

Family Guide

JCC Nierman Preschool

“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.”

-Excerpt from the Nierman Preschool Vision



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Contact Information

In case of Emergency/Urgent	
For Extended Care matters requiring immediate attention please call	
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Classroom	Extension
Room 1 - Natalie	1281
Room 2 - Rosy	1282
Room 3 - Carol	1283
Room 4 - Elba	1284
Room 5 - Rita	1285
Room 6 - Sandra & Maggy	1286
Room 7 - Kristin	1287
Room 8 - Candy	1288
Room 9 - Jessica & Sandra	1289
Room 10 - Valerie	1290
Room 11 - Ariela	1291
Room 12 - Debbie	1292
A & C - Krasí	1346
Room 15 -Tatiana	1160

Nierman Preschool

Vision Statement

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

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 2, 3 and 4 year olds, and introduce Spanish language into all classrooms, including the youngest children.

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 sing songs about Israel, the moon, & the holidays that fall within the new month.
- **Hebrew word of the Week:** The entire school (teachers too!) will learn a new Hebrew word every week.
- **Live Music:** This year, we will have schoolwide (socially distanced) live music 2 times a week. On Tuesday and Friday, all the children will have a sing along to the preschool favorite tunes and celebrate Shabbat every Friday!
- **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. We will incorporate zoom this year to include families. .
- **PJ Library:** Your children are learning about the world around them through the stories they hear. We are part of an international network of PJ Library which bring Jewish ideas and inspiration through the provision of award winning literature into all of our classrooms and library.

Enrichment

An Enrichment program is offered Monday to Thursday from 1:15 – 2:15 pm for 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. Sports, 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 3 pm. Information about classes, schedules and fees will be available online.

Extended Care (Before Care and After Care)

We offer an 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. You must have a reservation in advance for extended care. Children who take afternoon naps will sleep on 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. Should you be late for pick-up, your child will automatically be included in After Care. A daily record is kept of each family's use of Extended Care, which is charged on an hourly basis.

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.

Inclusion

Nierman Preschool welcomes children with special abilities and needs. 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:

- **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 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.

The Preschool Committee is an opportunity for ALL PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS. The members of the committee work with the Preschool Director and staff to:

- Create and evaluate school policies & programs
- Organize family social activities
- Develop parent education programs
- Create and organize holiday events and special programs for the children
- Plan fundraising activities
- Represent Nierman Preschool to the community-at-large

Preschool Committee meetings are open to all Nierman parents and caregivers, and are generally held in the morning on the first Monday of the month. Parents are encouraged to attend. **This year, all monthly meetings will be conducted over zoom.**

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.

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.
- 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. Be loving but firm, letting them feel secure about their new environment. Children sense how you are feeling.
- 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

Lunch time 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 and salmon are considered *pareve* (neither meat nor 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,** and please respect the policies of your room.

Healthy snack ideas:

- Fresh fruit such any kind of berries, grapes, pineapple, any kind of melon, pears (bananas & apples are available at school)
- Fresh Vegetables with low fat ranch dip
- Yogurt
- Hummus or veggie dip
- Whole-grain crackers with low fat cheese
- Yogurt smoothies
- Cottage cheese with fruit
- Black bean and corn salad
- Egg or tuna salad

Low Sugar: Most important is to not bring cakes, cookies, cupcakes, or items with frosting for the Healthy Sharing Snack.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables: Please wash and cut all fruit/veggies before bringing them to school. This helps our teachers spend more time with the children. Fresh fruit cups and applesauce are fine. Some favorites are bananas, apples, grapes, oranges, melons and strawberries. Some fruits/veggies are a little more enticing to children when they are dressed up with other things such as cream cheese, veggie dip, or hummus. Yogurt also makes a good dip.

Cheeses and Yogurt: Children generally prefer the softer, milder cheeses such as Cheddar, Colby or Monterey Jack. These may be sliced, cubed or the prepackaged string cheeses or cheese sticks.

Crackers/Rice cakes: Please watch your labels. Many crackers contain sugar in high amounts. Generally, if sugar is listed in the first three ingredients, you can know that it contains too much (limit to less than 8 grams

per serving). Some favorites include baked crackers such as Wheat Thins and pretzels, Cheese Nips, plain Cheerios. No chocolate flavors please.

Drinks: Water is best for quenching thirst and this is our first choice at preschool. We have plentiful water available. We will never serve anything labeled drinks or soda. On occasion, 100% fruit juice will be served.

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.

Challah & Shabba Tote Bags

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. You can also order a **Shabba Tote** bag which makes celebrating Shabbat convenient with candles, holders, kosher grape juice, a Kiddush cup, challah and a copy of the prayers in English & Hebrew.

Sick Child Policy

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, nasal discharge; **(even with no color)**
- 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 sick children 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 your arrival. Please remember that these guidelines are meant to protect the health of all the children and staff at the preschool. **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 current preschool families and those 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: **Medical Exemptions must be authorized by your child's MD**

Information required include:

- Confidential Family History (must be filled out every year your child is at our school)
- Sunscreen/Diaper Cream/Wound and Burn Care application Waiver
- Treatment package for children who must take medication on an ongoing basis or for children with severe allergies
- Nierman Preschool Policies and Waivers

Emergency Information

It is imperative that emergency contact information is updated as soon as changes occur. This includes new address, home or business phone numbers, cellular phone information, and/or email address. 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. **Please notify us in writing, of all allergies.**

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 our JCC employs a number of measures, including video cameras around the campus and security guards. You will need your membership card at all times 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.

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 & 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.