

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
March 25, 2022

"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and trying new things, because we are curious, and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths." Walt Disney

Dear Families,

What a pleasure it was to experience warm and sunny weather this past week! With longer days and more hours of sunlight, we are finally experiencing spring. Spring is a time for hope and renewal, of reborn plants, budding trees, newly green landscapes, and colorful flowers of every kind. And there are so many opportunities for outdoor exploration.

Day by day, the children are discovering new concepts. Nurturing curiosity can be one of the most important things a parent can do for a child. A child who is not afraid to ask questions like, "I wonder what's inside?" "Why do leaves fall from trees?" and "What will happen if...?" is a child who wants to find out more. Children who are between the ages of two and five are making sense of the world in their own ways: They are active and eager to explore, and they learn mostly through playing with real things. They are curious, ask a lot of questions and use all their senses to explore the world and discover. They are thinking critically and are learning to skillfully analyze, assess, and reconstruct. By observing, investigating and testing ideas, they are developing a sense of wonder and a scientific mind.

Research has shown that more than 50% of adult interactions with children are in the form of questions. In order to help children develop into curious adults who regularly solve day-to-day problems, children need experience with questions that encourage them to think. Early childhood educators refer to these questions as “open-ended” questions because there are many possible answers, not just one correct response or a simple yes or no answer. Open-ended questions help children consider various possibilities and encourage them to be more thoughtful and observant. When children search for answers to open-ended questions, they are using their own insights to construct their learning. They make comparisons, discover new ideas, and create theories for testing. They are “scaffolding” – building upon what they already know to create greater and deeper learning. Ultimately, children are using a higher level of thinking to learn.

Here are some ways to ask questions that encourage thinking:

- Focus your questions on changes that are occurring or could be made to occur while you work together.
- Wonder aloud about what you see.
- Ask questions that can be answered in many different ways.
- Begin your questions with words and phrases like, “I wonder...” “How could...” “What else...” “How did you...”. For example, “I wonder how we could make a swing from this rope and some branches.” Or, “I wonder how I could make this work.” Or, “Why do you think the tree’s shadow is in a different place now than the last time we looked?”

Stop, look, and listen to the sights and sounds around. Pick a dandelion, watch the butterfly in the garden, or listen to bird calls with your child. Instead of focusing on questions that sound like you’re giving a test (i.e., “What color is this?” “What shape is that block?” “What’s this number?”), observe, explore materials, and express your thoughts with your child. By asking open-ended questions, you and your child will discover the wonders of the world together.

Shabbat Shalom
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, March 28

Tuesday, March 29

Saturday, April 2

Tuesday, April 5

Tuesday, April 12

Thurs-Fri, April 14-22

Tuesday, April 26

Wednesday, April 27

Thursday, April 28

Tzedakah Drive Continues - NEW Packaged Children’s Clothing Items

Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed

Rosh Chodesh Nisan

Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K

Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K

Passover Recess – School Closed

Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K

Picture Day

Yom Hashoah

CONNECTIONS

Tzedakah Drive - Thank you so much for supporting our Tzedakah Drive! We are helping to provide much-needed clothing to children in Ukraine! One of the ongoing goals of early childhood educators is to make concepts real in the minds of our young students. Please help by donating new, packaged clothing items for children. We are so grateful for your generosity and we thank you for helping our students understand the important mitzvah of giving tzedakah and helping those in need.

Parent/Teacher Conferences - will be held on Tuesday, March 29. The conference will focus on achievement of the goals that were set by you and the teachers in the fall. The goal of our collaboration

this year has been to assist each child in achieving his/her maximum potential in school as well as at home. We are happy about the progress your child has made and are excited to share these accomplishments with you.

The length of each conference is 20 minutes. We are committed to making sure that our communications with you are effective and appropriate. Please let me know whether you would like us to provide translation services to assure your comfort during conferences.

Registration for the Summer Program – 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. Stress-free transitions are important for young children. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

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.

Mask Protocols – Beginning on Wednesday, March 2, 2022, a mask-optional approach for the school was implemented. Students and staff members have the individual choice whether to wear a mask indoors. Masking is also optional outdoors. Please be supportive of whichever decisions are made by individuals. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have worked hard as a school and temple community to be tolerant, respectful and caring for one another. Under these new guidelines, I hope each one of us will continue to be kind and considerate of everyone's personal choices. Thank you.

Health and Safety Precautions – If your child or anyone in your household is sick, DO NOT send your child to school. Wash your hands!! Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Good hand washing technique is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases among both children and adults. The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific as we strive to reduce the spread of infection in our school. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

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.

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.

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 – 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://tinypurl.com/vb9uuvtk> (Ideas for Children’s Independent Play Experiences Outdoors)

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/childrens-books-empathy-kindness_1_5d52e7b1e4b0c63bcbee2699

<https://www.ujafedny.org> (Support Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine)

<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.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
(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/yc/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/>