

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 29, 2021

*"I think that I should never see
A poem lovely as a tree...
A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray..."* Joyce Kilmer

Dear Families,

Juxtaposed with today's blast of frigid arctic air, we celebrated Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, yesterday. Tu B'Shevat literally means the fifteenth day of the month of Shevat, and it marks the beginning of the spring season in Israel, evident there in the earliest blooms on almond trees. In New York, we celebrate the holiday by helping children connect with nature's gifts of trees, plants, and flowers.

When we allow ourselves the opportunity to be observant and attuned to the cycle of the trees surrounding us, we can learn from them and be inspired by their ongoing, living legacies. The children are learning that we could not survive without trees as they provide oxygen for us to breathe, fruit for us to eat, shade for us to be protected from the sun, and inspiration for their beauty. With incredible longevity, even when their leaves are shed, trees remain vital and alive. By studying the photographs you

receive from the teachers throughout the week, you can clearly see your children connecting with trees and nature in the most significant ways. As a school community, our children also experienced new discoveries related to soil, seeds, and plants. Throughout the week, we celebrated the beauty of the holiday by planting seeds and tasting many different varieties of delicious fruit.

Another custom, growing in popularity, is to feed the birds. The mitzvah of Tza'ar Ba'alai Hayim, caring for animals, is appropriate during the cold winter months in New York. The celebration of Tu B'Shevat dovetails nicely with feeding the birds. Creating bird feeders to put on the trees and watching the birds eat, especially during this frigid weather, is a beautiful project for you and your child to work on together. Using all our senses to awaken our emotions, we are able to feel, understand, and be inspired by the full impact of trees on our souls.

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Thursday, Feb. 4	Challah Dough Program Begins
Fri & Sat, Feb. 12 & 13	Rosh Chodesh Adar
Fri-Mon, Feb. 12-19	Presidents' Week Recess – School Closed
Monday, Feb. 15	George Washington's Birthday Observed - School Closed
Monday, Feb. 22	School Reopens
Friday, Feb. 26	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.

Registration for 2021-2022 – Don't get closed out of a class! The Early Bird Registration was a huge success!! 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.

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 begins next week. Sign up today!**

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://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/y97pbd6p>

35 Children's Books That Teach Empathy and Kindness <https://tinyurl.com/y5aczd6p>

<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/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>