

Summary of Boston Grandparents Focus Group
March 22, 2004

A. Relationship Between Grandparents and Tuition

1. Grandparents commented that if they offer to help pay for one grandchild's tuition, they must contribute to ALL of their grandchildren's tuition. This can become expensive.
2. People invest money in causes which they believe to be important. Grandparents will be more willing to invest money if they believe in the value of a day school education.
3. There is a growing need to more widely expose grandparents to day schools.
4. If day school were free, enrollment may increase but the school's perceived value may decrease. Yet, tuition assistance programs provide a lower tuition cost without detracting from the school's value.
5. Grandparents commented that parents need to express interest in sending their children to day schools before grandparents can be involved in a conversation on tuition.
6. Many grandparents provide some financial support for their grandchildren's day school education.

B. The Conversation Between Parents and Grandparents

1. Grandparents commented that parents have "new ways of doing things," and it is often difficult to try and open the door for conversation.
2. The extent to which grandparents can speak with parents about day school depends on the type of relationship they have.
3. Intermarriage of parents is a significant factor when considering a conversation about day school.
4. Grandparents should start speaking to the parents about a day school education before the grandchildren are of school age.
5. Many parents feel that an afternoon Hebrew school in combination with public school is "good enough" for their children. Grandparents who believe in a Jewish day school education find it difficult to convince parents to choose this path instead of public school.

C. Grandparents as Advocates

1. Grandparents should form a group which would work towards helping to shape their grandchildren's Jewish future.
2. Grandparents and parents who are already invested in day schools need to act as advocates, and assist in marketing a day school education.
3. There are various different audiences for which grandparents can be advocates. Some of these include:
 - Parents paying for non-sectarian private schools
 - Parents of Jewish pre-school children who are predisposed and serious about sending the children to day school
 - Parents of Jewish pre-school children who are not willing to send their children to day school
 - Parents who are open to a day school education because they have enough money
 - Parents who are open to a day school education but are deterred by lack of money
4. Grandparents need to encourage children and parents to visit day schools, either on their own or through their local synagogue or some other venue.
5. Grandparents may encourage other grandparents to be involved if they put their grandchildren's Jewish education in terms of Jewish survival.