

Noah's Notes

December 16, 2021

Dear families,

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for a wonderful first chapter in our preschool journey this year. Today brings us to approximately the halfway point in the school year for our part day classes and a third of the way in for our full day friends.

Our year began with our introductory events: Open houses for our students and Orientation for our parents (*remember walking into the building for the first time?*). We quickly moved through the High Holidays. Our Rabbis blew the shofar for our students, we played and ate in the sukkah, and we unrolled the Torah in celebration. We danced and sang to celebrate Shabbat each week -- first in each classroom then outside on the patio, spaced out but still together with a few other classes. We painted murals, built towers, dug in the sandbox, rode tricycles, and hiked in Rock Creek Park. We played dreidel, lit menorahs, and bundled up as the temperature dropped. Our teachers have built emergent curricula around their students' passions and our children have built long-lasting friendships as they've developed new skills and strengths. All the while, we wore our masks, washed our hands, and diligently followed our health protocols (*remember to check [Jocelyn's email](#) for travel requirements and other Covid information*).

Our next chapter promises to hold joy and celebration as well; we look forward to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Tu B'shvat, Purim, and Passover in the months to come... and maybe a snow day or at least some flurries!

With the upcoming two week pause in our journey together, we invite you to explore Darci Lewis's suggestions for [at-home activities for preschoolers](#). My personal favorites are Tape Escape and Hot Rocks! I'll challenge you to try at least one activity from Darci's list -- let us know how it goes.

The story of this chapter would not be complete without highlighting the success of [Gan HaMishpacha](#), our new family center, and [Gan HaNeshama](#), our new multidisciplinary evaluation center. Our family center has seen expectant parents meet each other and build that precious community of support that is so critical in the earliest days of life and parenthood. With Darci at its helm, the family center has welcomed newborns into the greater Gan community and nurtured our crawlers and early walkers in their Kangaroo classes. Under Stephanie's expert leadership, our evaluation center has manifested the Reggio-inspired value that children with divergent development have special rights, including the right for care and support in order to flourish within their community school setting. Screenings, evaluations, and therapies now take place under the Gan roof, allowing for a smooth integration into the child's preschool day. I applaud Darci and Stephanie for stretching us in each of these directions and for the work they have done in redefining what a preschool community can be.

We will miss your children these next two weeks. We wish you peace and love and can't wait to begin the next chapter of our journey together.

Shabbat shalom and happy new year,
Noah