

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
October 23, 2020

We enjoyed being in the Rudin Garden on a drizzly day, being able to experience the rain drops on our hand, faces and hair.... ECEC Teacher

Dear Families,

Nature walks, collecting leaves, rolling down the hill on the side of the building, finding worms and discovering a corner area of woods are just a handful of the ways the children and teachers have been discovering and exploring our outdoor world. Spending so many hours outside has truly enhanced each child's understanding about the natural world, and there have been many opportunities to engage and build relationships with all aspects of nature. Feeling the textures of leaves, pinecones, pine needles, sticks, acorns, and pumpkins is thrilling, and being an active participant in the ever-changing weather is new and exciting.

As a Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool, we value the environment as a third teacher, and our school environment this year is helping children use their natural curiosity and all their senses to make discoveries, investigate materials, and solve problems. Developing a relationship with the outdoor world not only helps the children foster a sense of wonder, it provides each one with an increasingly necessary way to observe and engage. Children are capable, competent, and creative thinkers, and bring a wealth of knowledge to their educational setting. Every day, we are witnessing their amazing intellect as they make

new discoveries. Children and nature go together. We know that they learn to think critically, skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing their learning. The learning process involves asking questions, gathering and assessing the information, and communicating with others to reach a solution. It is thrilling to be with the children outdoors every day and to observe how they have put this theory into action. They have become the masters and constructors of their own learning, generating new ideas and creating games with the materials on hand. It is beautiful to observe and the photos that your teachers send capture and reflect so many of these experiences.

Recently, I attended a workshop on “Nature as a Source for Learning in the Outdoor Classrooms.” The participants asked each other, “How does the outdoor learning environment promote healthy behaviors and developmentally appropriate practice by encouraging children to explore, learn about, and appreciate the natural world?” We learned that being physically active is necessary for learning. Children need to move. Research has shown that movement stimulates the brain. Daily opportunities to run, push, pull, manipulate, lift and climb are imperative for young, growing children. Children need hands-on, do-it-yourself experiences, and trying to get them to sit still at this age is an unreasonable expectation. Children will sit still on their own, when they are ready, as when they notice and begin to focus and study something - a worm, a particular leaf, a colorful bird sitting on a branch, or a squirrel running up a tree.

It’s impossible to escape the beauty of the magnificent foliage each year, yet it is equally as important for each child to hear the rustling of the drying leaves and feel the crispness of the autumn air. As Socrates said, “Wisdom begins with wonder.” Exploring the outdoors during these early childhood years are the foundation upon which all future learning will occur. It is my hope that you joyfully celebrate the wonder of the outdoors with your family as often as possible. The rewards are endless.

Shabbat Shalom

Vicki

Ways for Parents to Help Children Develop a Relationship with the Outdoor World

1. Take regular walks and bring along a magnifying glass, a camera, a small pad and a pencil. Focus on developing your child’s sense of inquiry. Observation is an important first step in scientific inquiry, so help your child observe carefully.
2. For young toddlers, offer collections of unusual learning materials. Allow them to discover the properties of the materials and notice the way they interact with them.
3. Find one particular area in your backyard or nearby park and observe the changes that take place in the same area over a period of time. Record and document your observations.
4. Encourage your child to ask questions and seek answers. Encourage open-ended questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Open-ended questions have many possible answers and encourage higher-level thinking. While searching for answers to open-ended questions, children construct their own insights and make meaning from the information.
5. Listen to your child’s ideas and explanations. Your attention gives them confidence and encourages them to be more curious and interested in learning.

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, Oct. 27
Thursday, Oct. 29
Sunday, Nov. 1

Pee Wee Pros – Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Tkiya - Jewish Music Program for the School
Daylight Savings Time Ends – Set Clocks Back One Hour

Tuesday, Nov. 3
Tuesday, Nov. 3
Wednesday, Nov. 11
Thursday, Nov. 12
Tuesday, Nov. 17
Wed-Sun, Nov. 25-27

Election Day – School Closed
Professional Development for Teachers
Veterans Day – School Closed
Chanukah Boutique – PTC Fundraiser
Rosh Chodesh Kislev
Thanksgiving Recess – School Closed

CONNECTIONS

Thank You Teachers – Our teachers have successfully adapted to our new routines, facilitating an extraordinary reopening, and ensuring that we stay together as a school family. We are all building new relationships in a safe and secure way, and I am extremely grateful to our teachers for making this happen. This has not been an easy task, and like any of the challenges our teachers have faced in the past, they are facing these new challenges with dedication, love, passion and a positive attitude. Our teachers are the front-line workers at Temple Beth-El, and although it has been hectic and stressful, they have embraced the beginning of the school year with the greatest courage, strength and resilience. Thank you, teachers!

Parent Teacher Council – Thank you to our special Parent Teacher Council (PTC) for arranging additional programming for the children. The school loved Matt the Music Man, Tkiya, and Pee Wee Pros. We look forward to their next visits with us. All programs are held outdoors and are fully aligned with our ECEC health and safety requirements and procedures.

The first meeting of the PTC was held on Thursday, October 15 at 9:20 AM. **Many new ideas were generated, and we will be working together to create fundraising opportunities to support the school. More details will be provided next week. Thank you, in advance for your support of these fundraising events.** 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. They are off to a fabulous new beginning and we thank them for their 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 (dharooi@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, and especially want to thank Dalia, Marianna and Sam for helping us provide excellent programming for the children.

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 hope that arrival will be more organized and efficient. 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. We have been blessed with magnificent weather, and we pray that it will continue.

Shabbat Sing – Every 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.

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. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

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 (See below) – 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.

Links to Remember

<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>

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

www.tbe-ecec.org

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

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

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

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

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/>