

## Partnering with IDEA Providers to Support Inclusion: Part 2

Jen Fung: Hi, everybody. Welcome. Good afternoon to everyone who's joining us. We are thrilled to have you here today for part two of our "Partnering with IDEA Providers to Support Inclusion" webinar series. Today we are going to talk about collaborative activities and really specific partnership activities that IDEA partners and Head Start partners can engage in to facilitate and support inclusive service delivery.

If you didn't join us for part one of our webinar series where we focused on the importance of partnerships and developing a memorandum of understanding or an MOU to really support and facilitate strong and effective partnerships, don't worry. That webinar is recorded, and it lives on the ECLKC, The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, and our amazing Q&A supports will put the link to that webinar in our Q&A, so you'll be able to see that pop-up if you haven't yet been able to watch that or if you want to refresh your memory.

Before we jump in and introduce ourselves and talk about our webinar for the day, I just want to remind folks that if you haven't had a chance yet, please take a second to download our viewers' guide. You'll find the viewers' guide in the resource list widget at the bottom of your screen.

We developed our viewers' guide just for this webinar, and we will refer to it often. There will be some areas that we touch on where it might leave you wanting some more information or with some questions. We've purposefully extended some more resources, some more information in the viewers' guide, as well as providing some spaces for reflection and planning your next steps as you listen to all the examples of collaboration today and really think about what's next for you and your program and your partnerships?

Again, that's the viewers' guide, which is in the resource list widget. I am Jen Fung, and I am the inclusion lead at the National Center on Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning, or DTL as we call it, and I am your inclusion series webinar host, and I am thrilled and honored to be joined today by my colleague and friend, Jani Kozlowski. Jani, do you want to say hi?

Jani Kozlowski: Sure. Hi, everyone. I'm thrilled and honored to be here with you today, Jen. Appreciate it. I'm Jani Kozlowski. I'm a technical assistant specialist with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. And we work with Part C and Part B, Section 619 coordinators in states. I will share some of what we know about the IDEA partner perspective.

Jen: Great. Jani also not only brings knowledge about IDEA Part C, part B systems but, Jani, you are also a disability services coordinator in Head Start, weren't you?

Jani: I was many years ago. It was a lot of fun, though. I miss those days.

Jen: Great. Again, Jani, I'm always happy to have you join, but especially today, thinking about these partnerships, you having worked across both systems, your perspectives are going to be so valuable for our participants. Thinking about today and what we'll talk about, really, like we said, we're extending the conversation that we started in October about the importance of partnerships to really look today at how strong partnerships and how, like I said earlier, those really specific collaborative activities, those ongoing activities between IDEA and Head Start partners can facilitate and support inclusive services.

Today we're really excited to be able to feature your colleagues across the country who are using some really innovative and exciting and effective collaborative strategies. We're going to be able to really focus on what these collaborations look like in action. As we get started and as we start to think about collaboration, how collaboration can support inclusion, what are the legal foundations for collaboration for IDEA partners and Head Start partners are, we'd love it if you could reflect on this question that's here on the screen.

How can collaboration, how can strong ongoing partnerships across systems so partnerships between Head Start, Early Head Start and their IDEA partners, whether that's your local Part C, early intervention agency or your Part B 619 local education agency or school district, how can those cross-system partnerships strengthen inclusive services? And how can that collaboration can promote positive outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families?

As you're thinking about that, we invite you to — we don't have a chat for this webinar, but we will use our Q&A, kind of like a chat. Jani and I can see your Q&A, your comments and questions come in. Becky and Brittany can see those and we're going to be able to push those out so that your colleagues can see those remarks as well. Invite you to reflect on this and think about how has collaboration strengthened services for children and families in your program or how might it strengthen and support positive outcomes?

As folks are reflecting on that, as people are getting their thoughts together, let's start out by taking a quick look at the requirements related to partnerships and collaboration, both for Head Start agencies and for our IDEA partners. A really quick look at the Head Start program performance standards.

We know that there are some really specific requirements related to collaboration between Head Start programs and IDEA partners, both for the purposes of identification and referral and, evaluating children who are potentially eligible for IDEA services, but also ongoing collaboration for service provision in inclusive environments.

Most of these requirements in the performance standards are in Part 1302 Subpart F, but you'll see some other additional requirements throughout the performance standards, and the viewers' guide has more information about those standards related to collaboration and specific links to the performance standards themselves for those who might be less familiar.

Before we move on, Jani, I'm seeing some great reflections in the Q&A here.

Jani: Yeah. One about communication.

Jen: Yeah, communication. I see Kim is saying when Head Start and LEAs work together, then children can access services earlier, which we know the earlier the better when it comes to our early intervention services.

Jani: I like that one. I also like this one about working together in the community so that children can be the best they can be. I love that community focus that I'm seeing from some folks.

Jen: I actually was just looking at one to call out as well saying ensuring that children's needs are met really integrates them into our community. Thank you to everybody who is reflecting, who's sharing. Please continue to do that as you have questions throughout the webinar, please continue to put those in the Q&A, and Jani and I will answer those as we're able to. And Brittany and Becky will also be responding to questions.

Jani: And the nice thing about this, I think, Jen, is that collaboration doesn't just show up in the Head Start performance standards, but it also shows up in the IDEA law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We see it in several different ways. And starting out, this is a regulation or a citation that's in Part C of the law.

And you can see it's part of the purpose statement of Part C in and of itself. It's really clear from IDEA that agencies across systems should collaborate to plan to implement services for young children with disabilities, and especially with Part C, not just the children with disabilities, but their families as well. It's so cool that Head Start and Part C has this family focus approach. This starts out right from the very beginning of the Part C legislation.

Jen: Absolutely.

Jani: We also see it in Part B, Section 619. Section 619 is the part of the law that focuses on preschool-age children, so, children three through five. There are several places that we just wanted to call out in the law where collaboration is noted. You can see this first section around screening and evaluation. We know that LEAs have 60 days from the time that parents give consent or parental consent is received to complete the initial evaluation. And part of this can be through a collaboration with Early Head Start or Head Start to share screening information in an effort to keep from duplication for families so there can only be one set of screening for a child is — an option that the law offers.

There's also collaboration just within the process itself. We are all well aware that Head Start teachers and staff can be invited to participate on the IEP team to support families, to share information about their programs so that collaboration can be super helpful for families and children. It's not just during the evaluation process, but also to develop the IEP and through the functional, individualized education program that is developed.

We also see an expectation for collaboration in service delivery itself. IEP services must be provided, as you know, in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate. Those services can be planned alongside Head Start partners, Head Start education staff, and disability services staff can support those services within the Head Start program. Those programs, through their routines and activities can be a great placement for children with disabilities that are receiving IEP services.

We also see it in transition planning that LEA personnel must participate in transition planning conferences, and this can happen in collaboration with Head Start as well. IEP teams provide information to families that are transitioning from Part C to Part B services, and that can include how those services might be provided in the Head Start classroom or from Early Head Start to Head Start if that's the case for that child. We see clear guidance from our federal partners that these different systems can and should work together. Collaboration is called out in the law and in and of itself. And we can collaborate on an ongoing basis so that it will really benefit children and families.

And you can see more of this in the viewers' guide, as Jen noted. There are links to the policy and guidance documents that I'm referencing here in these slides. We have some really great resources from the federal level that can give that kind of guidance. The joint policy statement that was written back in 2015. But then we also have more recently the Dear Colleague letter and MOU guidance that Jen and I were able to share with you in October. You can find those links in the viewers guide as well.

Jen: Thank you, Jani. I just wanted to thank you again for sharing that because I know we get a lot of questions in Head Start from folks who are familiar with the performance standards and know what the performance standards say about collaboration for Head Start staff. But we get the question a lot, what does IDEA say? Thank you for making that so clear. And just for folks who maybe are less familiar with IDEA, as Jani said, we've got some links in there to some policy guidance, but also in the viewers' guide, we've got links to the specific sections of the federal law IDEA that align with what the different components of IDEA that Jani just listed out here. Those are also linked in the viewers' guide. Thank you again, Jani, for giving us that great information.

Jani: Yeah, I'm seeing some really good questions in the chat. Jen, this question about the MOU and if that is a requirement for IDEA Part B, Section 619, we don't see it called out in IDEA the way that it is called out in the Head Start program performance standards. But you can see that those components of the MOU that we talked about, the screening and evaluation, IEP, service delivery, transition planning, those are all MOU components that it really just helps to have that on paper for both parties and so LEAs can really benefit from working together using that MOU guidance that really recently came out to develop something in collaboration.

Jen: Yeah, and I think that's a great question and thank you to Asia for asking that. Yes, while the MOU is required and specifically called out in the performance standards, it isn't specifically called out in IDEA, but with that really nice clear guidance that came out in October about the state-level MOUs and both the Office of Head Start and the Office of Special Education

Programs, which oversees the IDEA services Part C and Part B, Section 619. Our leadership at the federal level has been doing a really great job about modeling this collaboration, but also giving lots of opportunities for state-level 619 coordinators and Head Start collaboration directors to come together and meet one another and begin those conversations around state-level MOU. As we see more of those developed, I'm really encouraged just about this work in the way that collaboration is happening in general, but that as we see more state-level MOUs, hopefully we'll see that modeled at the local level as well.

Jani: We have some great examples of states that are going in that route and also states that are creating templates for their local programs to use. It could be created in collaboration with the Head Start State collaboration office and the leadership at the state level so that local programs and LEAs have a template that they can use as a model. We're seeing that in a couple of states.

Jen: I'm just going to say, as we're seeing more and more states with those stronger collaborations happening with those templates, it's hard for me to keep track. If folks aren't sure if their state has a state-level MOU or those templates. Definitely get in touch, reach out to your Head Start collaboration office, your state collab director to see what progress looks like in your state. Jani, yes, let's talk about why collaboration, really thinking about these collaborative activities. Like we said, we're going to look at lots of examples, but how does this support inclusion for children and families?

Jani: It's a really good question. I think it's related to some of the comments that we're seeing in the chat about outcomes for children and families. We know that inclusion or children being served side by side, children with and without disabilities being served side by side benefits all children, children with disabilities, children without disabilities, their families, educators, communities.

We have a strong body of research that shows that inclusion works, and so this collaboration can work to support inclusion. In this way in particular, it can help to address those commonly cited barriers that we sometimes hear about, because through that coordination, it supports access for children and families and reduces the burden on families. Through these partnerships, we can provide comprehensive, cohesive support that makes the bridge across our different systems. We can share expectations as well as supports that we have in place for children. And that's going to lead to a better experience for all.

Jen: Right.

Jani: Another way is through the barriers around staff knowledge and confidence. I think that I certainly was a preschool teacher that had some feelings of being unsure about how to support certain children in my class. And I think having those experts available to me was really, really helpful. Head Start teachers can really benefit from that collaboration because they have access to information from specialists as well as from special education staff. They can learn about specialized practices that then can be used with other children in the program.

It's not just necessarily for the child with an IEP, and then for the IDEA partners, collaboration can increase access to information about family engagement and culturally and linguistically responsive practices, those signature components of Head Start that can really enrich the work that IDEA partners are providing.

Jen: Right.

Jani: And it also can address attitudes and beliefs. What we've learned is that the most frequently cited barrier to inclusion are attitudes and beliefs. Through these collaborations, we can break those down, we can build understanding of each program, we can learn about each other's purpose, the services available, the methods and strategies and practices and roles that we all use in our different programs. Through that, in the formation of a unified team, it can break down those barriers and also open up our acceptance of one another and our beliefs that this can work. We think about this unified team as including our IDEA partners and Head Start staff. For every child, there's one team and that would include the family, of course.

Jen: Right.

Jani: Those components are super important. And this is part of the position statement that you'll also find in the viewers' guide. Again, you can see right from the federal level that there's a huge support for access, making sure that cross-system partnerships can increase access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs. And that is through the shared responsibility that you see highlighted right there. Thinking about not just Head Start and IDEA partners, but also our communities and government agencies at all levels. It really takes all of us working at the state and local level to come together for children and families.

Jen: Perfect. And I love that, Jani, the way you broke down, we know that there are some barriers and challenges that we often hear from folks across systems and across different agencies around inclusion. But we know that collaboration, while it can be difficult to get started and takes ongoing work, intentional work, that it really can, like you said, address those barriers, create solutions to some of those challenges. And, bottom line, what you see here on the screen is that those collaborations really do increase access to high-quality services and environments for young children with disabilities and their families. Thank you very much. Now we are going to take a look at collaboration in action.

I'm so excited to share strategies and examples from around the country from both Head Start and partners around how they're engaging in collaboration and how they're engaging in partnerships with their partners. But before we take a look at those examples, let's hear from our participants. We have a poll here on the screen. Hopefully, everybody can see that. But we're interested in how you collaborate with your partners. If you're an IDEA partner on the call with us today, how do you partner and collaborate with your Head Start partners? And if you're from a Head Start program, how do you partner with your IDEA partners to support inclusion?

And for this particular poll, you can select all that apply. Are you attending meetings with families? Is that one of the ways that you collaborate with your partners? Are you sharing resources? If you work for Head Start, are you sharing resources and materials that were developed in your program with your IDEA partners? Are you conducting? If you are working as a home visitor, are you conducting co-visits with your IDEA partners for young children who are in Part C early intervention? Are you hosting community events?

We know there are lots of different ways to partner and lots of different ways to collaborate. Share with us. I'm seeing some responses coming in. We're going to give folks a couple more minutes to respond, and then we'll share the results of this poll so everybody can see how their colleagues are collaborating.

Jani: And Jen, I'm seeing some of these ideas listed in the Q&A as well. When you ask that question at the start, I'm seeing some examples of these...

Jen: Oh, great.

Jani: ...the regular meetings, community events.

Jen: I love it. I'm seeing some coming into the Q&A now as well, attending meetings with families, building relationships with families, and attending the local interagency community council. Great. It makes me so happy when I hear about these collaborations that are already happening. Okay. What do you think, Jani? Should we see what our participants — oh, it looks like some are still coming in. I'm going to give just a couple more seconds here.

Jani: Jen, the suspense is killing me.

Jen: I know. I know. Okay. It looks like it's slowing down. Let's take a look.

Jani: Oh, lots of attending meetings with families.

Jen: Yeah, lots of attending meetings, participating in IEP or IFSP development. I like this number, 62% of participants are sharing Head Start resources and materials with their IDEA partners. I love that, because that goes to what you were saying earlier, Jani, about effective inclusion when both of our workforces across systems feel confident and competent using effective strategies. And that goes both ways.

Jani: Right.

Jen: I like that.

Jani: Yeah, sharing resources with one another. I love this item about sharing Head Start resources.

Jen: Perfect.

Jani: Head Start has just as much to give as the IDEA partners and vice versa. We can really learn from one another.

Jen: Perfect. Thank you, everybody, for responding. And now we're going to take a look at some of your colleagues, maybe some of you on the line today at what some of these partnerships look like and what the benefits are. As we are looking at, we've got lots of videos. We did lots of interviews with folks. As we're looking at these videos, we know that there are so many different ways to collaborate, whether it's what you see here on the screen, sharing those materials, attending meetings, co-facilitating trainings that there are so many different ways to partner and so many different activities that happen on an ongoing basis to facilitate that collaborative service delivery.

And really it is going to vary depending on the community that you're in and the needs of your community, the way that specific policies and regulations in your area. But as we're watching these videos really reflect and think about how could this collaboration that you're hearing about, how might that facilitate inclusion, how might that support inclusion? And if you've engaged in a similar collaborative activity, share it with us in the Q&A.

The first video that we're going to take a look at is taking it a step back. An it's really about creating those connections. We're about to hear from a disabilities manager who works in Region 9 in California, and she works with a large service area. Her service area, she partners with 13 different school districts, 13 different LEAs to help implement and facilitate those Part B, Section 619 services. She's going to describe to us how she got started when she was new to her position, how she got started, even forming those relationships with so many different partners, especially when we're hearing that there's a lot of turnover across both systems. Let's take a look at what Jessica had to say.

[Video begins]

Jessica: When I first became manager, I came in on the tail end of the MOUs being completed so super easy. Got an e-mail with a signed MOU. I filed it away, and I moved on. Then came time to renew the MOUs, and that's when the real hard work started. I started out with e-mails trying to connect with all of the SELPA directors to get word out there that the MOU needed to be renewed, and that was open to any sort of collaboration that they were interested in.

That process has been going on for about three years. It's taken lots of e-mails, lots of phone calls. What I discovered in the process were there's a lot of turnover, and there were a lot of directors who were not familiar with Head Start and what Head Start did, and I gave quite a few presentations to staff to give them a heads-up on what Head Start is, all the amazing things we do, how we serve our families here in Orange County, and I actually opened the door for more meetings if they wanted to talk further or collaborate.

[Video ends]



Jen: I love that example. Jessica, who's just wonderful and who has an experience that I know many of you share. She described that persistence. She talks about this long process of continually reaching out, trying to find who is the right person. Do I still have the right e-mail? But she also describes something else that I really love — explaining Head Start services to her LEA partners, not making the assumption that they knew what Head Start services were, that they, not making the assumption that they knew about the comprehensive services and the family-focused services that Head Start provides.

And that's actually a really common piece of advice that we hear from Head Start staff across the country to make sure your partners know about those comprehensive services and really what Head Start can bring to the partnership so that they can really understand that benefit of partnering with their Head Start partners.

Jani: Yeah. Jen, it makes me think about the Head Start 101 session that you did at the Division for Early Childhood Conference, which typically draws a lot of early intervention and early childhood special education folks. Many people were wanting to get to know more about Head Start. I think there's a lot of information that you all have to share that can really help them better understand what you can provide. And I loved it that she said to brag about Head Start, to not let the MOU just sit on a shelf that she was -- was using it as a working document and clarifying things for members on her team. And I know that that's really common that a lot of programs have multiple school districts to work with. Figuring out how to be strategic around that is a really great strategy.

Jen: Yeah, agree. We have another example here. Nina, who also works in California in a different county, but she is going to share with us another successful strategy for engaging her LEA partners and her — actually her Part C partners as well in conversations around again, exploring those potential collaborations when it comes time to revisit your MOU. Let's see what Nina has to say.

[Video begins]

Nina: Just continuing to try and get meetings and get people to understand what our vision was. And some of the strategies I used with that was, one, even though the doors would be closed, like we're not interested in partnering right now. Thank you. Returns on your e-mails and your requests for meetings. I would just keep going, and I would try and find other people that saw the vision.

Seeking out other people in the community who had the same vision, whether it be parents, but also, we have an amazing community organization in our town here that's called Young and Healthy, and they really are looking for ways the district can help support kids. Those individuals definitely helped me continue to get meetings, to spread my vision. And eventually, when we got in there and were able to meet again, we really had to clarify what we were looking to partnership around.

They were very concerned. The districts were very concerned that we were going to take their TK kids, their young kids, that there was a lot of competition for the same kids and really helping them understand, no, we're serving the same kids, but it can be together and that we can do it collaboratively, that we're going to look at serving right now with the one that we've built, we serve infants and toddlers zero to three.

Explaining to them, look at these three-year-old kids are going to be coming to your school district. Wouldn't it be great if they already knew you, already had a relationship, already understood the teachers and the special education services, and they got that through this inclusion classroom at the Head Start.

[Video ends]

Jen: I love this example because, again, she's talking about persistence, but she also looked to the community and what other organizations exist in the community. She talked about some parent advocacy organizations, another community organization that she could partner with that could help strengthen services, but also help strengthen some of the partnerships with her IDEA partners.

And again, just really being clear around what would the benefits of these collaborations be and really describing that continuity of services for children and families that this was a much longer interview. But as she continued to talk, now that she's got this collaboration and this partnership with her early intervention Part C partners, they really are seeing families feeling more confident, families feeling a greater sense of belonging as their children transition out of Head Start and into school district services.

Again, really being creative, persistent, and just being willing to have those open conversations about what might this look like and how can this benefit our children. I loved that, again, thinking back to what you said, Jani, earlier, one child and family, one team. These are our children.

Jani: And she was also really thinking about the what's in it for them from the LEA's perspective, thinking about how this connection with early intervention would be helpful to them because they could get to know those three-year-olds that are going to be coming up into the system. Making that link, I think is really useful too, putting yourself into their shoes to think about why the partnership would matter to them. What benefits do you see it from their perspective?

Jen: Absolutely. All right. Jani, I know you have a great example to share.

Jani: Yes. This next one is one that Jen, you and I have really explored and shared at a couple of different places because we like it so much. It's from our friend Lori down in Palm Beach County. And she got into this program, and one of the first things that she discovered was that there were children from Head Start being bused to one of the local elementary schools for services.

And she thought, this is just it's a big waste of time for one for the child, and it's a waste of resources, paying for the bus driver and the school bus costs and gas and all of that. That's where she started. That's a little bit of the backstory. But we'll let Lori tell you the rest.

Jen: Perfect. Let's take a look.

[Video begins]

Lori: After making a few calls and a few visits, I approached my director with the idea of pushing services in to where many of our students were being bused from. With that, let me show you how our two agencies met and have been meeting for almost two years.

We never met each other in person until this past June. Each day starts with a commitment and activities to calm, connect, and unite us. We decided to model that in our own way. We continued to meet virtually and be true to our process. The next few slides are pictures taken within our Head Start classrooms. These are examples of practicing belly breathing for calm bodies.

Can you tell who is the ESE teacher and who is the Head Start teacher? Can you tell which children have special needs? Here we are connecting and building relationships. Can you tell who is employed by which agency? Our ESE teachers are fully immersed and engaged with all students and teachers in the Head Start centers. The professional relationships built are genuine and trusted, which is the foundation of our partnership. We are modeling the very practices we hope that our young students will embrace and carry forward.

Another proud accomplishment is the success of the first annual leadership retreat. This is where many of us met in person for the first time. This was inspirational, motivating and a fun day that brought leadership and center directors together.

[Video ends]

Jen: Jani, you said we love that example. I wanted to just point out, this is in a large school district. This is in Palm Beach County where I think Lori's told us that there are 180 district early-learning classrooms. Just to be clear, Lori, who was just described, she works for the LEA. She told us, in this large district, about this rollout and this scale-up. It started with one teacher to support just five classrooms and is slowly built up over time over the pandemic, which is incredible.

Jani: Yes. I mean, it's a huge partnership, a great partnership example. But also, just the way that she's been able to scale this and take a process and a way of delivering services that everyone was comfortable with. They were really comfortable busing children in and shaking that up and thinking about, well, what really makes the best sense for children and educators. Using this push, which she calls push in services really made a huge difference. And she talks about the fact that there are so many people that made it possible on that leadership team, that retreat that they had. Including Head Start teachers, Head Start coaches, teachers and

specialists, disability services coordinator, as well as the LEA administration. It took all of those partners coming together to make this happen.

Jen: And thinking about, Lori has talked about this is part of a longer video. I'm seeing some questions about whether or not we're able to share the video. We don't have permission from Lori to share the YouTube video that we just showed a clip of. Folks will be able to see what you just saw in the recording of this webinar. But for folks who are interested, if folks want to follow up on MyPeers and potentially be connected to Lori with some questions, she's very generous with her time.

Unfortunately, we can't show the whole video, but you will be able to see what we just shared. But I wanted to just also point out, it, before we move on to seeing our last few videos. But, Jani, you talked about this team of people that are required. But it also took some really ongoing specific work. Lori talks about that there's ongoing planning? Ongoing supported protect planning time between teachers and specialists, collaborative professional development for both teams to make sure, like you talked about earlier, that they're able to use those effective practices for instruction, but also around PD teaming and collaboration.

Lori has also shared that there are weekly meetings to check in on a variety of different processes, whether that's the referral processes from Head Start to the LEA, the evaluation process, IEP development, including placement decisions and then ongoing check-ins about IEP implementation. It's taking people, but it's also taking time as a resource. It's so exciting to see the leadership, like you said, the leadership across both the Head Start system and the LEA really be invested in providing those resources that they know will take to make this an effective partnership.

Jani: That's such a good point that it's people, but it's also what we've seen before, persistence and like you were saying, time.

Jen: Yes.

Jani: Just setting it up once isn't necessarily going to lead to ongoing success. It's those check-ins and temperature taking as the programs go along. I love that example. It's a great local example. Now, we're going to hear from a state 619 coordinator and a program executive director about how they approach collaborative service delivery. And you'll hear about a really neat strategy called itinerant teaching. Let's go and take a look at this next video.

Jen: Perfect.

[Video begins]

Mary Varr: The result was that we have many children that are on IEPs in Woonsocket, that are in all of our Head Start and pre-K classrooms. The school system was unable to have them. They did not have enough space in their own classrooms. They are in our programs. We use the itinerant model for special education.

We have the staff, the school department staff have office space in our programs, and we have — now they have their IEP meetings where the parents and the children are comfortable, so they don't have to — we systematically are trying to take down the barriers that we've learned would prevent parents from being more involved or from children getting the services that they need. And we have placed them strategically around the city where they are more comfortable so that they will be a part of the process and get what they need before they get into kindergarten.

Ruth Gallucci: For those of you that are not familiar with the itinerant model, it's all about providing special education and direct service in those in general early childhood programs. And it's all about that collaboration and coordination between the general ed teacher and the special ed teacher. It really fits so nicely into this conversation. Without that coordinated approach to supporting children with disabilities, we're just not able to see the outcomes that we want for all of our children.

Mary: It was a learning process for all of us. But as we have grown through the years with it, know that it works. Our teachers have learned many new skills by the itinerant special ed teachers being in the classroom, which is what the goal of that model was for. The children get their services throughout the week by the teacher or the special ed director. And it's not just sporadic.

Ruth: What I went in and what I saw was really beautiful. It was children that were so at home in their environment because the entire staff had wrapped their arms around the children, and the progress that we saw, sure, we have little bits of work to do, here and there, and we can always do more. But it truly was beautiful to see how the children with some significant disabilities were doing within their environment. It's truly always been about that collaboration. It's been about Mary's willingness to work with the school department as they moved away from self-contained classrooms, being willing to have the children and do whatever she needed to do to ensure that they were successful in their environments.

I can't say enough about how coordination and collaboration has led to the successes that we've seen. We want all children to have access to a high-quality early childhood education. Head Start has been at the forefront of that movement for as long as I can remember. Head Start is that logical, partner in beginning this work.

Mary: The school department gave us two classrooms in one of their schools because they wanted to learn the Head Start way for comprehensive services. They wanted to learn how to do a developmentally appropriate general ed preschool classroom. They wanted to learn how to do family engagement and better engage their families in being a part of the whole process of their child's education.

We are now talking with the school department because I have a couple of open classrooms of having some of the children that are on — that need special services using our space in our classrooms. It becomes that Woonsocket as a whole, where there is space in a classroom and we can provide services, we're going to do it together.

Mary: In Rhode Island, we really see all children as general education students. The children with disabilities are Head Start students, and that's the way they are. Some children require special education to be successful. We don't really think about it as dual enrollment. The enrollment is in Head Start, and we provide specialized instruction in the Head Start program.

[Video ends]

Jani: That's such an awesome example of this we talk about special education is a service, not a place. When we saw the example in Palm Beach County about pushing in services like speech-language pathology, in this example in Rhode Island, what we see is removing what they call self-contained classrooms or those classrooms that are just made up of children — only children with disabilities to foster inclusion so that children with disabilities are served in all programs, child care, Head Start, state pre-K. I love the fact that Ruth was talking about how they started out with this shared vision.

Jen: Right.

Jani: And both of those folks talked about the mutual benefit, giving the Head Start educators this opportunity to learn those specialized practices from the early childhood special ed teacher. There's some direct support that the early childhood special educator provides to the child. But there's also coaching that happens...

Jen: Right.

Jani: ...you know, in that visit. Head Start teachers learn about those practices, and then the LEA staff learn about family engagement. And we see better outcomes for children across the board.

Jen: Absolutely. And I'm really glad you said that, Jani, because I saw a question in the Q&A come through from Elizabeth who said, do any of the Head Start teachers serve as the itinerant teacher or do they have a separate teacher? Unless the Head Start teacher to be the itinerant teacher, the Head Start teacher, it needs to be an employee of the school district because those itinerant services are coming as part of the child's IEP.

But just what you said that shared collaborate, those shared service delivery models, while it might look like in some cases the specialist coming in, whether that's the speech therapist or a special educator or a physical therapist, whoever it might be coming in to provide direct services, we also see that collaboration and that consultation where there is coaching to really build up the knowledge and the skills of the Head Start staff so that when that itinerant teacher isn't in the classroom, that the Head Start staff are still able to use those specialized strategies to support their child's learning and participation.

Jani: Right. And apply those practices to support other children as well.

Jen: Absolutely. And just one more thing want to point out about this particular example. We're hearing about the — not the tail end because this is ongoing. And you heard Ruth say, yeah,

there are things that come up all the time that we identify as areas for improvement in our partnership and our collaboration and our service delivery. But Rhode Island didn't just decide to meet one day and the next day implement this incredible model that we're hearing about. It took time and it took working from that shared vision that you described, Jani.

And in part one of this webinar series, you actually do hear from Mary and Ruth about what those early stages of that partnership and of that MOU development looked like. And Mary said there were some uncomfortable conversations. It was a long process to develop not only the shared vision, but then think about like, okay, what's our shared language? Do we have an understanding of one another? Knowing that these partnerships don't happen overnight, but that they take that careful time and tending to. Just wanted to point that out. We're seeing the the end product but knowing that there's a lot of work pre and ongoing that go into these collaborative activities.

Jani: Yeah, good idea a plug for going back and looking at part one if you haven't seen it.

Jen: Yeah.

Jani: I forgot about that piece that there really was all of this need to learn about each other's culture within the program as well. Absolutely. I think we have one more video, don't we?

Jen: We do. And I'm so excited. This example that we're about to look at is another example of shared collaborative, what we call service delivery. Collaborating in many different ways with that goal of sharing responsibility. And this actually — this is a really interesting example. We're going to hear from Beth, who's a preschool director at an LEA. She works for the LEA, and she's going to describe some collaboration that has resulted from a long-standing ongoing partnership in Ohio in in the Lorain County schools in Ohio.

And I'm not sure if she talks specifically about this. But want to point out that, again, thinking about this mutual benefit, they have both they have collaborative service delivery across systems. Within the LEA, the district preschools, they have a Head Start teacher and a Head Start family services worker who work on an ongoing basis in those district preschools and then in the Head Start programs across the county, they've got specialists in a district team, occupational therapy, physical therapy, intervention, psychology, who go out to the Head Start program. I want to point out that this collaboration in this shared service delivery is again, across systems. Let's take a look at what Beth had to say about their collaboration in Lorain County schools.

Beth Deidrick: We have a very good relationship long established with our Head Start folks. We do engage in a lot of shared professional learning with our staff. Their staff is invited and included to participate in anything that we're offering within the district and vice versa. Some of our staff just did CLASS training that was provided at a Head Start location by Head Start, and our district was welcomed to that. We also have developed and provided some PD to Head Start staff to support inclusive practices.

They have an ongoing community of practice or community of learners. They meet once a month, and we had some folks get some Ohio approved; approved within our professional development registry, some training, and we were able to go in and facilitate that community for the entire school year to look at things that were happening, help them come up with interventions by using resources, both Head Start resources, DEC resources, NAEYC resources, active resources, all kinds of resources to just help them to learn, help all of us to learn how we where we can access tools to support that inclusion and then how we can pair them with things that are maybe challenging to us or giving us shark music, as I like to say, and then implement them. Being able to come back and back and back together was super valuable for that team.

We also do a lot of collaboration and consultation with the Head Start staff in those facilities because we know that the itinerant intervention specialist isn't there all the time and that lead teacher is. We do as much as we can to consult with them to coach them, to provide them with resources, anything that they might need to be able to continue to embed that specially designed instruction in that student's day, even in our absence.

Our staff has learned so much from Head Start staff and our Head Start staff, I believe, would say that they've learned so much from our district staff. Just having that opportunity to engage in that, just that collegial learning has developed a lot of like shared efficacy among the staff and that has certainly led to improved outcomes for everybody. Just having that teaming and collaboration from Head Start provides opportunities for families to be connected with supports within the community. They're also super helpful.

Head Start in general is at connecting with additional services that a family might need, even if it is related to the child specifically, like something around wellness or early childhood mental health. They've been amazing support to our program in helping our students get connected to those services. Our families have a direct connection then to our district for kindergarten purposes. When it's time for the kindergarten roundup, as they call it, over there, when they see the Lorain City School table, it's not the first time they've heard of Lorain City schools.

We have staff members that are in and out of their sites all the time. Families are familiar with that. Their families are invited to our district-level Winter Wonderland, all of our family events that we have here. We did a parent cafe, um, that was shared between Head Start and Lorain City schools' families specifically for families with young children. That was amazing.

But some of the things that are most exciting to me is, um, just that shared bringing together all those resources for the good of all folks. Like I said, we can send our team, everybody has an expertise in a different area. We have all those people that can come together to just develop the best plans and instructional strategies and things for our kiddos.

[Video ends]



Jen: There's so much to say. I just — all these videos. I wish we had much more time. But one thing I wanted to point out —

Jani: She put a lot of ideas into her comments. I'm sorry. Go ahead, Jen.

Jen: Oh, no. You're you know, and again, it's just the — I think she said at the beginning, we have a long ongoing partnership with our Head Start partners. And that's been really intentional. Beth described that and she also did describe that leadership from both agencies was really supportive of the collaboration.

And one of the things — I actually see a question in the Q&A from Edward, who's asking if any programs have internal multidisciplinary teams where the purpose is really to support children who might not qualify for services. It's interesting because Beth did describe that in addition to all the activities that they do on an ongoing basis, the meetings, she described some of the community of practice, um, that they do some collaboration and consultation.

The district staff, the IDEA staff come into the Head Start programs and in addition to doing the consultation and the coaching around a child's specific IEP goals for the purpose of implementing a child's IEP, they've also been doing some building level, for lack of a better word, but some systems-level collaboration with their Head Start partners around multi-tiered systems of support for all children and supporting staff when there are questions about whether a child might need a referral for additional evaluation.

I think that one of the common things we've heard across these different examples is the partnership and some of these collaborative activities might start with a really specific focus and a purpose around those specific IDEA services for children who qualify, but that they expand as those partnerships develop and grow. I love this.

We are down to our last minute. Jani, thank you for being here. Thank you to all of our participants who it's been my attention has been divided between the slides and the Q&A where I'm seeing all these great questions and all these great comments. Thank you all for joining us today. And a special thank you to our friends and colleagues who are willing to jump on a Zoom interview with me.

Jani: You guys were great.

Jen: I think they can see me coming now. But if you have collaborations to share, we want to be able to share these with your colleagues. Share with us on MyPeers. And we know this is just a small sliver of what's happening. Share with us on MyPeers. Let us know what's going well and also look to your colleagues for support. Again, thank you to everybody. Thank you to you, Jani.

Jani: Thanks, everyone. And thank you, Jen.

Jen: Before we sign off, please mark your calendars for our next inclusion webinar, which will be on May 23rd from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern. And we'll focus on partnerships for our next

two webinars, for our May webinar and our August webinar. But we're going to shift to focusing on partnerships with families, which I'm also really excited about.

You can actually register for the May webinar today. If you click, there's a registration link in the resource list widget. If you're interested in this and think you might forget, register before you log off. Thanks everybody.