

**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**  
**February 18, 2022**

Dear Families,

Throughout my childhood in the New York City Public Schools, Lincoln's Birthday was celebrated on February 12<sup>th</sup> and Washington's Birthday was celebrated on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. They were honored so significantly, that large paintings of both presidents were hung on either side of the auditorium. Schools were closed on both of these holidays, and part of the learning experience was to focus on the legacies of these presidents - individually. Some time during the 1970s, these important dates were transformed into a Monday holiday celebrating only George Washington's Birthday. And, when I moved south to Maryland, it became clear that Lincoln's Birthday had never been celebrated in that state. To make matters worse, the greeting card and calendar manufacturers, along with retailers, erroneously transformed all of this into "Presidents Day." And now, schools in New York are closed for an entire week! The Monday holiday is, by federal law, called George Washington's Birthday, and we can do a great service to the memory of our founding father by referring to it correctly. Referring to the full week as "Presidents' Week," is consistent with honoring these two important presidents correctly.

So, just how should we honor George Washington and Abraham Lincoln? Washington is known as a strong leader and was regarded as being truthful and trustworthy. Lincoln is known for his integrity, his tolerance, and his honesty. Both were men of deep conviction who did not waiver under terrible duress. These values are a significant part of our nation's history and tradition, but they are also values that we define and hold dear as

“Jewish values.” Jewish values and traditions are transmitted from generation to generation and are the core of Jewish strength and survival. They are the foundation upon which we form the character of our children. Jewish educators in early childhood settings have the awesome responsibility of transmitting Jewish values to the children and, at the same time, helping young families begin their own personal Jewish journey.

Jean Piaget, the great pioneer of cognitive development, proposed that children develop concepts about morality through an interactive constructive process. The Constructivist Theory states that morality cannot be taught – it is learned through children’s early experiences with peers and adult. As educators of young children, we provide the environment and the experiences to help children internalize Jewish values. What we do is far more important than what we say, and our work with the Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative (JECEI) continues to have a huge impact on transmitting foundational Jewish ideas and values to our children and families.

There are many books in the library that promote Jewish values such as *Tikkun Olam* (Repairing the World), *Bal Tashchit* (Don’t Destroy), *Gemillut Chasadim* (Acts of Loving Kindness), and *Kavod* (Respect for Others and Oneself). Why not spend some time this vacation week by exploring the multitudes of books available for transmitting your family’s Jewish values to your children? You can still find copies of the out-of-print Value Tales series, which is one of the most effective teaching tools I’ve seen. My husband and I used these books extensively with our own children, and I highly recommend them to you. Some libraries will have them, and we often see them in used book shops.

When we return to school on February 28, we will begin to learn about Purim, and will have several days of festivities as we celebrate the most joyful holiday in the Jewish calendar. Purim is an opportunity to state our distinctiveness in being Jewish, uphold the values that we cherish, stand up to oppression, and focus on our obligation to do good deeds. And it’s a wonderful time to have an abundance of merriment, fun and laughter! We are looking forward to having many days of celebrations during the entire month.

Warmest wishes to each one of you for a healthy, safe, and fulfilling week.

*Shabbat Shalom*

*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Monday, February 21**

**Mon-Fri, Feb. 21-25**

**Thurs & Fri, March 3&4**

**Friday, March 4**

**Friday, March 11**

**Sunday, March 13**

**Thursday, March 17**

**Tuesday, March 29**

**George Washington’s Birthday Observed – School Closed**

**Presidents’ Week Recess – School Closed**

**Rosh Chodesh Adar II**

**Crazy Hat Day – Wear a Unique and Fun Hat!**

**Pajama Shabbat Day – Wear or Bring Pajamas to School**

**Daylight Savings Time Begins (Set Clocks Forward One Hour)**

**Purim – Dress in Costume**

**Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed**

## **CONNECTIONS**

**Registration for the Summer Program – We are very excited to announce that our wonderful Summer Program Director, Karen Wasserman, will be returning to Temple Beth-El this summer. She is very excited to re-connect with our returning families and to meet our new families. Stress-free transitions are important for young children. 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. **Registration begins TODAY.**

**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.

**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, if Great Neck Schools has a delayed opening, we usually have the same delayed opening.” Our emergency text messaging system is up and running. 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.

**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. **If your child or anyone in your household is sick, DO NOT send your child to school.** Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

**Challah Fundraising Program** - We are 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 began on January 6. You can still sign up.

**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@tbgreatneck.org](mailto: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/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>

<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/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.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/>