



Congregation Beth Elohim

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Dear Yachad Community,

We are grateful for your support as we develop our plans for the fall. After an extensive process involving discussions with Yachad parents, analyses of parallel institutions, and a recent parent survey, we have made the difficult decision to run the Yachad program virtually through the fall, with in-person supplementary experiences, when possible.

The parent survey, with over 150 responses, reinforced concerns regarding unknown logistics around school schedules as well as the safety of attending an in-person program. Many indicated a preference for virtual programming.

About Yachad This Year. Concurrent with our decision making process, we have been working to develop an excellent virtual Yachad program, based on our perpetual values of creating an engaging, rich, and meaningful Jewish learning experience. Having learned from our experiences this spring through parent and student feedback, as well as having undergone training in virtual education and community building, we know that Yachad this year will offer your children:

- a focus within the curriculum on Jewish social-emotional-spiritual learning, trauma-informed education, and social/racial justice
- personalized attention from our dedicated staff
- a weekly schedule which mirrors the typical in-person schedule
 - K and 1st: Gan Shabbat family service + class on Saturdays
 - 2nd: tefila + class on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, or Gan Shabbat family service + class on Saturdays
 - 3-6th: tefila + class on Mondays AND Wednesdays OR Tuesdays and Saturdays
 - 7th: class on Thursdays
 - 8th-10th: class on Tuesdays
 - 11th and 12th: monthly class on Tuesdays
- abbreviated class time with breaks to reduce Zoom fatigue
- optional asynchronous (independent) activities
- grounding, applicable wisdom from the Jewish tradition

We know that virtual learning was a challenge for many families this spring and that this year will be significantly different from previous years. But we believe, now more than ever, Yachad will provide our children with a solid and grounding connection to their Jewish community and Jewish wisdom during a tumultuous time in all of our lives.

CBE-wide Decisions. As you may know, we are planning to run CBE's Early Childhood Center program in person starting in September. In consideration of government guidelines, we have been able to outfit the Temple House such that we can safely welcome our ECC families to in-person programming and fulfill the need for high-quality all-day early childhood education.

In contrast, Yachad's classes, which are held in the synagogue building's Rotunda area on weekdays, have more confined points of egress and limited space which make similar accommodations there more challenging. Our Saturday Yachad classes, many of which are held in the Temple House, would be all the more challenging to accommodate given the new demands on them due to the ECC. These considerations, as well as considerations around tefila/prayer, involving group singing, and socializing through eating together as a large group, lead us to believe that opening in-person Yachad at this time would seriously compromise our ability to provide the fun and meaningful experiences we have come to know and love.

We know that this decision comes on the heels of another painful decision to suspend the After School program for the fall trimester. We are committed to evaluating our decisions throughout the fall, because above all, we miss all of our students deeply, and yearn to safely welcome them back as soon as possible.

Learning more about Yachad this year. We will be providing additional, detailed information about our program via emails from teachers. Also, please [RSVP](#) to join us for the **Yachad Parent Meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 1st, from 8-9:30pm**, to hear more about our plans for this year and to have the opportunity to ask questions about our program. For those wishing to learn more about our curriculum, please see [here](#) for K-8th curriculum, and [here](#) for 9-12th curriculum. And as always, we are dedicated to having individual conversations with any family to determine the best way to achieve learning and community for your child(ren) right now. Please email Tehilah Eisenstadt, teisenstadt@cbebk.org, and/or Rabbi Epstein, repstein@cbebk.org, to set up a time to talk.

We know that you have a lot on your plate when it comes to determining the fall. Though the format will be different for the time being, we know that by working together to keep our community intact virtually, Yachad and CBE will provide a sense of grounding, meaning, and belonging during what will likely be a tumultuous time. For those of you who have not yet enrolled in Yachad, we invite you to do so by visiting <https://cbebk.org/yachad/>. We miss you deeply and we can't wait to welcome you back to Yachad, in safety and in health, this fall.

Sincerely,
Tehilah Eisenstadt, Director of Yachad and Family Education
Rabbi Rebecca Epstein, Associate Rabbi Educator
Alan Herman, Executive Director / COO