

Welcome to Kane Street Kids, the preschool program of Kane Street Synagogue! We provide a warm, open-minded Jewish environment where young children learn through play in a secure, structured setting.

Kane Street Kids is a part of Kane Street Synagogue, a warm, active Synagogue which is 150 years old, yet has a young and active spirit. The children who attend Kane Street Kids will, in a natural and comfortable manner, partake of Jewish traditions and practices throughout the day and throughout the school year. We are a diverse and inclusive school welcoming to all.

We invite you to read below about our growing preschool program, and if you are interested in applying, please contact Kane Street Kids' Director, Joyce Heller, at Kids@Kanestreet.org, or at (718) 875-1550, extension two, to arrange a school tour.

School tours begin in early October. On this web site, there is an application you may download. We ask that applications for admissions in September be in by the second week of January, and we mail out notifications of acceptance by the first week of March. We are happy to consider applications after that point if there is space available, but please understand that priority is given to families who apply by January.

Kane Street Kids opened in September 2005 with a two's class. In September 2006, we added a three's class, and in September 2007, we added a four's pre-kindergarten class as well. Some children come just for the mornings, while other children stay for a full day. We are a licensed preschool program with educated, responsive teachers and a wonderful, warm-hearted community.

The central goal of Kane Street Kids is to promote our children's intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being within a progressive Jewish environment which is welcoming to all. To achieve this goal we emphasize caring, thoughtful and enriching interaction with teachers and peers, and a curriculum and philosophy that offers children structure as well as ample opportunities for free choice and exploration in a secure, caring environment.

The daily life at Kane Street Kids reflects this balance between structure and flexibility important for young children. Teachers establish a comfortably familiar routine for the children, and within that structure there are many opportunities for each child to learn and explore individually, in small groups and at circle time.

Below is a description of a typical day at Kane Street Kids. By describing the general structure of life in Kane Street Kids, we invite you to understand the manner in which young children learn and thrive at Kane Street Kids.

Choice Time The morning begins with guided free play, also called choice time since children are encouraged to choose an activity or area which interests them. As children play, teachers circulate throughout the classroom, responding to the

children's choices, observations and creations. Guided free play allows each child to learn through doing at her or his own pace, in small groups and individually. Each child's individual attention span develops naturally as the days pass.

The children also develop their social skills during choice time, including their ability to consider the feelings of others and the ability to share. Equally important, the children's social confidence develops as they make choices that are supported by caring and responsive teachers.

The library, the art and writing center, the building area, dramatic play, and science areas are generally open when the children arrive. Manipulatives and puzzles are available as well. In addition, there is always a special activity, usually related to the class's current educational theme; children participate in this special activity in small groups.

Throughout choice time, teachers respond to the children and interact with them. Teachers listen, respond, and ask questions that enrich the children's learning. The teachers also encourage children to try new activities and gently help children develop the confidence and awareness of others that will allow friendships to bloom.

All toys with which the children play are designed to encourage the children to develop the skills necessary to become a confident and able learner. For this reason toys will be simple. This encourages thought, exploration and action on the part of the child. The same is true of the activities in which the children participate; each song, book and movement activity provides an opportunity for the children to develop skills that will enrich the children's lives in and out of the classroom. These include listening, observation and communication skills, as well as the ability to predict, compare, evaluate, imagine and invent. Equally important, children learn that they can try different ways of playing and learning with other children. The goal is for children to appreciate that learning is a process that makes life enjoyable.

Art at Kane Street is process-oriented. The children explore the materials according to their creative choices. Art for young children is one of the earliest means a child has of bringing their deepest thoughts to life in a form which blends and synthesizes the abstract and the concrete. Accordingly, the choices and efforts the children make in producing their art and writing are treated with the respect they deserve. When children explore through art materials they are not pushed or expected to produce a particular result.

Clean Up Time After participating in choice time, the children now work together as a group to clean up and reorganize their environment. Clean up time for young children is a time where children work together as a group to achieve an

observable, concrete goal. It is also an opportunity for children to develop the ability to make transitions, to organize and categorize and to develop self-control. As the year develops and children increasingly participate in clean up time, they have a sense of mastery of a real-life task.

After clean-up time, the children come together as a group for their first circle time. Circle-time is a chance for the whole class to come together to discuss themes and activities children have been working on, to sing, to move, to read a book. As the children's comfort level in the classroom and their attention spans grow throughout the year, the circle time grows longer and more varied.

Often, during circle time the teachers will develop the concepts related to special activities the children have explored that morning. For example, if the children explored various leaves and compared their colors, shapes and textures during the course of the morning, they might read a book about leaves and their colors, shapes and textures; if the children made matzoh covers in preparation for Pesach, they might then sing a song about matzoh and Pesach.

The teachers plan and choose movement activities, songs, and books based on the children's interests and to promote the development of skills. Listening skills develop as the children learn and sing songs, listen to books and participate in movement activities. Their large motor skills, and their ability to respond to verbal directions, develop as they participate in teacher-led movement activities. Rhymes that are accompanied by hand movements develop small motor skills, and the ability to recognize patterns in the sound of language, which promotes reading skills. Taking turns and listening to others at circle time develops patience, empathy and self-control. Expressing oneself and singing along at circle time requires social confidence that develops at circle time with the caring support of the teachers.

After circle time, the children have a snack together. Snack-time is a time for children to socialize. Snack is provided by Kane Street Kids and usually consists of crackers or pretzel sticks.

After their snack, the children make the transition to go downstairs and participate in gross motor play. For young children, each opportunity for a transition is a moment to learn. For example, getting ready to go outside provides opportunities for children to master self-help skills and to gain confidence.

Outside or Inside Gross Motor Play Every day, weather permitting, the children play outside in the courtyard between the educational building and the shul. Children have their choice of a variety of riding toys which develop their gross motor skills, coordination and physical confidence. Riding these various vehicles allow the children to develop their ability to focus their physical energy on a given task. Teachers actively interact with the children outside, encouraging them,

talking with them about what they are doing and discussing what the children observe in their environment and what the weather feels like on that day.

The children also have access to a very large indoor play area, the Shul's social hall, adjacent to the courtyard. The area is very large and allows children ample opportunities to really move physically. Teachers lead the children in movement activities, encourage all children to use their bodies, to throw balls, to climb, to run, to participate in teacher-led movement activities, and to explore their physical abilities with confidence and a sense of trust. Teachers keep moving from area to area to make sure children are playing safely.

Tefillah Each morning the children participate in simple morning prayers in Hebrew. At this time they also sing morning songs that reflect Jewish themes interwoven with children's daily experiences. Kane Street Kids warmly welcomes families and children of all religious approaches, perspectives and backgrounds, Jewish or not Jewish, and welcomes families with diverse approaches to being Jewish, as long as parents are comfortable with the presence of Jewish practice and traditions in Kane Street Kids' program which are presented as a natural part of the children's day. For example, Tefillah includes simple morning prayers said in Hebrew, the beginning of the Shema and Mode Ani.

Lunch Coming together as a group to share a meal is a positive, natural way for children to build on the friendships among their peers and to establish self-help skills. Parents provide a parve (neither meat nor dairy) or dairy lunch. Children are supervised closely as they eat their meals, but are encouraged to feed themselves and to clean up after themselves.

Dismissal/Preparation for Rest Time

For the children who stay in the afternoon, rest time follows. All children who stay for the afternoon are required to have a quiet time on their cots; this is both a Board of Health rule and a necessity in order for the children to have the rested energy necessary for a happy, productive afternoon at school. Some children will fall asleep, and others will not; in some instances, parents will request that we do not let their children fall asleep as this interferes with their sleep patterns at home. As much as possible, we aim to respect the child's individual needs regarding rest time.

What sets the afternoons apart from the mornings at Kane Street Kids, is related in large part to the cozy, family feeling that develops as children get up from their cots, well rested and ready to explore. As in the mornings, the children have opportunities for art, movement, outside play, area play, but in the afternoon, there is increased individualized planning. For example, children who are developing the ability to cut with scissors have an opportunity to do so; children who want to read a book several times, can do so. Most importantly, the children receive quality attention and responsiveness throughout the day at Kane Street Kids.

Classroom Themes and Units

Your head teacher will provide you with a weekly newsletter letting you know what the children will be working on in the coming week. The themes and units will reflect the children's observable environment and will allow children opportunities to explore the concepts through a variety of activities and approaches.

The **Jewish holidays**, though often quite abstract for very young children, present excellent opportunities to explore themes and participate in activities that are very concrete and observable. Just as examples, as the children prepare for Tu B'Shvat, the celebration of the birthday of the trees, the children will focus on trees and plants; similarly, as they learn about the importance of Shabbat, they learn through **doing**, tasting the challah, saying the blessings, singing the Shabbat songs.

Children learn the stories of the Jewish holidays and explore the meaning and significance of the holidays. Through celebrating and preparing for the holidays, the children not only learn about the customs and traditions of the Jewish holidays; they participate and bring to life these customs and traditions.