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## JRC Early Childhood Update December 2020

If you have been able to keep up with the weekly JRC newsletter, you know that we have been preparing and working diligently to open our Early Childhood Program in January. We are happy to announce that we are ready to open classes for three to five-year-olds on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

JRC has done a tremendous job of pivoting to online programming for most of our services and programming. Early Childhood Education is one area where no virtual alternative is possible. That is why preschools across the nation have opened and have had great success remaining open safely. We are confident that we will do the same.

After consulting with medical professionals, DCFS, and doing our due diligence regarding building use and airflow requirements, we feel confident that we can safely and effectively open the ECC. Classes for 3 to 5-year-olds start January 11<sup>th</sup> and will meet M/W/F from 9:15 am - 12:00 pm.

Here's why:

- The medical professionals consulting with the JRC Covid19 Taskforce have advised us that young children are less likely to spread the virus than older children or adults.
- The preschool will consist of a very small group of fewer than ten children and two adults for this spring, allowing for proper social distancing.
- The state guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health state that child care programs can stay open.
- Early Childhood is contained in one part of our building, away from staff or public areas.

Unfortunately, it is not currently safe to open the building for other events. Synagogues that have had some in-person programming have quickly pivoted back to virtual offerings.

As you know, JRC has been on the conservative side when making decisions around the pandemic. While this has been difficult for everyone, the results support our choices. Taking this path should also reassure our families that the decision to open the preschool went through a rigorous evaluation and planning process.

None of us can predict the future. We will continue to stay on top of the latest information and monitor our preschool students' and staff's health and safety.