

Prioritizing Families Experiencing Homelessness for Enrollment: Performance Standards and Related Strategies

Brandi Black Thacker: Welcome, again, everybody. It is exactly the top of the hour, so we do not want to waste any minutes or seconds together. We want to jump right in and think about one of our prioritized populations — families experiencing homelessness. I'm so excited for this specific dialog because it relates to what we think about and what we do and how we create our systems and services in the enrollment part of our process. And we have so much help. We have these incredible performance standards to stand on. We're bringing you some strategies today, some best practices. We know that you're going to insert your brilliance, and the crazy and wonderful things that are working for you out there. And we also want to share where there might be hiccups, and where you might want to think together about what's working and what you're running into, so that we can really wraparound each other in service of families experiencing homelessness. The other thing that I would like to do super quickly, you know, to honor my good Southern graces, is make sure that you know who has the honor to be with you today, and tell you a little bit about our speakers. Now, I want to offer for you straight away my name and my colleague's, Dr. Jennifer Olson. We both come from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. I'm Brandi Black Thacker, and I have the absolute distinct privilege to be the director of Training, Technical Assistance, and Collaboration for our center. Jennifer is going to say a little hello, tell you about herself, and then turn it over to our esteemed federal colleagues and leaders at The Office of Head Start.

Jennifer Olson: Hey, Brandi. Thank you so much. This is Jennifer Olson. I am a Senior Training and Technical Assistance specialist from the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Center. And I'm just absolutely thrilled to be here and learn through this opportunity.

Brandi: Thank you, Jennifer. And over to Kiersten, reporting live from Washington, D.C.
[Laughter]

Kiersten Beigel: Hello, Head Start. How are you? Hello, Early Head Start. My name is Kiersten Beigel and I'm lead for The Office of Head Start on all things families, family engagement, family well-being, supporting families experiencing adversity, you name it. I'm really happy to be here with you today. Dr. Deborah Bergeron, our director of the Office of Head Start, is here with me today. Not to build up even more excitement about hearing her speak, but I'm going to hold off on letting her take the floor for a few minutes until we've had a chance to do a little bit of intro work. But really excited to have her here today. She's going to talk to us about some very exciting news very relevant to this topic. So, let me start by just telling you about this webinar series that you have entered on into. We're at number one here, in case you didn't know. We're at number one. Number two is going to be Nov. 14: Conversations with Families about Living Experiences and Housing Goals. And kind of looking at that through a professional development, staff wellness kind of lens. And number three is about establishing and sustaining community partnerships for outreach and continuity. We hope to partner on these webinars with our collab directors and maybe some of you, some grantees, to really share some promising practices in this area. So, let me just say, before we continue, that this webinar and

the other two, we're really not going to focus on McKinney-Vento definition kinds of training here. We had sent in the e-blast that we encouraged you to dive into our interactive modules that Brandi just mentioned, so that you could ... The first three are really about kind of getting familiar and comfortable with that definition. So, we wanted to kind of step off of that and get into some other kinds of conversations with you. We will proceed with that. Our learning objectives today: we're going to talk a little bit about some performance standards and how they relate to this area of children experiencing homelessness, families experiencing homelessness. We'll identify some strategies, ways to implement those performance standards, some best practice ideas, and really hear from you, both through polls and through chats, about some of the things that are working for you in this area. We know that you really like hearing from each other. So, we can raise up a lot of ideas and practices. But know that you, too, can do that for each other. So, obviously it's important to talk about homelessness. And we know that there are really historic increases in the number of our youngest children experiencing homelessness in this country. And we know Head Start is a really good fit. We also have a law in the set of regulations that require us to do this work, but for good reason. Infants are actually the most vulnerable to be ... At risk of living in a shelter in the United States.⁰⁸⁰ We know that homelessness can really contribute to some delays and challenges for children, related to their health and their emotional-behavioral development, learning challenges. So, for these reasons and many others, it's really important for us to be engaging in this conversation as a community. Also, equally important, thinking about our youngest children and our preschoolers and infant and toddlers, thinking about our young parents. So, young parents have three times the risk of experiencing homelessness, compared to their non-parenting peers. And we know that 43 percent of 18- to 25-year-old young women experiencing homelessness report that they have had at least one child, compared to 22 percent of young women who had not had that experience of homelessness. And so, why is this important for us? Because of Early Head Start right, and Head Start, too. But really important for us to be thinking about how we can support these young parents and their little ones who are experiencing homelessness. So, before we kind of get into the nitty gritty, I think it's just really important to take a pause and think about our language. You know, we have an act and a definition of homelessness that is federal. It uses language that, you know, helps us understand whether families have fixed, adequate night time residences. Whether families might be sharing the housing of others because of a sudden loss of housing or an economic instability. So, we have that language, and we use that language to make eligibility decisions. And that, you know, can be a very administrative function, a really important one, as far as getting children and families enrolled in our programs. But equally important is the way we talk about this challenge, this stress, of homelessness or houselessness or instable housing, in a way that is really sensitive and is in a way that honors that not all people want to hear that word about themselves. And even from a cultural perspective, many tribes don't identify with that word at all. So, finally ... You've already heard us saying this, it's in our module names, we talk about children experiencing homelessness and families experiencing homelessness, because we want to use people-first language. We know that homelessness doesn't define the person or the child, right. It's an experience they're having. And we want to do what we can to help them move out of that experience to a more stable experience. So, our language should really try to, in our conversations with families, and as we build trust with families, should really be looking to be as sensitive as possible. So, we have two

jobs. We have to do the eligibility, the enrollment, the paperwork, the procedures, and all of that, and use that really important definition to make sure we can enroll them, and we have to build trust with families, and use language that is meaningful to them and their experience. So you might have ... You probably, hopefully know this woman here, Dr. Bergeron. She has really called a charge to us in The Office of Head Start last year to really think about how we can prioritize children and families experiencing homelessness. And so, what you see up here are a few different things. You see a vlog of hers. She has a few vlogs on the subject. For those of you who might not know, she puts out a video vlog every month. You should listen in to them. They have great information resources and really good calls to action. These are some Facebook kinds of entries that we have used. We have a letter to policy council parents here, as well as a flyer that you can use and give to your community partners to help them understand what Head Start is all about and why Head Start is such a good match for families experiencing homelessness. So, this campaign -- Home at Head Start -- is an ongoing one really looking to support our work as a community to enroll more children and to help us kind of be stronger in our program practices in working with families experiencing homelessness. So, stay tuned to that. We have a new landing page on the ECLKC dedicated to all of this. And I think it's a really good time for me to segue way on over to our special guest who is Dr. Bergeron. [Laughter] She's sitting right here with me. And she has some really interesting information to share with us. So, I'm really happy you could be with us today. Welcome.

Deborah Bergeron: Me, too. Thank you. It's been kind of fun. I've just been staring at the screen watching all the people pop up. And where everyone was just all over the place. And it was kind of fun. I saw my neighbors from Ashburn, Virginia, not far from where I live. And Orange, Virginia. I just was in Orange over the weekend. Go Orange. And our D.C. friends right here. So, it's fun to see everybody all over the place, hanging out together to talk about something so important. And yeah, it's been really interesting to sort of reflect on a year ago, I think, is about when we started having this conversation and trying to figure out how we could ... We obviously already serve children living with any kind of housing instability and really trying to hone in on those children. But it seemed to me there needed to be more focus. So, we launched the campaign in January, and just got an incredible response. People were emailing and stopping me at conferences and saying, "I'm so glad that you're highlighting this. This is so important." So, I was really happy that it wasn't just something that sort of struck me, but that the field itself was very excited to have a highlight, highlighted focus. But then also these other supports that came along with with it. I know the module that I challenged everybody to, or the eight modules, I think, that were on the ECLKC that we challenged folks to complete last year, we just saw a huge surge in use of those modules, which is great, because the more educated our staff are around this topic, the better we can serve the children and families. And then, if you fast forward a little bit, I would say, maybe in the spring, or maybe I don't know, at some point last year, I started to hear chatter around this whole idea that we've seen a surge in kinship care. And it, you know seems to be centering around substance misuse. But it could be for a number of different things going on in a family. But I do think with ... At least from my experience, the people I was meeting were generally parents who were struggling with substance use disorder, in particular opioids seem to be the most prevalent, and then children were getting placed with grandparents and great-grandparents and aunts and uncles. And

programs have even started to do programming around supporting grandparents and great-grandparents who are now going back to being, you know, a caregiver, which, you know if it's been 20 or 30 years, you can kind of lose your touch. So, that's really fantastic. But then what I was hearing was, children weren't eligible for Head Start because they were living with a relative, even though they were in this really dire situation, experiencing lots of trauma. And, I mean, there were even some cases where people were telling me that the kin were actually putting the children into foster care so that they could live in foster care long enough to be in the system, which would make them eligible for Head Start. To me, that was just not OK. So, kind of came back to the office here and talked to folks here and said, "What can we do?" I know we can't change the rules, don't get me wrong. I recognize that your states are all different. They're going to define foster care as they do. And we have full respect for that. None of that changes here. However, every conversation I had sort of made me feel like there is room here for programs to respond to these situations in a much different way than I think ... They're doing so. And I said, "Is there something we can do, to sort of communicate that out?" And of course, that started a whole process of creating the IM that we are putting out there. And I can't even remember if the e-blast has gone out yet. I know that there is going to be an email blast that you're going to get. You may have already gotten it. I don't know the timing. But Kiersten noticed the IM, and knew she was having this, this webinar, and said, "What do you think about coming on, and just talking to folks about it, since we're going to have an audience? It's around homelessness, which certainly is relevant." And I was thrilled to be invited. So, thank you for letting me sort of butt in on your time and take some of your time today.

Kiersten: You know, Cindy just commented, Cindy Crice, "We've lost a lot of grandparents raising their grandchildren because they cannot get in due to income."

Deborah: Yes, right. And, I mean a lot of times these are people on fixed incomes. They're not rolling in it. They aren't living at the poverty line either. And I actually had, you know the honor of meeting several of these folks as I've traveled around. And the work they're doing, I just can't say enough. I met an almost 80-year-old great-grandparent who took in a baby, and she was 4 now. And wondering how she's physically handling this, just physically, forget the whole mental stress of it. And then, I started thinking about when this child's 14, how old this grandparent's going to be. And I don't even ... I can't even go there mentally. I don't know what's going to happen there. But I do know that you're right. ... There's a barrier there. And, you know I don't have the authority to change the rules around how we define foster care, and states have to do that. We have to respect that. But as we talked about it, we saw a lot of connection between this particular scenario and homelessness, according to McKinney-Vento. So, we started to have those conversations. Is there a way that we can communicate this out? I'm sure you guys appreciate the fact that at the federal level, we have to be very cautious about communication and making sure that we're staying in line with, you know, what regulations say and what laws say. And so, we took some time on this and consulted a lot of people, including the Department of Education, which I think is really great. And have come up with an IM that hopefully helps facilitate for you all decision-making. You still have to be thoughtful and think through things. We're not making decisions for you. But hopefully we're helping to facilitate that. So, I'm going to go through this a little bit. In the beginning of the IM, there's a just for information, an opening paragraph, and one of the sentences says ... Actually, I'm going to read this paragraph

to you just to be super clear. "The Office of Head Start, OHS, has received questions from grantees who want to enroll children living in kinship care and are concerned about the eligibility of these children. Formal ... Or informal kinship care for the purposes of this IM broadly refers to children who are living with relatives or caregivers other than their parents. In most cases, these children are eligible for Head Start services, according to the Head Start Act and Head Start program performance standards, and programs can enroll them. OHS encourages grantees to include children in kinship care in their enrollment and selection process." So, hopefully that paragraph alone lets you know how we feel about this situation, and we want to be supportive. But, of course, you need to have more than a paragraph like that in order to think this through. So, there's a paragraph on public assistance, which talks about TANF. And, again, you're somewhat tied to your state and how states distribute TANF funds. But I encourage you to read the language in the IM and see where that gives you some latitude, in terms of how you're interpreting TANF and how that gets relayed or given to the child, and then how that might qualify them for Head Start. Foster care, of course, is an automatic eligibility. If a child's living in the welfare system, which foster care would be included. And we are seeing more and more children in foster care. And it's something, frankly, the ACF Office and Children's Bureau has taken a very strong stance in prevention. They really are trying to work toward preventative measures and keeping children out of the foster care system. We know that being in that system is not as productive for children as being with their families. And the notion, and I didn't just hear this once, but the notion that folks would feel like putting a child in foster care, in order to gain that eligibility status, speaks desperation to me. Because I can't imagine that there really are people who want to do that. So, I encourage you to read the foster care piece, and to see if that helps to better define some of that. But the big piece of this IM, in my opinion, is the piece on homelessness and how we talk about it and how we define it. As Kiersten said, we're not going to get into a deep dive in McKinney-Vento. That's really something I encourage you to do, use the modules that we provide. But the big piece of McKinney-Vento I'm going to pull out talks about sudden loss of housing. And children, generally, who are living with a non-parent relative due to loss of housing, economic hardship or another reason, it's typically very sudden. And the child may meet the definition of homelessness based on this. And the other piece that we put in the IM that I think is extremely important is to provide some examples of circumstances leading to child kinship care. Economic hardship, substance misuse, or incarceration. We pulled these out specifically because we think these are key drivers to children ending up in a kinship situation. And we want to make sure that we're making that clear. And it says if the child is living with non-parent relatives for these or similar reasons, the child may be considered homeless, and then would be eligible for Head Start. So, this information memorandum still requires you to do some thinking and some processing in consideration. We certainly don't want to take up slots for children who aren't in need of the Head Start and the Head Start services. But we know that in many, many situations, particularly in the area of substance misuse, and I'd say even more particularly with the opioid situation, and I would say that because it's hitting families who may not necessarily have a history of substance misuse. So, we see doctors prescribing opioids that have led to substance use disorder, and families who are just not prepared for that, and children losing their housing, as a result, and living with kin, and still in need of those supports. In fact, the trauma that they've often endured is pretty significant. So, that's sort of picking apart the IM for you a little

bit, as it relates to homelessness. I think I would get ... I'm just preaching to the choir to say that I think that children living in kinship care could greatly benefit from Head Start and Early Head Start. And I would encourage you to read the IM, consider your eligibility processes, and make sure that, you know, you're in line with standards and regulations, but to see where there might be room for you to reach as many children as you possibly can who have this high need in your community. And, you know Kiersten was talking about a number of things before I came on. And the word she used that really stood out the most to me is trust. And I think, in this situation, trust is at the center. I'm reflecting right now on the great-grandparent I was referring to earlier. She was in Ohio, who I met, and she was just an incredible human being. But the trust that Early Head Start had established with her family was making all the difference for this child who sat through the whole meeting. It was about an hour long. She's 4. And she was just so engaging, and clearly was loved and really getting the kind of care she needed. And that great-grandparent was getting the kind of support she needed to be a good caregiver for that child. So, I'm hoping that we can continue to build these trusting relationships. And this IM, hopefully, will be a support to all of you to do that. I will tell you one thing before I sign off here. I really feel like an IM like this has the power to completely fill every slot that we have empty out there. So, I'm going to give you a challenge. I really expect there to be no under-enrollment anywhere. We probably have a total of maybe 23,000 empty slots nationwide. We have many, many, many more kids than 23,000 living in kinship care due to family economic hardship, substance misuse, incarceration, and other similar situations. So, I'm really hoping that we can reach out to those families, enroll them, and perhaps, next year at this time, we'll be talking, you know 100 percent enrollment. That would be fantastic. So, I appreciate all the work you do on the ground to make sure these things get translated properly, and that we're really out there reaching families. And also, want to just give a huge shout out to everybody who made this call possible, this webinar possible. I just find it so satisfying that I can jump into a room here in D.C., and reach you guys so personally. And I really appreciate that. So, I'm going to turn it back over to Kiersten. I know she's got a lot of good information for you. And I'm excited to see there are other ... This is a series. The first of many. Good, good. Thank you so much.

Kiersten: Thank you. Thank you so much. It's really exciting. This info memorandum will be coming out at the end of the day today, Eastern Standard Time. Basically, what we encourage you to do is to read it, and with your staff and leadership and managers and parent policy council members, and to see what you think it affords you in thinking about how you can serve more ... Children who are living with kin care, with their relative. So, from that, we will sort of segue way on now. And I guess I just will ... I know I see a lot of questions in chat around kind of specific situations already. And also, folks responding with ideas about their own state policies around grandparents raising grandchildren. And as Dr. B. pointed out, you know every state has kind of different ways of defining kinship care and different kinds of benefits access. There's some commonalities, but at this level, it's very hard to put out a clarification that would meet everybody's needs. What we think we've done is provide an IM that clarifies all of the possible ways that grandparents raising grandchildren, or relatives raising grandchildren, can potentially be eligible for Head Start. So, you can see all of that in one place, and make some good, informed decisions about that. It also affords, I think, a little more flexibility than we've been

able to communicate in the past. So, it's very exciting. Alrighty. So, let's see now. I think what we have now is the task of moving on forward to seven strategies for enhancing access and participation. Jennifer Olson. Come on down. Come on down.

Jennifer: Thank you so much. And I'm just so excited to hear this information from Dr. Bergeron today. Oh, my gosh, what an opportunity to increase access for families, happened just today. Right on this webinar that we're experiencing, we saw this ... Door opening for a whole group of people and families that need it so badly. So, as we begin to talk about increasing access and participation, or continue to have that conversation, we need to ground ourselves in the impact of our services and how they can lessen the impact of homelessness for young children. We also know that our programs provide that critical support to families by helping them build on their strengths, identify their needs, and, of course, plan for their future. And essential to this process is increasing the families' knowledge of access to resources, which may lessen the impact of their housing circumstances. And so, we're aware of the impact that ... Our programs can have for families as they encounter barriers to access participation, as well. You know, there may be several issues that families face that keep them from either accessing or participating in our programs. And the Head Start performance standards particularly specify regulatory requirements for removing those barriers. Let's look at what we've identified as seven strategies for enhancing access and participation. So, the seven, just quickly, are: prioritization, reserving slots, eligibility, verification, grace periods, and continuity of enrollment and effective transition. Finally, training for staff. And these are the seven that we're going to go through today. And we're going to share a little bit about the standards, and then ask you to either respond to a poll or a reflective question, so we can go deeper, and then touch back on the best practices that we've identified. And we're hoping that you'll share more best practices through our conversations today in chat. Brandi, do you want to take it away with strategy number one?

Brandi: I would love to, Jennifer. I just have to reflect with you guys for a second. Like, I just need to get real. Did anybody else just hear what I heard from Dr. Bergeron? I am beyond myself. We've been with you guys all around the country. We've heard your stories. We've held many of your hands. And we've dried each other's tears. You've talked to us about being in the space where you've had to turn away grandparents, where you've had to turn away aunts and uncles. Where you've had to turn away important members of child's family because of many reasons. But so much of what Dr. Bergeron just spoke about, I have chill bumps, because we're going to have this opportunity to serve in a way that is real and it's right now. ... And those of you who know me, and I recognize lots of names out there today, know that I feel in a really big way that I cannot get over the opportunities that this is going to offer us. One other quick thing, because I also know about our Head Start community that many of you are looking for the information memorandum. I think one of you mentioned, it literally hit as this webinar began. We're working on ... Going to go ahead and bring it over to you guys. Thank you, Cedrick. I see that many of you are going to hold each other up and bring that over as we're working together. And certainly, I think it was Cynthia, also, gave you the nod, if you register on the ECLKC, you'll get all of those hot off the press. And I'm guessing that our ECLKC colleagues are in the process of getting that up on the "What's New?" page of ECLKC. But also, of course, you can always go into the information memorandum and the program instruction pages to see all of

the new bits there, as well. Thanks, Amy, for inserting that there. So, guys this is also an opportunity, this is a screen shot moment, for the slide that's on the screen. There are seven strategies. Miss Jennifer gave us a nod to the rhythm and the flow that each of these seven strategies are going to follow. We're going to look at one through seven, one-by-one, and we're going to give you some, you know generalized language to think about with us. We are also going to give you the performance standard. I feel like I need to get, like, a little "whoop whoop" going with the performance standard connected to each of these, because we really do have a lot of information here to not only hold from our regulatory body, but also what we've learned from each other, and more importantly, you guys. So, not only are we going to look at each strategy, we're going to give some general language that supports the strategy. We're going to give you the citation from the performance standards, and, oh by the way, we're going to also bring in some best practice strategies along with your voice and what's been working for you guys out there. So, let's see. Are you ready, general chat? Oh, just testing. Testing one, two, three. Yes! All right. Thanks, Aaron. All right. Let's look. Number one, everybody, prioritization. So, we have already in our toolkit the knowledge that families and children experiencing homelessness are a prioritized population. One of the best parts of this is that we have several different ways ... Now, you guys know how it works in our community. In Head Start, it's always based on what we know about the strengths and the needs of our community, and the context within our program. What both Kiersten and Dr. Bergeron were sort of nudging us into is, we know about our safe territories and tribes, we know what overarching ideas and regulations fit within those constructs, but within the federal performance standards, we also have this regulation. And I made a slide, everybody. 1302.14(a)(1). That gives us the opportunity to annually establish a selection criteria. And if you guys go off to look up this 1302.14(a)(1), you're going to find the language that supports the selection criteria process, but also, you get listed up here the families and children experiencing homelessness, this is where the foster care language comes in for selection, of course the child's age. It all lives within this regulation. So, we already have the opportunity, through our regulation, to stand on making sure that families experiencing homelessness are prioritized as part of your very own selection process. Of course, informed by your community assessment, what you know about your families and your children and your program. So, I feel like I want to say, "Can I get a 'whoop whoop?' " This is one of those things that is embedded, everybody, it's embedded in our system and it's so critical. And it's something that I know you're all taking advantage of. Thanks, Patrice. And that we probably, if we're being honest with each other, could take advantage of in a deeper way. So, these are some of the things we're going to pull apart. All right, so I want to see. Put in your vote. I feel like one of those game show hosts. Talk to us about your ERSEA policies. Now, depending on your geography, you may say ERSEA or ERSE-A, E-R-S-E-A. You guys know where I am. This whole enrollment recruitment period is when we're just getting to know families and their stories. We want to know, do your policies prioritize families experiencing homelessness? Now, we know we have just talked about the selection criteria. But have you followed it through? Have you been able to weave it in a way that is visible in your policies, in your mission, in your vision? I'm taking it a little further. You see me now, right? We want to see if this is happening. Now, some of you are ... Certainly, families experiencing homelessness have always been a priority for us. But now that we have all the pieces in place with the current version of the performance standard, this fresh, hot, brand-new, off-the-press IM, we're just

going to have a lot more to stand on here. So, what I see is an overwhelmingly big number of you that say, "Absolutely, yes, it's integrated already into our policies. We have it in language. We have in things like ... I'm just going to foreshadow a little here for you, like training or professional development, for all of our staff, because we all need to know the pieces of not only what qualifies families, but how they can be lifted up. And one of the parts that I think is most critical has already come up a couple of times today around trust, around being able to stand with families in a sensitive place when you're thinking about things together that bring big emotions. So, those are some of the other things that we're going to see. What we want to do is show you the poll, and close it out, so that you can see the results. And what we're seeing here is about 96 percent of you have already integrated the prioritization of families experiencing homelessness into your policies. So, that's exciting. There are several of you that are working on it. And that's great too, because what we find is ... I don't know if you guys have this, but when I was a Head Start director, we put a lot of stuff into practice, and then our policies caught up. You know, it's the vein of continuous quality improvement. If you haven't moved to that space yet, here's an opportunity. It looks like several folks have done it. Maybe there are folks in here that have great language that we can all learn from for those policies. We're going to transition back to the main view. So, if you're in mid-word as you're typing, don't lose track of your thought. We want to make sure that you have that. So, prioritization, number one. The general language about your selection criteria, here's the standard. And we also want to think about some best practices with you. Now, many of these things you guys have already integrated. And I don't about you, but when I was in a program and I heard other folks offering ideas that, you know we had already caught on to, or we'd integrated, or we were trying out, that gift was huge in and of itself. Sometimes, the gift of confirmation is as big and exciting as the gift of a brand-new idea. So, hopefully some of these will touch both of those for you, things that are confirming of your good, hard work, and things that might be a little nugget for you to consider that's new to you. So, a couple of things here, best practices. Of course, making sure that you have the data to support you in all of your endeavors as you walk to serve families experiencing homelessness. I've been in communities before where folks say things like, "We don't have a problem with homelessness," because stereotypically, it may not look like what folks have created in their own mind's eye or in their schema. So, we want to make sure that you guys have had the opportunity to think about what's really happening where you are in your service areas, and that you've been able to document it in a way that feels meaningful to you, that you can articulate to your stakeholders, and hold up in a very real way, and that you can lean into when you are really thinking about, for instance, like this selection criteria or even putting this new IM to use, you have the data to back you up. Also, here, you see the sufficient criteria for the points. That goes back to the selection criteria part so that as you guys are doing the points, I know we did that back in the Head Start program where I worked, that families experiencing homelessness get popped up to the top, and that you have that solid system and criteria in place, you know ahead of time. These are all the prepare pieces. Making sure that you have connections to community and other service providers that really have resources, connections, services, and otherwise as families need them in the moment they deserve them. Also, one of the biggest pieces I've already foreshadowed a little, that the preparation for the conversations with families cannot be underscored here. I think that Kiersten alluded to this a little earlier, but how do we really get in a space with families and

talk about their living situation and without ever even using the word "homelessness?" The word brings a lot of impact for folks when you hear it and you hold it. So, how can we have a conversation with families that's respectful, that's non-judgmental, that's non-stigmatizing, that really gets them in a place of sharing with that trust and the respect that we are always in the process of building and sustaining, that honors where they are and where they want to go as they are ready. So, let me pause here for just a quick second because I know that you guys have had things flying by in the chat. And I want to pause for a couple of my colleagues just to see if there's anything we need to list up here, or if we can go right on to strategy number two. As they're thinking, I also wanted to remind you guys, we are going to get hang out at least 15 minutes after the webinar ends. We have 90 whole minutes together, and then we hang out for some informal questions and dialog. So, feel free to stay for that. If we don't get to answer all the questions out loud, we really do try to keep track of those so that we can bring it back for you, if you have the extra minutes to hang out. Pausing for my colleagues.

Kiersten: I think we're doing good. We've had a couple of questions about ... Alexis King wanted to ask about, "Would families that are registered with FEMA be automatically eligible?" Again, the circumstances that are part of each family's living situation, we wouldn't be able to necessarily kind of answer this without understanding the whole circumstances. But when people lose housing suddenly ... Related to disasters, that usually falls into the McKinney-Vento definition. And then, Alyssa was wondering about a resource for defining homelessness. And we do have that. We have these interactive modules online that we, I think we have a reference to on the web link. We can provide it again. And it really walks program staff through how to think about what the definition is that we're required to use by law in Head Start, and what it means, and how we can use it.

Brandi: Kiersten, thank you for that nod. For those of you that haven't experienced it yet, if you click it, it's going to take you away from the screen. So, that's just a warning. You do have a box over to the left-hand side that says "web link." And if you click on the word "supporting children," and then you also click on the "browse to," it's going to take you away from this screen, and you're going to go over to our modules at ECLKC. And there are eight of them, as Dr. Bergeron mentioned. And those are the ones that she challenged us with nearly that year ago. And one of them is specifically focused on this dialog around the McKinney-Vento Act definition and its application. So, it's one of a few reasons that we're not delving deeply into that piece of this dialog today. But I do feel like we need to look at this second strategy because there's so much more good stuff to unpack with you guys. All right, so strategy one was prioritization. Strategy two, you guys know this one, we've heard you talking about it all over the place, this reserving slots piece. Not only do we get to use this reservation of slots to protect vacancies, but we also are able to help families seek services during the program year, even if it's outside of the typical recruitment enrollment period. So, let's look at the actual standard. You know how we do. We can't have any kind of conversation without looking at the citation. And this one is 1301.15(c). And this is a really critical one to look at about reserving slots. This goes right back to the community assessment, the beginning of all of our planning process. And it allows us the flexibility to hold no more than 3 percent of your funded enrollment can be reserved for families experiencing homelessness. Up to 3 percent. So, this is an exciting piece that we have, in terms of flexibility, to make sure that if we happen to meet a

family midstream, through our program year, that we have a space for them straight away, one. And two, that you are also in a place where you're not feeling, let's just be real everybody, vulnerable, because we know that another major priority, rightfully so, is about full enrollment. So, I think that this regulation, if I would humbly submit to each of you, is a great balance for both being able to serve our families experiencing homelessness in real time, and gives us, you know a great place to stand as we're constantly working towards full enrollment. I want to ask you a quick question here for reflection. As I know that you have a few questions coming in, too. We're tracking those. And we'll create some space to maybe answer one or two here as we transition. But one of the parts that we're wondering about with you guys is, what are some ways, for the greater good here, now that we're all family by now, we've been together about 45 minutes, what are some ways that you guys have been able to use this regulation in support of families experiencing homelessness? Now, remember, this is the 3 percent rule, the reservation of slots. Which ones are you ... How are you using this? What kinds of ways have you found success? We're going to give you a couple of minutes to type. And then we want to ... Oh, my gosh, Judy. Thank you. I see you working hard there. Judy, everybody, round of applause. Judy has corrected the citation on the last slide. See, it takes a village. It's true what they say about it. It is 1302.15. Thanks, Judy. About the 3 percent. We'll make sure that's updated for you guys, as well. I love how we hold each other up. [Laughter] Thank you. All right, what kinds of things?

Kiersten: Brandi, a lot of people have questions just about the way this regulation works, basically. And I'm seeing people asking about how long you can hold the slot. So, you know the regulation talks about up to 3 percent of funded enrollment. And you can reserve a slot for 30 days. And so, that's kind of considered a reserved slot. And then after 30 days, if the slot hasn't been filled, it becomes vacant. And then it's considered a vacant slot. And a vacant slot is how you deal with any vacant slot. You have 30 days to fill that. And so, you know some people do the math and think, "OK, I have 60 days." A lot of you are anxious to get those slots filled before the 30-day vacancy. But that's kind of the nuts and bolts of the regulation. And so, you know a lot of programs try to think creatively about how to work within that. And we're, you know, just as interested in kind of some of your brainstorming ideas on that as we are your ideas around things that you're doing already.

Brandi: Kiersten, I always appreciate you bringing your federal perspective into this. So, what you guys hear is a little bit of like the technical assistance and training sort of, you know, conversation of this. And then I'm so grateful that we have Kiersten on the line to really bring home sort of the federal slant to how this works. Because, of course, she's the only one that can do that with the connection to the regulation. So, I'm glad you're here, Kiersten. OK, and I'm seeing a couple of things in chat go by. I'm grateful, you know, Kiersten, for your clarification, especially about the 30 days, because in addition to the citation that Judy gave us, it's 1302.15, and the 3 percent, it does state very clearly in the reg about when slots aren't filled within that 30 days, as Kiersten mentioned, that that slot becomes vacant, and it must be filled in accordance of the other piece of that section. So, give that a peep again if you're getting inspired about how to put this to work for you. And revisit what that looks like. And rejuvenate the conversations if you're looking at it as a potential option for you in your program. OK. Let's look at a couple ... Hi, Jennifer.

Jennifer Olson: Hi, Brandi. I noticed that Samantha mentioned that they reserve center-based Head Start and Early Head Start slots located right outside of the family homeless shelter. That's kind of an innovative thought here. Someone else ... Debra's saying, "We also use the rule for children in foster care." And then we have some more questions. We move on to get fully enrolled. Wow, there's some good ideas popping up on the screen.

Brandi: These are excellent, Jennifer. And I love that innovation that we're seeing. And, just so you guys know, in case you find things in the chat that you, you know, want to go back to, when we record and archive, the chat's available for you as well. So, you can always reference that later. If things are flying by much too quickly for your preference. We'll be able to turn this around. Yes, KB, what you thinking?

Kiersten: Just to clarify, too, like, you know, programs are required to maintain full enrollment at all times. That's, like, what the act says. And so, when we put the regulations out ... The reserving slots was an attempt to allow a little bit of flexibility in a, you know, fairly unflexible requirement. So, the most important part to always keep in mind is that programs are required to be fully enrolled at all times. And so, ... Probably should have just said that first and foremost.

Brandi: Thank you for that, Kiersten. All right, well let's look at many of the things that you guys have in chat below. Let's look at a couple others that we've collected from you over time. And some of you have already listed these up. I mean, you're working not only within your local program but certainly your community stakeholders to make sure that 3 percent is reserved. Lots of relationships. So, we just saw, Jennifer ... I saw that you listed this one up, the part about relationships with shelters or other homeless service providers that not only streamline referral and enrollment, but sometimes offer a one-stop shop, if you will, for families so that they don't have to travel outside of the space of the shelter, that we're actually gifting services right in the midst of that community partner space. And certainly, here, referrals, and making sure that we're coordinated so that we can stay within that 30-day time frame, and that slot doesn't become vacant again. Kiersten, back to your nod about the full enrollment being the bottom line exclamation point requirement. I want to pause here one more time, before we move on to strategy three, to make sure none of our colleagues want to lift up a question or a comment before we transition.

Kiersten: A couple of the examples of things that I've heard that programs do are they use other ... Even within 30 days and the 30 days to fill after the 30 days of reserving, programs looking for, you know, other alternatives because they really want to serve these families and children. And so, some programs have ... If they have different funding sources coming in like Pre-K Dollars or different funding sources, they are able to use those dollars more flexibly, so they might reserve slots with those dollars. Some programs will over-enroll and make sure that they are still meeting space and ratio requirements. But that over-enrollment allows them to have a little more flexibility in using the reserving slots regulation. So, those are just a couple of other ideas.

Brandi: And Kiersten, I really, and Antoine mentioned something I think that's very important here about, it's not just about enrollment. And Antoine, you're exactly right. This is the focus of this conversation today. But we are going to be sort of sticking a toe and maybe a leg into the places and spaces in this conversation, too, about services for and with families experiencing homelessness. Because it doesn't just stop here. You're exactly right. This part is exciting because we have some flexibility, we have some opportunity here that some of us are hoping that we can take better advantage of. But this is a larger conversation that we're going to continue over the next two webinars in this series, as well. So, I'm really glad that you lifted that up.

Kiersten: There was another question, and then we can move on, Brandi, about if you have like an application to hold a spot, can you just hold the spot for specific areas of your program? And that's a really interesting question. Probably good to just update your policies and procedures to show that if you are going to do that, that that's very planful and intentional. And so, at what point do you circle back to the application, or what updates do you need to make periodically? So, just to show that that is actually your strategy, and not that your application is just ... You want to show that you're revisiting that. And also, just that grantees can consider and develop their own policies and procedures to make sure that they're documenting. But we're not really regulating the documentation, but it's always just a good practice. When you're coming up with creative strategies to implement these regs to just be able to articulate your process for how much you want to prioritize these families and why you've made the decisions that you have. And that goes for, you know, any kind of out-of-the-box thinking with regulation. You just want to be able to show how you're thinking about prioritizing those families.

Brandi: Thank you for that, Kiersten. I've seen a couple other questions that we're keeping track of as we go along. And given that ... I can't believe that we only have, like 30 minutes left already. I want to bump us along to strategy three. And for that, I'm going to turn it over to Jennifer.

Jennifer: Thank you so much, Brandi. And I'm so excited to see how in the chat room, people are really responding to each other. That's just so much who we are as a Head Start community, Early Head Start community, supporting and lifting each other up, and answering questions for each other. So, thank you for all of this interaction that's happening in chat. So, now we have strategy number three, and that's eligibility. Children experiencing homelessness are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment. And no other criteria are necessary to establish that. I just think it's so important. This is a light touch for us today because we wanted to absolutely, for sure reference it, and here is our standards, which you, 2.12, etc., so that you're aware of that very specific language of this in that standard. And so, this allows us, because it's a lighter touch, to ask you in a reflection poll, how comfortable is your program in using the McKinney-Vento Act definition for ERSEA practice? Oh, my gosh. I'm already seeing. Oh, my gosh. You guys are such quick poll-takers. This is very wonderful. And so, we're getting some ... Watch as they come in. We're thinking about, now, how comfortable you are using the McKinney-Vento definition? Because as we travel around the country, we do hear some questions about whether or not it applies in your setting and how it's interpreted and it's easy to say that you prioritized it. But now, are you really using it, applying it? Are your staff trained on it. All of those things as we think about comfortability with using it. So, we're watching those

numbers go up. And people are putting "very comfortable." I see on this chat room response. Using it and applying it. Great, great, great.

Brandi: And Jennifer, I'm seeing folks have caught on to our alphabet soup. MK, that's the ... Stands for the McKinney-Vento Act definition. We had to abbreviate a little here so you could see every word on the screen. But it looks like many of you are feeling pretty good about the application of the definition.

Jennifer: Although, I'm so glad for those 30 percent of you already that have said, "We're using it, but there may be some opportunity to improve." So, I'm so glad that you shared that. And maybe in the chat, you can say some of those challenges that you may still be facing about opportunities to improve how you use it. And, again, we, of course, want to refer back to those modules all the time because there's all sorts of strategies in there for implementing the definition, not just describing what the definition is. So, that's modules one, two, and three that would be really helpful to you if you're thinking about opportunities ... For improvement. So, let's show the results. Can they see the 63 percent have said that they're very comfortable? And 33 percent are using it, but there's opportunity to improve. And as I said before, feel free to put in the chat room ideas that you might have about improvement. Let's look at some best practices around eligibility. All of you that are so comfortable with it already, I'm sure you have some other ideas you can give us today. But some of the ones that we came up with was to create a protocol for ensuring families experiencing homelessness are not required to submit income, in addition to verification of homelessness status. So, it's really streamlining your paperwork and making sure that your ERSEA practices absolutely do not over-require parents to submit more information than is needed. And then provide a flexible enrollment practice. Home visits at shelters, many of you have mentioned working at shelters until the family is more settled in to new housing. And so, those are some best practices that we've seen of great value. And please feel free to put into the chat room other strategies and best practices that you're using, as far as eligibility, and we'll take note of those.

Brandi: Miss Jennifer, I know there's a question to go back to, the citation slide, so you guys can see here the numbers. I don't know, Judy, if you're still on, you check us. You come behind us and you make sure we got this one proper for the eligibility pieces. So, I wanted to make sure to do that while we were close, Sally, since you had asked for that.

Jennifer: Thank you. And I see it in the chat that some programs maybe are wondering about this. So, thank you, Brandi, for bringing us back to that. So, it's 1302.12(c)(1)(iii) And it's right in that definition where they talk about foster care. Eligibility requirements, the family's income is equal to or below the poverty line. Families are eligible for, in the absence of child care, TANF. Child is homeless is the third one. And they define in part 1305. Okey-dokey. Looking at our time, do we want to move on now to strategy four. And this strategy, we're going to spend a little longer today on, because verification, as we travel again and listen to you, we understand that this is a really important strategy. So, let's look at it. It references the fact that Head Start programs can adopt documentation and verification policies that allow flexibility for families. And a couple of the factors that contribute to the need for this strategy are, the informal or emergency situations make it difficult for families to provide those critical documents. And also, as importantly, families may feel fearful or uncertain about what will happen if they share

information about that housing, which could be unstable. So, as we think about your program's procedures for verifying housing status and how we might be sensitive to a family's circumstance or fear, we have some reflection questions. But first, dah-dah-dah, here is our standard. And I will leave it right up there on the screen so that people can reference it if they're wondering about this one or have some questions about it. Let me just rest there for a second so people can jot that down before I move on to our reflective question.

Brandi: Well, Miss Jennifer, this might be a good place, also, to ... I know that the sound is ... The techno-glitches are ever-present everywhere. We'll work on it for you guys. ... But I'm grateful that you're letting us know when you're having that issue, in the chat. But Miss Jennifer, ... You let everybody get the citation here. Do you want to take us over to the question? Or do you guys think there's more to pull out here with the actual language from the standard?

Jennifer: No, I think you're right, Brandi. Let's move on over to our question for reflection. This is the one we selected for you today. What strategies have you incorporated into the documentation of your ERSEA process that ensure families are treated with dignity and respect? So, we're coming back to that issue of families maybe feeling a little bit uncertain or fearful about what will happen. And we alluded to this when Kiersten talked earlier about trust. And Brandi brought that up as one of the most critical issues that families sometimes need to feel very comfortable and safe with us before they can share information about housing circumstances. And so, when you're thinking about families coming into the program, around enrollment, what strategies might you use to make sure that families are treated with dignity and respect?

Brandi: Oh, Erna, listening to their story with no judgment.

Jennifer: Oh, that's beautiful.

Brandi: It is. And it's a gift. And it's hard to do. I would humbly submit that we come to this work as folks who have a heart to serve. And even with our best intentions, sometimes we can get in our own selves' way with, you know, doing exactly the simplicity and the power of what you mentioned, just listening with no judgment, no stigma. [Overlapping conversation]

Jennifer: Someone said, you know, they treat all families with dignity and respect. And of course. And that's just such an important reminder. That is what we want, judgment-free zones.

Brandi: Well, and I was thinking, what does that actually look like? I mean, as you guys are crafting that environment, I mean, you guys know the PFCE framework. There's whole element in the pink column of the framework that's called "program environment." This is very much where we were taking folks, even with that sentiment. How do you create this space where people know it's a safe spot with sanctuary for them, not only for them, but for their littlest ones, their most precious gift. What does it look like? What does it sound like? These kinds of things feel like lip service sometimes. But when you're in a space where you are worried about where you might be resting your head that night, or you're worried about, you know, as you guys mentioned, will I need to be transient in a certain way, you know, in the next few days? These are things that are extremely powerful and useful not only in developing but sustaining

the relationship so the families feel connected to another individual. We know that that makes a difference. And I have to tell you guys, I really believe that we do it better than anybody.

[Laughter]

Jennifer: Yeah. Did you see where Amy is saying that we call them families in transition? That's a very interesting phrase. Yeah! Yeah!

Brandi: You know, Amy, it makes me think about the ... I love this because it makes me think about the family outcome that is in the blue column of the framework, family engagement in transitions. And we really tried to write that in a way that was broad, not only with a pregnant mama, expectant family, they transition to Early Head Start. But so many of you across the country have taught us that you take our definitions and then you make them specific to where you are, and what makes the most sense for you. Like, our migrant and seasonal colleagues taught us, you know, that in their programs, they extend that definition even further for transitions since the families are following the crops and the seasons and maybe crossing state lines and coming back, so that we can honor where the family is as they're ready. And also, Amy, what I love about this is that you're really giving the space for families to ask questions about, "What does that mean?" And you kind of come into that understanding together.

Jennifer: Yeah. And I saw, also, translation services and sensitivity to culture. But, Kiersten, I think that you are thinking about a comment here, too, I noticed. Did you want to comment on this now?

Kiersten: I'm just watching all this information fly by, these practices.

Jennifer: Yeah, this is exciting. ... Keep going. Keep going. Yeah. OK. Well, as you continue to put your own best practices into that chat room, you know, I want to go ahead and slide over to the best practices that we wanted to talk about today. Most importantly, it's about the person and not that paperwork. You know, it's just so critical to ... Keep that in mind, and it's so evident that you are thinking about that all the time in your comments today. Be open and compassionate. And it has protocol to verify the living situations. We want to have you think about, going back and making sure that those relationships with the homeless service provider, school personnel, other service agencies are intact and being used to make it easier and much more efficient to get documentation on living situations. So, we can now, I think, move on to ... The extension of this strategy, which is thinking about families that are currently enrolled. Because as we all know, we know that we think about this when we're enrolling families in the first place. But what about those families who become homeless or have living situations that are not what they expected when they are already enrolled in our program? So, staff are in a unique position to notice changes in family members that might signify a new living situation. And in this case, we can hopefully be assured that they already have an established relationship and a history of problem solving, and that they can trust and support each other through this process. So, when we think about currently enrolled, we want to remember best practices contains the fact that families may not actually recognize that their new living situation makes them eligible for additional resources. And this has become such a sensitive conversation, as Brandi talked about earlier, preparing for these kinds of conversations and talking about them with your staff when they're going to happen. So, when a family shares changes in a living situation with staff member -- I mean it might even be a bus driver, home visitor, or a teacher --

the information needs to be handled with care. And we want to be sure to provide the family with opportunities to access additional resources. But we also have to consider the sensitivity of this. And a big, big takeaway here is to realize that the families really may not see themselves as homeless, and their beliefs or values that are sort of associated with multi-generational housing might influence their response. Their move might actually be supported by and welcomed by larger family members, family members in the larger [Inaudible]. And we might have to begin a conversation with, "From what you've told me, I'm thinking about this, that you might qualify for additional support if you're interested."

Brandi: Well, you can see that you guys have hit a passion point here with us. I think there's something really critical to lift up, and you guys beat us to it here. The connection to culture, and not only our individual cultures, our familial cultures, our group cultures, our universal cultures. There are pieces here that we need to be thoughtful about and having conversations as families choose to live with the larger generations that are connected to themselves and their little ones. And I think, Jennifer, what you're saying here about one, the connection to families who are seeking services that we can prioritize, you know, based on all the strategies we've already lifted up. But I know that we've always craved, in our community, to be more intensive with our follow up and enhance our follow-up practices for families who are currently enrolled. So, I get excited to think about what this might look like in conversation as we've built those trusting relationships, and how families are going to be more open to share with us. And we can think together with them about where they want to go, based on the vision for their family and their own readiness. But let me pause there. Kiersten, take it away.

Kiersten: Well, I do think it's interesting that we put, you know, all these practices under verification. But really, I think we're just trying to suggest how important it is to keep our relationships and communications open with families so that we can be helpful at any point during a program year. You know, we tend to think in verification more about those practices and procedures that, you know, help you understand a family situation for enrollment. And as far as ... Just to close out the verification discussion, I think, you know, it's important to consider all of the different categories in the process. A lot of times, I think staff maybe just come to income first and start the conversation around income. And they're so used to doing that that they don't realize that, actually, if they open up the conversation, it could be more about other situations where they would be identifying as homeless, for example, or a foster parent. But I do think that ... There's this misunderstanding that families experiencing homelessness aren't automatically eligible. They are automatically eligible. ... I encourage everybody to read the verification regulation specifically to see how that can be done. But it doesn't include showing necessarily an income statement. So, just wanted to add that to the conversation.

Jennifer: Thank you so much, Kiersten. Let's move on to strategy five. So, this is all about the grace period. And when a child has been determined to be homeless or experiencing homelessness, the program must allow a child to attend for up to 90 days, or as long as allowed under the state licensing requirements, without immunization and other records, and to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. So again, we're doing a light touch on this one because this is one that is so cut and dry that we would expect that this one should be easily implemented. But we will learn from you. And let's see what reference this is to the

standards, 1302.15(e) and 1302.16(c)(1). As we contemplate that, let's do a reflection poll. So, here's our reflection poll. Are children allowed to attend while health records are being obtained? Let's see what you say to this one. And, again, we knew that this is a light touch one, but it's so important to remember to put all the strategies in that help families maintain access and participation in our programs. So, we didn't want to leave something out. And I see a little bit of variation in the numbers this time. So, people are asking, "Kiersten, what's the correct answer to this question?" They're saying, "I'd like to know the correct answer." Are there are answers that could be other than "yes?"

Kiersten: Well, I mean ultimately, it does relate to, yes, and what are the state requirements around licensing? ... There's a lot of different state policy related to child care development funds policy, as well as state licensing that can kind of affect this for some programs. So, it's just different based on the ... State you live in. But I think the most important thing here is really just to acknowledge that wherever possible, children are enrolled, you know, while this information is being collected. That's the aim. That's the aim. But sometimes there are situations ...

Jennifer: So, we have 68 percent, 70 percent saying "yes." And others are saying "most of the time," and "some of the time," depending on the circumstances. And Kiersten has clarified for that. That might be actually state licensing standards that are doing that. So, I'll let you continue to answer the poll. Let me move on to some best practices. So, best practice relates directly to letting children attend while immunization and other health records are being obtained. And, of course, that's dependent on your state licensing standards. Assist families with obtaining required documentation. So, give families the support that they need to actually find that documentation or find a health home that can help them with that documentation. Establish interagency agreements for sharing documentation between all providers of resources for families so we can move that along efficiently for families, which is what we're going to do with our strategies, as well, Brandi, let's go to six.

Brandi: But before we transition, I do want to pop back to the citations. We had a quick question to do that so you guys can capture these for strategy five and the grace period. These are in bold at the bottom here for you. There are two. And I have to say, the second one of these actually speaks also a bit to attendance. ... And it's actually a very nice segue way for us to look at strategy six. But I want to make sure that you guys have what you needed from the citations on five. All right. Let's look at six. I'm trying to be mindful. You guys said that when I talk, you have to turn down the volume. So, hopefully, I eased you into that transition more thoughtfully than before. That's just the story of my life. Strategy six. I actually really appreciate this piece. I'm going to go ahead and put up the standards right up front so you guys can see them at the bottom in bold. Really, this part talks about how we have the opportunity to create that space of safety and sanctuary. And I add another "S" word there in stability. The performance standards allow us requirements that really wrap around the children and the families to make sure that their services are not disrupted. Now, you guys caught this earlier on. You saw our note about, it's the person, and it is about the process. The person first, and not necessarily the paperwork. Now, we know we have regulations. We've got to abide by those. But what is going to be in the best interest of the family and the child? What kinds of things can we do to help wrap around them, as they're ready for us to do that, in transitions and to ensure

continuity? Like, if a family has absences for a little bit, ... And we're always mindful of our attendance numbers, as we ought to be, right. What can we do to make sure that families experiencing homelessness have extra consideration, have as much flexibility as we can offer, and in ways that are actually meaningful to their situation? So, this is one that I actually am really grateful for because not only are we thinking about the transitions themselves as families choose to move on, but also, within the context of our program structure. The other part, you know, we want to look at the best practices here, as well. Folks have taught us over time that they're doing things like creating an early alert system. So, a tickler system, if you will. Put time to catch if kids' attendance, health, development, or anything related to their learning is not been complete or if there's a problem so that we can follow up with the families straight away to help blaze those trails, or to help facilitate transportation, you know, all the things that are very organic to us. That's part of almost a preventative measure so that we catch it up front before it gets too far gone. We can see here, and we do this so well, about the facilitation of this new transition, whether it's within our service area or outside of it, making sure that we're able to transfer records and communication. Also, many of you have gotten very sophisticated and concrete with yourselves to create actual formal memorandum of understanding, to make sure that you have connections to the places where your families may be moving to so that you can help with those pieces around connections and helping families feel comfortable as they do that. There are a few more here we wanted to make sure you guys can take a peek at. These, I think, are really exciting because they inspire some new thinking, in my humble opinion. But, certainly, many of us work together across our program service areas, so making sure that we can bring in, for instance, if a family comes from another grantee, child health files. Think about what we can transfer so the family doesn't have to try to do all of those things over again. Making sure that, in the places that we can, that families use electronic data records so that maybe those can be transferred, whether they're going to, you know a new health facility or we're helping their transition. And then, here's the last one around making sure that we are supportive and helping families who might be relocated due to experiencing homelessness. And these are all the things that we often have ready and in order around transportation, whether that's with our public schools, other community agencies. Many of us use vouchers. There are, you know, different kinds of programs that we have locally for access to cars and other transportation. These are just some ideas. And I see that you guys are sharing a few in the chat, as well. And I want to make sure that we get to the very last one because this is a bit of a tease for where we're going to pick up in webinar two, which is around professional development and some staff wellness. Certainly, we have this requirement for training around the pieces of not only the modules, which you see linked in down there at the bottom and in your web link pod off to the side, but we have the awesome opportunity here to really think about how we not only apply the McKinney-Vento Act in real practice, but also how we -- and this is the language that comes from the slide you saw earlier -- we incorporate strategies for treating families with dignity, respect, and for dealing with the very real issues that we all experience, whether that's domestic violence, stigma, substance misuse, as Dr. Bergeron mentioned earlier. These are the places where we want staff ... And it was Antoine earlier who mentioned, it's not just about enrollment. There's a spectrum beyond what that looks like as we walk alongside families once they are partners within our program. So, let me pause here, because I want to show you guys a couple of things. And then, of course, I promise also ... Oh,

citation, I want to make sure you have that. 1302.12.(m)(1)(ii). Magdalena, I think this training piece and the professional development part, if we could integrate this into conversations, you know, anytime that we get together as colleagues, I think it's just so critical because one, it allows each of us to find a comfortability in having the conversation and not feeling worried ourselves that we're going to stumble over wrong words or that we're going to be in a place that doesn't hold a family close in safety. It's just the more that we have a chance to think about it together, the better we all are. So, high five! I'm with you. All right, so let me show you a couple of things as we close out in the last couple of minutes. Now remember that we are going to hang out here for a little bit and answer a couple of questions. We have had a ton of them fly through. And we're strategizing about ways that we might get some answers back to you guys. So, stay tuned for a little bit more on that. But, I just wanted to offer these on the screen so that you can see, of course, training on de-stigmatization, the connection to community partners so that you're really bringing everybody in, even on language. Kiersten kicked us off with that. We use family-first language. It's families experiencing homelessness. I'm not defined by my situation. I'm not defined by my journey at that point in time. We're defined by who we are as individuals. So, we want our language to support that. And then, of course, embedding it everywhere and anywhere that we can. All right, let me show you guys this, cause this is where we've been. Look at what we've done. Let's see some virtual high fives, everybody. We've gone through seven strategies. We have experienced that there is a brand-new IM out there in support of all the work that you are doing in terms of supporting families who are experiencing homelessness. And guess what? You still have the modules if you want to have a refresher, if you want to check these out for the first time, these are over on our page on the ECLKC. The link is off to the left-hand side in your web link pod. And guess what? We're actually not finished. We know that not only do we have the Home at Head Start campaign. Look you guys! You have to tell us if you see yourself in one of these pictures. So many of you have completed all eight of these modules. And you send in your pictures with your certificates to Dr. Bergeron. And we get those and we get excited about these. So, keep up the good work. You can always revisit them anytime you would like to. And we love to hear your success stories in coming through all eight of those. And we're not finished, everybody. Come back and see us Nov. 14. We're going to continue the conversation around professional development and also, in December, we already have a very exciting lineup for you guys on the conversation connection to community and outreach as it relates to families experiencing homelessness. So, make sure you mark your calendars and come back and visit and tell us what you're done since then. Also, what we're going to do is I'm going to offer an official goodbye. We are going to be putting the ... You probably notice you have a new handout pod off to the side, which is the PDF version of the slides, as many of you are asking. We are going to say an official goodbye. But we are going to hang out for about 15 minutes now to chat and take some more questions. So, if you have a few more minutes to hang out, we are excited to spend the time with you. And enjoy the rest of your day. Thank you so much for choosing to spend time with us in this conversation. And thank you so much for the incredible work you do every day. It's an inspiration to each of us. Thank you, guys. Enjoy the rest of your day. And we'll hang out and take questions.