



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

JEWISH PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL CHOICE

KEY POINTS

- Not all parents have access to schools that support their children's needs.
- The Bible establishes the basis for a parent's role in their children's education.
- The Jewish Law dictates that a child be taught a means to make a living, according to their individual needs.
- All parents should be empowered with options that best fit their child.

IN PRACTICE

ESAs provide funds to parents that help them pay for tuition at an accredited school of the parents' choosing, as well as for tutoring services, books, transportation and other approved educational expenses. Thirty-one states have similar programs and 14 have ESAs.

JUDAISM AND CHOICE

For more than 3,000 years, Judaism has placed the primary responsibility and privilege of raising and educating children in the hands of their parents.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

The idea of a parent's role in their children's education appears as early as Genesis, where G-d declares his love for Abraham (18:19):

כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את־בניו ואת־ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה ומשפט

"For I have cherished him, because he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of G-d by doing what is just and right."

Maimonides (Sefer Hamitzvot Positive Commandments 11) cites Deuteronomy 6:7 as the source for the obligation parents have to educate their children:

ושננתם לבניך

"Teach them to your children."

"There is a Biblical obligation upon each person to teach his son Torah; if the father does not teach him, the son is obligated to teach himself. ... One is obligated to hire a teacher to teach one's children." Yoreh De'ah 245:1&4

JEWISH LAW AND EDUCATION

Jewish law also requires that a child be taught a means of making a living. The Talmud recounts in the name of Rabbi Judah:

רבי יהודה אומר: כל שאינו מלמד את בנו אומנות מלמדו ליסטות

"If one does not teach his child a profession, it is as if he has taught him robbery." Kiddushin 29a

Every child is unique, with a unique personality and set of strengths and weaknesses. Education, therefore, must be tailored to the needs of the individual student. This

timeless truth was expressed by King Solomon in Mishlei/Proverbs 22:6:

חנוך לנער על פי דרכו

“Educate a child according to their path.”

It is clear in Judaism that when it comes to educating children, parents have a right to bring in a new educator or establish a new school if they feel that is in the best interest of their children.

A CALL TO EMPOWER PARENTS

Texas parents, like all parents, should be empowered with transparency, quality, respect, and choices in their child’s education. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are a good example of a means that helps parents shoulder their educational responsibility to their children.

Texas parents deserve every assistance possible to enable them to carry out their responsibility to help their children learn and succeed in life.

Please pray for your legislators, that they would pass laws that further support families, and empower parents as their children’s primary educators.

To learn more visit txparentsmatter.com/ESAs.



A MOTHER’S VOICE

“We were so lucky to discover we had a lot of choices all with varied education models, styles, and diversity. We settled on a great up and coming school in our community with a fresh approach, dual language in Hebrew, and energetic school leadership.”

–Mother Rachel Kugel (New York)

A RABBI’S VOICE

“Over the last few years, momentum for universal school choice has been steadily building across the country, and we are grateful to Governor Abbott and the legislative sponsors for working to bring ESAs to Texas. Every Texan should have the ability to send their child to the school or educational program that best fits their unique needs. ”

–Rabbi Ari Weisenfeld

Associate director of state relations for Agudath Israel