

Instrument 1: Head Start Administrator/Family and Community Partnerships Manager Pre-Visit Call

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to learn how Head Start programs coordinate family support services. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this information collection is [OMB #] and the expiration date is [DATE].

Pre-Visit Call with Head Start Administrator/Family and Community Partnerships Manager

This protocol is written to be generic, so it can be used with different respondents with varying roles – for example, respondents at the grantee level versus respondents at the center level or Head Start Administrators versus Head Start Family and Community Partnerships Managers. The term “site” is used, as respondents may come from the grantee, delegate, center, and/or program levels; “site” will be replaced with “grantee,” “delegate,” “center,” and/or “program” depending on what is appropriate for the respondent.

This protocol represents the full list of questions we may ask respondents, but the full list may be cut down depending on who we are speaking with and whether we have gathered this information during prior discussions with representatives from this site under the generic clearance (OMB #0970 - 0356, issued in month 2019) or through the PIR. In that case, the call will focus on briefly reviewing information that has already been collected and asking for updates or corrections. Other questions and probes are structured assuming the team does not have this information already. Interviewers will tailor the questions to confirm or verify information for any item we already have from the PIR or previous phone calls – e.g., instead of saying, “How many staff do you have?” the interviewer would say, “From the PIR I can see that you have [#] staff. Is that still correct?”

This protocol includes probes, which will be used if a respondent doesn’t understand the question or gives a brief answer. This protocol also includes sub-bullets, which are example questions that will be asked, time-permitting, if the respondent doesn’t touch on that topic in their first response. Interviewers may probe more deeply in response to an interviewee’s comment, in line with the Head Start Connects research questions.

Section 1. Introduction and Overview

Thank you for joining the call today to discuss the Head Start Connects study. I’m [NAME] and I work for [MDRC, MEF, OR NORC – SHORT DESCRIPTION]. Can you each please introduce yourself and give a brief description of your role?

Thank you. Now, I’ll give you a brief overview of the study. Head Start Connects is a research study funded by the Administration for Children and Families and conducted by MDRC, MEF Associates, and NORC at the University of Chicago. The aim of the study is to build knowledge about how Head Start programs (Head Start or Early Head Start grantees, delegate agencies, and staff) across the country coordinate family support services for parents and the processes or practices used to ensure that service coordination is aligned with individual family needs and fosters family well-being. When I say, “family support services,” I mean services for parents and guardians, such as education, employment services,

financial capability services, housing and food assistance, emergency or crisis intervention services, substance abuse treatment, physical health services (such as tobacco cessation services, nutritional services, or other services to maintain and promote physical health and well-being), and mental health services. During the study, we will carry out a literature review and conduct in-depth case studies that will inform the creation of several design options for a large-scale study of Head Start programs' approaches to coordinating family support services.

We invited you onto this call today because [HEAD START GRANTEE] was selected to participate in the Head Start Connects case study. The case study will involve a three-day visit to your site this spring. While we are on-site, we will conduct interviews with Head Start Administrators or Family and Community Partnerships Managers, Head Start Family Support Staff, teachers, parents, and community providers. These interviews will last no longer than one to two hours for most staff, and 2.5 hours for family support staff, and will be planned to best accommodate your schedules.

The purpose of this call is for us to learn more about your program and center logistics and to start planning for the site visit and interviews. This call won't take more than 30 minutes, and your participation is voluntary. If you need to leave at any time or don't want to answer certain questions, that's fine – just let me know. This is not an audit. We will not use your name or the name of your site or otherwise identify you when we report our findings. Your name or other identifying information will be protected and will not be shared outside the research team. Finally, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX.

Do you have any questions before we start? So you know, whenever I reference “parents” I'm talking about parents and legal guardians.

Section 2. Site Structure, Management, and Staffing

Let's start by discussing your program's structure, management, and staffing. We learned about some of this information by looking at the PIR data [AND VIA PREVIOUS PHONE CALL WITH OTHER PROGRAM STAFF, IF RELEVANT] and would like to confirm that what we have is correct.

1. **To begin, we understand that [NAME OF GRANTEE] is a/n [AGENCY TYPE] and operates [A SINGLE CENTER/MULTIPLE CENTERS] or delegates Head Start services to [OTHER AGENCY]. Please describe the management structure.**
 - How many sites does the grantee or delegate operate?
 - How many total classrooms do you have across programs?

2. **How are family support services structured?**
 - Who oversees family support service coordination for parents?
 - What is this person's formal title?
 - Does this person oversee the grantee's or delegate's family support services team?

- o Does this staff oversee one site or multiple sites?
- 3. Which staff are involved in providing family support services?**
- o What are their titles? Briefly describe their role in providing family support services.
 - o Is it just the family support staff or are others involved (for example, teachers, mental health counselors)?
- 4. How many family support workers do you have on staff?**
- o Are they full-time or part-time?
 - o What is the average caseload across all family support staff?
 - o Are family support staff shared by Head Start and Early Head Start programs? How does this work?
- 5. Is there a Family and Community Partnership Supervisor and/or Manager on staff?**
- o Briefly describe the job responsibilities of this(these) role(s).
 - o Does this Supervisor or Manager carry a caseload? If so, what is their caseload?
 - o Is the Supervisor or Manager shared by Head Start and Early Head Start programs? How does this work?
- 6. Who are the key staff who oversee the Family and Community Partnerships Supervisors/Managers and Family Support Workers?**

Section 3. Family Support Services

Next, I would like to learn more about the family support services your site provides.

- 7. Please briefly describe the family support services your site provides to parents.**

[PROBE: For example, case management, parenting classes, education services, employment services financial capability services, housing and food assistance services, health education, physical health services (such as tobacco cessation services, nutritional services, or other services to maintain and promote physical health and well-being), mental health services and/or emergency or crisis intervention services.]

- o Which services are provided on-site, by Head Start staff?
- o Which services are provided on-site, by community providers or other organizations that aren't Head Start staff?

- o Which services are provided off-site?
 - Who provides these services – Head Start staff, community providers, or both?
- 8. Does your site have a way to track service take-up for these family support services?**
- o If so, about how often are each of these services taken up by parents?
- 9. Where are the family support services offered?**
- o In what location or building? At the same building as where early childhood classes are taught or somewhere else?
 - o Where do parents meet with family support services staff (e.g., office, classroom, lounge area)? Is it dedicated space for family support services, or shared with other program functions?
 - o Where are the administrative offices for the family support services located?
- 10. Do you have any documents or other materials you can share that highlight the services offered to parents, how the services are coordinated and provided, the family support process, etc.?**
- o For example, do you share flyers for parents, parent or staff handbooks/manuals?
 - o Do you have any general program documents you can share that give information about your site and the populations you serve?
 - o Could you share your most recent community needs assessment with our team?
 - o Could you share your family partnership process with us (in document form if you have it)?
- 11. Finally, we would like to learn about how parents interact with your site and staff. What are the different ways children arrive at the center and leave the center?**
- o Do parents drop their children off at center or do children arrive on a bus? If the latter, when (if ever) do parents visit the center?
- 12. What are some specific ways your program communicates with parents? For example, phone, email, text, papers sent home with child, in-person.**
- o When does this communication occur?
 - o Which Head Start staff do parents interact with? Who do they interact with the most?

- 13. Those are the main questions we have for you at this point. Before we discuss the logistics of the site visit, I wanted to pause and ask for some feedback from you. Are there particular aspects of understanding coordination of family support services for parents that you would find especially useful to learn about? Do you have particular goals for participating in this study?**

Section 4. Planning Site Visit Logistics

Lastly, let's discuss the logistics of the site visit. There are five types of people that we would like to talk to. We will go over each type, starting with an administrator or family and community partnerships manager, then teachers and Head Start staff, parents and legal guardians, and community providers. Most of these interviews will take about 60 minutes. We would like to have longer interviews with the family support staff, so we'll talk about that group last.

- 14. We would like to interview someone who oversees family and community partnerships or the program's overall approach to service coordination when we are on site; this may be a Head Start Administrator or the Family and Community Partnerships Manager – someone with a role in managing family support services and site operations.**

- Is [NAME OF STAFF] the best person to interview, or would you recommend someone else?

- 15. If teachers or other Head Start staff are involved in coordinating or arranging family support services, we would like to interview a few.**

- Earlier you mentioned [NAME(S) OF STAFF] are involved in providing family support services. Who would you recommend?
- Can you give us their names and contact information so we can reach out to them directly?

- 16. We would like to interview parents who interact with family support services staff or who receive referrals or services from your center/program. Ideally, we would speak with parents from various backgrounds and living situations, who meet with family support services staff. Is [NAME OF STAFF] the best person to ask for recommendations or should we ask the family support staff when we have a pre-visit call with them?**

- We are interested in speaking with: a parent who has been connected to your site for more than one year potentially through different children, and who has accessed different family support services through the center; and a parent who is relatively new to the program and who has met with a family support services staff.
- Who would you recommend?
- Can you give us their names and contact information so that we can reach out to them directly?

- o If not, would you be willing to contact parents on our behalf?

17. We would like to interview staff at a few community service providers who provide the most commonly accessed services for parents from your site. We are particularly interested in talking with the staff who have the most direct communication with your site's family support services workers. These might be service providers who provide services on-site or at an off-site location.

- o Who would you recommend?
- o Can you give us their names and contact information so that we can reach out to them directly?

18. Finally, we would like to conduct an in-depth interview with family support staff at your site.

- o During one part of the interview, we will ask staff to walk us through how [S/HE] coordinates family support services using specific types of cases in [HIS/HER] caseload. In some of our previous work, we have found it helpful to have people reflect on their activities while thinking about real life examples. We will not gather any personally identifiable information about these families or review the case documentation. It is not an audit, and our study staff will not view the actual case file or records of any families. We will not use your name or the name of your site or otherwise identify you when we report our findings. Your name or other identifying information will be protected and will not be shared outside the research team.
- o We will ask the staff member to think of two different types of families [S/HE] has worked with in advance so that during the interview [S/HE] can answer a series of questions about working with those families. We will interview the staff member to understand how the staff member and parents interacted throughout the process, and how staff aimed to coordinate family services and tailor those services to family needs.
- o For these case narratives, we will be asking family support staff to consider their work with families with different backgrounds, strengths, and needs – in particular, one family with services needs that are common at your center and one family with exceptional service needs (that is, either more needs or more challenging needs). To prepare for this, we have a few questions to ask.
 - Which family support staff would you recommend we interview that would include these case narratives? Can you provide us with their names and contact information so that we can reach out to them directly?
 - [IF MORE THAN 3 FAMILY SUPPORT STAFF]: We would be interested in interviewing at least one staff member who has been at your site for at least 5 years and at least one staff member who has been at your site for around 1 year.

19. Is there a private space at your site where we could conduct these interviews?

- Are there any restrictions on its use? Do we need to do anything to reserve it?

20. We understand that the process for getting approval to participate in a research study at your site is [DESCRIBE PROCESS]. Is this correct?

- Is there anything else we need to do to ensure we have approval for research so we can conduct the site visit?

21. Lastly, let's talk about possible dates for our site visit. We are interested in conducting a 3-day visit between [DATES] and [DATES]. What days would work best for you?

Section 5. Conclusion

[IF REFERRED TO OTHER HEAD START ADMINISTRATOR/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER]: You mentioned earlier that it would be helpful if I arranged a phone call with [OTHER HEAD START ADMINISTRATOR/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER] to get further information about some of my questions. Can you please share their contact information so I can reach out to them?

Our next steps are to confirm the site visit dates and to schedule interviews. I will send you an email that summarizes all of this information and the potential site visit agenda. I will also be reaching out to the family support staff you mentioned so I can schedule calls with them. Can we then arrange another call – either with you or someone else you recommend – to finalize the site visit schedule, including deciding on times and locations for the staff interviews?

Do you have any questions?

Thank you again, and I look forward to meeting you in person!