



Pipeline Relationships Between Day School Admission Directors and Early Childhood Directors

Admission Community of Practice

Facilitator: *Rebecca Egolf*

Guest: *Linda Mann Simansky, PEJE*



November 24, 2008



Agenda

- Announcements
- Welcome and Introductions
- Background: What do we know about the pipeline?
- New Research: USCJ survey by Dr. Elaine Cohen and Maxine Handelman
- Discussing the USCJ Survey
- Resources
- Next Steps



PEJE Marketing Webinar

Story: The Marketing Tool for Today

Tuesday, December 16, 2008 3:00-4:00 pm Eastern

Guest: Madelyn Blair, PhD, founder and president of Pelerei, Inc. (<http://www.pelerei.com/>), is a world leader in the use of story in business. Her work takes her around the world working with groups to help them use the power of story.

Webinar participants will:

- *Experience the power of story*
- *Learn techniques for eliciting and developing stories*
- *Discuss the kinds of stories that attract new students and donors to Jewish day schools*

Teams of school leaders (admission directors, development directors, heads of school, board members) are encouraged to participate in the call as a group.

RSVP to Kirk Tallman at kirk@peje.org

Meet Our Guest, Linda Mann Simansky



- At PEJE:
 - *Senior Program Officer for Grants*
 - *Manager of Governance and Board Relations*
 - *Knowledge Champion – Early Childhood to Day School Pipeline*
- In Boston's Jewish Community:
 - *Vice President of Governance, Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston*
 - *Board member, Congregation Kehillath Israel Nursery School*
- Contact Linda at linda@peje.org



Also with us...

- Dr. Elaine Cohen, Associate Director, USCJ Department of Education
- Maxine Handelman, USCJ Early Childhood Education Consultant
- Several PEJE Pipeline Coaches:
Mollie Aczel
Rheua Stakely





Pipeline Background

- 35 Jewish day schools have been recipients of PEJE's Pipeline Grant, which focuses on the development of a rich relationship between the school and its key feeder organizations.
- The Jewish Early Childhood Key Informant Group includes more than a dozen experts from the field who meet periodically with Linda to stay apprised of current issues and challenges in the field.



Pre-Existing Conditions

- Early Childhood programs and/or professionals are plagued with a “less than” feeling.
- There is a perception that day schools see themselves as “elite” – above the early childhood programs.
- Language matters – refer to programs not as preschool or nursery school but as early childhood education.
- Programs that enroll large numbers of non-Jews often feel discomfort in recommending day schools.



Common Challenges

- Many heads of early childhood programs have mixed feelings about Jewish day schools.
- Synagogue early childhood programs feel pressured to recommend their supplemental schools to families.
- Rabbis are often not the partners we assume they might or should be.
- Building these relationships takes a long time. Results don't come right away. If there are staff changes, you sometimes have to start over.
- Competition exists particularly in situations when day schools have early childhood programs or transitional kindergartens.



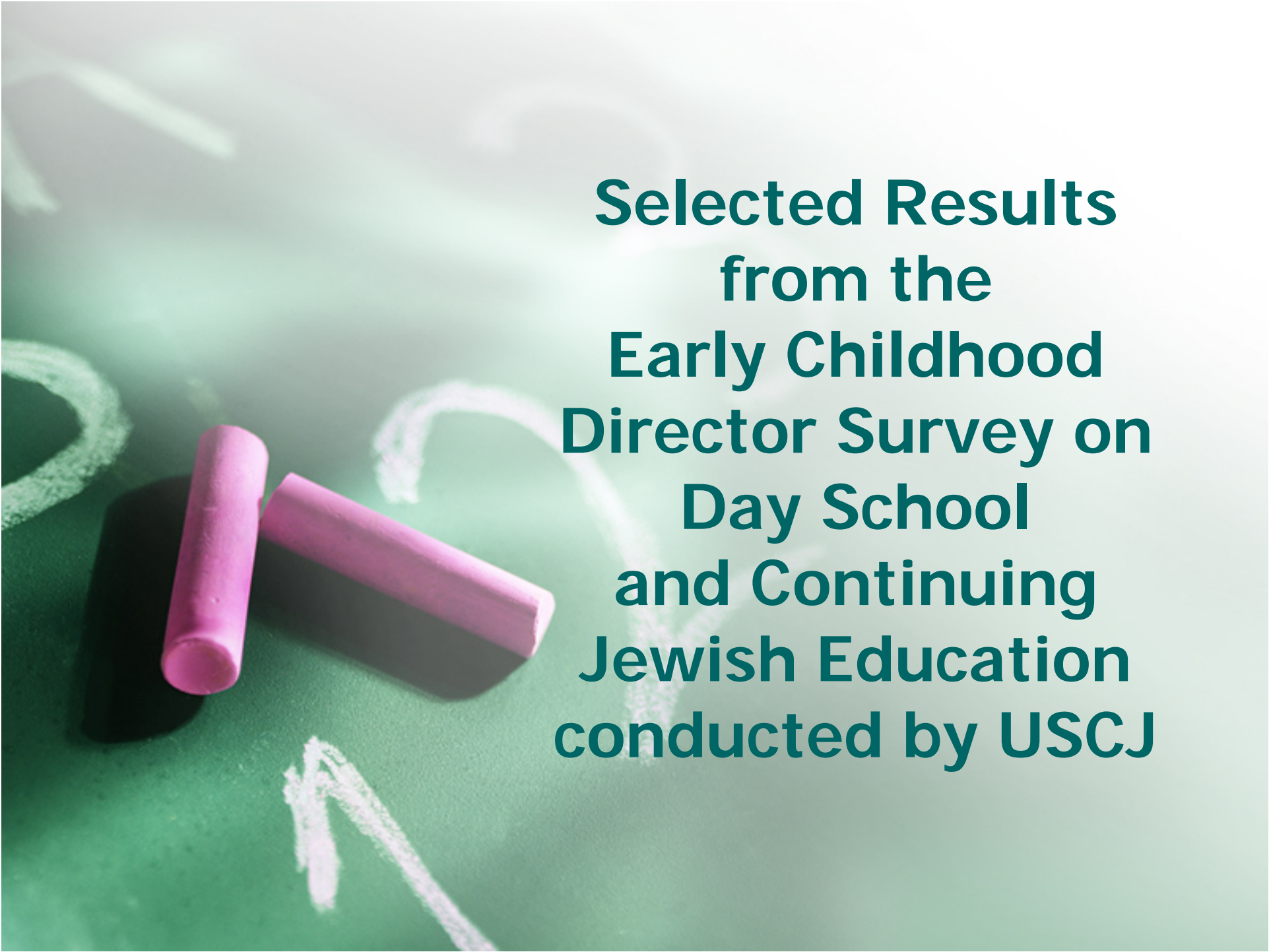
Relationship Building is Key

- Build a trusting, mutually beneficial relationship between early childhood programs and day schools.
- There is a continuum to the relationship that involves the heads, directors, admission professionals, and teachers.
- Heads of school play a critical role in forging this relationship.
- Ideally, start with heads of school first, then admission professionals – either separately or together.



Characteristics of a Successful Relationship

- Mutual
- Existence of dialogue
- Benefits to both sides
- Listening, back and forth
- Pre-existing relationship or friendship is extremely helpful

The background of the slide is a photograph of a green chalkboard. Two pieces of pink chalk are lying on the board, one standing upright and the other lying horizontally. There are some faint, white chalk markings on the board, including a large 'A' and some curved lines. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Selected Results
from the
Early Childhood
Director Survey on
Day School
and Continuing
Jewish Education
conducted by USCJ**



How much do they know?

- 85% of responding EC directors claim to have enough information about the Jewish day school(s) in their community and, if they are housed in a synagogue, about the synagogue's religious school, in order to be able to speak with parents about their choice of a kindergarten/elementary school for their child.
- But do they know what YOU want them to know, or primarily second-hand information that may include rumors or misperceptions?



Are they supporters of JDS?

- Only 65% of responding EC Directors consider themselves to be a supporter of Jewish day school education.
- 24% are not supporters, or are uncertain.
- We recognize that there is a difference between having a positive attitude about JDS and actually taking the stand to proactively recommend it. Attitudes and behaviors may not match.



What are their impressions of local day schools?

The majority reported that most schools in their area offered excellent education. Some concerns included:

- Distance
- Cost
- Public schools were the preferred choice
- Day schools don't serve children with special needs
- Denominational conflicts – non-Reform day schools are not attractive to Reform families

A few respondents reported that the schools in their area were dysfunctional or had negative environments.



74% have had a positive experience with a local day school.

Many people mentioned:

- Being invited to and attending tours, meetings and luncheons
- Keeping in contact
- Hearing about how their EC students are doing now that they attend the JDS
- Communication between the day school and the EC families/children or having special events for them
- Experiences for teachers (classes, training, etc.)
- Day school reaching out to EC children with special needs



60% have had a negative experience with a local day school.

Some of the negative experiences included:

- Competition existed between the EC program and the day school for 4 year olds or kindergarteners.
- The day schools seem to be mainly interested in getting our enrollment list to enroll our children in their programs and get the younger sibling to attend their school instead (POACHING).
- The admissions person shared my confidential comment concerning a child that was applying to her school with the parent (VIOLATION OF TRUST).
- Schools issued invitations, but they didn't follow through.
- Day school did not provide services to special needs children.
- The day school director treated our children (from the Reform preschool) as if they were not up to their level in knowing Hebrew, prayers, etc.



Reactions?

What were your reactions to the survey?

- *Did anything surprise you?*
- *What was new?*
- *What was provocative?*



Recommendations for Day Schools

- Provide personal attention to early childhood programs.
- Seek multiple opportunities to provide information about your school to the local early childhood directors.
- Look for opportunities for partnership – for parents, children and teachers.
- Be in communication about the “sharing” of four year olds.
- Provide early childhood programs with updates on the progress of their “graduates” who are in your school.
- Seek to establish quality programs and support for children with special needs.



Recommendations for Day Schools

Remember these two comments about relationships that were working:

- *I feel like the Day School values my opinion.*
- *The director and staff have visited us and invited us to visit them. The goal is a partnership of sorts that will help us advise our parents based on our own positive experience with the school.*

What works?

- What is your school doing to successfully build relationships with local early childhood programs and their directors and teachers?



Action Steps

- What were the three most practical, do-able recommendations in the report that you can do now?





Resources from PEJE

- Creating a Day School-Early Childhood Pipeline: Building the Relationship
- Opening the Gateway from Early Childhood Programs into Jewish Day Schools
- A Collection of Timeless Wisdom: The Day School - Early Childhood Connection
- Materials and handouts from Pipeline sessions at the 2008 PEJE Assembly

These will be posted in the PEJE Admission CoP Google Group and are available to download from the Admission Knowledge page at www.peje.org and peje.wikispaces.com (Assembly handouts)



Next Steps

- Within our CoP
 - *Discuss in our Google Group—who wants to start us off?*
- Back at your school
 - *Who will you share this with?*
 - *Why?*
 - *When?*

THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING!