

Akiba Academy of Dallas  
JECEI Accreditation Program Portfolio  
2010

**Principle of Excellence 2: Indicator 4**

**Indicator 4 - Families are partners in  
the creation of the learning  
community.**

## Directions for Indicator 4 .

a) Please provide a list of the ways that the school has engaged parents in Jewish living and learning over the last two years. (You can include offerings by the host institution jointly sponsored with the ECE school).

- Laugh and Learn . parent drop off and drop in around the High Holy Days and Sukkot on bringing the holidays to your family table (see flyer)
- Shorashim . parents and teachers learned together about Jewish topics and engaged in discussion about how the topics related to themselves personally, professionally, and as parents; met monthly in 2007/2008 - see flyer
- Akiba rabbi offers Jewish parenting sessions
- Annual Pollman Lecture Series funded by a family often with nationally renowned Jewish educators e.g. 2010 topic, instilling Jewish ethics and values in your children . see e-mail communication
- Community Kollel of Dallas is located on the Akiba campus and they offer weekly classes for parents on parsha, Hebrew, holidays, and more

Please provide support for at least 4 pieces of evidence.

**4.1 The school facilitates experiencing and/or exploring parenting.**

- Four part parenting series with Reggio inspired expert 2009/2010
- Akiba rabbi offers Jewish parenting sessions – see 4.1
- Daily reflections from the teachers offer insights into parenting – see sample
- Teachers and director provide support when parents ask advice about different issues or situations relating to their parenting

4.2 The school facilitates parents' engagement in Jewish learning and living.

**4.3 Parents feel part of and responsible for the well being of the school community.**

- Parents are invited to Shabbat and holiday programs for their families. As part of these celebrations, the teachers lead tefilla to share with parents what happens in the classroom – see photos
- PTA (whole school) help plan Hanukkah and Sukkot dinner, send out gift bags including prayers and background on the holiday to all families for Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah
- PTA helps coordinate field trips
- Parent volunteers were invited to help bake hamantaschen for the school - see photos
- Ambassador group reaches out to school families and potential families to provide support to families in anyway needed
- Education Task Force of the Akiba Board of Directors consisting of parents, lay leaders, and administrators discuss the educational well being of the entire Akiba school – see roster with people's roles
- Parents co-chair major fund raising gala dinner for the entire Akiba school and co-chair a variety of development events
- Parents share their views in the survey

Note: The school makes certain that preschool parents are well represented on all school wide committees

**4.4 Parents feel connected to the Jewish community.**

- See survey results **4.5 Parents feel that they may have made long term friends.**

- See survey results

4.6 Families have at least one adult who participates in some form of Jewish learning.

**4.7 Parents help plan Jewish living and learning experiences.**

- Shorashim included parents as part of the planning committee that recruited participants and helped decide the program topic and format - see 4a

**4.8 Parents help facilitate Jewish living and learning experiences.**

- PTA (whole school) help plan Hanukkah and Sukkot dinner, send out gift bags including prayers and background information about the holidays to all families for Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah - see sample gift bag enclosure
- Parents are encouraged and supported to share their Jewish expertise e.g. parent who teaches a Hebrew class

**4a) Please provide a list of the ways that the school has engaged parents in Jewish living and learning over the last two years. (You can include offerings by the host institution jointly sponsored with the ECE school).**

This is an example of a Laugh and Learn Flyer that was used to recruit parents to an adult Jewish learning experience that was offered after parents dropped their children off at school. A series of these classes were offered.

The Community Kollel of Dallas and Akiba Academy Preschool invite you to a morning of fun, laughter and learning.


- Be inspired and discover ways to make the High Holidays more meaningful for you and your families
- Keep up-to-date with all that your children are learning at Akiba
- Meet other preschool parents

Refreshments served

**Monday, September 10**  
8:30-9:30 am  
Preschool Lobby

For more information contact  
Rabbi Jay Weinstein,  
the Kollel's Young Adults Coordinator at  
214-412-9608, or email [jw15@aol.com](mailto:jw15@aol.com)

**rosh hashana**



**laugh & learn**

**Community Kollel of Dallas**

**A K I B A**  
academy of dallas

plant a seed  
watch it grow



Highlights of the program include:

- Hear about the inspiring journey of 3 Akiba teachers to Boulder Journey School in Colorado.
- Learn how your child's curriculum can be enriched by teachers furthering their study.
- Discussion groups focusing on how we have grown as parents and educators over the school year.
- Explore what Judaism has to say about completing a year of study.

RSVP:

Jordana Bernstein, Akiba Academy, Early Childhood Director  
jbernstein@akibaacademy.org or call 214-295-0400  
Rabbi Jay Weinstein, Community Kollel of Dallas, Young Families Coordinator

THE COMMUNITY KOLLEL OF DALLAS  
and  
AKIBA ACADEMY EARLY CHILDHOOD

SHORASHIM SIYUM  
(GRAND FINALE)

REFLECT ON THE YEAR OF GROWTH AND  
LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR

TUESDAY, MAY 27  
7-8:30 PM

*Shorashim, meaning roots, is an opportunity to meet and greet other parents and Early Childhood teachers, engage in meaningful discourse about Jewish parenting and other topics that interest you.*

*Everyone is welcome! You won't want to miss it!*  
**MEET IN THE PRESCHOOL LOBBY**

BABYSITTING AVAILABLE - MUST RSVP BY 5/20



**4a) Please provide a list of the ways that the school has engaged parents in Jewish living and learning over the last two years. (You can include offerings by the host institution jointly sponsored with the ECE school).**

This is an example of a program from Shorashim, a parent teacher Jewish learning series. 4 Shorashim sessions were offered throughout a semester from January - May 2008

SCHEDULE

- 7:00 PM - Welcome & Refreshments
- 7:15 PM - Workshop in classrooms (see room assignments below)
- 8:00 PM - Presentation in Hanna's Room  
Akiba teachers: Terri Rohan, Kochava Malka and Gail Mabel
- 8:20 PM - Wrap-up and Evaluations  
Jordana Bernstein

**Room 113- Babysitting**

ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Please go to the classroom of your YOUNGEST child

**Nevatim - Room 103**  
Facilitator: Ayelet Myers  
Teacher: Carol Fitzerznan

**Teenoki - Room 109**  
Facilitator: Aidy Drizin  
Teacher: Sarah Lipinsky

**K'Tonton - Room 111**  
Facilitator: Sharon Weinstein  
Teacher: Dent Schonbrunn

**Nitzanim - Room 110**  
Facilitator: Naomi Schragar  
Teachers: Gail Mabel and Kochava Malka

**Chaverim - Room 108**  
Facilitator: Rabbi Joe Hirsch  
Teachers: Terri Rohan

SOURCE MATERIAL

1. Text from a Siyum (completion of study):

קדי רצון *May it be Your will, Hashem, my God, that just as You have helped me complete Tractate Bravin, so may You help me to begin other tractates and books, and to complete them; to learn and to teach, to safeguard and to perform, and to fulfill all the words of Your Torah's teachings with love. May the merit of all the Tannaim, Amoraim, and Torah scholars stand by me and my children, that the Torah shall not depart from my mouth and from the mouth of my children and my children's children forever. May there be fulfilled for me the verse: When you walk, it (i.e., the Torah) will guide you; when you lie down, it will watch over you; and when you wake up, it will converse with you.*

2. Blessing of a Skinned Knee (Page 50):

I once read a beautiful teaching attributed simply to a "modern educator." It read: "Try to see your child as a seed that came in a packet without a label. Your job is to provide the right environment and nutrients and to pull the weeds. You can't decide what kind of flower you'll get or in which season it'll bloom." When we are open to the differences in our children, we'll give them the soil they need to grow.



**4a) Please provide a list of the ways that the school has engaged parents in Jewish living and learning over the last two years. (You can include offerings by the host institution jointly sponsored with the ECE school).**


This is an e-mail communication from the Director of Communications to all parents of Akiba (EC 8<sup>th</sup> Grade) about the upcoming Pollman Lecture Series, a series of learning opportunities for adults that relate to parenting

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**Jordana Bernstein**

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**From:** Mireille Brisebois-Allen  
**Sent:** Monday, October 12, 2009 2:24 PM  
**To:** Mireille Brisebois-Allen  
**Subject:** Akiba Academy Presents: Teaching Children to be Truthful - Sunday, October 25 at 7 p.m. at Akiba  
**Importance:** High  
Akiba Faculty – You are Invited!



Why do children and teens sometimes lie, cheat or act in other unethical ways? What is normal for different ages, and what can adults do to help children and teens develop into honest and ethical adults?

**TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE TRUTHFUL**  
A Harold and Leah Pollman Speakers Series Event

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, at 7PM**  
Akiba Academy, Pollman Hall

Guest Speaker: Dr. Rona Novick, PhD

Dr. Rona Novick is associate professor at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, and director of its Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Division of Doctoral Studies. She is a licensed clinical psychologist, with a PhD from Rutgers University.

Open to the Community - Free to Attend  
R.S.V.P.  
214.296.3400 [info@akibaacademy.org](mailto:info@akibaacademy.org)

Refreshments Served.

**Akiba Teachers, your participation is requested:**

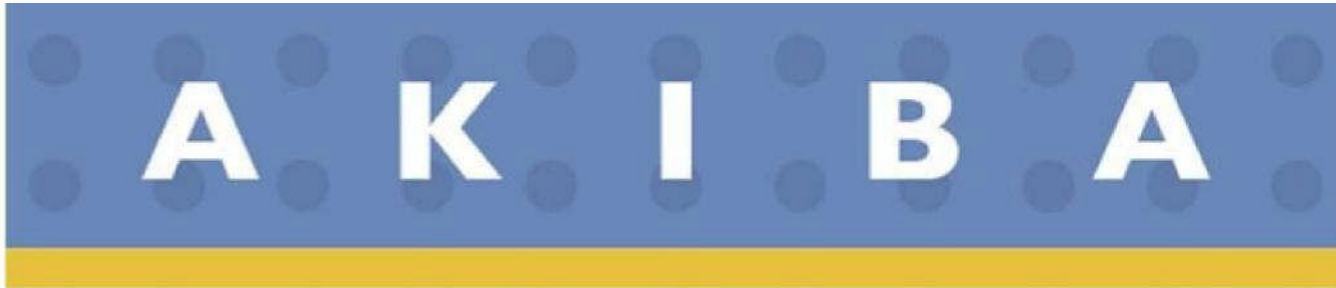
Dr. Novick invites you to complete an anonymous student integrity survey as soon as possible: the available data will be discussed during Dr. Novick's presentation.

Follow this survey link, Akiba Teachers! Thank you.  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=mb3W27NLk6UUPVAAIE8qRw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=mb3W27NLk6UUPVAAIE8qRw_3d_3d)

4/11/2010

## 41 The school facilitates experiencing and/or exploring parenting.

This is a sample daily reflection sent to parents by a teacher. This reflection is typical of the daily/weekly reflections from each classroom. Often our teachers send useful parenting tips in their daily/weekly reflections such as the one below.



February 4, 2009

Dear Parents,

The children are learning about the steps of problem solving as presented by Morah Jenny and the Second Step Curriculum. There are three important steps you must do in order to be an effective problem solver:

1. Stop!
2. Slow down.
3. Listen!

When you have stopped to assess the situation at hand, there are three helpful things to do:

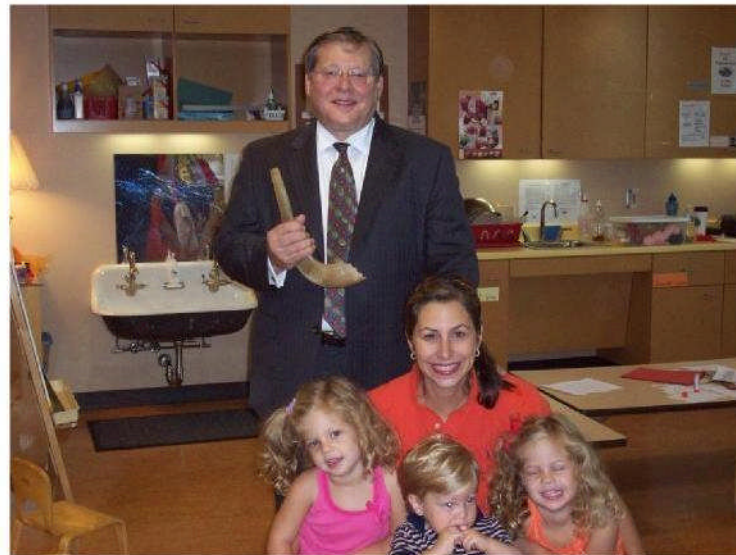
1. Look at the person's face.
2. Look at the whole situation.
3. Identify what's the problem!

What a great lesson to refresh our problem solving skills, as adults too! How often we just want to rush, rescue and resolve without taking the time to look at the whole picture!



### 4.3 Parents feel part of and responsible for the well being of the school community.

Following are 4 photos that depict parents participating in Shabbat and other holiday programming. Clockwise from the top = Parents join their children in the classroom as they celebrate Shabbat together; Parents share Shabbat with their children at a Family Shabbat celebration; A class grandpa blows the shofar and teaches the children about why we blow the shofar during the month of Elul; Parents help our youngest toddlers to be the host class for our Early Childhood Family Shabbat celebration.





### **4.3 Parents feel part of and responsible for the well being of the school community.**

Before Purim 2010 parents volunteered to bake hamantaschen for Purim



### **4.3 Parents feel part of and responsible for the well being of the school community.**

The following is a list of the Education Task Force Members. This task force, consisting of administrators, lay leaders and parents, meets monthly to discuss and offer input about various aspects of the school related to quality education for Early Childhood - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Rabbi Silver - Administrator

Beverly Millican - Administrator

Jordana Bernstein - Preschool Director

Sheryl Wernick - Chair of Education Task Force, Middle and Lower school parent, Executive Board Member

Liz Liener - Past Board President, Lower school parent

Andy Schultz - Board President, Middle and Lower school parent

Robin Stone - Preschool Parent

Melissa Wainman - Lower school parent

Sandra Dickter - Lower school parent

John Lacritz - Middle and Lower school parent

Caren Edelstein - Educator outside of Akiba

Gianina Abouzaglo - Preschool, Lower and Middle school parent

Lisa Siegel - Middle and Lower school parent

#### **4.4 Parents feel connected to the Jewish community.**

#### **4.5 Parents feel that they may have made long term friends.**

A survey was sent out to our Early Childhood Families in the Spring of 2010. Following is a question that relates to whether or not parents feel connected to the Jewish community. As they commented on this question parents also revealed the friendships they were making as a result of the community environment which is being developed.

#### **Survey Question #13: I feel a sense of belonging to a community when I come to the Akiba Early Childhood Program.**

**Following are some quotes from families who responded to the survey:**

“Friendly greetings in the hallways, wonderful camaraderie during Family Shabbat

“There is always something going on that includes parent participation at Akiba.”

“The program has a number of ways for the parents to feel involved. From lectures series to shabbat mornings on Fridays with the children, to the carpool line. I know that I am missing some things out. The items the children bring home around holiday time, the newsletters & emails that come out. All of these things contribute to a bond that is being created without even thinking about it... Thank you”

“From the relationships my child has made to seeing my own friends at drop off and pick up, I feel that way.”

“When we come to school, we feel so comfortable. We know so many parents/kids that go to the school and the teachers are always warm and greet us (even if my son isn't in their class!). My son smiles when we come into the building and it's clear he is comfortable in his environment.”



It is customary on the nights of Rosh Hashana to eat apple dipped in honey as an expression of our desire that Hashem grant us a sweet year

Before eating recite:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם  
בורא פרי העץ

Blessed are you Hashem our G-D, the king  
forever  
Who creates fruits of the tree

After the first bite recite:

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו  
שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה

May it be Your Will, Hashem our G-D and the  
G-D of our forefathers  
that you renew us for a good and sweet year

On the second night of Rosh Hashana  
when the blessing of "Shehechyanu" is  
recited,

it is customary to have a new fruit at your  
meal.

The P.T.A. wishes you and your family a year  
of health and happiness.

#### **4.8 Parents help facilitate Jewish living and learning experiences.**

Throughout the year the PTA creates holiday gift bags to distribute to all Akiba families to help facilitate their Jewish holiday experiences. This is a sample gift bag enclosure sent to all Akiba families by the PTA in a Rosh Hashana gift bag.

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