

Instrument 3—HS2K HS Program Director Protocol 3

RECORD DATE: _____

RECORD START TIME: _____

INTERVIEWER'S INITIALS: _____

NOTETAKER'S INITIALS: _____

Interviewer Instructions: *DO NOT READ TO RESPONDENT. Throughout the protocol text in italics are suggested content you can read to the respondent, or you can say in your own words, please review a few times before interviews so you feel comfortable with these scripts. Text in brackets [] are instructions for you, and should not be read aloud. In the interviewer instructions, “R” refers to the respondent or person answering the survey.*

STEP 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

Hello, my name is [your name] and I work for [Organization]. It's nice to meet you. Thanks for speaking with me today.

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 improve surveys we are developing to better understand how Head Start programs and elementary schools are supporting children and families as they transition into kindergarten. We estimate our conversation today to last approximately one hour and thirty 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 0970-0355 and the expiration date is 08/31/2024. I can repeat that if you would like to keep it for reference.

We are having a conversation today to help test a newly developed survey on kindergarten transition practices, policies, professional supports in Head Start programs and centers, and perspectives of Head Start program and center staff.

A survey is a set of questions about your experiences. I will ask you to answer the questions as if you were taking a real survey. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and it’s ok if you do not know some of the answers. In fact, we are not using the answers you provide; we’re more interested in what you think the questions are asking you. So, as you are answering the questions, I will stop you once in a while and ask questions to see what these questions mean to you and if you are having difficulty answering them. Your responses will help us make the survey better and clearer for other people who may take it in the future. I should also share that I didn’t write these questions, so I won’t take it personally if you say something is not clear. I’m only here to learn how to improve them.

Because the information you provide is so important, I am going to be taking notes while you are working and while we’re talking [INSERT IF THERE IS A NOTE TAKER: and my colleague will also be taking notes on our session today].

This interview will also be recorded so the team can go back to specific places where I may not have been able to write down enough detail in the notes. We will not use any personal information, such as your name or program in our reports. And, as I mentioned before, we’re not really interested in what you answer. Instead, we will only use the answers to improve the survey.

As a thank you for your time and effort, you will receive \$40 at the end of today’s interview.

If at any time you want to stop, just let me know. [*If, for any reason, the participant wants to end the interview, thank them for their his/her time and end the interview.*]

Before we continue, do you have any questions about what I just said? [*Answer any questions the participant may ask.*]

Do you agree to participate in the interview?

CONSENT TO PARTICPATE OBTAINED: YES NO

Do you agree to this interview being recorded?

CONSENT TO RECORD INTERVIEW OBTAINED:

YES NO

[If yes, start the recording]

Can you confirm for the recording that you consent to this interview being recorded?

Were you able to review the consent form we sent you via email? [Email again if needed.] As the form explains, your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary, and we will keep your answers private. Your responses will be combined with responses from others we talk to, and they will be kept in a secure electronic place. We may use quotes from our discussions in written internal reports, though we will not include your name or any personal information that can be used to identify you. The results might be discussed at a high level in public reports, but direct quotes will not be included.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started?

STEP 2: PRACTICE THINK ALOUD

When I ask you to complete this survey, I would like you to read out loud everything you would read to yourself if you were completing the survey by yourself. I'd also like you to "think aloud" as you answer the questions. This means I would like to hear your thought process and how you figure out or think through your answers to the questions. This helps me understand how to make the survey better.

"Thinking aloud" is different from anything you may have done before, so we are going to do a practice question. Before we do that, I'd like to share the type of information we're looking for. So that we can learn from you, it is important that you tell me when something in a question does not make sense to you or seems weird to you in any way. Please tell me if:

- a question seems hard to answer.
- the words in the question are hard to understand.
- you have a hard time coming up with an answer.
- the words in the question are not the ones that Head Start Program Directors would use.

- o you think other Head Start Program Directors may not understand.
- o you don't have the information to answer the question or if you think other Head Start Program Directors would not be able to answer.
- o the response categories don't match the question to you.
- o you don't think any of the response categories represents your experiences.

I'll do a practice run with the sample question "How many windows do you have in your apartment or house?"

[Interviewer, to demonstrate an example: Answer the question about your own home using the "think aloud" technique. Include detail about panes of glass in doors, etc.]

Okay, now it's your turn, I'll ask you to answer the practice question on the survey we sent you and "think aloud" as you decide your answer.

[If R only gives a number, ask them to do it again, but this time to say more about how they are arriving at their answer so that you can understand how they came up with the number.]

If needed: What are you including?

Great, thank you. That's the kind of detail I am looking for throughout our session. I will remind you to continue to "think aloud" if you forget while you're answering questions.

Probe Bank:

[If R forgets to "think aloud" please nudge them to continue. You can use suggestions from the following probe bank.]

- Please keep sharing what you're thinking.
- What are you thinking (about)?
- How did you arrive at your answer?
- Can you share more about that (thought)?
- How did you choose [answer] for that one?

- [If you pick up on a visual cue of thoughtfulness]: You seem to be thinking, can you share what you are thinking right now?
- [If you pick up on a visual cue that indicates confusion like going to previous pages or rereading instructions]: “I’m interested in what just happened. Can you tell me about what you were just doing?”

STEP 3: COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Now we're ready to begin. *[Refers R to a copy of the questionnaire, provided online.]*

Remember that I'd like you to "think aloud" while you are reading and deciding on your answer. Also, remember to please, read aloud anything you would have read to yourself if I were not here.

Question-by-Question Follow-Ups

Head Start Program Information

The following questions ask you to reflect on your Head Start program and the children who transition to kindergarten.

9. How many separate centers does your program have?

Drop Down Menu — 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+

10. In a typical year, how many children in your program, across all centers, transition to kindergarten?

a. | _ | _ | _ | children

b. Don't Know

Policies

Policies are written statements that codify/standardize procedures or expectations. In this section, we ask questions about your Head Start program's policies related to kindergarten transitions, and the extent to which these policies are aligned or coordinated with K-12 districts to which your Head Start children transition. **Alignment of policies** across systems is the extent to which Head Start and K-12 systems have explicit, substantive policies about transitions that complement each other.

PROBES:

- **WAS THIS INTRODUCTION EASY OR DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?**
- **WHEN WE SAY WE WILL BE ASKING YOU ABOUT 'POLICIES' WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?**
- **WERE THERE ANY OTHER TERMS OR DEFINITIONS THAT COULD BE CLEARER? IF SO, WHICH?**

11. During a typical year, does your Head Start program issue written policy documents or provide guidance about any of the following topics related to kindergarten transitions? This may include guidance on kindergarten transition practices and procedures.

PROBE: WHAT DOES THE TERM, "WRITTEN POLICY DOCUMENTS" MEAN TO YOU?

Check all that apply (respondent can choose to not check any option):

- a. Best practices for sharing data and records between elementary schools and Head Start programs
- b. How to share special education service IEP or IIIP records with school or district staff
- c. How to support children and families who receive special education services
- d. How to support children and families who speak languages other than English at home

- e. How to support children and families of color
- f. How to support children and their family members who identify at LGBTQ+
- g. How to support children and families experiencing homelessness
- h. Best practices for supporting school readiness as defined by your state, if applicable
- i. How to coordinate transition practices between Head Start centers and elementary schools
- j. Best practices for meetings with families of children transitioning to kindergarten

PROBES:

- **WERE ANY OF THE OPTIONS LISTED UNCLEAR?**
- **ARE THERE OTHER TYPES OF DOCUMENTS OR WRITTEN GUIDANCE YOUR OR OTHER PROGRAMS USE THAT WERE NOT LISTED?**
- **ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL TOPICS TO LIST THAT SEEM RELEVANT FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

12. To what extent are you familiar with the kindergarten transition-related components of the following federal laws:

	Very familiar	Familiar	Somewhat familiar	Unfamiliar	Not at all familiar	Don't know	Choose not to respond
a. Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)							
b. Head Start Act (HSA)							

c. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)							
d. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)							

13. To what extent are you familiar with state-specific kindergarten transition-related policies in your state?

(Likert-scale response with an open-ended response to list the policies)

Professional Supports

*In this section, we ask questions about the professional supports related to kindergarten transitions your Head Start program offers to Head Start center directors and administrators, teachers, family service workers, or other staff. Professional supports may include but are not limited to training, professional development, coaching, professional learning communities, higher education courses, paid time to engage in transition activities, and financial support for engaging in these activities. **Shared professional supports** are those activities that are engaged in jointly across Head Start and receiving elementary schools and LEAs/school districts.*

21. You indicated that some of your staff participated in the following opportunities. Was at least one instance a shared or joint opportunity with elementary school staff?

	Yes	No
<i>[Display list of opportunities from Q20 in which respondents selected anything but 'no staff' and 'unsure/don't know']</i>		

22. You indicated previously that some of your Head Start program staff participated in the following opportunities. *(Reference only the selections the respondent indicated “yes” for program administrations in the previous question)*

a. What organization or agency provided these opportunities?

	Offered by receiving elementary school	Offered by receiving LEA/school district	Offered by Education Service Agency (ESA)	Offered by state education agency	Offered by OHS/Regional Office/EC T/TA System	Unsure/ Don't Know	Other (specify)
<i>EXAMPLE: One-time training on transitions to kindergarten for...</i>							
a. One-time sessions or workshops							
b. Training series or set of sessions							
c. Coaching, mentoring, or ongoing consultation with specialist(s)							
d. Meeting(s) of a professional organization (e.g., Zero-to-Three, National Association for Education of Young Children, etc.)							

e. Higher education course (from 2- or 4-year institution)							
f. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)							

PROBES:

- **DO YOU HAVE THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS? IF NOT, WHO WOULD BE THE BEST PERSON?**
- **ARE THERE OTHER TYPES OF OPPURTUNITIES THAT SHOULD BE LISTED?**

28. How would you rate the **current resource allocation** (resources inclusive of funding, infrastructure, and human capital) aimed at providing equitable kindergarten transition supports to children and families? Please mark one option only.

- Substantial
- Adequate
- Inadequate
- Don't know

Practices

*Kindergarten transition **practices** are concrete activities designed to directly engage children and families during the kindergarten transition. Staff in Head Start or kindergarten can enact transition practices separately or jointly through **coordinated** transition practices. In this section, we ask questions about your Head Start program’s engagement in Head Start-specific and joint kindergarten transition practices.*

32. Do you currently gather information from families about how they benefit from kindergarten transition practices? (If answer is “no” or “don’t know,” skip to Q#35; if answer yes, proceed to next question)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don’t know

33. (If yes to Q32). How do you gather this information?

- d. Open-ended response

34. (If yes to Q32). How are you using this information?

- e. Open-ended response

PROBES: CAN YOU WALK ME THROUGH HOW YOU ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS?

- **WHAT DOES “BENEFIT” FROM KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION PRACTICES MEAN TO YOU?**

35. Do you currently gather information from Head Start teachers about how they benefit from kindergarten transition practices? (If answer is “no” or “don’t know,” skip to Q#38; if answer yes, proceed to next question)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

36. (If yes to Q35). How do you gather this information?

- a. Open-ended response

37. (If yes to Q35). How are you using this information?

- a. Open-ended response

PROBES: CAN YOU WALK ME THROUGH HOW YOU ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS?

38. Do you currently gather information from **Head Start Center Directors** about how well kindergarten transition practices are working? (If answer is "no" or "don't know," skip to Q#41; if answer yes, proceed to next question)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

39. (If yes to Q38). How do you gather this information?

- a. Open-ended response

40. (If yes to Q38). How are you using this information?

a. Open-ended response

41. Do you currently gather information from **kindergarten teachers** about how well kindergarten transition practices are working?

(If answer is “no” or “don’t know,” skip to Q#44; if answer yes, proceed to next question)

a. Yes

b. No

c. Don’t know

42. (If yes to Q41). How do you gather this information?

a. Open-ended response

43. (If yes to Q41). How are you using this information?

a. Open-ended response

PROBES: CAN YOU WALK ME THROUGH HOW YOU ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS?

45. In a typical program year, who, if anyone, at your Head Start program engages in *joint* kindergarten transition practices with K-12 receiving entities? Check all that apply.

	School District/LEA	Individual School	Don’t know	Not applicable
a. Myself (Head Start Program Director)				
b. Head Start Program				

Managers/Coordinators				
c. Head Start Center Director				
d. Other (specify)				

Perspectives

***Perspectives** about kindergarten transitions are the beliefs, visions, and values about transitions to kindergarten held by those involved in the process (families, teachers, administrators). This includes perspectives about their and others' roles in supporting transitions to kindergarten. **Shared perspectives** are those that are common or complementary across individuals involved, including across Head Start and K-12. In this section, we ask you to reflect on your own perspectives about engaging in kindergarten transition practices and those expressed by your Head Start program through communications with internal and external collaborators.*

*The following questions ask you to reflect on **your program's** perspectives on kindergarten transition practices.*

PROBES:

- **WAS THIS INTRODUCTION EASY OR DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?**
- **WHEN WE SAY WE WILL BE ASKING YOU ABOUT 'PERSPECTIVES' WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU IN THIS CONTEXT?**
- **WERE THERE ANY OTHER TERMS OR DEFINITIONS THAT COULD BE CLEARER? IF SO, WHICH?**

47. What is your Head Start Program's vision for engaging in kindergarten transition practices and activities?

- Don't know [Skip logic: skip Q48-Q49 if respond with this option]
- My Program does not have a vision or purpose related to kindergarten transitions [Skip logic: skip Q48-Q49 if respond with this option]
- Open-ended response: Please paraphrase or summarize your Program's vision or purpose for engaging in kindergarten transition practices and activities.

PROBES:

- **WHAT DID YOU THINK “VISION” MEANT HERE?**
- **WOULD YOU HAVE RESPONDED DIFFERENTLY TO THESE ITEMS IF WE USED THE WORD “PURPOSE” INSTEAD OF “VISION”?**
- **WERE THESE RESPONSE OPTIONS EASY OR DIFFICULT TO USE?**
 - o **(IF DIFFICULT): WHAT TYPE OF RESPONSE OPTIONS WOULD HAVE MADE THIS QUESTION EASIER TO ANSWER?**
- **IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE THIS QUESTION EASIER TO UNDERSTAND OR RESPOND TO?**

48. [Skip if response to Q47 is a. or b.] For your program, where is this vision related to the kindergarten transition articulated? **Check all that apply.**

- a. In strategic planning documents
- b. Within interagency agreements and/or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with LEAs
- c. In resources and guidance developed for Head Start teachers
- d. In resources and guidance developed for Head Start Program Managers/Coordinators
- e. In resources and guidance shared with kindergarten teachers and K-12 administrators
- f. In resources and guidance developed for families
- g. In resources and guidance shared with community members
- h. Unsure/Don't Know

PROBES:

- **ARE THERE OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT SHOULD BE LISTED IN THIS SECTION?**
- **ARE THERE OTHER WAYS THAT THE PROGRAM SHARES ITS VISION OR PURPOSE THAT ARE NOT LISTED HERE?**

49. [Skip if response to Q47 is a. or b.] **In a typical year, with whom does your Head Start program communicate a vision for engaging in kindergarten transition practices and activities? Check all that apply.**

- Head Start Program Managers/Coordinators
- Head Start center directors
- Head Start teachers
- Head Start Family Engagement staff
- K-12 district administrators
- Elementary school leaders/administrators
- Kindergarten teachers
- District or school family engagement staff
- Family members
- Community members (e.g., librarians, business owners)
- We do not communicate with anyone
- Other (include option to add short description)
- Other (include option to add short description)
- Other (include option to add short description)

PROBES:

- **ARE THERE OTHERS AT YOUR PROGRAM WHO YOU COMMUNICATE A VISION OR PURPOSE TO? IF YES, WHO?**

*The following questions ask you to reflect on **your own** perspectives on kindergarten transition practices.*

53. Are there any other practices not listed above that you believe are specifically beneficial for children?
- Yes (Please specify)
 - No

54. Which kindergarten transition practices do you believe are the most beneficial for **families**? Please rank the top 5 practices in order, with the top choice being the one you believe is most beneficial.

- Differentiating transition supports for the specific needs of individual children (e.g., children with special needs, children experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, children of immigrants)
- Sharing information with families (e.g., kindergarten requirements, registration materials)
- Working directly with families (e.g., helping families fill out kindergarten registration forms, meeting with individual families, conducting home visits)
- Consulting families on what supports they would like for a smooth transition to kindergarten

- e. Coordinating with your local LEAs or elementary schools to **share information about Head Start children** who are starting kindergarten (e.g., identifying which students will enroll in their kindergarten program, sharing child records and other data)
- f. Coordinating with your local LEAs or elementary schools on **joint kindergarten transition practices** (e.g., curriculum planning, co-teaching lessons, shared professional development)
- g. Inviting elementary staff to the Head Start centers to meet and observe students
- h. Arranging visits to kindergarten classrooms for Head Start children and families

PROBES:

- **HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT FOR YOU TO RANK ORDER THESE PRACTICES?**
- **WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK “MOST BENEFICIAL” FOR FAMILIES?**
- **ARE THERE ANY PRACTICES THAT DIDN’T MAKE SENSE TO YOU TO BE INCLUDED?**

55. Are there any other practices not listed above that you believe are specifically beneficial for families?

- i. Yes (Please specify)
- j. No

56. Which kindergarten transition practices do you believe are the most beneficial for **Head Start teachers**? Please rank the top 5 practices in order, with the top choice being the one you believe is most beneficial.

- a. Differentiating transition supports for the specific needs of individual children (e.g., children with special needs, children experiencing homelessness, dual language learners, children of immigrants)
- b. Sharing information with families (e.g., kindergarten requirements, registration materials)
- c. Working directly with families (e.g., helping families fill out kindergarten registration forms, meeting with individual families, conducting home visits)
- d. Consulting families on what supports they would like for a smooth transition to kindergarten
- e. Coordinating with your local LEAs or elementary schools to **share information about Head Start children** who are starting kindergarten (e.g., identifying which students will enroll in their kindergarten program, sharing child records and other data)
- f. Coordinating with your local LEAs or elementary schools on **joint kindergarten transition practices** (e.g., curriculum planning, co-teaching lessons, shared professional development)
- g. Inviting elementary staff to the Head Start centers to meet and observe students
- h. Arranging visits to kindergarten classrooms for Head Start children and families

57. Are there any other practices not listed above that you believe are specifically beneficial for Head Start teachers?

- a. Yes (Please specify)
- b. No

Closing

Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. The information and perspectives you have provided will help improve this survey on kindergarten transitions for Head Start children, their families, and their educators.

If you have any questions about this survey or the broader study, please contact **[INSERT NAME]** at **[INSERT EMAIL]**.

Now that we've finished, I'm happy to forward a \$40 gift card to thank you for your time sharing your expertise. Which email or phone number would you like me to send it to?

Excellent. I will send that as soon as we hang up. Thank you!