

**Draft Phase 3 Interview Guides**  
**Study of Disabilities Service and Inclusion in Head Start**

**Introduction - All Guides**

[FILL BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENT FROM PHASE 2 SURVEY]:

**Respondent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Type:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Setting(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Region(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete the online survey of EHS/HS DSCs. We appreciate you agreeing to talk to us today to tell us more about your role and the services you provide to children with disabilities and their families. Specifically, we'll be asking you about **[SELECTED INTERVIEW TOPIC]**.

Please remember, your responses here will not be reported to your supervisor. The information will not be used for monitoring purposes and ACF funding for your program will not be effected. Quotations from this interview may be selected for inclusion in reports, but will be adjusted as needed to ensure that you and your program are not identifiable.

## Interview Guide 1: Partnerships with Disability Service Providers

**OBJECTIVE:** To describe how DSCs collaborate with LEA and Part C disability service providers, formally and informally, to provide services for children with disabilities and suspected delays in their EHS/HS program.

**Additional Selection Criterion:** Indicated that their program has partnerships with community-based service providers (EXTCLB11)

**Interviewer:** We would like to hear about the strategies you use to collaborate with:

- service providers to provide services for children with disabilities; and
- Community-based service providers for children found ineligible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

You provided some information on these topics in the online survey you completed. Now we would like to learn more about which strategies are successful for engaging and communicating with disability service providers and what has been challenging.

1. **[IF DSCR06 = a or c ASK:]** In what ways do you collaborate with Part C to support children with disabilities?
2. **[IF DSCR06 = b or c ASK:]**
  - a. In what ways do you collaborate with Local Education Agency (LEA) partners to support children with disabilities or suspected delays in your program?
3. You also indicated that your program has established partnerships for providing services for children found ineligible under IDEA.
  - a. How do you establish these partnerships to provide services for children found ineligible under IDEA?
    - i. *Prompt:* Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Interagency agreements, subcontract for consultant services
  - b. Is it ever hard to establish these partnerships?
  - c. Can you tell us more about how you collaborate with these providers for children found ineligible for IDEA?
  - d. Is it ever hard to collaborate with these providers?
  - e. How do these partners support the provision of services in your program?
  - f. Is it ever hard to schedule or coordinate the delivery of services?
4. How do your LEA, Part C, and community service providers help to ensure that the services provided are racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically responsive to the population you serve?
  - a. Can you share some success stories about times these partners helped your program tailor services to the populations you serve?
  - b. Can you also share some examples of times when services were not responsive to the needs of racially, ethnically, culturally, or linguistically diverse populations you serve?

5. **[IF DSCR06 = a or c and EXTCLB05 = c, d, or e]** Your responses in the survey indicated that your Part C partner(s) [is/are] not fully meeting the needs of the eligible children in your program.
  - a. Can you describe the gaps and how your program is trying to address them?
    - i. **Probe:** Has your program tried to build other partnerships or agreements to fill that gap?
    - ii. **Probe:** [IF YES] Please describe. Who are you partnering with?
  
6. **[IF DSCR06 = b or c and EXTCLB06 = c, d, or e]** You indicated in the survey that your LEA partner(s) [is/are] not fully meeting the needs of the IDEA-eligible children in your program.
  - a. Can you describe the gaps and how your program is trying to address them?
  - b. Has your programs tried to build other partnerships or agreements to fill that gap?
    - i. **Probe:** [IF YES] Who are you partnering with?
  
7. What are the biggest challenges your program faces in delivering services to children with disabilities or suspected delays?
  - a. What do you or your program do to try and overcome those challenges?
  
8. Next, I'd like to discuss the process for developing MOUs and/or interagency agreements with Part C, LEA, and/or community-based service providers.
  - a. **[IF EXTCLB04 = b or c (somewhat or highly involved)]** Can you tell us a bit more about your level of involvement in developing these MOUs/IAs?
    - i. What kinds of processes and/or services are stipulated in these agreements?
    - ii. How long do these negotiations usually take?
  
  - b. **[IF EXTCLB 04 = a (not involved)]** In the survey, you noted that are not involved in the development of these agreements. Does that ever present challenges for your work?
    - i. Would you want to be more involved/informed about your program's MOU/interagency agreements?
  
9. **[IF DSCR06 = a or c ASK]** In your experience, what are the most successful practices for collaborating with Part C?
  - a. Do you have a story you can share about a particularly successful collaboration with a Part C provider?
  
10. **[IF DSCR06 = b or c ASK]** In your experience, what are the most successful practices for collaborating with LEA?
  - a. Do you have a story you can share about a successful collaboration with an LEA provider?
  
11. What are the most successful practices for collaborating with community-based service providers (who serve children not eligible under IDEA)?
  - a. Do you have a story you can share about a particularly successful collaboration with a community-based service provider?

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12. If the Office of Head Start dedicated additional money to supporting partnerships with disability services partner agencies, how would you suggest that your program spend those funds?

## Interview Guide 2: Teacher Training and Other Professional Development

**OBJECTIVE:** To describe how DSCs evaluate effectiveness of trainings and how training needs are identified and addressed.

**Interviewer:** We would like to hear about your program's trainings to support children with disabilities or suspected delays and their families. Thank you for responding to our survey! For our conversation today, we want build on what you reported in the survey to learn more about the types of trainings that your program provides.

1. In the survey, you indicated that you [FILL LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY FROM DSCR14a<sup>iii</sup>] for assessing teachers' needs for training or other resources.
  - a. Please describe how you determine training needs for program staff who are supporting children with disabilities and suspected delays and their families?
    - i. **Probe:** How does your program assess needs?
    - ii. **Probe:** Do teachers ask for trainings?
  - b. Who makes the final decisions on what training topics are provided?
2. Currently, what are some of the most pressing teacher training needs that you or other program staff have identified for serving children with disabilities/suspected delays and their families?
3. After your program has identified a need for disability or inclusion-related teacher training, what steps are taken to meet that need?
  - a. What sources do you turn to?
    - i. *Prompt:* community-based service providers, Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network, Part C/LEA, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC)
  - b. Who is involved in the training decisions?
4. Has there ever been a time when your program was unable to provide a needed disability or inclusion-related training?
  - i. **Probe:** [IF YES] Please describe.
  - ii. *Prompt:* Any other time?

**IF DSC DID NOT REPORT ARRANGING OR PROVIDING ANY OF THE TRAININGS IN SPRT04, SKIP TO Q8.**

5. In the survey, we asked you to indicate the disability or inclusion-related trainings that your program provided in the last 12 months.
  - a. How do you determine frequency of disability or inclusion-related trainings?
    - i. **Probe:** Are there trainings you feel should be provided more often than every 12 months?
  - b. What formats have you used to provide these trainings?
    - i. [If only one identified] Are there any other formats you use to provide trainings?
    - ii. *Prompt:* coaching, small groups, a learning community, individual support, workshops, lecture series, learning management system
  - c. **Probe:** Are trainings ever infused throughout your program activities?

- i. *Prompt:* During staff meetings, included within other staff trainings that aren't primarily disability-related, as part of program-wide initiatives
  6. We're also interested to learn about the effectiveness of the disability or inclusion-related trainings provided by your program.
    - a. How do you know a training has worked?
      - i. Have you measured any change in teacher knowledge or behaviors?
    - b. Which trainings have been the most effective? Which have addressed your goals and objectives?
      - i. What features of the training made it successful?
        1. *Prompt:* materials provided, level of need, interest in topic, request from teacher vs. need identified by management, training method, frequency
        2. *Prompt:* Which trainings have been less successful?
7. **[IF SPRT04i = Yes, I solely provided the training OR Yes, I provided the training with others OR Yes, others provided the training]** In the survey, you noted that your program provides teacher training on culturally responsive and appropriate practices for working with children with disabilities and their families.
  - a. Please describe the training provided.
    - i. *Prompt:* Do you partner with individuals or organizations to train your staff on culturally responsive and appropriate practices? Please describe.
  - b. Can you say more about other resources your program uses to provide staff with guidance on cultural beliefs, practices, customs, and traditions to help support children with disabilities and suspected delays and their families?
    - i. Can you give me an example of a time you used these resources?
    - ii. *Prompt:* organizations, people, materials
8. **[IF DSC DID NOT ARRANGE FOR OR PROVIDE ANY TRAINING TO PROGRAM STAFF IN SPRT04.]** In the survey, you indicated that you have not arranged for or provided training to program staff on disabilities and inclusion-related topics in the last 12 months. Why not?
  - a. *Prompt:* Training wasn't needed? Training was needed but not available? Other reason?
9. **[IF SPRT04i = NO]** In the survey, you noted that your program has not provided teacher training on culturally responsive and appropriate practices for working with children with disabilities and their families.
  - a. Even if targeted, formal training is not occurring, do teachers have other opportunities to receive training about culturally responsive and appropriate practices
    - i. *Prompt:* during staff meetings, included within other staff trainings, working one-on-one with teachers
  - b. Why do you think your program has not yet provided this type of formal training?
  - c. Does your program have other resources for to provide staff with guidance on cultural beliefs, practices, customs, and traditions to help support children with disabilities and suspected delays and their families?
    - i. Have you made use of these resources?

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ii. Can you give me an example of a time you used these resources?

*Prompt:* People, materials

10. What is the level of need in your program for training on culturally and linguistically responsive practices for working with children with disabilities/suspected delays and their families?
11. If the Office of Head Start dedicated additional money for teacher and other staff trainings related to disability services and inclusion, how would you suggest that your program spend those funds?

## Interview Guide 3: Recruitment and Enrollment of Children with Disabilities and Suspected Delays

**OBJECTIVE:** To describe the strategies DSCs use to recruit and enroll children with disabilities into their EHS/HS program.

**Interviewer:** We would like to hear about the strategies your program uses to recruit and enroll children with disabilities into your EHS/HS program. We would like to build on the information you provided in the online survey to learn more about recruitment practices and the challenges you face.

1. In the survey, you indicated strategies that have been successful in your program for recruiting children with identified or suspected disabilities and/or delays including: [FILL FROM RSEA 04]
  - a. Please describe your most successful strategy for recruitment?
    - i. *Prompt:* referrals, advertising
  - b. What has made these strategies successful for your program?
  - c. How does your program reach out to those most in need in your community?
2. In the survey, you indicated that the following factors make it challenging to recruit children with identified or suspected disabilities and/or delays into your program: [FILL FROM RSEA02 if R indicated somewhat challenging, very challenging, or extremely challenging]
  - a. How has your program worked to overcome the challenges?
3. In the survey, you noted that it is [LEVEL OF EASE OR DIFFICULTY] [FILL FROM RSEA01] to meet the 10 percent requirement for the enrollment of children with disabilities.
  - a. [IF RSEA01 = c or d (VERY EASY OR EASY)]: What factors help your program meet the 10 percent requirement easily?
  - b. [IF RSEA01 = a or b (VERY DIFFICULT OR DIFFICULT)]: What factors make it difficult for your program to meet the 10 percent requirement?
4. When, on average, in the program period of operation does your program meet the 10 percent requirement?
  - a. *Prompt:* Two weeks after opening? Three months after opening? Immediately?)
  - b. Is recruitment of children with disabilities occurring throughout the program period of operation?
5. Has your program had to request a waiver related to the 10 percent requirement?
  - a. [IF YES] What has been your program's experience requesting a waiver?
    - i. *Prompt:* issues regarding instructions, what to include in the waiver request, when the decision is made
6. What advice would you give to other programs having challenges recruiting and enrolling children with disabilities and suspected delays?

ASK Q7 – 8 if DSCR06 = a or c.

Next, we'd like to learn more about the process for referring children to Part C for evaluation.



7. What helps the Part C evaluation process go smoothly?
  - a. What do you do to facilitate the evaluation process for families?
8. How do you learn about Part C evaluation results and eligibility determinations?

ASK Q9 – 10 if DSCR06 = b or c.

Next, we'd like to learn more about the process for referring children to LEA for evaluation.

9. What helps the LEA evaluation process go smoothly?
  - a. What do you do to facilitate the evaluation process for families?
10. How do you learn about LEA evaluation results and eligibility determinations?

ASK Q11 if DSCR06 = c.

11. In what ways does the process for referring children for evaluation differ when you're working with Part C versus the LEA?
12. If the Office of Head Start dedicated additional money to supporting the recruitment, enrollment, and referral of children with disabilities or suspected delays, how would you suggest that your program spend those funds?

## Interview Guide 4: Family Collaboration

**OBJECTIVE:** To describe how DSCs communicate and build relationships with families of children with disabilities and suspected delays in their EHS/HS program.

**Interviewer:** We would like to learn more about the strategies you use to collaborate with families of children with disabilities and suspected delays. With this conversation, we will build on the information you provided in the online survey to learn more about strategies and the challenges you face.

1. What challenges have you experienced in your role as a DSC when communicating with families with children with disabilities/suspected delays?
  - a. *Prompt:* hard to reach, lack of internet access, frequently changing contact information, language barriers, cultural barriers
  - b. Are some families very hard to communicate with?
  - c. In what ways have you tried to overcome these challenges?
2. Would you please share a recent example of how you've worked with a family of a child with disabilities who needed multiple services or a high level of support?
  - a. How did you build the relationship with the family?
  - b. What challenges did you face coordinating or collaborating with the family?
3. How do you support families who are just learning about their child's disabilities and/or suspected delays for the first time?
  - a. **Probe:** Can you think of an example you can share with us?
  - b. **Probe:** How do you typically begin these conversations?
  - c. **Probe:** What resources or other staff do you work with in supporting these families?
4. Some families are reluctant to discuss their child's disabilities or delays, and some are reluctant to have their child receive disability services.
  - a. For these families, in what ways do you and your program support these families?
  - b. From your experience, is culture or language ever part of communication barriers with families?
5. We're also interested in learning about how you work with families from underserved populations, such as teen parents, families that are homeless, or families with children in the foster care system. What are some of the strategies you use to engage families from underserved populations when providing disability services?
6. How can families be advocates for their children with disabilities?
  - a. Does your program actively support parents as advocates for their children?
    - i. [If yes] How does your program do this?
7. How did you learn and develop effective strategies for working with families of children with disabilities or delays?
  - a. Which trainings or experiences made the biggest difference for your work with families of children with disabilities or delays?

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8. In the survey, you noted that it is [LEVEL OF EASE OR DIFFICULTY] **[FILL FROM FAMCLB11]** to get support and guidance on the cultural beliefs, practices, customs, and traditions of all the diverse families of children with disabilities and suspected delays you serve.
  - a. **[IF FAMCLB11 = c or d (VERY EASY OR EASY)]** Can you describe the type of support or guidance you received?
    - i. **Probe:** Who provided this support?
    - ii. Did it help your program better serve children and families from diverse backgrounds?
  - b. **[IF FAMCLB11 = a or b (VERY DIFFICULT OR DIFFICULT)]** What kind of support or guidance does your program need?
    - iii. Did your program end up receiving this kind of support? If so, from whom?
  
9. If the Office of Head Start dedicated additional money to supporting families with a child with disabilities, how would you suggest that your program spend those funds?

## Interview Guide 5: Transitioning Children with Disabilities

**OBJECTIVE:** To describe the best practices, challenges, and solutions for transitioning children with disabilities.

**Interviewer:** We would like to hear about the strategies your program uses to support children with disabilities and their families as they transition from your program into other settings (for example, kindergarten or other early care settings). In the survey, we asked you about activities associated with transitions. Today, we would like to build on the information you provided to learn more about the strategies.

First, I'd like to discuss your experience engaging with receiving settings.

1. [IF DSCR06 = a or c] In the survey, you indicated that the following receiving settings are challenging to work with: [FILL FROM TRANS01 if R indicated sometimes challenging, often challenging, always challenging].
  - a. What challenges have you faced working with these receiving settings?
  - b. **Probe:** What about cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the receiving program – does that sometimes make these transitions challenging?
  - c. **Probe:** What about a lack of alignment between your program and the receiving program's policies and practices - can this create challenges?
2. [IF DSCR06 = b or c] In the survey, you indicated that the following receiving settings are challenging to work with: [FILL FROM TRANS09 if R indicated sometimes challenging, often challenging, always challenging].
  - a. What challenges have you faced working with these receiving settings?
  - b. **Probe:** What about cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the receiving program?
  - c. **Probe:** What about policy and practice alignment, is this an issue?
3. [IF DSCR06 = a or c] In the survey, you indicated that the following receiving settings are rarely or never challenging to work with: [FILL FROM TRANS01 if R indicated never challenging or rarely challenging].
  - a. What makes these settings easy to work with?
  - b. **Probe:** What are the receiving staff like?
  - c. **Probe:** What about cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the receiving program?
4. [IF DSCR06 = b or c] In the survey, you indicated that the following receiving settings are rarely or never challenging to work with: [FILL FROM TRANS09 if R indicated never challenging or rarely challenging]. What makes these settings easy to work with?
  - a. What makes these settings easy to work with?
  - b. **Probe:** What are the receiving staff like?
  - c. **Probe:** What about cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the receiving program?
5. What are the best transition practices you have seen from a receiving program?

6. Now let's talk a little bit about starting the transition plan.
  - a. What kinds of challenges have you faced in starting transition planning?
  - b. How have you worked to overcome these challenges?
  
7. Next, we'd like to talk about how you work with families of children with disabilities during the transition process.
  - a. How do you prepare families to transition their children with disabilities to other settings?
  - b. How do you ensure that the transition process is culturally and linguistically appropriate for children with disabilities and their families from diverse backgrounds?
  
8. **[IF DSCR06 = a or c]** How do you collaborate with Part C to support the transition of children with disabilities found eligible under IDEA from EHS to HS or another receiving program?
  - a. In the survey you indicated that it is [LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY] **[FILL FROM TRANS02]** to transition a child with disabilities or suspected delays from Part C to the LEA.
    - i. **[IF TRANS02 = c, d, or e (sometimes, often, or always challenging)]** In what ways is it challenging to transition a child with disabilities or suspected delays from Part C to the LEA? What factors make it difficult to transition a child with disabilities or suspected delays from Part C to the LEA?
    - ii. **[IF TRANS02 = a or b (never or rarely challenging)]** What factors help the transition process go smoothly?
  
9. **[IF DSCR06 = b or c]** How do you collaborate with the LEA to support the transition of children with disabilities found eligible under IDEA from HS to Kindergarten or another receiving program?
  
10. What is the transition process for children not found eligible under IDEA but in need of additional supports?
  - a. *Prompt:* Coordination of services for in-eligible children at the receiving setting, identification of options for funding supports
  
11. What lessons have you learned based on your programs transition experiences?
  - a. **Probe:** What lessons have you learned from transitioning children to child care settings that are not Head Start programs or public schools?
  
12. What advice or recommendations would you give other DSCs regarding best practices or successful strategies for transitioning children with disabilities from their program into other settings?
  
13. Overall, how do you feel your program is doing with respect to transitioning children with disabilities?
  - a. Are you comfortable with the transition support they receive?
  - b. Is there anything else your program could be doing to better support children with disabilities when they transition from your program to other settings?

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- c. Are there other activities or resources that could be helpful for transitioning children with disabilities?
14. If the Office of Head Start dedicated additional money to support the transition of children with disabilities from your program to other schools or care settings, how would you suggest that your program spend those funds?