

Collaboration with Families and Other Partners: Essential Features of High-Quality Inclusion

Megan Vinh: We're glad that you could join us today for the third webinar in a series on high-quality inclusion. Today we're going to be focused on collaboration with families and other partners. And sort of some essential features of high-quality inclusion. Before we get started, I just wanted to make sure folks knew that we do have some resources for you that are in that tips and resources pod. The Powerpoint can be accessed there, along with another resource that we'll reference throughout the webinar. Also, if you have any trouble with your audio while you're on the webinar, please look at the webinar-audio tip sheet. That should help out, and if not, there's an e-mail in there in that tip sheet that you can contact someone to get some more help. But I think those are my updates, and so for now, I'm going to turn it over to Pam Winton who's going to be our moderator today.

Pam Winton: Thank you, Megan. And that was Megan Vinh from ECTA. Pam Winton here from the DTL center, as we call it, with our nickname. And for those of you who have been part of our previous webinars, you know that we are called Partnerships for Inclusion, and this is the third in the series on high-quality inclusion. The first one focused on access, the second on participation, and the third one is on support. So, I'm going to introduce our panel right now, and really happy to welcome them to the webinar. So, we have Sangeeta Parikshak from the Office of Head Start and Kiersten Beigel, also from the Office of Head Start. And you've met Sangeeta in previous webinars. Kiersten is new to our panel. Welcome to both of you. And we also have Christy Kavulic and Julia Martin Eile from the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education. So, welcome, panelists. We're so happy you're here. And if you've been part of previous webinars, you know that our access, participation, and support, the key essential features of high-quality inclusion are drawn from this national position statement on early childhood inclusion, developed jointly by the NAEYC or National Association for the Education of Young Children.

And the Division for Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children, also known as DEC. And in that policy statement, the definition of support that's provided is that we can have access that can allow children into the general curriculum and into programs. And then we can do things, high-quality practices that supports their participation. But that is really not enough when we talk about high-quality inclusion that we really need support. And the definition here refers to aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and then opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals. So our focus today is on that collaboration aspect, both with families and other professionals. Our outcomes are to hear about from our panelists sort of the vision and the federal laws and policies related to these two important areas, family professional collaboration and communication and collaboration with other adults. And then in every webinar, we talk about those practices that undergird the law of policies and vision. The practices that promote communication and collaboration, in this case, with families and other adults. We're always introducing you to free resources, and so we'll have some good resources on these topics. And then as always, we really want your questions.

And so you'll see on your screen a question for presenter box. That's where we hope you will enter your question. What we're going to do is, we'll have times throughout the webinar where those questions will be presented to the panelists, and they'll answer them. And then in the room with me now, I have, in addition to Megan Vinh, I have Tracy West, Taylor Simpson, and Sarah Padonte. And so there are a tag team of folks who are going to be monitoring the Q&A, answering questions, links to resources when they can. And then getting the questions to presenters so that we can organize a set of questions during

the times we have for those Q&A. So, please feel free to send in your questions at any point in time. So, let's get started with our content. Family professional partnerships. That's the first big chunk of content that we're going to focus on. And we'll start with the vision, laws, and policies. And I think it's important to say that when we have in the room as we do, the U.S. Department of Ed. OSEP, and we have Head Start. We know we have a long history of the simple roles for families from both agencies. And a long history of laws and policies that undergird that vision for family professional partnerships. So Kiersten, how about if you start us off and share a bit of that vision with us?

Kiersten Beigel: Good afternoon, everyone. It's so good to be with you today. Yeah, my kickoff role here is to get us grounded in understanding a bit about how the two departments -- the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education -- have really been thinking about and implementing family engagement over the past couple of years through our various collaborations and joint projects. So, a couple things we want to touch on here. There's really three kind of constructs where I think we have a lot of alignment. And you'll see, the first one is in this definition here on the slide in front of us where we say the family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of family and activities and programs that promote children's development. Not just their development, but their learning and wellness, so that kind of holistic picture of the child. And we've offered here also that we're including this kind of inclusion across planning, thinking about planning mechanisms, development, and evaluation of the activity.

And so I think what this is really saying is, family engagement isn't about sort of a practice here or an activity there. It's really about thinking about the full range of opportunities we have to include strategies that include families systematically. Another important construct that has to do with sort of how we view family engagement across the departments has to do with thinking about families as our essential partners when we're providing services. And also, that those partnerships are in service of the nurturing of positive relationships between parents, families, and staff in order to ultimately support families and children's learning and development. And so it's systematic. It's integrating practices around family engagement, and this sort of relational stance about thinking about how families are essential partners in the world. And how much we can support the relationship between children and their parents and our work. So I just wanted to offer that overview before we dive in more into some of our policies and laws that we want to share today.

Pam: Yeah. Thank you, Kiersten. I mean, that is a very popular vision, and I know that, Julia, maybe you'll go next and share some -- not only OSEP's vision, which I think is encapsulated in some of the comments Kiersten shared, but also the legislative support for that vision.

Julia Martin Eile: Yeah, thank you, Pam. And welcome everybody. Yeah, so IDEA requirements related to family engagement and participation, you'll see in your tips and resources box that we have a document that's been developed and been used on our family engagement webinars. But you'll note that IDEA embeds throughout the statute and regs family involvement and engagement. And you'll see that I've lined up a bunch of areas where you will find that engagement and participation. And so in purpose, the statute focuses on enhancing the capacity of families to meet the needs of their child. Under a unit of focus, the family is thought of as that unit throughout all of the Part D and Part B programming. Through individualized plans, ISSP and IEPs, as well as the multi-disciplinary team and decisions that are made. That multi-disciplinary team includes the family and includes decisions around ISSP and IEP development for the child. When it comes to cost of services, no one is denied services in Part C because of inability to pay. And Part B, all services are free, so there is this strong focus on making sure families are included and involved in all of the programming.

You'll see under procedural safeguards, there's an importance around timely resolution of all parental complaints and rights of confidentiality. Again, in other area services, there's many services for family engagement and participation. There's family training and counseling. Part C coordinators come to the homes and help support families in improving upon their own lives as well as the development of their child. And so then with transition planning conferences, as well, families are involved in a child moving from C to Part B, and engaged in the decision-making there. And then data collection. We ask our state to submit state performance plans which requires the state to collect data on family involvement and their capacity to support their child. So we have really embedded throughout the IDEA requirement both in statute and reg a consistent family engagement and collaboration.

Pam: Thank you, Julia, and I think that one of the documents you shared with us is on the website and can be downloaded. Is that the more detailed analysis document that's down there in our resource section?

Julia: Yes, that's correct.

Pam: Okay, that's great. So folks, if you want more detail, and I know Julia, you covered a lot of territory there, please download the document under resources. Kiersten, maybe speak to us now about the Head Start guidance to programs around family engagement.

Kiersten: We have so much in common, that's what's so fun about doing webinars with you all. Our standard -- which is, we kind of refer more to our Performance Standards than our law -- are really expansive when we talk about families and family engagement. But I wanted to offer you today just a little bit of areas where I think we have the most intersection. And this section here, the Head State Family Engagement standards is where you'll see the bulk of what our requirements are. And how we partner with families in Subpart E. So, there's four sections. the first family engagement is really a general overview of the ways that we try to make our environments open, responsive, And welcoming, both in a culturally responsive way, as well in terms of hours and that kind of thing to make the space for families to be our partners in our programs.

So you'll see some different kinds of requirements there. The second section has to do with some very specific activities that we have to promote child learning and development where we look at ways to engage families around literacy, family literacy, as well as bilingualism. And kind of supporting families and supporting their children in learning two languages. We also have some requirements here having to do with implementing parenting curriculum. Research-based parenting curriculums. the third area is our goal-setting section, our family partnership services. And this is where we're really trying to provide aspirational and supportive services to families. What do they want to accomplish in their lives with their families and with their children? And then the last section is related to the community partnerships and coordination. And this is where we always think about how Head Start can't do this work alone. Who are all of the partners in the communities that we work with to provide services for families and to support children's learning and development. So that's kind of a very sort of concrete set of standards that we have related to how we partner with families. And then we also have several other sections which we'll touch on throughout the presentation a little bit more later in our collaboration discussion. But we do have a very specific section in our additional services for children with disabilities. That really does run through some of the same things that Julia was talking about.

So, how we collaborate and support parents of advocates for services that their children need. How we help families understand what their children's disability or needs are related to their development. How we help families access the services that their children need, whether it be within the classroom or the home. We also have a set of requirements that helps us try to align with IDEA, so helping parents understand IDEA and the referral and evaluation process. How parents can more actively participate in eligibility process or meetings around IFSP or IEP development. As well as making sure families know they can include Head Start staff in those meetings. And then finally a last nod here to just ensuring that children's needs are accurately identified in that process. So, sort of serving as a partner with families in the process.

Pam: Kiersten, thank you. Boy, you can certainly see the strong, strong alignment between the Head Start and the OSEP policies. And it's really good to hear that foundational information. I know on the last webinar, you both talked about the movement at NHHS to focus on outcomes through results-driven accountability. And we know that laws and policies can only get you so far, so could you share a little bit about what the agencies have done to make sure there's a clear focus on family outcomes as a next component of what you all share? So we're now looking at Family Professional Partnerships and Outcomes Frameworks. Kiersten, you want to start for us on that?

Kiersten: Well, this lovely picture probably looks familiar to a lot of our Head Start audience members. This is our family engagement framework, PFCE Family Engagement Framework. Stands for Parents, Family, and Community Engagement. You know, what this really is for us is a road map, and it helps us look at all of the different levers we have in our programs and how we can embed family engagement or family-related strategies into those levers in order to support family outcomes. And ultimately, that's all in service of supporting our children's learning and development. So when you look across here, you know, we have these different columns. And essentially what this is really saying in a nutshell is, the yellow column is the foundation. So you've got to have your program leadership on board with prioritizing the importance of family engagement. You've got to provide strategies to support professional development of all staff. Depending on what their angle is to be playing an important role in that integration that we were talking about earlier, integrating those strategies. And then a continuous improvement process, kind of like that idea of the use of data and how to collect it and make sure that it's helping you understand the progress and the effects that you're having in terms of your work. The second column, the pink one, is what we call our program sort of impact areas. I mentioned already this idea of the program environment, how important it is to embed strategies in making sure you have an inclusive and welcoming environment. We also use our family partnerships lever, which is our goal-setting practices.

Our teaching and learning, of course, which is the heart and soul of what we do in Head Start, and that our community partnerships which I talked about. And those are all in service of our outcomes, and we have seven. The first one is family well-being, and that's essentially how we can support and increase family's health and safety and increase financial and economic stability. The second is that parent-child relationship and how our services and our partnerships with families strengthens that parent-child relationship. Help families with their attachments, with their very young babies, and learning about parenting and the things that help that parent and those parents and the child to be successful and to develop together. The third is families as lifelong educators, which is one of the areas of family engagement people most easily go to which is, how do we support our families as those folks who are connecting the curriculum in the program to the home? How do we build on what children are learning in their programs with what they're learning in their home and community, and parents being the major conduit for that. Families as learners is how we support adult aspirations and dreams and interests.

Things that parents and families want to learn to better themselves in their lives. Family engagement in transitions.

Thinking about all of those early learning environments we have our kids in, and how we support parents when children are moving from environment to environment and on into kindergarten. Family connections, peers and community have to do with how we connect parents to each other to break down isolation to give parents that needed support to feel part of community and to decrease their stress. And then the last area is the families as advocates and leaders. And that outcome area is one that is really essential to the way we conduct our Head Start programs. There are governance opportunities for families in our programs. And these policy council folks who are part of the webinar probably -- some of you may have a lot of experience with that. But speaking of our parents as partners in the way that we design and improve what we do. So those are the outcomes that we're after in Head Start. And, of course, programs work on those in different ways and in different concentrations at different times. It's very locally driven. I'd love to hear about some of your outcomes on the IDEA side.

Pam: Yeah, Kiersten, that's such a great framework. It's so chock full of information, and I can see the alignment with the OSEP outcome. So, Julia, are you going to tell us?

Kiersten: I forgot the most important part. I'm sorry. I forgot the most important part.

Pam: Oh, what's that?

Kiersten: It's the arrow on the top.

Pam: Oh, tell us about that.

Kiersten: I know, I can't believe it. It says positive and goal-oriented relationships, and it basically is sort of the thing that runs through all of it. It's the relationships that drive all of this. I'm sorry I cut you off, but I was, like, "I can't believe I forgot that."

Pam: Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Kiersten. So, Julia, share a little bit about the OSEP family outcomes framework.

Julia: Sure. So, when we think about our family outcomes, we have three of them. I know HHS has seven outcomes. We have three, but we do see a lot of interconnections, and we have looked at family outcomes for a number of years now, more than ten years of collecting this data from states. States have a framework of improving their systems within this state improvement plan. And their systems is the family outcome, first part. And so we want them to be able to help their families know their rights, effectively communicate their child's needs, and help their children develop and learn. And families are evaluated in these states, mostly surveyed about how well they're understanding their rights and communicating their child's needs based on being in part C. They're only in part C for a very short period of time. And in many cases, it takes at least a year or two for them to really be more involved in understanding the needs that their child may have.

And I know that a number of our states are looking closely at the family outcome indicator, which is we call the spinner. Which is just looking very closely at how they can try to improve family outcomes for each of these families that they're working with. When we move to Part B, we look at it from a parent involvement. And so percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report

that school- facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. And so IDEA Part B focuses on the family involvement, and the school's ability to involve the parent in improving services and results for their child. And states also submit data to OSEP on parent involvement and their systemic improvement plan.

Pam: Yeah. Thanks, Julia. I think it's really impressive that you all are collecting data on these outcomes and using that to make improvements, so thank you for sharing that. Now, here's a question, actually, from our last webinar. So this will encourage everybody to ask those questions 'cause we come back to them eventually. When we presented on the OSEP child outcomes, and the Head Start early learning outcomes framework in two different frameworks. A question from a listener came in who said, why do we have to have two different outcome frameworks? Can't we just have one? So I think it's a really legitimate question when we think about early childhood as an inclusive field of practice. So, on this next slide, we have put the outcomes frameworks. You'll see them kind of side by side. On the left-hand side, it's the Head Start family outcomes framework, and on the right side, the OSEP Part C family outcomes. And I wasn't sure these lines were going to pop up so quickly, but Kiersten, you want to talk about your own kind of informal exercise in matching these up? And then we're going to open it up for people's reactions and questions and comments on that.

Kiersten: Yeah, so I think, like we've been sort of talking about this theme of overlap and connection. And there's a lot of connections to make. A couple that I made but I would really love to hear from our audience has to do with effectively communicating their children's needs. We see that as a sort of current focus in a lot of our different outcomes. So, how the parent-child relationship is evolving, and parents are advocating for what their child needs in the program, how parents as lifelong educators are learning, more about what their child is learning and what their child-learning developmental needs are, and how they're advocating or supporting that learning. Family engagement and transitions. This is a really big communication connection for Head Start, just so important that the environment children are going into have the information they need, and that we can really support the continuity for that child. Families if advocates and leaders -- I keep saying advocating, so I think it goes without saying but parents do get the chance in our programs to learn a lot about how to advocate, and given opportunities to practice that and have opportunities to have a lot of parents teach in conferences. I think that can really help them to have improved communications over time. So I see a lot of connections there. I see some connections also related to -- Let's see if we can get this moving. Bear with me. Right now my arrow is not working, so perhaps you can forward it for me.

Pam: Okay. There we go.

Kiersten: So knowing their rights. Families with advocates and leaders, families of learners, so really understanding the rights of the parent and the child. And then the last connection I was thinking about, if you want to move it forward.

Pam: Okay. Here we go.

Kiersten: Is, of course, helping their children develop and learn. I'm going to get too repetitive here because I've already talked about some of these connections with our outcomes around families as lifelong educators and the transitional piece. I wonder if folks have other thoughts about some of these outcomes and some of the things that come to mind for you about what you see in common across these two programs.

Pam: So, folks, if you have comments to share about this alignment we've done in an informal way between the two sets of outcome frameworks, please type into the question and answer period. It doesn't just have to be a question. You can put your comments there or your thoughts about it. And thoughts that any of the panelists have, please jump in right now because I always think when I've done this kind of exercise in a presentation or something that what stands out for me is that top Head Start family outcome of family well-being. Whereby, I think that Head Start historically and traditionally has really focused more on the sort of whole-family approach. As Kiersten, you know, because you're, I think, the federal project officer for the family parent community engagement National T.A. Center that focuses a lot on these family outcomes and this holistic approach to families, including their well-being. So that's one thing that stands out for me, at least. So please, everyone, make your comments or questions in the Q&A, and we'll get to those after we continue. So, we've looked -- Julia: Pam?

Pam: Yeah? Are you Julia?

Julia: This is Julia. Yeah. I just wanted to recognize -- Pam: Hi, Julia.

Julia: Hi. I just wanted to recognize, we see these linkages definitely where you've drawn the pictures and the circles. And you know, the two that stand out to me that aren't linking as much is what you were just mentioning, the family well-being, and the family connections to peers and community. But I feel -- Pam: Julia, will you speak up a tiny bit? We're all having a hard time hearing you.

Julia: Sure, but I feel that there's a lot of indirect linkages here, as well. The service coordinator in Part C plays such a crucial role in helping families to grow. And so we don't really have that linkage here that says actually what our service coordinator role is, but she does so much about connecting families to other resources to helping families build in their own community and help support themselves. And this whole advocacy of the parent growing so that they can better take care of their own child as well as themselves. So you don't see direct links. I think there's a lot of indirect supports that are varied out there.

Pam: Good point, Julia. And for those of you with Julia in the room, I think you're going to need to speak up a little bit. But some reason, the audio is really low right now.

Julia: Okay, we will.

Pam: Okay. Anyone else want to comment on this alignment exercise? Okay. We're going to then move on to the next segment on family professional partnerships, and that's the segment on practice guidelines. I mean, I think it's really important to think about these outcomes, but if we don't have practices that are evidence-based and associated with these outcomes, we won't get very far. So, Christy, you're up next to talk us about the practices that have the strongest evidence for supporting the early childhood outcomes -- family outcomes we were just looking at.

Christy Kavulic: Thank you, Pam.

Pam: You're welcome.

Christy: I wanted to talk about the division of early childhood recommended practices.

Pam: Yeah, and speak up a little louder, Christy. I don't know what's happening on y'all's end, but your voices suddenly became very soft.

Christy: Okay. [Chuckles] The DEC recommended practices were updated in 2014, and these are practices that really have a strong evidence for supporting early childhood outcomes and family outcomes. So we wanted to make sure we highlighted specific recommended practices for you within the DEC recommended practices. To give you a little more information about the DEC recommended practices, they were really developed as a way to provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children birth through 5 years of age who have or at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. So the goal of the recommended practices is really to try to inform and improve the quality of services provided to young children with or at risk for disabilities or delays as well as for their families and to really try to bridge the gap between research and practice by highlighting those practices that have been shown to result in better outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families as well as the personnel who serve them.

So during the process of updating the recommended practices, there is a two-year process where different researchers, different faculty at universities, family members, practitioners really came together to think about what were the practices that would best inform and improve the quality of services for young children with disabilities. And they wanted to think about practices that were both supported by research, but as well as values and experience that would represent a breadth of topics that could be observable. That weren't disability-specific, and we wanted them to be delivered in all settings, meaning where children naturally are. So inclusive preschools, childcare settings in the home and other community-based settings. And we wanted them to build on and not be duplicative of other standards, such as National Association of Education of Young Children Developmentally Appropriate Practices. And so what the DEC recommended practices ultimately became were practices within eight different topic areas, and you'll see on the slide that family was specifically a topic area as well as there are some other areas that aren't specific to children, but are thinking about the support which is what the overall webinar is on today.

But just to give you a sense of what the DEC practices say around families, it's said that family-recommended practices guide practitioners interactions with family members so that practitioners can support the family's confidence and competence in helping their child grow and learn. And with under this heading of families, this topical area of families, there are three major principles in how the practices are organized, and I'll go through those principles right now. The first is that parents are constant in the lives of young children with disabilities or developmental delays, and so practitioners should provide families with the information they need and recognize the information they already have. The second principle is, in every interaction with a family, it is the role of the practitioner to promote confidence and affirm the competency of parents to support their children's development and learning so they will continue to provide their children with what they need. And then the third principle under which the practices are organized is that practitioners need to respect the unique characteristics of each family, including ethnicity, culture, family structure, and family goals, and work in collaboration with the family to achieve these goals. Under each of the principles, or under the principles, there are different practices.

So we gave you an example of one of the practices. Practices support family functioning, promote family's confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strength and capacities. And then under that, you'll see that there are

some different examples of how a practitioner could support a family in meeting under that practice. So, as you can see, the practices really align to and support both the vision and the policies and the statutes of our two programs. But also, I think they really align to the outcomes, frameworks, as well, put forth by our different offices so that there's a great alignment between all of this. And there's also an alignment, though, between how we think about the DEC recommended practices and how they fit within the broad early childhood field. As you'll see on the screen, we have a schematic known as the house, and it's just been recently revised. As a premise for effective practice for all Head Start children, the roof of the house is about highly individualized teaching and learning, and it being an essential element in providing high quality inclusion for children with disabilities. But you'll note, kind of the center of this house is the fact that the families are central to the house. And, really, everything we want to do to promote family engagement so that they can help in supporting their young children's development.

At the bottom of the house are those foundational practices that support all children and nurturing the responsive and effective interaction and engaging environments that are at the foundation of program quality. The left-hand pillar indicates the importance of very intentionally using those foundational practices within the structure of a research curriculum. The right-hand pillar depicts the ongoing use of data for making decisions about when to individualize more carefully and systematically for children who are struggling to learn and who might need more specialized instruction and modifications and accommodations for the general curriculum. And then, lastly, just re-emphasizing the importance of aligning all the DET recommended practices with the outcomes framework. And there's an example we have for you. So, just let it come up here. As families as advocates and leaders, the example for the CEC recommended practices is that practices inform families about leadership and advocacy skill-building opportunities. We encourage those who are interested to participate. So again, you see from examples of the DEC recommended practices that would align to the Head Start family outcome framework.

Pam: Thank you, Christy. It's really exciting to see these alignments that you all are sharing and thinking about how, across Ed. and HHS, there is so much we have in common and so much we can do to work together. This is a great way to illustrate that. We have some questions that came in, and the first one, since we were talking, Christy or Julia, either one of you, this is a question for OSEP. And OSEP stands for the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Ed. Has OSEP considered adding family well-being and parent-child relationships as additional components to these family outcomes?

Julia: Pam, this is Julia. I don't know if we're going to actually add well-being specifically, but I think we do recognize where our outcomes may have limitations in getting all the information we want to get from families. And I feel the same way about the parent involvement indicator in Part B, so I know there is an internal group looking at it and thinking about how we could get better information in the future. So there is a potential of revising them

Pam: Uh-oh. Still there? Are you still there, Julia? You kind of cut off.

Julia: Yes, yes, yes.

Pam: Okay. So there's some potential there for making some adjustments, I think you said, right?

Julia: Yeah, there's potential for revision down in the future. We are re-looking at it, yes.

Pam: Great, great. One more question, and then we'll move on. This one came in and is up for grabs. If the child's IEP or individualized education plan says that the LRE, the least-restrictive environment is a

school district, specialized Pre-K, are we supposed to also enroll them in our non-school district Head Start classroom that we operate.

Christy: Hi, Pam, this is Christy, and I think that in terms of thinking about placement for children with disabilities, it's really an individualized decision. So it's the IEP team or the individualized education program team that comes together that makes those decisions. So, dependent on what the IEP team decides, some might decide that, for a child to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, that would be in a program operated by the school district. Others would talk about that the Head Start program would be the most appropriate way to provide a free appropriate public education with the least restrictive environments. So, that is really a decision that's made by the IEP team.

Pam: Okay, thanks, Christy. So keep the questions coming. Appreciate you all fielding those. So we're going to now turn to the last section of this component and resources. Can you all share some resources with us that you think would be really helpful to our listeners to know about and to have access to? Kiersten, you or Sangeeta want to start?

Kiersten: Sure. Well, just to let folks know, we have a lot of resources on our early cognitive learning and knowledge center, the ECLKC, that are designed to help programs or staff build relationships with families. I just highlighted a few for you here. Our simulation series is really popular, and basically, you can see here on this slide, we have four different simulations. The first is engaging families from the start. That's really looking at some relationship-based attitudes and practices and you're sort of acting as an avatar. So it's a game. You're making choices. There's a relationship meter. It tells you how well you're doing with that parent. We have one on goal settings, one that's really looking at strength-based relationship building, and then we have a new one that's just come out that is talking about developmental concerns with parents and employing a lot of these relationship-based practices to do so. And then the second resources that I pulled up for you here is really about these relationship-building skills and practices. More exercises to kind of work on those. So things that have to do with how to support the parent-child relationship, use the children's behavior as a way to talk and connect each other. Reflecting on your own sort of ideas about and expectations of parents and when those interfere or don't. So a lot of those kinds of things are contained in these resources.

Sangeeta: This is Sangeeta, so I just wanted to add one more thing which is that I think what we're trying to do with some of our resources is really emphasize that we understand that engaging with parents is not easy. It sounds easy, but then when you put it into practice, sometimes it can be difficult. And so having something like this simulation, if you walk through it, can be really helpful because it kind of puts you through some areas that you may encounter every day and help you think about different ways to approach it and talk to parents.

Julia: And this is Julia. Similarly with IDEA and OSEP, we have resources to support family engagement. We have in each state a PTI, a parent training and information center in which those centers help support families. This has been predominantly for K through 12, but they have moved into the early childhood arena in the last number of years, and so if you go to our parent center hub, you will find a map in which you can find the PTIs that are located in your state. They also have a wealth of resources on parent engagement and collaboration. In addition, on the next slide, we have, as you've been hearing, we've been doing a webinar series on engaging families and creating trusting partnerships. And then we also have an OSEP-funded center CONNECT learning module on family professional partnerships. Similarly has videos and modules on how to engage with families, which are really great

and helpful. And then, obviously, we have some resources at the Department of Ed, and there are some links there for you, as well.

Pam: Great. Thanks for sharing those. I think we're going to -- we've gotten some great questions. Going to continue to move on, but please keep sending your questions. We don't have any in the queue quite yet. We're going to move onto the second big chunk of information on communicating and collaborating with colleagues, the other adults in your lives as you work with families and children. So we'll start again with a quick overview of some division for this and the laws and the policies. So, let's start off I think with you, Julia.

Julia: Okay, great. So I think OSEP's vision is really looking at all the multiple levels that play out on any level, whether it's state or local early childhood programs, child, family, and even higher education. Prioritizing, collaboration, and coordination. So, what does it mean for state? State and state leaders need to recognize that they play a major role in proactively developing a high quality early childhood system in which they collaborate with all those early childhood providers. What does it mean for local early childhood programs? They, similarly to the state, raise public awareness and create a culture of acceptance of all children and families and are collaborative within their early childhood environments. Prioritizing collaboration and coordination for the child. A child feels welcomed and accepted in early childhood programs in the state. They receive individualized support from services to meet their needs from highly trained early childhood professionals in high quality settings. For families, all families feel welcomed and accepted in early childhood programs. Families are engaged in the program, and they understand the need for their child and are supported and empowered to help their child grow and learn. And for higher education, which I feel we're really trying to focus on here. When you heard about Christy talking about recommended practices and making sure that we have high-quality professionals coming out of universities.

Institutes of higher education should be collaborating and coordinating with the state and be included as part of the state level task force and plan so that they can prepare early childhood professionals with the skills necessary to provide high-quality, inclusive services for children. IHE should be evaluating early childhood program studies so that it aligns with the state-level plan, and IHE should be embedding in their curriculum competencies and culturally and linguistically responsive policies and practices, family engagement, and inclusion of all children. So it's a large collaborative piece a multiple levels.

Pam: Great. So, when we think about IDEA requirements relating to teaming and collaborating, we look at it from a system level and a practice level. And so IDEA has focused on teaming and collaboration. When you look at the regulations, they ask for an established state inter-agency coordinating council, and that requires members from the early childhood field, programs, families of children with disabilities must sit on the FICC. There's memorandums of agreement so that those different early childhood programs that sit on the council work together and collaborate. They collaborate around child find so children are found quicker. They have interagency agreements around public awareness programs and their central directory of services. For practice, we look at multidisciplinary approach through evaluation, IFSP and IEP development as I talked about earlier. We look at the collaborative approach that comes from services coordinators collaborating with early childhood programs to support the child and family. The service delivery.

We want to encourage services that are provided in the child's classroom, the day care center, wherever they are getting their care. We want the services, the IDEA services, to be provided in that setting so that means teaming and collaboration are happening across the board. For outcomes, as I mentioned

earlier, we want to collect data on outcomes for children and need to have folks well-trained to understand what the early childhood outcome is and how children are developing and how we can collect that data and get it to the state so we see that actually from entry to exit of Part C programs, children are actually making gains in their development. And finally, with transition, I mentioned earlier, it's a multidisciplinary approach to transition planning. So it's preschool to kindergarten that all providers are part of that team in making those decisions about the child's best placement.

Pam: Wow. So much to take in there, Julia. That was a great presentation of it, and I know we have a great question about transition come in, but I'm afraid looking at my watch that we probably will not have time to answer more questions because of the amount of content we wanted to cover. But we will collect these questions. We will come back with answers to them, and this just tell us that there's a lot of rich material here that's going to require more discussion. So, we're going to move on and, Sangeeta, what about Head Start? How does Head Start provide guidance to programs in this area of collaboration? And maybe kind of quickly. [Chuckles] Sangeeta: Thanks, Pam.

Pam: Okay.

Sangeeta: Head Start provides guidance to programs in the area of collaboration in a variety of ways. Through the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Head Start early learning outcomes framework birth to 5, and through collaborations at the local level. So the Head Start Program Performance Standards really emphasize a coordinated approach. Now, this is not new for Head Start, but the terminology itself is new in the recent regulations. And it specifically highlights children with disabilities. So, what we say is at the beginning of each program year, and on an ongoing basis through the year, a program must design and implement program-wide coordinated approaches that ensure the full and effective participation of all children with disabilities. So we specifically say that includes but is not limited to children eligible for services under IDEA. And that we talk in this section about providing services with a variety of different facets, including appropriate facilities, program materials, curriculum, instruction, staffing supervision, et cetera.

So the kind of larger question is how do we accomplish this? Coordinated approaches is one term, but it really is kind of difficult to wrap your hands around. And so here on this slide, I really like it because it's a cheat sheet of all the different areas in the Performance Standards where we really talk about children with disabilities. So we have the section 1302 Subpart C, which is the first bullet there, where we talk about education and child development program services. So in this section, we really talk about ensuring that programs include all children, including those with an IEP or IFSP in a wide variety of areas. So we touch upon teaching in the learning environment, curricula screening and assessment, and parent and family engagement in education and child development services. The next section here, 1302.33, recognizes that some children with delays may not be eligible for IDEA but benefit from additional supports and services. So we talk here about ways that, you know, if a child really doesn't meet the criteria for disability in a particular state that we still want to make sure that the program will be able to provide these children with services and support. And ways to do that, maybe under section 504 of the rehabilitation act, or through the child's health insurance. Subpart F is really kind of the meat and potatoes of the Performance Standards when it comes to serving children with disabilities. We emphasize here the importance of sole participation in program services and activities. We talk about making sure that we're serving children a least restrictive environment possible, and that they must fully participate in all program activities.

There is a subpart. The subpart also has a section devoted to services for parents of all children with disabilities. Kiersten had talked a little about it earlier. And going back to kind of the coordination and collaboration, the subpart has a section focused on coordination and collaboration with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA including that a program must work to develop interagency agreements with the local agency to improve service delivery to children eligible for services under IDEA. Subpart G, the transition services. so I know we had a great question about transitions, and I wanted to make sure that we emphasize this, because this is something that when we revised the Performance Standards, we wanted to make sure that we were very clear about this. We understand that children will be moving to a school where we don't really know about what the family engagement piece is going to look like.

This section space, the programs must provide transition services to support children with disabilities and their families as they prepare to leave the program. And it specifically talks about not only taking into account the child disability status, but also moving the individual family service plan or the individualized education program, the IEP, for children when they were moving from Head Start to kindergarten. The Subpart J is the program management section where we talk about coordinated approaches as I mentioned earlier. And then we have a section on transportation. So just making sure that, whenever possible, a child with a disability is transported in the same vehicle used to transport other children enrolled in Head Start or early Head Start. So all of these standards are here, and I'm highlighting them for you because you can see that there are kind of different strands and strings that you have to pull together to coordinate and collaborate to provide services to children with disabilities. So that's one area, and I tried to do it as quickly as possible in the performance area where we talk about collaboration really quickly.

Pam: Yeah, there's so much rich information here, Sangeeta, and I'm thinking, I don't want to cut short your presentation here, but maybe skip along through some of the slides about the outcomes frameworks and then the PIR data on the agreements that Head Start folks have with LEAs.

Sangeeta: Absolutely. And, you know, in a previous webinar, we did cover the Head Start early learnings outcome framework. So please tune into that if you want to learn a little bit more about that. It's also on the ECLKC as a good resource for you, as well. And here's a graphic of our early learning outcomes framework. And just want to highlight that it should be used for children with disabilities. And we do talk about coordination and collaboration at the local level in the early learning outcomes framework. And just to -- earlier, I mentioned the requirement that a program must work to develop interagency agreements with the local agencies. So here's just some data, just some concrete example of how this collaboration is currently working at the local level. You can see here, we have the number of LEAs at the service area around 19,000 number of formal agreements the program has with LEAs to coordinate services for children with disabilities is around 14,000. So we're doing pretty well. We could do better. We've also highlighted some of those formal collaborations for public school pre-K programs as well as part C agencies.

Pam: Great. Thank you, Sangeeta. So, we're going to move on to our practice guidelines, and, Christy, I think this is you. If you'll go quickly and tell us about some of the DEC recommended practices on teaming and collaboration.

Christy: Sure, Pam. As I mentioned earlier, the DEC recommended practices, one of the topical areas is teaming and collaboration. And you can see it's about practices to promote and sustain collaborative adult partnerships, relationships, and ongoing interactions. And so within that, there's themes around how you compose teams, how you communicate and facilitate group interactions and how you establish a purpose for your team. And just as in the other one around family practices, if you go through the DEC recommended practices, you'll find some examples of how to actually operationalize the practices.

Pam: Great, that was a nice, quick, speedy trip through the DEC recommended practices. And there are a few resources that you all wanted to share.

Christy: Sure, one is the CONNECT. It's a learning module that's really good on thinking about how providers communicate to establish better collaborations, and then the ECTA center, which is hosting the webinar, has a number of good resources on IDEA and interagency collaboration, as well.

Pam: Great, and there's some Head Start resources, too. I see some on Transitions. That was one of our questions.

Christy: Yeah, these were also to be found on the ECLKC. One is a research to practice, and then the other is a series of differing kinds of training tools.

Pam: Great, so we're coming to the end of our time. We got some good questions. I'm glad we've got some of them in. We want to remind you that some of these questions will probably spill into the next webinar, which is focused on that other element of support, professional development. That'll be coming later in 2017. And especially want to thank the panelists who did such a marvelous job off getting through so much rich content. I think you all exemplify the word partnership and collaboration so we really appreciate you all and appreciate all of you all who are on the webinar, who sent in your questions, who continue to please send in questions because we collect these. We compile them. We're creating a giant, frequently asked questions, and we will get back to you with them. So I appreciate everybody. I want to say goodbye and thank you, and we'll see you at the next webinar. Thanks, all.

Christy: Thank you.

Together: Thank you. Thank you.

Pam: Okay, bye.