Sheva is not a curriculum, but rather an approach to learning. The approach recognizes that to offer excellence, you must hire and support excellence in your directors and staff. The approach recognizes that learning is a team effort between staff, children and their families.

Using a Jewish lens to teach and learn, sheva, which in Hebrew means “seven” incorporates seven core elements:

1. **Children as Constructivist Learners**
   Our children are natural learners. A Jewish expression of values emphasizes that our teachers inspire our children to question their world and appreciate multiple perspectives. When our children are agents of their own learning, they will build lifelong critical thinking skills and are more deeply invested in the process.

2. **Early Childhood Directors as Visionaries**
   Exhibiting fluency in the standards of excellence, Sheva Early Childhood Directors must also demonstrate passion to go beyond these definitions.

3. **Early Childhood Educators as Professionals**
   At the J, our educators view themselves as lifelong learners, constantly engaging in the pursuit of learning opportunities, prized by our Jewish tradition. Our educators seek to create and embrace learning opportunities for personal and professional development, provoke wonder, nurture curiosity, and engage the intellect of their students and families.

4. **Families as Engaged Partners**
   Our families are essential in building a healthy school community. JCC early childhood centers go beyond this to actively listen to and incorporate parents’ perspectives into how we think about teaching and learning.

5. **Environments as Inspiration for Inquiry**
   Our preschool is an intentional place for children that provokes wonder, curiosity, intellectual engagement and creativity with endless possibilities.

6. **Discover: Catch (taking care of our bodies)**
   By employing a holistic approach to children’s health, we nurture a love of physical activity and encourage children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

7. **Israel as the Story of the Jewish People**
   We create meaning around Israel for teachers and children including customs and celebration of holidays.
Eric & Sheila Samson Family Early Childhood Learning Center is named a Sheva Distinguished Community of Learning

Early childhood learning is the centerpiece of JCCs nationally. Recognizing the evolution in knowledge about how children learn, the JCCA (Jewish Community Center Association of North America) invested in and developed a program, Sheva, to further develop JCCs' abilities to engage our young children in learning by incorporating seven key elements based on our Jewish values.

As part of the Sheva rollout, Merage JCC’s Aronoff Preschool was pronounced a Sheva Distinguished Community of Learning for being an innovator and modeling the Sheva principles in our current program. One of five Sheva communities, the Merage JCC is recognized as a leader with a dynamic vision of excellence in Jewish early childhood education.

It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text that they will never forget.

Abraham Joshua Heschel