

a message from the editor

Universal Pre-K at Bank Street

Summer is just moments away and with it comes longer days, bright blooms and hopefully time to relax and enjoy. It is also a time to celebrate all of your hard work and dedication in making UPK successful. This year over 38,000 children were enrolled in UPK programs. This is an amazing accomplishment considering that this is the third year of

Universal Pre-K in New York State.

This issue is about celebrating the work that everyone is doing in the early childhood community. There is a spirit of cooperation, collaboration and thoughtfulness

that is pervasive through all segments of the early childhood community. These characteristics are central to our goals for our young children.

Many young children model these characteristics on a daily basis. The spirit of collaboration and creativity was evident when a group of four year olds invited me into a small closet to show me outer space and the stars and planets that they had created. This collaboration is central to the work of the early childhood community. Recently, I had the opportunity to work with colleagues from various agencies in planning a family literacy conference. Again, the spirit of community and collaboration were central to the suc-



cess of the conference. It is wonderful to work with a community who exemplifies these characteristics, in the classroom and out of the classroom.

This summer will bring a change to the center for UPK. We will be moving to West 123rd Street. We will be sending our new information during the summer.

I hope that you all enjoy the summer issue of the UPK Newsflash and may the summer days bring long cool days to celebrate all that you have done this year. I am looking forward to another successful year of Universal Pre-K...

Best wishes for a long summer filled with health, happiness and good times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally" followed by a circled "n" and a circled "d".

universal pre-k newsflash

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From the Center for Universal Pre-K Director's Desk

Maria Benejan, Director,
Center for UPK

Well, yet another year of Universal Pre-K is coming to an end. Wow, yet another year to celebrate accomplishments and hard work. Gee, yet another year of UPK to look forward to. UPK has grown in leaps and bounds with an expected enrollment of over 50,000 children next year. Yes, just like children UPK has grown bigger and bigger in New York City.

It really has been such a pleasure to work with so many dedicated, passion and committed professionals. We hope that the services we have provided through the Center for UPK to Universal Pre-K staff have been beneficial and strengthened the quality of early care and education programs. This year the Center for UPK is most proud of it's first "Teacher and Leader Institute: Working on the Tools of the Trade". Thirty directors and teachers from Universal Pre-K programs participated in the Institute this year. Through the Institute, teams of directors and teachers received over forty hours of course work, advise, mentoring, peer support and site visiting. Each program team also developed an action research project to be carried out in their program. Look out for future articles on the progress of these projects.

Best of luck! Enjoy the summer! Come back refreshed and rejuvenated. We look forward to another year of



our Fellows program and the subsidizing of New Perspectives courses as well as a new and exciting Teacher Mentor Project.

Finally, we are looking forward to moving this summer into new space. The Center for UPK will be moving to 123rd Street and Broadway. We will be sending everyone our new address and contact numbers as soon as we complete the move. See you in September! ●

The Center for Universal Pre-k at Bank Street College of Education

The Mission of Bank Street's Center for Universal Pre-Kindergarten is to help early care and education programs strengthen their services to young children and their families. We provide a variety of services to young children and their families. We provide a variety of services and resources for teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, policy makers, advocacy groups and researchers that promote quality Universal Pre-K programming.

Services include:

- Universal Pre-K Fellows Program Watch for applications in October
- Subsidized New Perspective courses for UPK teachers—throughout the year
- Individualized training and technical assistance for programs
- Support for programs seeking NAEYC accreditation

If you are not on our mailing list please contact Dawn De La Rosa at (212) 875-4516 to be put on the Center's list.

From a Fellow . . .

"She won't let me use any of the blocks. . . ."

Helping children to solve their conflicts

Mercedes Flor, Teacher, District 24, Elmhurst, NY

Working with children to solve their conflicts is one of the greatest challenges for educators. Some think that by isolating the child in a corner (time out) or far away from where the problem occurred, it solves the problem. We need to understand that "time out" should instead be a time when the teacher intervenes in a fight or a problem and removes the child or children involved in the problem to a special place in the classroom to try to solve the problem. The conflict should be solved through communication. The teacher needs to play the role of a mediator and the child or children involved in the problem should be given a time to express their anger or the reason they are acting the way they are. The teacher needs to be fair to every child who is involved.

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It is very important that the teacher understand each child involved in the problem and she should try to make peace among the children. Finally, the teacher should encourage the child or children to go back to where they were playing and that if there is any problem they should talk to each other instead of hitting or destroying somebody else's project. I have been using this technique for four years and it really works and by using positive language and a calm attitude, children feel safe and able to express their feelings.

When an agreement or solution to the problem is not reached, the teacher should encourage children to work in a different area and show them the interesting things that other areas

can offer. Lastly, classroom rules and problems should be discussed during formal or informal meetings and the importance of living in harmony and helping each other as friends. ●

District 21's UPK Update

The dedicated interdisciplinary early childhood team of professionals at District 21 have had a very exciting and busy year. As of this school year, all of our public schools, as well as 10 participating CBO'S have PreKindergarten programs. Here are the highlights from our school year:

Staff development for Teachers

- Kamishibia- the unique and exciting art of Japanese storytelling.
- Math through Music- a fun and interesting approach to basic math concepts
- Creative Curriculum Guide: Serves as a foundation for our PreKindergarten classes based on child development theory.

Parent Workshop/Activities

Some topics that were covered

- How Children Learn through play
- Communicating with Your Child
- Building Self-Esteem
- Lending libraries and craft projects are available daily for parent participation.

Community Workshops

- Children's Health Issues-including diabetes, autism, pediatric care, first aid and safety.
- Family Literacy-promoting literacy by providing information to families in the school community.
- Multicultural Sensitivity-understanding and recognizing cultural differences in our community.

This is just a sample of the myriad of activities offered to our community through collaborative efforts of teachers, teacher specialists, teacher assistants, family assistants and social workers. Our staff meets monthly to develop and coordinate activities based on identified community needs.

Making Connections

Marie Martinez, Teacher Specialist, District 7, Bronx, NY

As a Pre-k Specialist in Community School District Seven, I have had the opportunity to interact and observe many talented and creative teachers. Some teachers have a wonderful dramatic play area in which they integrate different themes such as a "Latin Restaurant" or a "Veterinarian Office". While others have inviting art centers where children are able to use materials freely. Still others are musically talented or have exciting, animated read-alouds.

One teacher in particular, Dorothy McGlynn, has incorporated weekly cooking in the classroom to her teaching practice. Children can choose cooking as an area to go to during center time. Dorothy makes beautiful pictorial recipe charts, which have not only the recipe in print but also photographs that she cuts out from supermarket circulars or magazines to show the different ingredients. Dorothy also color-codes the utensils to match the actual measuring cups and spoons.

These cooking experiences are language rich. In fact when I was sitting with a group of children who were playing with play dough, I heard them talking about "kneading the dough" and "grating the cheese" to make their pretend pizza.

Dorothy was a recipient of the Bank Street College Early Childhood Teacher Awards last year. As a part of her proposal she envisioned extending her cooking center to involve parents. This year Dorothy as well as Elise Ortiz, the Family Worker at P.S. 156, provide "Cooking Workshops" for parents. Dorothy and Elise show parents how to use cooking as an educational, family bonding activity to use at home with their children. The "Parent Cooking Class" has been such a success! Parents are now cooking with the children in the classroom and have formed friendships among themselves in which they have opened up to each other about the joys and stresses of parenting. Dorothy has a reflective journal available to the parents during each session in which the parents write their thoughts about each class. This book turned out to be a lovely keepsake of their time together. (One parent is even thinking about going back to school to become a teacher.)

Since Dorothy's cooking program has been so well received, Christine Marcell, the Early Childhood Coordinator at Community School District Seven, proposed to Dorothy that she share her experiences with cooking during one of our Professional Development days. Dorothy, along with her co-teacher, Elise Ortiz, and myself, put together a workshop titled "An Overview of Cooking in the Pre-K Program." We started by showing a "Classroom Cooking and Parent Involvement" video, which was filmed at P.S. 156. It showed Dorothy's class during cooking as well as scenes from the parents cooking workshops. Dorothy then spoke about how she connects literature to each cooking session as well as the rich language involved when working on such a project. Next we divided into four groups and actually gave our staff a hands-on cooking experience. The feedback from this workshop was very positive. Many teachers stated on their evaluations that they appreciated the fact that the participants in the video were actually from our district. Other teachers wrote that she had been afraid of cooking in the classroom with the children, but after seeing the benefits as well as the process she planned to add it to her practice.

All in all, it was a beneficial experience. What we at Community School District Seven now plan to do is utilize our talents as a community. We are planning interclass visitations to see a great art center or a wonderful story time, as well as utilize our talents for future Professional Development days. We want our children and families to see we are truly a family of learners. ●

Early Childhood Teacher Award

Recipient

Dorothy McGlynn, Pre-K Teacher,
District 7, Bronx, NY

It has been a very exciting and fulfilling year for me since receiving the Bank Street College Early Childhood Teacher Award last spring. The purpose of my project was to entice parents into the school community through a social and non-threatening environment and have them become more involved in their child's education. Cooking with parents was my hook, and it has been successful.

Twice a month since November, a core of a half dozen parents have come together to share recipes from their native lands, discuss parental issues, and become familiar with classroom literature. We have prepared Moro de Gondules from the Dominican Republic, ceviche from Ecuador, Tostones from Puerto Rico, and apple custard pie from Peru. The parents have also learned about foods unfamiliar to them, such as: potato latkas, quiche lorraine, madelines, spring rolls, and Irish soda bread.

To enhance parental involvement within the classroom, PPD screenings were performed in January, enabling parents to turn their cooking experiences into classroom activities. I was also given the opportunity to share my classroom and parental experiences with colleagues at a Pre-K district workshop. This proved to be a wonderful experience because it provided the opportunity to share my skills with other Pre-K teachers, assistants, and family workers and enable them to prepare simple recipes with their students. We will end the project with a feast and a cookbook compiled of parental recipes and other recipes used throughout the year.

For me, the most gratifying aspect of this project has been the parental enthusiasm and the bonding that has taken place. I have also enjoyed exposing the parents to different cooking tools, ethnic recipes, and

UPK Highlights

Our Venture Into Space

Heather Brown, Teacher, District 26, Bayside, NY

During the month of March, our Dragonfly Class, which is one of the Bayside YMCA's UPK classrooms, began to investigate Outer Space. What started out as a teacher-planned unit quickly turned into a child-directed adventure. The children in Caitlin and Jane's UPK class were fascinated by everything beyond the world they knew.

To begin the unit, the teachers introduced things the children already had some knowledge of: the sun, the moon, and the earth. They talked about their colors, shape, and temperature, and if the children could live anywhere else in the stars. Caitlin and Jane then looked at big concepts such as constellations. A non-fiction book, *Zoo in the Sky*, by Jacqueline Mitton, was used as a starting point. The children learned that constellations are named after something they resemble. Caitlin and Jane then encouraged the children to make and name their own constellations using toothpicks and mini-marshmallows. It was wonderful to see the imaginative works the children created. Children named their constellations such things as "the Big Dipper," "Dogs," "My House," and "TV."

From there the teachers began to introduce the nine planets. Every morning during circle time Caitlin and Jane would discuss a new planet and through pictures begin a discussion with the children about what each planet looked like, if you could live there, what each planet is made of, and the order of planets from the sun. Their discussions of planets and space were incorporated into all areas of the classroom. The children participated in creating "Space Food" during cooking. The dramatic play area was transformed in a space station where children pretended to be astronauts. In the block area children began building space vehicles and planning missions. Even in the manipulatives center chil-

dren were eager to put together space shuttle puzzles.

Caitlin and Jane were able to measure the amount of learning that was taking place by observing the class. They noticed that the children were able to show their newfound knowledge through easel paintings. On their own, several children were able to replicate the order of the planets, including their colors, in wonderful easel paintings. The teachers also observed that the children's vocabulary began to reflect many space terms such as astronaut, constellation, crescent, and launch. The children even learned to count down from 10 to 1 (blast off!)

Our Dragonfly Class was so intrigued with this unit that it was extended for two additional weeks. Parents began to comment on their child's excitement on what was happening in school. Many parents were amazed at how much their child was learning about Outer Space. The children would go home at night and be bubbling over with new facts and requests to look at the night sky.

As teachers, Caitlin and Jane also learned a lot from this unit. Not only did they increase their own knowledge about space but also learned that it is sometimes better not to stick to a plan but to allow the children's interests to guide the activities in the classroom.

Here are some of the books that the children enjoyed while involved in this unit:

Moon Cakes, by *Frank Asch*
Sun Up, Sun Down, by *Gail Gibbons*
The Moon Book, by *Gail Gibbons*
The Planets, by *Gail Gibbons*
The Planets in Our Solar System,
by *Franklyn M. Branley*
The Big Dipper, by *Franklyn M. Branley*
Our Stars, by *Anne Rockwell*
Earth Dance, by *Joanne Ryder*
Where the Moon Lives, by
Ivan Gantsche ●

Professional Development

Are you interested in expanding your horizons this summer...if so you may be interested in some gardening, music, or Bibliotherapy just to name a few. Why not add a professional dimension to your summer fun? Here are just a few courses that will be offered through New Perspectives.

- Bibliotherapy in the Early Childhood Setting (preschool-3)
- Finding Diversity in Excellent Children's Literature (preK-3)
- Computer Software for the Disabled Student: Assistive Technology (preK-12)
- Young Children and Computers (N-3)
- Staff Development in Early Childhood Settings
- A Garden Grows Anywhere: Gardening Projects for Young Children (preK-4)
- Creative Movement in Early Childhood Curriculum (preschool-3)

A special treat for UPK teachers, directors, and assistants... subsidized New Perspectives courses. For further information, contact María Beneján at (212) 875-4783.

A Visit to the Goodnight Moon Room

Alice Mulligan, Teacher & Program Director, District 20, Brooklyn, NY

As part of a thematic study entitled Bedtime, the Pre-K students at Our Saviour's Lutheran Preschool in Brooklyn have brought literature to life by transforming their dramatic play center onto the bunny's bedroom from the beloved children's classic, *Goodnight Moon*, by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd.

After reading and discussing the story a number of times, a three-sided room was assembled by hinging together three four-foot high pieces of plywood. The children painted the walls green and mounted construction paper for the windows. They include the moon and stars that they had drawn. The curtains were created by the children with paint. A fireplace was constructed from an old cardboard box and "fire" was made by the children with different colored tissue paper and oak tag. In the Art Center, a number of children worked on making the framed Clement Hurd pictures of "The three little bears, sitting on chairs," as well as the other pictures that adorn the bunny's room. We furnished the room with a combination of found objects from school and those brought in from home, including a rug, a plush mouse and kittens, a telephone, a bookshelf, and books. A bedside table was made from a carton and topped with a real working lamp, "a comb, and a brush, and a bowl full of mush." A child-sized rocking chair and bed were added, along with a little bunny in blue striped pajamas. Finally, a dark blue sheet was suspended over the room. This, along with the lamp and lullabies playing in the background, gave the room a cozy, nighttime feeling.

Although various curriculum components were met through the work that the children did as part of the larger thematic study. The actual creation of our Goodnight Moon room was most effective since it allows our preschoolers an opportunity to dramatically work through the scary issues that they so often associate with bedtime. Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd gave their readers a chance to observe the bunny as he struggled through his nighttime rituals. In the Goodnight Moon Room, our prekindergarteners explore their own nighttime routines as they play out the role of the restless bunny. One of our children has often spoken about the rats that are in the basement of his apartment house. He worries about the possibilities that they will get into the bedroom he shares with his younger brother. In the Goodnight Room, he has often been observed playing with the 'young mouse' and takes great joy in hiding it so that no one can find it.

When the children choose to act out the role of "the quiet old lady whispering hush" as she gently prods her charge to settle down, they assume the powerful role of the caregiver. In this situation, they have the opportunity to control the routines and are able to address many nighttime issues that are so important at this young age. We have observed children in this role comforting the bunny as he is in the throes of a "nightmare".

We concluded this nighttime study with a pajama party. All the children and staff wear pajamas to school and bring assorted blankets, teddy bears, and dolls. At the end of the day, we assemble in the darkened Goodnight Moon Room to read bedtime stories and sing lullabies. This serene concluding experience is a rarity in our usually boisterous, noisy classroom. ●

Something to share with your families. . .

10 Great Reasons to Read Aloud to Children

1. When you hold them and give them this attention they know you love them.
2. Reading to them will encourage them to become readers
3. Children's books today are so good that they are fun even for adults.
4. Illustrations in children's books rank with the best giving children a life-long feeling for good art.
5. Books are one good way of passing on your values.
6. Books will enable your children's imaginations to soar.
7. Until they learn to read themselves they will think you create magic.
8. Listening to stories will help to develop your child's attention span.
9. When you give them this gift you will create memories that last a lifetime.
10. Every teacher and librarian you ever meet will thank you.

Early Childhood Program Award

Bruna Herzfeld, Director, District 3, New York, NY

On January 29th the West 84th Street Day Care Center sponsored by St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's Neighborhood Center was granted an outstanding early childhood program award in recognition of "Excellence and Quality in Education and Services" provided to children & families. The office of NYC School and Community Services of the NYS Education Department presented the award at the Interagency Conference held at the Manhattan Hilton Hotel. This recognition is the culmination of a series of acknowledgements, honorable mentions, and awards that the Center has received over its many years of operation.

The Center has been in existence since 1969. Its goal is to help 35 preschoolers in attendance acquire social, emotional, physical, and intellectual skills so that they can develop into well-adjusted, healthy, knowledgeable, and competent individuals. In 1983 the St. Mathew's and St. Timothy's Day Care Center was the first day care center in NYC to obtain National Accreditation and has maintained it ever since. The curriculum includes a literacy program, music, science and math labs, activities that foster artistic creativity, and computer skills. Children are guided to learn at their own pace through experimentation and discovery. An anti-bias curriculum is integrated into the daily schedule to promote mutual understanding, self-esteem, and racial and cultural awareness.

A wide variety of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are available indoors and outdoors. They are carefully selected to stimulate the children's thinking skills, widen their horizons, and lead them to acquire information and knowledge. A gym, a backyard and a roof area have all been newly renovated offering opportunities for physical development.

The director, Brunu Herzfeld, holds a degree in business administration and a MSW from Italy, as well as a master's degree in early childhood education. These three fields of knowledge and expertise enable her to effectively exercise leadership and supervision in the administration of the school, in the development and implementation of the program, and in the intricate interrelationship between parents, children, staff, the funding agency, and the community at large.

Speaking on behalf of the Parents' Advisory Committee, Sarah Gibbons said the following: "As working parents, we are relieved on a daily basis that our children are at a safe, clean, and nurturing environment. . . . It gives us a great peace of mind."

It is, we believe, the National Accreditation process that over the years has motivated the staff to work as a team and to achieve ever-higher levels of performance, constantly improving upon the service. It is the involvement in the self-evaluation process of parents, administrators, and staff that helps create a sense of unity and a feeling of pride to be part of a great organization: a Center where every one strives to improve the service, setting aside personal interests, rising above professional jealousy — focusing on the interests of the children.

National Accreditation is not a legal requirement, as each state and city has its own licensing and evaluation procedures. The National Association for the Education of Young Children uses a very demanding set of standards. Having successfully met them serves to confirm for families and interested parties the high value of service to the community. ●

Looking for a special book for a child?

Literary Resources

Books for Children on Self-concept

- Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse, by *Leo Lionni*
- My Mamma Needs Me, by Mildred Walker
- The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring, by *Lucille Clifton*
- The Carrot Seed, by *Ruth Krauss*
- The Little Engine That Could, by *Watty Piper*

Books about Daily Family life

- Jesse Bear What Will You Wear, by *Nancy Carlstrom*
- Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth, by *Lucy Bates*
- The Way to Start the Day, by *Bryd Baylor*

universal pre-k newsflash

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