

Head Start Oral Health Initiative Key Staff Site Visit Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is _____ and I work for [MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH/HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH], an independent research firm. As you know, we are conducting a study for the Administration on Children and Families about Head Start agencies' experiences implementing the Head Start Oral Health Initiative. Findings from the study will be helpful to other Head Start agencies implementing similar initiatives.

Everything you tell me is confidential. I would like you to feel comfortable giving your opinions and impressions. The information we gather will be used to write a report for the Administration for Children and Families about programs' experiences implementing the Head Start Oral Health Initiative, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned by grantees. Our report will describe the experiences and viewpoints expressed by staff across grantees, but specific comments will not be attributed to specific individuals or programs. No individual staff member will be quoted by name.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

About You

To begin, I'd like to learn about your role in the Oral Health Initiative.

1. What is your official job title? What are your primary responsibilities?
2. How long have you worked for [GRANTEE]?
3. How long have you held your current position? What other positions have you held within the agency?
4. Prior to your current position, have you had experience providing oral health services?

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS (10 minutes)

Let's talk about your community and the characteristics of families and children targeted for the Oral Health Initiative.

5. In your opinion, what are the main barriers families in your community face in accessing oral health care services, and particularly oral health care for young children?
6. What is the availability of oral health care providers in the community? General dentists? Pediatric dentists? Other providers? Do oral health care providers in your community accept Medicaid? Are they willing to serve young children?
7. What is the availability of health care, transportation, and other services for children and families?
8. Tell me about the families and children you serve through the Oral Health Initiative. Are you providing services to infants and toddlers, preschoolers, pregnant women, other family members?
9. In general, what are families' cultural norms and practices related to oral health care? Oral health care beliefs and practices for young children? What is the prevalence of practices that threaten oral health, such as putting babies to bed with bottles, using pacifiers past age 3, giving children sweetened drinks, other?

STAFF TRAINING (10 minutes)

Tell me about the training you have received for the Oral Health Initiative.

10. Did you receive any orientation or training for the Oral Health Initiative before you began providing services to children and families? If yes, please tell me about the training. What topics were covered, and who provided the training? How long did the training last?
11. Have you received any training for the Oral Health Initiative since you began working on it? If yes, please tell me about the training. What topics were covered, and who provided the training? How long did the training last?
12. Have you received any training, either before or after you started working on the Oral Health Initiative, on how to conduct visual inspection of teeth and mouth to identify children who need follow-up care?
13. How helpful has this training been for the work you do on the Oral Health Initiative? Which training was the most helpful, and why? What were the most important things you learned?
14. Are there other topics related to the Oral Health Initiative on which you would like more training?
15. If you were to give advice to another program that was trying to start up a similar oral health initiative, based on your experience, is there any training you think is essential for staff who will work on the initiative?

SERVICE DELIVERY (25 minutes)

Now let's talk about your experiences providing services through the Oral Health Initiative.

16. To start, what are your main goals for the work you do on the Oral Health Initiative?
17. Were you involved in designing the Oral Health Initiative? If so, tell me about the process.

Risk Assessment and Clinical Services

18. Are you involved in conducting or arranging for routine oral health assessments using clinical or other means (such as clinical assessments, parent questionnaires, assessment of medical history, assessment of demographic risk factors)? Who conducts these assessments (for example, you or other Head Start staff, dentists, dental hygienists, nurses, health coordinators, others)?
19. Do you use a formal oral health risk assessment tool? If so, which tool do you use and how was it selected? How well do you think the tool works?
20. How does your program use the results of the risk assessments? For example, are oral health care providers able to use the assessment results to make a diagnosis or develop a treatment plan based on the assessment?
21. Do you have suggestions for improving your program's oral health risk assessment tools or process?
22. Are you involved in providing or arranging for provision of other clinical preventive services through the Oral Health Initiative? For example do you provide or arrange for cleanings, sealants, fluoride treatments, or other preventive services? What is your role in providing these services? Which services are provided by your program and which are provided by partners? Where are the services provided? How are the costs of these services covered (for example, program grant funds, insurance reimbursement, donated by provider)?
23. Are you involved in providing or arranging for provision of clinical treatment services through the Oral Health Initiative? What is your role in providing these services? Which services are provided by your program and which are provided by partners? Where are the services provided? How are the costs of these services covered (for example, program grant funds, insurance reimbursement, donated by provider)?
24. Which clinical services do you provide to children, pregnant women, and other family members?
25. How receptive have families been to the clinical preventive and treatment services you provide through the Oral Health Initiative? How has their receptivity changed over time?

Services to Support Access to Dental Services

26. Does your initiative have referral systems in place for helping families access needed clinical services? If so, please tell me about these systems. What is your role in the referral process? How well does the referral system work? Would you make changes to it if you could?
27. Does your program keep track of treatment outcomes and needed follow up services? If so, how this done? What is your role in this process? Is the tracking system helpful to you in your work with children and families? If so, how is it helpful?
28. Do you provide or arrange for services to help families access needed clinical services, such as help them make appointments, provide transportation, or provide translation services? If so, what is your role in this process? Approximately what proportion of children and families receive these services? Without the services, would families still be able to access needed dental care?
29. Does your program help families establish dental homes for their children? If so, what is your role in this process? How easy or difficult is it to help families establish dental homes? What are the main barriers to establishing dental homes? Which oral health providers serve as dental homes for the children and families in your program? What is your definition of a dental home?

Oral Health Education

30. Are you involved in providing education and skills-building activities to parents about oral health promotion? If so, please tell me about the main educational messages you deliver and how often you provide these services. How are the educational messages delivered and where (for example, during parent meetings, home visits, or by distributing written materials)? Do you instruct parents on how to do visual inspections of children's teeth using such techniques as "Lift the Lip"?
31. Are you involved in providing education and skills-building on oral health promotion specifically to pregnant women? If so, tell me about the education you provide, how these services are delivered, and how often. Are the educational messages different from those provided to other Head Start parents? If so, how?
32. Are you involved in providing oral health education and skills-building activities to children? If so, tell me about these services and how often you provide them. How are the educational messages delivered (for example, classroom activities, home visit)?
33. IF STAFF ARE INVOLVED IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Do you use a curriculum to provide oral health education to children and families? If so, what curriculum do you use and why did you choose it? How well do you think the curriculum is working? Is it a good match for the needs of the children and families you work with? Are there changes you would make to it if you could?

34. Do you provide oral hygiene supplies to children and families? If so, what types of supplies do you provide, and to whom? How do you provide them and how often? Do you provide parents with training on how to use the supplies? Do you think families use these supplies? What evidence do you have that the supplies are being used?
35. To what extent have you tailored education and other non-clinical services to the needs and cultural norms of your target population for the Oral Health Initiative? Can you please provide some examples?
36. How receptive have families been to the screening and educational services you provide through the Oral Health Initiative? How receptive are parents, pregnant women, and children? How effective do you think your approach to education and training is to changing families' oral health care practices? What are families doing differently after participating in these education and skills-building activities? How has their receptivity changed over time?

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS (10 minutes)

I'd like to shift gears now and talk about your interaction with community partners on the Oral Health Initiative.

37. Do you work with community partners on the Oral Health Initiative? If yes, what types of partners do you work with?
38. What is your role in working with community partners? For example, do you make referrals to them, follow up on treatment outcomes and plans, coordinate services, or plan joint parent education events on oral health?
39. IF STAFF MAKE REFERRALS TO PARTNERS: How do you make referrals to community partners for services? Do you receive information from them about treatment and needed follow up? How do these referral systems work?
40. Have you provided training to community partners about providing oral health services to your target population? If yes, please describe the training you provided. Why did you decide to provide it, and how helpful was the training?
41. How often do you communicate with community partners and what form does the communication take (meetings, phone calls, emails, referrals)? What do you typically communicate about? How well does communication with partners work?
42. In your opinion, how are the partnerships going so far? What has worked well about the partnerships, and what has been challenging? What strategies have you used to work through the challenges? How well have these strategies worked?
43. Based on your experience with the Oral Health Initiative, are there other kinds of partners that would have been helpful? If so, what types of partners and why?
44. If you could, is there anything you would change about the partnerships or partnership agreements? If so, what would you change and why?

IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS (15 minutes)

45. At this point, how much progress have you made toward meeting your goals for the Oral Health Initiative?
46. What have been your most important successes so far? What are you most proud of?
47. What are the most significant challenges your program has faced so far?
48. What strategies have you used to address these challenges? How well do you think these strategies are working?
49. What are the most important lessons your program has learned about providing oral health services?
50. What changes, if any, would you like to make to your Oral Health Initiative and why?
51. What advice would you give to other programs that want to implement a similar initiative?
52. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end the discussion?

Thank you again for participating in the interview.