

<p style="text-align: center;">MILWAUKEE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM OVERVIEW</p>
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The MJDS Junior Kindergarten program provides an atmosphere of acceptance and love. It is a place where teachers and parents work together toward development of the whole child. We offer a rich, Jewish environment that fosters positive self-esteem and healthy emotional growth. We foster each child's self-image to promote successful learning. We encourage children to be confident about who they are and about their growing skills and independence.

Young children learn best by doing, and there are daily hands-on opportunities for early academics and social learning. Children learn through manipulation of developmentally appropriate materials. Meaningful learning opportunities build upon each other daily, and soon, the children have internalized important concepts. We strive to meet the needs of a variety of learning styles and abilities. We work to develop critical thinking skills and a joy for learning. Play provides very important learning. We want our students to feel safe enough to explore the give and take of friendship. Children are challenged academically and socially in a safe, nurturing environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Our language arts program spirals and is integrated throughout the curriculum. Predicting outcomes, hearing rhymes in words and patterns in stories, and noticing individual words and spellings all are important early reading skills reinforced by reading together. Students are immersed in language activities through story writing, journaling, language experience charts, "big" book creation, poetry, author study, and self-expression through sharing, puppetry, thank you notes and greeting card making. Children practice writing by using invented spelling and sounding out words, with concentration on sounds. Fieldtrips may include First Stage Children's Theater.

MATH

The Jr. Kindergarten math curriculum, based on the Math Their Way program, emphasizes math concepts through a hands-on approach using free exploration, experimentation and use of manipulatives. This is an on-going program integrated throughout the curriculum. The program includes daily calendar activities, counting, sequencing, shape recognition, pattern recognition and creation, classification and sorting, measuring, and graphing. Number recognition and value is also emphasized. Early math skills are reinforced through meaningful learning experiences that relate to all units of study.

SOCIAL STUDIES

We teach social studies through a sequential program beginning with the study of the child. It continues to include the study of families, foreign countries (i.e. Folk Fair and Israel Fair), and friendships. Class discussions based on shared reading experiences and children's observations and feelings help enhance our group social studies lessons. The children experience role playing in classroom centers.

SCIENCE

In Jr. Kindergarten science, we focus on the processes of observing, inferring, classifying and predicting. The children experience science through hands-on activities and assorted science units. The study of weather and the seasons is ongoing throughout the school year. Children become immersed in our study of trees, forest life, and oceans. Science lessons help integrate secular with Judaic learning. For example, we teach hands-on science lessons while studying about Rosh HaShanah, Tu B'Shevat, and Pesach. Science-based art projects give students additional insight and meaningful learning experiences throughout our science studies. Fieldtrips may include the Milwaukee County Zoo and an apple orchard.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Jr. Kindergarten physical education program at MJDS emphasizes development of movement and coordination. Students accomplish this through activities using balls, parachutes, beanbags, bells and more. Two physical education classes are held each week.

HEBREW

The children's first Hebrew words are chosen from their immediate environment, such as body parts, family, colors, animals, etc. We also teach Hebrew words related to the Jewish holidays, such as foods and holiday symbols. Words and sentences are learned and reinforced through songs, games, puppet play, pictures, books and videos in Hebrew.

JEWISH STUDIES

In Jewish studies, Jr. Kindergarten students are introduced to the experiences and celebrations in Jewish life. Our students are taught stories from the Torah which follow the yearly cycle of the Torah reading, they learn the blessings appropriate for different kinds of foods, and they mark the progression of the Jewish year by preparing for and celebrating the Jewish holidays. To initiate our new Jr. Kindergarten students to the sweetness of Torah study, they and their families participate in a Kabbalat Torah ceremony in conjunction with Sukkot. They also enjoy an annual Chanukah family program. They also learn about many *mitzvot* in class through story and song, including the importance of *tzedakah* (righteous behavior). The children experience daily *tefillah* (prayer), and they become familiar with the role of the synagogue in Jewish life. The Jr. Kindergarten Family Education Program will focus on learning the *Shemah* prayer, and families will create a *Shemah* pillowcase. The students gain a connection to the land and people of Israel through songs, art projects, our *Shin-Shin* (Israeli) volunteers and projects with our Israeli partner school. We invite parents to join with their kindergarten children for a pre-Passover Seder. Enriching our Jr. Kindergarten is an intergenerational Tikkun Olam curriculum that helps children understand their role in repairing the Earth.

MUSIC

The MJDS music program allows students to learn through the musical process. The broad goal is to develop cognitive, affective and sensory motor growth through which children can experience music as an integral part of their personal development. Singing, listening, playing instruments, musicianship, movement, appreciation and musical theater are incorporated throughout the curriculum. These skills encourage creativity, self-expression, confidence, discipline, proficiency and social skills. As a result, students nurture their own talents and increase their love and appreciation for the performing arts.

At MJDS, we provide an integrated program of singing songs in English, Hebrew and the languages of other cultures. Singing enhances not only the music class, but general studies and Hebrew studies classes, as well. The learning and performance of a variety of songs gives added meaning to our school events, holiday programs and our own "Shabbat Sing." Junior kindergarten children have music class twice per week. In addition, once each week, an instructor from the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music teaches hand drumming to our Jr. and Sr. Kindergarten students. Children will learn to keep a steady beat and play basic rhythm patterns through music, games and activities. Beginning musical concepts and listening skills are introduced and developed.

ART

In Jr. Kindergarten, art is not a separate subject area; rather, we incorporate art into all curricular areas. Our projects are process based vs. product based. The children have the opportunity to experience a variety of media, including markers, crayons, craypas, paints, scissors, glue, clay, textiles, chalk, etc. Projects are both unit-based and free choice. Some are teacher directed, while others are based on free expression.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The learning specialists are available to provide academic support, interventions and/or additional instruction to meet the specific needs of the students they service. The specialists work closely with the child's classroom teacher and parents to help the child reach his/her full potential. They also collaborate with teachers to modify curriculum and develop strategies to meet the students' academic needs.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

The MJDS school counselor provides short-term individual and group counseling for students in Jr. Kindergarten through 8th grade students. She also develops a close working relationship with the teachers and assists faculty in dealing with students' academic, social and emotional concerns. The counselor may lead group sessions on specific issues, serve as a student advocate, and assist teachers in classroom presentations on topics dealing with student emotional and social development. She is available to provide parents with information and referrals to community resources.

SECOND STEP®

Our counselor coordinates and assists with the Second Step anti-bullying program for Jr. Kindergarten-2nd grade. This program prevents violence and bullying and promotes responsible, respectful student behavior through classroom presentations and literature units. These programs are led by trained MJDS staff members and classroom teachers. During the sessions, our students learn:

- How to recognize, refuse and report bullying when it happens to them or to someone else.
- Friendship skills that reduce the risk of being bullied, including how to make friends, join group activities and manage conflicts.
- Emotional skills, such as understanding the feelings of others and managing emotions.
- How to use positive values (responsibility, respect and caring for others) as a guide for behavior.

LIBRARY

The MJDS library is an ever-evolving center offering opportunities for information exploration, reading guidance and curriculum support. The library space, which houses two institutional libraries, has more than 20,000 titles in book and multi-media formats. Networked computers are available to both the professional staff and students, allowing them to explore local school holdings and the Internet. The librarians maintain a library website at www.mjds.org (click on “Library”).