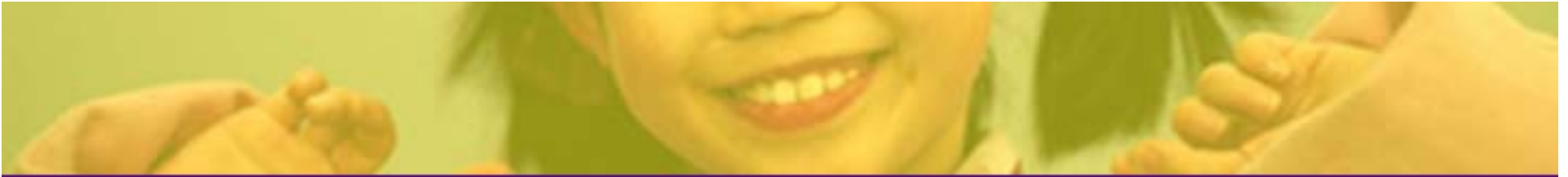


A young child with light-colored hair is shown in profile, blowing bubbles. The child's mouth is open, and several bubbles are visible near their face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green with many more bubbles floating around. The overall mood is joyful and playful.

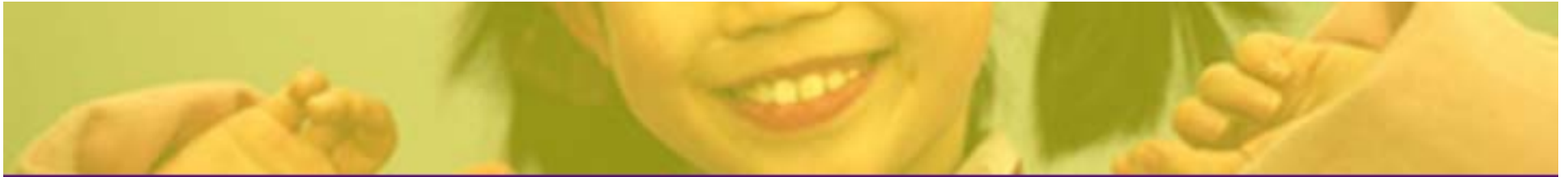
# Putting the "Kinder" Back into Kindergarten

VPDN – Fall 2009



## Discussion Leaders

- Lauren Maguire, Kindergarten Teacher, Molly Stark School, Bennington
- Karen Burnell, Director of Early Childhood Education, Southwestern VT SU
- Manuela Fonseca, Early Education Coordinator, VT Department of Education



# Introduction

What would Freidrich Froebel say if he visited today's Vermont kindergartens? When he established the "children's garden" in Germany in the early 1800's, the curriculum focused on: play, singing & movement, "gifts" and "occupations."

Did he know something we've forgotten?

In this conversation about kindergarten, we will seek to answer this question, explore some ideas, and listen to a story about one supervisory union's efforts to transform kindergarten and "put the kinder back into kindergarten."



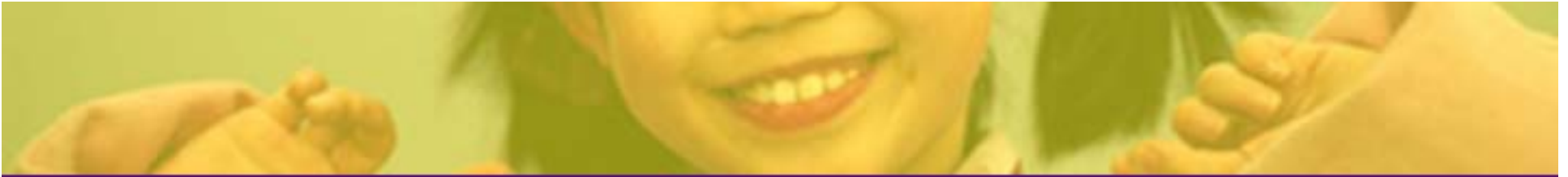
# Schedule - AM

- 8:30 Introductions, review the day, and discuss learner outcomes
- 9:00 Crisis in the Kindergarten report
- 9:45 SVSU's initiative to transform kindergarten
- 10:30 BREAK
- 10:45 What's working & what's not working worksheet
- 11:00 Understanding successful learners and effective teaching
- 11:45 Reflections on the morning
- 11:55 Preview of the afternoon session
- 12:00 LUNCH (please return promptly at 1:00)



# Schedule - PM

- 1:00 Description of learning centers:
  - Learning Environment
  - Daily Schedule
  - Curriculum Planning
- 1:15 Participate in learning center of your choice
- 2:00 Accountability
- 2:15 Putting it all together: One example of what it looks like in action
- 2:45 Complete 4-column worksheet & promise note card
- 3:00 Adjourn



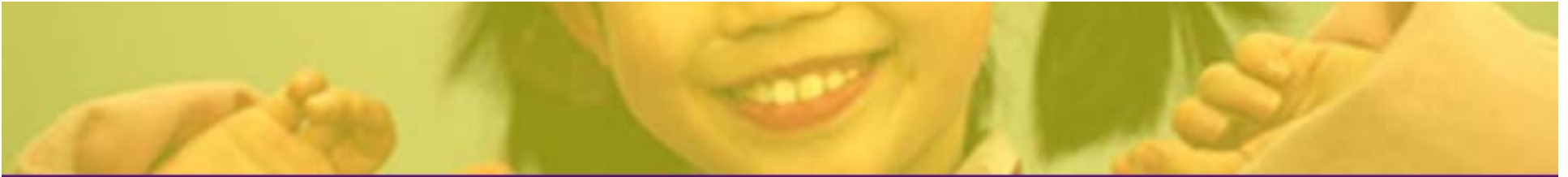
## Learners will:

- Reflect on current practices
- Understand the continuum of child-initiated play and teacher guided activity
- Recognize the characteristics of successful learners
- Explore practices consistent with a child-centered approach
- Articulate one change they want to focus on in the coming months



# Crisis in the Kindergarten

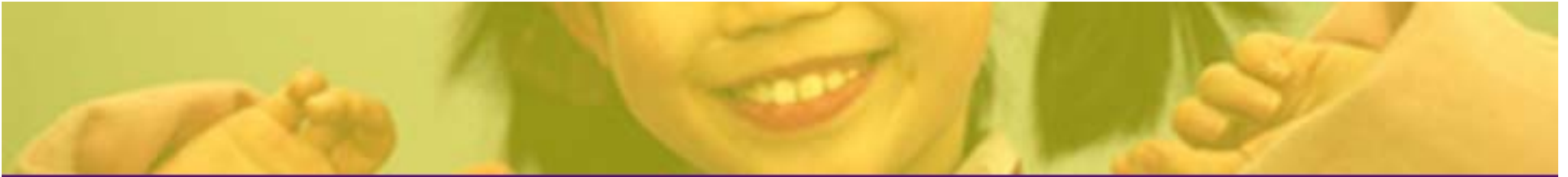
- Small group discussion of the executive summary of the *Crisis in Kindergarten* report
- Form small groups of 3 or 4:
  - Select a timekeeper/facilitator who participates as well
  - Read the summary and mark the passages that have important implications for your kindergarten
  - Each round consists of 1 person taking 5 minutes to (1) read the passage she/he selected aloud, (2) saying what she/he thinks about the passage, and (3) saying what implications this passage has for her/his kindergarten
  - Each person select 1 word or phrase to summarize her/his thinking
- Whole group de-brief



## SVSU's Initiative to Transform Kindergarten

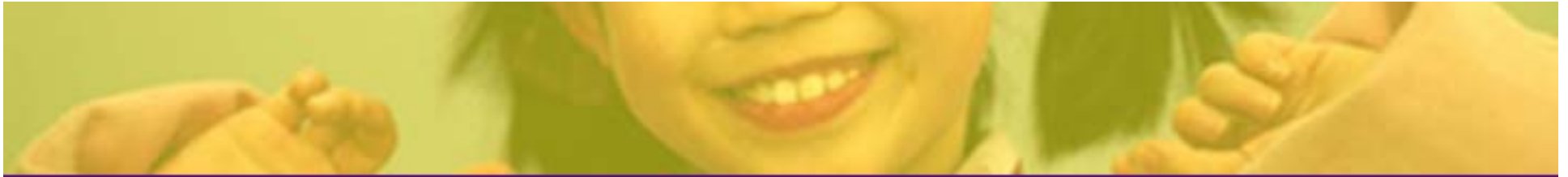
- The impetus that led SVSU to reconsider its kindergarten practices
- What is the initiative
- Laying the foundation for change
- One teacher's story





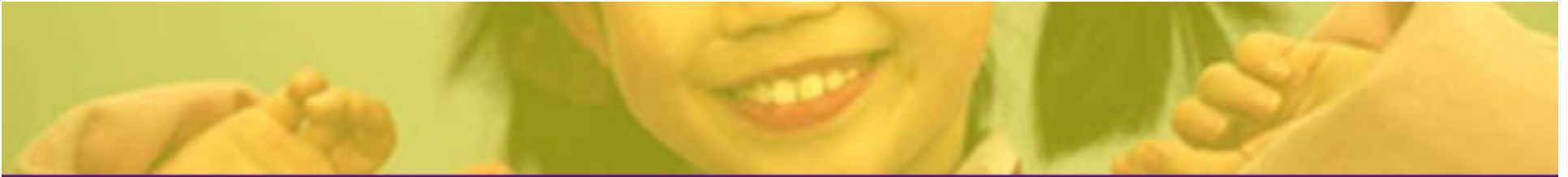
## What's Working & What's Not Working

- Using the 4-column worksheet, jot down what you think is working in your classroom in the first column
- In the second column, write down what you think is not working
- Pair and Share your worksheets
- Hold onto them; you'll be filling in the next two columns during the workshop



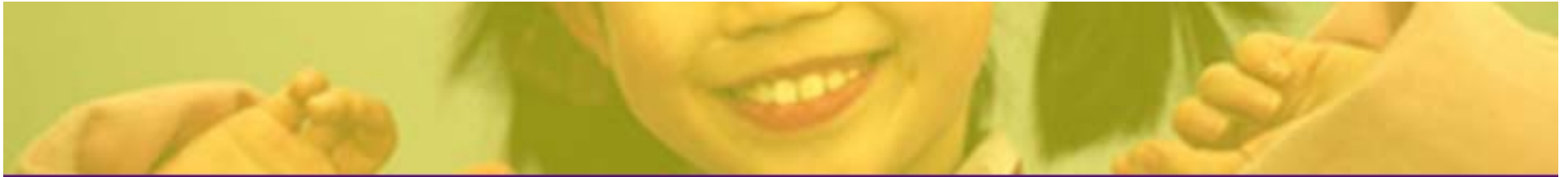
## Understanding Successful Learners and Effective Teaching

- Understanding 5-year-olds in general, and the children you teach specifically
  - Small group brainstorm of the characteristics of a 5-year-old
- Characteristics of a successful learner
  - Pair and jot down your ideas
  - Share with the whole group, popcorn style
- Strategies that lead to effective teaching



# The Learning Environment

- What to include in the environment
- Planning an environment to meet various goals and objectives
- Learning centers
- Activity:
  - Draw an outline of your classroom, including doors, windows, outlets, light & water sources
  - Design your classroom to include how you'd like to change it
  - Consider number of children, traffic patterns, outlets, water sources, etc
  - Be prepared to explain the WHY as well as the WHAT of your changes to your colleagues



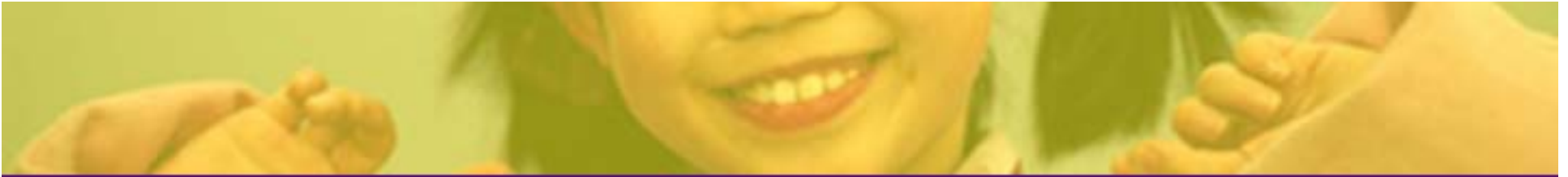
# The Daily Schedule

- The Schedule:
  - Blocks of time for Child-Directed and Teacher-Guided activities
  - Transitions
  - See to strike a balance of child-initiated play and teacher guided activities
- Activity:
  - Write your current schedule on one side of the form
  - On the other side of the paper, write your desired schedule
  - Start with the non-negotiable items such as lunch, departure, etc.
  - Then write what you'd like your schedule to be in order to address the developmental needs of the children in your kindergarten



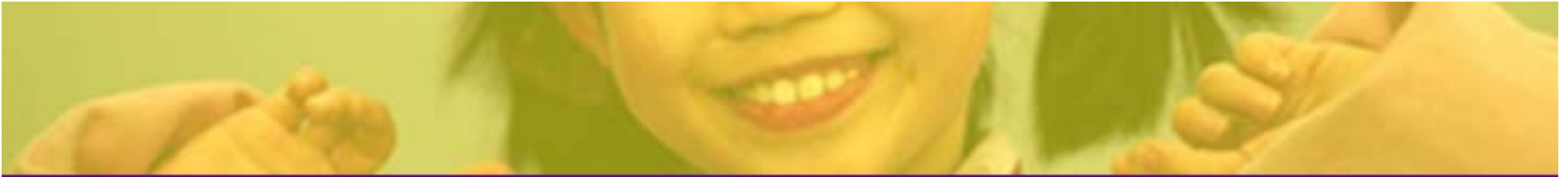
# Curriculum Planning

- Engaging children through integrated learning
- Don't forget the GE's
- Activity:
  - Working in pairs, small groups, or individually, review the K GE's
  - Consider children's interests and create a concept map or web
  - Identify the skills and knowledge inherent in the content, and link to the GE's
  - Generate a list of possible learning opportunities you would offer children; remember to balance teacher guided and child-initiated activities



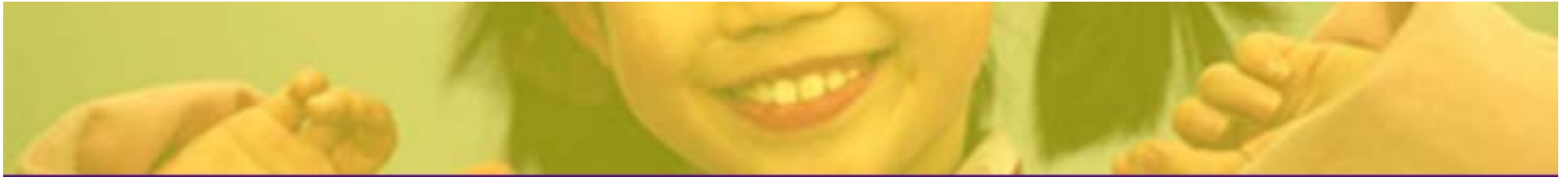
# Accountability

- Assessment is part of the ongoing cycle of planning, teaching, assessing, and reflection
- Authentic assessments of children's learning yield more reliable information
- Types of authentic assessments
- Assessments need to be planned and intentional



## Putting It All Together

- The following video shows one example of an integrated, developmentally appropriate kindergarten
- The Eliot-Pearson Children's School at Tufts University did a 2 ½ month study of the Boston Marathon...



## Closing

- Complete the last two columns of the What's Working worksheet
- Reflect on what you've learned today
- Think of **one** action you'd like to take in the next 3 months and write it on the note card. Seal it and address it to yourself. It will be mailed to you in early January 2010.