

## Temple Israel of New Rochelle

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[www.tinr.org](http://www.tinr.org)



## Innovation: Full Day Jewish Early Childhood School

Temple Israel of New Rochelle believes that nothing is more important than engaging and educating children in Judaism. For years, Temple Israel has been a leader in creative programming for children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. The commitment that Temple Israel has made to this age group is most obvious by the expansion of the early childhood wing in September of 2011. This expansion along with their new operating partnership with Bright Horizons Family Solutions, has allowed the school to be open full-time: from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. all year long. Families can elect to enroll their children for shorter days, as well. Options include four-hour "partial" days, six-hour "school" days, up to ten-hour "full days," and twelve-hour "extended" days. Two, three, and five day arrangements are all available.

In the warm and nurturing environment of the Kehillah School, teachers provide a developmentally appropriate, educational curriculum for young children within the context of Judaism. Each child is encouraged to pursue a path of discovery which will make the process of learning a rewarding and exciting one. It is a place where a young mind's introduction to schooling can reveal the joys of learning and set the course for a lifetime of intellectual pursuit, creativity, and critical thinking.



**Nancy Bossov, Director**

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Temple Israel's Kehillah School has been lead by Nancy Bossov since September 2010. Nationally recognized for her advocacy and consulting work in developing the field of Jewish early childhood education (ECE), Nancy served as ECE Director for the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York and as national ECE Director at the Union for Reform Judaism. She was instrumental in establishing the URJ's infrastructure for Jewish early childhood education and in creating the Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism (ECE-RJ), the professional organization for Jewish early childhood educators. At the 11th annual conference of the ECE-RJ in January of 2011, Nancy was installed as Vice President for Professional Development and granted the organization's award of Eshet Chayil, or Woman of Valor, for "future thinking, the highest standards, and passionate love of Judaism and, above all, an innate knowledge of our profession." Nancy began her work with Temple Israel in a consulting capacity, through "Designing Rich Futures," the firm that she founded and managed as Principal. Nancy has also served congregations as ECE Director, Education Director and Family Educator.

Nancy received her B.S. degree in Music Therapy from NYU, an M.A. in Music Education from Teacher's College of Columbia University, and an M.A. in Religious Education from HUC-JIR. Passionate about Jewish music, Nancy has taught more than 200 teens to play guitar and become song leaders and is now often found singing and dancing with students in the classrooms and activity rooms.

## Luria Academy of Brooklyn

238 St. Marks Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11238

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[www.luria-academy.org](http://www.luria-academy.org)



### Innovation: Integration of Montessori and Traditional Jewish Education Methods

Luria Academy is a nurturing, child-centered, value-oriented environment dedicated to academic excellence and Jewish heritage. Luria incorporates innovative teaching methodologies and state of the art technological educational tools. By exposing students to a uniquely integrated Judaic-secular curriculum they offer them an extremely rigorous and high quality Torah and secular education. Above all, Luria fosters Jewish pride - *Ahavat Yisrael* - and a deep sense of compassion and commitment for all mankind - *Ahavat Olam*.

The school atmosphere is one in which students can achieve their spiritual, intellectual, and social potential while recognizing the relevance of Jewish values in their lives. Their educational philosophy is rooted in a profound respect for each child as a special individual with a unique form of intelligence. By incorporating both the progressive Montessori and Dewey teaching methods and the traditional modes used by successful Jewish day schools, they aim to create a new model for Jewish education. At Luria, each child learns to think, observe, and reflect in their own creative way.

They believe that an ideal Jewish education combines Torah learning with secular studies in a perfect symbiosis, thereby resulting in a mutually enriching interdisciplinary learning experience. At Luria, they are committed to teaching both Torah and Secular disciplines in a rigorous and comprehensive manner that encourage drawing moral insights and religious guidance from both disciplines. Through a Montessori-based holistic curriculum students become attuned to the interconnectedness of all things. At Luria every subject is woven into another to form a meaningful web that encourages critical thinking and supports a child's innate drive to find meaning in life.



### Bryna Leider, Education Director

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Bryna has worked in education for 13 years. She received a B.A. in English and Education from Touro College, and then became the lead teacher in a Pre-K class, a position she held for seven years. She also worked as a Judaic studies teacher for 1st, 3rd, and 6th grades and taught English Language Arts to 11th and 12th graders. These diverse experiences led her to pursue a M.S.Ed in Curriculum and Teaching (N-12) at Fordham University. After graduating summa cum laude, she accepted a position as the education coordinator of a large Head Start program. In 2006, she became an education consultant. She traveled to schools on the East and West coasts where she evaluated programs and guided implementation of changes, including creating customized curricula, and presenting a variety of staff development topics. In 2007, she joined Luria Academy as a consultant and shortly thereafter accepted her current position. Bryna attended Montessori training at the Montessori Teachers College of San Diego.

## The JCC in Manhattan The Saul and Carole Zabar Nursery School

334 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 646-505-4400

[www.iccmanhattan.org/nursery-school](http://www.iccmanhattan.org/nursery-school)



### Innovation: Family Engagement and Documentation in a Reggio Inspired Center

The Saul and Carole Zabar Nursery School at The JCC in Manhattan is a progressive preschool that embraces families from all backgrounds and cultivates a connection to Jewish values and tradition. Teachers work collaboratively to create environments and experiences that spark wonder and creativity, build confidence and skills, allow children to explore materials, and encourage a questioning mind. Families are partners in the work that they do, joining with children and teachers to celebrate Jewish life and learning.

The staff views the environment, classrooms and common spaces, materials, bulletin boards, and print materials as powerful tools for learning. Children use their physical world in a myriad inventive ways, finding pathways for self expression at every turn, transforming the everyday into moments of wonder.

Teachers facilitate this process by working collaboratively as researchers, guiding and following the interests of the group. We support children's learning, connections with one another, their achievements and their points of view by making their work visible through many forms of documentation. Daily reflections, journey binders, small booklets, visual narrations on the walls and videos provide windows into the world of the children at school. This documentation helps teachers, parents and children understand and deepen the learning at school, as we think collaboratively about children's learning.



**Ilana Ruskay-Kidd, Director**

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Ilana Ruskay-Kidd is the Director of The Saul and Carole Zabar Nursery School. She has been working at the JCC since 2001 and has been the Director of the school since 2006. Ilana received her BA from Harvard University and a Master's Degree in Education from Bank Street College. After being inspired and trained at Central Park East in Harlem, she became a co-founding teacher at the Ella Baker School, an alternative public school in Manhattan. She then went on to work as an Early Childhood Curriculum Consultant for the Children's Aid Society where she developed curricula with directors and teachers in day care, Head Start and private nursery school programs throughout the city.

At The JCC in Manhattan, Ilana began as Director of Young Families and then became Senior Director of Family Life, supervising programs serving families and children ages newborn-eighteen years old.

## Mid-Island Y JCC

45 Manetto Hill Road  
Plainview, NY 11803

516-822-3535

[www.miyjcc.org](http://www.miyjcc.org)



### Innovation: Creation of Outdoor Learning Environment

The Early Childhood Center at the Mid-Island Y JCC offers both full and part-day quality education, enrichment classes and parenting workshops. Their state certified staff teaches a challenging and engaging curriculum including language development, science, mathematics, art and literature, while providing a loving and nurturing environment for each child. Music, physical education, swim, smart board, and movement classes taught by specialists add an enjoyable dimension to many of the programs. Jewish holidays and Shabbat celebrations are interwoven through song, art, stories, food and special guests. They are committed to providing a positive school atmosphere; one which promotes exploration, hands-on experience and intellectual growth fostering a lifetime of learning.

The Mid-Island Y JCC Outdoor Nature Explorium earned the designation of being one of only 100 nationally certified Nature Explore Classrooms from the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. This certification places them in a growing network of organizations that have created effective outdoor learning environments for children. Certified Nature Explore Classrooms are designed to help fill the void by educating young children using research-based principles for integrating nature into their daily learning.

Mid-Island Y JCC's creation of their outdoor learning environment was spearheaded by parent volunteers of the JCC's Early Childhood Center, as well as Dr. Rhya Jerrold, the ECC Director. In a certified Nature Explore Classroom, children can create visual masterpieces in a natural art area, build and construct with natural materials, enhance gross-motor development by climbing on natural structures, explore the world around them in science and discovery areas, and practice their balance, agility, and creativity in areas designed for music and movement.



### Rhya Jerrold, Director

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Rhya has a B.A. in Philosophy and Sociology, a J.D. from Touro Law School, an M.S.Ed. in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Policy. Before her tenure as the Early Childhood Director, Rhya previously worked as a nursery school teacher, a private elementary school teacher, and a preschool camp coordinator. Her other prior work experience includes a position as a trainer for daycare workers seeking their credentials, and an attorney editor for a publishing company. Rhya's combined background of formal education, teaching, and training of others in the daycare field help provide her with a unique perspective and approach to the various aspects of the JCC program.