

Journal

Journal

Protégé
Journal



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children & Families
Administration on Children, Youth & Families
Head Start Bureau



Steps to Success
An Instructional Design
for Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches
in Head Start and Early Head Start

Protégé Journal

When we have children in our care, we need to act in a respectful manner and to demonstrate respect toward the child, others and ourselves. Keep in mind that children are learning all the time from what we do and that we are their role models for learning respect. By demonstrating respect in all aspects of our lives – our children will learn how to respect all life.

—Wakanyeya WoAwanka Manual (2001)

This Protégé Journal will help you to prepare and reflect on work with your Mentor-Coach, plan observations, and use child assessments and other resources to help children progress in developing early literacy and language skills.

Together, you and your Mentor-Coach will:

- Define the roles and responsibilities within your relationship
- Meet regularly and engage in reflective conferences
- Identify and solve problems
- Maintain confidentiality
- Plan observations and follow-up activities
- Provide and receive feedback
- Use assessment information to guide children's learning
- Enhance your professional growth.

PURPOSE OF THE JOURNAL

This journal is for you to use to note any questions, issues, and needs as they arise or to remind you of what you want to discuss with your Mentor-Coach. Use it to extend your thinking about new ideas and changes in your classroom or home-based child care setting. The Protégé Journal provides a place to write down what you are already doing well and what you might do to improve your child care and teaching practices.

The Protégé Journal contains three sections. The first section describes the roles of the Early Literacy Mentor-Coach and protégé and associated skills and strategies. The second section describes processes and activities that are the foundation of the Mentor-Coach and protégé relationship. The third section includes resources to promote positive language and literacy outcomes for children ages birth to five years.



I. MENTOR-COACH AND PROTÉGÉ CONCEPTS

ROLE OF A MENTOR-COACH

Mentor-Coaches guide, support, and provide resources to classroom staff and home visitors. Mentor-Coaches help you solve problems, reflect on your practices, and learn new ways to help children develop language and literacy. Your Mentor-Coach will:

- Share information about culturally and age-appropriate curriculum, and early literacy practices
- Schedule and conduct conferences
- Help to solve problems
- Assist in organizing and analyzing your classroom or home-visiting setting
- Visit your classroom or home setting to observe and discuss observations
- Provide resources and information about professional development opportunities.



ROLE OF A PROTÉGÉ

A protégé is a staff person who is willing to learn new skills, reflect on practices with others, and develop teaching and caregiving practices to enhance children's learning and growth.

You can get the most value and meaning from your relationship with your Mentor-Coach if you make a commitment to involve yourself in the following activities:

- Assess your learning needs and strengths
- Engage in reflective dialogues and conferences with your Mentor-Coach
- Apply and analyze new teaching and literacy practices with the support of your Mentor-Coach
- Identify issues and problems, and work with your Mentor-Coach to resolve them
- Participate in professional development opportunities, trainings, and events.



MENTOR-COACHES' AND PROTÉGÉS' SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

The following skills and strategies are key to enhancing your relationship with your Mentor-Coach:

- Sharing beliefs, principles, and ideals
- Recognizing and respecting values, attitudes, and practices in different cultures
- Reflecting on one's own practices, knowledge, and beliefs
- Enhancing communication by careful listening and by asking questions
- Identifying and setting realistic goals related to your relationships and practices
- Solving problems by defining the problem, examining options, and selecting appropriate solutions
- Using observation tools and techniques to gather information on classrooms, other child-care settings and the practices used
- Using journals to write thoughts about professional practices and new ideas and plans
- Providing honest and respectful feedback to improve professional practices and behavior
- Planning professional development, making time to identify professional goals, to obtain additional training or information, and to document progress.

PLEASE NOTE: At the end of this section, there is a two-page resource—***Glossary of Skills and Strategies Used by Mentor-Coaches***. It expands on some of the above “skills and strategies.”

What do I want to focus on with my Mentor-Coach?

[illegible]

THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Has anyone ever been a mentor to you? _____

What was it like? _____

What did you most appreciate about that person? _____

What did you learn? _____

YOUR ROLE AS A PROTÉGÉ

At this point in your career, what does being a protégé mean to you?

Do you have any questions about your role?

The following three pages are examples of how to use your journal before, during, and after meetings with your Mentor-Coach. You may want to make multiple copies of the second and third pages. You can use them as an ongoing record of your meetings with your Mentor-Coach.

SAMPLE JOURNAL PAGE

Mentoring has helped me to confidently assess my practices, to see other perspectives, and to grow as a teacher. It has also helped to build a strong sense of community among teachers in our program.

—A Protégé

My Mentor-Coach's name, phone numbers, and e-mail address:

Next meeting:

Bring:

What questions do I have as I plan to meet with my Mentor-Coach?

SAMPLE JOURNAL PAGE

Date: _____

After meeting with your Mentor-Coach, write about what happened.

How did our Mentor-Coach and protégé meeting go?

What I shared (Did I ask the questions I wanted to? Why or why not?):

What I learned:

Next steps that I will try:

Questions and comments:

II. FOUNDATION OF THE MENTOR-COACH AND PROTÉGÉ RELATIONSHIP

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

Forming and maintaining a trusting, supportive relationship with another person is essential to mentor-coaching.

Key ingredients to relationship building are:

- Good communication skills
- Reflective practices
- Clarity in roles and expectations
- Making time to meet
- Honoring confidentiality
- Cultural sensitivity.

What are my strengths in relationship building? _____

What are my challenges in relationship building? _____

What I want to talk about with my Mentor-Coach: _____

Definition: Cultural Sensitivity

Culture is the fundamental building block of identity. Through cultural learning, children gain a feeling of belonging, a sense of personal history, and a security in knowing who they are and where they came from...Early child care that respects time-honored cultural rules helps children develop a secure sense of self. In essence, the gifts children receive from infancy firmly grounded in their home culture are confidence, competence, and connection. For children to receive these gifts, culturally sensitive care is crucial.

—Mangione, Lally, and Signer (1993)

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Mentor-Coaches and protégés often come from different cultural backgrounds. Seeking and sharing cultural knowledge with each other is a first step in demonstrating respect for who the other person is. When both Mentor-Coaches and protégés recognize that values and practices vary across cultures, they are more prepared to demonstrate cultural sensitivity with children, staff members, and parents in their program.

What does it mean to you to be culturally sensitive with your co-workers, families, and children?

What are some of the ways your cultural background influences you as a teacher?

Reflection means stepping back from the immediate, intense experience of hands-on work and taking the time to wonder what the experience really means.

—R. Parlakian (2001)

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCING PROCESS

The Professional Conferencing Process is a process in which a Mentor-Coach and protégé evaluate practices and plan new approaches.

- **Pre-Observation Conference**—Set a goal for the observation, identify teaching strategies to observe, and share these strategies with your Mentor-Coach.
- **Observation**—Conduct the observation in your classroom or during your home visit.
- **Post-Observation Analysis**—Think about the strengths of the practices and the missed opportunities that occurred during the observation.
- **Reflective Conference**—Discuss the observation and plan next steps.
- **Post-Conference Analysis**—Reflect on the goal for the conference and whether that goal was met.

How comfortable do you feel with the Professional Conferencing Process?

Do you have any questions about the process?

OBSERVATION

You may have already had the experience of being observed by someone who used a formal observation tool. It is very common for Mentor-Coaches to take notes or to use a tool when observing your practices. Find out what your Mentor-Coach plans to do and which tools she or he will use during the observation.

What have been your experiences with formal observation, either as an observer or as someone who was observed?

How comfortable do you feel about being observed?

What would you like to discuss with your Mentor-Coach prior to the observation?

REFLECTIVE CONFERENCING

Reflection begins with thoughtful questions. For example, an observation may focus on promoting children's use of new vocabulary words. As you think about the observation afterward, you and your Mentor-Coach might ask the question, "How effective was this activity in encouraging the children to use new words?"

In reflective conferences Mentor-Coaches and protégés:

- Talk, ask questions, and listen
- Plan for observation, reflect on practices, and analyze results
- Equally participate in the reflective process
- Document teaching and learning.

What protégés can do to prepare for a reflective conference:

- Reflect on the observed activity and the effectiveness of the strategies used
- View a video or audio tape of the observation when available
- Prepare questions to ask the Mentor-Coach.

What are your experiences with reflective conferencing? What is your reaction?

How can reflective conferencing be most helpful to you?

KEEPING A JOURNAL

Keeping a journal helps you to regularly examine your practice, think about what works and what doesn't, and come up with new ideas. Keeping a journal also enables you to review your progress, thoughts, and the impact of professional development on your practices over time.

Have you ever kept a journal?

How did you use it?



Begin this journal by writing about a specific situation with a child, a home-visit or a classroom activity:

What happened? Describe the situation.

Why do you think that happened?

What did you want to happen?

What were you thinking about when this situation occurred?

What would you do differently next time?

GLOSSARY OF SKILLS AND STRATEGIES USED BY MENTOR-COACHES

Relationship Building—A process of forming, expanding, and maintaining a trusting, supportive connection with another person, often within a particular context. The processes of building and maintaining relationships require careful attention, patience, and persistence.

Sharing Values—Sharing values means that a person is willing to share beliefs, principles, or ideals with another. In the ongoing process of sharing values, Mentor-Coaches and protégés come to know one another and are more prepared to meet the diverse needs of the children and families with whom they work.

Culturally Sensitive Approaches—Mentor-Coaches and protégés show respect for each other by seeking out and sharing each other's cultural knowledge. When Mentor-Coaches and protégés recognize that values and practices vary across cultures, they can better demonstrate cultural sensitivity not only with each other, but with children, staff members, and parents.

Self-Reflection—Reflecting on one's own practices, knowledge, and beliefs enables a person to be more self-aware and make changes in one's behavior or viewpoint.

Listening and Reflective Inquiry—Mentor-coaching relationships are based on effective communication. They involve building trust and confidentiality, careful listening, and asking respectful questions to achieve clarity. In two-way conferences with protégés, Mentor-Coaches often engage in reflective inquiry (asking thoughtful questions to elicit thoughtful answers).

Setting Achievable Goals—Mentor-Coaches assist protégés in identifying, refining, and setting realistic goals. In content-focused mentor-coaching, the goals relate to the specific Head Start or Early Head Start Child Outcomes being targeted.

Problem Solving—When a problem arises, Mentor-Coaches actively assist protégés in finding the solution. Rather than stepping in and providing an answer, Mentor-Coaches help protégés to define the problem, examine the options for a solution, and select strategies to resolve the problem.

Observation and Use of Observation Tools—Observation is a central activity in mentor-coaching relationships. Most commonly, the Mentor-Coach schedules a visit and observes protégés at work. A pre-observation conference allows you to talk with your Mentor-Coach about your thoughts and goals for the observation. If an observation tool is going to be used you will talk about how it will be used. During the observation, your Mentor-Coach will document what she or he sees. In a post-observation conference you and your Mentor-Coach will discuss your thoughts and reactions to the observation. Results of observations are always shared with protégés.

Reflective Conferencing—Reflective conferencing is an interactive process through which Mentor-Coaches support protégés as they examine and enhance their teaching practices. In reflective conferences, Mentor-Coaches help lead protégés to analyze observed events, address any challenges, and discuss next steps.

Using Journals —Mentor-Coaches and protégés frequently use journals to write their thoughts about professional practices, interactions, new ideas, plans, and observations. Journals help protégés to track their own growth and development. Referring to journal entries is a way to prepare for meetings between Mentor-Coaches and protégés.

Providing and Receiving Feedback—Honesty, encouragement, and respect are guiding principles for Mentor-Coaches to follow when providing feedback. Receiving feedback is about moving forward or being “proactive,” not about making mistakes and going backward. By asking protégés what they want to learn or gain from feedback, Mentor-Coaches follow the lead of the protégé.

Professional Development Planning—Mentor-Coaches and protégés, through reflection and dialogue, can document their progress and identify professional pursuits. As milestones are achieved, new ones can emerge.

III. SUPPORTING YOUR PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote young children's language development. Use the checklists and questions to guide you in thinking about current practices.

Language Development for Infants and Toddlers

Key Concepts

- Language plays a key role in early literacy. The development of language abilities is an important goal for infants and toddlers.
- Children learn to use language over time by watching, listening to, and conversing with adults and peers.
- Adults should help children to interact and have "conversations" beginning in early infancy. As their ability to participate in conversations improves, children's opportunities for learning language increase.
- Infants develop listening and speaking skills when adults respond to their sounds, gestures, and actions.
- Infants use crying, smiling, facial expressions, and body movements to communicate. They learn to send powerful messages through their gestures and sounds. From there, they progress to using single words to communicate.
- By the toddler years, children are using more vocabulary and combining words. They can verbally participate in short conversations.
- Language skills are essential elements of social competence.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS¹

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Responding verbally to children's sounds and actions
- ☐ Imitating infants' vocalizations to create a "conversation"
- ☐ Describing what the children are experiencing during daily routines
- ☐ Talking to babies and toddlers as you go about everyday activities
- ☐ Communicating with words and nonverbal cues
- ☐ Naming objects and actions
- ☐ Singing songs and using simple finger-plays
- ☐ Reading aloud to children frequently
- ☐ Using children's names when talking with them
- ☐ Encouraging parents to read, sing, and talk to children
- ☐ Replicating what parents are doing at home

¹ Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community—Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence and Learning*. Washington, D.C.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES

Language Development with Infants and Toddlers

Ways I am currently supporting infants' and toddlers' language development:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Infants' and Toddlers' Language Development

How I can individualize my interactions with children:

- Learn more about the stages of language development
- Assess each child's language abilities
- Learn about what parents are doing
- Learn about parents' expectations.

How I can become more intentional about engaging children in "conversations":

- Use routine times (diapering, feeding, napping) as opportunities
- Increase the number of times I initiate interactions throughout the day
- Use strategies to encourage turn-taking that are appropriate for each child's developmental stage.



SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Language Development for Infants and Toddlers

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about the development of language in infants and toddlers?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



Talk with your Mentor-Coach about observing you as you interact with children. Decide on a focus for the observation that relates to your goals (e.g., responding appropriately to children in different stages of language development). Ask your Mentor-Coach to videotape the observation so you can see yourself “in action.” Meet with your Mentor-Coach soon after to reflect on your success in meeting your goal.

EARLY LITERACY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

This section of your journal focuses on how you can set the stage for young children's later development of skills related to literacy. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Early Literacy Key Concepts

- Young children develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes about literacy even before they can read and write in adult ways.
- While literacy skills may not seem like a focus for infants and toddlers, the development of the whole child, the growth of language and problem-solving, and socialization with peers and adults are the literacy skills that are appropriate for this age.
- Infants and toddlers are building and refining important fine and gross motor skills that affect their later attempts at writing.
- Reading aloud to children beginning in infancy increases their interest in books and supports their emergent literacy.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Encouraging parents to read to children
- ☐ Singing familiar rhyming songs and using finger plays at home or school
- ☐ Offering a variety of materials such as blocks, puzzles, and manipulatives
- ☐ Reading books with simple words, rhyming patterns, and animal sounds to help children have fun with the sounds of language
- ☐ Providing children with a wide selection of sturdy, durable books with engaging pictures
- ☐ Displaying children's names and simple print
- ☐ Building the eye-hand coordination needed for writing, through fine motor activities such as pouring and dumping at the sand table, stacking blocks, and manipulating clay or play dough
- ☐ Providing very young children with safe opportunities to crawl and climb, to enable them to develop the arm and upper-body muscular strength they will need to be able to sit at tables and to use writing or drawing materials
- ☐ Allowing toddlers to explore a variety of writing materials, including paints, markers, and large crayons
- ☐ Providing opportunities to scribble and draw at an easel, on a white board, and on paper
- ☐ Modeling writing for various purposes, including making lists, writing letters, labeling children's work
- ☐ Narrating what you write for children
- ☐ Reading simple alphabet books

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES

Development of Early Literacy Skills for Infants and Toddlers

Ways I am currently supporting development of early literacy skills:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge?

**MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT:
Development of Early Literacy Skills for Infants and Toddlers**

Provide more opportunities for book reading:

- Place books on a low shelf so children have access to them throughout the day
- Set a goal of reading to children at least three times per day
- Identify more infant-appropriate books (board books, and soft covers and pages).

Model the purposes of reading and writing:

- Sit on the floor with the children while I complete their daily activity sheet to send home. Talk to them about what I am doing: "I'm writing to Mom to let her know that you played outside today."



**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Development of Early Literacy Skills for Infants and Toddlers**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about early literacy?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



Do an inventory of available books and ask your Mentor-Coach to review the list with you. Assess the quality, quantity, variety, and age-appropriateness of the books. Your Mentor-Coach can share knowledge and resources to help you improve your collection.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Book Knowledge and Appreciation for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's development of **book knowledge and appreciation**. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Book Knowledge and Appreciation:

- Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and nonfiction books and poetry.
- Shows growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.
- Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; and to predict what will happen next in a story.
- Progresses in learning how to handle and care for books; knowing to view one page at a time in sequence from front to back; and understanding that a book has a title, author, and illustrator.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE BOOK KNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATION FOR 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS²

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Reading to children one-to-one or in small groups where children can see and touch the book and develop positive feelings about reading
- ☐ Reading the same book over and over if children request it
- ☐ Actively engaging children in reading time—asking questions about the book before reading it, posing questions that call on them to predict what will happen, noticing cause and effect relationships, chanting with rhyme and patterns
- ☐ Assisting children in seeking information in books or using books as resources to help solve problems (“What does the space shuttle really look like, so that we can build it with blocks?”)
- ☐ Engaging children in retelling stories or acting out favorite stories in dramatic play
- ☐ Making sure that books reflect children’s culture, home language, and identity
- ☐ Encouraging parents to read and tell stories to children

² Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader’s Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 50–51.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Book Knowledge and Appreciation

Ways I am currently supporting children in learning about and appreciating books:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to helping children learn about and appreciate books?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Book Knowledge and Appreciation

My goals and ideas for supporting children's knowledge and appreciation of books:

Types and examples of books available to young children:

- **Fiction:** e.g., *The Snowy Day*
- **Nonfiction:** *Are You a Snail?*
- **Concept:** *Eating the Alphabet*
- **Predictable:** *The Napping House*
- **Poetry & Rhyming:** *Hush! A Thai Lullaby*
- **Multicultural:** *More, More, More Said the Baby: Three Love Stories*
- **Folktale:** *Anansi the Spider*
- **Wordless:** *Pancakes for Breakfast*

Books I'd like to read to children:

Make a list of ways to extend and re-visit books:

- Flannel board
- Use props during reading
- Re-write or illustrate a favorite story
- Make an "All About Me" book with and for each child about his or her family.

**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Book Knowledge and Appreciation**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about supporting book knowledge and appreciation?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me support book knowledge and appreciation?



For center-based staff: Your Mentor-Coach can support your goals by observing. You may decide to use a tool that assesses how you are supporting children in acquiring book knowledge. For example, the Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO) has several sections related to book knowledge and appreciation. Be sure to join the Mentor-Coach in a reflective conference after the observation.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Print Awareness and Concepts for 3- to 5-Year Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's awareness of print and print-related concepts. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Print Awareness and Concepts:

- Shows increasing awareness of print in classroom, home, and community settings.
- Develops growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print, such as signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus.
- Demonstrates increasing awareness of concepts of print, such as that reading in English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.
- Shows progress in recognizing the association between spoken and written words by following print as it is read aloud.
- Recognizes a word as a unit of print, or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE PRINT AWARENESS AND CONCEPTS FOR 3-TO 5-YEAR OLDS³

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Reading aloud using oversized books (big books), so children can see print and pictures
- ☐ Engaging children in making their own signs and labels
- ☐ Tracking print while reading to children from books, big books, and charts to demonstrate left to right, return sweep, and top to bottom concepts
- ☐ Directing children's attention to meaningful print around the room, such as labels, rules, signs, and charts
- ☐ Providing children with lots of opportunities to write and see adults model writing
- ☐ Supporting parents in print-related activities at home
- ☐ Exposing children to the print conventions of other languages that their families may speak at home

³ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 52–53.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES

Print Awareness and Concepts

Ways I am currently supporting children's awareness of print and print-related concepts:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to helping children become aware of print and print-related concepts?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Print Awareness and Concepts

I can direct children's attention to print when...

- Labeling art work and drawings
- Referring to important charts, e.g., a job chart, in a classroom or home setting
- Taking field trips in the community

Resources I can add to support print awareness and concepts:

- Sign-making materials in the block area
- Meaningful print and writing materials in the dramatic play area (e.g., menus, Open/Closed sign, order pad)
- Interesting, varied materials in the writing center
- Materials for making big books.

With parents ...

- I can encourage them to direct children's attention to print when they are out in the community at familiar places such as grocery and department stores



**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Print Awareness and Concepts**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about supporting children's learning about print and related concepts?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me in teaching them to be aware of print and related concepts?



Your Mentor-Coach can support your print awareness and concepts goals by engaging you in a written dialogue in a journal. You and your Mentor-Coach can use the journal to trade new strategies for supporting children's learning about print. You can continue the "conversation" with the Mentor-Coach by using the journal to report how children responded to each new strategy.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Early Writing for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's development of **early writing**. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Early Writing:

- Develops understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes.
- Begins to represent stories and experiences through pictures, dictation, and in play.
- Experiments with a growing variety of writing tools and materials, such as pencils, crayons, and computers.
- Progresses from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words, such as their own name.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE EARLY WRITING FOR 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS⁴

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Encouraging children to record their thoughts in pictures or writing in their personal journals
- ☐ Providing opportunities for writing daily and making writing materials available in each activity or interest area
- ☐ Asking children to include print in their drawings like the authors of storybooks
- ☐ Displaying the alphabet at children's eye level
- ☐ Supporting children's attempts at writing letters
- ☐ Stocking a writing center with all kinds of writing tools and paper for children to experiment with
- ☐ Displaying children's writing attempts
- ☐ Helping children write and draw recipe cards related to a cooking activity
- ☐ Enriching outdoor play by including sidewalk painting with water, writing with sidewalk chalk, and making a mural or sign to hang on the fence
- ☐ Making writing materials available in each activity or interest area
- ☐ Asking children to sign in each morning
- ☐ Taking dictation from children—their own stories or message

⁴ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C: Author. pp. 54–55.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Early Writing

Ways I am currently supporting children's early attempts at writing:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to encouraging children's early attempts at writing?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Early Writing

Writing opportunities that I can provide for children:

- Finger paints
- Writing center
- Writing materials around the room
- Sign-in/Sign-out sheet
- Turns list
- Labeling art work
- Bookmaking project

Writing materials that I can introduce to children:

- Envelopes
- Name cards
- Variety of paper
- Clipboards



SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Early Writing

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about supporting children in their early attempts to write?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me support children in their early attempts to write?



For center-based staff: Your Mentor-Coach can support your early writing goals by observing you with a tool that assesses how teachers encourage children's writing. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO) has several sections related to early writing. Be sure to join your Mentor-Coach in a reflective conference soon after the observation.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Alphabet Knowledge for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's development of ***alphabet knowledge***. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Alphabet Knowledge:

- Shows progress in associating the names of letters with their shapes and sounds.
- Increases in ability to notice the beginning letters in familiar words.
- Identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name.
- Knows that letters of the alphabet have their own names.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE FOR 3-TO 5-YEAR-OLDS⁵

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Creating a sign-in sheet for children, grouping names by initial letters of first names
- ☐ Using letter-name knowledge during transitions (“Everyone whose name starts with B, wash your hands.”)
- ☐ Providing alphabet puzzles, computer software, and toys that reinforce letter knowledge
- ☐ Displaying the alphabet at children’s eye level
- ☐ Supporting children’s attempts at writing letters
- ☐ Using well-written alphabet books that clearly illustrate the sounds of the letters with pictures of objects
- ☐ Singing the alphabet song and other songs that play with letters and sounds
- ☐ Making a puzzle of each child’s name
- ☐ Providing multisensory experiences, such as writing letters in sand, shaping letters out of play dough, or handling letter-shaped magnets

⁵ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader’s Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 57–58.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Alphabet Knowledge

Ways I am currently supporting children's knowledge about the alphabet:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to encouraging children to learn about the alphabet?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Alphabet Knowledge

Make these changes to the environment to help children learn the alphabet:

- Display alphabet at children's eye level
- Provide alphabet books at the writing area
- Add name cards and word cards to writing area.

Incorporate these approaches into my daily activities:

- Give children help with forming and identifying letters when requested
- Call attention to letters in children's names and print in the environment.



SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Alphabet Knowledge

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about alphabet knowledge?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



If you are looking for more information about alphabet knowledge, your Mentor-Coach could plan a guided discussion about this topic with you and other protégés. The alphabet knowledge video clips in the *Steps to Success* curriculum can help start the discussion.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Listening and Understanding for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's language skills related to ***listening and understanding***. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Listening and Understanding:

- Demonstrates increasing ability to attend to and understand conversations, stories, songs, and poems.
- Shows progress in understanding and following simple and multiple-step directions.
- Understands an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- For children who do not speak English, progresses in listening and understanding English.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING FOR 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS⁶

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Modeling good listening skills, such as maintaining eye contact
- ☐ Playing listening games with children, e.g., having children identify objects by sound only
- ☐ Reading to children every day, to enhance their vocabulary and listening skills
- ☐ Reading regularly read in small groups of three to six to ensure children's active participation
- ☐ Using children's interests to identify new words
- ☐ Choosing stories or books with rich vocabulary and uncommon words that children may not hear or use regularly, explaining words that will be new
- ☐ Providing new and different experiences that expand vocabulary, and having children describe them in their own words
- ☐ Supporting parents' efforts at home, including listening to stories about the child's family, or stories from the family's culture

⁶ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 34–35.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Listening and Understanding

Ways I am currently supporting young children's learning to listen and to understand:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to promoting listening and understanding?

**MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT:
Listening and Understanding**

Make a list of listening games:

- Alphabet lotto
- Identify mystery object from clues
- Talk with parents about culturally relevant words or objects at home.

Identify rich and varied vocabulary words from books and curriculum, for example:

- *Cradle* and *muttered* from *Peter's Chair*, by Ezra Jack Keats
- *Chrysalis*, *metamorphosis*, and *nectar*, for a butterfly curriculum.



SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Listening and Understanding

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about the language skills of listening and understanding?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



Talk with your ELMC about observing as you interact with children. Decide on a focus for the observation that relates to your goals (e.g., using vocabulary-building strategies throughout the day). Ask your ELMC to videotape the observation so you can see yourself “in action.” Meet with your ELMC soon after to reflect on your success in meeting your goal.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Speaking and Communicating for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's ***speaking and communicating*** abilities. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Speaking and Communicating:

- Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, and questions; and for other varied purposes.
- Progresses in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversation and discussions with peers and adults.
- Uses an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary.
- Progresses in abilities to speak clearly and use sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.
- For children who do not speak English, progresses in speaking English.



STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SPEAKING AND COMMUNICATING FOR 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS⁷

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Engaging in one-to-one extended conversations with individual children about their personal experiences
- ☐ Responding to children's speech with expansions and questions that point out causes and consequences
- ☐ Engaging children in conversations about events, experiences, or people that are in the past, the future, or children's imagination
- ☐ Writing down children's notes to parents or others, or other dictation, and reading them back
- ☐ Talking with children about stories you have read, asking them to retell or act out the story
- ☐ Giving children enough time (5 seconds or more) to respond in conversations

⁷ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 35–40.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Speaking and Communicating

Ways I am currently supporting speaking and communicating:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to promoting speaking and communicating?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Speaking and Communicating

Encourage children to use language for different purposes:

- Invite children to tell stories
- Ask children to share personal experiences or to bring objects from home they can talk about
- Ask for predictions while reading aloud.

Enrich the environment to stimulate speaking and communicating:

- Provide dramatic play themes and props that encourage conversation
- Chart important vocabulary words from curriculum.



**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Speaking and Communicating**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about the language skills of speaking and communicating?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



Invite your ELMC to model or demonstrate a certain practice that you have questions about or would like to improve (e.g., ways of engaging children in meaningful conversations). Observe carefully and have a discussion afterwards.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CHILD OUTCOMES

Phonological Awareness for 3- to 5-Year-Olds

This section of your journal focuses on how you can promote children's development of ***phonological awareness***. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework Indicators for Phonological Awareness:

- Shows increasing ability to discriminate and identify sounds in spoken language.
- Shows increasing awareness of beginning sounds and ending sounds in words.
- Progresses in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories, and poems.
- Shows growing ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words.
- Associates sounds with written words, such as awareness that different words begin with the same sound.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS FOR 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS⁸

What strategies have you tried?

- ☐ Reading books and poetry with strong rhyming patterns, like Dr. Seuss stories
- ☐ Reading books that use alliteration (same beginning sounds: e.g., *She sells sea shells by the seashore*), such as alphabet books
- ☐ Singing songs that highlight rhyme and initial sounds, like *Willaby*, *Wallaby*, *Woo* and *Down by the Bay*
- ☐ Clapping out the syllables of children's names as you dismiss them from group (i.e., Sa-rah = 2 claps)
- ☐ Dismissing children to wash their hands by the initial sound in their name (i.e., "Everyone whose name starts with the "ssss" can get their coats .")
- ☐ Stretching out the sounds in words as children attempt to write words
- ☐ Focusing on the sounds in words as you take children's dictation
- ☐ Playing matching games where children match words or pictures that have the same beginning or ending sounds (e.g., *ball* and *bear*; *cat* and *hat*)

⁸ Adapted from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2001). *The Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes: Strategies to Support Positive Child Outcomes*. Washington, D.C. pp. 47–48.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES
Phonological Awareness

Ways I am currently supporting children's awareness of sounds in spoken language:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to promoting phonological awareness?

MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT: Phonological Awareness

Make a list of books that highlight rhyme, alliteration, and word play, for example:

- *Silly Sally*, by Audrey Wood
- *In the Tall, Tall Grass*, by Denise Fleming

Make a list of songs and finger plays that highlight rhyme, and initial sounds:

- Down by the Bay
- Willaby, Wallaby, Woo
- Ask parents about songs from home

Make a list of games that highlight sound:

- Jump the syllables in your name
- “I’m thinking of an animal that sounds like this . . . “



**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Phonological Awareness**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about phonological awareness?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me to meet my goals?



Your Mentor-Coach can support your phonological awareness goals by suggesting additional books and activities that you can use with children.

ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

This section of your journal focuses on child assessment practices. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Using Questions to Guide Ongoing Child Assessment

Successful ongoing assessment is well planned and regularly conducted. It uses both child performance and staff observation methods to gain a full picture of the child's language abilities and emergent literacy learning. Ongoing assessment draws Head Start staff and parents or guardians together around children's progress and the program's policies.

Effective, accurate assessment starts with a question or set of questions about a child's growth and development. Young children do not simply tell us what they know. We must determine the answers from their activities and behavior in a number of different settings and over time. Keep the following points in mind as you think about assessment:

- Questions can help you learn about a child's interests, skills, and abilities; approaches to learning; use of language; and social interactions. Developing specific questions about a child gives a focus for observations.
- Answering questions about what a child knows or is able to do depends on careful observation and information from a number of sources.
- The younger the child, the more challenging the assessment process can be. Infants and toddlers must have their physical needs met and must feel emotionally safe and comfortable with the adults caring for them in a familiar environment before assessment begins.
- Make sure you have some knowledge and understanding of the family's culture and other contextual factors before coming to conclusions about what a child is able to do.

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

What strategies have you used to collect information about children?

- ☐ Running record
- ☐ Portfolios
- ☐ Anecdotal records
- ☐ Journal entries
- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Sampling observations
- ☐ Rating scales
- ☐ Videos and audiotapes

What approaches have you used? (Write some comments below on the approaches you have tried.)

Used naturalistic assessment activities that center on the child and his or her usual interests and activities.

Used focused assessment activities and materials that you have selected to directly draw out the skills targeted for observation and assessment.

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES

Ongoing Child Assessment

Ways I am currently using ongoing child assessment:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to implementing ongoing child assessment?

**MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT:
Ongoing Child Assessment**

Make a list of ways to involve parents or guardians in the assessment process:

Make a list of ways to organize assessment information:

- An expanding file for a year's worth of data
- Photo albums with photos dated and arranged in sequence

Goals I have related to this topic:

- For example, take a class on child assessment

**SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Ongoing Child Assessment**

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about ongoing assessment practices?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me meet the goals I've identified?



Talk with your Mentor-Coach about beginning an assessment for a child who puzzles or concerns you. Together develop questions that address your concerns. Your Mentor-Coach can help you choose one or two strategies for collecting information. Try both a naturalistic and a focused assessment.

INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION

This section of your journal focuses on how you can use observation and assessment information to ***individualize instruction*** for children. Use the checklists and questions as a guide to help you think about your current practices.

Key concepts about individualizing instruction

According to the Head Start Performance Standards, curriculum and instruction should be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development. Observing and gathering assessment information for each child is the starting point for individualizing. Thoughtful adaptation of activities and the learning environment allows children to participate with their peers to the fullest extent possible.

Research indicates that the most-effective learning opportunities are those that occur within the context of meaningful and functional activities and routines. These opportunities should include a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed practices throughout the child's daily routine.



STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

What types of changes have you made in activities to individualize instruction?

- ☐ **Environmental Support:** Altered the physical environment and the timing of activities to promote a child's participation
- ☐ **Materials Modification:** Modified materials so that the child could participate as independently as possible
- ☐ **Modification of the Activity:** Simplified a task by breaking it into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps
- ☐ **Use of Child's Interests or Preferences:** Identified a child's interests or preferences and integrated them into classroom materials or activities that would attract that child and encourage his or her participation?
- ☐ **Peer Support:** Used peers to help engage a child in an activity
- ☐ **Invisible Support:** Purposefully arranged an activity in a way that the child may not have noticed, so that an individual child would be able to participate
- ☐ **Adult Support:** Asked other adults to intervene and join the activity to encourage the child's participation at a higher level

REFLECTING ON MY OWN PRACTICES

Individualizing Instruction

Ways I currently support individualizing instruction:

What strategies are working?

What could I do differently?

What is my greatest challenge to individualizing instruction?

**MY GOALS AND IDEAS TO SUPPORT:
Individualizing Instruction**

Make a list of ways to individualize instruction by modifying activities in a particular learning center:

Make a list of ways to individualize instruction using children's interests or preferences:

Make a list of goals to improve your skills in individualizing instruction:

SUPPORT I NEED TO MEET MY GOALS FOR:
Individualizing Instruction

What questions do I have for my Mentor-Coach about individualizing instruction?

How can my Mentor-Coach help me meet the goals I identified?



With your Mentor-Coach, look at one child's assessment results. Be sure to look at results collected over a period of a few weeks. Decide on one type of activity change (environmental, materials, activity, child's interests, or peer, invisible, or adult support) and develop one way to individualize. Ask your Mentor-Coach to observe the impact in your class or home setting.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Your Mentor-Coach will work with you to chart a course for professional growth and development. Ask yourself these questions as you think about your own professional growth and development.

Do I have a plan to grow and develop as a teacher? In what ways?

What support or training do I need to grow professionally?

In addition to my Mentor-Coach, who can help me with my professional growth?

YOUR NOTES



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