

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 18, 2022

*“The Torah begins and ends with acts of caring, loving kindness.” Talmud: Sotah 14a*

Dear Families,

A walk into any one of our classrooms will reveal teachers saying, *“See how sad your friend is because you called him that name? Let’s think about what you can say to help him feel better.”* It’s important to help children learn to use words that name their feelings and help them notice the feelings of others too. Teachers help children by saying, *“He looks like he feels angry right now”* or *“I can tell she’s unhappy because she’s crying.”* Older children are asked to be more introspective and to think about how they can be helpful and kind to each other and their families. Working together and helping each other are goals throughout the school year. Being kind to each other and family members is documented in the form of “kindness trees,” “kindness charts,” and “kindness jars.” Every act of kindness is documented and highlighted, and gradually our children are learning that acts of caring and loving kindness are values of the Jewish people.

During these past months, the world news has shown us how important it is for our communities to work together to achieve common goals. Learning to get along with others, sharing, taking turns and solving problems are everyday occurrences. These seemingly simple concepts underpin the nature of our peaceful society, and they are most indelibly learned in the early childhood years. 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 share them with their classmates. This question should not be asked only once a year. Caring for

others, helping those who are less fortunate than us, and expressing gratitude are important values that we teach in our school. It is imperative that we help the youngest members of our society learn how to be caring and kind-hearted people, critical thinkers and problem solvers.

A child's moral development is very important, and the teachers and I take seriously our responsibility as role models. Children learn best in environments that foster tolerance and gratitude. Judaism places an enormous and unique emphasis on our role and responsibility to be partners with others in repairing what has been broken in the world, and on our commitment to act now, not later. As we freely gather together with our families and friends and are surrounded by our loved ones next week on Thanksgiving, it's important to recognize the special blessings we have as American Jews and Jewish Americans. As we continue to yearn for increased harmony, unity, and partnership with others, how wonderful that we can recognize and voice these core values.

Every Friday, children bring in money for Tzedakah so that their collected efforts will help them understand the values of Gemilut Chasidim (Acts of Loving Kindness) more completely. Next week, we will begin our Annual Thanksgiving/Chanukah Tzedakah Drive. The box will soon be filled with children's coats, hats and gloves for needy families on Long Island. As the children begin to walk by the box every day, the teachers will be telling the children that the clothing will help families who don't have enough money stay warm this winter. Learning about kindness in this first-hand way is the best way for young children to embrace these important values.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

<b>Monday, November 21</b>	<b>Thanksgiving &amp; Chanukah Tzedakah Drive Begins – Children's Coats, Hats and Gloves</b>
<b>Tuesday, November 22</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 23</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess – School Closes at 1:00</b>
<b>Thurs &amp; Fri, Nov. 24&amp;25</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Recess – School Closed</b>
<b>Thurs &amp; Fri, Nov 24&amp;25</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh Kislev</b>
<b>Tuesday, November 22</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</b>
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 7</b>	<b>Registration for Temple Members</b>
<b>Thursday, Dec. 8</b>	<b>Registration for Currently Enrolled &amp; Former Students</b>
<b>Friday, Dec. 9</b>	<b>Registration Open to the Community</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 6</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 14</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences – Evening Hours</b>
<b>Thursday, December 15</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 13</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 20</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</b>
<b>Thursday, December 22</b>	<b>Early Bird Deadline for Registration</b>
<b>Sun-Mon, Dec. 18-26</b>	<b>Chanukah</b>
<b>Sat &amp; Sun, Dec. 24&amp;25</b>	<b>Rosh Chodesh Tevet</b>
<b>Mon-Mon, Dec 26-Jan 2</b>	<b>Winter Recess – School Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday, January 3</b>	<b>School Reopens</b>

## **CONNECTIONS**

**Health and Safety Precautions** – 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. **Do not bring your child to school if s/he appears ill.** We appreciate your cooperation at all times.

**Thanksgiving & Chanukah Tzedakah Drive** – **Help us help others!** Our children are learning about the value of giving and helping other people. It is always a blessing to help those who are in need, especially during holidays, and we are supporting families in need by providing **NEW or GENTLY USED children's coats, hats and gloves.** **Let's all work together to help children stay warm this winter. A collection box will be placed outside the main entrance.** Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!

**Registration for 2023-2024** – We are very pleased and excited to announce Early Bird Registration for the 2023-2024 school year. Registration materials will be sent out next week. **The deadline for the Early Bird is December 22, 2022.** Prices will be locked-in at the Early Bird rate for next year's tuition. Please remember that families of current students can register before the general community. You can find the specific registration dates on "Dates to Remember" above. If you have any questions about our program for your child for next year, please don't hesitate to contact me.

**Parent Teacher Council** - The PTC is comprised of parents and teachers who work together to make decisions and provide ongoing support for the school and temple community. Please volunteer your time to help make our PTC strong and vibrant this year. If you would like to be a part of this exciting Parent Teacher Council, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to having our first meeting in November.

**Class Parents** – We need one or two class parents for each classroom. Volunteer to be a Class Parent and please let your child's teacher know that you are interested. Thank you!

**November is Jewish Book Month – Have You Read a Jewish Book to your Child Lately?**

**Dressing for the Outdoors** – Please be attentive to the weather every day to ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. We go outside every day for long stretches of time, unless it is raining, or the temperature is below 30 degrees. 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. Two complete changes of clothing (to be left in school), sweaters, hats, mittens, and a warm jacket are necessary. As the weather becomes colder, we will continue to be outdoors. It's a good time to start purchasing waterproof snow pants, jackets, snow boots and mittens for the winter. **Please label all children's clothing! Thank you for your cooperation.**

**Pre-K Program at Temple Beth-El for 2023-24** – **It seems as though many parents are not familiar with our highly regarded Pre-K program.** **In order to meet the ever-changing needs of families, a few years ago Temple Beth-El generously reduced the tuition significantly, increased the number of hours for the Pre-K (from 9-2 to 9-3), and included lunch.** We have an outstanding Pre-K program, taught by exceptional and highly qualified teachers, and our school meets and exceeds New York State's Prekindergarten Next Generation Learning Standards. Our students are very well-prepared for kindergarten. As you know, Temple Beth-El strives to provide an excellent early childhood Jewish experience for our toddler through pre-kindergarten children and to keep our programs accessible to our community. We are very grateful for the generosity of our Temple to help families out in this way. **I hope you take advantage of this opportunity. If you would like a tour, please contact me to arrange a date. We are proud to show you our dynamic Pre-K class in action. Registration begins on December 7.**

**Hot Lunch** - 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 with sauce on the side, and vegetable

**Tuesday** – Baked chicken fingers, French fries and vegetable

**Wednesday** Pizza and Israeli salad

**Thursday**- Cheese quesadillas and beans

**Friday** – Grilled chicken, rice and vegetable

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.

**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.

**Shabbat Sing** –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. Our Shabbat Sing experiences are outdoors, especially during these beautiful days. Singing and music is a vital part of education, and we embrace the language of music as often as possible.

**Shabbat with the Rabbi or Shabbat with the Cantor** – This year, we are also blessed with having Rabbi Stoller and Cantor Adam share beautiful Shabbat experiences with the children in our Chapel every week. Having meaningful relationships with the Rabbi and Cantor are one of our goals this year, and we look forward to creating joyous and memorable Shabbat celebrations with them every week.

**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://archive.nytimes.com/parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/04/teaching-children-empathy/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&smid=fb-share&r=5](https://archive.nytimes.com/parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/04/teaching-children-empathy/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&smid=fb-share&r=5)

<https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2016/04/08/children-play-nature-john-lee>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/04/12/report-debunks-earlier-is-better-academic-instruction-for-young-children/?noredirect=on>

<https://pjllibrary.org/getmedia/c63e85f1-58d9-44fd-ae8a-696825e88d25/Jewish-values-ECE.pdf>

[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/>