



# PARENT ORIENTATION GUIDEBOOK

## Introduction

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On behalf of the staff at the Rosen JCC and Early Childhood Learning Center, we would like to welcome you to the 2021-2022 school year. We are excited about the challenges and rewards of being a critical part of your child's future. Our commitment is to provide a safe and healthy environment, especially during these challenging times.

We have a great team of dedicated educators and professionals at the Rosen JCC. Our team will be working together to provide the best and most developmentally appropriate program for your child. We provide our students with a variety of dynamic enrichments, including weekly music, physical education, dance, music, art, cooking, STEM, technology, and Spanish.

We are proud to be an APPLE accredited facility! APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment) is a national program that recognizes early learning centers for operating high-quality programs. Research shows a direct link between a high-quality learning experience and a child's future success.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter 1: Required Documents

---

- 8 Parent Packet
- 9 Know Your Child Care Facility
- 9 Influenza Virus Brochure
- 9 Distracted Adult Brochure

## Chapter 2: Your Child's Education

---

- 12 Curriculum
- 16 Classroom Supplies

## Chapter 3: Policies and Procedures

---

- 22 Kashrut Policy
- 24 Peanut and Tree Nut Allergy Policy
- 26 Attendance and Tardiness Policy

## Chapter 4: Things to Know

---

- 30 Lunches and Snacks
- 31 Brightwheel
- 32 PikMyKid
- 33 Academic Calendar

## Chapter 5: Additional Resources

---

- 36 Separation Anxiety and Transitions
- 38 Potty Training
- 42 Toddlers and Biting
- 50 Positive Techniques to Change Behavior
- 52 Hand Hygiene

## About the Early Childhood Learning Center

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The Rosen JCC's Early Childhood Learning Center provides children a balanced program with the best, most creative hands-on learning experiences. Children embark on an exploration of concepts, gain awareness and understanding of literacy and numeracy, and become more articulate, confident individuals. Your child will make life-long friendships and develop life skills such as focus, self control and critical thinking.

Educating young children is both an art and a science, and the JCC has been an expert in both for over 20 years – creating a safe, caring, nurturing educational environment for children to grow and develop. Our program is rich in Jewish culture and values, while embracing diversity and being inclusive of families of all backgrounds.

## Faculty and Staff

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**Amanda Jacobs**  
Director of Children's Programs



**Xiomara Sanchez**  
Assistant Director



**Jill Schwartz**  
Office Manager



**Selah Levin**  
Assistant Office Manager



**Linda Bonventre**  
VPK Coordinator





# CHAPTER 1

## Required Documents

Parent Packet	8
Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure	9
Influenza Virus Brochure	9
Distracted Adult Brochure	9



# PARENT PACKET

## Help us get familiar with your child

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You must complete the parent pack prior to your child's intended start date. The online parent pack can be found at [www.rosenjcc.org/parentpacket](http://www.rosenjcc.org/parentpacket). In order for all current and new children to start school, all forms in the Parent Packet must be submitted at least three days prior to your child's start date.

If we have not received all forms, your child will not be permitted into his/her classroom, per Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) regulations. For your convenience, you will be able to submit all required forms online.

All students must have current Immunization and Physical forms on-file in order to start school. If desired, digital copies of Immunization and Physical forms may be sent electronically to Selah Levin at [SelahL@rosenjcc.org](mailto:SelahL@rosenjcc.org). Your child's school records MUST be complete so that our school licensing complies with the Department of Children and Families' regulations. Please note that our Early Childhood Learning Center does not accept religious exemptions for immunizations. All children registered in our Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program must have their Certificate of Eligibility form turned in to Jill Schwartz by July 31.



## Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure

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This brochure was created by the Florida Department of Children and Families, and shares important information about what goes into making the Rosen JCC Early Childhood Learning Center a licensed child care.

## Influenza Virus Brochure

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Required by the Florida Department of Children and Families, this informative brochure provide information detailing the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus.

## Distracted Adult Brochure

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Required by the Florida Department of Children and Families, this brochure provides information regarding the potential for distracted adults to fail to drop off a child at the facility/home and instead leave them in the adult's vehicle upon arrival at the adult's destination.

**Parents are required to view and acknowledge receipt of the above brochures as part of the enrollment process.**



# CHAPTER 2

## Your Child's Education

Curriculum

12

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Classroom Supplies

16

# CURRICULUM

Our curriculums are designed to ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

## Infants and Toddlers

**Story S-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-r-s** - This curriculum provides a print-rich and literature-rich environment for young children. It is an interactive teaching idea based on the story or content in a children's book.

The story s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-r is designed for active participation, for manipulating objects, and for learning about concepts that includes math exploration, literacy, science/discovering and social skills. These activities are fun and guided by what we know about young children as learners.

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## Twos

**Building Language for Literacy: Phase 1** - This curriculum prepares children today for reading success tomorrow. It is based on research on early literacy development.

It features original-loving characters who inspire and motivate learning and built upon children's home and community experiences to create meaningful connections.

## Threes

**Building Language for Literacy: Phase 2** - This curriculum prepares children today for reading success tomorrow. It is based on research on early literacy development.

It features original-loving characters who inspire and motivate learning and built upon children's home and community experiences to create meaningful connections.

This curriculum also introduces math, science, and social skills in a natural sequence to nourish learning one step and a time, with individual attention suited to your child's unique needs.

## Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

A standards-based, comprehensive preschool/ kindergarten curriculum, **Land of the Letter People** successfully immerses children in reading and writing across several content areas and prepares students for success.

This comprehensive program includes thematically organized instruction integrated across content areas, oral language and listening skills, phonological and phonemic awareness, word building and vocabulary development, writing and spelling, as well as social and emotional development.

## Kindergarten

Combining developmentally appropriate literacy, math, science, technology, and social studies experiences in a thematic approach, children learn essential academic and social skills.

Our Kindergarten program provides a rich, comprehensive curriculum as a foundation for future learning, using hands-on and multi-sensory approaches to support learning for all students.





# CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

## Infants

2 - Crib Sheets ("Port-a-Crib" Size)

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3 - Full Changes of Clothing, Including Socks

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4 - Receiving Blankets

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Snacks and Lunch (as applicable)

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Diapers

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Extra Bottles

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Extra Formula and/or Milk

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Pacifier (if used)

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Pre-Measured Formula/Bottles

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Wipes

## Toddlers

3 - Full Changes of Clothing, Including Socks

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Backpack or cloth bag to store items for sleeping

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Bedroll or a sheet and blanket

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Blanket (if used)

---

Snacks and Lunch (as applicable)

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Diapers

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Pacifier (if used)

---

Sippy cups (at least 3 per day)

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Wipes

Our staff has put together a **recommended supplies list** that will assist in making your child's classroom a happy and comfortable environment throughout the day. Listed below are items that you will need to bring to the classroom on the first day of school.

## Twos

3 - Full Changes of Clothing, Including Socks

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Backpack or cloth bag to store items for sleeping

---

Bedroll or a sheet and blanket

---

Blanket (if used)

---

Snacks and Lunch (as applicable)

---

Diapers

---

Pacifier (if used)

---

Sippy cups (at least 3 per day)

---

Wipes

## Threes

Backpack or cloth bag to store items for sleeping

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Bedroll or a sheet and blanket

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Complete set of clothes to keep in cubby  
(including socks and underwear)

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Diapers (if used)

---

Wipes (if used)

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Snacks and Lunch (as applicable)

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

- 1 - Plastic shoebox clear for supplies with your child’s name
- 1 - Backpack - large enough for pocket folders
- 3 - #2 Jumbo pencils
- 1 - Package of colored pencil
- 1 - Box of broad tip washable markers
- 2 - Boxes of Crayola crayons (8 count)
- 1 - 12-inch ruler
- 1 - Pair of blunt 5" scissors
- 1 - Clip Board
- 1 - Box of Watercolors
- 2 - Bottles of Elmer’s Glue (4oz.)
- 4 - Glue Sticks
- 1 - Plastic folder with brad pockets
- 2 - Solid color pocket folders
- 1 - Package of construction paper
- 1 - Refillable Sports Bottle
- 1 - Family picture; 1- picture of child. Please write a description of family on back
- 1 - Set of clothes to keep in cubby (including socks and underwear)
- 1 - Box of tissues
- 2 - Bottles of antibacterial hand soap
- 1 - Box, gallon size Zip lock bags
- 1 - Box, quart size Zip lock bags

Snacks and Lunch

## Kindergarten

1 - Plastic shoebox clear for supplies with your child's name

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1 - Backpack - large enough for pocket folders

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3 - #2 Jumbo pencils

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1 - Package of colored pencil

---

1 - Box of broad tip washable markers

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4 - Boxes of Crayola crayons (24 count)

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1 - 12-inch ruler

---

1 - Pair of blunt 5" scissors

---

1 - Clip Board

---

1 - Box of Watercolors

---

2 - Bottles of Elmer's Glue (4oz.)

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4 - Glue Sticks

---

1 - Plastic folder with brad pockets

---

2 - Solid color pocket folders

---

1 - Package of construction paper

---

1 - Refillable Sports Bottle

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1 - Family picture; 1- picture of child. Please write a description of family on back

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1 - Set of clothes to keep in cubby (including socks and underwear)

---

1 - Box of tissues

---

2 - Bottles of antibacterial hand soap

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1 - Box, gallon size Zip lock bags

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1 - Box, quart size Zip lock bags

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Snacks and Lunch



# CHAPTER 3

## Policies and Procedures

Kashrut Policy	22
Peanut and Tree Nut Allergy Policy	24
Attendance and Tardiness Policy	26

# KASHRUT

## Food preparation and restrictions

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The purpose of the Early Childhood Learning Center's Kashrut Policy is to underscore our mission as a central agency of the Jewish community, open and welcoming to all segments of the community. Members, staff, and the general public are expected to adhere to the Kashrut Policy.

- 1 There will be no mixing of dairy and meat, and there are no pork or shellfish products allowed in our facility. This includes the vending machines on campus.
- 2 The Early Childhood Learning Center and all Youth and Camp programs permit the children to send in meat or dairy lunches, but cannot combine meat and dairy together in their lunches. No pork or shellfish products are allowed.
- 3 All snacks served at the Early Childhood Learning Center and Youth programs will be dairy. If meat is ever served for a special event within our children's programs, it must be Certified Kosher meat, and never combined with dairy.
- 4 Any food brought in the Rosen JCC building, or held on the Rosen JCC campus, or held off-site for Rosen JCC sponsored programs or events, must adhere to our Kosher policy.
- 5 All meat that is served at Rosen JCC programs or events must be Kosher meat. Meals served at meetings with a finite number of participants may be an exception. For example, meat or chicken may be served, but not mixed with dairy, and no pork or shellfish is allowed. However, food served in these settings should be acceptable to all individuals who will be attending.



- 6 For all Rosen JCC sponsored programs or events that include a served meal, a Certified Kosher option will be made available on the invitation or promotional materials.
- 7 Staff is not bound by these guidelines for their own personal use. The staff lounge is exempt from the Kashrut Policy.
- 8 The Kashrut Policy regarding Youth, Teen or Adult Travel groups (field trips, etc.) is as follows: (I) Individuals ordering food may purchase the food of their choice, and (II) If a Rosen JCC Staff Member is ordering food for the group, they must adhere to the Kashrut Policy.
- 9 Outside vendors, individuals, or corporations renting our facility or campus who are providing food to the Membership and the public, must operate under our Kashrut Policy as stated, and be given our policy in writing.

# TREE AND PEANUT ALLERGIES

You have all read the headlines and seen the news stories: food allergies are a growing concern in schools and camps across America. Millions of children - children who are perfectly healthy and normal in every other way - must watch every single bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life-threatening reaction.

Some of our students have serious peanut and tree nut allergies - the foods that claim more lives each year than any other. A child with a serious peanut or tree nut allergy can suffer a reaction merely by coming into contact with a food that contains peanuts or tree nuts.

For these children, all nuts are poison. Peanut butter is particularly deadly to anaphylactic children because it sticks to surfaces, to cutlery, and to hands and faces. By establishing the guidelines in our Peanut and Tree Nut Allergy Policy, our goal is to make the Early Childhood Learning Center nut-free. To do this, we need everyone's cooperation. Even a small trace of peanuts can be deadly. We realize this request poses an inconvenience for you when packing your child's health snacks and lunches. However, we wish to express our sincere appreciation for your support and understanding of this potentially life-threatening allergy.

This is a learning process for all of us, but we trust that you understand how deeply important it is to respect and adhere to these guidelines. If throughout the course of the year you have any questions or

**For the safety of all children, we have placed the following safety guidelines into effect:**

- 1 Please do not send any peanuts, peanut butter, or foods containing peanuts or peanut butter to school.
- 2 Please do not send any tree nuts (ex. almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.) or foods containing these items to school.
- 3 We will not be doing any classroom projects that involve using peanuts or tree nuts.
- 4 Please let your child's teacher know a few days ahead of time when you would like to celebrate your child's birthday, so that any food-allergic children can provide his/her own safe treats, if necessary.
- 5 We will be extremely careful about the ingredients in all of the food items that the school provides.
- 6 Parent-provided "Healthy Snacks" are limited to uncut fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 7 If your child ate peanut butter for breakfast, please make sure that his/her hands are washed with soap and water before leaving for school. Water alone does not do the trick!

# ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

## Policies for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program

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The purpose of the Early Childhood Learning Center's Kashrut Policy is to underscore our mission as a central agency of the Jewish community, open and welcoming to all segments of the community. Members, staff, and the general public are expected to adhere to the Kashrut Policy.

### Tardiness

All VPK instruction begins promptly at 9:30 AM. The instructional day starts at 9:30 AM and all students are expected to be in place and ready to start the day. Children that are VPK ONLY should be in their classrooms by 9:30 AM. VPK children in extended-day programs should report directly to their classrooms, as per their scheduled time. Arrivals after 9:30 AM are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arrival child, as well. We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be running late, but more than twice a month will not be acceptable and will be cause for termination from the VPK program.

## Absences

Daily absences during the scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. Not only is the Early Childhood Learning Center linked to attendance, but also the child's success upon entrance into Kindergarten.

Absences cannot exceed more than 20% of the instructional days each month. This means the child can only miss three days out of each month. Therefore, the Early Childhood Learning Center has the right to dismiss a child after 25 VPK absences, excused or unexcused. The 20% does not apply to schedule holidays or other school closings. Please refer to our school calendar for holiday closures and plan your vacations in accordance with these dates. A child with excessive absences (more than 20% each month) may jeopardize his/her continued enrollment in the VPK program.

The Early Childhood Learning Center will allow one document five-day absence during the 180-day instructional period due to "Extraordinary Circumstances". Documentation must be in advance, explain the reason for the five-day absence, and be dated and signed by the child's legal custodial adult for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest.
- Physician or dentist appointment
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation
- Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child's family member
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena)
- Special education or related services for the child's disability
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Family vacation, not to exceed five excused absences per program year

It is mandatory that you notify your child's teacher through Brightwheel if your child is going to be absent or late to school by 9:00 AM. If the message has not been received by this time, the childcare personnel will contact the child's parents to check on their status. If the childcare personnel are unable to reach the parent, emergency contacts will be notified.



# CHAPTER 4

## Things to Know

Lunches and Snacks	30
Brightwheel	31
PikMyKid	32
Academic Calendar	



# LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Lunch is a pleasant, social, learning time for the children. They are encouraged to taste everything, finish what they can, and share pleasant conversation with their friends and teachers. Children are not forced to eat at any time. Leftover foods that will spoil are thrown out. Unopened packages will be sent home. Parents will be notified by the teacher if there is a change in their child's appetite or if there is a particular food that their

## Lunches

This school year, we will be offering catered hot lunches daily. All orders should be placed online one week before the new month. We will try to accommodate day-of requests, if ordered by 8:00 AM. To view the menu and to place an online order, visit [rosenjcc.org/lunch](http://rosenjcc.org/lunch). The cost for lunch is \$6.00 per day.

## Snacks

A nutritious snack and beverage will be served to all children mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Children are encouraged to taste everything. Alternate choices are not offered. A snack menu will be sent home monthly. If your child has specific food allergies or special needs, parents are encouraged to speak with either the teacher or an administrator and arrangements can be made to store whatever snack you need to send in.

# BRIGHTWHEEL

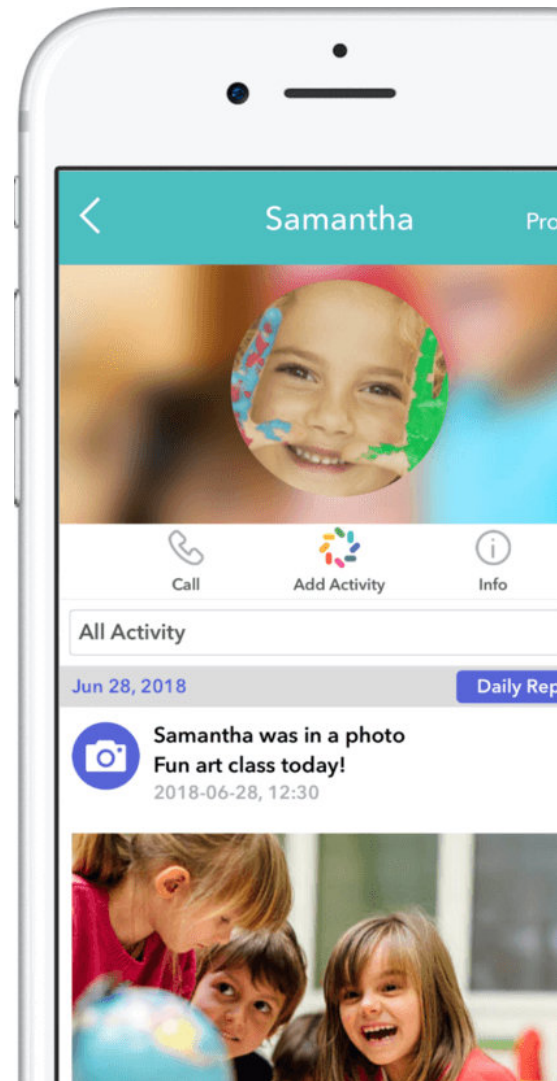
## A real-time feed of activities throughout the day

Using the innovative Brightwheel app, parents can have real-time communication with teachers and staff. From time to time, administrators will send essential messages on Brightwheel. We recommend enabling your phone to receive notifications so that you can make the most of the instant messaging features. Your child will be placed in the Brightwheel system prior to their intended start date. When registering, please wait to receive an invitation email from the Early Childhood Learning Center. This will allow you to easily create and edit both your parent and child's profile. For security purposes, we ask that you upload a current photo of your child during the registration process.

During the day, you will receive private, real-time updates and photos of your child delivered to your mobile device. Your child's teacher will use Brightwheel to digitally sign-in and sign-out your child each day when they arrive in the classroom in the morning and prior to dismissal in the afternoon.

We ask that you communicate with your child's teachers directly through Brightwheel if your child will not be attending for a specific day or an extended period of time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us [eclc@rosenjcc.org](mailto:eclc@rosenjcc.org).



# PIKMYKID CAR LINE APP

We are excited to share that the Early Childhood Learning Center will be using a program called PikMyKid to help organize the daily dismissal process and improve safety. This program is a phone application downloaded onto your smartphone (found in the Google Play or Apple app stores) and will allow you to notify us of pick-up changes and authorize others to pick-up your child, as well as help organize the car line during pick-up.

The registration process is easy and we ask that all parents register with the phone application as soon as possible. Please make sure you register with your personal current mobile phone number or the app will not allow you to access your child's information.

If you do not think that we have your mobile phone number on file, or if your child does not appear in your app's home page, contact us at [ecclc@rosenjcc.org](mailto:ecclc@rosenjcc.org) after registration with your child's name, classroom, and updated email address and phone number for yourself. If after completing these steps you still do not see your child's information on the home screen of the PikMyKid app, you may need to log out and log back in before the updated information will be displayed.

Anyone who will be picking up your child should also register themselves with the application. Their screen will be blank and they will not have any authorization until you allow it within the app.

Additionally, please keep a lookout for the car tags that will be sent home with your child. These care tags should be placed on the dashboard of the vehicle that will be picking up your child for the day. This helps us safely and efficiently escort children from the Early Childhood Learning Center to your vehicle.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us [ecclc@rosenjcc.org](mailto:ecclc@rosenjcc.org).

# ACADEMIC CALENDAR

## The 2021-22 school year at a glance

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The academic calendar provides an overview of the Early Childhood Learning Center's official academic calendar at a glance and includes information such as first and last day of school, holidays, and changes to facility hours of operation.

The most up-to-date version of the calendar can be found on our website at [rosenjcc.org/calendar](https://rosenjcc.org/calendar).



# CHAPTER 5

## Additional Resources

Separation Anxiety and Transitions	36
Potty Training	38
Toddlers and Biting	42
Positive Techniques to Change Behavior	50
Hand Hygiene	52

# SEPARATION ANXIETY AND TRANSITIONS

Starting an Early Childhood program is a significant event. This may be the child's first step into the world outside their home or his first experience of having someone take care of him who is not part of his family. This could be a child's first experience in an early childhood program.

It is important to remember that the term anxiety is different from the term fear. Fear has a specific object or person attached to it whereas anxiety is objectless, referring to the unknown. If we say to a fearful child at the door of an early childhood room, "What are you afraid of?", it is impossible for the child to respond because there is no "what." Separation anxiety is a real fear for some children. There are many ways in which children express their anxiety, from simple clinging or acting quieter than usual, to tears or temper tantrums. The child is usually not alone in experiencing this anxiety. Almost always their significant adult also shares the anxiety which works subconsciously to create anxiety in the child.

**Here are some messages we hope to convey to children as they begin our program:**

**You will be safe here.** We will make sure that you are well-fed, well-rested, clean and safe. We will take care of both your physical and emotional needs. Your feelings will be respected. If you need to cry, we will offer listening, support and comfort.

**You will be taken care of by a special person who you will get to know very well.** Your special teacher will learn your communication style and you will learn hers. She will talk about your family and will help you when you are missing your family.

**Every day your family will come to pick you up and take you home.** There will be a predictable schedule that will help you to learn when you can expect to be picked up. Your teacher will let your family know all about your day at school.



**Your family is welcome here, too.** Your family is an important part of this program. They might spend time here talking to your teachers or other families. We plan to have pictures of your family displayed where you can always see them.

**There are lots of fun and interesting things to explore here, and you can choose what you want to play with.**

This is a place for you to explore when you are ready. There are things for you to play and learn with; there will be active and quiet activities for you; there will be things to do with friends and with teachers and things to do alone. When you are ready you will be able to make new friends.

**Here are some guidelines to consider as children transition into our program.**

- One week before school starts, say: "You are going to start school and meet new friends and have a lot of fun!"
- Go through the daily routine of who will be there and what things they will be doing.
- As the teachers assist children become engaged in an activity, your presence will be less vital. The staff has experience in helping to ease a child's separation from their significant adult.
- Do not "slip away" as a way to deal with or avoid the pains of separating. If you are sneaky, children will learn that you can't be trusted.
- State in an assured manner that you accept their feelings, but that you know they will be fine.
- When it is time to leave, please leave. When you say "you will be fine" or return in response to crying, screaming, etc., the message you give the child is that there might be something to be afraid of.

**Daily Transitions** - Children in the Extended Day (Full Day) program might meet in a different room before 9am or after 4:30pm. In the mornings, place their belongings in their regular classroom. In the afternoons, their belongings will be in their regular classrooms. Remember to sign them in and out each day.

# POTTY TRAINING

## Learning to use the toilet

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There is not one “right” way or one “right” age to learn how to use the toilet. Here are some questions and thoughts to keep in mind as you help your child learn to use the toilet.

When and how to help your child learn to use the potty depends on how ready your child is, as well as your own beliefs and values about toilet training. There is not one “right” way or age to learn. Here are some questions and thoughts to keep in mind as you help your child learn to use the toilet.

## Signs that children are ready for potty training

Most children develop control over their bowel and bladder by 18 months. This skill is necessary for children to physically be able to use the toilet. How ready a child is emotionally to begin learning to use the potty depends on the individual child. Some children are ready at 18 months, and others are ready at 3. While every child is different, about 22% of children are out of diapers by 2½, and 88% of children are out of diapers by 3½.

**Your child is ready to learn to use the toilet when he or she:** stays dry for at least 2 hours at a time, or after naps; recognizes that she is urinating or having a bowel movement; Is developing physical skills that are critical to potty training—the ability to walk, to pull pants up and down, and to get onto/off the potty (with some help); copies a parent’s toileting behavior; can follow simple instructions; and most important, your child wants to use the potty.

## When not to start potty training

There are some issues that can sometimes get in the way of successful potty training. For example, when children are going through a significant change or several changes at once (see list below) it might be smart to hold off on adventures in potty training. At these times, children often feel overwhelmed and sometimes lose skills they have already learned or were making progress on, like potty training.

**Common situations that can cause stress and are generally not good times to start training include:** an upcoming or recent family move; beginning new or changing existing child care arrangements; switching from crib to bed; when you are expecting or have recently had a new baby; a major illness, a recent death, or some other family crisis.

If your child is in the middle of potty training during a stressful time and seems to be having more accidents than usual, know that this is normal. Your child needs all of your patience and support right now. Your child will return to previous level of potty training once things have gotten back to normal.

## Starting potty training

It can be helpful to think of potty training as a process in which both you and your child have your own “jobs” to do.

**It is the parent’s responsibility to create a supportive learning environment.** This means that you: recognize that your child is in control of his or her body; let your child decide whether to use the potty or a diaper/pull-up each day; teach your child words for body parts, urine, and bowel movements; offer your child the tools he/she needs to be successful at toileting (such as a small potty, potty seat, stool, etc.); expect and handle potty accidents without anger; and avoid punishment as well as too much praise around toilet use. (This can make children feel bad when they aren’t successful.)

**It is your child’s responsibility to:** decide whether to use the toilet or a diaper/pull-up; learn his body’s signals for when he needs to use the toilet; and use the toilet at his own speed.

## Starting potty training (continued)

Finding a toilet training method that works for your family is the key. No matter how you do it, remember this is a learning process that takes time, with many accidents along the way. Being patient is the best way you can support your child as she learns.

Keep in mind that children with special needs may take longer to learn to use the potty. They may also need special equipment, and a lot of help and support from you. If you need assistance with your child's toilet training, speak with your child's health care provider or community service coordinator.

## What to avoid when potty training my toddler

Toddlers are all about trying to gain some control over their world. They are using their growing physical, thinking, and language skills to gain some power over themselves, their bodies, and their surroundings. This natural and healthy desire for control can lead to power struggles, as children quickly figure out that one way to feel in charge is by refusing to do something they know their parent wants them to do. And, for better or worse, learning to use the potty is way up there on most parents' list of what they really, really, really want their children to do—and children quickly pick up on that. (Just picture mom and dad clapping and jumping up and down when they see their child's first bowel movement in the potty.) Toilet training is particularly ripe for power struggles because it is so tied up with toddlers wanting to have control over their own bodies.

So it's important to approach toilet training matter-of-factly and without a lot of emotion. Think of it as just another skill you are helping your child learn. If you show anger or disappointment when it's not going well, or overwhelming joy when it is, it lets your child know this is something you want him to do badly. Refusing to do it becomes a very powerful way for your child to feel in control. The more emotional you are, the more it shows your child how much it matters to you that he use the potty.

It is also very important not to force your child to use the potty because it can cause intense power struggles. These power struggles sometimes lead to children trying to regain control over their bodies by withholding urine or bowel movements. This can create physical problems, like constipation. So if you are starting to see power struggles developing over potty training, it might help to take the pressure off. Stop talking about potty training or doing anything about it for a little while, until your child shows signs of readiness and interest again.

### To use rewards for potty training or not

Many parents wonder about offering rewards for using the potty—a sticker, an extra sweet, or a little toy every time their child is successful on the toilet. Although these kinds of rewards may encourage progress in the short run, the concern is that for some children, the pressure of “success” in the form of the reward creates anxiety or feelings of failure when they have a (very normal and even expected) potty accident. The other risk is that the use of rewards for toileting can lead children to expect rewards for doing almost anything—finishing a meal, brushing teeth, etc. When parents are matter-of-fact about potty training and don’t make a big deal about it, children are more likely to follow their own internal desire to reach this important milestone.

### When preschoolers are still not interested in potty training

Reach out to your child’s health care provider with your questions or concerns about potty training. Occasionally, children have physical issues that make potty training more difficult, so a check-up is always a good idea. You may also want to sit down with a child development specialist who can help you figure out what the challenges around potty training might be for your individual child and can help you identify toilet learning strategies that might be more successful.

# TODDLERS AND BITING

## Finding the right response

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Biting is a very common behavior among toddlers, which means there are a lot of concerned parents out there. You are not alone. The good news is that there is a lot that parents and caregivers can do to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate biting.

To set the stage for effectively addressing this challenge, avoid calling or thinking of your child as a “biter” and ask others not to use this term. Labeling children can actually lead to them taking on the identity assigned to them, which can intensify biting behavior rather than eliminate it.

## Shaming and harsh punishment do not reduce biting

Children bite in order to cope with a challenge or fulfill a need. For example, your child may be biting to express a strong feeling (like frustration), communicate a need for personal space (maybe another child is standing too close) or to satisfy a need for oral stimulation. Trying your best to understand the underlying cause of the biting will help you develop an effective response. This makes it more likely that you will be successful in eliminating the behavior.

### **Why do toddlers bite?**

There are many reasons why toddlers might bite. Some are listed below. If you think one of these reasons might be why your child is biting, read specific strategies on how to respond later in the article. Toddlers might bite if they: lack language skills necessary for expressing important needs or strong feelings like

anger, frustration, joy, etc.; are overwhelmed by the sounds, light or activity level in the current setting; are experimenting to see what will happen; need more active playtime; are over-tired; are teething; have a need for oral stimulation.

## What can I do to prevent biting?

As you watch your child at play, you can begin to anticipate when a bite might occur. The following questions can guide you in identifying the kinds of situations that often lead to biting:

1. What happened right before the bite?
2. Who was your child playing with?
3. Who was bit? Is it always the same child, or different children each time?
4. What was your child doing?
5. Where was your child?
6. Who was caring for your child?

### **Strategies to Prevent Biting -**

If you see signs that your child might be on the verge of biting, you can:

**Distract your child with a toy or book.** Suggest looking out the window or take a walk to another room or outside. The goal is to reduce the tension and shift your child's attention. When parents shift their focus and energy to the child who was bitten, they clearly communicate that biting does not result in more attention.

**Suggest how your child might handle the situation that is triggering the need to bite.** For example: Marcus, you can tell Ana: "You are a little too close to me. I don't like it when you touch my hair." If you think your child might be biting due to a need for oral stimulation, offer your child something he can safely bite and chew—a cracker, some carrot sticks, or a teether.

(continued on next page...)

**Suggest ways to share.** Take out a kitchen timer to give children a visual reminder of how long they can each play with a particular toy. In a group caregiving setting, you will want to make sure that the classroom has more than one of the most popular toys. Sharing is one of the most common triggers for biting.

**Reading books about biting can also help.** As you read, ask your child how the different characters might be feeling. If you have an older toddler, you can ask him to “read” the book to you, by telling you what is happening based on the pictures.

## What do I do when my toddler bites?

**First, keep your own feelings in check.** When a toddler bites, you might feel frustrated, infuriated, annoyed, embarrassed, and/or worried. All of these feelings are normal, but responding when you are in an intense emotional state is usually not a good idea. So calm yourself before you respond—count to 10, take a deep breath, or do whatever works for you.

**In a firm, matter-of-fact voice (but not angry or yelling), say: No biting. Biting hurts.** Comment on how the other child is feeling: Look, Madison is crying. She is crying because you bit her. Biting hurts. Keep it short, simple and clear.

**Next, shift your attention to the child who was bitten.** Often when a child bites, adults pay a lot of attention to him or her. This is usually negative attention, but it is still very reinforcing and can actually cause the biting behavior to continue, rather than stop. When parents shift their focus and energy to the child who was bitten, they clearly communicate that biting does not result in more attention. Showing concern and sympathy for the child who was bitten also teaches empathy.

**Remember, learning a new behavior takes time.**

**If your child is verbal and able to talk about his experiences, go back and talk with him about the different strategies he can use next time,** instead of biting: If Tyler grabs your cuddly and won't let it go, you can say: “Tyler, that is my cuddly. Give it to me.” If he won't give it back, you can come get me and I will help you. Or: When you want to play, you can say: “Will you play with me?” Then your friend knows you are ready to play.



**Help the children move on.** Ask: What would you like to play now? It might help to offer activities, like play-dough, drawing, or playing in sand or water, that allow them to release energy in constructive ways and can help them relax. The toddler who bit and the child who was hurt should not be made to play with one another, unless they want to.

Remember, learning a new behavior takes time. Your toddler may bite again, so continue watching playtime closely. It also helps to use the same words (No biting. Biting hurts.) as consistently as possible to emphasize the message.

## Strategies to respond based on your child's development

### 1. Support Communication and Language Skills -

If you think biting is a substitute for not having the language skills to express himself you can:

**Put into words what you guess your child might be thinking:** Tanya, do you want to have a turn on the tricycle? You can ask Henry, "Can I have a turn now?"

**Help your child express his feelings in appropriate ways.** If your child is really angry, you can say: Max, you are so mad! You are really, really angry. Then suggest a way to deal with these feelings: Making angry lion faces and growling, ripping up newspapers, punching the couch cushions, banging a drum, jumping up and down—whatever is acceptable to you.

**Reinforce your child when he uses words to share his feelings:** You asked me for a turn blowing bubbles instead of grabbing them. Great job. Here you go.

**Give your child age-appropriate choices,** for example, about what to wear or who to play with. Having choices gives children a sense of control and can reduce biting.

**Consider a speech-language assessment** if you think your child's verbal skills might be delayed.

## 2. Help Your Child Cope With Feeling Overwhelmed -

If your child is easily overwhelmed by lights, sound, and activity, you can:

**Keep television and radio off or on low volumes.**

**Avoid big crowds and high-activity settings** like the mall or the playground on a sunny Saturday morning.

**Schedule activities with a lot of sensory input** (like clothes-shopping or trips to dentist or doctor) for your child's "best" times of day, when he is fed and well-rested.

**Talk with your child's other caregivers** about his difficulty managing a lot of sensory input. Brainstorm ways to reduce the stimulation in his other caregiving settings.

**Give your child a firm "bear" hug** when you sense she is feeling stressed and out of control and perhaps about to bite. This can help children feel "held together" which can be very soothing.

**Create a "cozy corner"** in your house with pillows, books and other quiet toys like stuffed animals, or use a play tent as a safe place to take a break. Explain that this is a place your child can go if he wants to be alone or feels out of control and needs to cool down. Ensure that your child's other caregiving settings have a "cozy corner" as well.

## 3. Explain the Effects of Their Actions

If your child is experimenting to see what will happen when he bites, you can:

**Provide immediate, firm, unemotional (as best you can) feedback** (No biting. Biting hurts.). Shift attention away from your child to the child who was bit.

**Help your child understand about cause-and-effect:** You bit Macy and now she is crying. When you bite, it hurts your friends. Biting is never okay.

#### 4. Provide Opportunities for Active Play

If your child needs more active play, you can:

**Set aside time each day to be active.** Take a walk after breakfast. Turn music on while you are cooking dinner and have your child dance with you.

**Talk with your child's other caregivers** to ensure that active play is a part of everyday. Toddlers who bite should not be punished by losing "recess" time. This may make the problem worse.

**Build activity into your child's everyday routines** - for example, doing 10 jumping jacks before lunch or stretching before bed.

#### 5. Address Sleep Challenges

If your child is over-tired, you can:

**Try incrementally moving his/her bedtime 30 to 60 minutes earlier over a few weeks.**

**Set up a schedule of naps** or, if she won't nap, "quiet times" when she is in her crib or bed with a book and soft music playing.

**Avoid play-dates** or other potentially stressful activities on days when she is very tired.

**Tell your child's other caregivers when she has not slept well** or is tired so they can shadow her, in order to reduce the possibility of a biting incident.

## 6. Support Healthy Teething

If your child is teething, you can:

**Offer him a teether or cold washcloth to bite.**

**Talk to your child's caregivers** to make sure they understand he is teething and to identify appropriate teethers in the classroom.

## 7. Provide Oral Stimulation

If your child has a need for oral stimulation:

**Offer her crunchy (healthy) snacks at regular intervals** across the day. Research has found that this intervention can actually reduce biting incidents.

## When to seek help

While biting is very common behavior, it usually stops by age 3 to 3 1/2. If your toddler continues to bite, or the number of bites increases instead of decreases over time, it is probably a good idea to request an assessment from a child development specialist.

This professional can help you identify the reason for the biting and develop a strategy for addressing the behavior. Remember, there is no quick fix. Over time, and with assistance, your child will stop biting and use more appropriate ways to express her needs.

### **What absolutely WILL NOT work to stop biting?**

**Shaming or harsh punishment do not reduce biting**, but they do increase your child's fear and worry—which can actually increase biting incidents. Aggressive responses like these also do not teach your child the social skills he or she needs to cope with the situations that trigger biting.

**Biting your child back, which some might suggest, is not a useful response.** There is no research to show this behavior reduces biting. However, it does teach your child that it's okay to bite people when you are upset! Keep in mind that human bites can be dangerous, and biting constitutes child abuse. This is not an appropriate response to toddler biting.

# POSITIVE TECHNIQUES TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR

Basic to any good early childhood program is an understanding of how to guide children toward the goal of self-control. Children need limits - rules help young children develop internal control and skills for dealing with themselves and the world effectively.

**Objectives of discipline:** To change behavior without lowering child's self-esteem or damaging your relationship with the child while at the same time teaching the child self-control.

**Environmental control** - Prevent problems through an arrangement of space, traffic floor patterns, developmentally appropriate activities, smooth transitions, keep your house as childproof as possible to prevent problems.

**Giving the child a choice** - Only when you intend to allow them to choose. "Do you want to play with the children or play by yourself?"

**Positive rather than negative statements** - "Use two hands to climb" rather than "Don't fall," or "Friends play together," rather than "Don't fight."

**Use "I" statements** - Describe what you see, what you feel, what you expect: "I need for you to finish your lunch," or "I'm disappointed when you do not clean up when I asked."

**Verbal positive reinforcement** - Praise the child for specific behavior: "You are learning to take turns," or "I like how you waited your turn."

**Positive consequences** - Emphasize the positive things that will happen if the rules are followed, rather than on what will happen if the child is disobedient: "When we clean up the toys, we can go outside."



# HAND HYGIENE

## Reduce the number of infections your kids get each year

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It's no secret that kids share everything, including germs. Hand washing is the single most effective strategy in reducing the spread of infections. From the bathroom to the classroom, from the kitchen to the playground, hand washing protects kids of all ages – and even saves lives.

### How to wash (and dry)

Kids typically spend less than 5 seconds washing and leave the sink with their hands dripping wet. A 20-30 second wash and thorough drying will reduce the germ load by as much as a 1000-fold. Teach your kids to wash until they finish singing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” or the “ABCs”; this makes your job easy because both songs have the same tune and last exactly 20 seconds each.

Use lots of water and lots of rubbing with soap to create a good lather – include the wrists, between the fingers, and around the nails – followed by lots of water again. How kids dry their hands is also important; the drier the hands, the fewer the leftover germs. Use clean towels (paper or cloth) and thorough rubbing; electric dryers aren't as effective in germ reduction.



## What to wash with

Simple soap doesn't kill germs; it cleans hands mechanically, lifting and washing away dirt and organic material that contain germs. But, simple soap works. Studies in day care and schools show that the rates of diarrhea, vomiting illnesses, respiratory infections, and absent days are reduced dramatically by simple soap and water washes.

Products that kill germs include alcohol-containing "hand sanitizers", and antibiotic- containing "antibacterial" soaps. Alcohol kills many germs on contact, and has been incorporated into "rubs", rinses, foams and gels that don't require water, making them ideal for your purse and the glove box in the car. These are safe products, but will sting if used on cuts or scrapes.

Liquid soap in a dispenser is less likely than bar soap to become contaminated with the very germs we're trying to protect kids from.

## When to wash

Germs get on kids' hands from contact with other people, animals, and inanimate objects. The kids then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth and the germ invades and causes infection. Good luck teaching kids not to put their hands in their own or each other's eyes, noses, or mouths, so strategically timed hand washing is the next best option. Here are the 10 most important times to wash:

1. After playing with a sick friend or sibling.
2. After using the bathroom (use the hand towel to turn off the sink and open the bathroom door).
3. Before eating.
4. After high-fiving the opposing team at the end of a sports competition.
5. After recess.
6. After school or day care.
7. After playing with animals or in areas where animals hang out.
8. After playing outside.
9. After blowing your nose or coughing into your hands.
10. Before bedtime.

Many studies have proven that effective strategies for hand washing, like those mentioned above, will keep your kids healthier – fewer respiratory infections and fewer gastrointestinal infections. Your kids will miss less school and day care, and you'll miss less work.

