



SPECIAL EDITION: Universal PreK (UPK) Café

Issue 6 – June 24, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

This year marked Vermont's 10th year anniversary for Universal PreK. The Early Education Team would like to recognize the efforts and contributions of early educators over the past ten years. The following is a recap of what we have shared with you this celebration year.

Celebrating 10 Years

January - The History of Universal PreK (UPK)

In January, we shared with you the history of Prekindergarten Education in Vermont and how it has evolved. A decade ago, when Act 166 was passed, Vermont embarked on a pioneering journey to provide universal access to pre-kindergarten education. Universal PreK in Vermont was established to enhance early childhood education by making high-quality pre-kindergarten programs available to every child aged 3-5 across the state.

February - Early Multi-Tiered System of Support (Early MTSS)

Vermont's Early MTSS is an innovation neutral framework that wraps around The Pyramid Model Framework designed to build each and every child's social and emotional skills, competencies, and development. Early MTSS also supports initiatives in early literacy, mathematics, science, arts and expression, and social studies, utilizing a two-prong approach: implementing equitable and inclusive high quality evidence practices while building system capacity.

March - Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)

The Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) 2015 is a resource for families, teachers, caregivers, administrators, policymakers, and more. The VELS represents common goals for development and learning across the early childhood years in all settings. The VELS is a resource tool which outlines these goals for adults, guides their practices, and supports each and every child to make progress toward or achieve these goals. This includes making adaptations and accommodations for children's unique circumstances, whether they are typically developing or have diverse abilities.

April - Inclusion

Each and every young child and their family are diverse in culture, language, geography, values, beliefs and circumstances. To support individual growth, development and continuous learning over their lifetime,



the AOE is committed to fully including each and every child in a continuum of high quality, evidence-based early learning experiences, from birth through grade three.

May - Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies formerly known as TS Gold, is an assessment tool used in Vermont's Universal PreK programs to assess children's development and learning. Teaching Strategies helps educators observe and document each child's progress in various domains, including cognitive, language, physical, and social-emotional development. This data-driven approach allows teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the individual needs of each child, ensuring that every learner can thrive.

June - Hopes for the Future

As Vermont celebrates a decade of Universal PreK, the Early Education Team looks forward to continuing its commitment to early childhood education and serving each and every child in Vermont. The past ten years have marked significant strides in early childhood education and Vermont has much to be proud of. The future holds promise for even greater progress, ensuring that each and every child in Vermont has the opportunity to thrive from the very start of their educational journey.

Have a great summer and be on the lookout for more announcements about future Professional Development opportunities, resources and collaboration from the Early Education Team.

Resources

[Vermont Agency of Education Early Education webpage](#)

[UPK Cafe Archives](#)

[Vermont Early Learning Standards](#)

[Vermont Early Learning Standards Manual](#)

[Universal PreK Program Handbook](#)

Future Hopes

Vermont's UPK is a true "universal" system as it provides access to prekindergarten education for each and every Vermont child across multiple settings. As the timeline details, the process of building Vermont's current Universal Prekindergarten system has been many years in the making. The Early Education Team recognizes the work of those who contributed to building what currently exists today. We look forward to future collaborations and educational initiatives in the future to provide equitable and inclusive high-quality early education environments for each and every young Vermont child and their families.

Reference

[NIEER Past Reports since 2003](#)