

**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**  
**September 11, 2020**

Dear Families,

I want to welcome you, once again, to the Temple Beth-El family. The blending of our returning families with our new families is always an exciting process in the school. We are grateful for this beautiful beginning, and I want to thank our outstanding teachers who worked tirelessly during the past few weeks to create classroom and outdoor environments that are educational, stimulating, and inviting. This year is certainly new and different for each of us, yet our commitment to our children and families remain as strong as ever.

During the weeks and months ahead, we will nurture each child's sense of wonder and their ever-increasing curiosity. We will reach out to each one of you for your help and support in making our school community the best it can be. Everything is new and exciting, and the world is just beginning. We are all here for each other, and together, we will create a strong community for our children and families.

Children and parents have been at home with each other for many months, and the teachers and I are especially sensitive to the separation process this year. We have much experience helping children separate. We know that separation is a process and does not happen overnight. Your children are doing

well, thus far, and we have intentionally created a slower phase-in period this year. At home, you and your child can participate in many playful activities that help build skills and strategies to support positive separation. The games also help you develop a better comfort level with your child's first school experience.

Some activities that you and your child can play are:

1. Practice "Hello" and "Good-bye," which help to affirm your child's trust that you are coming back when you say you are. Young children need constant reassurance that their parent is returning. They are not good yet at keeping a visual image of their family for a long period of time. Tell your child when you are leaving the room or house, and when you'll be back. Never disappear or sneak out. It may be initially easier, but your child never knows when you are leaving and returning. When you do return, tell your child that you are back. The words that you use should be consistent.
2. Favorite games like Hide n' Seek and Peek-a-Boo promotes separation and reunion. Use different types of objects for these games. Hiding and finding small toys in the sandbox is also a fun, outdoor activity.
3. Read stories that address separation and reunion. These stories may seem simple to you, but they are meaningful for children who can relate to the theme. The following are some favorites about separation:

Are You My Mother?

If You Were My Bunny

The Runaway Bunny

Goodnight Moon

Goodbye, Hello!

Owl Babies

Mama, Do You Love Me?

You Go Away

By P.D. Eastwood

By Kate McMullan

By Margaret Wise Brown

By Margaret Wise Brown

By Shen Roddie

By Martin Waddell

By Barbara M. Joosse

By Dorothy Corey

4. Celebrating Shabbat each week is a wonderful family tradition that honors the separation of Shabbat from the rest of the week.

I hope these strategies are helpful. Separation is a life-long process. Achieving a comfortable separation from home to school, for both parents and children, is one of the most important accomplishments during the first few months of school. Mastering separation frees a child to use his/her energies to achieve potential in other areas of learning and socialization. We do not make our journeys alone. A close home-school relationship is invaluable in reaching this goal.

We have completed our first week of school, and I am extremely grateful for the beautiful relationships that are already forming. Connections among children, parents, and teachers are in the early phase of development, but I can already see the seeds blossoming into vibrant flowers.

As we all grow together on our journey this year, may we find new challenges, growth, and accomplishment in all we do.

*Shabbat Shalom*

*Vicki*

## HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, Sept. 14	Hot Lunch Begins
Friday, Sept. 18	Erev Rosh Hashanah – School Closed
Sat & Sun, Sept. 19&20	Rosh Hashanah
Tuesday, Sept. 22	First Day of Fall
Monday, Sept. 28	Yom Kippur – School Closed
Sat & Sun, Oct. 3&4	Sukkot
Sat & Sun, Oct. 10&11	Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah
Monday, Oct. 12	Columbus Day – School Closed
Sun & Mon, Oct. 18&19	Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan

## CONNECTIONS

**Shabbat Sing** – Today was the first day I celebrated Shabbat with the three-year-olds and Pre-K students. For those of you who are new to our school, we join together on Friday mornings 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 fish and vegetables

**Wednesday** Pizza and Israeli salad

**Thursday**- Breakfast for lunch (waffles, french toast or pancakes), vegetables, fruit

**Friday** – Baked chicken fingers, rice, vegetables

This year, the lunch will be provided in individual packages for each child. We will 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. **Hot Lunch begins on September 14 for the 3s and Pre-K classes.**

**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](mailto: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**

[www.tbe-ecec.org](http://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/>