Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Intersection with States

Amanda Bryans: Good afternoon, and welcome to today's webinar on the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Intersection with States. We are delighted that you can join us here this afternoon. My name is Amanda Bryans. I'm direct of the education and comprehensive services division in the Office of Head Start. And I'm so happy to be joined here by Linda K. Smith, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Dr. Blanca E. Enriquez, the Director Office of Head Start, Rachel Schumacher, the Director of the Office of Child Care and a special panel, moderated by senior project analyst, Karen Heying and including Tom Rendon, Iowa State Collaboration Office -- Rendon, Iowa Head Start Collaboration Office Mary Janssen, CCRR Regional Director from Iowa, Kim Kennedy, our Head Start Collaboration Director in Kansas, and Carrie Hastings, the Children's Services Manager in Kansas. And I'm going to go over to Linda for her kind of her opening thoughts about our topic today.

Linda Smith: Well thank you, Amanda and we're thrilled to have a very great response to this webinar and a lot of people joining us. we're very excited about the opportunities that have been presented by the new early learning outcomes framework and the intersection and how it can help us in the work that we're trying to do to align our programs within the early childhood community, between the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care, here in Washington but across the country, in terms of how we can better use our resources and help each other out.

So what I want to do to start this conversation is give a little bit of background on what it is we're trying to do. And as many of you know, around this country, we have been working on this alignment for quite some time now. How can we break down the barriers between Head Start and Child Care? How can we create a pathway for childcare programs that ultimately get them to the same levels of quality standards and requirements as Head Start has and using Head Start as what we believe is the laboratory, the nation's laboratory -- that is always has been: How do we use the lessons learned from what we know about Head Start to help and inform the rest of early childhood.

So it's really important to us here to begin to look at pathways that get us from where we are, to where we need to go in almost every aspect of early childhood and this document provides a good guide we think for that work. Just so you know, we also believe very much that the work that we've done with the Early Head Start Partnerships is a big piece of this and if you look at this map, it shows you where we have those partnerships between Early Head Start and Child Care, and the work that we're doing around the country to align these two radically different systems. So, that work is going on and we're learning lessons everyday as we move through this first year of implementation of the partnership.

I want to just call attention to a couple of things and these Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships are a piece of the work that we're trying to do. And that is how do we create a birth to five continuum in this

country. In Head Start, and if you're on this call and you're from the Head Start community, you know that we tried -- or didn't try -- we did a pilot competition of a birth to five strategy and we've now moved into all of our competitions going towards that, so that we don't have one program, and then we have to figure out how to transition our children between two of the same type of program.

So the birth to five strategy is really important to us, along with the alignment across the programs. I think when it comes to this work, and as we start to look at what we are doing, it's important for people to know what we're doing to support this work. And so, on the next slide, I put this up there as a reminder that we have, here in Washington, done a lot of work in the last couple of years to realign our training and technical assistance, and the transformation of our TA system. So that if we're developing something in Head Start, it's available to people in Child Care and vice versa. And I do want to stress that this is a two-way street here, because there are many things in the Child Care community that Head Start folks can learn for and vice versa.

So this alignment of our TA centers, our national centers which are shown on this slide -- if you haven't seen it before and you're interested in hearing about it, let us know. Because we would be very much like to make sure you understand what it is that we're trying to do. But those centers in that dark blue area are where there's overlap between these programs and it's generally around health, some of the different aspects. Pretty much programmatic types of things and where we can gain efficiencies and share resources so we're not duplicating effort. So that's one of the points that I think is important that you know: That we're putting our money where our mouth is right now, here at ACF in trying to support this alignment work.

So, how does that play into the early learning outcomes framework? Well, we see this early learning outcomes framework as a document that can help guide that work of not only these centers, but the alignment of our programs, through the Head Start, Early Head Start. As I said that pathway, that birth to five alignment, but also this alignment from Child Care onto higher levels with Head Start. So this is one of those things, I -- usually if you would see me, I would be doing this little hand dive about, you know, there's horizontal versus vertical alignment of programs. This is where there's actually an intersection and basically, if you can see across in front of you, this is where all of this comes together in my mind.

So, we're going to move on here and talk a little bit more about each of the different programs. But, as we do that, keep in mind, and explain the early learning framework to you, understand that we are appreciative of many people around this country for what we have. We didn't just take a blank sheet of paper and dream this up. We looked at the best of what the states were doing with their early learning guidelines. What researchers could tell us, etcetera.

So, if you see some of your work reflected in it -- that's great because we don't want to begin to think that we do this work in isolation. But, rather that we learn from all of you around the country who are doing things that we can take and move forward. So I think what we're going to do next is take a look at Child Care and where we are with that program then we'll move on and look at Head Start and then how do we really align these things, so...

Rachel: Great! Thanks, Linda. Hi everybody, this is Rachel Schumacher, as Amanda said, I'm the director of the office of Child Care and it's such a thrill to be with so many people committed to promoting child development around the country. Great turnout today. My job is to just say a couple of things about the Child Care context that we are looking at right now. For those of you -- we know that we have folks on the line, some folks coming really familiar with Head Start, some really familiar with Child Care systems and so we want to make sure that everyone's on a level playing field as we go forward here in really understanding context. So the Child Care context -- one thing that one cannot ignore -- there's two things that I'm going to go over and one is: that we have a major, new reauthorization in Congress of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act which is the major funding source for child care for low income families around the country and to improve the quality of childcare for all children. And that has been a sea change in what the role of the childcare program is around the country and right now we have states developing their plans for how to implement a lot of these changes, and we'll be moving to the tribes, starting in July.

So, there's a lot going on around the country. And the revised purposes of the Child Care and Development Fund which is the fund that's authorized by CCDBG really put a much more two-generational focus on what had really been a work support, so that we're really looking at the importance of child development and moving more low income children who have parents who are working or in education and training into high quality settings. Those are now purposes of the Child Care Fund. So going along with that, Congress increased the amount of the funding that will be set aside for quality in the states and territories around the country. And added a new infant-toddler set aside that will come into effect in the next fiscal year in 2017.

So all this is great and it sets a context where I know my partners around the country who are running this program are thinking about how do I use that money and what are the best ways to really improve and update what we're doing for children and families in our state. And one of the things that they can do is improve or implement early learning guidelines; I'm using ELGs; I think we have ELSs on some of the state slides; everyone uses a different term. But these are, in Child Care context, voluntary guidelines for what children should be able to do at appropriate ages that are used in a lot of different ways and it's an allowable use of the quality set aside for states to be doing some of this work over the next set of years.

The second thing I want to point out is how states are already using these. Linda already really mentioned: We know states have been doing this for a long time. There's be already a decade of work out there. States developing early learning guidelines. Almost all states are telling the federal Office of Child Care that they have guidelines and that they have worked to align them with the previous Head Start Outcomes Framework. But, you know, fewer of them are birth to five; some are birth to three and then they have 3 to 5 separately. So many states -- it's a constant process of reviewing and updating them. And states perspective, they are also looking at state pre-K standards, the Common Core, there's a lot of other pressures they face as they look at -- although they clearly are looking to the Head Start standards and have been for years when they do this.

So states are using their early learning guidelines, as we've all talked about, to promote alignment across programs and really get a level playing field for children, no matter what door that they are

walking into. They use them to inform the training and education and technical assistance that they provide to providers. And we really would encourage, and have worked with states through our technical assistance work to encourage them to really think about: How do you really embed standards into what is going on in their quality rating and improvement systems and other systems they have to improve quality. And last, but not least, to use them to engage families in their children's development, which is actually also a new purpose of the Child Care Development Block Grant now and something that the early learning guidelines, when they are translated appropriately and made accessible to families can be an incredible tool. So, I will stop there and hand it over to Amanda.

Amanda: Thanks, Rachel. And thank you to Linda too, to both of you, for kind of the context that you provided that you provided. While you were talking I was thinking about two really significant things I think as we're working to implement the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and we're thinking about intersections with states and why we do that, I think there're two really important things that are common across all groups who are doing this work and the first is that we acknowledge that children need, that they attend multiple programs that there are few children that get everything, all of the care that they need just from Head Start. Lots and lots of kids go to Head Start for part of their day and child care for a different part of their day, or they go to child care, you know, from birth to three and then Head Start or the reverse. So there's children who go to multiple settings and somehow we've got to make the world be coherent and kind of make sense for them.

And the second thing which we're all presuming, but is worth saying is: Everybody wants good outcomes for kids. Parents want their children to do well and communities need their children to do well. So, we're working together to try to figure out how to maximize the resources we have -- I think Linda spoke to that several times -- in order to improve the outcomes and opportunities for the young children that we serve. I wanted to talk a little bit about why we have a new Head Start Framework. We have heard some people express a little frustration that maybe they had just finished aligning to the old framework and we replaced it with a new framework and that is an understandable concern.

We asked ourselves: Did we really need to do this? And we didn't only ask ourselves. We also asked this large group of experts -- national experts -- in early childhood education, who very incredibly, generously consulted with us extensively as we did this work. And after lots of discussion, we recognized we really did need a new framework. One reason that we did is that an increasing number of our programs are serving children from birth to five. And even if they're not, child development tends to not just stay kind of, at the chronological age of the child. We see children who are 28 months old and do some things like 46 month olds and other things like, you know, 14 month olds. So, the more that we can provide the kind of continuum of development that teachers can use in individualizing, the better, the more accurate the resources they have. So I think that it was necessary in that way.

We also had gotten feedback from both Head Start programs and from researchers and other experts, that our former framework with 11 domains was spreading everyone too thin. That we really needed to narrow the number of domains, so that people could think more purposefully about the instruction and the environments they were providing to support kids' development. It's not that all 11 aren't important or aren't still part of how early childhood services are developed and how we engage kids, but it's that we really wanted to think about the kind of sequence of development and intentional instructional

strategies in a narrower group of domains that we know are linked to better outcomes for kids in the long run. We wanted to make sure that we were very purposeful in terms of why, what the job of the framework is; so we want to make sure that we're supporting the implementation of high quality, developmentally appropriate curriculum learning experiences and assessments; so we wanted it to be fairly clear how to, whether things are aligned or not aligned.

We wanted to make sure that dual language learners are included and that dual language learning is recognized as a strength under this framework, that as children are acquiring English they're also having lots of opportunities to develop in their home language. We wanted to make sure that the needs of children with disabilities could be met in the framework very explicitly. We developed the framework to include domains, subdomains goals, developmental progressions and indicators. Indicators are specifically what children should know and do at age 36 months and 60 months. And the developmental progressions are kind of showing the sequence of development leading up to those indicators, and again that's a really important resource in helping teachers plan the experiences that children are having on a day-to-day basis, whether it's in a center-based program, a family childcare home, or through a home visiting program.

Additionally, one of the pieces of kind of feedback we got in our consultations with states and others, was that Head Start is in a unique position with regard to influencing the implementation of this framework, that because of our T and TA system and the fact that our statue requires alignment with the outcomes framework, we really are positioned to help early childhood educators implement this framework and that that is an important, kind of, leadership activity. So for all those reasons, we went ahead, and again, with the work of the national experts and after extensive review of state early learning guidelines, which were contributory in the development of our final framework, we were able to produce this document. I'll give you the link at the end; it is available on our website and it can be downloaded and printed.

So I mentioned that we narrow the domains in this framework. We now have Approaches to Learning, which is inclusive of self-regulation and executive function; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy. And you'll see under the Infant and Toddler that's really one domain, called Language and Communication, and then under Preschoolers we've split it into two: Language and Communication and Literacy and that's because as children are getting a little bit older, you can do a little bit more specification or differentiation in that domain.

Similarly, with Cognitive and Cognition domain. It is cognition for infants and toddlers; we've divided it into mathematic, development and scientific reasoning for preschoolers and then we have the perceptual, motor and physical domain. Finally, I wanted to just give an example of what one of the domains kind of looks like: This is Approaches to Learning. You can see that we have age group breakouts to help again with the developmental progression and to help teachers kind of recognize each child's status along that progression and plan for what they can be doing with children to support their development. We provide goals as well for each area.

Many programs have said well, can we use those goals for our school readiness goals and our answer was you may want to do that, but what's important is the kind of review of needs of the children you

enroll and your community and then thinking about what school readiness goals make the most sense, for you to establish. But you can certainly use the goals in the framework to help you with that. The goals increase the specificity of what children should know and be able to do -- behavioral skills and concepts -- to later be successful in school. And again the whole -- each domain is crafted in a way that it should help teachers and home visitors plan and scaffold teaching and learning experiences. And, now I am glad to turn this over to Dr. Enriquez who is going to talk a little bit more about how the framework can be used in the programs.

Dr. Blanca E. Enriquez: Thank you, Amanda. And welcome everybody, one more time. I'm glad you have chosen to join us this afternoon. I want to begin by saying that no matter where children are being nurtured, in Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, pre-K, or in a center-based option, home-based or family child care, our Early Learning Outcomes Framework will be your guide to creating learning experiences for children that target the development of their skills, their behaviors and their knowledge.

So Amanda walked us through the content and structure of the ELOF, as we call it for short, The Early Learning Outcomes Framework i.e., ELOF. She has emphasized that the ELOF identifies key areas and expectations for child development and learning. Let us now dialogue a little bit for a moment about how to use the ELOF. But it is first important to understand what the ELOF is not. The ELOF is not a curriculum. It does not tell you how to teach, nor does it give you a set of activities to do with your children. Also, the ELOF is not an assessment of skills, behaviors and knowledge. It is not a checklist that you use to assess the children's learning.

So those two principles are very important in your use of the ELOF. So how do you use the ELOF. Well, you begin by identifying the age-level of your children, and then proceed the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that the children should know and demonstrate in each of the five domains. Then you create your lesson plans and activities to engage the children in the learning. You will decide your small group and whole group activities. You will create learning center activities and meaningful play activities to reinforce the skills, knowledge and behaviors.

And of course as you're doing that, you are building positive and supportive relationships, and you are also individualizing instruction. Again, you are using the ELOF to create these learning activities. You will also incorporate your curriculum materials and you use your curriculum materials as tools to advance the learning of the children. In this manner, you are aligning your curriculum materials to the skills, the knowledge and behavior of your children in each of those domains. And you engage with the children in the learning you are also observing the reaction, their demonstrative behaviors, and you will be able to scaffold the instruction, as well as determine what additional practice activities they might need. For as you teach them, you are also assessing the learning or their level of learning.

Now, each of the domains in the ELOF also includes indicators and these are indicators of learning. You can use these indicators as you align the assessments to your learning materials. Finally, you can use the ELOF to structure your professional development. Teaching staff will need to fully understand and incorporate the domain and the indicators into their instruction and interaction with children. This is a perfect opportunity for mentors and coaches to use the ELOF to structure the content, the discussions and the practice of their training, as well as, of course, their lesson modelling, as they model lessons in

the classroom. And professional development time needs to be invested in aligning the curriculum and the assessment to the ELOF.

So really in summary: How do you use the ELOF? The ELOF is really designed to be the backbone of school readiness for children birth to age five. That's the way you would use the ELOF. And I know that our partners that are here with us this afternoon, from the various states are really going to show you how you can do this with a lot more graphic support. Karen?

Karen Heying: Thanks. Well, I think everyone here has given a really good foundation of where we're at, a little of where we've come from and how we're moving forward with this work and continuing it. and we're very excited that Iowa and Kansas can join us to really talk about what it's like on the ground, moving forward. And both states have done some incredible work around partnering, and in making sure that it's not just Head Start, but it's with our partners and with the early care and education field out there.

And so we thought it would be really great to hear some brief overviews. Each state does a little bit different. Most states have early learning guidelines, if not all, I think. And I think the great majority of them have really used the Early Learning Outcomes in the past, as kind of that foundational work. And so many people ask: So how do we move this forward?

Well hopefully, Kansas and Iowa can give you a good snapshot about what they've done in their states. But I would also encourage you, if you're not in either one of those states, to reach out to your other folks in your -- collaboration offices director or administrator or someone to really think about how it can be incorporated into your early care education setting. So, Iowa and Kansas --we'll have a brief presentation from both of them, and then we'll have an opportunity for some discussion and open questions and stuff afterwards. But we thought we really needed to have a basis of what two examples might be. They could be differing in your particular state.

But, Tom Rendon who is our collaboration director and has been working on this for many, many years and is joined by Mary Janssen who is with the childcare resource and referral system in Iowa. And Tom, I'll go ahead and let you start this off and tell us a little bit about what's happening in Iowa.

Tom Rendon: Well, thank you very much Karen and I really appreciate this opportunity to talk a little bit about what we're doing in Iowa. And I think I'm going to begin, by letting Mary talk a little bit about the context, particularly, because actually the early learning standards were initially part of both the department of education and the department of human services and under the department of human services, that's where the childcare connection happened. So, with that Mary, can I just turn it over to you to talk a little bit about the early learning standards implementation that you're doing in child care resource and referral.

Mary Janssen: Yeah. Thank you very much. My name is Mary Janssen and I'm one of the five regional directors in the state of Iowa for child care resource and referral. I was a part of one of the rewrite teams in 2012 for the Iowa early learning standards. So it's exciting to kind of talk about what we've done and what we're continuing to do. Just a little history of that. We implemented the statewide in 2006; at that same time, we were implementing a new QRIS system and also a voluntary preschool

program around that same time; so it was very busy here in the state of Iowa. So in 2010 after the standards had been released for about four years, we talked statewide that we needed to revise and in 2012, a revision team revised these standards, and I was a part of that team with another colleague, who was a training specialist in the southern part of the state.

CCR&R's involvement which I'm going to share with you today. We since 2012 have really implemented these standards through our trainings that we offer statewide. So, we have five training specialists that manage trainings for our childcare providers and those trainings go through an approval process through our training specialists. Each training specialist has a content outline form and an instructional plan that they ask the folks that are writing these trainings; so they could be staff from childcare resource and referral or they could be partners from Head Start, the Iowa state extension writing these trainings that we want to implement.

And in that instructional plan outline, what we ask them to do is somehow infuse the early learning standards into the curriculum. And with Iowa, we have infant and toddler standards and we have preschool standards. And I think that's been a great -- we have always done that since 2006; it's been a great way to include all the age groups. And when our staff are writing these trainings, they can easily pick and choose from the different standards for the age groups.

So far this year, we have seven areas in the infant and toddler and we have seven areas for the preschool. Once they're writing the curriculum, they're getting started, they check which area that they are infusing, implementing into this training. So, for example if they are writing a training about toddler motor activity and how to do large motor activities, they would mark that they are meeting area 1 for physical well-being and motor development and then they would explain how that standard aligns in the curriculum. I think this has been a great way to show our childcare providers and introduce them more to these early learning standards. We have a training that introduces them to these standards, but we also in the state, I feel have developed these standards that's an easy document for them to pick up and implement in their programs, because I feel it's a very easy read and easy way to understand and implement.

Otherwise, I really just wanted to share with you how we're doing that within the trainings and it's allowed our childcare providers just to become more familiar with those early learning standards. This past year, we also revised a training statewide called ChildNet and it's a 25-hour training for child care home providers and within each of the ten modules, the early learning standards are introduced and talked about in each of those trainings. And it's been a great -- we've had a great response from providers statewide. And I think for me Tom, that's it.

Tom: Ok, great. Thank you so much, Mary. And I will -- I just wanted to talk a little bit about some work that I've been doing from the Head Start Collaboration Office around trying to build linkages between our state's early learning standards and Head Start. And there are really three different things that I've done. One is to really develop crosswalks and I should note that most of the work that I've been doing has been with the old framework and not the new framework. Incorporating the new the framework will be part of stuff that we still have to do. But I intend to do pretty much the same thing that I've done in the past with the older framework.

But the first one was to develop crosswalks and then to align those crosswalks with statewide assessments. And then I was also involved in the 2012 rewriting. And so I'll just talk about each of those three really quickly. In terms of a crosswalk, it's pretty straightforward. I convened a cross-disciplinary group that sat down with the early learning standards and with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. Largely, Head Start people and sort of talked about where we saw the commonalities, and this is a document that Head Start programs use a lot, because it's a way for them to say to the Head Start people who are following the Outcomes Framework to say to state folks in the context when they meet you: Here's how we're following the state early learning standards.

So this becomes the bridge between allowing them to look at both their statewide roles and their national roles and be able to speak the same language. And we have this crosswalk, by the way, posted when you get a copy of the slide, and know they're going to make available; we have a crosswalk library actually, that is all different crosswalks that we do on the Iowa Head Start Association website and so we work closely with the Iowa Head Start Association to both develop the crosswalk and then to have this common place where we can put it.

And then the other thing that we did with the early learning standards was we created alignments with our Common Core. Iowa is a state that has adopted the Common Core as well as there's something we call the Iowa Core which goes beyond the Common Core. Because the Common Core as you know is just right now only math and English language arts. But because the early learning standards are much broader, we created vertical alignments with just the English language arts section of the Common Core and the mathematics Common Core. And that really is a way, frankly, for us to communicate with school districts to say: This is the Common Core for early childhood and here's how we're preparing children for the Common Core as it begins to get implemented at the kindergarten level.

And then, in terms of alignment with statewide assessments, we have a statewide license for teaching strategies goal. And so in the crosswalk, actually, we put all of the different objectives for GOLD and aligning them with the early learning standards. So now anyone, Head Start programs and others, can say: We are teaching to this particular standard and we have a means by which we can assess it. The other part, and we have almost all of our Head Start programs in the state -- all but two -- that are participating in the state license for GOLD and actually one of them that's not participating uses teaching standards, uses teaching strategies; they just don't happen to use it under the state license. So that's a really important alignment.

The other thing that we've done is -- the state launched a couple of years ago a multi-tiered system to support primarily for the K-6 as part of an early literacy initiative, but they've also included pre-K more optionally for districts. So it's not exactly available yet to Head Start. But one of the things that I've been trying to do is to sort of say: Well, if and when Head Start is engaged in this, how can we move them along. So part of the -- one of the things that happen with this multi-tiered systems of support is that after the initial screening, if less than eighty percent of children are proficient, the implication is that what can you do at the universal tier level to support proficiency.

So, we've developed this facilitation guide for programs to use and there's a pre-K version of it and a K-6 version of it that's really based on the six building blocks that you see on the screen. And so, part of

when you think about one of the building blocks, is that you have Curriculum Instructional Materials and Environment, or you have Literacy Instructional Strategies and Differentiation. Both of those, we assume, are going to be aligned to the Language, Literacy and Communication standards within the early learning standards. So, that way in fact all the quality improvement efforts, particularly focused around instructional practices are also being driven essentially by the early learning standards.

And then finally, as I say we participated in early learning standard development that was both Head Start presentation and as Mary also said, Child Care. And we -- so one of the things I did in the Collaboration office was really to make sure we had good Head Start participation on some of the different writing teams. When we did our rewrite in 2012, the new Head Start Outcomes Framework had included English language learners and social studies and so we added those in. So we were really trying to make sure that our update of the early learning standards would align to the Head Start.

There's been kind of this leap frogging so we update the early learning standards to where the Head Start standards are, then we update the Head Start standards and it moves to another place. So I'm sure when we do another revision in five years, we're going to be looking at that too. And we've also been working very closely with Child Care and other pre-K training to align the early learning standards with our positive behavioral intervention support system, which involves, pre-K, Head Start and Child Care.

We're engaging with all of our statewide literacy efforts and the Iowa Association for the Education for Young Children has a play group that is also promoting play as an essential part of early learning environments and we've aligned those with the early learning standards, to say: How does in fact play manifest these particular kinds of expectations that we have, so children will know and be able to do. And Mary, I don't know if you want to say a little bit about the Child Care side. I know you talked a little bit about this, but I don't know if you want to say anything more.

Mary: Yeah -- actually, here within childcare resource and referral we have child consultants that work with the providers. The early learning standards is a really nice document to work with. Any childcare provider, so family care provider or childcare center, preschool, any type of program and if they've been open for twenty years or if they've been open for one week, they're just a great document to use within the program. One thing I just love about this document is that it's for all childcare providers. So that it's for every -- no matter what type of care they're offering family center, preschool, it's for anyone and that it really prepares those kids for school.

Tom: And let me just say. I'm going to go to the very last slide. The last place where we've really done a lot of work -- particularly recently -- and I'm sure every state states in the new CCDF reauthorization and the requirement to have a new state plan and the state plan is asking for the CCDF-supported initiatives to really integrate early learning standards and that's always been part of it, but it certainly was part of our discussion. So I don't know if you want to say anything more about -- I know I've been involved with a lot of the state plan work and I know Child Care resource and referral has also been involved.

Mary: Yeah -- we -- definitely the early learning standards are a part of the plan. When visiting with our partners at DHS, we plan to keep it very, we're going to be very involved with the early learning

standards and continue to promote the document. I think we're still ironing out how this will all look but it's definitely going to be a part of the future.

Tom: Great. Well thanks very much for this opportunity. I hope that was helpful. So I'll turn it back to your Karen.

Karen: Ok, great. Thanks, so much, Tom and Mary. That was really, really helpful. And I think that -- I was just -- it becomes a leader in many ways of some of the work that you've been doing along with all of your partners around there, I think it's not just you, it's everyone working on this. But I think you've given us a really good background about how you've been able to really get folks moving across sectors and what have you. We're gonna go ahead and go into Kansas and hear a little bit about how they have done their work which is a little bit different and I think that's the uniqueness about this work is that states can really speak to what are their own needs and abilities. Kansas has always done a continuum of birth to 8, if I'm not mistaken and we've got Kim Kennedy, who is the Head Start Collaboration director in Kansas and Carrie Hastings who is the children services manager in Kansas who has also been involved in this work. So, Kim I'm gonna go ahead and turn it over to you to give a little background and you and Kerry can take it away for Kansas.

Kim: Thank you Karen. As Tom said, we are very excited to be a part of this call and share the information of how Kansas went about developing their early learning standards. Carrie has a little bit of a cold today. So she said she'd leave most of the talking to me. But I did tell her, that if she felt I left anything out, to jump right in there and let me know. And I hope my audio is ok. Earlier there was a bit of an echo. Does it sound ok? We're alright? Ok. Thank you.

So with the Kansas early learning standards, the first version was completed in 2006 and this project was headed up by the Kansas department of education and the Kansas department of education has continued to be the lead on this project through the original version and any of the revision work. However, the department for children and families has been, has played an active role throughout all three versions of the early learning standards. And we've served in several capacities whether that be through our CCDF administrators staff or the Head Start Collaboration office.

The 2013 version, which was the second revision was jointly funded by the Kansas department of education and the Head Start Collaboration office. And I thought after the fact; I should have posted a link to the website where it is housed at the Kanas state department of education's website. So if anybody wanted to look at that just to kind of see what it looked like that's where it is where it is found. The 2013 version of the early learning standards contained eight domains. It covered physical health and development, social emotional development, approaches to learning, communication and literacy, mathematical knowledge, science, social studies and creative arts. All three versions of the early learning standards were built upon the birth to five continuum. They were all cross walked to align with the Early Learning Outcomes Framework. And they all provide examples of using the standards in practice.

What is developmentally appropriate practice, what that might look like. Recognizing that play is learning or learning is play. Either way you want to look at that there. The first two versions of it, towards the end of the document, there was like a resource guide that provided examples of curriculum, again, developmentally appropriate practice and our most current version is a little different because it is all electronic and I'll talk more a little bit about that as we go on further into the webinar. There is a plan in place to crosswalk our current version which are childcare licensing standard also with the revised early learning outcomes framework and we also do plan to have our state's QRIS system aligned with our early learning standards. However, at this time, Kansas is in the very early development stage of our QRIS; so right now we really can't say what that will look like. But there is a plan in place, for to have that to align. Moving on to the next slide.

Our development team, from the very beginning, the project was -- we looked at a large spectrum of the early childhood field of, the early childhood professionals, parents, providers and then considered how the early learning standards could and should be utilized. And so here is the development team. And this revision team has worked closely together for the original version in 2006 and then reconvened two other times for the revision work. And so getting the group together for the most recent revision work was really pretty seamless; it went really smoothly.

The Kansas state department of education contracted with Kansas in-service training system to crosswalk the 2009 early learning standards with our state K-12 standards and the early learning outcomes framework that was at that time. And then from that the new format for our current early learning standards took shape. And this is the part that I had mentioned earlier; with our newest version of the early learning standards, we have a tool kit that has been put together. This tool kit is electronic. It is provided on a flash drive and it will provide resource information, using web links and other documents on there to provide resource information that could be available to parents, childcare providers, Head Start personnel -- anybody that is utilizing the early learning standards. It provides links to curriculum that supports the framework, and families who experience homelessness, dual language learners and you can see the list there above.

This project was funded through [inaudible] dollars and the final stages -- they're wrapping up the final stages and so the document should be made available or the tool kit available this spring. So we're really excited to have that out. It's kind of been a long time coming. It was a big project to get in place and we were anxious to get it out there. It was -- probably our biggest challenge was prioritizing the information we wanted to be in the tool kit, looking at how it would be used, and looking at the accessibility of it all. We had talked about using web links, for the entire toolkit itself. But we felt like maybe not everybody would have that internet access resource. So if it was on a flash drive, anybody who had a computer could plug it in and access that information. While there are still some web links on there, there would be a lot of usable information as well readily available for folks to use.

I'm looking further at my notes here. I kind a lost my place; I got excited talking about the toolkit. The state agency's childhood leadership team was instrumental at getting this project together to get the tool kit in place. And from there we contracted again with the Kansas in-service training system team to help us with development of the toolkit. And was there anything else there about the tool kit, Kerry.

Carrie Hastings: All I can think with the toolkit when we developed it, the inter-agency team that we decided to work with, like she said our in-service team and the reason we picked them, because that was actually that is the team that actually designed the training for early childhood special education [inaudible] in Kansas. And we really, and if that team could show how they could be utilized with special needs children, then it was readily and easily applied for all. And so they've done a really nice job with the resource kit. And then also they worked with us closely with the new CCBF; with the new reauthorization, we kind of looked at some areas of focus, within reauthorization, regarding resources working with families homelessness and any of the areas that were maybe potentially called out in CCDF. But it's been a really nice time to take a re-look at this and see kind of how it fits all of programs' needs.

Kim: And I think that is all that we have from Kansas.

Karen: Great. Thank you so much. I really do believe that this gives us a fairly broad range of some of the options that are out there. And now we'd actually like to address some of the questions that have come in and again we have a number of folks here that you've heard from before that can address some of those questions. And we'll start with Amanda on some of the questions that were brought forward.

Amanda: Well, thanks, Karen. I'm gonna answer the easy questions first. We are delighted that we got a number of questions about today's slides. And whether there'll be available. And we're actually going to send them to everybody who registered for today's webinar, so you'll be able to use those right away if you'd like to. We also had questions about the presentation today. And it will be posted on the ECLKC and available for you to use with your staff or maybe community partners in about month. It takes us about a month to get it ready for posting. We also had a number of questions about the framework itself. And we were able through really some incredible work on our behalf, by our deputy assistant secretary, Dr. Enriquez, to get some printed copies of the framework.

We sent one to each program and to a couple of representatives in the state. We don't print a lot now in the government. But I'm glad to say that there is an electronic version on the ECLKC. We encourage you to use the interactive digital version, which gives you a lot of resources. You also can download the document from the ECLKC. It's in the public domain. It is free. Some programs have found it more efficient to put it on a flash drive and take it to a copy center to get printed. While there is certainly a cost involved in that, you might not run out of ink as quickly as if you tried to do it in your own programs.

And finally, we had a question about other languages, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework's availability in other languages. We do have it available at this time in Spanish. It has not been translated or interpreted in other languages as of now. But we do have it in Spanish. And with that I would like to turn it over to Dr. Enriquez to answer another one of the questions we received.

Dr. Enriquez: Right. There was a question that talked about: How can childcare providers partner with the Head Start program for Early Head Start, when our programs are being blacked out or even overlooked by those in charge? And how can we childcare providers lead a community of Early Head Start providers? And I would say that this is a perfect opportunity for you all to connect with your local Early Head Start provider, or even a Head Start provider in your community and initiate a discussion on how you can partner and apply for the upcoming Early Head Start Childcare Partnership 2016 funding that is going to be available. So please look that up and apply for those funds. And this way you can become one of our Early Head Start Child Care providers.

Rachel: Great. So this is Rachel Schumacher again. And another question that we got -- we got a couple of questions around the family-childcare, applicability of this wonderful new resource. And I think just as our speakers from Iowa mentioned this is a resource that is intended to be used in all kinds of settings and is being used in different types of settings. The same types of outcomes apply whether you're providing a Head Start/Early Head Start program in a center, or a family-childcare home. And it can be used also in the context of the childcare programs out there.

Now we mentioned and you heard a lot of examples of how the early learning outcomes can be used for the training of [inaudible]directly with providers. So if you're sitting at a state level you think about this a little bit differently, than if you're thinking at a program level. You'd be thinking: Ok so maybe we have a network of infant-toddler specialists in our state. Is this something they can use when they're going out and working with folks serving infants and toddlers? R and R's can use it in the trainings that they provide coaches and mentors.

And some states have family health care networks that are staff family child care networks or family childcare associations who could take this resource and use it to provide information to providers who are a part of their network or association. And use it to guide discussion or dialogue, as Dr. Enriquez was saying. Or to really think about what they're doing with their children that could promote these various types of outcomes. I think it can really be used in a lot of different ways. The folks from Iowa. We had a specific question. You mentioned some modules for family childcare providers. And we have questions about whether those are available online.

Mary: Right. This is Mary. And we actually do not offer the training online as of right now. It's a face to face training. But you can visit our website at www.IOWACCRR.org and you'll click on the provider tab and then click on Childnet. And it will show you our policies and procedures for family childcare providers related to Childnet and also kind of an outline of the curriculum and lots of great information surrounding that specific training.

Amanda: Great. Thank you. This is Amanda again and we had another question wondering what really I would call regarding the research base of the early learning outcomes framework and whether the standards have been age or content validated. And I would again emphasize that this is an evidence-based framework and that the people who developed each of the domains are leading national experts in early childhood education. So, yes we feel there's the strong evidence base and that the domains and the indicators and the developmental progressions have a very strong evidence base.

Linda: We had another question here about how some of this work can be done in some of the states. And especially, when about a particular state where there isn't a lot going on right now. And I think one of the things that we would guide people to, if you are interested and you're an individual person or an individual agency, we are encouraging states to pretty much keep the state on course with the state advisory council which were authorized in the last Head Start Reauthorization. And we see a critical role for them. So getting your state advisory councils engaged in some of this work

if you haven't already done this alignment work between Head Start and the rest of what's going on in your early learning guidelines in your state. I think that's an opportunity that you can give your state advisory councils and it's a very concrete task that they could take on and certainly work on. I'm going to ask Karen to answer a couple of other questions because we have some other state-specific questions and Karen can probably direct people in the right direction.

Karen: Sure. One of the questions around -- has[inaudible] around the Head Start Framework, where they can get some of the copies. Up on -- you can contact the Head Start Collaboration director in your state. If you don't know who that person is, you can go up on to -- I don't know the exactly address -- the ECLKC, the Head Start website and I can't roll off the -- put the ECLKC into the Google, it will come up. But then if you go to the Collaboration and Partnerships page and up to Collaboration, you'll be able to find who your Collaboration director is and there's the name and address, phone number, email address. and you can connect with that person. And they can actually tell you what's been happening around any alignment between the early learning guidelines, their standards in the states and the Framework and what's been done in the past. So, I would certainly--

Linda: And we've specifically this year, asked our Collab directors to take on this issue of working more intentionally on the alignment issue and so part of when the funding agreements went out with the states: This is one of their specific, primary responsibilities is this alignment between Child Care and Head Start/Early Head Start. So, l like Karen encourage you to get online. If you can't find them, give us a call; we'll certainly direct you to who you need to work with in your state, if you don't already know them. But those Head Start Collab people should be there and willing and ready to work with you on these things.

We have another question here about the Kansas tool kit and since we have Kansas on the line: Is your tool kit available for free to others outside of Kansas?

Kim: Well, that's a very good question. That hasn't come up yet. But I would have to guess that it could be made available, if somebody was interested in that. I did forget to mention, when I was discussing the toolkit, the way that those will be distributed is there will be an initial face to face training and so when folks come to that training they will receive the toolkit at that training and they can take that back to their programs and then share it with their staff or counterparts in their area. But if somebody is interested in that, please contact me and I can get that flash drive sent out to them.

Linda: Yeah, I think it did -- thank you very much. It's always the best form of flattery when people want your work.

Amanda: That's right. That's right. That's how I feel when people ask about getting the Framework from Head Start. So there's a really great question that is: How are teachers being guided to blending the standards with their curriculum? How are standards aligned to kindergarten standards to support kindergarten teachers' concern that children aren't prepared? And that question I think touches a lot of important things. I mentioned earlier that we've got to get some kind of coherence and continuity for children. Head Start programs are required to establish school readiness goals and one of the most important things they should do in that process is talk with their local education agencies, with kindergarten teachers, with principals and I think with parents about what their dreams are for children.

And really start there and then get down to kindergarten teachers: What's it like on your first day? Can you tell who came to Head Start. Are there things that kids aren't doing that you wish they were? What are they? It doesn't mean that if they say: I want children to write all the numerals from one to a thousand in roman that we are going to have children doing that. But it's important to hear from them what the pressures are they're experiencing and then to really engage with them in conversations about what children are like when they come to us, what are the goals their parents have, what do we think in our program, what's our curriculum and then how we work together so that we create that alignment. So that it's a very dynamic process in that you know you can build this relationship with the school district that will serve not just you well, but most importantly the children and families really well.

The way we think about -- so in the early learning outcomes framework for Head Start, what is called Standards or early learning guidelines in states is really our goals. And what we would say is: You look at your curriculum. First you get to know the Framework a little bit and you look the goals. And then the goals should be telling you the kinds of experiences, the things we want children to be progressing toward in their classrooms. So make sure that the curriculum is providing rich opportunities in each of the areas described by the goals.

And if things are missing, think about how you're going to supplement that curriculum to insure that children are getting those experiences. And similarly, you want your assessment system to be documenting how children, what their status was when they came in and how they're progressing toward those goals through the curriculum. So it's not that the standards are blended in, it's that the goals or the standards are kind of what you're working toward. And when you think about alignment, that means well: How does my curriculum and my assessment system help make sure that kids are getting those rich experiences and making progress in those areas?

Linda: Ok, we have another question here which I think is a really good one and thank you for asking: Are there advantages, e.g., alignment and disadvantages, e.g., state ownership of early learning guidelines, for a state that chooses to adopt these for childcare rather, than update their current early learning guidelines? And I think there are both pros and cons. But the one thing that I would like to say: In our work the goal is to, to the best of our ability, is to help states further and promote these types of activities and the most recent research that we can. If you'll notice on any of our materials, none of our materials are copyrighted or trademarked, so can take them and use them as you can and see fit in your state.

We totally get state ownership of early learning guidelines and all the work that's gone in -- obviously the two on this call today have put a lot of work into their early learning guidelines. Our goal is to help states in any way we can and to try and make sure that when states do early learning guidelines, they at least, have the benefit of these to look at, to work with. That's why we actually printed the copies; we did send these to the state administrators office, as well as the Collab directors and others within state government. So, they could see them, have them, use them as they see fit. There's always advantages to and a sense of pride and ownership in the early learning guidelines in the states and we respect that. We're just trying to make it easy for everyone. And if you can use it that's all the better.

Rachel: And Linda I'll just to add to that that, in some states, they may not have the resources to actually spend the time to go through and develop them. And so, that's the advantage of being able to tap into an existing resource. But I also know that we've had other states connect with a neighboring state or someone else's in the region, asking if maybe they can broaden the use of their particular state and adopt those as well. But that buy-in I think from the state is an important piece and as long as they're in agreement with what's put out there, I really think there's wide -- why re-create a wheel, if there's something already been developed. So I think it's really looking at what resources you really have and where it fits within your state climate.

Linda: One thing I think is a good part of looking very seriously and critically at this framework, is the work that we've been doing and the work that we just completed with the National Academy of Sciences on the workforce. We do need to be thinking very carefully about how we align these things so we're very clear with what we're trying to do with our workforce. And for sure as we try to move our workforce and particularly our childcare workforce toward higher levels of education and degrees, we need to make that whatever we're doing in that area is aligned to something that gives them what they need. And I think this is a great way to think about this even when it comes to professional development alignments as well as just the standards.

The second thing I would say and it's kind of my own little personal story. I do know that these standards are very appealing to people in the public. And I think because they make a lot of really good sense when it comes to looking at the progression and so forth. And I say everywhere I go, when I take a copy of the standards -- we brief these things up on Capitol Hill; we've briefed them here at the Department of Health and Human Services -- everywhere I go and I take one, I never get it back; they want to keep it; somebody asks for it -- up to and including assistant secretaries and members of Congress who want to keep these because they want to read them. So they're very readable, understandable; they make sense in the way they're laid out. And if nothing more than that, they could help folks out in the community in terms of helping people understand what it is we're trying to do here.

Amanda: I think that's a really good point, Linda. And I think also one of the reasons, I think, we've gotten that response is that, while we increasingly recognize the need for a well-prepared workforce, it's hard; so we use words like scaffolding which means that you kind of build on where the child is, what they already know and challenge them a little bit so that they can keep going. But we -- people haven't been so sure about what the developmental sequence looks like for a particular skill. What is the first thing that happens and then what is the next developmental thing that happens and the next that happens. And the Framework actually provides that and that gets to the question the validity of the content too. So I think that it's really a resource that can really assist teachers.

Related also to that, we got a question about how children with special needs or disabilities are included under the Framework. And the Framework itself provides examples throughout of how services can be individualized for children, so they can be full participants in all of the program services, including all the education services and that they are also making progress toward the goals that are identified in the indicators for children at their given ages.

So and then there's also in the framework itself some reference to how the child's IFSP or IEP can be inclusive of the goals under the Framework and that you can -- that special education and related services can be also contributing. So and I think that over the course of the next year, we will be providing many more evidence-based resources related to instruction and support for all children in making progress under the Framework. So, thanks for that question.

Tom: Linda?

Linda: Yes.

Tom: I just wanted to add -- this is Tom Rendon from Iowa -- we actually require our IEPs, our individualized Education programs and also our IFSPs to include goals linked to our early learning standards. [inaudible]because these are expectations for all children, regardless of ability, that's the place where we need to start. So we definitely do exactly what you were saying and try to pull all our children with special needs into the same common set of expectations for what we want children to know and be able to do.

Amanda: That's really good, Tom. Everyone here is nodding their head. I think that the way you articulated that was really important. We talk a lot about windows of opportunity for very young children, who sometimes have pretty significant developmental delays. But when they start getting exposure to high-quality, early learning environments they make remarkable progress. And it's extremely important that there are no limiting processes about their potential at young ages -- so thanks.

Linda: We keep getting questions about how to access the Kansas toolkit. So we will make this information available, when we finally post these slides. I believe we'll try to put the information in the slide, as to how to contact and get access to that information. So just -- those of you that seem pretty interested in that, we'll try and help you out on that. We have another question here about what suggestions do you have for child care and Head Start programs to connect with higher learning organizations and credentialing programs to support awareness of the early learning framework and state standards in our early education degree programs. I think that's an excellent question and one we probably need to spend some time working on. We haven't focused as much on higher ed at this point but I do think there's a lot of room for that. Karen did you want to add something?

Karen: Yeah -- I was just gonna say, that we do have -- our Collaboration directors, one of their roles is to actually connect with higher ed and while I don't know that everyone has specifically brought early learning guidelines to the table, but I also think about some of the CCBF administrators and their connection to higher ed, to really help bring these documents and these tools to the higher education system within the states so they begin to incorporating this into their course work and into their -- as they plan; it's sometimes difficult to break into the higher education system, but I think we're making some inroads in many of the states. And they're looking at that to see how they can actually make sure that the course work includes these outcomes and really looking at that. But it's a long term process.

I was wondering if any of our states colleagues had a thought on how to answer that question and how you might have had success working with the higher education community in your states. Or advice from other states and providers on how to think about this question.

Carrie: This is Carrie from Kansas. And we did. On our group we had higher education represented on our planning group. And then I also wanted to make an important note. I know we're getting requests about sending in our toolkit. I wanted to note that we are in the process of still launching that. So if you make the request of us, right now, we don't have the flash drives to send out. And so are in the process right now. We're finishing up all the revisions. We're finishing up the toolkit and getting it formalized. And then we will be releasing it and launching it in Kansas. So we haven't even launched it. It will be launched this Spring.

Linda: No one can get it, until they've had it in Kansas. [Laughter]

Tom: I would --

Linda: Tom?

Tom: I would just say to answer your question about connecting it to higher education. We have -- you know in addition to having, I would say a good a quarter to a third writing committee were college faculty, so they were really involved from the ground up. But then they've also done a pretty good job of using the standards within their teacher preparation curriculum and in their course work, so that hadn't been a hard sell at all. They see that as essential as anyone would, that teachers have to have a pretty good grasp of what those early learning expectations are for children.

Then I think what they like to do and I've seen and what I've heard, at least in a couple of cases, where when they have a course on curriculum or on assessment that's really the place where everybody's starting. They start with the early learning standards and they say: How do we assess to that? And then that builds into their assessment coursework. Or how do we really implement a curriculum? And so they kinda connect back to that to say: Here are the expectations for children, so what are the instructional plans that we have to help children grow and learn in this particular area.

Linda: Thank you, Tom, for that. We got another question here on communicating with the states. Rachel you want to jump in on this one?

Rachel: Sure. I think right now when you say: The states -- if I'm thinking about my friends, that state administrators around the country, they're probably tired of me communicating with them in some ways. Because we've been communicating with them quite a bit about the roll out of our proposed regulations for the child care block grant reauthorization and many other things. But so we -- so as Linda mentioned or Amanda mentioned, earlier, a copy of the standards, of the early learning outcomes framework was sent to all the state administrators and they received invitations to come to this as well.

We talked to them quite a bit about the opportunities to share resources back and forth between Head Start and Child Care. We have the technical assistance centers that Linda talked about before, that are being redesigned to be across the two systems, so that resources that might have before said Head Start on them or Child Care on them and so people from those various systems would say that's not for me.

We really want to break that down. Because we see, especially with something like Early Learning Outcomes Framework you know it's not meant to be that children in Child Care learn differently than children in Head Start; it's supposed to be for everyone. So we've been really clear about that in trying to really share these types of resources and make that point over and over again. In particular, when our states are looking at a lot of new things they have to do with the law.

We really do want to encourage them -- as Linda said before. Like if there's something out there that's received a lot of - that a lot of experts as Amanda said, weighed in on this and we put it out. Why use your quality dollars to re-create this wheel, when there's something you could at least start from? So that's something we will continue to talk to the states about. They've also been -- this particular question was something around whether folks know about the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships in particular or any of the many initiatives that Linda has mentioned.

And we certainly have done work and outreach with our Child Care administrators around the country to keep them up to date on what's going on with the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership. And really see it as a tremendous opportunity to pull lessons learned and think about what types of resources, what can be done to work with Child Care and Head Start together, so both programs have the best of what each other has to offer including meeting some of the standards for Head Start, and Early Head Start Programs which are, which have different ratios different qualifications requirements and things that maybe a childcare partner might have been required to do to be licensed. So that's an opportunity to figure out what do we need to do, what are the resources that it takes to get there. As well as, working with the Head Start side and saying ok let’s really work, full day, full year work requirement and how can we make this work for children and families so that they are able to do what they need to do. So we're really excited about all those opportunities to work across the programs, and do try to reach out and keep our states up to date; whether it's an initiative coming out of one side or the other, more and more, we're all doing it together so it's not really a matter of a resource for a Head Start program versus a Child Care program anymore. That's not where we're headed.

Linda: Ok, we have one other question. And that is how does the Framework coincide with the early childhood education in the military childcare system. That is something that we actually do not have an answer to. But I know personally that the military's program is built on a developmental framework. And we do a lot of work with them and as a matter of fact have been doing work with them in terms of how we do more work for preparation and some of their materials are on our website for the early educator central. So we do a lot of work with the military. We have not shared this document with them. And we certainly could do that and get an answer in the future on that. But, my own experience there says, that if they are not absolutely aligned just probably 99 percent aligned with what the military does.

Amanda: I think that's all the questions that we have. I think we're just getting to close out of time. We're so delighted that everyone could join us today. We are anxious to continue communicating with you. As I said, we've provided the website for you, the ECLKC, where you can find the Early Learning Outcomes Framework and many, many other resources that will support you in your implementation of early childhood and family programs.

To learn more about state early learning guidelines, you can look at all the state early learning guidelines at this site. That website is there and then we have general information about childcare training and technical assistance. Don't break your hands trying to write these down. We are going to send you all the PowerPoint. And you'll be able to get these web sites from that.

It's interesting, I Googled the Early Learning Outcomes Framework right before I came in here and it said 1.7 million hits, but I didn't have to go far before I realized that there were many, many related but different things amongst those. But I do think a lot of people are looking at the Framework. And we're anxious to continue our dialogue. So thanks again and enjoy the rest of your day.

Linda: So with that I think we'll call it a day and look forward to questions you might forward to us.