

"Educate a child in his/her own way" (Proverbs 22:6)

Enhancing Jewish Identity

Education is a priority for Congregation Eshel Avraham and The Goldsmith Educational Center

Our Early Childhood Center has 8 classes, with 225 children, from three months to 6 years old. The children usually continue their education in our Center for 2-5 years, until first grade. The families come from all areas of the city and from a variety of backgrounds, but only a few of these families are members of the congregation.

Our egalitarian, pluralistic Jewish program is centered on learning about Shabbat and Jewish holidays and values, including basic Masorti tenets, with an integration of love of Israel with love of man-kind. Eshel Avraham Early Childhood Program educational approach seriously considers creative ways in which to engage parents as part of the Jewish practice and learning that their children experience.

PROJECT: Enhancing Jewish Identity through art and music, and shared family experiences. We believe that deepening and intensifying these families' involvement with Jewish Identity is an important aspect of the educational program that we should give to our kindergartens. Moreover, it is essential for the continuous development and growth of our congregation. The new educational approach will seriously consider ways in which to make parents part of the Jewish practice and learning that their children experience. This will be done by initiating joint workshops for the families in the afternoons, with training of how to apply this practice and learning at home.

OBJECTIVES: To strengthen the *Jewish Identity* of new young families in our Early Childhood program and the surrounding community, while also enhancing and encouraging a connection to Congregation Eshel Avraham.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- 🕒 Provide five training seminars for the kindergarten staff in the new educational
- 🕒 Conduct eight Kabbalat Shabbat programs and discussions for congregation and kindergarten families in order to integrate our community and to ensure that Jewish values emerging from Shabbat and holidays are relevant to family life in our time.
- 🕒 Supply the parents with educational material that they can use at home during festivities of the High Holy Days, Chanukah, Tu B'Shvat, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot in order to encourage and implement inter-generational family dialogue and provide the parents with tools for inventive and imaginative Jewish activities at home.
- 🕒 Conduct weekly afternoon activities for children and parents including: theatre, Yoga for parents and children together; parenting workshops and child development workshops
- 🕒 Coordinate four social programs and activities to encourage the participation of congregation members, general staff and kindergarten staff and parents
- 🕒 Provide a variety of possibilities for congregation members, parents and staff to fulfill the responsibility for "Tikun Olam", including supporting the local Senior Day Center and Nursing Home, raising awareness of Ecological Environment with NOAM activities, developing the community garden; supporting activities in the absorption center for new immigrants.

Congregation Eshel Avraham - Masorti Judaism blooming in the Negev

www.masorti.org.il/eshelavraham

