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Principles and Standards

of the
National Accreditation Board of
Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch

for the
Accreditation
of
Early Childhood
Programs and Schools

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__Introduction__

For many early childhood educational centers achieving accreditation is essential. It attests competence, efficiency and the effectiveness of the school and its programs. Yet, many of those who undertake an active role within an accreditation process are experiencing it for the first time. To some the very idea is novel; to others the rigorous demands may seem arbitrary, maybe even unnecessary. They should all be assured that the National Accreditation Board of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch sees the obligation and opportunity of *working with* a school as central to its mission. The avowed purpose of the National Accreditation Board is to help schools achieve accreditation.

As the reader familiarizes him/herself with the protocols and expectations outlined in this document it should become clear that the process will but strengthen and enhance a Jewish early childhood center and its mission. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that it is the *institution* which *achieves* accreditation rather than an outside body granting it. Having gone through the process of self study and peer review, and having set a course for the future, a school is able to *achieve* accreditation.

National Accreditation Board professionals as well as a number of directors of members schools stand ready to assist and guide an accreditation candidate where the school feels there is an area which needs help or attention. We are grateful to Dr. Chana Silberstein for the outstanding work she did in adapting the standards of the twin umbrella organizations the Commission on International and Trans-regional Accreditation, CITA and the National Council for Private School Accreditation, NCPSA so that they reflect the needs of Jewish Early Childhood centers of education. Many thanks are due to Rabbi Meir Muller PhD who represented the NAB of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch as a commissioner to the joint CITA NCPSA commission which drew up the original international standards and also edited this document. Our appreciation to the editorial committee who review the work and gave the standards the grass-roots approbation they need.

It is the fervent hope of all those involved with the mission of the National Accreditation Board that the process will serve *Lkadesh shem shamayim* to exalt the greater glory of the Al-mighty. We pray that the world of early childhood *chinuch* will be enhanced in the course of the pursuit of our sacred task.

Rabbi Nochem Kaplan
Chairman, National Accreditation Board

Acknowledgements

This document is essentially a revision of the CITA/NCPSA "Infant and Early Childhood Education Accreditation Handbook", and we are grateful to the CITA/NCPSA commission on E/C for the outstanding work they did. As a member of NCPSA, the NABMLC contributed to the original CITA/NCPSA document and thus paved the way for it to be a work adoptable to the specific needs of the Jewish early childhood education community.

The standards before you were adapted to the specific requirements of the NAB of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch by Dr. Chana Silberstein Ph.D,

Members of the editorial committee who reviewed the work were:
Rabbi Meir Muller Ph.D, Columbia, S.C
Mrs. Susie Denenbeim, Palm Springs, CA
Mrs. Shifra Landa, St. Louis, MA
Mrs. Faygie Kaplan, Thornhill, ON
Mrs. Chana Katzman, Staten Island, NY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the National Accreditation Board is to foster the continuous pursuit of educational excellence through an accreditation process which is unique to Yeshivas, Jewish day schools and Jewish Early Childhood education centers. It is a process established by the Jewish education community to facilitate and assure the quality of education within the Jewish education movement.

Through the National Accreditation Board, the Chinuch Office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch can facilitate continuous educational improvement and validate the achievement of quality education in both Judaic and General studies, nationwide.

The self study and peer review create an atmosphere conducive to educational progress. Strategic long-term planning sets the stage for an ongoing process of advancement toward excellence. The standards and training and assistance offered by the National Accreditation Board provide the mechanism and help generate the enthusiasm, which make the accreditation protocols effective and meaningful.

Section 1

Preamble,
THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS,
AND
THE EXPECTATIONS OF AN ACCREDITATED SCHOOL

1.1. Preamble
I.1.1 Historic Overview

The National Accreditation Board was established by The Chinuch office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in order to promote an accreditation process which is unique to Yeshivas and Jewish day schools and Jewish early childhood education centers. It is a process established by the Jewish education community, to facilitate and assure the quality of education within the Jewish education movement.

For decades accreditation of Yeshivas and Jewish day schools varied from region to region and from state to state. Some states had set accreditation standards for all private schools. Other states have merely required registry and have expected schools to meet the standards of their sponsoring organizations. Many Jewish day schools had chosen to turn to one of the six regional associations of colleges and schools for voluntary accreditation. Yet most of the hundreds of Yeshivas and Jewish day schools in the United States, while meeting state requirements, did not have an opportunity to measure themselves against national standards for Jewish education.

In 2000 with the establishment of the National Accreditation Board of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch Yeshivas and day schools were, for the first time, afforded the opportunity to undertake an accreditation protocol which was tailor made for them. Yet in spite of the fact that elementary school standards also included standards for preschools, independent early childhood centers were not formally included in that effort. There were no standards created with their specific needs and unique concerns in mind.

In 2002 the National Council for Private School Accreditation, of which the NAB is a member, created a commission to draft a new series of accreditation standards for infant and early childhood education. This effort was undertaken in cooperation with the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation CITA, the top umbrella organization of American accreditation. The NAB was invited to appoint a member and Rabbi Meir Muller Ph.D of Columbia South Carolina was appointed to represent the NAB. The NCPSA-CITA document was completed and approved in 2004.

Subsequently, inspired by the NCPSA experience, the NAB decided to create its own set of Jewish early childhood standards which would give expression to its unique character. The NAB created a commission to recommend standards, which

are distinct from the typical preschool of an elementary institution. They deal with all administrative and educational functions which an independent Jewish early childhood educational institution has to contend with as it goes about its business of serving its unique of learners, their parents and community. The early childhood principles and standards which are presented herein were drafted by Chana Silberstein Ph.D, a faculty member at Cornell University, and reviewed and edited by the commission members.

1.1.2 Introduction to the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch National Accreditation Board

The mission and purpose of the National Accreditation Board is to foster the continuous pursuit of educational excellence. A self study and peer review creates an atmosphere conducive to educational progress. Strategic long term planning sets the stage for an ongoing process of advancement toward excellence. The standards, training, and assistance offered by the National Accreditation Board to the professionals within e/c centers, help generate the enthusiasm which makes the accreditation protocols effective and meaningful.

The Accreditation Board (NAB) consists of no fewer than seven and no more than ten experienced educators originally selected by The Chinuch office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch to serve an inaugural two year term. At the conclusion of the initial two year term, the Chinuch office replaced or reappointed National Accreditation Board members for an additional two year term. Subsequent boards will be appointed in the following manner: Half the members (five or fewer) will be appointed by the education office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. Accredited Yeshiva day schools will in turn, select up to five more members from among yeshiva day school professionals. All subsequent National Accreditation Boards serve for a period of four years. The executive chairman is appointed by the education office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

A Preliminary Accreditation Review Committee (PARC) reviews the data submitted in a self study by a candidate school, reviews the site visitors report and makes recommendations to the National Accreditation Board as to the acceptance of the reports. The PARC members are appointed from among yeshiva day school professionals who have taken part in a successful accreditation process or who are currently serving in a supervisory capacity at an accredited school and it consists of no fewer than five and no more than ten members.

The NAB meets semi-annually or more frequently as necessary to conduct its regular business. The board receives the reports of the preliminary review committee and their recommendations, and determines the accreditation status to be granted to candidate schools.

The NAB periodically examines the principles and standards used as criteria for accreditation to be certain that they are research-based and reflect educational practices which are consistent with the educational objectives of Yeshivas and day schools nationwide.

1.1.3 The Accreditation Imperative

The National Accreditation Board accreditation process, similar to that of other accrediting agencies in the Unites States, consists of three components:

> **1. Self study**: The self study includes a review of all facets of the educational institution, the past and the present though the use of professional evaluation instruments. The review is followed by the development of a strategic plan for the future.

> **2. Peer review:** A National Accreditation Board team of peer visitors reviews the self study and validates it during an extensive visit.

> **3**. **Periodic reevaluation:** An accredited school is required to submit an annual report outlining any changes within the school and the accreditation self study is repeated every five years.

> The National Accreditation Board has established basic standards, which are presented herein, to effect and validate the academic and professional quality of member e/c institutions. The National Accreditation Board recognizes that such school may establish their own standards, consistent with their individual educational mission and particular "*chinuch*" philosophy. The National Accreditation Board standards presented should be seen as universally applicable at a minimum level.

> Every effort is made during the accreditation process to respect and retain the autonomy of individual schools. The standards and criteria are not meant to alter the essential character of any school. They are meant to educate and to evaluate but not to control member schools. Thus the national Accreditation Board evaluates the school's programs from a <u>religious educational</u> perspective rather than from a <u>religious ideological</u> one.

> At the conclusion of its self study, a school will hopefully have a new self-awareness, a renewed sense of purpose, and a much better understanding of its educational program and the effectiveness thereof. It will also have reviewed and perhaps revised its administrative processes as well as its governance. It will determine a long-range strategic action plan for specifically designated areas of school improvement. The school will thereby emerge from the accreditation process a stronger and more invigorated institution focused upon clearly-defined measurable objectives and observable school improvement goals.

1.1.4 Values and Vision:

All education seeks to provide preparation for life in a proximate sense, by providing the tools for productive living. Religious education extends this mandate. By definition; the religious life is one that takes account of life's greater meaning in the ultimate scheme of things.

In providing guidelines for the assessment of a quality Torah education, the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch National Accreditation Board is guided by the grand world-view of Judaism. That G-d has an intimate relationship with His universe; that the world has meaning and that each individual is endowed with the gift of life in order to fulfill a specific purpose. He bequeathed the Torah to us to guide us if fulfilling that purpose. The underlying axiom of our religious education is that we matter to G-d, and it is our job to tend His garden, the universe around us.

These axioms color and shape all the traditional aspects of education. Learning becomes a sacred task, a way to respect our very being and make the most of the mission with which we have been endowed. The everyday "stuff" of life becomes a joy, a celebration of the specialness of the universe and our place in it. Academic and life skills have importance beyond their mere utility in ensuring personal success—they are ways to protect and cherish the sacred trust that G-d has granted us.

Researchers have identified spirituality as essential to the human experience. Gardner speaks of the spiritual intelligence as one of the multiple intelligences. Cole and Lipman describe the moral and philosophical thinking of young children. Within the context of a religious setting, it is clear that we deprive children if we do not consciously attend to the development of their moral imagination and spiritual sensitivity.

In writing these guidelines and standards, we have tried to remain general enough so that the principles we have outlined can be applied to schools with a variety of visions. Some will emphasize the natural developmental unfolding of the child; others will emphasize the role of loving guidance and scaffolding in preparing the child for life. Some programs will use the creative instincts of the child as the starting point for lessons; others will provide rich models and scaffolding as a framework to under gird the child's attempts at originality. Our goal is not to proscribe a particular method, but to outline the reflective process whereby schools can articulate their values in ways that will empower them to enrich the lives of the children and the communities that they serve. For it is the religious world-view that can help them recognize their own value and self-efficacy; it is the religious world-view that can direct them to dedicating their lives to positively impacting the world.

2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

2.1 initial application requirements:

In order to meet with the initial application requirements, a prospective school should review the short list of candidacy standards which are listed below and be sure that it is able to comply with all the standards published with the application form. If it feels that it falls short in any area, the school should be sure to address that

deficiency prior to making formal application. The National Accreditation Board is ready to assist any school in this regard.

2.1.1 Standards are:

- The primary purpose of the sponsoring organization is to operate a Yeshiva or day school and, to educate Jewish children in both Judaic and general studies.

- The school is chartered, licensed, and meets applicable laws in all its operations.

- Facilities and funding are adequate to offer an educational program on pre-school, elementary and/or high school levels.

- The administration and staff are appropriately qualified for their assigned duties.

- Provisions are made to account for students' attendance, academic progress, personal growth, health and safety.

- The philosophy and goals of the school have been appropriately articulated and published.

- All of the school's operations are open to evaluation by the National Accreditation Board.

- The school operations are guided by Halachic requirements in all matters.

- The school has published a statement of non-discriminatory policy.

2.1.2 The Application Process:

The first step for prospective schools seeking *Accreditation Eligibility Status* is to submit the following initial application requirements:

- **A Letter of Intent from the school Head** indicating that the governing authority and school/education committee have reviewed the application process, the basic standards for accreditation and this manual of principles and standards.
- **A Letter of Intent from the Governing Body** of the school indicating that they have reviewed the application procedures, the principles and standards, and they understand the requirements of the accreditation process. This letter should state that the governing authority is committed to ensure that the school will meet all requirements for accreditation.

- **A Complete Application Form and Payment of the Application Fee**

- Upon receipt of the initial application requirements, the director of the National

Accreditation Board will immediately review the application, and appoint a representative of the board to make a preliminary visit. The purpose of this visit is to review the initial application requirements on-site and ascertain the readiness of the school to continue the application process. The representative will then submit a written report of his/her findings to the director. The director will then communicate the findings to the administrator of the prospective member school.

- If the findings are that the school has met the initial application requirements the school shall be considered a candidate for accreditation within the association, and will be granted *pre-accreditation (eligibility)* status.

- If the findings are that the school has not met the initial application requirements, the report will outline the necessary actions the school needs to undertake to satisfy the requirements.
- Upon being accepted as a candidate, the school shall be granted a time period of eighteen months to finish the application process - this includes the completion of the self-study (including strategic improvement plan) and the site accreditation team visit. If the self-study and visit are not completed within the eighteen month   time frame, the school should inform the director of the circumstances preventing its completion and at his discretion the school may be given an extension or the school may be required to begin the application procedures anew.

- A Letter of Information from the School is requested in the first month of the self-study process. The information it should disclose is as follows:
    o   A timeline of the self-study process.
    o   The name of the self-study instrument to be used.
    o   A statement of how the various groups which form the steering committee, the board of trustee and education committee will be involved in the self-study process and how they will be informed of the outcome.

2.2 The Self Study Process:

- Accreditation is an opportunity for a school to learn, to grow and move forward. A school engages in a self-study process to assess its own effectiveness based on established standards and guidelines, and it is able to simultaneously make changes and improvements and finally to report its results.

- During the self-study process, the school will use an evaluation instrument to study and evaluate all its programs and their effectiveness. All the stakeholders including faculty, staff, administration as well as the governing body and wider school community must respond honestly to the questionnaires and complete all self-assessment checklists (see 9.9.1). The steering committee will record all the findings, and the results and interpretation of the data for exhibition in the Self Study Document (accreditation notebook).

- As the self-study proceeds, the school completes the Self Study Checklist (p.147)

and compiles the extensive Self Study Document. As the findings of the self study, resulting from all the internal evaluations unfold, the school may well decide to provide in-service training for personnel, or make other necessary changes and adjustments so as meet all required standards. Assistance from the National Accreditation Board is available to schools during the self-study process.

- Perhaps the most important component of the self-study process is that it generates a **strategic plan** for future improvement (see p. 139). In the strategic plan, the school outlines areas where the school can make improvements and changes which will move it   further in the direction of educational excellence. The plan will naturally be consistent with its stated philosophy and statement, and will include a timetable for its implementation. It is up to the school to see to it that its strategic plan for future improvement is in fact brought to fruition. The National Accreditation Board will want to see evidence of its implementation in annual reports and reevaluations. The school may choose to defer the final draft of its strategic plan for future improvement until after it receives the site visitation report.

- A time period of twelve months will be allotted to the school to conduct the self-study. Upon its completion, the Self Study Document is submitted to the National Accreditation Board for review. The National Accreditation Board will then assign a visiting committee to the applying school.

- Some schools may have gone through a recent self-study as part of another accreditation program. The National Accreditation Board may choose to recognize this process as a status level towards accreditation; however, final recognition of accreditation will be deferred until after the site visit, and formal review.

2.3 NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD SITE VISITATION AND REPORT:

On-site visitation is critical to the objective validation of school effectiveness and is an integral part of the accreditation process. It precedes any decisions regarding the awarding of final accreditation status. The results of the site visit will serve as a key element in the formal review and recognition process of the school.

Specifically the objectives of the visit are:

- To assure the Accreditation Committee that the self-study was objective and accurate and that it reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the   school. The Visitation Committee will verify that all of the materials   submitted by the school are accurate.

- To bring objective expertise to the school to assist in current evaluation and future planning: to verify that there are no violations of National Accreditation Board standards.

- To serve as a catalyst in changing those aspects of the school operation which are

not meeting National Accreditation Board standards.

Evaluation is conducted by persons with no vested interest in the school, familiar with the accreditation standards and procedures, and knowledgeable of sound Torah-oriented educational practices. Some of the visitors will be representatives of the National Accreditation Board; others will be representatives of peer institutions.

- Visitation teams involved in site visits are limited in their activities to gathering information and making recommendations. Formal reports of these visits are forwarded to the National Accreditation Board for final review.

- The Visiting Committee will appraise the quality and comprehensiveness of the school's self-study, make recommendations for further study and implementation, and assess the extent to which principles and standards are being met.

- Follow-up of the self-study by the accredited school shall include: study of the Visiting Committee Report, determination of the areas that need additional attention, identification of new needs, establishment of priorities for action, and the implementation of plans for improvement.

- The Accreditation Board chairman will receive the self-study and the Site Visitation Committee Report and after preliminary review to assure basic compliance with all standards, will refer them to the Preliminary Accreditation Committee for review and recommendation. The Preliminary Accreditation Committee will examine the reports, hear from the Site Visitation chairman, and determine whether or not all standards have been met and whether the reports should be recommended to the National Accreditation Board. The Preliminary Accreditation Committee may recommend further action by the school, further investigation as to full compliance with standards, or may recommend the   National Accreditation Board grants a particular level of accreditation status to candidate schools. This will be done in a formal Statement of Recommendation the National Accreditation Board.

The Preliminary Accreditation Committee may choose one of the following designations:

a. **Accreditation:** All standards have been met satisfactorily; the   school's strategic plan for   future improvement   is in place.

b. **Accreditation advised:** All standards appear to have been met, but further clarification is necessary on one or more standards or related issues; or the school's strategic long-term plan is not yet in   place.

c. **Provisional Accreditation:** One or more standards may have not been fully met – and a specific timetable for compliance is issued, or if the strategic plan for future improvement has not yet been formally adopted and finalized.

d. **Non-Accreditation:** One or more standards have not been met, and no timetable exists for compliance, or if a strategic plan for future improvement has not been devised.

- After review of the Preliminary Accreditation Committee report and its Statement of Recommendation, the Accreditation Board will **formally designate** schools previously visited as "accredited", "accredited advised", "provisionally accredited", or "not accredited." An appeal of an unfavorable decision may be made to the Accreditation Board within three months after the decision. A school "not accredited" for failure to meet standards may be revisited in the following year if efforts to rectify deficiencies are evident. The decision to have the school revisited rests with the applicant school.

2.4 REEVALUATION:

Accreditation is both a result and an ongoing process. As such, it is essential to insure that members are maintaining the level of quality present at their initial recognition. To do so, the accreditation process provides for the periodic reevaluation of members.

Annual reports will be required of accredited schools at the highest level of accreditation and/or recognition to assure that standards and other requirements are being fulfilled on a continual basis. Annual reports will require information   in three essential areas: (1) statistical and demographic information, (2) any substantive changes that may have occurred, and (3) how the school is progressing in the implementation of its strategic improvement plan.
The National Accreditation Board requires that all schools at the highest level of accreditation participate in a reevaluation process containing the elements of self-study, site visit, and final review. The process is as follows:

- One year after initial accreditation, a "Report on Recommendations made by the Visiting Committee" shall be completed by the school according to the established procedures of the National Accreditation Board.

- Three years after accreditation, a follow-up conference shall take place. The purpose of the conference shall be to ensure that each accredited school is continuously

striving to implement the components of its strategic plan for future improvement and the recommendations contained in the initial visitation report, and that each school is adhering to the principles and standards established by the National Accreditation Board.

- During the sixth and seventh years following the initial self-study, the staff of the accredited school shall engage in and complete a new self-study as an integral part of the ongoing process of school improvement. Reaccreditations will take place during the seventh year.

- The "Annual Report for Continued Accreditation" (ARCA) shall be filed each year by the accredited school. This report will be evaluated by the National Accreditation Board to verify that accredited schools are continuing to meet accreditation standards. Schools failing to meet the standards will be referred to the Accreditation Board for reassessment of their accreditation status.

3. EXPECTATIONS OF AN ACCREDITATED SCHOOL

3.1 WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A SCHOOL IN ITS SELF-STUDY AND SELF-EVALUATION

- **It is expected that the school will have experienced self-discovery during its self-study.** Accreditation leaders need to be aware that self-study, properly done, produces a heuristic effect, a sense of self discovery. There is release of new energy, a new sense of community, and a stronger sense of mission. Although the heuristic effect is hard to define, it is more quality of emotion than of logic.

- In its self-study, the faculty ought to have discovered something.   Whether good or bad, the effects are the same. The process itself   energizes and invigorates it, and infuses it with a renewed sense of mission. Having explored the school to its foundation, it is as if they know it for the first time. This in turn energizes the evaluators and tells then that they process is working properly. This may provide further insight into the adage of our "*chazal*": "*Yogato Umotzoso Taamin* (When the toils one is sure to find, even beyond his expectations)."

- It is expected that the self-study will have explored the experience students have within the school. The academic dimensions, of a self-study are easily judged. One does not need to be a trained evaluator to recognize a report that has academic rigor. What is infinitely more difficult to detect is whether the self- study reached into the experience the students have of the school.

- The essence of quality education can only be appreciated when one views the process from the vantage point of the learner. One must ask, has the experience of learning had an impact upon the whole "gestalt" of the learner as a human being and as a Jew? The answer to this question should be a bi-product of self-evaluation.

The self-study ought to reveal the momentum within the school.

- The National Accreditation Board does not accredit a snapshot; it accredits a living, moving, changing institution. The self-study reflects a sense of the past and a theory of the future because all things in the school are in a state of arriving or departing. These two words denote the same thing: "*L'an Ato Holech*." Where are you heading? Assistance is making those projections is available through the National Accreditation Board Office. The standards for accreditation take full account of the dynamics of change. They require the school to report on philosophy, governance, evaluation, resources, communications, and relationships. These are the elements that go to work when the school weighs anchor and begins to move, when they fulfill the works of the Psalmist *"Loleches M'chayil el Choyil"* – To go from strength to strength.

The self-study ought to reveal coherence.

- In coherent self-study, the principal and faculty first develop the logic (or idea) of the school and then determine through the remainder of the study how well the offerings and supporting provisions cohere with that logic.

- A school with a clear idea of itself constantly struggles to be in coherence with its idea. Its virtue consists in being true to its idea. A school without an image of its own ideal has no guide to its virtue.

The self-study ought to include strong self-evaluation.

- Another expectation of the self study process is *real* self-evaluation. All self-study guides; elementary, secondary, and K-12, provide opportunity for the faculty to record evaluative judgment. These, range from strong to disappointing. If the self-evaluations are strong, the evaluator's job is simple: The evaluators agree or disagree, and then they say why. But, if the self-evaluations are weak, then it falls to the team alone to get useful evaluation judgment on record. It's difficult to do a good evaluation of a school that shies away from self-judgments. Indeed, weak self-judgments are often a sign of academic immaturity. Strong self-judgments, on the other hand, signal confidence and maturity.

The self-study experience should empower those closest to the students.

- Although accreditation protocols move into the school through the top, the *process* can not be successful if it is undertaken from the top. The very first task is to move to the base of the table of organization and set up an internal "government" which is broadly representative of the teaching faculty and support personnel. This is called *steering committee*. The steering committee is a local "board of directors" for the self-study. The steering committee appoints all committees and drives the process. Thus, the activity "percolates" upward from the base of the pyramid rather than hammers downward from above. It derives from the will of the teachers rather than authority on high.

- This empowerment awakens feelings of responsibility rather than obedience. It develops a sense of mission rather than a feeling of submission. This "grows" the staff, and a school operated by growing people is an improving school.

3.2 WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A SCHOOL AS IT PREPARES FOR EVALUATION BY A VISITING TEAM:

The **self-study is the corpus for the evaluation.** A good visiting team enters the school through the self-study report, follows "paths" it lays down, and then it builds its own report as a *commentary* on the self-study. When interviewed by members of the team, the faculty should be prepared to discuss its self-evaluations. By doing this, both the team and the faculty attain a much higher level of reflective experience.

- **The faculty ought to present specific examples of what is reported in the self-study.** When the evaluators appear in the classroom, they hope to see a room that "speaks" of the school's philosophy, its teaching style, the tone of its interaction between teacher and student, and other things. Samples of the instructional materials, and student work should be on display, and the characteristic of the school organizational schemes should be evident as visitors make their way through the building.

   Similar effort ought to be made by those who offer student services. Health personnel, food personnel, transportation personnel, and guidance personnel should be prepared to demonstrate what they have reported, and they should be prepared to explain how this demonstration is consistent with the self- study.

   In preparing for evaluation, the faculty ought to be **"mission-conscious"** it should it should be conversant about what the school is there to do.

- **The faculty should know its own philosophy** and what the philosophy means for its own teaching. Furthermore, the educational practices within the school should bear testimony as to the implementation of the school philosophical underpinnings and mission statement. For example, in the Judaic Studies. If the philosophy of the school entails teaching in a way which helps a student develop tools with which to be able to learn a passage of *Chumash* independently, the instruction within the classroom should reflect this approach as should the student's understanding of the "objectives" of the lesson.

- In preparing for evaluation, **the faculty should understand the school community,** especially the students.

- During evaluations, the good conversations between faculty and evaluators tend to move toward philosophy, or toward community. These are the two "wellsprings" of the school and its programs. Teachers ought to prepare for such conversations by first hand involvement in community life. The ethnicity, the family structure, and the social organization, should not be simply abstractions.

- The administration and faculty of the school would be well advised to **ask for assistance in planning a stronger institution.**

- It is perfectly legitimate for members of the administration to point out special areas of success or conversely to call attention to areas which need strengthening. A visiting team is much more impressed when a school that recognizes its This is a signal to the chair to call the Chinuch Office and ask that someone with that special strength be assigned to the team. Schools may ask, for example, for help with ESL programs, Special Education or technology while it moves to meet new growing needs.

- This is not an admission of inadequacy, it is simply telling the evaluators and accreditation leaders how best to be helpful.

- **The school ought to inform the school community that it is undergoing evaluation and involve the community as appropriate.** School evaluation is not a "closed gate" inspection. It is a *positive* event in a positive protocol. It should stimulate the growth or improvement of the school. The visiting team, even before it arrives, is the "significant other" in the life of the school and of the community. When the team arrives, it is a special moment, and the wise and good school shares it.

  The community rallies around a school that is to undergo evaluation. If a school aspires to accreditation, the community, and even other schools in the community, wishes it well. Here again, there is a heuristic effect. As "the significant other" approaches, the school rediscovers the community and the community rediscovers the school.

  To put it crassly, this is not without cash value. Out of the evaluation comes recommendation for improvement. Invariably, this means a community effort. It is far better for a community to stand in anticipation of such news than to be informed later, "we had an evaluation and this is what we think we should do".

- **In preparing for a visit by a visiting team, the faculty should become "future minded".** The attitudes of the faculty on the eve of evaluation are extremely important. They ought to feel they are discovering their future, not defending their past. A good evaluation is much more than a report card. It is a vision of what the school can become.

  Any good evaluation report of any school, no matter how good the school is, will

identify things that could be better than they are. A future minded faculty will use the report to make the tomorrows into what they want their   tomorrows to be.

3.3 WHAT A SCHOOL IS EXPECTED TO DO WITH A GOOD EVLUATION REPORT:

• **The school ought to use the evaluation report as a way of understanding how others see it.** In the self-study, the faculty and administration develop a view of the school as they see it. The judgments are their own. A team report is the view of a different "eye"; and when combined with the "eye" of the self-study report, the vision becomes binocular.

 A good school seizes upon the advantage of "binocular vision". The steering committee for the self-study combines with the official leadership of the school to structure faculty discussion regarding the visiting teams report. The faculty and administration will evaluate and then explain *how* and *why* it sees itself in a certain way. How they might differ from the report regarding a particular area. The act of creating an explanation itself moves the faculty to higher ground; and this, after all, is what the accreditation protocol purports to do.

• **The school ought to use the evaluation report as basis for a report to its school community.** If the school has done it right, the community is well aware that an evaluation has been conducted and the report of the evaluation is in hand. Many in the community will want to know what the report has to say about the school. It is common to hear them ask: What did we get an A, B, or C?

    The best approach which offers the school new opportunities for   communication is for the steering committee and/or the official leadership of the school to prepare its own digest of the team report and distribute it to the school community. Schools that do this may want to make it clear that members of the community, including the press, are free to come to the school and examine the self-study and team report. But, when a good digest has been available, this has never been known to happen.

    The digest gives the substance, the flavor, and some of the supporting detail. It usually can be read in 15-20 minutes; and it usually describes the place of the evaluation report in the full accreditation protocol.

• **The school should examine the reports' commendations and   recommendations to determine developmental goals of high strategic merit.** Some schools develop action plans as they do the self-study; others wait until the report of the visiting team has been received. There are advantages and disadvantages to both procedures. In either case, the school develops a strategy for its future.

The procedures of self-study and evaluation are not necessarily inductive of strategic thinking. The strategic goals of any strategic plan may never appear in either the self-study or team report as a recommendation. However, the attainment of a good strategic goal, through side effects, should satisfy many of the recommendations. The mark of the good strategic plan is the number of things it accomplishes with a relatively small number of well directed efforts.

- **The school ought to share its experience with other schools.** *Chazal* has said: *"umitalmidai Yoser M'Kulom"*, or in simpler words, the way to really learn something is to teach it to someone else. This is one of several reasons the school should share its experiences with others. One way to do this is to make interested and talented staff members available for service in accreditation. In every school, there should be a number of individuals who participate regularly in accreditation activity. Schools that recently underwent an accreditation process are the best resource possible to those embarking upon it.

- **The school should use its evaluation as a "benchmark".** General evaluators and Torah educational professionals visit accredited schools often find the evaluation reports are marked up with notations and worn down at the edges from handling and use. *This is as it should be.* As stated above, the evaluation report is a "navigational fix". Because of all that went into the self-study and evaluation, and because of the high consciousness of the faculty and school community of the evaluation team, the report becomes a "point of departure" into the future.

3.4 THE KIND OF LIFE A SCHOOL MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO LEAD IF IT WANTS TO LIVE AS AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL.

- **Accreditation is an activity not just a status. In fact, the word "status" denotes lack of movement.** The movement of an accredited school spring from knowing the philosophy and goals, knowing the community needs, and knowing how the school's offerings relate to philosophy and community. The coherence of all of these was established by the self-study and evaluation. The school is accredited because it establishes this coherence. Therefore, there is a "working belief" that movement that stems from accreditation activity is good. These processes activated teachers, principals, and some of the parents. Through the activity, they developed a new or stronger sense of involvement and belonging. This is the essence of the follow-up reporting procedure in subsequent years.

- **Through the accreditation protocol, an accredited school develops skills needed for self-correction and ought to use them regularly.** Self-evaluation and strategic goal setting are capabilities developed and tested through the accreditation protocol. After accreditation, these capabilities should be regularly exercised and kept in top form. Great institutions have a self-developed and self-managed course correction capability. This is especially important when forces external to a school act upon it with sufficient force to get the school off course.

- **An accredited school ought to undertake its share of responsibility for maintaining education as a self-regulating profession.** The rigor of the accreditation protocol reflects some of the ways educators have of regulating themselves. Why self-regulation? It is the key to academic freedom. A profession deserves the indulgence of the public, if, and only if, it has the capacity to regulate itself. One can only imagine what the Torah world would look like if it were to be totally regulated by government, industry, or commerce. By being self-regulating, Torah education has the freedom to say what must be said about how these entities serve Torah interests.

Section 2

Philosophy, Governance, & Administration

Section 2

Philosophy, Governance &Administration: Defining the Fundamental Principles Under Which the School Operates

2.1 Philosophy

2.1.1 Mission/Vision

For a school to develop and function with a consisting set of goals and objectives it need to declare who it is and what its mission is. Thus a mission statement is an essential ingredient which facilitates the success of any educational institution. A vision statement (the two may or may not be combined) articulates what needs the founders expected to fulfill with the creation of the school and how they continue to guide the schools purpose.

- The mission statement should include a statement of the fundamental values of the organization, an indication of the population being served, and the service or function for which the organization exists.

   A vision statement should include a description of the long-term   change or societal benefit that the organization hopes to bring about through its existence.

   § The program has a written mission statement which includes a vision statement that clearly articulates the program's purpose for the care and/or education of young children. The statements should include a mention of commitment to a quality Torah education.

Self study document:

   § Include a copy of the mission and vision statements and describe how they were developed and by whom.

Rating:

   § **Standard met:** The mission and vision statements clearly articulate the program's purpose for existence in a manner that affirms the religious underpinnings of the program.

   § **Standard partially met:** The program has a mission or vision statement that affirms the religious underpinnings of the program but not both.

> **§** **Standard not met:** The program has neither a mission or vision statement that considers the religious underpinnings of the program.

2.1.2 Religious Principles

Rationale:

> **§** Review and accreditation by the Merkos National Accreditation Board assess the standards of Yeshivas, Jewish Day Schools and Early Childhood Centers that define their mission in terms of Torah education and Halacha. Schools that do not see adherence to Halacha as part of their mission do not fall under the purview of the Merkos National Accreditation Board.

Standard:

> **§** Whereas it is to be expected that philosophy and mission will evolve over time, it is expected that religious institutions have defining principles such that if these principles are altered, the fundamental nature of the institution is changed, and the former entity ceases to exist.

Foundation Principles:

> **§** All Merkos institutions must include in their by-laws a statement regarding the halachic foundation of the school, including the halachic authority that may arbitrate on religious policy.

> **§** A school may also choose to include other fundamental philosophical principles in its by-laws to be determined by the school itself (Example: a school may choose define itself as an all-male school).

> **§** These foundational principles may not be altered by the governing board members. Should these principles be overridden, the school shall no longer exist as the original entity, and the existing accreditation shall be automatically voided.

> **§** (In the event the foundational principles are voided, but the subsequently adopted by-laws adhere to the Merkos standard of halachic governance, the school may choose to re-apply for accreditation. But it is understood that from the perspective of Merkos, voiding of the by-laws establishing foundational principles automatically voids the original accreditation.)

Self study document:

> **§** Identify the principles upon which the school is based that are not subject to change by vote of the governing boards without dissolving the identity of the institution. This must include a statement regarding the schools adherence to halachic standards, and how those standards are defined (including naming of the authority who will arbitrate halachic decisions). It may also include other principles fundamental to

the mission of the institution.

Rating:

§ **Standard met**: School specifies in its by-laws at minimum the halachic foundation of the institution, and that this by-law may not be voided without dissolving the identity of the institution. It may also identify other principles fundamental tot he mission of the institution that are not subject to board vote and may not be voided without dissolving the identity of the institution.

§ **Standard not met** : School does not specify in its by-laws defining principles that may not be voided with out dissolving the identity of the institution.

2.1.3 Educational Philosophy

Standard:

§ The program has written philosophy regarding the care and education of young children, the philosophy considers current research and is shaped by the religious ideology and orientation of the program and is consistent with the program's mission and vision statements.

Self study document:

• Include a copy of the program's philosophy statement and cite the research and/or religious principles on which it is based.

Rating:

• **Exceptional compliance :** It is evident that a serious analysis of the program's religious philosophy of Torah education was made, and that this philosophy was articulated with consideration of a substantial amount of child development research. The statement of philosophy also reflects the mission and vision of the program.

• **Standard met:** The philosophy statement considers Torah principles and current understanding of child development, and reflects the programs mission and vision.

• **Standard partially met:** The program has developed a philosophy statement. However, it is not backed by research or carefully articulated Torah philosophy and/or fails to adequately reflect the program's mission and vision.

• **Standard not met:** There is no written philosophy statement.

2.1.4 Adherence to Teaching Methodology That Reflects Best Practice

Standard:

Current research supports a number of teaching practices as effective and age-appropriate. Which of these practices are most appropriate for a given program will, however, be shaped by the philosophy of the program. The program should identify the methodological best practices it encourages and supports. There should be evidence that these practices both reflect the program's philosophy and are supported by current research.

- nclude a statement of educational practice that identifies the key methodological practices that govern the implementation of the school's curriculum, and explain how these practices are in keeping with the school's stated philosophy and are supported by current developmental research.

Rating: Self study document:

I

- **Standard met:** The statement of educational practice identifies the research base of the practices supported, and explains how these practices are in keeping with the school's statement of philosophy.

- **Standard partially met:** Best practices that are incorporated into the program are identified, but the document does not elaborate on the research base of these practices nor does it consider how these practices support the school's philosophy.

- **Standard not met:** There is no clear statement of preferred best practice in teaching.

2.2 Governance

2.2.1 Corporate Structure

2.2.1 Bylaws The corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early education program, whether independently incorporated, or if it is religiously affiliated, has clearly articulated bylaws that include the early childhood education program.

Self study document:

- Define the corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early childhood education program, demonstrating that clearly articulated bylaws include educational options sufficient to cover the early education program.

Rating:

- **Standard met:** The corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early education program—whether incorporated, franchised, proprietary, or religiously affiliated—has clearly articulated bylaws that include the early education program.

- **Standard not met:** The corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early education program—whether incorporated, franchised, proprietary, or religiously affiliated—does not have clearly articulated bylaws that include the early education program.

2.2.2 Governance Entity   Programs under the auspices of another organization and/or agency should be represented by a governing entity or committee (hereinafter referred to as "the governance") responsible for the general policies and the financial stability of the early education program.

Self study document:

- Include a diagram of the authority structure of the governance and of the early education staff. Discuss whether the governance is responsible for the general policies and the financial stability of the early education program, or by whatever other means fiscal soundness is achieved.

Rating:

- **Standard met**: The self study contains a diagram of the authority structure of the governance and of the early education staff. The governance is responsible for the general policies and the financial stability of the early education program.

- **Standard not met**: The self study does not contain a diagram of the authority structure of the governance and of the early education staff, and/or the self study does not contain information indicating that the governance is responsible for the general policies and the financial stability of the early education program.

Self study document:

- Include a list of the governance members' names, years of service on the governing entity, means by which service is determined, term of service and selection of members as required in the by-laws.

Rating:

- **Standard met:** A list of governance members' names, years of services, and demographic information is included.

- **Standard substantially met:** Governance members are listed with years of service. However, demographic information is not provided.

- **Standard not met:** The self study does not contain a complete list of governance members' names with years of service.

2.2.3 Bylaws Authority   The governance operates in conjunction with and under the appropriate bylaws of the corporation.

Self study document:

- Include a copy of the corporation's bylaws that provides specific oversight of the early care and educational programs operated under the corporation.

Rating:

- **Standard met:** Bylaws of the corporation give specific oversight to early care and educational programs operated under the corporation.

- **Standard not met**: The self study does not contain bylaws of the corporation that give specific oversight to early care and educational programs operated under the corporation.

2.2.4 Governing Policies and Procedures   The governance establishes and maintains written governing policies and procedures that are consistent with the program's philosophy.

Self study document:

- Include a copy of the current policies and procedures manual for the early education program and/or inclusive of the early education program.

Rating:

- §   **Standard met:** Policies and procedures reflect the program's current practices and the program's philosophy.

- **Standard substantially met**: Policies and procedures are consistent with the program's philosophy. However, they have not been reviewed and brought up to date in more than a year.

- **Standard not met:** The policies and procedures are not consistent with the program's philosophy.

2.2.5 Governance Role and Responsibilities   The governance has clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the early education program, and new governance members are provided with an orientation when they join the governance.

Self study document:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the governance and how new members receive orientation information.

Rating:

- **Standard met:** The roles and responsibilities of the governance are defined, and the governance orientation process is described.

- **<u>Standard substantially met:</u>** The roles and responsibilities of the governance are loosely defined, and there is no governance orientation process described.

- **<u>Standard not met</u>**: The roles and responsibilities of the governance are not defined, and there is no governance orientation process described.

2.2.6 **Minutes of Meetings**:

Written minutes of governance meetings are maintained on file.

On-site observation:

- On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

- **<u>Standard met:</u>** Copies of the governance minutes from three governance meetings referring to the early education program are available on site to the visiting team chair or to his/her designee.

- **<u>Standard not met:</u>** Copies of three governance minutes referring to the early education program are not available on site to the visiting team chair or to his/her designee.

2.2.7 Governance Responsibilities

The director submits an annual program evaluation based on early childhood/child developmental theory, research, and best practices, as well as religious mission, and assists the governance in setting and prioritizing short- and long-range goals for the program.

Self study document:

§ Includes a copy of the last annual evaluation of the program and a prioritized list of short- and long- range goals for the program.

Rating:

§ **<u>Standard met:</u>** The last annual is provided, and the evaluation includes short- and long-range goals.

§ **<u>Standards partially met:</u>** A copy of the last annual evaluation or a copy of goals is provided, but not both.

§ **<u>Standards not met:</u>** The data do not satisfactorily validate either an annual evaluation or short- and long-range goals.

The governance ensures the program meets and/or exceeds all requirements of civil authorities in the areas of health and safety, child-staff ratios, background screening, fingerprinting, and staff-training requirements or training requirement equivalencies, regardless of any exception status that may be present, unless clear rationale is provided

for making use of the exemption status, and evidence is shown of having made a good-faith attempt to meet standards.

(For example, Jewish studies teachers may have an alternate religious certification because it is not possible to obtain a Jewish studies teacher with both a standard degree and alternate religious certification.)

2.2.8 Legal Requirements

The Governance and the program meet **all** pertinent requirements of the civil and legal authority in the jurisdiction, including where applicable, but not limited to the Board of Health, Fire and Safety regulations, and any licensing required.

Self study document:

§ Licensed programs must include a copy of the program's current license and last inspection report. Programs exempt from licensure do not need to supply a copy of a current license or an inspection report, but they will be expected to meet or exceed all minimum licensing requirements regardless of exemption, unless clear rationale for utilizing exemption is shown, and there is evidence of a good-faith attempt to meet standards.

Rating:

§ **Exceptional compliance:** Evidence throughout the visitation demonstrates that the program highly exceeds requirements by civil authorities in the areas stated above.

§ **Standards met:** The program meets/exceeds requirements of civil authorities in the areas stated above, unless there is clear rationale presented for making use of exemption status, and a good-faith effort has been made to meet the standards.

§ **Standard partially met:** The program meets/exceeds some of the requirements of civil authorities in the areas stated above but not all of them.

§ **Standard not met:** The program does not meet any requirements of civil authorities in the areas stated above.

The director submits an annual program evaluation based on early childhood/child development theory, research, religious philosophy, and best practices, and assists the governance in setting and prioritizing short- and long-range goals for the program.

2.2.9 Admissions: Clear admission policies and procedures are stated in writing. These policies are inclusive and non-discriminatory, and they reflect the diversity of all children, various family structures, and the community. They also uphold halachic principles. Admissions policies should be reviewed by the school's selected halachic authority.

Where there is disagreement regarding the responsibility/possibility of admitting a child, the matter should be

arbitrated arbitration by the school's selected halachic authority, and the school should agree to respect this judgment.

Self study document:

§   Include a copy of the program's admission policies and procedures. Define the growth in the program over the past few years and how inclusion has or has not been reflective, and the role of the halachic authority in assuring equitable admissions in light of the school policies.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Clear admissions policies and procedures are stated in writing. These policies and procedures are inclusive and non-discriminatory, and they reflect the diversity of all children, various family structures, and the community. They are in keeping with the judgments of the school's selected halachic authority.

§   **Standard partially met:** Clear admissions policies and procedures are stated in writing. However, either they are not inclusive and non-discriminatory, or they do not reflect the diversity of all children, various family structures, and the community.

§   **Standard not met:** The self study does not contain clear admissions policies and procedures, or contains policies and procedures that are not in keeping with halachic practice.

2.3 Fiscal Management and Accountability

2.3.1 Budget

The budget will provide evidence of financial support sufficient to achieve the school's mission. The budget shall be prepared annually by the governance, with input from the director and educational board as well as faculty and lay leadership as appropriate.

Self study document:

§   The last year's budget shall be submitted, along with a description of how the budget was set.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The last year's budget is submitted, and procedure for setting the budget reflects appropriate input from faculty and lay leadership.

§   **Standard partially met:** The budget is submitted, but there is no evidence for the appropriate input from faculty and lay leadership.

§   **Standard not met:** No budget is submitted.

2.3.2 Long-Range Financial Planning

There shall be evidence of long-rang financial and educational planning by the governance of the school, with input from the director and other appropriate school personnel.

Self study document:

§	Minutes of at least two meeting within the last two years demonstrating financial/ educational planning are submitted.

Rating:

§	**Standard met**: Minutes of at least two meetings are submitted, demonstrating evidence of long-term financial and educational planning by the governance, with input from the director and other appropriate school personnel.

§	**Standard partially met:** Minutes of only one meeting are provided, or the documents provided do not show evidence of long-term planning or involvement of appropriate school personnel.

§	**Standard not met:** Self study document is not submitted.

2.3.3 Tuition and Fees; Refund Policy

Each school will demonstrate sound tuition policies, including tuition and a fee schedule appropriate to its operation and clientele as well as fair ethical scholarship and refund policies that are communicated to the parent body.

In the event of disagreement, relating to the payment of tuition and fees, parents should be allowed the right to request a mediation hearing with a representative of the halachic authority that the school has selected. Administration and parents shall agree to abide by the mediation agreement set in conjunction with this halachic authority.

Self study document:

§	School provides a copy of its published tuition and fee schedules, and a description of the process by which scholarship, grants, tuition reductions, and tuition refunds are awarded, as well as provision for mediation with a Halachic authority chosen by the school in the event of disagreement.

Rating:

§	**Standard met:** School provides published tuition and fee schedules, as well as the process through which scholarships, grants, tuition reductions, and tuition refunds are rewarded. It includes provision for a mediation process with a Halachic arbiter in the case of disagreement regarding tuition payment.

§	**Standard Partially Met:** School provides a published tuition and fee schedules, but does not articulate the process through which scholarships, grants, tuition reductions, and tuition refunds are awarded, nor does it outline recourse to mediation

with a Halachic arbiter in the case of disagreement.

> § **Standard Not Met:** No tuition and fee schedule is submitted, nor any description of tuition policies.

2.3.4 Governance Responsibility for Fiscal Matters

The governance provides oversight of the program, and it reviews the financial position of the program and it ensures its stability.

Self study document:

> § Describe how the information about the program and financial records is prepared and from whom the governance receives this complete information. Discuss whether these records and the reporting system are adequate and how the governance ensures the stability of the program's financial position.

Rating:

> § **Standard met:** The programs financial records and financial reporting system to the governance are adequate, and the governance ensures the stability of the program's financial position.

> § **Standard not met:** The self study data do not satisfactorily demonstrate that the program's financial records and financial reporting system to the governance are adequate and that the governance ensures the stability of the program's financial position.

2.3.5 Governance Oversight of Financial Records

The governance requires a review of the program's financial records, including an annual internal review. General accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.

Self study document

> § Available on site are the last internal review and verification that general accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.

Rating:

> § **Standard met:** A financial review report is available on site, as well as verification that general accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.

> § **Standard not met:** One or both of the following are not available on site; a financial review and verification that general accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.

2.3.6 Reporting and Records: Procedure

The school will demonstrate appropriate policies and procedures regarding financial reporting and record keeping and will provide evidence upon request that these records are kept in a safe, effective, ethical, legal, and professional manner. The school will provide access to records, billing, and accounting, as necessary.

Rating:

§   **Standard Met:** School is able to provide evidence of appropriate record-keeping upon request.

§   **Standard Not Met:** School is not able to provide evidence of appropriate record-keeping upon request.

2.3.7 Insurance

In order to ensure the stability of the program in the case of a significant litigation, the governance maintains adequate liability and accident insurance including insurance on any vehicle that transports children.

Self study Document:

§   Includes a copy of each proof of insurance that the governance maintains.

Rating:

§   **Standards met:** The governance maintains adequate liability and accident insurance as described in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** The governance does not appear to maintain adequate liability and accident insurance as described in the standard.

2.3.8 Staff Salaries and Benefits

The governing entity approves wages and benefits. Wages, benefits, recruitment procedures, and staff retention are reviewed at least annually by the governance. Policies reflect an effort to compensate and retain quality staff by including benefits such as health coverage, sick leave, vacation leave, continuing education, Social Security, and an opportunity to participate in a tax-sheltered annuity or other type of retirement plan.

Self study document:

§   Report what percentage of the annual budge it reflected by wages and benefits for the staff. Define how wages are set and approved, what benefits are available to whom, and how often the governance reviews wages, benefits, recruitment procedures, and staff retention.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The governance approves wages and benefits that compensate staff as described in the standard, and the governance reviews wages, benefits, recruitment

procedures, and staff retention at least yearly.

§ **Standard not met:** The governance does not approve wages and benefits that compensate staff as described in the standard, and/or the governance does not review wages, benefits, recruitment procedures, and staff retention at least yearly.

2.3.9 _Financial Stability and Integrity

The program is not undergoing financial reorganization to protect itself from creditors.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The program is not undergoing financial reorganization to protect itself from creditors.

§ **Standard not met:** The program is undergoing financial reorganization to protect itself from creditors.

2.3.10 Resource Development

Schools will document all fund-raising and resource development activities demonstrating that all such activities are conducted in a legal, ethical, and professional manner.

Self study document:

§ The school will provide examples of promotional fundraising literature, newsletters, alumni activities, and the like, and write a statement describing the fundraising activities/ resource development activities implemented in the past two years, and their relative effectiveness.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** School provides examples of fundraising literature and a statement describing the procedure and relative effectiveness of fund-raising activities implemented in the past two years.

§ **Standard partially met:** School provides examples of fundraising literature or a statement describing fundraising activities implemented in the past two years, but not both.

§ **Standard not met:** School provides neither examples of fund-raising literature nor a written description of fund-raising activities.

Section 3

Personnel Administration

Section 3

3.0 Personnel

RATIONALE:

§   Research suggests that *the performance of the program director, particularly as it relates to providing leadership in a program, functioning at the administrative level, and providing high-quality supervision and feedback, predicts program quality* (NCEDL). The quality of care and education received by the children, the continuing

education and professional growth of the staff, and the confidence the parents will have in the program, is dependent on the knowledge and skills of the early education administrators (CFOC Standards 2002).

§   The leadership of any program accredited by Merkos should represent a skill set including practical classroom experience with children, a theoretical understanding of principles of child development, training in non-profit or business administration, knowledge of child development, and sufficient religious education to ensure that the values of the program can be properly imparted. In many communities, especially those with smaller Jewish populations, it may be difficult to find a single individual that possesses all these qualifications. An acceptable alternative in those cases may be to create a leadership team which may include, for example a director, program director, and administrator. It is however critical, that the recommended skill set be represented among those leading the program.

§   It is also critical that all staff members conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the underlying philosophy of the program, modeling appropriate standards to the parent students and parent body of the school.

STANDARDS:

3.1 Staff Hiring Practices and Benefits

3.1.1 Employee Handbook: All staff members receive a copy of the employee handbook. The staff is instructed at least annually on the program's employee policies.

Self study document:
§   Submit a copy of the staff employee handbook.
Rating:
§   <u>Standard met:</u> All staff members receive a copy of an employee handbook and have indicated receipt of same, and the administration reviews these policies with the staff on an annual basis.
§   <u>Standard substantially met:</u> All staff members receive a copy of an employee handbook. However, there is insufficient documentation that the administration reviews the policies with the staff on an annual basis.

§   <u>Standard not met:</u> There is insufficient documentation that all staff receive a copy of an employee handbook and that the administration reviews policies with the staff on an annual basis.

3.1.2 Nondiscrimination Policy: The program has a published nondiscrimination policy relating its hiring practices regarding "race, color, and/or ethnicity".

Self study document:
§   Include a copy of the program's nondiscrimination policy and a copy of an actual

position advertised in any form, the wording of which includes nondiscriminatory language.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A copy of the program's nondiscrimination policy and of an actual position advertised in any form, the wording of which includes nondiscriminatory language, is included in the self study.

§ **Standard not met:** The program shows insufficient evidence of a nondiscrimination policy.

3.1.3 Culturally Appropriate Staff: The program actively seeks a diverse staff that reflects the school population and its surrounding community.

The definition of diversity is defined relative to the school community and its philosophy and goals: in some cases, this may mean staff from various countries of origin; in others, it may mean staff with varied childhood religious experiences who can identify with the experience of the school population (e.g. *ba'alei teshuvah*).

Self study document:

§ Describe how the program actively seeks a diverse staff. Where relevant, include how the staff communicates with children whose first language is not English.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The program has or is seeking a culturally diverse staff that reflects the school's target population.

§ **Standard not met:** There is no documentation showing that the program has or is seeking a culturally diverse staff.

3.1.4 Background Screening: The program's hiring procedures include background screening and fingerprinting to obtain a history regarding abuse and any criminal convictions for all employees and for others who have direct access with the children in the program.

On-site observation:

§ Personnel files will be reviewed by the visiting team chair or his/her designee in order to confirm background screening and fingerprinting.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Civil authorities have cleared all staff to work with children after consideration of the staff's background screening and fingerprinting used to check for a history regarding abuse and any criminal convictions.

§ **Standard substantially met:** All staff documentation has been submitted to the appropriate civil authorities, and clearance is pending.

§ **Standard not met:** Insufficient evidence of staff screening and fingerprinting is

available.

3.1.5 Staff Orientation: New staff are provided with an orientation and/or a Staff Manual that should include but not be limited to the following:

> § goals and philosophy of the program
> § planned activities for the program
> § appropriate classroom management techniques
> § routines and transitions in which the children in the program are engaged
> § discipline policies and procedures
> § communication with parents
> § mealtimes and food-handling policies
> § occupational health hazards
> § emergency health and safety procedures
> § general health policies and procedures including but not limited to the following:
> • hand-washing techniques
> • diapering techniques and toileting (including proper diaper disposal and diaper-changing techniques where applicable)
> § child abuse/child neglect detection, prevention, and reporting
> § cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
> § recognition of symptoms of illness, documentation of these symptoms, and implementation of ill-child policies that include the following:
> • applying the program's policies regarding exclusion of ill   children and readmission of them after illness
> • cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
> • documenting and administering prescribed medication if given to children during program hours by program employees
> • notifying parents/guardians regarding a communicable disease occurring in children or staff
> • assessing the health of children daily

Self study document:

> § Include documentation of presentation of orientation procedures, verifying that the above-mentioned items are addressed with the staff.

> ### Rating:
> § **Standard met:** An orientation as described above is provided to the staff.
>
> § **Standard not met:** An orientation program is not provided to the staff.

3.2 Director

3.2.1 Qualifications: The director of the early education program has professional training as evidenced by having obtained a minimum of a bachelor's degree or its equivalent (1) in early childhood education/child development, (2) in elementary education with twelve credit hours in early childhood education/child

development, or (3) in any other subject with twenty-four credit hours in early childhood education/child development—all from an accredited institution.

The director may alternatively hold either a rabbinic degree or a Jewish Teacher's seminary degree and have earned a Merkos International Teacher's license, and be enrolled in a Masters degree program.

The director should have a working understanding of business practices as evidenced by twelve credit hours of college course work or the equivalent of documented one year of on-the-job training in an administrative position under the supervision of a mentor.

Where no one individual possesses all these qualifications, it is acceptable (though not preferred) to distribute this skill set among those leading the program, e.g. the administrator has experience in business practices, the director holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and the program director is a graduate of a Jewish Teacher's seminary program.

Self study document:
§   Include a copy of the resume, licenses and certificates of the director and of any other director-qualified leadership staff that perform director duties.

Rating:
§   <u>**Exceptional compliance**</u>: The director/has a post-baccalaureate degree in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution or has any post-baccalaureate degree with a minimum of twenty-four credit hours in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution,. Or has earned a rabbinic/ seminary degree, holds an International Merkos Teachers License and is working toward a Masters degree in early childhood. In addition, the director has training in business practices.

§   <u>**Standard met:**</u> The director/other staff leader has a minimum of a bachelor's degree as described above, hold an International Merkos Teachers License or its equivalent and either one year of on-the-job training in an administrative position or twelve credit hours of college course work in business practices.

§   <u>**Standard substantially met:**</u> The director/other staff leader has a two-year degree or its equivalent, from an accredited institution and holds an International Merkos Teachers License or its equivalent, or has met state director requirements; four years of teaching or administrative experience, and three credit hours in administration. The director also has a professional development plan in place that will culminate in a bachelor's degree as described in the standard.

§   <u>**Standard not met:**</u> The director/other staff leader does not have a minimum of a two-year degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution or is director qualified as defined by state statute, and does not have a professional development plan in place that will culminate in a bachelor's degree as described in the standard, and no staff leaders have engaged in yeshiva/seminary study.

3.2.2 General Responsibilities: The director is charged with assuming responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the program, maintaining program policies, and monitoring the program's compliance with applicable requirements of civil authorities. The director's leadership addresses the program's goal of fostering the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and character development of children.

Self study document:
§ Include a copy of the director's job description.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** A current job description for the director delineates the above-mentioned responsibilities of the director.

§ **Standard not met:** The self study does not contain a current job description for the director, delineating the above-mentioned responsibilities of the director.

3.2.3 Experience: The director and/or program director has experience working directly with children whose ages are represented in the early education program for which the director/program director has oversight.

Self study document:
§ Submit a copy of the director's/program director's resume listing experience working with children.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** The director/program director has documented experience working with children the same ages as those represented in the early education program over which the director/program director has oversight.

§ **Standard substantially met:** The director/program director has experience working with children but not specifically with the age groups represented in the early education program over which the director/program director has oversight.

§ **Standard not met:** The director/program director has no previous experience working with young children.

3.2.4 Continuing Education and Development: The director obtains a minimum of twelve clock hours per year of continuing professional development, provided by a qualified entity, in such areas as emergent literacy and mathematics, methods in religious instruction, child or staff development, programming, administration, health and safety, family relations, legal issues, communications, and technology.

Self study document:
§ Include verification of the director's continuing education.

Rating:
§ **Exceptional compliance:** The director annually obtains professional development,

provided by a qualified entity, exceeding twelve hours in the stated areas, which must include business administration.

§ **Standard met:** The director annually obtains twelve clock hours of professional development, provided by a qualified entity, in the stated areas.

§ **Standard substantially met:** The director annually obtains fewer than twelve clock hours of professional development but has an action plan in place with a target date for completion to obtain the remaining hours for the current year and the following years.

§ **Standard not met:** The director does not annually obtain twelve clock hours of professional development and does not have an action plan in place with a target date for completion to obtain the remaining hours for the current year and the following years.

3.2.5 Hiring Staff: The director/administrator is responsible for hiring staff that support the philosophy and mission of the program in accord with applicable governance procedures.

Self study document:
§ Include the documentation showing that staff sign to indicate their support of the program's philosophy and mission.
Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Staff sign to indicate their support of the program's philosophy and mission.

§ **Standard not met:** The self study does not include documentation that staff signs to indicate their support of the program's philosophy and mission.

3.2.6 Evaluation of New Employees: The director ensures a formal evaluation of new employees takes place no more than six months into the orientation period and at pre-determined periods thereafter.

Self study document:
§ Include the formal evaluation document used with new staff during training period. Explain when the evaluation takes place.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** A formal evaluation of new employees takes place no more than six months into the orientation period.

§ **Standard not met:** A formal evaluation of new employees does not take place within six months after the orientation period begins.

§ **Standard not met:** Staff members' files are unavailable.

3.2.7 Evaluation of all Employees: The director ensures for each staff member an annual written evaluation

is conducted that contributes to the staff member's professional development and is kept in the staff member's file.

Self study document:

§ Include a copy of the annual evaluation forms used for staff members. Explain both how the evaluation process contributes to professional development of staff and whether the evaluations are kept in staff members' files.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Annual written staff evaluations are performed that contribute to staff professional development and are kept in staff members' files.

§ **Standard substantially met:** The annual staff evaluations are performed, but documentation is not on file.

§ **Standard not met:** The evaluations are not performed, and the documentation is not on file.

32.8   Follow-up Evaluation of Staff: The director discusses the formal written evaluations with each staff person confidentially and recognizes strengths as well as those areas needing improvement. The areas needing improvement receive follow-up.

Self study document:

§ Explain when and how a formal evaluation meeting takes place and how the discussion of strengths as well as those areas needing improvement are documented and addressed after the evaluation.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A written explanation of the formal evaluation process as described above is included in the self study, and documentation that verifies its implementation is available.

§ **Standard substantially met:** A written explanation of the formal evaluation process as described above is included in the self study, but documentation that verifies its implementation is not available.

§ **Standard not met:** There is insufficient evidence that formal evaluation meetings take place.

3.2.9   Staff Substitutes: The director has a current list of qualified substitutes who may be called upon to maintain the integrity of the program.

Self study document:

§ Describe how the director seeks qualified substitutes who may be called upon to maintain the integrity of the program.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A current and sufficient list of qualified substitutes is included in the self study, and evidence is clear that the integrity of the program is maintained during teacher absences.

§ **Standard substantially met:** A plan to obtain substitutes is in place, but it does not include qualified substitutes.

§ **Standard not met:** A plan to obtain substitutes is not in place, and a list of qualified substitutes is not available.

3.2.10 Acting Director: The director designates a qualified person to assume leadership and responsibility of the early education program in the event of his/her absence.

Self study document:

§ Explain who assumes the responsibilities of the director in the director's absence, and include this person's qualifications.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A qualified person is the designated leader in the absence of the director.

§ **Standard not met:** There is no specific person designated to assume the responsibilities of the director when the director is absent.

3.2.11 Team Building: The director builds strong relationships and communication between the staff and administration, and encourages team collaboration and spirit among the staff.

Self study document:

§ Explain how relationships and communication are encouraged throughout the staff. Provide a schedule of staff meetings for the past twelve months.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Staff meetings take place a minimum of once a month, and they include relationship building and communication opportunities.

§ **Standard not met:** Staff meetings are not provided a minimum of once per month, and/or the staff meetings do not include relationship building and communication opportunities.

3.2.12 Program Evaluation with Staff: The director meets with the staff annually to evaluate the early education program and to discuss areas of strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The areas needing

improvement are addressed after the meetings through a specific Program Improvement Plan.

Self study document:

§ Explain how an annual evaluation is provided and how input from staff regarding areas of strengths as well as areas needing improvement are addressed.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** An annual evaluation is provided, and there is evidence that appropriate staff input is incorporated into the program.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Staff meet annually to discuss areas of improvement, but there is little evidence that change takes place as a result.

§ **Standard not met:** Annual program evaluations do not take place.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** All informational sources established by the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination.

3.2.13 Personnel Files: The director maintains a confidential personnel file on each employee. The file should contain but not be limited to the following and/or contain information that civil authorities require:

§ resume
§ application
§ copies of college or university transcripts
§ background screening and results
§ fingerprints/clearance
§ annual staff evaluations
§ documentation of any grievances
§ evidence of in-service training
§ copy of contract/work agreement
§ I-9 form
§ health screening data (if required)

On-site observation:

§ The visiting team chair or his/her designee will review staff members' files for compliance in documenting the above items.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Staff members' files are complete.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Staff members' files are available but incomplete.

3.2.14 Volunteers: Volunteers may be allowed to be alone with children only if undergo orientation, background screening, fingerprinting, and training. They work under the supervision of qualified staff.

Self study document:

§ Submit an outline of volunteer files, orientation, and training for compliance.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Orientation and training is provided to volunteers, their background screening and fingerprinting have resulted in clearance, and they are supervised by qualified staff.

§ **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: Orientation and training is not provided to volunteers, their background screening and fingerprinting have not resulted in clearance, and they are not supervised by qualified staff.

§ **Standard not applicable:** Volunteers are not used in the program.

3.3 Instructional and Support Staff Qualifications

3.3.1 Qualifications: Qualifications of all instructional and support staff meet or exceed the requirements of civil authorities.

Self study document:

§ Include a completed copy of the Personnel Qualification Form found in the appendix.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A Personnel Qualification Form demonstrates that the qualifications of all staff meet or exceed the requirements of civil authorities.

§ **Standard not met:** A Personnel Qualification Form demonstrating that the qualifications of all staff meet or exceed the requirements of civil authorities is not included in the self study.

3.3.2 Job Descriptions and Other Staff Policies: Clear and up-to-date written personnel polices have been developed by the program. These policies include but are not limited to job descriptions; wages and benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures.

Self study document:

§ Include a copy of the program's personnel policies.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Clear and up-to-date written personnel policies including but not

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limited to job descriptions for each position; information pertaining to wages and benefits; and the resignation, termination, and grievance procedures are included in the self study.

§   **Standard not met:** Clear and up-to-date written personnel policies including but not limited to job descriptions for each position; information pertaining to wages and benefits; and the resignation, termination, and grievance procedures are not included in the self study.

3.3.3   Communication of Personnel Policies: Written personnel policies have been communicated with the staff, and receipt of them by the staff has been documented.

On-site observation:
§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** Documentation that the staff has received written personnel policies is available on site for review by the visiting team chair or his/her designee.

§   **Standard not met:** There is no documentation that written personnel policies have been communicated with the staff.

3.4 Instructional Staff

3.4.1 Teachers: The director recruits and hires quality staff members with appropriate training and experience to carry out their role in the early education program.

Self study document:
§   Personnel Qualification Form for Teachers

Rating:
§   **Exceptional compliance:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that teachers have obtained a minimum of either a bachelor's degree in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution or any bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with twelve credit hours in early childhood education/child development. Alternatively, a teacher may hold a Merkos International Teachers License and be working toward a Masters degree.

§   **Standard met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that teachers have obtained a minimum of either an associate's degree in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution or any associate's degree with twelve credit hours in early childhood education/child development from an accredited institution, or holds an International Merkos Teachers License.

§   **Standard substantially met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that all teachers have obtained a minimum of a state/nationally recognized competency credential, or a combination of college course work and at least one year of experience under qualified supervision and thus have obtained a competency credential.

§   **Standard not met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that not all teachers are credentialed.

3.4.2   Assistant Teachers:

Self study document:
§   Personnel Qualification Form for Assistant Teachers

Rating:

§   **Exceptional compliance:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that assistant teachers have obtained a minimum of an associate's degree in early childhood education/child development or its equivalent from an accredited institution or have obtained a minimum of any associate's degree from an accredited institution with twelve credit hours in early childhood education/child development.

§   **Standard met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that assistant teachers have obtained a minimum of a state/nationally recognized competency credential or two years of experience working in an early education program and a minimum of twelve clock hours of early childhood education/child development training.

§   **Standard substantially met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that assistant teachers have obtained a minimum of twelve clock hours of early childhood education/child development training or have at least two years of work experience in an early education program.

§   **Standard not met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that not all assistant teachers have at least two years of documented work experience with young children or at least twelve hours of early childhood education/child development training.

3.4.3 Qualifications for Incorporating Religious Instruction
In an ideal situation, the teacher for each classroom will possess the religious training to be able to take initiative in incorporating Jewish religious practices, thematic units, and values into the classroom. Where the main teacher does not have the training to do this on her own, it is recommended that an assistant with this training be sought. At minimum, each classroom should be led by a teacher or assistant teacher who has had the experience of teaching in a pre-school classroom and incorporated religious instruction in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the school.

Self study document:

§   Teacher Qualifications for religious instruction

§   **Exemplary compliance:** The teacher of each class possesses a yeshiva/seminary degree with at least 3 credit hours of religious instructional methods and at least two years of experience teaching in a Jewish pre-school and holds an International Merkos Teachers License.

§   **Standard met:** The teacher or assistant teacher of each class possesses at least one year of post high school yeshiva/seminary training and at least one year of experience teaching in a Jewish pre-school and is working toward meeting the requirements of an International Teachers License.

§   **Standard partially met:** The teacher or assistant teacher of each class has attended Jewish schools and/or has at least one year or experience teaching in a Jewish school and is working toward meeting the requirements of an International Teachers License.

§   **Standard not met:** Neither the teacher nor the assistant teacher has adequate training or experience for taking initiative in incorporating Jewish experience and values into the classroom.

3.5 Support Staff

3.5.1 Training and Experience: Support staff—such as secretaries, kitchen staff, substitutes, and aides—have training and/or experience to carry out their role in an early education program.

Self study document: Provide evidence and content of the training for staff members.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that the support staff has obtained a credential and/or specialized training in their field.

§   **Standard met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that the support staff has obtained specialized training in their field and/or a minimum of two years of experience in their field.

§   **Standard not met:** A completed Personnel Qualifications Form demonstrates that not all support staff have specialized training in their field.

3.5.2 Continuing Education/Development Programs: All staff responsible for the care and education of the children in the program participate annually in a minimum of twelve documented clock hours of continuing education or professional development relating to child growth and development in the areas of cognitive learning and social, emotional, and physical development; religious instruction, safety and health issues for young children; family and community relations; classroom and program management; and professional development which may include special needs. Training may also include related language development,

discipline, and technology.

Self study document:

§   Submit evidence of continuing education opportunities for staff, including the above areas.

Rating:

§   **Exceptional compliance:** All staff annually participate in at least eighteen clock hours of continuing education provided by a source outside their early education program.

§   **Standard met:** All staff responsible for the care and education of the children in the program annually participate in a minimum of twelve clock hours of continuing education provided by a source outside their early education program.

§   **Standard substantially met:** 80 percent of the staff annually participate in a minimum of twelve clock hours of continuing education provided by a source outside their early education program.

§   **Standard not met:** Less than 80 percent of the staff annually participate in a minimum of twelve clock hours of continuing education provided by a source outside their early education program.

3.6   Child-Staff Ratios

3.6.1   Primary Teacher/Caregiver: In order to help ensure the care, bonding, and nurturing of the individual child, each group of children has one primary teacher/caregiver.

Self study document:

§   Provide a list naming the primary teacher/caregiver assigned to each group of children.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** A list demonstrates that each group of children in the program has one primary teacher/caregiver.

§   **Standard not met:** A list demonstrates that each group of children does not have one primary teacher/caregiver.

3.6.2 Ratios The following ratios are recommended by the National Health and Safety Performance Standards in *Caring for Our Children* (American Academy of Pediatrics 2002):

Age	Child-Staff Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Birth–12 months	4:1	8
13–24 months	5:1	10
25–30 months	5:1	10
31–35 months	6:1	12
Three-year-olds	8:1	16
Four-year-olds	9:1	18
Five-year-olds	10:1	20

When mixed age groups of infants and toddlers are in the same room, the child-staff ratio is maintained according to the youngest child in the room. If the children in the mixed age group are older than toddlers, the child-staff ratio is maintained according to the average age of the children.

Self study document:

§   Include a completed copy of the Child-Staff Ratio Form found in the appendix.

Rating:

§   **Exceptional compliance:** The program has established and maintains the child-adult ratios and group sizes in the above chart.

§   **Standard met:** At a minimum, the program has established and maintains the ratios and group sizes that are in compliance with requirements of civil authorities.

§   **Standard not met:** Ratios and group sizes are not in compliance with requirements of civil authorities.

3.6.3 Supervision of Children: The staff maintains a continuous, accurate account of the children in their care.

Self study document:

§   Describe methods used by staff to ensure children are accounted for at all times, such as during field trips and time on the playground or during transitions outside the classroom, which include trips to the restroom.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** A process is in place and is implemented to ensure children are accounted for at all times.

§   **Standard not met:** A process is not in place or is not implemented to ensure children are accounted for at all times.

3.6.4 Internal Communication Related to Supervision: Staff members who are sharing the primary responsibility of a group of children communicate with one another to ensure smooth operation of the program.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** Outside the classroom, staff has an opportunity daily to discuss events related to the children in their care.

§   **Standard met:** A process is in place to ensure good communication among staff caring for the same group of children.

§   **Standard not met**: A process is not in place to ensure communication among staff caring for the same group of children.

3.6.5 Children's Information: The director should ensure that current, complete, and confidential records are kept for each child and are available to authorized personnel. The file should include such information as the child's Hebrew name and parents Hebrew name, relevant life history, behavioral patterns, assessment so developmental and cognitive development, parental contact information, and appropriate health records as noted in the Health and Safety section of this document.

On-site Observation:

§   The visiting team chair or his/her designee will review children's records and the policies regarding who can see these records.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Current, complete, confidential children's records are filed and available only to designated staff.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Children's records are filed but at least one of the following is true: the records are not current, they are not complete, and they are not stored in a confidential location.

§   **Standard not met:** Children's records are not kept.

3.6.6 Disciplinary Policies: The director should oversee the interaction between staff and children, publishing the discipline policies and procedures for parents/guardians and staff and taking appropriate measures to maintain discipline. Corporal punishment and demeaning tactics are not allowed.

Self study document:

§   Include a copy of the program's discipline policies and explain how staff is trained and parents/guardians are informed of the policies.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A copy of the above-described discipline policies, training procedures, and information given to parents/guardians is included in the self study.

3.7 Public Relations:

3.7.1 Public Relations: All information sources established by the program accurately describe the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of non-discrimination.

Self study document:

§ Provide evidence and/or a description, of all informational sources that accurately portray the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** All informational sources established by the program accurately portray the early education program—including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination.

§ **Standard partially met:** Informational sources established by the program are available but do not address the program's enrollment policy, mission, or statement of nondiscrimination; and/or the information is not current.

§ **Standard not met:** informational sources established by the program are not available.

Section 4

Curriculum
and
Instruction

Section 4

4.0 Curriculum

RATIONALE:

Research on cognition and learning, child development, and the social and cultural context of learning has shown that young children are competent learners even at a young age. It is important to note, however, that the "pace of learning will depend on whether and to what extent the child's inclinations to learn encounter and engage supporting environments" (Bowman, et al. 2001).

Federal-State partnerships in the delivery of quality early education programs are now being formed that impact all pre-kindergarten programs. These educational reform initiatives have specifically targeted the need to align expectations of the early education program prior to children entering kindergarten and what is expected of them once they enter the elementary school years.

Initiatives are also being developed to evaluate the success of the early education program by how well the children are prepared to succeed once in the elementary school system.

Finally, initiatives to develop informational pieces to educate teachers, parents, childcare providers, and others are in place to provide ways to prepare children to be ready for school.

Voluntary guidelines are being developed to support early education programs in preparing young children in the areas of literacy, language, pre-reading skills, pre-mathematics, science, and early social studies.

Within the context of Jewish pre-schools, we would expect to find Jewish knowledge and values integrated into these areas; e.g. introduction of Hebrew vocabulary in the

language scope and sequence, introduction of Jewish customs and practices as a component of the social studies unit, integration of Hebrew alphabet and printed texts in the literacy component of the program. Classic Jewish educational texts address the issue of developmentally appropriate scope and sequence; developmentally appropriate practice should be considered when setting goals for Jewish studies.

STANDARDS

4.1 General Practice Overview

4.1.1 Curriculum Guide   The curriculum used by an early education program consists of proven successful resources with a consistent scope and sequence for each age group. Written goals and objectives drawn from researched- based developmental benchmarks and scientifically based research is included and reviewed on an annual basis.

Self study document:
§   Include an overview of the program's scope and sequence with supporting research citations for each age group. Jewish sources that impact curriculum development are cited and discussed. Describe the familiarity of instructional staff with the written goals and objectives.

Rating:
§   <u>**Exemplary compliance:**</u> Teachers from each age group of children are familiar the research and development of the scope and sequence, and relevant Jewish sources as they impact development of curriculum. All staff members trained in the implementation of the guide.

§   <u>**Standard met**</u>: The self study contains a complete scope and sequence guide with credible research citations and/or citation and discussion of Jewish sources as they impact the curriculum.

§   <u>**Standard substantially met:**</u> A scope and sequence is provided. However, each age group is not addressed, or research citations have not been included.

§   <u>**Standard not met:**</u> A scope and sequence as described in the standard has not been developed or is not available for review.

4.1.2 Lessons Plans   Instructional staff develops lesson plans for each class/age group that reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Lesson plans include age-appropriate integration of Jewish content and values.

Self study document:
§   Include a sample copy of lesson plans for each classroom/age group.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** All lesson plans reflect thorough knowledge of and application of the scope and sequence and of child development principles, as well as age-appropriate integration of Jewish content and values.

§   **Standard met:** Written lesson plans are in alignment with the goals and objectives of the scope and sequence for all age groups represented in the early education program, and are in alignment with the Jewish philosophy and objectives of the program.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Goals and objectives have been identified in the scope and sequence for each age group, but these goals and objectives are not incorporated into the lesson plans of all groups represented in the early education program. While goals are consonant with the Jewish philosophy and objectives of the program, there is no demonstration of the relationship n the lesson plans submitted.

§   **Standard not met:** Lesson plans for each classroom have not been included and/or a scope and sequence for each age group represented in the early education program.

4.2 Physical Development

4.2.1   Balanced Program--Indoor and Outdoor Play   The curriculum is designed to meet the physical needs of each child. The curriculum includes a balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities to enable the children to develop gross-motor skills.

Self study document:

§   Include in the self study a copy of the classroom schedule listing indoor and outdoor activities.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The curriculum includes consistent daily practice of both indoor and outdoor activities.

§   **Standard not met:** The curriculum does not include consistent daily practice of both indoor and outdoor activities.

4.2.2   Motor Skills   The curriculum results in lesson plans that provide opportunities for children to develop fine- and gross-motor skills.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating for infants/toddlers:

§   **Standard met:** Fine- and gross-motor activities are provided which may include such activities as sitting, kicking, rolling, swinging, walking, climbing, jumping, sliding, reaching, grasping, dropping, retrieving, carrying, and stacking.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Fine- and gross-motor skills activities are not provided, but toys encouraging the use of fine- and gross-motor skills are available and thus result in opportunities for development to happen spontaneously during the day.

§ **Standard not met:** Opportunities for developing fine- and gross-motor skills are not provided and toys encouraging the use of fine- and gross-motor skills are limited. The classroom and/or staff do not encourage the children to participate in such activities.

Rating for preschoolers:

§ **Standard met:** Fine- and gross-motor activities are provided in the preschool classroom which may include such activities as jumping, running, climbing, swinging, sliding, balancing, riding, stacking, squeezing, lacing, tracing, sorting, pounding, connecting, and snapping.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Opportunities for developing fine- and gross-motor skills are not provided, but toys, tools, and other materials encouraging the use of fine- and gross-motor skills are available and thus result in opportunities for development to happen spontaneously during the day.

§ **Standard not met:** Opportunities for developing fine- and gross-motor skills are not provided, and toys, tools, and classroom materials encouraging such activities are limited. The classroom and/or staff do not encourage the children to participate in such activities.

4.3 Social and Emotional

The curriculum provides opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children. Socio-emotional development is encouraged within the context of Jewish values, and the deliberate expansion of socio-emotional skills as part of moral development is stressed in the curriculum in age-appropriate ways.

On-site observation:
§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating for infants/toddlers:

§ **Standard met:** The curriculum provides opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children through activities in which the staff interact with infants/ toddlers. Examples may include: listening and responding to needs, making eye contact, using each child's name in a positive manner, holding and singing to children, and encouraging children in such self-help skills as self-feeding, pulling up, walking, crawling, climbing, and sitting.

§ **Standard not met:** The curriculum lacks specific and intentional opportunities for

the staff to foster the social/emotional development of children through activities in which the staff interact with infants/toddlers by listening and responding to needs, making eye contact, using each child's name in a positive manner, holding and singing to children, and encouraging children in such self-help skills as self-feeding, pulling up, walking, crawling, climbing, and sitting.

Rating for preschoolers:

§ **Exemplary compliance:** The curriculum provides opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children through including but not being limited to instruction and consistent daily practice of activities addressing the following: sharing, cooperating, helping, taking turns, problem solving, learning to transition from home to school, developing self-discipline, gaining confidence in performing age-appropriate tasks, and relating appropriately to adults and peers. Instruction and practice makes explicit reference to Jewish values, such as respect for others, self-respect, empathy,

§ **Standard met:** The curriculum provides opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children through including but not being limited to instruction and consistent daily practice of activities addressing the following: sharing, cooperating, helping, taking turns, problem solving, learning to transition from home to school, developing self-discipline, gaining confidence in performing age-appropriate tasks, and relating appropriately to adults and peers.

§ **Standard not met:** The curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children, in that (1) child-staff interaction is not an integral part of the social development of the child and (2) expectations of the children are not age appropriate and/or instructional techniques prohibit appropriate problem solving.

4.4 Teaching Strategies

4.4.1 Balanced Activities   The curricular practices provide for a balance of active and quiet activities including large-group (teacher-directed), small-group (teacher/child-interactive), and individual-choice (child-initiated) activities throughout the day.

On-site observation:
§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Classroom observation reflects appropriate balance of active and quiet activities as described in the standard.

§ **Standard not met:** The classroom observation does not reflect a balance of active and quiet activities as described in the standard.

4.4.2 Length of Group Times   The length of group times is appropriate for the age and development of the

children in the class. In mixed-age groupings, accommodations and flexibility meet the needs of each age group included in the class.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The length of group times is appropriate for the age and development of the children in the class. In mixed-age groupings, accommodations and flexibility meet the needs of each age group included in the class.

§   **Standard not met:** The length of group times is not appropriate for the age and development of the children in the class, and/or in mixed-age groupings, accommodations and flexibility do not meet the needs of each age group included in the class.

4.4.3   Use of Transition Activities   Staff uses transition activities to move the children from one activity to another throughout the day. Transitional tools may include songs, poems, or other signs that children recognize as signaling a change of activity.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Staff is observed using transition activities as suggested in the standard to move children from one activity to another throughout the day.

§   **Standard not met:** Transition activities as suggested in the standard are lacking, causing children to have difficulty moving from one activity to another.

4.4.4   Materials and Equipment   Ample developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are provided to support the learning objectives of the program's scope and sequence. Materials and equipment may include but are not limited to manipulatives, puzzles, building materials, musical instruments, creative art materials, sand and water tables, dolls, and other props that support the educational objectives. Where possible, the Jewish character of the program should be reflected in the materials and equipment, e.g. music, dramatic play props, art materials, and puzzles. Items should not be present that violate the philosophy and goals of the program.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** Ample developmentally appropriate materials and

equipment as suggested in the standard are provided to support the learning objectives of the program's scope and sequence. The Jewish character of the program is reflected in the selection of materials and equipment of the program.

§   **Standard met:** Ample developmentally appropriate materials and equipment as suggested in the standard are provided to support the learning objectives of the program's scope and sequence. The materials and equipment chosen are consistent with the Jewish character of the program.

§   **Standard substantially met:** The classrooms contain ample materials and equipment. However, children have limited access to those resources.

§   **Standard not met:** Materials and equipment as well as child access to them are limited.

4.4.5 Small Group and Large Group Instruction   Ample opportunities for children to interact independently, in small groups and in large groups, are provided in order to help meet social/emotional needs of children.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Ample opportunities for children to interact independently, in small groups and in large groups, are provided in order to help meet social/emotional needs of children.

§   **Standard not met:** Ample opportunities for children to interact independently, in small groups and in large groups, are not provided in order to help meet social/ emotional needs of children.

4.4.6 Involving the Children   Instructional staff initiates interaction with children who are not engaged in order to stimulate and expand the involvement of these children in the classroom offerings.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff initiate interaction with children who are not engaged in order to stimulate and expand the involvement of these children in the classroom offerings.

§   **Standard not met:** Instructional staff do not initiate interaction with children who are not engaged in order to stimulate and expand the involvement of these children in classroom offerings.

4.4.7 Healthy Nutrition in Curriculum   Curricular plans include ensuring children learn about healthy nutrition through experience and instruction, as appropriate to the program. Ideally, the nutritional instruction is provided in the context of Kashrus (a spiritually healthy diet) and the religious value of respecting the sacred gift of life through good health practices.

On-site observation:
§   On-site observation of curricular plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** Children gain nutrition awareness through experience and instruction, as appropriate to the program. Nutritional awareness is provided within a broader context of values, including Kashrus and the value of respecting the sacred gift of life through good health practices.

§   **Standard met:** Children gain nutrition awareness through experience and instruction, as appropriate to the program.

§   **Standard not met:** Nutrition awareness is absent from or insufficient in the curricular plans.

4.4.8 Good Health Practices   Children are made aware of good health practices. Methods may include the use of related daily routines by teachers, teacher example, visits to health facilities or from health care professionals, and other curricular presentations appropriate to the program's curriculum. Whenever possible, good health practices should be taught within the context of the Jewish values regarding preserving physical and emotional well-being.

Self study document:
§   Describe the methods used to make children aware of good health practices.
Rating:
§   **Exemplary compliance:** Children are exposed to good health practices through activities as suggested in the standard. Instruction regarding health practices is provided within the context of Jewish values regarding the importance of maintaining physical and emotional well-being.

§   **Standard met:** Children are exposed to good health practices through activities as suggested in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** Health practices are not addressed. Consequently, exposure to good practices is insufficient.

4.4.9 Disciplinary Policies and Practices   The program's discipline policy is clearly articulated in a written document. The policy employs interactive procedures such as redirection, reflective listening, adult role modeling, and positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment or demeaning practices are not used.

Self study document:

§ Include a description of the written discipline policy and techniques, indicating that the above procedures are employed, and the policy clearly states that corporal punishment and demeaning practices are not utilized.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The discipline policy is clearly articulated in a written document. The policy employs interactive procedures such as redirection, reflective listening, adult role modeling, and positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment and demeaning practices are not utilized.

§ **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: A clear written discipline policy is not articulated, corporal punishment and/or demeaning practices are utilized.

4.4.10 Forming Habits and Routines Staff prepares the environment and plans the flow of the day in such a way that encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative. For example, routines are clearly established so that children know when to clean and organize the room, when to put on clothing for outside activities, and/or when to transition to different activities. Jewish practices are incorporated into routines in a manner that supports the philosophy of the program.

On-site observation:

§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Exemplary compliance:** Staff prepares the environment and plan the flow of the day in such a way that encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative in such ways as those suggested by the standard. There is evidence of Jewish practices being incorporated into the daily routine.

§ **Standard met:** Staff prepare the environment and plan the flow of the day in such a way that encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative in such ways as those suggested in the standard.

§ **Standard not met:** Staff do not prepare the environment and plan the flow of the day in such a way that encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative in such ways as those suggested in the standard.

4.4.11 Hand Washing and Cleanliness Hand-washing techniques are appropriately taught as part of the curriculum. Specifically, hand-washing always precedes eating, and children regularly wash hands after bathroom use and outside activities. Ritual forms of hand-washing are practiced and taught. Hand-washing and cleanliness are taught within the context of Jewish practice and values.

On-site observation:

§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Exemplary compliance:** Hand-washing techniques are appropriately taught as part of the curriculum. Specifically, hand-washing always precedes eating, and children regularly wash hands after bathroom use and outside activities. Ritual forms of hand-washing are taught as well. Hand-washing and cleanliness are taught within the context of Jewish practices and values.

§ **Standard met:** Hand-washing techniques are appropriately taught as part of the curriculum. Specifically, hand-washing always precedes eating, and children regularly wash hands after bathroom use and outside activities.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Hand-washing is encouraged but not monitored to ensure every child has participated.

§ **Standard not met:** Hand-washing is not routinely followed and monitored.

4.4.12 Proper use of Media & Technology Media (especially videos) are used on a limited basis, and are used particularly for the reinforcement of a teaching topic.

On-site observation:

§ On-site classroom observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Media (especially videos) are used on a limited basis and particularly for the reinforcement of a teaching topic.

§ **Standard not met:** Media are used for entertainment and/or on a regular basis to occupy children during unstructured portions of the day.

4.5 Language & Literacy; Core Knowledge

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the whole child including social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and the development of character. This includes but is not limited to the multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences of each child.

RATIONALE:

Children begin developing language and literacy at birth. As young children express their feelings, ask questions, and share imaginative stories, they are communicating what they know about their world. Between the ages of three and five children are becoming more aware of print in their environment, however, oral language continues to be their primary means of communicating (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

STANDARDS

4.5.1 Appropriate Language Experience   Receptive and expressive language experiences appropriate to the development of children are provided throughout the day. Children in the preschool classes are provided with increased exposure to print and active experiences that support the development of listening and speaking concepts and skills. Children are exposed to vocabulary supporting Jewish experiences. Hebrew and/or Yiddish are incorporated into the language experiences of the children in accordance with the philosophy of the school.

On-site observation:
§   On-site observation of the classroom confirms the use of receptive and expressive language experience for   children.

Rating for infants/toddlers:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** Receptive and expressive language experiences are provided throughout the day through interactive language and eye contact by children with pictures, books, and objects through positive play experiences. There is specific evidence for Jewish language and literacy experiences are incorporated through use of Hebrew words, Jewish names Jewish phrases, and discussion of Jewishly themed pictures, books, and objects,

§   **Standard met:** Receptive and expressive language experiences are provided throughout the day through interactive language and eye contact by children with pictures, books, and objects through positive play experiences.

§   **Standard not met:** Receptive and expressive language experiences are not provided throughout the day through interactive language and eye contact by children with pictures, books, and objects through positive play experiences.

Rating for preschoolers:

§   **Exemplary Compliance:** Opportunities for using receptive and expressive language are provided throughout the day in a variety of ways, which may include writing, scribbling, copying, drawing, using puppets, singing, repeating finger plays, answering open-ended questions, playing, participating in show-and-tell, and writing stories. There is specific evidence of support for Jewish literacy in the program as well. Jewish literacy is enhanced through providing opportunities for discussing Jewish themes, introducing Jewish texts, books and objects, introducing Jewish vocabulary, and Jewish prayers, and introduction of Hebrew and/or Yiddish into the classroom as appropriate.

§   **Standard met:** Opportunities for using receptive and expressive language are provided throughout the day in a variety of ways, which my include writing, scribbling, copying, drawing, using puppets, singing, repeating fingerplays, answering open-ended questions, playing, participating in show-and-tell, and writing stories.

§   **Standard not met:** Opportunities for using receptive and expressive language are

limited to responding to teacher-directed activities. Children are provided with few opportunities to experience writing, scribbling, copying, drawing, using puppets, singing, repeating finger play, answering open-ended questions, playing, participating in show-and-tell, and writing stories.

4.5.2 Print-Rich Environment   Teachers provide daily interactions with labels, signs, and/or other forms of print, and read aloud to the children. They provide exposure to the sounds and names of the letters of the alphabet. In a Jewish pre-school, there will also be exposure to the Hebrew alphabet and primary Jewish texts. At minimum, each classroom posts the Alef-Bet and contains a Siddur.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of the classroom confirms the use of a print rich environment for children.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary Compliance:** The preschool classroom is a print-rich environment that may include books, pictures, labeled materials and equipment, and opportunities for name recognition. There is introduction as well to Hebrew and its role in Jewish life. Hebrew text is visible in the classroom, whether in the form of Alef-Bet Charts and manipulatives, or Jewish sacred books such as a Siddur or Chumash. Children see Hebrew print used in personal ways, e.g. on name tags.

§   **Standard met:** The preschool classroom is a print-rich environment that may include books, pictures, labeled materials and equipment, and opportunities for name recognition. Jewish literacy standards are enforced with the presence of an Alef-Bet chart, and at minimum, the presence of a Siddur in the classroom.

§   **Standard not met:** The preschool classroom is lacking a print-rich environment. There are limited opportunities for children to experience, books, pictures, labeled materials and equipment, and few opportunities for name recognition.

4.5.3 Vocabulary and Comprehensive Development   The instructional staff consciously works to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension. They verbally interact with the children to guide them in the acquisition of new and expanded vocabulary, in anticipating outcomes, and in comprehension of what they have heard. This may include (1) "What if?" type questions to help children anticipate outcomes, (2) recall of a story, and (3) other verbal interactions that help the children understand sequence (building memory), interaction between characters, etc.

While these techniques for enhancing comprehension are applicable across content, it should be recognized that vocabulary development is often key to the development of comprehension. As such, within the Jewish pre-school, attention should be given to ensuring that the children have the vocabulary to successfully engage with Jewish concepts.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans confirms that the instructional staff intentionally plans for building vocabulary and comprehensive skills for the use of analytical

questions with the children.

Rating:

§ **Exemplary Compliance:** The instructional staff use the above-listed approaches to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension. There is evidence that the Jewish instruction reflects this standard, by ensuring the development of relevant vocabulary and incorporating comprehension building methods to insure the children absorb content of Jewish instruction.

§ **Standard met:** The instructional staff uses the above-listed approaches to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension.

§ **Standard not met:** The instructional staff does not use the above-listed approaches to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension.

4.5.4 Phonemic Awareness "Children begin to develop a phonemic awareness through understanding that words are made up of a combination of sounds. Lesson plans reflect a variety of songs, finger plays, stories, and games that have rhyming words and alliteration to strengthen phonemic awareness." (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

Lesson plans include activities that encourage the awareness of phonemes, such as (1) listening for sounds in words; (2) beginning to isolate the syllables of a word using snapping, clapping, or rhythmic movement (e.g., cat, apple); (3) learning to differentiate between sounds that are the same and different (e.g., environmental sounds, animal sounds, phonemes); and (4) beginning to recognizing when words share phonemes (sounds) and repeat the common phoneme (e.g., /b/ as in Bob, ball, baby; /t/ as in Tom, kite, boat) (ODE 2002). Isolation of syllables and sounds can be taught in the context of Hebrew words, as well as in the context of words in the child's first language. There is some evidence that early bilingual experience aids children in understanding meta-language concepts such as the notion of a phoneme. As such, bilingual influences are encouraged.

On-site observation:

§ On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Children begin to develop a phonemic awareness through the methods described in the standard. Phonemic awareness includes Hebrew word as fitting given the philosophy of the program.

§ **Standard not met:** Children do not begin to develop a phonemic awareness through the methods described in the standard.

4.5.5 Alphabet Children are exposed to the form and function of the alphabet through opportunities such as tracing shapes, copying or writing letters, and practicing writing names. Programs will vary as to the timing of the introduction of the Hebrew alphabet. Some will introduce phonemic awareness in the context of the aleph Bet; some in the context of the alphabet; some programs will introduce both alphabets. Experience with the aleph bet is strongly encouraged.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Children are exposed to the form and function of the alphabet through opportunities described in the standard. The aleph bet is introduced in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the program.

§   **Standard not met:** Children are not exposed to the form and function of the alphabet through opportunities described in the standard.

4.6   Mathematical Awareness--Core Knowledge

RATIONALE:

Young children begin to develop the concept of number through interactions in their environment on a daily basis. They learn through observations and hands-on activities that objects may be manipulated, sorted, ordered, and quantified. They learn about relationships, when engaged in meaningful experiences involving skills that include collecting, counting, building, and comparing. "As they proceed through the daily routine, children experience a variety of 'math moments.'" (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

STANDARDS

4.6.1 Mathematical Activities   The instructional staff plan activities that expose children daily to math activities such as sorting and classifying concrete objects; recognizing and identify likenesses and differences; recognizing first, middle, and last; using opposite concepts such as long and short, in and out, up and down, over and under, and top and bottom; and using concepts of quantity, such as more than and less than. These concepts are integrated into the daily program, including the Jewish instruction.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The instructional staff plan activities that expose children daily to math activities as described in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** The instructional staff do not plan activities that expose children daily to math activities as described in the standard.

4.6.2 Mathematical Concepts   The instructional staff plan ample opportunities for children to be exposed to basic math concepts such as numbers and numeration through counting; placing objects in one-to-one correspondence; grouping objects by color, shape, or other characteristics; patterning; and recognizing numbers in their environment.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The instructional staff plan ample opportunities for children to be exposed to early math concepts such as numbers and numeration through the methods described in standard.

§   **Standard not met:** The instructional staff does not plan ample opportunities for children to be exposed to early math concepts such as numbers and numeration through the methods described in standard.

4.7   Science--Core Knowledge

RATIONALE

Preschool children learn about the natural world, including the physical properties of things around them, as they interact with objects, people, and other living things. Children whose early lives are rich in sensory experiences and accompanying verbal labels tend to have greater facility for building up the more complex labels and patterns required for thought and problem solving in later life. Knowledge and appreciation of these experiences is placed within the context of Jewish values, i.e. wonder and appreciation of G-d's world and the mandate to interact with the world safely and responsibly.

STANDARDS

4.7.1   Sensory-Rich Environment   The preschool classroom is a sensory-rich environment and it includes numerous objects and organisms with which the students can interact. Opportunities are provided throughout the day for children to use their senses for observing and learning about objects, events, and organisms. Instructional staff helps children to perform simple investigations and to describe their observations.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating for preschoolers:

§   **Standard met:** The preschool classroom is a sensory-rich environment, and it includes numerous objects and organisms with which the students can interact. Opportunities are provided throughout the day for children to use their senses for observing and learning about objects, events, and organisms. Instructional staff helps children to perform simple investigations and to describe their observations.

§   **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: The preschool classroom is not a sensory-rich environment; it does not include numerous objects and organisms with which the students can interact; opportunities are not provided throughout the day

for children to use their senses for observing and learning about objects, events, and organisms; and instructional staff do not help children to perform simple investigations and to describe their observations.

4.8 Social Studies--Core Knowledge

RATIONALE

Preschool children develop an awareness of self as a growing individual. They learn about their own needs, interests, and abilities. They begin to learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others, including their peers, their family members, and their community. They view themselves as part of the Jewish community, and are familiar with Jewish culture and practices.

STANDARDS

4.8.1 Advancement of Social Skills   Instructional staff promotes the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating for preschoolers:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** Instructional staff promotes the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others. There is evidence that students identify themselves as part of the Jewish community and are familiar with Jewish practices.

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff promotes the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.

§   **Standard not met:** Instructional staff does not promote the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.

4.8.2 Promotion of Communication and Interaction   Instructional staff foster positive communication and interaction as preschoolers actively engage in a variety of such learning experiences as taking turns, playing simple small-group games, and performing daily routines.

On-site Observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating for preschoolers:

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff foster positive communication and interaction as preschoolers actively engage in a variety of such learning experiences as those described in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** Instructional staff does not foster positive communication and interaction as preschoolers actively engage in a variety of such learning experiences as those described in the standard.

4.8.3 Cultural and Racial Awareness   Instructional staff provide opportunities and activities that expose children to cultural diversity, including Jewish cultural diversity. Especially important is sensitizing children to the cultural diversity that exists within their own community, and particularly, within the school community.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff provide opportunities and activities that expose children to cultural diversity.

§   **Standard not met:** Instructional staff provide few or no opportunities and/or activities that expose children to cultural diversity.

4.9   Fine Arts--Core Knowledge

4.9.1   Musical Experiences   The curriculum daily provides age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as singing, listening, rhythmic movements, and playing rhythm instruments. Music is used to enrich Jewish experiences; e. g. chanting or singing of blessings of prayers.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplarily compliance:** The curriculum daily provides age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences as described in the standard. Music is used to enhance Jewish instruction.

§   **Standard met**: the curriculum daily provides age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences as described in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** The curriculum does not daily provide age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences as described in the standard.

4.9.2 Creative Arts Experiences   The curriculum daily provides opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as painting, gluing items together to create art, cutting for design purposes, combining mediums, molding with clay, and creating one's own stories, plays, and other dramatic activities. Art is used to enrich the Jewish curriculum.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation of lesson plans verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** The curriculum daily provides opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences as described in the standard. There is clear evidence that art is used to enrich the Jewish curriculum.

§   **Standard met:** The curriculum daily provides opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences as described in the standard.

§   **Standard not met:** The curriculum does not daily provide opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences.

4.10   Program and Child Assessment

4.10.1 Curriculum Involvement and Training   Instructional staff is trained in the use and deliverance of the curriculum. Opportunities for instructional staff to share their suggestions and ideas regarding the curriculum are provided annually. Suggestions and/or training should include explicit reference to the Jewish curriculum of the school.

Self study document:

§   Provide a description of curriculum training and the procedure used to allow instructional staff to provide input regarding the curriculum. Explicit reference should be made to ways in which staff is trained in allowed to provide input in the Jewish curriculum of the school.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff is trained in the use and presentation of the curriculum, and opportunities for instructional staff to share their input regarding the curriculum are provided annually. Jewish curriculum is represented in this process.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Instructional staff is trained in the use and presentation of the curriculum. However, opportunities for the staff to share their input

regarding the curriculum are not provided annually.

> **§** **Standard not met:** Instructional staff is not trained in the use and presentation of the curriculum, and opportunities for instructional staff to share their input regarding the curriculum is not provided annually.

4.10.2 Continuous Student Assessment   Ongoing assessment of children's progress takes place and is used to plan activities for individual children and for groups of children. Children's progress is reported with supporting documentation, and the assessment methods are consistent with the program's philosophy and methodology.

Self study document:

> **§** Describe the assessment of children's progress, including how often it takes place, whether it contains supporting documentation, how it affects individual and group activities, and whether the methods used are consistent with the program's philosophy and methodology.

> ## Rating:
> **§** **Standard met:** Ongoing assessment of children's progress takes place, is used to plan activities for individual children and groups of children, is reported with supporting documentation, and is consistent with the program's philosophy and methodology.

> **§** **Standard substantially met:** Ongoing assessment of children's progress takes place, but one or more of the following are true: The assessment is not used to plan activities for individual children and groups of children, it is not reported with supporting documentation, and it is not consistent with the program's philosophy and methodology.

> **§** **Standard not met:** Ongoing assessment of children's progress does not take place.

4.10.3 Variety of Assessment Techniques   The program recognizes that instructional improvement, as evidenced by the progress of children, requires the use of multiple tools for assessment. Such assessment should include such tools of evidence as the following:

> **§** Samples of children's concrete learning explorations (writing and art projects) and sketches of constructions with blocks or sand

> **§** Photographs, audio recordings, and videos of children engaged in play while alone and while in groups in a variety of situations and of children otherwise engaged in interactions with others

> **§** Written observations such as time and event samplings of children's interactions, individual and group activities, and language while alone and in groups

> **§** A checklist of developmental levels and behaviors, on which to mark children's progress and increasing capacities across time

§   Observations that address all areas of children's development—that is, the eight intelligences, not just cognitive development. Inter/intrapersonal intelligences and spiritual/philosophical intelligence should be given particular attention within the Jewish program.

§   Results of screenings and formal assessments

§   Individual portfolios that contain a wide array of these records and other documentation and that aid teachers in using flexibility to adapt lesson plans

§   Written assessment tools shared with parents

Self study document:

§   Provide evidence of assessing children by using more than one tool. Discuss how the use of multiple tools has led to instructional improvement and thus to progress of children.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Instructional staff use a variety of such assessment tools as those described in the standard, and assessment has led to instructional improvement and thus to the progress of the children.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Instructional staff use a variety of such assessment tools as those described in the standard, but assessment has not led to instructional improvement or to the progress of the children.

§   **Standard not met:** Instructional staff do not assess the progress of children.

4.10.4 Training for Assessment   The director ensures instructional staff either are qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations. Results of observations are used for curriculum planning after identification of each child's stage of development, and parent/guardian conferences.

Self study document:

§   Provide documentation that instructional staff either are qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations. Describe how observations are used for curriculum planning, identification of each child's stage of development, and parent/guardian conferences.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** (1) A specific person is identified and trained to assist instructional staff in observing children and documenting these observations, (2) instructional staff are using observation effectively for teaching individual children, and

(3) these observations are discussed in parent/guardian conferences.

§ Standard met: (1) Instructional staff are qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations, (2) instructional staff are using observation effectively for teaching individual children, and (3) these observations are discussed in parent/ guardian conferences.

§ Standard substantially met: Instructional staff observe children and record these observations but are not qualified to do so and do not have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations. However, these observations are used to teach individual children.

§ Standard not met: Observation of children and the curriculum are not correlated.

4.10.5 Age Appropriate Assessment Tools An age-appropriate, research-based assessment tool is used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

Self study document:

§ Describe the procedure of assessment, including the methods used and the determination of levels and growth of children.
Rating:
§ Exemplary compliance: Several age-appropriate, research-based assessment tools are used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

§ Standard met: An age-appropriate, research based assessment tool is used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

§ Standard not met: An age-appropriate, research based assessment tool is not used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

4.10.6 Observations of Child Development Observations of children by staff address all areas of children's development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences and character development.

Self study document:

§ Describe the staff's child observations that focus on all areas of children's development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, various learning styles, and learning preferences.
Rating:
§ Standard met: Staff use child observations that focus on all areas of children's development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

§ Standard substantially met: Staff use child observations that focus on at least one

of the following: multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

§ **Standard not met:** Staff use child observations that do not address any of the following: multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

4.10.7 **Teaching Toward Individual needs** Observations of children by staff address the various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and learning preferences. Staff then use these observations to incorporate classroom activities that address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children in their care.

Self study document:

§ Provide lesson plans that include activities that (1) address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children and (2) result from the application of classroom observations of multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Classroom activities that address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children include those resulting from the application of classroom observations of multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Classroom activities include those resulting from the application of classroom observations of at least one of the following: multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

§ **Standard not met:** Classroom activities do not include those resulting from the application of classroom observations of at least one of the following: multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences.

Section 5

Nutrition and Food Services

Section 5

5.0 Nutrition and Food Services

RATIONALE:

One of the basic responsibilities of every parent and caregiver is to provide nourishing food that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children (Caring for Our Children 2002).

Early food and eating experiences are the foundation for the formation of attitudes about food and eating behavior and consequently of food habits. Sound food habits build on eating and enjoying a variety of healthful foods. Including culturally acceptable family foods is a dietary goal for feeding infants and young children.

Current research documents that a balanced diet combined with regular and routine age-appropriate physical activity can reduce the risks of chronic diseases later in life that are related to diet (U.S. Dept of Agriculture 2000).

In a Jewish program, there must be recognition of the importance of Kashrus as the standard in a Jewish setting, as well as provision made for the as the ethical and religious values that are imparted during meal-times.

STANDARDS:

5.1 Food Preparation

5.1.1 Response to Civil Authorities' Standards: If food is prepared on the premises, the program must be in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities for food storage, preparation, and service. Food may be prepared at an approved facility and transported to the program in approved containers and at approved temperatures.

Self study document:
§ Describe where, how, and by whom food is prepared and served to the children.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** The program meets all requirements governing the storage, preparation, and serving of food on the premises.

§   **Standard not met:** The program does not meet all requirements governing the storage, preparation, and serving of food on the premises.

5.1.2 Nutritional Guidelines: The meals and/or snacks provided for the children meet the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities that are age appropriate for the children, as suggested by the Child Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Self study document:
§   Include two months of menus showing the appropriate food groups and quantities offered to each age group participating in the program.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** The program meets all requirements governing the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities offered to children in the program.

§   **Standard not met:** The program does not meet all requirements governing the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities offered to children in the program.

§   **Standard not applicable:** Parents/guardians provide all meals and snacks for children on an individual basis.

5.1.3 Sanitary Conditions: Kitchen equipment is monitored by civil authorities, where applicable, to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions.

Self study document:
§   Describe how the kitchen equipment is monitored to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions and how often this monitoring is performed. Include any food service inspection reports if applicable.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** Kitchen equipment is monitored for healthy and sanitary conditions on a regular schedule, and inspection reports are included.

§   **Standard not met:** Kitchen equipment is not monitored for healthy and sanitary conditions.

§   **Standard not applicable:** Kitchen facilities are not used by the program.

5.1.4 Kashrus Policy: Every Jewish program should have a policy, cleared with the school's chosen rabbinic authority, regarding the Kashrus standards of the school. The policy must include standards for foods prepared on premises, as well as policy regarding foods brought by children from home for individual consumption, sharing of foods, and standards for foods brought into the classroom for parties, class events, instructional activities, or the like. The policy should include as applicable whether the facility can accommodate both meat

and dairy foods, either, or neither, acceptable standards for kashrus supervision of foods entering the facility, acceptable procedures for food serving and preparation, and procedure to be followed in the event the policies are violated.

Self study document:

§ Include copy of kashrus procedure, and name of rabbinic authority with whom it has been cleared.

Rating:

§ **Standard met**: A comprehensive *kashrus* policy is included, as well as the name of the rabbinic authority with whom it was cleared.

§ **Standard partially met:** a *kashrus* policy is included, but it has not been cleared with a rabbinic authority, or is incomplete.

§ **Standard not met:** no *kashrus* policy is in place.

5.2 Parent/Guardian Information

5.2.1 Availability of Menus: Parents/guardians have access to written menus that meet all nutritional guidelines established by civil authorities. Written menus of all snacks and meals provided by the program are also posted in such a way that they are easily seen by parents/guardians. At least two food groups are included for each snack (programs are encouraged to ensure one of these items is a protein source), and four food groups are included for each meal.

Self study document:
§ Include two months of snack/meal menus, which are provided to parents/guardians.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Parents/guardians are given-information regarding children's menus that are offered by the program, including at least two food groups for each snack and four food groups for each meal.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Snacks and/or meals include the appropriate number of food groups, but parents/guardians are not provided with a menu.

§ **Standard not met:** Snacks and/or meals do not include the appropriate number of food groups.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Food from Home: Suggestions for food choices that meet nutritional requirements are made available to the parents/guardians who send meals and/or snacks with their own children. Parents/ guardians are encouraged to include at least two food groups, including one protein source, for each snack and four food groups for each meal. In addition, the parents are informed of the Kashrus policy regarding food brought from home.

Self study document:

§ Include copies of suggestions given to parents/guardians who send meals and/or snacks to children.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Suggestions for nutritional choices are given to parents/guardians who send meals and/or snacks to children, and the suggestions include an appropriate number of food group items. Parents are also informed of the Kashrus policy regarding food brought from home.

§ **Standard not met:** Parents/guardians do not receive appropriate suggestions and information regarding the meals and snacks they send to the children in their care.

5.2.3 Food Storage Food brought from home is stored appropriately

Self study document:

§ Describe what foods may be brought from home, how they are stored, and whether they are refrigerated when appropriate.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Food items are appropriately stored when brought from home.

§ **Standard not met:** Food items may be brought from home but are not monitored for refrigeration needs, and/or refrigeration is not available for perishable foods.

§ **Standard not applicable:** Food items are not brought from home.

5.3 Social Interaction

5.3.1 Standards for Mealtime: Mealtime is to be cultivated as a pleasant social time. Staff members sit with children and encourage healthy social interaction, appropriate table manners, and good eating habits.

Self study document:

§ Include a description of snack/mealtimes for the children while they are under the supervision of the adults in the program.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Children engage in pleasant social interaction while eating. Staff sits with the children, role modeling appropriate table manners and good eating habits.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Children engage in pleasant social interaction while eating. Staff encourages appropriate table manners and good eating habits but do not sit with the children.

§ **Standard not met:** Staff does not interact with the children during snack/mealtimes.

5.3.2 Size of Furniture: Tables and chairs used for snack/mealtimes are appropriate for the sizes of the

children.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Observations are made that children are provided size-appropriate furniture during snack/mealtimes that allows their feet to touch the floor.

§   **Standard not met:** Tables and chairs are not appropriate for the sizes of the children using them for snack/meal times.

5.3.3 Children's Responsibilities: The children are encouraged to serve themselves and assist with cleanup, within age-appropriate levels of ability.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Staff are observed providing opportunities for children to set the table, serve themselves, and assist with cleanup at an age-appropriate level.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Staff provides one or two of the following opportunities for children: setting the table, serving themselves, or assisting with cleanup at an age-appropriate level.

§   **Standard not met:** Staff does not allow children to set the table, serve themselves, or assist with cleanup.

5.3.4 Inculcation of Jewish Values Governing Meal-time: Many Jewish values and practices center around meals: including the ritual washing of hands before eating bread, the recitation of blessings before and after eating, table manners and respect for food,. In addition, Shabbat and holidays often have particular customs or laws governing what food is eaten or how. In a Jewish program, the values, customs, and rules governing food will be incorporated in the program as age-appropriate.

On site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether this standard is met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:**   There is a procedure in place for hand-washing, and recitation of blessings before and after eating as age-appropriate and as applicable in light of the program philosophy. In addition, there is evidence that Jewish values governing meal-time are modeled to the children, and discussed as appropriate.

§   **Standard not met:** There is no procedure in place for hand-washing or recitation of blessings before and after eating (as age-appropriate and applicable in light of the program philosophy). Neither is there other evidence of introduction of Jewish values governing meal-time.

5.4 Food for Infants and Toddlers

5.4.1   Feeding Infants: Infants are held when bottle-fed and not placed with bottles into cribs at any time.

Self study document:
§   Provide a copy of staff procedures for feeding infants.
Rating:
§   **Standard met:** Infants are held when bottle fed and are not placed with bottles into cribs at any time.

§   **Standard not met:** Staff allow infants to be placed with bottles into cribs.

§   **Standard not applicable:** Infants are not enrolled in the program.

5.4.2 Recording of Food Intake and Times: Feeding times and amount of food consumed are recorded and made available to parents/guardians of infants and toddlers on a daily basis.

Self study document:
§   Include a copy of the program's form for documentation of feeding information. Discuss how parents/guardians are provided with this information.
Rating:
§   **Standard met:** Staff record amounts of food/formula consumed by infants and toddlers and make the information available to parents/guardians daily.

§   **Standard not met:** Staff do not record feeding times for infants and toddlers.

Section 6

Physical Environment

Section 6

6.0 Physical Environment

RATIONALE:

> Programs should provide equipment, materials, and space to facilitate the children's success in learning, by encouraging teachers to effectively organize the classroom and playground environments in a way that not only promotes the achievement of each child's educational goals but also increases the number of opportunities for achieving these goals during both child- and teacher-initiated activities (Bowman, et al. 2001).
>
> The Jewish ambience and atmosphere of the facility also creates the conditions that foster the child's integration of Jewish identity and values. As such, Merkos expects the physical setting to reflect the Jewish character of the program.

STANDARDS:

6.1 Lighting and Ventilation

The physical environment of the program meets all pertinent State health requirements; it provides sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature.

On-site observation:
§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** The program provides sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature for the children.

§   **Standard not met:** The program does not maintain sufficient lighting, good ventilation, or a comfortable temperature for the children; and/or maintenance is needed.

6.2 Classrooms

6.2.1 Suitable for Class Size: Classrooms are suitable for the age and activities of the children in the program, and meet all State heath requirements. General standards are: Floor space have minimum of thirty-five square feet of usable space per child, outdoor areas include seventy five square feet per child

Self study document:
§   Provide a diagram of the early education facility and note on the diagram the square footage of all classrooms and the number of children in the classroom at any one time, and children's play spaces.
Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The program meets all local and state space requirements governing children's classrooms and indoor play spaces.

§ **Standard not met:** The program does not meet the minimum space requirements governing children's classrooms and/or play spaces.

6.2.2 Classroom Maintenance: Classrooms are clean and well maintained.

On-site observation:
§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** The classrooms are clean and in good repair and well maintained.

§ **Standard substantially met:** The classrooms show signs of needing some attention. For example, the walls are in need of fresh paint, the carpets are dirty and show obvious wear and tear, the furniture is in need of repair, and/or other such conditions exist.

§ **Standard not met:** The classrooms show numerous signs of neglect and/or are in disrepair.

6.2.3 Classroom Arrangement of Furnishings: The physical environment of the classroom is arranged not only to stimulate learning by accommodating large and small groups of children but also to encourage exploration and experimentation. The following are examples:

Infants have a protected space for crawling and playing away from more mobile babies. Mirrors, pull-up bars, and/or other interactive items are placed on the walls at babies' eye level.

On-site observation:
§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Infants have a protected space for crawling and playing. Interactive items are at babies' eye level.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Infants have a protective place for crawling and playing, or interactive items are at babies' eye level. However, both conditions do not exist.

§ **Standard not met:** Infants do not have a protective place for crawling and playing, nor are there interactive items available for babies at their eye level.

§ **Standard not applicable:** Infants are not enrolled in the program.

6.2.4 Age Appropriate Furniture and Equipment: The environment designed for toddlers and two-year-olds facilitates optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. Shelving and storage units provide an organized flow to the room and thereby invite children to interact with materials and equipment.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** The environment is designed for toddlers and two-year-olds, and it facilitates numerous optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. The organization of the classroom invites the children's focused and purposeful interaction with a wide variety of materials and equipment.

§   **Standard met:** The environment is designed for toddlers and two-year-olds, and it facilitates optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. Shelving and storage units provide an organized flow to the room and thereby invite the children to interact with sufficient materials and equipment.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Sufficient equipment is available, but the design of the room limits the opportunities for optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. Shelving and storage units provide an organized flow to the room and thereby invite the children to interact with materials.

§   **Standard not met:** Inadequate equipment is available to support learning experiences. The design of the room does not allow for optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. The arrangement of the shelving and storage units does not provide an organized flow to the room and thus does not invite the children to interact with materials.

6.2.5 Children's Personal Storage Space: Children are provided with individual spaces, such as cubbies, in which they can store their work and personal belongings.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Children are provided with individual storage spaces.

§   **Standard not met:** Children are not provided with individual storage spaces.

6.2.6 Appropriate Classroom Flooring: The physical environment includes not only appropriate furnishings, such as tables and chairs, that allow children's feet to touch the floor but also appropriate room flooring and soft areas that are comforting to children.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Children are provided with such furnishings as age-appropriate tables and chairs as well as soft areas that are comforting to children.

§   **Standard not met:** Either children are not provided with age-appropriate tables and chairs, or they are not provided with soft areas that are comforting to children.

6.2.7 Drinking Water: Drinking water is adequately provided to the children as regulated by civil authorities.

Self study document:

§   Describe the location of drinking water in relation to the children in the program.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance**: Drinking fountains are accessible to children in each classroom, and drinking water is available to the children on the playground.

§   **Standard met:** Drinking water is accessible to children indoors and on the playground.

§   **Standard not met:** Drinking water is not accessible to children indoors and/or on the playground.

6.3 Restroom Facilities

6.3.1 Accessible & Appropriate Sinks and Toilets: Sinks and toilets are readily accessible to children. The number of sinks and toilets (child-sized ones are recommended) must be in compliance with civil authorities and adequate for the number of children in attendance.

Self study document:

§   Describe the number and location of sinks and toilets in relation to the number of children in the program.

Rating:

§   **Exemplary compliance:** A minimum of one sink and one flush toilet is available for ten or fewer toddlers and preschoolers as recommended by the National Health and Safety Performance Standards.

§   **Standard met:** Child-sized toilets are being used, restrooms are easily accessible to the children, and the facilities are in compliance with the regulations of civil authorities.

§   **Standard substantially met:** The number of sinks and/or toilets is adequate for the number of children enrolled in the program, but adult-sized toilets are being used for toddlers and preschool-age children, are accessible to the children, and have secured platforms or steps to ensure child safety.

§ **Standard not met:** Children's restrooms are accessible, but the number of sinks and/or toilets is inadequate for the number of children enrolled in the program.

6.3.2 Location and Adequacy of Lavatories: Sinks are located in the area near the toilets, with soap and paper towels accessible to the children.

On-site observation:

§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Sinks are located near toilets, and soap and paper towels are accessible to the children.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Sinks are located near toilets. However, children are not able to access soap and paper towels without assistance.

§ **Standard not met:** Sinks are not located near toilets.

6.4 Diapering of Infants and Toddlers

The diapering area is in good repair and is sanitized after each use, and soiled diapers are stored in a sealed container. Gloves as well as running water and soap for hand washing are accessible and utilized by the staff during diapering.

On-site observation:

§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The diapering area contains gloves, running water, and soap, which are utilized by the staff during diapering; is in good repair; and is sanitized after each use. Soiled diapers are stored in a sealed container.

§ **Standard not met:** At least one of the following is true: The diapering area is not sanitized after each use; diapers are not stored in a sealed container; and gloves, running water, and soap for hand washing are not accessible and utilized by the staff during diapering.

§ **Standard not applicable:** Infants and toddlers in diapers are not enrolled in the program.

6.5 Staff Space

6.5.1 Director's Office: The facilities include appropriate office space for the director of the program.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The director has an office that is of sufficient size and location to effectively administrate the early education program.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Space is designated for the director's use. However, it is not of sufficient size or location for effective administration of the program, including meeting with parents or staff.

§   **Standard not met:** An office is not provided for the director or one is included inside a classroom.

6.5.2 Staff Meeting Room: The facilities include an appropriate area for staff meetings and breaks.

Self study document:

§   Describe the location of staff meetings and of the area designated for staff breaks, and address the sufficiency of this space.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** An area is provided for staff meetings, and an area for staff breaks is provided.

§   **Standard not met:** No area is provided for staff meetings and/or for staff breaks.

6.5.3 Storage Space: The facilities provide suitable storage space.

Self study document:

§   Describe the areas designated for storage and include how adequate and accessible the provided storage and shelving are.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** A sufficient amount of storage and shelving is available for the program's use.

§   **Standard not met:** There is an insufficient amount of storage and shelving available for the program's use.

6.6 Outdoor Facilities

6.6.1 Adequate Outdoor Space: To accommodate the children's various play activities, the outdoor physical

environment includes seventy-five square feet per child on the playground at any given time and provides adequately for safety concerns.

Self study document:

§   Provide a diagram of the outdoor play area and include the square footage, the maximum number of children playing there at any given time, and the quotient resulting from dividing the square footage by the maximum number of children.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The outdoor play area meets the minimum standard of that established by local and state authorities or seventy-five square feet per child playing on the playground at any given time.

§   **Standard not met:** The outdoor play area does not meet the minimum standard of seventy-five square feet per child playing on the playground at any given time.

6.6.2 Playground Equipment: Playground equipment is varied and sufficient for the number of children on the playground at the same time. The playground is designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children.

Self study document:

§   On the diagram of the outdoor play area, include what type of playground equipment is provided for children and where it is located. Describe how the playground's design and equipment allow for optimal learning experiences for children.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Such items as climbing apparatus, swings, slides, riding toys, equipment for sand and water play, an outside easel, and a playhouse are provided for children's use in the outdoor play area. The playground is designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children.

§   **Standard not met:** The outdoor equipment is varied but not sufficient for the number of children present, or it is sufficient for the number of children but not varied in terms of type of equipment. The playground is not designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children.

6.6.3 Playground Supervision: Children are supervised at all times, and the child-adult ratio is maintained while the children are on the playground.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Child-adult ratios remain the same when children are in the outdoor play area.

§   **Standard not met**: Child-adult ratios do not remain the same when children are in

the outdoor play area.

6.6.4 Playground Safety, Security, and Protection: The program provides adequate protection for the play area, including fencing and a balance of sun and shade.

Self study document:
§   On a diagram of the outdoor play area, include indications of where fencing has been placed and where sunny and shaded areas are located.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** The outdoor play area is fenced and provides a balance of sun and shade.

§   **Standard not met:** The outdoor play area is not fenced and/or does not provide a balance of sun and shade.

6.6.5 Playground Surfaces: Wood chips, sand, and other cushioning materials of recommended depths are used under equipment such as swings and climbing apparatus, as recommended by civil authorities or national playground safety standards.

Self study document:
§   Include a description of the playground coverings required in fall zones, and note who is responsible for maintaining the upkeep of the cushioning materials.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** All fall zones are appropriately covered, and there is a person responsible for maintaining the upkeep of the cushioning materials.

§   **Standard not met:** Fall zones are not covered with appropriate types of material, and/or the depths of the material are substantially lower than the recommended depths.

6.6.6 Inspections and Repairs: Through routine inspections and resulting timely repairs, the outdoor play area is well maintained to prevent children from being injured by broken equipment, sharp edges, and rusty parts.

Self study document:
§   Describe the procedure used to maintain safe equipment on the playground, and note how concerns are reported, logged, and addressed.

Rating:

§—**Standard met:** The outdoor play area and equipment are routinely inspected for maintenance needs, and procedures are in place for reporting concerns and for timely repair.

§   **Standard not met:** A procedure is in place for reporting concerns, but concerns are not consistently addressed to ensure the safety of the children.

6.6.7 Substitute and Adequate Space Indoors for Large Group Play ;   When inclement weather prevents children from playing outdoors, alternative activities are planned to ensure large-motor exercise and to foster large-motor development.

Self study document:

§   Describe what alternative activities are provided to children in the program when inclement weather prevents outdoor play.

Rating:

§   <u>**Exemplary compliance:**</u> During inclement weather, children have the opportunity to participate in large-motor activities in an indoor play area, other than their regular classroom, with varied equipment and appropriate floor cushioning.

§   <u>**Standard met:**</u> Children have the opportunity to participate in large-motor activities during inclement weather.

§   <u>**Standard not met:**</u> No alternative large-motor activities are provided for the children during inclement weather.

6.6.8 Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds ;   There is a process in place that ensures proper maintenance of the buildings, grounds, and equipment.

Self study document:

§   Describe the process that ensures proper maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment.

Rating:

§   <u>**Standard met:**</u> A written description of the maintenance process for the facility confirms a safe and healthy environment for the children and is included in the self study.

§   <u>**Standard substantially met:**</u> There is a maintenance process, but the process is not followed.

§   <u>**Standard not met:**</u> The maintenance of the facility is insufficient and may be unsafe and/or unhealthy.

6.7 Ambience ; The building should reflect the Jewish nature of the program. At minimum, there should be *mezuzot* on each door, In accordance with the philosophy of the school, Jewish artwork or design elements may also be present.

Rating:

§   <u>**Exemplary compliance:**</u> Each door has a mezuzah and the design of the school reflects its Jewish nature.

§   **Standard met:** *Mezuzot* are present

§——**Standard not met:** *Mezuzot* are not present

Section 7

Health and Safety

Section 7

7.0 Health and Safety

RATIONALE:

The early education program has a responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of each child in attendance. The staff should have continuing and required training in emergency first aid and in special medical needs in order to be alert and prepared for emergencies. Staff members need to be safety conscious with a view toward prevention (Caring for Our Children 2002).

STANDARDS

7.1 Documentation of Inspections: The program is inspected by city/state agencies as applicable for licensing or exemption under state or federal law (i.e., fire department, health department, food services, etc.). Inspection documentations are on file. If the program is exempt from licensing, voluntary inspection has been sought, and recommendations for improvement have been followed.

Self study document:
§ Provide a copy of the program's license to operate where applicable.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** For licensing/compliance purposes, documentation of inspections is on file for each required area (e.g., fire marshal's report).

§ **Standard not met:** The program provides inadequate documentation of compliance with any areas in which it is required to be inspected.

7.2 Children's Health Records: Up-to-date, complete, and confidential health records for each child enrolled in the program are maintained in a safe and secure area and are available to authorized personnel. These files may include such information as the child's life history, developmental milestones, screening or assessment results, typical behaviors, and interests. Children in attendance are in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities regarding immunizations, physical examinations, and communicable diseases.

Self study document:
§ Include copies of any documents kept in a child's file regarding the health and immunization of children as required by civil authorities.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** All children have a file documenting that their health records and immunizations are up to date.

§ **Standard not met:** Children's files indicate that children whose health records and immunizations are not up to date are attending the program.

7.3 Emergency, Health, and Security Information: Current emergency information is maintained for each child enrolled in the program, including expected attendance, parent/guardian contact information, people

authorized to take the child off the premises, allergies, and other important health information.

On-site observation:
§ On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Children's files include all the current emergency information described above.

§ **Standard not met:** Children's files do not contain all the current emergency information described above.

7.4 Policies Regarding Illnesses: A written policy regarding the attendance of children who are ill, have been diagnosed with a contagious disease, or have been found to have a communicable condition has been developed and made available to parents/guardians. An isolation area is made available for ill or contagious children while they wait for someone to take them home.

Self study document:
§ Provide a copy of the ill-child policy given to parents/guardians. Describe how children are cared for when they are ill and waiting to be taken home.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Parents/guardians are provided with a policy that includes when ill children are removed and are permitted to return to the program. An isolation area is made available for ill or contagious children while they wait to be taken home.

§ **Standard not met:** A policy regarding ill children has not been provided to parents/guardians, and/or an isolation area for ill or contagious children is not provided.

7.5 Special Health Needs of Children: Staff are alerted to special health conditions of children and are equipped, when applicable, to handle such concerns.

Self study document:
§ Describe how staff are equipped to handle children who have special medical conditions (e.g., asthma or severe allergies).
Rating:
§ Standard met: Information about the special health conditions of children is provided in detail to the staff. When applicable, training is provided on such topics as medicines and the handling of equipment.

§ Standard not met: Little or no information is provided to the staff regarding the special health conditions of children. Appropriate training has not been provided on topics such as medicine and the handling of equipment.

7.6 Administering and Storing of Medicines: A written policy that complies with the requirements of civil authorities for administering and storing medications has been developed and made available to the parents/guardians of the children in the program.

Self study document:

§   Provide a copy of the policy pertaining to administering and storing medications on the program's premises and a copy of the information made available to parents/guardians pertaining to medication.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Included in the self study are a copy of an appropriate policy pertaining to administering and storing medications on the program's premises and a copy of the information made available to parents/guardians pertaining to medication.

§   **Standard not met:** A copy of an appropriate policy pertaining to administering and storing medications on the program's premises is not included in the self study, and/or a copy of the information made available to parents/guardians pertaining to medication is not included in the self study.

7.7 Medical Log: A detailed medical log is maintained that includes a record of all medications given to children, the time the medication was given, and the person administering the medication.

Self study document:

§   Provide a copy of the program's medical log for the past two months.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** The medical log as described above is complete.

§ **Standard not met:** The medical log as described above is incomplete.

7.8 Blood-borne Pathogens: The program has developed policies and procedures to protect the staff and children from blood-borne pathogens by developing a blood-borne exposure control plan and by providing annual in-service to the staff regarding protective procedures. As a result, the staff use "universal precautions" when encountering children's body fluids.

Self study document:

§   Describe the program's blood-borne exposure control plan, the education of the staff regarding blood-borne pathogens, and the use of universal precautions.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** A blood-borne exposure control plan is in place, and annual training is provided to the staff regarding blood-borne pathogens and the use of universal precautions.

§ **Standard substantially met:** The staff are encouraged to use universal precautions when handling body fluids. However, a blood-borne exposure control plan is not in place, and/or annual training is not provided to the staff regarding blood-borne pathogens and the use of universal precautions.

§ **Standard not met:** Policies and procedures that include universal precautions are not followed.

7.9 Cleanliness Requirements: Children and adults wash their hands after toileting, before eating or handling food, and as otherwise necessary to prevent the spread of disease.

Self study document:
§ Describe the program's hand-washing policy and how the policy is implemented throughout the facilities.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** A hand-washing policy is in place, and it includes not only training for the children and staff but also monitoring for compliance.

§ **Standard not met:** An official hand-washing policy that includes monitoring is not in place.

7.10 Washing of Infant and Toddler Bedding: Infant and toddler bedding is washed at a minimum of twice per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings. Bedding used by preschoolers is washed a minimum of once per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings.

Self study document:
§ Describe when and how laundry is provided for the program.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Soiled bedding and other items are laundered and used as suggested above.

§ **Standard not met:** Bedding is used by more than one child between washings and/or is not washed as suggested above.

7.11 Health Screenings: The program makes visual, auditory, speech, language development, physical development, cognitive development, and other health screening assessments when available to the children, having the consent of their parent or guardian, in the program at least annually.

Self study document:
§ Describe how the program makes visual, auditory, speech, and other health and

developmental screenings available to the children at least annually.

Rating:

§   Standard met: The program makes developmental and health screening as described above available to the children at least annually.

§   Standard not met: The program does not make developmental and health screening as described above available to the children at least annually.

7.12   Safety

7.12.1   Supervision of Arrivals and Departures   Safe arrival and departure procedures have been developed that ensure all children in the program are accounted for throughout the day and released only to authorized adults. Children are supervised by sight at all times, and transition of children from one teacher to another or from one area to another is accounted for to ensure the supervision and whereabouts of children at all times.

Self study document:

§   Describe how the program ensures children are accounted for throughout the day and released only to authorized adults and how the administration ensures children are supervised by sight at all times.

Rating:

§   <u>Standard met:</u> Procedures are in place that ensure children are accounted for throughout the day, released only to authorized adults, and supervised by sight at all times.

§   <u>Standard not met:</u> Procedures are not in place that ensure children are accounted for throughout the day, released only to authorized adults, and supervised by sight at all times.

7.12.2   Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect: The staff is trained to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect. They know the laws and procedures for reporting to the appropriate agency. All communications with authorities are documented and placed in a confidential file. The Merkos overall policy published in "Guidelines for schools: The Safety of our children:, serves as the foundation of schools policies. In addition, the director is in contact with a halachic authority and relevant Jewish family service agencies to determine the best procedure for adhering to reporting requirements while protecting the privacy of families and ensuring the most favorable outcome for children and their families.

Self study document:

§   Describe how the Merkos policy is implemented. New staff members are trained to recognize signs of child abuse/child neglect, how such abuse and neglect are reported, and how the information is kept confidential. Include a copy of any requirements of civil authorities.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Staff members are trained in recognizing signs of child abuse/child neglect, and a reporting process to the appropriate agency is in place. All communications regarding reports are kept in a confidential file. The school is able to refer to a halachic authority for instruction on how best to comply with state requirements.

§   **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: Staff members are not trained in recognizing signs of child abuse/child neglect, there is not an official process in place for reporting such abuse and neglect to the appropriate agency, and reports are not kept in a confidential file, or school has no plan in place for contact with a halachic authority experienced in these matters.

7.12.3 Policies and Procedures to Eliminate Child Abuse: Exemplary abuse prevention should be practiced throughout the early education program. For example, a minimum of two teachers are assigned to a group of children. Viewing windows allow for visual access into the classrooms, bathroom doors are left open, and random walk-throughs are practiced throughout the day. In addition, Jewish values are integrated into the program in a way that reduces conditions that lead to abuse: i.e. respect for the privacy of the individual, norms of modest behavior, etc.

Self study document:
§   Describe how the program maintains exceptional abuse prevention compliance.

Rating:
§   **Standard Met:** A policy whereby a minimum of two teachers are assigned to all groups visual access allows for viewing classrooms and all the other school areas. Jewish values of Tznius are practices by the teachers and discussed with the children.

§   **Standard substantially Met:** Two teachers are assigned to all groups but window viewing is not possible. Jewish values are practiced and discussed.

§   **Standard not Met:** Two teachers are not always assigned to groups and visual access to classroom is not possible.

7.12.4 Providing Extra Clothing for Children   Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide a change of clothing for their children to keep on the program's premises in the case of an accident. The program maintains a supply of generic clothing in varying sizes to ensure children are provided with a change of clothing in case of an emergency.

Self study document:
§   Describe how the program maintains emergency clothing needs.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** An extra set of clothing is brought from the home of children and stored appropriately on the premises for children to use in the case of an emergency. Additional clothing in a variety of sizes is maintained on the program's premises and is

generic in style.

> **§**   **Standard substantially met:** A system is in place but is not working to ensure clothing is always available to children when needed (e.g., clothes taken home but not replaced).

> **§**   **Standard not met:** A change of clothing is not maintained for children.

7.12.5   First Aid Certified Personnel: At least one staff member with first aid certification—and infant/child CPR certification will be present on the premises at all times. (It is recommended that all staff have basic first aid and CPR training.)

Self study document:
§   Explain how the program ensures a staff member qualified in first aid certification—and infant/child CPR when applicable—is on site at all times.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** A minimum of one staff person with current first aid certification—and infant/child CPR certification when applicable—is on site at all times.

§   **Standard not met:** The program site is without a staff member with current first aid certification—and infant/child CPR certification when applicable—at some point during the day.

7.12.6   First Aid Supplies   The program maintains adequate first aid supplies and a universal precaution kit that are conveniently available to the classrooms but not to the children. The program maintains a detailed medical log regarding the use of these items.

Self study document:
§   Describe how first aid supplies and a universal precaution kit are made available to staff members, where these items are located, and how a detailed medical log is maintained regarding the use of these items.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** First aid supplies (as defined by civil authorities) and a universal precaution kit are conveniently available to staff and are located in areas accessible only to adults. A detailed medical log is maintained regarding the use of these items.

§   **Standard not met:** First aid supplies and/or a universal precaution kit is not conveniently available to the classrooms, and/or a detailed medical log is not maintained regarding the use of the items.

7.12.7   Written Record of Accidents and Illnesses   A written notice of accidents and/or illnesses is kept on file, and a copy is given to the parents/guardians of the children in the program.

Self study document:

§   Provide a copy of the program's accident/illness form. Describe the process that staff follow when notifying a parent/guardian of an illness or accident.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** A system is in place to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an ill or injured child. An accident/illness form is completed and filed, and a copy is given to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

§   **Standard not met:** No system is in place to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an ill or injured child, and/or accident/illness forms are not completed, filed, and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

7.12.8 Emergency Preparedness Plans   The program has a general disaster plan and/or an Emergency Crisis Manual that includes evacuation procedures and inside actions in the event of a disaster or crisis (e.g., snowstorm, tornado, lightning, flooding, fire, bomb threat, violence, and hostage situation). The plan includes directions for disasters common to the geographic area. Staff members are familiar with routes and procedures, which are posted in each classroom, and staff regularly practice drills with the children. Such plan should be reviewed periodically by the local law enforcement, emergency personnel, and conform to that recommended by the Office of Homeland Security.

Self study document:

§   Provide a copy of the policies and procedures relating to emergency drills and evacuations and of the records of drills and evacuations for the past twelve months. Include a copy of any requirements of civil authorities.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Disaster drills are held at least monthly, their occurrence is recorded, and the reports are filed. Escape routes and procedures are posted in each classroom.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Escape routes and procedures are posted in classrooms. However, disaster drills are not held at least monthly.

§   **Standard not met:** Disaster drills are held less than monthly, and escape routes and procedures are not posted in each classroom.

7.12.9 Fire Extinguishers and Detectors   Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are provided and checked as mandated by the local fire marshal, and staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

Self study document:

§   Describe the location of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors, their maintenance, and the training of staff regarding the use of fire extinguishers.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are located in areas as regulated by civil authorities. Staff are trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

§ **Standard not met:** Fire extinguishers or smoke detectors are not in use in the facilities as mandated by civil authorities, or the staff are not trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

7.12.10 Emergency Phone Numbers   Emergency phone numbers or 911 is posted by readily accessible telephones that have 911 access in order to allow for quick reference in contacting the fire department, police department, poison center, and rescue squad.

Self study document:
§ Describe the location of all telephones with 911 access.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Readily accessible telephones with 911 access have emergency numbers clearly posted and quickly accessible in the case of an emergency.

§ **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: Telephones with 911 access are not readily accessible, they do not have emergency numbers clearly posted, and the numbers are not quickly accessible in the case of an emergency.

7.12.11 Notifying Parents/Guardians in Emergencies   A plan is in place to contact parents/guardians in case of an emergency closing, and the parents/guardians have been made aware of the plan.

Self study document:
§ Provide a copy of the information given to parents/guardians regarding the program's emergency closure policy.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** A policy is in place for notifying parents/guardians in the case of an emergency closing, and the parents/guardians have been made aware of the policy.

§ **Standard not met:** A policy is not sufficiently in place for notifying parents/ guardians of an emergency closing.

7.12.12 Proper Chemical Labeling and Storage   All chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in their original containers. All potentially dangerous products are stored in a locked area. An MSD (Material Safety Data) sheet is strategically placed near harmful chemicals.

Self study document:
§ Describe the location where potentially "dangerous if swallowed" materials are kept. Address whether all chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in their original containers and whether an MSD (Material Safety Data) sheet is strategically placed near harmful chemicals.

Rating:

§ Standard met: All chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in their original containers, all potentially dangerous products are stored in a locked area, and an MSD sheet is strategically place near harmful chemicals.

§ Standard not met: One or more of the following are true: Chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in containers other than their original containers, potentially dangerous products are not stored in a locked area, and an MSD sheet is not strategically place near harmful chemicals.

7.12.13 Vehicle Inspection, Permits, and Qualified Drivers   Current documentation is available on all vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications, verifying that all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.

Self study document:

§ Provide documentation on all program vehicles and their drivers, verifying that all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.

Rating:

§ Standard met: With regard to vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications, all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.

§ Standard not met: With regard to vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications, not all requirements of civil authorities and not all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.

§ Standard not applicable: Children are not transported by the program.

7.12.14 Vehicles with Restraining Devices and Emergency Equipment   Vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices and a first aid kit, and appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported.

Self study document:

§ Provide documentation that all program vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices along with a first aid kit and that appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported.

Rating:

§ Standard met: All program vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices along with a first aid kit, and appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported.
§ Standard not met: Not all program vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate

restraint devices along with a first aid kit, and/or appropriate safety precautions are not taken when children are being transported.

§ **Standard not applicable:** Children are not transported by the program for any reason.

7.12.15 Field Trip Policies and Procedures The program has written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of all children at all times and thus promote the safety of the children. These are shared with parents/guardians and implemented by the program. The policies and procedures must include that permission is attained from parents/guardians and that roll checks are logged before, regularly during, and upon return to the program's facilities.

Self study document:
§ Include a copy of the policies and procedures regarding all aspects of field trip protocol, including supervision, transportation, and parent/guardian approval.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** The program has written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of all children at all times and thus promote the safety of the children. These are shared with parents/guardians and implemented by the program, and they include the elements described above.

§ **Standard not met:** One or more of the following are true: The program does not have written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of all children at all times and thus promote the safety of the children, these are not shared with parents/guardians and implemented by the program, and they do not include the elements described above.

7.12.16 Cleanliness of Facilities The facilities are cleaned on a daily basis, including sanitizing the bathrooms and removing trash. The facilities are free of mold and offensive odors.

Self study document:
§ Describe the arrangements for maintaining clean facilities.

Rating:
§ **Standard met:** Facilities are thoroughly cleaned on a daily basis, and they are free of mold and offensive odors.

§ **Standard not met:** Facilities are not thoroughly cleaned on a daily basis, and/or they are not free of mold and offensive odors.

7.12.17 Sanitizing Toys and Equipment The program has an established plan of sanitizing toys and equipment regularly (infants: daily, toddlers: semiweekly, preschoolers: weekly—with all three groups of toys and equipment receiving more frequent sanitization as needed to maintain a healthy environment for the children).

Self study document:

§   Describe the procedures and schedule for sanitizing toys and equipment as described above.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The procedures and schedule are documented as described above.

§   **Standard not met:** The procedures and schedule are not documented as described above.

7.12.18   Hot Water Conditions   Hot water heaters are set for 110°F or less if the heated water is accessible to children.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Hot water heaters are set for 110°F or less if the heated water is accessible to children.

§   **Standard not met:** Hot water heaters are set higher than 110°F, and the heated water is accessible to children.

7.12.19   Safe Electrical Outlets   Electrical outlets in the wall are covered to prevent children from being shocked by electricity.

On-site observation:

§   On-site observation verifies whether the standard has been met.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Outlets within the reach of children are covered.

§   **Standard not met:** Some or all the outlets within the reach of children are not covered.

Section 8

Family and Community Relations

Section 8

8.0 Family and Community Relations

RATIONALE:

Parents are a child's first teacher, and the early education program respects the critical role parents play in supporting the growth and development of their child. Partnerships with parents are a part of a quality early education program. A rapport is built between staff and parents, which supports communication between the home and the early education program.

STANDARDS:

8.1 Public Relations: All informational sources established by the program accurately describe the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination and satisfied consumer protection requirements as established by state, Federal law or Administrative Rule.

Self study document:
- § Provide evidence and/or a description of all informational sources that accurately

portray the early education program—including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination—and are available for review.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** Information sources established by the program are available and address the program's enrollment policy, mission, and statement of non-discrimination.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Informational sources established by the program are available but do not address the program's enrollment policy, mission, or statement of nondiscrimination; and/or the information is not current.

§   **Standard not met:** Informational sources established by the program are not available.

8.2 Parent or Guardian Handbook

8.2.1 Contents and Communication: Parents/guardians of the children in the program receive a parent/guardian handbook that includes but is not limited to (1) the philosophy statement regarding the care and education of young children attending the program, including what discipline techniques will be used; (2) policies regarding holidays, illnesses, hours of operation, fees, refunds, enrollment, and termination procedures; and (3) an explanation of the program's day-to-day functioning. Parents/guardians sign a statement acknowledging that they understand and support the program's policies as outlined in the parent/guardian handbook.

Self study document:

§   Include a copy of the parent/guardian handbook and the form that parents/guardians sign to acknowledge that they understand and support the policies.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The parent/guardian handbook includes and satisfactorily explains the above-mentioned items, and parents/guardians are expected to sign an acknowledgment of support.

§   **Standard substantially met:** The parent/guardian handbook includes the above-mentioned items. However, additional information needs to be included in the handbook regarding these items, and/or parents/guardians are not expected to sign an acknowledgment of support.

§   **Standard not met:** The parent/guardian handbook does not include the above-mentioned items.

8.2.2 Visitation Rights: The program has an welcoming policy regarding visits by parents/guardians on the program's premises, including in their child's classroom Policies concerning parent/guardian involvement (e.g., visiting, observing, and volunteering) are in place to ensure the partnership between home and program is maintained. Policies reflect both the value of making parents welcome on campus as well as respect for the

needs of the faculty and students in ensuring an orderly routine and a secure classroom environment.

Self study document:
§   Include a copy of the information given to parents/guardians with regard to parent/ guardian involvement policies.

Rating:
§   **Standard met**: Parents/guardians are welcome on the premises, including in their child's classroom, and a policy regarding ways of incorporating parent/guardian presence/involvement is included in the parent/guardian handbook.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Parents/guardians of the children are welcome with hesitation in the classrooms and elsewhere on the premises.

§   **Standard not met:** Parents/guardians of the children are not welcome in the classrooms and/or elsewhere on the premises.

8.3 Communications

8.3.1 Communication with Parents or Guardians   Administrators and staff communicate with the parents/ guardians in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events, or through evolving electronic means.

Self study document:
§   Include a copy of communications provided to parents/guardians from the administration and from classroom staff.

Rating:
§   **Standard met:** Administrators and staff communicate with the parents/guardians in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events.

§   **Standard substantially met:** Either administrators or staff—but not both—communicate with the parents/guardians in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events.

§   **Standard not met:** Administrators and staff do not communicate with the parents/ guardians in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events.

8.3.2 General Conferences about their Children: Conferences with each child's parent(s)/guardian are offered at least twice per year—and at other times as needed—to discuss the child's developmental progress, personal care, and education. Conference schedules accommodate working parents/guardians.

Self study document:

§　Describe how parent/guardian conferences are held and what staff are expected to discuss at such meetings.

Rating:

§　**Standard met:** Parent/guardian conferences are held a minimum of twice per year; they address the child's developmental progress, personal care, and education; and a variety of appointment times are made available to accommodate working parents/guardians.

§　**Standard substantially met:** Parent/guardian conferences are held a minimum of twice per year. However, parents/guardians must attend during program hours.

§　**Standard not met:** Semiannual parent/guardian conferences are not scheduled.

8.3.3　Conferences Regarding the Child's Development Progress:　Parents/guardians of the children in the program receive communication regarding their children's developmental progress at least twice per year. During parent/guardian conferences, summaries of the results of child observation forms used during scheduled observations of the child are shared with parents/guardians, and parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in the goal-setting process for the child.

Self study document:

§　Describe how, when, and by whom children are observed and how information is recorded and appropriately shared with parents/guardians. Explain the process used for setting parent/guardian-teacher goals for children.

Rating:

§　**Standard met:** Children are observed by qualified personnel who record the information and appropriately share it with parents/guardians at least twice per year. Observations are used by parents/guardians and teachers to set goals for children.

§　**Standard substantially met:** Children are observed by staff who are not qualified but who do record the information. However, recorded observations are used by parents/guardians and staff to set goals for the children.

§　**Standard not met:** Staff does not officially observe and/or record observations, and/or observations are not used for parent/guardian-teacher goal setting.

8.3.4　Reporting of Significant Changes in Behavior　Significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition are reported to the parent(s)/guardian(s), documented, and placed in the child's file.

Self study document:

§　Include information given to the staff not only about documenting significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition but also about

informing parents/guardians of these changes.

Rating:

§ **Standard met:** A policy is in place requiring the staff not only to document any significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition but also to inform parents/guardians regarding these changes.

§ **Standard not met:** Either (1) a policy is not in place requiring the staff to document any significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition and to inform parents/guardians regarding these changes or (2) a policy is in place but is not adhered to by the staff.

8.4 Parent or Guardian Education

8.4.1 Parent Training Programs: The program director plans and implements regularly scheduled parent/ guardian programs that support parents/guardians in their parenting role and reinforce the mission of the program. These programs take place at least quarterly. The Jewish nature of the schools is reflected in the programming selected. Examples of Jewish oriented-programs are: seminars on age-appropriate ways to inculcate Jewish values, and parenting workshops presented from a Jewish perspective and picnic for parents and children to celebrate an upcoming holiday. As needed, opportunity is given to the parents to learn more about the Jewish values underlying the program so that they can effectively support the child's learning at home.

Self study document:

§ Include documentation of programs provided during the past twelve months.
Rating:
§ **Exceptional compliance:** Programs supporting parents/guardians in the parenting role and reinforcing the mission of the program are offered quarterly to the parents/ guardians of children attending the program. At least two of the programs offered each year explicitly address in some way the Jewish values that are part of the school's mission.

§ **Standard met:** Programs supporting parents/guardians in their parenting role and reinforcing the mission of the program are offered quarterly to the parents/guardians of children attending the program.

§ **Standard substantially met:** Programs supporting parents/guardians in their parenting role and reinforcing the mission of the program are offered less than quarterly to the parents/guardians of children attending the program.

§ **Standard not met:** Programs that support parents/guardians in their parenting role and reinforce the mission of the program are not offered to the parents/guardians of children attending the program.

8.4.2 Referral to Community Resources: The director is familiar with community services and resources

regarding children with specific needs and provides this information to parents/guardians. The director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed. In communities with Jewish family support services, the director is also able to assess the appropriateness of the Jewish support services and refer parents to them as needed.

Self study document:

§   Include a list of community resources available to the director. Describe how this information is provided to parents/guardians and how the director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.

Rating:

§   **Standard met:** The director is familiar with community services and resources regarding children with specific needs and provides this information to parents/ guardians. In addition, the director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.

§   **Standard not met:** Either the director is not familiar with community services and resources regarding children with specific needs, or the director and staff do not work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.

Section 9

Administrative Notebook

the accreditation protocol
Strategic Planning
the accreditation checklist

Section 9

9.1 the accreditation protocol:

The application process is outlined in Chapter 1. The process is formal and its intent is to assure that all elements within the school leadership are committed to undergoing an accreditation protocol. The various documents required by the N.A.B. pave the way for smooth interaction between the school community and the N.A.B. administration and staff. It also, naturally, provides N.A.B. with all the pertinent information regarding the candidate school.

Having made its application to the N.A.B., the school needs to begin the self-study organizational process. A member of the N.A.B. staff will visit the school, in most cases, along with a school official from an institution which recently went through the process. The purpose of the meeting is simply to assist the school in its accreditation organization. They will meet with the school leadership and, at the discretion of the principal, with the faculty and parent body. They need to fully understand what to expect during the ensuing year.

9.1.1. The school will need to do the following in short order:

9.1.1.1 Select a Steering Committee

The Steering committee includes representatives of the faculty, administration, parent body, and the lay leadership. This committee sets up the governing organization for the self-study. Who will do what, by when, and to whom will he report. It derives its authority from the school governing board but its activity and ultimate success are the result of achieving full cooperation with an intense involvement of the entire faculty.

In most cases the chairman of the committee is an employee who is relieved, at least part

time, from his/her regular duties, to concentrate on the accreditation protocol.

9.1.1.2 Select an Accreditation Instrument

The E/C instrument, much favored today is the N.S.S.E. "*Program Evaluation: Infant and Early Childhood Education*" which is a comprehensive toolkit for the evaluation and improvement of infant and early childhood programs. It is available in print and on a CD. It is clear, step by step guide so that even those who are new to the accreditation process can proceed with some confidence.

Schools which are participating in an accreditation process are by definition committed to engage in a process of continuous improvement. They will find it beneficial to make good use of all the components of the "*Program Evaluation: Infant and Early Childhood Education*". They stand to benefit from this latest effort of the education profession to self-assess the quality of its work in behalf of student learning and develop plans for serious school improvement. It is for this reason that it is recommended by the N.A.B.

9.1.1.3 Carefully Follow the N.S.S.E. process

A self Study process involves all the stakeholders within the school community, the school administration, faculty and staff, the parent body and the broad community as well as the governing body. They all have a unique perspective of the school programs, activities and their successes. The N.S.S.E. (as well as other) instrument provides the steering committee with the tools necessary to gather and evaluate that information accurately.

I addition, to reach an honest, impartial evaluation of the school's programs requires careful and accurate use of a valid, well designed evaluation instrument. The steering committee needs to make sure that all the instructions are properly followed and all the data properly recoded. This will assure that the information submitted in the Self Study Document is meaningful, accurate and verifiable.

9.1.2. N.A.B. Assistance

The N.A.B. expects to be called upon to visit all schools during their self-study process. N.A.B. personnel are eager to help schools achieve accreditation. The N.A.B.'s objective is to foster the search for educational excellence through the accreditation process. Assisting schools in their self-study process is by definition a move toward the fulfillment of that objective.

Periodic meetings with the steering committee can also assure that the school is moving according to a plan which will help it reach its final objective of completing the self-study report on time.

The check list which follows in the subsequent pages is meant to guide the steering committee in preparing the documentation for the N.A.B. and the visiting team.

9.2 STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

9,2.1. OVERVIEW:

When your E/C Center is ready to develop its strategic/long term action plan you will find the format presented in this chapter useful. This format is strongly recommended for the successful completion of the accreditation protocol.

Throughout the self-study, the faculty and members of the school community have no doubt been developing ideas about what the school should and could ideally be. These ideas are about the future capabilities of the faculty, future programs, future services, future facilities and equipment, future enrollment and organization, and future sources of funding and financial planning. These separate ideas should be integrated into a single cohesive strategic concept of the school; where the school is heading. The clarification of this concept is the first step in successful planning.

The planning activity should include input from the entire faculty and members of the school community. Broad participation in planning invariably results in strengthened commitment toward the school's development.

9.2.2. THE NUMBER OF STRATEGIC GOALS:

It is not possible to entertain all good ideas at once. In a strategic plan the goals are few in number. Some plans have only one; very few plans have more than three. So the faculty can begin its selection activity with the thought that it is seeking from one to three goals that have high strategic value.

Strategic goals deserve all of the energies and resources the school can put into them. Energies and resources are, after all, finite and not unlimited. When the latter are diffused across a great many activities, the prospect of failure is stronger. In such cases the schools often achieve progress on minor matters, but strategic goals are not attained. Much effort is expended, but there is little real movement. This is why the number of strategic goals admitted to the plan must be limited. Other worthwhile ideas may be recorded for future consideration.

9.2.3: GOAL STATEMENT:

The goal statements must include five elements. They are:

    1. **The Goal**:

For a goal to have any real meaning, it must be able to quantify the objective and set a time limit. In other words, who will do what by when and have the result be measured and be deemed successful. The format presented here builds these essential elements onto the wording of the goal.

2. The Action:
This tells the reader the kind of activities that is envisioned. (It is almost always stated in the infinitive, e.g., to increase to decrease, to limit, to add, to improve, etc.) The action element in the goal statement identifies the tone of the activity the goal will generate.

3. The Object:
The object of the action is really the object of the goal. It is in effect, "the what" of the goal. It may be anything from school attendance to measured reading ability. It could be arithmetic worksheets or library utilization. When the action is joined with the object of the action the goal statement is half finished. As in this example:

To increase	Utilization of the library
action	object of action

4. The Limits
Where possible, limits are expressed in the prepositional "from-to" format. Limits state where the school is now and where it will be when the goal is attained. This is very important because it defines the goal's attainability. Unless limits are clearly expressed no one can be certain when the goal has been reached. For example, a school may state the action and the object as "to foster better relations with parents." This is always a good idea, but it gives no indication of what changes can be observed and confirmed. Now, if the object of the action changes from (the vague) "better relations" to increased face-to-face communication, the goal becomes:

To increase	Incidence of face-to-face	Communication with parents	From 50 a month to 200 a month
action	object of	action	limits of action

The skill of the goal writer in this instance is to convert a desired object, i.e., "improved relations" into qualified limits. Quantification makes attainment verifiable. In the case of "increased utilization of the library," the goal statement now becomes:

To Increase	Instances of weekly library use	By students	From 75 to 200 per week
action	object of action	action	limits of action

This can be observed by the librarian and/or secretary, and regular progress reports can be issued.

What if quantitative expression is impossible? Limits can be stated qualitatively. For example, it is possible to say "from inadequate to adequate." This can be satisfactory if the planners succeed in developing a standard meaning for the terms "inadequate to adequate."

For example, an "adequate" testing program can be one which provides all answers to a set of questions posed by teachers and parents. "Inadequate", of course, would be one that fails to provide those answers. Other qualitative terms such as good, far satisfactory, or poor pose similar problems for the planner. All must commonly understand what is meant by "good".
Where limits are clear, attainability is clear, and where attainability is clear, accountability can be established.

Even more importantly, there is a basis for satisfaction. When all recognize that a group goal has been attained, morale improves.

5. Time:

The last of the five elements of the syntax is the time of action. Some strategic goals require only months, others require four or five years. In deciding about time, planners must interpolate between the urgency of the goal and all that is required to attain it. In wartime the term "crash program" is commonly heard. Huge buildings are planned and erected in just a few weeks. But settlement cracks often start up the wall before the roofs are trimmed out. A goal should be given the time it needs, and "crash programs" reserved for emergency situations which hopefully never arise.

Developmental activities require continuity of effort over a number of years. It is not uncommon for a school to change leadership once, twice, or even three times before a goal is attained. It is gratifying to visit such a school to find that progress on a strategic goal has not been disrupted by leadership changes. One important reason for this is that the time of the action is stated and usually known and accepted by the new principal, Menahel or Vaad HaChinuch.

Nature does not grow an oak in a fortnight. Accredited Yeshivas and Day Schools are now growing in quantity, and do their work with the consciousness of the time qualitative growth requires.

In the final form the goal might read:

To Increase	Instances of weekly library use	by students	from 75 to 200 per week	by June 19
action	object of action	action	limits of action	time of action

9.2.4. THE WORDS:

There are a few instances in language when word and deeds are more closely linked than in the language of goals. Words begin as thoughts, but as thoughts become words they go beyond thoughts. Words play upon emotions and imaginations of those who hear them, and they take on a life of their own exerting nuances often not intended by those who give them utterance.

One nuance to be born in mind is that people are more easily enthused about increasing than decreasing. For example, a national goal often heard:

To reduce unemployment from 9% to 7% by_____.

Or it could be:

To increase the number of persons employed from ____to____by____.

Both goals are clear, but authorities in the field insist that the latter will generate more group enthusiasm than the former. Increase is simply a more effective action more than decrease. It is alright to say *decrease* the death *toll* because the words death toll are so horrifying that they neutralize the emotive force of the decrease. On the other hand the strong verbal force of *increase* the *life toll* would be stronger and more positive. It may be slogan-like, and in goals, phrases that have sufficient emotive force to become positive slogans, are valuable. It is always better to *consolidate* than *reduce* or *eliminate*; it is also better to integrate than to *desegregate*, and one

prefers to be *reorganizing* than *reducing a deficit.*

9.2.5. THE PROGRAMS

The program includes all of the activities and resources required for the attainment of a strategic goal. Thus, in action plan there must be a separate program for each goal.

Each goal must include critical and collateral events, resources necessary for attainment of the goal, and the monitoring structure for goal implementation.

9.2.6. SELECTING EVENTS

After the strategic goals are written, attention immediately goes to the events which will lead to attainment of each goal in the time allotted. The task entails selection and orchestration. The latter word is important because the events leading to the attainment of a goal must be "harmonized" with all of the other things the school is doing. For example, it is probably not wise to schedule a major event of the action plan during one of the weeks report cards are sent to parents. Events will fail if the planners overload the capabilities of the faculty.

9.2.7. SEQUENCING EVENTS

The events that appear early in the sequence are usually those which provide needed information. At times it mat be necessary for an introductory event or sries of events to facilitate some major change. At times one event simply needs to follow another for practical purposes. It may be necessary to secure financial backing before undertaking the renovation of a building, or to complete a facility before making full use thereof. It is essential that the sequencing of those events be clearly understood by all involved and therefore specified.

If the goal is to increase enrollment, improve parent/community relations, diversify finances, or develop outreach programs, it may be important to begin with consulting with someone who has had experience in a similar setting. In fact, it may be wise to suspend the identification and sequencing of later events until the consultant's opinions are heard. It is never a good idea to have the plan fully locked in place before dealing with an outside authority whose advice is needed for the school to attain its goal.

9.2.8. GOAL

1. The first step in constructing the chart is to identify major or critical events. These are the events that must occur if the goal is to attained.

To establish	Two learning center	In each	Intermediate grade classroom	By June 1999
action	object of action	limit	of union	time

> **2. Critical Events:**
>   a. Faculty visits to school s that are making effective use of learning centers.
>
> b. Program revisions which demonstrate relationship of learning centers, to   continuing curricula.
>
> c. Design the learning centers.

   d.   Physical changes in the classrooms.

   e.   Parent information programs on educational advantages.

   f.   Ordering materials and equipment for first center.

   g.   Teacher workshops on uses and techniques.

   h.   First center each classroom becomes operational.

   i.   Order materials and equipment for second center.

3. Collateral Events:

After the critical events are charted on the critical path, the planners then list the events that are related to each one of the critical events. Here are some examples:

a   Schools identified
a2   Permission arranged
a3   Schedule developed
a4   Substitutes employed
a5   Visits occur

b.   Program revisions which demonstrate relationships of learning centers to continuing curricula.

   b1   Educational purpose defined
   b2   Reading activities assigned to centers
   b3   Math activities assigned to centers
   b4   Social Studies assigned to centers
   b5   Center management model developed

c.   Design Learning Centers

   c1   Establish spaces and location
   c2   List Equipment
   c3   List materials
   c4   Establish child-oriented décor

d.   Physical Changes

   d1   Rewiring of classroom
   d2   Carpentry (patch and repair)
   d3   Painting
   d4   Installation and testing of equipment

e.   Parent Information Program

   e1   Development of brochure

e2   Parent meeting

e3   Parent Visitation of classes

f.   Ordering of Equipment and Materials for First Center

f1   List equipment and specifications

f2   Obtain bids

f3   Make purchase

f4   Receive

g.   Teachers Workshop on Uses

g1   Workshop on scheduling

g2   Workshop on management

g3   Workshop on relation to regular programs

h.   Order Equipment for Second Center in Each Classroom

h1   List Equipment

h2   Obtain bids

h3   Receive

While such detailing may seem superfluous, experience has shown it to be the most effective way to institute change, and in the case of a log jam, to locate where the problem is and how to overcome it.

9.2.9. TIME EVENT DIAGRAM:

Many schools use computers to develop a time/event diagram. Others find it helpful to use a per chart which identifies the critical events and all related events. The per chart indicates inter-relationships among events.

Schools are encouraged to use the format that will provide the meaning necessary for the schools to move toward successful implementation of the goals.

9.2.10. METHOD MONTORING PROGESS:

There are four ways to describe resources committed to each strategic goal. They are time, personnel, facilities, and funds. Planners must not identify more resources than needed because redundancy deprives other activities of needed resources. On the other hand, one does not project fewer resources than needed. It is very important to identify the sources of additional funding necessary for goal implementation.

9.2.11. METHOD OF MONITORING PROGRESS:

The administration and steering committee must be continuously informed on how the strategy is working. Within good planning there is flexibility which must exercise at the right time. The chart (or time-event diagram) offers a good view of both what is occurring and should be occurring, and it reveals where flexibility is possible.

Any soundly conceived strategy includes the prospect of withdrawal or regrouping if either becomes necessary. At times, "game plans" work to perfection; but frequently it is necessary to review options, revise goals, and develop alternatives. "Let's return to the drawing board" is a frequent expression in all walks of life. The worst thing that can happen is a deteriorating effort that affords no alternative but further deterioration.

9.2.12. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING ACTIVITY:

a Describe how the planning process was organized and managed.
b Describe the group(s) that were involved and indicate what the group(s) did.
c Describe the techniques/procedures use in identifying the school-wide strategic goals.
d Identify the individuals or group responsible for the implementation of the plan.
e Describe the strategic merits of the plan, i.e., in what ways will this plan result in school-wide development that is believed desirable.

9.2.13. STRATEGIC GOALS:

Phrase each goal in the syntax suggested below the lines goal statements are recorded.
Goal No. 1

_____   _____   (the

action)   (object or)

_____   _____   (nature of the

action)   (limit of the action)

_____   _____   (time of the

action)   (limit of the action)

Goal No. 2

_____   _____   (the

action)   (object or)

_____   _____   (nature of the

action)   (limit of the action)

_____   _____

(time of the action)

9.2.14. EVENTS (DUPLICATE FOR EACH GOAL):

This section of the planning report must be completed for each one of the school-wide goals listed in the Foregoing Section 9.4. If only one school-wide goal is listed then only one Section d5 is completed. If two goals are listed then two of these Section d5 are included in the planning report. If three goals, then three Section d5 reports. In other words, if one goal is listed the following format is used once. If two, a cop must be made and the format used twice, etc. All are included in the planning report.

a. Goal Statement

_____

_____

b. List the major (or critical) events which must occur if the goal is to be attained.

a._____

b._____

c._____

d._____

c. State the critical event and list any collateral events which are associated with the critical event. This is to be completed for each critical event listed on previous pages.

a.
1.
2.
3.
4.

9.2.15. TIME/EVENT DIAGRAM (DUPLICATE FOR EACH GOAL):

A time/event diagram is an essential planning component and may not be omitted. When the time lines are developed, the school must chart the time line with reference to everything else that is happening in the school. The time lines should reflect at least a three year frame for implementation.

The development of a flow chart is optional. However, there are a number of values in this activity. Developing such a chart enables the staff to visualize events in sequence and relationships. The school is encouraged to develop the visual interpretation which will provide the broadest meaning for implementation.

9.2.16. RESOURCES (DUPLICATE FOR EACH GOAL):

As in the two forgoing sections, a separate action on Resources must be completed for each of the goals listed. If one goal, than only one Section f7. If two goals, then two Section f7 are needed, etc.

a. Describe the resources (staff, facilities, equipment, materials, etc.) available for the attainment of the goal.

b. Describe the resources (staff, facilities, equipment, materials, etc.) that can be redeployed from other programs and services to attain this goal.

c. Describe the resources (staff, facilities, equipment, materials, etc.) that must be acquired or developed in order to attain this goal.

9.2.17. MONITORING (DUPLICATE FOR EACH GOAL):

a. Describe how progress toward this strategic goal is monitored and indicate who is responsible.
   b. Indicate the criteria the school will use to evaluate the attainment of the goal.

Self Study Checklist

Self Study Checklist

Section 2

2 Philosophy:
2.1 Mission/Vision:

- A copy of the mission and vision statements and by whom they were developed are submitted.

2.1.2 Religious Principles:

- The principles upon which the school is based that are not subject to change by vote of the governing boards (including a statement regarding the schools adherence to halachic standards, and the authority who will arbitrate halachic decisions).

2.1.3 Educational Philosophy:

- A copy of the program's philosophy statement is submitted.

2.1.4 Adherence to a Best Practice Teaching Methodology:

- Statements of educational practice which identify the key methodologies that govern the implementation of the school's curriculum are submitted. They explain how these practices are in keeping with the school's stated philosophy and are supported by current developmental research.

2.2 Governance:
2.2.1 Corporate Structure:

- The corporate structure of the school outlined demonstrating that clearly articulated bylaws include educational options

sufficient to cover all the early education programs**.**

2.2.2 Governance Entity:

- A diagram of the authority structure of the governance and of the early education staff is submitted.

- A list of the governance members' names, years of service on the governing entity, means by which service is determined, term of service and selection of members as required in the by-laws are submitted.

2.2.3 Bylaws Authority:

A copy of the corporation's bylaws that provides specific oversight of the early care and educational programs operated under the corporation is submitted.

2.2.4 Governing Policies and Procedures:

- A copy of the current policies and procedures manual for the early education program and/or inclusive of the early education program is submitted.

2.2.5 Governance Role and Responsibilities:

- Definitions of the roles and responsibilities of the governance and how new members receive orientation information is submitted**.**

2.2.7 Governance Responsibilities:

- A copy of the last annual evaluation of the program and a prioritized list of short- and long- range goals for the program is submitted.

2.2.8 Legal Requirements:

- A copy of the program's current license and last inspection report are submitted. (Programs exempt from licensure report, are expected to meet or exceed all minimum licensing requirements, unless clear rationale for utilizing exemption is shown).

2.2.9 Admissions:

- A copy of the program's admission policies and procedures is submitted. (It defines the growth in the program over the past few years and how inclusion has or has not been reflective, and the role of the halachic authority in assuring equitable admissions in light of the school policies.)

2.3 Fiscal Management and Accountability:
2.3.1 Budget:

- A copy of last year's budget is submitted, along with a description of how the budget was set.

2.3.2 Long-Range Financial Planning:

- Minutes of at least two meeting within the last two years demonstrating financial/educational planning are submitted.

2.3.3 Tuition and Fees; Refund Policy:

• The school has submitted a copy of its published tuition and fee schedules, and a description of the process by which scholarship, grants, tuition reductions, and tuition refunds are awarded, as well as provision for mediation with a Halachic authority chosen by the school in the event of disagreement.

2.3.4 Governance Responsibility for Fiscal Matters:

• A description on how the information about the program and financial records is prepared and from whom the governance receives this complete information is submitted.

2.3.5 Governance Oversight of Financial Records:

• Available (on site) are the last internal review and verification that general accounting procedures   used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source has been submitted.

2.3.6 Insurance:

• A copy of insurance policy that the governance maintains has been submitted.

2.3.8 Staff Salaries and Benefits:

• A report of the annual budget percentages reflected by wages and benefits for the staff has been   submitted.

2.3.10 Resource Development:

• The school is submitting examples of promotional fundraising literature, and a statement describing the fundraising activities implemented in the past two years and their relative effectiveness.

Section 3 Personnel Administration

3. Staff Hiring Practices and Benefits:
3.1.1 Employee Handbook:

• A copy of the staff employee handbook is submitted.

3.1.2 Nondiscrimination Policy:

• A copy of the program's nondiscrimination policy and a copy of an actual position advertised is submitted.

3.1.3 Culturally Appropriate Staff:

• A description on how the program actively seeks a diverse staff is submitted. (Where relevant, it includes how the staff communicates with children whose first language is not English.)

3.1.5 Staff Orientation:

• A documentation of presentation of orientation procedures, verifying that the above-mentioned items are addressed with

the staff is submitted.

3.2 Director:
3.2.1 Qualifications:

- A copy of the resume for the director and for any other director-qualified leadership staff that perform director duties is submitted.

3.2.2 General Responsibilities:

- A copy of the director's job description is submitted.

3.2.3 Experience:

- A copy of the director's/program director's resume listing experience working with children is submitted.

3.2.4 Continuing Education and Development:

- A verification of the director's continuing education is submitted.

3.2.5 Hiring Staff:

- The documentation showing that staff sign to indicate their support of the program's philosophy and mission is submitted.

3.2.6 Evaluation of New Employees:

- The formal evaluation document used with new staff during training period is submitted.

3.2.7 Evaluation of all Employees:

- A copy of the annual evaluation forms used for staff members is submitted. An explanation on both how the evaluation process contributes to professional development of staff and whether the evaluations are kept in staff members' files is also included.

3.2.8 Follow-up Evaluation of Staff:

- An explanation on when and how a formal evaluation meeting takes place and how the discussion of strengths as well as those areas needing improvement are documented and addressed after the evaluation is submitted.

3.2.9 Staff Substitutes:

- A description on how the director seeks qualified substitutes who may be called upon to maintain the integrity of the program is submitted.

3.2.10 Acting Director:

- An explanation on who assumes the responsibilities of the director in the director's absence is submitted, and also included is this person's qualifications.

3.2.11Team Building:

- An explanation on how relationships and communication are encouraged throughout the staff is submitted. Also provides is a schedule of staff meetings for the past twelve months.

3.2.12 Program Evaluation with Staff:

- An explanation on how an annual evaluation is provided and how input from staff regarding areas of strengths as well as areas needing improvement is addressed.

3.2.14 Volunteers:

- An outline of volunteer files, orientation, and training for compliance is submitted.

3.3 Instructional and Support Staff Qualifications:
3.3.1   Qualifications:

- A completed copy of the Personnel Qualification Form found in the appendix is submitted.

3.3.2 Job Descriptions and Other Staff Policies:

- A copy of the program's personnel policies is submitted.

3.4 Instructional Staff:
3.4.1 Teachers:

- A Personnel Qualification Form for Teachers is submitted.

3.4.2   Assistant Teachers:

- A Personnel Qualification Form for Assistant Teachers is submitted.

3.4.3 Qualifications for Incorporating Religious Instruction:

- A Teacher Qualifications Form for religious instruction is submitted.

3.5 Support Staff
3.5.1 Training and Experience:

- Evidence and content of the training for staff members is submitted.

3.5 Support Staff:
3.5.2   Continuing Education/Development Programs:

- Evidence of continuing education opportunities for staff, including the above areas is submitted.

3.6   Child-Staff Ratios:
3.6.1   Primary Teacher/Caregiver:

- A list naming the primary teacher/caregiver assigned to each group of children is submitted.

3.6.2 Ratios:

- A completed copy of the Child-Staff Ratio Form found in the appendix is submitted.

3.6.3 Supervision of Children:

- A Description of methods used by staff to ensure children are accounted for at all times, such as during field trips and time on the playground or during transitions outside the classroom, which include trips to the restroom is submitted.

3.6.6 Disciplinary Policies:

- A copy of the program's discipline policies is submitted and an explanation on how staff is trained and parents/ guardians are informed of the policies.

3.7 Public Relations:
3.7.1 Public Relations:

- Evidence and/or a description, that all informational sources accurately portray the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination.

Section 4 Curriculum and Instruction

4.1 General Practice Overview:
4.1.1 Curriculum Guide:

- An overview of the program's scope and sequence with supporting research citations for each age group is submitted. Jewish sources that impact curriculum development are cited and discussed.

4.1.2 Lessons Plans:

- A sample copy of lesson plans for each classroom/age group is submitted.

4.2 Physical Development

4.2.1   Balanced Program--Indoor and Outdoor Play:

- A copy of the classroom schedule listing indoor and outdoor activities is submitted.

4.4.8 Good Health Practices:

- A description on the methods used to make children aware of good health practices is submitted.

4.4.9 Disciplinary Policies and Practices:

- A description of the written discipline policy and techniques, indicating that the above procedures are employed, is submitted.

4.10   Program and Child Assessment

4.10.1 Curriculum Involvement and Training:

- A description of the school's curriculum training procedures is submitted.

4.10.2 Continuous Student Assessment:

- A description on the assessment of children's progress, is submitted.

4.10.3 Variety of Assessment Techniques:

- Evidence of assessing children by using more than one tool is submitted.

4.10.4 Training for Assessment:

- Documentation that instructional staff either is qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations is submitted.

4.10.5 Age Appropriate Assessment Tools:

- A description on the procedure of assessment, including the methods used and the determination of levels and growth of children is submitted.

4.10.6 Observations of Child Development:

- A description on the staff's child observations that focus on all areas of children's development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, various learning styles, and learning preferences is submitted.

4.10.7 Teaching Toward Individual needs:

- Lesson plans that include activities that (1) address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children and (2) result from the application of classroom observations of multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences are submitted.

Section 5 Nutrition and Food Services

5.1 Food Preparation

5.1.1 Response to Civil Authorities' Standards:

- A description on where, how, and by whom food is prepared and served to the children is submitted.

5.1.2 Nutritional Guidelines:

- Two months of menus are submitted.

5.1.3 Sanitary Conditions:

- A description on how the kitchen equipment is monitored to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions and how often this monitoring is performed is submitted. Any food service inspection reports if applicable is also included.

5.1.4 Kashrus Policy:

- A copy of kashrus procedure, and name of rabbinic authority with whom it has been cleared is submitted.

5.2 Parent/Guardian Information

5.2.1 Availability of Menus:

- Two months of snack/meal menus, which are provided to parents/guardians is submitted.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Food from Home:

- Copies of suggestions given to parents/guardians who send meals and/or snacks to children are submitted.

5.2.3   Food Storage:

- A description on what foods may be brought from home, how they are stored, and whether they are refrigerated when appropriate is submitted.

5.3 Social Interaction

5.3.1 Standards for Mealtime:

- A description of snack/mealtimes for the children while they are under the supervision of the adults in the program is submitted.

5.4 Food for Infants and Toddlers

5.4.1 Feeding Infants:

- A copy of staff procedures for feeding infants is submitted.

5.4.2 Recording of Food Intake and Times

- A copy of the program's form for documentation of feeding information is submitted.

Section 6 Physical Environment

6.2 Classrooms

6.2.1 Suitable for Class Size:

- A diagram of the facility including the square footage of all classrooms, play areas and the number of children using them any one time, are submitted.

6.2.7 Drinking Water:

- A description on the location of drinking water in relation to the children in the program is submitted.

6.3 Restroom Facilities

6.3.1 Accessible & Appropriate Sinks and Toilets:

- A description on the number and location of sinks and toilets in relation to the number of children in the program is submitted.

6.5.2 Staff Meeting Room:

- A description on the location of staff meetings and of the area designated for staff breaks is submitted, and addresses the sufficiency of this space.

6.5.3 Storage Space:

- A description on the areas designated for storage and include how adequate and accessible the provided storage and shelving is submitted.

6.6 Outdoor Facilities

6.6.1 Adequate Outdoor Space:

- A diagram of the outdoor play area which includes the square footage, the maximum number of children playing there at any given time, and the quotient resulting from dividing the square footage by the maximum number of children is submitted.

6.6.2 Playground Equipment:

- On the diagram of the outdoor play area, included is what type of playground equipment is provided for children and where it is located. A description on how the playground's design and equipment allow for optimal learning experiences for children is submitted.

6.6.4 Playground Safety, Security, and Protection:

- On the diagram of the outdoor play area, included is indications of where fencing has been placed and where sunny and shaded areas are located.

6.6.5 Playground Surfaces:

- A description of the playground coverings required in fall zones is submitted, and it is noted who is responsible for

maintaining the upkeep of the cushioning materials.

6.6.6 Inspections and Repairs:

- A description on the procedures used to maintain safe equipment on the playground is submitted, and noted is how concerns are reported, logged, and addressed.

6.6.7 Substitute and Adequate Space Indoors for Large Group Play:

- A description on what alternative activities are provided to children in the program when inclement weather prevents outdoor play is submitted.

6.6.8 Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds:

- A description on the process that ensures proper maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment is submitted.

Section 7 Health and Safety

7.0 Health and Safety

7.1 Documentation of Inspections:

* A copy of the program's license to operate where applicable is submitted.

7.2 Children's Health Records:

* Copies of any documents kept in a child's file regarding the health and immunization of children as required by civil authorities is submitted.

7.4 Policies Regarding Illnesses:

* A copy of the ill-child policy given to parents/guardians is submitted.

7.5 Special Health Needs of Children:

* A description on how staff are equipped to handle children who have special medical conditions (e.g., asthma or severe allergies) is submitted.

7.6 Administering and Storing of Medicines:

* A copy of the policy pertaining to administering and storing medications on the program's premises are submitted.

7.7 Medical Log:

* A copy of the program's medical log for the past two months is submitted.

7.8 Blood-borne Pathogens:

* A description on the program's blood-borne exposure control plan, the education of the staff regarding blood-borne pathogens, and the use of universal precautions is submitted.

7.9 Cleanliness Requirements:

* A description on the program's hand-washing policy and how the policy is implemented throughout the facilities is submitted.

7.10 Washing of Infant and Toddler Bedding:

* A description on when and how laundry is provided for the program is submitted.

7.11 Health Screenings:

* A description on how the program makes visual, auditory, speech, and other health and developmental screenings available to the children at least annually is submitted.

7.12   Safety

7.12.1 Supervision of Arrivals and Departures:

- A description on how the program ensures children are accounted for throughout the day and released only to authorized adults and how the administration ensures children are supervised by sight at all times is submitted.

7.12.2   Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect:

- A description on how staff are trained to recognize signs of child abuse/child neglect, how such abuse and neglect are reported, and how the information is kept confidential is submitted. Included is a copy of any requirements of civil authorities.

7.12.3 Policies and Procedures to Eliminate Child Abuse:

- A description on how the program maintains exceptional abuse prevention compliance is submitted.

7.12.4   Providing Extra Clothing for Children:

- A description on how the program maintains emergency clothing needs is submitted.

7.12.5   First Aid Certified Personnel:

- An explanation on how the program ensures a staff member qualified in first aid certification—and infant/child CPR when applicable—is on site at all times is submitted.

7.12.6 First Aid Supplies:

- A description on how first aid supplies and a universal precaution kit are made available to staff members, where these items are located, and how a detailed medical log is maintained regarding the use of these items is submitted.

7.12.7 Written Record of Accidents and Illnesses:

- A copy of the program's accident/illness form is submitted. A description on the process that staff follow when notifying a parent/guardian of an illness or accident is also included.

7.12.8 Emergency Preparedness Plans:

- A copy of the policies and procedures relating to emergency drills and evacuations and of the records of drills and evacuations for the past twelve months is submitted. Also included is a copy of any requirements of civil authorities.

7.12.9 Fire Extinguishers and Detectors:

- A description on the location of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors, their maintenance, and the training of staff regarding the use of fire extinguishers is submitted.

7.12.10   Emergency Phone Numbers:

- A description on the locations of all telephones with 911 access is submitted.

7.12.11   Notifying Parents/Guardians in Emergencies:

- A copy of the information given to parents/guardians regarding the program's emergency closure policy is submitted.

7.12.12   Proper Chemical Labeling:

- A description on the location where potentially "dangerous if swallowed" materials are kept is submitted. Addressed are whether all chemicals, medicines, and other "dangerous if swallowed" materials are stored in their original containers and whether an MSD (Material Safety Data) sheet is strategically placed near harmful chemicals.

7.12.13   Vehicle Inspection, Permits, and Qualified Drivers:

- Documentation on all program vehicles and their drivers, verifying that all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met is submitted.

7.12.14   Vehicles with Restraining Devices and Emergency Equipment:

- Documentation that all program vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices along with a first aid kit and that appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported is submitted.

7.12.15   Field Trip Policies and Procedures:

- A copy of the policies and procedures regarding all aspects of field trip protocol, including supervision, transportation, and parent/guardian approval is submitted.

7.12.16 Cleanliness of Facilities:

- A description on the arrangements for maintaining clean facilities is submitted.

7.12.17 Sanitizing Toys and Equipment:

- A description on the procedures and schedule for sanitizing toys and equipment as described above is submitted.

Section 8 Family and Community Relations

8.0 Family and Community Relations

8.1 Public Relations:

- Evidence and/or a description of all informational sources that accurately portray the early education program are submitted.

8.2 Parent or Guardian Handbook

8.2.1 Contents and Communication:

- A copy of the parent/guardian handbook and parents/guardians acknowledgment that they understand the policies is submitted.

8.2.2 Visitation Rights:

- A copy of the information given to parents/guardians with regard to parent/guardian involvement policies is submitted.

8.3 Communications

8.3.1 Communication with Parents or Guardians:

A copy of communications provided to parents/guardians from the administration and from classroom staff is submitted.

8.3.2   General Conferences about their Children:

- A description on how parent/guardian conferences are held and what staff is expected to discuss at such meetings is submitted.

8.3.3   Conferences Regarding the Child's Development Progress:

- A Description on how, when, and by whom children are observed and how information is recorded and appropriately shared with parents/guardians is submitted.

8.3.4 Reporting of Significant Changes in Behavior:

- Information given to the staff about documenting significant changes in a child's behavior and/or physical condition is submitted.

8.4 Parent or Guardian Education

8.4.1 Parent Training Programs:

- Documentation of programs provided during the past twelve months is submitted.

8.4.2 Referral to Community Resources:

- A list of community resources available to the director is submitted.

Notes: