Attachment C: Telephone Interview Discussion Guide

INTERVIEW WITH ECCS COORDINATORS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this evaluation interview. As you know from our previous communication, this interview is designed to help us understand your experiences with the ECCS Initiative.

Before we begin, I would like to review a few details about our discussion:

- The interview will last no more than 90 minutes.

- Your agency's name and location, and your general job title (e.g. State ECCS Coordinator) may be identified in reports prepared for this study and in data files provided to HRSA. None of your responses will be released in a form that identifies you or any other staff member by name.

- Participation in this interview is voluntary, and you may decline to answer particular questions.

- We would like to tape this interview to ensure that we are accurately recording your responses and to check against our notes.

Do you have any questions about any of these details or about the assessment?

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0990-XXXX . The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour and 45 minutes per response, including the time to gather the data you needed to participate, to review instructions, and complete the interview. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, OS/OCIO/PRA, 200 Independence Ave., S.W., Suite 537-H, Washington D.C. 20201,   Attention: PRA Reports Clearance Officer

Do you agree to voluntarily participate in the interview? [GET RESPONSES FROM ALL RESPONDENTS ON THE CALL]

- ❑   Yes [Continue]
- ❑   No [Thank the respondent(s) for their time and end the call]

Do you agree to being audio-recorded during the interview? [GET RESPONSES FROM ALL RESPONDENTS ON THE CALL]

- ❑   Yes [Turn on the recorder and proceed with the interview]
- ❑   No [Proceed with the interview without the recorder turned on]

Do you have any questions before we begin?

STATE TEAM

MCHB defines your State Team as all your partners who are working with you to implement the systems-building activities included in your state plan.

1. What has worked well about the way your State Team carries out its activities? What has not worked so well?

2. What is the relationship between your ECCS State Team and other State entities that focus on improving early childhood systems and services?

3. PROBE [ASK IF THE SURVEY OR ABSTRACTION INDICATES THAT THE STATE TEAM DOES NOT SERVE AS THE COUNCIL]: What is the relationship between the ECCS State Team and the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care required in the 2008 Head Start Reauthorization legislation?

4. Overall, how effective has your State Team been in its efforts to increase collaboration across early childhood sectors and programs? Can you provide some examples of this? What relationships do you think have been particularly strengthened as a result of your ECCS Initiative? What barriers exist to further collaboration?

5. What steps are you planning over the next 2 years to make your State Team more effective in increasing collaboration and creating system change?

6. [ASK ONLY IF THERE ARE CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS FROM THE ABSTRACTION AND/OR SURVEY] Based on our review of your 2009 application, State ECCS Plan, and completed survey, we have a few questions about the structure and function of your State Team.

   [INSERT STATE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS HERE]

STATE PLAN

The next set of questions concerns the State Plan that you have developed for your ECCS Initiative.

1. Based on our review of your 2009 application, you currently [have no plans/plan to revise/are reviewing/other] your State Plan. Is that correct?

2. How have you used your State Plan in your efforts to promote system change?

3. Overall, how effective has your State Plan been as a tool in helping you achieve your goal of helping foster system change? What about it has been effective? How could it have been more effective?

4. What steps are you planning on taking over the next 2 years to make your State Plan more effective or to make the way you use it more effective?

SYSTEMS-BUILDING ELEMENTS

The next set of questions covers the seven systems-building elements that were included in the most recent ECCS application guidance. [IF THEY SEEM UNSURE WHAT THEY ARE SAY: These elements include governance, financing, family leadership development, and provider/practitioner support].

Governance

First, we will ask about governance. Governance involves oversight and authority over your early childhood system, including such things as agency structure, the role of private or public/private entities in that structure, and requirements for interagency collaboration.

1. Overall, how has ECCS contributed to revisions in how early childhood programs, initiatives, and resources are governed in your [State/Jurisdiction]?

2. What have been the benefits of these changes?

3. What challenges have been faced in implementing them? What have you done to overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

4. How has ECCS contributed to efforts to facilitate comprehensive system approaches at the community level? What benefits have occurred as a result of these efforts? What challenges have been faced in implementing them? What have you done to overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

5. Governance also involves impacting policy, how much influence does ECCS and your other comprehensive systems-building efforts have in regard to impacting policy at the [State/Jurisdictional] level? How has your State Team exercised that influence? What policy changes have you been able to achieve? What barriers do you face in regard to having more influence? What steps are you taking to try and overcome those barriers?

Financing

Next we want to ask about financing. Systems building around financing includes efforts to find out more about the funding of early childhood programs through financial mapping or scanning or the development of children's budgets; collaborative efforts to seek additional financing through grant applications; or efforts to change funding approaches, such as the blending or braiding of existing funding streams.

1. Based on our review of your 2009 application and your evaluation survey response, we see that you [have/have not] developed a financial map or scan.

   [IF DEVELOPED] How have you used your map or scan to address finance issues? How effective has that effort been? What could make it more effective?

   [IF NOT DEVELOPED] What are your current plans in regard to developing a map or scan? How do you plan to use it?

2. Has your ECCS Initiative contributed to any joint applications for funding or support? How successful have those efforts been in obtaining support? What, if any, other benefits have those joint efforts to obtain funding produced?

3. What other efforts has your ECCS Initiative contributed to in regard to addressing system-level financing issues? What have been the outcomes of these efforts?

   PROBE: Have you made any efforts to create mechanisms for blending or braiding of funds? What has been the result of those efforts?

4. What challenges have you faced in addressing financing issues through ECCS? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

5. What role do you foresee ECCS playing in the next 2 years with regard to addressing financing?

Family Leadership Development

Next I want to turn to family leadership development. Here the focus is on both family leadership within your State Team and efforts to promote family leadership in the early childhood system as a whole.

1. Overall, how successful has your ECCS Initiative been in insuring that parents and family members play a role in your systems-building activities? Please include examples in your answer. [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

2. What challenges have you faced in involving family members in your systems-building activities? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

3. What efforts do you have planned over the next 2 years to insure that parents and family members play a role in your systems-building activities?

4. Overall how successful has your ECCS Initiative been in strengthening the role of family leadership in your [State/Jurisdiction] approach to early childhood? Please include examples in your answer. [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

5. What challenges have you faced in strengthening the role of family leadership in your [State/Jurisdiction] approach to early childhood? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

6. What role do you foresee ECCS playing in the next 2 years in regard to strengthening the role of family leadership in your [State/Jurisdictions] approach to early childhood?

Communications

I'm going to turn to communications now. Communications covers efforts to explain the importance of system building and early childhood investment to a variety of audiences as well as informing the public, provider/practitioners, or policymakers about early childhood development topics.

1. What steps have you taken to communicate the importance of a comprehensive systems approach to early childhood to program administrators, policymakers, or the public?

2. Overall, how successful have your efforts been to communicate the importance of a comprehensive system approach to early childhood been in regard to program administrators whose programs serve the early population? To policymakers? To the public?
    [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

3. What steps have you taken to communicate the importance of investing in early childhood to program administrators, policymakers, or the public? Overall how successful have your efforts been to communicate the importance of investing in early childhood?
    [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

4. The communication system-building element also includes efforts to inform providers, practitioners, and family members about effective strategies to support child development. How have you addressed this area? Overall, how successful have your efforts been?
    [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

5. What challenges have you faced in the communications area? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

6. What role do you foresee ECCS playing in the next 2 years with regard to communicating around issues related to early childhood systems building?

Provider/Practitioner Support

Next I want to turn to your efforts to support providers and practitioners who serve young children and their families. This can include activities related to professional development, education, and compensation.

1. What have been the main contributions that ECCS has made in the area of supporting providers and practitioners in [*NAME OF STATE/JURISDICTION*]?

2. Overall, how successful have the provider/practitioner support efforts that ECCS has been involved with been? Please include examples in your answer.

   [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

3. What challenges have you face carrying out provider/practitioner support activities? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

Standards

Next I want to turn to the element that covers the development of standards for programs and providers and practitioners. This can include the development of quality standards, core competencies, and credentialing systems.

1. What have been the main contributions that ECCS has made in the area of standards for early childhood programs and providers and practitioners?

2. Overall, how successful have the standards efforts that ECCS has been involved with been? Please include examples in your answer.

   [IF GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL:] What factors contributed to that success?

3. What challenges have you face carrying out standard development or implementation? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

4. What role do you see ECCS playing over the next 2 years in the area of standards development and implementation?

Monitoring/Accountability

The next element to cover involves monitoring and accountability which relates to indicators and data development activities such as increased sharing of data or the collection of new data on children and families.

1. In your completed evaluation survey, you indicated that your ECCS Initiative [has/has not] developed a set of early childhood indicators for monitoring and assessment purposes.

[IF THEY HAVE:] How have you used your indicators in your systems-building efforts? Overall, how effective have your efforts to use them been? How well do you think your indicators measure the systems change that you are seeking to create?

[IF THEY HAVE NOT:] Why haven't you developed a set of early childhood indicators?

2.   What other contributions has ECCS made in the area of the data and data development activities?

3.   What challenges have you faced carrying out data/data development activities? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

Other Important Systems Change Efforts Not Yet Captured

1.   We have completed our review of the systems-building elements. Are there other important system change efforts that you have been engaged in that have not been captured during this review? [IF NO, SKIP TO SECTION V]

2.   What are they? What have you accomplished through these activities? What challenges did you face in implementing them? What steps have you taken to try and overcome those challenges? How successful were those efforts?

Efforts to Support State Teams

The next set of questions asks about the support you have received from MCHB, TA providers, and other Federal agencies that address early childhood.

1.   How effective do you think that the ECCS Initiative has been at fostering the sharing of systems-building strategies across States and Jurisdictions? What has been effective? What could be done to better facilitate such sharing?

The Federal Partners Early Childhood System Work Group is a collaborative effort of Federal agencies serving young children and their families and is designed to help facilitate systems building in States and communities. I have a few questions about how their efforts are affecting your work.

2.   How has the work of the Federal Partners Work Group affected your work in [*NAME OF STATE/JURISDICTION*]?

3.   What steps could the Federal Partners Work Group take to achieve their goal of facilitating systems building in states and communities?

4.   One of the goals of the Federal Partners Work Group is to foster collaboration among the many technical assistance (TA) providers supporting early childhood efforts including both providers funded by MCHB and those funded by other Federal agencies. How much collaboration currently exists among the various TA providers who work with you and your partners on your ECCS State Team? What changes have you observed in the level of collaboration recently?

5.   What types of collaboration between TA providers would you like to see more of?

Sustainability

Finally, I have a few questions about efforts to ensure that systems-building work continues over the long run.

1. What steps have been taken to ensure that [*NAME OF STATE/JURISDICTION*] will continue to move forward on early childhood comprehensive systems building if ECCS funding ends?

2. Overall, how committed are the ECCS partners in continuing to work on systems-building efforts if ECCS funding ends? What resources are available to support these efforts if ECCS funding ends?

We've reached the end of the questions, is there anything else that you would like to add that would help us understand ECCS' contributions to early childhood system-building in [*NAME OF STATE/JURISDICTION]?*

Thank you very much for your time and the information that you have provided.