Measuring What Matters Webinar Series: Webinar 3-Lessons from the Field on PFCE Data & Partnering with Families to Measure Progress

Brandi Black Thacker: Hello everyone! Welcome to the third and final installment for Measuring What Matters: Making Progress Toward Expected Family Outcomes. Today, I have the distinct honor and pleasure of bringing you several of our colleagues from across the country to talk about what they're doing right now, today, toward this effort. What I'd like to do to get us grounded, to begin, is first of all, say hello so you don't have stranger danger. My name is Brandi Black Thacker, and I'm the Director of Training and Technical Assistance for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.

I want to take a little walk through time over the past week, and just review, quickly, where we've been together over the last two webinars. In the first two webinars, you heard a little bit about prepare and collect and some wonderful exercises that we've created for you to think about that back at your program and enhance where you'd really like to go and drive this effort toward measuring what matters. Then on Thursday you got to hear a little bit about use and share and aggregate and analyze and how those both connect to the first two days of activities, and how together they really support, not only our efforts toward continuous improvement, programmatically, but how to specifically connect what we know about our data, our families, in our service areas, to what we really want to accomplish toward family engagement outcomes.

Without further ado, I'd love to tell you where we'd like to focus today. How do we in Head Start and Early Head Start honor families in the process of setting program goals? What lessons have other programs learned about PFCE data and the Four Data Activities? And then what kind of experiences have folks had, out and about there, in connecting family outcomes to child outcomes? These are some of the top three questions we get across the country from you guys about what are folks doing, how are people thinking, and what kinds of resources are out there.

So, what we have in store for you today is a really wonderful journey through the eyes of colleagues from Region 9 in two programs that you'll be introduced to here shortly, and also from the eyes of some of our TA colleagues, not only from Region 9, but also Region 1, which you'll hear from a little later in the hour together. So, let's get started with Region 9, and one of my favorite folks, and for those of you who know her, I'm sure yours as well: the one, the only, Laura Landis! Welcome, Laura!

Laura Landis: Thank you, Brandi! I'm Laura Landis and I work with the T/TA System in Region 9, specifically in Arizona right now. We had the pleasure of having the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement come to Arizona to provide the Measuring What Matters Institute for grantees for Arizona and Nevada.

We were able to do a joint-state institute back in May. Some of the key points that I just want to share from our experience are, first, prior to the National Center coming out and providing the training, we provided grantees and prepared grantees by asking them to identify the key players to attend. This was critical. The reason why it was so important: We knew that grantees have a lot of questions around family engagement and school readiness, especially with the five-year grant process.

So, many times certain National Centers in specific trainings, draw out either family engagement staff or education staff, but not always both. So, we knew having a combination of the staff at the table would allow for those discussions and those "aha" moments. Folks who sent comprehensive teams, including upper management--and that was definitely key-did have those integrated system discussions and those "aha" moments together. They were able to dig deeper. And having the upper management folks attend allowed for those groups not to feel like they had to go back and recreate what they had learned. They had carved out time during the Institute for the teams to plan and discuss. This was huge-absolutely huge.

So I'm really excited, I'm thrilled to be able to introduce two amazing colleagues of mine from Arizona that attended the Institute today. We have Marion and Katrina. They both attended the two-day Measuring What Matters Institute with their grantee teams. They both walked away with tons of "aha" moments and they were just on fire. Today, you're going to hear from two grantees that are rural and urban. We thought having a little bit of both would help folks across the nation. Marion works with the City of Phoenix. It's a very large grantee and is located in the heart of the city. And Katrina works with Pinal-Gila--that is a rural grantee that is very spread out over two counties. Both will share more about their programs, but now I'd like to turn it over to Katrina.

Katrina Relph-Mueller: Hello there. This is Katrina Relph-Mueller. I'm the Family Services Coordinator for a program, like she said, out in Pinal-Gila counties. It's 10,000 square miles in our service area and our farthest site is about two hours away. In our preschool-Head Start-we have 885 children and in our Early Head Start, 162. And I want to just shout out that we've been here 40 years--our anniversary was this past April. So very exciting. We've been here for a while. I just wanted to share with you guys our journey. We started back when the PFCE Framework first came out, very excited. We really were so excited that we had a framework that really showcased what we do for our families, and in celebrating the successes our families have, by bringing up those outcomes and being able to share that with the public.

So, as we started planning, we gathered everybody together-we had our ed coordinator, our disabilities coordinator, behavioral health. We had our professional development people. We met in a room and we just sat down and decided, "Okay, we're going to get this done. We're going to actually come up with a goal." We actually came up with seven goals, because our understanding was that we had to have a goal for each of the seven PFCE outcomes. So, you can imagine the size of the document when we finished, by the end of the day, was about seven to eight pages long.

We had a goal and then we had three outcomes for each of those goals. So, it was rather challenging at the start. As we continued on, we decided to vet this whole process. We took it out to our parents at the sites, and during home visits and shared and received feedback from them. The big feedback response was "this is really great." They loved the Framework. They really enjoyed that they were going to be part of the Head Start-and really loved it. They're only feedback was, "It's big; this is a big document." However, we continued to use it. We took it to our Policy Council. We took it to our ed and family service advisory committees-which is made up of community members and staff and parents-and we just continued on. We took it to our board and used it for a few years. As we used it, we realized we hadn't really had outcomes in mind. So, it was more like a plan--more like a service plan--of what we were going to do.

We started thinking about how we could change this process. What we did is we started looking at our school readiness goals and tried to figure out how we could best use the Framework to support the school readiness goals. So, we started from there. We have a much better plan now and a much better goal. We have outcomes in mind. We're really focused on how to get the parents engaged in classrooms. So, we've focused on attendance. We're focusing on volunteering and receiving more observations from our parents. So, they're really engaged in that learning process.

Some of the really good, positive things that did happen from our startup, is that we realized that our professional development was lacking when we-with our teachers-with parent engagement. So, we started a whole campaign of really training-that it's everybody's business-and really focused on parents and teachers working together, and training teachers how to speak and talk to parents and how to engage them when they're talking about child assessments; when they're talking about, "Hey, let's make a goal for your child."

We have teachers that came back and said, "That was fantastic--I've never had that before. I am really seeing how I am able to reach out to my parents better." The next thing that we did was we focused on job descriptions, and we focused on evaluations. So, we have language about school readiness and parent/family engagement throughout our program. It's also in our procedures. Even though the first plan didn't go as well as we had thought, it really did solidify--it's in all of our processes now. It's even in our strategic planning-everything about parent/family engagement.

So, yes, we started out weird, but we actually have come out at the end with something that's really positive. And we really, really are excited to see how this goal works out now and what outcomes we're going to get. So, that's really kind of our process. Wish us well for the future.

Brandi: Oh gosh, thank you so much Katrina. I wonder-there are so many incredible nuggets that you uplifted for us to consider, based on your process and based on the experience that you guys had at your program. What I'd like to do is offer our colleagues-in virtual land-which one of the things most resonated with them based on what you said.

Sort of a little review of some of the high points, but also, which of the things connect, in terms of what you guys are thinking about, where you are, where you've been. I love what Katrina said, which is, "We started weird." [Laughter] "But we ended up with this great process," which I think we really have to give ourselves permission to do. So, if you haven't yet, look at your screen and let us know where you are. Katrina uplifted a few ideas here. The first one you can see is, you know, family engagement isn't necessarily about compliance.

Although we have a few things in our laws and in our regulations that really uplift the core of what we've always known-which is we revere families and honor their voices in ways better than anybody in the business. But it's about us doing what is right beside families, to partner with them in a meaningful and intentional way, based on the data that they share with us. The second bit is, this takes time. Even in the research today--implementation sciences--when you take on a big thing like this, it might be three to five years of weirdo, or sort of stopping and starting, recalibrating, course correction. Which ties in a little bit to the third bullet as well-giving yourself permission to start small and build out. You heard what Katrina said. "Oh my goodness, we have this huge document, we had all these goals. It was our understanding what we had to have something that aligns every single one of the Family Engagement Outcomes in the blue columns of the PFCE Framework."

But through this process, what we got to do is take a step back, take a breath, and really make meaningful connections based on our own data-and then big decisions beyond that, like the professional development focus, the job descriptions, and the evaluations. So, a couple of things. I'm tallying, we're seeing how you guys are voting. We're going to reveal the results here in just about five seconds to make sure everybody gets time to weigh in here. Let's have a drum roll please. My colleague, Miss Lara Ballou, is going to reveal our results now. So, as you guys can see, by and large, well over half of you still really connected to Katrina's reflections around, it's not just about compliance, it's about us doing beside our families what we know is right, what we know is true, what we've always done.

But guess what? The wonderful gift is that through the five-year project period, we have this structure now that really organizes our thinking in a way that just builds on the core and the strength of what we've always known and done. And it really gives us a great way to interact with our leaders and our regional offices and be in constant communication about where our focus is, where we're going, and then how we are either staying in that course over the five years, or course correcting based on what our data tell us.

For instance, when we get to that data activity around aggregate and analyze, we learn a lot of good stuff. So, first, It’s not about compliance. It's about doing what's right in partnership with families. Second, giving ourselves permission to start small and also remembering that it takes time. Anything like this depth and breadth that we uplift is going to take a little bit-that's what the science tells us.

So, now, we want to thank Katrina so much. That was wonderful. I appreciate you uplifting what you guys have been doing. I'd also like for you to guys to hear from one of other Region 9 colleagues, Marion, who is from the City of Phoenix. Marion, take it away!

Marion Hill: Alright, thank you! My name is Marion Hill. I'm a Program Coordinator with the City of Phoenix Head Start program. Let me kind of give you an overview so you can draw a picture or paint a picture of what we look like here at the City of Phoenix. So, the first thing is that we are a government entity. We have a Head Start Program that has 3,090 slots. Those 3,090 slots-the provision of those services is provided by nine delegate agencies. Seven of those delegate agencies are school districts; two of them are non-profits. We also have an Early Head Start-- which is our home-based program. We have 300 slots there. And then we were just awarded the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership. We have 188 slots there with three child care partners. Then we have a data system that collects all of that data, whether it's coming from our delegate agencies or whether it's in house here with our Early Head Start program.

That was really important to us as we began to look at the PFCE Framework-began talking about school readiness-what that looked like and the current reality of the services that we were currently providing. The other interesting thing to understand about the City of Phoenix-and we're a different kind of a grantee-is that we, as the City of Phoenix, the grantee, we provide the social services component, and our delegate agencies provide the classroom services. So it's important that we work together to make sure that we provide some well-rounded services to our families. So, when we began looking at the Framework and looking at an initial review of our data as to where we currently were-to try to set a path for where we were going-we really identified some interesting things.

We knew that as the grantee, we were providing the social services. So, we had a scale family assessment tool. We looked at the strengths and weaknesses across several different domains for our families. We knew we provided the Head Start services, Early Head Start services, and our delegates provided the classroom services. So, we began pulling all of that data and taking and looking at that data to see how it fit really into the Framework. We identified some interesting things. One: We identified that we were very siloed in the delivery of our services. Neither of the two really crossed over. Our delegates did their thing; we did our thing, from a social services perspective. Our Early Head Start did their things. Even though we had a system, there really wasn't a lot as it related to crossing over with regard to the delivery of services-very siloed.

We had this case management system that really wasn't having as big of an impact as we thought that it would have on our families. Basically looking at the data we pretty much determined that our caseworkers or our family support workers were really nothing more than glorified eligibility workers that were good at giving out referrals and having families go to other organizations to receive services. We weren't quite making the connection to school readiness, although we did have child goals. We did have some family goals.

We struggled with trying to come up with community goals. We still weren't making that connection. One of the most important things is that we discovered and determined that we were disconnected from our delegates. So, there wasn't really any communication that took place between our teachers and the caseworkers as it related to providing services to families and children. And we struggled with the implementation of PFCE, because we really focused on the outcomes in our current delivery system. That really caused us some confusion, because we were trying to think: How in the world are we going to be able to get to those outcomes with where we are right now.

So, not only was this a change for us from the standpoint of coming up with some goals, it was an entire culture shift for us. Now we really needed to partner with one another and begin working together on all realms related to Early Head Start and Head Start, as it related to our delegate agencies. We needed to come together. So, we came together and really began spending some time really trying to hammer out a vision, trying to set a foundation, come up with some goals with regard to where we wanted to go. We didn't concern ourselves so much with the outcomes.

Basically, we said, "Look, if we create this vision, if we have some goals, then the outcomes are going to happen." Bottom line is that we all care about the services that we provide to families and to children, and we want to make sure that our children are progressing to make that transition into kindergarten. We can do some long-range studies, taking them out to third grade to see where they are. But it was important for us, really, to come together and be on one accord. So, out of that came five areas that we wanted to make sure that we addressed. We wanted to make sure that we provided a unified birth-to-five early childhood program that provided some quality, comprehensive services to the community.

We needed to align our Early Head Start and our Head Start programs so that we could better facilitate seamless services to the families. We wanted to certainly enhance our child and family outcomes through more effective family engagement services. And then we determined to strengthen our family services to ensure that 75 percent of our families progressed in our-using our family assessment tool and our family partnership agreements. Then we finally wanted to make sure that we developed and maintained the highest-skilled and most-qualified workforce. So doing that we created the foundation.

We set the vision through the development of these obtainable goals. We were clear in our purpose. And now the data that we started to pull and analyze began to make more sense. Then we created a method for professional development in all of our programs, both at the grantee and delegate level-individually, as well as collectively. But the "aha" moment came in this, when we started looking back at all of that data, we recognized---we didn't know it at the time, what we were doing-but what we had developed was a method to decrease the achievement gap that existed between children from low income families in comparison to children from middle to upper income families in areas like reading, language, family routines, and positive discipline.

And then it tore down-it just completely broke down all of the silos. We recognized and understood and appreciated that there was a gray area that existed. We knew that it was there, but we were afraid to really work in that gray area, which says that teachers and caseworkers need to work together. The grantee and the delegate needs to always be working together to make sure that we're providing the best services-well-rounded services-both in Early Head Start and making that transition from Early Head Start to Head Start, and that we have some really obtainable goals and can make a difference in the lives of our families. That was really the big "aha" moment to us.

Now, through me participating—and several of my other staff participating in the Measuring What Matters Institute--the one thing that we're doing now is trying to look at the data and see how that data-the data that happens with the families-how does that correlate to what's going on in the classroom. Meaning that their success in the home, their success with the families, how does that measure to the success that's going on in the classroom? So, that's a little bit about us, and, and where we are. I know that was kind of high level, but those are really kind of lessons that we've learned, and things that we've gained through this process.

Brandi: Wow Marion, thank you so much! Gosh, where to start. The excitement-there's so many good things to unpack here. Let's look at a poll from Marion too. Let's see some of the nuggets that he offered and which ones resonate with you guys the most, based on his sharing. A couple of things--let's start at the top. Don't get overwhelmed by all of the data. He offered a couple of things, like "Woo! We were struggling." He used the language y'all, he brought the "S word" out. He admitted very transparently that, "Well, we really had to work through this. There was some going through the muck and mire and making some pieces connect, and pulling it through. We felt siloed."

There are a couple of things here we're going to talk about, but don't get overwhelmed by all of it. We know that in terms of those Four Data Activities-prepare, collect, aggregate/analyze, and use/share-- by and large you tell us, "We are so comfortable with collect. As a matter of fact, we'd like to be less comfortable with collect." [Laughing] "We've been doing that since the dawn of time, we really want to streamline." So what Marion's offered is: Take a step back. Connect it to things that you actually see happening for your children, your families. And then make that connection to those outcomes in that blue column.

There is nothing that you could share with us that we couldn't help you make a connection to those outcomes in the blue column of the PFCE Framework. The other part that he said that's really exciting, that I wanted to connect to as well, is a tie to what was happening in the larger community. He mentioned a couple of things about really taking the things that they knew about the data, about their families, and their children and expanding that discussion to touch things with the community. You guys have to admit, when the Information Memorandum came out last March about the five-year project period, a couple of you were a bit anxious about a few of the bullets in there.

One in particular, was that we needed to create this [inaudible] to measure progress, not only for children, but also families-thus, this series of resources, including this webinar-and community. And what Marion just offered you is a way to make some of those connections, all in one fell swoop, so that you can really tell the story. Breaking down those silos-this is something that we're always excited to do with each other. Making sure that it uplifts what Katrina said before-this really is everybody's business. It lives with our teachers. It lives with our upper management and leadership staff. It lives with every person who lives and loves within our program. It's everybody's job to make deposits in the relationships with our families. And that's how we get closer every day to engagement. So breaking those down.

I love this next one: Gray is okay. Embrace the gray. [Laughing] We can really wrap our arms around that it's alright to feel--I'm going to get scientific on you--squishy. It's okay to live in that space of figuring it out. Seeing where you're going, seeing if it's working. Taking a step back, doing a little bit of the dance that this process requires. As Marion said, often times, our human service delivery structure isn't so black and white. So it's okay to really live in that space-but keeping that consistent dialogue as we're tasked to within the five-year project period, with your program specialist and your federal leaders so that they can know, right beside you, where you're going, where you hope to go.

If things don't go exactly as you proposed or project, then you take a step back and recalibrate. And then finally, again--can't emphasize this enough--giving yourself permission to start small. Thinking about connecting to one of the Family Engagement Outcomes, or even taking a step back and thinking about, well what smaller subgroup of our families could we really focus around or beside. So, for instance, we had a program tell us that they had a real increase in mommas who were experiencing postpartum depression. The percentage that they had currently was abnormal--it had really grown. But they wanted to take a step back and really invest their energy in a meaningful way around that group of moms and-expectant families that were now new parents and families-and really follow them over time. That gave them the opportunity to really get deep with those families, follow them in a longitudinal way. And then replicate out what made sense, based on the new data coming in.

So, now that you've all put your vote in, let's do the drum roll, please, and see where you all fell for this one! [Pause] Look at this guys. It's really a lot more evenly distributed--check this out! You almost fell completely in an even way. The winner though, is "breaking down the silos." This is what we hear. Being able to bring the PFCE content to teachers, to health folks, to transportation experts, to culinary gurus-all the folks that live, as Marion described it, in our comprehensive service structure--in a way that really resonates with folks based on their role and their experience right beside families. A couple of things here that I wanted to point out. You may have seen my colleague, Lara Ballou, put down in this speaker box at the bottom middle of your screen, that not only can you share—if you're having technological problems or any kind of tech issues with audio or otherwise--but you can also propose some speaker questions for Katrina, for Marion, for anybody that you hear speak--myself, Laura Landis, and coming up next, one of other TA colleagues from Region 1, who's going to offer you up a state model.

So, make sure if you have things roaming around in your mind, if you want more information, go ahead and put them there in the question box. We're going to answer some of those out loud in a little bit, after you hear from Nancy Darlington. And then at the end of our time—if you've been on the other two webinars, you'll know--we also create some space through chat and a water cooler function at the end of our time together where you can talk to each other, talk to the presenters, and share information as colleagues. So, we'll be doing that here in a little bit as well.

But, without further ado, let's see here, let me check in with my colleagues to make sure-alright. We'll address some questions that we've seen coming in here in our Q-and-A section in a little bit. But without further ado, let's get you over to Miss Nancy Darlington, who is from Region 1. She's going to introduce herself and, guys-this is so exciting. You've heard some incredible feedback from both Katrina and Marion and their experience on the ground right in their programs. What Nancy's going to bring to us is a statewide model from the New England area. And with that Nancy, over to you!

Nancy Darlington: Thank you Brandi! And hi everybody! I'm excited to talk about this. It's sort of a broader look at the process of measuring family services. In Maine, when we were thinking about the process for measuring family outcomes, the Head Start directors and the family services managers wanted to find a way to collect and look at data that would provide insight into outcomes for Head Start families across the state. We knew that each program was collecting data on family circumstances and family engagement activities, but beyond that, they wanted to find a way to begin to answer these questions that you see up on your screen. [Pause] So, to figure out how to do this, they decided to hire a consultant to help hone the process. She worked with them to come to agreement on: What are we going to measure? How are we going to measure it? What are the indicators for measurement? How will the data be recorded and shared? And that third bullet there is, who is the audience for the data? What is the impact of the data?

As we know from learning about the Four Data Activities, it's very important to put a lot of emphasis on preparation, and this was their-the main emphasis of their preparation before embarking on this project. So, this slide that you're seeing now comes from the consultant that they used, and it's the definitions for the considerations of power. So, basically they were looking at what is it that they're going to measure. Who does it communicate to? What is the audience? What is the importance of the information? Why are we collecting it? And what is its relevance in real time? They chose three outcomes to look at for the statewide data collection.

And then, in the next process in your Four Data Activities, where they began the process of collecting the data--they defined each performance measure and they identified the indicators that would be used to define participation by the family. And the last of the Four Data Activities, is--as you know--use and share.

So, one of the goals of this project was to demonstrate the link between positive family outcomes and positive child outcomes and school readiness. Under their considerations for power, they did indicate research that supported that link between family outcomes and child outcomes. Then, they thought about who should be made aware of this information and how might it be used to influence bigger policy decisions in the state.

So, I'm going to show you those three performance measures that were chosen and what it looks like. So, this is the first one--literacy-- and this is the definition of the performance measure. They wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page. And they wanted to make sure everybody was collecting data based on the same activities.

So, these were the indicators for measurement. They also decided that-every program has a different method for collecting and tracking their data, but they could still put the information into a common place, so that everybody could see what was happening.

Under considerations for power, they did provide links to data that showed studies that made that link between the outcomes for children whose parents are actively involved in their literacy. And they looked at who would be their relevant audience for this. Who would be interested in this information? The second focus they chose was financial security. So, there's your definition. I don't know how well you can see this slide-there's a lot on there.

But these were the indicators that they chose to look at as far as leading that definition of financial security. By defining the indicators and agreeing on indicators, they were able to collect common data from every program. Now, in the considerations for power on this one, they knew that this information would be very relevant to legislators, to community members, to lots of people--but it was also a place that made it really clear that there's a long way to go between measuring effort and effect.

So, this is a really good example of starting out small-starting out understanding that you really are measuring effort. But the long-term goal is to be able to show the impact and look at the effect. The final focus they chose was attendance.

And again, this was to make the link between attendance and child outcomes. I didn't put in a slide for the considerations for measurement, because attendance is pretty clear--either you're there, or you're not there. But on the considerations for power, again they provided the link to data. And they can also provide data on Head Start child outcomes, linked to attendance in programs. Highlighting this information, they felt, was really important because we know there are so many factors that can impact a family's ability to maintain a high attendance level. But understanding that link between attendance and success hopefully can influence the level of intervention that's provided to alleviate those factors.

And helping people understand that it's not just the responsibility of the family, but it's the responsibility of a community to understand and help when families are facing adversity that might keep a child from getting to the program. [Pause] So, again, the final step in the Four Data Activities is data use and sharing. I've talked a little bit about the "use" and what they've decided at this point to do with this information that's collected. It will be aggregated and analyzed, and then it will be published in the annual Head Start report.

And some of the goals for this process will be to create a better understanding of the family engagement activities that are taking place around the states in these three categories-again, starting in the fall-to raise awareness beyond the Head Start community of family engagement activities, to demonstrate the link between family outcomes and school readiness. And ultimately, we hope to be able to use data to influence higher-level policy decisions that impact children and families.

So, the next step that will be happening in Maine is to really start to look at the difference between effort and effect. We understand this is a long-term project, and the next steps will be working on finding ways to measure the long-term benefits or effects of these family engagement efforts that are taking place. So, thank you!

Brandi: Nancy, that's incredible. This should be a great opportunity for us to thank, not only your federal and TA leaders in Region 1, but certainly, similarly, our federal and TA leaders in Region 9 for allowing us the honor to share time with all of you guys on the webinar today. And I have to say, to our colleagues out in virtual land, you're offering some really incredible questions that we want to get to. Before we do that though, we're going to flip over, on behalf of the amazing work that's going on in Maine, to look at a poll one last time for what Nancy just shared, about what's happening through that statewide effort.

So, what resonates most with you? Where are you guys at? What are you thinking? How are you feeling? First and foremost: Family outcomes directly impact child outcomes. This is something that we've always really known and really honored. But the PFCE Framework gives us the grounding to really live and stay there, not only through research and what we know that's out there in the science, but what we know that's worked over time for us. We also know here on the second bullet point that we want to uplift just as high that family outcomes data, as we do our child outcomes data. And if you've guys haven't discovered it yet, I'm going to give you a little sneak peek.

There was an update to the grant application for the five-year project period that was released on April 1st. And there's a bullet in there that actually gives you the opportunity to make connections from your family engagement data to your child outcomes data and see how and if it correlates. Guys, this is what we've all been waiting for, right? I mean, this is the thing that we've all been so thrilled about-is being able to showcase what we've always known and revered about the way our families grow and how that impacts their children's growth and progress.

This is our chance to really uplift those kinds of ideas-and for you-right in your program, to shine a light on it in ways that maybe we haven't in the past. I love what Nancy said about measuring effort and effect. It's really something that we've been talking about now and sharing that with our colleagues from Program Management and Fiscal Operations, or NCPMFO. It's not just about the count-s-or what we call the hash marks--in terms of effort, but really what impact, what knowledge, and behavior change is happening over time in terms of our opportunity to make a difference. That's the third bullet.

And then last, but not least: Don't we have an incredible opportunity to impact public policy? Talk about a community tie, talk about connections in the Bronfenbrenner-esque kind of way. [Laughing] You know, micro to macro, this is incredible. We have the opportunity right now, today, to make impacts in things like overall budgeting for early childhood education, public school initiatives, social services programs, and so much more.

I used to be a director myself and some of you may have heard me ask questions before like, "Could you use a little extra funding ever?" This kind of data gives folks the chance to uplift--in a really tangible way--the work that we've always known, in a way that can resonate with funders, with other community partners, with policymakers-basically having everything we need to not only make our case, but really showcase it in a way that connects to what we know right in our own service areas and where we're going-in terms of making progress beside those families. So, let's get the results. Drum roll please. I wonder if any of you are actually doing the drum roll. [Laughing]

The first one wins out in a pretty large margin! Family outcomes are directly tied to and impact child outcomes. This is what resonates with you guys. This is where we've been and this is how we know that we partner right beside families, not only to make an impact through our locked-arms approach with our grown folks and colleagues-but also how that impacts the tiny, little ones too, and how we use that together to make strides toward what we all spring out of bed for everyday—which is to support our kids toward that trajectory on school readiness. Alright, that's all of that.

What we'd like to do now is save some really dedicated time for you guys to ask some questions--of which we've collected quite a few already--and give our colleagues, both Marion and Katrina, opportunities to share from their program's perspective what they're doing. And then certainly Nancy and Laura Landis an opportunity to offer anything from their expert technical assistance perspectives as well. So, let's start with one of the questions that we usually get the most when we're out and about on the street. Marion, I'll offer this one over to you first, which is a lot of curiosity around your collection of data, tools, format, tracking forms. What would you offer the group?

Marion: So, our collection of data--the system that we use is really a custom system. We have an IT department that's worked to create a case management system—we call it CMS that collects all of our data. Now our delegate agencies in the classrooms--they're using TSG. We have tools that we use, of course, in Early Head Start. And all of that data is reported into our CMS system. We are tracking that classroom data or the child data, that drives our child goals three times a year--we're collecting that.

And then the case management system on the family side, the foundation of what we use is we developed a scale family assessment tool that really measures where a family is from a strength assessment in probably 14 different domains. Everything from where they are with employment to income to the parent-child relationships. There's just a plethora of areas in there. But we actually have customized that even more, to go a little bit deeper, and what we did was we connected with Early Shine Learning--the Acelero group. I believe they're out of New Jersey. And we hammered out a parent survey, which is more of a strength assessments survey that is wrapped around school readiness.

So, now we're looking at family routines, things that are going on in the home, things that parents are currently doing with their children. And we're really able to identify where there are some weaknesses in the home--just basic family routines. Then we're able to also identify some areas with regard to self-sufficiency. Are there some things there that are causing some issues in the home? Whether it be income coming into the home, whether it be employment, whether it be transportation, whether it be issues related to substance abuse--all things that would be related to causing issues with a child in a classroom. And that information--we have a pre-, we have a mid-, and we have a post--that we do, again, three times.

But that's a lot of data that our case managers are consistently putting in the system. And anytime we're able to go in and pull that data out-now as it relates to the classroom, that's three times a year. We have times that our delegates input that information. We generate reports off of that, and then we sit down with our delegate agencies and go through that information, as well as Early Head Start. Then our family goals are connected to what's being input in our case management system as a result of our parent survey and our scale family assessment tool. So we're able to measure where a family is when they come in, where they are midpoint of the year, and then where they are at the end of the end of the school year when they leave us.

Brandi: Marion, this is incredible. One of the things that occurs to me is, you guys have really created and built something that sounds super meaningful to you based on the data that you have been connected with and to, right beside your families. I mentioned this on the first webinar last Tuesday, and I wanted to offer it again in the context of what Marion's offered here. At the National Center, we've been working really hard on what we've been calling a compilation document, which outlines a lot of wonderful, reliable, and valid instruments that are out there for you to consider.

They are based on and organized by the seven Family Engagement Outcomes in the blue column of the PFCE Framework. Now, as you've heard Marion say, there's a lot of pre-work to that, right? Because a lot of folks have discovered over time that it's not really even necessary to go that far in terms of purchasing the tool. If you have data that's what we call secondary data-that you already have your hands on or that, for instance, through your community assessment, others have gathered and that you have access to, it's not necessary to purchase something above and beyond that.

However, we do know, like the example that I mentioned earlier today around mommas who may be experiencing postpartum depression, there are tools out there-under the family well-being umbrella- that would allow you to really follow, track, and, for instance, give benchmarks, if you will-when they might need more supportive services from community partners outside of our expertise in mental health, or otherwise.

So, just a couple of things for you guys to consider. You get to really pave your own path based on where you are and where you want to go. And Marion offered us some excellent example to think about. One of the other things that we get a lot-that I want to make sure you guys have the chance to hear from both Katrina and Marion around this--okay, let's get real, talk about aggregate and analyze. What data management systems have you guys found out there that you're either using-and they're working? Or that you're building around? So, we want to open it up for Katrina to start us off, and then we'll all go back over to Marion again, just to see what he would offer.

Katrina: So for our data collection, we utilize ChildPlus, and one of our collection tools that we use at the site level to get information from parents is Family Maps Inventory. And from there, it's a comprehensive tool. We get a lot of information from that tool. There's a pre- and a post-. So, we have sites doing the data collection and data entry. And then us coordinators are pulling data on a monthly basis and then aggregating it into Excel documents or graphs or whatever is useful for what we want to collect and what we want to share. It's been kind of journey because we had a self-made family assessment tool and it wasn't quite comprehensive enough, so the Family Maps is really helping us out in getting some meaningful data. We also use a survey and collect information that way. And then from there, it's just ChildPlus and Excel documents.

Brandi: Oh great, Katrina, thank you for all of that. As, as you guys can hear, it's really a meaningful approach in a lot of different ways and spaces. And we've had folks tell us a lot of information like, "Gosh, you know, we felt so much pressure in the beginning to get to a tool, to choose something, to buy something. But we forgot to take a step back and think about what we might already have and see what we could take inventory of, and how we could streamline it, and ultimately, if it's necessary." So, Katrina, that's super helpful. Thank you for offering the few ways that you guys have really made those connections. And Marion, we want to offer the same opportunity to you.

Marion: Yeah, I think for us-we've looked at different data management systems that we could use. But, again, being a government entity that is also a community action agency and having other funding sources, community services, [inaudible], other funding sources to report against as well, we wanted to make sure that we connected, as a community service entity. And so, I think that's why it was important for us to make sure that we customized a system that works for us. I mean, we can cut reports and then input data elements that we want to pull out of reports and then convert those-whether they be in the graphs and the Excel documents-in terms of what's going to work for us.

We're looking at both qualitative data, as well as quantitative data. I think on that quantitative data-we've got a whole IT section. So, anytime we want to pull something that may be a little bit different from the goals that we've already established now--or the way we're able to go in and put in subsets, and then pull additional data.

Then, we're also pulling data across to see how we're doing as a community action agency, because what we do, in Head Start, and the progress that our families make-that is also reported into our CSBG reports as well. That we're reporting to the National Association of State Community Service Programs. So, for us, it's looking at it as a broader picture. We're a community action agency first. What services do we provide inside of there? All of the data that we're collecting--we customize everything to develop those reports, and then to be able to analyze our data.

Brandi: Alright, thank you Marion. We also had another curiosity about what you guys are doing in the City of Phoenix. The five areas that you uplifted earlier, Marion--I remember the first one was about a birth-to-five service delivery structure around comprehensive services. But it looks like folks are feeling more curious about the other areas that you guys are thinking about and around with that. So, if you could give us another reflection around those, that would be great.

Marion: So, the unified birth-to-five early childhood program provides quality comprehensive services in the community. The second one is really aligning Early Head Start and Head Start to better facilitate seamless services to families. One of the things that we identified there is that we have kids that come out of Early Head Start and they're not making the transition to Head Start.

Now, there are several reasons there. It could be based on our selection criteria, because they're young three-year-olds that are coming. Or we just haven't communicated that between Early Head Start and Head Start in order to transition those kids. So we wanted to make sure that we began to align our program so that we can go from Early Head Start to Head Start, and that it's a seamless service to families. We don't want families just hanging out there waiting on Head Start after they finished Early Head Start.

Then, enhancing child and family outcomes through effective family engagement services-that really speaks to the assessment tools that we're using with our families. The first thing that we have with our families when they enter into our program is kind of an agreement that says, as Head Start, this is our expectation of you. And here's what you can expect from us. That's the beginning conversation around school readiness. And then from there, we're able to go into the parent survey. The parent survey then allows us to be able to work on areas that we've identified where they may be deficient--it could be family routines. And there are some trainings and things that need to take place there.

It could be issues related to income and employment. We have a community initiative program that works on those things with regard to employment. So, we're able to connect them with different services off that tool. And we're also able to share that tool with our teachers and our delegate agencies, as well. So, the teachers can kind of get an indication--if there are some behavioral issues that are going on with a child in a classroom-they can go back and look at this document--the parent survey--and see family routines.

For example, if there's a behavioral issue, you can go in-one of the questions that we ask is, "What time does your child go to bed each night?" What time do they wake up in the morning? Do they do that on a consistent basis? If they're not getting enough sleep, that could manifest itself in the classroom. So, that's an important tool for us. And then strengthening family services to ensure 75 percent of our families progress, using our family assessment tool and our family partnership agreements. In our parent survey, with all of the questions that we're able to ask, we have--it's a measurement for each one. So, if you fall--let's say it's on a scale of 1 to 10-if you fall below a 4 in a certain area, we have identified you as being deficient in that area. We then have goals that can be pulled from each one of those. And those goals then have small objectives that they can reach to improve in a particular area.

I think we've got over 65 goals that go with our parent survey. So, we want to make sure that we see some improvement from the time that you entered and came in with us to the time that you left. Even though we know we can't provide full case management services, we can at least plant the seed and begin building some momentum with families to have some small, incremental success. And then finally, developing and maintaining the highest skilled, most qualified workforce--that speaks to our professional development. We give our caseworkers the tools that they're going to need in order to be able to connect and engage with families.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Marion. Well there are again, for Katrina and Marion both, so many incredible nuggets to pull from there. But one of them-actually, I'm going to do two at once, you know, watch me work. One of the things that's been so important in terms of lessons learned for us as we've gone out and about and learned from each of you around the country, is that you've got to create the space, as Marion said, to really define what success means to each family. And it's completely different, right? Because we hear a lot of times, "Well, the same old goals come up on the family partnership agreement."

Let's say a family wants to buy a house, for instance. Well what we've begun to think about--with you guys and at the National Center in particular--well what does success look like for the family? We might see it from our-you know, staff and colleagues'--perspective as the brick and mortar structure. But the family might say, "Well, no. I just want to know what it really means to get through the loan process. Even if I get accepted or declined for the funding, I may just decide to rent. This just may be too much for where we are right now-where we want to go."

And if we hadn't created the space for a family to tell us what success looks like to them, then we could have missed some huge opportunities in documenting that family's progress. Because we could find out and help them get connected to the process for loans for homeownership in less than 30 minutes-really, if we're feeling generous, 30 days. So, Marion gives us a couple of ideas to think about there in terms of really individualizing where we are beside our families and taking a look at that data with a really critical eye.

As we transition over to the chat boxes--so we can continue some of this dialogue virtually—one of the things that we hear and have been processing with you guys is the necessity for qualitative data. We have so much around quantitative information-whether it's PIR-esque, Section C--where we have to uplift all the services that we deliver to a family or refer a family for, from letters, you know, A through triple T, like substance abuse services, housing services, any kind of support through counseling. What we found is we really want to enhance our, our systems and structures around the qualitative side.

As Marion mentioned, it could be through parent survey and some open-ended questions. It could be through focus groups. It could be through our regular, ongoing conversations and communication with families. It's just thinking about-in that prepare data activity-how you're going to gather that. And then, ultimately, how you're going to aggregate and analyze it, which again, as a Center, we're working on--some different ideas for you guys to consider as it relates to those things.

So, let's transition over to our water cooler area of the webinar. If you guys were with us last week, in Webinars 1 and 2, you remember that on the top left-hand side of your screen you have a space to say, "Hello everybody! How are you?" Wish everybody well in the top left-hand side for informal conversations. In the bottom left, you have professional chat. So, if you guys want to talk to each other about what other tools are out there, what other aggregation and analysis systems folks are having luck with, that would be the bottom left-hand side. And then in the middle, you have the water cooler area for presenters. So, if Marion, Katrina, Laura, and Nancy have really intrigued you, you have more opportunities to connect with them in chat right there in the middle. I know that because there are so many of us on the line today, that we probably won't get to touch every single one, but we actually document all these great questions and they will all be archived on ECLKC.

You have access at the bottom center of your screen to some of the resources that we've talked about today. And certainly we can make available for you the PowerPoint. With that, I think what we're going to do is allow the chat to go for a little while. We've extended the time if you're interested in hanging out for a little bit. I just want to thank everybody-both colleagues from Region 9, Region 1, my colleague, Lara Ballou, everybody at the National Center, our federal leader, Kiersten Beigel, and certainly the federal leaders in both Regions 9 and 1 for allowing us the honor and pleasure to be together today and learn from each of you on the line. Thanks so much! Hang out with us for a little bit if you'd like. We'll talk in text. And we'll look forward to the next time we get the chance to share some information and learn from each of you. Thanks again! Have a great day!