

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 30, 2020

Dear Families,

Our outdoor classrooms have been a source of pleasure and excitement for the children, but this week was different. The children and teachers were engaged in new explorations and discoveries in their indoor environment. The play and investigations that occurred were fun, spontaneous, and intrinsically motivating for the children. In our Reggio-inspired school, we value the environment as a third teacher, and we continually add new materials to the classroom to provoke children's innate curiosity and to challenge them to deepen their understanding of a concept in which they are interested. This week fostered much inquiry, exploration, and communication and the children were joyfully engaged in the process of learning. They are truly having fun, and we fully embrace their "smiling" eyes and genuine laughter.

Play is evident at all times and is valued as a necessary opportunity for children to construct and shape their learning. I'm sure that you have noticed how dynamic and exciting learning can be. Our teachers continually strive to be attentive to every detail, to place intentionality at the core of everything we do, and to reflect on and document the process for each one of you to see.

With this in mind, the play resources in your home should also reflect the ways in which your children learn. Carefully consider the toys and materials you acquire for your child. They need not be expensive nor fancy to be developmentally appropriate and fun. Toys and materials are important tools; they influence children's play and experiences, engage their capabilities, and enhance opportunities for learning. Here are some suggestions:

- Collect materials from nature, such as stones, pinecones, seashells, gourds, dried flowers, twigs and leaves.
- Gather household objects such as pots and pans, spools of thread, shoelaces or ribbons, plastic containers, wooden trays, bowls, spoons, and empty boxes.
- Search unusual items such as coaster sets, napkin rings, hair curlers, candleholders, and translucent, light-reflecting, objects.
- Find items that invite children to explore trajectory in a focused way. Wood molding and plastic troughs function as excellent ramps with balls, spools, and other objects that roll.

As parents and teachers, it's important for us to explore new materials for their possibilities before we give them to children. When we offer children meaningful open-ended materials, we may notice how they become immersed in the magical world of play. As they explore and discover, we can readily see the concentration on their faces as they experience wonder, experiment with the materials, and discover new theories and learning. Toys can be divided into two categories - those which children can use independently and safely without adult supervision, and those requiring adult interaction. A toy for independent play should not require adult explanation or be so expensive that you can't let a child use it without supervision. An open-ended toy or experience is one in which there is not a predetermined result or product. Children will figure something out or learn something about the attributes of the material when they engage in the experience. Before purchasing a toy, the American Occupational Therapy Association offers the following questions to consider:

1. Is it fun? If the child does not enjoy a toy, it will be useless.
2. Is the toy appropriate for the child's current stage of development, not just chronological age?
3. Will the toy best contribute to the child's growth and development? The best toys require active, not passive, participation.
4. Does the toy have multiple purposes which require a variety of skills and interests? Some old favorites in this category are blocks, beads, building toys, dolls, toy cars and trucks, crayons, markers, and paper.
5. Is the toy child-safe? It should not have parts which a child could swallow if they are removed and should not have rough or sharp edges. The best toys are washable.

Blogger Jonathan Liu writes about the five best toys of all time – sticks, boxes, string, cardboard tubes and dirt. You can read the description of his article below.

<http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2011/01/the-5-best-toys-of-all-time/>

It is well known that through play, young children learn about themselves and the world around them. If we provide them with quality, hands-on materials, they will learn more about the world around them than any electronic device can teach!

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, Nov. 1	Daylight Savings Time Ends – Set Clocks Back One Hour
Nov. 1 – Nov. 30	PTC Fun Pasta Fundraiser
Tuesday, Nov. 3	Election Day – School Closed
Tuesday, Nov. 3	Professional Development for Teachers
Thursday, Nov. 5	Tkiya - Jewish Music Program for the School
Tuesday, Nov. 10	Pee Wee Pros – Sports Program for 3s and Pre-K
Wednesday, Nov. 11	Veterans Day – School Closed
Thursday, Nov. 12	Chanukah Shopping Boutique-PTC Fundraiser-11:00 AM–3:00 PM
Tuesday, Nov. 17	Rosh Chodesh Kislev
Wed-Sun, Nov. 25-27	Thanksgiving Recess – School Closed

CONNECTIONS

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.

Parent Teacher Council Fundraiser – The PTC is raising money for our wonderful school. You are receiving an order form for a variety of pastas. The more you order the more money is raised for our school. These can be a great holiday gift and/or a donation to local food pantries.

Download the Fun Pasta App on your phone or from your computer go to funpastafundrasing.com, then input this code: **DUK-FKE** to join. Then you’re all set to begin to shop!

The pasta fundraiser will begin November 1st and run until November 30th. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to members of the PTC. Thank you for your support. Happy shopping!

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.

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.

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@tbe-greatneck.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://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://pjllibrary.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/>