



# Welcome.

Welcome to The J Center for Early Learning! We are thrilled that you are considering our school.

Everyone at The J knows children are competent and capable. Their curious minds lead them to seek new experiences that result in a natural desire to learn each and every day. Our goal is to encourage thirst for knowledge as we help them grow. Our teachers allow children's interests to help guide curricular exploration, while maintaining age-appropriate academic standards.

The best way to experience our school is to come for a visit, where you can meet our teachers and better understand their passion and love for each child in their care. You can also tour our school and learn about our classrooms, which are designed to encourage curiosity and stimulate imagination. Floor-to-ceiling windows let in natural light from our beautiful courtyard, and neutral colors fine-tune the focus on learning and growing. Artwork adorns the walls as our students leave traces of their learning throughout the space.

We are happy to help you with any questions you may have as you decide on the right educational setting for your child. Please don't hesitate to call Meg Birk at 534-1234. We hope to see you and your child soon at The J!



## Director Meg Birk



Ms. Birk has been an educator for 38 years and brings experience as a kindergarten teacher and a teacher leader. She has implemented gifted and talented,

dual language and advanced literacy, and math programs across the district through her work with EPISD's Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the University of Texas at Austin. Meg holds a bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at El Paso with a special endorsement in early childhood education.

## Pedagogista Cecilia Valencia



Ms. Valencia, our Pedagogista and Kindergarten teacher, is an advocate for meaningful learning experiences and child-centered

environments. Born in El Paso, Texas, and raised in Ciudad Juarez, Ms. Valencia received her bachelor's degree in Bilingual Education from the University of Texas at El Paso and her master's degree in Early Childhood Education at Webster University in St. Louis where she taught at a Reggio-inspired early childhood center. She earned her Montessori certification at the Centro International M. Montessori in Perugia, Italy, and is a certified Pedagogista.

# Mission Statement:

The J Center for Early Learning is passionate about providing an innovative learning environment for El Paso's youth. The school embraces families from all backgrounds, while teaching core Jewish values of community, tolerance, and respect. Teachers work collaboratively to create environments and experiences that spark wonder and creativity, build confidence and skills, allow children to explore materials, and encourage questioning minds. We partner extensively with families and community members to enrich our school environment. We are caretakers of each other, our school community, our city, and our planet.

# Philosophy:

At The J Center for Early Learning, we believe that children are competent and capable. Through child-driven instruction and exploration, we allow children to guide their own learning experiences. Our school is influenced by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Using this approach, teachers follow the students' lead to guide lessons and inform instruction.

Jewish values are at the core of who we are and what we do. We believe in the value of tikun olam, bettering the world, and teach even our youngest children to do their part for their community. We use a Jewish lens to teach about kindness, responsibility, tradition, and respect.

The environment is an additional teacher for our children. Our classrooms showcase and document children's achievements and demonstrate what they have learned. The materials in the classrooms allow students to explore freely and express themselves in a myriad of ways.

The love of learning that students develop at The J Center for Early Learning will stay with them for a lifetime. Children learn respect, empathy, resilience, and curiosity every single day, and these qualities will serve them throughout their careers as students and beyond.

