

# 20th Annual Vermont Kindergarten Conference

Friday, March 30, 2012

Hilton Hotel Burlington, VT

The Vermont Kindergarten Conference offers kindergarten teachers, administrators, early educators, students in educator preparation programs, and others an opportunity to gather, network, learn, and celebrate.

8:00 - REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:45 - WELCOME

**Keynote Address:**

## Great Moments in Kindergarten

Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Vermont Kindergarten Conference, it is appropriate to reflect on the Great Moments in Kindergarten that have occurred over the past two decades. As one of the founders of the Vermont Kindergarten Conference, Jim Squires will offer a refreshing look at all that has happened, and not happened, in policy and practice affecting kindergarten education and the lives of educators and children. Several current and former kindergarten teachers will be on hand to tell stories of their great or not-so-great moments as well. Jim will be certain to remind educators of their critical role in creating Great Moments in the years ahead, too!

**Keynote Speaker: Jim Squires, Ph.D**

Jim is a Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University. He served as Early Childhood Programs Coordinator at the Vermont Department of Education for nearly 20 years. He has been an educator and administrator in childcare programs, Head Start, migrant education, and higher education. Jim serves on NAEYC's Council for Accreditation and has served on more early education committees than he can recall.

10:30—12:30 - WORKSHOP SESSION I

### **A. Common Core: Coming Soon to a Kindergarten Theatre Near You!**

Is it possible to address the Literacy and Math Common Core standards in ways that are developmentally appropriate for kindergartners? How might that look? We will explore the challenges and opportunities in creating learning experiences that incorporate the Common Core standards yet still meet the needs of our youngest students. There will be time for small group work so you can collaborate with your colleagues and develop an action plan to take back to your school or district.

**Presenters:**

**Susan Carey Biggam**, Associate Director of Research and Development, Co-coordinator, Literacy Leadership Initiative; VT READS Institute at UVM

**Marilou Carey Hyson**, Consultant, Early Childhood Development and Education; Adjunct Professor, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

## **B. The Art of Classroom Inquiry**

Two years ago, a group of Vermont teachers were inspired by the work Karen Gallas presented at the Kindergarten Conference in 2010. We formed a group of teacher researchers who gather twice a month to explore our questions and observations about our classroom practice . We have found this experience compelling and rewarding. During this workshop, we will describe how the group developed, what our process of inquiry looks like, and how it has influenced our work with children. In collaboration with the presenters, participants will have an opportunity to 'try on' the role of teacher researcher. We invite you to share our journey and encourage you to begin your own!

### ***Presenters:***

**Becky Crandell**, Kindergarten Teacher, Rumney Memorial School

**Hannah Geier**, Preschool/Kindergarten Teacher, Roxbury Village School

**Christine Hertz**, Third Grade Teacher, Waits River Valley School

**Pat Fitzsimmons**, Assistant Director, Research, Standards, and Assessment, Vermont  
Department of Education

(with support from Karen Gallas)

## **C. Words Come Alive!: Strengthening Reading Skills Through Drama**

Back by popular demand! Research proves that early reading skills are significantly developed by connecting reading with drama - and drama capitalizes on a child's natural urge to play. Come experience this winning combination in this workshop, drawing from techniques evolved over 10 years in Words Come Alive!, the Flynn's Center for the Performing Arts' professional development program. A Flynn teaching artist with two K teachers will present tried-and-true activities that build vocabulary, highlight story sequence, and enrich understanding of character and setting. Prepare to participate actively and have fun - and to leave with activities that will sure to delight your students the next day!

### ***Presenters:***

**Jamie O'Hare**, Kindergarten Teacher, East Montpelier Elementary School

**Beth Parker**, Kindergarten Teacher, East Montpelier Elementary School

**Susanna Olson**, Teaching Artist, Flynn Center

## **D. Teaching Stewardship for a Healthy Future**

Key to nurturing the inner life of the young child is exploring our natural world. From exploration comes the enriched sense of wonder which leads children to an understanding of stewardship at very young ages. This workshop will water you with a myriad of possibilities to use your existing landscape and take it to the next level with inquisitive minds and gentle souls. There will be an opportunity for you to share snapshots of how you have inspired our future stewards of the earth.

### ***Presenter:***

**Carol McQuillen**, K/1 Teacher, Orchard School

Co-founder, SLIMY (Sustainable Living Initiatives Motivating Youth)

## **E. Blocks as a Learning Medium to Enrich Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**

Young children are natural scientists, mathematicians and engineers who explore and make sense of their physical environment. Participants will examine how the medium of blocks can provide rich and meaningful opportunities for children to engage in scientific inquiry, mathematical thinking and engineering.

### ***Presenter:***

**Karen Hewitt**, President, Learning Materials Workshop in Burling, Vermont  
Early Childhood Educator and Toy Designer

## **F. Building Constructive Community- Fostering Strong Family/School Partnerships**

How parent involvement can support the teacher, enrich curriculum and nurture the classroom environment for children. Come hear the story of a Burlington classroom where the teacher, families and children journeyed through the continents. Along the way, they became partners.... learning, discovering and building relationships together.

### ***Presenters:***

**Alice Patalano**, 1st grade Teacher, Integrated Arts Academy in Burlington  
**Sara Poretz**, Mom and Co-President of the Parent and Teacher Organization

## **12:30-1:30 - LUNCH and Celebration**

During the second half of lunch, **Gary Dulabaum** will be leading our celebration marking 20 years of gathering at the Vermont Kindergarten Conference. Gary will provide us with an interactive concert that features his original songs, traditional folk songs, contemporary children's songs and Mother Goose. We'll all sing *songs every child and kindergarten teacher should know*.

## **1:30—3:30 - WORKSHOP SESSION II**

### **A. Common Core: Coming Soon to a Kindergarten Theatre Near You!\***

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\*Repeat of the 10:30-12:30 session

## **B. Songs and Musical Activities that Enhance Social Emotional Development**

Children love music and music is an incredible teaching tool for enhancing social emotional development in young children. Through music and musical activities you can learn to manage daily transitions (using clean-up songs for example), teach simple routines/rules (the music has started, I need to start cleaning up now), and help children participate in the group life of the class (being involved in a performance or simply being involved in a musical experience). Gary will also demonstrate musical movement ideas great for having children interact with each other and for developing self-confidence. Gary's workshop also

explores how children can find expression for their thoughts, values, ideas and feelings through poetry, movement, humor, storytelling, drama and songs. Using music/song as a daily teaching tool helps children connect with their own creativity as well.

### ***Presenter:***

**Gary Dulabaum**, Songwriter, author, visiting artist, poet, educator

## **C. Kindergarten Outside the Box**

Join veteran kindergarten teachers Julie Benz and Sue Blair, both founding faculty at the Sustainability Academy, and their collaborators from Shelburne Farms, veteran kindergarten teacher Linda Wellings and long time kindergarten enthusiast Sarah Kadden, for a hands-on, participatory workshop where they will share the evolution of their program (and support you in yours) into a working model of Early Childhood Education for Sustainability. This model includes an Outdoor Classroom, the use of a year-long essential question, and an integrating theme of community. Be prepared to take your students and your thinking Outside ...the classroom!

### ***Presenters:***

**Julie Benz**, Kindergarten Teacher, Sustainability Academy at Barnes

**Sue Blair**, Kindergarten Teacher, Sustainability Academy at Barnes

**Sarah Kadden**, Shelburne Farms

**Linda Wellings**, Shelburne Farms

## **D. Yoga Workshop for Teachers**

This hands-on interactive workshop is for teachers who would like to learn more about using yoga postures and breathing techniques to promote health, increase self-awareness and relieve stress in young children. Betsy Eckfeldt, a certified Yogakids teacher, will talk about how to create a peaceful classroom using yoga techniques that foster mindful collaboration, respect and inclusion. Teachers who are already doing yoga in their programs are encouraged to bring ideas and resources to share. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a yoga mat or towel.

### ***Presenter:***

**Betsy Eckfeldt**, Certified YogaKids and Kripalu instructor, and former preschool teacher at Waitsfield Elementary School

## E. Books in Bloom: Connecting Botany and Children's Literature

Gardens present possibilities for interdisciplinary learning. Over the past ten years we have developed a collaborative process for digging into children's literature from our two perspectives--biology and literacy-- to reveal rich educational potential. In this workshop we will share our process and invite participants to do the same. Participants will leave with a specific booklist and strategies for discussion and learning experiences involving gardening, the natural world, and literature.

### *Presenters:*

**Drs. Mark Lubkowitz** (Biology) and **Valerie Bang-Jensen** (Education) are professors at Saint Michael's College, curators of The Teaching Gardens of Saint Michael's College, and co-authors of the new monthly column, "Books in Bloom," published by The National Gardening Association.

## F. Address and Support the Unique Needs of Kindergartners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Your Classroom

This session will present a brief overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and evidence-based practices (EBP) that include addressing the core issues of ASD, namely communication and social skills.

A school district team that currently participates in the Vermont Department of Education's ASD Project will share its experiences of implementing EBP, and discuss how systematic training, data-based decision making, and team communication supported these efforts. Suggestions for how you can work to meet the unique needs of a kindergartner with ASD will be provided.

### *Presenters:*

**Kate Rogers**, Essential Early Education Coordinator, Vermont Department of Education  
**Kindergarten Teacher and Special Educator** participating in the ASD Project

3:30 Adjourn

### **Registration Deadline - March 19, 2012**

Cost: \$100.00 per person \$50.00 if a full time student (bring student ID)

Fee for Parking Garage: \$10.00

Follow this link to register online:

<http://creator.zoho.com/allisonkeating/kindergarten-conference-2012>

Payment: Make checks payable to "UVM" and mail to:

Sue Ellen Walsh, University of VT, L/L C150 633 Main St., Burlington, VT 05405

Fax Purchase Orders to 828-0573 Attention: Shirley Rawson

Questions can be sent to [shirley.rawson@state.vt.us](mailto:shirley.rawson@state.vt.us) or 828-5128

NOTE: If you do NOT receive an e-mail from Shirley by March 19, 2012 stating that payment has been received, you will need to pay at the door. Thank you!