

Starfall®



Homeschoolers' Guide

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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. Our standards were developed through careful consideration of those of many state, district, and federal programs and therefore, in most cases exceed those of individual states, fully preparing children to proceed to the next level. They 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 parent 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 opportunities to explore and experiment with what they have learned.



The Starfall Pre K Curriculum was designed with a classroom in mind. However, each Learning Center and daily lesson can be modified or adapted to your unique homeschool setting.

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A Learning-Centered Experience

Learning centers provide the most natural and effective use of curriculum materials, time, and space. As a homeschool parent, your entire environment, inside and outside, may be considered a learning center!

While the learning centers outlined in this curriculum are for classroom use, we encourage you to streamline the ideas for your child(ren). We suggest choosing one or two learning center ideas per day and explore that center with your child.

Additionally, if you communicate with other homeschool families, create a learning center day each week. Invite children to explore the centers in a round-robin fashion and then invite them to share their experiences with the group.

Learning centers are an excellent way for children to make choices, to handle, taste, smell, and observe, to explore at their own developmental levels, to solve problems in their own way, to dramatize, and to create. They encounter problems and learn to solve them. They grow in confidence and self respect.

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 your child, encourage his or her current interests, and spark new ones. Provide a variety of open-ended materials that allow choices and invite your child 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 your child. Children need help as they experiment, observe, question, record observations, or research a topic of interest. If you are aware of the skill needs of your 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 your child the opportunity to talk about his or her work using open-ended questions and requests, such as “How did you build this?” or “Tell me about your picture.”



Evaluator/Observer: Your purpose in observing and evaluating is to help your child. 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, enabling you to be responsive to your child’s interests and provide relevant learning experiences. How you ascertain the development of your child will vary, but should include the following:

- ★ **Personal interaction** - At the Art Center, you observe your child shaping play dough into an animal. Talk with your child about his or her 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 how your child approaches an activity. Engage in open-ended questioning and, if appropriate, pose problem solving scenarios.
- ★ **Collect timely samples** of your child’s work (artwork, handwriting, dictated stories, etc.)
- ★ **Keep anecdotal records** - Consider creating a learning journal. Record funny, interesting, or unique conversations. Note steps of growth, etc.

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.

For the homeschooler, this is an excellent time to work on a skill or activity on which your child could most benefit.

Lessons are outlined during days 1-4. Feel free to modify these lessons to best address your child’s needs. This would also be an excellent time for a “field trip” to the library, museum, etc.

Preparing Your Home Environment

Set up the Alphabet Board



Display the Starfall Alphabet Cards at your child's eye level. Each Alphabet Card depicts 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.

If space is an issue, consider displaying the Alphabet Cards on the ceiling!

Display the Alphabet Poster



The Alphabet Poster depicts the letters and sounds represented on the Alphabet Cards.

Beginning of the Year Checklist (Prior to the first day of homeschooling)

- ★ 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 your *Starfall.com* membership for use on the computer and/or mobile device that your child will be using
- ★ Determine method for Gingerbread Boy's daily message
- ★ Prepare Assessment materials

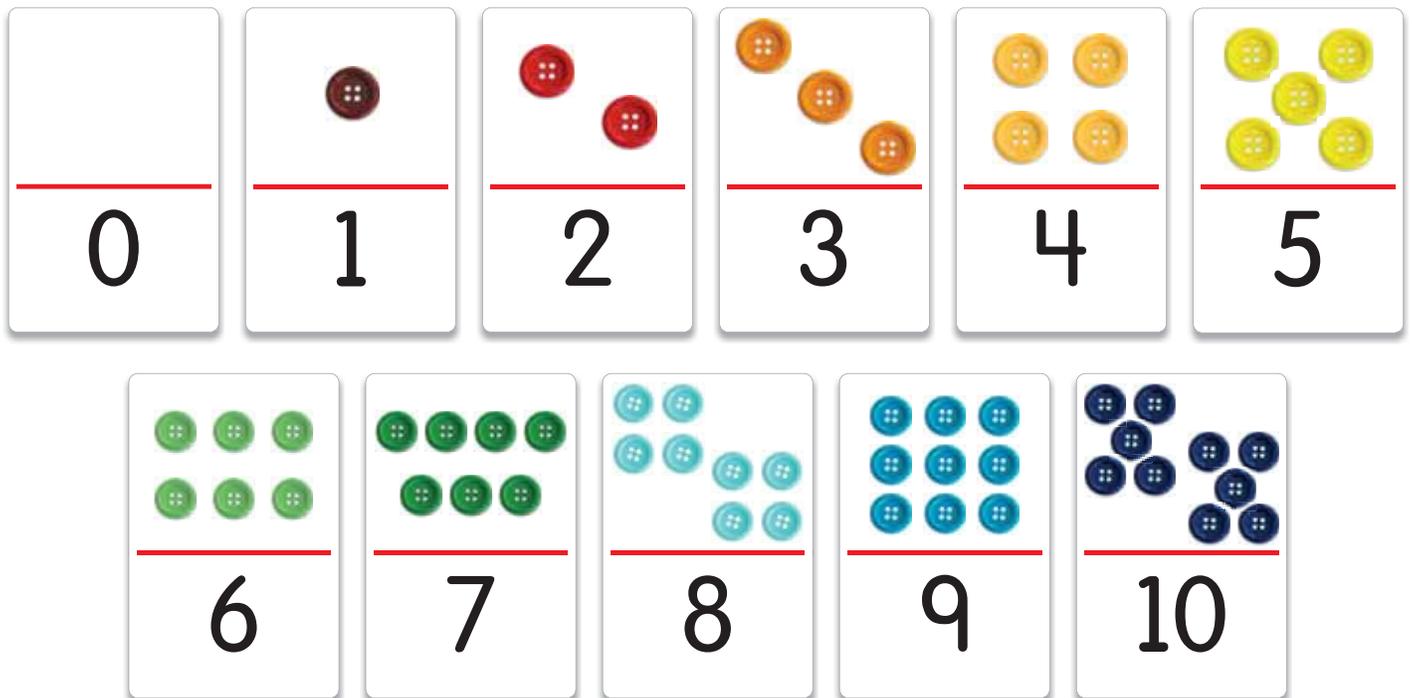
Note: The Calendar Routine will not begin until Week 5.

Display the Color and Number Wall Cards

Display the Color Wall Cards near your learning area.



Display the Number Wall Cards.

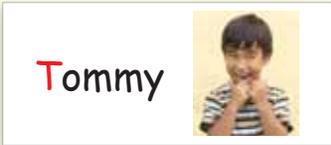
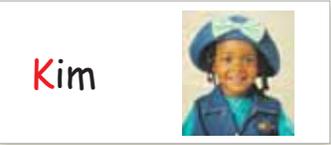


Assemble the Attendance Board

Note: This procedure works well for homeschoolers with more than one child. However, you can still have fun with it. Consider, inviting your child to give names to his or her stuffed animals, and include them on 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 11.)

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
 <p>Tommy </p>	 <p>David </p>
 <p>Kim </p>	

Materials:

- Name Cards for each child (or imaginary classmates), 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 your child will observe the weather, predict the afternoon weather, and forecast the next day's weather. (See Daily Routines on page 11.)

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
		

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 downloadable from the Starfall Parent-Teacher Center at 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 your child, and photos of family members, relatives, and/or neighbors, and attach them to the appropriate birthday months. Display the cakes on the wall in order, beginning with August. Cut out and color the candles. Write each person's name on a candle, and attach it to the person's birthday month above the person's photo. Fold the flame back behind the candle. On each person's birthday, fold the flame up so it shows.



Learning Centers

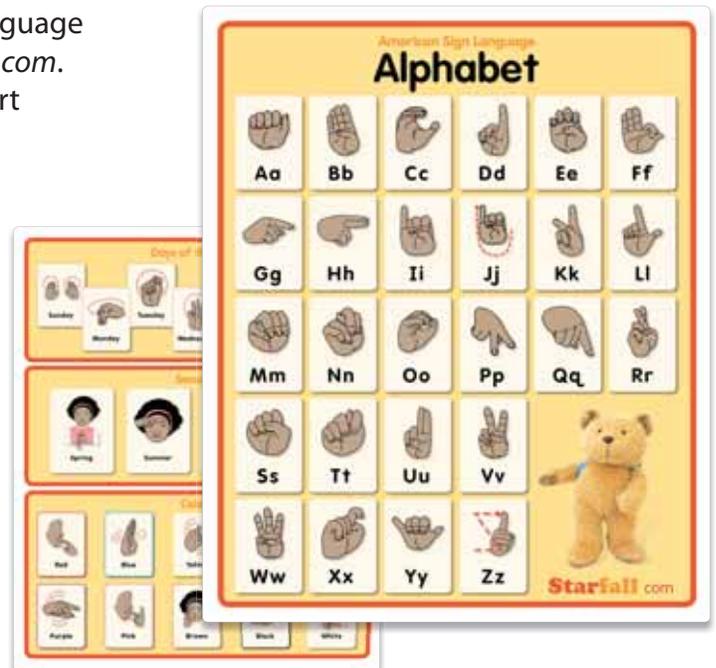
Small Learning Center Cards are available for use on your Learning Center Planning Chart.



Learn some American Sign Language

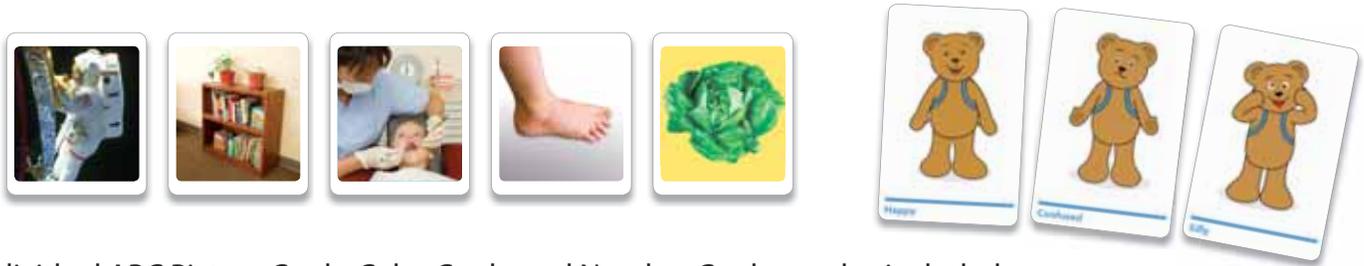
Starfall integrates American Sign Language (ASL) as a visual and kinesthetic means of teaching sound-spellings, days of the week, seasons, and colors. Learn the ASL hand signs on the ASL display/reference poster. You and your child will use them regularly.

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 *Emotions 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 computer and/or mobile devices



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, math, colors, songs, and rhymes.

Starfall also provides a variety of educational resources in the Parent-Teacher Center at *teach.starfall.com*, including customizable cards, pictures, worksheets, and more for various activities throughout the year.

Additional Materials for Starfall Pre-K

 **Story Books with Downloadable Read-Along MP3s:** find the download link in the Pre-K section of teach.starfall.com! Audio CDs for the story books are also available at store.starfall.com.

- *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*
- *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 Cards** are available for download on teach.starfall.com to accompany 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
- Playground
- Safety Posters 1 and 2
- Trains
- The Four Seasons

 **Plush Gingerbread Boy** and **Grandmother** from the Gingerbread Boy story come to life as a classmate and a classroom volunteer.

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

Daily Routines



Gingerbread Boy's Daily Message

Gingerbread Boy delivers magic each day in a message he secretly hides in your home. Use the Gingerbread Boy's Message Generator on *teach.starfall.com* to create his daily messages, or write them on large post-it notes. Sign them with Gingerbread Boy's stamp and place them in a special place in your home later in the 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 child or the personality of your Gingerbread Boy.

Each day your child will search for Gingerbread Boy's message.

Gathering Meeting

The Gathering Meeting consists of three routines:

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

Attendance Routine

Each day your child places his or her **Name Card** 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 your child to his/her **Name Card**. This not only assists your child to recognize and locate his or her name quickly, but also helps him or her to recognize the names of stuffed animals, etc. When appropriate, replace these **Name Cards** with ones that do not include photos.

(You will need to modify this routine to meet your individual needs.)

Weather Routine

Utilizing the "**Weather Station**" suggested in the **Home Environment Preparations** will familiarize your child with weather and weather words and in addition will preview observing, predicting, and forecasting concepts. Each day, your child (as the meteorologist) selects the Weather Card that represents the weather at that time, predicts the weather later in the day (afternoon), and later, forecasts what the weather might be the next day.



Calendar Routine

Download the cards found in the Parent Teacher Center at teach.starfall.com in the Pre K Curriculum section, Unit 1, under Color Supplements: Calendar Cards to set up your linear calendar. Look at the calendar with your child each day and he or she 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

When your child is ready, introduce the traditional grid calendar that displays the days of the week and the dates.

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 your child to master this format yet. He or she 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.



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

- Parent interacts, engages, and observes

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

- Engage your child in the prescribed lesson on Days 1-4 or create your own lessons to best meet the needs of your child.

The lesson plans may be accessed by week via 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
Off to School Unit 1 	1	Alphabet Preview	Here We Are!	Teacher's Choice <i>The Gingerbread Boy</i>
	2	Alphabet Preview	Look at You!	<i>The Gingerbread Boy</i>
	3	Alphabet Preview	Be a Good Friend	"Mr. Bunny's Carrot Soup"
	4	Alphabet Preview	Colors & Numbers	"Draw Dragon Dot Eyes" <i>Let's Eat!</i>
Your Home & Neighborhood Unit 2 	5	<i>Bb</i>	Your Family	"The Little Red Hen"
	6	<i>Tt</i>	Your Neighborhood	<i>Stone Soup</i>
	7	<i>Nn</i>	Community Helpers	<i>The Cobbler and the Elves</i> <i>A Day in the Life of a Firefighter*</i>
Your Body Unit 3 	8	<i>Ss</i>	Your Five Senses	"Chicken Little"
	9	<i>Aa</i>	Staying Healthy	"One Rice Thousand Gold"
	10	<i>Pp</i>	Being Safe	<i>Goldilocks & the Three Bears</i>
The Great Outdoors Unit 4 	11	<i>Ll</i>	Observing Weather	<i>Who Likes the Rain?</i> <i>Thermometers*</i>
	12	<i>Rr</i>	The Four Seasons	<i>How the Turtle Cracked Its Shell</i>
	13	<i>Cc</i>	Outer Space	<i>Why the Sun & Moon Live in the Sky</i> <i>Reach for the Stars*</i>
Animals Everywhere! Unit 5 	14	<i>Ee</i>	Pets	<i>The Frog Prince</i>
	15	<i>Mm</i>	At the Farm	"The Little Rooster" <i>The Story of Milk*</i> <i>The Troll Who Lived Under the Bridge</i>
	16	<i>Ff</i>	In the Wild	<i>Over in the Meadow</i>
	17	<i>Dd</i> <i>Oo</i>	Animals In the Air and Sea	<i>The Ugly Duckling</i> <i>Humpback Whales*</i> <i>Dolphins Are Not Fish!*</i>
	18	<i>Kk</i>	Dinosaurs	<i>Dinosaurs!</i>

Unit	Week	Target Letter	Theme Focus	Literature
Watch Us Work Unit 6 	19	Ww Hh	Let's Build It!	<i>The Three Little Pigs</i>
	20	li Xx	Let's Move It!	<i>My Father Runs an Excavator</i> *
	21	Yy Vv	Let's Go!	<i>A Tale of Two Little Engines</i>
Your Environment 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 schedules 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

Starfall Pre-K Standards & Benchmarks

The Starfall standards provided the guidelines for the development of our balanced and comprehensive Pre-K program.

Emergent Reading

Motivation for Reading

- Enjoys reading and reading-related activities
- Interacts appropriately with books and other materials in a print-rich environment
- Asks to be read to or asks the meaning of written text

Phonics: Alphabetic Knowledge

- Recites the alphabet in sequence
- Focuses on letter names and shapes
- Recognizes most letters when named
- Names most letters
- Recognizes/names some letter sounds
- Matches some letters to their sounds

Print/Book Awareness

- Connects oral language and print
- Shows where reading begins on a page
- Demonstrates directionality in print
- Distinguishes relationship between print and illustrations
- Identifies front cover, title, and first, middle, and end pages of a book
- Understands that letters form words
- Counts words

Sentences & Structure

- Uses complete sentences of four or more words, usually with subject, verb, and object order
- Uses regular and irregular plurals, regular past tense, personal and possessive pronouns, and subject-verb agreement
- Uses sentences with more than one phrase
- Combines more than one idea using complex sentences
- Combines sentences that give detail, sticks to the topic, and clearly communicates intended meaning

Phonological Awareness

- Distinguishes individual words within spoken phrases or sentences
- Identifies spoken words as same or different
- Combines words to make a compound word
- Deletes a word from a compound word
- Counts syllables
- Deletes a syllable from a word
- Combines onset and rime to form a familiar one-syllable word with and without pictorial support
- Identifies rhyming words
- Discriminates rhyming words
- Listens for beginning sound
- Isolates ending sound
- Blends three phonemes

Vocabulary

- Acquires new vocabulary
- Discusses words and word meanings
- Asks questions about unknown objects and words
- Uses illustrations to find the meanings of unknown words
- Understands describing words
- Identifies signs, labels, and environmental print

Listening & Speaking

- Understands by asking and answering relevant questions, adding comments relevant to the topic, and reacting appropriately to what is said
- Follows simple and multiple-step directions
- Engages in agreed-upon rules for discussions
- Describes familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provides additional detail
- Participates in group discussions

Conversation

- Demonstrates varied uses of language (e.g., requesting, commenting, using manner words, problem-solving)
- Follows another's conversational lead, appropriately initiates or terminates conversations, or appropriately introduces new content
- Provides appropriate information for the setting
- Demonstrates knowledge of verbal conversational rules (e.g., appropriately takes turns, does not interrupt, uses appropriate verbal expressions, and uses appropriate intonation)
- Demonstrates knowledge of nonverbal conversational rules (e.g., appropriate eye contact, appropriate facial expressions, maintaining a comfortable distance in conversation)
- Matches language to social and academic contexts (e.g. uses volume appropriate to context, addresses adults more formally than he or she addresses other children, and uses the more formal academic language of the classroom)

Emergent Writing

- Uses drawing to convey meaning
- Demonstrates understanding of the connections among their own ideas, experiences, and written expression
- Contributes to a shared writing experience or topic of interest
- Uses scribbles/writing to convey meaning (e.g., signing artwork, captioning, labeling, creating lists, making notes)
- Uses letter-like shapes or letters to write words or parts of words
- Writes own name
- Writes some letters on request
- When writing or dictating, uses appropriate writing conventions (e.g., starts a letter with "Dear"; writes a story with a beginning, middle, and end)

Comprehension

- Retells or reenacts a story after it is read aloud
- Asks and answers appropriate questions about the story
- Recalls information from stories
- Makes connections using illustrations/photos, prior knowledge, and real-life experiences
- Uses illustration clues to predict
- Identifies sequence of events
- Connects events, characters, and actions in stories to specific experiences
- Identifies story characters
- Identifies basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic
- Distinguishes between fiction and nonfiction
- Makes inferences
- Compares and contrasts
- Recognizes cause and effect
- Identifies role of author/illustrator
- Recalls important facts of informational text



Math

Counting & Cardinality

- Verbally counts in sequence
- Counts sets of objects
- Constructs sets of objects
- Uses one-to-one correspondence to determine “how many”
- Compares and orders groups of objects (more, fewer, less, and/or same)
- Understands that numbers always represent the same quantity
- Uses ordinal numbers from first to fifth
- Recognizes numerals
- Uses numbers to predict, estimate, and make realistic guesses
- Combines and separates sets of objects to create new sets
- Recognizes numbers in the environment
- Uses different ways to represent numbers

Patterns & Seriation

- Recognizes patterns and non-patterns
- Duplicates identical patterns with at least two elements
- Uses rules to create and extend repeating patterns
- Sorts objects into categories
- Describes objects according to characteristics or attributes
- Orders objects in increasing order of size

Geometry

- Recognizes basic two-dimensional geometric shapes
- Categorizes (sorts) examples of two-dimensional shapes
- Understands that two-dimensional shapes are equivalent in different orientations
- Identifies the number of sides of two-dimensional shapes
- Identifies three-dimensional shapes
- Categorizes (sorts) examples of three-dimensional shapes
- Constructs examples of simple symmetry and non-symmetry using concrete objects

Media & Technology

- Enjoys electronic forms of storybooks and informational texts
- Uses technology to explore and review information

Measurement & Data

- Becomes familiar with standard and nonstandard measuring tools and their uses
- Measures or compares the length of one or more objects using a nonstandard reference
- Measures or compares the weight of one or more objects using a nonstandard reference
- Measures or compares the height of one or more objects using a nonstandard reference
- Collects and sorts materials to be graphed
- Uses graphs and charts to answer questions
- Predicts the results of a data collection
- Explores the use and meaning of currency and coins
- Sequences familiar events in time

Spatial Relations

- Shows understanding of position words
- Describes relative position from different perspectives (e.g. “I am on top of a hill. You are below me.”)
- Understand and can tell the difference between orientation terms (e.g. horizontal, diagonal, vertical)
- Uses directions to move through space and find places in space (e.g. Simon Says...)

Operations & Algebraic Thinking

- Indicates there are more when combining sets of objects
- Indicates there are fewer when removing objects from a set
- Combines sets of objects to equal a set no larger than 10
- Removes objects from a set no larger than 10
- Uses concrete objects to solve complex problems

Health & Safety

- Identifies basic safety rules
- Demonstrates awareness of good nutritional practices
- Recognizes the danger of fire
- Discusses appropriate health and safety procedures

Creative Arts

- Explores visual materials and activities
- Shows care and persistence in a variety of art projects
- Creates original work
- Expresses self through movement
- Demonstrates ability to use movement and music
- Represents fantasy and real-life experiences through pretend play
- Participates in teacher-guided dramatic activities
- Engages in cooperative play with other children
- Uses oral language to describe or explain art

Social/Emotional Development

- Recognizes own first name
- Recognizes own first and last name
- Names family members and relationships
- Helps establish rules, routine
- Uses materials appropriately and puts them away
- Demonstrates increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness
- Demonstrates willingness to choose a variety of familiar and new experiences
- Works with others to solve problems
- Recognizes and identifies feelings

Physical Development

Fine Motor Skills

- Uses writing and drawing tools
- Coordinates hand and eye movements
- Demonstrates control, strength, and dexterity to manipulate objects

Gross Motor Skills

- Combines a sequence of large motor skills
- Distinguishes left from right
- Moves with balance and control

Science

Concepts

- Notices changes in living things over time
- Recognizes that living things have similar needs for water, food, and air
- Describes characteristics in the appearance and behavior of animals
- Explores the characteristics of the sun, moon, stars, and/or clouds
- Observes and describes weather and how it changes
- Explores simple machines
- Uses senses to explore
- Investigate states of matter (solids and liquids)
- Observes and describes various ways that objects move

Processes

- Shows curiosity by asking questions and seeking information
- Collects, describes, and records information
- Uses tools and equipment to explore objects
- Makes and verifies predictions
- Compares, contrasts, and classifies objects and data
- Participates in scientific investigations

Social Studies

Self & Community

- Recognizes his or her role as a member of a group
- Describes characteristics of where he or she lives and visits
- Investigates ways that people form a community
- Understands maps are representations of actual places
- Begins to categorize time intervals
- Becomes aware of common symbols in the community

Economics

- Demonstrates knowledge about community workers and their roles
- Demonstrates an awareness of the uses of money

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. Some themes are scheduled to occur near certain times. (e.g., fire safety in October, fire safety month). Rather than skipping 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 developing 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

Often we only have a four day week. How can I fit five days of plans into a shorter time frame?

This is always a challenge! Day Five of each week is a review day with no new skills or concepts introduced. 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. Can I rearrange time blocks?

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.

Music

I see that Starfall has included three 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 your child!

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 encourage you to incorporate these quick exercises throughout the day as transitional activities and as your child'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 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.

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 kindergarten concepts, and to develop and motivate successful life-long learners.

Please visit teach.starfall.com, Information: Frequently Asked Questions. Here you will find questions and answers that provide additional information that may be helpful for homeschoolers.

Authors & Credits



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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).



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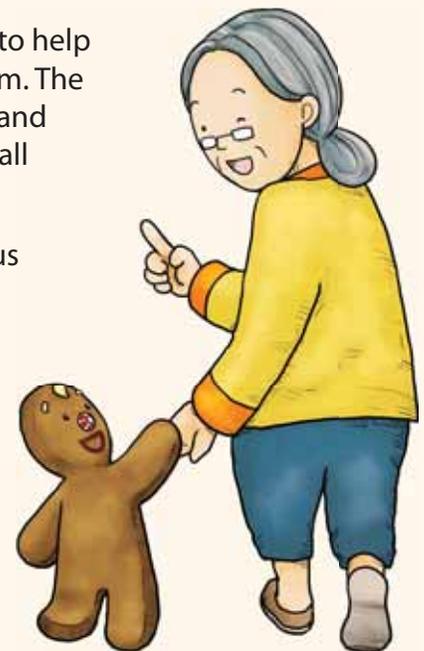
A Brief History

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, 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
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- **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
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