

## **Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships—Comprehensive Services Part III: Family and Community Engagement, March 28, 2014**

Ginny Gipp: Thank you for joining the webinar today. We can see that a few people are still logging in, so we're going to wait 1 more minute to get started. Thank you.

Hi, everyone. Once again, this is the ACF Central Office, and we thank you for joining today's webinar. We have just a few quick logistical announcements, and then we'll get started with our presentation.

First, you may have noticed that all the lines are muted. That's so we can avoid the distraction of background noise. If you have any questions or comments during the webinar, you can type them into your question box, but please note that we will not be addressing questions live on today's webinar. We will, however, pass them onto our policy team for review so that they know what questions are coming in from the field.

Our registration for this webinar was higher than past webinars, so our capacity is having some issues. There may be some people who are unable to log in due to the tremendous excitement over the topic today. If this happens to be one of your colleagues who want to access the information late, you should know that we will be posting the audio, the transcript, and the slides from this webinar online within 1 week, and we will distribute the link to those and other resources widely. You'll also see the links to those materials later on in the webinar.

I'll also mention that although the slides will be available on line in a few days, they aren't available for distribution now, and I'm referring to the actual PowerPoint slides you'll be seeing on the webinar today.

And finally, I would just like to be clear in response to some questions that we've been receiving. So I wanted to be clear to everyone on the line that ACF will not be issuing any completion or training certificates for attendance on this webinar.

Now, since I've finished with the logistical announcements—the person who normally does these on behalf of the Offices of Child Care and Head Start has laryngitis, I was pleased to take on that role.

Now, I'd like to actually welcome you to the fifth in a series of webinars that have been organized to give background and context for all stakeholders who may be interested in applying for the upcoming Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships grants.

I'm Ginny Gipp, the Technical Assistance Division Director at the Office of Child Care. On the four other webinars, you've heard Sharon Yandian from the Office of Head Start. She is their Technical Assistance Division

Director; she provides the welcome, introduces the topic, and introduces the presenters.

Sharon—you can see a pattern here—Sharon felt this afternoon, and since she and I are [part of] the close Head Start – Child Care working partnerships, I’m very pleased to welcome you on her behalf. So sorry. It’s me until we get to our presenters.

So before I introduce our presenters, I wanted to talk briefly about the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. As you know, this is a new \$500 million competitive grant opportunity to support the partnerships between new and existing Early Head Start programs and child care providers.

At the Office of Child Care and the Office of Head Start, we’re very excited about the President’s initiative for expanding high-quality, comprehensive early learning opportunities and services for young infants and toddlers and their families who live in poverty.

It will allow us to reach more young children and their families in communities all around the country. It is also giving us an amazing opportunity to collaborate more fully across our Federal Offices of Head Start and Child Care.

Over the next hour, you’ll hear from Kiersten Beigel and Katherine Falen on today’s call, which is about engaging families. You’ll see their pictures right here.

And the objective, which you’ll see in the screen, for today’s call, they’re all about family engagement to share information about family engagement standards in Early Head Start and Child Care State systems, to understand comparable approaches to family engagement across Early Head Start and Child Care, and to identify resources for planning and implementing effective family engagements.

With that, I’m pleased to turn this over to Kiersten Beigel from the Office of Head Start.

Kiersten Beigel:

Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Friday. So glad you are joining us today and a futuristic hello, I guess, to those of you who are listening to this webinar in its archived form down the road. I work at the Office of Head Start with Sharon Yandian and many others, and I work on family and community engagement.

So I spend my days on this wonderful topic, and I’m really pleased to be able to be working with the Office of Child Care to present to you some of this information today.

And I just also wanted to say that it's really exciting to acknowledge the diversity of participants who have been joining these webinars. I know just from looking at registration lists we've got child care providers, child care directors, Early Head Start directors, child care administrators, teachers, and [Tribal] child care providers. I see human service departments and CCR&R staff are signing up for these along with Head Start program staff and Head Start collaboration officers.

It just goes on and on in terms of early learning councils and schools. So it's kind of exciting. We're a large and mighty group of early childhood folks, and I just wanted to acknowledge that and welcome you all.

So this work of family and community engagement is about relationships, and you've probably been hearing that if you've tuned into some of these Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships webinars previously.

The way that we talk about our relationships with infants and toddlers and parents and community partners, these are really parallel processes and efforts. And they each rely on our ability to form positive relationships. So that's really at the heart of this topic.

And we're finding, too, in fact that research is really increasingly finding that the family-provider, family-teacher, family-staff relationships are an important component of the quality of early care and education settings. And that a growing number of you local, State, and Federal folks and administrators are really focusing on promoting and putting more of an emphasis on the high-quality family-provider relationship. So it's really exciting that that's kind of going on.

Moving on to talk a little bit about family engagement, we know that it means very different things to different people across programs and across communities. So let's start with what we mean by this in Early Head Start. And I know for those of you who are with Head Start and Early Head Start a lot of this is going to be pretty familiar.

But first of all, the earlier we engage families, the better. It starts prenatally when expectant families are engaged at birth with parent-child bonding and attachment. And family engagement is really developmental. So it happens in the context of relationships with providers that are, you know, reciprocal and culturally responsive, but it also just happens over time. So the look of family engagement can really differ based on what's going on with children's learning and development.

So where families are our partners, we share responsibility for children's learning and development, and that's kind of what we mean by the reciprocal responsive piece.

And we know that with sensitive, responsive, and predictable care, children can develop the skills that they need to succeed in life. And I think family engagement and relationships with families really support those efforts, as children learn and develop over time.

You can see here at the bottom of the slide that I have highlighted that HSPS stands for Head Start performance standards, and I'm going to just provide some of those we provided on each of the slides to give folks who aren't that familiar with the standards the flavor.

In this one, we're talking about the cultural responsiveness piece and ensuring that meetings and interactions with families are sensitive and respectful to people's culture and backgrounds. But do keep in mind that these examples of the standards are not exhaustive. So they really are just kind of examples.

The last bullet here refers to thinking about parent involvement and engagement because those of you who have been part of this have noticed the shift in language over the last 5 or 6 years. And in Early Head Start, we're really kind of looking at this as a bit of a paradigm shift.

In terms of thinking about both involvement and engagement, involvement is often thought of as sort of the one-way interaction where parents are invited in to participate in activities and those kinds of opportunities for families. In early childhood, families are really critical.

Engagement we think of more as sort of relational—that reciprocity, that two-way street. And when you see engagement really flourishing, we see parents taking on more leadership and more initiation in the context of their children's early learning.

So sometimes we think of family engagement as parent involvement 2.0. They're both critically important, but engagement kind of incorporates involvement activities that go broader in terms of thinking about the relationships.

So a bit about the Head Start performance standards. You know, there are a good many of them related to family engagement. They're really, though, an integrated part of a day in the life of Early Head Start.

So many of them are common sense and part of what teachers and caregivers do every day, like pickup and dropoff times, just in relating with families around how their children are doing, and things like that.

So if you are new to thinking about Early Head Start partnering—partnering with Early Head Start—please don't worry. We have developed many resources to help support programs and to implement family engagement standards.

One really centers around our training and technical assistance—that work that we do and that we provide out of the Office of Head Start around family engagement. It does center around this framework that we refer to as the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. It should definitely look familiar to the Early Head Start community, but even if you have not seen these pretty colors, the concepts that you see here and very funny words are probably familiar to most of you.

But let me just explain a little bit about this, and I'm not going to spend too much time on it on this webinar. But the framework is really a roadmap, and we start with the end in mind, mainly thinking of the children, in the purple column, and thinking about children's learning and development and, ultimately, school readiness.

And then as we move back, we look at this blue column, and these are the family outcomes or the things that we think make the best difference for families and ultimately for children's school readiness. When we move back even further a step to the pink and yellow columns, they just really represent the ways that we do work on a day-to-day basis.

So looking at the pink column, for example, we work on making sure that we have a family-friendly environment, we support families' needs and aspirations through family partnerships, we partner with families around their learning development, and we rely on our partnerships in the communities also to support families.

So at the very front end of this framework, in the yellow column, you can see that program leaders and administrators set the tone and the mandate for really strong relationships with families and effective family engagement practices.

They support professional development for staff in this way, and they help make sure that the organization supports learning and figures out what works best with families. So the arrow at the top—that's the positive and goal-oriented relationships arrow. It's what makes all this stuff go.

But I think the point of this really is to say that family engagement is really most effective. What we've learned, and what the research has been telling us is when the things in the pink column and yellow column really work together to reinforce each other to support families and children.

So we like to refer to that as integrated and systemic family engagement. What we're really going to focus on for the reminder slides that I wanted to share with you is the blue column, and it's circled here. But just to point out, again, these concepts really aren't new, so if you are in any way an accredited organization, you may recognize some of the standards related to these concepts here.

If you are a State or a program that's implementing a Strengthening Families approach through QRIS or some other initiative you've got going, you might also recognize some of these same concepts as well.

So I'll point out here that at the end of the presentation, on the resources slide, there is a link to a paper that talks about some of the similarities and differences between the Strengthening Families framework and the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. Just for folks who are, you know, thinking about both, that is something that Strengthening Families folks put out, and we give a little input on it.

So let's now talk a little bit more about this blue column and some of these areas of practice in Early Head Start just to give folks who are newer to Early Head Start some more texture here and some more "concretes."

The first area is around family well-being, and we start with this as the foundation for school readiness, and we know it's a predictor of positive child outcomes, and it directly impacts children's school readiness.

So that's why we put it at the beginning, and studies really suggest that children whose families—and this is not surprising to anybody on this call—families who have secure housing and access to healthy food and health care tend to fare better in terms their early development than children in families who are really struggling economically and facing some social hardship.

So we know that this piece is really critical. So we focus on the safety, the health, and the financial security in supporting and working with families. And we do this by conducting a family assessment, some identifying interests and aspirations and needs that families have, and we do this also by coordinating with community agencies to support some of these interests and needs.

And again, the example of the Head Start performance standards you see here really focuses on the need to check with families to see how things are going—so kind of the ongoing nature of our partnerships with families around their goals.

And the next area is parent-child relationships. So all things center around the parent-child relationship, and clearly the interactions between parents and young children really help drive their development—emotional, physical, and cognitive.

So I think that what's really special about this work with very young children is supporting these relationships, and these infant-toddler teachers will often say that what they do in a relationship with the child must always lead back to the parent.

So sometimes, many of you may have used the behavior and language of the child to support the relationship. So things like—I noticed when you arrived today to pick up Sam, he ran right over to you and hugged your leg. He really misses you. He talks about you during the day, and I can see he's really connected to you and so happy to see you.

So even though there's any number of things going on in supporting the development during the day, all roads do lead back to supporting that relationship with the parent. So these things here, on this slide, are things that we do to help support the parent-child relationship. So programs need to provide opportunities for parents to learn; practice parenting skills and opportunities to gain new knowledge, both about themselves and their child; and of course, to support the parent-child relationship.

You know, as we talked about, this is all happening in the context of culture and cultural—I want to say priorities, but that's not really the right word. Just kind of the ways that families relate and their beliefs and practices in child-rearing.

Classroom staff in Early Head Start have to be able to communicate with families, either directly or through an interpreter, and to be familiar with families' ethnic backgrounds; often, that kind of familiarity occurs within the context of getting to know somebody. The standard cited here is one that refers to a child's mental health and really talks about sharing observations with parents about children at various ages and stages.

Families as lifelong educators—this is an area where, you know, we often have this phrase around children; parents are children's first teachers, and that's ultimately what this area is about.

You know, families may see themselves and their roles as educators of their children in very different ways based on culture and family priorities. But in these partnerships we can really enhance a family's role as the child's first teacher by welcoming families during all program hours as partners, as volunteers in the program at the center, and as staff too.

Families are encouraged to observe their infants and toddlers in the classroom. Programs will conduct a couple of home visits and staff-parent conferences at a minimum each program year. And the goal is often to support parents in observing their children and in assessing their progress so that they can share important information with teachers. These kinds of standards really help build an environment, and they're a climate that's engaging and that prioritizes parents as teachers.

A little bit more on this one through learning activities and with families and children. We know that children develop their skills, their social skills, their sense of persistence and what motivates them, and also a love of

learning. All the things that you would really want to support later success for children and later academic success.

And again, we want to support family engagement whenever we can. So here are, again, some of the ways that we do this. We focus on individualizing, and of course, part of the way we do that is through giving information and input from parents and families. We seek out input from families about their ideas on their baby's progress and their toddler's progress. We plan and refer to early intervention in partnership with families when that's needed.

Using a program curriculum often happens at more of a program level so that parents are in more of a leadership role in the program and give input on policy and things like that. The governance level often will give input on a program curriculum.

And decisions about school readiness skills that a program has for trying to see the progress infants and toddlers are making in the program and making sure that there are ways that parents get to give input on those goals as well.

The standard—that's highlighted here—refers to how programs make sure to get parental input to inform their periodic assessments of infants and toddlers. So all of us and all families have knowledge that we use and information that we draw on to survive, live, and get ahead. An important first step, I think, in promoting families as learners is to value what family members know already or are currently learning. And early childhood programs can learn as much from families as families can learn from programs. So again, there's that reciprocity.

We're essentially supporting parents [and] their baby's learning together. One mom told us recently when we were visiting a program, and I'm going to quote her now, "I am learning as much as my son is learning. I'm learning every day, and I am teaching him that you never stop learning. This is something that mommy is going to do always, and you are going to learn, too, and you are going to grow and succeed in it every day."

So we do support parents who want to learn different things by focusing on getting a GED, going to college or job training, or through family literacy services, as highlighted here on this slide.

These kinds of services can support parents and adults at all literacy levels. They can also support children's parent-child conversations, interactions, and language development and increase a family's access to materials, books, and other print materials in support of the emergent literacy of young children. So, opportunities that can help support those things.

And these things can be done through partnerships or in-house or through referrals to other providers in the community. And the standard here refers to essentially creating a good match of learning activities that best match what a parent is looking to learn, which we know is most effective in terms of learning what we want to learn—really helps.

Thinking about family engagement and children's health, those of you who participated in the health webinar a couple of days ago probably heard some of this, but, essentially, we work alongside families to support the comprehensive needs of infants and toddlers.

Early Head Start programs make sure to communicate about food and feeding schedules and different cultural preferences, such as finger feeding and these kinds of things. Programs need to make sure to familiarize parents with different health and developmental procedures that are going on in the program; to obtain permission, of course, for different tests; to share information about diagnostic results; to make sure to have open communication about what kinds of treatments might be needed for babies; and to talk with parents immediately, obviously, when there is a concern or a problem—developmental problem—identified.

So these are some of the things that were probably discussed during the other webinar—also, assisting parents. Making sure families are enrolled in, like, a regular—a medical home—and having an ongoing source of health care are really important for programs to be doing.

And programs, generally speaking, are providing education on different topics related to oral health, medical health, nutrition, and mental health as well.

Family engagement, transitions, and continuity. So we know that when children experience more stability in their early settings and in their relationships with adults, in these settings they do better both socially and academically. So during kindergarten and beyond—so family engagement during these years and in early transition really begin to build a foundation for effective later transitions.

So in Early Head Start, we really look at supporting families to gain knowledge about what their rights are going to be and what their rights are to support their young children in different early care environments.

We want to support classroom continuity and transitions that occur, especially because we know those relationships between caregivers and babies are very important. So we want to provide continuity there, and we want to transfer records whenever to new settings in order to support that continuity as well.

And to support parents to become their children's advocate, we do kind of try to hold staff-parent meetings toward the end of the participation in the program. Programs usually make some decisions about that so as to try to support what's coming in the next setting—where kids are going next.

For Early Head Start, in order to ensure the most appropriate placement in service of following participation, the planning usually begins about 6 months prior to the child's third birthday.

And family leadership and advocacy, all parents—I mean, you could think of all parents as advocates and leaders in the lives of their children in so many different ways. Early Head Start parents work with staff on training and events. They speak at parent orientations. They advocate, obviously, for their own little ones. The list really goes on as far as the kinds of things that families do and then are encouraged to do to exercise leadership.

And of course, Head Start and Early Head Start have a very strong national model of family advocacy, leadership, and programs.

Parents are leaders in decisionmaking, so are part of the governance structure, and they weigh in on policy decisions. We think of parents as such amazing drivers of quality through the governance structure, which includes, as you see here, the policy councils and parent committees. And parents do have the opportunity to kind of lead center activities through the parent committees, and those are usually made up exclusively of parents. Actually, they are made up exclusively of parents who have infants and toddlers enrolled.

And then, as the example standard on the bottom talks about, 51 percent of parents of currently enrolled infants and toddlers would need to [constitute] part of the policy council. And again, that kind of looks at some of the major programmatic decisions that get made for programs.

The community engagement piece, it's really about bringing organizations and individuals [together] and how relationships where the community, as a whole, will benefit, and there's a common vision in supporting very young children, as is clearly the case with the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships.

And I think Early Head Start and child care programs are a really important part of the fabric of any community. And this picture here on the right, it's a slide that comes from a multimedia resource. Maybe some of you have seen it from the Harvard Center for the Developing Child.

It's really a series of changes about minimizing the effects of toxic stress, but the picture highlights the community supports and the relationships that support families and buffer children from overwhelming stressors they may experience. You don't see any of that. But what you do see is,

why I love this picture, how it shows the centrality of the home-ECE connection so nicely.

I think that what Early Head Start must do in regard to community partnerships is what you see here on the left—engage in ongoing collaborative relationships, really help families access resources and social support networks, and participate in related community planning.

So staff participate in councils and networks with common goals and interests, depending on their roles, of course; partnerships are the partnerships that are relevant to families and Early Head Start—WIC and child care agencies, pediatric care, early intervention, mental health programs, child welfare, libraries, and museums. It goes on, right? This standard highlighted here really is going to suggest the role that Early Head Start has to play with regard to communication and cooperation with community agencies.

So family engagement and staff qualifications, I'll just say a few things here, a few points for you to consider regarding this. For family services staff, and for those of you who may not know, they are staff who work directly with families. It kind of sounds like the name. These programs will call family services staff very different things, so you have to figure that out together through your communications if you're going to be a newer partnership. But there is a lot flexibility as far as background and experience for these staff.

So at OHS, the Office of Head Start, we've developed a set of competencies that you see here on the right, called the Head Start and Early Head Start relationship-based competencies for staff and supervisors to work with families. It's quite a mouthful.

These competencies are just the kinds of skills, knowledge, and abilities that support effective partnerships. And programs use some to inform professional development activities that support family well-being and to help staff practice self-awareness and relationship-building and help staff with goal-directed relationships with families—that kind of stuff.

So as far as the CDAs that are highlighted here, for infant-toddler teachers and family child care providers, there are family support competencies embedded in these credentials as well, since it's working with families, particularly. Birth to three is just par for the course; it's part of the work.

So you heard a lot about Early Head Start standards—next slide. Now, I think it's well time to hear from Katherine, who's going to talk about other standards that providers may be using and looking at. So we can look at some points of alignment between Early Head Start and Child Care.

We know that many of you have different standards you're reading as well. So by virtue of meeting licensing and QRIS standards, you may already be doing some of these things that Early Head Start requires. It may not be as big a list as you think. So let's hear from Katherine.

Katherine Falen: Thank you, Kiersten. And thanks to the Offices of Child Care and Head Start for this opportunity to be with you this afternoon.

I am going to talk to you a little bit more about the child care side of things. And I just want to say, too, that you may hear me volleying back and forth between using the term "parents" and using the term "families"; I mean those interchangeably for the purposes of our discussion today. They are meant to be inclusive—sometimes a different word over another one and it's not intentional. It's not intended to exclude families when I mention parents and vice-versa.

So with that, from the moment of birth, infants are dependent on the adults in their lives to have their needs met—their parents and their extended family members. This continues throughout childhood, but it's most critical in the first few years of life.

When children spend time in an early care and education setting outside their home, it is important that the child's parents and any other family members who play a significant role in that child's life have strong relationships with the other adults caring for the child.

What child care programs can do to build this relationship is to have multiple ways for families to engage in their child's program and learning experiences. As we heard from Kiersten, research shows that parent and family engagement in a child's ECE learning experiences has a positive long-term effect, and we just heard about a lot of ways that Early Head Start works to accomplish that same goal.

But family engagement can be accomplished through many varied strategies and approaches that go beyond simply allowing parents to have access to the program when their child is on site. It's important to proactively encourage parents to participate in the programs by offering opportunities during the day as well as through other avenues in the event that parents' schedules don't allow them to come during the day. These might include volunteer activities, parent participation on committees or projects, parent surveys soliciting feedback, family events, and regular parent-teacher conferences, just to name a few.

States, Territories, and Tribes have policy funding and regulatory strategies that they can use to promote these and other family engagement strategies, including requirements for teacher training on topics related to family engagement, similar to what Kiersten just talked about. Regulatory approaches can often be the most effective because they are mandatory for

all providers, unless exempt by State law, and they impact the largest number of providers and children.

As you may know, there have been many quality improvement efforts to support providers in improving the quality of care; such as Strengthening Families and teacher scholarship programs. Thirty-six States currently have a statewide QRIS that builds on the requirements found in licensing, defines higher levels of quality, and helps parents understand the elements of quality and evaluate the care their child is receiving.

Within a comprehensive professional development system, family engagement can be addressed in multiple ways. For example, communicating with families can be included in a State's core knowledge and competencies for child care providers. Again, very similar to the competencies that Kiersten just spoke about for Early Head Start.

The National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives did an analysis of State core knowledge and competencies and found that 43 of the 44 States with these competencies have a family and community content area.

Professional development systems can teach providers how to promote family engagement. Course work and college early childhood teacher preparation programs specific to caring for infants and toddlers need to include content on working with families, communicating with families, and engaging families in the care and education of their children.

In addition, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge also requires standards for family engagement strategies and an additional option for identifying and addressing health, behavior, and development to improve school readiness, which includes engaging and supporting families.

This Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships project provides a great opportunity to improve this alignment of standards across programs and to raise the bar on quality for all programs. As noted in earlier webinars about State policies, it's helpful to look at State regulations and standards and Early Head Start standards to identify where their needs may be comparable. By comparable we mean that the categories are covered in a large number of States, although the specific requirements will differ from State to State.

First, there are licensing requirements that are comparable to Early Head Start performance standards. I'm sure some of you who are not Early Head Start providers heard some very familiar things in what Kiersten was talking about, and you thought, well, we have to do that for licensing. Areas such as parent participation and daily communication are standards that many licensed child care providers are already meeting.

Next, there are QRIS standards that are comparable to Early Head Start performance standards. Some of those are in areas like program input, parent-teacher conferences, family activities, and parent education opportunities. So States may find that child care providers at higher QRIS levels may also already be meeting several of these Early Head Start performance standards.

Lastly, there will be some Early Head Start performance standards that are not including the State licensing or QRIS standards. Parent participation on program or governance committees, identification referrals, and the coordination of additional family support services and home visits are some of the areas where there are not comparable standards typically in licensing or QRIS.

Head Start has a much greater focus on comprehensive services that are not addressed in the State licensing requirements. However, several States are starting to include family support criteria in their QRIS standards that require providers to develop and implement a written plan for referring families to appropriate community services.

In the area of family engagement, Head Start has 88 different related performance standards. The State licensing standards do not address this with the same depth and breadth, and it's likely that these are areas that even a high-quality child care provider may need additional resources to meet the Early Head Start performance standards.

Another resource is available for use to compare Early Head Start standards against your State licensing and QRIS standards and can be found at the link on the bottom of the slide. It's a new online National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool that is prepopulated with national early childhood program standards, for example, Head Start Accreditation and Caring for Our Children.

This tool is designed to provide a simpler way to compare different program standards. It's not intended as a guide for programs seeking to meet these standards or achieve accreditation, but it can be a helpful way to see points of intersection across different standards.

An enhancement that will be available in the coming weeks will allow you to enter and compare your own State licensing regulations and QRIS standards against Head Start standards by topic area as well as to download your results.

So again, certainly those of you who are currently working in Early Head Start, what Kiersten talked about was very familiar. But for others who don't work in Early Head Start, I think some of it was probably not that different than what you do or think about when working with families. So

now, we're just going to look a little bit deeper at a comparison of some of the standards in the areas that are comparable.

All State licensing regulations require that programs give parents access while their children are present, and more than half extend this to include invitations to volunteer in the classroom or in other ways.

What are not as prevalent in licensing regulations that can be seen in higher numbers in QRIS standards are additional ways for parents to engage in the program by contributing to curriculum or menu development, opportunities for social and interactive events for families, and more formal ways for parents to serve on program committees and to contribute to policymaking and other decisions.

Note, too, where States already address an item in their licensing regulations, we don't see as many standards in QRIS. But if only a small number of States include a licensing regulation, we're more likely to see it in the higher QRIS standard.

So you expect to see that if it is addressed in licensing, it will not be again addressed in QRIS, but QRIS is a nice place to address something that may not be covered in licensing.

Here again, when we look at family communication and education, we see where we also have high numbers and licensing regulations, and fewer States include QRIS standards that address those same areas. Parent-teacher conferences are fairly common across both licensing and QRIS, and daily communications about an infant's or toddler's day, probably in the form of a daily care sheet or something that gives some summary of the child's day, is also typically addressed in licensing regulations and is therefore minimally necessary in QRIS standards.

Where we see another big difference is an opportunity for parents' education, with more States including this as a component of a higher level of quality and a minimal licensing regulation. Finally, in the areas of family support and resources, we see no States with licensing regulations related to helping parents coordinate additional community services.

It should be noted that many States do include some regulations related to referral for and coordination of special education services for children with disabilities. However, those regulations do not address needs that other children and families may have. Conducting home visits is only included by one State in its QRIS standards. But as you can see, several States have used their QRIS as a way to incorporate family engagement in child care through the use of Strengthening Families.

Ten States have included it in their QRIS by incorporating the use of the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool or including staff training in

Strengthening Families, as either required or as a way to earn additional points toward a higher QRIS rating.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy, authors of the Strengthening Families approach, will be releasing a crosswalk of Strengthening Families and the Head Start performance standards. It's in the final review stage, and it's expected to be available in the next week or so.

Already available is the comparison that Kiersten mentioned of the alignment between the Strengthening Families approach and the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. So hopefully, this is an opportunity for you to see things that look familiar and where you may already be meeting these standards.

Available on the Web site when the PowerPoint and presentation are available will be some supporting documents that can give you more information about which States include these standards that we've highlighted here in this table, and you can see if your State is one of those.

And with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Kiersten.

Kiersten Beigel:

So keep in mind—this is a little bit of a summary here—keep in mind that as a big, beautiful community of providers, administrators, teachers, and leaders who are committed to family and child well-being, that, all standards aside, from the standpoint of principles, philosophy, and vision, we have a lot in common and a lot to work within these partnerships.

Principles of quality family engagement that really provide some fertile ground for Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships include all the knowledge about learning and development that happens in the context of relationships with parents.

We know a lot about that as a community. We know a lot about engaging in relationship-based practices with families. We do have a lot in common in terms of providing family support in times of need.

And I know, even in addition to what Katherine mentioned in terms of referrals to appropriate community resources, that many providers are engaged with and through their State system. Also, many providers take it upon themselves to make referrals to families, have helpful resources on their bulletin boards, and sometimes do a lot to support their families even without the infrastructure that expanding what they do and partnering with Early Head Start can really help with. So there's a lot there in terms of that piece of the foundation and in terms of supporting families' economic well-being; both programs are really trying to support working families.

And communicating—the big one, and most obvious perhaps—is communicating with families about what's going on with children, young

children, and their learning and development. And I think there are many more, but just to name a few, I think we're in good shape as far as what we have in common.

I wanted to leave you with kind of circling back a little bit to some of the things I mentioned in the beginning, particularly with regard to the resources that we have.

This is a Web page on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Centre, the ECLKC, and this is our National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement landing page. So you can see we have a lot of resources here. For example, you see OHS PFCE framework; that's an interactive framework you can click on and get different resources. It kind of goes through all the different parts of the framework and gives folks who are interested in learning more about those areas different links to different kinds of materials.

We have some drill-down information. I guess more specifically, as Katherine was saying, went back and forth just saying parents and families. And obviously, families look very different; sometimes we're talking about fathers, and sometimes we're talking about grandparents. So, we do have some really wonderful resources to help people think about family engagement—father engagement—practices that you can find here.

If you look down on the lower level of buttons—it could be a button—I'm not sure you can see it, but it's the middle one, and it's a cartoon figure of a family, and that's our—the boosting school readiness simulation, relationship-based practice simulation. It's like a game. You can go in there and make choices about how to build relationships with families when they're first coming in to your program. There's a little meter on the side. It tells you if your choices are helping the relationship get stronger—that kind of thing.

So we have some really interesting things, and I encourage you to check those out for whatever reason. And the relationship-based competencies are also here; those documents I referred to—if you look at the top navigation, on the red bar there under relationship-based practice—you would find those there.

So Katherine, are there other resources that might be of interest?

Katherine Falen:

Yes. We have a few extra resources here. These are some links to resources that were mentioned in today's presentation.

They include a link to the actual Head Start performance standards as well as the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool, which is a tool that's available to family child care programs and center-based programs to assess themselves on how well they are implementing strategies that will

engage and strengthen families, leading to positive outcomes for the children and family.

The alignment of the Strengthening Families approach to the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework, which we mentioned in the PowerPoint, and it's got a piece with more detail about how States have incorporated Strengthening Families into QRIS. So the State approach is integrating Strengthening Families. You can read more about specifically how States have included those standards or training in their quality rating and improvement systems.

And then, finally, a link to the National Program Standards Crosswalk Tool, where in the next week, you'll be able to compare your State licensing regulations and QRIS standards to Head Start standards.

So we hope these will be helpful tools to help you dig a little bit deeper, look for more points of alignment, and be able to answer some questions that you may have as you think through this work.

With that, I'm going to turn it back over to Ginny Gipp.

Ginny Gipp:

Thanks, Katherine and Kiersten. And I appreciate you going over the resources that you just mentioned because we now can tell you—and hopefully you all have not only seen the slides before, but you've bookmarked most of these Web sites so that you will very quickly be able to go to the Child Care TA Web site and also the Early Childhood Learning and [Knowledge] Center Web site that Kiersten showed you a couple of slides ago, where it has the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement section.

Next, you need to ask yourself, and if this is your fifth webinar you've been on, I hope you've been asking yourself, are you planning to apply? Well, if the answer is yes, or it's heading toward yes, then please, as soon as you can, go to the grants.gov Web site and, once again, if you think you're going to apply, you need to register as soon as possible because the registration process can take 1 to 3 weeks—the sooner, the better. An important note here—only the applicant organization needs to register. If you are coming in as a partner organization, you do not need to register. The applicant organization will take care of that on behalf of your partnership.

When you go to this site, you will receive things such as the FON, the Funding Opportunity Number, talks a little bit about it there; the DUNS number, which is the Data Universal Numbering System number; and you'll be able to register in SAM, which is the System for Award Management eligibility requirements. That's the link at the bottom, which hopefully many of you have already bookmarked, along with the

childcareta.gov and [ECLKC] Web sites. That's where you can find all this information.

And also many of you may have written this one down, too—this e-mail address, where to send questions to. And as you heard earlier, these questions are very helpful to our policy team here in thinking through some of the questions as the funding opportunity announcement is being finalized.

And finally, we hope you'll join us for the webinar on Maximizing Resources in Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships/Role of Governance in Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. This will take place on Monday, March 31, which is right after the weekend, so it's next Monday. And it's from 2:00 to 3:00 eastern time. We look forward to having you on the call with us then and thank you so much for joining us. Have a good afternoon and weekend, everyone. Bye-bye.