

# Functional and Life Skills Curriculum for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum

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Teaching functional and life skills requires educators to determine the needs of each student and to prepare effectively for their future. Technology has added a new dimension to teaching functional and life skills. It is important to use curriculum and programs that are successful, and research based whenever possible.

Below is a listing of some examples of curriculum and programs that can be used to teach functional and life skills to individuals on the autism spectrum. In addition to these programs, please be aware that there are many other supplemental programs, books, strategies, and resources that are not included but are available. Many of these resources can be accessed by Indiana residents via the [Library at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community](#). Inclusion on this list does not imply endorsement of any one program.

## Resource List

### **Accessible Literacy Learning Reading Program (ALL)**

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: ALL is a software evidence-based approach that teaches individuals with complex communication and physical challenges to learn to read basic words and sentences. Good supports for individuals who require augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Uses Boardmaker® images.
- Vendor/Company: Tobii Dynavox
- <https://www.tobiidynavox.com>

### **Achieve 3000®**

- Grades: K to 12
- Description: Three differentiated online literacy instruction solutions that use individualized Lexile® reading levels.
  - **Smarty Ants®** Grades: Primary  
Teaches fundamental reading skills
  - **KidBiz3000®** Grades: 2 to 5  
Reading and writing assignments with non-fiction content based on each student's reading level.
  - **TeenBiz3000®** Grades: 6 to 8  
Prepares for college and career.
  - **Empower3000®** Grades: 9 to 12  
Teaches the critical literacy skills to compete and succeed post-graduation.
- Vendor/Company: Achieve3000® Believe
- <https://www.achieve3000.com/>

### **Aligning Life Skills to Academics Program**

- Grades: 6 to 12+
- Description: A curriculum that offers life skill lessons with matching worksheets that align with instruction in general education subjects, including social studies.

- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Boardmaker® Software**

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: Software that is designed to create materials using visual supports combined with language. Symbols can be used to improve reading comprehension.
- Vendor/Company: Boardmaker
- <https://www.goboardmaker.com/>

### **DT Trainer**

- Grades: Pre-K to 12
- Description: Evidence-based direct instructional software program. Includes hundreds of curriculum content programs, motivating reinforcements, and data tracking/assessments.
- Vendor/Company: Accelerations Educational Software
- <https://www.dttrainer.com/>

### **Early Literacy Skills Builder™ (ELSB) & Early Reading Skills Builder™ (ERSB)**

- Grades: K to 6
- Description: For Moderate to Severe Developmental Disabilities
- **ELSB** incorporates systematic instruction to teach both print and phonemic awareness. Multi-year program with ongoing assessments so individuals progress at their own pace.
- **ERSB** continues to progress students from early literacy to a second grade reading level. Skills addressed include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Both programs incorporate scripted lessons, teachable objectives, built-in lesson repetition, and ongoing assessments for one-on-one or in small groups and formal assessments.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com>

### **Edmark Reading Program Functional Words Series**

- Grades: 6 to 12+
- Description: Functional curriculum that uses word recognition and repeated exposure to target words within a variety of engaging learning activities. 100 words for four functional areas: Fast Food/Restaurant Words, Grocery Words, Job/Work Words, and Signs Around You.
- Vendor/Company: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- <https://www.proedinc.com/>

### **Edmark Reading Program Levels I & II**

- Grades: K to 3
- Description: Research-based instruction in vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. Uses strategies of errorless learning, positive reinforcement, manipulatives, oral and sight word vocabulary, social skills enrichment, and progress monitoring. Can be used as print only or in combination with matching software. Can also be used with a variety of devices to interact with the program (i.e., adapted keyboards and switches). Uses mastery tests, lesson plans, games, and DVDs of sight words for comprehension.
- Vendor/Company: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- <https://www.proedinc.com/>

### **Enhance: Functional Life Skills**

- Grades: 6 to 12
- Description: Combines hands-on and printed materials with software. Contains 6 functional programs including: *Personal Care Survival Guides*, *Living on Your Own Survival Guide*, *Explore Your Community*, *Look 'n Cook Cookbook*, *Personal Success Software*, *Community Success Software*.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Enhance: Functional Literacy Resources**

- Grades: 6 to 12
- Description: Combines hands-on and printed materials with software. Contains 6 functional programs including: *Life Skill Readers Books*, *Safety Skills Reader Book*, *What's Cool About Music Book*.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Failure Free Reading™**

- Grades: K to 12+
- Description: Curriculum is a combination of teaching, text, and technology. Has highly structured, multi-sensory language development lessons that teach word recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Has added a Life Skills program for high school-aged students. Complete language/literacy curriculum centers on 1 of 4 “School to Career” transition themes.
- Vendor/Company: Failure Free Reading™
- <https://www.failurefreeonline.com/>

### **Functional Math Package**

- Grades: 1 to 12+
- Description: Six programs that teach budgeting, money skills, telling time, scheduling, and organization.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Hidden Curriculum**

- Grades: 1 to 12+
- Description: Books written to provide a “hidden curriculum” of social rules to help children and adolescents with social skills, particularly peer relationships and everyday activities.
  - *The Hidden Curriculum and Other Everyday Challenges for Elementary-Age Children with High-Functioning Autism*.
  - *The Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Navigating the Social Landscape of Employment, A Guide for Individuals with Autism Spectrum and Other Social-Cognitive Challenges*.
- Vendor/Company: AAPC Publishing
- <https://www.aapcautismbooks.com/>

### **Language Builder: Academic Readiness Intervention System (ARIS)**

- Grades: Pre-K to 6
- Description: Program is designed to meet the needs of students with moderate to severe Autism Spectrum Disorder. ARIS is anchored in the principles of applied behavior analysis. The lessons follow a standards-based learning progression created by correlating to common core state standards, Head Start, ABLLS, and VB-MAPP. Includes detailed lesson plans, teaching materials, data systems, and assessment questionnaires.

- Vendor/Company: STAGES Learning
- <https://stageslearning.com>

### **LessonPix**

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: An online resource to make customizable and printable materials with over 35,000 scalable images, 500+ templates for visuals, AAC, games & more.
- Vendor/Company: LessonPix
- <https://lessonpix.com/>

### **Life Skills Curricula Series**

- Grades: 6 to 12
- Description: Hands-on curricula that helps to develop functional vocabulary. Contains 5 functional programs including: *Home Cooking, Keeping House, Looking Good, Select a Meal, and Shopping Smart.*
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Life Skill Readers**

- Grades: 6 to 12+
- Description: A photo-illustrated reading comprehension program for transition-age students. Uses contemporary life skill themes. Software will read stories out loud to students.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### **Life Skills Series for Today's World**

- Grades: 9 to 12
- Description: Series of 10 board games that focus on meaningful, contemporary life skills, including behavior, community, social skills, money, time, safety, and health. Includes a teacher's guide and progress chart.
- Vendor/Company: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- <https://www.proedinc.com/>

### **PCI Reading Program**

- Grades: K to 12+
- Description: Three level curriculum that incorporates high-frequency and real-world words. Instruction through repetition, hands-on practice, controlled reading, and high-interest activities. Available in print and software versions.
- Vendor/Company: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- <https://www.proedinc.com/>

### **Preparing for Life**

- Grades: 9 to 12+
- Description: Resource that addresses perspective taking, non-verbal communication, conversational skills, goal setting, and stress management.
- Vendor/Company: Future Horizons, Inc.
- <https://fhautism.com/>
- <http://www.jedbaker.com/books.htm>

### Pro-Ed, Inc.

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: Hundreds of program options that cover topics such as: activities of daily living (ADLs), functional life skills, survival signs, health/safety, transitions, and money math/real life math. View vendor online for additional options.
- Vendor/Company: Pro-Ed, Inc.
- <https://www.proedinc.com/>

### STAR® Autism Support

- Grades: K to 12+
- Description: Programs that are designed specifically for individuals with ASD and developmental delays. Uses ABA (applied behavior analysis) instructional methods of discrete trial training and pivotal response to teach functional routines. Includes detailed lesson plans, teaching materials, data systems, and a curriculum-based assessment.
  - **Sunshine Literacy Kit®** Grades: K to Early Elementary  
Kits use premade activities that are fun and motivational to teach social skills, such as joint attention, attending to a structured activity, and socializing in a group. Lessons focus on literacy and offer opportunity to practice and generalize skills learned in direct instruction sessions. Includes language, letters, sight words, and comprehension.
  - **FACTER® and Links®** Grades: 5 to 12+  
Teach everyday routines and skills for daily living. Promote independence in natural environment.
- Vendor/Company: STAR® Autism Support
- <https://www.starautismsupport.com/>

### Stepping Out Curriculum

- Grades: 1 to 12+
- Description: A community-based instructional program for students to practice independence outside of school, such as shopping, banking, and planning supervised outings. Includes 23 Cues and supplemental materials.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.learningservicesus.com/>

### Tasks Galore

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: Book series using visuals/photos to teach structured tasks relating to play, work, self-care, and more.
- Vendor/Company: Tasks Galore Publishing, Inc.
- <https://www.tasksgalore.com/>

### Teaching to the Standards: Math

- Grades: 6 to 12
- Description: Effective for students with significant disabilities and accommodates nonverbal students. Real-world stories are illustrated with pictures and taught with fading support. Covers Geometry, Algebra, Data Analysis, and Measurement.
- Vendor/Company: Attainment Company
- <https://www.attainmentcompany.com/>

### Unique Learning System® News2You

- Grades: Pre-K to 12+
- Description: This online standards-based program is designed as functional curriculum for individuals with ASD and developmental delays. Is divided into monthly thematic units with 30 lesson plans and downloadable materials. Uses SymbolStix<sup>®</sup> graphics. Includes three levels of differentiation for diverse learners.
- Vendor/Company: Unique Learning System<sup>®</sup>
- <https://www.n2y.com>