

Early Childhood Director Search: Communication

Telling Your Community about the Search Process

Transparency and ongoing communication are best principles of when it comes to filling any position in your congregational community. The Search Committee's efforts to find an early childhood education director and continual updates are no exceptions. The first two sample letters explain the Search Committee and its process. The third letter represents a way to keep your community up to date. (You'll notice similarities between the two.) Both letters could come from the Search Committee chair; the president; the rabbi; and/or the ECE Committee chair.

The Search Committee

The following sample letter was created by URJ staff members

Dear [Name of ECC Program] Families,

We hope you are enjoying the beautiful spring season with friends and family as life at the ECC and the congregation continues to be in full motion!

This coming fall, we are gearing up behind the scenes for another “adventure” on which we will soon embark, as our Director of Early Childhood Education, [name of current director], will be leaving us at the end of this school year. [Name] has been with us since [approximate date], and in that time, [s/he] has taken our Early Childhood Center—and the congregation’s programming for *all* children—to an entirely new level. It will take a dedicated and talented person to fill the role that s/he has created.

Over the past few weeks, we have been working hard to put together a Search Committee to identify, attract and hire a new director of Early Childhood Education. The selection of committee members was a task not taken lightly; we are lucky have so many talented and involved members of our community. The main guidelines we followed were those put forth by the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ), created just for this purpose. They provide a list of suggested roles to fill in order to ensure a dynamic and diverse group is conducting the search. These roles include: educator, social worker/psychologist, pediatrician, attorney, HR professional, current, past and future parents, faculty and religious leader, among others. We have followed these guidelines as closely as possible, and are thrilled to have put together a committee that we feel represents both the ECC and the congregational community as a whole.

[list the names of the committee members, along with their respective roles]

We are confident this committee will embrace the philosophy, values and mission of the ECC as they embark on their search. Our ECC and our programming for families with young children is a strong, vibrant, vital part of our community. We look forward to continuing our focus on and our investment in the youngest members of our community for years to come.

We are excited to begin the search process, and will communicate with you throughout the year to keep you up to date on the committee’s progress. If you have questions at any time, feel free to contact the Search Committee chair, [name and contact information], or either of the ECE Committee co-chairs, [names and phone numbers]. As we continue with the school year, we hope that your spring and summer seasons ahead continue to be filled with excitement and adventure!

Regards,
[signatures]

Early Childhood Director Search: Communication

The following sample letter was shared by leaders at Congregation Beth Israel (San Diego, CA)

Dear Early Childhood Education Family,

We hope you and your children are happily engaged and settled in the school year at Beth Israel's Bill and Sid Rubin Preschool.

We are writing to share important news about our early childhood education director, Tammy Vener: Tammy plans to retire at the end of the current school year, June 2015. Since 1998, Tammy has been the outstanding leader of our early childhood program, lending her creativity and vision to its remarkable growth.

Today, our congregation is known throughout the country for cutting-edge Jewish programming that engages children and their families in Jewish life. For the last two years, Tammy has brought the national spotlight to the excellence of Beth Israel's program as the national president of the Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism. Also, Tammy is a pivotal force in Beth Israel's Youth Engagement Think Tank, which brings together parents and educators in the preschool, religious school and youth department to re-envision the way families connect to our educational programs. Tammy and her family are longtime members of Beth Israel, so although we will celebrate Tammy's retirement next spring, we also look forward to many more years of Tammy and her family's active involvement in our synagogue community.

Please know that we are committed to finding a dedicated and talented leader for our early childhood program. To that end, we are working closely with Tammy, we have consulted with the excellent resources available through the Union for Reform Judaism and we have carefully assembled a thoughtful and experienced Search Committee to recommend a new early childhood education director. The Search Committee will seek critical input and involvement from all who are invested in the program's future.

The nine individuals who have agreed to serve on our search committee represent a balance of skills and experience in education, management and human resources:

- Meryl Maneker, co-chair, Beth Israel's VP/Education, former preschool parent; employment attorney
- April Fink, co-chair, former preschool parent, immediate past chair of Preschool Parent Committee
- Karen Coleman, former preschool grandparent
- Rachel Goldenhar, preschool parent, member of Youth Engagement Think Tank; psychologist
- Robin Layton, member of Youth Engagement Think Tank; CEO of Educational Enrichment Systems, Inc., a non-profit child development agency that operates many early childhood programs throughout San Diego County
- Amy Lieberman, former preschool parent, co-chair of Youth Engagement Think Tank, former chair of Preschool Parent Committee
- Meg Mandel, president-elect of Congregation Beth Israel
- Michael Rabkin, preschool parent; executive director of Hillel of San Diego
- Joellyn Zollman, former preschool parent, co-chair of Youth Engagement Think Tank; professor of Jewish history

We will communicate with you regularly to keep you abreast of the progress. If you have questions, feel free to contact us or Search Committee Co-Chairs Meryl Maneker or April Fink at ecesearch@cbisd.org.

Beth Israel's programming for families with young children is a strong, vibrant, vital part of Beth Israel. We are dedicated to ensuring that the Bill and Sid Rubin Preschool continues to provide children with a warm, loving environment that helps them transition from family to school, and is rich in Jewish culture, tradition and values. We look forward to continuing our focus on and our investment in the youngest members of our community and their families for many years to come!

Sincerely,
[rabbi and president's signatures]

Early Childhood Director Search: Communication

Updating Your Community

The following sample letter was shared by leaders at Temple Beth Shalom (Needham, MA)

Hello Children's Center Families and Staff,

We have been working together as a Search Committee for the past several months now, and we want to take this opportunity to update you on the status of the search for the new Children's Center Director.

Starting in October, we began laying the groundwork in this search. We spoke with Marcie [current director] to better understand what the job entails. We put together a job description and posting; we advertised the job through a variety of online sites, graduate schools, organizations and conferences; and we reflected on the characteristics and skills that we know will be critical for success in this role.

Over the past few months we have received resumes from a variety of candidates and have made initial contact with each of them. In the last couple of weeks, we have met as a committee and reviewed each resume in more detail and selected candidates with whom we would like to speak further. We are now in the process of setting up phone interviews with each of those candidates, and will be speaking with them over the coming weeks. Of course, as additional resumes come in, we will continue to review them and consider whether or not those new candidates will move forward in the process as well.

Once we complete this round of phone interviews, we will select our top candidates to bring in for in-person interviews. We anticipate the timing of this will fall in late February and March. Our goal is to have finalists come back in late March or April to spend time in the Children's Center, to meet with the TBSCC staff, and to meet with Temple Beth Shalom's professional staff, as well. At that point, with the input of the Children's Center staff and the congregational staff, we expect to have enough information to select a new director from among these finalists.

We look forward to keeping you posted as the process unfolds in the coming months. If you have any questions or want to share your input, feel free to get in touch with us through this email address, or contact Meredith Fried directly at [email address].

We hope that 2015 has started on a great note for you and your families!

Best Regards,
The EC Director Search Committee
[names of committee members]