

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
January 14, 2022

*Once there was a tree.... and she loved a little boy. And every day the boy would come
and he would gather her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk and swing from her branches and eat apples.
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.*

The Giving Tree Poem by Shel Silverstein

Dear Families,

Welcome to 2022!! I hope the New Year brings good health, happiness, fulfillment and peace to you and your family. Our secular New Year and the New Year for the trees occur in January this year. Tu B'Shevat marks the beginning of the spring season in Israel, and in New York we celebrate the holiday by helping children connect with nature's gifts of trees, plants, and flowers. Trees were always considered important by people. They provide us with food, building materials, art supplies and shade, and they are a source of many medicines. One of the lessons we learn from this holiday is that we must treat with care and consideration, not only people who live around us, but also trees, fruits, flowers, the fields and orchards.

While spending so much time outdoors, children have noticed so many important details in the environment. Tikkun Olam, the repair of our world, is a lens through which we can look at many aspects of Jewish life. It is through this lens that we typically engage our children and families when we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, and we designate this sacred time during the month of Shevat to appreciate our earth. One custom, growing in popularity, is to feed the birds. The mitzvah of Tza'ar Ba'alai Hayim, caring for animals, is appropriate during the cold winter months in New York. The celebration of Tu B'Shevat dovetails nicely with feeding the birds. Creating bird feeders to put on the trees and watching the birds eat, especially during this frigid weather, is a beautiful project for you and your child to work on together. When children use all their senses to awaken their emotions, they are able to feel and understand new and unknown concepts.

Today, Jewish families from all parts of the world plant trees in Israel, and this holiday can make a lasting impression on your children. Why don't you create a Tu B'Shevat celebration in your home on Sunday evening or Monday? There are several customs that are appropriate for young children. One possibility is to eat a new fruit - one that the child has never seen before, or one that your family has not eaten in many months. It is also traditional to eat from the Seven Species (Shivat Haminim) described in the Bible as being abundant in the land of Israel. The Shivat Haminim are wheat, barley, grapes (vines), figs, pomegranates, olives and dates (honey) (Deut. 8:8), and the blessing prior to eating these fruits is Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Haolam, Borei Pri Ha-Etz - Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates fruit of the tree. Some families create a Tu B'Shevat Seder, at which all of the Shivat Haminim are recognized and eaten. Highlighting this special day is fun and very important in so many ways. Make it special.

Shabbat Shalom
Yom Huledet L'Aytzim
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed
Monday, January 17	Tu B'Shevat
Tuesday, February 1	Professional Development Day for Teachers – School Closed
Tuesday, February 1	Rosh Chodesh Adar
Monday, February 21	George Washington's Birthday Observed – School Closed
Mon-Fri, Feb. 21-25	Presidents' Week Recess – School Closed

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. **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.

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 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.

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://pjlibrary.org/Beyond-Books/PJBlog/January-2013/A-Seder-for-Tu-B-Shevat>

<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/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/>