



Universal PreK (UPK) Café

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Welcome to the Agency of Education Early Learning Team's weekly electronic UPK Café! Our hope is to share resources, news items and articles related to Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education from a variety of reliable sources to support your daily practice. Some weeks will be short with a few tidbits and some weeks will offer longer strands that are connected to a certain subject.

Thanks for all you do for Vermont's children – we appreciate your hard work, long hours and cute faces you support!

Understanding Motivation: Building the Brain Architecture

Source: National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

A recent [working paper published by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child](#) (December 2018) explores the science of motivation and how positive feedback in early childhood reinforces a child's inherent feelings of satisfaction or pleasure. The development of the brain's motivation systems is most sensitive when infants and toddlers "are learning approach, avoidance, and attachment behaviors". These behaviors are learned best via responsive, supportive interactions from caregiver relationships. The paper further explains how a child's motivation and rewards systems can be disrupted and implications for caregivers and policymakers.

What are the DEC Recommended Practices?

Source: Division for Early Childhood. (2014). DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014. Retrieved from [Division for Early Childhood online](#).

DEC Recommended Practices are a DEC initiative that bridges the gap between research and practice, offering guidance to parents and professionals who work with young children, birth through age 5 who have or are at risk for developmental delays or disabilities.

The DEC Recommended Practices were developed to provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children, highlighting those practices that have been shown to result in better outcomes.

The updated set of practices consists of eight domains: leadership, assessment, environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming and collaboration, and transition.

We are excited to share the Vermont Agency of Education's definition of High Quality Effective PreK Education!

What defines Vermont Universal Prekindergarten Education is the implementation of high-quality, effective instruction by licensed educators who use evidence-based practices within intentionally designed early learning environments. Early educators align curriculum with the Vermont Early Learning Standards while adapting experiences to support the full participation of each and every child to realize their full potential and promote successful outcomes.