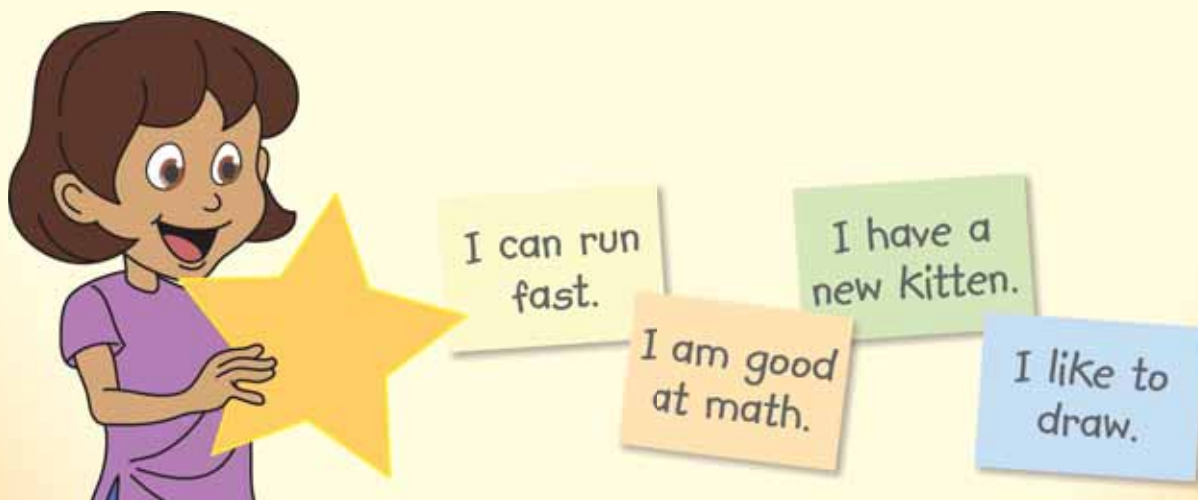




Character Development: I Am Special

for Pre-K and Kindergarten

Starfall Character Development is a supplementary program to implement throughout the school year in order to foster positive social interactions and create a warm and welcoming learning environment.



This module is an excerpt from the Starfall Character Development Program.

If you have questions or comments, please contact us.

Email: helpdesk@starfall.com **Phone:** 1-888-857-8990 or 303-417-6414 **Fax:** 1-800-943-6666 or 303-417-6434



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Special thanks to Pamela Ferguson and Stephanie Riess, primary authors of this program.

I Am Special

Self Awareness, What Makes Me Special, My Family

Preschool and kindergarten children are growing quickly and developing in a variety of ways. They are busy learning new concepts and skills, and mastering old ones. How they feel about themselves, or their self-concept, begins to develop early in life and is one of the greatest responsibilities of parents, caregivers, and educators.

Since a positive sense of self is formed in large part through meaningful achievements, the preschool and kindergarten years are a crucial time for children to participate in such experiences. The early childhood educator must therefore provide activities and tasks in which the children can find meaningful success. Suggestions for developing children's self-esteem are particularly important if you work with disabled children. Remember to provide as many opportunities as you can in order for all children to experience success. Be sure to notice and acknowledge their successes with honest positive feedback.

The activities in this module are included to assist in helping the children feel special and unique, and to experience success. Included is an ongoing year long activity called "My Special Week." For this activity, you will assign each child a week in which he or she may bring his or her favorite toys, books, pictures, awards, a special snack, and so on to share with the class. You will trace the child on bulletin board paper, cut it out, and ask classmates to provide compliments for you to add to the cut out.

Other activities in this module focus on the children's unique qualities and characteristics, and reflect on their growth and new abilities. The development of a good self-concept early in life helps children feel competent and willing to accept new challenges and seek success.

Book Suggestions

- *A Pocket for Corduroy* by Don Freeman
- *Corduroy* by Don Freeman
- *Happy in Our Skin* by Fran Manushkin
- *Hooray For Me!* by Remy Charlip, Lilian Moore
- *I Can Do It Myself* by Emily Perl
- *I Know What I Like* by Norma Simon
- *I Love You More* by Laura Duksta
- *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch
- *I Love You to the Moon and Back* by Tim Warnes
- *I'm Glad to be Me* by P.K. Hallinan
- *The Wonderful Things You Will Be* by Emily Winfield Martin

Starfall Online Activities

- *Starfall.com*: It's Fun to Read, "All About Me"
- *Starfall.com*: Motion Songs, "Happy and You Know It" and "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes"
- *Starfall.com*: Nursery Rhymes, "Mulberry Bush" (Track 8)
- *Starfall.com*: Who Am I?

Starfall Books & Media

- Writing & Observation Journals

Lessons

Year Long Activity: My Special Week

Step One

Assign a week to each child. It is recommended that the week assigned does not include the child's birthday nor be a week shortened due to a major holiday. Be sure to assign yourself a week early in the school year so you can model the process, and include other adults who assist in your classroom. Optional: Special Weeks may take the place of "Show and Tell."

Step Two

Create an **Information Sheet** to be sent home prior to each child's assigned week. Information sheets should be completed by parents or guardians with their child's help and returned to school by your assigned due date. The information sheets should be posted on the Special Week bulletin board during each child's Special Week. Sample questions may include:

- My name is _____ .
- My eyes are _____ .
- My hair is _____ .
- My favorite story is _____ .
- My favorite dessert is _____ .
- I like to _____ .
- I have a pet _____ . My pet's name is _____ .
- I do not have a pet because _____ .
- I like _____ .
- I do not like _____ .
- I am afraid of _____ .
- I am not afraid of _____ .
- When I grow up I want to be _____ .



Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and expresses positive feelings about self

Identifies self as a unique member of a group (e.g., class, school, family or larger community)

Recognizes self as unique having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

Uses words to demonstrate knowledge of personal information (e.g., hair, color, age, gender or size)



Step Three**Special Week letter** to parents/guardians: Sample Letter

Your child will be assigned a special week during which he or she may bring his or her favorite toys, books, pictures, awards, special snack, and so on to school. You will receive a reminder the week before your child's special week.

Step Four

Designate a **My Special Week** bulletin board on which to display the child's information sheet, photos, and other treasures. If possible provide a table or large basket to hold items the child brings to share during his or her special week.

Step Five

At least a week before each child's special week, place a **class list** with spaces for individual comments on a clipboard. As children are playing, circulate and ask each child to say something nice about the special week child. It may be necessary to provide leading questions in the beginning of the year. Write the children's comments on the class list next to their names.

Step Six

Trace the special child on large butcher or bulletin board paper, then cut it out. Have the child add his or her face and hair. Use a marker to transfer the quotes from classmates in sentence form onto the cut out and include their names. For example: Timmy said, "He is fun to play with. I like him." Add the completed cut out to the special week display. Send it home at the end of the week as a keepsake for the child.

Step Seven

If your school allows **special treats**, arrange for the special week child to bring a special treat or snack during his or her special week.

Step Eight

Designate a time each day for the special week child to present his or her items. You might designate that on Monday you will read the information sheet, on Tuesday the child shares his or her photos, on Wednesday the child shares a special book or story, on Thursday the child shares his or her toys and/or other keepsakes, and on Friday the child answers questions from his or her classmates.

I Am Me!

Teach the children the poem “I Am Unique” and have them recite it with you several times. Volunteers take turns to share their thoughts about the meaning of the poem.

Partner the children and partners sit knee-to-knee. Tap one child in each pair on the head, and tell that child he or she will be Partner #1. Explain that when you ring the bell (or other signal) Partner #1 will tell his or her partner one thing that makes him or her special. Provide suggestions such as hair color, eye color, they speak another language, they can dance, have a pet, and so on. Ring the bell and Partner #1 in each pair shares.

Ring the bell again and Partner #2 shares something special about him or herself. Continue with partners taking turns several times. If appropriate, the children share what they learned about their partners.

Distribute Writing & Observation Journals. The children illustrate themselves and write their names, ages, and/or something that makes them special, using kid or inventive spelling. As children work, circulate and provide “adult writing.”

The children sit in a special chair (“or Share Chair”) and share their illustrations. Others share positive comments or things they noticed, such as *I noticed you colored nicely*, etc.

Optional: Demonstrate *Starfall.com: Who Am I?* so the children may play it independently.

“I Can” Chart

Discuss some of the many things the children can do, such as sing, count, dance, sleep, run, and so on. Each child then identifies one thing he or she knows how to do that no one else has identified. Classmates may assist as necessary.

List each child’s response on a sheet of chart paper followed by his or her name. Example: I can ride a bike. (Amelia) I can set the table. (Samuel) I can do a somersault. (Ashley)

When the chart is complete, read each response and the class gives a “round of applause” (clapping in a large circle) after each. Conclude by explaining that there are many qualities that make each of us special!

Materials

- Writing & Observation Journals
- Pencils, crayons
- Bell or other signal
- Share Chair
- Optional:** Classroom computer

I Am Unique

*All around the room I see
Lots of people, including me!
But there is no one I can see
That is just the same as me!*



Materials

- Writing & Observation Journals
- Pencils, crayons
- Chart paper, marker



Social/Emotional Development

Engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with trusted adults and children such as cooperating, compromising and turn-taking

Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and expresses positive feelings about self

Identifies self as a unique member of a group (e.g., class, school, family or larger community)

Recognizes self as unique having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

Approaches to Learning

Attends to tasks for brief periods of time

Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and expresses positive feelings about self

Recognizes self as unique having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

Distribute pencils, crayons, and Writing & Observation Journals. The children illustrate and write about some of the things they can do. At a convenient time, have the children partner and share their illustrations and writings with each other.



Eye Color Graph

Play “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” and the children indicate the parts of their bodies as they are named in the song. Explain that in many ways people are the same, but in some ways they are different.

Discuss ways people are the same and ways we are different. Lead the children to understand that one way people may differ is the color of their eyes.

Indicate the graph on a poster or chart paper. Explain the purpose of graphs and how this graph will be used to learn about the eye colors of the children in the class.

The children take turns looking into a mirror to identify their eye colors. They then locate their names on the graph and color a square under the corresponding eye color. When each child has had a turn, record the number of children who have each eye color and discuss the results.

Use the results to lead the children in a discussion about how people can be different on the outside, but we are very much alike on the inside.

Materials

- Starfall.com: Motion Songs, “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”
- Prepared eye color graph
- Hand-held mirror

Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates understanding and acceptance of similarities and differences in others

Responds to or uses words to demonstrate knowledge of personal information (e.g., hair, color, age, gender or size)

	Brown	Blue	Green	Hazel
Sue				
Izzy				
Kim				



Names, Addresses, and Phone Numbers

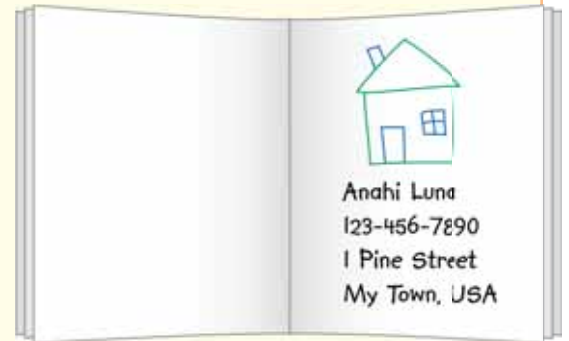
Create a label for each child that includes the child's name, address, and phone number. The children illustrate their own houses in their Writing & Observation Journals then place the prepared address labels beneath them. They illustrate additional houses to create a neighborhood, and add environment as time allows.

Explain that sometimes when we have work or jobs to do we may get frustrated and want to give up. If we have that feeling we can say to ourselves, "I can do this! I am doing a great job!"

Provide support and encouragement by circulating and encouraging children who have difficulty or may want to give up. Consider partnering children who are resistant with other children for support.

Materials

- Prepared label with name, address, and phone number for each child
- Writing & Observation Journals
- Crayons



Materials

- Starfall.com: Nursery Rhymes, "Mulberry Bush" (Track 8)

Helping Your Family

Explain that being part of a family or any group requires people to help each other. The children share ways they help their families.

Discuss what would happen if no one did anything around the house, like cook, wash dishes or clothes, or clean the floor. The children should understand that every member of the family shares in the responsibility of caring for his or her house.

Play "What if?" Ask questions such as the following to help children realize the consequences of not doing their part.

- What if no one washed the dirty clothes?
- What if you never put away your toys?
- What if the floor was dirty and no one swept it?
- What if your mom or dad asked you to help and you just wanted to play?
- What if your mom and dad had to do all the work at home by themselves?

Play *Starfall.com*, Nursery Rhymes Track 8. The children make up and perform actions for each verse as they sing "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

Discuss additional ways the children can help their families. Challenge the children to help out at home today after school and report back to the class.

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

*Here we go round the mulberry bush
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush
Here we go round the mulberry bush
So early in the morning.*

*This is the way we wash our clothes...
So early Monday morning.*

*This is the way we iron our clothes...
So early Tuesday morning.*

*This is the way we mend our clothes...
So early Wednesday morning.*

*This is the way we sweep the floor...
So early Thursday morning.*

*This is the way we scrub the floor...
So early Friday morning.*

*This is the way we bake our bread...
So early Saturday morning.*



Look How I've Grown

Note: This activity should be done at the beginning of the year and repeated at the end of the year.

Discuss how people are alike in many ways, but we are also each different in other ways. Some people are shorter, some are taller, some have black hair, some have brown.

Explain that as we grow, we change. Tell the children that you will measure each of them and provide them each with a paper strip that indicates how tall they are. The children print their names on their strips and decorate them using crayons.

When the strips have been decorated, gather the children together. Invite each child to sit in the Share Chair, show how tall they are, and describe other characteristics such as their hair color, color of their eyes, and one additional characteristic that makes them special.

Model this procedure for the children with your own paper strip.

You can display these strips or "tuck" them away. You should repeat this activity at the end of the school year. You will then provide the original paper strips for the children to compare with their strips at the end of the year. You will then also discuss other ways in which the children have changed and grown.

Materials	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Measuring chart
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long, thin (2") paper strip for each child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crayons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Share Chair



Social/Emotional Development

Demonstrates confidence in own abilities and expresses positive feelings about self

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

Uses words to demonstrate knowledge of personal information (e.g., hair, color, age, gender or size)

I Am Special, Past and Future

Prior to this lesson, send notes home to parents requesting that they send a baby photo of their child in an envelope. They should write their child's name on the back of the photo.

Remind the children that everyone is special and that we are all alike in some ways. Discuss the ways in which all of the children are alike, such as they all have two eyes and two ears, they all need to eat and sleep, and so on.

Explain that even though the children are alike in some ways, they are also very different in many ways. Discuss how they don't all look the same, and they each have their own set of special fingerprints and talents.

Explain that the children will play a game. Place all of their name cards on the right side of the pocket chart.

Materials	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing & Observation Journals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Baby photo of each child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name card for each child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crayons, pencils
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pocket chart



Approaches to Learning

Attends to tasks for brief periods of time

Social/Emotional Development

Persists at individual planned experiences, caregiver-directed experiences and planned group activities

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

Identifies self as a unique member of a group (e.g., class, school, family or larger community)

Indicate one baby photo. Partner the children, or they share with their neighbors who they think is pictured in the baby photo. Volunteers share who they think it is. The child who is identified finds his or her name card and places it under or next to his or her baby photo.

Continue until all of the photos have been matched to a child, and discuss how each baby has grown into a very special and unique person.

Distribute the Writing & Observation Journals. The children illustrate how they imagine they will look when they are older, such as when they are in high school. They write something special they might be able to do when they are older.

The children share their illustrations and writings with each other.

Who is it?

Gather the children in a circle on a rug or the floor. Select one child to come with you while covering his or her eyes. Select another child to hide somewhere in the classroom.

When the child has hidden, have the child covering his or her eyes uncover them and try to identify which child is hiding by asking his or her classmates for clues. Classmates provide hints such as the child hiding has long hair, brown hair, blue shoes and so on, that help the child determine who is hiding.

Social/Emotional Development

Uses words to communicate personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts and feelings

