

# **PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL FOR NEXT STEPS FOR RIGOROUS RESEARCH ON TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

## **A. Background**

### **1. Moderator and co-facilitator introductions**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. We are from Mathematica, an independent research firm, and we are here to learn about your experiences with the [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]. My name is [NAME] and my colleague is [NAME].

### **2. Explanation of project and purpose of discussion**

We are interested in hearing about your experiences as part of a broader research study, Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches, that is looking at how programs like [TWO-GEN PROGRAM] are designed, operated, and can be improved. We are interviewing staff about the program's services and ways they collect information. In addition, we are holding discussions with people like yourselves to ask about their experiences with the program. Talking with people who participate in the program is a good way to learn about what the program is really like. We are also interested to learn about what program activities you have participated in; what you find helpful about the program; and what you think can be improved.

### **3. Privacy and recording**

We expect this discussion to take about 90 minutes. Before we start, I want to let you know that your participation in this discussion is voluntary. We will use the information you share with us to write a summary of what we have learned, and we will not attach your name to your response, so please feel free to talk openly about your opinions. We value the information you will share with us and want to make sure we capture it all by recording it. We will destroy the recording at the end of the project. If you want to say anything that you do not want recorded, please let me know, and I will be glad to pause the recorder.

There are no repercussions if you choose not to participate in this discussion. If you do not know the answer to a question, please let us know that, and we will simply move on. If you prefer not to answer a question for any reason, you do not need to respond. Do we have your permission to proceed with the discussion?

### **4. Ground rules for discussion**

Before we start, we want to agree on some ground rules about how our time together should go.

- This will be an informal discussion. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. We are interested in learning everyone's opinion.

- There will be no formal breaks. Please feel free to stretch or use the restroom whenever you need to.
- We would like only one person to talk at a time so we can understand you clearly, but we hope that each of you will share your thoughts at some point.
- To help us learn all that we want to learn from you, I might change the subject or move ahead from time to time.
- We also ask that you keep the discussion private, and do not share what you hear here with others outside this room.

Does that sound okay? Do you have any questions or suggestions before we get started? If there are no other questions, I'll start the recorder.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: 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 control number for this collection is 0970-0356 and it expires 5/31/2021.

## B. Introductions

Let's start with introductions.

1. Can you share your first name and how long you have participated in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?
2. Which members of your family also participate in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]? If your children participate in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM], how old are they?
3. Why did you decide to participate in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?
  - a. What services or resources did you hope to access by participating in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?

## C. Program services

We would like to discuss the services you and your family receive and activities you and your family participate in. First let's discuss you, specifically. Then we'll discuss the services your [child/children] receive and participate in.

### 1. Parent services

1. What services or activities have you or your partner participated in since joining [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]? [*Probes: Have you participated in services that focus on employment or education? Have you participated in services that focus on things like parenting, health, or help accessing benefits?*]
  - a. How long have you been participating in these services or activities?
  - b. How often do you or your partner participate in these services or activities?

2. Which services or activities have been the most helpful to you? Why?
  - a. Which services or activities have you enjoyed the most? Why?
  - b. Which services or activities do you think are making the most difference for you? Why?
3. Which services have been least helpful and why?
  - a. What would you change about the services you have received or activities you participated in? [*PROBES: Consider things like the time when it is offered, how often it happens, how long a session is, how easy or difficult it is to receive services, and how easy or difficult it is to coordinate the schedule for your services with your child(ren)'s schedule.*]
4. What other services or activities for yourself would you like to receive that are not currently offered in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?
  - a. Have you received referrals to other services? If so, what services were they for? Did you follow up on those referrals?

## 2. Child services

1. What services or activities have your children participated in as part of [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?
2. What services or activities have been the most helpful to your children? Why?
  - a. What services or activities have your children enjoyed the most? Why?
3. Which services have been least helpful to your children and why?
  - a. What would you change about the services your children have received or activities they participated in?
4. What other early-learning or child development services or activities would you like your children to participate in that are not currently offered in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?

## D. Family experience in program

Let's talk about your interactions with the program, who you work with, what you work on, and what has helped you or made it more difficult to participate in the program.

1. Have you had individual meetings or discussions with program staff? How often do you meet?
  - a. How many different staff have you met with?
  - b. Please describe what normally happens during these meetings. What did you discuss?
2. Do you work with staff to set goals as part of participating in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM]?
  - a. Did you discuss separate goals for parents, children, and the whole family?
  - b. How do you provide information to program staff about progress toward these goals?

3. What makes it easier for you and your family to participate in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM] activities and participate in services?
4. What gets in the way or makes it difficult for you and your family to participate in activities and services?

## E. Wrap-up

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us. As we close our discussion, we're interested in your final reflections on [TWO-GEN PROGRAM].

1. Imagine you were telling someone else about how [TWO-GEN PROGRAM] can support them. What would you tell them are its best features?
2. Imagine you were leading [TWO-GEN PROGRAM] and you wanted it to be the best program possible for supporting people like you. Where would you focus on expanding or improving it and why?
3. Is there anything we haven't discussed about your experience participating in [TWO-GEN PROGRAM] that someone else considering participating in this program would want to know before starting?
  - a. *[PROBE: It can be a positive or a negative thing, just something important for someone new to the program to understand.]*