



Universal PreK (UPK) Café

November 6, 2019 – Issue 13

We have relocated! After a few weeks of getting unpacked, getting a lay of the land and settling in – we are back in full swing! The Early Education Team and a few other of our AOE teams have made the move to the National Life Building in Montpelier. The rest of the AOE will be joining us in the next week or so.

This week we will be looking who is the Agency of Education’s Early Education Team and what we do! We hope that this can help direct you to the person that provides that support and help you in your daily practice and when supporting families.

Kate Rogers, Early Learning Team Manager, kate.rogers@vermont.gov

Kate Rogers, Early Education Program Manager, holds a M.A from UVM with a concentration in early childhood special education and emotional behavioral disorders. Kate has worked for over 30 years in many different roles and capacities in early childhood education (e.g., Head Start classroom teacher, childcare provider, home-visitor, teacher, school district early childhood special educator, and supervisory union early childhood education program coordinator). She has worked for the VT Agency of Education (AOE) for 11 years as the early childhood special education coordinator and past 4 years in her current role as the Early Education Programs’ Manager. Kate works with the Early Education Team to coordinate and provide statewide training and technical assistance for school district administrators, early childhood and early childhood special educators, as well as public and private prekindergarten education programs. She oversees Universal PreK prequalification, approval and is about to launch VT’s PreK monitoring system.

Standing on her soap box, Kate gladly promotes the use of high quality inclusive practices so that each and every child has equitable access to age appropriate learning opportunities. As a member of AOE’s special education monitoring and comprehensive school improvement team Kate ensures alignment between birth to 5 and K-3 worlds. Kate was a major contributor in revising Vermont’s Early Learning Standards as well as statewide scale up and sustainability of Early Multi-tiered System of Supports (Early MTSS).

She collaborates with national leaders from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Program, Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems, Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention and the Pyramid Model Consortium. Kate represents the AOE and fellow early education team members on numerous national, state interagency, policy committees and is AOE’s designee for Vermont’s Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council and Universal Prekindergarten Interagency Team.

In her spare time Kate enjoys playdates with her 3 granddaughters and new puppy Finley.

Katie McCarthy, ECSE Coordinator II/IDEA 619, katie.mccarthy@vermont.gov

Katie is the state of Vermont's IDEA Part B 619/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator (ages 3 through 5). Though her position sits on the Early Education team, she works collaboratively across many AOE teams and divisions. Her focus is on making sure the special education field, districts, private and public PreK programs, and families receive accurate and digestible information in order to help make the best informed decisions for their young children. Greatest hits at the AOE include being the state's first PreK Inclusion Coordinator and developing resources such as the *Early Childhood Outcomes Practices and Procedures Manual*. Katie's 20 year experience in the education field spans PreK-12 public school systems, higher education, and online enrichment. When not at the AOE, Katie can be found driving her three children to their various afterschool and weekend activities around the state as well as attempting recreate Old Forge style pizza, watching episodes of the Office, and reminiscing about her childhood outside of Scranton, PA.

Leslie Freedman, PreK Monitoring and Assessment Coordinator, leslie.freedman@vermont.gov

Leslie has recently moved from the PreK Inclusion Coordinator to the PreK Monitoring and Assessment Coordinator. With this new position she will be working to help implement the state's first PreK Monitoring System with the use of Assessments (The **Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool - TPOT™** for Preschool Classrooms and the **The Inclusive Classroom Profile - ICP™**) to help establish and support high-quality practices in education and development for each and every child in inclusive programs. She has also taken on the challenging yet rewarding role of Teaching Strategies Gold State Administrator and assists public and private programs as they work to become a Prequalified Universal Prekindergarten Education Program as part of Act 166.

In her newly acquired free time (think empty nest syndrome), Leslie enjoys Vermonting on the weekends, attempting to lift heavy weight as a wannabe powerlifter and spending lots of time with her children and granddogs as well as her own dogs including a new Great Dane puppy, Otis.

Amy Murphy, PreK Inclusion Coordinator, amy.murphy@vermont.gov

Amy is the state of Vermont's IDEA Part B 619 Inclusion Coordinator for the Early Childhood Team. Vermont is one of the only states in the country to hold this important position! Amy will work collaboratively with private and public PreK programs, families, and other state agencies, focusing on the implementation of high quality inclusive PreK practices throughout Vermont. Amy is developing guidance and training materials regarding young children with disabilities and inclusive special education practices, as well as inclusive multi-tiered universal supports within PreK programs. Amy assists IDEA 619 Coordinator, Katie McCarthy, with ECSE technical assistance, annual reporting of Indicator 6 (Least Restrictive Environment),

Indicator 7 (Early Childhood Outcomes), Indicator 12 (Part C to B Transition), and PreK Monitoring to name a few. Amy has worked in online, public, and non-profit settings since 2009, working with families, as well as teaching K-12 in special education. In her down time, Amy spends time with her family exploring all Vermont has to offer!

Michele Johnson, Program Technician Early Learning Team, michele.johnson@vermont.gov

Michele is the state of Vermont's Program Technician for the Early Education Team and for Student Support Services. Michele provides technical assistance and administrative support as part of the PreK Monitoring and comprehensive early childhood assessment system. As the Technical Assistant Michele will also be supporting Vermont's Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) online PreK student information. Michele's 35 years of experience in the early education field has consisted of teaching Preschool for 15 years, providing para support as a SLP aide for 3 years and working for Capstone Head Start at the Learning Together Center for 10 years. When not at the AOE, Michele is busy with her family, friends and granddaughter. Having time with my family and granddaughter is my greatest JOY!

[Coming soon!!!](#)

Act 166 Universal Prekindergarten Education Coordinator

1) Vermont Agency of Education's definition of High-Quality Effective PreKindergarten Education

What defines Vermont Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) 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.

If you have a resource you'd like to share on **UPK Café** or have been forwarded this issue and would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Leslie at leslie.freedman@vermont.gov

Thank you!