



Tips for Virtually Engaging Millennial Families with your Institution

By Rabbi Yael Buechler

While my generation of millennials has been notoriously institutionally-weary, there is good news on the horizon. As we begin to raise our own families, we are more likely to be open to the idea of connecting with traditional institutions.

As a millennial with young children and as a Jewish communal leader who engages with millennials, here are 4 tips to help connect us with your institution, especially as our world primarily remains in virtual-mode.

At The Leffell School in Westchester, where I direct a new outreach initiative for millennial parents, we have utilized the 4 techniques below to expand our points-of-contact by over 500% in just one year – through both in-person and virtual programming.

1) **Get to know us and our needs:** As millennials, we prefer a customized approach to programs. While there might be a standalone program that speaks to us, we will more often participate in your program if we feel more involved in the genesis of the program and if it speaks to our needs. Feel free to solicit input from a millennial already in the orbit of your institution to find out what programs would be most helpful for young families at this time. This way, you will build a cohort of parents who are invested in your programs and will likely spread the word about them as well.

Tip: Millennial parents' needs currently include anything that will keep our young children occupied for 20-30 minutes at a time while we attempt to work.

2) **Word-of-mouth marketing:** We deeply trust word-of-mouth recommendations. If a friend forwards us an email about a program that they received from your institution or if a friend posts about your program in one of the Facebook groups we are a part of, there is a higher likelihood that we will sign up for your program.

Tip: Social media posts about your programs are more authentic coming from fellow millennial parents rather than official representatives of your institution. Quality photos without your logo will likely boost those posts!

3) **Communicate with us strategically:** Once we have signed up online for one of your programs, please add us to your email list but only contact us about events that will directly appeal to us. If we're religious about one thing, it's unsubscribing from unwanted emails!

Your institution could also creatively design programs that will benefit us, as an "excuse" to further engage with us. For example, your institution could start a Zoom buddies reading program like we did at The Leffell School this past summer. As part of this program, older students were matched with toddlers and preschoolers to read to them over Zoom. This program also provided a great opportunity for millennial parents to connect with parents who are 5-10 years ahead of them and who are already deeply connected with our institution.

Millennial parents also love personalized emails and will more likely respond to an email that is clearly geared toward us – be it mentioning our children's names or referencing a recent Zoom program that we attended.

Tip: Email millennials sparingly. We don't like to receive "too" many emails, be they personal emails or eblasts from any institution.

4) **Reminders are key:** If we did sign up for your event, we love reminders. Please email us the day of the event with all of the details that would be helpful. Your email reminder will make us even more likely to attend. Please note that just because we signed up for your event does not mean we will attend it. We consider signing up more as a courtesy. Don't take it personally – it's a millennial thing!

Tip: In your event registration page (preferably something quick and easy to complete on an iPhone), please include an option to add a second email address for a caregiver so the link to the program can also be sent directly to their device.

I truly believe that the generation of millennial parents – and millennials in general – are making incredible contributions to the Jewish world.

We may be your next biggest assets – we just have to be let in your virtual door first! And once we're in, more of us are bound to follow.

Rabbi Yael Buechler directs an outreach initiative at *The Leffell School* in Westchester where she is the Lower School Rabbi. Rabbi Buechler (@midrashmanicures) is the founder of [MidrashManicures.com](https://midrashmanicures.com) and recently designed a Zoom Rosh HaShanah card with a cartoonist from *The New Yorker*.

<https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/tips-for-virtually-engaging-millennial-families-with-your-institution/>