

# Chaperones you can count on

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**P**arents planning b'nei mitzva celebrations typically arrange for food, music, centerpieces, and favors, but their best investment might be hiring a Bar Mitzvah Bouncer.

So says Evan Wofsy, owner of the professional chaperone company based in Livingston that supervises child guests at events — so adult guests can relax.

"Parents want a stress-free night," says Wofsy, who works full time as a math teacher at an East Orange middle school. "They want to enjoy themselves, not worry about the kids."

For the past 13 years, Wofsy has made sure kids attending b'nei mitzva parties are safe — and behaved.

"I love working with kids," he says. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime night for a child, and we are able to help make it special for the family."

The "bouncers" are certified teachers; the number working at an event varies depending on its size. The only chaperone company to restrict its staff to just certified teachers, Wofsy says, "I hire friendly, outgoing teachers with dynamite personalities. My staff knows how to make children laugh. They know how to build rapport with children." Many of Wofsy's teachers are sports coaches who are experienced at managing energetic children.

"We are always looking for outstanding, friendly teachers for our staff. Parents trust me to take care of a hun-

dred 12 and 13 year olds. It's a huge responsibility — and a huge amount of fun," he says.

B'nei mitzva parties often begin with bus transportation that parents have specially arranged between a base point and the party's location. Bus transportation is also where a great deal of mischief can occur, says Wofsy.

The company makes its presence known — and simultaneously sets the scene — by offering young guests at the bus stop the red-carpet treatment, courtesy of wel-

coming blue carpeting with blue velvet roping.

"We make it fun for them," Wofsy says.

"We take attendance from a list provided by parents, making sure every child is accounted for. And we patrol the bus aisle, back and forth, back and forth, making sure there's no mischief."

At the event itself, the staff works relentlessly to contain the children. "We don't let them run around,

go outside, wander the parking lot," says Wofsy. "We don't stand in a doorway with our arms folded. We never stop moving around, making sure the kids are where they're supposed to be."

The staff also makes nonstop trips to the rest rooms, where, Wofsy says, girls tend to congregate for gossip; boys, meanwhile, might entertain themselves by throwing wet toilet paper at the ceiling (which the staff prevents, of course).

The staff keeps children quiet during the night's various ceremonies, such as candle lighting and blessings, and works closely with other vendors, especially deejays and caterers, to accommodate the schedule. At the end of the night, they stay till the wee hours until every child

is picked up by parents.

"People come up to me and tell me they were at a bar mitzva where the kids terrorized the party — they destroyed the centerpieces, they threw candy. They say, 'We love how you stayed on top of the kids. We're going to recommend you to everyone.' You can't put a price tag on comments like that."

The father of three children, ages 6, 4, and only a few weeks old, Wofsy depends on his "very supportive wife," Stacy, a dress designer, to hold down the fort on weekends, when he might be out till 1 a.m.

"Every party is the most important party," he says. "There are no second chances to get it right. When I hear from parents that it was 'the best money we spent,' that's my goal, to wow them 100 percent."



Evan Wofsy plans his upcoming calendar for Bar Mitzvah Bouncer. Photo by Robin Friedman

*Livingston company provides 'bouncers' to keep b'nei mitzva parties running smoothly*



Photo courtesy Bar Mitzvah Bouncer

## Bar Mitzvah Bouncer

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