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Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership: Early Childhood Survey. Vogelstein, Ilene C., and David Kaplan. "Jewish Early Childhood Education: Study Highlights." Includes drafts and correspondence, 2002.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the American Jewish Archives website.

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X-Sender: gamoran@imap.ssc.wisc.edu  
X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Pro Version 4.2.2  
Date: Mon, 01 Jul 2002 11:12:58 -0500  
To: JECEP1@aol.com  
From: Adam Gamoran <gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu>  
Subject: Re: survey  
Cc: dkaplan@UDeI.Edu, gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu

Dear Ilene,

Thank you for the chance to comment on the JECF report. In general it is very well written and clear. It raises important points and presents them in an interesting way. The report is incredibly timely and I hope it will attract much attention.

As I have noted before, the report is significantly limited by the low and uneven response rates. (This is the first time I've had the opportunity to see how different the response rates were across categories.) Even at this late date, there may be more you can do to address this problem. First, I appreciate the straightforward accounting of response rates and the discussion of how they occurred. That is a big improvement over the "highlights" version.

Second, the response rate from JCCs approaches respectability and both that and the response rate from the reform schools are substantially higher than the rest. This might be considered in the interpretation of results. Are there any points of difference between the JCCs and the rest, or between the reform schools and the other synagogue schools, that might reflect differences in response rates? If not, that is also worth pointing out, as it may mean the uneven response rates are not as problematic as one might fear.

Even more important -- but probably too late, and I wish I'd had the opportunity to discuss this with you at an earlier phase -- there are steps you can take to determine how serious the non-response problem is. The question is, do the respondents differ from the non-respondents in meaningful ways? Since you know who responded and who didn't (I think), you can at least see whether there are differences e.g. by geography, size, anything else you have a record of. Ideally -- but should have occurred a year ago -- you could have done a small telephone follow-up of non-respondents, to try to determine how they differ from respondents.

Ultimately, it would be helpful and appropriate to add a statement to the methodology section about how the response rates should affect our interpretation. Should we view the results with caution? Should we assume the JCC results are representative, but not the rest? I would suggest something like the following: "Higher response rate for JCC-affiliated schools means we can have more confidence in the representativeness of the survey results in that category. For this reason it is especially important to take note of differences in survey responses across affiliations. Although we must be cautious in interpreting the results, we have no information that leads us to think the respondents were systematically different from non-respondents within any of the affiliation groups." [This is where you would add something about differences between respondents and non-respondents, if you had the info.]

I have one other general concern: The figures seem too small. Actually the real problem may not be the figures themselves, but the font size of the accompanying print. Especially if you want lay leaders to read the report, I encourage you to use larger type to go with the figures.

Now for some editorial comments:

1. The intro does a very nice job of setting out some background issues. However, there is too much of a jump from the second to the third paragraph -- you go from the 1930s to the 1990s without any transition. You need some sort of transition to pave the way from preschool-as-babysitting to the educational early childhood programs of today.
2. I did not check the references systematically, but there are many places where a study is mentioned in the text and apparently omitted from the references. The first place I noticed this was in the 4th and 5th paragraphs of the intro, which mention the 1994 CIJE report (I gather this is the policy brief) and the best practices report on early childhood, neither of which are found in the references. Other examples include the US Dept of Ed Early Childhood Program Participation Component (1996), the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes study (1995), and Quality Counts (2002).
3. I did not copy-edit as you have someone lined up for that, but note there are many places where you have the period before the parenthesis instead of after.
4. The first time you mention that 100,000 Jewish children attend early childhood ed is in the 10th paragraph of the intro, but no reference is provided. I assume this is from Schick 2000, since that is cited later (also missing from the reference list!) -- it should be cited here also.
5. This paragraph (10th para of the intro) and in the conclusion you claim that early childhood ed is "becoming the primary place where Jewish identity is formed." That claim goes beyond any evidence that you present or cite, and I'm not sure it can be supported. I would tone it down.
6. Para 12 of the intro begins with "These studies..." -- I'm not sure what studies you are referring to.
7. Para 13 of the intro -- the funding partners were "committed to ensuring that every child..." -- should this be every JEWISH child?
8. Section 1, text following figures 3a-f, there is an incomplete sentence (related to Conservative affiliations) at the end of the paragraph. In the next paragraph, you discuss the dropoff at age 5. You speculate that this occurs because Jewish kindergartens are unavailable. An equally likely explanation is that parents choose public kindergartens as soon as they can. You mention this in the conclusion in a sort of back-hand way. I would bring it up more centrally, both here and in the conclusion, because (a) I think it's the real reason and (b) it has important policy implications. As you point out in the conclusion, if parents prefer public schools then the expansion of public early childhood may mean lower enrollments for Jewish early childhood. This could be discussed as an important issue.
9. Titles of Figures 8a and 8b -- the word "enrollment" appears twice under 8a and is missing from 8b.
10. Section 2, second paragraph of text, last sentence is not clear. I would replace "weakest relationship" with "lowest level of consistency." [And I wonder, is this because principals in other categories whose teachers do not have a consistent philosophy, did not respond to the survey? Probably not, probably this represents a real difference between JCC and synagogue schools.]

11. Third paragraph of text in section 2: I'm confused by the statement that "thirty-three (33%) of the directors..." Since there were 152 respondents, I would think 33% would be about 50 directors.

12. Figures 6a-f needs a KEY so the reader will understand the abbreviations e.g. "PM Heb Elem" etc.

13. Para under "Recruitment and Retention" -- should be "cited" instead of "sighted"

14. Para under "Salary and Benefits" -- rather than "inability to recruit" I would say "difficulty in recruiting..." A little lower, I would say "most" Orthodox teachers...earn...

15. Figure 13 -- I strongly recommend placing greater emphasis on differences across categories in the availability of health plans. Although over 80% of JCC schools have this option, far lower proportions of the synagogue schools do so.

16. Section 4, third parag of text, I would say "79% of the directors in this sample will reach..." -- i.e. add "in this sample"

17. Section 4, last para, you mention "the turnover rate for directors," but unless I missed something, you haven't said what that is.

18. Overall I think the conclusions are well stated and appropriate, but here are a few comments:

Point 1: When you say "this study suggests" in the middle of the paragraph, are you referring to YOUR study? But you are not the one who estimated 100,000 children. Also, in section 1 you say there are 600,000 Jewish children age birth-6 so that would mean 1/6 are in Jewish early childhood ed, not 1/4. This is confusing.

Point 2: Again, how do you know early childhood ed is the "primary place where Jewish identity is formed"? This is unsubstantiated.

Point 3: As I noted earlier, I would reorganize this to give more space to the likelihood that parents choose public schools as soon as they can.

Point 4: I think it's too strong to say all Jewish educators are underpaid. Rather than starting with Jewish educators, I would start with the field of early childhood education: "Salaries for Jewish early childhood educators, like those of early childhood educators more generally, are too low." At the end of this point, you say professionals that left the field went to public ed -- where is this from?

After "Vshinantam l'vanecha" there is some nonsense text -- I'm worried that your copy editor won't catch it!

I hope my comments are helpful. Congratulations on an important and timely report. I think it will be widely read and can play a big role in advocacy for the JECP.

Adam

At 02:45 AM 6/28/02 -0400, you wrote:

| Adam, you are the best. will do. thanks. ilene



From: JECEP1@aol.com  
 Date: Mon, 25 Mar 2002 10:52:48 EST  
 Subject: exec summary  
 To: dkaplan@udel.edu, gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu  
 X-Security: MIME headers sanitized on charles.ssc.wisc.edu  
 See <http://www.impsec.org/email-tools/sanitizer-intro.html>  
 for details. \$Revision: 1.133 \$Date: 2002-01-05 17:09:21-08  
 X-Mailer: AOL 6.0 for Windows XP US sub 50

David and Adam, hope all is well with you. I know that David is knee deep in a conf and very busy now and I assume the same for you, Adam.

I am attaching a draft of the executive summary that I would like to print and distribute before the full document is ready. I would appreciate it if you could read it and give me some feedback on it. Some of the numbers or not in yet, but the implications are. Please comment on the writing, the implications and recommendations. Is this something you would be proud to have your name attached?

I wish you a chag samaech. look forward to your comments. ilene



exec summary 3.23.doc

- AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
- ① Not an exec summary  
- HIGHLIGHTS on Policy Brief
  - ② major weakness is low reply rate
    - a why this is a prob
    - b what you can do at this pt
  - ③ Too much editorializing w/in the rpt
  - ④ Many Recs do not derive from data
    - drop those, more others to other caucuses
    - caucuses or rec section



## Introduction

Since the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, Jewish community agencies and organizations have reviewed and revised their missions, asked hard questions like, "What's Jewish about us" or "What does the J in our agency name mean", and used words like renewal and renaissance. Birthright Israel, STAR, Synagogue 2000, and Melton Adult Mini School are all examples of programs that blossomed as a result of those questions. Agency boards study before board meetings, religious schools now have family programming and Shabbat experiences as part of the school program, day school attendance is growing, as is camping, and many JCCs now have Jewish educators on staff. No doubt, the 2000 National Jewish Population Study will provide some feedback as to how well we answered and addressed those questions.

The one constituency that was left out of the discussion, and the renewal, was the early childhood programs. For those within the field this was not only frustrating, but totally baffling. Most people believe that what happens to you when you are young is critical to who you are when you are older. ~~(This is the basis of Freudian psychology.)~~ In fact, an explosion of research in early childhood development and the care of young children in the past ten years conclude that the early years (0-5 years of age) are critically important, unequivocally affect brain development, and lay the foundation on which subsequent learning builds (Shonkoff, 2000). Research further reports that an increasing number of children at young ages (0-5) are spending more time (30+ hours a week) in non-parental childcare facilities. In 1999, 62% of children ages birth through 5 years old received some form of non-parental childcare in the United States (Quality Counts, 2002). Twenty-eight percent of these 12.9 million children are cared for in facilities that are places of worship (Child Care Exchange,). There are approximately 100,000 children in Jewish early childhood centers in America today (Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership, 2002).

The care and education of young children is no longer the sole responsibility of the mother or the family. It is a partnership between the parents and the early childhood center. It impacts the entire family, not just the child, and is a primary gateway into the Jewish community, the synagogue and Jewish living. So why not invest in the youngest? Why has the Jewish leadership given little attention and support to this area of Jewish education? Why wait until a child is six when school formally begins (kindergarten) or even eight when most religious schools begin, to invest in their Jewish education?

In 1994, the CIJE conducted a personnel study on religious school, day school and early childhood Jewish personnel in three communities in the United States. They found that early childhood educators had the lowest salaries, the weakest Jewish background and training, and largest numbers of non-Jewish professionals within the three school systems. For the most part, there was no

\* This refers to daycare, childcare, preschool, and before and after school programs for children 0-5 years of age



reaction, or response, from the Jewish leadership.<sup>1</sup> In 1996, the CIJE published Early Childhood Jewish Education as part of their Best Practices Project. It was the Jewish community's first attempt at identifying quality in the early childhood programs. The criteria were used to identify schools to spotlight "best practice" rather than be used as a tool to evaluate. The report determined that a critical component of early childhood "best practice" is the knowledge and skill of the educator. "The younger the child, the more crucial is competence in the teacher".

Except for the CIJE study, there is no systematic research on the Jewish early childhood profession. Communities conduct annual early childhood professional surveys, but each one contains different kinds of information and communities generally do not report or share their data. Few communities know how many Jewish children there are under the age of 6, how many of them attend Jewish child care and education programs or how many hours children are spending in early childhood centers every week. There are no national standards for measuring the quality of a Jewish early childhood education program, although some Jewish preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and some communities (Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Baltimore and Boston) have developed criteria for assessing the presence and quality of Judaic content in early childhood programs.

In the general education community, studies investigating this population are primarily concerned with quality, traditionally meaning ensuring that children are cared for in a safe and nurturing environments, and have historically been conducted on childcare centers and Head Start programs. However, the recent studies do not distinguish between childcare and preschool programs.

Irrespective of the type of facility the young child attends, these studies independently agree that

- 1) the quality of the relationship between the child and the childcare professional significantly impacts on every aspect of the child's development (Shonkoff, 2000)
- 2) the strongest predictor of a high quality early learning program is the training and compensation of the early childhood professional
- 3) while no single curriculum is best, children learn more in a well planned preschool where curricular goals are specified and followed (Bowman, et al, 2001)
- 4) the biggest quality issue facing the early childhood profession is the inability to recruit and train qualified staff. (Whitebook, 1998)

The supporting Foundations of the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership, a non-profit advocacy and educational organization, decided to commission this survey on early childhood Jewish education for three reasons.

<sup>1</sup> The Children of Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff Philanthropic Fund funded Machon L' Morim: Bereshit, a five year intensive professional development program for early childhood educators in Baltimore. [www.JECEP.org.machonlmorim.org](http://www.JECEP.org.machonlmorim.org)



First, they recognize the importance of the early years of life as critical for both the overall development of the child as well as for the impact these years can have on the development of the child's and their family's Jewish identity and their subsequent involvement in and commitment to Jewish study and the Jewish community.

Second, they wanted to ascertain if the information available concerning the secular early child profession was applicable to early childhood Jewish education.

Third, they were hoping findings from this study would serve as a catalyst for encouraging the Jewish leadership to seriously consider supporting and investing in this population. Why not lay the strongest Jewish foundation possible when the children are in preschool so when they are adults and can make decisions for themselves the answer is already within them? Why not invest in a partnership with families when they are at the doorstep of the Jewish community?

The purpose of this study is to collect descriptive data about Jewish early childhood programs from a random sampling of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, JCC and independent schools. This data contains information on the major components of a Jewish early childhood education program including enrollment figures, and the characteristics, credentials and compensation of the early childhood professionals. This study does not address infant and toddler programs, although this is the fastest growing subgroup of children and early care and education programs. (Kagan and Newman, 2000). Nor does it directly assess the quality of the programs. Rather, quality is based on the collective parameters determined by early child development and early childcare research in the general community.

Surveys were sent to the directors of 300 early childhood centers out of a database of 1006 centers, spanning the range of affiliations including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Community/Independent, and JCC/Y's. All data is reported by directors. 152 directors/centers in 28 states responded. These centers employ 2,583 professionals (117 directors, 35 director/teachers, 1,637 teachers and 856 assistants) and enroll 15,117 children between 0-6 years of age. There is an average of 11 teachers and 6 assistants per school. 84% of the student population and 70% of the professional population is Jewish. Conservative, Reform and JCC schools constitute approximately 75% of the sample centers. All centers have an educational component (school) and a child care component (before and after school care).

The study is divided into five sections. Section I addresses the student population including enrollment and hours children attend center programs. Section II discusses basic characteristics of the programs including educational and religious philosophy and mission statements. Section III addresses the professionals (teachers and assistants) their credentials, salaries, benefits, age, years of teaching and staff turnover. Section IV takes a look at the directors' credential, salaries and career plans.

It is our hope that the findings in this report will bring national attention to the critical importance of and the issues facing early childhood Jewish education, as well as provide a basis for advocacy, education and strategic planning.



## Findings

### Student Population

Large numbers of children participate in Jewish early childhood programs, even larger numbers do not. One hundred and fifty-two (152) centers in 28 states spanning the range of affiliation enroll 15,117 children between birth and six years of age (including kindergarten). 84% of the total sample population is Jewish. Jewish enrollment varies considerably depending on the affiliation. Jewish enrollment is as low as 50% in some Jewish Community Centers and as high as 100% in some of the synagogue schools. 35% of the total non-Jewish population is enrolled in the Jewish Community Centers.

While this data does not allow for an accurate projection of the total national Jewish preschool population, based on these numbers and census information from JESNA, we estimate there are 100,000 children between birth and 6 years of age in Jewish early childhood programs, not including day school kindergarten children. These numbers are difficult to project, as noted by Schick (2000). However, this is double the number reported in Time to Act (1988). We further project that this is only a small percentage of the total Jewish population of children between 0 – 6 years of age which is approximately 700,000 (Keysar, 2000). As comparison, Hillel currently estimates there are 400,000 college age students in the United States.

The majority of these children are between 2-4 years of age and spending increasing amounts of time in early childhood centers. The x% of 2 year olds spend 15 hours or less in the centers while the majority (80%) of 3 year olds spend between 16 and 30 hours a week in the centers. X% of the total sample spend 30 hours or more a week and x% (2-6 year olds) spend 40+ hours a week in these centers. Early childhood centers are becoming the day schools for children under the age of six. They are becoming increasingly important as they are not only the introduction to Judaism, the Jewish community and the synagogue for young Jewish children and their families, but are replacing the home as the primary place to experience Jewish living. Also, no other Jewish experience has as the extent of the eagerness and willingness of children, together with their families, to learn and to live Jewishly.

Enrollment drops significantly between the four year old programs and the five year old programs. This may result from the limited number of kindergarten programs (only 28 centers have designated kindergarten programs) and/or public kindergarten.

Total enrollment increased slightly between 99-00 and 00-01 and is projected to be stable for the coming school years. National trends suggest that early care/education enrollment continues to increase, especially for infants and toddlers. (This study did not address the needs of the infants and toddlers) Enrollment in early care centers in the United States increased 19% between 1997-1999. (NCES, 1999) At the same time, enrollment in centers operated by religious facilities increased by 26% (Neugebauer, 2000). New York BJE noted a 12% increase in their enrollment in the last year. The disparity between this

report and other studies may be indicative of young Jewish children outside of New York City enrolling in public preschools as more programs become available or the difficulty of directors to project enrollment. There is no question that universal kindergarten and public three and four year old programs have the potential to dramatically negatively affect enrollment.

### Recommendations

- Centers 72 say demand is so great*
1. Greater efforts need to be made to recruit Jewish children to attend Jewish preschools.
  2. More Jewish pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs should be established.
  3. Research should be conducted on what happens to the children and families after they complete a Jewish early childhood program.

### Program Goals

School mission statements and educational philosophy drive the curriculum, dictate the culture and reflect the professionalism of the school. 61% of the schools indicated they have a mission statement. 33% indicated they don't. *= 94%* Of those that have mission statements, 88% have some Jewish education as part of their mission. 12% do not mention Jewish or Judaism at all.

Half of the directors did not know or did not respond to the question that asked if the teacher's personal religious beliefs matched the school's religious philosophy. 67% of the directors did not feel it was important for teachers' beliefs to be consistent with the school's religious philosophy. Of those that responded, between 25% and 65% of the staff's personal views match the school's religious philosophy.

*interest*

This raises one of the most critical issues addressing this constituency. Are these Jewish early childhood education centers or early childhood Jewish education centers. What does the Jewish qualify – the site or the content? This becomes an even more significant when viewed in conjunction with the personnel data.



## Recommendations

4. Every early childhood center should have a well developed mission and vision statement with a clear understanding of their role as a Jewish educational institution.
5. Every early childhood center should have a Jewish educational consultant/specialist to assist with the Judaic curriculum. Synagogue schools should enable their professional staff or their religious school staff to work in the preschool.

## Personnel – Teachers and Assistants

This survey reported 1637 teachers (including 35 directors/teachers) and 856 assistants. Approximately 98% are women. Overall, 70% of the early childhood professionals are Jewish; 30% of teachers and 45% of assistants are not Jewish. The majority of teachers across all affiliations range in age between 30 and 59 years, except for those affiliated with the Orthodox preschools where the majority are in their 20's, and have been teaching 9 years or less. Directors report that X% of their teachers have no formal Jewish education after Hebrew school. (Many directors did not know or did not report the Judaic educational level of their teachers.) In direct contrast, 55% of teachers and x% of assistants have a bachelors or masters degree, many in early childhood education.

Current research indicates that the most consistent finding in developmental science is that knowledgeable and trained early childhood professionals are the key to both the quality of early childhood programs and to the social-emotional development of the child. The central function of early care giving relationships addresses the child's socialization into a specific cultural niche. (Shonkoff, 2000) As more children are spending more time in the care of early childhood centers, how effective can our professional staff be in educating and transmitting Jewish knowledge, values and concepts if it is based on afternoon religious school education from 30 or more years ago? Or if the early childhood educator is not Jewish? This is not to say that the current Jewish early childhood professionals are not dedicated to Judaism and the Jewish people. In fact, it is just this dedication and feeling of community that brought them to the field and enables them to stay when salaries and benefits are so poor. Most 10 month contract teachers with college degrees earn between \$10,000 and \$19,999. The majority of assistants earn less than \$10,000. Most benefits are not offered to teachers or assistants.

If the role of early childhood programs shifts from Jewish early childhood education centers to early childhood Jewish education centers and if they shift from supplementing experiences in the home, both educational and Judaic, to

being the primary provider of the information, our educators need to have strong Judaic knowledge as well as be current in early childhood best practices.

Recruitment, as well as retention, are priority issues for all Jewish educators. Directors reported that 12% of teachers and 14% of assistants either left this past year or are planning to leave in the coming year. Directors indicated most teachers left for "other" unspecified reasons or because of poor salaries and most went to the public schools. Directors also reported that most teachers do not plan on retiring in the near future. Three quarters of the directors were able to hire new staff within 8 weeks after a position was open. However, only 34% were very satisfied with the new staff's early childhood qualifications. Fewer were satisfied with their Judaic qualifications.

National trends differ significantly indicating an annual turnover rate of 30%, one of the highest for any profession. This disparity may be a result of data obtained from directors instead of directly from teachers. Directors in some communities are fearful of the opening of public kindergarten and three and four year old programs where their teachers will not only be welcomed with open arms, as 55% of our teachers have a Bachelors degree and x% of those have the degree in early childhood education, but where they can double their salary (and get benefits) the minute they sign the public school contract.

#### Recommendations

6. Salaries of early childhood teachers and assistants must be increased and benefits or intangibles be added to their contracts.
7. An early childhood personnel study must be conducted to obtain information regarding staff turnover directly from the teachers and assistants.
8. Require intensive ongoing professional development training programs to improve the secular and Judaic knowledge of the early childhood professionals.

#### Directors

93% of directors are Jewish. The overwhelming majority of directors are well educated with college degrees in education and 78% of them have either a bachelors or masters degree in early childhood education. This is significantly better than the general community where only X% have college degrees and x% have early childhood training. In contrast, 60% have the equivalent of a high school diploma in Jewish education and 32% have no formal Jewish education after completing an afternoon elementary school program. Only a few directors (#) have educational leadership training. Of those directors that responded, the



majority are between 50 and 59 years of age. 79% of directors plan to continue in their current position and 72% have no plans to retire.

The demands on directors are increasing. In addition to their role as school administrator, they now need to be skilled in marketing (to recruit students and teachers), financial management (to balance the budget), advocacy (to get funds to increase salaries and program costs), professional development (to educate themselves and their staff about Jewish texts, new issues in early literacy, brain research and educational methodologies), change management (to implement changes based on professional development knowledge and adult text study), and leadership (to create a new vision and strategic plan for their schools based on this information).

#### Recommendations

9. Establish formal educational leadership training programs for current directors
10. Encourage universities to create early childhood Jewish education leadership certificate and degree granting programs.
11. Create financial incentive to encourage directors' participation and financial rewards upon completion of the training.

## Conclusion

Historically, the primary role of early childhood centers was providing part-time programs that offered safe and nurturing environments for young children while their mothers worked. (Bowman, 2001). The curriculum focused on developing the social-emotional skills of children such as separating from home, sharing, cooperation and positive self-esteem. This was in fact, babysitting and not designed to have an educational component. A child's education began when they went to school at the age of six – hence the name "preschool". The Jewish aspect of a Jewish early childhood program was its location (synagogue or JCC) and the ethnicity of the population. Jewish content was minimal for two reasons. First, it was believed that Jewish education was occurring in the home. Secondly, people believed the children would learn about Judaism when they began their "formal" Jewish education in Hebrew school. This explains the nomenclature of "Jewish early childhood education" instead of "early childhood Jewish education".

Today, we know that the early years of life unequivocally affect brain development and lay the foundation on which subsequent learning builds. While formal schooling still begins at six years of age, school readiness is now, or is becoming, the responsibility of the early childhood programs. Most children ages 3-6 (not yet in kindergarten) attend some form of child care/education program (NCES, 1996). Furthermore, children's participation in non-parental child care and education programs increases the higher the mother's educational level, the higher the family income and if the mother works. (NCES, 1999). We also know that children are spending increasing amounts of time in early childhood programs. The relationship a young child has with their primary provider significantly affects the overall development of the child, including cultural behaviors and beliefs.

Most Jewish families have high expectations for their child's general education. At the same time they depend on the Jewish schools to educate their children about Jewish values, concepts and Hebrew language. One would expect parents to demand that their children interact with well-trained, Judaicly knowledgeable faculty capable of preparing their children to begin their formal education and their life as a Jew.

This survey is the first attempt at obtaining information about the state of early childhood Jewish education in the United States. While it provides significant information, it only gives us glimpse of the profession and raises a number of questions.

Findings from this study regarding the characteristics, credentials and salaries of early childhood educators were similar to the findings of the CIJE (1994) study. The final recommendation from that study, "improving the quantity and quality of professional development for teachers, along with enhancing the conditions of employment, is the strategy most likely to improve the quality of the



teaching force (in Jewish schools)," needs to be applied to the early childhood profession now.

Salaries for all Jewish educators are inadequate. They are worse for Jewish early childhood educators. Most early childhood teachers have bachelor's degrees in education, earn \$14 an hour, and have few benefits. These educators have the skills and the ability to move freely into the public school system and double their salary. In fact, 31% of the teachers who left the field went to the public school schools. Without recognizing that early childhood education is valuable, without pedagogic and Judaic professional development, and without equitable compensation, public kindergarten and preschool programs will lure both our educators and our families. Only individuals and families with a calling, the most committed to *Clal Yisrael*, will enroll in an early childhood Jewish education center or stay in the Jewish early childhood profession. Fewer will enter into the field.

At this point, we have no idea of the quality of the programs. Nationally, most early childhood centers are mediocre.<sup>2</sup> However, We know that our teachers are well trained. 55% of Jewish early childhood educators have a college degree. (% have bachelors degrees in education, % degrees in early childhood education and % masters degree) We do know that most receive stipends for participate in ongoing professional development, but we don't know the contents or quality of the training.

We also don't know about the extent of the Jewish content in the classroom. Nor do we know how much content is needed in order to transmit that to the children and their families. Can a love of Judaism and the Jewish people be taught as a content area? Can Jewish values be taught during circle time? Does an early childhood educator need to be a practicing Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox person in order to transmit the beliefs and values of that denomination? Does an early childhood educator in a Jewish preschool need to be Jewish? What distinguishes a Jewish preschool from a public preschool? While the answers to these questions are unclear, new understandings about the development of the cultural behaviors and beliefs and the role of the adult in the transmission that milieu suggest that early childhood educators in Jewish preschools need to be knowledgeable not only in the latest pedagogic methodologies, but more importantly, need to have substantive Judaic knowledge and exude Judaic values and mores. If we want to be early childhood Jewish education centers, then we need to recruit Jewish educators and retain Jewish families.

How a culture (or society) treats its youngest members has a significant influence on how it will grow, prosper, and be viewed by others. (Meisels, 2001). The future of the American Jewish community depends on the quality of the early childhood centers and the professional staff caring for and educating our children.

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<sup>2</sup> Cost, Outcomes

Good - follow up/revs

1st of 95 12/12/1999

In the past ten years there has been an explosion of research in early childhood development and the care of young children.<sup>1</sup> Several different reports of this research have independently identified six core conclusions regarding childcare\* in the United States.

- all presented as  
empirical facts,  
but some are  
facts, others in xps.

200  
Trans. +

\* This refers to daycare, childcare, preschool, and before and after school programs for children 0-5 years of age

While the Jewish community has not carried out extensive research on the state of Jewish education, it does have some information on the status of the day schools, religious school and early childhood professionals. In 1994, the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education conducted a survey in three communities and obtained information about teacher credentials, compensation, benefits, job satisfaction, etc. The Avi Chai Foundation and the Covenant Foundation also have conducted research on the day school educator. The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education conducts surveys of its members.

Except for the CIJE, there is virtually no research on the early childhood profession. Communities conduct annual professional surveys, but each one contains different kinds of information. Few communities know how many Jewish children there are under the age of 6, how many of them attend Jewish childcare programs or how many hours children are spending in the early childhood centers every week. There are no national standards for measuring the quality of a Jewish early childhood education program, although some Jewish preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and some communities (Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Baltimore and Boston) have developed criteria for assessing the presence and quality of Judaic content in their preschool programs.

The purpose of this study is to collect and disseminate descriptive data about Jewish early childhood programs. This study surveyed 152 centers in 28 States that provide early childhood education services. Centers spanned the range of affiliations, including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Community/Independent, and JCC/Y's. Conservative, Reform and JCC/Y affiliated centers constituted approximately 75% of the sample of centers. This data describes several aspects of Jewish early childhood education, validates some of the critical issues facing the Jewish early childhood profession and serves as the basis for advocacy, education and strategic planning. The major questions to be addressed are:

1. How much time are Jewish children spending in childcare/preschool centers?
2. What are the secular and Judaic credentials of the Jewish early childhood professionals?

Start w/ this  
See more  
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Good



3. What are the salaries and benefits of a Jewish early childhood professional?
4. What are the enrollment statistics of Jewish preschools?
5. How does the state of the Jewish early childhood compare to the national early childhood education profession?

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Executive Summary Data description

*Need Intro*

What are the characteristics of the children enrolled.?

There are X children ages 18 months to 6 years of age in the one hundred and fifty two schools sampled. Total enrollment statistics show that the majority of children (x%) range from 2 to 4 years of age, and this holds regardless of center affiliation. X% are under 2 years of age and x% are five and six years old. On average, before-school programs are approximately 1 hour in length, the school day is approximately 6 hours long, and after-school programs last approximately 3 hours on average. X% of the total population is Jewish

*Self identified*

How much time are Jewish children spending in childcare/preschool centers?

The majority of two year olds spend less than 15 hours/week in their centers. However, X% of 2 years spends thirty hours or more a week in their center. X% of three year olds spend from less than 15 to as much as 30 hours/week in their centers. x% of 3 year olds and x% of four year olds spend thirty hours or more a week in the center. The x% of five year olds spend from 16 to 40 hours/week in their centers. The x% of six year olds spend between 31 and 40 hours per week in their centers.

What are the characteristics of the early childhood professionals?

Approximately 98% are woman and 73% are Jewish. Approximately 70% of the teachers are full-time employees. Approximately 80% of the teachers range from 30 to 59 years old. The largest group overall range from 40-49 years of age. The majority of directors are over 50 years of age. Most have been teaching 5 years or less. This pattern varies slightly with the affiliation of the center. In the past three years, the majority of teachers leave to XXXX. Assistants leave to XXXXXXXX. The vast majority of center

*explain*



*in the next x years.*  
directors, regardless of the affiliation of the center, respond that they have no plans to retire.

### What are the secular and Judaic credentials of the Jewish early childhood professionals?

X% teachers in the sample hold a bachelor's degree (x% in early childhood education, x% in education and x% in no-related field. This is contrasted with assistants, with approximately the same <sup>proportion</sup> number (x%) holding only high school diplomas as those holding bachelor's degrees.

In contrast to teachers and assistants, the education credentials of before-school and after-school caregivers appears to be more varied. Most (X%) however, hold a BA/BS in a non-early childhood education field.

With respect to credentials in Jewish education, 27% of the teachers are not Jewish. Of those that are, x% of the teachers highest level of formal Jewish education is Hebrew high school. This is in contrast to x% of the assistants.

### What are the salaries and benefits of a Jewish early childhood professional?

*relate to part/full-time*  
The survey shows that approximately 40% of the teachers with 10-month contracts earn between \$10,000 and \$19,999. By comparison 24% of the teachers in the sample earn less than \$10,000, and about the same number earn between \$20,000 and \$29,999. Salaries for 10-month contract assistants are generally lower than salaries for teachers, with approximately 93% of the assistants earning less than \$20,000.

### Conclusions

This survey is the first attempt at obtaining information about the state of Jewish early childhood education in North America. While it provides significant information, it only gives us a glimpse of the profession and raises a number of questions.

The findings can be categorized in two broad categories – personnel(salaries and credentials) and program characteristics, including student population.

Salaries for all Jewish educators are inadequate. They are worse for Jewish early childhood educators. Most early childhood teachers have bachelor's degrees in education, earn \$14 an hour, and have few benefits. These educators have the skills and the ability to move freely into the public school system and double their salary. In fact, 31% of the teachers who leave the field go to the public schools. With the advent of universal kindergarten and public three and four year old programs, only a small number -someone with a calling or the most committed to Clal Yisrael, will stay in the Jewish early childhood profession. Fewer will enter into the field.

Current brain research and child development studies unequivocally conclude that 0-5 years of age is the foundational period of development on which subsequent learning is based. Cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, physical and moral development are dependent on the quality of the environment the child is in and on the skill of a nurturing relationship with the educator.

Children three to five years old are spending a significant amount of time in early childhood centers. At this point, we have no idea of the quality of the programs. Nationally, most early childhood centers are mediocre.<sup>1</sup> However, We know that our teachers are well trained. Only % of Jewish early childhood educators has no college degree. (% Have bachelor's degrees in education, % degrees in early childhood education and % masters' degree) Most teachers receive stipends for participate in ongoing professional development, but we don't know the contents or quality of the training.

We also don't know about the extent of the Jewish content in the classroom. Nor do we know how much content is needed in order to transmit Jewish values or to develop a strong Jewish identity in the children and their families. Can a love of Judaism and the Jewish people be taught as a content area? Can Jewish values be taught during circle time? Does an early childhood educator need to be a practicing Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Orthodox person in order to transmit the beliefs and values of that denomination? Does an early childhood educator in a Jewish preschool need to be Jewish? What distinguishes a Jewish preschool from a public preschool?

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<sup>1</sup> Cost, Outcomes

## Implications

The first and most obvious implication is that we need more research. We just don't know enough about what is happening in the field to develop a strategic plan on how to strengthen Jewish early childhood education. The problem is that research takes time and money. Jewish early childhood education does not have the time and it needs money now in order to ensure there will be teachers next year. The schools surveyed indicated their enrollment to be about the same for the 2002-2003 school year. BJENYC school survey noted an 11% increase in enrollment from 2000 to 2001. If national trends are any indication of what is happening, we would expect to see an increase in enrollment as more women enter the work force and more families have two working parents.

Wertheimer's Dollar and Sense about Jewish Education (2001)

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<sup>i</sup> From Neurons to Neighborhoods (2000)

# J e w i s h   E a r l y   C h i l d h o o d   E d u c a t i o n

## *Study Highlights*



Spring 2002

Ilene C. Vogelstein, M.A.  
David Kaplan, Ph.D.

### **Partners**

Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation  
Children of Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff  
Philanthropic Fund  
Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation  
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How a culture treats its  
**youngest members** has a  
significant influence on  
how it will grow, prosper,  
and be viewed by others.

Meisels and Shonkoff, 2000

## Introduction

Historically, the care and education of young children was the responsibility of the family. Child care centers were designed to provide low income families with programs that offered custodial care for young children while their mothers worked (Bowman et al., 2001). These centers essentially filled a "babysitting" function and were not designed to have an educational component. In the early twentieth century, nursery schools emerged for the middle and upper class families. These programs "were designed to nurture exploration and facilitate socio-emotional development" (Meisels and Shonkoff, 2000) such as separating from home, sharing, cooperation and positive self-esteem. Although nursery schools placed more emphasis on education than child care centers, the prevailing belief was still that a child's education began when he or she went to school at the age of 6—hence the name "preschool."

Jewish early childhood programs first emerged in the 1930s. The primary goal of these programs was to develop good American Jews and prepare the children for school. The assumption was that the families were already living Jewish lives. Now they had to learn to become Americans. (Rotenberg, 1977) The teachers in most of these schools had limited Jewish backgrounds. The primary Jewish feature of these, and subsequent, programs was the location (e.g. synagogue or JCC) and the ethnicity of the population, not the content of the program.

Today, it is clear that "preschool" plays a much more important educational and cultural role. The experiences young children have shape who they are and who they become when they are older. It is now well known that the early years of life affect brain development and lay the foundation for subsequent learning (Shonkoff, 2000). While formal schooling still begins at 6 years of age, school readiness is increasingly becoming the responsibility of the early childhood programs. Most children ages 3-6 (not yet in kindergarten) attend some form of child care/education program (Olson, 2002). The mother's educational level and employment status, as well as family income, is positively related to children's participation in non-parental child care and education programs (Kagan & Neuman, 2002).

Jewish early childhood centers are becoming increasingly important as they not only serve as the introduction to Judaism and Jewish communal life, but

are becoming the primary place where Jewish identity is formed. Today children are spending increasing amounts of time in early childhood programs. The relationship young children develop with their primary caregiver plays a significant role in their overall development, including cultural behaviors and beliefs (Bowman et al., 2001). The care and education of a young Jewish child is no longer the sole responsibility of the parents. It is a partnership between the parents and the early childhood center.

These centers have the potential to have the same, or even greater impact, than the day schools for two reasons. Children spend up to six hours a day in programs that are integrated with Jewish values, concepts, and Hebrew language and participate in numerous family experiences. 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.

It is this realization that inspired the formation of the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership (JECEP), a non-profit advocacy and educational organization. The JECEP has two primary goals. First, to place Jewish early childhood education on the national Jewish communal agenda. Second, to encourage federations and foundations to support and invest in Jewish early childhood education programs.

JECEP recognizes the crucial role Jewish early childhood programs have among the approximately 100,000 Jewish children and their families currently participating in these programs. In most communities, Jewish early childhood education is the only formal educational venue that is not a direct recipient of Federation dollars (i.e., capitation funding for religious schools and day schools). The Jewish Community Centers Association and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are the only national Jewish organizations that employ professional staff members whose sole responsibility is to oversee early childhood education.

In 2001, the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership commissioned two studies; 1) a national demographic study on Jewish early childhood education programs; and 2) an "exit survey" investigating decisions parents make regarding subsequent Jewish education after their children "graduate" from Jewish early childhood programs. These studies were commissioned for four reasons:

1] To obtain information on the status of Jewish early childhood education from a large and demographically diverse sample of programs;

2] To assess the extent to which Jewish early childhood programs face similar challenges around staffing and program quality as found with secular early childhood programs;

3] To ascertain the extent to which the current teaching staff in Jewish early childhood programs are well trained in both child development and Jewish studies; and

4] To document the impact that Jewish early childhood programs have on the children and their families.

The national demographic study was designed to collect descriptive data about early childhood programs from Orthodox,\* Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Jewish Community Center, and Independent Jewish early childhood programs. The study addresses the major issues in early childhood education programs as well as issues relevant only to the Jewish community. These include:

- number and ages of children, Jewish and non-Jewish, enrolled in the sample centers
- number of hours children spend in centers
- number of professionals, Jewish and non-Jewish, in centers
- secular and Judaic credentials and compensation of the early childhood professionals
- the extent of the similarities and differences between the affiliations in all areas studied (see full report)

The study does not directly assess the quality of the sampled programs. Rather, where appropriate, the results are compared to those on early learning centers and early childcare research in the secular community.

Surveys were sent to the directors of 300 early childhood centers. Directors reported all the data. One hundred fifty two directors from 28 states (encompassing all regions across the country—Northeast, Northwest, Midwest, Southeast and Southwest) completed and returned the survey.

The sampled centers employ 2,583 professionals (152 directors including 35 director/teachers, 1,637 teachers and 856 assistants) and enroll 16,408 children birth-6 years of age. There is an average of 11 teachers and six assistants per school. Seventy-seven percent

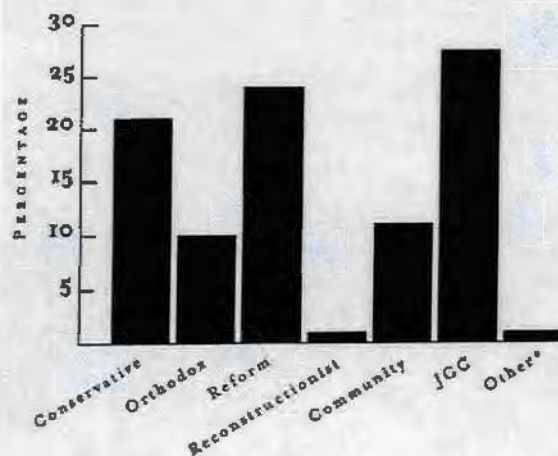
(77%) of the student population and 69% of the professional population (teachers and assistants) is Jewish. Conservative, Reform and JCC schools constitute approximately 75% of the sample centers. All centers have an educational component (school) and a child care component (before and after school care).

This report contains the highlights from the study and is divided into the same five sections as the full report. The full report contains charts, graphs, and finding implications in greater detail. *Section I* addresses the characteristics of the student population, including enrollment and the number of hours that children attend center programs. *Section II* discusses basic characteristics of the programs, including educational and religious philosophy and mission statements. *Section III* addresses characteristics of the professionals (teachers and assistants), their credentials, salaries, benefits, age, years of teaching and staff turnover. *Section IV* examines at the directors' credentials, salaries and career plans. *Section V* closes the report with conclusions.

The findings in this report should raise our attention to the critical importance of the issues facing Jewish early childhood education and provide a basis for advocacy, education and strategic planning.

4

*Percentage of Enrollment by Affiliation*



This chart shows that the majority of children enrolled in early childhood education programs are enrolled in Conservative, Reform and JCC affiliated centers.

\*Three schools chose not to align themselves with any affiliation



## Findings

### Student Population

Large numbers of children participate in Jewish early childhood programs, even larger numbers do not. One hundred and fifty-two (152) centers in 28 states enroll 16,408 children between birth and six years of age (including kindergarten). Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the total sample population is Jewish. Jewish enrollment varies considerably depending on the affiliation ranging from 25% in community settings to 100% in some synagogue schools.

While these data do not allow for a precise projection of the total national Jewish preschool population, we estimate there are approximately 100,000 children between birth and 6 years of age in Jewish early childhood programs including day school kindergarten children. This is double the number reported in *Time to Act* (1991). This is only a small percentage of the total Jewish population of children birth to 6 years of age which is approximately 700,000 (Kosmin et al., 2000). In comparison, Hillel currently estimates there are a total of 400,000 Jewish college age students in the United States (Hillel.org). Thus, the current Jewish early childhood population is almost double that of the current Jewish college age population.

The majority of the children in this sample are 2-4 years of age and spend a considerable amount of time in early childhood centers. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the total sample spend 30 hours or more a week and 10% spend 40+ hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of 2 year olds spend 15 hours or less in Jewish early childhood centers. In comparison, the U.S. Department of Education Early Childhood Program Participation Component (1995) reported that 24% of two year olds spend less than 15 hours. Sixty-three percent (63%) of 3 year olds spend between 16 and 40+ hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers compared to 83% in the secular community.

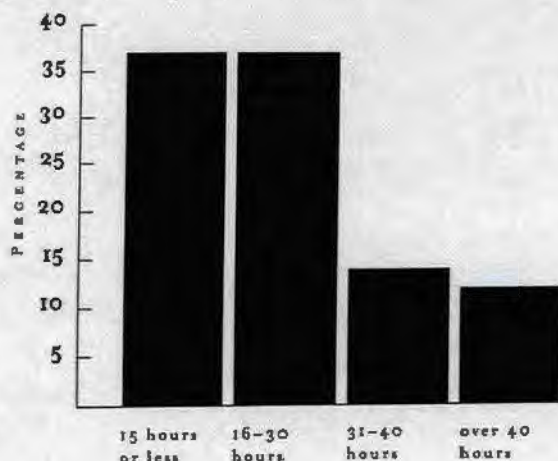
Program enrollment drops significantly between the ages of four and five. This may result from the limited number of kindergarten programs (only 32 centers have designated kindergarten programs), and/or enrollment in public or non-sectarian private kindergarten programs. This finding requires further study.

National trends suggest that early care/education enrollment continues to increase, especially for infants and toddlers, the fastest growing subgroup of children and early care and education programs (Kagan and Newman, 2000). Enrollment in early care centers in the United States increased 19% between 1997-1999. At the same time, enrollment in centers operated by religious facilities increased by 26% (Neugebauer, 2000). Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York noted a 12% increase in enrollment in the last year. Most directors anticipate a stable enrollment. The disparity between the national trends and directors' projections require further study. Nevertheless, universal kindergarten (free kindergarten for all children) and public 3 and 4 year old programs have the potential to dramatically limit enrollment in Jewish early childhood centers.

### Program Characteristics

School mission statements and educational philosophy drive the curriculum, dictate the culture and reflect the professionalism of the school. One expectation for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children\* is a clear articulation of the program's philosophy. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the schools in the sample indicated they have a mission

*Three Year Olds*



\*The purpose of NAEYC Accreditation is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs in the United States.



statement. Of those that have mission statements, 88% have some Jewish education as part of their mission, while the rest do not mention Jewish or Judaism at all.

Half of the directors did not know or did not respond to the question that asked if the teacher's personal religious beliefs matched the school's religious philosophy. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the directors did not feel it was important for teachers' beliefs to be consistent with the school's religious philosophy. Of those that responded, between 25% and 65% of the staff's personal views match the school's religious philosophy.

#### *Personnel: Teachers and Assistants*

This survey reports on 1637 teachers (including 35 directors/teachers) and 856 assistants. Ninety-eight percent (98%) are women. Overall, 69% of the early childhood professionals are Jewish; 30% of teachers and 33% of assistants are not. This is significantly different than the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education study (1994) that reported overall only 10% of the early childhood teachers were not Jewish.

The majority of teachers across all affiliations have been teaching 9 years or less. Teachers' ages range between 30 and 59 years, except for Orthodox pre-schools where the majority of teachers are in their 20s. A surprisingly large percentage of directors report they do not know the level of Jewish education of their teachers. For those who responded, 45% of the teachers' highest level of Judaic education was an afternoon Hebrew school. The teachers' level of Jewish education varies significantly by affiliation.

In direct contrast to their Judaic training, 69% of teachers and 38% of assistants have a bachelor's or master's degree, often in early childhood education. This compares to 45% of teachers who have a bachelor's degree or higher and 58% who participated in a supervised early childhood practicum in the secular early childhood community (Whitebook, 2000).

Recruitment and retention are priority issues for all Jewish educators. Directors reported that 12% of teachers and 14% of assistants either left this past year or are planning to leave in the coming year. Jacobson (2000) reported that the average turnover rate in a study of centers in five cities conducted by The Center for Child Care Workforce was thirty-one percent (31%).

Directors indicated that most teachers left because of poor salaries and went to the public schools. The majority of the directors (85%) were able to hire new staff within eight weeks after a position was open. However, only 40% were very satisfied with the new staff's early childhood qualifications. Fewer (34%) were satisfied with their Judaic qualifications. The *Then and Now* study (Whitebook, 2000) also found that "new teaching staff was significantly less-well educated than those they replaced."

Currently teachers earn between \$10,000 and \$29,999 for a 10 month contract. The average salary is \$19,400. The majority (59%) of assistants earn less than \$10,000 for a 10-month contract. Teachers and assistants are rarely offered benefits. This is consistent with early childhood professionals in the secular community. According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics Labor, the annual salary of preschool teachers in 1999 averaged \$19,610 (Jacobson, 2002). This is in comparison to the average elementary teacher's salary (in 25 states) which was slightly less than \$40,000, as reported by the National Education Association (Washingtonpost.com, 4/8/02).

6

#### *Characteristics of Center Directors*

The vast majority (93%) of directors are Jewish. Seventy-nine percent (79%) have either a bachelor's or master's degree in early childhood education and 31% have a certificate in educational leadership. In the secular community, 77% have completed a bachelor's degree and 71% have participated in a supervised teaching practicum. (Whitebook, 2000).

However, in contrast to their secular education qualifications, 67% of directors of Jewish early childhood centers have the equivalent of a high school diploma in Jewish education and 32% have no formal Jewish education after completing an afternoon elementary school program. Only 18% have a bachelor's or master's degree in Judaic Studies.

Of those directors who responded, the majority are between 50 and 59 years of age. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of directors plan to continue in their current position and 72% have no plans to retire. We calculate that within 10-15 years, 79% of the directors will reach retirement age.

## Conclusions

This survey is the first attempt to obtain detailed information about the state of early childhood Jewish education at the national level. Findings from this study provide a snapshot of the current state of the profession and raises important questions about the content, the professionals, the enrollment and the role of early childhood Jewish education.

New understandings about the development and transmission of cultural behaviors and beliefs, coupled with the knowledge that children spend substantial amounts of time in early childhood programs suggest that early childhood education is the perfect opportunity to shape the Jewish identity of young children and their families and to lay the foundation for subsequent Jewish experiences and involvement.

Research has consistently demonstrated that knowledgeable and well-trained early childhood professionals are the key to both the quality of early childhood programs and to the social-emotional development of the child. Jewish early childhood educators play a critical role in shaping the behaviors and beliefs of children and their families. Even though the majority Jewish early childhood educators are dedicated to the field (CIJE, 1998), they have limited Judaic training.

Without recognizing that early childhood education is valuable, without pedagogic and Judaic professional development, and without equitable compensation, public kindergarten and preschool programs will lure both our educators and our families. If we want early childhood education centers to focus on Jewish education, then we need to recruit and retain high-quality Jewish educators. To be most effective, educators must have substantive Judaic knowledge and exude Judaic values and mores as well as be current in early childhood practice. "Improving the quantity and quality of professional development for teachers, along with enhancing the conditions of employment, is the strategy most likely to improve the quality of the teaching force (in Jewish schools)" (CIJE, 1998). Without this, only very special individuals will stay in the Jewish early childhood profession. Fewer still will enter the field.

Similarly, we must be able to demonstrate that Jewish early childhood education provides an exceptional, nurturing, developmentally appropriate secular and Judaic early childhood education. Otherwise, only families most committed to *Clal Yisrael*, will enroll in Jewish early childhood education centers. Therefore, it is essential to ask a number of questions:

- 1] What distinguishes a Jewish preschool from a public preschool? What does the term "Jewish" qualify in the statement—the site or the content?
- 2] How effective can early childhood centers be in transmitting Jewish values when the teacher's Jewish knowledge is based on an afternoon religious school education from 30 or more years ago? Or, if the early childhood educator is not Jewish? Or if the teachers' religious philosophy does not match that of the school's?
- 3] How much Jewish content is needed to transmit sustainable Jewish values to children and their families? Can a love of Judaism and the Jewish people be taught as a content area? What influence should, and do, non-Jewish students have on the curriculum?
- 4] What will be the impact on our enrollment and teaching force with the introduction of public three and four year old programs? Can we compete with public pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs? Can we afford not to?
- 5] How can a partnership between the family and the early childhood center strengthen the child and his or her family's Jewish identity and their subsequent involvement in Jewish education, the synagogue and the Jewish community.

*V'shinantam l'vanekha* וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְפָנֶיךָ

The imperative to teach our children is one of the distinguishing features of the Jewish community. Jewish education shapes who we are and how we behave. How a culture treats its youngest members has a significant influence on how it will grow, prosper, and be viewed by others (Meisels & Shonkoff, 2000). The future of the American Jewish community depends on the quality of our early childhood centers and the professional staff caring for and educating our children.

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# Memorandum

**To:** Adam  
**From:** ilene  
**Date:** 6/28/02  
**Re:** report

---

Adam, thank you very much for reading and commenting on this report, especially in light of the fact that you have one foot out the door. I am sending you the last draft. This goes to a copy editor and a graphic designer to be prepared in a double column report format. It will also have headers on each page so the reader can easily identify the section they are in. I just learned the rule that one should read about a graph before one sees it. While I don't think that is a big issue, we will review and modify where we can.

I would especially love your feedback on the conclusions section. Also, some places we have both percentages and numbers because we felt it was important for the reader to see real numbers. If you feel we are duplicating the information unnecessarily, we can easily eliminate a graph.

Thanks again for your comments. I really value them. They were extremely helpful last time and I know they will be this time. This has been an incredible learning experience for me and I hope the report is considered seriously.

Have a great trip. Please let me know how much to compensate you and the return fed ex costs.  
Thanks again. ilene



## Introduction

Historically, the care and education of young children was the responsibility of the family. Child care centers were designed to provide low income families with programs that offered custodial care for young children while their mothers worked (Bowman et al., 2001). These centers essentially filled a "babysitting" function and were not designed to have an educational component. In the early twentieth century, nursery schools emerged for the middle and upper class families. These programs "were designed to nurture exploration and facilitate socio-emotional development" (Meisels and Shonkoff, 2000) such as separating from home, sharing, cooperation and positive self-esteem. Although nursery schools placed more emphasis on education than child care centers, the prevailing belief was still that a child's education began when he or she went to school at the age of 6—hence the name "preschool."

Jewish early childhood programs first emerged in the 1930s. The primary goals of these programs were similar to the secular nursery schools with the additional purpose of helping the children adapt to the American culture and preparing them for school. The assumption was that the families were already living Jewish lives. Now they had to learn to become Americans. (Rotenberg, 1977) The teachers in most of these schools had limited Jewish backgrounds. The primary Jewish feature of Jewish preschools, and subsequent early childhood centers, was the location (e.g. synagogue or JCC) and the ethnicity of the population, more than the content of the program.

In 1990, the National Jewish Population Study ushered in an era of greater awareness and concern of how Jewish culture and identity is transmitted, thus causing Jewish community agencies and organizations to review and revise their missions, ask hard questions such as, "What's Jewish about us?" or "What does the 'J' in our agency name mean?", and used words like "renewal" and "renaissance". A number of programs were established or blossomed as a result of those questions such as Me'ah, birthright israel, STAR, Synagogue 2000, and The Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Institute. Many Jewish organizations now regularly incorporate Torah study into their meetings. In addition, religious schools now have more family programming and Shabbat experiences as part of the school program and more Jewish Community Centers now

Missing Shift -  
from "babysitting"  
to education  
& from  
Americanization  
to Jewish  
ed

Wuh 7  
too great  
about

have Jewish educators on staff. Renaissance and Renewal has also seen spurred increased participation day schools and Jewish camping.

The one constituency that received little attention during this "renewal" and "renaissance" was Jewish early childhood education. The only data on Jewish early childhood education comes from the Mandel Foundation (formerly known as the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education). In 1994, the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) conducted a study of religious school, day school and early childhood Jewish personnel in three communities in the United States. They found that early childhood educators had the lowest salaries, the weakest Jewish background and training, and the largest numbers of non-Jewish professionals within the three school systems. This study served as a catalyst for Jewish early childhood professionals to ask the question, "what should a quality Jewish early childhood education experience consist of"? However, there was little or no reaction, or response, from Jewish leadership.<sup>1</sup>

In 1996, the CIJE published Early Childhood Jewish Education as part of their Best Practices Project. The report determined that a critical component of early childhood "best practice" is the knowledge and skill of the educator. "The younger the child, the more crucial is competence in the teacher".

Except for the CIJE studies, there has been no systematic research on the Jewish early childhood profession. Some communities conduct annual early childhood professional surveys, but each one contains different kinds of information and communities generally do not report or share the data. Few communities know how many Jewish children under the age of 6 there are in the population, how many of them attend Jewish child care and education programs or how many hours children are spending in early childhood centers every week. There are no national standards for measuring the quality of a Jewish early childhood education program, although some Jewish preschools are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children<sup>2</sup> and some communities (Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Baltimore and Boston) have

<sup>1</sup> One exception is *Machon L' Morim: Bereshit*, a five year intensive professional development program for early childhood educators in Baltimore that was funded by The Children of Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff Philanthropic Fund. [www.machonlmorim.org](http://www.machonlmorim.org)

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of NAEYC Accreditation is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs in the United States

Since these are mentioned in the text, some readers will want to know about them, so include them in the references

developed criteria for assessing the presence and quality of Judaic content in early childhood programs. In direct contrast, there has been an explosion of research in the secular community in the past ten years on early childhood development and the care of young children.

Research investigating the early childhood education and educators independently agree that :

- 1) the quality of the relationship between the child and the childcare professional significantly impacts on every aspect of the child's development (Shonkoff & Meisels, 2000)
- 2) the strongest predictor of a high quality early learning program is the training and compensation of the early childhood professional
- 3) while no single curriculum is best, children learn more in a well planned preschool where curricular goals are specified and followed (Bowman, et al, 2001)
- 4) the biggest quality issue facing the early childhood profession is the inability to recruit and train qualified staff. (Whitebook, 1998)
- 5) the cultural context from which core values are passed on from generation to generation are defined by the relationships children have

Today, it is clear that "preschool" plays a much more important educational and cultural role than originally intended. The experiences young children have shape who they are and who they become when they are older. It is now well known that the early years of life affect brain development and lay the foundation for subsequent learning (Shonkoff, 2000). While formal schooling still begins at 6 years of age, school readiness is increasingly becoming the responsibility of the early childhood programs. Most children ages 3-6 (not yet in kindergarten) attend some form of child care/education program (Olson, 2002). The mother's educational level and employment status, as well as family income, is positively related to children's participation in non-parental child care and education programs (Kagan & Neuman, 2000). One would therefore expect large numbers of Jewish children in early childhood programs.

In fact, approximately 100,000 Jewish children attend Jewish early childhood education programs. Jewish early childhood centers are becoming increasingly important as they

Re Examine 7  
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How do you know this?

not only serve as the introduction to Judaism and Jewish communal life, but are becoming the primary place where Jewish identity is formed. Today Jewish children are spending increasing amounts of time in Jewish early childhood programs. The care and education of a young Jewish child is no longer the sole responsibility of the parents. It is a partnership between the parents and the early childhood center.

Jewish early childhood education centers have the potential to have the same, or even greater impact, than the day schools. Children spend six to eight hours a day in programs with skilled professionals knowledgeable in Judaic and early childhood development who integrated with Jewish values, concepts, and Hebrew language into a curriculum that includes numerous family experiences. 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.

Which studies?

These studies also acknowledge that the changes in the employment patterns of women and the increase of single parent families have significantly increased the demand for nonparental care and education of young children. These factors are the driving forces behind universal kindergarten and public three and four year old programs. They also contributed to the urgency that inspired the formation of the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership (JECEP), a non-profit advocacy and educational organization.

Jewish?

The Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership (JECEP) was established in March 2001. The six funding partners were committed to ensuring that every child has an opportunity to participate in quality, innovative and meaningful Jewish early childhood educational experiences that will enable the children and their families create permanent connections to Judaism. Two initial goals developed from that vision. First, to place Jewish early childhood education on the national Jewish communal agenda. Second, to encourage federations and foundations to support and invest in Jewish early childhood education programs. JECEP recognizes the crucial role Jewish early childhood programs have among the approximately 100,000 Jewish children and their families currently participating in these programs. In most communities, Jewish early childhood education is the only formal educational venue that is not a direct recipient of Federation dollars (i.e., capitation funding for religious schools and day schools). The Jewish



Community Centers Association and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are the only national Jewish organizations that employ professional staff members whose sole responsibility is to oversee early childhood education.

Since there is no current research on Jewish early childhood education, the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership commissioned two studies at the outset; 1) a national demographic study on Jewish early childhood education programs; and 2) an “exit survey” investigating decisions parents make regarding subsequent Jewish education after their children “graduate” from Jewish early childhood programs. These studies were commissioned for four reasons:

- 1] To obtain information on the status of Jewish early childhood education from a large and demographically diverse sample of programs;
- 2] To assess the extent to which Jewish early childhood programs face similar challenges around staffing and program quality as found with secular early childhood programs;
- 3] To ascertain the extent to which the current teaching staff in Jewish early childhood programs are well trained in both child development and Jewish studies; and
- 4] To document the impact that Jewish early childhood programs have on the children and their families.

The national demographic study was designed to collect descriptive data about early childhood programs from Orthodox<sup>3</sup>, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Jewish Community Center, and Independent Jewish early childhood programs. The study addresses the major issues in early childhood education programs as well as issues relevant only to the Jewish community. These include:

- number and ages of children, Jewish and non-Jewish, enrolled in the sample centers
- number of hours children spend in centers
- number of professionals, Jewish and non-Jewish, in centers
- secular and Judaic credentials and compensation of the early childhood professionals
- the extent of the similarities and differences between the affiliations in all areas studied.

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<sup>3</sup> Schools are affiliated with Torah Umesorah

This study does not directly assess the quality of the sampled programs. Rather, where appropriate, the results are compared to those on early learning centers and early childcare research in the secular community.

The central findings from this report are:

- 77% of the total sample population is Jewish. Jewish enrollment varies considerably depending on the affiliation ranging from 25% in community settings to 100% in some synagogue schools.
- More than one third of the sample population, majority of the whom are between 2 and 4 years of age, spend 30+ hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers.
- Program enrollment drops significantly between the ages of four and five.
- 88% of the sample early childhood centers have some Jewish education as part of their mission. The rest do not mention Jewish or Judaism at all.
- Overall, 69% of the early childhood professionals are Jewish; 30% of teachers and 33% of assistants are not.
- Teachers earn between \$10,000 and \$29,999 for a 10 month contract. The average salary is \$19,400. The majority (59%) of assistants earn less than \$10,000 for a 10-month contract. Teachers and assistants are rarely offered benefits.
- A surprisingly large percentage of directors report they do not know the level of Jewish education of their teachers. For those who responded, 45% of the teachers' highest level of Judaic education was an afternoon Hebrew school.
- Directors indicated that most teachers left because of poor salaries and went to the public schools. Directors were generally not satisfied with the new staff's early childhood qualifications or their Judaic qualifications.
- The vast majority (93%) of directors are Jewish. Seventy-nine percent (79%) have either a bachelor's or master's degree in early childhood education and 31% have a certificate in educational leadership
- Of those directors who responded, the majority are between 50 and 59 years of age. Within the next decade, three quarters of the directors will reach retirement age.

This report contains an introduction, overview of the study and five sections of findings.

Section I addresses the characteristics of the student population, including enrollment

and the number of hours that children attend center programs. Section II discusses basic characteristics of the programs, including educational and religious philosophy and mission statements. Section III addresses characteristics of the professionals (teachers and assistants), their credentials, salaries, benefits, age, years of teaching and staff turnover. Section IV examines the directors' credentials, salaries and career plans. Section V closes the report with conclusions and policy recommendations.

The findings in this report should raise our attention to the critical importance of the issues facing Jewish early childhood education and provide a basis for advocacy, education and strategic planning.

## Study Design and Methodology

The Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership currently has 1,082 early childhood centers in its database. In June, 2001, surveys were sent to the directors of 300 centers spanning the range of affiliations including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Community/Independent, and JCC/Y's. By July, 80 schools had returned the surveys. The first stage of follow up began mid-July only to find that most schools were closed for the summer and the directors were unavailable until the end of August. At the end of August, surveys were again sent to schools that had not responded. Follow up phone calls to schools were made. Many directors indicated they were too busy preparing for the opening of school and would complete the survey in September. September 11<sup>th</sup> coupled with the High Holidays interfered with the responses. At the end of October a third effort to obtain more responses was attempted. By the end of November one hundred and fifty-two (152) centers in 28 states (encompassing all regions across the country- Northeast, Northwest, Midwest, Southeast and Southwest) completed and returned the survey.

The primary reasons for non-response to the survey fell into three categories: the survey was too long and they were too busy; a new director who did not know the information; or contact information was incorrect. Response rates by affiliation are shown in Figure 1. Affiliations had between a 25% response rate and a 67% response rate. One reason the JCC response rate was so high may have been because the survey was discussed and distributed at the annual JCCA early childhood director meeting. Figure 2 shows the percentage of centers' participation by affiliation. It can be seen that the sample represents approximately 20% of the total number of Conservative, Reform and JCC centers and only 10% of the Reconstructionist, Independent and Orthodox affiliated centers.

Figure 1. Percentage of Responses by Affiliation

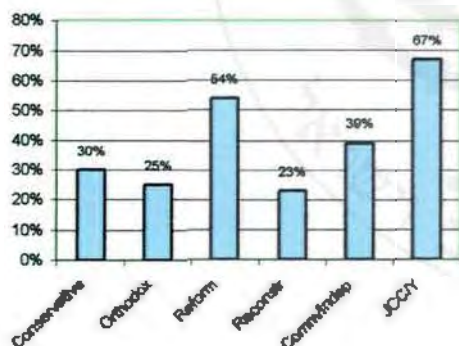


Figure 2. Percentage of Jewish ECE Centers Participating in the Study by Affiliation

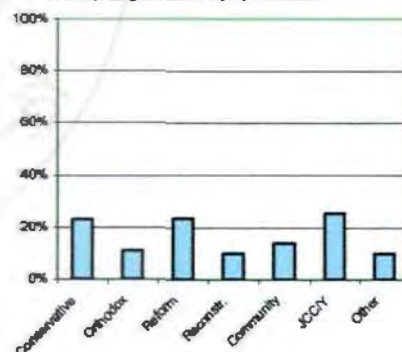


Figure 3 shows the percentage of enrollment by affiliation. Conservative, Reform and JCC schools constitute approximately 75% of the sample centers, with the JCC/Y affiliated centers enrolling the largest percentage of children followed by centers affiliated with the Reform Movement. Three centers (as indicated by "other") choose not to align themselves with any affiliation.

Thank you for completing the survey. We have your information and will be in touch with you soon. We are very grateful for your participation. We are very grateful for your participation. We are very grateful for your participation.

Figures are too small!



Figure 3. Percentage of Enrollment by Affiliation

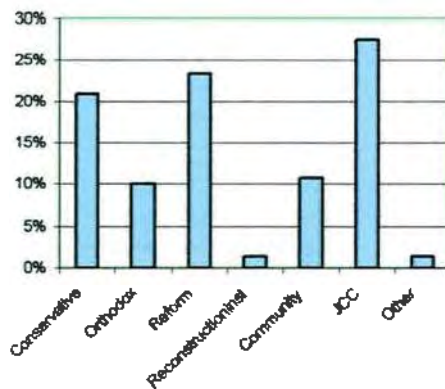
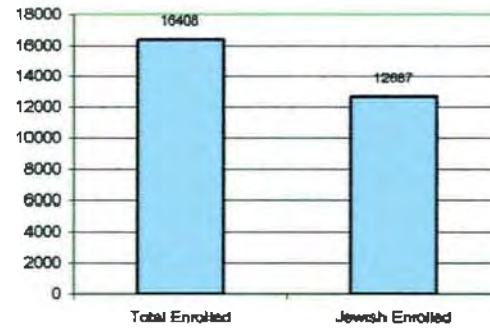


Figure 4. Total Enrollment & Jewish Enrollment



The sampled centers employ 2,583 professionals (117 directors, 35 director/teachers, 1,637 teachers and 856 assistants) and enroll 16,408 children birth-6 years of age. There is an average of 11 teachers and 6 assistants per school. Seventy-seven (77%) of the student population (Figure 4) and 69% of the professional population is Jewish. (see Section III),

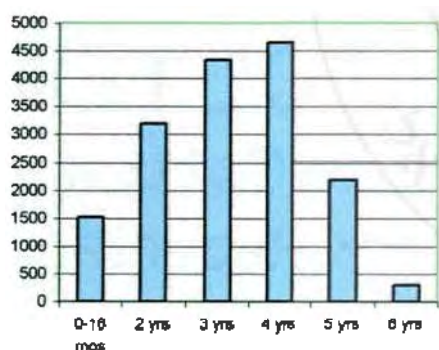
## Section 1 - Student Population

### *Enrollment Data/Student Population*

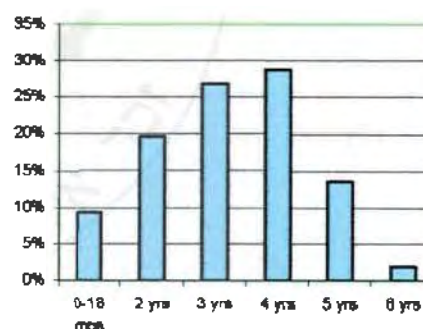
Large numbers of children participate in Jewish early childhood programs. While these data do not allow for an accurate projection of the total national Jewish preschool population, there are approximately 100,000 children between birth and six years of age in Jewish early childhood programs, including 31,000 day school kindergarten children (Schick, 2000). New York City alone services 24,500 Jewish preschool children. This is double the number reported in a *Time to Act* (1990) and only a small percentage of the total Jewish population of children birth to 6 years of age, which is approximately 700,000 (Keysar et al., 2000). As a comparison, Hillel currently estimates there are 400,000 college age students in the United States (Hillel.org).

This study sampled 152 centers in 28 states. These centers enroll 16,408 children between birth and six years of age (including kindergarten). Figures 1 and 2 show the enrollment for the total number of children by age and the percentage of children enrolled by age. There is no difference in patterns of enrollment between the total sample of children and the sample of Jewish children. These figures indicate that the majority of children range from 2 to 4 years of age. Enrollment patterns are consistent across affiliations, except for schools affiliated with Orthodox. Figures 3a-3f show enrollment by affiliation.

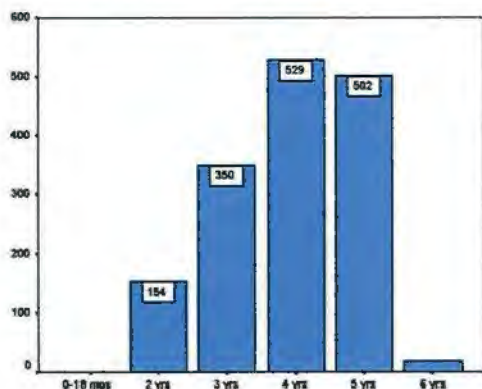
**Figure 1. Total Enrollment by Age**



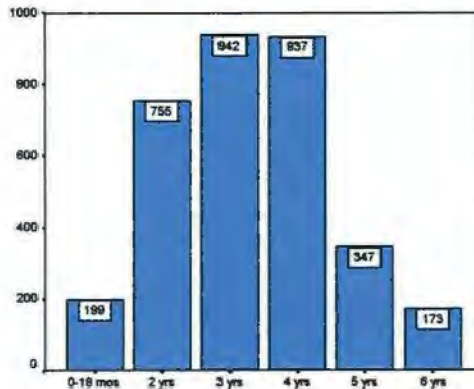
**Figure 2. Percentage of Enrollment by Age**



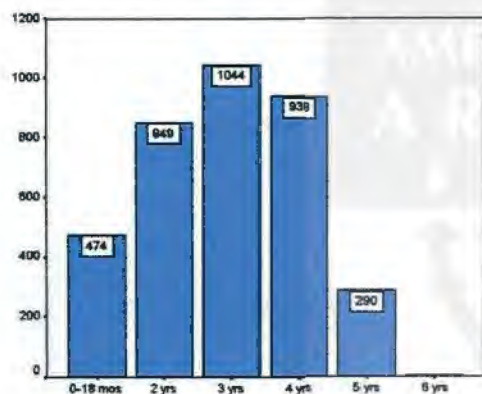
**Figure 3a.**  
**Orthodox Enrollment**



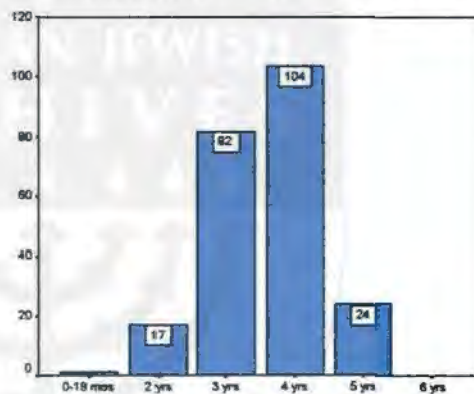
**Figure 3b.**  
**Conservative Enrollment**



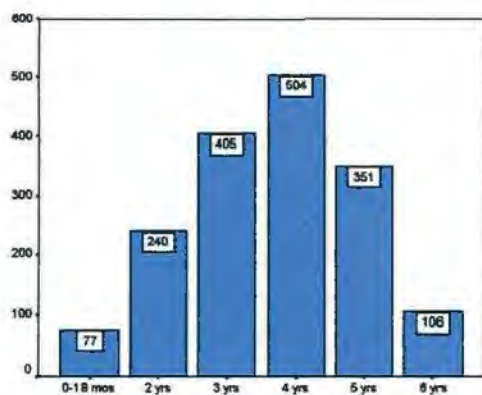
**Figure 3c.**  
**Reform Enrollment**



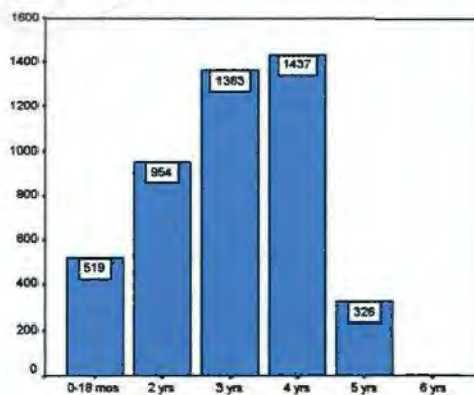
**Figure 3d.**  
**Reconstructionist Enrollment**



**Figure 3e.**  
**Community/Independent Enrollment**



**Figure 3f.**  
**JCC/Y Enrollment**



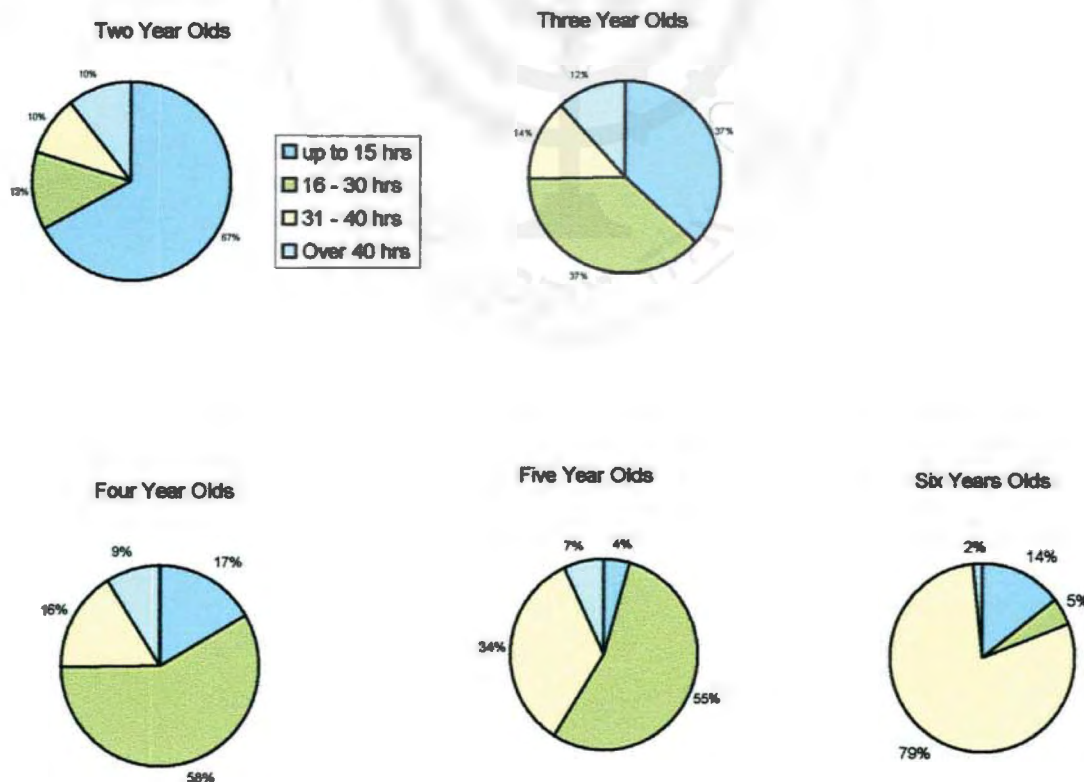
The enrollment data also shows the general trend that enrollment peaks at four years of age and fewer children are enrolled in early childhood programs as they approach kindergarten age. There are two deviations from this general pattern. First, children in Orthodox and Reform early

childhood programs have roughly equal numbers of 4 and 5 year olds enrolled. Second, children in Conservative affiliated programs.

It is interesting to note that there are more two year olds in the sample centers than five and six year olds. In the general community, the numbers are about the same (4 million per age beginning at infancy, (NCES, 1995). There could be several reasons for the decrease in enrollment of five year olds. The most plausible reason is that Jewish kindergarten programs are not available in many communities since children have access to public kindergartens. Only 22% (34 schools) of the sample schools indicate they have a kindergarten program. Preliminary findings from the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership's Exit Survey indicate that approximately 75% of children completing a 4 year-old Jewish early childhood education program enroll in public kindergarten programs. (Beck, 2002) Public three and four year old programs have the potential to have the same impact and dramatically limit enrollment in the core Jewish early childhood population, 3 and 4 year olds.

The lack of Jewish kindergarten programs becomes even more critical when one considers that synagogue religious schools generally begin their formal program when children are in the second grade of their secular school. (The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism recently revised guidelines may begin to address this problem.) However, 83% of four year old children spend 16 hours or more a week in a Jewish educational environment and then have between none, or at most, 2 hours of Jewish education a week until they are 8 years old and enter religious school, where they generally receive between 4 and 6 hours of Jewish education a week.

**Figure 4. Time Spent in Centers**





The number of hours that young children spend in the early childhood programs is staggering in its own right. Figure 4 shows the number of hours children spend in their early childhood centers by the age of the child. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the total sample spend 30 hours or more a week and 10% spend 40+ hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers. When viewed by age, 67% of 2 year olds spend 15 hours or less and 20% spend 31+ hours in Jewish early childhood centers. In comparison, the U.S. Department of Education Early Childhood Program Participation Component (1995) reported that 24% of two year olds spend less than 15 hours a week in non-parental childcare while 51% spend 31+ hours a week. (Figure 5) Sixty-three percent (63%) of 3 year olds spend between 16 and 40+ hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers compared to 73% in the secular community.

Figure 5.

Percentage distribution according to number of hours per week in nonparental care by age

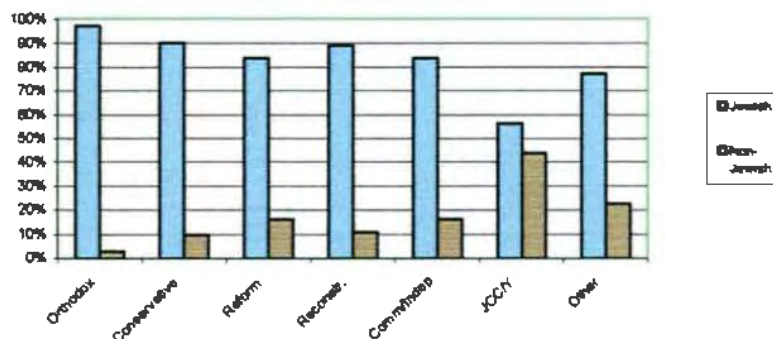
Age	Less than 15 hours	15-24 hours	25-34 hours	35+ hours
1	19	15	13	53
2	24	11	14	51
3	27	15	12	46
4	32	14	13	41
5	30	14	17	39

U.S. Department of education, national Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1995, early Childhood Program Participation Component

One would expect that older children are spending greater amounts of time in centers than younger children. However, most two year old programs are 2 and 1/2 to 3 hours long two to three days a week. That means they attend "preschool" between 5 and 9 hours a week. Even if they attend "preschool" five days a week for 3 hours each day they are only in the center 15 hours a week. Therefore, two year olds that spend more than 15 hours a week in a center are generally in before and after school programs. Twenty percent (20%) of 2 year olds are in Jewish early childhood centers over 30 hours a week. The data also indicates that 81% of six year olds are spending more than 30 hours a week in the centers, an additional 2 hours a day in either before school care, after school care or some combination of both. Young Jewish children are spending the same amount of time in early childhood centers as older children spend in Jewish day schools.

Another enrollment issue facing Jewish early childhood education is the non-Jewish student population. Figure 6 compares the percentage of Jewish children to non-Jewish children enrolled in the centers by affiliation. The percentage of Jewish children is greater than the percentage of non-Jewish children across affiliations. However, the Jewish enrollment varies considerably depending on the affiliation. JCC's Jewish enrollment is only 12% higher than the non-Jewish enrollment, while the Orthodox centers show approximately 98% Jewish enrollment compared to about 2% non-Jewish.

Figure 6. Jewish / Non-Jewish Enrollment Comparison



This poses a problem for many directors who wonder how much Jewish education they can include as their non-Jewish population increases.

Figures 7a compare last year's enrollment with the current year's enrollment. These figures show a slight increase in total enrollment from 99-00 to 00-01 across affiliations with the exception of a slight drop in total enrollment in the Community/Independent centers. Figure 7b compares last year's Jewish enrollment with the current year's Jewish enrollment. It appears that there were drops in Jewish enrollment in Conservative, Community/Independent, and JCC/Y centers, with the drop being more noticeable for the Community/Independent centers. Data from the 152 centers also show that the 99-00 school year average percentage of Jewish children to the total number of children in the sample was 81%, and in the 00-01 school year it was 77%. It is important to note that the JCC centers enroll 33% of the total sample population and 19% of the total non-Jewish student population.

Figure 7a. '99-'00 and '00-'01 Enrollment Comparison

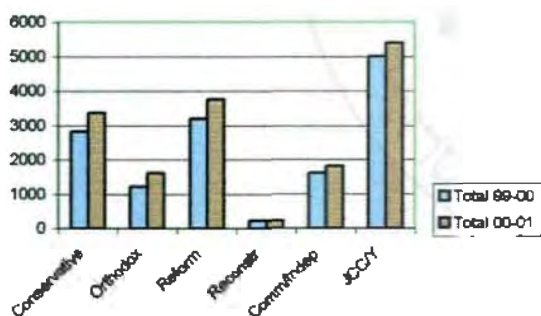
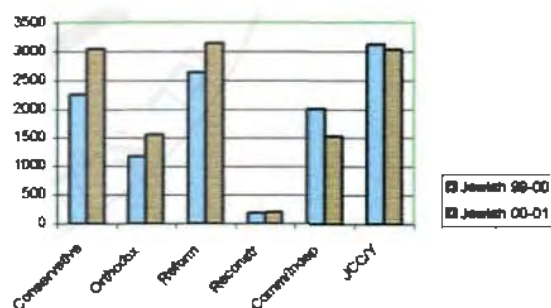


Figure 7b. '99-'00 and '00-'01 Jewish Enrollment Comparison

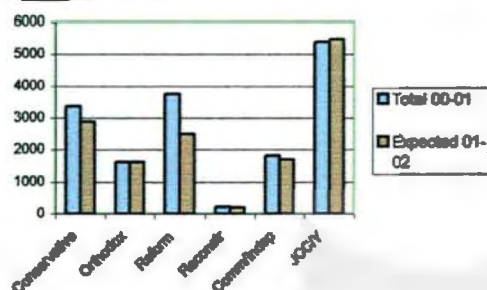


Figures 8a shows the 2000-2001 versus expected 2001-2002 enrollment by affiliation for the total sample. Figure 8b shows the 2000-2001 versus expected 2001-2002 Jewish enrollment by affiliation. The findings indicate most directors anticipate a decrease in both overall and Jewish expected enrollment. The two exceptions are among Orthodox centers which anticipate steady enrollment, and among JCC centers which anticipate an increase both in overall and Jewish enrollment.

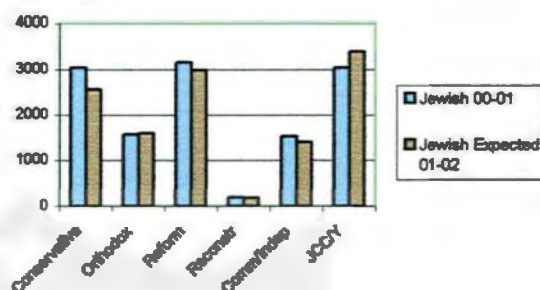
This is in direct contrast to the national trends that suggest early care/education enrollment continues to increase, especially for infants and toddlers, the fastest growing subgroup of children in early care and education programs (Kagan and Newman, 2000). Enrollment in early care centers in the United States increased 19% between 1997-1999. At the same time, enrollment in centers operated by religious facilities increased by 26% (Neugebauer, 2000). The Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York noted a 12% increase in enrollment in 2001

and a decrease in enrollment in 2002 school year. There is no data to explain the decrease of 2576 children, the majority of whom are four year olds (1374 four year olds). However, it is believed that most children left to participate in universal pre-k programs. The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education in Philadelphia notes an 8% decrease in enrollment in early childhood programs over the past ten years. The disparity between these data require further investigation.

**Figure 8a. '00-01 and '01-02  
Comparison of Expected Enrollment**



**Figure 8b. '00-01 and '01-02  
Comparison of Expected Jewish**



## Section II Program Characteristics

School mission statements and educational philosophy drive the curriculum, dictate the culture and reflect the professionalism of the school. One expectation for accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children\* is a clear articulation of the program's philosophy. Figure 1a shows that only two-thirds of the centers have a mission statement. Of the approximately 45% of directors that supplied a mission statement, 88% of those statements made explicit reference to some form of Jewish content to their mission. (Figure 1b) This raises the questions as to what distinguishes a Jewish early childhood education center from a secular early childhood education center if it is not the Jewish content.

Figure 1a. Mission Statement

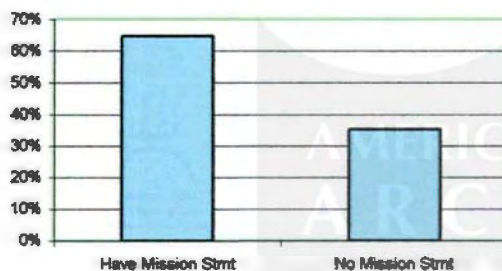
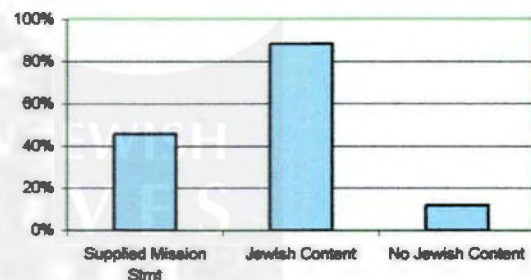


Figure 1b. Jewish Content of Mission Statement



Programs that intend to instill Jewish values consistent with a specific denominational philosophy need to have professionals knowledgeable with that given philosophy. Half of the directors did not know or did not respond to the question that asked if the teacher's personal religious beliefs matched the school's religious philosophy. The majority of the directors did not feel it was important for teachers' beliefs to be consistent with the school's religious philosophy. Figure 2 shows that schools affiliated with the Orthodox movement have a higher percentage of directors who believe that a teacher's personal religious beliefs are consistent with the schools. Of those directors that responded, between 25% and 65% of the staff's personal views match the school's religious philosophy. As expected, schools affiliated with the Orthodox movement had the highest rate of consistency between the professional's personal religious views and the school's religious philosophy. The weakest relationship was among the JCC schools.

Figure 2. Importance of similar religious philosophies

Affiliation	Directors believe similar religious philosophies are Important (%)
Orthodox	65
Conservative	24
Reform	20
Reconstructionist	33
Community/Independent	30
JCC/Y	32

*lowest level on 1-4.5 rating*



3370

It is also important for directors to have a definitive educational philosophy for the school. Eager to Learn (Bowman, et al, 2001) stated that while no single curriculum or educational philosophy is best, children learn more in a well planned preschool where curricular goals are specified and followed. Thirty-three (33%) of the directors stated the educational philosophy of their school was play and 49% stated "other". While this does not preclude these schools from having clearly articulated curricular goals, it does raise questions as to what the goals are. Only 16% of the directors indicated a specific educational philosophy for their school (4% Constructivist, 2% Montessori and 8% Reggio). Having a distinct articulation of educational philosophy was not unique to any affiliation. This finding suggests there is a potpourri of educational methodologies occurring in any given school. This fact may play an important role in planning professional development programs.

At this point we do not have data on the Jewish content in the classroom – the extent of the Jewish content, how is it being transmitted and the outcomes of the programs. The data also do not speak to the quality of the Jewish early childhood programs. Traditionally, "quality" in early childhood education has meant ensuring that children are cared for in safe and nurturing environments. Only a few states have educational standards for early childhood programs and/or training requirements for early childhood professionals. The "Cost, Quality, Outcomes" study reported that seven out of ten early childhood centers are mediocre (1995). As more states look to the preschools as preparation for elementary school, states are developing specific goals and evaluation tools for their early childhood centers and requiring increased training for early childhood professionals. However, many Jewish early childhood education programs are exempt from these regulations as they are affiliated with religious institutions. Jewish early childhood centers are going to need to at least meet, or more likely, exceed the state requirements if they are going to recruit families lured to public preschool education.

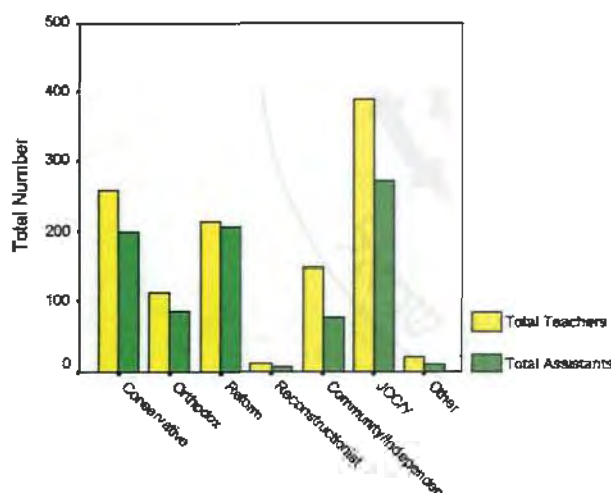
## Section III: Early Childhood Professionals

### Number of Professionals

It is clear that the responsibility for raising young Jewish children is now a partnership between the parents and the early childhood professional. Current research indicates that the most consistent finding on child development is that knowledgeable and trained early childhood professionals are the key to both the quality of early childhood programs and to the social-emotional development of the child (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). The relationship young children develop with their primary caregiver plays a significant role in their overall development, including cultural behaviors and beliefs (Bowman et al., 2001).

This survey reports on 1637 teachers (including 35 directors/teachers) and 856 assistants. Figure 1 compares the total number of teachers to the total number of assistants by affiliation. The figures show that generally centers employ more teachers than assistants. Ninety-eight percent (98%) are women. Overall, 69% of the early childhood professionals are Jewish; 30% of teachers and 33% of assistants are not. This is significantly different than the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education study (1994) that reported overall only 10% of the early childhood teachers were not Jewish.

Figure 1. Total number of Teachers  
And Assistants



Figures 2a and 2b compare Jewish teachers and assistants to non-Jewish teachers and assistants across center affiliations. In general, there are more Jewish teachers and assistants than their non-Jewish counterparts. The JCC centers have the closest ratio of Jewish to non-Jewish teachers, and the same percentage of Jewish to non-Jewish assistants.

Figure 2a. Percentage of Jewish/Non-Jewish Teachers by Affiliation

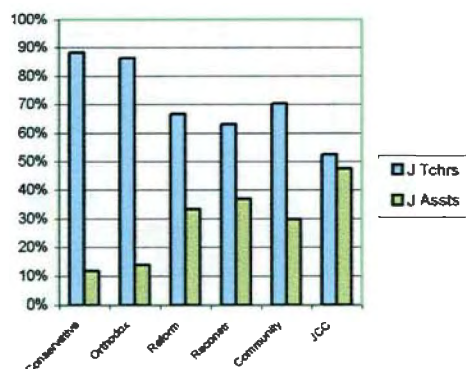
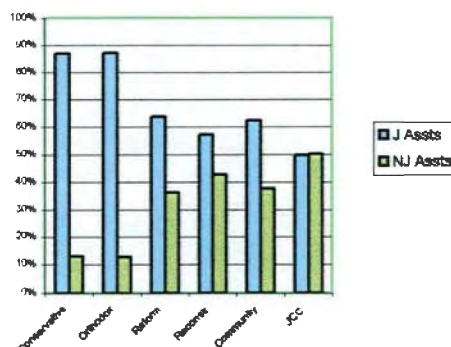


Figure 2b. Percentage of Jewish/Non-Jewish Assistants by Affiliation



## Ages of Professionals

Figure 3a shows the age ranges of the teachers in the sample centers. The majority of the teachers are between 30 and 60 years of age. In terms of affiliation breakdown, the exception to this pattern are teachers in the Orthodox affiliated early childhood centers (Figure 3b). Almost twice as many teachers in centers affiliated with the Orthodox are in their twenties compared to the sample as a whole. Moreover, the age range of teachers in Orthodox centers is more evenly spread compared to the sample as a whole. The study does not provide any data to explain this finding.

Figure 3a. Age range of teachers

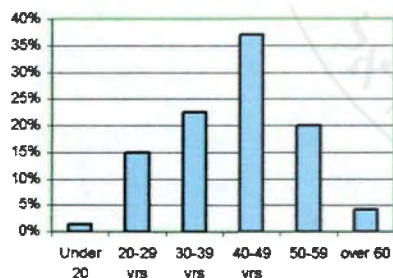
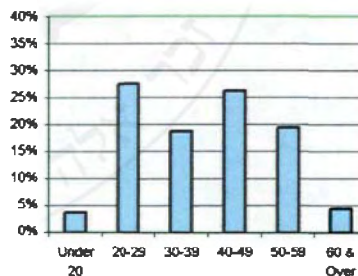


Figure 3b. Age Range of Orthodox Teachers



## Length of Time Teaching

Figure 4a shows the length of time teachers in the sample have been teaching. The findings show that 75% of teachers have been teaching less than 14 years. The pattern shows a decline, with fewer teachers having taught for long periods of time. The exception to this pattern is with teachers in Conservative affiliated centers as shown in Figure 4b.

The data also suggests that approximately 50% of the teachers are relatively new teachers. in

Both findings contradict anecdotal information that most early childhood educators are in their 40's and 50's, have been teaching for 15 years or more and may not be amenable to the new methodologies as they have been in the field for a long time and "set in their ways".

Figure 4a. Number of years teaching

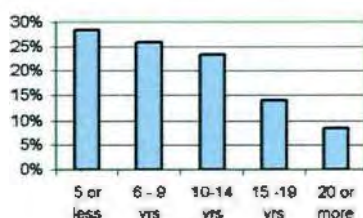
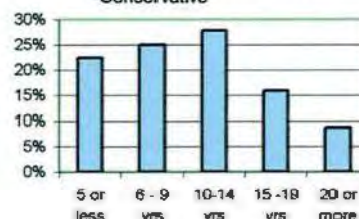


Figure 4b. Number of Years Teaching -Conservative



### Secular Education Level of Professionals

Research has found that one of the strongest predictors of high-quality early-learning programs is the preparation and compensation of early-childhood educators and their responsiveness and sensitivity to the children in their care. The National Research Council has recommended that all young children in center-based programs be taught by a teacher with a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood. (Quality Counts, 2002)

Nationally, less than half of early childhood professionals have bachelors degrees (Quality Counts, 2002). In many states, individuals who work with young children are not required to hold any certificate or degree, and ongoing training requirements are minimal. On the other hand, every state requires kindergarten teachers to have at least a bachelors degree and a certificate in elementary or early-childhood education. The pattern that emerges from this study (Figure 5a) is that the majority of Jewish early childhood assistants have high school diplomas and approximately 30% have BA/BS degrees in a field other than early childhood education. Overall, the sample of assistants' level of secular education, as reported by directors, is similar to secular early childhood professionals.

By contrast, and contrary to national trends, Jewish early childhood teachers predominantly have a BA/BS or MA/MS. (Figure 5a) However, it is important to note that less than half of the teachers have either a BA/BS or MA/MS in early childhood education. While that is well above the national level, it is still troublesome.

A slightly different pattern emerges when comparing educational levels of before school and after school caregivers. Figure 5b shows relatively high levels of education for both groups. No clear pattern of differences emerge between the two groups that can be easily explained.



Figure 5a. Teachers & Assistants Highest Level of General Education

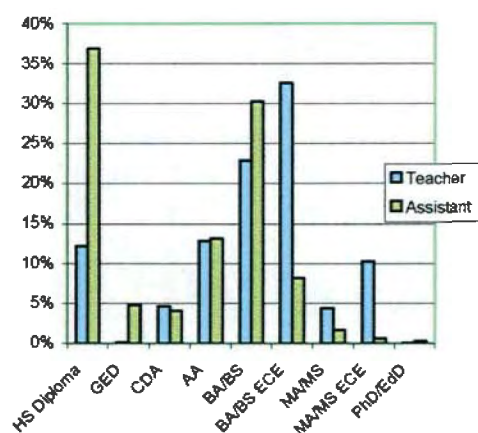
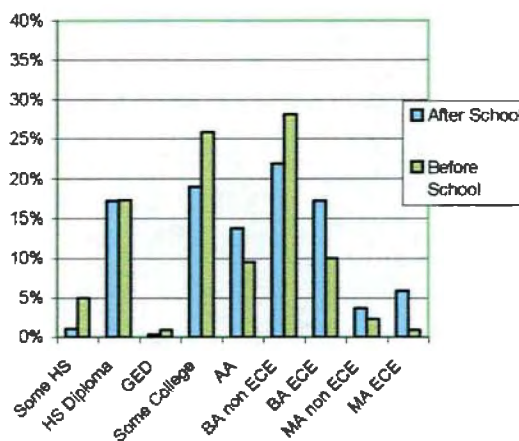


Figure 5b. Before & After School Caregivers Highest Level of Education



### Judaic Education Level of Professionals

The Jewish education level of the early childhood professionals differ significantly from their secular education levels. The following Figures 6a-6f describe the Jewish educational levels of the teachers as reported by the center directors. Figure 6a reports on the Jewish educational level of teachers in the total sample. When viewed across affiliations (Figures 6b – 6f), a surprisingly large percentage of the directors report that they do not know the level of Jewish education of their teachers, except for the Orthodox and Community/Independent centers. When the Jewish educational level is reported, the general pattern indicates that most teachers have received an afternoon Hebrew school education at the elementary level. The data suggests that the vast majority of teachers in Orthodox and Community/Independent affiliated centers have received Yeshiva High School Education. The JCC centers have the largest percentage of teachers whose highest level of Jewish training is the elementary level. The data does not provide information to explain why Community/Independent center early childhood professionals have Yeshiva High School education.

Figure 6a. Total sample Teacher Jewish Education Level

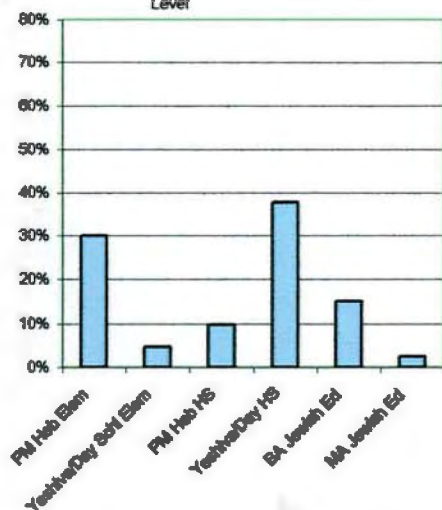
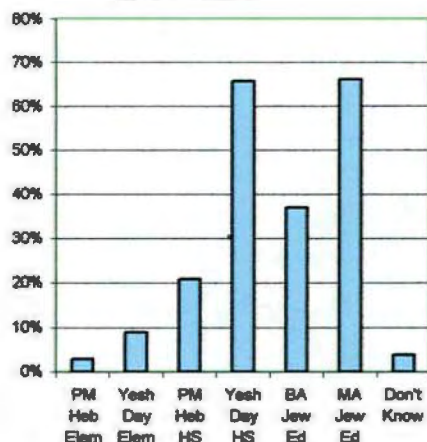


Figure 6b. Orthodox - Teacher Jewish Education Levels



*needs a key*

Figure 6c. Conservative - Teacher Jewish Education Levels

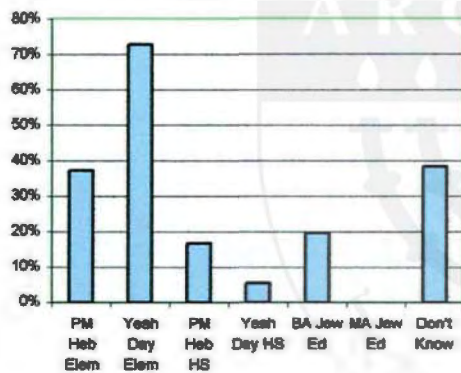


Figure 6d. Teacher Jewish Education Levels - Reform

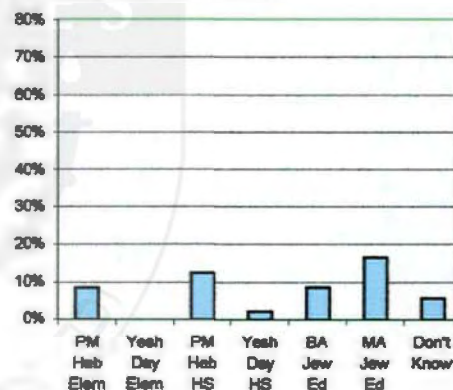


Figure 6e. Teacher Jewish Education Levels- Reconstructionist

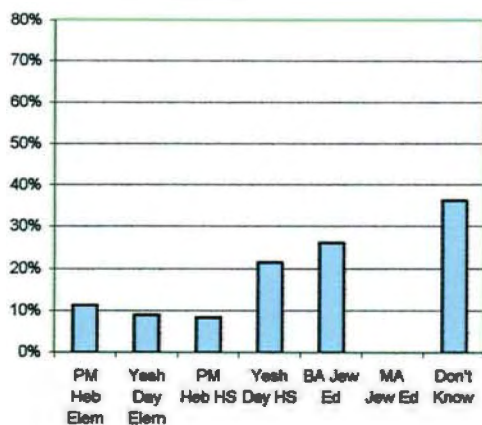


Figure 6f. Teacher Jewish Education Levels - JCC

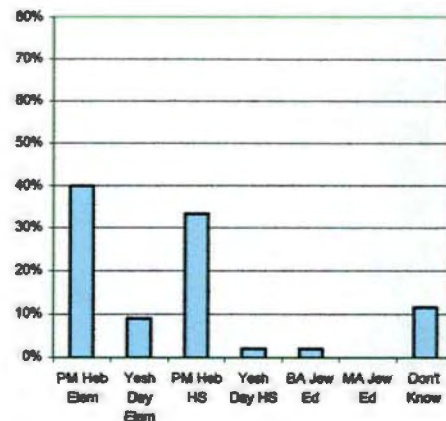
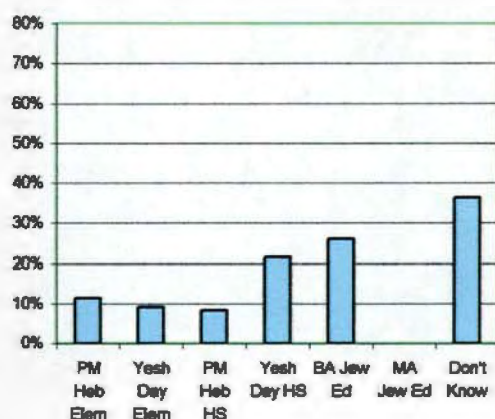


Figure 8g. Teacher Jewish Ed Level - Community



### Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention are priority issues for all Jewish educators. The following charts relate to the problem of teacher and assistant attrition and the reasons given by directors for teachers leaving their jobs. When directors were asked the reasons teachers left, 16% did not respond (Figure 7). Since these are directors' reports, it is unclear whether this information is an accurate representation of the teachers' reasons for leaving and where they go. Figure 9 shows the number and reason early childhood teachers left the field, as reported by the directors. The most frequently sighted reason was taking a position in the public schools. It is likely that this is due to higher salaries and better benefits that teachers would enjoy in the public schools, but it is not possible to directly test this assumption with the current data. Figure 8 indicates that 30% of the directors did not respond when asked why their assistants left. This suggests directors do not know the reasons why their assistants have left. However, unlike the teachers, among those responses that were given, "entering a new field" was the most frequent response.

Figure 7. Reasons Teachers Left

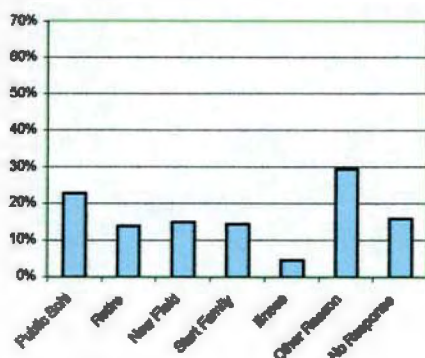


Figure 8. Reasons Assistants Left

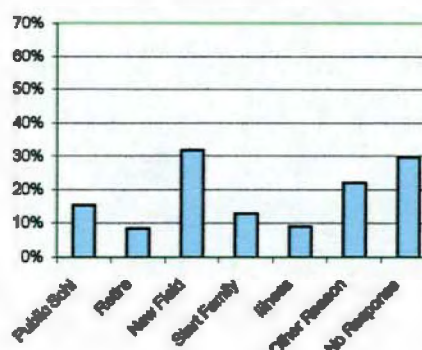


Figure 7. Reasons Teachers Left

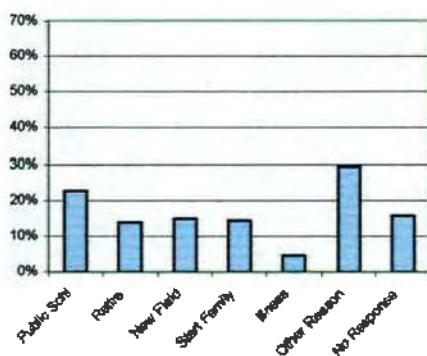


Figure 8. Reasons Assistants Left

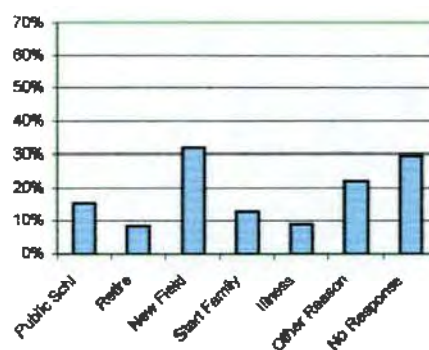


Figure 9. Reasons Professional Left the Field

Reason	Teachers	Assistants
Public School	84	24
Retire	51	13
New Field	55	49
Start Family	53	20
Illness	17	14
Other Reason	108	34
Directors who didn't respond	24	45

That being said, most teachers are remaining in their current positions. Directors report that only 12% of teachers and 14% of assistants either left this past year or are planning to leave in the coming year. This is distinctly different from Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York that reported x vacancies in 2002, an increase of x from x. It also contradicts the secular early childhood program data which reports an annual turnover of 30% (Quality Counts 2002).

Following the question of turnover, it is important to know the length of time it takes center directors to rehire staff. Figure 10 shows that it takes most center directors from one to eight weeks to rehire staff. The charts do not distinguish between rehiring teachers versus rehiring assistants. However, only 40% of the directors were very satisfied with the new staff's early childhood qualifications. Fewer were satisfied with their Judaic qualifications. (Figure 11) The overall level of satisfaction with both sets of qualifications is mediocre. The Then and Now study (Whitebook,2000) also found that "new teaching staff was significantly less-well educated than those they replaced."



Figure 10a. Satisfaction with Judaic Qualifications

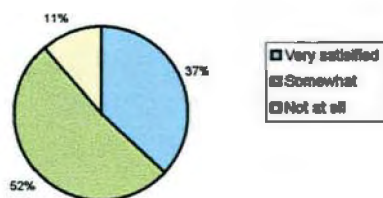
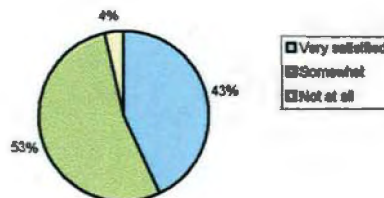


Figure 10b. Satisfaction with ECE Qualifications



## Salaries and Benefits

One of the possible reasons for the inability to recruit qualified staff may relate to the poor salaries of the early childhood professionals. Overall, the majority of teachers earn from under \$10,000 to \$29,000 over the 10-month period. (Figure 12) The average salary is \$19,400. This is consistent with early childhood professionals in the secular community. According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics Labor, the annual salary of preschool teachers in 1999 averaged \$19,610 (Jacobson, 2002). The United States pays about as much to parking-lot attendants and dry-cleaning workers as it does to early-childhood educators. As a comparison, the average elementary teacher's annual salary (in 25 states) was slightly less than \$40,000 and still, barely kept pace with living costs in the 1990's. (www.washingtonpost.com, 4/8/02) The salary pattern of Jewish early childhood educators depends on the denominational affiliation of the teacher. For example, Figure 13 shows that teachers in Orthodox affiliated early childhood centers earn between \$20,000 and \$49,000. By contrast, teachers in Community/Independent day care centers (Figure 14) earn salaries that are more evenly spread across the categories.

Figure 11a. Salaries - 10 month contract teachers

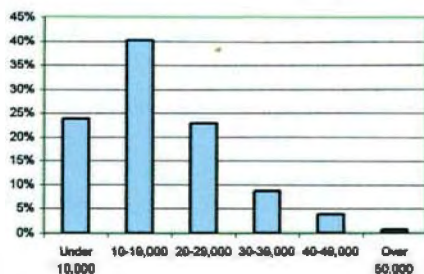
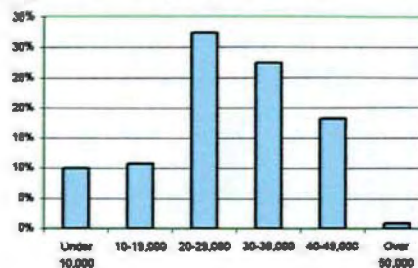
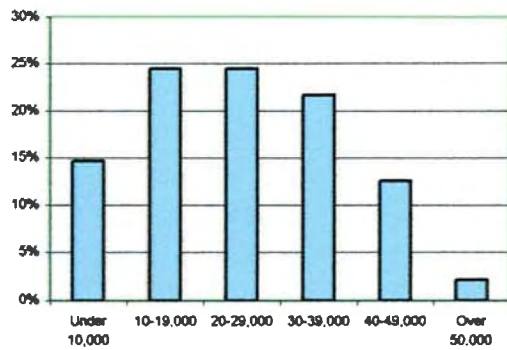


Figure 11b. Orthodox - Teacher Salaries 10 month Contract

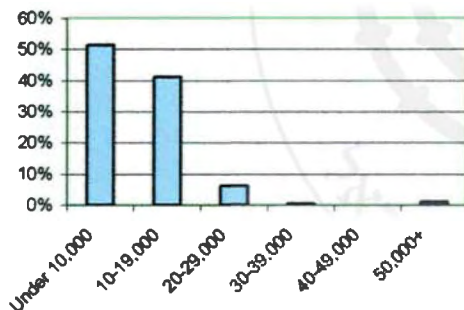


**Figure 11c. Community Teacher Salaries  
10 month contract**

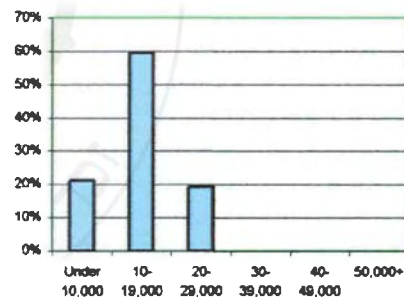


The majority (59%) of assistants, on the other hand, earn less than \$10,000 for a 10-month contract. (Figure 12a) This pattern also depends on the denominational affiliation of the center. Figure x shows the majority of assistants in Orthodox and Community/Independent centers earn more than \$10,000 annually. As a comparison, the average annual salary of a child-care workers in the secular community is \$15,430. (Quality Counts, 2002)

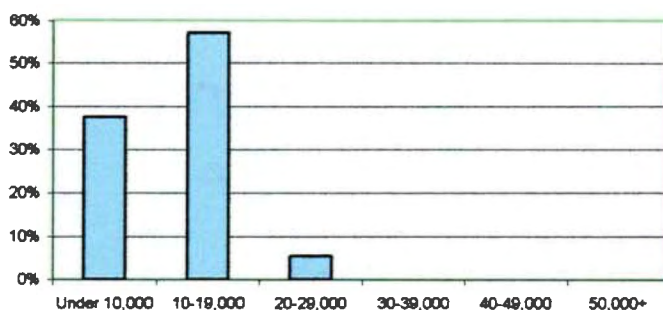
**Figure 12a. Salaries - 10 month contract  
assistants**



**Figure 12b. Salaries - Orthodox  
10 month contract assistants**



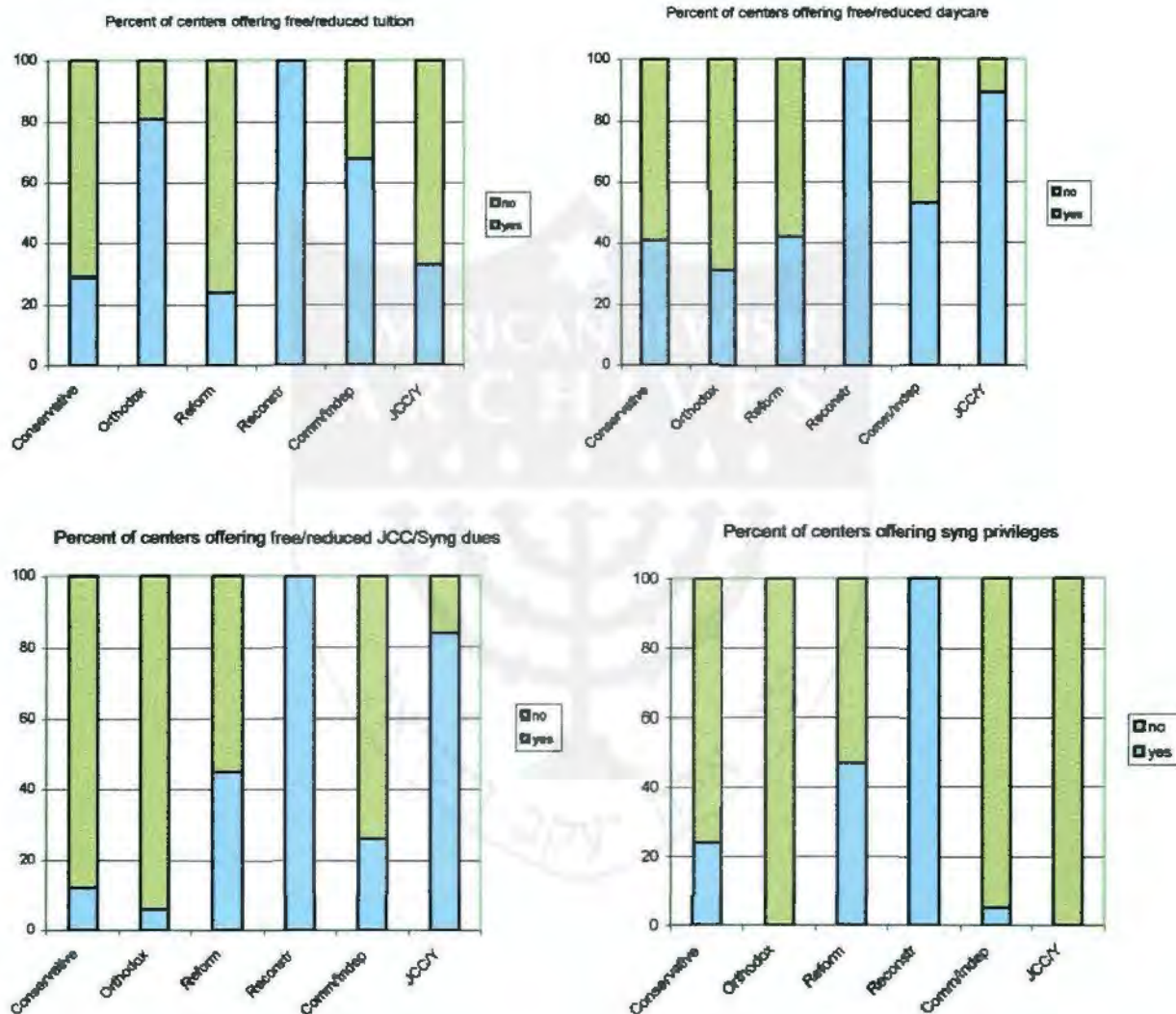
**Figure 12c. Salaries - Community/Independent - 10 month  
Contract Assistants**



I would emphasize the differences across categories

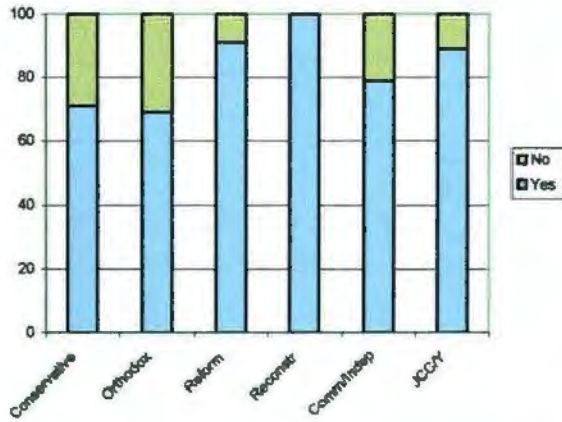
It is clear from Figure 13 that most benefits are not offered to teachers regardless of the affiliation of the center. Some exceptions emerge. Most centers offer their teachers funding to attend conferences. Many centers offer health care plans to their teachers. However, with the exception of Community/Independent and JCC/Y affiliated centers, most centers do not offer benefit plans (particularly pensions and life insurance) to their teachers.

Figure 13.

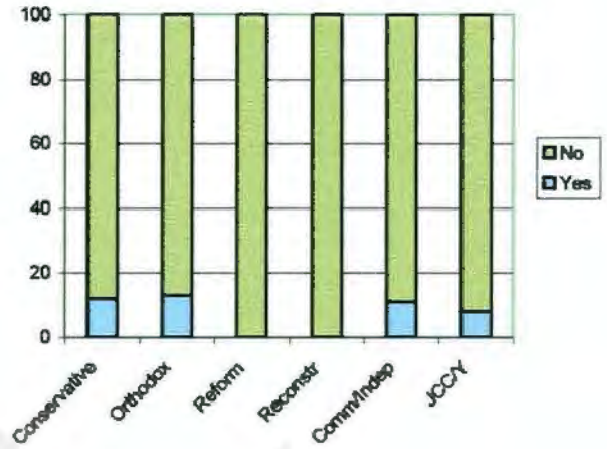




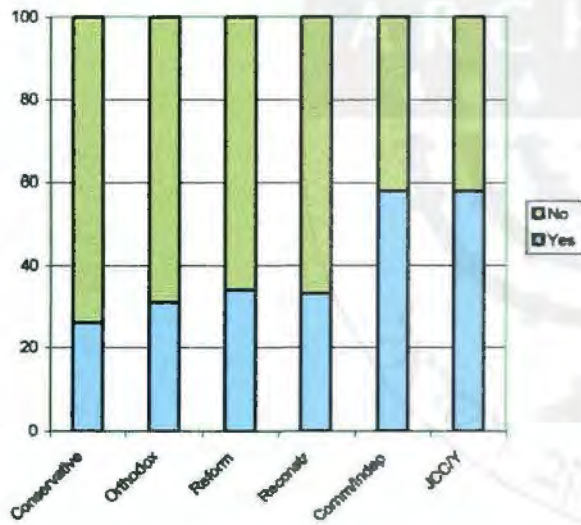
Percent of centers offering funding



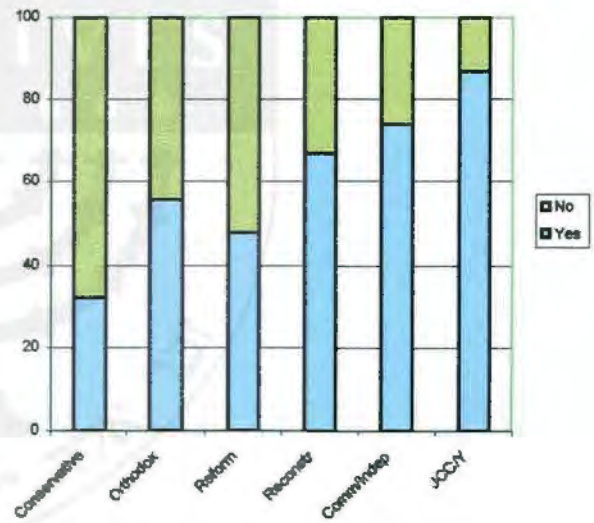
Percent of centers offering sabbatical leave to teachers



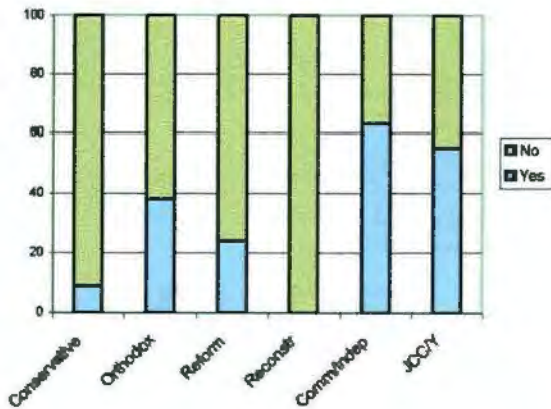
Percent of centers offering disability benefits



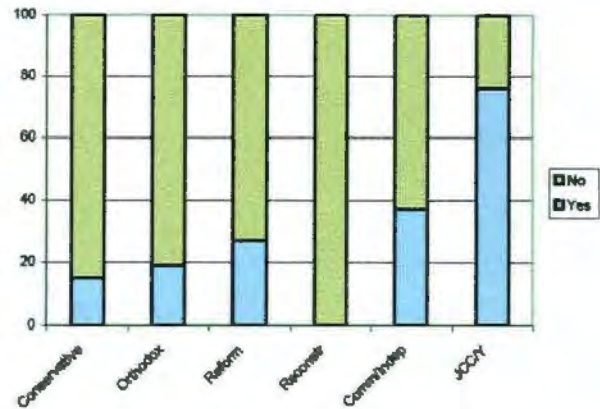
Percent of centers offering health plans



Percent of centers offering pension plans



Percent of centers offering life insurance





## Section IV - Directors

The study sampled 117 directors and 35 teacher/directors. The vast majority (93%) of directors are Jewish and are well educated. Figure 1 shows that 91% have either a bachelors or masters degree in education. Figure 2 shows that 78% have early childhood education training (41% have a MA and 37% BA). In the secular community, 77% have completed a bachelor's degree and 71% have participated in a supervised teaching practicum. (Whitehook, 2000). However, only 7 directors indicated they had a certificate in educational leadership.

Figure 1. Directors General Ed Level

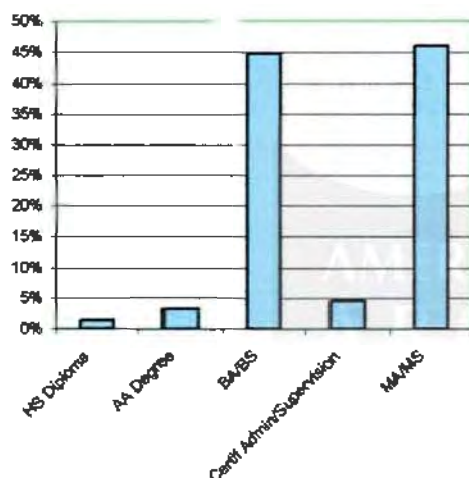
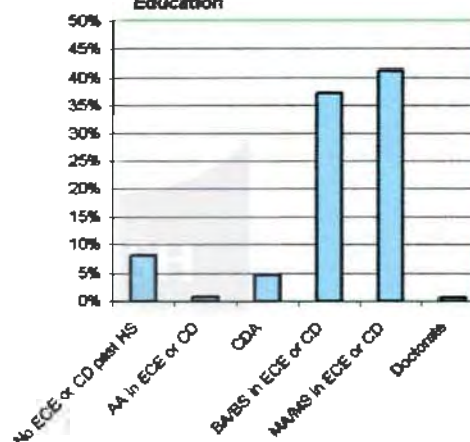
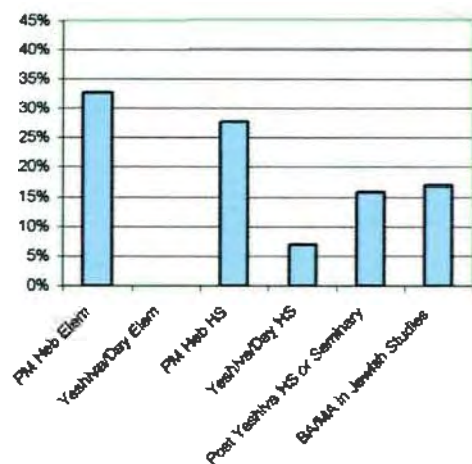


Figure 2. Directors' Level of ECE Education



In direct contrast to the advanced training in early childhood education and child development, center directors indicated modest levels of Jewish education. Figure 3 shows that a little more than half (67%) of the directors report having the equivalent of a high school diploma in Jewish education and 32% have no formal Jewish education after completing an afternoon elementary school program. Only 18% have a bachelor's or master's degree in Judaic Studies.

Figure 3. Directors' Level of Jewish Education



Of those directors who responded, the majority are between 50 and 59 years of age. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the directors plan to continue in their current position. Figure 4 shows that 72% have no plans to retire. We calculate that within 10–15 years, 79% of the directors will reach retirement age.

Figure 4. Directors' Planned Retirement

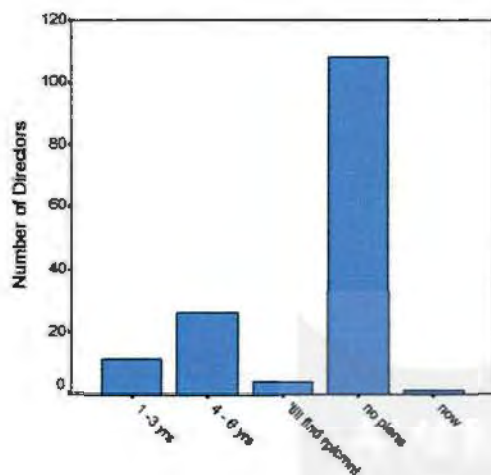
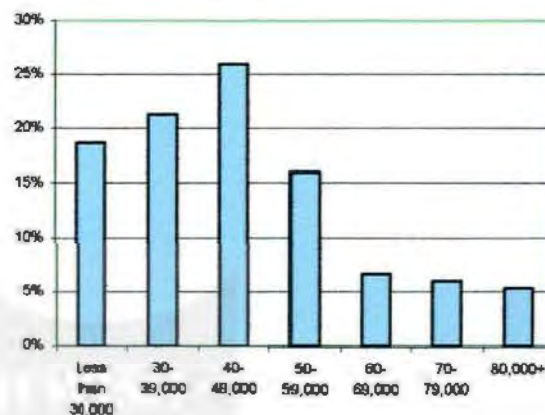


Figure 5. Director's Salary Range



Directors' salary, while better than the teachers and assistants, is still low. While this does not seem to impact on the turnover rate for directors, it is unclear what impact this will have on recruiting new directors.

affect

in this sample

## Conclusion

Historically, the primary role of early childhood centers was providing part-time programs that offered safe and nurturing environments for young children while their mothers worked. (Bowman, 2001). The curriculum focused on developing the social-emotional skills of children such as separating from home, sharing, cooperation and positive self-esteem. The traditional, and currently predominant, belief that formal schooling still begins at six years of age is obsolete. Formal schooling begins the moment a child enters into a non-parental educational center whether at 3 months or 3 years of age. New understandings about the development and transmission of cultural behaviors and beliefs, suggest that the early years of a child's life shape the identity of the child. Experiences that children have when they are young unequivocally affect brain development and lay the foundation on which subsequent learning builds. Most children acquire skills from their environment and the relationships they have with their caregivers. Furthermore, research has consistently demonstrated that knowledgeable and well-trained early childhood professionals are the key to both the quality of early childhood programs and to the social-emotional development of the child. The child's primary provider significantly affects the overall development of the child, including cultural behaviors and beliefs. (Shonkoff, 2000).

Conclusions regarding early experiences in child growth and development are critically important as a backdrop for examining the following key results and policy implications of this study.

1. **Large numbers of children participate in Jewish early childhood programs, even larger numbers do not.** In *The Next Generation*, Keysar (2000) suggests there are almost 400,000 children ages birth through 4 years of age. This is the largest cohort of children under the age of 18 (33.6%) in the 1990 Jewish National Population Study. In addition, infants and toddlers are the fastest growing group of children in the United States. When kindergarten age children are included, the percentage increases significantly. As a comparison, there are 400,000 college age students in the United States. (www.hillel.org) That means, the early childhood population (birth -6 years of age) is greater than that of the college age population. This study suggests there are approximately 100,000 Jewish children attending Jewish programs. The survey data suggests that while Jewish early childhood programs are attracting approximately one quarter of the population between birth and 6 years of age, enrollment in the early childhood programs is decreasing. Both Philadelphia and New York City indicated a reduction in enrollment. The enrollment patterns in other cities is unclear and needs to be researched.

While the majority (88%) of the schools have Jewish education as part of their mission, this study does not directly access the extent, prominence,

or quality of the Jewish content in the early childhood programs. If in fact, the transmission of cultural behaviors and beliefs occurs during the first years of life, then increasing the numbers of children participating in Jewish early childhood centers as well as investigating the amount and quality of Judaic content in early childhood centers should be placed on the Jewish communal agenda.

2. **Young children are spending increasing amounts of time in Jewish early childhood centers.** Jewish early childhood centers are becoming increasingly important as they not only serve as the introduction to Judaism and Jewish communal life, but are becoming the primary place where Jewish identity is formed. Today children are spending increasing amounts of time in Jewish early childhood programs. Twenty percent (20%) of two year olds, 25% of three and four year olds and 41% of five year olds spend between 30 and 40 hours a week in Jewish early childhood centers. The relationship young children develop with their primary caregiver plays a significant role in their overall development, including cultural behaviors and beliefs (Bowman et al., 2001). The care and education of a young Jewish child is no longer the sole responsibility of the parents. It is a partnership between the parents and the early childhood center. Our preschools have the potential to provide a quality Judaic and developmentally appropriate education that fosters the child's Jewish identity and lays the foundation for future Jewish experiences and involvement in the Jewish community. Early childhood centers that have a strong Judaic curriculum have the potential to not only increase parent interest in day school education, but also may increase the Judaic content in religious schools as children are exposed to Jewish concepts and values at a younger age. As children spend longer periods of time in the early childhood centers, the centers need to ask themselves numerous questions including 1) What are the viable options of a developmentally appropriate Jewish early childhood education? and 2) Given the importance of parent in the lives of young children, what kinds of learning experiences can be created to foster the partnership between the home and the early childhood center?

3. **Enrollment in Jewish early childhood centers peak at four years of age and then drops dramatically.** This study does not have data on where the children go after they leave the centers, however, it is assumed the majority enroll in public kindergarten programs.\* One reason for this may be that there are very few Jewish kindergarten programs available for parents to choose from. This study reported that only 32 out of 152 centers had kindergarten programs. This is a very troubling finding as many religious schools do not have kindergarten programs. Even if they do, they meet for 2 hours once a week. This implies that these children participate in a Jewish educational environment between 30 and 40 hours a week for one year and then nothing or at best two hours a week the next year. Third, if parents are choosing public kindergarten over Jewish kindergarten programs and day schools, then public three and four year old programs have the potential to also dramatically negatively affect enrollment of three and four year old children in Jewish early childhood centers. We must be

\* The Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership is releasing a study this summer 2002 that addresses this issue.



able to demonstrate that Jewish early childhood education provides an exceptional, nurturing, developmentally appropriate secular and Judaic early childhood education. Otherwise, only families most committed to Clal Yisrael, will enroll in Jewish early childhood education centers.

4. **Jewish early childhood educators are underpaid.** There is no question that the salaries for all Jewish educators are inadequate. They are worse for Jewish early childhood professionals. Most early childhood teachers have a bachelor's degree, earn \$14 an hour and have few if any benefits. The professionals in these centers are responsible for the care and education of our children, our future. Few people would entrust their legal affairs or their medical needs to anyone but a highly trained and experienced professional. This is not to say that the current Jewish early childhood professionals are not caring, nurturing and dedicated to Judaism and the Jewish people. In fact, it is just this dedication and feeling of community that brought them to the field and enables them to stay when the salaries and benefits are so poor (CIJE, 1994). However, as the role of the early childhood professional shifts from being a part-time caretaker/educator to the primary caretaker/educator, and from supplementing experiences in the home to being the primary provider of experiences, our educators need to be well trained in child development and early childhood pedagogy. One reason for the lack of specialized early childhood Judaic training is that there are no Jewish early childhood degree granting programs in the United States. Individual communities have professional development opportunities through their Central Agencies/Bureaus of Jewish Education, but these programs are sporadic, and generally offered once a year for a short period of time with little or no follow up. (Miller, 2001) Some communities (i.e. Baltimore, Florida and Cleveland) are beginning to collaborate with local universities and create certificate and degree granting early childhood programs that have a complementary Judaic component. But too few programs are available. As public three and four year old programs begin to emerge, the demand for early childhood professionals will dramatically increase. Currently, almost one third of the professionals who left the field went to the public schools. We need to provide professional development training for our current faculty and we need to increase our salaries to retain and attract the best and the brightest. Otherwise, only very special individuals will stay in the Jewish early childhood profession. Fewer still will enter the field.

5. **A significant number of professionals in Jewish early childhood education are either not Jewish or have no formal Jewish education after the age of thirteen.** Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the early childhood professionals are Jewish; 30% of teachers and 33% of assistants are not. Forty-five percent (45%) of the teachers' highest level of Judaic education was an afternoon Hebrew school. These findings raise two fundamental questions. First, what is the role of a Jewish early childhood education center? Second, what do early childhood teachers need to know and be able to do successfully fulfill the role of the Jewish early childhood center?

Jewish education is an essential ingredient for identity development and attainment. Traditionally, the family has been responsible for identity formation and the transmission of values. However, in an era of mixed marriages, single

parent families, and dual career families, more children are spending increasing amounts of time in Jewish early childhood education centers. These centers, and the early childhood professionals, are becoming a major influence on the identity development of the children and their families. If the role of a Jewish early childhood education center is to socialize Jewish children into Jewish identity it seems most likely that to be an effective transmitter of Jewish knowledge and culture, caregivers must have substantive Judaic knowledge and lead active Jewish lives. "Improving the quantity and quality of professional development for teachers, along with enhancing the conditions of employment, is the strategy most likely to improve the quality of the teaching force (in Jewish schools)" (CIJE, 1994).

Jewish early childhood education centers are the perfect opportunity to shape the Jewish identity of young children and their families and to lay the foundation for subsequent Jewish experiences and involvement. However, without recognizing that early childhood education is valuable, without pedagogic and Judaic professional development, and without equitable compensation, we will not be able to provide quality secular and Judaic early childhood programs.

V'shinantam l'vanekha jipal mzppye

The imperative to teach our children is one of the distinguishing features of the Jewish community. Jewish education shapes who we are and how we behave. How a culture treats its youngest members has a significant influence on how it will grow, prosper, and be viewed by others (Meisels & Shonkoff, 2000). The future of the American Jewish community depends on the quality of our early childhood centers and the professional staff caring for and educating our children.

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