

Using the 5Rs to Support Creativity in Young Children

Vanessa Maanao-French: Hello, and welcome to our webinar space. If you haven't already, we would love to know where you are joining us for today. Drop it into the Q&A widget because we love to see just how far and wide our Head Start community is. Good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you are. Welcome to the Education Manager Webinar Series on the 5Rs and Using Approaches to Learning. Today, we're going to be focusing on creativity, which we are so excited about. I feel like this brings us to like the climax of all the excitement around approaches to learning and how we can support it in young children.

Before I get too far down the line, I do want to introduce myself and save some space for Katie to also say hello. My name is Vanessa Maanao-French, and I'm with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. And I am so excited to be joined by my colleague, Katie. Katie, you want to say hi?

Katie Miller: Absolutely, my name is Katie Miller, and I am also with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, or DTL as you'll hear us refer to it. A little less stressful to say it just that way. But Vanessa and I are both former Ed managers. We are super excited to be able to join you and to really jump into this topic on creativity and thinking about it in some really, I guess pun intended, creative ways. We are very excited, and we're glad to have you with us.

Vanessa: Awesome, perfect Katie. If you've been with us for this journey starting back in the fall, then you'll know that Approaches to Learning has been part of some integrated content that we have been sharing with other webinar series that come from DTL. Teacher Time, Coaching Corner, and the Home Visitor Series also are really taking a closer look from our own perspectives and the roles that we like to support in our webinar series, how we can best leverage approaches to learning to support every child's development. Our hope in doing that too is that it provides an opportunity for you and your teammates to come together. Like watch those webinars, either together or separately, but come back together and talk about what did you learn and how can we apply it as a full team.

We would love to hear about your experiences. If that's something you've already started doing, pop those ideas into the Q&A widget. We just would love to be able to hear your stories and share them with others. The Leader's Digest was the one I really wanted to highlight in the purple – purple? Was it purple? No, blue resources list. Download this if you haven't already. It is writable. You can engage with us as we ask questions. It'll capture your reflections, some takeaway ideas that you'd like to share with your team. And in addition, the last two pages has an amazing list of resources for you to take this session one step further. And to be able to share it with others. Do download that if you haven't. We actually have an activity specifically that we'll be using the resource guide. Download, and we will press on.

Today, we are focused on creativity. It is the last of the four subdomains of Approaches to Learning. And we want you, at the end of our time today, to be able to describe strategies that

you can use as an education manager, as a leader in your program, to support the creativity of young children. And then finally, during our – after our time together, we hope that you can really see the 5Rs and how it can help you promote the creativity in your staff.

Throughout the session today, when we're talking about the 5Rs and creativity, we're really trying to create this parallel process. We're talking about supporting children, but to do that, we really must support our staff.

Question to get us started and to help you practice using that purple Q&A widget button: We are curious – how do you nurture and sustain creativity in your personal life? We'll pause and give you time. How do you nurture and sustain creativity in your personal life?

And as your answers come in – excited to hear them – I will tell you I have a 7-year-old who absolutely helps me stay creative in my life. My 11-year-old as well. But definitely, you're kind of forced to when you have a young person who has all these ideas.

Katie: I can share too. I really like exploring and seeing other people who are being creative. Listening to different kinds of music or art or any expression that is especially local in my area. I love following those.

Vanessa: Yes, are you seeing some of these come through? These are exciting. Reading, coloring, doodling. Every meeting. I'm with you, Amy.

Katie: Looks like Deirdre has ...

Vanessa: Yeah, I saw one that was, "I paint badly but joyfully." And I ... The joy is the whole point. And art is subjective. What you think may be bad may be just exquisite to someone else.

Katie: And in all caps, "Do what makes you happy." That's wonderful.

Vanessa: I feel like our session is done. That is it. That is the bumper sticker for our session. A fellow crocheter. There are a couple crocheters out there, just so you know. I also crochet and knit, and we've got some bakers. "Art is what you want it to be." Stephanie, yes, yes. I'm loving these. We could just read these, like all day, but maybe we should push on. But you want to highlight a couple before you take the next slide?

Katie: I think there's such an interesting variety of how people are interpreting creativity, which I completely love. It really fits well with how we're going to talk today. But a couple of things that jumped out at me, one person mentioned that they have a child with autism and that that child helps orient them to creativity, which is wonderful. Talking about planting flowers, eating wonderful food with people who make me laugh. Reading, walking, running, playing in the water. What a neat variety of ways to express and explore creativity. Love it.

Vanessa: Awesome, thanks everyone for sharing. Really appreciate it.

Katie: Great. Let's talk about the ELOF. I know it's everybody's most exciting part of it, but I promise this is actually really cool framing moment for our discussion on creativity. As you might have known, if you've seen any of our other in this series, this year we've been using the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework or ELOF, to guide in our application of these 5Rs. Specifically within the framework, we have selected the domain Approaches to Learning to explore this year. One of my all-time favorites. I've been thrilled to be a part of this one.

So far this year, we've covered how the 5Rs can be used to support emotional, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulation and initiative and curiosity skills in young children. We have accomplished a lot already. And today, we are going to focus on, as we mentioned, creativity. Whether climbing onto a couch to retrieve a toy, building increasingly elaborate block structures, or deciding on the roles in pretend play, young children draw upon their curiosity, persistence, and creativity to gather information and solve problems. Yet another way to describe creativity, to gather information and solve problems.

We had a lot of inspirational quotes that really helped us to explore this topic. And one of them was by Albert Einstein, who once said that "To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science." Indeed, he connects creativity to science, which we also want to do. We also know that to have a good idea, whether that's in math or solving a problem with a peer, or thinking about what to paint, you have to have lots of ideas. And this takes a creative mind.

The Early Learning Outcomes Framework, ELOF, helps us to consider how these skills grow in young children from simple to complex. We're going to briefly review the goals for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers as we ramp into this topic.

Alright, our creativity goals for infants and toddlers – we have two that we're going to talk about; the child uses creativity to increase understanding and learning. It's a vehicle for learning. And second, the child shows imagination in play and interactions with others. And I will just pause for a second and say, I love that it brings out interactions with others as a part of creativity, so relationships are really embedded in this as well. And then creativity goals for preschoolers; the child expresses creativity in thinking and communication. And again, the child uses imagination in play and interactions with others.

What a great overall example of how creativity is woven into all the learning and the development that happens with our children – thinking, communication, play, interactions with others. I think that's pretty cool.

Vanessa: Thanks, Katie. I feel like I can almost sum up this slide with a quote from one of your colleagues out there in webinar land. Jessie said, "To be creative is to be free." And I just love that definition, your self-definition. I thought I should raise it up and share it with all. And I feel like it touches on each of these quadrants that we're going to talk about to describe why creativity is so very important.

There has been research out there on both adults and children and what they need to be successful both in the moment that they are sitting in, as well as for their lifetime. And creativity is right up there with intellect and being able to get along with others. Creativity is so, so very important.

We're going to raise these three big – these four big ideas actually, about why it's important. One, we know that our world is rapidly changing. When I think about my children and then think about myself in the age that my children are now, how much the world has shifted. My middle-schooler has a cell phone. What? The technology is just one way. The way that we communicate, the way that we receive and provide information has so drastically shifted. It's our flexibility that is needed within creativity to be able to adapt and best use the world around us as things shift.

The other is that creativity is key to problem solving. When you see children in a block area trying to build a tall structure and it keeps falling down, that's awesome because you know they're going to keep trying different ways. Children iterate on ideas in ways that adults don't. We may give up, but they don't. They're like, "We are determined to create this zoo for both the animals and the dolls that are all going to cohabitate in this block area. We've got to figure it out." They're motivated, and their creativity is what inspires them to move on.

It also reflects the unique ways that children just are in the world. The way they see, the way they hear, feel, and engage with the world around them. It's a reflection of their way of thinking. When you see those unusual structures that are being built or an unusual way to use materials that were, I had an idea for one way of using them and the kids are coming at you with a totally different one. Follow their lead, because it's their way of showing who they are as a person.

And then finally, creativity helps children express their emotions. And I notice we had some comments – when we asked about creativity in your personal lives – there were comments about using painting or singing, or other types of music, or dance. I wonder for you as adults, how does that help you express your emotions? How does that fit as part of your identity? If we were to take away dance, would you feel different as a person? That's a part of creativity and who you are.

There were a couple puzzlers in our group. Love to see. We have a thing about puzzles in our team. And what's interesting is that we each come together around one puzzle and have different strategies for that. And that's part of how we go about engaging in the world. I could go on and on, but I think I've made my point. But if you have other ideas, as I'm sure you all do, you're so great at engaging with us about why do you think creativity is important for both young children and for your staff. Please drop those into the Q&A. Use that purple button and let us know your thoughts.

Let me move us on to our next slide where I share this amazing quote from Sydney Gurewitz Clemens. Now, her original quote was really specific to art, but I think that she would be OK if we said creativity more broadly. She's an early educator as well, just like us. The quote is,

"Creativity has the role in education of helping children become like themselves instead of more like everyone else." And I've seen a comment come through about how sometimes adults can guide children's creativity away from their natural inclinations or there are ways that we can shut down or promote children's creativity. And we'll be talking about that for sure in just a bit. I thought I'd share that quote with you.

As always, for our series, we have been talking about the 5Rs and where does this fit in? If you are new to the 5Rs, I will run through them really quickly. And then Katie and I selected two today to really investigate further around its connection to creativity.

The first of the Rs is responsive relationships. That's how you as leaders help develop this unified culture around your team, which means we take care of each other. We are part of a shared mission. We are teammates in all sense of the word. We know each other. We hear, listen, and respect one another and the work that we do.

The next R is reason, and that's really the why behind our work. As education leaders, we're connecting the reason why we do what we do to our policies and practices. Not just to get buy in, but to inspire commitment to those practices and to those policies.

The next R is resources. And automatically, often we think of those really tangible things, like materials for your classroom, or your salary, or training dollars. And yes, all of those things are vital to the success of our program. But we like to really think about resources too as the people that you surround yourself with. And that would include your staff as being resources to one another, but also the families and the community at large as being amazing informants to our work to do it well.

The final two: reflective dialogues, we will be talking about – so excited – is how we engage with our data. That's the best way I think to say it. We want to engage with our data so we can answer these three questions: How are the children doing? How do we know? And how do we know with confidence? And then there's one last question, if we know we have answers to those first three questions, what are we going to do about it? Reflective dialogues gives us a space to be reflective versus evaluative with our data and to be able to challenge ourself to try new things.

Last R is recognition, and this can be about awards. It can be about certificates. It can be about acknowledging someone for a job well-done. It is all of those things. And it is also making sure every staff person feels visible, valued, and validated for their place within the program and that they feel like they're contributing to something bigger than themselves. Because who wouldn't want to feel that? Acknowledgement and really beyond praise, but we'll talk a little bit more about that later today too.

Without further ado, I think I will pass it over to you, Katie.

Katie: Great. I mentioned that we, when we were exploring this topic, we came across a variety of quotes. We'll share a few more of them throughout the time to really, I think, enhance the

aspect of creativity that we're talking about. In this area, we have a quote from Steve Jobs, who's the founder of Apple – one of the founders of Apple, and he had an extraordinarily creative mind, but he summed up creativity so simply. And he said, "Creativity is just connecting things." I'm just going to pause on that for just a moment.

We're going to take a page from Steve Jobs' notebook and during our time today, we'll focus on, as Vanessa mentioned, just two of the Rs. We only have an hour. We would love to explore it in-depth with all of the Rs. But in this case, we really wanted to highlight these two, responsive relationships and reflective dialogues. We're going to connect these to the support of creativity in both young children and education staff and of course, you. Let's look more in-depth.

Early learning leaders build a relationship based foundation through responsive relationships that support and develop a thriving culture of learning and connectedness. Here's our connection again. They work to create trust, demonstrate caring for and about education staff, and encourage belonging. They demonstrate reliability, foster resilience in themselves and others, and lead intentionally through an ever present lens on equity and anti-racism. They know their team members, their needs and strengths, and they support their chosen path for professional development. They create communities of learning and share the excitement in the learning alongside their team.

We talked about those responsive relationships, the connections, creativity – they're really interwoven with that excitement about learning. Leaders are a guide on the side – we like to use that phrase – as home visitors, teachers, and family child care providers, engage directly with children and families. Responsive relationships between the leader and their team model what we want for children. We want supportive interactions that guide and encourage the growth of new skills and behaviors.

As leaders, we really want our education staff to practice autonomy support. This was a phrase and an idea that we came across that we really thought explained well this connectedness. We want children to have the time, space, and materials, to choose how to accomplish tasks. And in this way, we allow children the opportunity to find new ways to reach a goal. I actually saw someone say almost exactly that same thing within the Q&A earlier. We're on the same page already.

Creativity is not bound to expression in the arts. I'm going to pause on that statement because I think that is actually a hard one for a lot of us to get past. Creativity is not just expression of the arts. That's a great part of it, but it's not all of it. Children demonstrate creativity when they use their imagination to create new games or problem solve ways to share the sensory table, just one other example. Children naturally prototype or create versions of solutions before deciding on their approach or product. Block towers are created repeatedly to find just the right combination of blocks to achieve their desired shape or height. We don't want any sort of cookie cutter experiences for our children. Purple cats and blue horses were OK for Eric Carle. We can certainly find opportunities for ways to support children as they think and play in creative ways.

Our most important role as adults is to give children the resources and time they need to exercise their creativity. Our challenge to you as an education leader is this: How do you provide your team with the resources and time they need to exercise their creativity? We started with you personally, now let's think about how you provide your team with the resources and time they need to exercise their creativity. I'll tag Vanessa for a talk about reflective dialogue.

Vanessa: Thanks, Katie. We did promise you two Rs. This is number two. She's right. We wanted to do all five, but we only have you for just so little time. But if you want this, put it in your evaluation. We'll come back to this topic. Effective learning leaders use reflective dialogues to collaborate to make meaning of data. They apply it to the decision making processes, whether it be individualizing for a single child, or thinking about the group classroom experience, or how they're going to prepare to go out and work with the family on a home visit.

They also promote dialogue around equity. This gives us an amazing space to sit back, really look at what the children are showing us, listen carefully to what they are telling us, look at what the numbers from our data are showing us too, to be able to think is what we're doing equitable? Are we providing our very best to every child? What we're doing is working for this group, is it working for this group? And if not, what can we try to refine our practice to make sure every child benefits from the time that we have them together?

And that brings up that idea of being able to challenge and provoke thinking. Again, reflective dialogues is a space for your team to have a safe space to try new things, to feel like the data is there to help them know if they're on the right track, or do we need to recalibrate?

This is why I feel like maybe in every one of these series, Katie, we may have touched on reflective dialogue. We are a group of professional dynamic educators in Head Start. And to be dynamic, we need to use all of the tools at our disposal. And our data is a critical piece of that. We can be data informed and creative and having that "let's try this" attitude as part of it.

Earlier, we had an amazing comment come through, which was like, I feel like maybe you helped us develop this webinar, about how as adults, we can hinder the development of creativity in young children. We wanted to touch on just a bit on how the words we use as adults matter and how they can promote, again, or hinder, a child's creativity.

Let's take a moment to engage with this photo of a family child care provider and a young child who has just brought a creation to share with her with some enthusiasm. And the teacher, family child care provider in this photo, might say things like, "What is it?" "Tell me about the octopus you drew." "Why did you use paints?" "Teacher Mark put out markers and crayons for today." Or "I like your picture, but you got paint all over you. Let's go clean up."

Question for our group out there, why would these comments and questions hinder creativity? What are your thoughts? I see a couple things coming through. "The focus is more on the product and the process." Yes, thank you. Other ideas? Judging. "It's your agenda, not hers." "The child will feel shutdown, is going to turn off their creativity." Yeah, Marcy, I agree, it feels a

bit as like a negative tone, right? Like you got messy, why'd you do that? You guys are right on. Open-ended. Yes. Agreed, agreed, thank you, thank you, negative dismissive statements. OK, and this is just a 1-second interaction back and forth with the child.

These things that you're saying can be spot on for that child's experience. And I'm sure you're probably sitting now with that young child, go back and want to create again. Or are they feeling like "Well, that experience makes me feel less like I want to show myself through my creativity." I don't want to leave us with that. I want to flip the script a little bit, well a lot of bit, and think about the kinds of questions and comments that can promote creativity.

What if this family child care provider instead said, "Tell me about your creation," or, "I see that you used crayons and paint. What inspired you to do that?" And I love this next one: "If we put this piece of art in a museum, what name would you give it?" And then finally, "What was your favorite part about what you created?" Why do you think these promote creativity? Kind of flipping the script.

Katie: As people are answering that, I actually had anything question that I thought would be really cool to bring out to group. One of our participants asked, how do program managers who work at small, rural programs embed reflective opportunities into their program? I thought that might be another one to pair with this, so I'll throw that out there as well. Anybody who works in a small, rural program, how do you support your staff to have reflective opportunities? It could be in ways such as this. We're talking about how educators are speaking to children, but it could be other ways as well.

Vanessa: Yes, there is wisdom in this room for sure. Please share your ideas, and we'll push those out to the larger group. Positive and reaffirming statements gives the child the opportunity to talk about their work, and "their" in all capital letters, yes. Shows excitement, makes her feel good about her work. These are great. I mean you get it. You get it. Question for you all to consider as leaders – and I know many of you out there also are teachers, family child care providers as well – thinking about the things you hear and say to children when faced with a similar situation, how often do we slip unintentionally into the, "What is it?" Or focus on the mess, or we just slip into those when we could use these other questions that are more open-ended to affirming of creativity. Just a thought to ponder.

We want to be intentional about our language because this group is really letting us know, I think, Katie, that they know the value of words and that these words really matter. We wanted to give you an opportunity to be creative as well and to think about the words and how your words matter with a quick little activity. This is also in your Leader's Digest if you would prefer to put your answers there for yourself. But we would love for you too to use the Q&A widget.

This is Rose's creature. She has brought this creature. She's called it a creature. Brought it to you. What feedback would you give to Rose to promote her creativity?

Katie: Oh, we've already got a great one. Joan says using the word creation with art and structure with blocks when the child told her that it wasn't a building. Using more open-ended words themselves when they're asking about it was really a cool idea.

Vanessa: Nice. Oh, "What can you tell me about it?" Yes, Donna, nice, big open-ended question. Lots of space. Oh, I love the enthusiasm. Yes, wow, can you tell me more about it? Yeah, it's a unique thing, and I do like this one, it is ... Where would a creature like this live? What would it eat, right? Even expanding beyond what you can physically see, engaging that child's imagination. "You used so many colors. Why those colors?" Yes, how does it work? I love it!

Katie: The one that people are also talking about, you remember when we starting talking about it, we said that it also connects with communication and using why questions beyond just what questions will help teach children to look to that next level of thinking and explanation.

Vanessa: Yes, yes, yes. Well Cindy put in there too, something about "What do the colors represent?" Just taking it to the very next level and then higher and higher. Great. Yes. "Like the way you used tape to keep your creature together." "You are so smart." How affirming is that? In 5 seconds, that child is going to go and build an entire family of creatures. I wish we could stay on this slide forever, Katie, but we should probably move on. I will turn it over to you.

Katie: Alright, now we have our next steps. We talked about our own personal creativity. We talked about supporting the creativity of our educators in both your and their out of office time, but now we're curious about when you feel creative in your work environment. Please feel free to answer one or both of these questions. Again, you can answer in your Leader's Digest, though we'd also love to see those who are willing to share with us in Q&A. You can answer one or two of these: How do you express creativity in your work? Or, what does creativity look like in your work? Maybe it's something that someone else does in your work that supports creativity. Let's pause for a moment, give people time to answer.

Vanessa: Sounds good. Do you have an answer for yourself, Katie?

Katie: Oh, that's interesting. Putting me on the spot. I like it. I think leaving things more open-ended sometimes. Letting my own supervisor letting me make some decisions about how I might progress with a project feels like I have creativity to solve a problem my way. And having some opportunities planned for open-ended conversations like, "What's on your mind?" I really appreciate that as an aspect of creativity. How about you?

Vanessa: Nice. Me? Well, I don't know if you know this, but I am a big fan of Smartsheet, and for those who don't know what Smartsheet is, it's basically Excel but an online platform for Excel, and so many other things. But I could lose myself creating Smartsheets and dashboards, like that's my zone for creativity. That's me.

Vanessa: Alright, I see some answers coming through about the things that they create, and this is super interesting. It's quite a variety. One person likes to create systems or forms and that those things make their jobs better. Other people have talked about coming up with new ways

to teach things like math and science as a coach, asking the teacher how she would be more creative. Taking your lead from others. Finding ways to help parents see and support creativity. What are you noticing?

Vanessa: Well, I am seeing engaging teachers to problem solve. Again, like you mentioned, pushing it back to others through training with staff. Now I feel like Crystal. I need to go to your trainings with your staff to learn some things about how we can weave in creativity. As a developer, I get excited about what you're sharing with others. There's also some examples from coaches doing the very same things, but I have to really bring up Rebecca's about helping parents to see and support creativity in their children. That is fabulous, thank you, Rebecca.

Katie: I want to acknowledge that it might have taken a little longer for responses to come to mind when we asked you to think about how you are creative in your work, versus your personal life. That may come down to how we define creativity. And I know we've highlighted it just a little bit already, but I really want to emphasize that it's important to think about creativity as adults because it really does support our intellectual health.

Here is another quote. This time another one from Albert Einstein, and it says that "Creativity is just intelligence having fun." And it makes us think, creativity in a way is like a recess for our brain, a fun way to think about it. While we are on the topic of the brain, we wanted to acknowledge and address one popular theory about the brain, which implies that left brained and right brained people have different skills and abilities. This theory suggests that left brain dominant people are more logical, analytical, numerical, detail oriented, focused on the task at hand and likely to think in words rather than to visualize. And it also implies that right brain dominant people are more free thinking, creative, intuitive, able to see the big picture, and likely to visualize more rather than thinking in words.

We want to give you the unfortunate information for people who really love this idea that unfortunately, this really is a pretty much a myth. We don't necessarily have one way of thinking and people are not just one or the other. We really do use our whole brain for creativity, and we are all creative even though that might be expressed in different ways.

If you are logical and Excel spreadsheets are your jam, or like Vanessa, some Smartsheets, congratulations, you are an artist who uses Excel as your canvas and I won't lie, I do love a good spreadsheet. Creativity can include finding new ways to review, use, and share data, out of the box ways to rearrange a learning area so people talked about using math and science curriculum planning for creativity. Creating different ways to describe child development to parents during the home visit to give them that ah hah moment.

During the pandemic and it has also meant offering Head Start services virtually. Finding ways to train, communicate, and connect with staff using platforms like Zoom or ON24 that we're on today. It's also problem solving new ways to operate in-person services again, something seemingly as simple as children's arrival to the program had to be reconfigured in many programs. In this way, we want to acknowledge that we can all be creative and creativity includes the arts but it can be so much more.

Vanessa: Thanks, Katie. We wanted to highlight too that there was a webinar 2-3 months ago, back in April, and part of the webinar talked about intellectual health as part of staff wellness. Our colleagues Reagan and Joyce, along with OHS, broadcasted this webinar about staff wellness using a wellness wheel that had different components to it. There was physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual. And our overall wellness is based on how these components are balanced. If one has a deficit, think of it like a wheel. If one has a deficit, it's like having a hole in your tire, things are just clunky. We really do need to be mindful about all aspects of wellness.

And in the webinar, they discussed intellectual health as being the space where creativity really lives. It's the way we learn, problem solve, and vent, communicate, and all of these things can help improve our wellness so long as we embrace a growth mindset. And for those who were with us before, we talked about growth mindset, and we're going to bring it up again. I think Katie's got a great video loaded up for us to watch as a reminder for those and for those that are new, to catch you up but we did want to let you know that this webinar, the link for it if you'd like to learn more about staff wellness and the interaction of creativity through intellectual health, that webinar link is in the resources widget. Feel free to grab that because it's great information and may be really, really helpful for you thinking about your staff.

I think I'm going to pass it back to you, Katie, to gear us up for growth mindset.

Katie: Alright, as Vanessa mentioned, we have brought this up before, and you might be familiar with having this fixed versus growth mindset. But this is a really lovely short clip that just expresses and describes it in different ways. We really wanted to bring this up as a really important aspect of creativity. We're going to watch this together. It's about two minutes long. And as you watch the video, we'd like for you to think about how encouraging a growth mindset can help education staff grow their creativity. That's the question we want you to be pondering as we watch this video. Let's see it.

[Video begins]

Announcer: Researcher and professor, Carol Dweck, uses the term mindset to describe the way people think about ability and talent, to delineates between two different mindsets that exist on a continuum that first is the fixed mindset, which suggests that your abilities are innate and unchangeable. The second is a growth mindset, which views it as something you can improve through practice.

In a fixed mindset, you view failure as permanent. But with a growth mindset, you see failure as a chance to learn and even pivot. Those with a fixed mindset are more likely to view critical feedback as a personal attack while those with a growth mindset will see it as a chance to improve, where they can develop new systems.

With a fixed mindset, you're more likely to choose easier tasks and put in minimal effort. After all, if talent is fixed, why bother improving? Why even try? But with a growth mindset, you are more likely to embrace challenging tasks and work hard to improve.

Those with a fixed mindset are likely to give up when they face an obstacle, meanwhile, those with a growth mindset will view obstacles as a chance to experiment and solve problems. In a fixed mindset, the focus is on measurable accomplishments. But with a growth mindset, the focus is more on a journey of continual improvement. With a fixed mindset, you are less likely to take creative risks. But with a growth mindset, creative risks are simply a way to innovate and improve.

Ultimately your mindset influences everything from creative risk taking to how you view feedback, to whether or not you finish difficult tasks. And in the end, it's one of the greatest factors in determining whether or not you grow and improve in your abilities.

[Video ends]

Vanessa: I wanted to mention one thing really quickly before we move on, Katie. We got some comments in the Q&A box that some folks weren't able to hear the video, so apologies for that. But we're going to extend you all a link to the video so you can watch it. It's just a couple of minutes and it's a ... Feel free to share that with others as well. It's a nice summary of growth and fixed mindset.

Katie: Some creative problem solving on our parts too. After watching the video, we are curious, how do you encourage a growth mindset in your program? It's this idea that mistakes are a function of learning, that our intelligence and achievement is not a set thing but rather response to effort. We'll get people a moment to post in Q&A. Alright, seeing a couple come through. Brainstorming as a team on ways to use outdoor play differently. Great. Asking prints or family members for new ideas for socialization groups.

Vanessa: Oh, this one might be my favorite, it might become a t-shirt, having a "guess what I learned" mantra versus "I made a mistake."

Katie: Love it. Oh, listening to others. Mistakes are opportunities for learning.

Vanessa: Let everyone be heard.

Katie: We saw the same one.

Vanessa: Right? That was that good. We both had to say it.

Katie: Yes. Positive and nonjudgmental environment and community, so building that community as leaders.

Vanessa: That's right in the wheelhouse of responsive relationships. You've got that one nailed. Perfect.

Katie: Great, well let's keep on moving. OK, we are going to transition to an activity. You'll find this activity in the Leader's Digest in the Resources widget. If you haven't already, please go ahead and download it now. But if you don't have the Leader's Digest or way to download that,

don't worry, you can also replicate this activity on a piece of paper. And Vanessa and I have vowed to do this activity with you too. We have our paper ready.

Alright, here's how it works. One more quote to give you just a little bit more time to download the Leader's Digest or grab that piece of paper and a pen or pencil. We're going to finish the drawing activity, and a quote to inspire is: "Creativity is a natural extension of our enthusiasm." The enthusiasm we present fuels our creativity. I love that. That was from Earl Nightingale, an author on topics that are related to human character development and to motivation. We want you to bring your enthusiasm for our next activity.

Alright, taking this squiggle as a starting point, what would you add to finish it? If you're using paper and a pencil, feel free to draw as close a copy of this squiggle as you can, and once you have your squiggle prepared or your Leader's Digest out and ready, then go! We'll give you a moment. We'll do this too. Make something out of our squiggle.

Vanessa: I'm thinking I should have practiced, Katie.

Katie: What has been on my mind lately. I am doing some work on my lawn, and this is the first time I've had a lawn in my life so I'm super excited about all these projects still. I drew a little like maybe, let's see if I can hold it up closer. Of my lawn, so this is ... We're going to ... This is actually a design that we're looking at to make a little patio area with some rocks and people enjoying themselves by a little campfire. That was on my mind today, designing.

Vanessa: In the spirit of creativity, this is probably not going to ... Look at that. Will you look at that? Look at that face. Look at that face.

Katie: I love it! Looks like we also have people adding a top and gave it a face, made it a ghost.

Vanessa: Brilliant.

Katie: Looks like a cub drawing from the cave in Lion King. Nice. Cool, well, feel free to continue telling us about what you created in Q&A. We'd love to hear about it. Well, and since you can't see everyone's responses, we'll make sure and highlight and bring them up.

Vanessa: Absolutely.

Katie: But let's see what some of the other ideas have been around this. Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties. We're asking you to be vulnerable and create something new today.

Vanessa: Oh, these are so great! People are making jellyfish and monsters and ... OK, OK, I'm so distracted in the best possible way by your responses. In the Leader's Digest, there is a link if you would like to replicate this activity with your team. It is super fun. It also includes examples from around the world of people who have responded to this squiggle to make it something else. And this is the first one ... Little earthworm. Got to love it.

Here's another one. This person obviously had some extra time. Got some color going on. Do you still see the squiggle, though? It started out as a squiggle. Somebody made a fox. OK, this person I love. This person turned it. Changed the perspective, and they made a coffee cup. I think the coffee cup will be smiling after it's completely empty. How about this one? Angry hamburger from a – pretty amazing. Again, these folks had way more than the 30 seconds we gave you. And then how about this one? You can see it flowing through her hair. Alright. Thank you for sharing. Oh my, drawing become a head of hair with a face. A dinosaur, a fox. There's so many things that are still coming through, Katie. Amazing.

Katie: Puddle of water, squirrel, waves with a boat on top.

Vanessa: This is so great! This has turned out better than we planned. I love that we took this risk to do this activity with you, and we are inspired by a charcuterie board story. We are now best friends, Laura. I love it when we did this with you all, and we're getting excited and inspired by what you are doing. Just imagine bringing this to your team with people who you have strong relationship with. People that you sit side by side with or you're in a classroom or family child care program together. A fellow home visitor, a space to just be creative and have fun.

Because you cannot, as Maya Angelou would say, run out of creativity. The more you use it, the more you have. And I think we could also extend that, The more you share it, the more you have. Please, please, please, take this activity, something like it to your team and build that fire around creativity and honestly just to have fun. Just to have fun. OK, I'll turn it back to you Katie.

Katie: Alright, this we think the perfect quote to end our time together. We're going to wrap up. We have just a little bit of Q&A time, to answer a couple of things. But we want to really emphasize all of the things – well not all of the things – but just a few of the things that creativity can be. Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun. And that quote is from Mary Lou Cook, who is an actress.

We have a couple of Q&A questions that came up. One of them was the one we brought up briefly but didn't have a full chance to answer, about reflective dialogue and creativity in rural programs. We actually wanted to encourage also some creativity from our group as well, so feel free to throw out your ideas.

I think, to me, in rural programs, even where the data might not be as plentiful, you might not have quite the same volume of data points with a smaller population, I think that maybe gives you an opportunity to do different and more creative things as you really have to reflect a little bit more on what your data means and where you can go with it. I think to acknowledge that maybe your data points look a little different is very helpful, but that doesn't mean we cannot be creative in coming up with solutions based on that data. What are your thoughts, Vanessa?

Vanessa: Well I actually was going to shift us to another question, knowing that the amount of time that we have and maybe this will be helpful too to others, was a question about how we

can support dual language learners to support their creativity if their language is not the language that we share. The approach should be similar, and even if you don't have full command of that child's language, your enthusiasm comes through regardless of the language that you speak. Learning those key phrases in that household language can really bring them out, but it's really about that relationship that you have with that child.

I would also stay engaging with the family to talk with them about how they provide encouragement for their child to be creative at home. And bringing those ideas into your learning setting would be a phenomenal way to support their creativity and really, that's for all children. And then maybe other staff members too, who speak that child's language, who would love to spend some time in that room and having conversations with children about how they too can be creative. Oh, go ahead, please.

Katie: Sorry, I was just going to mention, Jen had a really great idea as well to learn some key phrases like "tell me more." They're still open-ended phrases and questions, but in that child's home language. I thought that was a wonderful idea.

Vanessa: Yes. Yes, this is why it takes a team to answer your questions. But thank you for bringing those questions forward. I did have one more thought about, for folks who are spread out and how do you engage in those reflective dialogues, and one key tool that can be helpful. We've all become really well-versed in the use of virtual, right? We get together virtually all the time. You're here with us virtually, so really trying to leverage the technology that we have, including Coaching Companion.

If you're using the Head Start Coaching Companion, that's another fantastic way to be able to connect with your team and to be able to write comments on each other's practice to share resources that may be helpful and to post questions. Maybe someone posts a video of their practice, and they're asking for some feedback. It's a beautiful way to be able to leverage technology and to help people who feel far apart, together.

The other space that I would recommend is MyPeers. That's a space where you can get together not just with your own teammates, but people from across the country. If you have a question or a wondering or thinking about things in a new and innovative way, and you've just got to share it with the world, MyPeers is a space for you. And we've got a space just for you as education leaders. We have our own community. There's one for disabilities and inclusion, for teacher time, home visitors. We've got one around transitions. There is a community for you, and join them all. All the ones that are of interest, why not? Be creative. There's MyPeers.

If you haven't already, you can use your phone to grab that QR code if you're not using it to join this meeting. Otherwise, all of this information is in your Viewer's Guide.

And if I could put us back just to that last slide one more time with the quote, because this will be the way that we can close out our time together. We think about how creativity is defined here. To me, it defines the way kids engage in the world. If we can take the lead from them to invent, experiment, grow, take risks, break rules sometimes, make mistakes as often as you can,

and have fun, I think we'll all be at a better place as adults and really exercise our creativity. Any last thoughts, Katie?

Katie: No, I think that's just a really wonderful way to close with our time together. And we appreciate you, and we thank you for everything that you do for your programs, for your staff, for your children and families.

Vanessa: Thanks all. Until next time. We will see you in November.