

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 8, 2022

*“In every generation every individual should feel as though he or she had personally gone forth from Egypt.”
The Haggadah*

Dear Families,

Tomorrow is Shabbat Hagadol, the Shabbat that immediately precedes Passover. Each one of us is involved in the physical preparations that take place every year. Whether we’re cleaning, shopping, cooking, or spiritually preparing ourselves, Passover is the holiday of our freedom. And while this is normally a joyous time, we are saddened by the terrible suffering in Ukraine. The contrast between our good fortune to be free in America and the nightmare that Ukrainians face is a reminder that slavery, war and brutality are not mere Biblical themes or things of the past. In every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as though each one of us personally escaped from Egypt – as having the good fortune to be American Jews. Perhaps our Seders this year will reflect this theme in new ways.

There is something very special about this Chag. In many ways, the holiday is designed specifically for children, and it’s important to find ways to make the Seder experiential so that we feel as if we, ourselves, have made the journey from slavery to freedom. These past weeks have been a whirlwind of new learning for the children. Their hands-on, age-appropriate, child-centered, and meaningful experiences were the culmination

of many weeks of preparation. The teachers in our Reggio-inspired Jewish school set the scene and honor the children's curiosity, acting as facilitators and resources for learning. The result is that the children have had numerous experiences relating to Passover. Every class has been interpreting the story in their own, unique ways. The teachers and I are extremely impressed by the children's immersion in the holiday and their understanding of the meaning of freedom. In a two-year-old class, I observed the children putting their backpacks on, singing "Marching out of Egypt" as they crossed over a bridge. In the three-year-old and Pre-K classes, whether they are building cities for Pharaoh or being led by Moses to cross the sea, their interpretations are genuine and timeless. I want to express my sincerest gratitude and respect to each one of the teachers in our ECEC for creating meaningful and memorable Passover experiences. I hope you are singing these special songs with your children at home and are enjoying their excitement and anticipation of the holiday.

The Passover Seder is a time to sit back, finally relax, and reflect on another beautiful year of growth and rebirth. On behalf of the entire ECEC faculty, we wish you the most wonderful Pesach - filled with love, joy and memory-making experiences.

Shabbat Shalom
Chag Sameach
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, April 12
Thurs-Fri, April 14-22
Tuesday, April 26
Wednesday, April 27
Thursday, April 28
Tuesday, May 3
Wednesday, May 4
Thursday, May 5

Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K
Passover Recess – School Closed
Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K
Picture Day
Yom Hashoah
Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K
Yom HaZikaron
Yom HaAtzmaut – Dress in Blue & White

CONNECTIONS

Thank You Teachers and Families– Many families thanked me this week for their children's Passover experiences at school. Thank you for your kind words, support, and dedication to our school. I want to convey my heartfelt thanks and Kol HaKavod to each one of our teachers for providing the best, age-appropriate Pesach experience for our students. I also want to thank you, our wonderful families for providing us with so much excitement, energy and delicious food during this holiday season.

Pre-Summer Enrichment Program – We are offering an extension to the school year from **Monday, June 13 to Friday, June 24**. Registration for this program will be available after Passover.

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! Registrations are still coming in 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 talk about our school.

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@tbgreatneck.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://pjlibrary.org/passover>

<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/march-2017/passover-101>

<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.ujafedny.org> (Support Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine)

<https://pjlibrary.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.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
(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>

<http://www.jnf.org/> (Plant a tree in Israel for Tu B’Shevat)

<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.naeyc.org/>

<http://families.naeyc.org/>

<http://www.reggioalliance.org/>

<http://www.brainy-child.com/article/reggioemilia.shtml>

<http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/>