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Jewish Education

Invest in futures





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In 1717, when King Frederick ordered every child in Prussia to go to school, people thought he was quite the maverick. France didn't follow suite for another hundred years while England and the U.S.A. waited until the end of the 19th century. But Frederick was still behind by 2,989 years.

That's when Moses commanded his people to teach their children and become a literate nation.

Moses' words were well heeded. From ancient times, the Jews were the only nation where education and literacy was the norm rather than the privilege of an elite. Sixteen and a half centuries before Frederick, just before the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, a High Priest named Joshua ben Gamla ordered every Jewish community to establish schools for underprivileged children, supported by a communal tax. "A community that has no public school teachers," the Talmud ruled, "shall be excommunicated."

And so it was that the Jews managed to remain



educated and literate in the darkest of times. “A Jew, however poor,” wrote a 12th century monk, “if he has ten sons would put them all to letters...and not only his sons, but his daughters.”

As would be expected, Jewish educational methods were far ahead of anything the rest of the world had seen. The Mishnah and the Talmud demanded critical thinking skills. The practice of studying in pairs and learning out loud taught the art of dialogue. A good student was one who asked good questions and “made his teacher wiser.”

Then, in the last 150 years, something bizarre occurred: As the walls of the ghettos fell, Jews began to opt for the relatively neophyte educational institutions of the gentiles. Jewish education became a luxury item, provided after the child was already tired from a full day of school. The result: rather than being inspired, thousands of Jewish kids were turned off.

In the last 20 years, however, that trend has dramatically reversed. Jewish day schools are popping up everywhere today like mushrooms and enrollment is soaring. What happened?



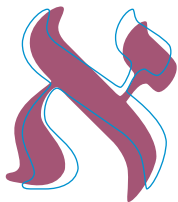
Here are some weighty factors:

Educating the Whole Child

A child is more than a data processor. And life demands more than knowledge and marketable skills. Parents want their kids to have some spiritual and ethical basis to their lives. Jewish traditions are the basis of ethics in our society and are rich in spiritual inspiration.

Give Your Child an Identity

In a confusing world, Jewish identity provides solid ground to grow from. A child that identifies with the most resilient nation in history, a child that discovers he or she has roots four thousand years deep—such a child is imbued with confidence and pride to face the world and make a difference.



The Best For Our Kids

We have a long tradition of teaching people to think for themselves while remaining firmly grounded in tradition. And as Jews, we can't think of anything more valuable in life



than ensuring our children will receive the best and strive for the best. That's why Jewish day school students on average score much higher in all subjects than the general population.

Join the Community

Parents who enroll their children in a Jewish school find their lives enriched as they become part of a vibrant, growing community. They, too, end up learning, socializing and identifying.



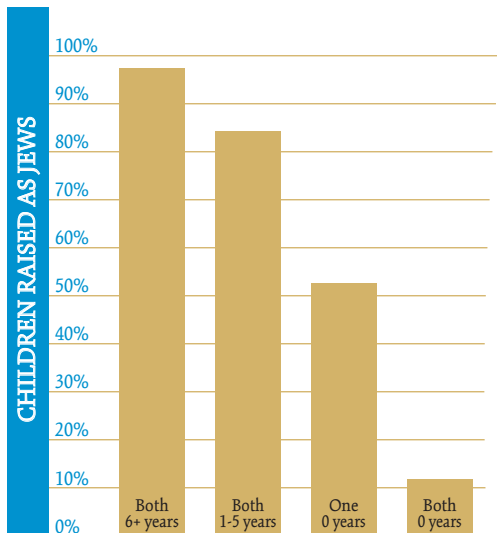
Our Children, Our Future

We've had a rude awakening. We've seen first hand that without Jewish education there can be no Jewish people. Enrollment in a day school, especially at the secondary level, turns out to be the major factor in whether a Jew will marry a Jewish spouse. Those Jews without a formal Jewish education are most often lost to their people.

Where do I start?

Talk to your local Chabad rabbi about starting your kids off in Jewish studies. He'll help you make an educated decision about which is the best school for your family. He also may have access to scholarship funds or advice on how to apply.

Will your grandchildren know they are Jewish?



Source: The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies Research Report 10, 1994

FORMAL JEWISH EDUCATION OF PARENTS

Parents who had a Jewish education pass their Jewishness on to their children. Those with no Jewish education generally drop the torch. If you want your grandchildren to know they are Jews, send their parents to a Jewish school.



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