



Head Start Family Focus Group Protocol

Before we begin, I would like to note that all information we collect from you and all others today and in the future will be kept private. Your responses today will be used to help better understand how Head Start programs, elementary schools, and community organizations are supporting children and families as they transition into kindergarten. We estimate our conversation today to last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Additionally, federal law states that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this data collection is 0970-0XXX and the expiration date is XX/XX/XXXX. I can repeat that, if you'd like to keep it for reference.

I. Introductions

To start, I'd like to do a quick round of introductions, just to give you a chance to get to know each other. Let's go around the group, and if you would, please share:

1. Your first name and your child's first name?
2. *[If more than one classroom]* Which Head Start classroom your child is in or your child's Head Start teacher?
3. Is this your child's first year in Head Start? How long has your child been in Head Start?
4. Is this the first time you have a child who will be transitioning into kindergarten?

II. What Transitions Mean to Families

Now, I'd like to learn more about what a successful transition to kindergarten means to you, and

your hopes and any concerns you may have about sending your child to kindergarten.

5. We know that the transition to kindergarten is a big one for children and families. When you think about the transition to kindergarten, what does it mean for you and your child to have a "successful" transition into kindergarten?
6. What do you think your child will be most excited about?
7. What are you as a parent/family member most excited about?
8. What, if any, are your biggest concerns about the transition to kindergarten for your child and your family?
 - a. *Probe for concerns about access to preferred schools, supportive environment that meets your child's developmental needs (inclusion), and the responsiveness of different school options to families' language and cultural origins.*

III. Transition Activities and Supports

Next, I'd like to learn about some of the supports you have received and any activities you may have participated in to help prepare yourself and your child for the kindergarten transition.

9. Do you talk with anyone about getting your child ready for kindergarten? For example, a teacher, a relative, other center staff, etc.?
 - a. Who do you mainly talk to about getting your child ready for kindergarten?
 - b. What kinds of things do you talk about?
10. How often do you and your child's Head Start teacher talk about your child's transition to kindergarten?

- a. Can you give me an example of what you talked about during these conversations?
 - b. What about these conversations has been the most helpful? Not as helpful?
 - c. Does your child's Head Start teacher share information with you about the transition to kindergarten in any other ways?
 - i. *Probe for newsletters, emails, social media*
11. In what ways, if any, have your Head Start teachers or other staff talked with you about goals for your child's learning, or learn more about your child's needs?
- a. How about to talk about your goals for your child's transition into kindergarten?
 - b. How helpful were those conversations for preparing for the transition?
12. Has your child's teacher or other staff member shared any information with you about what you can do at home to prepare for the transition to kindergarten?
- a. What kinds of activities did the staff recommend?
 - b. Did you use this information or do some of the activities? What did you do?
 - i. If you did not use this information or do some of the activities, why not?
13. In addition to what you just shared, what, if any, other things are you doing to help get your child ready for kindergarten?
- a. Have you shared what you are doing with your child's teacher or others at the Head Start program?
 - ii. Are you involved with other families in these activities?
 - b. Is there anyone else who is supporting you and your child on the transition?

- i. *Probe for kindergarten teacher; elementary school staff; family support specialist; other support staff; special education teachers and/or advocates; pediatrician; family, friends, or neighbors; other community agency/organization(s)*
 - c. *[If working with multiple people/orgs] Is the information you get about kindergarten transitions from different people consistent or different from one another? If different, what are some of the differences?*
 - i. What have you found the most helpful? Not helpful?
14. Aside getting information about the kindergarten transition, what else has your child's current Head Start teacher or staff done to help you and your child prepare for the kindergarten transition?
- a. *Probe for: met with their k teacher, set up a visit to elementary school/k classroom, set up the Head Start classroom in ways that help their child know what to expect in a kindergarten classroom*
15. What kinds of things has your child's soon-to-be kindergarten teacher or school done to help you and your child prepare for the kindergarten transition?
- a. *Probe for: met with family (in-person or virtually), asked parents to share information about child, organized activities for families/children to meet each other (in-person or virtually)*
16. Of all the activities you have mentioned, which ones have been most helpful, in getting ready for the kindergarten transition?
- a. How did they help your child?

- b. How did they help you?
17. Were there any activities that you did not find helpful? Can you explain why you didn't find it helpful?
18. Was there anything that you wish the Head Start Program might have done differently to support your child through the transition to kindergarten?
19. Is there anything that you wish your child's upcoming kindergarten teacher or elementary school might do differently to support your child for the transition to kindergarten?

IV. Summary and Wrap-up

Lastly, I have a couple of wrap up questions for you.

20. Overall, how prepared do YOU feel about your child's transition into kindergarten? Why or why not?
21. Overall, how prepared do you think your CHILD is? Why or why not?

Those are all the questions I have. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me?