

**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**  
**October 15, 2021**

*Early childhood is like fall... A season filled with wonder, and beauty, and change that rushes by all too quickly.* Deborah J. Stewart, Early Childhood Educator

Dear Families,

We are incredibly grateful for the glorious weather we've been having. We are spending countless hours outside, providing our students and teachers with so many opportunities to engage and build relationships with all aspects of nature. They have had the time to explore and discover, feeling the textures of leaves from trees and drying plants, pinecones, pine needles, acorns, pumpkins, and so much more! New buckets, shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes and other outdoor tools are providing new inspiration and exploration. As we intentionally spend longer periods of time outside, the children are becoming very familiar with the ever-changing landscape.

Our children are active learners, and our school environment focuses on helping children to use their natural curiosity and all their senses to investigate materials, make discoveries, solve problems, and develop relationships. Developing a relationship with the outdoor world not only helps the children foster a sense of wonder, it provides each one with an increasingly necessary way to observe and engage. As a Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool, we take a unique approach to learning. It isn't about teaching children random facts about nature, which barely contributes to learning. Rather, it's about building relationships with all aspects of their

environment, building critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and expanding their knowledge to practice their newly acquired ideas. Our youngest toddlers explore, and we try to imagine what they might be thinking. They investigate the materials by texture, shape, color, size, weight, and sound. They fill containers, dump the contents, and transport them to other areas, learning cause and effect during this entire process. As they grow, they will use this learning as building blocks to their understanding of abstract ideas, patterns and concepts.

Children and nature go together, and it is important for us to focus on creating more opportunities for children to experience nature. Thinking critically means to skillfully analyze, assess, and reconstruct learning. The learning process involves asking questions, gathering and assessing the information, and communicating with others to reach a solution. By creating experiences and time spent outdoors for our children, a deep bond with the natural world will develop with ease and last throughout their lives.

### **Ways for Parents to Help Children Develop a Relationship with the Outdoor World**

1. Take regular walks and bring along a magnifying glass, a camera, a small pad and a pencil. Focus on developing your child's sense of inquiry. Observation is an important first step in scientific inquiry, so help your child observe carefully.
2. For young toddlers, offer collections of unusual learning materials. Allow them to discover the properties of the materials and notice the way they interact with them.
3. Find one particular area in your backyard or nearby park and observe the changes that take place in the same area over a period of time. Record and document your observations.
4. Encourage your child to ask questions and seek answers. Encourage open-ended questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Open-ended questions have many possible answers and encourage higher-level thinking. While searching for answers to open-ended questions, children construct their own insights and make meaning from the information.
5. Listen to your child's ideas and explanations. Your attention gives them confidence and encourages them to be more curious and interested in learning.

As Socrates said, "Wisdom begins with wonder." Exploring the outdoors during these early childhood years are the foundation upon which all future learning will occur. It is my hope that you joyfully celebrate autumn this weekend and create meaningful experiences with your family in the outdoor world.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Tuesday, Oct. 19**

**Wednesday, Oct. 20**

**Tuesday, Oct. 26**

**Tuesday, Nov. 2**

**Tuesday, Nov. 2**

**Friday, Nov. 5**

**Sunday, Nov. 7**

**Thursday, Nov. 11**

**Wednesday, Nov. 24**

**Thurs & Fri, Nov. 25&26**

**Pee Wee Pros Sports Program for 3s and Pre-K**

**Matt the Music Man Program for the School**

**Pee Wee Pros Sports Program for 3s and Pre-K**

**Election Day – School Closed**

**Professional Development for Teachers**

**Rosh Chodesh Kislev**

**Daylight Savings Time Ends – Set Clocks Back One Hour**

**Veterans Day – School Closed**

**Thanksgiving Recess – School Closes at 1:00 PM**

**Thanksgiving Recess – School Closed**

## **CONNECTIONS**

**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, 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.

**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** – Baked fish, rice and string beans

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.

**Car Seats are Mandatory** - New York State law requires that all children eight years old and younger wear a safety restraint that meet the manufacturer's suggested weight and height requirements. The following is New York State's Car Seat Laws: **Children two and younger should use a rear-facing car seat until they exceed the manufacturer's suggestions. Once a child is over the age of two and goes over the manufacturer's weight and height requirements, s/he can move on to a forward-facing seat. After the age of four and when a child is over the manufacturer's requirements for a forward-facing seat, s/he can be placed in a booster seat with both the shoulder and chest straps. Although not required, NY authorities strongly recommend parents keep their children in the back seat until they reach the age of twelve.**

**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.

**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://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>

<https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2010/outdoor-play>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning>

<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/>