

# PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

## WELCOME TO KIDS CENTER!

Thank you for choosing Kids Center for your after-school enrichment needs. We look forward to partnering with you over the coming school year and offering your child the best possible experience!

We hope this parent handbook will serve as a guide for the Kids Center program and your experience; you will find vital information regarding policies and procedures for Kids Center. Please feel free to contact Ronna Ruffin, Director of Youth Programs at 414-967-8218 or [rruffin@jccmilwaukee.org](mailto:rruffin@jccmilwaukee.org) if you have any additional questions.

### **What is Kids Center?**

Kids Center is the after-school program of the Harry & Rose Samson Family JCC designed for K4-6<sup>th</sup> graders. It enables children to socialize and participate in enrichment activities outside of school in a fun, relaxing, yet structured environment.

### **What are Kids Center's hours and days of service?**

Kids Center after-school program operates from 2:45 PM until 6:00 PM Monday-Thursday, and until 5:30 PM on Fridays. Please see our Kids Center yearly calendar for a list of days we are open and offering programming, and the days we will be closed.

### **Transportation:**

#### **How does my child get to the JCC from their school?**

One of our JCC branded buses will pick your child up from their school. Our buses will park at their designated pickup location. Once your child is dismissed from school, they will meet the bus at their designated pickup area and load the bus to their assigned seat.

#### **Bus Etiquette:**

While on the bus, we expect all students to use good manners, remain in their seat while the bus is in motion, keep their hands to themselves, and keep seatbelts fastened. Children may talk with friends using a normal "inside" voice, so the driver is not distracted. Eating is prohibited while on our JCC buses. This helps us keep the bus safe and clean.

Once the bus arrives at the JCC, students are to remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver tells the students they can unbuckle their seat belts. Each student may leave the bus in an orderly manner and carefully step out of the bus. Students will then enter the vestibule of the JCC for attendance. After attendance is complete, the children will be walked to their classrooms.

Use of inappropriate language, climbing over bus seats, failure to properly wear their seatbelt, and any other misbehavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from our JCC bus.

Our bus drivers are responsible for following the rules of the road as well as following our JCC transportation operation rules. Drivers go through annual training and are given expectations at the beginning of each school year. The safety of our passengers is our top priority. Your child can help our drivers by following the rules set forth in this handbook.

## What does the typical Kids Center day look like?

- 2:45-3:30 PM Children arrive, snack, classroom free choice activities.
- 3:30-5:30 PM Group activity rotations. This includes, but are not limited to sports, games, science, and art led by our Kids Center teachers.
- 5:30-6:00 PM Supervised free choice activities (**Kids Center closes at 5:30 pm on Fridays**)

*For our group activity rotations, we use the entire JCC facility! Sports and games are often run outside or in the gym. We also have access to our swimming pool, and you will be notified in advance if your child's class is swimming that week!*

*On Fridays we celebrate Shabbat! All classrooms will celebrate with singing, dancing, blessings, and challah as we end our week by welcoming Shabbat.*

## Do you provide afternoon snack?

Kids Center provides nutritious, kid-friendly, kosher snacks daily. If your child has any food restrictions or allergies, please let us know. We do not allow additional snacks or left over lunches to be brought in due to Kashrut and allergies.

## Will my child complete their homework?

Kids Center understands that each child has different homework needs. If children have homework and their parents want them to get help, staff can offer homework support in the classroom during free play time. Be sure to complete the homework form and inform Kids Center staff about your expectations. This can be found in your online portal with the rest of your Kids Center required forms.

## How are the children grouped together?

Typically, children will be grouped with children in the same grade, however this is determined by the number of children enrolled in each grade level and our staffing.

## Where do I pick up my child?

Our building is located at 6255 N Santa Monica Blvd, in Whitefish Bay. Please park in our North parking lot, accessed off Santa Monica Blvd. Enter through the Peck Fitness area. If you are not a member of the JCC, please let the desk staff know you are here to pick up from Kids Center and that you will need a key FOB to access the Soref/Early Education wing of the building. KEY FOBs MUST BE RETURNED TO DESK STAFF PRIOR TO EXITING OUR BUILDING AFTER EACH VISIT. Our West entrance, Marcus Pavilion, is open Monday – Thursday until 8:00pm and closes Friday at 3:30pm.

Once you enter through the Peck entrance, walk through the main gym to the far-right corner. Turn left and go through the door. Walk down that hallway until you meet the secure door. Use your key FOB to gain access to the Soref wing.

## Where will my child's classroom be?

Your child's classroom assignments will be emailed to you prior to the beginning of Kids Center. Each group in Kids Center will have their main classroom, where they will have snack in the afternoons and engage in fun, teacher-led activities. Based on the daily schedule, we will also use various spaces throughout the JCC, such as the Family Gym, Ritz Theatre and swimming pool, where the children will also engage in teacher-led activities, games and adventures.

### **What if I know my child will be absent from Kids Center?**

If your child will be absent on a day they are normally scheduled for Kids Center, you must notify us by using our ***Transportation Hotline at 414-967-8267 or email at [kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org](mailto:kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org) before 2:15 PM on the day of absence.*** Please leave a voicemail/email with your child's name, school, grade, and date(s) of absence. ***If you need to report an absence after 2:15 PM, please call the Kids Center cell phone at 414-429-8740.*** Due to the size of our program, and to help keep our buses running on schedule, it is imperative that absences are called or emailed into the hotline. There will be a \$25 fee charged to your account after the first no-call.

### **What if I am LATE picking up my child?**

The program hours of operation are 2:45pm-6:00pm (2:45pm-5:30pm Friday), except during days of early dismissal, where we will begin our program earlier on those specified days. Children must be picked up promptly. Families who pick up their child beyond the scheduled pick up time will be assessed a fee at the rate of \$5.00 per minute for every minute after the program officially closes. Extenuating circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. ***If you know you are going to be late, please call the Kids Center cell phone at 414-429-8740 and let us know so we (and your child) won't worry.***

### **Who may pick up my child at the end of the day?**

On the registration form, you have the option to list people authorized to pick up. If someone other than a previously designated adult is picking up your child, please notify the Director or Manager by e-mail or by phone. We will not release your child without checking photo identification. Please share the assigned pick-up time and location with whomever will be picking your child up.

### **When are my forms due to the JCC?**

Per our state licensing laws, we are required to have these forms submitted prior to the start of your child's first day of Kids Center. If they are not submitted before then, your child will not be able to attend our program. A \$50 late fee will be applied if the forms are not received one week prior to your child's first day of attendance.

### **What is your fee policy?**

A payment plan must be established with the JCC, or payment must be received in full, before the first day of your child's attendance. Failure to make proper payment arrangements will result in your child's withdrawal from the program. There are no fee adjustments for holidays, school closings, illness, vacations, or weather-related closures. There will be no changes in schedule, unless the school's schedule changes, and Kids Center needs to adjust our schedule.

### **What is your cancellation policy?**

Any cancellations require a 30-day notification. Tuition will be prorated for any additional portion of time. Deposits will not be refunded if enrollment is cancelled.

### **What is Kids Center Gold?**

Kids Center Gold is a package in which your monthly Kids Center fees include 5 days of after-school care per week and all Vacation Day fees (including winter and spring breaks). An active JCC membership is required for either of these package options. Please note that registration is required for all Vacation Days and includes Vacation Day fees from September 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of the school year.

### **Can I change my child's schedule?**

We understand that schedules may change, and you may need to adjust your child's afterschool schedule to accommodate extracurricular activities outside of the JCC. Should you need to change your child's schedule, you must notify the Director of Youth Programs no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. This new schedule will be effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of next month. Any schedule change requested after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following

month. The first change to your child's schedule will be free of charge. Any additional changes will have a \$25 administrative fee charged to the account on file.

Due to our large enrollment numbers, we may not be able to accommodate any add-a-day requests. Please reach out to the Director of Youth Programs, Ronna Ruffin, to inquire about space on a day you may need to add. If you can add a day, there will be a \$35 fee per day added.

### **What is your Illness Policy?**

We understand that all children become sick at one time or another, especially in a school environment. Our goal is to keep the children well and to diminish the possibility of spreading communicable diseases. We appreciate parental assistance in determining the wellness of your child. **Please do not send your child to school if they exhibit cold, flu, or COVID-19 related symptoms, or those of other communicable diseases, including fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, viral blisters, rashes, or any behavior that indicate they are in discomfort.**

If your child exhibits any of the above listed symptoms, parents will be called immediately. They will be expected to pick up their child within 1 hour. The ill child will be made comfortable while waiting for the parent to arrive. For this reason, it is necessary for the JCC to be informed immediately about job changes, phone number changes, schedule changes and changes in authorized pick-up contact information. Children may not return to Kids Center until they are symptom free for a minimum of 48 hours without the aid of medication.

When a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, parents are contacted, and the Public Health Department is notified. Parents must notify the school when a communicable disease is confirmed. A classroom notice is posted when there is an incidence of a communicable disease. 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 will provide contagious period recommendations. Staff are subject to the same exclusion criteria. Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: Coxsackie Virus (Hand, Foot & Mouth), Head Lice, Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever, Influenza, and RSV. If you are not sure if your child has an illness that requires notification, please reach out to the Director of Youth Programs, Ronna Ruffin, to confirm.

If your child arrives showing signs of being ill, they will immediately be separated from their Kids Center group and monitored. If your child becomes ill during Kids Center hours, someone must be able to pick up your child in case of an emergency.

Our staff are trained in safety procedures, and emergencies will be handled accordingly. The safety and welfare of your child is our primary concern. The Wisconsin state required Health History and Health Report forms requires you to list specific allergies or food restrictions as well as a notation of actions to be taken in the event of an allergic reaction. Our Kids Center Emergency Information Card also asks for the information. Please provide all needed information, for us to provide the best possible care while your child(ren) is with us in Kids Center.

### **What if my child is sick?**

The staff of Kids Center are concerned about the health and safety of all the children in our care. PLEASE, KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME if your child has symptoms of illness. Please use our Transportation Hotline 414-967-8267 or [kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org](mailto:kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org) to report your child absent, as well as list the symptoms your child has. If your child is sent home from school due to illness, please be sure to notify our Transportation Hotline to report your child's absence. Your child may return to Kids Center following our illness policy guidelines.

### **What are School's Out Vacation Days?**

On days when school is out, Kids Center is in. Kids Center offers full day programming from 9:00am-3:00pm with Before care from 7:00am-9:00am available, as well as After Care from 3:00pm-6:00pm (5:30pm on Fridays). Vacation Day

registration is required for all School's Out Days. Regular parent emails will be distributed alerting you to the dates of our scheduled Vacation Day programs. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from the JCC on School's Out Days, except for half day vacation days, in which one of our JCC branded shuttle buses will pick your child up from their school and bring them to the JCC. Children should wear comfortable clothes every day and should bring a lunch (*Please see our lunch policy below*), bathing suit, and towel.

Vacation Day activities change regularly. They may include field trips, special performances, arts & crafts, sports, swimming, games, and cooking. Registration will close at least 7 days prior to the program date. Registration is required for all participants, including those registered with Kids Center Gold. To learn more about Kids Center Gold, please reach out to Ronna Ruffin at [rruffin@jccmilwaukee.org](mailto:rruffin@jccmilwaukee.org).

We will provide a snack in the morning during Vacation Day programs as well as snack in the afternoons for those joining us for After Care. A minimum of six participants is required to run a School's Out Vacation Day. Please see our Vacation Day FAQs for more specific information and refer to your Vacation Day "Details" email which will be sent out 24 hours prior to your scheduled program.

We provide care to many different schools in our area. There will be many days when one school is not in session and your child may have a regular day of school. While there may be a Vacation Day program that day, Kids Center will be running as usual. Please refer to our Kids Center calendar to see when we offer Vacation Day programs, and when Kids Center will be closed or running as usual.

### **What is your lunch policy?**

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 of our families, we ask that you follow these simple guidelines when packing lunches for our JCC Programs

- Lunches may contain meat items or dairy items, but not both.
- Please do not pack any pork products or shellfish.
- Nuts are allowed in all programs except Gan Ami.
- Children are asked not to share any part of their lunches with their friends.

### **How are you ensuring a safe and engaging environment?**

Our Kids Center teachers work every day to create warm, fun, and nurturing environments for our kids. We treat everyone with respect and kindness and encourage children to be their authentic and unique selves.

Before the start of a new school year, our teachers undergo three days of training and regularly attend professional development sessions throughout the year. Our work is guided by the JCC Mission Statement and the Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) Covenant. We strive to create a sense of belonging for each individual, where they feel they can express their personalities, tap into their creative side, ask questions, and develop important life skills.

### **Special Circumstances:**

Kids Center makes every effort to work with all children and families enrolled in our program. On rare occasions, circumstances may occur that bring the program to the conclusion that it cannot meet or provide for the needs of the child and/or family. In this case the program reserves the right to ask you to seek a more appropriate alternative if it is determined by the program, in its sole discretion, that it is in the best interest of the child and the program.

## **Behavior Expectations:**

The JCC Kids Center Program is a program providing a safe and enriching environment for children to learn, excel and have fun throughout the school year. We are continuously evolving and constructing our program to best accommodate all children and their needs.

Our program revolves its principles around kindness. Kindness is defined as behavior traits shown through characteristics, as being pleasant and showing concern and consideration for others. At Kids Center we display kindness as listening and being respectful. These principles are the basis for the 3 primary rules we hold in our program:

- Listen
- Be Respectful
- Have Fun

Without listening, there can be no respect. Without respect, there can be no fun.

We appreciate parental support in ensuring that all children follow basic behavioral rules, as well as the rules inside their individual Kids Center classrooms and on our JCC buses. We do our best to support each child the best way we can, sharing behavioral information with us helps make that possible.

## **Important Numbers & Contact Information**

Ronna Ruffin - Director of Youth Programs	414-967-8218
Shea Beilke – Youth Programs Manager	414-967-8100
<b>Transportation Hotline</b>	<b>414-967-VANS (8267)</b>
<b>Transportation Email</b>	<b><a href="mailto:kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org">kctransportation@jccmilwaukee.org</a></b>
<b>Kids Center Cell Phone</b>	<b>414-429-8740</b>
Jess Lanke – Senior Program Director	414-967-8194

Harry & Rose Samson Family JCC  
964-4444 (Main) 964-0922 (Fax)  
6255 N. Santa Monica Blvd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53217

## **Building Hours**

Monday-Thursday:	5:00 am – 10:00 pm
Fridays:	5:00 AM – 6:00 PM (5:30PM DURING DAYLIGHT SAVINGS)
Saturday:	8:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Sunday:	8:00 AM – 7:00 PM