

NJPS 2000-01 Methodology Series

UJC Research Department

Report #5

Enrollment Estimates in Selected Types of Jewish Education: NJPS and the Avi Chai Foundation

NJPS provides an estimate of the total number of students age 6-17 attending Jewish day schools or yeshivas. In addition, NJPS provides estimates of the enrollments of children ages 0-5 in kindergartens, nursery schools, pre-schools and childcare programs under Jewish auspices.

To help validate the NJPS estimates, Table 1 below compares NJPS estimates to estimates of day school enrollments provided by the Avi Chai Foundation in its census of Jewish day schools conducted in 1998-99 (Schick, Marvin. 2000. A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States. New York: Avi Chai Foundation.)

In evaluating different data sources, it is important to examine categories that are as comparable as possible. The category best suited for comparison between NJPS 2000-01 and the Avi Chai census of day schools is the total enrollment in day schools or yeshivas for 6-17 year olds (i.e., 1st through 12th grade in the Avi Chai census).

As Table 1 indicates, NJPS 2000-01 and Avi Chai estimates are very similar, with NJPS estimating 161,000 students in day schools or yeshivas and Avi Chai estimating 153,000. The convergence of estimates supports the validity of both the Avi Chai census and the NJPS.

Other categories in the table are not as well suited to comparison. NJPS asked about enrollments in kindergartens, nursery schools, pre-schools and childcare programs under Jewish auspices for children age 4-5 and 0-3 separately, but did not specify whether the program is part of a Jewish day school. In contrast, the Avi Chai Foundation's data for children age 3-5 includes day school enrollments only. Moreover, the Avi Chai Foundation report states that enrollment figures for 3-year-olds are incomplete and does not provide data for those less than 3 years of age.

The absence of strict comparability between the two data sources makes direct comparisons of estimates for 4-5 and 0-3 year-olds difficult. However, one test is possible: given the more expansive definition of Jewish programs in the NJPS data and the inclusion of complete data for children 0-3 in NJPS, the NJPS estimates in these two categories should be higher than the Avi Chai estimates. The table indicates this is the case, thereby again supporting the validity of the NJPS estimates.

Table 1: Educational enrollments under Jewish auspices by age group

	NJPS 2000-01	Avi Chai Foundation
6-17 year olds: day school or yeshiva	160,954	152,856
4-5 year olds (sum)	40,722	30,328
Kindergarten (sub-sum)	7,958	
Synagogue	396	
JCC	3,958	
Another Jewish organization	3,604	
Pre-school/nursery school (sub-sum)	31,531	
Synagogue	15,973	
JCC	9,857	
Another Jewish organization	5,701	
Childcare (sub-sum)	1,233	
Synagogue	0	
JCC	0	
Another Jewish organization	1,233	
Day school only		30,328
0-3 year olds (sum)	20,431	6,847
Pre-school/nursery school (sub-sum)	13,026	
Synagogue	4,605	
JCC	1,549	
Another Jewish organization	6,872	
Childcare (sub-sum)	7,405	
Synagogue	495	
JCC	4,692	
Another Jewish organization	2,218	
Day school only		6,847
Total day school/yeshiva for 6-17 year olds plus any Jewish program for 0-5 year olds	221,107	
Total day school/yeshiva		190,031