

Hachnasat Kehillah: Welcoming Community

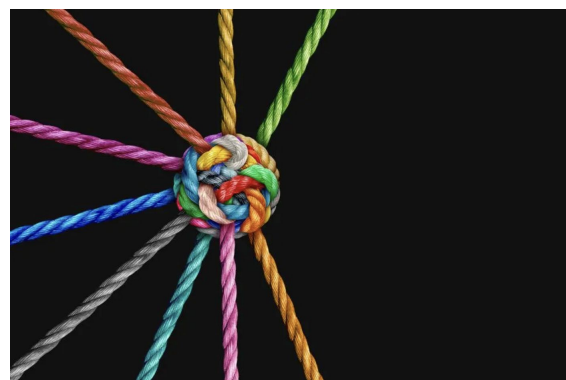
Creating a Welcoming Space





Agenda

Hachnasat Kehillah



Unboxing the Toolkit



Practice



Wrap-up





Hachnasat Kehillah

Hachnasat | Welcoming

- Authentic Belonging
- Mirrors and Windows

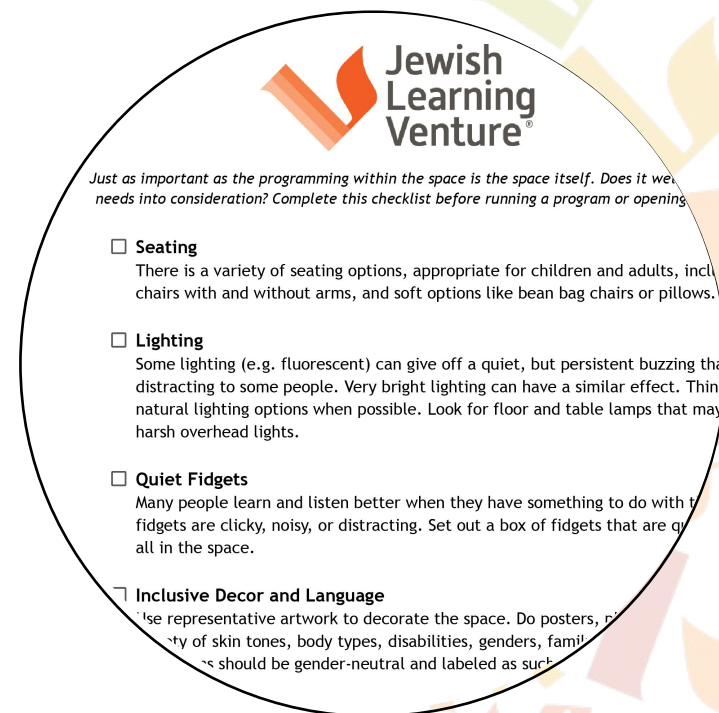
Kehillah | Who are we welcoming?

- Students
- Families

When do we welcome the community?

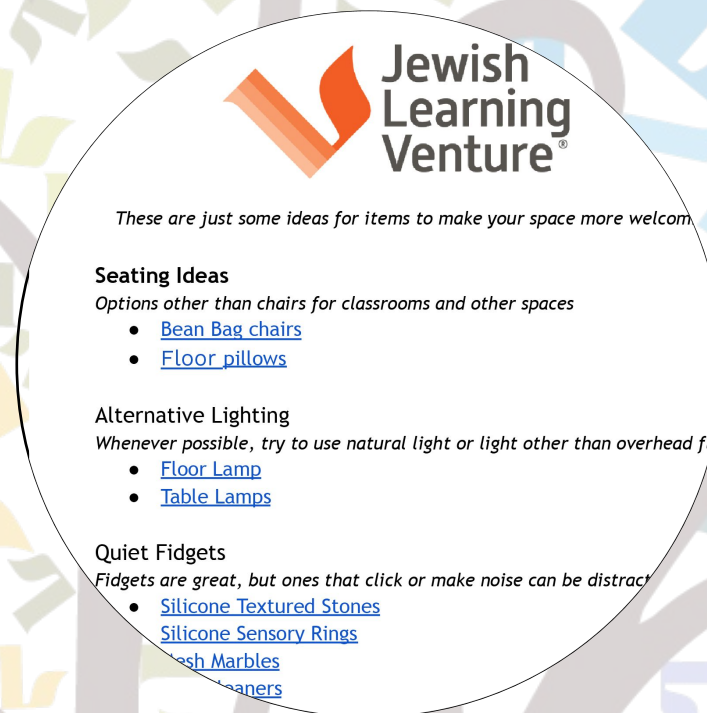
Before anyone even steps into the space!

Unboxing the Toolkit



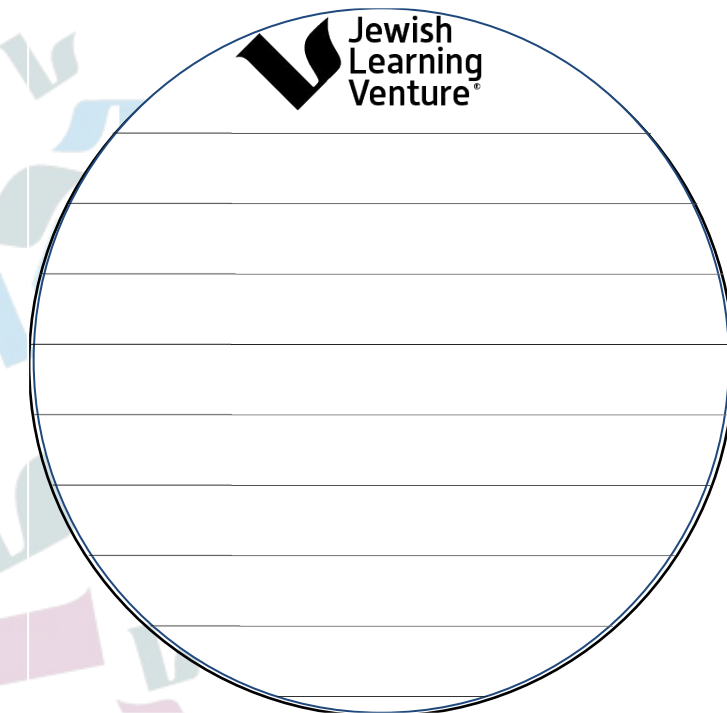
Checklist

What to think about before setting up a classroom or planning an event



Resources

Where to get some of the things we talked about



Notebook pages

Note what you notice working and not working in your space



Creating a Welcoming Space

Just as important as the programming within the space is the space itself. Does it welcome all people and take their needs into consideration? Complete this checklist before running a program or opening your classroom to students.

☐ Seating

There is a variety of seating options, appropriate for children and adults, including floor space, chairs with and without arms, and soft options like bean bag chairs or pillows.

☐ Lighting

Some lighting (e.g. fluorescent) can give off a quiet, but persistent buzzing that can be very distracting to some people. Very bright lighting can have a similar effect. Think about softer, more natural lighting options when possible. Look for floor and table lamps that may allow you to turn off harsh overhead lights.

☐ Quiet Fidgets

Many people learn and listen better when they have something to do with their hands, but often, fidgets are clicky, noisy, or distracting. Set out a box of fidgets that are quiet and freely accessible to all in the space.

☐ Inclusive Decor and Language

Use representative artwork to decorate the space. Do posters, photos, drawings, etc. represent a variety of skin tones, body types, disabilities, genders, family structures, and neurotypes? Similarly, bathrooms should be gender-neutral and labeled as such whenever possible.

☐ Schedules

If your day and/or event will adhere to a schedule, post it prominently and call participants' attention to it. Offer both a written and visual option to accommodate as many learning styles as possible.

☐ Language

Names of events and activities are inclusive and non-gendered. E.g. "Mom's Night Out" can be "Parent/Caregiver Night Out" or "Daddy/Daughter Dance" can be "Grown-up and Kid Party"

☐ Accessible Space

All areas of the space are accessible. Ramps or elevators can be used in place of stairs, if needed. Bathrooms are spacious enough to accommodate all body types and accessibility aids. There is ample room for those who need to sit apart, but still participate, to do so.





Resources

These are just some ideas for items to make your space more welcoming. There are many other options available.

Seating Ideas

Options other than chairs for classrooms and other spaces

- [Bean Bag chairs](#)
- [Floor pillows](#)

Alternative Lighting

Whenever possible, try to use natural light or light other than overhead fluorescent lights

- [Floor Lamp](#)
- [Table Lamps](#)

Quiet Fidgets

Fidgets are great, but ones that click or make noise can be distracting. These are some quiet options.

- [Silicone Textured Stones](#)
- [Silicone Sensory Rings](#)
- [Mesh Marbles](#)
- [Pipe Cleaners](#)

Inclusive Decor

*Instead of posters that instruct inclusivity, try **decorating with inclusivity in mind**. Decorate as you typically would, but intentionally choose objects that are inclusive. (I.e. instead of a “All People Are Welcome” poster, which can be read as performative, put up images of all different people or use posters and clip art that are representative of differences, **actually showing that all people are welcome.**)*

- [Multicultural Plush Dolls](#)
- [Artist Posters for Neurodiverse Learners](#)
- [Famous Neurodivergent People Posters](#)
- [Inclusive Feelings Poster](#)
- [Diverse Body Type Clip Art](#)
- [Gender Neutral Clip Art](#)
- [Family Structure Posters](#)
- [Non-Gendered Restroom Sign](#) (try to avoid bathroom signs with two genders or stereotypical gender representation.)
- [Visual Schedule](#)
- [One-step curb ramp](#)



A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.





Let's Practice!

Teachers:

- Create new classroom
- Choose one center (dramatic play, art, etc.)
- Use checklist and resource list and describe what's in it
- Money is no object!

Other Family Influencers

- Design a family program
- Use checklist and describe it
 - where, when, who, what?
- Money is no object!

Questions?



Thank you!

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