



Seattle Jewish Community School  
*Challenging each **Mind** and **Inspiring** each **Heart***

**Kindergarten/Gan  
Curriculum Overview  
2011-12/5771**

**Teachers**

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## **Apology of Action**

An *Apology of Action* is a process used in the classroom along with The Ladder of Success.

An *Apology of Action* not only gives the children who have done the action an opportunity to do something to make amends but it also gives the children who have been hurt the opportunity to stand up for themselves and assert their needs. If any one in the classroom hurt someone's feelings, he or she will have the opportunity to make reparations. The most important guideline for an *Apology of Action* is that the action is related to the hurtful behavior. It is important to hold our classroom members accountable. We hold the expectation that there will be follow through and we keep track of who owes whom what. By the end of the year, the children become more independent in follow through and our goal is for every child to know how to make amends.

## **Morning Meeting**

Morning Meeting allows us to begin each day as a community of caring and respectful learners. All classroom members gather in a circle, to acknowledge one another. This morning time creates opportunities for the development of social and academic skills. We notice who is absent and who is present, what bird we may have heard on the way to school, who is smiling and who is sad. We briefly grapple with problems that may be challenging and we are informed of the events in the day ahead. Morning Meeting allows us to begin each day as a community of caring and respectful learners.

Morning Meeting is made up of four, sequential components. These are:

- *Greeting* - Children greet each other by name, often including handshaking, clapping, singing, and other activities.
- *Sharing* - Students share some news of interest to the class and respond to each other, articulating their thoughts, feelings and ideas in a positive manner.
- *Group Activity* – The whole class does a short activity together, building class cohesion through active participation.
- *Morning Message* – Students practice academic skills and warm up for the day ahead by reading and discussing a daily message posted for them.

The goals of Morning Meeting are to be recognized as a member of the classroom community, as well as the ability to take notice of other classmates. We also develop the skills of attention, listening, expression and cooperative interaction.

## **Language Arts**

In the classroom we use Big Books, library books, beginning readers, Internet, pocket chart, guest readers, and one-on-one volunteers who 'read' with the children. Language Arts also includes Writers Workshop, Handwriting and Story Time.

In learning about language, we introduce a developmentally fun approach to the history of language and the layers of stories of the English Language, we build on a foundation for reading. Using the Wired for Reading program, we will learn how to count syllables (rhythmic beats of words) by using our body, we will learn how to use a vowel map to form basic words. We will use both whole language and direct phonics instruction in the classroom.

## **Writers Workshop**

The Writers Workshop gives children a wide-open invitation into the process of writing. Using this curriculum designed by Professor Lucy Calkins, we cultivate rich conversation, storytelling and detailed drawings during our writing time. The Writers Workshop is an opportunity to make and convey meaning. In the Kindergarten classroom, this is done through drawings and printing. During the year the children have plenty of time to approximate working with print before they are expected to read and write conventionally. The outcome is for every child to believe that he or she is a Writer.

During our writing time the children learn to respond to "let's gather" on the rug for a teacher demonstration of writing. We teach the children to take their pencils, markers and crayons so they can "put themselves on the page." They may draw turtles, tall buildings, and writing-like squiggles, alphabet letters that float across the page or use words to tell the story on paper. Some sign their names; others label their drawings; some record long stories. No matter what they do, the goal is for the children to "put themselves on the page" and by the end of the year every child will be an independent and resourceful writer.

## **Handwriting**

The purpose for teaching the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum, developed by Jan Olsen OTR, is to develop key skills needed for writing legibly and with speed. The lessons are visual, tactile, auditory and kinesthetic. We use uncluttered black and white pages. Each child receives his/her individual handwriting workbook. We use a wet-dry-try on a slate to give children touch and repetition. We use child-friendly language and music to help the children learn and remember easily. We also use movement with music to teach the letter formation as well as imaginary writing with large arm movements and visual cues. Handwriting skills take several years to develop and these skills begin in Kindergarten. These skills are:

- *Memory* - to be able to name letter and numbers quickly from a random list and to be able to visualize a letter or number quickly without seeing it.
- *Orientation* - To be able to print letters and numbers with few reversals.
- *Placement* - To be able to follow line and place letters and numbers correctly on the baseline.
- *Size* - To be able to write in an appropriate size for kindergarten and to make the letters a consistent size.
- *Start* - All letters and numbers start at the top (except d and e).
- *Sequence* - To be able to make the letter parts in the correct order and direction and to make the letter parts the correct way every time.
- *Control* - To be able to print the letter parts neatly with no gaps, overlaps, or extra tracings.
- *Spacing* - To be able to keep letters in words close and to leave space between words in sentences.

## **Storytime**

Storytime builds a sense of community as the teacher and children share the power of language through written and oral story. Storytime can be either a read aloud with pictures, a shared reading experience where the children are invited to read along, or an oral story where the children can 'act' out different parts of spoken tales. Reading aloud and oral storytelling are important to a young child's success in learning to read and in comprehending language. Storytime works on listening skills, vocabulary and invites students to participate in language before becoming proficient in the language.

## **Math**

In Kindergarten, the approach to math is individualized as well as working with the Everyday Math curriculum. The philosophy of Everyday Mathematics is that young children should have many opportunities to explore mathematical concepts through play, informal interactions with adults and other children, and through exposure to a variety of materials and manipulatives in a range of contexts. We work with the child to establish a firm foundation in number sense.

Students take an active role during mathematics. They give reasons for answers and communicate their ideas to others. Reflecting on one's thinking and learning is a challenge for all learning, but even the youngest students can begin to engage in this important aspect of mathematical learning.

In Kindergarten class, talking about mathematical ideas and sharing work from a math activity are as much a part of the classroom culture as sitting together to listen to a story, talk about a new activity, or anticipate an upcoming event.

## **Science**

Life on earth today is strongly impacted by science and technology. The foundation for literacy in these areas is a hands-on experience, using multisensory methods, where naturally curious kindergarten students are free to observe, explore and describe.

Small group explorations foster an interchange of ideas and a sharing of exciting discoveries. Exploring the outdoors with children, combined with classroom investigation, instills a love for nature through the study of science that builds a natural curiosity and interest in the physical world.

We will be using the school grounds for many of our observations. The kindergarten students will explore the cycles of the season, bees, worms, snails, owls, fish, rocks, fabric, and beginning experiments.

## **Social Studies**

We look to our classroom community for our social studies curriculum. If a family member is from a different country we will explore that country. If we have several religions represented in the classroom, we briefly explore and discuss those beliefs. The child brings an important contribution to our social studies curriculum. If something significant has happened in a particular country or state during our time together, we will explore that country and event. When we are studying a particular artist or author, we will bring his or her culture into the classroom in a developmentally appropriate method.

## **Field Trips**

The purpose of our field trips is to compliment our units of study. We will be taking field trips through-out the year and we will keep you informed as to place and time.

## **Art**

Art education is for all students. Art teaches students that they can communicate a variety of ideas and emotions in many different ways. In kindergarten we will introduce the elements of art – line, shape, color, space, form, texture, rhythm, balance and unity. We will use a variety of media such as crayons, markers, paint, paper, clay, fiber, fabric, wood, and other materials. We will examine some art pieces and learn about different artists. We will invite working artists into the classroom.

## Recess

Last, but certainly not least is recess. The most talked about curriculum of the day. Recess is a time to incorporate the whole body. It is a time to release the imagination in safe and constructive ways through play. On the playground children interact with each other outside of the classroom. This is the place where they practice social skills, build friendships and learn how to cooperate. They can run, shout and breathe fresh air and come back to the classroom environment invigorated, alive and ready to learn.

Recess can also be hard and frustrating. Recess can then provide an opportunity to learn the skills of mediation and problem solving with a teacher. These are skills that will carry over into all areas of life.

Kindergarten days are full, exciting, and stimulating. Your children are busy learning how to grow into healthy, compassionate, inquisitive citizens of our planet. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

## Jewish Studies Curriculum

**BLESSINGS** – Students will be exposed to blessings related to eating, holidays, Shabbat, and other mitzvot that arise.

**CYCLE OF THE JEWISH YEAR** – Students will be introduced to the Jewish holidays using an integrated language-arts teaching model, including stories, books, Big Books, art projects, food, drama activities, and music.

**HEBREW** – Students will gain Aleph-Bet recognition. Students will recognize and write their own Hebrew name. Students will begin to build an oral Hebrew vocabulary including colors, body parts, family, Jewish objects and activities in the home, in the classroom and in the synagogue, weather, Shabbat, and holiday terminology.

The Jewish **HOME** – Students will become familiar with symbols found in the Jewish home, such as the Mezuzah, siddur, kippah, Kiddush cup, and candles.

**ISRAEL** – Students will recognize Israel as a home for all Jews. They will study and experience many places of Israel, including Jerusalem, the Kibbutz, Eilat, and archaeological digs. They will culminate their study with an all-school “trip” to Israel.

**JEWISH VALUES** – Students will be introduced to many Jewish values, including “*Dereh Eretz*” (kindness and respect) “*Bitahon*” (a place of safety), and “*Shem Tov*” (developing a kind, respectful reputation and manner in interaction with others).

**MITZVOT**- Students will experience and integrate mitzvot related to daily living experiences as well as those that are holiday specific, including *hazan et hakol* (feeding the hungry), *tzedakah* (giving to those in need), *sh’lom bayit* (peace in the house), *kibud av v’em* (honoring your father and mother), *kibud zekenim* (honoring the elderly), *hahnasat orhim* (welcoming guests), *n’kayon* (cleanliness) *bikur holim* (caring for the sick), *tz’ar ba-alei haiim*, (treating all creatures with dignity), and *g’milut hasadim* (acts of love and kindness).

**READING/WRITING AND DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS**- By experiencing the Hebrew alef-bet and vocabulary through an integrated and hands-on manner, each child is able to explore Hebrew reading and writing at the pace for which they are developmentally ready.

**SHABBAT** – Students will become familiar with the symbols, foods, rituals, and concepts of this most important holiday.

**SYNAGOGUE AND TORAH** – Students will be introduced to the parts, people, and purpose of the synagogue. They will identify parts of the Torah’s dress in Hebrew and English.

**T’FILLOT** – Students will gain familiarity with prayers leading to memorization, especially through song. There will be a special emphasis on the Shema and the V’ahavtah. Students will gain sight word recognition of important Hebrew words from such prayers as the Shema, Modeh Ani, and others.

**TORAH STUDY** – Students will be introduced to many stories in Torah, particularly those relating to specific holidays. We will study Bereshit (the story of Creation), Adam and Eve, Joseph, Moses, Miriam, the Exodus, and the receiving of the Torah at Sinai. Schedule allowing, we will also learn about Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, and other great Biblical leaders of Israel including Deborah and King Solomon.

## **Music**

### Listening and Appreciation

- gaining exposure to classical composers, their childhood and their work
- understanding that music is a common experience for children all over the world
- identifying musical qualities that elicit our responses
- experiencing that music moves us to emotional and physical responses

### Creative Expression and Movement

- reflecting qualities of music through our bodies

### Music Concepts

- understanding steady beat by moving to music in free and instructed patterns
- introducing basic music vocabulary: steady beat, tempo, volume, up and downward (dynamics) movement of pitch
- focusing on steady beat
- discovering rhythm in words

### Instrumental Production

- exploring how the concept of steady beat in our bodies translates to expression of steady beat with hand percussion instruments

### Singing

- developing a sense of joyfulness around singing
- increasing repertoire of childhood songs
- providing opportunities to perform within the class, as well as with the support of the larger school community

## **Library**

**All of the units in the library curriculum are guided by three main goals:** 1) to instill a love of books and reading, 2) to teach library and research skills, and, 3) to use various forms of literature as a vehicle to explore important personal and social issues such as respect for diversity and social responsibility.

Kindergarten is mostly about reading the very best picture books and learning library basics. We always identify the title, author and illustrator before reading a book. We learn about book care and borrowing versus owning. Once all of the students demonstrate the correct use of shelf markers, the class can begin checking out books from the library. We discuss how to find interesting books by the cover and spine. Then we learn about fiction versus non-fiction by reading animal books. To learn about how books are organized, students imagine themselves as books on a shelf as we sing the alphabet and line up in alphabetical order.

## **Physical Education**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Seattle Jewish Community School recognizes the need for Physical Education and provides opportunities for students to learn, grow and develop in the areas of movement skills, fitness (energy) education, and teamwork. Paramount to its physical education environment is good sportsmanship through dereh erez, mutual respect, positive language and proper behavior among students. SJCS provides a safe learning environment and uses a diverse array sports games, tumbling exercises, dance, fitness and other related activities to provide a well-rounded physical education curriculum.

### **Curriculum**

Students begin the year learning to use basic movement skills such as hopping, skipping, jumping, kicking, throwing, rolling, balancing, dodging and fleeing through a number of challenging activities. In October the focus shifts to basketball as students develop hand eye coordination while learning the finer points of dribbling, passing, catching and shooting/placing a basketball or tossing bean bags in a hoop. November brings our soccer and first fitness unit installment. Students learn to dribble, stop rolling balls, and pass to teammates using their feet only. A variety of fitness activities are also conducted to promote aerobic endurance, body manipulation, quick reaction, and listening.

The month December continues with listening skills development, but now focuses on teamwork. Students are challenged to work with a partner(s) while participating in various activities using jump ropes, hula hoops, and bean bags with a focus on friendship, personal space awareness, and cooperation along with balance, agility, coordination, and quick reaction. January brings another fitness installment as students now learn the correct way to do calisthenics such as jumping jacks, sit ups, pushups, etc., as well as bear crawls, crab walks, and jogging nonstop for 2 minutes each class. During February's football unit students learn how to carry a football through a maze of wall mats while trying to keep other kids from snatching the flags attached to their waist. This activity helps kids with the skills dodging, snatching, fleeing, and strategy. It also helps prepare them for flag football at the higher grade levels.

Our March t-ball unit is solely focused on striking the ball off the "T", fielding the baseball, and then the actual game of t-ball. During our t-ball unit students learn to develop hand/eye coordination as they are challenged to watch the bat as it makes contact with the ball for a hit, successfully field a rolling or flying ball, and maintain awareness as they run the base paths alone or with teammates. Forward rolls, handstands, and cartwheels comprise the month of April as we usher in our tumbling/gymnastics unit. During the months of May and June a review of different skills/games/activities taught during each prior month will be conducted each week.

### ***SJCS PE Dress for Success Policy***

SJCS welcomes students to its Physical Education Curriculum of exercises and activities. In order for your child to optimize their learning experience and to reduce the embarrassment factor, we request that you pay close attention to your child's PE day(s) and make sure they are dressed appropriately each day.

Each child should wear a pair of athletic shoes. No heels, sandals, crocs, uggs, boots, etc.

Girl appropriate dress would include shorts, skorts, yoga pants, sweats. No dresses or skirts please! It is preferred that boys wear shorts or sweat pants.

Thank you for your understanding, and detailed attention to this matter. We look forward to having another great year of PE at SJCS