

# Pre Boston

Family Newsletter – September 2022

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

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Nothing gives us greater joy than to welcome your family to the Universal Pre K (UPK) program - a free, high-quality preschool education program - this school year 2022-23! My name is Joelle Auguste and I am the Family Engagement and Comprehensive Services Manager for Boston Universal Pre-K.

As our newest scholars are embarking on this journey to set them up for success, we want to remind you that it is vital that you partner with us. We acknowledge that you are your child's first teacher and that if we support you adequately, together we can lay down strong foundations for future academic success for your child as well as find and secure great resources and advocacy opportunities for you!

To that effect, I will call out the following:

- We will share with you homelinks during the year, which will help you to support the curriculum used in the classroom at home.
- You will be invited to join the Early Childhood Family Council (ECFC), where you will have the opportunity to participate in the UPK governance and have your voice heard.
- We encourage you to connect with the Family Engagement Coordinator at your site for information and support.
- You will soon be invited to the Boston UPK Open House in October to learn about opportunities available to your family.
- We have upcoming workshops on parenting, trauma, special education, and other topics. Please take advantage of them.

You will receive this Family Newsletter once a month throughout the school year, which features news on activities at UPK sites, news from Boston Public Schools, important dates, free events, and articles from staff and partners.

Here's to a fantastic school year filled with opportunities for your child to learn through play, adventures, and joy!

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Dear UPK Families,

Welcome to the beginning of a new school year! My name is Sarah Olia and I have co-chaired the Early Childhood Family Council (ECFC) for the past two years.

The ECFC is a group of parents and caretakers representing each of the UPK program sites. The council meets regularly throughout the year to learn about and provide feedback on UPK initiatives, as well as to share experiences, offer encouragement to each other, and plan family events. I hope you will consider joining the council this year as a representative of your program. You will learn more about this leadership opportunity soon.

Two years ago, my son was a UPK student and this year my daughter is enrolled in UPK as a three-year-old. For our family, the UPK program is the perfect combination of the care we require during the day and the academic, social, and emotional support our children need to thrive as early learners and successfully transition to their next classroom. I am confident that your student will also have a positive experience with UPK.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions!

Sarah Olia  
ECFC Co-chair  
(2020-2022)  
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## Making the Transition to School Easier for Families with Young Children

### By Terra Richards, UPK Special Education Liaison

It's the first day of school and your child begins crying and grasping at your shirt. What do you do? Whether this is your little one's first time going to school or returning, this scenario can have you feeling like you're on an emotional roller coaster and feeling uncertain about your child's day. Honestly, these feelings are natural especially when it comes to your child.

Most parents experience mixed emotions when they send their children to school. But eventually, over time these feelings will begin to fade. Try to remind yourself that this is an important step in your child's development and it will become easier.

Here are 4 tips to manage your emotions during this period of uncertainty. (Before reading, remember that it takes time and commitment to reach long and short-term goals).

#### **Schedule and Routines**

Children need time to acclimate to new transitions. Fortunately, children are resilient and have the ability to adapt to change especially with a little support. Create a schedule and routine that is consistent and predictable. This may help your child feel:

- In control of their environment
- Safe, secure, and comfortable
- Aware of what's happening and what comes next



#### **Your Child is in Good Hands!**

Be patient and give some time. Try to establish meaningful relationships with educators and staff. Each classroom setting should be welcoming and nurturing. Do not hesitate to ask questions, even if you believe you have the answers. You have the right to actively collaborate in any area of your child's education.

#### **Prepare for the Unexpected**

All parents want positive outcomes for their children, regardless of what happens. Sometimes life throws curve balls at us, which creates a sense of uncertainty. For the most part, we hope for the best and prepare for the worst. However, with the appropriate support and guidance, we build the capacity to address barriers and access resources.

#### **Understand Your Options**

You know your little one best! If you suspect that your child may have a disability, you are not alone! Share your child's developmental concerns with your group of trusted adults. This circle may include your child's pediatrician, teacher, pastor, etc. Each organization has different resources that can set you on the right path while supporting your child's educational journey.

## Introducing new UPK Behavioral Health Staff

### **Tacara Kirby, School Psychologist**

I am Tacara Kirby, and I have been a school psychologist within the Boston Public Schools for 15 years. A native Bostonian, I received my undergraduate education in psychology from North Carolina Central University and a Master of Arts and specialist degree in school psychology from Tufts University. During my career in BPS, I have worked with youth ranging from early intervention to high school. However, for the past six years, I have worked primarily with the early childhood population. My role includes work centered on social-emotional learning, improving school climate, consultation with teachers and caregivers, and assessment for special education eligibility. I am excited to join the UPK team and I look forward to collaborating with staff and families in order to support students' social-emotional and academic development. When outside of school, I most enjoy spending time with my husband and two sons.



### **Glendina Duncan, Bilingual School Psychologist**

My name is Glendina Nadine Duncan. I was born in Boston. Both of my parents are from Haiti and I speak Haitian Creole and some French. I have three children and live in Boston. I have been working as a school psychologist within the Boston Public Schools since 2017. Prior to working as a psychologist, I worked at the Counseling and Intervention Center and the Adult Learning Center within BPS. I really enjoy the work that I do and the position God has placed me in. I became a school psychologist because I wanted to provide the proper representation to the underrepresented members within our inner city communities.



### **Nicole Ferrara, Social Worker**

My name is Nicole Ferrara and I am beginning my 17th year as a Social Worker in Boston Public Schools. I have worked both in school-based positions and in district-wide positions throughout that time. Prior to working in BPS I worked as a home-based therapist for both DMH and DCF involved families and in a residential setting for adolescents. My passion is working with children and families to ensure that their voices are heard and they are empowered to achieve their best educationally. I have a masters degree in Social Work and had a dual major in undergrad in Social Work and Human Development. Outside of work, I am married and have three children who keep me very busy with most evenings and weekends spent on sports fields. Our summers and our breaks often include some sort of travel or outdoor adventure which is something we all love. I am so excited to join the BPS UPK team and to collaborate with families and professionals throughout the programs.



## Site Spotlight: VietAID

Students at VietAID Âu Cơ Preschool celebrated in advance of the Mid-Autumn Festival/Autumn Moon Festival.

The Autumn Moon Festival celebrates when the moon is believed to be at its brightest and fullest size, and the time coincides with harvesting time in the middle of Autumn. In Vietnamese culture, this event is known as Tết Trung Thu, where children would go around at night with their brightly lit and beautiful lanterns in the shape of various animals and enjoy festivities such as lion dancing. Moon cakes are usually eaten around this time.

The students were able to make mooncakes out of playdough, make their own lions/dragons using paper plates, and also make their own lanterns. The summer ended with two performances from the students.

