

Georgia Preschool Association

The President's Corner

Diane Lamb

Spring 2015

I am so excited to be elected the new president of the Georgia Preschool Association. This is truly an honor for me to serve such a wonderful organization. I have been a member of the GPA for 20 plus years and began serving on the board 6 years ago. This is one of the hardest working boards I have ever served. Each person on the board is very dedicated to making sure that quality training is provided throughout the state. It is a pleasure to work with such a wonderful organization.

Thank you to those who attended the annual conference at the Cobb Galleria. Your attendance and enthusiasm were great. Your visits to the vendors and the silent auction really helped make the conference a huge success. We do appreciate each of you for spending your time with us and we hope that you went home with some ideas that would help improve your school. It is really all about the children and whatever we can do to make our schools and staff better only benefits everyone.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the board for all

they do in preparation and participation for our annual conferences. We begin thinking about next year's conference, often with the conference site dates secured, before the conference ends.

At our first training committee meeting after the conference we review your evaluations and focus on your suggestions as we research and choose a conference theme, potential presenters and a keynote speaker. Communications and contracts are started with presenters as their workshop descriptions are received and a brochure and conference book begins to be compiled for printing.

The website is updated to include new conference information. Contracts with the hotel are finalized. Exhibitors are contacted and contracted and specific space determined. Silent auction donations are requested, collected and priced. You help us select Georgia's best preschool educators with the Distinguished Awards recognition.

We also appreciate you volunteering to be amazing

hostesses in the workshops as you assist the presenters. Some of our board members don even another hat and present outstanding workshops, while helping the rest of us work the conference tables, hand out books and BFTS stickers, guide attendees to workshops and lunch lines and answer your many questions. Throughout, our very efficient administrative assistant is registering you for the conference, sending confirmations, constructing name tags and making sure everyone has a place when they arrive for the conference.

So to our Georgia Preschool Association Board: Nancy Bulger, Louise Clifford, Karen Coffeen, Helen Geesey, Terry Graham, Beth Hefner, Donna House, Denise Luders, Cathy Mercier, Laura Newman, Kristi Oltermann, Betsy Primm, Tonie Sanders, Janis Smith, Diane Synder, Kyle Taft, and Amy Wraga... thank you for your devotion, dedication and your many hours of planning, preparation and participation for GPA. This is a job you do out of love for the children in the State of Georgia. (continued on page 2)

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Don't think just because the annual conference is behind us that our work is finished.

That would be far from the truth. We held our first board meeting of the new year in Griffin on March 21. We spent a number of hours planning and discussing the events for the coming year. Diane Snyder has already scheduled the

training committee meeting for planning the 2016 yearly conference. By the way that date is **February 26 and 27, 2016**. Karen Coffeen will be representing us at the GAYC Conference on September 25 and 26. Helen Geesey has planned a workshop in the **Savannah area for October 3**. Mark your calendars for that event. You can find more information about all these events

on the GPA website. Plan on receiving 4 "Bright From the Start" credit hours and then enjoying the afternoon in and around the beautiful area of Savannah.

If I can ever be of any service to you, please feel free to contact me. Your input is very much appreciated. I hope each of you have a wonderful and safe summer.

Chaplain's Message

Cathy Mercier

Lately I have been thinking about an article written by Dr. John C. Maxwell that someone sent me on Facebook. I have a habit of taping notes to the inside of my kitchen cabinets that make me laugh or motivate me. This one is worthy of the kitchen cabinet...

Working in preschool we meet a lot of people every day. The article is titled: "What I Know About People". Here are some excerpts for all of us to think about.

"Everybody wants to be somebody. Isn't that true? Everybody wants to accomplish something. They want to have some worth. They want a little recognition. And they certainly want some affirmation.

Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care. I say this often; but it's worth repeating because it's so important. If you

want to touch people and change lives, you have to touch them relationally first. Don't tell them what you know. You don't impress them with your knowledge; you impress them with your compassion.

Everybody needs somebody.

Every so often, I come across someone who says, "I don't need anybody. I'm independent; I'm a self-made man (or woman)." When people tell me this, they think I'm going to congratulate them. But I don't. In fact, my reaction is just the opposite. You can't achieve greatness by yourself. So if you've done something all by yourself, you haven't done much at all.

Anybody who helps somebody influences a lot of somebodies.

When you help someone, you're not only helping that person. Either directly or indirectly, you're also helping everyone

within that person's sphere of influence. The power of influence always adds and multiplies.

Today, somebody will rise up and become somebody.

This was one of Mary Kay's foundational understandings. Because she believed so strongly in the individual worth of every person, she could see your value before you saw it yourself. She could latch onto your potential before you ever bought into it. That's just how she was. It's part of what made her a great leader. You may not achieve the kind of name recognition that Mary Kay realized in her lifetime, but if you take these five ideas to heart and act accordingly, you will greatly increase your chances of succeeding--as a leader and in all your other roles."

Dr. John C. Maxwell

Is Your Program Accredited?

GPA Supports Preschool Accreditation
Accreditation encourages excellence in preschool programs and presents evidence of quality in a program.

In our continuing effort to support excellence in programs for early childhood, the Georgia Preschool Association would like to recognize programs which have achieved accreditation on our web-site, and also, provide information about types of

accreditation that are available in our field.

Accreditation is a volunteer process validated by peer review and involving systematic self-evaluation against national or regional accepted standards. It denotes a benchmark of quality that is recognized by other educators and by parents seeking quality preschool experiences for their children.

If your school has achieved accreditation, please email the name of your school with address and include the accreditation organization with dates, to lclifford@georgiapreschool.org. Check out our web-site for information regarding different types of accreditation. If you have questions let us know at the above email address.

Legislative Action for Children with Autism Disorder

Legislative Action for Children with Autism Disorder

SB 1 was perhaps the biggest legislative action affecting pre-schoolers that the Georgia General Assembly passed this year. It requires that insurance companies cover evaluation and treatment for children with an

autism spectrum disorder. This bill places a \$30,000.00 cap on payment for such services and limits the age of eligibility to children six years and under. Therefore, it is important for preschool teachers to communicate any concerns about a child's social or communication development to parents in a timely manner! Doing so may make all the

difference in a child's family being able to access the insurance benefit this bill provides in order to help their child.

Submitted by Betsy Primm

[SightWords.com](http://www.sightwords.com)

Phonemic and Phonological Awareness Release Website Update:

The Georgia Preschool sponsored website, www.SightWords.com, has released the first of 39 lessons of its phonemic and phonological awareness curriculum. These lessons are part of approximately 100 lessons that will be released over the coming months. The modules you can now access are

on Listening, Rhyming, Sentences, Words, and Syllables. Each module includes about 10 lessons with materials to download and a video clip that walks you through the activity. The lessons can be used with one child or a small group of children by teachers or parents. Children as young as 2 ½ can begin using the listening module. The remaining modules are designed

for use with children ages three to five.

Go to <http://www.sightwords.com/phonemic-awareness> and give it a try. At the end of every lesson there is a comments section. We would love to hear from you!

SIGHTWORDS.com



Most of us in the DeKalb/Rockdale counties have enjoyed spring break and we are back for the last weeks before it is time for school to end in May. This is usually a very busy time as curriculum goals are reviewed to be sure classroom instruction is on target and final assessments are made to prepare for end of year parent conferences. End of year activities are in the final preparation stage and the last field trips are being taken. It is a busy time.

Let this also be a time to reflect and give praise for all the wonderful experiences that have taken place this year, for the individual victories of the children, and the many "a-ha" moments as children mastered a skill or understood a concept. Assessments show progress and we need them, but they do not reflect the joy the progress has brought to a child's face or the difference the years' experience has made in the life of a child and his/her family. When we

take the time to reflect on these things, God gives us an "a-ha" moment as to why He chose us to do this work. Take time to give yourself a hug and a high five for the 2014-2015 school year!!!

District 4 workshop: Georgia Preschool Association will sponsor a District 4 workshop on **August 15th at Saint Philip AME Church in DeKalb County**. Information about this six hour training event will be posted on the website in May.

District 5 Laura Newman

lnewman@georgiapreschool.org

Study Finds Preschool Reduces the Need for Special Education:

I hope this finds all of our readers well as temperatures have risen and flowers continue to bloom. This contribution to the GPA Newsletter addresses the latest research by Duke University that found students who attended one of two state-run Preschool programs were **less** likely to be placed in special education in the third grade than students who did not. This not only helps the students, but alleviates special education costs as well.

Researchers compared the funding levels for preschool in 100 North

Carolina counties to the third grade special education placements in those counties during a 13-year period. It was found that state-run programs, known in North Carolina as "Smart Start" which provided health screening and childcare to children under five, and "More at Four", (now called "NC Prekindergarten program") which offered preschool slots to disadvantaged four-year-olds, demonstrated a 39% **reduction** in special education placement when compared to counties not using these programs. Placements diminished most for the preventable categories of specific learning disability, educable mental handicap, and other health impairments. Less malleable categories of physical

disability, speech-language impairments and behavioral-emotional disabilities were **not** affected.

In conclusion, special education programs cost twice as much as regular education programs. The authors outlined the savings from the implementation of the two state-run preschool programs.

Wishing our Georgia Preschool members a joyful spring and impending summer season as you continue to provide exemplary early care and learning programs to your enrolled families.



After returning from the Georgia Preschool Association Conference everyone brought back many great ideas that they really liked and will implement in their classrooms. This conference was especially good and it gives everyone a chance to "recharge their batteries" during the middle of the school year. Being able to listen to and sing with Greg and Steve was really special. Their music is so much fun along with the learning aspects of each song. This is also a wonderful time to meet other staff that are doing the same job you are doing and comparing notes on what works and doesn't work. In planning your school year for **next year the GPA Conference will be on FEBRUARY**

26 & 27, 2016 at Cobb Galleria.

There will be a training opportunity at **Griffin First Baptist Weekday on WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2016.** This workshop will offer four "Bright From the Start" credit hours. This workshop is open to anyone who works with or has an interest in the betterment of children. There will be many quality presenters that will be of interest to everyone. You and your school should be receiving more information about that workshop in the next few weeks. It is also nice to have a workshop on the south side of Atlanta.

Let me offer a challenge to each of you in District 6. If you know of

someone or a school that is not a member of the Georgia Preschool Association, make it a point to invite them to join this organization. If you can send me the name of the school, I will be glad to make the contact. GPA is such a good resource and the fee to join is very reasonable. I really don't want anyone to miss out on this wonderful resource. It is so comforting to know that there is a professional organization for us.

Have a wonderful summer and come back ready to hit the ground running.

Keep the Magic! District 7 Fall Training Event August 11

Has your attitude turned you into Cinderella or even worse, her ugly stepsister? Come earn your glass slippers with entrancing activities designed to help you sustain your enthusiasm! Meet some fairy godmother presenters who use their magic wands to help you create a magical learning environment. Start your school year with enchanting

ideas and excitement! Presenters and registration information will be posted at standrewumcpreschool.com and georgiapreschool.org.

Fun on the Playground

In March we held Box Week on our playground. Using balls and a collection of cardboard boxes, one of our teachers (Ms. Mo) transformed our playground. With so many fun activities and some much appreciated

sunshine, no one wanted to leave the playground! There are lots of great ideas for 'teaching outside the classroom' that take only a little imagination and planning to implement. Skills across the curriculum can be reinforced while children learn through play. See the SECA Winter 2007 article that was the basis for these activities. (see pictures below)



Using themes in the classroom

April is the month of the young child. We celebrated the NAEYC Week of the Young Child April 12th to 18th by adapting these themes for our classroom:

Music Monday: exploring song and dance

Taco Tuesday: promoting healthy eating through cooking

Work Together Wednesday: learning through building creations together

Artsy Thursday: open ended art experiences

Family Friday: sharing about your family through pictures and stories

You may find that another week works better for your school or that you may

enjoy adapting themed weeks at different times of the year. These can be done around almost any topic or holiday.

Have you considered themes for days or months? Plan a "one day fun day" based on a favorite book or other idea such as "Red, White and Blue Day". A month long theme can be a wonderful way to incorporate several topics and expand them to meet the curiosity of your class. If November is the month that "I am thankful for" topics could include friends, family, food, pets, the earth, etc.

Sharing themes with another class or two can be fun for the children as well as streamlining the work for you. We have 3 classrooms of 3 year olds who

did a farm unit. In one classroom they planted seeds, another classroom had all our pretend farm animals and the 3rd room had farm trucks, barns, etc. The children moved from classroom to classroom to enjoy each set up. At the end of the week they celebrated with a farm to table picnic.

Consider a Reggio Emilia approach and ask the children in your class to pick something they love as a theme. One of our classes studied jungle animals, another class learned about Poland and another studied famous artists.

If you continue to explore new themes and frameworks the learning can be fun for your class and fun for you.

2015 Distinguished Service Awards

The following people were honored at the 2015 Annual Conference February 27, 2015. Congratulations to you all!

Edelina Lane: Distinguished Family Home Daycare Owner

Edelina owns and teaches full time at her family center, Lina Lanes Learning Center. She has a CDA and is working toward her Bachelors in ECE. She directs a network of 300 home care providers, has received the Quality Rated recognition from the governor and the ECE commissioner and participates in 7 professional organizations.

Leslie Yokeley : Distinguished Director

In her 4 years as director of Duluth First United Methodist Preschool/ Kindergarten, Leslie has improved the

school by adding a fitness class, a book nook classroom, and computer lab. Supporting teachers inside and out of the classroom and adding programs has increased the enrollment dramatically and improved all aspects of learning for the children.

Ashleigh Cagle: Distinguished Teacher

Ashleigh balances a full schedule of teaching, family and volunteering while working on a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. She coordinates the school fundraising carnival for Griffin First United Methodist Preschool and leads the summer camp. She excels at parent communication through Shutterfly, personal phone calls and parent conferences. She has developed science and social studies

lessons beyond the usual preschool standards.

Jennifer Taylor: Distinguished Teacher

Jennifer Taylor is requested by parents to be their teacher, requested by UGA to be the mentor of interns from the Birth to Five program and is requested by Clarke County Schools to accept special needs children in her classroom. Jennifer holds a bachelor's degree and recently completed her CDA coursework. Jennifer thoughtfully and thoroughly researches to find new ideas to improve the facilities and activities at Emmanuel Episcopal Day School.



Pictured L-R:

Edelina Lane

Leslie Yokeley

Ashleigh Cagle

Jennifer Taylor

What a special time we had at this year's annual conference entitled "We All Live Together!" There were so many excited folks and so many great workshops from which to choose. Thank you to all who helped to make this conference another memorable one! The conference evaluation forms gave us a pretty good picture of how folks viewed each of our important workshops and it was overwhelmingly positive. We are excited that the teachers who attended this year's conference went home with some fun and inspiring ideas of their own to share in their classrooms. Greg & Steve gave us a great start with their keynote session and then ended the conference with a closing session - our first in quite some time! Thanks to Greg & Steve for a fantastic time and for a great conference theme!

This year, our Exhibit Hall space was not as full as in years past, but we keep trying to encourage other vendors to participate in this great opportunity. You can help by talking to potential and former exhibitors and asking them to be present at our conference each year. The exhibitors were happy and the crowd was able to

move more freely throughout the Exhibit Hall. As we have done the past two years, we gave more time for shoppers to visit the Exhibit Hall and most folks enjoyed being able to visit two or three exhibitors between classes. Keep the ideas for

Georgia Preschool Association Annual Conference February 26 and 27, 2016 Cobb Galleria Centre

exhibitors coming as we continue to expand our exhibit hall.

The workshops this year offered a wide variety of topics from which to choose. Our consultants did a great job of helping us to celebrate "We All Live Together" by sharing their expertise with you. They were amazed at how well each of you responded to the workshops they presented. Thanks to all who attended for being such great students in each of the workshops. You made a

great impression on those who were presenting and that speaks well of our members and guests. Thank you for helping our speakers to feel welcome, as well!

Our Georgia Preschool Board members did an outstanding job of helping this conference to go smoothly - all of us working as volunteers to make things happen. Thank you to all of our Board members, both seasoned and new, for all your hard work to make this conference such a success. Without you, it could never happen and I appreciate all of you and how willingly you work to get everything done!

Next year's conference is already in the planning stages, so **mark your calendars for February 26 & 27, 2016 at the Cobb Galleria Centre**, where we will look forward to many great workshops, a super keynote speaker, and many excited exhibitors, to help us move forward into the future of our conference. Keep the ideas coming and help us continue to improve the Georgia Preschool Association's most well-known event of the year!

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 because of the warm hospitality we provide and our hostesses are responsible for that hospitality.

Thank you to all who served as host-

esses at the 2015 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 through the GPA website.



Schools of Excellence

Louise Clifford

You may have noticed some of our conference attendees wore a School of Excellence ribbon attached to their name tag indicating those Georgia Preschool Association were honoring at the keynote sessions from these outstanding schools.

The staffs of these schools were seated in the front rows of the ballroom in recognition of the status their programs had achieved by completing high quality standards and becoming accredited, certified or Quality Rated.

We know there are member schools that were not included and we hope you will let us know who you are. We recognized every school that responded to our contact request if you were accredited, certified or Quality Rated.

If your school has met the School of Excellence standards through

NAEYC, NECPA, N. Georgia U. Methodist Program of Excellence, SAC, AdvancED, Georgia Accrediting Commission or Quality Rated, or if you have questions please contact lclifford@georgiapreschool.org.

We plan to add links to these organizations to our website for your reference.

The following is the list of honored schools.

Accredited and Quality Rated Schools

NAEYC

St. Andrews U. Meth. Preschool
Trinity Early Learning Center

NECPA & Quality Rated

Apostles Learning Center
Brookhaven U. Meth. Child Development Center

Quality Rated

First Baptist Weekday
Education Center Ellijay

N. Ga. U Meth Program of Excellence

Griffin 1st U. Methodist Preschool
Winters Chapel U. Meth Cornerstone Kids Preschool and Kdg.
Due West Preschool

AdvancEd

St. Luke's Little Saints Preschool and Kdg.
Faith Lutheran Preschool

Ga. Accrediting Commission

Chapel Hill Christian 1st Presbyterian Weekday School
Live Oak Morning School
The Little School

SACS

Sandy Springs U. Meth Preschool



GPA Silent Auction

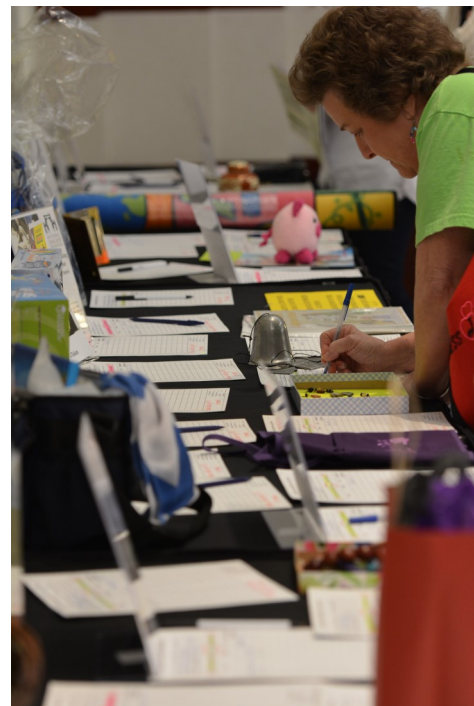
Diane Lamb

WOW! The "silent auction" was a huge success. The proceeds from this fun project totaled \$2,627.94. This money goes to defray the cost for the website. And, besides everyone who participated had a great time. I know some of you needed a U-Haul to get your treasures back home. It was fun to see the excitement around the "silent auction" tables, but it was also great to see the excitement during the entire conference.

Thank you to all who participated and many thanks to those companies, organizations, vendors, schools and board members who contributed the items for the auction. This project is a huge

collaboration of many folks working together. It is always a lot of work to get items donated, labeled and ready to go for the Friday and Saturday event. May I say thank you to Lynn Pitts, Administrative Assistant at Griffin First Baptist Weekday who worked tirelessly before, during and after the "silent auction". She is a real asset to GPA and also to me.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for the "silent auction" for the future please let us know. You can visit the website to contact us. Again, thank you for your participation. Amy Wraga, Terry Graham and Laura Newman will be in charge of this event next year and I know they will do a terrific job.



GPA Conference Exhibit Hall

Karen Coffeen

Thank you to everyone who attended the conference and came in to shop and gather information in the exhibit hall. The exhibitors were happy to see you and appreciated the time you took to look at and purchase their products as well as listen to the descriptions of their services. I hope that you enjoyed the Exhibit Hall Bingo. We did! We gave away 40 prizes!

I would also like to thank all 36 of the exhibitors who had a booth in the exhibit hall. We appreciate their support of the GA Preschool Association. The companies that were represented included: Abrams Learning Trends, Alive Studios, Becker's School Supplies, Busmax Rent-A-Bus, Chattahoochee Nature Center, ChildCare Careers, Child Care Education Institute, Dexter Educational Toys, Discount School Supply, Early

Childhood Training on Demand, Feingold Association of the U.S., Fundanoodle, Fun Science, GA Student Finance Com./Path2College, GAYC, GPA, Greg & Steve Productions, High Ground Solutions, Inc./PreSchoolCast, Jim Elkins Photography, Kado Kid, Kyle Taft, Lakeshore Learning Store, Ms. Ceci, NJS Fashion Handbags, Parent to Parent of GA, ProSolutions Training, Pure Fun! Inc., Sophia Academy, Sweeney Enterprises, Inc., The School Box, Usborne Books and More, Zoo Atlanta, and Zoo-phonics.

If you would like more information on any of these companies please check out the website:

www.georgiapreschool.org or contact me at the contact information below. Also, if you have any companies that you would like to see in the exhibit hall next year, please send me their

name and contact information if you have it. We want next year's exhibit hall to be better than ever!

Karen Coffeen, Exhibit Hall Chairperson and Past President

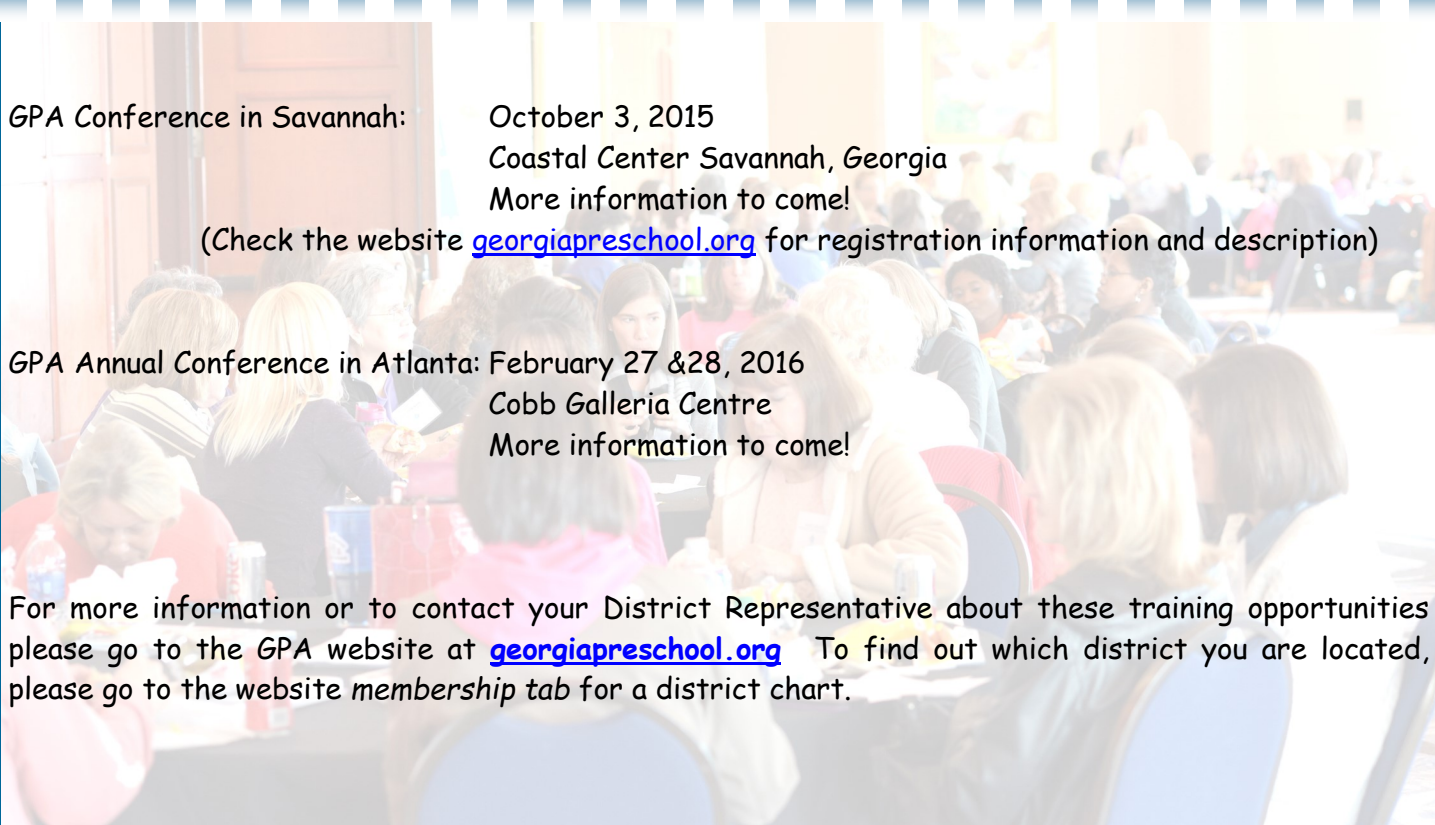
kcoffeen@georgiapreschool.org or
770-590-0982



Next GPA Annual Conference: Feb. 26 & 27, 2016

Upcoming Training Opportunities

- 
- District 4: August 15, 2015
6 hours BFTS credit
St. Philip AME Church in DeKalb County
(Check the website georgiapreschool.org for registration information and description)
- District 6: July 22, 2015
4 hours BFTS credit
First Baptist Weekday of Griffin
(Check the website georgiapreschool.org for registration information and description)
- District 7: August 3, 2015
4 hours BFTS credit
St. Andrew UMC Preschool, Marietta
(Check the website georgiapreschool.org for registration information and description)



GPA Conference in Savannah: October 3, 2015
Coastal Center Savannah, Georgia
More information to come!
(Check the website georgiapreschool.org for registration information and description)

GPA Annual Conference in Atlanta: February 27 & 28, 2016
Cobb Galleria Centre
More information to come!

For more information or to contact your District Representative about these training opportunities please go to the GPA website at georgiapreschool.org To find out which district you are located, please go to the website *membership* tab for a district chart.