

GESHER

PROGRAMS FOR KIDS IN GRADES K-6

PARENT INFORMATION MANUAL

JCC OF GREATER ROCHESTER

THE GESHER PROGRAM

Gesher Program Goals

Educational

Children will be exposed to a wide variety of experiences and materials including blocks, art/craft materials, puzzles, board games, "manipulatives" (for both math and reading/language skills), and dramatic play. Informal education will be emphasized with a focus on accessibility for all learning styles and abilities.

Cultural

Children will learn to be accepting and tolerant of differences in others—physical, developmental, or religious. Jewish culture will provide guiding principles and cultural background for our program and will be presented in a manner that is educational, experiential and non-threatening.

Social

Children will learn to make good choices concerning their activities, behaviors and responses to other children. Staff will facilitate the development of appropriate problem solving and resolution skills.

Emotional

Gesher will provide a stable, welcoming environment for children, in which they may feel safe, comfortable and accepted. Staff is trained to attend to any specific emotional needs or concerns a child may have.

Physical/Recreational

Opportunities will be provided daily for physical exercise and recreation. Children will be exposed to a variety of different games and sports, utilizing our sports fields, swimming pool, auditorium rooms, gym, and indoor play gym.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Choices

Our program is designed to allow children to choose activities that appeal to them and enrich their out-of-school hours with varied, challenging, engaging activities. Each day we have a homeroom period until 4:25pm. We then have one "choice" period from 4:30 to 5:20 when children have the opportunity to choose what activity they would like to participate. At 5:30 children are back in their homerooms for convenient pickup.

Enrichment Classes

Enrichment classes are offered at the same time as our choices. Children in third through sixth grade have the opportunity to pre-register for enrichment classes that are offered once a week. If your child pre-registers, they will attend that enrichment class for the entirety of the session (fall, winter, or spring).

Youth Fitness Classes

Youth Fitness Classes are similar to Enrichment Classes in that they require pre-registration and run for half of the session length (Fall Session 1, Fall Session 2, Winter Session 1, Winter Session 2, Spring Session 1, Spring Session 2). Youth Fitness classes are run by the Youth Fitness Department and include

children outside of the Geshher program. Because of this, classes may fill up quickly, so it is important to sign-up as soon as we provide you with the class offerings. This information will be sent out in our monthly newsletters via constant contact, so please make sure to check your email!

THE GESHER PROGRAM

Homework (Grades 3-6)

Monday through Thursday, children have the opportunity during their homeroom time, before choices, (approximately 20 minutes) to complete their homework. We also offer "Homework" as a daily activity choices from 4:30pm to 5:20pm for third through sixth graders. Staff members are able to assist children when possible. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to do their homework.

During the 35-minute period, children who do not have homework are encouraged to either read a book (from our bookshelves or home), color, draw, or some other quiet activity. This ensures that children working on their homework are able to concentrate.

Physical Education

Each week children will have many opportunities to participate in sports or fitness activities. These activities will be lead by Fitness, Wellness and Recreation Staff, INzone Staff or Geshher staff using the gym facilities, the racquetball courts, the INzone or our outdoor ball field. Options vary by session and include (but are not limited to): basketball, soccer, hockey, kickball, scooters, relays, INzone, and team handball.

Arts and Crafts

Geshher is rich with artistic talent. Children will have daily opportunities to participate in creative endeavors. Offerings will change periodically. Some will be one day projects, while others will be ongoing, longer term projects.

Shabbat

Each Friday, we will observe Shabbat (the day of rest), saying the blessings and sharing a challah (and cake).

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Swimming

We provide free-swim times during Geshher hours. Additionally, one Red Cross swim lesson per week (during class sessions 10 to 13 weeks long) is included in your Geshher fee as long as your child attends at least 3 days per week. These lessons are coordinated through the Aquatics department and require enrollment through the Geshher office during our one-week enrollment period. Registering your child for swim lessons means that they will attend their scheduled lesson EVERY time it is offered, unless we hear otherwise from you.

If more than two of the first five swim lessons are missed, your child will be removed from swim lessons for the rest of the session. You may register again for the next session.

Vacation Camps

On most days that Brighton Schools are closed we offer vacation camps. Vacation camps often include field trips and special guests. They are exciting days filled with lots of fun activities From 7am-6pm.

Pre-registration is required at least 1 week in advance. Fees for school holiday programs are IN ADDITION to Geshher fees.

Snow Days

In case of inclement weather, when Brighton cancels school, Geshher will offer childcare if possible. Snow day coverage is provided when the JCC is open. These days are covered by Geshher at no cost for children normally registered on that day. An additional charge will

apply for children not normally registered on that day.

Superintendent Conference Days and Half Days

When the school district in which your child attends has a day off of school for Superintendent Conference Days, and Half Days, children already registered to attend Geshar on those days can come free of charge. A limited number of additional spaces will be available at an additional charge. We ask that you please let us know at least 3 days in advance if your child will be attending. Please make sure to pack a dairy lunch on these days (no meat).

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

3:00-4:25 Buses Arrive, Attendance taken, Snack Time, Children choose activity periods.

4:25-4:30 Transition between classes

4:30-5:20 CHOICE PERIOD

5:35-6:00 Home-based classroom time

HEALTH & SAFETY

Emergency Procedures

- We conduct routine fire drills on a monthly basis.
- Building evacuation plans are posted by the door in each classroom.
- Please keep all emergency numbers up-to-date. Those relatives and/or friends that are listed on your child's information form will need to know that they may be contacted in the event that we are unable to reach you.

Health

The health and safety of your child is the first consideration of all staff. The entire staff is alert to signs of illness. We cannot keep sick children in Geshar. Please do not send your child if he or she is not feeling well or is unable to fully participate in regular activities. This will safeguard your child and the other children. If your child becomes ill at Geshar, he or she will be isolated from the rest of the group and you will be notified immediately.

It is our expectation that all parents will pick up their sick child without delay.

For the health and safety of all of our children, please keep the following basic rules in mind:

Fever. If your child is running a fever he/she will not be admitted. Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of medication) to be re-admitted to Geshar.

Abdominal Symptoms. Children with abdominal symptoms, vomiting, or diarrhea must be symptom-free for 24 hours before re-admission to the program.

Antibiotics. A child being treated with antibiotics may usually return 24 hours after beginning the medication, provided he/she can participate in normal activities. Please check with your doctor about specific medications.

Sore Throat. We recommend a throat culture for a child who has a sore throat, swollen and tender glands, a stomach ache, and fever. If a strep infection is diagnosed, the child should be isolated for 48 hours after starting an antibiotic.

Rashes and Sores. Children with undiagnosed rashes and sores will not be admitted until diagnosis and treatment by a physician occurs.

Chicken Pox. If chicken pox is diagnosed, the child should be isolated until *all* lesions have crusted, usually 5 or 6 days.

Head Lice. If your child is diagnosed with head lice, immediate attention must be given and appropriate medication applied. Children will not be admitted until there is no evidence of gray-black bugs attached to the child's hair or scalp.

Ear Pain. A physician should evaluate any signs of ear pain, soreness or discharge to rule out infection. Children may return with physician's permission.

Conjunctivitis. Children with a pink or redness in the white portion of the eyeball, yellow or green drainage from the eye, or itchiness or frequent rubbing of the eyes, should see a doctor immediately. A child must be using a prescription antibiotic for at least 24 hours before he/she is no longer considered contagious.

Colds. Symptoms of a cold are nasal congestion, sneezing, scratchy throat, fever and clear nasal discharge. Other symptoms may include red and watery eyes, dry cough, mild swelling of lymph nodes, and stuffiness/mild pain in the ears. Some viruses that cause the common cold may be present for up to two weeks. Children who have a thick yellow or green nasal discharge, pus-like discharge from eyes, ears, or nose, enlarged or tender neck glands, breathing difficulty, severe headache, chest pain, stiff neck, or chills need to stay home. These are not symptoms of a cold. Children must remain at home until these symptoms disappear.

HEALTH & SAFETY

It is also helpful for our staff to be aware of any anxieties, fears or change in your home routine (father away, new baby, etc.). The staff can provide extra TLC and sensitivity, if informed. It is the responsibility of parents to keep emergency names and phone numbers up-to-date. It is important that these names reflect people who are in the vicinity and available so that a child who may get hurt or sick during Gesher hours can be picked up if it is necessary. Please notify your emergency names of their responsibility when you cannot be reached.

Medications

Our staff are only permitted to administer medication—prescription or OTC—with written, signed permission from both parent AND physician. The Director and Assistant Directors are certified in Medication Administration Training. It is imperative that a medication form be filled out every 12 months and returned to the director with the child's medication. Medication will not be administered without a form.

The original label for all prescription drugs must be on the medications container with the physician's instructions and the physician's name.

Accident/Injury

Children do experience scraped knees, stubbed toes and other minor injuries. In such an event first aid will be administered and you will receive a written report that day.

If an accident or injury requires more than basic first aid, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to the hospital. You will be notified immediately.

Please be sure to provide us with up to date insurance and medical information including allergies so we have it available if necessary.

If you do not have medical coverage, you will be billed directly for any medical attention beyond basic first aid by Gesher staff.

Visitors

For the safety of all children and staff, non-parent visitors must make prior arrangements with the Director or Assistant Directors. All visitors must sign the Visitor's Log upon entrance and exit of the facility.

Security

Each parent or guardian is issued a fob to open the doors leading to the children's department upon receipt of the fob form, \$15 deposit and copy of a driver's license. There is a \$10 replacement fee for lost fobs. When another authorized adult will be

picking up your child, he/she must ring the doorbell and present valid photo ID to gain access.

Children must be signed in and out by a parent or other authorized individual. Sign out sheets are monitored by the staff to help us insure the safety of our children.

The JCC uses video surveillance for safety purposes. Cameras are located throughout the building, mainly aimed at the exits. This includes the Gesher area, where cameras are aimed at each exit.

Emergency Procedures

All staff are orientated to the Emergency Preparedness Plan, and a copy of the plan hangs in every Gesher classroom. A fire drill will occur once a month throughout the school year and there will be two Shelter-in-Place drills. If for some reason, the JCC must be evacuated for an extended period of time, children will be taken to French Road Elementary School and parents will be notified.

REGISTRATION

Tuition

Enrollment in the Gesher program is available on a 10 month basis only, unless special arrangements are made in advance with the Director.

No refunds on tuition will be granted for holidays, vacations or illness. Two weeks advance notice is required to stop monthly billing of Gesher fees.

Payments

Payments may be made using automated EFT or credit card. Other arrangements may be made with the registrar if necessary.

Withdrawals from Program/ Change in Schedule

It is imperative that parents notify the Gesher Director immediately to inform the Center of the intent to withdraw. This notification must be given two weeks in advance of the withdrawal date. Refunds will be made when possible for the unused period of time.

Arrival and Departure

Please notify us by phone or email if your child is to be absent. Attendance is taken daily and absences are checked in the office. If you do not notify us, we will call you to confirm that your child is safe and where he/she is supposed to be.

You have identified, on the registration form, people authorized to pick up your child. If anyone else is to pick up your child, we must be notified in writing with the authorized person's full name, the date and your signature. Any person not recognized by our staff will be checked for proper identification and authorization.

Transportation

All transportation changes must be communicated through the transportation department or the school district. During vacation camps, Gesher will rent a bus to transport children to/from field trips. During field trips, the Gesher staff will ride the bus with the children and supervise them at all times.

Pick Up Procedure

The Kinder-Crew program ends at 3pm, or 6pm depending on your enrollment. All Gesher programs end at 6pm. Children must be picked up on time. *A charge of \$10 for every 15 minutes or segment thereof will be billed to you for each late pickup.*

Please stop outside the Gesher area to sign your child out BEFORE picking them up in the afternoon. Once you sign them out, you can proceed to their homeroom classroom to pick them up. If they are not in their homeroom class, please consult the "Choices Board". This is the white board in their homeroom that the children use to sign up for their

choices. It will indicate the location and time of each activity for which your child has signed up. If you need assistance locating your child, any of our staff would be happy to help!

Parking for Pick Up

When picking up your children, please park in the regular JCC parking lot, enter the building using the main door, and swipe your key tag at the front desk. We understand this seems like a long walk to pick up your children, but it is for the safety and security of everyone in the building. Please DO NOT ever enter or exit from any of the back Gesher doors that lead to the play yard. This is for the security of the children. There are pick-up/drop-off parking spots directly in front of the building to use for brief periods of time when picking up your children.

POLICIES

Clothing

Please be sure your child's clothes are suitable for playing with paint, glue, water or mud. Children choose their activities and may be messy. We also take play outdoors as much as possible, so *please be sure your child has appropriate outerwear each day*. We often visit the children's PlayGym, as well, which requires the use of socks. Please make sure to leave a pair of socks in your child's classroom.

You may want to leave extra clothing in your child's room in case of accidental spills or weather changes. *All clothing should be clearly labeled.*

Lost and Found

All belongings should be clearly labeled. Please do not allow toys or other belongings from home except in special pre-arranged circumstances. All items left in classrooms will be returned as soon as possible.

Items that are not labeled or recognized by staff or children will be placed in the Lost and Found box. Unclaimed items are periodically donated or discarded. If your child loses something please check for it promptly.

The JCC is not responsible for lost items or the condition of items brought from home.

Snacks and Food

A nutritional kosher afternoon snack will be provided. This snack consists mainly of fresh fruits and vegetables, with occasional pretzels, Chex-Mix, or popcorn. If your child has a food allergy, please note this in writing on the CampDoc health profile.

For Kinder-Crew and on Half Days and Superintendent's Days, please send vegetarian lunches (no meat).

In the event that you forget to send a lunch, we will provide food from our own cupboards. You will be billed for the lunch. The charge is \$3.50.

Birthdays

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at Gesher. We welcome you to bring kosher cupcakes, cookies or treats on the day of your child's birthday. There are many store-bought pre-prepared options. Malek's Brighton Bakery on Monroe Avenue is another great option.

Communication (Responsibilities of the program and the parent)

Ongoing communication between the home and Gesher provides a better understanding of each child's needs, development and progress and ensures optimal success for every child.

We will keep our lines of communication open with you by:

1. Calling you to inform you of any unusual behaviors or specific incidents concerning your child.
2. Sending newsletters and calendars home via Constant Contact on a monthly basis.

We hope you will keep your lines of communication open with us by:

1. Notifying us of any event or changes at home that might affect your child at school.
2. Notifying us as soon as your child comes down with a communicable disease.
3. Notifying us if your child will be absent.
4. Notifying the Director or Assistant Director of any problems or concerns relating to the Geshher program.
5. Checking your email to make sure you receive and read our monthly newsletters.

We encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher(s) regularly. Valuable information can be learned by teachers *and* parents through these informal conversations. If a parent desires, a special conference can be arranged. Please remember to check daily for messages, flyers and important information.

POLICIES

Behavior and Discipline Policies

Geshher staff use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, anticipation or prevention of potential problems, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism. Punishment, humiliating or frightening discipline techniques are NOT used. Consistent, clear rules are explained to children (and understood by all adults involved.). If your child tells you of inappropriate behavior by a staff member, please notify the Director immediately.

Staff facilitates the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity and setting clear limits. Children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as guiding... valuing mistakes as learning opportunities... redirecting... listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations... and reminding children of rules.

We strive to establish partnerships between Geshher staff, parents, and children to work on and solve behavior issues. Rarely, behavior issues are beyond the scope of our ability to solve them. Thus for the safety of all of our children and staff, repeated seriously disruptive or violent behavior problems may require us to utilize a behavior agreement between parent(s), the child and Geshher which may result in a child being sent home, suspended or eventually expelled without refund.

Babysitting

If you would like to ask any of the Geshher staff to babysit for your children, you are welcome to do so, but please remember that this is completely separate from the Geshher program, and the JCC is not liable for anything that happens outside of our program. As such, we are not allowed to suggest a babysitter to you, but you are welcome to approach and ask the Geshher staff if they are interested.

Licensing/Regulations

The Gesher Before and After School Program is licensed through the Office of Children and Family Services. You can access the Regulations in the Gesher office at any time.

If you suspect child abuse or maltreatment, you can call the complaint line toll-free at (800) 732-5207. If the Gesher staff suspects child abuse or maltreatment, they immediately file a report and take every reasonable precaution to keep the children safe at all times.

POLICIES

GESHER CUSTOMER SERVICE PLEDGE

STAFF INTERACTION

- We will always know where your child is.
- A teacher will always greet you when you arrive.
- You will be contacted if your child does not arrive as expected.
- You will be notified of any injuries/incidents involving your child.
- Staff will interact with your child.
- We will provide your child with personal attention.
- Your child will be encouraged to voice his/her opinion and help decide outcomes should disciplinary action be necessary.

PHILOSOPHY/GOALS

Your child will:

- Be encouraged to treat others in a positive, respectful manner.
- Be treated with respect by staff.
- Be loved.
- Have his/her well-being given top priority.

ENVIRONMENT

- Your child's belongings will be together and neatly stored.
- Your child will receive snack everyday.
- Your child will have a quiet time and place to do homework and/or read.
- We will provide a safe environment for your child—physically and emotionally.
- Your child's room will be clean and well-supplied.

ACTIVITIES

Your child will:

- Be encouraged to try new things.
- Receive help with homework when needed.
- Be encouraged to interact/socialize with other children.
- Have fun.
- Participate in physical activity.
- Learn about Jewish celebrations and values.
- Have a variety of activities to choose from

THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Holiday Celebrations

Through the celebration of Shabbat and Jewish holidays, our children begin to learn the beauty, joy and dignity of Jewish culture. A joyous approach to holiday appreciation through music, cooking, and arts and crafts fosters positive identification with our Jewish heritage. Weekly Shabbat programs add to the specialness of our traditions.

The JCC is a place for the Jewish community to gather and celebrate Jewish festivals and holidays. An elementary introduction to the history of the holidays and their traditional rituals will be explored in the Geshher program. We may not be able to experience all the holidays together but at least we can learn about them!

Shabbat

Although the Sabbath lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, we celebrate

the Sabbath at Geshet every Friday afternoon. The staff lights the candles, and the children recite the traditional blessing:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ho-olom,

Asher Kid-shonu B-mitsvo-tov V-tzivonu L-hadlik
Ner Shel Shabbat.

Blessed Art Thou, O L-rd, our G-d, King of the
Universe, who has sanctified us by His Commandments,
and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.

THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish year begins with *Rosh Hashana*, which usually falls in September, on the first day of Tishri in the Jewish calendar. The children enjoy apples and honey which are symbolic of hope for a sweet year.

Yom Kippur

This is the most solemn holiday of the year -- the Day of Atonement. At this time, we discuss the nice things we can do for others during the New Year and how it's good to be good, but better to be better.

Sukkot

The Feast of Tabernacles recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in tents and booths, or *Sukkot*. The harvest season is symbolized by the *Lulav* (palm branch) and *Etrog* (citron). The last day of the eight-day holiday emphasizes the importance of learning in Jewish life. During this week, we decorate our Sukkah with fruit and greenery, and enjoy our snacks outdoors.

Shemini Atzeret

This holiday occurs on the eighth day of *Sukkot* and is considered a holiday in itself. It is a solemn day with special prayers for rain (*geshem*). This is the beginning of the season which determines the fertility of the land in the year to come.

Simchat Torah

This holiday is associated with *Sukkot*, but is actually an independent holiday, falling on the day after. Throughout the year passages of the Torah are read aloud in the Synagogue. On *Simchat Torah* the reading is completed (with the last two chapters of Deuteronomy), then immediately begun again (with Genesis). This symbolizes the fact that study of the Torah has no beginning and no end. Children are traditionally given the honor of being called to read the Torah alongside the adults. Children also join adults in carrying Israeli flags and specially decorated flags in a series of seven processions (or *Hakfat*) around the Synagogue. The seven processions are in honor of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David.

Chanukah

The Festival of Lights celebrates the Maccabean victory, when brave Judah Maccabee and his small band of followers saved the Jewish nation from the Syrians. For eight days each year, the Chanukah Menorah, or eight-branched candelabrum, is lighted to recall their rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people. You can expect hand-made gifts from your children.

Tu B'shvat (Israeli Arbor Day)

On *Tu B'Shvat* we celebrate the New Year of the trees and our own belief in the future of the world. The Jewish Calendar with all its holidays is tied to the cycle of growing things. As Jews, we have a kinship with trees, especially fruit trees. Trees are a symbol of life, a symbol of the Jewish people.

Purim

Purim is the jolliest of all the holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her uncle, Mordecai, saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the Prime Minister, Haman, to destroy them. This day we eat Hamantashen—special fruit filled, triangle shaped cookies.

Passover (Pesach)

Passover commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt and the Exodus following them. The *Seder* is a special family occasion. Prayers and songs from the *Haggadah* (story of Passover) are read and certain foods are eaten. The best known of these is the *matzoh*, or unleavened bread.

THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Lag B'Omer

This holiday recalls the struggle of the Jewish to regain their independence as a Jewish nation during the second century BCE. The Romans, ruling Palestine, banned the study of the Torah and Jewish literature. Jews continued to learn and study in secret. They studied in caves and forests under the pretense of hunting and hiking. Eventually they organized a heroic revolt which resulted in a massacre of the Jews involved. Today however, the holiday celebrates Jewish survival.

Shavuot

Shavuot, a thanksgiving and harvest feast, also commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Known as the Feast of Weeks, *Shavuot* is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. It is a custom to decorate the house with plants and flowers—the greens recall the green mountain of Sinai where Moses received the Commandments as well as the fruits of the ancient harvest festival.

Israeli Independence Day

This holiday recalls the struggle of the Jews to gain their independence as a Jewish nation.

Other Holidays

Because we are a Jewish facility, all Jewish and national holidays will be celebrated. We do not celebrate the following holidays: Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter.



Gesher Calendar 2016-2017

September 6	First Day of Gesher
October 3 & 4	Gesher Closed – Rosh Hashanah
October 10	Columbus Day Vacation Camp
October 11	Superintendent Conference Day- Gesher open all day
October 12	Gesher Closed- Yom Kippur
November 11	Veteran’s Day Vacation Camp
November 18	Brighton Half Day- Gesher open for KCrew all day and Gesher at 11:30am
November 23-25	Gesher Closed – Thanksgiving
December 2	Superintendent’s Conference Day-Gesher open all day
December 9	Brighton Half Day- Gesher open for KCrew all day and Gesher at 11:30am
<i>December 9</i>	<i>Gesher Family Holiday Party, 4:30-6pm</i>
December 23	Winter Vacation Camp
December 26	Gesher Closed
December 27-30	Winter Vacation Camp
January 2	Gesher Closed

January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Vacation Camp
February 20-24	February Vacation Camp
April 14-21	April Vacation Camp
May 26	Brighton Half Day- Gesher open for KCrew all day and Gesher at 11:30am
May 29	Gesher Closed- Memorial Day
June 10	Gesher End of the Year Picnic, 4:30-6pm
June 22	Tentative Last Day of Gesher