

School Readiness for Infant and Toddlers: What Should Collaboration Directors Know?

Frances Moore: So welcome, everybody. We'll go ahead and get started. We will be hearing some more beeps, I think, for the next few minutes as people join. My name is Frances Moore. I'm one of senior writer and trainers here at the Early Head Start National Resource Center. I'll be your moderator today. Before we get started, I want to go through some housekeeping items to help things kind of run smoothly, hopefully. And the first thing is that – to let you know that the webinar will be recorded and posted on the ECLKC at some point. We also want you to know how to ask questions and solve problems during the webinar.

So the first thing we're going to ask you to do is press *6 as soon as you join the webinar. You – and then I also need you to know that if you have any technical difficulties at all during the webinar, you can post a question in the question feature on the panel to your right of your screen. And we'll be – have somebody respond to you with how to solve that – that difficulty. Also, we're going to have a question and answer period at the end. And at that time, all your lines will be un-muted and you can ask questions to the panelist at that time. You'll have to press *6 again before you ask your question, and then *6 again when you're complete with your question. You can also post questions during the webinar, and those questions will be prioritized and answered as time allows at the end as well. So – and I'll remind you of these at the end when the question and answer period comes.

So with that, Sarah Merrill is here with a welcome from the Office of Head Start to get us started.

Sarah Merrill: Thanks, Frances. I'm Sarah Merrill, I'm an infant/toddler program specialist at the Office of Head Start, and it's my great pleasure to be here with you, and even greater pleasure to welcome you on behalf of Yvette Sanchez Fuentes in the Office of Head Start for today's webinar. As you know, this the second webinar in the series hosted in the series hosted by the Early Head Start National Resource Center. On behalf of the Office of Head Start, know that this is to support your role as Head Start collaboration director in supporting state systems, programs, staff, and most importantly, influencing the care and learning settings of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in your – in your local state.

The administration has focused a lot of time and attention in the systemic approach to ensure continuity of care and quality services, all with the ultimate goal of enhancing children's well-being and their developmental competence. And this is the foundation for school readiness. And we know you play a significant role within – within your state.

We really appreciate your work and your willingness to attend these webinars. And I also want to take a moment to thank the Early Head Start National Resource Center for organizing these webinars. I have the opportunity to work with Frances, Tracey, Holly, and Jennifer; and they've been working very diligently with Karen Heying, who you know and love. And Karen, I wanted to thank you, too, for connecting us together and I look to – to today's discussion. And I wanted to give Karen a moment to offer her welcome. Karen?

Karen Heying: Hi! Thanks, Sarah. Well, I have to say this has been really exciting for me to – to see these webinars unfold. When EHS NRC had approached me and Angie and folks about doing these webinars, I thought this is a wonderful way to really get folks connected to the infant/toddler world. And – and although many of you are certainly connected very strongly out there, but it was a way to really keep

you in the loop about what's going on around infants and toddlers and just kind of bring everybody up to speed. We have also invited the Office of Child Care CCDF administrators to join on this call as well. So we're excited have them if they were able to join to be a part of these calls as well.

As Sarah said, this is the second in a series of webinars. The – the first one that we had a short time ago was on home visiting. This one, of course, is on infant/toddler school readiness. We'll be having another one coming up on professional development and credentialing [inaudible]. And then, the last will be on infant/toddler research. And so, we look forward to those as well. But again, thanks to EHS NRC for the hard work that they've been doing. And I look forward to hearing our two panelists, which I believe most of you know. So, I will turn it back to Frances.

Frances: Thanks, Sarah and Karen, for setting the stage for our discussion today. It's a big topic and we want to focus on providing you specific information and opportunities. So our goals today are to provide some foundational guidance from the Office of Head Start on what school readiness for infants and toddlers means for collaboration directors. We also want you to have that opportunity to hear from two of your – your peers on what's going on in their states around school readiness. And there also will be time, as we mentioned before, for questions and answers, discussion on the topic. We'll also want to make sure you have all the resources that are currently available on school readiness for infants and toddlers.

I'd like to make sure that you are aware of the – of the distinguished panel that we have for you to make – to help us get to these goals. You've heard from Karen, and she's the senior adviser at the Office of Head Start. We've also heard a little bit from Sarah Merrill. She's an infant/toddler program specialist with the Office of Head Start. And in a few minutes, she'll be providing us with an overview for – for school readiness. Then we'll hear from Sandy Petersen from the Early Head Start National Resource Center. She's the director of Outreach, Research, and Innovation, and she'll give us a little bit more detail about school readiness goals for infants and toddlers. And then your first colleague to speak will be Janice Haker; and she's the director – the collaboration director in Georgia, and she'll be talking about what's going on there in Georgia on school readiness. And then after her, Patricia Persell from New York will speak with us about what's happening in New York.

So it's really exciting to be – to hear about what's going on. So first, we'd like to – we're going to hear from Sarah Merrill. As I said, she's the infant/toddler specialist at the Office of Head Start and has been instrumental in providing her expertise [inaudible] Office of Head Start on this topic. Sarah?

Sarah: Thanks, Frances. So my purpose is to provide you with an overview of what school readiness means for Head Start in general, but particularly with a focus on infants and toddlers. Since Head Start's inception in the '60s, it's always been its mission to support children in being prepared and ready for school. And the Head Start Act in 2007 states that Head Start's purpose is to promote school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development in early learning environment that support children's growth. And all this happens through the provision of comprehensive services to children and their families. Can you turn to the next slide? Thanks.

In December 2012, new Head Start regulations were released. §1307 was published; that outlines what school readiness is. §1307.3(1)(i) states that all grantees must establish goals – pragmatic goals for improving school readiness for participating children and that these goals reflect the ages of children participating birth to 5. So what are school readiness goals? Well, the Head Start Performance Standards say that the goals articulate programs' and grantees' expectation of children's status and progress across

the five domains, and that this will improve children's readiness for kindergarten. And really, up until §1307 was released, the discussion about school readiness primarily focused on preschool children.

So, we all know that the foundations for learning begin prenatally and occur during the first three years of development as well. So, if we go to the next slide, Holly... So the term school readiness can provoke a lot of images and responses from people, particularly when the term is linked with infants and toddlers. But in general, school readiness means children are possessing the skills and knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning in life. And school readiness is far more than the ability to read and write. It's also the ability to control and regulate one's body and emotions. It's the ability to focus and persist, to communicate, to relate with others, to be healthy and curious; and those are just a few examples.

And with all of these in place, infants and toddlers are able to explore and practice and hone their skills that support their later academic success. And I love these photos that are in this slide of this young – young child working on emerging reading and early learning and writing, and all of this was supported by all of the other abilities that I mentioned in my list of examples. Holly, can you turn to the next slide? Thanks.

So to ensure that the acknowledgment of the sequence of development that occurs throughout childhood, the Office of Head Start further defined school readiness for infants and toddlers as preparing them for preschool. We really want this and – and grantees and programs and staff to really understand that we don't want to miss this developmental sequence. And I've included photos in this slide to reiterate this. Even in these still shots, you can identify the multiple domains that may influence one another. So for example, the newborn on the far left, it's controlling her body but also regulating her emotions by staying in the fetal position.

And you also see the ability to move, which supports the ability to explore objects and peers. And though adults aren't present in the photograph, you can be certain that caring adults provided the nurturing environments and provided the materials and the interactions so that these children could enjoy and be able to explore and learn about their environment. And Early Head – Early Head Start programs and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have been serving infants and toddlers since their beginning, have always provided holistic relationship-based experiences and services, and have promoted healthy development by implementing the Head Start Performance Standards. So in essence, supporting school readiness shouldn't be new to our grantees.

The Office of Head Start also knows that development and early learning, particularly for infants and toddlers, is holistic, it's interconnected. Children's rate of development has – has surges and pauses. It's rapid. It requires caring relationships with all adults. And we don't want to lose that. We want that to maintain for our Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal programs, and we even want that to transfer up to the Head Start program. Go to the next slide.

So, reading well and doing well are two different things. So the intent of §1307 was for grantees to develop intentional school readiness goals and to develop and implement strategies that help the grantees intentionally focus on fostering children's development across the domain so that the children can be successful later in life and in their school settings. The four action steps listed here on the slide are to ensure systemic processes and that grantees are intentional in improving their ability for ensuring school readiness when children exit out of their programs.

Now, these four steps should be pretty familiar to our grantees. The Office of Head Start has spelled them out in various communications. Probably the first time grantees viewed them was in the Program Instruction that was released in November of 2011. And that is Program Instruction 11-04, and that was Improving School Readiness for Programs Serving Preschool Children. And then in December with the release of §1307, again it spelled out the four action steps and really highlighted that for all children birth to 5. And then since the PI focused on preschool children, the Office of Head Start released a three-page brief through the Early Head Start National Resource Center in the spring of 2012 which highlights these four steps but really focuses on infants and toddlers. And we're going to quickly go through the four steps today.

So if we go to the first step... Next slide. Thanks, Holly. The first step is grantees are to establish and align their goals. And we think that this is really a place where you as Head Start collaboration directors can really play a part in helping your state systems think about the alignment with early learning guidelines within your state; and ensuring that your state has a developmental sequence that is appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; and ensuring that parents are involved in – in the process and that their – their needs are considered. Holly, go on to the next slide. Thanks.

And step two, grantees, once they have established their goals, they need to be sure to implement a plan that helps them reach – helps them – help the children reach these – these goals. We want infant and toddler services to really focus on the nurturing relationship with pure attachment, responsive care and play routines, continuity of care. And again, you know, this shouldn't be new for programs. It's all listed in §1304.2(1)(a) and (b) of the Head Start Performance Standards and throughout the Head Start Performance Standards, the comprehensive services that are – are needed to support children and families.

Additionally, grantees need strong systems and need systems to be well-managed so that the services are intentional and are – are of quality when you're delivering them to the children and families. And again, this is outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards. So the images on the screen are ways for grantees to consider how support school readiness. The circles up top are the established goals – our five domains that the goals need to be established around, and you'll probably notice that at the center of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. And the square and pyramids that are below that are two logic models that are – have been around for programs to use in designing and implementing their systems and strategies even before. And all of this is with the focus on supporting child well-being and – and development, which is also known as school readiness.

So we'll take a few moments before we go to the action step three. So let's take a few moments to quickly look at these two logic models. So if we switch to the next slide, you probably know this as the Early Head Start Program Performance Pyramid – Performance Model. And I just want to let you know that in 2012, the language within this model has been slightly revised to reflect current language, particularly around the ongoing process for quality improvement and for current terms such as engagement with families.

And I'll talk you – I'll quickly talk you through this. The bottom purple lines that say staff, child, family, and community, those are the four cornerstones that were recommended that Early Head Start programs consider when they're – first were being developed. And that their management system should focus on those four cornerstones and all the services as well to develop strong staff, to support child development, to develop family, and to build community relationships.

The blue bar right above that represents the management systems. And components for them to think about are enhancing the proficiency of staff; enhancing nurturing environments so that child development can be fostered; engaging families throughout the whole program services as well as within their caring routines and supporting their – their own child development; and developing strong community partners because we know we can't do this – this alone.

The green bar, which represents program services, and that's how – another output of the program that's set to deliberate services to children and family and, you know, talk about the individualized services, helping parents and children develop strong relationships as well as linking to the necessary community resources.

The red bar are about the outcomes. So when the program has these strong inputs into – into their program, the child and the family can then have strong outcomes. And the ultimate goal, which is on the pinnacle, is the child's well-being and competency. I can almost imagine that the grantee goals, their school readiness goals, will be up in that program and would be the – the driving force of their – of their thinking and shaping their program systems and services.

And with that, if we switch to the next logic model on the next slide, this is relatively new. This is the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework, and this too talks about having strong management systems that impact the quality of services, which impact the family and child outcomes. And all of this drives and supports child well-being and competence. So kind of like this, the pyramid is tilted onto its side. And not only do they have the child school readiness goals in mind but you really want to have family engagement and family outcomes in mind, and the two work together. I know I went through this very quickly. There probably will be more resources on the ECLKC and further ongoing conversations, but I just wanted to have that in the back of your mind as you continue your work.

So let's back to the – the third step of the action steps. And this is aimed for grantees to know how they're doing in their progress to – to achieving their established goals. And there are two pieces of this – of this action step. So they need to assess, aggregate, and analyze their – their child assessment data. One focus is that the individual child level, and this is not new for grantees, is ensuring that each child is progressing on their individual path.

The second level at the program-wide focus is going to be new for – for grantees. So, they have to pull all of their information together and take a look about – how are we really doing in supporting our children? Are we helping our children get to the place that we want them to be? And again, it's for them to be intentional, to take this data and then use it in their continuous improvement process. We want them to think about the data and to drive informed their decision-making process.

And step four links with step three. The intent is that all of the children in the grantees are looked at and examined. Programs have the choice of figuring out how they want to group the children and make sure that they are observing the progress each child is making or each group of children are making. And again, this is a way for them to aggregate and disaggregate the data. They really get deep meaning about how we are doing on behalf of our children. So the intent for programs is to develop internal priorities around school readiness that align with the external structures within their state and their local communities, and to their families. And all of this is to help them make sense of what's occurring within their program and to enhance quality so that all the children are – are ready and able to succeed when they become preschoolers and eventually kindergartners.

And that's it in a nutshell – a long, big nutshell – but I think it gives you a nice, quick summary. And I just will pass the mic back to Frances.

Frances: Great. Thanks, Sarah. I think that really does provide a solid platform for us to dive into what all these means for infants and toddlers. And Sandy Petersen, our next panelist, will assist us with this even further. Sandy is the director of Outreach, Research, and Innovation at the Early Head Start National Resource Center. Sandy?

Sandy Petersen: Thank you, Frances. As I'm sure you all remember, in November when §1307 specified that programs serving infants and toddlers needed to write program goals that established school readiness goals for infants and toddlers, people were very surprised. This was not how we had thought about the work before. And yet, when you stop and think about it, it is prenatally. We serve pregnant mothers. And in the first three years of life, our infant and toddler age group, when the brain is developing most rapidly and with the longest life term results.

So we must assure that infants and toddlers get the kinds of relationships and experiences that support healthy brain development. This really is the work of Early Head Start. To quote from a book by our colleague Rebecca Parlakian: "Babies are born ready to learn. Adults encourage this capacity by providing very young children with the experiences and nurturing relationships they need. This ensures that they will develop the skills that are related to their later success in school and in life." Next slide.

Specific experiences affect specific brain circuits during specific developmental stages. There are sensitive periods for parts of the brain. And the sensitive period in infancy, and this actually begins prenatally, is that the child must feel safe and secure in order to right – to have the right hormonal bath for brain connections and brain circuitry to be built. The child has to have good nutrition and good health care or he may never build a brain that can love and learn. Next slide.

So we, Early Head Start, need to think about school readiness because early experiences directly affect the developing structure of the brain. The quality of the child's early environment, the availability of appropriate experiences at the right stages of development, are crucial in determining the strength or weakness of the brain's architecture, which in turn determines how well he or she will be able to think and to regulate emotion. Next slide.

We knew that the Office of Head Start invited the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning to develop exemplar goals for programs to look at for school readiness – goals for programs. And remember here, we've – we've always known how to write individualized goals for children, but now we're taking this idea to what should programs be aiming at for children – for their whole set of children in order to think of them as being ready for school? So, Quality Teaching and Learning developed a set of goals and they have been disseminated pretty well. The field was becoming familiar with them and we wanted to be able to add to that picture so that programs that were serving children birth to 5 would be able to really explain the process of getting ready for school from birth to 5, or programs serving only infants and toddlers would have birth to 3 goals – programs serving birth to 5 might have birth to 3 and then 3 to 5. These – all of these parameters really were to be set by the program and what would work. Next slide.

So given that there is a great deal that is the same, we also felt there were some very important things to stress, needed to be considered as unique about infants and toddlers. These happen also for

preschoolers, but they need to be the center of our focus for infants and toddlers. And the first is one that Sarah mentioned earlier, this tremendously rapid period of growth and development. Next slide.

Another thing that is unique about infants and toddlers is the critical nature of relationships with responsive, caring adults. Preschoolers are still extremely dependent upon nurturing, loving relationships, but infants are totally dependent on those relationships. And so, we can never lose track of that. Next slide.

The impact of brain development occurring prenatally and during the infant and toddler years, the impact that if it develops correctly, the child has every good hope of good outcomes in life. But if the brain development is compromised in utero or early in infancy by substance abuse, by violence, by chaos, it's entirely possible that these children's brains will never develop in a way to compensate. So, this period is critical. Next slide.

And here, it's that during these three years all of the foundational skills are developing for every domain. And this is – it's such a simple little picture, but here is a child who is – literally has an adult at her back watching her, keeping her safe. She's very focused. Her attention is really there. She's problem-solving with her fingers, fine motor. How does she make these beads move around these wires? She's shifting posture as she moves the beads. Every domain becomes involved in every piece of learning and learning is involved in every piece of play during this time. So, the next slide.

The fact that development and learning are rooted in culture and supported by the family, this of course is always true. But in infancy, babies are looking around and understanding how people behave toward each other, and what their family values and how their family acts. And from that, they're building a sense of who they are. So, that very basic sense of identity is coming from their culture. Next slide.

So, when the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning issued exemplar goals for preschool children, they were well distributed. And the Office of Head Start asked the Early Head Start National Resource Center to write similar goals for infants and toddlers simply as an example, a way to give programs a way of thinking about how they might look. And we chose to use their end goals. They would like to see children look like going into kindergarten as our end goals, but that we would paint that progression from infancy. And I am going to show you one example. Next slide.

So this is a social and emotional development goal for infants and toddlers that, at the age of 5, they would want – that children will develop and engage in positive relationships and interactions with adults. Next slide. Let's take a look at this. For very young infants, this includes turning to adults for security and comforting, play, information, language, and lots and lots of watching. Next slide. For older infants, it becomes more varied in their understanding of – of the ways that they can relate to adults, including now really using adults to help them achieve their own goals. They'll understand when they get stuck and they'll turn and – and ask for help. So, this relationship is beginning to have more layers.

Let's move on to toddlers. For toddlers, the descriptors that we've used was that it includes establishing at least one ongoing, meaningful attachment relationship with an adult. It also includes understanding that others may have beliefs, intentions, and desires that differ from their own. Now, this is coming under social-emotional, but in many ways these are also huge cognitive achievements for toddlers.

And now in the next slide, let's look at how Quality Teaching and Learning described developing good relationships with adults as looking like for preschoolers or [inaudible] really communicating needs,

wants, and information, seeking help, using assistance, cooperating with adult requests – we did not put that one in the toddler section – and demonstrating signs as valuing the adult's attention, showing pride in accomplishments, sharing affection. So, by the time the child is 5, we have a really multifaceted picture but you can see how it got there step by step from early infancy. Frances?

Frances: Oh thanks, Sandy. I think that that really does give a great visual of what school readiness looks like for infants and toddlers. And now we're going to be hearing about how all this is working in states from two of the Head Start collaboration directors. The first is Janice Haker. Janice is the Georgia Head Start collaboration director and she is going to share with us what's going on down in Georgia. Thanks, Janice, for sharing today.

Janice Haker: Thank you so much. I'd like to say that Georgia is very fortunate in that the Collaboration Office is located in the Department of Early Care and Learning. And this is one of the few states that has its own – own learning – Early Care and Learning Department that's equal to the Department of Education. So, that really helps and assists and make sure that Head Start is an integral part of this work. So, what I'd like to do is say that – and – and Sandy set the stage there with her background on infant/toddler development – that we can't begin to discuss infant/toddler school readiness without talking about how we align early learning standards from birth through 5.

And that's what Georgia is doing, is we are in the process of aligning those standards. Georgia was included in the second round of funding for the first Race to the Top efforts, and this proposal from Georgia included early childhood. And so, the Department of Early Care and Learning was part of this proposal. And to ensure that early childhood education and K-12 standards were aligned and this is so that children transitioning into school would be successful.

So in addition, this funding also included the implementation of CLASS in the Georgia 4-year-old pre-K program. So using this funding, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning was able to fund a review of the current ECE standards with respect to new research. This included the revised Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. And since the initial review, the Head Start infant/toddler outcomes have become available. And if you'll change the slide, please?

The department was able to engage Catherine Scott-Little and Sharon Lynn Kagan in reviewing the Georgia ECE standards with up-to-date research. This review was fortunately conducted at the same time that Head Start revised the Child Outcomes Framework. And as you know, these are the five domains that were included in – in that Outcomes Framework.

As a result of the review, if you'll change the slide please, a review of the birth to 5 early learning standards and the Georgia pre-K standards indicated some gaps and inconsistencies. And the biggest inconsistencies were in the socio-emotional area and as well as approaches to learning. In some cases, the 3-year-old standards exceeded Georgia standards for 4-year-olds. There were gaps in the five essential domains, and it should be noted that the birth to 3 standards were more – most recently updated using research that was more current. In fact, about eight years ago, this process started where they revised the birth to 3 standards but did not revise the 4-year-old standards, and – and that's what happens in that arena.

If you'll change the slide... Oh I'm sorry, if you go back one please. [Laughter] I'll get it right.

When the review was completed, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning invited early childhood stakeholders to learn the results of the study directly from Lynn and Catherine. The stakeholders group consisted of all those stakeholders in early childhood, including private daycare, family daycare providers, Georgia pre-K center operators, Head Start and Early Head Start directors, education specialists, the Head Start Collaboration Office, the Georgia Department of Education, early learning and early childhood consultants, resource and referral agencies, and early learning professionals from technical schools and two- and four-year colleges. If you'll change the slide, please?

The stakeholders during this meeting were divided into work groups according to the five domains and worked for the next several days to complete outcomes developmentally from birth through 5. Note that this whole alignment does include the kindergarten core standards that are used by the Department of Education. This work was submitted for review from our experts and that review is still in process. Since this process was begun in August of 2011, the infant/toddler outcomes have become available and are being included in this review. And although this set our timetable back, it certainly was fortuitous and that we won't have to redo it from the beginning to include the Head Start infant/toddler. This process has taken much longer, but Georgia is hopeful that our revised standards will soon be on track; and we think that this will be ruled out in July and completed, and then we'll be positioned to do training and rule out to the early childhood community.

So, once the early learning standards are aligned and updated, the use of an appropriate assessment tool will be necessary. In looking at the – the status of the work that's already been completed, there is evidence to suggest that an updated assessment tool will be necessary. Currently, the 4-year-old Georgia pre-K uses work sampling and work sampling for Head Start. Head Start uses a variety of tools, such as GOLD and High Scope. We will also need to look at other assessments for infants and toddlers that we – that need to be included; and this would include looking at the Ounce and High Scope for infants and toddlers.

At this time, part of the Georgia Early Learning Childhood Advisory Council began working on a unified data system to support school transitioning and school success. This system will utilize the Georgia Department of Education system. Each child receives an ID number when they enroll in public school, and this system will enable tracking services and assessments. So, Georgia 4-year-old pre-K and Head Start and Early Head Start will be assigned ID numbers for the longitudinal data system.

In Georgia, we are fortunate that 29 out of the 31 grantees use the ChildPlus system to collect data. We are now in the process of doing data share agreements so that ChildPlus can share the data with the Department of – with the Department of Early Care and Learning as well as the Department of Education. So this gives Head Start and Early Head Start a real jump on – on that process and then transitioning into school, and it gives those kindergarten teachers some information about the services that our children are already participating in and what their developmental level is. If you could change the slide, please?

The – the Georgia Head Start Association has made a big commitment; and as part of their strategic plan, the association is intending to collect Early Head Start and Head Start outcomes in each of the five domains. So, each program will report their school readiness goals, and three to five will be selected from each domain using the goals that are most recorded. The association with the Collaboration Office and help from our research department here at Bright from the Start will determine how we can track progress for Georgia Head Start and Early Head Start.

And you already heard the fact that we certainly analyze data from each child and that each program and grantee will be required to analyze their data, but we want to get a big picture of where Head Start fits at the state so, statewide, we can support each other and determine where we need to prioritize our skills. In addition, Georgia just has started their QRIS system, and that started in January. And seven programs – Head Start and Early Head Start programs participated in – in the pilot prior to that. We have received a letter of support from the department and the Early Head Start and Head Start Association to support entering Head Start and Early Head Start programs into this system. And after just four months, Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment in that QRIS system represented 17 percent of the total applications that were received.

So, I feel that these efforts will go a long way in – for Georgia in planning for today and in the future so that our Early Head Start and Head Start children will be ready for school. So I thank you very much for this opportunity to tell you about what Georgia is doing, and I look forward to any questions that the end of the presentation. So, thank you, Frances; it's now back to you.

Frances: Okay, great. Thanks, Janice. It sounds like your – things are really moving along well in Georgia around school readiness. And next, we're going to go up to New York State and find out what's happening up there in school readiness with Patty Persell. Patty, thanks for sharing today.

Patricia Persell: Sure. Thank you, Frances. Can we go to the next slide, please? Thank you. So in New York, early childhood caregivers, educators, and administrators are tasked with ensuring that all children are "Ready for school success." So, by allying – aligning the state's early learning guidelines – which are brand new, we just released them this year – the new pre-kindergarten standards, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, this massive goal becomes more reachable. We have spent quite a bit of time working with all three groups to build these bridges. Next slide, please. Yep, that's the slide.

So, just to get us acclimated on what three documents I'm talking about. In New York State, we just released early learning guidelines, and our guidelines show the developmental progression that typical children go through over time. They're not standards but they outline how children develop in each domain from birth to 5. So it's a continuum from birth to 5, and that includes our youngest children – our birth to 3-year-olds as well. And the – and in the state, we now have pre-kindergarten standards that build off of the National Common Core. So here in New York, they're called the Pre-kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, and these – this set of standards shows the skills that children need to know and be able to do at the end of the preschool year. And of course, we all know what the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework is.

And so, we took these three documents and worked hard to compare them and show people how they work together, that they're not in conflict with one another. They – they can help inform our practice at all of the different age levels. And also to ensure that children are getting the best possible start on this road to school readiness, the state took the opportunity to produce and disseminate all three documents, but especially the new early learning guidelines that start at birth. In this way, no matter which program a child is in, caregivers and teachers can provide experiences that will serve as a strong foundation for later learning and skill development. Next slide, please.

So, just a brief look at the three documents that I'm talking about. The pre-kindergarten standards, which is in the middle box, you can see have many more standards than the other two documents do, and then yet they cover only one year. So they're pretty heavy and – and detailed, but they're not in

conflict in any way with the Head Start Framework or the New York State early learning guidelines. I'll get into greater detail in a minute, but first you might ask yourself, why does any state need three documents?

I think we all struggled with this over the last few years; maybe longer. I know some states have had their guidelines for a long time. And so New York State put some thinking behind this, and the universal pre-kindergarten programs are guided by the Foundation to the Common Core. And those focus solely on the educational needs of approximately 99,000 children who are enrolled in our public preschool program. And Head Start programs are guided by the Framework, which supports the educational programming for about 55,000 3- and 4-year-olds. So we knew that there were many more children in early learning programs that were not required to use either set of documents. And so, we wanted to make sure that children of the younger ages and children in any kind of early care learning program would have the opportunity to – to use and understand how children develop from birth to 5.

And we all know from all the slides that came before this that, you know, the first three years are so crucial. So, we felt by informing the field that children develop in varied ways across all the developmental domains that children, maybe several months ahead of their chronological age in one area of development like motor development, motor skills, that they might at the same time be several months or more behind in another area, like socializing with peers. So this is something that we thought the breadth of these guidelines would allow parents and professionals to determine the best experiences and activities to provide for each child to help encourage their optimum development. So, next slide please.

So we put together a crosswalk of all three of these early learning documents, and this crosswalk is aimed at the education staff, teachers, and supervisors, education managers, and also programs of higher education who teach teachers. And it can help all of them in planning for children to ensure that they're including experiences in all domains and understanding how they're sort of meeting all their piper's if they indeed are funded by more – more than one funding stream. We're also planning a document for use by parents and child welfare workers. There's also link at the bottom there. So if any of you want to access any of these documents afterwards when you get the PowerPoint, feel free to do so. Okay. Next slide.

We're just going to briefly look at each document separately just to see how the distribution of domains place out and compare them a little bit. So, these are the New York State early learning guidelines. They, again, cover from birth to age 5. So you can see the social-emotional development is the biggest piece of the pie. It's got 19 percent, with physical health and development coming in second at 14 percent. And obviously, that makes sense because we are starting at the youngest ages that it would be top-heavy in the area of physical health and social-emotional development when so much of that is taking place. And then if we go to the next slide.

The next slide – this one represents the Pre-kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core. And considering that the National Common Core only includes math and science – I'm sorry, math, literacy, and language and it's for K to grade 12 – the fact that our state Education Department along with its partners built this Pre-kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, it includes all the domains. So although there are skinnier slices of the pie, they're there and they're quite rich in their information, and they do help. I think they help the field see how some of the stuff we do early from birth to age 3 can feed into these areas. And so, it's – it's really nice. And even though it is really literacy focused top-

heavy, nearly 50 percent of their standards, we're thrilled that they include all domains and worked very hard with State Ed. to – to have kind of a balanced approach. Okay?

And then our last slide of – of the wheels here talks about the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, which we're all the most familiar with, and you can see that this is much more of an even pie. And – and I think we can just note that math has 14 percent of the elements of – of all of them. And that's because, I think we know that in the past – in the recent past, we were doing very well in Head Start on promoting social development and some of the other areas, but we didn't do as well in math. So I know that the Office of Head Start, when they revised the – the Framework, really focused on math. So that's why it's a little larger than the areas but something we might not notice unless we looked at it. I was a little surprised.

So on the next slide, we see all three documents that our state uses for early learning lined up next to each other by element. So this just means that there are that many elements in each of those domains. So you can see that in literacy, the third one in from the left, that there are 43 standards or elements in the universal pre-kindergarten standards and there's only one specific to literacy in the early learning guidelines. And it goes all through all the ages. So there's like one for infants and toddlers, one for preschoolers, and – and on up. And – and for Head Start, we know there are the five. So it's just very interesting, I thought, to see them laid out next to each other.

It can also help the field see that we're really doing a lot of the same things, there are just certain areas where we're much more detailed. And in getting ready for kindergarten and seeing with the pre-K programs are expecting children to do by the end of that 4-year-old year, we're able to coordinate our curriculum and our assessment tools to make sure we are in line with what the expectations are. And I'd say none of them are age inappropriate or inappropriate in other ways. So I think it's really about educating our – our teachers to – to accept them in a new way. We did have some – you know, a little push back in the beginning because they are quite difficult standards; but they're not – not unachievable.

Okay, so if we can just move on. I'll summarize this section. And – and so, something about getting the field ready for all of these "new documents" – which are not that new but we're putting them together this way for the first time – at first glance, some programs, especially those with blended funding, feel overwhelmed. They just don't know how they're going to do more than they already do. And so, I think helping them understand that these documents are not in conflict with one another, that we are offering professional development so that they can understand and work together to actually feed into each other and – and help [inaudible].

And we also just briefly are implementing our QRIS system as well in New York, and it's called Quality Stars New York. And that the piece of the early learning guidelines and understanding the standards for the state are part of our standards for Quality Stars New York. So I think at the same time as we're bringing all these things to the field, we're also providing with them with technical assistance and support in their implementation in the scoring system through Quality Stars New York with its big quality improvement piece. So, next slide.

So again, you know, in preparing children and – and providing strong, rich environments for all the children in the state no matter what kind of program they're in, our goal is all basically the same: that every child in the state be ready to enter school with the same basic skills and readiness to succeed. And just as a personal note, that's my daughter in a pink getting ready to go to kindergarten on the very first

day. And I point out that her little shoe, she's like moving on to that bus. She can't wait to go. So we want every kid to be eager and ready socially, emotionally, cognitively, the whole package.

So I'm going to transition now into a second part of our presentation in New York, and so this – the heading of – of this one is "Breastfeeding and School Readiness." So when you first see that or hear that, it might wake you up a little bit and – and you might ask yourself, "What's breastfeeding got to do with school readiness?" Well, when we were asked to reflect on something special in New York State that was going to help infants and toddlers with their school readiness, our breastfeeding friendly initiative came to mind. So, it's pretty well known that breastfeeding is beneficial to the health of the baby and the mother. And I want to illustrate today how some of these benefits impact a child's school readiness.

So this slide holds a few of the elements that breastfeeding have an impact on. So, breastfeeding supplies all of the necessary nutrients in the proper proportions, and it changes as the baby grows. So this is an area where it builds the baby's brain; it's got the right fat, the right sugar, and it's really optimum for baby's brain development. Breastfeeding also protects against allergies and infections, sicknesses, and later, obesity. And if a child is sick less, they miss less days of schools, less days of care. Their life is more consistent, less stressful. So all of these things, again, help with school readiness. Children have a healthier weight as they grow, which, again, can impact their overall health. And, their scores on later IQ and cognitive test are higher by a few points.

Children who are breastfed have lower incidences of SIDS, which means they are getting to school, right, because they're – they're still with us. And breastfed babies cry less; thus, they can spend more of their time growing and learning, spending time on things like attachment, playing, and again, having less stress, because babies who cry a lot are stressed and then their brain is flooded with sort of the cocktail of stress hormone. And all of these ideas here point to the fact that they're related to the child's overall physical health and development, their cognitive development, and their social-emotional development. So those are three of our domains that we talk about on our wheel for school readiness goals. Next slide.

So in New York State, I'm proud to be a part of a work group that is called Obesity Prevention in Child Care Partnerships. And I sit on this work group with people from Department of Health, people from the CCR&R, the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the state, other people from the ECAC, and – and many other partners in child care and from the Department of Health and the group that works on obesity prevention. And so we – we have this work group, and it's a long story but the short story for today is the breastfeeding sub-work group had the goal of increasing breastfeeding support in child care settings. And so, I'll tell you just very briefly today about some of the things that we've done to – to encourage this. And we all know that in Early Head Start, we serve pregnant women and we are required to provide them with information on the benefits of breastfeeding. And obviously, in Early Head Start we aim to support all new babies; and part of that can be in being breastfed and providing information to fathers, mothers, and other family members to encourage and then support breastfeeding. Next slide.

So in our state, we have some supports within child care to get towards these goals. So the first bullet talks about our state licensing, which says that every effort must be made to accommodate the needs of a child who's being breastfed. So they get to us into one of our child care programs and they are being breastfed, every effort needs to be made. Then the next two bullets are some national best practices, like from Caring for our Children. It says that "Child care facilities should encourage and provide arrangements for and support breastfeeding, including designated spaces for breastfeeding and

pumping." And then, the next one is from early childhood obesity prevention policies, and it states that, "Adults who work with infants and toddlers and their families should promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months, and a continuation in conjunction with complimentary solid foods for up to one year or more."

So, these recommendations go beyond the consent to store and feed expressed milk to breastfeeding infants that come into child care. Our child care system should promote and encourage breastfeeding and help families meet whatever their personal goals might be. So if a family arrives at one of our child care centers or a child care home and is currently breastfeeding, we should be a part of the support system for this family to keep going for as long as they want and not an obstacle for them to overcome, which is something that we found in our state is the key. Many breastfeeding babies arrive in child care, and within in a [inaudible] of being in care they're no longer breastfeeding. So we see child care as a prime candidate to really help our breastfeeding rate. We can also look to our state child care licensing and training systems to be a big part of success at the program level. Okay, next slide please.

So we needed to discuss at the state level what was our need or demand for breastfeeding child care centers. And in New York State last year, 52 percent of the requests for child care that came to resource and referral agencies were for children in the infant/toddler age group. And nationally was only 40 percent, so we knew that we were 12 percent above the national average. So we knew that more infants and toddlers were joining care settings. And in New York State, we are lucky enough and happy to provide a recognized breastfeeding-friendly child care designation.

So some of you may know about the baby-friendly hospital designations and things like that. So this is in – an effort to increase the number of breastfed babies that are breastfeeding exclusively for six months and then in conjunction with solid food for up to one year or more. And so currently in our state, we have 3,650 centers that are licensed to care for infants, and of those, 500 participate in CACFP. And of those who participate in CACFP since we started our initiative, 90 centers are now designated as breastfeeding-friendly. So we know we have a long way to go, but we're very pleased that we have such a big uptake in the first two years.

So on the next slide, we talk about how many child care homes we have. And so in New York State, we have 2,250 licensed child care homes that care for infants and participate in CACFP. And so far, 200 of them are designated as breastfeeding-friendly. And something I like to tell providers is an added bonus to providing for – participating in CACFP if they don't already, if they become breastfeeding friendly and offer the child the mother's expressed breast milk, they can receive 5 dollars a day for each breastfed baby. And in six months, that's 500 dollars per baby. So if they have a room of eight babies, that's 4,000 dollars a month with no expense to reimburse so it's really just income for the program. So this is a very hidden benefit that I think in today's tough times, every little bit helps.

Okay, next slide. So how does one become a breastfeeding friendly child care center or home? Well, there are these six basic steps to becoming a breastfeeding friendly designated program: and being welcoming to the breastfeeding families; helping the mother continue with their goals; helping provide resources for the families; feeding the infants on queue; coordinating with the parents schedule so that the baby is fed as much as possible by the mother; training staff to support the breastfeeding parents; and having a written breastfeeding policy. And we have some examples of policies and some other resources at the website below. We hope that other states will also develop breastfeeding friendly designations for child care to help increase the number of breastfeeding babies in child care in their state. And we – if you want to see where your state stands in terms of breastfeeding rates at birth, at 3

months, and at 6 months, you can look to the second link below on this slide that has got the CDC's Breastfeeding Report Card for 2011. And it's very interesting. Next slide, please.

So you know, our big push was to initially focus on increasing the numbers of breastfeeding friendly centers and homes that are part of CACFP. So that's our first goal. And then if we get to that point, we'll go to child care centers and homes that aren't in CACFP participation. But for now, that's our focus. And we – we also want to share with everyone that there are some really handy resources that are already available. So if you look to do this in your state, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. You can feel free to borrow things from our state or other states; and I know Wisconsin has some nice resources as well. But the bottom resource on this slide is breastfeedingpartners.org, and that sits at our New York State WIC program. And it's a nationally recognized source for breastfeeding support and resources. Next slide, please.

So we did realize at that end of all our work towards this goal that we needed to provide some basic training for all child care providers who have infants and toddlers on how to store and handle breast milk and about the benefits of breastfeeding. There's a lot of, you know, old wives tales and misnomers out there. So we realized there was a little bit of work that needed to be done there before people could just pick up the ball and say, "Okay, let's go to it." I think that collaboration directors across the country can help play a key role in increasing breastfeeding rates in their states, which can then in turn help with school readiness down the road.

So you know, at the end of this webinar, I'd love to take any questions that you have, or if you want to email me at another time or give me a call because this is something we've worked long and hard on and I would love to help any state that wants to dive in and – and work on this at their state level. So, I appreciate your time and look forward to hearing from you. Thank you. Frances?

Frances: Okay, great. Thanks so much. Thanks so much, Patty. I think it's really exciting to hear how you're really supporting school readiness for infants and toddlers in a lot of different areas and with different state partners. I'd also like to thank all the presenters for the great information and the ideas and guidance on a very timely topic for all Early Head Start stakeholders. And here on this slide are some of the resources that are – have been mentioned during the presentation. And you all should have received these resources and handouts in one of the emails for this webinar.

In addition, I'd like to just mention that there are some resources coming soon, and some of these – from Early Head Start National Resource Center. Some of these are the News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness series. And the series will include a piece on School Readiness and Brain Development; Approaches Toward Learning parts I, II, and III; Early Math Learning for Infants and Toddlers. We also have a podcast coming up on school readiness, and there's another webinar this week for American Indian and Alaska Native programs on school readiness. So in addition to that, this PowerPoint will be sent out to you after this event so that you can have these slides and the links to these resources.

So right now, it looks like we have some time for questions and – and answers, discussion. I'd like to open the floor for any questions you might have. I want to remind you that you need to press *6 before asking your question, and then when you finish, to go ahead and press *6 again. So if you have any questions for any of our panelists, we'd love to hear from you. Any questions or comments? Wow, we answered all the questions that you have on school readiness for infants and toddlers.

Karen: Hi. Actually, this is Karen. I have a question for Janice.

Janice: Okay.

Karen: And Janice, when you were talking about the – the data – longitudinal data system and you said – you said that all children receive an ID when they enroll in the public school system and that the Georgia pre-K and the Head Start and Early Head Start will be assigned ID numbers coming up?

Janice: Yes.

Karen: Are there – are there other plans for other programs or was that intentional to try to graph the – the Head Start data as possibly something in addition to highlight or was there – are there plans for, like, any child care or any other programs that might reach down to infants and toddlers?

Janice: Yes, there are. And it was intentional to do Head Start and Early Head Start as that most at-risk group so that we could use information to really address any needs that might come up. We are also – one of our Head Start programs is a nonprofit that has both Head Start and non-Head Start classrooms as well as pre-K, and they use a different system – I think they use ProCare – and we're working with them. And that will be the next test on how the system works. So our goal, again, is Head Start or Early Head Start. And then we'll be enrolling those private child care centers. So hopefully, every child in the state of Georgia will have this identification number very early to give us information and include those services, those medical and special needs that children are receiving, and the results of their assessments.

Karen: Great. Thanks.

Janice: You're welcome.

Frances: Now I know this was a lively group, so there's got to be some questions out there.

Carolyn Kiefer: This is Carolyn Kiefer in Idaho. And I want to thank both Janice and Patty because, whether you've known it or not, we've been standing on the shoulders of giants and using you as our step up. In Idaho, we're in the midst, or maybe the throes, of updating and revising our early learning guidelines because it's been three years since we wrote them out and also aligning with Common Core.

Janice, we use some of the work from Georgia and Sharon Lynn Kagan and Catherine Scott-Little's work as we had a couple of faculty members do an – kind of an assessment. We take – took a good look at the balance since some of those same factors within our guidelines [inaudible] then reviewed the literature. And Patty, yours is open on my desk right now because I've been kind of using you as an anchor and a grounding, and checking as we've had questions around the wording of some of our goals and developmental indicators.

So not a question, just a huge thank you and to let other people know that, you know, we – we can use each other's work. And in Idaho, we don't have any funding for this. So you can even do it making stone soup. [Laughter]

Patricia: That's great to hear, Carolyn. Thank you.

Frances: Great. Are there any other questions or comments or anything that folks would like to share about what's going on their state? We'd love to hear about it.

Carolyn: Oh, Idaho will jump in again then. Ours is a pretty big test. We began – we, like some of the others, have put together a kind of cross-sector team. And we had a work group team and then a review team. And next week, the work group is coming back to integrate what came from the review team. And ours is a foundational document, and it's a completely electronic document. So we've had some interesting times with merging files, with getting things enough in print so that people can mark all over them and use them as a working document, yet save everything electronically. And so, it has been quite the task.

The Common Core has driven much of our work, and it's also balancing in some other ways with – as we review our guidelines. So process works is probably the biggest lesson we've learned. And process works particularly well when you have very dedicated professionals who are really concern about the well-being of children. So, we'll – we've got months of work ahead of us but it's looking – it's looking like its coming together.

Frances: Great. Thanks so much. We – we do have a few more minutes if anybody would like to add any other sharing about what's going on in their state or have any other questions for panelists. Okay, well... Well, I think that there's a lot of information here to – to go over and I think that, hopefully... If you have any additional questions or something [inaudible] you'll send those in to us and we'll be glad to find out, you know, what kind of resources we can provide to you for those questions. You'll also be requested to evaluate this webinar, so please look out for that. And be on the lookout also for copy of this PowerPoint presentation as well.

We really appreciate your time this afternoon, and have a great rest of the day. Thank you so much.