



## **Frequently Asked Questions - EarlyJ Jewish & Israel Cultural Ambassador Program - Fall 2026**

### **What is the purpose of the EarlyJ Jewish & Israel Cultural Ambassador Program?**

This program offers a 17-day immersive seminar in Israel designed to strengthen Jewish identity, nurture a connection to Israel, and cultivate partnerships among Jewish Early Childhood Education (JECE) educators from Israel, the Bay Area and LA. Participants will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Israeli culture while focusing on early childhood education. The program is fully funded by EarlyJ. Graduates will receive a one-time bonus, funded in partnership between EarlyJ and their preschool, 5 academic credits from Oranim College, and the title “Jewish & Israel Cultural Ambassador.”

This initiative offers JECE educators the opportunity to cultivate connections to Israel and the Jewish community while participating in graduate-level professional development. Ultimately, the program aims to strengthen Jewish identity and the global Jewish community by introducing JECE educators to innovative techniques and a supportive network.

Please also visit EarlyJ’s website to read about the [program](#), read [testimonials](#), and [hear](#) the alumni educators share their personal experiences and reflections.

**For registration form, click [Here](#)**

### **What is the program’s rationale?**

Our program is designed to integrate both theoretical and practical knowledge essential for effective JECE. Participants will expand their understanding of child development principles, the practical organization of educational settings that align with developmental stages, expertise in curriculum planning for early childhood education settings, and cultivate their skills to foster optimal growth and effective communication in relationships both with parents and the broader community.

The program aims to produce graduates who demonstrate a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge, with heightened self-awareness, cultural proficiency, and a keen understanding of their environment. The program fosters cultural, Israeli, and Jewish awareness, focusing on nurturing Jewish and Israeli identity. This is achieved through a multifaceted approach incorporating Torah narratives, children's literature, holiday traditions, and ceremonial practices. Additionally, the curriculum explores assimilation techniques that align with the developmental needs of educational frameworks in the Diaspora.

### **What are the educational goals?**

- Strengthen Jewish identity and foster a sense of connection to Israel and the Jewish people within both local and Diaspora communities.
- Equip educators with the latest theoretical insights in the field of JECE.
- Further practical pedagogical proficiency tailored to the Jewish early childhood educational setting, emphasizing an Israeli community kibbutz orientation.
- Deepen an understanding of Israeli and Jewish culture, including practical insights into effectively integrating these cultural aspects.

### **Who is eligible to participate in the program?**

The program will have 2 tracks:

A. A program for **leading educators** from Jewish preschools from the **Bay Area** and **Los Angeles**, including preschool directors, associate directors, assistant directors, and leading teachers with at least 5 years' experience in the field of early childhood education.

B. A program for educators from Jewish preschools in the **Bay Area** and **Los Angeles** with at least 5 years' experience in early childhood education. **These educators do not need to hold leading positions within their preschools.**

### **What are the requirements for participation?**

- Applicants must have a minimum of 5 years of experience in Jewish early childhood/preschool education
- Applicants must be currently teaching in a Jewish preschool classroom in the Bay Area or LA, with or without holding a leadership role.
- Only educators from **nonprofit** Jewish preschools from the Bay Area or LA are eligible to apply for the program.
- Applicants must provide confirmation of previous training/studies in the early childhood field
- Applicants must submit a letter of recommendation from their superiors and take part in an interview process.

## What does the program entail?

The program consists of three main components:

1. Introduction to Jewish Early Childhood Education (virtual meetings)  
(dates TBD)
2. 17-Day Israel Seminar
  - a. October 11, 2026 – October 28, 2026 (Including flights)
  - b. Academic Learning
  - c. Early Childhood Education practicum in Israeli preschools
  - d. Israel Experience - Exploring Israel: A Dynamic Journey through History, Society, and Culture
3. Project presentation - February - March, 2027 (TBD)

## Is there an introductory Zoom meeting?

Yes, join us to hear further details about the program from EarlyJ and Oranim staff. Please add the date to your calendar.

## An Online information session will be held on:

Thursday, June 4, 2025, at 9:00 am

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88193685160>

## What are the program benefits?

- All expenses are covered. (Including flights)
- Upon completing the training and receiving a certificate, participants will receive a one-time bonus of \$5,000. (EarlyJ and the preschool will evenly cover the one-time bonus of \$5000.)
- Five academic credits from Oranim College
- At the end of the seminar, educators will receive the title of Jewish & Israel Cultural Ambassador.
- The bonus and the Ambassador title depend on each participant organizing related events/curriculum/programs at their preschool. **The bonus will be awarded only after completion of their project in their preschools/communities.**

## What is required of the educators?

- Participation in all the Zoom meetings before and after the seminar in Israel.
- Participation in all the activities during the seminar in Israel.
- Project presentation upon completion of the program.
- Organizing 2-3 events in the preschool related to Israel during the year following the seminar in Israel.
- Educators are encouraged to remain at their current preschool or within a Jewish preschool in their area. If they choose not to, EarlyJ reserves the right to request reimbursement for the seminar costs.

### **What is required of the preschools?**

- Identify educators to recommend for the program and provide recommendation letters.
- Each preschool and EarlyJ will evenly cover the one-time bonus of \$5,000. EarlyJ will pay the preschool \$2,500 and the preschool will pay the educator \$5,000. The preschool will sign a letter agreeing to these terms. The bonus will be paid only after the educator completes all of their responsibilities. EarlyJ will inform the preschool when the bonus payment is due.
- We strongly encourage offering paid professional days off for educators to attend the seminar, so they do not have to use their vacation days.
- Please note that educators are expected to organize 2-3 events at their preschool during the year following their seminar in Israel otherwise EarlyJ reserves the right to request reimbursement for the seminar costs from the educator.

### **How can I apply for the program?**

Applications can be completed online. **For registration form, click [Here](#)**

Interested individuals must submit their applications **by June 25, 2026**

### **What is the selection process?**

- **Apply by June 25, 2026**
- Obtain recommendations and approval from the preschool administration.
- Applicants may then be invited to participate in an interview.

### **When will the interviews take place?**

The interviews will take place on Zoom between June 28 - July 5, 2026

### **What expenses are covered by the program?**

All expenses related to the program, including flights, transportation to and from the airport, and meals (either provided or covered by the stipend) are fully covered. EarlyJ will provide health insurance while in Israel.

### **Where is Oranim College located?**

Oranim College of Education, located in Northern Israel (20 minutes north of Haifa), is responsible for facilitating and operating the program. Oranim College is committed to academic excellence, community involvement, and the promotion of higher education.

### **How many educators will join this program?**

20 educators will participate in the program.

**Will there be a main base in Israel or is it a traveling program?**

The main base is in Oranim College.

On the weekends, participants will travel with the group to different cities in Israel.

**Where will we be staying?**

We will be staying in a hotel in Haifa. Educators will share rooms (2 per room).

On the weekends, participants will travel with the group to different cities in Israel and will stay in different hotels.

**Can I stay in a room by myself?**

Yes, but you will have to pay an additional cost for the room.

**Is academic learning via seminar?**

Yes, at Oranim College.

There will be additional Zoom meetings before and after the seminar in Israel.

**What do the pre and post virtual meetings look like? How long is each session and what day of the week?**

Each session is 1.5-2 hours and will be on Sundays.

Dates and times **TBD**

Project Presentations and Reflection (virtual meetings) February - March, 2027 (Exact dates TBD)

**I am Shomer Shabbat, can I join the program?**

Yes, we can accommodate Shomer Shabbat. All programs at Oranim are during the week. On the weekends (Shabbat) we will have walking tours in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. All participants are expected to join. We will not drive on Shabbat or use other transportation.

**Should I buy travel insurance?**

We *strongly* recommend that each participant buy additional travel insurance.

**Is the food Kosher?**

Yes.

**I want to fly earlier to Israel or stay after the seminar, is that possible?**

We will try to accommodate everyone. Please note that if there's a difference in the price of the ticket, the participant will have to pay the difference. Participants who do not arrive or leave with the group will have to pay for their transportation to and from the airport.

**Do we have time during the seminar to visit family?**

The seminar runs throughout the entire week, with additional trips scheduled on the weekends. **Full participation in all activities is required.** Once you receive the complete itinerary, you'll be able to see any available free time during which you can meet with family and friends.

**What about laundry?**

We do not provide laundry services. Please pack for the entire stay. You will receive a stipend that can be used to do laundry at the hotel, which can be expensive.

**Stipend**

Each participant will receive a stipend for buying food (when meals are not provided), snacks, transportation (when not provided), and personal use.

**Who can I contact for more information?**

For further inquiries or assistance, please reach out to:

- **Zehava Dahan** at Zdahan@earlyj.org or (415) 509-1181
- **Jackie Levi-Atias** at jackie\_l@oranim.ac.il or (001) 50 650-3013 (for calls from the US to Israel)

**\*Oranim College of Education** is the largest and leading academic college of education in the North of Israel, catering to thousands of students enrolled in bachelor's and master's degree programs in education, teaching certification courses, and advanced career training. Many of our graduates continue their studies by pursuing advanced degrees and training in Israel and overseas. Oranim graduates are in demand in all education-related fields – in public and private schools, diverse educational institutions, local and regional governments, national ministries, youth movements, non-profits, the arts, sciences, and industry. Tens of thousands of Oranim graduates are involved in education in Israel. The college is located 20 minutes east of Haifa and is named after the pine trees that grow on the premises. Oranim College is committed to academic excellence, community involvement, and the promotion of higher education. Oranim boasts a broad range of programs and degrees, as well as a diverse student body, with Jewish and Arab students of all ages, ethnicities, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds.