



## A Family Education E-Resource

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Dear Parents,

Here are some ideas for you to think about before the beginning of the Jewish school year.

### Getting Ready for School

Whether you are sending your child to a pre-school, religious school, or a day school, the first day of school can be anticipated with excitement but may also be a bit scary because of the newness of the situation. Students new to Jewish school may find that they already know some of their classmates from their local school, sports teams, pre-school or camp, but there also may be a lot of classmates they don't know. Many returning students look forward to seeing their Jewish friends who may not live in their neighborhood. You can ease the transition to Jewish school by making it a positive family experience.

### Make a new friend

Ask in the school office if there are any students who live nearby who will be in your child's class. There may be some possible car pool prospects as well as friends for activities.

### Supplies

Purchase special school supplies for Jewish school needs.

Pick out a school bag for Jewish schoolbooks and materials.

Personalize the bag with your child's Hebrew name, Jewish symbols or the name of the Jewish school.

Older students, who sometimes have classes late in the day, should think about purchasing a special insulated bag and thermos for them to take a snack to eat just before class. Check with the school's food restrictions and *kashrut* observance policy.

### **Meet the teacher**

Teachers may call to speak to your child before school starts or may send a letter or e-mail to each student to introduce him or herself. You may also want to speak to the teacher and share any special concerns as well as give appropriate medical and family information to the school office. It is important that this information be shared so it can help the school personnel better understand your child.

### **Visit the school**

Meet the staff before classes start. Take a quick tour to locate your child's classroom, the bathroom, the all-purpose room, and the sanctuary or chapel where *tefillah*/prayer services are held. If this isn't possible, assure your child that his or her teacher will guide the students through all activities.

### **Share the experience**

- ◆ Show your interest in the Jewish education your child is getting.
- ◆ Look for any handouts or home materials after each class.
- ◆ Ask your child what was the most important thing he or she learned in class so your child will know that you value his or her Jewish schooling.
- ◆ Find out about the many adult Jewish learning opportunities in the community and in Jewish school.
- ◆ Extend the Jewish school experience by reviewing the themes and topics mentioned by your child and in the class/school newsletters.

### **Establish a routine**

- ◆ Review/Discuss the ideas and skills learned.
- ◆ Provide a place on the refrigerator or a bulletin board for school handouts.
- ◆ Check regularly for any school notices and announcements.
- ◆ Make sure your child and the school office know your child's travel routine. The office should be notified if any changes are made.

### **Celebrate the Day**

- ◆ Prepare a special treat or meal to celebrate beginning Jewish school or returning.
- ◆ If it is the very beginning of Jewish schooling, think about treats with honey (a tradition of Torah being sweet), in the shape of Hebrew letters, or a cake (or pancakes!) in the shape of a Jewish star or a Torah.

- ◆ Recite the *Shehechyanu* blessing together with your child. Use your own *Siddur/Prayerbook* or find the Hebrew, English and transliteration at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Shehecheyanu.html>
- ◆ Take your child's picture on the first day of school. Post it on your refrigerator and e-mail or snail-mail it to relatives. This makes it clear that the Jewish schooling your child is receiving is important to you and your family.

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