WOW WITH PAM
WORDS OF WISDOM

By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

Education as a career path and life goal began for me in 1992 with my graduation with a BS in Psychology from Binghamton University. That fall, I entered my master's program in Early Childhood Education at the same university, different school and I never looked back! With many relevant degrees, over 3 decades of hands-on experience, Early Childhood Education is my passion, my raison d'etre, my tachlit, my reason for being.

The Month We Start Adding Light

This Tuesday and Wednesday we celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the start of a brand-new Jewish month. And Kislev is a special one: it's the month of Chanukah!

Have you noticed how early it's getting dark lately? Kislev arrives during the longest nights of the year. That's no accident. Right when the world feels darkest, we are asked to do something simple and brave: add light.

Our sages even debated how to light the Chanukah candles. One school said to start with eight and take one away each night. Hillel said to start with one and add another each night, because when it comes to goodness, we always go up, never down. We follow Hillel. Every night of Chanukah, the light grows.

There's a beautiful teaching that a little bit of light pushes away a lot of darkness. You don't need a spotlight. One small candle changes a whole room. One kind word changes a whole day.

So this year, let's not wait until Chanukah to start glowing. Let's spend all of Kislev getting ready!

Make a Family Light Jar

All you need is an empty jar and some paper (yellow, orange, and gold are extra fun!).

1. Decorate your jar together with stickers, ribbon, or drawings of candles and stars.
2. Each time someone in your family does a kind deed, like sharing a toy, helping set the table, calling Grandma, or cheering up a friend, write or draw it on a slip of paper and drop it in.
3. Spot someone else being kind? Add theirs too! Catching kindness counts.
4. Watch your jar fill up with light all month long.

When Chanukah begins, on Friday evening, December 4, read your notes together by the glow of the Chanukah Menorah and Shabbat candles or just around the dinner table. You'll see just how much light your family made.

When the nights grow long, families have always known just what to do: we gather, we light, and we add a little more goodness every day. From generation to generation, that's how we shine.

Chodesh Tov, a happy and bright new month, from all of us at the EVJCC! #Shabbat Shalom