



KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM GUIDE

We are so glad to welcome you to Kindergarten at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School!

Following this introduction, you will find an overview of the Kindergarten curriculum. While each teacher uses her own teaching approach, we are confident that children will be taken from where they are individually in September and moved forward through the year to meet the goals and standards of our Kindergarten program.

The CESJDS Kindergarten Philosophy

In kindergarten, we take a team-teaching approach, with two full-time teachers in the classroom - a General Studies teacher and a Judaic Studies teacher. The teachers and the students flow through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities during the week. The teachers integrate subject matters seamlessly and in unique and challenging ways.

During the year, children will develop as enthusiastic, curious learners who feel good about themselves. As the kindergarten year progresses, we focus on the main areas of our whole-child approach to learning: cognitive, social-emotional, spiritual, and physical growth.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

CESJDS' whole-child approach to learning is at its finest in our kindergarten classrooms. We start our day with Morning Meeting, guided by the *Responsive Classroom*® curriculum. Through our focus on the Middah of the Month and social-emotional development goals, we foster our students' awareness of self, others, and community:

- The children will experience socialization in the context of Jewish life and to develop a responsive classroom.
- The children will develop respect for others in our early childhood setting.
- The children will have experiences that will encourage enjoyment of and pride in our children's Jewish community and heritage.
- The children will experience development of the *middot*/values of generosity and empathy by participating in meaningful *tz'dakah* projects.

GENERAL STUDIES

Language Arts in the CESJDS Kindergarten

Developing a love and confidence in reading and writing is an important part of a kindergartner's work at school. At CESJDS, we spend time every day engaging in reading and writing activities both individually and in small and large groups. We understand that becoming proficient readers and writers takes time and that each child develops at their own pace. Therefore, we have a variety of activities to engage all learners in the reading and writing processes. Our curriculum is guided by Fountas and Pinnell resources.

Throughout the day, kindergarteners engage in a variety of reading experiences such as shared reading where they read aloud together, small-group guided reading, where a teacher can focus on specific strengths and goals, and individual reading, choosing books that are particularly interesting to them. Often, the day starts with an interactive read-aloud where students listen to a story read by a teacher and then discuss it in order to make meaning of it together. Through all of these activities, students develop a well-rounded understanding of the context, purpose, and meaning of reading as they develop their own styles and preferences.

Writing is so much more than just putting word on a page. Writing includes idea formation, details, and voice. Kindergartners often begin the writing journey by creating picture stories to convey meaning. As they develop an understanding of letters, words, phrases, and sentences, they can begin to engage with the writing process. Often their writing connects with what they have been reading. CESJDS kindergartners participate in shared writing where they work on a piece together, responsive writing where they complete an assignment given by their teacher, and independent writing where they write what is in their hearts and minds. Children enter our kindergarten classrooms with a wide array of skills and abilities in reading and writing. We understand this variance as well as the need to challenge students at their own pace. The variety of experiences we provide allows all children to progress towards our stated learning goals. Those who need extension are provided interesting opportunities to engage their interests and develop their skills. Those that need assistance to achieve our expectations are given the support they need. When kindergarten students leave our classrooms and move up to first grade, they are prepared with the thinking skills, attitudes, and abilities to meet their new challenges.

Guided Reading Standards in K-2 at CESJDS

At CESJDS, we want each child to love reading and to grow into books that stretch their thinking. Teachers observe their students carefully to assess literacy skills. In kindergarten, we formally assess students using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) assessment for phonological awareness and early reading skills and the Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell *Benchmark Reading Assessment*. Once assessed, we guide students to find "just right" books and place them in the appropriate guided reading group to help meet their needs and advance their skills.

In K-2, teachers use leveled texts to match the correct books to individual students, to run small guided reading groups, or assemble materials for skills groups. Our book collection includes both narrative and informational texts leveled using the A-Z system based on research by Fountas and Pinnell. Interest level, mature content, and, at times, the type of humor in some of the extremely high-level books generally do not match and are not a good fit for a K-2 reader, even when that child has sophisticated comprehension. If you or your child is having difficulty choosing a "just right" book, your child's teacher and our school librarian can guide you in your book choices. Our classroom libraries are a central element in each primary classroom and our Gudelsky Library offers an extensive and accessible collection of resources in Hebrew and English as well as other languages.

For children who need additional support, we have acquired the Fountas and Pinnell Language Literacy Intervention kit. Teachers will give children who may benefit from this extra boost the opportunity to use this kit in their classrooms.

The research-based literacy levels we use are organized by specific features and progress from easy to challenging. The classroom teacher will be happy to show you examples of the various levels. The letters only loosely tie to a particular grade level or time of year. The characteristics of each reading level guide teachers in the correct placement of children and help determine the skills and strategies a child needs before moving to the next level. Our list of reading benchmark levels is a living document that we constantly reconsider as new research and new student profiles come to our attention.

The Fountas and Pinnell text gradient for students in grades K-2 is as follows:

- Kindergarten Levels A-D
- First Grade Levels D-K
- Second Grade Levels I-M

We use Fountas and Pinnell recommendations and other research to discuss our students and how to meet their needs. When assessing and determining reading levels, each teacher makes her own professional decision using Fountas and Pinnell's guidelines along with documentation and anecdotal information. You are welcome to get more specific information by meeting with your child's teacher.

Word Work

In General Studies, the children are introduced to "star" words (high frequency words found most often in printed English). We encourage children to practice the star words until they learn to read them with automaticity.

KINDERGARTEN: Star Words List A

Students will know these words with automaticity by the end of the school year. **introduced in Gurim*

me*	is*	like*	am*	love*
I*	in*	at*	my*	on*
see*	it*	go*	we*	do*
can*	and*	you*	up*	he*
red*	a*	dad*	she*	mom*
be*	no*			

KINDERGARTEN: Star Words List B

Students who master the Star Words List A will move onto this list. Many of our kindergarten students will know many of these words with automaticity by the end of the school year.

the	to	get	with	of
they	big	from	or	look
had	by	word	but	not
small	all	come	how	are

an	said	then	here	way
may	one	two	three	where
*red	blue	green	yellow	

Kindergarten students explore words by looking at letters and sound patterns during “Word Work” time. Learning various “chunks” (listed below) helps children to understand how words are related to one another. Studying chunks provides students with a foundation for decoding more challenging words as well as supports them in their independent writing work (e.g. **-at**: *cat, sat, bat*).

-ad	-am	-ed	-ig	-og
-ag	-at	-en	-in	-op
-an	-ut	-et	-it	-ot

Word work instruction is complemented by the implementation of *Words Their Way*, a developmental approach to word study. Students are assessed and placed in their appropriate spelling levels. As a differentiated program, *Words Their Way* meets each student’s needs so that the student is appropriately challenged in spelling and word work. The use of this resource will begin in the winter months.

Handwriting

At CESJDS, we use the *Handwriting Without Tears* method of instruction in Gurim-Grade 3. This explicit, multisensory approach offers a variety of hands-on strategies to develop writing fluency. Gurim-Grade 2 focus on printing, and by Grade 3, students are ready to learn cursive. We begin by teaching capital letters and move into lower case according to their formation. For example, we teach how “magic c” can turn into *a, d, g* and *q*. We will also teach students songs to help them remember the correct formation of each letter as they work toward greater writing independence.

SOCIAL STUDIES

An important goal of our kindergarten is for children to understand themselves so that they can better understand others and the world around them. Through Social Studies, our students learn that they are unique individuals who are important members of a group. Our Social Studies curriculum is based on lessons about our families, our community, our traditions, and ourselves. The children will demonstrate an understanding of how Americans, Jews, and Israelis celebrate specific holidays.

Students participate in a variety of learning activities including:

- The background and origin of holidays
- Music associated with each holiday
- Dances associated with each holiday
- Art projects to encompass various aspects of the holiday
- *Tz'dakah* projects to help the community

Kindergarten teachers create a classroom community and teach responsibility through class jobs. Introducing democratic ideas, teachers allow children to make some decisions as a class by voting or facilitating the creation of class and playground rules by group consensus. Your child will have the opportunity to work together to solve issues that arise and need to be discussed as a whole class. Our kindergarten participates fully in the whole school's monthly middah program. We value our responsibility to develop *menschen* and encourage character development at every opportunity throughout the school day.

MATH

In Kindergarten Mathematics, students use inquiry- and context-based lessons to start building a foundation of mathematical skills and practices. Each day, math is used as a tool to help make sense of the world around them and assist with problem solving within the classroom through activities such as calendar math, sorting, and organizing. In addition, four in-depth units will foster a deep conceptual understanding of essential mathematical ideas, strategies, and models, while also engaging students in critical thinking, problem solving, and communication activities. Instructional time focuses on two critical areas: developing number sense and describing shapes and space.

Two units from the program [Contexts for Learning Mathematics](#) will delve into number sense. Students will represent and compare whole numbers with objects and with written numerals, as well as explore compensation and equivalence, doubles and even or odd numbers, and the relationship between doubles and skip-counting.

Two units from the program [Project M²](#) cover geometry and measurement concepts through the “frogonaut” characters Fonzie and Freeda. Students will engage in investigations, Space Labs, and choice centers as they explore the process of measurement and ways to create and describe shapes. In the measurement unit they will learn beginning measurement concepts and processes associated with the attributes of length, area, capacity, and volume. In the geometry unit they will develop the concepts involved in identifying and describing 2- and 3-dimensional shapes, composing and decomposing shapes, spatial orientation, and visualization.

SCIENCE

Our program is organized in accordance with the most up-to-date science education research and focuses on learning progressions which promote depth of content knowledge and skill over breadth. Our program is based on the [Next Generation Science Standards](#), a framework of learning created by the National Research Council in conjunction with the National Association of Science Teachers and professional leaders in science fields. To accomplish these learning goals, we use the TCI curriculum to structure our program.

(<http://www.teachtci.com/science/k-8-online-interactive-science-textbooks-and-notebooks.html>). TCI includes hands-on experiments, games, literacy, and STEM projects that lead children through diverse ways of learning about the world around us. Our science department complements this with unique projects and experiences, citizen science, and infusions of STEM centers that General Studies teachers offer in conjunction with the math program. The overarching goal of our science program is to provide students with a strong foundation in life science, earth and space science, and physical science while inspiring a new generation of scientists with exciting inquiry-based learning opportunities. The topics for Kindergarten Science are Weather, Push and Pulls, and Plants and Animals.

Life Science: Plants and Animals

Students learn where animals and plants live and why they live there. They will define the basic needs and care maintenance of these plants. Classes will grow plants in the classroom and outside. Students will learn that plants and animals have certain basic needs relative to their habitats and will role play as various plants or animals in their habitats. They will create a book with information about animals and how they change the earth. Students will also learn about recycling.

Physical Science: Pushes and Pulls

In this unit, students learn what happens when you pull or push an object. Students will conduct motion investigations using a variety of materials from marbles to cars. They will experiment with the effects of pushes and pulls on a ball and collision on objects of different forces. They will create a game and, finally, they will design, test, and engineer a slide with a ramp (inclined plane) and a bumper. By the end of the unit, students will analyze a design solution for various strengths of pushing and pulling an object.

Earth Science: Weather

This unit will focus on what the weather is like today and how it is different from yesterday. Students will track weather each day for two weeks on a calendar. They will analyze the data and make conclusions about the weather in our area. They will experiment with the effect of sunlight on water and various soil types (sand, soil, and rock). They will design, test, and build a structure to keep a sandbox cool. Each student will write a nonfiction story in first person about a storm the student experienced and understand the importance of weather forecasting for severe weather.

JUDAIC STUDIES

Hebrew Language

CESJDS has adopted the proficiency approach to the teaching of Hebrew Language. This approach has a specific focus on the development of communicative language skills and content that over the course of a student's years of study, will lead to a comfort with speaking, writing, and reading in Hebrew with high levels of comprehension. We are partnering with Hebrew at the Center (HATC) to provide ongoing professional development and coaching to Judaic Studies faculty members in the Proficiency Approach, which has led to deliberate choices regarding curriculum and instruction in Hebrew and an evolution of the kindergarten schedule that allows for specific time dedicated to all Judaic Studies subjects. During the Hebrew Language block, we immerse the children in the sounds of the language and emphasize spoken Hebrew. Our goal is to expose our children to a Hebrew environment in which they feel comfortable hearing and using Hebrew. Each day, the students have 45 minutes of Hebrew instruction through songs, games, books, and hands-on activities.

In kindergarten, students will experience the following elements in order to facilitate Hebrew learning:

- An *Ivrit b'ivrit* model (Hebrew taught in Hebrew) for 45 minutes per day
- Directions given in Hebrew throughout the day and encouraged to ask questions, make requests, and name objects in Hebrew.
- Listening to and singing Hebrew songs and reciting Hebrew jingles and rhymes as important elements of the Hebrew immersion lesson and overall classroom environment.
- Develop both active and passive simple Hebrew vocabularies.
- Exposure to the Aleph-Bet, learning the names of the letters and their sounds.

Haggim (Jewish Festivals) and Shabbat

In kindergarten, we seek to connect students to their Jewish identities through joyful participation in and learning about the cycle and special days of the Jewish calendar. As a pluralistic school, we embrace the backgrounds and home practices of each child while exposing them to traditional rituals, blessings, and practices as a foundation for their future learning. Each child's personal experiences from home are celebrated as they engage in the learning in the kindergarten classroom. Children will have the following experiences in this curricular domain:

- The children will develop a connection to Shabbat and Jewish festivals by exploring and experiencing them in class through prayer, song, cooking and crafts. Weekly hallah baking is a highlight of the kindergarten year for students and families.
- The children will learn *b'rakhot*/blessings associated with various Shabbat and festival rituals as they develop literacy within the domain of Jewish life and living.

T'filah and Torah

Engaging in *t'filah*/prayer and Torah study have been aspects of Jewish education for centuries. At the kindergarten level, we seek to develop a sense of love and joy in these two curricular areas. In *T'filah*, students are introduced to the practice and routine of daily *t'filah* as part of the early morning circle time. Students are led by the teachers in a brief musical and participatory set of prayers in which students come to love to sing together. Our Jewish music and *t'filah* specialist sees students once per 6-day cycle in our Bender Beit Midrash for communal *t'filah* as well, where the following prayers are introduced and discussed in-depth.

In Torah, the children will discuss major events and values within each weekly Torah portion/*parashat hashavu-a*.

English	Hebrew
<i>Hinei Mah Tov</i>	הנה מה טוב
<i>Modeh Ani</i>	מודה אני
<i>Elohai N'sha-mah</i>	אלהי נשמה
<i>Mah Tov</i>	מה טוב
<i>Kol Ha-n'sha-mah</i>	כל הנשמה
<i>Sh'ma, V'ahavta</i>	שמע, ואהבת (שורה ראשונה – עברית ואנגלית)
<i>Mi Khamokhah</i>	מי כמכה (עד "על שפת הים")

<i>Adonai S'fatai Tiftah</i>	א-דני שפתי תפתח (שיר)
<i>Amidah (until "Ha-El Hagadol")</i>	עמידה (עד "הא-ל")
<i>Sim Shalom (first four words)</i>	שים שלום (רק 4 מילים)
<i>Oseh Shalom</i>	עושה שלום
<i>Va-y'hi Bin'so-a</i>	ויהי בנסע
<i>Sh'ma/Ehad Eloheinu/Gad'lu La-Adonai</i>	שמע/אחד א'/גדלו לה'
Torah Blessings	ברכות קריאת התורה באנגלית
<i>V'zot HaTorah</i>	וזאת התורה
<i>Eitz Hayim Hi (1st 7 words)</i>	עץ חיים (רק 7 מילים)
<i>Ein K'elohaynu (two versions)</i>	אין כא-להינו (עברית ועברית/לדינו)
<i>Adon Olam</i>	אדון עולם (רק פזמון)
<i>Shofar Calls</i>	קריאת השופר
<i>Ha-yom (first verse)</i>	היום (בית א')
<i>B'Rosh Hashanah Yikateivun</i>	בראש השנה יכתבון
<i>Hal'lu-Hodu La-shem</i>	הללו – הודו לשם

<i>Avinu She-bashama-yim</i>	אבינו שבשמים
<i>Birkat Hamazon</i> (1st paragraph)	ברכת המזון (1 st paragraph only)

Israel and Jewish Peoplehood

Personal Jewish identity development and a sense of connection to the Land and People of Israel begin in kindergarten. Our goals and activities in this area include the following:

- The children will come to understand the centrality of Israel in Judaism as we associate it with events, prayer, language, the Bible, and special days such as Yom Ha-atzma-ut/Israel Independence Day and Yom Y'rushalayim/Jerusalem Day.
- The children will develop a sense of personal connection to Israel and its people by singing Israeli songs, dancing Israeli dances, hearing and speaking Hebrew, and “meeting” personalities from the history of the modern State of Israel.

SPECIALS

Specials are scheduled by class and occur at a set number of times in each 6-day rotation.

- *Library* – Once every 6 days, students will have a library class in which they will learn how to use the resources available in their own school library.
- *Music* – Students will have a Judaic Studies music class once every 6 days. This will expose your child to all of the important lessons to be learned in music, both in a general sense and in a Jewish sense.
- *Art* – Once every 6 days, students attend art where they focus on drawing, painting, creative skill, and personal expression.
- *Physical Education* – Twice every 6 days.
- *Science Lab* – Once every 6 days.

TECHNOLOGY

Our students become digital-age learners beginning in kindergarten as they use technology to demonstrate their creativity, critical thinking, and applied knowledge. Technology enhances every subject area for individual students, collaborative groups, and whole class instruction. Even our youngest students use technology to illustrate their writing, explore their research topics, and connect with the global community. Our instruction develops both digital fluency and a deep understanding of digital citizenship. Students learn to use technology to explore, learn and analyze purposefully and responsibly. The basis for our curriculum is the [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\) Standards for Students](#) (NETS•S), which evaluates the skills and knowledge students need to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly global and digital world.