Effective Child Care and Early Head Start Collaborations that Promote High-Quality Comprehensive Care: Part Two

(links for viewing and download at end of transcript)

Kevin Booth: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to Part Two of Effective Child Care and Early Head Start Collaborations that Promote Highly Quality Comprehensive Care.

My name is Kevin Booth. I'm the moderator for your webinar today, and today's call is being recorded. To ask questions or seek assistance with audio or signing in to the webinar, both Kavita Casari and I are available. You can chat with us via the text chat tool on the bottom left-hand corner. Directions are posted there, as well, to click on the private tab and then double-click "Leaders and Assistance."

As we begin our presentation, we just want to make sure -- how everybody is doing and to get a sense of what the weather is like in your area. And we're going to be using a number of these tools throughout the presentation today. So we're going to ask the sample question right now, and the question is, yes or no, on the left-hand side please respond: Has it snowed in your area yet this fall, moving into winter, season? Just click on yes or no.

Now, as those answers are coming in we're going to share out those results. It looks like we've had a very small group, about 25 percent, that have seen snow; myself, being in New York, I've seen it twice -- once earlier this morning. But to officially start this webinar, I'd like to pass the floor over to one of our hosts today, Heath. Heath Ouellette, take it away.

Heath Ouellette: Thank you, Kevin. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Heath Ouellette, a technical assistance specialist with the National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO THREE. It's great to be here with all of you again for Part Two of our webinar series, called Effective Child Care and Early Head Start Collaborations that Promote High Quality Comprehensive Care.

Today, we'll be providing an overview of state policies and program strategies for managing finances within collaborations. Joining me here in Washington, D.C. is Sarah Merrill. She's a senior training specialist and writer with the Early Head Start National Resource Center. We will be your hosts for today.

Sarah Merrill: Thanks, Heath, and welcome to everyone. In our audience today, we are joined by many people across the nation, including federal staff, Child Care Development Fund administrators, regional and state partners, as well as staff from child care and Early Head Start programs.

Today's live event, as Kevin mentioned, is being recorded and will be archived for later viewing on several websites, including the NITCCI site, the EHS NRC site, and the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, also known as the ECLKC. These are the websites where you'll be able to find both parts of this webinar series.

We are currently in the process of archiving Part One, which provided a general overview of collaborations between Child Care and Early Head Start, and we'll be posting Part Two as soon as possible. And regardless if you're joining us live or accessing us as an archived event, we're happy to have you with us.

Heath: Sarah and I are very pleased to have a panel of guests joining us again today. In D.C., we have Carla Thompson, the deputy director of the officially and newly named Office of Child Care; as well as Angie Godfrey, the infant and toddler training specialist from the Office of Head Start.

We also have two panelists joining us remotely, and they'll be lending their expertise later in the webinar. Laurie Possin is the Early Childhood finance -- Financial Program's policy specialist at Minnesota's Department of -- of Human Services, and Kathy Colfer is the director of Child & Family Services at Kennebec Valley Community Action Program in Maine.

As this webinar progresses, you'll have an opportunity to hear from all of our guests, and we're looking forward to hearing their perspective and expertise. In addition to our panel, we also have several NITCCI and EHS NRC staff joining us. Karen Heying, the director of NITCCI, is here, and she'll be facilitating your questions for us.

So as Kevin previously mentioned, ask your questions throughout the live broadcast by going to the left-hand side of the screen, clicking the public tab in the chat box, and selecting "Leaders and Assistance." Karen will capture your questions and will spend time addressing them after each panelist.

Sarah: As I mentioned, during Part One we highlighted how partnerships can support programs in providing quality services for our most vulnerable population, our infants and toddlers. We also learned that about $14,591 per child/per year was the average price being charged for child care. However, the true cost of providing quality programs and services is often much higher. And collaborations and partnerships provide a way for programs to streamline and to enhance their services for infants, toddlers, and families.

So, today we will focus on how to effectively utilize and manage funds so that these services can be provided through collaborations. To do this, we're going to discuss fiscal management of collaborations. We will provide financial management information, describe how services are funded in Child Care and EHS collaborations, and give some examples on effective financing strategies.

Heath: As I mentioned earlier, we have with us today Carla Thompson and Angie Godfrey. To hear their perspectives and to talk about the financing considerations from the Office of Child Care and Early Head Start perspectives, Carla, would you like to get started?

Carla Thompson: Absolutely. And so thank you, everyone, for joining us today. We're very excited to have so many participants talking with us around how we can better support infants and toddlers across our nation. The Office of Child Care, formerly the Child Care Bureau, and so we're very excited to now have office status, works on supporting low-income families by promoting access to affordable, quality early care and after-school programs.

We administer the Child Care Development Fund, and we have -- annually, we have a $5 billion budget. But with ARRA, that increased our budget to $7 billion, and so we've been using those resources to really primarily focus, with lots of state input and consideration, around how we can support all low -- low-income children across all of the care environments in our nation.

What's particularly interesting is that of the $7 billion that was available through ARRA, $94 million was specifically targeted to help improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. And there's a number of examples of how states, Tribes, and territories use those resources to support infants and toddlers.

The Child Care Development Fund is the largest federal early -- early -- early care and education funding stream to support infants and toddlers. We serve approximately 500,000 children between birth and three years of age each month, and so that's a lot of children being served. But the great thing about that is that not only do we have the work that's going on in the Office of Child Care, but we also have an excellent partnership with the Office of Head Start.

And between our two offices, we've been working on lots of collaborative strategies on how we can support infants and toddlers; how can we look at our TA systems so that we can better support state administrators and Head Start programs and Early Head Start programs so that there's continuous support across the birth to three and the preschool programs?

We're particularly interested in how can we support the professional development of the workforce so that we have more infant/toddler credentials; that we have more mental health consultants; that we have more appropriate curricula; good -- and good outcomes for young children. The work for the Office of Child Care focuses on three pathways, and those of you who were able to join us for our 20th anniversary symposium received this -- it's also on our website -- but our work is focusing on pathways to stronger policies and accountabilities.

We want to make sure that the policies we're putting forward do not exclude any age group and that all of the policies really have a focus on high quality. And so you'll see some of our efforts through the Child Care Development Fund preprint that we have out for public comment now. And we encourage all of you to provide comments on that preprint because it really does give us a sense of what states are doing, the Tribes and the territories as well, to support high-quality outcomes for young children.

In addition, we have our Pathways for Excellence for Child Care program, and here we're really trying to figure out what is it that we need to do across our multiple funding streams, across the multiple programs, to support young children. And then our Excellence in Care for Educators, which again is our workforce initiative on what can we do to support the workforce.

As many of you know, I was the former state administer -- administrator for the District of Columbia, and I was also the special assistant under Harriet Dichter for the Pennsylvania's Office of Child Care and Early Learning, and so there's lots of things that I know in that position that we face in trying to figure out how to fully support infants and toddlers.

And so I'm very much looking forward to having the discussion today and really figuring out good ways in which we can braid and blend funding so that we can have stronger programs to support young children. So thank you for joining us, and I look forward to hearing your comments later on in the call.

Heath: Thank you, Carla. It's so great to hear how the Office of Child Care is focusing on high-quality care, in particular for our infants and toddlers. And now I'd like to turn the mic over to Angie Godfrey to share the perspective from the Office of Head Start.

Angie Godfrey: Thank you, Heath. And it's wonderful to be here today, I would like to say that first, and even more wonderful to follow Carla and to build on some of the things that she said. We do serve a lot of the same children at the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care. And our numbers are much smaller.

Early Head Start serves about -- around 95,000 plus children, where -- we are small compared to Child Care. But it's one of the reasons that I think that we're so anxious for programs at the local level to be able to partner with Child Care, because we know that the children we serve in Early Head Start are very vulnerable, some of the -- the most vulnerable children and families in the country. And that's also true for children in Head Start, that we often are serving the same children.

We also know in Early Head Start that our services are strengthened and enhanced through partnership with Child Care, particularly for low-income working families or families in training or going to school. But all of our families do benefit. And like the Office of Child Care, we were fortunate to get a lot of ARRA funding. We received funds to -- to serve another 48,000 plus children. We were -- again, our numbers are at 90 -- 95,000 plus because of the ARRA funding that we have.

One of the real focuses with the ARRA funding was encouraging programs to write applications and submit proposals to provide services in partnership with other community agencies, with child care being one of the ones that we were hoping for, as a way to support families beyond the number of hours that -- that -- that many Early Head Starts are open to operate. So that's been a huge effort on our part to look at how to -- as Carla said, "how to braid and blend funding" to support this.

We also, for the first time -- and we're engaged in a -- in a collaboration with family child care, which we know many of our families in both Early Head Start and Child Care benefit from the flexibility and from many other aspects of that. And we understand it in terms of both continuity of care for young children, but continuity of care and services for families.

So that's just an additional way that we're looking at how to expand services for families without having them go to too many placements or transitions within a day, and I think that continuity of care for the very youngest children, for infants and toddlers, certainly is a benefit that families have. And again, the other thing that we're looking at, not just in

family child care but throughout, is helping programs to understand how they can blend and braid fundings.

I think sometimes there are misconceptions that, well, you can't spend money on both Early Head Start -- children in Early Head Start and children in Child Care. And one of the things that we're doing at the federal level, that I think is also happening at the state and at the local level also, is looking at how to manage that and blend and braid funding so that families are receiving seamless services, and those families and children that are the most vulnerable are able to receive those services with the least amount of disruption and hardship in terms of their lives.

So I'm going to stop talking now. It's great to be here today. I look forward to listening, and I'm just really happy to be here. This is such an important conversation and topic. So thank you, all.

Heath: Angie, thank you so much for bringing in the perspective of the Office of Head Start. You're right, we are serving the same children, and together we can enhance the quality and bring services to all children. I specifically appreciated your input around continuity of care and ensuring that our children who need full-day/full-year care can receive care from the same provider all year and not have to receive care from multiple providers. [Beeping]

Many states are facing long waiting lists for child care and often are conflicted about balancing the need to serve as many children as possible with the quality of care that is provided. States also take in to consideration the true cost of quality, particularly for infants and toddlers, which we know is significantly higher than -- the cost is significantly higher for this age group than for older children. We all want our youngest children in safe, secure, and healthy environments.

In addition, research also shows us that our youngest children are better off when care is provided in settings with the highest quality. We believe one way to accomplish this is through Child Care and Early Head Start collaborations. However, we also know that managing the multiple funding streams can be complicated. We hope this webinar will provide you with specific examples of financing policies and strategies that help to ensure our success within collaborations.

To begin, we want to review a couple key concepts that are often referred to when dollars are pooled together in collaborations. Both Carla and Angie referred to braided and blended funding. Some programs who collaborate choose to keep separate funds; others choose to braid or blend. Blended funds, to describe it best, is when you take a pool of dollars and put them together in one pot. And all those dollars are used to provide the services, but you can't really tell where the dollars initially came from, very much like a ponytail.

When you braid funds, you pool all your dollars together in one pot. However, the strands remain defined and you can see, as well as know, which dollars are being used where and when, much like a braid. Before we hear about Minnesota's perspective on blended and braided funding, let's get a pulse from our audience. So, on the left hand-side of your screen if you could answer this question: Does your state allow you to braid or blend Child Care Development Fund dollars with Early Head Start funds?

So, overall it looks like we have just under three-quarters of our states being able to do this from a state perspective, and we have a little over a quarter of states that don't allow programs to -- to braid or blend these funds. We hope that this webinar will certainly provide a different perspective on how to look and how to go about doing this.

Sarah: Great. Thank you, Heath. With us today to share a state perspective on financing Child Care and Early Head Start, we have Laurie Possin, who is the early childhood financial program policy specialist with Minnesota. Laurie has worked for the Department of Human Services in Minnesota for five years.

Prior to that she has managed multiple programs within a large Child Care Resource & Referral Agency and managed a Child Care Assistance program for a large metropolitan county. She holds a Bachelor's in child development and is one course and a project away from finishing a Master's in public administration. We give you good luck for that, Laurie. We're looking forward to hearing about your success.

Laurie Possin: Almost done, almost done. Sarah: So, Laurie, can you start by telling us a little bit more about your role

within Minnesota?

Laurie: Sure. Hi, and welcome, everybody. Thank you for joining. My role is to support policy development and do fiscal analysis related to the Child Care Assistance program, and that's what we call Minnesota's version of, really, blended Child Care Development Fund and TANF-funded program that supports low-income working families, as well as -- in Minnesota, we add state dollars to that pot of money.

I've coordinated cross-agency efforts to maximize resources, including working with Head -- Early Head Start and Head Start via our Department of Education and Mary Vanderwert, our Head Start collaboration director who's with me today. I helped launch the School Readiness Connections projects that I'll explain a little bit more later.

But with that project we pay higher rates to selected providers who meet higher qualifications, and we use our CCDF and TANF money for that. I'm currently working on the quality rating system to help expand Minnesota's pilot -- pilot quality rating system and also a group -- leading a group that is working on ways to improve how Child Care Assistance supports children with special needs, and special needs in broad -- broadly defined ways.

I help create department legislative proposals and, of course, respond to other legislative proposals during the year, and interpret CCDF regulations to make sure that we are complying with all state and federal regulations. Sarah: Great, and welcome to Mary, too. I'm glad she's there with you. So how many children does Minnesota serve using state CCDF and TANF funds?

Laurie: We serve about 31,500 children a month using that combination of funds. Some of those children do attend Head Start or Early Head Start programs. We have 36 Head Start grantees in Minnesota and 21 Early Head Start grantees who operate either full- or part-time in more locations than -- of course, than our grantees. And there are many partnerships within licensed homes and centers.

And just as an addition to the CCDF/TANF money -- Minnesota and Head Start money -- Minnesota does spend some of its own revenue to supplement federal funds for Early Head Start and Head Start with about $14 million. And so, in a nutshell, some but not all Head Start programs receive payments that come from the CCDF fund.

Sarah: So why did Minnesota decided to -- to support Child Care and Early Head Start collaborations?

Laurie: Well, I think it's been going on since the late '80s, but I think there was a renewed effort in 2005 following a Governor's Early Childhood Summit that created some goals. And they were specific to supporting collaborations so that there could be an improved coordination and alignment of the public funds used for early childhood combining CCDF and Head Start dollars to improve child -- children's outcomes.

And in, a strategic way, to support the combination of those funds so that the maximum benefit could be achieved with the resources currently available -- as many states are in the position of not -- not having increases in funds, or in fact decreases -- we've been working on this as a way to support programs that, you know, already exist and, again, maximize our use of funds.

Sarah: Great. And how does the state of Minnesota operate in regards to your CCDF funds? Like for example, if I was a family seeking child care, how would I go about accessing these dollars?

Laurie: Yes, Minnesota is a voucher state. Families do choose from all legal types of care and they do that -- become eligible for Child Care Assistance by contacting their county, and mostly these are done by mail, although families certainly can go in to their county agency office. Some counties contract with Resource & Referral agencies. I think we have three in Minnesota right now. Otherwise, we have 87 counties and some have multiple offices, so it's quite spread out around the state.

And they fill out their application -- at the point where they fill out an application, if they have not chosen a child care provider they are referred to the Resource & Referral Agency, who learn about -- then help the parent learn about their options and include Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the database so that those programs would be

included in -- among the customized list that the parent receives.

If they are eligible and do enroll in an Early Head Start program, they do have to fill out that application as well. So, it is a dual application process. Early Head Start programs do help families obtaining Child Care Assistance if they are seeking work, working, or attending school. And there are cases where there are waiting lists if you are not on Minnesota's TANF program -- program.

So, there is sort of a pool of money available if you're approved through your TANF employment plan. And if you're, you know, working or in school or seeking work outside of a TANF employment plan, you are likely to be put on a waiting list. Sarah: Thank you for that overview. And how did Minnesota prioritize your focus and your spending of Child Care Development Fund dollars?

Laurie: Well, recently we've had several efforts to address quality. And one of them is through our quality rating system. The pilot -- the pilot of our system, called Parent Aware, began in 2008, and initially it was tied to a $4,000 allowance that was given on a per child basis for eligible families who were low-income.

That incentive, funded out of state dollars, was not -- not funded by CCDF, but -- but the program, Parent Aware, was supported with CCDF money to incent providers and -- and families to use programs that had gone through the rating system and -- and obtained a higher rating -- a three or a four in Minnesota's case.

So the quality indicators were chosen in 2007 and 2008, and this was with a public/private partnership with our Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, and we rated programs in the areas of family partnerships; teaching materials and strategies; tracking learning; and training and education. And Head Start programs and school district pre-K programs did participate quite heavily, and -- and are participating still, in the pilot.

And the advantage of the $4,000 allowance, of course, was that it paid for costs that might not have covered -- been covered by the Child Care Assistance program or by Head Start, or it added to the Head Start/Early Head Start funds so that perhaps a child that was going part-time could now go full-time, and perhaps that program could serve more children.

So the quality rating system tied to these incentives was an important expansion of Minnesota quality efforts. Secondly, we have been operating the School Readiness Connections pilot project that I mentioned originally, and five of the 14 programs chosen for that pilot are Early Head Start or Head Start grantees or their partners.

And that is a -- the program where families eligible for Child Care Assistance, if they have chosen a provider who was selected who met these higher quality standards that actually do align to the quality rating system, then they get a higher rate and they also get the benefit of more continuity of care because once they've been approved for full-time child care initially, they can continue as long as they remain in an eligible activity.

And the advantage has been that if a family, say -- you know, drops from 40-hour a week work schedule down to 30, as in this economy has been happening, they don't lose, for instance, a day a week of eligibility. So we've addressed some -- some issues with continuity and -- and a lot of issues with quality with that pilot project.

Thirdly, we reimbursed some accredited programs and family child care providers who have at least a CDA with a higher rate. And that's sort of our shared reimbursement in Minnesota. And then last, the CCDF quality set-asides support infant and toddlers via working with the professional development system, the CCR&Rs, and others who offer training, technical assistance, consultations, and then of course the TEACH program that supports professional development for providers.

Sarah: And does Minnesota allow Child Care and Early Head Start programs to braid or blend their funds?

Laurie: Yes, Minnesota is similar to braiding; we kind of call it layering. In 2008, we launched a substantial effort to support Early Head Start and Head Start programs that offer full-day services, and this included just creating examples of how layering could be accomplished in a way that clearly illustrates how a full day of CCDF payment in the Early

Head Start dollars could make it possible to budget for a full day of integrated services that support working families.

We wanted both policy makers and counties to understand the benefits of layering and make it transparent so that there was not double-dipping questions that had been going on. Sarah: And so what was your process for providing clarification, as well as sort of highlighting the benefits of the layering?

Laurie: Well, one of the things we did, we -- we offered training in a number of ways. We offered video conference with counties. We've offered webinars with Early Head Start and Head Start grantees. We've created these materials, and one of them is up on the slide right now.

And so this one is sort of the -- the core of our presentation, which shows that dollars used in the inner circle are those core dollars that apply to any child care program, and that's how the CCAP reimbursement dollars are in a sense used, is to cost -- cover the cost of base -- teaching staff, supplies, meals, things that are -- are normally applicable to every child care program.

And then we show how the other dollars, or the Head Start/Early Head Start dollars, added to the CCAP payment, provide a way for the program to afford what's offered in an enhanced education setting and with the comprehensive supports required by Head Start. And so this is how we've sort of explained how the -- how the layering works. And we did this -- and -- and you'll see, as we get a little bit further on, in combination with working closely with the Early Head Start and Head Start grantees to explain to them how to create a budget that accomplishes this.

Sarah: It's a great visual as far as that layering and building of the funds. So what are some of the requirements you have of programs to be able to utilize both of the funding streams? Laurie: Well, in Minnesota we've decided that for the purposes of receiving the full day of Child Care Assistance payment, that the program had to operate their program at least eight hours a day.

The programs would operate all their -- provide all services in one location because we felt it was important that children not spend their place in two places -- in one -- time in two places in one day; that the Head -- Head Start Performance Standards would be met throughout the day; and that they did have to -- they do have to establish their own rate schedule -- some programs weren't used to doing that, particularly if they had only been offering part-time.

So essentially, we asked them to build their budget on what it cost and -- and then establish a fee so that it can be charged to Child Care Assistance. And then, again, we -- we do require them to -- to be approved for this. They do have to submit a budget or their partnership agreement that shows clearly how the Early Head Start dollars are being used. Sarah: Can you provide an example of a budget?

Laurie: Yeah. Here's -- here's one example. So this shows how salaries and benefits are shared between two lead teachers in a classroom, that some of the classroom costs are covered by the core Child Care budget, but the majority of the curriculum and assessment costs are -- are shown in the Early Head Start column. Equipment has been split equally. Space and utilities is more covered by the core Child Care budget. Professional development lies more in the Early Head Start column. Health services also fall in the Early Head Start column.

In this case, food and nutrition is all in the Child Care budget. It would not have to be. It's just that way in this example because this program might choose to only cover it because they were covering that before they became an -- an Early Head Start grantees or -- or partners. So that might be how that shows. And then supplies, same -- the same thing.

And we're not really strict. It's not a strict interpretation of this; we just want programs to go through this exercise and think about how dollars are spent in each of these funding sources. Sarah: Great. It would be intentional on how you want to place the dollars. Laurie: Right.

Sarah: How does Minnesota support programs that want to pool their dollars? Laurie: Well, what we do is we offer training and assistance to explain this process to them. And -- I'm sorry, I just lost my place. [Laughter] Sarah: Take your time, no worries.

Laurie: Okay. I got one ahead of myself. There we go. No, okay. We just offer a lot of technical and assistance and we keep promoting this whenever we can with grantees and counties. Again, we -- all of these materials are on our -- on the Department of Human Services website. Mary, the Head Start collaboration director, sends them out to the sites and talks about them when she's doing meetings with the grantees.

And what we tell them is that going through the, hopefully, simple application process is going to make it clear so that the counties don't have to interpret the -- the program model of a Head Start or Head Start partner. But instead, by submitting this budget and, simply, a declaration that they provide full-day services and that they're open at least eight hours a day, that...

...and then the counties don't have to be -- being that we have 87 counties making interpretations of how programs should get -- make payments through the CCDF funds, we wanted to make it simple so that the county can, when a parent chooses a program that has indicated that it's either Head Start or a Head Start partner, then the county can go to one place and check a list of approved programs who have gone through this fairly simple application process, and then the county knows they can approve the full-day payment.

Whereas in the past, counties would look at the parents schedule, they would see that the child was in Head Start, and -- and some counties were basically automatically deducting five hours a day. If they knew Head Start was open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., they were just deducting that time out of -- and maybe only authorizing part-time care. And so this process should help clarify it so that it's not as much negotiation and explanation going on between the Head Start grantee and the county.

Sarah: Right. I remember when we were planning this you also said it was beneficial to programs who have large service areas so they didn't have to deal with several counties. It made it a little bit more streamlined for them, as well.

Laurie: Yes, definitely. I mean, there are, you know, Head Start grantees or Early Head Start grantees that serve 10, 12, 14 counties at a time, and they wouldn't want to have to explain this every time they approve it -- got an approval for a child funded through CCDF.

Sarah: That's right. And can you spend a little time telling us about your state's process? When did you start? How long did it take for your counties, as well as your programs, to understand the state's mission and policies?

Laurie: Sure. We -- again, we saw examples of this in the 1990s. I wasn't around then, but from what I understand it's been -- certainly been happening ever since there was an expansion of full-day options because of welfare reform. So many counties have been doing this for years, and basically what we did is once we studied that and studied what other states were doing, we've just been trying to promote it and -- and expand it around the state, and also make it administratively simple.

So, we got some impetus from the Minnesota legislature when they passed a requirement that said that Head Start and Early Head Start programs would need to support more full-day slots by 2013. And that's -- they can do that, again, because they fund those slots with state dollars; and so that, I guess you could say, inspired some programs to -- in addition to just meeting the demands of their community, obviously. So that has kind of kept this more front and center in our state, as well.

So we're -- we're hoping that, you know, through these efforts of promoting it and -- and I'm sure the ARRA money, as well, for Early Head Start kind of helps programs see that their budget can work this way to serve more children.

Heath: Thanks so much, Laurie, for taking some time to share with us what you all in Minnesota are doing. You certainly have developed some strong and clear policies to help programs collaborate and increase the quality of care for infants and toddlers. We do want to remind the audience that we will post the resources that Laurie talked about from Minnesota on the Web, as well as we're going to be emailing them out to you all, as well as a copy of this PowerPoint presentation on the screen.

We do have a couple questions. One that I want to just -- I think is a point to clarify is that certainly we all talk about things being state administered and I think, Laurie, you talked a lot about things being administered at the county level, and we do want to recognize that things are sometimes locally administered. And I think Minnesota has certainly developed a way to ensure that there is local abilities, but as well as there is consistency across the state.

Laurie, we do have a couple of questions. And one is: "How do you ensure that the plans are being followed?" I guess, so to speak, what's you're monitoring process?

Laurie: I'm going to ask Mary if she wants to add anything to this, but my understanding is that sites -- Head Start and Early Head Start sites are visited by state staff along, with their, of course, federal reviews, and that there is a financial component of -- of those reviews, as well as the application that comes in for us and used to approve these full-day payments is -- goes first to -- to Mary so that she makes sure that it matches anything that -- that -- and supports anything that the program has said about the program model that they offer. Is there anything you want to add, Mary?

Mary Vanderwert: Yes, I think from -- from our -- from the Department of Education's standpoint, we -- we do the monitoring, but they also -- programs also send in an application every year with their -- with their models described because they get state funding. And so we watch those and then they also do enrollment reports every month so we can make sure those spots are still being used. So it isn't -- it isn't a real close monitoring. We trust that they are using the funds and using it in the right way.

Laurie: One simple thing that we do when we get the application is if they're -- if they're a licensed program, we can go on and see how they are listed both on their own website about how they advertise their services and then also in the CCR&R database, as well as our licensing database, to just sort of make sure that what they have said that they're offering matches up with everything that we can see publicly about their program.

Heath: So some checks and balances overall. Laurie, the next question we have is -- if you could share a little bit more about your process for gaining buy-in from the various counties, the question says: "Was it easy? Did it require any additional or unplanned support?"

Laurie: Certainly not unplanned support. There were definitely and have -- and continue to be questions from counties either -- you know, there have been programs that have changed their model who were maybe offering part-time and are now offering more -- more hours of care, and so when those -- or just expansion to new sites, and when those happen, those are likely to trigger questions from counties.

But really not -- not -- not too many. I can think of maybe four or five instances of either just explaining the policy to the counties or, if need be, getting both the Head Start grantee and the counties to talk to each other if there are questions about their -- you know, their service deliery model, or you know, maybe if they're confused by something that the parent told them. But they've all been really quite easily resolved. And I think, in general, counties are feeling really good about this.

Heath: Great. And the last question we have for you today is: "How did you all come up or decide upon the eight hours as being your full day?" Laurie: Well, we -- we knew that Head Start defined full-day as -- is it six or more or more than six? Mary: Yes.

Laurie: Six or more? And we knew that that would not meet the needs of most Child Care Assistance families, and so we didn't want to really promote layering of -- of full-day funds in care that really wasn't going to meet the full day of the family's need because we also have limitations on the amount of hours of care we can pay on a per child basis.

So we didn't want to be, you know, putting all the money for a child in a program that was essentially not going to meet their daily needs. So... And we also felt, for transparency and accountability purposes, that we could sell this better. We could promote it better, make it more palatable, if you will, to some lawmakers if we said really that this is at least eight hours a day. So we just thought it made sense. And some might have said nine or 10, and some might have said seven, so eight was kind of in the middle.

Mary: I might add that one of the things we did as we started our process is we -- we took a look at the research and -- and set up a set of guiding principles for our work together. And, you know, those principles and the research said that children needed more intensity in -- and more -- more time in high-quality programming. So that's another driver that we used.

Sarah: Thank you for sharing that. It's truly been great to hear how your state has been so thoughtful about making the process so clear and -- and framing it on principles and mission. So you're really balanced, providing quality, as well as support, for your infants and toddlers and families. And all of these efforts that can be taken or be done at the state level are completely important to programs.

They provide clarity to them and help them look at where and how they allocate dollars so that they can be mindfully using these dollars with intended purposes so that they too can provide specific quality programs and services. So in essence, we want everyone to be good stewards to nation -- to national and state grant obligations, as well as to the funds that they are being awarded, and to be good stewards to their community members -- the families and the infants and toddlers being served.

And you know by -- by providing reasons of the purpose behind actions and policy really helps it -- makes it easier for -- for people to comply to them. So, next we're going to focus our webinar on a program's perspective.

But before we do that, we want to take a quick pulse from our audience. And we have a question today, and it's a little bit geared for folks in program settings. So: Do you have families in your care -- and if you're not from a program, in your community -- who could benefit from child care services, such as needing at least eight hours of -- of care a day, or do you have families who could benefit from Early Head Start Services, such as health or mental health services? And we have the yes or no survey on the left-hand side.

There's nothing switching, so I think it's either no answers or a lot of yeses there; that really highlights the -- the true intent of these collaborations and the knowledge that we have a wide -- a huge population to be served and we really need to get -- draw on the essence and the benefits from both programs.

Heath: Well, that certainly speaks for itself as everyone out there is saying yes. I have the pleasure of introducing Kathy Colfer. She's the director of Child & Family Services at Kennebec Valley Community Action Program in Maine. She has a strong administration, financial, and marketing background.

She has designed, developed, and implemented programs for children and families in both the private and nonprofit sector, and in the public sector. She's the director of the Maine Head Start Directors. She serves on the Child Care Advisory Council and -- and she also sits on Maine's Children's Growth Council, which is the advisory council required through the Head Start Act. Kathy, please begin by sharing with us about your program.

Kathy Colfer: Well, thank you, Heath. And I too would like to say welcome, and hope that I can offer at least one idea that is useful today to -- to participants. Kennebec Valley Community Action Program is located in rural Maine. We're committed to high-quality early care and education services to children from birth to age five. Our partnership efforts have resulted in service to approximately 600 children daily. Our service settings are based in centers, public schools, or private homes.

Our service area is larger than the size of the state of Connecticut. We are the only Early Head Start and Head Start grantee in northern Kennebec and Somerset counties. We're funded for approximately 360 Early Head Start and Head Start children, of which 77 are Early Head Start-funded, and an additional eight are private pay -- pay clients.

Our service options are family child care, which we refer to as home start, or center-based or home-based. Our full-day services operate from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., five days per week. Pregnant women are referred to KVCAP's Maine Families Program, which is a home visiting program for service. We work very closely with them.

Our Early Head Start center base staffing ratio is about one staff person to three children. The majority of our lead teachers have a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and our home visitors have a case load of 10 to 12

families. And I -- I must say that recent research on the development of brain architecture has only heightened our commitment to high-quality services.

All service locations are NAEYC accredited and our goal is to increase the school readiness of all young children. Now, our approach within Child & Family Services program, which houses the Early Head Start program, is to ensure that all services are designed with a community-based philosophy, an inclusionary approach for children with varying abilities, incomes, and needs.

Heath: Kathy, how do you all go about meeting those goals that you've set for your program? Kathy: Well, we operate under the premise that braiding and blending of federal and state resources alone does not fund the full cost of high-quality services. We need to tap in to all available resources, including local. Buy-in, regarding the value of -- of quality service from our communities, we see as a critical component to the sustainability of our services.

Once a community need has been identified, we seek existing resources within our communities because our goal is to enhance existing services or to partner to bring needed services to a community. And we've found that formation of these meaningful relationships is vital -- is a vital component of our programming. It is important that these relationships are not only informed with parents, but with community representatives, school districts, and other agencies.

Heath: Can you share with us a little bit more about those community -- community representatives?

Kathy: Sure. I think -- as you can see from this collaboration wheel that guides our work, we truly believe the sustainability of quality infant/toddler care relies on community ownership. We need those non-traditional voices to be our advocates for early care and education, so we spend considerable time and effort in our program reaching out to community members about the importance of speaking for and funding quality.

And I'd like to give you a few examples. One example of our work is -- we call it our Community Contribution Campaign, in which we communicate with every town in our service area about quality and ask for financial contribution. In our communications, we talk about how quality service for their most vulnerable and youngest citizens benefits the town. We talk about the number of children and families served by a town. And we also talk about the budget gap for child and family.

Another collaboration is our collaboration with Child Development Services, which is Maine's IDEA Parts B and C organization. And for infants and toddlers, as you probably know, they're required to provide service to children in their most natural environments, which for -- obviously for most children, is the child's home.

So, when we have mutual clients and we have clients of theirs enrolled in Early Head Start services, our Early Head Start home visitors assist in the delivery of the Part C services. It's been a great partnership for us. Rather than two home visitors going in, we -- we have one.

The higher education community is also a great partner. We have provided on-campus Early Head Start services at our local community college. And in turn, they provided free space support for teacher salaries and funding to assist parents with their child care fees. We also have local colleges that provide on-site course work for staff and community members. And our classroom observation rooms are used by their students in their course work.

Throughout our budgeting planning process, we identify specific funding gaps and match those needs to the philanthropic community and their funding priorities. Some examples of our success is funding for facilities, support for family service members, support for arts integration, technology support, and to provide our program with funding for the difference between the cost of care and the market rates so that over-income families can access high-quality programming.

We also partner with our local Child Abuse and Neglect Councils to provide mandated reporting trainings, as well as parent education. And I have to say that public schools can also be wonderful allies in -- in supporting infant and toddler care. One of our collaboratives, which we've had, I guess more than six years now, has resulted in -- and that's

been a preschool collaborative -- has resulted in Title 1 funds being offered to support quality infant/toddler care.

So, we put significant time and effort into education and advocacy activities for parents and community members. Again, they speak with the -- those unbiased voices and they are willing to advocate for early care and education. An example of this is our local Fight Crime: Invest in Kids; they have embarked on a letter-writing campaign to all major newspapers in our state promoting early care and education.

And as a result, just a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to give the chief justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court a facility tour. So I guess the point of this is that we need -- we feel we need to use every segment of our community and have them stand up for quality care and education.

Heath: Well, Kathy, I'm -- I'm just so impressed that you all even think beyond just the funding from CCDF and from Early Head Start, but really look at your overall community. And I think -- I think that's great and I hope that members in the audience would be willing and interested in doing the same things in their communities. Kathy, could you get into some specifics about your operational budget, specifically for infants and toddlers?

Kathy: Sure. Our Early Head Start budget is just a little over $1.6 million, which is an average cost per child of $19,753. Of the 85 children we serve, 10 percent are in family child care; 66 percent are center-based care; and 24 percent are in home-based care. Now to -- to break it out even further, I'll talk a little bit about the cost per child/per service option. In our program, family child care, the cost per child is about $15,860 per child; center-based care is $24,150, and home-based is around $10,004.

In family -- the family child care option, we contract with area providers to offer Early Head Start programming in their homes. Program support is -- is provided to those providers by what we call a staff called our home-based coordinators, who are trained in the implementation of Head Start Performance Standards, and it includes the new family child care regulations.

I also would like to add that normally our center-based average cost per child is around $19,500. However, because we have an Educare Program, that cost has risen to $24,150. Heath: Can you share with us a little bit more about Educare and what it is?

Kathy: Sure. We feel very fortunate in this community. Educare is a partnership between the public and private sectors that require three principle partners: the Early Head Start or/and Head Start grantee; the public school; and a private partner. This partnership provides a place -- the facility -- to showcase early care and education; has very high quality of standards that are guided by ongoing research and evaluation; we operate with a shared governance structure; and we are dedicated to being a platform for -- for policy change.

Educare Central Maine is located in Waterville, Maine. It's the first Educare school in the northeast and is one of 12 nationwide, with several more being built. The model requires master-level teachers and family service managers that provide oversight to classrooms and social service staff.

I have to add that while we strive to pay a salary that is equal to public school teachers, unfortunately, we fall about 25 percent below that average due to our high staff-to-child ratios and the rising cost of benefits. Our salaries are not quite yet where we'd like them to be. However, the good news is that we are making progress. Salary lines continue to be about 83 percent of our overall budget.

Heath: It sounds like a wonderful opportunity for your program, and for the state of Maine as well. Where exactly do all your funds come from?

Kathy: Well, federal funding represents about -- about 76 percent of our overall Early Head Start budgets; state funds represent 8 percent; and community is about 16 percent. As you can see from this slide, federal Early Head Start funds account for about 42 percent of the overall federal allocation. Some examples of other federal funds that we use to support services, I'd like to just explain a little bit. We use the Community Services Block Grant, which is funding to support -- it supports our salaries, some materials, and supplies.

Again, federal fund's Title 1 funds is used to support infant/toddler services, as I explained earlier. Normally, this -- these funds have just been seen to support school-aged children, but I can tell you that we now have about $100,000 annually in Title 1 funds to support infant and toddler service. So it's -- it's been a great addition to our program.

We also use child -- Maine is a state that has dual systems, both vouchers and child care contracts. So we use all of those systems to support a full-day service. And because our center-based service is at the top of Maine's quality rating scale, we now receive a 25 percent quality bump over the established market rates. I'd also like to add here that our CCDF quality funds support that additional 25 percent bump for TANF recipients, which has been a wonderful addition. That's -- that's new; it's -- it's been a wonderful addition to support quality services.

It was great earlier to hear Angie and Carla talk about the collaboration between the Office of Head Start and Child Care because I'd like to speak just a minute about another notable in Maine, which we call our Continuity of Service pilot, and it's for Early Head Start programs who are at the top of Maine's quality rating scale. As you probably know, in the past, sometimes braiding Child Care and Head Start funding presents some unique challenges because they do -- don't necessarily have their congruent goals and regulations.

So, Maine has agreed to pilot a program where Child Care eligibility redetermination periods mirror those of Early Head Start. In other words, children who enter Early Head Start with parents who meet the Child Care eligibility guidelines at the time of entry stay eligible for service until entry into Head Start, at which time they must be re-determined even by Head Start Performance Standards.

So, this is a pilot project which has been committed for three years. But we are very excited, because it is going to limit those transitions for -- for our youngest children, and really, we will be able to track what the outcomes of that pilot are.

Just one other quick thing. We also use the Community Services Development Block Grant fund to support start-ups of classrooms. Now, we have to work with our city to -- who works through Maine's Economic Development Division, to secure these funds, but those funds -- that is an appropriate use of those funds. So that's kind of a federal recap. Heath: Kathy, can you share about the state and community funds?

Kathy: Sure. Well, as you probably know, Maine is -- is not -- is a, well, I guess I could say a poor state and is in significant budget crisis. So state funds just total a little over 8 percent of our overall budget. And those funds come to us through the state's general fund and tobacco settlement fund. The support from the Department of Labor, and it's noted on this slide, is -- really comes from an apprenticeship program that assists people in degree attainment in Maine.

Maine has a low percentage of its populations going on to higher education. So, they really help support that. And we use it to support the professional development activities of our staff. The community funds, this slide does not show -- this does not include in-kind services, but community funds represent about 16 percent of our overall revenue. Some of that's child development services, which I talked about earlier.

But we are also a United Way member, and we often seek -- they often provide support for family services or child care, for staff funding, and sometimes they have even provided our clients with stipends, because we are rural and there's a lot of transportation needs, to assist in the transportation needs.

Parent fees, both -- that is both private and subsidized, represent about 4.9 percent. And then the philanthropic is about 10 percent, and I mentioned earlier some of the ways we received that fund. A couple that -- ways we have received these funds that I haven't talked about is they also provide funds for professional development and funds for playground upgrades.

Heath: Kathy, what are some strategies that you used to maintain all these funding streams? Kathy: [Laughter] Well, I -- I can say our -- one of our most effective strategies is planning. The budget is our planning tool, and we start at least one year in advance of service start to see where gaps exist. And then we seek community partners to help close that

gap. Another strategy we use is department structure. We basically operate with two arms, one operational arm and one business and information arm.

The business and information arm is responsible for marketing, developing, and monitoring of contracts, enrollment, reporting child outcomes, and data input. The operational arm is structured into regions. Each region has a manager who provides oversight to direct service staff, facilities, and partnerships within their region. They, along with our content leads, directly report to a director of operations, and this structure provides adequate time needed for all staff to foster partnerships and community collaborations.

Let me think... Another strategy would be our communication and accountability systems. It has high focus in our programs. All management staff are accountable for working closely with the agency's finance and human resource system. And we have monthly feedback meetings to identify any issues or opportunities at hand.

Another strategy we use is staff satisfaction. We take it very seriously. We offer a competitive wage and benefit package relative to early care and -- the early care and education arena; we ensure timely evaluations; and we provide merit increases based upon performance regardless of COLA and quality -- whether we have a COLA quality award or not.

We also have semiannual landscape meetings with all staff to give them a picture of what is on the local, state, and national horizon. We have Staff Appreciation Day and Agency Fun Day that are both designed to provide relaxation, networking, and fun because they are very simple ways to send appreciation messages. We recognize specific employee milestones, whether personal or professional, with notes and thank yous.

So... We promote and welcome community tours, also. We don't miss the opportunity to let these potential partners know what our needs are. We certainly ask what their needs are. And it is amazing to see what can happen sometimes when you simply ask.

Heath: I continue to just be overwhelmed by listening to all that you're doing. Kathy, would you mind sharing a couple of specific budgets with us?

Kathy: Certainly, I -- I'll give an example of a family child care and one for Educare classroom. Now, our typical budget per child in the family child care provider home looks something like this -- about $15,860 annually. Before I explain with some detail, I would like to comment that the family child care providers are independent businesses. We simply contract with them to ensure that certain quality components and that the Head Start Performance Standards and family child care regulations are met.

KVCAP really reimburses for care components, along with extra Early Head Start requirements, you know, such as diapers, the health pieces, formula, et cetera. As I said earlier, our home-based coordinators are generalists who provide oversight to each family child care home to ensure quality.

You will notice in their -- in this budget on the screen that there are no food costs on this grid. There is a statewide independent program that monitors CACFP regulations for family child care in Maine, and we have an agreement with that program regarding providers who deliver Early Head Start services.

I would also like to add that our health -- health and nutrition manager provides content support to these providers. On the grid, you will see that provider payments average the full-day/full-year program close to $10,000 annually per child. Most of that is paid through Child Care -- CCDF or vouchers, but we also do some Head Start enhancements to that for the extra Head Start/Early Head Start requirements. The remainder of the budget is really a support per child that we put in to ensure that high-quality services and that the Head Start Performance Standards are being met.

The next one is Educare budget, which, as you will note on this one, contains the full cost of service. The way I budget this, it really contains the cost of maintenance staff, administrative staff, master teachers, and so on. But you'll also note that the direct service portion is around $140,000 per classroom, which covers 12 hours of service daily, five days a week.

So, the cost per child in this option is $24,150. Again, we blend Head Start, Early Head Start -- I'm sorry -- we blend Early Head Start and Child Care funds to support this programming, as well as a lot of our community supports that we previously mentioned. Heath: Thank you so much, Kathy. Earlier you mentioned that you have a new facility. Could you share some specifics about that?

Kathy: Sure, we just recently completed with -- with -- with our Educare program an $8.4 million early care and education learning center that houses 12 classrooms for children ages zero to five, along with a community learning center. To help build this, we accessed new market tax credits. The credit provided the final $2 million we needed to meet our capital campaign goals.

So I guess, in short, new markets tax credit is a seven-year interest-free loan that was purchased by an organization needing tax credits. In turn, we guarantee that we will serve at least 50 percent of low-income children for the next seven years. So, there's -- there's a lot of information on the Internet about this, but I would encourage anyone looking at building facilities to take a look at it, because the clientele we serve certainly lends itself to these tax credits.

Sarah: That's a great resource, thanks for sharing that. And I also appreciate hearing how you use the budget as your planning tool in an ongoing, systematic way. It really helps to maintain a pulse of the gaps so you can follow up in a timely manner. And also, you shared the ideas of clarity and transparency, which is -- is a similar strategy that Laurie highlighted about Minnesota's effort.

In doing this, you ensure that the mission for quality programming and services is completely upfront, which is terrific because you actually used it as a way to gain community buy-in and as strategy to build collaborations with a variety of partners. So, we're now going to -- if you're up for it -- take some questions and answers. And the first question we have for you is that -- you mentioned the $19,000 as a cost average per infants and toddlers, how does this compare to your preschool cost per child?

Kathy: Oh, that is a great question. I can tell you it is about 40 percent higher than the cost for a preschool child. Sarah: Wow. And the other question we have is that folks want to hear a little bit more about Educare. How did you become involved in that and how might other programs find out more about the Educare models?

Kathy: Sure, in -- I have to give a lot of credit to this program to our Governor and First Lady, John and Karen Baldacci. In 2007, our governor held a -- an economic summit on early care and education. And we are fortunate to have, in Maine, a woman by the name of Doris Buffett -- and I'm sure you recognized that name -- who summers in Maine, who saw all the PR about that effort. And she contacted our first lady and asked -- and said that she would like build some Educare centers in Maine.

So, through working with the state, there was a -- a request for bid or information -- request for information, I guess I should call it, put out. And there were four communities invited to participate. The others were all urban areas. We were the only rural area, but we were this -- the -- selected because of our partnerships with public schools -- as I said earlier, that's one of the requirements -- and because of all of our community support.

So, you know, I would say on the website -- if you type in Educare schools, there is all kinds of information on their website. It really talks about what their goals and missions are and kind of gives you some different pictures of different locations across the nation.

Sarah: Oh, great. It's another great go-to resource. Another one that you highlighted was the Continuity of Services pilot which is going on your state. Can you speak a little bit more about that pilot and maybe the initiative of, you know, we can inspire other states?

Kathy: Sure, I can tell a little bit about how some of this came about in Maine. As I said, Educare was a platform for change. And when we started the Educare process, I was invited to the table to really sit down with the lead commissioners in our state, first lady, and advocates. So there was a group of us that had a chance to sit down each month and talk about system issues.

So, the Continuity of Service, when we started talking about that -- now, I really approached it from the aspect of -- of the child and the family that... You know, our research is telling us that -- that transitions, you know, are -- really interrupt children's learning and brain development. So we really wanted to minimize those. So, again, when a -- if a family comes in to our full-day services and are eligible for Child Care, they stay eligible until they transition to Head Start.

So, it is really -- we are allowed to re-determine family fees-based status, but it does not affect their eligibility for service. And that goes true for Head Start, too. Once we re-determine for Head Start, if they're still eligible, they will remain eligible until they enter kindergarten.

Sarah: Great, that's music to a lot of our ears. We are hoping that this can happen on a nationwide basis to eliminate those transitional gaps.

Kathy: Yes. I can -- I can say, too, I'd like to give some credit here to our -- our Office of Child -- Child & Family Services at the state level, because they house both the Head Start Collaboration Office and the Child Care -- the CCDF division. So, it was great to have those -- both of those partners sitting at the table so that we could really work our way through this process.

Sarah: Yeah, that's really another strategy of getting everyone from the different perspectives at the -- at the same table to sort of discuss all these issues. Now, earlier you had mentioned that you collaborate in philanthropic ways. Can you tell us a little bit more about that process? What are some of your ways you send out -- outreach or the steps to know about these entities?

Kathy: We do it through several ways -- through our community partnerships, number one. We really seek to find people who have some type of connection to these philanthropic, you know, partners, whether it's somebody who sits on their board or -- and -- and we try to have conversations with them about what the goals of that organization are.

So, that is one way. I can tell you, over the past year I have really employed somebody on a part-time basis through unrestricted funds to help with some of the larger fund -- with some of the larger philanthropic organizations, because that sometimes takes a lot more legwork to really research what they are willing to fund. And again, as I said earlier also, that our managers and all staff are always seeking and looking for those types of opportunities. So, it's -- it's -- we've kind of embedded it throughout our whole structure.

Sarah: In our first webinar, one of our -- our panelists talked about hiring relationship- or partner-ready staff to make those outreaches. I'm wondering if you look for staff who have that quality as well?

Kathy: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, that is one of the key components in the job description of our director of operations, as well as our region managers who directly oversee the direct service staff but also are the ones who meet on a regular basis with all of our collaborating partners. So, it is infused in our job descriptions, yes. Sarah: And the other piece you highlighted was the -- the Title 1 and -- and partnering with public school and Part Cs. Can you explain a little bit more about serving children with disabilities, especially infants and toddlers?

Kathy: Sure. One of the things we do at the local Child Development Service, as I said, is the in-homes -- we call it in-home special instruction. And the way that works is when we have a child enrolled in Early Head Start who has an identified special need, who is also a client of Child Development Services, we work very closely with them on -- on the child's IFSP, their service plan.

And rather than having two people go in to -- to work with that parent, we often assist them in implementation of that IFSP, and that may be specific parent education; it may be helping the parent understand better the child's needs; or it could be activities outlined in their plan. And we help to make sure that those are ongoing.

Heath: Great, thank you, Kathy. If Laurie's still on the line, we did have a question for her. Laurie: Yeah, I'm here.

Heath: Okay, great. I knew you were going to be needing to leave shortly, so just wanted to double check. The question is: "What does Minnesota do if a child loses their CCDF eligibility?" The person goes on to ask: "Does the child stay in the Early Head Start with a decreased number of hours of service or does the Early Head Start pick up the full-day cost?"

Laurie: Great question. One of the things sites have been doing is budgeting in their overall annual budget for using more Head Start money, in a sense -- or Early Head Start dollars -- to cover full-day for a limited period of time. So they might set aside enough money so that a certain percentage of their families who might lose Child Care Assistance eligibility at least temporarily might draw down more dollars per day or -- or per week, and then kind of use that as a temporary measure.

And if they feel like that's going to not be resolved within a month or two, then often what they do is they do try to shift them to a part-time option unless they are lucky enough to have some foundation or philanthropic money to fill the gap, as some our sites do -- have been able to do. So, some have foundation money to draw down or, you know, have done some fundraising for that purpose.

Heath: Great, thank you. Thank you to both you and Kathy for sharing all that you're doing. It's really great to hear some practical -- practical examples. As we begin to close, [inaudible] the archived presentation of this webinar, as well as any additional materials, such as the Minnesota sample budget and application form, on the NITCCI, EHS NRC, and the ECLKC websites. There's also several other resources that you may be interested in -- on NCCIC's websites. They have a section called "Partnerships and Collaborations," as well as the Community Partnerships on the ECLKC website.

Sarah: And Heath, I just want to extend your thank you. We are so pleased to have both Kathy and Laurie with us. You've been very generous with your time and your expertise during the planning of this webinar and taking the time to share your insights, your challenges, your triumphs, which is so helpful to programs and states across the nation to provide quality comprehensive services for infants, toddlers, and families.

We also want to thank everyone who joined us today. We know you work so hard on behalf of the infants, the babies, the toddlers, and the families, as well. And it's because of you that we all remain charged and focused on doing our best and, you know, putting the -- putting the work into reality. Carla, Angie, would you like to add any final thoughts to the webinar before we close off?

Carla: Sure. This is Carla. I want to again extend thank yous to Kathy and Laurie for the excellent presentations. I mean, these are really good examples of how on-the-ground collaborations are happening, and we want to see more of this innovative thinking across Child Care and Early Head Start and Head Start, and all of the early learning programs. And so, I encourage you to continue to try to find innovative ways to braid and blend fundings.

And if you have questions, always contact the state administrator or the regional program office for guidance around rules and requirements. But again, you know, kudos to the excellent work that's being done in the field. And I look forward to hearing of more exciting things. Thank you. [Beeping]

Angie: This is Angie. Can you hear me? Sarah: Yes, we can.

Angie: Oh, good. And again, I would also like to thank all of you. Wonderful resources, wonderful conversation. And I -- I agree with Carla; I think that to move to the future, to support families with the services that they need and the care that they need, that this is a wonderful conversation around collaboration. And I think that it will help programs to determine how they can also collaborate with Early Head Start and Child Care to provide services families need. So, thank you very much.

Sarah: And we here would also like to extend our thanks to the Office of Child Care and the Office of Head Start for providing your leadership in allowing us to bring this information to our audience and archiving it. And we'd also like to thank everyone for attending and let you know that this ends today's portion of the webinar. We look forward to continued conversations.

Operator: This concludes today's call. We thank you for your participation.
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-- Premalink for viewing (requires Flash and javascript)

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