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Starfall FREE

Liz Kazandzhy

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App Review

App Name: Starfall FREE
Developer: Starfall Education Foundation
Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy
Version/Update: 1.34.05
Category: Educational
Platforms Available: Apple, Android
Device Used: Samsung Galaxy On5
Interest Level: Toddler, Preschool, Primary
Rating: Outstanding



Review

The Starfall app is designed by the Starfall Education Foundation, which seeks to “create free and low-cost experiences whereby children can successfully learn through exploration” (according to their app page). This program in particular, which requires an internet connection to run, is focused on a variety of core skills mostly related to reading and math. It is set up in a way that young children can easily explore, with a large home screen featuring over a dozen categories which can be clicked on and looked into with a variety of options to select. The free version includes access to only a few subcategories of each main category. To unlock all content, a Starfall Membership is required. Instructions to do this are clearly outlined, with a year-long home membership costing \$35; other year-long institutional memberships are also listed.

To say that this highly educational app is extensive is an understatement. For one, it is thorough in the material available; a few of the categories include Math Songs, Geometry and Measurement, Addition and Subtraction, Multiplication and Division, ABCs, Learn to Read, Talking Library, and Motion Songs. And second, it is thorough in the learning experience it presents. Filled with fun and creative animations, clearly spoken audio, and words that appear on the screen and are highlighted as read, this app provides a rich, balanced, and engaging experience for any child. With simple instructions, and a shimmering animation near whatever button needs to be pressed in order to proceed, even very young children would be able to navigate this simply designed program. Also, not only does it teach basic concepts, but it relates those concepts to the real world. For example, one activity explains that a penny is one cent (in the Counting section) and then matches basic geometrical shapes to the various real-world pictures (in the Geometry section). This outstanding app should be on every young child’s device (pre-k through first grade), and if parents can manage the \$35 subscription fee for the year, it might just be one of the best investments they make for their children.