

# Head Start Family Focus Group Recruitment Script

*Note: The purpose of this script is to contact interested Head Start families and solicit their participation in a focus group.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ from (NORC at the University of Chicago, Child Trends, National P-3 Center). I am 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.

*Am I speaking with (name of respondent)?*

- IF YES, CONTINUE.
- IF NO, ASK FOR PERSON OR A GOOD TIME TO CALL PERSON.

I'm calling today because your child's Head Start center director recently spoke to you about our study and passed along your name as someone who might be interested in speaking with us. We are organizing a small group of parents to collectively share their experiences with preschool and preparing their children to transition to kindergarten. We would love to hear from you.

## ABOUT THE HS2K STUDY

The purpose of the HS2K study is to better understand how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools.

## FOCUS GROUP DETAILS

- To thank you for your time, 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.
- The group discussion will take place during [XX week] and take approximately 90 minutes. We are hoping to visit the center and hold the discussion in person. In light of the COVID-19

pandemic, do you have concerns about this? If so, would you be open to doing this virtually through a video call?

- Would you be interested in participating? YES NO Record response.
  - o If YES, continue below.
  - o If NO, thank the parent for considering the opportunity and end the call.

## RECORD RESPONSE \_\_\_\_\_

### FAMILY BACKGROUND INQUIRY

We want to make sure we are hearing from families with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, which is why I would like to ask a few general questions about your family background.

First, have you ever participated in parent leadership positions at your child's Head Start program? Some examples might be participating in policy councils or committees. [RECORD RESPONSE] Do you participate directly at your child's program, such as through volunteering in the classroom? [RECORD RESPONSE]

One of the purposes of family focus groups is to gather information that can improve the experiences of *all* families, which is why we would like to hear about how your family's circumstances may have influenced your Head Start experiences. However, in the focus group, nobody will be asking anyone directly to share personal details or stories. If you choose to participate, you will be able to decide what you feel comfortable talking about. With that said, I would like to list a few potentially difficult circumstances that families face, which might require special supports from Head Start and kindergarten staff, and ask whether any of them have applied to your family. You do not have to specify which circumstances apply to your family, but--after I repeat each type of circumstance with its own separate list of examples--would you mind telling me if any of the circumstances I listed have ever applied to your family?

- IF YES, CONTINUE.
- IF NO: I completely understand. These are sensitive topics to talk about. Would you feel more comfortable if I listed all of the different types of circumstances and examples together, rather than each different type separately, and then asked whether any have ever applied to your family?
  - o IF YES: Okay, I will list each of the circumstances together with all the examples first; then I will ask if any of them have ever applied to your family. Our group discussion may touch on some of these topics, but you should not feel obligated to talk about any of them if you choose to participate. [SKIP TO CLOSING]
  - o IF NO: Again, I completely understand. Our group discussion may touch on some of these topics, but you should not feel obligated to talk about any of them if you choose to participate. [SKIP TO CLOSING]

1. A significant trauma, such as death of a loved one, abuse, community violence, serious medical issues, natural disaster, or loss of income.

[IF INQUIRING AFTER EACH CIRCUMSTANCE] Has your family experienced any kind of trauma similar to these examples? Again, you do not need to specify which one—we only want to make sure that we are representing the experiences of as many families as possible.

2. Needing and receiving special education supports for your child, such as supports for a child with a physical disability, down syndrome, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, or other kinds of cognitive/behavioral needs. For example, some children have an IEP or IFSP.

[IF INQUIRING AFTER EACH CIRCUMSTANCE] Has your family needed any kind of special education support for your child?

3. Cultural and/or language barriers at school. For example, not receiving communication from your child's center/school in home language, or a school's/center's lack of knowledge about your family's culture of origin.

[IF INQUIRING AFTER EACH CIRCUMSTANCE] Has your family experienced any kind of language or cultural barriers at your child's Head Start program?

4. Needing and receiving financial assistance from a government program, for example food stamps/SNAP, job training, Medicaid health insurance, or energy bill assistance.

[IF INQUIRING AFTER EACH CIRCUMSTANCE] Has your family received some kind of financial assistance from the federal, state, or local government?

5. Housing instability, such as homelessness, staying with another family, eviction, frequent moving.

[IF INQUIRING AFTER EACH CIRCUMSTANCE] Has your family experienced any kind of housing instability?

[IF INQUIRING ALL TOGETHER] Has your family experienced any of the circumstances that I just listed? It does not have to fit the examples exactly.

Thank you for sharing. Again, we only ask to make sure we that families of all backgrounds are represented in the focus groups.

### **CLOSING**

Before I let you go, are there any questions about the study or the group discussion that I can answer for you?

If you think of any further questions about our study or the group discussion, you can contact [NAME] at [NUMBER] or [EMAIL].

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Someone from our team will follow up shortly with more information.