



Community Partner Interview 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.

In this interview, we would like to learn about your role and what you and your organization do to support children and families' transition into kindergarten. Specifically, we are interested in any collaborations you may have with local Head Start programs and school districts.

We recognize that this past year or so has been unprecedented with the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purpose of our study, we would like you to think about your experiences during this [program/school] year.

I. Background

I'd like to begin by learning a little about you and your background.

1. First, can you tell us a little bit about your organization and its mission?
 - a. Do you serve specific communities, school districts, neighborhoods, etc.?
 - b. Do you serve specific populations of children, families, etc.?

- c. What types of supports do you provide to families and children?
2. How long have you been at your organization/agency?
 - a. *Probe for role and responsibilities.*
3. What did you do prior to your position here?
 - a. *Probe for prior elementary and early childhood experience.*

II. Transition Perspectives and Supports

In this next set of questions, we would like to learn more about your organization's role in supporting children and families during the transition to kindergarten.

4. What does a "successful transition to kindergarten" mean to you?
 - a. How does supporting successful transitions to kindergarten contribute to your organization's broader goals?
5. What is your organization's role in providing transition supports within your community?
6. What specific supports do you provide to children around the transition? Can you give me some examples?
 - a. What specific supports do you provide to families around the transition? Can you give me some examples?
 - b. How do you support children and families with specialized needs?
 - a. *Probe for supports for special populations of students and families (e.g., exposure to trauma, special education needs, cultural and linguistic variations, exposure to the child welfare system)*

- c. How do you support Head Start centers, schools, and districts around kindergarten transitions?
 - a. Has this been any different since the start of COVID?

III. Family Engagement in Transition Process

- 7. How do you involve or engage with families to help support successful transitions?
 - a. How, if at all, has this changed since COVID?
- 8. Of the strategies you use, which do parents engage in the most?
 - a. About how many of the families you work with would you say do these practices?
 - b. What strategies has your organization used to involve families that are harder to reach?
 - i. How successful have those efforts been?
 - c. What benefits have you seen as a result of families' efforts to help their child prepare for the kindergarten transition?
 - d. What challenges do you see families face in preparing their child for the transition?
 - i. *Probe for challenges as experienced by special populations of students and families (e.g., exposure to trauma, special education needs, cultural and linguistic variations, exposure to the child welfare system)*

IV. Working with Head Start Programs and Schools

Now I'd like to learn a little bit more about how your organization works with local Head Start programs and/or elementary schools/districts. I would also like to learn more about the specific ways you collaborate with staff from those programs and schools.

9. About how many different Head Start programs do you work with?
 - a. About how many elementary districts/schools do you work with?
10. *[If more than one district/school/program]* Do staff in your organization work with some Head Start programs, districts, and/or schools more closely than others?
 - a. *[If yes]* Which ones?
 - b. Who do you work with most closely in these schools, districts, and/or programs?
 - i. *Probe for names, positions, and titles*

For the next set of questions, we will focus specifically on your relationship with **[district(s) / school(s) / Head Start program(s) in our study]**.

11. How did your relationship(s) with these/this **[district / school(s) / program(s) in our study]** develop?
12. How often do you collaborate with staff in Head Start programs **[in our case study]**? In elementary schools **[in our case study]**?
13. When you collaborate with staff from **[elementary school(s) AND Head Start program(s) in our study]** around kindergarten transitions, what do you do together?
 - a. *[If they work with BOTH HS and ELEM]:* Do you all collaborate, or do you work separately with these Head Start and elementary staff/teachers?
 - b. *Probe for strategies and practices that are differentiated for special populations of students and families (e.g., exposure to trauma, special education needs, cultural and linguistic variations, exposure to the child welfare system).*
 - c. *Probe for differences across Head Start programs, districts, schools, or programs they work with.*

14. What, if any, barriers or challenges have you faced in working with [district / school / Head Start program in our case study] around kindergarten transitions?

a. How, if at all, has this changed since COVID?

15. How has the way you collaborate with Head Start or elementary school staff changed since COVID-19, if at all?

16. Of all the ways you have collaborated with these Head Start and/or elementary staff, what has been the most useful?

a. *Probe: For you? For teachers or staff in Head Start? For elementary teachers/staff? For children? For families?*

b. Can you give me examples of some of the benefits you've seen for children and families?

17. Of all the ways you have collaborated with these Head Start and/or elementary staff, what has been least helpful? Why do you think that is?

18. You just described your relationship with [elementary districts/schools / Head Start programs in our study]. Is there anything notable that you would like to share about how you work with *other* [elementary districts / schools / Head Start programs]?

Final Reflections Wrap Up

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

19. Overall, what kinds of supports do you wish you had to better help families and children transition to kindergarten?

a. *Probe for community-level supports, policies*

20. Is there anything else you would like to share about how COVID-19 impacted your approach or collaborations with Head Start or elementary school staff around kindergarten transitions?

Those are all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about transitions?