

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
December 10, 2021

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is the work of childhood.”

Mr. Fred Rogers

Dear Families,

We are very excited that registration for the 2022-2023 school year has begun. As you already know, our school recognizes the importance of choosing the proper education for young children, and we work with dedication and rigor to achieve and maintain the highest standards of excellence. Our school is widely recognized as a model of excellence for Jewish early childhood programs throughout the country, and our teachers continue to grow and strive to stimulate each child’s individual sense of curiosity and foster a love of learning in a seamlessly integrated secular and Jewish environment. The process of education at Temple Beth-El involves children interacting with their immediate world, and through these processes they develop curiosity, creativity, observation skills, different ways of communicating and making connections, and critical thinking skills. Our curriculum is child-centered and encourages authentic age-appropriate learning experiences aligned with New York State standards. Our school is in the seventeenth year of our journey since receiving our prestigious JECEI grant, a professional and educational development program, and becoming inspired by the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. We are ever-evolving, always dynamic and intentional in every decision we make, and

permanently on a journey to grow as professional educators. It is with the strong desire to be the best that we can be that our teachers and I continue to uphold the mark of quality represented by the NAEYC Accreditation system since 2001.

Erika Christakis, an early childhood teacher and former preschool director, and Nicholas Christakis, a professor of medicine and sociology, wrote an article entitled, “Want to Get Your Kids into College? Let Them Play.” Together, they served as the heads of one of the undergraduate residential houses at Harvard College. They stated that the undergraduates “all know how to work, but some of them haven’t learned how to play.” They strongly believe that “one of the best predictors of school success is the ability to control impulses... and if you want your child to succeed in college, the play-based curriculum is the way to go.” “Through play, children learn to take turns, delay gratification, negotiate conflicts, solve problems, share goals, acquire flexibility, and live with disappointment. By allowing children to imagine walking in another person's shoes, imaginative play also seeds the development of empathy, a key ingredient for intellectual and social-emotional success.”

“How do these approaches look different in a classroom? Preschoolers in both kinds of programs might learn about hibernating squirrels, for example, but in the skills-based program, the child could be asked to fill out a worksheet, counting (or guessing) the number of nuts in a basket and coloring the squirrel's fur. In a play-based curriculum, by contrast, a child might hear stories about squirrels and be asked why a squirrel accumulates nuts or has fur. The child might then collaborate with peers in the construction of a squirrel habitat, learning not only about number sense, measurement, and other principles needed for engineering, but also about how to listen to and express ideas. The child filling out the worksheet is engaged in a more one-dimensional task, but the child in the play-based program interacts meaningfully with peers, materials, and ideas.”

As research indicates, emotional intelligence is equally as important as academic preparation; and both qualities are necessary for successful learning and academic success. Asking questions, sharing information and drawing conclusions are some of the characteristics of a play-based curriculum. Young children are naturally curious, competent learners, and are capable of solving complex problems, following interests and ideas, and finding answers for themselves. When children are deprived of daily opportunities to play, we are depriving them of their right to learn and understand the world. Children learn best when engaged in meaningful experiences within a respectful learning community. “For children, play is serious learning. Play is the work of childhood.”

We look forward to sharing your child’s growth and development with you during our Parent-Teacher Conferences next week.

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, Dec. 14
Wednesday, Dec. 15
Wednesday, Dec. 22
Fri-Fri, Dec. 24-31
Monday, January 3
Monday, January 17
Monday, January 17

Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K
Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed
Early Bird Registration Deadline
Winter Recess – School Closed
School Re-Opens
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed
Tu B'Shevat

CONNECTIONS

Parent Teacher Conferences – Parent Teacher Conferences are held twice during the year. During this first conference next week, you and the teachers will work together to set goals for your child. Please come to the conference prepared with information that will help during this process (child's interests, needs, and any information you want to share that is pertinent to your child's growth and development). This will help the process greatly. The ultimate goal of our continuing communication and collaboration is to assist each child in achieving his/her maximum potential in school as well as at home. I hope the experience is productive and beneficial for you. Here, at Temple Beth-El Early Childhood Education Center, we strive to provide a loving, nurturing, and accepting environment where all children can thrive and grow in every area of his/her development. We, as teachers, thoroughly enjoy each child's gifts. And I, personally, continue to be excited about working toward helping each one reach his/her highest potential. Thank you for sharing your precious children with us.

Challah Fundraising Program - Beginning in January, we will be offering an opportunity for you to order a weekly challah dough to take home on Thursdays. This is a fun and educational way to enhance your Shabbat experiences with your children by making a fresh challah at home every week. More details will be provided next week.

Registration for 2022-2023 – Don't miss out!! Prices will be locked-in at the Early Bird rate for next year's tuition. There will be a tuition increase for those who register after the Early Bird deadline. **The deadline for the Early Bird is December 22, 2021.** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

Pre-K Program at Temple Beth-El for 2022-23 – In order to meet the ever-changing needs of families, a few years ago Temple Beth-El generously increased the number of hours for the Pre-K (from 9-2 to 9-3), included lunch, and reduced the tuition. We are very grateful for the generosity of our Temple to help families out in this way. As you know, Temple Beth-El strives to provide an excellent Jewish early childhood experience for our toddler through pre-kindergarten children and to keep our programs accessible to our community. We have an outstanding Pre-K program, taught by exceptional and highly qualified teachers that meet and exceed New York State's Prekindergarten Next Generation Learning Standards. I hope you take advantage of this opportunity. Please register quickly for next year's Pre-K, as registration is on a first come-first-served basis.

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.

NAEYC Accreditation - While talking to families about our school during the registration process, prospective parents often ask me about our national accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For those who are new to our school, accreditation provides a process by which early childhood professionals and families can evaluate programs, compare them with professional standards, and identify areas needing improvement. A NAEYC accredited program has demonstrated a commitment to providing the highest quality program for young children and their families. Our school has had the honor and distinction of being accredited with the NAEYC since 2001, with re-accreditation occurring every five years since then. We are extremely proud to be considered a high-quality school and are elated that we are still the ONLY nationally accredited Synagogue early childhood school on Long Island.

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.

Mask Protocols – Masks are mandatory for all students when indoors, except when eating, drinking or napping. Wearing masks outdoors is optional. All students are required to arrive at school with their mask on. Some days, we go directly inside; other days we stay outdoors. Because we are in close contact at the entrance area, teachers, parents, siblings and ECEC students must wear a mask in these outdoor areas when arriving and dismissing students at all times. Thank you 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 – **New Lunch** – 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.

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.

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

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

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

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/vc/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/>