

**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**  
**April 29, 2022**

Dear Families,

Welcome back! I hope Passover was as memorable for you and your family as it was for mine. Yesterday, we celebrated Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and even though we don't focus on this holiday with our very young students, it resonates personally for me every year. This is marked as a day to remember, and each year we are called upon to find ways to honor and commemorate those who perished during the darkest days of our history.

Perhaps, we can look closely at our own family's Seder table two weeks ago to find the greatest way to commemorate – our children. For many, it is the children who provide us with the greatest pleasures in life, especially during holiday celebrations. As all my grandchildren gleefully sang the Seder songs, I sat with awe and feelings of gratitude and blessing. *L'dor v'dor*, the beautiful Hebrew phrase signifying Jewish continuity from one generation to another, played out right there at our Seder table. My grandchildren's excited and radiating faces are apparent at every Jewish holiday, but there is something very special about Pesach – the Chag designed specifically for children. We owe it to our children - and our children's children - to keep that excitement alive.

One of my favorite books, The 10 Greatest Gifts I Give My Children, by Steven W. Vannoy, helps families create their own unique family vision and a plan to nurture and fulfill that vision. He talks about the choices we make for ourselves, our children and our loved ones, and how our values help guide those choices. For each family, those choices will be different. But, unless one knows the reasons for the choices they make, the choice itself is just a random choice. When we each have a clear vision that guides and propels us, the choices for our family are less complicated and easier to make.

So, just what can a parent do to keep the love of being Jewish alive for our children? How can we continue to keep the feelings we had during the Seder and make them last? For one, make sure that you make Jewish education a priority and keep your child enrolled in Jewish education every year. We are blessed in our ECEC, because our children are enrolled in a Day School education model. It's easy to take this for granted – but what happens next year if they go off to the world of public education? Will they continue their Jewish education in some way? Whatever decision your family makes is your choice – but I urge you to make that choice. By interrupting your child's Jewish education during these most formative years, you will make the choice not to continue his/her Jewish learning. As the famous song states, "I believe the children are our future." We need to teach them well Jewishly, so that they can carry on and help lead the way into the future.

Each spring, our Jewish holidays are arrayed in a fashion that speaks to our history of enslavement, our journey to freedom and the enduring nature of our people. Beginning with Purim's tale of oppression and rescue, we count and spend the next four weeks preparing to retell our defining story of slavery and redemption at Pesach. Twelve days later we pause, and all Israel stands still for a moment, to recall the destruction, in our time, of a third of all the Jews in the world. A week later - Yom HaZikaron - we pause again to commemorate Israel's fallen soldiers, and the next day, the epic reaches its climax as we celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut – Israel Independence Day. Perhaps one lesson of this timing is that, for the Jewish people to continue to mature and grow, and for our children's Jewish identity to reach the place we desire for them, there must be intentional and continuous learning throughout their formative years.

The faculty and I are looking forward to celebrating Yom Ha'Atzmaut in beautiful ways with you and the children next week.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Tuesday, May 3**  
**Wednesday, May 4**  
**Thursday, May 5**

**Friday, May 6**  
**Sunday, May 8**  
**Tuesday, May 10**  
**Tuesday, May 17**  
**Thursday, May 19**

**Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K**  
**Yom HaZikaron**  
**Yom HaAtzmaut – Dress in Blue & White**  
**Toddler Tkiya Musical Celebration - 9:30-11:00**  
**3s & Pre-K Family Workshop – 11:00-12:30**  
**Rain Date for Yom HaAtzmaut Celebrations**  
**Mother's Day**  
**Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K**  
**Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K**  
**Lag B'Omer**

## CONNECTIONS

**Pre-Summer Enrichment Program** – We are offering an extension to the school year from **Monday, June 13 to Friday, June 24**. Classes will be filled on a first-come-first served basis. You will receive the information next week.

**Registration for the Summer Program – Our Summer Program is a wonderful way to provide consistency and a seamless flow of the year.** We are offering programs for children who are two, three, and four years old. We are excited to offer the opportunity for our students to continue their experiences at Temple Beth-El during the summer. Stress-free transitions are important for young children. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

**Registration for 2022-2023 - Don't get closed out of a class for the 2022-2023 school year.** If you have any questions about our program for your child for next year, please don't hesitate to call or email me. I'm always happy and proud to provide a tour and talk about our school.

**Passover Reflections** - The week before Passover was a whirlwind of celebrations in our school. These hands-on, age-appropriate, child-centered, and meaningful experiences were the culmination of many weeks of learning and preparation. Each class shared their interpretations of the story, and the concepts and messages of Passover came through. Many families thanked me this week for their Seder experiences at school. Parents and grandparents told me about the meaningfulness of their Seders at home, the intensity with which the children participated, and the entire family's enriching experience during the two Seder nights. Many also shared that the children sang their Passover songs with gusto throughout the entire holiday!! Thank you for thanking us. These significant moments in a young family's life are the moments that help Jewish early childhood educators feel gratified and fulfilled. Heartfelt thanks and Kol HaKavod to each one of our teachers for providing the best, age-appropriate Pesach experience for our students and families. I also want to thank our families for providing us with delicious food, and for creating the beautiful partnership with your children's teachers that made our Seders and celebrations so meaningful. It was a wonderful week for all, and I hope the good feelings continue for many years to come.

**Health and Safety Precautions** – Wash your hands!! Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Good hand washing technique is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases among both children and adults. The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific as we strive to reduce the spread of infection in our school. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

**Dressing for the Outdoors** – Please be attentive to the weather every day to ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Our goal in all weather is to keep the children warm, dry and comfortable. If they are not dressed properly, the class is unable to take advantage of the open air and the many interesting outdoor spaces around the temple building. Boots, raincoats, an extra pair of sneakers, two complete changes of clothing (to be left in school), sweaters, hats, mittens, a warm jacket, snow pants and snow boots are necessary. As the weather becomes colder, we will be outdoors when the temperature is above 30 degrees. Please label all children's clothing! Thank you.

**Nut-Free School** – Reminder - We are a Nut-Free and Sesame-Free School. Please do not send food with nuts or sesame seeds in any form. And please do not give any of these foods to your child on school grounds. We have many children with serious food allergies this year. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

**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** – Plain pasta, sauce, shredded mozzarella and vegetable

**Tuesday** – Baked chicken fingers and corn

**Wednesday** Pizza and Israeli salad

**Thursday**- Sliders/hamburgers, sweet potato fries and cucumber salad

**Friday** – Pancakes and applesauce

Our 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.

**Shabbat Sing** – Every Friday, I celebrate Shabbat with the toddlers, three-year-olds and Pre-K students. 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. We sing, dance, and work together as a school community to create a joyous Shabbat celebration.

**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 [yperler@tbegreatneck.org](mailto:yperler@tbegreatneck.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.

<http://www.jnf.org/> (Plant a tree in Israel for Yom Ha'Atzmaut)

<https://tinyurl.com/yb9uuvtk> (Ideas for Children's Independent Play Experiences Outdoors)

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/childrens-books-empathy-kindness\\_1\\_5d52e7b1e4b0c63bcbec2699](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/childrens-books-empathy-kindness_1_5d52e7b1e4b0c63bcbec2699)

<https://www.ujafedny.org> (Support Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine)

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

[https://www.peacequarters.com/harvard-psychologists-say-parents-raise-good-kids-5-things/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_campaign=hiylfb](https://www.peacequarters.com/harvard-psychologists-say-parents-raise-good-kids-5-things/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_campaign=hiylfb)

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/explore-great-outdoors>

<https://www.invajy.com/20-happiness-quotes-for-making-you-smile/>

[https://d2gesac5hma2c2.cloudfront.net/uploads/attachment/file/1690/Winter\\_Thrive\\_Guide\\_2021.pdf](https://d2gesac5hma2c2.cloudfront.net/uploads/attachment/file/1690/Winter_Thrive_Guide_2021.pdf)  
(Ideas for Family Fun During Winter Months)

<https://www.mindful.org/noticing-connecting-with-our-kids-in-the-midst-of-busy-lives/>

<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/february-2017/how-to-talk-to-children-about-anti-semitism>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/playing-music-home>

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/12/29/christakis.play.children.learning/index.html>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/09/01/the-decline-of-play-in-preschoolers-and-the-rise-in-sensory-issues/?noredirect=on>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/04/12/report-debunks-earlier-is-better-academic-instruction-for-young-children/?noredirect=on>

<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/june-2021/what-is-rosh-chodesh>

<https://www.mommyshorts.com/2015/03/5-ways-kids-learn-at-a-reggio-emilia-preschool.html>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>

<https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2010/outdoor-play>

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health>

[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/>