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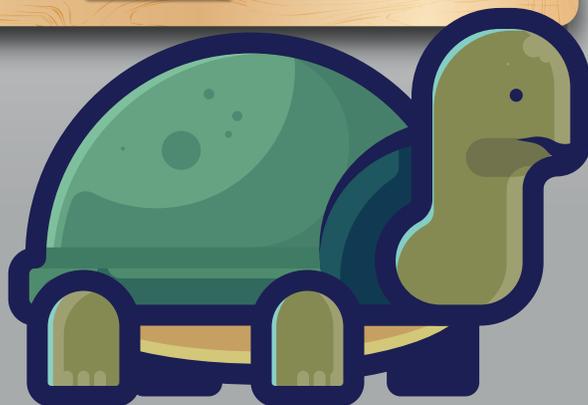
Teacher Time

Use with Teacher Time Webinars

This booklet contains resources on the Planned Language Approach and using children's background knowledge as the basis for introducing new concepts and skills. Education staff will learn ways to use planned experiences and interactions to build on children's prior knowledge and promote language skills. Resources also include strategies for adapting learning environments and opportunities for children who need additional support and children with diagnosed disabilities or suspected delays.



Teacher Time



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Joan Talks About the Big 5

Background Knowledge



Background knowledge is all of the information that children learn and store in their memories. This includes information about themselves, other people, objects, and the world around them. These concepts and key terms are introduced in the home language.



Background knowledge can be developed in one or more languages. It can also transfer from one language to another. Joan illustrates this as she talks about rice.



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Background Knowledge

Planned Language Approach (PLA)

Big 5
for All

Background Knowledge meets Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

In exploring and reading books, both fiction and nonfiction, children learn about the world in which they live. They gain the understanding that some books provide information rather than tell a story and, with the help of adults, find answers to their questions. When parents read books in their home language, it gives children the opportunity to learn about their language, print, and culture.



As a toddler, I enjoyed looking at the pictures in books, like *Rice* and *The Life of Rice*, as my teacher talked about each picture.

In preschool, I remembered the books and would ask my mother questions about how rice is grown. She borrowed the book *The Life of Rice* from the library and read it to me. Then I had a lot more questions!



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Background Knowledge

Planned Language Approach (PLA)

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Background Knowledge meets Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

In the early years, writing involves using pictures to convey messages, making marks on paper to give meaning to drawings, or writing a few letters of the alphabet. Writing is the bridge between the worlds of oral language and literacy—the written world.



Background knowledge gives children the material they will use in developing their pictures, messages, and basic written communication (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2004).

Knowledge of the alphabet is a critical skill in the development of writing in English. In other languages it may be the syllabic alphabet (e.g., Bengali, Hindi), or logography (e.g., Chinese). Bilingual children often learn to read and write in both languages at the same time—at preschool, at home, or in both contexts (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013).

My teacher showed us how to puff rice to make it rice cereal. It reminded me of making popcorn. She wrote down each step of puffing the rice on chart paper and put it on the wall. She sent a copy of the recipe home.

This year, in kindergarten, my friends and I made our own book on grains. We glued different types of grains onto the paper, drew pictures, and wrote stories. We used our imaginations! My mom translated the stories we wrote into Bengali. I enjoyed sharing our stories in both English and Bengali.



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Background Knowledge

Planned Language Approach (PLA)

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Background Knowledge meets Oral Language and Vocabulary

Dual language learners may learn some words first in one language, and other words first in another language. Once they have learned a word in one language, they only need to learn the label in the other language since they already know the meaning! Background knowledge helps all children develop vocabulary and assists in the acquisition of oral language skills. It provides them with context, content, and conversation-making skills.



As we read a book called *The Runaway Rice Cake*, I shared *idli* with my teacher and friends. *Idli* is a type of rice cake that I eat at home with my family. Our teacher downloaded photos of both types of rice cakes, and we talked about the words for *rice cake* in Chinese and Tamil.

Grandma came to our class to share her stories about visiting an area in India where they grow rice. My friends and I learned new words like *terrace farming*, *husk*, and *spikelets*.



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Joan nos habla sobre los 5 factores importantes

Conocimientos de base



Los conocimientos de base son toda la información que los niños aprenden y almacenan en su memoria. Esto incluye información sobre ellos mismos, otras personas, objetos y el mundo a su alrededor. Estos conceptos y términos clave se presentan en la lengua materna.

Los conocimientos de base se pueden desarrollar en uno o más idiomas. También se pueden transferir de uno a otro idioma. Joan da un ejemplo de esto al hablar del arroz.



¡Hola, me llamo Joan! Me encanta comer arroz. Mis amigos comen arroz con una cuchara y yo, a veces, lo como con los dedos, pero isabe igual!

He aprendido los nombres de distintas cosas. Me gusta comer arroz, *bhaat*, cereal, pan y *roti*. Hay palabras distintas que se pueden usar para la misma cosa—mi maestra dice arroz y mi mamá dice *bhaat*.

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Conocimientos de base

Metodología planificada para el lenguaje (PLA)

5 factores importantes para todos

Los conocimientos de base en relación con la familiarización con los libros y con los conceptos de la palabra impresa

Al explorar y leer libros, tanto de ficción como de no ficción, los niños aprenden acerca del mundo en el que viven. Así llegan a entender que algunos libros proveen información en lugar de contar una historia y, con la ayuda de los adultos, encuentran las respuestas a sus preguntas. Cuando los papás les leen libros en su lengua materna, eso les da a los niños la oportunidad de aprender sobre su lengua materna, su escritura y su cultura.



Cuando yo era una niña pequeña me gustaba mirar las imágenes de libros como *Rice* y *The Life of Rice*, mientras mi maestra nos hablaba de cada imagen.

En preescolar, yo me acordaba de esos libros y le preguntaba a mi mamá de dónde sale el arroz. Ella tomó prestado de la biblioteca el libro *The Life of Rice* y me lo leyó. Después, ¡yo tenía muchísimas preguntas!



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Conocimientos de base

Metodología planificada para el lenguaje (PLA)

5 factores importantes para todos

Los conocimientos de base en relación con el conocimiento del alfabeto y con la escritura temprana

En la primera infancia, la escritura se manifiesta en el uso de dibujos para expresar mensajes, de marcas en el papel para dar significado a los dibujos o escribiendo una pocas letras del alfabeto. La escritura es el puente entre los mundos del lenguaje verbal y la lectoescritura—el mundo de la palabra escrita.



Los conocimientos de base dan a los niños el material que usarán para el desarrollo de sus dibujos, mensajes y comunicación escrita básica (Schickedanz y Casbergue, 2004).

El conocimiento del alfabeto es una habilidad crítica para poder aprender a escribir en inglés. En otros idiomas podría ser el alfabeto silábico (p. ej., bengalí, hindú) o la logografía (p. ej., chino). Los niños bilingües a menudo aprenden a leer y escribir en los dos idiomas al mismo tiempo—en preescolar, en el hogar o en ambos contextos (Schickedanz y Collins, 2013).

Mi maestra nos enseñó cómo inflar el arroz para hacer cereales de arroz y eso me recordó a cómo se hacen las palomitas. Escribió cada paso para inflar el arroz en un papel de rotafolio y lo colgó en la pared. Después, mandó una copia de la receta a la casa.

Este año, en el kínder, mis amigos y yo hicimos nuestro propio libro sobre granos. Pegamos diferentes tipos de granos en un papel, hicimos dibujos y escribimos historias. ¡Usamos la imaginación! Mi mamá tradujo las historias que escribimos al bengalí. Me gustó mucho compartir nuestras historias en inglés y en bengalí.



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Conocimientos de base

Metodología planificada para el lenguaje (PLA)

5 factores importantes para todos

Los conocimientos de base en relación con el lenguaje verbal y el vocabulario

Los niños que aprenden en dos idiomas pueden aprender algunas palabras primero en un idioma y otras palabras primero en el otro idioma. Una vez que ya han aprendido una palabra en un idioma, solo necesitan el equivalente en el otro idioma, debido a que ellos ya saben el significado. Los conocimientos de base ayudan a todos los niños a desarrollar su vocabulario y les ayuda a adquirir las habilidades del lenguaje verbal. Es decir, les ofrecen el contexto, el contenido y las habilidades para tener una conversación.



Mientras leíamos el libro titulado *The Runaway Rice Cake*, yo compartí *idli* con mi maestra y mis amigos. El *idli* es un tipo de pastel de arroz que yo como en mi casa con mi familia. Mi maestra bajó fotografías de Internet de los dos tipos de pasteles de arroz y hablamos de las palabras para decir *pastel de arroz* en chino y en tamil.

Mi abuelita visitó nuestro salón para compartir sus historias de cuando visitó una parte de la India donde se cultiva el arroz. Mis amigos y yo aprendimos palabras nuevas como *terrazas de cultivo escalonado*, *cascarilla* y *granos de arroz*.

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STRATEGIES

How Parents and Families Support Background Knowledge

Introduction

Children learn and gather more and more information as they interact with people and their environments. Over time they develop a deep understanding of the routines of their lives and the words people say to them. They learn how to eat, play, walk, and run. They learn how people interact with one another, what they wear, and what things are used for. They learn their family's way of doing things—their cultural beliefs, values, rules, and expectations in different settings, such as stores, homes, restaurants, places of worship. Young children gain background knowledge as they:

- ▶ Connect new information to knowledge they have in memory
- ▶ Understand and gain new knowledge through observations, interactions, and instruction
- ▶ Solve problems and figure out how objects and their world work
- ▶ Expand their use of language and develop new vocabulary
- ▶ Reflect on what they know

Talking, reading, exploring, and just spending time with special adults provide lots of opportunities for young children to build background knowledge. The more children understand and know about their world, the easier it will be for them to acquire new knowledge (Kaefer, Neuman, & Pinkham, 2015; Sénéchal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995).



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Supporting babies to develop Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

Babies begin to learn about the world around them even before they are born! With every interaction that babies and young children have with their environments and the people in them, they gather new information about how things work, how people respond, and what it feels like to be hungry or full, wet or dry, sleepy or alert. Babies develop background knowledge primarily from their varied experiences in their world and by interacting with adults who will help them make sense of those experiences.



Babies develop Background Knowledge when parents and family members:

- ▶ Notice when babies are alert and interested and take advantage of these moments to interact by, for example, describing to them what they see and hear and talking to them about their routines (Rosenkoetter & Wanless, 2006)
- ▶ Use gestures, such as pointing, to direct children's attention to objects or people of interest (e.g., "Look! See the squirrel!") (Harris, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2011)
- ▶ Respond to babies' needs by, for example, swaddling a baby to help her feel secure when sleeping, or feeding him as soon as he is hungry (Bell & Ainsworth, 1972)
- ▶ Include them in such cultural events as celebrations, traditions, rituals, and worship (Walker & Scott-Melnyk, 2002)
- ▶ Talk to babies about their daily routines and activities, such as feeding, diapering, swaddling, tummy time, using their home language (Rosenkoetter & Wanless, 2006; Stockall & Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Offer safe toys and/or objects—things like balls, spoons, cups—that have different textures, such as smooth, bumpy, or soft (Bakeman & Adamson, 1984)
- ▶ Talk to babies as they explore and intentionally labeling textures, shapes, sounds, and actions (Barton & Brophy-Herb, 2006; Notari-Syverson, 2006)
- ▶ Engage babies in "conversations" by responding with different facial expressions, gestures, and/or words each time a baby babbles and coos (Fernald & Weisleder, 2011)
- ▶ Take babies out into the community to such places as grocery stores, parks, forests, places of worship and talk to them about sights, sounds, and smells (Volk & Long, 2005)

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Some ways parents and family members support babies' Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

At Home

Nine-month-old Paloma is tired and sleepy. "Time for bed, *mi amor*," Abuelo whispers. "Here's a soft blanket for you," Abuelo continues as she gently lays Paloma down on the blanket and begins to swaddle her. "First one side," she says tucking the bottom corner of the blanket around Paloma's shoulder, "then the other." When Abuelo finishes swaddling Paloma she says, "All done. Now you won't get cold." Then she gently picks her up and carries her off to bed.



At Home

Clara notices that 4-month-old Jennie is staring at a stuffed cat in her crib. Clara picks up the toy and moves it closer to Jennie's face. "Cat," she says as she gently shakes the cat. Jennie follows the cat's movement with her eyes. "Do you want to hold the cat?" Clara asks. "Here! You hold it," she says as she puts it in Jennie's hands. Jennie brings the cat to her mouth and begins to chew on it. "Oh! Does that cat taste good?" Clara asks.

At Home

Four-month-old Elina sits on her Mami's lap. "*La linda manita, que tiene el bebe*," Mami sings as she gently waves Elina's hands. "*Que linda! Que bella! Que bonita es!*" Mami brings Elina's hands up towards the sky as she sings the final word. By the time Elina is 6 months old, she will wave her own hands in the air as soon as her mother begins to sing this song.

In the Community

Mai takes 11-month-old Hong for a walk to the store in her stroller. When they stop at a busy intersection, Mai says, "Look at the red stop sign. That means we have to stop before we cross the street so we can be careful and safe. Cars have to stop, too." When she sees it is safe to cross, Mai says, "The cars stopped—so we can cross the street now. Let's make sure we stay in the crosswalk!" They cross to the other side and continue to the store. On their way home, Mai repeats her talk about traffic, street signs, and safety and even uses again the new word, "crosswalk," so that Hong can learn more about these words and concepts.

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Supporting toddlers to develop Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

Toddlers develop background knowledge through their interactions with others and with guided opportunities to safely explore the world. Parents and family members help toddlers develop background knowledge by providing them with many meaningful, hands-on experiences and by telling them what they see, hear, smell, and touch and why they do and do not do certain things. Toddlers learn the words that they hear, so it is important that they hear adults speak in the languages the toddlers are learning.



Toddlers develop Background Knowledge when parents and family members:

- ▶ Talk about what children see (e.g., “Look at those ants carry those big crumbs! Let’s watch and see where they are taking them.”) (Zero to Three, n.d.)
- ▶ Teach them new and interesting words and concepts—for example, day and night, the changing seasons, types of weather, or how things grow (e.g., “That is a coconut! It is the biggest seed in the world!”) (Collins, 2010, 2012)
- ▶ Help toddlers safely explore the world by doing with them such things as turning over rocks to look at insects, feeding the birds, looking up at clouds, drawing pictures in the dirt with sticks, and making mud pies (Veselack, Cain-Chang, & Miller, 2011)
- ▶ Visit different places in the community, such as the grocery store, park, forest, or church, and talk about what they see and hear (e.g., “Can you smell fish? This is the fish market. Let’s see if there are lobsters to look at.”) (Tabors, Beals, & Weizman, 2001)
- ▶ Know what toddlers know and stretch that knowledge (e.g., “Remember when we saw the ducks swimming with their webbed feet? Well, frogs have webbed feet, too. Those flaps of skin between their toes helps them swim fast!”) (Rosenkoetter & Wanless, 2006; Stockall & Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Respond to toddlers’ questions (e.g., “That’s a good question. Let’s think about how we can find out the answer.”) (Robson, 2012)
- ▶ Provide feedback that helps toddlers expand on what they know and learn more about the world (e.g., “Well, yes. It looks like a duck, but it’s a swan. See how it has a long neck . . .”) (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008)
- ▶ Explain daily routines and activities (e.g., “First, we have to go to the grocery store, and then we will go visit your abuelita.”) (Rosenkoetter & Wanless, 2006; Stockall & Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Encourage and support imaginary play (e.g., “Look at this box! We can pretend it is a boat or a rocket ship or a fire truck . . .”) (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001)

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Some ways parents and family members support toddlers' Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

In the Community

Three-year-old Soledad is at the market with her abuelo. Soledad sits in the shopping cart as they go to each section. "Let's get some chilies," says her abuelo, as she looks at her shopping list. "Chilies is a type of vegetable. Look! There are beans and squash and tomatoes right next to the chilies. They are all vegetables, too!"

Soledad's abuelo is helping her learn that vegetables are a category of food and that chilies, beans, and tomatoes are part of that category. Soledad is also learning about the market and shopping lists while she has fun spending time with her abuelo, who loves her a lot.



At Home

Henry's dad is taking apart the TV's remote control. "No work?" Henry asks. "No," Dad says. "It doesn't work. It needs new batteries." Dad pries off the back of the remote. "Look," he says. "There are two dead batteries in here." "Dead?" Henry asks. "Well, not really dead. They just don't work anymore." Dad asks Henry to get him two new batteries out of the nearby package. "One, two," Dad counts as Henry hands them over. "Now I put them back into the remote, close the cover, and . . . ta da!" Dad points the remote towards the TV and turns it on. "All better!" Henry cheers. "Yes. The new batteries made the remote all better! Thanks for your help, buddy!"

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Supporting preschoolers to develop Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

Children have background knowledge and their own ways of thinking about the world—often called “funds of knowledge”—that are developed through their experiences with their family and within their culture (Moll et al., 1992). The more opportunities they have to engage in conversations and experiences with others, the more they will develop these “funds of knowledge.” In addition, their background knowledge and experiences are a rich source of content for classroom conversations.



Preschoolers develop Background Knowledge when parents and family members:

- ▶ Show children their own interest and curiosity in the world (e.g., “This book says that crabs and ants have exoskeletons. I’ve never heard that word! Let’s keep reading and see if we can find out what an exoskeleton is!”) (Zero to Three, n.d.)
- ▶ Use conceptually rich talk that builds children’s knowledge of words and concepts (e.g., “A bat is nocturnal. That means they are active only at night.”) (Paratore, Cassano, & Schickedanz, 2013)
- ▶ Engage children in concrete, meaning-making activities, such as planting a garden (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Wasik, Bond, & Hindman, 2006), and include opportunities to learn important, extended vocabulary—words like “seed,” “plantlet,” “cutting,” “bulb,” and “tuber”—and concepts in meaningful ways (e.g., “We need to water the garden today because it has not rained, and plants need water to grow.”) (Cervetti et al., 2007)
- ▶ Explain unfamiliar words and concepts (e.g., “That window is transparent. ‘Transparent’ means something is clear and you can see right through it!”) (Elley, 1989)
- ▶ Connect new knowledge to what children already know (e.g., “Remember how we saw those chickens sitting on their eggs to hatch them. . . . Frogs are different! Frogs lay their eggs in water, and then they swim away!”) (Rosenkoetter & Wanless, 2006; Stockall & Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Answer (or try to answer) children’s questions (e.g., “It *does* look like the moon is following us, but I am not sure why. Let’s see if we can find out . . .”)
- ▶ Ask questions during and after story reading (e.g., “Why do you think the mouse helped the lion? What would you do if you were the mouse?”) (Whitehurst et al., 1988)
- ▶ Ask questions that encourage thinking and reasoning about everyday experiences (e.g., “Why do you think a police siren makes such a loud noise?”) and the natural world (e.g., “How does camouflage keep animals safe?”) (Peterson & French, 2008)
- ▶ Explore the sights, sounds, and smells of the local community (e.g., “Do you smell that? I think the bakery is making bread. Let’s follow our noses and see.”) (Volk & Long, 2005)
- ▶ Share age-appropriate informational and narrative texts, and read parts or all of the text depending on children’s interest (Schickedanz and Collins, 2013)
- ▶ Encourage children to paint, draw, and “write” to show what they know and what they are interested in (Notari-Syverson, 2006)

How Parents and Families Support Background Knowledge

Planned Language Approach (PLA)

Big 5 for All

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Some ways parents and family members support preschoolers' Background Knowledge

STRATEGIES

At Home

During dinner, 4-year-old Carlitos tells his parents and brother about something that happened at school that day. "Today, Chiara's uncle brought his backhoe to school." His mother asks, "What did he tell you?" "He told us about how he works for a contractor who helps build houses and stores." "That sounds



interesting," his father says. Carlitos continues, "He says that everybody has different jobs at a construction site, but that they all have to work together. If they didn't, it would be dangerous." "Did you get to sit in the backhoe?" his brother asks. "Yes! And I got to touch the controls. He also drives an excavator. My teacher asked if he could bring it to school. That was so funny!" "Why was that funny?" Carlitos' brother asks. "Because," Carlitos explains, "you can't *drive* an excavator to school. It has crawler tracks—not wheels!" After dinner, Carlitos shows his family pictures of backhoes and excavators in his favorite book, pointing out crawler tracks and a trailer that could be used to bring the excavator to school.

At Home

Li and her mother are getting ready to have tea when Karen, the home visitor, arrives. After an encouraging nod from her mother, Li asks Karen if she would like a cup of tea. "Why, yes. I would," Karen says as she reaches for the teapot. "Li can do it," Li's mother says. "Pouring tea is something that we like to do for our guests." Li smiles and nods. "Thank you," Karen says and smiles. "But please, just pour me half a cup. I can't drink a whole cup. It will fill me up," she says. She points to the cup and shows Li where "half a cup" is and where a "whole cup" is. Li nods as she pours the tea with her mother's help. "Here is a half a cup for you and a whole cup for me," she says.

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Resources for
Background Knowledge

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How Parents and Families Support Background Knowledge


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How Parents and Families Support Background Knowledge

Planned Language Approach (PLA)

Big 5 for All

Cómo los padres y las familias apoyan los conocimientos de base

ESTRATEGIAS

Introducción

Los niños aprenden y recopilan más y más información cuando interactúan con otras personas y sus entornos. Con el tiempo, desarrollan una comprensión profunda de sus rutinas diarias y de las palabras que las personas les dicen. Aprenden a comer, jugar, caminar y correr. Aprenden cómo las personas interactúan entre ellas, cómo se visten y para qué se usan las cosas. Aprenden la manera en que sus familias hacen las cosas—sus creencias culturales, valores, normas y expectativas en diferentes lugares, tales como tiendas, otras casas, restaurantes y lugares de culto religioso. Los niños pequeños adquieren los conocimientos de base cuando:

- ▶ Conectan la información nueva con el conocimiento que tienen en su memoria
- ▶ Comprenden y adquieren nuevo conocimiento a través de las observaciones, interacciones e instrucciones
- ▶ Solucionan problemas y deducen cómo funcionan los objetos y el mundo a su alrededor
- ▶ Amplían su uso del lenguaje y desarrollan nuevo vocabulario
- ▶ Reflexionan sobre lo que ya saben

Al hablar, leer, explorar y, simplemente, al pasar rato con adultos cercanos para ellos, los niños tienen muchas oportunidades para construir sus conocimientos de base. Cuánto más entiendan y sepan sobre su mundo, más fácil será para ellos el adquirir nuevos conocimientos (Kaefer, Neuman y Pinkham, 2015; Sénéchal, Thomas y Monker, 1995).



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Apoyo a los bebés para desarrollar los conocimientos de base

ESTRATEGIAS

Es sorprendente el hecho de que los bebés aprenden sobre el mundo que les rodea incluso antes de nacer. Con cada interacción que los bebés y los niños pequeños tienen en sus entornos y con las personas en éstos, recopilan información nueva sobre cómo funcionan las cosas, cómo las personas reaccionan y qué se siente cuando se tiene hambre o después de comer, si están secos o mojados, con sueño o bien despiertos. Los bebés desarrollan unos conocimientos de base principalmente a partir de diversas experiencias en su mundo y de sus interacciones con los adultos que les ayudan a entender esas experiencias.

Los bebés comienzan a adquirir los conocimientos de base cuando los padres y miembros de la familia:

- ▶ Se dan cuenta de cuando los bebés están bien despiertos e interesados, y aprovechan esos momentos para interactuar con ellos, por ejemplo, describiéndoles lo que ven y oyen, y hablándoles sobre sus rutinas (Rosenkoetter y Wanless, 2006)
- ▶ Usan gestos, como señalar con el dedo, para dirigir la atención de los niños hacia objetos o personas de interés (p. ej., “¡Mira esa ardilla!”) (Harris, Golinkoff y Hirsh-Pasek, 2011)
- ▶ Responden a las necesidades de los bebés, por ejemplo, envolviendo al bebé con mantas para ayudarlo a sentirse seguro cuando duerme, o dándole de comer en cuanto tenga hambre (Bell y Ainsworth, 1972)
- ▶ Incluyen a los bebés en eventos culturales como fiestas, costumbres, rituales y celebraciones religiosas (Walker y Scott-Melnyk, 2002)
- ▶ Hablan a los bebés sobre sus rutinas y actividades diarias, tales como comer, el cambio de pañal, envolverlo en mantas y jugar en el piso, mientras usan el idioma del hogar (Rosenkoetter y Wanless, 2006; Stockall y Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Les ofrecen juguetes u objetos seguros—cosas como pelotas, cucharas, tazas—que tienen diversas texturas; lisas, irregulares o rugosas (Bakeman y Adamson, 1984)
- ▶ Hablan a los bebés mientras exploran y describen, intencionalmente, las texturas, formas, sonidos y acciones (Barton y Brophy-Herb, 2006; Notari-Syverson, 2006)
- ▶ Tienen “conversaciones” con los bebés al responder con diferentes expresiones faciales, gestos y/o palabras cada vez que el bebé balbucea o hace arrullos (Fernald y Weisleder, 2011)
- ▶ Se llevan a los bebés de paseo a tales lugares como supermercados, parques, bosques, lugares de culto religioso, y les hablan sobre lo que ven, los sonidos y en los olores (Volk y Long, 2005)
- ▶ Tienen “conversaciones” con los bebés al responder con diferentes expresiones faciales, gestos y/o palabras cada vez que el bebé balbucea o hace arrullos (Fernald y Weisleder, 2011)
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Cómo los padres y las familias apoyan los conocimientos de base



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Ejemplos de cómo los padres y miembros de familia apoyan los conocimientos de base de los bebés

ESTRATEGIAS

En el hogar

Paloma tiene nueve meses de edad. Está cansada y tiene sueño. "Es la hora de ir a dormir, mi amor", susurra su abuela. "Aquí tienes una manta bien suave", la abuela continúa hablando mientras que con mucho cuidado pone a Paloma sobre su manta y la empieza a arropar. "Primero un lado", dice mientras coloca la punta inferior de la manta alrededor del hombro de Paloma, "después el otro". Cuando la abuela acaba de arropar a Paloma, dice, "Listo. Así no tendrás frío". Después, la toma en brazos con cuidado y la lleva hacia su cama.



En el hogar

Clara se da cuenta de que Jennie, que tiene 4 meses, tiene la mirada fija en un gato de peluche que está en su cuna. Clara recoge el juguete y lo acerca a la cara de Jennie. "Gato", dice mientras agita el gato suavemente. Jennie sigue el movimiento del gatito con sus ojos. "¿Quieres abrazar al gatito?" pregunta Clara. "Aquí tienes, ¡agárralo!" dice mientras lo pone en las manos de Jennie. Jennie se acerca el gato a la boca y lo empieza a morder. "¡Oh! ¿Está rico el gatito?" pregunta Clara.

En el hogar

Elina tiene 4 meses y está sentada sobre el regazo de su mamá. "La linda manita, que tiene el bebé", canta la mamá mientras mueve los brazos de Elina suavemente. "¡Qué linda! ¡Qué bella! ¡Qué bonita es!" La mamá sube los brazos de Elina hacia el cielo cuando canta la última palabra. Cuando Elina tenga 6 meses, será capaz de mover ella sola sus brazos en alto en cuanto su mamá empiece a cantar esta canción.

En la comunidad

Mai se lleva de paseo a Hong, que tiene 11 meses, a una tienda en su carriola. Cuando se detiene en un cruce con mucho tráfico, Mai dice, "Mira la luz del semáforo de color rojo. Eso significa que tenemos que esperar a cruzar la calle hasta que sea seguro. Los carros se tienen que detener también". Cuando Mai ve que ya es seguro cruzar, dice, "Los carros se han detenido, así que ya podemos cruzar. ¡Nos tenemos que asegurar de que caminamos por el cruce peatonal!" Atraviesan hacia el otro lado y se dirigen hacia la tienda. Al regresar a casa, Mai repite su charla sobre el tráfico, los semáforos y la seguridad, e incluso usa una nueva frase, "cruce peatonal" para que Hong aprenda más sobre estas palabras y nuevos conceptos.

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Apoyo a los niños pequeños para que adquieran los conocimientos de base

ESTRATEGIAS

Los niños pequeños desarrollan sus conocimientos de base a través de las interacciones con otras personas y de oportunidades supervisadas para explorar el mundo de manera segura. Los padres y los miembros de la familia ayudan a los niños pequeños a desarrollar los conocimientos de base dándoles muchas experiencias significativas y prácticas, y diciéndoles lo que ven, oyen, huelen y tocan, y explicando por qué hacen unas cosas y no hacen otras. Los niños pequeños aprenden las palabras que escuchan, así que es importante que oigan hablar a los adultos en los idiomas que los niños están aprendiendo.



Los niños pequeños adquieren los conocimientos de base cuando los padres y familiares:

- ▶ Hablan sobre lo que los niños ven (p. ej., “¡Miran cómo las hormigas llevan esas migas tan grandes! Vamos a esperar y ver adónde las llevan!”) (Zero to Three, sin fecha)
- ▶ Les enseñan nuevos e interesantes conceptos y palabras—por ejemplo, el día y la noche, las estaciones, el clima, o cómo crecen las cosas (p. ej., “¡Eso es un coco! ¡Es la semilla más grande del mundo!”) (Collins, 2010, 2012)
- ▶ Ayudan a los niños pequeños a explorar el mundo de manera segura realizando actividades con ellos tales como buscar insectos debajo de las piedras, dar de comer a los pájaros, mirar las nubes, hacer dibujos en la tierra con un palo de madera, y hacer pasteles de barro (Veselack, Cain-Chang y Miller, 2011)
- ▶ Visitan diferentes lugares en la comunidad, como por ejemplo, el supermercado, el parque, el bosque o la iglesia, y hablan sobre lo que ven y oyen (p. ej., “¿Puedes oler el pescado? Estamos en la pescadería. Vamos a ver si encontramos langostas”) (Tabors, Beals y Weizman, 2001)
- ▶ Saben lo que los niños pequeños ya saben, y amplían sus conocimientos (p. ej., “¿Recuerdas cuando vimos los patos nadar con sus patas palmeadas? Bien, las ranas también tienen patas palmeadas. Esa piel entre los dedos les ayuda a nadar muy rápido.”) (Rosenkoetter y Wanless, 2006; Stockall y Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Contestan las preguntas que les hacen los niños pequeños (p. ej., “Esa es una buena pregunta. Vamos a pensar en cómo encontraremos la respuesta.”) (Robson, 2012)
- ▶ Dan información que ayuda a los niños a ampliar los conocimientos que ya tienen y a aprender más sobre el mundo (p. ej., “Bueno, sí. Parece un pato, pero es un cisne. Mira el cuello tan largo que tiene...” (Pianta, La Paro y Hamre, 2008)
- ▶ Explican las rutinas y actividades diarias (p. ej., “Primero, vamos a ir al supermercado y después iremos a visitar a la abuelita.”) (Rosenkoetter y Wanless, 2006; Stockall y Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Animar y apoyan el juego imaginativo (p. ej., “¡Mira esta caja! Podemos imaginar que es un barco, un cohete o un camión de bomberos...” (Dickinson y Tabors, 2001)
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Ejemplos de cómo los padres y miembros de la familia apoyan los conocimientos de base de los niños pequeños

ESTRATEGIAS

En la comunidad

Soledad, que tiene tres años, está en el mercado con su abuelito. Soledad está sentada en el carrito de la compra mientras pasan por todas las secciones. "Vamos a buscar chilies", dice la abuelito mientras revisa la lista de la compra. "El elote es un vegetal. ¡Mira! Hay frijoles, calabazas y tomates justo al lado de los chilies.

¡También son vegetales!" La abuelito de Soledad le está ayudando a aprender que los vegetales son una categoría de alimentos y que los chilies, frijoles y tomates están dentro de esa categoría. Soledad también está aprendiendo acerca del supermercado y la lista de la compra, a la vez que pasa un rato divertido con su abuelito, a quien ella quiere mucho.



En el hogar

El papá de Henry está desarmando el control remoto de la televisión. "¿No funciona?" pregunta Henry. "No", dice el papá, "no funciona. Necesita pilas nuevas". El papá levanta la tapa trasera del control remoto. "Mira", dice. "Aquí hay dos pilas agotadas". "¿Agotadas?", pregunta Henry. "Bueno, no es que estén agotadas, simplemente dejaron de funcionar". El papá le pide a Henry que le alcance dos pilas nuevas que están dentro de un paquete allí mismo. "Uno, dos". El papá cuenta mientras Henry se las pasa. "Ahora, las pongo dentro del control, cierro la tapa, y.... ¡ya está!" El papá apunta el control remoto hacia la televisión y la prende. "¡Mucho mejor!" Henry aplaude. "Sí. ¡Las pilas nuevas hicieron que el control funcionara mucho mejor! ¡Gracias por tu ayuda, hijo!"

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Apoyo a los niños preescolares para desarrollar los conocimientos de base

ESTRATEGIAS

Los niños tienen unos conocimientos de base y unas maneras de ver el mundo propias —a menudo llamados “fondos de conocimiento”—que se desarrollan a través de sus experiencias con la familia y en su cultura (Moll et al., 1992). Cuantas más oportunidades tengan los niños de tener conversaciones y experiencias con otras personas, más podrán desarrollar estos “fondos de conocimiento”. Además, sus conocimientos de base y sus experiencias son una fuente valiosa de contenido para las conversaciones en el salón de clase.



Los niños preescolares adquieren los conocimientos de base cuando los padres y familiares:

- ▶ Muestran a los niños su propio interés y curiosidad acerca del mundo (p. ej., “Este libro dice que los cangrejos y las hormigas tienen exoesqueleto. ¡Nunca había oído esa palabra antes! Sigamos leyendo para ver si podemos averiguar qué es un exoesqueleto”). (Zero to Three, sin fecha)
- ▶ Usan un lenguaje rico conceptualmente que expande el conocimiento de palabras de los niños, así como de los conceptos (p. ej., “El murciélago es nocturno. Eso quiere decir que solo están activos por la noche”). (Paratore, Cassano y Schickedanz, 2013)
- ▶ Involucran a los niños en actividades concretas y significativas, como plantar un jardín (Dickinson y Tabors, 2001; Wasik, Bond y Hindman, 2006), e incluyen oportunidades para aprender vocabulario importante, así como ampliarlo—palabras como “semilla”, “plántula”, “esqueje”, “bulbo” y “tubérculo”—y conceptos de muchas maneras prácticas (p. ej., “Necesitamos regar las plantas hoy porque no ha llovido, y las plantas necesitan agua para crecer”). (Cervetti et al., 2007)
- ▶ Explican palabras y conceptos desconocidos (p. ej., “La ventana es transparente. ‘Transparente’ significa que algo es cristalino y ¡puedes ver a través de ello!”) (Elley, 1989)
- ▶ Relacionan los nuevos conocimientos con lo que los niños ya saben (p. ej., “Recuerda cuando vimos a las gallinas posadas sobre los huevos para incubarlos... ¡Las ranas son diferentes! Las ranas ponen los huevos en el agua, y después, ¡los dejan solos!”) (Rosenkoetter y Wanless, 2006; Stockall y Dennis, 2012)
- ▶ Responden (o tratan de responder) las preguntas de los niños (p. ej., “Si que parece que la luna nos está siguiendo, pero no estoy seguro de por qué. Vamos a ver si lo podemos averiguar...”)
- ▶ Hacen preguntas mientras leen una historia o cuando la terminan (p. ej., “¿Por qué crees que el ratón ayudó al león? ¿Qué harías tú si fueras el ratón?”) (Whitehurst et al., 1988)

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- ▶ Hacen preguntas que animan a los niños a pensar y razonar sobre sus experiencias diarias (p. ej., “¿Por qué crees que la sirena del auto de la policía hace tanto ruido?”) y la naturaleza (p. ej., “¿Cómo ayuda el camuflaje a los animales a mantenerse seguros?”) (Peterson y French, 2008)
- ▶ Exploran las vistas, sonidos y olores que hay en su comunidad (p. ej., “¿Hueles eso? Creo que están haciendo pan en la panadería. Sigamos ese olor a ver dónde nos lleva.”) (Volk y Long, 2005)
- ▶ Comparten textos informativos y narrativos apropiados para la edad de los niños, y leen partes del texto o todo completo, según el interés de los niños (Schickedanz y Collins, 2013)
- ▶ Animan a los niños a pintar, dibujar y “escribir” para que muestren lo que saben y en qué están interesados (Notari-Syverson, 2006)

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Ejemplos de cómo los padres y familiares apoyan los conocimientos de base de los preescolares

ESTRATEGIAS

En el hogar

Durante la cena, Carlitos, que tiene 4 años, cuenta a sus papás y a su hermano algo que ocurrió en la escuela ese día. "Hoy, el tío de Chiara trajo su retroexcavadora a la escuela". Su mamá le pregunta: "¿Qué les explicó?" "Nos habló de que trabaja como contratista que ayuda a construir casas y tiendas". "Eso suena interesante", dice el papá. Carlitos continúa, "Dice que cada uno tiene diferentes tareas en una obra de construcción, pero que todos tienen que trabajar juntos. Si no lo hicieran así, podría ser peligroso". "¿Te pudiste sentar en la retroexcavadora?" pregunta el hermano. "¡Sí!, y pude tocar los controles. También maneja una excavadora. Mi maestra le preguntó si la podría traer a la escuela. ¡Eso fue muy chistoso!". "¿Qué tiene eso de chistoso?", pregunta el hermano de Carlitos. "Porque", explica Carlitos, "uno no puede manejar una excavadora a la escuela. Tiene unos trenes de orugas—no ruedas!" Después de la cena, Carlitos muestra a su familia fotografías de retroexcavadoras y de excavadoras en su libro favorito, señalando los trenes de orugas y un remolque que se podría usar para llevar la excavadora a la escuela.



En el hogar

Li y su mamá se están preparando para tomar el té cuando Karen, una visita, llega. Después de que su mamá le asiente con la cabeza, Li pregunta a Karen si quiere una taza de té. "Si, me encantaría", dice Karen mientras alcanza la tetera. "Li puede hacerlo", dice la mamá de Li. "A nosotras nos gusta servir el té a nuestros invitados". Li sonríe y asiente. "Gracias", dice Karen sonriendo. "Pero, por favor, sírveme media taza solamente, no me puedo beber una taza entera. Me llenaría demasiado", dice. Señala la taza y muestra a Li hasta dónde es "media taza" y hasta dónde una "taza entera". Li asiente y mientras vierte el té con la ayuda de su mamá. "Aquí hay media taza para ti y una taza entera para mí", dice.

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Conocimientos de base: Recursos

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Conocimientos de base: Recursos

ESTRATEGIAS

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BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

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INTRODUCTION TO BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Background knowledge is the information that children learn and store in their memories—including information about themselves, other people, objects, and the world around them. This includes the beliefs, values, rules, and expectations in children’s cultures, environments, and languages. Even very young children begin to understand the routines of their lives and the words people say to them. They learn when and how to eat, play, walk, run. They also learn how people interact with one another, what people wear, and what different objects are called and how we use them in our languages. Children use this background knowledge as they begin to talk, write, and use books and other print materials. Children may develop this knowledge in one or more languages and can transfer it from one language to another. As children grow and have meaningful interactions with new people, in new environments, and in new languages, they build on this prior knowledge.

Children learn from their experiences, often beginning with experiences within their family. For example, they learn about animals from having pets or living on a farm with livestock; or they learn about transportation by using cars, buses, trains, or boats in their community. They learn their family’s way of doing things—their languages, routines, cultural beliefs, values, rules, and expectations—in different settings, such as homes, stores, restaurants, and places of worship. Young children begin to make connections between what they see and hear and themselves. Children also learn through planned, intentional experiences, like hands-on learning experiences and reading books together. These experiences can help children build new knowledge and learn more about their world. They will use this knowledge as they begin to comprehend the books they hear and read. For example, they will draw from what they learned about plants when they read books about plants later in school. Knowing the types and parts of plants will help them read the words “stem” and “flower,” and help them understand books about the life cycle of plants.

Just like the other Big 5 topics, background knowledge is an important component of curriculum. This key literacy skill is addressed in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, which is described fully on page 4. The curriculum should build on children’s backgrounds. Education staff can help children learn through planned experiences or teachable moments that build on children’s prior knowledge. Staff should also partner with families to learn about the rich background knowledge children already have and can use what they learn from their families with the children. Staff can also help families use this background knowledge to promote their children’s language and literacy skills at home, no matter what language they speak. Professional development opportunities should help staff build children’s knowledge and engage families. In other words, supporting background knowledge is part of a coordinated approach that supports children’s language and literacy development.



A coordinated approach also ensures the full and effective participation of children who are dual language learners (DLLs) and their families. We integrated the role that languages and cultures play in background knowledge development throughout this document.

“Dual language learner means a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time, or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.” Head Start Program Performance Standards, Part 1305 - 1305.2 Terms

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CONNECTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND THE HEAD START EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK: AGES BIRTH TO FIVE

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to implement program and teaching practices that are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) and the state’s early learning and development standards (ELDS). Since background knowledge includes many types of knowledge, it is captured across domains such as cognition and social and emotional development. Background knowledge is also key to language and literacy development because children learn to express what they know through words and writing. Eventually, they read for meaning to increase their knowledge. This resource will show where the HSELOF addresses background knowledge from the language and literacy perspective.

For infants and toddlers, the goals associated with background knowledge appear under the Language and Literacy central domain and the sub-domains under the Language and Communication domain: 1) Attending and Understanding; 2) Communicating and Speaking; and 3) Vocabulary. The primary goals that address background knowledge are listed below.

ATTENDING AND UNDERSTANDING

- IT-LC 1. Child attends to, understands, and responds to communication and language from others.
- IT-LC 2. Child learns from communication and language experiences with others.

ELOF



Infant/Toddler Language and Communication Sub-Domains



Goals for Sub-Domain: Attending and Understanding

- Goal IT-LC 1. Child attends to, understands, and responds to communication and language from others.
- Goal IT-LC 2. Child learns from communication and language experiences with others.

COMMUNICATING AND SPEAKING

- Goal IT-LC 3: Child communicates needs and wants non-verbally and by using language.
- Goal IT-LC 4: Child uses non-verbal communication and language to engage others in interaction.
- Goal IT-LC 5: Child uses increasingly complex language in conversation with others.
- Goal IT-LC 6: Child initiates non-verbal communication and language to learn and gain information.

ELOF



Infant/Toddler Language and Communication Sub-Domains



Goals for Sub-Domain: Communicating and Speaking

- Goal IT-LC 3. Child communicates needs and wants non-verbally and by using language.
- Goal IT-LC 4. Child uses non-verbal communication and language to engage others in interaction.
- Goal IT-LC 5. Child uses increasingly complex language in conversation with others.
- Goal IT-LC 6. Child initiates non-verbal communication and language to learn and gain information.

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VOCABULARY

- Goal IT-LC 7. Child understands an increasing number of words used in communication with others.
- Goal IT-LC 8. Child uses an increasing number of words in communication and conversation with others.

ELOF



Infant/Toddler Language and Communication Sub-Domains

Attending and Understanding	Communicating and Speaking	Vocabulary	Emergent Literacy
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Goals for Sub-Domain: Vocabulary

- Goal IT-LC 7. Child understands an increasing number of words used in communication with others.
- Goal IT-LC 8. Child uses an increasing number of words in communication and conversation with others.

For preschoolers, goals associated with background knowledge appear in the Language and Literacy central domain and the sub-domains under Language and Communication: 1) Attending and Understanding; 2) Communicating and Speaking; and 3) Vocabulary. Find the primary goals that address background knowledge below.

ATTENDING AND UNDERSTANDING

- Goal P-LC 1: Child attends to communication and language from others.
- Goal P-LC 2: Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.

ELOF



Preschooler Language and Communication Sub-Domains

Attending and Understanding	Communicating and Speaking	Vocabulary
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Goals for Sub-Domain: Attending and Understanding

- Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others.
- Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.

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COMMUNICATING AND SPEAKING

- Goal P-LC 3: Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.
- Goal P-LC 4: Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules.
- Goal P-LC 5: Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.



Preschooler Language and Communication Sub-Domains

Attending and Understanding

Communicating and Speaking

Vocabulary

Goals for Sub-Domain: Communicating and Speaking

Goal P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.

Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules.

Goal P-LC 5. Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.

VOCABULARY

- Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.
- Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words.



Preschooler Language and Communication Sub-Domains

Attending and Understanding

Communicating and Speaking

Vocabulary

Goals for Sub-Domain: Vocabulary

Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.

Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words.

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WHY BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE MATTERS: UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH

Children develop background knowledge through their daily interactions and experiences in their families and communities. Their minds organize information into concepts (schemas) from birth. Children connect information they are learning to familiar concepts.

Children’s growing knowledge is an essential component of their cognitive development and success later in school⁷. Background knowledge is important, not only for content and conceptual development, but also for reading comprehension and achievement¹. Evidence suggests that gaps in children’s background knowledge may make it harder for them to understand what they read and hear later in school⁶. Wide and deep background knowledge helps children make sense of the new information they learn at school. “Everything that children read or hear is automatically interpreted relative to what they already know about similar subjects...children with rich knowledge bases are more successful at learning new information^(7, p. ix)”.

Background knowledge “appears to be a key factor for both vocabulary acquisition and comprehension^(2, p. 206).”



“FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE” AS BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Children have similarities and differences in their background knowledge because they draw from different “funds of knowledge.” Funds of knowledge are the information that children’s families and communities develop, value, and share with their children⁴. Children from different cultures or backgrounds may have large sets of knowledge that adults from other cultures and backgrounds may not be aware of, so it is essential that education staff learn about the unique background knowledge each child has so they can build on these experiences. For example, some children may know a lot about gardening, since growing food is highly valued within their family and culture. Some children may develop self-care skills like dressing and feeding themselves at a very young age since independence is highly valued within their family and culture.



Some children may have lived in another country and be familiar with a different climates and landscapes. Others may have traveled little, but they have wide and varied experiences in their local communities that include going to the zoo, playground, library, or beach. These varied experiences contribute to the background knowledge children use to learn. Cultural knowledge is also part of children’s funds. Children begin learning how to participate in a culture at birth. For example, a baby may experience a back-and-forth conversational exchange. A toddler will learn when and how to speak to elders or peers. A child may learn to be quiet during a religious ceremony or on a public bus. Each child’s background knowledge is unlike any other child’s because it is based on the child’s own experiences and interests. These rich and varied experiences may be valuable resources when learning about different topics and in planning learning experiences and activities⁵. It is important not to assume what background knowledge children possess. The best way to find out is to engage with the children and their families.



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BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND CHILDREN WHO ARE DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS (DLLs)

Children who are dual language learners (DLLs) develop background knowledge in each of their languages. For example, they may know about the foods and cooking techniques used at home in their home language. But they may not know all the vocabulary words in English they would need to express this information to an English speaker. They also may not know as much about the foods and cooking techniques included in a curriculum’s unit or study on food and cooking. With support, children learn to transfer this knowledge from one language to another⁵.

Understanding children’s prior experiences and background knowledge is crucial for valid screenings and ongoing child assessments. Screening and assessing children who are DLLs includes learning about children’s experiences and prior knowledge in each of their languages. Families are an important part of the screening and assessment process because they have valuable information to share about their children’s knowledge and skills within their home language and culture, as well as in English. See [Gathering and Using Language Information That Families Share](#) for more on assessing background knowledge.

Alicia, a Spanish and English speaker, and Xiao, a Chinese and English speaker, are preschoolers who have both developed background knowledge about animals based on their experiences in their families and communities.

Alicia

Animals are pets. My dog cuddles with me. He licks my face. He loves me!

My dog has a collar around his neck with my phone number. He stays close to me on a leash.



Xiao

Animals are food. We buy chickens from the market and my grandmother makes delicious soup. I help!

You can make lots of food from chicken. My favorite is chicken dumplings. I help make the wrappers and we fold the meat inside the dough.



Note that Alicia and Xiao may be using their home languages to express their knowledge about animals. Each child has already developed a lot of background knowledge about animals through their experiences at home.

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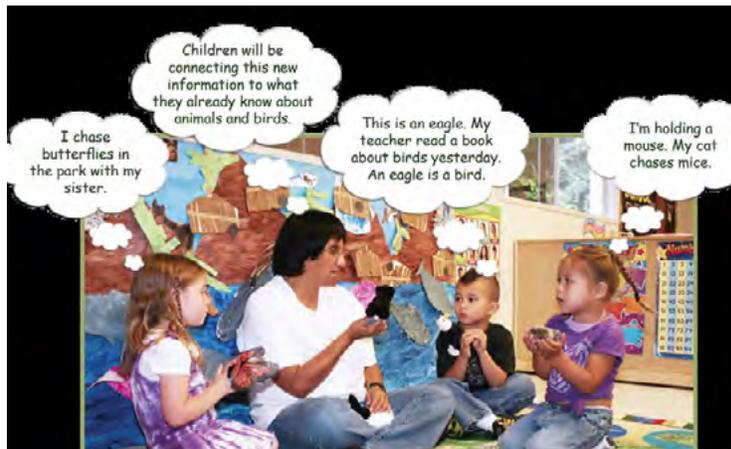
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THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers develop background knowledge as family members and other adults help them as they interact with their home, community, and environment. Adults teach children their language and cultural ways through their interactions and sometimes through intentional teaching practices. As stated earlier, children store information about themselves, other people, and objects, as well as their families' beliefs, values, rules, and behavioral expectations from these early experiences³. Education staff need to learn about the unique background knowledge each child brings so they can build on this knowledge.

Children develop and use background knowledge when they

- connect new information to knowledge they have already stored and organized in their memories;
- understand and gain new knowledge when adults provide a variety of diverse experiences and instruction, including observations, modeling, explanations, books, and other intentional interactions;
- solve problems and figure things out based on their emerging understandings about how their world works (e.g., people and interactions, objects, natural phenomena, and human-made events);
- offer to show things to others or share what they know;
- ask and answer questions about topics of interest;
- expand their use of language and develop new vocabulary as they learn more about their world;
- share their own cultural practices or ways of doing things;
- reflect on their knowledge, gain new insight, and rethink or ask questions based on those insights (preschoolers and older); and
- begin to express what they know through emerging writing skills.



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HOW DOES BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOP?



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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Talking, reading, and exploring the world with guidance from education staff provides opportunities for young children to build background knowledge. The more children understand about their world, the easier it will be for them to learn.



WAYS TO BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Explore rich and engaging topics together over time.

- Choose fun and interesting topics to explore based on children’s preferences, families’ suggestions, and your own interests and knowledge.
- Explore topics repeatedly over time—even over the whole year. It is easier for children to remember what they have learned when they see the information several times over an extended period.
- Create environments in which adults take children’s questions seriously and respect them, even if they cannot answer them immediately. Model how to find answers to questions by researching together on a computer or in expository books from the local library.
- Invite families to provide background knowledge at home, in the group care setting, and during socializations. Encourage them to talk to their children in their home language about their own experiences with the topics you explore or ask them to share their knowledge with the entire group.

Build on children’s prior knowledge.

- Look to families as a source of understanding about children’s background knowledge. Talk to them about what their children know, do, say, and enjoy.
- Consider children’s prior knowledge as you conduct screening and ongoing assessment so that you know what concepts or vocabulary may be new to children
- Talk with children about the connections between what they are doing and seeing at the moment, what they have done and seen in the past, and what they will do or see in the future.
- Ask children what they already know about an activity or a topic as you begin to explore it.
- Use home languages and English to learn about and discuss children’s prior experiences. Support children who are dual language learners as they make connections between knowledge they developed in their home language and knowledge they are developing in English.
- Plan learning experiences and activities that build on prior experiences and connect to individual child goals and program level school readiness goals.
- Share information with families on an ongoing basis as you build children’s knowledge together.



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HOW TO SUPPORT BABIES AS THEY DEVELOP BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Babies begin to learn about the world around them even before they are born! With every interaction that babies and young children have with their environments and the people in them, they learn about how things work, how people respond, and what it feels like to be hungry or full, wet or dry, sleepy or alert. Babies develop background knowledge primarily from their varied experiences in their world and by interacting with adults who will help them make sense of those experiences.

Babies begin to develop background knowledge when adults

- notice when babies are alert and interested and take advantage of these moments to interact;
- talk or sign to babies about their daily routines and activities, such as feeding, diapering, swaddling, and tummy time, using their home language;
- offer safe toys or objects—things like balls, spoons, cups—that have different textures, such as smooth, bumpy, or soft. Modify the objects as needed so that babies who have fine motor challenges can hold or grasp the objects;
- intentionally use words in their home language or sign language to label textures, shapes, sounds, and actions as babies explore;
- engage babies in “conversations” by responding with different facial expressions, gestures, or words or signs each time a baby babbles and coos;
- provide and read a variety of culturally and linguistically appropriate books with interesting photos and illustrations of objects, animals, and people to point to and talk about;
- take babies out into the community to places such as grocery stores, parks, forests, cultural events, and places of worship and describe sights, sounds, and smells.



Eight-month-old Juanita touches a soft stuffed animal her mother has given her, and then she touches the hard floor, enjoying feeling the different surfaces at home. Her mother describes what she touches and feels in Spanish.

Juanita is developing her knowledge of texture, vocabulary, and how to make sense of what she feels!

When she comes to the infant classroom, she notices that there are hard and soft surfaces. Her teachers describe the surfaces and how they feel in Spanish. Juanita’s teachers help her build on knowledge and language she is developing at home.

Home visitors can help parents identify, adapt, and try the practices listed above during home visits and group socializations.

GOAL IT-IC 2. CHILD LEARNS FROM COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS.



DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION			INDICATORS
Birth to 9 Months	8 to 18 Months	16 to 36 Months	By 36 Months
<p>Pays attention when familiar adults talk or sign about objects, people, or events during face-to-face interactions by changing focus, making eye contact, or looking at people or objects.</p>	<p>Participates in joint attention with an adult by looking back and forth between the adult and object. Points or gestures when an adult is pointing, naming, or signing about a familiar or new object and learns names and uses of objects.</p>	<p>Participates in increasingly complex and lengthy periods of joint attention with adults. Shows interest, understanding, or enjoyment when participating in language activities, such as demonstrating understanding of objects’ functions and uses, or when joining in games, songs, rhymes, or stories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acts on descriptions provided by others about people, objects, or events. ■ Demonstrates interest and understanding when participating in language activities or games.

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HOW TO SUPPORT TODDLERS AS THEY DEVELOP BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Toddlers develop background knowledge through their interactions with others and with guided opportunities to safely explore the world. Adults help toddlers develop background knowledge by providing them with lots of meaningful, hands-on experiences and describing what they see, hear, smell, and touch, and why they do—and do not do—certain things. Toddlers learn the words in the languages they hear, so it is important that they hear lots of languages during this exciting period of development.

Toddlers develop background knowledge when adults

- use a home or sign language to explain daily routines and activities (e.g., “First, we have to go to the grocery store, and then we will go visit your abuelita.”);
- help them safely explore the world by doing things like turning over rocks to look at insects, feeding birds, looking for pictures in the clouds, drawing pictures in the dirt with sticks, collecting interesting rocks (or seashells or leaves or acorns), and rolling down a grassy hill;
- use a home or sign language to talk about what children see (e.g., “Look at those ants carry those big crumbs! Let’s watch and see where they are taking them.”);
- teach them new and interesting words and concepts in a home language and in English—such as day and night, the changing seasons, types of weather, how things grow (e.g., “That is a coconut! It is the biggest seed in the world!”);
- provide and read a variety of culturally and linguistically appropriate books with interesting photos, illustrations, characters, and simple story lines to talk about;
- visit different places, such as grocery stores, parks, forests, cultural events, and places of worship, and describe what they see, touch, hear, taste, and smell (e.g., “Can you smell fish? This is the fish market. Let’s see if there are lobsters to look at.”);
- build on what toddlers know by stretching and expanding that knowledge (e.g., “Remember when we saw the ducks swimming with their webbed feet? Well, frogs have webbed feet, too. Those flaps of skin between their toes help them swim fast!”);
- respond to their questions (e.g., “That’s a good question. Let’s think about how we can find out the answer.”);
- provide feedback that helps them learn more about the world (e.g., “Well, yes, it looks like a duck, but it’s a swan. See how it has a long neck...”);
- talk about objects, animals and their categories (e.g., “Here is a knife, a fork, and a spoon. They are all silverware.” “Cows, chickens, and sheep live on farms. They are all farm animals”);
- encourage and support imaginary play (e.g., “Look at this box! We can pretend it is a car, boat, or a fire truck...”);
- encourage them to show what they know through painting, drawing, and “writing,” and talk with them about their creations; modify the environment and tools so that children who need more individualized support can access and use the space and materials for painting, drawing, and “writing;” and
- support children as they use assistive technology, as identified on their Individual Family Service Plans, to communicate what they know about people, objects, and events in their environments, and ask and respond to questions.

Home visitors can help parents identify, adapt, and try the practices listed above during home visits and group socializations.



Min, 34 months old, is having a picnic with his family at the playground. They are eating bi bim bap, a Korean dish with beef, rice, and vegetables. Min sees his neighbor Miguel having lunch with his family. Miguel’s family is eating rice and beans rather than bi bim bap. Min asks his mother why. She explains that people around the world use rice in different ways. Miguel’s family comes from Mexico, and they like to eat rice with beans.

Min is developing his knowledge about rice and about different cultures!

Min tells the home visitor about the rice and beans. The home visitor tells Min and his mother that she eats biryani at home and that it is made with rice. Min’s mother adds that rice is also in sushi, a dish their Japanese neighbors made for them. Together, the home visitor and Min’s mother build Min’s background knowledge and vocabulary.

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GOAL IT-IC 6. CHILD INITIATES NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE TO LEARN AND GAIN INFORMATION.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION			INDICATORS
Birth to 9 Months	8 to 18 Months	16 to 36 Months	By 36 Months
Takes turns in non-verbal conversations by using facial expressions, sounds, gestures, or signs to initiate or respond to communication.	Asks simple questions using gestures, such as pointing, signs or words, with variations in pitch and intonation.	Seeks information and meaning of words by asking questions in words or signs, such as "What's that?" or "Who's that?" or "Why?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks questions in a variety of ways. Repeats or re-phrases questions until a response is received.



HOW TO SUPPORT PRESCHOOLERS AS THEY DEVELOP BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Children develop background knowledge and their own ways of thinking about the world (i.e., funds of knowledge) through their experiences with their family and within their culture using their home languages. The more opportunities they have to engage in conversations and experiences with others, the more they will develop these funds of knowledge. In addition, their background knowledge and experiences are a rich source of content for conversations in group care settings or group socializations. Building on children's funds of knowledge by explicitly connecting what they know in their home language to words and concepts in English expands what they already know and introduces them to new ideas in a new language.



PRESCHOOLERS DEVELOP BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE WHEN ADULTS

- show children their own interest and curiosity in the world (e.g., "This book says that crabs and ants have exoskeletons to protect them. I've never heard that word! Let's keep reading and see if we can find out how an exoskeleton protects them!");
- share age-appropriate informational (nonfiction) and narrative (fiction) texts in children's home languages and in English. Read parts or all of the text, depending on children's interest; briefly pause to explain unfamiliar words and concepts during reading (e.g., "He was curious—he wanted to learn about everything—curious.");
- use conceptually rich talk (verbally or sign language) that builds children's knowledge of words and concepts (e.g., "A bat is nocturnal. That means they are active at night.");
- develop thematic units or project-based investigations that provide opportunities for children to meaningfully explore fun and interesting topics, such as buildings, trees, plants, water, and transportation;
- engage children in concrete, meaning-making activities, such as planting a garden, and include opportunities to learn new vocabulary—words such as "seed," "plantlet," "cutting," "bulb," "tuber"—and concepts in meaningful ways (e.g., "We need to water the garden today because it has not rained and plants need water to grow—just like you do!"). Ensure children with physical limitations have access to space where activities take place and appropriate modifications to toys, materials, and tools used in the activities;

Four-year-olds Ari, Jean, and Stefan tend their sprouts in the community garden near their family child care provider's house every day, making sure the sprouts get both sun and water.

Ari, Jean, and Stefan are learning about plants, the water cycle, and where food comes from!

As Ari eats an apple for snack, he tells his family child care provider that his Abba (Daddy) said apples were also plants and need sun and water.

Ari's family child care provider notes that he is continuing to develop his background knowledge of plants. She shares a book about apple trees with Ari and his peers (even the two toddlers in the group are interested!). She tells the children that apple trees grow, just like Ari, Jean, and Stefan's sprouts do.

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- connect new knowledge to what children already know (e.g., “Remember when we saw those chickens sitting on their eggs to hatch them? Frogs are different! Frogs lays their eggs in water and then they swim away!”);
- ask questions (verbally or sign language) that encourage thinking and reasoning about everyday experiences (e.g., “Why do you think a police siren makes such a loud noise?”) and the natural world (e.g., “How does camouflage keep animals safe?”);
- provide gentle but accurate feedback when a child is confused or misunderstands something (“That is called the banana peel, not the banana skin.”);
- have daily conversations (verbally or sign language) about topics of interests; explain unfamiliar words and concepts (e.g., “That window is transparent. ‘Transparent’ means something is clear and you can see right through it!”);
- talk about items and their categories verbally or using sign language (e.g., “This is a chameleon. It is a kind of lizard—just like your poodle is a kind of dog.”); and
- support their use of assistive technology, as identified on their Individualized Education Programs, to communicate what they know about people and the world around them, and ask and respond to questions.



Five-year-old Alex learns the names and eating habits of 15 kinds of dinosaurs, an interest he picked up from his seven-year-old brother.

Alex is developing his content knowledge about dinosaurs, learning how to categorize, and becoming enthusiastic about learning and sharing knowledge!

At Alex’s Head Start center, he acts out the different dinosaurs. He carefully stretches out tall or squats down short, depending on how big the dinosaur is. Alex creates drawings of dinosaurs, sometimes relying on books for pictures and the spelling of their names.

Alex’s teachers support his interests by having conversations about dinosaurs. They provide him with materials about dinosaurs, including templates, books, and printouts from the Internet.

Home visitors can help parents identify, adapt, and try the practices listed above during home visits and group socializations.



GOAL P-1C.1. CHILD ATTENDS TO COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE FROM OTHERS.



DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION		INDICATORS
36 to 48 Months	48 to 60 Months	By 60 Months
Shows acknowledgment of comments or questions and is able to attend to conversations, either spoken or signed.	Shows acknowledgment of complex comments or questions. Is able to attend to longer, multi-turn conversations, either spoken or signed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uses verbal and non-verbal signals appropriately to acknowledge the comments or questions of others. ■ Shows ongoing connection to a conversation, group discussion, or presentation.

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EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES IN EARLY LEARNING SETTINGS

EXAMPLES WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Reyna, a toddler teacher, supports Jamal as he explores his world. While his explorations of food can be a distraction at mealtime and snack, Reyna knows they can also provide rich opportunities for learning.

Reyna notices that her toddlers love to touch their food, especially Jamal. He is very interested in separating the bread from its crust. When Reyna speaks with Jamal's family about his interest in bread, she learns that he has always loved bread and that his family eats it daily. As an infant, he would grab for it. With encouragement from Reyna, his family is following his lead and providing opportunities for him to explore bread. They have begun to introduce different toppings, like butter, jam, and cheese. Reyna builds on these home experiences and provides opportunities for further exploration in the classroom.



Reyna says the word "crust" each time Jamal tears off the crust. She also asks him to help her serve the bread and shows him what a whole "loaf" looks like. Jamal will not use these new words yet, but with Reyna's support he is learning information about his world that interests him greatly.

Reyna also shares books about bread with him, reminding him as she reads that he eats bread. She encourages Jamal to explore toppings as new ones are introduced, such as hummus and sunflower butter. She even encourages Jamal to share "crumbs" with the birds.

IN AN INFANT CLASSROOM

Clara notices that 4-month-old Jennie is staring at a stuffed cat near where she is laying on the carpet. Clara picks up the toy and moves it closer to Jennie's face. "Gato" ["Cat,"] she says as she gently shakes the cat. Jennie follows the cat's movement with her eyes. "Do you want to hold the cat?" Clara asks. "Here! You hold it," she says as she puts it in Jennie's hands. Jennie brings the cat to her mouth and begins to chew on it. "Oh, does that cat feel soft in your mouth?" Clara asks. Later, Clara asks Jennie's mom or dad about whether they have a cat at home. She also brings in board books with cats and introduces them in the book bin.

IN THE COMMUNITY

During the last home visit, Mai and Chris, her home visitor, talk about teaching 11-month-old Hong new words and signs and symbols. Mai suggests taking Hong for a walk around the neighborhood and pointing out street signs. Chris adds suggestions about traffic and safety. Today, Mai and Hong take a walk to the store. On the way, they stop at a busy intersection and Mai, who speaks Vietnamese to her daughter, says, "Look at the red stop sign. That means we have to stop before we cross the street so we can be careful and safe. Cars have to stop, too." When she sees it is safe to cross, Mai says, "The cars stopped, so we can cross the street now. Let's make sure we stay in the crosswalk!" They cross to the other side and continue walking to the store. On their way home, Mai repeats her talk about traffic, street signs, and safety and even uses the new word, crosswalk, again so that Hong can learn more about these words and concepts. Mai will share this experience with Chris during the next home visit.



IN A TODDLER CLASSROOM

Mr. Nguyen reads a short story about a butterfly with a small group of toddlers. He points to the photographs that show the butterfly landing on flowers. One of the children points to the butterfly's wings. Mr. Nguyen asks what the butterfly does with its wings; three children respond, "Fly!" and the

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fourth moves his arms up and down. “Yes,” says Mr. Nguyen, “butterflies fly to different kinds of flowers and then land on them so they can eat the nectar. Nectar is a liquid like water. It’s sweet. Butterflies like nectar.” He shows the children some toy butterflies and some imitation flowers in a pot he has brought to class. “What would the butterflies do if they saw these flowers?” he asks. “They fly up,” answers Lea. “Can you show us how they would fly and land on a flower, Lea?” Lea demonstrates. “Yes. Like that!” Mr. Nguyen sets up a small area with the toy butterflies and flowers and the children go there when they want to help the butterflies land on the flowers.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Mrs. Diaz, a family child care provider, takes her small group of toddlers, including her two-year-old granddaughter, Soledad, to the market. Soledad and another toddler, Clara, sit in the shopping cart and look at the weekly food specials with Mrs. Diaz before going in. “Vamos a comprar maíz” [“Let’s get some corn,”] says Mrs. Diaz as she looks at her shopping list and points to the corn. “Corn is a type of vegetable. Look! There are beans and squash right next to the corn. They are all vegetables, too!” Mrs. Diaz is helping her toddlers learn that vegetables are a category of food and that corn, beans, and squash are part of that category. Soledad and her peers are also learning about the market, shopping lists, and food advertisements while they have fun with Mrs. Diaz, who loves all her children, especially her granddaughter, a lot!



EXAMPLES WITH PRESCHOOLERS

Ina is a home visitor to seven Armenian-speaking families and five English-speaking families. When she visits their homes, the children often talk about what they like to eat.

When Ina talks with the families about children’s interests in food, the topic of bread and bread-making comes up. So Ina and the families decide to explore this with the children. The families provide her with the names of the breads in their home languages, bread recipes, and descriptions of how the breads are used in their cultural traditions (for example, for certain holidays or at particular times of the day or year). One family shares gluten-free bread recipes because a family member has celiac disease.

During a home visit, Ina and each family make the family’s favorite breads. Many of the Armenian-speaking families want to make *lavash*, a thin unleavened flatbread. Ina and each family make a chart of all the steps involved in making bread. They also read books about bread (a favorite is *Bread, Bread, Bread* by Ann Morris; the local library carries the book and the Head Start program has copies in their family lending library). The children learn the vocabulary of making bread, including *knead*, *rise*, *bake*, *crust*, *dough*, and *yeast*. Over several group socializations, family members make an illustrated recipe book together. Each family receives a copy. The children and families enjoy flipping through the book as they remember making bread and decide which bread to make next.



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IN A PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

Teacher Nikki, who speaks English and understands some Spanish, is reading a book about animals. “This part of the book is about oviparous animals. I had to look that word up. *Oviparous* means ‘animals that lay eggs.’” She then asks the children to tell her what animals they might see in this part of the book. The children call out, “Un pájaro [a bird]! Una rana [a frog]! A whale!” Nikki says, “Well, yes. Birds lay eggs, and so do frogs, but a whale is a mammal. Most mammal babies are born live and do not lay eggs.” Eli adds, “My sister’s favorite animal is a platypus. Is a platypus ovi-ovi...” his voice trails off. “Is it oviparous?” Nikki responds, “Well, yes, it is because a platypus lays eggs. And a platypus is also a mammal. What else do you know about the platypus?” After Eli tells them what he knows, Nikki returns to the book. As she reads, she notices that Eli is smiling. She knows he is excited to share his new knowledge and his new word with his sister.



IN A FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME

It is early summer and the three preschoolers in Marianna’s family child care have been learning about how plants and trees grow. Today they are outside exploring the small pear tree that the children helped Marianna and her husband plant early last fall in a corner of the backyard. They have been observing the changes in their tree all year as they learned about the seasons and weather. But now Marianna is encouraging the children to connect all the different things they have been learning about trees.

“Let’s talk about all the parts of this pear tree.” “Roots, branches, leaves,” the children call out. Pointing to the trunk, Marianna asks, “What is the special name for this part of the tree?” “The trunk,” two children call out. “Like an elephant!” responds the third. “Hmmm,” Marianna says, pausing to think. “You know, that is really interesting! This tree has a trunk. How is this trunk [she points to tree] different from an elephant’s trunk?” she asks. When the children have finished making the trunk comparisons, discussing the parts of the tree and how it is growing, Marianna passes out paper, clipboards, and pencils. “I want you to observe the tree—just check it out. As you observe it, I want you to draw what you see.” When the children return finish their drawings, Marianna tells them this is the kind of work that scientists do—observing nature and making notes.



IN A PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

With their teacher’s help, Fatima and four of her friends are making a list of community helpers to post in the room. “Policeman!” Albert says. “Police! Booliska [*police* in Somali]!” “Police officer!” responds Fatima. Their teacher says, “Fatima has said something that we need to think about. The police officer who visited our school was a man—but Fatima, remind the class about your cousin.” Fatima says, “My cousin is going to police school. She’s a girl, so she can’t be a policeman.” The teacher nods and says, “That’s right. She is going to the police academy so she can train and learn how to become a police officer. So if we are talking about the men and women who work for the police department, we can say ‘police officer.’” As the teacher turns to write *police officer* on the class list, she notices that a child looks confused. “Daniel, what are you thinking about?” Daniel asks, “How do you say ‘girl fireman’?”

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HOME AND SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

During dinner, 4-year-old Carlitos tells his parents and brother about something that happened at school that day. “Today, Chiara’s uncle brought his backhoe to school to show us.” His mother asks, “¿Que les dijo?” [What did he tell you?] “His name was Miguel,” explains Carlitos. “Miguel told us about how he works for a contractor that helps build houses and stores.” “¿Que interesante!” [That sounds interesting!] his father says. Carlitos continues, “He says that everybody had different jobs at a construction site, but that they all have to work together. If they didn’t, it would be dangerous.” Carlitos’ brother asks, “Did you get to sit in the backhoe?” Carlitos smiles, “¡Sí Pude tocar los controls.” [Yes! And I got to touch the controls.] “Miguel also drives an excavator. My teacher asked if he could bring it to school. That was so funny!” “Why was that funny?” Carlitos’ brother asks. “Because,” Carlito explains, “Miguel can’t drive his excavator to school. It has crawler tracks—not wheels!” After dinner, Carlitos shows his family pictures of backhoes and excavators in his favorite book, pointing out crawler tracks and a trailer Miguel could use to bring the excavator to school.

SUMMARY

This resource focuses on how background knowledge is an important foundation for learning. It discusses the connection to the ELOF’s goals and provides examples of the developmental progression from birth to age five.

Authors also stress the importance of language and culture in background knowledge. Children build on their background knowledge as they learn new things in each of their languages at home, in the community, and in early learning settings. They connect new information they see, hear, and experience to more familiar ideas.

Note the practical strategies that support children’s background knowledge in different early learning settings. Adults help support children build these connections between what they are learning now and what they already know (in English and in a home language). Adults also support children’s background knowledge by providing them with new experiences (in any language) that expand their thinking. Later in school, children will use this background knowledge as they understand what they read and as they write and speak.

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EXPLORING JOAN TALKS:

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

This resource guide helps regional TA specialists and other professional development providers use *Joan Talks about the Big 5* to help Head Start and child care programs implement a planned language approach (PLA). This does not replace the *Joan Talks about the Big 5* series of documents; instead, it is a supplement to support implementation of the Big 5 with ideas for using the series in professional development, coaching, and peer learning communities or group socializations. Resources in *Joan Talks* guide readers through Joan's experience. Joan is a kindergartener who tells us about the language and literacy skills she has learned since birth. Through the series, staff can hear from a child's perspective. Joan is a dual language learner who is gaining confidence and knowledge in the Big 5:

- Alphabet knowledge and early writing
- Background knowledge
- Book knowledge and print concepts
- Oral language and vocabulary
- Phonological awareness

Regional TA specialists and other professional development providers can use this guide to support education staff's use of the existing series in group and home settings. The term "group settings," as used in this guide, refers to center-based care and family child care programs.

WHY USE THE RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN GROUP CARE AND HOME-BASED SETTINGS?

Use *Joan Talks about the Big 5* to present important language and literacy information in a fun and interesting way. Throughout each of the resources, staff and parents see how quality teaching helps build Joan's language and literacy skills.

These resources are important for professional development providers to use as they help staff implement high-quality language experiences.

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE TO USE THE RESOURCE GUIDE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Once you have reviewed *Joan Talks about the Big 5*, ask the following questions to think about how to use this in professional development opportunities in group and home settings:

- What teaching experience as well as language and literacy knowledge do staff have—particularly with children who are dual language learners? How comfortable are home visitors in helping parents support their child's language and literacy skills?
- What resources or methods do staff use to teach language and literacy? How can the *Joan Talks* series boost their strategies? How can home visitors use these resources to support parents' daily interactions with their child?
- Which areas of the Big 5 do staff implement well and where do they want support? How well do you integrate the prior knowledge and experiences of children who are DLLs when developing their Big 5 skills?
- Is the professional development best delivered in a whole group, small group, or one-on-one setting? Where would staff feel most comfortable? Which setting is best suited for the goals of the professional development?

Group care staff can use home visiting strategies to increase parents' knowledge about the importance of the Big 5.

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- Will facilitators provide a professional development experience that meets all staff's needs in the same session or will they offer multiple group sessions?

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Talk about the examples in the *Joan Talks about the Big 5* and explore ways to support each of these skills for all children.
- Home visiting staff can use the stories to talk with families about supporting their child's language and literacy development at home.
- Talk to staff and families about how the Big 5 are interconnected. In group settings, reflect with staff about how they align with their curriculum. In home-based programs, talk about how each of the Big 5 supports language and literacy skills.
- Encourage staff and families to read the *Joan Talks* series before a professional development training or home visit. Talk with staff about how they build language and literacy development in each area of the curriculum. Home visitors can use the stories with parents to show them how to support language and literacy development in each interaction with their child.

GROUP SETTINGS

Ms. Lee is preparing a professional development training for local Head Start and child care teachers. The programs recently enrolled children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Before the training, Ms. Lee asks the staff to read *Joan Talks* so they can have a rich discussion about their current language and literacy practices. During the training, Ms. Lee asks the staff to share how they support all children's language and literacy. Many of them say they read books to children in both whole group and small group settings, sing songs, and label their environment in different languages. Ms. Lee asks them how they could incorporate language and literacy practices in different parts of their classroom. Staff talk about ways they could improve, such as having rich conversations with the children during story time, offering a more engaging writing center, and understanding more about their family's culture and traditions to incorporate them into the classroom.



COACHING

- Coaches, teachers, and home visitors can use data from ongoing child assessments to identify language and literacy skills to strengthen in both group and home-based settings. Coaches, teachers, and home visitors can use this data along with data from coaching observations and staff self-reflection, to identify practices they want to implement to support children's development in these areas. Coaches can use *Joan Talks* to highlight ways to enhance practices in these areas. In home settings, staff can use the series to help families use strategies to strengthen their child's language and literacy skills.
- Coaches can encourage staff to read one of the stories in *Joan Talks* and use it as a discussion and reflection opportunity during the coaching session or home visit.

HOME VISITOR

Prior to his visit with the Santos family, the coach and Mr. Rodriguez, the home visitor, think about how to incorporate the family's cultural traditions to help them encourage language and literacy with their children. He reads the background knowledge section where Joan talks about how she enjoyed books about rice and learning about it through experiences with her family and teacher. They decide to share it with the family. He asks them about their cultural traditions and how those can be shared with children through books, songs, and other family activities.



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- Coaches can encourage staff to use the ideas in the stories. Staff can video an activity where they use one of the suggested ideas from the stories. Coaches might then offer staff feedback during their next meeting and discuss the next steps to enhance language and literacy practices.

GROUP SETTINGS

Patricia, a preschool teacher at a local Head Start, asks Ms. Lee for feedback on encouraging language skills during story time in her classroom. Ms. Lee asks Patricia to review the *Joan Talks* sections *Oral Language and Vocabulary* and *Book Knowledge and Print Concepts* for ideas. Ms. Lee and Patricia also agree that Patricia will videotape her next story time so the two of them can use this during their next coaching session.

One week later, Patricia and Ms. Lee review the video and the *Book Knowledge and Print Concepts* section. Patricia points out areas where she could have encouraged more conversation and engagement. Using the information found in the *Book Knowledge and Print Concepts* section, Ms. Lee points out that this will help all children become familiar with words. Patricia and Ms. Lee find more activities to help encourage language development. Patricia plans to have the children draw pictures for a book where they and label the pictures in their home language.



- Home visitors can work with and encourage families to try the ideas in the stories. Families can videotape, photograph, or write down how they implemented the ideas from the series. Home visitors can discuss the ideas during their next meeting.

HOME VISITOR

Before his home visit with the Santos family, Mr. Rodriguez reviews the *Phonological Awareness and Oral Language and Vocabulary* section. He talks to the Santos family about encouraging their child's language and vocabulary skills. He asks them about their child's favorite stories, songs, and rhymes. He learns that their child loves the *Click Clack* books and the *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* alphabet book. He asks the family to read a couple of the books before the next home visit and note how their child responded so they can talk about it during the next visit.



PEER LEARNING COMMUNITY/GROUP SOCIALIZATION

- Coaches can encourage staff who work with similar ages or in similar settings to meet and reflect on data they collect during ongoing child assessment activities and discuss how they support language and literacy development.
- Home visitors can provide opportunities for families who have similar-aged children to meet and talk about how they support language and literacy development with their children during a socialization. Strategies can be based on lessons learned from the *Joan Talks* series.

HOME VISITOR

Mr. Rodriguez reviews the *Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing* section before meeting with the families during a group socialization. He knows that many children will be attending kindergarten next year and he wants ideas to encourage families to help their children learn some letters in the alphabet and practice writing. Based on information in the *Joan Talks* series, he encourages families to have their children point out letters they recognize around the home and community and try to write, draw, or scribble stories, grocery lists, or things they see during family outings. They will share which strategies they used at their next socialization.



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- Encourage peer groups to support each other as they try strategies from *Joan Talks*. Coaches and home visitors can encourage adults to connect with each other casually between meetings and talk about what practices are working for them and where they still need support.
- Coaches and home visitors can encourage staff and families to create their own stories to teach language and literacy using the *Joan Talks* series as a guide. Coaches and home visitors could help gather information to use with other groups who have similar goals for children.

RESOURCES

Practice Based Coaching

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/practice-based-coaching-pbc>

Coaching Companion

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/head-start-coaching-companion> (NOTE: the link to Coaching Companion is also on the PBC home page)

Effective Practice Guides

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/effective-practice-guides/introduction>

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EXPLORANDO "JOAN HABLA":

UNA GUÍA DE RECURSOS PARA LOS PROVEEDORES DE CAPACITACIÓN Y ASISTENCIA TÉCNICA

Esta guía de recursos ayuda a los especialistas de TA regionales y otros proveedores de desarrollo profesional a utilizar Joan habla sobre los 5 factores importantes para ayudar a los programas de Head Start y de cuidado infantil a implementar una Metodología planificada del lenguaje (PLA, sigla en inglés). Esto no sustituye a la serie de documentos Joan habla de los 5 factores importantes; por lo contrario, es un complemento para apoyar la implementación de los 5 factores con ideas para utilizar la serie en comunidades del desarrollo profesional, coaching y del aprendizaje entre compañeros o en las socializaciones en grupo. Los recursos de Joan habla guía a los lectores a través de la experiencia de Joan. Joan es una niña de kínder que nos habla de las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura que ha aprendido desde que nació. A través de la serie, el personal puede escuchar la perspectiva de una niña. Joan es una niña que aprende en dos idiomas que está adquiriendo confianza y conocimiento en los 5 factores importantes:

- El conocimiento del alfabeto y la escritura temprana
- Los conocimientos de base
- La familiaridad con los libros y con los conceptos de la palabra impresa
- El lenguaje verbal y el vocabulario
- La conciencia fonológica

Los especialistas de TA regional y otros proveedores de desarrollo profesional pueden utilizar esta guía para apoyar el uso, por parte del personal de educación, de la serie existente en entornos grupales y del hogar. El término "entornos grupales", como se emplea en esta guía, se refiere a los programas de cuidado basado en el centro y los de cuidado infantil familiar.

¿POR QUÉ SE UTILIZA ESTA GUÍA PARA EL DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL EN LOS ENTORNOS DE CUIDADO GRUPAL Y LOS BASADOS EN EL HOGAR?

Utilice Joan habla sobre los 5 factores importantes para presentar información lingüística y de lectoescritura importante de una manera divertida e interesante. A través de cada recurso, el personal y los padres ven cómo la enseñanza de calidad ayuda a desarrollar las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura de Joan.

Es importante que los proveedores de desarrollo profesional utilicen estos recursos, ya que ayudan al personal a implementar experiencias lingüísticas de alta calidad.

¿CÓMO PUEDE PREPARARSE PARA UTILIZAR LA GUÍA DE RECURSOS EN EL DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL?

Una vez que haya repasado Joan habla sobre los cinco factores importantes, haga las siguientes preguntas para pensar en cómo usarlo en oportunidades de desarrollo profesional en entornos grupales y hogareños:

- ¿Qué experiencia de enseñanza, así como del conocimiento lingüístico y de lectoescritura tiene el personal, especialmente con los niños que aprenden en dos idiomas? ¿Qué tan cómodos se sienten los visitantes que ayudan a los padres a apoyar las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura de sus hijos?
- ¿Qué recursos o métodos utiliza el personal para enseñar el lenguaje y la lectoescritura? ¿Cómo puede la serie Joan habla impulsar sus estrategias? ¿Cómo pueden los visitantes del hogar utilizar estos recursos para apoyar las interacciones diarias de los padres con sus hijos?

El personal de cuidado grupal puede usar las estrategias de visitas al hogar para aumentar el conocimiento de los padres acerca de la importancia de los 5 factores importantes.

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- ¿Qué áreas de los 5 factores importantes implementa bien el personal y dónde requieren apoyo? ¿Qué tan bien se integran los conocimientos previos y las experiencias de los niños que aprenden en dos idiomas (DLL, sigla en inglés) para desarrollar sus habilidades en los 5 factores?
- ¿Es el desarrollo profesional mejor presentado en un grupo grande, grupo pequeño o un entorno individual? ¿Dónde se sentiría el personal más cómodo? ¿Qué entorno sería el más adecuado para los objetivos del desarrollo profesional?
- ¿Proporcionarán los facilitadores una experiencia de desarrollo profesional que satisfaga todas las necesidades del personal en la misma sesión o se ofrecerán múltiples sesiones grupales?

SUGERENCIAS PARA LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN

DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL

- Hable acerca de los ejemplos en Joan habla sobre los 5 factores importantes y explore maneras de apoyar cada una de estas habilidades en todos los niños.
- El personal de visitas al hogar puede utilizar las historias para conversar con las familias sobre cómo apoyar el desarrollo lingüístico y de lectoescritura de sus hijos en casa.
- Hable con el personal y las familias acerca de cómo los 5 factores importantes se interconectan. En los entornos grupales, reflexione con el personal acerca de cómo se alinean con su currículo. En los programas basados en el hogar, hable sobre cómo cada uno de los 5 factores respalda las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura.
- Madre leyendo un libro a su hija. Anime al personal y a las familias a leer la serie Joan habla antes de una capacitación de desarrollo profesional o una visita al hogar. Hable con el personal sobre cómo apoyan el desarrollo del lenguaje y la lectoescritura en cada área del currículo. Los visitadores del hogar pueden utilizar las historias con los padres para mostrarles cómo apoyar el desarrollo lingüístico y de la lectoescritura en cada interacción con su hijo.

ENTORNOS GRUPALES

La Sra. Lee está preparando una capacitación de desarrollo profesional para los maestros locales de Head Start y los de cuidado infantil. Los programas inscribieron recientemente a niños de diversos orígenes culturales y lingüísticos. Antes de la capacitación, la Sra. Lee pide al personal que lea Joan habla para que puedan tener una discusión amplia sobre sus prácticas actuales de lingüística y lectoescritura. Durante la capacitación, la Sra. Lee pide al personal que comparta cómo apoya el lenguaje y la lectoescritura de todos los niños. Muchos de ellos dicen que leen libros a los niños, tanto en grupos grandes como pequeños, cantan canciones y nombran su entorno en diferentes idiomas. La Sra. Lee les pregunta cómo podrían incorporar las prácticas lingüísticas y de lectoescritura en diferentes partes de su aula. El personal habla sobre las maneras en que podrían mejorar, tales como tener conversaciones significativas con los niños durante la hora de lectura, ofrecer un centro de escritura más atractivo y comprender más acerca de la cultura y tradiciones de su familia para incorporarlas al aula.



COACHING

- Los coaches, maestros y visitadores del hogar pueden utilizar los datos de las evaluaciones continuas de los niños para identificar las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura para que se fortalezcan tanto en los entornos grupales como en los del hogar. Los coaches, maestros y visitadores del hogar pueden utilizar estos datos junto con los datos de las observaciones de coaching y la autorreflexión del personal, para identificar las prácticas que quieran implementar para apoyar el desarrollo de los niños en estas áreas. Los coaches pueden usar Joan habla para destacar maneras de mejorar las prácticas en estas áreas. En los entornos del hogar, el personal puede utilizar la serie para ayudar a las familias a utilizar estrategias con el fin de fortalecer las habilidades lingüísticas y de lectoescritura de sus hijos.

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- Los coaches pueden animar al personal a leer una de las historias de Joan habla y usarlas como una oportunidad para hablar y reflexionar durante la sesión de coaching o la visita al hogar.

VISITADOR DEL HOGAR

Antes de su visita con la familia Santos, el coach y el Sr. Rodríguez, el visitador del hogar, piensan en cómo incorporar las tradiciones culturales de la familia para ayudarles a fomentar el lenguaje y la lectoescritura de sus hijos. Él lee la sección de conocimientos previos donde Joan habla de cómo disfrutó de los libros sobre el arroz y de aprender sobre ello a través de las experiencias con su familia y su maestra. Deciden compartirlo con la familia. Les pregunta sobre sus tradiciones culturales y cómo se pueden compartir con los niños a través de libros, canciones y otras actividades familiares.



- Los coaches pueden animar al personal a usar las ideas en las historias. El personal puede filmar una actividad donde se utilice una de las ideas sugeridas de las historias. Los coaches podrían entonces ofrecer los comentarios del personal durante su próxima reunión y discutir los siguientes pasos para mejorar las prácticas lingüísticas y de lectoescritura.

ENTORNOS GRUPALES

Patricia, una maestra de preescolar en un Head Start local, pide a la Sra. Lee comentarios sobre el fomento de las habilidades lingüísticas durante la hora de los cuentos en su aula. La Sra. Lee le pide a Patricia que repase las secciones de Joan habla sobre el Lenguaje Verbal y el Vocabulario, y el Conocimiento de los Libros y Conceptos de la Palabra Impresa para las ideas. La Sra. Lee y Patricia también están de acuerdo en que Patricia filmará su próxima hora de los cuentos para que las dos puedan usarlo durante su próxima sesión de coaching. Una semana más tarde, Patricia y la Sra. Lee revisan el video y la sección de Conocimiento de los Libros y Conceptos de la Palabra Impresa. Patricia señala áreas donde se podría haber animado más conversación y participación. Usando la información encontrada en la sección de Conocimiento de los Libros y Conceptos de la Palabra Impresa, la Sra. Lee señala que esto ayudará a que todos los niños se familiaricen con las palabras. Patricia y la Sra. Lee encuentran más actividades para ayudar a fomentar el desarrollo lingüístico. Patricia planea que los niños hagan dibujos para un libro donde ellos puedan etiquetar los dibujos en su idioma materno.



- Los visitadores del hogar pueden trabajar con las familias y animarlas a probar las ideas de los cuentos. Las familias pueden filmar, fotografiar o escribir cómo implementaron las ideas de la serie. Los visitadores del hogar pueden discutir las ideas durante su próxima reunión.

VISITADOR DEL HOGAR

Antes de su visita a casa con la familia Santos, el Sr. Rodríguez repasa la sección Conocimiento Fonológico y Lenguaje verbal y Vocabulario. Habla con la familia Santos acerca de cómo fomentar las habilidades lingüísticas y el vocabulario de sus hijos. Les pregunta sobre las historias, canciones y rimas favoritas de sus hijos. Él se entera de que su hijo le encantan los libros Click Clack y el libro del alfabeto Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. Le pide a la familia que lea un par de los libros antes de la próxima visita a casa y observe cómo su hijo respondió para que puedan hablar de ello durante la próxima visita.



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- Los coaches pueden alentar al personal que trabaja con edades similares o en entornos similares que se reúna y reflexione sobre los datos que recolectan durante las actividades de evaluación continua infantil y discutir cómo apoyan el desarrollo lingüístico y la lectoescritura.
- Los visitantes del hogar pueden proporcionar oportunidades a las familias que tienen niños de edad similar para reunirse y hablar acerca de cómo apoyan el desarrollo lingüístico y la lectoescritura con sus hijos durante una socialización. Las estrategias se pueden basar en las lecciones aprendidas de la serie Joan habla.

VISITADOR DEL HOGAR

El Sr. Rodríguez repasa la sección Conocimiento del Alfabeto y Escritura Temprana antes de reunirse con las familias durante una socialización en grupo. Él sabe que muchos niños asistirán al kínder el próximo año y quiere ideas para animar a las familias a ayudar a sus hijos a aprender algunas letras del alfabeto y practicar la escritura. Basándose en la información de la serie Joan habla, alienta a las familias a que sus hijos señalen las letras que reconocen alrededor de la casa y la comunidad y traten de escribir, dibujar o garabatear historias, listas de comestibles o cosas que vean durante las salidas familiares. Compartirán qué estrategias usaron en su próxima socialización.



- Anime a los grupos de compañeros a apoyarse mutuamente cuando prueben las estrategias de Joan habla. Los coaches y los visitantes del hogar pueden animar a los adultos a conectarse entre sí casualmente en reuniones y hablar sobre qué prácticas están funcionando para ellos y donde necesitan apoyo todavía.
- Los coaches y los visitantes del hogar pueden animar al personal y a las familias a crear sus propias historias para enseñar el idioma y la lectoescritura utilizando la serie Joan habla como guía. Los coaches y los visitantes del hogar podrían ayudar a reunir información para usar con otros grupos que tienen metas similares para los niños.

RECURSOS

Coaching basado en la práctica

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.bhs.gov/es/desarrollo-profesional/articulo/coaching-basado-en-la-practica-pbc-sigla-en-ingles>

Compañero de coaching de Head Start

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.bhs.gov/es/desarrollo-profesional/articulo/companero-de-coaching-de-head-start> (Nota: el enlace al Compañero de coaching también está en la página principal de PBC).

Guías para la práctica eficaz

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.bhs.gov/es/preparacion-escolar/effective-practice-guides/introduccion>

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THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
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TIPS FOR TEACHERS CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

CURRICULUM MODIFICATION: AN OVERVIEW

Know each child: Who is learning and who is struggling? If a child is struggling to learn, a simple modification to the curriculum may be just the amount of support needed.

<p>WHAT is Curriculum Modification?</p>	<p>WHEN do I modify the curriculum?</p>	<p>WHY modify the curriculum?</p>
<p>Making small changes to classroom activities or materials in order to increase a child's participation.</p>	<p>Curriculum modifications are most effective when the child is interested but not fully participating. However, modifications can also be designed to spark a child's interest.</p>	<p>Curriculum modifications help individual children access their early learning environment and increase their level of participation. This meaningful participation leads to more positive learning outcomes.</p>

TYPES OF MODIFICATIONS	
Environmental Support	Changing the arrangement of materials, peer groupings, and/or schedule to promote participation.
Materials Adaptation	Modifying the position, stability, or size of materials and/or the response required so that the child can participate more fully.
Simplify the Activity	Simplifying a complicated task by breaking it down into smaller parts or by reducing the number of steps.
Child Preferences	Identifying and integrating the child's preferred toys, activities, or people to motivate the child to take advantage of available opportunities.
Special Equipment	Using special or adaptive devices that allow a child to participate or increase the child's level of participation.
Adult Support	Having an adult step in to model, join the child's play, and/or use encouragement to support the child's participation and learning.
Peer Support	Utilizing peers to model, help, and/or offer encouragement to support the child's participation and membership.
Invisible Support	Thoughtfully sequencing turns and activities to increase the child's level of engagement.



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NOTES

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