

# Creating Purposeful Socializations: Supporting Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler School Readiness through Family Engagement

## 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Birth to Three Institute

Arleen Williams: ♪ Welcome, welcome, everyone ♪

All: ♪ Now we're here, we'll have some fun ♪ First, we'll clap our hands just so ♪ Then we'll bend and touch our toes ♪ Welcome, welcome, everyone ♪ Now we're here, we'll have some fun ♪

Arleen: One more time!

All: ♪ Welcome, welcome, everyone ♪ Now we're here, we'll have some fun ♪ First, we'll clap our hands just so ♪ Then we'll bend and touch our toes ♪ Welcome, welcome, everyone ♪ Now you're here, we'll have some fun ♪

Arleen: Thank you very much. We do it two times only because we know that repetition, that's how kids learn. So we do it twice so that people can get the rhythm and the movement without sound. Now, [indistinct]. Thank you.

Evelyn Brooks Ridgeway: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to our presentation. Our presentation is called "Creating Purposeful Socializations: Supporting Prenatal, Infant, and Toddlers' School Readiness through Family Engagement." So, welcome to all of you in the audience and welcome to all of you who are watching us online.

So, I'd like to, first of all, introduce us. My name is Evelyn Brooks Ridgeway. I'm the child development and mental health manager at the Early Head Start program at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. And I have with me a couple of my colleagues.

First, right here, I have Arleen Williams; and Arleen is one of our expert home visitors. She has a wonderful history in working with children, starting off about 20 years ago when she was a nanny. And the reason why I bring that up as being so important is because nannies know a lot about family engagement. So she knows a lot about working with families very intimately and brings that experience to her work with us. In addition, she also spent 10 years working in early childhood education settings – center-based setting. But right now, she's working with us for the past eight years as a home visitor.

And then next to Arleen, we have Tamique Ridgard; and Tamique is a doctoral school psychology student from Lehigh University. And I want to make sure I get the name of the grant that she's on correct because she is a student who is being sponsored by the Pediatric School Psychology Leadership Training Grant, which is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. And so, we've had the wonderful opportunity of having her work with us and our program for the past year. And actually, this is our last event together, today, so it's kind of culminated in all of this. And so, she's been a practicing student with us.

So, Arleen has really taken the lead in our program in terms of looking at our socializations. We thought we had pretty good socializations. We think we do pretty well with socializations. But we thought, you know, how can we make this better? How can we do better with our socializations? How can we really engage families? How can we really make sure that we are making sure that we are, you know, looking at what our school readiness goals are and kind of connecting what we do in socializations to – you know, to the other parts of our program?

And so Arleen really took the lead in doing that, and Tamique really was very instrumental in supporting her in that. So that's why they're here today. They're really the brains behind this whole thing. And I'm just the mouthpiece today, so... So that's a little bit about who we are, and I guess I should also say that our program is primarily a home-based program. We serve 124 children and families in our home-based option, and we are located in two zip codes in West Philadelphia. And then we also have 12 children that we service in our center-based option. Okay.

Tamique Ridgard: Okay. So, next I'm gonna review the learning objectives, and the learning objectives is what we want you all to take away from this presentation, and that's what we used when we were developing the presentation. Before I get into details about what we want, though, I want to find out a little bit more about what brought you here today. So I want you to take a minute and think about what else you want to learn about socializations and what you want to take away from this presentation. So if you can raise your hand, we can bring a mike for you to share; and if you're watching online, you can respond via the chat feature. So let us know, what do you want to take away?

Teresa: Hi. My name is Teresa. I really want to take away with me how to get the parents engages student socialization time instead of just watching what the home visitor or the teacher are doing. Even if we try to pull them to get engaged, interact with your kids, what is the main tool that we can use to engage parents?

Tamique: Definitely. We'll definitely talk a lot about that. Is there anyone else interested by a show of hands learning more about family engagement? Okay, perfect, perfect. Okay, anybody else? Oh, we have a response from online.

Spokeswoman: Well, we have a question from online: "What are key components of socializations?"

Tamique: Okay, that's a great question, and that's something we're gonna go through throughout the presentation and also show all of you. We've done our attention grabber. We've done our welcome song. So you'll see as we go through key components, and then we'll also talk about those, as well. Anybody else interested in learning about key components for socializations? Okay.

Teacher: I have a question. It's how to get the parents to commit to attending those socialization events, because, you know, we go over that with them at the beginning of enrollment and everything, but then getting them to come to those functions has been a real challenge for our program.

Tamique: Definitely. That is a great question. Anybody else have issues with attendance for socializations? Perfect. And so, hopefully, by promoting family engagement and increasing that engagement, that will help increase attendance. And we've noticed over the past several months, as we've revamped our group socializations, that attendance has increased. So hopefully, that will help.

Evelyn: Was there anybody else? I think...

Teacher: So, just more innovative new ways to help families observe their child during socialization; 'cause I know socialization with all the different components can be kind of hectic, but like slowing down and kind of helping parents really observe their child during socializations.

Tamique: Great. Thank you. Any other responses?

Teacher: Engaging parents in a parent committee process. This is really like pulling teeth in our program. How to engage them in the process and give them a voice about the program.

Tamique: That's great, and we're definitely gonna talk about that later on in the presentation.

Teacher: Hi. I'm wondering how to incorporate the prenatal moms – prenatal moms into the whole socialization. Like, what's in it for them to come?

Tamique: That is a great question. I think maybe we can take one more, but we're gonna be talking about that, as well. How do you make socialization developmentally appropriate for all the families attending? Yeah, okay. Okay, great. Oh, we have one more?

Arleen: Online.

Tamique: Oh, another online.

Teacher: I have been a Head Start provider, but I have not had an experience with Early Head Start. What is socialization, the rationale for socialization? And also interested in key components and examples.

Tamique: Great. That's a great question, and we're going to talk about that, too; highlight some of the Performance Standards related to socialization, so hopefully that will help with that question. So, we've developed three learning objectives for you all today. In the first learning objective, participants will be able to identify at least three ways to effectively implement school readiness goals and socialization. So, your programs have come up with broader school readiness goals – our program has – and these should be really driving your socializations. You should be using these to choose your activities and choose parent engagement activities as you go through.

Our second learning objective: Participates will write SMART goals to purposefully guide and execute socialization across age groups. So, we'll talk about what SMART goals are, how you write them, and how you can write SMART goals for each socialization you do to help make it more purposeful. In our last learning objective, participants will develop techniques to promote active family engagement during socializations. So really getting families involved through the entire process of socialization before and after, and hopefully that will help increase attendance.

So, now we're going to go through – and Evelyn is gonna come talk a little bit more about the Performance Standards and how those relate to socialization.

Evelyn: So, as you all know, a lot of what we need to do in Early Head Start is to address what the Performance Standards are that we are being asked to do by the Office of Head Start. And the Office of

Head Start definitely speaks to socializations. And the person who asked the question online had a question about exactly what socializations are, so I'm gonna talk a little bit about that.

So, basically, socialization are a time when in a home-based program – children who are in the home-based option may not have the opportunity to really socialize with other same-age peers because they're in their homes. They may or may not be going to other child care settings; they may or may not have friends, cousins, whoever in their neighborhood who they're interacting with; and they may not have that opportunity to really interact with other children. And so these children, when they don't have that opportunity – we talk so much about school readiness. So when they are ready to go to school, they've never had that experience, perhaps, of being in a situation where they're really interacting with other groups of children.

Now, socializations are a little bit different in that the children don't come to the center or to our program by themselves. They come with their parents. So, because they're coming with their parents, we also really want to engage parents; and it really provides a wonderful opportunity both for us to incorporate family culture – the parents' ideas into what we're doing and also to help guide the parents in different activities they may do with their children in learning about child development. So the socializations really are kind of set up for that purpose.

Some of the key issues with – or the key – the key things we want to talk about with regard to Performance Standards are – well, the Performance Standards actually are listed on our slide there. But we also have a handout that goes more specifically into what the Performance Standards are. I'm not gonna read them in their entirety, but I will just highlight some certain aspects of it.

So, for example, the Performance Standards say that we must provide a minimum of two group socializations – socialization activities per month as a program; that there are specific roles of parents in the group socialization activities; that the purpose of these socialization activities for the children is to emphasize peer-group interaction through age-appropriate activities; that the socializations are supervised by the home visitor with parents observing at times and actively participating at other times; and that parents are expected to accompany their children.

So we just kind of talked about those things, but again, we'll talk more about those things in greater detail. So, but that's just some basic things about the group socializations. So, the first thing we want to talk about, actually, is when we're – when we're doing socializations, we – we want to talk about being purposeful. We said that our – the title of our presentation is "Creating Purposeful Socializations." Okay?

So we actually wanted to stop, and you can take a look at that picture there. And I think about the word "purposeful." And I wonder, when you think about the word "purposeful" with regard to socializations, what does that say to you? So, if we can have a few people who might volunteer about what they think that means when we talk about purposeful in socializations; and again, if you're joining us online, you can use the chat feature.

Teacher: I would say that would be to have a lesson plan or a theme.

Evelyn: Okay, so – so definitely. So you talked about lesson plan, theme. I heard someone else also say, "Intentionality." Other ideas?

Teacher: School readiness goals.

Evelyn: So, somebody else just said, "School readiness goals." And online?

Teacher: Purposeful; has a plan, point, goal; and having meaning to the experiences of being together.

Evelyn: Absolutely. Okay, and then I saw another hand here.

Teacher: Individualized – along with school readiness goals, individualized to the child's goals, specifically to what [indistinct].

Evelyn: Great, and we're going to talk about that, too, because they kind of seem, you know, that they could be different. So we have school readiness goals that are kind of for the program as a whole, but then we have these individual children. So how do we accommodate both? Okay, and did I see a hand over there? Yes.

Teacher: It must be worth the parents' time to be there.

Evelyn: Worthwhile. Okay, great. Yeah. So, the question is, "What does "purposeful" mean to you when we talk about socializations?"

Spokeswoman: We have comments over here.

Teacher: I was just going to say that you want – you want the parent to be able to teach the child something and have them really enjoy being there so that will make them want to come back.

Evelyn: Oh, absolutely, 'cause we – a lot of people said, "How do we get people to come to socializations and to be engaged?" and that's, I think, an issue with most programs, and we've certainly struggled with that, as well, so it's a very key point.

Teacher: It's a thoughtful connection to the learning and activities that have been happening in the home.

Evelyn: So connecting it to the activities that have been happening in the home, absolutely. Okay, so, some of the things – those are all really wonderful examples, and they are broader than what I had kind of jotted down. But some of the things that I thought about were definitely that they're meaningful, that it's intentional, not haphazard. I think sometimes, you know, just coming from a home-visiting program, I mean, what are we doing all day? We're going out. We're in people's homes all day. There's a lot of other stuff that we're busy with, and then now we have the socialization. Oh my gosh, it's an extra thing that we have to do.

And so, sometimes the socializations can kind of be kind of pushed to the side a little bit and are not as much of a focus of our everyday kind of work in Early Head Start. So it can be really easy to kind of not put a lot of focus on the socialization, and then they kind of end up being haphazard. They're not connected to what – the other things that you're doing, and therefore, it does lose meaning for parents and also for staff. And I think it can become kind of not a lot of fun for staff sometimes, too, when it's kind of like, "Oh my gosh, we got to get this socialization done. Is it your turn?" you know, that kind of thing. So I think that when it's purposeful, it has more meaning for everybody, not just the family but also for the staff people who are putting it together.

And I think another really key piece is the connecting piece. So when we have purposeful socializations, we're looking at how it relates to all aspects of our program, how it relates to our school readiness goals, how it relates to our family engagement, how it relates to what we do with the families in the home separate from the socializations but what we're doing on home visits. But also, one of the things we talk about in our program a lot is how, you know, home visits are for just 90 minutes a week. So what we do on home visits, that's great, but what we really want is for families to be able to continue that work when we're not there. So socializations should be another activity that just helps to support and promote that and reinforce that.

And that they're planned. So that was the last thing I have there, so that they're planned. Very key piece. So that preparation is a very key piece in our school readiness – in our socializations, and that planning it is really driven by your school readiness goals. So when you look at your school readiness goals and your school readiness data, which is what, you know, is related to your goals as well, that should give you some information about what your socializations might look like. So for example, in our program, we find that we have a number of children who don't score as well with regard to language development, okay? And we have a number of children who are receiving services through early intervention for language disabilities. So we know that that's a key area that we need to focus on. We need to really look at language.

So one of the things that we do in our socializations is we really try to encourage a lot of literacy. And so, there are different ways that we do that. For example, we have a grant with a program called First Book, and some of you may be familiar with that. Are people familiar with the First Book Grant? Yes. So – so with that program, we're able to provide books for our families. So we try to get those books to be something that we give out to families once a month. So every family, every child, receives a book for their personal library once a month.

And so, those are books that we can tie into our socializations. So it's something we can take on the home visit. We can talk with the families about how you use it there. We can also tie it into what we're doing with our socializations, so our socializations often are related to a book theme. And today, what we'll be talking about is – many of the examples that we are gonna use come from a couple of different socializations that we have, both related to books. One is the book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," which I'm sure most, if not all of you, are very familiar with. A very beautiful book, beautifully written and beautifully illustrated book by Eric Carle.

And so, for those of you who may not be familiar with "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," it's a book about a little caterpillar who kind of goes through the book, and he's eating different fruits and vegetables through the book, and it has a lot of counting in it. It has a lot of information about different fruits and vegetables. It has a lot of color in it. And at the end of the book – spoiler alert – he goes into a cocoon because he's gonna turn into a butterfly. So it has a little bit of science in it, as well. So, we have counting. We have nutrition. We have colors. There's a lot of things that are in that book.

Another socialization we're gonna talk about was based off of the book "Eating the Alphabet." And we actually called the socialization "Eating the Rainbow," but we used the book "Eating the Alphabet," and that's a book by Lois Ehlert. And that's another book that has some very similar type of colors. It's very much about fruit and food and nutrition and whatnot. So we chose those two to talk about today because they kind of support each other and we can kind of go back and forth between them.

And so, one of the things that we would like for you to do today, and we're gonna give you a moment to think about this, we want this to be a session that has purpose to you, too. Okay. So it's not that you're just coming here and listening to what we have to say, but that – we want you to be able to walk away from here with at least the beginnings of some thoughts about what a socialization might be in your program or how to improve a socialization that you might be doing.

So, we'd like everybody to just take a minute and to think about a socialization maybe that you have done that you may want to improve, or maybe it's a socialization that you're thinking about doing. And to kind of think about what that might be. So you want to think about a theme. Someone mentioned that it can be related to themes, so think about a theme. And I've talked about some themes from our program that we used with books, but the themes could be around different things. It could be around food. It could be around culture. It could be around the seasons. So there are many different themes that you could use with regard to – could be around nature – you know, so many different themes that you could use with your socialization.

So, if people could just take a moment and think about a theme that you may want to do. And those of you also who are joining us online, if you could do that, as well; think about a theme, about a socialization that you would like to work on today. And as we go along, we're gonna ask you to do some different activities to help develop that theme and just keep that in your mind as we're talking so the different ideas can come to you.

Tamique: Okay. And also, as you're thinking about your theme, also think about your program's broader school readiness goals and how you can use the theme and those school readiness goals to drive the planning of your socialization. And we have a handout for you that's available online, and this can help outline some of the things you can think about in regards to school readiness and socialization. And here, we also just have two quick examples of some of our program's broader school readiness goals. Children will learn to use all senses to learn about their world; and parents will provide routines and family life and activities.

We also want to talk about engaging families in the planning process. So when we're preparing socializations, we want the families to be involved, as well. So we actually invite families to come and sit in on our meetings when we're planning socializations. We also get feedback from families after socializations through parent perspectives. So that's a form that families fill out and tell us about their experience, what they liked, what they thought worked really well, what they would change. They give us suggestions for other ideas and different socializations we can do in the future.

So we use that feedback when we're planning future socializations. And when we involve parents in that planning process, it gives them more ownership of the socialization, increases their engagement; and then when they come and they see their ideas incorporated and their children and other families participating in their ideas, their suggestions, it'll get them more excited about the socializations.

Also in the planning process, to help engage families, we use a multi-disciplinary approach. So we're fortunate enough to have partnerships throughout the hospital, and we have access to specialists from different disciplines – occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, developmental pediatricians – and we use them while we're planning. So the occupational therapist might come in during one of our planning meetings and help give suggestions about how we should lay things out to support kids as they practice their gross motor and fine motor skills.

As a psychology intern, I would work with home visitors, and they would say they might have a family that's really struggling with their child's behavior, temper tantrums, and then I could help support that family during the socialization. So, for example, we had a family where the little boy was 2, and he was having a really hard time with transitions and would cry and throw the temper tantrum on the floor during transitions. So I knew about that. I touched base with the home visitor beforehand to learn a little bit about the family; and then during the socialization, I was able to be at the door, greet the family when they came in, help them redirect their child, use distraction to transition, use positive directions, that sort of thing. So really, using a multi-disciplinary team in the planning process helps us engage families throughout.

Evelyn: And I think, Tamique, also, the young woman over here had mentioned about making sure that when we're planning the socializations that we are individualizing, as well as talking about group goals, and so – or the overall school readiness goals for the program. Is this mic on? Yes, okay. And so, this is actually a great example, I think, of how we can do that, how we can individualize when we have the socializations.

Another example, I think, with that – actually, with the same family, was a socialization that we had that was off-site. So we had it at a playground in Philadelphia. It's called Smith Playground, and it's a public playground that has both indoor space and outdoor space, and it's this really wonderful space for families. It's in our community. And so this family came to the socialization, and the little boy was very excited. And when he saw all of the play equipment and everything, he wanted to kind of run around and really get engaged in everything, and his parents were quite anxious about it.

And so, one of the things that the staff did in support of him is – even though we're gonna talk more about routine and the importance of routine in our socializations – because we knew about this family and because information had been transmitted from the home visitor to those who were actually preparing and facilitating the socialization, they were able to actually kind of go with the flow with this child and not kind of force him into the structure that we had set up because that wasn't gonna work for this family. If we had kind of forced this child to try to sit down, it wasn't gonna happen, and so then it would have made it into much more of a tense situation for the whole family and into a negative experience for the family.

So we were able to kind of support the family and kind of, you know, be with them as they went around, as their child was, you know, from their perspective, kind of out of control. But from our perspective, we kind of looked at it as, like, no, this is a really curious child who's never been in this environment and who really wants to learn and explore. So we were able to talk with the parents about that and support them. So, again, that's a way to kind of individualize within the socialization, even though there were some larger goals and structure that we had. But it's really important to have that flexibility, as well.

Tamique: Mm hmm. And thinking about individualizing, it's important to remember our children and parents that might have disabilities and making sure you plan the socialization so that the materials are accessible for all children, all families. We were talking about parent engagement and getting parents involved. So if we have words to the song, can all the parents read the words? They might have different literacy levels or different first languages, so it's important to keep that in mind as you're planning the socialization. And next, Arleen is gonna talk a little bit about what else we do to kind of create a supportive environment so we can make a lot of these changes to the socialization.

Arleen: So, Tamique and I had the pleasure of revamping our socialization planning form, and we presented it to the staff. So staff buy-in is very crucial in this, because we're the one who's doing the work. So I didn't want to make my peers, like, be mad at me, so I really needed to get their feedback. So looking at the form that we created, we had an opportunity to get a lot of feedback during the meetings; and one of my peers, she's a health advocator, Ajoa Abrokwa, you're gonna see a little clip about her really talking about oral health. And in our socialization form, we do have that area for tooth brushing. We teach oral education. So this is her giving feedback on how we can implement tooth brushing and oral health and the importance of it for the staff buy-in with this change.

[Video begins] Ajoa Abrokwa: So, first we know that you should be... However, you can see progression of tooth decay and plaque on your teeth from things that you eat. So it may be, sometimes when a kid drinks a Hug, his teeth turn red because the color's being absorbed by the plaque on the teeth, but it helps to see that so then you can see where you need to brush. So, during the tooth brushing time, we can show them, you know, we want our teeth to be white and then, like, show what we want. You want to prevent them from being green, orange, and all these other colors, and then have black so they can see the tooth decay.

No, this is for a very... Sometimes brown and then black, but make it the end result. Like... And just have a little color spectrum so the family can see that's why tooth brushing is so important.

Teacher: Right; once again, price costs.

Ajoa: We can use it for all of them. [Laughter] [Video ends]

Evelyn: I just wanted to make sure that people were able to hear the audio. Could people hear it? 'Cause I can do a little kind of recap on it. Do we need a recap? No, you could hear it? You could hear it? Okay. All right.

Arleen: So, with that being said – so, the staff buy-in was really crucial for us to make the changes on this particular form. We – you know, because we do have an area where we do tooth brushing, and we give our families toothbrushes. So having that time to really talk about oral hygiene was really important for us. And also, we wanted to keep in mind that doing this whole thing is a collaboration between all of us. So, as I said, I really wanted feedback from my peers. Instead of coming from the managers, it came from somebody else who has to do the work anyway, so it was really great feedback to get that information. So it's a collaboration.

Evelyn: And one thing, I don't know if people did pick up at the very end, you could hear the person talking. One of the other home visitors said something about, "Oh, we could use that for my socialization." So it was really an opportunity where they were trying to – you know, where they really bought into that idea of doing this. And it was around – they were talking about a socialization, again, where they were focusing on using colors and how she could incorporate color into socializations and how she can incorporate it into this tooth-brushing activity. And there's a question from online?

Spokeswoman: Yeah, the online folks actually wanted a recap of what the video was 'cause they couldn't hear it.

Evelyn: Okay, so we apologize for that. So, what the video was basically saying is that – we have a health educator with our program who was speaking, and she was talking about an idea that she had come up

with in our planning meeting about how a tooth-brushing activity could be incorporated into the socialization. And again, the socialization – they were talking about using colors in the socialization. So she basically was giving examples of – when we're talking about tooth brushing and how to brush your teeth properly, we can show people the color white and this is what we want our teeth to look like. And sometimes when we drink, you know, different colored fruit juices and the sugary juices, our teeth actually take on the color of those juices because of the plaque on our teeth. So they may look red or green, and she listed a bunch of colors, and then she said, ultimately, that your teeth may look black if they have significant decay and that we could actually show the different colors as we're talking about tooth brushing and reinforce that idea of color during that tooth-brushing activity.

Arleen: So, again, when planning for socialization, we also want to have the materials accessible. What we have noticed prior to all of this was it was taking our staff time to gather all of the materials. So let's say, for example, for "The Hungry Caterpillar," I have all of these already prepped. So, this is the leaf. I kind of cut that up myself and drew these things myself. And this is the caterpillar eating through the apple. So, all of these were prepped and ready for families as they come in. Each child would hold a fruit, walk up to their parent, and the parent can then, you know, show them how they eat through, which was a sock caterpillar on their hand. So all of these were prepped prior to planning the activities.

We also want to keep in mind that after you plan ahead, you use the families and the things that they have in their home as a resource. So, we ask our families to save us some toilet-paper holders. This is actually the butterfly. So all of these things is incorporated; that's family engagement. So, that's why we use things like that.

In the physical space, we also have a safety checklist that we check before and after play groups. The age groups are separated. And we'll have to keep in mind, also, having sufficient staff to accommodate the children that's going to be present, because we are the models for our families; so having the accommodation of the staff was really important.

Teacher: Can you talk a little bit more about your planning? Like, who's in the planning, how often is that planning, and is it all socialization planning?

Arleen: Yes.

Evelyn: Repeat the question.

Arleen: Can you repeat... Oh. No.

Evelyn: Okay. So, just repeating the question. So, the question was, can we talk a little bit more about our whole socialization planning process? Who's in the planning meetings, how frequently that we have them, that sort of thing.

Arleen: So, our planning meetings are a month ahead of the socialization itself, and we are a team-based program. So we have our health educator, lead home visitor, at-home visitors, a family liaison. So we all sit in, and the person who's leading the play group comes up with a theme. She kind of comes up with the ideas for the play group, and then other peers kind of elaborate on it. So, are we going to include nutrition? Are we going to engage – include family-community partnership? So it's a whole collaboration that is constantly evolving. So that's what we do throughout.

Teacher: You have one planning group per month?

Arleen: Two times.

Evelyn: And Jeanne.

Arleen: And Jeanne Cribben, who is an occupational therapist, she is also involved in the planning of the socialization.

Evelyn: Yeah, so we're very fortunate in that since we're at the hospital, we have some really wonderful partnerships with different disciplines and programs that are in the hospital, one of which is that we have the wonderful opportunity to work with an occupational therapist. Her name is Jeanne Cribben, and she's a really wonderful occupational therapist who not only helps in our planning, but she also comes and participates in our socializations. So we have the benefit of kind of her eyes in terms of looking at things that are going on with children, in terms of giving us ideas of how we can work with children to really improve or, you know, support their motor development, and how the families engage with them and work with them. So, it's a really wonderful opportunity.

And so another thing to think a lot about is, what are some of the programs or the other agencies in your community that you may be able to partner with that may be able to provide these kind of services? So that's actually just one example. Some other examples include that we have partnerships with – with a couple of fellowship programs at the hospital. So we have access at different times and for different purposes to nurses, to developmental pediatricians, to physical therapists, psychologists, to a variety of different people, and it's a really wonderful opportunity to kind of enhance the services that we're providing.

And speaking of our occupational therapist, she came and she did a wonderful presentation with our staff about writing SMART goals. And we want to talk a little bit about that. So again, we're talking about being purposeful; and it's very hard to be purposeful unless you have a goal, right? So when you have a goal in mind, then we know what we're reaching towards. So it's really important when you are developing your socialization to know exactly what your goals are, both for the socialization as well as for the specific activities that you are having in the socialization. And these goals are separate from your school readiness goals. Those are your programmatic goals.

I'm really talking about the goals that you want to have around your specific socialization. And so, SMART goals is one of the ways that we talk about goals, and it helps us to kind of remember how to write a really good goal. And while Jeanne came and talked to us about the SMART goals and spent about an hour and a half, we're not gonna do that today. We're only gonna spend a couple minutes kind of going over the SMART goals in a very general sense. But we want you to really kind of take it in because we do want to talk about having you think about when you're planning your socializations to use SMART goals because it can really help you to really hone in to exactly what it is you want to do and to make it very meaningful and purposeful and to know whether or not you achieve that goal.

So, the SMART goal, the acronym stands for – SMART stands for "Specific." And by "Specific," what we're talking about is... And again, this is on one of the handouts that you have, as well, "Specific" relates to – relates to "W" questions. So, "W" questions include what, why, who, where, and which. So when you're writing your goal, you should know what's the goal, why are you writing the goal, who is it about, where is it going to take place, those sort of questions. Okay, that's a key piece of your goal.

The "M" stands for "Measurable." So, "Measurable" answers the how questions. So, how much do we want of whatever the end product is? How many? Maybe how many times a child might do something. How will I know when the goal is accomplished? So the "M" stands for it being measurable, a measurable goal.

The "A" stands for the goal being attainable. So it's really important, we know, to have goals that are realistic, and I think at the beginning, someone talked about things being meaningful to families. So having a goal that's attainable means it's meaningful. So it's not something maybe that's too easy and there's no point in even doing it because we've done that a million times, but also having a goal that's too difficult, because if it's so difficult then why are you even gonna try to do it? So, it's finding a goal that meets that nice balance. So it means that the person was motivated to do it and they can accomplish that goal.

Another thing is the goal is relevant. And again, this goes back to the idea of it both being relevant to what your program school readiness goals are. So it's relevant to the needs are of the children in your program, but also it's relevant to the individual children in the socialization so that you're able to kind of individualize what you're doing for those children.

And the last piece is that the goal is timely. And so that answers the question when. So when will it be achieved? So if you're doing a goal for socialization, it should be something that you can do within that time frame of the socialization.

Oh, I'm sorry. There was a question? I'm sorry.

Spokeswoman: It was a little bit before the SMART, so we're going to let her go ahead.

Evelyn: I'm sorry.

Teacher: That's okay. So, my question is, how do you get parents to become involved in the planning process? So, I'm a parent rep from Policy Council. We have two sites that are within a homeless shelter and one that is at a continuation high school for teen parents. And we've had a huge, huge issue with family engagement in socializations. Perfect example, we hired a nutritionist to come and teach nutrition. And we service 75 families. Typically, I'd say at least 60 percent of our families have two or more children. Two families showed up, and it was a five-week thing. And so, we are having just a big problem with family engagement in socializations, but we want them to be involved in the planning so that they actually attend. So how do you guys get the parents to actually become involved in planning with you?

Evelyn: Well, I mean, I think there were a number of strategies that we used, and we're gonna be talking about some of them kind of throughout, so I hope we're answering it as we go along. One of the things that we did talk about already was this parent perspective, and I'm gonna go back to that because the parent perspective is a questionnaire that we hand out after our socializations; but that means they have to get there first, right, in order to fill that out?

However, we use our parent perspectives with other activities that we do in our program, as well. So we do have families that come to certain activities and they may not come to another. So if we have a family that comes, say, to a parent-focused activity, like a parenting class, we would also use the parent

perspective to get feedback from them there. And from there, we can get some information about, what are some things that would be interesting and relevant to them? And then, hopefully, when we include that, that they could then come to the socialization.

We advertise our socializations, as well; so we put out fliers a good... We have to be kind of prepared a couple months in advance because we put out a whole calendar of all of our events that comes out a couple weeks before the month begins, so we have to get those fliers together a couple weeks before that. So we have the socializations listed. Well, we have everything listed on the calendar, including the socializations, and we have a flier for each specific event.

And so the socializations will be something that we'll have listed on a flier, and in that, we'll talk a lot about – not a lot, but we give some highlights about, what are some of the goals for that socialization? What is the title of the socialization? What are some of the goals? What can the family kind of expect when they come to the socialization? So then they would get some feedback about whether or not we're actually addressing some of that. So those are some ideas.

Arleen: And also – and also the staff. We are the ones who promote this 'cause we're the ones doing it, so we encourage our families to come. "If you come to the Hungry Caterpillar, you'll be learning about nutrition, you'll be learning about counting, you'll be learning about shapes. It's going to be fun." Most of them always ask, because our families get very attached to their home visitors, "Are you gonna be there?" Sometimes it's not my play group 'cause it's different teams, but I'll say, "Yes, I'll be there. You'll be fine. The staff is welcoming." So we – the staff have to promote coming into the attendance, so we really talk a lot about promoting the event and telling them about it.

Evelyn: And I think Arleen actually hit upon a really key piece, which is that piece about families being kind of connected to their home visitor. I mean, you have a very intimate relationship with your families, right? So they may not feel like they want to come, maybe, if you're not there. Yeah. So, other people, you have that experience, as well? So, one of the things that we do try to do is to have teams that we work with. So every home visitor works also with a health educator and works also with a family service liaison. I do mental health consultation, as well as supervision of the home visitors.

So we have different people that also know who the staff are – who the families are, so hopefully they'll feel comfortable with other people. So, we try to build the relationship so they're not just connected to their home visitor only. Although, you know, you do have the most intense relationship with your home visitor.

Teacher: I guess I have a couple questions. My understanding is – do you hold just two socializations a month for your entire center for all of your home visitors? And two, not all the home visitors are at the socialization? So, I mean, it's possible that you may have a family that's connected with Home Visitor A but Home Visitor A might not be at that socialization?

Evelyn: Right, that's correct. So, we do. We have two socializations, and we have two socialization planning teams. So those teams comprise of, you know, like half of the staff on each team. And so the home – so they alternate when they do the socializations. So the family may not know the home visitor who's on that team, but again, we try to make sure that we're very connected with them because since we work as teams, we do go out on home visits with – with the home visiting staff. Their health educator may go, their lead home visitor, who's kind of like a mentor home visitor, may go, and they

may be on different teams, that sort of thing. So the teams – they should be connected with somebody who's on that team if it's not specifically their home visitor.

Teacher: How large are your socializations then? Aren't they huge? [Laughter]

Evelyn: No. I mean, I wish they could be huge. We have seen – we have seen a definite improvement in them. So we may see socializations with 20 – in the low 20s coming, which is – and remember, we have 124 children in the home-based option, and some of them are from, you know, families with multiple children. So I can't tell you exactly what the percentage is in terms of, you know, the exact percentage of who's coming, of how many are coming, but I think that's pretty good because I know it's – you know, of course we'd love it to be everybody coming, but I know socializations, there's a lot of difficulty with that. So... [Inaudible]

Spokeswoman: You have a lot of questions. Are you taking them at this time?

Evelyn: Yes. So, you know what? If we can hold some of the questions, because we do want to kind of move on. We want to take questions, as well, but we're going to have more time for questions as we're going along. So we want to make sure we hit upon some of the other points, so I apologize for that.

Tamique: Yeah, we'll definitely have a chance to answer more of your questions as we go through, but we wanted to wrap up the discussion of SMART goals by giving you guys an example of some of our SMART goals and having you practice writing some SMART goals. So, here up on the projector is a handout that is available to you. If not, we have it up here that you can use to write your SMART goals. So you want to use your theme and your broader school readiness goals to drive these SMART goals.

So, we talked about the socialization where we have the "Very Hungry Caterpillar" theme, and one of our goals was: Children will use all of their senses to learn about their worlds. So, for prenatal moms, one of our goals were: Mom will tap her belly to count the number of fruits that the caterpillar eats. So we're incorporating numeracy there, promoting that parent-child connection, mom connecting to the belly, the sense of touch. So that's an example of a prenatal SMART goal.

A SMART goal for the infants would be: Parents will name two labels of how a fruit feels as the child explores the fruit. So parents might say, "Soft, hard, wet, mushy," but just parents giving their child labels, so promoting literacy and language skills. The child's exploring the fruit by looking at the fruit and feeling the fruit.

For that same socialization, a SMART goal for toddlers would be: Toddlers will string at least three fruit on a pipe cleaner. So, Arleen was showing you some of the materials. So practicing that hand-eye coordination and those fine motor skills, learning about the fruit and what they look like.

So we want to take a few minutes for all of you to practice writing some SMART goals. So you are thinking about a theme in your head and you are thinking about your own program school readiness goals. So, if we could have the two sections over here write a SMART goal for prenatal moms, and you can partner with someone next to you; and these two middle sections, write a SMART goal for an infant; and then the two sections at the end, write a SMART goal for toddlers; and then those watching at home can pick who they'd like to write a SMART goal for, and then we'll share a few in a couple minutes.

Tamique: Hands on top!

Arleen: Everybody stop!

Tamique: Hands on top!

All: Everybody stop!

Tamique: Thank you, thank you. So, in the interests of time, we're gonna move on. This is definitely a long activity that you can really spend delving in and coming up with SMART goals for all of your different age groups, but can we start with the prenatal moms? Somebody over here or online who created a goal for a prenatal mom. If you'd like to share... Or if you had trouble, maybe some of the areas that made it hard.

Teacher: I didn't write it down, so bear with me, but we – our whole theme was about outdoor experiences and for the kids to have things labeled and be able to explore and touch the different things outside. So for our prenatal moms, we talked about prenatal moms would be aware and promotion of the health benefits of exercise and stress relief.

Tamique: Definitely. That's a really great one. And if you came up with certain things that prenatal moms can do. So if you had, they're gonna walk around the park once or, you know, giving them ideas. That's a really great one. And you're incorporating exercise, physical health, everything in that SMART goal. Great. What about for the infants? Do we have a SMART goal for the infants? These two middle sections?

Evelyn: Or from online. Does anybody have an infant SMART goal they came up with? Or one they're working on?

Tamique: Maybe if you give us your theme, we can help you think of a good SMART goal. Or where did you start? What were you talking about? [Indistinct]

Teacher: We're limited because it's an infant, but if you're reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and he's at that stage where you're introducing fruits to the child or vegetables, that you can talk about the color, what it tastes like, what have you. You know, so every week you introduce a new vegetable or new fruit. You can continue reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" one page at a time with a baby.

Tamique: Right. Yeah, and that's a good point. You might have to adjust for an infant and maybe only focus on one page, but that can be your SMART goal. So, make it very specific. Great. Any toddler SMART goals? Or maybe themes you were working on to create your SMART goal?

Teacher: In our center, what we do in September, because I partner with Head Start, and our county – because we have five counties. So each county has its own socials, and in the county where I have one, we only have two Early Head Start families in that county, so I partner with Head Start. So, we make September a pedestrian safety, because that way we can hit the bus rules for the children that are gonna be riding the bus for Head Start, but we can also work on, like, walking with the parent on the sidewalk, paying attention crossing at the crosswalk. So we incorporate it that way.

Tamique: That's great, and you can incorporate safety but also physical health and exercise in that one, as well. So those are good things to think about as you go through and create these SMART goals. So, next, we're gonna...

Spokeswoman: We have another comment, if we can...

Tamique: Oh, yeah.

Teacher: Sorry, I just had a quick question as to how you introduced or how you explained what your SMART goals are to the parents at the socials? Is that something that you started out with? Like, this is our goal as to what we're gonna do today, or how do they know, you know, that they're gonna do – like, tell the child two different things that the fruit feels like or – you know what I mean? How do you accomplish that goal through the parents?

Tamique: That's a good question. So in the very beginning of the socialization during circle time, which we're gonna talk about next, like our structure, we talk about what the theme is today, what are some of the different things we want you to do; and then before parents leave circle time, we talk about, in the toddler room, here are the materials we have there, here are some activities you can do. And then the home visitors and other supporting staff are there to help support the parents. So, as we see them interacting with the child's mom, "How about you tell him how the apple feels." So we're there to kind support throughout and encourage parents to accomplish some of these goals and do some of these activities throughout the socialization.

So, next, we're gonna talk about the structure of our socializations and how we implement them.

Arleen: So, we select songs, and so, like, sing the song. Like, we just did the hello song, and then we have a goodbye song; and that is actually encouraging our families with routine and school readiness. We want to make the theme very relevant. So you want to make it relevant toward these songs; so one of the songs were, "Flap, flap, flap your wings" to the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" because know at the end of the reading for "The Hungry Caterpillar," there was a butterfly. So parents got an opportunity to have the infants flap their wings, which is motion, and the toddlers were able to do the singing.

We also introduced a book, and we talk about the illustrator, the colors in the book. We talk about author. We talk new words, "cocoon." Some sure had never even heard of a cocoon, so their vocabulary is expanding as we go along with all of the structure of our socialization. We introduce poems. You can use your child's name when you're talking about poetry. We emphasize routines with that.

And then we wanted to consider culture. How do we incorporate culture into our socialization? So we created an area called the Culture Corner. And in that area, we wanted to talk about family traditions. What do you use in your home to greet each other? So we get our families to really have a voice to talk about their traditions. We thought it was important because we have families of different diversity, and that's a way that we tie in diversity and inclusiveness into our program. An example is one book that we use called "I Love You," and home visitors got an opportunity to take home – to the home visits, cut out hearts, and let the parents write. "How do you say, 'I love you' to your child?" And brought it back to the play group, and we shared it, and they will post it. So everybody kind of felt individualized, because it was posted with what they say to their families with that book.

Evelyn: So, just some quick examples of how people answered that. So, we have people who speak different languages. So we had some people who actually kind of literally said, "This is how I say 'I love you' " in the language that they speak, but we also had people who talked about different things that they do with – with their children. So, one mother actually even wrote a whole song that she had kind of

created herself that she sings to her child; and when she came to the socialization, she actually sang it and showed us. And so, the child was actually kind of on the other side of the room, and when she started singing it and using the little nickname that she uses for that child, he stopped what he was doing and he turned around, and he just beamed at her.

And so it really talked a lot about, you know, what goes on in that family in terms of how they relate to each other, and it also gives families – the families ideas about things that they can do and incorporate, you know, in their homes. So those were just some of the examples. You know, there were things about, you know, "I hold my child," or you know, "I read bedtime stories with them;" things like that. But people had different ways that they showed or told their child that they loved them.

Arleen: And – and all of that being said, that's what we call culture, and that's what we want our families to be a part of.

Tamique: So, next I'm gonna go into a little bit more detail about some of the activities that we do during socialization; so, after we have our circle time and we break up into different activities. And here are just some pictures from the two socializations we were telling you about. So, here for the infants, the parents made a carrot using the infant's footprint. And then here for the toddlers, like I was mentioning before, the pipe cleaners, and they can weave the pipe cleaners through the different fruits.

And when you think about the activities, you want them to be developmentally appropriate. So all of your families to be able to access the activities. So, here's an activity that we created for prenatal moms. So, it's mobile to go above the crib, and it has different fruit, each different colors of the rainbow. So really promoting attachment, getting mom to make something special for the baby that she can hang up over the crib.

For that same socialization, we had a mat with fruit in a Ziploc bag for the infants so they can tactilely explore the fruit; and this will also promote tummy time, developing their motor skills. And then we adapted this for the toddlers and gave them these plastic hammers so that they can bang the fruit, explore that way, see what happens when force is applied to the fruit; so just really giving them a chance to explore.

Also, of course, school readiness. We're gonna keep talking about this throughout. You want to make sure that each of your activities is promoting school readiness. So, here we have at the top a matching game so the toddlers could match the actual fruits to the correct paper fruit or the colors; so promoting school readiness that way. And then we have puzzles at the bottom. So constantly thinking about, how can we incorporate different parts of cognitive development, language development throughout every activity we do in the socialization?

And then, of course, you want to think about your domains of development. So, language and literacy; physical development and health; cognitive and general knowledge; social and emotional development; and approaches to learning. So, as many of these domains of development that you can incorporate in one activity, the more engaging the socialization will be and the more the families will take from the socialization. And next, we're going to talk about mealtime and how we make mealtime purposeful through our socializations.

Evelyn: So, one thing we talked about – you know, we've been talking about is how do we get families to come to these socializations. And one thing that really does attract people is food, right? So we – so we

And so... But we make sure that that mealtime is actually a very purposeful part of the socialization, too. It's not just about eating the meal. So, how can we really incorporate mealtime and be purposeful even there, as well? Our socializations typically are either 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or they're noon to 3 p.m. or they're 3 to 6 p.m. Okay, so depending on what the time is, we generally eat either at the beginning if it's – if it's the noon to 1. We'll do our circle time first and kind of get people oriented to what's going on in the socialization, and then we will do the meal. If it's the other times, we do the meal at the end of the socialization.

But again, we try to make the meal related to the whole socialization. So, for example, with the socialization that was called "Eating the Rainbow" or "Eating the Alphabet," the home visitor actually specifically asked, "When we have this meal, can we get a lot of really colorful fruit?" So she really wanted to make sure we had blueberries and that we had mangos, and that we had different color fruit and fruits with different names and different things like that so that children could be exposed to that, not only in the playing, you know, where they were kind of exploring the fruit in the activities section, but then actually at mealtime they had the opportunity to work with the different fruit.

When you – when you're setting the table where you have the table settings for the families, that is an opportunity to talk about STEM, to talk about science and math activities. So when we serve our food, we have different portion sizes. Our children are served on smaller plates, then our adults have larger plates. So we can talk about big and little, which is small, which is larger. We can talk about, you know, which are the spoons, which are the forks, which are the knives.

When we're looking at the food, of course we can talk about the colors of the food, textures, that sort of thing, and we can encourage families to engage with their children in that way. One of the things that we do during the socializations is we make sure that as a staff that we'll sit down with the families and eat with them. And in this way, we can help to model some of that with the families so that hopefully, again – you know, like I said before, we talk about our home visits as being 90 minutes, but we want families to have this as a takeaway that they – you know, that they do these activities with their children throughout the week.

It's not just about the home visit. Same thing with the socialization. So when we modeled this mealtime, we want families to be at home and not in front of the TV when they are eating with their children but to be really engaging with their children while they're eating and have that opportunity to learn and to explore. You know, of course, obviously, we can talk about nutrition during the mealtime, different food groups. We have My Plate up there, so we can talk about that.

And the other piece that's really big during that time, of course, is right after mealtime, is the tooth brushing. And we talked a little bit about the tooth brushing when you saw the video with Ajoa where we talk about proper technique. And of course, the kids always love the tooth brushing and they love getting their toothbrushes and choosing colors of toothbrushes, and that sort of thing. And I just want to touch on that parent perspective again because this is the time when we actually do give the parent perspective usually, because it's usually at the end of the socialization.

Okay, so the next piece that we have is – we have a handout for you that you may have printed out. And it's the one that's up there on the screen, as well, right now, and it's our school readiness handout. So if you look at it, you'll see that we've been talking a lot about – about incorporating kind of school readiness into your socialization. There are different times during the socialization. We have circle time, we have activities, and we have mealtime. So those are the three main areas.

And if you look on that handout, you'll see that we have – in circle time you can talk about routine, you can talk about literacy and activities, you can talk about STEM, and you can talk about social skills. In mealtime, you can talk about colors and motor skills. But of course, you can talk about any of those things at any of those times. That's just an example. But again, we want you think about that socialization that you're kind of planning in your mind as you're sitting here today and think about how you would incorporate school readiness into your socialization.

So, which part of the socialization would you incorporate it into and what exactly would that activity be? Maybe the goal that you were working on, or maybe you haven't worked on that goal but it's an activity. Maybe you haven't fully developed the goal fully, but it's an activity that you're interested in doing and how that supports school readiness within your socialization.

So again, if we can ask people this first section over here, if you could focus on a circle time activity and how that might be related to school readiness. And in the middle two groups here, if you could focus on an activity that you would plan during the socialization and how that might be related specifically school readiness. And in the group over there, if you could focus on mealtime and what activity you could promote during mealtime that would also focus on school readiness. And online, you can choose whichever one you would like to do. And we'll give you a few minutes to think about that and to talk about it with a partner, and then we'll come back and get some examples.

Tamique: All right. Are we ready?

Arleen: Do you want to say that?

Tamique: Mm hmm.

Arleen: So we should just stop them quick.

Tamique: What is it? She said, "Hands on top, everybody stop," right?

Arleen: Yeah.

Tamique: Hands on top!

All: Everybody stop!

Tamique: Hands on top!

All: Everybody stop!

Tamique: Okay. Thank you, everyone. So as we're wrapping up, now what I'd like to do is just share each person. We'll hear one activity from circle time, one from the activities in the middle of the socialization, and then one activity from mealtime, and then we're gonna wrap up really quickly and tell you about what we do after socialization. And then we'll take your questions, and we'll be also available afterwards to answer more questions if you'd like to stick around. So first, from over here or on online, are there any activity suggestions from circle time? Any books that you would read based on the themes or your school readiness goals that you were coming up with?

Teacher: We don't have a home-base where I'm at, but... It would be to read a book about routine, a child's routine, like – and then talk about what they do in their routines. What do you do to get your kids up? What do you do during breakfast? What do you do at brushing teeth time? What do you do at bedtime? And get some good ideas that way.

Tamique: That's a great idea. So in that activity, you're incorporating language and literacy, routines, but also the Culture Corner, asking families to share what they do. What about generally in the meat of your socialization? What would some of your activities be from this middle group or someone online? Any ideas or themes you had? Maybe you need help thinking of an activity for a particular theme.

Teacher: We talked about doing something with taking turns.

Tamique: Mm hmm.

Teacher: Taking turns with toddlers and preschoolers more.

Tamique: Definitely.

Teacher: And just taking that time to – everybody gets a turn, kind of getting that concept across and working on that a little bit. Everybody would get a turn maybe with a ball – a beach ball. You know, "Now it's your turn, and you can either roll it," or – you know, depending on what level they're at.

Tamique: Definitely. So starting that school readiness goal of taking a turn; even with the infants, having the parents kind of help them. And then those motor skills, if you have a ball, if you're rolling it, throwing it, what you're doing with the ball. What about during mealtime? Did you guys think of a way you can incorporate school readiness into a mealtime?

Teacher: We talked about having them serve it. Like, have them serve themselves so they can learn to count how many pieces they get, the portion size, hand-eye coordination, the muscles they use. So...

Tamique: That's a great activity, and you have a lot of domains of development incorporated in that one. Great. And so, we also want to touch on what we do post socialization because that's also really important.

Teacher: You have another comment in the back.

Tamique: Oh.

Spokeswoman: There was a suggestion from online for mealtime, so I just wanted to share that. "I would incorporate social skills into mealtime. This is where we could model manners, as well as getting parents and children talking to each other more, such as what their plans are for the weekend with the children. And parents may find an opportunity to socialize outside of EHS groups."

Tamique: That's a great idea; great suggestion.

Arleen: So, after socializations have ended, home visitors usually will take home to the home visits an activity for parents to continue, because it's a continuous learning. So we'll take some of the activities

we use, like storybook stretches. So, how could we expand on "The Hungry Caterpillar?" What else could we talk about? We use learning games. That's part of our curriculum, so we give them handout on that. We talk about [indistinct]. That's always another resource that we use to help our families to continue with their learning even after they leave socializations.

Tamique: And we also try and share additional resources with families. So if there's a similar book, another Eric Carle book. We told you guys about First Books, so using that to get books for our families and share them. Community activities, so telling parents about programs that are going on at their local library or parks. And also, one example for us is the community-supported agriculture program. So that's a food-share program, and our families get access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at a discounted price. So, encouraging good nutrition, exposing families to different fruits and vegetables that they might not normally eat. And for our socializations, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and Eating the Rainbow, that was a really helpful way to tie back our socialization to community partnerships.

And we do have a handout for all of you about different ways you can encourage family engagement. So I would encourage you to go through, read this, maybe jot down some ideas of what you can do as you're planning your socialization to promote family engagement. And then, that's all that we have for you. Thank you for your attention.

Tamique: Our contact information is listed up here, and we would like to take your questions from online or here.

Spokeswoman: And if you can be patient and hold your hand up until you have a mic in front of you, we'd appreciate that. We have one over here.

Teacher: Maybe you already mentioned, but how do you access the free books? The First Books?

Tamique: Yeah. So it's a grant, and you can go online and register with them if your program is serving low-income families, and then you can buy books at a discounted rate through First Books.

Teacher: It's not necessarily a comment but a suggestion, and – yeah, it's not a question. It's a comment. [Laughter] So, two things that worked really well within our socialization to get families engaged is, every other month, we actually mail out a postcard to our families – to all families. So it brings up that conversation again with our home visitor. They're like, "I got this in the mail. What is it?" You know, and obviously, it's in Spanish and English, and we're trying to move toward Chinese.

The third is an incentive program. You know, with Early Head Start, we have to have an incentive program, and so our incentive program is Baby Bucks. So, if they're going to the well child exam, if they get, like, this fake money or if they come to socialization and things like that, and we have, like, a little store that families can go and go shopping for diapers and things like that. And all that is donated, so...

Arleen: Nice.

Tamique: That's a great idea.

Evelyn: Thank you.

Teacher: I'm just curious as to – you said you created goals for the socialization ahead of time. Do you then report on them down to, like, the individual child that attends? Do you report out on how they worked toward those goals, or do you just create the goal as – you know, for the program as a whole for that socialization for anyone who attends, or do you bring it down to the individual level as well?

Evelyn: Do you want to talk?

Arleen: So, we try to incorporate it with the family's IFPP individual goal. So, sometimes we don't know every family, home visitors don't, but we try to incorporate that with the IFPP goals for the families, yes.

Evelyn: Online question?

Teacher: Yeah. There were a number of folks online who wondered how you kept everybody engaged for three hours, especially the youngest children.

Arleen: So, we try to put out a variety of activities because we know children's attention span is very short. So, we have various things out. So sometimes if a family is engaged with, let's say, lace, and then we may have puzzles, and we may have some bubbles. So we try to set different areas where the children can be more engaged into other things. So families are encouraged to follow their child's lead.

Evelyn: And also, someone had mentioned something about families becoming more connected with each other, and we found that socializations have been a time when families have really gotten to know each other and have developed really strong relationships that go beyond our program and that last even after they're out of our program. So when families are at the socialization, they really do connect. Their kids become play partners, and they do play dates together outside often. So when they're at the socialization, they're engaging, I think, at multiple levels. So they're engaging with their children, but the parents are also engaging with each other and getting to know each other, and kind of facilitating that engagement with their children often. So I think that's another way that people are engaged.

And again, we have that routine, so we're trying to teach school readiness. When children go to school, there's going to be a routine. And so, when we have that routine around things like circle time and then we adjust what we're doing to meet the needs of each child, I think that helps with – with making it last for three hours, if you will. Because we know we also have to have some flexibility, like that example I gave, you know, earlier – you know, earlier about the little boy who needed to kind of run around. So if we had tried to make him sit down and be still, he wouldn't have gotten through three hours, but allowing him to be able to move around was very helpful for him. Any other questions? Or from online?

Teacher: There were a couple of comments online about using technology. Tweeting or texting as reminders for upcoming socializations. Several people said that that actually helped in their programs with the younger families who have those devices. That's how they communicate.

Evelyn: Right. I actually – I think that's a great suggestion. I think that we do need to think about how people communicate. And I know for me, I don't know how to do the Twitter thing and all that, but I know that a lot of our families do interact with their home visitors. They want their home visits confirmed and whatnot by texts and all that kind of stuff. So I think that's a really great suggestion in that we are, again, flexible and using the modes that families use for communication and that they're comfortable with because this is how families do communicate kind of with each other, and so we're using that. That's a great – that's a great recommendation. Any other...

Teacher: Do you transport your families to socializations, or how do they get there?

Evelyn: We do not transport them; but what we do is, we do offer to families that if they're coming to a socialization, we will reimburse them or we will offer them tokens for the bus. Or if the family is a prenatal family or new – like with a newborn, or if there may be other special circumstances, say around a disability or that sort of thing, we will provide cabs for the families provided that they have an appropriate car seat. We will provide cabs. Safety is very important. We will provide cab service. And for our socializations, we are in a – in two zip codes in West Philadelphia, and a lot of our families actually are in walking distance from our program, as well, so we don't provide transportation.

Teacher: So you find those that are closer are the ones that come, then? Because – I mean, if you've got 150 families and you've only got 20 coming, what do you do to reach out to the other families who aren't coming to the socials?

Evelyn: Well, we have – we have about 100... Well, in terms of the number of families that we have coming to the socializations, we have about 124 children – children and pregnant moms. Some of them are, you know, siblings and whatnot. We do offer a lot of tokens and cabs, so we do have people coming from different distances coming to the socialization, as well. But we do offer the socialization to every family that – you know, that's in the program, and we try to talk with them a lot about what it's about.

Families sign up for the socialization. Sometimes families that sign up may not come. We do make phone calls to remind them within – you know, a few days before the socialization, we call to see who's gonna be coming. And with that, we try to adjust for things like the food that we've ordered and the activities that we're doing to make sure that we're accommodating to those families. But we do try to support families in the ways that we can around – around transportation, but actually providing the transportation isn't one of the things that we do.

Teacher: Do you try to have – set up socials that are closer to the neighborhoods where they live then, rather than having them come to a central location?

Evelyn: Well, we do have socializations in different parts of our area. But again, if you think about West Philadelphia and the zip codes, it's really not that broad of an area. Even though it's two zip codes, it's a very densely populated area. But we do have socializations at places like playgrounds, at local playgrounds, at the one we talked about before, which is Smith Playground. There's another playground in a different part of town – or a different part of our area that's called Clark Park. We have them at the different libraries there are in our area. So there are different places that we will have socializations that may be closer to where someone might be living, as well.

Teacher: So going on that, like, on the parks and different locations, how do you guys deal or have you had any challenges with like the safety and like meeting all the Performance Standards when you're going outside of, like, the actual center? 'Cause it is a public place, right, and it's like, other kids are there and things like that.

Evelyn: Right. One of the things that we talk about when we start every socialization is that the parents need to be observant of their children and that they're responsible for the safety of their children. And we do go over a safety plan whether we're at our center or whether we're out in another place, so we talk about where, you know, safety exits are, should there be an alarm, what you should do, that we use

the attention grabber occasionally, too, to make sure people know, where is your child, you know, so that they are being vigilant about their children.

We look at that as another kind of school readiness goal for the family, that the family's learning how to be vigilant for their child. Of course, as the staff, we're being very vigilant as well, but we do talk with families about safety. You want to talk a little bit about the playground safety stuff that you did, because I think that's really relevant, Arleen?

Arleen: Yeah. Usually if we're having a play group at the playground – I've been to the training, and we talk about the safety on the swings, keeping your child with you at all times, being mindful with the equipment that's being used, age-appropriate. So at the Smith playground, the things are really, like, for different ages, so it's easy for our families to get to the toddler area or to the infant area. It's a very safe environment for them.

Evelyn: And do a sweep. And when we do – we do a sweep to safety check. Okay, I think that we're out of time. I want to thank you for your participation, for coming, and I hope that we were able to answer some of your questions.

Arleen: Thank you very much. [Applause]