

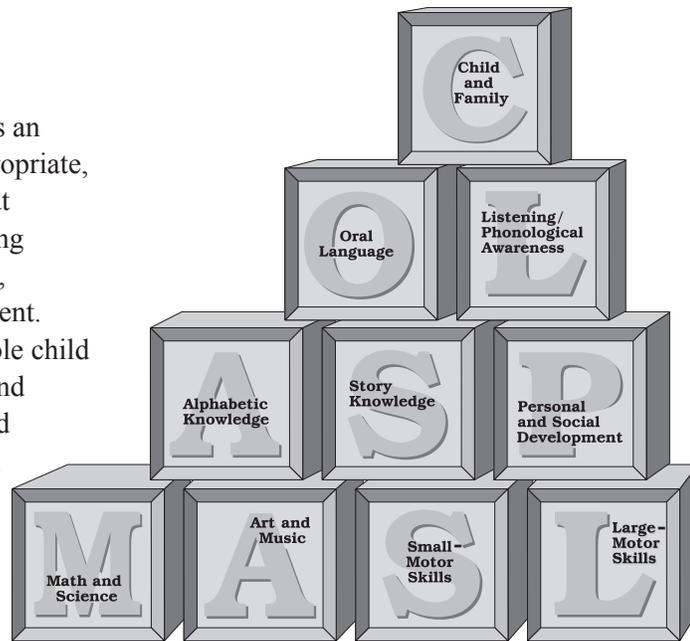
Let's Begin with the Letter People® 2009

In Support of the Performance Standards of HEAD START

Let's Begin with the Letter People is an easy-to-use, developmentally appropriate, comprehensive Pre-K program that addresses all Head Start domains including literacy, mathematics, science, music, art, social-emotional, and physical development. This program meets the needs of the whole child through interactive play, child-initiated and adult-directed experiences, individual and group activities, and family involvement. *Let's Begin with the Letter People* is a research-based, classroom-tested early-childhood program structured to support the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Let's Begin with the Letter People can be successfully incorporated into both part- and full-day Head Start settings. Teachers are encouraged to choose materials and activities that are developmentally appropriate for their young learners.

Let's Begin with the Letter People meets the needs of the whole child through interactive play, child-initiated and adult-directed experiences, individual and small- and large-group activities, and family involvement.



Let's Begin with the Letter People is a core program—a comprehensive curriculum organized around themes that integrate knowledge across content areas. It provides five Teacher Resource Books: *Ready, Set, Go!*; *At Home and At School*; *At the Park and At the Doctor's Office*; *In the Community and At the Zoo*; and *In the Garden and At the Museum*. Each theme book contains six or seven units, dealing with a facet of the theme, and each unit contains five daily menus of activities—including 1–3 brief, whole-class Meeting Circle activities, followed by selections of Small Group, Interest Center, Transition, Outdoor, and Differentiation activities. Those activities are reinforced and extended as the family becomes involved through the Family Activity Pages (in English and Spanish) and other home-school connections.

Among the unique components of this program are the plush, hand puppet versions of the Letter People. The engaging, motivating nature of the 26 (one for each alphabet letter) “people” draws children into the learning process, helps them make connections, and makes learning an enjoyable adventure, allowing children to recognize letters when they are ready.

Let’s Begin with the Letter People *is structured to support the Head Start Performance Standards.*

Language and literacy development, an essential part of the Head Start Performance Standards, is a major emphasis of *Let’s Begin with the Letter People*. The program revolves around quality literature, rhymes, poems, fingerplays, group discussions, beginning writing experiences, and phonological and phonemic awareness activities. Language development is strongly supported as the children interact with their new friends, the Letter People. The Letter People are also great promoters of letter identification—they wear their letters proudly!

Each Letter Person has a distinguishing characteristic and a song that reinforces the sound each letter represents. For example, Mr. N has a noisy nose and Ms. P wears pointy patches.

As the Letter People become an integral part of the classroom and friends to all of the children, an emotional connection forms—reinforcing the learning in an enjoyable way.

This innovative program is based on the following strongly held beliefs:

- School should be a place of enjoyment—play is the work of young children, and learning should be fun!
- Learning proceeds from prior knowledge—moving from the known to the new.
- Learning of any given concept or skill occurs best in context. Accordingly, the best educational program provides integrated experiences.
- Literacy development is an emergent process—depending on ample opportunity for use of receptive and productive oral language, exposure to various forms of print, experiences with drawing and writing, and formal examination of sounds and letters and their relationships.
- Hands-on activities are crucial—children learn by doing.
- Physical development is essential—gross-motor activities should be encouraged.
- Healthy social development is a key to success in school—and in life!

The Letter People express these beliefs through the reality of an interactive, interest-center-based format, allowing children to explore, investigate, and construct knowledge in ways that are interesting and fun.

Correlation

The following correlation of *Let’s Begin with the Letter People* demonstrates how this comprehensive Pre-K program meets Head Start Program Performance Standards and leads to a successful start for each child.

Let's Begin with the Letter People®

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A Correlation to HEAD START Program Performance Standards, revised March 10, 1999.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD	LET'S BEGIN WITH THE LETTER PEOPLE®
(a) Child development and education approach for all children.	
<p>(1) In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies approach to child development and education must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles; (ii) Be inclusive of children with disabilities, consistent with their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) (see 45 CFR 1308.19); (iii) Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition; (iv) Provide a balanced daily program of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, including individual and small-group activities; and (v) Allow and enable children to independently use toilet facilities when it is developmentally appropriate and when efforts to encourage toilet training are supported by the parents. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> is designed to create an environment that is developmentally appropriate for preschool children. Suggestions for differentiated instruction are based on specific needs of children. Children are encouraged to talk and listen; to tell about their experiences and ideas; to recall, re-enact, and retell stories; and to expand their language development by using complete sentences. Each unit focuses on oral language and vocabulary development, along with built-in support for English learners.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> offers suggestions for differentiated instruction (both reteaching and enrichment) based on the specific needs of children. It is understood that teachers will also plan activities consistent with their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP).</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> provides an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition through thematic topics including <i>We All Have Feelings</i>, <i>We're Kind</i>, <i>Families Help Each Other</i>, and <i>We're All Different</i>. Trade literature is also chosen with all of those topics listed above in mind.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> offers a critical path that includes two or three brief whole-class activities called Meeting Circles, a variety of choices for small-group instruction, and independent interest-center activities—all a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> includes several thematic topics that deal with health and healthful habits including <i>My Body</i> and <i>I'm Healthy</i>.</p>

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<p>(2) Parents must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Invited to become integrally involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education; (ii) Provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences; and (iii) Encouraged to participate in staff-parent conferences and home visits to discuss their child's development and education (see 45 CFR 1304.40(e)(4) and 45 CFR 1304.40(i)(2)). 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> addresses the important issue of family involvement in several ways.</p> <p>Throughout the year, children are given an opportunity to take home a Me Bag, which they fill with things that are special to them and bring back to school to share. Family members are encouraged to participate in this process.</p> <p>Also, throughout the year, Family Activity Pages are provided for the teacher to duplicate and send home. These pages, available in English and Spanish, inform parents and other family members about what children are learning. They also invite the family to engage in a variety of simple, brief educational activities with the child, all designed to extend the learning that is taking place.</p> <p>Children also share Take-Home versions of rebus books with their families.</p> <p>Teachers are encouraged to hold parent conferences on a regularly scheduled basis.</p>
<p>(3) Grantee and delegate agencies must support social and emotional development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Encouraging development which enhances each child's strengths by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) Building trust; (B) Fostering independence; (C) Encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations; (D) Encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others; and (E) Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being; and (ii) Planning for routines and transitions so that they occur in a timely, predictable and unrushed manner according to each child's needs. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> places a high priority on social development and conflict resolution.</p> <p>In addition to social situations presented by way of books, poems, and Story Cards—which lead to discussions of alternative choices and behaviors—a variety of interpersonal issues arise among the Letter People.</p> <p>Through use of literature selections and stories about the Letter People, models are provided for dealing with conflict within the classroom itself. The emphasis, always, is on seeing the world from someone else's point of view.</p> <p>The Letter People have different personalities which means that they have different likes and dislikes. And sometimes they aren't sure what to do or how to behave. This provides opportunities for children to help the Letter People resolve conflicts—and to think about better ways of handling similar situations in their own lives.</p> <p>Providing the most appropriate environment for all children and suggestions for regular routines and transitions are addressed in the <i>Ready, Set, Go!</i> Teacher Resource Book. The critical path outlined for each unit also offers routines and transitions that occur in a timely, predictable, and unrushed manner.</p> <p>Thematic units: <i>We All Have Feelings, We're Kind, We Share, Families Help Each Other, and We're All Different</i> support and respect the feelings of others, and the home language, culture, and various family compositions.</p>

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<p>(4) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Supporting each child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, and exploration; (ii) Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue; (iii) Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults; and (iv) Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development through materials and activities according to the developmental level of each child. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> reflects the most respected research about effective early childhood education programs. The best program is one that identifies what children already know, makes them aware of their knowledge, and helps them move from what is known to what is new through scaffolding. It also provides play opportunities that allow children to attach physical actions to learning. Children are engaged in activities that capitalize on their natural curiosity and motivate them to wonder, observe, question, and explore.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> offers many opportunities for children to express themselves creatively through art, music, movement, and dialogue activities that appear in every unit throughout the program.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> encourages preschool children to talk and to listen; to tell about their experiences and ideas; to recall, re-enact, and retell stories, and to expand their language development by using complete sentences and new vocabulary words.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> focuses on oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge. The content of the program reaches across all developmental domains, including science, health and safety, art, mathematics, social studies, and music, as well as development of gross- and fine-motor skills.</p>
<p>(5) In center-based settings, grantee and delegate agencies must promote each child's physical development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials and adult guidance for active play and movement that support the development of gross-motor skills; (ii) Providing appropriate time, space, equipment, materials, and adult guidance for the development of fine-motor skills according to each child's developmental level; and (iii) Providing an appropriate environment and adult guidance for the participation of children with special needs. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> encourages 30–60 minutes of daily outdoor or indoor play that supports the development of gross-motor skills.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> also encourages the development of fine-motor skills according to each child's developmental level through daily activities in a variety of centers including the Block Corner, the Paint and Project Corner, the Math and Science Center, the Game Table, the Sand and Water Table, and the ABC/Writing Center.</p> <p>Differentiated instruction options for both reteaching and enrichment are available within each teaching unit.</p>
<p>(6) In home-based settings, grantee and delegate agencies must encourage parents to appreciate the importance of physical development, provide opportunities for children's outdoor and indoor active play, and guide children in the safe use of equipment and materials.</p>	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> is appropriate for use in home-based settings. The same suggestions for daily indoor/outdoor active play are in place.</p>

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(b) Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers.	
<p>(1) Grantee and delegate agencies' program of services for infants and toddlers must encourage (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5) for a definition of curriculum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The development of secure relationships in out-of-home care settings for infants and toddlers by having a limited number of consistent teachers over an extended period of time. Teachers must demonstrate an understanding of the child's family culture and, whenever possible, speak the child's language (see 45 CFR 1304.52(g)(2)); (ii) Trust and emotional security so that each child can explore the environment according to his or her developmental level; and (iii) Opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences with support and stimulation from teachers and family members. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> encourages teachers to understand the child's family culture using a thematic approach including the topics of <i>We All Have Feelings</i>, <i>We Share</i>, <i>We're Kind</i>, <i>Families Help Each Other</i>, and <i>We're All Different</i>.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> offers opportunities for each child to explore a variety of sensory and motor experiences including centers such as the Sand and Water Table, the Block Corner, and the Paint and Project Corner.</p>
<p>(2) Grantee and delegate agencies must support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by promoting an environment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression; and (ii) Supports the emerging communication skills of infants and toddlers by providing daily opportunities for each child to interact with others and to express himself or herself freely. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> encourages the development of self-awareness, autonomy, and self-expression through units such as <i>What's My Name?</i>, <i>What Will I Wear?</i>, <i>My Body, I'm Healthy</i>, <i>All About My Senses</i>, and <i>We All Have Feelings</i>.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> focuses on oral language development and encourages emerging communication skills.</p>
<p>(3) Grantee and delegate agencies must promote the physical development of infants and toddlers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Supporting the development of the physical skills of infants and toddlers including gross-motor skills, such as grasping, pulling, pushing, crawling, walking, and climbing; and (ii) Creating opportunities for fine-motor development that encourage the control and coordination of small, specialized motions, using the eyes, mouth, hands, and feet. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> encourages the development of physical skills, both gross- and fine-motor, at various large group, small group, and center activities throughout the day.</p>

PERFORMANCE STANDARD	LET'S BEGIN WITH THE LETTER PEOPLE®
(c) Child development and education approach for preschoolers.	
<p>(1) Grantee and delegate agencies, in collaboration with the parents, must implement a curriculum (see 45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5)) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Supports each child's individual pattern of development and learning; (ii) Provides for the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to organize his or her experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success; (iii) Integrates all educational aspects of the health, nutrition, and mental health services into program activities; (iv) Ensures that the program environment helps children develop emotional security and facility in social relationships; (v) Enhances each child's understanding of self as an individual and as a member of a group; (vi) Provides each child with opportunities for success to help develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning; and (vii) Provides individual and small-group experiences both indoors and outdoors. 	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> is designed to create an environment that is developmentally appropriate for preschool children. It includes suggestions for differentiated instruction based on the specific needs of the children.</p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> focuses on appropriate literacy development, and it reaches across all developmental domains, including science, health and safety, art, mathematics, social studies, and music. Reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making also receive a major emphasis.</p> <p>Health and nutrition are integral parts of the program with a special emphasis in the units: <i>My Body, I'm Healthy, We All Have Feelings, Everyone Needs Food, Exercise Keeps Us Healthy, and Rest Keeps Us Healthy.</i></p> <p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> places a high priority on social development and conflict resolution. In addition to social situations presented by way of books and poems—which lead to discussion of alternative choices and behaviors—a variety of interpersonal issues arise among the Letter People. This provides opportunities for children to help the Letter People resolve conflicts—and to think about better ways of handling similar situations in their own lives.</p> <p>Daily indoor and outdoor experiences are offered.</p>
(2) Staff must use a variety of strategies to promote and support children's learning and developmental progress based on the observations and ongoing assessment of each child (see 45 CFR 1304.20(b), 1304.20(d), and 1304.20(e)).	<p><i>Let's Begin with the Letter People</i> offers a variety of assessment options including a pre/mid/post checklist, ongoing observational assessments, an electronic assessment, and a Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Checklist.</p>
[61 FR 57210, Nov. 5, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 2313, Jan. 15, 1998]	

Summary

Let's Begin with the Letter People is a comprehensive program that meets the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which in turn, helps meet the needs of young children and their families. The program offers an extensive variety of large- and small-group activities that can be easily adapted to any classroom.

Let's Begin with the Letter People addresses all areas of children's development and learning. This flexible program provides a wide array of choices that allow for individualization—choice of activities, modes of learning, skills emphasis, materials, and components.

* Boyer, E. L. (1991). *Ready to learn: A mandate for the nations*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, p. 54.

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The skills identified below provide a sound basis for early childhood development and education. Quality preschool experience is essential to children as they grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Children who have had preschool, especially Head Start, are better adjusted.* *Let's Begin with the Letter People* is that kind of quality Pre-K program that gives every child a head start for success in school—and beyond!

Let's Begin with the Letter People®

Foundational Skills: Building Blocks to Literacy

Child and Family—builds interaction essential to literacy

Oral Language—builds vocabulary through speaking and discussion

Listening/Phonological Awareness—builds listening comprehension and ability to hear sounds in language

Alphabetic Knowledge—“writes” own ideas and identifies letters, words, and use of print

Story Knowledge—“reads” and enjoys books and stories

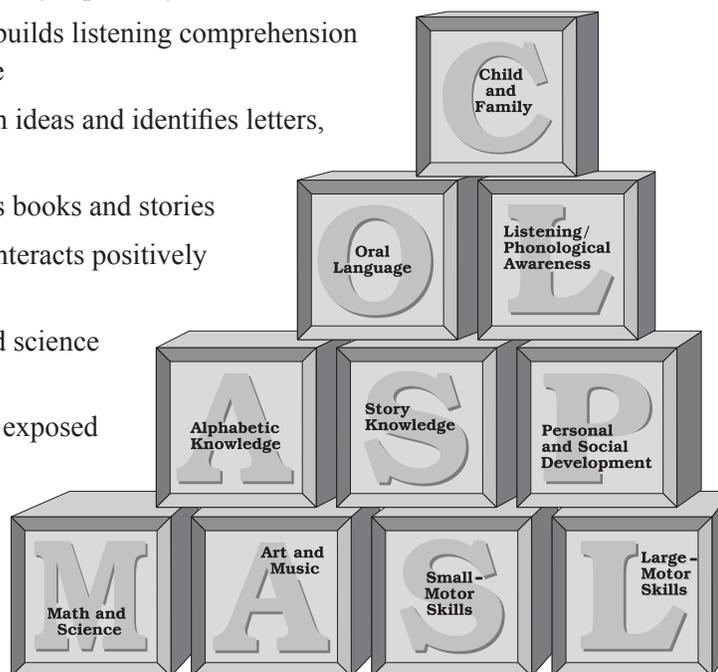
Personal and Social Development—interacts positively with others and builds self-esteem

Math and Science—explores math and science concepts: numbers, shapes, colors

Art and Music—uses creativity and is exposed to the arts

Small-Motor Skills—uses materials and manipulatives

Large-Motor Skills—uses space to move



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