

JECEI

**Principles of Excellence 1-3:
Indicators 1-9**

Teva Aleph

(Osher Marin Jewish Community Center-ECE)

Classroom Portfolio

2009-2010

Age of children: 3-4

Teachers: Nancy, Lisa

Indicator #1A Children (2 - 5 years) - Children take responsibility for themselves and others.

- 1.1 Children help each other.
- 1.2 Children carry out classroom routines.
- 1.3 Children manage their own behavior
- 1.4 Children use others to get help
- 1.5 Children explore relationships through interacting with other children
- 1.6 Children engage in tzedakah (acts of righteous), chesed (acts of kindness), and mitzvot (commandments/deeds) that demonstrate caring for others.
- 1.7 Children care for the school environment.
- 1.8 Children are involved in helping others in the Jewish and general community.

1.1 Children help each other



Here is a picture depicting Ethan and Jack working together to accomplish the task of getting the tire on the bike.



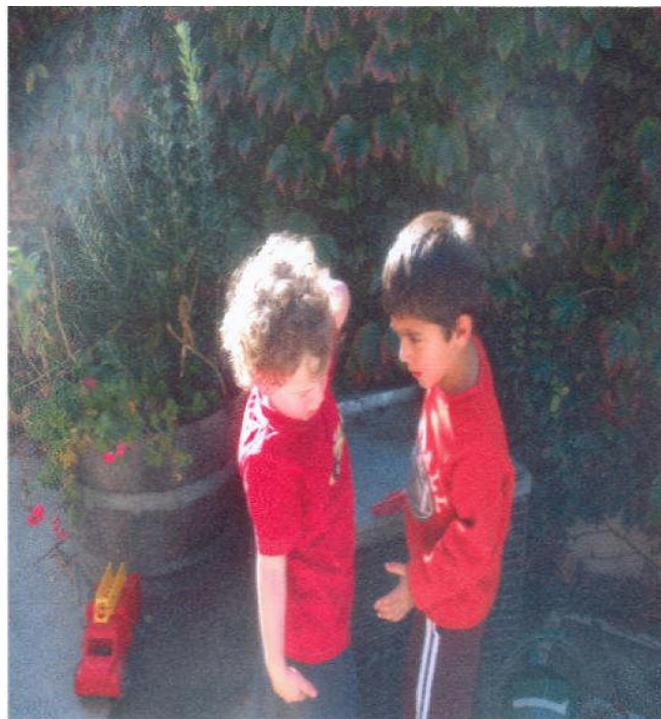
1.2 Children cart' out classroom routines.



When the children become aware that it is morning meeting time, they put away all of the toys and come to the carpet and find a seat on the floor.

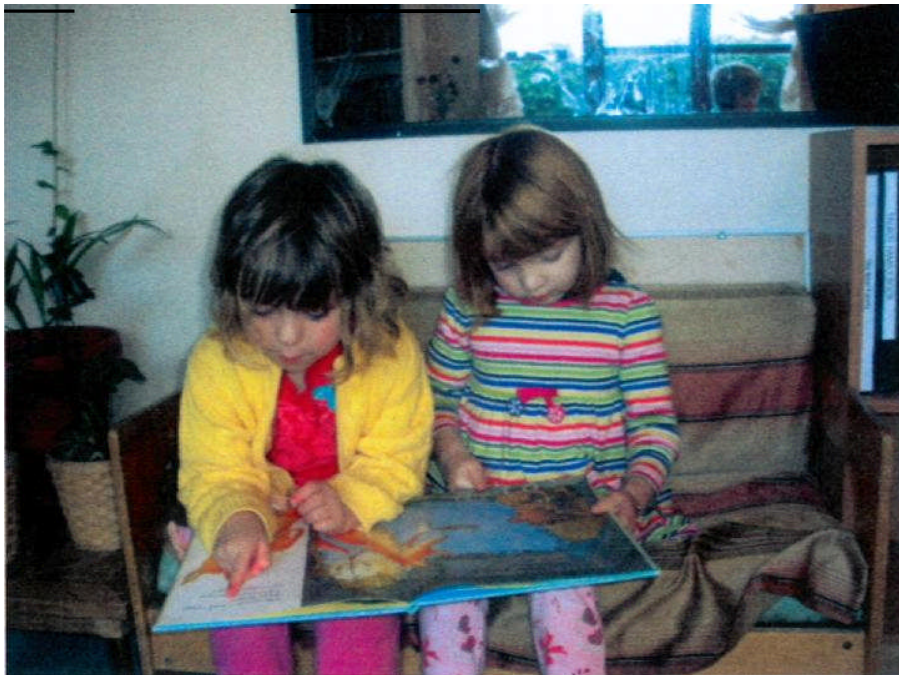
1.3 Children manage their own behavior

Here is a picture depicting two boys who have had an oppositional relationship since the beginning of the year. They play together often but are quick to argue/fight over just about anything. In the beginning of the year this would elevate to physical exchanges but throughout the year they have become well equipped with verbal skills and have learned to talk out their issues. This is a picture showing both boys managing their behavior through a discussion rather than a physical exchange.



1.5 Children explore relationships through interacting with other children

In this picture, one child asked another to read her a story. The other child asked her what book she wanted to read and when she told her, that child pulled it down from the shelf and started to tell her the story of what she saw in each picture.



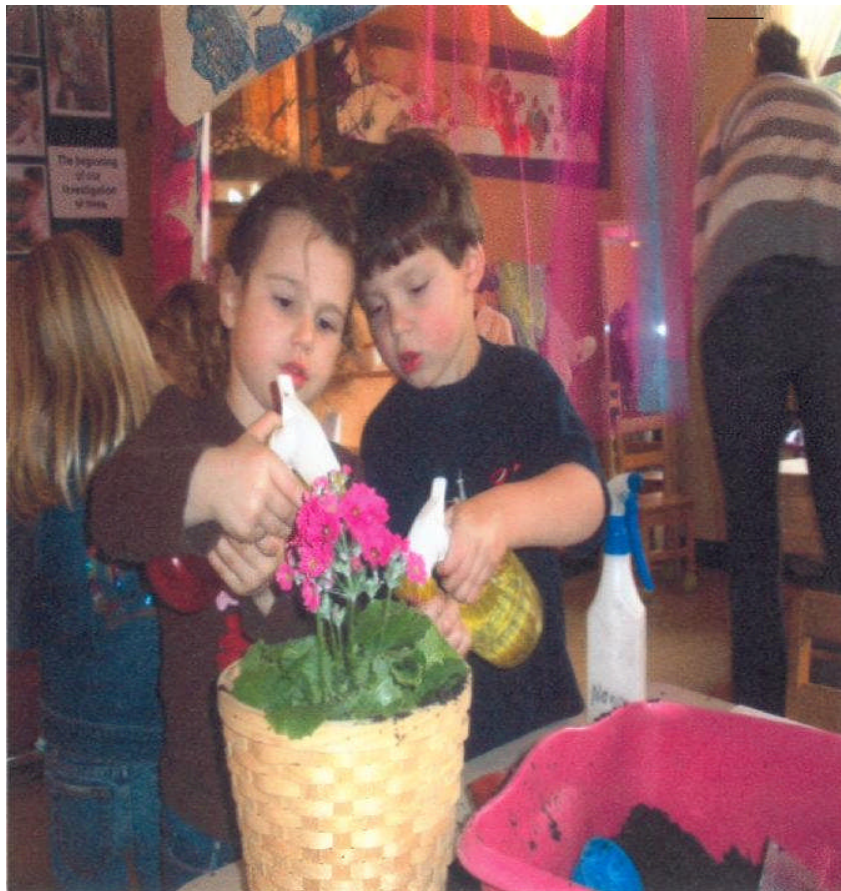
1.6 Children engage in tzedakah (acts of righteous), chesed (acts of kindness), and mitzvot (commandments/deeds) that demonstrate caring for others



This year we have created a mitzvah wall in our classroom. When anyone in the class performs a mitzvah, we write it down on a piece of paper and the child who carried out the mitzvah puts it on the wall. This is a picture of Nathan putting up his mitzvah paper. He got this for helping another child clean up when she spilled her juice at lunch time. This was a pure act of kindness for nobody asked Nathan to help the child clean up, he just got up and did it on his own.

1.7 Children care for the school environment

Children take pride in taking care of our classroom environment. These children took initiative to care for the plants by watering them.



Indicator #2 - Teachers and families are partners in nurturing the social and emotional growth of community members - children, families, and staff.

2.1 Teachers greet families and children at the beginning and end of the day with respect and warmth.

2.2 Teachers use home visits to understand children and families' needs, interests, and home life.

2.3 Teachers and families exchange information about children on a regular basis, daily for infant/toddlers.

2.4 Teachers are responsive to the social and emotional needs of children and families.

2.5 Teachers provide feedback to families on a regular basis.

2.6 Teachers share the strengths of children and joyful moments of learning and growth with parents on a regular basis.

2.7 Teachers focus on supporting the parent child relationship.

2.8 Teachers model desired ways of listening and interacting with children.

2.9 Teachers engage families in co-creating the classroom and school community.

2.10 Teachers and families respect issues of confidentiality.

2.11 Teachers and professional leadership make referrals to families when needed.

2.12 Teachers and professional leadership create an environment where families feel comfortable seeking support for parenting and family issues.

2.13 Teachers collaborate with families to support the social and emotional needs of children.

2.14 Teachers feel that their social and emotional needs are supported.

2.1 Teachers greet families and children at the beginning and end of the day with warmth and respect.

This is a picture of a teacher (in the pink shirt) greeting a parent (in the pink pants) that she hadn't seen for a week because that family was on vacation. After they hugged, they continued to have a little conversation about the vacation. Often times a family will have several children go through a class with the same teacher so the parents and teachers form a special bond throughout the years.



2.3 Teachers and families exchange information about children on a regular basis, daily for infant and toddlers

This is a picture of a parent picking up her child. The teacher is telling the parent about the child's day and is showing the parent a piece of art work that her child did that morning. In the morning when parents drop off their children, the teacher will ask about the child's night or weekend (if it's on a Monday) and the parent will let us know if there is any pertinent information we should know about their child on that particular day.



2.4 Teachers are responsive to the social and emotional needs of families

We as teachers understand that drop off time can be emotional for both children and their families. The teachers support the routines that the parents and children engage in to make the goodbye transition run smoothly.

This is a picture of a parent and little brother doing a "silly dance" at the window to say good bye to Arielle. This is something that this particular parent does daily to say good bye.



2.5 Teachers provide feedback to parents on a daily basis

At the end of each day, when we see a child get picked up, we make an effort to connect with each parent and discuss a little about the child's day and how it went. One specific example of this is when one child's mother came to get him one afternoon, she asked me how his day was. I told her that her child had a great day and that he cleaned up his lunch after he ate all by himself without being prompted to. This was a goal that we were working on so it was exciting to see it happening. The mother expressed how proud of him she was.

2.7 Teachers focus on supporting the parent child relationship

We had an event called "Bagels and Blocks" where we invited all of the working parents who usually don't get a chance to help out with school activities to come and have breakfast and do some activities with their children. The children had a great time showing their parents how to make cinnamon-raisin challah and they helped decorate Sedar plates with them as well.

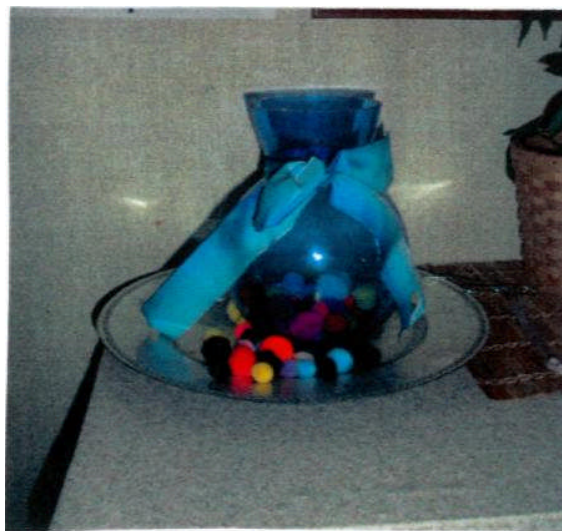
The most exciting part about this event was to see how all of the parents, grandparents and children shared and interacted together as a community. We celebrated and shared the spirit of Shabbat together, making this day a very special occasion for all.

We noticed that the parents who came to this event seemed to be much more comfortable coming into the classroom after they went to Bagels and Blocks. I feel that this event opened up the doors of communication between the working parents and the teachers.



2.8 Teachers model desired ways of listening and interacting with children.

In our class we have a Puff Ball Jar. This is a jar that the children put puff balls into when they have used their strong words. This is one way to use positive reinforcement in the classroom to teach the children to use their words rather than screaming at or hitting another child. When the jar is filled, we get to have a puff ball party. When we as teachers, see a child who forgets to use their strong words and instead starts to scream or try to hit another child, we immediately go to that child, ask them what is going on and we explain that the best way to handle the situation is to tell the child who is bothering them, that they don't like it when....(what ever they didn't like). We explain to them that using their strong words is easier for everyone to understand and that no one will know what they like or don't like, if they don't use their words.



2.9 Teachers engage families in co-creating the classroom and school community.

Here is a perfect example of a parent being apart of our classroom community by reading books to the children as part of the morning routine.



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2.10 Teachers and families respect issues of confidentiality.

Below is the section of the staff handbook clarifying the issue of confidentiality. As it reads below, this is considered to be of the utmost importance.

Confidentiality

The nature of our work makes us privy to private information about children and families. It is unprofessional to discuss other children with another parent. It is also unprofessional to talk about staff members to parents, even outside of the school environment. This is a serious matter, and is grounds for disciplinary action and/or dismissal. Please remember at all times that we must not discuss any child or family with another parent or within earshot of parents. If you must communicate with another staff member about a certain child, make sure it is done discreetly, away from parents and children. The State of California has very stringent laws concerning confidentiality, which apply to all ECE staff.

Sometimes on a rough day, it is very easy to answer a parent's question concerning another child. The question may be asked out of genuine concern, but please do not offer any answer. A simple reply would be, "Thanks for your concern, but I'm not at liberty to discuss that". Even if a child is crying in your arms and a concerned parent asks what is wrong, an appropriate answer would be, "So and so is sad right now", and leave it at that.

Our professionalism and warmth is what makes our school so special. It is important to remember that our families expect and deserve confidentiality. If you do receive information concerning a child or family that is important to be shared, please communicate with the director as to an appropriate way to pass on the information.

Ignoring the expected professional responsibility of confidentiality will be reason for disciplinary action.

2.10 Teachers and families respect issues of confidentiality.

Often times in our class, when one child gets hurt by another child, we write up an incident/accident report for both the child who got hurt and for the child who did the hurting. An example of this was when one child (child A) bit another child (child B). The protocol is to call both parents and write up an incident/accident report. When I called child B's mom, she was insistent on knowing who bit her child. I explained to her that it would be a breach of confidentiality for me to tell her which child bit her child. She was a little frustrated that I wouldn't tell her but she understood. I explained that I'm sure she will find out when she comes to pick up her child because chances are her child will tell her who bit him but that we were strictly not allowed to share that information.

2.11 Teachers and professional leadership make referrals to families when needed.

We had a meeting with the parents of a particular child who we thought could benefit from Occupational Therapy. In the meeting, we discussed the behaviors we were seeing in their child that warranted our thoughts leading towards additional support. The parents were very open to suggestions that we had dealing with Occupational therapy.

2.13 Teachers collaborate with families to support the social and emotional needs of children.

Below is the an excerpt from the Parent Handbook regarding transitioning into the program. It offers helpful suggestions for separation during this period and assures that the teachers are " sensitive and want to support you and your child in overcoming feelings of anxiety that occur over separation."

THE BUILDING OF TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Your child's first weeks at ECE are a "phase-in time" when children, parents, and teachers are establishing trusting relationships to support each child's transition into the school environment. Parents should plan to be available by phone and for an early pick-up if needed during this period. Your child's age, past group experiences, temperament, and your confidence in his or her success will all play a part in the adjustment. We want your child to feel secure and comfortable before you leave him/her for an extended period.

Many children enter programs eagerly and easily. For some children, however, the transition to building trusting relationships with new adults and children and learning new routines is more difficult. Our teachers understand this challenge and have seen most children overcome their fears and hesitation, and become active members of the group. Your child will not be pushed into an activity until he/she is ready and until the environment becomes a safe and familiar one. Until then, it is very common for young children to moments of tears. This situation can *be* difficult for both the child and parent. Our teachers are sensitive and want to support you and your child in overcoming feelings of anxiety that occur over separation.

Here are some helpful tips when to help establish comfortable routines and develop supportive relationships with teachers:

- Each new child will receive a home visit from his or her teacher before school begins or in the first days of school. This helps build a relationship in the comfort of the child's home and secure surroundings. When someone comes to your home, they are no longer strangers.
- Be as casual and matter-of-fact about leaving as possible. Once you and your child have said 'good bye,' please do not hesitate in your departure. Your child will be able to handle the separation more easily if the process is not delayed.
- Reassure your child that you will pick him/her up at a specific time or before or after a particular activity (e.g. after lunch time). Young children may not understand the concept of time, but he/she will get the message in terms of sequence of activities. Then, make sure you come back when you said you would.
- Show confidence in your child's ability to successfully cope with being at school (your child will!), and remember to say good-bye. The teacher will be sensitive, aware, and quick to give whatever help you and your child need.
- Once you say good bye to your child and s/he joins the group, please leave the classroom area so that your child is not torn between being with you and staying with the other children. You are welcome to stay and socialize with other parents but please move to the ECE lobby or JCC café so that your child does not continue to see or hear you. In the first days of school, the PA offers a breakfast for parents to connect and begin their own process of building relationships.
- Try to follow the same routine each day.

2.13 Teachers collaborate with families to support the social and emotional needs of children.

We had a meeting with parents who were having a difficult time with their child's bed time routine. Their child was not going to bed without having his mom sleep in his bed with him. This was a routine they wanted help getting out of because it was creating problems between the parents and the child. They wanted to talk with myself and Tamar (supervisor) about ideas on how to help them along. We advised them on making a picture poster of the routine things they do with the child before bed such as putting on pajamas, brushing teeth, reading a story and then kissing Mommy and Daddy goodnight. We also said that the first few times they try this, chances are the child will be upset and continuously get out of bed. But we explained that it was very important not to give the child the attention he wants when he gets out of bed. The parents were very appreciative of the ideas we gave to them. They tried it and reported back that it worked. Since then, we've noticed a positive change in both the parents and the child.

Indicator #6 - Children explore life through the JECEI lenses.

Children share their feelings, ideas, and experiences with their peers and adults.

- 6.1 Children raise questions and problem solve together.
- 6.2 Children have access to a variety of materials for play, projects, and other learning experiences.
- 6.3 Children work on projects in small groups.
- 6.4 Children explore and celebrate together moments of blessing, transition, and thanks.
- 6.5 Children explore relationships through interacting and reflecting.
- 6.6 Children co-create with teachers learning experiences that connect with the stories and ideas in torah and Jewish sources to daily classroom experiences.
- 6.7 Children explore with others the why as well as the how and what of Jewish symbols and practices.
- 6.8 Children's learning from one another is physically visible.
- 6.9 Children learn about their identities and uniqueness e.g. developmentally, culturally.
- 6.10 Children explore and interpret ideas and feelings through art and nature experiences.
- 6.11 Children reflect on documentation to further learning.

6.1 Children raise questions and problem solve together

Here is a picture of a group of children trying to design a sea airplane. One child is trying out her idea while the others observe and add their input. This particular child; Hannah, said "I think it should go like this because this is what planes look like". Sammy (the child in front of Hannah) said, "No, it needs to be pushed back more". Hannah then pushed it back and they taped it in place. This is an example of the children working together, raising questions and problem solving.



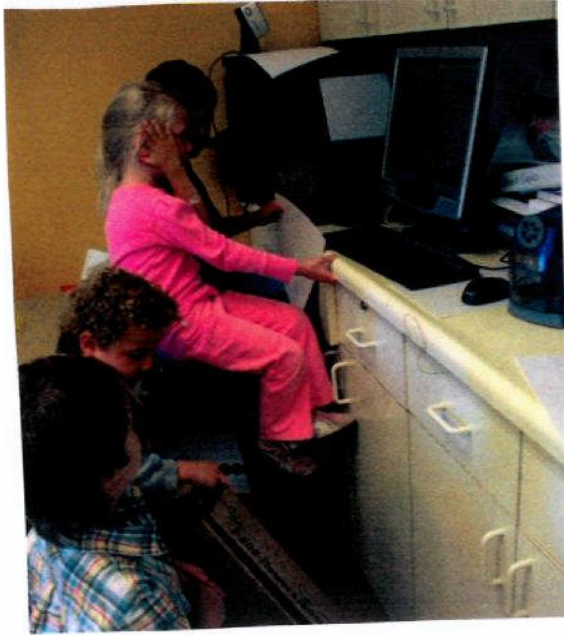
6.2 Children have access to a variety of materials for play, projects, and other learning experiences.

Here is a picture of several children playing with corn starch, colored water and droppers. The children's sense of wonder was evident when they saw the effect of water interacting with the corn starch. This is an example of Hit'orerut—a child's amazement—during a new classroom experience. It teaches the child about cause and effect. Mixing colors together to make new colors and working with the droppers allows them to practice their fine motor skills as well.



6.3 Children work on project in small groups

This is a great example of B'rit. This means to belong, build relationships and make commitments to each other. The children decided to build a Sea Airplane and formed a group of children to work on it. They put together a list of materials they needed and went around to all of the classrooms collecting the items they needed. They also went on the computer to look at pictures to see what sea airplanes look like. They all worked together as a team and chose how to design the plane choosing exactly where to put what as a team. They worked on this project for a couple of weeks and when they were done, we displayed it for all to see.



6.4 Children explore and celebrate together moments of blessing, transition and thanks.



Every Monday we celebrate Havdalah which is the separation between Shabbat and the work week. There are three components involving Havdalah. The Kiddish cup, the spices, and the braided candle. We pass the spices around in a circle for the children to smell them to be reminded to have a sweet week. During the passing of the spices, each child gets a chance to explore the bag of spices, feeling it between their fingers and taking the time to breathe the sweet scent in. Toward the end of the Havdalah blessing, we put out the candle by dipping it in the Kiddush cup which is filled with liquid. The children watch as the fire goes out and we always ask them what they think is stronger, the liquid or the fire. The children have learned that the liquid is stronger because it puts out the fire.

6.7 Children explore with others the why as well as the how and what of Jewish symbols and practices

This picture depicts a child exploring the Torah that we had brought out during Simchat Torah. We explained to the children that during this time, we celebrate the Torah and begin to read it again from the beginning. We also talked about the "robe" that the Torah wears as well as the Yad (metal hand) we use to read it with so as to not touch it with our fingers to get it dirty. We also explained why we keep the Torah in a safe place



6.8 Children's learning from one another is physically visible.

While on a nature walk, Elinor points out some bugs living under a rock to the other children. She began to explain to the children that they shouldn't step on the bugs because they have "Mommys and Daddys" I thought this was a great example of Tzelem Elokim (Divine image) in that she saw the bugs as being special and unique, created in Gods image.



6.9 Children learn about their identities and uniqueness (e.g., developmentally and culturally)

Every May we celebrate Israel's birthday. We called this Yom Ha'atzmaut. During this time, we set up the outside yard to look like a mock Israel. We set up a farm with real chickens, an archeological dig with pretend gold coins, paint tiles with the children, teach them how to do the traditional Jewish dances and give them opportunities to eat some vegetables that are grown in Israel. This gives the children and teachers an idea about what this celebration would be like in Israel. In this picture a child has just had his face painted with the Jewish flag on his cheek. This is a great celebration that allows the children to feel connected to Israel and the Jewish traditions.



6.10 Children explore and interpret ideas and feelings through art and nature experiences

On a walk with the children many of them noticed all of the ladybugs in the bushes. This sparked their interest in learning more about them. We took sketching paper, pencils and water colors outside so the children can draw the ladybugs that they saw. This was a great example of Hit'orerut which means awakening. The children were in awe of the ladybugs and through that, they were inspired to draw them. This allowed them to explore their fascination with ladybugs through art and nature.



Indicator #8 - Teachers document children's learning.

- 8.1 Teachers regularly engage in the process of observation and documentation as a way of facilitating learning and growth.
- 8.2 Teachers use documentation as a tool for reflecting on and planning the learning experience.
- 8.3 Teachers' documentation of children's learning occurs in multiple forms.
- 8.4 Teachers' documentation incorporates multiple perspectives and voices of children, parents, teachers, and others as appropriate.
- 8.5 Teachers document children's exploration of Judaism and Jewish life.
- 8.6 Teacher observation and documentation of children's work are part of assessment.
- 8.7 Teachers use documentation to help children reflect on their ideas and questions.
- 8.8 Teachers use documentation to celebrate accomplishments and growth.
- 8.9 Teachers use documentation as a vehicle for communicating with parents about their child's learning experience.
- 8.10 Teachers use documentation as a way of making visible the child's learning experiences throughout the time that they are in the program.

8.34 Teachers use documentation to help children reflect on their ideas and questions.

This is a picture of documentation showing a group of children's curiosity about the moon being out during the day. We had a meeting and discussed why they thought the moon was out during the day. They each drew pictures of the moon as well.



8.8 Teachers use documentation to celebrate accomplishments and growth.

This is a picture of a child putting up documentation of a mitzvah that he did in class earlier on our mitzvot wall.



8.9 Teachers use documentation as a vehicle for communicating with parents about their child's learning experience.

This is documentation that we keep in the hall in front of our classroom for the parents to see. This particular documentations shares with the parents how the first day of school was for their children.



Indicator #9 -The teachers implement the JECEI principles of *excellence* - an integration of the JECEI lenses with Reggio inspired, constructivist, ancettotional. responsive theories and practices - in their work in the classroom and with families.

9.1 Teachers create a culture of inquiry in the classroom; this cycle involves dialogue, reflection, investigation, and action.

9.2 Teachers make Jewish learning foundational by exploring the ideas, values, symbols, stories, and practices embedded in the JECEI lenses.

9.3 Teachers use classroom experiences, rituals, and routines to explore and celebrate moments of blessing, transition, and thanks.

9.4 Teachers co-create learning experiences with children that connect ideas in torah and Jewish sources to daily classroom experiences.

9.5 Teachers explore with children and families the why **as** well **as** the how and what of Jewish symbols and practices.

9.6 Teachers dialogue with children and families about Jewish life.

9,7 Teachers utilize Jewish sources, materials, artifacts, symbols, food, music, and Hebrew to deepen children's learning experiences.

9.8 Teachers utilize art and nature experiences with children to explore and interpret ideas and feelings.

9.9 Teachers share with families and colleagues evidence of the lenses into all aspects of teaching and learning.

9.10 Teachers get to know children and their families by gathering stories and symbols about their histories, hopes, and dreams.

9.11 Teachers demonstrate respect for others by listening to and interacting with them in caring, non-judgmental, and ethical ways.

9.12 Teachers actively engage in reflective processes individually and collectively to grow their self-awareness and ability to relate to others.

9.7 Teachers utilize Jewish sources, materials, artifacts, symbols, food, music and Hebrew to deepen children's learning experiences.

This picture shows a group of children on Israel's birthday surrounding a chicken coop that was set up at the school to help the children understand what life is like in Israel.



9.8 Teachers utilize art and nature experiences with children to explore and interpret ideas and feelings.

This is a picture showing a puppet show that a teacher is putting on for the children to help them better understand the many ways to deal with frustrations when it comes to taking turns and sharing toys. The children were able to give the teachers scenarios and solutions to the problems that the puppets were experiencing. This activity allowed the children to explore different ideas and feelings they have around personal space and sharing toys.

