

## Community Partnerships for Family Engagement in the Transition to Kindergarten

Brandi Black Thacker: Well, guys, so here's what we've come together to bring today. This is our webinar on Community Partnerships for Family Engagement, specifically with a notion of transition to kindergarten. We're going to be thinking about – as I said, as promised, as advertised – that the transition to kindergarten, but in the context of this larger conversation, we're all thinking right now about what this is going to look like in times of social distancing and in regular times. My name is Brandi Black Thacker, and it's great to be with you guys today. I'm the Director of T&TA in collaboration for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. I'm going to turn it over to a couple of my colleagues to introduce themselves. Take it away, Dr. Richard. Dr. Guylaine L. Richard: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Brandi. I know she was going to do this, and it's a pleasure really for me to be with you this afternoon. Welcome, everyone, I am Guylaine Richard, and I am the Director of Training Development at the National Center. And I am going to let Leslie Maxfield, one of our training senior specialists introduce herself. Leslie Maxfield: Thanks, Dr. Richard. My name is Leslie Maxfield, and I'm a senior trainer with the National Center. And I'm excited to be here today because I love the topic of transition. And I'd like to welcome one of our colleagues from another National Center.

Rilee Larsen: Hey, my name is Rilee Larsen. I'm an early childhood content specialist at Cultivate Learning with the University of Washington, and we work in partnership with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. I'm currently the lead content developer for the transition to kindergarten initiative with the Office of Head Start. And I'm really excited to be here. I'll pass it on to Kiersten Beigel.

Kiersten Beigel: Thank you, Rilee. My name is Kiersten Beigel, and I work at the Office of Head Start. I'm the Lead for the Office on Family Support, Family Well-being, and Family Engagement. It's great to be here today.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Kiersten. It's an honor anytime we have the pleasure of having you with us. But on this topic in particular, I know you're going to come back to us here in a little bit and give us some context from the federal perspective. But before you do, what I'd love to do is get folks grounded in where we are in this Community Engagement Webinar Series. Some of you joined us back in March when we kicked off this series around how to strengthen family well-being and specifically through what we call these engaged community partnerships, or if you let us say it that way we'd like, it's putting the unity in community. [Laughter]

And we've gathered together today to, as both Leslie and Rilee have alluded to, really stand in a space of transition to kindergarten. And given where we are right in this moment in time, we know what an important transition this is, not only for our littlest ones but certainly their grown-up counterparts that come along with them. So, we want to think about it today, not only in a few ways that you always do in the Head Start community but certainly, hopefully

offering a few new nuggets, given where we are and how we're hoping to be super supportive of and with our families as we make this transition together. And then, come back and see us in June. We're going to be hosting the third and final in the community webinar series that will be focused specifically on partnering with child welfare organizations, and many of you have been looking forward to that one for a while and it has certainly come up in conversation across your states, tribes, and territories, so we'll be looking forward to sharing time with you then. Don't forget that we do something that is pretty unique. We love to hang out, so we make each of these conversations 90 minutes, but my favorite part [Laughter] is the after chat, which is we hang out if we didn't get to some of the things that you're wondering about during the proper course of our 90 minutes together. The facilitators and certainly Kiersten stay with us, so we can think and talk together for the greater good because certainly, that's one of the many gifts that we receive from you and your thought process and the things that you're doing out there. But we also hope to offer a few things for you to consider along the way too, so if you have the moments to stay after, please do. We'd love to have you.

And with that, gosh, there's so much to talk about. Here's what we've planned for you guys today in the way of the learning objectives. You guys know who we are. We can't begin any conversation without grounding the work in the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. And for those of you that know it, you'll know where the language around transition lives, but Dr. Richard is going to take us through that here in just a little bit. We're going to think about some strategies for not only maintaining but sustaining those relationships that we worked so hard to cultivate not only with our families but with those receiving schools that they're going to be transition and over to. We have some great practices that we've collected over time that, really, we want to lift up and celebrate, one, because I totally believe in Head Start. We just are so good at this. We do it just ... OK, it's just us friends. We do it better than anybody else. [Laughter] So, we want to highlight some of those sorts of confirmation, but we also have some new ideas maybe for you to consider as well with ways of success in terms of the Head Start kindergarten partnerships. And also, we want to leave you with some resources, in case you want to do some further digging after we leave each other today.

With all of that, before I turn it over to Kiersten, I'd like to just touch on a few key messages, a little anticipatory guidance here, if you will, about where we want to take our conversation today. One, when we get the chance to create that safe and trusting relationship alongside families, we all benefit. When we parallel how we do that with families and that filters out, or ripples out, if you will, and how we are with community partners, it increases the likelihood for all of us that those transitions are going to be successful. But we have to be real too, guys. I mean, I have a 7-year-old little boy, so we went through this not so long ago, and it's fresh, fresh. Transitions can be hard, but guess what? We know about that. We know what they look like. We know how to facilitate that connection, that warm handoff. We know how to guide families in a way that predicts for them what's going to happen next. So, there's a deep comfort in what that looks and sounds like. And it strengthens our relationship with them and our receiving schools along the way. And then last, I feel like I'm kind of preaching, singing to the choir. When we work together, it's just a win-win for everybody. But you know where we stand.

We stand in service. So, the thing that we hold the most is how this looks and feels for families and their children as they leave us and go on to their next exciting adventure. And speaking of adventures, [Laughter] I'm just going to turn it over to Kiersten so that she can give us some perspective from her federal position at the Office of Head Start and some of those updates.

Kiersten: Yeah, so as far as Office of Head Start-related updates, a couple of things to let everybody know about. First of all, of course, is the CARES Act funding that appropriated \$750 million to Head Start programs to support children who've been experienced, school disruption of services during the time of the pandemic to essentially supplement, summer school. And so, programs are receiving those funds in the month of June and may begin to provide services during the summer months, including through center-based or family childcare home-based and possibly even virtually. But I think it's really important to think about that we are in a position to really help these kids transition to kindergarten. I also, you know, wanted to remind people who don't know that the Director of the Office of Head Start, Dr. Bergeron, has a really important initiative going that relates to transition to kindergarten and strengthening Head Start's relationships with local schools. And so, the Office of Head Start has a number of different things going on in that regard. There is a partnership with the Association for Elementary School Principals, so working with superintendents to improve transitions from Head Start into elementary school, and we have a memorandum of understanding signed with the Superintendents Association. We have many, many Head Start collaboration directors who are running transition to kindergarten summit to help strengthen those kinds of transition practices, and we also have a lot of training and technical assistance by the Development, Teaching, and Learning Center and, of course, your very own Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Center. So, be on the lookout for social media and texting services, and information, My Peers, that really highlight important resources for programs to use to support children and families in the transition to kindergarten, and many of those are universal type strategies and also remote strategies for programs who are remaining closed.

I always have the fun job of highlighting the performance standards on any given or important topic we do a webinar on. And so, I wanted to draw folks' attention to some important policy connections. On the subject of transitions, now, you've long known that you've had requirements related to coordinating with your local public schools and looking for ways to provide continuity for children and families, get to know kindergarten teachers, share information about children's progress, do any kinds of activities that are going to support young learners as they move into kindergarten. So, that's another area that you have been focused over the many years. But in the Every Student Succeeds Act, through the ESSA, there's a newer requirement in the last few years, since that legislation was enacted, that requires educational programs to systematically coordinate with Head Start to work on their own MOA, or Memorandum of Agreement, to outline a plan to share student information and to coordinate around family engagement opportunities. So, that's really important to keep in mind that there is a two-way policy opportunity there. That didn't always be the case. And so now I'd like to turn things back over. Thanks for letting me check in with everybody.

Dr. Richard: Thanks, Kiersten, for giving us such wonderful updates and also establishing the connections for us. But I am really excited now to explore with you transition as what it is really. A lot of us understand transition as being an event because this is something that is happening in our life when a child is transitioning to kindergarten. We look at it as an event. But we would love for us to look at transition now as a process. And with that, I would love to rely on that wonderful quote by William Bridges, where change that happened, during a transition, there is change, but "change is external." This is the thing that people see. This is the thing that people can let us know. This is an adjustment. This is what is happening to us. But transition really is an internal process. It's what I go to. It's what I feel. It's what is really making me accept or deny that change. So, we would like to anchor our conversation this afternoon on the framework. As you know, this is our theory of change. This is our pathway for change. This is the way we are understanding how engagement gets done, and how we build relationships, and how we get outcomes. So, what we ... As you know, the first ... If we were only leaning to on the arrow, you would see that the things that are making transition usually very successful are the way you're looking at positive, goal-oriented relationships and the way that you also doing that with fairness in mind, with inclusiveness, meaning ... And really when we talk about transition, the word inclusiveness comes to mind as a strong one because it is the way for us to understand that families ... As we think that when we are moving a child from one platform to another or from one program to another or even when a child is moving from Head Start to kindergarten, the transition is transitioning the child, but really, the entire family is experiencing those changes, and making sure that they are part of that transition is very important. And really, like cultural and linguistic responsiveness, I don't need to say much about it, how it is important for us to pay attention while any transition, and mainly when we are doing the transition to kindergarten for knowing where are those children ... When the children are leaving us and going to another classroom, is the setting that they're going to have conducive to where they are. For example, you may have a child in Head Start, which will speak Spanish, and we know coming to another center where, or coming to a school system where Spanish is not going to be experiencing people speaking Spanish with them. That may be bringing some changes. Yes, that may change, but the internal thing that child is going to feel is important for us to pay attention, so cultural and linguistic responsiveness. So, I am not ... All of us, we know that, at program, we do the work that we're doing and one of them is in order for us to get outcome. And as you see, outcome, when we thinking about outcome, one of the outcome that, in the framework that, we focus on is family engagement in transition. So, when we working with those families, we want them not only to transition their child so their child can be successful in kindergarten and in life, but also themselves. They can also focus on the transition and be successful themselves.

OK, so when we're thinking about this transition, we know that we don't do transition alone. Transition is a process that is going to involve others, and one of the things that we know, we have other community partners. Just thinking about the transition to kindergarten, for example, you know there is a partner that you have, which is the school system. So, I would like to take a quick moment to define community engagement again for us so we can anchor ourselves on what it means. Community engagement refers to the mutually respectful, strength-based interaction that Head Start and Early Head Start staff and families have with the community members and agencies at all levels. This partnership, as we are establishing them,

supports the parent's role as valued community members and their progress toward their goals for themselves and their children. So, the success of the child is in mind, success of the families is in mind. You need to be in a position where you have partners that understand what does this mean for the family to be successful, what does it mean for that child to be successful. So, they can reach their maximum potential. So, I would like to really have us also be very mindful of when we are looking at community engagement, we look at it with three priorities in mind. The reason why I'm saying that three priorities, it's like the thing that we do when we engage partners in the work that we do, we may do it to serve, for example, individual families, individual families in Head Start and Early Head Start. For example, the family may have a goal and, you know, you need to reach to a partner in that community to support this particular, this unique goal that this family have or some of your families may have. So, this is when we do find, for example, the family partnership agreement we are looking at, OK, what do you want to do for a family? And who do we need? Who do we have in the community as partner to support you? But also, we have the second priorities when we talk about families in Head Start and Early Head Start, which are more than one family. So, now we are, as a program, you are going to be focusing on what those families need, what is that group of family needs. So, you can go to a partner and say, "You know what, those are the families that I have, that have this need. And I know you have the resources, and I know you have the knowledge, and I know you have the expertise, so can you help us support those families?"

And another priority may be for you to focus on all families, meaning all families, not only the families that are in your program but families that are living in that community. For example, when you are thinking as a program to enhance a park, for example, to enhance a park because the park was having a lot ... You were worried about substance misuse around the park. So, you're not doing that to support only one family or a group of families but you're supporting all the families in this community, whether they are in your program or not. So, therefore, those families, this is one. When you thinking about community engagement, you are looking at what can we do as partners to come up not only to support the need of one or many, a group of families, but also all families in this community. So, you can better this community. So, as I said, when one of the outcome that we are focusing on is engagement in transition, and the way we define it in the framework is that parents and families are encouraged and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environment with them and between Early Head Start, Head Start, Early Childhood Elementary School, Early Elementary Grades, and beyond. So, you can understand that transition ... I like to emphasize, again, that transition is a transition of the child, but the transition that may happen is transition of the entire family, the whole unit. What does the research say then? We understand that transition is effective and make a difference when they are initiated early. So, that means even if you have an Early Head Start and Head Start, the way you transition that child from Early Head Start to Head Start may have a great impact on how the family sees transition being done and how the child is experiencing transition. And also, when you solve the transition early, meaning you put everything in place so they can experience that transition in a way where they are calm about it, they see their input in it, they see the efficiency of it. So, therefore that helps. You cannot wait until the person is ready to leave and you say, "OK, this is transition time." Transition, and I like to say myself when I was earlier saying, when I was a director, I used to

say, "Transition start when the person enters your program really." If you know how to get them in, you need to be mindful of how you're going to get them out.

So, another point that is important in making the difference is tailoring your transition process to the culture, language, and learning needs of each individual children and their families. We cannot transition for ... Remember, we say transition is a process, so everybody's going to experience it a different way. So, paying attention and individualizing your transition process to the needs of individual families is very important. So, those transition activities that we're going to be conducting, it's necessary to include activities that teachers, families, and community members can use to create the support and foster familiarity across early childhood settings and kindergarten. So, those activities are not like ... They have to be very ... There is a lot of mindfulness put in there, and so as long as, as you are delivering, as you are putting productivity in the place, you are thinking about how do I support and foster routine familiarity across those early childhood settings and kindergarten and what does the child was used to have. All right, I think, at this point, I am going to let you listen to Rilee. Rilee is going to give us a way of looking at transition across the lifespan and giving us some of the thinking that some great ideas that we can share with each other later on.

Rilee: Hello. Hi, again. So, moving on from the research slides, when we're thinking about specific transitions, we can zoom out and think about transitions in general, since all transitions share similar ingredient. So, we know that by nature, change is challenging. Fortunately, we actually know a lot about how to facilitate effective transitions since we do it every day. As adults, we have experienced transitions frequently throughout our lives: moving, finishing school, changing jobs, having kids. These are all major transitions, and through each one, we lean on a variety of supports to help us get through those smoothly. We have learned the tools we need to make these things happen on our own, but children, of course, are still learning how to navigate transitions, and so they need our help.

We can facilitate successful transition for ourselves and our children by leaning on three key evidence-based ingredients. So, the three key practices that lead to successful adjustment are sharing information, building relationships, and creating alignment between the old setting and the new setting. And these are practices that we should be doing from very early on, before the transition ever happens, throughout the transition, and then after the transition happens, during that adjustment period. Each of these ingredients is of equal importance and requires consistent, diligent communication between everyone involved in the change or involved in supporting a child through change and should happen kind of simultaneously or like interwoven throughout the transition process. Looking at information sharing, that includes communicating with families in their home languages, providing them and their children information about what to expect, preparing children and families for new relationships, helping them to make connections or to know who is going to be a part of the new environment, and then sharing data with the new educators and providers who will be working with those children and families. For building relationships that involve maintaining positive relationships with families throughout checking in with them, really partnering with them, and making sure that's happening consistently throughout the process, helping them to make connections with

individuals in the new setting. And that can include other families with kids who are going into the same classroom or the same environment. And that can also include helping kids to make connections with peers so that they have some familiar peers in the new setting. And that also includes fostering relationships with key community members and agencies who can support throughout the process of transition. And then, last but not least, we have alignment, which means establishing similarities between the old and the new. So, this could involve establishing similar teams, such as how educators contact families or how children line up to go outside. That means having members of both settings participate in professional development opportunities together, which in our current times that involve attending the same webinar and then meeting on Zoom or something similar to discuss it together. There are kind of creative ways to work around and still be doing these practices in evolved ways. That alignment piece can also involve planning transition activities together. So, if you're having a transition event or sending out a transition information sheet for families collaborating with people from both settings to create those experiences for that information. Leaders can also work together to adopt the same assessment and placement criteria and even standards and curricula when that's possible. So, here we see this linear approach to transitions. It's merely getting the child from one place to the next. And it's kind of an inadequate view of transitions because it forgets about all of the different ingredients for people involved in that change. So, as we support children and families through the transition, we need to think about all the different connections that support the child in their current setting and how we can move not only the child but their support network into the new setting. So, let's leave this old view behind, and we'll take a look at what a robust transition looks like.

Research shows that it is more useful to take an interactive and connected view of transition. So, in other words, there are relationships and information that support children and connect them to their surroundings. When they move to a new setting, we don't want to leave those connections behind and cause major disruptions for the child's sense of security and normalcy. We want to move them with these connections and structures intact, even if that means and there are going to be new people involved but kind of creating the partnership in the sense that the people in the new setting and old setting are linked. So, this network that we see on the slide, surrounding the child provides a great web of potential support that we can tap into. We want to think about the people involved in the child's life – family members, peers, community groups, educators – and how they can connect with each other and work together to support the child before, during, and after the transition. This framework and not the linear child-only framework should guide best practices for transition planning. As we enact the three key practices – information, relationship, alignment – to successful, well-connected transitions, there are four relationships, or what we like to call the four points of connection, to focus on nurture and leverage. In the transition to kindergarten, these are connections with the receiving elementary school, but you could swap that school icon in the center out for any new setting to which children and families are adjusted. The four points of connection are the child-to-school connection, through which we can foster children's familiarity with the new environment and people they will encounter. There's the family-to-school connection, which involves collaborating with families and supporting them to become involved in and able to confidently navigate the new setting. Sometimes, it can feel intimidating to become involved in

the elementary school setting just because processes and the way that families can become involved are different from the Head Start setting, so helping them identify those entry points to get involved or join parent organizations and that kind of stuff can be really supportive. We also have the programs-to-school connection, where leaders from both settings can collaborate to plan and provide children with consistent, supportive transition and learning experiences, so there's some similarities between each setting or sharing information about any differences that our children can expect. And then, finally, there's a community-to-school connection where relevant community members and organizations who make efforts to spread information about the transition and to provide support to children and families experiencing transition.

So, moving ahead, let's take a look more closely at the family to school connection. We'll zoom in on this connection for the next part of our session. Leslie Maxfield: Thanks so much, Rilee. This is Leslie, and I wanted to share a little bit about family-school connection in some work that we've been doing in this area because we know that effective family engagement encourages parents to continue their role as leaders and advocates that they developed in Head Start, and it fosters better child and family well-being. So, what we're going to look at is some points of connection that we have developed, that helped create continuity in the transition to kindergarten. And I wanted to reflect on some of the things that I've seen in chat, that people are saying, "Well, this is the time of year when we would normally be doing all of this, when we would be getting ready for kindergarten visits, we'd be contacting school, we'd be setting up roundups, or social times that families could meet their kindergarten teachers, and children could visit the classrooms." But that's not happening right now. So, what can we do? So, after I go through these points of continuity, and while I'm going through them, think of what you hope to do, when you get back, and what you usually do, but also think about how things have changed at this point in time, and how you're using these strategies to support families during this transition that we're going through with COVID-19.

So, the four ways that we think about in terms of creating continuity are, first of all, to create family-friendly and welcoming environments to promote home-school connections that foster parent engagement in learning and classroom experiences to engage parents as leaders and to support family well-being through effective delivery of comprehensive services. And that final one, that fourth one is where we really excel at Head Start; it's by providing comprehensive services to families. So, the first one is creating family-friendly and welcoming environments. We want to be sure that we engage families in transitions and support their participation to promote increased involvement during the kindergarten year. We create welcoming and inclusive environments to invite participation and encourage involvement and engagement in the present and the future and tailor engagement strategies by focusing on family's unique interests, strengths, and needs with families from diverse cultural groups. What's exciting is that this is all based on the research that Dr. Richard shared. And we have a resource for you that's in the pod that also is aligned with what Rilee shared in terms of how we share information, build relationships, and create alignment. So, one strategy for creating family-friendly and welcoming environments is to share information about how the program and the



school each support children's home language learning, and then to consider any differences in approach and how to bridge that gap.

So, our next point is promoting home-school connections to foster parent engagement in learning and classroom experiences. So, we're experts in this area too because adults who partner to support young children, help them develop the skills related to later school success: early language, literacy, and self-regulation, and attitudes towards learning. So, through targeted activities, Head Start programs support how families can reinforce curricular goals at home, and these practices set a foundation for future continuity between home and school. One of the strategies in terms of building relationships could be to host activities or events at the program or school for children and Head Start to talk to other children about kindergarten, find out what it's like. And then, families can find out how they can support that transition. Next, we move to engaging parents as leaders, which is one of the attributes of Head Start that we really, really hope continues when families move to a new setting. So, offer opportunities for parent leadership in the transition process and in the future with the receiving school. When families have a real role in decision making, they know they can make a difference, and their leadership growth. Continuity around parent leadership activities from Head Start to kindergarten can foster parent's social capital. Engaging parents in decision making roles and in reviewing child's assessment data in Head Start programs, for example, helps set parents on an advocacy path as they make the transition to kindergarten.

So, one way that you can create alignment, a strategy, is maybe to host breakfast with community and business leaders, public officials, and families to collaborate on a shared vision for the transition to kindergarten and continued school success. I think this is a time to, as you start thinking about what you're doing in your programs or could do that if we really think about our families as leaders, there are leaders in their homes, in Head Start, and in communities. And after we've been going through this difficult time, what can they bring to the table as we go through the period of re-entry and getting back to life as normal. And finally, we think about how we create continuity, how we support family well-being through effective delivery of comprehensive services. So, Head Start programs that engage community partners to offer comprehensive family support have a better chance of promoting family well-being and improving children's readiness for kindergarten. Family well-being is an important predictor of school readiness, so strengthening family well-being can contribute to more successful transitions to kindergarten. A strategy is to partner with the LEA Homelessness Liaison to enroll younger siblings of school-age children experiencing homelessness. Discuss strategies around child attendance and supports for children and families. So, those are some of the new strategies that we've been looking at for partnering with families and to support Head Start programs and schools. And now we have an activity that Brandi is going to lead you through. Thank you.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Leslie. Well, let me just give you guys a couple of nudges because I grew up in Head Start, and I know how you're feeling. There are a couple of things we need to make sure you have in your hands. [Laughter] So, if you will look with me to the left of your screen, you'll find a pod that says, "Files For Download." The great news is you do have the

PowerPoint there, you have a couple of things, and guess what, guys? You have a couple of things that we haven't even ever published anywhere. You heard it here first. [Laughter] We're going to show you what those are, but the things that you've asked about the most so far is the PowerPoint, which you have at the top of your Files Download pod. The beginning words are Final Community Engagement. So, you can actually click that button. If you click that phrase, Final Community Engagement, the button at the bottom that says, "Download File" will activate for you. And then, you'll be able to pull that down, and you'll get a copy of the PowerPoint. The other thing that I would say is that given all of that ... Now, if you let me say it, like I say it back home, I would say given all of the techno hee-haw, [Laughter] that we had today, we are going to rerecord this session for you guys. But we don't want to miss the chance. I can't ... There are hundreds and hundreds of you on the line. We don't want to miss the chance to go forward for those of you that are here and have dedicated your valuable time, but we also want to honor that there have been audio issues throughout and we think that we've broken the whole platform, you know, who we are in Head Start. So, we will rerecord this, so you'll have a full suite of the materials and you'll have a clear copy to hear and contribute to again, peruse at your leisure, like we ever have leisure time, [Laughter] especially now.

The other thing that I would offer for you is that you will get a certificate which is great news. We know how important these are to you guys every day. But we know what kind of importance the certificates have taken on in current day. We know that you're using those to track your PD, your professional development, and we know that you need them for your files, and to substantiate all the incredible work that you're doing from home. So, at the end, you fill out our evaluation link, you will actually get a personalized email to your registration email that gives you access to the certificate so that you will have it. So, no worries, we promise to take good care of you because you've taken good care of us and we're so grateful again for your persistence and your calmness as we figure out this new day. I have to tell you guys, on one of the OHS calls that we had last Monday, where Dr. Bergeron told us about the CARES Funding, which, side note, is also a huge piece of this. You guys know there's proposal in there. You probably, if your program is interested, you may have set your intent for that last Friday. It gives money for summer programming that also has specific language in there about partnering, around transitions to kindergarten. So, many of you guys have mentioned in the chat that you have paved a way from your Head Start program and that you hope that the school systems will, in some places, continue to open their doors but also start to crack those open a little bit in places where we're still working to do that. And we're hoping that some of those things that are going to be offered to you in the resources, not only as we plan for transition back, but there's support there for you guys because we know that this is such a critical piece. So, thanks, Angela. Let me work it. Angela said she love my accent, I just need to pause there for a second. Got to have a pick me up somewhere. And what we're going to do in the last few minutes, so a couple reminders real quick.

And also, I wanted to mention because I had a little bit of a tease moment earlier when I said, "You saw it here first." So, we have two documents that have not been released before, and I want you to find those under the PowerPoint in the Files For Download pod, under the PowerPoint which reads that Final Community Engagement. There's a whole list of resources

and it starts suggested resource in the Files For Download pod on the bottom left of your screen. And those are really specific. They are the resource sweep that we've created at the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, and that are helpful in these times as it relates to COVID and this specific transition. Underneath there, you guys are going to totally love this. Are you sitting down? Are you ready? Are you properly prepared? Can anybody do me a drumroll in the chat box, please? I'm waiting. I see. I see. OK. OK. The last document in the Files For Download pod is called TTK, which stands for ... Thank you, everybody.

The TTK continuity grid. You guys are going to love this document. It's not anywhere for you to find it. You're seeing it here first, going down like that, guess what it does. It takes the chat that we just did in those four pods and the strategies that Leslie gave you, and it mashes them up with what Rilee gave us with that bridge, those three things. I call them bridge bits. But you heard what she said, the information, relationships, and awareness – it combined all that together. So, you guys can see not only the incredible ideas that you already shared but a resource that we've offered for you to consider as you think about those connections. And maybe there's something in there that will be helpful for you to consider as you continue to enhance what you're doing. Yes, totally download it now. [Laughter] It's there for your viewing and perusing pleasure. All right, so we have just a few minutes left here. And what we want to do is just give you guys a light touch for this because when Rilee mentioned those four points of connection, we really wanted to focus on two of those. And we just spent a lot of time in the family to school, especially given that this is a conversation about transition to kindergarten but also this overarching transition based on the time we're experiencing now. There's also a really critical point of this in a second of those four connections, which is the community to school. And what Dr. Richard and I are going to do real quick is highlight these for you. And give a little point-counterpoint of how we would apply these regularly and then sort of specific COVID example. And then, Dr. Richard, before you do that, I just wanted to say to everybody ... You guys know how we do it. I call it the after-party chat. We hang out for at least 15 minutes after the close of the webinar, which will be in about five minutes. So, we'll be able to keep sharing a few things and answer any questions that you guys might have or, of course, hear from you as the experts about things that you want to continue to share for the greater good, so what we're going to do is show you a couple of these community-to-school connection examples, and then we'll pause for a couple of logistical bits before we go into the after chat. All right, Dr. Richard, what you got?

Dr. Richard: Yeah, so we're going to be talking to you about how do we strengthen the relationship with our community partners. And one of the main thing that is important for us to remember is like the need for us to learn about other organizations and their work. And like Brandi had said that, I'm going to give you a quick example. For example, now that we are dealing with COVID-19, would it be an important thing for you to know about how many buses does a partner have? Like can the partner really borrow you the buses and make the buses available to you to support families with transportation if they need it or to even like, help you with food distribution if you are doing so? So, this is a very good way for us to really know what our partner has, what resources they have, what can they do, and how they can even support during times like this, like where we are, like everybody stays home and the families got some

need. I heard something very, very interesting today, And I don't know the way I heard it anymore because we were thinking ... And I think, Brandi, you were sharing that like, some organization really creating Wi-Fi hot spot. This is really interesting to see like what the organization had. It's important. And so that takes us, Brandi, if you don't want to review the community in your program self-assessment data. For example, I just said something about the creating Wi-Fi hot spot for places where they know that internet is a problem because like, for example, if you have a rural community where Internet is very difficult for people to get. Or if the families need to just have that and some organization, a partner will come with buses and you can equip the buses with like the Wi-Fi. So, people can be like using that as a hotspot. So, I think those are creative ways that we can work with our partners to respond to the needs of our families experiencing transition like COVID for me is a transition that we're experiencing.

Brandi: Well, you know, doctor ...

Dr. Richard: Oh. Go for it, Brandi.

Brandi: I was just getting excited because in terms of the community partnerships, I think that we do this better than anybody else, truly. And we don't give up. I mean, many of you have said you ran into some stumbling blocks as you've tried to plough forward with these partnerships. But what I love about us is that we keep going, we keep moving forward, and we end up, in the end, persevering, and all in the spirit of service for our children and their families. The other thing that I have to say about, current times is we've been hearing other things from you guys and Dr. Richard is alluding to one where trains and planes all having Wi-Fi hot spots now and some Head Start programs may too. But we're hearing that a lot of our school systems, actually, the school buses have hotspots onboard. What you guys have been doing is partnering with the school systems to bring those buses into neighborhoods where you know that families don't traditionally have internet access. Many of you have partnered either with your own program, many of you are under community action agencies, some of you with local libraries to make sure that families have access to technology. Since we're doing so much online or tablets, laptops. So, it's incredible to hear what's happening as you strengthen your own community. I know, Scott, because we've been having feelings about we want to make sure families are staying connected that many of us don't have tablets or laptops. Or maybe there's one for the family, and there's many kids, and many grownups in the family. And I know, Carrie, I'll have to send you guys this article. I just saw it last night, but I was so blown away that folks are getting so innovative and side note, everybody, with a lot of this Head Start funding, that you have the opportunity to really be creative with and think about, I mean, I'm sensing you all are ... I can't wait to see what you come up with. But that idea blew me away because not only do we want our families to have access to the technology, like the actual hard-wired things, like the laptops or tablets, which we've been successful in doing, but we don't have a lot of influence about that infrastructure for internet access. So, that's one creative way that folks have really been making, you know, some headway, some major headway.

So, I want to show you guys a couple of things because we're about to transition into the after chat. So, let's look at a couple of key takeaways here. This is a humble thing to offer because I

know you guys are and I know how we do it in Head Start. These are just time-tested confirmations of the way we operate. We know that effective transition practices are holistic, and that's the way I want to say it today. That it's wrapped around both the children and the families, and we keep connections to community, and we are an integral part of that. The piece that I love also is that it is individualized. And you heard Dr. Richard, Leslie, and Rilee say it, it's connected to people as we meet them where they are and as we think about things like culture and language and access and ability. It really is connected to who people are and where they're headed. And we're also looking at continuity. We know what it looks like in child development for secure attachment, it's the same concept. And we're really good at it. Making sure kids and families have what they need as they move through, not only this transition to kindergarten piece, but certainly these overarching transitions that we're all experiencing now. And then certainly focusing on not only creating those collaborations between all those players you see on the, but screen fostering it, maintaining it, sustaining it. So, that way that we already have those systems in place through that partnership. If anytime that we need them, especially in times like this where we need each other more than ever.

OK, so a couple of quick things. I promise on the ECLKC, we have a whole bunch of resources over there, many of which we haven't even had the seconds to share with you today. We have a brand-new simulation. I don't know if you guys have seen our simulations. They're so good, my humble opinion. We have a brand new one on transitions to kindergarten. If you haven't seen that, you have to go check it out. It is so great, and what's awesome is it allows you to practice those relationship skills with the receiving school person instead of really applying them to and with and alongside a family member like we've done in previous ones. Check it out y'all. It really has this community connection in a larger way. So, you can see here where we have our family engagement and transition resources, and certainly, Rilee and her whole team at the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning have an entire just resources that you guys could live in for days, about what this looks like for and with children. And just things to use as you build this out and enhance ... that have been time tested and they're incredibly valuable. You guys know we're going to be back together. We're going to rerecord this version of our discussion about transition to kindergarten for you. But we also have another third and final webinar in this series that's coming on June 2. And you can see here it's about community partnerships with child welfare. And many of you have talked about really blazing trails in that arena, around child protective services, where you've had success, where you've had challenges, so we will come back together in June for that dialogue, same time, same bat channel, as they say. And then finally, and we have on the line, many of you know her already and love her. Dr. Ernestine Brown, one of our team members, is leading our effort over in the MyPeers Community. If you would like to continue this kind of conversation, join us over there. You can go to the ECLKC and you can find the PFCE Deepening Practice community. We are growing leaps and bounds. So, come on in; the water is fine. It tells you on the screen like how's this happening over there, and over there, and it's an open community. You guys ... Oh good, Lenora, we'll see you over there. You guys are already signing up, and you've been over there, you're sharing forums, you're asking questions, you're talking about how to stay connected with family virtually. It's really been incredible to see. And then, when we can offer anything like, "Hey, we worked on a resource for that," Ernestine puts that over in

there for you. And she's incredible at keeping up with all of the things that you guys are wondering about and making connections. The other thing that I hope you guys have signed up for is this Text4FamilyServices option. DTL and Rilee and her colleagues created a Text4Teachers, which we were so inspired by, and we were excited to be able to offer this for family service professionals, and all of us who do family type or human type services. And you get a couple of texts a month. It's also available in Spanish to do it. You can actually do what it says here on the slide, which is text PFCE to 22660. And I love these. I signed up for these as well. And just this past week, I got a little encouraging note about, I am exactly the professional that I need to be which I needed it right in that moment. I needed a little encouragement my own self, so that really sat well with my heart.

OK! We made it, everybody. I just feel like we need to give a virtual round of applause. You do have the spirit moves you in the chat, but I'm just physically going to clap because we did it. We made it through and with you guys. Oh, thank you. Somebody else is joining me with the clapping. And now we're going to hang out for a little bit. Thanks, Stephanie, handclap. One of the things that we want to do is ... Oh, I got an air hug too. Did you give that, G? I miss the hugs.

Dr. Richard: Well, thank you so much, everyone, for hanging in with us and really going through this, to the hiccups that we had this afternoon, but we really appreciate the fact that you stayed in with us so long and really appreciate the work that you do. And as I'm going to say it again, thanks for all you do, but mainly for being you.

Brandi: I don't think we could end on a better note, G. So, well, let me just also express the gratitude, of course, as Dr. Richard said for each of you and for spending your valuable time with us today, certainly to the whole NCPFCE team, and all of the things that go on in the forefront and the background [Laughter] to bring these kinds of events together. And, Rilee, it's such an honor. Thank you so much for coming over today from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Thanks to everybody. Thank you all so much. So, we hope you have a great rest of your day.