

**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 23, 2021**

*“Music can change the world” — Ludwig van Beethoven*

Dear Families,

Matt the Music Man came back to our school today to help us say good-bye to 2021 and hello to 2022. The entire school sang, danced and shared a beautiful day together. As we look forward to ringing in the new year on midnight, December 31, you will see the children’s excitement reflected in today’s photos and videos. Once again, extraordinary enjoyment and laughter echoed throughout our outdoor world, reminding us that music touches us emotionally and is truly the universal language for all people.

These cold, wintry days are excellent opportunities to provide your children with musical experiences at home. Some of my fondest memories with my children involve music, and I distinctly remember the different emotions engendered while listening to different types of music. Marching bands with pots, pans, spoons and other kitchen items were always favorites on cold and rainy days. And what could be more relaxing than playing with special toys against a backdrop of quiet, soothing, melodic music! Whether listening to musical recordings, playing instruments, singing songs, or attending live performances geared for young children, these experiences will help them, and the adults in their lives, learn to appreciate and enjoy music, bringing pleasure and enrichment as their innermost feelings and thoughts are expressed.

Parents, you have a beautiful opportunity to interact with your children in a musical way – in the same way that you interact using spoken language. The following information is based on: “Creating Music with Young Children,” Jan Wolf, Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, January 1992.

**Listening is the basis of all musical learning** (Bayless & Ramsey, 1986). Listening skills are needed to sing songs or keep a steady beat to music.

**Focused listening means helping children zero in on specific sounds or words that give direction.**

1. Records that give directions, songs that have movement, and games that require a response either through movement or singing are examples of appropriate musical listening activities.
2. Sound games requiring recognition of particular rhythm instruments, exercises that focus on a specific auditory cue on a record, or identification of certain environmental sounds (raindrops on the roof) also enhance listening skills in a playful, musical way.

**Beat competency reflects the ability to keep time with or feel the pulse of the music.** Very young children have their own sense of timing. This independent sense of musical feeling is the first step toward beat competency. As children grow, they begin to develop the ability to relate to the timing of others. The more experience they have, the quicker their competency.

**How young children learn to sing. Music educators have determined various stages of singing development:**

1. **Musical babbling** - First the child listens to sounds. Babies are likely to first hear musical sound through the human voice, although TV, radio, recordings, and music boxes are also usually part of their environment early on. As a result, the child invents musical sound sometimes referred to as musical babbling. This invention precedes imitation or copying what has been sung.
2. **Tagging on** - Imitation is observed as toddlers lag behind a bit or tag on to the end of a song.
3. **Talking/singing** - Short songs work best, especially those with repetitive melodies.
4. **Increased accuracy** - From age three to four, children progressively increase their ability to join in song.
5. **Accurate singing of simple songs alone.**
6. **Accurate singing with a group.**

Recorded music readily available today can be a valuable source of quality music just right for singing, if selected carefully. When choosing recordings, certain criteria should be kept in mind. Choose recordings with in-tune singing, children’s voices, easy-listening adult voices, or uncomplicated instrumentation.

For me, singing is always both a learning and transformational experience. No matter how challenging my week has been, I feel truly blessed and privileged to sing with the children every Friday. Each week, at our Shabbat Sing, I learn so much about the children and about myself, and I enter Shabbat with that music and the smiling faces of the children on my mind. When I arrive home, I’m ready to usher in Shabbat with song. Singing is a rich part of building a joyous family life.

May you have a joyful and a song-filled vacation week!

*Warmest Wishes for a Healthy and Happy 2022,  
Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

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

**Winter Recess – School Closed**

Monday, January 3  
Monday, January 17  
Monday, January 17

School Re-Opens  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed  
Tu B'Shevat

## CONNECTIONS

**Health and Safety Precautions During the Pandemic** – During this current wave of infection, please continue to wear your masks, stay physically distant from each other and wash your hands frequently. The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific this year. Please be extra vigilant when you return to school on January 3. If your child or anyone in your household is sick, DO NOT send your child to school. We will immediately send your child home if s/he exhibits symptoms. **All children in the school MUST be symptom free. If you have any questions about your child's symptoms, get a COVID test before you return to school.** Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

**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.

**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.

**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.

<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://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/>