

Policy Staff Interview Protocol

PPSS ECE Articulation Project Policy Staff Interview Protocol

Key points to convey to the respondent:

- This is a study conducted by American Institutes for Research on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the study is to examine the policies and practices that supports effective higher education articulation for early care and education (ECE) workers, so that they may progress from a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) to an associate of arts degree (AA) to a bachelor of arts degree (BA) without losing relevant coursework and credits. For the purposes of this study, early childhood education refers to the care and education of children ages birth to 8.
- The goal of this study is to highlight effective ECE articulation practices to inform the work of state and higher education leaders who are developing, revising, or implementing ECE articulation policies. The final report will highlight promising practices and the specific approaches states have taken to implement articulation policy in both two-year and four-year institutions of higher education in six focal states. This study is *not* meant to evaluate any state, agency, or policy.
- Have you received the consent form for this study? We want to assure you that we will protect your privacy and the information you share will be protected to the extent provided by law. We will not use your name in any reports, although states, agencies, institutions, and/or job roles or titles may be used in some sections of the report.
- We would like to record this conversation so that we can be sure we have an accurate record of our discussion. We will not share this recording with anyone outside the research team, and we will delete the recording after the final report is complete. Is that okay with you?
- Please note that your participation is completely voluntary. You may discontinue your participation in this interview at any time. Throughout the course of the interview, if we touch on topics that you believe to be sensitive for any reason, please bring that to our attention, and we will not include these comments either in public reporting or in discussions with the U.S. Department of Education.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to talk about what you think, even if it's different from what someone else thinks. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in critical comments as we are positive comments, and sometimes the critical comments can be the most constructive.
- We know that you are very busy, and we want to be respectful about your time, so we've made an effort to collect as much information as possible through publicly available documents prior to our call. We may reference that information during the course of the interview to confirm that our information is correct. This interview will take no more than 60 minutes.
- Do you have any questions about the purpose of this interview, your privacy, or anything else?

Introduction

Today, we'll ask you questions your state's articulation policies and practices. You can answer in the context of your articulation policy in general, but to the extent that you are familiar with the specific provisions related to early childhood education and how they are implemented, please tell me about that as well.

Question

- 1. We'd like to start by asking you to tell me more about your role in state education policy. How are you involved in policymaking related to articulation?**
-

Overview of General Articulation Policy

Let's talk more about your state's articulation policy. To the extent that you can answer these questions in a way that is specifically applicable to the field of early childhood education, please do so.

Question

- 2. How has your state's economic and policy context influenced articulation policy?**

Probe for:

- *What workforce demands is the higher education system trying to meet?*
- *How have institutional actors influenced articulation policy?*

Listen for:

- *State response to bachelor's degree requirements for teachers in Head Start, state prekindergarten, or QRIS*

- 3. How is your state's articulation policy designed to work?**
-

ECE Articulation Policy

The next two questions ask specifically about the field of early childhood education. If you are not sure or are uncomfortable answering these questions, you can answer in the context of your articulation policy in general.

Question

4. What efforts have been made to align ECE curriculum and learning standards between two-year and four-year institutions?

Probe for:

- *How have these efforts been unique to early childhood education, as opposed to other subjects?*
- *Who has been involved in these efforts, and what role have they played?*
- *How have institutional actors influenced articulation policy?*

5. How does accreditation—either from your regional accreditor, such as the Higher Learning Commission, or from a specialty organization, like the National Association for the Education of Young Children—relate to articulation in your state?

Governance and Oversight

The following questions ask about your state's governance and oversight structure for articulation. As you respond to these questions, please mention any aspects of oversight that are unique to the field of early childhood education.

Question

6. What kind of financial resources does the state provide to support oversight of articulation?

Probe for:

- *What does the funding support?*

Listen for:

- *Funding to sustain the work of the articulation board or committee, or funding for public community colleges or state university systems.*

7. In your state, which stakeholders are involved in making policy decisions about higher education articulation?

Probe for:

- *How are they involved?*
 - *In your opinion, are there any important stakeholders who are not included or do not have adequate input?*
-

State-Level Articulation and Transfer Supports

The following questions ask about the articulation and transfer supports available to institutions and students. In your answers, please discuss any supports that are unique to the field of early childhood education.

Question

8. How does your state support institutions of higher education in implementing articulation policy?

Probe for:

- *For example, do you offer incentives, training, or funding for staff positions to manage the articulation process?*
- *How do you assess whether the levels of support are well matched to needs?*
- *What are the consequences for institutions that do not implement articulation policy?*

9. What types of incentives does your state provide to encourage students to transfer from two-year to four-year colleges?

Probe for:

- *How do these incentives work?*
- *Why did your state decide to offer these incentives?*

Listen for:

- *Specific forms of financial aid, guaranteed transfer, or priority admission*
-

Evaluation

The following questions ask about the efforts to evaluate how well existing articulation policy works.

Question

10. How does your state evaluate its articulation policy and transfer student outcomes?

Probe for:

- *Does the state collect data on transfer student outcomes, such as the number of credits transferred or degree completion rates?*
- *Can data be limited to students in early childhood education degree programs?*
- *What is the source of these data? Is it the state's longitudinal data system (SLDS)?*

11. How are evaluation findings or articulation data reported?

Probe for:

- *Are the data accessible to the public?*
-

Closing Perspectives

Last, we'd like to understand your perspective on what has worked well, and what has not, as your state has worked to implement articulation policy.

Question

12. What aspects of your state's approach to articulation do you think work well?

13. Are there aspects of articulation that you think work less well, or that you would like to improve?

14. What are the barriers to instituting comprehensive articulation policy in your state?

Probe for:

- *What aspects of your state's higher education policy context make comprehensive articulation policy challenging?*
- *What are other barriers to coordination of academic policy across institutions?*

15. What steps have been taken to overcome those barriers?

Probe for:

- *What other approaches could be tried to overcome the barriers?*

16. What lessons could you share that other states might find helpful?

Conclusion

-
- **We have reached the end of the interview. Thank you for participating and for the information you shared.**
-