

A New Beginning *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior. In play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.

*- Lev Vygotsky
Russian psychologist*



Robin Hooper, Ed.D.

*Executive Director of
Early Childhood Department*

There is an atmosphere of anticipation as we begin the school year with our new preschool students and families on a journey of learning and preparation for success in academics and life. Our prekindergarten staff is focusing on developing relationships with students and families, establishing the daily routine and facilitating the plan, do, review process in classroom learning centers. Our department staff is continuing to assist parents in the registration process and to answer parent questions about our program. The new school year holds promise for our students, families and staff as we stand poised to move forward with our second year of implementation of the High Scope Preschool Curriculum, continued implementation of our interactive whiteboard pilot, continued implementation of our assessment pilot and evaluation of our curriculum implementation process.

During the summer, prekindergarten staff attended the annual Summer Institute professional learning opportunity held at the Strong Museum with presentations provided by High Scope curriculum staff over a four day period. The sessions focused on using the Child Observation Record anecdotal notes to plan student activities and the Growing Readers literacy component of the High Scope Preschool Curriculum. The Summer Institute was well attended by school and agency teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals, special education staff and agency directors. Staff received an opportunity to become certified in CPR/First Aid on a fifth day of training held in August. Our prekindergarten staff is beginning the year well-equipped to meet the needs of our incoming students and will continue to receive support in the form of online course opportunities, workshop sessions, classroom visits, district-wide Wednesday professional development and teacher forums.

A major focus of the prekindergarten program is the development of an active partnership with parents. Each school or agency develops an annual plan for participation of families in the program and the Early Childhood Department provides a calendar of district-wide events for prekindergarten families. Parents and family members provide support for student learning inside and outside of the classroom. Parents and teachers working together to promote student learning are a strong support for our preschool students.

Welcome Back!

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

**Registration for
this and other
professional
development will
be online using
avatar:**

[https://
rochesterny.courseinsite.com](https://rochesterny.courseinsite.com)

**Play gives
children a chance
to practice what
they are learning.**

*- Fred Rogers
American television
personality
1928-2003*

Summer Institute: High/Scope Curriculum on August 22-23 or 24-25

Over 300 professionals, serving the city's Pre-K population in UPK and Head Start sites, gathered at the Strong Museum of Play for two days in August. Meeting in groups by sites, teachers and paraprofessionals/teacher assistants examined the **High/Scope** approach to **Intentional Teaching, Using the COR to Inform Instruction** and the **Growing Readers Curriculum**.

The Early Childhood Department has supplied a library of professional resources to all UPK staff. This training provided an opportunity to take a closer look at some of these materials and how to implement the strategies presented in our classrooms. We began each of the 2-day sessions by looking at Intentional Teaching. The Intentional Teacher provides for both child-guided and adult-guided learning experiences and understands which content (concepts and skills) are learned primarily through child-guided or adult-guided experiences. These experiences are ones in which the children are actively engaged and the adults have created a supportive environment and scaffolded (provided support at the child's developmental level) children's learning.

We examined the Team Planning Process which incorporates specific content areas, children's developmental abilities, children's interests and classroom materials. The team ideally plans daily, using simple planning forms, based on the daily routine. Children's interests and abilities are assessed through ongoing observation and recording of anecdotes.

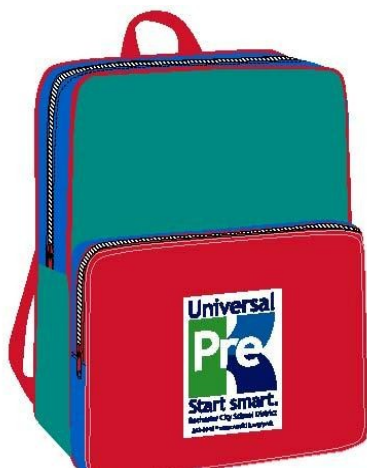
Based on these anecdotes, teachers support children's individual levels of development and provide gentle support extensions as they move to the next developmental stage. The book, *COR, What's Next: Planning Children's Activities Around Preschool COR Observations*, provides specific strategies for scaffolding children from their current level to the next, as they are ready.

We spent our second day together examining the Growing Readers Curriculum. The Curriculum is organized around four key literacy content areas: **Comprehension** (vocabulary building, connection, retelling, prediction), **Phonological Awareness** (rhyming, alliteration, segmentation), **Alphabetic Principle** (name recognition, name writing, letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence) and **Concepts About Print** (identifying book parts, orienting books for reading, distinguishing between pictures and words, understanding the direction of text).

We examined the different types of Growing Readers Cards and how best to use them. We referred to our previous learning about planning and scaffolding in our use of the curriculum. Teachers left with a much greater comfort level after working with the box.

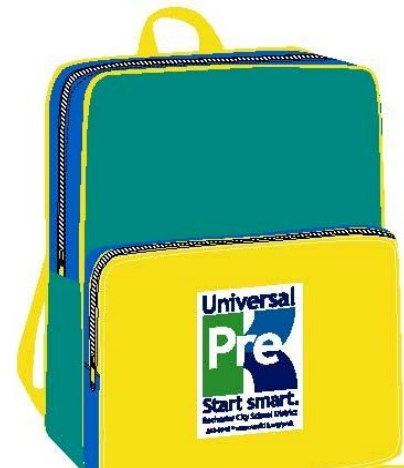
The **Letter Links** component was also featured. It provides a name learning system that pairs a child's printed name with a letter-linked picture of an object that starts with the same letter and sound. The online system enables teachers to print name tags, labels, sign-in sheets and many other creative uses.

UPK Children Have Backpacks to Organize Their Belongings



Backpacks have been delivered to all UPK sites to be given to our entering UPK students (4 year olds). Please use this tool (and encourage parents) to aid your communication with families and keep children's belongings organized.

Since they are identical, identifying individual children's bags can be a problem. For children's security we should avoid writing their names on the outside (inside good though). To reinforce the Growing Reader's Curriculum, a good way to differentiate the bags would be by using each child's "Letter Link." Laminated individual letter links can be attached like luggage tags.



*"Who are you
going to call?"*

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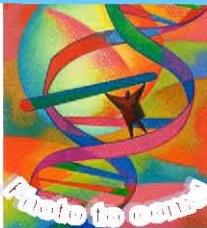
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How Does Your Garden Grow? *submitted by Teri Kenyon, RPPP, # 23 School*



Editors note: Many of our UPK classes have been growing gardens. Teri's photos and story are from the 2010-2011 school year. Fall is a good time to start a new spring bulb garden with your class. Get growing!

Our students grew flowers in our Pre-K garden. In the fall we planted what we thought were all daffodil bulbs. We found out there were a couple of white hyacinths in the bunch. This spring we were amazed as our beautiful daffodils came up—our students remembered the planting that we had done last fall and almost everyone new that the flowers had grown because of the bulbs they had planted (which is a COR anecdote.) Much to our surprise there were also a couple of white hyacinths; we picked them and brought the fragrant blossoms into the classrooms. Our students wondered how other hyacinths got their color and so we decided to put the white blossoms into colored water. One of our students brought in additional flowers from his own garden. We watched in amazement every day as the flowers changed colors.

