

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 4, 2022

Dear Families,

I stood at the window of the classroom this past Wednesday and observed the children outside at play. I watched with wonder, and then I quickly put on my coat, hat, and snow gloves and joined them. What joy!! The children were running, jumping, digging, exploring, and creating - all the while laughing. Their play materials involved shovels, sticks, branches, buckets, pieces of ice and use of their whole bodies. The landscape was one giant “snow-scape” – and it was full of so many possibilities. It has been a year since our entire school has completely engaged, explored and enjoyed the outdoor world in the snow, and the children can’t wait for more snowy days. Winter IS full of wonder!

The work of Piaget, Montessori, Dewey, Erikson and other child development researchers has clearly shown that children learn best by doing. Learning involves the interaction between children’s thinking and their experiences in the world. This week’s experiences, playing in the snow, created new skills and opportunities for the children to add to their growing knowledge base. Play, also known as symbolic play, pretend play, make-believe play, dramatic play, and imaginative play is critical for development. Why is “play” such a significant part of good early childhood programs? According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Criteria for High Quality Curriculum, play is the foundation of planning, flexible thinking, strengthening memory skills, problem solving, persistence, the ability to use symbols, and more. A vast amount

of research also indicates that imaginative play is a significant force in developing creativity, group cooperation, and impulse control. Play is the major vehicle through which children learn, and our teachers support each child's innate desire to be expressive. Understanding that learning involves thinking, and that quality thinking can best happen when children have first-hand experiences, we strive to provide opportunities for children to explore and discover, and we challenge them to think and figure things out for themselves. Play is often called a child's work. This is the highest form of learning – guiding children to learn how to learn. This is what education is all about and our teachers take this responsibility very seriously.

Mazel Tov and Thank You to all our teachers, who spent so much time helping children get dressed (and undressed) for their play in the great outdoors. These early years are the foundation upon which all future learning will occur, and we are blessed to live in an area where we can experience four beautiful seasons.

Shabbat Shalom

Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, February 21	George Washington's Birthday Observed – School Closed
Mon-Fri, Feb. 21-25	Presidents' Week Recess – School Closed
Thurs & Fri, March 3&4	Rosh Chodesh Adar II
Sunday, March 13	Daylight Savings Time Begins (Set Clocks Forward One Hour)
Thursday, March 17	Purim – Dress in Costume
Tuesday, March 29	Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed

CONNECTIONS

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 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@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/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://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/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/>