Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies Study: Program-Level Master Semistructured Interview Protocol

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *Throughout the protocol, question text instructs to "[SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]" that is of focus in this case. Depending on what we learned during case exploration, system-level interviews, and screening there may be an alternative or familiar name for the framework or initiatives that use the framework that should be used instead of the formal name of the framework.*

INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion. Your participation is very important to the study. My name is [LEAD INTERVIEWER] from Mathematica, an independent research organization. I am joined by [OTHERS ON CALL].

We are conducting a study for the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with approval from the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Management and Budget This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to support efforts to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average [SPECIFY 30 FOR CENTER-BASED TEACHERS OR 60 FOR FCC PROVIDERS OR DIRECTORS] minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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 and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-XXXX, Exp: XX/XX/XXXX.

In this study, the Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC) Study, we'd like to better understand different approaches to developing and implementing competency frameworks and assessing competencies for teachers and caregivers of infants and toddlers. We are focusing on using competencies for teachers and caregivers in group settings, including center-based and family child care settings. Ultimately, this information will support efforts to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

We realize that the word "competencies" can mean different things to different people. For our project, we use the term "competency" to refer to a piece of knowledge, a skill, or an attribute essential to the practice of teaching and caring for infants and toddlers. A "competency framework" is a set of competencies that an organization or entity has compiled to convey the range of knowledge, skills, and attributes that a teacher or caregiver should have. Today, we wanted to speak with you about how your program uses the [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK].

We will present our findings in an internal memo to the Administration for Children and Families, that will not be made public outside of the government agency. The internal memo will describe what we learn from you and others, and it will identify the competency framework we discussed but we will not attribute comments to specific individuals. In future public reports, we may highlight key lessons from our conversations and identify the competency framework we discussed but we will not identify you or your program by name.

I would like to record our discussion so I can listen to it later when I write up my notes. No one besides our research team will listen to the recording. If you want to say anything that you don't want recorded, please let me know and I will be glad to pause the recorder. We will delete all recordings at the end of the study. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions and you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to answer. You may withdraw from this study at any time without consequences. We expect this conversation to take up to [SPECIFY 30 FOR CENTER-BASED TEACHERS OR 60 FOR FCC PROVIDERS OR DIRECTORS] minutes. Please keep any information discussed today private to those participating in this interview. Do you have any objections to being part of this interview or to my recording our discussion?

If you think of resources or documents related to topics we discuss today that you think would be helpful for our team to review, please let me know. IF SENT DOCUMENTS] This would be in addition to the resources that you already sent, which were very helpful so thank for taking the time to send those!

Do you have any questions before we begin?

In this interview we will ask you about the work you do related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]. We realize that your work since early 2020 will likely have been disrupted by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. When you respond to the questions please consider both how you typically approached your work prior to COVID-19 and also whether and how that has changed due to COVID-19.

I.   Respondent background

We are going to start with some background questions about you.

   A. Can you start by telling me about your role at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]? What are your primary responsibilities?

      1. Do you supervise or mentor other staff?

      2. Do you have a role in planning, developing or delivering professional development activities to staff? Do you help staff complete an annual professional development plan?

   B. What is your highest level of education and in what field? Do you have any specific certifications related to your work in early care and education?

C. How long have you been working at this program? How much of this time has been in your current position? How long have you been working in programs in this state?

D. Are competencies or competency frameworks something that you are very familiar with and have use in your work? Can you tell me about your previous experience with competencies or competency frameworks?

E. Can you tell me how you heard about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

 1. Do you use any other competency frameworks in your work? Which ones?

F. In your current position, do you participate in discussions about how [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] is used in your own program? [*If yes:* Can you tell me more about that?]

II.   Program characteristics

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *The questions in this section are only for center directors or program directors from multi-site programs/agencies; all of these questions can be skipped for other types of respondents. For these director respondents, ask only questions that were not asked during the screening process; skip all other questions.*]

Topic	Program-level version	Center-level version
Years open	How long has the program been in operation?	How long has the center been in operation?
Size (children served, infant and toddler versus preschool)	How many children does your program currently serve? How many of these children are 0 to 3 (that is, are infants and toddlers; please do not include children in preschool-age classrooms)?	How many children does your center currently serve? How many of these children are 0 to 3? (that is, are infants and toddlers; please do not include children in preschool-age classrooms) How many classrooms are in this center? How many of these classrooms or for infants and toddlers aged 0 to 3?
Multi-site organization	How many centers are in your program? How many family child care centers are in your program?	Is this center part of a larger multi-site program/organization? [*Part of a larger organization means the center is part of and shares resources/staff with a larger organization, such as a YMCA, university, or other social service agency*]
QRIS participant	--	Does your center currently participate in [QUALITY RATING SYSTEM]? [IF YES] What is the current rating? [IF NO] Are you currently working toward participating in (and being rated by) [QUALITY RATING SYSTEM]?

Topic	Program-level version	Center-level version
		[IF STATE CENTER IS IN HAS OTHER MAJOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION QUALITY INITIATIVES, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION] Does your center currently participate in [QUALITY INITIATIVE]?
Accreditation	-	Is your center accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or by another accrediting entity?
For-profit status	Is your program for-profit or not-for-profit?	Is your center for-profit or not-for-profit?
Funding sources	Does your program receive funding or payment from any of the following sources? • Head Start or Early Head Start or Early Head Start-Child care Partnership • Child care subsidy programs that support care of children from low-income families (through vouchers/certificates or state contracts for specific number of children) [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *Name the specific subsidy program for this state.*] • Publicly funded Pre-K (that is, Pre-k paid for with funds from the state, or with funds from a local school board or other local agency) • Tuition paid by parents • Other source (please describe) Which of these are your two largest sources of funding/payment? Does your program have any other sources of revenue that are larger than these? [IF YES] What are those sources?	Does your center receive funding or payment from any of the following sources? • Head Start or Early Head Start or Early Head Start-Child care Partnership • Child care subsidy programs that support care of children from low-income families (through vouchers/certificates or state contracts for specific number of children) [NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *Name the specific subsidy program for this state.*] • Publicly funded Pre-K (that is, Pre-k paid for with funds from the state, or with funds from a local school board or other local agency) • Tuition paid by parents • Other source (please describe) Which of these are your two largest sources of funding/payment? Does your center have any other sources of revenue that are larger than these? [IF YES] What are those sources?
Operating months	What months of the year do settings in your program operate?	What months of the year does the center operate?
Operating days/hours	--	What time does the center's program start and end each day? Does the center provide full-day care, part-day care, or both full-day and part-day care?
Curriculum	What curriculum/curricula do you use for your infant/toddler program/classrooms? [IF ALSO SERVES PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN]: What curriculum/curricula do you use for your preschool-age program/classrooms?	What curriculum/curricula do you use for your infant/toddler program/classrooms? [IF ALSO SERVES PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN]: What curriculum/curricula do you use for your preschool-age program/classrooms?

Topic	Program-level version	Center-level version
	[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *Do not ask about all these options. If the respondent is uncertain, you can provide examples from this list. This list can be used to help clarify whether preschool versus infant/toddler versions of curricula are in use*.] • Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System Core Knowledge • Creative Curriculum (Early Childhood) • Creative Curriculum (Infant & Toddler) • Creative Curriculum (Preschool) • Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos • Developmental Learning Materials • Frog Street Infant • Frog Street Toddler • High Reach • High Scope (Infant & Toddler) • High Scope (Preschool) • Innovations • Scholastic • Locally designed • Does not have a curriculum	[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: *Do not ask about all these options. If the respondent is uncertain, you can provide examples from this list. This list can be used to help clarify whether preschool versus infant/toddler versions of curricula are in use*.] • Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System) Core Knowledge • Creative Curriculum (Early Childhood) • Creative Curriculum (Infant & Toddler) • Creative Curriculum (Preschool) • Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos • Developmental Learning Materials • Frog Street Infant • Frog Street Toddler • High Reach • High Scope (Infant & Toddler) • High Scope (Preschool) • Innovations • Scholastic • Locally designed • Does not have a curriculum
Staffing structure and turnover	--	[IF PROGRAM SERVES CHILDREN 0 TO 5, PROBE ON DIFFERENCES FOR INFANT AND TODDLER VERSUS PRESCHOOL TEACHERS] How many lead/head/co-teachers work in this center? How many lead/head/co-teachers left and had to be replaced in the last year? How many assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants work in this center? How many assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants left and had to be replaced in the last year?
Education and credentials of teachers/caregivers	Does your program have education or credential requirements for lead/head/co-teachers who work in infant/toddler classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants who work in infant/toddler classrooms? [IF	How many of the lead/head/co-teachers who work in infant/toddler classrooms in this center have • at least a BA degree? • at least an AA degree? [IF CENTER IS INDEPENDENT/NOT PART OF A MULTI-SITE ORGANIATION]

Topic	Program-level version	Center-level version
	YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for lead/head/co-teachers who work in preschool-age classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants who work in preschool-age classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements?	How many of the lead/head/co-teachers who work in infant/toddler classrooms in this center have at least a credential of some type? For example, a Childhood Development Associate or specific state credential related to caring for young children? Does your program have education or credential requirements for lead/head/co-teachers who work in infant/toddler classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants who work in infant/toddler classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for lead/head/co-teachers who work in preschool-age classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements? Does your program have education or credential requirements for assistant teachers/aides/teaching assistants who work in preschool-age classrooms? [IF YES] What are the requirements
Experience of teachers/caregivers	--	Thinking about the [REFER TO NUMBER GIVEN IN EARLIER QUESTION] lead/head/co-teachers who work in infant/toddler classrooms, how many have worked as a teacher/caregiver in any type of early care and education setting for: • Less than 1 year? • 1 or 2 years? • 3 or 4 years • 5 years or more? [IF RESPONDENT IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT EXACT NUMBERS IN EACH CATEGORY, ASK:] Your best estimate is fine. About what percentage of these teachers/caregivers have worked as a teacher/caregiver for: • Less than 1 year? • 1 or 2 years? • 3 or 4 years • 5 years or more?

Topic	Program-level version	Center-level version

Professional development offered/available	Programs can support staff's professional development in a lot of different ways. Has your program offered the following to teachers/caregivers in the last year?
	
	• Support for attendance at conferences
	• Paid substitutes to allow teachers time to prepare, train, and/or plan
	• Mentoring or coaching
	  o by program staff
	  o by external providers
	• Workshops/trainings online or in-person
	  o provided by program staff
	  o provided by other organizations
	• Training on and/or from the Program for Infant Toddler Care?
	• A community of learners, also called a peer learning group or professional learning community
	• Tuition assistance for Associate's or Bachelors' courses
	• Tuition assistance for courses toward getting a credential
		[IF MULTI-SITE PROGRAM: Programs and centers/IF INDEPENDENT CENTER: centers can support staff's professional development in a lot of different ways. Has your [IF MULTI-SITE PROGRAM: program or center/ IF INDEPENDENT CENTER: center] offered the following to teachers/caregivers in the last year?
		
		• Support for attendance at conferences
		• Paid substitutes to allow teachers time to prepare, train, and/or plan
		• Mentoring or coaching
		  o by program staff
		  o by external providers
		• Workshops/trainings
		  o provided by program staff
		  o provided by other organizations
		• Training on and/or from the Program for Infant Toddler Care
		• A community of learners, also called a peer learning group or professional learning community
		• Tuition assistance for Associate's or Bachelors' courses
		• Tuition assistance for courses toward getting a credential

III.   Program use of competency framework for recruiting, hiring, promotions, and compensation

My next set of questions are about how your program uses [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for recruiting, hiring, promotions, and compensation decisions.

[*If the competency framework is focused on both infant and toddler teachers and caregivers AND preschool teachers and caregivers, throughout these questions probe on whether there are any differences for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers and for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms. For example:* Can you tell me about any ways that the approach differs for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers? Can you tell me about any ways that the approach differs for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms?]

A. Does your program use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] in the process of recruiting or hiring teachers/caregivers? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

  1. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used for recruiting teachers/caregivers? [*Probes:* Can you give me an example of how this works?]

2. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used for hiring teachers/caregivers? [*Probe:* Can you give me an example of how this works?]

3. Are there particular competencies you look for in hiring new teachers/caregivers?

   a. Do job listings or descriptions include specific competencies or refer to the framework in any way? Which ones and why?

   b. Do you recruit from particular degree programs or institutions because of training they provide on competencies?

   c. Are there specific competencies within [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] that staff are expected to have at hiring? If so, which competencies? [*If framework includes proficiency levels based on our review:*] How are the proficiency levels used for hiring? Are staff expected to meet specific proficiency levels at hiring?

4. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that are prioritized or considered to be more important than others for initial hires?

5. How do you assess which competencies applicants have at hiring? What does the assessment process look like for applicants?

6. When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for recruiting? When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for hiring?

   a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

   b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to using the framework for recruiting? Or for hiring?

7. In addition to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK], are there other resources or materials that you use in recruiting? are there other resources or materials that you use in hiring?

8. Who at your program oversees or monitors the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for recruiting? For hiring?

9. Have you encountered any challenges to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for recruiting teachers/caregivers? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

10. Have you encountered any challenges to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for hiring teachers/caregivers? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

11. What has helped support the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for recruiting or hiring teachers/caregivers? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

B. Does your program use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to make decisions about promotions or compensation? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used to make decisions about promotions or increased compensation? [*Probe*: Can you give me an example of how this works?]

2. Are promotion or compensation decisions based on mastery or demonstration of certain competencies? If so, which competencies?

3. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that are prioritized or considered to be more important than others for promotion or compensation decisions?

4. [*If framework includes proficiency levels based on our review:*] How are the proficiency levels used to inform promotion and compensation decisions?

5. How do you assess teacher/caregiver competencies to inform promotion and compensation decisions? What does the assessment process look like?

6. When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to make decisions about promotions or compensation?

   a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

   b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to using the framework for making decisions about promotions or compensation?

7. In addition to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK], are there other resources or materials that you use in making decisions about promotions or compensation?

8. Who at your program oversees or monitors the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for making decisions about promotions or compensation?

9. Have you encountered any challenges to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for making decisions about promotions or compensation? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

10. What has helped support the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for making decisions about promotions or compensation? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

IV.   Program use of competency framework for training and professional development of teachers/caregivers

My next set of questions are about how your program uses [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for training and professional development of teachers/caregivers.

A. Does your program use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to determine training needs and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used to determine program-wide training needs and plan for professional development of teachers/caregivers? What does the assessment process look like?

2. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used to complete individual professional development plans for teachers/caregivers? What does the assessment process look like?

3. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that your program focuses on for training or planning professional development of teachers/caregivers?

4. When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to determine training needs and plan for professional development of teachers/caregivers?

    a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

    b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for determining training needs and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers?

5. In addition to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK], are there other resources or materials that you use for determining training needs and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers?

6. Who at your program oversees or monitors the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for making decisions about training and professional development?

7. Have you encountered any challenges to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for determining training needs and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

8. What has helped support the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for determining training needs and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

B. Does your program directly provide training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. What types of training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] does your program directly provide? [*Probes:* Do you conduct workshops? Cover content in staff meetings? Provide individualized coaching?]

2. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that your program focuses on for training or planning professional development of teachers/caregivers?

3. When did your program start to directly provide training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

    a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

    b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to directly providing training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

4. Who at your program oversees efforts and develops materials for the training and professional development your program directly provides related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

5. Have you encountered any challenges in directly providing training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

6. What has helped support your program's efforts to directly provide training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

C. Do teachers/caregivers in your program have access to training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] from an external organization (meaning, from someone outside of this program)? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. Do teachers/caregivers in your program have access to external workshops or trainings related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

   a. Who conducts these workshops or trainings?

   b. How are these external workshops and trainings identified?

   c. Who pays for teachers/caregivers to attend these workshops or trainings?

2. Do teachers/caregivers in your program have access to individualized coaching from external organizations related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

   a. Who conducts or provides this coaching?

   b. How are these external coaching supports identified?

   c. Who provides funding for teachers/caregivers to receive this coaching?

3. Do teachers/caregivers in your program have access to college courses related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

   a. Which institutions offer these courses?

   b. How do teachers/caregivers identify these courses?

   c. Who pays for teachers/caregivers to enroll in these courses?

4. Have you encountered any challenges in helping teachers/caregivers' access external training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

5. What has helped support your program in accessing external training and professional development related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe*: Have

you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

V.   Teacher/caregiver use of competency framework

This set of questions are about how you use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] in your own professional development and work.

[*If speaking with a family child care provider who works with an assistant (based on responses to Section I), ask about professional development of provider and assistant. For example, say "you or your assistant" modifying terms based on how the respondent refers to that person which may include "assistant" or "co-teacher" or other terminology*]

A. Do you use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for planning your professional development? For example, do your use it to plan what trainings or workshops to attend or what courses to pursue? [*If yes: Use probes*]

   1. How do you use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to determine your training needs and plan your professional development? Can you give me an example?

   2. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that you focus on in planning your planning professional development? [*If yes:* Which ones and why*?*]

   3. When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to determine your training needs and plan your professional development?

      a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

      b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]for planning your professional development?

B. Have you attended any workshops or trainings related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] from an external organization (meaning, from someone outside of this program)? Can you give me some examples? [*If yes: Use probes for each example*]

   1. Who conducted the workshop or training?

   2. How did you find the workshop or training?

   3. Were you required to attend the workshop or training? [*If yes:* By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or certification, or required by another set of

standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?]

4. Who paid for you to attend the workshop or training?

5. Did the workshop or training focus on specific competencies or groups of competencies? [*If yes:* Which ones?]

C. Have you received any one-on-one coaching or technical assistance related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. Who conducted the coaching or technical assistance?

2. How did you get connected to the coach or technical assistance provider?

3. Were you required to participate in the coaching or technical assistance? [*If yes:* By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?]

4. Who paid for you to receive the coaching or technical assistance?

5. Did the coaching or technical assistance focus on specific competencies or groups of competencies? [*If yes:* Which ones?]

D. Have you attended any college courses related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? Can you give me some examples? [*If yes: Use probes for each example.*]

1. Where did you attend the course?

2. How did you find the course?

3. Were you required to enroll in the course? [*If yes:* By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?]

4. Who paid for you to enroll the course?

5. Did the course focus on specific competencies or groups of competencies? [*If yes:* Which ones?]

E. Have you encountered any challenges in planning or accessing training and professional development opportunities related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

F. What has helped support you in planning or accessing external training and professional development opportunities related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

G. Have you used [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to make decisions about how to teach or care for children or work with families? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

1. How have you used [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to make other decisions about how to teach or care for children or work with families? [*Probe*: Can you give me an example?]

2. Are there specific competencies within [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]that have been helpful for making decisions about how to teach or care for children or work with families? [*If yes*: Which ones?]

3. How did [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]come to be used for this purpose? Is it required and, if so, by whom? For example, is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system?

4. Have you encountered any challenges in using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to make decisions about how to teach or care for children or work with families? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

5. What has helped support your use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to make decisions about how to teach or care for children or work with families? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations?]

H. Are there any other factors/incentives (beyond those we discussed earlier) that influence how much (or how little) you use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

VI.   Program use of competency framework for curriculum selection

My next set of questions are about how your program uses [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] for curriculum selection.

[*If the competency framework is focused on both infant and toddler teachers and caregivers AND preschool teachers and caregivers, throughout these questions probe on whether there are any differences for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers and for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms. For example:* Can you tell me about any ways that the approach differs for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers? Can you tell me about any ways that the approach differs for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms?]

A. Does your program use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to make decisions about curriculum selection? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

   1. How is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] used to make decisions about curriculum selection? [*Probes:* Can you give me an example of how this works?]

   2. Are there specific competencies or groups of competencies that are prioritized or considered to be more important for making decisions about curriculum selection?

   3. When did you start using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to make decisions about curriculum selection?

      a. Is it required? By whom? For example, is it required for licensing or another program certification, or required by another set of standards, such as a quality rating and improvement system? Or is it required by your program?

      b. Have you seen or experienced any benefits to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]for making decisions about curriculum selection?

   4. Who at your program oversees or monitors the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]for curriculum selection?

   5. Have you encountered any challenges to using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]to make decisions about curriculum selection? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

   6. What has helped support the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to make decisions about curriculum selection? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

VII.   Other aspects of program use of competency framework

I now just have a few more questions about other ways your program uses [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK].

A. Aside from directors and teachers/caregivers, do other staff at your program [Provide examples based on type of program: for example, home visitors, early intervention, mental health consultants, education managers (if Early Head Start program)] use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] to guide or inform their work/practice?

B. Do you communicate with families about the use of SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] at your program? How? In what ways are families involved in the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] at your program?

C. Are there any other factors/incentives (beyond those we discussed earlier) that influence how much (or how little) teachers/caregivers use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

D. Can you tell me about any data that your program collects about the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]in your program? [For example, data that tracks completion of trainings or other PD activities across specific parts of the competency framework; results from assessments of the competency framework; data to monitor use of the competency framework during family engagement or during instructional activities] [*If data are collected and for each type of data collected, use probes.]*

   1. What are the data used for?

   2. Who collects these data?

E. Are there plans or ideas under consideration for other ways that your program may use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] in the future?

F. In addition to any funding sources we have previously discussed, are there other funding sources that have supported the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]in your program? [*If yes: Use probes for each additional funding source identified*]

   1. What activities does this funding support?

   2. How consistent is this funding (for example, is it a one-time grant or awarded or appropriated annually, given for a set amount of time etc.)?

VIII. Dissemination of information about competency framework to programs

My next questions are about how information about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] is shared with potential users, including teachers and caregivers and [LIST OTHER USERS DESCRIBED IN PART II].

A. How is information about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] —its relevance, content, and how it can be used—communicated? [For example, how is information about the framework shared with programs, and current or prospective teachers and caregivers? Are there trainings provided? Written materials?]

B. What are challenges to sharing information (about the content of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] and how it can be used) with programs like yours?

C. What works well for sharing information (about the content of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] and how it can be used) with programs like yours?

IX.   Dissemination of information about competency framework to teachers/caregivers

My next questions are about how you have found or received information about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK].

   A. How have you received information about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [For example, did you access information online? Or any written materials? Where are the materials located?

   B. Have you encountered any challenges in finding information about the content of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]and how you can use it? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

   C. What has helped you find information you need about [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? Are there materials or sources that you have found particularly helpful?

X.   Assessment of competencies by programs

My next questions are about how [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] is assessed. I will ask about any existing assessments tied to the competencies within the framework and what they are used for.

[*If the competency framework is focused on both infant and toddler teachers and caregivers AND preschool teachers and caregivers, throughout these questions probe on whether there are any differences for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers and for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms. For example: Can you tell* me about any ways that the approach differs for infant and toddler teachers and caregivers? Can you tell me about any ways that the approach differs for mixed-age vs non mixed-age classrooms?]

   A. [*If any existing assessments mentioned in Part II*] Earlier you mentioned you assess competencies for various purposes [LIST EACH PURPOSE MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY], now I'd like to ask more about that process. For each of the purposes we discussed previously, can you tell me about any existing assessment(s) your program uses. [*If any existing assessments, use probes for each.]*

      1. How is the assessment used? [*Probes:* Who is assessed? How often are assessments conducted? Who conducts the assessment(s)? What is the method of assessment (for example, observation, paper/pencil, self-assessment, etc.)?]

      2. Is the assessment required to be used? By whom?

      3. Is there training to use the assessment? Can you tell me more about that?

      4. Does the assessment cover all the competencies within [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]or a subset? Does it assess the [SPECIFY TERM FOR DOMAINS]?

5. [*If framework includes proficiency levels based on our review:*] Does the assessment align with the proficiency levels?

6. What costs are associated with conducting (including training and analyzing data) the assessment? Where does the funding currently come from? How consistent is this funding (for example, is it a one-time grant or awarded or appropriated annually, given for a set amount of time etc.)?

7. Who can see the results of the assessment? Is that information collected/stored anywhere?

    a. How do people with access to the results of the assessment use that information?

B. Do you think there is a need for any or additional assessments? If so, for what purpose?

C. What are challenges to conducting assessments related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe:* Are there challenges related to the use of multiple assessments within your program?]

D. What has helped facilitate conducting assessments related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations? Is there someone in your program who has supported these efforts?]

XI.   Teacher/caregiver experience with assessments

My next questions are about how [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK] is assessed. I will ask about any experiences you have had with assessments that can or have been used to assess the competencies of teachers and caregivers?

A. Have you ever used an assessment tool related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

    1. What was the purpose of the assessment?

    2. Did the assessment focus on the whole competency framework or just some parts? Which parts?

B. Have you ever been assessed on any competencies related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*If yes: Use probes.*]

    1. What was the purpose of the assessment?

    2. Who conducted the assessment?

    3. Did the assessment focus on the whole competency framework or just some parts? Which parts?

4. Have you encountered any challenges in using assessments or being assessed on competencies related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe if yes*: How have you addressed those challenges?]

C. What has helped support your use of assessments related to [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe*: Have you received training or support from external coaches, technical assistance providers, state or national organizations?]

XII.   Supports and challenges for implementation

A. What factors facilitate or motivate the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe:* If respondent answers "yes", to any of the topics below, probe for how do you think the following factors support the use of the framework? *Ask about 1-9 below, excluding answers already provided.*]

1. Federal, state, and local policies

2. Existence of and alignment with other policies/standards

3. Accessibility of the framework – whether people know about it and understand it

4. Relevance for early care and education providers, teachers/caregivers

5. [*If framework is specific to infant and toddler teachers and caregivers.*] Specific focus on infant and toddler teachers/caregivers

6. Availability of professional development, training or education opportunities that are linked to the competencies

7. Adequate funding or financial support for using the framework

8. Leadership – presence of leaders in different agencies who are committed to and provide leadership for the use of competencies

9. Any other supports or facilitators?

B. Overall, how useful is [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]in your work? [*Probe*: How useful do you think the competency framework is for the following purposes we talked about earlier? *Use probes 1-6.*]

1. To what extent is the competency framework useful for recruiting purposes?

2. To what extent is the competency framework useful for hiring purposes?

3. To what extent is the competency framework useful for determining promotions or compensation?

4.   To what extent is the competency framework useful for determining training needs, support and planning for professional development of teachers/caregivers?

5.   To what extent is the competency framework useful for developing professional development and conducting trainings?

6.   To what extent is the competency framework useful for selecting or developing curriculum?

C.   What, if anything, makes it challenging to implement and use [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]? [*Probe:* If respondent answers "yes", to any of the topics below, probe for how do you think the following factors hinder the use of the framework? *Ask about 1-8 below, excluding answers already provided.*]

1.   Federal, state, and local policies

2.   Conflicts with other policies/standards

3.   Accessibility of framework – whether people know about it and understand it

4.   [*If framework is specific to infant and toddler teachers and caregivers.*] Specific focus on infant and toddler teachers/caregivers

5.   Lack of professional development, training or education opportunities

6.   Costs/lack of funding

7.   Leadership – lack of leaders in different agencies who are committed to and provide leadership for the use of competencies

8.   Any other barriers?

D.   What do you hope to see in the future in terms of the use of [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]?

E.   What advice or suggestions do you have for other programs who would like to or are using [SPECIFY COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK]in their work?

F.   What advice or suggestions do you have for national, state, or local administrators or policymakers who are thinking about how to better support the infant and toddler care and education workforce?

CLOSING SCRIPT

Thank you for this extremely helpful information.

Here are the resources and documents you identified for us during our call [LIST]. Aside from those listed, are there other resources and documents that you think would be helpful for us to look at?

Are there other people that you think would be helpful for us to speak with to learn more about the topics we discussed today? [FOR EACH PERSON IDENTIFIED, ASK FOR: NAME, ORGANIZATION, TITLE, TELEPHONE NUMBER, EMAIL, AND TOPICS. CONFIRM IF WE CAN USE THE CURRENT RESPONDENT'S NAME WHEN WE REACH OUT TO THE PERSON/PEOPLE.]

Before we end the call, do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for your time.