

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
December 11, 2020

Dear Families,

There is no better time for families to get together at home and illuminate the darkness than with the glowing Chanukah lights. Despite the global pandemic and significantly smaller gatherings, Chanukah 2020 will still provide you with opportunities to create lasting memories for your children. Our challenge every year is to rise above the feelings of fear and darkness, and to return to the light of the basic Jewish value of taking responsibility for each other. It is our Jewish responsibility to provide light when there is darkness – a miracle that can happen every day. We are not allowed simply to light a Chanukiah anywhere in our home. We are required to place a Chanukiah in a window, to declare our identity, celebrate our Maccabee heroes and heroines, and to declare our eternal resilience in the face of adversity.

Evaluating and defining the core concepts of a Jewish holiday are necessary, important, and can be used to help us throughout many childhood experiences. Several years ago, after Hurricane Sandy, our school's Chanukah experiences were very different. The children were still talking about the hurricane, and darkness was a main concept. The teachers and I listened to their thoughts and ideas about bravery and courage. Many children expressed that they are brave in the dark or are not afraid of the dark. They talked about light and electricity, and they were quite familiar with candles and flashlights. All of us, young and old alike, learned more about being prepared at home and helping others in need. The

important Chanukah theme of “light out of darkness” instructed us in the Jewish value of supporting and caring for the members of our community who were suffering, and our children lead the discussions with confidence.

This year, we are also learning words like freedom, courage, bravery, light, darkness, oil, candles, Chanukiah, and Menorah. To be "brave like the Maccabees" empowers children to embrace their connection to Jewish values and traditions, capturing the essence of what the holiday means. As you can see, our Chanukah experiences in school are designed to instill these significant values, capturing the children's imaginations and inspiring them to celebrate joyously. We look forward to lighting the candles together every day next week, and to sharing beautiful experiences with our friends. We also look forward to listening deeply to the children’s ideas about the holiday.

Thank you for your help as we work together this year to brighten the lives of the youngest members of our community. Your partnership is invaluable! As we celebrate our Festival of Lights, may you enjoy all the miracles in your life and look forward to a new year, illuminated with happiness, good health, peace, gratitude and blessings.

Shabbat Shalom
Chag Urím Sameach
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs-Fri, Dec. 10-18	Chanukah
Monday, Dec. 14	Covid-19 Informational Seminar for Great Neck Community
Wednesday, Dec. 16	Rosh Chodesh Tevet
Friday, Dec. 18	Early Bird Deadline for Registration
Monday, Dec. 21	First Day of Winter
Mon-Fri, Dec. 21-Jan. 1	Winter Recess – School Closed
Monday, Jan. 4	School Re-opens
Thursday, Jan. 14	Rosh Chodesh Shevat
Monday, Jan. 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed
Thursday, Jan. 28	Tu B’Shevat

CONNECTIONS

Don’t miss out!! Prices will be locked-in at the Early Bird rate for next year’s tuition. There will be a significant tuition increase for those who register after the Early Bird deadline. **The deadline for the Early Bird registration is Friday, December 18, 2020.** If you have any questions about our program for your child for next year, please don’t hesitate to call or email me.

Covid-19 Informational Seminar for Great Neck Community – Monday, December 14, 7:30 PM Via Zoom – Presented by the Health Education Committee of the UPTC for GNPS. It will feature a panel of medical experts from community partners who will discuss common questions about

Covid-19 transmission, prevention, testing, impact on children, quarantine, long term effects and more. Please register and submit your questions: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwtf-qtqTIqHNMz4CnaIZ0P_MdlM_vvP3SH

Pre-K Program at Temple Beth-El for 2021-22 – In order to meet the ever-changing needs of families, a few years ago Temple Beth-El generously increased the number of hours for the Pre-K (from 9-2 to 9-3), included lunch, and reduced the tuition. We are very grateful for the generosity of our Temple to help families out in this way. As you know, Temple Beth-El strives to provide an excellent Jewish early childhood experience for our toddler through pre-kindergarten children and to keep our programs accessible to our community. We have an outstanding Pre-K program, taught by exceptional and highly qualified teachers that meet and exceed New York State's Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core. I hope you take advantage of this opportunity. Please register quickly for next year's Pre-K, as registration is on a first-come-first-served basis.

Parent Teacher Conferences – Thank you for creating such meaningful Parent Teacher Conferences with the teachers. I received wonderful feedback from everyone. If you need any follow-up information, please don't hesitate to call or email.

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.

Yellow Zone Classification for the ECEC - As you know, Great Neck has now been classified as a "Yellow Zone" by Governor Cuomo. Our ECEC is considered a childcare program, licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services. According to the guidelines, standards and expectations for childcare programs are unaffected by the designation of a red, orange, or yellow zone, (except if the childcare program is housed within a school). Our goal is to remain open, and we will succeed only if all of us are consistently and persistently vigilant in our personal lives away from school. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts and I implore you to stay Covid-safe during Thanksgiving.

If, unfortunately, we need to quarantine a class at home for 14 days, every teacher is ready to begin remote learning the very next day. The teachers have prepared curricula and experiences for this period of time, and the teachers will instruct you to prepare a box of supplies to keep on hand at home, just in case. Hopefully, we will not need to use this box. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Gathering limit - On November 11, Governor Cuomo announced that gatherings at private residences (indoors and outdoors) is **limited to a total of 10 people**. All other gatherings are limited to a total of 50 people, this includes catered events. Please adhere to these new regulations for everyone's safety.

Dressing for the Outdoors – Please be attentive to the weather every day to ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. 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, an extra pair of sneakers, two complete changes of clothing (to be left in school), sweaters, hats, mittens, and a warm jacket are necessary. As the weather becomes colder, we will be outdoors when the temperature is above 30 degrees. Please label all children's clothing! Thank you for your cooperation.

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.

Thanksgiving & Chanukah Tzedakah Drive – Jackson’s 2nd Annual Sock Drive – November 1– December 22. **Help us help others!** Our children are learning about the value of giving and helping other people. It is always a blessing to help those who are in need, especially during holidays, and we are supporting homeless individuals by providing **NEW or GENTLY USED socks for men, women and children.** **Warm the feet and hearts of those in need.** **A collection box is outside the main entrance.** Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!

Inclement Weather Arrival and Dismissal Procedures – Please arrive on time and sit in your car until the teacher notifies you. Your child’s teacher will text you to inform you that it is your turn for arrival. **By intentionally following this staggered procedure, we have created an organized and efficient arrival and pick-up.** **Thank you, parents, for your help and cooperation.** Please note that during these extreme inclement weather days, the designated outdoor drop-off and pick-up location for the Rabbi’s Garden Play Area is outside the Temple’s main entrance. The designated outdoor drop-off and pick-up location for the two-year-old classes is the Rudin Garden entrance.

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- Bake Ziti and vegetables

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@tbegreatneck.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://reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/hanukkah>

<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>