

Ready to take the **First 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. Choosing a Jewish educational experience is a major event in the life of your family.

The Lorraine and Jack N. Friedman Commission for Jewish Education at Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County is proud to support local families in making these important education decisions for your children's future.

We are pleased to offer you this guide and hope that you can use some of the wonderful resources and connections we provide, as you and your children begin your Jewish journey together.

Resources:

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

jewishpb.org/education

For assistance in taking your Jewish First Steps, contact Amy Bergman, Director, Family Engagement & Outreach, at amy.bergman@jewishpalmbeach.org or 561.209.2608.



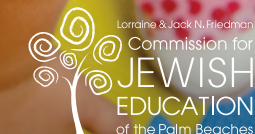
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A Guide for Parents Raising Jewish Children:
the Early Childhood Years

Your **Jewish** First **Steps**



Jewish Federation
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY





Your Jewish First Steps

STEP 1

CHECK OUT PLAYGROUPS

Playgroups are organized groups that provide a location and a host for families with babies (usually between 6 months and 2 years). A playgroup is a great way to make friends, learn from others with children the same age and to have fun with your baby. Some may be unstructured, while others may have a Jewish theme or even be Jewish music-based with a set lesson plan.

STEP 2

SIGN UP FOR PJ LIBRARY®



PJ Library® sends free Jewish children's books to families across the world every month. Locally, our PJ Library program sends books and music to children starting at birth. We know that something magical happens when parents sit down together to read with their children. PJ Library shares Jewish stories that can help your family talk together about values and traditions that are important to you. Enroll at pjlibrary.org.

STEP 3

ENROLL IN JEWISH PARENT/CHILD CLASSES

Classes are usually at a weekly or regularly scheduled time when a parent or caretaker attends and participates with the child. Whether in a Jewish location or in a public space, these classes are not only a way to connect with others, but they also can provide some constructive ideas for enriching play, as well as resources to help you create Jewish moments with your child at home. These classes are typically a precursor to an early childhood program and often contain some of the same elements, although they are shorter in duration.

STEP 4

CHOOSE A JEWISH EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

A Jewish early childhood program focuses on values, community and holiday celebrations. Children develop long-lasting, positive emotional connections with Shabbat, Torah and Jewish values, strengthening their Jewish identity. Children make friends and become a part of the Jewish community locally and world-wide. Jewish holiday and life cycle celebrations are experienced in a way that is complementary to each family's practice. In other words, it develops a foundation for Jewish identity that can last throughout your child's life.

Here are some questions to ask an Early Childhood Director:

- What makes your school an excellent Jewish early childhood program?
- What is the educational philosophy of your school?
- What accreditations does the school currently hold?
- How are parents involved in the school?
- What types of adult learning and family programming exist outside of the classroom?
- How does the school view diversity in Jewish practices among its families?

STEP 5

DISCOVER ONLINE RESOURCES

For a complete list of playgroups, parent/child classes, Jewish early childhood programs, synagogues, camps, parenting resources and Jewish educational information, please visit jewishpb.org/education.