2022

Sesame Street Seminar – Academic Readiness

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RATIONALE:

This module will provide an overview of the academic skills required for kindergarten readiness. The module will also provide insight into how Sesame Street has academically prepared children for entrance into school by providing them with engaging and age appropriate content through song, movement, and skits.

CLASS MODULE:

This module can be used for courses like Language, Literacy, and Cognition, Developmental Psychology, Introduction to Special Education, Early Childhood Development, Typical and Atypical Development, Overview of Kindergarten Readiness and Success, etc. This module would probably be used for an upper level undergraduate and graduate class as part of an early childhood education certification program, as a seminar.

POTENTIAL FORMAT:

This module can be modified for use in an online, hybrid, or face-to-face class format.

TOPICAL READINGS:

Carrico, M., & Wood, R. W. (1974). An evaluation of the influence of sesame street on kindergarten achievement. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 1*(1), 2-6.

Early Childhood Education by MOOC: Lessons from Sesame Street
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2015/06/18/sesame-street-was-the-original-mooc/

Minton, J.H. (1975) The Impact of Sesame Street on Readiness; *Sociology of Education*, *48*(2), 141-151
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2112472.pdf?casa_token=M3mgJSd40vwAAAAA:5MW0kQv94wM0p6Z9t9NLyB0DRDGR2d2hj2l5qg_b4jR-GiPhN5QAAZnnZzXSJlZukXwtbYT0CXZe6GC9v9OMw8UfxYbWTwQDvRUffhcfJVUc8TC9rEKViA

Red Light, Purple Light! Results of an Intervention to Promote School Readiness for Children From Low-Income Backgrounds
Front. Psychol., 22 October 2019 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02365 or
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02365/full

Study: Watching 'Sesame Street' Linked To Better School Performance
https://www.simplemost.com/study-sesame-street-watchers-better-school/

Truglo, R.T.& Thomas, P. (2019). *Sesame Street Ready For School! A parent's guide to playful learning for children ages 2-5.* China: Running Press Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-0762466078

VIDEO CLIPS:

Sesame Street: Ready For School Compilation with Elmo and Friends (50.01 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqEq49gxRgU

Sesame Street: Alphabet Songs Compilation | Learn the ABCs! (12.50 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWZ-iA3HMOU

Sesame Street: 0-20 Counting Songs! | Number of the Day Compilation (22.28 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Zi8KbgVhFc

Sesame Street: Find Colors with Elmo And Abby | I Spy Compilation (25.21 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuMODFk_BbE

Sesame Street: Check That Shape (with Nick Jonas) (2.05 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIRdMFo-h4U

ACTIVITIES:

Kindergarten readiness letter for parents:

You and your teammate(s) will create a kindergarten readiness letter for parents.

Collaborate with your teammate in a way that works for you (Google docs, FaceTime, etc.)

You will assume that you and your teammate are kindergarten teachers. Together, you will compose a short letter (3-4 paragraphs) to parents of incoming students,. You will mail this letter in April or May before students enter in September.

Your letter to parents should contain key skills for them to address with their child in preparation for your class. Additionally, list one activity for each domain (social-emotional, cognitive, physical, communication, and adaptive) that will help children prepare for kindergarten.

Please note that these five activities should be novel and not directly taken from any other source.

Put your creativity to work for this letter and compose some fun activities for parents and children to enjoy together while preparing for your classroom. We want your letter to look professional but convey a friendly and engaging tone.

Be a contributing book author!

Sesame Street Ready for School! is a parent's guidebook to facilitate meaningful and education interactions with children, ages 2-5. Each chapter has a different topic, but all chapters are formatted in the same way, including these recurring topical features:

Play and Learn Boxes: playful learning activities for kids and caregivers to do together

Quick Tips – entertaining hints designed to enhance quality time with your kids

Good Stuff – recommendations for books, websites, apps, arts, and crafts

Deep Dives – short essays to educate parents on a broad range of subjects

You and your groupmates will create one of each of the features, above, for addition to a chapter entitled "School readiness: Success in Kindergarten!"

Possible topics for your featured segments could include:

- Rote skills (color, shape identification, counting and ABCs)
- 1:1 correspondence
- Print awareness (left to right, top to bottom orientation)
- Object labeling
- Classification by attributes (big/small, shape, color, etc.)
- Motor imitation with and without objects
- Recognition of name in print
- Verbal imitation
- Awareness of math patterns (A, B, C, A, B, C, or AA, BB, CC, etc.)
- Body part awareness/ability to draw human stick figure (2 arms, legs, eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc.)

DEEP DIVE

LEARNING MATHEMATICS THROUGH MUSIC

Music provides a joyful way to introduce basic math concepts and language to young children. In the music vocabulary below, you can see how math is at the core of music. As you make music together with your child—by singing, dancing, playing with musical instruments—you'll be helping your child learn math! When you understand the underlying math concepts, you can, in turn, reinforce your child's grasp of these basic concepts in playful learning moments throughout the day. Here are a few basic musical concepts:

- RHYTHM is the NUMBER of beats in a musical pattern. Music is developed in groups of two or three. For example, the song "Rubber Ducky" is a 2 beat, and "I Love Trash" is a 3 beat. Children can recognize the difference between a 1-2 beat and a 1-2-3 beat and move their bodies accordingly. You can reinforce these sound and number patterns on simple instruments, such as a drum, a triangle, or maracas.
- TEMPO is the pace of music, which can be FAST OR SLOW (a relational concept). To demonstrate tempo, play different types of musical tempos and move your bodies to the tempo so your child can see, and then feel, how the tempo changes.
- DYNAMICS is the volume of music, which can be LOUD/SOFT (a relational concept). To show dynamics, sing a variety of songs, such as a lullaby in a soft voice and belt out a favorite song in a loud "Broadway" voice!
- PITCH is the MELODIC RANGE OF MUSIC, which goes from LOW TO HIGH. To explain pitch, sing a familiar song, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," and play the "Be My Echo" game. Change the range of your voice, alternating between low and high pitches.
- DURATION is the LENGTH of the musical sound. Sing a song, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," for your children to experience long sounds. For example "Twinkle–Twinkle (long sound) Little-Star (short sound).

- COPY, EXTEND, AND CREATE THEIR OWN PATTERNS. Children learn to play with patterns by creating a new pattern that matches one they see or continuing an existing pattern (cat, dog, cat, dog, cat, dog—what comes next?). They also learn to fill in a missing part (car, truck, truck, car, truck, truck, car, _____, truck—what's missing?). Eventually, they learn to create and describe their own patterns.

What to Expect from Your Preschooler

AGE 2

At two years old, your child probably is interested in patterns and simple sequences, and tries to create patterns with stickers or blocks.

AGE 3

At three years old, your child very likely recognizes simple AB patterns (patterns that repeat two items) and can say the pattern out loud while looking at it. For example, she may point out a pattern in floor tiles—"Look! Gray square, white square, gray square, white square, gray square, white square!"

AGE 4

At four years old, your child probably can extend or fill in the missing part of a simple AB pattern. For example, he can help set the table by continuing your pattern—fork, spoon, fork spoon, fork, spoon—and realizes when a fork is missing. In addition, he can copy a simple AB pattern. As he nears five years old, he can copy more complex patterns, such as following a simple dance step you teach him—step sideways, clap, step sideways, clap, step sideways, clap.

AGE 5

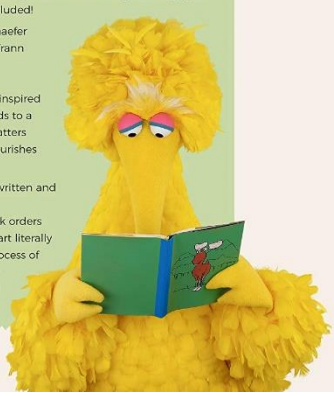
At five years old, your child can extend and fill in missing parts of more complex patterns. She can continue a rhythm you stomp out—short stomp, long stomp, long stomp / short stomp, long stomp, long stomp / short stomp, long stomp, long

GOOD STUFF!

GREAT BOOKS ABOUT NATURE

Scores of wonderful books are available on the subject of science and nature. Especially valuable are three series that include multiple titles: *Dr. Seuss The Cat in the Hat Learning Library* (*On Beyond Bugs: Wish for a Fish*, etc.); *Eyewitness Junior Books* (*Amazing Frogs & Toads: Amazing Lizards*, etc.); and *Sesame Street My First Book About:* (*Insects, Reptiles, Fish, Farms*, etc.). And here are some additional books about science and nature topics that will pique your child's interest:

- ***The Honeybee Man*** by Lela Nargi and Kyrsten Brooker
  The story of Fred, a man who lives in a New York apartment, but raises bees and makes honey, even in the city! Explains to children, especially urban children, where honey comes from.
- ***Plants Feed Me*** by Lizzie Rockwell
  This beautifully illustrated picture book explains, simply and accurately, how food gets from the garden and farm onto our dining tables.
- ***Growing Vegetable Soup***, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert
  How do vegetables get from seeds and soil to delicious soup? Curious readers will thoroughly enjoy this fresh presentation of the gardening cycle. An easy and tasty soup recipe is included!
- ***Because of an Acorn*** by Lola M. Schaefer and Adam Schaefer, illustrated by Frann Preston-Gannon
  This book is a celebration of the interconnectedness of ecosystems, inspired by the white oak tree. An acorn leads to a tree, which houses a bird, which scatters seeds, which grow into fruit that nourishes animals who scatter the acorns.
- ***Pancake, Pancake, Farm to Table***, written and illustrated by Eric Carle
  A charming story about how Jack orders pancakes for breakfast, but must start literally from scratch. Readers follow the process of making pancakes, starting with the crowing of a rooster! Charming and informative.



PLAY & LEARN

"[H]ealing the broken bond between our young and nature is in our self-interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depends upon it."

—Richard Louv,
from the Introduction to *Last Child in the Woods*

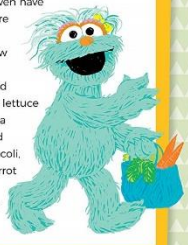
FROM GARDEN TO TABLE

Introduce your child to the important concepts of where our food comes from and how we get it. In explaining about planting fruits and vegetables, then harvesting, cooking, and eating them, you will be teaching your child about the natural scientific process, including observation, investigation, analysis, and finally, the "big idea," which might be digging into a delicious fresh salad!

If you have a home garden, fabulous! Together with your child, plant seeds for various foods and watch them as they grow: lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, strawberries, even carrots, potatoes, and possibly a few stalks of corn. When the time comes to harvest them, include your child in the process of deciding if a particular plant is ready for picking.

If you don't have a garden at home, take your child to a local farmer's market or farm stand. Talk about how the farmer has grown all these foods, picked them when they were ripe, and brought them to the market. You can even have this conversation in a conventional supermarket. Children are sometimes surprised to learn that those piles of apples or carrots that they see at the local grocery store originally grew on a farm.

Now take your garden greens, vegetables, and fruits, and create dishes that you eat together: a huge fresh salad with lettuce and tomatoes; sautéed spinach (children enjoy seeing how a huge bunch of spinach shrivels to a single serving of cooked spinach); a crudité platter with raw carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, and green beans. If you enjoy baking, consider making a carrot cake or an apple crisp, pointing out how foods begin by appearing one way, but by the time we eat them, they may look very different.



See additional topics:

- Language development
- School readiness behavior