

**Strong Pre-K Enrollment and Programs Position our District for Success** *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

***To be able to listen – without presupposing, classifying, improving, controverting, evaluating, approving or disapproving, without dueling what is being said... such listening is rare.***  
*-Abraham Maslow*



We have maximized our grant funding for our Universal Prekindergarten Program this year for the second consecutive year with our four-year-old enrollment for 2011-12. For years the early childhood department has worked to increase our UPK enrollment to reach this goal and we are pleased to have reached our target for the last two years with the support of our district and agency staff. We are most pleased with the affirmation we have received from the parents who have elected to enroll their children in our program.

During our second year of curriculum implementation we are focusing more closely on the literacy component of the High Scope Preschool Curriculum entitled, "Growing Readers." The Growing Readers literacy component includes the Letter Links program in which each student selects a picture that starts with the same letter and sound that mirrors the initial letter and sound in their name. Last year teachers noted that their students quickly learned their own letter links as well as the letter links of their classmates. Informal comments from several kindergarten teachers indicate they are seeing students transition-

ing from prekindergarten into kindergarten knowing a greater number of letters and sounds than in previous years. These preliminary informal results are very encouraging. Our spring student assessment, the Child Observation Record (COR), indicated that UPK students made an average of 1.6 years growth in the area of Language and Literacy during their Pre-K year.

Prekindergarten teachers will be attending district-wide professional development sessions focused on the emergent literacy skills (letters and sounds, comprehension, speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness). Teachers from our school and agency UPK sites as well as Head Start teachers will be attending these sessions together, further strengthening our early childhood programs in Rochester. Additionally, we are working to promote a smooth transition from our pre-kindergarten programs to kindergarten as a new curriculum promoting learning labs is being rolled out for our kindergarten through second grade classrooms. In this way we are working to position our prekindergarten program to support student success this year and for the future.

**Save the date!**  
**November 8**  
**Superintendent's**  
**Conference Day**

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**Registration for this and other professional development will be online using avatar. See page 3 for details.**



**Celebrating Our Success** *submitted by Abiezer Vega, Bilingual UPK at # 9 School*

Children begin the new school year planting bulbs in many of our prekindergarten classes. Language and literacy skills are strengthened in the classroom as they study and discuss these hands-on experiences. Won't the children be so excited to see the blooming flowers come spring! Won't we all marvel at the growth of our students come spring too!

***Never fear shadows. They simply mean there's a light shining somewhere nearby.***  
***-Ruth E. Renkel***

## Learning at Clean Up Time in the UPK Classroom *submitted by Emily Hasler*

All of the parts of our High/Scope daily routine are extremely important and clean up time is no exception. I think we can all agree that this can be a challenging time for both children and adults! First, we ask children to stop what they are doing at work time; this can be disappointing and frustrating. Next, we ask them to work together and put everything away, even if they didn't play with it!

As educators and caregivers, we understand the importance of fostering important learning and self help skills that will last our children a lifetime. Clean-up time incorporates a wide variety of learning skills such as sorting and classifying. In addition children are experiencing teamwork, collaboration, problem solving and a sense of community. We know it's important, but how do we make it productive, yet fun?

With a little help from fellow teachers, our High/Scope consultants and literature, we have found that the key to a successful clean-up time has been thoughtful planning! In our classroom two strategies that have been particularly useful are from the book "I Know What's Next" by Betsy Evans and High/Scope Press.

The first, called "Tickle Me" is simple. Teachers go around the room "dusting" children they see cleaning with a feather (we use large peacock feathers-also great for large group time). While dusting we sing (to the tune of "Frere Jacques"):



Who is cleaning? Who is cleaning?

Here I come, here I come,

Dust, dust, dust, dust,

Dust, dust, dust, dust,

I'll dust (child's name)

I'll dust (same child or another child).



The second strategy "Whisper Clean-Up" encourages teachers and children to pretend there is a sleeping bear under the house area table. This requires a "quiet clean-up" so as not to wake the bear! We turn off the lights and tiptoe around the room as well. Because we found this strategy was working so well, we have incorporated it into "Greeting Time" by giving children a choice of three animals drawn on the message board to vote on for "Who is sleeping?" under the table at clean-up time.

Finally, we never underestimate the power of a positive attitude and engagement. If we *really* pretend there is a bear under the table, they will too! This has made clean-up time fun in our room, and it has become an integral part of our daily planning.

*Editors Note:*

*Emily Hasler, Teacher of the UPK classroom at St. Paul's ChildCare Center, which is slated to be one of the High/Scope Demonstration classrooms, that will be available for site visits by our other UPK teachers in our district. Check the resources you received from RCSD Early Childhood Department last spring for the "I know What's Next" book as well as many other useful resources. After you've tried out some of the new strategies you've learned, please share it here for all to see.*

## Superintendent's Conference Day and other Professional Development

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

These sessions will be offered from 2:00—3:00 and 3:15—4:15 each of those days at the Phillis Wheatley Library. They will be listed for registration on avatar. RCSD teachers will register based on Zone and Tier and community teachers will register as assigned by their directors.

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

<https://rochesterny.courseinsite.com>

## Area Signs and Daily Routine Cards

Among the resources received by our UPK classes this past spring, teachers found Area Signs and Daily Routine Cards. The use of these cards allows children to identify the areas of the room as they plan and read the daily routine sequence to anticipate what happens next in their day.

Some teachers have photographed the area signs so that they can use them for various purposes, slightly smaller than the large ones provided can also serve as area signs, while much smaller ones can be used at the Planning group. The very large ones could also be used for a gross motor planning time as children hop (or another movement) to their planned area with signs on the floor.

*Children comb their babies' hair during Work Time.*



*Children work at Water Table (notice sign)*

The daily routine cards are sized in proportion to the amount of time devoted to each segment of the day. The cards can be displayed vertically or horizontally. Blank cards are also included for special segments of the day such as field trips.

The children in the SW YMCA UPK class notice the area signs and daily routine cards as they move throughout their day. An added benefit for our mobile population is that when children move to different UPK locations in Rochester, they will be familiar with the names for the room areas and understand the parts of the daily routine.



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Check out our Prekindergarten Website: [www.rcsdk12.org/prek](http://www.rcsdk12.org/prek)

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262-8140 [www.rcsdk12.org/prek](http://www.rcsdk12.org/prek)

Be sure to visit our Prekindergarten website where you will find many valuable resources. On the main page you will see the links for information on all of our programs. In the left column you will find information in these categories:

- **Embedded Professional Development** which includes Moving Minds and Music Building Blocks. Explore further and teachers will find strategies and ideas as well as printable resources for the classroom.
- **Prekindergarten Newsletter** allows you to access and print all of our past newsletters. This publication is now in it's 7th year!
- **Prekindergarten Program** provides links to facts about the quality of our program as well as a link to take you deeper into our district-wide curriculum, HighScope. Once there you can link directly to their website or specific pages on their site, including their
- **Prekindergarten Registration** for details on process.
- **Resources** for early childhood links.
- **Prekindergarten Parents** for information and photos of family events and participation in prekindergarten.
- **Preschool Special Education** for details on the educational services provided and the steps for evaluation to receive services.

We welcome your suggestions for other helpful information that can be included on the website for community wide access. Photos, notice and news of family events are particularly requested.