

## **Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, Helping Children, Families, and Programs Thrive**

Traci Dalton: Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining the Making Strides in Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, Helping Children, Families, and Programs Thrive webinar. My name is Traci Dalton. I am with the Partnership Center, and I will be providing instructions and support on the technical aspects of the webinar. Again, thank you for joining us today. And the webinar will begin momentarily. As a reminder, we would like to remind everyone that today's webinar is being recorded. The recording, as well as English and Spanish transcripts, will be posted to the Partnership Website in a few weeks.

All participants are in a listen-only capacity during today's webinar. And there is no call-in option; however, the audio should be being provided to you through your computer. We recommend joining online today to fully engage with today's bilingual webinar. And we hope that you will use the Q&A box to enter any questions, and you can enter those questions either in English or Spanish at any time during the discussion. Today's discussion will include both English and Spanish speakers, and closed captioning is available in both languages and will be provided throughout the webinar. Finally, you will find resources available for download on your screen in the webinar resources pod. You can access that information at any time during today's discussion. Now it is my pleasure to introduce you to Rae Anderson, project director of the National Center on Early Head Start and Child Care Partnerships. Rae?

Rae Anderson: Thank you, Traci. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our webinar. My name is Rae. I am the project director of the National Center on Early Head Start and Child Care Partnerships, also referred to as the Partnership Center. The Partnership Center is jointly funded and jointly administered by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, and the Office of Head Start. The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership initiative is intended to support states and communities in expanding high-quality early learning and development opportunities for infants and toddlers and to support families. Today's webinar focuses on promising practices of two Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees and their child care partners. One is in the Municipality of San Sebastián, Puerto Rico and the other is in Miami-Dade-Monroe, Florida, who are using coordinated approaches and responsive practices to engage parents and families and their communities to help them thrive.

I want to thank ACF, and in particular, Jennifer Amaya-Thompson, who is the program specialist on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices with the Office of Early Childhood Development, who advised us in the development of this innovative bilingual webinar. We hope the experience today will help us all understand the challenges that are faced every day by children and families who are learning another language. We are going to begin with remarks from two key members of the Administration for Children and Families. The first is Ginny Gipp. Ginny is the co-director of the Comprehensive Services & Training and Technical Assistance Division; she is the Office of Child Care Lead for the Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families. Ginny, would you like to begin?

Ginny Gipp: Sure, Rae. Thank you so much. And I would like to say back to Rae, thank you for your many years of leadership in early childhood partnerships at the state, national, and local level and to so many others behind the scenes on your staff and also in the federal government and out in the field who have done so much to push these partnerships forward. With that said, on behalf as Rae said, on behalf of ACF's Office of Early Childhood Development and ACF's Office of Child Care, I am delighted to welcome you to this webinar. I oversee the Office of Child Care's Training and Technical Assistance projects. And

as you can imagine, an important part of that work is the joint oversight that we share with the Office of Head Start for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships initiative. For those of you that don't know, and a lot of you I'm sure do, this exciting initiative began in 2014 and together we are now bringing comprehensive services and quality improvements to a funded enrollment of 32,000 low-income children in 275 Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships across this country. How great is that?

The partnerships combine the best of both Early Head Start and Child Care by supporting a coordinated approach across agencies and within programs to be responsive to the needs of all the children and families that we serve together. It is really exciting to hear from our grantees and their child care partners about how they are implementing the partnerships and the impact on children, families, and programs. Today, I am especially pleased that we will hear from a parent in the partnership program in the Municipality of San Sebastián, Puerto Rico, who will share her family's experience in the partnership. As we know, family engagement in early childhood programs is central to promoting children's development. And the Child Care and Development Fund, CCDF, regulations require states to collect and distribute research and best practices about meaningful parent and family engagement to eligible parents, providers, and the general public. That is a new consumer education provision that is in the Office of Child Care's new law, and we are very excited about it. We know today's webinar will add to our knowledge base and effective, responsive practices to engage parents and families and help them thrive. And now I am pleased to introduce to you my colleague, Jennifer Amaya-Thompson. She is our program specialist on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices with the Office of Early Childhood Development. She's been with us for close to a year, maybe a little more. It feels like more. And she also was a state collaboration director in New England. She will speak to you in Spanish. [In Spanish]

Jennifer Amaya-Thompson: Thanks, Ginny. Good afternoon, my name is Jennifer Amaya-Thompson. I work for the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services. I am the Lead on Culture and Linguistic Content for all the projects at the Division of Training and Technical Assistance. I am very excited to be a part of this innovative webinar. We're making history. This is the first time we are doing a webinar in both English and Spanish! And through this opportunity we're showing how important a coordinated focus in systems and services that benefit our children, our families, and our communities really is. It's been a pleasure working with the Partnership Center and the grantees that will be sharing their experiences today. I'm grateful to Nitza, the mother in the Puerto Rico program, for sharing her experience and her transformation testimony. This webinar reflects the hard and successful work that these partnerships put in to increase the quality of early care and education.

Today's event provides the opportunity to share examples of promising practices that should serve as motivation for all of us. We hope that through this innovative experience, you, the audience, can reflect on the importance of providing services that are respectful of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the families we serve. I appreciate the effort and sensitivity of the programs who will be sharing their stories today, as well as that of those in the audience. We hope through this webinar we can show all of the objectives of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships to integrate our families and to our engagement and cultural and linguistic diversity. I trust that the information shared today will be helpful to you and will inspire all of us to continue working for our children, families, and communities. Now I'm going to turn over to Dianne. Dianne?

Dianne: Gracias, Jennifer. Welcome, everyone. I am going to co-facilitate today's webinar along with my colleague, Adriana Bernal. We are pleased to be able to provide you this afternoon with facilitation and presentations in both English and Spanish. I just want to note that the first part of the webinar will be in Spanish and the remaining segments are in English. If you are looking at your screen, there is live captioning in English and Spanish that will appear in pods next to the PowerPoint screen area. Our goal today is to be responsive to both our English and Spanish speaking members of our audience as well as our speakers. And we want to hear from you what the experience was like and how we can improve it in the future. Today's webinar is the fourth in our Partnership Series. And our topic today is Helping Children, Families, and Programs Thrive, and we're going to focus on Promising Practices that Engage Parents, Families, and the Community. As you have heard, we're going to feature two grantees, but we will also have a child care partner and a parent. Our first grantee is from the Municipality of San Sebastián in Puerto Rico, and they will be followed by The Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start, which is a Division of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade-Monroe, Florida. They are going to speak about their work with parents and families and their communities to develop and implement the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and what it has meant to each of them. And at this point, I would like to ask my colleague, Adriana, to welcome you, as well, and tell you more about our presenters from Puerto Rico. Adriana is going to speak in Spanish. Adriana?

Adriana Bernal: Good afternoon, Dianne. [In Spanish] Good afternoon. My name is Adriana Bernal. I am with the National Center on Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. Our first speakers are Verónica Vélez, grantee director for the Municipality of San Sebastián, Puerto Rico and Nitza Rodríguez, parent. Nitza's family, including her daughter and husband, participate in the Municipality of San Sebastián Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program. Nitza is also a member of the policy council. Welcome, Verónica. Welcome, Nitza. Thank you for being with us today. We'll start with Verónica. Verónica, let's begin with you. Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Veronica Velez: Good afternoon, Adriana. [Inaudible] I am happy to be here today to speak to you about our work in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership for the Municipality of San Sebastián, Puerto Rico. Let me start with a little information about myself. I am passionate about providing high-quality child care and comprehensive services to our families in our community. I was a young mother, in need of child care, so I could continue my education and begin a career. Because I was able to find good care for my son, I was able to go to college and achieve a bachelor's degree. Now I have a master's degree, and I am the director of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico.

Adriana: Thank you for sharing your story explaining how you are an example of families that benefit from infant and toddler quality services. Talking about early learning programs, would you please tell us about the program that you direct?

Veronica: Of course, Adriana. Our child care program is located on the northwest side of the main island of Puerto Rico and has provided services to communities and families in San Sebastián for 24 years. Our program consists of one center with nine environments for child care. We also have a pre-K in the program. We serve 22 families through the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership. We became an Early Head Start program for the first time when we received the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant in 2015. Also, in February, 2015, we started offering services through this successful association the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership.

Adriana: Tell us, Verónica. Having an established program for so many years, could you tell us what interested you, why did you apply for the Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership funds?

Veronica: Throughout our history, we have worked very hard to provide excellent services within economic limitations. There are great needs in San Sebastián. The intention was to provide comprehensive services within our child care system, but there were some challenges that we needed to overcome. The Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership represents a great way to provide those comprehensive services to our children and families. We first conducted a community assessment to see if it was feasible to grow our program. We found needs and queues and give our children and families the services they needed. Based on the community assessment, we decided to apply to the grant the Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships.

Adriana: Speaking a bit more about the importance of your community needs, could you please tell us about the families you serve?

Veronica: Our families face many challenges. [ Inaudible] We know that because of Puerto Rico's economic situation, some parents need to have two or three jobs to provide for their families, minimizing the available time they have to spend with their children. They also may be attending school or colleges. Again, this minimizes their time with their children. They are trying to better themselves and provide for their children. We need to provide comprehensive services to both the children and the families to help them reach their goals. It has to be a two-generation approach. The purpose is to keep families active, integrate them to their children's development, and improve the quality of life of our families and our children.

Adriana: Thank you, Veronica, for sharing about your journey supporting the strengthening of family bonds and the betterment of families in your community. Let's hear from Nitza about her involvement with the EHS-CC Partnership. Nitza, would you share with us, how did you first hear of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program and why you decided to enroll your daughter?

Nitza Rodriguez: When my daughter was about a year old, I needed to go to work and I also wanted to finish my Master's. My husband and I were very apprehensive at first. I had stayed home with her for the first year, and we did not want to leave her in some random place. When I visited the center the first time and met Veronica and the staff, I was greeted with kindness, and I knew it was the place. My husband was not very supportive at first, but he learned that our daughter was in really good hands and he is now comfortable and happy because it turned out to be a very good decision. They're guardian angels to us.

Adriana: Thank you, Nitza, for sharing your first experiences as a parent leaving your child to child care for the first time. Many of us have had that experience. We know it is not easy. Verónica, we congratulate you for providing quality services to your community like you did to Nitza and her family. It sounds like the program has a very welcoming atmosphere. How else do you promote active parent involvement?

Veronica: We started before we applied. We worked with the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, and our families were very excited when they received this information that we have this new application. As we were developing the proposal, we saw the advantages the program could bring regarding the association between Early Head Start and Child Care. We got together with the families to

let them know about the benefits of our new program as well as the new requirements to use it. We wanted them to fall in love with our program. We wanted to form a bond between the program and the families and the staff and for them to see how they can transform their lives. That was our strategy.

Adriana: It is an excellent strategy to involve families in the application process from the start. To expand a little bit about the benefits of the partnership and how you work with the families, what are you able to offer now that you couldn't before?

Veronica: Many years ago child care funds allowed us to have a social worker, but then we were no longer [In Spanish] because of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership, we have three social workers who dedicate themselves to support families. They identify the needs, make an action plan, and go from there. We design activities ahead of time to help families throughout the year. We maintain close communication with families to identify changes in their needs through the year so we can offer timely services to help them achieve their goals.

Adriana: Thank you, Verónica. It is wonderful the partnership program can offer support to families now with additional resources. Would you speak about how the partnership program uses the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community framework in your work? Do you use it?

Veronica: We definitely use the PFCE Framework! At the start of the year, we review the framework with all the staff members, including the janitor. Everybody knows how [In Spanish]

Adriana: Thank you, Verónica, for explaining the benefits and additional resources that you can offer your families. It's really exciting. Maybe Nitza, can talk to us about this process with the program, what was the experience of developing an action plan for you and your family?

Nitza: Yes. We worked with the Family and Community and Education areas of our program and used the Framework as a tool to develop the action plan that we use at the center and at home. The Framework has been very important to us because it puts together all the tools that we as parents need as ongoing educators for our children.

Adriana: Thank you, Nitza, for letting us know what the action plan experience was like for you. Verónica, would you talk a little bit more about what you are able to do to respond to the needs of parents and families now?

Veronica: Of course, Adriana. We identified in our community assessment the need to engage male parents in their child's life. It was very relevant for them. We designed a plan to implement activities that would capture their attention that they would enjoy doing. Some of the activities we have implemented to involve them are quarterly breakfasts. Fathers make arrangements with their employers to come to the center and have breakfast with their child. That is so special because they usually do not have time to do it at home, because of their work and studies. This activity has had a big impact. You can see it in the kids' faces, how excited they are to be eating breakfast with their dads. We also offer a big event once a year for the dads that features volleyball, karate, and story reading. This event has been very successful with families and the kids. They enjoy it a lot. Once I was going to get something in my car and overheard a parent saying how much he was enjoying the activity and did not want to leave.

Adriana: Thank you, Veronica. It seems like the program is working very hard to work with the male parents, the dads. Maybe Nitza can talk more about that. You mentioned at the beginning that your husband was satisfied with the program. Has he been able to be a part of the activities?

Nitza: Yes. Thanks to those activities, my husband has been able to spend more time with my baby, my daughter. Sometimes because of work, that is not possible. He has been able to see the commitment, the trust, and especially the close bond our daughter has with her teachers and friends. That has been very significant for us.

Adriana: Thank you, Nitza. It is evident your husband feels part of the partnership program now. I understand that you are very involved now as well. You are on the policy council? Could you tell us a bit about it?

Nitza: I am a member of the Policy Council. I was Secretary in 2015-2016, and right now I am a community representative. We work really hard to make sure that we establish and sustain quality programs for present and future generations.

Adriana: Thank you, Nitza, for sharing your experience. You're example for the program.

[In Spanish]

Veronica: I'm here!

Adriane: That's good that you're with us! Verónica, regarding active participation and the support you bring to your families, would you tell us more about how you respond to the diverse needs of the families in the partnership program?

Veronica: Sure. Our goal is to be responsive [In Spanish] sensibly and sensitively to all the families and the community in all areas, in all activities. Last year we served a family in our program where mom and dad were blind and deaf. They were not able to respond to all of the offers in the program. But thanks to the partnership, we were able to get resources and were able to hire a sign language interpreter, so they can fully participate in the program and the activities. That was a big challenge for us to overcome, and had the family participating actively in the program. That had a positive impact on our families and the children, as well.

Adriana: It is wonderful that the partnership program and the community can provide the needed supports. On this matter, how are you engaging the community in the partnership?

Veronica: We have different activities, the Cultural Diversity Festival being most noticeable one. We celebrate the cultures from different countries that are in our program and the community. The event involves local businesses who prepare foreign dishes. Families, children and their teachers dress in the different countries' typical outfits. Families are active participants at these events and greatly enjoy the experience. Another exciting way is our participation in Puerto Rico's Music Conservatory program. It has a music curriculum to train staff, parents and children. The curriculum focuses on infant and toddler development through music. It also helps families to support all areas of their child's development. Last year, the Conservatory celebrated their 100-year anniversary with a big concert, and they wanted to feature the top five entities that were successfully implementing the curriculum.

Our program was selected to present at the concert! It involved many rehearsals and trips with the families and children to San Juan, but it was worth it. The families greatly enjoyed the experience. As a follow up to that event, we had a concert at our local coliseum and had 230 people in attendance, who were there to watch the kids sing. The families and the parents were the stars of the concert and were the ones who performed the different songs from the curriculum. Families were empowered by the learning that took place during this successful activity. We will keep doing these concerts once a year. The music curriculum goes through the whole year, and the recital takes place in December. The object of this activity is to have the parents and families actively participating in all the areas, and that they are a part in the development of their kids.

Adriana: All of these activities sound very exciting! Thank you for sharing some of the ways the EHS-CC Partnership has allowed your program to engage and support parents and families, and involve the community. I can hear the passion and excitement in your voice. Is there anything else you want to say about how the partnership has impacted your program?

Veronica: I am very passionate about my program, child care and this partnership. I could talk about this the whole day. We went from being a weak program to be a very successful one with all the training and strategies that we have developed thanks to the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership. These strategies are designed to have families active and engaged through the year, to create this connection and have parents practice at home what they are learning. We have asked from the start. We want to keep family engagement alive through the year by selecting activities they like. We can see the transformation of our personnel here. It's been wonderful. When we were awarded the funds, we started by training our staff, to empower them and to let them know how important their job was. We wanted the staff to fall in love with the program. Child Care and Early Head Start are two different cultures. From being teacher assistants, they have become teachers of this new association with all the certifications and everything to provide quality and comprehensive services to our families. I'm very passionate about it and we're happy to have started this association with Early Head Start and Child Care.

Adriana: Thank you, Veronica. It's exciting for us to listen to this information. Thank you for these wonderful experiences and successful stories. We have one more question for Nitza. Do you have anything else you would like to say about the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program?

Nitza: I feel very happy with the services. I'm a better mom, a better person, and better worker. I wish the partnership could reach even more families in our community and give them the opportunity to grow as people and as families. Certainly, it is possible. I'm an example of that.

Adriana: Our thanks to Verónica and Nitza for sharing their experiences on the EHS-CC Partnership in San Sebastian. If you have questions, please go ahead and type them into the Q&A pod. I am going to ask my colleague, Dianne Lake, to introduce our next speaker. Dianne?

Dianne Lake: Gracias, Adriana. Thank you, Verónica and Nitza. That was an amazing story that you shared about the way that you engage and work with families and parents in the community. I want to take this opportunity to let all of you who are listening to the webinar know that in this next segment our presenter will be speaking in English and there will be live Spanish captioning running in the pod beside the PowerPoint. I know some of you joined us later in the presentation after the point that we told you that this was both in English and Spanish today, so I just wanted to clarify that. I am pleased to

introduce to you Ms. Olabisi Baruwa-Castro. She is the Director of the Family and Community Support Services for the Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start, and that is the Division of The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade-Monroe in Florida. She is going to be followed by Ms. Evelyn Ellenbogen. And Ms. Evelyn is the owner of Shores School, one of the child care centers that participates with The Neighborhood Place. Welcome, Ms. Olabisi.

Olabisi Baruwa-Castro: Good afternoon.

Dianne: Can you start by just telling us a little bit about yourself and also your role in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program?

Olabisi: Yes. So I have been working for children and families for about 15 years. Most recently before working with the Early Head Start program, I was working with the Early Steps program in which I was working with children and families that had developmental delays, the children with developmental delays. I have worked with adults as well. I feel that working with the Early Head Start program has really brought it full circle because previously I was focusing on children or adults alone and here we work with the family as a comprehensive unit providing comprehensive services. So I am now working in the family service area of the Early Head Start program, working with the family advocates that work closely with the Early Head Start families.

Dianne: It sounds like you have got a great background to help you prepare for this role as the director of the Family and Community Support Services. Can you just tell us about The Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and how you got involved with that?

Olabisi: Yes. So the Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start was created to administer the EHS-CC partnership program. We are a Division of the Miami-Dade-Monroe Early Learning Coalition, one of the 30 coalitions in Florida. We are currently partnering with 26 child care centers to serve 750 children in four areas, and those areas are Opa-Locka, Liberty City, Little Havana, and Florida City. We chose these areas because they have high areas of poverty. We are one of four EHS-CCP partnership grantees in the area. And we named our program The Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start because our approach is to work with the community and the family that the child lives in to create a better place to grow and promote school readiness.

Dianne: My understanding is that the Early Learning Coalition has many early childhood initiatives. Why did the organization decide to apply for the partnership funding and create The Neighborhood Place? That's quite an ambitious expansion of services.

Olabisi: Yes. So the Early Learning Coalition was already historical and planted in the foundation of Miami. We were already servicing children and child care centers and providing them excellent educational services. But we saw that there was really a need for not only for the child but the family. We needed to be able to reach the community, have a better and greater outreach, so we thought that really providing comprehensive services would really promote the family as a unit to become independent and flourish within the community. So Early Head Start was the perfect catalyst to get this initiative off the ground.

Dianne: Well, as you said, you serve 750 children, their families, and 26 child care partners. So, I imagine that they come from many backgrounds. Can you tell us more about the children and families?

Olabisi: Yes. So, Miami is definitely a big melting pot. We serve children and their families who come from many cultures and backgrounds who speak a variety of languages. We have everything from Creole, French, Spanish, English. We have a huge cultural background here. Many of our families are facing tough challenges, and we felt like we really needed to get out in the community and be able to reach all cultures with all their diverse needs.

Dianne: So how do you engage so many diverse parents and families in the partnership? It's got to be challenging to reach them all across the 26 centers. What have you found to be effective?

Olabisi: Well, from the onset, we keep the family as our focus. And we are very culturally sensitive. So, our population is diverse, and our staff is diverse. We make sure that we are meeting our families' needs by setting them up with a family advocate that speaks their language. Our family advocates are culturally sensitive to the diverse needs of the community. And so, we are building that foundation of confidence, delivering on all the things that we are saying that we're going to do with the families, we're spending a lot of time educating our families on health services, mental health services, social services, and really being there as a support for them. So, that from the onset, gets your families engaged. Once they become engaged, then they understand what the program is really about. Then they want to be part of our Policy councils, our parent meetings, and so that engagement gets parents excited and motivated, and it starts to spread within the community. And that's how we're really getting known and getting our parents engaged within our community.

Dianne: Great. So, you shared how you carefully consider the assignment of the family service staff to meet the diverse needs of the families, but how do the family advocates actually approach their work with the child care partners?

Olabisi: So, we currently have a staff of 20 family advocates. We have some staff that have one and up to three sites; and so, they are itinerant, meaning that they are at their sites a majority of the week. So, when families are walking into those child care centers, they are seeing their family advocates as soon as they're walking through the door. And we're engaging the family at the start of their day and working with the children throughout the day and greeting families at the end of the day and even holding meetings at the end of the day with our families. So, our family advocates are, like I said, very culturally sensitive. They are very aware of the needs of the family. One of the first things that we do with our families when we meet them is, of course, introduce ourselves, we do a family needs assessment to find out really where those families are at that time and some of the goals that we can identify and needs that are identified to work on throughout their tenure in the program.

Dianne: So, you've spoken some about the multiple needs of families that you have described, and how do you prepare your family advocates to work with the parents and families to meet these multiple needs?

Olabisi: Well, when we prepare our advocates, we not only focus on an integrated service approach, we continually emphasize looking at the family as a whole. We always ask questions that force us to look at the family, you know, not just from one perspective but from many. Not to focus on just one area. You have to have staff that see the mission and the vision and really bring it to the table with motivation and inspiration that the Early Head Start program really is about. We need to always keep the families first, build confidence, create goals and small objectives towards reaching those goals so that we can celebrate each step and those small successes. Family advocates love to share their success stories. I

mean, when our staff is together, we have biweekly meetings, and we really get together and talk about the difference that we're making in the community. And when we find that our staff is motivated and confident in the work that they're doing, we find that our success levels really rise to the top. We are really reaching goals; we are really engaging families, so we're really being successful as a program. Once you understand that your families understand your families and you understand their needs, and you are able to support them, there is no way that the program isn't able to reach the success levels that you set out for.

Dianne: Super. It sounds you have a really clear vision of how to work with families. What other methods are you using to engage and support families parents and families?

Olabisi: So beyond engaging the families from the onset by supporting them and reaching their goals, we also have implemented an intensive parenting curriculum that goes beyond the traditional parenting classes. It really encourages our parents to look at themselves and to reflect. You look at your past experiences and decide how they have impacted you and impacted you in becoming the parent that you are today. What we want to do is to continue to support our families. We really didn't want to go into a curriculum that says these are your weaknesses and this is what you need to do to work on your weaknesses. We want to recognize those weaknesses, realize how they have made you into the person that you are today, and really work from there and find areas of strength. The parenting curriculum has been effective in engaging parents in the partnership and their child care centers. There is more participation in our parent committees and the policy council. We have had parents say, you know, before I started this curriculum, I really thought I was coming here to have a meeting about one more thing that I needed to do for my child. And having these two hours where I'm able to reflect on myself and really engage with other parents has been eye-opening for me, and it's really made me feel that this program has really taken me and my family into consideration.

Dianne: I think many of our listeners would like to know more about the parenting curriculum and how it is structured and delivered. Can you give us some detail?

Olabisi: Yes. So, we have two co-facilitators working with up to 12 parents over a 12-week period. In the first cohort, we had two groups. We had an English and a Spanish-speaking group. Our staff experienced the curriculum along with the parents. So they were the co-facilitators. They were level with the parents. So, when I say level, we are co-facilitating and facilitating these groups and sharing experiences, creating a more personable and secure and safe setting. So, if you're sharing experiences, you are opening up the floor to your parents really feeling that you are there with them and really understanding their needs which also creates a comfortable and safe environment. We begin each session by sharing a meal in family style. We share stories and build trusting and bonding relationships over those 12 weeks. We let parents know it is okay to be comfortable, to really be vulnerable within their groups. What I have seen through this curriculum are parents coming in really unsure, really not knowing what to share, and leaving being more confident and happy and really looking forward to other groups that could maybe mimic or be similar to this because they found many areas of strength, they built resources amongst each other, and it's really brought an engagement, not only in the Early Head Start program but while they're at their child care centers. They're more open to listening to what the providers are saying, or their attendance levels are going up, they're really beginning to understand outside of the curriculum the importance of being engaged in your child's life 360 degrees.

Dianne: So, what you've described sounds quite intensive at times. How do you get the parents to to recruit the parents and then get them to participate?

Olabisi: Well, when we first started the curriculum, we all, my staff, the family advocates, went through the curriculum so they could experience it and really understand from another perspective what your parents will be going through when they're going through these sessions. It was a very eye-opening experience, and actually it was a great teamwork or team building experience for the staff. So, you know, this experience really motivated staff about the curriculum. I was able to go out - we have monthly provider meetings and really market the program because I also truly believe in it. And I was able to get our providers, you know, excited about it. Our family advocates were able to have their parent meetings and more meetings with their parents and really speak about the program and really recruit for those retention levels.

Dianne: Twelve weeks is a significant commitment. Are parents able to complete the program?

Olabisi: Yes. They are definitely able to complete the program. The only issues with retention that we had were definitely not weather because Florida is always sunny. We just had a couple parents that really there were several moms actually that were pregnant and ended up giving birth throughout different sessions. So that kind of counted towards us losing some. And others went back for great things beyond childbirth as getting a painting job because those were some of the goals that we were working on and getting into school. So, beyond that, we were definitely able to keep families that weren't experiencing these other great experiences in their life.

Dianne: So now that you have completed the first cohort, what are parents, staff, and partners telling you about the curriculum?

Olabisi: Oh, they're so excited! Since completing the first cohorts, there are families that did not get to experience this session that are asking, okay, when are we going to have this curriculum at our school? We've heard such great things about it. We want to be able to participate. And providers excited about it because they've heard from other providers through word-of-mouth how engaged parents became after being able to participate in this curriculum, to where its retention levels as far as attendance had gone up and parents were becoming engaged and wanting to participate in in-kind volunteer hours within the site. So, our whole community is really excited about this curriculum.

Dianne: So, it sounds like you have created a demand. And what are you planning now to grow the curriculum?

Olabisi: We definitely are. We are going to be partnering with the QRIS team. So not only will our EHS families be able to benefit from this program but non-EHS students that attend our provider sites or child care programs also have the benefits of being able to participate in this program as well.

Dianne: Well, that's exciting that you've got support from the QRIS that allows you to expand to parents of children who are not in the partnership. Are there other ways that the community is being engaged so that you can serve both children and families in the partnership as well as other children and families?

Olabisi: Oh, definitely. We have other initiatives going on where we have a dental bus that goes out and provides dental care in our child care centers. Those children also have the benefit of being able to

participate in that. And we always encourage what we do is we encourage the same standards throughout our EHS programs. So if you go into a child care center that has a certain amount of EHS programs or classrooms, you also have classrooms that are not EHS. But we like to promote that the same setup, the same kind of curriculum should be throughout the program. And so since we know that EHS is really child-friendly, really comprehensive and really stringent on the health and safety standards, how great is it that the whole child care center would be able to benefit and participate in activities and having the health and safety measures up to compliance throughout the school, having great furniture throughout the school, really having ratios at levels throughout the school. So, we never work within silos. We always invite the community to participate in anything that EHS puts out.

Dianne: That is amazing. Earlier you talked about the diversity of the families that you serve and it sounds like many of them might be learning another language. And how do you support dual language learners?

Olabisi: So, definitely. We always take that into consideration. So, as I spoke of earlier, our family advocates are really matched to the needs of the families. So, if we have families that are dual language learners, we definitely make sure that the advocate speaks the language that they currently are using to communicate and we also have programs such as Miami-Dade College that offers these programs for dual language learners to help them along with their language skills.

Dianne: Well, it's almost impossible to believe that The Neighborhood Place has only been in existence for two years. Do you have any advice for other Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, particularly those that are coming in new to Early Head Start?

Olabisi: Definitely.

Dianne: And really about more to about approaching engaging parents, families, and the community, which you seem to be doing a lot of focus on.

Olabisi: Yes. Again, the key is to have your parents engaged from onset, from marketing the program, from enrollment, and just really getting those families educated on what Early Head Start and Head Start really is about and letting them know the benefits for - benefits of the program for them. This is not a child care center. We're not running child care. We're really running comprehensive services for the family. So when you really educate your families on the opportunities that we provide, listen to your families, and really are able to incorporate their ideas within the program, you will find that you will be successful. It is really important from inception of the partnership to integrate and coordinate your work to engage the families and the community. What I like about also the new standards is they do not stand alone.

So understanding the standards, that is another important thing. When you're able to understand the Head Start performance standards, you're really able to incorporate it throughout your program. Your staff needs to be educated on it so they are able to deliver it throughout the program and help the parents understand, not only the parents but the providers, so that you'll be successful in compliance measures. Family engagement is integrated into education, health, enrollment, attendance, and that was one of the key things that the new performance standards have really brought to light. There is nothing that is in a silo. So that's another thing that you'll learn when you understand the Head Start performance standards; family services is throughout. I also want to say that it is important to build

relationships with parents before family plans are made. We make goals to work on throughout the program year. So really understanding your parents, really letting them know, you know what, you are piloting this plane, and I'm here to support you and really delivering on the support that you're saying that you are going to bring to those families.

Being able to provide many engaging activities, picking a great parenting curriculum, really encouraging families to be embedded, part of the policy council, part of parent meetings, really letting them know that this program is really about them, and also, of course, having your staff up to standards, really having your staff motivated and seeing the vision of the program because that's where it starts as well. Your staff, we're going out into the community, and we're marketing the program, but you really want your staff to believe it, believe the vision so that as they're marketing, they're able to get your families motivated and engaged. It's also very important to understand the community. You really have to listen to the needs of the community. We are a social services agency and, you know, we like to go out and help and help and give you all this advice, but sometimes it's really just great to listen. And when you listen, you really learn the needs of the community, and you're really able to help that community grow. So those are definitely just a few pointers that I would have for new partners coming in or people that are interested in becoming part of the Early Head Start Program.

Dianne: Thank you. That was extremely helpful. If you've got questions for Ms. Olabisi, you can go ahead and enter them in the Q&A pod at any time. I see that that Q&A pod is pretty active right now. We're going to respond to as many questions as we can at the end of the presentations, but we're also going to offer you an opportunity that I will speak about later to continue the conversation beyond today. Our next speaker is Ms. Evelyn Ellenbogen. Are you with us, Ms. Evelyn? Evelyn

Ellenbogen: I'm here. I'm here.

Dianne: You have been waiting very patiently.

Evelyn: Yeah. I'm listening very carefully and with such pride.

Dianne: Thank you. Ms. Evelyn is the owner of Shores School, and that's one of the child care centers that is partnering with The Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start. Can you start by just sharing a little bit about you and then talk about your center?

Evelyn: Sure. Well, my husband and I moved to south Florida from Canada about 25 years ago. We came with three school-age children. And I looked for a job, and I got a job in a child care center as an assistant teacher in a three-year-old room for \$2.10 an hour. And I was just glad to get my foot in the door. I didn't know how much I would love it. And here I am. I went back to school, I got qualified, I had a degree in business, and I advanced to the point where my husband and I bought Shores School, and here I am today on a beautiful, exciting webinar.

Dianne: You're making history with us, too. Well, I understand that Shores School has been around for a long time.

Evelyn: Yes, we have been. Always doing the same thing. And when Early Head Start came to the community, I was very excited because I was aware of the regular Head Start Program. And so we serve 32 children, and we have about 85 children all together, and the others are part of the Early Learning Coalition. And our families are dear. We open the door, and we give them a hug, and we know them

very well. We're already on the third generation. And a little girl a little girl who grew up here is now the president of our parent council. So it stays in the family. We're just delighted that we can continue doing what we've always done with the Early Head Start help.

Dianne: So why did you decide to partner with Early Head Start? You're a very well-established program.

Evelyn: True.

Dianne: Why did you decide to take this leap?

Evelyn: Only because they could offer us a different aspect of things that we didn't already have. For example, maybe I'm jumping, but the

parents: a parenting program was one of the things. But I just want to say that we speak five or six languages here. All our staff have national CDA, plus I think we have three AA degrees, one BA degree, and they've grown up with us, and they've stayed with us. And they still love child care, and we are just so happy to still have them. We were always looking to help the children and the families and here was this perfect program that came along. The staff are wonderful. They make our job easier to reach the families and encourage them. In the parenting curriculum, we had a full enrollment, and already I'm fully recruited for the next one, and the parents are asking when is it starting. We have fathers who one father said to me I'm not only the name on the birth certificate. I am so happy to participate. Do you hear what I've just said?

Dianne: Yes. Amazing.

Evelyn: This is the community we live in. I'm so happy to give him self-esteem, that we're counting him in the quorum. We've helped people get jobs, have them gone back to school. We found out what they could do. They didn't know what they could do. And some of them come, you know, with a language difficulty. I speak French; my ladies speak French and Spanish. Language is not a deterrent at Shores School. I could jump ahead and talk about our family advocate. It's a perfect match. She comes --

Dianne: Well, I was just going to ask you about her. So, You can tell us a little bit more?

Evelyn: She's a darling lady. She has free access to the school. She comes twice a week and more if necessary. She has her appointments. We had to -- at first, we had to reassure the parents that it was okay to share their stories and needs with her. People are intimidated. They thought she might be there to check up on their immigration status or something like that or to judge them and they had trouble trusting. But they see from experience, and we assure them that it was wonderful. They say you know what, you were right. She's so helpful. She helped me, so-and-so and so-and-so. And just asking questions like have you had a mammogram this year. This is not -- not everybody can ask somebody, a frightened parent, that story. At Shores School, we do it. Don't be afraid to speak out because the parents need it, they want it, and they welcome it, and they're so happy to hear it from a friend. At the beginning, she had trouble getting forms signed. But now, that job became easier also. The forms are signed, sure, where - where should I sign is the question. And the family advocate knows her job. And if she doesn't know something, she will follow up and find out about it. And good cooperation is the secret to a successful relationship in any part of life, not only in child care.

Dianne: It certainly sounds like you have developed a very close partnership with The Neighborhood Place. Can you just tell us a little bit more about some of the changes you have seen for your families and for your school?

Evelyn: Well, I observe the parents feeling good about themselves, they've started to comb their hair a little bit, put on a little makeup, to me, that's a sign that they're feeling better in their own skin. The children are coming I would almost say they're becoming clean, they're coming cleaner, and the clothes are ironed. This is an indication that things are okay around the kitchen table. We talk about the parenting council, they have the meals together, and I said, you know, if you try to have a meal together at least once a week, it doesn't matter what it is, sit around, set the table, it doesn't have to be a table cloth, just spread a napkin out and pretend it's a placemat. We're building families' self-esteem besides raising these wonderful, delicious babies.

Dianne: Thank you so much. Thank you so much, Ms. Evelyn. Well, I want to thank our speakers. I think we've heard some amazing stories. And I want to thank everyone who is in the audience and experiencing this with us. I know this may be a different experience for you. It is for us, where we are doing both Spanish and English presentations simultaneously and captioning. And we want to talk to you a little bit about your experience with parent curriculum because we're noticing a lot of our Q&A is coming in around this issue. And we would like you to participate in the poll that is now on your screen. And you will see that it is in both Spanish and in English and you can use whichever one you prefer. And our question is really this first part of the question is focused on program level, the Early Head Start-Child Care grantees, their partners, and any other program level member of the audience. And we're asking you to tell us what the response has been to the parent curriculum that you used in your partnership or program. I see we've got people answering already. That's great. While we're waiting for the results, I'm going to check in with Brandi Thacker who is with the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. Brandi, do you - can you just speak briefly about all the wonderful resources that you have on choosing parent curriculum? Are you there? Brandi Thacker-

Black: Absolutely, Ms. Dianne. I am here. How are you?

Dianne: I'm great. I'm happy you're here with us.

Brandi: I'm thrilled to have learned so much during this dialogue today. Thank you, guys, for allowing us the opportunity. We have been thinking about and working on all things parenting curriculum for quite a while now and are so excited for the standard that we have before us today. You guys will not only find here in your virtual environment some places which I know Dianne is going to explain where you can download them, but you can also go over to the ECLKC and find our parenting compendium which lists evidence-based instruments that are out there for folks to look at. The great thing about this document - there are a couple of things one, it not only looks at the growth of families but subsequently their children. So, the inclusion criteria for the instruments and program interventions that made that guide were very finite. That's really great because it's a very high-level bar.

My only caution is there are certainly many more instruments, tools, ideas out there that we are in the process of corraling right now for you so that you'll have a few different ways to work and find the information. So, if you're looking at something for a home-based program option, if you're looking for something that might have a more clinical feel, so you can go to our page, the Parent, Family, Community Engagement page on the ECLKC, and find our parenting compendium as a starting point. It

also has a companion guide that is excellent. So many of you on the line here, it looks like you're already very engaged in a curriculum that you've utilized and that you've found to be beneficial to your families and to your program. We have a guide that coincides with that compendium that allows you to kind of look and see. If you're just getting started, for instance, what you should be doing in which stage of implementation. So, both of those are here for you to download. And I'll stop there so Ms. Dianne can tell you where to find them.

Dianne: Well, if you look on your screen, you'll see what we call a resource pod, and there are two documents there for you to download. The first one is a compendium of all of the relevant well, not all, but some of the relevant resources around parenting curriculum as well as resources that are more general about Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. So, when you open that document, you can link to those resources. Many of them are on the web, and some of them are in Spanish, which we're happy to tell you. So, we suggest that you take a look at that. And also, the second resource is a document that just came out about some research that was done in California around partnerships and their challenges and successes with engaging parents and families and communities as they were implementing their program. So, that's a really good source of information, as well.

So, let's take a look at our poll results... for question one. So, it looks like on our Spanish side, on the Spanish poll, that 80 percent so you're reporting 80 percent of your parents are very engaged in the parenting curriculum. And on the English pod, it looks like it's pretty much of an even split between very engaged, somewhat engaged, and not much interest. So, that is very helpful for us to know, for all of us to know. Can we launch the second part of the poll question? This is really oriented for our technical - training and technical assistance providers who may be on the call today. And we would like to know how frequently you are asked for training and technical assistance on choosing a parent curriculum. And you can go ahead and enter that now. And while you're doing that, I'm just going to talk about the the opportunity that we're going to be providing for you to continue this conversation because we're looking at this Q&A pod and knowing we're not going to get to all your questions today. But we are not going to ignore them. You will get a response.

And we're also going to be providing you with an opportunity to continue the conversation with your peers through a learning community called MyPeers. And once we go back to the Power Point, you'll see a PowerPoint slide that talks about that. We know that peer-to-peer sharing is a great way for grantees and partners to learn about innovative approaches on this topic and more. And I know many of you are asking, well, what curriculum did Miami use? Obviously, we don't want to appear to endorse any curriculum. So, we can't directly answer that today, but you can have an opportunity to talk to each other about that through MyPeers. It's an online social and learning network for Head Start and Early Head Start program staff and partners to dialogue and to share your thoughts and experiences. And we want MyPeers to be a very positive and supportive environment.

So, feel free to ask and answer questions of your peers and really think about solutions and learn from each other's experience. So, it's really a virtual community so you can spend time with your peers and really not only talk about Parent, Family, and Community Engagement but, you know, whatever other issues you might want to talk about as you implement your program. We want you to know it's not a place for confidential conversations. It's not for advocacy or policy clarification. ECLKC is the official information center for the Office of Head start. And the Office of Child Care site is the official source of information for CCDF. But we hope, particularly for our TA providers and our grantees and partners that

are out there, that you come and visit the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Learning Community and engage with others in solution-oriented conversations.

And we promise we will send you out information via email in the next couple of days so that if you're not already a member of MyPeers, you'll know how to register and join in the conversation that we started today. Okay, let's take a look at our results. In Spanish, our Spanish speakers are saying that about 100 percent are asking for T/TA on the parenting curriculum sometimes. And we're finding on the English side of the column that we're getting mostly rarely. They're not at this point asking for T/TA on choosing a parent curriculum. So, either people are finding lots of success, or we may be seeing some uptake in the demand after today. Okay. So, we have I think maybe ten minutes left that we could reply to the questions that have come in today. So, I'm going to ask Adriana if you have one you want us to talk to first.

Adriana: Yes, Dianne. Yes. Veronica. We have a question for you, Veronica. Which is the most success that you had with the partnership and which recommendation can you give to other programs?

Veronica: I think that our best success with the partnership had been the integration of our families and the development and learning of their children, to get active participation -- [

Adriana: We're losing you, Veronica.

Veronica: I'm here, Adriana.

Adriana: Yes, I hear you. We didn't get your answer, could you repeat?

Veronica: Okay, our greatest success has been able to achieve active participation of the families in the development of the learning of their children, and have them fall in love of the activities of the program with the purpose of having a better quality of life. Success has been acquired thanks to the

strategies: starting with a community assessment, identifying their needs. I think what's important is to know our family's needs; use the framework to create action plans, and put them in motion. That's how we achieve success.

Adriana: Do you consider parents' active participation to be your greatest success?

Veronica: Yes, it has been thanks to the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. They gave us the opportunity to have the funds and the resources to achieve the integration.

Adriana: Thank you for the answer. I think there is another question. I think that's for you as well. For example, if you were to have an event with the families and the children, do the families and children gather somewhere? Do you meet in the center? What's the procedure?

Veronica: Well, we unify the educational and the social areas so that they inform the parents about the activity and ask them to participate. But they must be in love with it first. They get involved voluntarily, fall in love with the activity, and then they participate. So, we meet at the center, in their corresponding environments, and then we go off to the activities. In the case of uncles, aunts, grandparents, many of them wait for us at the destination. That's how we've managed to have active participation from the families in our communities.

Adriana: Thank you for your answers.

Adriana: Dianne, do you have any more questions that somebody might --

Dianne: Adriana, I think I'm going to check with Alejandra. Alejandra, do you have a question? One more - I think we have time for one more.

Alejandra: Yes, Dianne. I have a question for the Neighborhood Place about how does the Neighborhood Place help families to feel like they're a part of Head Start?

Dianne: Did you hear that, Olabisi?

Olabisi: Yes. A great question. From the onset, as I was speaking before, we really let our parents know that they really run this program. We like to educate them on the comprehensive services and the perks of the program, but we really let them know that we really take their ideas and needs into consideration when we are making policies and procedures, when we are bringing programs to them, when we're picking parenting curriculum, when we're picking with the families parenting meeting topics, as well as when we are making goals with our families. We really let them know, you know, what is your dream? What is it that I can do to support you? So we really train our family advocates. They go through a rigorous 4-6 weeks of training where we train them on how to keep your families centered, how to reach goals, providing resources for them. They are able to shadow other family advocates so that when they do start working with families, the families feel engaged and feel like they are the key to making the program work.

Dianne: Thank you.

Olabisi: You're welcome.

Dianne: I think we could get one more question in if we're fast. Alejandra, do you have anything else?

Alejandra: Yes. There's another question for the Neighborhood Place. It's from Ms. Bart, and she's asking if the Neighborhood Place has any other staff like education or disability or health. And if not, does the family advocate cover those areas with their caseloads?

Olabisi: I'm so sorry. What was the question again? I heard the last portion of it, not the beginning.

Alejandra: Yeah, sure. Does The Neighborhood Place have any other staff that works with education or disability or health, additional staff? Or if not, does the family advocate cover all those areas for their caseloads?

Olabisi: That is an excellent question. And the answer is we have a health manager, an educational director, as well as - actually, it's a health director, educational director, disabilities manager, and education manager. The family advocates fall under me. They actually work under all areas. So, as I supervise them and help them with social services, the other managers educate them on other areas, and they utilize the family advocates to do the outreach to the families to get information for health, get the connections and resources for disabilities, as well as mental health. So, yes, the family advocate is the person that really covers the families 360 with our comprehensive services.

Dianne: Thank you very much. Unfortunately, I think we've run out of time for Q&A today, but as I said, we will respond and post the Q&A online, and we will let you all know when that is available. And again, we will continue the conversation through MyPeers. So we're going to go now to our speaker slides. And I just want to thank all of our speakers today. You can see them all there together. Rae Anderson, our

director, Ginny Gipp with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Technical Assistance Division for Administration for Children and Families, Jennifer Amaya-Thompson, the program specialist on Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices with the Office of Early Childhood Development, Veronica Nunez, director of Child Care and Early Head Start and the Early Head Start- Child Care Partnership for the Municipality of San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, Nitza Rodriguez who is a mother and a policy council member with the Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership, again in San Sebastian. Ms. Olabisi Baruwa-Castro, director of Family and Community Support Services at the Neighborhood Place, and Ms. Evelyn Ellenbogen, owner/director of Shores School. And we've just got a couple of minutes left, and I'm going to ask our project director, Rae Anderson, to make some closing comments. Rae? Rae

Anderson: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Dianne, and thank you to everyone for joining us this afternoon. We hope that your experience today has been informative and we hope that it provided an opportunity to learn about some promising practices to engage with parents and families. This was our first experience with a bilingual webinar. It may or may not have been your first experience. But we really would like to hear back from you about what worked well and what we could have done to make it a better experience for you. So, we hope that you'll take time to respond to the evaluation that will launch at the end of the webinar. Our experience today preparing for the webinar provided us with many different opportunities to really learn and share insights about what it's like for the children and the families that we work with, every day the children and families that are in our programs who are learning more than one language and who experience these challenges or these daily translation issues. And so, we really have learned even more to admire them greatly as well as the staff who work with them every day and support them every day. So, thank you for this opportunity and thank you for being a part of this experience with us. So have a great day, everybody, and a great rest of your week.

Adriana: Thank you. Thank you.

Rae: Bye.

Dianne: Bye.

Evelyn: Bye-bye for now.

[Speaking ends]

[Silence]

[End video]