

**MULTI-CASE STUDY:  
FULL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR NON-HEAD START STAFF  
(COMMUNITY PARTNERS, STATE ADMINISTRATORS, ETC.)**

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## Introduction to the Project and Interview

Thank you for joining us today. My name is **[insert lead facilitator name]** and I will be facilitating this discussion today. I am from **[MEF Associates/Urban Institute]**, an independent research organization contracted by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to conduct this research project. I am joined by my colleague(s) **[insert colleague(s) names and organizations]**.

We are working on a project titled “The Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start to Early Head Start (HS2EHS).” The main goal of the project is to build the knowledge base around the conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. **Are you generally familiar with what it means to “convert enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start”?**

***If not...*** The Head Start Act of 2007 allows Head Start grantees to shift funding for Head Start preschool-age children to Early Head Start services for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. Head Start grantees may request permission to convert funded enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start, and to then reallocate those funds proportionally. There are many reasons why grantees may request permission to convert slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. As just one example, in conducting their community assessment, Head Start grantees may find that the needs of the communities they serve have changed and that there is more demand for Early Head Start services that target pregnant women, infants, and toddlers.

The purpose of our research project, and why we’re here today, is to better understand how and why programs such as **PROGRAM NAME** converted slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. In our conversation today we are hoping to learn about what factors in the larger community are affecting the supply of child care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. We’re particularly interested in understanding issues that were emerging around **DATE**, since this is the time when **PROGRAM NAME** was applying for conversion. We’re interested in hearing your perspective on issues related to the workforce, public pre-k expansion, and how programs collaborate or compete across funding streams. **Do you have any questions so far about the project?**

I also need to cover a few logistical items:

- This call should take no more than an hour to complete.
- These interviews are voluntary, and we consider the information you provide as private. You may skip any questions you don’t know the answer to or prefer not to answer. Although we will take notes, we will not share these notes with anyone outside of our research team. When we write our reports and discuss our findings, information from all the people we speak with will be compiled and summarized without identifying organizations or individual respondents by name. That said, we will provide some non-identifying information, such as respondents’ titles/roles, when discussing findings in our reports so, it’s possible

that a discerning reader could figure out from whom a piece of information originated.

- An agency may not conduct or sponsor a federal study, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is **xxxx-xxxx** and it expires **xx/xx/xxxx**.
- We do not think there are any risks to you in participating. This project will benefit researchers, funders, program administrators, and policymakers in developing and supporting understanding of the conversion process.
- We ask that you participate from a private setting, out of earshot or viewing by unauthorized persons - those not participating in the study. While we take appropriate steps to ensure security, we cannot guarantee full confidentiality if others on your end can see or hear you.

### **Do you have any questions? Do you agree to participate in this interview?**

One last thing, to help us accurately capture the information you share, we would like to record this interview. The recording is just a back-up for our notes and will be kept within our small research team and stored in a secure location that only the research team has access to. Is it okay with you if we record the interview?

(If consent given) We will begin recording now. (Notetaker presses record)

(If consent is not given) We will not record this interview.

## Section 1. Introductions

**Can you please briefly introduce yourself (name, title/role, organization)?**

**Can you describe how **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** works with or relates to **PROGRAM NAME**?**

## Section 2. Supply

**Tell us about the early childhood context in **your state/community** by describing the major types of funding for early care and education and services? Probe:**

- For preschoolers? (e.g., Head Start, federally subsidized care, state or local pre-K, religiously affiliated programs, philanthropic supported care, private-pay care)
- For infants and toddlers? (e.g., Early Head Start, center-based, home-based, federal subsidized care, religiously affiliated programs, philanthropic supported care, private-pay care, home visiting)
- For pregnant women? (e.g., home visiting, public health funding)

**Next, I have a few questions about the supply of child care and early education services in **STATE/COMMUNITY**. When answering these questions, please think back to **TIME PERIOD**, since this is the time when **PROGRAM NAME** was preparing their request to convert enrollment slots.**

### **SUPPLY FOR PRESCHOOLERS**

Thinking back to **TIME PERIOD**, how would you describe the supply of early care and education options for **PRESCHOOLERS** in your **state/community**?

- **How would you describe supply of center-based child care and early education for preschoolers relative to demand or need?**
  - o How would you describe the supply of state- or locally funded pre-K?
  - o How would you describe the supply of Head Start?
  - o How did the supply in **COMMUNITY NAME** compare to that of other regions in the state?
  - o What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality center-based care and early education for preschoolers? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
  - o What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high quality center-based care and early education for preschoolers?
  
- **How would you describe supply of family child care for preschoolers?**
  - o How would you describe the overall supply of family child care for preschoolers?
  - o How would you describe the supply of family-based Head Start for preschoolers?
  - o How did the supply of family child care in **COMMUNITY NAME** compare to that of other regions in the state?
  - o What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality family child care for preschoolers? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
  - o What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high quality family child care for preschoolers?
  
- **How would you describe the supply of home visiting for preschoolers relative to demand or need?**

### **SUPPLY FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

Thinking back to **TIME PERIOD**, how would you describe the supply of services and care for **INFANTS AND TODDLERS** in your **state/community** relative to the demand or need?

**To what extent has EHS expansion been a priority for your state/community?** Probe:

- Have you expanded EHS through EHS-Child Care Partnership Grants or EHS Expansion Grants?
  
- **How would you describe supply of center-based child care for infants and toddlers?**
  - o How did the supply in **COMMUNITY NAME** compare to that of other regions in the state?

- o What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality center-based care for infants and toddlers? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
- o What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high quality center-based care for infants and toddlers?
- **How would you describe supply of family child care for infants and toddlers?**
  - o How did the supply in **COMMUNITY NAME** compare to that of other regions in the state?
  - o What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality family-based care for infants and toddlers? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
  - o What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high-quality family-based care for infants and toddlers?
- **How would you describe supply of home visiting services for infants and toddlers relative to demand or need?**
  - o How did the supply in **COMMUNITY NAME** compare to that of other regions in the state?
  - o What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality home visiting to infants and toddlers? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
  - o What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high quality home visiting for infants and toddlers?

### **SUPPLY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN**

**Thinking back to **TIME PERIOD**, how would you describe the supply of services for **PREGNANT WOMEN** in your **state/community** relative to demand or need?**

- What types of services were available and who funded these?
- Do you know whether Early Head Start programs refer pregnant women to these services?
- What would you say are the biggest challenges to providing high-quality services to pregnant women? (e.g., workforce, professional development, funding, policies, pandemic/COVID)
- What would you say are the biggest successes around providing high-quality home visiting for pregnant women?

## **Section 3. System Coordination and Challenges**

**Next, I have a few questions about how you might characterize the successes and challenges of the early childhood system in your **state/community**.**

**Thinking back to TIME PERIOD, how would you describe the state/community leadership for early childhood care and education?**

- What did leadership do well to support families that were pregnant or had young children?
- What could leadership have done better to support families that were pregnant or had young children?

**Thinking back to TIME PERIOD, how would you describe the infant/toddler workforce?**

- What did the state/community do well to build and support a qualified workforce?
- What could the state/community have done better to build and support a qualified workforce?
- Did the state/community face challenges at this time with respect to child care and early education workforce turnover? How did you overcome those challenges?

**Thinking back to TIME PERIOD, how would you describe the workforce with respect to services for pregnant women?**

- What did the state/community do well to build and support a qualified workforce?
- What could the state/community have done better to build and support a qualified workforce?
- Did the state/community face challenges at this time with respect to turnover among the workforce providing services for pregnant women? How did you overcome those challenges?

**Thinking back to TIME PERIOD, to what extent did different program types (such as Head Start, public pre-K) collaborate OR compete with one another in your state/community?**

- If collaborative: Who facilitated this collaboration? Can you give an example of how programs collaborated or worked together?
- If competitive: Were programs competing to serve children of specific ages, children with certain characteristics, children from particular geographic areas?

## Section 4. Involvement in Conversion

The next set of questions are specifically about how you may have worked with PROGRAM NAME when they were converting slots.

*If applicable: We read in the PROGRAM NAME request for conversion that you supported them through conversion by [DESCRIBE HERE]. [Or, include the language that we heard from program staff.]*

**IF INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING THE REQUEST...**

**What aspects of the request did you collaborate on?**

**How often did you work together?**

**Did you share information or data? How so?**

**Did you work together to interpret data and understand the community's needs?**

**What went well in your collaboration on the request?**

**Were there any challenges? If so, what were those challenges?**

**IF INVOLVED IN COLLABORATING WITH THE PROGRAM ON SERVICE DELIVERY...**

**When did you start collaborating with the program? (Before or after conversion?)**

**For community partners that provide services...**

- o What services do you provide?
- o Who do you provide these services to?
- o How frequently do you offer these services?
- o How many infants, toddlers, pregnant women do you provide services to?

**How did you prepare for any changes that were required to deliver EHS service?**

**In what capacity do you collaborate on implementing services?**

**How often do you communicate? Has this changed over time?**

**What has gone well in terms of your collaboration? What has been challenging?**

**Has your role working with the grantee changed as a result of the pandemic?**

**What barriers exist that could challenge the grantee in offering high-quality Early Head Start Services?**

**To what extent do you think EHS services in the community are meeting the needs of parents with infants and toddlers?**

- Which services seem most helpful to parents with infants and toddlers?
- Which services could be improved to better meet the needs of parents with infants and toddlers? *Probe for:*
  - o *Extended/nontraditional hours*
  - o *Program options (center-based, family child care, home-based)*
- Are there certain groups of parents with infants and toddlers who still have unmet needs? If so, which parents (e.g., geographical location; language groups; cultural, racial, or ethnic groups; children of a particular age)? How do you think these groups of parents' needs are not being met/could be better met?

**To what extent do you think EHS services are meeting the needs of pregnant women?**

- Which services seem most helpful to pregnant women?
- Which services could be improved to better meet the needs of pregnant women?
- Are there certain groups of pregnant women who still have unmet needs? If so, which pregnant women (e.g., geographical location; language groups; cultural, racial, or ethnic identities; children of a particular age)? How do you think these groups of pregnant women’s needs are not being met/could be better met?

**What factors do you think are most important for **PROGRAM NAME** to be successful in delivering high-quality EHS?**

**Wrap-Up**

**Given what we have discussed, are there any other issues we haven’t touched on that you think are important for us to understand about child care in your **community/state**?**

We have one final request—we’re interested in obtaining reports or other documents that can help us understand the early childhood context in your **community/state**. **Do you know of any needs assessments or other research that might be helpful to see? Can you share these with us?**

Thank you for your sharing your time and expertise with us today. On behalf of our whole team, we are grateful for your contribution to this study.

Our next steps are to continue interviewing staff to learn about your experiences with conversion. We will use what we learn to contribute to the knowledge base about the conversion process. This knowledge may be used to inform future technical assistance resources and approaches to better support Head Start programs converting enrollment slots. If you think of anything else you’d like to share, please feel free to email the study team by responding to the email invitation to participate in this interview.

You can learn more about this study and keep up to date with what’s going on by visiting OPRE’s website and following OPRE, the Urban Institute, and MEF Associates on social media.