



Lorraine & Jack N. Friedman

Commission for

**JEWISH**

**EDUCATION**

of the Palm Beaches

Connect. Learn. Grow.

# Your **Jewish** Next **Steps**

A Guide for Parents Raising Jewish Children:  
After the Early Childhood Years

# Ready to take the **Next Steps** in your family's **Jewish Journey?**

In Judaism, providing a Jewish education is one of just a few things that a parent is obligated to do for their children. Mazel Tov for completing the early childhood years! As you consider this accomplishment, you will marvel at how much your child has changed and grown. Leaving preschool and entering formal schooling is a critical time in your child's development. Choosing a Jewish educational or camping experience is a major event in the life of your family. The Lorraine and Jack N. Friedman Commission for Jewish Education is proud to support local families in making these important educational decisions for your children's future. We are happy to offer this guide as a resource for you. We hope you can use some of the wonderful resources and connections we are providing as you and your children continue your Jewish journey together.



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# STEP 1

## LEARN THE LINGO

Here are descriptions of Jewish education choices.

### SYNAGOGUE SCHOOLS

A Hebrew School or Religious School is usually a supplementary Jewish education program housed in a synagogue or in a Jewish institution. The program teaches a wide variety of subjects, ranging from Hebrew and prayer to Jewish holidays and values. For many families, the program provides an opportunity to extend friendships and expand learning formed during the preschool years. For others, the school represents a chance to form new family friendships and experience new learning connections.

### JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

A day school is a full-time, private school where students receive a high-quality education in language arts, mathematics, social studies and science while also receiving instruction in Jewish subjects such as Hebrew, Jewish history prayer, texts and values.

### HEBREW LANGUAGE CHARTER SCHOOL

A Hebrew Language Charter School is a school of choice that is state-funded but privately operated. Charter Schools have the autonomy to set many of their own policies related to curriculum delivery, parental involvement, discipline, and special programs. Students may study modern Hebrew language and participate in activities that expose them to Israeli social studies and culture. In accordance with state guidelines, Judaism and its religious aspects are not taught as part of the curriculum.

### JEWISH CAMP

A Jewish Day Camp or Overnight Camp weaves Jewish values, culture and traditions into the fabric of a summertime experience, helping campers connect to their own identities and to the larger Jewish community. Staff members use experiential learning to reveal what makes Jewish religion and culture unique in today's world. At camp, Jewish and Israeli cultures are celebrated through song, food, art, and dance.

# STEP 2

## FIND THE RIGHT FIT

School/Camp philosophy should support your family's goals for your child's Jewish educational experiences. One of the surest ways to guarantee your child's success in his or her Jewish journey is to make sure that you have chosen experiences that are a good fit for your child and for your family. Your family is unique. Look for programs that truly meet your criteria.

# STEP 4

## DO YOUR PART & MAKE YOUR CHOICE

Ask other parents about their experiences with the programs you are considering. Find out whether the programs met their family's needs, and why? As you weigh your options, always keep in mind the characteristics that are most important for you and your child so that you can find the right fit.

# STEP 3

## TAKE A TOUR

Schedule tours of a variety of programs, meet the directors, observe what happens in each setting, and carefully explore the programs' websites.

Find out:

- What is the school/camp's philosophy and curriculum?
- Who are the educators/counselors?
- What is the typical daily schedule?
- Do students/campers seem happy and engaged?

# STEP 5

## BE INVOLVED

The Shema states *v'shinantam l'vanekha*, "and you shall teach the words of the Torah to your children." The obligation to provide children with a Jewish education rests with the parents. You may not be your child's teacher or counselor, but you can still be involved. Is there an active committee that you can join? Are parents invited and encouraged to volunteer? Find out how you and your family can be involved.

## Resources:

For a complete list of schools, synagogues  
and camps please visit our website:

**[www.cjepb.org](http://www.cjepb.org)**

For assistance in taking your Jewish Next Steps,  
contact Amy Bergman, Director of Jewish Family Life.  
[a.bergman@cjepb.org](mailto:a.bergman@cjepb.org) or 561-209-2608



4601 Community Drive, West Palm Beach, FL 33417