

Office of Early Learning Newsletter



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News from the Director, Jason Breslin, NBCT

As we continue through a school year like no other year in recent history, I am continuously impressed with districts and educators across the state and their ability to adapt to this ever-evolving situation. I know that our youngest learners and their communities are getting the best education they can under these tough circumstances.

As a reminder, all UPK/SUFDPK applications should be submitted in the NYSED Business Portal. Also, the SUFDPK Child Count survey is also now available for those districts who receive statewide universal full-day prekindergarten funding. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

The [National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement](#) offers a variety of resources for families and educators on talking to kids about COVID-19 including videos, articles, and tip sheets.

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OEL Update

Teaching & Learning FAQ

On September 23, 2020, the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Early Learning (CIEL) has compiled [answers to questions collected from the field](#) regarding [NYSED's July 2020 School Reopening Guidance](#).



Teacher & Family Resources

The [Sesame Street Community](#) website has a variety of resources for educators and parents. The site allows families and educators to pick the age of the child, the kind of activity (e.g. storybook, interactive, etc.) and the desired length of the activity. The website also offers useful tips for both families and educators on topics like reading to young children, setting up a literacy area in the classroom or home, and free professional development training videos.

Taking care of yourself as an educator is one of the most important things you can do during these uncertain times. According to Dr. Jane Nelsen and Dr. Kelly Groerer, it is one of the best gifts that can be given to students. They offer the following suggestions on the [Positive Discipline](#) website. Visit the website for additional activities and ideas for taking care of yourself.

1. Make a list of the things you like to do that feed your heart, your body, your mind, and your soul.
2. Get out your calendar and make time for yourself EVERY day.
3. Give up all guilt about taking time for yourself, or for taking time to be with people who boost your energy and your joy.
4. Keep a gratitude journal.
5. Ask for help when you need it. After all, you aren't asking for anything you would not be happy to give. Allow others the blessing of giving to you.
6. Laugh and learn from your mistakes— another great gift to yourself and others.

The [NYSED Office of Early Learning](#) website has a set of ten tip sheets that were created for families that school districts and educational centers can customize with the district/agency name to send home throughout the year. Each tip sheet covers one area of learning and provides activities that can be done at home and additional resources about the topic. Topics include, but are not limited to, the importance of reading to a child, having healthy bodies and minds, talking about feelings, writing with their child, and spending time outdoors.

Supporting Emergent Multilingual Learners

Who are Multilingual Learners? In their [September newsletter](#), NYSED’s Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) clarifies the terminology used to refer to this population of students in New York State. Clarified as an umbrella term, “Multilingual Learner (ML)” includes English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12, Former or Ever ELLs, heritage speakers of World Languages, and students pursuing a course of study in one or more World Languages. Therefore, every student who is or seeking to be language diverse regardless of English language proficiency is a Multilingual Learner. This includes our Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) in Prekindergarten.

As heritage speakers of World Languages, who may or may not later be identified as ELLs in Kindergarten, EMLs bring rich cultural and linguistic experiences to the Prekindergarten classroom. These valued resources should be used to scaffold learning and can contribute significantly to academic achievement in Prekindergarten and beyond.

In order to be responsive to the diverse needs of EMLs and their families, NYSED has developed the EML Profile. This tool helps educators by identifying students’ existing language(s) and linguistic experiences so that classrooms, instruction, and programming are responsive and relevant. The Profile and accompanying guidance are available in several languages and can be accessed on the [“Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten Programs” webpage](#).

To meet the needs of all Multilingual Learners, NYSED is continually committed to the development of a highly effective workforce, equipping educators with guidance and resources, and providing professional learning opportunities. We will keep you informed as future professional learning opportunities are made available.



Parent Advisory Council -B5 Grant

Families are the experts on their children, and they know what works and what doesn't work in terms of services for their son or daughter. Family engagement and participation in decision-making is critical when it comes to improving early childhood programs and achieving better child and family outcomes. It is also important that the family voice is representative of the family's culture as it pertains to the child's needs. (Pacer Center, 2018).

The Parent Advisory Council (also known as the PAC), is a statewide group comprised of parents and guardians who use their family voice to render opinions, participate in public speaking events and plan conferences as well as other actions to impact the early childhood system.

We are looking for parents/guardians with child/ren under age eight to be representatives on the PAC.

If you or you know an agency that works with families and guardians who are interested in using their family voice, [apply to be part of the PAC](#).

For more information, contact Yvette James at yvette.james@ccf.ny.gov.

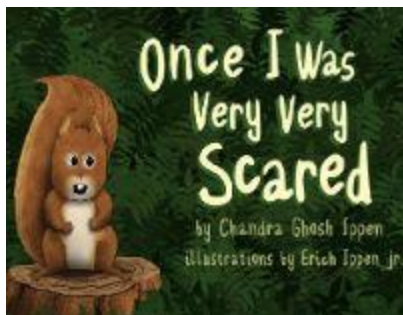
No Small Matter Film Viewing Opportunity



In August, the NYS Council on Children and Families (CCF) partnered with the NYS Education Department's Office of Early Learning to convene the annual P-3 Summer Institute. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's P-3 Summer Institute was held online, and it included a full length, free screening of the film *No Small Matter*. from Executive Producer Alfre Woodard. *No Small Matter* is the first feature documentary to explore the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for change in America today: early childhood education. Through poignant stories and surprising humor, the film lays out the overwhelming evidence for the importance of the first five years and reveals how our failure to act on that evidence has resulted in an everyday crisis for American families, and a slow-motion catastrophe for the country. This film is still available for viewing and we encourage administrators, teachers and parents to watch it before the opportunity is missed. Please visit [our website's Summer Institute page](#) to see this film, and all the professional learning opportunities offered this summer in this exciting virtual format.

Social & Emotional Learning

Book Nooks



The New York State Pyramid Model Consortium has a set of fourteen Book Nooks for families and teachers that enhance social and emotional learning. The [Book Nooks](#) offer a list of social and emotional words found that can be emphasized in the book as well as age appropriate activities.

Notable Children's Books for 2020

The [Association for Library Service to Children](#) (ALSC) annually identifies the best of the best in children's books. ALSC defines "notable" as: Worthy of note or notice, important, distinguished, or outstanding. When applied to children's books, notable includes books of especially commendable quality, books that exhibit venturesome creativity, and books of fiction, information, poetry, and pictures for all age levels (birth through age 14) that reflect and encourage children's interests in exemplary ways. Check out the list of books appropriate for **Younger Readers** – Preschool-grade 2 (age 7) which including easy-to-read books on the ALSC website.

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