

# ASCENDING THE MOUNTAIN OF INNOVATION

North American Conference on Reinventing Religious Schools:  
A Gathering for Congregational Educators, Rabbis, & Lay Leaders

## Embracing the New Realities of Today's Families with Young Children

Cathy M. Rolland, RJE  
Director, Families with Young Children

# Framing our Time Together



- 10:50-11:00 - Exploring the ECE landscape - Who are today's FwYC? Why are they important?
- 11:00-11:10 – “Embracing the New Jewish Reality” - New Research & Implications
- 11:10-11:15 – Processing/Reflection
- 11:15- 11:35 “8 Principles” that drive strong congregations - BUILDing Jewish ECE and CEELI – Chicago Early Engagement Leadership Initiative
- 11:35-11:40 – Questions, opportunities, taking action!

# Exploring the Early Childhood Landscape



Who are today's Families  
with Young Children?

Why are they important?

# The Faces of Our Families



# Segmenting the Consumer Market



generation z

adults 2-17

the 'upcoming'  
generation

millennials

adults 18-34

fostering  
the future

generation x

adults 35-49

'the  
middle'

baby boomers

adults 50-69

remaining  
valuable

# Millennials: Who They Are and Why They Are Important

## Millennials born 1981-2000

- 86 million strong in U.S.
- 40% bigger than Gen X
- 8% bigger than boomers
- 2 billion people globally
- Within a decade they will comprise almost 1 in 5 workers and will hold significant purchasing power



## Millennials with Young Children

- Special window of opportunity before the first baby turns 2
- Parents are looking for new friends and trusted providers
- Logistics are paramount
- Recommendations of friends are important

# Listening to Understand Today's Parents

- Our first pedagogical mitzvah, the Sh'ma, commands us to listen carefully. We are still learning the enormous social, emotional, and work related pressures that parents of young children experience.
- New Parents – who are competent professionals in their careers – find themselves in uncharted waters when they start preparing to welcome their first child.
- Do we know what their needs are? And, are we responding directly to those needs?
- Are we asking of them or offering to them?



# Embracing the New Jewish Reality!

Problem?  
Challenge?  
Opportunity!

Love  
Faith

What  
Judaism  
can offer

“Interfaith couples value Judaism’s gratitude practice, home/family practice, focus on others, focus on improving the world, spiritual life, and ongoing questioning.”

“Jewish values can help parents do the core job of parenting.”



INTERFAITH  
OPPORTUNITY  
SUMMIT 2016  
*Embracing the  
New Jewish Reality*



UNION *for*  
REFORM  
JUDAISM



# Who are Today's Families Raising Jewish Children? New Research

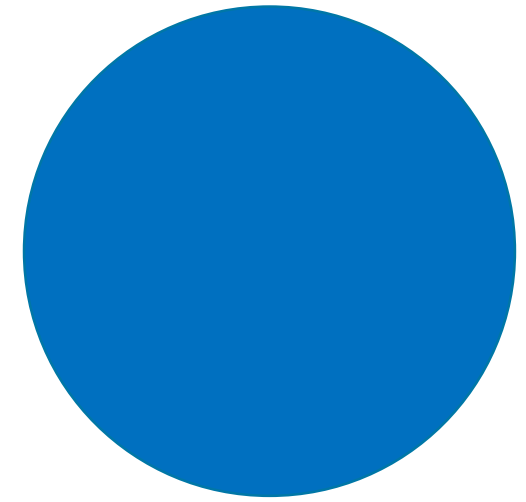
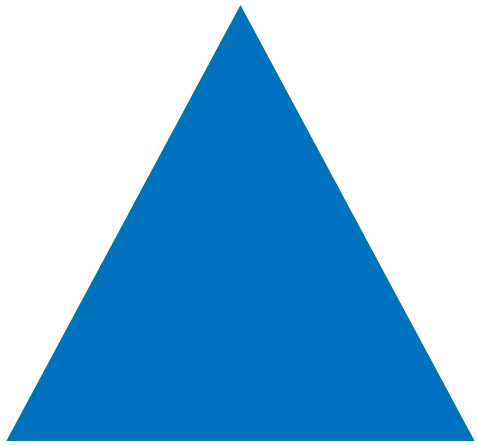
## PJ Library Triennial Survey, 2016

- Sent to 120K families
- 25K responses (20%)
- Additional 6,449 interviewed by phone



## DIVERSE FAMILY BACKGROUNDS

- 85% said it is very important to me that my children identify as all or partially Jewish.
- 72% said it is very important to me that my family is part of a Jewish community.
- 99% said I am proud to be Jewish.
- Self-identification:
  - 28% One parent identifies as Jewish, and one does not
  - 16% One or more household members is a Jew by choice
  - 7% Multiracial household
  - 6% Single-parent household
  - 4% One or more children in the household has a disability
  - 3% One or more household members identifies as LGBTQI
  - 1% Children are being raised by a grandparent or other adult
- 7% reported a primary language other than English.
- 22% reported a secondary language other than English.
- 6% of families speak Russian either as primary or secondary language.



**What POINTS stuck out for you?**

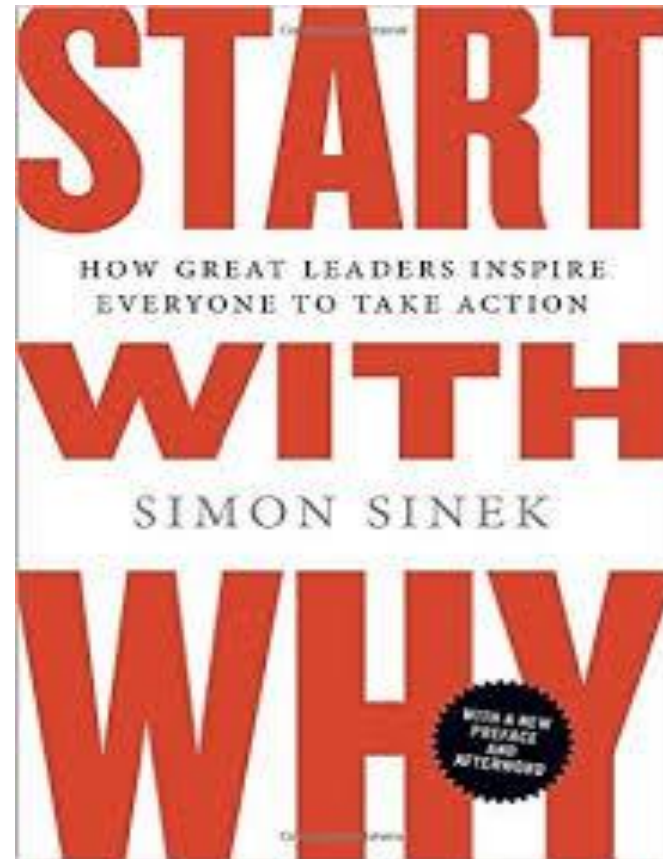
**What SQUARED with what you already believed?**

**What ideas are still CIRCLING around in your head?**

# 8 Principles that Drive Strong Congregations

- **Start with Why** – the sacred purpose
- **Be aware of the sacred**; congregations are not just businesses
- **Work as a team** to address today's challenges
- Redefine success in terms of **Relations, Impact & Meaning**
- **Experiment** and **learn from failure** as well as success
- Bring participants into the **design process**
- Attend to the **human side** of change
- **Best principles**, not best practices

Is everyone clear on your congregation's vision for FwYC?



Is your purpose widely shared among your congregation's stakeholders?



## Work as a TEAM. Involve and partner with:

- clergy
- professional and administrative staff
- teachers
- lay leadership
- parents and grandparents



There has to be room for experimentation, failure and learning from mistakes. And there needs to be an opportunity for people to think together, valuing each other's perspective and contributions, in order for creative new ideas to emerge.

*Let's Stop Confusing Cooperation and Teamwork  
with Collaboration,* Jesse Lyn Stoner

*“It might require some explanation, but the process itself was fun and informative.”*

Ken Davidson, Executive Director



## Work as a Team to Address Today's Challenges

### TEMPLE OHEB SHALOM Our Goals for our FwYC



What does our  
CoP Team want?



What does our  
clergy want?



What do our  
children want?



What does our  
staff want?



What do parents of  
young children want?



What does our  
board want?



What do grandparents  
of young children want?



What does the  
Jewish community  
want?



# It Is No Dream: How to Connect Preschool Families to the Congregational Community



**Communities  
of Practice**

CEELI—Chicago Early Engagement  
Leadership Initiative

Fern Katz and Rabbi Seth Limmer  
Chicago Sinai Congregation





# What do We Mean by Success?



*I love the idea of sharing stories about success. I encourage you to try to step back every once in a while and reflect on what stories you see as successful. What is the type of evidence that you typically point to as being success? Then you can start to work towards planning for these outcomes even more. AND you might even be able to concoct a way to measure them. One of the reasons we use numbers is because it's pretty easy to count without even talking to anyone. But measuring relationship building or meaning or impact requires a more nuanced measure AND may require you to interact with the subject. - Amy Asin, VP, Strengthening Congregations, URJ*



**Communities  
of Practice**

# Measuring Success

## Old Measures

- How many people came to the event?
- Was there enough food? Space?
- Did the event **meet budget**?
- Who complained?
- Were people on task?



## New Measures

- **Relationship** - Did I deepen or make new connections in the community?
- **Impact** - Will I behave or act differently as a result of the experience?
- **Meaning** - Did the experience change or add to my understanding of myself or the world around me?

# 8 Principles that Drive Strong Congregations

- Start with Why – the sacred purpose
- Be aware of the sacred; congregations are not just businesses
- Work as a team to address today's challenges
- Redefine success in terms of Relations, Impact and Meaning
- Experiment and learn from failure as well as success
- Bring participants into the design process
- **Attend to the human side of change**
- Best principles, not best practices

# Attend to the Human Side of Change

Subject: Thank you

Hi Susie

Thank you for everything you have done for my family in this most stressful two weeks. Your kind words and thoughts have been most appreciated and so comforting.

In addition, can you please send me addresses for each of the clergy? I'd like to send them all thank you notes. Not only were they so thoughtful and amazing, but they went out of their way to show their love and concern for my family and especially Will. Today I came home to the most beautiful hand-knit blanket for Will and a sweet card from the clergy. Words cannot express how truly moved I was. This was so unnecessary and beyond thoughtful on so many levels. We are so lucky to be part of such an amazing and loving community. We are so touched by the support you have all given us. We look forward to being a part of this congregation for a very long time.

Thank you again

All my best

# 8 Principles that Drive Strong Congregations

- Start with Why – the sacred purpose
- Be aware of the sacred; congregations are not just businesses
- Work as a team to address today's challenges
- Redefine success in terms of Relations, Impact and Meaning
- Experiment and learn from failure as well as success
- Bring participants into the design process
- Attend to the human side of change
- **Best principles, not best practices**

# BEST PRINCIPLES instead of BEST PRACTICES

## BUILDing Jewish ECE

	Initial		Satisfactory		Exemplary		Score
	<i>Minimal = 1</i>	<i>Emerging = 2</i>	<i>Developing = 3</i>	<i>Competent = 4</i>	<i>Consistent = 5</i>	<i>Engrained = 6</i>	
ECE educators have dedicated time and professional development to explore their personal lives in consonance with values through a Jewish lens	Educators have a workshop before each holiday to make sure they know the story of the holiday and have thought about relevant songs and crafts		Educators are brought together to study texts, music, art and literature about the holidays and rituals of Jewish life so they can experience it in a new and personal way.		There is regular and devoted time for Jewish text study and the teachers are expected to pull out the universal values in these texts, see them through a Jewish lens and be responsible for “being” those values as a role model for their families and children		4
Judaism is seamlessly integrated into the daily life of the classroom and center	The only things you see in the classroom that evokes Jewish life are ritual objects pictures of Israel, holiday posters, Hebrew words		The classroom is integrating the values of Jewish life in the way they are building relationships and communicating with parents. You can hear it and see it in the stories they tell, the values they exhibit and the way they invite families into the school. Their values translate to the way we respect staff, children and families		You can see that Judaism provides invaluable opportunities to enhance awareness of what is essential in everyday life, to forge stronger webs of communal life, to celebrate sacred time and the power to transform the daily lives of families and children		3



**BUILDing**  
Jewish ECE

Connecting generations  
Strengthening community  
Building the future

[printer-friendly version](#)

# Standards of Excellence

## BUILDing Jewish ECE

	<i>Initial</i>		<i>Satisfactory</i>		<i>Exemplary</i>		<i>Score</i>
	<i>Minimal = 1</i>	<i>Emerging =2</i>	<i>Developing =3</i>	<i>Competent = 4</i>	<i>Consistent = 5</i>	<i>Engrained = 6</i>	
ECE educators have dedicated time and professional development to explore their personal lives in consonance with values through a Jewish lens	Educators have a workshop before each holiday to make sure they know the story of the holiday and have thought about relevant songs and crafts		Educators are brought together to study texts, music, art and literature about the holidays and rituals of Jewish life so they can experience it in a new and personal way.		There is regular and devoted time for Jewish text study and the teachers are expected to pull out the universal values in these texts, see them through a Jewish lens and be responsible for “being” those values as a role model for their families and children		4
Judaism is seamlessly integrated into the daily life of the classroom and center	The only things you see in the classroom that evokes Jewish life are ritual objects pictures of Israel, holiday posters, Hebrew words		The classroom is integrating the values of Jewish life in the way they are building relationships and communicating with parents. You can hear it and see it in the stories they tell, the values they exhibit and the way they invite families into the school. Their values translate to the way we respect staff, children and families		You can see that Judaism provides invaluable opportunities to enhance awareness of what is essential in everyday life, to forge stronger webs of communal life, to celebrate sacred time and the power to transform the daily lives of families and children		3





The average 4-year-old  
asks 437 questions,  
every day.

**What questions do you have?**

# What opportunities to you see for your community?





**Check your  
mindset,**

**challenge your  
own  
assumptions,**

**and be bold on  
your journey!**

# ACTION ITEMS

- Share today's presentation and handouts with your ECC director, board and stakeholders
- Download our guidebook <http://urj.org/what-we-do/congregational-life/engaging-families-young-children>
- Explore the [printer-friendly version](#) BUILD SOE's as you begin a journey towards excellence in your community
- Discuss an “8 principles” implementation strategy with your leadership team
- Email me [crolland@urj.org](mailto:crolland@urj.org) to share your successes!

