

**Early Head Start for Family Child Care Partnership Week 2012**  
**Increasing Quality Through Local Partnerships**

Automated Voice: This meeting is now being recorded.

Angie Godfrey: Hi everyone. I'm Angie Godfrey, Head Start Program Specialist in the Office of Head Start. Thank you for taking the time to join us today. We're excited to share with you the experiences from one our 22 partnership teams from the Early Head Start for Family Child Care Demonstration Project. We'll be talking to them on they are, are working to increase quality through partnership at the local level. I'm pleased to introduce Lee Turney and Becky Littlewolf from the Leech Lake partnership team. Lee is the director of the Youth and Early Childhood Development division at Leech Lake and Becky is the child care services program manager at Leaf -- program manager at Leech Lake. And, I just thank you both for being here today and for sharing with the audience. And, we're going to be asking them a few questions about some of the challenges and some of the successes that they faced as part of one of the teams on the Demonstration Project.

So, now I'm going to ask Lee Turney to give us a brief overview of Leech Lake.

Lee Turney: Thank you, Angie, and it's a pleasure to be a part of this conversation today. And, to talk a little about the project and what it meant for Leech Lake takes me back to a time when we were basically recruited to participate. We had a conversation, Becky and I. And, we talked about this whole concept about Early Head Start and Family Child Care, and what it meant to us here at Leech Lake. Was it feasible? Did it make sense as a, as a possible option that we could implement in the future. And, at every point of discussion that we laid out, Becky and I both, you know, shook our heads yes. It, it just seemed a fit. It just seemed like it was something that we should be involved in. And so, you know, we jumped in with both feet not understanding exactly what it was gonna end up being like. But yeah, we jumped in fully committed. And, being a, a newer Early Head Start grantee from Mera, we were learning more without really understanding the Early Head Start in its full context. So, there was a lot of learning going on at that point. But, through this whole process, you know, working with our consultant and the team work that was involved through the self-assessment -- both at the local and the state level -- we just seen the opportunity for bridges to be built and opportunity for us to bring something new to Leech Lake that, you know, really could enhance the care that is, is here on Leech Lake, but also give our families, you know, another option to consider rather than maybe what we have, is, is center care.

So, you know, that's a brief overlook of, of the conversations we've had around the Early Head Start Family Child Care Project. But again, we're thankful that we, that we were a part of it and have implemented the program.

Angie: Thank you, Lee. It was wonderful to have your team as part of it and to watch as you grew throughout. So, that overview really helped. And, Becky, I wanted to ask you, can you talk a little bit

about some of the committees your team undertook through the Early Head Start for Family Child Care Project?

Becky Littlewolf: Yes. We've both attended the orientation along with our child care consultant, David Allen. And through that process, we started with a self assessment where we looked at our program's -- what we were currently doing and some of the areas that we maybe needed to grow. Off that assessment -- I'm sorry.

Angie: That's okay. Just start again.

Becky: Yeah, I was look -- I was looking at the challenges we sought to address. Okay. We developed an action plan to build on our needs, some of our community needs. Part of our vision has always been to build the capacity of, of Infant-Toddler Care, along with the quality. I know that we needed to build awareness not only with our programs but within our communities on the importance of services to, for infant and toddlers. We decided to hold a series of events to build out the comprehension and the confidence in our providers by introducing that concept of Early Head Start and Family Child Care. They have always been in, in separate arenas: family child care on one side and Early Head Start or Head Start on the other.

One of the events that we wanted to kick it all off with was our infant-toddler resource fair. We brought together other agencies that provided services for zero-to-three, along with our Early Head Start management and classroom staff, and invited our local family child care providers just to -- my phone's ringing, sorry.

Just to bring them all together, and for them to get to know each other, and to see what each other does.

Angie: That's great. Thank you, Becky for those examples. That was really helpful. And, Lee can you talk a little bit more about how your team was able to build awareness and appreciation for the Early Head Start Family Child Care option in your community?

Lee, I think you're on mute still.

Lee: There it is. I'm sorry.

Angie: Good. No. You're fine.

Lee: Thanks, Angie. From the onset, Becky and I realized the importance of building this community awareness, but also building these bridges in this profession called Early Head Start and family child care. We understood right from the onset that the job that they did was so similar, that they, you know, they had more in common than they had indifference to each other. So, you know, we approached it from that, from that perspective. And, what we wanted to do was put together different projects or

different presentations, you know, that would bring them both into the same room, getting the same information. And again, by taking a look at where we were with Early Head Start, you know, they, they, this was new information to all of them. So, there was no one greater than the other. They were all starting from the same level and, and building their, their knowledge base, you know, right, right along with the, you know, with each other. So, that was a, you know, important step, I think, is acknowledging where we were in both Early Head Start and with family child care, understanding that, you know, to build that trust, to build those relationships, you know, they needed to be in the same setting during this educational piece so that they understood, again, that they both did the same thing in our communities in just two different scenarios.

Angie: That really is a wonderful description, Lee, and it's so focused on serving children in the community. And then, understanding how your, how programs in the community work together. So, thank you for that. That was wonderful. And you also helped to, helped your team -- your team focused on helping family child care providers access training to implement it. So, can you talk a little bit about how you were able to do that?

Lee: Yes, Angie. Through our discussions with our team -- David Allen, and Becky, and myself -- we also, you know, met with our, our management team in Head Start and Early Head Start here at the program. And, you know, what we talked about was what we thought was important as a baseline of information, you know, to both settings. And, we wanted to gear that all towards meeting, you know, their needs, but also starting to build that foundation of understanding. And, for example, we're able to offer, you know, a class on the brain research, you know, and it focused on the importance of, you know, of, of the development of infants and toddlers. And, Dr. Terry Rose came up and, and the room was full. We had other programs that contacted us just to get in on the conversation, and, and spread it to their staff also. So, it was a hugely successful endeavor, and, and of dialogue during, during the training, and I think everybody came away from there with a, with a huge understanding of infants and toddlers, and, and how important the role they have in, in their development. And, you know, the one thing that Dr. Rose always referred back to was what the research suggests, you know, that extensive intervention and the capacity for the brain to absorb and, and, store, and, and build, and grow maybe not -- may not be a new concept to a lot of our people, but I think that it, it -- I think that it just reinforced the capacity of our children, and I think it gave our folks a greater respect and understanding of the role that they have in, in child development stages of our, our kids that we have in care.

Angie: That's a wonderful description of, kind of, relearning and reintroducing information. And doing that with everyone together. And, and just shows how invested the community was, and your willingness to bring in people like Dr. Rose to come and talk to folks is really great. And you did some other things, too. And Becky, can you share some of the important ways that you -- that the folks care, and provide care to children, and tell us about your work to help the provider community better understand the Head Start Performance Standards?

Becky: Yeah, we brought or we contacted Sue Heiser, Sue Heisler, and she put together a presentation on the Head -- federal Head Start Performance Standards, our Leech Lake tribal licensing requirements,

along with the Coney regulations for, for licensing of day care facilities. And, it was overview. And, she took different pieces of those regulations and compared them to each other, and showed a lot of the similarities and the differences. And, I think, at, at that presentation the, the providers really began to ask those questions and, and it really started to open up that door that, that, you know, it is possible to, to, to take those Head Start Performance Standards and implement them in their programs. And, I think that's really where the gears start turning and some of the managers also began -- began asking the questions. And, it really created a great dialogue between the programs. And, off of that presentation, we invited Lynn Tisdall down to provide a more in-depth presentation of the Head Start Performance Standards specific to family child care. A lot of the providers that attended our overview and were interested in doing the Family Child Care/Early Head Start option joined us, and along with the managers -- because it's, it's -- the Family Child Care option was new to them, also. And, Lynn Tisdall did a really great job at, at pulling that all together for both the providers and our staff.

Angie: Thank you, Becky. That's really great, and again, I love how you knew that you needed to really build the foundation around the Standards that would support people. Because it can be scary, and it is a new option, and I love that you took those extra steps to bring people together, and provide the training. And I -- guess what I'm wondering now? You were very successful project. The project's been over for a few months now. So, Lee, can you tell us a little bit about where, where your program is now in working with Early Head Start and the Family Child Care option?

Lee: Yes, we have currently -- we have two providers that are in our Early Head Start Family Child Care program option. They're serving six children from five families. The transition has, has been really good. Our connection with them and our visits to their, their programs has, has, you know, been real positive. We're fortunate that we had a get together yesterday on, on -- just a check-in. How're we doing? Where're we going? And, you know, and seeing what their needs are and, versus, what we've been able to, you know, work with together. And, and both of the family child care providers are, you know, they're excited about this program option, and, and not only did they see the growth in themselves, and, and how it enhanced their business, but what they seen is how it enhanced, how it added more structure to their learning, and how it is -- benefited the other children that they have in care there, you know. So, it, you know, it was exciting to see the smiles on their face because, you know, we didn't know which way this was going to go. We had a, a lot of our family child care providers were interested in this process. We have other family child care providers that are, are interested in continuing, and, and, and being able to provide in this option if we choose to expand it.

And, right now, we're looking at, at stabilizing what we have and, you know, refine our processes. But, we have adopted this program option and we are going to maybe sustain the levels of where we're at with Early Head Start Family Child Care for the coming year. But also, during this timeframe, we're looking at building the capacity of our family child care providers so that as the opportunity arises for us to expand, we have the family child care providers in a position to step in. So, our connection to them, and all of our family child care providers, hasn't been lost because the demonstration project is over. It continues in everything that we do, by the outreach, and the communication that we have with them, the opportunities to train together, you know, and invite them into the, the activities and things that we

do. So, you know, this have given us an opportunity to strengthen the bond. I believe it's done that. I think that as we build this foundation and strengthen it this next year, it's going to open doors for a lot of things for our family child care providers to be able to do as we move into the future. And, they're already asking about, you know, a Head Start Family Child Care option. That's how, you know, ramped up they are about what they're doing. They, they want that child in their setting all, all the way to, you know, the time that they go either the tribal or public school system.

Angie: That's wonderful. I think we find out so often because families love that Family Child Care option, and they want to stay. And, I was thinking Lee and Becky, as you were talking about when you first came, the excitement you brought to it, but also the, the nervousness because you knew it wasn't going to be easy. But, listening to the meeting you had last week, I just feel that it was a wonderful opportunity. There were many challenges, but you faced them and worked through them with your community. And I think -- this certainly, this short tape is something to share with our audience, but all -- you're one of the programs that's profiled, and the information is on the ECLKC under Early Head Start and Family Child Care. So, folks can learn more about what you did.

And, I want to thank you both for your time today. You've given us a really good picture of the work you've done in your community, and I really appreciate your time, and thank you for sharing with us.

Lee: Angie, we -- I want to say thank you for the opportunity. You know, we, we went into it with a lot of apprehension but we came away with it having grown. And, as we look to the future, you know, we see the benefits not only for our program and our staff, but for our children and families here on Leech Lake.

Angie: Thank you so much. This was wonderful. Talk to you soon, Lee.

Lee: Thank you.

Angie: Okay. Bye. Bye, Becky.

Becky: Bye.

Angie: Thanks from Laura and Carolyn, too.

Lee: Yes, thanks ladies, and good luck with that edit.

[Laughter]

Angie: Okay, thanks. I'll tell them that, Lee.

Lee: Okay. Bye, Angie.