



Frequently Asked Questions - EarlyJ Jewish & Israel Culture Ambassadors Program

What is the purpose of the EarlyJ Jewish & Israel Culture Ambassadors Program?

This initiative offers Jewish Early Childhood Education (JECE) educators the opportunity to cultivate connections to Israel and the Jewish community while participating in graduate-level professional development. Ultimately, the program aims to strengthen Jewish identity and the global Jewish community by introducing JECE educators to innovative techniques and a supportive network.

For more information and the registration form, click [here](#).

Please also visit EarlyJ's website to read about the [program](#), read [testimonials](#), and [hear](#) the alumni educators share their personal experiences and reflections.

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

This summer, the program will have 2 tracks:

- A. A program for leading educators in the Bay Area including preschool directors, associate directors, assistant directors, and leading teachers with at least 5 years experience in the field of early childhood education.
- B. A program for educators in the Bay Area with at least 5 years experience in early childhood education. These educators do not need to hold leading positions within their preschools.

What are the requirements for participation?

- Applicants must have a minimum of 5 years of experience in Jewish early childhood/preschool education
- Applicants must be currently teaching in a Jewish preschool classroom in the Bay Area with or without holding a leadership role
- Applicants must provide confirmation of previous training/studies in the early childhood field

- Applicants must submit a letter of recommendation from their superiors and take part in an interview process.

What does the program entail?

The program consists of three main components:

1. Introduction to Jewish Early Childhood Education (virtual meetings)
 - a. 4/27/2025 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - b. 5/4/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - c. 5/11/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - d. 5/18/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
2. 17-Day Israel Seminar, between 06/08/2025 - 06/24/2025 (including flights). The seminar will include academic lessons, an early childhood education practicum in Israeli preschools, and exploration of Israel
3. Project Presentations and Reflection (virtual meetings) October 2025 (TBD)

Is there an introductory Zoom meeting?

Yes, join us on 1/12/2025 at 9:00 am to hear further details about the program from EarlyJ and Oranim staff.

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81483000025>

Meeting ID: 814 8300 0025

What expenses are covered by the program?

All expenses related to the program, including flights and transportation to and from the airport are fully covered.

EarlyJ will provide health insurance while in Israel. We recommend each participant to buy additional travel insurance.

What are the program benefits?

- All expenses are covered by EarlyJ.
- At the end of the program, educators will receive 5 academic credits from Oranim College of Education and the title: Early Childhood Jewish & Israel Cultural Ambassador.
- Educators will receive a one-time bonus of \$5,000 (each educator's preschool and EarlyJ will evenly cover the one-time bonus).

*The bonus and the Ambassador title are dependent on each participant organizing related events/curriculum/programs at their preschool the following year. **The bonus will be awarded only after an educator's completion of their project in their preschool/community.**

What are the educators' responsibilities?

- Participation in all the Zoom meetings before and after the seminar in Israel.
- Participation in all the activities during the seminar in Israel.
- Project presentation upon completion of the program.
- Organizing 2-3 events in the preschool related to Israel during the year following the seminar in Israel.
- Educators are encouraged to remain at their current preschool or within a Jewish preschool in the Bay Area. If they choose not to, EarlyJ reserves the right to request reimbursement for the seminar costs.

What are the preschools' responsibilities?

- Identify educators to recommend for the program and provide recommendation letters.
- Each preschool and EarlyJ will evenly cover the one-time bonus of \$5,000. EarlyJ will pay the preschool \$2,500 and the preschool will pay the educator \$5,000. The preschool will sign a letter agreeing to these terms. The bonus will be paid only after the educator completes all of their responsibilities. EarlyJ will inform the preschool when the bonus payment is due.
- We strongly encourage offering paid professional days off for educators to attend the seminar, so they do not have to use their vacation days.
- Please note that educators are expected to organize 2-3 events at their preschool during the year following their seminar in Israel, otherwise EarlyJ reserves the right to request reimbursement for the seminar costs from the educator.

How can I apply for the program?

Applications can be completed online through the provided registration [link](#). Interested individuals must submit their applications by 2/7/2025.

What is the selection process?

Apply by 2/7/2025.

Obtain recommendations and approval from the preschool administration.

Applicants may then be invited to participate in an interview.

Who can I contact for more information?

For further inquiries or assistance, please reach out to:

- Zehava Dahan at Zdahan@earlyj.org or (415) 509-1181
- Jackie Levi-Atias at jackie_l@oranim.ac.il or (001) 50 650-3013 (for calls from the US to Israel)

Where is Oranim College located?

Oranim College of Education, located in Northern Israel (20 minus north of Haifa), is responsible for facilitating and operating the program. Oranim College is committed to academic excellence, community involvement, and the promotion of higher education.

How many educators will join this program?

15-20 educators will participate in the program.

Will there be a main base in Israel or is it a traveling program?

The main base is in Oranim College.

On the weekends, participants will travel with the group to different cities in Israel.

Where will we be staying?

We will be staying in a hotel in Haifa. Educators will share rooms (2 per room).

On the weekends, participants will travel with the group to different cities in Israel and will stay in different hotels.

Can I stay in a room by myself?

Yes, but you will have to pay an additional cost for the room.

Is academic learning via seminar?

Yes, at Oranim College.

There will be additional Zoom meetings before and after the seminar in Israel.

What do the pre and post-virtual meetings look like? How long is each session and what day of the week?

Each session is 1.5 hours and will be on Sundays.

Dates and times:

1. Introduction to Jewish Early Childhood Education (virtual meetings)
 - a. 4/27/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - b. 5/4/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - c. 5/11/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am
 - d. 5/18/2025, 9:00 am - 10:30 am

2. Project Presentation and Reflection (virtual meetings) - October 2025 (TBD)

I am Shomer Shabbat, can I join the program?

Yes, we can accommodate Shomrei Shabbat. All programs at Oranim are during the week. On the weekends (Shabbat) we will have walking tours in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. All participants are expected to join. We will not drive on Shabbat or use other transportation.

Is the food Kosher?

Yes.

I want to fly earlier to Israel or stay after the seminar, is that possible?

We will try to accommodate everyone. Please note that if there's a difference in the price of the ticket, the participant will have to pay the difference. Participants who do not arrive or leave with the group will have to pay for their transportation to and from the airport.

Do we have time during the seminar to visit family?

The seminar runs throughout the entire week, with additional trips scheduled on the weekends. **Full participation in all activities is required.** Once you receive the complete itinerary, you'll be able to see any available free time during which you can meet with family and friends.

What about laundry?

We do not provide laundry services. Please pack for the entire stay. You will receive pocket money that can be used to do laundry at the hotel, which can be expensive.

Pocket money

Each participant will receive pocket money for buying food (when meals are not provided), snacks, transportation (when not provided), and personal use.