



Universal PreK (UPK) Café **June 9, 2020 – Issue 31**

Special Edition: Transition to Kindergarten

Dear Friends,

The Early Education team is hoping you are all doing well as you have made it to the end of the school year. 2019-2020 has been challenging, overwhelming but most of all amazing. We recognize all that you have given to the children and families of Vermont in these past few months and we thank you.

This issue of the UPK Café highlights Transition to Kindergarten resources and activities. These resources will help you stay connected with and support each and every child and their family as they transition from public PreK, home or childcare to kindergarten. The first resource listed below addresses transition to kindergarten considerations during the current COVID 19 response.

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!

RESOURCES for Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Special Educators

- **Agency of Education – Early Education Team:** [Considerations on Transition to Kindergarten During the COVID-19 Response](#)

The typical transition from home and/or early education settings to kindergarten is an important event in children's lives and can be challenging for those who are not prepared for the adjustment. Due to COVID-19, this may be especially true for children whose first public school experience may be directly impacted by the school districts plan for reopening. This resource will help guide SU/SD's to establish and revise kindergarten transition plans and activities that will address remote or site-based learning.

- **Joint State Agency & Building Bright Futures** [Child Care Reopening: Supporting Social Emotional Needs Resources for Vermont Families & Child Care Providers](#)

Early Childhood Educator resource with tools to support the social/emotional needs of children and families as they re-enter child care.

- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)** [Equity Webpage](#). NCPMI promotes policies and practices that advance equity, diversity, and the full inclusion and participation of all young children and their families in early care and education environments.

- **Head Start/Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)**
[Transition to Kindergarten: Collaborations, Connections and Six Steps to Success](#)
This document outlines a step-by-step approach to build, implement, and evaluate a kindergarten transition plan, and includes sections on: The importance of kindergarten transition, forming a transition team, and fostering four types of connections, six steps to transition planning, successful stories of kindergarten transition and resources.
- **Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA). (2018).** [Your Child's Transition from Preschool Special Education to Kindergarten.](#) Transition tips for families who have a child moving from preschool special education to kindergarten. [Spanish version.](#)
- **Vermont PBS: Program Schedule and Educator Survey**
The Vermont AOE and PBS want to know how to improve programming and supplemental resources for the summer and fall. Please fill out a [short survey](#) and share your thoughts. The results will be used to inform next steps. Additionally, this is [the Vermont PBS Week-Ahead Program Schedule](#) for the week of June 8, 2020. Resources available online as well as those that can be printed and sent home have been identified within the schedule.

RESOURCES for FAMILIES

- **North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development**
Foundation for Families: [Fantastic Fours](#)
This handout gives some information about a child's development and learning, based on the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Included are ideas for activities families can do in daily routines that will help support their child.
- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI):**
[How to Use Social Stories to Teach Your Child New Skills and Expectations](#)
This issue of The Backpack Connections Series from NCPMI provides different stories that can be used as tools to teach children about routines and expectations that can be part of their kindergarten day.
- **National Public Radio. (2019).** [Talking Race With Young Children](#) Suggestions to start conversations about race, racism, diversity and inclusion, even with very young children.
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):**
[National Transitions to Kindergarten](#)

In this article, NAEYC provides families tips to help their child when preparing to start kindergarten. Ideas for children who will move to a new school, for children who will stay in the same building, and suggestions for families to help support their child during the transition.

- **PBS for Parents:** [It's Going to be Okay: The Transition from Play-Based Preschool to Kindergarten](#)

A parent perspective when their child transitions from preschool to kindergarten.

- **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)

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:

- As your child gets ready for kindergarten in the fall, start transferring small responsibilities over to your child. After a family trip to the pool, let your child be in charge of emptying the backpack, refilling the water bottles, or hanging up their wet swimsuit. Even when it may be easier for you to complete these tasks, let them accept the responsibility and be proud of contributing to their family “community”!
- Take a drive to the school where your child will be attending kindergarten using the route they will walk or ride in a bus or car. Talk about what they will see as they go to the school. How many traffic lights? Whose house do you see? Then the route back home. Familiarity is comforting for children – even the trip to and from school!
- Kindergarten is different from other grades because there are a lot of firsts. It’s a big unknown that can make kids feel anxious. Help your child get through the first-day jitters—and bigger worries—by talking. Ask things like, “What do you want to know about kindergarten?” Or, “You seem a little nervous. What are you thinking about?”

It might be hard for your child to understand or express these feelings. But asking questions and showing empathy lets your child know you’re there.
- Take a virtual tour! School districts may offer virtual open houses and orientations. These tours can be of the classroom, modeling classroom routines (pick up/drop off, morning meeting, and lunch time) and even a walk around the school building meeting other members of the school community.

Books to read with your child:

- *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes*, Written by Eric Litwin
- *Planet Kindergarten*, Written by Sue Ganz-Schmitt
- *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo*, Written by Rachel Vail
- *The Feelings Book*, Written by Todd Parr
- *The Day You Begin*, Written by Jacqueline Woodson
- **Common Sense Media.** (2020) [Best Books For Kindergarteners](#). These books can help ease first-day-of-school jitters by showing kids the lay of the land: classroom, cubbies, and playground.

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.

Please let us know if you have any distance learning experiences and activities you would like to share as an Educator in the Spotlight. Don't be shy, share with your colleagues!

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.

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](#)