

JECEI ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Purpose of This Document

JECEI's bold move was to create Jewish Early Childhood Education schools of quality in order to attract and inspire families with young Jewish children to deepen their lifelong connections to Jewish living and learning. This document presents a picture of what a quality Jewish ECE program can look like. This document presents the process and content by which JECEI schools were reviewed in order to receive JECEI accreditation. It explains why JECEI developed an accreditation process.

Can Be Used for Self-Study

The usefulness of this document goes beyond describing the JECEI accreditation process. It provides a framework for exploring, reflecting and dialoguing about quality, goals, outcomes, and measuring success in one's school from the multiple perspectives of stakeholders and in one's practice as an educator. Appendixes A, B and C would be helpful documents to use during the self-study.

Background on JECEI's Accreditation Process

Why did JECEI create an accreditation system?

The JECEI Logic Model outlines JECEI's theory of change clearly articulating WHAT JECEI set out to accomplish. JECEI's purpose was to create quality schools in order to achieve two long term outcomes, increasing the number of children in quality Jewish ECE schools and increasing families' long term engagement in Jewish living and learning. What this document articulates is HOW the JECEI Jewish ECE schools go about achieving these outcomes. What does a quality JECEI school look like? What are the key elements of a Reggio inspired, constructivist, and Jewish ECE school that one would expect to find in all JECEI schools?

JECEI initially developed Principles of Quality in order to help concretize its approach to Jewish early childhood education and provide guidance to the schools participating in the transformative change process. Later, these Principles of Quality were refined and became the central piece of the JECEI accreditation process.

The JECEI accreditation process was created to verify that those schools that went through the extensive JECEI consultative process actually achieved the level of quality envisioned. The decision was made to develop a system internally using JECEI staff and stakeholders familiar with JECEI's goals and approach and to use external a team of validators, with recognized credentials and experience in early childhood education and engagement of families with young Jewish children.

How was the accreditation system devised?

The entire JECEI accreditation content and process underwent rigorous review at all stages of its development by the wide variety of stakeholders involved in JECEI and experts in accreditation outside of JECEI. The JECEI stakeholders included: JECEI Think Tank of academics and leading practitioners in the field, JECEI board members, directors and 2nd tier leaders in JECEI schools, as well as JECEI national staff and consultants. JECEI reviewed other articulations of quality in terms of both general and Jewish accreditation systems and consulted with those who devised these systems.

The accreditation process was devised with an attempt to answer some basic questions. What are the common elements that should characterize all JECEI Jewish ECE schools? How might those characteristics look in the classroom and on the school level? What is a sufficient level of those characteristics being in the classroom and school to a) demonstrate quality and b) sustain the JECEI approach?

The JECEI accreditation content, Principles of Quality and its supporting Evidence, emerged by reviewing what JECEI consultants were doing in the schools, conversations with JECEI stakeholders and experts in the field of ECE and Reggio inspired practice, and by reviewing research both empirical and philosophical in the field. In other words, good thinking and good practice were combined to articulate in a concrete way what quality using this approach looked like.

JECEI'S ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Purpose of JECEI's Accreditation Process

The purpose of JECEI's accreditation process is for the school to demonstrate that it has and will continue to incorporate JECEI's approach to Jewish early childhood education into its vision and operation and that it has achieved overall excellence in early childhood education as demonstrated by accreditation through NAEYC or a comparable organization. Accredited schools receive the JECEI brand recognizing their achievement of excellence and are part of JECEI's national campaign to raise awareness about these schools in specific and in about the importance of excellence in Jewish early childhood education in general.

This document outlines the expectations and procedure for school accreditation. The procedures are meant to capture what is being done in the school in your adaptation of the JECEI approach in your school. The intent is that the accreditation process will provide another growth experience for the school and create an opportunity for recognizing and celebrating the contribution and accomplishments of all who are on the JECEI journey.

Accreditation Elements

Each school will be expected to complete the elements listed below.

1. **School Portfolio**: Create a school portfolio addressing at least one indicator connected to the three Logic Model areas of Quality Early Childhood Education, Engaging Families in Jewish Living and Learning, and Shared Leadership as follows:

- Required of All Schools: 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11
 - Choice of 9 or 10
 - Choice of 12 or 13
2. Classroom Portfolio: Create classroom portfolio for all classrooms addressing 3 of 4 classroom Indicators of Excellence based on the JECEI Tri-Colon
 3. 5-Year Plan: Develop an outline of a comprehensive school plan for the next 5 years to continue the JECEI work (See Appendix C for template)
 4. Validation Visit: Participate in a validation visit

The portfolios are such a rich way of sharing what the school does with a wide variety of audiences that it is prudent to use only photos of children for whom permission to share has been obtained.

School and Classroom Portfolios

Portfolios will serve as a vehicle for the educators and lay leaders to demonstrate the school's readiness for JECEI branding as an excellent Jewish ECE school. One school level portfolio is needed. A portfolio will need to be developed for each "home room" classroom.

All portfolios are sent to the validators **two weeks prior to the visit** in an **electronic format**.

Indicators and Evidence

The accreditation standards consist of indicators and numerous pieces of evidence for each. The pieces of evidence are examples of what an indicator might look like. As such, in most cases, schools are welcome to add their own evidence for indicators.

Proficiency Level

The accreditation standards consist of indicators and evidence. Instructions are given for each indicator of what is required. Essentially, JECEI is looking to see that educators are capable of implementing the JECEI approach. Since JECEI is coming into schools that have approached Jewish early childhood education in a variety of ways in the past, the accreditation process seeks to confirm that the approach is prevalent, hopefully reaching a "tipping point" where the educators are committed to and capable of continually learning and reflecting on how to refine the JECEI approach.

What is required to show proficiency for each indicator is specified in the instructions. (See Appendices D and E).

At least 70% of the classrooms need to have portfolios that fulfill the stated requirements. (See Appendix E).

Scope of Educational Experiences

The accreditation focuses on the educational experiences offered for the regular school day during the academic year. Programs that are not included in the accreditation documentation include:

- separate summer program
- specialty or enrichment sessions that occur before or after the "regular" school day

any educational experience that meets for less than a total of 4 hours per week such as a “parent and me” program

Classroom Portfolios by Homeroom

Documentation of the evidence should draw on all the programs that occur in a “homeroom” classroom; this approach is in recognition that schools often offer multiple programmatic experiences – session days and length of days. To be clear, if M-W-F there is a 2 year old group in classroom 101 and on T-Th there is a 3 year old group in classroom 101 they need only one portfolio. Classrooms devoted to specialty areas like gross motor, atelier, and outdoor play areas do not need separate portfolios but may be included in the “home room” classroom portfolios.

Assembling the Portfolios

There are two options for how to document the indicators – the Examples Approach and the Pieces of Evidence Approach. Educators may use either approach for the indicators. Educators can use one approach for some of the indicators and the other approach for the other indicators. Even within an indicator, both approaches can be used. In other words, you can use what is most suitable to meet the requirements for each indicator.

Work in the portfolios can come from any time that the school was engaged in the JECEI transformative change process.

Option #1 – Examples Approach

The richness of the educational experience is often communicated through concrete examples of what has happened in the school. These examples capture the educational experience in a holistic or integrated fashion. In this approach, you prepare one example, two examples at most, that embody each indicator.

The example will need to convey the essence of the indicator. The documentation should include a listing of pieces of evidence incorporated into this example.

The example might be an educational experience, a meeting with parents, the process of developing a vision statement, a professional development session, a new communication vehicle, a system put in place for feedback, etc. As with any documentation, use a variety of media - written word, pictures, art work, quotations, etc. to demonstrate how your classroom or school fulfills the indicator. You will need to list the actual pieces of evidence that you feel your example includes. Electronic versions of the examples are preferable but not required.

For the example(s), please make certain the following information is included in your documentation:

- What was the event/item about?
- Who was involved?
- Who or what precipitated the event/item?
- How were different stakeholders in your school and host institution involved?
- What were the goals or what were you trying to accomplish?
- What were the outcomes from this event/item – what did you learn? How did stakeholders benefit?

- What made this event/item so significant to your JECEI transformation work?

Option #2 – Piece of Evidence Approach

The school and classroom portfolio takes each indicator and provides documentation for each of the pieces of evidence up to the required amount. For example, Indicator 6 – Jewish living and learning, ideas and values, are part of the everyday learning experiences, the teachers identify as a piece of evidence 6.1 - Children share their feelings, ideas, and experiences with their peers and adults. Then the teachers provide documentation for this piece of evidence. Next, the teachers identify the next piece of evidence, 6.2, and provide documentation, and so on.

5-Year Plan

Each school needs to develop a 5-year plan. A format for developing that plan aligning with the JECEI indicators is provided (See Appendix C).

Validation Visit

Two independent validators will visit each school. Depending on the size of the school, the visit will occur over 1 or 2 days. The validators are the individuals who determine whether or not a school is accredited. Schools qualify for one of three levels of accreditation:

Accreditation – the school has fulfilled all the JECEI requirements for accreditation. The validators may include suggestions for improvement that should be addressed during the accreditation period.

Conditional Accreditation – the validators identify specific items that can be addressed in a short period of time before accreditation is granted.

Accreditation Deferred – the validators feel that the school needs another year to address specific items. These schools may reapply in a year's time.

Accreditation is for five years if the school is currently NAEYC accredited or accredited by a comparable organization as pre-approved by the Director of Research and Standards. Schools not currently NAEYC accredited or accredited by a comparable organization have 3 years to achieve this other accreditation. Those schools that receive NAEYC or comparable accreditation within the 3 years will be granted an additional 2 years of JECEI accreditation for a total of 5 years.

Schools will be expected to complete a brief annual using Appendix C update at the end of each year to demonstrate how they are sustaining the JECEI approach and excellence.

APPENDIX A

JECEI'S VISION OF EXCELLENCE: LENSES, LOGIC MODEL, TRICOLON, INDICATORS, AND EVIDENCE

Foundational to JECEI are ideas and values about Jewish life expressed as the “JECEI Lenses.” The JECEI Lenses are ways of viewing and experiencing our lives and the world:

Masa – (Journey) – reflection, return and renewal
B'rit – (Covenant) – belonging and commitment
Tzelem Elokim – (Divine Image) – dignity and potential
K'dushah – (Holiness) – intentionality and presence
Hit'orerut – (Awakening) – amazement and gratitude
D'rash – (Interpretation) – inquiry, dialogue, and transmission
Tikkun Olam – (Repair of the World) – responsibility

The JECEI Lenses inform our vision and approach to Jewish early childhood education as we integrate them with constructivist, Reggio inspired theories and practices in our work with children, families, and schools.

JECEI LOGIC MODEL, TRICOLON, INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE

The JECEI Logic Model explains the reason that JECEI exists. It articulates what JECEI is setting out to accomplish. The Logic Model both describes the desired outcomes and the main activities for achieving these outcomes. The Logic Model focuses on three areas: Quality Early Childhood Education, Engaging Families in Jewish Living and Learning, and Shared Leadership. These three areas incorporate key ideas including: relationships, vision, and environment.

What does a school look like that achieves these outcomes? The answer to that question is articulated as JECEI Principles of Quality in each of the three areas, a tricolon: Quality Early Childhood Education, Engaging Families in Jewish Living and Learning, and Shared Leadership.

The 13 JECEI Indicators are broken down into even more concrete observable pieces of evidence specifying what educational excellence looks like in a Jewish early childhood school. The description of these 13 JECEI Indicators makes it possible for a school to adapt these behaviors and provide a basis by which a school can be accredited and then branded as a JECEI school of excellence.

**ACCREDITATION APPENDIX B
WHAT AND HOW JECEI ATTEMPTS TO ACCOMPLISH:
OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS**

***All Outcomes are from the JECEI Logic Model approved by its Board May 2008**

TRICOLON: THREE LOGIC MODEL AREAS	HOW JECEI ACCOMPLISHES ITS OUTCOMES: Indicators	WHAT JECEI ACCOMPLISHES Logic Model Outcomes
QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	<p>1 Teachers and families are partners in nurturing the social and emotional growth of community members - children, families, and staff.</p> <p>2 The professional leadership (director/2nd tier) facilitates the flow of information and exchange of feedback on the school level and encourages the same between teachers and parents.</p> <p>3a Children (2 – 5 years) - Children take responsibility for themselves and others.</p> <p>3b Infants/Toddlers – Teachers use relationships as the primary way of supporting the development of the infant/toddler’s self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression.</p> <p>4 Small group project work and documentation are part of the curricular process of teachers engaging students in constructing the learning experience.</p> <p>5 The environment reflects the school’s vision.</p>	-Enhance communication and deepen relationships between parents and teachers
ENGAGING FAMILIES IN JEWISH LIVING AND LEARNING	<p>6 Families are partners in the creation of the learning community.</p> <p>7 Jewish living and learning, ideas and values, are part of the everyday learning experiences.</p>	<p>-Engage children and families in Jewish life and learning in the Jewish ECE schools.</p> <p>-Parents value the Jewish ECE school as a place to learn about parenting and to</p>

		<p>explore Jewish life.</p> <p>-Parents begin to connect with other parents.</p>
<p>SHARED LEADERSHIP</p>	<p>8 Key stakeholders in the community are involved in creating a vision integrating the JECEI Lenses and Indicators of Excellence.</p> <p>9 Professional leadership and teachers grow in their identity, skills, and knowledge as professionals working in Jewish ECE.</p> <p>10 The school and host institution support educators' professional growth as aligned with the school vision.</p> <p>11 Lay Leadership in the school and host institution partners with Professional Leadership to champion the JECEI change process to create schools of excellence and engage families in Jewish learning and living.</p> <p>12 Professional Leadership designs and maintains structures that support daily operations in alignment with the school's vision.</p> <p>13 Professional Leadership partners with teachers to carry out the vision of the school.</p>	<p>-Increase competency of lay people as leaders and partners</p> <p>-Increase competency of school and central agency for Jewish education Jewish ECE professionals to lead and effect change</p> <p>-Increase competency of teachers in Jewish learning and early childhood education.</p> <p>- School begins to operate in consonance with the JECEI model.</p>

APPENDIX C
5-YEAR PLAN TO CONTINUE THE JECEI WORK

Instructions: Please complete both columns of the chart and answer the questions listed below the chart to develop your 5-Year Plan. The process to develop the 5-Year Plan should include a broad range of school and host institution stakeholders.

Logic Model Three Categories and Outcomes	What will you continue to do to...	What will you begin to do in the next 5 years to...
Quality Early Childhood Education <i>Enhance communication and deepen relationships between parents and teachers</i>	1) be family centered?	
	2) facilitate the flow of information and exchange of feedback among all stakeholders? between teachers and parents?	
	3a) (children 2 – 5) facilitate children’s growth as competent, responsible, and caring individuals?	
	3b) (children 0 -2) support infant/toddlers’ development?	
	4) use small group projects work and documentation in the learning process?	
	5) create an environment that furthers the school vision?	
	Engaging Families in Jewish Living	6) involve parents in planning and leading as well as participating in

<p>and Learning</p> <p><i>Engage children and families in Jewish life and learning in the Jewish ECE school.</i></p> <p><i>-Parents value the Jewish ECE school as a place to learn about parenting and to explore Jewish life.</i></p> <p><i>-Parents begin to connect with other parents.</i></p>	<p>adult Jewish study?</p>	
	<p>7) engage children in exploring Jewish life? Use Jewish ideas and values (JECEI Lenses) in this exploration?</p>	
<p>Shared Leadership</p> <p><i>-School begins to operate in consonance with the JECEI model.</i></p>	<p>8) implement the school's vision?</p> <p>8) integrate Jewish ideas and values (the JECEI lenses) with Constructivist, Reggio inspired practices in the school?</p>	
<p><i>Increase competency of teachers in Jewish learning and early childhood education.</i></p>	<p>9 and 10) provide opportunities for educators to continue to grow as quality professionals working in Jewish ECE?</p>	
<p><i>Increase competency of lay</i></p>	<p>11) cultivate and involve lay leadership in the</p>	

<i>people as leaders and partners</i>	ongoing pursuit of excellence in Jewish ECE? 11a) engage the host institution at all levels in supporting and furthering the work of the Jewish ECE school and increasing community support for Jewish ECE? 11b) provide ways for families to learn about current and future ways of engaging in Jewish living and learning?	
<i>-Increase competency of school and central agency for Jewish education Jewish ECE professionals to lead and effect change</i>	12) refine and maintain structures that support daily operations to align with the vision?	
	13) enhance the performance of the Director and 2 nd tier leaders as a team?	
	14) provide opportunities for teachers to take responsibility for carrying out the school vision?	

1. Describe the process used to develop the 5-Year Plan. Please include the range of stakeholders tapped.

2. Please identify the following:
 - a) Challenges that the school needs to address in implementing the 5- Year Plan
 - b) Resources needed for the 5-Year Plan
 - c) How the school plans to orient new teachers, parents, and lay leaders to learn about and implement the JECEI approach
 - d) Other

APPENDIX D

SCHOOL PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS

All portfolios are sent to the validators **two weeks prior to the visit** in an **electronic format**.

School Portfolio: Each school is required to create a portfolio of the indicators designated below. These indicators cover the three Logic Model areas of Quality Early Childhood Education, Engaging Families in Jewish Living and Learning, and Shared Leadership.

- Required of All Schools: 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11
- Choice of 9 or 10
- Choice of 12 or 13

Provided below are the instructions for completing each indicator.

Indicator 2 – The professional leadership (director/2nd tier) facilitates the flow of information and exchange of feedback on the school level and encourages the same between teachers and parents.

ALL SCHOOLS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 2:

Please provide support as follows:

For 2.1, please provide support for at least 6 pieces of evidence.

For 2.2, please provide support for at least 3 pieces of evidence.

For 2.3, please provide support for at least 3 pieces of evidence.

- 2.1 Pick 7 of the following items that characterize communication between the school and/or teachers and families:
- 2.1.1 Schedules and agendas for family/teacher meetings
 - 2.1.2 Display areas in shared early childhood space
 - 2.1.3 Parent communication area in each classroom
 - 2.1.4 School newsletters
 - 2.1.5 Teacher emails to individual parents
 - 2.1.6 Teacher and/or school websites
 - 2.1.7 Daily or weekly updates from each classroom to all families
 - 2.1.8 Yearly program evaluation that families answer
 - 2.1.9 Vehicle for ongoing feedback e.g. suggestion box
 - 2.1.10 Families experience the communication system as helpful, consistent, and/or comprehensive.
 - 2.1.11 Families perceive that teachers and professional leadership are accessible to parents.

- 2.2 Pick 3 of the following items that characterize communication between professional leaders and teachers (meetings and reflective supervision are considered part of communication):
- 2.2.1 Schedules, agendas, and/or notes for all staff meetings
 - 2.2.2 Staff bulletins, newsletters, or emails to teachers collectively
 - 2.2.3 Schedule of meetings for individual teachers, classroom teams, age level meetings, or other smaller grouping of teachers with a professional leader
 - 2.2.4 Teachers meet with professional leadership or get their support when situations arise on an as need basis
 - 2.2.5 Teachers experience the communication system as helpful, consistent, and/or comprehensive
 - 2.2.6 Teachers perceive that professional leadership is accessible to them
- 2.3 Pick 3 of the following items that characterize communication among the early childhood school, the host institution, and the larger community include at least 3 of the following:
- 2.3.1 Schedules, agendas, and/or notes for host institution board meetings or committees (other than just for the early childhood school) mention the early childhood school
 - 2.3.2 Bulletins, newsletters, websites, brochures, or other forms of host institution publicity include items about the early childhood school
 - 2.3.3 Articles in local Jewish or general newspapers either print or website or other media about the early childhood school
 - 2.3.4 Items about the early childhood school found in display areas in shared host institution space
 - 2.3.5 Schedules, agendas, and/or notes for central agency for Jewish education include items about the early childhood school

ALL SCHOOLS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 5 - Please provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

Indicator 5 - The environment reflects the school's vision.

- 5.1 The school's vision and identity are visibly articulated and represented.
- 5.2 The school's engagement with Jewish life is evident through the environment.
- 5.3 The identity and voices of children are evident through photos, stories, artifacts, and other items throughout the school.
- 5.4 Families', host institution's, and local and Jewish communities' identities are evident through photos, artifacts, and other appropriate items
- 5.5 The space is designed to be welcoming.
- 5.6 The school building includes space for families (sorry reinstate) to build relationships with one another.
- 5.7 Space promotes interaction, conversation, and learning among all who enter the school.
- 5.8 Materials are arranged to be accessible to children and aesthetically pleasing to promote exploration and learning.

- 5.9 Natural materials are used throughout the school.
5.10 Children, teachers, and families take care of the environment.

Indicator 6 - Families are partners in the creation of the learning community.

ALL SCHOOLS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 6 –

6.1 Programs implemented: Provide a list of the ways that the school has engaged parents in Jewish living and learning over the last two years. (You can include offerings by the host institution jointly sponsored with the ECE school).

6.2 Process for Jewish Living and Learning Experience Implementation: Provide support for at least 5 pieces of evidence.

6.2 Process for Program Implementation: Provide support for at least 5 pieces of evidence.

6.2.1 Parents are included in groups that plan Jewish living and learning experiences.

6.2.2 Parents help facilitate Jewish living and learning experiences.

6.2.3 Parents' opinions regarding Jewish living and learning experiences are sought through program evaluations, needs assessments, surveys or other forms of feedback

6.2.4 Parents' are encouraged to organize programs based on their interests and ideas.

6.2.5 Jewish learning and living experiences are constructed to facilitate community building, parents getting to know one another, and/or parents making friends.

6.2.6 Learning opportunities address parenting issues informed by Jewish perspectives.

6.2.7. Parents receive support from staff in planning and implementing Jewish living and learning experiences.

6.2.8 Professionals and supporters or members of the host institution are tapped to help plan and implement Jewish living and learning experiences.

Indicator 8 – Key stakeholders in the community are involved in creating a vision integrating JECEI's Lenses and Indicators of Excellence.

ALL SCHOOLS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 8

Please provide support for ALL of the pieces of evidence listed below.

8.1 Provide a vision, mission, and /or values statement that integrate the JECEI lenses, Indicators of Excellence and approach to education with the school's history, culture and context.

8.2 Describe how the visioning process included a range of stakeholders including parents, teachers, professional leaders, lay leadership, and host institution and may include community leaders and funders.

SCHOOLS MAY CHOOSE INDICATOR 9 OR 10

Indicator 9 – Professional leadership and teachers grow in their identity, skills, and knowledge as professionals working in Jewish ECE.

Directions for Indicator 9 - Please provide support for at least 6 pieces of evidence.

- 9.1 The professional leadership and teachers are involved in adult Jewish learning.
- 9.2 The professional leadership and teachers study constructivist, Reggio inspired early childhood education
- 9.3 The professional leadership and teachers study how to partner with and engage parents and/or families.
- 9.4 The professional leadership are involved in studying about being a leader.
- 9.5 The professional leadership and teachers value Jewish learning as essential to their work
- 9.6 Professional leadership and teachers gain skills and knowledge about Jewish life that they apply to their work.
- 9.7 Professional leadership and teachers gain skills and knowledge about partnering with and engaging families and/or parents that they apply to their work.
- 9.8 Professional leadership and teachers gain skills and knowledge about Constructivist, Reggio inspired early childhood education that they apply to their work.
- 9.9 Professional leadership gain skills and knowledge about leadership that they apply to their work.

Indicator 10 – The school and host institution support educators’ professional growth as aligned with the school’s vision.

Directions for Indicator 10 – Please provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

- 10.1 Professional Leadership leads the school in understanding and implementing a Jewish and constructivist approach to learning.
- 10.2 Professional Leadership plans professional development offerings that further the teachers’ understanding and implementation of a Jewish and constructivist approach to learning that is family centered.
- 10.3 The school and host institution provide dedicated, contracted or compensated time for teachers individually and collectively to study, experience, and discuss Judaism and early childhood educational theories and practices.
- 10.4 Professional Leadership co-creates with each teacher an individualized professional development plan.
- 10.5 Teachers participate in ongoing professional development through a variety of formats and media.
- 10.6 Teachers learn from and with other teachers in the school.
- 10.7 Teachers use the JECEI lenses and Indicators of Excellence to think about and reflect on their professional and personal experiences.

- 10.8 Professional Leadership shares books, articles, or materials with Jewish and/or early childhood educational content with the teachers.
- 10.9 Professional Leadership and teachers use protocols for studying books or articles.
- 10.10 Professional Leadership collaborates with the Jewish and early childhood communities in providing professional development opportunities.
- 10.11 Professional Leadership seeks resources from the host institution or other sources to support ongoing professional development.

ALL SCHOOLS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 11.1

- a) JECEI Leadership Team: Please provide a list of the JECEI Leadership Team members, their roles in the school and host institution, and activities throughout the process including for the accreditation and the future.
- b) 11.2 Family Members (Adults and Children) Continuing Jewish Education beyond Early Childhood Years Please provide a list of the ways the school encourages and facilitates families exploring current and future ways of engaging in Jewish living and learning.
- a) 11.3 Championing the Change Process: Please provide support for at least 6 pieces of evidence.

Indicator 11 - Lay Leadership in the school and host institution partners with Professional Leadership to champion the JECEI change process to create schools of excellence and engage families in Jewish living and learning.

- 11.1 A JECEI Leadership team consisting of professional and lay leadership (director and/or 2nd tier leader, teacher, parent, lay leaders, and host institution professional and lay leader) meets regularly to guide the JECEI change process.
- 11.2 The JECEI Leadership Team maintains ongoing connections to and communication with the host institution and other Jewish ECE school structures that are involved in decision making and/or programming (e.g. board, committees, PTO, elementary school day or religious school).
- 11.3 Lay Leadership seeks resources to support the work of the JECEI change process.
- 11.4 Lay Leadership partners with Professional Leadership to build a school community.
- 11.5 Lay leadership participates in policy and decision making based on research and/or the school vision.
- 11.6 Lay Leadership is committed to sustaining the JECEI approach to Jewish early childhood education.
- 11.7 Lay leadership participates in recognizing and celebrating moments of school growth, transition, and/or accomplishment.
- 11.8 Lay Leadership strengthens linkages between the school and other Jewish institutions.
- 11.9 Lay leadership advocates for early childhood education in the school, host institution, and community.

SCHOOLS MAY CHOOSE INDICATOR 12 OR 13

Indicator 12 - Professional leadership designs and maintains structures that support daily operations in alignment with the school's vision.

Directions for Indicator 12 –

- 1) Provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

12. To carry out its vision, the school has developed structures or systems for:

- 12.1 Shared professional leadership that includes a director, 2nd tier leader(s), and teachers
- 12.2 Making policy decision
- 12.3 Budgeting
- 12.4 Resource development
- 12.5 marketing
- 12.6 the intake/enrollment process for families
- 12.7 orientation and integration of new families
- 12.8 orientation and integration of new staff
- 12.9 program or curricular planning for learning experiences for children
- 12.10 program evaluation
- 12.11 Assessment of children's learning
- 12.12 Children with special needs

Directions for Indicator 13 - Please provide support for at least 4 pieces of evidence.

Indicator 13 – Professional Leadership partners with teachers to carry out the vision of the school.

- 13.1 Teachers are involved in decision making about the school's direction.
- 13.2 Teachers take responsibility for implementing the school's vision in the classroom.
- 13.3 Teachers initiate or take leadership roles that advance the school's direction.
- 13.4 Teachers are held accountable for implementing the school's vision.
- 13.5 Teachers are given increasing opportunities to broaden their responsibilities and deepen their roles.
- 13.6 Teachers take on leadership roles by coaching and mentoring peers.

APPENDIX E

CLASSROOM PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS

All portfolios are sent to the validators **two weeks prior to the visit** in an **electronic format**.

Classroom Portfolio: Each classroom creates a portfolio addressing 3 of the 4 classroom based Indicators of Excellence as follows:

- Required of All Classes: 7
- Choice of 2 of 3: 1, 3, and 4

Provided below are the instructions for completing the classroom portfolio.

ALL TEACHERS MUST COMPLETE THIS INDICATOR

Directions for Indicator 7 –

- a) Make visible your approach to integrating Jewish living and learning into your classroom. Include how the lenses are part of your approach. You can focus on one lens in your presentation.
- b) Please provide at least 8 pieces of evidence. All pieces of evidence must in some way be connected to Jewish living and learning. At least 5 of them must include the pieces of evidence that specifically mention children.

Indicator 7 – Jewish living and learning, ideas and values, are part of the everyday learning experiences.

- 7.1 Children share their feelings, ideas, questions, and/or experiences with their peers and/or adults.
- 7.2 Children have access to a variety of materials to explore Jewish life.
- 7.3 Children work on projects in small groups.
- 7.4 Children and teachers both explore and celebrate moments of blessing, transition, or thanks.
- 7.5 Children learn about their identities or uniqueness e.g. developmentally, culturally.
- 7.6 Children explore their ideas and/or feelings through art or nature experiences.
- 7.7 Children and teachers explore the why of Jewish symbols and practices.
- 7.8 Teachers create a culture of inquiry in the classroom; this cycle involves multiple steps such as dialogue, reflection, investigation, and action.
- 7.9 Teachers make Jewish learning foundational by exploring the JECEI lenses such as the ideas, values, symbols, stories, and/or practices embedded in them.
- 7.10 Teachers explore with parents the why of Jewish symbols and practices.
- 7.11 Teachers connect the stories and ideas in torah and/or other Jewish sources to daily experiences.
- 7.12 Teachers utilize a variety of Jewish sources such as stories, materials, artifacts, symbols, food, music, and/or Hebrew to deepen children's learning experiences.

- 7.13 Teachers share with parents evidence of the JECEI lenses in the children's learning experiences.
- 7.14 Teachers get to know children and their families by gathering stories or symbols about their histories, hopes, and/or dreams.

TEACHERS MAY CHOOSE 2 of 3 INDICATORS 1, 3, OR 4. The indicators are listed below.

Indicator #1 - Teachers and families are partners in nurturing the social and emotional growth of community members - children, families, and staff.

Directions for Indicator 1 - Please provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

- 1.1 Teachers greet families and children at the beginning and end of the day with respect and warmth.
- 1.2 Teachers use home visits to understand children and families' needs, interests, and home life.
- 1.3 Teachers and families exchange information about children on a regular basis, daily for infant/toddlers.
- 1.4 Teachers are responsive to the social and emotional needs of children and families.
- 1.5 Teachers share the strengths of children and/or joyful moments of learning and growth with parents on a regular basis.
- 1.6 Teachers focus on supporting the parent child relationship.
- 1.7 Teachers model desired ways of listening or interacting with children.
- 1.8 Teachers engage parents in co-creating the classroom community.
- 1.9 Teachers respect issues of confidentiality.
- 1.10 Teachers and professional leadership make referrals to parents when needed.
- 1.11 Teachers and professional leadership create an environment where parents feel comfortable seeking support for parenting and family issues.
- 1.12 Teachers collaborate with parents to support the social and emotional needs of children.
- 1.13 Teachers feel that their social and emotional needs are supported.

Indicator 3 is either 3A for Children (2 – 5 years) OR 5B for Infant/Toddler Classrooms

Indicator 3A Children (2 – 5 years) - Children take responsibility for themselves and others.

Directions for Indicator 3A - Please provide support for at least 6 pieces of evidence.

- 3A.1 Children help each other.
- 3A.2 Children carry out classroom routines.
- 3A.3 Children manage their own behavior
- 3A.4 Children explore relationships through interacting with other children

- 3A.5 Children engage in tzedakah (acts of righteous), chesed (acts of kindness), and mitzvot (commandments/deeds) that demonstrate caring for others.
- 3A.6 Children care for the school environment.
- 3A.7 Children are involved in helping others in the Jewish community.
- 3A.8 Children are involved in helping others in the general community.

Indicator 3B Infants/Toddlers – Teachers use relationships as the primary way of supporting the development of the infant/toddler’s self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression.

Directions for Indicator 3B - Please provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

- 3B.1 Teachers encourage infants/toddlers to express themselves through verbal imitation expanding on their sounds and words
- 3B.2 Teachers encourage infants/toddlers to interact with adults and/or other children
- 3B.3 Teachers provide verbal interaction and aural stimulation for infants/toddlers
- 3B.4 Teachers expose infant/toddlers to Hebrew as well as other languages
- 3B.5 Teachers balance holding infants/toddlers with times for moving around on their own
- 3B.6 Teachers verbal and physical interactions reflect warmth and care
- 3B.7 Teachers create an environment that is calming and predictable
- 3B.8 Teachers take the infant/toddler’s lead individualizing experiences around their interests and developmental level
- 3B.9 Teachers provide opportunities for children to learn through experimentation including trial and error
- 3B.10 Teachers provide infant/toddlers with opportunities to experience Jewish symbols, food, and music
- 3B.11 Teachers encourage infant/toddlers to help each other.
- 3B.12 Teachers help infant/toddlers manage their own behavior
- 3B.13 Teachers are responsive to the social/emotional and physical needs of infant/toddlers
- 3B.14 Teachers interact with infant/toddlers in a variety of ways and places including on the floor
- 3B.15 Teachers are playful in helping infant/toddlers make transitions throughout the day.

Indicator 4 – Small group project work and documentation are part of the curricular process of teachers engaging students in constructing the learning experience.

Directions for Indicator 4 - Please provide support for at least 3 pieces of evidence from each of 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. This is a total of at least 9 pieces of evidence.

- 4.1 Engaging children in constructing the learning process
 - 4.1.1 Children’s ideas, interests, and/or feelings inform curricular choices.
 - 4.1.2 Children are given choices of what to do in the classroom
 - 4.1.3 Teachers use provocations to encourage children’s exploration

- 4.1.4 Teachers use their observation of and/or conversations with children to inform learning experiences
- 4.1.5 Teachers and children map out/brainstorm directions that exploration of a topic can go
- 4.1.6 Teachers tap into real life experiences/happenings of children, their families, and/or themselves to foster learning
- 4.1.7 Children's play is a source for learning
- 4.1.8 Children's interactions with one another are a source for learning

4.2 Using small group project work

- 4.2.1 Children's learning occurs over multiple sessions.
- 4.2.2 Children use a variety of media to explore a subject
- 4.2.3 Children's work is expressive of their individuality and viewpoints
- 4.2.4 Children learn from one another
- 4.2.5 Children's discussions and work with one another informs the direction that a project takes
- 4.2.6 Teachers design strategies to show children how exploration of a topic might continue
- 4.2.7 Children work in small groups

4.3 Documenting children's learning

- 4.3.1 Teachers regularly engage in the process of observation and documentation as a way of facilitating learning and growth
- 4.3.2 Teachers use documentation as a tool for reflecting on and planning the learning experience.
- 4.3.3 Teachers' documentation of children's learning occurs in multiple forms
- 4.3.4 Teachers' documentation incorporates multiple perspectives and voices such as that of children, parents, teachers, and others as appropriate.
- 4.3.5 Teachers document children's exploration of Judaism and Jewish life.
- 4.3.6 Teacher observation and documentation of children's work are used in assessing children's growth.
- 4.3.7 Teachers use documentation to help children reflect on their ideas and/or questions.
- 4.3.8 Teachers use documentation to celebrate accomplishments and growth.
- 4.3.9 Teachers use documentation as a vehicle for communicating with parents about their child's learning experience.
- 4.3.10 Teachers use documentation as a way of making visible the child's learning experiences throughout the time that they are in the program.

Appendix F

SAMPLE ACCREDITATION VISIT SCHEDULE

48 hours over 3 days

DAY 1

Travel to school/city
Late afternoon/Dinner

Validators meet to review logistics, schedule, and key areas to investigate.

DAY 2

8:00 AM

Arrive at School
Meet School's Accreditation Point Person for Quick Tour of School
Review Schedule
Observe arrival time

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Observe classrooms

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Interviews arranged with a) JECEI Leadership Team, b) Teachers, and c) Parents
Check out with School's Accreditation Point Person

6:30 PM

Validators Only
Dinner
Review of Day – Identify areas not covered, questions seeking further investigation

DAY 3

Option A

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM

As needed:
Observe classrooms
Follow up with Administrators/2nd Tier Leaders
Follow up with Teachers, Parents, and Leadership Team

12:30 PM – 4 PM

Validators meet to discuss findings and report outline

Option B

9 AM – 4 PM

Validators meet to discuss findings and report outline

Appendix G
Accreditation Visit – School Responsibilities

2 – 6 Weeks in Advance of the Visit

1. Interviews/focus groups – 45 minute block of time

*Please note that the Director/2nd tier leaders are NOT to be present at the interview with parents or teachers

- a. Parents – want 6 – 8 people present – do NOT include parents who are teachers
- b. Teachers – 4 – 8 teachers present – try to have 1 teacher from each age group
- c. JECEI Leadership Team (large range of stakeholders parents, lay and professional host institution leaders, director, and teachers) – invite all members
- d. Director and 2nd tier leaders

Two Weeks in Advance of the Visit

2. Copies of the school and classroom portfolios are sent in an electronic format on zip drive, cd, or whatever method works best for the school to a) each of the validators 2 weeks in advance of the visit, and b) to the JECEI office to Roberta Goodman’s attention. A traceable method of sending e.g. Fedex, UPS is recommended.

- a. Each classroom portfolio should be in a single document

3. Contact Information for Validators

Couple of Days before the Visit

4. Final schedule of the two days – the school is responsible for emailing this directly to the validators and copying the Director of Research and Standards
5. The Final Schedule should include a check out time with the Director and another 2nd tier leader as designated by the school sometime on the second afternoon in the noon to 3 PM range. At the check out, the validators will talk about the next steps and timeline; the validators are not able to provide feedback at this time.

Day of the Visit

6. School provides to the validators a list of teachers, classrooms, and ages

7. Food
 - a. Provide kosher lunch both days
 - b. provide list or make suggestions of kosher restaurants in the area for dinner
8. Room – the validators need a quiet space where they can work that is in or near the school

JECEI Accreditation Portfolio

Indicators and Evidence

School Name and Location
School Year

Age of Children:

Teachers' First and Last Names:

Room Number

Appendix J Preparing the Example Option

Preparing the document for the example option:

- Indicator number and wording
- Describe – why you focused on this example?
- Cover these types of questions:
 - What was the event/item about?
 - Who was involved?
 - Who or what precipitated the event/item?
 - How were different stakeholders in your school and host institution involved?
 - What were the goals or what were you trying to accomplish?
 - What were the outcomes from this event/item – what did you learn? How did stakeholders benefit?

- What made this event/item so significant to your JECEI transformation work?
- Present in a chronological order through narrative/written explanation and with proof (e.g. photos, children’s words/conversations, newsletter or update to parents)
- For each “twist and turn,” explain why you went in that direction – what led to going that way
- At the end, copy all the pieces of evidence for the indicator and highlight which pieces of evidence you feel the example covers
- **Accreditation Planning Sheet for each classroom indicator**

**Appendix K
ACCREDITATION PLANNING SHEET**

Indicator #1 - Teachers and families are partners in nurturing the social and emotional growth of community members - children, families, and staff.

Directions for Indicator 1 - Please provide support for at least 7 pieces of evidence.

EXAMPLE APPROACH

POTENTIAL PROJECTS	ITEMS NEEDED TO DOCUMENT THE EXAMPLE E.G. PHOTOS, WEEKLY JOURNAL

PIECES OF EVIDENCE APPROACH

EVIDENCE	EXPERIENCE/ DOCUMENTATION	ITEMS NEEDED E.G. PHOTOS, WEEKLY JOURNAL
1.1 Teachers greet families and children at the beginning and end of the day with respect and warmth.		
1.2 Teachers use home visits to understand children and families’ needs, interests, and home life.		

1.3	Teachers and families exchange information about children on a regular basis, daily for infant/toddlers.		
1.4	Teachers are responsive to the social and emotional needs of children and families.		
1.5	Teachers provide feedback to families on a regular basis.		
1.6	Teachers share the strengths of children and joyful moments of learning and growth with parents on a regular basis.		
1.7	Teachers focus on supporting the parent child relationship.		
1.8	Teachers model desired ways of listening and interacting with children.		
1.9	Teachers engage families in co-creating the classroom and school community.		
1.10	Teachers and families respect issues of confidentiality.		
1.11	Teachers and professional leadership make referrals to families when needed.		
1.12	Teachers and professional leadership create an environment where families feel comfortable seeking support for parenting and family issues.		
1.13	Teachers collaborate with families to support the social and emotional needs of children.		
1.14	Teachers feel that their social and emotional needs are supported.		

Validators Report Formt
Name of School
Submitted by Names of Validators

Date of Submission

Overview of This Report

This report includes the findings of the Accreditation Team visit conducted at Name of School.

The report of the team presents the findings based upon:

- x# Classroom Portfolios
- School Portfolio
- 5 year plan
- Classroom and school observations
- Review of supporting documentation and
- Interviews with representative stakeholders including parents, teachers, and the leadership team

Schools qualify for one of three levels of accreditation:

- Accreditation – the school has fulfilled all the JECEI requirements for accreditation. The validators may include suggestions for improvement that should be addressed during the accreditation period.
- Conditional Accreditation – the validators identify specific items that can be addressed in a short period of time before accreditation is granted.
- Accreditation Deferred – the validators feel that the school needs another year to address specific items. These schools may reapply in a year’s time.

On the basis of the following report, the accreditation recommendation is: x level.

Background

Accreditation

The purpose of JECEI’s accreditation process is for the school to demonstrate that it has and will continue to incorporate JECEI’s approach to Jewish early childhood education into its vision and operation and that it has achieved overall excellence in early childhood education as demonstrated by accreditation through NAEYC or a comparable organization. Accredited schools receive the JECEI brand recognizing their achievement of excellence and are part of JECEI’s national campaign to raise awareness about these schools in specific and in about the importance of excellence in Jewish early childhood education in general.

School (Basic Overview)

The school serves x children in x classrooms covering x sites and their location.

The Visit

Two validators visited school sites over two days on x dates. The visit included a school tour, observations and portfolio review in each of the x classrooms and interviews with teachers, the leadership team and parents. In addition, an exit interview was conducted with the school director and team leader.

Accreditation Team Report

Institution:

Dates of Visit:

Accreditation Team Recommendation:

Rationale:

The recommendation of x level of accreditation was based on a thorough review of the Classroom Portfolios, School Portfolio, classroom and school observations, 5 year plan, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative stakeholders including parents, teachers, and the leadership team, additional supporting documents available during the visit, along with additional information requested from the validators during the visit.

The team felt that it obtained sufficient and consistent information that led [level] degree of confidence in making this decision. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the school was based upon the following;

Classroom Portfolios

Portfolios serve as a vehicle for the educators and lay leaders to demonstrate the school's readiness for JECEI branding as an excellent Jewish ECE school. The accreditation standards consist of indicators and evidence. Instructions are given for each indicator of what is required. Essentially, JECEI is looking to see that educators are capable of implementing the JECEI approach and committed to and capable of continually learning and reflecting on how to refine and sustain the JECEI approach. The requirements were as follows:

- Teachers must complete x of x indicators – indicators listed by number
- Listed required indicator by number
- A project should be included in the portfolio.
- For each indicator, 70% of the pieces of evidence need to be substantiated
- 70% of portfolios must meet the requirements listed above

Indicators

Pattern for reporting classroom portfolio indicators:

Indicator #: Indicator written out fully.

Indication of whether or not the indicator was met and if supported by a single or multiple sources of evidence.

Areas of Strength in Indicator Implementation

Areas for Growth in Indicator Implementation

Overall Comments on Classroom Portfolios

Areas of Strength in Overall Classroom Implementation

Areas for Growth in Overall Classroom Implementation

School Portfolio

Whether or not school portfolio indicator was met. Done for each indicator.

Indicator 2: The professional leadership facilitates the flow of information and exchange of feedback on the school level and encourages the same between teachers and parents.

Brief description as appropriate.

5 Year Plan

Description and comments as appropriate

Interviews

Teacher Interviews

Validators met with x# teachers to discuss their roles in the JECEI process as well as their challenges and successes.

Successes:

Challenges:

Parent Interviews

Validators met with x# of parents to discuss their involvement in the JECEI process and their perceived successes and challenges.

Successes:

Challenges:

School Leadership Interview

Validators met with x# members of the school leadership team who were candid about the challenges and successes created by the JECEI change process.

Successes:

Challenges: