

About the Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics

The Styer-Fitzgerald Program is a comprehensive Assessment and Curriculum that is individualized for your child. The Program is designed to teach your son or daughter the skills needed to be as independent as possible both now and after leaving the school system.

The Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics developed from the work of Dr. Candice Styer and Suzanne Fitzgerald, M.Ed., who together have more than 35 years of classroom experience teaching students with disabilities as well as other speaking and training experience. The Program is a result of their collaboration and experience with a range of students in their own classrooms. With increasing numbers of teachers and administrators visiting their classrooms and asking for their materials, the authors decided to move toward publication in order to address the requests and also to reach a wider group of educators. The Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics, Secondary Level first became available in 2009; the Elementary Level followed in 2010.

Since then, the Styer-Fitzgerald Program has reached hundreds of classrooms across the country and has had a profound impact on students, their families, and educators.

Description

The Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics is a complete K–Transition Program which provides a comprehensive approach to teaching real world skills to students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities including autism. It is specifically designed to meet the needs of students with a variety of developmental disabilities. The skills targeted in the *Curriculum* have been chosen for the explicit purpose of increasing your child’s level of independence in order to enable access to his/her community.

The Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics:

- Covers multiple academic content areas with a functional skills focus plus community-based training and independent skills.
- Incorporates Applied Behavior Analysis methods and best practices of classroom management.
- Assesses individual skill levels in order to develop an individual functional academic program.
- Provides the much-needed data to support progress on Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Makes possible the continuity of learning throughout your child’s entire school experience. The Curriculum and Assessment move with him/her from year to year so that growth is supported by continuous, sequenced instruction based on assessment and progress tracking. Schools or districts that use the Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics across several grades are providing students with a cohesive, consistent learning environment and are collecting longitudinal records of student achievement.

Philosophy of the Styer-Fitzgerald Program for Functional Academics

Beliefs about Learning

All students can learn and move towards experiencing their greatest potential:

- If instruction in any content area is begun at one skill level higher than the student's assessed Present Level of Performance.
- If the materials used in instruction challenge learners and are broken into logically sequenced, small steps.
- If they experience success and begin to own their own learning accomplishments.
- If what they are learning is utilized in their lives outside of the classroom.
- If the progress they make is not undone due to a lack of continuity of instruction grade-to-grade.

Beliefs about Teaching

The effectiveness of those who teach students with special needs increases when the teaching materials they use:

- Are part of a district-supported curriculum structured to build students' skills and knowledge grade-to-grade so that teaching can lead to continuous growth.
- Give explicit teaching strategies to meet clearly identified learning objectives and recognize the high value of the teacher's professional expertise and the teacher's awareness of student needs by being flexible enough for modifications to be included as appropriate.
- Support classroom organization that creates a manageable, day-to-day environment that makes learning possible.
- Generate a clear picture of student progress which informs instructional decisions and can also be used to prepare necessary progress reports.
- Have enough built in clarity and structure so that, with teacher oversight, paraeducators or peer tutors can be trained to effectively and reliably work with students on learning tasks.

The Curriculum

The *Curriculum* is the teacher's primary guide to teaching each of the content areas, for collecting progress-tracking data from daily instruction, and for knowing the sequence of instruction using the student's assessment (determined starting point) and subsequent progress.

The **Elementary** *Curriculum* contains:

- 14 Academic and Life Skills Curriculum units:
 - Functional Reading
 - Colors
 - Shapes
 - Location Concepts
 - Computer Skills
 - Writing Skills
 - Time-Telling Skills
 - Calendar
 - Money Management, Bills
 - Money Management, Coins
 - Calculator Skills
 - Phone Skills
 - Community Based Training (Generalization)
 - Independent Skills

The **Secondary** *Curriculum* contains:

- 13 Academic and Life Skills Curriculum units:
 - Functional Reading
 - Computer Skills
 - Writing Skills
 - Time-Telling Skills
 - Time Management
 - Money Management, Bills
 - Money Management, Coins
 - Calculator Skills
 - Phone Skills
 - Budgeting and Banking
 - Community Based Training – Generalization
 - Multi-skill Application
 - Independent/Pre-vocational Skills

Each Academic and Functional Skills unit contains multiple lessons, materials, and a skill-sequenced Flow Chart with appropriate starting points and guidelines for what to teach next. Also included is a Cross-Reference Chart providing a seamless transition from Elementary to Secondary.

For more information, visit our website:

www.styer-fitzgerald.com