

AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER

Volume 16 No. 1

Autumn, 2011



Application of
Personal &
Professional
Learning
Experience

Section 1: An Overview of Volume Focus

Welcome to the APPLE—a newsletter for teachers of young children, ages birth to eight – or third grade. Early childhood is defined as birth to age 8. The APPLE provides information for you who teach all these ages: Birth to Kindergarten & Primary Grades.

This is our first APPLE of 2011-2021. Welcome to a new year! Please feel free to share this with other teachers as well as parents, administrators, and other staff members who might find the information useful or interesting.

Section 2 is the State update. As is usual in our first volume of the year, this APPLE will include an overview of some new state initiatives, especially those around data, and an overview of federal grants. There is an ongoing focus on data collection during the birth to five years and into kindergarten and early elementary grades.

Section 3 continues to focus on the first three years of life. Programs that serve children of this age and their families provide the support that all of your programs use as a foundation as the children move through the preschool and kindergarten years and on into early elementary grades.

Section 4 provides an update on the Four Year Old At-Risk program, including a new data collection process. The Early Childhood Special Education program is also highlighted with its continuing focus on early childhood outcomes. The Pre-K Pilot Program and the Kansas Preschool Program work will also be described.

Section 5 focuses on Kindergarten as well as primary grades. This APPLE will give you an opportunity to provide feedback about the revised version of the Kansas Early Learning Inventory (KELI-R)—and an update about how this might be useful to you in the future.

The 'Teacher to Teacher' section continues to give you each the opportunity to share your expertise—send Gayle topics you are interested in discussing at gstuber@ksde.org.

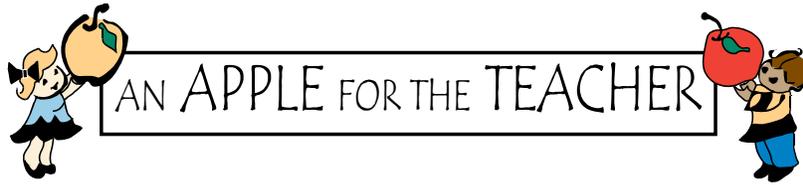
Finally, **Section 6** provides a list of resources, websites, and conferences that might be of interest to you.

As always, we appreciate you and all the work that you do! Please address any comments, suggestions, or questions to the editor, Gayle Stuber 785-296-5352 or gstuber@ksde.org.



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Section 2: State Overview and Update

School Readiness

The School Readiness Data Task Force is charged with three (3) primary tasks:

1. Reviewing and if necessary updating the Kansas School Readiness Framework in light of new research, evaluation findings, and the State's experiences with this framework over the past almost ten years;
2. Reviewing and updating as appropriate the goals and indicators presently in place for each of the four framework components to ensure their alignment with current knowledge from research, evaluation, and practice; and
3. Identifying quantifiable and measureable data elements that can be used by the State's Early Childhood Data System to assess the status of family, school, community, and child readiness.

By the conclusion of its work, the School Readiness Data Task Force will prepare recommendations that address each of these three tasks, each of which is needed to develop a comprehensive and coordinated statewide early childhood data system. The Task Force recommendations will be due to the Early Childhood Advisory Council and KSDE.

The timeline of the work was originally March 2011 through November 2011, but that time may be extended based upon the requirements of the work. All meeting documents are available at: www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4681

Birth to Five Regional Summits

KSDE, in collaboration with early childhood staff from the Departments of Health and Environment and Social and Rehabilitation Services, has developed Birth to Five Regional Summits that will take place across the state this Fall. The topic this year is: Transition Planning through Team Work and the locations and dates for the Summits are:

- 🍏 September 27, Dodge City
- 🍏 September 28, Newton
- 🍏 October 4, Emporia
- 🍏 October 5, Topeka

The major purpose of this Summit is to optimize coordination across early childhood programs to promote smooth transitions for children and their families who access more than one program or move from one program to another. There will be two parts to the day:

MORNING: For Community Planning Teams including Administrators of tiny-k Part C Infant Toddler Early Intervention, Early Head Start, Parents As Teachers, Part B Early Childhood Special Education, At-Risk Four Year Old Programs, Pre-K Pilot, Head Start and other program partners.

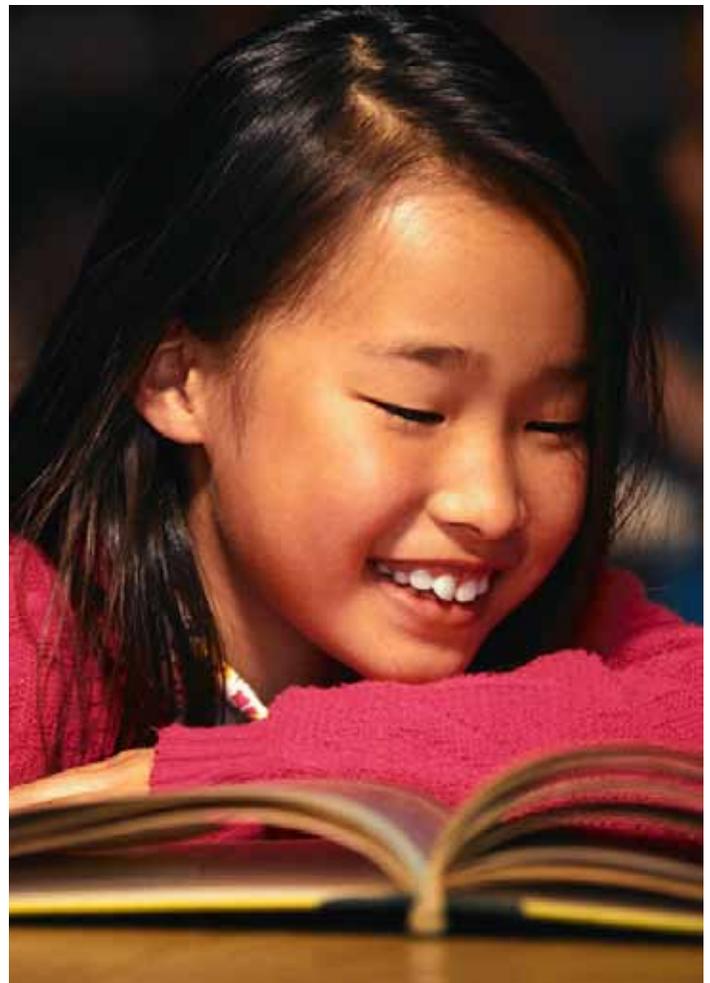
AFTERNOON: Part C to Part B Transition Requirements (required for Part C and Part B providers with interested partners invited to attend)

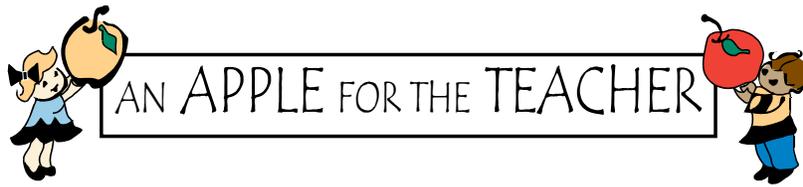
To register for a summit, go to www.kskits.org the Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) website.

Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge

Kansas Governor Brownback has indicated that Kansas will participate in the application process for the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge. The final RFP is due out mid-August and will likely be due mid-October. The RTT-ELC is to support breakthrough work that dramatically improves the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs serving high-need children—ages birth to five. The focus is on key reforms, including aligning EC resources and systems and improving early learning and development standards and assessment, program standards, tiered rating and improvement systems, and early childhood educators. Applicants need to demonstrate: courage, commitment, capacity, and creativity. Other considerations may be to ensure that systems are developed in states with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas.

More information will be shared as the requirements and timetable for the work are clarified.





Section 3: Birth to Three

The Parents As Teachers program is in place and going strong this year! From the Parents As Teachers National Center, The training on the new curriculum has been available – and mostly full!—since last spring. The trainings are in place through this fall. For those of you who need training or are interested in the program, go to the KSDE website www.ksde.org and look under Early Learning for Parents as Teachers.

The next PAT Coordinators meeting is September 16 and will take place in Maize, near Wichita. The contact for KSDE PAT is Janet Newton. You can contact her at jnewton@ksde.org for more information.



Section 4: The Preschool Years

Pre-K Program & Four Year Old At-Risk Program:

The Four Year Old At-Risk Program and the Pre-K Pilot are up and running for the 2011-2012 school year. This year there is a new data collection process using the KELI-4R (Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours, Revised) as a web-based application for the Four Year Old At-Risk program. This is a part of the integration of early childhood programs into the Longitudinal Data System and we are calling the application: Success in School. Teachers in the Four Year Old Programs will be completing the KELI-4R on 10 of their children, randomly selected. The process for selecting the children and the training for the process will be available on the KSDE website after August 30, 2011. Look under Early Learning Services at:

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3293>

WHY is this change happening?

One of the difficulties in the past years has been to collect state-wide data on the program because each program selects its own assessment(s). The 2011-2012 Program year for the Four Year Old At-Risk is opening up a new process for state-level data collection. The web-based data collection process will allow KSDE to collect data from programs across the state that is the same for all programs and teachers. The data collection will allow schools, districts and KSDE to:

1. Use the data to show improvement in child learning outcomes across the program year;
2. Use the data to promote the strength of the Four Year Old At-Risk program in meeting its major outcome of “Children will enter school ready to learn.”
3. Use the data to promote the quality practices that teachers are using to support and improve child outcomes.

The basic answer is that Early Childhood programs need to be able to prove that they make a positive difference in children’s lives. The Four Year Old At-Risk program is a critical component in the Early Childhood continuum of learning. Teachers and administrators in this program help children be successful in school—and this success continues past the Kindergarten year. KSDE is following children in Kindergarten on into fifth grade. This includes children who have been in the Four year Old At-Risk program. These children learn a lot in their four year old year—and are prepared for success in Kindergarten. An overview of the School Readiness Project results is included with this letter. This data collection will allow KSDE to

expand this report and include the Four Year Old At-Risk Program data to promote and support the importance of the program.

Pre-K Pilot Program

The original 12 sites of the Pre-K Pilot are still in place. Funding was reduced at the end of the 2010-2011 year due to a reduction of the Tobacco funds administered by the Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund. The Continuation RFP’s were approved by the State Board in April, 2011. Tobacco funding was again reduced and a 4% reduction was taken on the budgets for the 2011-2012 year. Hopefully, the current funding level will be maintained.

Teachers in the Pre-K Pilot program will complete the KELI-4R on 10 children randomly selected in their classrooms during the fall of 2011. Many of these teachers are in community programs so they do not have access to the new web-based applications this year. The hope and plan is that the web-based applications will be available to all programs that give their children the KIDS numbers needed to get them into the system.

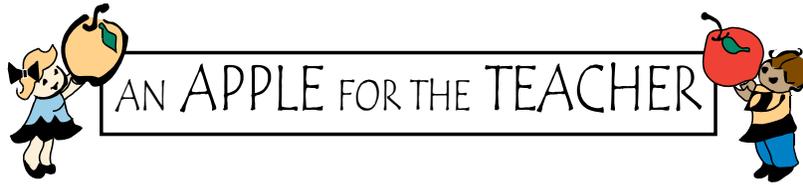
Kansas Preschool Program: Updates

The Practitioner group is meeting the end of August to finalize their recommendations around what a Quality Preschool Program should entail. The overview is below. Feel free to send thoughts and ideas to Gayle at gstuber@ksde.org. This work should be finalized this fall and may provide some foundational information to use in the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant application.

Vision: Families, schools, and communities support and serve children effectively so that all children have the ability to succeed in various learning environments.

Mission: To provide high quality learning experiences and comprehensive services to all children ages 3-5 years and their families through a community and school-based, collaborative process that requires braided funding and community partnerships.

Outcome: Each and every child who participated in the Kansas Preschool Program will enter kindergarten ready to be successful.



The major components of the Kansas Preschool Program are:

1. Community-based collaboration: a local early childhood consortium
2. High quality programs and programming: High quality staff & Comprehensive services
3. Meaningful Family involvement & Engagement
4. Braided and Blended Funding from multiple sources
5. A monitoring and accountability system that provides data to guide decisions for continuous quality improvement.

Early Childhood Special Education:

The Early Childhood Special Education work group coordinated by Tiffany Smith, our Section 619 coordinator, is working to provide training on the Early Childhood Outcomes required by the federal Office, OSEP. Please look at the KITS website, www.kskits.org, for information about registering for the webinar. The final webinar will be available online in early fall on the KITS website as well.

TEACHER to TEACHER:

IMPORTANT QUESTION!! PLEASE READ!!!

- 🍏 Sharing professional expertise, questions, and concerns.
- 🍏 Working together to help each other and the children and families of Kansas.

We now can look at the skills and abilities of young children in our preschool programs—particularly Four Year Old At-Risk and Early Childhood Special Education. We have an instrument that looks at kindergarten entry skills as they relate to preschool Early Learning standards.

We need your thoughts and suggestions: should a common ‘snapshot’ of child learning and skill levels be collected at the first grade and second grade levels? And if so—HOW?? Your ideas, comments and suggestions would be very much appreciated!

Send an email to Gayle at gstuber@ksde.org. You can also send topics you want covered in future APPLES.

Section 5: Kindergarten through Third

Last year, we followed the 2006-07 kindergartners into third grade and the 2005-06 kindergartners into fourth grade. This year we are adding the 2007-08 kindergarten class and looking at their state assessment results for third grade while moving to fourth grade results for the 2006-07 class and the fifth grade results for the 2005-06 kindergarten class. Results of the state assessments are not available until later in the fall so reports will be ready in the spring of 2012. The results from last year were consolidated into a one page flyer that is available on the KSDE website under Early Learning Services. YOU make a difference! Use this flyer with your parents and administrators to prove it!

The Kansas Early Learning Inventory (KELI) is in the process of being revised and validated for piloting with kindergarten classrooms in the fall of 2012. More information will be available later this fall. The revised version, the KELI-R, is aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards and the Common core standards and includes items that are research-based and predictive of later academic success—particularly the literacy items which have the most research behind them.



Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) REMEMBER: Go to www.kskits.org for a calendar of events and conferences. This is the KITS website. If you want to be on their newsletter list serve—let them know.
- (2) KAEYC — the Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children has its annual conference in Manhattan on October 1st. Go to their webpage for registration information. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet others in the early childhood world, get up to speed on new initiatives, and expand your understanding of early childhood. There are sessions for Kindergarten as well as for the birth to five early childhood programs.
- (3) NAEYC—the National Association for the Education of Young Children—has a list serve that is for Children’s Champions. You can sign up to receive the emails. A current update, August 5, described two bills in the legislature that have been introduced to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The highlights of these two bills include portions that incorporate pre-k into the Act and promote a continuum of learning. Keep checking NAEYC at www.naeyc.org for updates.
- (4) Young Children has many excellent articles. If you do not get the journal go to Beyond the Journal at www.journal.naeyc.org/btj. This will get you many of the same articles – and they are free! Joining NAEYC and KAEYC (the Kansas affiliate) is an excellent way for all of us who work with young children and their families to keep updated and in touch with the best practices and best research!
- (5) The National Institute of Early Education Research: NIEER—has many research-based articles and resources to help as you think over the School Readiness topic. Go to www.nieer.org.

As always, early learning is front and center in our lives. This year—2011-2012—will present many challenges as well as exciting opportunities for early childhood professionals. We all need to work together to provide a strong continuum of learning, from birth through third grade!

Send questions, comments, and suggestions to Gayle at her email address below.

Thank you again for all your help and support this year—Keep in touch!

Gayle

gstuber@ksde.org

Editor of the APPLE

