

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 0970-0538 and the expiration date is 4/30/2021.

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 original plan was for the case study to involve a three-day visit to your site this past spring, but in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are now conducting the case studies virtually. To do this, we will conduct interviews with Head Start Administrators or Family and Community Partnerships Managers, Head Start Family Support Staff, teachers, parents, and community providers over video calls (ideally – though if video is not possible, we can conduct the interviews over the phone). 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 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 0970-0538 and the expiration date is 4/30/2021.

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.**
 - o How many sites does the grantee or delegate operate?
 - How many total classrooms do you have across programs?

2. **I understand that the COVID-19 pandemic (when the coronavirus closed non-essential businesses in many places across the country) may have affected operations at your center. At any point did your site suspend regular, in-person programming due to the pandemic – for example, stopped some or all in-person operations and moved some or all activities to being**

conducted remotely? If so, please tell me about what was suspended and when (for example, closed all in-person activities on this date, resumed in-person activities just for families of essential workers on this date).

- What is the current status of your site – open and resuming all typical in-person programming, partially open (some in-person programming is resumed, other programming is either paused or conducted remotely), or closed and all programming is remote?
 - **[IF PARTIALLY OPEN OR CLOSED]**: When do you think your site will be fully open again?

3. Next, I'd like to learn about how your family support services are structured, generally. Please let me know if anything we discuss has changed as a result of the pandemic.

- 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?
- Does this staff oversee one site or multiple sites?

4. Which staff are involved in providing family support services?

- What are their titles? Briefly describe their role in providing family support services.
- Is it just the family support staff or are others involved (for example, teachers, mental health counselors)?

5. How many family support workers do you have on staff?

- Are they full-time or part-time?
- What is the average caseload across all family support staff?
- Are family support staff shared by Head Start and Early Head Start programs? How does this work?
- What, if any, changes did you have to make to family support worker staffing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, laying off (permanently or temporarily) family support staff, changing the roles of family support staff.

6. Is there a Family and Community Partnership Supervisor and/or Manager on staff?

- Briefly describe the job responsibilities of this(these) role(s).
- Does this Supervisor or Manager carry a caseload? If so, what is their caseload?
- Is the Supervisor or Manager shared by Head Start and Early Head Start programs? How does this work?

7. 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.

8. 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.]

- Which services are provided on-site, by Head Start staff?
- Which services are provided on-site, by community providers or other organizations that aren't Head Start staff?
- Which services are provided off-site?
 - Who provides these services – Head Start staff, community providers, or both?
- In what ways, if at all, has the pandemic affected the delivery of these services? For example, did you offer any of these services remotely or stop offering them altogether as a result of the pandemic?
 - What is the current status of these services – are they being offered on-site, remotely, or not at all?

9. Does your site have a way to track service take-up for these family support services?

- If so, about how often are each of these services taken up by parents?

10. Where at your site, physically, were the family support services offered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (and currently, if it is the same as prior to the pandemic)?

- In what location or building? At the same building as where early childhood classes are taught or somewhere else?
- 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?
- Where are the administrative offices for the family support services located?

- o Where were the family support services offered during the time your site closed or suspended typical programming?
- o Where are the family support services being offered currently?

11. 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)?

12. Finally, we would like to learn about how parents interact with your site and staff. What are the different ways children arrived at the center and left the center, prior to the pandemic?

- o Did parents drop their children off at the center or did children arrive on a bus? If the latter, when (if ever) did parents visit the center?
- o In what ways, if at all, has the pandemic changed how parents informally interact with staff at your site?

13. 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?

14. 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 interviews. 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. Ideally, we would like the interviews to take place via a Zoom video call, as seeing the person helps us to build rapport. When we talk about each individual, please let me know whether you have any concerns about the possibility of video calls.

15. We would like to interview someone who oversees family and community partnerships or the program's overall approach to service coordination; 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?
- We would like to conduct this interview in two parts – as the first interview conducted with anyone at your site and as the last interview conducted, so we can confirm what we are learning. We anticipate the first interview will be 1 hour and a half, and the second interview will be 30 minutes.

16. 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 (phone number and email address) so we can reach out to them directly?

17. 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 (not brand new, though, as we are looking for someone who has had some time to interact with family support services staff – at least a few interactions with 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?
- If not, would you be willing to contact parents on our behalf?

18. 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?

19. 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 a specific type of case 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 the family support staff's 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 one family [S/HE] has worked with in advance so that during the interview [S/HE] can answer a series of questions about working with that family. 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, we will ask staff members to think of a family with services needs that are common at your center and a family with exceptional service needs (that is, either more needs or more challenging needs). (We are hoping to speak with multiple family support staff, each of whom we'll ask to talk about one type of family.) 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.

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

- o Is there anything else we need to do to ensure we have approval for research so we can conduct these interviews?

21. Lastly, let's talk about possible dates for the interviews. We are interested in completing all interviews within one week. Which of these weeks work best [LIST A FEW POTENTIAL WEEKS]?

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?

[ADJUST AS NECESSARY, DEPENDING ON WHETHER RESPONDENT PREFERS TO SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS OR TO LET YOU REACH OUT DIRECTLY TO SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS]: Our next steps are to confirm the interview week and to schedule individual times and days for each interview. I will send you an email that summarizes all of this information and the potential interview schedule. 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 interview schedule, including deciding on times for the staff and parent interviews?

Do you have any questions?

Thank you!