

# The Jewish Educational Impact of Jewishly Committed JCC Leaders:

## The Commitment of Presidents & Executives to JCCs' Jewish Mission

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Florence G. Heller  
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## Commitment Makes a Difference

Jewish Community Centers make a substantial investment in the Jewish educational mission. They conduct classes, lectures and programs for adults; they infuse the early childhood education programs with holiday celebrations aimed at toddlers and parents alike; they bring Israel, Shabbat, and Jewish music to their thousands of campers, be they in day camps or overnight facilities; they engage the services of professional Jewish educators, Israeli shlichim, and other staff members; they attend to the Jewish ambiance and atmosphere of their physical facilities; and they hire and train staff to advance their Jewish educational mission.

But having said that JCCs widely engage in Jewish education, we also must recognize that the breadth and depth of commitment to the Jewish educational mission varies considerably. One would expect as much in a continental system of 224 JCCs of varying sizes, with varying memberships, in all parts of the U.S. and Canada, and with different types of lay and professional leaders at the helm. Not all JCCs are equally invested in the Jewish educational mission, and not all offer as wide and as rich an array of programs.

So what accounts for these variations? Why are some JCCs “more Jewish” than others?

While several factors are at work, this study shows that one is especially crucial: Leadership – both lay and professional. Where the JCC president and where the JCC executive director are especially committed to the JCC Jewish educational mission, we find:

- More adult education programs
- More commitment to Jewish education in the ECE and camping programs
- More professional Jewish educators on staff
- More instances of staff training in Jewish education
- More public display of Jewish, Israeli, and Hebrew themes in the buildings

In addition, the commitment to the Jewish educational mission of JCCs on the part of the leaders is itself not happenstance. Rather, people who are personally committed as Jews are more committed to the JCC Jewish educational mission.

These and other relevant findings emerge from the 2006 Survey of JCC leaders conducted by the Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center. The details follow.

## The Survey and the Sample

Drawing upon prior qualitative interviews with JCC executive directors and presidents, we constructed a questionnaire that reflected their thinking, often using the very words we heard in our interviews. Thus, not only did we ask for reports on the many sorts of Jewish educational activities that take place in the JCC, we also asked for the views of the respondents on their commitment to the educational mission and the factors that influence that commitment.

In August of 2006, we conducted a Web-based survey sent to all JCC presidents and executive directors, 347 in all. A total of 142 or 41% responded, representing 139 JCCs across the continent. They derive from all parts of the United States and Canada, with the largest concentrations in the Northeast (22%) and Southeast (21%), reflecting their true distribution throughout North America.

<b>Regional Distribution</b>	
12%	New York City
22%	Northeast
17%	Midwest
21%	Southeast
8%	Southwest
15%	West
6%	Canada
100%	Total

Not only are they widely distributed by region; they also represent the diverse range of JCC size, the classification used in the field that reflects size of budget and number of members. Nearly a third fall in the large-intermediate category and an additional 29% are intermediate in size, the smallest size category.

<b>Size of JCC Distribution</b>	
16%	Metropolitan
18%	Large
31%	Large-Intermediate
29%	Intermediate
7%	Branch
100%	Total

In the analysis below, unless where otherwise noted, we found no systematic variation in our results by region or size of JCC.

Who are the respondents? We received completed questionnaires from a sample that includes more professionals than lay leaders, and more men than women. They are largely well-educated, Jewish, in-married, Conservative or Reform, Judaically active at home and in

the community, and Jewishly well-educated, particularly in terms of informal educational experiences in their adolescent years. The highlights include the following:

- 142 leaders from 111 JCCs
- 69% are professionals, largely executive directors  
31% are presidents (8% of these are former presidents)
- 62% are male; 38% are female
- The vast majority, 88%, are married; 9% are divorced; 3% are single
- Nearly all respondents hold a college degree, and 70% hold a post-graduate degree
- When asked “how important is being Jewish in your life?,” nearly everyone identified ‘very or extremely important,’ with 42% choosing ‘extremely important.’
- Everyone is Jewish, and nearly all spouses are Jewish:  
98% of respondents are Jews by birth, and 2% are Jews by choice or conversion;  
87% of spouses are Jews by birth, 9% are Jews by conversion, and only 4% are not Jewish.
- Denominationally, they are divided as follows:  
5% are Orthodox  
47% are Conservative  
34% are Reform  
6% are Reconstructionist  
7% are “other Jewish”
- As many as 43% attend a Jewish worship service once a month or more.
- 90% are dues paying members of a synagogue
- 99% donate to the local Jewish federation
- 93% fast at least part of the day on Yom Kippur
- 65% light Sabbath candles on Friday night
- 25% serve (or served) as an officer or board member of a synagogue
- Only 2% have a Christmas tree in their house.
- 39% say that all or almost all of their closest friends are Jewish,  
and 86% say that most are Jewish
- Almost all (91%) received some type of Jewish schooling as a child.
- Respondents widely participated in some type of Jewish educational activities in their younger years, in frequencies far higher than typically reported by adults in Jewish population surveys:  
56% participated in youth activities at a JCC  
61% attended Jewish day camp  
55% attended Jewish overnight camp  
73% were members of a Jewish youth group  
25% took a youth trip to Israel  
35% participated in Hillel at college

# Findings

## Widespread support for the Jewish mission, but with qualifications

When asked about their personal commitment, over 80% are highly committed to JCCs working to “strengthen Jewish identity”, to the JCC “serving as a meeting center for all Jews”, and to JCCs “providing a strong Jewish community.” These findings suggest near-universal support for the JCC Jewish educational mission, especially when cast in the role of the JCCs bringing Jews together to form community.

With that said, we also find areas of **hesitation or qualification**. Near the bottom of the list, in relative terms, are somewhat more demanding formulations, such as:

- Inspiring Jewish journeys (60%) – the JCC Association trademarked slogan in this area
- Engaging in Jewish education (54%) – indicative of the ambivalent connotations of “Jewish education”

Also indicative of qualification, respondents are split evenly over the question, “Everything that permeates the JCC should be Jewish.” Even more critically, they are not totally convinced that commitment to the Jewish mission is good for membership numbers.

In short, while nearly every leader is convinced that JCCs should be in the business of strengthening Jewish identity, only a slim majority strongly endorse “engaging in Jewish education” as an important JCC objective. Clearly the movement has some ways to go in terms of advancing commitment to Jewish education. And, as we shall see, such commitment is critical to actually engaging in the effort to maximize the Jewish educational effectiveness of JCCs.

The following items, used to create an index of Commitment to the Jewish Educational Mission, illustrate the diverse levels of personal investment in that mission among JCC presidents and executive directors:

### More support for Jewish identity, less for Jewish education

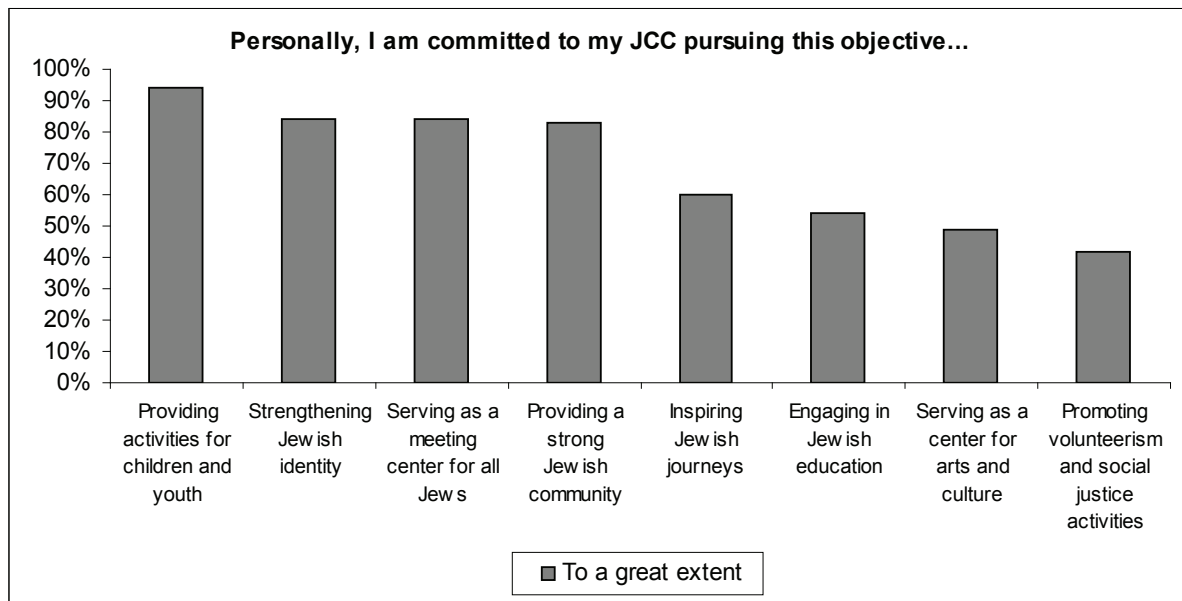
Personally, I am committed to my JCC pursuing this objective...	To some extent or less	Mixed	To a great extent
Strengthening Jewish identity	4%	13%	84%
Making strong Jewish memories	8%	21%	72%
A place to explore identities as Jews	9%	23%	68%
Inspiring Jewish journeys	15%	25%	60%
Engaging in Jewish education	17%	30%	54%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your JCC?

	Strongly disagree or disagree	Not sure or Mixed	Strongly Agree or agree
A Jewish meeting place; not for explicit Jewish education	68%	16%	15%
As much as we'd like to do more Jewish programming, we're a consumer-driven institution devoted primarily to child care, camping, and fitness facilities	59%	15%	26%
Everything in the JCC should be Jewish	37%	23%	39%

Suppose your JCC were to engage in a community-wide discussion about whether to place greater emphasis upon the Jewish mission of the JCC... Undoubtedly, such efforts would require additional resources. How do you think each of the following parties react to such a suggestion?

	Strongly oppose or oppose	Mixed, not sure	Favor	Strongly favor
Executive director (or you)	6%	17%	50%	28%
The president (or you)	9%	29%	42%	20%



## The Jewish education budget: Better treated in good times and bad, perhaps

One key indicator of commitment to Jewish education emerges in budgetary decisions. Are funds for Jewish education treated like every other program, or are they treated more favorably, or less favorably? We conclude that, at least according to the reports of these respondents, JCCs tend to **treat Jewish education budgets well** in times of budgetary cutbacks or expansion. We asked about the budgetary commitment in a variety of ways, and however we asked the question, we received a fairly similar distribution of answers. About half say that the Jewish educational budget is treated the same as the other departments in the JCC. Of the rest, where the educational budget is treated differently, those seeing it as better treated outnumber the others by roughly a 3:1 margin.

Thus, to take one example, when in the recent past when JCC budgets were contracting, a small number (11%) believe their JCCs treated “Jewish-oriented programs” less favorably than others, but three times as many (33%) believe they were treated more favorably.

With all this said, we cannot ignore the tendency of respondents to provide socially approved answers. In all likelihood, on a survey addressing matters of Jewish education, respondents are likely to shade their answers in the direction of more support for Jewish education. Thus, while these responses may be encouraging at first blush, they cannot be seen as positively as they may first appear. Another way to look at these results is to say that “only” a third to 42% could claim that Jewish education is a priority, such that it is especially protected in times of contraction, and especially assisted in times of overall budgetary expansion.

### Better treatment for Jewish educational budgets in times of contraction and expansion

In the year of the greatest pressures on your budget, how did the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change?

Decreased more than other programs	Decreased the same as other programs	Stayed the same, or increased, as other programs were decreased
11%	56%	33%

In the year of the greatest increase in your budget, how did the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change?

Stayed the same, or decreased, as other programs were increased	Increased the same as other programs	Increased more than other programs
13%	45%	42%

What do you think will happen to the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented programs? It will ...

Decrease more than other programs	Decrease the same as other programs	Stay the same, or increase, as other programs are decreased
12%	50%	39%

If you didn't answer any of the three questions above: What do you think will happen to the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented programs? It will ...

Stay the same or decrease, as other programs are increased	Increase the same as other programs	Increase more than other programs
3%	55%	42%

### Professional Jewish educators: Wide range of staffing patterns

Previous research has demonstrated the value of engaging professional Jewish educators, and JCCs with more such educators also report dramatically more Jewish educational activities.

To establish a benchmark for tracking the growth, or decline, of such positions, we calculated the number of these positions, assigning a full point for each full-time educator, and a half-point for part-time professionals. As might be expected, the average Jewish educational staff size is very much a function of size of JCC, albeit with large variations within size categories. The smallest JCCs report an average of .68 (or two thirds) of a position. Metropolitan JCCs, in contrast, report 1.64 Jewish educational staffers, on average.

Although the average number of educators increases with growing size, in any one size category we find significant variations. For example, in the 28 large-intermediate JCCs where the executive responded, we have 15 with 0-.5 lines devoted to a Jewish educator, and 6 JCCs that have two or more such educators employed. Similarly wide ranges are found at each size level. Clearly, expansion of these positions is critical for further expansion of Jewish educational activities.

### Average number of Jewish educators by size of JCC: More educators in larger JCCs

	Branch	Intermediate	Large-Intermediate	Large	Metropolitan
Mean number of Jewish education professional staff	0.95	0.68	0.98	1.38	1.64

Number of Jewish Educators by Size of JCC: Wide Variations within Size Categories  
(Responses are limited to executive directors. Entries are the number of JCCs in each cell.)

Number of Jewish education professional staff	Branch	Intermediate	Large-Intermediate	Large	Metropolitan
2 ½ or more	0	0	3	1	4
2	1	1	3	2	6
1 ½	0	0	2	2	1
1	1	7	5	5	4
½	3	6	7	2	0
0	3	11	8	2	1

### The work of Jewish educators: More with children than adults

Of those JCCs with a Jewish educator on staff, we asked about the types of activities in which the educators are engaged. The results point to greater involvement with the education of children (camps, ECE) than of adults, such as board members. Whereas about two-thirds of the educators work with camps, ECE programs, and the staff, only about a third **teach lay board members**, suggesting an area that may need more emphasis.



## Incomplete penetration of JCC Association initiatives for camps, ECE

JCC programs for children almost all contain some element of Jewish education. The celebration of Jewish holidays and Shabbat is nearly universal. As many as 84% of the day camps have written plans to integrate Jewish cultural programming in their programs.

As the same time, the extent to which these JCCs make use of JCC Association-provided assistance in the Jewish educational area is less sweeping. (To be sure, several of the leaders may have failed to check off the respective questions affirmatively owing to their own lack of familiarity with the internal workings of their camps and ECE programs. But that circumstance would point to a communications issue: to make presidents and executives aware of JCC Association involvement in supporting their Jewish educational programs.)

Less than **half of the ECE programs** make use of An Ethical Start®, the JCC Association-provided initiative in Jewish education, suggesting another area for ongoing attention. Also, less than half the leaders report that their camps make use of TAG: Jewish Values through JCC Camping®. It is of some relevance that the TAG program was launched only in 2004. Thus, on the one hand, JCCs are at least nominally committed to providing quality Jewish educational experiences to their children; on the other hand, many which are so committed have yet to avail themselves of presumably the more appropriate and more effective means of delivering Jewish education. In this respect, the cup is both half-full and half-empty.

### Widespread education on holidays and Shabbat

To what extent does each of the following characterize your JCC?

	To 'some' or 'a great' extent
Programs for children include Jewish holidays	97%
Offer opportunities for children to experience Shabbat	89%
Day camp has a written plan to integrate Jewish cultural programming components into activities	84%

### Twice as many camps with Shabbat programs as those using TAG®

	Yes
Day camp has special Shabbat programming	95%
Day camp has a shaliach on staff	68%
Day camp uses the TAG® initiatives	48%
Pre-school participates in An Ethical Start® (The Peer K. Explorer® program)	40%

## Adult Education: Leaning toward the cultural, and away from the religious

JCCs are widely engaged not just in Jewish education for children, but in Jewish education for adults as well. In this context, it is useful to recall that the other major purveyor of adult Jewish education is the synagogue. Understandably, JCCs seem to complement the usual offerings of synagogues. While congregations may well focus on Bible, text, and other courses that reflect their distinctive mission, JCCs are more likely to offer courses in the cultural domain of Jewish life.

Thus, with respect to the substance of programs and classes, most widespread are those focusing on holidays and arts, with Israel, Hebrew, and history not far behind. Least popular are a variety of subject areas that are generally seen as the purview of synagogues (e.g., Bible, prayer, and spirituality). This circumstance suggests an area where JCCs may wish to engage their local rabbinic leadership in reflecting on the relative **lack of offerings in the religious domain** at JCCs.

### Adult Education at JCCs: Indicative Activities

Educational classes are widespread

To what extent does each of the following characterize your JCC?

	To 'some' or 'a great' extent
Offer adult Jewish educational classes	84%

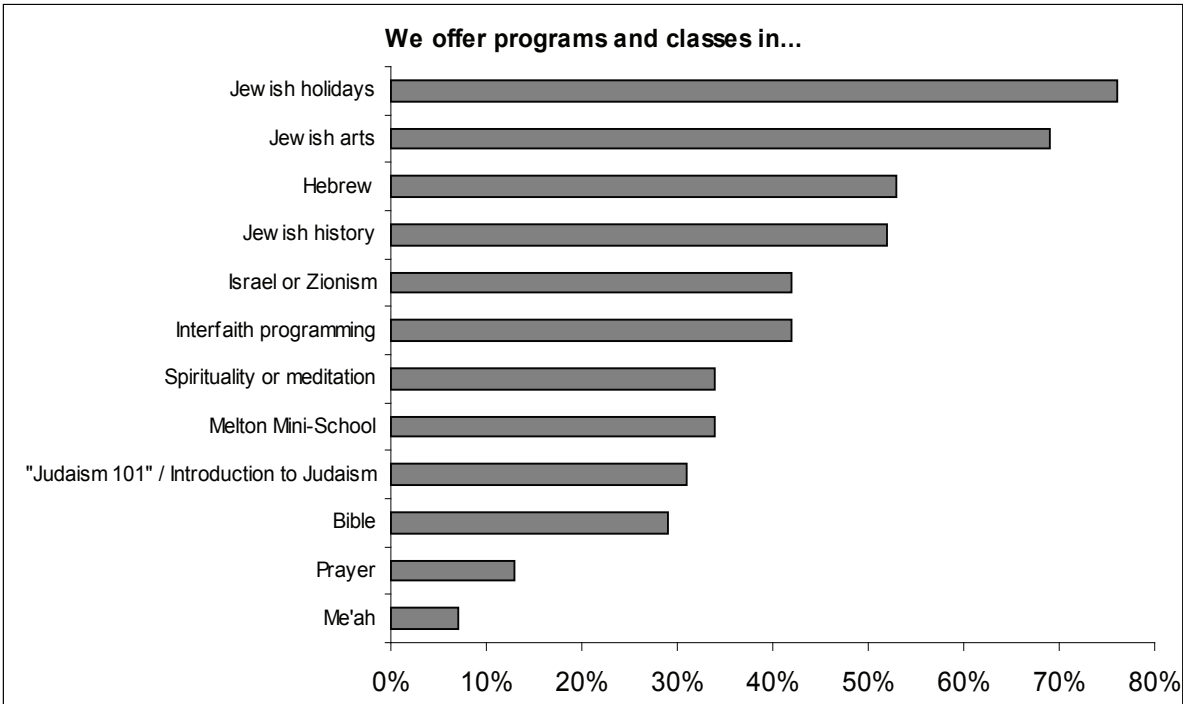
Holidays, arts, and Hebrew at the top - Bible, prayer much less frequent

We offer programs and classes in...

Jewish holidays	76%
Jewish arts	69%
Hebrew	53%
Jewish history	52%
Israel or Zionism	42%
Interfaith programming	42%
Spirituality or meditation	34%
Melton Mini-School	34%
"Judaism 101"/ Introduction to Judaism	31%
Bible	29%
Prayer	13%
Me'ah (adult education course)	7%

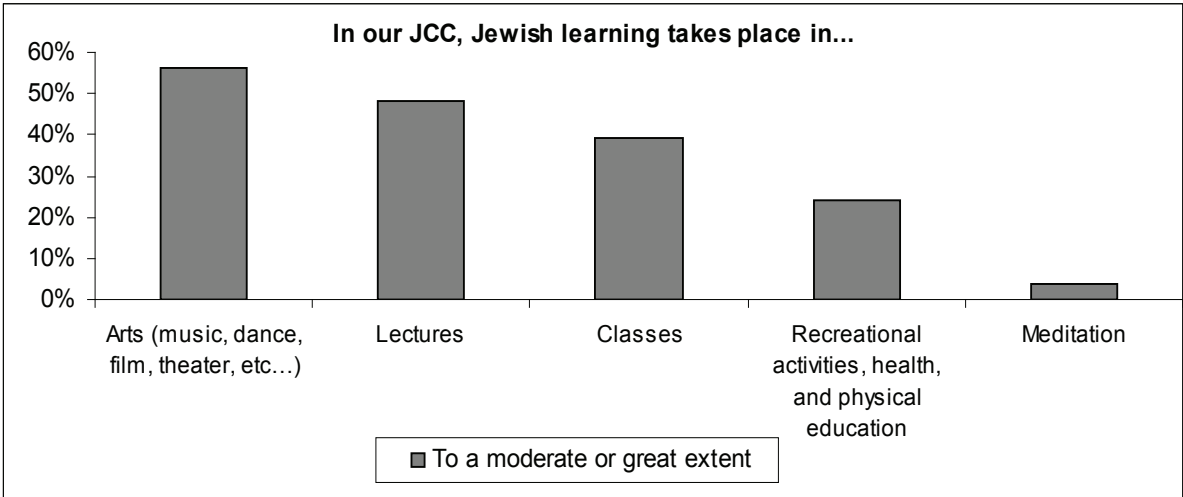
A professional helps people think about what they need and classes they might take

Yes
43%



**Where they learn: arts, classes, lectures, and some in recreational activities**

Jewish learning at JCCs takes place largely in the domains of the arts, classes, and lectures. Far **less learning takes place in recreational activities**, suggesting an area that may benefit from some consideration.



### Staff training in the Jewish mission: most, but not all

Asked about the availability of programs and staff development opportunities in the area of the Jewish mission of JCCs, respondents generally reported high levels of activity, with about two-thirds claiming that their staff members receive such training. At the same time, only a slim majority of respondents report that their staff meetings have a Jewish educational component. Again, we have reports of engagement with the Jewish mission, with more room for growth.

To what extent does each of the following characterize your JCC?

	To 'some' or 'a great' extent
Staff receives training regarding the Jewish mission during staff orientation	68%
Board meetings have a Jewish educational component	63%
Staff receives in-service training in Jewish subject matter	60%
Staff meetings have a Jewish educational component	55%

### Jewish Life on Display: A Mixed Picture

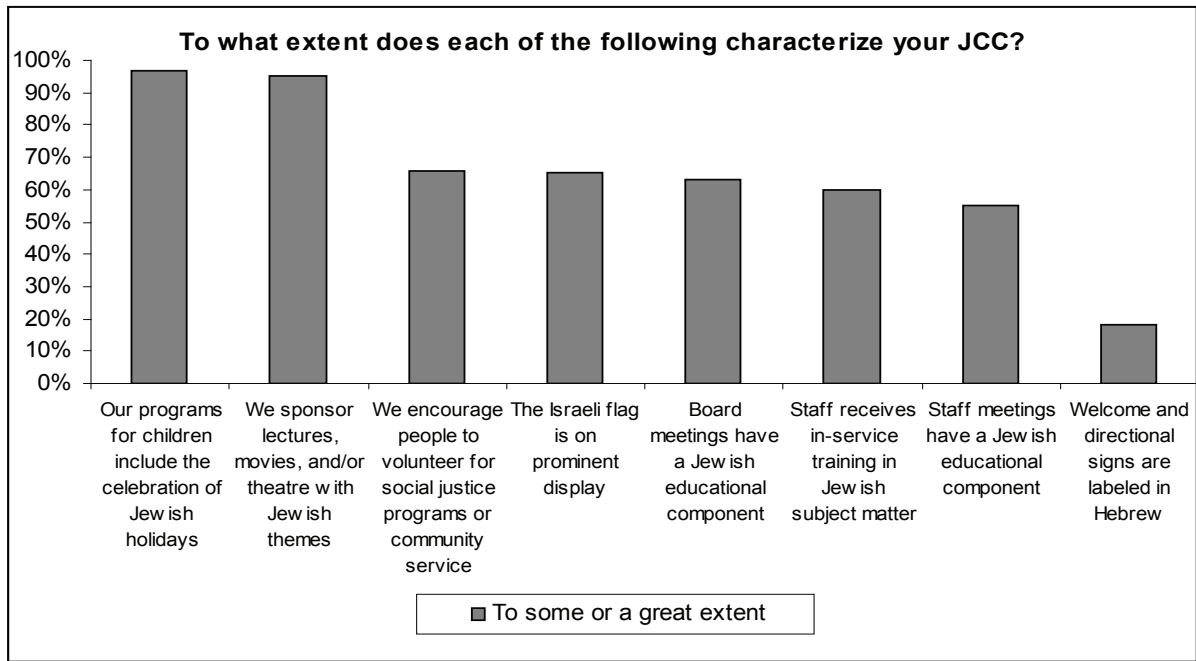
JCC Association has long identified atmosphere, ambiance, and the visual feel of the building as critical to expressing the Jewish educational mission of JCCs. Here, as elsewhere, the results are largely positive, but still mixed.

The vast majority (84%) report that their lobbies feature holiday displays, and 65% report that the Israeli flag is prominently displayed. At the same time, just 18% report the use of Hebrew signage, a symbol both of the importance of Hebrew and of the importance of the Jewish mission.

To what extent does each of the following characterize your JCC?

	To 'some' or 'a great' extent
Lobby features Jewish holiday displays	84%
Opportunities to learn about Israel	74%
The Israeli flag is on prominent display	65%
Signs are labeled in Hebrew	18%

In Sum: Wide Variations in Practices that Embody the Jewish Mission of JCCs



**Who Supports the JCC Jewish Mission?**

**Leaders and members in tension?**

Of the policy-relevant constituencies, those seen as most favorable to the Jewish mission of the JCCs are the **executive directors and the local federations**. Almost as supportive are the top laity, and senior staff. Jewish members and local rabbis are seen as mixed to supportive, with the non-Jewish members seen as least supportive.

Thus, in the view of the top leaders themselves, with respect to the Jewish mission of the JCC, they are leading, albeit with the support of the local federation. In contrast, the members, who are the personal and financial life-blood of the JCC, are seen as less-than-enthusiastic about the Jewish mission, especially (of course) if they are non-Jewish.

The implication is that leaders need to be supported and assisted in thinking through how to advocate the Jewish mission, especially during times of budgetary constraint and declining membership.

Suppose your JCC were to engage in a community-wide discussion about whether to place greater emphasis upon the Jewish mission of the JCC. More emphasis would imply such things as:

- more explicit Jewish educational content in the pre-school and camps
- more adult Jewish education programs
- more emphasis on hiring staff with a strong Jewish background and commitment
- more investment in staff development around Jewish matters
- more visible signs of Jewish commitment in the building

Undoubtedly, such efforts would require additional resources, possibly implying cutbacks elsewhere. How do you think each of the following parties react to such a suggestion?

	Strongly oppose or oppose	Mixed, not sure	Favor	Strongly favor
Local federation	1%	22%	48%	30%
Executive director (or you)	6%	17%	50%	28%
President (or you)	9%	29%	42%	20%
Major donors	3%	41%	45%	12%
Local congregational rabbis	14%	38%	36%	12%
Other senior staff	8%	39%	42%	11%
Other officers	9%	49%	33%	9%
Jewish members	6%	45%	42%	8%
Non-Jewish members	19%	71%	9%	1%

### Commitment to the mission: The impact of leadership

We measured levels of personal commitment to the Jewish mission of the JCC by way of responses to several questions on commitment to, for example, strengthening Jewish identity, engaging in Jewish education, inspiring Jewish journeys, expanding emphasis on the Jewish mission, and related items. The answers to these questions were combined to form a single index of Leadership Commitment to the Jewish Mission.

Uniformly we found that the level of leadership commitment to the Jewish mission is linked with higher levels of Jewish educational activity and engagement at the JCC. In particular, the JCCs **where leaders are more committed** to the Jewish mission are also those where:

- More adult Jewish educational activities take place
- The ECE and camp programs engage in more Jewish educational practices
- The atmosphere of the building is more explicitly Jewish
- More staff training in Jewish education takes place
- The budget for Jewish educational programs receives better treatment in times of cutbacks and prosperity

		Leadership Commitment to the JCC Jewish Mission			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Level of Jewish education for adults, relative to size of JCC	High	19%	38%	43%	100%
Level of Jewish education for children, relative to size of JCC		7%	41%	52%	100%
Visible signs of Israel and Jewish holidays		20%	20%	60%	100 %
Conducts Jewish educational training for staff & board		18%	9%	73%	100%
How Jewish education budget is treated		19%	44%	37%	100%

While cause-and-effect are difficult to disentangle, **leaders’ commitment to the Jewish mission bears real consequences for functioning on the ground.**

### Personal commitment to being Jewish means a leadership commitment to the Jewish mission

The personal is political, many say. And those who are personally committed Jews, when they serve as leaders, are also publicly committed as leaders to the Jewish mission of the JCC. The results certainly point in this direction.

On average, executives are more committed to the Jewish mission than are presidents. For both sorts of leaders, those who are personally more Jewishly engaged (as indicated by saying, or not saying, that being Jewish is “extremely important” to them) are also more committed to the JCC Jewish mission. In fact, in contrast with the presidents and with executive directors with lower levels of personal Jewish engagement, the **executives who are personally engaged in being Jewish** score especially high on the measure of commitment to the JCC Jewish mission. This finding suggests that advocates of the Jewish mission have an interest in promoting the hiring of Jewishly engaged executive directors, and in furthering their personal Jewish involvement once they assume the position of executive director.

### Leadership commitment to the JCC Jewish educational mission, as a function of high personal commitment to being Jewish

		Being Jewish is extremely important	
		Low	High
Leadership commitment to JCC Jewish education = High	Professional Lay	22% 8%	58% 23%

**Reading the table:** The table above reports the percent scoring high on the index of Leadership Commitment to the JCC Jewish Education Mission. The table reports calculations separately for professional and lay leaders, and it divides both into those for whom being Jewish is extremely important and those for whom it is not. Among professionals for whom being Jewish is NOT extremely important, just 22% scored high on the Index of Commitment to JCC Jewish Education. However, among those who say that being Jewish is extremely important to them, the percent scoring high on the index rises to 58%.

**The findings:** We learn the following lessons from this table.

1. Commitment to the Jewish educational mission is higher among professionals than among lay leaders.
2. Personal commitment to being Jewish strongly influences one's leadership commitment.
3. The leaders in the system with the strongest commitment to the JCC Jewish educational mission are executives with strong personal commitments to being Jewish

**The implications:** To advance commitment to the Jewish educational mission of JCCs, the JCC Movement has an interest in recruiting executive directors with a strong commitment to being Jewish, in sustaining that commitment, and, where necessary, in deepening that commitment.

## Conclusions

Sometimes the obvious is worth saying and demonstrating. Here are the most notable conclusions to be drawn from this study:

1. Jewish Community Centers in North America are actively engaged in a wide variety of activities that demonstrate their commitment to the Jewish mission.
2. Notwithstanding the high levels of activity and investment, JCCs differ widely in the extent to which they are devoted to the Jewish mission. Staff levels, budgets, activities, and participation in continental initiatives vary widely.
3. Critical to high levels of engagement in the Jewish mission are high levels of commitment on the part of JCC presidents and executive directors. Those with higher levels of leadership commitment to the mission report higher levels of functioning in this realm at their individual JCCs.
4. Personal commitment to being Jewish is closely linked with a leadership commitment to the Jewish mission.
5. Advocates of the Jewish mission have a strong interest in finding, promoting, and nurturing leaders – both lay and professional – with strong commitments to being Jewish and strong commitments to the JCC Jewish mission.

## Responses to this Survey

Please note that some questions have been re-ordered according to responses in order to help with this analysis. All numbers below are percentages.

You are:

President	Professional
31	69

1. Jewish Community Centers aim to achieve a variety of worthy objectives. In thinking about your JCC, to what extent would you say that you personally are committed to your JCC pursuing each of the following objectives?

Personally, I am committed to my JCC pursuing this objective...	To some extent or less		To a great extent
Providing activities for children and youth	1	5	94
Strengthening Jewish identity	4	13	84
Serving as a meeting center for all Jews	5	11	84
Providing a strong Jewish community	2	15	83
Providing activities for the entire family	3	14	83
Providing a caring community	5	16	79
Providing a place where people make and experience good friendships	7	18	75
Making strong Jewish memories	8	21	72
Serving the older adult community	11	19	70
Providing a place for people to explore their identities as Jews	9	23	68
Providing health and fitness services	19	14	67
Inspiring Jewish journeys	15	25	60
Engaging in Jewish education	17	30	54
Serving as a center for arts and culture	23	29	49
Promoting volunteerism and social justice activities	22	37	42

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree or disagree	Not sure or Mixed	Strongly Agree or agree
Sometimes I feel we're "too Jewish"	91	7	2
To reach non-Jews, we need to downplay the Jewish part of the mission	88	8	4
We have to make sure not to become "too Jewish," so as not to drive away our members	80	11	9
If we became "less Jewish" in our programming and atmosphere, we would eventually lose community philanthropic support	11	11	79
Our investment in the Jewish mission does nothing for our "bottom line"	74	18	8
Were it not for our Jewish mission, I would not be interested in serving as a leader of our JCC	23	6	70
The JCC should be a Jewish meeting place, but not a place for explicit Jewish education	68	16	15
If we became "more Jewish" in our programming and atmosphere, we would eventually lose membership	66	25	9
The fact that we are clear about who we are as a Jewish institution actually helps attract non-Jewish members and users of our services	12	27	61
As much as we'd like to do more Jewish programming, we're a consumer-driven institution devoted primarily to child care, camping, and state-of-the-art fitness facilities	59	15	26
If we became "less Jewish" in our programming and atmosphere, we would eventually lose membership	25	31	43
Everything that permeates the JCC should be Jewish	37	23	39
Local synagogue leaders feel that they, and not the JCC, should do Jewish programming	33	23	45

**Jewish mission and the budget**

3. In the past 3 years, have there been years in which you have needed to significantly cut the budget for programs?

Yes
55

3a. (IF YES TO #3) In the year of the greatest pressures on your budget, how did the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change?

Decreased more than other programs	Decreased the same as other programs	Stayed the same, or increased, as other programs were decreased
11	56	33

4. In the past 3 years, have there been years in which you were able to significantly increase the budget for programs?

Yes
38

4a. (IF YES TO #4) In the year of the greatest increase in your budget, how did the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change?

Stayed the same, or decreased, as other programs were increased	Increased the same as other programs	Increased more than other programs
13	45	42

5. In the next 3 years, do you imagine that your JCC will need to significantly cut the budget for programs?

Yes
19

5a. (IF YES TO #5) What do you think will happen to the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change? It will ...

Decrease more than other programs	Decrease the same as other programs	Stay the same, or increase, as other programs are decreased
12	50	39

6. In the next 3 years, do you imagine that your JCC will significantly expand the budget for programs?

Yes
49

6a. (IF YES TO #6) What do you think will happen to the budgetary commitment to Jewish-oriented program change? It will ...

Stay the same or decrease, as other programs are increased	Increase the same as other programs	Increase more than other programs
3	55	42

7. Does your JCC have a written policy for kashrut?

Yes
87

8. Does your JCC have a written policy regarding activities that take place on Shabbat and holidays?

Yes
81

9. How many professional full-time Jewish educators work at your JCC?

None	One	Two or more
55	29	17

10. How many professional part-time Jewish educators work at your JCC?

None	One	Two or more
44	25	32

11. Does the JCC professional Jewish educator undertake the following activities?

	Yes
Serve as a Jewish educational resource for the day camp	69
Serve as a Jewish educational resource for the ECE program	66
Teach staff members	62
Teach board members	37

12. About what proportion of your JCC's program staff (not support staff) is Jewish?

All or almost all	Most	About half	Less than half
27	40	21	12

13. Does your JCC pre-school participate in "An Ethical Start<sup>®</sup>" (the Peer K. Explorer<sup>®</sup> program), the JCC Association sponsored effort to enhance parents', students', and teachers' understanding of Jewish ethical values?

Yes
40

14. Are two-thirds or more of your pre-school teachers Jewish?

Yes
52

15. Are two-thirds or more of the children in your early childhood programs Jewish?

Yes
66

16. Does your day camp use the TAG® initiatives provided by the Mandel Center for Jewish Education?

Yes
48

17. Does your day camp have special Shabbat programming?

Yes
95

18. Does your day camp have a shaliach (Israeli representative) on staff?

Yes
68

19. In the area of adult Jewish education, does your JCC have a professional staff person who helps people think about what they need and which classes they might want to take?

Yes
43

20. We offer programs and classes in...

	Yes
Jewish holidays	76
Jewish arts	69
Hebrew	53
Jewish history	52
Israel or Zionism	42
Interfaith programming	42
Spirituality or meditation	34
Melton Mini-School	34
"Judaism 101"/ Introduction to Judaism	31
Bible	29
Prayer	13
Me'ah (adult education course)	7

21. To what extent does adult Jewish learning take place in the following ways and venues at your JCC?

In our JCC, Jewish learning takes place in...	Not at all (+ next column)	To some extent	To a great extent (+ prev column)
Arts (music, dance, film, theater, etc.)	4	40	56
Lectures	4	47	48
Classes	13	48	39
Recreational activities, health and physical education	38	38	24
Meditation	78	18	4

### Activity: Program and Staff Development

22. To what extent does each of the following characterize your JCC?

	To 'some' or 'a great' extent
Our programs for children include the celebration of Jewish holidays.	97
We sponsor lectures, movies, and/or theatre with Jewish themes.	95
We offer opportunities for children to experience Shabbat.	89
We make a concerted effort to recruit staff with the Jewish background and commitment to carry out the Jewish mission.	86
Our atmosphere is clearly Jewish.	85
We offer adult Jewish educational classes.	84
Our day camp has a written plan to integrate Jewish cultural programming components into camp activities.	84
Our lobby features displays about Jewish holidays.	84
Our resident camp has a written plan to integrate Jewish cultural programming components into camp activities.	82
We offer opportunities for members and guests to learn about Israel.	74
Staff receives training regarding the Jewish mission during staff orientation.	68
We encourage people to volunteer for social justice programs or community service.	66
The Israeli flag is on prominent display (e.g., in the lobby, out front).	65
Board meetings have a Jewish educational component.	63
Staff receives in-service training in Jewish subject matter.	60
Staff meetings have a Jewish educational component.	55
Welcome and directional signs are labeled in Hebrew.	18

23. Suppose your JCC were to engage in a community-wide discussion about whether to place greater emphasis upon the Jewish mission of the JCC. More emphasis would imply such things as:

- more explicit Jewish educational content in the pre-school and camps
- more adult Jewish education programs
- more emphasis on hiring staff with a strong Jewish background and commitment
- more investment in staff development around Jewish matters
- more visible signs of Jewish commitment in the building

Undoubtedly, such efforts would require additional resources, possibly implying cutbacks elsewhere. How do you think each of the following parties react to such a suggestion?

	Strongly oppose or oppose	Mixed, not sure	Favor	Strongly favor
Local federation	1	22	48	30
Executive director (or you)	6	17	50	28
President (or you)	9	29	42	20
Major donors	3	41	45	12
Local congregational rabbis	14	38	36	12
Other senior staff	8	39	42	11
Other officers	9	49	33	9
Jewish members	6	45	42	8
Non-Jewish members	19	71	9	1

## Your Background

24. Are you

Male	Female
62	38

25. How old are you?

26. What is your current marital status?

Single/ Never Married	Married / Partnered	Separated or Divorced	Widowed
3	88	9	0

27. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

High school graduate or less	BA or BS, college degree	Master's degree	Doctorate, MD, JD, or equivalent	Other
3	27	56	14	0

## Your Involvement in Jewish Life

28. How important is being Jewish in your life?

Not at all important	A little important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
0	1	6	51	42

29. Thinking about Jewish religious denominations, what denomination do you currently consider yourself to be?

Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Reconstructionist	Other Jewish	Not Jewish
5	47	34	6	7	0

30. This past year...

	Yes
Did you or your spouse/partner donate to the local Jewish federation?	99
Did you or your spouse/partner fast all or part of the day on Yom Kippur?	93
Did you or anyone in your household usually light Sabbath candles on Friday night?	65
Did you serve as an officer or board member of a synagogue?	25
Did you have a Christmas tree in your house?	2

31. This past year, were you or anyone in your household a dues paying member of a synagogue?

Yes
90

31a. (IF YES TO #31) What is the denomination of this synagogue?

Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Reconstructionist	Other
9	53	34	1	3

32. During the past year, how often did you go to Jewish worship services?

Never or bar/bat mitzvahs	Just for High Holidays	A few times during the year	About once a month	2-3 times a month	About once a week or more
3	11	44	12	16	15

33. How many of the people you consider to be your closest friends are Jewish?

None	Some	About half	Most	All or almost all
0	2	12	47	39

34. Do you identify yourself as:

A Jew by birth	A Jew by choice or conversion	Non-Jewish
98	2	0

35. Does your spouse/partner identify him or herself as

A Jew by birth	A Jew by choice or conversion	Non-Jewish
87	9	4

36. What was the main type of Jewish schooling you received as a child?

None	Sunday school or another one-day-a-week school	A religious school that met two days a week	A religious school that met three days a week	A full-time Jewish day school	Other
9	25	18	34	8	5

37. Before the age of 25, did you ever participate in...

	Yes
Jewish youth group	73
Jewish day camp	61
Youth activities at a JCC (e.g., JCC day camp, overnight camp, teen programs)	56
Jewish overnight camp	55
Hillel at college	35
Youth trip to Israel	25

38. Please enter any comments you may have about JCCs and the Jewish educational mission or this survey



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