

Charting the Cs
Conference 2025:
*To Literacy and
Beyond*

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

STAR Autism Support: Launching Every Learner to Reading Success!

April 29th at 2 PM
Kaleen Schultz



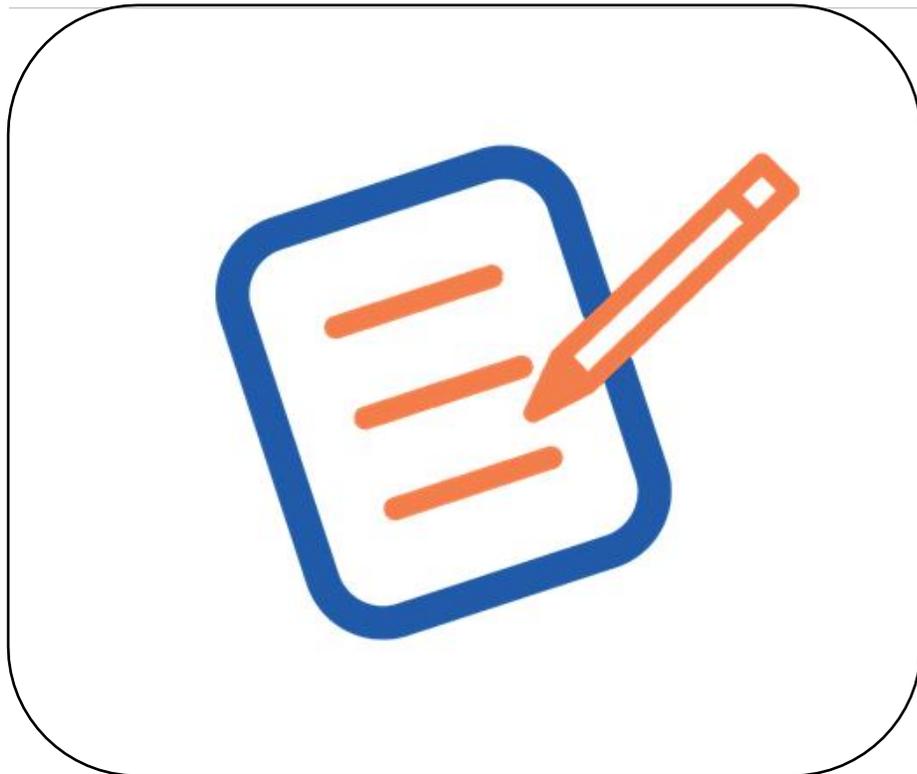
Introductions

Kaleen Schultz, M.Ed

- ★ Former Special Education Teacher
- ★ Parent to a child with autism
 - ★ STAR Training Specialist
 - ★ Minnesota ★



Handouts



- ★ Our handouts include resources!
- ★ Anytime you see this icon on the bottom, left corner – that resource is included!

Who is STAR Autism Support?

- ★ **Evidence-based** curricula and resources
- ★ **Training and support** for educational staff and caregivers



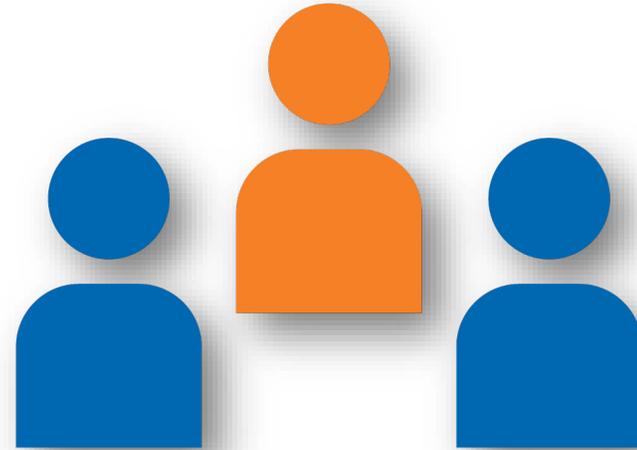
- ★ Building school- and **district-wide** capacity to serve students with **autism and other developmental disabilities**



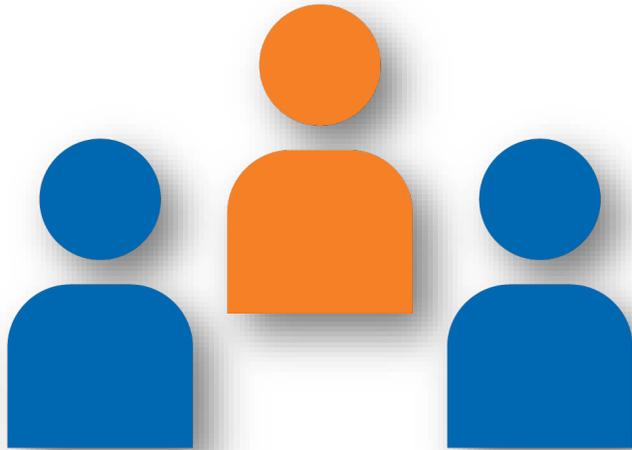
- ★ Comprehensive approach across **all grade levels**
- ★ Student growth and achievement in **all learning environments**

Getting to Know You: Raise Your Hand!

- ★ What age-level do you currently teach?
 - ★ Preschool
 - ★ Elementary
 - ★ Middle School
 - ★ High School
 - ★ Post-Secondary
 - ★ Other



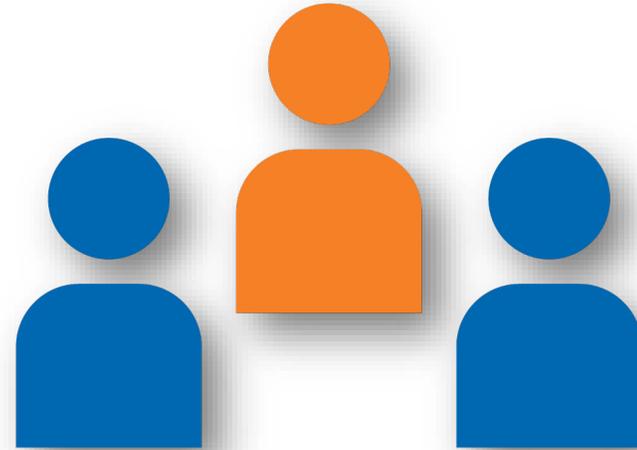
Getting to Know You: Raise Your Hand!



- ★ What brings you to this presentation? I am a/an . . .
 - ★ Student in the field of education
 - ★ Educator
 - ★ Administrator
 - ★ Parent

Getting to Know You: Use Your Fingers!

- ★ How familiar are you with our products? The STAR Program, Links Curriculum or SOLER
 - ★ Show 1 – I haven't heard of any of these tools!
 - ★ Show 2 – I have some experience, but it's been a while!
 - ★ Show 3 – I use STAR, Links or SOLER in my district, and I am looking for more in-depth info!



Goals for Today

- ★ Discuss the benefits of using a **comprehensive curriculum** to teach acquisition of reading skills to students with significant learning challenges.
- ★ Review **tools** for aligning reading lessons to IEPs and state standards.
- ★ Provide examples of **digital and printable reading tools** that aligned to state standards and can be used with a variety of learners!



Challenges Teaching Reading or Pre-Reading Skills



- ★ **Diverse learner needs** in one classroom
- ★ Language and **communication** deficits affect instruction
- ★ **Attention** to task and **behavior** issues disrupt learning small group learning
- ★ **Lack of resources** for reading or pre-reading skills
- ★ **Foundational gaps** in early literacy skills

What else do you experience?



Using a Comprehensive Curriculum

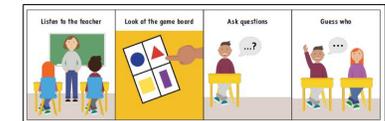
Comprehensive Systems to Teach Foundational Skills

Assessment and progress monitoring
Data collection
Detailed lesson plans in core curricular areas
Differentiated learning for 1:1 and group instruction
Digital tools
Strengths-based

Preschool and Elementary: STAR Program

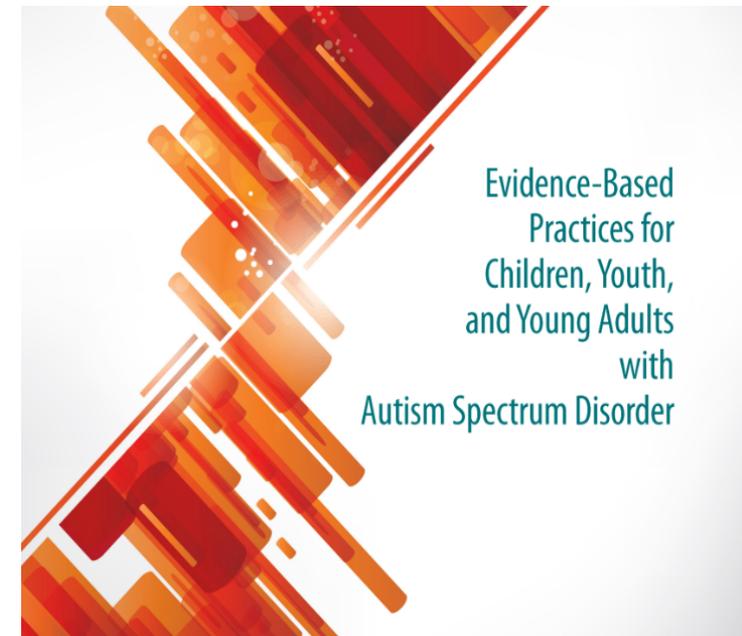
Themes First!
Academic Teaching Units

Secondary: Links



Instructional Strategies for Students with Autism

- ★ Behavioral Interventions (ABA methods)
- ★ Pivotal Response Training
- ★ Visual Schedules/Visual Supports
- ★ Language Training
- ★ Self-Management
- ★ Task Analysis Instruction
- ★ Alternative Communication Devices
- ★ Modeling
- ★ Naturalistic Teaching Strategies
- ★ Peer Mediated Instruction
- ★ Parent Training



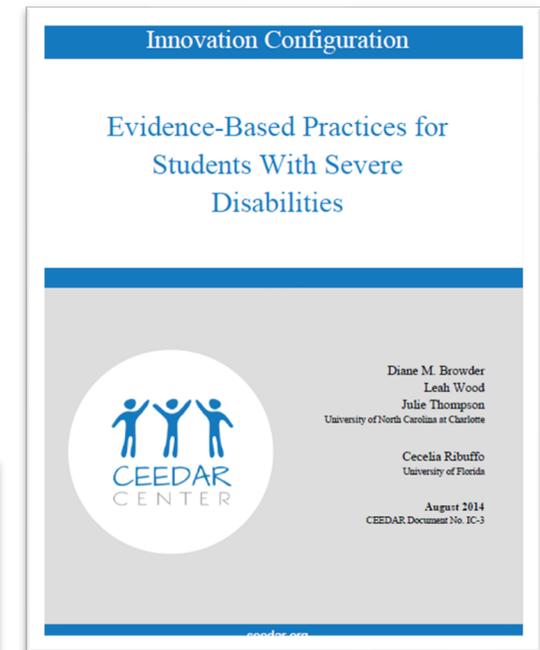
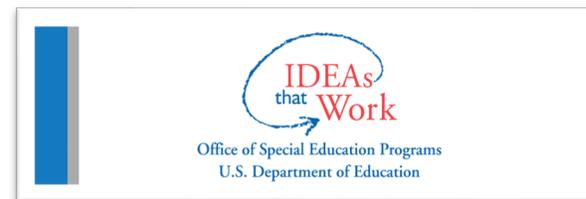
Connie Wong, Samuel L. Odom,



(The National Professional Development Center, 2015)

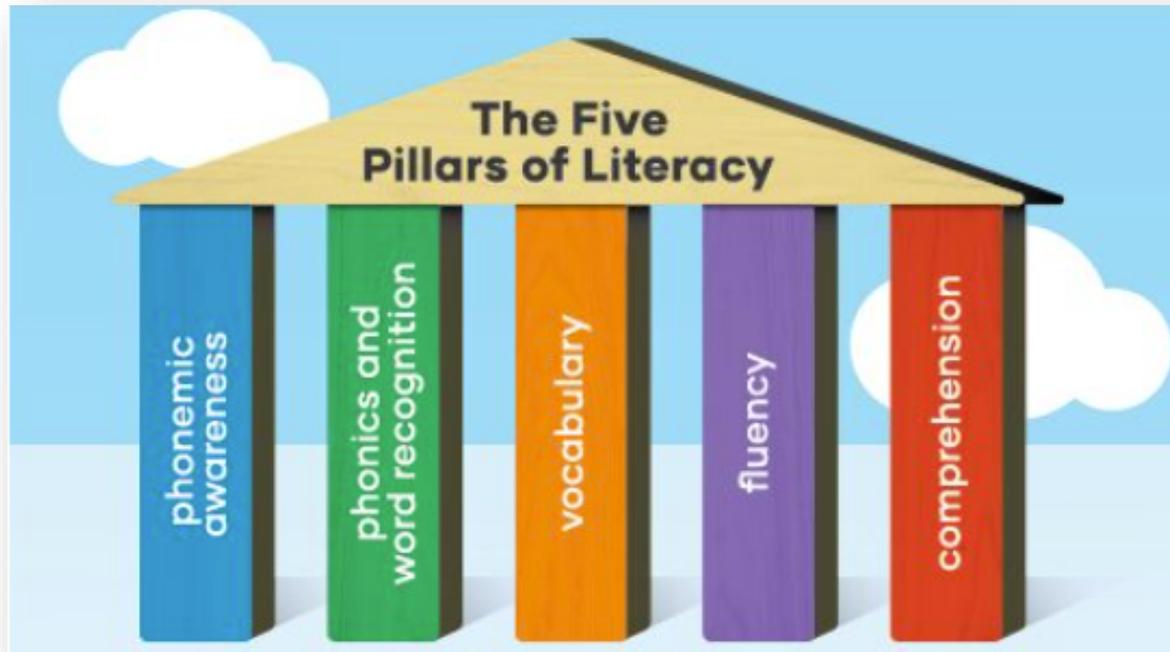
Instructional Strategies for Students with High Support Needs

- ★ Systematic Instruction Based on the Principles of ABA
- ★ Task Analysis
- ★ Data Collection
- ★ Prompting and Fading Procedures
- ★ Reinforcement
- ★ Generalization
- ★ Self-Directed Learning



(Cedar Center, 2014)

Five Pillars of Reading Instruction



(Teaching Strategies, 2025)

1. **Phonemic Awareness:** individual sounds
2. **Phonics:** letters have sounds to form letter-sound relationships and are put together to form/spell words
3. **Fluency:** ability to read correctly with speed and expression
4. **Vocabulary:** knowing what words mean
5. **Comprehension:** understanding what is being read

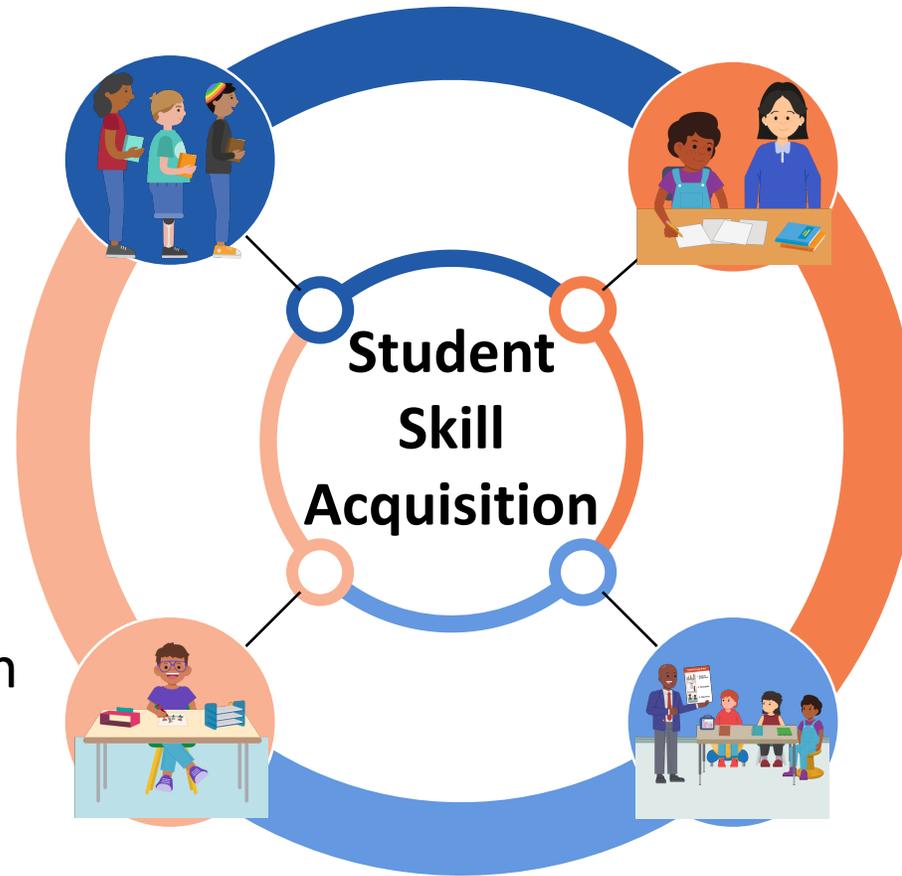
Levels of Instruction for Learning

Routine Instruction

Students apply learned skills during classroom routines and activities

Independent Instruction

Students work independently and work on reinforcing learned skills through practice



One-to-one Instruction

Students engage with individualized learning with educator

Small Group Instruction

Educators are focused on providing reteaching learning skills

Foundational Academic Lessons in STAR

Lesson 10: Reading—Receptive Identification of First Name, Match to Picture

Objective: Student will receptively identify his or her written or typed first name from a field of 3 choices by placing his or her name next to his or her picture when given the verbal cue "Match your name with your picture." Student will respond correctly 3/3 times for 2 consecutive days.

Prerequisite: Criteria were met on Level II, Preacademic Concepts, Lesson 9: Reading—Receptive Identification of First Name, and Level I, Receptive Language, Lesson 12: Labels of Pictures.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS TO TEACH
Items to match: Student's name and photo (discriminated from distractor names and photos)

Materials Included in Program

- Discrete Trial Training, Daily Data sheet
- Discrete Trial Training, Summary of Skills Mastered

Materials Provided by Teacher

- Index cards with student's name and distractor names
- Photo of student and distractor photos
- Activities and items to use as reinforcers
- Token board, if appropriate (See Chapter 6.)

Cue	Correct Response	Consequence/Pause	Criteria
<p>1 Teach student to match name with photo when no other names or distractor photos are present.</p> <p>Place the student's typed name on table and, a few inches away, place a photo of the student.</p> <p>Say, "Match your name with your picture."</p> <p>Or simply say, "Match Name with picture."</p>	<p>Student places his or her name with picture.</p>	<p>For a correct response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-for-one tangible, highly preferred reinforcer and one-for-one social reinforcement. <p>Pause: Student enjoys reinforcer and brief social interaction with teacher.</p> <p>For an incorrect response, provide a CORRECTION.</p> <p>If student is unable to perform task or makes 2-3 incorrect responses, provide RLT.</p>	<p>3/3 correct responses.</p> <p>Repeat this step until criteria are met.</p>
<p>2 Teach student to match name with photo when distractor photo is present.</p> <p>Place student's typed name on table and, a few inches away, place photo of student and 1 distractor photo (use a photo of another student).</p> <p>Say, "Match your name with your picture."</p>	<p>See Correct Response 1</p>	<p>See Consequence/Pause 1</p>	<p>3/3 correct responses.</p> <p>Repeat this step until criteria are met.</p>
<p>3 Repeat 2 using 2 distractor photos.</p>	<p>See Correct Response 1</p>	<p>See Consequence/Pause 1</p>	<p>3/3 correct responses.</p> <p>Repeat this step until criteria are met.</p>

Cue

4 Teach student to match name with photo when 1 distractor name and 2 distractor photos are present.

Place both student's typed name and second student's typed name on table and, a few inches away, place photo of student and 2 distractor photos.

Say, "Match your name with your picture."

Correct Response	Consequence/Pause	Criteria
<p>See Correct Response 1</p>	<p>See Consequence/Pause 1</p>	<p>3/3 correct responses.</p> <p>Repeat this step until criteria are met.</p>

Cue

5 Repeat 4 using 2 distractor names and 2 distractor photos.

Note: This lesson is teaching student to identify his or her written name from other written names and to match it to a picture of him- or herself. Additional student names can be taught using Level III, Preacademic Concepts, Lesson 12: Reading—Sight Words.

Correct Response	Consequence/Pause	Criteria
<p>See Correct Response 1</p>	<p>See Consequence/Pause 1</p>	<p>3/3 correct responses for 2 consecutive days.</p>

CORRECTION

When student makes an incorrect response, provide a correction:

- Stop and restart trial.
- Repeat the cue.
- Prompt with just enough assistance to get a correct response.
- Reinforce with one-for-one social reinforcement only. If needed to maintain responding, also use a less preferred tangible reinforcer.
- Re-present the original cue/step without the prompt, and use a highly preferred reinforcer.

Reinforced Learning Trials (RLT)

If student is unable to perform task or makes 2-3 incorrect responses, provide RLT:

- Select prompt level that will ensure correct response.
- Provide cue along with selected prompt.
- Reinforce with tangible and social reinforcement.
- After 3/3 correct responses, drop back to a lesser prompt.
- Re-present original cue/step when student is ready to attempt task without prompt.

Next up Provide opportunities for student to use skill during routines (e.g., signing in during arrival routine).

Level II Preacademic Concepts
DT Lesson 10: Reading—Receptive Identification of First Name, Match to Picture

- ★ Letter identification
- ★ Name identification
- ★ Letter sounds
- ★ Matching words to pictures
- ★ Sight word identification
- ★ Reading a simple book
- ★ Writing from dictation
- ★ And more!

Foundational Academic Lessons in Links

- ★ Matching letters
- ★ Reading a simple set of instructions
- ★ Matching phrases to pictures
- ★ Typing words
- ★ Using a sight word daily schedule
- ★ Social scripts
- ★ Writing academic content
- ★ And more!

LINKS Reading a Simple Set of Instructions (Expanded) Lesson 113 **Advanced**

Curriculum Area: Functional Academics-Reading

Goal: The student will read instructions by reading 2 or 3 words per page from a previously learned 5 or 6 page instructional booklet and will demonstrate comprehension by correctly responding to the cue. Tell me about the book for every page and at the end of the booklet for 3/3 correct trials across 2 consecutive days for 5 booklets during random presentation.

Prerequisite Lessons	Teacher	Materials Provided By:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading a Simple Set of Instructions (L.71) Matching Words to Pictures (Expanded; L.112) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple Instructional Booklets with Words (e.g. teacher-developed social stories, instructional booklets about activities) Token Board Reinforcer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links™ Instructional Data Form Sequential Learning Steps without Distractor

Instructional Procedures

Instructional Set-up and Teacher Cue

- Provide the student with a 5/6 page instructional booklet that includes 2 or 3 words per page and words and pictures of familiar objects/people/actions.
- Open the first page of the booklet, point to the first sentence, and say, "Read the directions to me."
- After the student reads the words, cover the words and say, "Tell me about the directions."
- Repeat the previous steps for each page of the booklet.
- At the end of the entire booklet, say "Tell me about the directions" or ask the student a specific question about the directions.

Expected Student Response

- The student points to the words on each page and reads 2 words aloud.
- The student responds to the teacher's request to describe the directions and re-states the words (at a minimum).
- At the end of the booklet, the student states a 2-word phrase including a noun or verb that is relevant to the instructional manual.

Reinforcement Procedure

- Reinforce each correct response with a tangible or token reward and social praise.
- Simultaneously teach the student to use the appropriate token board reinforcement system.

Evaluation Criteria

- The student reads 2 or 3 words per page of a 5/6 page instructional booklet and provides 1 correct answer for a comprehension question for 3/3 correct trials across 2 consecutive days for 5 booklets during random presentation.

Example

- The teacher provides the student with a simple instructional book about sharpening a pencil.
- The teacher points to the words "sharpen pencil" and says "Read the directions to me."
- The student reads the words "sharpen pencil."
- The teacher covers the phrase "sharpen pencil" and says "Tell me about the directions."
- The student says, "Sharpen pencil."
- The teacher repeats the previous steps for each page of the booklet.
- After the student finishes reading the 6-page booklet about sharpening a pencil, the teacher says "Tell me about the directions."
- The student says "Sharpening pencils."
- The teacher reinforces the appropriate response with a token and social praise.

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LINKS Reading a Simple Set of Instructions (Expanded) Lesson 113

Introducing New Skills

- Introduce new booklets using the Sequential Learning Steps without Distractor until the student can complete all of the steps in the Instructional Procedures with at least 5 different books.
- After the student has learned to read 2 booklets, randomly rotate between the two booklets. Continue introducing new booklets until the student can read and demonstrate comprehension for 5 booklets presented during random rotation.
- Once the student has met criteria for 2 words per page and a 2-word answer to a comprehension question at the end of the booklet, have the student read 3 words per page and provide a 3-word answer to a comprehension question at the end of the booklet. Continue to expect longer answers until the student can respond with enough information to be able to follow the directions.

Recommended Skills

1st-5th Booklets: Read 2 words per page, answer questions using 2 words per page and 2 words at the end of the booklet.
Expanded Comprehension: Read 3 words per page, answer questions using 3 words per page and 3 words at the end of the booklet.

Modifications

Follow the Data Collection Coding System on the Links™ Instructional Data Form and document the student's performance for each skill as well as any modifications made to the instructional procedures.

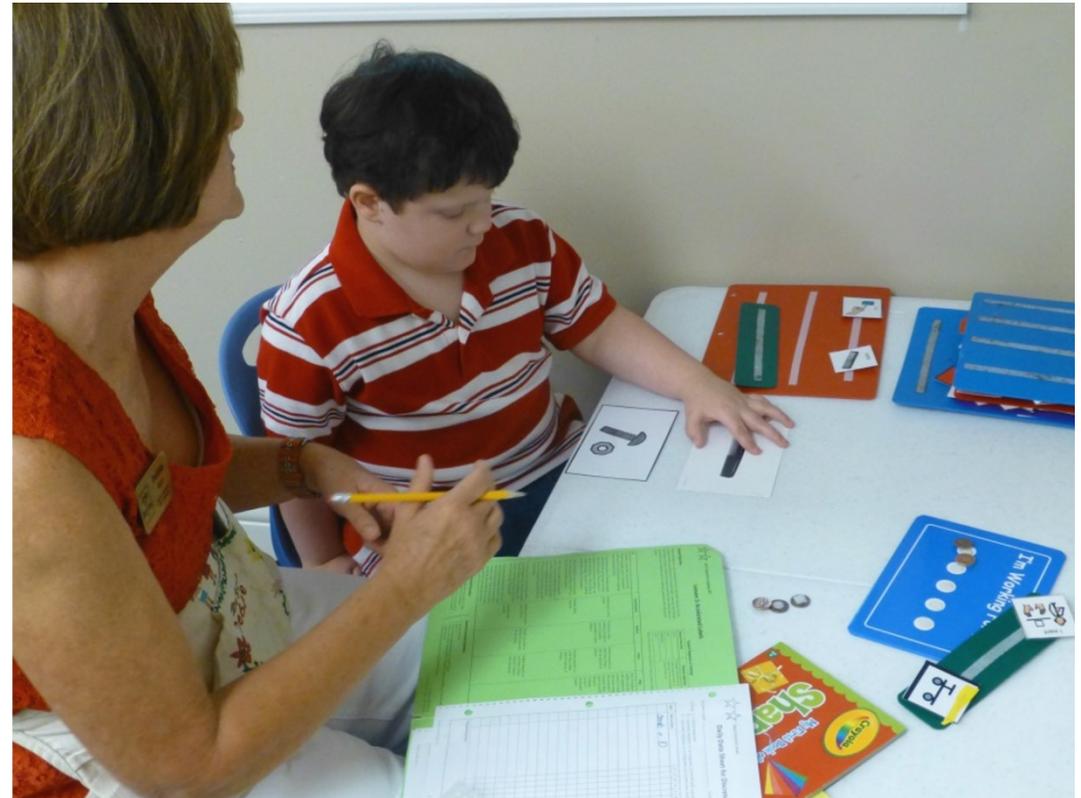
Correction Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If the student does not perform the skill accurately and corrections are needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat the Instructional Cue. Prompt with as little assistance as possible. Reinforce with social praise only. Repeat the Instructional Cue (with tangible reinforcement available to student). If the student has difficulty or needs the Correction Procedure 2-3 consecutive times advance to the Errorless Learning Procedure below.
Errorless Learning Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the Errorless Learning Procedure if the student has difficulty or needs the Correction Procedure 2-3 consecutive times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a prompt (visual, gesture, verbal or physical) to the instructional cue. After the student performs 3/3 correct responses, fade the prompt level to a lesser prompt (e.g. continuous physical to intermittent physical). Some students may need more opportunities than 3/3 correct at each prompt level or may need more than 3 prompt levels (e.g. 100% physical prompt, 90% physical prompt, 80% physical prompt, etc) to successfully learn the task. Adjust the prompt levels according to the student's needs. Continue fading the prompt until the student can correctly perform the skill without prompting. Continue teaching the student new skills following the Sequential Learning Steps.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If the student has difficulty reading words, obtain pictures of objects/ animals/people in the booklet and teach the student to match written words to the pictures (Matching Words to Pictures, Lesson 58). Fade out the teacher cue so the student is able to independently turn the page and begin reading, if possible. Encourage generalization of this skill by using instructional manuals needed during the student's daily routines. If the student is unable to respond verbally, use an augmentative communication system. Use instructional booklets based on topics that are relevant to functional routines (e.g. recipes, classroom jobs, school wide activities, community routines). Also work on Social Skills with this lesson.

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What is Discrete Trial (DT)?

- ★ DT is an evidence-based teaching strategy where skills are taught in a logical sequence building on previously learned skills
- ★ Concepts taught are identified, then broken down into specific steps for instruction



Lesson objective

Prerequisites

Procedures for Teaching

LINKS CURRICULUM Matching Words to Pictures (Expanded) **Advanced**
Lesson 112

Curriculum Area: Functional Academics: Reading

Goal: The student will read and comprehend words by selecting the correct word (upper and lowercase type) and match it to a corresponding picture when given the cue, "match the word to the picture" for 3/3 correct trials across 2 consecutive days for 30 words during random presentation.

Prerequisite lessons:	Teacher	Materials provided by:
Lesson 58: Matching Words to Pictures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Token boardReinforcer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Links Instructional Data FormSequential Learning Steps (with distractor)Flashcards of sight words and pictures

Instructional Procedures

Instructional setup and teacher cues

- Identify and select words and pictures of preferred items.
- Place a flashcard of one printed word in front of the student and one corresponding picture of the same word 6–10 inches from the student.
- Provide a verbal cue "match the word to the picture."

Expected student response

- The student reads the word and matches the word to a picture of the item.

Reinforcement procedure

- Reinforce each correct response with a tangible reinforcer or token reward and social praise.
- Simultaneously teach the student to use the appropriate token board reinforcement system.

Evaluation criteria

- The student correctly matches words to pictures for 3/3 correct trials across 2 consecutive days during random presentation.

Example

- The teacher places the written word "apple" in front of the student and a picture of an apple farther away on the table and says, "Match the correct word to the picture."
- The student matches the word "apple" to the picture of the apple.
- The teacher reinforces the appropriate response with a token reward and social praise.

Introducing New Concepts

- Introduce new words using the Sequential Learning Steps (with distractor) until a new set of words can be placed in front of the student (3–5 words at a time) and the student can match any of the words to the correct picture.

Recommended Concepts
5 functional words
10 functional words
15 functional words
20 functional words
25 functional words
30 functional words

Lesson 112: Matching Words to Pictures (Expanded) © STAR Autism Support 2020. Links.

Evidence-based practices embedded in the lesson

Recommended Concepts to Teach/Targets



Elementary ELA Example

A photograph of a young child with short brown hair sitting at a light-colored wooden table. The child is looking towards the right. On the table, there is a green card with the text "I'm Working For" and several small white circles. To the right of the card is a red sensory toy with a white ball on top and colorful beads. The background is a plain wall.

Preacademic
Reading: Receptive Identification of Letters

starautismsupport.com



Secondary ELA Example

A screenshot of a lesson title slide. The slide has a white background with a blue and yellow diagonal banner in the top-left corner. The banner contains the text "Advanced Lesson" in white. In the center, there is the LINKS CURRICULUM logo, which consists of two overlapping circles (one green, one blue) followed by the word "LINKS" in blue and "CURRICULUM" in smaller blue letters below it. Below the logo, the text "Lesson #112 - Example 1" is written in blue, and "Matching Words to Pictures (Expanded)" is written in a smaller blue font below that.

Advanced
Lesson

LINKS[®]
CURRICULUM

Lesson #112 - Example 1
Matching Words to Pictures (Expanded)



Reading Lessons

What Guides Our Content Development



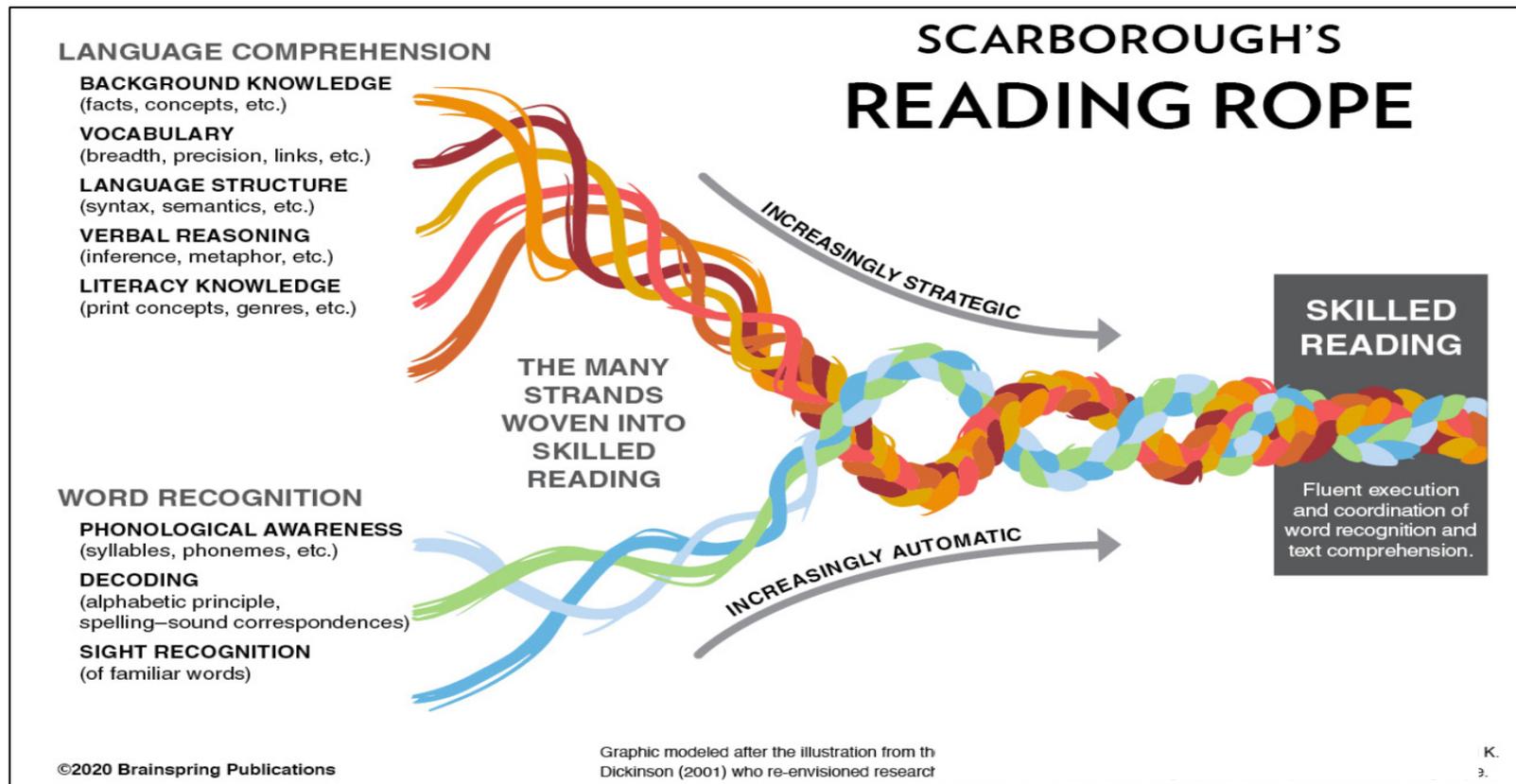
- ★ Evidence-based strategies rooted in **education research**
- ★ Structured literacy methods aligned with the **science of reading**
- ★ Need for **easy-to-access lesson plans** and supports for differentiation
- ★ Built for **real-world success**—various digital and printable lessons for all students!

Understanding Scarborough's Reading Rope

- ★ Scarborough's Reading Rope, developed by Hollis Scarborough in 2001, explains how various language skills intertwine to develop proficient reading abilities.
- ★ A weakness in any strand can impact reading development, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to instruction.



Scarborough's Reading Rope



ELA Lesson Alignment for Both Strands

- ★ Each month, four lessons align with the monthly unit themes, thereby enhancing student engagement with the content.
- ★ Two word-recognition lessons include a focus on sight words.
- ★ Two language comprehension lessons support diverse learning needs.
- ★ Lessons utilize gradual release to increase effective teaching for a variety of learners.

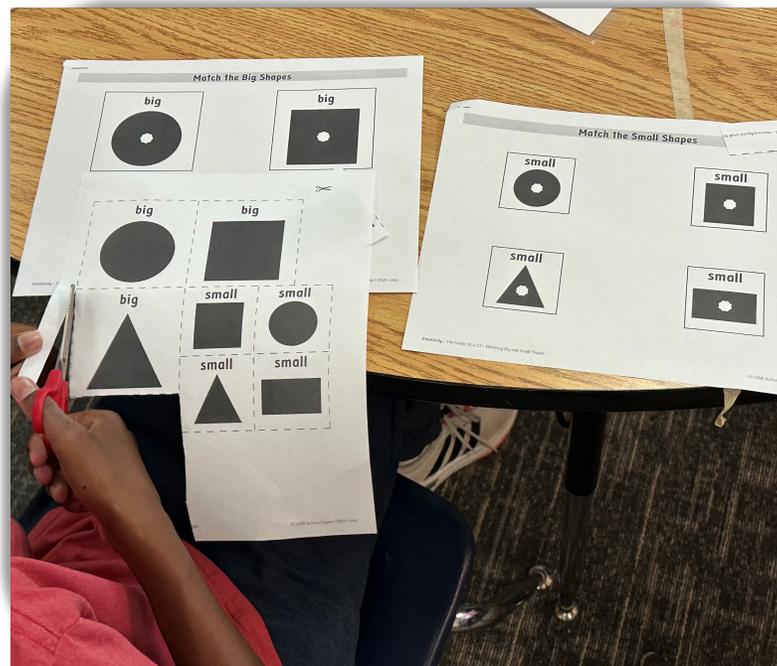


Monthly Thematic Content

Primary: Themes First!



Secondary: Academic Teaching Units

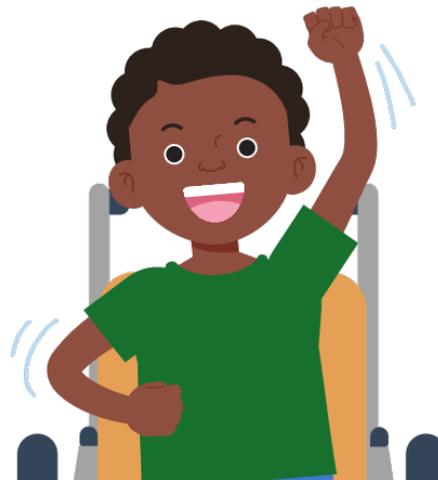


2025-2026 Themes

Upcoming Themes First! Units

2025 – 2026 School Year

Release Month	Theme Unit
August	Back to School
September	My Five Senses
October	Fall Festivals
November	Making Music Together
December	Planes Trains and Automobiles
January	Winter Animals
February	Forecast Fun
March	Reading Superpowers
April	Spring Animals
May	Beautiful Bugs
June	Summer Fun
July	Fun in Our Community



Upcoming Academic Teaching Units

2025 – 2026 School Year

Release Month	Academic Teaching Unit
August	Back to School
September	All About Me
October	Nutrition
November	Music
December	Community Signs
January	Money
February	Weather
March	Literature
April	Gardening
May	Sports
June	Celebrations
July	Our Community



ELA Alignment in STAR Themes First!



Themes First!

Group Activities: Academic Standard Alignment Chart

Math

Theme Unit Category	Academic Standard Alignment			
	Counting and cardinality	Operations and algebraic thinking	Numbers and operations in base ten	Measurement and data
Circle	✓		✓	✓
Group	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vocabulary				
Science	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Studies	✓		✓	✓
Movement	✓		✓	✓
Independent Work	✓	✓		✓

English Language Arts (ELA)

Theme Unit Category	Academic Standard Alignment			
	Reading (literature)	Reading (informational text)	Reading (foundational skills)	Writing
Circle	✓	✓	✓	✓
Group	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science		✓	✓	✓
Social Studies		✓	✓	✓
Movement				
Independent Work	✓	✓	✓	✓



English Language Arts (ELA)

Theme Unit Category	Academic Standard Alignment					
	Reading (literature)	Reading (informational text)	Reading (foundational skills)	Writing	Speaking and listening	Language
Circle	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Studies		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Movement					✓	✓
Independent Work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

ELA Alignment in Links Academic Teaching Units

 Academic Teaching Units						
Group Activities: Academic Standard Alignment Chart						
English Language Arts (ELA)						
Theme Unit Category	Academic Standard Alignment					
	Reading (literature)	Reading (informational text)	Reading (foundational skills)	Writing	Speaking and listening	Language
Morning Meeting					✓	✓
Vocabulary		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ELA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math						
Science		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Studies		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Current Events		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vocational/ Life Skills		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Newsletter to Include Caregivers





Exploring Spring

Newsletter



Get ready to spring into learning with this month's vibrant unit—Exploring Spring! Just like the season, students' academic skills are set to bloom and grow. This engaging unit offers a variety of activities that bring learning to life in exciting ways.

In this unit, group activities will help students build social skills, while more personalized tasks will ensure they can blossom at their own pace. Budding mathematicians will practice counting backward and measuring objects with nonstandard units, while young scientists study the fascinating life cycles of plants and animals. Community service activities plant seeds of relationship-building and teamwork.

With lessons tailored to diverse skill levels and interests, every student will find something to spark their curiosity. As students enjoy the sunshine-filled fun, they'll make connections, strengthen their communication, and grow their academic confidence. Let's welcome the season of growth and discovery—hello, spring!

Caregiver Connection Corner

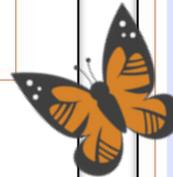
Plant a Mini Garden

- Start a small garden with your child by planting seeds like flowers, herbs, or vegetables in pots or a garden bed. This hands-on activity teaches children about plant growth while encouraging responsibility as they care for their garden. Watching their plants sprout and bloom creates a sense of accomplishment and wonder, perfect for celebrating the renewal of spring.

Make Spring-Themed Arts and Crafts

- Unleash your child's creativity with spring-inspired crafts like flower crowns, butterfly art, or pastel paintings. Incorporate natural materials like leaves and twigs for a fun, eco-friendly touch. These activities let children explore their artistic side while celebrating the vibrant colors and themes of the season.

Exploring Spring - Newsletter
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Theme Unit Vocabulary

Animal homes: Burrow, Coop, Field, Garden, Nest, Tree

Animal life cycles: Baby Bird, Bird, Bunny, Butterfly, Caterpillar, Chick, Chicken, Chicken Eggs, Chrysalis, Fool, Frog, Frog Eggs, Horse, Ladybug, Ladybug Eggs, Pupa, Rabbit, Tadpole

Growth concepts: Change, Grow

Plant life cycles: Bud, Bulb, Flower, Food, Rain, Seeds, Soil, Sprout, Sun

What We Are Learning About Spring

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary: 35 spring-related vocabulary words ELA: Sequencing events Math: Measuring with nonstandard units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and Life Skills: Caring for pets Science: Life cycles Social Studies: Community service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Movement: Spring Animal Relay Race Art: Windy Painting Cooking: Green Apple Frog Fine Motor: Cutting basics
--	--	--

Note From the Teacher





Circle (TF): Introduction Stories

Exploring Spring
"Let's Explore!" Introduction Story

Activity Goal:
Students listen and attend to a story introducing the monthly theme unit and participate by matching and/or identifying pictures related to the theme.

Embedded Skill Targets:

Curricular Area	Learning Spectrum	
	Increased support needs	Following two-step directions
Receptive and Expressive Language	Attending	Receptive/expressive nouns
	Object imitation	
Academic Skills	Picture identification	Comprehension of picture books
	Following one-step directions	Identification of items in a book
	Matching shapes	

Materials:

Provided:

- "Let's Explore!" story
- "Let's Explore!" video
- Vocabulary pictures

Needed:

- Hole punch
- String
- Scissors

Preparation:

- Assemble the book:
 - Print and laminate the book pages.
 - Hole-punch the top left corner of the pages.
 - To bind the book, place a ring through the hole.
- Print, laminate, and cut out the vocabulary pictures.
- Affix hook and loop fastener to the:
 - Back of each vocabulary picture
 - Black "shadow" cutouts on the book pages, where indicated

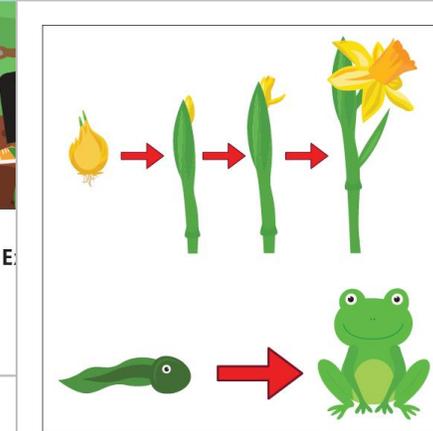
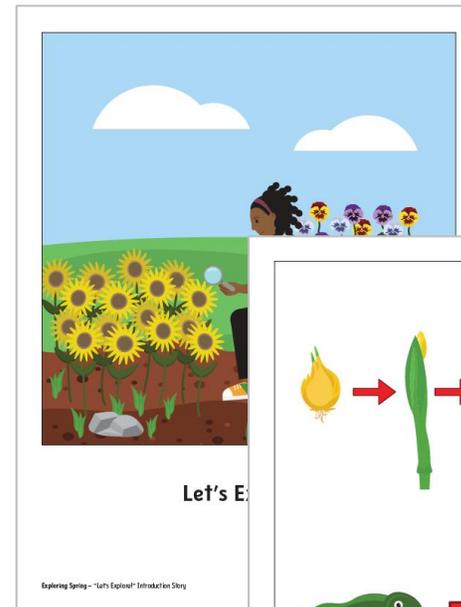
Helpful Learning Tools

- Use the corresponding digital REEL as an alternative or complement to the printable materials.
- Review the Learning Differentiation Guide to individualize this lesson for each student's learning level.

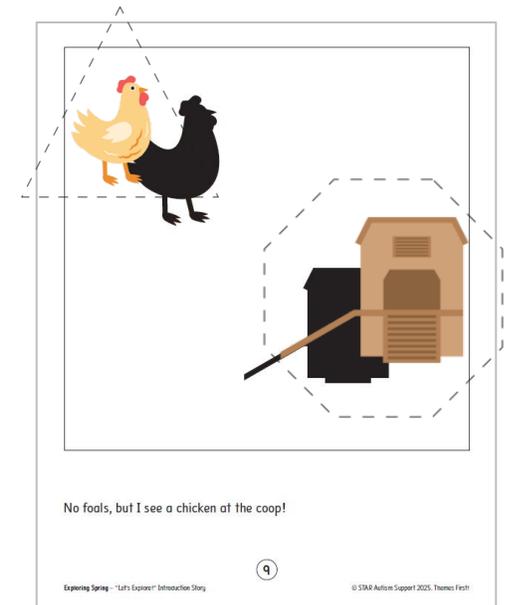
Instructions:

- Prior to starting the monthly theme unit, read the story to the class to introduce vocabulary concepts.
- Pass out one vocabulary picture to each student. If you have more students than vocabulary pictures, divide the class into smaller groups to read the story, or read the story multiple times to give different students a chance to interact with the book.
- Read the story to the class. Pause on each page with a missing vocabulary picture:
 - Read the story to the class.
 - Label the missing picture.
 - Prompt the student with the missing picture to add it to the story so it completes the page appropriately (show each picture as you read).
 - Give the cue "Point to the X (vocabulary picture)." For students working on expressive nouns, immediately ask, "What is it?" For students working on more complex language skills, ask with questions (e.g., "What do you do with X (vocabulary picture)?").
- Show the complementary video and have students identify the vocabulary pictures and answer questions about concepts presented.
- Continue reading the book and showing the video throughout the month, increasing the complexity of questions and expecter responses as students become more familiar with the unit's theme.

Exploring Spring - "Let's Explore!" Introduction Story
© STAR Autism Support 2025, Thomas First



Spring is a time when plants grow and animals change. This means there is lots to explore!



No foals, but I see a chicken at the coop!

Morning Meeting (ATU): Conversation Starters

4. What animals do you see in your community?

squirrels	birds	other animals
		?


1. Have you ever planted a tree?

yes	no	I don't know
		

2. Would you rather take care of a wild animal or a plant?

an animal	a plant	I don't know
		


5. Which item is recyclable?

a pizza slice	a can	popcorn
		

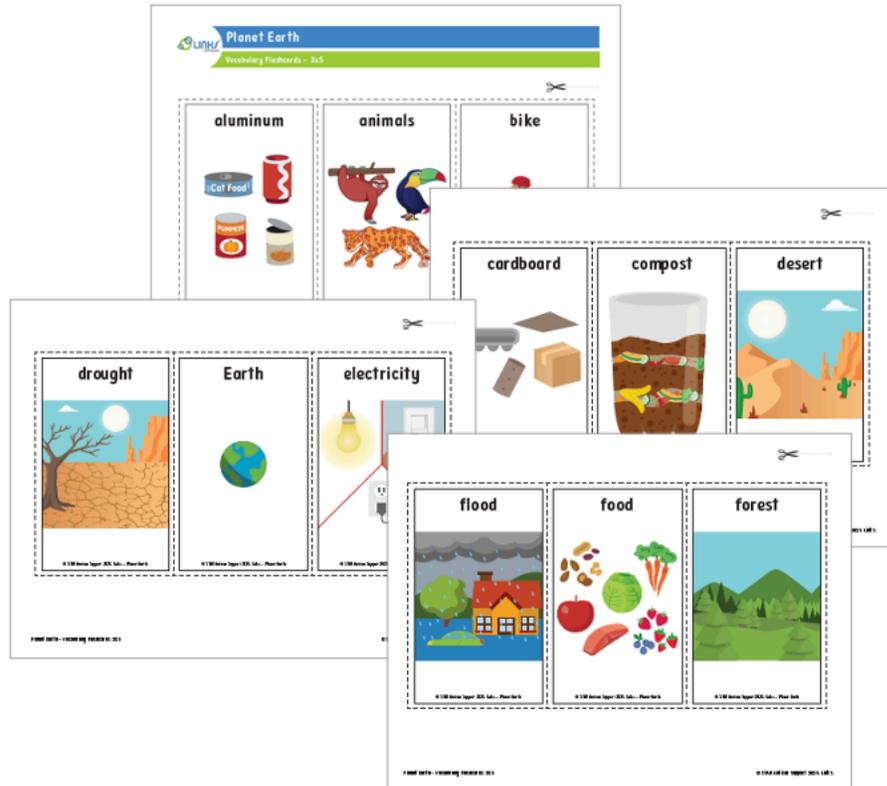



3. What kinds of plants are in your community?

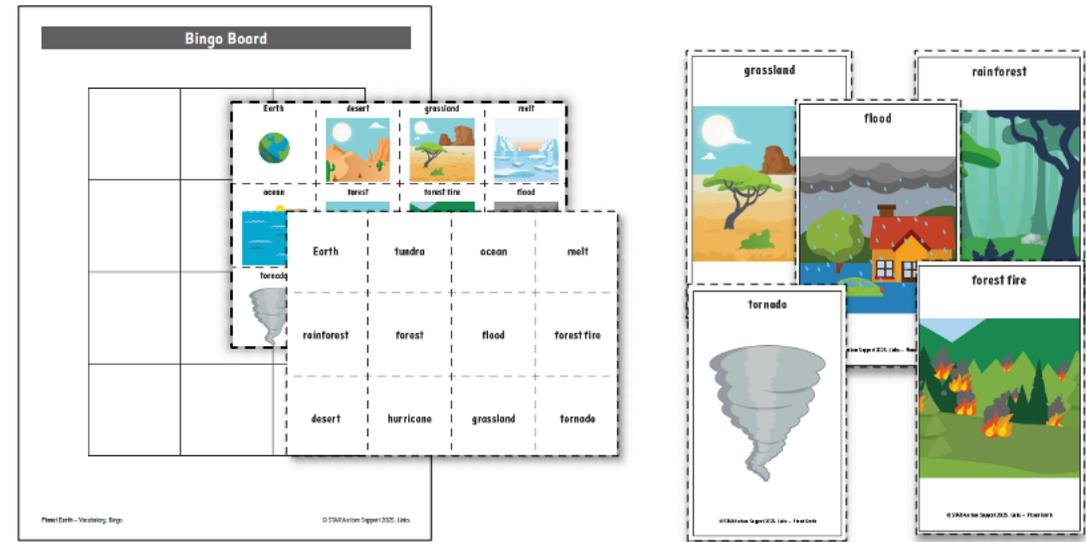
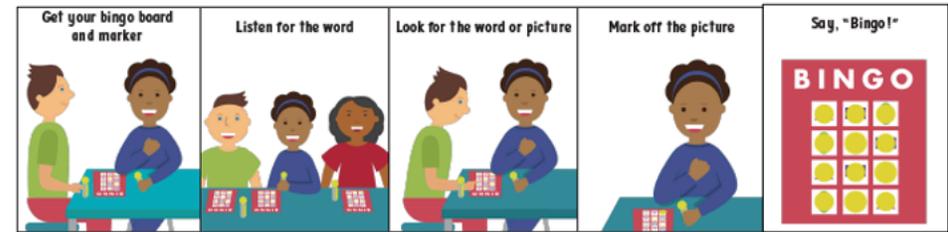
flowers	trees	grasses
		

Vocabulary

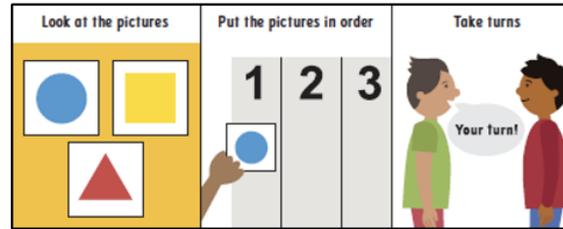
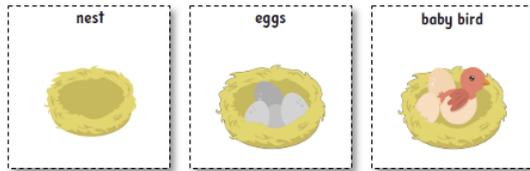
Flashcards



Group Activities



ELA: Sequencing Events



Materials:

Provided:

- Sequence strip or large sequence panels
- Sequencing boards:
 - 1 Option A
 - 2 3 4 Option B
- Sequencing cards

A

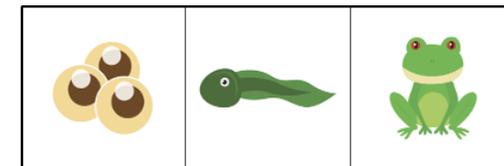
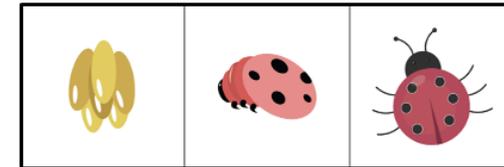
1	2	3

Exploring Spring - ELA, Lesson - Sequencing Events: Sequencing Board A - Hatching Bird Sequence © 2014 Aunim Support 2015, Thomas Fencil

B

1	2	3

Exploring Spring - ELA, Lesson - Sequencing Events: Sequencing Board B © 2014 Aunim Support 2015, Thomas Fencil



ELA Levelled Practice Activities

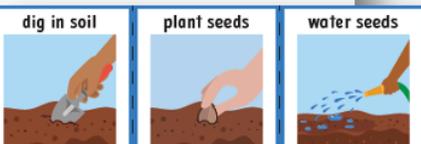
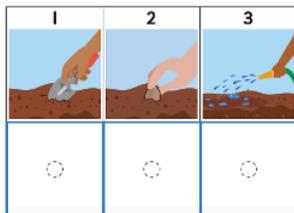
Levelled Academic Goals:

- 1 Matching events in a sequence
- 2 Sequencing events
- 3 Sequencing and describing events
- 4 Sequencing events, then identifying first, next, and last

1

Match the Pictures

Planting

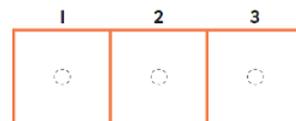


2

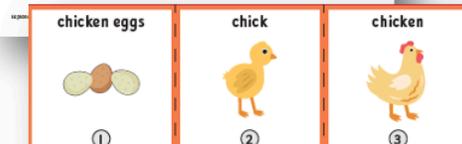
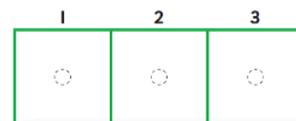
Put the Pictures in Order



Chicken Life Cycle



Flower Life Cycle



3

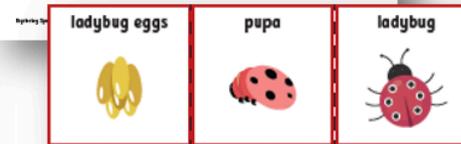
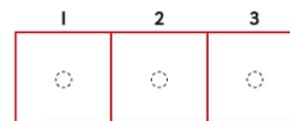
Put the Pictures in Order



Planting



Ladybug Life Cycle

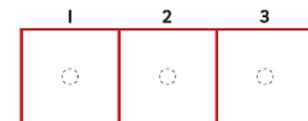


4

Sequence the Pictures and Complete the Sentences



Ladybug Life Cycle



First,



Next,



Last,



a ladybug lays eggs

a pupa grows

Lesson Structure

Planet Earth

ELA: Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word?

ELA Area: Word Recognition	Leveled Academic Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Discriminating sight words 2 Matching sight words 3 Identifying sight words 4 Naming sight words
--------------------------------------	--

Activity Goal:
Students receptively and/or expressively identify sight words.

Embedded Skill Targets:

Curricular Area	Learning Spectrum		
	Essential	Intermediate	Advanced
Engaging in Diverse Activities	Using a task sequence strip	Responding to teachers' questions regarding class activities	Demonstrating appropriate social behaviors
Responding to Language and Communicating With Others	Following one-step directions Verbal imitation of functional words	Following two-step directions	Following multiple-step directions Building vocabulary

Materials:

Provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence strip or large sequence panels • Sight word cards • Teacher calling cards 	Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scissors • Tape (optional)
---	--

Planet Earth – ELA: Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word?
© STAR Autism Support 2025. Links



Preparation:

1. Review the leveled academic goals for this lesson, and identify which academic goal is most appropriate for each of your students.
Note: As students demonstrate an understanding of the selected level, consider advancing students to the subsequent level(s) when repeating this lesson.
2. Divide the class into small groups based on the selected goals (e.g., place students who are working on discriminating sight words together in one group and students working on receptively identifying sight words together in another group).
3. Print, laminate, and cut out:
 - a. Sequence strip or large sequence panels
 - b. Teacher calling cards (3 sets)
 - c. Sight word cards (3 sets)
4. If using the large sequence panels, arrange the images in order and tape them together.
5. Prepare a simple alternate activity (e.g., independent work) for students to complete while waiting for their group's turn.
Note: Choose an activity that allows for student groups to rotate approximately every 10–15 minutes.

Helpful Learning Tools

- Use the corresponding digital REEL as an alternative or complement to the printable materials.
- Review the Learning Differentiation Guide to individualize this lesson for each student's learning level.

Instructions:

1. Transition the first group of students to the small group area.
2. Gather the corresponding sight word cards and teacher calling cards:
 - 1 Gather the cards labeled "on," "cool," and "like." Place all other cards off to the side.
 - 2 Gather all of the cards.
3. Preview the corresponding sight words with students using the sight word cards:
 - a. Hold up the card for students to see.
 - b. Read the sight word.
 - c. Have students point to or repeat the sight word using their mode of communication.
4. Shuffle the sight word cards, and deal the cards to students:
 - 1 Hand each student one card.
 - 2 Deal the cards equally to each student.
5. Shuffle the teacher calling cards, and place them in a pile near you.
6. Review the activity sequence strip.

Planet Earth – ELA: Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word?
© STAR Autism Support 2025. Links

7. Play the game:
 - a. Draw one teacher calling card.
 - b. Provide the following cue(s):
 - 1 Show the students the card, and say, "I have X [sight word]. Match X [sight word]."
 - 2 Without showing the students the card, say, "I have X [sight word]. Who has X [sight word]?"
 - 3 Show the students the card, and say, "What word is this?" Select a student to read the word on the card.
 - c. Prompt students to look at their card(s) and identify if they have a matching word.
 - d. Place the teacher calling card face up on the table.
 - e. Encourage the student with the matching word to say, "I have X [sight word]" using their mode of communication before placing the card on top of the teacher calling card on the table.
Note: If more than one student has the matching card, have the student who responds the fastest put the card on the table.
 - f. Continue playing until all sight word cards are on the table. Complete as many additional rounds of the game as time allows.
 - g. Rotate a new group of students to the small group area, and transition the finished group to the alternate activity area.

Activity Variation:

- To maintain interest as students are building skills, consider using the prepared materials in the following ways:
 - Have students place their cards out in front of them. If they have the matching word, have them gently tap their card. If more than one student has the matching card, the student who touches their matching card first will be the one to put their sight word card on top of the teacher calling card.
 - Present the teacher calling cards in a flashcard manner for students to try to identify all the sight words in a set amount of time.
 - Use the sight word cards (2 sets) to play a game of "Memory." Place the cards facing down in rows forming a square or rectangle on a table or the floor. Place students working on the same learning goals in groups, and have them take turns flipping cards over to find pairs of matching sight words.

Planet Earth – ELA: Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word?
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Embedded Skill Targets

Planet Earth
 ELA: Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word?

ELA Area:
 Word Recognition

Leveled Academic Goals:

- 1 Discriminating sight words
- 2 Matching sight words
- 3 Identifying sight words
- 4 Naming sight words

Activity Goal:
 Students receptively and/or expressively identify sight words.

Embedded Skill Targets:

Curricular Area	Learning Spectrum		
	Essential	Intermediate	Advanced
Engaging in Diverse Activities	Using a task sequence strip	Responding to teachers' questions regarding class activities	Demonstrating appropriate social behaviors
Responding to Language and Communicating With Others	Following one-step directions Verbal imitation of functional words	Following two-step directions	Following multiple-step directions Building vocabulary

Materials:

Provided:	Needed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence strip or large sequence panels • Sight word cards • Teacher calling cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scissors • Tape (optional)

Planet Earth – ELA Lesson – Who Has the Sight Word? © STAR Autism Support 2025. Link.

Leveled Academic Goals:

- 1 Discriminating sight words
- 2 Matching sight words
- 3 Identifying sight words
- 4 Naming sight words

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Curricular Area	Learning Spectrum		
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Lesson Variation

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 - Provide the following cue(s):
 - Show the students the card, and say, "I have X [sight word]. Match X [sight word]."
 - Without showing the students the card, say, "I have X [sight word]. Who has X [sight word]?"
 - Show the students the card, and say, "What word is this?" Select a student to read the word on the card.
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Printable Lesson Examples



Digital Lesson Examples

The image displays four digital lesson screens for sight word recognition, arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each screen features a character, a speech bubble with a word, and a matching exercise. The screens are numbered 1 through 4 in blue circles.

- Screen 1:** A girl character says "eat". The exercise "Match eat." shows three boxes: a grey square, the word "eat", and the number "1".
- Screen 2:** A girl character says "must". The exercise "Match must." shows three boxes: the word "must", the word "four", and the word "say".
- Screen 3:** A boy character says "say". The exercise "Who has the matching sight word?" shows four boxes with different characters and words: a girl with "on", a boy with "say", a girl with "ride", and a boy with "eat".
- Screen 4:** A girl character says "say". The exercise "What word is this?" shows a speech bubble with the word "say".

A QR code is located in the bottom left corner of the overall image.

Let's Explore!





Scheduling for Success

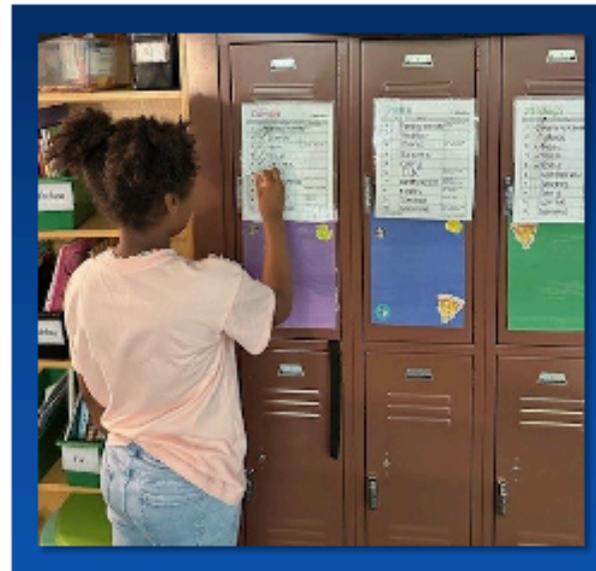
Schedule Samples

Primary Schedule 

Start Time	End Time	Activity Name and Description
8:00	8:05	Arrival Create and read student portfolios. Use check-in to help students identify where to come looking for help. Use time to connect Student Essentials, Arrival and Departure on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas.
8:05	8:30	Circle Create a visual sequence of the activities for individual groups. Click here to access Student Essentials, Circle on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas. Click here to access Theme It First for printable and digital thematic small-group activities.
8:30	9:30	Teaching Rotations Use the time to teach students at 15 using the state trial STA Model Response Writing (MRW) writing and independent work. Teachers can use visual schedules to group or to differentiate. Use time to provide 1:1 and 1:2 support. Review Resources, Transition on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Independent Work on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and independent work activities. Click here to access Theme It First for printable and digital thematic small-group and independent work activities.
9:30	9:35	Independent Work Create a rotation and self-care visual or provide individual supports to increase independence. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Independent Work on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas.
9:40	10:00	Snack Consider dividing students into two small groups to provide several opportunities for communication. Prepare snack schedule for each group including snacks, place mats, cups, and paper napkins. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Snack-Mealtime on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas.
10:00	10:30	Break Create a visual to help provide information about the expectations of break or use a break schedule to help all students know when to go to break. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Break on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas.
10:30	11:00	Rotations Use the time to teach students at 15 using the state trial STA Model Response Writing (MRW) writing and independent work. Students can use visual schedules to group or to differentiate students every 15 minutes. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Transition on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Independent Work on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and independent work activities. Click here to access Theme It First for printable and digital thematic small-group and independent work activities.
11:00	11:40	Independent Self-Care Create a rotation and self-care visual or provide individual supports to increase independence. Click here to access Routine Essentials, Independent Self-Care on the STAR Media Center for printable supports and ideas.



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IEP Alignment tools

IEP Alignment

Teacher's Name: _____ Student's Name: _____ Level: 1 2 3

IEP Goal	STAR DT, PRT, or FR Lessons or Prerequisite Lessons	Thomas First Activity/ Small Group Lesson	Independent Work Task
	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		

IEP Alignment

Teacher's Name: _____ Student's Name: _____ Level: 1 2 3

IEP Goal	Links Lessons/Prerequisite Lessons or Links Routine	Routine Teaching Unit Activity/ Small Group Lesson	At-Home Activity or Independent Work Task

IEP Alignment

Teacher's Name: Mrs. Brown Student's Name: Rashad Level: 1 2 3

IEP Goal	STAR DT, PRT, or FR Lessons or Prerequisite Lessons	Thomas First Activity/ Small Group Lesson	Independent Work Task
Identifies colors and shapes	1. DT Preacademics Lesson 2 2. DT Preacademics Lesson 3 3. DT Receptive Language Lesson 8 4. 5.	Small group activity: Shapes Bingo	Matching colors and matching shapes file folder tasks
Uses 10 words spontaneously with use of AAC	1. PRT Expressive Language Lesson 2 2. DT Receptive Language Lesson 12 3. DT and PRT Imitation lessons 4. 5.	Vocabulary activities Circle time / Spy game	Practice spontaneously requesting "help" or expressing "finished" and choice of reinforcer
	1. 2. -		

STAR - IEP Alignment

LINKS

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Resources

Free Home Supports



www.starautismsupport.com

Home Support Activities and Visuals

Home Activities Home Visual Supports Home Support Webinars

- Routine Resources: Mealtime
- Recursos de Rutina a la Hora de Comer
- Routine: Socializing in a Small Group
- Rutina: Socializar en Grupos Pequeños
- Routine Resources: Fun with Family
- Rutina: Diversion en Familia
- Routine Resources: Helping Around the House
- Rutina: Ayudando en la Casa
- Fine Motor and Art
- SOLS at Home - Primary
- SOLS at Home - Secondary

Home Activities Home Visual Supports Home Support Webinars

Please enjoy these FREE STAR Home Supports. They are intended as resources for families with children who have autism or a developmental disability to support home learning and routines.

If you are an educator interested in supporting virtual learning for your students, [learn more about our STAR Online Learning System.](#)

- Supporting Positive Behavior
- Staying Safe and Healthy
- Learning From Home
- Building Social Skills
- Family Routines
- Fun with Family
- Community
- Current Events

Chore Chart

Chore	Family Member	Day of the Week	Finished

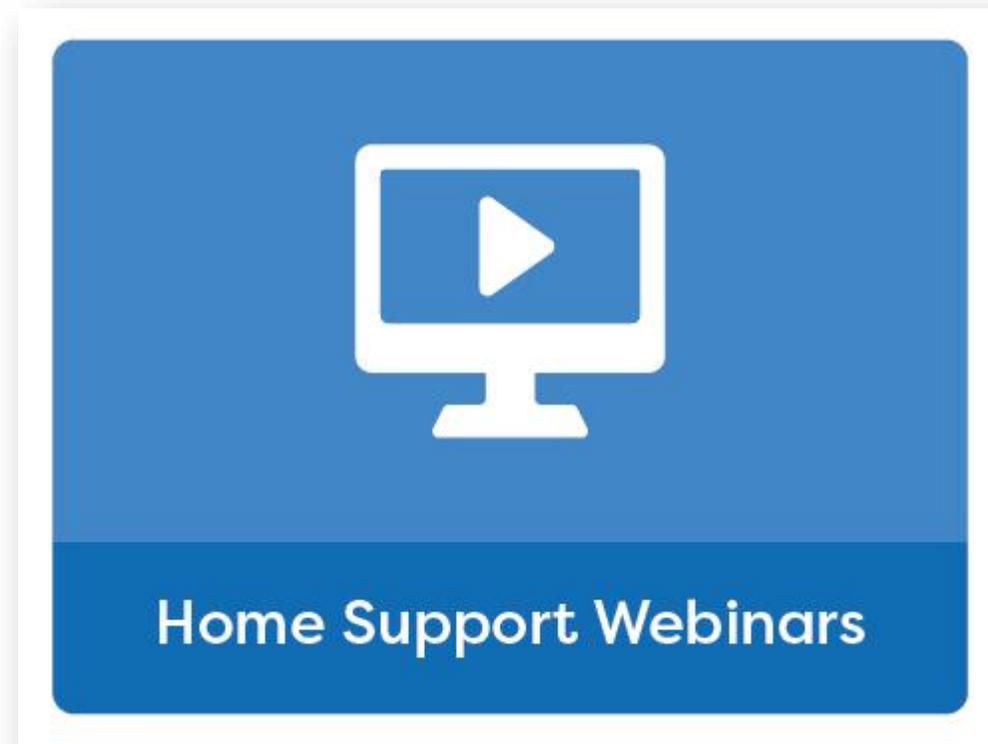
Home Supports - Bedtime Routine Sequence Strip

Home Supports - Bedtime Routine Sequence Strip

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Home Support Webinars

- ★ Routines
- ★ Motivation
- ★ Schedules
- ★ Visual Supports
- ★ Prompting
- ★ And more!



Thank you for joining us!



Newsletter Sign-Up

Questions?

Visit our website:

www.starautismsupport.com

Email:

information@starautismsupport.com



Contact us

References

- ★ Brainspring Publications. (2020). [Scarborough's reading rope](https://brainspring.com/content/blog-files/Scarboroughs-Reading-Rope-rgb-G1-102-UNI-032422.jpg).
<https://brainspring.com/content/blog-files/Scarboroughs-Reading-Rope-rgb-G1-102-UNI-032422.jpg>
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- ★ Scarborough, H. S., Neuman, S., & Dickinson, D. (2009). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis) abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. *Approaching difficulties in literacy development: Assessment, pedagogy and programmes, 10*, 23-38.
- ★ Teaching Strategies. (2025, April 7). [Science of Reading in early childhood classrooms: 6-part webinar](https://teachingstrategies.com/solution/science-of-reading/). <https://teachingstrategies.com/solution/science-of-reading/>
- ★ Wong, C., Odom, S. L., & Hume, K. A. (2015). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with autism spectrum disorder: A comprehensive review. [Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 45\(7\)](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2351-z), 1951–1966. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2351-z>



Charting the Cs Conference 2025

Statewide Professional Development to Support the Workforce and Low Incidence Disability Areas in the State of Minnesota.

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