It’s been a wonderful year in our Early Childhood Center despite challenges and changes due to the pandemic. Under the guidance of Forest Levy Wolfe, our new ECC Director, our program was able to safely open last fall to provide the warm and inspiring learning environment our families expect from our ECC. Our students engage in art and exploratory play in their classrooms, enjoy the outdoors on our playground, sing and play sports, and develop a love of Judaism through hands-on experiences - all while wearing a mask and staying within their classroom “pod.” Our children are resilient, it’s been amazing to watch.

In addition to new safety protocols, we’ve integrated several virtual components into our ECC to keep everyone connected. All classrooms do Havdallah together with Ms. Sam through Zoom on Monday mornings, sports and movement with Mr. Matt is broadcast through a big screen in Handleman Hall, and our Friday morning ECC Shabbat is streamed on Facebook Live. (Check us out on Fridays at 10:30am on Facebook, it will surely put a smile on your face!) Thanks go out to Forest for her leadership during this challenging time, to Jen Goren, our administrative assistant, for her constant support, and - of course - to our amazing teachers who show up each day to nurture and care for our students. We also appreciate Damon Kaigler, our building director, and his staff, for maintaining our building and keeping it clean, as well as Morris Collins, our head of security, for keeping us all safe and stocked with stickers.

And to our families - thank you for trusting us with your children. Their voices and laughter fill our hearts and make all of it worthwhile. We’re looking forward to a great summer at Camp Beth El 2021!

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We don’t have to tell you that this time is unprecedented or how drastically our lives have changed due to the coronavirus, but future generations will want to learn from what we are living through today. That’s why The Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives of TBE and the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives of the Jewish Federation have teamed up to preserve the stories of life during COVID-19. We are collecting photographs, diaries/journals and audio/video recordings (personal narratives or oral history interviews) that document everyday life during the pandemic. There is also a questionnaire that you can fill out to contribute your reflections of this time. No matter your story, no matter how you want to tell it, we want to preserve it. Join this effort by visiting the COVID-19 Archives Collection website: jewishdetroit.org/Covid19-collections. For more information, please contact Laura Williams at lwilliams@tbeonline.org.

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The community, we need your story!

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- Nicole Van House, ECC parent
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- Nicole Van House, ECC parent

During these unprecedented times, the ECC has outdone itself once again! Our leadership and teachers have exceeded my expectations by providing the safest environment for my daughter while maintaining an engaging and fun learning community!

– Erin Simmerman, ECC parent

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