

## **Enrolling Children and Young Families Experiencing Homelessness in Early Head Start**

Moderator: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for joining us this afternoon. Kiersten, the floor is yours.

Kiersten Beigel: Thank you, Glenna. Hello. Hello. Hello. Hello. Welcome, everybody. Good afternoon. Good morning, wherever you are. My name's Kiersten, Kiersten Beigel. I work for the office of Head Start, and I'm hosting this webinar today, Enrolling Children and Young Families Experiencing Homelessness in Early Head Start. I'm really excited that so many of you are so interested in this really, really important topic. Before we get into the topic a little bit more and you get to meet some of our wonderful presenters for the day, I wanted to just take just a minute and orient you to this space, the virtual space that we are all in right now.

So, first thing I want to tell you is that I know that many of you live in the virtual life these days and on all kinds of different platforms. This one does not have any video, so just going to be an audio experience for you today. The chat box is on your lower left side of your screen. You can ask us a question. You can chat with us. We will see your remarks, your thoughts, reflections, and questions. You will not see those of your colleagues who are also participating in today's webinar. I also wanted to let you know that we have the PowerPoint handy for you today, and you can access that by downloading it in the event resources section, also in the lower hand section of your screen. So, this webinar is being recorded. It will be on demand for a bit. You can access it through the exact same channel with which you registered for today's webinar. There will also be a certificate available to those of you who are participating today. It will be provided via email once this webcast has ended. So, I know there'll be more questions about those a little bit. And so, I'm sure we'll speak to those again, in chat with you as well as I'll remind you as we get going, but let's get to the fun stuff.

I am really excited to welcome you officially. This is our team of presenters. We also have some wonderful guests joining us in just a minute, but this is our wonderful team of folks who you'll be hearing from today. As they each take their turn in the presentation, I will invite them to introduce themselves. So, for now, what you have is me on the left-hand side, Kiersten Beigel. And I'm going to take you through the next few things, and then you'll be hearing from Habibah and then you'll be hearing from Angela and Amy. So, stay tuned.

A little bit about what we're hoping to do with you in this short hour we have together. We are going to hear from our leadership and the Office of Head Start and the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families. We're going to talk to you a little bit about the Maternity group home and Runaway and Homeless Youth Programming and Early Head Start Programs. We know that many of you joining us today are from Early Head Start. Many of you are calling or joining us from your Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs, including Maternity group homes. So, we have a really wonderful mix of participants today.

After we do those overviews, we're going to invite our friends, Angela, and Amy, to talk with us a little bit about how they have developed a partnership working together between Early Head Start and a Maternity group home. So, you can hear a little bit about their experience and some of the successes, challenges, highlights that they'll share with you. I want to give you a little bit of information about how you can find each other out there, if you're an Early Head Start program looking for Maternity group

home to partner with. So, if you're a Maternity group home or Homeless Runaway Youth Program or Transitional Living Program looking to partner with an Early Head Start, so we'll make sure to get you that information.

And we also hope to have some time for some questions and answers. So, all that to say, let's get on with the show. I really am excited to introduce to you Commissioner Darling. She oversees the administration for children, youth, and families. We're super excited and lucky to have her to kick us off this morning, or this afternoon, and share with us a few of her thoughts.

Elizabeth Darling: Thank you so much. The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families at the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau supports organizations and communities that work every day to reduce the risk of youth homelessness, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic violence. FYSB works toward a future in which all of the nation's youth, individuals, and families, no matter what challenges they may face can live healthy, productive violence-free lives. FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth Program serves as the national leader for the provision of shelter services to unaccompanied homeless youth, grants, support, emergency shelters, and transitional living. And our Maternity group home Program provides supportive services to homeless parenting youth and ensures the wellbeing of their children, which is why we're speaking with you today.

Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness not only need basic necessities like food and shelter for their young families, but they must also learn to be effective and nurturing parents. Young parents are three times more at risk of experiencing homelessness compared to their nonparenting peers. And infancy, of course, is the period of life when a child is at greatest risk of living in a homeless shelter across the country. For young children, homelessness can contribute to developmental, health, social, and emotional behavioral and learning challenges. Early Head Start and Maternity group home Programs provide complimentary support services that can help to build strong foundations for young parents and their children, and most important, help mitigate the impact of family homelessness on young children.

I want to thank you all for your hard work, for your interest in this discussion today, and your dedication in providing these vital services every day, when you serve the needs of young families experiencing homelessness in your community. I wish you continued success in addressing the needs of low income young families and children so that they may have healthy and enriching experiences that they need to realize their full potential. And now it's my pleasure to introduce Ann Linehan, the Deputy Director of the Office of Head Start at the Department of Health and Human Services. Ann?

Ann Linehan: Thanks. Hey, thanks, Commissioner Darling, particularly for calling out the importance of the partnerships and the potential partnerships between Early Head Start program, MGHs, and certainly our Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs. One thing that I want to point out: The Office of Head Start and FYSB, we are sister offices within the Administration for Children and Families. And one thing we share in common, which is unique from other federal offices, is that our funding goes right from our federal office right to the local program, and I think that puts us in a unique position because we engage with our programs at the local level. And we see the work, the important work that you do every day that is so critical to our most vulnerable children and families. I often think about ... And I know Kiersten is going to talk more about Head Start, Early Head Start ... But I remember the birth of Early Head Start. I was here 25 years ago, and our leader at the time would always say, whenever we gathered like we are gathering today and talking about infants and toddlers, envision a child – an infant – absolutely in the

middle of that conference table, so you never lose focus, and all your discussions and decisions are based on what's best for that baby.

Today, to me, what's significant is we're including a very important person to hold that baby in the center of that table, and that's the young mother whom we know is often scared and isolated. So, again, I see this is really an important point in our growth and development.

We've been around 25 years and we always did serve homeless children, but it was in 2007 when Congress said, "You know what? If a child is homeless, that child gets into Head Start automatically. Forget about income, forget about anything else. If they're homeless, they're categorically eligible." And that was a significant turning point that made accessibility easier for homeless families to access Head Start. Few years later, and many of you know that Dr. Bergeron is the Director of the Office of Head Start ... In 2019, Dr. Bergeron started a really great program, a really great initiative called Home at Head Start. She did blogs, she did webinars. I think, Kiersten, there was a lot of attention around saying to our Head Start and Early Head Start programs: We have 6 million children who are homeless and under the age of six. What can we do to recruit more children and families? Just the attention that Dr. Bergeron brought to this, we saw increases in the number of children, homeless children, enrolled in Head Start Early and Head Start programs. And in fact, one small state was so moved by her messages that all the programs, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs, got together to band to do a huge recruitment of homeless children, and they identified, within three months, 700 families who qualified for Early Head Start and Head Start services. Additionally, just with the attention – and I think we're bringing attention to the importance of these partnerships today – we found thousands of staff went on our website – and you'll hear more about that later – to sign up for online training about best practices in working with and supporting homeless children and their families. I can't think of two better offices and groups to come together to do incredible things to further the quality of life, long life, for our young kids and our very young mothers. So, I'm privileged to be here today. Thank you very much. And Kiersten, I will turn it over to you.

Kiersten: Thank you both so much. Thank you, Commissioner Darling. Thank you, Ann Linehan. Thanks for grounding us in some of the vulnerabilities of these very young little ones and their parents and keeping that at the center of what we do. And thank you for also pointing out what some of the things we have in common already. We really appreciate that. All right. Let's move along now and hear from my colleague, Habibah Sulayman Smith. And she is a very experienced person who's worked in both the Head Start side and the homeless youth side. We're really lucky to have her to talk to us today a little bit about Maternity group homes. Habibah?

Habibah Sulayman Smith: Thank you, Kiersten. And hello, thank you to Commissioner Darling and Ann Linehan. As Kirsten said, my name is Habibah Sulayman Smith. I am the Federal Project Officer for the RHY – this is Runaway and Homeless Youth Program – in Region III. I cover the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, D.C., Virginia, and West Virginia. Six years ago, before I came to RHY, I spent about a decade or so working in Head Start in both Region III, which is my home in Philadelphia, and also Region II. And many, many moons before that, I was a homeless mom with two young children, navigating the adult homeless system and Philadelphia. So, I say that these two programs merge both my passion and my purpose, and I'm still very excited to be here to talk about the Maternity group home. Next slide.

The Maternity group home, or MGH, is a community-based adult supervised long-term shelter, apartments and/or scattered site apartments for pregnant and/or parenting youth, ages 16 to under 22,

and their dependent children and child and/or children who are homeless and cannot safely live in their own families. I wanted to also say here that we also haven't heard ... Just back up, one more thing. We also have Transitional Living Programs, or TLPs, that serve pregnant and parenting youth throughout the country for a number that cannot be licensed at MGH in their state. For example, here in Pennsylvania, there are programs that serve pregnant and parenting youth and their children that are not identified as an MGH program. So, when you're looking for a partner in the community, both look for both Maternity group home and Transitional Living Program. Next slide.

The MGH program offers a number of services. The first service we offer is safe and stable housing in extended residential shelter for 18 months and, under extenuating circumstances, for up to 21 months. We also offer a comprehensive service model and case management plan with a positive youth development approach, and some of the services in that comprehensive service model are things such as individual and group counseling, education and basic life skills and interpersonal skills building, assistance with educational advancement and job attainment skills, access to physical and mental health care, referrals to social services and a number of different services within the community, also affordable child care and/or child education programs. We also have a positive youth development model, which is to teach parenting skills, child development, family budgeting, health, nutrition, and other skills. We believe that youth are the experts of their lives. And we find a way to have our program and services be youth-driven and youth-focused.

Lastly, we have our transitional living and aftercare plans of services for each youth and their child and family for at least three months upon exit. That plan works to move them to independent living and includes referrals to health care, counseling and insurance coverage – whatever services that are needed to help the youth stay successful and move into self-sufficiency. Next slide.

In our comprehensive service model, we also focus on the youth, as a parent and also the infant or child. We look at record-keeping a case management for the infant and toddler. We look at helping the family develop a child care plan, which provides [Inaudible] safe and affordable and accessible child care and early childhood development services, so you can complete their education and employment goals. We have a child development focus, which looks at a normal progression by which children grow by acquiring and refining knowledge, behavior, and skills. We also promote parenting skills that promote positive parenting practices and opportunities for families to engage in activities that promote positive parent-child bonding and other interactions and support parents in addressing challenging behaviors and barriers. We ensure that our programs use a parenting curricula, which is evidence based, to assist in improving parent and child outcomes. We look at health and nutrition such as prenatal care, well baby exams and immunizations. We also look at family budgeting, credit counseling, budgeting banking, and home ownership. Next slide.

The TLP and MGH program has four core outcome measures. The first is social-emotional wellbeing, which means a connection to a system of trauma-informed care providers and achieve improved physical, dental, mental health for themselves and their young families. The second is permanent connection, which means to develop healthy family engagement strategies, co-parenting skills, and positive attachments to families, communities, schools, and other social networks. No. 3 is education or employment, connect with schools, either post-secondary or vocational training programs and improved interviewing skills, job attainment skills, and employment. This is also important to connect the Head Start and other community resources, which promote early childhood development and learning and wraparound child care services to ensure stable employment. And lastly, stable housing. Our desires for each youth and family in a MGH or TLP to transition to safe and stable housing. So, I want to thank you

so much, and I want to transition back to Kiersten from the Office of Head Start to talk about OHS and EHS. Thank you.

Kiersten: Thank you so much. Well, you heard a little bit about Head Start and Early Head Start from Ann, but for those of you who are new to it, let me tell you a little bit more. [inaudible 00:18:50] was founded in 1965. And so, Early Head Start came later in 1995. Many programs do both Head Start and Early Head Start. So, at birth to five. Some programs are standalone Early Head Start programs as well. Like Ann mentioned, these are federally funded programs that provide local community-based programming for low income families and children. It's a two generation approach, and also, really targets families with the greatest need. And the way we think about or not think about, but the way we're required to do eligibility in Head Start really focuses on the federal poverty level. Families who are receiving public assistance, children who are in foster care, and families who are experiencing homelessness. So, both foster children and children who are experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible, like Ann said. These programs are structured through center-based program services, home-based services, child care and family child care.

The Migrant Seasonal Head Start program was created in 1969. And indeed, many of the Early Head Start program found its roots in the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program, which is at birth to five program. When families are migrant and seasonal, they are also potentially eligible as experiencing homelessness based on the definition of the McKinney-Vento definition related ... That is the one that we use for Head Start and Early Head Start to determine eligibility. And we also have the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program. You'll hear a little bit more about today. We have around 1,600 Early Head Start programs. We serve around 160,000 infants and toddlers. And I want to point out that, as excited as we are about this partnership, it's probably going to be a lot easier for Maternity group home folks to find Early Head Start folks than for Early Head Start folks to find Maternity group homes, just due to the expansive nature of the Early Head Start program in terms of the numbers that are out there. The last thing I want to say ... Well, not the last thing, but it's just also important to know that Early Head Start does also serve pregnant women and expectant fathers as well.

And then, a little bit about the purpose. Habibah talked a little bit about the services and the purpose of the Maternity group home. Well, Early Head Start's purpose is ultimately to help young children be cared for and to learn and be ready for school, in kindergarten. Starting early, the wraparound comprehensive services around mental health and developmental screening, nutrition, and oral health are all there holistically to support the child and the parent. Early Head Start services are delivered in very family-centric centered ways with attention to culturally and linguistically responsive services. The parent child relationship is really at the center of all that we do in Early Head Start. And in Early Head Start and Head Start, of course, we see parent engagement and parents as our partners in supporting the learning and development of young children, infants, and toddlers. Indeed, one of our pinnacle philosophies is that we see parents as their child's first and lifelong teachers. Early Head Start programs are very much focused on family well-being; providing food, health, safety, financial capability; and engaging with community partners to be able to do their work. This is a tall order and it's very much a community-entrenched mission. So Early Head Start and Head Start really rely on community partners to do all of this.

I wanted to just share this next slide with you. Give me a second here as I work my way over. I'm sorry. I didn't transition this slide. This was the purpose slide. And I went through each of these with you around the purpose and supporting school readiness. And then here we have the nice depiction of the complimentary nature of the two programs. So, on the Early Head Start side in purple, we have Early

Head Start prioritizing homelessness for enrollment, access to prenatal care and health insurance access, family and father engagement. And then, some of the other comprehensive services I just mentioned on the MGH side, we'll see that for sure. We have automatic eligibility for Early Head Start, a real emphasis on positive youth development, coordinated case management, different kinds of services where young parents can access counseling and life skills education, interpersonal skill building, as well as some of the same kinds of services we talked about with Early Head Start, so the health and the social services and education was a huge one.

So, we've laid out sort of the overview for you now. And what I'd love to do next is turn things over to Amy Rice and Angela Card, who are going to walk us through their programs, their services, and a little bit about their partnership. Amy?

Amy Rice: Thanks, Kiersten. This is Amy Rice. I am the Vice President of Programs at St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families. Thank you to the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, and to FYSB and the Office of Head Start for having me here today. I'm really excited to talk about St. Ann's and about our partnership with the Lourie Center. Here's a beautiful picture of the front of St. Ann's. With our mission, St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families strengthen and support families on their journey towards stability inspired by Catholic social teaching and gospel values, St. Ann's Center provides a nurturing community where families heal from the past, overcome barriers and take hold of their future. I thought it was important to put this out there because our mission leads us in all that we do. As you can see, we are a faith-based agency, and we lean back to our mission to remind ourselves of where we are coming from and to guide us as we go. As I go through our programs here, I'm going to talk ... Our programs are very unique and specific, and you've heard specifically about what Maternity group homes programs are and what Early Head Start is. And I'm going to talk a little bit specifically about St. Ann's and you're going to hear about the Lourie Center. This may not be what a partnership looks like to everybody, but this is the partnership that we have worked out.

A little bit about myself, I have been at St. Ann's for almost four years. And prior to coming to St. Anne's, I have worked in residential homes for foster care youth. I have worked with homeless families, and I have worked with Runaway and Homeless Youth programs. So, when St. Ann's came along, we do a little bit of all of this, so I found this to be a perfect match. I was very excited to come to St. Ann's. We have three separate residential programs at St. Ann's. We have Grace House, which is where our teen mother and baby program is. And those are for young women who are 13 to 21 years old, who are either pregnant or parenting. And then we have our Hope House and Faith House, which are transitional housing programs for women who are 18 and up, who are experiencing homelessness, and again, are either pregnant or parents.

Next slide. I got that. Our Maternity group home is housed in our Grace House and Hope House program, and it's very much dependent on the needs and the assessment of the family who is coming in to determine which program they can go into. As you can see, from what I described earlier, our Grace House program does serve young people who are younger than 16. And our other transitional housing program serves people who are older than 21. So, we have to house them between those two to determine what exactly is appropriate. The young mothers in the Maternity group home are 16 to 22 and are either pregnant or parenting, 16 to under 22. Once they turn 22, they will move on. They're working on their education, their high school GED or college, and/or working on employment skills. They can be working on both, but at least one or the other.

The families are engaged in parenting classes that we offer on site, working very closely with the moms and engaging them in a reflective manner to work on their fields with their children. We provide trauma-informed, strength-based, developmentally based services through a reflective lens. And as it has been stated several times earlier, homeless families are categorically eligible for Early Head Start. So, this is where it becomes a perfect match for our families who are homeless to get enrolled in Early Head Start.

We also have a Child Care Center. This is where we are a little bit unique as a program. We have residential and Child Care Center, all on-sites in one facility. You saw the picture earlier on. That may not be the way other Maternity group home and Early Head Start partners work. That is how it is done here and it works very well for us. Our families are right on site with our Child Care Center, making it very convenient, to be able to drop off children and go on to school or work. We have offered high-quality and safe child care to our residents and neighborhood families for more than 35 years. We were the first infant child care center licensed in the State of Maryland outside of a hospital. So, we've been around for a while. We have a lot of experience. Our current Early Head Start program began in 2018. So, we've been doing it for a couple of years now, and we are enjoying it. I'm going to pass you all on to Angela Card, who's going to talk a little bit more about the Lourie Center. And then we will come back and we'll talk a little bit, both of us about our partnership together.

Angela Card: Thank you, Amy. Good afternoon, everyone. So, hi, I am Angela Card, and I'm the Lourie Center Head Start director. I have been at the Lourie Center for nearly five years, but I've worked in Head Start for 25 years, various programs, various capacities, throughout those 25 years, including time in the TTA system with Region III. So, I'm really excited to be here and thank you to the Office of Head Start and FYSB for inviting me today. It's my honor to talk about our partnership with St. Ann's and the important work of our programs.

So, the Lourie Center was founded in 1983 by Drs. Reginald S Lourie, T. Berry Brazelton, and Stanley Greenspan. We are a private nonprofit agency, and our mission is to improve the social and emotional health of young children, families through prevention, early intervention, education, research, and training. The Lourie Center's core purpose is to provide trauma-informed, attachment-centered, and team-based care through a school-based, clinic-based in Early Head Start and Head Start center, and home-based model. So, the Lourie Center has a school. It's an elementary school up to fifth grade. There is a clinic for children and families. And we also, of course, have our Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

The Lourie Center Head Start program ... We are purposed to provide year-round child and family development services for vulnerable families and children. We do serve prenatal pregnant women to five years old. We offer support services that involve school readiness and family engagement, and we offer that through our comprehensive services model. Our program has 352 children. We serve those children and Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland. And we do have the Head Start grant for three to five age children, and that's a full day center-based model. Our Early Head Start grant, and we also have an Early Head Start child care partnership grant. Together, we serve 152 infants and toddlers. We offer services in a center-based model, as I said, but much of our center-based work is with our community partners. And then, in addition, we have a home-based option, and that's how we serve our pregnant women and infants and toddlers in their homes and through group socialization opportunities.

So, when we decided to explore partnership with St. Ann's, we really were interested because we knew that St. Ann's had very high-quality services. We have very similar missions, and the model that St. Ann's offers to homeless families and homeless women, we thought was really something that we wanted to support and try to bring some of what Early Head Start could offer to St. Ann's. And we found that it would definitely be a mutually beneficial relationship because of our similarities, but we also had to look at our differences and see where could we come in and offer something that possibly St. Ann's doesn't have and vice versa. What could St. Ann's offer to us that we don't have readily available? And that's where being able to have a program that serves homeless families really benefits Early Head Start.

So, we explored the program models, we looked at the quality programming that is being offered, and then we looked at how the enrollment process would work. Being a Maternity group home and a Transitional Living Program, the residents being homeless, as it's been mentioned and I'll just say it again, categorically eligible. So, basically what that means is they're automatically eligible for the Early Head Start program. So, that's a real benefit for Early Head Start to be able to secure partnerships and bring our comprehensive services model to a Maternity group home and to those children and families. When we say comprehensive services, what we bring to St. Ann's is really enhancing the work that they're already doing. They're already supporting pregnant moms with health and prenatal care, but we also have health and nutrition services. We have mental health. We support school readiness through our education and disability services. And then, of course, we also partner with families and work on parent and family engagement. So, with St. Ann's Maternity group home, much of this was already happening, but we were able to talk about what we could do that might be a little bit different and could bring some additional strengths to the program. Some of that would include, for example, St. Ann's benefit is that they have all of the families have a social worker. In Early Head Start, we have family partnership workers. Family advocates is also another familiar term. And it's a one-on-one assignment of a family advocate with a family. In this case, our family support workers can just partner with the social workers and really provide a coordinated case management approach with the other comprehensive areas. So, we're looking at the whole family and the whole child in a very coordinated way, and that's a strong benefit. Another thing Early Head Start brings is support for professional development. We have specific credentialing that we'd like to see in our teachers. So, we offer training and technical assistance as well as funding for staff to get certifications and tuition assistance. So, we knew that after all of those benefits of the partnership, the most important thing is buy-in from the leadership, the staff, and really the full team. So, we did engage in quite a few meetings to support, getting to know each other, understanding what the services are that we would be bringing to the table, as well as how St. Ann's would benefit Lourie Center Head Start. And that was a key part of us getting started.

So, we began to formalize our partnership in 2018, 2019. We had to agree. The first part of this partnership is really coming to a contractual agreement. And so, we're just laying out, again, all of those things that we know we're accountable to, so that's quite a process to look at the Head Start program performance standards, which is our body of regulations that we need to make sure we are meeting compliance. And St. Ann's also has compliance standards that they have to follow. So, we needed to kind of find out where any, again, similarities or differences live and put those down in the contract to talk about how we would make sure that we are meeting our deliverables. We also had to work out payment and reimbursement structure and negotiate that. And the partnership agreement, which we have many partnerships at the Lourie Center with other child care providers, as I've mentioned ... Not every partnership agreement looks the same. It's very individualized and it's based on the strengths and needs of each partner. So, that was a process to kind of work that through together.



Amy: Can I add to that, Angela?

Angela: Of course, Amy. Please go ahead.

Amy: This is Amy Rice speaking again. That was a very important part of the initial meeting is being able to have open and honest conversations about what each organization can bring to the table and what each organization needs from this partnership. We don't want to duplicate anything, and we don't want to leave anything out. And I think that took good communication between St. Ann's and the Lourie Center, and it continues with communication. We involve their family support worker in our team meetings about our families. We make sure we communicate that we are all on the same page. We communicate with the families together. So, I think it's a matter of having those conversations all along the way and the partnership, having those conversations with the family. So, the family knows who's responsible for what in this partnership and nobody gets lost in the middle. So, I think having great communication when you're going into this partnership is really important.

Angela: Yes, that's absolutely key. And part of the communication is also just assessing what those needs are. And when I talk about assessing the needs, I mean furniture, equipment, materials, consumables, what type of environmental enhancements might be needed to support the partnership. Again, we talked about staff qualifications and how we could, as Early Head Start program, support their staff in becoming credentialed or getting their child development associates credential. So, that communication feature is really very, very important.

And then again, after we agreed that partnership is what we want to pursue, we needed to do introductory meetings with the staff, with the teachers, with other team members from both Early Head Start program, as well as St. Ann's and just introduce each other so that we could see familiar faces and we wouldn't wonder what was happening. That's all, again, part of the staff buy-in.

So, since we have been in partnership, we've identified several strengths of the partnership, and these are just few, a very few of them, but we wanted to highlight some of the things that we certainly value in coming together with the Maternity group home and the Early Head Start model. And part of the strength that we identified in the beginning, as I'd mentioned a little bit earlier, is the expertise that both St. Ann's and Lourie Center have built in within our leadership. So, coming, I think St. Ann's, and you could speak to this Amy, certainly ... I'll say that for me, with St. Ann's, I knew that they were a quality program that I understood, they know how to operate this Maternity group home and the Child Care Center with this particular model. So, I had full confidence that us coming into the program would not be starting from ground zero and having to really build a quality program. They were already there, and we simply could enhance what they're working on. Amy, did you want to say anything about that?

Amy: Yes. Thank you. I think, we came together as partners because we both realized the quality in each other's services and how they could play together. Having the expertise with youth homelessness, with young pregnant women ... That's a population St. Ann's has worked with for many, many years. We have a very dynamic service management team. Our Child Care Center, as I mentioned earlier, has been around for a long time. So, then if you layer in the experience and expertise that the Lourie Center has, their specific experience to Early Head Start, the supports and trainings and teachings and in-classroom supports, they could give to our teachers ... We have a lot of teachers who've also been here for a very long time and really know what they're doing, so continuing to work with them to improve their skills on working with the families that come in and with the children that come in ... These partnerships just really came together and highlighted what both of our strengths were.

Angela: Absolutely. And one additional thing I wanted to mention with working with the staff or the teachers, we provide coaching for the teachers but also for the center directors. We have early childhood coordinators that come in and really help them, so it's not like the partner just has to automatically know Early Head Start and start functioning as an Early Head Start program. They function as St. Ann's, and they function as a Maternity group home. And then we're just building in some additional support with coaching and mentoring and assisting with the funding, to be quite honest. I mean, we're bringing funding to the table, which is helpful to be able to just enhance the programs quality even further.

So, some specifics that our partnership brings, when I think about funding, that I wanted you all to know is ... In Head Start and Early Head Start, we are required to offer developmental screenings to children as well as then go into ongoing child assessment because we're monitoring and measuring children's school readiness, so that costs money. It's a requirement that not always is required at Maternity group home, so anything that's not required already in your standards that a Maternity group home is following, Early Head Start with bringing funding to support and enhancing that because it is a benefit, certainly, to look at children's development and to make sure that they are on track. So, we fund teaching strategies gold as the tool that we use in our program, but many different assessment tools and screening tools are there that Early Head Start has now built in to the Maternity group home.

We have a disability manager, and we're hiring now a disability specialist that specifically look at the children's IFSPs, or if a teacher feels like there's a delay of some sort or just a concern. If we see anything from the developmental screening that is a red flag, our disability specialist comes in and will talk with the teachers and the parents and be part of that whole evaluation process, which is certainly a benefit. We have mental health consultants that are psychologists or licensed social workers that have that expertise to really support parents that are struggling as well as children who may demonstrate any mental health needs. We have the nurse consultants that also go in. They prenatally meet with mom, and then they also meet with mom after she has the baby within the first seven days. So, that's a benefit that Early Head Start brings to the table: learning materials, classrooms ... I mentioned that earlier. Definitely enhancing the environment, child care centers, certainly community child care centers, don't always have funding every year to be able to replace something that is starting to show some wear, so we bring some additional funding to be able to support that and replace items that need updating. We provide the formula and food. It's WIC doesn't provide formula, then we offer that financial assistance. We also offer financial assistance for diapers and wipes. And as Amy mentioned, St. Ann's already has parent work groups. They do parent trainings and parent meetings. And Head Start also does monthly parent meetings. Most models of Early Head Start and Head Start do a monthly meeting. And then, events throughout the year, parent engagement opportunities ... So, we partner in that way where perhaps St. Ann's didn't offer food before, we could come to the table and provide funding to offer food and to offer maybe some materials or the purchase of a book. So, there's lots of exciting things that we can do to just enhance those parent workshops and trainings.

We offer an opportunity for those parents to engage in leadership and program governance, so they could choose to run for our Policy Council and then grow their leadership skills, which is very exciting. And just connecting to additional community resources ... There's just lots of different ways that Early Head Start can support the great work that St. Ann's already does. Amy, did you want to say anything else about that?

Amy: I just have a couple things in closing about our partnership. I know Angela just went over a lot of things that Early Head Start provides, and some of this is, again, making sure some of this helps

supplement things that we are doing, helps financially fund some of the things that we are doing – we appreciate that – but also just as a reminder as we go through this that this is the partnership between the Lourie Center and St. Ann's, and it may not necessarily ... All the things that we are talking about are things that need to be hammered out working forward if you're coming together for a partnership. This is a slot-based center, so we run the Child Care Center. The Lourie Center helps us fund the slots in our Child Care Center, and we operate all of that. In other communities that might be a standalone Maternity group home that's going to approach a standalone Early Head Start Child Care Center or Early Head Start and Head Start, and then you would have to work out how those two programs would work together. And I think that that's another great type of opportunity. It would look a little different than maybe the partnership that we've described here, but a lot of the pieces of it would still be able to materialize there.

The other thing I want to mention is ... I think Angela quickly mentioned we are in Prince George's County, Maryland, so we are right on the Washington D.C. line. I did not mention that when I first started, and I apologize for that. I did put a slide up here for a little bit about St. Ann's in the news, so you can see a little bit more about us. There were a couple of articles that came out in the Washington Post and the New York Times earlier this year that can just give a little bit more background, a little bit more of a personal touch and a story to St. Ann's so you can see the kind of work that we're doing. Angela, do you have anything else to add?

Angela: I do. Thank you, Amy. I wanted to also share with Maternity group homes that you all are hearing about the center-based model, classroom-based model, but we also, in Early Head Start, as I'd mentioned, we have home-based. So, even if you don't have a child care center, that's completely fine. What we would want you all to know is, as you possibly explore Early Head Start programs, you also could talk about how the Early Head Start program could support pregnant women or expectant fathers, how the Early Head Start program comes in and offers home-based services in the residential setting and any type of transitional setting or even a homeless shelter. So, there's lots of great ways to partner, and it doesn't have to be an open funding opportunity. It doesn't have to be a time where a Early Head Start program is applying to maybe then bring on a partner. Early Head Start programs, and that's for all of my fellow Early Head Start programs out there, you can certainly just, if you have a home-based model or a center-based model, just explore partnership and consider offering Early Head Start services with the MGHs in your community. Just have to talk it through and flesh out the similarities and differences of your program, but there is lots of opportunity for partnership, whether it's a center-based or home-based model. So, thank you so much. I will turn it ... Oh, go ahead.

Amy: I did see one question. I want to answer a question real quick because we had a question about people in the Early Head Start program who maybe don't live at St. Ann's. Just to give a little information ... In 2020, fiscal year 2020, we had 71 children total enrolled in our Child Care Center. Twenty-three of those were Early Head Start children who are living at St. Ann's. We have four community children who are not living here, so we do serve families who are not necessarily living at St. Ann's as well in Early Head Start. We make a focus for the families that live here, but we also serve families that are in our community.

Kiersten: That's great. And that's so responsive. That's a responsive approach, and we did have a question where someone had asked, "Is it possible for Early Head Start to serve 100% of their enrollment, be families experiencing homelessness, young children? That is possible. Yes, there are some programs that do that. So, I want to segue really quick ... we may circle back in a few minutes with some additional questions that folks might have for you, and we really encourage you to put those in

chat, if you have more questions for Amy and for Angela. But I do know that many of you have asked this question, "How do we find these programs in our communities?"

And so, I wanted to make sure to share. Again, you have this PowerPoint. All you have to do is download it. It's in a handout format in the lower left-hand side of your Resources tab. If you're an Early Head Start program, you can find it in MGH program here. This link ... There's a map. In all of the youth service programs that Habibah mentioned – Transitional Living Program, the Emergency Services, RHY – and then, of course, what we've been talking about today can be found here, so you can locate those and see if there are in your nearby neighborhood or state. If you are in RHY or an MGH program, and you want to find the Head Start or Early Head Start program, you can locate those here at the ECLKC. This is the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. It's Head Start's website, and on the very front page, you can locate a program near you. So, you have that information, and I really appreciated the way that Amy and Angela were able to kind of step out and think more broadly about these partnerships, knowing that there are different ways to do this. I want to remind everybody that today we were really trying to emphasize the complementary nature of the services that your programs provide. The complementary strengths to invite you to explore collaboration, and to know that you're McKinney-Vento liaisons, your homeless liaison is better situated with the local educational agencies in your communities, can certainly help you both. They can be partners to both of you.

A few different partnerships, strategies, and ideas to leave you with, some of which we've touched on but some which we haven't. You can hold staffing presentations to understand each other's services. You can establish some referral protocols so that you're really prioritizing your young parents getting a slot in an Early Head Start program and your Early Head Start program really prioritizing the needs of young parents with very young children who are experiencing homelessness. You can also ensure that – and this was touched on – the importance of the developmental screening services for young parents with young children. I talked a little bit about both programs being able to utilize the McKinney-Vento liaisons as important partners to see what kinds of additional services your families may be eligible for. You can share ideas about, really, early-learning-friendly environments. So, in some cases you might be able to really benefit from each other's expertise around parenting groups for young parents or really nice high quality early learning environments for babies and toddlers. You can, obviously, and we talked about this, leverage each other's resources around employment or basic life skills education for young parents and different kinds of educational opportunities over time, career options.

And of course, really thinking about those fathers. The fathers, extended family members of young parents and ways to nurture and engage them as you wrap around the family. So, those are just some examples where you can leverage each other's strengths and look for some coordination opportunities. We do have a little bit of extra information here, just about the programs, so that's included in your handout. And some of it we've already gone over today.

And lastly, I just want to open it up and see if there are any questions and invite folks to ask questions of our presenters in chat. I'm looking now to see what folks are wondering about. I think that I've seen some different questions around serving homeless children, children experiencing homelessness in Early Head Start. I've seen a couple of questions that are really about: Can you serve a child who isn't in your service area? And just for folks who aren't on Early Head Start, a service area is the defined area of enrollment for an Early Head Start or Head Start program. And so, the answer to that question is ... First thing I would say is: it's so important to support continuity of early learning and developmental services for young children who are experiencing homelessness, and so we encourage programs to develop memorandums of understanding and agreements so that if children are moving across service areas that

you can support that continuity. So, the most important thing is to, as long as parents are interested obviously, to enroll these young ones into the Early Head Start program and to work with programs and other service areas to come to an understanding about that and logistically what that can look like.

There are also some other policy-related questions for Early Head Start. People want to know about categorical eligibility for foster care and homelessness. And I would just remind folks, there is no requirement to look at the financial situation of any family who is able to demonstrate that they are homeless, and you can look at the performance standards to understand what that means, what the verification of that looks like. And the same thing with foster care ... You do not have to look at the financial situation of a family. It does not come into play; that's what categorical eligibility means. It's an automatic eligibility. Anything else coming in, Linda or Habibah, that you wanted to answer yourself. Let us know what the question is, and if there's anything that you'd like to answer.

Habibah: Sure, Kiersten. Someone asked the question, "Does every state have a McKinney-Vento liaison?" And the answer is yes. The way the McKinney-Vento liaison looks at each local school district will be very, very different, so I would suggest going to HUD and looking at McKinney-Vento liaison or then reaching out to your local school district. The school district has the freedom to design and pick and choose how the liaison works and where the liaison works, but every district is required to have a McKinney-Vento liaison to support and serve homeless, runaway and homeless children, youth, and families in their district.

Kiersten: Thanks for that. Well, it looks like we are at the end of our time together, so I just want to take a moment and really thank our presenters, Habibah and Amy and Angela, for your time today, sharing with us your knowledge. And I really want to thank our participants who asked wonderful questions and stayed with us. We had well over 1,000 of you joining us today, so we really appreciate that you spent time with us. We hope you got something out of this webinar today. Go forth and coordinate and get to know each other. Become great partners. Thank you so much, everyone, and take good care.