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**THE FLORENCE MELTON PARENT  
EDUCATION PROGRAM:  
Evaluating an Innovative Approach to Adult Jewish  
Education for Parents of Preschoolers**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Parents of young children are often ill equipped to serve as Jewish role models. Their efforts to invest their home with meaningful Jewish practice are often hindered by their lack of Jewish knowledge. In 2000, the AVI CHAI Foundation challenged the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School (FMAMS) to redesign their core adult Jewish education curriculum to both be more appealing to parents of preschool age children and to advance a case for day school selection. In September 2002, the FMAMS, with the financial support and coordination assistance of the AVI CHAI Foundation, began teaching the Parent Education Program (PEP). PEP is a customized adult Jewish education program, offered, on a pilot basis, to parents of children enrolled in Jewish-sponsored preschools in Boca Raton, Florida, St. Louis, Missouri, and Portland, Oregon. The goal was to expand preschool parents' Jewish knowledge and to influence their choices regarding their family's Jewish observance and their children's Jewish education. This study was designed to enhance the continued development of PEP by providing detailed information about the impact of the program, as well as the educational needs of preschool parents.

### **METHOD**

Information was gathered using focus groups and mail-back surveys. Twenty three PEP enrollees participated in focus groups designed to explore participants' perceptions of the program, the elements that drew them to the program, and their thoughts about the future Jewish education of their children.

Three parallel questionnaires were sent to current PEP participants, former participants (i.e., those who began, but dropped-out), and parents who either chose not to enroll or whose children entered preschool after recruitment for PEP had closed. Each version included questions on religious identity and background, Jewish observance and communal involvement, and decision-making regarding Jewish day school. Participants were also asked about their experiences in, satisfaction with, and outcomes of participation in PEP. Those who left PEP were asked about factors that might have lead to their departure. Candidates for future PEP classes were asked about their interest in adult Jewish education.

Surveys were distributed in February and March 2004. Fifty four current participants, 13 former participants and 423 non-participants returned surveys, a response rate of 84% for participants, 36% for former participants and 50% for non-participants. Extensive follow-up efforts were made to gain feedback from all groups

### **FINDINGS**

1. PEP attracted relatively few parents. While it is not clear how many households were made aware of the program, in its first year the pilot attracted only 94 participants from 17 Jewish preschools.
2. Current participants fit the target population. Many parents had only limited knowledge of Judaism prior to PEP. 16% had no Jewish education in childhood and another 37% had attended only a one day a week supplementary school. In two of

the three pilot cities, PEP attracted a smaller proportion of Jews by birth and a larger proportion of Jews by choice and non-Jews than in the larger local population of preschool parents. Whether they were raised as non-Jews or had only minimal Jewish education as children, PEP participants appear not to have had sufficient Jewish background to enable them to create Jewish homes for their children.

3. Current participants were attracted to the PEP curriculum, the reduced cost of tuition, the reputation of the Melton organization, and the scheduling and location of classes. Least attractive was the two year commitment the program required. PEP dovetailed well with the personal goals of participants, including their desire for structured education to fill perceived gaps in Jewish knowledge.
4. Those currently participating were quite satisfied with their PEP experience, giving high marks to the level of preparedness and responsiveness of PEP teachers, the breadth and quality of the information they gained, the ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful, class discussions with other parents, and the administration and logistics of the program.
5. Participants indicated their experience in PEP positively affected their attitudes toward Jewish study, Jewish observance, and involvement in the Jewish community. Participants reported they were more likely to see themselves as Jewish role models for their families and had increased their commitment to giving their children a Jewish education. Involvement in PEP was also associated with growing levels of Jewish observance, including Shabbat candle lighting and attendance at services.
6. Ten of the 38 households of participants, who responded to the survey, have newly enrolled in or switched a child to a Jewish day school since starting PEP. While not a large number in absolute terms this does mark a sizeable increase in the stream of children moving from these specific preschools to enrollment in Jewish day school. Those participants who have newly enrolled their child in a Jewish day school indicate that PEP was an influence on their decision.
7. By the second year of PEP, 32% of original participants had dropped out. This level of program attrition is within the range experienced in the standard Melton program. PEP dropouts were only slightly less satisfied with the program than continuing participants. The overwhelming reasons given for leaving PEP were logistical difficulties, including time and childcare.
8. Almost half (44%) of parents who did not enroll in PEP indicated that they never heard about the program. Over half (55% -59%) of parents who would be potential participants for future PEP classes reported not being aware of PEP.
9. Most preschool parents (66%) appear to be interested in opportunities for adult Jewish education, with about one third indicating strong interest.

## **SUMMARY AND RECCOMENDATIONS**

PEP has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the Jewish education of parents of young children. However, only an extremely small portion of eligible parents chose to enroll. Development of PEP and other adult Jewish education offerings for parents of preschoolers needs to be done with full awareness of the realities and constraints faced by these parents. The ability of PEP to reach a large number of Jewish families is dependant on creatively addressing these concerns and, where needed, radically restructuring the program.

- The vast majority of parents do not appear to be willing and/or able to make a two year commitment. Consideration should be given to breaking the program into smaller courses or into intensive half or whole day programs. Options for employing distance learning technology should also be explored.
- PEP seems to be very attractive to parents who are either non-Jewish or Jews by choice. The possibility should be explored of designing classes specifically geared toward and marketed to these parents.
- The availability of reliable and affordable childcare is a major stumbling block to participation. Efforts need to be made to either provide on-site child care or to arrange for access to in-home babysitting services. Toward this end, arrangements should be explored with local babysitting agencies.
- Marketing efforts need to be significantly expanded to reach a greater segment of the target population.

## **PART I INTRODUCTION**

The preschool years are a critical developmental period for children, shaping their personalities and their identities, including their religious identity. The period is also critical for parents, and among other changes, greater religious commitment and activity emerges. (Cohen and Eisen, 2000). During the early childhood period preschoolers develop an awareness of and rudimentary concepts about their ethnic and religious identity (Phinney and Rotheram, 1987; Dor-Shav, 1990). The presence of children in the household also leads many parents to greater involvement and investment in Jewish home ritual and celebration (Cohen and Eisen, 2000). Unfortunately, parents of young children are often ill equipped to serve as Jewish role models and their efforts to invest their homes with meaningful Jewish practice are hindered by their own lack of Jewish knowledge. Recent studies of Jewish adults, including parents of preschoolers indicate that few recall a rich Jewish home environment from their own childhood and most have had no formal Jewish education past their early teen years (Cohen and Eisen, 2000; Wall, 1994). The problem is not new among American Jews and it has been commented that the Jewish legacy these parents have to offer their young children is, at best, deficient and culturally deprived (Himmelfarb, 1975).

With their access to parents of young children and their explicit educational mission, Jewish preschools are in a unique position to remedy this situation. It has been observed that “Jewish early childhood education impacts the entire family, not just the child, and serves as a primary gateway into the Jewish community, the synagogue and Jewish living” (Vogelstein and Kaplan, 2002, p ii). The potential audience is large. It is estimated that approximately 100,000 children between birth and 6 years of age are enrolled in Jewish early childhood programs, including 31,000 day school kindergarten students (Schick, 2000). However, a study of families enrolled in Jewish preschools, concluded that very few of these programs provide parents with opportunities to increase their own Jewish knowledge or to connect with other preschool families (Beck, 2002).

In 2000, the AVI CHAI Foundation approached the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School (FMAMS) with a challenge to redesign their core adult Jewish education curriculum to both be more appealing to parents of preschool age children and to advance a case for day school selection. In 2002 FMAMS, with AVI CHAI’s financial support and assistance in coordination, began to teach a customized version of their adult Jewish education program. The program was called the Parent Education Program (PEP) and was offered to parents of children enrolled in Jewish preschools in three communities. The goal of PEP was to expand preschool parents’ Jewish knowledge and, by providing an adult Jewish learning experience, influence choices that these parents make for their family’s Jewish observance and their children’s Jewish education. The AVI CHAI Foundation, asked the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) to conduct an independent evaluation of PEP. The following report details the methods and results of that evaluation study.

### **Background**

FMAMS is a two-year adult education program with a Jewish curriculum that is affiliated with Hebrew University in Jerusalem. An evaluation of the FMAMS standard program yielded promising results with participants reporting increased appreciation for and comfort with Jewish learning as well as greater meaning and purpose in prayer, ritual observance, and

holiday celebrations (Grant, Shuster, Woocher, and Cohen, 2004). Participants in FMAMS also reported more involvement as Jewish role models for their families, strengthened connections to the Jewish community and stronger support for enrolling their children in Jewish day schools. Unfortunately, parents of pre-school children make up only a small portion (12%) of the FMAMS student body.

In 2001, in response to the challenge posed by the AVI CHAI Foundation, Melton proposed the development of a specialized variation of FMAMS that would be targeted to parents of preschool age children. In addition to providing these parents with a foundation of Jewish knowledge and competency, the overarching goal of this program was to motivate participating parents to enroll their children in Jewish day schools. Table 1 summarizes comparisons between the standard and PEP versions of the FMAMS program. Of particular note are the differences in cost and curricular focus. To prevent tuition from becoming an obstacle to participation, the fee for PEP was significantly lower than the usual cost. In addition, both parents within a family were allowed to attend without incurring additional fees. The curriculum was also adjusted to incorporate a greater focus on developing competence in Jewish home observance and increasing understanding of the meaning of specific Jewish practices.

**Table 1: Comparison of Standard and PEP Versions of FMAMS**

	<b>Standard version</b>	<b>PEP version</b>
<b>Cost</b>	\$400 per year for each participant	\$100 per year for each household. Both parents in a family can attend for this fee
<b>Length of program</b>	Two hours per week for 30 weeks each year	SAME
<b>Marketing</b>	Advertising through local Jewish and secular press	Advertising directly through preschools. Preschools identify families who may be amenable to influence regarding day school education
<b>Curriculum</b>	Emphasis on Jewish literacy	Emphasis on Jewish literacy and competency with additional focus on sharing knowledge with children in the home
<b>Student body</b>	Heterogeneous. Median age for participants is 50	Homogeneous. Parents of preschool age children
<b>Teachers</b>	Competent teachers with high level of Jewish knowledge	Existing FMAMS faculty who are advocates of day school education
<b>Auxiliary sessions</b>	None	<i>Mishpacha Shelanu</i> sessions. Held several times per year. Sessions involve whole family and support parents in becoming teachers of their children

Ten FMAMS sites applied to Melton for consideration as PEP pilot sites. Each city had to meet a double faceted threshold criteria: They had to have at least one preschool whose



graduates rarely if ever continued on to a Jewish day school; in addition, they had to have at least one Jewish day school that would commit to accepting as many kindergarten or first graders from participating families who might want to enroll. Melton chose three pilot cities that met these criteria and, as well, provided geographic diversity and variety in terms of size of Jewish population, and level of establishment of the larger Jewish community (“new” vs. “old” communities). Each of the selected cities also had a strong faculty already in place and had successfully conducted the standard FMAMS course. The selected pilot cities were Boca Raton, Florida, St. Louis, Missouri, and Portland, Oregon.

In the spring and fall of 2002 the pilot PEP program was marketed to parents of children ages 3-5 attending Jewish preschools. In Boca Raton information was disseminated through 4 preschools, three of which have in excess of 300 students. In Portland, information was distributed through 7 preschools and in St. Louis to 6 preschools. A two tiered recruitment strategy was employed in at least two of the pilot cities. Initially all households were informed of the upcoming program through flyers and preschool newsletters. This was followed by personal contacts made by preschool directors to a small group of parents who had been identified as high potential candidates.

Parents of children enrolled in preschools associated with Jewish day schools were initially not included in PEP, but this decision was altered with the hope that the presence of these parents might influence the group positively toward day school enrollment. PEP classes were launched in all three pilot communities in fall 2002 with one class formed in Boca Raton, two in Portland and one in St. Louis.

### Evaluation Task

The research was designed to support the continuing development of PEP and to enhance its impact by providing a full and detailed understanding of the educational needs of the target population of preschool parents and the specific impacts of the program on participants and their families. Working in collaboration with the trustees and staff of the AVI CHAI Foundation, CMJS developed the following research questions:

- ***Preschool Parents’ Backgrounds:*** In each community, what are the demographic characteristics and Jewish attitudes, behaviors and involvement of parents who have chosen a Jewish preschool for their children?
- ***Factors Influencing PEP Enrollment:*** In each community, what religious, demographic, or other characteristics distinguish PEP students from non-enrollees?
- ***Success of PEP Marketing:*** How successfully was the program marketed and what percentage of parents indicate that they knew of the program but chose not to enroll? Among those who were aware of the program, what reasons are given for not enrolling?
- ***Potential Opportunities for Adult Jewish Education:*** What are the Jewish educational needs and interests of this population?
- ***Reactions to PEP:*** What do participants feel they have learned and how has this learning affected their connection to Judaism, Jewish texts, and the Jewish community? How satisfied are participants with the program overall as well as more specifically with the quality of teaching, content, and related classroom experience?

- **Effects of the Program:** Are PEP students more inclined to select a Jewish day school or supplementary school education for their children, pursue additional Jewish education, engage in a greater level of Jewish practice, or increase their involvement in the Jewish community?

## **PART II HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED**

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted between late October, 2002 and early January, 2003 with PEP participants in all three pilot cities. In total, 23 PEP students participated in these focus group discussions with 11 attending in Portland, 5 in St. Louis, and 7 in Boca Raton.

The CMJS facilitator opened each focus group discussion by explaining the purpose of the project and the confidentiality of the information that participants would be sharing. The ensuing discussions were structured around a set of open-ended questions followed by more specific probes. Questions were designed to explore PEP participants' impressions of the program, the elements that drew them to the program, and their thoughts about the future Jewish education of their children including Jewish day school (see protocol in Appendix A). Focus group discussions were audio taped to facilitate development of reports.

### **Survey**

CMJS researchers worked in consultation with Melton, PEP pilot city coordinators and the AVI CHAI Foundation to develop a mail-back survey instrument. Three parallel versions of the questionnaire were developed, tailored to current PEP participants, former participants (i.e., those who began, but dropped-out before the second half of Year 2 of the program), and parents who either chose not to enroll or whose children entered preschool after PEP recruitment had closed. All three surveys included questions designed to assess religious identity and background, behaviors and attitudes toward Jewish observance and involvement in the Jewish community, and factors involved in the decision to enroll a child in Jewish day school. Current PEP participants were also asked about their experiences in, satisfaction with, and outcomes of participation. Those who left PEP were asked about factors that might have led to their departure. Candidates for future classes were asked about their level of interest in opportunities for adult Jewish education and the factors that might play into their decision to enroll in a class. The survey was designed to be completed in 10-15 minutes and included a mixture of checklist, rating scale, and open-ended questions. A copy of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix B.

### **Procedures**

Surveys were distributed in two ways. Surveys for current participants and former participants whose children no longer attend a Jewish preschool were mailed directly to their home addresses. Surveys for current and former participants still connected to a Jewish preschool, as well as for all non-participants were distributed through the Jewish preschools originally involved in PEP recruitment. An initial memo was sent to preschool directors (see Appendix C) describing the goals of the research, their role in survey distribution, and the measures

taken to protect the privacy of parents. As an incentive for their support, preschools were offered a gift of \$180 upon the receipt of 75% of the surveys distributed in their respective schools. Each preschool received a survey distribution kit including surveys and instructions for their distribution (see Appendix D). Preschools were instructed to distribute surveys to non-participant families that identified themselves as Jewish. This definition of Jewish family identity was based on both matrilineal and patrilineal heritage.

Of the 17 Jewish preschools involved in the initial PEP recruitment, 16 agreed to distribute surveys and 15 actually did so. One of those not involved in the survey has closed since the start of PEP. Another preschool was unable to follow through with survey distribution due to the medical leave of the director. Each survey was accompanied by a cover letter to parents describing the purpose of the survey, the confidentiality of the information they would be sharing, and the school incentive tied to their participation (See Appendix E) as well as a postage paid envelope for the return of the completed survey.

Extensive follow-up efforts were made to gain optimum participation from all groups. Reminder flyers were sent to each preschool for distribution to parents (see Appendix F). In addition, reminders were sent directly to current and former participants at their home addresses (see Appendix G). Phone calls were also made to PEP participants and, in particular, to former participants to encourage survey completion.

### Response Rates

A total of 948 surveys were distributed. As of the closing date of the survey, 54 current participants, 13 former participants and 423 non-participants had returned surveys. As can be seen in Table 2 this translates into an overall response rate of 84% for participants, 36% for former participants and 50% for non-participants.

**Table 2: Response Rates by Type of Respondent and City**

		Boca Raton	St. Louis	Portland	Total
<b>Participants:</b>	<b># Surveys Sent</b>	16	21	27	64
	<b>#Surveys Returned</b>	15	17	22	54
	<b>% Response</b>	94%	81%	81%	84%
<b>Former Participants:</b>	<b># Surveys Sent</b>	13	8	15	36
	<b>#Surveys Returned</b>	4	4	5	13
	<b>% Response</b>	31%	50%	33%	36%
<b>Non-Participants:</b>	<b># Surveys Sent</b>	308	383	157	848
	<b>#Surveys Returned</b>	108	264	51	423
	<b>% Response</b>	35%	69%	39%	50%
<b>Total:</b>	<b># Surveys Sent</b>	337	412	199	948
	<b>#Surveys Returned</b>	127	285	78	490
	<b>% Response</b>	38%	69%	39%	52%

The gender distribution of participant respondents is identical to that for the population of PEP enrollees. 72% of parents currently enrolled in PEP and of those who completed a survey are female.

## **PART III RESULTS**

### **WHO PARTICIPATED IN PEP?**

PEP attracted relatively few parents. While it is not clear how many households were actually made aware of the program, in the first year the pilot attracted only 94 participants from 17 Jewish preschools (see Table 3). Almost half (44%) of parents who did not enroll in PEP, but who had children enrolled at the time of PEP recruitment indicated that they never heard about the program. Of the parents of Pre-K age children who indicated that they had initially considered taking part in PEP, the most commonly cited reasons for not doing so were that they did not feel they had the time (to make a two year commitment to the program) and/or they did not feel they could find adequate and reliable childcare. Parents also commonly expressed concerns about the time, day, and location of classes.

In all cities, larger numbers of parents initially enrolled than those who ended up attending sessions in the first year of the program. Almost one half of those who initially registered (49%) and one third (32%) of those who participate in the first year dropped out prior to the start of the programs' second year. These drop-out rates are within the range experienced over the last three years in the standard Melton program. The reasons given for departure from the PEP program will be explored later in the report.

**Table 3: Enrollment and Dropout in Three Pilot Cities\***

<b>Pilot City</b>	<b>Number Initially Registered</b>	<b>Number Participating Year 1</b>	<b>Number Starting Year 2</b>
<b>Portland</b>	58	41	27
<b>St. Louis</b>	33	29	21
<b>Boca Raton</b>	34	24	16
<b>Total</b>	125	94	64

\*Information based on PEP pilot site records

Some information is available about parents who initially registered but then did not attend any classes. Fifteen of the 17 individuals in Portland who fit this profile completed a registration form. Four of these potential participants have spouses who continued on in the program. For this subgroup, the logistical reality of having both parents out of the house for a two hour class each week may have become more apparent as they neared the start of the program. Those who never actually attended PEP in Portland may have also experienced less need for the program. As compared with those who actually attended,

those who never attended were more likely to have a variety of Jewish educational experiences in childhood including Jewish preschool (20% vs.13%), Hebrew day school (33% vs. 10%), Supplementary school (60% vs. 43%), Jewish camp (67% vs. 30%), Jewish youth group (47% vs. 23%) and Yeshiva (7% vs. 0%). They are also half as likely to have no Jewish educational exposure in childhood (20% vs. 43%).

The PEP program was intended to meet the Jewish educational needs of parents of pre-school age children who did not have sufficient Jewish educational background to enable them to create vibrant Jewish homes for their children. Despite the limited numbers of participants, the program clearly attracted individuals “in need” of Jewish education. As can be seen in Table 4, in two of the three pilot cities (Boca Raton and Portland), PEP attracted a smaller proportion of Jews by birth and a larger proportion of Jews by choice and non-Jews than in the local population of preschool parents. Portland stands out as having the smallest percentage of Jews by birth and the largest percentage of non-Jewish participants. Overall, almost three quarters of participants responding to the survey (74%) indicated that they are Jews by birth as compared with 82% of non-participants.

**Table 4: Jewish Identity of Participants and Non-Participants by City**

	Boca Raton	St. Louis	Portland	Overall
<b>Participants</b>				
<b>Jew by birth</b>	79% (n=11)	88% (n=15)	59% (n=13)	74% (n=39)
<b>Jew by conversion</b>	14% (n=2)	6% (n=1)	27% (n=6)	17% (n=9)
<b>Non-Jewish</b>	7% (n=1)	6% (n=1)	14% (n=3)	9% (n=5)
<b>Non-Participants</b>				
<b>Jew by birth</b>	85% (n=91)	83% (n=217)	75% (n=38)	82% (n=346)
<b>Jew by conversion</b>	10% (n=11)	9% (n=24)	18% (n=9)	11% (n=44)
<b>Non-Jewish</b>	5%(n=5)	8% (n=21)	8% (n=4)	7% (n=30)

Looking at the Jewish denomination within which they were raised (see Table 5), only a small percentage of participants are from Orthodox backgrounds with over half (57%), raised in the Conservative or Reform movements. This is very similar to the general population of Jewish preschool parents in the three pilot cities.

**Table 5: Family of Origin Denomination of Jewish by Birth Participants and Non-Participants by City**

	Boca Raton	St. Louis	Portland	Overall
<b>Participants</b>				
<b>Orthodox</b>	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	9% (n=2)	4% (n=2)
<b>Conservative</b>	36% (n=5)	35% (n=6)	9% (n=2)	25% (n=13)
<b>Reform</b>	29% (n=4)	47% (n=8)	23% (n=5)	32% (n=17)
<b>Secular</b>	7% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	9% (n=2)	6% (n=3)
<b>Just Jewish</b>	7% (n=1)	6% (n=1)	9% (n=2)	8% (n=4)
<b>Non-Participants</b>				
<b>Orthodox</b>	3% (n=3)	3% (n=7)	4% (n=2)	3% (n=12)
<b>Conservative</b>	38% (n=41)	27% (n=71)	20% (n=10)	29% (n=122)
<b>Reform</b>	35% (n=37)	47% (n=122)	35% (n=18)	41% (n=177)
<b>Secular</b>	0% (n=0)	2% (n=6)	4% (n=2)	2% (n=8)
<b>Just Jewish</b>	8% (n=8)	3% (n=6)	8% (n=4)	5% (n=18)

In terms of Jewish educational background, enrollees fall into two groups. The first group consists of those who had no Jewish learning experiences in their childhood. This would include not only those participants who were not raised as Jews but also the group who were raised as Jews but were not afforded opportunities for Jewish learning. As can be seen in Table 6, almost one third (31%) of Portland participants and 13% of St. Louis participants, who are Jewish by birth, reported that they had no Jewish education in childhood. In both these cities the proportion of participants without any Jewish formal education is greater than for the local population. Clearly this group meets the characteristics of the audience targeted for PEP. Prior to PEP they had little or no formal Jewish education to draw from as they created their own family traditions and rituals.

The second group in both cities is composed of parents who had some formal Jewish education in childhood. Both participants and non-participants typically attended some form of supplementary education usually in the form of a one day a week school. In all three pilot cities at least half of the participants had a bar or bat mitzvah as a child. Between 30% and 80% of participants in each city experienced Shabbat candle lighting during their childhood. Although Jewish learning is not foreign to this second group, many of them may not have been involved in any form of education since their teenage years.

**Table 6: Childhood Jewish Learning Experiences of Participants and Non-Participants\***

Type of Learning Experience	Boca Raton	St. Louis	Portland	Overall
<b>Participants</b>				
One day a week supplementary school	30%	60%	15%	37%
Several times a week supplementary school	20%	20%	39%	26%
Jewish day school	20%	7%	0%	8%
No Jewish education	0%	13%	31%	16%
Someone in the home lit Shabbat Candles	30%	80%	39%	53%
Bar or Bat Mitzvah at age 12 or 13	80%	60%	62%	66%
<b>Non-Participants</b>				
One day a week supplementary school	35%	53%	43%	47%
Several times a week supplementary school	32%	29%	20%	29%
Jewish day school	12%	6%	10%	8%
No Jewish education	12%	8%	13%	9%
Someone in the home lit Shabbat candles	40%	47%	60%	47%
Bar or Bat Mitzvah at age 12 or 13	66%	54%	63%	58%

\* Of those indicating that they were raised Jewish

In Boca Raton, the only pilot site where information about post bar or bat mitzvah Jewish education is available, only one third of enrollees attended Hebrew school beyond the age of 13. Table 7, based on this information, indicates that very few of these parents have engaged in any adult Jewish learning since their college years. These parents may have a foundation of Jewish knowledge, but the last time they considered questions of belief, ritual, and commitment to the Jewish people, they were adolescents. It is likely that the implications of Judaism for parenting were not something they thought about at that time.

**Table 7: Adult Jewish Learning Experiences of Participants from Boca Raton**

Type of Learning Experience	Percentage
College Jewish or Hebrew studies	22%
Hillel	17%
Synagogue courses	28%
Lecture series	28%
Study weekends	0%
Chavurah	0%
Adult bar mitzvah classes	5%
Study with Rabbi	33%
Conversion classes	22%
None	33%

### WHAT ATTRACTED PARTICIPANTS TO PEP?

When asked to rate the attractiveness of different aspects of PEP on a five point scale where a rating of one is “not at all attractive” and a rating of five is “extremely attractive” participants indicated that they were quite attracted to the course curriculum, the reduced cost of tuition, and the reputation of the Melton organization (see Table 8). In making their decision to enroll, participants also found the scheduling and location of classes to be appealing. Least attractive was the two year commitment they were asked to make.

**Table 8: Attractiveness of Aspects of PEP**

In deciding to enroll in PEP how attractive was...	Mean Rating
The subjects covered in the program	4.4
The reduced cost of tuition	4.1
The reputation of the program	4.0
The time and day that classes were offered	3.6
The location of classes	3.5
The two year commitment	2.6

PEP also seemed to dovetail with the personal goals of participants. When asked, in focus groups, what lead them to enroll in PEP, participants described a number of ways in which PEP filled a need or goal they had already identified.

- **PEP Provided Needed Structure for Learning:** While parents may have every intention of expanding their Jewish knowledge through self directed study, the reality is that it is difficult to carve out time on a regular basis to learn on one’s own. One parent likened PEP to signing up for an exercise class as opposed to trying to exercise regularly on your own.

*I don't find myself just picking up a book to learn but if I go to a class or lecture I learn.*

- **Parents Wanted to Build Jewish Family Traditions:** Several parents commented that they want their children to grow up connected to Jewish community and tradition in ways they themselves may not have been in their youth. Several reported that they had already made commitments to more regular participation in their synagogue. For example, one mother reported that she and her spouse had resolved to do Tot Shabbat once a month. These parents want their children to grow up both appreciating and understanding their Jewish heritage.

*I want my children to have a connection with the Jewish community worldwide and to know that they can go to any congregation anywhere and feel welcome.*

*I want my daughter to know what Judaism is so she can make informed choices and can enter and be part of the Jewish community at any time in her life.*

- **Parents Felt Inadequate as Jewish Role Models:** Participants were keenly aware of their position as Jewish role models for their children while at the same time feeling that their own foundation of knowledge and experience was lacking. Both Jewish and non-Jewish spouses wanted to be prepared to answer the religious/spiritual questions that their children may soon or have already started asking.

*It's hard to hand down things to our kids when we don't know what you're talking about. It's our turn...If you don't have answers then it may not continue and it has to.*

- **Participants Were Looking for Jewish Education:** Some PEP participants had already explored opportunities for adult Jewish education including the standard version of the Melton program but had not gone the next step to actually sign up for a course. For some the scheduling of most adult education presented a problem while others described difficulty in finding courses to take in their area. For example, one mother commented that while courses were offered locally on Jewish cooking and culture, she had trouble finding avenues for serious adult study. These parents were already primed to enter into adult Jewish education but seemed to need a stronger pull to move them to the point of making a commitment to a program. With its targeted curriculum, and attractive fee structure PEP successfully moved these parents past their reservations and the distractions of daily life.

*It was divine intervention. Seems like just as I was thinking about getting more Jewish education, the flyer came.*



## HOW SATISFIED WERE PARTICIPANTS WITH THE PROGRAM?

Participants appeared to be quite satisfied with all aspects of their PEP experience (see Table 9). Participants were asked to show their level of satisfaction on a four point scale where a rating of four indicates that they are “very satisfied”. Across pilot cities they gave high marks to the level of preparedness and responsiveness of PEP teachers, the breadth and quality of the information they gained, the ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful, class discussions with other parents and the administration and logistics of the program. Clearly these parents felt that their experience in PEP was well worth the cost of tuition. The feature of PEP that received the lowest satisfaction ratings are the *Mishpaha Shelanu* sessions intended to bring participants and their children together for socializing and family education.

**Table 9: Mean Satisfaction of Participants by City**

To what extent are you satisfied with...	Boca Raton Mean Rating	St. Louis Mean Rating	Portland Mean Rating	Overall Mean Rating
The responsiveness of PEP teachers	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9
The preparedness of PEP teachers	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
The cost of the PEP program	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9
The ease of registration	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.8
Your overall experience in PEP	4.0	3.9	3.6	3.8
The information that you took away from the courses	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.8
The availability of PEP program coordinators	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.8
The ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7
Class discussions with other parents	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.6
The physical comfort of the classroom	3.6	3.8	3.3	3.5
The value of the PEP readings/texts	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.4
The <i>Mishpacha Shelanu</i> sessions	3.3	2.9	3.1	3.1

In focus groups, parents repeatedly described PEP as an incredible opportunity and a valuable gift for which they were very thankful. They found themselves leaving each PEP class with new knowledge and previously unexplored perspectives that they continued to think about throughout the week.

Although many parents were drawn to PEP specifically because of its focus on parenting, some felt that the intersection between Jewish text study and parenting issues was not clearly articulated. One participant commented that the parenting curriculum seemed to be laid over a course on Judaism, with little or no integration and synthesis of the material. In a related concern, some parents said that they would like to see the program expanded to include periodic opportunities for in depth discussion of issues related to Jewish parenting. When these issues emerged in class, the resulting discussion felt, at best, like a sidetracking of the curriculum and at worst, like the session had been “hijacked”. Having sessions dedicated to group discussion, would both short circuit sidetracked class conversations as well as allowing parents needed opportunities to explore concerns and questions that arise in the normal course of family life.

## **IMPACT OF PEP ON PARTICIPANTS**

### **Individual Impact**

Although PEP participants were selected because they are parents of preschoolers, they are also individual adult learners. Participants indicated that their experience in the program has very noticeably affected their relationship to Jewish study, Jewish observance, and the Jewish community.

*I feel a part of the Jewish community like never before! ... I finally belong in my heart to the Jewish community.*

*(Portland participant)*

*I feel more comfortable with my involvement with the Jewish community.*

*(St. Louis participant)*

When asked to rate the extent of this impact on a five point scale where a rating of one indicates “not at all” and a rating of five corresponds with “great extent” of impact, participants in all pilot cities stated that PEP expanded their social network, enhanced their spirituality, increased their comfort studying Jewish texts, and increased their attachment to the Jewish community (see Table 10).

**Table 10: Impact of PEP as Perceived by Participants by City**

To what extent has your experience in PEP....	Boca Raton Mean Rating	St. Louis Mean Rating	Portland Mean Rating	Overall Mean Rating
Increased your comfort studying Jewish texts	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.1
Enhanced your spirituality	4.1	3.9	3.3	3.7
Helped you develop new friends	4.2	3.5	3.4	3.6
Increased your attachment to the Jewish community	3.7	3.8	3.3	3.6
Helped you become more observant	3.5	3.5	2.7	3.2
Increased how comfortable you are participating in synagogue worship services	2.4	2.8	2.9	2.7
Improved your knowledge of Hebrew	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.3

When compared to non-participants, participants had a measurably different view of the importance of various aspects of their Jewish identity. Participants and non-participants were asked to rate how important different values were to them on a five point scale where a rating of one indicates “not at all important” and a rating of five indicates “extremely important”. As can be seen in Table 11, participants felt a substantially greater commitment to continuing their own Jewish education, and to involving themselves in the larger Jewish community.

**Table 11: Importance of Jewish Values to Participants and Non-Participants**

How important to you is....	Participant Mean Rating	Non-Participant Mean Rating
Increasing your own Jewish knowledge	4.5	4.0
Participating in the Jewish community	4.4	3.9
Contributing to Jewish charities	4.3	3.7
Being involved in a synagogue	4.1	3.6

PEP allowed many parents to brush up on their Jewish knowledge. Several commented in focus groups and on the survey that while they received a good Jewish education as children, they have retained little from that experience.

*With my increased knowledge of Judaism I am more comfortable speaking as a Jew—I have the information when I open my mouth.  
(Boca Raton participant)*

*Thanks to the openness and great knowledge of the instructors, I have been able to explore what it means to be Jewish with honesty.  
(Portland participant)*

Other parents sadly admitted that they had only negative memories of their prior Jewish educational experiences. PEP gave these participants a positive experience of Jewish education, quite unlike their own childhood schooling.

*99% of my peers hated Hebrew school. I want them to have one taste of one of these classes so they could see it's not the thing they tried to shove down my throat.*

For other participants, PEP represented their first foray into Jewish education. This was true for both parents who had and had not been raised in Jewish homes. For these parents PEP provided an easy first step into adult Jewish education. The curriculum started at a basic enough level that almost all participants felt they could engage from the beginning.

### **Impact on Families and Parenting**

As hoped by the developers of the program, participants reported that they brought their new knowledge and attitudes home to their children and spouses. Parents were very positive in their assessment of the impact of PEP on their home life and their parenting. Focus group participants and survey respondents commented that they experienced benefits in both expected and unexpected ways. Parents found themselves eagerly looking for opportunities to share what they learned with spouses and children and reported that increasingly they and their children see the world through a Jewish lens.

*The enthusiasm comes home. It spills over at our table and we share why we do this or that.*

*I realized the importance of setting an example for our children through their actions and our words. By lighting Shabbat candles every Friday no matter how late in the evening we are teaching our children the importance of traditions and spirituality through our actions. (Boca Raton participant)*

As a result of their PEP experience, participants reported that they gained a greater appreciation of themselves as Jewish role models for their families and increased their commitment to educating their children as Jews. As seen in Table 12, when asked to rate the extent of this impact on a five point scale where a rating of one indicates “not at all” and a rating of five corresponds with a “great extent” of impact, participants in all pilot cities experienced a considerable change on attitudes toward Jewish parenting.

**Table 12: Impact of PEP on Aspects of parenting**

<b>To what extent has your experience in PEP....</b>	<b>Boca Raton</b>	<b>St. Louis</b>	<b>Portland</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Enhanced your view of yourself as a Jewish role model for your family	3.6	4.1	3.7	3.8
Strengthened your commitment to giving your children a Jewish education	4.2	4.4	3.6	4.0

PEP participants also looked different from non-participants in terms of the value they attribute to various dimensions of Jewish parenting. When asked to rate how important different values were to them on a five point scale where a rating of one indicates “not at all important” and a rating of five indicates “extremely important” participants felt a substantially greater investment in fostering both the Jewish identity and Jewish experiences of their children (see Table 13).

**Table 13: Importance of Jewish Values Related to Parenting to Participants and Non-Participants**

How important to you is....	Participant Mean Rating	Non-Participant Mean Rating
Celebrating the Sabbath	4.1	3.4
Creating a Jewish home	4.6	4.1
Raising your children to be Jewish	4.9	4.6
Socializing with other Jewish or interfaith families	4.4	4.0
Your children receiving some form of Jewish education after preschool	4.6	4.3

Involvement in PEP was also associated with growing levels of Jewish observance. Focus group and survey respondents related that PEP provided them with ongoing practical information, reinforcement, and support as they worked to create a Jewish home.

*Growing up... I didn't understand why I couldn't have a Christmas tree. Now that the reasons have been explained and I see the beauty of Jewish holidays I understand and have something to offer my kids.*

*My Jewishness abounds daily. We all pray before every meal and we talk so much easier with the kids about Jewish topics.  
(St. Louis participant)*

The overwhelming majority of participants (93%) reported that they light candles on Shabbat. This is contrasted with only 64% of non-participants who reported lighting candles. Participants, as contrasted with non-participants were also more likely to report that they attended Jewish worship services at least once a month (57% vs. 37%) and that they fasted on Yom Kippur (89% vs. 73%). In fact, when asked if their level of Jewish activity has changed in the last three years, participants reported substantially greater increases than did non-participants.

Married participants found that the PEP curriculum gave them a context within which to discuss their personal thoughts and beliefs about religion. One mother commented that her husband was very private about his Judaism and that her involvement in PEP allowed them to open up a new and productive dialogue. Other couples described their discussions of class material as a source of bonding.

*Melton has affected our family quite a bit. The class topics have served as starting points for many conversations between my husband and me regarding a variety of topics: our own spirituality and relationship to God, what we hope to teach our children regarding God and prayer, and their own Jewish identities, how we can better create a Jewish home, how we can*

*better parent, and our understandings of Jewish history and modern day events in Israel and the US (to name a few!).*

Parents described the ongoing challenge of balancing Jewish involvement and observance with the demands of work, school and secular community activities. Several focus group participants expressed their belief that the knowledge they gained in PEP would be a resource to them as they continued to negotiate and balance their own and their child's involvement in Jewish and secular activities.

*It's hard to help your children draw boundaries when you don't know what they are for yourself.*

*It has strengthened our commitment to thoughtful Jewish parenting  
(Portland participant)*

### **DID PEP HAVE AN IMPACT ON JEWISH DAY SCHOOL SELECTION?**

One of PEP's primary goals was to influence preschool parents to select a Jewish day school education for their children. Since starting the program, ten of the 38 households responding to the survey, that did not previously have a child in Jewish day school have enrolled in or switched a child to a Jewish day school. This number does not include four families who enrolled a child in a Jewish day school since entering the program but already had older children attending Jewish day school.

Participants who did not decide to send a child to Jewish day school indicated that their involvement in PEP only minimally increased their inclination toward this educational option while those parents who have newly chosen to send a child to Jewish day school credited PEP with influencing this decision (see Table 14). Overall there is no substantial difference between those who did and did not participate in PEP in terms of perceived likelihood of sending children to Jewish day school. For both groups the average rating indicated that they are, at best, only somewhat likely to make the decision in favor of a Jewish day school education.

**Table 14: Mean Impact of PEP on Likelihood of Selecting Jewish Day School Education**

<b>To what extent has your experience in PEP....</b>	<b>Parents Not Choosing Day School</b>	<b>Parents Newly Choosing Day School</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Increased the likelihood that you will select a Jewish day school education for your children	1.6	4.1	2.5

Many factors impact on the decision to enroll a child in a day school. Participants were asked to rate the importance of a variety of potential influences on a five point scale where a rating of one indicates "not at all important" and a rating of five indicates "extremely important". As can be seen in Table 15, the most important factors mentioned by PEP participants were the quality of secular education and the general reputation of the school followed closely by the sense of community within the school. The mean rating for all of

these items indicated that they are very important to parents. Parents in the focus groups echoed this sentiment and several expressed concerns about the quality of the secular education provided by Jewish day schools. They worried that time spent on Judaics would significantly detract from the amount of material covered in secular classes.

**Table 15: Factors in Decision to Enroll in Jewish Day School for Participants**

How important is....	Mean Rating
Quality of the secular curriculum	4.4
General reputation	4.4
Sense of community	4.2
Quality of the Judaic curriculum	3.8
Cost	3.6
Location of the school	3.3
Diversity of the student body	3.3
Knowing other families who attend	3.1
Extra-curricular activities	3.1
Transportation to the school	2.9
Access to special needs services	2.5
Availability of an after school program	2.5

Although access to special needs services was only somewhat important overall, parents in the focus groups who predicted that their children would require special education services or whose older children have needed these educational supports, did not see Jewish day schooling as a viable option. One parent told us that she did not chose a Jewish day school because the public school had successfully addressed the special needs of her older child and she did not want to be in a different school system if her younger child required the same learning supports.

Although the absolute number of PEP households that chose to enroll a child in a Jewish day school was small, it marked a sizeable increase in the stream of children moving from these specific preschools to enrollment in Jewish day school. Participants credited the program with shifts in their thinking. Each of the PEP classes included parents who already had children enrolled in day schools. Parents without children in day schools thus had the unique opportunity to become acquainted with their day school counterparts and to explore areas of commonality. The result of this contact may have been to dispel or modify any preconceptions about what kinds of families send children to day schools and to effectively normalize day school as an educational option.

### **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THOSE WHO LEAVE THE PROGRAM?**

Although only a small group of program dropouts responded to the survey, the available responses made clear that their reasons for leaving PEP were not primarily related to the course instructors, costs, or topics. Program dropouts expressed levels of satisfaction with the program that were only slightly lower than those of continuing participants (see Table 16). They showed only slightly less satisfaction with their overall PEP experience and with the information gained through participation.

**Table 16: Mean Satisfaction of Participants and Drop-outs**

To what extent are you satisfied with...	Participant Mean Rating	Drop-out Mean Rating
The responsiveness of PEP teachers	3.9	3.8
The preparedness of PEP teachers	3.9	3.8
The cost of the PEP program	3.9	3.8
The ease of registration	3.8	3.9
Your overall experience in PEP	3.8	3.5
The information that you took away from the courses	3.8	3.5
The ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful	3.7	3.5
The availability of PEP program coordinators	3.7	3.7
Class discussions with other parents	3.7	3.7
The physical comfort of the classroom	3.5	3.2
The value of the PEP readings/texts	3.4	3.1
The <i>Mishpacha Shelanu</i> sessions	3.2	3.3

Former participants were asked to indicate on a five point scale how much they agreed or disagreed with different reasons for leaving the program. A rating of one indicates strong disagreement and a rating of five indicates strong agreement. Those who had left the program indicated that the content of the course was both interesting and appropriately challenging for them (see Table 17). Former PEP participants most frequently indicated that their primary reasons for departure were logistical difficulties related to available time and childcare issues. Many commented that changes in family composition (the birth of another child), or changes in the employment of a spouse left them with a combination of less available time and fewer childcare options.

**Table 17: Reasons for Leaving PEP**

	Mean Rating
The two year commitment was too long	3.8
The time and day of classes did not work for me	3.4
Finding childcare was difficult	3.4
The content was too advanced	2.0
The content was too easy	1.9
The content was not interesting to me	1.9

## DESCRIBING THE MARKET FOR FUTURE PEP CLASSES

The parents of children attending Jewish preschools are a very well educated and busy population. Although 95% of non-participant respondents are female, 44% work at least half time. In terms of secular education the vast majority (93%) of these parents have attained at least a bachelor's level degree. Almost half (47%) have earned a Masters or Doctorate.



An encouraging number of these parents (66%) indicated interest in opportunities for adult Jewish education with about one third (30%) indicating strong interest. When asked how important different factors would be in their decision to participate in a Jewish adult education program, those rated the highest were the curriculum of the program, the time and location of classes, finding adequate childcare and the reputation of the program (see Table 18). Between 55% and 59% of these parents indicated that they have never heard of the PEP program.

**Table 18: Importance of Factors in Decision to Participate in Adult Education**

How important is...	Mean rating
The subjects covered in the program	4.1
The time and day that classes were offered	4.1
Finding childcare so I could attend	3.8
The reputation of the program	3.7
The location of classes	3.7
The length of the program	3.5
The cost of tuition	3.3
The opinion/support of my spouse/partner	3.1

#### **PART IV SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The mezuzah is placed on the doorframe of the house to remind all who enter that this is a Jewish home. It welcomes the family and visitor alike to a home based on Jewish text and ritual. Like the mezuzah on the door, parents can also mark the doorways to worship, study, and observance in their homes. But like a mezuzah case without a scroll, many parents of young children have no message of welcome to Jewish living to give their children. PEP has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the Jewish education of parents of young children by filling these mezuzah cases with knowledge.

- Those currently participating were quite satisfied with their PEP experience, giving high marks to the level of preparedness and responsiveness of PEP teachers, the breadth and quality of the information they gained, the ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful, class discussions with other parents, and the administration and logistics of the program.
- Participants indicated their experience in PEP positively affected their attitudes toward Jewish study, Jewish observance, and involvement in the Jewish community. Participants reported they were more likely to see themselves as Jewish role models for their families and increased their commitment to giving their children a Jewish education. Involvement in PEP was also associated with growing levels of Jewish observance, including Shabbat candle lighting and attendance at services.
- Ten of the 38 households of current participants, who completed a survey, have newly enrolled in or switched a child to a Jewish day school since starting

PEP. While not a large number in absolute terms this marked a sizeable increase in the stream of children moving from these specific preschools to enrollment in Jewish day school.

However significant the potential of PEP to impact on young Jewish families, the reality is that only a very small portion of eligible parents chose to enroll and many who began the program, dropped-out. Development of PEP and other adult Jewish education offerings for parents of preschoolers needs to be done with full awareness of the realities and constraints faced by these parents. The ability of PEP to reach a large number of Jewish families is dependant on creatively addressing these concerns and, where needed, radically restructuring the program.

- The vast majority of parents do not appear to be willing and/or able to make a two year commitment. Consideration should be given to breaking the program into smaller courses or into intensive half or whole day programs. Options for employing distance learning technology should also be explored.
- PEP seems to be very attractive to parents who are either non-Jewish or Jews by choice. The possibility should be explored of designing classes specifically geared toward and marketed to these parents.
- The availability of reliable and affordable childcare is a major stumbling block to participation. Efforts need to be made to either provide on-site child care or to arrange for access to in-home babysitting services. Toward this end, arrangements should be explored with local babysitting agencies.
- Marketing efforts need to be significantly expanded to reach a greater segment of the target population. Almost half of parents who did not enroll in PEP indicated that they never heard about the program.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL**

1. I'd like to learn a little bit about you. Let's start by going around the room. I'd like to know your name and your child's name and age.
2. How did you hear about the Melton Parent Education Program? What attracted you to it?
3. How do you like the program so far?
4. What do you think would get more people to take it?
5. How do you feel about being Jewish, or if you aren't Jewish, about being married to someone who is Jewish?
6. If you could name one thing about Judaism that's really meaningful to you and to your family, what would that one thing be?
7. How do you plan to transmit your feelings about Judaism to your children?
8. What kinds of plans do you have for your child's secular education? Jewish education?

## APPENDIX B

# Jewish Preschool Family Survey

**DIRECTIONS:** Most of the questions in this survey ask you to check one of the numbers that are offered in an answer scale after the question. Choose the number that best matches the description of how you feel about this question. Except where noted, please mark only **ONE** answer for each question. Please mark your response with a check (✓) directly **ON** the number of your answer.

**EXAMPLE:**

<i>HOW IMPORTANT to you is...</i>	<i>Not at all Important</i>	<i>A little Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Extremely Important</i>
<i>Volunteering at the preschool?</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>

Other questions ask you to fill in information about yourself. Write your answer to these questions in the spaces provided. Remember, all of your responses are anonymous and confidential. **DO NOT** sign your name anywhere on the survey. Once you have completed the survey please mail it back to the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University in the postage paid return envelope.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

**I YOUR CHILDREN (completed by all)**

1. In which preschool class(s) do you have a child? Please check all that apply

(1) Infant/ toddler program	(3) 3-4 year old class
(2) 2-3 year old class	(4) Pre-K class
(5) Do not have a child in preschool	

2. <b>HOW IMPORTANT for your child's preschool experience is....</b>	Not At All Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. The sense of community in the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. The pre-academic skills being taught	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. The social-emotional skills learned	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. The warmth/support of teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. The exposure to Jewish knowledge and rituals	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. The Jewish feel or ambiance of the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. <b>In deciding whether or not to send your child(ren) to a full time Jewish day school after preschool, HOW IMPORTANT is.....</b>	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. Location of the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. Transportation to the school	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. Quality of the Secular Curriculum	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. Quality of the Judaic Curriculum	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. Access to special needs services	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. Availability of an after-school program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g. Extra-curricular activities	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
h. Sense of community	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
i. General Reputation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
j. Cost	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
k. Diversity of the student body	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
l. Knowing other families who attend	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

4. How important is it for your child(ren) to receive some form of Jewish education after preschool?

(1) Not At All Important	(2) A Little Important	(3) Somewhat Important	(4) Very Important	(5) Extremely Important
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5. Thinking about your preschool age child(ren), **how likely** are you to send them to a part-time Hebrew or Sunday school for supplementary Jewish education once they leave preschool?

(1) Not At All	(2) A Little	(3) Somewhat	(4) Very Much	(5) Extremely
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6. Thinking about your preschool age child(ren), **how likely** are you to send them to a full-time Jewish day school?

(1) Not At All	(2) A Little	(3) Somewhat	(4) Very Much	(5) Extremely
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**IIA YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE PEP PROGRAM (completed by PEP participants)**

1. <b>In deciding to enroll in the Melton Parent Education Program, HOW ATTRACTIVE was....</b>	Not at all Attractive	A Little Attractive	Somewhat Attractive	Very Attractive	Extremely Attractive
a. The reduced cost of tuition	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. The two year commitment	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. The time and day that classes were offered	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. The location of classes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. The reputation of the program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. The subjects covered in the program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

2. <b>In deciding to enroll in PEP HOW IMPORTANT was...</b>	Not at all Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. Finding childcare so I could attend	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. The opinion/support of my spouse/partner	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. Since you started the PEP program, what percentage of the sessions were you able to attend?

(1) Almost none	(2) Less than half	(3) About half	(4) More than half	(5) Almost all
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4. What are the strengths and suggested changes for this year's PEP courses?

Course	Areas of strength	Suggested changes
Ethics		
Dramas		

5. Does your spouse/partner also attend the Melton Parent Education Program?

(1) YES (2) NO

6.	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT are you satisfied with...</b>	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied
a.	Your overall experience in PEP	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
b.	The responsiveness of PEP teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
c.	The information that you took away from the courses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
d.	The value of the PEP readings/texts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
e.	The ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
f.	The <i>Mishpacha Shelanu</i> sessions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
g.	The preparedness of PEP teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
h.	The availability of PEP program coordinators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
i.	The physical comfort of the classroom	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
j.	The ease of registration	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
k.	The cost of the PEP program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
l.	Class discussions with other parents	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

7.	<b>TO WHAT EXTENT has your experience in PEP ...?</b>	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very Much	Great extent
a.	Increased your comfort studying Jewish texts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b.	Improved your knowledge of Hebrew	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c.	Enhanced your view of yourself as a Jewish role model for your family	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d.	Increased your attachment to the Jewish community	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e.	Increased the likelihood that you will select a Jewish day school education for your child(ren)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f.	Strengthened your commitment to giving your child(ren) a Jewish education	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g.	Helped you develop new friends	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
h.	Enhanced your spirituality	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
i.	Helped you become more observant	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
j.	Increased how comfortable you are participating in synagogue worship services	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)



8. Since you enrolled in PEP have you enrolled or transferred a child to a Jewish day school?  
 (1) YES (2) NO

9. In your own words, how has the Melton Parent Education Program affected you and your family?

**IIB YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE PEP PROGRAM (completed by PEP drop outs)**

1. TO WHAT EXTENT were you satisfied with...	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. Your overall experience in PEP	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
b. The responsiveness of PEP teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
c. The information that you took away from the courses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
d. The value of the PEP readings/texts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
e. The ability of PEP teachers to make the texts accessible and meaningful	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
f. The <i>Mishpacha Shelanu</i> sessions	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
g. The preparedness of PEP teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
h. The availability of PEP program coordinators	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
i. The physical comfort of the classroom	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
j. The ease of registration	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
k. The cost of the PEP program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
l. Class discussions with other parents	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

2. How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The two year commitment was too long	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. The time and day that classes were offered did not work for me	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. The location of classes did not work for me	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. Finding childcare was difficult	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. The content was too easy	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. The content was too advanced	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g. The content was not interesting to me	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. In your own words what was the **primary or main reason** that you stopped attending PEP courses?

**IIC EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS (completed by those who had never enrolled in PEP)**

1. If a Jewish educational program designed for parents of preschool children were to be offered in your area, **how interested** would you be in enrolling?

(1) Not at all Interested	(2) A little Interested	(3) Somewhat Interested	(4) Very Interested	(5) Extremely Interested
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2.	<b>HOW IMPORTANT would each of the following be in your decision to participate in a Jewish adult education program?</b>	Not at all Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a.	The cost of tuition	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b.	The length of the program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c.	The time and day that classes were offered	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d.	The location of classes	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e.	Finding childcare so I could attend	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f.	The reputation of the program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g.	The subjects covered in the program	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
h.	The opinion/support of my spouse/partner	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

3. Have you ever heard of the Melton Parent Education Program for parents of preschool children?  
 (1) NO (2) YES

**If you currently have a child in the Pre-K class please answer questions 4 and 5**

4. How much consideration did you give to enrolling in the Melton Parent Education Program for preschool parents when it was offered two years ago?

(1) None at all	(2) Very little	(3) Some	(4) Quite a lot
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5. What was the **primary or main reason** that you decided not to enroll in the Melton Parent Education for preschool parents?

**III YOUR FAMILY'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY (completed by all)**

	YES	NO
1. <b>This past year....</b>		
a. Were you or anyone in your household a member of a synagogue or temple?	(1)	(2)
b. Did you or anyone in your household usually light Sabbath candles on Friday night?	(1)	(2)
c. Did you have a child in a part-time Supplementary Jewish education program?	(1)	(2)
d. Did you fast all or part of the day on Yom Kippur?	(1)	(2)
e. Did you have a child in a full time Jewish day school?	(1)	(2)
f. Were you or anyone in your household a dues paying member of a Jewish Community Center (JCC) or YMHA?	(1)	(2)
g. Did you attend any program or activity at a Jewish Community Center (JCC) or YMHA?	(1)	(2)
h. Did you use the Internet to find Jewish related information?	(1)	(2)
i. Did you keep Kosher inside your home?	(1)	(2)

2. During the past year, **how often** did you go to Jewish worship services?

(1) Only for weddings and Bar Mitzvahs	(4) About once a month
(2) Only for High Holidays	(5) 2-3 times a month
(3) A few times during the year	(6) About once a week or more

3. Compared to three years ago, has your family's level of Jewish activity generally....

(1) Decreased Very Much	(2) Decreased A Little	(3) Stayed the same	(4) Increased A Little	(5) Increased Very Much
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4. If you are not already a member of a synagogue, how likely are you to join one in the next year?

(1) Not at all	(2) A little	(3) Somewhat	(4) Very much	(5) Extremely
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5. <b>How IMPORTANT to you is....</b>	Not at all Important	A Little Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. Celebrating the Sabbath	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. Creating a Jewish home	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. Celebrating Jewish holidays	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. Raising your child(ren) to be Jewish	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. Countering anti-Semitism	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. Increasing your Jewish knowledge	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g. Participating in the Jewish community	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
h. Being a Jewish role model to your family	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

i. Contributing to Jewish charities	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
j. Being involved in a synagogue	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
k. Socializing with other Jewish or Interfaith families	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

6. Have you ever been to Israel?

(1) NO	(2) YES, once	(3) YES, twice or more
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**IV YOUR RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND (completed by all)**

1. Do **you** identify yourself as:

(1) A Jew by birth	(2) A Jew by conversion	(3) Non- Jewish
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2. Does your **spouse/partner** identify him or herself as:

(1) A Jew by birth	(2) A Jew by conversion	(3) Non- Jewish
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3. In what Jewish denomination was your **spouse/partner** raised?

(1) Not raised Jewish (2) Orthodox (3) Conservative (4) Reform	(5) Reconstructionist (6) Secular (7) Just Jewish (8) Other _____
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4. In what Jewish denomination were **you** raised?

(1) Not raised Jewish (2) Orthodox (3) Conservative (4) Reform	(5) Reconstructionist (6) Secular (7) Just Jewish (8) Other _____
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5. What is your approach to the religious upbringing of your child(ren)?

- (1) My child(ren) will be raised only as a Jew
- (2) My child(ren) will be raised with both Jewish and some other religious traditions
- (3) My child(ren) will be raised without any formal religious upbringing
- (4) I have not yet decided about the religious upbringing of my child(ren)

6. Are different children in your home being raised in different religious traditions?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

**IF YOU WERE RAISED JEWISH please answer the following questions 7-9:**

7. When you were about 10 or 11 years old, did anyone in your family usually or always light Sabbath candles on Friday night?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

8. Which of the following types of Jewish education did you receive in grades 1 to 7?

- (1) A one-day-a-week Jewish program, such as a Sunday school?
- (2) A several-times-a-week program such as an afternoon school, Talmud Torah or Heder?
- (3) A full-time Jewish day school or Yeshiva?
- (4) Private tutoring?
- (5) No Jewish education?
- (6) Other? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Did you have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at age 12 or 13?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

**If you are Jewish BY BIRTH OR CONVERSION, please answer questions 10-12:**

10. How important is being Jewish in your life?

(1) Not At All Important	(2) A Little Important	(3) Somewhat Important	(4) Very Important	(5) Extremely Important
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11. Have you had an adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

- (1) YES      (2) NO

12. Thinking about Jewish religious denominations, do you **currently** consider yourself to be:

(1) Orthodox (2) Conservative (3) Reform	(4) Reconstructionist (5) Secular (6) Just Jewish (7) Other _____
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**V A BIT ABOUT YOU**

<p>1. Are you:                  (1) Male      (2) Female</p> <p>2. In what year were you born?                  19 _____</p> <p>3. Are you currently:                  (1) Married                  (2) Remarried                  (3) Single/ Never Married                  (4) Divorced                  (5) Separated                  (6) Widowed                  (7) Living with someone in a committed relationship</p> <p>4. Are you currently...                  (1) Employed full-time                  (2) Employed part-time                  (3) A full-time homemaker                  (4) Other _____</p>	<p>5. What is the highest level of education you have attained?                  (1) Some high school                  (2) High school graduate                  (3) Some college                  (4) BA., or BS. College degree                  (5) Some graduate courses                  (6) Master's degree                  (7) Doctorate, MD, JD or equivalent                  (8) Other</p> <p>6. What is the highest level of education that your spouse/partner has attained?                  (1) Some high school                  (2) High school graduate                  (3) Some college                  (4) BA. or BS. College degree                  (5) Some graduate courses                  (6) Master's degree                  (7) Doctorate, MD, JD or equivalent                  (8) Other</p>
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APPENDIX C  
EXPLANATORY MEMO TO PRESCHOOL DIRECTORS



# Brandeis University

Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center  
for Modern Jewish Studies

Mailstop 014  
415 South Street  
Waltham, Massachusetts  
02454-9110

Tel: 781-736-2079  
Fax: 781-736-3929

Leonard Saxe, Ph. D.  
Director

email: fchertok@brandeis.edu

## MEMO

TO: ST. LOUIS EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DIRECTORS' COUNCIL

FROM: FERN CHERTOK, PROJECT  
DIRECTOR

DATE: JANUARY 8, 2004

### Evaluation of the Melton Education Program for Pre-school Parents

As you already know, in September 2002 the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School (FMAMS) began teaching a customized version of their program, called the Parent Education Program (PEP), to a group of self-selected parents who have children enrolled in pre-schools with Jewish sponsorship in three cities including St. Louis. Many of you have preschool parents participating in this pilot project.

The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), with the support of the Avi Chai Foundation, is conducting a study to evaluate the impact of this educational program on participating families as well as to learn about the needs, interests and backgrounds of parents who have chosen to enroll their children in Jewish pre-schools. The information gathered will be valuable to Jewish preschools, Jewish early childhood educators, and Jewish community planners. We need your help to successfully reach the parents from your preschool.

**How we plan to gather the information** –We have developed a brief paper and pencil survey that should take parents only 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey asks questions about religious background, involvement in the Jewish community, Jewish home ritual, attitudes toward the Jewish education of children, and about the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School courses held in your community. Our intent is to distribute this survey in late January and again in late May. The second survey will be much shorter.

We plan to distribute the survey through the preschools. Each parent would receive a brightly colored envelope in their child's backpack containing a letter of support from your preschool, an informed consent form, the survey, and a postage paid envelope for returning the completed survey directly to CMJS.

**How will the identity of parents be protected?**—In order to track changes in attitudes and behavior, we need to be able to connect the first and second survey for each parent. **However, this does not mean that we need to know their names.** Each survey will have a unique ID number. We will also provide a tracking sheet for you to assign ID numbers to individual parents. When it comes time for the second survey, the same ID number will be assigned to each parent. In this way we, at CMJS can connect pairs of surveys without knowing the name of any individual parent. The only exceptions to this are those parents who are enrolled in the Melton Parent Education Program. Their ID numbers will be assigned by CMJS. As part of their participation in the PEP project, these parents have already agreed to provide information to CMJS.

**The nuts and bolts**—In coordination with each preschool, a CMJS associate will come to each preschool to do the following:

- Organize and create a record of the assignment of ID numbers to individual parents. This record will remain at the preschool.
- Distribute survey packets to the appropriate backpacks

**The incentive for parents to complete and return the survey**—To encourage parents to complete and return the surveys we are offering a school-wide incentive to each school. Once CMJS receives 75% of the surveys from a preschool, we will send a gift of \$180 to that preschool. **It's easier than a bake sale!**

If you have any questions please contact the project director, Fern Chertok either by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu), or by phone at 781-736-2079

**APPENDIX D**  
**SURVEY DISTRIBUTION MATERIALS FOR PRESCHOOLS**



**Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies**

Brandeis University

Mailstop 014

Waltham, MA 02454-9110

phone (781) 736-2060 ♦ fax (781) 736-3929

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Dear Preschool Director,

Thank you for your cooperation in distributing the *Jewish Preschool Family Survey* to the families in your preschool. As you know, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University, working with the Florence Melton Adult Mini School, is interested in learning about both the experiences of those preschool parents who have participated in the Melton PEP program, as well as developing a deeper understanding of parental attitudes toward Jewish educational opportunities for themselves and for their children. The findings of this study will be helpful to Jewish preschools in the St. Louis area as well as to other local and national Jewish organizations as they develop and market educational initiatives for Jewish preschool families.

Remember, once we have received 75% of the surveys distributed to your preschool families we will send your preschool a check for \$180 as our thank you. You may want to attach your own letter with the survey encouraging parents to help your preschool earn its \$180 gift.

In this mailing you will find the following:

- Instructions for the distribution of surveys.
- Survey Tracking Form. This is the form on which you will record the name of each family assigned to a survey ID number.
- Preassembled survey packets for distribution to families in your preschool. Each packet includes a letter of introduction describing the survey and the confidentiality of responses, a survey with an ID label on the lower left hand corner of the back page, and a pre-addressed, postage paid envelope. Packets for PEP participants (if there are any in your school) have a GREEN letter and already have the participants name on the front. Packets for those parents who have not participated in PEP have a BLUE letter.
- A Reporting Form to be returned to CMJS in the attached pre-addressed postage paid envelope. The information on this form will allow us to determine when the response rate from you preschool reaches the threshold for your \$180 gift.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the survey or its distribution, please contact Fern Chertok, the Project Director by e-mail at [Fchertok@Brandeis.edu](mailto:Fchertok@Brandeis.edu), or by phone at 781-736-2079. Thank you again for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D.  
 Director, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies



## **Jewish Preschool Family Study Instructions for Distribution of Surveys**

### **1. Families Eligible to Receive Surveys**

We have sent you survey packets for the approximate number of families you indicated attend your preschool in the **2-3 through Pre-K classes**. It is fine if you have more families than surveys or if you have extra surveys.

- Parents who are participating in the PEP program will receive surveys with GREEN cover letters. These packets already have names on them.
- Non-PEP families should receive a survey packet if they identify themselves as a Jewish or Interfaith family. If either parent is Jewish by birth or by conversion, they should receive a packet with a BLUE cover letter.
- Surveys SHOULD NOT be distributed to non-Jewish families.

### **2. Completing the Survey Tracking Form and Designating Survey Packets**

Included in this mailing is a tracking form which includes a column for family names and a column (already filled in) for survey ID numbers. The numbers on the tracking form correspond to the ID number to be found on the bottom left hand side of the back page of each survey. **This tracking form will stay at your school.** The names of parents who are participating in the PEP program are already printed on the Tracking Form.

- Print the name of each eligible family in the column labeled “**PEP Participant or Family Name**”.

### **3. Preparing Surveys for Distribution**

- Using the first survey with a BLUE cover letter, identify which family is assigned this survey by looking at the ID label on the lower left hand corner of the back page of the survey. Then look at your tracking form to find out which family has this ID number.
- Put the corresponding family name on the top left hand corner of the BLUE cover letter so you know who gets this packet.
- **Do not write the family name on the survey itself.**
- Surveys for PEP participants are already identified on the GREEN cover letter.
- You can now distribute the surveys to families.

**If you have any questions about these instructions please contact Fern Chertok at 781-736-2079 or by e-mail at [Fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:Fchertok@brandeis.edu)**

**THANK YOU**





**Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies**

Brandeis University

Mailstop 014

Waltham, MA 02454-9110

phone (781) 736-2060 ♦ fax (781) 736-3929

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**REPORTING FORM  
JEWISH PRESCHOOL FAMILY STUDY**

**Name of Preschool** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of surveys distributed** \_\_\_\_\_  
(This includes both surveys with GREEN and BLUE cover sheets)

**Please return this form to CMJS in the pre-addressed, postage paid envelope provided.**

**THANK YOU**

**APPENDIX E:  
COVER LETTERS TO ACCOMPANY SURVEYS  
LETTER TO NON-PARTICIPANTS**

Dear Preschool Parent,

As the parent of a child attending a Jewish preschool you have already made an important decision about your child's Jewish education and you may already be thinking about how your family wants to connect with the Jewish community and Jewish education in the future. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University with the support of the Avi Chai Foundation is interested in learning about the experiences, thoughts and needs of families just like yours. Our aim is to obtain a deeper understanding of the attitudes of parents toward Jewish educational opportunities for themselves and for their children. The findings of this study will be helpful to your preschool and to other local Jewish organizations as they develop and market educational initiatives for preschool families.

We want to hear from all kinds of families. Whether you are an interfaith family, identify with any Jewish denomination or just consider yourself to be a secular Jewish family, we want to hear from you. Everyone's thoughts are important to us.

Please take the time to complete the attached survey. The survey is completely confidential and anonymous. Your preschool has not released your name to us. Instead they have agreed to distribute this survey which is identified only by an ID number. Only your preschool knows which ID number is assigned to you. No one from your preschool will know how you respond and only aggregated data and overall themes will be reported.

You can return the completed survey to us in the attached postage paid envelope. Once we have received 75% of the surveys from your preschool, we will send a gift of \$180 to your preschool. It's easier than a bake sale and a wonderful way to help your preschool and the Jewish community. If you have any questions about this survey please contact Fern Chertok, the project director by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu) or by phone at 781-736-2079. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D,  
Director  
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

## LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Melton PEP Participant,

As a participant in the Melton PEP program and the parent of a child in a Jewish preschool you have already made important decisions about your child's and your own Jewish education and you may already be thinking about how your family wants to connect with the Jewish community and Jewish education in the future. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University working with the Florence Melton Adult Mini School and with the support of the Avi Chai Foundation is interested in learning about your experiences in the PEP program as well as obtaining a deeper understanding of the attitudes of parents toward Jewish educational opportunities for themselves and for their children. The findings of this study will be helpful to the Melton PEP program, to your preschool and to other local Jewish organizations as they develop and market educational initiatives for preschool families.

We want to hear from you regardless of how many PEP sessions you were able to attend or how well you liked the program. Everyone's thoughts are important to us.

Please take the time to complete the attached survey. The survey is completely confidential. Only the researchers at the Cohen Center will see your responses. No one from the Melton PEP program or from your preschool will know how you respond and only aggregated data and overall themes will be reported.

You can return the completed survey to us in the attached postage paid envelope. Once we have received 75% of the surveys from your preschool, we will send a gift of \$180 to your preschool. It's easier than a bake sale and a wonderful way to help your preschool and the Jewish community. If you have any questions about this survey please contact Fern Chertok, the project director by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu) or by phone at 781-736-2079. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D,  
Director  
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

## LETTER TO FORMER PARTICIPANTS

Dear Former Melton PEP Participant,

As a former participant in the Melton PEP program and the parent of a child in a Jewish preschool you have already made important decisions about your child's and your own Jewish education and you may already be thinking about how your family wants to connect with the Jewish community and Jewish education in the future. The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University working with the Florence Melton Adult Mini School and with the support of the Avi Chai Foundation is interested in learning about your experiences in the PEP program as well as obtaining a deeper understanding of the attitudes of parents toward Jewish educational opportunities for themselves and for their children. The findings of this study will be helpful to the Melton PEP program, to your preschool and to other local Jewish organizations as they develop and market educational initiatives for preschool families.

We want to hear from you regardless of how many PEP sessions you were able to attend or how well you liked the program. Everyone's thoughts are important to us.

Please take the time to complete the attached survey. The survey is completely confidential. Only the researchers at the Cohen Center will see your responses. No one from the Melton PEP program will know how you respond and only aggregated data and overall themes will be reported.

If you have any questions about this survey please contact Fern Chertok, the project director by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu) or by phone at 781-736-2079. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D,  
Director  
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

**APPENDIX F:  
REMINDER FLYER DISTRIBUTED THROUGH PRESCHOOL**



**Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies**

Brandeis University

Mailstop 014

Waltham, MA 02454-9110

phone (781) 736-2060 ♦ fax (781) 736-3929

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**EASIER THAN A BAKE SALE!**

**Thank you if you have already returned your JEWISH PRESCHOOL FAMILY survey.**

**If not, there is still time to help your school earn \$180.**

**Please return the survey to CMJS in the pre-paid, postage paid envelope. If you cannot find the envelope send the survey to**

**Fern Chertok  
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies  
Brandeis University Mailstop 014  
Waltham, MA 02454-9110**

**If you cannot find the survey please contact Fern Chertok by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu) or by phone at 781-736-2079.**

**Thank you in advance for helping us to learn about the thoughts and needs of preschool families just like yours.**

**APPENDIX G:  
REMINDER LETTER MAILED DIRECTLY  
TO PARTICIPANTS AND DROP OUTS**

Dear Melton PEP Participant (or Former Participant),

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

The Florence Melton PEP program and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University want to learn from you about your experiences in the PEP program.

We want to hear from you regardless of how many PEP sessions you were able to attend or how well you liked the program. Everyone's thoughts are important to us.

**PLEASE TAKE THE TIME  
TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY**

The survey is completely confidential. Only the researchers at the Cohen Center will see your responses. No one from the Melton PEP program will know how you individually respond.

You can return the completed survey to us in the attached postage paid envelope. If you have any questions about this survey please contact Fern Chertok, the project director by e-mail at [fchertok@brandeis.edu](mailto:fchertok@brandeis.edu) or by phone at 781-736-2079.

We greatly appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Leonard Saxe, Ph.D,  
Director  
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies