

WAITING TO TEACH DECODING

Responses from the 2019 summer survey of "On-the-Way" and "All In" #OnwardHebrew programs

MOST "WAITING PROGRAMS" CHOOSE 5TH GRADE, BUT OTHER STARTS INCLUDE:

- Sixth grade
 - A specific interval (e.g. 11 mo) prior to B'nai Mitzvah
 - Choosing a starting point based on family learning goals for the child, as well as on individual learning styles and needs
- Some offer a choice - "as before" or "later."



WAITING CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT STUDENT COMPETENCE & CONFIDENCE

Comments from survey respondents include:

- "Children seem encouraged by the faster pace of learning and individualization."
- "Students are ready and are learning quickly and successfully without struggling."
- "(We see) no difference in 'being prepared' for Bar/Bat Mitzvah."



BENEFITS OF WAITING TO TEACH DECODING INCLUDE:

Time is freed up for more compelling topics than decoding.

Parents appreciate being able to fit Hebrew learning into their busy schedules (this, when learning is individualized).



YES, CHALLENGES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

- It is hard to overcome the long-held belief that decoding should start in 3rd grade and take 4 years ("We've never done it that way!").
- Some parents and students worry about "being behind."
- It can be hard to find teachers or tutors for an individualized approach.
- New decisions need to be made about the learning structure and curriculum.



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- WHAT "EXISTENCE PROOFS" WILL ALLAY PARENT, TEACHER AND STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT WAITING TO TEACH DECODING UNTIL AFTER STUDENTS BUILD A RICH HEBREW BACKGROUND?
- WHAT SUPPORTS DO DIRECTORS NEED TO SUPPORT THE NARRATIVE OF THE CHANGE (E.G., ASSESSMENT, STORY-TELLING, MARKETING)?

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