

Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool

PROGRAM STATEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

The Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool (WJMP) is proud to offer a creative Jewish environment where our children's individual style of learning is valued and nurtured.

We encourage our children to explore the world, to learn to be part of a group, and to solve problems in a constructive manner. Learning is self-rewarding, joyous, and non-competitive. At the Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool, through various art forms (creative movement, music, rhythm, and visual arts), our children are offered a comprehensive secular curriculum, which includes reading readiness, concepts in numbers, science, the natural environment, and social studies. We are committed to:

- educational excellence and innovation in both General and Judaic studies;
- nurturing student learning; and
- instilling a love of Torah, Judaism and the Hebrew language.

VALUES

At the WJMP we value:

- Developing students' knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills, while exceeding the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum expectations
- Providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment
- Meeting the individual needs of our students to ensure their success
- Recruiting and developing excellent educational leaders and teachers who, with high level professional development, consistently work to improve students' learning experiences
- Teaching and learning Torah to acquire knowledge, build a strong moral character and inspire action
- Mastering Hebrew language skills
- Celebrating and fulfilling Mitzvot
- Creating leaders with a commitment to community involvement
- Partnering with the community and parents to make Jewish education financially accessible to the largest number of children possible

VISION

For our students: To foster a lifelong love of learning while teaching our students to be ethical, knowledgeable and engaged.

For our school: To continue our distinguished history of being an exceptional leader in providing the highest standard of General and Judaic studies education.

For our community: To maintain our commitment to parents, staff, donors and community partners to play a leadership role by providing access to exceptional Jewish education, regardless of a family's ability to pay.

Goals Guiding the WJMP & Approaches Implemented:

The WJMP is guided in programming and pedagogy by the Ministry of Education's "How Does Learning Happen" (HDLH):

1. To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children. We believe:
 - every child is developing a sense of self, health and well-being.
 - in nurturing children's healthy development and in supporting their growing sense of self.
 - in providing nutritious food and beverages that incorporate family and cultural preferences.
 - in creating positive eating environments and in providing food and portion sizes appropriate for young children.
 - in protecting the health of our students by adhering to a strict peanut/nut free policy.
 - in the importance of providing children with daily physical activity.
 - in respecting and finding ways to support children's varied needs for active play, rest and quiet time.

2. To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and staff. We believe:
 - in focusing on children's strengths, offering them support and encouraging problem solving abilities.
 - in our teachers' active participation in children's play.
 - that teachers converse with children as partners in learning.
 - that a supportive social environment has a positive impact on children's learning and allows children to feel safe and supported.
 - that positive interactions with staff, children and parents create the school climate. These relationships are founded in mutual respect and inclusion and must be modelled by all, and as result, a culture of respect becomes the norm.

3. To encourage children to interact and communicate in positive ways and to support their ability to self-regulate. We believe:
 - in playing games that promote understanding of body language, emotions and perspective taking.
 - in implementing a guided conflict resolution process that can be used to help children resolve conflicts that may arise during their day.
 - in approaching the children with a calm voice and encouraging children to talk to each other and offer suggestions.
 - that every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself/herself in many ways.
 - in offering an early childhood program that fosters communication and expression in all forms.
 - that social, emotional and cognitive self-regulation and the ability to communicate with others are foundational to learning.

4. To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry. We believe:
 - in designing our environments, through the Montessori Method, to promote play-based learning for children with a wide variety of opportunities to explore the world around them while receiving the rich sensory stimulation they need to promote healthy development
 - in providing experiences that engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.
 - that through play and inquiry, children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them.
 - that problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity are all vital for success.

5. To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. We believe:
 - in encompassing the best of play-based, theme-based and project-based experiences in the programs we offer.
 - in viewing the child as an active participant in learning.
 - that children develop knowledge and skills at varying rates and through various means, and our program takes that into account.
 - each child has unique strengths and needs that require teachers to adjust teaching methods and materials accordingly to meet every child's needs.

6. To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported. We believe:
 - in offering children quality experiences that focus on their emotional, social and cognitive development.
 - in developing our classrooms in correspondence to the Montessori Method. Children are able to access all areas, as they are introduced to them, independently as well as take some responsibility for use of these areas and the activities in them.

- that children are capable of complex thinking, and are naturally curious. We deliver programs and services that value and build on each student's strengths and needs.
7. To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children. We believe:
 - in making outdoor play safe, adventurous and fun.
 - in providing opportunities for physical activity indoors by bringing music and movement to the classroom and incorporating technology (e.g., SMARTboard).
 8. To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children. We believe:
 - in treating parents as partners.
 - in viewing the parents as an essential resource for their child(ren)'s development by being collaborators in the process of learning.
 - in encouraging honest and open communication between parents and the staff of the WJMP.
 - in operating with an 'open door' policy and welcome any questions, concerns or suggestions parents may have.
 - in hosting a variety of events throughout the school year, including workshops for parents and parent-teacher interviews.
 - in creating an environment that welcomes families into our school, inviting their perspectives and providing opportunities for families to participate in meaningful ways on an ongoing basis.
 - in offering opportunities for parents to volunteer in the school (field trips, organizing school events, etc.).
 9. To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff. We believe:
 - in the involvement of local community partners, such as the Ontario Dairy Education Program, music teachers and Rideau Bakery, among others.
 - in school community partnerships that provide access to resources and services that can offer additional support to school, staff, children and families.
 - that our environment and communities plays a key role in promoting the visibility, inclusion and active participation of children in society.
 - that partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability to meet the needs of all students.
 10. To support staff, volunteer and others who interact with the children, in continuous professional learning. We believe:
 - in ensuring that our educators receive ongoing training and professional development in a variety of areas.

- that educators are reflective practitioners who learn about children using various strategies such as listening, observing, documenting and discussing with colleagues and families to understand children as individuals.

11. To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses 1-10 on the children and their families. We believe:

- in making learning visible and allowing us to look beyond development and reflect on how students think and learn by having our teachers observe and document the daily life of the school.
- in having our teachers use a variety of documentation methods, such as cameras and journals, to track children's thoughts and ideas as they play together or work with materials. For example, writing down quotes from the child, posting artwork and writing samples.
- that pedagogical documentation encourages us to be co-learners alongside children and their families.