Dear Audioconference Participant:

We are so glad that you will join us for Look Again: Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program on Wednesday, October 26 from 3:00 – 4:30 pm EDT. The attached confirmation form provides instructions for connecting to the call. This is the fourth audioconference in our 2011 series, designed to unpack the rich resources being sent to programs on behalf of the Office of Head Start. This audioconference will focus on observation.

To make the most of this training experience, use the attached handouts, copies of faculty biographies, and the audioconference evaluation. If you are listening in a group, copy this packet for other participants. Also, each participant should:

- Complete the Observation Pre-Activity before the conference begins. This pre-activity was sent to the site contact person upon registration.
- Review pages 1-3 before the conference begins. These handouts are designed to help you prepare for the audioconference.
- Schedule some time for reflection and/or discussion after the audioconference. Use the Applying the Information handout (p.11) individually or with your team. In most cases, discussing information, strategies and ideas as a team is the best way to think about what is already in place in your program, and how to prioritize and enhance observation in your program.
- Use additional handouts to discuss new information and to plan for the future.

After the call, please fill out and return an evaluation! Your ideas will help ensure that future audioconferences will be meaningful and helpful to you. There are two options for submitting your feedback. Go to ONLINE EVALUATION or fill out the form at the end of this packet and return evaluations to:

Amanda Perez  
Early Head Start National Resource Center  
1225 23rd St, NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20037  
fax: (202) 638-0851

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me. My phone number is (202) 638-1144 x2061. Enjoy the program!

Sincerely,

Amanda Perez  
Senior Writer/Training Specialist
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Objectives

During this call, panelists will:

1. Describe the value of observation in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs;

2. Consider how to make observation a regular part of your program’s routines;

3. Offer tips for conducting meaningful observations; and

4. Identify how the Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) materials and the Learning Through Observation and Space To Grow DVDs can support staff in building skills in observation.

Agenda

2:50 PM*  
Call-in
Please call in five to ten minutes early for the conference.

3:00 PM*  
Welcome
Panel Introductions
Panel Discussion

4:15 PM*  
Question and Answer
At this time, the operator will give instructions for dialing in with questions.

Concluding Words

* These times are given in Eastern Daylight Time.
Look Again:  
*Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program*

**Faculty Biographies**

**Amanda Perez, Moderator**

![Amanda Perez](image1)

Senior Writer/Training Specialist  
Early Head Start National Resource Center

Amanda Perez has worked with the Early Head Start National Resource Center since 2000. She has coordinated over 30 audioconferences in that time. A writer and trainer, Amanda also moderates the parent panel at the Birth To Three Institute.

**Angela R. Fisher**

![Angela R. Fisher](image2)

Senior Writer/Training Specialist  
Early Head Start for Family Child Care Project

Over a decade ago, Angela Fisher left the business sector to pursue her interest in developmental psychology. In her masters and doctorate studies and research, she honed her particular interest in prenatal/perinatal psychology and infant/toddler behavior. Currently, in addition to her work at the Early Head Start for Family Child Care Project at ZERO TO THREE, Angela is a parent-infant consultant, a childbirth doula, and a professor in early childhood education. She continues her research on a parenting observation and psychological assessment instrument she developed that allows parents and caregivers to observe infant behavioral cues. Trained in Resources for Infant Educarers (RIE), Angela has a deep passion and commitment to serve our youngest children in Early Head Start, child care, and family child care programs.
Faculty (cont’d.)

Ruth Anne Hammond

Board of Directors, RIE Associate
Resources for Infant Educarers

Ruth Anne Hammond, author of *Respecting Babies: A New Look at Magda Gerber's RIE Approach* (2009), is a specialist in infant/toddler development and caregiving. She has been leading the Pacific Oaks Infant-Toddler/Parent Program in Pasadena since 1996, where she also hosts Early Head Start socialization groups. She was President of the Board of Directors of Resources for Infant Educarers (RIE) from 2005 to 2011, and is a mentor/teacher with RIE having studied under its founder, Magda Gerber. Ruth Anne also teaches in the Human Development Department of Pacific Oaks College, and currently studies affective neuroscience under Dr. Allan N. Schore of the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine.

Robin Williams

Early Head Start Coordinator
Olympic Educational Service District #114
Bremerton, WA

Robin Williams’s view of relationships as the core tool in work with young children and their families evolved out of a career of service to her community, including roles as a campus child care director, an early childhood consultant, and a parent educator. Immediately after she was hired to coordinate the EHS program in Bremerton, WA, she spent one of her first weeks on the job at a weeklong RIE training. Since then, she has worked with her team to infuse the program with a strong commitment to understanding and responding to the developmental goals and challenges of the individual parents and children in her program. Robin has a Masters Degree from Pacific Oaks College in Human Development.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Head Start Program Performance Standards

§ 1304.21 (a) Child development and education approach for all children.

(1) In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies' approach to child development and education must:

   (i) Be developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles.

(2) Parents must be:

   (i) Invited to become integrally involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education;
   
   (ii) Provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences; and

§ 1304.20 (b) Screening for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns.

(1) In collaboration with each child's parent, and within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program, grantee and delegate agencies must perform or obtain linguistically and age appropriate screening procedures to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory (visual and auditory), behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills (see 45 CFR 1308.6(b)(3) for additional information). To the greatest extent possible, these screening procedures must be sensitive to the child's cultural background.

(3) Grantee and delegate agencies must utilize multiple sources of information on all aspects of each child's development and behavior, including input from family members, teachers, and other relevant staff who are familiar with the child's typical behavior.

§ 1304.20 (f) Individualization of the program.

(1) Grantee and delegate agencies must use the information from the screening for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns, the ongoing observations, medical and dental evaluations and treatments, and insights from the child's parents to help staff and parents determine how the program can best respond to each child's individual characteristics, strengths and needs.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

THE WHY: Why Observe?

Observation creates an attitude of openness and wonder in your work with infants, toddlers and their families. It helps staff and families to know and understand the children they serve.

Use observation to:

- connect with the children
- enhance relationships with children and families
- provide information that staff and families can share
- determine each child’s skills, interest and needs
- identify necessary changes in the environment:
  - make meaningful changes to the curriculum
- identify concerns
- determine strategies for handling problems
- measure children’s growth and development over time

THE WHY: Responsive Process

WestEd’s Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers uses a simple three-step process for learning about and providing nurturing, responsive care to infants and toddlers. The first step is careful observation. Overall, the process recognizes the diversity of children and that children are best supported in their development by adults who can recognize and respond to their individual needs and temperaments.

*Watch:
Observe the child – without interpreting what you see. Use all of your senses to understand what the child is experiencing. Look (and listen!) for what happens before and after behaviors of concern. Think about both the physical environment and the social environment.

Ask “I Wonder” Questions:

Young children communicate through their behavior. Ask questions that help you wonder about and understand what you have observed. Consider the following:

- **Development:** I wonder what is happening developmentally for this child?
- **Temperament:** I wonder what this child’s temperament is (and the goodness-of-fit with mine?)
- **Physical factors:** I wonder how this child is feeling physically? Could the child be hungry/tired/sick?
- **Emotional factors:** I wonder how this child is feeling emotionally? Is s/he comfortable, feeling safe, anxious, angry?
- **Self-regulation,** defined as the child’s ability to gain mastery in controlling bodily functions, managing powerful emotions constructively, and keeping attention focused (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000): I wonder how this child calms him or herself? I wonder how this child expresses his or her emotions or needs?
- **Environment (physical and social):** I wonder what is triggering or reinforcing this behavior in the moment? Does there seem to be a pattern?
- **Home environment:** I wonder if something is happening in the home environment that can help me understand this behavior?
- **Staff, family and cultural understanding:** I wonder how I/how the family understands/ experiences/interprets/responds to this behavior? The wider community?

**Adapt:**
Use the information you gather to develop a theory: What do you think the child is communicating? How can you help? Is it a matter of changing the environment? Is the behavior less challenging for you now that you understand it differently? How can you respond to that child’s need before the behavior begins? How can you help the child develop different ways of communicating the message?

Keep in mind that this is a dynamic process. Use Watch, Ask, and Adapt at different times, as appropriate. And, after you adapt, always observe again to make sure that the adaptations are working! Remember, too, that children are constantly growing and changing. Continue to use this process, in formal and informal ways, to inform your work in providing children and their families responsive services.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

THE HOW:
Tips for Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

1. **Recognize the child’s capacities.** There is so much to do in a day! But young children learn the most when they are given the opportunity to follow their interests, explore, and problem-solve. Understanding all that children can do offers adults permission to slow down and allow them that time.

2. **Plan it!** It can be hard to make observation a priority unless it is actively built into the schedule. Discuss observation in your program with your team: Why is it important, and how will you use it? Consider how observation may fit into your routines and activities and how staff can work together to make it possible. Develop systems that allow communication about and planning and reflecting on observation.

3. **Attend to time and setting.** Like all of us, children are affected by their environments and daily routines. As you observe, note the time of day and the environment.

4. **Make documentation convenient – and family- and staff-friendly.** Keeping notes from observation helps families and staff identify patterns in behavior and document changes in skills. Keep paper and pens handy in homes, classrooms, socialization spaces, outdoor areas, etc.

5. **Engage families in shared observation.** Engaging families in shared observation is required by the Standards, and such an important piece of learning about the child and parent education. Talk with families about the value of observation to both shared learning about the child and the child’s joy in being the center of attention. For staff, shared observation with families provides rich opportunities to learn from the experts on young children.

6. **Start concrete!** For beginning observers, it can be helpful to start with specific questions to guide observation. Look at the Starting Points for Observation on page 8 and 9 for some ideas of how to begin.

7. **Recognize observation as a skill.** Observation is not just a strategy, it is a skill. Observation requires practice and reflection with a supervisor or with peers. Staff may benefit from learning more about observation and sharing observation with families.

8. **Use tools.** Many screening and assessment tools offer structure and guidance for observation. They also offer developmental information that can provide staff development and parent education opportunities.

9. **Be objective . . .** In order to learn about a child from that child’s perspective, it is important to be objective in your observation. This is hard! You are in relationship with the child! Describe behaviors rather than feelings, and choose language that describes what you see objectively.

10. **. . . and monitor your own responses.** Still, your own emotional responses can often give you clues about what you observe. Consider your responses and what they might tell you even as you remain calm and objective.

11. **Watch before, during, and after.** If you are observing a child for specific behaviors, notice what happens before, during and after that behavior. This information can give you clues as to what triggers the behavior and whether it is being rewarded or punished in some way.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

THE HOW:
Sample Form for Documenting Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed behaviors</th>
<th>Wondering questions/interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex: <em>LS</em> on his tummy on blanket on floor. <em>RM</em>, a toddler, plopped down on his tummy next to <em>LS</em>, his face a few inches from <em>LS</em>. <em>LS</em> pushed his hands on the floor, tensed his body, and breathed in. He frowned slightly. Then he laughed.</td>
<td>Ex: I wonder if <em>RM</em> startled <em>LS</em>? But he seemed to recover quickly, and seemed delighted to see his friend! I wonder if his older brother plays with him this way at home?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

THE HOW:
Starting Points for Observation

Sometimes, staff and families are motivated to observe, but aren’t sure how to begin. Consider first your purpose in observation: what is it you hope to learn? Observation is a developed skill. The following questions can help staff and families build skills in observation at the same time they learn about the child they observe.

Observe for particular behaviors:

How many times are behaviors observed in an hour, day, or specified time?
At what time of day? During particular experiences and/or routines?
Who is around?
What happens before and/or after they occur?
Does there seem to be a goal to the behaviors of the child?

Particular behaviors can include:

For infants:

- Gaze and gaze aversion (looking away)
- Yawning
- Vocalizations (including giggling, squealing and crying)
- Expressions (including pushing out of lips, wrinkling the brow, lip grimace or lip compression; smiling; tongue show; brow raising, dull look)
- Movements (including pulling away, joining of hands, arching back, stiffening, clinging posture, lowering the head, hand to eye, hand to ear, hand to mouth, hand to stomach, reaching for caregiver)
- Etc.

For toddlers:

- Words
- Sentences
- Pointing
- Eye gaze or eye aversion
- Pulling adult
- Smiling or laughing
- Crying
- Biting
- Tantrums or other behaviors of concern
- Etc.


Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

THE HOW:
Starting Points for Observation (cont’d.)

Observe for relationship behaviors:

How does the child respond to and approach different adults during the observation?
How does the child respond when those individual adults come close or leave?
Does the child refer back to his/her parent or caregiver in his or her play and exploration?
How does the child respond to and approach different peers?
Is adult intervention needed as the child interacts with peers?
If so, who intervenes and how does the child respond?

Observe the child in the indoor and outdoor environment:

What are the objects in the environment that are most interesting to the child?
How does the child use the objects?
How does the child respond to the environment?
Are there places in the environment where there is often conflict or injury?
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Applying the Information

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program’s approach to using or enhancing the use of observation in the program.

1. Consider the Head Start Program Performance Standards on page 4. Why do you think these particular requirements are included as part of the Standards? How does your program meet these requirements?

2. Consider the reasons for observation shared by faculty and listed on page 5. Why do you think that observation is important? How do you use observation in these ways? Are there uses for observation listed here that you have not considered before? Does/how does this list make you think differently about observation in your program?

3. How do you work with families to build observation skills and/or share observation? Do you/why do you think that work with families is so important?

4. In your preactivity, you were asked to do a five-minute observation of a child. What challenged you about that activity? What did you learn about the child through that activity? What did you learn about observation? What resources (e.g., additional time, extra staff) or information (e.g., more specifics on goals for the observation) would have been helpful to you?

5. How do you already use the Responsive Process described on page 6 in your work? How does observation provide a foundation for work with young children and their families?

6. Consider the Tips for Observation listed on page 7. In what ways are you already using these ideas in your observation in your program? What strategies did you hear that might enhance your use of observation?

7. Faculty talk about how observation is a developed skill. What is your level of skill and experience? Will you/How will you use the list of Starting Points for Observation listed on page 9 and 10 in your work? Is there anything you might add? More experienced observers: Would you be interested in mentoring others in your program? How can you build a system of support for building skill in observation?

8. What opportunities are there for skill development in observation at your program? Are there more practiced staff who can mentor others on the team? Do staff get opportunities with peers or supervision where they can share and reflect on what they observe?

9. How is data from observation used in your program? What works about this system? What doesn’t? How can you address some of the challenges?

10. The Office of Head Start is providing a number of resources to your program. Look through the information on pages 12-15 of this packet. How can you/your program use these resources?
Look Again:  
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Quick Glance Guide

Respecting Babies: A New Look at Magda Gerber’s RIE Approach  
by Ruth Anne Hammond

To learn more about the following content, please refer to the following pages:

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Magda Gerber’s Principles</td>
<td>1-7</td>
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<td>Picking up Baby</td>
<td>Slow Transitions &amp; Movements</td>
<td>15-16</td>
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<td>Regular Routines</td>
<td>Sleeping &amp; Feeding</td>
<td>27-42</td>
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<td>Environments</td>
<td>Super-Vision &amp; Safety</td>
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<td>Language</td>
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<td>Selective Intervention</td>
<td>Red, Green, Yellow Light</td>
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<td>Play</td>
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<td>Shared Silence</td>
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<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Respectful Relationships</td>
<td>124-130</td>
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</table>
Look Again:
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DVD Quick Glance Guide

Resources for Infant Educators (RIE)

Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) is another lens to support your work in nurturing infants and toddlers and observation. These DVD’s are an ideal resource for EHS and MSHS programs, families, expectant families or anyone involved in the care of infant and toddlers. Ranging 15-30 minutes each, the DVD’s are beautiful illustrations of RIE principles. The intent is to teach, support, and demonstrate to professional and families the importance of following the child’s lead. Though the videos were filmed in the 1970’s, the concepts presented are universal and timeless. Below you will find some points and questions you may want to explore, such as “How do we show respect when handling infants knowing they have unique rhythms and needs?”

Seeing Infants With New Eyes

Content:
In this DVD, the late Magda Gerber, a renowned infant specialist, explains her philosophy of respect for infants and how caregivers can use observation as a tool for building a relationship with young children.

Strategy:
This DVD can be used to demonstrate the importance of documenting infant and toddler behavior on a regular basis. It may also be helpful for parental education.

On Their Own With Our Help

Content:
This DVD explores the free movement of infants and toddlers in a group setting, illustrating the Educaring principle of Selective Intervention. Demonstrations for how caregivers can selectively intervene during the play of the young child are shared.

Strategy:
This DVD can be used to teach caregivers and families when and how to intervene in a child’s play.

See How They Move

Content:
This video shows the stages of gross motor skills that infants experience with an explanation of how the philosophy of respect applies to infant motor development.

Strategy:
Families can view this DVD to better understand infant motor development.

Mira Cómo Se Mueven (See How They Move)

Content:
This DVD is presented in Spanish and gives an opportunity to support dual language learners in their understanding of the principles of infant movement. It gives a unique perspective for those that are serving special populations.

Strategy:
Early Head Start and Migrant Seasonal Head Start programs serving families whose home language is Spanish may find this DVD useful as they learn more about infant movement.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

DVD Quick Glance Guide

Learning Through Observation:
5 Video Vignettes to Spark Reflection and Discussion

This DVD offers videos of five interactions, unscripted and without interruption or narration, occurring between the youngest children, families and staff. Each vignette is about ten minutes long. Reflective questions, written to support observation and spark discussion, are also included here as part of each video clip and the accompanying booklet. Finally, the DVD includes video of conversation among three colleagues at ZERO TO THREE after each clip, highlighting their reactions and raising additional questions.

These vignettes are ideal for staff development experiences in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, with a focus on building skills in self-awareness and observation. They offer video of a variety of interactions in a variety of settings, all relevant to work with the youngest children and their families. With some planning, program administrators and trainers might use them one at a time as a basis for short conversations in staff meetings or all together as part of a larger training experience. It is important to remind participants that the adults in these videos volunteered to be taped, and are not meant to provide examples of what staff should or should not do. Instead, they open windows for observation and opportunities to help staff think in different ways about their own work.

The following descriptions offer information about the vignette setting and topics of interest raised in the videos and the discussions.

Vignette 1: Home Visit with a Child with Special Needs and His Family
Home visiting
Working with children with special needs
Managing strong feelings in work with children and families
Responding to questions you don’t know the answer to

Vignette 2: Drop Off in a Child Care Center
Group care
Supporting children and families through transitions
Staying objective during observation

Vignette 3: Supervision
Reflective supervision
Supporting staff and families in the face of overwhelming challenges
Balancing a family’s needs for interaction with a focus on the child

Vignette 4: Home Visit with a Spanish-Speaking Family
Home visiting
Staying objective during observation
Attending to culture

Vignette 5: Early Head Start Home Visit
Home visiting
Use of curriculum
Balancing a family’s needs for interaction with a focus on the child
Attending to culture
Through observation, we know that a child’s environment is an important element in understanding his or her behavior. *Space to Grow* is a DVD from the Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers that provides staff with information about creating a well-designed environment that supports the growth and development of young children. The DVD describes the necessary components for creating a quality-learning environment for infants and toddlers to grow and explore by:

- Assuring that the environment is safe
- Understanding the importance of comfort and convenience for the children and caregivers using the space
- Providing the flexibility that young children need in order to move and make choices freely

### What topics are covered in the DVD?

Topics in the Space to Grow DVD include:

- Safety and Health
- Comfort
- Convenience
- Child Size
- Flexibility
- Movement
- Choice

The accompanying trainer’s guide provides a detailed discussion of key points to consider in each content area.

The DVD highlights each of the content areas in individual segments creating natural breaks for group discussion and feedback. This also helps caregivers see the small details needed to create a quality environment and provides a host of good ideas for caregivers to consider using in their own spaces. The DVD also shows a variety of settings, including outdoor environments and family childcare.

### How can I use the DVD?

- **Support professional development.**
  - Use this DVD as a refresher for staff working to enhance their classroom or socialization environments. For example, you can develop lessons that show how an item in the environment—a piece of equipment or a structure—links to several of the video’s seven content areas.
  
  - Use this DVD during orientation for new staff as they learn the importance of classroom and socialization learning environments. For example, you can design training sessions that allow participants to consider both the “whys” and “hows” of setting up environments for infants and toddlers. The video provides explanations for specific recommendations and illustrates how to implement them.

- **Support Childcare and Family Childcare partners.**
  - Use this DVD during training sessions with your childcare and family childcare partners to support a quality standard of care across all your program options.
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Additional Resource List

For more information, see the following resources:


Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Additional Resource List (cont’d.)


Your comments are very important to us. After participating in the audioconference, please complete the following evaluation form. Use extra paper for additional comments, and make additional copies as needed.

Look Again: October 26, 2011
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

Use the following scale to rate each of the items listed below. Write your rating on the line by each item and explain your rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inadequate</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A. _____ Usefulness of the information presented to your work
Explanation: __________________________________________________________

B. _____ Speakers’ knowledge of the subject
Explanation: __________________________________________________________

C. _____ Speakers’ ability to communicate effectively
Explanation: __________________________________________________________

D. _____ Organization of the content
Explanation: __________________________________________________________

E. _____ Overall rating of this training program
Explanation: __________________________________________________________

2. Explain what information was most useful to you and how you will use it to support your work:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Look Again:
Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program

3. Explain what information was least useful to you and any recommendations you would suggest:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

4. What made participating in this experience via audioconference helpful or unhelpful (format, supplemental materials, discussion forum, etc.)? We would be particularly interested in how you used the “Applying the Information” handout provided in the supplemental materials. Please explain:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

5. What topics should future audioconferences address?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

6. How can we make audioconferences more effective learning experiences for you?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Though optional, we would appreciate the following contact information. We may contact you to learn more about your responses so we can continue to develop useful training experiences.

Date: ______________________________
Name: _____________________________ Position: _____________________________
Program Name: ____________________ Phone: _____________________________
E-mail: ____________________________

Please fax or mail your completed evaluation forms after the audioconference to:

Attn: Amanda Perez
Fax: (202) 638-0851
EHS NRC @ ZERO TO THREE
1225 M Street, NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20037

Thank you!