Instrument 1: Discussion Guide for Key Informants

BASE: Environmental Scan

Background

Thank you for joining us today. This discussion is being conducted as part of the *Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education Workforce* project, which I will refer to as BASE project. I'm going to start by sharing some information about the project [review one-page project description in Appendix B].

[This language will be used with key informants who have deep knowledge about a specific strategy or strategies aimed at building, advancing, or retaining the ECE workforce.]

By talking with you today, we're hoping to learn more about [STRATEGY] and how it is being delivered. We expect this conversation to take no more than 60 minutes.

Please know that your participation is voluntary. The information you share today will not be released to the public and will be kept private. The information you provide will help contribute to the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation's (OPRE's) understanding of strategies to build, retain, and advance ECE workers currently underway in the United States and help inform a framework to help inform what factors might influence ECE workforce employment behaviors. We will protect individually identifiable information and will summarize responses. 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 # is 0970-0356 and the expiration date is 2/29/2024.

Please feel free to ask me questions at any time.

[This language will be used with key informants who have deep knowledge about a specific data source or data sources that may help describe the ECE workforce.]

By talking with you today, we're hoping to learn more about [DATA SOURCE].

The information that you share today will help us understand how accessible [DATA SOURCE] might be and what information [DATA SOURCE] might contain that can help describe the ECE workforce, their employment behaviors, and the factors that might drive these behaviors. This will help us understand how suitable [DATA SOURCE] might be to support analyses as part of the BASE project.

Please feel free to ask me questions at any time.

Interview Protocol

From this point on, the discussion guide is meant to be tailored to the key informant being interviewed. Depending on the key informant's role and expertise, and what is already known to the BASE project team based upon the scan of publicly available information, please consider which modules and specific questions are appropriate and necessary to address gaps in information about the strategy or data source. Examples of illustrative probes are included, please adjust probes as needed to follow-up with key informants, depending upon their responses.

Module 1: Introductory Questions
Use this module with all key informants.

1. Tell me about your organization and role.

2. We identified you as a potential key informant because of your connection with [STRATEGY/DATA SOURCE]. Are there other [approaches/data sources] to addressing ECE workforce issues that you hope to discuss with us today?

Module 2: Discussion of Specific Strategy/ies
This section is to be used with key informants who have deep knowledge of a specific strategy or strategies that were identified during the environmental scan. For key informants who are knowledgeable about multiple strategies identified in the scan, complete this module for each strategy.

We want to understand more about [STRATEGY]. We're particularly interested in how it is implemented, what the challenges to implementation are, and how contextual factors affect implementation.

1. What is your relationship to [STRATEGY]? That is, how do you know about it and how, if at all, are you involved with it?

2. Give me a brief (2-3-minute) overview of [STRATEGY].

3. I have a few follow-up questions to flesh out that summary *(Ask all that apply. Aim to help respondent keeps answers brief as we will delve into more complex information next. This section is to help us understand the basics.)*:

   a. What problem or issue is [STRATEGY] trying to solve or target?

   b. What are the intended outcomes of [STRATEGY]?

   c. How does [STRATEGY] aim to achieve these intended outcomes?

   d. What are the core components of [STRATEGY]? If you had to list the building blocks—the key activities and supports—what are they? *(Probe: essential pieces; Intensity or dosage; mode of service/program delivery)*

   e. Who delivers or implements [STRATEGY]? *(Probe: type of organization; personnel)*

   f. Who or what organization/institution developed [STRATEGY]? *(Probe: same or different from the entity that delivers or implements?]*

g. How long has [STRATEGY] been operating? Is it in use currently?

h. What program/provider, city, state, or jurisdiction is [STRATEGY] implemented in? Has it been implemented in multiple places? *(If yes, include questions from Module 3 in interview)*

i. Who is eligible to participate in [STRATEGY]? (*Probe on each of the following (setting, staff role, age of children staff work with, and other criteria)*

Setting:	Staff role:
☐ Head Start (home-based, center-based, family child care)	☐ Administrator/Owner/Director (center)
☐ Early Head Start (home-based, center-based, family child care)	☐ Provider/Owner (home-based)
☐ Child Care (center)	☐ Teaching Staff (Lead/Assistant/Aide)
☐ Child Care (home-based)	☐ Prospective Worker/Student
☐ Public Pre-K	☐ Other (e.g., education coordinator, coach)
☐ Other non-ECE setting (specify) _____	
Age of children staff work with:	Other criteria:
☐ Infants	☐ In settings participating in QRIS
☐ Toddlers	☐ With certain levels of training
☐ Preschool (Ages 3-5)	☐ Other eligibility criteria?
☐ School age (Kindergarten – 6th grade)	

j. How are participants recruited?

k. How, if at all, does [STRATEGY] address the unique risks and opportunities facing members of the ECE workforce from different racial, ethnic, linguistic, or immigrant backgrounds?

4. I'd like to understand more about the infrastructure and supports that [STRATEGY] needs to get off the ground and be successful.

   a. Who are the stakeholders for [STRATEGY]?
      i. Which organizations or agencies are important partners?
      ii. Are there other advocates or champions that support the implementation of [STRATEGY]?

   b. How is [STRATEGY] financed? [*Probe, if respondent represents regional/state/local agency:* To your knowledge, will any COVID-19 federal supplemental funding (e.g., CARES, CRRSA or ARP) and/or the child care stabilization subgrants be used to implement this strategy?]

   c. How is [STRATEGY] staffed?

   d. What data are collected to support the implementation of [STRATEGY]?

i. Is there a data system or management information system (MIS) involved?

   e. What other supports or infrastructure are needed to implement [STRATEGY]?

5. We're interested in how context affects how [STRATEGY] got started and how it operates.

   a. How has the community context affected [STRATEGY]? *(Probe: urbanicity, resources available in the community, community demographics and characteristics)*

   b. *How has the policy context affected [STRATEGY]? For example, how* have standards, regulations, or policy guidance —at any level— affected [STRATEGY]? *[Probe: federal information memo on child care stabilization grants]*

   c. *Have federal administrative flexibilities or initiatives during COVID-19* affected [STRATEGY]? *[Probe: technical assistance or special initiatives, such as the Head Start Forward Campaign]*

6. What challenges has [STRATEGY] run into? *(Probe: staffing, financing, recruitment, partnerships)*

   a. How has each challenge been addressed?

7. How are participants in [STRATEGY] tracked and monitored (e.g., enrollment, engagement, and progress in meeting milestones/outcomes)?

8. How are outcomes measured and assessed?

9. How has COVID-19 affected the implementation of [STRATEGY]?

   a. How do you expect COVID-19 will affect the implementation of [STRATEGY] going forward?
   b. Do you expect the COVID-19 federal supplemental funding (e.g., CARES, CRRSA, or ARP) for child care and Head Start programs and/or the child care stabilization subgrants to affect its implementation?
   c. Do you expect the policies, initiatives or administrative flexibilities allowed due to COVID-19 or the end of these to affect its implementation going forward?

10. Has [STRATEGY] been evaluated? *(If yes, probe for information about the type of evaluation, what data/information were used or captured, who conducted the study, what the study found, and where we can find it.)*

11. Are there other data sources, such as administrative data or survey data, associated with [STRATEGY/COORDINATED EFFORT]?

Module 3: Similar Strategies in Different Settings

Use this module to explore the use of similar strategies across different settings. There should be some commonality in the approach the strategies use (e.g., apprenticeships, wage supplements, etc.).

We're interested in strategies that have been implemented in multiple different settings. This could mean a strategy has been used in different states, cities, or program/provider settings. We hope to understand how these different contexts have affected implementation of the strategies and their outcomes.

We understand that [STRATEGY] or something similar has been used in different settings [such as: {*Interviewer to fill in more detail, if we have it*}].

1. Tell me about the different settings [STRATEGY] has been used in. *(Probe for: location [e.g., state, city, rural/urban, etc.], time frame, type of ECE setting [i.e., Head Start, Early Head Start, center-based child care, home-based child care, public pre-K, non-ECE settings])*

2. How has implementation differed across these different settings?

    a. [*If implementation differed:*] Why was the implementation different?

    b. [*If implementation differed:*] Were those different approaches to implementation planned or did they come about because of issues that emerged after implementation began?

3. How are participants in [STRATEGY] tracked and monitored (e.g., participation, engagement, and progress in meeting milestones/outcomes) across these different settings?

    a. [*If tracking and monitoring differed:*] Why was the tracking and monitoring participants different?

    b. [*If implementation differed:*] Were those different approaches to tracking and monitoring participants planned or did they come about because of issues that emerged after implementation began?

4. How have outcomes differed across these different settings?

    a. [*If there were differences in outcomes:*] What were the reasons – to the best of your knowledge – for those differences?

    b. [*If there were differences in outcomes:*] Were those differences anticipated?

5. What other challenges have been encountered as [STRATEGY] was implemented across these multiple settings?

6. Are you aware of sources of data about [STRATEGY/COORDINATED EFFORT] in other settings?

Module 4: Coordination among Strategies

Use this module to explore the use of multiple strategies in a single jurisdiction. These strategies may work in concert to address a single malleable factor, or they may complement one another to form a more comprehensive approach to ECE workforce issues.

We are interested in multi-pronged or coordinated efforts to address ECE workforce issues, such as using multiple strategies within a single program/provider, city, state, or system. We understand you may have a unique perspective on efforts that we have learned a bit about [*Interviewer provide more detail*] in our scan of the field.

1. We'd like to learn about the strategies being used in [PROGRAM/PROVIDER, CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM] to address ECE workforce issues. Tell me the story of [PROGRAM's/PROVIDER's, CITY's, STATE's, or SYSTEM's] approach to identifying and addressing ECE workforce issues.

    a. What is/are the ECE workforce problem/s or issues that leaders have identified and are trying to address?
        i. Are there other ECE issues that leaders want to address simultaneously or as part of the same coordinated strategy?

    b. What are the strategies that are being used to address that/those issue/s?
        i. How are these strategies aligned to address that/those issue/s?
        ii. How are these strategies in conflict with each other?

    c. What policies and regulations are in place in [PROGRAM/PROVIDER, CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM] to address ECE workforce issues?
        i. How do you think these policies and regulations shape the strategies in place?

    d. What worker roles in the ECE workforce do these strategies target? *(Probe: Administrator, owner, director, teaching staff, prospective worker/student, other)*

    e. Tell me about how those strategies are coordinated and complement one another. *(Probe: Singular leadership, shared leadership, shared outcomes, shared funding streams, etc.)*

    f. What have the outcomes of [CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM]'s efforts looked like so far?

2. What are the challenges for [CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM]'s efforts?

3. Are there groups, settings, or communities that are not included in [CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM]'s efforts?

4. What are the lessons learned from [CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM]'s efforts?

5. Are there specific data sources associated with [CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM] that characterize the ECE workforce or provide context about that workforce?

6. How has COVID-19 affected the implementation of strategies being used in [PROGRAM/PROVIDER, CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM] to address ECE workforce issues?
    a. How do you expect COVID-19 will affect the implementation of strategies being used in [PROGRAM/PROVIDER, CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM] to address ECE workforce issues going forward?
    b. Do you expect the COVID-19 federal supplemental funding (e.g., CARES, CRRSA, or ARP) for child care and Head Start programs and/or the child care stabilization subgrants to affect implementation of strategies used in [PROGRAM/PROVIDER, CITY, STATE, or SYSTEM]?

Module 5: Data Source-Specific Questions
Use this module to explore a specific data source or set of data sources in more detail.

We are interested in learning more about [DATA SOURCE].

1. When was/is [DATA SOURCE] collected? How frequently is [DATA SOURCE] collected (e.g., cross-sectional, cohort, longitudinal data)?
    a. How has COVID-19 affected the availability of the data?
    b. Is ARP funding affecting investment, supports for, or availability of these data?

2. What is the target population and sampling frame for the [DATA SOURCE]?
    a. At what level are the data collected? (e.g., individual, program)
    b. Which settings, ECE workers/prospective ECE workers are included?
    c. Where is the data relevant? (e.g., nationally, states, localities, systems, programs/providers)

3. What information/measures are collected in the [DATA SOURCE]?
    a. What ECE workforce characteristics are measured?
    b. What ECE workforce employment behaviors are measured? (e.g., job acquisition, length of time in a job, job exits, movement within the field, exits from the field)
    c. What contextual factors are measured? *(Probe: characteristics of settings, programs, communities)*

4. Can the data be aggregated at different levels of analysis? (e.g., state, locality, system, program/provider levels)

5. How accessible is identifiable data from [DATA SOURCE]? (e.g., available for public use, restricted use, or negotiated data sharing agreement with access to identifying information)

a. At what level can the data be identified? (e.g., state, county, community, program/provider, individual via geocode or other identifying information, such as name, demographic information)

Module 5: Concluding Questions
Use this module with all key informants.

Thank you for sharing your insight and observations with us today. I have just a few more closing questions for you.

1. Given what we've discussed today, is there anything else about [STRATEGY/COORDINATED EFFORT/DATA SOURCE] that I should have asked you? Or is there any other information you want to be sure we have?

2. If we wanted to get more information about [STRATEGY/COORDINATED EFFORT/DATA SOURCE], who should we contact?

3. As we move forward with the next phase of our project, which will include identifying strategies to study in greater depth, what should we keep in mind?

4. Are there other data sources you are aware of that relate to ECE workforce challenges or experiences?

On behalf of our team, thank you so much for your time today. You've provided helpful information that is integral to this important project. We may contact you at other points in the project as needed, but otherwise, at this point we're not asking anything further of you. If you have anything you want to share with us after today's conversation, please feel free to reach out by email.