


4B.E.L.S. Curricular Guide

Introduction to the 4BELS Curricular Guides

The 4.B.E.L.S. curricular guides are developed according to the 4BELS instructional process designated in the book the *4B.E.L.S. Four Brain Essential Learning Steps, A Process to Create Inclusive Environments*. It is best to lesson plan according to the 4-Step process however, you have the option to use the guides according to each step that complements your school's curricular requirements. For example, should you want to introduce a topic with BELS1 strategies, there are brain-friendly suggestions as is explained in Chapter 2 of the book. Should you want to facilitate exploration as is designated for BELS2 in Chapter 3, the lesson plans will enable you to easily plan for this possibility.

Planning for each Brain Essential Learning Step you will see this icon . This is your opportunity at each step to add your creative brainstorming ideas to the topic and process. Let's learn to appreciate every student with respect for every student's distinct brain, knowledge, skills, and experiences. As young or old as we all may be, from infancy into preschool and older ages, each of us develops environmental knowledge, emotions, and behaviors. 4BELS instruction integrates the student's ideas and knowledge into all curricular topics and learning yet, it is the differentiated assessment we do daily that represents genuine respect for all abilities and differences. 4BELS assessment focuses on each student's talents and strengths. Teacher instruction is planned according to a student's strengths to improve weaknesses. Please use the 4BELS assessment and instruction for an enhanced awareness of your student's ability. Share your experiences at www.4bels.com. Each curricular guide has an integrated assessment process that begins with BELS1 and continues as we complete each of the 4BELS instruction.

Cognitive Responsibility System (CRS) guide is recommended as the first lesson for every school year. CRS prepares each student's brain for emotional safety, concentration, and focus. Brain preparation is important for all learning every day. Use CRS brain exercises at the beginning of the day as well as throughout the day when needed for student emotional safety and concentration. Download the CRS curricular guide for free with every Brain Exercise Card Set.

Studies indicate that family involvement in a child's education is an advantage that is beneficial for every child. There is a HUG PAK (Helping Parents Understand Goals/Parent Action Kit) or parent guide at the end of each curricular plan that includes suggestions for parents to reinforce classroom learning.

Every school program can choose curricular guides according to the individual school curricular content and/or subject when not specifically using a 4BELS curriculum. For example, if you need ideas for a STEM lesson on biology, you may want to choose one of the STEM guides related to your specific learning unit. There is flexibility for each guide whether you are following a preschool program or a grade school program. The teacher decides the level and depth of the material. All ages benefit from 4BELS instruction. The curricular guides support this instruction for the purpose of lesson planning. Following any one of the guides is practice for implementing the process.

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You may want to develop plans with your students to complete a project that, may or may not, be followed as the 4BELS process, and there are suggestions of how to accomplish this when planning with your students at the BELS3 level in Chapter 4.

The goal is to achieve a final product, presentation, or accomplishment related to your specific curricular content that is BELS4 or Chapter 5. There are lists of achievements that you can choose from as a BELS4 completion in each guide.

The most effective use of the curricular guides, to maximize each of your student's learning potential, is to lesson plan according to the 4BELS instructional process. However, awareness for implementation of some of the steps is better than not focusing on any of the brain-friendly strategies. You will be creating an emotionally safe, bias-free classroom environment with each of the Brain Essential Learning Steps whether they are implemented individually or as a total process. You can refer to Chapter 6 for additional suggestions from teachers of how-to mix-up the steps.

The curricular guides are color-coded for different age groups. The early childhood education classrooms that begin in the infant to 2-year-old range or teachers working with non-verbal students are designated with red titles according to the Environmental Rating Scale as the **ITERS** groups. The preschool 3-year-old through grade school age ranges are designated with black titles as the **ECERS** groups. There are designations for **Virtual** or **Parent** instruction with purple titles for all age learners. This is dependent upon the topic and curricular content for that specific age group.

Each Brain Essential Learning Step is color-coded.

BELS1 – Green – Let's get started and GO

BELS2 – Orange – Energize and Explore

BELS3 – Red - Stop, Gather all information and Plan

BELS4 – Blue – It all comes together with Achievement and Pride

There are 52 curricular guides according to 4-5 weeks of each month. Should you follow the 4BELS curriculum according to the academic school year, there are 43 guides to choose.

The content according to the academic school year builds on information from the prior guides. For example, should you begin the school year with themes based on the individual student, behavior management, and the Fall Season in September, the October topics will build on this information and introduce information that includes the inside and outside of the body, nutrition and how to grow a healthy body. September discusses each student's unique brain whereas October adds to this information with the exploration of bodies. The last two themes of October connect the brain and body with discussions on how we become who and what we want to be with preparations for making original costumes dependent upon each student's life goals at any given age. Awesome creativity is developing as there is brainstorming practice with each class morning session.

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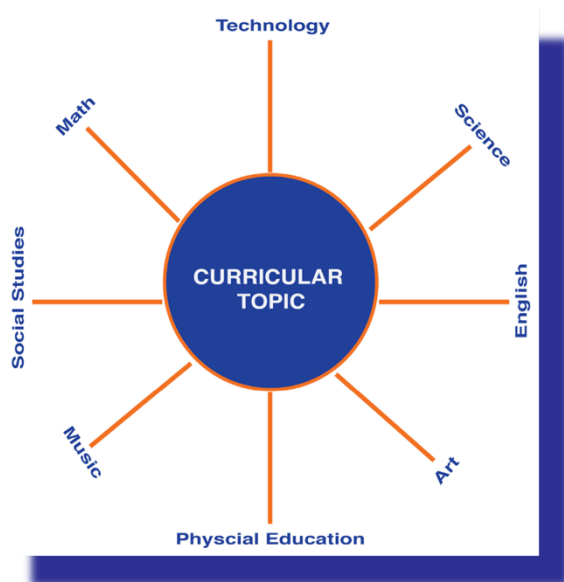


November moves from the individual child, from a physical and mental perspective to the child's family and community and where the student fits into this structure. These themes progress to discussions about the history of our country, respect for cultural diversity in the United States, and how we celebrate Thanksgiving together as a family, a community, and a nation.

December expands from individualism, family, and national awareness to explorations of countries and cultures around the world. The students choose the country their class will research for any given year. They learn about new languages and communication. Maps and geography are expanded upon from the map of their school (September) to a map of their homes and community, and of the United States (November) to geographical concepts around the world (December). All subjects and disciplines are integrated into each theme and each theme develops upon prior information.

There may be sessions that are more focused on STEM topics as we move into January through April themes as we observe the environment and seasonal changes however, each curricular guide includes topics related to all the disciplines: STEM, literacy, history, and the arts. Life requires knowledge of all subject material, and the information is not departmentalized depending upon a time of day designated for that subject. We go into a store and buy an item because we need the item and not because it is time to learn math to calculate the price. Life is an integration of knowledge and education, and it is important to teach students how to use this knowledge in all situations. However, should you want to focus on a particular subject or discipline, the beginning of each guide lists the learning units that are more focused on a particular subject.

A mind-map lesson planning format is beneficial and included with each curricular guide. Choose to plan with one mind-map for all 4 Steps or complete a mind-map plan for each of the steps.



Mind Map Lesson Planning

Curricular content when connected to all subject areas and how it is relevant to everyday life strengthens long-term brain storage and motivation for retention and retrieval.