

Office of Head Start FY24 Monitoring Kickoff

Glenna Davis: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the FY24 Monitoring Kickoff webcast. It is now my pleasure to turn the floor over to the Office of Head Start Director, Khari Garvin. Director Garvin, the floor is yours.

Dr. Khari Garvin: Well, thank you so much for that, and good afternoon, everyone. To others of you, good morning, and welcome to the Office of Head Start FY24 Monitoring Kickoff. We're looking forward to the upcoming monitoring year, and in anticipation of that, we have prepared some important informational sessions to help all Head Start grant recipients understand the FY24 monitoring priorities and methodologies including some exciting refinements.

I want to take a moment to thank the Office of Head Start team for the hard work on getting us prepared, and I also want to thank you, the Head Start community, for the strong effort over the last year and for joining us today. As I reflect on my 6 months or the last 6 months as the Director of the Office of Head Start, I really do continue to be amazed in all that Head Start community is doing every single day to serve eligible children and their families.

And to be sure, the last few years have been challenging, but I'm also grateful to be part of such a persevering community that chooses each and every day to charge forward in spite of those hardships. And I've enjoyed very much visiting programs across the country to see firsthand how so many of you are implementing incredible innovations to strengthen program services. Your tireless commitment to serving children and families continues to make our Head Start community stronger, so thank you, and again, thank you for the work you are doing every single day in your communities.

Today is our first webinar to kick off the 2023/24 monitoring season, and this webinar is being recorded, and it will be available for future viewing on the ECLKC website. Today and later this week, you will hear from our monitoring lead, Adia Brown, and her team. And if I say so myself, they have done a wonderful job of refining and improving our monitoring tools over the years. Today, we will have a conversation about our FY24 monitoring protocols, and we'll share some updates with you, and before it's all done, there will be an opportunity to engage in a little Q and A. Without further ado, I want to welcome Adia to continue this important conversation. Adia, all yours.

Adia Brown: Thank you. How is everybody doing? Wow, back again, another monitoring year, another monitoring season. I am so excited, as usual. Now, I promised Dr. Garvin that I wouldn't break into song or rap, which is totally who I always am. But I do need to introduce myself because although I've been doing this job for about 20 years, I realize that some of you may not have been, and you may not know who I am. I am Adia Brown, and I'm the Lead for the Oversight division here at the Office of Head Start. I love monitoring. I love the work that I do. I love coming out to see programs, and I'm really, really super excited to tell you guys what you can look forward to in FY24.

Put your seat belts on. Hold on. I've been told that I talk really fast, and I know that we don't have a lot of time together, we may go fast, but you get to watch this multiple times. And you can ask as many questions as you want. You can ask them in the question-and-answer section or in the chat, and I have a whole team of people behind me who are going to be able to collect those questions that will answer them for you at the end.

Super excited to be here. Thank you all for being here, and let's get – you can see we have a lot of stuff that we need to cover today, let's get started. We're going to talk about a few things today. First, we're going to talk about the FA1s. Then we're going to talk about the FA2s, and then we're going to do a little talk about CLASS. You may – If you're new, you may not know that the ACT requires us to actually do several different types of monitoring events for all Head Start grantees.

The ACT requires – it's actually an old requirement. It's from when we used to have indefinite grants. The ACT actually requires that in the first year of any new grant that we actually do a monitoring event. When we had indefinite grants, we didn't have to do as many of those because we would only get new grants every so often. But since we changed to a 5-year grant cycle, all grantees become a new grant every 5 years. In the first 12 to 24 months of that first 5 years, we do what's called an FA1 review. We conduct it virtually, so we don't come on-site, but we do a lot of things, and I'll tell you a little bit more about that.

Somewhere after that in the third or fourth year, we actually come on-site because the ACT actually requires that every 3 years, we do an on-site monitoring event of all Head Start programs. In your third or fourth year, we actually do an FA2 event. You're going to hear a lot more about that later. And also we are also statutorily required to do CLASS, and this year we have some new and exciting opportunities about CLASS. And I hope that if you are getting a CLASS review, you already have taken some of those CLASS sessions, and if you haven't, they're available for you on the ECLKC. Let's talk about some of the highlights of monitoring.

One thing that folks always ask is, "When will we do monitoring reviews, and when won't we do them?" For most of the major holidays, we don't do monitoring reviews, so you will notice that we don't come out to do on-site reviews or Focus Area 1 reviews at that time. But there are some holidays that we use that we don't count, and we will do monitoring reviews during those times, and that includes Indigenous Peoples Day, Juneteenth, Veterans' Day, Martin Luther King Day, and Presidents' Day. Now, we won't do it on the day of the holiday, but that week of the holiday, we still do some review events, but other holidays like Christmas or Thanksgiving, we don't do reviews.

Grant recipients who will receive an FY24 monitoring review have already been notified, so you know that you're going to have a monitoring review this year. But you don't know what your date is yet, and that is purposeful. We extend out the date to grantees 45 days prior to them actually having a monitoring review except if you have an unannounced review. And every time I do one of these monitoring events, people always ask me – they always say, "Adia, is the Office of Head Start going to unannounced reviews this year?" And this year, we are post-pandemic. We are moving forward. This year, we're actually going to do unannounced reviews. Everybody doesn't get unannounced reviews.

We select a sample of our total amount of grantees, and then off that sample, there are some grantees that we do unannounced reviews for, and we are going to start that back up this year. I'm going to stop here because I noticed that Khari's is still on the screen. I think he's pinned to the screen, but I'm not, so no one can see me, but hopefully somebody in the background can actually fix that. You can see me. I just can't see myself. Great. All right. Let's go on to the next slide, then. Fantastic. We're going to talk a little bit about the FA1 review. The FA1 review is a pretty cool review. I like this review a lot. It's a review that you kind of get to do from your home base.

We don't come to visit you on-site, but we do call you. We call you, and we spend some time with you really trying to understand where you are in the first year or 24 months of your 5-year grant. You may be a program that's been in existence for many, many, many years. Or you may be a brand-new program. But everybody has the opportunity at the beginning of their new 5-year grant to talk about the things that are important, the systems that they're going to be developing, how they're going to implement high-quality services, how they're going to do comprehensive services, what new things they might want to do and what strategies they have for improvement.

It's a great time to really think about your own self-assessment as we work with you to understand more about what you do as a program. We also assess compliance during that time there's different things that we ask during the FA1 that help us understand whether or not the grantee is actually complying with the regulations, and we do that through the virtual review. We'll ask you things like teacher qualifications, or we'll ask you about whether or not you understand what the health status is of children. Lots of those things come into play during the FA1, and because we're asking you about those types of things, we do ask for data.

There will be a point in time where you get to actually share your screen, and you can share your screen and help us to understand how you actually use data to accomplish compliance. We also use the FA1 to identify the needs and the trends that grantees have and hopefully to help them improve for the future so that by the time we get to the FA2, you really understand the things that you need to improve, the trends that you have in your program, and you can make those improvements so that when we next review you, you'll be doing things in a much better way. You probably are interested in understanding, when do these reviews all start?

That's super important for all grantees. You always want to know when we're going to get there. The FA1 reviews are going to begin on October the 9th. If you've gotten a notice that tells you that you're going to get an FA1 this year, if you're not getting an unannounced review, you'll get a 45-day letter that tells you, "Oh, this is the date of your review, and it may be October the 9th or sometime in the future from there." If you got a letter that says you're going to get a review, and you haven't heard anything, you may be getting an unannounced review. This is something that you need to be aware of, but we will start this process on the 9th.

Virtual review – they moved the slides. Go back one for me. Thanks. These reviews occur for 3 days. You get one reviewer for 3 days. The reviewer will conduct interviews with you, leaders, governing bodies, the policy council, and other staff. You will also be asked to screen share examples of your documents and your data, and you will collaborate with the assigned reviewer to develop a schedule so that we understand who to talk during the week, what times

of day are available for you and you get to collaborate in the development of how we conduct the review.

Dr. Garvin: Today, I'm going to – before we move on to that slide, I just want to back up one if we don't mind to those who are managing the slides. I have a question for you, please. You just mentioned a couple times here that screen sharing, that there will be a screen-sharing component to the FA1 process. Can you just say a little bit more about what we at the Office of Head Start hope to learn from grant recipients by the use of this feature during the FA1 reviews?

Adia: Yes, I can. One thing that we learned during the pandemic and through the use of Zoom and Teams and all the other things that we have available to us now that we didn't have available to us before, is that it's much easier for grantees to be able to show us sometimes than tell us. During the FA1, we give all the grantees the opportunities, and we tell you – you'll see in the protocol that we've designed the protocol to tell you what documents we're interested in seeing when we actually talk to you about the FA1.

We're interested in seeing things like I mentioned earlier, like we're interested in seeing documents that show us what your staff qualifications are or whether or not your staff have gotten criminal record checks, or whether or not you actually are tracking the status of children and their health status. We'll also ask you information about fiscal, and you will have the opportunity, or your staff will have the opportunity during the calls to actually share your screen and show us that documentation.

Rather than just us talking about it with you, you're able to basically show us your wares and help us to even better understand what you're doing, what trends you have, and where you even may want to make improvements that will help you to actually meet the compliance standards or more over the course of the next five years. Thanks for asking the question, Khari. I really appreciate it. I'm sure the grantees do, too. Khari, the next thing I'm going to talk to people about is really the FA2. FA2 is when we actually come on-site. This is when we visit you. We come on-site, and we send a team.

Our team is going to be a little bit bigger this year than it has been, so we've added some reviewers to the team. We've added reviewers to the team because we want to get out, and we want to see more classrooms. We want to see more centers. We want to be able to do more observations. We want to talk to more teachers. We're going to talk to more parents. Well, in order to do that, we added a few more team members so that we have the bandwidth to be able to do that when we come on-site. Well, when we come on-site, this is really the opportunity for the grantee to demonstrate their success and your high quality.

The first thing I want grantees to know is that when we come on-site, we want you to brag. We want you to tell us about the things and show us the things that you are doing that really makes you an exceptional Head Start program. We want to hear it. We want to know. When we come on-site, monitoring is not always about just trying to figure out whether or not the grantee is in compliance or not. We really want to know how you're meeting the needs of your community.

This is super important to the Office of Head Start. We develop and we fund Head Start programs because we want communities to be – to change, to be enlightened, and we want kids to get a quote-unquote head start. We come on-site; we want you to show us that. We want to be able to see it. One of the ways we're capturing that in this new program year is that we have instituted something that we're listening for called Strong Practices. During your review, we're going to be actually asking you questions that relate to things that are compliance-driven and all the standards that we all know and love.

But we're also going to be asking you things about Strong Practices because we want to take the opportunity to make sure that we understand what programs are doing that make them really strong and make them valuable and make them necessary and relevant in their communities. We're going to be asking questions about Strong Practices this year. We're also going to be assessing your compliance. We always do that. We want to know about your compliance. We want to understand your compliance. We want to know whether or not you have areas where we're concerned, and we want things.

We want you to actually think about those things and work with your regional offices to get TNTA. We want to also identify things, if they're there, that are not in compliance. That helps you to think about the things that are not in compliance, and it also gives you a time frame for when you want to correct those things. The difference between AOC as the time frame is much longer, and there is actually not a time frame. You get to work with the TNTA on those. But for ANCs, you actually have a time frame that you have to meet, and that means that that's really important, because if you don't meet a time frame that we have identified when we're assessing compliance, it turns into a deficiency, and then that deficiency, if you don't correct it, can turn into a termination.

We never want that for programs. We identify these things early on, give you time to correct them and then allow you to work with your regional office and your TNTA to make sure that those things get done. We do those three things during the FA2. We understand your quality. We understand your Strong Practices, and we assess your compliance, and we do that all on-site with one caveat: fiscal. The fiscal reviewer is the virtual part of the FA2 review. The fiscal reviewer, they actually don't come on-site. They work with your fiscal team, and they actually do their part of the review most often virtually. There are times when the grantee is really complex or large, and we need to send the fiscal reviewer on-site, but we learned during the pandemic that the fiscal reviewer can actually do their job better when they are virtual, thus, the only reviewer who is not on-site during the FA2.

Dr. Garvin: Well, Adia, I appreciate hearing that. I'm excited about now what you were talking about there with the addition of the strong practices to the FY24 monitoring protocol. I expected to see the whole Zoom platform light up there. But can you just say a little bit more about that?

Adia: Oh, yeah. I think people – oh, look. Look at that. There's little celebration hats and all that kind of stuff. We've had a lot of different iterations of highlights, strong practices throughout the year. But this is something that all reviewers are actually consistently looking for through every program. We want – not every program will have a strong practice, and that's OK. You don't always have to have them. But when you do, we want to be able to identify them in a

consistent way across all programs and really determine which programs are doing things that are innovative and different and exciting, and how can we actually leverage those across the entire Head Start community so that we can get more of that over time?

I like all of the celebration hats and all the high-fives and stuff like that. I think that that's a nice addition to monitoring, and I hope that it turns out to be a very good resource not just for the individual program but for programs nationally as we capture these strong practices. Let me tell you a little bit about the FA2 and how long it is, so this is a 5-day review. It's a little longer than the FA1 review. It's 5 days. You have folks who come on-site. You have three reviewers on-site and one virtual.

We do data tours when we're on-site, and there are so – we have developed so many documents and tip sheets for you this year to help you understand what the data tour is, what documents you need during the data tour, what we look during a class observation, how we actually look at the center. We have documents available for you to tell you what the interviews are going to be like and what we're thinking about when we're –and give you an at-a-glance view of what an interview consists of, who should be at that interview and what kind of questions we're going to ask.

We developed a lot more tools. Normally, we just put out the protocol, but we develop a lot more tools to help you understand all of the things that we're going to do. We're going to have discussions, data tours, document tours, classroom reviews, site visits, everything. And this happens in 5 days in your program. Everybody is always interested in the report.

This year, you will get a report after your event. Reports note where you are compliant, which is really important. We kept that. We want grantees to understand these are the places where you're compliant. The reports will also identify anywhere where you had an area of concern or if you had an area of compliance or if you had any deficiencies, and it will also identify if you had any strong practices. This year, we worked to streamline the reports a bit.

Some of the reports that we wrote in the past, they got sort of overwhelming with the narrative. We really worked to streamline the report to make sure that you get the – you can understand either what the strength or the problem is. But it doesn't take a lot of text for us to articulate that for you. The new reports will be a lot – hopefully they'll be a lot easier to read.

They'll be easier for your parents to read, easier for the board and the policy council to read, and easier for the public to read. We made that adjustment just so that these reports will be much easier for people to digest and also easier for you to identify what the problem is if you have one and to correct that problem without sort of trying to guess what it might be.

We really worked on the reports this year, and we're hoping that that's going to really be a positive change for grantees and that you'll be able to use the reports and they'll be more useful to you over time. We are going to put out a protocol just like we always do, and the protocol is going to be posted on ECLKC, and I saw in the chat – because I actually do this. I'm looking at the chat, and I'm doing my job, too. But I saw in the chat somebody's asking where all the resources are. There's going to be two places where you can look for resources. One is going to be ECLKC. For everybody who is familiar with the Early Childhood Learning and

Knowledge Center, you'll be able to go there, and you'll be able to find all the protocols and some resources for this year.

And then some of the tip sheets and the at-a-glance tools and all the things that I mentioned, every year when we actually do the monitoring events, we put out a virtual conference. It's called the Virtual Expo. And when you go to ECLKC, you'll see the link for the Virtual Expo, and you'll be able to find all those tip sheets and tools and different things that we want to make available to your program. Yes, all of this will be posted. The new FY24 protocol, it's a lot more descriptive. We wanted to give you more information about what we're going to do when we either do an FA1 or an FA2. There's more information about what documents you need. There's more information about the interviews and who needs to be in those interviews.

There's more information about the types of questions that we're going to ask. We are trying to create a suite of information to ensure that you are as prepared for either – for any type of monitoring event that we have available for grantees. We are also going to do CLASS this year, we are resuming CLASS. CLASS was on hold for the last couple of years during the pandemic, but we are resuming that. And for all grantees who have been – who are going to have a CLASS review this year, you've already been notified that you're going to have a CLASS review.

There's already been sessions to help you understand the types of reviews that are available to you as a grantee. You can go back to ECLKC, and you can review those sessions again. But I will tell you that there actually two ways that we're doing CLASS this year. We're doing CLASS on-site, and we're doing CLASS as a video option. If you're already having a CLASS review this year, you've already selected your option; you've already decided whether or not you want it on-site or whether or not you wanted the CLASS review observation.

If you are AIAN grantee, you have a third option that I'm not going to discuss today, but that third option has already been given to AIAN programs, and I'm happy to report that I think it's either 99%, somebody will correct me, or 100% of our programs who have already selected the type of CLASS review that they want. That's pretty exciting. I'm really happy about that. And once you select it, we are now able to work with you and actually help you to participate in that type of review. Grant recipients will receive a final report for CLASS just like all the other ones, and for FY24, CLASS scores will count towards designation renewal. We haven't done that in the last couple of years, but they absolutely will count.

Dr. Garvin: I've got to jump back in on this one. Can you please tell us all just a little bit more about that last section? You kind of glossed over the Designation Renewal System section. Say a little bit more about that one, please.

Adia: I sure can, Khari, because this is important. In 2020, OHS published a final rule that created quality and competitive CLASS thresholds for DRS decisions. This change was made based on feedback from the field, and the thresholds were designed using data from prior years. However, this has not been implemented since 2020 because OHS was not able to conduct class observations during the pandemic.

This year, for FY24 CLASS observations, these thresholds, along with their DRS implications, will be implemented. This means that programs will know their DRS determinations immediately upon receiving their CLASS scores unlike in prior years where they had to wait for the whole

cohort to complete their reviews, unlike prior years where they had to wait for the whole cohort to complete their reviews.

Importantly, OHS is committed to providing assistance, the programs and areas where they are in need of quality improvement. These threshold determinations will also guide technical assistance to programs that may benefit them. DRS this year is coming back. There are the quality and the competitive thresholds. You will know immediately, and this was one of the real complaints, Khari, that people had in prior years, is that you had to wait for the whole cohort to get their class to determine whether or not you were in the lowest 10%.

Because we changed the regulation and now there are thresholds, as soon as you get report, you know whether or not you are clear, whether or not you fell into the competitive threshold, or whether or not you fell into the quality threshold. This is a big improvement for grantees. One big thing, and as I know that this is one big priority for Dr. Garvin, is child health and safety incidents.

We are really trying to understand the trends around child health and safety incidents and why they are happening. We're trying to understand those trends, but in the meantime, we are also trying to help programs to prevent them. It's a big task, and it's something that the Office of Head Start, we all have put on our thinking caps around.

Every person who works in any other division is working on how to reduce health and safety incidents, how to determine that they've happened, how to mitigate the risk around them, and the monitoring oversight division is no different. One of the things that the Central Office and Regional Offices have collaborated is to develop a RAN protocol for grantees. Prior to this year, grantees would have an incident of either supervision or unauthorized release or child abuse or something to that nature, and we requested that you report that to us, and we still do. We want you to report it.

We want you to call. We want you to e-mail. We want you to put it on HSES. We want to make sure that we understand, when you have troubles at your program that relate to child health and safety. But we've also designed a series of things to help you do that, and one of them is we've designed a RAN – we designed a sample grantee reporting form. This is not a form that is mandatory for grantees to use, but we wanted to create this tool because we thought it would be helpful so that when you are actually reporting an event, you what to report.

You know that you can report the time that the child was unsupervised or where the incident happened or what type of staff was involved or when the incident actually occurred. And this form helps you to kind of think through all the things that you actually want to report to the Office of Head Start so that we can start to help provide you with TNTA. We can help start to assess what the issue is. We can do a lot of different things by making sure that all grantees sort of have a clear way that they can understand what to report.

We also developed, which something very different this year – we developed a RAN protocol. It's going to come out a little later on during the season, but that RAN protocol helps us to really understand what the incident was and what happened. It also helps us to understand what the root cause of the incident is. And root cause analysis and assessment is super important because understanding the root cause of the incident is the way that we help to prevent the

incident in the future or improve the situation so that those incidents don't reoccur. There's a lot of things that's happening around child health and safety. The monitoring team is involved. The Program Operations Division is involved. The TNTA Division is involved.

And later on, sometime next week, we're going to have another recording that's available to you so you can understand all the pieces and how we want to support programs. And really the main goal is to try to help to reduce the incidence of child health and safety because they have elevated in the last 2 years. Since the pandemic with the workforce shortage, we're seeing a lot of programs that have a lot more unfortunately cases of child abuse, and that's not where the – That's not the direction that the Office of Head Start wants to be going, so we're trying to figure out ways with you to try to make this better. And RAN stands for the Risk Assessment Notification.

Dr. Garvin: I really appreciate that. Adia, look, this is – thank you, first of all, for emphasizing the child health and safety, and just I know that our audience is tuned into that as well, but this is a priority, and we want to really make sure that we're all doing everything we can to properly safeguard children in our care.

Thank you for that, and I also want to thank you and your team for all the work that you all have done to improve the monitoring experience for our grant recipient partners out there. It's just a big deal and an important moment for us. There have been lots of questions along the way. You shared a lot of information. I know we're kind of in the home stretch, but can we just talk a little bit about what resources specifically are available to grant recipients and how they can access them?

Adia: Absolutely, sometime during this call, Khari, my team is going to start to put resources in the chat. We're going to actually – the first resource available to recipients is ECLKC, and if you go there, there are links and information that help recipients prepare for all of the monitoring events. Check back frequently because we add those links as we do these different sessions with you. We add additional links.

Right now, after this call is over, we will begin to add the links that you need to start to participate in the monitoring events. There's also another helpful resource, and that link will be on ECLKC. I talked about it earlier, and that is the Virtual Expo. This is where you can go, and you can get lots of tips and tools and information that will help you be prepared for monitoring events. I want to thank Dr. Garvin for being on the call with us thus far, and we're going to now open this up for some question-and-answers, and my team is going to send them to me.

They may have already sent them to me. I'm supposed to check a bunch of stuff and make sure that I'm on point, and the question and answers are in my inbox. I'm going to open those up, and I'm going to start answering some questions, I hope. I know that Dr. Garvin has to go. He is always moving around the country because he really wants to make sure that he's a presence in all the Head Start programs and as many places that he could absolutely go.

But if he's still here, and he's hanging around, he can feel free to jump in an answer any of these questions. But I also have team members on who will also help, I have a bunch of members of the monitoring team and people from DLH who can answer these questions. But I'll start off with, if a recipient has a class and a focus area to review in FY24, will those notices be

sent out together or separately? The question was about notices. I will defer to one of my teammates. I think that Cynthia Northington may be on the call to tell you about when the notices are going to be sent.

The answer to the question that they provided was that these reviews don't occur during the same week. If you have that question, which is a different question which is, do we do CLASS and the Focus Area 2 at the same time? We do not. We don't do the CLASS and the FA2 at the same time. We do them at different times during the program year, but I don't know if the notifications are sent at the same time. If Cynthia Northington or anybody is there, and they can come on the microphone, can you answer that question? Or Latoya?

Jacqueline De Puy: Adia, I don't believe that they're on audio right now.

Adia: OK. Well, if they could put it in the chat, that's helpful, too.

Jacqueline: Sure.

Adia: Thank you, Jacqueline. How will grant recipients know if they will have an FY24 monitoring review? Grant recipients receiving an FY24 monitoring review have already been notified of their review event via email through the Head Start Enterprise System, or HSES. If you haven't checked HSES in a while, I recommend that you go back, check it, and determine whether or not you have a notice. If you don't have a notice, it means that you are either – you are not getting a review this year either on-site, virtual or unannounced, but every grantee who will be getting an FY24 monitoring review has received that notice.

And if I'm incorrect, somebody please correct me in the chat, OK? My next question is, how does a Focus Area 1 review differ from a Focus Area review or Focus Area 2 review? That's a very good question. They're very different. A Focus Area 1 review is actually done all virtually, so we do not come on-site. This is a virtual review. It lasts 3 days, and we actually talk with you and work with you through screen sharing and Zoom to actually do that review, Focus Area 1. Focus Area 2, we come on-site. We send three to four reviewers on-site with a – depending on – and it can be bigger depending on the site. It could be a larger team depending on the size of your program, but we send reviewers on-site, and we do a fiscal portion of the review virtually.

The big difference between those two reviews are that one is virtual, one is on-site. The other difference is that in the first FA – in the FA1 review, the very first review, we're really trying to understand where you're going, your strategies, your different ways that you are doing things, your foundation, where you're going for the next 5 years. In the Focus Area 2 review, we're wanting you to demonstrate what you have done, so we want you to demonstrate how you've actually made progress with children in the classroom. We want you to demonstrate how you've supported families in their family partnership agreements and ensuring that they're actually doing the things that those family partnership agreements say.

We want you to demonstrate how you have actually maintained safety in your program. We want you to demonstrate how you have actually provided mental health services and how they supported your families and your children and your teachers in your program. The FA2 is all about demonstrating what you've done, while FA1 is more about us understanding, do you have a mental health consultant, for example, to do the things you want to do? Do you have a

system set up that you could actually track everything that's happening in health services with your children, and are you already in the process of ensuring that they are having a good experience there and getting the things that are required under comprehensive services? The reviews differ in that way.

How do I update my availability calendar? Grant recipients will not be able to update availability calendars once submitted. Questions or requests to update availability dates should be emailed to dlh@ohsmonitoring@dlhcorp.com. Please note, requests to make calendar changes will not be accepted after a grant recipient has been notified of their review date. When do all reviews start in FY24? All reviews begin the week of October 9th. Does the 3-day Focus Area 1 review occur on certain days of the week? Or is this determined on an individual basis by review? The Focus Area 1 review will typically begin on Monday.

However, adjustments will be made based on the grant recipient's availability, and also you heard me talking earlier about holidays. If there's a holiday, we won't start it on the holiday day. Can you talk more about Strong Practices? What can we expect with these in reviews? Strong practices are a way for OHS to understand all the great things programs are doing in the field. These will be explored during the Focus Area 2 reviews in FY24. We'll use those Strong Practices to collaborate with national and regional TNTA to provide better training, drive, innovation and better understand all the great work Head Start programs are doing.

You may receive information back on Strong Practices demonstrated in your FA2 report. How are home-based programs monitored? Home-based programs are monitored through data tours, home visitor interviews, socialization observation and parent interviews. How many days does the fiscal portion of the Focus Area 2 review take? The fiscal portion of the review is typically conducted over a 5-day period.

To make the review as efficient as possible, we asked programs to closely review the data and documents requested in the fiscal section of the FA2 review and to have this information readily available for the reviewers on the first day of the review. Let us stop there for a second, and I'm going to take a look at the chat just to see where we are, how people are doing. And also it will get super boring if I just keep asking these questions. I'm going to go to the chat a little bit. And first, I want to see, how is everybody doing, and are your questions getting answered?

Jacqueline: Adia, can I prompt a question live? There seems to be quite a lot of questions about unannounced reviews for – and the clarification of doing an FA1 and/or FA2. Can you speak to that some more?

Adia: I absolutely can. Thank you, Jacqueline. Unannounced reviews are something that we are returning to. We did them pre-pandemic. They only have been for FA2 reviews, so we don't do any unannounced FA1 reviews. FA1 reviews are always announced. But we will do FA2 unannounced reviews. Jacqueline, can you ask me more about that? Because I didn't get all of the question. I don't know if I answered everything.

Jacqueline: We have so many great questions. I'm scrolling to make sure that we've touched on what people are asking. But there was some confusion about that from many of our listeners, so I think that that was a good clarification.

Adia: OK.

Jacqueline: There are a couple other questions about unannounced reviews such as, what if key staff is out of the office during that time?

Adia: One thing that we like to make sure that grantees – if you need to update your calendar, you do. Someone is going to put in the chat the link that you need to contact if you need to update your calendar. But because we're doing unannounced reviews, it's really important that you do update your calendar and make sure that your calendar reflects who – reflects times when you think that most people are going to be in the office. However, an old colleague of mine used to say all the time that programs should be review-ready at all times.

Unannounced reviews can happen when some of your staff may not be there. And really just like a program that's an operation, a program is an operation you generally have a plan for. If I'm on vacation, somebody does my work. I do it with my team. I go on vacation. I tell somebody, "OK, this is ... These are things that you need to do. You're going to be me for the next week." If you have an unannounced review during the time, it's really important that you make sure that you have people covering the area that people are on vacation for.

Jacqueline: Thanks, Adia. I see another repeat question, if you could provide some clarification, is, do Early Head Start classrooms also have a class review?

Adia: That's a good question, Jacqueline, and they do not. Class reviews are only for preschool center-based classrooms.

Jacqueline: Great. Thank you.

Adia: Any more repeat questions in the chat, Jacqueline?

Jacqueline: Well, this is a good question. What do center explorations look like?

Adia: That is a really good question. Center explorations are a lot of fun. We do classroom observations and center explorations. Center explorations are more about us really trying to understand the safety of the center. We go in. We look at the playground. We look at your lobby areas. We look around this – we look outside to see whether or not there's tripping hazards or what the building actually looks like. Is there peeling paint in the centers? Does the center look safe overall? A center observation is really about us actually looking at that center in totality to determine whether or not it's actually safe for children to be there. That's what a center exploration looks like.

Jacqueline: Thanks. There is one more repeat question I see about unannounced reviews. It's the hot topic today.

Adia: It is.

Jacqueline: And that is, will they get notification letters?

Adia: Yes, so every grantee who has any type of review during FY24, you'll get a notification letter. However, the difference between an announced and an unannounced review is that an announced review, 45 days before your review date, you will get a letter that tells you the date of your review. For an unannounced review, you will know that you're getting a review, but

you'll never get that 45-day letter. We will just come and do the review sometime during the program year.

Jacqueline: Thank you, Adia. Another question that we have is, can you repeat when the FY24 protocol will be posted?

Adia: I actually didn't say, Jacqueline. If somebody has an answer to that, they should put it in the chat box because –

Jacqueline: Oh, I'm sorry.

Adia: That's OK. I don't have the answer. I'm hoping that the FY24 protocol is going to be posted after this call but if the –

Jacqueline: It's actually – I'll take the – I'll be the person to shine on this question. It's actually already posted on ECLKC.

Adia: Well, thanks for shining. That's great, Jacqueline.

Jacqueline: You're welcome.

Adia: I love it. It's already there. If you're looking for it, and you go to ECLKC, it is posted. We're in good shape.

Jacqueline: Another one for you, Adia, is – there's lots of questions about what we talked about with the child health and safety incidents and what you called RANDs. Will there be additional information that will come out about that for recipients to listen to?

Adia: Yes. I'm actually glad you asked that question. There's actually three more information sessions that are coming out. There are two this week, so there's an information session that is just about FA1. If you are here, and you're listening, and you want to know more about FA1, you want to get in detail about it, ask more questions about that review, there is going to be an information session on the 13th which I believe is tomorrow.

On the 14th, the next day, there is going to be another information session for the FA2 review. And then the week of the 21st, I don't have the exact date for this one, but we will send out a date. There is going to be a recorded session for the RAND reviews or the child health and safety reviews. There's going to be another session for those types of reviews next week. And these sessions are where you can really start to ask in-depth questions about the – what happens during those reviews, the questions, the protocol, things of that nature. We'll have three more information sessions for each type of review. We'll have three more information sessions, one for each type of review.

Woman #1: And, Adia, just if I can build off of that, they'll be able to find that, those recordings, on ECLKC and the Virtual Expo.

Adia: Thank you. I appreciate that. Let's do some more questions. Jacqueline, I'm liking this question-and-answer format. It's a little weird for me to ask the questions and then answer them. You can take them off the sheet, or you can do whatever you want, but I like it when you ask me the question.

Jacqueline: Well, great. There is one that just came in that I don't know if we have an answer for but something for us to consider. Someone said that our area is seeing a rising number in COVID numbers, and will OHS take this into consideration for reviews this year?

Adia: One of the things OHS always does is we try to keep our ear to the ground of what's happening health-wise. We have a health expert at the Office of Head Start kind of like you guys have a health and safety advisory committee. We actually have a person at the Office of Head Start that kind of advises us. If we see that there's something unusual or different that's happening, we will make plans for it at that time.

Jacqueline: Thank you. Seems to be a few questions in here about how home-based programs are monitored.

Adia: Yeah, home-based is a great program. We love it, we actually – when we know that grantees have a home-based program, we try to do a couple of things. One, we try to go on a home visit, so we try to assign some staff to go on a home visit if it's possible. We try to visit a socialization, so we will work with the grantee prior to us coming on-site unless it's an unannounced review.

We will work with the grantee prior to coming on-site and determine when they have their socializations, and can they plan one for that review period? We also like to talk to the parents who are involved in the home-based program and the home visitors. Just like the other options of the program, we also want to look for things like the data related to home-based. Are children in home-based programs making progress, and how do you know it? Do your home visitors keep data on those children? Are children in home-based up? Are they up to date on their health status? We want to determine that.

Just like for grantees who have center-based options or family child care or all those options, our main concern is to determine whether or not the children in home-based and their families are fully participating in Head Start. So are the home visitors working with the families? Are the family service workers actually working with the families to work on family goals? All the things that you would expect to happen for children in a center-based program or a family child care program, we want to make sure that children in the home-based program are also getting the full comprehensive services of Head Start.

When we do a home-based review, we are looking for similar things that we look for in center-based with the exception of, we understand that in the home, the parent is the child's first teacher. The home visitor is helping that parent to fulfill that role. The curriculum that you use for home-based, we are interested in understanding more about that. We're interested in understanding whether or not the home-based program is working for that child so that they're making progress. So those are all the things that we look for in home-based.

Jacqueline: Thank you so much, Adia. Here's a good one. Are programs being reviewed irrespective of whether or not they are on an under enrollment plan?

Adia: That is a really good question. Yes, they are. It doesn't matter whether or not your program is fully enrolled or under-enrolled. There's another division at the Office of Head Start

that actually works with you on under-enrollment. But my division, the oversight division, we still review programs regardless of whether or not they're fully enrolled or not.

Jacqueline: Thank you. What happens if the government shuts down? Will reviews still continue?

Adia: Interestingly enough, we use a monitoring support contract to do monitoring reviews. When the government shuts down, there is always someone who is identified in the federal government as an essential worker, so someone stays in the federal government. The federal government never completely shuts down.

That essential worker then becomes responsible for lots of – for maintaining continuity across all of our systems, and one of the systems that continues to move forward is monitoring. Because monitoring is handled by a contractor that is paid by the federal government but is not part of the federal government, monitoring reviews still occur even if the federal government is shut down. If the Head Start programs are open, they can still experience a monitoring review.

Jacqueline: Thank you. Will family child care partners be included in CLASS observations?

Adia: Yes, family partnerships are looked at as centers, and when we do our sample of centers that we want to review, we try to ensure that we get lots of different types of centers, and family child care can be a part of that sample selection. Did you say for CLASS, Jacqueline, or just for regular reviews? Because that's not true for CLASS.

Jacqueline: I asked specifically about CLASS, but I think it's good to clarify for both.

Adia: I'm sorry. I didn't understand that. No, for CLASS, the sample that is selected is only for center-based classrooms, not family child care classroom.

Jacqueline: Great, and if I may, Adia, I'm just going to clarify. You had mentioned that we have additional information sessions this week. So tomorrow we're going to be talking about FA1 reviews, and on Thursday, we're going to be talking about FA2, and I see some questions in the chat. To clarify, recipients who are going to be getting an FA1 review this year have been invited to the information session tomorrow, and recipients who will be getting an FA2 have been invited for the session on Thursday.

Adia: Thank you, Jacqueline. Thanks for the clarification.

Jacqueline: We have a 4-minute –

Adia: Jacqueline, I have a question of you. Are we recording those sessions?

Jacqueline: We are.

Woman #1: Yes, we are.

Jacqueline: OK.

Woman #1: And they will be posted onto ECLKC and the virtual expo.

Adia: OK. Even if you didn't get an invitation to one of those sessions because you're not getting that type of review this year, the sessions themselves will be posted so that you can see them. But because of space limitations, we only invited people – we wanted to make sure that the

people who are having that type of review get to attend those sessions and ask the questions that they need to ask.

Jacqueline: Thank you. How many more questions would you like, Adia?

Adia: Let's see. I'm looking at my screen. We answered a lot of questions. Somebody asked a good one that was, can you share some examples of Strong Practices? And I can. FCE can have a Strong Practice. The grant recipient could demonstrate that it uses a data-driven strategy to continuously evaluate and obtain new community partners to ensure they meet the needs of the families in the program. Or maybe a Strong Practice might be an ECD where supervisors or management staff regularly observe classrooms to improve practice and provide staff with extra supports and resources as needed.

Or maybe a Strong Practice could be in PDM where the grant recipient annually tracks retention data cross the program and has a plan to address issues related to any identified retention risk. And those retention risks that's actually a really Strong Practice in today's world around retention, is really staff retention. Grantees who have already really thought about their trends and have determined ways where they can actually plan to address those issues are that – we consider that to be a Strong Practice because we know that workforce causes a lot of problems in Head Start programs.

If you're already doing things to retain your workforce, we think that's a great thing. Let's see. Let's see if I have any more on this lovely question and answer that you guys gave to me. No, I think we answered a lot of these which is really cool. Somebody asked the question, will Strong Practices be shared with all stakeholders via ECLKC with or without any personally identified information, PII? Your Strong Practices will be included in your monitoring report, and we eliminate all PII from monitoring reports, so there's not personally identifiable information in any monitoring report. Somebody said, "When do notices go out that you are getting a review this year? If you don't receive one, do you assume you don't have a review?"

Cynthia Northington, can you tell me, or can anybody tell me, when the notices actually went out? Because they've already gone out. They went out earlier this summer. If you haven't gotten one, you can probably assume you will not be getting a review unless – the Office of Head Start always reserves the right to do, in unusual circumstances, special reviews. Special reviews occur when we notice that there's either a grantee complaint, something is not going well at a grantee, things are problematic. In those cases, even if you weren't scheduled for a review, we may do a review because we need to understand what's happening in your program, but those are special cases. That's why it's called a special review.

Jacqueline: It looks like some people are saying that they are going to be getting an FA1 or FA2 review this year – sorry, in FY24, and have not received an invite for this information session tomorrow, on Thursday. We'll look into making sure that there are reminders that get sent out.

Adia: OK. Thank you, Jacqueline.

Jacqueline. You're welcome.

Adia: Missy, you can't find the sample reporting form because it's not there yet. It's coming. After we do that information session sometime next week, we will post the sample reporting

form. And I see that notifications were sent out in June of 2023. Notices went out for the October reviews 45 days ago. We have 2 more minutes, 2 more minutes. Any question that you want to ask in the next 2 minutes, please do. We don't want to end the call before people have gotten their questions. Amy: "I'm assuming our review could be unannounced, since we have not received notification of our FA2." It could be. It could be unannounced. It could also be announced. It could just mean that, remember, the review notification, the date notification, doesn't happen until 45 days prior to your review.

You may have a – you may know you're going to get a review, and it could be, if you haven't already been notified, unannounced. A RAND review is something separate, Christine. A RAND review is something that happens only when you have an incident. If you have an incident of supervision, child abuse, unauthorized release, discipline, or inappropriate conduct, we do what's called a RAND review. Anything that has to do with child health and safety, we do a special review that is outside of the parameters of the FA1, FA2.

I see some CLASS questions in the chat box. I'm not going to really answer those CLASS questions about how many review – how many class – how many videos you have to upload, different things like that. I will refer you back to the CLASS webinar. I believe it was posted, and it will answer a lot of those questions. There's a really long comment in here. I don't know if the person meant to put that.

Woman #1: I don't think they did, Adia.

Adia: Yeah, I don't think they –

Woman #1: But I do see that our time is up. It's 2:30.

Adia: Our time is up. Oh, no.

Woman #1: Yeah.

Adia: Our time is up.

Woman #1: Time flies when you're having fun.

Adia: Well, our time is up, and I want to say thank you on behalf of the Office of Head Start and Dr. Garvin. We really appreciate your attendance, and we know that we are all in this together, and hopefully you will enjoy your monitoring experience this year. We try to make it enjoyable, although we do know that it causes some anxiety for people, and we do understand that unannounced reviews also cause even more anxiety.

But I know that programs are always doing the best that they possibly can do to serve their communities, to serve the children in their communities, and for that, I thank you. And I hope I – my team and I, we go out. We do monitoring visits in person. I hope that I'll be able to come and visit some of your programs this year. I always love doing that. I always love meeting new people and seeing the really hard work that you do for the Office of Head Start. Thank you, thank you, thank you for all that you do, and have a great afternoon.