

Themes First! General Information

What is Themes First!?



Themes First! is a rotating monthly content theme unit that includes a wide variety of fun and engaging activities to support generalization and expand learning.

Resources and activities include instructions, classroom customization materials, monthly calendar and unit enrichment, circle activities, group activities, vocabulary, movement activities, and Independent Work activities for English Language Arts, Math, and Fine Motor.

Why Use Themes First?

Theme units in Themes First! are designed to be used as part of a comprehensive behavioral curriculum (the STAR Program). All students will benefit from direct instruction focused on teaching essential skills in receptive and expressive language, academics, and social/play skills. The activities in the theme unit can assist instructors with generalizing and expanding skills students have learned in more structured teaching sessions. All activities provided throughout the theme unit address a range of student skill levels.

How to Use Themes First!

A few easy steps for successful theme unit instruction:	
1	Follow the suggested monthly calendar for activities focusing on community-themed vocabulary and concepts
2	Introduce the theme unit concepts during circle and group activities. Using the lessons provided, teach students important vocabulary and concepts that will be used in centers and independent work
3	Independent work activities are provided for a wide range of student skill levels. Activities are a follow-up to the concepts, vocabulary, and ideas presented during circle and group activities. The independent work activities can also be used during group teaching times
4	Group activities incorporate art, cooking, games, life skills, social studies, science, movement, and social emotional concepts. Activities provide an opportunity to introduce and practice the concepts taught throughout the theme unit.
5	The monthly newsletter guides caregivers through the current unit, with an option to include a personalized note from the instructor.
6	The vocabulary assessment can be completed with students at the start and the end of the unit to assess their learning.
7	The best thing to do to get started is to think about the needs of your student (independent work? circle time? vocabulary? something else?), go to the Themes First! site, click on the box that best fits that need, then view, print, and use the resource there.