

## Getting Ready for Kindergarten in the Fall

*submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

***We learn more  
by looking for  
the answer to a  
question and not  
finding it than  
we do from  
learning the  
answer itself.***  
***-Lloyd Alexander***

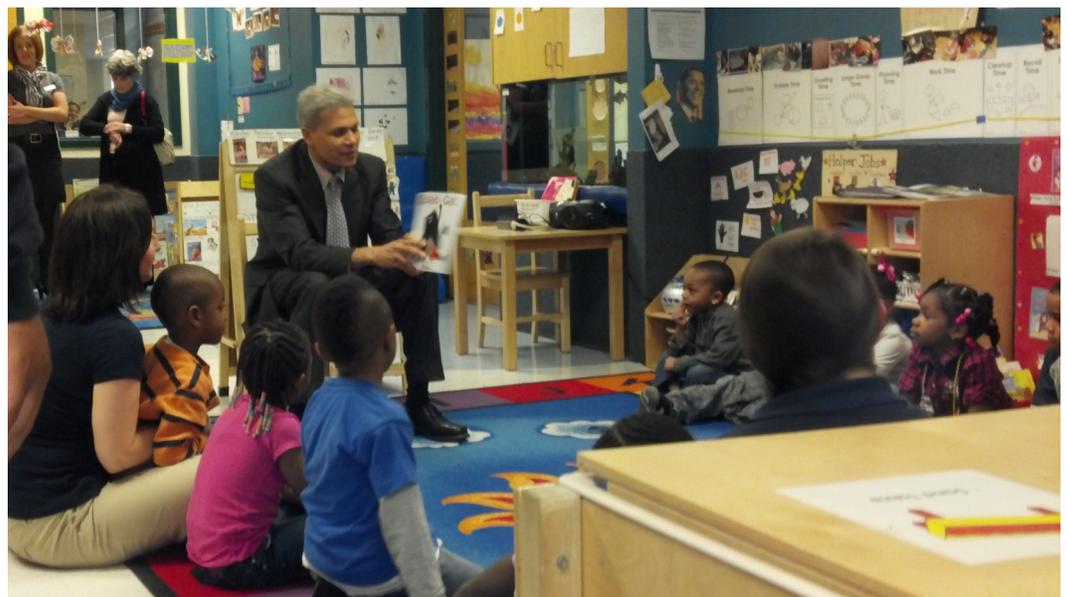


May is a very busy time for our prekindergarten students and their families as they prepare to attend kindergarten in the fall. During the month of May prekindergarten teachers are completing their assessments of student progress to gauge the learning that has taken place throughout the year using the Child Observation Record and the Teacher-Child Rating Scale. Both assessments rely on teacher observation of specific skills and both are used to compare current performance to student performance measured at the beginning of the year using the same assessments. We typically see more than ten months growth for our student population at the end of the year indicating that our students' rate of progress is higher than a typical rate of progress. Throughout the year teachers document progress related to these assessments using anecdotal notes and samples of student work that are shared with parents. It is exciting to see how much learning has taken place during the year.

In May parents and students prepare for their transition to kindergarten by registering for kindergarten, selecting schools, securing transportation and organizing schedules for childcare, work and family activities to fit the full day kindergarten schedule. We are fortunate to have a full day kindergarten program in the Rochester City School District to support student learning. It may take students a few weeks to adjust to attending school all day in the fall; however in my experience of being a former kindergarten teacher when our district provided half day kindergarten and eight

*- Continued on page 2*

## Prekindergarten Welcomes Superintendent Bolgen Vargas!



*Dr. Vargas reads to one of the UPK classes at the YMCA Carlson MetroCenter*

**Save the  
Dates!**

**Transition to  
Kindergarten  
May 19**

**\*\*\***

**Summer Institute  
August 20-21**

**or**

**August 22-23  
at Strong Museum  
Details coming in  
June Newsletter  
Registration will  
be required**

*Reflections—continued from page 1*

years of supervising kindergarten I do believe our students benefit greatly from the full day program in our district.

Parents can support their children through the transition from their half day prekindergarten program to the full day kindergarten program by talking with their child about what to expect when they start kindergarten in the fall, establishing a consistent bedtime schedule before school begins in September and establishing a routine for getting ready for school in the morning. Parents can prepare children academically for entry into kindergarten by reading with them daily and holding conversations with them about things they are interested in discussing to develop language skills. The Rochester City School District is working to ensure our students are reading on grade level by third grade through the implementation of the ROC Reads program. In June each four-year-old student will receive four books to keep and read over the summer as part of the ROC Reads initiative. Four year old students will also receive a Leap Frog word builder to assist them in developing skills in letter, sound and word identification during the summer. In addition, all of our four-year-olds and their families are invited to join us for a Transition to Kindergarten Family Event on May 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM until 2 PM at School No. 33/Ryan Center located at 500 Webster Avenue. See our flyer in this newsletter for further details.

Please join us for this fun and informative free event. We would love to see you there!

## Work Time in UPK



*Architect apprentice in Caterpillar room at RCN*

Using wooden hollow blocks to build during work time allows a child to feel powerful as he is able to build a structure that's even bigger than himself. What joy!

## Rochester Early Childhood Staff Presentation at NYSAEYC Conference



*Karen Spawton, Sheila Murphy and Betsy Wing-Schroeder*

The RCSD Early Childhood Department and our UPK program were well represented at the New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) conference in Buffalo, with a presentation by **Karen Spawton**, Administrative Specialist, CPSE Chair; **Sheila Murphy**, Special Education Teacher, #33 School, Integrated Class and **Betsy Wing-Schroeder**, UPK Teacher, #57 School, Integrated Class.

Their session, **Successful Preschool Experiences for Children with Special Needs**, was offered Saturday morning, April 21. During their interactive presentation they offered recommendations for supporting students and families through the

Committee on Preschool Special Education process from the point of initial concern through evaluation, intervention and implementation of the Individual Education Program for preschoolers with disabilities. They answered several questions from participants throughout their presentation with many participants remaining to ask additional questions. Their work was well received and we are looking forward to the opportunity to have them repeat their presentation for our UPK staff in the future.

## Planning for Transitions *submitted by M'Lou Speranza*

Dan Murty and Shannon Maher taught the children the song, "Fuzzy Caterpillar" and then used it as a transition to go the sink to wash hands for snack. Two or three children at a time pretend first to be fuzzy caterpillars curled up on a leaf, and then turn into butterflies who "fly" to the sink!



*Tune: Down by the Station*

*The fuzzy caterpillars curled up on a leaf,  
Spun their little chrysalises and fell fast asleep.*

*While they were sleeping, they dreamed that they could fly,  
And later when they woke up, they were butterflies!*

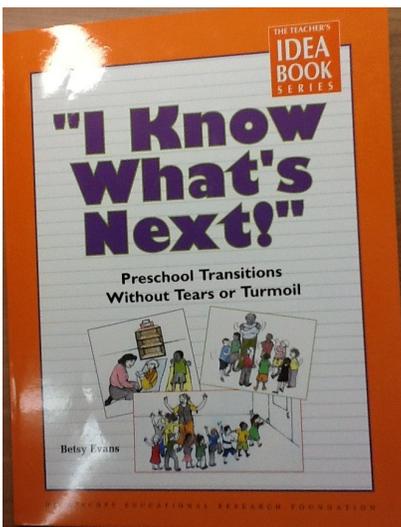
*- Dragonfly UPK Classroom at RCN*

1. Children curl up like fuzzy caterpillars.
2. Butterflies emerge from their chrysalis.
3. Butterflies fly off to wash their hands for snack.



## Transitions throughout Preschool and Beyond *submitted by Jeanne Herrick*

Transitions are typically the most challenging time of the day for both children and adults. In our classrooms, children need to transition many times, even in a two and a half hour day. As they enter your classroom, they are transitioning from home or perhaps they've been at childcare or on the bus before they arrive. We then ask them to transition throughout the various components of our program. Soon our children will be making an even larger transition as they move from Pre-K to Kindergarten.



*Check your HighScope materials for this wonderful resource.*

Planning for transitions provides for less stressful and more meaningful experiences. Our classrooms all have the Daily Routine posted in pictures to help children understand what comes next in their day. Having a child move an indicator along the symbols as they move throughout the day, reinforces their understanding. Transitions include "easy to join" activities to begin Large Group Time. Using activities such as the "Fuzzy Caterpillar" provide a fun learning experience while sending children to the next activity at a controlled pace.

All of our UPK classrooms have been provided the HighScope book, "I Know What's Next!" Preschool Transitions Without Tears or Turmoil by Betsy Evans. In visiting classrooms with HighScope consultants, they consistently stress the importance of planning for transitions and recommend this book. It provides strategies for all the daily transitions, including the longest and generally most stressful, clean up time. You will also find a section on Moving on to Kindergarten in the book. The Early Childhood Department will be offering its Transition to Kindergarten event on May 19. Please see details on back of newsletter. Encourage your families to attend, so they will receive information and tools to support summer learning.



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## Transition to Kindergarten—*Let your families know they should save the date!*



### Transition to Kindergarten Family Event

Saturday, May 19, 2011  
10:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m.

# 33 School and Ryan Center  
500 Webster Avenue

The Rochester City School District Early Childhood Department conducts this event to support families in getting their child(ren) ready for Kindergarten. All participating families of our current Prekindergarten students who will be attending Kindergarten this fall will receive:

Registration available for  
Kindergarten or Prekindergarten

Please bring:

- Birth certificate
- Picture ID
- Proof of Address
- Immunization record
- Guardianship and/or IEP (if applicable)

- Hands-on learning activities
- Mini-workshops for parents
- Free learning materials (see picture to left for sample)
- School bus safety tips
- Light refreshments

*Plan to spend an hour or two engaging in fun activities!*