Quick Facts about the Gesell Developmental Assessment

Overview: All applicants to Yavneh’s Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs are assessed for admissions purposes in February by the school’s Learning Specialist. Because Yavneh believes success in early childhood is made up of more than simply academic achievement, we have chosen to use the Gesell Developmental Observation (GDO) as our admissions assessment tool. The GDO gives an overall picture of the whole child's development, taking into consideration social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and adaptive development.

What happens during the Gesell Assessment? Your child will experience his or her assessment as a special “playdate” with Mrs. Schnitzer. Mrs. Schnitzer will warmly greet your child in the Yavneh office and walk him or her upstairs to her office. For 30 minutes, she will gently guide your child through a series of engaging conversations and experiences. There are no right or wrong responses. At the end of the assessment, Mrs. Schnitzer will walk your child back to the Yavneh office to meet you.

What information are you trying to get from the assessment? The GDO provides a qualitative, descriptive profile of your child's development, rather than a numerical or standardized raw score. In creating the profile of the child, Mrs. Schnitzer, who is trained and certified by the Gesell Institute, considers her own observation of the child in concert with input from the child’s current teacher (provided on the teacher recommendation form) and the child’s parents and/or guardians (provided on the Gesell Parent Questionnaire). The profile helps the Admissions Committee make admissions decisions that 1) benefit each child’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth, and 2) create thriving classroom environments.

Can I be present during the assessment? Will you tell me how my child did? The observation appointment is an opportunity for the Learning Specialist to get to know your child one-on-one. Parents can not be present for the assessment, and we do not generally discuss the results of the Gesell Assessment with the parents. The results are kept confidential and are used only by the Admissions Committee for admissions purposes.

When should I schedule my child’s Gesell assessment? The Yavneh Admissions Director will contact you to schedule your child’s appointment once your application and the teacher recommendation have been received. For your convenience, we try to schedule the Gesell Assessment at the same time as your parent interview with the Head of School.

My child attends the JCC Preschool. Can you pick my child up from his or her preschool class to administer the assessment? Absolutely, though the preschool requires that you sign a consent form in advance of the assessment date. Please make arrangements directly with the JCC preschool.

How do I prepare my child for the assessment? There is no special preparation for the Gesell assessment itself, though you can prepare your child to meet Mrs. Schnitzer. We suggest that you tell your child on the day of the assessment that he/she will be having a special playdate with a Yavneh teacher. Be positive with your child about the appointment and discuss any special pick-up or drop-off arrangements you may have made so that your child knows what to expect.

Gesell Assessments for applicants for the 2011-2012 school year will be scheduled for February 14th through February 25th during the morning hours. A Parent Questionnaire will be mailed to you when you schedule your child’s assessment. Please make sure you complete the Parent Questionnaire and bring it with you to your child’s assessment!