

Recruitment: Engaging Families Who Are New to the United States

Brandi Black Thacker: Hello, everyone, and welcome. We're so excited to bring you this session. I am honored to be part of a wonderful team of women today who are going to bring you conversations around Recruitment: Engaging Families Who Are New to the United States. To get started, we want to think about the theme of our conference. You guys keep hearing it come up from us: roots, resilience, and relationships.

Today is Day Two. We're fully embracing the resilience that we've each experienced together over time. We want to start by recognizing – and you've seen the timeline from us now on Day One in a couple of different places. I want you to remember that 1969 point in time where we were able to bring forward migrant programming. It connects to this conversation in a couple of ways. We want to recognize not only the resilience of who we are as colleagues and as community, but certainly for and beside our families.

Many of us come to the U.S. for a better life, for safety, for security, for the role that we play in supporting families to reach their fullest potential. We're going to talk a little bit about that piece today in particular as it relates to equity and access. Right away, what we want to do is make these connections to resilience, to belonging, to wrapping families up as they're ready, and to making sure that they have open arms to come into as they come into the U.S. and to our programming.

Let's take a look at a couple of the learning objectives for what we hope to think about and talk about together today while we're here. First and foremost, we want to explore the big four. That's how I want to say it to you today, because I don't know if you guys saw it, but Dr. Futrell just released four big priorities from the Office of Head Start. You've seen them mentioned already here today.

We're going to go a little bit deeper in a couple of those, especially as they relate to ERSEA. We're going to get into reviewing equitable culturally and linguistically effective approaches in recruiting and enrolling families who are new to the United States. Finally, we're going to look together at planning, policies, and processes for reaching and connecting with families.

With that, I want to get you guys straight away to meet the incredible women that I have the honor to share time with today. I'm so excited for you to meet each one of them. They're each going to say "hi" to you now. I want to turn the microphone first and foremost to Dr. Sandra Barrueco.

Dr. Sandra Barrueco: Hi, everyone. [Speaking Spanish] My name is Dr. Sandra Barrueco. I'm a full professor of psychology at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. My heart is also with Head Start for many, many years, and I'm blessed and excited to be here with you today.

Jhumur Saeed: Hi, everyone. I am Jhumur Saeed. I'm with the NCPFCE team, and I'm part of the content development team here. I wanted to have the honor to say "hello" to staff and families across the nation who are joining us today, and especially those staff and families who are

observing the holy month of Ramadan. From all of us here, “Ramadan Mubarak. Ramadan Kareem. On to Jennifer.

Jennifer Amaya: Good afternoon, or good morning, wherever you are. I am Jennifer Amaya from the Office of Head Start. I am thrilled to be with all of you today. Thank you.

Brandi: With that, Jennifer, I know that you have a few things you’d like to share with us today, certainly given your role at the Office of Head Start, given the work that you’ve done over all these years in leading conversations around equity, inclusion, culture, and language. This is an exciting moment in time. Tell us about it.

Jennifer: It truly is, Brandi. Thank you so much. I’m really excited to join today’s plenary on this important topic of recruiting and engaging families that are new to the United States. As the Office of Head Start Content Lead on Equity, Inclusiveness, Culture, and Language, and also the Federal Project Officer for Tribal Colleges and Universities, I am honored to work every day with federal, state, regional offices, colleagues, and staff who really care and who really are committed to make sure that all children and families and individuals have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

I’m really excited to be with you. Recruiting and engaging families that are new to the United States is essential for Head Start programs and their communities. New families to the United States arrive on a daily basis from multiple parts of the world. We know that implementing culturally and linguistically responsive practices is at the core of Head Start programs as we serve across the nation communities that reflect the diversity of our country.

It is exciting to be able to have this conversation today. I am thrilled to review with you the Office of Head Start’s four priority areas recently released by our director, Dr. Futrell. One of them is related to advancing equity. The second one that I would like to emphasize today is related to reaching more children and families.

As you can see in the screen, we have supported programs through the pandemic, the response, and recovery. We also have invested in the workforce: our staff, our communities, and our programs. But for this discussion, I wanted to make sure that I emphasize advancing equity within the lens of the work that we do together.

As we promote equity, we want to make sure that by promoting belonging and by identifying and addressing barriers and promoting new pathways for family stability, when we think about recruiting and engaging families that are new to the United States, we think about the different reasons why families come onto the country. We want to think about the new ways of their thinking and seeing the world. We want to make sure that we address their cultures. We want to make sure that we are acknowledging that there are different circumstances why families come to the United States.

What we know for sure is that all children and all families come to this country with the hope, with the purpose, of having a better life, a way to reach their full potentials where the communities appreciates them, values them, and honors them. As a Head Start community, we know that advancing equity is a way of promoting that belonging, where family comes into the daily work that we do with programs and they feel welcome, that they feel that they belong,

that they feel that they are part of a community where they might have no one or they might not know anybody.

By coming into the Head Start programs, they feel that they belong not only into the Head Start program, but in their communities, into our society. When you think about equity, it's important for us to make those connections of the work that we've been doing throughout generations and throughout the years. That is when you're thinking about advancing equity from the lens of the four priorities within the Office of Head Start.

We also wanted to think about what do we mean by reaching more children and families as another priority within the Office of Head Start. Let's think about these opportunities for recruitment and enrollment. Let's think about the different ways, the innovative ways that we encourage all programs and communities to think about those programs that are already existing in the communities that are working with the families that are newly arriving. How are they communicating? How are they reaching out? Who are their partners and how do we commit to advancing equity into the work that we do and reaching out to the families that really need our support, and that they bring the strengths of their own values, of their own cultures.

Together we move this work forward as supporting our families, recruiting, and outreach to our new-arrived families in Head Start. That is something that I wanted to make sure that we think about these four priority areas. I am asking my friend Jhumur if she has anything else that she would like to add to this conversation as well.

Jhumur: Thanks, Jennifer. I think the part that you mentioned about the belonging and all the strengths ... It's the strengths the families bring, the culture, the languages ... that is so important for us, and that is what we hold really dear, and we value that.

I think to the core of all the work that we do, we know it's about relationships. That's what we want to really hold as we move through this presentation and really consider how do we support families, how do we work with families to reach their full potential. Jennifer, I know next you are going to take us to the definition, or at least a part of the definition, on equity.

Jennifer: Yes. Thank you, Jhumur. Really exciting. For the past couple of years across the National Centers and within the Office of Head Start and our colleagues at the Office of Child Care, we have been working very hard to put together a working definition to support training and technical assistance on what do we mean by equity.

When we thought about putting this equity definition together, we followed the executive order through our administration on serving ... advancing equity and serving communities through the federal government, we looked at multiple definitions that were developed. We looked at the guidance from the federal government, and we also looked at multiple definitions that were used by the field.

What we came to do, we concluded – and this again, is a working definition – what we wanted to make sure is that within this working definition, we emphasize that “equity” means “fair and just treatment to all children, families, and those who support them,” as well as “equity enables everyone to achieve their full potential.”

There are other parts of the equity definition – I know that you guys probably will put a link for everybody to see the equity definition – but it also promotes the sense of community, the sense of belonging, the sense of protective factors, and the sense of making sure that we’re all working together to advance equity for all children, families, communities, and individuals that are served through the federal government. Thank you, Jhumur.

Jhumur: Thanks, Jennifer, for walking us through and giving us an overview, the behind-the-scenes about how we have come to this definition of equity. Now for our audience we want to offer an opportunity about – put yourself in the place, and maybe you’ve been there – what is the experience of a family who is new to the United States? What does it mean? What is that experience? It’s about perspective taking. How do you work with families to help them reach their full potential? Connecting it with your work.

We just want you to take a moment. If you do want to share, please use the Q-and-A box to share some of your thoughts, your stories, your experiences.

Brandi: Jhumur, I love this question and I love this exercise. I think the perspective-taking piece is just so important for each of us as we think about recruiting families and specifically families that are new to the U.S. We’re going to see what our colleagues have to say in the chat who are on the line [Audio disruption].

Jhumur: Very recently, when I go sometimes to the grocery store or just in our community here in Texas, I observe new families who are new to the U.S. because there are certain things you’re becoming familiar. What came to me was that transition. What is it, and how is it that you make that connect. What is it that they’re needing? It is often some of those basic necessities. I observe families when they’re looking for shoes or clothing ... and how can you support a family or families in your program.

Brandi, I wanted to reach out to you. There are some comments we are receiving in chat, which I know the audience members are sharing with us.

Brandi: There are, Jhumur. Thank you for that. I have a couple here to report. It looks like programs are helping families come into the program by reaching out in their home language. We have another one of our colleagues offering that being an active listener is incredibly important so that we can support families in the ways that they’re ready to be supported and in the ways that they hope, because each family has different circumstances and different conditions.

Another piece that I see coming in here – and you guys please keep sharing, because these are so important to not only confirm and celebrate each of the pieces you guys are doing in your programs, but it helps to inspire others. Thank you for sharing so openly. One last comment, Jhumur. “We can also help families feel comfortable by giving them supports to help their children.” Certainly it’s a goal that we all share together, is “wrap it around their littlest most precious gift,” and that way we want to make sure that as families develop their dream for their journey, we’re alongside them to discover what that is.

[Crosstalk]

Jennifer: As we are having this conversation and reading what is coming through the chat, it makes me also think about when families come to the United States. Sometimes their history about the importance of early childhood and their understanding about early childhood might be a little bit different than what others might have.

When welcoming new families, it is so important to know what their background is, what their knowledge is, what the perspective is. We know that all families want the best for their children. Having those conversations and open discussions is what really makes a difference so that the families also feel like they belong, so that when we open those doors, we make them feel welcome, but they also feel like they belong, and they can have the trust. They have open communication with our programs to express what their expectations and their hopes are for the children's future. Thank you.

Brandi: Thank you so much for that, Jennifer. I love the piece around belonging. May we all find the places and spaces where we have that sense of connection and belonging. I love that we get to think about how to do that every single day in Head Start. Jhumur, speaking of ... I know that you pulled up some facts and some data for us to consider as we think about what's happening, not only in a big, broad sense of the what's happening, but for us in Head Start.

Jhumur: Right. Exactly. You know how it is about numbers and data. The important part about the data, whether it's what we see on the slide or the data that we come across, it is important because it guides our work, especially when it comes to recruitment and enrollment. You are going to find out who is in the community. We do know part of Head Start. We have a number right here; 308,750 children in Head Start primarily speak [Inaudible] English at home. That's 29% of the children we serve.

I want you to think about who else, who are the other children and families? Can you increase that number? What does that mean for your program? What can you do? I think that is really the core of this presentation. You're doing an awesome, wonderful job, but there is more potential. There are many more children and families, and what can you do to make that connect. Thanks, Brandi. This is an important slide.

Next, what we are going to do is, we know you're doing all of these amazing approaches, strategies to make that connection with families. This clip is a short clip from a program that serves families who are part of the migrant seasonal work. In this clip, knowing the communities you are serving and strategies to welcome and be part of their child's everyday education, just as Jennifer mentioned, it comes forth. Why don't we go ahead and watch, and we do some listening and some learning from this video clip. Thanks, Brandi, if you want to queue that in.

[Video begins]

Narrator: Successful family engagement means strong partnerships built on respect, shared goals, and commitment to better outcomes for the children.

Mom: You can write your name in there if you want to.

Child: Yeah.

Mom: That's OK.

Narrator: By building on family strengths and listening to their needs, programs can create an environment that supports family well-being and helps them thrive.

[Mom and child talking in the background]

The resulting sense of belonging, ownership, and community are all critical to a family's success. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs run by the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo have created just this kind of environment. Most of their families farm the strawberry fields of California's Central Coast.

Julissa Solorio: They work long hours. They start 5:30, 6:00 in the morning, and the children are picked up at 5, 6, 6:30 in the evening. Sometimes 7:00.

Narrator: The toll on families is real.

Julissa: They get home. They're tired. They're exhausted. They need to get ready for the next day – and they still don't have that time for their kids. I think that becomes stressful.

Narrator: The program engages its parents from the start.

Enriqueta Fuentes: We always let our community know that we are open, and then families start calling or coming in. We start building a relationship with them from there, taking their information, talking to them, listening to their stories, finding out where they came from, what's been going on with them.

Narrator: Building relationships with the children and parents is a priority.

Maria Reyes: We enroll the children. There is a home visit done before the children actually start in our program. They go to their homes, they meet the children, and they ask parents questions, helping us to know your child. That helps a lot for children because they see the teachers going to their houses, talking to their parents, interacting with them. Then when they come to the center, that first day that they're here, they saw that familiar face already that was at their home.

Children: [Singing] Now I know my A, B, Cs. Next time won't you sing with me.

Narrator: Whether center based or family child care, the environment is welcoming, and relationships are valued.

[Crosstalk in Spanish]

Julissa: We have all the parents coming before we actually start the program. We go over expectations from parents. We try to involve them and let them see how important it is for them to be part of their children's education. They are their first teachers in their child's life, and we need to have that connection. We need to work together to get the best of their children.

[Children and adults speaking in Spanish]

Narrator: An important part of the program is its support of family child care.

[Teacher speaking in Spanish]

Narrator: Family child care gives these migrant parents added flexibility with their special work situations. It also creates a stable, homelike environment for children who are often on the move. The close relationships they form with providers help them learn better.

[Teacher speaking in Spanish]

Narrator: Helping parents learn, too, is a constant goal.

Sonia Garnica: Our agency adopted the Abriendo Puertas, the Opening Doors curriculum. It's a program that was designed in partnership with the Latino parents in the community where it was developed. It's themes that are really important to the families. We look at child development starting with brain development, the physical language development.

[Background speaking in Spanish]

[Video ends]

Brandi: Jhumur, so many good things to see in there. I know you wanted to ask the group a couple of questions. What's coming up for you?

Jhumur: Every time I watch this video, I'm just in awe. I wanted to ask our audience, our participants, "what did you hear or learn from this video? What is that takeaway message for you that you can take to your program, or something that resonated with you, and you went, 'You know, that's exactly what we want to do. That's important.'" Please do share in chat with us using the Q&A feature.

As people are sharing, I think what I connect with is that word "belonging." We heard that successful family engagement means strong partnerships built on respect, shared goals, and commitment to better outcomes for children. That's not just the message. It's not just the voice-over, but it's what the program staff and how they say it. What I always take away is the voice, the timbre of the message from staff being shared.

Brandi: I love that, Jhumur, and I love also that always in our history, it's never been one size fits all. It's about really standing in that relationship and figuring out what it is that really will bring us closer. Sometimes that's allowing families some space and time. We talk about when families are ready to really be seen in that partnership alongside us. I really appreciate the way we do that very delicate dance together and the ways that we really wrap each other up in that relationship, which ultimately blossoms into a whole partnership.

Jennifer: Yes, Brandi. [Inaudible] True, true ... What you make me think about, too, is, when you mentioned that Head Start is fundamentally an equity program. Equity is not just embedded into Head Start practices, but it's at the core of who we are and what we do on a daily basis and how we support families.

When I think especially about newly arrived families, the concept of belonging provides Head Start with that unique opportunity, that unique opportunity to create those environments where the families feel safe, feel love, feel that they belong. That is what we do. We do that on a daily basis. It's a good reflection. I'm sure that you get a lot more reflections on the chat, but I just wanted to put that in there.

Jhumur: We sure did, Jennifer. We had some wonderful, wonderful comments in chat about the pieces that we've spoken about. One of our audience members added, "Being an active listener and being open to support families in different ways," because each family has a different circumstance and different conditions – where they have come from and what their needs are when they're in the United States.

I wanted to have Sandra share in the work that, Sandra, you have done and from your research and your working with your colleagues, but also your work with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. Please, we would love to hear from you.

Sandra: Yes. I'm so excited to speak with everyone. There's so much that is bubbling up inside of me as a psychologist. I'm a licensed psychologist. I'm happy to be part of this group from that perspective and working directly in the field, literally with children and families to support them from a mental health perspective, but in a general, positive well-being perspective, and not only the staff.

One important piece that I've noticed throughout the beginning of our time together is the importance of belonging and equity of the staff members themselves – you all – and the work that you are bringing forward and the experiences that you bring and the expertise and the respect that we have for you and for each other. Together we're being connected in this strong puzzle.

When I look at those four key priorities, that interconnection with each other, with our families, within ourselves as a community of Head Start, that is what is going to strengthen us and continue us forward with this vision and goal for engaging with our communities and supporting the children in the best way that we can in order for them to flourish moving forward.

I'm excited to be here today. I am a researcher and a psychologist, a professor. I also have worked myself in the field. I began my love of early Head Start and Head Start an early childhood as an assistant teacher myself for quite a number of years. Then finally, I do want to bring forward that I have a shared experience. My family, parents came here with me in their belly. My mom says I was quiet, though, on the plane ride and coming into this country.

My parents came with me in the belly with many dreams and excitement, but also barriers that they experienced. From both a lived experience, a clinical experience as a psychologist, but also I'm going to focus us deep into evidence-based practice for all of the research that we've been conducting since the beginning of Head Start. One of the wonderful opportunities of Head Start is to say, "Let's use the evidence, let's use the research, and let's use science-based in order to best support the work that we're all conducting out there."

Years ago, we published a paper, a research brief that was asked of us, looking deep into the research to understand what can best support family or parent engagement with linguistically diverse families in order to support young children's life success.

So much of what's being said today and even in that wonderful video, which I just love so much, is actually reflected in the research. That's good news. It's not pointing us necessarily into a different direction. It's having us double down, double down on this puzzle that we're seeing

here about equity and belonging and other elements in our outreach and connection with each other. Let's step through it.

I want to have us go and look at two main takeaways. We have reviewed all the research, looked at thousands and thousands of studies and participants in work in early childhood and more broadly with the community. It boils down to these two pieces that I'd love for you to walk away with today.

One: the critical importance of creating welcoming, supportive environments. There's a big body of research to show how important that is and the impact that it has on actually opening doors, breaking down barriers, having equity in the moment. Then two: supporting the parent-child learning activities in the home. After today, after we talk and you're going forward, there are two things from research. This is what they are: the welcoming environment and supporting those activities at home.

I'll break it down a little bit further as well. In terms of welcoming, supportive environments for linguistically diverse families, what do we mean by that? Because we can talk about it, but how? How do we do that? I actually put first bullet here to be the one that seems to be amongst the most impactful. There's always more research to be done. There's always more things for us to do, but when we do head-to-head analyses and we see "what could be the most impactful," there's some interesting studies and findings from across the nation and large-scale studies, that we foster social networks among the families themselves.

What do we mean? The families that identify that they know one other or more other families in a classroom well enough to ask them a question – not only like "hi" or "como está?" or "bien," "hi," but enough to have some type of communication with the other individual in that classroom, in that center, in that space – they're more likely to follow up with the family engagement activities, and that's critical.

The work that we're doing explicitly, one-to-one with the families, but some of this work – and it seems to be quite the strong thing that we can do – is have them speak with each other, have them connect with each other. Some of the wonderful things we love in Head Start is about the strength of the parents and the parent councils and so forth. Continue to do that work because it does pay dividends in this respect of actually having people engage and lean in and feel welcomed, and then engage in those family activities with you.

Related to this is that connection – positive connections with each other, as staff members and then with the families themselves. Connecting the families together and then us interacting and connecting personally with the families from dual language backgrounds. How do we do this? Again, individual, one-to-one. We know how important that one-to-one connection is, to listen to each other, to hear each other, to respect each other, to speak. To listen.

The other is in these group meetings, as well. Both are impactful. I'll get to it a little bit more about this on the next slide, which is – we started talking about this already, we're seeing this – just thinking about what are the differences as well as the similarities and cultural understanding about how families engage with their children around parenting practices. What are some of the beliefs around that, both explicit or implicit? What they say and don't say. For us to deepen our understanding of that. There is research showing that more explicit training of

staff and incorporating that in professional development training and seminars is helpful and is impactful for that translating to the work that we do with families.

The other thing is we also know in terms of Head Start and talking about engaging with the broader community. We will be trusted as we are felt to be and understood to be a part of a member of a whole. That's including in the classroom, in the center, and the broader community. They might see us out and about. They might hear that we're connecting with their larger social networks, whether it's a local church or with a bodega, a supermarket, or out in the community, but creating those connections. Families then feel like you are part of me, and I'm part of you.

You've already heard me probably mention the word "respect" – such an important facet. People understand and they can pick up – and you can pick up – when people are not perhaps showing you respect. I think sometimes when there's a rush in the day, or let's say stressors that are happening in the environment, that's a key connection that we have for each other, to slow it down and to show each other respect. That can either be verbally but also can be ...an important facet is in our presence with each other.

Then I'm going to turn us to looking at ... I wanted to mention one more thing, which are barriers: barriers to attendance and barriers to participation and our own interpretation. What do I mean by that? It's not me here saying this alone. It's what we have from science and research, as well, which is families do experience many barriers to engaging with many of the great things that we're trying to do. We're trying to schedule a time to come to their house. We're scheduling events in the evening. We're doing events on the afternoon. We're doing it on the weekend.

Then we might say, "Well, why aren't they coming?" We can sometimes have our interpretations and misinterpretations of why they're not coming. It can be because of issues related to time and space. It can be transportation. We know those logistical barriers. But it can be also cultural barriers and linguistic barriers, which I'll get to on the next slide, as well. We need to really think about some of our own interpretation about why someone or a family is not coming to the table that perhaps we have set and worked so hard to create. Perhaps we need to shift it a bit.

Second. This is second main point, which is supporting learning activities in the home among families: discussing, learning culturally valued approaches. Two examples, again coming from more of one aspect of Latinx communities, such as consejos, how valued stories and admonitions in that family system are used to support personal characteristics. We also know apoyo, or support, is another valued approach of how families can lean into supporting their children – broader understanding of what family engagement is like.

We see this again and again in the research and the science that we do with Head Start, early Head Start, MSHS, and other, AIAN, communities as well – really understanding that, and we're learning about it some more and actively talking about it with the families.

Second – this is not the first time you've seen this type of bullet coming with Head Start, but we see this in the science – the more that multilanguage use is present in the classroom, present in the centers, the more the families will come and will engage and not only increase what they're

doing in the center itself, but they will be engaging even more at home with their children. This provides direct impacts. It's a good thing to do, but there is also research to show that it actually changes practice in the home.

Relatedly, in terms of providing supports and materials, providing multilingual books, providing culturally diverse materials for the families to deepen their linguistic engagement with their children at home, to deepen the types of activities that they're doing, to understand the lessons that are being provided with teachers and bringing it at home and also engaging with it. Materials are beneficial – seeing that as impactful from research.

Another aspect is explicitly focusing on children's school readiness in the broader way of us understanding school readiness. It is OK to talk about it explicitly. It's OK to then to engage with it, with the families. We have the researchers show that the more explicit, the more likely there is going to be that translation of some of the activities that we're doing directly with the children will happen with the families themselves. The families also feel comfortable talking about it directly and engaging directly and leaning in with the program itself.

Then I want to finally end on this piece, which is establishing our opportunities to observe and practice effective ways. What does this bullet really mean? That means that families would love for us to show, to be shown, and to see how teachers are engaging directly with the children, how others in the center are engaging directly with the children.

Not only that, but that it's mutual, that it's a shared moment of the teachers or the staff watching the families engage with the children. It's a shared activity. It's not just watching, but the modeling, the displaying the support in that warm, engaged, connected environment. That's where it really comes alive. We're not only talking about the children or talking about the families or saying, "this is what can be helpful, this is what we can do," but actually to do it together.

Again, there are research to show that that's quite impactful for shaping behavior, changing what we're doing, and to feel support so that the next moment of needing to lean in and engage together as a community is there and ready to go for the next activity. That's a little bit more about making the connection. I'm happy to turn it over.

Brandi: Dr. Barrueco, thank you so much for your words and for your insights. I have so many things that are zooming through my mind [Laughing] in terms of the gifts of that wisdom and the ways that we might be able to put some of these things to work for us in our Head Start community across the country.

I'm guessing that you guys are feeling the same kind of inspiration. We want to check in with you in chat to see things that perhaps Dr. Barrueco confirmed, things that now you're inspired to do. What's working for you when you're reaching out to and recruiting families specifically? One of the reasons that we've been so excited to bring you this ERSEA Institute is because we wanted you to have the gift of each other. Not only do we know that that's super valuable in the ways that we work together across the country in Head Start, but you told us. Here's some space.

Jhumur, I'm hoping that you and I can come and work together and see what's coming in to chat about what folks are doing that's really working so that we can share it with the greater good.

Jhumur: I think the one part that I'm seeing in a lot of the responses is that respect piece that Sandra brought forth, also the different materials. Making that available from outreach onwards. I think really being responsive: the outreach materials, the flyers. I did want to mention something, Brandi, that we are trying as well from our center – at the end of this presentation or the slide deck, you can actually look at some of the resources, and there's one particular one that specifically speaks to what Sandra shared about the outreach piece in different languages for families who are new to the U.S. It's really encouraging.

I know Brandi, the one part, the other part, that I wanted to connect with are the Head Start Performance Standards. How important is that, that we have it identified. There's support right there, Brandi. It's about the relationship with parents, the ongoing communication. But if you look at the second one we have, it's really conducting family engagement services in the family's preferred language. Amazing. Of course, Sandra highlighted the importance of hearing it, seeing it in the classroom and the program spaces. Brandi, over to you.

Brandi: I love this, Jhumur. It gives us such confirmation. We've been having this walk through memory lane the entire time we've been together. Guess what, guys? This is not new for us. These are core tenants. Ms. Jennifer, you mentioned earlier: core values, the thread in which we stand in all of our Head Start programming. It's just a core part of our way of being. This is just one more way to evidence what we've always known, what we've always revered, and the ways that we can continue to come alongside families in ways that are meaningful to them.

Jhumur, you know, I am the biggest nerd on the planet when it comes to the PFCE Framework. There's so many connections here based on what Dr. Barrueco shared with us in the research. I just have to point out a couple of them. As I think about the supportive and welcoming environments, of course we have "program environment" right in the pink column.

You guys know where we started this whole discussion. If you stand firmly in the foundation of those areas of relationships and all things – equity, inclusion, culture, and language – you have those strong systems of high-quality services, which are what the yellow and pink columns represent to us, then families and children grow.

In the context of this conversation, we heard about the research, that there are pieces around that program environment piece, the connections to peers and community, and how valuable that is, not only in belonging but growth and development, the connection to community engagement, the connection to access.

Even as I'm thinking about the second point of the research around supporting the parent and children learning activity and connection at home, we have the full connection to the whole story that is the theory of change of the framework in making those springs, if you will, from the arrow, into each of the opportunities we have to spend with each other.

Jhumur, I do want to mention for folks, because this is new, and you guys know how we like to do it, the hot off the press. We want to make sure it's in your hands first and foremost. I want

to show you the resources that Jhumur was mentioning that are available to you now, specifically as it relates to this topic. Jhumur, before we bid each other a fond farewell after such a wonderful – and it went way too fast – conversation, I wondered if you wanted to add anything here.

Jhumur: I think the part is that we have a lot of resources, but the important message for me today that I'm taking away is the value that we place and the importance of the connections with families. What I did want to offer both our other wonderful panelists, Sandra and Jennifer – if you would like to share something as we are winding down this amazing, amazing session.

Jennifer: Really quickly so Sandra can also add a little bit of her input, but for me, it is reminding us all that we've been doing this for years. When you think about equity and belonging and creating environments to welcome the families, this is what you do. It's not an "add on." It's what we do.

Just keep that in mind, and think about within the framework of PFCE – parent, family, and community engagement – how do we support these newly arrived families coming to a whole different country with whole different opportunities? How we transition from challenges to creating opportunities for families. That is just a few words, and I'm sure that my colleague here will have a little more to say, as well. I transition it to you.

Sandra: I agree completely. I wanted to end with saying, from my perspective, that this all does matter. It does take time. It does take energy. It's very impactful in a way that sometimes we don't see – every day, every moment. Not only that these activities matter, but the families matter, the children matter, and then ultimately, of course, you matter. We are very thankful to have spent this time with you and appreciate all your contributions and look forward to continuing our conversation together.

Brandi: Thanks to each of you brilliant women for spending many moments of your day with us. We're so grateful for each of your contributions to this conversation and all the ones we'll have after this. For our colleagues in the audience, don't forget. Come over to the networking lounge breakout chat. We're going to have two featured in English, one featured in Spanish. We want to hear what you thought about this session, our marketing session from this morning, the opening plenary. Come on in, get comfortable, and we'll see over there. Thank you guys so much.

Sandra: Thank you.