



Clubhouse

After-School Program

PARENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012



**Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh
Squirrel Hill**

ABOUT CLUBHOUSE

The JCC Clubhouse combines top-quality facilities with trained, caring and creative staff. Our goal is to nourish your child's physical, emotional and social well-being. We offer a wide variety of fun and stimulating activities for children in Pre-K through grade 6 in our tournament-sized gyms, heated indoor swimming pool, age-appropriate homerooms and in our various clubs.

JCC Membership is required to become a "member" of Clubhouse. Scholarships are also available for those who qualify. For more information, please contact the Membership Office at 521-8011, ext. 534.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

1. To offer our families a warm, secure atmosphere provided by caring, quality staff.
2. To enrich your child's physical, emotional and social development.
3. To encourage independence and cooperation.
4. To permit freedom of choice within set limits.
5. To further an understanding of the Jewish cultural heritage.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Clubhouse is open Monday-Friday after school until 6 pm. Arrival time is 3-4 pm

HOMEROOM TIME

- Children are met at their bus stops by counselors, checked in and escorted to their age-appropriate homerooms.
- Kosher snacks such as fresh fruit, crackers, yogurt, pita, cereal and peanut butter sandwiches are immediately available.
- All children do homework with active help from counselors.
- After homework is checked and put away, weekly theme or holiday activities are available as well as gym time on a limited basis.
- Children are presented with the day's clubs and their choices are recorded.

CLUBS

- At 4:30 pm, all buses have arrived, and children are escorted to their clubs. Those children arriving too late for homework in home rooms will proceed to Homework Club where they will have a snack and complete homework before joining their choice of club for the day.
- Club activities occur in the homerooms, the Robinson building gym, in Area L (the lunchroom in the Early Childhood Department in the Irene Kaufmann Building), the racquetball courts, the computer lab in the Kaufmann building, at Davis Park on Hobart Street, etc. If you are picking up your child during club times, please refer to the sign-in /sign-out procedures. Twice a week in good weather, we take children to Davis Park on Hobart Street.
- It is the clubs at Clubhouse that make our program truly unique. We offer a rotating, dynamic schedule of clubs designed to pique children's interest in something new, help them develop fine and gross motor skills, and social skills. Examples include: Construction Zone (building with different media), Friends Around the World (exploring a different culture), Back Yard Adventure (nature and science activities), Goofy Games (loosely structured gym time), Swimming (twice weekly), Cooking, Sewing, Chess and Gardening. New clubs are invented by our talented and creative staff with particular children's interests in mind.
- 6:00 pm: All children must be picked up and signed out by their parents or guardians. A \$25 fee will be charged to your account for late pickup after 6:05 pm.

UNITS

In order to best meet the developmental needs of children, Clubhouse is organized into four units. Each unit is named for a Hebrew word that represents our program.

Yesod: Our youngest children, Pre-K-Kindergarten; *yesod* mean foundation.

Kehila: First- and second-graders; *kehila* means community

Chaverim: Third- and fourth-graders; *chaverim* mean friends

Kvutza: Fifth-, sixth- and seventh-graders; *kvutza* means group.

At the JCC's Clubhouse After-School Program, we create a **community** using a **foundation** of diverse **groups** that help build lifelong **friendships**.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The goal of Clubhouse is to provide a safe nurturing atmosphere in which your child can develop his/her socialization skills and grow as an individual within a group setting. For the safety of all children, Clubhouse provides discipline guidelines to help all children make positive choices as well as comply with program policies. Our trained staff is dedicated to building your child's self esteem by reinforcing positive behavior and maintaining communication with the parents.

If at any time a child has difficulty adhering to the discipline guidelines, parents will be contacted so that a positive outcome can be achieved in order to allow your child to grow in our programs.

REGISTRATION

ALL CHILDREN MUST BE REGISTERED IN ADVANCE FOR CLUBHOUSE.

Registration forms are available in the Clubhouse office, or you may call us and have them mailed.

In addition to the registration forms, all children must have emergency forms on file in the Clubhouse Office including parent consent, medical authorization forms, and an emergency contact card. These are available in our Clubhouse Family Information Packet.

CHANGES IN REGISTRATION

To insure the integrity of our program, Clubhouse does not accept drop-ins. We believe that building relationships is the key to quality children's programming. Registrations are on an annual basis. If a family needs to cancel their registration due to a move or for any other reason, a cancellation fee of \$150 will be assessed. After that, unused months will be credited to your account. If a family stops and restarts registration for Clubhouse within the same year, both the cancellation and the registration fee will apply.

Occasionally you may need to have your child come to Clubhouse on a day you haven't registered for. We are glad to accommodate our families occasionally in this way. A \$30 per day, per child fee will be charged to your account.

ABSENCES

Please call the Clubhouse Office at 521-8011, ext. 217, by 1 pm if your child is not coming to the JCC on a registered day, as we must adjust our daily pick-up schedules. As indicated on the registration forms, there are no substitutions or refunds for missed days.

SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES

JCC Member ID cards are necessary to enter to the building. If you forget your ID card, you must sign in at the receptionist's desk upon arrival.

Our staff will ask for identification when an adult they do not recognize comes to pick up your child. No child will be allowed to leave the building with an adult who is not listed on your registration form unless we receive verbal and/or written permission from you.

Our most important concern is the safety of your child. Please follow these procedures:

SIGN-IN

Once the children arrive at the JCC, they are greeted on Darlington Road by a counselor, and taken to the ground floor of the Robinson building, home of Clubhouse. Children are checked into the sign-in book and directed to their homerooms. In the homerooms, the children are again checked in by their counselors.

When the buses have arrived at the JCC, the office checks all of the lists for absences and discrepancies. If your child is absent, we call you to double-check. If we do not know in advance of an absence, we also call the child's school.

SIGN-OUT

When you arrive to pick up your child at the JCC, please be aware of the Clubhouse schedule. Our clubs are from 4:30–5:30 pm and from 5–6 pm. Some of these clubs are in the Irene Kaufmann Building, and children must cross the street with their counselors to return to Clubhouse.

When arriving to pick up your child, go directly to the sign-in/ sign-out desk located at the children's department office. The sign-out sheet lists all of the children in the program. You are responsible for signing out your child, including your name and the time you pick up your child.

The desk will have information on your child's activities and location. You may go the club area to pick up your child if you wish, but only after signing your child out. Children who go to the Kaufmann building or a different destination for their clubs take all of their belongings with them so that once they are signed out, parents may get them and depart. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to come to the office.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

Children's transportation to Clubhouse is facilitated by the school and the parent. To arrange for your child to have transportation to the JCC, please contact your child's school. You will need to fill out a PM Drop-Off Form, requesting your child's destination to be the JCC, Darlington Road entrance. (The PM Drop-Off Form may be obtained from the office at your child's school.) If you have any questions, please call the Clubhouse Office.

Teachers at your child's school are responsible for getting your child onto the bus coming to the JCC every day. Our counselors cannot be responsible for items your child leaves on the bus. Please remind your child to keep their backpacks closed so that personal items do not get lost.

HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS

Enclosed in your family information pack are an emergency medical form and a medical authorization form. All forms must be turned in to the Clubhouse Office PRIOR to your child starting the program.

ANY MEDICATIONS, PRESCRIPTION OR NON-PRESCRIPTION, cannot be distributed without your WRITTEN permission. Please send a completed medical authorization form to the Clubhouse Office, along with the medicine in the ORIGINAL pharmacy container, labeled with your child's name.

For the protection of all children, you are requested to keep your child at home when he/she exhibits the following symptoms:

- A. Temperature of 100.5 degrees orally within 24 hours
- B. Vomiting twice within the past 24 hours
- C. Diarrhea, loose stools, and/or abnormal bowel movements
- D. Red, glazed, or discharging eyes (pink eye); your child needs to stay home until the discharge stops, or on medication for 24 hours

E. Ringworm, lice, or impetigo; remain home until adequate treatment has controlled the spread

Children developing any of the above symptoms during the course of the day will be isolated until an authorized person can pick them up. If contacted in a situation such as this, we request that you please pick up your child within one hour of receiving a call from the Clubhouse Office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURES

In the event that your child's school is closed due to inclement weather, Clubhouse will open at 7:30 am and follow a Fun Day schedule, closing at 6 pm. Clubhouse follows the lead of Pittsburgh Public Schools and may be closed in severe weather. Please call us at 521-8011, ext. 217, to get the latest program update during a weather emergency.

FUN DAY PROGRAMS

On school holidays when the JCC is open, the Children's Department sponsors Fun Day programs. These programs are run by Sarah Glascom, Program Coordinator and may include field trips and other special activities to make this time off from school enjoyable for your child. More details and registration forms will be provided prior to each of these breaks. There is an additional fee for these special programs.

ABOUT THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS

SHABBAT

Shabbat is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. It is eagerly awaited throughout the week, a time when we can set aside all of our weekday concerns and devote ourselves to higher pursuits. To sanctify the Sabbath, we say a blessing over wine and eat a special braided egg bread, challah.

ROSH HASHANAH

The Jewish New Year is a time for serious introspection. According to tradition, G-d writes our name in the Book of Life and decides who will live and who will die, who will have a good life and who will have a bad life, for the following year. We eat apples and honey in the hope that we will have a sweet year.

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) is the most important day of the Jewish calendar. Occurring 10 days after Rosh Hashanah, it is a day dedicated to fasting, reflection, prayer and penitence. Traditionally it is believed to be the last opportunity to seek forgiveness from those we have wronged during the past year.

SUKKOT

Sukkot is a fall harvest holiday. We build three-sided temporary booths that have no real roofs or doors. We decorate them with branches, fruits and vegetables. We eat, study, play and sometimes sleep in our sukkah during the holiday. We remember that when the Jewish people wandered in the desert after they were freed from slavery in Egypt, they built sukkot for shade and rest.

SHEMINI ATZERET

Shemini Atzeret occurs on the day after the seven-day festival of Sukkot and is generally translated as "the eighth day of assembly." The Talmud declares the eighth day as a separate holiday dedicated to the love of God. In ancient Israel, Shemini Atzeret coincided with the beginning of the rainy season.

SIMCHAT TORAH

Each year in the synagogue, we read the Torah from start to finish. The holiday of Simchat Torah marks the day we finish reading the last section and begin reading the first section over again. It's a time for dancing and singing.

CHANUKAH

Chanukah celebrates religious freedom. In 175 B.C.E., King Antiochus used force to impose Greek religion on the people of Israel. This caused an uprising led by Judah the Maccabee and a small band of poorly armed Jews who succeeded in overcoming the Greeks. Once the Maccabees prevailed, they entered the desecrated Temple and found an untainted jar of oil sufficient to light the Temple lamp for only one day. But a miracle occurred and that small amount of oil lasted for eight days.

TU B'SHEVAT

Tu B'shevat (15th day of Shevat) is the New Year of the trees. This marks the start of spring when the almond tree is decked with beautiful white flowers. On this day, school children in Israel plant thousands of saplings. Traditionally in the Diaspora we eat dried fruit symbolizing the fruits of Israel.

PURIM

Purim derives its name from the word "Pur," meaning lot. It recalls the lots that Haman, Prime Minister of Persia, cast to determine the most favorable month and day for the execution of the Jews of Persia. This diabolical scheme was foiled by the intervention of the Persian queen, Esther, and her uncle, Mordecai, who were both Jewish. Purim is a festival of joy, and young and old dress up in costumes to celebrate.

PESACH (PASSOVER)

Pesach commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt and the birth of an independent and free people. It is also known as Chag HaMatzot (the feast of unleavened bread) in remembrance of the time when the children of Israel left Egypt so hurriedly there was no time for the dough to rise.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

On May 14, 1948 the State of Israel was proclaimed by the Provisional State Council sitting in Tel Aviv. This day was declared a national holiday known as Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Independence Day).

SHAVUOT

Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) is one of the three festivals (Sukkot and Pesach being the other two) when Jews in ancient times made a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. It commemorates both an agricultural as well as a religious and national event in Jewish history. It was on this holiday that the fruits of the first harvest of the seven species of the land of Israel were brought to the Temple as offerings. The seven species are wheat, barley, dates, olives, figs, grapes and pomegranates. Shavuot also commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

CONTACT INFORMATION

JCC Main Number	(412) 521-8010
Clubhouse Hotline	(412) 521-8011, ext. 217
Jayme Vertullo Program Coordinator jvertullo@jccpgh.org	(412) 521-8011, ext. 852
Rachael Altoff Program Coordinator raltoff@jccpgh.org	(412) 521-8011, ext. 228
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