

Instructions for Lesson Plans

2023-24

In order to make sure that teaching staff implement lesson plans consistently and effectively, we must have a set of guidelines that all staff will follow. Here is a list of instructions and clarification on how the lesson plans will be used:

- A “Lesson Plan Schedule” has been provided for all teaching staff. This schedule should be followed in the order listed and must be posted in a “parent-friendly” area of the room. Posting it on the wall behind your desk would NOT be a parent friendly area.
- All classrooms in your delegate program will be on the same schedule for the lesson plans. This means that 2 classrooms in the same delegate would never be doing different lesson plans during the same week. You will always be on the same lesson plan as the other classrooms. The schedule of lesson plans that we give you can be altered by your Head Start Director as long as the entire delegate remains on the same schedule.
- Each delegate program begins the school year on a different day in August. This means that even though your classroom will always be on the same lesson plan as the other classrooms within your delegate, classrooms in other delegate programs will be on a different schedule.
- Lesson plans will be emailed to you as Excel documents. They will be sent in groups of 4+. This will give you time to look through each of them and plan for the materials that you will need. You must review the lesson plans ahead of when they will be used and prepare materials.
- Your first lesson plan will begin in the week following your first day of Head Start. Regardless of whether the first day of school for your kids is on M-TH, you will not use the first lesson plan that week. You will begin using the lesson plans on the FOLLOWING MONDAY so that you do not overwhelm the children during their first few days in the classroom. For that first week, use some fun activities and keep the kids busy and begin your routine but you do not need to use a complete lesson plan.
- There are a few exceptions to the requirement that all lesson plans must be used in the order listed on the Lesson Plan Schedule:
 - One of the lesson plans is named Dr. Seuss. This plan was developed to be used during the Read Across America event hosted at most elementary schools in our area. Though this event usually occurs in the first week of March, it is our understanding that not all schools take part in this event at the same time. For this reason, you will need to use the Dr. Seuss lesson plan during the week when your school has the event even though it is listed on our schedule for week 25.
 - There are 4 lesson plans on the schedule that are listed as “Teacher Choice”. These themes are: 1) Thanksgiving 2) Christmas 3) Easter 4) Ready for Kindergarten. During those 4 weeks, there will not be a lesson plan given to teaching staff. You will create your own lesson plans (using the same format as the other plans) to go along with those themes. You will create those themes and use them during the week where they fit (nearest the holiday). For the 3 holiday themes, we felt that every teaching team has their own ideas about what activities are fun and exciting for the kids so we wanted to let you decide what will occur in your room.
 - The Ready for Kindergarten theme is a little bit different than the rest. During this week, you will need to develop your own activities based on the Kindergarten Brigance skills that you feel your children are still struggling with. We felt that each team needed to decide what those activities would be because only you would know what YOUR children need to work on. The plan for that week should be filled with activities related to the skills on the Kindergarten Brigance.
- There will be instances during the year when your school is closed on multiple days during the week. When this occurs, please do the following:

- **If you have school for at least 1 day during a week, you will use your lesson plan for that day.** The following week, you must move on to the next lesson plan. For instance, if school is closed Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in week 19 when your lesson plan was “Transportation” but it was open on Thursday, then that means that the theme of Transportation is only being used on that one day. The following Monday would begin the new lesson plan of “Weather” for week 20.
- If your school is closed for the entire week (snow, Spring/Fall break, etc.), then you would not skip a lesson plan. For example, if Transportation is supposed to be your theme for week 19 but that is your school’s Fall break for the whole week, you would begin the Transportation lesson plan the following Monday after you return from break. So in other words, if the kids attend at least 1 day during the week, use the lesson plan for that one day and then you must move to the next lesson plan for the following week. If they don’t attend any days during a week, you will not skip the lesson plan.
- The lesson plan is set up the way you need to complete it. There should be no activities deleted or replaced. There may be the rare occasion when you do not have the materials needed to complete an activity. In that instance, you will need to use alternate materials to complete the activity as close to the description as possible. In that case, you would need to make those changes on the plan.
- When putting these plans together, we did not assume that teachers would already have all necessary materials in the classroom to complete the activities in each plan. In other words, we know that you will need to spend time finding your materials. But while planning was taking place, the goal was to make sure most of the materials for the activities would be easy to find or make. We also try to order lots of the consumables that appear on the plan so you will have them when the school year starts.
- The lesson plan shows a 5 day week (M-F). For those classrooms that have children 5 days a week, the plan should be completed as it is listed. For those classrooms that have children only 4 days a week, you will be able to replace one of the days on M-Th with the activities on Friday if you choose.
- If you choose to replace one of the M-Th days with the activities on Friday, it must be “all or nothing”. For example, you can’t just choose Small Group Activity #1 from Friday and use it for Tuesday and keep everything else the same. You could choose not to do any of the things on Tuesday and replace all of them with the things listed for Friday, but you can’t pick and choose just certain things from each day.
- Do not switch days Monday-Thursday with each other. In other words, don’t flip-flop two of those days and do the Monday activities on Tuesday and the Tuesday activities on Monday unless there is an unavoidable reason (*see next bullet*). The only day that can be used as an alternate day is Friday.
- There will be several instances during the school year when you will not be able to complete activities listed on the lesson plan given to you because of events at your school, field trips, etc. For example, your school decides to have a week long gross motor initiative involving all classrooms and during your scheduled gross motor time, you have to take your group to the gym for school planned activities. This makes it impossible to do the gross motor activities that are listed on the lesson plan that you were given. This is completely understandable. Here’s another example: You have a planned field trip to a pumpkin patch that will be an all-day event. It takes place on a Tuesday which means you will not be able to do any of the activities that was listed for Tuesday on your lesson plan. In this situation, you could choose to flip-flop Tuesday with any other day’s activities or just eliminate what was planned for Tuesday.
- When you receive your lesson plans by email, you will need to make adjustments so that the plan accurately shows what will be taking place in your room that week. For example, if you have an all-day field trip planned for Tuesday, you should delete the activities that were on the lesson plan you received and list FIELD TRIP. The lesson plan that you display in your room should show an accurate representation of what will be taking place in your room that week.
- Your lesson plan must be displayed in a “parent friendly” area of the room.
- In the past, you were required to send your lesson plans to your director or ed. manager for approval. Your director will decide whether you will submit your lesson plans to him/her each week for approval.
- For Large Group, Small Group, and Gross Motor activities, the Teaching Strategies GOLD objectives that relate to those activities have been listed for you. Keep in mind, the objectives that are listed are a matter of opinion and are by no means being listed as a certainty. For example, let’s say one of the TSG

objectives listed for a particular small group activity is *#16a Identifies and names letters*. When you (the staff) do the activity, it turns out that several of the kids did not name any letters. It is not expected that there would be an anecdotal note for all children for *16a* just because it was listed for a small group activity that week. Actually, while you are doing that small group activity with the kids, you may find that it goes in a direction that we didn't anticipate and you are able to write anecdotal notes that cover multiple TSG objectives that were not listed. That is also completely fine.

- The purpose of listing TSG objectives on the lesson plans is just to help teaching staff look for certain things that need to be covered on the children's assessments. If you know ahead of time what objective(s) might be covered in an upcoming activity, it can help you to pay special attention to certain children.
- You will notice that there are blank spaces for TSG objectives in other sections of the plan such as Music and Story Time. You are not required to put in additional objectives on the form, but the space is there in case you want to write some of your own that you think may be evident when the activity occurs.
- For each lesson plan, there will also be a materials/instruction sheet sent as an attachment. This sheet will describe and clarify the procedure for some of the activities as well as provide helpful information and formats to print many of the needed materials.
- Individualization – Under the large group and small group activities for each day, there is a section called “Individualization”. This is where you will need to identify which children you are planning to focus on during these activities. You can choose to identify the children in one of the following ways in order to maintain confidentiality:
 - List the names or initials of the children. If you do it this way, the copy of the lesson plan with their names/initials should not be displayed for parents to see. A copy that does not have this information should be displayed.
 - Identify children with numbers. For example, you could have your own list of the children with a number that identifies them. You could then place their number in the individualization section and it would be confidential because parents would not know which children these were.
- Every child in your class should appear in one of the individualization sections at least 1 time during the week. There should be multiple children listed in each section, meaning you have planned which children you will pay special attention to during each activity.
- **Small Group** - There are 2 small group activities listed on each day. IF you schedule your small group time during free play, then you are only required to do one of these activities each day. IF you have a stand-alone small group time on your schedule, then you must complete both of the activities listed each day. The reason is because the children should have a choice in whether they take part in the small group activity and if you have a time set aside for only small group, the only way the child has a choice is if there are two activities to choose from. If you don't plan on using both small group activities, remove the one you won't be using.
- **Large Group** - You will notice that some days may have 1 large group activity and some days will have 2. If there are 2 listed, you must complete both of them. If there is only 1 listed, there will be a blank spot for the 2nd one and you can choose to list an additional large group activity OR only complete the one listed. Whether you choose to do an additional large group activity does not change the fact that the ones listed must be completed. It just gives the teachers the opportunity to add some additional things to the plan if they choose.
- **Music** – On the pre-made lesson plan, there will be at least 2 days that will say “Teacher Choice” that you will list your own music. On the other 2-3 days, there is a theme-related song listed that you must use. You can use other songs in addition to the ones listed.
- **Story Time** – There is a book listed that you must use during Story Time. Over the past few years, several copies of the same books have been purchased and given to classrooms. All of the books used on the lesson plans are those books that have been purchased for you at some point. We realize that books become damaged or worn over time and you may no longer have a book we listed on the plan. In those few instances, you can choose another book as an alternative. Again, the book that is listed is one of the books you must read to the group. If you have time and want to read additional books, that is completely fine.

- **Changes to Interest Areas** – On each day, there will be two different learning centers that are identified. The lesson plan will show things that you need to add to your center, discuss with the children, or draw attention to if the materials are already in the center. For example, the plan may require you to add a STOP sign to the Block Area on Tuesday, but then ask you to encourage the children to build a zoo in the Block Area on Thursday. So it's not always about adding something to the two areas listed. The committee designed the "Changes to Interest Areas" in a way that the teaching staff would also be given ideas of how to enhance the children's play in particular areas.
- **Vocabulary/Word Wall** – The word that is listed for each day must be used as a vocabulary word that will be placed on the Word Wall. The teaching staff must create a card that shows the word and a picture representation. We have only listed one word per day, but the teachers may decide to use other words as well. This vocabulary word should be introduced to the children at some point during a large group session each day. Words on the Word Wall can be rotated and all words over the past week do not have to be present. However, the words that were used on the plan that week should be present.
- **Theme Related Questions or Wow Facts** – In this section, there are ideas, questions, and facts that you need to share with the children sometime during the day. This information might be shared at morning Circle Time while doing the listed large group activity, or you might choose to discuss some of the topics during Story Time because you notice that it would fit in with the book that you will be reading. The information is meant to be shared with the entire group of kids.
- **JAM** – This section is where you will put your JAM activity for the week (i.e. JAM #1). Because JAM is sent to you as a weekly activity that is the same for each day, this section of the lesson plan is not broken down by individual days.
- **Second Step** – As with the JAM area of the lesson plan, you will notice that Second Step is not broken down into individual days. The Second Step units actually show you what activities to do each day, but we didn't see a reason to ask teaching staff to write that on their lesson plan. What you will need to write is the actual unit and week that you are doing for the week. For example, the lesson plan should show something like: Unit 5 – Week 28: Making New Friends in Kindergarten.
- **Gross Motor** – There is an activity listed for you to do with the kids each day during Gross Motor time. Some of the activities will require preparation or materials to be created/gathered while other activities are just simply playing a game or giving directions. It is never required or expected for all children to take part in the Gross Motor activities but just that the teaching staff encourage children to take part and make it interesting so that most of them might want to. There will undoubtedly be several children who are interested in other things on the playground and the activity that you are doing will not be something they enjoy.
- **Additional Activities** – This section should be used to include other activities that you plan to do that do not fit in any other section of the lesson plan. It is not required that you list anything in this area because it is only meant to be an optional section if needed. This area could be used to list:
 - Nutrition activities
 - An extra large/small group activity that you don't have room for in the other sections
 - Notes or reminders of things that you want to plan to do as extensions of other activities that are listed
- In any situation where the teaching staff chooses to add information to the existing plan (i.e. additional large group activity) or when the plan shows "Teacher Choice", it is perfectly fine to use some of the activities that have already been used on other lesson plans. If you did an activity with the kids that they really liked or that you felt was really helpful, feel free to use that activity again on future lesson plans.

To the Curriculum Enhancement Committee:

The work that you have put in to create these plans and strengthen our program has been extremely valuable and so appreciated. We feel that the finished product has the fingerprints of teaching staff all over it so we know that the majority of activities and instructions are "teacher friendly". This could not have been possible without your contribution and we plan to continue drawing on your knowledge for updates and revisions as we go forward.

