



THE ELECTRONIC EDUCATOR-
A weekly update of information for you and your school!
A service of the NJ Region USCJ Dept. of Education
Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities
Nita Polay Levin, Field Worker
Lisa Harris Glass, Executive Director

**New jersey region USCJ-NJ Region
Department of education
Introduces a new service
For special needs students
And the educators who teach them**

Many of you and your faculties have reached out to us to ask for advice in teaching students with special needs. Last year we sent out a survey to our schools and the overwhelming response confirmed that this is an area we need to be focusing on. So, rest assured: **We have heard you!**

We are proud to announce a new program designed to help teachers and principals reach students with special needs. The first phase of this program is to run a series of three workshops for principals, beginning in the winter months of this year. These workshops will include:

1. how to recognize and define various disabilities
2. learning how principals can communicate with parents in order to put them at ease and allow them to let us help their children by sharing pertinent information and working in partnership
3. and, finally, strategies, tips, and problem solving.

Experts in the field, including special needs educators and psychologists, will present these workshops. By the end of this course, principals will be equipped to set up programs for special needs and help their teachers, who are on the front lines, reach these students. We are anticipating that our course will be accredited by the NJ State Education Department.

We are deeply indebted to Wendy Dratler, former Department Director, and Linda Kay, Associate, of MetroWest Federation's JEA Center for Special Education department who were very helpful to us. Last May, Nita Polay Levin, regional Education Field Worker, and Judy Lerner, an expert in both the fields of special education and Jewish education, met with them. Wendy and Linda gave us printed materials that they have used in their trainings and very helpful advice, allaying many of our fears in approaching this daunting task. We are very grateful to them for their expertise, help in getting us started, and support.

In addition, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Kara Fund, a private foundation, for granting us the monies needed to facilitate this program.

Be on the lookout for more information and dates of these workshops. We will publish the dates and times later this fall. We are looking forward to serving your needs in this crucial area.

We are pleased (and yes, even proud!) to bring you these workshops, as well as our research, free of charge, a benefit of your synagogue's membership in the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

PRESCHOOL CORNER

Shana Tova!

Here is the Staff Meeting Shiur for October.

B'Shalom,

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I have this theory that chocolate slows down the aging process...It may not be true, but do I dare take the chance?

USCJ EC Staff Meeting *Shiur* – October 2007

Questions for discussion:

1. Parashat Lech-lecha (the Torah portion Lech-lecha, Genesis 12:1-17:27) is full of blessings. God blesses Abram several times, even blessing him with a new name: Abraham (and his wife, Sarai, with a new name: Sarah)! King Melchizedek of Salem blesses Abram and his God, God blesses Hagar, foretelling the birth of Ishmael, and God blesses Ishmael, as well as foretells the birth of Isaac, promising that a covenant will be maintained with him. What does it mean to be blessed?
2. What are some blessings in your life? In the passage above, God tells Abram that he will be a blessing. How are you a blessing?
3. Most blessings start with the Hebrew phrase “’ - *Ba-ruch A-tah Adonai* - Blessed are You Lord.” The word /Ba-ruch/Bless has the same root as the Hebrew word – Be-rech, which means “knee.” Sometimes when we say a blessing, we actually bend our knees when we say “Ba-ruch,” involving our entire body in the blessing. But even when we don’t bend our knees, how does this bless-knee connection change the meaning of the blessings we say?
4. The rabbis tell us we should say 100 blessings a day. Indeed, there are many standard times during the day for saying blessings, such as eating and during tefilla (prayer), as well as special times, such as during a thunder storm or upon seeing a flowering tree. When we engage in “God-talk,” referring to God (“Look at the beautiful flower God created”) or saying a blessing, we make a safe environment for young children to ask about God, thus creating their own relationships with God. What can we do if we happen upon a “blessable” moment but don’t know the traditional blessing to say?

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Please take a moment to respond to a very short survey so that we may be able to communicate with you better. Todah.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wLNwCXJ1_2bWev895n6q6MPA_3d_3d

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We wish you a meaningful Sukkot. May you and be grateful for, and take comfort in the knowledge that, your home, unlike your sukkah, is sturdy and warm and not subject to the winds that we pray for at this time of year.

Chag Sukkot Same'ach,
Nita and Michelle