

Safe Foundations, Healthy Futures: Introducing the Campaign

Dr. Deborah Bergeron: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm so glad that you are here to join us for the kick-off of the Office of Head Start's campaign Safe Foundations, Healthy Futures. Supporting Safe Children, Thriving Staff, And Strong Programs. You have the pleasure -- I have the pleasure of joining you today to share with you a campaign that we've been working on for some time. And I have two wonderful people here with me. This is Dr. Bergeron, by the way. I guess I should probably tell you that. Ann Linehan, our deputy director is here to join us, which is wonderful. Her experience goes way back to the classroom. So she'll be able to relate to so much of what we're going to talk about today. And then, we have David Jones here, who works with a National Center and PMFO, and has extensive experience with Head Start, particularly working with our fatherhood programs, which is wonderful to hear about, and to know about in relation to how we run our programs, and there's a lot of relevance between what we're going to talk about today, and the work we do with our families.

Before we jump into content, though, just take a look at your screen. There should be a left sidebar where you can ask questions, you can download the slides, give you a few seconds to do that, make sure that you can see the slides. And certainly, feel free to use the text box to ask questions throughout, and we'll get to as many questions as we can, once we're finished with the presentation.

So, without further delay, let's jump right in.

One of the first things we want to talk about is, is why people work in Head Start. It's a great question to ask, and of course, we've got some ideas here. We've got passion to serve children and families, and making a difference. We all want to feel like we're making a difference, and we have meaning in our life. But I was thinking, you know, it's really a good idea for you to stop and pause, and think about why you've chosen to do this work. We have a lot of choices in our life to choose career paths. And even within career paths, which is where we're gonna spend that energy. And you've chosen Head Start, and that isn't an accident. I believe that was probably very intentional. I know a lot of the folks we have, who work for us used to be parents, and I think they feel a -- not an obligation so much, as just a desire to pay it forward, and to give back to the program that helped their own children. I know we've got folks who were in public school systems who come over to Head Start to work with a specific population that they know they can really make a difference. Last week we were at a TA conference, and we started off just by saying, you know, "What is your purpose?" It's important to know why. And why do we ask why? Well, when we know the why, it's a lot easier to know what we should do. And today's kind of about that, when we know that we're here to serve children and our most vulnerable children, we know that if we're going to do that, safety has to be at the forefront of that work.

I know in my own previous life as a school administrator, I used to stand up in front of high school students, and asked them what the most important part of my job was. And they would yell out all kinds of things that were not even close. And then, we would talk about how safety was really my first priority. And, talk to them about how important having a safe learning environment is in order to get anything done. And parents expect that. They expect their children to be safe when they're with us. And if they're not, nothing else really matters.

So, we're going to talk a lot about safety and wellness today. We're launching a campaign that is going to be supporting everyone throughout the Head Start environment. During the next year, you can expect a lot of activities around this. Maybe we'll, you'll see some webinars. A lot of information coming out to prevent risk of physical or emotional harm. Practical resources pushed out to you so that you can

have some skills in your toolbox that you can pull from. We know that day to day, you have a lot of challenges. Some of topics you might see are things like safety and active supervision, positive climates for classroom management. I'm very interested, actually personally, in pushing some of that out. I think that when the classroom have a positive climate where children feel safe, and where adults are available to them, you feel a lot fewer incidents.

But we also are going to touch on trauma-sensitive issues. We know that a lot of our children are coming to us from places of trauma, and knowing how to handle that is a big piece. And staff wellness is another one we want to touch on. So there are a lot of different things you're going to see throughout the year so that you can start to develop and grow your own safety campaign, in your own space, in your own programs. I mean, you might see some webcasts, tip sheets, My Peers discussions, town hall discussions, a lot of other fun things so that we can keep on this throughout the year. And -- Ann?

Ann Linehan: Well, I just want to say, I am so happy to be part of this. And I think, if I wasn't invited to present I probably would have had a fight with somebody. That said, you know, you may say why are we doing a campaign. Well, when I think about some of the successful campaigns over the years, when I think about Back to Sleep. That was so successful. It was a sustained campaign, and it really influenced people's behavior. We're doing a campaign, one, because we know from our own data that we have seen trends where we think things are happening where they could be avoided. We also want to move the needle. Not move the needle just to have fewer incidents where children are in unsafe places, but to really eradicate any incident from happening. You know, we think about who's responsible. We think about, you know, our teachers, our frontline staff, but we really want to influence the behavior and the thinking of our governing bodies, of anyone who works in Head Start. The custodian. The bus driver. This campaign is for everybody who has any responsibility for caring for our children.

I do want to put this in perspective, though. When we -- this is a very serious campaign. And I just want to share a stat with you. So last year, we had 131 documented incidents. But when you think about the opportunities for something to happen to a Head Start or Early Head Start child in your care, when we think about program year, we have 687,000 little bodies moving around on a daily basis somewhere in your hands. When you think about a program year, and all the days that those kids go to school, there are about 131,000,000 million opportunities for something to happen that is harmful or hurtful to a child. When you think of those statistics, the number of incidences in Head Start is really 0.00045. That said, so it's a small -- it's -- the incidences are small, but one is too many, and 131 is far too many. And those are really the ones that we know about. And our goal is as part of this campaign is to inform, to influence behavior, and also to offer support throughout the year to grantees in creating these safe environments. We believe, as we said earlier, that most are preventable, such as leaving a child on a bus, or a playground, or in a bathroom, or giving a child to someone who they don't even know. So again, we are here to support you in the work you do in creating these safe foundations, safe environments for our children. You know, the one thing that we know, for many of our children and families, life is very challenging. And often, Head Start should be, and in many cases is, the most joyous part of a child's day. They should have loving staff from the moment they enter the bus, or crossover that door, to the time that they are returned to their parents. And you know, we have focused a lot -- I want to say over the last two or three years, on classroom instruction. Classroom instruction. How important that is. Intentional teaching practices. But I can share with you, without a safe and nurturing environment, where kids can feel confident and safe, the instruction isn't going to matter. So really, starting out with that safe, loving environment is really the most important goal of each day.

And when I think about the parents, and the grandparents, and the foster parents, that every day entrust their child to you, and, or, to us, when I think about handing off that four-month-old baby to the Early Head Start teacher, to the family child care provider, for one moment does that parent, or grandparent, or foster care parent ever think my child is going to be in harm's way. So, the responsibility that each of us has every day to ensure to that the children are safe, and I like to say always, and it was not my saying, but bathed in love is really our responsibility.

Dr. Bergeron: You know, Ann, I think of something when you talk about all these different aspects of a Head Start program that affect children every single day. And both as an administrator and as a parent -- As a school administrator, I used to hyper focus on my bus drivers and cafeteria workers, and custodians, because so often they're sort of in the background, and we're so teacher-focused, that we forget that there are all these other people who make the day work. It wouldn't without a clean building. It wouldn't work without a good lunch, or without a safe drive to school. But also, as a parent, I can share a personal story with you from last week. My daughter is a rising senior, and she was chosen to speak to all of the incoming, what they call, well the support staff in [Inaudible] County. So those are your bus drivers, and your cafeteria workers, and those kind of folks, as they returned to the school year last week. And I went and listened to her, and she started by telling her story about her bus driver when she was in Kindergarten, she fell asleep on the bus. And she fell over, and she was just a peanut, so the bus driver didn't see her. And she talked about that story, and how the bus driver took her home, went out of her way to make sure she got to her bus driver, bus stop. And then, she talked about her cafeteria worker who used to let her take the lunch carts during lunch. And that was the best part of her day, because she got to be important, and she was in first grade. This is a rising senior who is remembering the people who were working in these sort of ancillary jobs in her school building when she was five. And she's remember these people. This is how important they are. And I think, you know, in, amongst all these skills and strategies, and things we're going to talk about, I think the most important thing we can do with all of the people who work with our children is to reiterate important they are. Annabelle, my daughter, talked about how the bus driver's the first person, I think she said, a little face sees in the morning, or something like that. Just made my heart warm. Because she is right. It's the first person that child sees for the day to decide, is this going to be a good day, or a tough day. And when that is a welcoming smile, and a warm heart, and that goes along with making sure, you know, the seat belt's buckled and that everyone is off the bus. Those are all part of those things, it just makes for a better day. So, I think as you, as you take in all that we're going to talk to you about, to really think about holistically how you mobilize your staff to understand how important each and every one of them is. I think, certainly we're going to look at systems and practices. I know that you have to have systems in place. You cannot follow every person around in your building, and making sure that they're doing what they're supposed to do. So, there has to be systems. There are going to be, sort of, predictable challenges that you can think about ahead of time. But at the end of the day, I think it is about the relationships that you have with your staff. If they trust you. If they know you're setting them up for success, then you can have honest conversations. And when things aren't going the way that you would hope they would go, those are opportunities for improvement, not opportunities to get your hand slapped. And that's sort of where we need to be. We need to be at a place where we are all in this for the kids, and when that's going on, then we're all just trying to get better at what we do. And so, it doesn't just feel like a gotcha, as much as an opportunity to grow.

Ann: I think that's a great segway, David, into your comments.

David Black: Absolutely. You know, it's interesting. I really resonate with the story that you told. Because I think that's where it's at, that you hear about the experiences of children, and too many times they are

negative experiences, but the way your daughter talks about how influential bus drivers and the cooking staff were in the school, it says a lot about what we do. I'm really excited to be a part of this conversation because I have the opportunity to kind of represent the collective voice of the project offices that sort of guide the work of the National Centers. And also talk a little bit about management systems and the services. To the previous slide emphasized the leadership's role in supporting staff to kind of do their best. And one aspect of that support really centers around communication. I think when we think about organization, they usually follow, you know, the type of patterns where it's hierarchical. You know, the directors are at the top, managers kind of work between the director, and the front line staff. I mean, the front line staff, as we just heard, you know, they provide services to children and families.

When systems are implemented, so they usually follow this top down structure. But the good thing for programs to think about in relationship to this campaign is how important it is for organizations to establish communications systems that inform, influence, and direct service provision.

Many organizations are moving from the more traditional organizational structures, you know, displayed on this screen, to a more fluid communication system, and I think this is the case for many of our grantees.

Next slide.

This is the same organizational chart as the previous slide. But however, as you can see, it's inverted. Now the majority of Head Start work force, to me, is at the top, and they have a direct interaction and influence on enrolled children and families. Viewing this chart through the lens of a direct service provider causes us to think about the importance of bilateral communication, where it flows from the top down and from the bottom up.

Front line staff are deeply engaged in service delivery and are consistently looking for ways to improve what they're doing. And when an organization sets a tone where ideas, thoughts, recommendations, and suggestions about strategies to improve service delivery are welcome, it demonstrates a respect for the professionals who are engaged in what I believe, and what we've already heard, is our most important work. Partnering with the families in an effort to educate children.

This can be done on a collective buy-in on the part of all of the staff, where they willingly embrace responsibility and they invest that all children are safe in our care.

Ann: Well I -- Thank you, David. Let's go to the next slide. And I think that this is -- Debby, you mentioned this a little bit earlier. I think this is one of our favorite slides in the entire slide deck. Because it really talks about viewing these opportunities to learn, rather than blaming. And I have to say, it is painful for any organization to have an incident where a child is left alone, handed off to someone who is unauthorized, mistreated by a staff member. There's no grantee that intends to have that happen in their program. And we know that this is also -- and it cuts across fantastic programs, programs that are struggling. And I, I will tell you, three years ago, as a grantee director, I had a contractor, a transportation company, and one of the bus drivers didn't see the little kid that fell asleep in the last row, parked the vehicle in this parking lot. Four hours later we got a call from the mother saying, "Gee, I wonder where the child is?" And lo and behold, that little boy climbed out of the bus and was wondering in a square, and was picked up by a policeman. My reaction -- and I, and I, and I remember that day vividly, was to call these, the contractor, and say, "You fire that blank blank blank blank bus

driver!" Little did I ever reflect to say, "Now, what could we have done for orientation training of contracted staff?" For me, I got rid of that, that terrible person, and my problem solved. And I think we tend still to see, kind of, that knee-jerk reaction, and in some cases, the person in that case may not have had the appropriate training. There was a great example, and a real-life scenario that I actually just read today, where there was a child -- and we hear this in many organizations -- you know, kids with very challenging behavior. And I think the child threw a toy, and then kicked the teacher. And it was kind of a brand new teacher. And the teacher restrained the child in a way that was not appropriate. And that was reported up. And what the program realized was, you know, thankfully the child was not hurt. Someone intervened immediately. But the teacher did not know how to properly hold a child so the child wasn't going to hurt himself or others. And what that program realized was they really needed to do more training and support, and not fire that teacher that had a lot of promise. So, we really want to say to programs, we know that this tough. We know that it's painful. But I think stepping back and saying, what is it from a, a management perspective, from a training perspective, from a coaching perspective, from a new employee orientation, for ongoing observation, what is it that we need to strengthen in our systems so these kind of things could be potentially avoided in, you know, in the future. So, we just want to say these really are opportunities to learn, and I even know, me -- And I'm going to say the word that people probably all thinking. "Well, you guys blame us. You give us bad monitoring report." But I, I can tell you some pretty tough directors, who are really upset, you know, they said, "You know what? It really forced us into really doing some reflection, and we think are children are safer for it."

I also want to do, and I should have done this in the beginning -- a shoutout. You know, the Office of Head Start is doing this nationally. But we have three regions, Region IX, was out there pretty quickly, I want to say, probably a year and a half ago. Region VII. I know has got a campaign. And I know Region XII. And what we have observed, because I think Region IX has been the longest running campaign, we have seen fewer incidences. So, that's why, to take this on nationally, we want to reduce those numbers. Because it is a painful experience for staff person, the grantee, the parent, child. Nobody -- It is painful for everybody involved. And I think what we want to do -- I don't know if we have any questions. But, I think what we'd like to do is kind of take a couple of questions if folks have them.

And I think we got two. "I got on a little late, but what does a reference to safe mean?" I really think, you're really talking about creating a safe environment. But what does that mean. It means that having the teachers that have the kind of support and training, and skills. It's not just the classroom setup. I mean, you can go in and see some classrooms that are set up, where the child's not in the sight lines. Or they're sipping hazards. Or there are, you know, safety issues within a classroom. That's one thing that can be corrected, I think, or addressed even more, more easily. I do think, again, it's how the children, the interactions with the child. I mean a stern voice can -- can go a long way at ruining a child's day, or making a child feel less confident about asking a question, or how you handle transitions. You know, are you preparing children, or are you just laying things on with just -- unpredictable guidance, where children are kind of taken back.

You know, the social-emotional aspect is incredibly important. And I think it -- I don't -- I would say social-emotional safety, security, where children feel confident about themselves, where they can take risks, you know, for the learning perspective, where they feel free to explore, where they're not careful that the teacher's going to yell at them if they leave one center and go to another. I mean, it's hard to say, both are necessary The physical environment must be safe. But the social-emotional environment is as important. I think one thing, when people have an incident, where they are not -- you know, where a child was slapped, or a child was yelled at, or a child was left alone unsupervised -- people always say,

but the child wasn't hurt. We have no idea from a social-emotional perspective how that child reacted to that event, which could have lasting repercussions. I think, you know, Debby your daughter told my stories. Where I can tell you horrible stories, and I'm an old lady. [Laughter] And I still have repercussions from that nasty teacher, what she did to me.

So, you know, I don't -- I don't know thoughts about --

Dr. Bergeron: Well, I think that putting it into the buckets of physical and social-emotional help kind of identity, say, content areas. Right? But I think there's another aspect. And there is sort of the preventative, the systems that you put in place. For example, the bus driver that you described didn't have a system in place to sweep a bus. You know, you -- that probably wasn't in place. Nobody would think to do that. Now we know that needs to be part of a system. But then, there's also the response side. So, there's what do you do upfront to make your environment as safe as possible as kids. And that can be physically or emotionally. But also, what are you doing in response when things don't go as planned. That again, can be physically or emotionally. Physically, when a child gets angry and throws a toy, what is your response to that? When the the weather doesn't cooperate with you, and the playground may not be safe, what is your response to that? So I think it's kind of this dynamic thing. It's certainly not linear by any stretch, and I think think that's why it will take a whole year for this to roll out, a campaign that has any meaning, and can really give you the girth that you need. And I really think a big piece of this, and I said this at the beginning, and I know it's part of the campaign is the wellness of your staff. And that's physical and emotional, too. It's physically. Are they healthy and well to be able to work with kids of this, of this age, who are very physical? And also, are they emotionally at a place so that what kids do isn't personal. It's not about them, so they don't have to feel reactionary when things aren't going quite the way that they wish they would. I think it's very complex, but I don't think it's complicated. I just think it require a lot of different perspectives.

Ann: The next -- David, did you have a comment? I'll move on to the next question. The next question is really an interesting one. And I'm actually glad that someone posed it. You know, they'd like a little bit more information on the kinds of incidences. And they also asked, are these child abuse neglect allegations that get reported to the regional offices, or are these CPS-substantiated incidences of abuse and neglect? So let me break it down a little bit. The, now. What I shared with you, the 131, are reported incidences that we have documented, and we have issued reports. That does not mean that they're not others that were not reported. So all of these were reported to the regional office, the regional offices. And they really break down into three categories. I think, you know, when you talk about the types. When we talk about mal-treatments, it could be from roughly handling a child, to we had a teacher got actually was arrested. Someone took a video of her dragging the child down the corridor by holding on to the child's legs and dragging the child. It could be humiliate -- instances of humiliation. I mean, there are certainly a substantial bucket around what we would consider mal-treatment. I think there is, where teachers are being abusive to children, either physically or emotionally, I think that there are issues where children are left unsupervised. You have heard about the bus. You have heard about the playground. You've heard about the bathroom. And, there are -- and that happens quite frequently. And out of the 131. And I think that the other ones that are probably a little less frequent but still, when they happen, it's really pretty scary, when they, when a child is released to someone who is unauthorized. We had a situation where a child was released to someone who the child didn't even know. And the child went willingly. That's, that's all little bit scary. You asked also -- and I want to get back to -- with these substantiated incidents of abuse and neglect by your children and protective services. Some are, some are not. The licensing is very different from state to state. And we go according to our regulations. There are some states we know that the bar is, I want to say is probably

so low that if the child is not almost near imminent, imminent death, then CPS does not, you know, substantiate, or even take in the complaint. So we don't -- we look to see what evidence, for example, there may be, on a grantee in a given state relative to incidences that were called in, or to licensing that is substantiated by CPS. But the decisions we make are independent, based on our own regulations and the facts in which we gather and document.

So. Debby, I, you know, when you talked about trauma-informed care, training available, and with the -- of the whole -- and then you layer on the opioid and drug-addicted stuff. Do you want to comment on that?

Dr. Bergeron: You know, I just think that you can expect more specific training around that. So please keep your eye out for that. I know, I'm sure all of your staff are feeling like they want to know more. What do we do about this? And there is more and more training that's being made available. And I'm sure we'll be pushing a lot of that out. And, I think that requires -- that's more of skill-based thing more than it is anything else. We can care all we want, but in some ways, you do have to have the background on specific ways of dealing with trauma. And I would just keep my eye out for that.

Ann: Go ahead, David.

David: Also, there's question that came in around how could this information be applied to a home-based program. And I think that's a really great question. Because I think so much of what we do involves partnering with and communicating effectively with parents. And there's no other time that our work is so critical is when you're going into someone else's home. We even have conversations with them about safe environments, and sort of, give thoughts about how to interact with their children in ways, you know, that are developmentally appropriate. So, I think for the home-base option, again it's nuancing. I'm going in and being respectful of cultures, asking questions, partnering with parents in a way that you're looking up their values and their beliefs, and what's important to them in their child's development.

Ann: So, I think it's the same thing, you know, when we get into smoke-free environments with children in schools. I think that had a trickle-down effect. I mean, we're hoping that whatever is good for a child in an Early Head Start or Head Start setting, or partnership setting, or family child -- it's going to be, also, helpful for parents in thinking about ensuring that their homes are also safe environments. And I, will take this, because it's on some people's minds. As far as federal review, monitoring goes, what specifically would the team look for or observe when visiting programs in reference to safe environments. What I would say, you know, every year the Protocols are posted. The Monitoring Protocols. It's transparent. You know what questions we're going to be asking. You know what we're going to be observing. But I think you also know that sometimes these things are so unpredictable, you could be going and just focusing on an activity that a teacher's doing, and they're could be an episode in the classroom that could be handled not in the way that is appropriate. So we don't go looking for bad things to be happening. It is just apart of, the general observations. But I will tell you. Most of the things that we identify are not part of the team going in. They're things that either we get complaints from the community, or there is a newspaper article, or programs as they are required to do, report these incidents to us. So it really, most of these do not emanate from the, what I would say, the more traditional monitoring team going in. Although like anyone, if, if something is inappropriate or unacceptable, that needs to be reported. But that's not the intent of the monitoring teams when they go in.

We're going to be able to answer a little bit in the closing, David, kind of the timeline. So, some of the things that are happening. So.

And again. What other -- if I could scroll down the questions.

Oh. Someone really offered a good insight. In addition to home-based programs, I also think it's important in thinking about group socialization spaces, and ensuring they're health -- are safe and healthy, too. And I think that's a really good point. Thanks, Jan, for offering that comment.

Are there any other -- So I think that --

Dr. Bergeron: Those other questions are really good segway into, David's --

Ann: Yep.

Dr. Bergeron: Sharing the calendar.

Ann: Absolutely. So, David, if you could take us through sort of what some of these upcoming events are.

David: Absolutely. So, we are extremely excited, you know, to have an opportunity to spend time with you this afternoon. To launch the Office of Head Start's national campaign Safe Foundations, Healthy Futures. And again, the tagline, Safe Children, Thriving Staff, Strong Programs, which is going to run from September 2018 through April of 2019. And we're really excited about, as I said earlier, all the National Centers are involved. And one thing that we didn't say earlier, that I think, when Ann was giving credit to the regions, I think, there was a meeting a few months back when our RPMs came in, and really kind of helped to put this on our radar in a meaningful way. They were, they were really passionate about wanting to do something, which really informed where we are at right now. So, for the month of September, it's going to kick off with the National Center on Health and Wellness, and they're going to sort of talk a little about actually building upon a lot of great work that they did back in 2016 on active supervision. Creating and Enhancing a Culture of Safety. That's going to be done in partnership with the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operation. In October of 2018, we have Active Supervision for Child Safety. November 2018, Strategies to Create Positive Learning Environments for Children and Families. So that actually speaks from the content that we covered about learning environments in keeping children safe. In December, Caring for Yourself So You Can Care for Others. And I think this is critically important. Staff wellness, you know, again, to the degree that staff sort of are coming into the classroom ready and able to deal with some of those challenging behaviors that children have has a lot to do with how well they're taking care of themselves, and how they are being supported through supervision and professional development. So, we're excited about that week, that month. January 2019, Creating Trauma Sensitive Classrooms to Promote Health and Safety. Again, focusing in on trauma-related issues that teachers have to contend with. February 2019, Strategies to Promote Organizational and Staff Wellness. March 2019, we're going to get into some of the human resources considerations that assist in recruit and retain responsive staff, and also, some things that you can do to sort of be a little more observant about when they may be struggling with particular issues that could put children in jeopardy. And last but definitely not least, in April of 2019, Planning for In-Service Training.

Ann: And David, there's going to be a lot -- these are just kind of the big topical areas, but there's going to be a lot of activity ongoing, in between -- that are supplementing these, that are providing additional resources for programs.

David: We got some media campaigns. There's going to be town hall events. I think, we really want, you know, grantees on the front line to get excited about it. We want you tweeting about it. We want you posting on Facebook. Whatever you can do to kind of keep this alive and active, and well in your programs, we'd love to see that.

And let us know how you're doing. I mean, there may be some really great stories, too, which we didn't cover, on how one of your systems really sort of -- you had a minor incident. Right? Something that may have been reported, but [Inaudible] an incident which has occurred. Right? But you improved your system in a way that you had any of those incidents again. We want to hear your success stories, as well, of things that you've implemented to think about, in keeping children safe.

Dr. Bergeron: Yeah. I think, I think the success piece is really where it's at. I think both at -- on the ground, really promoting the success within your own space is important, I think, promoting what works is much more powerful than going through all the things you shouldn't be doing. I know that sometimes you have to over those things, but I would definitely take a positive messaging angle with your staff where you're identifying the things you already do so well, and maybe even to the point of having some kind of regular recognition. It doesn't have to be a big deal, but somehow calling people out when they're doing -- not just the things they're supposed to do, but when they are going above and beyond

to really support the safety and wellness of your children and even staff. I think the more you can promote what you're looking for, the more you're going to see it. So, I would highly encourage you to do that. And, we at the -- the other level is we definitely want to hear your story.

Ann: And we have a new mom in this room whose son goes to a child care facility, and she said, you know, make staff make the teaching staff part of making that environment safe. You know, give them permission. And we know that folks that are working in the classroom really do have good incites sometimes administrators may overlook. And so, I just want to put that plug in. It really is about permission for people to really contribute it at II different levels.

Dr. Bergeron: And really, everybody. If you got everybody in that building you've hired to do something, keeping an eye out for what's going on, it's it's a great situation because you'll have folks. I mean, you're custodians are more in tune with what's happening than anybody else in the building because they're there, they are everywhere, and they've got eyes, and they pay attention. So you've got a lot of opportunity to capitalize on the people who are in your building. And then, of course, we want to hear your stories. We do want to showcase what's working. The more we can share out on that note, the better you are going to give them avenues to do that. Or have some ways to do that. Dave, that's great.

David: Absolutely.

Dr. Bergeron: Great. So, you know, it's always fun to think about the fact that every day almost a million children are impacted by Head Start. That's a big responsibility. And it's one that I know all of you are proud to be a part of. I know I am. I think it takes all of us working together to do this work, and I like to think Head Start is really the access to the American dream. I think it is the first step to the

American dream. I will say it's hard to dream if you don't feel safe, so make sure you take care of that piece and then I think everything else will fall into place. And of course, you've got tons of support here as you are mulling this all over and coming up with questions, or concerns, and we'll make ourselves available to you. Do you guys have any other?

Ann: No, I just think, I feel like it's kind of a long time coming. We've talked about it. And, you know, we wish for the success of the program, and if they're successful, then that means that children are safe. So I just wish everyone well, and either you're beginning classes are ready, or you're in pre-service, and this is a big program year for us. And we think of that almost million kids. Many babies, and all the nervous parents. We want everyone to feel confident when they're in our hands.