

Preschoolers Learn About Themselves

submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper

"If man is to survive, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and between cultures. He will learn that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's exciting variety, not something to fear."

- Gene Rodenberry

Preschoolers learn about themselves, their community and the communities of others as part of the curriculum in our prekindergarten classrooms. Our students explore ways that people are the same and different as they learn about their community in Rochester and communities in other places. At the beginning of the year Pre-K teachers engage students in small group lessons and activities focused on students' families and students' roles in their families and at school. Teachers introduce lessons focused on community helpers and specific places in the community such as the library, post office, store and the bank. Through these experiences students are able to identify their roles in their communities and begin to understand differences in the ways people live in other communities.

Students learn classroom rules in the prekindergarten program and why it is important to follow the rules. This early learning assists students in their later experiences as they advance through the grades and supports their continued success in school. All of these topics are addressed by the New York State Foundation for the Prekindergarten Common Core Standards that are the basis for the lessons implemented by Pre-K teachers.

June is a month of joy and celebration as we prepare our prekindergarten students to become kindergarten students in the fall. I encourage parents to spend time reading the books that will be sent home with their Pre-K child to support their literacy skills over the summer and to visit the library. The word builders that each child will receive at the end of the year have been provided to support your child's continued learning over the summer. Thank you for enrolling your child in our UPK program.

Summer Institute August 20-21 or August 28-29

Sessions will be held at the Family Learning Center, 30 Hart Street, from 9:00—3:00 each day, with an hour provided for lunch. See details on back cover.

Registration required.

Registration will be available on avatar June 1.

All UPK staff should register by June 14. The classes will be open to Kindergarten teachers after that time.

Play Ball! *submitted by Paula Wooters, St. Paul's Day Care*



When children follow their interests, as these baseball fans have, learning and performance increase dramatically. **CCLS: Domain 5, Social Studies—Geography 1, 2, 3.**

Exploring Our Uniqueness *submitted by Joie Markham, Community Place of Greater Rochester*

While out on the playground the other day, some of the children started talking about their skin color. One girl said "I am black and you are white". Well right away I saw an opportunity to address this conversation. I brought over a sheet of white paper and said "hmm this paper is white, but when I hold it up to L----'s skin they look different to me. Then one little boy brought over his black sweatshirt and held it up to his skin and said "My skin is different". The next day (since outside time is at the end of our day) we re-read the book *Shades of people*. Then we took multicultural paint and started mixing the lighter and darker paint. As they were mixing the paint, we would stop and paint on our skin, to see if we have found the shade that matched our own skin color. The children started referring to themselves as shades and mixtures of colors, rather than just black or white. Now we have the multicultural paint available in the art area for the children to explore and mix and paint with.



"Discovering Shades of Color"

Common Core: Domain 5, Social Studies—Geography

1. Develops a basic awareness of self as an individual, self within the context of family, and self within the context of community. a, g. 2. Demonstrates awareness and appreciation of their own culture and other cultures. b, d.

Celebrating Diwali *submitted by Louise Andrews, Family Learning Center*

Children, teachers and parents had a Diwali celebration at the Family Learning Center UPK class earlier this school year. The parents explained that Diwali is a Hindu holiday in Nepali. In Nepal this holiday celebrates their relationship between brothers and sisters. Sisters give brothers new clothes. Floral necklaces and colorful clothes make this a joyous occasion. Sisters paint a colored mark called a *teeka* on the forehead of their brother(s).

Small lit candles are placed in the windows of homes. Special

sweets, nuts, candies are prepared. A large sweet pretzel-like dough treat called is always eaten.

Money can be given in an envelope. The parents played a video on the computer with the music and colorful dances. We all danced and "shimmied" together. Animals too take a special place in Diwali. The cow is sacred, but families will prepare a goat for the meal as part of the celebration. Even dogs are dressed up, decorated, and fed sweets as part of this holiday!



Sharing "pretzels"

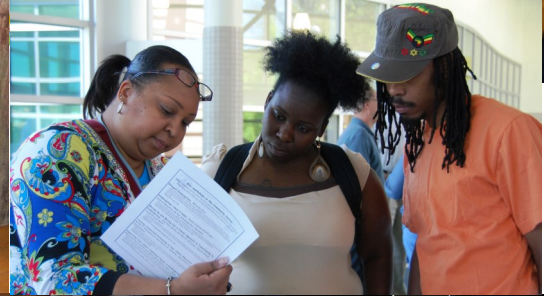


Preparing to mark a teeka on the forehead

Common Core: Domain 5, Social Studies—Geography 1. Develops a basic awareness of self as an individual, self within the context of family, and self within the context of community. a, g. 2. Demonstrates awareness and appreciation of their own culture and other cultures. b, d.

Transition to Kindergarten Family Event *photos by Bonny VanDerMeid*

Over 600 Pre-K family members attended the Transition to Kindergarten event. They participated in multiple learning activities, attended mini-workshops, enjoyed refreshments provided by the Office of Parent Engagement and left with a bag full of learning materials and a packet of activities to continue the learning at home.





Rochester City School District
Department of Early Childhood
131 West Broad Street
Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: 585-262-8140 / Fax: 585-262-8273
www.rcsdk12.org/prek



Message from the Editor:

Producing this Newsletter for the past 8 years has been quite a journey and I want to thank all of the teachers who have contributed to it's success. The good work you have shared helps us all to grow professionally.

I will be retiring at the end of this school year and leave the newsletter in the capable hands of Sandy Hess. Please email future contributions to her at: sandra.hess@rcsdk12.org. I look forward to reading future issues on the Pre-K website.

All the best to you!

Jeanne Herrick

Summer Institute, August 20-21 or August 28-29

Once again, there will be two days of professional development offered this summer for all UPK classroom staff (and their supervisors). These classes will be listed on avatar and registration will be required. If you are unable to access avatar, please check with the Technical Support Teacher who works with your site. You will register for your choice of 3 sessions (1 full day and 2 half days), offered either August 20—21 or August 28—29. This means you will register for three specific classes. The day will run from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. with an hour provided for lunch on your own. You may bring a lunch or leave at 11:30 a.m. and return no later than 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon session.

All will take a full day session:

- **A Walk Through the HighScope Preschool Curriculum Box**, on your day of choice. This class will examine the new curriculum materials ordered for each UPK classroom. RCSD teachers/paras should bring their classroom set of materials. Curriculum sets for CBO teachers and assistant teachers will be distributed at the Summer Institute.

For the other day of training, all will take a half day session:

- **Looking at the Common Core and Kindergarten Expectations.** This 2.5 hour class will be presented jointly by a Kindergarten and Prekindergarten teacher. You will examine best Pre-K teaching practices to prepare your children for Kindergarten.

You will also choose between the following two sessions for the other half day:

- **Looking at CLASS to Support Effective Instructional Strategies.** This session will examine effective *Concept Development, Quality of Feedback and Language Modeling*, using HighScope practices, as measured by CLASS.
 - **Dealing With Grief and Loss.** Whether a family member has passed away, is in the military or incarcerated, children may not understand. This workshop will provide educators with activities and resources to help their students and families who are dealing with grief and loss. Presented by Cara Rager and Marion French, WXXI.
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