



PARENT Newsletter

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009 | VOLUME 8 NO. 2

YVY Head Start Approved for Innovative Program

YVY is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant for the expansion of its Federal Head Start program. As part of this expansion, two additional Head Start classrooms serving 36 children will be opened.

In addition to serving these children in a conventional classroom setting, YVY will be servicing the remaining 72 children under a locally-designed option in an innovative new program conceived by YVY CEO Solomon Igel. Many children in the communities that YVY serves have been stricken with chronic or serious illnesses and cannot attend preschool. YVY's new program will service these children either in the hospital or in the home, so that they, too, can benefit from having a preschool experience. YVY will be partnering with the American Cancer Society, Chai Lifeline, and other organizations and hospitals to assure that these services are delivered with sensitivity and have optimal impact. YVY Head Start looks forward to the opportunity to provide preschool service to this population which has never before been served by Head Start.

YVY has also submitted an application for expansion of its Early Head Start program and is awaiting formal approval for this additional expansion. 



Holding new toothbrushes, YVY students emerge from the Ezra Mobile Dental Van after screenings.

Head Start

YVY Children Screened Following Head Start Timetable

Teachers in YVY Head Start and Early Head Start have completed all mandated educational screenings within the 45-day period required by Head Start. Enhanced hearing and vision screenings using non-invasive state-of-the-art equipment have also been provided by YVY during this time frame. The Ezra Medical Mobile Dental Van has been visiting YVY sites, to guarantee that all children are screened for dental problems before the 90-day required time limit. (See photos) Children are screened in order to identify any potential problems which require attention. Parents are, of course, apprised of the results of all screenings. YVY's HSFIS program tracks all screening results to assure that all children receive proper follow up.

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Non-invasive vision screenings have helped alert YVY parents to potential problems



YVY boys enjoy a fall outing at the Prospect Park Zoo



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YELED V'YALDA

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YVY's Dual Language Policy Being Implemented

All YVY Head Start and Early Head Start sites have always had a policy which respects the home language and culture of the children in their care. Now that a formal dual language policy is required by Head Start, formal monitoring procedures have also been put into place to track compliance with YVY's policy, which was formulated by the YVY Research Institute. (Please see related article in Magazine section.)

Cool Culture Cards Enhance Holiday Outings

YVY sites are members of Cool Culture, which provides parents with cards that allow them to visit NYC cultural institutions with their families at no charge. Many YVY parents take particular advantage of the opportunity to use these cards during the summer, and many report having used them during the intermediate days of the Sukkos holiday in October, when parents and children traditionally go on outings together. The cards enable parents to take children to interesting and educational venues which would otherwise be too costly.

New Mentoring Program to Begin at We Care EHS

We Care Early Head Start is enhancing its services to its parents through a new mentoring program that it will be offering in collaboration with the Council of Jewish Organizations of Flatbush.

This program pairs twelfth graders with EHS families who can use additional help with their children. Students are trained in early childhood development, acquire skills in child care — which can help them in future careers — and they also earn some extra money. Students are supervised by mentors who match them with families and are available for consultation. Williamsburg parents who are interested in enrolling their teenage daughters in this program can call 718.855.6916.

Head Start and Early Head Start Parent Activities in Full Swing

All YVY parents have attended orientation sessions at their sites. YVY parents have also attended workshops on transition, and YVY's Fathers' Group will soon be resuming. YVY parents, therapists, and employees enjoyed a session, sponsored by YVY's Special Services Division, on the therapeutic effects of laughter, which put everyone into a more cheerful frame of mind!

YVY Head Start Sites Elect Representatives

All YVY Head Start and Early Head Start parents have already elected representatives on the classroom and center/site level. Representatives work with teachers and education and social service staff, assuring that parents have input into their child's preschool program.

In December, representatives of all YVY sites will meet to elect an agency-wide Policy Council which meets monthly and is an integral part of YVY overall governance. 



YVY CEO Solomon Igel addresses parents at parent orientation at YVY's 1257 38 Street site

Staten Island

Beginning-of-Year Activities in Staten Island

Both Staten Island sites have been busy these last two months. Parents and staff have attended orientation sessions, and elections for class and center committees have been held. All Staten Island children have also been screened in all mandated areas, and home visits have begun. Parent meetings, fathers' activities, and special events have been planned and initiated.

Silver Lake to Hold Parenting Skills and Nutrition Workshops

Silver Lake II staff attended a training session at City Harvest to enhance nutrition education for children and families. City Harvest partners with the Silver

Lake sites to provide its centers and families with surplus produce and other nutritious food products. The training will help parents cook more nutritious foods with their families.

The Silver Lake sites are also initiating a comprehensive series of parenting skills workshop run by an experienced early childhood specialist.

Family Literacy Program Starts in Staten Island

A family literacy program, Get Caught Reading, is beginning at Silver Lake I. As part of a national program to encourage reading, SLI always has a camera ready to capture any parent, child, or staff member when they are reading. Photos of the readers are hung on a special bulletin board. On a monthly

family literacy day, parents will participate in an event centered on one theme expressed in available books. A partnership with the New York Public Library will enable library staff to come on site and enroll families for library cards. ❧

Two graduates of the Silver Lake GED Program



Continuous staff training helps YVY maintain professional standards. Here, YVY ABA therapist training

Facilitated Enrollment

YVY Facilitated Enrollment Undergoes Successful Audit

YVY's Facilitated Enrollment division has successfully entered into its third year of operation. The second-year audit of this new YVY division revealed what all those who use this service already know: that YVY's Facilitated Enrollment operates efficiently, promptly, and courteously to help their clients with their public health insurance enrollment or recertification.

Healthy Families Project Off to a Good Start

Director of Facilitated Enrollment Michelle Goldkrantz, LMSW, is also overseeing a new case management grant that YVY has been awarded by DYCD, to promote

WIC

YVY WIC Director Nechama Stolzenberg presented the YVY WIC Healthy Lifestyle program on obesity prevention and at the WIC Coordinator's meeting on September 22.

The YVY WIC's popular Peer Counseling program under the direction of YVY Senior Nutritionist and Lactation Specialist Svetlana Tenenbaum is now enter-

ing its third successful year of operation, helping pre and post partum women through a variety of modalities, including one-on-one counseling and Mommy and Me classes.

After five years of successful operation, YVY WIC has been officially approved to provide WIC services for the next five years. ❧



New YVY WIC Fit WIC Play Waiting Area

Healthy Families. Counselors are available to help families with referrals and follow up for many different needs. Families often do not know where to turn for help in difficult circumstances. Sometimes even minor obstacles can be difficult for families

in need to overcome. This YVY division is ready to help. After only two months in operation, an audit of this division revealed that it had already met its quota in terms of numbers and had helped its clients with a wide variety of services. ❧

ONGOING PARENT ACTIVITIES: BROOKLYN

Aerobics

99 Heyward Street
Sundays November 1, 8,
15, 22, 29

Yoga

99 Heyward Street
Tuesdays November
10, 24

Parenting Workshops

6002 Farragut Road
Thursday November 6
99 Heyward Street
Mondays November 9, 23
1312 38th Street
Tuesday November 17

Fitness for Men

99 Heyward Street
Wednesdays November 4,
11, 18, 25

Expectant Mom's Program: Aerobics and Childbirth Education Parenting Skills for Postpartum Moms

1257-63 38th Street
Sundays November 1,
15, 29
99 Heyward Street
Mondays November 2,
16, 30

Focus on Fathers

99 Heyward Street
Monday November 9
1257-63 38th Street
Tuesday November 10

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES: BROOKLYN

Swimming

YvY Fitness Center, 1312
38th Street
November 15–December
30

YVY Eat Well Play Hard School Wellness Council Leader Training

1257-63 38th Street
Wednesday November 18

YVY WIC

1312 38th Street

Mommy and Me

Mondays November 2, 9,
16, 23, 30

Brooklyn Housing

Wednesday November 25

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bullies to Buddies

1257-63 38th Street
Monday November 2

Let the Children Be Heard

1694 Ocean Avenue
Sunday November 15

How to Improve Your Food Choices

Staff Development
1312 38th Street
Tuesday November 10

ONGOING ACTIVITIES: STATEN ISLAND:

Parent Committee

Wednesday November 18

Fathers in Action

Thursday November 6

Home-Based Infants

Friday November 13

Home-Based Toddlers

Friday November 20

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES: STATEN ISLAND

Parent Teacher

Conference

Tuesday November 3

Parenting Skills

Workshop

Mondays November 9, 16

Family Literacy Day

Wednesday November 25

Health Advisory Committee Meeting • Wednesday, November 25

Policy Council Meeting • Tuesday, November 24

Policy Council Elections • Tuesday, December 8

NOVEMBER 2008

For more information on any of Yeled V'Yalda's services, please call the following numbers:

Headstart.....718.686.3700 *3
Early Headstart..... 718.686.3700 *3
Special Education 718.686.3700 *1
ABA Program 718.514.8600
Early Intervention 718.686.3700 *2
Ezra Medical Center 718.686.7600 *9
YvY WIC Program..... 718.686.3799
YvY Facilitated Enrollment
..... 718.686.2189

YELED V'YALDA STATEN ISLAND:

Silver Lake Headstart,

10 Gregg Place.....718.815.4488

Silver Lake Headstart II,

20 Park Hill Circle: 718.720.0090

YELED V'YALDA SUPPORT LINES:

YvY Parenting Hotline

Fridays, 10-2 718.686.2402

All calls are confidential. You do not need to give your name.

Yeled v'Yalda 311

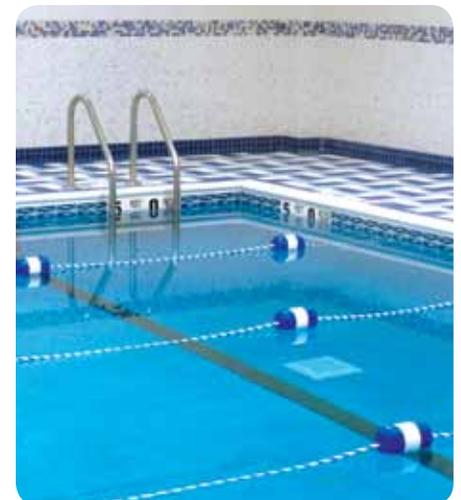
for comments/concerns 718.686.3700 *311

YVY Fitness Center Enhances Programming

In response to the demand that has been generated by the popularity of the new YVY Fitness Center, the Center has enhanced its programming to include group exercises targeting different fitness goals. These group sessions are free with membership, which also includes, of course, the use of its state-of-the-art fitness equipment, a sparkling five-lane lap pool, a sauna, and a steam room. Center personnel are helpful in teaching new members how to use the equipment and are also available for private consultation for those who desire this service.

In order to assist YVY Head Start and Early Head Start parents in their pursuit of the healthy lifestyle goals which Head Start encourages, a free membership is being offered on a trial basis to all parents

who are currently enrolled in YVY. All parents have received fliers notifying them of times and terms. Parents can call 718.686.3788 for more information. ♫



YVY Fitness Center's sparkling lap pool



RAISING A BILINGUAL CHILD

As we all know, a large number of Americans are either immigrants or children or grandchildren of immigrants. Many United States residents, therefore, have parents or grandparents who arrived to these shores speaking another language. While 65% of the world population speaks at least two languages in their everyday life, most children in the United States eventually become dominant, or even monolingual, in English. Many parents would like to have their children remain fluent in their home language, but worry about the ramifications of a decision to raise their children to be bilingual.

There are many good reasons for children to be fluent in more than one language. In our multicultural age, it is, of course, both socially and professionally valuable to be able to communicate with a wide variety of people of different cultures. More immediately, however, having children speak the language of their families creates a bridge between generations, which makes it easier for children to forge a connection with their older relatives. In some cases, this connection is with relatives who remain in the home country, who are now more accessible than in the past both through eased communication

and greater travel opportunities.

Since languages differ in the way they describe reality, knowing two languages also helps bilingual speakers learn that people can construe the world in more than one way. Anyone who speaks more than one language knows that certain words or expressions are almost untranslatable because they reflect the unique culture of the speakers of that language. Thus, speaking the language of the family also allows children to partake in the culture of their heritage more fully.

Learning a language early in life is an almost effortless means to fluency, and once children know two languages, learn-

ing additional languages becomes much easier. While bilingualism will not make children smarter overall, research suggests that bilingual children have advantages in areas such as cognitive processing and overall language awareness. These advantages depend on their degrees of fluency and literacy in each language.

The amount of the non-dominant language that children learn to speak tends to be influenced by their closeness to the speakers of their language of origin. First generation immigrants, children of parents who do not speak English, tend to be exclusively exposed to their home lan-

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Bilingualism (continued from page 5)

guage until they enter preschool. Grandchildren of immigrants differ in the amount of exposure they have to their home language. Heritage language learners — such as speakers of Yiddish, who have maintained multilingualism for hundreds of years — are children whose mother tongue has been transmitted to the third or fourth generation. Heritage language learners are raised in a broad range of linguistic contexts, both at home and in their communities.

Two types of childhood bilingualism have been defined to differentiate the circumstances under which these languages are learned. The first is simultaneous learning of two languages. For example, two parents may speak to the child in different languages, or the child may hear one language at home and another in the community. The second is sequential, where the child is raised in only one language and encounters a second language once he is in school because it is the dominant language of the country or when it is taught in formal study.

Many parents have expressed the concern that exposing children to two

languages and expecting them to learn both will confuse them. This is not the case. While there is anecdotal evidence that children who grow up hearing two languages simultaneously start talking a bit later than their peers, most research confirms that children's language learning is not affected. In fact, many, many children throughout the world grow up with two, or even more, languages from infancy and do not show any signs of language delay in either language.

Some parents are also concerned that their children will have difficulty learning the language of their new country if they continue to speak in the language of their heritage at home. This, too, has proven not to be the case, as children tend to learn the majority language quickly, given sufficient exposure.

Parents who hear their children switching back and forth between languages may suspect that this is the result of a deficiency in their children's knowledge of both languages. In fact, what is known as "code switching" can be a sign of mastery of both languages. The amount of code switching that takes place in one conversation is the result of how much of this

children hear at home and how much is accepted in their community.

Parents who wish their children to be bilingual must make a conscious decision that this is important to them, for helping a child remain bilingual demands effort on the part of parents. There are degrees of bilingualism that range from the passive bilingual — those who understand a second language but have difficulty speaking, reading, or writing it — to true bilinguals, who are equally adept at speaking, reading, writing, and even thinking in two languages. The latter, of course, is harder to achieve, but even being passively bilingual has benefits and makes it easier to learn the language later in life.

Some hints that will help parents raise a bilingual child:

- **Have a positive attitude** — children will mostly echo the attitude of their parents and older siblings towards speaking the minority language.
- **Give positive feedback** — children will echo this positivism if their efforts at speaking the language are met with enthusiasm, and if parents are not criti-

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Bilingualism and the Special Needs Child

Research strongly bears out the idea that bilingualism alone is not a reason for delayed language development. If exposure to different languages starts at an early age, in a normal situation children should be able to cope with more than one language easily.

It is important to distinguish between the popular use of the term "language delay" in reference to a child who is perceived to take longer than his peers to begin speaking but who is well within the normal range, and the clinical term — which refers to significant delays in development of language that are associated with a specific disorder or are secondary to another disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Children with disorders such as Down syndrome or other handicaps can learn several languages, of course within the realm of their own limitations. A multilingual environment does not seem to be an added burden for such children. On the contrary, limiting the child to one language can hinder him from communicating with close family members.



Bilingualism (continued from page 6)

cal or harsh when they make mistakes or slip into the other language. Repeating the child's thought in the minority language without further comment is usually sufficient.

- **Be consistent** — if parents mix languages, children will do the same. There are many ways to maintain consistency, such as speaking only one language at home and another language outside the home or having each parent speak one language. But, children need to hear a language for 30% of their waking hours if they are to learn it well.
- **Provide a rich linguistic environment** — people who speak one language well can more easily speak another language well. Parents need to be good models by introducing rich vocabulary and varied conversations in the minority language and expanding the child's experiences in that language through books, music, videos, and contact with others who speak the language.
- **Talk, talk, talk** — while other media can reinforce the minority language, human interaction is the best way for a child to learn.
- **Have fun singing and telling/reading stories in each language** — children acquire a rich vocabulary and learn about how each language is structured through singing and interactive story telling.
- **Respect individual differences** — as in all areas of education, all children are not the same, and one child may learn more easily than another.
- **Be persistent** — even if the child resists, continue talking in the minority language. The child will be grateful later on. The first five years are the hardest!
- **Choose a school carefully** — it is important for the child to attend a school which respects his culture and his ability to speak another language.

The most important ingredient towards raising bilingual children, however, is commitment and planning on the part of parents. Giving children the ability to speak in two languages is a unique gift that parents can give children who grow up in households where a language other than English is spoken. †

Yeled v'Yalda Dual Language Policy

YVY serves over 2,000 children, and 70% of these children do not speak English at home. Yiddish, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Farsi/Persian, Hebrew, and Haitian Creole are only some of the home languages of children enrolled in YVY. YVY's Dual Language Policy was designed to help these children by respecting and helping them preserve their home language while teaching them English so they can succeed in school and in life.

The Yeled V'Yalda Dual Language Policy has several components, including:

- In classrooms at sites where the majority of children come from the same language background, YVY provides at least one education professional (the teacher or the assistant teacher) who is fluent in the child's language.
- In classrooms at sites where a range of languages are spoken and no language clearly dominates, YVY provides at least one or two education professionals who speak most of the languages that the children speak.
- A lending library at each site has books in the Home Languages of the children.
- Organized cultural events at YVY sites, such as music, dance, puppetry performances, and cooking events celebrate the home cultures of the children and their families.
- For bilingual children who need speech therapy, YVY provides Speech and Language pathologists who have bilingual certifications in the relevant/appropriate language.
- For bilingual children who receive services at home, home visitors speak the language and understand the culture of the families they serve.
- For the parents of bilingual children, YVY offers workshops on prevention of obesity and on good parenting practices, staffed by education professionals who speak the preferred language of the parents.

YVY's Dual Language Policy is part of YVY's longstanding commitment to providing a language-rich learning environment for children of all backgrounds — one that respects their home culture and helps them acquire the skills that will lead to success in school and in life.

The full text of YVY's Dual language Policy is available on the YVY website, www.yeled.org. The link to the YVY Research Institute, www.yeled.org/res.asp, can also inform parents about YVY's ongoing research into bilingualism and language acquisition.



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 The New York City Department of Health

Yeled v'Yalda
 EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
 718.686.3700

Healthy Celebration Foods:

FOR BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY PARTIES

Fresh Fruit	All-fruit fruit leather
Fresh Veggies, cut up	Whole grain crackers
Pretzels, whole wheat or regular	100% Fruit Juice
Corn Chips	Rice Cakes, plain or flavored, less than 6 gm of sugar per serving
Tortilla Chips**	Corn
Potato Chips **	
Mini Muffins	
Lowfat Muffins	
Unfrosted cupcakes	
Popsicles**	
Frozen fruit bars**	

** All snacks should be free of ALL food coloring (ex. Red #40, Blue #5 etc.)
 The above mentioned foods are low in sugar and low in fat.

YVY Implementing New Food Standards

YVY Director of Nutrition Services Dina Lipkind, MS, RD, CDN, has been working with all YVY sites to help implement the new USDA standards for serving healthy foods at early childhood programs. These standards, which are a response to the epidemic of obesity in children in the United States, emphasize low fat foods and additional vegetables and fruits which must be prepared without added sugar, salt, or fat. Nutrition and healthy eating are also taught in the classroom.

To reinforce what children learn in school, parents should encourage their children to eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and limit the amount of sweets and fats their children consume. Together, we can assure that children will grow up healthy with good eating habits that will last them a lifetime.

These new guidelines apply to celebration foods as well. This YVY flier describes foods that are appropriate for celebrations in the classroom.

