



Beth Emeth Early Childhood Center

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MYTH-BUSTERS!

Cleanses are all the rage these days, and being that this is the anniversary of my very first *Shofar* article, one year's cycle of sharing my thinking surrounding the experiences at our preschool, I would like to do a little column cleanse. This month's article will be an opportunity to clarify a couple of things that I have come to realize over the course of the year that are common misperceptions about our school's philosophy.

When explaining our Reggio-inspired school, we portray children as "competent and capable" and often describe ourselves as "a child-centered, play-based school." Let's detox . . .

MYTH 1: "Child Centered" or "Child-Led" means that the teachers simply follow the children's interest and do what the children want to do.

TRUTH: Child-led means that we that we encourage children to express themselves so they can help lead us to understand their way of thinking about things (as opposed to us imposing our way as the only way or "right way" to do things). Our teachers plan and create rich and meaningful learning experiences designed for children to have the opportunity to test their own theories, share their ideas, and hear others points of view thereby constructing their own knowledge through interacting with the world and people around them. Observing and dialoguing with the children as they interact with the experiences help lead us to their understandings, and the more we are led to understand how they are thinking, the more we can build on those experiences and challenge them to the next level of thinking.

MYTH 2: Being a Reggio-inspired, play-based school means that we do not believe in developing and fostering academic skills.

TRUTH: Quite the opposite. Reggio believes strongly in building cognitive and academic skills. We believe that

learning comes best if it's organic and integrated into the daily life, not in isolation. The children are developing academic skills through rich contexts that allow for the learning to be meaningful and relevant. Play is how children learn, and through their play – the engaging and challenging experiences we design for them – we are intentionally fostering their academic skills. We are consistently exposing them to pre-reading, reading, writing, mathematical and scientific concepts, and children will connect to it in a way that they are developmentally ready to understand.



Ahhh, I feel better getting rid of those assumptions and clearing the air. It is crucial to understand that seeing children as competent and capable does not mean that they control what we do and that we turn our back on learning the conventional ABC's and 123's. Seeing children as competent and capable means that they have the right to have experiences that encourage them to express themselves and their ideas and learn pre-academic skills through rich and meaningful contexts. Allowing children to access the parts of their brain that develop critical thinking, problem solving, and construction of knowledge will create citizens who will learn to communicate, understand the world around them, and become competent members of society.

Going through this cleanse has opened the door to share some exciting news . . . though I am out of space so you will have to stay tuned until next month's article to discover what we have in store. Enjoy your July!

-- Robin

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Childhood Center
Reggio-Inspired,
Jewishly-Guided

Registration

Registration is now open for
the 2018-19 School Year!

Early drop-off and extended day options available.

Contact us today!

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