

Improving Early Learning Programs is a Priority at State and Local Levels *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must be what the community wants for all its children.

-John Dewey



**Register Now!
 November 8
 Superintendent's
 Conference Day**

**See professional
 development
 details on page 3**

**Life is not
 measured by the
 number of breaths
 we take, but by the
 moments that take
 our breath away.**

-Anonymous

Improving the coordination and quality of early learning was a priority for State Education Commissioner John B. King, the Board of the Regents, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Office of Early Learning and a variety of advocacy and stakeholder groups as they worked to submit the Early Learning Challenge Grant last month. The Board of Regents directed State Education Department officials to develop a Determination of Kindergarten Readiness tool for implementation in 2014-15. The Board charged the State Education Department with the creation of a Kindergarten Readiness Advisory Council made up of expert stakeholders to develop the assessment. This assessment will provide a common baseline measure for entering kindergarten students. Readiness findings will not be used to prevent a child's entry into kindergarten, to place them in special education or make other high stakes decisions such as evaluating teacher effectiveness. This low stakes assessment coupled

with the longitudinal data system proposed in the ELC grant application has potential to support improvements in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs across the state.

The Board of Regents also approved the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Standards during October. This final approved version of the New York State Prekindergarten Standards incorporating the Common Core Standards for Prekindergarten will be used as our benchmark in our implementation of the High Scope Preschool Curriculum. During November the Office of Early Learning will be finalizing the New York State Education Department Assessment Guidance for Early Learning focused on prekindergarten through Grade 3. These new initiatives from our State Education Department will guide our development as we work toward continuous improvement of our prekindergarten programs through collaboration with families, staff and community partners.



Celebrating Our Success *submitted by Susan Neal, photo by M'Lou Speranza*

The children in the Honeybee class at **Rochester Childfirst Network (RCN)**, spend a large portion of Work Time at the water table. During Small Group Time, the students poured water into their individual basins and used straws to blow into the water and create small waves. Next, they added soap, repeated the experiment and hundreds of bubbles appeared. This particular student giggled as he blew through the straw and observed the outcome, "big bubbles."

Learning Throughout the HighScope Day in Pre-K

The children at The **Community Place of Greater Rochester** worked with sand with popsicle sticks during **Small Group Time (SGT)**. Zoo animals were buried in the sand and the children had spoons and small containers. Using the spoons to dig in the sand they found the animals and made castles and cages for them. The children were each given a small baskets of sticks to add to their building and creativity. The children were having zoo parties and making cakes and some used the sticks to make fences and cages



for the animals. There was a great deal of language used about the zoo animals and where they were in the sand. Some were in the castle, some outside, some on top, some under the sand. They were telling stories about their zoo animals climbing mountains to get to the party. Knowing that this group is very sensory driven was helpful in planning for them.

- submitted by *Jolette Markham*



During **Work Time (WT)** children worked cooperatively building a house with the hollow blocks in the Honeybee class at **Rochester Childfirst Network**. The house had "rooms" that were used as bedrooms for the students who were building the structure. Later on, the play featured students role playing/pretend playing as dogs, and each room then became a sleeping area for the "dogs." Students used blankets to make the beds.-submitted by *Susan Neal*, photos by *M'Lou Speranza*



Superintendent's Conference Day and other Professional Development

The Early Childhood Department will be providing a half day session presented by High/Scope Consultants on November 8 at the Strong Museum. Participants will choose to attend the morning session from 8:30 until 11:30 or the afternoon session from 12:30 until 3:30. The topic for the day is **“Adult-Child Interaction Strategies to help Scaffold Learning.”** This session will examine methods of interacting with children, including conversational techniques that support children’s learning throughout the day.

Registration for Superintendent’s Day will be available on avatar. If you do not have access, please let us know and we will see that you are included.

Throughout the year, there will be 5 additional required trainings for all UPK teachers. These will be offered with a choice of 6 different times for each as follows:

- Pre-K Assessment: COR on October 12, 19 or 26

- Emergent Literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Phonological Awareness on November 9, 16 or 30
- Emergent Literacy Skills: Comprehension/ Expressive and Receptive Language on January 4, 11 or 18
- Emergent Literacy Skills: Letters and Sounds on February 1, 8 or 15
- Numbers Plus: An Overview on April 4, 18 or 25

These sessions are listed for registration on avatar. RCSD teachers will register based on Zone and Tier and community teachers will register as assigned by their directors. Your use of avatar facilitates our planning for numbers and our communication to participants regarding materials needed for each session.

Additional optional offerings will be available on avatar as well throughout the year:

<https://rochesterny.courseinsite.com>

District Wide Professional Development



At our recent District-Wide meeting, teachers learned a chant using the “Separation” method suggested in the High/Scope Teaching Model. Here, the movements of a song are taught before the words, or vice versa. It is easier for children to learn if we use only one presentation

modality at a time, in this case, first the visual (demonstration), then the auditory (saying or singing the words). Children can feel successful just by doing the movements, even if they can’t sing all the words to a particular song. For more information, see the High/Scope book, Movement Plus Rhymes, Songs, and Singing Games. *submitted by M’Lou Speranza*

In addition to M’Lou’s transition stretch, we examined the new indicator “0” on the COR, and how we use the COR anecdotal notes to plan. In small groups we participated in activities using the book, COR: What’s Next. Teachers discovered new ways to use this practical resource.

Please note that the sequence of the topics listed above has changed. Our next topic for the November District Wide meetings is Emergent Literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Phonological Awareness. At the time that this was written, the details have not been finalized. The planning team is likely to draw on a couple of the resources all of our UPK classes were given this past spring: Fee, Fie, Phonemic Awareness and Let’s Talk Literacy.

All of the sessions are listed on avatar. We request that both District and CBO teachers register using avatar so we will have an accurate count so we can ensure the appropriate materials and chairs are available. We will likely request that one or both of the above resources be brought with you to the session. Please register for all of your sessions now and we will send reminders to bring any needed materials as the session approaches.

A great deal of what we see still depends on what we’re looking for.
-Anonymous



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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.

Rochester Preschool Parent Program Families Enjoy Pre-K@College

*submitted by Terri Kenyon, UPK Teacher
at #23 school*

Many Rochester Preschool-Parent Program Families braved the rain Saturday, October 15th to attend Pre-K at Nazareth College. Students and their families had a chance to visit the college and see first-hand the many opportunities available at this fine institution. Nazareth students worked individually with each Pre-K student, bringing them around to various stations, including nutrition, literacy, science, puzzles, math, music and so much more.

Local author, Will Hubbell, read from his book, Apples Here! He also offered his own drawing station and was seen sketching many a child. Each attendee received a signed, hard bound copy of his book. A good time was had by all.

Author, Will Hubbell, poses here with Pre-K student who just received his free autographed book. →

