@JEWELSchool.org](mailto:sbamberger@JEWELSchool.org)

Therapy Coordinator: Carin Feldman, DPT      [cfeldman@JEWELSchool.org](mailto:cfeldman@JEWELSchool.org)