



Universal PreK (UPK) Café

September 11, 2020 – Issue 38

Dear Friends,

This week the State of Vermont opened school to begin the 2020-2021 school year. The Agency of Education's Early Education team recognizes your dedication and the incredible work you have done to ensure a safe and healthy start for each and every child, their family and staff. We thank you and wish you and your family a healthy and safe fall.

This issue of the UPK Café provides resources that support program planning and implementing **Universal Developmental Screening and Assessment** and supporting social and emotional development to ensure that each and every child's needs are addressed as they begin the new school year.

Vermont's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System Framework

The purpose of [Vermont's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System \(VECCAS\)](#) is to provide a framework of currently utilized assessments and current initiatives that support child assessment and screening, as well as an initial plan for implementation of a statewide early childhood comprehensive assessment system for Vermont. The VECCAS framework is intended to be referenced and used over an extended period of time for reflection, self-evaluation, and improvement in early childhood (birth-grade 3) efforts. This framework helps to address key questions facing those who are developing birth-grade 3 assessment approaches in their schools, districts, and communities.

Universal Developmental Screening and Assessment

Universal developmental screening and assessment involves establishing a process to gather information from a variety of sources including the child's family. Processing and understanding of patterns in a child's social, emotional, and development is critical in effectively implementing evidence-based teaching practices that prioritize children's social, emotional, and learning needs.

As many as one in four children through the age of five are at risk for a developmental delay or disability. Early identification allows programs to intervene earlier, leading to more cost-effective resources and interventions during the preschool years. ([Agency of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families](#)).

Screening helps educators and families better understand a child's development, and ways to support healthy development in children. Screening shows when a child has reached important milestones and helps to identify the first signs of when a child is having challenges or difficulties. [Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!](#) is a coordinated federal effort to encourage healthy

child development and universal screening for children, support for families and providers who care for them.

There can be some confusion about the difference between screening and assessment in early childhood settings. This infographic helps illustrate key characteristics for each type of tool. [Screening and Assessment in Early Childhood Settings](#). Below, we have defined the difference between and assessment.

Screening

- Provides a quick snapshot of a child's health and developmental status.
- Does not capture the full range of development, skill, or capacity among children.
- Only indicates a possible presence of developmental delay or difference and cannot definitively identify or describe the nature or extent of a disability.
- Must be followed by a more comprehensive and formal evaluation process in order to confirm or disconfirm any red flags raised by the screening procedure.

Assessment differs from screening in the following ways:

- Assessment is a continual process of observing, gathering, recording, and interpreting information to answer questions and make developmental and instructional decisions about children.
- Assessment can be used to serve several purposes, such as documenting children's developmental progress or helping early childhood practitioners plan to meet the individual needs of children; whereas screenings are used only to monitor whether children are at risk for delays in their growth and development.
- Assessment measures young children's performance over time rather than attempting to measure their skills and abilities at one point in time.
- Assessment is often a lengthier process than screening and may require collecting information about children from multiple sources in order to create a comprehensive picture of their skills and abilities.

Screening Tools

Ages and Stages Questionnaires

[Help Me Grow: Ages & Stages Questionnaires Online](#) - Help Me Grow is Vermont's integrated system that helps communities identify vulnerable children through routine developmental monitoring and screening for all young children. The impact on a child's long-term success is greatest when developmental concerns are discovered and addressed as early as possible. Help Me Grow Vermont provides parents and caregivers with information about child development, trains professionals to conduct developmental screening, and links families with children ages eight and younger to community resources.

[Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition \(ASQ-3\)](#), may be offered to children ages one month through 5½ years and will provide families and educators with a quick check a child's development. Families will be asked to answer questions about some things their child can and cannot do. The questionnaire includes questions about the child's communication, gross motor,

fine motor, problem solving, and personal social skills. The ASQ-3 assesses the five major areas of development: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social.

[Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Social-Emotional, Second Edition \(ASQ:SE-2\)](#) was developed to monitor a child's social and emotional development including self-regulation and interactions. The questionnaire may be offered every 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48, or 60 months of age. Families are asked to answer questions about some things their child can and cannot do. The questionnaire includes questions about a child's ability to calm down, take direction and follow rules, communicate, perform daily activities (e.g., eating, sleeping), act independently, demonstrate feelings, and interact with others.

Progress Monitoring Assessment: Teaching Strategies GOLD

Act 166 requires all prequalified public and private prekindergarten education (PreK) programs to collect and report annual student progress monitoring data to the Agency of Education. Teaching Strategies Gold® (TSG) is Vermont's approved assessment tool.

[Teaching Strategies GOLD®\(TSGOLD\)](#) is used to assess children from birth through kindergarten. Extensive field tests have shown it to be both valid and reliable. Available online, the system can be used with any developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum. Grounded in 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, Vermont Early Learning Standards, and the Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Teaching Strategies GOLD® helps teachers focus on what matters most for school readiness. It can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills. Teaching Strategies Gold has been adopted as the progress monitoring tool for Universal PreK.

Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TSGold/TSG) Resources:

[My Teaching Strategies GOLD® 2020-2021 Requirements and Guidelines](#)

[Teaching Strategies GOLD® Transfer Request 2020-2021](#)

[School Year Teaching Strategies: Alignment With Vermont Early Learning Standards - Birth Through Third Grade](#)

[Teaching Strategies: Classroom Connect](#) - Stay connected with families and help support children's learning at home with resources that includes: Healthy at Home, a website specifically designed for families with resources and activities to support learning at home.

[Teaching Strategies: Family Observations for Documentation](#)

Recognition and Response

The [Recognition and Response](#) approach is designed to be a systematic problem solving process with early childhood educators and families who work collaboratively to recognize and identify concerns that may be attributed to trauma and/or possible signs of developmental delay. PreK

programs respond to data collected by implementing evidence-based practices, strategies and necessary resources that address each child's individual needs so the child is able to fully participate and be successful in age appropriate learning activities within a high quality inclusive early childhood setting.

Additional Resources for Educators:

[BIRTH TO 5: WATCH ME THRIVE! An Early Care and Education Provider's Guide for Developmental and Behavioral Screening](#)

[Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! An Early Intervention Service and Early Childhood Special Education Provider's Guide to Support Developmental and Behavioral Screening Initiatives](#)

[Help Me Grow Vermont](#) - The goal of Help Me Grow Vermont is to create strong families, which helps promote healthy child development, and ensure that all children reach their greatest potential.

Additional Resources for Families:

[Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive - Families](#)

[CDC Milestone Tracker](#) A free and parent-friendly app from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track a young child's development from ages 2 months through 5 years.

[Parent Milestone Checklist](#) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed milestone checklists for parents and caregivers to use with children between the ages of two months to five years. [Print the Milestone Checklists](#) (PDF)

[Translated Materials](#) Vermont has translated the Milestones Brochure into several languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, French, Nepali, Somali, and Swahili

Again, we thank you for all your hard work to start the school year strong and safe for Vermont's children. Take care of yourselves and enjoy this new school year.

If you have received this issue from a coworker and would like to be placed on the UPK Café listserv, please email Leslie at leslie.freedman@vermont.gov.

Be well and stay healthy,

The Early Education Team