

# Pre Boston

Family Newsletter – March 2023

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

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family happy and healthy! As we enter the month of March, we welcome Women's History Month. The theme for 2023 Women's History Month is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." As we reflect on the contributions of women in history and today, consider taking advantage of this opportunity to engage in storytelling with your children about influential women and women in your life. This month, I remind you of a few updates below:

## Homelinks

We are excited to continue providing homelinks, which include resources such as books and activities related to [Unit 4](#) that are currently being studied in your child's classroom. We are hopeful that these resources will be a support in efforts to strengthen the school-to-home connection.

## UPK Registration for 2023-2024

The UPK application for community providers for the 2023-2024 school year opened on March 1. If you have a child who will be three or four years old by September 1, 2023 and have not yet applied, please do so. Please also share this with anyone you know with preschool-aged children in Boston. Details can be found at [bostonpublicschools.org/upk](https://bostonpublicschools.org/upk). Thank you for helping us spread the word!

## Survey on Special Education Resources

Boston Public Schools staff asks parents and caregivers to fill out a quick survey on interests and preferences in learning about Special Education, Related Services, and Behavioral Health. See details to the right. You can fill out the survey [here](#).

We are eagerly looking toward spring and continuing our work in partnership with you all. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, the Family Engagement Coordinator at your site, and/or your program's Early Childhood Family Council representative.

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## Updates & Announcements

### City of Boston Childcare Survey

The City of Boston seeks to identify barriers families face to access care and public spaces, in order to create a thoughtful policy to address these issues. The City wants to hear from parents and guardians in Boston with children ages five and under about early education and care needs and experience using public spaces. This includes how families access and experience child care and places such as parks, libraries, and community centers. **Click [here](#) to take the survey** (available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cape Verdean Creole, and Brazilian Portuguese).

### Free Tax Prep Services for Eligible Boston Residents

The Boston Tax Help Coalition offers free tax preparation services to Boston residents who earn \$60,000 or less a year. Tax services are available remotely and in-person at over 30 neighborhood tax sites. Assistance is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, French, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Learn more and see the schedule at [bostontaxhelp.org](https://bostontaxhelp.org).

### Survey on Special Education Resources

Boston Public Schools staff asks parents and caregivers to fill out this [quick survey](#) on interests and preferences in learning about Special Education, Related Services and Behavioral Health. BPS offers free online workshops for UPK parents/caregivers throughout the school year and is looking for feedback on preferred times/days, as well as preferences on topics and other formats for learning. **You can fill out the survey [here](#).**

## Reframe Challenges & Build Resilience!

Molly DuBuc, M.A., M.S.

Consultant at Families First

Our kids face **challenge after challenge** in their earliest years—every new task, new social space, new experience has the potential to be a challenge. And we know that, even as adults, sometimes it is tough to see a challenge in a positive light. Despite the frustration and stress in the moment, challenges are an important part of development in early childhood. They set the stage for kids' approach to disappointment and difficulty down the line—so let's change how we think about them!

**Reframing challenges** to feel less intimidating can change the way we approach them—this change in approach can build resilience. **Resilience** in kids looks like:

- **Bouncing back** from difficult situation
  - I was scared to go to a new school, but I went and really like my classmates!
- **Positive attitude** toward challenges
  - I've never done that big puzzle before, but I really want to try!
- **Coping** with disappointment
  - I'm really upset right now, but I know we can't go to the playground if I'm sick.

Any number of challenging situations can help kids practice resilience. However, one of the best ways to teach them is **modeling**. As parents, we are always showing our kids how to behave in certain situations (lots of pressure, I know!). When you come across a challenging situation (big or small), **model how to reframe the challenge in a positive way!**

For example:

- (*big*) I am having a hard time getting along with someone at work and it is making my days feel bad and long. I am going to try to talk with them at lunch and see if we have something in common that can help us become more friendly. If not, I know I can find a way to be ok.
- (*small*) I'm so disappointed the market didn't have the bananas that we needed to make nana's banana bread. They had a lot of apples though. It's not what I had planned, but making grandpa's apple pie will be a delicious treat too.

These may not be conversations we usually have **out loud**, but letting kids into our heads to hear how we reframe a challenging situation can give them the building blocks to do it themselves.

So, as you move through your day, **notice the opportunities** to *reframe* a challenge with your preschooler, *encourage* them to work through the challenge, and *reinforce* the resilience they show in their daily development!

*For more information about the importance of building resilience in your preschooler, check out a [Power of Parenting](#) program. Contact Joelle Auguste for information on upcoming free Power of Parenting series for UPK parents at [mauguste3@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:mauguste3@bostonpublicschools.org).*

## Positive Behavior Support (PBS) at Home Series, Part 5

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. 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. Each month in this year's family newsletter, we share, review, and provide examples of one of the nine key elements of Positive Parenting.

**Key Element #6:** Recognize and regulate your own feelings and behaviors before responding to your child.

**Element description:** When we are faced with a challenging situation, our first impulse might be to match the intensity that our child is presenting. This element of Positive Parenting suggests that, in these situations, we take a moment to go inward and steady ourselves first before attempting to help our children.

#### Ideas for using this in everyday moments:

For example, if your child is having a tantrum in a grocery store, your first impulse might be to yell or carry your screaming child out of the store. To use this element of Positive Parenting, parents might instead consider taking a deep breath, or several deep breaths, before responding to the child. Recognizing our own emotions as parents in these situations and calming ourselves a little bit before addressing our children will likely lead to a better outcome for everyone.



**Additional Resources:** Want to learn more about this? Check out this article on [co-regulating](#) throughout a child's life. If you're interested in learning more, Zero-To-Three published a full [article](#) on this Key Element.

**Coming next month: Key Element #7** Know that parenting can be stressful and missteps are part of raising a child.

## Free Playgroups for Boston Children Ages 1-5

Did you know that Countdown to Kindergarten offers free playgroups for Boston children ages 1-5 (with an adult caregiver)? Playgroups each meet once a week for two hours and are hosted by trained facilitators from Boston Public Schools. Activities promote social-emotional and school readiness skills, as well as community building.

Playgroups operate during the school year. They are currently held at the Margarita Muñiz Academy in Jamaica Plain and the Mario Umana Academy in East Boston on a variety of days and times. Find a flyer (English and Spanish) [here](#). Caregivers can fill out a form to receive more information: [English form](#) and [Spanish form](#).



## Introducing New UPK Staff

### Tiombé Nikai Smith, UPK Family Partner

Hello, my name is Tiombé Nikai Smith and I am the new Universal Pre-K Family Partner. In the past, I worked with BPS in an elementary setting as a paraprofessional assisting teachers and students with a variety of special needs during the school day. In the afternoons, I cared for the K1 & K2 students in the afterschool program. I have had the honor of serving as the Director of Membership Sales & Service with the YMCA of Greater Boston affording me the opportunity to create meaningful connections with people from many different walks of life. I love to share that I am a proud and doting adoptive Mother of 5 (2 separate sibling sets) and birth mother of a current BPS kindergartener. My experience, while unique, is similar to many loving parents who want nothing but the best for their children.

I am beyond excited to be in this role, supporting families and children once again. I am passionate about children receiving the best we collectively have to offer in order for them to reach their greatest potential. I enjoy many hobbies like beadwork, sewing, making soap from scratch, and studying foreign languages. I fancy myself an excellent cook creating tasty vegetarian meals for my family. I am also a movie/documentary buff and a lover of many different types of music - Afrobeats, Jazz, old-school, new-school, pop and rap just to name a few. I look forward to building new relationships with the amazing UPK team and serving awesome children and families.

