



# Georgia Preschool Association

## The President's Corner

Karen Coffeen

Fall 2014

It is amazing how quickly two years can go by! I will pass over the president position to Diane Lamb on February 27<sup>th</sup> at our two day conference at the Cobb Galleria Centre. Diane is a very capable, experienced early childhood educator who will be an excellent president. She will continue our tradition of providing quality educational trainings to as many teachers, administrators, and parents as possible.

I have truly enjoyed my time as president as I met more of our members when I attended our conferences at Jekyll Island and the Galleria as well as district trainings in Griffin and Marietta. It has been a wonderful experience for me. I will stay on the Executive Board as the past president and the exhibit hall chairperson, so I will continue to be involved in this incredible organization. Thank you to the Executive Board who put in a lot of time and effort to provide quality trainings all

over the state—all as volunteers! Thank you also to the members and conference attendees. I hope that you have taken away many good educational ideas that you could use in your classroom as well as taken advantage of the opportunity to network with other early education professionals.

To help you with your children in your class or your children at home, I would like to share a strategy for reading with children that was developed by The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School. It is called the READ strategy to help parents and teachers as they read books to children.

### The READ Strategy:

**R:** Repeat the Book—Read the book several times with the child or children. The first couple of times you read it, push-in, or teach, vocabulary, key events, and characters' thoughts and feelings. The next couple of times you read,

pull-out, or have your child talk about, the same information by asking them questions and encouraging them to talk about the story.

**E:** Engage and Enjoy—Have fun while reading and encourage children to have fun as well. Use different voices for the characters and act out parts of the story.

**A:** Ask Questions—By asking a variety of questions, especially why questions, parents can encourage children to think about what's happening in the story, while also encouraging critical thinking and problem solving.

**D:** Do More With the Book—Help the children make connections between the book and other activities they have experienced so that the book will come alive for them.

The Rollins Center does many amazing things with children. The Georgia Preschool Association is proud to be a partner with them to bring quality training to educators.

## Inside this issue:

The President's Corner	1
Membership	2
District 4	2
District 5	3
District 6	4
District 7	4, 5
District 10	5
Conference Update	6
Hostess Information	6
Silent Auction	7
Exhibitor's Hall	7
sightwords.com	8
Slate of Nominated Officers for 2015-2017	9
By-Law Changes and Ballot Information	9

## Membership

Our letters have gone out inviting present members to join us again this year. I hope that you have filled out your form and returned it to Denise Luders. Membership in Georgia Preschool Association offers many resources, newsletters and numerous training events to help us grow professionally.

District workshops are held throughout the year. The Jekyll Island training took place in October again this year and our Annual Conference in February 2015 features Greg and Steve. The GPA website offers links to sites with valuable information for our members. We are excited to introduce

a new resource, Sight-Word.com. All the materials on the website are free and are designed to help children learn to read. The site is designed for teachers and parents with games and activities to download and use with children. (See article in this newsletter.)

Last year we set our goal to have 2000 members by conference time. We are excited that our numbers reached 1752. We need your help to reach that 2000 mark!!!!

If you have not joined again this year, please send in your membership fees today. If you know of individuals or

schools in your area who are not taking advantage of membership in GPA, please share information about us with them. Our website, [www.georgiapreschool.org](http://www.georgiapreschool.org) has information about membership and membership fees.



## District 4    Tonie Sanders

[tsanders@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:tsanders@georgiapreschool.org)

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, over 100 teachers from District 4 gathered at Saint Philip A.M.E. Church in Decatur for an outstanding back to school 2014 workshop. The 6 hour state approved workshop was conducted by Danny Darby from Georgia State University. He presented 2 sessions -one on language and literacy (Infants to Pre-k)

and a Circle Time and Transition session. The Language and Literacy session was a Level II Intermediate session.

There were over 20 schools represented among the teachers. School Box supplied gift cards as a door prize and pads and pens as give aways.

Feedback from the participants was positive and

questions have been asked about the next event. Thank you to all who attended.

We are already planning our event for next August. We will send out information in the spring with details for the 2015 event. Check our website for the latest information! [georgiapreschool.org](http://georgiapreschool.org)



Your program prides itself on the routine in place for your early learners and with regards to late fall conferences. These routines and follow up meetings afford teachers the opportunity to better define your child's progress and success in the classroom. When you talk to the teacher or if you are the teacher, you share important information about the child's talents and needs.

A strong early learning program follows a prescribed routine so that the day is free flowing but with specific schedules, knowing we do what is best to meet the children's attention span and desire to learn. Prime time in the morning puts into place large group time that can be the key to continuity beside a sense of belonging inherent to any quality program, half or full day hours. Additionally, when children are placed into small groups, they benefit from time extended for additional learning to take place. When a child arrives after the large group experience, their own window for opportunity to join the entire class is lost. Parents must embrace the notion that a

child who follows a regimen of early arrival will most benefit from attention to learning and lesson plan outcomes where each child is an intricate part of the morning routine and the classroom community.

#### **During Conferences**

*A two-way conversation is best when both parties speak and listen to one another. If you are a parent, ask if your child is meeting the expectations. Inform your child's teacher about their skills, interests, needs and dreams. If you are the teacher, be sure the parent takes away the most detail possible and with no unanswered questions.*

***Opportunities and challenges*** are at every corner as anticipated in early childhood. Be

*prepared to think about your child's strengths and challenges beforehand and ready to ask questions about ways you and the teacher can collaboratively help with a challenge or desired goal.*

***Support learning at home*** by offering suggestions and make a plan to follow up if desired. If you are the parent, ensure that you have a plan to support learning so there is a collaborative relationship in place.

*Wishing all of our GPA members a delightful Fall filled with meaning, joy, fun and bountiful learning as it takes place in the program you align yourself with.*

Fondly, Laura Newman  
District 5 Representative

Photo below from recent District 5 training event held on October 11, 2014.



I am sure by now most of you have all settled into a great school routine. It does take a few weeks for the "new" children to adjust to being in school, but that is just a part of our jobs as educators. We assist in making their adjustment as simple as possible.

With the beautiful Fall weather we are now having I hope you are able to enjoy all the wonderful things that this season brings. We have had all sorts of "apple" activities, and we have especially enjoyed the "homemade" applesauce.

Along with Fall there seems to be a lot of sicknesses and illnesses. We have already had several respiratory infections including Enterovirus. There are some things that we do to help keep the children as safe as possible. Washing hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds does help in the prevention of spreading germs. We also use the hand sanitizer.

We encourage children to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands (easier said than done!). Avoid kissing, hugging and sharing cups with anyone. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, etc. We wash the dress-up clothes often and we do not have any stuffed animals in the classrooms.

In spite of all the precautions, we do have children that get sick. If a child is out for several days our teachers get in touch with the parents and find out why. If it happens to be an illness that is serious and contagious, there is a note to the parents in that class that lets everyone know that their child was exposed to that particular illness. Just recently I sent a note home and a particular parent was very appreciative because he was a "wounded warrior" and does not have a spleen. This gave them the notice that there had been a

very serious virus in the classroom.

Now that I have tried to keep each of you well, I want to encourage you to attend the Georgia Preschool Conference that will be held in Atlanta on February 27th and 28th. Attending these conferences truly gives you a chance to renew what you already know and learn new ways of doing things. This is a great time to share with those that are from other areas and make new colleagues. Griffin First Baptist Weekday hosted a training workshop this summer and had about 150 persons attending. Next year's District 6 Training will be on WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2015.

If I can ever be of any assistance to you or your school, please feel free to call on me.

### The Importance of Goals

Frequently we become so focused on the day-to-day routine of preschool that we forget to dream about the future. At least yearly, it pays to have a shared vision session and talk about goals for your school and specifi-

cally for your classroom.

The process of conceiving, sharing and writing goals makes it more likely that you will actually work on a particular goal. Success in meeting a goal may require that several stake holders - teachers, parents, administration, board

members, and the host church staff or corporation - be informed and on board. Another important aspect of an achievable goal is enough specificity to gauge whether you have actually met the goal.

(continued on next page)

## District 7 (Continued)

An example of a school wide administrative goal might include:

*"Lower the rate of staff turnover to less than 10% per year."* Adopting such a goal requires the administration and preschool board to look at salary rates, special perks for staff, the physical work environment and hiring standards that lead to loyalty among staff. The process of meeting such a goal can lead to a better trained, committed staff that identifies themselves as a

special, cohesive group.

Some examples of individual classroom goals include:

*"Implement at least 10 minutes of intentional phonemic awareness activities each day."*

*"Find fun ways to incorporate new science activities weekly in the 2-year-old class."*

*"Add puppets and props to my story time at least weekly"*

*"Include dad's specifically in the classroom activities at least 2 times each year."*

These goals require personal

commitment and communication between the age-level teachers and the director so that materials can be acquired, and recognition given to successful accomplishment of the goals.

One exciting aspect of goal setting is to look back at previous year's goals and realize how your efforts have contributed to improvements in your school and classroom.



## District 10 Amy Wraga

[awraga@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:awraga@georgiapreschool.org)

Adding movement to your classroom

We all have outdoor playtime for the children at school. But did you know there are ways to incorporate active learning in the classroom?

We are lucky to have a certified yoga instructor who is also our music teacher. She starts her class with some simple poses like sun salutations, downward facing dog, and prayer hands. What an opportunity to learn the names of body parts while you get your body ready to dance during our movement and

music class. Many yoga instructors specialize in classes for young children and could teach a class for your teachers. The NAEYC conference often has a yoga workshop to introduce poses and benefits of the practice. Redleaf Press has a great book/DVD set: **Bal Yoga for Kids** which demonstrates 26 easy poses.

**Big Body Play** by Frances Carlson is a wonderful book about incorporating big movements indoors and outside. Adding some big movements to the beginning of circle

time and transitions can help children stay focused on tasks. Teaching children to move throughout the day helps form healthy habits for the future. The GPA board is pleased that Ms. Carlson will be presenting a workshop at our annual conference at the Cobb Galleria this year.

Improve health, learn balance, and exercise your body so your brain is open to learning....enjoy all these benefits when you incorporate physical fitness in your day.



"We all live together!" Yes, we do! We all must learn to live together in order to make our world a better place for all of us. This year's conference will emphasize this theme as we welcome some familiar friends back to Georgia Preschool's 2015 Conference. "Greg and Steve" are known worldwide as special folks who provide uplifting, fun, and educational music for children everywhere. The title of Greg & Steve's long acclaimed album is our theme for this year's conference, "We All Live Together." We welcome them back to Georgia with excitement and enthusiasm as we learn together with two of the most well-known edutainers in the business! Don't miss a chance to get your picture made or to have them sign your favorite CD in the Exhibit Hall. Come join us for fun and learning with Greg and Steve leading the charge! They will lead us in our keynote

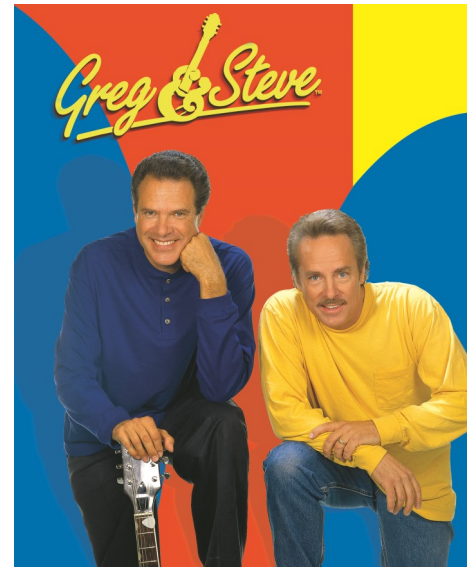
session on Friday morning at 8:00 and then again as we have one general closing session on Saturday afternoon at 3:00 to charge us up and send us on our way!

### Georgia Preschool Association Annual Conference February 27 and 28, 2015 Cobb Galleria Centre

Lots of other workshops will fill in the "meat" of our conference. Donna House, Hope Long, Sharon Egan, Jane Hyche, Merry Bentley-Barlow, Georgia Fruechtenicht, Kimberlee Wing, Gajan Retnasaba, Natalie Jones, Margaret Schafer, Meg Keener, Donna Moyer, Kay Rosenblum, Gary Larson, Robert Capuozzo, Kyle Taft, Rodney Pires, Frances Carlson, Carol Burkhardt, Danny Darby, Betsy Primm, Kristi Estes

and Terry Graham round out our presenters with lots of favorite, and some new, topics from which to choose. Check out our web site to get a complete listing of all workshops and descriptions.

We welcome EVERYONE to attend this year's Georgia Preschool Association Conference! See you on February 27 & 28, 2015 at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta as we all learn how to live together!



## Hostesses Make A Difference!

## Janis Smith

One of Georgia Preschool's strongest characteristics is the quality of the consultants we are able to provide at our Annual Conference. One of the reasons consultants are happy to return to work with us is because of the warm hospitality we provide and our hostesses are responsible for that hospitality.

Thank you to all who served as hostesses at the 2014 Annual Conference. Not only did you provide a warm and friendly contact with the consultants, you gave us important insight as to the quality of the workshop through your evaluations. We are always in need of hostesses, if you would like to be one, please contact Janis Smith

at [jsmith@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:jsmith@georgiapreschool.org)



## GPA Conference Silent Auction

Diane Lamb

Hopefully, all of you who participated in the "silent auction" got home with all your treasures. Some of you needed a U-Haul to get all your items home! This is always a fun project for the Georgia Preschool Association, and it also helps raise funds to pay for the website.

First, let me thank all of you who participated by purchasing items and also many, many thanks to those who donated the items. We had a very large variety of items and lots and lots of tickets at various venues. It is fun to see the excitement of everyone watching the bid sheets and making sure their name and

amount appeared in the final bid line. Your enthusiasm is contagious! That is what being involved in GPA and education is all about. You are in it because you love what you are doing and you make a difference in the lives you touch/teach.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Lynn Pitts, Administrative Assistant at Griffin First Baptist Week-day who worked tirelessly before, during and after the "silent auction" project. She is a real asset to GPA, but especially a real asset to me. Thank you, Lynn.

Now let me share the really good news with you. The

"silent auction" netted over \$2,000.00. It just gets bigger and better each year. Again, thank all of you who made this possible. If you have any suggestions for the "silent auction" feel free to email or call me. All advice is appreciated!

Diane Lamb

District 6 Representative and  
Silent Auction Chairman

[dianelamb@fbcgriffin.org](mailto:dianelamb@fbcgriffin.org)

770 228-7880



## GPA Conference Exhibit Hall

Karen Coffeen

We are looking forward to another great conference on February 27 & 28! A part of that wonderful experience is the Exhibit Hall (don't we all love to shop?). We are inviting the exhibitors back from last year, some from previous years, and some new companies. We have easily accessible space again this year and we'll be bringing back our fun Bingo so that

you can win a prize just for visiting the vendors. A lot of the prizes are donated by the vendors, so you'll get a useful or fun prize—it's your choice! You can fill out as many Bingo cards as you want—the more you fill out the better your chance of winning a prize.

We would also like your input. If you would like to be an exhibitor, know of someone else who would, or remember

a company that has not been there for awhile; please contact me as soon as possible: Karen Coffeen

[kcoffeen@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:kcoffeen@georgiapreschool.org)

or 770-590-0982.

You can also check the GPA website

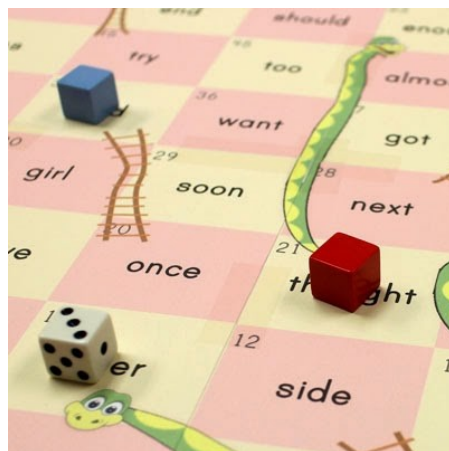
[www.georgiapreschool.org](http://www.georgiapreschool.org) for more conference and vendor information.

We are excited to introduce you to [SightWords.com](http://SightWords.com), a Website designed for parents and teachers to use. It is a new resource sponsored by the Georgia Preschool Association and designed to help children learn to read. **All the material on the Website is FREE!** This site is designed to help learners who are Pre-K and above. There are four sections currently available to use on the Website.

There is a **History** section which teaches what sight words are, identifies different types of sight words and gives you sight word lists. One unique feature of this section is that it contains short video clips of five separate, research-based techniques for an adult to use in teaching sight words to children.

The **Lessons** section helps you learn research-validated and classroom-proven ways to introduce words, reinforce learning, and effectively correct mistakes. Each sight words lesson is approximately 30 minutes and is divided into

2 sections: an instructional portion (10 minutes) and a game portion (20 minutes). Obviously, this schedule can be modified and altered, based on your situation and the age of the child or children being taught.



The **Games** section offers 10 fantastic games that will help children practice their sight words and build toward mastery. The Sight Words Fishing game is a favorite, as is Snakes and Ladders and Bingo. Any parent or teacher can easily customize the sight words used in any of these games to meet the needs of an individual child or group of children at various levels of learning. This feature allows children to engage in and enjoy these games as their sight word vocabulary continues to grow.

The **Flash Cards** section is very comprehensive but easily divided by grade level or word frequency. One of the key components to learning to read sight words is consistent repetition over time. The flash cards this sight offers can be printed out in different sizes for use in different ways. For use by individual children, you may want to print quarter page flashcards and laminate them. Then punch a hole in the corner of each card and put them on a book ring or shower curtain ring. Doing so allows a child to carry them anywhere and practice them often whether in line at school, at home on the couch, in a waiting room, or in the car.

If you work with a child who is just learning to read or a grade-school child who is struggling with reading, check out [SightWords.com](http://SightWords.com) and spend some time trying some of the teaching techniques, games and flashcards. It will save you time and money, and, most importantly, it should help you help children master sight words.



## GPA Slate of Nominated Officers for 2015-17

Pursuant to the Georgia Preschool Association By-Laws, a nominating committee, appointed by the president, convened to select the 2015-17 slate of officers to include president-elect, secretary and treasurer. The

committee met and finalized the selection on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Executive Board voted on November 12<sup>th</sup> and approved the presentation of the slate to the membership for election at the Annual Conference business meeting

on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Ballots will be available at the conference registration table for Georgia Preschool Association members.

## GPA By-Law Changes and Ballot information

The following By-Law changes were presented to the Executive Board at the September 13, 2014 meeting.

### Article II: Purpose

#### Goals:

To unify the field of Early Childhood Education throughout Georgia with energy focused on serving the needs of young children and families.

### Article III: Membership

#### Section C: Student Membership

Student membership is open to any student currently enrolled in the Early Child-

hood Education or related field at an accredited college, university or technical school.

### Article IV: Organization

#### Section C: Nomination of Officers

2. All active and honorary members of the Association shall be furnished a copy of the report of the Nominating Committee by the Parliamentarian in the fall newsletter and/or other forms of communication.

#### Section I: Duties of Officers

##### Administrative Assistant

18. This position is an hourly employee of GPA and is hired

and reviewed by the Executive Board.

### Article VIII: Amendments and Revisions of By-Laws

#### Section A: Procedures

6. Exceptions to any of the above By-Laws can be made by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

Ballots for voting to approve or reject the above By-Law changes will be available to Georgia Preschool Association members at the conference registration table on Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

