

***What a  
Solomon Schechter  
Kindergartener  
Should Know  
and  
Be Able To Do!***

General Studies

Judaic Studies

Specials Program

**ושננתם לבניך**

“And you shall teach  
your children...”



Solomon Schechter  
Day School of Las Vegas

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Mr. Jonathan Mitzmacher, Head of School

## **A Message to the Reader**

This brochure lists skills and abilities in General Studies, Judaic Studies, and the Specials program that students should acquire by the end of Kindergarten to earn promotion to the First Grade. It answers questions that everyone in the school community needs to ask, such as:

- **What are students expected to know and be able to do?**
- **How are their achievements measured?**

This document is the product of extensive work by our faculty and administration, taking into account guidelines published by the Nevada Education Department, the New York State Education Department, and the unique needs of our school community. Besides detailing the curricular goals and objectives of this particular grade, this document is designed to be part of the overall K-5 curriculum of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Las Vegas. Similar brochures can be obtained for other grades.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please be sure to contact Mr. Mitzmacher at 702-804-1333. We value your feedback and input.

### **Mission Statement**

The Solomon Schechter Day School of Las Vegas provides an outstanding secular education in a dynamic Jewish setting. It is our goal to instill in our students a lifelong love of learning and discovery, a healthy self image, and a strong, positive Jewish identity. Each student's ability to think critically is developed through a dual-language program. Additionally, our school fosters a synergy and appreciation of both Jewish and American cultures.

We strive for educational excellence by encouraging free inquiry, discussion, and creativity, while promoting intellectual integrity in a warm, personal, and highly motivating atmosphere. Our students receive personalized instruction to address fully their needs, develop their abilities, and stimulate their interests. The School guides each student on a path toward success by fostering the fulfillment of his or her individual potential through a uniquely integrated curriculum of general and Jewish studies.

## **Language Arts**

### **Reading—Reading Habits**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Choose reading as a way to enjoy free time at school and home.
- Begin choosing books to read, re-read, and have read to them.
- Hear one or two books a day read to them in school and two more outside of school.
- Hold books right side up and turn pages in the right direction.
- Distinguish between print and pictures in literature and be able to follow along with the text.
- Locate parts of a book such as beginning and end.

- Read a range of materials, including picture books, songs, and informational texts such as ABC books.
- Discuss books daily with the teacher, a classmate, or in a group.
- Learn new words daily.

### **Reading—Getting the Meaning**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Show that they understand books read to them by retelling a story in their own words.
- Re-read favorite books that have been read to them, imitating the reading behaviors of the teacher.
- Recognize and interpret familiar signs and symbols from the environment, such as stop signs.
- Join with the class in creating charts and diagrams to record important details about characters and events in stories.

### **Reading—Print/Sound Code**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Understand the idea that letters stand for sounds that make up words.
- Recognize and say the sounds of all the letters of the alphabet.
- Begin to recognize the way different sounds go together to make a word.
- Recognize short vowels.
- Recognize blends and the beginning and end of words.
- Hear and identify rhyming words.
- Recognize their own first name in writing.
- Read some common words on their own.
- Begin to read common labels in the classroom and at home.

### **Writing—Habits**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Enjoy writing daily on topics that they choose themselves.
- Use letters, drawings, and gestures to tell a story.
- Use words and phrases from classroom charts and labels to add to writing.
- Begin to listen to others' writing and re-read their own.
- Begin to keep a collection of their writing.
- Have opportunities to share finished work with an audience.

### **Writing—Purposes**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Write in order to:
  - Share an experience or event.
  - Communicate information to others.
  - Tell a made-up story.
  - Tell what they think about a book.
  - Tell how to do something.
- Retell and act out stories as an activity before writing.
- Tell about events in the order that they happened.

## **Writing—Language Use and Conventions**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Write freely, using drawings, signs, symbols, and invented spelling to express themselves or tell a story.
- Create writing that sounds like talk, choosing words carefully to express what they want to say.
- Begin to use one or two letters, especially initial consonant sounds, to represent whole words.
- Be able to reread their writing immediately after they have written it.
- Leave spaces between words.
- Write left to right and top to bottom.
- Use uppercase and periods when writing a sentence.
- Begin to use classroom resources such as alphabet charts and word lists to help with writing.

## **Listening and Speaking**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

Listen and speak daily in whole class and small group discussions, and in one-to-one conversations with the teacher, in order to:

- Show understanding of stories read to them.
- Learn and practice using new vocabulary.
- Share ideas and facts with classmates and teachers.
- Ask questions to make things clearer.
- Hear and follow directions.
- Listen respectfully and learn to take turns speaking.

# **Mathematics**

## **Arithmetic and Number Concepts**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Count objects up to 20.
- Identify number names orally through 50.
- Practice the skills of counting on from a particular number (for example, starting from the number 7).
- Use a number line to count forward and backward.
- Use ordinal number names from first to tenth.
- Be familiar with number words through 20.
- Share sets of objects with others.
- Compare two groups and determine which is more, less, or the same, and use appropriate vocabulary (for example, more/bigger, less/smaller, equal/same).
- Explore fraction concepts using the words whole and half.
- Practice estimating and counting the actual number to check estimates.
- Use real money to learn the names of coins and bills.

## **Geometry and Measurement Concepts**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Create geometric pictures and designs.

- Introduce names of shapes.
- Explore non-standard units of measure (e.g., use strings to measure circumference).
- Practice estimating (guessing) sizes.
- Use comparisons such as bigger than, lighter than, less than, equal to, etc.
- Compare size and capacity.

### **Function and Algebra Concepts**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Observe and describe patterns.
- Follow directions to copy a pattern.
- Attempt to extend patterns.
- Look for patterns in graphs, art & rhythm.
- Look at quilt patterns for different geometric shapes.

### **Statistics and Probability Concepts**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Sort and classify objects by one characteristic (color, shape, size).
- Gather data (information) relating to experiences by counting and using pictures.
- Talk about graphs using words like most, least, the same, etc.
- Use dice for making decisions while playing games.
- Discuss the certainty and uncertainty of events.

### **Mathematical Process**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Talk about mathematics in their everyday life.
- Play games that involve sorting and classifying with blocks, buttons, seashells, cookies, and other sorting toys.
- Put objects in order or sequence.
- Solve problems in ways that make sense.
- Draw pictures to show mathematical situations.

## Science

### **Physical Sciences**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Observe, investigate, describe, and sort objects based on how they look, feel, taste, smell, or sound.
- Observe and describe the concept of magnetism.
- Observe and investigate the properties of material that sink and float.

### **Life Sciences**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Observe and investigate the parts of a plant and the process of growing plants.

- Observe and describe the life-cycle of insects (butterfly and ladybug).
- Observe, investigate and describe different animal habitats.

### **Earth and Space Sciences**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Examine and describe Earth materials such as bodies of water, sand, rocks, and soil.
- Begin to observe objects in the day and night skies (Sun, Moon, and stars).
- Begin to observe daily and seasonal changes in the weather.

### **Scientific Thinking**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Begin to work individually and in groups to collect and share information and ideas.
- Begin to ask questions based on observations of objects and events.

### **Scientific Tools and Technology**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Use magnifiers and measuring devices (measuring cups and pan scale).
- Use non-standard units of measurement for length, width, weight, and volume, such as cubes, paper clips, rulers and counters.

## **Social Studies**

### **American History**

*By the end of the school year, students should:*

- Understand the narrative of the Pilgrims' & the Indians' roles in early America.
- Be familiar with presidents George Washington & Abraham Lincoln.
- Be familiar with Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Be familiar with Nevada holidays.

### **World Geography**

*By the end of the school year, students should understand:*

- Land and water masses can be located on maps and a globe.
- Nevada and Las Vegas can be located on a map and a globe.
- The United States can be located on a map and a globe.
- Basics of cardinal directions and basic mapping skills.

### **Physical Geography**

*By the end of the school year, students should understand:*

- The climate and topography of the desert.
- The climate and topography of the rainforest.

## **Economics**

*By the end of the school year, students should understand:*

- Community and the dynamics of community (jobs, businesses, etc.).
- The United States has its own unique currency.

## **Government**

*By the end of the school year, students should understand that:*

- The United States has a president and should understand his role.
- Rules and laws help govern a country (and a classroom).
- The United States and Israel have flags and be familiar with them.
- The United States has a “Pledge of Allegiance” and should know how to recite it.
- The United States has patriotic songs and be able to sing “My Country ‘Tis of Thee”.
- That the United States and Israel have national anthems and know how to sing them.

# **Judaic Studies**

## **Conservative Judaism**

We are a school proudly aligned with the Conservative Movement. We adopt the guiding principles of our Movement for our school’s curriculum and program. As such we provide learning and experiences that encourage:

- Development of a personal relationship with God.
- The centrality of Mitzvah and Torah Study.
- Valuing and cherishing Jewish plurality and diversity, both within our school and the larger world around us.
- Identity with Jews in Israel and the world.

## **Mitzvah**

As a Conservative Day School, we teach, experience, and celebrate mitzvah. All of the mitzvot are both taught and observed throughout our school program. Much of the Mitzvah curriculum is implicit in all phases of our school program. This applies both to mitzvot we traditionally call “ritual” (*mitzvot bein Adam l’Makom*) and those we sometimes refer to as “ethical” (*mitzvot bein Adam l’chavero*). For example, all children give tzedakah each week. So too, Kashrut is strictly observed throughout the school. At the same time, we teach respect for teachers through an emphasis on proper behavior. Children observe the mitzvah of *kavod ha Brit* through recognition of the differences among our students and teachers.

While we recognize the wide range of observances among our families, the school remains committed to the observance of mitzvot for our children and families.

As the first year of our school program, Kindergarten children begin their exposure to a wide range of daily, lived mitzvot in school. These mitzvot are taught and observed as the way Jews live.

*Among the mitzvot lived in Kindergarten are:*

- Tzedakah
- Shabbat – Candles, Kiddush, Challah
- Food – Kashrut, Brachot
- Tefillah

### **Tefillah**

Tefillah is seen as the central way we express our thoughts, needs, and wishes as Jewish people. Tefillah teaches us the central categories of Jewish values and helps us communicate with God. Because the school sees Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people, tefillah is always done in Hebrew. Boys and girls participate equally in all aspects of the school's curriculum and Jewish experiences.

We teach tefillah both to help children learn the *matbayah tefillah* (the way the tefillot are recited in the synagogue services) and the ideas and aspirations the tefillah encompasses.

Tefillah is a sequential curriculum. Each year builds on the tefillot learned in the previous school years. By the end of their learning in the Elementary School, the children are capable of leading almost all of the daily and Shabbat tefillot.

Because we do not formally teach reading or writing of Hebrew in Kindergarten, tefillah is done orally as a class experience. The children master each of the tefillot through choral singing. In Kindergarten the children learn the central tefillah vocabulary, such as *tefillah, HaShem, siddur, Torah, Aron Kodesh*.

Tefillah is a daily experience. On Monday, the children celebrate Havdalah. On Friday, the children anticipate the beginning of Shabbat through the Kabbalat Shabbat. An overt connection is made between our school celebration and home observances and celebrations. For example, families are welcome to join us on Friday afternoons for Kabbalat Shabbat.

*By the end of Kindergarten, the expectation is that our students will be familiar with the following tefillot:*

*Modeh Ani; Mah Tov; Shema; Amidah – Avot Bracha; Oseh Shalom; Torah Tzeva Lano Moshe; Adon Olam.*

### **Shabbat and Holidays**

Through the weekly and monthly life of the school, the children see Shabbat and the Jewish holidays as special moments for Jewish celebration. Connections are made between the mitzvot of the Torah, our Jewish life in school, and our lives as Jews at home and in the wider world.

Each week the children learn to celebrate Shabbat with a Kabbalat Shabbat program. The children learn to light the Shabbat candles, say the brachot over the wine and challah, and learn many Shabbat songs. They also learn the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim*, inviting guests to our homes. The emphasis is on the beauty of the home Shabbat rituals.

### **Torah Study**

The goal of Torah study is to fulfill the mitzvah of *Talmud Torah*. We study the Torah as the central unifying story of our people's understanding of the world and our relationship with God. By studying the Torah, we come to identify with our Jewish history and fulfill God's covenant with the Jewish people. Finally, we begin to appreciate God's commands and wishes for us as responsible and committed Jewish people.

The children in Kindergarten learn about the major story cycles of the Torah. Following the holiday of Simchat Torah, when we begin anew the reading of the Torah, the Kindergarten children learn about God's creation of the world, the story of Noach and the Flood, the major life events of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, Yosef, and the story of the Egyptian slavery and Exodus.

The learning is done through a wide variety of class lessons, ranging from crafts to dramatics, from story-telling to song. The design of the lessons is to engage each child in the wonder of the Torah stories and the holiness of Torah learning. While the majority of the lessons are conducted in English, the Hebrew names for people and places are exclusively used.

By the end of the year, the children will be familiar with the major stories of the Torah. They will also have acquired a love for the study of Torah.

### **Hebrew Language**

The school assumes that the children coming to our school do not necessarily bring any Hebrew background. The goal of the Kindergarten year is to immerse the children in spoken Hebrew. By the end of the school year, the teacher is speaking approximately 75% of the time in Hebrew. The children feel comfortable hearing the teacher speak in Hebrew and responding in simple dialogues. While there is an exposure to written Hebrew, it is not a formal part of the program.

### **Medinat Yisrael**

All children in the school learn about the State of Israel. Focusing primarily on modern-day Israel, the children daily express our love of Medinat Yisrael by singing Hatikvah at the start of the school day. The children learn about the Flag of Israel.

Through our annual celebration of Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day), the children learn about different aspects of modern day life in Israel, ranging from Jerusalem to the Army, from the map of Israel to the joy of Israel's existence. Finally, the children regularly engage in projects fostering their connection to

the State of Israel and our responsibility to Israeli Jews. These projects range from letter writing to tzedakah projects.

## Specials

In addition to classroom learning, all children are offered an enriching "Specials" program. Children have Music, Computer, and Art, for 40 minutes each week. The children have Physical Education twice a week. Each of the special areas is taught by a professional teacher who specializes in the given area.

### MUSIC

The Music program combines singing, clapping, and body movement with the playing of both pitched and unpitched instruments to teach beat competence, vocal development, music notation, form, rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, dynamics, and conducting. In addition, separate educational units are presented in the areas of the science of sound, musical instruments and their respective families, unconventional musical instruments, the recorder, and famous composers. The vocal repertoire, approximately 80% of which is Judaic, is often used as a tool in teaching the elements of music.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The primary goals in Physical Education are to teach students individual and team games that stress the importance of physical activity and fitness. Instructional emphasis in Grades K-3 is based on motor skill theme development, movement concepts, and improvement in muscular strength, endurance, flexibility, and agility. In Grades 4-5, emphasis is on refinement of motor skill themes, and development of a high level of physical fitness. Students will improve skills, knowledge, and attitudes to help them lead active, healthy, and productive lives as adults.

### COMPUTER

The Computer program is fully integrated with the classroom curriculum. Kindergarten classes work on early learning programs, including early literacy and math. First Graders are introduced to a range of phonic awareness, reading, and math programs. Second Graders begin to use desktop publishing programs. They also learn basic editing skills and graphics programs. Third Graders are given their own disks to learn data management. They also use the computer as a research tool. Fourth and Fifth Graders use the Internet to supplement their class learning and research projects. The Fourth Graders learn about databases. Students in Fifth Grade learn the fundamentals of spreadsheets.

### ART

Each week, every child in SSDS has art for approximately 40 minutes. The children learn basic methods for drawing and painting and are given opportunities to explore new media. Curriculum objectives include understanding color, composition and tone and value relationships. Historically important artists and

art movements will be discussed to enhance understanding of subject matter. Children should be able to discuss their artwork and the material presented in class both in the classroom and at home.



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