Office of Head Start CAMP: Session 3

Ann Linehan: Good afternoon and good morning to our West Coast colleagues. This is Ann Linehan from the Office of Head Start, and I want to welcome you to our third CAMP session. We're halfway through after today, and along with myself, we have our household names Adia, Amanda, Belinda, and Colleen, who are joining us today to answer some really critical questions as you are planning or in the process of planning your services for this upcoming program year, and for those of you who are already maybe serving children. We are very excited to be with you again. Dr. B hopes to drop in at some point, but if she were here, she would say, yesterday, she did her first virtual site visit to a local program in Maine, and it really was heartening when she talked about seeing the kids in the classroom, meeting with staff, and being able to talk with parents. So, I know that she'll probably make some comments about that, but we have a lot to cover today. And I do want to go back to, and we do this every time we begin these series, to really, what are the underlying principles that have driven us to do this? We want to empower you to make reasonable decisions, and we want to also uncover how meeting the Head Start performance standards may look different this year and reinforce with you your need to use your community data and state data and local guidance to make informed decisions. And everything – everything you do should ensure that the health and safety of children, staff, and families comes first.

In today's session – I know that this is one that people have been eagerly anticipating – we're going to focus on education and child development program services. Also, touch upon some critical issues of children with disabilities. And also, touch upon transportation that follows our recently issued information memorandum. And of course, we have a Q&A session at the end. The purpose of that primarily is to recap and revisit some of the questions from last week as well as if we have time to touch upon some questions that came in today. So Adia, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Adia Brown: Well, thanks, Ann. I'm happy to be the moderator again this week. You know how much I enjoy doing that. So why don't we just jump right into education and child development program services? I'm sure there's lots of people who have tons of questions. Our first question that comes in is, should education services be delivered in-person or remotely during the 2020-2021 program year? Ann, what do you think about that?

Ann: Well, again, as we have said many times over, this is going to be a local decision, and programs have got the flexibility to deliver education and child development services in person, virtually, or many programs may do a combination of both. Programs, as always, should individualize education services really based on the needs of the children and families, including service delivery mechanisms, in person or virtually. We understand services could change throughout the course of the upcoming program year as local conditions evolve. But regardless of this service delivery mechanisms, we really want to stress this is a time where just as you're seeking information, parents need to be kept up to date every day in terms of what the services

are going to look like to both new and returning families. This is a year where communication is going to be paramount between the program and the parent.

Adia: All right, Ann. I'm sure people are really thankful for that question. I'm going to go onto our next one, and for this one, I think we're going to talk to Amanda. Amanda, if community conditions result in a program offering virtual service to some or all the children enrolled in center-based options, what are some of the important considerations for service delivery?

Amanda Bryans: Well, hello, Adia. That is a great question. And again, my name is Amanda Bryans, and I work with everybody who's on the webinar today at the Office of Head Start. I'm really happy to have the chance to talk about some of these things with all of our participants today. So, programs offering virtual services to children enrolled in a center-based option are … I know now deeply involved in planning, they should consider how they will individualize services for children and their parents. So, thinking about parent and child capacity and how service delivery will differ from the typical model where children are served for three to six hours, or even more in a classroom environment. You have to think about staffing needs, and the training of staff, the availability, and the capacity of parents. Are they going to be home with children? Are they having to go to work? How many people are there? What's the situation in home? And make sure there's a clear understanding among your staff and your families about how virtual services can be really engaging and impactful and effective in supporting progress towards school readiness. If parents or other adults in the home are not going to be available to support their child's participation, think about ways – alternatives that will help make sure that children still have maximum progress and are getting the comprehensive services they'll need, and how those services can be aligned with family situations so they're appropriate.

If virtual services are provided to some or all of the children enrolled in the center-based option, the managers and staff need to think about how they'll make sure that those are comprehensive services. And we wanted to remind you, as we always do, that the early learning outcomes framework and school readiness goals are essential to planning. Using those as a foundation can help people ask questions about how they'll do what, make sure program managers and staff plan virtually services including thinking about, are you going to use the regular center-based curriculum and can that be adjusted to be effective? Should you be thinking about a home-based curriculum when there's a parent or a primary caregiver available to support a child's development? Would a home-based curriculum be more appropriate and work better? Can you follow a scope and sequence? Which just means, is there a logical progression for teaching and learning experiences so that children's increasing knowledge and skills are built upon throughout the time the child is being served. And consider the time staff are going to need to develop individual small and group lessons, as well as delivering the needed materials and supplies to families. Who's going to do that? Is it going to be staff? How's the schedule going to work? And always, as we said, keeping our eye on the prize of promoting progress towards school readiness, regardless of the environment where children are served so that children are ready cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically to eventually go to kindergarten. Long answer.

Adia: Wow. I was about to say, for our CAMPers out there, that was a very long answer. Lot – packed – jam packed with a lot of really good information for them. And so, I know people always ask about the slides and are they available, and these slides will be available. You're probably downloading them right now, grantees. It's a jam-packed answer, but there's a lot to consider when you're thinking about center-based services during this time. So, our next question is for Ann. Ann, you still there with me?

Ann: Yes.

Adia : Good, good. So, folks really want to know about home-based programming too. We talked about center basing, but how do programs provide education services and home-based during the 2020 and 2021 school year?

Ann: Before I answer Adia, I just want to build on what you were talking about, that was a really long answer and these slides are just packed with narrative, and that was really an intentional. This is not your model PowerPoint presentation, but we wanted to provide not bullets, but a complete answer so programs could use these slides with their staff, with their policy councils, with their boards so they would have our full thinking on these subjects.

That said, to get to home-based services, if you look at the first two sentences in the first paragraph, these are the things that we would be saying for any home-based option, not just during COVID time, that the visits are jointly planned with parents and focus on the critical role of parents in the learning and development of their children, the foundation of a home-based program. And programs must ensure the home-based curriculum has an organized developmental scope and sequence, just as – similar as Amanda mentioned, when providing virtual services and include learning experiences based on the child's developmental progressions. So, that is the standard response to, how do you deliver home-based? What is different this year is we understand that socializations are really important part of the home-based experience, and if programs are not able to provide the number of group socializations, they're not going to be penalized. We know it may be very difficult, if not impossible, to get groups of children together to meet that part of the home-based requirement. So, where we deviate a little bit because of the COVID situation is we want to say for in person, what is a little bit different this year is to – if you are considering in-person home-based services, you really want to ensure the family is comfortable with you coming into their home. And if not, maybe they're open to conducting visits and other creative ways, like maybe physically distance outside at a park or in the backyard. And again, similarly for virtual home-based services, and this echoes, I think, what Amanda was saying also, you really must consider – particularly in home-based – whether the parent has the time and capacity to participate in this service model. And again, we just want to talk about, you know, should follow the previously mentioned guidelines for in-person curriculum implementation, parent engagement, and socializations. Again, understanding the comfort level of the parents and their capacity to fulfill their important role in home-based is really important. And I think we want to encourage, while you may be anxious to provide services, the comfort level and the individualization for the family, the service should match the needs for the family at this given period. Thanks, Adia.

Adia: You're welcome, Ann. All my CAMPers out there, I need you to wiggle your toes as if you were in a pool. We'll make you feel a little bit more relaxed. And I want to go to Amanda. Amanda, while everybody's wiggling their toes and feeling a little bit more comfortable like they're in a nice, cool pool at the campsite, Amanda, can you tell us a little bit about the curriculum and whether or not there's a lot of changes that people are anticipating this school year? And if they have to make some changes to their curriculum, do they have to consult with an expert?

Amanda: Yeah, that's a really important question, Adia. And even before I answer that, and I just wanted to acknowledge what Ann said about how much information we're providing and what a short time, and reframe for everybody that we are thinking that many programs will return to regular center-based staff services. There are our service areas, which have very – very little COVID spread and are able to go ahead as per usual. There are other programs where things are really – really concerning, and they may decide to start all virtually, and there are lots of programs where there is some community spread and there are local recommendations and national recommendations about things like physical spacing that will mean not as many children may be in a classroom as usual. And we're trying to talk about all those things in one set of slides. So, I know if you can get confusing, but we now are not making assumptions or giving you directions about how you will serve kids. We are giving you guidelines to help think about planning across these different delivery options, and we wanted to say that we are hoping you're, to the largest extent possible, able to align the options with what the child and family needs and capacity are. So, that's the frame for all of these discussions.

But in response to the question you just asked around adaptation and do you need expert approval of a change in curriculum, and no, you do not. During this exceptional time, when we are in a pandemic, you are not required to consult with an expert to develop or evaluate curriculum adaptations that you regularly would. You are encouraged where you can to work alongside experts to look at expertise that's available from objective sources on the ECLKC and in other places to make the kind of decisions you need to ensure curricula continue to align with what your school readiness goals are. And that, to the greatest extent you can, you're ensuring that children are making progress. When you're developing and adapting curriculum for this upcoming year, again, you're encouraged to use the outcomes, the early learning outcomes framework, the beloved ELOF, and don't forget the ELOF2GO app as a guide to help you plan experiences and activities that match and build on children's skills and abilities. And the framework is immiscible across all the options.

Adia: Thank you, Amanda,

Amanda: You're welcome, Adia. My pleasure.

Adia: Thank you. Thank you. So, Ann, we've heard the word family multiple times, families, parents, parent capacity, making sure that family still stay engaged. So, how should programs address family engagement as it relates to teaching and learning in the 2020, 2021 program year?

Ann: Well, what I would say again is they should approach it as they always do, but with a heightened sense of awareness of how important it is going to be this year when children are in a locally designed to different situations, how important that communication is between teaching staff and parents. And we're talking about regular communication, even if the child is in virtual services. Understanding what a child learning and development, routines, the activities, behavior, and progress. We had talked in an earlier CAMP session, certainly, we want the parent teacher conferences to continue no less than two times per year, but that's sort of an official requirement, but the ongoing communication that happens regularly and particularly when you think of your infants and toddlers, the communication between teaching staff and the parents is absolutely critical. And again, one of the things I think that is also heightened this year is the whole issue of understanding, parents understand purpose and results of developmental screenings and assessments. It seems particularly heightened this year because parents are likely going to play a larger role in completing screenings and assessment tools. And so, the communication, setting the foundation for that easy back and forth, valuing the observations of parents and incorporating that into the individualization that you're doing for the children is really critical. And as always, we want parents to be able to have a voice and provide feedback if it's on [Inaudible] selected curricular, instructional materials that are going to be used with their children in the program. So again, it's like, well, this is what we would always say, but things feel so heightened and the stakes is so much higher because it's not going to be a typical year.

Adia: Thanks, Ann. Wow, we talked about a lot so far. But so far, just to recap for our CAMPers, we've talked about center-based, we've talked about home-based, we've talked about virtual, we've talked about curriculum. We've talked about a lot of different things. So, if you're thinking about your educational program and how that may look different in 2021, this camp really has provided you with lots of answers for things that you can consider and think about as you're making the local decisions in this next program year. And my next question is for Amanda. Amanda, if center-based programs transitioned to home base during COVID-19, will center-based teachers be required to have a home-based CDA?

Amanda: Again, great question, Adia, and the answer is no. This is a very exceptional time. We would not require a early childhood education center-based teacher to require a CDA or to have a home-based CDA during this upcoming year. We are encouraging programs, absolutely, to support teachers who are newly working with families in a home-based environment. There are many free online courses, which highlight some of the best practice strategies for connecting families with families in the home visiting environment. Many of our programs have some home-based option or neighboring program with a home-based option. So, we encourage you to draw on the expertise you may have within your program or neighboring programs around that. And we, again, encourage you to use the home-based and home visiting guidance that's available and training that's available on the ECLKC, but we will not be requiring that you have the credential.

Adia: Thanks, Amanda. Ann, how can programs continue to support the development of dual language learners during the 2020, 2021 program year?

Ann: Well, again, I would say the heightened importance of this is really paramount. I can imagine that every parent is anxious, and if a parent is not proficient in English, the anxiety about what's happening to their child will be even greater this year. So, the commitment on the part of programs to continue the development of the home language for the dual language learners, in addition to supporting English acquisition for your preschoolers or experiences that expose a child to English if they're infants and toddlers, critically important. And we also want to say to meaningful engage with DLLs and education services. It's critical the program staff be able to communicate effectively with parents of enrolled children. And I just want to say plain and straight, if the parents have limited English proficiency, and you have no members that speak the home language or the preferred language, you have got to find out a way – a strategy to be able to communicate with that parent in their preferred language. I know that there are a variety of strategies that you have employed over the years. Again, I think it is incredibly a heightened responsibility to ensure that those parents who need to be communicated in a language other than English get the same kind of information, the same frequency that our English speaking parents receive.

Adia: Ann, that was a great answer. So, the next set of questions that we're going to be answering are going to be ones that are very interesting to Head Start grantees. So, if you're typing in questions right now, if you walked away from your computer, you want to come back because these are questions that are about screenings, assessments, and aggregation of data that I know that you'll be very interested in. So, stop typing, listen very carefully, and I'm going to ask the very next question. So, during the 2020-2021 program year, are programs expected to complete developmental screenings, Amanda?

Amanda: Well, Adia, yes, they are. Programs need to do the developmental screenings as soon as possible. We think this is especially important this year, and I know there are people out there with panic looks on their faces, but there may be delays in the referral and evaluation process. You all know that Head Start is a key player in ensuring that children from low-income families get the screening, and if they're eligible, get early intervention services during the time this real window is open for making incredible progress; and they always make progress, but you know what I mean. So, we want to make sure that they get the screening. There are screening tools available that are specifically for parent administration. Programs want to look at these tools. You're also encouraged to consult screening vendors about possible adaptations that have been made to help people do this work virtually. You also want to be talking to your clinics and health providers about what the pediatricians are doing during well-child checks to see if children can be screened that way. And I think you need to document your decisions regarding when and how the screenings were completed.

We wanted to remind you this is not about monitoring and penalties; this is about meeting children's needs, that you are not going to be penalized if you're not able to meet the timeline. If a family is unable to administer a developmental screening, and a child is unable to come to a center or get a home visit where that screening could be done, at the very least ask the parent, "Do you have any worries? Let's talk about it," and see if you can learn more about what's happening with the child's development. But we do think the vast majority of children, you

should be successful, even the ones that are served virtually because there are these parent administered screening forms.

Adia: So, see Head Start, I told you this would be a question that you'd be interested in. Ann, I bet you folks would be really interested in this one too: Are folks going to be expected to complete the assessments for children in 2020 and 2021?

Ann: You know, it's interesting. I was looking at the questions that I was going to respond to, and I had put five stars next to this one, thinking it was the most important Q&A in this slide deck. But just listening to Amanda, I feel like her response and this one, they kinda go together. They're equally important. So, we would say, you know, programs should make every effort to complete the required assessments because understanding the child's progress during the year is so important, again, for individualizing and understanding the effect of the instruction. We understand, just with the screening, it may be more difficult to complete direct or observation-based assessments in the upcoming year, but we encourage programs also to encourage – to consult the assessment vendor for adaptations and guidance on how to use the assessment tool in various environments. I think these two Q&As are so critical because this is the information that gives us an opportunity, particularly not only to assess a child's progress, but to figure out where a child may be falling behind or may have some not typical development. It's just critical that ... And we know what's going to be hard. Are we going to penalize you if you're not able to complete all the assessments? No, this is not what this is about. With these two questions, if this is information that is so meaningful for this child, not only success in this coming year, but for future years.

Adia: Amanda, along those same lines, do folks have to still aggregate and analyze child assessment data three times during this program year?

Amanda: Yeah, these questions really do all fit together. So, of course, programs are encouraged to analyze and aggregate assessment data, if available. We understand that the data and the integrity of the data will likely look different for many programs this year. But the point isn't really about OHS coming out and monitoring you on doing this. It's about your program's ongoing quality improvement, ensuring that children are making progress, that the intervention and instruction and learning experiences are supporting child progress. That what you're doing is working, and children are making that progress, that you're individualizing, and you're meeting the needs of different children across groups. So, programs will not be penalized, but we encourage you to the largest extent you can to look at the data that you can collect across different groups of children and individual children, and just to understand how effective your services are and what you need to fine tune.

Adia: Thanks, Amanda. Well, Amanda, you mentioned several times about monitoring and grantees being penalized. And one question that is on a lot of grantees' minds is, how are we going to handle class this year? And so, they left this up to me, your moderator today, but normally, as Ann likes to call me, your monitoring guru, to answer this question for you guys. So, one thing is that we are all in very uncertain times right now, and there's a lot of complexity around administering class, and OHS is really determining the best way to proceed with class

observations during upcoming program year. There's a lot of folks who are thinking about this. We know that this is going to be challenging for the school year. And we are developing a strategy right now that we will share with you guys in September, and we won't spring anything on you. We won't have any surprise visits. We will let you know exactly how we're going to handle this and make sure that all grantees are informed about how we're going to handle both class and monitoring in the upcoming school year. We can't tell you today, but we definitely will have some answers for you soon. So, with that, I'm going to move on to our next section, which is about additional services for children with disabilities. And our first question is, if the program wasn't able to meet the Head Start requirements for ensuring that at least 10% of their total funded enrollment was filled by children eligible for services under the IDEA for the 2019 and 2020 program year, are they required to submit a disabilities waiver?

Ann: Adia, the simple answer is yes. We know that when COVID began wreaking havoc with our programs, it was in March, a time – a month when most programs would have met the 10%. If there is some programs that caught up in the whole COVID crisis and managing closures and realize now that, you know what, they didn't need the 10% or have not met the 10%, programs are required to submit a disabilities waiver request for the year that has just ended. We're gonna simplify the process. We're extending the deadline to August 31st, 2020, and grantees should submit very simply the data regarding the extent of the shortfall, and a brief summary of the factors that created barriers to fulfilling their requirements. These waivers for the 2019-2020 program year, which meet these minimum requirements, will be approved and documented in HSES. It is really very important that we have the documentation, and we are trying to be cognizant to some of the challenges this year, but it's important that we have this documented not only for you, but also nationally.

Adia: So, Ann, I bet you people have that same question, that was for last year? What about the upcoming year? And what's the requirement for the 10% of the funded enrollment for 2020-2021?

Ann: So, this fall as many other Q&As we had about funded enrollment, and, "Are we going to meet our funded enrollment, and are we going to be dinged and what's going to happen." And so, we want to approach this in a very reasonable way. We are basically saying this year, "Look, if you have a funded enrollment to serve 500 kids, that's what's on your notice of award." And you get to do your program planning and realize, wow, our capacity is not going to be 500. We might be able to serve 300. Once you determine what your actual enrollment is, that's what you base your 10% on, and if programs are unable to ensure 10% of their actual enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA, they must submit what is a typical detailed request for disabilities waiver. And again, those details in regard to the information required in the waiver will be available in the HSES resource tab. And again, grantees should be mindful of ensuring adequate tracking and documentation of efforts to recruit, enroll and provide services to the required percentages of children with disabilities throughout the year. We certainly know this year programs might say, "You know what? We know we have more than 10%, but the referrals are so delayed." Obviously, those are reasons why you might not make the 10% of your actual, but we are basing the requirement to meet the 10% not on your funded

enrollment on your NOAA; it's on the capacity, the actual enrollment that you established this year. And I'm hitting my table, so I'm sorry for that noise.

Adia: It's okay, Ann. We know you get really passionate about these things. And I'm getting a lot of notes that are telling me that there's lots of questions that are coming in from the chat box. We are going to answer some of those questions. Before we do that, we're going to go, and we're going to move on to transportation. Recently, we had IM that came out about transportation, and I'm going to let Amanda talk about the IM in our next questions. So, Amanda?

Amanda: Thanks, Adia. I'm sure everyone listening has already enjoyed reading the IM. It's pretty long. It is informed not only by OHS policy and regulations, but the Center for Disease Control and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration also added to the content and weighed in. And again, it's guidance, but we encourage you to look at it. This is available under the policy tab on the ECLKC.

Adia: We have a few of our first questions about transportation, and the first one is, how can programs support transportation staff safety?

Amanda: Yeah, we've been hearing a lot of questions about that. And of course, it's really important that all of our staff are as safe as possible so that they are able to continue delivering services to children and families, and also because we care about them. This is some information you can learn more about and learn more also about from the IM itself. But we strongly encourage programs to tell staff members who are sick to stay home. Obviously, if they've tested positive for COVID or are showing COVID symptoms, which are pretty diverse, it's critically important, but in all cases where people used to come in a DF, maybe they had a sniffle or a slight sore throat. Now we would say, err on the side – programs should be saying err on the side of staying home. Make sure that you have made available and ensure the use of cloth face coverings – masks as guided by the CDC. Make sure that there are a lot of hand hygiene supplies. So, obviously we don't have running water and soap on the buses. So, safe hand sanitizer that hasn't been recalled by the Food and Drug Administration as appropriate on buses, and staff should use it frequently and make sure that they're following CDC guidelines. And also, we know there are vulnerable workers who are in the high-risk categories and what we want to say is those, to the extent possible – and this is a very difficult, very challenging – but to the extent possible, try to keep those workers able to work in ways that minimize their contact with children, family, and other employees, and that can include just reminding them about physical distancing, but thinking about other protocols you may have within your agency.

Adia: Amanda, the next question is really about safety too, and it's about cleaning the buses between uses. What do you say about that?

Amanda: Yeah, again, there's so much anxiety and worry about this. But the word "clean" is really important. That just means remove the visible dirt. So, when kids maybe get on the bus with muddy feet or there are loose bits of grass from a recently mowed field or lawn or something, those things get picked up first, swept up, and removed, and then the vehicle gets

disinfected. Not deep cleaned, not sanitized, just … Disinfected means that you use a disinfecting solution that aligns with the CDC's list of recommended ingredients and products, and that you follow the directions to make sure that it is used appropriately. Many of the solutions need to be applied and left on for some period of time. Some of them get left on and are allowed to dry, others get wiped off. So, just following the directions and using cleaning products disinfecting solutions between bus runs. So, if you pick children up, then you disinfect. Clean as necessary, and then disinfect. So again, it's all right there in the IM, so you don't have to memorize it from the slide.

Adia: All right, Amanda, and there's one last question before our lightning round. And that is, can programs use agency vehicles to transport food and supplies?

Amanda: Yeah, I have to laugh, because we know programs did that from the very beginning, and we're so grateful. We've seen so many incredible images of really needed supplies being developed to communities – being delivered to communities all over America. So, thank you, Head Start and Early Head Start. So yes, they can be used. Again, we just wanted to remind people, even though they're not transporting children, they still need to minimize contact between the vehicle operators and other staff. So, if you have teachers or nutrition staff helping organize and load supplies that you keep physical distance between all of them, including the vehicle operator, if children are coming out of houses or buildings to see the Head Start bus when it makes a delivery. Gently reminding people, again, that we're so happy to see you, and we're going to say hello from at least six feet away. And making sure, again, that people have available cloth face coverings and hand hygiene supplies, and I think doing that will really go a long way to mitigate risk and still allow programs to fulfill this important function.

Adia: Amanda, those answers about transportation are so meaningful. We are about to go to the lightning round, but before we do, Ann, I know you want to try to address some of the questions that are coming in.

Ann: Well, and I just want to say, you sounded like you were in a little bit of a tunnel there, Adia. I just want to make a couple of comments and not really so much specific, but we're getting several questions in that are asking us for an answer when the answer should be coming from the grantee, and I just want to give a couple of examples. You know, we talked about, yeah, you need to do the two parent conferences at a minimum and you can do them virtually. And one program said, "But what if parents don't have internet? Can we use the phone?" And my response is, you don't even need to ask us that, you document parent-teacher conferences were conducted via phone when internet wasn't available. Again, someone came up with a very interesting idea, kind of asking us, "Is it okay?" And I kinda want to say, "Don't be asking if it's okay if it's an idea that you can support, and you've made a decision and we understand why you made the decision. Go for it!" Someone was talking about when I mentioned socialization, they might be hard to do, someone said, "Well, we could do a virtual socialization. Do a field trip virtually and consider it a socialization." That's a great idea, and I think one of the things that we really stressed with the home-based, but this whole notion of if you're doing virtual services, not home-based, but virtual services, instructional services conducting over the

internet with kiddos, the parents have to be involved. We've got to make sure that the child has a successful environment and what is the benefit from the learning. Some children, if the parents set them up or we know some kids could get right on the computer and be fine, other kids are going to need more support. So, it's not asking us, it's really thinking about the individual needs of the child and the family, and we know kids and families are different. I think the same with people or staff are very worried about overwhelming parents with communication, and we talked about how important communication is. On the other hand, you're best at deciding, given a family situation, how many times a week should we be communicating? What's the age of the child? Again, these are decisions that we want you to be confident in responding to based on what you know about your families and not feel like you have to get our approval or guidance because we don't have the information you have. So, it's really about instilling confidence. We're trying to give you guidance at a higher level that you then can incorporate into your thinking about making local decisions. So, that's it, Adia.

Adia: Thanks, Ann. That was fantastic, and I know that Colleen had a question that she wanted to answer from the chat that's coming in. Colleen, do you want to answer that question?

Colleen Rathgeb: Hi, everybody. I've seen a bunch of questions, and similar to what Ann said, I just wanted to highlight again where programs have a lot of flexibility in thinking about how they do this with themselves. So, a number of people had said things like, "Can I over enroll my home-based option?" Or "Can I transition just slots between my center-based to my home-based option?" And we just want to remind folks that, really, in this time you have the flexibility to determine what program options best address the needs of your community. And so, you absolutely can move slots between home-based and center-based or provide a smaller number of hours than you normally do in center-based. And you don't get to think about it as over-enrolling or under-enrolling. Really, you have the flexibility to be making different choices for this coming program year than what you normally have done or what's in your current application. And so, programs do not need prior approval to make those changes, but just do need to be in communication with their regional office about those plans. So again, just wanted to highlight lots of those questions coming in and really want people to have that knowledge that they can make those choices.

Adia: Thanks, Colleen. Okay, grantees. We are now moving into the part of the session that where you really have to turn on your listening ears. This is called the lightning round, and the OHS staff, they're going to give you answers to some of the questions that you asked last week. And they're not going to appear on the screen, so you have to be tuned in very carefully to listen for your answer. And I'm going to start with the first one, and this one goes to Ann. Ann, if local guidance and OHS requirements differ during the upcoming program year, what should programs do?

Ann: Adia, we had been incredibly consistent in saying the programs really have to make local decisions that support and protect the health and safety of children, families, and staff. We all know that there are differing opinions and even different sets of guidance is coming out at state levels, at the federal levels. We have issued our guidance on the flexibilities applicable to many

program requirements. But at the end of the day, all we're saying [Inaudible] is, use your best judgment, use the best guidance you can get to make your decisions. And if something conflicts with the Head Start's requirements that has to do with protecting the health and safety of children and families just, we want you to document why you made the decision you made. You don't have to come and ask for permission. It's just, again, the documentation is important. And again, what we're saying – we're punting back to you because you're the ones that will have the best information to make the best decisions locally.

Adia: Thank you, Ann. Our next question is about policy council. Are programs allowed to keep community members and parents on the policy council past the five years?

Ann: You know, it's very important to get, certainly encourage new blood, new ideas, new parents, and that's why we established a five-year limit on the one-year terms. Of course, programs always had the ability to set a shorter limit. That said, we still think a program should make every effort to recruit and elect policy council members timely this year. However, we understand the programs are unable to hold elections. They can keep the current TC membership in order to maintain a quorum until elections can be held. What we would not want is no quorum and then policy council would not have a meaningful vote in things that they are designed to influence and to make judgment about.

Adia: Belinda, you're up next. And our next question is about cost. What costs are allowable during the COVID-19 crisis?

Belinda Rinker: Thanks, Adia. So, we've heard a lot about how program services will vary during the upcoming year, whether they are somewhat center-based, delivered remotely, home-based, or some combination of the options. That also means that the allowable costs that programs will need to incur during the upcoming year are going to look different than they might have during previous years. So, we are consistently getting questions around things like reimbursement of internet services, or phone costs, or supplies that are needed to conduct virtual or off premise meetings and those sorts of things. And the cost principles haven't changed in light of COVID-19, but they have always allowed programs to make decisions based on the circumstances in existence at the time those spending decisions are made. And so, the decision of what's allowable is going to look different as services are delivered in response to COVID-19 then it would have before COVID-19. And as long as in light of current operations and expenses necessary to deliver those services to enrolled children and families, it is reasonable. So, almost all of the types of goods and services that folks are asking about may be allowable, if they are relating to that delivery of services, whether it's supporting the policy council, whether it's staying in touch with parents, providing materials and supplies for parents to use to work with children in the homes, or making adjustments to how the buses are operated to keep them safer in the era of COVID. But remember, adequate documentation is always also allowed to show allowability.

Adia: Thanks, Belinda. My next question is to Amanda. Amanda, if programs are providing both in person and virtual center-based services, can parents choose which day their child attends the program?

Amanda: Well, this is really complicated question, and I know it's a question that, again, people are struggling with all over America for kids from birth through college. So, I would say the most important thing is two things: to understand the needs that are happening in the community for the eligible Head Start children, and then to understand, to think about what can your program do? What capacity do you have? And what is the most logical construction of services in this time? Understanding, even once you make a design, you may have to change at times.

So, each program will make the decision about what they can do, and then it's their decision whether they're going to allow parents to make some decisions. I would imagine it would be something like, we're going to have half the kids here two days a week and the other half another two days or something, and then give parents choices within that framework. It's most critically important that programs clearly articulate what they are going to do and that they communicate that with every accepted family. Parents need to fully understand the services and the choices that they have and – and how services can be aligned. The family and the program together need to come to understanding about what services are best aligned for the family situation.

Adia: Thank you, Amanda. And Belinda, for the next few minutes, you have a ton of questions. The next series of questions are all about staff wages and benefits. The first one is, if high risk staff work remotely, and it results in a diminishment of duties and responsibilities in their pay, is their pay expected to be adjusted accordingly? So, do you have to adjust people's pay if their responsibilities diminish, Belinda?

Belinda: So, Adia, like many of the things we've discussed today, staffing decisions are locally made, and they should be made in consideration of current and projected service delivery options and associated staffing needs. So, staff work assignments and compensation are locally determined decisions that should reflect the grantees written policies and procedures. So, programs need to review the applicable wage and hour laws and their own personnel policies and procedures and work with their human resource and legal professionals to make reasonable and legally sound decisions about staff salaries and benefits. Programs need to take responsibility for making staffing decisions that meet the needs of enrolled children and families.

Adia: Belinda, is furlough an option?

Belinda: It is, Adia, and it can be determined at the local level. Certainly, before a program makes a decision to furlough staff, and using the term "furlough" can have a lot of different meanings, but let's say that what it means here is that staff are required to take unpaid leave while still being considered an employee. By putting someone in that category, the program always needs to review its personnel policies and procedures to determine whether furloughs are included in those policies and procedures. And if not, policies and procedures need to be developed. Certainly, the availability of unemployment compensation benefits for employees who are placed on forced leave or furlough should also be considered, and policies that programs that do have policies already governing the use of furloughs should make sure that they fully understand the legal requirements and other consequences that may result in the

event of a furlough. So, they are certainly possible. Need to be based on sound decision making at the local level, as well as fiscal policies and procedures and the advice of qualified professionals.

Adia: Belinda, if a staff can't do their job from home, should the program put them on unemployment insurance?

Belinda: We get a lot of questions about the difference between the continued payment of wages and benefits and placing staff on unemployment, which means they are separated from employment or terminated. It is important to recognize, and we recognize that staff wages and benefits are the major costs in any Head Start or early Head Start budget, and that that cost needs to be managed. But in making staffing decisions, the first question a grantee needs to ask is, "What sort of staffing do we need to support the program services now and in the upcoming months that we're intending to deliver?" So, if a program is planning to shift from remote services to center-based services, can that shift be made without cooks and bus drivers? Remember, the Office of Head Start flexibilities to continue to pay wages and benefits continue through September 30th of 2020. But important decisions like work assignments, hours worked, payment of wages and benefits, layoff, or separation from employment all impact the program, its budget, and individual employees, and they need to be made in consultation with the school human resources and legal professionals, and based on written policies and procedures.

Adia: Belinda, can program use their current budget to pay for hazard pay? And is there any additional funding for that?

Belinda: So, the first question is, I mean hazard pay is a term that can be used when employees are asked to work in an environment other than their usual work situation, sometimes one that might be considered to be more dangerous or in some sense, more of a challenge. But there are regulations in the fiscal requirements that the uniform guidance and those are at 45CFR 75.430 and 431 that talk about when a salary incentive and hazard pay as a type of salary incentive is warranted. That salary incentive in the form of hazard pay perhaps must be supported by the grantees written policies and procedures, and comply with those compensation requirements of the uniform guide, which would require demonstration of how that policy enhances the efficient operation of the program. And it's important to make these decisions with all of their consequences in mind, meaning setting information in that policy and procedure, who will be eligible? How will the incentive or the hazard pay be calculated? Who's eligible? How long will that hazard pay continue? As far as where will those funds come from, if it is necessary to make a hazard pay incentive in a program or the program fields, that's a reasonable course of action. They can use their base grants funds to do that. They can certainly use CARES Act or COVID-19 funds to do that, but we don't anticipate any additional COVID-19 funding opportunities that would cover such an expense.

Adia: Last question, Belinda. If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, is the grantee required to pay the staff salaries or do they use their sick leave?

Belinda: Again, as you've heard throughout this conversation, the administration of staffing status, wages, and benefits is primarily a local decision in consideration of all of the applicable requirements at the state and federal level. So, while we know that COVID-19 is foremost in people's thoughts right now, programs should have already developed and have a preexisting policy or procedure that addresses how they will handle leave and wages for staff who are diagnosed with communicable diseases. So, if that policy doesn't exist, programs need to develop one. If it does exist, they need to follow it and make sure that in their own personnel policies and procedures, they have something in writing that addresses how the program will deal with employees who are testing positive for COVID-19.

Again, taking into consideration local state and federal laws, any rules and regulations that apply to staff illness and pay. So again, one of those local decisions that needs to be based on a written policy or procedure, and the implementation of that decision needs to be adequately documented. That's always the underlying premise, adequate documentation. Hey, Adia, I'm going to turn it back over to you.

Adia: Belinda, you did the speed round incredibly, and that leaves us with one minute for me to tell you guys about next week. So next week, we'll be talking about family community engagement, resources on the ECLKC during COVID-19, and any breaking news. And of course, we will do the lightning round again next week with the questions from this week. So hopefully, that's keeping all the CAMPers engaged, and be prepared to hear the answers to some of your questions next week. With that, I'm going to let Ann close out the session. Ann?

Ann: Thanks, Adia. I just really want to revisit, because it's hard not to look at all the questions because it's so interesting, the questions coming in that we'll try to address next week. But I want to reflect back on, I think it was the second slide, where we talked about what the intent of this series is. And I just want to say, again, to empower grantees to make reasonable decisions, exploring how the standards to the requirements may look different. And again, your need to use community data and state and local guidance to make informed decisions. Again, when we think about doing these very different locally designed, tailored programs or things it might not quite look exactly like they look in the standard. It's not for us to make a determination. You know, if you're doing virtual home-based, is 90 minutes really the right amount of time? You may find in certain situations it is; you may find it's really too much, it's too intense in a virtual environment. These decisions, again, look at that first bullet, empowering grantees to make reasonable decisions. Colleen talked about the flexibility of ... you know – I know you're thinking about, what's on that notice of award. X number of children are home-based, or X number of children are center-based. Think about the flexibility you have. If you have more parents that are saying, "I don't want my kids to go to the center." That doesn't mean that you have to serve all the center-based slots that you had and you know it. You might find that you have to reduce those because you're expanding your home-based portfolio. So again, I just want to bring us back to, so much of this is, again, what matters for your children and families, putting health and safety first. Do you have the staffing structure in place to provide the quality services that you're providing? And we are saying to you week and week again, we believe – we are confident that you are going to make careful, meaningful

decisions that are in the best interest of your children, families, and staff. And with that, we can close it out. I know we're running over a little bit. We look forward to seeing, or to hearing you, or for you to hear us next week. And we are in this with you. We are here to support you. And we thank you for the incredible work you are doing every day. Thank you so much. And thanks to my colleagues who work so hard to getting this up and running on a weekly basis. Thank you.