

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
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"Happiness, not in another place but this place... not for another hour, but this hour." ~ Walt Whitman

Dear Families,

Next Tuesday and Wednesday, we will celebrate Rosh Chodesh Adar. Tradition tells us that "when Adar arrives, our joy will increase." And this year, we are blessed to celebrate two months of Adar. Rosh Chodesh Adar II will be celebrated on Thursday and Friday, March 3rd and 4th. It is appropriate to ask, "How is the month of Adar special in our school?" In a Reggio-inspired school, the environment is a major value, and we consider the environment to be an actual teacher. During the month of Adar, we will be creating fun experiences for the children, from Pajama Day to Crazy Hat Day, and there will be plenty of opportunities in every classroom to be merry and have fun!

Adar is rich in experiences that are joyful, and, yet the Talmud tells us that even if we think we are happy, we need to stretch even further and become more joyful. Purim, the most festive day in the Jewish calendar, is an opportunity to state our distinctiveness in being Jewish and uphold the values that we cherish and the values that set us apart. I am particularly mindful that it is impossible always to feel happiness, especially during difficult times. Being content and satisfied may, at times, be the best we can provide for ourselves. Marcel Proust, French novelist, best known for his novel, Remembrance of Things Past, once said, "Let us be grateful to people

who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” I want to convey special thanks to our young children who always make us happy. Although they enjoy all Jewish holiday celebrations, it's at this time of year - late winter through spring, Adar through Iyar – when children and parents can feel the real joys and relevance of Jewish life to its fullest. Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Yom Ha'atzmaut - all holidays that occur at this time of year - are especially valuable. The richness and pleasure in celebrating Jewish life here at Temple Beth-El's ECEC is a gift that you give to your children. The following are more gifts you can give to your children every day - compliments of Joshua Becker, a blogger who is on a journey to inspire families to intentionally live with less.

35 Gifts Your Children Will Never Forget by Joshua Becker

1. **Affirmation.** Sometimes one simple word of affirmation can change an entire life. So, make sure your children know how much you appreciate them. And then, remind them every chance you get.
2. **Art.** With the advent of the Internet, everyone who wants to create... can. The world just needs more people who want to...
3. **Challenge.** Encourage your child to dream big dreams. In turn, they will accomplish more than they thought possible... and probably even more than you thought possible.
4. **Compassion/Justice.** Life isn't fair. It never will be – there are just too many variables. But when a wrong has been committed or a playing field can be leveled, I want my child to be active in helping to level it.
5. **Contentment.** The need for more is contagious. Therefore, one of the greatest gifts you can give your children is an appreciation for being content with what they have... but not with who they are.
6. **Curiosity.** Teach your children to ask questions about who, what, where, how, why, and why not. “Stop asking so many questions” are words that should never leave a parent's mouth.
7. **Determination.** One of the greatest determining factors in one's success is the size of their will. How can you help grow your child's today?
8. **Discipline.** Children need to learn everything from the ground-up including appropriate behaviors, how to get along with others, how to get results, and how to achieve their dreams. Discipline should not be avoided or withheld. Instead, it should be consistent and positive.
9. **Encouragement.** Words are powerful. They can create or they can destroy. The simple words that you choose to speak today can offer encouragement and positive thoughts to another child. Or your words can send them further into despair. So, choose them carefully.
10. **Faithfulness to your Spouse.** Faithfulness in marriage includes more than just our bodies. It also includes our eyes, mind, heart, and soul. Guard your sexuality daily and devote it entirely to your spouse. Your children will absolutely take notice.
11. **Finding Beauty.** Help your children find beauty in everything they see... and in everyone they meet.
12. **Generosity.** Teach your children to be generous with *your* stuff so that they will become [generous](#) with *theirs*.
13. **Honesty/Integrity.** Children who learn the value and importance of [honesty](#) at a young age have a far greater opportunity to become honest adults. And honest adults who deal truthfully with others tend to feel better about themselves, enjoy their lives more, and sleep better at night.
14. **Hope.** Hope is knowing and believing that things will get better and improve. It creates strength, endurance, and resolve. And in the desperately difficult times of life, it calls us to press onward.
15. **Hugs and Kisses.** I once heard the story of a man who told his 7-year-old son that he had grown too old for kisses. I tear up every time I think of it. Know that your children are never too old to receive physical affirmation of your love for them.
16. **Imagination.** If we've learned anything over the past 20 years, it's that life is changing faster and faster with every passing day. The world tomorrow looks nothing like the world today. And the people with imagination are the ones not just living it, they are creating it.
17. **Intentionality.** I believe strongly in intentional living and intentional parenting. Slow down, consider who you are, where you are going, and how to get there. And do the same for each of your children.
18. **Your Lap.** It's the best place in the entire world for a book, story, or conversation. And it's been right in front of you the whole time.

19. **Lifelong Learning.** A passion for learning is different from just studying to earn a grade or please teachers. It begins in the home. So read, ask questions, analyze, and expose. In other words, learn to love learning yourself.
20. **Love.** ...but the greatest of these is love.
21. **Meals Together.** Meals provide unparalleled opportunity for relationship, the likes of which cannot be found anywhere else. So much so, that a family that does not eat together does not grow together.
22. **Nature.** Children who learn to appreciate the world around them take care of the world around them. As a parent, I am frequently asking my kids to keep their rooms inside the house neat, clean, and orderly. Shouldn't we also be teaching them to keep their world outside neat, clean, and orderly?
23. **Opportunity.** Kids need opportunities to experience new things so they can find out what they enjoy and what they are good at. And contrary to popular belief, this doesn't have to require much money.
24. **Optimism.** Pessimists don't change the world. Optimists do.
25. **Peace.** On a worldwide scale, you may think this is out of our hands. But in relation to the people around you, this is completely within your hands... and that's a darn good place to start.
26. **Pride.** [Celebrate the little things in life](#). After all, it is the little accomplishments in life that become the big accomplishments.
27. **Room to Make Mistakes.** Kids are kids. That's what makes them so much fun... and so desperately in need of your patience. Give them room to experiment, explore, and make mistakes.
28. **Self-Esteem.** People who learn to value themselves are more likely to have [self-confidence](#), self-esteem, and self-worth. As a result, they are more likely to become adults who respect their values and stick to them... even when no one else is.
29. **Sense of Humor.** Laugh with your children everyday... for your sake and theirs.
30. **Spirituality.** Faith elevates our view of the universe, our world, and our lives. We would be wise to instill into our kids that they are more than just flesh and blood taking up space. They are also made of mind, heart, soul, and will. And decisions in their life should be based on more than just what everyone else with flesh and blood is doing.
31. **Stability.** A stable home becomes the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. They need to know their place in the family, who they can trust, and who is going to be there for them. Don't keep changing those things.
32. **Time.** The gift of time is the one gift you can never get back or take back. So think carefully about who (or what) is getting yours.
33. **Undivided Attention.** Maybe this imagery will be helpful: [Disconnect to Connect](#).
34. **Uniqueness.** What makes us different is what makes us special. [Uniqueness](#) should not be hidden. It should be proudly displayed for the entire world to see, appreciate, and enjoy.
35. **A Welcoming Home.** To know that you can always come home is among the sweetest and most life-giving assurances in the entire world. Is your home breathing life into your child

It is my hope that each of you experience two joyful months of Adar this year, and may you continue to receive happiness and blessings from your beautiful children throughout the year.

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, February 1
Tues & Wed, Feb. 1&2
Monday, February 21
Mon-Fri, Feb. 21-25

Professional Development Day for Teachers – School Closed
Rosh Chodesh Adar I
George Washington's Birthday Observed – School Closed
Presidents' Week Recess – School Closed

Thurs & Fri, March 3&4
Sunday, March 13
Thursday, March 17
Tuesday, March 29

Rosh Chodesh Adar II
Daylight Savings Time Begins (Set Clocks Forward One Hour)
Purim – Dress in Costume
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 – A blizzard is coming tomorrow, and we hope you’re ready. I’m sure your children will be so happy to play in the snow with you. Enjoy this special time together! Please have your child’s snow pants and boots ready! We will be playing in the snow next week at school. 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. 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.invajy.com/20-happiness-quotes-for-making-you-smile/>

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/>