



# How to Create Your Own Program Guides and Lesson Plans for Family Room Experiences

**An Educational Program Guide by Lisa Friedman**



**THE JEWISH  
EDUCATION PROJECT**

Developed in partnership with The Jewish Education Project

Many [Family Room](#) experiences can be adapted for intergenerational family programs. Below are guidelines for choosing which experiences to use and how best to implement them.

The Jewish Grandparents Network is also pleased to provide sample lesson plans. Contact Terry Kaye, Director of Creative Partnerships: [terry@jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org](mailto:terry@jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org)

## **1. Decide on the content of your program.**

Explore the [Family Room](#) by destination, for example, Arts, Celebrations & Holidays, Cooking & Food, Family Stories, and so on. Which activities:

- Strike you as ideal for a group setting in your community?
- Can you clearly picture in action?
- Meet a curricular goal for your organization?
- Do you think will be easiest and most effective to implement?

If you are uncertain, reach out to the Jewish Grandparents Network for recommendations of favorite educational experiences.

## **2. Begin by setting goals.**

Effective programs and lessons are built on enduring understandings and goals. They provide a rationale and a road map for the program or lesson.

An enduring understanding (EU) is a big-picture statement summarizing important ideas that are central to the content and have lasting value beyond the class or program itself. The EU synthesizes what learners or participants should understand or know or how they will act as a result of the experience — how they will be changed.

Goals are more concrete; they are specific items the learner or participant will know or be able to do as a result of the experience.

For example, an enduring understanding might be “Our Jewish community stands on the contributions of its members.” Goals might include “Students will be able to (a) list the communities — and the Jewish communities — to which they belong, (b) articulate ways they can contribute to their communities, and (c) state how their communities can support them.”

### 3. Decide on the type of program you will offer.

Consider whether:

- a) You will offer a grandparent-grandchild (“skip-gen”) event or an intergenerational program that includes parents. For example, skip-gen supports and celebrates the grandparent-grandchild relationship. However, parents may want and expect to be included.
- b) Your family program will include an *in-class* component. For example, you may want young learners to come prepared to the family program. However, the content may not be part of your school’s curricular goals.

### 4. Plan and prepare.

Once you have established the goals and structure of the program or course, you can move on to planning and preparing in detail.

*Effectives lesson plans or leader’s guides usually include the following:*

- **Teacher Resources** — Guidance for the teacher or facilitator, including background information such as articles to read, websites to review, or videos to show. These resources help the leader become familiar with the subject.
- **Program Materials** — Everything the teacher or facilitator needs to run the program effectively, including supplies (whiteboard, cards, paper, markers); tech needs (smartphones, monitor, laptops, Wi-Fi); and furniture and room setup (location, chairs and tables). It’s often best to prepare this section *last*, after the program is fully written, so you don’t forget anything.
- **Timing** — A program timeline, including the steps and how much time to allot to each section of the program. This helps the teacher or facilitator cover all the planned content in the right amount of time.
- **Program Details** — The how-to section describing each part of the program or lesson in detail, including what the facilitator says to participants, activities participants will do, questions for the facilitator to pose, and possible participant responses, where appropriate. Key is to guide the facilitator on how to personalize the learning experience and make it relevant to participants’ lives.

For example, in a program about Shabbat rituals you might start by asking, “What is your favorite Shabbat or Jewish holiday memory?” In a program about passing down

family stories, you might ask participants to name an object in their home that holds meaningful family memories and the reason they are meaningful.

Some lesson plans fully script the dialogue, especially if the facilitator is new to the subject or the class. Such highly specific program details help the facilitator carefully prepare in advance.

- **Wrap-Up and Follow-Up** — A summary, questions, or final activity that connects back to the enduring understanding and helps make sure you met the goals of the program. This is also an opportunity to discuss ways to take the learning home and extend the learning beyond the day's experience.

For example, in a program about Havdalah, you could send participants home with simple objects to celebrate Havdalah at home (Kiddush cup, spice bag/box and spices, braided candle, a sheet with the blessings) or make the objects available for purchase. Or in a program that explores the meaning and importance of tzedakah (righteous giving), participants might make and take home a tzedakah box and prepare a statement committing to creating a culture of giving at home.

You might also send a follow-up email with additional information or suggest other experiences families might like to explore in the [Family Room](#).

*B'hatzlachah!* We wish you luck on your learning journey.

**See appendix on next page.**

## **Appendix: Deciding on the Type of Program You Will Offer**

A key first step in planning a program is to decide on the type or overall framework. Here are two important questions to consider.

### **A. Should my program be a grandparent-grandchild or intergenerational program?**

The experience will be different if the program is for grandparents and grandchildren (“skip-gen”) alone or for intergenerational families including parents.

Here are some aspects to consider as you decide whom to include.

#### **Grandparent-grandchild:**

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- The grandparent role is celebrated and highlighted.
- These grandparent-grandchild times are opportunities to build and nurture the grandparent’s unique relationship with each grandchild.
- The mood is often more playful and relaxed when parents are not present.

#### **Intergenerational:**

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- The family system is the focus, often with the parent as the primary adult figure, and grandparents step into a secondary role.
- Parents may monitor grandparents-grandchildren interactions and may interpose with comments and interpretations (“What Grandma means is . . .”) and corrective actions (“We don’t do, say, behave,” etc.).
- Parents may want and expect to be included — or at least invited.
- It can be enriching for the child to have their closest people around them sharing in a Jewish experience.

### **B. Should my program include in-class lessons ending with a family program, or should it just be a family program?**

You might want to start the learning with students in a class, whether in person or virtually. Here are some aspects to consider.

### **In-class with family program:**

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Include an in-class component if you want:

- The learner/child to have some background information about the topic.
- The learner/child to take a leadership role in the family program.
- The family program to be a demonstration of ideas learned and/or sharing a school project with family members.

### **Family program only:**

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Hold a family event with no in-class component if:

- You want all the participants to encounter the content together for the first time.
- The content does not meet your in-school curricular goals or there is not sufficient content to warrant a multi-session course.



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