



Family Handbook & Policy Guide

Revised 11/15/2023

***Gan Ami** (Gahn ah-mee) is a Hebrew term that means “Garden of my People.” In Israel, a preschool is referred to as a Gan. Our Gan is filled with our people: children, faculty, parents, and grandparents...a place where we can all come together as a community to learn and grow.*

B’ruchim Haba’im!

Welcome to Gan Ami!

Dear Gan Ami families:

We welcome you to our school community! We are honored to share this Family Handbook with you as a tool to serve you as you begin or continue at Gan Ami.

Communication with our families is integral to our program. We will be working hard to get to know you. A network of communication truly exists between our children, our parents, and our faculty. These three components work together to create a spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and the co-construction of knowledge. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with your child's specific educators, the Gan Ami faculty, and the leadership team within Gan Ami.

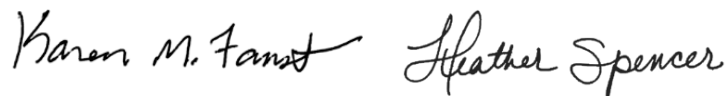
We weave Jewish values into the children’s everyday experiences at Gan Ami, including: **Hachnasat Orchim** (welcoming guests), and **Kehillah** (community), responsibility, dignity, kindness, tradition, and respect. We also incorporate **Tzedakah** (charity) as an opportunity to teach the children about taking care of others and creating a spirit of giving. Human values help our families feel welcome in our Jewish school – we all seek to support young children in their humanity and their understanding of the dignity of all people.

Our philosophy of education includes inspiration from the schools of Reggio Emilia, where children are seen as capable, parents are active partners in the educational process, and talented faculty are both guides and researchers. Play is essential to the growth of a child, and we offer engaging, hands-on learning environments and experiences to challenge and support all children in their quest to become life-long learners.

Please read this handbook carefully so that you will become more familiar with Gan Ami’s programs, policies, and procedures. If we can be of assistance to you and your family, please call or visit. We strive to foster positive and long-lasting relationships between home, school, and our larger JCC community.

We look forward to our learning journey together and we welcome you to our **mishpacha**, our family.

B’shalom,



Karen Faust and Heather Spencer

Directors of Early Childhood

You can follow Gan Ami and JCC on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/JCCGanAmi

www.facebook.com/HarryandRoseSamsonFamilyJCC

Hours of Operation, Locations, and Contact Information

Hours of Operation

Monday-Thursday: 7:00 AM-6:00 PM

Friday: 7:00 AM-5:30 PM

Locations and Contact Information

Gan Ami Early Childhood Education Mequon

Linda & Fred Wein Family Center

10813 North Port Washington Rd., Mequon WI 53092

Karen Faust, Early Childhood Director, Mequon

kfaust@jccmilwaukee.org

262-242-9871

Gan Ami Early Childhood Whitefish Bay

Karl Campus

6255 N Santa Monica Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53217

Heather Spencer, Early Childhood Director, Whitefish Bay

hspencer@jccmilwaukee.org

414-967-8189

Account and Billing questions:

Amy Pequignot, Gan Ami Business Manager

aPequignot@jccmilwaukee.org

414-967-8173

Methods of Enrollment/Population Served

Enrollment forms may be requested by telephone or email. Parents are encouraged to tour the facility prior to enrolling. Placement shall be confirmed based on evaluation of child, availability, completion of enrollment forms, and receipt of deposit. Each location only serves children 6 weeks through 5 years of age.

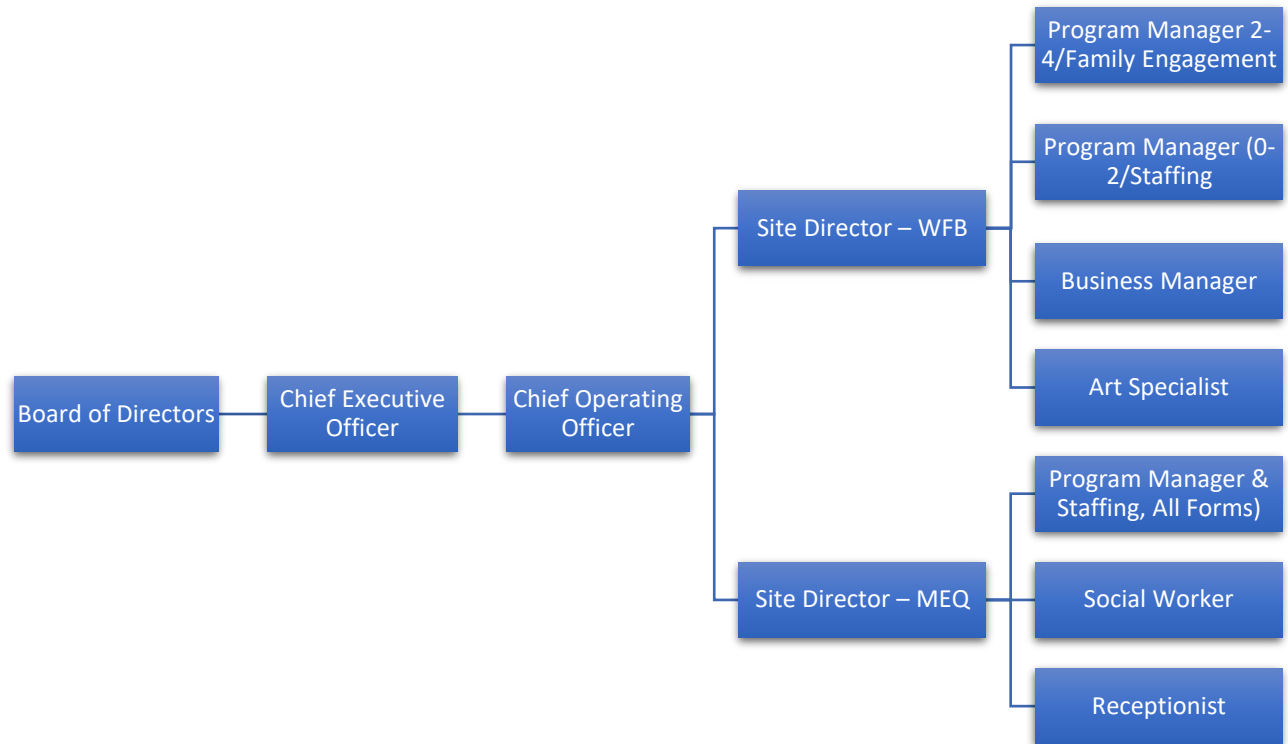
Mission

Creating spaces. Building opportunities. Inspiring Jewish moments for diverse communities.

Our Values

- B'tzelem Elohim - All are made in the image of God.
- Hachnasat Orchim - Welcoming all guests.
- Kavod - Honor and respect.
- Kehillah - Community.
- Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh - All are responsible for one another.
- Tikkun Olam - Repair the world.

Administrative Structure



Attendance

- Children may attend Gan Ami on pre-arranged half-day or full day schedules, with a minimum of three days per week. For more information, please refer to the current contract for more information.
- Educators in each classroom will take daily attendance on a pre-printed, monthly classroom attendance sheet.
- Parents are encouraged to call the school’s main line or leave their child’s classroom a message on Remini if their child will be absent or is arriving later than 9:15am. If a child is absent and the parent has not notified the school, the teacher will call the home or send a message on Remini, the school’s communication system, to verify the child’s absence.
- Educators will record when parents drop off and pick up their children on Remini. Educators will always maintain responsibility for every child in their care. Information on late pick-up, absences and vacation policy is available under the Enrollment, Fee Structure & Discharge Policy section. At the end of the month all attendance forms are uploaded to the secure Early Childhood drive.

Taxes

The JCC billing system allows users to log in and print their own receipts. If you need help creating an account, please contact the Gan Ami Business Manager, or the JCC Membership team.

THE TAX ID# FOR GAN AMI EARLY CHILDHOOD: is **39-0806234**

Confidentiality

Staff will maintain all child records to ensure confidentiality of all personal information. Parents and persons who have written authorization may access children's records upon request. Only other agencies that have legally authorized access will be allowed to review records.

Nondiscrimination

The JCC is committed to provide equal opportunities and does not discriminate by race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, creed, or special needs. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights (Office of Adjudication), 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632- 9992 (Voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal Relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The JCC Early Childhood Department complies with all aspects of ADA requirements and will, therefore, afford reasonable accommodations for children with known disabilities unless such accommodations would cause an undue hardship to the JCC. Children with special needs will be integrated into JCC programs. Staff will meet individually with parents to develop a program that works for the child and classroom.

JCC's Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) Covenant

We empower a sense of belonging, where every individual can express their authentic selves, through our intentional experiences and demonstrated values.

Terms of License

The Gan Ami Early Childhood Family Handbook, outlining all Center philosophies, policies, and procedures and Wisconsin Administrative Code, HFS s 39.93, Licensing Rules for Group Day Care Centers are available upon request. Copies of each of these booklets are also available in the Gan Ami Early Childhood offices. Our state license, accreditation information, and the record of our last licensing visit are posted on the wall in the Gan Ami Early Childhood Entry Way.

License/Posting

All JCC Early Childhood programs will display the following:

- Group Day Care License on the main bulletin board of each school for parent review. This license will reflect days, hours and months of operation, ages of children to be served as well as the maximum number of children to be served at any given time.
- The most recent licensing inspection report will be posted next to the license including any non-compliance or enforcement actions.
- The JCC will comply with all laws governing facilities and operations.
- Other pertinent school information
- Specific classroom information is posted outside the door of each classroom.
- Copies of policies are on file in the school office and are available upon request.

Parental Access

- Parents are encouraged to visit the center anytime.
- Parents are welcome to participate in our program in several ways. We enjoy having families join us for special days/events. Parents are encouraged to talk to their child's educators about sharing a hobby, reading a book during circle time, or joining us for Havdalah or Shabbat Sing. Our center is open to family involvement and communication.
- Gan Ami Early Childhood has an open-door policy for families to visit at any time during Gan Ami's hours of operation unless access is prohibited or restricted by court order.

- Community Health guidelines and restrictions will always take precedence over access to our spaces.

Item Provisions

Parents will provide diapers, wipes, cot (crib sized) sheet, blanket, a change of clothing, clothing for outdoor play, formula, lunch, backpack or bag and personal items. The JCC will provide all supplies and equipment that are appropriate for the care and learning environments of the program. JCC Provides breakfast, AM snack and PM snack.

How To Get Involved and the Gan Ami Family Committee/Room Parent

Many opportunities exist for all parents to become involved at Gan Ami. We encourage participation and presence. Please consider becoming a Room Parent or joining the Gan Ami Family Committee; information will be available during the first months of school and throughout the year.

Family Committee Mission Statement

The Gan Ami Family Committee mission is to establish and nurture a close relationship between the parents, educators, and children by advancing opportunities in the home, school, and community of Gan Ami Early Childhood. The committee aids educators in classroom settings, promotes school and family social interaction, and provides a forum for sharing information on issues that impact our children. It is our belief that the team effort of a parent committee offers the best possible learning environment for our children.

Use of Child's Photos

JCC Membership agreement stipulates permission and consent to JCC and Gan Ami to use, print, copy, publish and reproduce any and all photographs, negatives, print reproductions and likeness of any kind now or at any time hereafter made of me or my family by JCC for advertising, publicity, display or any purpose whatsoever without fees to be paid to me waiving any right to inspect and/or approve the finished product of the advertising copy that may be used in connection therewith or the use to which it may be applied. Our partnership agreement with MJF requires that we provide, within reason, access to photos and the like for the same purposes.

School Closings/Calendar

- School closings are planned annually and scheduled based on Jewish holidays, National holidays and required in-service training days.
- Emergencies closing due to weather conditions or other emergencies are communicated through email, Remini, Remind text messaging service, or reported to the local radio and TV channels.
- School calendars can be located on the JCC website and Gan Ami Parent Portal

<https://www.jccmilwaukee.org/programs/education-families/early-childhood-education/gan-ami-parent-portal/>

Pets

- The Center does not authorize dogs or cats on the premises.
- If the Center elects to maintain dogs, cats, or other animals, parents will be notified in writing.

Children's Records

Each child participating in a JCC Early Childhood program has a file that includes:

- A Childcare Enrollment Form and Health History Form must be on file prior to the first day of attendance.

- Children under two years old will also have an intake form on file by the first day of attendance. This form must be updated every three months and kept in a place where the teacher has access and can keep information current.
- A current Health and Immunization form must be on file within 30 days of attendance. Families choosing slow or no immunizations for health or religious reasons will need a signed letter from their pediatrician and may be excluded from the program if there is an outbreak of a specific virus reported by the health department in the area. The Early Childhood Director will make this decision.
- Emergency Contact and Pick up Authorization forms will be kept on file in each classroom and given to the van drivers when applicable.

Communication

Beginning of the School Year and Intake Meetings

Families new to Gan Ami Early Childhood are asked to arrange a visit with their child's teacher to answer any questions they may have and for the classroom teacher to share information about the daily routine, center educational philosophy, curriculum, and assessment process. This is also a time for the classroom teacher to ask questions about the child, family and how we can make the family a part of our program. This visit is required for all families by Wisconsin Childcare Licensing Regulations.

Family/Teacher Conferences

- There are two family/teacher conferences scheduled each school year, during the fall and during the spring. Educators post sign-up sheets on their classroom doors prior to the conference. We encourage families to set up meetings with the educators whenever there is a concern about activities in the classroom, engagement, or questions about child development. Conferences are an excellent time to work together with the educators to offer support services to each child and family. If a parent cannot attend in person a phone or virtual conference can be requested.
- We also provide newsletters, and daily information using the Remini application. Family notices, events, reminders etc. are sent out through e-mail and our parent communication app.

Documentation and Assessment

Gan Ami uses a variety of assessment methods that are sensitive to family culture, experiences, children's abilities, and home language. Staff share an understanding of the purposes, values, and uses of assessment in the program. As a part of our Young Star and National Accreditation Commission (NAC) accreditation, as well as program planning, educators in the classrooms use a variety of methods to record and gather information on each child.

Assessment is used for:

- Establishing goals for each child's learning
- Curriculum planning
- Setting up learning environments
- Planning for small and large group activities
- Meeting children's needs and interests
- Documentation of children's work and assessment for future planning

Every child at Gan Ami has a Journey Binder. Educators record and gather information (anecdotal records, photos, and direct quotes) about the children's interests, activities they participate in, children at play and developmental milestones that are demonstrated while at Gan Ami.

Remini Parent Communication App

We use an app called Remini to communicate about your child's day, send photos, and check your child in and out of the program. With that said, being with your child is our educator's first priority. The Remini updates come second to the children's safety and learning. We view our early childhood educators as professionals. This means they engage in deep learning experiences with your children. This includes the learning domains as well as relationship building through daily care routines such as diaper changing, feeding, etc. Educators will only use school assigned smart devices and school emails to communicate with families. Please refrain from contacting educators via their personal phone numbers or emails.

- Educators will send one group message or activity per day.
- Educators will attach at least one photo per day.
- Educators will send one individual update per week for children over the age of two and one update daily under the age of two.

Remini does have a messaging feature, but if your need is urgent, please call the Gan Ami office and we will contact the classroom educators for you.

Enrollment, Fee Structure & Discharge Policy

Enrollment

- Registration forms are distributed several months before the end of the school year and are available throughout the year upon request. A nonrefundable deposit is required at the time of registration to secure a place in the program.
- Scholarship is available. Parents must formally apply through the JCC scholarship office. For a confidential consultation, please contact the scholarship office at (414)964-8180.
- Payment arrangements may be made with the Gan Ami Business Manager. Monthly payments are due on the 15th of the month, in the form of credit or debit withdrawals.
- There is a sibling discount for families with additional children in the Gan Ami program. Discount applies to lowest tuition rate(s).
- There are additional fees for field trips, lunches, late care, and late pick-ups.
- The JCC Staff Accountant manages overdue payments and NSF checks. Late pick-up fees are assessed based on current contractual agreements.
- The full day program enrollment is for a minimum of 8 hours/day. Early and late care is available for full day enrollment and included in tuition pricing.
- Early morning and late afternoon care are provided in the child's classroom unless groups need to be combined due to staffing restraints. Child: teacher ratios and maximum group sizes delineated by State licensing rules will not be exceeded.
- The days children enroll for are set and cannot change unless space is available, and the parent fills out a "schedule change" or "add additional day of care" request form.
- For children not enrolled in our full-time program, additional full or half days may be added to a child's schedule on an individual basis with preapproval by the Business Manager. Requests for additional days of care will be granted based on availability and on a first come first served basis for an additional fee.
- Any refunds of fees will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Directors of Early Childhood Education and the Chief Financial Officer.
- Families whose children are enrolled in Gan Ami must be members of the JCC.
- This Gan Ami Family Handbook and Policy Guide is given to all parents when they register for the program via web link in the signed contract, and anytime changes are updated throughout the school year.

- The Gan Ami Family Handbook and Policy Guide is available on our Gan Ami Parent Portal online at any time.
- Child records are available to parents upon request.

Programming

The Curriculum and Philosophy of Gan Ami Early Childhood

- Gan Ami Early Childhood believes children learn by doing. As children experiment with objects and handle materials, they make discoveries and learn new skills through play. When children leave our center, they are prepared to face challenges through communication, problem solving, risk taking, and exercising self-discipline.
- Our educators carefully prepare the classroom with learning opportunities in different interest areas. We plan child and teacher-directed experiences in art, music, science, literacy, cooking, creative movement, verbal expression, and cultural foundations. Balancing activities — free choice/structure and active/quiet — helps foster responsibility, self-regulation, and confidence.
- Our program is inspired by the approach of the schools of Reggio Emilia, where children are viewed as capable, parents are partners, and educators are both guides and researchers. Educators receive training on this approach and parents are invited to ask questions and provide support as classrooms engage in projects and long-term studies of ideas and concepts that are connected to the interests of the children.
- The state of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families along with the Department of Public Instruction published the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). Our curriculum and assessment at Gan Ami Early Childhood is in support of the WMELS Guiding Principles.
 - The guiding principles are:
 - All children are capable and competent
 - Early relationships matter
 - A child's early learning and development is multidimensional
 - Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development
 - Children are individuals who develop at various rates
 - Children are members of cultural groups that share developmental patterns
 - Children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain of development
 - Children learn through play and the active exploration of their environment
 - Parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators
- We are committed to developmentally appropriate practices as defined by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC). We integrate Jewish culture and traditions into each classroom — providing experiences for the celebration of Shabbat (the Sabbath) and festive Jewish holidays.

The National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) and YoungStar

- Gan Ami Early Childhood is a state licensed program that is accredited by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC). NAC is a national accreditation program which develops and promotes professionalism and quality for early care and educational programs.
- Gan Ami is a 5-Star YoungStar Center. Gan Ami is evaluated based on a quality rating indicator system called YoungStar. Centers are ranked on a scale of 2-5 stars based on their quality rating. For more information on YoungStar, please visit: www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/.

Sheva Early Learning Framework

- The Sheva Early Learning Framework is coherent with the culture and teachings of Judaism in everyday life, values, and principles. The Jewish lenses serve as a tool, a prism through which we overlay our traditions, our study, and our Jewish philosophy. The core elements are the fundamental components of our early childhood program and are deeply rooted in the latest research on child development.
 1. Children as Constructivist Learners
 2. Early Childhood Directors as Visionaries
 3. Early Childhood Educators as Professionals
 4. Families as Engaged Partners
 5. Environments as Inspiration for Inquiry
 6. Discover CATCH as Sh'mirat HaGuf (taking care of our bodies)
 7. Israel as a Key Component of Early Childhood Jewish Education
- Within the framework is rooted foundational Jewish ideas and values through which we view and experience our world. We have grouped these core concepts, drawn from our ancient tradition, into seven interconnected categories, which we call lenses. These lenses provide an ethical model for living, a set of resources designed to help us experience increased sanctity in an increasingly confusing, commercial, and difficult world, and a language through which we can articulate a shared vision that we want to pass on to future generations. The lenses clarify transcendent Jewish values, serve as foundational and transformative guides, and are used in the classroom as well as the extended school community.
- These lenses articulate our approach to our work. They inspire as much as they inform. Ideally, they are manifested daily: in the ways in which we structure our time, our curricula, and our classrooms; the quality of our relationships with our students, our faculties; and the partnerships we forge with the families in our communities. They improve and sharpen our vision and enable us to see our world more clearly and in a focused way. Judaism is not exclusively a matter of the “what” or “when” in the world of ritual and faith but includes the deeper matters of the “how” and “why” of the totality of our lives and our relationships to the world. It welcomes diversity, inclusion, reflection, and innovation.

Specialists

- In addition to our well-trained educators, depending on your child’s classroom age group, specialists assist in providing experiences in music/movement, art, experiential swim, and Hebrew, along with Jewish culture and traditions.

Disenrollment of Child

Guidelines for the Disenrollment of Children Are as Follows:

- If disrupting or atypical aggression is displayed and staff has little or no success implementing traditional methods of defusing the situations, the family will be consulted, and the behaviors will be documented for a period.
- During the time of observation and documentation, the family will be updated daily. If the behaviors of this child result in an accident report for another child, the report will be verbally shared with the parents of the child whose actions have caused the incident withholding confidential information.
- After the observation period and anecdotal documentation, the teaching staff will work with the Site Director to determine who will observe the child and consult with staff.

- If the family does not agree to working with an outside professional, care for the child may be terminated with two weeks' notice.
- Educators and the Early Childhood Director will meet with the family to describe the proposed observations and/or consultation with an outside agency.
- Educators will continue to document behavior while implementing the strategies recommended by the outside professional. Progress toward changed behavior must be noted within a month of initiating the early childhood specialist's recommendations.
- At the end of this one-month period, a meeting will be held between the director, the educators and the family. If no progress has been made, the enrollment may be ended.

Factors considered in this decision will include:

- Impact of behavior in the classroom
- Demand on staff time
- Availability of resources to Gan Ami
- Impact on the basic nature of the program and the finances of Gan Ami to accommodate child's special needs.
- The possibility of danger to the child or others in the class and the ability of staff to meet the child's needs.
- Willingness of the family to work with the teaching staff and/or to get outside help

Gan Ami Early Childhood Education reserves the right to disenroll at any point in time, without regard to the above procedures, in a situation that is determined to be extremely detrimental and/or dangerous to the child concerned, other children and/or staff in the program.

Other Factors for Disenrollment Could Be:

- Non-payment from parents and/or lack of adherence to JCC tuition/membership payment policies.
- The child has special needs which Gan Ami cannot meet, including disruptive behavior which requires a disproportionate amount of one-to-one attention or is putting the safety of themselves, other children, or educators in jeopardy.
- Failure to provide the required forms for enrollment.
- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by the family toward program staff, other families and/or children.
- Non-compliance with Gan Ami Early Childhood's policies and procedures.
- Lack of cooperation from the family in adhering to policies and procedures relating to a child's arrival and pick-up.
- Unwillingness to work with Gan Ami staff on issues relating to the child.

Discharge

- Written notification of leaving the school is required one month in advance of the targeted date. If a child does not remain in the program, irrespective of reason, fees are not prorated. A full month of tuition is charged, barring extenuating circumstances. No money will be refunded for temporary illness or family vacations. Children may be considered for discharge if the behaviors are so severe that it significantly interfering with the learning of others. (See above Disenrollment policies).
- For more information regarding contract termination please see your Gan Ami signed contract.
- An appeal to discharge can be made in writing to the JCC Chief Operating Officer. The COO will make a decision, after consultation with all parties.

Education Policy

The JCC provides both a developmental curriculum: language, social and math, science, language arts and community awareness as well as Judaic education to all children who attend Gan Ami. The Judaic curriculum includes Jewish holidays, the Sabbath, values, and other basic traditions. Traditions are taught through art, song, books, prayers, and special foods.

Preschool Curriculum

Educators are cognizant of all three areas of development: cognitive (including language), psychomotor (gross and fine motor) and social/emotional. These developmental areas are seamlessly integrated into the classroom activities. Learning centers are built around Judaic content, the arts, science, cooking, reading readiness and language. Specialists provide instruction in music, physical education, and creative movement. Curriculum plans are developed following the interests of the children as well as both Jewish & secular calendars. Each classroom team is free to choose specific projects and areas of study/interest and is responsible for creating weekly and monthly teaching plans.

Infant/Toddlers Programming

Infants follow individualized care, as each child follows his/her own schedule. Toddlers transition from cribs to cots at age 12-15 months. Educators begin to schedule more group activities as they see fit. All programming is developmentally appropriate. The children are stimulated through music, songs, language, and interaction. They are provided with a variety of safe toys and manipulatives to stimulate growth and provide learning opportunities. The educators provide nurturing and physical contact through holding, rocking, talking, and singing. Parents and educators will communicate daily through conversation and Remini.

Outdoor Activities

Children are taken outside, except during inclement weather. Temperatures and wind chills must be above 0 degrees or below 90 degrees for ages two and up, and over 20 degrees and under 90 degrees for ages two and under. Children are taken to playgrounds located on the premises or taken for walks around the building or local neighborhoods. Infant/toddlers are taken for walks in strollers.

Water Activities

At times classrooms take part in water table and wading pool activities. Children are in sight, sound and in the arms of an adult during these water activities. Water tables and wading pools are emptied and cleaned after each use as delineated by WI state licensing rules.

Child Guidance

The JCC provides positive child guidance for each child. Clear expectations and limits are articulated, modeled, and reinforced through each teaching opportunity. Children are taught listening skills, problem solving, making good choices, expressing their feelings and needs and understanding logical and natural consequences. Methodologies employed include modeling, structuring the classroom environment, planned activities, direct instruction of related concepts and evaluating established routines. Beginning to acquire these skills helps children gain self-esteem, self-control, and respect for others. During transitions or lining up, children participate in learning activities to keep them engaged

and connected. Some of these activities can include singing, storytelling, I-spy games, jumping and many more creative ideas the educators come up with based on the children's interests.

Managing Upset Children

We have several ways of managing crying, fussing or distraught behavior: Children are cuddled, held, redirected and educators make every effort to engage the child in different activities. Educators collaborate with parents sharing ideas of what strategies work best with the child at home to provide consistency at school. The leadership team is used when a child needs space to be away from the group and out of the classroom to calm down, reset, and have a successful day.

Building Self-esteem

Children feel good about themselves when they feel empowered and capable. This is accomplished by first establishing clear expectations for behavior and providing an organized learning environment. This is followed by intentional teaching, which incorporates opportunities for self-expression and deliberate and frequent positive reinforcement.

Child Concerns

Child concerns include both those that are related to overall growth and development as well as behavioral issues.

Growth and Developmental concerns are those that primarily relate to cognitive, linguistic, social/emotional, or psychomotor development. Assessments in these areas are strictly observational in nature.

Behavioral concerns are those in which a child's behavior significantly interferes with the overall flow of the program by requiring constant one-to-one attention, causing harm to others or unable to conform to the very broad parameters of the program.

When such concerns arise, observation and documentation is required. This is followed by parent conferences in which the parents are brought in as partners to further assess and/or identify appropriate interventions. Interventions may include professional referrals, instituting behavioral plans, establishing consistent approaches in home and school and/or providing additional support help in school.

The JCC strives for mutual agreement with parents when it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met in this environment and must withdraw from the program. (See Disenrollment Procedures)

Timeouts

- Time-outs are considered the "last resort" alternative to modifying behavior. Other approaches such as proximity control, reinforcement for incompatible behaviors and redirection should be applied systematically across time before a decision to place a child in time-out. Additionally, a time-out should only be used when a child is clearly out of control and is therefore exhibiting dangerous behavior.
- Time-outs could take place in the classroom. The length of the time-out is determined based on the age of the child using the standard guideline of one minute per year, with a maximum time-out of three minutes.
- Time outs are not permitted under the age of three in any circumstance.
 - At times, parents, the Early Childhood Director, and educators will make a specific, unique plan for a child to follow.

Prohibited Treatment

Prohibited treatments include spanking, hitting, shaking, verbal abuse, derogatory or sarcastic remarks, grabbing children in anger and withholding or forcing of food or naps. Caregivers who exhibit any of these behaviors will be counseled and put on probation. These behaviors may lead to suspension or discharge of the caregiver.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

- Aggressive behavior is of concern for families and staff working with infants, toddlers and young preschoolers. Biting, although considered a more aggressive act, is not an unusual behavior for young children; it is developmentally appropriate. Young children act out for different reasons such as teething, sensory exploration, autonomy and control, peer interaction, imitation, frustration, anxiety and curiosity etc. It occurs most frequently when a child is tired, frustrated, or over-stimulated.
- When children have specific behavior problems such as biting, staff's first objective is to identify the followings:
What is happening with the child exhibiting the behavior both at school and at home?
When and where did the bite or aggressive act occur?
Who was or hurt?
How was it handled?
What was the child's response to the consequence?
- We then "track" this information and child (by "shadowing" them) to see if there is a pattern that helps us identify why this child is behaving this way.
- The family of the child who has acted out is told about the incident or incidents and offered resources and support, so together staff and parents can work with the child to help eliminate the behavior. Should the family wish or the staff feel it is necessary, a conference is held with the family, educators, and the Director to share information from school and home that may be helpful in our working together on this problem? If the biting or behavior continues Gan Ami, along with the family's assistance, will seek outside resources to help the child stop the behavior.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

Communication between home and Gan Ami is the key to the effectiveness of any child guidance approach. Children experience varying difficulties at different stages of their development. While this is quite typical, it is also important that problematic behaviors not be shrugged off as being "just a stage," as this approach prolongs and reinforces behaviors that, if left unchecked, can create major difficulties for the child. However, after reasonable efforts, if the child's behavior continues to be disruptive to the classroom in ways which require a disproportionate amount of one-to-one attention, parents will be counseled to find an alternative childcare arrangement that may be able to better meet their child's needs. In these situations, we seek to ensure the safety of other children and educators in the program.

Diapering, Toilet Training and Changing Clothes

Diapering Policies

- The families of children who wear diapers are responsible for having an adequate supply of diapers and wipes at Gan Ami. Diapers should be clearly labeled with your child's name to avoid mix-ups. If your child wears cloth diapers, we ask that you send enough diaper wraps so a fresh one can be used each time your child is changed, and the diaper can be changed as a single unit.

Plastic pants do not meet health and safety standards for group care. Cloth diapers cannot be rinsed by staff, as state health codes prohibit rinsing diapers in public toilets. They will be placed in a plastic bag and hung on your child's hook. Please take these home daily.

- Children under two are changed every two hours. All children over two are checked once every two hours and changed as needed. The changing area is in the bathroom or classroom area separate from the learning centers. Staff will follow the changing procedures posted in the diaper changing area, and the changing table will be cleaned and sanitized after each child's use. Soiled diapers will be put into the foot operated, lidded container next to the changing table. The container is kept closed and contents are not accessible to the children.
- If you want staff to apply ointment, please label the ointment with your child's full name and fill out the medication form. Forms are available online or in the Gan Ami office. If you are out of diapers and the room uses one from an emergency supply, please be sure to return one to them.

Toilet Training

- Learning to use the toilet is an important self-help skill for young children. It's a process that requires much encouragement and patience. When you and your child are ready for toilet training, please let us know. A cooperative effort between home and Gan Ami is most effective with training to have started at home. For the first couple of weeks, continue to send diapers in addition to extra underpants and clothes. Staff will wash their hands before and after assisting children with toileting. Staff assists children in learning and carrying out habits of personal hygiene. Independence and the development of self-help skills are encouraged. As with diapers, rinsing soiled underwear or pants is not possible (251.09(4)(a)6.). They will be placed in a plastic bag and put in your child's cubby. Please take the underwear home daily.
- Children learning to use the toilet at Gan Ami are taken to the bathroom more frequently. Toilet training can be a difficult time for children and is handled sensitively, with patience, praise, and positive reinforcement.
- In accordance with childcare regulations, the JCC may not attempt to toilet train children under the age of 18 months.
- A cooperative effort to toilet train a child can take place when the parent has begun to initiate training at home.
- No child is refused participation in school due to toilet training issues.

Clothing Changes

- When changing diapers, using the bathrooms or changing soiled clothing, we change children in the bathrooms. We do not separate children by gender when changing their clothing, toileting or changing diapers. There is always an adult present in the bathroom.
- During our summer programming and days over 80 degrees in Early Fall and Late Spring we may participate in water play. Swim clothing or extra clothes is encouraged.
- When changing children in and out of swim clothing we do not separate children by gender in our toddler, young preschool, preschool or pre-kindergarten programs.
- Gan Ami believes in developing positive attitudes about our bodies. In keeping with our educational goals for the development of positive self-concept, educators educate children with the correct anatomical names for all body parts. In response to children's curiosity about their bodies, questions are answered in an age-appropriate way.

Health Care

Parent Notification

- Parents will be notified of the following:
 - If a child becomes ill or is injured.
 - If a child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

Communicable Diseases

- When a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, parents are contacted to consult with their pediatrician.
- Parents must notify the school when a communicable disease is confirmed in their child.
- A classroom notice is posted when there is an incidence of a communicable disease. A photo is taken of the classroom notice and posted on the particular classroom's Remini feed.
- The Public Health Department is also notified of certain communicable diseases.
- Additionally, a letter may be sent home to parents describing the symptoms to look for and the incubation period.
- The child shall remain out of school until all symptoms are gone. The child's physician may provide contagious period recommendations.
- At times Gan Ami policies may be stricter than physician recommendations. In this case Gan Ami policy supersedes physician recommendations.
- Staff are subject to the same exclusion criteria.

Illness

- Parents are called immediately when a child exhibits the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, has vomited, has diarrhea, a rash, discharge from nose, ears, or eyes and whose behavior indicates that they are in discomfort. Parents are expected to pick up the child within 1 hour. The ill child will be made comfortable and isolated from the other children while waiting for the parent to arrive.
- Children may not return to school until they are symptom/fever free for a minimum of 24-48 hours, dependent on diagnosis, without the aid of medication.
- Staff are subject to the same exclusion criteria.

Injuries/Allergic Reactions

- If a child is injured, the Director will be notified immediately. First aid will be administered for minor injuries. A 911 emergency will be called in case of a serious injury. The decision to take a child to a medical facility will be the decision of the paramedics.
- Parents are notified immediately. The medical log is completed as well as an incident report which is filed in the incident binder.
- If a child is bitten, the same injury process is followed. The area is washed, iced if needed and the parents of both parties are notified.
- Parents complete a field trip permission slip prior to taking a child off-site. Off-site injuries will follow the same procedures.
- Allergic reactions follow the same protocol unless an "Allergy Action Plan" is provided by the parent. Forms for this can be requested in the office or come from the child's pediatrician.

Medical Log

- Staff maintains a medical logbook indicating all injuries, accidents and medication administered. Precise data entry procedures, as delineated by licensing codes, are followed. The Program Manager checks the log monthly.

Universal Precautions

- All staff will take CPR and first aid every other year.
- All staff that potentially are exposed to blood, bodily fluids such as vomit, urine, and feces will wear disposable gloves. Gloves will be disposed of in a plastic bag after use. Hands will be washed with soap and warm water. All areas affected by any bodily fluid spills will be disinfected.

Cleanliness

- Children's hands are washed with soap and water before eating, and after toileting.
- Children's hands and faces are washed after meals and snacks.
- Staff wash hands before and after handling and assisting with toileting and wet or soiled clothing will be changed promptly.
- Disposable wipes and diapers, etc. are used rather than cloth unless the child has allergies. Diapers and gloves are disposed of in a foot operated diaper pail.
- Cups and eating utensils are not shared with others.

Medication

- The parent that provides permission and delineates specific instructions for administration of medication must sign an authorization form. No medication is administered without written parent authorization.
- Medication authorization forms cannot be dated for longer than two weeks. *Please see an Administrator for exceptions related to Epi Pens, inhalers, etc.
- The medication must be in its original container with the child's name on it. Prescription medications must have the child's name, drug name, dosage, directions for administering, date prescribed and doctor's name.
- All medications given will be recorded in the medical log.
- Medications will be kept in a secure location away from the children. Refrigerated medication will be kept in a secure box in the refrigerator.
- Missed medication dosages or other problems related to medication are communicated to parents immediately and documented in the classroom medical log.

Sanitation of Toys & Kitchen Equipment

- All toys and equipment are wiped down and washed daily with a bleach water solution. Toys that are put in a child's mouth are immediately removed after the child has put it down and placed in a wash bin.
- Eating surfaces are sanitized before and after use.
- Kitchen equipment is sanitized in accordance with WI State licensing standards.

Rest Periods

Children under the age of five, who are in the Center for more than four hours, are given the opportunity to rest or nap. If a child does not nap after 30 minutes, they will be allowed to have quiet activities.

Sleeping / SIDS Risk Reduction

According to State Licensing Mandate on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), when children under one year of age are put to sleep, the following procedures are instituted:

- No toys of any kind will be in the crib with the child.
- No blankets will be used.

- Child will be placed on their back unless there is a signed note from pediatrician.

Nutrition Policy

Breakfast & Snacks

- Sample menus for breakfast and snacks are posted and based on seasonal fruits and availability.
- Each meal provides one-third of the daily nutritional requirement for children and includes a variety of foods.
- Center provided breakfast consists of fruit, grain, and dairy as delineated in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Childcare Food Program guidelines.
- All breakfast and snacks provided are kosher and nut free.
- Parents are to provide lunch for their children and are presented with healthy lunch guidelines as appropriate.
- A snack provided by the parents for all children must be confirmed by the teacher and ingredients posted in an area accessible to all parents. The snack must be prepackaged, kosher and nut free. This includes birthdays and holidays.

Laws of Kashrut (keeping kosher) in Gan Ami

The JCC is proud to provide an inclusive environment for members, guests, and families. For many members of our community, the laws of Kashrut (keeping kosher) represent a core Jewish belief. Out of respect for all our families, we ask that you follow these simple guidelines when packing lunches.

- Lunches may contain meat items **or** dairy items, but not both.
- Please do not pack any pork products or shellfish.
- Nuts of any kind are NOT allowed in Gan Ami.

Suggestions for creative and healthy kosher-style lunches from home in Gan Ami

- MEAT LUNCH: If you pack a turkey or roast beef sandwich, just leave off the cheese. Likewise, the lunch bag should not include any dairy items like yogurt, string cheese, or pudding.
- DAIRY LUNCH: Mini bagels and cream cheese, cold cheese sandwich, or leftover mac 'n cheese can anchor a nice dairy lunch.
- OTHER (pareve): Sandwiches like egg salad, tuna salad, or a veggie wrap can go with either meat or dairy items.
- Add-ins to put in your child's lunch that go with either meat or dairy include fruit, veggies, applesauce, hummus, chips, pretzels, or juice.

Infant/Toddler and Nutrition Policy

- Parents are responsible for providing formula, milk, milk substitutes or breast milk. The center will rinse bottles. Parents should wash/sanitize bottles at home.
- Parents provide solid food daily and an eating schedule for their child. Feeding information including what introduction of new foods are updated a minimum of every three months.
- Finger foods that encourage self-feeding are provided, as well as child friendly eating utensils. For toddlers 12 months and older, the center provides appropriate morning and afternoon snacks including whole milk.
- Discuss with classroom educators if the center provided breakfast is appropriate for your child.
- Infant seats, highchairs, low tables, and chairs are provided when eating.
- Babies are always held when bottle feeding until they are able to hold their own bottle.
- The center has a supply of spoons and cups.
- Children are offered water several times a day in accordance with their parents' wishes.

- Parents receive a daily record of the child's basic needs, which includes food intake. This record is easily available for staff and parent reference through the Remini app (see more in Communication section).
- Milk and other center-provided perishable foods are refrigerated. Nonperishable foods are stored in covered containers in a clean dry area.
- Food brought in by parents needs to be labeled, dated by parents, and stored in a temperature-controlled lunchbox with and cold pack.
- Please make sure all bottles are clearly labeled with the child's name and the date.
- **NO** food used or unused can be returned home at any age.

Nutritional Education

- Programs that highlight nutrition and healthy eating habits are incorporated into the early childhood curriculum.
- Programs and procedures of how to introduce nutrition concepts to young children are addressed through staff in-services.
- Children with food allergies and special diets or restrictions are provided a list of ingredients for snacks to communicate with the teachers which snacks their child can eat.
- Teachers are strongly encouraged to eat their own lunch and snacks with the children at mealtimes to model and encourage appropriate socialization during these times.

Schedule of Snacks and Meals

Snacks and meals are provided according to the following schedule:

<u>Time Present</u>	<u>Number of Meals/Snacks</u>
2-2(1/2) to 4 hours	1 snack
4-8 hours	1 snack & 1 meal
8-10 hours	2 snacks & 1 meal
10+ hours	2 meals & 2-3 snacks

Orientation and Ongoing Professional Development

All staff and volunteers are required to go through an orientation within one month of beginning employment. The orientation must be completed before any staff member is left alone with a child. In the orientation, the following areas will be covered:

- Licensing Rules DFS 251
- Review of Center Policies and Procedures
- YoungStar, NAC Regulations and WI Registry Requirements Overview
- Confidentiality
- Child abuse and neglect recognition and reporting
- Health observation and precautions, medication, universal precautions, infectious disease control, and communicable disease recognition.
- Recognizing Illnesses
- Center contingency plans include fire and tornado, evacuation plans, and the operation of fire pulls and extinguishers.
- Procedure for sharing information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities.
- Information on any special needs a child enrolled in Gan Ami may have and the plan for how those needs will be met.

- Procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from Gan Ami without prior notification from the parent.
- Emergency training including pediatric first aid, and CPR/AED within six months of hire
- Working with families with diverse backgrounds.
- Job responsibilities/duties as they relate to job descriptions.
- Schedule of activities of center
- Child management techniques used at Gan Ami
- Knowing children's whereabouts at all times / Global Supervision
- Hand washing procedures
- Abusive Head Trauma (formerly SBS)
- A copy of the JCC employee handbook (ADP)
- A copy of Gan Ami Educator Resource Guide
- Jewish Holidays and traditions

In-service Training

- Gan Ami provides a minimum of seven full days of training annually as well as monthly staff meetings. CPR, First Aid Training and Universal Precautions, Fire Safety and Fire Extinguisher use, Child Abuse and Neglect, Medical Log Entry Directions, how to administer medication, how to use an Epi Pen are provided annually and required by all staff. Other in-service opportunities are related to child development and how to work effectively with diverse families and teaching in an early childhood setting.
- Every year the JCC holds a mandatory all-staff professional development and training for all departments at the JCC together.

Continuing Education

- All staff are required to obtain at least twenty hours of continuing education hours per year. These hours may be obtained through CPR training, staff meetings, and in-service training provided by the Early Childhood department. Staff are also encouraged to attend conferences and workshops related to early childhood education throughout the community. With prior approval, staff will receive work release time to attend outside conferences and workshops.

Documentation of Continuing Education

- Educators are required to document their continuing education hours on standardized forms and place them in personnel files.

Personnel Policy

- Job descriptions are given to each staff person when hired and available in ADP.
- All JCC staff receive the JCC Staff Employment Handbook upon hire obtainable in ADP. Every member of staff is required to sign receipt and understanding of this handbook before beginning in Gan Ami. All work rules are included in the handbook including: alcohol/ drug use policy, smoking, dress code, time off notifications and parking.
- Reflective supervision appointments are set with the Program Manager and each teacher.
- Evaluations are completed annually and include input from staff and delineation of goals for the upcoming year.
- A probationary period for all JCC staff, including Gan Ami, is delineated in the JCC Staff Employment Handbook.
- All staff receive a letter of intent that delineates work hours, meeting responsibilities and required ongoing education.

- Staff receive breaks based on the number of hours they work according to State employment regulations.
- Paid Time Off, (PTO) includes vacation, sick leave and paid holidays are based on the number hours of employment per week and are delineated in the employment handbook.
- Corrective action may be considered if the employee's behavior affects the quality of delivery of service to children and attempts at remediation have been unsuccessful.
- Corrective action may be considered if the employee does not follow proper protocol regarding Gan Ami policies or the agency overall.
- Grievances require a written explanation and a decision by the Executive Director.
- All caregivers will complete a childcare background check disclosure form when hired and each year thereafter.

Staff Health Requirements

- Staff will obtain a medical examination within 12 months prior or within 30 days after beginning work at the Center. The exam shall indicate the staff is free from communicable diseases that present a safety or health risk, including tuberculosis, and is physically able to work with children.

Procedures of Reporting Child Abuse

- All staff are trained in child abuse and neglect law, how to identify abuse and neglect and procedures for reporting prior to working with children and biannually thereafter. All Gan Ami educators and staff are mandatory reporters.
- If a staff person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, the staff person is required by law to notify the County Department of social services, human services, or the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- Fill out an incident report with the facts and record it in the Medical Log.
- The leadership team member and teacher will immediately notify the County Social Services Department, Protective Services. This agency will conduct the investigation and give further instructions.
- The leadership team member will notify the advisory executive or if unavailable, the center executive.

Required Notifications

- All are staff required to notify the licensee, and the licensee to notify department, as soon as possible but no later than the next business day when: the employee has been convicted of a crime; has or is being investigated by any governmental agency; has a substantiated governmental finding against them for abuse or neglect of a child or adult or for misappropriation of a client's property; or has a professional license denied, revoked, restricted or otherwise limited.

Contingency Plans

Fire /Tornado and Other Emergency Policies

- Daily attendance is taken and kept in each individual classroom. At the end of each month, attendance records are compiled into a master office file. An emergency card for each child is completed by parents and kept in each child's respective classroom and a copy is in the office child file. These include parent home & work telephone numbers, an emergency contact, allergies, and physician's name.
- Educators take emergency cards with them whenever the class leaves the classroom.

- No child may leave the classroom unattended by an adult.
- Emergency plans and diagrams for evacuation for fire, tornado drills and/or other evacuations are posted near each door of every classroom.
- Emergency procedures, including accidents and use of fire extinguishers, are reviewed during the annual orientation held at the beginning of each school year. Educators employed at other times are individually oriented.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly. The staff carry with them attendance sheets and emergency cards. The lights are turned off and all doors are closed. The children are taken away from the building. Staff wait for all clear notification before returning to the building.
- During tornado evacuations, the staff takes children to the designated area away from windows and doors. Attendance lists and emergency cards are taken when leaving the classroom. Children remain in the designated area until there is an all-clear notice.
- Fully equipped first aid kits are provided in every classroom and vehicle. First aid kits must be taken when leaving the building with a class.
- Telephones and emergency numbers are in each classroom.
- The inside temperature of the building and classrooms must remain between 67 and 80 degrees.
- If a loss of building services occurs (heat, air-conditioning, water, electricity, plumbing or telephone), a decision to close the facility will be made based on the anticipated length of the disruption and the evaluated conditions and circumstances.
- Only authorized individuals may pick up children. Verbal permission for other than "authorized" individuals to pick up a child is acceptable. Presentation of a picture ID is required before the child is released.
- Children are not released to any person under the influence of alcohol. A call to another responsible adult is made.

***See Missing Child Appendix 2**

Emergency Medical Source

For the Mequon location - A 911 call will be placed, if determined the nearest medical facility will be used for serious medical incidences.

For the Whitefish Bay location - A Purple Duty is called. Trained personnel from the Gan Ami Administration and the Heath and Recreation Department respond. Aide is provided, as well as any determination of a 911 call. If determined the nearest medical facility will be used for serious medical incidences

All staff are required, annually, to be CPR and First Aid Red Cross certified. Employee orientation will detail actual steps to be taken.

Transportation

- If the child is not present and they have not been reported absent, the parents are contacted immediately to verify the absence. If the parent cannot be reached, the school will be contacted.
- When children are transported to and from kindergarten by a private van or public-school bus, a roster is provided to the driver. When the JCC provides transportation, a roster is also supplied to the school.
- Parents of children in the K4 and 3-year-old program are required to sign a Transportation Permission Form (DCF 251.08) to keep on file. This is for regularly scheduled transportation to our Whitefish Bay location.

- Any child with limited mobility or special needs will be escorted onto the bus first and secured in place.
- Parents are notified ahead of time in writing about fieldtrips and are required to sign a fieldtrip permission slip (DCF 251.04(4)(a)4 and 251.04(6)(a)4 prior to the field trip.

See Transportation Appendix for Additional Protocols and Permission Slips

APPENDIX 1: Transportation

- Gan Ami uses attendance lists that have a 2-column check-off for entering & exiting the vehicle with their class
- If JCC vehicle is used, driver checks seatbelts
- If educators are with children, they sit with their students
- Count and check-off as children enter the vehicle
- Count and check-off as children exit the vehicle
- Designated staff person walks through vehicle for final sweep after each stop
- All vehicles used are equipped with “Back door alarms and Child Safety Alarms”
- First Aid kit is in front dash of JCC vehicle

APPENDIX 2: Missing Child Procedure

Gan Ami WFB: Follow Lost Child Procedures in the HRS Family JCC Emergency Procedures Handbook

GAN AMI Mequon:

Definition: When a child is reported missing in the building the following procedures are to be implemented: **Alert: Walkie Talkie**

“Attention all Gan Ami Staff, we have a lost child Alert. One teacher from each classroom should report to the Front Desk.

Staff Reporting the Lost Person:

1. Assess the situation
2. Office announces lost child/person walkie talkie
3. Staff making the call should gather as much information as possible.
-Detailed description of the missing child/person (i.e.: name, age, clothing, hair color and any other distinguishing characteristics), how long the person has been missing and the last location seen.
4. Immediately Report to the Front desk.
5. Organize and coordinate the search by building area/outside area
6. If the missing person(s) are not located during the initial search by staff members or if there is any indication that foul play or a dangerous situation is involved, call 911 and notify law enforcement officials immediately. Then call the parents and Executive Leadership.
7. Request that law enforcement officials, parents/guardians search the residence where the students(s) live, school, etc. Missing children have frequently been found hiding in closets, attics and in other areas at home.
8. Provide information for staff as appropriate.
9. Assist law enforcement officers with the investigation.
10. **All Staff members** should carefully search his or her area of responsibility for the missing child(ren). Any potential hiding place should be searched, including crawl spaces, rest rooms, storage closets, cabinets, and storage containers. Missing children have frequently been found hiding in these types of areas.
11. Staff members should advise the Site Director and JCC Executive Leadership of the results of the search as soon as the search is completed.

Appendix 3: Jewish Values and Holidays

Child Education and Religious Values Teachings

The JCC Early Childhood Program is a Jewish preschool and childcare facility that prides itself on having a diverse population of both participants and staff.

Our curriculum includes learning about Jewish holidays, values, traditions, and customs. We celebrate both Shabbat, the day of rest, as well as Havdalah, each week. Using symbols and traditions, the customs of the holidays come alive.

Some of our core Jewish values include:

- Hachnasat Orchim (welcoming the guest)
- G'milut Hasdim (acts of loving kindness)
- Ahavah (love)
- Tikkun Olam (repairing the world)
- Shmirat HaGuf (Respecting our bodies)
- B'tzelem Elohim (We're all created in the image of God)
- Hitorrut (Awakening)

Our values, which transcend beyond religious lines, are incorporated into our classrooms and community on a continual basis and we strive to remember them as we relate to one another in community.

As a Jewish school, our calendar revolves around the Jewish calendar rather than the secular calendar. As such, we ask that families and staff refrain from celebrating holidays such as Halloween, Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, Christmas, and Easter at school.

We appreciate that families may celebrate these holidays at home, and we ask that the celebrations remain there. Holiday treats, cards, costumes are encouraged to be used at home and not in Gan Ami. The exception is Purim, the Jewish holiday when costumes and the giving of cards and treats (called Shelach Manot) are part of the celebration.

* Shabbat is a Day of Rest discussed in the Torah. God tells us to work hard for 6 days and then on the 7th rest and appreciate family, community, and the gift of Shabbat. We light candles, say a blessing over sweet wine (Kiddush), bless the children and eat Challah, a sweet, fortified bread. It is customary on Shabbat to rest, attend synagogue and enjoy meals with family or friends.

Jewish Holidays

Here is a brief description of the major Jewish holidays celebrated during the year:

The first is **Rosh Hashanah**, which means "the head of the new year." This is our Jewish New Year. It is also the beginning of the Ten Days of Repentance; a time we turn inward to examine our mistakes over the past year and seek to make amends with ourselves, friends and family, and ultimately, with God. Next comes **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement when we stand before God and publicly and privately confess our shortcomings and ask for forgiveness. Yom Kippur is a fast day which helps remind us of the awesomeness and importance of the day.

We have a four-day break and then comes **Sukkot**, the Festival of Booths, when we erect temporary dwellings outside to serve as a reminder that our permanent shelters are fragile, and we have much for which we can be grateful.

The end of Sukkot is **Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah** when we turn towards Torah, the Five Books of Moses. On Simchat Torah, we read the last words of the Book of Deuteronomy and the First words of Genesis.

Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights. It is an 8-day festival during which we recall the Maccabees and their religious conviction. Standing up to the Greek Hellenists, they won a battle that allowed the Jews to go in and clean and re-dedicate the Holy Temple. Worried that the one cruze of oil they found would not last long enough to clean the Temple, a miracle occurred and the oil lasted 8 nights. On Hanukkah we light a candelabra (called a Menorah) and celebrate light and freedom.

Tu Bishvat is the Birthday of the Trees. On this holiday on the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat we stop and appreciate nature. We eat fruits and vegetables that grow on trees and think of ways we can reduce, recycle, and help protect our precious universe.

Purim is a holiday that reminds us to take a break from the pressures of everyday life and let silliness and play teach us about the bravery of Queen Esther, the ideals of Mordechai and the ability to defeat those that are out to hurt us, like Haman. We dress in costume and give acts of kindness called Shelach Manot to our family and friends.

Passover teaches us to celebrate Freedom. We recall the story of the Jews leaving Egypt. To remind us that they had to leave in a hurry, we eat unleavened bread, called Matzah for 8 days of this holiday. The first two days have a Passover Seder when we tell the story of the Exodus and teach our children what it was like to go forth to Freedom so that in every generation our children will appreciate the gifts of freedom, family, and community.

Yom Ha'atzmaut is Israeli Independence Day. We celebrate that in 1948 the State of Israel came into being and allowed the Jewish people to have a homeland.

Shavuot reminds us of the Gift of Torah. We tell the story of Moses receiving the 10 Commandments on Mt. Sinai. Shavuot is a dairy holiday where we enjoy foods like cheesecake, kugel, and ice cream. It is also a night to stay up and study.



Dear Gan Ami Families,

We want to make sure you have all the educational tools at your fingertips to help you on your journey at the Harry and Rose Samson Family JCC Gan Ami Early Childhood Program.

The Gan Ami Family Handbook provides policies and procedures for you to reference at any time, and is updated regularly. You are able to access, print out, upload, and read our Family Handbook, and all other required forms by using this link:

Gan Ami Parent Portal on-line

Please acknowledge you have received our Family Handbook by signing and dating this form.

Name:

Signature

Date