

**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 21, 2022**

*“The highest form of wisdom is kindness.” The Talmud*

Dear Families,

The convergence of last week’s two holidays, Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday and Tu B’Shevat, the birthday of the trees, was significant. Our tradition teaches us that a New Year provides us with opportunities to renew and refresh.

As a national holiday and as a tribute to a man who forever changed our nation, Dr. King was a prophetic leader and a pioneer. And as a school devoted to Jewish ideals and values, we can learn much from the legacy of this great man. Dr. King was fortunate to have parents who taught and inspired him to be caring toward others, despite their differences. His mother told him, “You are as good as anyone.” He took those words to heart and grew up envisioning an America where all people are treated equally. He preached for unity and love, and against separatism and hate. Compassion and concern for others were his guiding principles, and we feel honored to share these principles with our students not only on this national holiday, but every day.

After the horrific events at the Beth Israel Synagogue in Colleyville, Texas last Shabbat, it is important to continue to work to combat hatred, bigotry and antisemitism. Our future is in our own hands so that when your little children grow up, they will be able to live and love in a world that is compassionate and free from hate.

As educators, we arrived back to school doing what we've always done, teaching and inspiring children, even though we continue to face new challenges ahead. We work continually to keep our children safe and secure, and we teach them valuable lessons from the Torah. After reading "Martin's Big Words" by Doreen Rappaport, our Pre-K teachers, Morah Karen and Morah Sarah asked the children how they can help make the world a better place by using kind words and demonstrating kind actions. The answers reflect the moral development of four-year-olds, and I am very pleased with their highly developed expressions of compassion and caring. I am proud to share some of their responses:

Help people and love them.  
Ask someone how they feel if they get hurt.  
Cheer someone up if they feel sad.  
Share toys.  
Invite a friend to play.  
Say sorry if someone is hurt.  
Be nice to my friends.  
Listen to my friends.

There is little that is more important than nurturing young children's sense of caring, compassion, and social responsibility, giving them what they need to fulfill their potential and achieve happiness and fulfillment in their lives. Showing kindness and empathy for others are hallmarks of our early childhood education center. Children are encouraged to help each other throughout the school day by sharing a toy, cheering someone up who is sad, or just by being a good friend. The Talmud states: "The highest form of wisdom is kindness." The children, teachers and families in our school are truly wise.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

Sunday, January 23	Adult Education – Becoming a Soulful Parent with Rabbi Tara – 10:00 am
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](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.

**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://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.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/>