



Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K) Transitions Study Recruitment Materials

Head Start Center Director Recruitment Materials

January 2026

The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to help better understand how Head Start programs and local education agencies are supporting children and families as they transition into kindergarten. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 50 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. 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 and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-0355, Exp: 10/31/2027. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Marc Hernandez, Ph.D. at HS2Kproject@norc.org or 1155 E. 60th Street, Chicago IL 60637.

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Head Start Center Director

1. Initial Survey Recruitment Email – Head Start Center Director

Subject: You Have Been Selected to Complete a Survey about Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions

Dear [Name],

You have been selected to participate in an important nationwide study about Head Start (HS) to kindergarten transitions. *The Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study aims to identify and describe strategies that may contribute to smoother transitions from Head Start to kindergarten and improved outcomes for children, families, and teachers. You or your designee (e.g., assistant director or other center-level administrator) may complete the survey.

Our Ask:

Please complete the online questionnaire by opening your camera app and scanning the QR code below or by navigating directly to the survey and entering your unique PIN:

URL:

PIN:

[INSERT QR CODE]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire. It is important for us to hear from every selected person to get a complete picture of the strategies and supports for children's and families' transitions from Head Start to kindergarten. You represent many educators working with children and families across the nation.

About the Study:

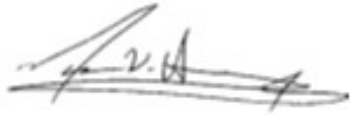
HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start. Your responses to the survey, along with responses from other HS center directors, school district administrators, HS program directors, elementary school principals, and HS and kindergarten teachers, will provide valuable information on how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools. Your input can help inform how Head Start supports kindergarten transitions.

Next Steps:

Participation is voluntary. The questionnaire will take about 50 minutes to complete, and your responses will be kept private. You have the option to skip any question or end the questionnaire at any time. If you have questions

or need help to get started, please call 888-216-1220 or email HS2Kproject@norc.org.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hernandez', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

Marc Hernandez, Ph.D.
HS2K Study Project Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

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1. Initial Letter – Head Start Center Director

Dear [NAME],

You have been selected to participate in an important nationwide study about Head Start to kindergarten transitions. *The Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study aims to identify and describe strategies that may contribute to smoother transitions from Head Start to kindergarten and improved outcomes for children, families, and teachers. You or your designee may complete the survey.

Our Ask:

Please complete the online questionnaire by opening your camera app and scanning the QR code below or by navigating directly to the survey and entering your unique PIN:

[SURVEY URL]

Your Unique Pin: [PIN]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire. It is important for us to hear from every selected person to get a complete picture of the strategies and supports for children's and families' transitions from Head Start to kindergarten. You represent many educators working with children and families across the nation.

About the Study:

HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start. Findings from this research can offer valuable insights that are relevant and applicable to the wide variety of preschool settings from which children transition. Your experience as a [ROLE] is very important to helping us understand kindergarten transitions.

Next Steps:

Participation is voluntary. The questionnaire will take about 50 minutes to complete, and your responses to the survey will be kept private. You have the option to skip any question or end the questionnaire at any time.

If you have questions or need help to get started, please call 888-216-1220 or email HS2Kproject@norc.org.

Thank you,



Marc Hernandez, Ph.D.
HS2K Study Project Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

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1. Frequently Asked Questions

What is NORC at the University of Chicago?

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) is conducting this study. NORC is an objective, nonpartisan research institution that helps federal agencies, decision-makers, and nonprofits make better decisions through data and analysis. For more information about us, please visit www.norc.org.

What does HS2K stand for?

“HS2K” stands for Head Start to Kindergarten, which we use to refer to the *Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study. If you would like to learn more about the project, please visit:

<https://acf.gov/opre/project/national-descriptive-study-transitions-head-start-kindergarten-hs2k>

Who is funding this study?

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

What is this study about?

This study aims to better understand strategies and supports for children’s and families’ transitions to kindergarten, as well as barriers to and opportunities for collaboration between the Head Start and K-12 systems. The goal of this study is to support improved kindergarten transition outcomes for children, families, and teachers.

Why was I (my program/school district/center/school) selected for this study?

You, your Head Start program, school district, elementary school, or Head Start Center were selected to participate in this study. It is important for us to hear from every selected person to get a complete picture of the strategies and supports for children’s and families’ transitions from Head Start to kindergarten. You represent many educators working with children and families across the nation. Your participation will contribute to federal and local Head Start program and local school district staff’s understanding of kindergarten transitions, and improved supports for kindergarten transition outcomes for children, families, and teachers.

How long will the survey take?

The survey will take about 50 minutes to complete.

Will I receive anything for completing the survey?

You will receive a \$50 electronic gift card for completing the survey. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to choose an electronic gift card (Amazon, Walmart, Target, or Mastercard), which will be emailed to you. You may refuse the gift card upon survey completion if you so choose.

How will you protect my privacy?

Your name or any identifying information will never be released to the public. Nobody at your program or district will see your responses to the survey and your responses will be kept private.

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2. Follow-Up Email(s) – Head Start Center Director

Subject: Reminder: Please Complete Your Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions Survey

Dear [NAME],

I am following up on our previous email to invite you or your designee to complete a survey about Head Start (HS) to kindergarten transitions. *The Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study, aims to identify and describe strategies that may contribute to smoother transitions from Head Start to kindergarten and improved outcomes for children, families, and teachers.

[Example, optional additions to the opening statement based on non-response and timing:

- *Your input can help inform decisions that support Head Start to kindergarten transitions.*
- *Findings from this research can offer valuable insights across a variety of early care and education settings and systems supporting kindergarten transitions.*
- *Your experiences are very important to helping us understand kindergarten transition practices and support structures across the country.*
- *We are especially interested in responses from Head Start centers in [STATE].*
- *We know you are very busy, and we appreciate your time.*
- *We want to hear your perspective about your experiences with kindergarten transitions.*
- *Sharing your experiences can help to inform kindergarten transition efforts that support staff, families, and children.*
- *Your input can help inform supports for kindergarten transitions that promote sustained learning and development.*
- *We have heard from XX% of your colleagues in the Head Start community: we'd love to hear from you too!*
- *Your unique perspective as a [ROLE] is important to get a full picture of the kindergarten transition process.*
Your perspective is crucial to our understanding of the policies, perspectives, professional supports, and practices involved in the kindergarten transition process.]

Our Ask:

Please complete the online questionnaire by opening your camera app and

scanning the QR code below or by navigating directly to the survey and entering your unique PIN:

URL:

PIN:

[INSERT QR CODE]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

About the Study:

HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start. Given your role and expertise, we hope that you can participate. Your responses to the survey, along with responses from other HS center directors, school district administrators, HS program directors, elementary school principals, and HS and kindergarten teachers, will provide valuable information on how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools.

Next Steps:

Participation is voluntary. The questionnaire will take about 50 minutes to complete, and your responses will be kept private. You have the option to skip any question or end the questionnaire at any time. If you have questions or need help to get started, please call 888-216-1220 or email HS2Kproject@norc.org.

Thank you,



Marc Hernandez, Ph.D.
HS2K Study Project Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

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2. Follow-up Letter – Head Start Center Director

Dear [NAME],

This is a friendly reminder to complete a survey about Head Start to kindergarten transitions. *The Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study aims to identify and describe strategies that may contribute to smoother transitions from Head Start to kindergarten and improved outcomes for children, families, and teachers. Your input can help inform how Head Start supports kindergarten transitions.

Our Ask:

Please complete the online questionnaire by opening your camera app and scanning the QR code below or by navigating directly to the survey and entering your unique PIN:

[SURVEY URL]



Your PIN: [PIN]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

About the Study:

HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start.

Given your role and expertise, we hope that you can participate in the study. We know you are likely very busy, and we appreciate your time.

Next Steps:

Participation is voluntary. The questionnaire will take about 50 minutes to complete, and your responses will be kept private. You have the option to skip any question or end the questionnaire at any time.

If you have questions or need help to get started, please call 888-216-1220 or email HS2Kproject@norc.org.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hernandez', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

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3. Postcard Reminder – Head Start Center Director

We recently sent you a letter asking you to complete a national survey about how Head Start programs and K-12 systems work to support kindergarten transitions.

Goals:

1. Understand existing strategies and supports for kindergarten transitions
2. Understand barriers to and opportunities for collaboration between Head Start and K-12 school districts

Findings from this research can offer valuable insights to help understand kindergarten transitions.

[**SURVEY URL**]



Your Unique Pin: [PIN]

The survey will take approximately [X] minutes. To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

Questions/Concerns: HS2Kproject@norc.org or 888-216-1220.

Thank you!



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4. Phone Script – Head Start Center Director

Hello. My name is [NAME] with NORC at the University of Chicago.

Am I speaking with [RESPONDENT NAME]?

- IF YES, CONTINUE.
- IF NO, ASK IF THE RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE TO SPEAK.
- IF NO, ASK THE PERSON ON THE LINE FOR A GOOD TIME TO CALL BACK.
- IF THE RESPONDENT NO LONGER WORKS HERE, REQUEST NEW CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NEW CENTER DIRECTOR:
 - o Thank you for updating me! Could you please share the name and contact information of the current HEAD START CENTER DIRECTOR? If available, can you please share their email address?
 - o Thank you. I will follow up with this individual. Have a great day.

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today.

We are conducting the Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K) study, funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

We are following up on an email we sent earlier inviting you to participate in a survey about Head Start to kindergarten transitions.

- We are specifically interested in learning more about Head Start center directors' leadership practices around supporting kindergarten transitions and collaboration with local elementary schools.

We know you are busy, but your viewpoint and expertise are invaluable to the project given your first-hand experience as a Head Start Center Director. We are happy to offer a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

Would you be interested in completing the survey?

- IF YES, **CONTINUE.**
- IF NO, ASK IF THE RESPONDENT HAS ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY (AND ANSWER THEM).
 - o IF NO, THANK RESPONDENT FOR THEIR TIME AND SHARE THAT THEY CAN ALWAYS ACCESS THE SURVEY VIA THEIR EMAIL INVITATION.

- o IF NEEDED, SAY THAT YOU CAN CALL BACK WITH ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

Great! I can send you a link to the survey. What is the best email address for me to use?

- [Record email address and update records.]

Please feel free to respond to that email with any additional questions you may have.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. We appreciate your time and thank you for contributing to this important research!

5. Phone Script: Head Start Center Director Recruitment Assistance

Scenario 4: Phone Script Head Start Center Director Reaching Out to Head Start Lead Teachers

Hello. My name is [NAME] with NORC at the University of Chicago.

Am I speaking with [RESPONDENT NAME]?

- IF YES, **CONTINUE**.
- IF NO, ASK IF THE RESPONDENT IS AVAILABLE TO SPEAK.
- IF NO, ASK THE PERSON ON THE LINE FOR A GOOD TIME TO CALL BACK.
- IF THE RESPONDENT NO LONGER WORKS HERE, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE NEW RESPONDENT OR REQUEST NEW CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NEW CENTER DIRECTOR:

Thank you for updating me! Would we be able to speak to the current **[ROLE]**?

- IF YES, **CONTINUE**.
- IF NO:
 - Could you please share the name and contact information of the current **[ROLE]**?
 - Thank you. I will follow up with this individual. Have a great day.

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in the Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions study! We appreciate your participation.

To get a full understanding of Head Start to kindergarten transitions, we are also surveying Head Start lead teachers. We would appreciate your help notifying **[Head Start Teacher]** at **[Head Start Center]** about the study. Would you be willing to send an email on our behalf to **[Head Start teacher]** at **[Head Start Center]**?

- IF YES, **CONTINUE**.
- IF NO, ASK IF SOMEONE ELSE AT THE HEAD START CENTER WOULD BE ABLE TO SEND THIS EMAIL ON THEIR BEHALF.
 - IF YES, ASK FOR THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THIS PERSON. RECORD NAME, PHONE NUMBER, AND EMAIL ADDRESS. THANK THE CENTER DIRECTOR FOR THEIR HELP.
 - IF NO, ASK IF THE RESPONDENT CAN SHARE THE CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE HEAD START TEACHER.
 - IF YES, THANK THEM AND RECORD THE TEACHER'S UPDATED INFORMATION
 - IF NO, THANK THEM AGAIN FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY AND THEIR TIME SPEAKING TO YOU

Great! I can share a draft of the email with you to share with the Head Start teacher. What is the best email to reach you at?

[Record Head Start teacher's name and email address and update records. Send the email draft to share with the center director.]

Please cc HS2Kproject@norc.org when you send the message on behalf of our project. Thank you so much for sharing the email with the Head Start teacher.

Would you also be able to share the current contact information for the Head Start teacher with us?

- IF YES, THANK THEM AND RECORD THE HEAD START TEACHER'S UPDATED INFORMATION
- IF NO, THANK THEM AGAIN FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY, SHARING THE EMAIL, AND THEIR TIME SPEAKING TO YOU

Thank you so much for your continued support.

Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions you may have!

Attached Email:

[For NORC Field Interviewers to send to Head Start Center Directors to forward to their Head Start Lead Teachers and CC HS2Kproject@norc.org]

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K) Study and helping us coordinate with your Head Start Lead Teacher. Please copy and paste the text below into a new email to the selected HS Lead Teacher as discussed. We will reach out to them directly as well.

---Share Text Below--

Hello,

Our **Head Start program and local school district** have been selected to participate in the National Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K) study. HS2K is an important federal effort to better understand strategies and supports for children's and families' transitions to kindergarten, and barriers to and opportunities for collaboration between the Head Start and K-12 systems.

This study is being conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago and is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

The study team plans to survey Head Start teachers, the Head Start center director(s), and the Head Start program director, as well as a local school district administrator, elementary school principal(s), and some kindergarten teachers to get a full understanding of Head Start to kindergarten transitions. Nobody at the Head Start center will see your responses to the survey.

NORC will be contacting you via letter and/or email inviting you to participate and will include a link and unique PIN to complete the survey. To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the study team at HS2Kproject@norc.org or call them at 888-216-1220.

Thank you,

[Your Signature]

6. Final Email – Head Start Center Director

Subject: LAST CHANCE to complete the Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions survey

Dear [NAME],

The *Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* survey is ending soon. Sharing your experiences can help to inform kindergarten transition efforts that support staff, families, and children.

Our Ask:

Please complete the online questionnaire by opening your camera app and scanning the QR code below or by navigating directly to the survey and entering your unique PIN:

URL:

PIN:

[INSERT QR CODE]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

Our final deadline for participation in this study is [DATE]. Your contribution is very valuable, and we appreciate your input.

About the Study:

HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start. Your responses to the survey, along with responses from other HS center directors, HS program directors, school district administrators, elementary school principals, and HS and kindergarten teachers, will provide valuable information on how to improve children's transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools.

Next Steps:

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Thank you,



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6. Final Letter – Head Start Center Director

Dear [NAME],

The *Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* survey will end soon. This is your last opportunity to participate in this important study.

We have heard from many of your colleagues in the Head Start community, but we want to hear your perspective about your experiences. Your contribution is very valuable, and we appreciate your input.

Our Ask:

Please go to [SURVEY URL] to begin or scan the QR code below. To access your survey, you will need to enter your unique PIN (below).

[SURVEY URL]

[INSERT QR CODE]

Your PIN: [PIN]

To thank you for your participation, you will receive a \$50 electronic token of appreciation of your choice for completing the questionnaire.

Our final deadline for participation in this study is [DATE]. Your contribution is very valuable, and we appreciate your input.

About the Study:

HS2K, led by NORC at the University of Chicago, is funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Office of Head Start. Given your role and expertise, we hope that you can participate in the study. We know you are likely very busy, and we appreciate your time. As a reminder, we are also surveying other Head Start center directors, Head Start program directors, school district administrators, elementary school principals, and Head Start and kindergarten teachers.

Next Steps:

Participation is voluntary. The questionnaire will take about 50 minutes to complete, and your responses will be kept private. You have the option to skip any question or end the questionnaire at any time. If you have questions or need help to get started, please call 888-216-1220 or email HS2Kproject@norc.org.

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7. Thank You Email – Center Director

Subject: Thank you for your participation in the HS2K study!

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for completing the *Head Start to Kindergarten Transitions (HS2K)* study survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and can help inform how Head Start supports kindergarten transitions.

You will receive an email from rewards@norc.org with a link to redeem your choice of a \$50 electronic gift card. If you encounter any issues, please contact HS2KProject@norc.org and we'll be happy to assist you.

Thank you again for your participation!

Thank you,



Marc Hernandez, Ph.D.
HS2K Study Project Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

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