

**Peretz Centre**  
*for* **Secular Jewish Culture**  
Education – Community – Tradition – Tikkun Olam

**Child & Youth  
Education Program:  
a Secular Approach to  
Jewish Cultural Education**

**For Kids:**  
**Early Explorers, 4-6**  
**Growing Learners, 7-9**



**exploring our roots & moving forward together**

# Why send your child to the Peretz Centre when there are so many other great Hebrew schools in Vancouver?

## There are a lot of reasons why the Peretz Centre might be perfect for your family:

- ◆ You are looking for an inclusive, non-dogmatic, secular approach to Judaism.
- ◆ You are looking for an intellectually rich education that doesn't focus only on Hebrew, Israel, Holidays and Bible stories, but teaches Jewish history, ethics, literature, culture, music, and art as well.
- ◆ Your family practices more than one faith or is not religious.
- ◆ You identify as a “cultural Jew.”
- ◆ You want your child to learn in an environment which is truly open-minded and welcomes all points of view.
- ◆ Your child is not interested in synagogue life.
- ◆ Torah, prayer and Israel are not the primary way your child connects to Judaism
- ◆ Your child has not found a connection to Judaism yet and you want them to find their own way into Jewish tradition and history, not have that way chosen for them.

The Peretz Centre offers a secular approach to Jewish culture which emphasizes the humanist, progressive and universalist aspects of our heritage. We focus on history, language, literature, art, music, dance, and ethics.

Parents are encouraged to be part of their child's education at the Peretz Centre. Assignments to be done during the two weeks between classes often involve parent discussion or assistance; the year is dotted with holiday celebrations for the whole family to participate in—Tu b'shvat and Passover community seders, *Purimshpil* and party, *tikkun olam* (healing the world) activities, picnics and Shabbes (Shabbat) dinners.

# Early Explorers & Growing Learners Overview

## **Growing Up at the Peretz Centre**

Education at the Peretz Centre is broken up into three cohorts: Early Explorers (4-6), Growing Learners (7-9) and B'nai Mitzvah (10-13 and up). The age ranges of the groups are approximate; which group is right for your child will be decided between you and the teachers.

Early Explorers and Growing Learners meet bi-weekly on the same Sunday. After gathering for learning, singing and activities together with their parents for the first half an hour, the two groups separate for the rest of the afternoon.

## **Early Explorers (4-6 years old): The Journey Begins**

Arts and crafts, songs and music, stories and language. Early Explorers learn foundational Jewish values of *menshlikhkayt* (good interpersonal behaviour, being a “*mensh*”) and begin to know the rhythms, symbols, music and food of Jewish life. Activities are focused on craft, dance, song, play and story.

## **Growing Learners (7-9 years old): The Terrain Gets More Interesting**

Increased focus on language, stories, and Jewish values, holidays, Torah study, Jewish folklore, music and dance.

## **Module One: Language**

By the end of their time in Cohort Two, children will be able to read Hebrew. This means that they will know all the Hebrew letters and vowels and be able to read vowelized Hebrew script. They will also learn some common Yiddish words and phrases and be familiar with the sound and cadence of the language.

## **Module Two: Holidays**

Children will learn the basic stories and meanings of the Jewish holiday cycle—Tu b'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Hanukkah. The Peretz Centre has Tu b'Shvat and Pesach Seders every year, a *Purimshpil* (telling of the Purim story) and costume party, our own Sukkah and a Hanukkah party.

All holidays are presented in a pluralistic, universalist and social justice-oriented way which emphasizes positive, progressive messages.

### **Module Three: Jewish Values**

Children will begin to examine Jewish ethical values, exploring and debating topics such as ecological stewardship, social justice, harmless speech, loving the stranger, multicultural understanding, and the importance of curiosity, learning and questioning. Children will also be introduced to the Torah and Rabbinic writings as literature—as the stories Jews have told about our history and crafted to explore what we thought and think is true about the world. Children will be encouraged to think and dialogue about how those values can be applied in their daily lives, families and the wider world.

### **Module Four: Folklore, Music and Dance**

Children will learn Jewish dance and song, be introduced to stories from Jewish folklore, and practice arts and crafts. Stories from Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, and Falasha folklore will be read and the students will enact plays in class where these tales come to life.

Children will learn traditional songs in Hebrew and Yiddish, Israeli and Yiddish dance, and contemporary English songs embodying the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), peace and justice.

By the end of the Growing Learners program children have the foundation for a cultured Jewish life and be well-prepared to dive deeply into our two year B'nai Mitzvah program (see online or ask for B'nai Mitzvah handout for more information).

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6184 Ash St, Vancouver: a scent-free environment on the  
unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish First Nations