

# Pre Boston

Family Newsletter - November 2021

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

Dear Boston UPK Parents & Caregivers,

We are thrilled for the opportunity to partner with you this year! It has been a pleasure to hear about your children's learning experiences in the classroom. The theme for the month of October is "Family." The books they are reading include "[Peter's Chair](#)" by Ezra Jack Keats, "[Sometimes I'm Bombaloo](#)" by Rachel Vail, and "[The Seven Chinese Sisters](#)" by Kathy Tucker.

This unit is about family and community while teaching your child to identify and find ways to manage their emotions. It has been fun to learn about your child's family through various activities (family boards, photo albums etc...) in the classroom. Ask your child about their impressions of the stories narrated in the books they've read. Take the opportunity to share your own story and be fascinated by what your child knows about their family history, their ancestors. Please refer to the [Unit 1](#) on our curriculum website for additional activities to support the curriculum at home. Unit 2 will start in a few weeks and the theme is "Friends." You can check out [Unit 2](#) to learn all about it and take advantage of the home activities.

Last year, Boston UPK launched the Early Childhood Family Council (ECFC) designed to create a forum where your voice as a UPK parent or caregiver can be heard and members can have the opportunity to influence the governance of Boston Universal Pre-K programs across the city and the curriculum of the Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood. **We are currently recruiting parents and caregivers of current UPK students to join the ECFC.**

This year, we made improvements to the ECFC and worked with community partners to make available to you diverse workshops around parenting, special education, trauma, social emotional learning, and more in various languages.

ECFC members have the opportunity to participate in meetings of the UPK Advisory Committee and the UPK Leadership group, as well as other groups to improve our UPK program and the early learning model across the city.

Parents and caregivers who join the Early Childhood Family Council are paid in the form of a stipend for their time throughout the school year. We recently increased the compensation to help mitigate factors such as transportation, food, and child care that could otherwise prevent you from joining the ECFC.

My plea is that you would consider joining to represent your UPK community-based organization this year if they are still looking for a representative. The deadline is fast approaching and we want your voice to be heard. Please refer to this [flyer](#) for important dates and a list of activities for ECFC representatives and alternate representatives [here](#). Don't hesitate to reach out to the Family Engagement Coordinator (FEC) at your program for additional information.

Joelle Auguste  
Boston UPK Family Engagement and Comprehensive Services Manager

## Events and Announcements

### Power of Parenting Program (Spanish cohort)

Thursdays at 6:15 PM for 12 weeks. Hosted by Boston UPK partner Families First. This group has started meeting but new members can register until Nov. 4. In this free program, UPK parents and caregivers learn about their child's developmental stages, connect with other parents to share experiences, expand their toolbox of parenting strategies, discover self-care techniques, and grow individually and as a community. **Flyer [here](#). Sign up [here](#).**

### Early Childhood Family Council

We need your voice to influence the early childhood curriculum in Boston! Ask your program's family engagement coordinator (FEC) for details or reach out to Boston UPK Family Engagement and Comprehensive Services Manager Joelle Auguste at [mauguste3@bostonpublicschools.org](#) or 857-342-2738.

## Preschooler's Mindset: "I'm still learning!"

By: Molly DuBuc, Families First



Encouraging curiosity in your child is easy because they are naturally inclined to be curious—that is why they ask ALL. THOSE. QUESTIONS! And when parents encourage curiosity, they are creating a growth mindset. In preschoolers, it's all about a curious approach to the challenges or setbacks that they face. New skills take practice, and practicing a growth mindset is a wonderful idea for you and your child.

What can it look like, day to day? We have all seen a child struggle with the dreaded coat zipper—intense concentration, tiny fumbling fingers, snagged fabric, and sometimes the sad cry: "I can't do it!" It is so hard to see them wanting to succeed and also wanting to give up. That moment is your opportunity to practice a growth mindset with them. In this situation, you can:

Encourage them to use the word "yet" at the end: "I can't do it yet. But I will keep trying." Then find an opportunity when nobody is in a rush to let them work on it at their pace!

Talk to them about how long it took YOU to learn zippers. "I know, it's hard! It took me a lot of tries to get it, but I was SO happy when I finally got it!" Kids love hearing about when their parents were little!

Praise the process and celebrate the steps they did get through! "Look at that! You got it all lined up right! Now we just need to get this little piece all the way into here—this is the tough part, but let's try it!"

Practice also means a lot of trial and error. Help your preschooler see challenges they face – at home or at school - as opportunities to grow and learn. We parents play a role by practicing a growth mindset ourselves. Our kids are always watching and learning from us and making mistakes in front of them is a real-life teachable moment. When they see us struggle through an obstacle, make mistakes, or rebound from failure, they learn that these are normal life experiences.

Try using growth statements in real life situations:

<b>FIXED MINDSET</b>	→	<b>GROWTH MINDSET</b>
• I can't do it.	→	I'm still learning!
• It is good enough.	→	Is this the best I can do?
• I'm afraid to mess up.	→	Mistakes are a great way to learn!
• I don't know.	→	I can learn or find out!
• I give up.	→	I can try a different way!
• They are better.	→	How can I learn from them?

These types of statements encourage your child's curiosity and willingness to learn and explore new situations. Watch as your child's growth mindset develops and they begin to welcome challenges, flow through failures, and steer through setbacks. Remember to praise the process and not the outcome, share your own struggles, and encourage trying new skills. Nothing is better than growing together!

**Boston UPK Partner Highlight:**

**STRIVE**

[\(Supportive Trauma Interventions for Educators\)](#)

STRIVE is a collaborative project between Boston Medical Center's [Child Witness to Violence Project](#) and [Vital Village Networks](#) that 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.

STRIVE partners with Boston Universal Pre-K to offer workshops to UPK parents and caregivers, as well as early educator staff, in order to increase capacity to identify, respond to, and optimally support the unique needs of young children who have been impacted by trauma exposure.

Here are some great resources for you and your family to understand trauma and gain tips for navigating it.

- [Understanding Childhood Trauma and Your Family Pamphlet](#) by Family Resource Centers
- [Tips for Parents and Other Caregivers](#) by Child Witness to Violence Project at BMC
- [Parenting After Trauma: Understanding Your Child's Needs](#) by American Academy of Pediatrics

Each year, STRIVE offers workshops for parents and caregivers on topics including stress management and self care. **STRIVE is seeking your input** on workshop topics for this current school year, as well as times of day that would be most accessible to you!

Please **fill out** this short form to submit your feedback on topics for events [here](#).