

# MONTHLY BAGEL BRUNCH

Having a bagel brunch for member and prospective member families is integral to learning about each other, group cohesion, and building a social core. These regular get-togethers have a large impact on the cohort's feelings of being supported through the difficult process of fostering and adopting.



# BASICS

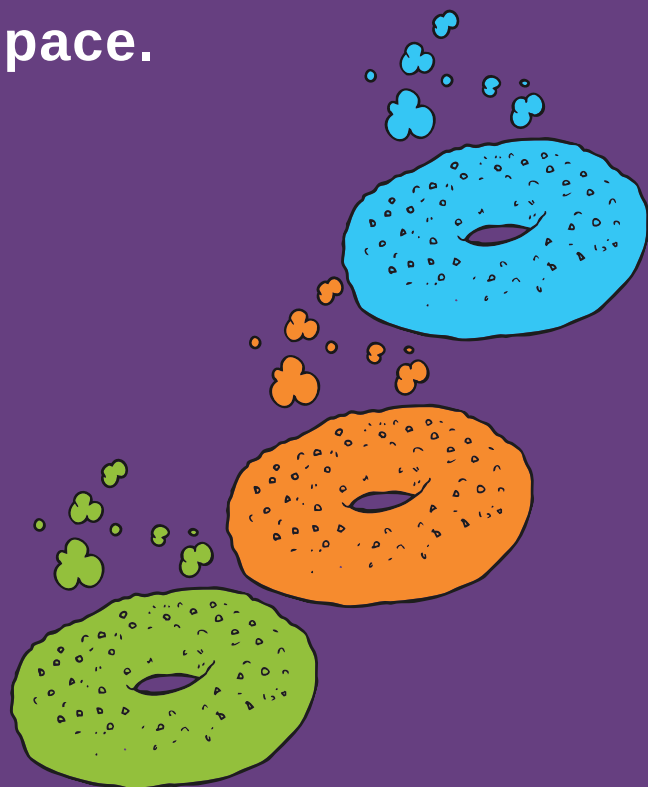
## LOCATION

Hold your brunches in the community building if possible, with a separate (but nearby) room for babysitting the children. Cohort members can also host at their home. There should be a space for the families to eat and meet as well as a separate area for the children to play.

Establish that the location is safe with no easy access to the street or to anything dangerous (kitchen, staircase, tools, small toys, etc.) The brunch must be held in an enclosed space with no street access. There should be no standing water in or near the brunch space.

## SCHEDULE

Choose a set Sunday each month (1st, 2nd, etc.) and a standing time, like 10-12.



# OVERVIEW

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## Leadership

For the first six or so brunches, Second Nurture will have a staff member at your brunch to lead the conversation and facilitate the meeting and greeting of cohort members if they don't already know each other. If Second Nurture is needed for more brunches, we can discuss that.

## Communication

We recommend that you send out an invitation to the membership about a week ahead of the brunch to remind them that it is upcoming and request for RSVPs.

It is our experience that you will need to follow up individually with each family to see if they plan to attend. Invite families to bring tupperware or ziplock bags for leftovers or provide disposable tupperware.

## Babysitters

Each brunch must have two qualified babysitters. It's important that the whole family is invited, but also that the adults have the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with other adult members of the cohort.



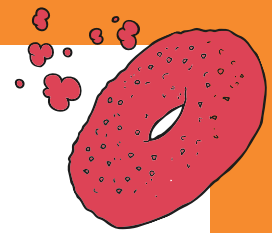
# Supplies and Support

## TOYS AND BOOKS

Store toys and books at the synagogue for monthly use. Provide disinfecting wipes for the babysitters to use to clean the toys once all the children have left, and then store everything at the synagogue, or if you alternate between homes, find a volunteer to transport the toys.

## NAME TAGS

Large tags and markers. (Place on kids backs so they don't peel them off.)



## FOOD

A bountiful, fresh and delicious brunch spread is not only a treat, but integral to the brunch's success. People love to eat! And when trying to decide whether to pack up your kids and their things and drive somewhere, the promise of yummy food is a wonderful bolster of the decision to go. It's important to provide food options for both adults and children. Be aware of allergies, etc.. People are deeply grateful to be taken care of!

Second Nurture provides the food for the first two brunches. The synagogue provides the food for all the brunches thereafter. Second Nurture has decided to NOT ask the families to bring brunch potluck style. This gathering is an opportunity for parents to be cared for in body and soul—not another item on the to-do list.

## BRUNCH ASSISTANT

One person, either hired or a synagogue volunteer, will shop for brunch foods, and then set up and break down the brunch. This person will wait, however, outside the brunch room during the event.



# At the Brunch

## Meeting Agendas

The brunches begin as families arrive. The food should be ready and laid out so that families can start eating on arrival. There is about a half an hour for families to reconnect with each other, to feed their kids, to eat, and to get settled.

Once the kids have eaten, the babysitters walk them to the nearby playroom. Sometimes parents go with them to get them settled. We recommend going around the room and making introductions and sharing a bit about everyone's story. Depending on how well the cohort members know each other and what's happening for them, this process may well take up the rest of the brunch.

Getting to know each other is very important, so there's no need to rush this. Once the cohort knows each other pretty well, the leader may choose a topic of focus and email the cohort ahead of the brunch.

Here are some topics that we've covered in the past:  
Dealing with DCFS and FFA social workers; Support networks; Interracial fostering and adopting; Relationships with our kids' biological families;  
Creating life books—pros and cons

### Cohort Member Milestones

Brunches are an excellent opportunity to celebrate family milestones such as new placements, adoption finalizations, brises/namings, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, (Baptisms, etc. for non-Jewish cohort members)

### Babysitting

There must be two experienced babysitters with the children at all times. Both babysitters are on duty from the moment the first child arrives to the moment the last child leaves. Before and after children are present, babysitters can help set up and clean up the brunch. If there is even a single child present, both babysitters are on duty. Provide the babysitters with the cellphone numbers of the parents or the Coordinator to call if any of the children need their parents. Only parents will change their own children's diapers and bring them to the bathroom.

## Attendance

Expect that attendance may be sparse early on, until people get into the habit of coming, as the cohort grows in size and membership, and as people learn the value of the brunches. Please do not despair and please do not give up! And regardless of the number of cohort families who RSVP, please do not cancel. In fact, it's become so important that during quarantine we had bagel brunches delivered to each family to enjoy while we had a Zoom gathering!