

## **Navigating Conversations with Families about Money**

Helah Robinson: Hello, and welcome to Day Two. Thank you so much for joining us for today's first session of the day, which is going to be about Navigating Conversations with Families about Money. Let's get started.

Before we dig in, I wanted to make sure to give you a few reminders about your console to ensure that you can maximize your experience with us today. I'm going to walk you through a few key reminders of resources. At the bottom of your screen, you will see several engagement tools. I'm going to run through them as a quick reminder. First is the Media Player. You can use this tool to watch presenters and any videos that are played during sessions. Questions for Presenters, that's next. You can use this tool to share questions or comments during the session. Throughout today's session, we will have several times where we're going to be asking you questions for your reflections and your feedback, and you can drop it there in the Questions for Presenters section, and we'll see them.

Next are Slides. Use this tool to display the PowerPoint presentation on your screen. Next is Related Resources and Links. This tool includes a list of resources available for download and helpful links in particular that we'll be covering in today's session and others. You can also find the slide deck and session handouts here, as well as always in the Engagement Hub. Presenter Bios are next. If you're curious about us, use this tool to learn a little bit more about us. Then, of course, Certificate of Attendance. You use this tool to access your certificate at the end of the session. You must meet the criteria to earn your certificate. I'll give a quick reminder of how to do that at the end of today's session as well. These engagement tools are on your console. Remember that they are resizable and movable, so you can customize them to what makes most sense for you. If you minimize any of these tools, you can always click on the icons at the bottom of your screen to make them reappear.

Before we get in, I just wanted to do a little bit of a quick introduction. My name is Helah Robinson. I am a family economic mobility partner with the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. I'll let my colleague introduce herself.

Jennifer Lambert: Hi, everyone. Nice to see everybody today. My name is Jennifer Lambert. I'm also with the National Center, working with Helah.

Helah: Thank you so much, Jen. OK, let's dig in.

For today's session, our learning objectives are, by the end of the session, we hope that you are able to walk away with confidence and comfort with, first, being able to examine "money mindset" and really your and our values that we hold about money. Understanding how those values and impressions that we bring to money inform how we think about and then also inform why families might hesitate to talk about finances. Also, explore strategies to address families' mistrust in financial institutions and where that mistrust may come from as a result of experiences that they might have had, and components of structural racism, which we'll talk about a little bit today. Then, explore the "Your Money, Your Goals" toolkit, as well as other resources that you can use to really help you guide these conversations about money. Let's start.

Why start here? We know that financial security, or insecurity, impacts all aspects of a family's wellbeing, health, and safety, and that is true now – more true now, perhaps, than ever before. We know that helping families make progress towards greater economic mobility and economic stability is a fundamental component to supporting their overall wellbeing. It really doesn't live in a silo. It's a foundation, and it's kind of behind everything that we are working with families towards. This is why your work with families is so invaluable. The relationships that you build and the deep, trusting partnerships that you develop create a really critical space for families to explore, define, and achieve their own visions that they have for themselves and their children, which often will include visions for greater financial security.

But we also know that to effectively partner with families and to support their progress towards greater financial security and economic mobility, we know that we have to talk about money. But we also know that doing so can be really difficult. It requires that you and families discuss what can be really sensitive topics, and requires us to be vulnerable with one another, and also requires that we talk about things that sometimes we might not have the confidence or the comfort to discuss.

It's really important to understand how and, really importantly, why discussing finances can be so challenging, as well as to understand that facing this challenge head-on is really worth the effort, because doing so can really be transformational for families.

Now, always remember that there are many resources available to Head Start and Early Head Start staff to help you as you dive into these conversations. In particular, the "Building Partnerships" series contains two really fitting resources that can help provide step-by-step ways to engage in what can be sensitive or challenging conversations with families. They also include some really tangible strategies to guide you in your own self-reflection of what you're bringing to conversations when you're working directly with families. Those in particular are the resources around "Engaging with Families in Conversations About Sensitive Topics" and "Preparing for Challenging Conversations with Families," which, of course, are both available on ECLKC. Links to those will be available in the Resource Hub.

Let's start there. Let's start by exploring what might make talking about money from the beginning difficult, beginning with a little bit of self-reflection, beginning with how we, as family support professionals, approach this topic and what we might be bringing to conversations with families when we engage in this type of work with them.

What I want you to do is actually just take a minute to think about the word "money." Just take a minute. Think about it. What is coming up for you? What words or phrases or feelings or some other associations are coming up for you when you hear that word, when you hear "money"? Associations can be anything from movies and songs or anything that's coming up for you when you hear just the word "money." Go ahead. Think on it, and go ahead and drop some associations that are coming up for you in the Q&A.

"Systemic inequities," "freedom to do what I want," "cash," and "need." These are what I'm seeing coming from the group. "Piggy bank." Definitely "piggy bank." "Greed." "Greed" is another one. A lot of things coming in through the chat. "Worries and always wishing there was more of it." Stress." Seeing another round. "The ability to take care of families' needs." "The

ability, or maybe feeling the insecurity of the inability, to take care of my family's needs."  
"Budgets, just the practicalness." "Vacations."

I'm seeing a lot coming through. There are many, many things that comes up for us – individually that comes up for us when we think about the word "money." A lot of these things can be positive, like vacation. They can be negative, like stress, a bit scary. Greed. They definitely differ from person to person. Seeing a lot of different things coming through the chat, and it's different from person to person. A lot of stuff is going on in the background, really, when we as individuals, just hear the word "money." A lot of the stuff is coming up, and a lot of the stuff is different, and it's both good and bad and can mean a whole lot of different things.

Where did all that come from? All the things that you guys were naming into the chat, where do you think these associations came from that informed your attitudes towards money? Another way to think about it is, what informed those things that were coming up to you that might inform the way that you think about money or really the choices or behaviors that you might make with money. Where does that come from? What do you think? Go ahead again and drop it into the chat. Where do you think that these associations come from?

"My parents"? Yup. "Family. Parents. Family of origin." Maybe families coming from different places or different backgrounds and cultures. "From my own family and parents when I was growing up." Families more broadly than just parents, but family links a network around the society, "Society, TV and movies, the news, seeing other folks struggle." Seeing what your neighbors and what your community is experiencing and going through. "Pop culture, celebrities."

What we see and what I'm seeing in the chat is that our associations and our attitudes and our perceptions of just the term "money" comes from a lot of different places and can be informed by many, many different things, including family, our peers, our culture, our background, our historic experiences with money and with financial institutions or that of our peers. That all differs, and that differs from person to person.

Your experiences and the things that have influenced the way you think about money is different from mine and different from the families that we serve. With that recognition, that many things impact our attitudes towards money differently, what might this mean when working with families? Why is it important to hold that truth and to recognize that? What might make this important when we're working with families? Go ahead and drop it in the chat.

I'm seeing that "Your attitudes and influences can inform choices or behaviors that you make with money. What you choose to do with money might be different." Yes. "Families might have different associations or feelings for money than staff do." Yes. Exactly. I'm seeing that "We inevitably bring our own beliefs, biases, and assumptions to work." Let's see another. These are so good, and there's so many coming through. "In the goal-making process for setting goals, I might think differently than a family I'm working with."

This all is resonating, and I think really speaks to the importance of self-reflection when we're engaging with families, particularly when we're engaging with families about topics that can be really sensitive, and are asking families to put themselves in a pretty vulnerable place.

What I'm seeing from the previous conversation and discussions that we were having, many things impact our attitudes towards money and our perceptions of it. They do so differently, including different experiences that we have with our family, our peers, media, culture, government, and a lot more. These attitudes inform our choices and inform our behavior, which at times might include choices that we might not understand.

It's important to reflect and honor the fact that our choices and the behaviors that we take are influenced by other circumstances or other priorities that might be different from our own. I'm seeing that, in the goal-setting process, that a family might think differently or be setting goals differently than I would, or they might make choices with their money that I don't understand, or that might be different from the choice that I would make. And understanding and honoring what is influencing their thinking, their perceptions, and their priorities and values when it comes to money really helps us approach family engagement from a place of really genuine trust and nonjudgment.

It's important to consider this. As we've just discussed, financial decisions are never made in a vacuum. Many, many things influence both our short- and long-term financial decisions. Like we were talking about, and you were dropping into the chat, things like values and culture and traditions might play a part in how we spend, save, or make financial choices, and my choices might be different from yours, and we both have priorities and values that are informing those choices in different ways.

For example, a family that you're working with might have to choose between using their tax refund to build a rainy day fund or contributing to savings to an emergency fund, or use it to pay down their debts, or spending it to pay off a family's medical bills – a mother's medical bills, and their priorities, their experiences, their context will inform their financial choices just as it would do yours.

The other thing to really keep in mind is that financial decisions and when people are talking about money, it's about a whole lot more than just the numbers. When we talk about money, one of the reasons why it can be so challenging and so difficult to engage in this conversation is that we are also discussing what money means to us. Attitudes and behaviors about money are wrapped up in feelings about security, about failure, about family, about love, about status, and all of this is going on in the background when we're talking about money. But talking about money can be a really transformative thing with families as we work with them and partner with them to make progress towards their goals. Because of this, listening deeply to families' emotions about money will help keep your discussions grounded and resonant and approachable.

Further, financial decisions are also made within the very, very powerful context of history and socioeconomic status. It's important to reflect and remember that many of the communities that we serve might have a deep mistrust in financial institutions based on their own past experience – that of family members or peers – and also historic and systemic barriers to inclusion and being intentionally excluded from financial opportunities in the past. Historic and present racism in everyday life and government policy, such as slavery, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and housing policy has historically excluded people of color from building wealth and

participating in financial institutions. It has shaped both access to and attitudes of money up until today.

In working with your families, this history will be really important to be aware of and to acknowledge in conversations, as they likely influence the way families are approaching these types of conversations and their relationship with their financial situation, in addition to all of the other influences that we've been talking about that people bring with them and that we bring with ourselves into conversations about money.

I also want to make sure that we keep this particular conversation going throughout today's session. As you've any thoughts or comments about how structural barriers have played a role in topics that we are going to discuss, please drop them into the chat. I'm going to take a pause a little bit and just take a look through the chat and see if there were any questions that folks have asked.

Someone said we should thoughtfully ask families about their feelings about money. We're actually going to transition directly into that, into tangible tactics and strategies and resources that you can use to help you facilitate these kinds of conversations. But my headline answer is have an open, transparent conversation with families about what's coming up for them when you're engaging this conversation. Because starting from that place of trust, deep listening and transparency will set you on a really strong foundation to dig in and to really make progress on financial goals.

So far, we've discussed how different forces inform our behaviors and inform our attitudes and our financial behaviors, and particularly, how acknowledging these realities and intentionally discussing the values that we bring when it comes to money with families builds this really strong foundation to open up conversations about money and really on specific goals, like budgeting, savings, and dealing with debt – all topics that you are going to dig into in more detail in future sessions throughout the day.

By addressing these values and feelings that someone has about finances, you can really create that trust and create a more open and more comfortable conversation space to talk about money. How should you do that? How should we get started? We are now going to walk through some really helpful resources and tactics that you can use to help you do just that.

To help you first, give ourselves a better understanding of our own associations, our own values, our own level of financial acumen and financial empowerment, how comfortable we are with financial topics and products so that we know what we're bringing to the conversation. Also strategies, tools, and tactics that you can use to partner with parents to genuinely reflect on their values when it comes to money so that you can ground your support and you can ground your work with them in a place and making recommendations on things that will resonate most for them and be most impactful.

With that, to take us through some of these really concrete and helpful resources, I'm going to hand it over to my colleague. Take it away, Jen.

Jennifer: Thanks so much, Helah. My name is Jen again. We're going to kind of circle back. Helah set us up perfectly. I love all the engagement in the chat for how we can go back and

start with you and really understand a little bit more and take a little bit deeper in reflecting on ourselves what knowledge, beliefs, values, and maybe even insecurities we have when partnering with families, specifically about money.

As we just discussed earlier and some of our discussion questions, we all have associations, opinions, knowledge, maybe knowledge gaps about money that are influenced by different things. We all have our own attitudes and feelings towards money that may affect the way that we approach these financial conversations. It's important that we as practitioners ground our conversations in families' motivations and values and not in our own. Really making it focused around the family, and identifying the fact that we have our own associations and compartmentalizing that.

Partnership is most effective when it's aligned with the person's own deeply rooted beliefs and values. You're likely familiar with something called "Your Money, Your Goals." It's a toolkit put together by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the CFPB. It's actually a fantastic resource for supporting families with financial goals.

We're going to review several of "Your Money, Your Goals" tools throughout the sessions during the institute, including this first resource that we're going to go over now. It is called the "Financial Empowerment Self-Assessment." There's a photo of it here. This assessment is a tool for staff and family service professionals. Walking through the questions on the tool can help you better understand your own financial skills, knowledge, knowledge gaps, and confidence. It's really nice structured tool in order for you to use to discover some of those things.

Based on your answers that you provide on this tool, it will then provide you with clear guidance and resources that you can review to help further build your own financial knowledge and confidence. Overall, it can help you shape the way that you support families and their financial goals and decisions. It starts by asking questions on the tool, and it ends with next steps you can take to increase your knowledge, examine your money values, and prepare for financial conversations with families. You can check out the tool and the handouts associated with this session.

I'm going to go a little bit more into it. The "My Money Picture" is going to be the next tool that we're going to talk about here. There's another photo of that here conveniently for you. This tool specifically helps you intentionally partner with families to explore what they're bringing to conversations about money. The first tool is going to help you explore your own, and then the next tool will help you explore what feelings families actually have.

You can use this knowledge discovered in this tool to help craft economic mobility objectives that resonate and are more likely to be achieved. We can do that by offering questions that explore feelings, values, and motivations. Then also make sure to use a strengths-based approach when completing this tool. Before diving into questions – into conversations about financial objectives and goals, start by asking questions.

Another thing for us to engage in the Q&A is going to be what kind of questions could you have families in order to learn about their feelings and concerns around money and what influences their financial decisions? Drop any thoughts you have on that into the Q&A. In order to get people started a little bit more, we have a couple of examples – samples on the next slide. I

have some coming through first. First, find out if families want to talk about money with you. That's a great thing. Asking permission is going to be very, very important. It's definitely not a topic that can be forced on anybody. They need to be comfortable, feel safe when having these conversations, and permission is a great place to start.

Another thing is, what if your earliest experience with money? I love that. Those are very formative experiences when you learn about money and how money is used and how money shapes everyday experiences. What are some of your earliest memories about money? Build trust in relationships with family support before trying to bring these up in discussions. Of course, having that, again, going back to that safe trust and space, building rapport, before diving into these somewhat heavy topics.

Some other sample questions that you can use. This first one I love is just, what does money mean to you? Asking that very open-ended question and kind of just opening the door a little bit and letting the family guide the conversation. It's a really, really good starting point.

Another one is, what is the most difficult thing about money for you, for your family? Another, how did your family handle finances when you were growing up? Did you discuss money openly? How did you think this would influence you? Then a very good one, especially, obviously, when working with families is, what do you want your children to learn about money, and what do you think they're learning from you now?

These are just some really good open-ended questions to get that conversation started. But I do really want to circle back to that fact of asking that permission and building that trust. Those will be a really good starting point before even hopping into these open-ended questions that are sampled here.

Helping people become aware of financial decisions that can be influenced by emotions and past experiences can help them understand what drives some of their financial choices now. Going back to that, what's your first memory of money? What's your earliest experience with money? That can be really transformative, as well. It can also help you better understand their unique strengths and challenges when dealing with money issues as well throughout the entire process of working with them on their financial goals.

Additionally, going back to using a strengths-based approach, leveraging a strengths-based approach and discussion is going to be very important. What this means is coming to conversations with a genuine assumption that families are good with money, that they have potential, and that they have unique strengths and capabilities to bring to the work.

It's a view that, even when discussing, perhaps, missteps from the past, maybe some experiences that families had that weren't so positive when it came to money, that you will focus on the family's strengths that helped them move forward in those situations. Having a strengths-based approach and always having unconditional positive regard is going to be very important for these conversations, additionally, helping build trust and moving these relationships forward.

Another tool that I want to talk about here is from "Your Money, Your Goals." It's a wonderful tool that helps kick off these conversations. It asks a series of short yes-or-no questions that run

the spectrum, such as, “Do you have dreams for you and your children that require money to make them happen?” or “Do you usually have the same amount of money – the same amount of income every week?” Based on families’ answers, it points you to specific resources within the toolkit that can help them take action.

Let’s take, for example, the very first question, “Do you have dreams that you and your children – do you have dreams for you and your children that require money to help you make them happen?” Say a family answers “yes” to that question. Within the tool kit, the answer key that is provided there will direct you to resources for setting goals that can be used to help move the conversation forward. Then additionally, say a family answers “no” to the second question, “Do you have the same amount of income every week?” The answer key will then refer you to another tool that assists you with tracking income and benefits. These tools will be covered in other sessions later today, more in detail.

Another thing for engagement in the Q&A, has anybody used a tool like this with families before and sharing a little bit more about how it’s gone? I’m go and check out some of the stuff that’s been going on the Q&A.

“I think that I had to learn that money was just not about to hear and now, and that it was OK to plan.” It’s a very important takeaway, as well. It’s not the immediate. It’s about the long-term planning. Money is a long term, and managing it is a long-term journey and not just always a short term.

Has anybody used this tool with families before? That’s totally fine, if not, which is, even more it’s good to have that structure available. Not a lot of experience with using it before, but it’s really, really helpful, especially when approaching these conversations for the first time, to have that structure in place. You don’t have to read it word for word, but it’s a very good guide for moving yourself forward for these conversations and connecting to next steps, that’s being mentioned in the chat. OK, great.

The next thing we’re going to do is an activity. This is actually a different organization that puts this together. It’s one final resource that helps facilitate these conversations. It’s put together by an organization called Prosperity Agenda. Prosperity Agenda is a nonprofit financial empowerment organization. It offers activities to help family service professionals begin conversations with families about their financial life.

The activity, it’s called Money Mindset, involves dialogue-based cards that you can use in groups or in one-on-one conversations. We’re going to go over one of these today. These activities start from the premise that when people focus on their money mindset, they can access more of their own personal power, sense of control, and hope about their financial well-being, both now and in the future. Dialogue, of course, can be a very powerful way to learn about other people’s experiences with money. Those experiences make each of us think about and approach money differently. Having that dialogue is very important to discover those things.

Money Mindset cards also generate dialogue that’s family driven specifically, so we can start by acknowledging the savviness, intuition, and strength of people experiencing financial insecurity. Let’s try one out.



I wanted the Money Mindset cards that we're going to do together right now. It's called Build Financial Control. We'll go ahead and walk through it. On this Money Mindset Card, it is going to prompt you to – together, if you were physically together – draw a vertical line down the middle of a piece of paper. Or, probably in this virtual world, you just have this discussion and use it as a dialogue prompt. But let's pretend we're in person and things are back to normal, and you got a piece of paper handy. You'll take it out and draw a line right down the middle of it.

On one side of the piece of paper, you're going to want to brainstorm all the ways that the family feels like money is out of their control. Brainstorming all those and listing them, naming it, writing it down on paper. Drop some answers on this in the chat. What might a family say if you ask them to respond to this same brainstorm? If you told them, "List some things that you feel like are out of your control when it comes to money," and drop those ideas of what the responses would be in the chat.

I'm seeing some examples, it could be "lack of opportunities to make more money." "Uncontrollable, high expenses." "Life is just expensive." "You can't always find things." "Cost of rent." I'm seeing come through the chat, "A family member losing a job of income and having to lean in and help them out." The prompt was "things that are out of the – things that are out of the family's control when it comes to money. "How much their boss pays them." "The amount of money in their paycheck," of course. These are all great things that a family may feel when responding to this prompt of things that they feel like are just out of their control when it comes to money. Many people work hard but don't make a livable wage. These are all great examples of responses that could be coming through during this exercise.

On the other side of the page, you're going to be putting down "Talk about ways that the family feels like they can take control of their money." What are some examples you think that families would respond to with this prompt? Brainstorm on the other half, ways that you feel that money is within your control. What do you think?

"Access to banks." I think that might have been "out of the control." Some other examples that are coming through: "The fact that they can plan each month." Those are some things that they can actually sit down and make a plan for each month. The amount, the ability, perhaps to save regularly, even if it's \$5.

"Creating a budget," I'm seeing coming through a lot here. That's something again, going along with that plan. Is that something that you can plan to have a budget every single month and stick to it as much as possible. "Set a goal for saving a small amount each month." That's totally within, with a way that you can feel in control and take control. Just sitting at that small goal for yourself. "Being an example for their kids." Absolutely.

"How much they spend on entertainment." Some of those more variable costs, things that aren't fixed costs, like rent, food, things like that, transportation. Having a little bit more control and knowledge over some of those more variable costs. "Maybe putting aside a small amount of money for savings, even if it's not in banks, even if it's just \$10 per week or 25 per paycheck." I love that idea.

“Decide what they spend any extra money on.” I think that goes back to making that budget and having that plan, and understanding what kind of – type of, money remains and taking control of how that money is being spent, if it’s going into savings, if it’s going into a different type of investment, maybe towards education or some other goal. OK. This is great.

The next prompt on this, after this has all been outlined and named on each side of the piece of paper, “Talk about ways that they can take that small steps – I’m sorry – small steps that they can make today.” With all of this and these great ideas, what can they do in two months from now, or six months from now? Going back to some of the examples that were popped into the chat, say, “In two months from now, we can have design a budget and stick to it.” “Design a savings goal and reach it within six months.” These are all great examples of concrete steps of not just the brainstorm part, but also the concrete steps that can come out of this dialogue exercise.

Also, I wanted to finally highlight that in these cards there is always helpful prompts under coaching questions that are listed there and helpful hints to facilitate more discussion. Some of the prompting questions that could be within this scenario is asking, “What’s in the way?” What is in the way of you creating a budget? What is in the way of you setting that savings goal?

A lot of times a savings goals of enforcing expenses. Going back to the fact that somebody brought up a family member losing employment and having to help out a health-related expense coming up. Those are other good prompting questions to dig deeper in the conversation. Other content questions are – examples of those are, “What will help you move forward?” “What will help you gain a little bit more control?” And “What is your first step?”

Again, sometimes these prompts can be a little bit overwhelming of what to do. Those are just ways to take first steps is by introducing these questions. Then another good question is, “What would happen if you didn’t do anything?” That’s one question that I really love.

An example of helpful hints that would be available on the cards are acknowledging that these things – that they are often things outside of us that we can’t control. I think this is very, very important to acknowledge. Knowing that the families aren’t to blame for these things that happen, when they’re not able to meet – stick to their budget every single month. They had a car expense come up and it ruined their budget, and they weren’t able to meet their savings goal. I think this is very important to acknowledge.

This is just a quick overview of the Money Mindset activities overall, and just one example of a way to approach conversations about financial values with families. You can check out more about these Money Mindset activities and get a free sample of these cards via the link in our session handout. You can also develop your own techniques for these types of conversations. As with all these tools, these are just a guide, a way to get yourself more comfortable about the structure in approaching these conversations, and feel free to always adapt and make them your own.

What is really important when you open up these conversations is that you’re listening with intention, and that you’re focusing on strengths and engaging with dialogue that’s open, judgment-free, and communicative. All right.

On to the next discussion question. Another engagement opportunity for the chat box is “How do you envision implementing a tool or activity like this, like the Money Mindset cards with families?” Then, “In what setting, as well?” And “What challenges do you anticipate?” Any responses that you have to those three prompts, just drop them in the chat.

I see a really good follow-up comment from in our transition: “Acknowledging that families are budgeting and saving as much as they can. They just don’t make enough money in some instances.” That’s another thing that is sometimes outside of the family’s control is that they are implementing these tools, it’s not that they don’t exist. It’s just that making ends meet is sometimes very difficult to do, based on the pay wages that they’re receiving at their current job. It’s a great point to bring up.

Anybody else have thoughts about how you envision implementing these tools during the Family Partnership Agreement process? It’s a great opportunity to sit down and have that table-setting conversation. “If a family creates a family goal related to finances, ask them if they’re interested in doing this activity together.” I love that. It’s a very natural entry point into having this activity. It’s structured, it’s easy to get through, and a really good prompt to dig a little bit deeper into that financial goal.

“Once you’re able to identify the right time for a family during a one-on-one meeting with the family.” I like that as well. Just creating that safe space and the one-on-one meeting and setting aside that focused time to dive into this.

“You could also do this at a group parent event.” Totally agree. “Ensuring that you create a safe and confidential space for parents to share.” Love “peer to peer learning,” as well, and families recognizing that they’re going through a lot of the same things that other families are, as well. That group setting can really, really be transformational, as well. “It can also follow up parent activity night on financial well-being.” Really, really love all these ideas. All right.

I want to go back and talk about where this all fits in the family partnership process. While you’ve seen this goal-setting graphic that’s displayed on the slide a few times, you’ll want to know how it can be applied in several ways. For example, by engaging in financial conversations with family using the strengths-based approach that we talked about earlier, you’re taking part in an effective family partnership process.

By addressing feelings, values, and finance, by creating a space for these conversations, you are prioritizing communication with families and assessing their strength. Keeping families’ values at the forefront of your discussions will ensure that you are supporting families in setting goals that resonate with their values, motivations, and beliefs. This honors their strengths and recognizes that they know best what their family needs to most succeed. And you are partnered with them in their journey towards greater economic mobility.

It’s also important here to note that not all families will name financial goals. Having conversations about money and building comfort in discussing financials is crucial to supporting families and thinking about these topics and the roles that they play.

As family service professionals, we can support families to understand the relevance of finances to all types of goals, such as employment goals and how that's related to their career goals and how finances are related, and also their education goals and how that's related.

For example, going back to school may require giving up some income, of course. Right? If you're in school, you might not be able to work full time. You might need to find part time employment, or you might need to work night shifts or something that pays a little bit less or work less hours. Going back to school also may introduce new transportation or child care costs that weren't there before. All these are things that families could proactively think about and plan for. Taking that next step can become more feasible when incorporating it with the financial ramifications of that choice. All right.

Another final thing to engage in the chat box about. What are some ways you see financial goals supporting other goals that a family might have? They have a financial goal, but it also might affect a career goal or an education goal. What are the ways – if you could share in the chat – what are the ways that you see financial goals supporting other goals a family might have that don't appear on the surface to relate to finances?

While people are responding to that, I wanted to elevate a comment that “We often aren't comfortable talking about our own finances. Yet we ask families to open up about theirs. It could be helpful for family service professionals to practice talking about financials with colleagues, peers, friends, et cetera, to practice having these conversations.” I absolutely love that. It's a little bit of the “practice what you preach,” and going through that experience yourself of opening up about finances and putting yourself in those families' shoes of what it would feel like to actually have that open conversation, as well.

Some responses that I'm getting from the prompt. “Saving for education – saving for education for themselves or their kids.” If the family has an education goal that they want to save for college for their child, that has financial ramifications, and building that in. Where within your budget, are you going to put aside savings for that education goal?

“Advancing their education, since there's a cost that.” Of course, especially post-secondary education is very – very expensive. You can't be planning for a post-secondary and pursuing something in that space without also planning for how you're going to pay for it and how you're going to cover child care, additional child care costs, and all that thing – and all those related things.

Helah: Hey, Jen?

Jennifer: Yes?

Helah: I just wanted to jump in real quick because I know we're hitting on time, and I want to make sure that folks have time to go to the Engagement Hub and check out some of those resources there. I just wanted to jump in quickly and name that how important these resources and tools can be to help facilitate those conversations and really draw the connection between financial goals, but a lot of those other goals, as you were saying, Jen, a lot of those other goals that don't appear to be directly related to finances.

Jennifer: Absolutely. That's all I have for my slides, as well. You can go ahead and wrap up, Helah. Thanks.

Helah: All right. Thank you so much. Yes. As Jen was saying, a lot of these resources are available to help you have these conversations. Another thing to really keep in mind is that you do not need to be an expert. As a family support professional, we are not expected to be financial experts. We are partners, and we are partners in connecting families to the resources they need and to help them take action towards those goals that they've named with you.

We have a lot of resources available to help you do just that. Some of them we shared through "Your Money, Your Goals" and, of course, through the "Economic Mobility Toolkit for Head Start and Early Head Start" staff, which are always available on ECLKC and in the Resources tab and in the Engagement Hub.

To wrap up our session, some of our key takeaways are really what we've been talking about. First, that the financial behaviors and decisions that are shaped by person's unique experiences and that are also influenced by structural barriers that they may have faced; that as family service professionals, we hold our own values that we bring to this work, and it's important to recognize that; and that there are lots of tools and resources that we can use to help have these conversations.

As I saw in the chat, I want to elevate really how destigmatize those conversations, and name that lots of people use lots of different kinds of tools, and these are some of them.

Then, of course, approaching these financial conversations with the knowledge, self-awareness, and sensitivity to support building a really strong relationship to support families in making progress towards those goals.

Before we hop out, I want to thank you again for taking time with us. And a reminder to complete this session, you can download your Certificate of Attendance. Quick reminder, you can go to the engagement tools at the bottom of your console, click the blue Certificate. A pop-up message will appear. If you've met the full criteria, you'll be able to – a PDF will appear, and you can either save it or print it. We recommend that you save it to your computer. Group leaders can always open the View and Group Viewer Room if you're watching with multiple people who have also received – met the full credit.

Don't forget to download the resources, which are all in the Helpful Links section and in the Engagement Hub. Of course, your feedback is always very important to us. There's an event survey that will be posted in the Engagement Hub. Please remember to complete it at the end of the institute.

Lastly, we are all very eager to get back to resume full-in person services. Great news is that the Biden administration is prioritizing teachers, early educators, and child care to receive the vaccination. To learn more, again, there's information in the Engagement Hub that you can use to make the right decision for yourself.

Thank you again. We've come to the end of our session. Please join us in the Engagement Hub for a self-care break, and get ready for your next session. Thank you so much.