

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 25, 2020

Dear Families,

After six months of relative silence at Temple Beth-El, the sounds of children's voices are creating the most beautiful music in our ECEC. It is an extraordinary experience for the teachers and me as we participate in the reawakening of our school and temple worlds. Like the sounding of the Shofar calling us to attention, the children's voices are calling us to focus on the most important values we share.

Values of kindness, honesty, trust, respect, compassion, empathy, love, courage... find their way in our early childhood classrooms every day. The children are absolutely thrilled to be with each other again. They are sharing, taking turns easily, and new friendships are forming. As we work to help the children create positive social experiences, we know that their self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to develop meaningful and lasting friendships has been rekindled. As educators of young children, it has never been more important to provide the opportunity to nurture children's social and emotional development, and we are documenting these precious moments every day with photos. The pictures are worth a thousand words and tell a beautiful story. Even with masks covering half their faces, the touching photos show children working and playing together throughout the day.

We continue to rely on Jewish values and traditions to teach our students. From generation to generation Jewish values are the core of Jewish strength and survival. They are the foundation upon which we form the character and personalities of our children, and especially during this pandemic, we have the humbling responsibility to nurture our children's moral, emotional, and social development. How can you teach Jewish values to your children at home? If we talk about Jewish values enough, children can draw upon these values as they grow, and they will grow up to be kind, responsible and caring individuals.

Tzedakah (sharing, generosity) – The root of the word, *Tzedakah* is *Tzedek*, justice or fairness. Natural opportunities for being fair and sharing with others build the foundation for *Tzedakah*.

Derech Eretz (the way of the land) – Proper, decent behavior, manners, respect. Practice manners at the table during meals. Wait for everyone to sit down before you eat. Talk about feelings. When children are upset about something, help them put their feelings into words. Play games that require taking turns.

Rachamim (compassion) - Encourage naturally occurring tendencies for compassion. When a child shows signs of empathy towards an unhappy child, or attempts to offer aid, validate and support these feelings. Foster empathy when someone is hurt by providing appropriate words. Give the child the ice pack to bring over to an injured person.

Tikkun Olam (repair the world); *Bal Tashchit* (do not destroy) - Pick up toys after playing. Fix books when they are ripped. Create a garden and plant vegetables, spices and flowers.

Gemillut Chasadim (acts of lovingkindness) - Foster kindness by sharpening the child's awareness of the needs and feelings of another person requiring help. Reinforce self-motivated acts of kindness and label it *Chesed*. Help each child build a self-image as a kind and helpful person. Whomever you're with and whatever you do, be kind, loving and thoughtful.

Hachnasat Orchim (hospitality, welcoming guests) – It is difficult to practice this value while maintaining physical distance rules during this pandemic. But you can make the connection to the biblical story of Abraham and Sarah and talk about inviting guests to your home.

From my family to yours, I wish each of you a healthy, fulfilling and sweet New Year. G'mar Chatima Tova – May you be sealed for a good year, and Tizku l'Shanim Rabot - May you merit many years.

Shabbat Shalom

Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, Sept. 28

Tuesday, Sept. 29

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Sat & Sun, Oct. 3&4

Sat & Sun, Oct. 10&11

Monday, Oct. 12

Sun & Mon, Oct. 18&19

Yom Kippur – School Closed

Special PTC Sports Program for Threes and Pre-K

Special PTC Music Program for Toddlers

Sukkot

Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

Columbus Day – School Closed

Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan

CONNECTIONS

Parent Teacher Council – Thank you to our special Parent Teacher Council for surprising us with the rainbow arch of balloons on the first day of school. The balloons added a beautiful welcoming feeling to our entire school community and added greatly to our spirits. Next week, the PTC has arranged two special programs for the children. Matt the Music Man will sing with the two-year-olds and Pee Wee Pros will provide sports programming for the three-year-olds and Pre-K. All programs will be held outdoors and are fully aligned with our ECEC health and safety requirements and procedures.

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. I would like to welcome our new PTC Co-Chairs for the 2020-2021 school year, 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 – Today was the first day I celebrated Shabbat with our two-year-old students. It was a beautiful morning for everyone. 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- Breakfast for lunch (waffles, french toast or pancakes), vegetables, fruit

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://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/>