

Instrument 2: Head Start Family Support Staff 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 Family Support Staff

This protocol uses the term “site” because respondents may come from the grantee, delegate, center, and/or program levels; study staff will replace “site” with “grantee,” “delegate,” “center,” and/or “program” depending on what is appropriate for the respondent. 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 your site was selected to participate in the Head Start Connects case study and [NAME] suggested that we speak with you. The case study will involve a three-day visit to your site this spring, where we will conduct interviews with Head Start staff, parents, and community providers. Our on-site interview with you will last no longer than two hours and will be planned to best accommodate your schedule.

The purpose of this call is 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. We ask that you not provide specific names or other identifying information about particular families, as we want to maintain their privacy. 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.

Are you interested in participating in this call? Do you have any questions about Head Start Connects or the case study logistics? So you know, whenever I reference “parents” I’m talking about parents and legal guardians.

Section 2. Overview of the Case Narrative

One part of the interview will ask you to describe in detail how you coordinate family support services¹ for families with varying interests/needs. We will ask you to think about two specific cases in advance, to discuss during the interview. This is not an audit and our study staff will not view the actual case files or records of any families. In some of our previous work, we find it very helpful to have people reflect on their activities using real life examples. We will not gather any personally identifiable information about these families or review the case documentation. We will not use their name or the name of your site or otherwise identify you or the families discussed when we report our findings. Names or other identifying information will be protected and will not be shared outside the research team. This part of the interview is a way for you to reflect on the different ways you may coordinate services for a variety of families.

Specifically, we ask you to think about two specific cases where the parent has interacted with you to address family well-being needs (such as education, economic assistance, asset development, housing and food assistance, physical and mental health). The two cases should reflect the following types of families you might work with:

1. A family on your caseload who has common needs for families served by your site (that is, needs that are typical at your center, that lots of families may have);
2. A family who had exceptional needs compared with other families served by your site (that is, the parent has either more needs than others or needs that are particularly challenging).

Can you think of families falling into these groups? If possible, it would be helpful for you to think of one family that fits into each of these two groups prior to the interview; we will send you a summary of the interview questions in advance so you will have an idea of the kinds of things we are interested in learning about. While we will ask questions about how you work with these types of families during the interview, we ask that you not tell us any names or other identifying information, as we want to protect

¹ Family support services include: Help or assistance with obtaining a high school diploma, a training certificate or a degree; or English language classes (Education); Help or assistance with finding a job (Employment); Help or assistance in managing money and making financial decisions (Financial capability services); Help or assistance with finding an affordable house or apartment to live in (Housing); Help or assistance with finding food pantries or food banks in your community (Food assistance); Immediate help and support when you have an emergency or crisis with your family or living situation (Emergency or crisis intervention services); Help or assistance with getting substance abuse treatment (Substance abuse treatment); Help or assistance with accessing medical and dental services to make sure families are healthy (Physical health services, such as tobacco cessation services, nutritional services, or other services to maintain and promote physical health and well-being); and Help or assistance for depression or anxiety (Mental health services).

these families' privacy. Further, we will not want to see the case documentation or any notes you may have on these families, so we ask that you keep these private.

Section 3. Conclusion

Our next step is to schedule your interview. We will be visiting your center on [DATES AGREED ON WITH HEAD START ADMINISTRATOR/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER]. What does your availability look like for a 2-hour interview over those days? I am very flexible and will do my best to schedule the interview at a time that works best for you.

Thank you so much for chatting with me today! Is there anything else you would like to add in about the plan for our interview? I will send you an email that summarizes our discussion today.