



Theme-Based Therapy & Lessons A Way to Keep Learning Fun!



by Keri Spielvogle, MCD, CCC-SLP

Do you and your students get tired of doing the “same old thing”? Do you find yourself spending too much time planning and less time enjoying your work? Then theme-based therapy and teaching might work for you! With good initial planning and fun activities, you can start developing themes relevant to all subject matter that last all week long!

► For Teachers...

Use theme-based lessons for a fun way to incorporate all subject areas and provide the children with an opportunity to learn in a fun, non-standard way.

Some suggestions for possible themes to incorporate in the classroom include the following:

- **Science** - Solar System, Rocks, Plants, Bugs, Animals.
- **Language Arts** - Reading & Writing Stories and Poetry using themes such as Seasons, Holidays, Food, Clothing.
- **Social Studies** - Maps (Divide into US, Canada, etc.), Historical Events.
- **Math** - Time, Addition, Subtraction (Get creative by assigning each child a number, having him/her stand by another “number” and choosing which “number” is correct).

Theme-based lessons adapt easily for children with special needs. Reuse them yearly! Simply store lesson plans, materials, and notes away in plastic tubs to pull out next year.

► For Speech Therapists...

Theme-based therapy works well for children with language and articulation disorders. This type of therapy works great with groups and is functional because it transfers to the “real world.” Meet each child's individual needs by personalizing each lesson.

Themes provide a great opportunity for collaboration between teachers and speech therapists!

► **How...?**

Use this sample lesson plan with your own theme! (Speech therapists who don't have the same children every day can modify the lessons, making the theme last over a week!)

Monday: Introduction to the theme. Provide children with basic information, assign roles for role-playing activities, & allow children to write or color & cut out books depending on individual needs.

Tuesday: Make this an "arts & crafts" day. Let the students choose to draw, paint, or make their theme-based items. After they complete their crafts, let them present them to small groups for a great language-building activity!

Wednesday: Make this a "singing" day! Let your students make up songs, use popular songs related to the theme, or change words to songs. A fun activity for a class is a "contest" to award the group that makes up the best song!

Thursday: This is a day to have fun doing a variety of theme-based activities. Let the children complete sorting tasks, play word games, role-play, play trivia, or any other fun activity centered around your theme.

Friday: Use this last day of the theme to assess what the students have learned. Have them complete teacher-created or relevant worksheets, write summaries about all the information they remember from the week, or "teach" the class about a certain theme-based item.

Incorporate all your ideas into themes for a fun and exciting way to teach the "same old thing" and foster creativity and participation at the same time. Theme-based lessons can't be beat!