

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
January 15, 2021

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear Families,

We celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday this Monday as a national holiday and as a tribute to a man who forever changed our nation. And as a school devoted to Jewish ideals and values, we can learn much from the legacy of this great man. Dr. King was fortunate to have parents who taught and inspired him to be caring toward others, despite their differences. His mother told him, "you are as good as anyone." He took those words to heart and grew up envisioning an America where all people are created equal, consisting of unity instead of separatism, and of love instead of hate. Compassion and concern for others were his guiding principles, and we feel honored to share these principles with our students not only on this national holiday, but every day.

Lawrence Kohlberg, a developmental psychologist who is well-known for his theory of moral development, was influenced by the work of Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget and American philosopher, John Dewey, two notable early childhood theorists and educators. His theory of moral development states that morality begins during the early childhood years and mostly occurs through social interaction.

Because young children construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world through interactions with their environment, their cognitive development is closely aligned with their moral development. Teaching young children how to be kind and perform acts of kindness helps them understand how they can feel empathy towards others and provide help when others are in need.

How can you teach your young children about kindness? Michigan State University Extension recommends the following easy tips to use with your child:

Model kindness. The best way to teach our young children how to be kind or what being kind looks like is to model the behavior ourselves.

Talk about kindness. When you see your child being kind, name it. Say things like, “I saw how you gave your brother a hug when he was sad, that was kind of you,” and other statements that help point out how they were kind to someone else.

Perform acts of kindness. Young children may not be able to do this on their own, but they can help pick up their toys or draw pictures for local children’s hospitals or nursing homes. The point is they are giving back without expecting anything in return and they are helping people too.

Be kind with words. What you say and how you say it are important. Teach children to say “hello,” “goodbye,” “good morning,” “please” and “thank you,” but also focus on other kind statements, such as, “Nice to meet you,” “How is your day?” “Are you ok?” and “I am glad to see you.” Being kind with their spoken words is one way young children can help others feel better.

Being a moral role model highlights the importance of practicing honesty, fairness and caring ourselves. We also need to respect children’s ideas and listen carefully to them. We need to teach children that all feelings are okay, but some feelings, when expressed, can have harmful consequences to others, like being mean, hurting people, and acting like a bully. Children need our help to learn to cope with all their feelings in productive ways.

Pirkei Avot 1.2 (Ethics of Our Ancestors) teaches us that, “The world stands on three things: Torah, Prayer, and Deeds of Kindness.” Let us hope that this new year will bring blessings of good health, happiness and kindness to you and your family.

Shabbat Shalom

Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, Jan. 18

Thursday, Jan. 21

Thursday, Jan. 28

Fri & Sat, Feb. 12 & 13

Fri-Mon, Feb. 12-19

Monday, Feb. 15

Monday, Feb. 22

Friday, Feb. 26

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed

PTC Challah Program Samples Distributed

Tu B'Shevat

Rosh Chodesh Adar

Presidents’ Week Recess – School Closed

George Washington’s Birthday Observed - School Closed

School Reopens

Purim

CONNECTIONS

Registration for the Summer Program – We are offering programs for children who are two, three, and four years-old. We are excited to offer the opportunity for our students to continue their experiences at Temple Beth-El during the summer. Stress-free transitions are important for young children, and our Summer Program is a wonderful way to provide consistency and a seamless flow of the year. **Registration will begin in February.** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email.

PTC Challah Program - We will begin to sell Challah dough every week, beginning at the end of this month! **Samples will be provided on Thursday, January 21.** More details will be provided during the coming weeks.

How to Help Children During Scary Times – Please try to prevent your very young children from seeing or hearing scary stories on the news. Images like this past week's violence at the United States Capitol are frightening and terrifying. During these challenging times, Mr. Fred Rogers' timeless advice, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping," is a good way to begin. The following article provides additional suggestions on how to help children process information they may hear or see during scary times.

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

Are You Looking for New Year's Resolutions for 2021? Here are some suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

1. Provide outdoor play time for your child whenever possible. Exercise and outdoor play – even in the wintertime – decreases the growing obesity issue with young children.
2. Provide a nurturing environment in which children feel loved, safe and valued.
3. Good nutrition makes for a healthy child. Be sure that your child eats regularly and has a variety of nutritious foods.
4. Buckle your child's seatbelt at all times. Help avoid the leading cause of children's disabilities and death at all times.
5. Monitor what your child sees in the media, including television, movies and music. Children are affected by what they see and hear.
6. Read to your child every day, beginning in infancy, to enhance early brain development.
7. Prevent violence by setting good examples for your child. Remember that words can hurt too.
8. Give your home a safety check. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, store poisonous substances out of your child's reach, and know how to access emergency services.

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.

Revised 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.

For more information on the quarantine requirements and other procedures for travelers, please see the NYS Department of Health guidance found at the following link https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/11/interm_guidance_travel_advisory.pdf

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.

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.

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.

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.

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- 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://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.zerotothree.org/early-development>

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

<https://pilibrary.org/home>

<https://pilibrary.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/yc/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>