



בס"ד
TAMMUZ תמוז
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YAYOE

Inspire!

VOL III

YESHIVA AHARON YAAKOV OHR ELIYAHU

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INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESCHOOL YARD

Children cross over the bridge into "wonderland" as they enter the new preschool yard, surrounded by grass-covered hills, a tunnel to crawl through, and trees and foliage to climb over and around. The new climbing apparatus provides numerous opportunities for mastering gross motor skills, the bike path meanders all the way around the playground equipment, and there is even a garden in which we can grow our own vegetables that we will ultimately make into soup when learning the bracha, "borei p'ree ha'adamah!" The art center, dramatic play area, and music garden (wait 'till you see that!) enhance an environment that is devoted to creativity, imagination, language development, and cooperative play.



THE KING & HIS SON

There was once a king who had an only son. The prince became ill for a period of time and therefore was not able to continue his studies with his teacher. As soon as the prince began to show some signs of improvement, the teacher returned to the king and requested that the prince be allowed to resume his studies. The King replied that while indeed his son's overall condition had improved, "The glow has not yet returned to his face, so how can he be allowed to return to school? Rather, let my son recuperate for two or three months with healthy food and drink, and after that he may return to school."



So too, when the *Bnei Yisroel* came out of *Mitzrayim*, the goal was for them to receive the Torah as soon as possible. However, they were still suffering from the illnesses of *Mitzrayim*, so, HaShem delayed *Kabbalas HaTorah* until the all-important glow of robust spiritual and physical health returned to the faces of His children.

"Rather let them recuperate for two or three months with manna and water from the be'er, and afterwards they may receive the Torah. When? *Bechodesh hashlishi* - in the third month."

Medrash Yalkut Shemoni (יתרו , רעה , יז)



OUR SAGES SAY:

The maturity of a child's understanding does not determine his ability to fulfill mitzvos. Rather, the halacha defines his ability. The halacha determines that when a child awakens (in the night) and does not cry "Imma, Imma," this is a sign that he has reached the level that he is no longer dependent on his mother and does not need her as much. At this point, he is responsible to sleep in the sukka. If so, the time to accustom a child to the mitzva of sukka is not from the time that the child begins to understand the verse 'I caused them to dwell in sukkos,' but rather according to his development; when he is no longer tied to his mother."

(Rav Chaim Friedlander, *Mesilas Chaim B'Chinuch*, pg.11)

The Great Outdoors!

by Shanya Goldmann,
Director
Early Childhood Department

There is an anonymous quote that states, "If you plan for a decade, plant trees; if you plan for a century, work with children." It's a quick little reminder of the importance and long-lasting effect of the work in which we, at Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu, are engaged and I love its connection to nature. Just as the gardener sows, waters, weeds, watches, and patiently waits, we too must tend, nurture, support, observe, and patiently wait as our children navigate their way through early childhood and beyond. And, just as the gardener must use his hands to plant and sow, children must also use their hands (and elbows, feet, mouths, everything!) to develop, learn, grow, and blossom!

Young children are intrepid explorers and discoverers and I believe that they investigate and learn every chance they get. It is our sacred task to provide them with an environment that encourages questions, maintains trust and safety, and enables independent thought and experience, all the while ensuring that this is done through play. Play is the fundamental activity of childhood because it is the means by which children learn. By rolling a ball back and forth, children become aware of cause and effect, which is basic physics. When mixing flour and water and making mud pies, they are discovering chemistry. When they hum, twirl, and spin, they are establishing patterns in their brains for music, reading, and mathematics. And when they play with one another, children learn to negotiate and to share.

We are so fortunate at our Yeshiva to have a staff of educated, dedicated teachers who are knowledgeable of how children learn and are responsive to their emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs. Children come to school every day with their stories, idiosyncrasies, their passion, energy, their laughter, and their sorrows. It takes special people who are able to listen to their stories, understand and have compassion for their idiosyncrasies, appreciate their passion and energy, engage in their laughter, and soothe their sorrows. Our teachers are able to build an ever-growing love of Torah and mitzvos while simultaneously laying the foundation for numerous skills in language, math, music, and science.

In Pre-Nursery, we learn about blue by painting and gluing in blue, making blue playdough, making blue cupcakes (only to discover that they turned green because we added blue food coloring to yellow batter, but adding blue sprinkles instead!), wearing blue clothing, reading stories about blue, searching inside and outside for blue, and on and on. We live and breathe blue so that we really know it and feel it. In Nursery, we live the parsha by dressing up as Avraham Avinu and Sara Immeinu and welcoming the malachim who come to visit our ohel. We learn about the bracha of borei p'ree hagafen by making our own grape juice, from washing and squeezing the grapes through straining them and pouring the finished product into small bottles to bring home to our families. In Kindergarten, we discover the different properties of light and dark, create our own light show, and do a variety of experiments about light and electricity with Mr. Randall, the school's science teacher. And we live the mitzvah of hachnassos orchim by inviting one kindergarten class to come to the other for a mezonos mesibah where everyone learns about the bracha of mezonos and what it means to share.

Recently, I saw one child stroke the head of another who was feeling sad. I watched as another child explained to her friend (who had become very upset when she wasn't able to be first in line) what she needed to do to be able to rejoin her friends. And I observed one little boy encouraging another as he tried to climb up the dome climber outside in the yard. Around here in our Yeshiva, kids notice that we take care of each other.

We are fortunate, as educators, to be in the unique position of being able to help bring about change toward a better world every day. Most people have to go somewhere or find someone or some way to start. For us, each morning, the world shows up in our classrooms and looks up at us with hopeful, curious, and willing faces. Our goal here at the preschool of Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/Ohr Eliyahu is to help create people who are little bnai Torah in training, who see the possibilities of tomorrow, who will always wonder and be continually amazed at the beautiful world Hashem has given us, and who will have the courage to make a difference as they grow and bloom.

FROM LANGUAGE

by Mrs Lynn Karz
General Studies Principal

Just as children progress from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”, children also progress from “learning to talk” to “talking to learn” as they acquire language. Although the development of effective reading skills is a complex integration of both auditory and visual processing abilities, experts agree that most difficulties in learning to read are based on weak decoding skills, poor vocabulary acquisition and weak comprehension of concepts; all skills that develop through language. Hence, the child’s skill in language is a pre-requisite to literacy. Indeed, research shows that strong language skills in the early years influence vocabulary development, story telling, in depth subject knowledge, decoding skills, fluency and reading comprehension all the way through grade seven. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss the relationship of language development to literacy.

What many think of as reading, the ability to divide a word into its sounds and then blend them to re-create the whole word, more accurately describes the process of decoding. Decoding automatically along with developing sight word vocabulary leads to reading fluency. However, literacy is more than the ability to easily decode print. The real purpose of reading is to understand what one reads, that is, comprehension. This process

is a complex one. The goal of comprehension is to construct meaning so students enhance their understanding, acquire and apply their knowledge, and at a higher level, develop insight. Thoughtful readers must extend their understanding beyond the literal meaning of the text. When we think, we think using words, we “talk” to ourselves. This is all part of higher level thought processes. We search our memories for what we already know as we connect prior knowledge with new information; we ask ourselves questions to clarify our own understanding; we distinguish the big ideas from the tangential ones; we draw inferences and synthesize information--all through language.

Since reading comprehension is primarily an extension of language and language development starts early, successful readers need good language skills. That is why at YAYOE, our Pre-school and Yesod (Pre 1) classes emphasize language development. Every activity and story read is enriched with discussions that explain concepts, expand sentence structure, promote new vocabulary, and go beyond the here and now to connect with prior knowledge as well as project and wonder about the future. Since children best learn language in an environment that encourages extended conversational interactions our teachers encourage language development by asking more what, why and how questions instead of questions that can be answered by a simple yes

or no. Talking about topics that are of high interest to our students increases the chances of a real discussion during which there are opportunities to explain, wonder, question and find answers. Using specific and interesting words in situational contexts also helps to build vocabulary in ways that vocabulary lists cannot touch.

Our Yesod and Pre-school staff are sensitive to the language enrichment opportunities that surround us. For example, at school recently, one of our classroom door locks malfunctioned and the door jammed shut. After struggling to open it and to prevent it from jamming again until the locksmith could come, I duct taped the latches flush with the door. The ever watchful Yesod boys wanted to know what I was doing. I told them that I was using *duct tape* to *prevent* the door from getting stuck, while we waited for a *locksmith* to come *fix* or *replace* the lock. I also pointed out that the duct tape was only a *temporary*, not a *permanent* solution. I parenthetically explained each new word as I used it, while answering their *what* and *why* questions. The whole interaction took less than five minutes. I could have extended the discussion by asking what they thought needed to be done to fix the lock, or why they thought it malfunctioned. Enriching language includes introducing children to unknown vocabulary, new information, cause and effect, problem solving, making connections and taking different perspectives.

INSIGHTS FROM OUR SAGES:

The childish side of conversations that we see in the interaction of children, is a reflection of those aspects that would not be appropriate if expressed by adults. In other words, “childish” really refers to expressions that are not appropriate to the intellectual capacity of the people involved in the conversation. For example, if an adult would converse in the manner of a child, that would be considered

AGE to literacy



At YAYOE teacher training for developing language and higher level comprehension skills in our students is taken seriously. Our Yesod and Pre-school teachers have benefited from specific course work and in-class application of the strategies mentioned above. In addition, in developing a balanced literacy program, teachers conscientiously use shared book reading, where the story being read provides a jumping off point for student and teacher to discuss their own ideas and experiences as they relate to the book. Teachers also use this discussion to model strategies for predicting, inferring and explaining new vocabulary. Our Yesod class was so excited about a recent shared book selection that five of the boys even talked their parents into buying the book!

Obviously, making the connection from language to literacy is a prime focus in a child's education. If you are interested in more information on the how-to's, consider joining our parent workshop, *You Make the Difference*, which focuses on strategic ways you can help enrich your pre-school or Yesod child's language development. Stay tuned for time and place!

INSIGHTS FROM OUR SAGES:

"The first man gave the first mother in the history of mankind the name חוה, 'She who speaks,' or 'Giver of thoughts,' not only חיה, 'Giver of life.' This implies that every mother should strive to be חוה, the cultivator of the language and the thoughts of the child for whom she has been the giver of life, חיה."

(The Collected Writings of Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, Vol. VII, (Feldheim) pp. 111-112).

YAYOE INTERVIEWS FELDMAN FAMILY: SHANA, DONNY, MOSHE

YAYOE: With so many yeshiva choices available, Baruch Hashem, in Los Angeles, why did you choose YAYOE?

FELDMAN FAMILY: We searched for a school that could provide our children with personal attention and imaginative learning opportunities during their preschool years. Looking ahead, we also sought an excellent yeshiva education combined with a rigorous secular one, in an environment that emphasizes the centrality of middos, during their elementary school years.

YAYOE: Have you been satisfied with your choice? Why?

FELDMAN FAMILY: We have been very happy with Moshe's teachers -- their creativity, enthusiasm and love for our son have validated our choice. We hope to replicate his experience for his younger brothers.



MOSHE

childish. But, if the child's conversation, no matter what form it takes, is appropriate for his age, these conversations are far from meaningless--in fact they are of absolute necessity, for through these conversations he is brought little by little, into adulthood.

(Toras Avraham pp. 368-369)

... Meeting

“Midos Tovos is the backbone of this yeshiva.”

You'd think that a man who grew up in Los Angeles, served as president of the school, and has five children B"H currently attending, would have something to say about Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov-Ohr Eliyahu. And he does. Consider the following to be only a taste of YAYOE's highlights from a parent who really knows our school.



ARIELLA, EITAN, AVISHAI, HILLEL, UZI

What drew the Mermelsteins to YAYOE? It started out about twelve years ago when they went to a parlor meeting at the Fenigs' home and met some of the school administration and parents. The meeting helped to clear up some of their preconceived notions and to discover the true character of the yeshiva. The Mermelsteins were also excited about the campus, with its open, grassy playing fields and an amazing view of the city.

It all looked good, but were they happy once they were in the school? Considering that the Mermelsteins now have five children at Ohr Eliyahu, the answer appears to be a resounding 'yes.' With their daughter Ariella graduating this year and their son Eitan graduating next year, the Mermelsteins feel confident that their children will be well equipped for Bais Yaakov or any yeshivas they will choose. Mr. Mermelstein is confident that their Ohr Eliyahu foundation has enabled them to succeed in the future whether they ultimately serve the Klal Yisroel as rebbes, Morahs, or as business people, or professionals choosing law, medicine, etc. And of course, IYH, they will become fine parents themselves one day.

Mr. Mermelstein calls the boys' rebbem "a winning team," because they help the boys acquire two key elements in Torah studies: the tools to learn on their own, and a yearning to continue learning Torah in future years.

The combination of Rabbi Goldberg's vision and the ability of the rebbes to build on that vision has helped to create a successful educational environment. Mr. Mermelstein is very proud of this year's 8th grade boys who have been accepted to Yeshiva Gedola, MBY, and Calabasas and we are sending the largest class ever to Bais Yaakov.

Regarding the girls' teachers, he says his daughter, who is now in eighth grade, has had an "excellent Limudei Kodesh program." Her mechanchos have been amazing role models who have inspired and challenged her to learn more and continue to grow and develop into a Bas Yisroel. The girls are comfortable learning texts inside, have tremendous class spirit, and have the zchus to have Rabbi Goldberg answer all their hashkafa questions. They are confident, lovers of Yiddishkeit, creative thinkers, writers and performers—fun loving and frum. What could be better than that!



the Mermelsteins ...

The Mermelsteins are also very impressed with the secular studies department that constantly seeks out new and innovative ways to inspire the children. A few examples are Zoo-phonics, Marcy Cook math, Singapore math, 'hands on science' and a successful developmental writing program that enables students to win state wide competitions. Our children have gained so much from the music program, that begins in preschool, that they have gone on to study harp, clarinet, piano and flute (Uzi, our youngest, is not yet strong enough to lift a tuba!).

The administration and faculty are encouraged to attend professional development seminars throughout the year, and are often invited to speak at these workshops throughout the country in both limudei kodesh and limudei chol. In addition to the exemplary academic program, Mr. Mermelstein also praises the emphasis on midos tovos that allows each child to really shine. The value placed on positive midos creates an environment where students can feel safe and secure. The self-confidence instilled in each child is a key element in the formula for creating a successful adult. As Rabbi Goldberg always reminds us, "We are in the business of building people" who will grow to be caring and confident husbands, wives, and parents in the future.

But what about the grassy campus and amazing view, now that the school is moving to its new location in the La Brea neighborhood?

Mr. Mermelstein calls the new campus "a bracha for everyone involved. The beautifully renovated school building has an outdoor upper deck eating area for the boys, a courtyard eating area for the girls, a beautiful beis medrash, a gym, a science lab, a library - it's impressive." And yes, there is even a big grassy play area and lots of space for outdoor activities.

Any final words? Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov Ohr Eliyahu definitely walks their talk. They really do inspire a love of Torah and learning in each child.



YAYOE INTERVIEWS THE MANN FAMILY: KARINA, SIMCHA, DOVI, YOSEF, ABIE

YAYOE: With so many yeshiva choices available, Baruch Hashem, in Los Angeles, why did you choose YAYOE?

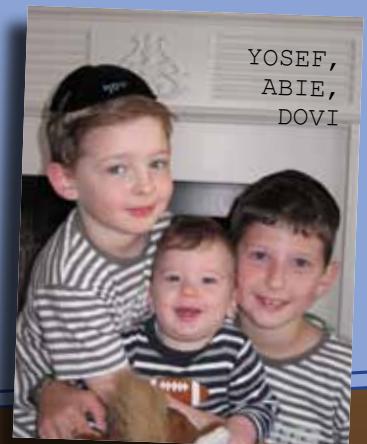
MANN FAMILY: We chose YAYOE because we loved the small class sizes and the individual attention children receive. Everyone was so welcoming from the minute we walked into school. We felt comfortable right away!

YAYOE: Have you been satisfied with your choice? Why?

MANN FAMILY: We have been very satisfied with our choice because our son loves going to school (he's in 3rd grade)! The school offers so many different outlets, from Art to Science, that makes school "fun" and a place he wants to go to everyday!

YAYOE: What makes YAYOE stand out or be special?

MANN FAMILY: YAYOE is special because every child is treated with respect. Each child is given the confidence knowing that their thoughts and ideas are valued.



**YESHIVA AHARON YAAKOV/
OHR ELIYAHU
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OUR SAGES SAY:

Until age five, parents should "roll with their child" which means says Rashi, to treat him and speak to him kindly and softly. At age six or seven, depending on the physical strength of the child, it is permissible to "feed him like an ox."

The Maharsha points out that the Gemora's intent is that even then, the child should be fed gently and by hand, like an ox, not stuffed forcibly, like a camel. *Tractate Kesuvos (.3)*

**YAYOE INTERVIEWS THE SCHARF FAMILY:
YITZY, LEAH, MOSHE & ARYEH**

YAYOE: With so many yeshiva choices available, Baruch Hashem, in Los Angeles, why did you choose YAYOE?

SCHARF FAMILY: When we moved here from Brooklyn (June 2009) we looked for the right yeshiva for our two sons, Moshe and Aryeh. The limudei kodesh program was on the top of our list. We wanted a serious program for our sons that would instill within our boys the best tools to grow in the right derech. When my wife Leah (a YAYOE alumnus) and I met with Rabbi Goldberg, the warmth we felt and the answers we received told us immediately that we were making the best choice for our family.

YAYOE: Have you been satisfied with your choice? Why?

SCHARF FAMILY: We have been more than satisfied with the Yeshiva and can't wait for the move to the new building. Our children come home happy; my older son comes home from first grade and understands what he's learning. Just by the way the rebbeim go about their day, my children are able to see the correct way to act with great midos tovos and derech erez.

YAYOE: What makes YAYOE stand out or be special?

SCHARF FAMILY: YAYOE stands out from other Yeshivas in so many ways. The strong sense of Torah learning, the high standards in the limudei chol program, the emphasis on midos tovos, and the dedicated and committed staff. In addition, the music, art, and after school programs add an enriched touch that we haven't seen anywhere else. Keep up the amazing work.



ABOUT THE YESHIVA

Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/ Ohr Eliyahu added the name Aharon Yaakov in 2003 after the passing of Reb Aharon Yaakov Kornwasser zt"l, a loyal chassid, baal tzedaka, and great-grandfather of several students in the yeshiva.

Yeshiva Aharon Yaakov/ Ohr Eliyahu is preparing for its move this summer to our new state of the art 66,000 sf facility at 241 S. Detroit Ave.

We look forward to continue educating the "whole child" with our state of the art Limudei Kodesh and Limudi Chol programs together with the arts and always with an emphasis on Midos Tovos.