

## **Non-native Hebrew Speakers Programs**

**Everything Kids Love In Hebrew.** We offer a program that brings **everyday** Hebrew to **every** child, engaging **every** sense, experiencing Israel and learning **everything** in Hebrew with a well-established program and professional guidance and support.

### **Who is the program for?**

The program is intended for children who are taking their first steps in Hebrew. Using a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, materials and teaching aids the program creates a fascinating and inviting learning environment which engages all the senses, stimulates the child's imagination and fosters a love of the Hebrew language.

### **What is unique about our program?**

One of the most unique aspects of the program is that it focuses on conversational Hebrew, teaching the language by using it in everyday situations rather than teaching topics or themes. Kids will learn to introduce themselves, friends in class and family members. They will learn names of animals, foods, learn about Shabbat, Jewish Holidays, Israel and more.

The content of the program derives from the children's everyday life and are therefore more likely to become part of the child's everyday vocabulary.

This is how children naturally acquire language.

### **Separation between learning the language and the Jewish traditions**

Because the Holidays and Bible stories are so rich in possibilities for conversations with young children, we may use English in some of the classes when we discuss Jewish holidays and traditions. This will allow the children to express themselves when speaking of the holidays and their meanings. This also allows the teacher to progress in the Hebrew language studies in accordance with the children's pace and not be concerned with covering a certain amount of material by the time a particular holiday comes around. We incorporate holiday vocabulary into the sessions, so that the holiday will also be present in the Hebrew language component of the curriculum.

## What principles guide the program?

### **1. Focus on the child**

The entire program and all of the activities have been designed with the child in mind. The program is informed by research on language acquisition at this age and developmentally appropriate practice. The Hebrew sessions are structured so that the children are speaking, dancing, playing and singing. Our goal is for the child to love Hebrew and use the language in an authentic communicative manner with family members, friends and Hebrew speakers.

### **2. Ivrit B'Ivrit - Hebrew in Hebrew**

The classes are conducted in Hebrew. In order for children to view Hebrew as a language in which they too can communicate, it must be used for communication by the teacher and the children. Hebrew in Hebrew instruction also lays the foundation for the development of thinking processes in Hebrew in the future.

Based on research concerning acquiring second languages the attentive ability of children learning a second language is inferior to their attentive ability in their mother's tongue. Therefore the Hebrew lessons are not based on translation, so that the children will make the effort to listen and understand Hebrew.

### **3. Systematic language instruction**

Our program is focused on the linguistic patterns that are the foundation of the language. The children will learn the principles of grammar and how to apply them. For example, we will learn male and female endings as well as single and plural endings of words. While there are exceptions to this rule, we do not include them in the program. The term "linguistic progression" refers to the way the program progresses from familiar to unfamiliar, simple to complex, common to rare, from male to female, and from singular to plural. The logic of sequencing in language learning is similar to the logic that underlies sequencing in the teaching of mathematics or the study of musical notation. The learning of the basics in a sequenced, structured and systematic way is what makes virtuosity possible later on. One of the ways we facilitate progressive learning is through the inclusion of vocabulary familiar to the children from their first language. This

creates a sense of basic knowledge and confidence in Hebrew. The study units at the beginning of the program include cognates - words that are pronounced similarly or identically in Hebrew and other languages, for example chocolate and shokolad or telephone, which is exactly the same in Hebrew. This enables the child to speak Hebrew from the very first sessions. We mainly use the present tense. The use of present tense enables immediate communication, which is the program's primary goal. The child's mental world focuses mainly on the present, and at this age children are still in the process of acquiring grammatical past and future tense forms in their first language. The content words that are included in the program are among those used most frequently by Hebrew-speakers generally, and by young children in particular.

#### **4. Spiral instruction**

Children learn to use language through repeated encounters with the same pattern in different contexts. Each study unit builds on those that precede it and includes the previously learned vocabulary and patterns. In this way, each study unit lays the groundwork for those following it and ensures constant practice of what has been learned. This gives the children confidence and fosters their ability to create new language combinations.

#### **5. Israel Education**

The Hebrew language can serve as a living bridge connecting children and their families to Israel. The program includes a variety of activities and teaching aids which, in addition to their role in Hebrew language instruction, serve as a window to the landscapes and children of Israel for the young child in the Diaspora.

#### **6. Family Inclusion**

Our program extends the learning experience beyond the classroom, through activities involving the children's families at home and by inviting parents to take an active role in their child's Hebrew experience.