

Pre Boston

Family Newsletter – January 2023

Monthly News from Boston Universal Pre-K for Parents and Caregivers

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I hope that the new year is off to a great start and I wish you and your family good health, abundance, joy, and treasured moments. This time of the year, some make new year's resolutions, some prefer to call them intentions. Whichever one you may have adopted, we hope that good self-care practices and quality time with family and friends are on your list!

Homelinks

To continue to support your child at home, please refer to the homelinks for resources including books and activities related to the curriculum units ([Unit 3](#) & [Unit 4](#)) that are currently being used in the classroom.

BPS K2 Registration

Please know that the BPS kindergarten (K2) registration deadline is fast approaching. It is imperative that you register your child(ren) for kindergarten no later than February 3. It was a pleasure chatting with you at the info sessions hosted by Countdown to Kindergarten. Feel free to reach out to [me](#) with any questions or concerns you might have. If you were unable to attend or would like to access the resources referenced, please see this public [Google Drive folder](#) with resources. You can also find a slide presentation on K2 registration developed by Welcome Services (in 10 languages) in [this folder](#). See more details in the column to the right about BPS registration.

Family Engagement Survey:

Boston UPK kindly requests that you fill out a survey on your experience so far, including your experience enrolling in a UPK program. Please find details in the column to the right. Completing the survey (available in 10 languages) enters you into a raffle to win a \$50 gift card. Please [fill out the survey](#) by January 31.

May 2023 be your best year yet! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me, the Family Engagement Coordinator at your site, or your program's Early Childhood Family Council representative.

Joelle Auguste

Boston UPK Family Engagement and
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Events & Announcements

BPS Kindergarten Registration for 2023-24

The BPS kindergarten (K2) priority registration period for the 2023-24 school year continues until February 3. See the full letter (English version) sent to UPK parents and caregivers of children in community provider settings on November 28 with details on the kindergarten (K2) registration process for 2023-24 [here](#).

Power of Parenting

Boston UPK partner Families First will soon begin the next Power of Parenting programs for parents and caregivers of children ages 3-8. See a flyer (English) on the next page or download the flyer (English/Spanish) [here](#).

Family Engagement Survey

Please complete this survey on your experience enrolling in your UPK program and how your family has been engaged in programs. Your feedback will help us support you this year, as well as help us enhance the UPK experience for future families. Completing the survey enters you into a raffle to win a \$50 gift card. Please fill out the survey by January 31, 2023. [Please complete the survey here](#) by Jan. 31.

UPK Registration for 2023-24

Spread the word to families you know what the UPK application for community providers is expected to open on March 1 for the 2023-24 school year. If you know other families with young children, please let them know they can fill out a [referral form here](#) to stay in touch with us and be notified when the application opens.



In partnership with:



Do you have a child between the ages of 3 - 8?

LEARN ABOUT THE FREE VIRTUAL POWER OF PARENTING™ PROGRAM

PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Meeting once a week for 12 sessions
- Eligibility to earn up to \$100 in grocery gift cards
- Opportunities for Parent Leadership

- Eligibility to receive professional clothing from Dress for Success or Suits & Smiles



WHERE AND WHEN:

- Tuesdays (English) & Wednesdays (Spanish)
- Starting Feb. 28th and March 1st
- 6:00 -7:15pm
- Zoom link sent upon registration
- Optional Info Sessions: Feb 21st (English) and 22nd (Spanish) at 6pm



LEARN

about your child's developmental stages

CONNECT

with other parents and share experiences

EXPAND

your toolbox of parenting strategies

RELAX

by discovering self-care techniques

GROW

individually and as a community



Limited space. Sign up today!
<https://tinyurl.com/UPKPowerofParenting>

For more information, contact: Marissa Lehrman
mlehrman@families-first.org • 781-819-3522

Building Routines to Promote Child Resilience



How do you and your family define resilience? **Resilience** is the ability to adapt to adversity and events that children experience as stressful. Building resilience can help children respond to what is happening around them and navigate anxiety, uncertainty, or other big feelings.

A powerful strategy parents/caregivers can use to help their children build resilience is **routines**. And the New Year is a wonderful opportunity for families to revisit or create new routines with their children. Having regular routines, schedules, and familiar rituals or practices that are meaningful to your family can help children learn how to manage themselves and their environment.

When children do things in a similar way at a similar time, they learn to know what to expect. Predictability can create feelings of comfort and safety. As a result, children are better supported to navigate unexpected events because they can rely on the predictability of family routines.

Dr. Dana Suskind from the University of Chicago says, “Think of a nurturing routine as a security blanket or worn-out stuffed animal that provides a calm, loving environment in where the child feels comfortable exploring their feelings during a setback or challenge.”

- **Opportunities for Routines:** Parents/caregivers can build routines that are unique and meaningful to your family. Routines can be developed during the morning, evening, around meals, related to cultural traditions, on certain days of the week, etc.
- **Build Relationships During Routines:** Families can also develop routines that foster relationship building with children. For example: asking children about their day on the way home from school/childcare, family conversations during dinner, family game nights on Wednesday, going to the library on Saturday, etc.
- **Explaining the “Why” Behind Routines:** Explain the reason behind a routine to help children learn what is expected of them and to feel the positive impact of completing routines. For example: “We go to bed at this time to feel rested after we sleep,” “Let’s eat breakfast to feel energized for the day,” or “Having 30 minutes quiet time or reading books can help us relax.”
- **Consistency and Communicating Changes in Routines:** It takes time to develop routines and children need regular reminders of what these skills and schedules look like for your family. It’s important to be flexible and compassionate with ourselves and children even when we can’t stick to our routines. Children may experience different emotions when a routine is missed and this is an opportunity to offer comfort. For example, “I’m sorry we didn’t get to read a bedtime story together. It makes me sad too. Let’s be sure to make time for reading one together tomorrow.”

What routines are you going to create with your family to support building your child’s resilience in 2023?

Sources:

- [Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers by APA](#)
- [Resilience in Children: Developmental Perspectives](#)
- [Family resilience: The power of rituals and routines in family adaptive systems](#)
- [Want to raise strong, resilient kids? Create ‘Nurturing Routines’](#)

[STRIVE \(Supportive Trauma Interventions for Educators\)](#), is a partner of Boston Universal Pre-K. STRIVE is a collaborative project between Boston Medical Center’s [Child Witness to Violence Project](#) and [Vital Village Networks](#). STRIVE aims to help schools and early education systems of care increase their capacity to **identify, respond to, and optimally support** the unique needs of young children who have been impacted by trauma exposure.

Less Stress, More Hugs!
Molly DuBuc, M.A., M.S.
Consultant at Families First



As we dive back into school and work schedules after the holidays, it tends to feel hectic to get back to the routine. The family is all going in different directions and the kids spend most of their time at school and afterschool programs. In the midst of these crazy winter days, here is your reminder to **get your hugs** in!

It seems like a nonsense reminder - *of course we hug our kids!* Sometimes though, those days of vacation hugs and snuggles are overcome by stress at work, busyness at school, or the juggle of it all. And during the long days of winter there can never be too many mood-boosting hugs between loved ones, right?!

Many studies show us that we (yes, kids AND adults!) need **several hugs a day** to maintain or grow in multiple areas of life. For our little ones, the benefits are exactly what they need at their age. For example:

- **Emotional Resilience** - A hug from loved ones helps children feel supported and that they have the strength to try again in the face of a mistake or failure.
- **Self-regulation** - During the moments that your child is having a hard time, we can use a hug for co-regulation. This allows the parent-child closeness to help calm the child - like a mirror.
- **Health** - A hug from a safe person lowers stress hormones and increases mood boosting hormones! Feeling relaxed and confident rather than stressed and worried is a great perk.

Now, we know what the benefits are, but we also know that not all children are the same. *Some children prefer not to be hugged, which is totally normal.* Offering a handshake, high five, or encouraging words can produce similar benefits for those children. *Some children need a warning, which is also totally normal.* Practicing consent before hugging your children will help them learn that people have control over their own bodies - if they do not want a hug, help them with the words to express that: "No, thank you. I do not want a hug right now."

Overall, it's the **loving, safe connection** that hugs and attention can build between parents/caregivers and their young children. These connections are different for every child, but can benefit their resilience, self-regulation, and health as they grow.

So, as we move through the winter months and we get back into a post-holiday/break routine, remember to **build that connection** with each other when you can. We could all use more stress-melting hugs and connection!

For more connection-building activities check out [these](#) tips about nurturing your child, and to learn more about parent-child connections, check out the [Power of Parenting](#) program!

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) at Home Series, Part 4

By Liz Muscolino, M.Ed., EdS

UPK Behavioral Health Services Liaison

What Is Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and why should I care?

Positive Behavior support, or PBS, is an approach to interacting with children that has been shown to improve child behaviors and adult feelings of well-being. All behavior is communication. When we acknowledge our child's behavior, even behaviors like tantruming, as communication, we can move away from snap judgements and knee-jerk reactions and start to use every situation, no matter how unpleasant, as an opportunity to support a "child's capacity to love, trust, explore and learn". Although most parents (91% from a large, diverse sample) find parenting to be a source of great joy, they also report having many questions about child-rearing practices. PBS, Responsive Caregiving, and Positive Parenting can offer some answers on the journey of parenthood. In each month's family newsletter this year, we share, review, and provide examples of one of the nine key elements of Positive Parenting.

Key Element #4 Respond with interest and sensitivity to your child's cues.

Element description: This element of Positive Parenting is all about about perspective and understanding that all behavior (even tantruming) is communication. "Taking the time to watch and learn your child's cues and communications teaches her that she's important and cherished. Your baby may let you know he needs a break by turning away. Your toddler may let you know the mall has too much stimulation by having a tantrum in the food court." Zero-To-Three encourages parents to be as sensitive as possible in these moments, ready to give children what they need, even if they ask for it in an inconvenient way.

Ideas for using this in everyday moments: Because this element of the Positive Parenting series is all about perspective, consider narrating what you think your child may be trying to communicate with their behavior. If you think your child is turning away because they need a break, say so out loud. Try explaining aloud the meaning of your child's behavior (e.g., "It looks like this birthday party is overwhelming for you," or "Yes, it really hurt when you fell down"). Saying these things out loud may help caring adults remember that all behavior, even unpleasant behavior, is our children communicating. If we keep this perspective, we can be ready to respond with sensitivity no matter what.

Additional Resources: If you want to learn more about this kind of perspective and responding to children with sensitivity, check out this free 30-minute webinar from Conscious Discipline: [Tools For Your Parenting Toolbox: Power of Perception and the Power of Attention](#). Here are some [additional resources](#) about what kind of behavior to expect from preschool-aged children. These resources and others like it may help support a sensitive perspective on children's behavior.

Coming next month: Key Element #5. Provide consistent, age-based guidelines, limits, and boundaries.

Additional Resources and Announcements

New Website for Boston Early Childhood Research Practice Partnership

The Boston Early Childhood Research Practice Partnership (RPP) began in 2007 and includes practitioners from Boston Public Schools and researchers from the University of Michigan, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and MDRC. Together, the team uses data and research to improve early educational experiences and outcomes for young children in Boston and beyond. The RPP team has launched a [new website](#) to share the work! You can explore past and current research studies and all associated publications. Boston UPK community providers are critical partners in this ongoing work through the [Boston UPK Study](#), part of the RPP.



**BOSTON EARLY
CHILDHOOD RESEARCH
PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP**



Basics Insights Text Sign-ups

Boston UPK partners with [The Basics](#), who offers [Basics Insights](#) to UPK families. Basics Insights is a fun, simple way to help young children be happier and smarter. Every week, two text messages are shared with parents that give a fact about development and an activity to try. UPK parents and caregivers of children ages 0-3 can sign up for Basic Insights in English, Arabic, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese [here](#). Download a flyer on Basics Insights (English) [here](#).

Welcome Baby Visits

Boston UPK partner Boston Family Engagement Network (BFEN) offers a one-time celebratory home visit for parents with a child from birth through 6 months of age. BFEN reinforces the importance of reading and talking with your baby for a child's healthy development and school readiness. [Visit the BFEN website](#) for details.



empowering parents...
nurturing children