

## Supporting Participation From All Children: Essential Features for High-Quality Inclusion

Megan Vinh: We're happy to have you here for our second in a series of three webinars. I'll focus on questions that frequently arise when local early childhood programs collaborate to build high quality inclusion. So the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, along with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning is really excited to be joined by staff from the Office of Special Education Programs and the Office of Head Start to discuss supporting participation for all children, essential features on high quality inclusion. So as I said, this is the second webinar in our webinar series. Each of the three webinars will focus on one of the three essential features of high quality inclusion -- access, participation, and support. On our last webinar, we focused on access to high quality inclusion.

You can find the link to that webinar at the end of this PowerPoint. You can also download the PowerPoint from the file pod if you would like to do that now. Today's webinar is gonna focus on participation in high-quality inclusion environments. And I just had a couple quick housekeeping things. To start, I wanted to go over the key logistic information. So you're listening to the webinar through your computer speakers, so please make sure you've turned up the volume. If you're having Adobe issues, you can feel free to private Christine Wagner, or you can e-mail her, and her e-mail is in the logistics pod that's up there. We do want to hear from you during this webinar, so if you have questions for the presenters, please place those in the Q&A pod at the bottom -- it's at the very bottom of your screen. We will try to answer all the questions that we can. And if we miss one, we do plan to follow up with a Q&A document. Also, there is a chat box for you to discuss content. And please feel free to use that pod.

However, we're not checking that pod to bring questions to the presenters. So just please not that. So now we're gonna go ahead and get started. So today we're pleased to be joined by Sangeeta Parikshak, from the department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Head Start. We're also joined by Laura Duos, Christy Kavulic, and Julia Martin Eile from the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Pam Winton from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. And the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute will serve today as our moderator for today's call. So, Pam, I'm gonna turn it over to you and let's get started.

Pam Winton: Thanks so much, Megan. I hope everybody can hear okay. Let us know in that chat box if you can't. So to start us off today on our conversation, I'd like to provide some context on the topic. And so what do we mean by participation in the context of inclusion and why is participation considered an essential feature of high-quality inclusion? What you see on the screen is the 2009 joint position statement on inclusion from two professional organizations in our field, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, also known as NAEYC, and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children, also known as CEC. And in this statement, participation was identified as one of the three essential features of high-quality inclusion, and that was in 2009. So really what this says to us is that simply providing access to inclusion programs is just not enough. It's what happens in those programs that's critically important in promoting positive outcomes for young children with disabilities in their families. So let me dig a little deeper now into what participation means.

This next slide, you'll see the joint positions. A statement on inclusion released by the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services. This was released in 2015. And this statement digs deeper in defining what is meant by participation. So to paraphrase from that 2015 policy statement,

it means holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities by making individualized accommodations and using evidence-based services and support to foster children's development, foster friendships with peers, and to create a sense of belonging. And this applies to all young children with disabilities or at risk for disabilities -- those with the mildest to those with the most significant disabilities. So that's what we mean by participation. So what do we want to accomplish today in this conversation with you all? First of all, we hope that you will understand more about the laws and policies on this topic. Many of you know a lot already, but we hope to deepen your knowledge.

Know about the evidence-based practices that promote active and meaningful participation in home, community, and education settings. Learn about resources that support implementation of those practices, and then, most importantly, since we do have an Ed and HHS audience with us, understand each sector's role in ensuring that children diagnosed with suspected disabilities receive those services and supports they need to learn and develop to their fullest potential. So to start us out, I'd like to ask Christy to share with us what does inclusion look like across the nation and what do these data show us or tell us about this essential feature of high-quality inclusion. Christy, will you share some of the state data that the Office of Special Education Programs at U.S. Department of Ed collects annually that addresses our topic?

Christy Kavulic: Sure, Pam. Thank you for the question. Annually, OSEP, the Office Special Education Programs, collects information from states on, we call it our educational environment data. And states report that educational environment data to us through an annual performance report. The annual performance reports are turned in by both the Part C system, that's the system that serves children birth to two, through two, and then Part B system, those that serve children three through 21. The data that I'm gonna talk about today is specifically for the preschool children that receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. And the data that OSEP collects is looking at the types of placements where children are and the types of settings where they receive their services. So one is looking at an early childhood program -- are children spending at least 10 hours a week in a general early childhood program? And a second thing we look at is where are children receiving those services.

So we're only presenting a few data items to you right now, but one of the indicators that we look at is the percentage children who attend a regular early childhood program and receive the majority of special education related services in that program. And the national data, that says about 45% of children are both attending a regular education program and receiving services, the majority of services in that program. And the percentage of children who attend a special education classroom or separate school residential facility is, nationally, about 25%. But I just want to show you that there is wide variation in the data across states. So you will see on the next slide that in states where we're looking at the first one, children receiving services in their general early childhood setting, it really varies, the percent of children that are receiving those services in a general education setting. And same with indicator 64, that children are receiving services in a separate setting. And I just want to highlight that this just gives us a general picture of where children are and where they're receiving services. But it really doesn't talk about the quality of those services and doesn't give us a sense of what children are necessarily learning within the environment or how they're participating is supported.

Pam: Thanks, Christy. And here's a question for you guys. It's come in from people. We've heard from some parents that even though their children are in inclusive settings and theoretically receive their

services in those preschool settings, sometimes children are pulled out into isolated places like a small room to get special services while the rest of the children are having group learning activities. Or a child may even be bused to another place to receive services. Christy, is there a policy about this practice of pull-outs?

Christy: Yeah, you know, we know the issue is really complex. So, you know, we really know from looking at research and from thinking about the needs of family and children that it's really important that early childhood programs and IDEA programs work together to ensure that preschool children with disabilities receive services in the least restrictive environment and are fully engaged and participating. And we have, as you said, heard about challenges around busing and where kids are receiving services. So in the joint policy statement that you mentioned earlier, Pam, we did really try to highlight in there and tried to discuss the need that for children who are dually placed in more than one program, that these programs really look at their policies and try to not have unnecessary transitions between service providers that can burden families, disrupt service delivery, or really impact children's developmental progress and learning. We also recently released another letter -- a dear colleague letter on the least restrictive environment on January 9, 2017. And this letter was a -- we added information from our previous dear colleague letter on the least restrictive environment. And I was gonna ask my colleague Laura that's in the Office of Special Education Programs to talk a little more about the letter.

Laura Duos: Thanks, Christy. So as Christy said, earlier this month, we released a dear colleague, and we made -- what it is is we made revisions to a 2012 dear colleague addressing the implementation of the least restrictive environment provisions in preschool. Since the 2012 letter was issued, there has been additional guidance on early learning inclusion and in expansion of early learning opportunities, but we do continue to receive questions about how the IDEA LRE provisions apply to preschools. So we decided to update and re-release the letter. Next slide. Okay. So, overall, the letter reaffirms the position of the department that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive, high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support to enable them to meet high expectations. The letter walks you through the LRE provisions, which have existed since the initial passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children in 1975, which was renamed IDEA in 1990.

And these requirements reflect the IDEA's strong preference that children with disabilities should be educated in regular classes with appropriate aid and support. Specifically, the LRE provisions state that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities should be educated with children who are not disabled and that special classes, special schooling or other removal of children with disabilities... from the regular education classrooms should occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in the regular setting with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. And throughout the letter, we do emphasize that all of these provision apply to children in preschool. Next slide. The letter also goes through the placement provisions in IDEA, and the overriding rule is that placement must be individually determined based a child's abilities and needs as described in the IEP. Placement decisions are made at least annually and include a team of people, which must include the parent, and may include the child's current teacher. And before placement outside of the regular education setting, the group that's making the placement decision must consider any supplementary aids and services that could be provided to enable the child to stay in the regular education setting.

We also make clear in the letter that when determining placement for a child with disability who already participates in a regular public preschool program, and that would include a community-based regular public preschool program that is operated by a public agency other than the LEA, such as Head Start, the child should be educated in the school that he or she would attend if they were not disabled unless the IEP does require some other arrangement. So that's the gist of the LRE provisions that we went through, which is similar to the 2012... similar to the 2012 letter. We also added two new sections to this letter. The first was a data section, and that clarified the definition of early regular early childhood programs. And we clarified in that part of the letter that that definition means special education and related services that are delivered in the child's classroom in the course of daily activities and routines in which all children in the classroom participate. And that if services are delivered in other locations such as a one-to-one therapeutic setting or in small groups that are only made up of children with disabilities, that that would not be included in the definition of a regular early childhood program. And then, finally, we added a funding section where we walk you through how Part B funds can be used for private and public preschool placement. And for a private placement, we clarified that if the placement team determines that a child needs an inclusive private preschool placement for faith, then the LEA is responsible for insuring that the tuition costs associated with that placement for the period of time that it's needed to implement the IEP must be at no cost to the parent. So that is... those are the two new sections of the letter. It is a pretty comprehensive letter. The link is in the resources section. And we encourage you to take a look.

Pam: Oh, thank you, Laura. I mean, those new sections of the letter I think will be of great interest to many people, especially parents. So thank you so much for sharing that, both you and Christy. And for folks out there on the webinar, please put your questions for them into the Q&A so we can start compiling them. And, meanwhile, we'll move on to Sangeeta. We'd like to hear now from you, if you could share some of the latest Head Start data and policies related to inclusion, and especially those that you think focus on the quality of children's inclusive experiences. So thanks, Sangeeta, for going next.

Sangeeta Parikshak: Thank you, Pam, and thanks to my colleagues and staff. That was very, I think, illuminating for myself and for a lot of folks in the audience. So I really appreciated that overview. So as many of you may know, the annual Head Start Program Information Report, or PIR, must be completed by all programs funded by the federal government to operate Head Start and Early Head Start programs. And so we ask a lot of questions in the PIR report. It's fairly comprehensive. I'm gonna focus just on what we gather around children with disabilities. And so what we know from the 2015 report was that the cumulative enrollment of children in Head Start and Early Head Start was over one million kids. And 12.3% of enrollees were children with disabilities. So that's around 133,000 kids. And we asked some questions regarding preschools disability services. I'll let you know what the question is, and then we can look a little bit at the graphs here. So one of the questions that we ask is the number of children enrolled in the program who had an IEP at any time during the enrollment year, indicating they were determined eligible by the LEA to receive special education and related services. And of these, the number who were determined eligible to receive special education and related services, both prior to enrollment and for the program for this enrollment year, and during this enrollment year.

So we asked those questions both for that -- IEP, and for the IFSP. So if we look at the graph on the left, in general, you can see that a little over the half of the children who enter the program were already determined to be eligible. So they already had an IEP in place. They were eligible to receive these services, and Head Start was required to help implement the IEP. Around 43%, so a little less

than half, were actually determined eligible to receive special education and related services during the enrollment year. And of the number who had not received services, they're about 1%. So that basically means that Head Start did a pretty good job with the preschool kids of making sure that those kids who were eligible received services in the program, and they also did a fairly good job of determining who was eligible during the program year. Then if you look at the graph on the right, this is the IFSP. So this is for Early Head Start. And so about 12% of children are enrolled in Early Head Start and migrant programs that have an IFSP.

And you can see here that the graph is a little bit different than the one on the left in that about 64% of the children that enter the program at that age were already determined eligible to receive those services. So about 35% were determined eligible to receive services during the enrollment year. So not as many were identified during the enrollment year as it was for some of the older kids. We also ask a question around primary delay or disability. And the way that we do that is we asked programs to report the number of children with an IEP who were enrolled during their enrollment year whose primary or most significant disability was determined by a multi-disciplinary team. So we asked that, you know, we look at just the kids who have the IEP, that they were determined to have a disability by actually having a very thorough assessment and what those delays or disabilities looked like. And you can see from the graph here at the bottom that really the majority of our kids, they are diagnosed with a speech or language impairment. We also have a pretty significant number with a non-categorical or developmental delay, and then fewer who are diagnosed with autism. Some other diagnoses, just for your information, that appear on the PIR data include health impairment, emotional disturbance, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, specific learning disability, and we also do have some that have multiple disabilities as well.

Pam: All right, thanks, Sangeeta. Do you have some more data to share there about the collaboration aspects of the Head Start PIR data?

Sangeeta: Yeah, so I really wanted to highlight this. As we are sitting here with our colleagues from OSEP, I mean, we're talking about collaboration and participation. So I was really happy to be able to pull some of these numbers. So what we asked in the PIR around the collaboration agreements is around entities with whom the Head Start program has a formal contractual agreement to provide services to enrolled children that meet the Head Start program performance standards. And I will talk about the standards in a little bit, but I just wanted you all to know what the instructions are given we're giving for programs. So we ask the number of LEAs that are in a program's service area, and then the number of formal agreements the program has with the LEAs to coordinate services for children with disabilities. So you can see here from the graph this is the first group of bars on the left. The number of LEAs in the service area were, in general, a little over 19,000, and the number of formal agreements that the programs had with LEAs were a little over 14,000 that were reported. That's a pretty significant number of formal agreements. We also asked a question, did the program have a formal collaboration resource sharing agreement with public school pre-kindergarten programs. And here, we had about a little over 2,000 indicate that, yes, they did have some agreements with pre-K programs.

And, finally, we asked a question regarding Part C agencies, so the number of Part C agencies in the program service area. And here you can see it was a little over 8,000. And then the number of formal agreements the program had with those agencies as well were a little bit less than that. So as I said earlier, well, actually, I said it in the previous webinar, so the first webinar we had -- the Office of Head Start requires that at least 10% of children enrolled in a Head Start program have an identified

disability. And as you can see from what I just showed you all, we do collect annual data to document that programs are meeting that expectation. However, I do think that it's fair to say that these data do not provide information on the extent to which programs are ensuring that children are fully engaged and participating in those settings. And I think that's the same for some of collaborative relationships that I showed you here on the graph. You know, we know that there are a lot of different agreements and formal collaborations, but we don't know how many are being actively implemented or the quality of those agreements. So this makes it hard for us to really address some important questions about quality and participation. And I just wanted to turn it over to Christy here. I wanted to see if you would say the same thing is true for some of the OSEP data that you discussed earlier.

Christy: Thanks, Sangeeta. Yeah, I do think that's true as well. But, again, it's really focused on access to inclusive settings and where children are receiving services. And I think we really need to think about how we can support space and local programs to think about the data they have and to really dig deeper in looking at how they can understand the quality of the programs that children are in and then receiving their services. And how to support programs and providing that appropriate support, such as imbedded routine-based teaching, explicit interventions, and scaffolding learning in tier models to ensure the full participation and engagement that leads to the positive outcomes for children that we both know are very important.

Pam: Well, thanks, Christy and Sangeeta, for that very candid kind of analysis of what we can say and what we can't say. And I think you both, you know, I think Head Start and Ed have invested a great deal of time and energy and thinking about those outcomes you mentioned just now, Christy. And those two agencies have identified outcome frameworks and practice guidelines that, in my view, pushes forward in learning and going deeper and providing guidance. In terms of what you're both talking about, that is, you know, fostering and focusing on ensuring that young children are really meaningfully participating in inclusive environments. So talk to us a bit about outcomes and what Head Start and the OSEP are doing. Maybe, Sangeeta, you start and tell us a bit about the new Early Learning Outcomes Framework or the ELOF that was at Head Start in 2016.

Sangeeta: Thanks, Pam. So this new Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, which was released in 2016, replaces the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. So that earlier framework was only for children three to five years old, and this latest one spans from ages birth to five. So it includes both Early Head Start as well as Head Start. And this framework really describes the skills, behaviors, and knowledge that programs must foster in all children. It can be used to guide planning, learning about child development, and can also be used as a good way to communicate with families around where children are meeting their current developmental milestones and developmental progressions. And programs also use the framework to plan instruction and design opportunities for children to learn and really for them to help form relationships in a positive and stimulating environment. And I think that, you know, I really want to highlight some of the ways that this new framework addresses children with disabilities. So it identifies learning goals that are important for all children. We say this specifically kind of throughout, that it's all children, and we talk about children with disabilities throughout as well. We acknowledge that children with disabilities may need more individualized or intensive instruction to develop and learn, and we provide information and examples of how children with disabilities may demonstrate what they know and the kinds of support that they may need.

So, for example, we have some of these descriptions throughout within our compendium here. And I wanted to provide one example where we say developmental delays can impact children's social and

emotional development, including the ability to engage in reciprocal interactions and to regulate their emotions. Adults can use puppets to help children engage in back and forth interactions and to teach them how to demonstrate different emotions. So this was just one small example of how we take what could be applicable to all children and then highlight how we can maybe address some of the learning for children with disabilities. The framework includes seven guiding principles, which you can see here on the screen. So we talk about how each child is unique and can succeed, and we do this a number of ways. One of them is through describing the developmental progression, how it's not that each child has to hit development at the same time, but, in fact, every child can meet things in a little bit of a different way and may need individualized support. We talk about how learning occurs within a context of relationships, that it is not in isolation. They are surrounded by caring adults, both at home as well as in the childcare environment.

And that families are really the ones who know their children the best. They're the ones who are the advocates for their children, and that it is up to the staff and the program to really foster this relationship, and to learn from the parents in the best way that they can. We talk about how children learn best when they are emotionally and physically safe and secure, and that areas of development are integrated. So particular type of development may be actually pull from a variety of different domains and different areas, and we intentionally talk about that throughout the framework. We talk about how teaching must be intentional and focus on how children learn and grow, because not every child is the same, as we said earlier. And every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family culture, background, language, and beliefs. So we do talk about dual-language learners throughout the framework, and we have a couple of nice pull-outs targeted towards that population. So here is a graphic of what the framework essentially looks like. So we have a variety of different levels in the structure of the framework, so we have the domains, which are kind of the broad areas. And there's a broad area of learning from birth to five years that are essential for school and long-term success is how we describe it. But I wanted to give an example of what a domain would be. So one of the domains are social and emotional development. So we would have under that the sub-domains. So the sub-domains are categories or components of development within the domain. And so one would be relationships with an adult that would fall under social and emotional development. Within each of the sub-domains, we have goals, which are broad statements of expectations for children's learning and development. So one of the goals that we have for preschoolers under relationships with adults is that the child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults. Within each of those goals, we have what we call developmental progressions, which describe the skills, behaviors, and concepts that children will demonstrate as they progress toward a given goal within an age period. So when I talk about a developmental progression for preschoolers, we have it broken down from 36 to 48 months, then 48 to 60 months.

And we talk specifically about what it would look like for the child to engage in and maintain positive relationship. How is it that they're supposed to meet that goal? What are we looking for? Finally, we have indicators which describe specific observable skills, behaviors, and concepts that children should know and be able to do, both at the end of early Head Start, so that would be 36 months, or at the end of Head Start, which would be 60 months. So we really are trying to help whoever is using the framework to be able to visualize what they're looking for in the child so that they know where they're following along that developmental progression. So here's what you would see if you went on our website, which is the ECLKC, and I know at the end of our webinar today, we'll have a link that will take you to this page. But this is what the central domains are. Now, what is really nice and helpful, I think, is that we have an interactive website here. So what you can do is you can use it on your smartphone, or you can, you know, go on your computer and use it. But you can click on it, and it will take you to all

of those different levels that I told you about. You can social and emotional, you can click on language and communication. It will take you to those sub-domains, into those goals. And then what I think is really nice is that it pulls resources from our different national centers under each of those goals and each of those domains so that you can see how you might be able to help a particular child to reach certain milestones.

So, for example, with regard to children with disabilities, under social and emotional development, it takes you to the Head Start Center for Inclusion. And it has different print-and-go things that you can do, asking a friend how to, you know -- to ask a friend how to play or learning how to give a compliment or some things that are really basic that is easy for teachers to pull out. We also have social stories as well. So what is it, why use it, and also downloadable social stories. And, finally, like I said earlier, the framework can be used for a variety of different children, but we do talk about infants and toddlers, preschoolers, dual-language learners, and we also talk about children with disabilities. And just to emphasis again, we talk about individualized instruction in order to develop and learn the skills described in the framework. We talk about how the framework should be used in collaboration with specialists identified on the child's IFSP, IEP, or their 504 plan. And identify children's strengths and ability to ensure that learning opportunities are maximized, and that children are fully included in all educational experiences and activities. I think that's what we're talking about today is participation, and we've really tried to emphasize that throughout the framework.

Pam: Thank you, Sangeeta. That is a very comprehensive overview of the outcomes framework, and I'm sure some folks on the phone today really hadn't had a chance to know about it or explore it with anyone, so thanks. So, Julia, OSEP also has an outcomes framework that's part of the state monitoring process. Can you tell us a little bit about that? And as Julia's getting ready to get started, I want to thank folks for sending in questions and want to urge you to keep them coming. We're compiling those and sending them back to our panelists so see how many they can cover. And Megan Vinh here is responding to a lot of them by e-mail. So keep those questions coming. So, Julia, OSEP Outcomes framework...

Julia Martin Eile: Thank you, Pam. OSEP Early Childhood Outcomes is similar to what you hear from Sangeeta about the Head Start framework outcomes. You know, OSEP has moved from a compliance-driven accountability system in which we measured timeliness of services to a more results-driven accountability system where we focus on outcomes and program improvement. Similar to Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes framework, OSEP has also looked closely at early childhood outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities. We've been doing it for over 12 years -- that's a long time. The Office of Special Ed Programs began requiring state, early intervention, and preschool special ed programs to report on child outcomes as far back as 2005. The three outcomes are considered critical to children becoming active and successful participants across a variety of settings. All states are required to report data to OSEP on these outcomes -- positive social emotional skills, including social relationships, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills -- including early language, communication, and early literacy -- and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. OSEP feels these three outcomes are important for the infant, toddler, and preschool children with a disability to achieve. This data is collected at entry and exit of the child's experience in early intervention and preschool.

The data is collected and reported to OSEP through an annual performance report. Prior to the social/emotional, they are -- these are outcomes that involve relating to adults, relating to other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups, or interacting with others. The



outcome includes concepts and behaviors such as attachment, separation, autonomy, expression, emotions, and feelings, learning rules and expectations in social situations, and social interactions and social play. For acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, there's outcome-involved activities such as thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem-solving, number concepts, counting, and understanding the physical and social world. It also includes a variety of skills related to language and literacy, including vocabulary, phonic awareness, and letter recognition. For appropriate behaviors to meet needs or self-help, this outcome involves behaviors like taking care of your basic needs, getting from place to place, and using tools such as forks, toothbrushes, and crayons. And in older children, it can be contributing to their own healthy, safety, and wellbeing. It also includes integrating motor skills to complete tasks, taking care of oneself in areas like dressing and feeding and grooming and toileting, and acting on the world in socially appropriate ways to get what one wants. This data along with the settings data gives us a better idea of the experiences that a child is having and the success the child is having in the program. Here is early childhood outcomes data for 2014, '15.

This analysis is completed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center every year, and as you can see, for Part C children, we see a greater than expected growth based on participation in the program. The growth across the three outcomes is between 67% and 75%. Similar in Part B, OSEP is seeing greater than expected growth based on participation in the program. As we mentioned before, this is the great data for OSEP. However, it does not measure the quality of the program the children attend and the evidence-based practices that may be used. So we have this data. We have the service location data, and we have this outcomes data. And the participation of children. What we don't have is the data that really looks at the quality and the experiences the children are having in the classroom. So, Christy, can you tell us what are the practices that have the strongest evidence for supporting these early childhood outcomes?

Christy: Sure. So I wanted to talk today about the DEC recommended practice, or the Division for Early Childhood recommended practices. The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children is a professional organization for early interventionists and early childhood special educators. And they recently redid their recommended practices. And the recommended practices were developed to provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcome and promote the development of young children birth through five years of age who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities. The DEC recommended practices really support children's access and participation in inclusive settings and natural environments and addresses cultural, linguistically, and ability diversity. They also identify key leadership responsibilities associated with the implementation of these practices.

So, again, it's really looking at the bridge between research and practice and trying to highlight how those practices, when used, have been shown to result in better outcomes for young children with disabilities, their families, and the personnel who serve them. So as I mentioned, they were recently re-released, and DEC had gone through a very systematic two-year process to update and streamline the practices as a way to improve the quality of services provided to young children with disabilities or those at risk for disabilities.

So just to give you a sense of the process that DEC used, you can see that it's based on research. They've basically looked again at the current research and looked at experience and professional wisdom. And they came up with practices from the research, from the experience and professional wisdom, and then did a field validation study where they're looking at... also making sure that this is a process that involves a lot of stakeholders across the country who are using the practices. And what is

nice is that DEC has a plan in place to consistently update the practices as new research begins to emerge over time. The practices are divided into eight topic areas or child focus practices, and they include thinking about the practices that support the instruction of children, the environment, interaction between children, and between children and adults, assessment practices, teaming, family, leadership, and transition. And there are other practices that are focused. As I said, the family leadership and transition are more focused on... the working within the system, not just with children. And just to provide a little more background, the DEC recommended practices, besides being supported by research, values, and experience, they cover a breadth of topics, they should be observable. They're not disability specific. They can be delivered in all types of settings, and they really build on and are not duplicative to other standards such as NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices.

Pam: So, Christy, thanks for sharing the practices. I think those are really important. That's important information for us as we think about professional development and some of the -- that will be one of the topics for the next webinar. So we'll definitely extend the information on those practices then, but that was really helpful. It's occurred to me, you know, as I think about the DEC recommended practices and I know it's occurred to many people, that these practices are really applicable to each and every child. I mean, the concept of individualization is one that resonates across all early childhood practitioners, although we know for sure that some children need more intensive support than others. So can you speak a little bit about how practitioners can make decisions about what levels of support a specific child that they're serving might need.

Christy: Sure, Pam, and, again, I think that we definitely agree that the DEC recommended practices are applicable to all children in all settings, and we know that these practices can work well with more intensive supports for children who may need them so that they can participate fully in inclusive settings. One of the things we wanted to just highlight was what we had talked about on the previous webinar, the November webinar that was talked about earlier. But it's the idea of response intervention and recognizing that response intervention is really a comprehensive continuum of practices designed to provide a quick response to children's needs, wherever those needs are. So it's based on teachers being able to continuously observe and recognize when a child is struggling as a way to develop and learn and then use data to make decisions about how to provide instruction or how to modify and adapt instructions to respond to children's needs. So this ensures that interventions, that each child's needs are provided in a timely and intentional fashion. It also allows for families to be part of the decision-making process and to be there to help support their children, the individualized needs of children.

Pam: Great, Christy. Thanks for kind of extending the learning that got started in the last webinar. So good to know more about response to intervention, which some people call tiered approaches to intervention or tiered approaches to instruction. Sangeeta, what about from the Head Start point of view? How did the -- you said you were gonna speak a little bit about the Head Start new performance standards. How to those support implementation of some of the practices we just heard about from Christy?

Sangeeta: Sure. So HHS made the first holistic revision and complete reorganization of the performance standards since they were originally published in 1975. So those just came into effect starting November of 2016. And, in general, the new standards implement changes from the 2007 Head Start Act, which replaced reliance on Head Start programs to evaluate some children and provide IEPs to make it clear that such services are entitlements under IDEA. So programs have really followed

this statute since it was enacted, but the regulations now have been updated to accurately reflect the act. Other sections of the performance standard really speak to children with disabilities. So we have one of our sections, sub-part C, entitled Education and Child Development Services. It ensures that programs include all children, including those with an IEP and IFSP, and it recognizes that some children with delays, they may not be eligible for IDEA, but they do benefit from additional support and services. So for example, the standards state that if a child has a significant delay, the program must partner with parents to help the family access services and support to help address the child's identified needs.

And that it may be appropriate for the program to provide these services and supports under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Since there are different definitions and criteria for identifying a child with a disability by state, this is really actually very useful. And a child who may qualify for services under IDEA in one state may not in another state. So there may be some delays or diagnoses, such as ADHD, for which a child would definitely benefit from support. And this where we would say that Section 504 would come into play. And I know that this is something that has been new for programs, and we are providing some trainings around 504 because we do recognize that it is different from IDEA and sometimes may not know that that was the way that we could get supports and services in place for all our kids. We also have a section, transition services, and it states that programs must provide transition services to support children with disabilities and their families as they prepare to leave the program. So they state that the transition services take into account the child's disability status, the individual family service plan, which is the IFSP for children in Early Head Start, and the IEP for children in Head Start. We also have another section on program management, and it states that programs must implement a coordinated approach to serving children with disabilities and their families. So this means that the standards maintain requirements for programs to coordinate and collaborate with local agencies responsible for implementing IDEA Part B and Part C services to ensure appropriate referrals, evaluation service delivery, and transition. And that is one of the reasons we do have that question on the PIR that I mentioned earlier. And the standards also maintain requirements for programs to coordinate and collaborate.

Kind of, you know, with families, we talk a lot about family engagements throughout the program performance standards, and this is definitely highlighted for children with disabilities. The standards also include a new requirement for programs to provide individual services and supports to the maximum extent possible to children awaiting determination of IDEA eligibility. So this really fills in the gap for the kids who will probably be determined to be eligible, but sometimes it can just take a while to get those services in place or even to determine if the child is eligible. So we're saying that we really want those children to be supported as well. And as I mentioned earlier, the performance centers really do weave in parent engagement throughout the standards. An example of how it is discussed regarding children with disabilities is that the standards recognize parents' roles in the IEP and IFSP process, and prepare parents to advocate for their children. So as I mentioned when I was talking about the Early Learning Outcomes Framework, this piece about how learning does not happen in isolation, but actually children really do benefit from supports from their families and we really need to encourage parents to be the first and foremost advocates for their children. And also while we're talking about the Early Learning Outcomes Framework, I also wanted to highlight the standards that Head Start program performance standards do talk about the Early Learning Outcomes Framework. It is incorporated throughout the standards, particularly in the area of teaching and learning environments, and that we talk about how the teaching and learning environment must be aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, including for children with disabilities.

Pam: Thanks, Sangeeta. And thanks for mentioning the 504 regulations, because that is a question that did come in. So that's really helpful. Another question that came in and it's related to the 10%, this question is children who are enrolled in Head Start who are currently receiving services through an outside agency, are they considered 10% in our Head Start count, or must our children come strictly from our local school districts?

Sangeeta: So if a child is enrolled in a Head Start program or Early Head Start program and they have an IEP, which means that they are eligible for services under IDEA, then they do count under the 10%. So regardless of where they are receiving the services, if they do have an IEP, that is how they are counted.

Pam: Okay, okay. And another question that's come in, and I think it's a question we got on our last webinar is how do you know that a child's IEP goals are being addressed in a Head Start or a child care program? How do you determine that?

Julia: So, Pam, this is Julia, and I just want to start off by saying the IEP is a tool that can be used to document individualized outcomes and use of evidence-based processes. Practitioners and specialists working in partnership with families are key ingredients to ensuring active engaged participation. IEPs should always include these practices as well as the location of services and goals for the child. To know the child's IEP goals are being addressed, a strong IEP team will include all of the individuals who come into contact with that child, such as a therapist, teachers, Head Start teachers, disability coordinators, et cetera. It is important that the team determine the best setting for the child with the supports and services to allow him or her to learn in the least restrictive environment.

Pam: Okay. Thanks, Julia. There are some -- this is an interesting question, and I don't think that we'll be able to answer it today, but I think it's a thought-provoking one. And this has come in. Why are there two sets of outcomes? It seems it would make sense that we'd have one set for all early childhood. So, you know, to me, that question sort of says what are we doing to try to align and integrate these outcomes within the framework so we could have sort of a national set of outcomes that we all aspire to. Any thoughts about that, panelists? I know that's not -- that's more of a think question than a "yes, no, this is the answer" question. But is that something you all have thought about?

Sangeeta: Yeah, we have talked about how different programs and different states use the different outcomes framework. And different states have really taken the different frameworks and used them together. So I think there's some great state examples out there that we can probably pull from and talk maybe in another webinar about how the different outcome frameworks are being used across programs.

Pam: Yeah, that's great. Well, we have about five minutes left, and we have some more questions. But on this next slide, if someone will advance it for me, there is a place that we set up for you to post your questions, your ongoing questions, questions that you think of in the next few minutes or in the next hour or so. And it's our online disabilities inclusion network, and it's a platform called My Peers. So we have a little place there, and we will come back to those questions, because we really want this conversation to continue. It's not just a one-shot webinar, there's another webinar coming up. And there are also some upcoming events that we want to share with you that are important to advance the conversation. And here you have the National Early Childhood Inclusion institute, which is May 9 to 11 in Chapel Hill. Registration is open now. And then for those of you who are Head Start disability

coordinators on this call, there is a Head Start Disability Coordinator Institute on April 5, 2017, in Chicago, and registration for that will open very soon. So those are some ways to continue the conversation as well as the chat. And then we also want to make sure that you have access to the last webinars that we keep referring to. So here is the link to that. And if someone -- Christy or Megan -- could put these links in the chat box, that would make them live. And it might help people click on them right away, especially the questions. I think we want to keep those questions coming. And then, Julia, maybe you could point us to some of the resources that were mentioned on this webinar that you want to particularly let people know where to find them. And then maybe Sangeeta has something to add to that. So...

Julia: Thanks, Pam. So you'll see on this page that we've given you a number of links. As you remember Christy talking about the DEC recommended practices, you can find them located at that link as well as our Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center has aligned the practices to performance checklists and practice guides. These are fabulous resources to you. They include not only checklists and practice guides, but videos so that you can really be able to see the practices and be able to implement them. You'll see another link is to our CONNECT Module. In addition, we have resources on the Early Childhood Outcomes data that we talked about, and then general resources on inclusion you can also find at the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. On the last page, you'll see -- on the next page, you'll see the links to a number of the documents that we talked about today, the first one being the least restrictive environment memo, and then the Head Start learning framework and performance standards. Those are links to those documents. Sangeeta, do you have any additional resources?

Sangeeta: So I thought of one, especially in light of that question about why is it that we have two different outcomes frameworks, and we do have this resource that will be coming very soon. It will be posted the ECLKC, which is the Head Start website. It's the resources on practices that support individualization, and this collection of resources provides information about evidence-based practices that support individualization and associated resources. What's nice about this is that these practices are aligned with both the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, ages birth to five, and organized around the eight topic areas of evidence-based practices identified in the DEC recommended practices. So please look for that resource soon.

Pam: Thank you so much for the discussion on resources. And that -- I think with that, that's going to conclude our webinar. We will make sure that we follow up with everyone about the questions and answers that we didn't get to, so we'll be making sure we send out a Q&A document after the webinar. And then, again, please stay tuned for the following webinar. We're gonna be talking about high quality inclusion, our next one's gonna be focusing on the support within the access -- participation and support. And that one will be in April and we'll make sure that we send out information, and that you will have access to that. And, again, if you want to, you can download the PowerPoint from the file pot, and it has all those resource links in it, and it also has our e-mail. So if you have further questions, please feel free to reach out to us, and we'll make sure that stay in touch. So thank you, everyone, and thank you to our presenters. And we will hear from you in April.

Julia: Okay, great.

Pam: Thanks, everyone.