



# Exploring the Associations between Jewish Early Care and Education and Jewish Engagement: Research to Inform Practice

A special presentation of the findings of a multi-year  
research project from CASJE and Child Trends

**June 29**

[Recording](#) (*Research Presentation begins at 06:47*)

[Sliddeck](#)

[Full report: casje.org](https://casje.org)

**Arielle Levites**, Managing Director of CASJE, the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education housed at George Washington University.

Introduction.

- I want to give a special shout out to the educators on this call for their expertise, professionalism, care and commitment to our children and community in these tumultuous times.
- **One change that has emerged from the pandemic and its turmoil is that as a society we may finally be ready to acknowledge unequivocally that high quality early care is *essential infrastructure* without which the country cannot function and our children cannot thrive. And early care and education is essential infrastructure for the Jewish community well.**

- The promises that we make as Jewish people both to our ancestors and to the future converge in how well we welcome the youngest children and their families into Jewish life. The skills and capacities that children develop in high quality early childhood settings not only set them up for academic success but shape their emotional and relational selves. It doesn't get more essential than that. This presentation will show how Jewish ECE can create an entry point and sometimes even an amplifier for connection to Jewish life.

#### About the study.

Several years ago CASJE held a convening to identify critical research questions for Jewish early childhood education. Out of that day of learning and discussion we developed the kernel of this project. CASJE then brought together two stellar research teams with insider and outsider expertise.

#### Relevance.

- When CASJE first developed this project we did not anticipate the world into which we would be releasing the findings. It's a strange time and difficult time but also paradoxically the right time. The world has been disrupted. ECE has been disrupted. We have no choice but to change, so let's change toward improvements.
- There is a famous debate in the Talmud: Is study greater, or is action greater? The rabbis conclude: "Study is greater, for it leads to action." We could also perhaps understand the dictum as saying: Study is greater *when* it leads to action. That's our intention here today.
- This study is a tool for you to act on. It offers data from an independent research team that shows us what Jewish ECE has accomplished and where Jewish ECE can do better so that we can make informed decisions as we build our best new future, and so that we can deliver on the promise that we make to families and communities that entrust us to welcome the youngest children into Jewish life.

**Dr. Mark Rosen** is co-principal director of the study and Associate Professor in the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program at Brandeis University. Mark has been doing research on Jewish families with young children and Jewish early childhood for the past 15 years. [mirosen@brandeis.edu](mailto:mirosen@brandeis.edu)

**Dr. Tamara Halle** is a co-principal director on this study. She is a Senior Scholar in Early Childhood Development at Child Trends. Tamara has been doing research on ECE, including professional development of the ECE workforce and quality of ECE

settings, for over 20 years. Child Trends is the nation's leading nonprofit research organization focused exclusively on improving the lives and prospects of children, youth, and their families. Child Trends is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to producing objective, unbiased research. [thalle@childtrends.org](mailto:thalle@childtrends.org)

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