

During December, Pre-K Students, Parents and Staff are Busy Developing Skills *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

If animals play, this is because play is useful in the struggle for survival; because play practices and so perfects the skills needed in adult life.

- Susanna Miller



Dates to Remember

January 10 and 12
ECERS-R Training
(through RECAP)

January 4, 11, 18
District-Wide
Professional Development—Emergent
Literacy Skills:
Comprehension/
Expressive and
Receptive
Language
(through avatar)

Students in our prekindergarten classrooms have settled into their daily routines, are developing relationships with classmates and adults, and developing literacy skills and making plans for work time. This month all UPK students will be four years of age and preparing for kindergarten by developing good habits and skills such as carrying a backpack to and from school, singing songs, identifying their letter links, and participating in a variety of fine and large motor activities. As we move toward the midpoint of the school year students are becoming more confident in their role as learners and familiar with different areas and materials in the classroom.

Prekindergarten staff members are also busy increasing their skills and knowledge through professional development in and out of the classroom. During December High Scope Mentor/Technical Support Teachers are implementing lessons in designated demonstration classrooms as part of the curriculum implementation plan and the High Scope Train-the-Trainer program. They will have completed half of the Train-the-Trainer program in December. At this point two-thirds of the funds allotted for online curriculum coursework have been allocated to classroom staff to increase their knowledge in specific areas of the High Scope curriculum. The remaining funds will be made available to UPK support staff and classroom staff requesting additional funds for High Scope coursework.

Parents are learning ways to support their children's learning at home through communications with classroom staff, newsletters, program events, and classroom visits. Community field trips, Science Saturdays, and the upcoming Academic Showcase scheduled for January 7th at the Riverside Convention Center provide opportunities for parents to access information and learning activities for their children. During the Academic Showcase parents will be able to speak with principals and staff from a variety of Rochester Elementary Schools and register their child for kindergarten.



Celebrating Our Success

submitted by Stacey Holmes

Letter links are used thought out the UPK day. Stepping Stones Learning Center teachers thought it would be fun to dress up like their letter links to reinforce the letter sounds. Juliana Juice box, Lori Ladybug, and Lori Lion. The students were so excited to see the teachers dressed up like their letter links, they shouted "wow look it's Lori Lion"

Large Group Time: Time for Music, Movement, Children's Ideas and Fun!



Children and adults shake the parachute as they sing "Shoo, Turkey, Shoo!"

M'Lou Speranza shared a fun activity in Erica Rzepka's UPK class at the ABC Head Start, Hart St. location. She introduced the song, "Shoo, Turkey, Shoo!" beginning with a story about a mother and her children on a farm. She worked in the melody and lyrics while telling the story, eventually asking the children to join in Part 1 of the song. After children became familiar with the "call and response" part, they demonstrated how they thought turkeys would walk and they practiced part 2:

Part 1

Little girl, little boy, (yes ma'am)
 Did you go to the barn? (yes ma'am)
 Did you see my turkey? (yes ma'am)
 Was my turkey gone? (yes ma'am)
 Will you help me catch him? (yes ma'am)

Part 2

So..... shoo turkey, shoo shoo,
 shoo turkey, shoo shoo,
 shoo turkey, shoo shoo,
 SHOO!

M'Lou then brought out the parachute to add the instruments and movements as she had learned them, but realized that she needed to take the children's lead and modify the activity. The children just

became very engaged in shaking the parachute up and down, so M'Lou had them shake it as they stood in place, singing part 1, and then walk around in a circle holding onto the parachute as they sang part 2. After doing this process a couple of times, children chose a shaker instrument and played it on Part 1, placing their instrument down on the edge of the parachute on the word "sooooo" (which is held longer). Then on Part 2, the adults tried to guide the children to move around the parachute any way they wished (as they had demonstrated before doing the activity) until the last "SHOO." At this point, children would pick up an instrument that was near them and repeat Part 1.

Note: Youtube.com can be a good source for learning melodies of songs that we might not be familiar with. There is a longer version of this song on that website.

M'Lou's reflections of the experience:

Children need to have had lots of opportunities to play with the parachute before trying the original activity; otherwise, they really can't focus as much on the music and movement. The modification of using the parachute in the way the children wanted was good teaching practice, but that would have been a good stopping point for today. In trying to add the instruments and movement around the parachute, some children got off task. The children would have been more successful if I had spread this activity out over a 2 or 3 day period!

- submitted by M'Lou Speranza and Jeanne Herrick



Willoby Walloby Woo (passing a heavy elephant) is a wonderful transition from LGT to Planning Time.

Superintendent's Conference Day

On Superintendent's Conference Day, November 8, there were 4 High Scope consultants presenting to groups of our Early Childhood staff for 3-hour sessions in the morning and in the afternoon. The topic for the day was **"Adult-Child Interaction Strategies to help Scaffold Learning."**

We examined and contrasted climates for children, "laissez-faire, supportive and directive," using group activities to list the advantages and disadvantages to each style. The High/Scope curriculum uses a supportive approach. Children and adults share control. Adults observe children and plan with children's strengths and interests in mind. They join children as partners in play, intentionally supporting their learning. The curriculum content comes from children's interests and the Key Developmental Indicators (KDI's). Active learning is highly valued and adults take a problem-solving approach to social conflict.

We learned about and practiced interaction strategies to encourage active learning. Besides being physically on the child's level, the first strategy we practiced was SOUL (**S**ilence-**O**bservation-**U**nderstanding-**L**istening). Using SOUL, looking for natural play openings and playing in parallel all support us as partners in children's play. By entering children's play using this technique, we avoid making erroneous assumptions about what the child is doing. We also give the child the opportunity to invite us into their play.

Similar strategies are used when looking for opportunities for conversation with children. Respond to their lead, stay on topic, make comments that allow the conversation to continue without pressuring children for a response and wait for the child to respond. Ask questions sparingly, relate questions to what the child is doing and that explain their thought process.

High/Scope Online Courses for all UPK Classroom and Support Staff

The Early Childhood Department has provided the opportunity for many teachers and paraprofessionals/teacher assistants to enroll in online training classes from High/Scope. Additional training money remains available allowing for classroom staff to take another class as well as opening up the possibility for UPK classroom support staff (including special education teachers, SLP, education/disability specialists, coaches and mentors) to also take a class.

More information and descriptions of the classes listed here can be found on the High/Scope website: <http://www.highscope.org> under Preschool Online Training. The Early Childhood department will pay for the training to the extent the funding allows and the department secretary will arrange for the training.

We encourage you to consult with the teacher who provides technical support to your classroom as they have all had experience with online courses. Please submit your request by December 9 so that all requests can be reviewed and forwarded to High/Scope before the holidays. These requests are for any additional courses beyond the first choice requests that were already submitted on the previous flyer. In the event there is not money to cover all requests, the Early Childhood Department will make final decision.

- _____ **Numbers Plus** - \$215.00 per person, 1/16 - 3/5
- _____ **Intentional Lesson Planning** - \$65 per person
3/20 - 3/19
- _____ **Small-Group Time for Active Learners** -
\$125 per person, 2/20 - 3/19
- _____ **Large-Group Time for Active Learners**
\$125 per person, 1/16 - 2/13 or 3/5 - 4/2
- _____ **Planning and Recall** - \$120 per person,
1/16 - 2/13 or 3/12 - 4/16
- _____ **Work Time** - \$65 per person, 2/20 - 3/19
- _____ **Child Observation Record (COR)** - \$240 per
person, 1/16 - 2/27 or 3/12 - 4/16
- _____ **Assessing Preschool Program Quality Using
the PQA** - \$120 per person, 1/16 - 2/20
- _____ **Physical Development: Gross and Fine Motor**
- \$125 per person, 1/16 - 2/20
- _____ **Using COR Data to Inform Instruction** - \$120
per person, 1/16 - 2/13 or 3/5 - 4/2,

If you wish to enroll in one of the above classes, please check the appropriate line and circle date, complete the information below and then **fax to: 262-8273 by December 9, 2011.**

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Mailing address: _____



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Check out our Prekindergarten Website: www.rcsdk12.org/prek

All newsletters are available on our website. Feel free to print and distribute.

Preschool Special Education Regulation Changes Require Additional Parent Notifications *submitted by Robin Hooper and Karen Spawton*

Recent changes in the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Part 200 require districts to inform parents in writing before parents give consent for evaluations or services to be provided. These recent changes in regulation are referred to as "Prior Written Notice" and are required to be provided when preschool students are being referred for an evaluation for special education services. Additionally, parents are required to be notified in writing before special education services are provided, before their child is re-evaluated, or whenever any significant change to existing services is being proposed. The purpose of this legislation is ensure that parents are aware of any proposed change prior to any action taking place so they can approve or make known their decision regarding the proposed change. Parental consent for evaluation and provision of special education services is voluntary and parents can choose to remove their

consent at any time. Although this additional requirement may lengthen the process for parents, it serves to ensure that the parent is the primary decision-maker for their children. Parents who wish to request an evaluation for special education services are required to put their request in writing stating the specific area of concern. For example: I am concerned about my child's speech and would like an evaluation. Parents can use a template provided on our prek webpage for their convenience, but are not required to use the template. The template is available at the Pre-K website under Preschool Special Education. If you are looking at this online, you may access with this hyperlink: http://www.rcsdk12.org/197310105144747820/lib/197310105144747820/PARENT_REFERRAL_LETTER_11-10.pdf