

Early Childhood Jewish Education and Profiles of its Educators

The Number of Students and Teachers Within Jewish Education in the United States

Eli Schaap, Assistant Executive Director, CAJE, June 24, 2004

There are currently an estimated total of 125,000 children in the U.S. enrolled in early childhood Jewish educational programs. These institutions employ about 20,000 educators (Chart 1). This estimate is based on combining the data from three studies: the 2002 study titled "Untapped Potential: The Status of Jewish Early Childhood Education in America," published by the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership, which was incorporated into CAJE's new Early Childhood Department in July 2002; Marvin Schick's 2000 study of day schools for the Avi Chai Foundation; and the 2000 census of enrollment collected by The Association of Directors of Central Agencies of Jewish Education (ADCA). CAJE is planning a new census for the fall of 2004.

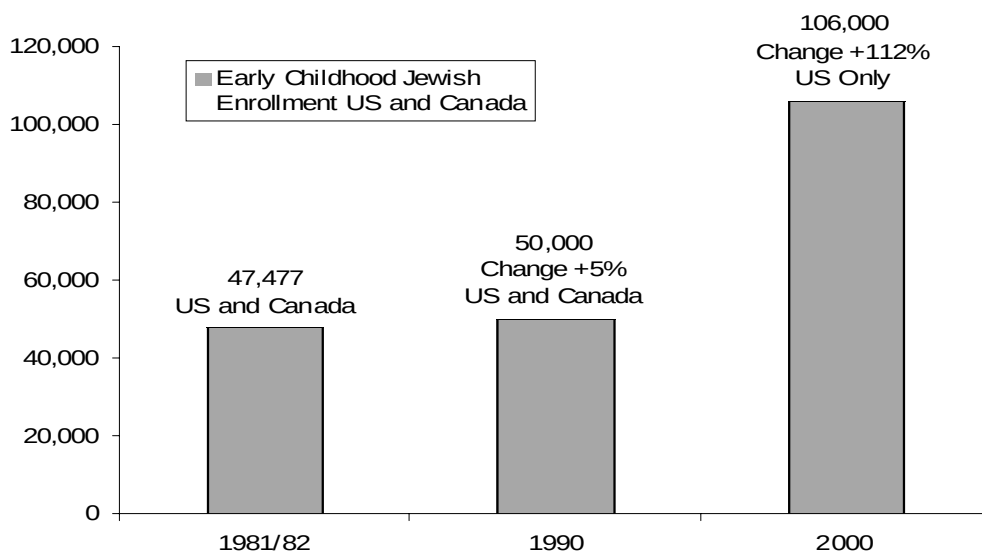
Chart 1: The estimated number of students in Early Childhood Jewish programs in the U.S.

	Grand Total	% Jewish	Total Jewish	NJPS 2001 Other and Day schools combined	% Jewish Kids in EC Settings	% Total Potential Population 230,000 Core Jews #1 NJPS 2001	% Total Potential Population 430,000 Core Jews #2 see
Day Schools							
Orthodox	28,556	100%	28,556		28%	12%	7%
Community (RAVSAK & Independent)	2,849	100%	2,849		3%	1%	1%
Conservative (SSDS)	3,380	100%	3,380		3%	1%	1%
Reform (Pardes)	1,683	100%	1,683		2%	1%	0%
Immigration and Outreach	654	100%	654		1%	0%	0%
Special Ed	53	100%	53		0%	0%	0%
Total Day Schools	37,175	100%	37,175	12,573	36%	16%	9%
Synagogue Settings							
Reform	26,123	81%	21,371		21%	9%	5%
Conservative	27,255	90%	24,587		24%	11%	6%
Orthodox	1,137	97%	1,103		1%	0%	0%
Reconstructionist	1,767	89%	1,572		2%	1%	0%
Total Synagogues	56,282	89%	48,633	24,536	47%	21%	11%
JCC/Y's	22,732	56%	12,782	15,010	12%	6%	3%
Community/Independents/Cooper-atives	4,943	84%	4,140		4%	2%	1%
Other	1,409	77%	1,090		1%	0%	0%
Grand Total	122,541		103,820	52,119	100%	45%	24%
Totals for the different types of institutions							
Reform	27,806	83%	23,054		22%	10%	5%
Conservative	30,635	91%	27,967		27%	12%	7%
Orthodox	29,693	100%	29,659		29%	13%	7%
Reconstructionist	1,767	89%	1,572		2%	1%	0%
Community/Independent	7,792	90%	6,989		7%	3%	2%
JCC/Y	22,732	56%	12,782		12%	6%	3%
Other	2,116	85%	1,797		2%	1%	0%
Grand Total	122,541	85%	103,820		100%	45%	24%

The figures from the 2000 National Population study (NJPS) diverge significantly from our estimates. As others have already argued (Steven M. Cohen and Leonard Saxe at the recent AJS meeting in Boston, December 2003), the NJPS data are not necessarily reliable estimates. Aside from the general debate about the reliability of the absolutely numbers of NJPS 2000, the telephone response rate for people with young children is probably among the lowest and NJPS 2000 has made no adjustment for this.

Over the last 20 years there has been a significant increase of the number of children in early childhood Jewish programs (see chart 2). The 1982 data are based on Sergio Dellapergola's "First Census of Jewish Schools in the Diaspora 1981/2-1982/3: International Survey" and the 1990 data are estimates from "A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education of North America." The tremendous increase in enrollment is similar to the increase seen in the early childhood programs' enrollment in all programs in the United States.

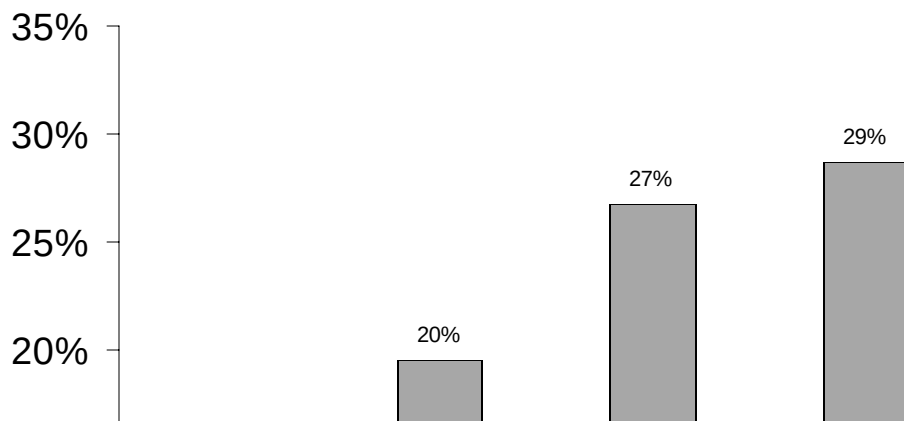
Chart 2: The estimated increase in number of students in Early Childhood Jewish programs in North America



This increase in enrollment provides the Jewish community with a great untapped potential - windows of opportunity for individual and family Jewish identity building and community Jewish identity building.

Most of the children are enrolled in two-five-year-old programs. Since we know from the US data that there is also a very significant increase in demand for child-care, this raises the question as to whether the Jewish community is experiencing a similar demand. Currently there are few programs available for zero-to-two-year olds. Research is needed both on the content and quality of these programs and on the need to establish new programs. With older children, there is a national trend towards free public school kindergarten and even free four-year-old programs. This will put pressure on the Jewish programs

Chart 3: The estimated percentage by age of students in Early Childhood Jewish programs in North America



to redefine their role. Already, the New York metropolitan area experienced a drop in enrollment of four-year-olds over the last two years. Excellence in both pedagogics and Jewish content may mitigate the potential outflux of four- and five-year olds. In the Orthodox community there is no corresponding drop-out since most children transition from early childhood programs to day schools. Since early childhood Jewish programs are potential gateways for life-long commitment to Jewish identity and Jewish learning for both the parents and the children, it will be quite important to keep track of enrollment patterns in the non-Orthodox community. This also indicates the need to continue the exit research as conducted by JECEP's "Jewish Preschools as Gateways to Jewish Life" by Pearl Beck. Beck's study indicates great potential for using the the early childhood Jewish programs as a pipe-line to further Jewish education and involvement.

Chart 4: The estimated percentages of students in Early Childhood Jewish programs in the U.S. by age and by type of setting

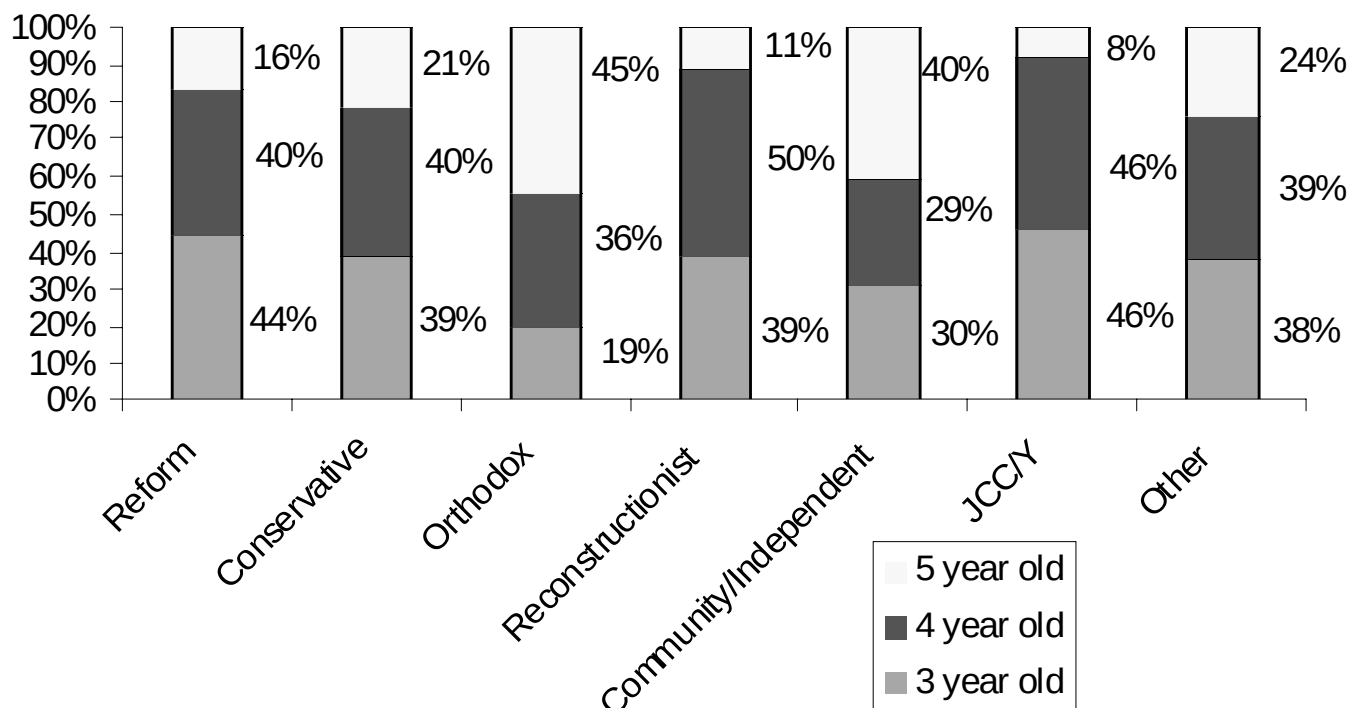


Chart 5 shows a comparison between the age distribution based on the JECEP study which is based on children vs. the CAJE-NAJECS survey which is based on the number of educators.

The differences in terms of toddlers and five-year-olds may reflect the fact that the survey missed some of the toddler and day school programs. It also could indicate a trend towards a lower enrollment for five-year-olds. When the toddlers and five-year-olds are excluded (Chart 6) the percentages for two, three and four-year-olds are actually very close. This confirms the validity of both the JECEP 2002 Survey and the new CAJE-NAJECS survey.

Chart 5: Age comparison between JECEP survey (2002) and the CAJE-NAJECS survey (2004)

	JECEP Survey of Students	CAJE/NAJECS Census of Educators
Toddlers	9%	2%
2's	20%	25%
3's	27%	32%
4's	28%	33%
5's	14%	7%

Chart 6: Age comparison between JECEP survey (2002) and the CAJE-NAJECS survey (2004) 2's, 3's and 4's

	JECEP Survey of Students	CAJE/NAJECS Census of Educators
2's	27%	28%
3's	36%	36%
4's	37%	37%

Description of the educators employed in early childhood Jewish education

Methodology: The benchmark study for profiles of Jewish educators is the CIJE study conducted in 1993 and published in 1998 (Gamoran et. al). Regretfully there have been no systematic studies conducted since. In 2001 CAJE started surveying its own members, repeating and expanding on the questions asked in the CIJE study. However, the membership of CAJE is not necessarily reflective of the field of Jewish educators of the three systems of formal Jewish education. Administrators and congregational school educators tend to be numerically over-represented in CAJE. This is not necessarily a problem if those who are CAJE members are representative of other educators in the same settings in terms of their characteristics. We have not yet conducted comparative studies to ascertain this. The data collection within CAJE was not done by random sampling. Instead, surveys were conducted at CAJE Conferences and by mail. Return rates tended to be between 15% and 20% which doesn't allow us to state with any certainty that this is not biased sample. When the sample sizes of subgroups of Jewish educators fell below 50 we have excluded these data from our report. Comparison to the overall demographic characteristics of the CAJE membership indicate that the surveys are representative of the CAJE membership in terms of geography, gender and job descriptions, but this does not necessarily confirm that the specific characteristics and attitudes are representative of the overall CAJE membership. This needs to be confirmed by conducting random sampling. The CAJE studies allow for a comparison between the recently conducted CAJE-NAJECS survey data on early childhood educators with those who work in congregational and day school settings.

The CAJE-NAJECS survey includes descriptions of 2,827 educators employed in early childhood Jewish programs. This survey may again be biased since this only represents approximately 15% of the total number of educators employed in early childhood Jewish programs. The survey was mailed to all the directors of known early childhood Jewish educational programs in the US and Canada. The return rates for Canada were very low so these data have been excluded. The directors were asked to distribute the survey to their staff and send them back to CAJE. Even after two mailings, many directors failed to reply to the surveys. Some directors only sent back responses for themselves. It is possible that when the directors distributed and collected the surveys from their staff that a subgroup (e.g., non-Jews) may have been less likely to return their surveys, biasing the results. Most of the responses received were from Conservative and Reform congregations and from JCC's.

These surveys provide intriguing results, but, because of the research methods, they need to be taken more as an indication of trends than as definitive data on the educators. During the fall of 2004, CAJE is planning an extensive study based on random sampling initially of its membership and afterwards of educators who are not currently members of CAJE.

Characteristics of Early Childhood Teachers: Age, Years in the field, Hours worked per week

Early Childhood Education	Congregational School Education	Day School Education
Teachers (Overall) 46 is the median age 25 is the average # weekly hours 12 is the median # of years in the field The preliminary data from the national survey allow the teachers to be separated into three sub-categories: Head teachers 48 is the median age 25 is the average # weekly hours 16 is the median # of years in the field Co-Teachers 46 is the median age 25 is the average # weekly hours 8 is the median # of years in the field Assistant Teachers 45 is the median age 22 is the average # weekly hours 8 is the median # of years in the field	Teachers 47 is the median age 11 is the average # weekly hours 7 is the median # of years in the field Please note that some teachers in congregational schools work in more than one type of setting. When adjusting for this, the number of hours worked drops to 8 .	Teachers 48 is the median age 35 is the average # weekly hours 15 is the median # of years in the field

Characteristics of Administrators: Age, Years in the field, Hours worked per week

Administrators	Administrators	Administrators
51 is the median age 40 is the average # weekly hours 25 is the median # of years in the field	49 is the median age 33 is the average # weekly hours 17 is the median # of years in the field 12% of these administrators work less than 20 hours.	50 is the median age 43 is the average # weekly hours 20 is the median # of years in the field

- The median age of all six categories of Jewish educators is in the high 40's or low 50's. This is significantly higher than teachers in the U.S. in public (42) and private schools (43). By comparison, the median age for the average American is 35, while it is 42 years for American Jews. This makes the recruitment issue quite acute.
- Early childhood Jewish educators on average started their careers while in their 30's. This indicates that many Jewish educators don't select Jewish education as a career after they finish college, but initially enter other professions.
- The average number of weekly hours for early childhood Jewish educators is 25, which means that, by federal law, they can be described as full-time.

Early Childhood Education	Congregational School Education	Day School Education
<i>Characteristics of Teachers: Gender, Marital status, education</i>		
Teachers (Overall) 96% are female 17% are single 78% have a Bachelors degree or higher 28% have a Masters degree or higher 29% have a post <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Jewish education 53% have received no formal Jewish education Head teachers 81% have a Bachelors degree or higher 32% have a Masters degree or higher 28% have a post- <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Jewish education 53% have received no formal Jewish education Co-Teachers 76% have a Bachelors degree or higher 25% have a Masters degree or higher 28% have a post- <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Jewish education 54% have received no formal Jewish education Assistant Teachers 53% have a Bachelors degree or higher 12% have a Masters degree or higher 22% have a post <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Jewish education 63% have received no formal Jewish education	Teachers 85% are female 36% are single 87% have a Bachelors degree or higher 47% have a Masters degree or higher	Teachers 86% are female 21% are single 92% have a Bachelors degree or higher 54% have a Masters degree or higher
<i>Characteristics of Administrators: Gender, Marital status, Education</i>		
Administrators 99% are female 9% are single 92% have a Bachelors degree or higher 55% have a Masters degree or higher 45% have a post <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Jewish education 35% have received no formal Jewish education	Administrators 80% are female 22% are single 97% have a Bachelors degree or higher 65% have a Masters degree or higher	Administrators 67% are female 29% are single 100% have a Bachelors degree or higher 89% have a Masters degree or higher

- The lower the pay, the greater the percentage of women employed in the field. In the US public schools 75% of the teachers are women. In Jewish education only administrators of day schools have a lower rate of women, possibly due to the better compensation. Early childhood educators have a higher rate of women than congregational and day school educators.
- The lower the hourly pay, the lower the percentage of Jewish educators who are single. By comparison, the 2000 NJPS study found that 43% of the adult Jews are single. Data from the NEA show that for public school teachers 27% are single.
- In terms of general education all six types of Jewish educators are quite well educated. The lower paid Jewish educators have less education. They are still better educated than Jews overall; by comparison, the 2000 NJPS study found that only 25% of the adult Jews have a graduate degree and 80% have a Bachelors degree. The lack of Jewish education among the early childhood educators certainly is alarming. It raises the question whether these educators consider themselves Jewish educators as opposed to educators who happen to work in a Jewish setting.

Early Childhood Education**Congregational School Education****Day School Education***Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction**Which items most contribute to keeping you in Jewish education?***Teachers**

78% Satisfaction derived from work
 63% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 46% Compatibility with family life
 19% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

Administrators

93% Satisfaction derived from work
 52% Work suits my skills
 48% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 30% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

Teachers

77% Satisfaction derived from work
 56% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 31% Work suits my skills
 24% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

Administrators

74% Satisfaction derived from work
 52% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 31% Work suits my skills
 19% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

Teachers

77% Satisfaction derived from work
 49% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 38% Work suits my skills
 38% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

Administrators

83% Satisfaction derived from work
 60% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 34% Work suits my skills
 26% Opportunity to teach *Torah*

*Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction**What are the things that would most improve your job as a Jewish educator?***Teachers**

73% Increased salary
 57% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 27% Pension
 22% Health insurance

Administrators

59% Increased salary
 48% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 41% Pension
 30% Support services
 (such as secretaries, aides)

Teachers

59% Increased salary
 40% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 25% Pension
 24% Health insurance

Administrators

69% Increased salary
 44% Support services
 (such as secretaries, aides)
 37% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 29% Pension

Teachers

71% Increased salary
 47% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 37% Pension
 19% Health insurance

Administrators

66% Increased salary
 49% Support services
 (such as secretaries, aides)
 37% Professional development,
 including degree programs
 26% Pension

*Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction - Have you ever CONSIDERED LEAVING
 Jewish education for a period of time for work in another field outside of the Jewish community?*

Teachers

41% Yes

Administrators

41% Yes

Teachers

43% Yes

Administrators

48% Yes

Teachers

46% Yes

Administrators

40% Yes

*Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction - Have you ever LEFT Jewish education for
 a period of time for work in another field outside of the Jewish community?*

Teachers

24% Yes

Administrators

11% Yes

Please note that this question was not
 asked in the CAJE surveys of
 Congregational School educators

Teachers

24% Yes

Administrators

6% Yes

*Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction**If yes, what caused you to leave or consider leaving?***Teachers**

50% Need for more money
 44% Career growth
 25% Need to receive benefits
Administrators
 27% Need for more money
 18% Career growth
 18% Need to receive benefits
 18% A bad work experience

Teachers

57% Need for more money
 42% A bad work experience
 37% Need to receive benefits
Administrators
 59% Need for more money
 48% Work hours
 43% A bad work experience
 28% Family priorities
 27% Need to receive benefits
 27% Career growth

Teachers

30% Need for more money
 22% Career growth
 18% Need to receive benefits
Administrators
 33% Need for more money
 20% Career growth
 20% Work hours
 20% Family priorities

The data on this page come from CAJE surveys conducted of its membership. Please note that the sample size for the early childhood and day school educators was close to or just below 50. In addition as explained in the introduction there are problems with the sampling method. Therefore, these results can only be considered indicative of trends.

Early Childhood Education

Congregational School Education

Day School Education

Characteristics of Teachers: Personal income, Family income, benefits

Teachers Overall (benefits are reported only for teachers working over 20hrs)

\$15,000 is the median income
\$75,000 is the median family income
39% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
23% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Head teachers

\$16 is the median hourly wage
25 is the average # weekly hours
\$19,000 is the median yearly income
41% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
24% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Co-Teachers

\$13 is the median hourly wage
25 is the average # weekly hours
\$18,000 is the median yearly income
42% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
23% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Assistant Teachers

\$10 is the median hourly wage
22 is the average # weekly hours
\$10,725 is the median yearly income
35% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
23% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Teachers

\$ 2,500 is the median income
\$82,500 is the median family income
1% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
2% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Please note that, due to the way the question about income was asked, the figure for Congregational School teachers is only a rough estimate. When asked for total annual salary, 11% stated that they make less than \$1,000 and 49% stated that they earn between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

Teachers

\$41,250 is the median income
\$97,500 is the median family income
54% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
60% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Characteristics of Administrators: Personal income, Family income, benefits

Administrators (benefits over 20hrs)

\$ 42,500 is the median income
\$115,000 is the median family income
50% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
36% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Administrators

\$45,000 is the median income
\$97,500 is the median family income
53% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
42% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

Administrators

\$ 75,000 is the median income
\$115,000 is the median family income
66% state that the employer is contributing towards a major medical plan
77% state that the employer is contributing towards a retirement plan

- According to the 2000 NJPS study, the median income for Jews is \$54,000 (compared to \$42,000 for the general US population). Except for day school administrators, all Jewish educators have lower median incomes. Early childhood teachers have lower per hour pay than congregational and day school educators. The NEA 2000 data show the median salary for public school teachers to be \$43,262. The NEA 2000 data show public teacher's mean household income to be \$77,739

- As noted previously, most Jewish educators are women and most are married. If it were not for the income of their spouses, most Jewish educators would not be able to afford to stay in Jewish education.
- Jewish educators stated in our surveys that the two most important benefits to them are: major medical insurance and retirement plan contributions. Yet, these are lacking in significant percentages for many Jewish educators.
- When the educator's employer doesn't pay for medical insurance, this insurance is covered through the spouse, parent(s) or other employer. This reinforces the message to the educator that their profession lacks status.
- Even benefits that save both the employers and employees money (such as cafeteria style plans and qualified tuition reduction) are rarely available.
- On a community or national level, there is no system of benefits for Jewish educators, such as discounts to Jewish book stores or free entrance to Jewish museums.
- While JCCs and synagogues sometimes offer free or reduced memberships to Jewish clergy, they rarely extend this benefit to Jewish educators. The only common exception is made by synagogues for congregational school administrators.

Early Childhood Education**Congregational School Education****Day School Education***Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Are you planning on retiring?***Teachers**

10% Within five years
 71% 6 years or more
 19% Other
 0% Never

Administrators

17% Within five years
 72% 6 years or more
 10% Other
 1% Never

Teachers

4% Next two to five years
 14% Can't afford to retire
 75% Have not established retirement date
 7% Other

Administrators

9% Next two to five years
 23% Can't afford to retire
 66% Have not established retirement date
 3% Other

Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction
IF your child went into the field of Jewish education, what would you worry about most?

Teachers

78% Money
 38% Career opportunities
 30% Status

Administrators

93% Money
 52% Career opportunities
 19% Status
 19% Number of hours worked
 19% Work satisfaction

Teachers

59% Compatibility with family life
 40% Status
 25% Career opportunities
 25% Compatibility with living a Jewish life
 24% Money
 23% Work satisfaction

Administrators

69% Compatibility with family life
 37% Status
 29% Money
 19% Career opportunities
 19% Compatibility with living a Jewish life

Teachers

84% Money
 36% Career opportunities
 29% Status

Administrators

86% Money
 31% Career opportunities
 31% Number of hours worked
 23% Status

Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction
How important to your household is the salary or pay you received from Jewish education?

Teachers

23% It is the **main** source of income
 61% It is an **important** source of additional income
 16% It is an **insignificant** source of income

Administrators

11% It is the **main** source of income
 89% It is an **important** source of additional income

Teachers

11% It is the **main** source of income
 53% It is an **important** source of additional income
 36% It is an **insignificant** source of income

Administrators

47% It is the **main** source of income
 49% It is an **important** source of additional income
 4% It is an **insignificant** source of income

Teachers

32% It is the **main** source of income
 50% It is an **important** source of additional income
 7% It is an **insignificant** source of income

Administrators

60% It is the **main** source of income
 37% It is an **important** source of additional income
 3% It is an **insignificant** source of income

Characteristics of Teachers and Administrators: Job Satisfaction
To what degree are you satisfied with the salary or pay you received from Jewish education?

Teachers

54% Very satisfied or satisfied

Administrators

55% Very satisfied or satisfied

Teachers

70% Very satisfied or satisfied

Administrators

71% Very satisfied or satisfied

Teachers

46% Very satisfied or satisfied

Administrators

60% Very satisfied or satisfied

The data on this page come from CAJE surveys conducted of its membership. Please note that the sample size for the early childhood and day school educators was close to or just below 50. In addition, as explained in the introduction, there are problems with the sampling method. Therefore, these results can only be considered indicative of trends.

- Whether or not the educator is satisfied with the salary or pay seems to be more directly related to family income than to the pay derived from the work in Jewish education.

- As a result, even though the typical early childhood teacher earns far less than the typical day school teacher, their level of dissatisfaction is lower and this seems directly related to their spouses having significantly higher incomes when comparing them to the spouses of day school teachers.

Further results of the CAJE-NAJECS Survey of Early Childhood Educators

The following are the results specifically from the recently concluded survey of early childhood Jewish educators. The survey was limited to short questions that fit on one page. Often, that leaves the researcher somewhat dissatisfied, because the responses sometimes raises more questions than answers. We collected data from 2,827 educators working in 368 programs. Since we estimate that there are over 1,000 programs, this represents less than 35% of the programs. Regretfully, some of the directors misunderstood the scope of the survey and only returned surveys for themselves and not the rest of their staff. Based on our estimates that there are between 15,000 and 20,000 educators in the system overall, the 2,827 respondents represent only about 15% of the total. At the same time, because of the paucity of available data on this population, this survey gives us major insights into the field.

The JECEP studies give a preliminary description of the programs. They were based on questionnaires directed to the directors of the early childhood programs. In analyzing the data it became clear that the directors didn't know much about the background of their teachers, particularly of their Jewish identity and education. This was the impetus for the 2004 survey conducted jointly by CAJE and the National Association of Jewish Early Childhood Specialists (NAJECS). The goal was to gain a better understanding of the profiles of the educators working in the early childhood Jewish settings. Further research during the Fall of 2004 will attempt to go into more depth and also verify these data by means of a random sampling process.

The majority of the responses came from Reform and Conservative congregations and from JCCs. The day schools' response rates were low. Below is a comparison of the estimated census data as reported on page 1 with the current survey. This shows that in our current survey, Reform and Conservative congregation-based educators are somewhat over-represented.

	# of Students (see Chart 1)	%	Educators Survey	%
Reform Synagogue Settings	24,000	20%	720	25%
Conservative Syn. Settings	27,255	23%	847	30%
JCCs	22,732	19%	564	20%
Others	46,431	38%	696	25%
Totals	120,418		2,827	

It is not surprising that administrators are more experienced than teachers. The teachers working in the early childhood Jewish programs have significantly less experience than those working in the public schools.

Number of years experience	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21+
Administrators	8%	12%	33%	47%
Teachers	26%	22%	36%	16%
Assistant Teachers	52%	22%	20%	6%
Public School Teachers NEA 2001	19%	19%	24%	38%

When comparing the # of years of experience for those working in the settings of formal Jewish education the early childhood educators have more years than the congregational school and less experience than the day school teachers. The percentages in the new survey are remarkably close to those in the previous CAJE surveys.

Chart 8: **Teachers** Years of experience comparing the CAJE-NAJECS survey (2004) and the CAJE Survey 2003

	Early Childhood CAJE-NAJECS Survey	Early Childhood CAJE Survey	Congreg. School CAJE Survey	Day School CAJE Survey
1 - 5	26%	24%	38%	18%
6 - 10	22%	21%	22%	20%
11 - 20	36%	36%	23%	30%
21+	16%	19%	16%	32%

Chart 9: **Administrators** Years of experience comparing the CAJE-NAJECS survey (2004) and the CAJE Survey 2003

	Early Childhood CAJE-NAJECS Survey	Early Childhood CAJE Survey	Congreg. School CAJE Survey	Day School CAJE Survey
1 - 5	8%	9%	12%	10%
6 - 10	12%	15%	18%	13%
11 - 20	33%	40%	33%	30%
21+	47%	36%	37%	47%

Working 10 months per year allows employers to consider the educators as part-time staff and thus they are not entitled to benefits. Regretfully, most teachers indicated they are in this category.

Number of months per year employed	10	12
Administrators	38%	62%
Teachers	87%	13%
Assistant Teachers	92%	8%

When asked whether the center provides before- or after-school care for the children, 71% answer “yes.” This percentage increases to 94% for the JCCs.

The survey asked about accreditation at the state or at the national level and, from notes of the respondents, it became clear that many confused licensing with accreditation, making the answers meaningless.

In terms of a simple “yes” or “no” question on the availability of scholarships, there is a significant difference between the JCCs (90% “yes”) and the congregation-based programs. (51% “yes”). The flow of money in the institutions definitely deserves further study.

Since the teaching of Israel has been an important issue in Jewish education, the survey asked whether the educator has been to Israel. There was no attempt made to quantify the educational significance of this trip or how recently this occurred. The answers are, not surprisingly, significantly different for the Jewish compared with the gentile educators. Below are the answers for the Jewish educators only (Chart 10):

	Yes
Directors	66%
Teachers	50%
Assistant Teachers	44%
NJPS 2000	35%

Chart 10: Percentages of Jewish educators who have visited Israel compared with NJPS 2000 data

The survey asked whether there is a Judaic specialist on staff. Our interpretation of the answers is somewhat complicated. We consider that it is better to have at least one specialist on staff, if the alternative is that nobody on the staff has a good knowledge on how to integrate Jewish identity in the school. However, the preferred situation is a school where every teacher has a decent knowledge of Judaism and how to bring this to the classroom. This makes the analysis of the responses problematic, since if the answer was “no Judaic specialist on staff,” it is not clear what the situation is. Overall, 71% of the respondents answer this question affirmatively. Administrators and teachers from the same school did not always give the same answer to this type of question. Administrators answered the question affirmatively at a rate of 63%, vs. teachers at 72%. This begs for further study on the differences of perception between teachers and administrators within schools. Another example where there is a discrepancy between administrators and teachers is in the questions about reflection time where administrators tend to state that there is more frequent and lengthier reflection taking place in the school than the teachers replies.

Overall, 61% answered that there is a written Judaic curriculum in the school. Again, there are problems with this question, since there is no way to measure the quality of the curriculum. Actually, there are some excellent schools that may, in practice, have significant Jewish content, but lack a written curriculum. In an school with an approach favoring the emergent curriculum approach (e.g., Reggio Emilio) the absence of a written Judaic curriculum may actually be quite conscious and may not necessarily be a reflective of quality.

The next question asked about parent education classes. Some 78% stated that their program has parent education classes. However, the survey didn’t ask about frequency or content.

Only 15% of the respondents state that parents plan with the teachers. This question did not attempt to quantify time or content, it simply asked for a “yes” or “no.”

The early childhood Jewish programs can and should function as an important pipeline for transitioning the students to further Jewish education, whether in day schools, congregational schools, or informal Jewish educational programs. Therefore, we asked whether the school has a systematic approach to transitioning to further Jewish education. Beck's 2002 study had found that many educators are hesitant to take an active approach towards transitioning. This survey found the same trend, with only 44% answering this question affirmatively. There are significant differences between the settings

	Yes
JCC	36%
Reform Congregation	42%
Conservative Congregation	47%

Chart 11: Percentages of educators who stated that there is a systematic approach in their program towards further Jewish education.

The survey explored the personal religion of the Jewish educators. Some chose not to answer this question. The answers were recoded into "Jewish," "not Jewish," and "probably not Jewish." Respondents were assumed to be "probably not Jewish" if they chose not to answer the personal religion question and if they answered "no" to any form of Jewish education (see Chart 12).

	Role	Jewish	Not Jewish	Probably Not Jewish
JCC	Administrators	82%	8%	10%
	Teachers	68%	14%	18%
	Assistant Teachers	70%	13%	16%
Reform	Administrators	97%	1%	2%
	Teachers	86%	3%	7%
	Assistant Teachers	76%	14%	11%
Conservative	Administrators	97%	1%	2%
	Teachers	88%	5%	7%
	Assistant Teachers	80%	9%	11%

Chart 12: Personal religion of the educators working in the early childhood Jewish programs

Chart 13 shows that the different regions of the US have significantly lower percentages of Jewish educators

	North-East	Mid-West	South	West
Administrators	95%	90%	88%	94%
Teachers	85%	77%	85%	63%
Assistant Teachers	81%	64%	68%	63%

Chart 13: Percentage of Jewish educators by region

While the JCCs have more non-Jewish teachers, there seems to be no significant difference between the Reform or the Conservative congregational settings. A further question is whether the extent of Jewish education of the Jewish educators is significantly different for the three main settings. The data show a trend that the level of Jewish education of the Jewish educators is higher for administrators than for teachers and both are higher than assistant teachers. In terms of settings, the Conservative settings show a higher level than the Reform which is similar to the JCC settings. (Chart 14).

	Role	> Bat Mitzva	Bat Mitzva	Other	None
JCC	Administrators	32%	22%	25%	22%
	Teachers	24%	28%	27%	22%
	Assistant Teachers	19%	24%	21%	36%
Reform	Administrators	34%	26%	25%	15%
	Teachers	24%	24%	29%	22%
	Assistant Teachers	23%	24%	19%	33%
Conservative	Administrators	48%	23%	16%	13%
	Teachers	35%	20%	27%	17%
	Assistant Teachers	29%	14%	27%	31%

Chart 14: Levels of Jewish education

The final part of the survey addresses a series of question on special needs children.

Is there a special needs consultant connected with the school? 84% stated "yes."

Are there special needs children in the school? 88% stated "yes."

Are there undiagnosed special needs children in the school? 81% stated "yes."

Has the school denied placement to children? Since the administrators tend to be more knowledgeable in this area, they tend to answer "yes" in greater proportions. 63% stated "yes." Again, the special needs questions only provide a quick glimpse. They don't answer the extent of the children's special needs, nor do they explore what happens to those children who are denied placement because the program could not accommodate their specific needs.

We know from the JECEP and the CAJE studies:

- At most 25% of the total core population of children from birth through 6 years of age are enrolled in early childhood Jewish programs. See Chart 1.
- The children spend 25-30 hours a week in Jewish early childhood programs with professionals who are either not Jewish; Jewish but not Jewishly literate; or "bagel and lox Jews," i.e., not living active/engaged Jewish lives, however they define it.
- Many of the early childhood professionals do not see themselves as Jewish educators (an important distinction from day schools and religious school educators).
- Host institutions do not see them as Jewish educational institutions, which would account, in part, for:
 - The non-Jewish personnel (never see non-Jewish personnel in religious schools or day schools Judaic Departments).
 - The fact that most directors don't know the Jewish literacy level of their teachers (not asked in interviews).
 - Many schools do not have "Jewish" in their mission statements.
- Additionally, many of the professionals do not meet requirements for quality, defined by the National Institute for Early Education Research as having at least a 4-year college degree and some early childhood training.
 - The teachers' median hourly wage is \$15 an hour with few, if any, benefits.
 - Jewish content in most programs is inconsistent and sporadic, with Israel and Hebrew being the weakest areas.
 - 35% of parents never saw the Rabbi the entire time their children were enrolled in the early childhood program.
 - Many synagogues don't actively recruit from the parent body for synagogue membership.
 - Most directors do not provide parents with Jewish educational options post-early childhood program.

We are in this predicament for several reasons:

- Early childhood programs were not set up as Jewish education centers, rather as enrichment centers.
- The Jewish community does not understand the importance of the period from birth - age six for the overall development of a child, including Jewish identity development.
- The organized Jewish community (Federations, Central Agencies, synagogues) does not see the early childhood programs as Jewish educational institutions, the first step in a continuum of Jewish education opportunities, and a critical gateway for families to enter into the Jewish community. Early childhood Jewish programs are isolated entities.
- Compensation is horrendous. We pay parking lot attendants more than our child care providers. Median salary for full-time early childhood teachers is \$15,000, while, for day school teachers, it is \$41,250. In other words, day school teachers, on average, make 175% more than teachers in early childhood Jewish programs for a similar teaching day. In addition, most of the early childhood teachers have no job-related benefits at all - no medical insurance, no pension.
- Host institutions see schools as cash cows and take profit out to support other institutional programs.
- Many early childhood programs do not have lay boards or committees advocating for them to the board of the host institution.

That being said, there are exceptions for each area mentioned. Most parents, who have little or no expectation for Jewish content since they did not choose the program for that feature, said the early childhood experience had an overly positive impact on their family. Some 70% are now doing something different Jewishly as a result (Beck 2003). This, together with the NJPS 2000 finding that more intensive forms of Jewish education in childhood are associated with lower intermarriage rates, makes a strong statement.

There is tremendous, untapped potential - windows of opportunity for individual and family Jewish identity building and community Jewish identity building.

The profile of the early childhood Jewish educator is grim: the low salaries and lack of benefits eliminates all but the most dedicated from considering a career in this field. Very few are entering this field directly from college and seeking it as a career. The lack of career opportunities, coupled with the increase in demand for early childhood educators in the public sector, threatens to reduce the staff we currently have.

The question "who is going to teach my children and grandchildren?" is no longer a fundraising ploy. It is a real concern. Early childhood Jewish education has the potential to significantly impact on the Jewish identity of children and their families as well as serve as a key gateway into the Jewish community. Lack of serious attention to the challenges of recruitment and retention may result in the loss of the next generation.

Summary

The Jewish community needs to recognize the importance of the period from birth to age six as a crucial time in the development of a child. Jewish early childhood education can play a pivotal role in this development stage, if more attention is paid to these programs and the educators who deliver it.

In order to encourage families to send their children to Jewish early childhood education programs (particularly in the places where free public school programs are available), there needs to be a sufficient number of good programs with effectively trained teachers. Within these programs the emphasis on Jewish values and identity must also be clear and consistent.

Noted problems with existing Jewish early childhood programs include:

- * older teachers
- * a drop in recruitment
- * a lack of personnel who can functionp as Jewish educators
- * a lack of trained teachers
- * low pay
- * inadequate job-related benefits

Recent studies show that enrollment is on the rise in Early Childhood Jewish Educational programs, which indicates that there is an interest in this educational setting.

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