



Administrator Interview Protocol

Intended for: [Head Start Grantee and Delegate Agency Administrator / Local Education Agency Administrator]

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, what you and your [agency / district] do to support children and families' transition into kindergarten, and specifically about collaborations you may have with local [districts and elementary schools / Head Start programs]. 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. How long have you been [staff at a Head Start agency / a district administrator]?

a. Probe for title, role, and responsibilities

2. How long have you been [at this agency / in this district]?
3. What did you do prior to this role?
 - a. Probe for prior early childhood [and/or elementary] experience.

II. Transition Perspectives and Supports

In this next set of questions, we would like to learn more about your views about transitions to kindergarten, including how you define successful transitions, who you engage with around transitions, and what roles and responsibilities people take on.

4. What does a "successful transition to kindergarten" mean to you?
 - a. Probe for what it means for children, families, and teachers
 - b. [If school readiness comes up] Probe for how school readiness is tied to transitions.
5. When do you consider the transition process to begin and end? [Share that for the remainder of interview, we will be thinking about transitions as from year before kindergarten, through their entry into kindergarten, until the end of their kindergarten year]
6. What types of training or supports are provided by the [agency / district] to improve children's transition from pre-k to kindergarten? Can you share a specific example?
 - a. Probe for roles and responsibilities of [agency / district] staff.
 - b. How do [agency / district] staff support [directors / principals] around the kindergarten transition?
 - c. How do [agency / district] staff support teachers around the kindergarten transition?

- d. How do [agency / district] staff support children and families around the kindergarten transition?
7. Last year, all Head Start programs received some one-time funding related to COVID-19, to help with responding to the pandemic. Did your program use any of this funding to support your work focused on kindergarten transitions, and if so, how?
8. How has COVID-19 impacted the strategies and practices your [agency / district] uses to support kindergarten transitions?
9. Who else in your [agency / district] is responsible for supporting transitions?
 - a. How do you collaborate with these other [agency/district] staff around kindergarten transitions?
10. Do you work with any community or social service organizations/agencies to help support families and children around the transition into kindergarten?

[If yes]

 - a. What is your relationship with these organizations/agencies?
 - b. In what ways, if any, do you work together to support children and families around the kindergarten transition?

III. Family Engagement in Transition Process

Now I'd like to learn a little more about how your [agency / district] involves families in the transition process.

11. What do you believe families can do to help children transition to kindergarten?
12. How does your [agency / district] involve or engage with families around the transition to kindergarten?

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

IV. Partnership with [Districts and Elementary Schools / Head Start Programs]

This next set of questions will focus on how your [agency / district] partners with [districts and elementary schools / Head Start programs] around kindergarten transitions. *[For district level interviewees only]:* We would like to hear about your experiences working with Head Start programs specifically, rather than with other types of preschool or early childhood care and education providers.

13. Approximately how many different [districts and schools / Head Start programs] did the children in your [program / schools] transition [to / from] this year?

- a. (Grantee/delegate agency staff only) How many elementary schools?

14. Do your [agency / district] staff collaborate with staff from any of these [districts or schools / Head Start programs] around kindergarten transitions? *[If NO, skip to question #23.]*

- a. *[If yes]* With how many different [districts and/or elementary schools / Head Start programs]?

- b. Do you work with [district/school / Head Start program in our case study]?

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].

15. How did your relationship(s) with these/this [district / school(s) / program(s)] develop?

- a. Who do you or other [agency / district] staff work with most closely in these/this [district(s) / school(s) / Head Start program(s)]?

- i. *Probe for name, position, and title*
 - b. How long have you had a relationship with staff at [district / school(s) / program(s) in our study]?
16. When you or your staff collaborate with [the elementary districts / schools / Head Start programs in our study] around kindergarten transitions, what do you do together?
 - a. *Probe for specific practices, such as: information sharing, meetings, professional development/training and/or coaching around transitions, opportunities to learn about kindergarten standards, etc.*
 - 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. Please describe how you collaborate around those practices.
17. If done in collaboration with [elementary districts/schools / Head Start in our study], who funds the work? (e.g., PD/training/coaching around transitions)
 - a. *Probe for each of the practices and activities they do in collaboration with the elementary districts/schools/Head Start programs in our study*
18. Who initiated the coordination between your [agency / district] and [elementary districts/schools / Head Start programs in our study]?
19. How has the way you collaborate with [elementary districts/schools / Head Start programs in our study] staff changed since COVID-19, if any?
20. 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]?

21. In what ways did your existing relationships with [districts and schools / Head Start programs] help your [agency / district] navigate kindergarten transitions during the COVID-19 pandemic?
22. What makes it easier for you to collaborate with particular [districts/schools / Head Start programs]? What makes it harder?
23. Across all the transition-related practices your [districts/schools / Head Start programs] are implementing, which ones do you believe are most effective? What makes them so effective?
 - b. *Probe for how these practices lead to positive outcomes for teachers, families, and children. If not mentioned, ask about the outcomes raised in response to Q4 (definition of a successful kindergarten transition).*

V. Transition Policies

24. How do specific federal, state, or local policies directly influence your [agency's / district's] work around kindergarten transitions?
25. What, if any, policies, regulations, or formal guidance has your [agency / district] put in place around kindergarten transitions?
 - a. Do any of these policies (either federal policies or ones you have put in place) specifically focus on collaborating with [districts or elementary schools / Head Start programs]? In what ways?
 - b. Do any of these policies specifically focus on coordinating with community partners around transitions? In what ways?
 - i. *Probe for information sharing, joint professional development, etc.*

- c. *[If don't bring up MOA/MOU]:* Do you have a memorandum of understanding with any local [districts / Head Start programs]? If so, which [districts / Head Start programs]?
 - ii. What is in the MOA/MOU?
 - d. What, if any, types of data do the [districts or elementary schools / Head Start programs in our study] share with you? What about from other partners?
 - [If they receive data]:*
 - iii. Who collects those data?
 - iv. How is it shared?
 - v. How does your [agency / district] use those data?
 - e. What information/data, if any, does your [agency / district] share with [districts or elementary schools / Head Start programs in our study]?
26. Are there any incentives or sanctions that influence how your [agency / district] implements these transition policies? If so, please explain.
27. What supports do you think would help you and your staff implement these policies most effectively?
- f. *Probe for resources, professional supports, shared vision/values, partners, specific practices and strategies, other policies.*

VI. Final Reflections and Wrap Up

I have a couple of final wrap-up questions for you. *[Mention to district level interviewees only]*

Please think specifically about Head Start as an early childhood care and education program.

28. Among all of the practices and strategies you mentioned, what would you say are the ones you think are most useful/important for Head Start children's and families' transition success? Why?
29. What do you think is needed to help improve and sustain coordination, collaboration, and communication between Head Start programs and districts/elementary schools in order to have effective Head Start to kindergarten transitions?
- a. *Probe for differences in needs based on specific populations.*

Lastly, we acknowledge that COVID-19 may have impacted how your [agency / district] typically functions.

30. How, if at all, did COVID impact your child enrollment targets this year?
31. What do you wish your [agency / district] had in place to better support kindergarten transitions during COVID-19?
- a. What might help alleviate those challenges moving forward?

Those are all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else you think is important for me know about transitions that we have not discussed?