

Dear Early Childhood Families,

If you were to enter any of our Early Childhood classrooms on any given morning, you would see the children and their teachers gathering in what we call morning meeting or *mifgash boker*. This daily ritual serves many purposes: to set the tone for respectful learning, establish a climate of trust, motivate students to feel significant, create empathy and encourage collaboration, and support social, emotional, and academic learning.

This week, I had the pleasure of observing in one of our Junior Kindergarten classrooms as the teachers were modeling a new greeting. A greeting is an essential part of the morning meeting process and serves a variety of purposes; at this early point in the year, it is certainly important in ensuring the children know and use each other's names. However, like everything we do in our classrooms, it goes much deeper than that. As the teachers introduced the greeting they paused often to ask their students, "What did you notice?" This is where the sweet spot is! Where we get to encourage, multiply and build capacity for the children's developing understanding of how it looks, feels and sounds to be recognized, appreciated and welcomed as a member of a community, a *kehillah*. And how it looks to view their actions through the perspective of another.

I noticed you smiled.

I noticed you looked in her eyes. You gave eye contact.

I noticed you said thank you and said her name.

I noticed it made her feel happy.

As educators, we recognize that this type of social emotional learning and community building is essential to creating an environment where children feel comfortable and safe. Morning meeting is experiential. It is less telling and more doing and, as such, it has the potential to lead to authentic learning of foundational life and academic concepts that stick because children see why it is important.

"What did you notice?" is a tool that can easily be incorporated into your experiences with your children outside of school and, like in our classrooms, can allow your children to think critically about the world around them and examine the choices they make as they engage with family members, friends and strangers. It also gives you the

opportunity to share what you notice as you support your child in incorporating and learning your family values and expectations.

Wishing you Shabbat Shalom and chag sameach.

Warmly,

Abby Aloni
Head of Early Childhood