YVV CEO Solomon Igel and YVV Director Naomi Auerbach attended the National Meeting of Head Start and Early Head Start Directors in Washington, D.C. in January. The focus of this conference was the new emphasis on measuring outcomes that has been mandated by the government for all Head Start agencies. One important area of assessment is that of literacy, where children will be expected to identify ten letters of the alphabet by the time they leave Head Start. YVV has already put a program in place where teachers are assessing children three times a year in seven domains of knowledge in order to chart their progress. YVV’s teachers are thus well prepared to undertake this new effort.

YVV Director of Federal Programs Wayne Goldberg, who has been appointed as a Johnson and Johnson Head Start Management Fellow, was invited to attend the most recent Head Start Advanced Management Institute in Los Angeles at UCLA in January. Wayne Goldberg joined 120 Head Start Directors from all over the country to network, share ideas and concerns, and to receive training in areas such as preparing a business plan, making presentations to elected officials, and using computer technology to enhance productivity.

YVV Director Naomi Auerbach and Education Directors responsible for the individual Head Start sites attended the Eight Annual Interagency Early Childhood Conference co-sponsored by many of the New York State Education agencies held at the Marriott Hotel in Brooklyn in January. The topic of the conference was “Strengthening Partnerships and Collaborations to Develop Life Long Learners.” Participants attended workshops dedicated to topics such as Promoting Emergent Literacy (see article in magazine section), Supporting the Development of Self Esteem, Integrating Technology in Early Childhood Learning, and other topics related to early childhood education.

YVV’s Policy Council, the governing body of YVV Head Start, held its first formal meeting of the year on January 29. Policy Council members who are Head Start parents were elected in December by representative parents from all YVV sites. The Policy Council also includes some community representative. They met together with Solomon Igel, YVV CEO, Wayne Goldberg, Director of Federal Programs, Naomi Auerbach, Head Start Director, and Policy Council Liaison, Gitty Ziegelman. Among other agenda items, Mr. Igel and Ms. Auerbach reported on the new requirements for measuring and reporting outcomes that were announced at the Washington, D.C. meeting they had attended. YVV’s expansion for Early Head Start in Williamsburg and the planned expansion of both Early Head Start and Head Start in Boro Park (see page 4) were also discussed.

A two-part Parent Workshop geared to fathers on First Aid and CPR was held in January at 571 McDonald Avenue and was well attended. Fathers who attended and passed an examination will be given Red Cross certificates in First Aid and CPR. YVV Head Start is very interested in giving workshops that would interest the fathers of the Head Start children. If you have any ideas for future workshops, please call our Parent Involvement coordinators at (718) 686-3750.
An Educational Toy workshop was also given in January at 571 McDonald Avenue. Chanie Schwartz of Discovery Toys demonstrated how using children’s toys properly can help enhance their cognitive and motor growth.

YVY continues to take part in the Westat study commissioned by the Federal Government to determine the effectiveness of Head Start education. YVY was chosen by national Head Start Bureau in Washington D.C, to be one of the agencies participating in this study. Westat evaluators have interviewed parents in some of YVY’s programs about their Head Start experiences and have assessed some children in order to determine their current standing in the educational domains that Head Start addresses. These children will be assessed again before they leave Head Start in order to determine whether they have made progress in these areas. YVY thanks all parents who are cooperating with Westat in this important study.

In order to help parents promote literacy in their young children, YVY Early Head Start in Brooklyn has begun a monthly “Come Read with Me” program for Early Head Start parents. Parents and children come to learn to read together, and parents are helped to choose books appropriate for a child’s age level. “The Cozy Corner,” a lending library for parents, allows parents to borrow a variety of books to read with their children.

A large delegation from Early Head Start represented Yeled V’Yalda at the Seventh Annual Head Start and Child Care Birth to Three Institute which took place in Washington, D.C. in January. Early Head Start Coordinator of Home-Based Program Simi Schlafrig and Social Services Coordinator Bassie Morris together with Caregiver/Teachers Nechama Fried and Chana Tilly Engel and Home Visitors Devorah Meyer and Kreindly Lazerson attended the conference to represent the Brooklyn Early Head Start sites. The Staten Island sites were represented by Family/Community Partnership Coordinator Nancy Alfonso, Caregiver/Teacher Anna Lee Mitchell and Assistant Elizabeth delaCruz and Home Visitors Marilyn Ogbo, Janice Mitchell and Wilma Holder. Participants attended workshops devoted to topics such as nutrition, mental health, building relationships, and promoting language and literacy growth in infants and toddlers (see article in magazine section). All these workshops are designed to enhance the skills of Early Head Start workers so that they can better serve children and families.

YVY Early Head Start is pleased to announce the opening of a new program in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. “We Care” Early Head Start in Brooklyn has begun a monthly “Come Read with Me” program for Early Head Start parents. Parents and children come to learn to read together, and parents are helped to choose books appropriate for a child's age level. "The Cozy Corner," a lending library for parents, allows parents to borrow a variety of books to read with their children.

The Maternity and Early Childhood Foundation, which provides partial funding for YVY’s Expectant Moms Program, conducted an audit of the program in January. As in previous years, YVY’s program was found to be doing very good work.
In order to serve its clients better, YVY's Special Services Department has implemented a state-of-the-art record keeping system. All therapists are given a Palm Pilot with a program designed by YVY's Director of MIS Samuel Fefferkorn. Instead of writing notes by hand after each therapy session, therapists can record easily on the Palm Pilot. The flow of paperwork is further reduced since therapists then "sync" their Palms at YVY Head Start sites and information is thus transferred to the main office where it can be collated and filed.

To help its therapists work with the Palm, YVY Special Services has its own newsletter, Yeled Anywhere News.

**Professional Training**

As part of its continuing efforts to enhance its therapists' skills, YVY offered a workshop to all its professionals on "Auditory Language Processing Disorders: Assessment and Intervention Strategies." The workshop was run by Dr. Gail J. Richard, Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois. Dr. Richard is a specialist in childhood development language disorders. At her workshop, she reviewed with the therapists and teachers attending ways to identify language disorders and presented strategies for intervention to help correct and compensate for deficits. The workshop, which was open to speech therapists, audiologists, special educators and Head Start teachers outside of YVY as well as those working for YVY, was very well attended.

**In a continuation of its effort to provide the community with the best possible medical service, Ezra Medical Center is partnering with SUNY College of Optometry in a Vision Care Clinic at the Ezra Medical Center at 571 McDonald Avenue.** The clinic provides complete visual evaluations along with vision therapy when required. Dr. Harold Friedman, Clinical Professor and Chief of Vision Therapy Rehabilitation Service at SUNY College of Optometry, heads Vision Care services at Ezra Medical. We spoke with Dr. Friedman, a pioneer in Vision Therapy Rehabilitation, at his last visit to Ezra.

*What is the rationale behind Vision Therapy Rehabilitation?*

In order to be certain that the eyes are working as they should, three different evaluations are necessary. The first is a primary eye care evaluation. This evaluation checks the health of the eyes and rules out any ocular disease. Any vision examination must also take careful measurements, both for distance and reading vision. Problems in either of these areas can be corrected with glasses.

However, there are potential problems which a primary care evaluation may not reveal. Any good visual evaluation must also consider visual motor skills. Normally, both eyes work together; even though we have two eyes, we only see one image. We also have a set of muscles which focus the eyes so that what we are looking at is clear. When we read, the eyes must track across the page for a significant amount of time without losing place. When a child looks up at a chalkboard, he must be able to immediately look back at his book. That is why a good visual examination must also measure efficiency of eye movement and test for problems with eye teaming and focusing. An individually designed program of vision therapy can alleviate dysfunction in these areas.

Another area of concern can be in visual processing skills. In order to learn to read, a child must be able to recognize the forms and shapes of letters and numbers and distinguish one from the other. The child must also be able to reproduce these shapes for writing and remember them in sequence for spelling and sentence structure. Visual skills must be used together with language, auditory, and eye-hand motor skills. A visual perceptual evaluation checks for deficits in these areas. If there are deficits, vision therapy can address them.

*Who is a candidate for Vision Therapy?*

Any child - or adult - who has problems reading should be tested. A child who consistently loses his place when reading, who has a short attention span, who is intelligent but does not seem to be able to learn to read or to comprehend written material is a good candidate for vision therapy evaluation. Certainly vision problems should be ruled out before a child is labeled as being learning disabled.

*How does vision therapy help?*

A vision therapy program is designed individually for each patient to correct his or her deficits. The program consists of a series of sequenced tasks for the eye so that blurred vision, double vision, focusing problems, or other problems that impede vision are corrected.

*Is there anything unique about SUNY's Vision Therapy program?*

SUNY’s Vision Therapy Rehabilitation Service is one of the unique full scope vision care programs in the country. Ezra Medical is the only center other than SUNY which offers vision therapy on site. I am very proud of the program and am pleased that those who come to Ezra Medical will be able to receive the best visual care in the city.
Dr. Sklar Joins Ezra Medical Center

Ezra Medical is very pleased to announce that Dr. Tziporah Sklar has joined its staff. Dr. Sklar, who is Board Certified in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, is Director of the Division of Developmental Pediatrics at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, where she is also First Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology. Dr. Sklar specializes in evaluation, diagnosis, and management of children with developmental delays. Working with babies born “at risk,” children who show regression after normal birth, or children who are not maintaining proper development is Dr. Sklar’s specialty. Dr. Sklar will also be working together with YVY’s ABA program to implement a team approach to treating children receiving services. She will collaborate with therapists to be sure that all facets of a child’s disability are addressed. Dr. Sklar is also hoping to be involved with teachers at YVY Head Start sites. Dr. Sklar is available for pediatric evaluations at Ezra Medical Center twice a week. Look for Dr. Sklar’s article on child development in the next issue of the YVY Newsletter.

YELED V’YALDA OPENS NEW SITE IN BORO PARK

In order to serve the Boro Park community better, Yeled V’Yalda will shortly be opening a new site in the heart of Boro Park. This site will house both Early Head Start (2-3) and Head Start (3-5) classrooms for both boys and girls and will provide a free, quality bi-linqual pre-school education for income-eligible children.

Yeled V’Yalda is now accepting applications for three- and four-year olds for this Head Start program. YVY is also accepting applications for employment for teachers and assistants at this time.

To apply for Headstart please call 718-686-7855
For employment, please fax resume to 718-435-0404

YELED V’YALDA STATEN ISLAND:

Silver Lake Headstart,
10 Gregg Place (718) 815-4488

Silver Lake Headstart II,
20 Park Hill Circle (718) 720-0090

DIRECTORY

For more information on any of Yeled V’Yalda’s services please call the following numbers:

Headstart: (718) 686-3750

Early Headstart: (718) 686-3750

Special Education: (718) 686-3700 ext. 1
ABA Program: (718) 686-3700 ext. 539

Early Intervention: (718) 686-3700 ext. 516
Ezra Medical Center: (718) 686-7600

Vision Screening: (718) 686-7600
Audiology: (718) 686-7600
Speech Therapy: (718) 686-3700 ext. 115

Yeled V’Yalda Mental Health Hotline
Mondays 11-3

686-3750
Ext. 125

All calls are confidential
You do not need to give your name
First Lady Laura Bush said in a recent speech: "Every child deserves to realize his or her dreams. From the crib to the classroom, it is essential that children have parents, teachers and others in their lives who prepare them for success in school and in life."

Most people would agree that the key to a child's success is the ability to read and write, otherwise known as literacy. Literacy is essential to success in our society. The ability to read and write has never been as important as it is in today's highly technological and competitive society.

As a parent of a baby or toddler, you may wonder what reading-readiness or literacy development has to do with you. You might be wondering: Isn't my child too young? Isn't it too early to start worrying about reading? Won't my child's elementary school teachers take care of this issue? What does it have to do with me? According to today's educators, it's never too early to start your child on the path to reading readiness. Even a child as young as a few months is open to learning and language. While it's true that formal teaching, especially in the elementary grades, will contribute to the development of your child's literacy skills, a lot of growth in literacy actually occurs outside of school - in the circle of home and family.

Experts didn't always believe that it was useful to try to promote reading and writing readiness in very young children. From the late 1800s to the 1920s, most research on reading and writing focused only on the elementary school years. But in the 1920s, educators began to realize that the early childhood and kindergarten years were a "period of preparation" for reading and writing.

In the past, much of the thinking about child development focused on the idea that reading readiness had to do with biological maturity and that the mental processes necessary for reading would develop along with the rest of the child's body and mind and unfold automatically at the right time. According to this theory, it didn't really pay to teach a child to read and write before a certain age because the child wasn't developed enough yet to benefit from it. Parents and educators were told to postpone the teaching of reading until children reached a certain age, usually elementary school age.

In recent years, however, the thinking on this subject has changed a lot. Researchers began to believe that reading readiness didn't have so much to do with physical maturation as with appropriate experiences. Modern researchers argued that if children - even very young children - were given the opportunity to have the right kind of experiences, their reading readi-
ness could be accelerated a great deal.

This new theory of reading readiness became known as emergent literacy. Emergent literacy means that even though young children cannot read or write in the conventional sense or the way we think about true reading and writing, they do show certain behaviors that are related to reading and writing and that these early behaviors should be encouraged and cultivated.

The following story is a real life example of emergent literacy. Three-year-old Elisheva and four-year old Yakov are in preschool, playing with a doll. Elisheva picks up a book and starts telling the doll and Yakov the story of The Yellow School Bus. As she turns the pages and holds up the book, you realize that the book she is holding is really One Fish Two Fish. Although Elisheva is not really reading, she is engaging in a literacy activity that is developmentally appropriate for a child at the three-year old level. You can tell that she is read to on a regular basis at home and in school and that she is familiar with the act of reading even though she can't yet read in the conventional sense. Elisheva is practicing literacy skills she's observed her mother and teacher using.

Today, emergent literacy is the most popular approach in developing reading readiness in children. It holds the following principles:

* Literacy involves not only reading and writing abilities but also listening, speaking and comprehension.
* Literacy development begins way before children start formal learning in elementary school. For example, by age two or three many children can identify signs, labels, and logos in their homes and in their communities.
* Reading and writing develop at the same time in young children, not one after the other.
* Knowing that letters spell words and knowing that words have meaning are just as important a part of reading readiness as knowing how to recognize and name specific letters and words.

* Children learn about written language when they interact with parents and other adults in reading and writing situations; when they explore print on their own; and as they see others around them involved in reading and writing activities.
* Children pass through stages of literacy development in different ways and at different ages.

You might ask, "What can I, as a parent, do to help make my child become reading ready?"

There are a lot of things you can do. Each stage your child goes through has different reading readiness needs.

**Infants - Birth to 18 Months**

Babies as young as a few months can be involved in literacy activities. Even though it might be hard for some parents to believe that reading to an infant has any benefit, behavioral scientists have found that reading to a child as early as 44 weeks of age is an extremely meaningful activity.

Long before children can walk and talk they will listen closely to the rhythmic rise and fall of their caregiver's voice. Before the age of 6 months, a baby's experience with stories and poems is closely tied to music and rhythm experiences. Babies older than 6 months enjoy sitting in your lap and can reach out to touch and feel the book as you point to the pictures. By 9 months, most babies will try to help you turn the pages in a book.

Babies can be given cardboard or cloth books with brightly colored pictures. These books can be about daily life, family members, animals, or food. Because babies relate to the sound of their mother's voice at a very young age, they like to hear stories
that have rhyme, rhythm, or repetition such as nursery rhymes. Parents can help develop a baby's vocabulary by playing "What's that?" or "Where's the ball?" when reading books together. Also, when walking or driving or shopping in a supermarket, mothers can point out words and explain what they mean.

**Toddlers - 18 months to 4 years**

Even though toddlers and preschoolers have short attention spans, they can relate to simple stories with a basic plot and one central character. Match the length of the story to your child's attention span and listening skills. Begin with short selections and increase the length of the story a little at a time. Young toddlers like stories that have the same word or phrase repeated again and again and the repetition helps develop their memory and language skills. They also enjoy pop-up books and other books they can take part in, as well as books about ideas such as up/down and in/out. Two-year-olds are ready to hear books about colors and shapes, and 3-year-olds are ready to hear about numbers and letters. Go the library with your toddler or preschooler. The library is your greatest resource. Take out a variety of books and read to your child as often as you can. Discuss with him or her what the story was about. Respond to your child's requests about which story to read, even if it means that you reread favorite stories again and again. Also, always answer your child's questions about the print on packages at the grocery store, road signs, and menus at restaurants.

**Preschoolers - Four- and Five-Year-Olds**

Four- and 5-year-olds have more developed attention spans and can listen to longer stories, such as in a book with short chapters. They like to listen to stories about things they know. Often, they memorize the words to a favorite book and "read" the story out loud to you by using the pictures in the book as clues to help them remember the words. This is their first step in learning to read. Four-year-olds have a good sense of humor. They're curious about people and the world around them and like to explore their environment. They enjoy silly language, riddles, and nonsense rhymes. Sometimes they will even make up their own nonsense rhymes and exaggerated stories to test their language skills.

Five-year-olds are interested in their families, schools, and neighborhoods, and want to know "how" and "why." They like to hear books about how things are made or done and why things happen. Four- and five-year-olds are beginning to form real friendships for the first time and stories about friends are meaningful to them. They are also starting to assert their independence, but still need warmth and security, and they love to hear stories about happy families and relationships with parents and siblings.

In order to promote early literacy, make sure that your home is well stocked not only with print materials such as books, magazines and newspapers, but also with paper, crayons, pens, pencils, and markers. This will create a literacy-supportive environment. Let your toddler or preschooler help you write your shopping list or follow the steps in a recipe. Always praise their reading and writing accomplishments rather than criticize them. Be a reading and writing role model for your toddler or preschooler. Since children love to imitate what their parents say and do, let your child observe you reading and writing. Write notes and letters, keep a calendar, post shopping lists on the refrigerator door. Read books and subscribe to newspapers and magazines. Watching you take part in literacy activities with pleasure will instill a love of reading and writing in your child.

Always remember that it is never too early to start reading-readiness activities with your child. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "Reading to young children enhances brain development and also provides healthy bonding and quality interaction between the parent and child." Parents play a very important role in their young children's literacy education. By giving their children the individual attention and support they need early on, they help their children succeed in school and in life.
PARENT ACTIVITIES

SUN, MARCH 2,
EXP. MOMS PROGRAM
Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
Parenting skills for Post-partum moms by Janie Friedman, RN
571 McDonald, 10:45-1:00

TUES. MARCH 4,
EHS/HS Swim
at Boro Park YM/YWHA
11:00 A. M.-12:00 Noon
PARENT WORKSHOP
“Cooking Course” by Agi Lemmer
6012 Farragut R.

WED. MARCH 5,
EHS PURIM CHAGIGA
SARA SCHNIERER
11:00A.M.-1:00 P.M.

SUN. MARCH 9,
EXP. MOMS PROGRAM
Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
Parenting skills for Post-partum moms by Janie Friedman, RN
571 McDonald, 10:45-1:00

MON, MARCH 24
Policy Council Meeting

WED. MARCH 10,
Parent Workshop
““AEROBICS”
571 McDonald, 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

WED. MARCH 12,
Parenting Workshop by Bassie Morris, CSW
571 McDonald Ave
10:00 A.M.-12:00 Noon
Parent Workshop
“Focus on the Father”
Dr. E. Kaminetsky
1301-45 St.
7:30 M.-9:30 P.M.

SUN. MARCH 16,
Exp. Moms Program
Exerc. & Childbirth Ed. by Chana Brecher
Parenting skills for Post-partum moms by Janie Friedman, RN
571 McDonald Ave., 10:45-1:00

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

TUES. MARCH 25,
EHS/HS Swim
at Boro Park YM/YWHA
11:00 A. M.-12:00 Noon

MON. MARCH 31,
Parent Workshop
“AEROBICS”
571 McDonald, 11:30A.M.-12:30 P.M.

WED. MARCH 26,
Prof. Staff Workshop
“Behavioral & Social Skills Progm. For Children”
Devora Samet, MS
571 McDonald Ave 8:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M

SEIT CLUSTER MEETING
571 McDonald Ave
7:00-8:00 P.M

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