

**New  
& Improved  
Second  
Edition!**

**Starfall®**

**Pre K**

**Second  
Edition!**

**Teacher's Guide**  
***Read Me First***

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**Starfall Education Foundation**

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# Starfall's Pre-K Curriculum is...

-  **Integrated** — Young children learn best when they can make connections across many disciplines. Therefore, early literacy, math, social studies, science, social-emotional development, creative arts, physical movement, health, and technology are integrated throughout the curriculum.
-  **Standards-Based** — The Starfall curriculum establishes clear and developmentally appropriate goals for children's learning based on multiple state, district, and federal programs including VPK, UPK, and Head Start. Benchmarks are listed alongside each lesson plan.
-  **Systematic, Spiraled, and Scaffolded** — Children retain new information when it connects with previous knowledge and experiences. New information is presented in a logical and linear fashion. Thereafter children move from simple concepts to advanced understanding through a continuum where skills and concepts are reviewed, revisited, and expanded.
-  **Focused on Early Literacy** — Children with large vocabularies who exhibit phonological and phonemic awareness skills are more likely to become literate. Starfall Pre-K develops these skills and applies them to phonics, concepts of print, comprehension, and writing, laying the foundation for long-term achievement.
-  **Focused on Math** — The Starfall Pre-K curriculum integrates and emphasizes math skills and concepts. Direct instruction, center exploration, games, and activities provide a practical approach to applied math children encounter in everyday life.
-  **A Balance of Instruction and Exploration** — The Starfall teacher facilitates learning. Direct instruction provides a framework to ensure that children receive target skills, concepts, and strategies. Learning Center and Exploration times provide children time and opportunity to explore and experiment with what they have learned.



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# A Learning-Centered Classroom

During Learning Center time in the Starfall classroom, children are fully engaged in the Learning Centers. They are not pulled out to participate in small group sessions or art projects. Rather, children work uninterrupted and have the full attention of the teacher and paraprofessional.

Learning Centers provide the most natural and effective use of classroom materials, time, and space. Children are free to make choices, to handle, taste, smell, and observe, to explore at their own developmental levels, to solve problems in their own way, to share with friends, to dramatize, and to create. Children move around freely and learn by doing. As they change activities, they meet different groups of children and have frequent contacts with the teacher. They learn to work and socialize with others. They meet problems and learn to solve them. They grow in confidence and self-respect.

Most importantly, Learning Centers are fun and are based on purposeful play, which is integral to how young children learn. At center time, children choose the center in which they wish to work and which materials they use. Children need uninterrupted time to explore learning activities and develop interests and talents. During this period, most Learning Centers (computer, art, dramatic play, construction, discovery, library, writing, and math) are open. Teachers observe children, ask open-ended questions, and make suggestions that extend children's play and support their learning.

Learning Centers integrate literacy learning by featuring reading and writing. Paper and pencils are found in the Construction Center for children to use to create signs ("Please do not knock this building down.") and in the Dramatic Play Center for grocery lists and signs such as "Dentist's Office" or "Restaurant." Alphabet books are placed in the Writing Center, counting books in the Math Center, and appropriate books in the Discovery, Construction, and Art Centers.

## *Your role in Learning Centers*

**Provider:** You provide the children with challenges and opportunities to learn, and then trust them to construct their own knowledge in their own unique ways. Carefully select materials and equipment that reflect the developmental needs of the children, encourage their current interests, and spark new ones. Provide a variety of open-ended materials that allow choices by the children and invite them to learn. In addition to the general materials typical for each Learning Center, add specific materials for each thematic unit to extend the topic and to develop new vocabulary and purposes for reading and writing.

**Facilitator:** You facilitate the active exploration and learning of each child. Children need help as they experiment, observe, question, record observations, or search for materials on a topic of interest.

If you are aware of the skill needs of each child, you can find opportunities to effectively incorporate these skills. Start by asking questions which promote communication and learning. Rather than saying, "Nice tunnel" or "Good picture," give the children opportunities to talk about their work using open-ended questions and requests, such as "How did you build this?" or "Tell me about your picture."

You also coordinate and facilitate the efforts of resource teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent volunteers who work with your children. Arrange for these adults to work with the children in ways which are compatible with the existing atmosphere and organization of your learning environment.



**Evaluator/Observer:** Your purpose in observing and evaluating is to help the children. The progress made in all areas of development – emotional, social, cognitive, and physical – must be observed and noted in order for you to provide appropriate activities. Observation and recording should occur spontaneously and continually in the classroom, enabling you to be responsive to the children's interests and provide relevant learning experiences. You move from area to area to assist, suggest, question, and answer. Constant awareness on your part helps to keep children involved. How you ascertain the development of each child will vary, but should include the following:

- ★ **Personal interaction** - At the Art Center, you observe a child shaping play dough into an animal. Talk with the child about his work, and indicate a place to display the animal. At the Discovery Center you might ask, "Why do you think your sand tunnel collapsed?"
- ★ **Close observation** - During Learning Centers notice conversations, movement within the Centers, and how the children relate to each other. Is the child's play reciprocal? Observe social-emotional and communication skills.
- ★ **Collect timely samples** of the child's work (artwork, handwriting, dictated stories, etc.)
- ★ **Keep anecdotal records** - *"Kim doesn't like messy paint or clay. Enjoys tidy art activities."*  
*"I wonder if Kevin needs glasses. Holds his head very near the paper and books, does not catch a ball yet."*

**Recorder:** There is no standard form for recording children's activities and behaviors. Develop a method which works for you. You might choose a binder to keep records for each child, and note the date and specific comments about the child. Or you may prefer to keep anecdotal records on index cards adding comments as appropriate during the day.

Your school or district may have a particular checklist that can serve as a guide for your daily record keeping. These observations and written records are primarily to help further the child's development, but they also can be used as a reference for parent conferences and as a basis for the written report that may be given to parents each grading period.

## Exploration/Small Group

Starfall feels strongly that the Learning Center experience should be an uninterrupted period of time therefore an additional period has been added to allow children the opportunity to engage in free choice activities. It is during this Exploration period that "pull outs" occur.

Designate an area or cabinet for games and activities that would not typically be used in a specific Learning Center such as memory games, board games, doll houses, farms, zoos, table and floor puzzles, building blocks and other construction manipulatives etc. Children will choose from these materials during Exploration.

Divide your class into two or three small groups. During Exploration, call a small group to work with you on a specific skill outlined in the lesson plans. Your paraprofessional should remain free to facilitate children in the Exploration areas and not pull children out for additional small groups.

# Preparing Your Classroom

## Set up the Classroom Alphabet Board



Display the Starfall Alphabet Cards at children's eye level. Each Alphabet Card contains the uppercase and lowercase letter and a sound-picture. The designated sound-picture is used throughout the curriculum to introduce and review that letter/sound.

Allow space below each letter to accommodate index-sized cards. Occasionally you will post word cards under the appropriate letter. (E.g. a child's name under the first letter of the name.)

## Display the Alphabet Poster



The Alphabet Poster includes the letters and sounds represented on the Classroom Alphabet Cards. Display this poster in your Writing Center.

### Beginning of the Year Checklist (Prior to the first day of school)

- ★ Display the Starfall Alphabet Wall Cards
- ★ Display Color Wall Cards
- ★ Display Number Wall Cards
- ★ Display American Sign Language Poster
- ★ Prepare Attendance Board Photo/Name cards
- ★ Establish a Pocket Chart for the Attendance Routine
- ★ Establish a Weather Center
- ★ Prepare Birthday Cake display
- ★ Organize Picture Cards
- ★ Set up *Starfall.com* on classroom computers
- ★ Determine method for Gingerbread Boy's daily message
- ★ Prepare Assessment materials

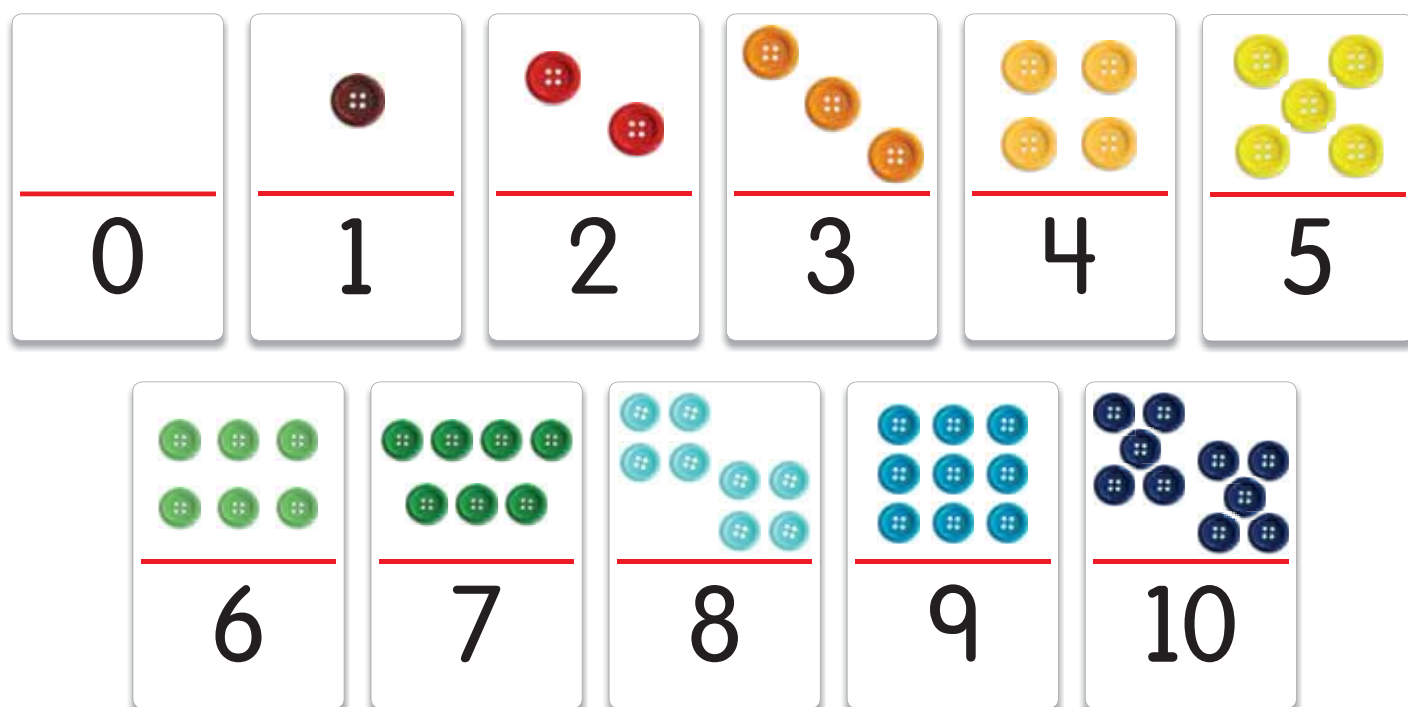
Note: The Calendar Routine will not begin until Week 5.

## Put up the Classroom Color and Number Wall Cards

Display the Color Wall Cards near the Art Area. Make sure the cards are easily viewable from your gathering space. Downloadable Color Cards are also available in English/Spanish and English/French.



Display the Number Wall Cards at children's eye level near the Math Center. Make sure the cards are easily viewable from your gathering space.





## Assemble the Attendance Board

The Attendance Board is used daily to establish who is present and as an instructional tool throughout the curriculum. (See Daily Routines on page 12.)

Name Cards should be laminated since they will be handled on a regular basis. Visually emphasize the first letter of each name on the cards. (e.g. in bold or colored red)

Present	Absent
	
	

### Materials:

- ☐ Name Cards for each child, using photos and first names
- ☐ A Pocket Chart to accommodate the Name Cards
- ☐ Heading Cards: *Present* and *Absent*, or *Here* and *Who's Missing?*

## Build a Weather Station

Prepare a space to accommodate a "Weather Station." Each morning children will observe the weather, predict the afternoon weather, and forecast the next day's weather. (See Daily Routines on page 12.)

Attach Velcro dots to the chart or wall under each heading, and to the back of each Weather Card for easy placement and removal.

### Materials:

- ☐ Heading Cards: *Today's Weather*, *Our Prediction*, and *Tomorrow's Forecast*
- ☐ Weather Cards (provided): *cloudy*, *cold*, *cool*, *rainy*, *snowy*, *stormy*, *sunny*, and *windy*
- ☐ Velcro dots

Today's Weather	Our Prediction	Tomorrow's Forecast
		

## Put up the Calendar

The calendar is used as a tool to show children how to keep track of important events. You may wish to purchase a linear calendar pocket chart as shown below. These are available through Amazon.com and Oriental Trading Company. Starfall Calendar Cards are included with the lesson plan supplements (Classroom Kit) or downloadable at *Teach.starfall.com*. The names of the months and days of the week in Spanish and French are also available to download in the Parent-Teacher Center on *Teach.starfall.com*.



## Make a Birthday Chart

An appropriate way to introduce months of the year to young children is through the use of a birthday chart. Children have a natural interest in learning the names of the months related to their birthdays and/or the birthdays of friends.

To make a birthday chart, photocopy the "Birthday Cake & Candles" master blackline. You will need one candle for each child and twelve birthday cakes. Cut out, decorate, and laminate the cakes. Write the name of a month on each one. Print a small photo of each child, and attach it to his or her birthday month. Display the cakes on the classroom wall in order, beginning with August. Cut out and color the candles. Write each child's name on a candle, and attach it to his or her birthday month above the child's photo. Fold the flame back behind the candle. On the child's birthday, fold the flame up so it shows. Celebrate summer birthdays during the school year.





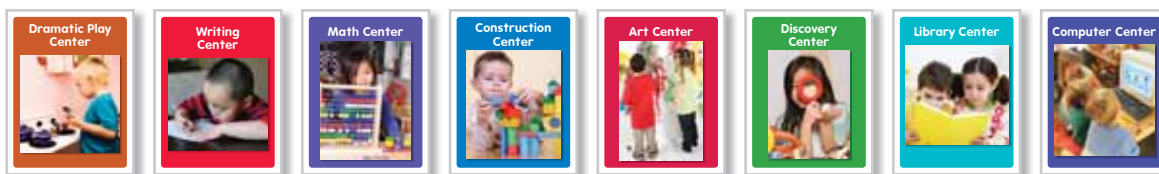
## Prepare a Learning Center Choice Board

A learning center Choice Board gives children a concrete method for managing center time. Therefore, the following materials are included:

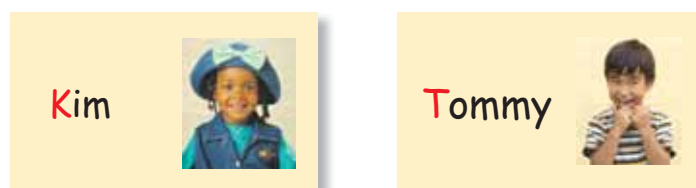
**Large Two-sided Learning Center Identification Cards** to post above your centers



**Identical small Learning Center Cards** to use on your Learning Center Planning Chart.



**Individual Child Name Cards** with space for a photo. Use a pocket chart or attach Velcro to the back of each child's Name Card.



Use a system for Learning Center sign-up that works well for you. See Daily Routines on page 12 for Learning Center management suggestions.

## Create a Responsibility or Job Chart

Children need to learn the importance of caring for their classroom. Create a job for each child in your class. One job may even be assigned to two children to share. At the beginning of the year, assign jobs to ensure that children are able to experience all of the different responsibilities. As children become adept, they can mentor their peers. You may wish to have children change jobs by the week or by the day.

As the year progresses, children choose their own jobs. Randomly flash children's Name Cards. When their names are revealed, the children choose jobs.

Introduction of jobs and responsibilities is not formally addressed in the lesson plans. Create a job chart and a procedure that works best for you.

Jobs may be divided into Early Morning Jobs, Lunchtime Jobs, and Afternoon Jobs (if you are a full-day session).

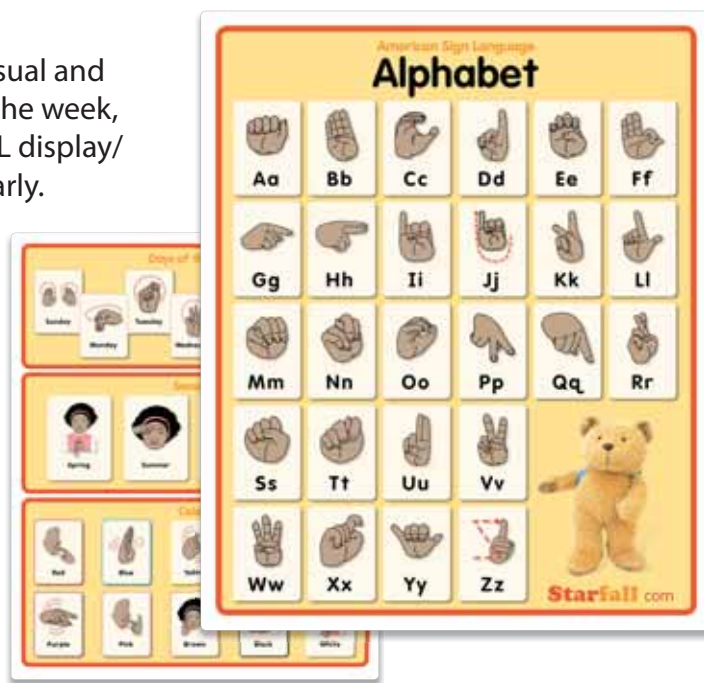
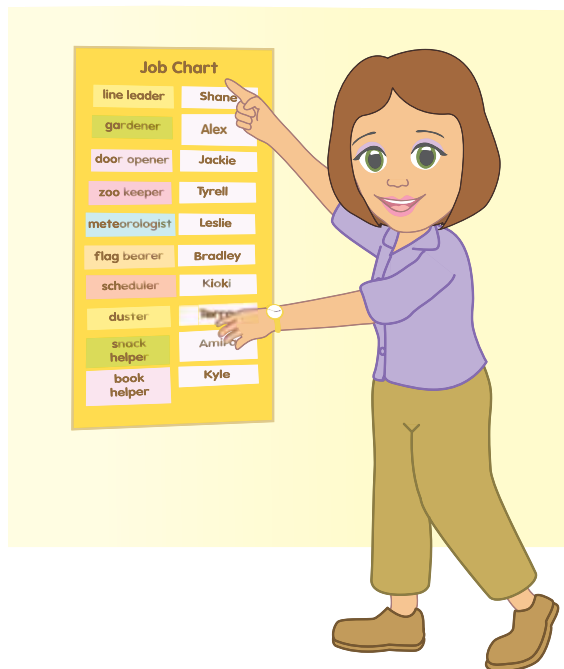
### Suggested Job Titles:

- ★ Schedule Manager
- ★ Snack Helpers
- ★ Soap Manager (waterless soap dispensers)
- ★ Gardener (water plants)
- ★ Floor Manager
- ★ Zoo Keepers
- ★ Door Holder
- ★ Chair Manager
- ★ Maitre-de
- ★ Door Closer
- ★ Electrician (light helper)
- ★ Equipment Manager
- ★ Line Leader
- ★ Duster
- ★ Area Managers
- ★ Classroom Book Helper
- ★ Meteorologist
- ★ Flag Bearer(s) (state and US flag)
- ★ Librarian
- ★ Calendar Helper

## Learn some American Sign Language

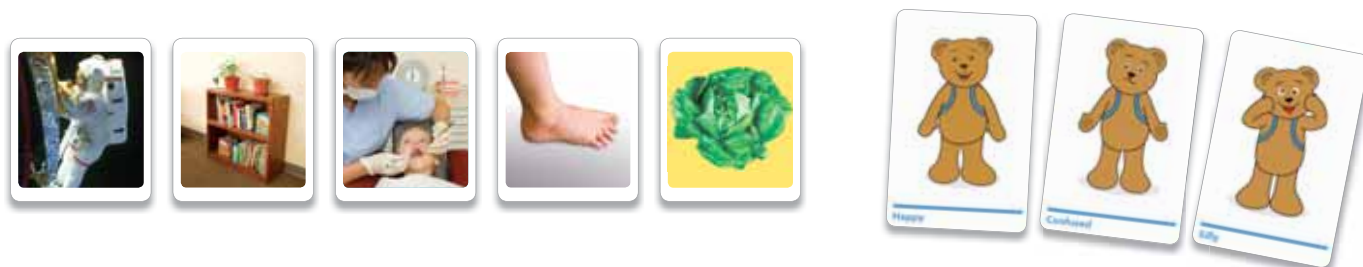
Starfall integrates American Sign Language (ASL) as a visual and kinesthetic means of teaching sound-spellings, days of the week, seasons, and colors. Learn the ASL hand signs on the ASL display/reference poster. You and your class will use them regularly.

For additional instruction on the American Sign Language alphabet you can access the ABC section on *Starfall.com*. Each letter of the alphabet is demonstrated in a short video that you can access by clicking on the "interpreter" symbol in the bottom row.



## Organize your Picture Cards

Instructional Picture Cards are provided for use in phonemic awareness and phonics activities. Theme-related **Picture Cards** and **Emotion Cards** assist in presenting and reviewing concepts.



Individual ABC Picture Cards, Color Cards, and Number Cards are also included.



## Set up Starfall.com on your classroom computers



*Starfall.com* is an interactive website where children practice letters, sounds, words, sentences, and stories, to reinforce the day's lessons. With a Starfall subscription, you will receive all of the content you know and love from the free *Starfall.com* website, plus new content, including numbers and math, colors, songs, and rhymes.

Starfall also provides Resource Generators in the Parent-Teacher Center on *Starfall.com*, which allows teachers to customize and print pictures, worksheets, and more for various activities throughout the year.



# Additional Materials for Starfall Pre-K



## Books and Read-Along Audio CDs:

- *Nursery Rhymes*
- *The Gingerbread Boy*
- *The Little Red Hen and other Folk Tales*
- *Draw Dragon Dot Eyes and other Chinese Fables*
- *Stone Soup*
- *The Cobbler and the Elves*
- *A Day in the Life of A Firefighter*
- *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*
- *Who Likes the Rain?*
- *Thermometers*
- *How the Turtle Cracked Its Shell*
- *Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky*
- *Reach for the Stars*
- *Where Oh Where is Backpack Bear?*
- *Over in the Meadow*
- *The Story of Milk*
- *The Frog Prince*
- *The Ugly Duckling*
- *Dolphins Are Not Fish*
- *Humpback Whales*
- *Dinosaurs!*
- *The Three Little Pigs*
- *My Father Runs an Excavator*
- *A Tale of Two Little Engines*
- *The Troll Who Lived Under the Bridge*
- *Green Grass Grows All Around*
- *The Ant and the Chrysalis*



**Story Sequence and Picture Cards** to go with many of the fiction books



## Music CDs and Lyric Books:

- *Starfall's Selected Nursery Rhymes, Book and Audio CD*
- *Starfall Sing-Along Volumes 1 and 2, Books and Audio CDs*
- *Star Writer Melodies Audio CD*



## Posters:

- ABC Poster
- Animals
- Dinosaurs
- Let's Stay Healthy!
- My Five Senses
- Numbers Poster
- Playground
- Safety Posters 1 and 2
- Trains
- The Four Seasons
- Emotion Poster
- American Sign Language Poster



**Plush Gingerbread Boy, Grandmother and Dragon** come to life in your classroom as classmates and classroom volunteers.



**Gingerbread Boy Stamp and Stickers, Starfall Pencils,** and more!

# Daily Routines



## *Gingerbread Boy's Daily Message*

**Gingerbread Boy** delivers magic each day in a message he secretly hides in the Writing Center. Use the Gingerbread Boy's Message Generator on *Starfall.com* to create his daily messages, or write them on large post-it notes. Sign them with Gingerbread Boy's print stamp and place them in the Writing Center after school each day so that they are ready in the morning.

Although suggested messages are included in the plans, feel free to adjust the messages to meet the needs of your class, school events, or personality of your Gingerbread Boy.

Each day a volunteer retrieves the message from the Writing Center during the Morning Meeting.

## Gathering Meeting

The Gathering Meeting consists of three routines:

- ★ **Attendance Routine**
- ★ **Weather Routine**
- ★ **Calendar Routine** (beginning Week 5)

### *Attendance Routine*

Each day children place their **Name Cards** in the **Present** column on the **Attendance Board**. This board is used to address a variety of phonics skills throughout the curriculum. In the beginning of the year attach a photo of each child to his or her **Name Card**. This not only assists children in recognizing and locating their names quickly, but also helps them to recognize the names of their classmates. When appropriate, replace these **Name Cards** with ones that do not include photos.



### *Weather Routine*

Utilizing the "**Weather Station**" suggested in **Classroom Preparations** will familiarize children with weather and weather words and in addition will preview observing, predicting, and forecasting concepts. Each day the classroom meteorologist selects the Weather Card that represents the weather when the children arrived, predicts the weather later in the day (afternoon), and later, forecasts what the weather might be the next day.

## **Calendar Routine**

At the beginning of each week, add the home and school symbols, as well as any applicable Special Day Cards to the linear calendar pocket chart. Children will understand the calendar best if you place the first “school day” at the beginning of the week, and put the weekend “home days” together at the end of the row. Look at the calendar with the children each day while the Calendar Helper moves the calendar star to the current day’s space.

Research in child development indicates that children do not truly understand time concepts until the first or second grade, even though they may use words associated with time concepts. Initially, the calendar is used as an informational graph to identify important events such as a child’s birthday, holidays, guest speakers, etc. Over the course of the year, the calendar routine expands into more complicated concepts.

## **Adding Complexity**

If your class seems ready, January might be a good time to introduce the children to a traditional grid calendar that displays the days of the week and the dates. If you switch to a grid calendar help children make the transition by continuing to use the home and school symbols from the linear calendar.

**Note:** Many children are confused or overwhelmed by the organization of the grid calendar and the concepts of months, days, and dates, so don’t expect children to master this format yet. Children will have many opportunities to learn about months, days of the week, and numeric dates in Kindergarten and First Grade.

## **Morning Meeting**

### **Warm Up Your Brain Activities**

Each day the Morning Meeting will begin with a short Warm Up Your Brain activity. These movements/exercises help develop small and large motor control, improve coordination, create brain patterns, and activate both sides of the brain among other benefits. You will notice that on occasion the movement/exercise occurs as part of the Morning Meeting rather than at the beginning. Gingerbread Boy will introduce his friend Dragon to assist in each day’s Warm Up Your Brain activity.





## Learning Centers

Below you will find some suggestions for managing Learning Center Time. If you have a management routine that has been successful for you, we encourage you to use it.

Partition the classroom with shelves, bookcases, or dividers to provide small spaces. Large open areas invite children to run! Arrange Centers according to the noise and activity levels. Quieter Centers, such as Library (with an electrical outlet), Writing, and Math Centers, should be grouped together. The Dramatic Play, Construction, Discovery, and Art Centers should be located in another area of the classroom. The Art Center, with double-sided easels, and the Discovery Center should be placed on easy-to-clean flooring near a sink. Carpeted areas work best for housing the Construction, Dramatic Play, and Library Centers to reduce noise. Make sure you can see all areas of the classroom at all times.



### *Managing Center Time*

Before Learning Center time, discuss the activities that are available. A Choice Board (described below) with illustrations will help children make choices. A matching illustrated label should be placed in each Learning Center.

Explain how children will place their names on the Choice Board to indicate where they will work. Discuss how the number of Velcro strips, dots, etc., shows the number of children who can be in a Center at one time and where children place their names. When children are finished working in one area, they are free to move to another. Instruct the children to move their cards when they decide to try another Center.

Five minutes before cleanup time, ring a bell or use some signal to let children know they need to finish up their work. In areas such as Construction or Dramatic Play, children should begin cleanup earlier.



★ **Choice Board I:** Create and laminate a Choice Board with illustrations of the different Learning Centers in your classroom, using the Learning Center Cards provided. In each section, place dots to represent the number of children who can work in each Learning Center. Use a permanent marker to write each child's name on a clothespin. At Center time, each child in turn clips his or her clothespin on the Center of choice. When children wish to change Centers, they move their clothespins to other Centers with empty spaces.

★ **Choice Board II:** This option is the same as above, using Velcro instead of dots. Place Velcro dots to represent the number of children who can work in each Center on the Choice Board under each illustrated category. Write each child's name on a small card. Laminate the cards, and place Velcro on the back. Continue as above.

There are many other methods for managing Learning Centers such as weekly graphs on which children color in the Centers where they would like to work each day, or various colored necklaces, bracelets, or props that children can wear to indicate their preferences. Some teachers conference individually with children to determine where they would like to work and what they plan to do there. Consider the options carefully to decide which will work best in your classroom.



# Lesson Plan Format

The easy-to-follow lesson plans include Whole Group, Small Group, and Learning Center activities. Each session builds on the next, and must be completed in sequence.

**10 minutes**



## **Gathering**

- Attendance Activities
- Weather Observation/Prediction
- Weekly Calendar (beginning Week 5)

**15 minutes**



## **Morning Meeting**

- Warm Up Your Brain Activity
- Integrated theme development including literacy and/or math skills

**45 minutes**



## **Learning Centers**

- Teacher/Paraprofessional interact, engage, and observe children
- No pull-out sessions

**15 minutes**



## **Circle Time**

- Share center experiences
- Phonemic/Phonological Warm Up
- Early Literacy/Letter-Sound

**15 minutes**



## **Story Time**

- Read-alouds and related concept-development activities

**40 minutes**



## **Exploration/Small Group**

- Children move freely among Exploration activities facilitated by paraprofessional
- Small Group pull-out sessions led by teacher

Lesson plans are available for download from the Parent-Teacher Center on *Teach.Starfall.com*. Printed copies are available for purchase separately if desired.






# Yearly Theme Plan

\*Indicates Nonfiction

Unit	Week	Target Letter	Theme Focus	Literature
<b>Off to School</b> Unit 1 	1	Alphabet Preview	<b>Here We Are!</b>	Teacher's Choice <i>The Gingerbread Boy</i>
	2	Alphabet Preview	<b>Look at You!</b>	<i>The Gingerbread Boy</i>
	3	Alphabet Preview	<b>Be a Good Friend</b>	"Mr. Bunny's Carrot Soup"
	4	Alphabet Preview	<b>Colors &amp; Numbers</b>	"Draw Dragon Dot Eyes" <i>Let's Eat!</i>
<b>Your Home &amp; Neighborhood</b> Unit 2 	5	Bb	<b>Your Family</b>	"The Little Red Hen"
	6	Tt	<b>Your Neighborhood</b>	<i>Stone Soup</i>
	7	Nn	<b>Community Helpers</b>	<i>The Cobbler and the Elves</i> <i>A Day in the Life of a Firefighter*</i>
<b>Your Body</b> Unit 3 	8	Ss	<b>Your Five Senses</b>	"Chicken Little"
	9	Aa	<b>Staying Healthy</b>	"One Rice Thousand Gold"
	10	Pp	<b>Being Safe</b>	<i>Goldilocks &amp; the Three Bears</i>
<b>The Great Outdoors</b> Unit 4 	11	Ll	<b>Observing Weather</b>	<i>Who Likes the Rain?</i> <i>Thermometers*</i> <i>Where Oh Where is Backpack Bear?*</i>
	12	Rr	<b>The Four Seasons</b>	<i>How the Turtle Cracked Its Shell</i>
	13	Cc	<b>Outer Space</b>	<i>Why the Sun &amp; Moon Live in the Sky</i> <i>Reach for the Stars*</i>
<b>Animals Everywhere!</b> Unit 5 	14	Ee	<b>Pets</b>	<i>The Frog Prince</i>
	15	Mm	<b>At the Farm</b>	"The Little Rooster" <i>The Story of Milk*</i> <i>The Troll Who Lived Under the Bridge</i>
	16	Ff	<b>In the Wild</b>	<i>Over in the Meadow</i>
	17	Dd Oo	<b>Animals In the Air and Sea</b>	<i>The Ugly Duckling</i> <i>Humpback Whales*</i> <i>Dolphins Are Not Fish!*</i>
	18	Kk	<b>Dinosaurs</b>	<i>Dinosaurs!</i>
<b>Watch Us Work</b> Unit 6 	19	Ww Hh	<b>Let's Build It!</b>	<i>The Three Little Pigs</i>
	20	Ii Xx	<b>Let's Move It!</b>	<i>My Father Runs an Excavator *</i>
	21	Yy Vv	<b>Let's Go!</b>	<i>A Tale of Two Little Engines</i>

Unit	Week	Target Letter	Theme Focus	Literature
<b>Your Environment</b> Unit 7 	22	Gg	How Things Grow	<i>The Green Grass Grew All Around</i> <i>The Troll Who Lived Under the Bridge</i> (repeated)
	23	Uu Qq	Plant It!	"The Turnip"
	24	Jj Zz	Things Change	<i>The Ant and the Chrysalis</i>
	25	Review	Look At Us Now!	"The Four Friends"

## Holiday Plans

Starfall Pre-K curriculum includes 25 weeks of formal lesson plans. The remaining weeks are allotted to seasonal activities as they occur throughout the year. Rather than taking a week off and delaying the next set of concepts and skills to accommodate a seasonal event, extend one week of plans to two, and incorporate holiday activities as part of the regular curriculum. The holiday plans include activities, songs, rhymes, recipes, and more!

Fall	Winter	Spring
Season of Fall	Season of Winter	Season of Spring
Grandparents' Day	Chinese New Year	St. Patrick's Day
Johnny Appleseed	Groundhog Day	Earth Day
Harvest/Halloween	Valentine's Day	Cinco de Mayo
Thanksgiving	Black History Month	Mother's Day

## New Resources

### Snacks Throughout the Year

Weekly snack suggestions, including materials and recipes are available to download in the Pre-K section of [teach.starfall.com](http://teach.starfall.com). The snacks are related to weekly themes and are quick, easy, and fun for children to prepare.

### Outside Activities Throughout the Year

Suggestions for weekly outside activities are also available in the Pre-K section of [teach.starfall.com](http://teach.starfall.com). Included are various types of group games, relays, and gross/fine motor strengthening activities.



# Starfall Pre-K Standards & Benchmarks

The Starfall standards and benchmarks were designed to address the VPK, Head Start, and UPK programs, and to reflect many current Pre-K state standards. The resulting Starfall standards provided the guidelines for the development of our balanced and comprehensive Pre-K program.

## *Approaches to Learning*

### ***Initiative and Curiosity***

- Demonstrates flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities
- Demonstrates increasing independence and willingness to try new challenges
- Shows curiosity and initiative by choosing to explore a variety of activities and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and tasks

### ***Engagement and Persistence***

- Focuses attention on tasks and experiences despite interruptions or distractions
- Brings a teacher-directed or self-initiated task, activity, or project to completion
- Attends to tasks for a brief period and seeks help when needed

### ***Creativity***

- Approaches tasks, activities and problems with creativity
- Uses imagination in play and interactions with others

### ***Reflection and Problem Solving***

- Uses prior knowledge to understand new experiences or problems in new contexts
- Develops increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task or problem alone or with others
- Uses self-talk as a strategy
- Reflects on what has been learned

## *Creative Arts*

### ***Art***

- Experiments with a variety of art materials
- Creates original artwork that reflects thoughts, feelings, experiences, or knowledge
- Shows appreciation for different art forms, culturally diverse works of art, and the creative work of others
- Describes or explains own artwork
- Shows care and persistence in a variety of art projects

### ***Music***

- Enjoys participating in a variety of music activities
- Creates sounds using traditional or handmade instruments
- Experiences different moods, tempos, and rhythms in music activities

### ***Creative Movement and Dance***

- Participates in a variety of dance and movement activities with or without props

- Responds to changes in tempo and a variety of musical rhythms through body movement
- Participates in creative movement and dance from different cultures and times
- Expresses concepts, ideas or feelings through movement
- Participates in movement using fingerplays, songs, and rhymes

### ***Dramatic Play***

- Demonstrates appropriate audience skills
- Participates in teacher-guided dramatic play activities such as acting out a story
- Engages in spontaneous and imaginative play using a variety of materials to dramatize stories and real life experiences
- Reinforce concepts through dramatic play
- Represents fantasy and real-life experiences through pretend play
- Engages in cooperative pretend play with other children



## ***Health, Safety and Nutrition***

### **Self-care**

- Demonstrates personal hygiene and emerging self-care skills

### **Health and Nutrition**

- Develops awareness of nutritious food choices and habits that promote physical well being

### **Safety**

- Identifies the importance of personal safety practices, rules, and routines
- Identifies adults in their communities who keep them safe and healthy
- Recognizes dangerous substances and situations

## ***Physical Development***

### **Gross Motor**

- Demonstrates strength and coordination of large muscles to engage in skills such as jumping, hopping, and running
- Moves with an awareness of personal space in relationship to objects and others
- Combines a sequence of large motor skills
- Moves with balance and control

### **Fine Motor**

- Demonstrates hand-eye coordination
- Uses a variety of writing, drawing, and art tools with increasing coordination
- Demonstrates control, strength, and dexterity to manipulate objects

## ***Social/Emotional Development***

### **Self-Regulation**

- Uses materials appropriately and puts them away
- Recognizes and regulates emotions, attention, impulses and behavior
- Follows simple rules, routines, and directions
- Demonstrates self-help skills

### **Relationships**

- Engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with trusted adults and children
- Demonstrates sense of belonging to family, community, and other groups
- Expresses common courtesy and respects the rights of others (compromises, cooperates, takes turns)
- Identifies family members and their relationships
- Seeks assistance from adults or classmates (or assists adults or classmates)

### **Social Problem Solving**

- Accepts guidance and direction and seeks support when needed
- Uses basic problem solving skills to resolve conflicts peacefully
- Works with others to solve problems

### **Emotional Development**

- Recognizes and identifies emotions in self and others
- Recognizes self as unique having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests
- Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and expresses positive feelings about self
- Demonstrates understanding and acceptance of similarities and differences among others (race, gender, culture, language, special needs, and family)
- Empathizes with the feelings of others
- Shows emotions through facial expressions

## Mathematics

### Number Sense

- Uses one-to-one correspondence to determine “how many”
- Counts/identifies numbers in sequence
- Recognizes the number of objects in a small set without counting (subitizing)
- Understands that numbers always represent the same quantity
- Counts, constructs, compares, or orders groups of objects (more, fewer, less and/or same)
- Recognizes, names, and/or writes numerals
- Understands and uses ordinal numbers
- Uses numbers to predict, estimate, and make realistic guesses
- Represents numbers in different ways
- Recognizes number of objects stays the same regardless of their arrangement
- Recognizes numbers in the environment
- Identifies the number that comes *before* or *after* a given number in a counting sequence

### Patterns, Operations, and Algebraic Thinking

- Combines and separates sets of objects to create new sets
- Understands addition as adding to and understands subtraction as taking away from
- Uses concrete objects to solve problems
- Creates, identifies, duplicates, and extends simple patterns
- Sorts objects by physical attributes

### Geometry and Spatial Sense

- Identifies shapes regardless of their orientations or size
- Describes, compares, creates, and composes shapes
- Recognizes and identifies basic two-dimensional shapes
- Recognizes and identifies basic three-dimensional shapes
- Sorts two- and/or three-dimensional shapes
- Understands directionality, order, and position of self and objects in space
- Responds to and uses positional words such as in, under, between, down, behind

### Measurement and Data

- Becomes familiar with standard and nonstandard measuring tools and their uses
- Measures length, weight, height, size, or capacity of one or more objects
- Uses measurable attributes to compare objects
- Orders objects by measurable attributes
- Uses terms related to time periods such as morning, afternoon, night, today, tomorrow, and yesterday
- Analyzes, compares, and sorts groups of objects by a single attribute (e.g., size, shape, color, texture, orientation, and position) and explains
- Uses graphs and charts to collect and analyze data
- Explores the use and meaning of currency and coins

## Science

### Scientific Inquiry and Reasoning

- Explores simple machines
- Shows curiosity by asking questions and seeking information
- Participates in scientific investigations, analyzes, draws conclusions, and communicates results
- Collects, describes, and records information
- Uses tools and equipment to explore objects
- Makes and verifies predictions
- Compares, contrasts, and classifies objects and data

### Physical Science

- Investigates states of matter (solids, liquids and gases)
- Observes and describes how objects move
- Develops awareness of the properties of objects (e.g., float/sink, heavy/light, rough/smooth, hard/soft, magnetic/nonmagnetic, solid/liquid, wet/dry)
- Explores relationship of objects to light

### ***Life Science***

- Notices changes in living things over time
- Recognizes living things have similar needs for water, food, and air
- Describes characteristics in the appearance, behavior, and habitats of animals
- Uses senses to explore
- Describes simple life cycles of plants and animals
- Observes similarities and differences in living and nonliving things
- Notices similarities and differences among various living things

### ***Earth and Space***

- Explores the characteristics of the sun, moon, stars, and/or clouds
- Observes and describes weather/seasons and how they change
- Understands the use of natural resources and demonstrates environmental awareness and responsibility (e.g., reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Investigates properties of earth materials including water, soil, rocks, and sand

### ***Engineering***

- Designs, builds, analyzes, and modifies structures using blocks or other classroom materials

## ***Technology***

### ***Exploring Technology***

- Becomes familiar with interactive applications, games or activities
- Uses technology for research with teacher support
- Uses technology independently to explore concepts and gain information

### ***Vocabulary***

- Understands common technology terms, such as computer, Internet, mouse, keyboard, device, tablet, and printer

### ***Technology Use***

- Navigates simple on screen menus
- Moves a cursor to a target on the screen
- Understands how to open or close windows and use the back button
- Enjoys electronic forms of storybooks and informational texts
- Uses a device to take pictures

### ***Technology and Our World***

- Identifies examples of technology used in daily life such as phone, computer, car, and camera
- Identifies examples of how technology affects them in daily life including their home and school environments

## ***Language and Literacy***

### ***Reading - Literature***

- Retells familiar stories in sequence
- Identifies characters, settings, and major events in a story
- Asks and answers questions about key elements and details in a text
- Compares and contrasts characters, stories, or events
- Makes predictions based on titles, illustrations, content, and prior knowledge
- Recognizes common types of literature (folk tales, fairy tales, fables, poetry, nursery rhymes)

### ***Reading - Informational***

- Asks and answers questions about key elements and details in a text
- Recalls important facts from informational text
- Makes connections between pieces of essential information in a text
- Distinguishes between fiction and nonfiction

### ***Integration of Knowledge and Ideas***

- Identifies the role of author and illustrator
- Describes the relationship between illustrations and text
- Engages in group reading activities with purpose and understanding
- Makes connections using illustrations/photos, prior knowledge, and real-life experiences
- Uses illustrations to make inferences or predict
- Recalls information from stories and other text
- Interacts appropriately with books and other materials in a print-rich environment
- Identifies sequence of events
- Identifies basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic
- Recognizes cause and effect

### ***Phonics & Word Recognition***

- Associates letters with their names and sounds
- Recognizes own name, familiar words, and environmental print
- Demonstrates understanding of one-to-one correspondence of letter and sounds
- Recognizes frequently used words in text
- Identifies words beginning with the same letter as their own name

### ***Print Concepts***

- Understands print conveys meaning
- Shows where print begins on a page
- Identifies front cover, back cover and title of a book
- Understands that letters form words
- Demonstrates/Understands directionality in print
- Recognizes that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters
- Understands words in print are separated by spaces
- Differentiates between letters and numbers
- Recognizes relationship between illustrations and text
- Focuses on letter names and shapes
- Connects oral language and print

### ***English Conventions***

- Uses frequently occurring nouns and verbs
- Forms regular plural nouns
- Understands and uses question words (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how)
- Recognizes first letter of names is capitalized

### ***Alphabet Knowledge***

- Recognizes and names most letters of the alphabet especially those in their own name
- Recites the alphabet in sequence

### ***Phonological Awareness***

- Distinguishes individual words within spoken phrases or sentences
- Combines words to form compound words/  
Separates compound words
- Counts/blends/deletes syllables in spoken words
- Combines onset and rime to form a familiar one-syllable word
- Identifies or discriminates rhyming words
- Identifies spoken words as same or different
- Blends phonemes into words
- Recognizes/identifies beginning and ending sounds in words
- Isolates and pronounces the initial sounds in words

### ***Vocabulary***

- Connects/Discusses words and (their) meanings
- Uses illustrations and context to determine word meaning
- Understands and uses describing words
- Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary
- Begins to recognize opposites of familiar words
- Uses words and phrases acquired through conversations, activities and read alouds (Uses new vocabulary)
- Identifies real-life connections between words and their use
- Identifies new meanings for familiar words and applies them accurately
- With guidance and support, explores word relationships and nuances in word meanings
- Asks questions about unknown objects and words

### ***Speaking & Listening***

- Speaks in complete sentences
- Listens to and discusses literary texts
- Describes familiar people, places, objects, and events according to characteristics or attributes
- Participates in group discussions
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults
- Engages in agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion)



- Asks and answers questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood
- Participates in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about pre-kindergarten topics and texts
- Follows simple and multi-step directions
- Demonstrates knowledge of nonverbal conversational rules (e.g., appropriate eye contact and facial expressions, and maintaining a comfortable distance in conversation)

### **Writing**

- Contributes to a shared writing experience or topic of interest
- Writes own name
- Uses a combination of drawing, dictation, scribe writing, or invented spelling to convey meaning
- Uses writing tools and materials
- Recognizes writing as a way of communicating for

a variety of purposes, such as giving information, sharing stories, or giving an opinion

- Independently writes some letters and words
- Uses appropriate writing conventions with adult assistance
- Explores letter-sound relationships while writing

### **Language Development**

- Comprehends previously learned simple vocabulary in a language other than their own
- Demonstrates the ability to listen, understand, and respond in increasingly complex ways
- Understands that people use different languages (including sign language) to communicate
- Expresses simple greetings, words, and phrases in a language other than their own
- Communicates effectively with adults and/or classmates who speak other languages by using gestures, pointing, or facial expressions

## **Social Studies**

### **Self, Family and Community**

- Recognizes his or her role as a member of a group (class, family, community)
- Describes characteristics of where he or she lives or visits
- Recognizes common symbols in the community
- Recognizes the roles and responsibilities of various workers in their community
- Recognizes and accepts responsibilities
- Investigates ways people form communities
- Demonstrates knowledge of personal information (hair color, age, gender, phone, address etc.)

### **Geography and Cultural Differences**

- Recognizes aspects of the environment, such as roads, buildings, trees, gardens, bodies of water, or land formations
- Recognizes that people share the environment with other people, animals, and plants
- Understands maps are representations of actual places
- Understands similarities and respects differences among people including those from different cultures

### **Government**

- *Recognizes patriotic symbols and activities*
- *Understands the need for rules in a variety of settings*

### **History**

- Differentiates past, present, and future
- Describes events that happened in the past (e.g., family or personal history)
- Understands how people live and what they do changes over time
- Sequences familiar events in time
- Begins to categorize time intervals

### **Economics**

- Understands that an individual earns money through work
- Demonstrates an awareness of the uses of money
- Understands that money is needed to exchange for goods and services
- Recognizes difference between wants and needs

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Sequence of Themes**

***Is it important to follow the sequence of themes in the order in which they are presented, or can they be presented in a different order?***

The curriculum content and skill lessons are presented in a linear fashion, and we encourage you to follow the sequence in order. Concepts introduced or reinforced in later parts of the year are based on prior knowledge of content and skills introduced early on.

While the themes are presented in a specific order, they cannot always match seasonal events, since school start times vary. Some themes are scheduled to occur near certain times. (e.g., fire safety in October, fire safety month). Rather than skip ahead to the weekly lesson plans for these themes, we encourage you to incorporate some of your own ideas and plans. Doing so will provide prior knowledge and information as well as the opportunity to review the content when the theme is addressed in sequence.

## **Sequence of Letters**

***How did you decide on the order for teaching letters and sounds?***

The sequence of letter introductions is determined by the most frequently encountered letters and sounds, placing similar letter sounds apart from each other, and giving the ability to blend early sounds together to form words. During the first four weeks, no individual letters are introduced. Rather, an overview of all letters is presented, specifically those which occur in the children's names. Beginning with Week Five, one letter/sound is featured per week. We encourage you to follow the sequence of letter introduction, as previously introduced letters/sounds are reviewed and reinforced with the introduction of each new letter/sound. However, any activity related to letter/sounds formally introduced or not yet introduced is encouraged!

## **Holidays, Special Events, Days off from school**

***Often we have a four day week. How can I fit five days of plans into a four day week?***

This is always a challenge! Rather than skipping Day Five, look carefully at the week's activities and incorporate some of them into the following week. It is not essential for you to complete a week's worth of plans in one school week. You may wish to carry over some activities to the next week.

## **Lesson Plan Schedule**

***I'm not sure I can follow the daily lesson plan schedule due to specials. Can I rearrange time blocks?***

We are aware that every school/center has schedule challenges! Some schools provide special pull out sessions for physical education, art, etc, and you must follow the school's daily time line. The Starfall lesson plan schedule reflects blocks of time typical in preschools such as morning meeting time, story time, circle time, and center time. These time blocks may be rearranged to suit your schedule needs. However, we do encourage you to follow the lesson order in sequence. It is preferential to extend a week's plan to the next week, rather than skip or eliminate a lesson. We are confident that teachers can make thoughtful modifications.

## **Learning Center Time**

***I noticed there are no small group pull out times during Learning Centers. I've always done this in the past and it has worked well for me. Can I pull small groups during this time?***

It does seem reasonable to pull groups out of learning center time since children are engaged and it provides an opportunity for the teacher to work with small groups while the others are working in centers. We believe a crucial opportunity is lost when teachers do this! Learning Centers offer the most valuable educational time for purposeful observation during the day. If teachers are busy pulling children from groups and focusing on directing lessons, they miss valuable opportunities to engage with and encourage the children. Learning center time becomes mere busywork, allowing teachers to conduct small group time, but also causing teachers to lose a rich opportunity to actively facilitate and observe the children.

We realize that working with small groups of children is essential, and for that reason we have included a special block of time called Exploration. During Exploration time, children engage in activities while the teacher pulls small groups. It's the best of both worlds! Teachers can be an active part of Learning Center time, while also having time later to pull children for small group sessions.

## **Music**

***I see that Starfall has included music CD's with the program. I have many different songs that I have used from other sources or publishers. Can I still use those songs?***

Absolutely! We encourage you to use as much music as possible! The songs provided by Starfall are related to themes and activities. Feel free to substitute your own songs at any time. Copyright restrictions limit the songs we can provide.

## **Literature**

***I noticed you do not include some of the classic stories in your program and that sometimes you only incorporate one story per week. Can I use additional literature to supplement the program?***

Starfall has produced many fiction and nonfiction stories, and has rewritten many traditional fairy tales, folk tales, and fables for the pre-k program. We strongly encourage you to incorporate the classic stories and additional quality literature as often as you can! During story time, you may occasionally want to substitute one of your favorite books and develop the skill/concept addressed that day around your story. You can never read too much to children!

## **Warm Up Your Brain**

***Is it important to always begin the Morning Meeting time with the "Warm Up Your Brain" activity or can I skip that?***

Research shows that children are getting less and less exercise. It also shows that engaging both sides of the brain during movement helps children to better focus and engage in the activities. The "Warm up Your Brain" activities were carefully chosen to assist children in accessing both sides of their brains, creating brain patterns, and developing core strength, which improve large and small motor skills and provide opportunities for movement. These activities are especially beneficial for children with special needs, such as those with sensory integration issues or poor small motor control. We actually encourage you to incorporate these quick exercises throughout the day as transitional activities and as the children's needs require.

## **ESL and Special Needs**

### ***How does the curriculum address English language learners and children with special needs?***

The curriculum was designed to address English language learners and children with special needs by incorporating rich language development, and all modalities of learning (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) throughout the program. *Starfall.com* has free activities that can be used by children at school and home to review and reinforce many phonics and phonemic awareness skills. A *Starfall.com* membership adds more opportunities to practice phonemic awareness, phonics AND math skills. We have found this is an invaluable tool for English language learners as well as children with special learning needs. The Starfall curriculum includes use of *Starfall.com* on a daily basis.

Use time during Exploration to pull special needs groups for emphasizing specific areas in which reinforcement is needed.

Remember, pre-K is a time to expose children to basic skills. Due to varying levels of readiness and development, one should not expect mastery at this time. Pre-K is a springboard for success in kindergarten. While some children will master all the skills set forth, others will not. Our primary goals are to introduce pre- kindergarten concepts, and to develop and motivate successful life-long learners.

## **Assessments**

### ***Our school offers VPK and we have specific objectives and assessments to address. How does your curriculum align with this program?***

The Starfall standards and benchmarks were designed to address the VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten), Head Start, and UPK (Universal Pre-Kindergarten) programs as well as to be reflective of many state pre-K standards. Sample observation forms and assessments which reflect those used in these specific programs are included with Starfall Pre-K. We realize that many districts have required assessment and observation forms. Please modify or adapt the assessment/observation included to meet your specific needs. We encourage you to develop individual portfolios for each child to include samples of their work, observation notations, and assessment checklists.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### ***Why aren't activities like fire drills, severe weather drills, handicapped accessibility, and bathroom rules procedures included?***

Procedures such as these are considered school policy issues. Refer to your school's or center's rules and regulations dealing with conducting drills, providing accessibility for handicapped children, bathroom rules (depending on where the bathrooms are), self-care issues such as grooming, and rules regulating what items can be used in the classroom (combs, antibacterial soap, outside food, etc).



# Authors & Credits



**Pam Ferguson — Principal Author**

39-year veteran kindergarten teacher in St. Petersburg, Florida, at Holy Family Catholic School; serving on the Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation team since 2001; former director of several daycare centers in Baltimore, Maryland.



**Joan Elliott — Principal Author**

18 years teaching kindergarten in North Carolina and Texas public schools; 12 years teaching in Department of Education, University of North Carolina at Asheville and University of Texas at Brownsville; recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Teaching Award and Fulbright Fellowship (Korea).



**Stephanie Riess — Principal Author**

Veteran teacher of 38 years with experience in public schools in Pinellas County, Florida, as well as a parochial school in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Experience includes teaching a variety of grade levels in both general and gifted education.

**Teacher Advisors**

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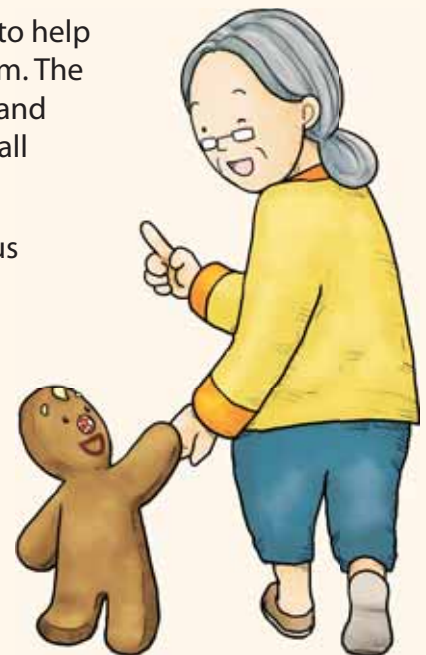
## A Brief History

*Starfall.com* opened September 2002 with a mission to ensure children have fun learning to read. Shortly after its launch, teachers worldwide wrote to tell us how the website successfully motivated their students. A few teachers, including our principal writers Joan Elliott and Pam Ferguson, described how they had created lesson plans leveraging the excitement Starfall had created in their classrooms. Joan's message proclaimed, **"By year's end, all of my kindergarten students were reading!"**

Impressed by their enthusiasm and success, we enlisted Joan and Pam to help us create a complete kindergarten reading and language arts curriculum. The effort involved a task force of over 150 volunteer teachers, 50 schools, and over 5,000 students across the United States. We proudly released Starfall Kindergarten in 2009 alongside membership content on *Starfall.com*.

Due to the success of the kindergarten curriculum, we received numerous requests to create a Pre-K program, the Starfall way. In 2009, Starfall embarked upon developing a complete Pre-K curriculum. Pre-K teachers around the country volunteered to pilot the program in public and private schools, day care centers, and homeschools. These teachers embraced the curriculum and provided excellent feedback, ensuring the program uses what works based on practical real-world experience.

Starfall Pre-K was released in July of 2013, revised in 2019, and is offered to schools and parents at an extremely low price.



**Starfall gratefully acknowledges** the following teachers who piloted Starfall Pre-K, and actively contributed to its development:

- **Brooke Mack**, Williamsburg Elementary School, Williamsburg, KY
- **Cathy Trumbull**, Sacred Heart Interparochial School, Pinellas Park, FL
- **Daphne Bordelon**, Sale International Studies Magnet School, Columbus, MS
- **Dolores Gracia**, Benavides Elementary School, Brownsville, TX
- **Erin Stovall**, Dobson Elementary, Dobson, NC
- **Esperanza Chavez**, La Costa Valley Preschool and Kindergarten, Carlsbad, CA
- **Isela Salinas**, Benavides Elementary School, Brownsville, TX
- **Jamie Bishop**, Gateway Creative Minds, Portland, OR
- **Laura Ann King**, Holy Family Early Childhood Center, St. Petersburg, FL
- **Laura Beth Rogers**, First Baptist Church Preschool, Newnan, GA
- **Lee Ann Zweeres**, Kid's Planet Preschool, St. Petersburg, FL
- **Maizie Tyler**, La Costa Valley Preschool and Kindergarten, Carlsbad, CA
- **Melissa Watterson**, Holy Family Early Childhood Center, St. Petersburg, FL
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- **Penny Doan**, Williamsburg Elementary School, Williamsburg, KY
- **Rebecca Martinez**, Benavides Elementary School, Brownsville, TX
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- **Susan Bridges Hester**, First Baptist Church Preschool, Newnan, GA
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