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**TASK FORCE ON REINFORCING  
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JEWISH EDUCATION  
IN JCCs**

**COMJEE II**

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**ASSESSING THE JEWISH EDUCATIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS OF JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS --  
THE 1994 SURVEY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 1993 – January 1994, the JCC Association commissioned a study of the current state of Jewish educational activity in Jewish community centers in North America. The following highlights emerged in this survey of the Centers (N=126).

- I. Most JCCs in North America have made adult Jewish learning a key aspect of their programming. Almost all North American JCCs conduct adult Jewish education programs of some sort. Over 50% of the Centers offer some sort of program in Basic Judaism or Basic Jewish Literacy. Half also conduct workshops or lectures for interfaith couples and 37% run programs for the families of mixed married. Three-quarters of the Centers offer Jewish family education and Jewish parenting classes, and over two-thirds of the Centers sponsor speakers' series on Jewish themes. A third sponsor Jewish scholars-in-residence. A third of the Centers sponsor trips to Israel with a Jewish educational dimension.
- II. Most Centers observe some sort of Jewish holiday calendar, through hall decorations, educational programs, and public celebrations. The vast majority (81%-95%) of Centers conduct programs which focus on the following six holidays: Hanukkah, Sukkot, Purim, Pesach, Tu B'Shevat, and Yom Ha'atzmaut. Between a half and two thirds of the Centers conduct programs on five other holidays: Yom Hashoah, Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur, Shavuot, Lag B'Omer, and Tisha B'Av. Over a third of the Centers celebrate Yom Yerushalayim.
- III. Most of the Jewish Community Centers in our sample report that their buildings are visibly Jewish and that they have taken steps to create some basic Jewish ambiance in their buildings. Over two-thirds reported that there are mezzuzot on most interior doors of the building. Two-thirds maintain a Jewish library; and almost a third have Hebrew signs designating areas of the building. Over 60% of Centers mount displays on Jewish holidays; over half exhibit Jewish art; and over a third sponsor displays on Israel. In the aggregate, over three quarters of Centers sponsor special exhibits or displays on some sort of Jewish themes.

- IV. Almost all (96%) of the Centers report some activity in the area of Jewish arts. As many as 83% of Centers sponsor Jewish book fairs; 80% sell Jewish art and ritual objects, 69% screen Jewish-oriented films; 61% sponsor Jewish dance groups; about half report programs with Israeli performing groups and with Jewish drama groups; and over 40% run Jewish art classes.
- V. Centers have introduced Jewish dimensions into the three areas of their world which deals with the young: pre-school; camping; and teenagers. Over two thirds of the Centers that conduct pre-school programs have Jewish educational curricula. Between 85% and 91% of Center pre-schools celebrate Jewish holidays, celebrate Shabbat in some fashion, claim to teach "Jewish values," and teach something about Israel. Almost all (97%) camps celebrate the Sabbath in some way, and 94% include Jewish singing in their activities. Over two-thirds report that their counselors are trained by a Jewish education specialist, and nearly as many claim that the specialist spends a significant part of the summer with the camp. Nearly half (44%) report that Israeli shlichim serve as day camp staff.
- VI. As part of the effort to deepen their Jewish educational effectiveness, Centers have made investments in staff development and growth in Judaica. Over half reported that some of their staff engaged in Jewish educational training outside the local community. In the last three years alone, about a quarter of the Centers have sent staff to Israel for Jewish educational training, and 16% said they were planning such a trip for the next year. Over three-quarters of North American JCC's have sent staff to Israel in toto.
- VII. In 1994, 45% of Centers report they have hired a Jewish education specialist. Of these, 30% work part-time and 16% work full-time.
- VIII. The typical Center executive in 1994 exhibits a high rate of Jewish involvement as compared with the American Jewish population at large and with Center executives of a decade ago. Today's executive is a member of a synagogue, attends services periodically, fasts on Yom Kippur, and has visited Israel several times. Nine in ten are synagogue members and most claim to attend synagogue services more often than the high holidays, on the order

of "every few months." Over four in five Center professional leaders fast on Yom Kippur; over three in five live in households where Friday night candles are lit; and almost a third of their households use separate dishes for meat and dairy dishes. Almost nine out of ten have been to Israel, and most have visited Israel three or more times (most have come on JCC Association sponsored seminars).

- IX. Almost all Centers (96%) have a written mission statement and 80% of these statements contain explicit references to Jewish education.
- X. The data in our study present an ambivalent picture of the role of the Board in the Jewish education process. More boards than before have introduced some Jewish content in their meetings. However, when compared with other spheres, progress in the area of Board commitment, leadership, and ownership of the Jewish educational mandate seems only moderate.
- XI. Five factors were most closely correlated with a high level of Jewish educational activity in a Center: 1. Size of Center; 2. The importance attached to Jewish education by the executive, Board, and Center as an institution; 3. The presence of a full-time Jewish educational specialist; 4. The extent of ongoing study in Judaica undertaken by the staff, especially an Israel study seminar 5. The extent to which board and staff members are selected on the basis of their Jewish knowledge and commitment.

Generally, the 1994 findings show almost universal intensification of levels of Jewish education over those reported in the 1988 study. By looking at the studies from 1982, 1988, and 1994, we are able to discover a revealing picture of the metamorphosis of Jewish education in Jewish Community Centers into a multi-dimensional cultural and recreational agency which has made Jewish education one of the dimensions of its being. These findings suggest that the most important change in the Center world has been the metamorphosis of a culture whereby "things Jewish" have become more rather than less of a norm in the Center world.

Seven policy implications for deepening the Jewish educational role of JCCs in the coming decade are proposed: 1) The need to adopt a distinctive Judaic philosophy on the part of the Centers; 2) The need for executives to assume responsibility for acting as the principal educational leaders of their Centers; 3) The adoption of an approach which makes Judaic study a basic norm and requirement of work in the Center field; 4) A senior and full-time Jewish educator in every Center; 5) Increased utilization of Israel and the Israel seminar; 6) Commitment and involvement of the Board in supporting Jewish education; 7) Authentic and efficient cooperative efforts with other communal agencies.

If Centers are to capitalize on the gains in Jewish programming they have realized in the last decade, they will need to enrich, and once and for all, unequivocally establish their emerging commitment to Jewish education.

The Jewish center should have a Jewish purpose.... it should be an agency with which the Jew might identify himself in order to satisfy his specialized Jewish need. From this premise, it follows logically that the program of the Jewish center should devote primary attention to Jewish content, without, of course, excluding or ignoring the general activities which are essential for a well-rounded center program. (Janowsky 1948).

## BACKGROUND

In 1984, the JWB's Commission on Maximizing Jewish Educational Effectiveness of Jewish Community Centers (COMJEE) issued its landmark report urging a dramatic shift in the mission of North America's Jewish Community Centers (JWB 1984). The heart of the document was a call for a sharply increased emphasis on the Jewish education component of the Center movement. In so doing, the Commission aspired to significantly influence Centers' senior leadership, boards, staff, policies, programs, and membership in ways that would signal enhanced attention to Jewish education, culture, identity, and continuity.

The Commission's work had its roots in earlier endeavors to enhance Centers' Jewish educational component. The Center movement was influenced in the 1920's-30's by Mordecai Kaplan's views on the role of a Jewish Center in shaping American Jewish life (Sculd 1993). The importance of the Center as a Jewish force was one of the central conclusions of the 1948 "Janowsky Report" (Janowsky 1948), and is reflected in the writings of Louis Kraft in the 1950's (Kraft 1967). The post-1967 period saw an upsurge of Israel-related activity in many Centers (JWB Study 1969).

Notwithstanding these earlier developments, the COMJEE effort represented what most observers regard as a true turning point in the history of Jewish Community Centers (Chazan and Juran 1992).



What has come to be known as "the COMJEE process" also reflected -- and anticipated -- growing concerns within the larger American Jewish community over its survival as a distinctive religious and ethnic group in the midst of a highly modernized society (Cohen 1983, 1988).

Centers have traditionally reflected mainstream American Jewish life. Accordingly, the changing patterns of Center life are a barometer of changing patterns of North American Jewry over the decades.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, organized Jewry shifted its focus from integration as Americans to survival as Jews (Cohen and Fein 1985). This shift was reflected in several developments: growing day school enrollments in all three denominations; increasing traditionalism among Reform Jews; a new vigor and confidence among the Orthodox (Heilman and Cohen 1989); increased federation support for Jewish education, and a far more assertive style of advocacy among the defense agencies.

In addition, during the 1980s, several notable private philanthropic foundations established various aspects of Jewish continuity (e.g., professional development; lead communities; the Israel experience) as their main focus (Chazan 1988). One of the clear voices in that context was the National Commission on Jewish Education convened in the late 1980's by the JWB, JESNA and the Mandel Foundation which resulted in the document entitled, "A Time To Act".

The 1980's was also a time of dramatically increased concern for reaching out to less involved Jews (Cohen 1985, 1991). This concern spawned a veritable industry of Jewish "outreach" activities, a great deal of which takes place within Centers (Mayer 1991; Mayer and Dragonne 1992; and Cohen 1993b). The anxiety over American Jewish continuity peaked in early 1990's with the publication of the findings from the 1990 National Jewish Population Study (Kosmin et al. 1991, Goldstein 1992) and the emergence of numerous commissions on Jewish continuity.

In the midst of these developments in American Jewish life, many Centers, led by the continental JCC Association, made a bid to be taken seriously as Jewish educational institutions. They instituted a series of policy decisions and practical programs aimed at upgrading the Jewish nature of their agencies (Chazan and Charendoff 1994). In 1982 and 1988, Bernard Reisman of Brandeis University conducted surveys of Center directors designed to examine the extent and nature of the movement's commitment to Jewish educational activity (Reisman 1982, 1988).

## THE 1994 STUDY

In late 1993, the leadership of the JCC Association, under the aegis of a new Committee on Jewish Educational Effectiveness (COMJEE II), decided to examine the current state of Jewish education in JCC's one decade after the beginning of COMJEE I. In November 1993 an 11-page questionnaire on Jewish education in the Jewish Community Center was distributed to 225 Centers who are affiliated with the JCC Association. This report is based on an analysis of 126 survey questionnaires which were returned to the primary researchers by January 20, 1994.

This study addresses the following questions:

- 1) In what ways are Centers in 1994 engaged in visible and observable Jewish educational activities?
- 2) How do the levels of Jewish educational activities compare with those reported in 1982 and 1988?
- 3) What factors promote Jewish educational excellence in JCC's?
- 4) What policy implications for the Center movement emerge from the findings?

## THE DATA ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN JCC'S IN 1994

We examined 14 areas of Jewish educational activities in Jewish Community Centers: adult learning; holidays; Jewish arts programming; pre-school; camping; staff training in Judaica; Sabbath policy and programming; staff; Jewish education specialist; board involvement; the executive director; relations with other agencies; ambiance; missions statement and funding.

### I. ADULT JEWISH LEARNING

Almost all (95%) of North American JCC's conduct adult Jewish education programs of some sort. These programs cover a broad array of options.

Some Centers (e.g., Toronto, Washington, Atlanta -- to name just a few) conduct major institutes of Jewish learning which present a broad array of courses on aspects of classical and contemporary Judaism.

Over 50% of the Centers offer some sort of program in Basic Judaism or Basic Jewish Literacy (18% participated in either the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Program or the Derech Torah Program). These courses are aimed at Jews who feel generally illiterate in their own Jewish background, as well as at newcomers to Jewish life, be they converts, Gentiles married to Jews, or born Jews just becoming aware of their interests in things Jewish. In this context, half the Centers conduct workshops or lectures for interfaith couples and 37% run programs for the families of mixed married (presumably, for parents of intermarried children, among others). Three-quarters of the Centers offer Jewish family education and Jewish parenting classes, reflecting a growing concern for the Jewish family.

Over two-thirds of the Centers sponsor speakers' series on Jewish themes. A third sponsor Jewish scholars-in-residence (this term most often refers to a lecturer giving several lectures within a period of from a few days to two weeks).

A third of the Centers sponsor trips to Israel with a Jewish educational dimension.

In short, the 1994 evidence points to widespread and growing Center involvement in formal Judaic study for adults.

**TABLE 1: ADULT JEWISH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Speaker Series on Jewish Themes	-	-	72
Workshops or Lectures for Interfaith Couples	-	-	49
Adult Education Jewish Learning Institute	-	-	48
Shabbat programs	-	-	44
Programs for Families of Mixed Married	-	-	37
Trips to Israel	49	30	33
Jewish Scholar-In-Residence	26	27	31
Florence Melton Adult Mini-School	-	(0)	12
Havurot	25	9	10
Weekend Retreat on Jewish Themes	33	15	6
Derech Torah program	-	-	6

**TABLE 2: JEWISH SUBJECTS IN WHICH  
CENTERS OFFERED CLASSES**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish Family Education	73	61	76
Jewish Parenting	-	-	72
Hebrew Language	69	62	65
Jewish History	-	54	63
Jewish Thought	-	48	62
Yiddish Language	48	50	62
Israel	-	61	59
Contemporary Jewish life	-	48	57
Basic Judaism	-	-	46
Bible	-	37	41
Other Judaica	-	-	58

Number of Judaica Subjects in Which Classes Were Offered	
All 11	18%
8-10	27
5-7	25
1-4	25
None	5
	<hr/>
	100%

## II. JEWISH HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

The vast majority (81%-95%) of Centers conduct programs which focus on the following six holidays: Hanukkah, Sukkot, Purim, Pesach, Tu B'Shevat, and Yom Ha'atzmaut. Between a half and two-thirds of the Centers conduct programs on five other holidays: Yom Hashoah, Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur, Shavuot, Lag B'Omer, and Tisha B'Av. Over a third of the Centers celebrate Yom Yerushalayim.

The holidays that are more widely celebrated at Centers share two characteristics: first they are children-oriented. Second, they emphasize cultural and historical motifs, rather than purely religious or synagogue-oriented themes. It is interesting to note that the ordering of the frequency of Center holiday programming does not strictly follow the traditional calendar: in the Center world Hanukah, Purim, and Sukkot are more prominent holidays than the High Holidays or Passover. Clearly, these are signs that Centers have developed a programming approach which reflects unique priorities and needs of their clientele.



### TABLE 3: HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Hanukah	95	95
Sukkot	87	94
Purim	90	91
Pesach	84	88
Tu B'Shevat	65	84
Yom Ha'atzmaut	84	81
Yom Hashoah	71	67
Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur	48	64
Shavuot	42	59
Lag B'Omer	43	55
Tisha B'Av	46	52
Yom Yerushalayim	39	37

#### Number of Holidays in Which Programs were Offered

10+	22%
7-9	57
3-6	17
0-2	4
	<hr/> 100%

Israel fair or celebration - 49

### III. JEWISH ARTS PROGRAMMING

Almost all (96%) of the Centers report some activity in the area of Jewish arts. As many as 83% of Centers sponsor Jewish book fairs; 80% sell Jewish art and ritual objects, and 69% screen Jewish-oriented films. 61% of the Centers sponsor Jewish dance groups; about half report programs with Israeli performing groups and with Jewish drama groups; and over 40% run Jewish art classes.

## TABLE 4: ARTS PROGRAMMING

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish Book Fair	57	73	83
Sale of Jewish Art and Ritual Objects	-	-	80
Jewish Film	76	54	69
Jewish Dance Group	57	54	61
Israeli Performing Group	-	-	51
Jewish Drama Group	43	33	48
Jewish Art Class	61	27	41

  

Number of Types of Arts Programs Presented in the Past Year	
All 7	17%
5-6	22
3-4	42
1-2	16
None	4
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100%

Regular exhibitions or displays on ...			
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish Holidays	62	69	60
Jewish art	43	52	56
Israel	40	43	37

  

Number of Types of Exhibitions	
All 3	28%
2	21
1	29
None	22
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100%

#### IV. PRE-SCHOOL AND CAMPING

The JCC movement sponsors the largest network of Jewish pre-schools and summer camps in North America. Over two thirds of the Centers that conduct pre-school programs have Jewish educational curricula. Between 85% and 91% of Center pre-schools celebrate Jewish holidays, celebrate Shabbat in some fashion, claim to teach "Jewish values," and teach something about Israel.

Two dimensions of Jewish culture permeate almost all Center day camps: 97% of the camps celebrate the Sabbath in some way and 94% include Jewish singing in their activities. Over two-thirds report that their counselors are trained by a Jewish education specialist, and nearly as many claim that the specialist spends a significant part of the summer with the camp. Nearly half (44%) report that Israeli shlichim serve as day camp staff.

## TABLE 5: PRE-SCHOOL

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish education curriculum for pre-school	43	77	68
Pre-school program includes activities in:			
Jewish Holidays			91
Shabbat			90
Jewish values			85
Israel			85

## TABLE 6: DAY CAMPS

(Entries are Percentages)

Camp celebrates the Sabbath	97
Activities include Jewish singing	94
Counselors trained by a Jewish education specialist	71
Jewish education specialist spends significant part of summer with the camp	64
Israeli shlichim serve on staff	44

## V. AMBIANCE

Most of the Jewish Community Centers in our sample report that their buildings are visibly Jewish. Over two-thirds reported that there are mezzuzot on most interior doors of the building. Two-thirds maintain a Jewish library; and almost a third have Hebrew signs designating areas of the building.

Over 60% of Centers mount displays on Jewish holidays; over half exhibit Jewish art; and over a third sponsor displays on Israel. In the aggregate, over three-quarters of Centers sponsor special exhibits or displays on some sort of Jewish themes. Over a quarter (28%) sponsor exhibitions or displays on all three themes: Jewish holidays, Jewish art, and Israel.

**TABLE 7: THE BUILDING**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Mezzuzot on most interior doors	50	54	72
Jewish library	66	62	67
Hebrew signs designating areas of the building	30	21	30

## VI. SABBATH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Three-fifths of the Centers in our study indicated that they are open on the Sabbath, and just over a third of these (35%) conduct special Shabbat-related programming. The question of Shabbat openings has increasingly become a major Center issue. On the one hand, it reflects an increased demand from clients for the Center to serve their needs, particularly in the areas of health and sports. On the other hand, it raises a host of issues related to religious policy, Jewish observance, employment of staff, and Jewish image in the larger Jewish community.

**TABLE 8: SABBATH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Center open Shabbat	53	51	59
Shabbat-related programming (if open Shabbat)	49	32	35

## VII. THE STAFF

Approximately three quarters of the staff of JCC's are Jewish. The percentage of Jewish staff varies greatly according to department in the agency. In group services and in cultural arts, about nine in ten of the staff members are Jewish. In the pre-school and administration sectors, about three-quarters are Jewish. In Health and Physical Education, just over half are Jewish.

**TABLE 9: AVERAGE PROPORTION OF STAFF IN EACH DEPARTMENT  
WHO IS JEWISH**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Group Services	92	95	92
Cultural Arts	80	91	90
Administration	—	81	76
Pre-school	84	80	72
H&PE	63	59	55
All Other	—	—	67

When asked to rate the various personal qualities required of professional staff, Jewish commitment ranked well below interpersonal skills and pleasant personal manner, but slightly ahead of management skills. Jewish knowledge was ranked a distant last. Apparently, directors make a sharp distinction between Jewish commitment which they regard as a quite desirable professional characteristic and Jewish knowledge which they may regard either as less critical or as less readily available.



**TABLE 10: CRITERIA FOR SELECTING  
PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

(Entries are Percentages)

	% VERY IMPORTANT	
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Interpersonal skills	97	96
Pleasant personal manner	72	81
Jewish commitment	64	64
Management skills	48	59
Intellectual capacity	54	54
Jewish knowledge	26	21

## VIII. JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT FOR THE STAFF

The findings present clear evidence of widespread and frequently utilized opportunities for Jewish enrichment on the part of the staff. Over half the Centers reported their staff took "in-house" courses in Judaica. Over half reported that some of their staff engaged in Jewish educational training outside the local community. A fifth noted that some members of their staff studied Judaica at a local university. In the last two years alone about a quarter of the Centers have sent staff to Israel for Jewish educational training, and 16% said they were planning such a trip for the next year. Over three-quarters of North American JCC's have sent staff to Israel in toto.

In addition, Centers reported staff participation in the Mandel Executive Education Program, the Wexner Program (continuing education for Center executives), and the Executive Fellows, reflecting the Center movement's concentration on Jewish training for management level staff.

Three-quarters maintain a library of Jewish educational materials for use by the staff in planning programs. Over two-thirds conducted in-service educational programs, in which Jewish content was among the areas most frequently covered (83%, second to management with 88%, and ahead of work with groups and supervision). Almost a quarter of the Centers provide financial or other incentives for the staff to engage in Jewish study.

**TABLE 11: JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT  
FOR THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
"In-house" course(s) in Judaica for the staff		52
Staff took part in Jewish educational training outside community		55
Staff took courses in Judaica at local universities		19
Training program in Israel (past 2 years)	26	26
Planning such a trip for the next 12 months	33	16
Participation in Mandel Executive Education Program		18
Library of Jewish educational materials available for use by the staff in planning programs		74
Financial incentives for staff to engage in Jewish study		24

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
In-service educational program	81	69	71
Subjects included:			
Management	61	76	88
Jewish content	70	94	83
Work with groups	55	57	71
Supervision	69	64	71

## IX. THE JEWISH EDUCATION SPECIALIST

In the 1980's the concept of a full-time professional Jewish educator working in the JCC began to evolve. In 1994, 45% of Centers report they have hired a Jewish education specialist. Of these, 30% work part-time and 16% work full-time.

The vast majority of these specialists have worked as Jewish school teachers (79%) and have had university-level training in education (77%). A small number have obtained relevant credentials. About a quarter have graduated one of the schools of Jewish communal service. Almost a fifth have a social work degree. As many as 16% are rabbis and 13% previously worked for campus Hillels.

The specialists are widely involved in the activities of the Center. Almost half are defined as part of the Centers' senior executive teams. Their areas of functioning reflect the interests and activities of the Centers where they work. When asked to report on the functions the specialists perform, the executives' answers closely paralleled frequencies of programs reported earlier in this study. Specialists are most active in staff training, adult learning, early childhood education, cultural arts, and summer camping, in large part because these are the most frequent Jewish educational activities at Centers. One-third of specialists are involved in planning Center sponsored trips to Israel.

**TABLE 12: JEWISH EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish education resource/specialist on staff	29	35	46
Full-time			16
Part-time			30
No specialist			54
			—
Specialist part of senior executive team			44
Professional and educational experience of Judaic specialist			
Jewish school teacher			79
University-level training in education			77
Graduated Jewish communal service school			26
Social work degree			17
Rabbi			16
Hillel worker, director			13
Areas in which specialist functions			
Staff Training			83
Adult Learning			80
Early Childhood			76
Cultural Arts			74
Summer Camping			66
Teens			48
Board Study			41
Israel Trips			29
Russian Absorption			27

## X. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When asked to rank key forces in advancing Jewish education in the Center. Three-quarters of the executive directors saw themselves as principal advocates of Jewish educational activities. They perceived their presidents as next most supportive, followed by their Boards, with Center members a distant last.

**TABLE 14: PERCEIVED SUPPORT FOR JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

(Entries are Percentages)

To what extent have each of the following been supportive of high levels of Jewish educational activity at your Center?

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO SOME EXTENT	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL
The Executive Director	75	22	3	0
The President	50	38	11	2
The Board of Directors	38	42	19	2
The members	14	51	29	6
The Federation	<b>41</b>	43	13	3
Synagogues, local rabbis	<b>25</b>	32	33	10

In the last 12 months, in conversations with Board members, have you personally advocated the hiring of a full-time Jewish educator?

YES	34
NO	50
DOES NOT APPLY (WE ALREADY EMPLOY SUCH A PERSON)	16
Believes other Jewish communal professionals regard him/her as an advocate for Jewish education	86

Over 40% of the respondents to our survey saw their local federations as largely supporting their efforts to expand Jewish educational offerings in the Center, in contrast with the synagogues and local rabbis whom they see as more ambivalent.

Notwithstanding their divided impressions about the overall image of the Centers as a Jewish educational agency, 86% of the executives believe that local educators regard them personally as advocates for Jewish education.

Today's executive directors are, on the whole, a highly identified group Jewishly. With respect to rates of Jewish involvement, they compare favorably with the American Jewish population at large. Nine in ten are synagogue members. Most claim to attend synagogue services more often than the high holidays, on the order of "every few months." American Jews, on average, attend "only on high holidays." Almost half the respondents (44%) identify as Conservative Jews; almost a third are Reform; 9% are Orthodox; 2% are Reconstructionist; 13% identify as some other kind of Jew. Relative to the Jewish population, leading Center professionals are far more likely to identify with a religious denomination; of those who do so, they are somewhat more likely than the larger Jewish population to identify with Orthodoxy and Conservatism.

Over four in five Center professional leaders fast on Yom Kippur; over three in five live in households where Friday night candles are lit; and almost a third of their households use separate dishes for meat and dairy dishes. In each instance, the respondents' ritual practices are approximately 15-20% more frequent than those of American Jews.

Almost nine out of ten have been to Israel, and most have visited Israel three or more times (most have come on JCC Association sponsored seminars).

**TABLE 15: JOB TITLE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	75	77	88
ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	10	3	5
BRANCH DIRECTOR	5	13	2
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	3	2	2
OTHER	8	6	3

**TABLE 16: BACKGROUND OF EXECS (AND OTHERS)**

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Mean Age:	46	46
Sex: MALE	76	71
FEMALE	24	29
13 or more years as a JCC professional	63	66
Years this Center		
0-3	35	24
4-6	23	15
7-12	21	31
13+	21	30



**TABLE 17: JEWISH INVOLVEMENT OF EXECS (AND OTHERS)**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Member of a synagogue	85	90
Religious service attendance		
ABOUT ONCE A WEEK OR MORE	14	10
A FEW TIMES A MONTH	22	17
EVERY FEW MONTHS	48	56
ONLY ON HIGH HOLIDAYS	13	11
NEVER	3	2
Closest friends		
None are Jewish		0
Few are Jewish		0
Some are Jewish		6
Most are Jewish		39
All or almost all are Jewish		53
Jewish denomination		
Orthodox	7	9
Conservative	41	44
Reform	31	31
Other	21	
Reconstructionist		2
Something else		13
Fasts on Yom Kippur	84	82
Household usually lights candles on Friday night	61	64
Household uses separate dishes for meat and dairy	39	30
Visits to Israel		
NEVER	18	10
ONCE OR MORE		82
ONCE		19
TWICE		15
THREE OR MORE TIMES		55
Participates in Wexner-JCCA Continuing Education Program		20
Takes part in a Jewish adult education class		40

## TABLE 18: JEWISH EDUCATION PRIOR TO AGE 18

(Entries are Percentages)

Attended a Jewish day school or yeshiva	18
Attended a part-time Jewish high school	31
Visited Israel	22
Participated in a Jewish youth group	76
Attended an overnight summer camp with Jewish programming	61
Had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration	74

## XI. RELATIONS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Respondents in our survey indicated that they work collaboratively on Jewish education programs with a wide range of agencies, most frequently federations (92%) and local synagogues (90%). Nine out of ten Centers report that rabbis from local congregations teach at the Center, and 43% have helped conduct Jewish educational programs at local synagogues in the past year. Between 61% and 74% of Centers collaborate with a variety of other Jewish communal agencies, including youth organizations, family services, and day schools. At the same time, less than half the respondents felt that Jewish educators view their Center as an agency that places a high priority of Jewish education.

**TABLE 19: COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES  
IN JEWISH EDUCATION**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Federation	96	99	91
Rabbis from local congregations taught in Center program(s)		89	
Synagogue(s)	91	91	90
Jewish Youth Organizations	82	81	74
Jewish Family Service	98	97	68
Teen department serves local youth groups			68
Jewish Education Co-ordinating Agency (e.g., BJE)	81	80	65
Community Relations Council (or defense agency)	-	-	65
Jewish Day School(s)	-	-	61
Center helped conduct Jewish educational programs at a local synagogue			44

## XII. BOARDS' COMMITMENT TO JEWISH EDUCATION

Over two-thirds (71%) of the respondents reported that Jewish education appeared as an explicit item on their Boards' agenda during the past year. In 1994, 44% of Board meetings begin with a Dvar Torah, and 29% of the Boards have a standing committee on Jewish education. In the last two years, 17% of the Boards have had a seminar on Jewish education, and 10% of them had taken a trip together to Israel.

Jewish commitment is a factor of some importance in selection of board members, ranking after being active in the Center and having influence in the community as factors of importance. As with the staff, Jewish commitment is more highly valued than Jewish knowledge (43% versus 6%).

**TABLE 20: BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMITMENT TO JEWISH EDUCATION**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Jewish education appeared on agenda (past year)	–	71
D'var Torah given at all Board meetings	36	44
Board committee which deals with Jewish Educ'l Effectiveness	31	29
Board had seminar on Jewish education (past 2 years)	–	17
Israel trip for Board (past 2 years)	10	10
Now planning such a trip for the next 12 months	21	15

**TABLE 21: CRITERIA FOR SELECTING BOARD MEMBERS**

(Entries are Percentages)

How important are each of the following criteria in selecting members of your Center's Board of Directors?	% VERY IMPORTANT	
	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Active in the JCC	55	55
Influence in the community	49	46
Jewish commitment	38	43
Status in the community	31	39
Wealth	5	21
Jewish knowledge	12	6
Any Board members serve on the JCCA Board	–	42

### XIII. MISSION STATEMENT AND FUNDING

Almost all Centers (96%) have a written mission statement and 80% of these statements contain explicit references to Jewish education. Four out of five respondents claim that their Centers make clear public statements that Jewish education is an important objective. Almost as many believe that Jewish education is central to their organizational culture. Fully 86% of Centers reported that their regular budget constitutes the major source of funding for Jewish educational programs. Of those who have hired a Judaic specialist, more than two-thirds (71%) report that the major funding for this professional derives from the Center's regular budget.

**TABLE 22: CENTERS' STATED COMMITMENT TO JEWISH EDUCATION**

(Entries are Percentages)

	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
Written mission statement	92	96
Mission statement refers to Jewish education	79	80
Public statements that Jewish education is an important objective	-	80
Jewish education central to organizational culture	-	76
Center's regular budget is the major source of funding for Jewish educational programs	86	
Center's regular budget is the major source of funding for Judaic specialist	71	
Jewish educators view Center as an agency with high priority on Jewish education	-	44

## THE 1994 FIGURES COMPARED TO 1988

What happened since 1988? To what extent have there been changes in the Jewish educational activity in JCC's over the past six years?

The 1994 findings show almost universal intensification of levels of Jewish education reported in the 1988 study.

Courses in Judaica increased in availability in seven out of eight areas. The period between the 1988 and the 1994 study saw the emergence of such full-fledged programs as the Melton Mini-School and Derech Torah as well as a variety of externally supplied or assisted educational services.

One adult Jewish educational format that did decline over the past decade is the weekend retreat on Jewish themes. In 1982, 33% of Centers sponsored such programs; the fraction fell to 15% in 1988 and once again to 6% in 1994. This trend may be explained by the high costs of the retreat format both in terms of overhead and staff time as well as by the expansion of the many other adult learning frameworks.

Jewish arts programming has increased consistently and in all areas from the early 1980's until 1994. This trend is most dramatically seen in the growth of Jewish Book Fairs from 57% in 1982, to 73% in 1988, to 83% in 1994.

Programming for nine out of the twelve holidays in the survey grew since 1988, with the most dramatic change being for Tu B'Shevat (from 65% in 1988 to 85% in 1994). Only three holidays failed to increase in frequency of programming since 1988 (Yom Ha'atzmaut, Yom Hashoah, and Yom Yerushalayim -- all of which, incidentally, are Israel-related).

The number of Centers that are open on the Sabbath has climbed from 51% in 1988 to 60% in 1994. This development has less to do with Jewish educational concerns and more with either economic needs or membership priorities. At the same time,

it does give rise to a host of new challenges related to the Jewish image and programming policy of the JCC.

There is a very significant increase from 1982 to 1994 in the presence of Jewish educational specialists on Center staffs. In 1982, only 29% reported employing such a person; by 1988, the number had grown to 35%; in 1994, 44% of Centers report they have hired a Jewish education specialist. Of these, 30% work part-time and just 16% work full-time.

The proportion of Jewish staff in the JCC's declined slightly between 1988 and 1994.

The patterns of staffing suggest an interesting Jewish educational dynamic in Centers. The Center world seems to regard Jewish education as inherently related to programming, events, and holidays, rather than as reflected in the inter-personal or human dimension of Center life. Thus, Centers seem to feel comfortable with hiring non-Jews in certain areas -- physical education, early childhood programs, and other specialized sectors -- which Centers do not regard as inherently educational. Jewish education seems to be regarded as a programming area very much related to a high level professional; but not necessarily a dynamic that pervades all staff.

Board involvement with Jewish education shows an overall intensification in 1994 as compared with former times. By 1994, almost all Centers have written mission statements, and in 1994 45% of Board meetings begin with a Dvar Torah, as compared with 36% in 1988.

The role of the Israel visit increased dramatically by 1994 by which well over a quarter of Centers and three quarters of executives had educational experiences in Israel (the proportion of directors who have never been to Israel fell from 18% in 1988 to 10% in 1994 as contrasted with roughly two-thirds of American Jews who have never been to Israel).



## THE DYNAMICS OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE JCCs -- FROM THE 1980s TO THE 1990s

By looking at these three studies, conducted over a period of 14 years, we are able to discover a revealing picture of the metamorphosis of Jewish education in Jewish Community Centers from 1982 to 1994. The contemporary JCC emerges as a multi-dimensional cultural and recreational agency which has made Jewish education one of the dimensions of its being.

I. The majority of Centers observe some sort of Jewish holiday calendar, through hall decorations, foods, educational programs, and public celebrations. The planning process of Center life is typically geared to dealing with upcoming Jewish holidays. The nature of the observance of and programming for these holidays adapts some but not all traditional religious patterns associated with these holidays. Centers do typically conduct Hanukkah candle lighting ceremonies, building of a Sukkah, and planting of trees, although they generally do not conduct religious services. For that reason, it is misleading to suggest -- as some have claimed -- that JCC's are perpetuating a secular Judaism; in fact, JCC observance of holidays perpetuates many traditional religious behaviors and customs. It is fair to conclude that the public life style of the typical JCC building operates according to a Jewish calendar.

II. Most Centers have taken steps to create some basic Jewish ambiance in their buildings. It is increasingly becoming the rule that JCC's look and feel different from non-Jewish sports or recreation facilities. Mezzuzot adorn doorways; Hebrew signs and music are felt somewhere in the building. Israel and Jewish art and artifacts are likely to line the halls. Holiday decorations surface throughout the year in the early childhood wing and in the main lobby. If one visits Centers in West Palm Beach or Cleveland or Richmond or Berkeley one would say that Centers are increasingly looking like some kind of very modern but nonetheless Jewish looking late twentieth century neighborhood.

III. Most JCC's in North America have made adult Jewish learning a key aspect of their programming. Whereas Centers traditionally conducted adult learning programs in general areas of culture and recreation (ceramics, world art, music,

fitness) and left Jewish learning to synagogues, in the past decade they have elevated the importance of Jewish learning.

Jewish adult learning in Centers has encompassed three main areas. The first is general Jewish learning and literacy. This area covers the gamut from intensive year or more courses devoted to the basic study of Judaica to lectures and mini-courses on specific topics of Jewish civilization. Frequently, these Jewish literacy courses have been aimed at reaching out to inter-married couples, potential converts, uninvolved, and essentially illiterate Jews.

The second area is families and family education programs aimed at either young parents with children in the Center pre-school or families desirous of total family life activities for the entire family.

The third area has been individual and isolated lectures, symposia, one-time events.

Taken together, these areas constitute a decisive step and statement which Centers are making about the importance of adult Jewish learning -- and about their desire to be very Center players in this arena.

IV. Centers have introduced Jewish dimensions into the three areas of their world which deals with the young: pre-school; camping; and teen-agers. The easiest area in which to introduce the Jewish element has been the pre-school, and this has been effected via focus on holidays, heroes, events, Israel, and Jewish values. Jewish topics have been introduced in the summer camp via: Israeli themes; Israeli emissaries (shlichim) who are sent for the summer; Kabbalat Shabbat events; and the use of the Jewish educator. Teen programs have included discussion groups, service projects, and Israel youth travel.

V. As part of the effort to deepen their Jewish educational effectiveness, Centers have made investments in staff development and growth in Judaica. Centers have realized that they are not likely to recruit entirely new staff who are skilled in their professional areas and also Jewishly knowledgeable. Consequently, Centers have focused on a diverse array of in-service and professional growth programs in Judaica.

VI. The data in our study presents an ambivalent picture of the role of the Board in the Jewish education process. Clearly, there is agreement that the Board should play an important role; indeed, that was one of the main directives of the original COMJEE report. The progress in that area has been mixed. Some Centers show more board involvement and interest. More boards than before have introduced some Jewish content in their meetings. However, when compared with other spheres, progress in the area of Board commitment, leadership, and ownership of the Jewish educational mandate seems only moderate.

VII. The typical Center executive in 1994 exhibits a high rate of Jewish involvement as compared with the American Jewish population at large and with Center executives of a decade ago. As we have seen, today's exec is a member of a synagogue, attends services periodically, fasts on Yom Kippur, and has visited Israel several times.

VIII. It seems fair to say that the Center executives have come to regard Jewish education as part and parcel of their professional mission. For some executives this is a commitment of belief and will; they have come to believe that Centers can help affect Jewish identity and continuity. Others have come to the realization that lay leaders and the board increasingly expect their executives to be aligned with the Jewish mission, and consequently it is the correct and expected "thing to do". Whatever the motivation, by the 1990's, the executive has come to regard Jewish education as part of the multi-dimensional responsibilities of the contemporary executive.

IX. Metamorphoses and Ambivalences: What ultimately has happened in the Center world in a decade? What do the studies from 1982 to 1994 show? They certainly point to many specific changes. However, there is a larger over-all effect which they describe: the metamorphosis of a culture.

"Things Jewish" have become more rather than less of a norm in the Center world. The culture of the JCC world in 1994 includes Jewish (and Israeli) artifacts, references, symbols, and concerns. Continental Board meetings always begin with a Dvar Torah; Jewish study sessions are now a mainstay of a JCC Association Biennial; local Centers have kosher snack bars. The rhetoric of the continental roof organization is directly focused on Jewish education, identity, continuity. The

studies over a decade show a clear acceleration of Jewish dimensions to the point where a new Jewish cultural norm has been established for the Center movement.

These findings should not be mis-interpreted; they do not mean that the Center has become a thoroughly Jewish agency in a qualitative sense. They do not mean that Centers are now highly observant or that their members have been Jewishly transformed. Indeed, the culture of the inhabitants of the local JCC remains very much oriented to recreation, cultural arts, child care, and physical education. Centers are agencies which respond to the needs and desires of the Jewish community, and these needs continue to be in areas just described.

Thus, it would be inaccurate to say that Jewish education has conquered the local JCC. Many Centers still engage high proportions of non-Jewish staff. Most Jewish staff remains Jewishly ignorant or modestly knowledgeable at best. The funding of Jewish education remains an ambiguous area: it is clearly not a profit-producing area and its support remains a challenge and a problem. Boards are still unclear about their role in the process -- and in some cases as to whether the process is their responsibility. Many observers outside the Center world -- as well as some within it -- question the legitimacy of the Center's role in Jewish education. All executives are not ideologically committed to this cause. Many board members remain passive or unconvinced of the Jewish mission of the Center, particularly in times of economic difficulty.

At the same time, it is clear that the JCC building, the contents, the staff, and the mission of this agency have assumed much more Jewish tones. Jews who come to Centers associate with other Jews in pleasant Jewish environments, and some sort of inter-connectedness is likely to develop. This means that the over one million people who enter the doors of JCC's across North America in the 1990s are more likely to be touched by a Jewish neighborhood, Jewish oxygen, and Jewish artifacts than before. This does not mean that they are more Jewish or will be; but it does mean that there is more of a chance for Jewish "chemistry".

## FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY IN JCC'S

Having examined the level of Jewish educational activities, we now need to explore the factors that influence that level. In simple terms, we are trying to learn why some Centers are more active Jewishly than others.

In order to ascertain the answer to this question we utilized the procedure of factor analysis in order to determine which individual Jewish education activities tend to be present (or absent) together.

This procedure identified two clusters. One axis revolves around adult-oriented Jewish educational programs. It includes adult education courses, exhibits, and other adult-oriented educational activities. The second axis involved child-oriented Jewish educational programs. It incorporates the pre-school program, day camps, the celebration of Jewish holidays.

These two dimensions are statistically related. Centers strong in the adult area tend to be strong in the children's sphere as well. However, some JCCs are clearly active in the adult education area, but only moderately or even weakly committed to child-oriented Jewish education, or the reverse.

To obtain an overall measure (or score) of the level of Jewish educational activity of a specific Center, we combined the two indices into a single scale. We divided Centers into three levels of Jewish educational activities (high -- 20% of the Centers, moderate -- 54%, and low -- 26%). We then proceeded to examine which institutional factors are most closely correlated with the level of Jewish educational activity. Our analysis isolated five factors which seemed to be most closely linked to high levels:

1. Size of Center -- Larger Centers tend to be more active in the sphere of Jewish education.

2. The importance attached to Jewish education by the executive, Board, and Center as an institution -- Centers with highly committed executives and boards are more active Jewishly.
3. The presence of a full-time Jewish educational specialist - - Whether cause or effect, a full time Jewish educator correlates positively with intensified Jewish educational activity.
4. The extent of ongoing study in Judaica undertaken by the staff, especially an Israel study seminar, -- Centers in which staff participate in ongoing Jewish study exhibit more Jewish educational activity.
5. The extent to which board and staff members are selected on the basis of their Jewish knowledge and commitment -- Centers in which board members are selected for Jewish knowledge and commitment are more Jewishly active Centers.

Larger Centers are clearly more able to stage a larger variety of Jewish educational programs. Their very size simply means they sponsor more numerous and more diverse programs of all sorts, not only in the Jewish educational area. In addition, often larger size allows for more discretionary spending on staff and programs which are financially unprofitable.

A little over half the Centers have failed to hire a Jewish educational specialist; about a third have hired a part-time specialist; and a sixth employ a full-time specialist. The differences among the three situations are striking. Centers with part-time specialists are more than twice as likely as those with no specialist to report high levels of Jewish educational programming. Moreover, Centers with full-time specialists are also more than twice as likely as those with part-time specialist to report high levels of Jewish educational programming.

Thus, both the presence of a specialist in Jewish education, and his or her availability, full-time, contribute significantly to the size and diversity of Jewish educational programming. To some extent, the presence of a specialist depends on the size of institution. Larger Centers are more likely to hire a specialist and to hire one full-time. But even when we statistically control for the size of Center, the

presence of a specialist -- especially a full-time staff member -- is associated with a substantial difference in the level of Jewish educational programming.

Of the Centers with little staff study, hardly any reported high levels of Jewish educational activities; conversely, of Centers with high levels of staff study, and particularly study in Israel, hardly any reported low levels of Jewish educational activity.

The sponsorship of Jewish educational programming, then, seems to go hand-in-hand with a personal (or professional) commitment on the part of the staff to engage in Jewish study. Centers with high levels of Jewish educational activity require or inspire their staffs to study Jewish subject matters; and, to some extent, staff members who are engaged in Jewish study are the type who most readily initiate and support Jewish educational programming.

By combining the characteristics analyzed above, we arrive at a composite portrait of Centers that sponsor a wide range of Jewish educational activities:

The most Jewishly active Centers are those with large staffs and resources, that place a strong emphasis on Jewish education as part of their mission and organizational culture, that hire full-time Jewish educational specialists, that encourage their staffs to engage in Jewish study at home and in Israel, and that place a premium on Jewish knowledge and commitment in the selection of their board and staff members.

## CONCLUSIONS

For the last decade and more, the Center movement has made a concerted effort to emphasize and actualize its Jewish educational mission. The findings contained in this report clearly indicate that during this period Centers have taken significant strides in elevating and enriching their Jewish educational activities. A diverse and active Jewish educational program has come to typify Jewish Community Centers throughout North America. The executive directors, the Boards, and the staffs have come to adopt a commitment to Jewish education as a central feature of the ethos of the Center movement. In these senses, this report points to considerable progress in turning Centers into Jewish educational institutions; yet much remains to be achieved.

The survey on which this report is based could hardly touch on matters of quality rather than quantity. Thus, we could readily detect the presence of Jewish educational programming; but we could judge neither the manner in which such programming is carried out nor its impact upon Center members and users.

Indeed, it is only by way of informal observation and anecdotal impression that leads us to a basic distinction between 'Jewish programming' -- now a common feature of JCC's -- and Jewish education'. Clearly, many Centers have put numerous and variegated Jewish programs in place. However, programs are not the same as an educational process. The former refers to a one-time self-contained activity revolving around a Jewish subject -- it could be a holiday program that is planned, happens, and is over. Education refers to an ongoing process and continuum of events, activities, and inter-relations which constantly pervade the agency. It is like oxygen which constantly flows throughout the agency's bloodstream.

By drawing the distinction between education and programming, we are, in effect, setting forth a challenge to the Center movement to embark upon the next stage in its development as a vital instrument of Jewish education. A true and comprehensive adoption of Jewish education as central to the mission of Centers would entail several key components.



**1) The clarification and adoption of a distinctive Judaic philosophy on the part of the Centers (Chazan, 1988; Dubin, 1990, Poupko, 1994).** Centers are the modern inheritors of the classical Jewish notion of 'kehilla' (community). As such they must develop an authentically Jewish mission perspective which can be comfortable for all Jews whom they serve. This mission must be rooted in and reflect the very best values and behaviors of Jewish tradition.

**2) The assumption by the executives of the responsibility for acting as the principal educational leaders of their Centers.** The literature of general education together with clear indications from our research points to the decisive role of the Center executive in the Jewish education mission. Executives who believe in the Jewish education mission are those who transform the agency. We will need a generation of executives who see themselves as a new genre of Jewish educational leaders. This will involve transforming existing executives, and recruiting a new generation with deep Jewish knowledge and commitments. The continental agency will need to dramatically expand the opportunities and contexts for serious Judaic study by its executives.

**3) The adoption of an approach which makes Judaic study a basic norm and requirement of work in the Center field.** Jewish study must become a core dimension of pre- and in-service professional growth in the Center field. The entire Center staff plays an important role in the Jewish educational process, and until the entire staff deepens its Jewish knowledge and commitments, the Center is going to struggle in its Jewish mission. Up to now there have been isolated, creative forays in this direction; over the next decade Judaic study and commitment must become a norm and a given for employment in the Center field. The Center movement should consider many new ventures and frameworks for enhanced Judaic training (the Wexner Program in continuing education for Center executives is especially noteworthy here). The Movement might consider the establishment of a permanent Summer Institute for staff study in Judaica.

**4) A senior and full-time Jewish educator in every Center.** The research unequivocally points to the decisive role of a full time Jewish educator in effecting

institutional change. Every Center -- large or small-- must set such a staff position as a goal by the end of this decade. Just as a Center could never be considered fully professional if it does not have a qualified physical education director or pre-school supervisor, so it can never be considered as fully committed to the Jewish educational mission unless it engages at least one qualified full-time Jewish educator. In large Centers, there should be a staff or team of Jewish educators encompassing: family life educators; adult educators; early childhood experts.

5) **Increased utilization of Israel** (Chazan 1994; Cohen 1986 and 1993a; Cohen and Wall 1994; Reisman 1993). The Israel seminar and its related activities have proven to be powerful forces in the Jewish educational thrust of Centers in two ways. First, Israel seminars increase the basic Jewish literacy of staff. Second, Israel seminars seem to exert a deep effect on Jewish commitments and attitudes. All Centers should send staff to Israel by the end of the decade. New forms of Israel seminars should be devised. Qualified Israeli resources and materials should be developed for Centers.

6) **Transformation of the Boards.** Our research demonstrates the critical role of the board in the Jewish enterprise. This area has shown only modest advances in the past decade. New and creative efforts need to be invested to ensure that local and continental boards are truly committed to the Jewish educational cause. This commitment will have to involve the unconditional funding of Jewish education and the realization that it is a Center activity of different dimensions and categories than all other Center activities. Without Board involvement and support, the Jewish educational task can become marginalized.

7) **Authentic and efficient co-operative efforts with other agencies.** Jewish education is not owned by any one agency; moreover, there is more than enough work for synagogues, day schools, federations, camps, JCC's. The agencies of the community must learn how to work effectively together with -- rather than against -- each other. As the central agency rooted in the idea of "kehilla" or community, the JCC should play a lead role in advancing the cooperative communal effort.

These and other elements constitute components of an advanced and sophisticated commitment to Jewish education. Many Centers have taken important first steps. Now that they have established a programmatic foundation, they stand ready to make a significant qualitative leap forward in the realm of Jewish education. If Centers are to capitalize on the gains in Jewish programming they have realized in the last decade, they will need to flesh out, enrich, and once and for all unequivocally establish their emerging commitment to Jewish education.

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**A Time to Act.**

## RESPONDING JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS

Out of 171 possible respondents, representing Centers or regions, a total of 126 (or 69%) responded. Those agencies who participated in this study are listed below, grouped regionally for ease of identification. Within regional clusters, Centers are listed with attention to geographic proximity.

### CANADA

Jewish Community Center of Toronto, Ontario  
Ottawa Jewish Community Center, Ontario  
YM-YWHA Jewish Community Center, Windsor, Ontario  
YMHA Jewish Community Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Calgary Jewish Center, Alberta  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Vancouver, British Columbia

### NEW ENGLAND

Springfield Jewish Community Center, MA  
Worcester Jewish Community Center, MA  
Jewish Community Center of The North Shore, Marblehead, MA  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Boston  
Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island  
Jewish Community Center of Portland, ME  
Greater Hartford Jewish Community Center, CT  
Jewish Community Center of New Haven, CT  
Greater Bridgeport Jewish Community Center, CT  
Stamford Jewish Community Center, CT

### NEW YORK

#### UPSTATE NEW YORK:

Albany Jewish Community Center  
Jewish Community Center of Schenectady  
Jewish Community Center of Syracuse  
Jewish Community Center of Binghamton  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo  
The Jewish Community Center of Greater Rochester



WESTCHESTER & ROCKLAND:

YM - YWHA of Southern Westchester, Mt. Vernon  
Rosenthal Y of Northern Westchester, Pleasantville  
Mid-Westchester Y, Scarsdale  
Jewish Community Center on the Hudson, Yonkers  
Rockland YM-YWHA, West Nyack

BRONX, MANHATTAN, STATEN ISLAND:

92nd Street YM-YWHA  
YM/YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood  
Staten Island Jewish Community Center  
Riverdale YM-YWHA

BROOKLYN, QUEENS:

Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst  
Boro Park YWHA  
Sephardic Community Center  
Kings Bay YM-YWHA  
Shore Front YM-YWHA  
Hebrew Educational Society  
Central Queens YM + YWHA  
Samuel Field-Bay Terrace YM&YWHA, Little Neck

LONG ISLAND:

Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center, East Hills  
Greater Five Towns YM + YWHA, Cedarhurst  
The Suffolk Y Jewish Community Center  
Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center

## NEW JERSEY

Bayonne Jewish Community Center  
Jewish Community Center Metro West, West Orange  
Jewish Community Center of Central New Jersey, Scotch Plains  
YM-YWHA of North Jersey, Wayne  
Jewish Community Center on the Palisades, Tenafly  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Monmouth County, Deal Park  
Jewish Community Center of Southern New Jersey, Cherry Hill  
Jewish Community Center of Atlantic County, Margate City  
Jewish Community Center of Delaware Valley, Trenton

## PENNSYLVANIA

Jewish Community Center of Reading  
Jewish Community Center of Harrisburg  
Jewish Community Center of Scranton  
Pittsburgh Jewish Community Center  
Allentown Jewish Community Center  
Jewish Community Centers of Greater Philadelphia  
Lancaster Jewish Community Center

## DELAWARE, MARYLAND, D.C., VIRGINIA

Jewish Community Center, Wilmington DE  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore, Maryland  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, Rockville MD  
District of Columbia Jewish Community Center, Washington DC  
Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, Fairfax  
Jewish Community Center of Tidewater, Norfolk, Virginia  
Jewish Community Center of Richmond, VA

## TENNESSEE, KENTUCKY

Nashville Jewish Community Center, Nashville, TN  
Jewish Community Center of Greater Chattanooga, TN  
Memphis Jewish Community Center, TN  
Louisville Jewish Community Center, Kentucky

Dayton Jewish Community Center  
Canton Jewish Community Center  
Jewish Community Center of Toledo  
Jewish Community Center of Akron  
Leo Yassenoff Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus  
Youngstown Jewish Community Center  
Jewish Community Center, Cincinnati  
Jewish Community Center of Cleveland

#### OTHER MIDWEST

Indianapolis Jewish Community Center, Indiana  
Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor MI  
Jewish Community Center Metro-Detroit, West Bloomfield, MI  
Fresh Air Society, West Bloomfield MI  
Milwaukee Jewish Community Center, WI  
Jewish Community Center of the Greater St Paul Area, MN  
Minneapolis Jewish Community Center, MN  
Jewish Community Centers of Chicago  
Jewish Community Center Association of St Louis  
The Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City, Kansas  
Jewish Community Center of Omaha, NE  
Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

#### FLORIDA

Jewish Community Alliance, Jacksonville  
Jewish Community Center of Central Florida, Orlando  
Miami Beach Jewish Community Center  
Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center, North Miami Beach  
David Posnack Jewish Community Center, Davie  
Jewish Community Center of the Great Palm Beaches  
The Adolph and Rose Levine Jewish Community Center, Boca Raton  
Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Community Center  
Kent Jewish Community Center, Clearwater

## OTHER SOUTH

Jewish Community Center of Charlotte, NC  
Columbia Jewish Community Center, SC  
Charleston Jewish Community Center, SC  
Atlanta Jewish Community Center, Georgia  
Jewish Educational Alliance, Savannah, GA  
Birmingham Jewish Community Center, AL  
New Orleans Jewish Community Center, LA

## TEXAS

Dallas Jewish Community Center  
Dan Danciger Jewish Community Center, Fort Worth  
Jewish Community Center of Houston  
Jewish Community Center of San Antonio  
Jewish Community Council of Corpus Christi  
Jewish Community Center of Austin

## CALIFORNIA

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Jewish Community Center Association of Greater LA  
Long Beach Jewish Community Center  
Bay Cities Jewish Community Center, Santa Monica  
Jewish Community Center Orange County CA, Costa Mesa

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Albert L Schultz Jewish Community Center, Palo Alto  
Peninsula Jewish Community Center, San Francisco  
Oakland-Piedmont Jewish Community Center  
Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center  
Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael  
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco  
Addison Penzak Jewish Community Center of Greater San Jose

**MOUNTAIN, SOUTHWEST, PACIFIC**

Jewish Community Centers of Denver, CO

James L White Jewish Community Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Tucson Jewish Community Center, AZ

Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Portland OR

Stroum Jewish Community Center of Greater Seattle, WA

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