



Lawrence Family
Jewish Community Center
JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS

Family Guide to the JCC Nierman Preschool

Glickman♦Galinson
Early Childhood Education Complex

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LAWRENCE FAMILY JCC NIERMAN PRESCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision statements express our intentions and desired future for children, families and educators. The work of the Nierman Preschool fulfills the mission of the Lawrence Family JCC, which is to connect with Jewish heritage, identity, experiences and values to ensure the continuity and vibrancy of the Jewish community. We invite you to partner with us on this journey to embody and achieve our vision, described below.

CHILDREN

- We believe children are curious, capable, and creative risk takers (*D'rash*) who want to explore their environment to make sense of their world (*Hit'orerut*).
- We believe that preparing children to become engaged, contributing and open-minded members of society begins by seeing children now as future makers, leaders and innovators.
- We believe children are unique and natural learners who are able to drive their own learning.
- We believe children's self-directed learning helps their social-emotional, physical and intellectual growth, each along their own timeline (*Tzelem Elohim*).

FAMILIES

- We believe in fostering a strong connection (*B'rit*) between home, school and community where families are engaged and empowered as pillars of their child's educational journey (*Masa*).
- We believe that consistent and transparent communication between families and educators is the cornerstone (*K'dushah*) to creating a trusting and respectful educational environment.
- We believe that families, in collaboration with educators, create a supportive community wherein the enriching ideals and practices of Jewish life thrive (*Tikkun Olam*).

EDUCATORS

- We believe in educators who are friendly, passionate and professional.
- We believe in a warm, nurturing, healthy and inclusive environment for every learner who walks through our doors.
- We believe educators deserve competitive pay and benefits.
- We believe our educators can create respectful and individualized educational experiences for their students.
- We believe educators need multiple opportunities for professional development in cutting-edge Early Childhood Education, to facilitate their own lifelong learning (*D'rash*).

ENVIRONMENT

- We believe in providing a warm, sensory enriched, aesthetically inspiring and safe environment.
- We believe our preschool is the beginning of a lifelong connection to the JCC and serves as an asset to the broader San Diego community.

- We believe the environment serves as a welcoming home for families with young children as they begin their Jewish and educational journeys.
- We believe partnerships within our organization (including Performing Arts, Senior Programming, Sports and Fitness) as well as collaborations with local organizations beyond the walls of our JCC, inform the work of our preschool.

CONTACT INFORMATION

JCC	Guest Services	858.457.3030	
ECE Director	Fran Forman	858.362.1171	franf@lfjcc.org
ECE Program Manager	Judi Sofer	858.362.1354	judis@lfjcc.org
ECE Operations Manager	Nataliya Telerman	858.362.1147	nataliyat@lfjcc.org
ECE Operations Coordinator	Dana Koenig	858.362.1170	danak@lfjcc.org
ECE Program Coordinator	Jennifer Meltzer	858.362.1102	jenniferm@lfjcc.org
JCC Accounting Office	Cynthia Zena	858.362.1146	cynthiaz@lfjcc.org
JCC Fax Number	Attn Preschool	858.450.6835	
	Room 1	Ext. 1281	
	Room 2	Ext. 1282	
	Room 3	Ext. 1283	
	Room 4	Ext. 1284	
	Room 5	Ext. 1285	
	Room 6	Ext. 1286	
	Room 7	Ext. 1287	
	Room 8	Ext. 1288	
	Room 9	Ext. 1289	
	Room 10	Ext. 1290	
	Room 11	Ext. 1291	
	Room 12	Ext. 1292	
	Room 14	Ext. 1160	
	Room 15	Ext. 1118	
	Room A&C	Ext. 1346	

**Extended Care Cell Phone Hotline Numbers
For matters requiring immediate attention:**

858.472.0073 (Nataliya)

760.533. 7243 (Judi)

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Our focus is on creating a safe and nurturing environment that offers opportunities for exploration and discovery. We strive to develop curiosity, imagination, self-esteem, caring for others, and the ability to play both cooperatively and independently. We are committed to expanding community access to recreational and social programs for children of diverse abilities and backgrounds.

The environmental components in the classroom are enhanced by the *ta'am* (flavor) of Judaism - the heritage and values - which allow the children to cultivate a positive sense of identity for themselves and within the greater community. Cultural diversity is promoted and respected as children and families share their traditions from around the globe.

CURRICULUM

Learning activities are designed to match the developmental stages of each child. Attention is directed at the process and pleasure of discovery in each project, and NOT on the final product.

Quality educators and specialists offer an integrated approach to education, skillfully interweaving academic goals and objectives as they build on what children can do, and challenge them to try new things. Language arts, reading and math readiness skills, art, science, movement, dramatic and imaginative play, and creative activities are linked through individual units as they are explored.

Jewish culture, traditions and heritage are studied and celebrated with songs, stories, dance, cooking, and crafts. Shabbat is celebrated at school each Friday in an atmosphere of joyful togetherness and sharing.

SPANISH IMMERSION CLASSES

We offer Spanish Immersion classrooms for our 3 and 4 year olds, and introduce Spanish language into all classrooms, including the youngest children.

STEM

(SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH)

All of our students participate in weekly STEM lessons in our lab. Our STEM lab is equipped with state of the art, age-appropriate tools for exploration in biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and mathematics.

For 4-5 year old students, we introduce more advanced subjects such as electricity and basic coding. All lesson plans utilize our “learning through play” philosophy, and are aimed at developing the scientific method of thinking.

NIERMAN PRESCHOOL SPECIAL PROGRAMS

As part of our regular, school-year curriculum, Nierman Preschool offers a variety of special programs to provide meaningful and interactive opportunities for the children to engage as part of their larger preschool community with the various Jewish holidays celebrated throughout the year.

Rosh Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh acknowledges and celebrates the arrival of the new Jewish month. The children join together in our Courtyard on the Thursday closest to the actual date. The children sing songs about Israel, the moon, & the holidays that fall within the new month.

Shalom Sesame

This wonderful program has not only introduced great PJ Library books to our children, but it has also helped the children learn how to attend programs in the Theatre. Each year we present a few Shalom Sesame Programs to the children. Themes have included: Shabbat, Mitzvot, Hanukkah, Tu B'Shvat and Israel.

Holiday Programs

Holidays are a big part of the Nierman Preschool experience, and we celebrate them with great cheer. Some holidays are celebrated school-wide and others are observed in the classrooms. Parents are invited to join us. Some of the programs involve a series of stations for the children to visit to learn more about a particular aspect of the holiday or Jewish culture. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and help man the various stations.

ENRICHMENT

An enrichment program is offered each afternoon from 1:15 – 2:15 pm for 3 year olds and 4 and 5 year olds, with educators providing supervision for the transition from class to enrichment. We also have afternoon enrichments offered from 3:00 – 4:00 pm as well. Classes meet once a week for approximately 5-10 week sessions. Sports, dance, art, science, cooking, music and movement are among the enrichment classes offered. There is a separate charge for these classes. Regular Extended Care rates apply after 2:15 pm. Information about classes, schedules and fees are available online.

EXTENDED CARE

(Before Care and After Care)

We offer a flexible, extended day care program for children. **Before Care** is open from 7:30 – 9:00 am each day. **After Care** is from 1:00 – 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday, and 1:00 – 5:00 pm on Friday. Children who take afternoon naps will sleep on their cots in their designated sleeping room; others will have quiet play in another room. Afternoon snack, outside & indoor play, storytelling & circle times complete the day. Parents should indicate

on the daily sign-in sheet that the child is to go to After Care. Should you be late for pick-up, your child will automatically be included in After Care.

Extended Care is charged on an hourly basis. A daily record is kept of each family's use of Extended Care.

Please Bring: Crib sheet to cover cot during rest period. Additional small sheet or light blanket to cover sleeping child. *Please label all items. Parents are responsible for weekly laundering.*

The staff understands that, in rare cases, emergencies can occur. If you have an emergency, call the Preschool Office and indicate that you are running late. Parents are expected to pick-up their children on time. Late fees are as follows:

1st 5 minutes = \$5

Up to 15 minutes = \$20

INCLUSION POLICY

Nierman Preschool welcomes children with special abilities. We believe that inclusion programs provide an excellent educational setting for children, and we work to make sure that each child is a fully integrated member of the classroom in which he/she is enrolled. Children benefit from an environment that promotes diversity and respect for differences.

The more we know about your child, the better prepared we are to enhance his/her preschool experience and can more fully meet his/her needs. Your partnership in this regard is critical. There are a number of steps we can take collaboratively to ensure that your child receives the most benefit from the preschool experience:

- **JCC INCLUSION SERVICES:** We offer early identification and screenings in all areas of a child's development (speech/language, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive and social/emotional) at the request of parents and/or educators. Referrals are made to school district programs when appropriate, as well as early intervention services (Early Start) for children under the age of 3.
- The JCC Preschool has an Inclusion Manager, Occupational Therapist, and a School Counselor to consult with parents and staff regarding children's individual needs.
 - **OUTSIDE RESOURCES:** If your child has already been evaluated, we require access to the reports and information, including IEP/IFSP. We are committed to working with the community partners that support the special care and educational needs of children
- **RESOURCE VISITS:** Should a resource person plan to come to the school, we simply ask that you notify us ahead of time and complete the **Permission to Discuss Form** which allows us to speak to the professional(s) about your child.

FAMILIES AS ENGAGED PARTNERS

Parents and educators look at young children's learning from many different perspectives, with a common goal: making sure children engage meaningfully with the materials presented and grow from their experiences.

We believe one way to foster children's learning is through building partnerships between families and Nierman Preschool, with frequent and open communication and mutual respect.

A formal Parent/Teacher Dialogue will be offered in early winter. Educators will meet individually with parents to discuss your child(ren)'s progress. Weekly newsletters from the teacher will be received via email. In addition, you will receive e-mails as well as flyers and forms to notify you of upcoming events, describe programs and projects that occurred, and offer an explanation of upcoming Jewish holidays with suggested home activities, cooking projects, and words to songs.

Since we rely heavily on e-mail for school communication, please make sure your e-mail addresses are up-to-date, and notify the Preschool Office in person!

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & the ALL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The All School Committee is an opportunity for **ALL PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS** to serve as advisors for the Early Childhood Education Department. The members of the committee work with the Preschool Director and staff to:

- Create and evaluate school policies, programs and budget
- Organize family social activities
- Develop parent education programs
- Create and organize holiday events and special programs for the children
- Plan fundraising activities
- Make policy recommendations to the JCC's Board
- Represent Nierman Preschool to the community-at-large

All School Committee meetings are open to all Nierman parents and caregivers, and are generally held in the morning on the first Monday of the month.

Volunteers are vital to our program, helping us to create community while communicating new ideas and constructive feedback to the Administration. It is truly a rewarding experience for you and your child and a wonderful way to meet new friends.

There is no better way to be an active participant in your child's preschool experience than to become involved in his or her classroom. Whether you are able to help out by sending an email or two, come to a single event or organize several, your time and contribution is an appreciated and important part of what makes our school unique. Every Nierman caregiver is welcome as a class helper or school volunteer on the All School Committee. It is an excellent way to be involved and to be better acquainted with other parents.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Room Parents – Representatives from each classroom become the liaisons between the Preschool Committee and parents of the classroom. They are the primary communicators of the events organized by the Preschool Committee Chairs to the other classroom parents. There are usually 2-4 Room Parents per class. All Room Parents receive lots of support from the school and will meet at a special Room Parent Reception at the start of the school year. It is a wonderful way for the Preschool community to come together and help each other. As Preschool Committee representatives, Room Parents:

- Help review and make policy for the preschool.
- Plan, organize, and implement various classroom-specific parent involvement activities in cooperation with the teacher including a class social gathering in the fall, a class basket for the Hanukkah Happening, and the Thanksgiving and Passover Feasts.
- Help coordinate “mitzvot” (good deeds) for families and staff in need from their classrooms. Some “mitzvot” have been cooking or coordinating dinners and Shabbat meals for families who have had a new baby or illness/surgeries.

Hanukkah Happening – This event is held on a Sunday prior to/during Hanukkah (November/December). The JCC gymnasium is converted into a carnival with games, crafts, food booths, and all sorts of family activities. Volunteers work on the booths, get items donated for a silent auction, create gift baskets, help with publicity, and set-up the before the event. Each class creates a Theme Basket for auction.

Birthday Book Club – Families can donate a book in honor of their children’s birthdays or any other occasion. Volunteers send out letters to families to tell them about the club and work with the preschool to assure that books are properly distributed and parents are thanked.

Judaic Programming – This committee helps plan the Purim carnival, and other holiday programs designed by the Committee. Most holiday programming occurs in the Spring.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

At the beginning of every new school year, both parents and children are faced with a new routine and environment. Trying to acclimate to a new teacher, school, and different friends can be very challenging. Some children may be upset for a day, others for a few days, and others for weeks. They may be shy and cling to you, act aggressively, cry easily, or have bathroom accidents. These reactions are normal and expected. In fact, these feelings of anxiety help the child develop a sense of self and teach him/her to become independent. It is also natural for the parents to feel upset about their child’s reaction especially when the anxiety extends over a number of days.

These behaviors will disappear as your child begins to trust the educators and other children. Be sympathetic and understanding. Act out the experience of going to school with your child at home, discussing in detail what to expect. We welcome your visits anytime we’re open.

Please notify us of any changes in your household that would affect your child (e.g. new sibling, loss of a loved one, parent’s absence, family tensions, etc.) This information will be kept confidential and will allow us to meet your child’s needs.

Helpful Hints

- Talk about school as a place where children go to have fun. Talk to your child in a positive way about his/her new experience. Validate your child’s feelings by talking about them.
- Before the school year starts, start a daily routine by having your child help prepare his/her lunch and set school clothes aside the night before.

- Pay attention to your child’s behavior in separation circumstances so that you are prepared for his/her reaction.
- Plan to attend Orientation Day prior to the start of school. From 10 am to noon, you and your child can visit, meet the teacher and other children and play in the classroom. You may attend for a short time or the whole two hours.
- Keep the night before the first day as calm and restful as possible.
- Give your child a warm send-off, indicating that you will be waiting for his/her return in the afternoon. Always say goodbye to your child before leaving the classroom. Be loving but firm, letting them feel secure about their new environment. Children sense how you are feeling.
- If the teacher encourages you to spend some time in the classroom the first day, do so. Conversely, the teacher may ask that you not linger in the classroom in order to aid in the transition. Please follow the teacher’s recommendation.
- Transitional objects such as small stuffed animals or blankets can often ease a child’s entry into school. Our goal is for your child to feel comfortable and eager to come each day. If bringing "something from home" will help the transition process, please do so. Ask your child what s/he would like to bring or offer a choice of items you have selected. Sometimes the object brought is something that belongs to a parent. If so, tell your child that you will get it back when you see him/her next. Each family is encouraged to bring a family photograph to post on the classroom family board.

CLOTHING

Please send your children to school in comfortable, washable clothes which allow them to move freely and to participate in “messy” projects. We recommend that children wear closed-toe shoes appropriate for climbing, running, and other vigorous school activities. Please be sure to label all extra clothing with your child’s name.

LUNCHES and SNACKS

Lunchtime is an important learning experience at school. Parents provide nutritious lunches including a drink. Please do not send gum, candy, or soda to school. In accordance with the kosher policy at the Jewish Community Center, we ask for the following:

- All lunches must be vegetarian or dairy. Dairy refers to non-meat and non-fowl foods. Fish such as tuna fish are considered *pareve* (neither meat or dairy) and are acceptable.
- Please do not send any meat or meat products (such as chicken, pork or beef) or any shellfish or shrimp. They are not allowed at school. Peanut and tree nut allergies are becoming very common. **If your child has any allergies or foods that should be avoided, please contact the School Office!** For some highly allergic children, contact with even a trace amount of a nut/food product could result in a death within minutes. **Due to the severity of a peanut or tree nut reaction, we ask that parents not bring anything containing peanuts or tree nuts with their child to school.** Please respect the policies of your room. If you have any questions, please contact the Preschool Director. (See the next section for more information)

- Think “green” – we are also trying! Please send your child with a reusable cup that can be left at school for water, and reusable plates and utensils. Identify all items with your child’s name written in permanent marker.

Other Recommended Items to have on hand:

- Zip lock bags (pint and snack size) or reusable sandwich carriers
- Containers that are microwave-safe with lids
- Plastic ice block (Blue Ice) – to keep food cool
- Lunch box – an insulated one if you wish to keep food cool.
- Thermos – if you want to send a drink. We supply water.

Special lunches are offered each day. Sign-up forms are available online.

Healthy Snack Options: Daily midmorning snacks offered by the preschool consist of two food groups. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks on their volunteer snack day. Children in After Care and Enrichment also receive an afternoon snack.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Children’s birthdays are celebrated in the classroom at a birthday circle. Parents may provide a special snack, and are welcome to participate. However, birthday invitations may not be distributed for these classroom parties. Invitations for private birthday parties may be distributed at school only when all children in the class have been invited.

We invite you to commemorate your child’s birthday or a special celebration by participating in our Birthday Book Club. You can adopt a book which will have a tribute certificate in honor of your child or celebration and will be presented to your child’s class for the school library.

CHALLAH

Challah, a sweet braided egg bread, can be ordered from the Preschool for your weekly home Shabbat observance. These challahs will be delivered to the classrooms each Friday. Parents who sign their children up to be the class *mensch* (good friend) for Shabbat can order a special challah for that week. Your family will love the special bread, and you will be supporting the preschool at the same time. Challah forms are available online and through the Preschool Office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A child should not be in school when she/he has:

- Nausea or vomiting, or has vomited during the night;
- Diarrhea;
- Frequent coughing or sneezing, or nasal discharge;
- Evidence of a communicable disease such as a rash or unusual sores;
- A temperature of 100 degrees or above;
- If febrile, the child may not return to school until there has been no fever for 24 hours without Tylenol or Motrin (please note that the school may not administer these medicines);
- Sore throat;

- Unusual watery, burning, red, or crusted eyes;
- An unexplained or contagious rash;
- Head Lice;
- Any behavior changes interfering with participation in school activities;
- Health reasons which preclude his/her playing outdoors.

It is important to keep child when sick home for these reasons:

1. To protect the health of all children and staff at the school.
2. To protect the sick child whose resistance is lowered and who is more susceptible to other infections.

Please notify the school immediately if your child has been exposed to or has contracted a contagious disease. State law requires that we send home any child exhibiting signs of illness. Your child will be isolated until you arrive. The JCC does **not** have on-site nursing capacity and therefore your prompt arrival is greatly appreciated. Please remember that these guidelines are meant to protect the health of your children and staff at the school. **A note from your child’s physician stating that he/she is able to attend school does not mean that he/she does not pose a risk to classmates or staff and does not merit immediate readmission to school.** It is up to the discretion of the school to determine whether your child has met the criteria after an illness to return to school.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Children are to be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Striking or rough handling is never permitted.

We are required by law to report suspected child abuse by calling Child Protective Services. We report any suspicious marks, complaints, or actions to the Director and a report will be made to CPS.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Priority for registration is given to families that were enrolled in Shalom Baby. Registration is confirmed with a non-refundable application fee. Children attending Nierman Preschool must be between the ages of 18 months and 5 years of age. No child will be denied admission because of race, religion, or national origin.

CANCELLATION POLICY

The JCC cancellation policy states that once your child has been accepted to the Preschool, parents assume financial responsibility for their children for the entire school year. Please understand that just because your child is absent or withdraws before the school year ends, our costs are not mitigated. Therefore, the JCC/Preschool cannot refund fees or cancel unpaid obligations if you withdraw your child, even if it is prior to the start of the school year. Requests for a prorated registration must be made at the time of application submission and will be considered at the JCC’s discretion.

ADMISSIONS FORMS

It is the parent’s responsibility to furnish the following completed forms to the Preschool Office by the first day of class. These forms are required by the California State Department of Social Services and the San Diego County Department of Health.

- Identification and Emergency Information
- Consent for Medical Treatment
- Physician's Report (signed by your child's physician)
- Acknowledgement of Parent's Rights Notification
- Pre-Admission Health History
- Personal Rights
- Physician's Recommendation for Medication (if needed)
- Copy of Immunizations*

Information required include:

- Family Information and Health, Medical and Emergency Information Form: includes all pertinent information about your child on one form and must be kept up-to-date
- Confidential Family History (must be filled out every year your child is at our school)
- Consent for Medical Treatment
- Sunscreen/Diaper Cream/Wound and Burn Care Waiver
- Treatment package for children who must take medicines on an ongoing basis or for children with severe allergies
- Nierman Preschool Policies and Waivers

Please keep our school within code and your children in a safe environment. Keep your emergency information current by updating the Preschool Office with new address, home, or business phone numbers, cellular phone information, or e-mail address.

*Per Senate Bill 277, as of January 1, 2016, the immunization exemption for personal and religious beliefs (PBE) is eliminated in the State of California. Children with medical exemptions are exempt from this new law.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

Parents must accompany children to their classroom at drop-off. Children must be signed-in at arrival. The following information should be written on the sign-in sheet: the child's name, the **FULL signature** of the person signing-in, the time, any special comments (child attending daycare, enrichment, etc.), and the name of the person authorized to pick-up the child at departure. Children must be signed-out at the end of the day. A list of people authorized to pick-up your child should be written on the Identification and Emergency Information Form.

Preschool classes begin at 9:00 am and end at 1:00 pm. Children are expected to arrive at school **no earlier than 5 minutes before class.** Educators require the time before the start of class to prepare for the day, and are not available to properly greet or supervise children who arrive early. Children arriving before class begins should be signed-in to Before Care. **Children may be picked up between 12:50 and 1:00 pm.** Please be prompt in picking up your child if they are not staying for an extended day. If you realize that you are going to be late, please contact the Preschool Office. We will bring your child to After Care. Do not worry if you can't reach us – we will automatically take care of your child. **Please see the information on Extended Care and Enrichment on page 8.**

Children remaining in our care during after school hours (e.g. Enrichment and After Care) must have exclusive use of the facilities. Therefore, we are required to ask parents to leave the preschool playground by 1:10 pm daily. Parents who arrive to pick-up children from Enrichment also must leave the playground by 2:30 pm (according to State Law).

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

It is imperative that emergency information is updated as soon as changes occur. Please keep your contact information (address, emails, phone) current. Should an emergency occur while the children are at school, we will follow the JCC's emergency procedures. Parents will be contacted on pick-up procedures via automated phone messages and/or e-mails.

MEDICATION AND ALLERGIES

If your child requires special medication during school hours, the school must have written, dated, and signed instructions and forms from your child's physician and signed by the parent. Medication must be handed directly to the Preschool Teacher. **Do not send medications in lunch boxes.** In order to assure that the staff is properly trained in administering emergency treatment to children with severe allergies, a complete packet of information must be completed by the parent, physician, and teacher after being trained, prior to the start of school. Notify us, in writing, of all allergies that your child has. When appropriate, we will ask parents to provide all food, snacks, and special treats in order to assure that your child's specific needs are addressed. Since children at our school have allergies to animals, we ask you to please keep your pets at home.

SECURITY

The security program at Nierman Preschool is in place with many measures such as video cameras around the campus and security guards. For your children's safety, drop-off and pick-up must be done through the main doors to the JCC's Viterbi Galleria. This access is monitored by Preschool Staff during prime times and by the Guest Services staff throughout the day.

You will need your membership card for identification and door access. If you don't have your card, please sign in at the front desk. If a non-member will be dropping-off or picking-up your child, please fill out an authorization form found in your confirmation package or at the Preschool Office. The names of these authorized agents will be given to the Guest Services Desk. Make sure they have a picture I.D. for positive identification.

Safety in the Parking Lot: Two parking lots are available for drop-off and pick-up. The Executive Drive lot in front of the preschool is reserved exclusively for preschool parents for drop-off and pick-up. A second parking lot can be accessed from Genesee Avenue or Eastgate Mall.

A Beginner's Glossary of Jewish Words

Nierman Preschool offers an enriched curriculum, imbued with Judaica. Many of the words, phrases, and rituals are expressed in the Hebrew language. Here is a beginner's list of some holiday vocabulary your child and you might encounter. There's no test at the end of the year – just enjoy learning!

SHABBAT

Sabbath which begins at sundown on Friday night and ends Saturday evening.

Challah	A braided loaf of white bread. (On Rosh Hashannah it is baked in a circular shape).
Hamotzi	The blessing over bread or any meal in which bread is eaten.
Havdalah	A ritual which marks the end of Shabbat.
Kiddush	The prayer at the beginning of the Sabbath and Jewish holy days which is recited or chanted over a cup of wine.

ROSH HASHANNAH AND YOM KIPPUR, THE HIGH HOLY DAYS

Rosh Hashannah – Jewish New Year. Literally, “head of the year.”

Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement. Day of fasting, prayer, and reflection.

Kol Nidre	Prayer which ushers in Yom Kippur. It is sung by the cantor. During this solemn prayer, the Torah scrolls are removed from the ark and held before the congregation.
L'Shana Tovah Tikatevu	“May you be inscribed for a good year.” Sometimes shortened to “Shana Tovah” or, in Yiddish, “A Gut Yohr.”

Machzor	Prayer book used for Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur services
Selicot	Communal prayers said at night, the Saturday night preceding Rosh Hashannah.
Shofar	Ram's horn blown on Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur
Teshuvah	Hebrew word for repentance. The days between Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur are called the ten days of teshuvah.

SUKKOT

Festival of Booths celebrated for seven days marking the time of the Fall harvest.

Etrog	Fragrant fruit. The lulav and Etrog are the major symbols of Sukkot
Lulav	Palm branch with a holder containing myrtle and willow sprigs over which a blessing is recited and which is shaken.
Sukkah	Hebrew word for booth – a temporary structure built for this holiday to remind us of the flimsy structures in which the Israelites lived for 40 years in the desert.

HANUKKAH

Festival of Rededication which commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians in 167 B.C.E. and the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. This post-biblical holiday lasts for eight days.

Hanukkah Gelt	Gifts of money sometimes given to children on Hanukkah. We also know it as chocolate coins.
Hanukkiyah	Candelabrum with one arm for each night – eight lights - of Hanukkah plus one extra light, the shamash, from which the other lights are lit.
Sevivon	A four sided top with the Hebrew letters Nun, Gimel, Hay and Shin on each side. Used for a special Hanukkah game. Also referred to as dreidel in Yiddish.
Latkes	Potato pancakes traditionally eaten on Hanukkah. Delicious with applesauce or sour cream!

PURIM

Celebration of Mordechai's and Queen Esther's victory over wicked Haman told in the Book of Esther.

Grogger	Noisemaker used to drown out the name of Haman each time it is read in the Megillah
Hamantashen	Triangular pockets of dough filled with poppy seeds, stewed dried fruits, or jam.
Megillah	Usually refers to the book of Esther which is read in the Synagogue on Purim.

PESACH/PASSOVER

Spring Festival celebrating the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt observed for eight days.

Afikoman	A piece of matzah which is hidden, at the beginning of the Seder, to be found by the children. Once found, it is distributed to all to signal the conclusion of the seder.
Chametz	Food which is not permissible on Passover because it contains leavening or certain leavened grains.
Haggadah	The book containing the narrative of Israel's slavery in Egypt and the deliverance from bondage to freedom. It is read aloud at the Passover Seder.
Matzah	Unleavened bread. It comes in flat, thin, perforated sheets. It is a reminder of the bread which the Israelites ate when they hurriedly left Egypt.
Seder	The festive meal which ushers in the festival of Passover during which the story of the Exodus from Egypt is dramatically retold; special symbols are displayed and songs sung.

GENERAL TERMS

Kosher	Refers to something which is fit to eat, according to the Jewish dietary laws. Food which is not kosher is called "treif."
Mezuzah	A small container which is affixed, at a slant, to the right side of the front door of a Jewish home. Inside the mezuzah is a parchment in which printed are verses from Deuteronomy 6: and 11: 13-21, 4-9
Pushke	A small can or special container kept in the house in which money is collected for charity. A wonderful custom to perpetuate is to drop some coins into the pushke before lighting Shabbat candles. Also called a Tzedakah box.
Eretz Yisrael	The land of Israel
Mazal Tov	Literally "good luck," often used meaning "congratulations."

GREETINGS

Yom Tov	General holiday greeting meaning, "good holiday."
Shabbat Shalom	Peaceful Sabbath.
Boker Tov	Good morning
Erev Tov	Good evening.
Laila Tov	Good night.
Shalom	Hello, Goodbye, Peace.

