

**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 17, 2021**

Dear Families,

The teachers and I are always re-energized after Parent-Teacher Conferences. There's something magical about parents and teachers talking about their children's experiences and setting yearly goals. I hope your sacred time with the teachers was enlightening, constructive, and uplifting. We all feel profoundly blessed and grateful for the opportunity to share your precious children with you.

There's nothing more important than the love we have for our children, our families, and each other. The warmth of a small child's embrace, the joy they bring, the wonder we see through their eyes, and the infinite love we feel in our hearts is what we can be sure of in our world that sometimes feels like it has been turned upside down. We are continually reminded of these truths, and we are inspired to make sure we teach and take care of our children in the most extraordinary ways, always treating them with the highest levels of love and respect.

This Shabbat is Shabbat, Vayechi, (Genesis 47:28-50:26). Jacob blesses two of his grandsons, Ephraim and Menasheh, the sons of Joseph, elevating their status to full Israelite tribe, alongside his own twelve sons. Then, before he dies, Jacob goes on to bless each of his twelve sons. There is a very beautiful custom in many Jewish

homes that arises from Parshat Vayechi - the blessing of each child on Friday night, when Shabbat arrives. A parental blessing bestowed upon a child can be one of the most meaningful moments of life. It gives children a confidence and confirmation about who they are as individuals, a valuable feeling that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. It demonstrates that we love them all equally. These tangible, ritualistic moments are the times in a child's life when family and togetherness, God and prayer, gratitude and fulfillment are paramount. Parents are often equally as moved when they give the blessing. And we have the opportunity to create this sacred and powerful moment every week. The fifth of our Ten Commandments - honor your father and your mother - teaches us to receive and accept the traditions of our ancestors. Our patriarchs' blessings of their children and grandchildren teach us to transmit our heritage, welding our link in the chain of Jewish continuity, and to recognize and honor our children as our most precious blessings.

## **Blessing for Boys**

*Y'simcha Elohim  
k'Efrayim v'che-Menasheh*

"May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh"

## **Blessing for Girls**

*Y'simeich Elohim  
k'Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, v'Leah.*

"May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah."

## **Always Followed by (The Priestly Benediction – Numbers VI, 24:26):**

*Y'varechecha Adonai V'yish'm'recha.  
Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.  
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem l'cha shalom.*

"May God Bless you and guard you.  
May the light of God shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you.  
May the presence of God be with you and give you peace."

*Shabbat Shalom  
Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Tuesday, Dec. 21**

**Wednesday, Dec. 22**

**Thursday, Dec. 23**

**Fri-Fri, Dec. 24-31**

**Monday, January 3**

**Monday, January 17**

**Monday, January 17**

**Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K**

**Early Bird Registration Deadline**

**New Year's Celebration with Matt the Music Man**

**Winter Recess – School Closed**

**School Re-Opens**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed**

**Tu B'Shevat**

## CONNECTIONS

**Shelter in Place Drill** – We had successful Shelter in Place Drills yesterday. As you know, our school has a comprehensive Emergency Plan. Teachers are familiar with procedures for fire, accident, disaster and medical emergencies. In some situations, it may be necessary to remain on-site while taking special precautions to ensure the safety of the children. Every class has a designated safe place in their classrooms and the school building to remain quiet if necessary. Shelter in Place drills are conducted at least twice a year. Our fire and evacuation drills are conducted monthly.

**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 Wednesday, December 22, 2021.** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

**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. The Challah Program will begin on January 6. **Payment is due on December 22 in order to receive your Challah on January 6.**

**International Travel Requirements** – Please continue to be safe. We have been blessed with mostly continuous in-person education for our children, and we want to continue that way until June. **If you are traveling internationally, we need a copy of your return trip's negative COVID-19 test before your child can come back to school.**

For more information on procedures for travelers, please refer to the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>

**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.

**School Closings - Snow Policy** – Our Parent Handbook details the Snow/Inclement Weather Policy on Page 11 – School Closings. Please familiarize yourself with the policy: “If Great Neck Schools are closed, we are closed.” **Our emergency text messaging system is up and running. Last week, you received a test text. Please let me know if you did not get a test text message. We have been very pleased with the results of using this technology to make time-sensitive school communication more efficient and effective.** You can also find the closing listed on [www.News12.com](http://www.News12.com) and FIOS 1 (under Temple Beth-El Early Childhood Education Center). Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation and flexibility during the winter season.

**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](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.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.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/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/>