



School for Jewish Education and Leadership

OF AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY

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Educator's Corner

Instructor Highlight: Sasha Kopp

In addition to teaching at AJU, Sasha Kopp works for the Jewish Education Project in New York as a Community Early Childhood and Family Engagement Consultant. In this role, Sasha supports and connects early childhood educators throughout the New York area through networks and professional development opportunities. She comes to this role after two years as the Assistant Early Childhood Director at Central Synagogue in Manhattan. Sasha received two masters degrees at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles in Jewish Education and Jewish Non-Profit Management. During this time, Sasha also participated in the Wexner Graduate Fellowship / Davidson Scholars Program.



Sasha's passion for early childhood education has brought her to schools recognized as strong centers of the Reggio Emilia approach from coast to coast. After completing Brandeis University, she was a lead teacher at Temple Beth Shalom Children Center in Needham, MA and then throughout graduate school, she worked as the Administrative Fellow and Judaic Specialist at Temple Israel of Hollywood Nursery School.

What brought you to AJU?

I am so glad that I found AJU, and it came about through just a series of connections. Tamar and I had been in touch about her helping with a conference for The Jewish Education project in New York so when she was visiting New York one day we went out to lunch, and she told me all about the online program that AJU was thinking of creating. A few months later COVID started (my conference was cancelled) and I started teaching online right away. I am so grateful to be part of the program from the east coast!

What do you love most about teaching at AJU?

I love getting to know the students. I think AJU attracts curious individuals who are often very experienced in the field of early childhood. This past year I particularly appreciated getting to hear the reality of teaching during COVID. The stories that my students share help me feel more connected and in touch with the field of Jewish early childhood as a whole.

What course would you like to see taught in the next few years?

I would love to teach a course where we explore early childhood Israel education while traveling throughout Israel. There are many schools in Israel that have impacted my own teaching philosophy. Additionally, I believe that a hands-on Israel trip can help encourage educators to teach Israel with depth, as a country with a vibrant multi-faceted culture, rather than just as a holiday that happens when we celebrate Israel's birthday once a year.

What is an exciting project you are currently involved in outside your work at AJU?

One of my personal interests is that I am a fused glass artist and I have been beginning to run in-person workshops again! I recently led a workshop for Harvard Hillel students, and it was amazing to explore a creative process with them.

What's a book you are reading right now or recently finished and why should we read it?

I am currently reading Limitless Minds: Learn Lead and Live without Barriers by Jo Boaler. The book focuses on exploring one's own potential and removing one's own limiting mindsets. It is empowering to remember that we are capable of so much when we give ourselves permission to grow and learn. I also think it is interesting to read how teachers and other trusted adults create limiting mindsets for the next generation. I hope through my work at AJU we can work together for children to feel capable and empowered of exploring their full potential.

To learn more about any of our Early Childhood Programs, visit our website [here](#).

Virtual Open House

SUNDAY
OCTOBER 17
7:30 PM ET



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