



IN YOUR HOME

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Books for the Jewish Home

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Shalom Parents,

Love of books is essential for a rich Jewish life, emphasizing the importance of learning to Jews. Jewish homes generally include Jewish libraries, with books appropriate for all ages, interests and educational levels for every family member, helping readers see the world through Jewish perspectives.

How should you choose appropriate Jewish books for your young child?

Look for award-winning books. The Sydney Taylor Book Award recognizes the best in Jewish children's literature. Medals are awarded annually for outstanding books that authentically portray the Jewish experience in three categories: Younger Readers, Older Readers and Teen Readers. While awards are helpful in identifying excellent books, they are given to only a few of the numerous good children's books published annually. Fortunately, there is other good help available.

Ask experts for help. Teachers, librarians, and store clerks are extremely helpful in finding appropriate and appealing books.

If a book seems dull, put it down and find one that is appealing. Choose books you and your child will enjoy when you read aloud together.

What do we know about young children that can guide our choices?

They enjoy language. Consider your child's developing vocabulary. Are the words pleasing and phrases memorable? Do the book's characters speak naturally? Two to seven year

olds are rapidly developing language and delight in listening, again and again, while mimicking rhymes, repetition and nonsense words.

They appreciate good illustrations. Are the drawings (or photos) easy to interpret? Are the colors appealing? Two and three-year-olds' attention span is often short, requiring use of picture books with relatively few words. With increasing maturity and experiences with books, attention spans lengthen and, by age seven, reading (and being read to) becomes second nature.

They appreciate authors who understand and respect them. Does the author seem to appreciate children? Does the book help them feel competent and encourage self-esteem? Children respond positively to adults who show them respect.

They love stories that captivate their interests. Can they understand the story? Does it relate to their lives and interests? Does it help them think, rather than moralizing or giving easy answers? Children love stories about others

their own ages. Younger children are often confused by multifaceted characters or by stories with several major characters. Natural development and growth, assisted by experiences with stories, can help them learn to appreciate more complicated literature.

Loving literature, an appreciation to last a lifetime,

can be taught through experience. Words can inspire imagination and nourish the spirit. Parents can encourage their youngsters' interest in books by reading to them at special times and in special settings.



ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD'S LOVE OF BOOKS

Read and reread your child's favorite book to her. Sit close together in a special chair, or on her bed. She loves to hear the story over and over. When you cannot read it one more time, encourage her to read it to you.

Don't stop taking the time to read aloud once your child has learned to read for himself. Children ALWAYS love being read to, regardless of their ages or reading skills. Encourage him to read to you some of the time. This shared enjoyment will continue to strengthen his interest and appreciation.

Tell (or read) stories to her that were told (or read) to you as a child.

Ask him to read to you. Keep some books in the car. As you drive, he can "read" to you.

Encourage listening to books on cd. Check them out from the library to play when traveling by car. Be sure she enjoys listening to them.

Ask him to be the storyteller. Record him telling his favorite story. Play it back over and over, at home and in the car.

Following the reading of a book, play charades with her, taking turns acting out parts of the books and guessing what the charade is describing.

After telling him a story, ask him to change its outcome and retell it in his own way.

Keep books, magazines and newspapers around your home. It helps her view them as an important part of daily life.

While your child is still very small, start a home library for him, even if it's just a shelf or two. Be sure to offer some books that he can handle freely. Consider specially made, extra durable books for infants, and pick paperbacks and plastic covers for children who are older but still not quite ready for expensive hardbacks. Allowing him to touch, smell, and even taste books will help him develop strong attachments.

Include her in selecting books.

Let her choose some from the public library. Sometimes, let her select books from a bookstore, for permanent inclusion in her own library. Encourage her to create her own books to add to her library.

Help him personalize his library.

Provide materials and help so he can decorate a bookplate, writing his name on it and placing it in his book. Help him make bookmarks and show him how to use them.



DID YOU KNOW THAT???

-  Educational researchers learned (what parents long suspected) that babies as young as eight months old can recognize words and enjoy hearing simple stories.
-  November, Jewish Book Month, is a good time to search for *Hanukkah* gifts. Some synagogues and Jewish Community Centers are among many venues for Jewish book sales.
-  It is traditional Jewish practice to treat books with respect by keeping them in their proper places, and by placing them face up when lying them down and by closing them when they are unused.

A RECOMMENDED SELECTION OF BOOKS

FOR CHILDREN:

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins by E.A. Kimmel, Scholastic, 1989. Hershel of Ostropol saves *Hanukkah* for the village by tricking scary goblins who haunt the old synagogue and prevent *Hanukkah* celebrations. The entire family will enjoy Hershel's amusing adventures.

Chanukah Lights Everywhere by M.L.Rosen, Gulliver Books, 2001. As a little boy and his family celebrate *Chanukah* in their home, something happens each night to remind them of the number of candles they have just lit. Two and three year olds enjoy this introduction to *Chanukah*.

Grandma's Latkes by M.Drucker, Harcourt Brace, 1992. The traditional story of *Hanukkah* gets new life in this simple, enjoyable retelling. As Molly helps her grandmother make *latkes*, Grandma explains how the holiday came to be. This book is loved by four to eight year olds.

When Mindy Saved Hanukkah by E.A.Kimmel, Scholastic, 1998. A family living behind the walls of the historic Eldridge Street Synagogue in New York, uses thimbles as vases and plays with *dreidels* half their size. But they have a problem: the synagogue has "a fierce Antiochus of a cat!" So brave little Mindy finds a solution, creatively overcoming danger. This entertaining story, with delightful illustrations – charms five to ten year olds.

Happy Hanukkah Lights by J. Jules, Kar-Ben Publishing, 2010. A happy family celebrates the eight nights of *Hanukkah* by lighting candles, eating *latkes*, and playing *dreidel* in this new board book. Rhyming, counting, and *Hanukkah* traditions make this simple text appropriate for one and two year olds.

Jodie's Hanukkah Dig, by A. Levine, Kar-Ben Copies, 2008. During *Hanukkah* vacation, Jodie and her father join an exciting archaeological dig in Modi'in, the home of the Maccabees. Little Jodie's dreams of being an archaeologist come true, delighting five to eight year old readers.

Harvest of Light by A.Ofanansky, Kar-Ben Publishing, 2008. Beautiful photographs and clear explanations help three to

seven year olds understand how olive trees grow in Israel, providing oil for use during *Hanukkah*.

Latkes, Latkes, Good to Eat by N.Howland, Clarion Books, 1999. Sadie and her brothers are poor and hungry. When Sadie helps an old woman in the forest, she is awarded a magic frying pan that can make *latkes* on command. Four to eight year olds love this book.

Hanukkah Around the World by T. Lehman-Wilzig, Kar-Ben Publishing, 2009. Eight to eleven year olds have fun traveling to Italy, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, and beyond to see how *Hanukkah* is celebrated around the world and trying delicious and unusual recipes for *burmelos*, *latkes*, and *precipizi*.

Menorah Under the Sea by E.S.Heller, Kar-Ben Copies, 2009. When diving for sea urchins at the bottom of the frigid sea, marine biologist David Ginsburg brings *Hanukkah* to Antarctica with an unusual holiday celebration, intriguing five to eight year old readers.

Hanukkah Moon by D. daCosta, Kar-Ben Copies, 2008. When Isobel spends *Hanukkah* with her Mexican Aunt Luisa, her days are filled with fun and surprises. Six to nine year olds love this unusual multi-cultural story.

FOR ADULTS:

The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children, by W. Mogel, Penguin Books, 2001. Mogul, a clinical psychologist deftly blends Jewish teachings and values with parenting concerns.

The Jewish Parents' Almanac, by J.H. Danan, Jason Aronson, 1997. This handbook, full of creative ideas and resources, offers guidance for Jewish observance and celebration, as parents raise their children.

How to Be a Jewish Parent: A Practical Handbook for Family Life, by A. Diamant & K.

Kushner, Schocken Books, 2000. This accessible, non-judgmental, affirming book, suggests ways to create Jewish space, community, and time with children, from a primarily liberal Jewish orientation.

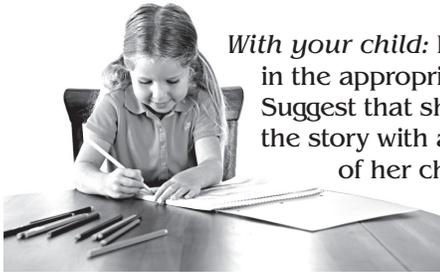
To Raise a Jewish Child: A Guide for Parents, by H.H.Donin, New York: Basic Books, 1991. This classic text deals with Jewish parenting issues from a modern Orthodox perspective.



MAKING THEIR OWN BOOKS

Encourage your children to create their own books, by providing materials and help, and finding a special place to keep the books that have been created.

A book created with paper and crayons or markers can be made by children of all ages. If she doesn't know how to write yet, she can draw pictures and dictate the words as you write them. Books about real experiences can be created by encouraging her to draw pictures of an event that really happened. Alternatively, she can make a book about something imaginary.



With your child: Place the pictures in the appropriate sequence. Suggest that she make a cover for the story with a picture and title of her choosing. Help her staple the pages together and then listen as she reads her new book

aloud. Help her find a special place to keep her book and encourage her to read it to you periodically.

A family-created book will certainly become a treasured object. Following the occurrence of an important event (wedding, *Bar Mitzvah*, family trip, etc.) the family can discuss what was important about the event. Then each family member can create one page (through drawings and /or writing) describing the importance of that event. Place the papers in the order determined by family members and staple them together, creating a book.

With your child: Make a cover with a title and picture and attach it to the book. Now place the book where all family members can find and read it when they wish.

A book-on-CD, can be made by reading a specially selected book or telling a made-up story.

With your child: Make the book-on-CD, while reading a storybook, and ringing a bell to signal when it is time to turn the page. Or, she can tell her own story while recording it on a CD. When the project is completed, she can listen to the CD while turning the pages of the book.

Photo album books can be created by helping your child select photos for inclusion. Afterwards, look through the album, discussing the photos with him. He will learn about people, places, things and events of importance to your family

With your child: Place the photos in the album, in chronological order, so that he learns the importance of sequence and classification in storytelling. Include brief written explanations along with the photos so that you and he can identify the photos in the future. Four year olds can be taught to take their own photos with disposable cameras. When the photos have been placed in an album, write his words below them (if he does not yet know how to write). He can title the book and, periodically, read it to others.

Making a bookmark. If you love to read, you probably have a collection of special bookmarks for your personal library.

With your child on the bookmarks below:

Bookmark I: Cut a strip from poster board or cardboard (about 8 2"). Cut a picture of a used greeting card it onto the strip. After dries, write a message; a picture) on the strip make the bookmark durable, cover it with contact paper or lacquer.

Bookmark II: Cut a strip from poster board or cardboard as above. Punch a hole 1 inch from one end of the strip. Pull ribbons (8 inches long, in a variety of colors) through the hole and tie them into place. Attach stickers (any kind and number) onto both sides of the strip.

