



Extraordinary Education. Timeless Traditions. Inspired Lives.

## What to Expect: Kindergarten at Denver JDS

The Kindergarten curriculum at Denver Jewish Day School is intended to stimulate children's curiosity to learn about the world around them. Our team of top-notch teachers builds on kindergartners' enthusiasm by integrating a project-based learning approach, offering hands-on, interdisciplinary projects that encourage children to delve deeper into the areas that interest them and expose them to a wide range of skills and competencies while maximizing socialization opportunities for the students.

### Literacy

The Denver JDS language and literacy curriculum emphasizes individual support for each student at his or her reading level. Students build foundational reading and writing skills using print concepts, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and literary texts and engage in the writing process with guidance and support from teachers, responding to questions and suggestions from peers and adding details to strengthen writing as needed.

### Math

Our Math in Focus curriculum emphasizes mastery of basic mathematical concepts, number sense, mental math and problem solving. Kindergartners focus on building an understanding of counting with one-to-one correspondence, sorting by attributes,

patterning and number recognition to 10 and beyond, developing cardinality, counting strategies and strategies for joining and separating within 10 and to make 10.

Our **Learning Resource Center** and **Gifted Learner Program** support Denver JDS teachers in challenging students across the academic spectrum and provide direct student support. Inside the classroom, flexible grouping and differentiation allows students to all be supported and encouraged to reach their potential. Additionally, through our **Focus on Growth Initiative**, teachers work with students to set individualized academic and social-emotional goals for the year, focusing on personal growth.

Denver JDS develops and fosters future-ready skills within our students to prepare them not only for today's world, but for the world of tomorrow. With an emphasis on creativity, communications, collaboration, critical thinking, and communities, we equip our students with the skills they need for success in any content area.

### Science

Our K-5 science curriculum, Full Option Science System (FOSS), begins at the kindergarten level with a focus on units such as "Trees." Through this unit, students learn that trees and leaves have identifiable structures, that trees are resources, have basic needs and that trees and leaves are identified by their shapes. Other kindergarten units include "Wood and Paper" and "Animals." Students have many opportunities to explore the world around them, partaking in hands-on science instruction that engages active and curious minds!

## Social Studies

Through an integrated dual curriculum of social and Judaic studies, students learn about the rules that help people get along with each other, develop their critical-thinking skills and begin to form opinions on issues and understand that others may have different points of view. With a heavy focus on Jewish traditions and values, or *middot*, students learn to be respectful, secure and responsible community members who appreciate and understand their own special and unique qualities. Through field trips, interactive lessons, performances and projects, kindergarten students study and create lasting connections to the world. Kindergarten social studies units include “Maps and Globes” and “Careers and Economics.”

At Denver JDS, instructional and educational technology are a key means of extending and enriching teaching and learning.

**Technology** is infused throughout every one of our classrooms as a vehicle for enhancing student learning.

## Service Learning

Service learning is an integral part of life in grades K-12 at Denver JDS. Our kindergartners become agents of change early on and continue to expand their understanding of that role through graduation. Our Helping Hands service learning program offers a unique opportunity to consider how students’ Jewish identity helps them to understand the world around them and how that identity carries with it a responsibility to make a positive difference in their world.

## Jewish Life and Learning

Regardless of individual manner of Jewish practice, Jewish tradition and values (*middot*) guide everything we do here at Denver JDS. The kindergarten Judaic studies program is often integrated into the study of other subjects and focuses on understanding these traditions and *middot*, their relevance to our students’ lives and how they connect to the world at large. Students learn a new *middah* each month and are encouraged to practice it in their daily lives. They study Torah by learning the weekly Torah portion and discussing the stories and lessons learned from the history of the Jewish nation. Classroom lessons include the study of various holidays throughout the year, focusing on associated traditions and customs, and students also learn the daily *tefillah* (prayer) as a way to say thank you and express their gratitude.

## Hebrew

Learning in both English and Hebrew is a core aspect of the Denver JDS experience. Students learn that letters and sounds go together to form words and how to identify English and Hebrew alphabet letters and their sounds. Many kindergarten students will know how to identify words in both languages by the end of the year.

Our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values) are lived everyday at Denver JDS, both inside and outside of the classroom. They are used as a basis of community building and character development across the curriculum.

## Building Community

Denver Jewish Day School is truly a school community. New families can expect to receive a warm welcome from one or two veteran families to show them the ropes and answer any questions they might have. The school hosts several social events on campus so that kindergartners (and their families) become comfortable with their new school. We also hold several school-wide gatherings so that you can meet those who will share your child’s learning space throughout their time at Denver JDS.