



## **Universal PreK (UPK) Café**

### **May 21, 2020 – Issue 29**

Dear Friends,

This issue of the UPK Café resources include: Family Engagement, Family Connections through home languages, Brain Architect's Podcast, VPR/PBS Scheduling, Conversation Starters for Children. VELs: Developing Self.

The AOE's Early Education Team cannot say this enough - your continued work supporting Vermont's children and families does not go unnoticed. We appreciate everything you do for your students and families as you support your own at home during this ever-changing time in our world.

We can't stop talking about our exciting news! The UPK Café is now posted on the [Early Education Team's webpage](#)! Please visit the webpage to explore the resources in current and past issues. You will continue to receive the weekly UPK Café via PreK and/or ECSE list serves.

And as always, if you have found any helpful resources that you would like to share or resources you would like to see, please let us know!

Thank you again for everything and enjoy this long weekend!

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- **EDUCATOR in the SPOTLIGHT** – Share your distance learning experiences and activities with colleagues from around the state! What has worked well for you? What are some lessons learned? Do you have ideas or activities to support student transition to kindergarten? Please let us know!

### **RESOURCES for Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Special Educators**

- **Edutopia:** [Family Engagement: Empowering Families for Distance Learning in Early Childhood](#)  
Early educators can collaborate with families to ensure that young students engage in the hands-on learning experiences they need.
- **World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)** [Family Connections through Home Languages](#)  
This infographic provides educators with information on how home languages play an important role in maintaining communication and relationships with family.

- **Center on Developing Child-Harvard University:** [The Brain Architects Podcast: COVID-19 Special Edition: A Different World](#)

While the coronavirus pandemic has changed many things around the world, it has not stopped child development. In this series of special episodes of The Brain Architects podcast, we aim to share helpful resources and ideas in support of all those who are caring for children while dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.

- **Vermont PBS Scheduling Information Week of 5/25**

Each Wednesday, the [Vermont PBS Week-Ahead Program Schedule](#) is made available to educators so they can plan for the following week. Resources that can be printed and sent home have been identified within the schedule. For more information on how to access PBS program schedules and materials, watch our [At-Home Learning Site Guide](#) video. PreK resources are easily linked to our Vermont Early Learning Standards. **Check out the new resources for Peg + Cat for math and Daniel Tiger for social and emotional connections!**

- **Vermont Public Radio and Vermont Public Television Programming for Students**

VPR's *But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids* is now on every Friday at 1 p.m. from May 8-June 19. Students can listen to the program over the air on [VPR's stations](#) or web-stream at [vpr.org](#). **This Friday, the focus will be space exploration with NASA Chief Scientist, Jim Green!** Supplemental resources for each program are available at [butwhykids.org](#) and the [Vermont AOE Vermont VPR webpage](#).

- **Here are some additional PreK specific resources about space!**

- [NASA Kids Club](#) (PreK - Grade 4; STEM). On this site, you will find games of various skill levels for children pre-K through grade 4. These games support national education standards in STEM -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- [NASA Aeronautics for PreK](#) (PreK; STEM). A collection of six STEM learning modules based upon children's books. Each module focuses on a single children's story book, followed by a STEM thematic lesson, including topics associated with gliders in nature (form and function), balloons (sinking and floating, weight), parachutes (fluid thickness and drag), kites (surface area and lift), helicopters and airplanes (force and thrust), and world flyers (geography and global trade).
- [Recommended Space Books for Kids, 2019](#) (Birth-Young Adult; STEM and ELA) The 2019 recommended space-themed book list for kids of all ages from Planetary Society's Senior Editor Emily Lakdawalla.
- [Storytime from Space](#) and [Space Station Explorers](#) (PreK-Grade 3; STEM and ELA) Astronauts read children's books about space from space to children on Earth!

## RESOURCES for FAMILIES

- **NPR:** [When Will This Be Over? Sesame Workshop's Tips For Parenting During A Pandemic](#)  
Kids have lots of questions about staying home right now. When can I go out to see my friends again? When will this be over? To answer them (and have a little fun), NPR's Life Kit reached out to Sesame Street's beloved monster, Grover. Grover talked to Life Kit about wearing a mask, missing his friends and why it's OK to be sad sometimes.
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** [Ideas to Spark Rich Conversations with Your Children!](#)  
Everyday activities, like deciding whether to have applesauce or yogurt as a snack, could lead to vocabulary-building conversations about nutrition, flavor, texture, or how foods are made. To help you make the most of those moments—and to inspire even more of them—NAEYC offers several easy strategies for sparking rich conversations in this article!
- **PBS.org:** [Selfcare for Parents](#)  
Stress causes wear and tear on a person, inside and out. When you take time for self-care, you are better able to care for your child. Even a few minutes of “you time” can help you recharge so that you can parent at your best. Remember, you are doing a great job by doing the best you can. Keep these tips in mind when you’re feeling overwhelmed.
- **Vermont Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and the Agency of Education (AOE)** are partnering to support continuity of learning for our students and school communities. This partnership provides access to free educational programming through [Vermont PBS At-Home Learning](#).

## VERMONT EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS (VELS)

### **VELS Section: Developing Self**

**Domain:** Approaches to Learning

**Element 2:** Initiative

**Goal 1:** Children show curiosity about the world around them and take action to interact with it and learn.

### **Developing Self Activities:**

- Have a cloud chat. On a beautiful spring day when the sky is filled with puffy clouds, try this classic activity, a calming and creative way to build communication skills. Go outside with your child and lie on your back together in the grass (bring a blanket if you like) or sit together on a porch, on a balcony, or near a window where you can see the sky. Take turns pointing out and describing different cloud shapes and patterns. A fun addition to this turn taking activity is by adapting Eric Carle’s *“Brown Bear, Brown Bear,*

*What Do You See?*" to "Samara, Samara what do you see? I see a bunny me looking at me!" "Mommy, mommy what do you see? I see a Samara smiling at me!"

- Make water pictures. This outdoor activity is a good choice for the first dry, warm day of the season. Give your child a plastic bucket of water, a paintbrush, and an old sponge and together paint "disappearing pictures" on a safe paved driveway, wooden fence or wall. Watch the pictures slowly disappear as the water evaporates. Ask your child why they think their water pictures disappeared. Then talk about what happens when water evaporates into a gas.
- Explore the sun and shade. Take a walk around your backyard, park, or playground to see if there is enough shade. Where is it shady in the morning? Where is it shady in the afternoon? Using rope, sticks, old sheets or pieces of cardboard invite your child build a fun shade tent in a sunny spot. Discuss how the sun moves across the sky throughout the day. Point out your child's shadow during different times of the day. Is it short or tall? And, playing shadow tag is always a hit!

**Books to read with your child:**

- *Please Take Me for a Walk*, Written by Susan Gal
- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, Written by Michael Rosen
- *My Garden*, Written by Kevin Henkes
- *Moonbear's Shadow*, Written by Frank Asch

Again, thank you for all the work that you do and for your continued work supporting Vermont's young children and families during this extraordinary time.

If you have received this issue from a coworker and would like to be placed on the UPK Café listserv, please email Leslie at [leslie.freedman@vermont.gov](mailto:leslie.freedman@vermont.gov).

Be well and stay healthy!

Leslie

**Helpful Links:**

[COVID-19 Guidance for Vermont Schools](#)

[COVID-19 Information from the Vermont Department of Health](#)

[COVID-19 Information from the Agency of Human Services/ Department of Children and Families](#)