



Universal PreK (UPK) Café

February 14, 2020 – Issue 19

Welcome to Issue 19 of the **UPK Café**. The Early Education Team is excited to share and hope you will use **UPK Café** as a regular resource to support and inform your practice as an Early Childhood Educator and Early Childhood Special Educator. The Team shares research, updates, resources and professional articles research relevant to your daily work and practice.

This week we share recent memos the field as well as some new things happening with the Early Education Team – please let us know if you have any questions.

1. On Thursday, February 6, 2020, Kate Rogers introduced the Vermont General Assembly House Committee on Education to the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. Please take a look at the PowerPoint presentation [here](#).
2. Act 166, Vermont’s Universal Prekindergarten Education law, ensures that each and every child who is 3, 4 or 5 years of age and not enrolled in kindergarten has the opportunity to attend a prequalified prekindergarten education program at public expense. This means that each child is entitled to participate in no fewer than 10 hours a week for 35 weeks per school district academic year operated in a prequalified public school or private program at no cost to the family. The attached document regarding allowable use of publicly funded PreK tuition dollars.
3. REMINDER NOTIFICATION: UPK Accountability and Continuous Improvement Annual Assurance Form due by March 15th, 2020.
If you have already submitted your PreK program’s annual assurance -THANK YOU! If you have not, please do so prior to March 15th. As a prequalified universal prekindergarten education program, you are required to submit an annual assurance form to the Vermont Agency of Education to maintain your current prequalification status. Agency of Education website: [Universal Prekindergarten Program Requirements](#).

Below are a few steps to follow to complete your annual assurance form:

Step 1: The AOE has developed an Annual Assurance Readiness Checklist. This document is a readiness checklist that will assist you in preparing to complete the annual assurance form on-line.

We encourage you to review the readiness checklist before going on-line to submit your annual assurance form. The readiness checklist provides directions and instructions for you to gather all necessary information and have at your fingertips prior to submitting your program's annual assurance form on-line.

Step 2: Complete the on-line [UPK Annual Assurance Form](#). Please note: If your program has multiple programs, complete a separate application for EACH program. The statutory authority for this request is 16 V.S.A §289 and VT State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices Series 2600-Prekindergarten Education Rules 2606(h)(k) Requirements of Prequalified Prekindergarten Education Programs and Rule 2612 Monitoring.

Update Your Universal PreK Prequalification Information Please complete the [Changes to Prequalified Program form](#) if you are an approved program and the information reported in your original application has changed. The Agency of Education will use it to verify and update your information.

Changes include:

- VT Licensed Educator renewal date (expiration date).
- Hiring a new licensed teacher/loss of licensed teacher.
- STARS -change in rating and renewal dates.
- Program/Physical Address/Email changes.
- Contact/Director information change.

Desk Monitoring

As part of the UPK Accountability & Continuous Improvement System, the Annual Assurance forms will be reviewed and verified by AOE staff through a Desk Monitoring process. AOE staff may contact programs to request further evidence for verification purposes. Programs will receive a Desk Monitoring Report upon completion of staff reviews.

Questions? Please contact Wendy Scott, UPK Coordinator AOE.UPK@vermont.gov.

4. 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.

As always, if you have a resource you would 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!