

Spring '09

# SHIELD NOTES



## PESACH: SANITY SOLUTIONS

The frenzied weeks before and the days of Pesach are filled with cleaning, organizing, cooking, and more cleaning. Stress levels rise as you try to get all the things on your “to do” list done. And, that stress is intensified when there are young children clamoring for your attention. Is it possible to accomplish the myriad of tasks on your list and refrain from losing patience? Yes! These activities are meant to involve children in holiday preparation, maintain their connection with their parents and build confidence in their own capabilities. Not to mention that their assistance can mean that you’ll accomplish those items on that to-do list faster!

- Give them a sponge and ask them to be your cleaning partner. Children actually enjoy helping—it gives them a sense of usefulness and pride.
- Have a contest to see how many Cheerios they can find.
- Assign them tasks such as shaping the matzo balls, hard-boiling and peeling the eggs, or chopping apples for the charoset.
- You take the broom and hand them a dustpan—as you sweep, talk together about their friends and school.
- Ask them to choose a holiday activity that would be fun to do together—then plan the activity they select.



## TOOL BOX: FAMILY CONNECTIONS

- Announce that you are establishing a new, fun dinner time tradition of having each member of the family share two things that they experienced during their day.
- Begin by talking about the best part of your day and the worst part of your day. (Or the happiest part and the hardest part.)
- If someone, when it is their turn, responds with “nothing happened” or “I don’t know” suggest that they share one thing they learned and one conversation they had with their friends.
- Older children may roll their eyes but tell them that since it is a family tradition, participation is a must.
- You’ll be surprised how much more connected everyone feels from this kind of simple conversation!

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

You know the feeling when someone is talking with you and they invade your space? When there are too many people in an elevator? When someone asks a question that seems just a bit too personal? Children also experience these kinds of discomforts so one of the most important messages we can convey to them is to trust their intuition—their gut—the “oh-oh” feelings that they get. Assure them that it is okay to admit when they feel uncomfortable with something - even when others around them seem perfectly okay with what is going on. Talk with them and help them to figure out realistic, appropriate strategies for dealing with prickly situations. By encouraging them to recognize and respect their own instincts, you’ll boost their confidence and empower them to handle all kinds of things that happen in their day-to-day lives.



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Project Shield newsletter. Shield Notes will be published approximately four times annually; please email us to be added to the distribution list.

Project Shield works in partnership with the community to build safe, healthy Jewish relationships and families by heightening awareness and providing education about child molestation.

For more information please contact:

T 847 568 5209

Helpline

312 656 3669

Project Shield@jcfs.org