

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 8, 2021

Dear Families,

Welcome to 2021! I hope the New Year brings peace and tranquility, good health, happiness and fulfillment to you and your family. When we returned to school on Monday, everyone was so happy to see their friends and teachers again. The cold weather reliably creates invigorating opportunities for fun outdoors as well as new experiences indoors. The teachers and I continue to marvel at the children's growth especially because we are spending so much time in new and interesting ways. We are striving to create the best educational experiences for our children, but how we help them become kind and considerate people in a complicated world is critical, and we work to give them the proper tools to enhance their "life skills." One of our most important tasks as parents and teachers is raising children who will be responsible and caring individuals, who are devoted to making this world a moral and compassionate place.

The horrific news this week will indelibly leave a stain on history and on us as moral and just people. What values and life skills do you want your child to develop so that s/he can live freely in the world? Ellen Galinsky, president and co-founder of Families and Work Institute, addresses these values in her book, [Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs](#). As you already know,

our school not only values these skills, we also embrace them as necessary elements of our social and emotional curriculum. Here is a summary of Galinsky's conclusions:

Focus and Self-Control – Children need this skill in order to achieve their goals, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly, and exercising self-control.

Perspective Taking – Perspective goes far beyond empathy: it involves figuring out what others think and feel and forms the basis of children understanding the intentions of their peers, parents and teachers. Children who can take others' perspectives are also much less likely to get involved in conflicts.

Communicating – Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading and writing – it is the skill of determining what one wants to communicate and realizing how our communications will be understood by others. It is the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

Making Connections – Making connections is at the heart of learning – figuring out what's the same, what's different and sorting these things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity. In a world where people can Google for information, those who can see the connections beyond simply knowing the information will use this information to their advantage.

Critical Thinking – Critical thinking is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions, and actions.

Taking on Challenges – Life is full of stresses and challenges. Children who are willing to take on challenges (instead of avoiding them or coping with them) do better in school and in life.

Self-directed, Engaged Learning – It is through learning that we can realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live – as long as we learn.

Although it is a constant and, often, exhausting process, the partnership between our Jewish family life and Jewish education is crucial in helping us fulfill the moral and ethical values we set for our children. Being a parent is about struggles and overcoming obstacles. Being a parent is about listening to your child – really listening to what s/he has to say and not just hearing the words. Being a parent is about giving your children the time they need each day to be nurtured by you and feel warm and safe throughout the day, especially when you tuck them into bed each night. Being a parent is also about setting limits and teaching children to be courteous and kind. Good parenting skills are not attained overnight. It takes work to set new goals and habits to become a better parent. Though the days with children can be very long, the rewards of good parenting are well worth the effort. Author Gretchen Rubin wrote, "The days are long, but the years are short."

Warmest wishes to each one of you for a very happy, healthy, and rewarding New Year.

Shabbat Shalom

Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Thursday, Jan. 14
Monday, Jan. 18

Rosh Chodesh Shevat
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed

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

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

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>

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.

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 Next Generation Learning Standards. 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.

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 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.

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 (dharoni@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@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.

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.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>