

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum

To what degree does *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum* mimic Boston Public School's curriculum?

To remain in alignment to the fidelity of the curriculum, *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum* mirrors Boston Public School's curriculum, *Focus on Pre-K*. The early learning standards (*The Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*) have been aligned to all the activities and the MDE (Mississippi Department of Education) has also adapted picture resources to reflect communities in Mississippi.

What is the research behind this curriculum?

MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum meets the requirements of the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*:

- Aligned to early learning standards
- Comprehensive to cover all domains
- Emphasis on early childhood literacy
- Evidence-based of child outcomes
- Thematic-based instruction

The child outcomes evidence-based research can be found at this link: [Teacher as Researcher — Focus on Early Learning \(bpsearlylearning.org\)](https://www.bpsearlylearning.org/).

Can teachers create their own units/themes in the curriculum?

To remain in alignment to the fidelity of the curriculum, it is important to follow the themes/units for the *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum*. However, there is a fifth week that is added to every unit to allow for flexibility and to include holiday/special activities. Sometimes a sixth or seventh week may also be added;

this may occur around times in the school year such as holiday breaks and/or assessment schedules.

Can the books be substituted/changed in each unit?

To remain in alignment to the fidelity of the curriculum, it is important to follow the Read Alouds for the *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum*. If a book is out of print, an alternative book title has been provided for the Read Aloud.

Can additional books be read throughout the week?

Absolutely! As long as the specified Read Aloud texts are read according to the specific instructions indicated for each Read, teachers may supplement favorite books that are related to the unit themes.

Can these lesson plans be used with three-year-old and four-year-old Special Education classrooms?

Children who receive special education services are required to have access to the general education curriculum as much as is appropriate to meet their needs. Sample accommodations are provided for each activity, but teachers can adjust these to fit the needs of their specific students.

Is there another strategy for classrooms with children with disabilities?

Teachers should always refer to the child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) for specific accommodations/modifications to use for a child, though there may be many other strategies that will work for a child in addition to what is in his/her IEP. There are Boardmaker materials that are designed to go along with many of the activities for each unit. Teachers can use those and/or adjust them for the needs of their specific students. Boardmaker is a software product that is available by subscription; if provided activities need to be adjusted, teachers will need to request a subscription to Boardmaker through their district or program.

Will phonological awareness and phonemic awareness be explicitly/intentionally taught?

Yes. This is done in Small Groups and throughout the day. “Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)” is a component that provides developmentally appropriate literacy and mathematics learning through fingerplays, poems, and songs.

When will trainings begin for school districts/sites wanting to implement the curriculum?

Professional Learning trainings have already begun. Recordings of the trainings can be found on our website: <https://www.mdek12.org/EC/Mississippi-Beginnings-Curriculum>.

If you would like more information on *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum*, please email earlychildhood@mdek12.org.

If you would like to request an in-person training, please fill out the training request form on the Professional Learning page:

<https://mdek12.org/EC/Professional-Development>

When will we receive all the materials, trade books, etc.?

The Office of Early Childhood is working diligently with the Office of Communications to get these documents prepared for printing. Please keep checking the website as documents are continuously being uploaded. All other materials will be provided by the school district/site (*Building Blocks Math* curriculum: Teacher Editions Volumes 1 and 2; manipulatives for math; trade books; center materials; etc.).

Will there be developmental assessments? When will they be used?

The Office of Early Childhood has prepared an [Informal Assessment](#). These documents include specific directions for assessing the children in the classroom. Teachers can use formal and informal ways of assessing (one-on-one with children, observations, conversations, documentation with photos, etc.). **It is important to note that all of *The Mississippi Early Learning Standards* are not assessed in these documents. Districts/sites have the autonomy to create developmentally appropriate assessments for the four-year-old preschool children.**

How can all these parts of the day be scheduled and completed?

Pre-K classroom teachers and administrators should refer to *The Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines* for specific requirements, as this is how classroom scheduling will be monitored.

To remain in alignment to the fidelity of the curriculum, daily components should include: Read Alouds, Intro to Centers, Centers, Thinking and Feedback, Small Groups (Literacy and Math), and *Building Blocks Math* curriculum. *The other components can be utilized flexibly throughout the week: Storytelling, Story Acting, Problem Stories, and Let's Find Out About It.*

How will the teacher know how much or how little to do each day?

Teachers should first refer to *The Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines. MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum* is designed to be flexible; teachers can make the classroom daily schedule fit into the school's/site's daily schedule. Some days may need to be more flexible than others.

How can the teacher fit everything into the time suggested for Whole Group time?

Plan intentionally for more than one, brief Whole Group during the day, so that the time will be used more efficiently in other component areas (Centers, Small

Group-Literacy and Math, etc.); *More Centers/Small Group and Less Whole Group*. The Whole Group time will increase over the school year as children’s attention spans grow.

During the fifth week of every unit, can teachers incorporate different monthly themes?

This is a great time for teachers to add special activities aligned to the theme. It is fine if this time needs to be extended to a sixth or seventh week! It is up to the school district/site to make sure the requirement of 180 instructional days is met.

Can hands-on, interactive worksheets be incorporated during Center Time?

According to *The Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines* (page 3), worksheets are NOT developmentally appropriate for this age. Our Professional Learning team offers great trainings for teachers on how to turn worksheets into hands-on learning! Check out: [Going from Abstract to Active Learning](#).

Do I have to use the weekly plan that is on the website?

Teachers can use any template they want to use or that their school district/site may require. The [Editable Weekly Plan](#) on the website is a “suggested” plan.

Do you have additional resources that align with the curriculum for families?

Yes! We know how important it is for families to know what is happening during the instructional day. There are *Home Links* (in many different languages) available for each week of each unit that correlate with the Read Aloud for the week and the unit theme. There are also [Splash Pages](#), an online activity aligned to the weekly theme, and [MPB Classroom TV: Welcome Friends Episodes](#) that families can watch at any time.

I noticed on the website some of the links are not active. Why?

As we continue to format *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum*, everything teachers need, starting with Unit 2 Week 4 and continuing through Unit 6, is linked to the At-A-Glance document. A unit At-A-Glance is located behind each unit title. [Here is a video to walk you through step by step.](#)

What are some comments from teachers who are currently using *MS Beginnings: Pre-K Curriculum*?

“One of the great aspects is the flexibility; one of the hardest is getting used to being flexible!”

“I had a hard time getting used to the 4 different Read Alouds. I messed up A LOT, but after a while, I noticed the children starting to enjoy the Read Alouds and their comprehension/connections were growing.”

“I like that I can still do my holiday activities; the extra weeks allow for that!”

“Next year will be so much better!”

“This is the way children learn and the way teachers should teach!”



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