

Appendix E—Recruitment Materials

E1: Project Overview

About the study: The purpose of this project is to better understand how to improve children’s transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools. Central to this project is a systems approach that recognizes that effective transitions require intentional engagement from *both* the sending programs (Head Start) and the receiving programs (elementary schools). Transition strategies and practices must be implemented at multiple levels – among classroom teachers in Head Start and kindergarten, families and teachers, elementary school principals and Head Start directors, Head Start grantees and school districts, and state and federal agencies.

Study sponsor: The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is the study sponsor.

Research Questions: The project aims to explore the definition of “successful transitions” by addressing the following research questions:

1. What strategies and practices are Head Start programs implementing to support children as they transition from Head Start to kindergarten? What is the content, quality, and quantity of these strategies and practices? How are they experienced by children, families, teachers, and other direct service providers?
2. What strategies and practices are elementary schools implementing to support children as they transition from Head Start to kindergarten? What is the content, quality, and quantity of these strategies and practices? How are they experienced by children, families, teachers, and other direct service providers?
3. What characterizes relationships among Head Start programs, elementary schools, and other community partners that support children’s successful transitions from Head Start to kindergarten? What are the specific facilitators of, and barriers to, successful transitions?
4. What are the key short- and long-term outcomes of transition strategies and practices for children, families, Head Start teachers, and kindergarten teachers? What are the key contextual factors and mechanisms that result in these key outcomes?

Project Activities: The project includes several key activities:

1. Review of the knowledge base regarding kindergarten transitions, including a literature review and qualitative interviews with key informants that will catalogue current transition strategies, operationalize “successful” strategies, and situate those strategies in various community and organizational contexts.
2. Development of a theory of change for kindergarten transitions that takes into account important contexts within Head Start and elementary schools, and assesses whether current strategies align to the theory of change in promoting positive outcomes for children, families, and Head Start and kindergarten teachers.

3. Scan of existing measures and data sources to determine alignment with the theory of change and identify any gaps or limitations in measurement that could inform development of new measures.
4. Implementation of a comparative multi-case study describing approaches to supporting transitions from Head Start to kindergarten.

Additionally, the project will include secondary analyses of a large-scale national dataset that examine kindergarten transition practices in both Head Start and elementary schools, and the experiences of Head Start children and families as they transition between these two complex systems. Stakeholders and experts will be engaged and consulted at critical junctures throughout the project.

Depending on findings from this foundational work, the project may include development of design options for a descriptive study of the national landscape related to transition practices within Head Start programs, development of new measures of transition practices, and/or additional analyses of secondary data to address research questions of interest.

Sharing what's learned: Insights from these key tasks will identify promising kindergarten transition strategies and inform changes to practices, professional supports, and policy in Head Start, other early care and education settings, and elementary schools. Findings will be shared through publicly disseminated reports, briefs, and presentations aimed at different target audiences including policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and the general public.

About the project team: OPRE has contracted NORC, with subcontracts to Child Trends and the National P-3 Center, to conduct the project. The points of contact at OPRE are Kathleen Dwyer, Nina Philipsen Hetzner, and Emily Ross.

E2: Outreach Email to Head Start Grantee Directors

Note: The purpose of this email is to notify the Head Start grantee about the nomination to participate in the case study and to request participation in a phone/video call to assess interest in participating in the comparative multisite case study.

TO: [HEAD START GRANTEE DIRECTOR]

FROM: [PROJECT DIRECTOR]

CC: [OUTREACH COORDINATOR]

SUBJECT: Nomination as a case study site for the federally-funded study “Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)”

Dear [FIRST NAME] [LAST NAME],

The research study Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K), funded by the Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), is investigating how to improve children’s transitions from Head Start to kindergarten. The study team plans to compare across different cases to better understand promising approaches to supporting kindergarten transitions in different contexts. Findings from this work will benefit both Head Start programs and the early education field more broadly. Attached please find a project description.

Over the past few weeks, we requested nominations from a variety of federal and non-federal stakeholders in both the Head Start and K-12 systems for Head Start-Local Education Agency (LEA) partnerships. In particular, we requested nominations of partnerships with promising approaches to supporting this transition period to be considered as a case study site. **I am writing to let you know that the [PROGRAM NAME] was nominated as a potential candidate for participation in the case studies.**

We would like to set up a phone or video call with you to discuss your interest in participating in the HS2K case study. During the call we will share more about the study, learn more about your program, and address your questions and concerns. If [PROGRAM NAME] is interested in participating, we’ll schedule a follow-up call then.

Since we are studying Head Start-LEA partnerships around transitions to kindergarten, we are also reaching out to an LEA administrator to gauge interest in participation. We would need agreement from both the Head Start site and the LEA or elementary school to move forward to the recruitment phase when we will select the six case study sites.

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. It would involve hosting a 2-day site visit (remotely or in-person) for the study team to conduct interviews with Head Start staff (including Head Start administrator/manager, center director, teachers, and support staff) and meet with a community partner. We will also schedule a remote focus group with parents.

This informational call will last approximately 60 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience.

Please let me know if you are available on any of the following dates and times.

Date	Time	Time zone
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Date	Time	Time zone
Date	Time	Time zone

If none of these dates/times work for you, please provide some options. We would appreciate hearing from you by [date].

Once we agree on a date and time for the call, we will send you a meeting invitation with a [*link for video/call-in number and passcode*] for the call. You are welcome to invite others from your team to join the call. Thank you for considering this invitation. The HS2K team looks forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E3: Outreach Email to Local Education Agency Administrators

Note: The purpose of this email is to notify the Local Education Agency Administrator about the nomination to participate in the case study and to request participation in a phone/video call to assess interest in participating in the comparative multisite case study.

TO: [LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR]

FROM: [PROJECT DIRECTOR]

CC: [OUTREACH COORDINATOR]

SUBJECT: Nomination as a case study site for the federally-funded study “Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)”

Dear [NAME],

The research study Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K), funded by the Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), is investigating how to improve children’s transitions from Head Start to kindergarten. The study team plans to compare across different cases to better understand promising approaches to supporting kindergarten transitions in different contexts. Findings from this work will benefit both Head Start programs and the early education field more broadly. Attached please find a project description.

Over the past few weeks, we requested nominations from a variety of federal and non-federal stakeholders in both the Head Start and K-12 systems for Head Start-Local Education Agency (LEA) partnerships. In particular, we requested nominations of partnerships with promising approaches to supporting this transition period to be considered as a case study site. **I am writing to let you know that the [PROGRAM NAME] was nominated as a potential candidate for participation in the case studies.**

We would like to set up a phone or video call with you to discuss your interest in participating in the HS2K case study. During the call we will share more about the study, learn more about your program, and address your questions and concerns. If [PROGRAM NAME] is interested in participating, we’ll schedule a follow-up call then.

Since we are studying Head Start-LEA partnerships around transitions to kindergarten, we are also reaching out to a Head Start grantee administrator to gauge interest in participation. We would need agreement from both the Head Start site and the LEA or elementary school to move forward to the recruitment phase when we will select the six case study sites.

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. It would involve hosting a 2-day site visit (remotely or in-person) for the study team to conduct interviews with an administrator, elementary school principal, teachers, and support staff.

The call will last approximately 60 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. **Please let me know if you are available on any of the following dates and times.**

Date	Time	Time zone
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Date	Time	Time zone
Date	Time	Time zone

If none of these dates/times work for you, please provide some options. We would appreciate hearing from you by [date].

Once we agree on a date and time for the call, we will send you a meeting invitation with a [*link for video/call-in number and passcode*] for the call. You are welcome to invite others from your team to join the call. Thank you for considering this invitation. The HS2K team looks forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E4: Case Study Recruitment Email to Head Start Grantee

Note: The purpose of this letter is to formally invite the Head Start grantee to participate. Through outreach to sites, the team will have already reached out to the Head Start grantee and Local Education Agency to assess their joint interest and the feasibility of participating in the comparative multisite case study (Appendices E2, E3).

[Letterhead]

Date

Dear [NAME],

Hello. My name is [name] and I am writing to you as a member of the research team for *Understanding Children's Transition from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)*, a study funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You may recall that we reached out to you in [fall 2021 / winter 2022] about the study.

OPRE has contracted NORC, with subcontracts to Child Trends and the National P-3 Center, to conduct the study. **At this time, we are happy to formally invite [name of grantee] to participate in the study and share your expertise about transition practices.**

About the Study: The purpose of the HS2K study (September 2019 – September 2023) is to better understand how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools. Central to this project is a systems approach that recognizes that effective transitions require intentional engagement from *both* the sending programs (Head Start) and the receiving programs (elementary schools). This approach also recognizes that transition strategies and practices must be implemented at multiple levels – among classroom teachers in Head Start and kindergarten, families and teachers, elementary school principals and Head Start directors, Head Start grantees and school districts, and state and federal agencies. Findings from this work will benefit both Head Start programs and the early education field more broadly.

Timing: In the winter/spring of 2022, we plan to conduct case studies of six Head Start programs, exploring in-depth transition practices across Head Start programs and elementary schools.

Next steps: We would like to schedule a phone or video call with you in the next few weeks to re-connect about the HS2K study, explore your participation, address any questions or concerns that you may have, and discuss the feasibility of on-site or remote visit (which includes interviews with a Head Start administrator, center director, teachers, staff, and a focus group with Head Start parents).

The call will last 60 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. **Please let me know if you are available on any of the following dates and times.**

Date	Time	Time zone
Date	Time	Time zone
Date	Time	Time zone

If none of these dates/times work for you, please provide some options. We would appreciate hearing from you by [date].

Once we agree on a date and time for the call, we will send you a meeting invitation with a [*link for video/call-in number and passcode*] for the call. You are welcome to invite others from your team to join the call. Thank you for considering this invitation. The HS2K Team looks forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E5: Case Study Recruitment Email to Local Education Agency

Note: The purpose of this letter is to formally invite the Local Education Agency to participate. Through outreach to sites, the team will have already reached out to the Head Start grantee and Local Education Agency to assess their joint interest and feasibility of participating in the comparative multisite case study (Appendices E2, E3).

[Letterhead]

Date

Dear [NAME],

Hello. My name is [name] and I am writing to you as a member of the research team for *Understanding Children's Transition from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)*, a study funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You may recall that we reached out to you in [fall 2021 /winter 2022] about the study, as the [name of Local Education Agency] was recommended as a candidate for the case studies by [name of Head Start grantee].

OPRE has contracted NORC, with subcontracts to Child Trends and the National P-3 Center, to conduct the study. **At this time, we are happy to formally invite [name of Local Education Agency] to participate in the study and share your expertise about transition practices.**

About the Study: The purpose of the HS2K study is to better understand how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools. Central to this project is a systems approach that recognizes that effective transitions require intentional engagement from *both* the sending programs (Head Start) and the receiving programs (elementary schools). This approach also recognizes that transition strategies and practices must be implemented at multiple levels – among classroom teachers in Head Start and kindergarten, families and teachers, elementary school principals and Head Start directors, Head Start grantees and school districts, and state and federal agencies. Findings from this work will benefit both Head Start programs and the early education field more broadly.

Timing: In the winter/spring of 2022, we plan to conduct case studies of six Head Start programs, exploring in-depth transition practices across Head Start programs and elementary schools.

Next steps: We would like to schedule a phone or video call with you in the next few weeks to re-connect about the HS2K study, explore your participation, address any questions or concerns that you may have, and discuss the feasibility of on-site or remote visit (which includes interviews with a Local Education Agency administrator, elementary principals, kindergarten teachers, and elementary school staff). The call will last 60 minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. **Please let me know if you are available on any of the following dates and times.**

Date	Time	Time zone
Date	Time	Time zone

Date	Time	Time zone

If none of these dates/times work for you, please provide some options. We would appreciate hearing from you by [date].

Once we agree on a date and time for the call, we will send you a meeting invitation with a [*link for video/call-in number and passcode*] for the call. You are welcome to invite others from your team to join the call. Thank you for considering this invitation. The HS2K Team looks forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E6: Head Start Family Focus Group Selection Notification Email

Note: The purpose of this email is to notify Head Start families of their selection for the site focus group and confirm their participation and availability.

[Letterhead]

[Date]

Dear Head Start Parent:

We recently spoke on the phone about your potential participation in the Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions study. Thank you for your time! We heard from your child's Center Director that you might be willing to share your family's experiences getting ready for kindergarten, and **we are writing to officially invite you to take part in our family discussion group.**

This 90-minute discussion group will include other parents and guardians at your center and will take place the week of [insert date range]. Your input will provide the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with important information about the experiences of families whose children are entering kindergarten. **We hope you will join us!**

As a thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 gift card. Participation is voluntary. You can stop participating at any time and there are no consequences if you do. You will not be identified in any reports.

If you would like to participate, or have any questions, please contact [name] at NORC at [\[name@norc.org\]](mailto:[name@norc.org]) or [xxx.xxx.xxxx]. Additionally, we ask that you provide your time availability here [insert hyperlink] so that we may schedule the discussion group at a convenient time for everyone.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

E7: Thank You Email to Head Start Grantee Directors after Outreach Call

Note: The purpose of this email is to thank the Head Start grantee for participating in the outreach call.

TO: [HEAD START GRANTEE DIRECTOR]

FROM: [PROJECT DIRECTOR]

CC: [OUTREACH COORDINATOR]

SUBJECT: Nomination as a case study site for the federally-funded study “Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)”

Dear [NAME],

Thank you very much for talking with us about the Head Start to Kindergarten Transition (HS2K) project and your nomination to participate in the case study. It was very helpful to learn more about your Head Start agency’s approach to kindergarten transitions.

[IF INTERESETED AND WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED]

We are glad that [HEAD START AGENCY NAME] is interested in being considered as one of the six case study sites. As noted on the call, we will be back in touch around [MONTH, DATE] to have a follow-up discussion about [HEAD START AGENCY NAME’S] interest in participating and the next steps to doing so. We look forward to reconnecting then!

[IF NOT INTERESTED AND DECLINED FURTHER CONSIDERATION]

We are sorry to learn that it would not be feasible for [HEAD START AGENCY NAME] to take part in the HS2K study and serve as one of the case study sites. We completely understand and appreciate that you took the time to consider it! We wish you the very best.

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E8: Thank You Email to Local Education Agency Administrators after Outreach Call

Note: The purpose of this email is to thank the Local Education Agency Administrator for participating in the outreach call and acknowledge 1) interest in participating in the study or 2) declining further consideration.

TO: [LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR]

FROM: [PROJECT DIRECTOR]

CC: [OUTREACH COORDINATOR]

SUBJECT: Nomination as a case study site for the federally-funded study “Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)”

Dear [NAME],

Thank you very much for talking with us about the Head Start to Kindergarten Transition (HS2K) project and your nomination to participate in the case study. It was very helpful to learn more about your school district’s approach to kindergarten transitions.

[IF INTERESED AND WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED]

We are glad that [LEA NAME] is interested in being considered as one of the six case study sites. As noted on the call, we will be back in touch around [MONTH, DATE] to have a follow-up discussion about [LEA NAME’S] interest in participating and the next steps to doing so. We look forward to reconnecting then!

[IF NOT INTERESTED AND DECLINED FURTHER CONSIDERATION]

We are sorry to learn that it would not be feasible for [LEA NAME] to take part in the HS2K study and serve as one of the case study sites. We completely understand and appreciate that you took the time to consider it! We wish you the very best.

Regards,

[Name]

Attached: Project Description

E9: Thank You Letter for Participation



1155 East 60th Street
2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 256-6000
fax (773) 256-6001

www.norc.org

Dear <Name>,

Thank you for taking part in the *Understanding Children's Transition from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)* project. We appreciate your time and insights!

The information you shared will provide the Administration for Children and Families with important information about Head Start grantees' strategies and practices on transitioning children from Head Start to kindergarten.

If you have any additional questions, you may contact us at [number] or HS2Kproject@norc.org.

Thank you again for your help with this important research.

Sincerely,

Stacy Ehrlich, Ph.D.

NORC at the University of Chicago

Kyle DeMeo Cook, Ph.D.

K Research Strategies, Inc.