

# A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO ISRAEL EDUCATION

*In a Post-October 7 World*

# EXPLORING RELATIONAL NEEDS



**What role do you believe relationships play in helping students process complex and emotionally charged events like October 7?**

# EXPLORING RELATIONAL NEEDS



**What have your learners expressed they need most from you in this moment—facts, emotional support, or something else?  
How has that informed your approach?**

# EXPLORING RELATIONAL NEEDS



**Some argue that we should focus on clarity and education over relationships in a time of crisis. What are your thoughts on this tension?**

# WHO IS THE iCENTER?

## OUR VISION

Every Jewish young person develops a lifelong relationship with Israel and Israelis.



# WHERE IS THE iCENTER?



# CREATING A LANGUAGE

## THE ALEPH BET OF ISRAEL EDUCATION®



Israel as a  
Cornerstone of Jewish  
Identities



A Learner-Centered  
Approach



The Place of Israel in  
Jewish Tradition



Eretz, Medina, Am  
Yisrael: Navigating  
Multiple Landscapes



Curricularizing Israel:  
Principles and Themes



Modern Hebrew:  
Culture and Identity



Israeli Arts and  
Culture: The Ability to  
Engage



Creating Immersive  
and Integrative Israel  
Education



Diverse Narratives



The Israel Experience



Relating and  
Relationships



The Educator: The  
Power of Teaching,  
The Power of Learning



# GOALS

- Build confidence in relational approaches
- Develop age-appropriate strategies
- Strengthen facilitation skills
- Create brave spaces for complex conversations





# BUILDING OUR APPROACH

**Relational**

**Dialogue-Based**

**Critical Thinking**

# RELATIONAL APPROACH

- Connection before content
- Building trust
- Creating community



# DIALOGUE-BASED LEARNING

## KEY ELEMENTS:

- Two-way communication
- Active listening
- Productive disagreement
- Clear boundaries



# IMPLEMENTATION NOTES

- Start where your learners are
- Build on existing relationships
- Remember less is often more
- Keep returning to safety
- Document what works
- Share successes with colleagues!



# EARLY CHILDHOOD (AGES 3-5)

## *Core Approach Connection & Safety*

### ENTRY POINTS

- > Start with emotions they understand
- > Use simple, concrete concepts
- > Focus on people and relationships

### **Sample Language**

- > “Israel is a special place where lots of people live and care for each other”
- > “Sometimes we feel worried about our friends and family”
- > “We can send good wishes/make pictures for people we care about”

# EARLY CHILDHOOD (AGES 3-5)

## *Core Approach Connection & Safety*

### KEY TOOLS

#### 1. Story-Based Learning

- a. Personal narratives about friends/family in Israel
- b. Simple stories about everyday life
- c. Books showing Israeli children doing familiar activities

#### 2. Emotional Vocabulary

- a. “I notice you’re feeling...”
- b. “It’s okay to feel...”
- c. “We can help each other by...”



# ELEMENTARY (AGES 6-9)

## *Core Approach Building Context & Community*

### ENTRY POINTS

- > Start with questions they bring
- > Connect to their experiences
- > Use concrete examples

### Sample Language

- > “What have you heard about...?”
- > “That’s a thoughtful question. Let’s talk about...”
- > “Just like we take care of each other here, people in Israel...”

# ELEMENTARY (AGES 6-9)

## *Core Approach Building Context & Community*

### KEY TOOLS

#### 1. Question Framework

- a. Create “wondering spaces”
- b. Use “I notice…” statements
- c. Practice active listening

#### 2. Community Connection

- a. Letter writing to Israeli peers
- b. Art projects expressing care
- c. Collecting stories of helpers

# ELEMENTARY (AGES 6-9)

## *Core Approach Building Context & Community*

### **3. Response to News**

- a. Acknowledge awareness
- b. Focus on helpers
- c. Emphasize community support

# MIDDLE SCHOOL (AGES 10-13)

## *Core Approach Critical Thinking & Empathy*

### ENTRY POINTS

- > Acknowledge their media exposure
- > Start with their questions
- > Create brave spaces for discussion

### Sample Language

- > “What sources help us understand...?”
- > “How do you think different people might see this?”
- > “What questions does this raise for you?”

# MIDDLE SCHOOL (AGES 10-13)

## *Core Approach Critical Thinking & Empathy*

### KEY TOOLS

#### 1. Media Literacy

- a. Source evaluation basics
- b. Fact vs. opinion discussions
- c. Multiple perspective analysis

#### 2. Discussion Framework

- a. Establish group agreements
- b. Use “both/and” thinking
- c. Practice respectful disagreement

# MIDDLE SCHOOL (AGES 10-13)

## *Core Approach Critical Thinking & Empathy*

### **3. Response to Complex Issues**

- a. Validate complexity
- b. Explore multiple narratives
- c. Connect to Jewish values



# TEENS (AGES 14-18)

*Core Approach Nuanced Dialogue & Personal Connection*

## ENTRY POINTS

- > Acknowledge their independence
- > Respect their opinions
- > Create space for complexity

### Sample Language

- > “How do you make sense of...?”
- > “What helps you navigate different perspectives?”
- > “How does this connect to your Jewish identity?”

# TEENS (AGES 14-18)

*Core Approach Nuanced Dialogue & Personal Connection*

## KEY TOOLS

### 1. Discussion Facilitation

- a. Establish brave space guidelines
- b. Use structured dialogue techniques
- c. Balance personal and political

### 2. Critical Analysis

- a. Deep source evaluation
- b. Historical context examination
- c. Multiple narrative exploration

# TEENS (AGES 14-18)

*Core Approach Nuanced Dialogue & Personal Connection*

## 3. Response to Activism

- a. Support informed engagement
- b. Explore productive dialogue
- c. Connect to Jewish values

# THE BEST EDUCATORS ARE LIFELONG LEARNERS

Share your experience and insights so  
we may better serve the Israel  
education community.



[theicenter.org/survey](https://theicenter.org/survey)



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