

LEARNING AND TEACHING ABOUT “WHAT MATTERS”

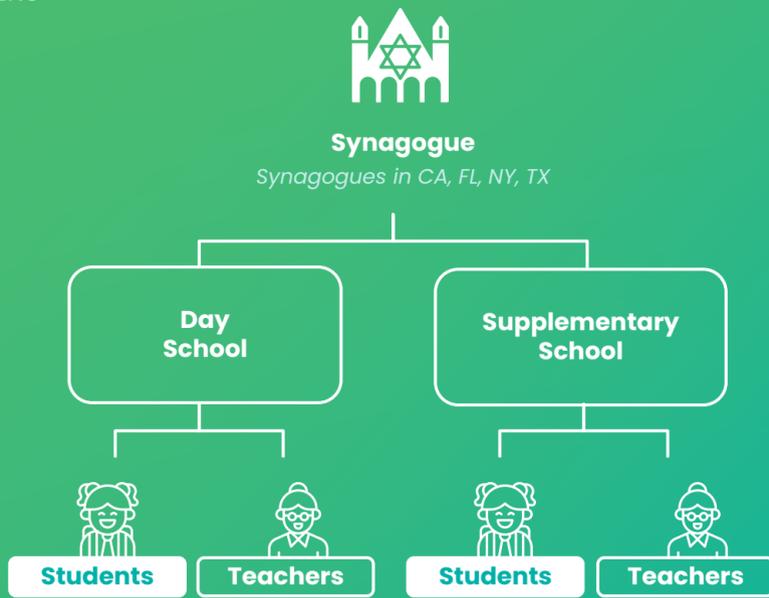
The **Learning and Teaching about What Matters Project** is a collaboration among researchers, 4th and 5th grade students, and educators in Jewish institutions in the United States. We are seeking to better understand how American Jewish children and their educators think about “what matters” in the world and the educational implications of those ideas.

The project aims to develop new knowledge around the questions:

- 1 What issues in the contemporary world matter to Jewish children, and how do children make sense of these issues?
- 2 How do educators make sense of their role in thinking with children about issues that matter?



OUR PARTNERS



The power of this research model comes from an intertwined focus on the voices of teachers and children.



The research is built on the foundational assumptions that:

- Children hold big and complex ideas** about the world around them
- Teachers make complex decisions** about their practice that impact and should be impacted by children’s thinking,
- Teachers and children need opportunities to listen and learn** from each other
- Educational research and policy should be centered around the **voices and the questions of teachers and children**

FINDINGS

Children

Our research has found that Jewish children are aware of, and care deeply about, a range of contemporary issues:



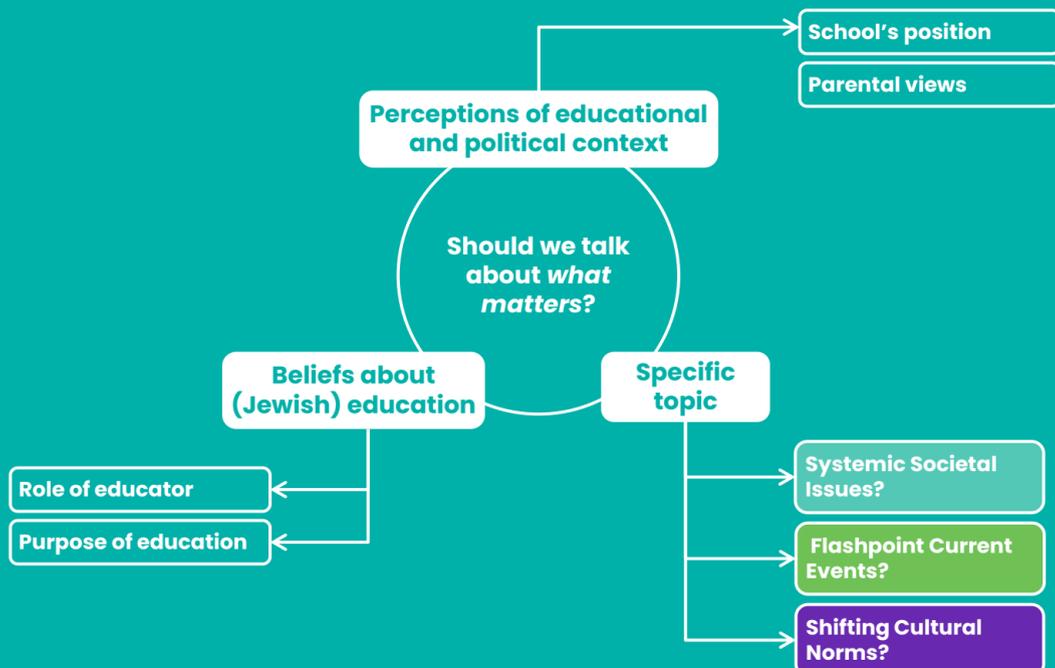
Children agree that these issues are important, and they feel shared responsibility to bring about positive change in the world. Children disagree about whether, when, and how contemporary issues ought (or ought not) be discussed in the classroom.

Teachers

Teachers make complex—and often implicit—decisions about whether, when, and how to talk about “what matters” with elementary-age children.

Teachers’ decisions are rooted in:

- their beliefs about the nature and purpose of (Jewish) education
- their perceptions about the educational and political contexts of their own schools
- the specific issues themselves, and whether they are systemic societal issues, flashpoint current events, or shifting cultural norms



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