

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 29, 2021

*A kind heart is a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity freshen into smiles.*  
Washington Irving

Dear Families,

The days are flying by as we all continue to navigate the pandemic. I'm often reminded about the importance of not losing sight of what's really important in life, and I frequently remember the wisdom of my grandparents, who courageously survived a devastating pogrom in eastern Europe when they were 21 years-old. When I was young, my grandfather often told me that the most important achievement in life was to become a *mensch*. "Grandpa, I would ask, "What is a *mensch*?" My grandfather would explain simply: A *mensch* is a good and kind person. Being kind means treating people in a nice way. A kind person is friendly, gentle and helps other people."

As a school community, we work to foster kindness. Children are encouraged to help each other throughout the school day by sharing a toy, cheering someone up who is sad, or just by being a good friend. They also learn from giving Tzedakah and from supporting the Tzedakah drives the school hosts during the year.

For families with young children, these are some of the most precious years with your children. They are the years in which significant memories are made and important values are learned. We should be mindful not to

squander this precious time. “What values do you want your child to live by? What behaviors do you want to see? And how do you want your family to be a part of the world around us?” Values form a continual backdrop to our lives, and it is not always easy to state what our values are. In his book, Raising Your Child To Be A Mensch, Rabbi Neil Kurshan states that “there are no simple prescriptions or magical formulas for raising a *mensch*. Children do not magically learn morality, kindness and decency any more than they magically learn math. Our most important tasks as parents are raising children who will be decent, responsible, and caring people devoted to making this world a more just and compassionate place.”

Adapted from “Caring for Kids Newsletter,” Cornell Cooperative Extension, a loving and caring home will help create positive parent-child interactions that foster kindness each and every day:

Say, “I love you”

Hug your children

Read to your children

Kiss them goodnight

Forgive them and yourself

Keep children safe and healthy

Laugh and have fun with your children

Get enough sleep

Enjoy nature

Listen

Make sure children eat nutritious meals and snacks

Limit TV viewing

Limit your use of mobile devices when you are with your children

Eat a family meal together

Teach kindness by example

Although it is a constant and, often, exhausting process, the partnership between our Jewish family life and Jewish education is crucial in helping us fulfill the moral and ethical values we set for our children. Together, we can help each child become kind, loving, moral, and responsible. Together we are helping each child become a good person – a *mensch*.

*Shabbat Shalom*

*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Mon-Fri, Nov. 1-12**

**Tuesday, Nov. 2**

**Tuesday, Nov. 2**

**Friday, Nov. 5**

**Sunday, Nov. 7**

**Thursday, Nov. 11**

**Wednesday, Nov. 24**

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

**Sun-Mon, Nov. 28-Dec. 6**

**Wed. Dec. 1**

**Thursday, Dec. 2**

**Friday, Dec. 3**

**Sat & Sun, Dec. 4&5**

**Thanksgiving Tzedakah Drive**

**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**

**Chanukah**

**Registration for Temple Members**

**Registration for Currently Enrolled and Former Students**

**Registration Open to the Community**

**Rosh Chodesh Tevet**

Wednesday, Dec. 15  
Wednesday, Dec. 22  
Fri-Fri, Dec. 24-31

Parent-Teacher Conferences – School Closed  
Early Bird Registration Deadline  
Winter Recess – School Closed

## CONNECTIONS

**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.**

**Thanksgiving Tzedakah Drive – November 1-12 – 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 partnering with St. Aloysius Food Pantry for a Thanksgiving Tzedakah Drive.** Please bring the following specific food items (no glass bottles please) to help families in need in Great Neck: Rice, Parmalat milk boxes, canned or dry beans, canned vegetables, canned fruit, apple juice, crackers or tortilla chips, cookies, oatmeal or 24 to 48oz cooking oil. **A large blue barrel will be outside TBE's main entrance from November 1-12. Thank you, in advance for your support.**

**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.

**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](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.peacequarters.com/harvard-psychologists-say-parents-raise-good-kids-5-things/?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_campaign=hiylfb](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.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/>