

**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 28, 2022**

*To everything there is a season, a time for every experience under heaven. Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3*

Dear Families,

As my grandchildren and I watched a magnificent sunset during our summer vacation at the beach, I was vividly aware that only a handful of other people were also witnessing this extraordinary moment. It was remarkable and memorable! The beauty, awesomeness and miracle of this beautiful sunset with my grandchildren was a true blessing, and I continue to marvel at the children's expressions of wonder throughout the year, especially during this autumn season. By now, you have seen the excitement of discovery on the children's faces during the teachers' daily sharing of photos. Autumn has always been my favorite season. And for so many children, fall is a particularly special time to enjoy the splendor of nature using many of our senses in a complete way.

As active learners in the indoor and outdoor classrooms, our school environment enables the children to use their natural curiosity and all their senses to make discoveries, investigate materials, solve problems, and develop relationships. Developing a relationship with the outdoor world not only helps each child foster a sense of wonder, it provides each one with an increasingly necessary way to engage the body in physical activity. Children love the outdoors, and they need to be a part of it. The experiences during the autumn season are fruitful and abundant. Watching the leaves turn colors, then fall to the ground is a highlight, and soon, the children will be jumping in the ever-growing pile of leaves. At school, children are gathering bags of leaves and

other collectibles from the season, and it is inspiring for all of us. As we continue to bring the outdoors inside, our classrooms are slowly becoming reflections of our outdoor world.

One of the silver linings of the pandemic is an appreciation of spending more time outdoors. The outdoor learning environment promotes healthy behaviors and developmentally appropriate practice by encouraging children to explore, learn about, and appreciate the natural world. We are truly blessed with two large outdoor spaces at our school as well as beautiful grounds throughout the temple's property. In our school community, weather permitting, we are intentionally spending longer periods of time on the playground so that the children experience the ever-changing landscape, the falling leaves, pinecones, pine needles, acorns, and so much more. Being physically active is necessary for learning, and children need to move. Research has shown that movement stimulates the brain. Daily opportunities to run, push, pull, manipulate, lift and climb are imperative for young, growing children. Children need hands-on, do-it-yourself experiences, and our rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, and buckets are the perfect tools for them to collect everything that captures their imagination.

It's impossible to escape the beauty of the magnificent foliage each year, yet it is equally as important for each child to hear the rustling of the drying leaves and feel the crispness of the autumn air. As James Lovelock, author and environmentalist, once wrote, "How can we revere the living world if we can no longer hear the bird song through the noise of traffic, or smell the sweetness of fresh air? How can we wonder about God and the universe if we never see the stars because of the city lights?"

### **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.

Every season is rich with new possibilities for investigation. 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. The rewards are endless.

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Vicki*

## **HAPPENINGS & DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Tuesday, November 1**  
**Sunday, November 6**  
**Tuesday, November 8**  
**Tuesday, November 8**

**Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K**  
**Daylight Savings Time Ends – Set Clocks Back One Hour**  
**Election Day - School Closed**  
**Professional Development for Teachers**

<b>Friday, November 11</b>	<b>Veterans Day – School Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday, November 15</b>	<b>Pee Wee Pros for 3s and Pre-K</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>

## **CONNECTIONS**

**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!

**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.

**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.

**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@tbgreatneck.org](mailto:yperler@tbgreatneck.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.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://pjlibrary.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/>