

## **Highly Individualized Practices Series: Resources and Strategies to Support Children with Disabilities and their Families During COVID-19**

Jani Kozlowski: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to our special edition inclusion series webinar on "Resources and Strategies to Support Children with Disabilities and their Families During COVID-19." We're so happy to have you join us. I'm Jani Kozlowski, and I'm the inclusion and professional development systems specialist here at the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, and I'm joined by my colleagues, Dayana and Susan. Dayana?

Dayana Garcia: Hi, good afternoon, everyone. I'm Dayana Garcia, disabilities and inclusion specialist with the Office of Head Start.

Susan Sandall: Hi, everyone. I'm Susan Sandall, and I'm also with DTL, and I'm located at the University of Washington in Seattle. Thank you for joining us.

Jani: Thanks, Susan and Dayana. We're so glad to have all of you join us. You know, much like many of you, I started out in the field – in the classroom – educating a diverse group of children with varying abilities, and I also served as the education and disability services coordinator for a migrant Head Start program in Michigan and provided Head Start technical assistance to programs in region five. So, early care and education, and Head Start in particular, is very near and dear to my heart, as it is, I know, for many of you. However, even though we share some of those same experiences of working with young children and working with those who educate and teach young children, I don't have the experience that you all do, that is so unique – this unique circumstance that we're facing right now. And I can't even imagine how stressful it must be for you all to be worrying about the pandemic, your own family, and the educators and the families that you support. So, please know that we are here for you during this time. We're going to try to offer some suggestions throughout this session for things that you might want to think about during these uncertain times. And we'd love to hear from you as well, if you have ideas that you think would be helpful to others. So, let's get started by learning about our objectives and the agenda for the session.

So, this session, we're going to refer to issues related to serving children and families from a distance – so, those remote services, but we're also going to talk about reopening and summer programming. So, we'll talk about how to engage and support children that have identified disabilities or suspected delays and their families during this time – that the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic. We'll consider strategies for providing services from a distance, in partnership with early intervention and special education. We'll talk about summer learning considerations that are specific to children with disabilities or suspected delays as programs reopen, and as some children prepare to transition to kindergarten. And then, we'll talk about some common questions that have emerged through MyPeers inclusion community and the ECLKC. So, now I'm going to turn it over to Dayana Garcia, and she's going to welcome you from the Office of Head Start.

Dayana: Thank you, Jani. Good afternoon, everyone. It is so lovely to be here with all of you. We understand and know how you are concerned about children and families with disabilities or suspected delays. We know that most families now face new challenges and they're asking themselves, "How do we care for our children while working or by schooling at home, and how do we not panic during this time?" Well, the first step I would like to say is take a deep breath – take a deep breath and know that we're all in this together, and together, we will get through it. The Office of Head Start understands that supporting young children and families can be challenging during this time, and even more so for children with disabilities or suspected delays. It can be hard when their routines change, and they no longer receive services during a daily school schedule. And while distance learning or teletherapy opportunities may provide some consistency and continuity, their experiences vary depending on the internet access the family has, the location, and the participation may also vary due to work and family obligations. So, as programs plan to transition back to more typically operations, it is important that staff assess the unique and individual needs of families to be able to address those and explore ways to prepare and welcome children and families. OHS, since March, has been compiling and developing very, very helpful resources, both created by the Office of Head Start National Centers or guidance from other official Web sites.

The first resource that I want to share is the "Responding to COVID-19" book, which is on the ECLKC Web site. The resources in that book are a compilation of general guidance, in particular, health from the CDC Web site, and also materials from the National Centers and other official websites. There is a particular section in the COVID book on the ECLKC, I wanted to mention, is there is a chapter on children with disabilities. It addresses resources on how to support children who have an IEP or an IFSP, and also talks about transitions, among other things. On this chapter, we also combined some resources with ECTA, which is the Office of Special Education Programs' website, and we really encourage you to look at the resources. These resources online are evolving as new information comes every day. So, I encourage you to look weekly, if you can, and learn about anything new that has been posted, especially as information is gathered around reopening. Parents and families who have a child with a disability may have additional concerns and questions about their child's development, and this subchapter on children with disabilities offers suggestions and resources to support staff, children, and families during COVID. So, now, I'm gonna pass this to Susan, who will be sharing more about supporting families during this time.

Susan: Thank you, Dayana. Give me just a second to make sure that I'm on the right slide. And there we go. So, I'm going to be talking about, and help you think about, some of the ways that we're supporting and encouraging families, and we know that you all have great traditions and experience in supporting families, and we're going to ask you to build on that. As always, families know their children best, and over the past few months, while we've been somewhat sidelined, families have been carrying on, and their children have been learning. They've been growing and hopefully, adapting to new circumstances. But as Dayana said, we also know that families are struggling. So, they may be struggling with – with food, and with housing and

transportation, and just this unsettled feeling of not knowing what's happening next. Some of them, unfortunately, are also dealing with illness and all of the additional stress that comes with that. So, we do need to be careful and thoughtful about how we are supporting families. We need to be coordinated. We need to make sure that we're not overwhelming with – with our own need to help. So, we might be asking some questions right now about, have we been maintaining contact with families? Are we making contact with families? Are basic needs being met? Are there needs for information and resources beyond Head Start? And how can we better coordinate with other community resources? Now, we also know that the home-Head Start relationship or partnership can often be the safe and comfortable relationship for many of our families. And so, we're going to try to build on this connection. But we have to think carefully about the approaches and strategies that we might use because some of our – our well-used strategies might not be helpful right now, and we have to think about equitable access.

So, Dayana mentioned that some of the ways that people have – people and programs have tried to provide services and supports, have included video conferencing and teletherapy and things like that. But that may not be accessible to everyone, and we need to think about how do we individualize delivery of supports and services just like we always do for children; how do we do that for families? So, do we use video, or phone, or e-mail, regular mail, or make arrangements for drop off of information, or just how can we do that there? There are other options. But we also know that families are maybe particularly concerned about their child's progress on their IFSP or IEP goals. And so, in this – in this webinar, we're going to think especially about those children who do have – already have individual plans, children with significant delays, suspected delays, and also, about those children who were somewhere in the process when everything closed down, and we're trying to sort of regroup and make sure that children and families are getting the support that they need.

One way that we can support families is that we can recognize and appreciate all that they're already doing. And one of the ways I like to think about this is that – is to help families remember that learning doesn't have to look like school, and for the last few months, it hasn't looked like school and yet learning has happened. So, we need to have – to sort of make explicit, the fact that families are already working on those IEP and IFSP goals. So, if your child has a language development goal, all of those daily conversations, all of those new words that you might be using or pointing out to the child – those are all ways that you're working on that language development goal. Or if a child has a social goal – maybe it's about taking turns – that it's not taking turns with other children in the classroom the way it was a few months ago, but there are ways to take turns with cleaning up the toys or setting out the spoons and the plates for lunch time, or something like that. So, there are ways to transform those goals into everyday learning opportunities, just the way we talked about embedded learning opportunities on previous webinars. We can think about everyday learning opportunities at home and how to maximize those opportunities.

So, at the bottom of this page, there are some resources that we might recommend for supporting families. The one that I'd point out to you, that maybe you haven't looked at yet, is

the parent information center. There are numerous parent information centers across the country. There's at least one in every state, and they have lots of resources, often in languages other than English, and they provide information. They can also help with advocacy, which can sometimes be a particular concern at this point in time. Let me point out a couple other resources that we want you to think about and use. We hope everybody has been to this website, the National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations. These are our friends who brought us CSEFEL. This is our – their new website. They have lots and lots of resources. I hope that many of you have already used them. But in this period of time, they have been very active – active in creating new resources for us, and they're updating their website all the time. So, take a look at those resources, and I'm going to just show you a couple. This is one for families: "Helping your Child During the Pandemic," and what this is, are some simple, straightforward ideas – suggestions about helping your child understand that things have changed, and what you can do. So, the categories are: Here are some suggestions for how to remain calm and reassure children; how to provide positive attention; how to teach safety habits; and how to be available. And then, the last one is called "Plan Your Day." So, you're going to hear this more than once today, this idea of trying to establish or reestablish some routines and schedules. And we don't want these to be complicated, and we don't want them to be rigid, and we don't want them to be stressful. But we do want to appreciate that having some notion of a routine and predictability helps us all feel more comfortable and available for learning. And so, there are some simple ways here to think about how to plan your day, or how to just plan the morning, but this idea of predictability. So, that's a nice little resource to look at.

The next one is called "Connecting with Families." And this one is actually useful for your education staff, those of – the folks on your team. One of the questions that we saw on MyPeers was about, "Well, how do I regroup? I had this great work plan in place for the summer. I had a staff development, a professional development plan, and that seems to have gone out the window. We need to do things differently." So, this is just one idea about some suggestions for focusing on our visits with families, whether those are virtual visits or as ... might be over the phone, maybe that they will soon be in person. How do we focus, and how do we be responsive? And one idea is to use this – this resource – this one-page resource with your staff and use it as a starting point for a conversation about connecting with families and getting focused. And then, your staff can share their ideas about what's working, what's not – not working so well. So, again, another resource from the Pyramid Model Innovation Center. There are lots of other resources. Use your handout. Use MyPeers to find out other resources. But we also want to stop and think, maybe pause and reflect, because there are so many resources, and because we all have our own needs to be helpful here. Here are a couple of questions to – to reflect on. One is, "Is my own need to provide help actually helpful? Is it actually in alignment with the level of support that the family wants or needs?" And then, another question to think about: "Are my current expectations for families truly realistic given all the stress that they are under?" So, again, just an – reminding ourselves to be aware of our need to provide help and what is truly helpful for the families. So, with that, let me turn it over to Jani, and she has lots more to share with you.

Jani: Thank you, Susan. Those are some really good points of reflection to think about. You know, I think we're all struggling with this in our own unique ways, and I think sometimes it's – it's a good reminder to remember to put ourselves in the shoes of the families that we serve and remember how important our role is in supporting children, not only children's socially emotional learning and mental health, but also the mental health and well-being for children and families, and to just be self-reflective during this difficult time. Now, we know that many programs have been incorporating a trauma-informed approach to support the mental health needs of children and families, and that's great. You know, now is the time that we can use what we've learned about that approach and leverage those practices to support families who are struggling during the pandemic. I've been so excited to read in MyPeers about some of the strategies that Head Start staff are using to provide case management types of services for families and helping them navigate the systems of care, whether it's mental health services, services for children with disabilities, or other supports. Some really great practices there. And I've seen a lot of comments in MyPeers about reaching out to Part B and Part C, early intervention and special education supports, as well. We know that mental health issues are especially difficult for children during this time of the pandemic because they have limited ability to communicate, and especially, limited ability to communicate about complicated feelings and stressors. And so, what we might end up seeing is some increased moodiness, some trouble sleeping, children might be more clingy than normal. They might seem distracted. You might have some increased outbursts or aggression, or even aggression toward themselves. And that's really normal because we know that children use behavior as a way to communicate their needs and their wants. So, it's really important that we don't take those behaviors personally, we don't label the child for those behaviors, and that we try to be as understanding as possible with families as well, who are also trying to do the best that they can.

So, I think it's really important that, at this time in particular, we first seek to understand the behavior. We try to remain calm, be understanding, and offer comfort and support. It's also important that we refer children and families to behavioral health providers, if needed. I'm really encouraged by this increase in telehealth. It's made behavioral health options much more accessible to families and also, to ourselves and to educators in our programs as well. In the resources handout that we have, that you can download from the "Resources" widget, you'll find lots of resources, including some mental health hotlines. So, if there are questions that you have about specific areas within the area of mental health, there are lots of resources there for you to check out. You'll also find some links to social stories in the "Resources" handout that you can download and use with children. There's even a link to a social story about how it feels to wear a mask, which, of course, is very appropriate in this time. Susan mentioned the National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations, or NCPMI. And one of the resources in the handout, and also at the bottom of the slide, is for a social story that NCPMI developed called "Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home." So, some of the resources that they have on the NCPMI site are adaptations of resources that you might already be using, and some are brand new and specific to the pandemic. This Tucker Turtle social story is also available in Spanish. They have a social story around being a problem solver at home. Spanish version for that, too. And another one that's called "Why Can't I Go to School?" And there's a Spanish

version of that social story as well. So, please take some time in and check out those new resources available at NCPMI.

So, when we think about mental health, no, it's not just for the children and families, but also for ourselves. You know, in many cases – it varies all over our country, not just from state to state, but even, as you know, from community to community about which communities are open and to what degree. And so, some of you may be working from home, and some of you may be considered an essential worker, and that comes with its own level of stress. You're coping with your own sense of financial stress, potentially. You may be a parent and having to teach your child at home; you're serving as a short order cook, more so than typical these days. So, it's really important that you take care of your own feelings at this time as well. You might be experiencing a lot of different emotions all at once – might be scared or anxious or frustrated, and that's really OK. I've certainly going through those emotions myself. And keep in mind that children are really sensitive to those cues that we – that we send as adults. Children are going to react to your own level of stress. So, it's really good to have a sense of awareness of your own emotions, and that's going to help you figure out what you need to do in order to calm yourself. Think right now, more than ever, we need to be kind to ourselves. We need to let go of responsibilities and timelines that are that are too much. Make time for activities that we enjoy. Take a break from the news. You know, it's important to know about your own community's response to coronavirus and the symptoms of the virus and basic hygiene practices but do it in small doses. Constant exposure to information like this can cause some real feelings of anxiety on its own. So, we recommend that you choose about 10 minutes a day where you can get the information that you need, and then, turn it off for your own mental health. Get some exercise, either outside, or take an online class. Healthy eating and getting some good sleep. I recently heard about a French cooking class that you can take that's broadcast from the south of France.

And so, it's a really good time to explore some of those hobbies that you might typically not have connected with in the past. And connect with friends and loved ones. Find someone that you can talk with about how you're feeling. Again, we need to be able to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of others. So, Susan had brought up some other reflection questions, and these are some to think about when you consider your own mental health and how it impacts the work that you do, either as a disability services coordinator or as an educator. Now, are you building in time for your own self-care, and how is your own mental health impacting the work that you do with children and families and with your colleagues, as well? So, think about this as you ... A lot of times we spend so much time thinking about the children and families that we serve that we neglect to think of our own mental health, and it's really important to do that at this time. So, Susan, tell us about Part C and Part B.

Susan: OK, thanks – thanks, Jani. And as you all know so well, delivering services for children with disabilities and children with significant delays is all done in partnership with local agencies, whether that's the local school district or the local Part C early intervention program or provider. And some of you are fortunate that, prior to the pandemic, you enjoyed positive frequent interaction with your – your partners, with the school district, with Part C. And – but

we also know that there's the whole gamut, that some programs have weaker relationships, and, you know, a crisis kind of shines a light on the gaps in communication, information sharing, and so forth. But we're going to talk about those partnerships a little bit. We'll talk about Part C and Part B. And here's just a really quick reminder, a really brief overview. Some of you in the audience could give this overview all by yourself because you are well steeped in Part C and in Part B. But as you know, what we do is guided by the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and there are two important parts, Part C and Part B, and there are some distinctions. There are some differences based on age, although both share the importance of providing appropriate services and supports for children and engaging with their families to fully support children's individual needs. But Part C focuses on the youngest children, on children birth through age 2, or until their third birthday. Services are guided by an IFSP for the child and the family, and there is an emphasis on providing services in natural environments. Then there's Part B, or sometimes, people refer to Section 619 of Part B. It focuses on children aged three and older. Services are guided by the IEP, and here, the focus is on educational goals for the child, and children are to receive free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Well, some of your school districts that have kind of dug in, figured it out, thought about how to provide alternative ways of serving children and families who have IEPs, have IFSPs, or are in the process – were in the process of determining eligibility. Some of you are in districts or programs that have struggled a little bit. I know in many cases, the first two weeks were really rough to try to figure that out, and in some ways, they've smoothed out a little bit. But as we – as we try to cope with this pandemic and all of the disruption that goes along with it, and as we think about how programs and services are reopening, I'd like to remind ourselves about some of the rights that are given in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, even when there is a crisis.

So, children with disabilities and exceptionalities have the right to early intervention and public education. Children with disabilities and exceptionalities remain an equal priority within our public systems. So, if educational opportunities have been made available for the general school population, then they need to be available – appropriately available – for children with IEPs, and if the Part C program is open, it's open for all of the other services might be delivered in a different way. So, schools and early intervention programs need to plan to meet the intensive supports and services that eligible children need to meet their needs, whether those are educational, behavioral, social, emotional. And that means for young children, the schools and early intervention programs need to collaborate with their community partners, and that includes Early Head Start and Head Start, so that children are receiving services in natural, inclusive environments to the degree that that's possible while still paying attention to appropriate health guidelines. So, as it says here, collaboration is important now more than ever. And so, some of you are in situations where, with some trial and error, you figured that out. Some places it's still kind of rough and rocky, but there are some obligations to provide services, and there are some options.

So, as I said earlier, we need to help think about how to individualize services and delivery options – teletherapy, telehealth might work, but it might not be accessible. So, what are other options, like phone calls? But again, even with phone calls and email, what are the financial

burdens to a family? Is that truly accessible? Maybe we can share information through regular mail, or we can do drop-offs or drop-ins and just share packets of information. I can imagine for lots of families, one of the most helpful things would be to get a packet of visual supports so that they can use visuals at home, either to help a child with comprehension, or to understand what's happening that day, or that the child can use in order to communicate. So, sometimes ... So, we can figure out how to drop off or make those visuals available. And then, as ... For some of you, and in some places, individual visits are already available, sometimes at home, but maybe at the school, or at another alternate location. So, maybe individual visits are – have started happening again or will happen soon. So, we can collaborate with our school districts, with our Part C programs, to figure out the right options for individual families, and at the same time, follow state and community guidelines. We need to remember to be flexible. And so, I've talked about partnering with our agencies and collaborating with our district's Part C agencies, but we also have to coordinate within our own programs so that we're not overwhelming. So, family services staff, health staff, education staff can coordinate their efforts so that families are not overwhelmed – they're not sure who to pay attention to. One location for lots of resources, that's been mentioned already, is the ECTA – Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, or ECTA, and all of the Office of Special Education Programs' information is also shared on that site, and that link is at the bottom of this slide. And now, Dayana is going to talk much more about what they have to offer. So, Dayana?

Dayana: Thank you, Susan, and I hope you're all enjoying the resources that are being shared up until now. I know it is a lot, and we find ourselves finding so much information, and we're trying to target the one that we feel is the most relevant to you all, and we hope that you can take advantage of that. And remember to download the – the "Resources" handout that's for this presentation. There is a "Resource" widget Jani also mentioned earlier. Just want to make sure you can also share the resources handout with other people in your program or other community partners. And I think the two words that capture the best from Susan's presentation is coordination and collaboration, and I think that that's so important during this time. As we mentioned earlier, the ECTA Web site is a resource that we at OHS highlight often when it comes to finding information for children and families with disabilities. They have also, as the ECLKC, the ECTA website also has an entire chapter on services during COVID and remote service delivery and distance learning. So, this is sort of the hub for COVID-19 resources at the moment, for early childhood special education and early intervention. I encourage you to look at the ECTA Web site, and they also update their resources often, as more information becomes available. And again, it's really important to stay tuned in with your local partners because the information that may be shared at the national level may not be the same as it is in your local communities. So, it's important to know, within your district, what's being offered and what are the plans for reopening and service delivery.

So, another very important topic that we wanted to talk about today ... And again, we see that there are some questions already, and I encourage you to continue to type in your questions in the Q&A. And if we don't address this during the presentation, we will make sure to address those at a later time, and we'll be adding the Q&A to the COVID book on the ECLKC. So, questions about screening have been very popular, coming to OHS and through MyPeers –

there are questions about "How are programs handling developmental screenings? Is it even possible to do screenings or assessments from a distance?" And again, we reference resources that are currently available in the ECTA Web site that I mentioned earlier. There was one question in MyPeers that came in from a user that said, "I am curious what other programs are thinking of as far as beginning of the year screenings for fall 2020. Has anyone thought that far ahead yet?" And again, there is a lot of activity in MyPeers and sharing resources. But one thing that we wanted to say at OHS is that screenings is possible to do at a distance and that virtual screenings is better than no screening at all. We do want to continue to work with families – closely with families – and to ensure that we hear any concerns from the family. I think the best possible screening that someone can do is to talk to a family and ask, "How is your child? Do you have any concerns about your child?" And that itself is a question that can provide a lot of answers and make sure that you are understanding where the family is at with their children and understanding their development. So, again, there are many possible resources, and the ECTA website, under the subheading that they have being added as screening, evaluation, and assessment – that particular resource addresses successful implementation of assessment when the practitioner cannot be in the same room with the child or the family, and they also provide some tools that focus on naturally occurring behaviors in helping collecting information remotely. Now, with these tools – gathering information on the child's functioning can be done through teleconference, parent reward, and of course, some parent videos that may show some child engaging in everyday activities or routines.

Again, Susan talked about the importance of routines during this time, and that is where also, I think, screening comes into play, and the teachers or family child care workers can work with the family and gather information about what are the behaviors that happened during those routines. Some other information and resources about screening during this time: OSA developed some webinars for Part B and Part C that provide information about applying assessment principles to evaluations to determine eligibility remotely. So, there are several resources there that I think are relevant for – if you are a disability services coordinator, if you work closely with the families and are involved in the evaluation process. It is important that you review those so that there's some new guidance that applies to this time. And again, continue talking about evaluation and assessments; there are some concerns about what to do when families voice concerns. And again, this is in reference to continue doing screenings, continue doing referrals. That does not need to stop. And for months – I think Susan referenced the fact that at the beginning there was a lot more uncertainty, and by the closing of programs, there wasn't really a lot of response when referrals were being made. But now, it has opened up more. And so, it is important that you check with your district, your RC, your LEA, and ensure that there is communication and ongoing process for referral. So, the Office of Special Education also recently issued a statement about the Part C agencies and the timelines, which also has been another question. Part C agencies are currently advised that they can extend the 45-day timelines for evaluations. using the "exceptional family circumstances" clause in the law. If the child or the family is unable to participate in the evaluation due to COVID-19, an exception can be granted, and the evaluation would take place after the 45 days.

There is also guidance about using an interim IFSP if certain components of the evaluation – for example, the in-person observation – cannot be completed. So, again, this goes back to Early Head Start programs being in constant communication with Part C providers and seeing how they can collaborate and assist in scheduling these meetings or setting up these interim IFSPs and helping coordinate the services. Now, OHS will not hold programs accountable for requirements such as screenings, assessments, data collection, and enrollment that are not possible or reasonable for them to achieve during the current closures. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the 2019-2020 Program Information Report, or PIR, will not be required this year. OHS wants to eliminate the reporting burden of the PIR as well as remove any confusion on how certain elements of the PIR could be collected and interpreted when programs are closed. OHS expects, however, the programs maintain records of services that they provide and those that were not able to provide. So, documentation of efforts is more important than ever at this time. So ... Also, grantees must be able to assure the safety of children in their care and financial accountability for funds and property. Many grantees have found out that it's very helpful to join the MyPeers community to discuss particular situations with their colleagues. If you have questions, you can always ask there, or you can also ask questions through the other ECLKC. At the same time, as Susan mentioned, school districts and early intervention agencies continue to be responsible to provide services for families, as set forth in IDA, and if an LEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, this school must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities. So, again, it comes down to your communication, your collaboration with Part C agencies, and your local agencies, and knowing what they are doing, if they are open, what types of services they're offering to children with disabilities, and how can you collaborate and support that effort. Now, I'm going to ...

Jani: Thank you, Dayana. These are really good points, and I know folks are – are struggling with those questions around screening and evaluations. And I think the main thing, the takeaway for me, is that the – in most cases, the – the law still holds, you know, other than those exceptions that we posted on MyPeers. So, families really do need to continue to advocate for their – their child. You know, we've talked a lot about routines on this webinar so far. Our routines are looking very different these days. You know, some of us are working from home, that kids might be home from school, as we said, or child care. And so, if you are working from home, or if you're advising families on how they can balance it all, some suggestions are that you'd want to start by having a workplace that is separate, if at all possible. And for children, you know, it's difficult for them to understand that, if you're home but you have to focus on work, and so, one idea is that you could ask your child to help you in making a stop-and-go sign to hang from your workspace. So, teaching your child that when it's on the "stop," it means you're working, and a "go" sign means that they can come in and talk with you. You know, as long as they know that there's an adult that's available, if they have some – an urgent need. Another idea is to create an activity bin of things that your child can do safely on their own, and your child can help in putting those things together in the bin that are special activities that they only get to use when you're working.

So, it's important that families know about some of those strategies and that they have some predictability in their own routines, because as we were saying, it really does help to provide reassurance and keeps children busy and engaged throughout the day. But those routines don't have to be complicated. We really encourage you to have routines that are relatively unstructured – a daily schedule just to delineate what is work time, what is playtime, what is family time, and when do some chores get done, and that can be done through words, but also through visuals. You know, a visual schedule can be really helpful for children, and those kinds of strategies will really help families to set some reasonable expectations for the day so that everyone can feel successful. Children can be given some control over those activities and the schedule as well, even if it's as simple as, "Do you want to take a walk before I have my phone call or after my phone call," gives that child a sense of a choice. Teaching children some age-appropriate ways to help with taking care of your home and the family needs can be really helpful as well. Children can sort laundry, depending on their age, help with taking care of pets, cleaning up their own toys, bringing their dishes to the sink. And those kinds of things might need to be supervised at first, but as your children gain independence in those tasks, it's going to help everyone feel more productive over time. So, sharing with families that it's a good idea to have a plan, but also being flexible and prepared when things don't happen quite as we expect them to.

So, there have been some questions about remote service delivery and what some alternatives might be. Holly Tenny wrote on MyPeers that she has a few children in her program that teletherapy services aren't working for them. The families have opted out of those services until school is back because they found them to be stressful. And she's ... Holly also mentioned that therapists are providing some written activities for parents, and Head Start teachers are also providing activities for parents that align with the goals in the child's IEP or IFSP. And Holly is tracking those activities, but also concerned about children falling too far behind. It really sounds like she's doing a lot to support children and families, and keeping track of those efforts is important, as Dayana was saying. So, as we said earlier, it's time – more than ever – to partner with Part C and Part B folks and get creative about providing some out-of-the-box options. So, thinking about families that don't have internet access, thinking about cost considerations, for example – it might be a great way to communicate by text if that's something that you enjoy. But for families that rely on a data plan that might be limited, you got to keep in mind that that might be giving them some extra cost. And so, talking about what kinds of strategies to use ahead of time with families is really going to lead to some successful service delivery from a distance.

One of the ideas that Susan made earlier was about creating some drop-off locations so that if families aren't online, that you can give them activities in person, activities that they can touch, keeping it simple, you know, just a few suggestions per week. We don't want families to feel overwhelmed or guilty that they're not doing more, because there's a lot of things that families are doing just through daily routines that are helpful for children. Another idea is to send families either video recordings or links to videos or online resources related to the child's IFSP or IEP goals. We also suggest that families reach out to trusted friends and family members via phone or online video chats, if that's available. Having someone that's not mom or dad to

spend time with the child can go a long way. Keeping things interesting – that you might not even find that working on goals can be more effective when the child is doing so with a person that that child really enjoys spending time with and is a special – a special treat, like a grandparent or a family friend. Many children are going to benefit from nature-based kind of environments. So, an idea is you can send materials home and suggest that those materials be used outside, keeping in mind that some families may not have access to green space, but even just sitting on the front steps of an apartment building and practicing counting by counting the cars go by, or by the number of clouds in the sky, can be a much needed change of pace. So, share – continue to share your ideas on MyPeers. This is a chance for us to be creative and help each other with those kinds of questions that come up. I'm going to turn it back over to Susan who is going to share a little bit about summer learning and transitions.

Susan: All right. Thanks. We've had lots of questions both today and certainly in MyPeers – questions and comments and concerns about summer learning and about transitions. Our time is running short but let me give you just a couple of ideas to – to kind of activate your thinking, and then, there'll be more in the Q&A that you can access. So, for summer programming for children with IFSPs and IEPs, for some children, that will continue through supportive efforts, but the child will primarily be at home. But we will also have programs reopening and special short programs – short summer programs, and one of the concerns is that the IEP or the IFSP may be out of date or the child has learned something new, or ... So, how do we – how do we make sure we're working on things that are appropriate and will match the child's current needs? While at the same time that you are working with your partners, the school district, or Part C, to update the IFSP and the IEP, and having the family participate in that process, there are some quicker ways to think about more immediate goals. So, I'd refer you to the child participation form that you can find in a couple of the 15-minute in-service suites, and that's the form where you lay out your simple, predictable routines and schedules for your summer program. And then, you think through how the child participates in those routine activities and think about where the child is having some difficulties, some concerns, not able to participate, or not able to participate independently. You can turn those into some immediate learning targets, two or three, and that can become the focus of your instructional effort.

And another thing that you can do is that you can anticipate and prepare the child for summer program because it is going to be different – different people, different children, maybe a different teacher, and have your modifications ready. Be aware that children will have to re-learn how to be in a group and how to learn from each other. Some of you have asked about health and safety concerns. So, we want to make sure that – that you know that the Center on Health and Wellness did a terrific webinar that's available for you to look at. And there was a – there's a lot of very good information in there about health and safety practices for children with disabilities and how to take those into consideration. We'll touch on some more things to do with summer learning in the Q&A, but I know transitions are particularly on your mind, as maybe transitions didn't happen, or you're thinking about the transitions for fall. And so, be on top of those – those timelines and the dates and take advantage of the possibility of using interim IFSPs or unusual family's circumstances or shorter initial IEPs so that services actually happen. But all of those good transition practices can be adapted for the situation. So, visit the

school, even if it's driving by or walking by. Make – use storybooks or create a social story about the transition. There are links on the ECLKC about how to create social stories for a child. And make sure that you know all the important dates and are staying in tune with opening and reopening, even though I know that things will always change. And as everyone has said, use MyPeers, and send in your additional questions, and we will respond to them more fully because now we're going to wrap up. So, I'm going to send it back to one of my colleagues who will do that for you.

Dayana: I just wanted to close by saying that we've been mentioning MyPeers, not knowing if everybody here knows what MyPeers is, and I want to make sure that you all have this slide with the link that will take you directly to the MyPeers community. It's the "Head Start Disabilities Inclusion" Community on MyPeers, and there's over a thousand members there sharing resources, engaging in conversation. So, we encourage you to log in or register if you're not registered yet. It's a great way to connect with others. And finally, if you have questions that were not answered during this time, please continue to send those either via the ECLKC or MyPeers. We will be updating the ECLKC COVID book and information. It is an ongoing resource. And so, you can go and check in and make sure that you have answers to those questions. And again, we're in this together. Take care of yourselves, take care of each other, and I hope you enjoy your afternoon. It was a pleasure being here. Thank you, Jani and Susan.

Susan: Thank you, everyone,

Jani: Thank you, Dayana. Thanks so much to Dayana and Susan, and have a great afternoon, everyone.