

TEMPLE BETH-EL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER
The Marjorie and Mark Gershwind Campus of Living Judaism
5 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023



GROWING TOGETHER

Vicki Perler, Director
April 30, 2021

Our experience . . . confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colors. They need the freedom to realize how reason, thought, and imagination can create the continuous interweaving of things, and can move and shake the world. Children must have the freedom to do all this without anyone arbitrarily setting the timing, rhythms, and measures for them. Yet this valuable apprenticeship, which cannot be left to chance, can only be accomplished when children are assured of the broad and active co-participation of adults.

Loris Malaguzzi (From the introduction to The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition)

Dear Families,

The year is quickly coming to a close. In the waning days of the summer before school started, we thought of what our children might achieve this year. Today, we can say that we've accomplished many

of our goals and realized our hopes and dreams. These next few weeks will culminate a year that honored children and families, bringing out the best in everyone.

Setting goals and working hard to accomplish them is one of our core values. To be able to see our toddlers - so young and timid in September - blossom, grow and mature into confident, independent children, takes consistency and patience. Our toddler and three-year-old children are now ready to move forward and continue their journey as independent thinkers in our community of learners. Their social-emotional development has flourished this year, and we are forever grateful that this has occurred in an unprecedented new world. Our Pre-K children are exceeding the standards set for kindergarten readiness, and they will arrive next year with expert learning skills as well. Our teachers work lovingly, creatively and thoughtfully to inspire higher-level thinking, creativity, compassion, respect for others, helpfulness, a love of Jewish heritage, literacy, and other important values with each child every day. We have worked tirelessly to maintain and improve our national recognition as a school that models excellence. Our journey is ongoing, and all of our extraordinary teachers work every day to provide children and families with the most meaningful school experience possible.

The high value we place on social-emotional development is evident in our school. The children have a deep love of Judaism and Jewish values, understand empathy for others, and know how to establish and sustain relationships. We are committed to developing and enhancing the emotional literacy skills of your children, for it is a priceless gift to be able to demonstrate resiliency and adaptability for each advancing stage of life. Our ultimate goal is for the children to commit to creating positive and harmonious interactions in the social world in which they live.

Most importantly, though, we recognize that our accomplishments are the direct result of parents, grandparents, childcare providers and teachers who place love and hard work at the forefront of everything we do for the children. All the children in Temple Beth-El Early Childhood Education Center have the opportunity to share their individual unique talents every day and to flourish. And together we have become a beautiful community. As I walk around the school, I can't help but notice how each child has grown, and how we have all worked together this year to bring out the best in every child. The book, [Awakening Your Child's Natural Genius](#), by Thomas Armstrong, talks about the ways in which parents and teachers can bring out the best qualities in children.

1. Expose children to a variety of experiences to help identify hidden talents.
2. Provide children with time - time is essential to learning and discovering interests.
3. Allow children the time to grow and learn at their own pace. Don't pressure them with developmentally inappropriate activities or timeframes.
4. Provide a sensory-rich environment at home. Have a wide range of open-ended materials available for exploration.
5. Provide choices for children to help them learn how to make decisions.
6. Praise children for their accomplishments. Don't criticize or judge children. Criticism leads to low self-esteem.
7. Give children permission to make mistakes so that they will learn to take risks.
8. Provide opportunities for chores and responsibility.
9. Help children learn to appreciate their capabilities.
10. Accept each child for his/her individuality.

As we continue to help children discover their unique talents, we can be sure that our future will be secure.

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, May 3	Picture Day
Tuesday, May 4	Pee Wee Pros - Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Wednesday, May 5	PTC Mother's Day Boutique
Thursday, May 6	Tkiya Jewish Music Program for School
Sunday, May 9	Mother's Day
Monday, May 10	Pee Wee Pros - Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Wednesday, May 12	Rosh Chodesh Sivan
Thursday, May 13	Tkiya Jewish Music Program for School
Thursday, May 13	PTC Sponsored Challah Bake - CANCELLED
Monday, May 17	Shavuot – School Closed
Thursday, May 20	Tkiya Jewish Music Program for School
Monday, May 24	Pee Wee Pros - Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Wednesday, May 26	PTC Handprint Tile Fundraiser
Monday, May 31	Memorial Day – School Closed

CONNECTIONS

Lag BaOmer- Today is Lag BaOmer. In Jewish tradition, we count the 49 days between the second night of Passover and the beginning of Shavuot. This is called *S'firat Ha'Omer* ("The Counting of the Omer"). On the 33rd day of counting, we celebrate the holiday of *Lag B'Omer*. "Lag" is an abbreviated combination of two Hebrew letters that, according to Hebrew numerology, add up to the number 33. *Lag B'Omer* is traditionally celebrated with great joy. Jewish sources offer a range of opinions as to the origins of this joy. **Happy Lag BaOmer.**
<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/april-2015/lag-bomer-activities>

Mazel Tov to the many families who have new babies. We wish you many years of happiness, good health, and blessings with your new "bundles of joy."

Registration for the Summer Program – The Summer Program registration is in full force. We still have spaces available. Give your child a summer of fun. Stress-free transitions are important for young children. **Our Summer Program is a wonderful way to provide consistency and a seamless flow of the year. We are offering programs for children who are two, three, four and five years-old.** If you would like more information about our programs, please don't hesitate to call.

Car Seats are Mandatory - New York State law requires that all children eight years old and younger wear a safety restraint that meet the manufacturer's suggested weight and height requirements. The following is New York State's Car Seat Laws: **Children two and younger should use a rear-facing car seat until they exceed the manufacturer's suggestions. Once a child is over the age of two and goes over the manufacturer's weight and height requirements, s/he can move on to a forward-facing seat. After the age of four and when a child is over the manufacturer's requirements for a forward-facing seat, s/he can be placed in a booster seat with both the shoulder and chest straps. Although not required, NY authorities strongly recommend parents keep their children in the back seat until they reach the age of twelve.**

Shelter in Place Drill – We had a successful Shelter in Place Drill last week. As you know, our school has a comprehensive Emergency Plan. Teachers are familiar with procedures for fire,

accident, disaster and medical emergencies. In some situations, it may be necessary to remain on-site while taking special precautions to ensure the safety of the children. Every class has a designated safe place in their classrooms and the school building to remain quiet if necessary.

Shelter in Place drills are conducted at least twice a year. Our fire and evacuation drills are conducted monthly.

Thoughts about Passover – It seems like the holiday was so long ago, but the children are still singing the songs. This week, during lunch in a two-year-old class, one child was singing “Mah Nishtanah.” Within minutes, others joined. In another class, several children were singing “Dayenu.” Learning often occurs long after the actual experience. So, don’t be surprised if you hear your child singing the songs and acting out the story of Passover. I hope you still have good feelings about your Seders this year. The passing of time is always highlighted during Pesach, especially when a young child recites “MahNishtanah” for the very first time!

Handprint Tile Fundraiser is Back – We are very excited about our expanding handprint tiled walls in the Early Childhood Education Center. These visible spaces serve as a beautiful way to remember your child’s years at Temple Beth-El ECEC by adding an imprint of your child’s hand. Your tile dedication will help support our Parent Teacher Council and the many programs they provide for our children and families. “Muddworks” of Great Neck will help us with this endeavor. **Muddworks will be here on Wednesday, May 26 from 9:00-10:30 AM. Thank you, in advance, for your support.**

Registration for 2021-2022 – Don’t get closed out of a class! Registrations are still coming in for the 2021-2022 school year. If you have any questions about our program for your child for next year, please don’t hesitate to call or email me.

Travel Requirements – **Please continue to be safe. We have been blessed with continuous in-person education for our children, and we want to continue that way until June!** It is highly recommended that you do not travel unless it is absolutely necessary. If you must travel, it is imperative that you follow all travel-related quarantine protocols set by New York State. Any traveler coming into NYS (who traveled outside NY, PA, NJ, CT, MA or VT for more than 24 hours must quarantine for 14 days UNLESS they receive a negative Covid test before departure and then again on day four of their return. A 14-day quarantine is mandatory for a return to school unless two negative tests results are provided to the school in writing.

PTC Challah Fundraising Program - We are offering an opportunity for you to order dough for your weekly challah to take home on Thursdays. This is a fun and educational way to enhance your Shabbat experiences with your children by making a fresh challah at home every week. **The Challah Program began this week. You can still sign up!** A huge thank you, to Marianna Costa and our extraordinary PTC, for initiating this wonderful experience for our children and families.

Challah Dough Details if Your Child is Absent from School – The school will put your dough in the freezer, and we will give it to you when you return. Once you receive the dough, it will need to be completely defrosted. It takes 6-7 hours to completely defrost, and then needs to be brought to room temperature before you prepare it and braid.

Dressing for the Outdoors – **Thank you for being so attentive to the weather every day to ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. We have had extraordinary experiences in the school this year!** Our goal in all weather is to keep the children warm, dry and comfortable. If they are not dressed properly, the class is unable to take advantage of the open air and the many

interesting outdoor spaces around the temple building. Boots, raincoats, snow pants, an extra pair of sneakers, two complete changes of clothing (to be left in school), sweaters, hats, mittens, and a warm jacket are necessary. We are outdoors when the temperature is above 30 degrees. Please label all children's clothing! Thank you.

Health and Safety Precautions During the Pandemic - The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific this year. Please wear your mask, stay physically distant from each other, and never bring your child to school if s/he appears ill. We will need to send your child home if s/he exhibits symptoms. **All children in the school MUST be symptom free.** Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

Parent Teacher Council – The PTC is comprised of parents, teachers and lay leaders from the Temple and school community who work together to make decisions and provide ongoing support for the school. Our PTC Co-Chairs for the 2020-2021 school year are Dalia Hagooli, Marianna Costa, and Samantha Talasazain. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our school. If you would like to be a part of our exciting Parent Teacher Council, please feel free to contact Dalia (dharoooni@aol.com), Marianna (mari.mostovaya@yahoo.com) or Sam (stalis625@gmail.com) at any time. We are grateful to all of you for your participation.

Shabbat Sing – On Friday, we join together to experience a beautiful sing-along with me. It is the highlight of my week - every week. I feel very blessed to be able to teach your children beautiful Shabbat melodies. Our Shabbat Sing experiences will be different this year as they will be outdoors and physically distant. We look forward to creating joyous Shabbat celebrations every week.

Hot Lunch Program - The foods children eat and lifestyle habits they learn have a lasting effect on their health. Due to the overwhelming interest of our families to provide nutritious meals for lunch, we offer meat and dairy lunches for all students. As you know, one of the values of our school is to maintain the highest quality of care whenever possible. This value should also be reflected in the foods we eat.

Lunch Menu:

Monday – Pasta, meat sauce, vegetables

Tuesday – Baked chicken fingers and vegetables

Wednesday Pizza and Israeli salad

Thursday- Grilled cheese and vegetables - NEW

Friday – Baked fish, rice, vegetables

This year, the lunch is provided in individual packages for each child. We also have whole wheat bread and soy butter available to children who have not yet acquired the taste for these new foods. We hope that over time, children will discover and enjoy a variety of foods.

Important ECEC Telephone Information – If you have an important message and cannot reach me or Nancy on the telephone during the day, please ask someone in the main office to find us and relay the message. We hope this system will help you if you are unable to talk to us in person.

Contact Information - Please call, email or see me if you have anything you would like to discuss. My email address is vperler@tbgreatneck.org. This is usually the best way to reach me.

Links to Remember – I invite you to visit the websites connected to the links below. The links relate to information about early childhood education, Jewish life and learning, and helpful hints for parents.

<https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/activities/outdoor/earth-day-activities-preschoolers/>

<https://pjlibrary.org/yomhaatzmaut>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ysg4R_LMzeI (Children singing Hatikvah)

<https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2016/04/08/children-play-nature-john-lee>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/explore-great-outdoors>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/joyful-parenting/201705/not-naughty-10-ways-kids-appear-be-acting-bad-arent>

<https://www.jnf.org> (Plant a tree in Israel for Tu B'Shevat)

https://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/04/teaching-children-empathy/?_php=true&type=blogs&_php=true&type=blogs&smid=fb-share&r=5

Harvard Psychologists Say: Parents Who Raise 'Good' Kids, Do These 5 Things!
<https://tinyurl.com/v97pbd6p>

35 Children's Books That Teach Empathy and Kindness <https://tinyurl.com/v5aczd6p>

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/helping-kids-navigate-scary-news-stories>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/early-development>

<https://www.mommyshorts.com/2015/03/5-ways-kids-learn-at-a-reggio-emilia-preschool.html>

<https://pjlibrary.org/home>

<https://pjlibrary.org/getmedia/c63e85f1-58d9-44fd-ae8a-696825e88d25/Jewish-values-ECE.pdf>

<https://childhood101.com/an-image-of-the-child-understanding-emergent-curriculum/>

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/if-we-dont-let-our-children_b_1017485?guccounter=1

<https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2016/04/08/children-play-nature-john-lee>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/vc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health>

www.tbe-ecec.org

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

<http://families.naeyc.org/>

<http://www.reggioalliance.org/>

<http://www.brainy-child.com/article/reggioemilia.shtml>