

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
November 19, 2021

*For the laughter of the children, for my own life breath,
For the abundance of food on this table... for the roof over our heads, the clothes on our backs,
For our health, and our wealth of blessings,
For this opportunity to celebrate with family and friends...
Thank You, God, for giving us all these.*

Rabbi Naomi Levy, a Thanksgiving Prayer

Dear Families,

Thanksgiving and Chanukah are almost here! We have an opportunity to be thoughtful about the occasions we are about to celebrate. We are celebrating two aspects of our identity as Jews and Americans – gratitude and miracles. Though the stories of Chanukah and Thanksgiving have similarities, they also have their own unique values and opportunities for learning. On Thanksgiving, we can be grateful for the blessings in our lives; on Chanukah, we can re-dedicate ourselves to these blessings.

Before Thanksgiving, it is customary to ask the children in our school what they are thankful for. Their ideas reflect their own individual thoughts, and they eagerly share them with their classmates. This question should

not be asked only once a year. The power of gratitude is significant. Emerging research correlates children's social well-being and achievements in school with gratitude. Studies show that grateful students perform better in school, experience more positive emotions, and ultimately live more meaningful lives. Young children who are involved in experiences that value gratitude have also shown higher levels of self-control and self-regulation. Children learn best in an environment that fosters tolerance and gratitude. Caring for others, helping those who are less fortunate than us, and expressing gratitude are important values that we teach in our school. From classroom rules to acts of kindness to *Mitzvah* projects, we ask our children and families to participate in opportunities for *Tzedakah* and acts of *Tikkun Olam* – the healing of our world.

When we return after the Thanksgiving Recess, our classroom environments will reflect our children's Chanukah experiences. Light and warmth will be noticeably present. The children are learning words like freedom, courage, bravery, light, darkness, olives, oil, candles, Chanukiah, and menorah, thereby internalizing the core concepts and values of the holiday. Our school celebrations will be joyous, and we look forward to documenting the experiences with photos and videos.

Take a moment to recite the *Shehecheyanu* - our prayer of thanksgiving. As we celebrate Thanksgiving and our Festival of Lights, I want to express my thankfulness and gratitude to all of you, and to all the beautiful people who enrich my life every day. It is my hope that each one of us can focus on the miracles and blessings in our lives and create beautiful memories for our families and ourselves. The beautiful memories you will create are the gifts of our heritage.

Shabbat Shalom
Warmest Wishes for Happy Days of Thankfulness
Vicki

HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday Nov. 23	Pee Wee Pros Sports Program for 3s and Pre-K
Wednesday, Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Recess – School Closes at 1:00 PM
Thurs & Fri, Nov. 25&26	Thanksgiving Recess – School Closed
Sun-Mon, Nov. 28–Dec. 6	Chanukah
Tuesday Nov. 30	Pee Wee Pros Sports Program for 3s and Pre-K
Wed. Dec. 1	Registration for Temple Members
Thursday, Dec. 2	Registration for Currently Enrolled and Former Students
Friday, Dec. 3	Registration Open to the Community
Sat & Sun, Dec. 4&5	Rosh Chodesh Tevet
Wednesday, Dec. 15	Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed
Wednesday, Dec. 22	Early Bird Registration Deadline
Fri-Fri, Dec. 24-31	Winter Recess – School Closed

CONNECTIONS

Registration for 2022-2023 – We are very excited to announce that registration will begin on December 1 for the 2022-2023 school year. Registration Materials are going home today. **The deadline for the Early Bird is December 22, 2021. Prices will be locked-in at this year's rate for next year's tuition.** Please remember that families of current students can register before the general community. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me.

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.

Pre-K Program at Temple Beth-El for 2022-23 – In order to meet the ever-changing needs of families, a few years ago Temple Beth-El generously increased the number of hours for the Pre-K (from 9-2 to 9-3), included lunch, and reduced the tuition. We are very grateful for the generosity of our Temple to help families out in this way. As you know, Temple Beth-El strives to provide an excellent Jewish early childhood experience for our toddler through pre-kindergarten children and to keep our programs accessible to our community. We have an outstanding Pre-K program, taught by exceptional and highly qualified teachers that meet and exceed New York State’s Prekindergarten Next Generation Learning Standards. I hope you take advantage of this opportunity. Please register quickly for next year’s Pre-K, as registration is on a first come-first-served basis.

Thanksgiving Tzedakah Drive – Thank you for your generosity during this year’s food drive. Our children are learning about the value of giving and helping other people. They are learning that it is a Mitzvah to give food to families who do not have enough money to buy food. **Thank you for your support and for helping the children to understand the value of giving to those who are less fortunate!**

NAEYC Accreditation - While talking to families about our school during the registration process, prospective parents often ask me about our national accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For those who are new to our school, accreditation provides a process by which early childhood professionals and families can evaluate programs, compare them with professional standards, and identify areas needing improvement. A NAEYC accredited program has demonstrated a commitment to providing the highest quality program for young children and their families. Our school has had the honor and distinction of being accredited with the NAEYC since 2001, with re-accreditation occurring every five years since then. We are extremely proud to be considered a high-quality school and are elated that we are still the ONLY nationally accredited Synagogue early childhood school on Long Island.

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.

November is Jewish Book Month – **Have You Read a Jewish Book to your Child Lately? Read about PJ Library** - <https://pjlibrary.org/about-pj-library>

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.

Health and Safety Precautions During the Pandemic - The health and safety procedures in the ECEC are very specific this year. Please wear your mask, stay physically distant from each other, and never bring your child to school if s/he appears ill. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

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/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/>