



*A Note from Sheryl...*

**"Every new child begins the world again." Henry David Thoreau**

Dear Parents,

Ann and Nate Levine Academy celebrates Grandparents/Special Friends Day on Tuesday, November 23 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. for all students attending school M-F. Students who attend school on only MWF will celebrate Grandparents/Special Friends Day on Monday, November 22 from 9-10:30 a.m. This is always such a special day in our ECC as we honor the wonderful love between the children and their grandparents. We are pleased to welcome your child's grandparents or "special friends" into our classrooms, attend a Thanksgiving Play, participate in a sing-along, and join in our Thanksgiving Feast prepared by our children.

This is a fantastic opportunity to teach the children the mitzvot of *Hachnasat Orchim* (welcoming guests) and *Kibud Horim* (honoring parents and grandparents). This is such a wonderful time to experience these mitzvot as the children prepare for their grandparents to visit the school.

In all of our ECC classes the teachers make 'choices' a regular part of their social and self-help practices. The children are allowed to make individual choices such as where they will work and with whom, and what they will create. Helping children learn to make decisions can be challenging for parents and teachers. We know that children do not always make the wisest choices. Occasionally, experiencing the consequences of a poor decision is the best learning tool for your child. I believe that children learn to be social by experimenting with anti-social behavior. Allow your child an opportunity to learn by making an error and holding your child accountable for her/his actions. An important idea is to allow your child to make choices between acceptable alternatives. "Would you like to pick up the blocks or the puzzles first?" "Would you like to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt?" Let's raise the expectation, and praise the positive choices your child does make.

We will have Parent/Teacher Conferences on Monday, December 13. The philosophy of our program is based on the assumption that: (1) growth is a sequential and orderly process and (2) children do indeed pass through stages of development that occur in a predictable sequence in their physical, social/emotional and cognitive growth. Our responsibility is to devise a program to facilitate your child to grow into his/her fullest potential by recognizing each stage of development and implementing a curriculum that will nurture and encourage growth. You will have the opportunity to talk to your child's teacher confidentially and receive an assessment form that lists the developmental guidelines we use for each age and stage of development. You will also receive a narrative description of the social and emotional behaviors we observe at school. We all know that social and emotional skills are the most important areas for accomplishing cognitive growth moving forward. Please be aware that children develop at different rates and it is acceptable for your child to need more time and experience to master a particular skill. Your teacher will explain how she assessed and observed each skill on the written form you will receive. We are all here to celebrate your child's accomplishments and to help your child grow in areas where he/she may need more assistance.

Warmly,

Sheryl

## *Jewish Studies...*

A BIG thank you to our current Mitzvah Mensch class! With the help of the children in Barbara and Tobe's Pre-K class, we collected a cart-full of donations for Operation Kindness.

To culminate this very important project, Nancy Burger, a representative from Operation Kindness, visited us on Monday, October 29. The children enjoyed hearing all about taking care of dogs and how to safely enjoy them. A special highlight of the day was having our Mitzvah Mensch class help fill Nancy's car with all of your wonderful donations. Nancy is sure that the animals at Operation Kindness will be wagging their tails with joy when they receive all of their wonderful new toys and treats!

We are really enjoying watching our Mitzvah Tree bloom with your child's Mitzvot! Please add leaves to our tree whenever your child performs a Mitzvah. Extra leaves can be found to the left of the tree.

We look forward to watching our tree continue to bloom!

Thank you for your continued support of our Jewish Studies Program,

Alyse Eisenberg & Suzanne Subel

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# *A word from our Counselor...*

Dear Families,

We are starting the second unit of the *Second Step* program. This unit is about managing feelings. The children are learning that they can have strong (intense) feelings, and that when they do, they may act in ways that other people notice. Children learn about frustration, excitement, and disappointment. These are all common feelings for your children. These feelings can easily become very strong- behavior can turn into crying, or children can become restless and out of control.

The children will be learning to check in with how they are feeling by putting their hands on their tummies. This helps them figure out how their body is feeling and gives their hands something to do. It also helps them know if they are taking the right kind of deep breaths. They will learn three ways to calm down strong feelings.

- **Say "Calm down."** This cues them to the need to calm down and helps them think about how to calm down.
- **Take deep breaths.** Children learn "belly breathing" so that they breathe deeply into the bottom of their lungs. Their bellies move out as they breathe in, and in as they breathe out. Breathing in this way slows down the heart rate, which immediately leads to an increased feeling of calm. Have your child show you how to do this kind of breathing. Then practice with him or her at home.
- **Count out loud.** Children learn to count slowly from 1 to 4. This cues children to take a break before acting without thinking. Older children can learn to count slowly in time with their breathing.

The children will also learn other ways to manage strong feelings. These include physical activities (throwing a ball, dancing), doing something fun by themselves (playing with blocks, drawing, listening to music, petting a cat,) or talking to a grown-up. Your child is learning a song about the ways to calm down.

Notice which things seem to calm your child down and encourage him or her to use them when he or she is having strong feelings. Be sure to let your teacher know so that she or he can use these methods at school.

Sincerely,  
Andy Blum LCSW  
ECC and Lower School Counselor

## Remember...

- Please bring a warm change of clothing for your child (labeled with her/his name).
- Send your child to school with a jacket. We play outdoors even when it's cold.
- The Lost & Found bin is located in the ECC office under Gail's desk. Please remember to label all your child's belongings. We try very hard to keep up with everything, but things do get misplaced.

## Parent Corner...

### 'Let's Pretend'

Make-believe play is not only one of the great joys of childhood, it also offers abundant opportunities for children's development. Children develop interpersonal skills, particularly cooperation and conflict resolution, and improve their language and problem-solving abilities in pretend (dramatic) play.

Around the age of 2, children begin to pretend to cry, sleep, and eat. They soon include a stuffed animal, doll, or favorite toy in their play. They also begin to transform objects into symbols a simple block becomes a fast race car or a stick makes a fine race horse.

As children approach the age of 3, they begin participating in make-believe play with other children. Dramatic play gradually becomes more elaborate and complex. Visit a 3-year-old class to watch our children incorporate blocks covered with photos of themselves, their houses, restaurants, and stores they visit. Building a neighborhood with their own photo blocks provides them a creative way to design their personal communities. Four and 5-year-olds engage in socio-dramatic play, which provides opportunities to rehearse adult roles. Such play helps children make sense of the world.

These first dramatic experiences often focus on home experiences. Kids pretend to cook, clean, and care for younger children. That's why our dramatic play area has props and equipment that represent the home setting. These stimulate children to act out roles familiar to them.

Dramatic play fosters emotional development as children work through fears and worries in a safe context. Social skills are promoted as children use language more frequently and more elaborately in make-believe play than they do in virtually any other activity.

Parents can actively encourage dramatic play at home by capitalizing on their child's interest at the moment, developing themes from stories their child has heard or movies he or she have seen, and providing props for pretend play. Providing a home environment that is conducive to play, stimulates intellectual and social development. At the same time, parents will be developing rich memories of their child at play, memories that will last a lifetime.



## **Transition to Parenthood Seminar**

**Tuesday November 16, 2010**

**7:30 PM**

**Cost: FREE**

**Lovers Lane Birth Center  
304 South Cottonwood Suite A Richardson, TX**

Parenting, although hugely rewarding, can often be a source of stress on a relationship. Couples generally receive little preparation for the challenges of maintaining a healthy marriage as they transition from a couple to a family.

Join Bringing Baby Home™ Certified Educator and Relationship Coach, Elizabeth Aloni for a **FREE** seminar for expectant and new parents (birth – 2 years) on The Transition to Parenthood (babies welcome).

In this one hour seminar you will learn:

- ➔ What to expect after having a baby
- ➔ To recognize 10 reasons why the transition to parenthood can be difficult
- ➔ 5 ways to build friendship
- ➔ To understand the impact of your relationship quality on parenting

For more information please contact Elizabeth at 650-440-0945  
[www.ejoycoaching.com](http://www.ejoycoaching.com)