

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 9, 2020

Dear Families,

When huge gusts of wind shook the Sukkah on Wednesday night, I was reminded, once again, about the fragile nature of the Sukkah and what that fragility means, especially during this historically vulnerable time in our lives. The act of leaving our home to dwell in the temporary shelter of the Sukkah for a week every year is an act of faith. We are not so much celebrating fragility as we are reminding ourselves of the perilous position our ancestors put themselves in when they fled Egypt, and that the danger ultimately was temporary and survivable. The celebration is really about our freedom, for Sukkot is one of the two holidays that celebrate the Exodus. At the beginning of the agricultural year, on the full moon near the vernal equinox, we remind ourselves of the Exodus with a celebration centered on its hallmark food. Six months later, on the full moon near the autumnal equinox, facing harsh winter, we rebuild the makeshift shelters of the first weeks of the flight.

We just completed the first month of our reopened school, and the fragility of the Sukkah is ringing loudly for me. Through extremely careful and intentional preparation and hard work by our faculty and staff, as well as the vigilance of our entire community, we have successfully enabled our students to reap the full rewards of our school. The connections among children and teachers that have already been made

by being together in our outdoor and indoor classrooms are worth the entire efforts of our collaborative hard work. But we all sense the fragility of our situation.

Feeling fragile and vulnerable is an uncomfortable feeling, and I have discovered that people generally prefer to focus on the opposite emotions – resilience and survival. Perhaps that’s why Sukkot is called *Zeman Simchateinu*, the “Season of Rejoicing,” and Simchat Torah commands us to be joyful with our Torah. Fall is a season when you can have joyful outdoor experiences with your children. Simply being outside on a glorious fall day infuses everyone with joy. Sukkot is our outdoor holiday – sort of a gateway to the wonders of fall.

As the Covid-19 pandemic rages on with new cases reported every day in our community, we are keenly aware of how quickly the virus can spread among us. When we are not careful, when we don’t uphold masking and physical distancing rules, and when we allow large gatherings, we compromise everyone’s ability to experience joy. As we prepare to celebrate Simchat Torah this weekend, we must continue to be vigilant about our responsibilities and practices so that we can continue to benefit from being in school every day. The Talmud teaches that all of us are responsible for one another.

May we continue to appreciate the fragility of the Sukkah and the joy of this season and beyond as we celebrate responsibly with our families.

Shabbat Shalom
Chag Sameach
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat & Sun, Oct. 10&11	Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah
Monday, Oct. 12	Columbus Day – School Closed
Tuesday, Oct. 13	Pee Wee Pros - Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Wednesday, Oct. 14	Matt the Music Man Program for the School
Thursday, Oct. 15	PTC Meeting – 9:20 AM – Back Parking Lot – Bring a Chair
Sun & Mon, Oct. 18&19	Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan
Tuesday, Oct. 20	Pee Wee Pros – Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K
Wednesday, Oct. 21	Matt the Music Man Program for the School
Tuesday, Oct. 27	Pee Wee Pros – Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K

CONNECTIONS

Parent Teacher Council – Thank you to our special Parent Teacher Council (PTC) for arranging additional programming for the children. The entire school loved Matt the Music Man, and he will be back to our school on two Wednesdays, October 14 and October 21. Pee Wee Pros will continue to provide sports programming for the three-year-olds and Pre-K on Tuesdays in October. Yesterday, Tkiya, a well-known Jewish music program, came to our school and we sang new songs and dances for Sukkot and Simchat Torah. We look forward to inviting them back again soon. All programs are held outdoors and are fully aligned with our ECEC health and safety requirements and procedures.

The first meeting of the PTC will be held on Thursday, October 15 at 9:20 AM. Please join us. 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 (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, 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@tbegreatneck.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://pjlibrary.org/sukkot>

<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/>