

**Head Start Oral Health Initiative  
Community Partner Site Visit Interview Protocol**

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**INTRODUCTION** (10 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 ask some questions about you and your agency.

1. What is your official job title, and what are your primary responsibilities?
2. How long have you worked for [AGENCY]?
3. How long have you held your current position? What other positions have you held within the agency?

**Your Agency**

4. What is your organization's primary mission?
5. What are the main programs your agency operates and services you provide? What oral health services do you provide?
6. What are the main characteristics of your agency's client population?

## **COMMUNITY AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS (5 minutes)**

Now I have a few questions about the community and the children and families you serve through your partnership with the Head Start Oral Health Initiative.

7. What is your impression of 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?
8. What is your impression of the availability of other services for children and families, such as health care, transportation, and other social services?
9. In your opinion, what are families' main barriers to accessing oral health care?
10. Tell me about the children and families who serve through the Oral Health Initiative. What are their primary oral health care needs? What are their 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?
11. Did you have experience providing services to Head Start children and families before the Oral Health Initiative began, or was this a new experience for you? If it new, has it been easier or more difficult than you thought it would be?

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HEAD START ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (10 minutes)**

Let's talk about your partnership with the Head Start program.

12. Did your partnership with Head Start begin with the Oral Health Initiative, or were you already partnering with the program before this initiative began? IF PREVIOUS PARTNERSHIP: Tell me about your previous partnership? What was your role?
13. How did your organization become involved in the Oral Health Initiative?
14. Why did your agency decide to enter into the partnership? What interested your agency in the Oral Health Initiative?
15. Was your agency involved in the process of designing the Oral Health Initiative, or did your involvement begin after the Head Start program received the grant?
16. Tell me about your role in the Oral Health Initiative. What are the main services you provide?

## **STAFFING AND COORDINATION (5 minute)**

Let's talk about staff from your agency that provide services through the partnership and how you coordinate the work with Head Start.

17. How many staff from your agency provide services through partnership? What proportion of their time do they spend on it? What are their job titles and qualifications?
18. How do you coordinate the work your agency does on the Oral Health Initiative with the Head Start program? Do Head Start staff refer children and families to you? How does this work?
19. How often do you communicate with the Head Start program and what form does the communication take (meetings, phone calls, emails, referrals)? What do you typically communicate about? How well does communication for the partnership work? Do you have suggestions for improving it?
20. Has your agency received any training from the Head Start Oral Health Initiative related to providing services to Head Start children and families? If yes, please describe the training you received. Who provided the training? Was it helpful? Why or why not?

#### **SERVICE DELIVERY (15 minutes)**

Now I'd like to hear about the services you provide to Head Start children and families through the Oral Health Initiative.

21. Do you conduct routine oral health risk assessments using clinical or other means (such as clinical assessments, parent questionnaires, assessment of medical history, assessment of demographic risk factors)? If so, do you use a formal oral health risk assessment tool? Which tool do you use and why did you select it?
22. Do you use information from routine oral health risk assessments, whether you or someone else conducts them, to make diagnoses or develop treatment plans for Head Start children and/or other family members?
23. Do you provide other clinical preventive services to children and families through the Oral Health Initiative? If so, what services do you provide? For example, do you provide clinical exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, or other preventive services? Which services are provided by your program and which are provided by partners? Where are the services provided?
24. Do you provide clinical treatment services to Head Start children and families? If so, what types of services do you provide and where do you provide them?
25. How are the costs of risk assessment and other clinical services you provide to Head Start children and families covered? Payment by program? Insurance reimbursement? Services donated? Other?
26. Are you involved in keeping track of treatment outcomes and needed follow-up services for Head Start children and families? Do you report treatment outcomes to the Head Start program? If so, how do you do this?

27. Do you provide services to help Head Start families access needed clinical services, such as help them make appointments, provide transportation, or provide translation services? If so, how do you decide which families need these services? Do you receive referrals from Head Start?
28. Do you provide or arrange for dental homes for Head Start children and families? If so, how do you do this? What is your definition of a dental home?
29. Do you provide education and skills-building activities to families about oral health promotion? If so, how do you do this—one on one with parents, during home visits, during parent education workshops, other? What are the main educational messages you provide? Do you use a curriculum to provide oral health education to families? If so, what curriculum do you use and why did you choose it? Do you instruct parents on how to do visual inspections of children's teeth using such techniques as "Lift the Lip"?
30. 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 parents receive training on how to use the supplies?
31. 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?
32. In your experience, how receptive have Head Start families been to the services you provide through the Oral Health Initiative? How has their receptivity changed over time?
33. In addition to working with Head Start children and families, does your agency contribute supplemental funding or other in-kind resources to the Head Start Oral Health Initiative?

#### **LESSONS LEARNED** (15 minutes)

At this point, I'd like to hear about the lessons you've learned so far from your involvement in the Head Start Oral Health Initiative.

34. How well is the partnership going so far? What has worked well, and what has been challenging?
35. Have you been able to implement the partnership as planned? If you've made changes, what changes did you make and why?
36. Do you have suggestions for improving the partnership? Improving referral systems? Communication with Head Start? Other suggestions?
37. How long do you think your partnership with Head Start will last? Will you continue the partnership after grant funding for the Oral Health Initiative ends?
38. What advice would you give to other organizations like yours about partnering with Head Start on a similar oral health initiative?

39. In your opinion, what have been the most important successes of the Head Start Oral Health Initiative so far?
40. What are the most significant challenges the Oral Health Initiative has faced? What strategies have been used to address these challenges? How well do you think these strategies are working?
41. What lessons has your agency learned about providing oral health services to Head Start children and families? What advice would you give to other service providers about working with this population?
42. Do you have suggestions for improving the Head Start Oral Health Initiative in your community? Are there changes you would make if you could? Is there additional training from Head Start that would have been helpful?
43. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end the discussion?

Thank you again for participating in the interview.