



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.

- 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.



- 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 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.



- 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>

This document was developed with funds from Grant Grant #90HC0012 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and the Office of Child Care by the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.