



Educator's Corner

Creating Inclusive Classrooms for Special Needs: Meet Melissa Lebowitz



Melissa Lebowitz is currently the Director of a Jewish preschool in Baltimore, MD, and an ECE instructor at AJU. She has been an early childhood educator for 25 years. Her background includes speech pathology and audiology, and early childhood special education. She is married with two daughters, three cats, and two dogs.

Twenty-five years ago, I began my career as an early childhood special educator. I went to school for speech pathology and audiology and then early childhood special education. I was very interested in making a difference for children at the beginning of their lives since research shows that the first five years are the most impactful regarding intervention. I worked in the preschools with children who were significantly struggling with development and/or delays. The work was challenging but incredibly rewarding. I was part of the initial diagnosis process for these children, and although it was difficult at times, it was also meaningful. The educators and providers at the beginning of a child and their family's journey are extremely impactful. Over the years I have seen innovative educational changes based on scientific brain and child developmental studies. These studies directly contribute to the wellbeing of all early childhood settings that create engaging, inclusive, and respectful environments through a child-led/play-based curriculum.

Twenty-five years later, I taught my first class as an AJU instructor, *Child Growth and Development (EDU 301)*. The class is geared toward learning how children develop physically, cognitively, socially, emotionally, and culturally within a Jewish community; how children acquire language and creative expression; understand the links between development and learning, and more. I had the honor of facilitating this child development course with some phenomenal educators. The class was comprised of new ECE students at the beginning of their journey, students looking to learn and grow to improve their current practice, as well as students beginning a new career later in life. We also had a rabbinical student who wanted to understand child development as it would pertain to her role as a rabbi. It was such a pleasure having a range of experiences and perspectives within one group.

We focused on topics like ethics in education, theories and theorists, and child development starting from inception. These subjects are crucial for educators so they have the foundational skills to build upon. As they begin to explore more in-depth topics, such as interacting with children respectfully, curriculum planning, and delivering innovative instruction within a developmentally appropriate approach, they are developing core skills that give them confidence to explore even further in their education. I had many meaningful conversations that led to thoughtful questions and collaboration. I look forward to meeting the students in the spring semester and am so glad that AJU has been a wonderful addition to my professional life as an early childhood educator.

If you or someone you know is passionate about early childhood education, our program is currently accepting applicants. Please visit aju.edu/education for more information.

FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS



Virtual Open House

SUNDAY JANUARY 30 5:00 PM PT

Learn about American Jewish University's Online BA and MA in ECE Programs

Virtual Open House Sunday | January 30 | 5pm PST | Online

Make a difference in the lives of young learners by completing a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education or a Master of Arts in Education in Early Childhood Education online at American Jewish University.

Join us at 5:00 pm PT/8:00 pm ET for a virtual information session to learn about the program, requirements, and what it takes to advance your career in early childhood education.

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SPRING 2022 EXTENSION CLASS



SPRING 2022 COLLEGE-LEVEL EXTENSION CLASS
CHILD GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS | COURSE STARTS JANUARY 18

TEENS AND ADULTS: CALLING ALL AMBITIOUS PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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Class Details

Adult class meets virtually bi-weekly every other Monday on zoom 4:30pm-6:30pm pt (7:30pm-9:30 et)

Teen class meets virtually weekly on Tuesdays 4:30pm-6:30pm pt (7:30pm-9:30pm et)


Total cost of course: \$600 and earn 4 college-level course credits

aju.edu/education

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FROM OUR FRIENDS AT MAVEN



Bruce Powell

Measuring & Meaning: A Vision for Jewish Education in America

Thursday | January 20 | 12pm PST | \$21 | Online

Join us online with SJEL faculty member and Jewish day schools expert and founder **Dr. Bruce Powell** as he offers a brief history and potential ways for infusing meaning in Jewish learning.

In 1930, Dr. Shlomo Bardin, a doctoral student and immigrant from Palestine, spoke to the Faculty Club at Columbia University. He observed that American education was too much about measuring and not enough about meaning. The culture of "measuring" in America has grown and now pervades many of our Jewish day schools. This one-hour course will highlight a brief history of "educational measuring" in America and offer some solutions on how to ensure a balance in our Jewish day schools of both measuring and meaning.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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