

**Strengthening Families 201:  
Sustaining and Deepening State Strengthening Families Efforts**

Prevention Webinar Presented by the  
Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect

May 21, 2008

Presenter: Nilofer Ahsan, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Melissa Lim Brodowski: [02:03] Hi. My name is Melissa Lim Brodowski. I'm with the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. I'm very excited to welcome you here but also very excited because my boss is here to welcome you as well. So anyway, I'm going to pass it over to Catherine Nolan.

Catherine Nolan: [02:14] Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us, and thank you to Melissa and all the folks who worked with her to make this presentation, webinar, available for all of us this afternoon.

I'm Catherine Nolan, and I'm the director of the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Children's Bureau here in Washington, DC. We're located within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Many of you may know that a key component of the work that OCAN does, as outlined in our CAPTA legislation, is Interagency Collaboration and Coordination and also, for those of you familiar with title II of CAPTA, the child abuse prevention work. And so we take our legislative charges very seriously, and this webinar today is really an example of just one way of reaching both of those goals in terms of working with our Federal and non-Federal partners and in collaboration on this project, as well as really focusing on prevention.

Again, I want to thank Melissa and the folks working with her for doing such a good job of pulling these various webinars together. This is actually the seventh informational call or webinar hosted by our Prevention Subcommittee. Many of you know that another one of our collaboration efforts is the Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect, which meets quarterly here in Washington. We have about 40 different Federal agencies represented on the roster of that group, and we have various subcommittees—we have a Research Subcommittee, and the Prevention Subcommittee is actually a newer group that was just formed within the last year. They're doing wonderful work, and this is just one of the services that they have offered is this sort of educational experience. So as I mentioned, this is actually our seventh webinar hosted by the Prevention Subcommittee.

Part of what happened is, as the subcommittee met and talked all the members agreed that there was a lot of good work going on in a lot of the different agencies, but the work wasn't necessarily being shared or there wasn't enough out there for the other partners to know about. So this series of calls is meant to be an informational series to share information about each

other's work and to promote some of those greater connections and collaborations across the systems. Even though the Interagency Work Group is Federal partners, we in OCAN also have a very important network of non-Federal partners and particularly in the prevention work that we do. And the Center for the Study of Social Policy has been one of those prevention partners for the last several years. We really appreciate working with them and, in fact, a real concrete example of their influence on our work has been the community resource packet that we put out for Child Abuse Prevention Month. The whole issue for the last two years has been focusing on the protective factors in families to prevent child maltreatment, and we really appreciate and enjoy working with the center on these projects.

So thanks again for everyone participating this afternoon and for our speakers. And I'd like to turn the phone back over to Melissa who will be chairing the rest of the call today.

Ms. Brodowski: [05:59] Thanks, Catherine. Great to have her back! I'm really excited at the level of interest in today's webinar. We actually have over 60 people registered. A number of folks from different programs across the country, including our Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grantees (CBCAP), some folks from the Maternal Child Health, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. We have some of our members from our Prevention Subcommittee on the call. I believe there are a couple regional staff and other Federal staff. So it's great. The last several calls, we really had a wonderful diverse group of people from the research, practice, policy communities. So I'm really excited at the discussion that we'll hopefully get to at the webinar.

As I said before the logistics... the call is actually being recorded so for folks that might not realize that we are recording this because we are planning to post the recording of the call as well as the slides after the webinar. As I said earlier, for newer folks, you need to mute the line, which sounds like people have been doing, which is great, but you can also press \*6 to unmute. We know we want this presentation to be very interactive. I know when I was talking with Nilofer, we'll definitely be taking questions by the phone, but there is also an option to ask questions through your computer. So you could also submit that on your screen.

Thinking about our presentation this morning, the Strengthening Families 201: Sustaining and Deepening State Strengthening Family Efforts, I really knew that I wanted...I actually talked to Nilofer and Judy Langford right after our grantees' meeting in March where we had a joint Early Childhood grantees meeting that there's so much energy and synergy to the work that's happening right there that I wanted to provide an update for other folks who both have been doing this work, as well as some newer folks that want to hear about some of the newer efforts.

And so Nilofer had asked me just to say a few words before I pass it along to her about how Strengthening Families fits with our work for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grantees.

Basically, for some folks who might not know, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program is a formula grant program that's authorized by title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, and approximately \$42 million actually goes out every year to a lead agency designated by the governor in every State to support child abuse prevention activities. And so the

lead agency is responsible for doing a number of activities—both leading a prevention network in the States, and we really consider that role to be a very instrumental role in sort of bringing collaborative partners together, and related efforts. Early childhood programs are definitely a key piece of those collaborations. So they do a number of activities at the State level, and then they also do some local grantmaking to fund community-based programs. They also do public awareness, technical activities, etc.

So there's many concrete ways that the Strengthening Families Initiative has actually influenced the work we do. One example is starting with the CBCAP conceptual framework. About 3 years ago, we started working with our grantees to really develop some of the more short-term and intermediate outcomes that we thought that their prevention activities were impacting. And interestingly, around that same time was also around the time that the Strengthening Families Initiative was starting. A number of those grantees involved in their pilot projects were involved in our workgroup. We really, really were feeling very strongly about wanting to infuse that protective factor framework into the work because it just completely was the strategy that they were already using. So basically, we adopted those protective factors into our conceptual framework—we added another one related to nurturing and attachment—but that definitely is part of the overall framework we use in looking at the short-term and intermediate outcomes that the programs are doing. Also, there's a strong parent leadership component of CBCAP, and Strengthening Families has a similar emphasis on parent leadership so those two areas really complement each other and provide vehicles at the State level where that work is really happening in partnership together.

As I said, lead agencies do technical assistance and public awareness activities around child maltreatment. So many are involved in doing those activities while really using that protective factor framework again in the way they carry out those training activities and the way they share information to the various community stakeholders about their work. And even at the State level, in terms of either the State leadership teams and advisory groups really also complement the leadership teams that Strengthening Families has been doing. Then more recently, our FRIENDS National Resource Center for CBCAP really worked on this protective factor survey tool. As you can see, protective factors is really a strong piece of a lot of the work just because I think it just makes complete sense in terms of the connection to child maltreatment prevention. I think there are many, many more places to go and describe where the two initiatives and programs complement each other. But I'm very excited about this opportunity for all of us to hear the latest and new directions that Strengthening Families is going.

There are a lot of exciting efforts right now actually to infuse protective factor framework with the work of child welfare agencies. So I'm really looking forward to hearing about those efforts in particular. So I think with that introduction, I really want to thank everyone for joining us and I really look forward to our conversations.

I'm really happy to introduce Nilofer Ahsan, who is a senior associate with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. She's been involved with this initiative from the very beginning, and for folks who don't know, she's been involved with the field of family support for a long time and has tremendous expertise in this area. And the neat thing is she has a history with CBCAP because she was one of the early directors of the FRIENDS National Resource Center for

CBCAP several years ago when Family Support America was actually the grantee. So I just want to say it's been great working with Nilofer. She's a wonderful partner and folks over there at CSSP, we really have enjoyed working together. And I guess with that, Nilofer I'm going to pass it along to you.

Nilofer Ahsan: [13:03] OK, great. Thank you Melissa and thank you Catherine. It's a wonderful introduction and it's been great—the partnership not only with Children's Bureau, with OCAN, but with all of the Federal partners who provide such a great platform for the Strengthening Families work of the States that we're working with. And we really appreciate these opportunities and all of the collaboration that that's created on the ground.

I just want to take a moment to just go over what we're doing today. Again, this call was focused...we framed it as a Strengthening Families 201. And the idea was to really focus on where the initiative is now, what's new and exciting. We're going to do a really brief overview of what is Strengthening Families anyway for those who may not be as familiar with the initiative, but that's going to be a very small part of the call. Folks who want more information on just the basics of what is Strengthening Families, how was it developed, and what does it look like on the ground can go to our website, which is [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net). There's literally hundreds and hundreds pages of information there. But what we're really going to focus on is the work right now as we're starting to unfold the Strengthening Families National Network.

We do want to make this call interactive. We hope that folks are coming in with questions or issues or things they want to discuss about the Strengthening Families efforts that they're engaged with. So I'm going to try to not take all the time with the presentation but to leave a lot of time open for discussion and really hope that those on the call will engage in the conversation. So once we finish with the slideshow and the overview, I want to encourage folks to take their phones off mute and to queue up questions for us, for me to answer, but also for us to discuss because I know that a lot of people on the call have a rich history and experience with Strengthening Families.

Starting with the overview. What is Strengthening Families? Strengthening Families is an approach to child abuse and neglect prevention and family support that's universal, not targeted by risk, focused on development and growth not just identified problems, and delivered through new powerful partners not typically identified as child abuse and neglect prevention partners. And that last point is really at the heart of Strengthening Families. What we're seeing is that rather than creating a family support program or a child abuse and neglect prevention program, how can we engage those already in regular contact with kids and families but provide them with supports, tools, and resources that they need so that they can link with those families in a supportive way? And that our existing network of family support programs and child abuse and neglect prevention programs have an important role to play not only directly with families but as resource organizations to these other providers—early childhood programs, other community providers working with kids and families—so that they can give them the tools, the knowledge, the supports they need to be supportive to families on a day-to-day basis.

[background noise]

So where did we start? We started with a simple set of ideas: That we needed to find evidence that universally available venues like early childhood programs can also help families and prevent child abuse; that we wanted to use that original evidence base, information base to influence national organizations and systems to adopt the idea; that we really wanted to be working on the ground in States because we felt like we needed to work with State infrastructures and State systems to really give an idea like this the power and the residence it needed; and that our end goal was to create greater safety and optimal development for millions of children.

I want to quickly go over what the basic model outline is. This slide looks very simple but it actually represents years of work in the field and looking at available research. We started with a goal, which was child abuse and neglect prevention and optimal development. We developed the protective factors that you see in the middle and that are at the heart of the Strengthening Families model based on a literature review conducted by the Erikson Institute of existing published research studies that linked child abuse and neglect prevention to protective factors—so what we could see in the existing research base. And we were also informed by structured dialog sessions with practitioners and national experts in child abuse and neglect and early childhood education. Those dialogs took us across the country, took about a year. We talked to literally hundreds and hundreds of people. And then the last column on the left, the program strategies, the on-the-ground tools for programs. And we really started with early care and education and developing a set of tools for early care and education to build these protective factors with families, and those tools were based on a structured field research design in which all of the research tools were designed around the protective factors where we involved close to a hundred early childhood programs across the country as part of the on-the-ground research. We did site visits, multiple day site visits, talking to parents, staff members, directors, and community partners in over 20 programs. And what it yielded was a set of practice tools for ECE providers that were very, very detailed and specific about how you would take this idea and build in protective factors and engage it in your day-to-day practice with children and families.

Most important of those tools is the self-assessment that we designed for the early childhood programs that look at, again, very small and concrete changes that can be made at the programmatic level to really bring those protective factors to life in this program. Our next step was to actually do a 2-year pilot with seven States, where we really looked at what were the policy, the resources, the cross-systems relationship, the support structure that needed to be in place at the State level in order to really create the capacity for early care and education programs to implement this type of approach on a large scale. We worked in seven States. There is a host of tools that were developed based on our piloting work with States that are available on our website. But that really look at how do you structure a Strengthening Families effort at a State level? How do you structure a leadership team? How do you think about the work you do around your early childhood, the structuring in your early childhood system? How do you think about the work that you do in terms of budgeting and resourcing and supporting a State Strengthening Families effort? What type of policy changes you can make? How do you think about evaluation? Again, all of those tools are available on our website.

So what does it mean to implement Strengthening Families? At a program level, what we would say is, that at the heart of implementing Strengthening Families in an early care and education program is the use of the self-assessment to develop a Strengthening Families action plan. In addition, in most States that use of the self-assessment is embedded [inaudible] the availability of training on protective factors and family strengthening. In addition, in some States, they really supported large-scale implementation through a few things. One was the availability of small pots of funds to support action plan implementation by early childhood programs. The second was the development of learning networks that really provided opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing and support across early childhood programs that were implementing Strengthening Families. And then finally, there was the development of mentoring, supervision, and other professional development approaches that helped folks who had participated in Strengthening Families training really take that and integrate it into their day-to-day work with kids and families.

At a State level—and I hope folks can actually read this slide—what we talked about in terms of statewide implementation is that you needed to start with a process of laying the groundwork, which meant building a leadership team, creating, your budgeting and implementation approach for Strengthening Families, and then you needed to move to your implementing strategies phase. And we talked about four specific parts of the implementation phase. One is working with your early care and education sector to really make this widespread practice within that sector. The second is the development of parent partnerships to ground your Strengthening Families approach and begin to seed a sort of parent-to-parent approach around protective factors. The third was working within your professional development system to ensure that there were the professional development activities and the supports to really support integration of this into practice. And then specific work with child welfare agencies to make sure that this was part of a continuum that started with prevention but connected to your child welfare system.

Then we talked about the third part where programs really needed to focus on sustaining change. So really looking at the policies and system change levers that would keep this from being a pilot approach, the flavor of the month, sort of something that's going to be around for the next 3 years and really turn it into sustainable practice within your early care and education field. And then the second is evaluation strategies that would really help us show the impact this approach was having on kids and families. That was the end of the overview section.

So let me talk a little bit about where we are now. So we learned from our original research on the protective factors and our original research on sort of what this is going to look like in a programmatic setting. We've learned from our State pilots, and now what we're really trying to do is create a national infrastructure that will support broad-based implementation of the Strengthening Families approach across many, many States across the country. And so this phase of our work has really focused on something we're calling the Strengthening Families National Network. And that national network includes States, it includes national partners, and it includes our Federal partners, but it's really the broad range of actors and players who are working on Strengthening Families implementation.

This slide gives a little bit of an overview of the national organizations that are part of the Strengthening Families national network. These are our national partner organizations; most of

these organizations actually receive funding from our key funder around Strengthening Families, which is the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Through that funding they have resources to specifically support the implementation of Strengthening Families types of activities within their own broad-based network of programs, States, agencies, etc. that they work with.

In addition, this entire national network is made up of partner States, affiliate States, partner organizations, and affiliate organizations. The partner States are Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Washington, and Wisconsin. And these are the States that really they have a very robust Strengthening Families implementation strategy in their State. They've committed to doing statewide data collection, and they've committed to partnering with us, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, to really, to a certain extent, govern this national network. So they are going to be engaged in peer review activities; they're going to be engaged in peer mentoring with other States. They are our partners in decision-making when we talk about what directions the initiative is going in, and to a certain extent, they are our closest partners in terms of developing new tools and new resources that will support Strengthening Families efforts.

In addition, we have affiliate States, and where the affiliate States are in their implementation varies. Some of them are working very, very close to the level of our partner States. Some of them have really pretty new and pretty nascent Strengthening Families efforts at the local level. We connect with them regularly; we're connecting them to our partner States. It's our expectation that a number of these States by the end of the year will actually move to partner status.

In addition, we have our national partner organizations, and I want to talk really quickly about the type of activities that those partner organizations are engaged in. BUILD supports States around the country who are doing cross-systems, early childhood systems building efforts, and they have just created a Strengthening Families assessment for States that really looks at the capacity of how States are integrating Strengthening Families approaches, the use of protective factors, etc. into their cross-system, system-building efforts in early care and early childhood. So they're looking across early care and education, health, mental health, family support, sort of across all of the arenas and helping States look at: Are these approaches built into how they're bringing these systems together? In addition to the development of this assessment tool, they are piloting that assessment tool and looking at this cross-systems building approach in four States now, and those States are Michigan, New Jersey ...

[background noise]

So, anyway, that's the BUILD effort. As Melissa talked about in the introduction to this call, this has become a strong part of the work that the CBCAP agencies have been doing in States. and the FRIENDS National Resource Center has been playing an active role in supporting State CBCAP leads in their efforts to integrate Strengthening Families and the protective factors into the work that they're doing. The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds has their early childhood initiative where they've been supporting, I believe, 29 children's trust funds in looking at how they integrate Strengthening Families into children's trust funds, child abuse and neglect prevention efforts at the State level. NAEYC has done a number of different things.

They actually surveyed early childhood professionals about what their needs were around information around child abuse and neglect, and whether they were supportive of being engaged in this kind of support approach. They developed a national cadre of Strengthening Families fellows. And then they are now working on a new curriculum for early childhood providers that helps them talk with families about some of the tough issues that come up, that were some of the things that they found challenging in terms of implementing the Strengthening Families approach.

The National Childcare Information Center, we're doing a lot of work with them right now to engage State child care administrators as a key part of State Strengthening Families efforts and build this into a lot of the way child care is ... States are thinking about structuring and supporting child care in their States. Zero to Three has their national State partnerships for prevention grant where they actually come in and train teams of early childhood and child welfare providers to act as trainers in the State and provide a curriculum for early childhood staff on how do you build protective factors, recognize signs of stress and potential child abuse and neglect early, and intervene early.

Literally 2 weeks ago, the National United Way just let a series of six grants to United Ways across the country, where United Ways will start looking at how they can integrate Strengthening Families and protective factors approaches into their own funding and convening work at the community level. In addition, we have affiliate organizations. So the Midwest Learning Center is doing training; the National Registry Alliance is looking at how registries can play a role in tracking Strengthening Families training at the State level. Parents as Teachers has built Strengthening Families and protective factors into some of their training for home visitors and is talking about making it part of all of the training they do for home visitors. And the Parent Services Project has been providing training in a number of Strengthening Families States.

What is the Strengthening Families network all about? It's about creating the support structure that will support widespread implementation in early childhood programs in States and large counties. It's about creating a national network that will really look at: What are the materials, training, and tools we need that can support Strengthening Families ideas? And then what are the Federal and State policies that will really support implementation and sustainability? The network is currently built to support States and our national partners, but we're right now exploring how we might build parallel supports for localities and for individual programs. We do regular phone calls in the network for information sharing, technical assistance, and coordination. And the network is structured to support peer learning, codevelopmentive tools, and common data collection.

So what do Strengthening Family network members do? They share and create innovation across States. We've set up an electronic workspace where folks from States around the country can all work on a document together. We've got communication spaces; we have shared online databases. We've got a whole infrastructure that supports information sharing, data collection, and really peer-to-peer creation of new tools and new mechanisms for bringing this work to life on the ground. We convene the network or subparts of the network regularly in learning circles to bring together States who are serving as leaders on certain issues with national experts and really sort of push the knowledge base in those areas. And we work together to implement and

demonstrate Strengthening Families at scale. And finally, our goal for this new era of Strengthening Families is really trying to also influence Federal policy.

I want to talk a little bit about something that we call the levers for change. So when we moved from our State pilot phase with Strengthening Families to the new implementation of the Strengthening Families national network—where all of a sudden we went working with 7 States to 25 States—one of the things that really concerned us and was a big focus for us is, again, how do we move this from being an innovative new idea, a pilot, or a model program to really being something that is built into the infrastructure of how we think about child abuse and neglect prevention? How we think about early childhood within a State? And so we developed, in partnership with our States, the idea of these levers for change. These are key areas or focus of work where we feel States need to be working in order to really create a robust Strengthening Families effort that will be sustainable over the long term.

And I'm going to talk a little bit about each of these levers for change. The first is parent partnership. And underneath parent partnership, we're talking about the capacity of States to do a number of things, so for example, to link parent groups and organizations to create a more powerful parent leadership pool. A good example of this is work that is going on in Georgia. What we know is that there are many, many different funding streams across ... Federal funding streams across State initiatives, across local programs that require parent leadership, and often what this means is that you have an individual parent serving as a parent leader within the context of this much broader initiative. What Georgia started to do is create a working group across all of those individual funding streams and approaches that are requiring parent leadership. So that you have a group of parents who are meeting together and looking across systems based on their own knowledge and expertise within a certain system that they are connected to.

We're also talking about States offering training and coaching for families to take leadership roles and for agencies to encourage them. We've got a number of different States that are developing parent-training strategies as part of the work that they are doing. Some of the most interesting work that's happening in this area out of Strengthening Families is in a couple of States. Illinois and Washington have really been working on engaging parents in parent-to-parent conversations and how to build the protective factors. This work is called Parent Cafés in Illinois and Community Cafés in Washington State. But what it really does is it reinforces the Strengthening Families work that's going on [inaudible] within an early care and education setting by connecting it to real opportunities for parents to learn about what those protective factors mean for them and to engage with other parents about why those protective factors are important. One of the most interesting things they've done is they've rewritten the entire language of the protective factors so that it's actually much more parent friendly than what we initially developed. So instead of talking about resilience they talk about how every parent needs hope and the capacity to grow.

The final thing that States ... that we're encouraging States to look at as part of the parent partnership's piece is customer satisfaction measures that really start to engage parents in some evaluation of the type of impact this type of approach has on them. When we look at infrastructure and policy changes, a number of things under there. In Georgia, for example,

they're working on shifting the licensing requirements and the way that licensers connect to early childhood programs. So that that process of ensuring that your licensing is up-to-date can actually provide technical assistance and support to early childhood programs in their efforts to build protective factors into the work that they do. In a number of States, they're looking at quality rating and reimbursement scales. So Idaho has made this part of the Idaho Star System, so that completing the self-assessment and developing an action plan will give you additional points for your star system rating. Arkansas has done something very similar, where they're asking every early childhood program above a quality rating of three to complete the self-assessment and develop a Strengthening Families action plan. Missouri has also worked this into their quality rating and reimbursement scales by taking specific items out of the self-assessment and infusing them into their larger quality rating approach.

Accreditation and credentialing requirements ... Arkansas has actually made this part of the approach to supervisory credentialing in the early childhood field. Child and Family Services Reviews, these are the reviews that every State has to do as part of their development of child welfare Program Improvement Plans for the Federal government. Illinois and Wisconsin are looking at integrating Strengthening Families into their Child and Family Services Review structure. In Illinois, at the Child and Family Services Review, and in Wisconsin it's what is called the Quality Service Review. Memorandums of understanding and other agreements in San Antonio, for example—this is a city-based model, but they're looking at revising all of their Head Start contracts. And working into those contracts and their MOUs with their Head Start agencies, specific language about the role those agencies are playing in building the protective factors.

When we talk about professional development, we're looking at, in a number of States, integration into CDAs (Child Development Associates) credential. And then also into the university-level course work in the early childhood field. So for example, in South Carolina they've integrated this into their community college system so that their early childhood course work at the community college level all has the protective factors and Strengthening Families ideas built into the course work that's available to students. In New Hampshire, they looked across their university system and cross-reference all of the existing courses to the protective factors.

Inservice training, many, many of the States have developed inservice training that is available to early care and education programs across the State that is specifically around Strengthening Families. In Wisconsin and New Jersey, they've actually trained all of their CCR&Rs to provide training, mentorship, and support to the early childhood programs that they work with around Strengthening Families.

At a program level, I'm just going to talk about one of our exemplary early care and education programs that we used to sort of develop the model around. The Carol Robertson Center, which is in Chicago, what they've done is they've taken their in-house trainers and they've trained them as trainers in Strengthening Families. And those in-house trainers actually have been ... in a 1-year effort they've trained everybody on staff. So not just the early childhood professionals, but also the cleaning staff and the staff who's at the desk and the folks who are providing transportation because their idea is that every eye and ear and individual who is going to come

into contact with a family and their program should have an awareness of and an understanding about how to apply these ideas.

In a number of States and jurisdictions, we're also looking at crosstraining among agencies and disciplines. So for example in Ohio—we're going to be going out to Toledo in June—and they're looking at this as a platform for training across their home visiting sector, their WIC programs, their early childhood sector programs, and their family support centers. And so the idea is that across all of those different [inaudible], they'd all be working from a protective factors approach, and they'd all be working on using a lot of these Strengthening Families concepts.

So one of the pieces that Melissa wanted to encourage me to focus on, and which I'm very excited about because it is very new and it falls in work for Strengthening Families, is the child welfare and early childhood connections. So when we originally started the Strengthening Families work, we thought that making the connections to child welfare agencies, sort of coming to child welfare agencies and saying we have this great new strategy for prevention would serve as a great entrée into child welfare systems. What we found was that it was actually very challenging for our States that were working on Strengthening Families efforts to engage the child welfare system around the prevention questions. And what we learned is that the child welfare systems, not surprisingly, are very worried about the kids that they are already connected with, the kids who are experiencing abuse and neglect and had less of a focus or an interest in the beginning on this prevention issue.

So we did sort of a learning circle with three States (Illinois, New Jersey, and Wisconsin) on this question of how would we really go about building these early childhood-child welfare linkages around the Strengthening Families approach? And what we learned from them was a few things: One was that there was very little focus to date on the question of what are the developmental needs of the very youngest kids who are in the child welfare system? We know that this is the fastest growing set of kids in child welfare systems. We know that early childhood is a period where some very key developmental activities are taking place. And we know that trauma, both in the form of incidents of abuse and neglect but also in the form of a child welfare investigation, removal from a home, return to a home, all of those things have an impact on those important early developmental tasks that are going on for kids. And so one of the things that served as a really important first entrée point with the child welfare systems that we were working with was this question of, how could we partner within the early childhood sector and the child welfare system to really support the early developmental needs of those kids who are connected to the child welfare system? And so that was really one of the things that came out of this work in Illinois is that they decided they put a rule change in place within the child welfare system that essentially said "education begins at 3 years old." And so for every child welfare case, every child between 3 and 5 who's in the foster care system, they now need to have an education plan that makes sure that they are connected to a quality early care and education setting.

Next, I'm sorry I printed my notes, but I didn't realize that the notes don't print out when they...I guess now I'm showing you my notes.

So in New Jersey for example, this focus on the developmental needs and trauma and the mental health needs for the youngest kids in care, that lead to a local collaboration. They had already

engaged their CCR&Rs as trainers in Strengthening Families to support the early childhood programs that were going to be implementing Strengthening Families in the State. And now they engage their child care resource and referral programs to build local collaborations between child welfare agencies and early childhood programs on the ground that could result in a partnership around the particular needs of those young kids in care. In a number of States now we're also looking at crosstrainings for caseworkers, teachers, foster families, and other early childhood partners. So that as a community, we can really look at, how do we support those kids in care? How do we support their families? How do we build protective factors for these kids within the system?

So in Wisconsin, this has resulted in a foster parent training that was developed by a foster parent that is focused on the protective factors and engaging foster parents in understanding what their role is in terms of building these protective factors—in terms of supporting the development of the kids that they are parenting, that they are foster parenting. In Wisconsin, we also have local collaborative work. So in five counties, on the ground, they're doing crosstrainings, they are doing community events, etc. that bring together early childhood providers and child welfare caseworkers so that they have the relationship they need to work together. We're also looking at how within child welfare systems we build protective factors for families connected to the child welfare system.

So in Illinois, the child welfare director has really taken this on as the mandate for their agency. In fact his tagline is, "the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services shouldn't be raising kids, we should be strengthening families." What that means for him is that is if you look across the entire child welfare system we should be strengthening families across the system. This means thinking about how we build protective factors for families at the prevention strategy but also as a stabilization strategy to keep kids in their homes when an allegation of abuse and neglect has been made, but we don't think the case rises to the level of child welfare placement being needed. How do we build protective factors as part of our case plan so when a family has been removed we're still thinking about building the protective factors with the family in order to strengthen them so that they'll have the capacity to re-engage as parents shortly? How do we build protective factors for foster families and adoptive families, recognizing that all of these types of changes place stress on the family? And how do we engage it as part of the reunification process?

Some other examples...if you're using this type of systemic approach that we're talking about in Illinois, some other examples of the type of activities we're talking about is working the protective factors into part of the integrated assessment process and the case planning process so it's part of how families are assessed. And it's part of the structuring that caseworkers use when they create a family plan. We're looking at the State's Program Improvement Plan (the PIP) and looking at how this becomes part of the PIP structure within the State. Then another conversation, which is actually not at the State level, but it's been very recent and we're very excited about it in terms of the early childhood/child welfare work. One of the things that came up with our States is that while the child welfare system could support a Strengthening Families approach there were also other partners that we needed to bring on board and probably the most important of those other partners were the courts, the advocates, and the legal system. That is so important to child welfare decision-making. So we just had a conversation with the ABA Center

for Children in the Law. They're doing training with courts and legal systems in States around thinking about the developmental needs of the youngest kids in care. One of the things that we're going to be exploring with them is, is there a way that we can partner so that in Strengthening Families States we can provide that training with contextualization so it actually links to States' Strengthening Families efforts?

Then finally, the final lever for change that we're talking about is this sort of local, State, and Federal policy. Because we feel like, if we don't put these changes in at the policy level then we won't be able to really make this an ongoing part of practice.

[silence]

Sorry, I'm trying to flip between my slides and my notes, and I'm not doing a very good job.

So in a number of States, Strengthening Families is a specific part of pre-K efforts so that it is part of the statewide pre-K system that is going into place. So for example in Georgia, every single State pre-K program has access to a resource coordinator who has been trained on Strengthening Families and whose specific role includes working with the pre-K programs in their region to build their Strengthening Families approaches.

In Wisconsin, we're looking at how Strengthening Families can define that State's very strong existing family support efforts. And so, how we can use Strengthening Families and the protective factors to build specific connections between the family resource centers that State has funded for a very long time and early childhood programs?

In a number of States we're looking at using Strengthening Families as a way to bring together a broader prevention effort that brings multiple partners into place. In several States, Strengthening Families has served as a family support platform for the States' ECCS family support plan. So for example, in Arkansas, in Alaska, in Illinois, the Strengthening Families leads were either part of the State leadership team or co-led the Strengthening Families leadership team. In those States, the ECCS structure and the Strengthening Families structure had been very closely aligned.

And finally we're looking at linking services...Strengthening Families as a way to link key services, such as mental health, family support, medical homes, early intervention (that's part of what the BUILD effort is), but it's also part of what work we're doing for example in L.A. where this is serving as a community-based prevention approach.

What are some of our emerging issues in Strengthening Families? One, we're trying to adapt our Strengthening Families tools for home-based settings. The original set of tools, the self-assessment, etc. were developed for center-based programs, and we find that a more comprehensive set of approaches are needed to really provide a more supported structure for home-based settings that want to integrate Strengthening Families approaches. And so we're looking at a number of tools that support networking for home-based providers, have a revised self-assessment, etc. We're also looking at expanding the protective factors across the age range of children so that we have interest at looking at the Strengthening Families approach within

schools and really thinking about, so then what do these protective factors look like if we're not talking about kids 0 to 5 but we're now talking about kids going up to early teens?

In a number of places, we're looking at using protective factors to set goals across multi human service agencies supported by practice change and collaboration. This is part of a new and evolving set of work where we're working not with a State but with a locality and really saying within a local community, how could you use the Strengthening Families approach as, again, a common and consistent framework that could bring together all of those who are interested in child abuse and neglect prevention?

We're working on new tools and new supports to support evaluation of Strengthening Families approaches. So we're looking at some new data tools across our Strengthening Families national network. We're working on developing a common set of data indicators for tracking across States. We're also looking at trying to identify some resources that will support Strengthening Families evaluation, and then we've gotten a lot of interest across other settings. So we're having some exploratory conversation about what does this mean within the context of early childhood mental health, within schools, and again within other settings.

That is the end of my talking at you. And so what I would really like to do now is to invite folks to ... I'm gonna end with this slide, which shows our contact information and how you can get in touch with us. Kate Stepleton supports all of our online network and all of our ... she's the network coordinator. If you send her an email, she can either answer any question you have or get you connected to the folks on our staff that you might need to talk to.

[On the slide: Strengthening Families website <http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net/>  
Contact: Kate Stepleton  
773.857.3653 or [kate.stepleton@cssp.org](mailto:kate.stepleton@cssp.org)]

But I want to now open it up to questions. What are the questions or issues that you're interested in talking about related to your own Strengthening Families effort and approaches?

Caroline Crocoll: [1:05:02] Hi. Thank you so much. That was really, really interesting. This is Caroline Crocoll at USDA. I've been spending quite a considerable amount of time actually working with the Family Strengthening Peer Network of the National Human Services Assembly, and it's kind of been an interesting process for me because I'm serving as cochair of the peer network, but I'm also an employee of the Federal government working with extension service through the Department of Agriculture. And one of the reasons that I'm doing this kind of bridging the not-for-profit/Federal kind of world is to look at what everyone is doing related to family strengthening, and how they're messaging, and what their goals are. And trying to maybe help us a little bit in being more consistent in our messaging through our systems around family strengthening. I wondered if you had had any A) interaction with extension services—you're looking at what's going on in the States, and B) whether or not you're looking at the Annie E. Casey work and what's going on with the family strengthening through National Human Services Assembly?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:06:30] So the answer to your first question in terms of extension services, it's hit or miss whether extension is involved in the State Strengthening Families leadership teams. I know, for example in Wisconsin, extension has been strongly involved. And in fact someone from extension actually developed, codeveloped (with some folks in the State) the curriculum that they're using—their Strengthening Families 201 curriculum that they're using with all their CCR&Rs. So in some States they've been a very strong partner, and we particularly think that they are a strong partner around the training, but it has been hit or miss. And if you had ... one of the things that we're working on now is some guidance for States to think about some of the partners they might want on their leadership team that they may not have thought of to date. And so if you wanted, you and I could connect to talk about how we might message to States about how to connect with their extension services and the role that the extension services can play.

Ms. Crocoll: [1:07:57] Sure, I would be very happy to do that. And I think what you're saying is absolutely right on, that I think a lot of it is about awareness with all of the different system functions in each of our organizations, and that's why I'm so pleased to be on this call today. I would definitely like to work with you on that.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:08:18] So you can reach us here. I'm going to adapt this slide so you can also see my contact information. And if you want to send me an email, I would love to work with you on that.

[nilofer.ahsan@cssp.org]

Ms. Crocoll: [1:08:32] Sure that would be great. I will do that.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:08:34] Then the reason I laughed about your second question is that I actually have spent a whole lot of time working with the Anne E. Casey Foundation on other work. In fact, that was about 50 percent of my time up until recently. And, no, I don't know anything about the work that they are doing with National Human Services on this.

Ms. Crocoll: [1:08:55] It's really quite an effort that... They've supported a lot of awards programs and grants around family strengthening. They have their way of ....

Ms. Ahsan: [1:09:14] I do know the family strengthening awards programs.

Ms. Crocoll: [1:09:19] Right. They also sponsor the work that's going on with National Human Services Assembly. So we can talk about all of that and walk you through all of that.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:09:29] That sounds great. That sounds great.

Other questions?

Audience Member 1: [1:09:34] This is Texas, can you hear me?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:09:35] Yes.

Audience Member 1: [1:09:36] I have two quick questions. One is you said ABA is working with court systems and advocates? Did you mean American Bar Association?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:09:49] Yes, sorry. The American Bar Association's Project on Children and the Law, I believe. The woman's name is Ava [inaudible].

Chris Brown: [1:09:57] Yeah, I'd like to provide some clarification on that. I'm Chris Brown with the National Fatherhood Initiative. It's actually the Center for Children in the Law. Specifically at the ABA, that's an effort of the ABA, and we're actually working with them and the Humane Association to run a national quality improvement center on nonresident father involvement in the child welfare system, with funding from the Children's Bureau. So that would be the specific arm of the ABA that you'd need to contact.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:10:35] Yes, this isn't on the fatherhood work per se. This is also on the work that they're doing engaging courts on thinking about the developmental needs of those young kids.

Mr. Brown: [1:10:50] I'm just trying to provide . . .

Ms. Ahsan: [1:10:53] Yes, thank you . . .

Mr. Brown: [1:10:54] So I do have a question. In all of the work that's going on with Strengthening Families across the country, what specifically is happening with efforts to involve fathers? Because there is clearly a link between fathers' involvement and the protective factors.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:11:09] Can I come back to that question in a second? I just want to make sure that the person from Texas got her full question out, and then I'll answer your question of fatherhood.

Mr. Brown: [1:11:20] Sounds good.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:11:21] So Texas, did you still have . . .

Audience Member 1: [1:11:24] Yes, I just had one more quick question. To make sure I understand, I heard you talking about the difficulty in engaging child welfare, and so I want to be clear, when you're talking about Strengthening Families, that's prior to any kind of CPS intervention. Is that right?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:11:44] Yes. Up until we got into this piece of work around the early childhood/child welfare linkages. So the major body of Strengthening Families work is focused just on prevention. But in the three States that we're working with around early childhood/child welfare linkages and in an additional three States who have expressed interest in sort of being the next round of folks who get involved in this, they're really looking at not just the prevention piece but also what are the implications for how the child welfare systems interact with kids and families.

Audience Member 1: [1:12:23] Great, thank you very much.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:12:26] OK, so back to the question on father involvement. When we did the original work with early childhood programs, we actually found that father involvement was a really important part of the way that these programs, these exemplary programs, worked with children and families in a way that was supportive. And so we actually have a whole strategy prepared for early childhood programs on the father involvement aspects of this work. I'll be frank that, in the work that we then did with pilot States, this did not come to the top of the agenda of what States were doing to support how early childhood programs implemented this work. So it sort of fell off the radar screen for a while, and so we're actually convening a meeting in June with some folks from the Casey Foundation and some close-in consultants to just start to re-engage the conversation about how do we make sure that the fatherhood piece is an integrated and important part of the work that is happening within States on Strengthening Families.

So that's not a great answer, but it's the best I can give you at the moment.

Mr. Brown: [1:13:46] Well, just on the part of National Fatherhood Initiative, we have partnered with the Casey Foundation for a number of years and obviously it sounds like with the date that's upcoming for that you might have the participants set. But if there is any way that we can be involved in helping you think about the father involvement piece, given that that's our focus, we would certainly be interested in talking to you about that.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:14:12] Can you do me a favor? Can you send me an email, just a follow-up email just saying what you just said, and I'll get back in touch with you.

Mr. Brown: [1:14:20] No problem. Thank you.

[silence]

Ms. Brodowski: [1:14:49] I was wondering, Nilofer ... This is Melissa again. I always have this interest in the evaluation efforts, and I think you mentioned you're sort of starting to—I forget the phrase you used around looking at different evaluations, maybe designs or something. If you could speak to a little bit of the initial thinking...

Ms. Ahsan: [1:15:09] Sure. So one of the things is ... We're working at multiple levels, right. So across our Strengthening Families National Network in our States, we're looking at having a common set of data indicators for tracking—but those are largely around implementation—so that they could both look at the breadth and the scale of implementation, how many families are being reached, how many programs are being reached, sort of some of the demographics. They'll also provide some qualitative information on our effectiveness in really moving these levers for change within the States. So that's one piece of work.

The next piece of work that we've been working on is trying to get—and it's been the bane of my existence frankly—but trying to get the Strengthening Families self-assessment online so programs can fill it out online, which gives programs some very nice online reports on their self-assessment, planning tools for doing their action planning, and sort of graphics and sort of a nice

overview of their self-assessment data. It also gives programs access to a parent tool and a staff tool that will then be sort of ... once you do the self-assessment you can use the parent tool, use the staff tool, and get data runs for your program about impacts of parent protective factors and impact on staff behavior, attitudes, and skills. So those are a very nice set of tools at the program level. They're nonvalidated tools actually. And so, Melissa, you might be interested to know that I had a conversation this morning with the University of Kansas people, and we've been looking at how we either connect the parents' survey to the protective factors surveys to get it cross-validated or potentially just use the protective factors survey as the parent tool with Strengthening Families, which would then create consistency between what we're looking at in Strengthening Families efforts and in CBCAP efforts.

But the reason we're trying to put all these tools online is not just so that they're available for programs to use, but we've created a data engine behind those tools that would create standardized reports for States. So that a State could look and find out how many programs have done the self-assessment, how many children were impacted, how many families were impacted, what was the average cost of the action plan items that were implemented, what was the total cost of Strengthening Families implementation at the local level within programs, and then also look at aggregated data from the parent and the staff tool.

And the idea is that States could run these standardized reports or they could download the data themselves and have it available in ACCESS format so that they could run their own analyses. One of the things that we've found is that even that's a big barrier for a lot of folks. That just having to run an analysis in ACCESS can mean that service gets fielded and data doesn't get used. So that's why we're trying to create the infrastructure behind the data analysis infrastructure that would be available, sort of behind a very friendly online system. Now that said, it all sounds great, but I will say that over the last 2 weeks the system has been down as much as it has been up. And it's been extremely frustrating for the folks who are using it, and we're hoping to get the bugs worked out, but the technology is much more complex than we thought.

Ms. Brodowski: [1:19:46] That sounds great though. I mean that's very exciting.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:19:50] Yeah, we're very, very excited about that. Then eventually my fantasy would be to actually get some money so that we could actually do a more rigorous study that would actually look at matched groups of programs who are implementing Strengthening Families programs versus programs that were not. And that we would need a major funder for.

Ms. Brodowski: [1:20:18] I'm curious actually for folks that are on the line who are implementing Strengthening Families if you want to share any comments about your experiences generally for folks, anything else you want to add? That'd be great to hear.

Lydia Freeman: [1:20:42] This is Lydia Freeman from South Carolina. Can you hear me?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:20:45] Yes.

Ms. Freeman: [1:20:47] I just thought I would share a little bit about what we're doing as an affiliate. I'm brand new to this, Becky Earhart was your contact person before. We have been doing training in partnership with our State-level department of social services for their child protective services staff, and that's been real interesting because you have to change the focus a little bit from how you would use the Zero to Three curriculum with child care providers, which I've also done a few of those workshops as well.

But what's been interesting to me is how well the information does transfer and how receptive they've been. We have a lot of different setups across our State. There are some places that are fairly affluent; there are some places that are a lot more urban and there's a lot more poverty. But across the board, they have seemed to really enjoy the material, and we've been using just Unit One, just a sort of a baseline to introduce them to some ideas on how to work with families and just introduce them to the idea of the protective factors.

Ms Ahsan: [1:22:03] That's great. Other States that are on the call want to talk about the work that you're doing?

Audience Member 2: [1:22:13] This is Karen in New Hampshire. I've found that the use of phrases "Strengthening Families" has been a lot more accepted in our outbound activities than the use of the words child abuse and neglect prevention. And so we've been using the words Strengthening Families as kind of a brand and have extended it to a number of different kinds of activities, and that has been very well received by funders and policymakers and legislators. So, thank you very much.

[laughter]

Audience Member 3: [1:22:52] I second that. I'm from South Carolina. We really like that too, and people get that message that if we work to strengthen families then we are preventing child abuse and neglect. And we don't have to make it so front and center as we have in the past.

Jeanne Brooks: [1:23:08] This is Jeanne Brooks in Tennessee. We're working at trying to get the awareness of quality child care in our child welfare system—where the level of center stars that the foster children are in has not been a part of our SACWIS system. And so we're trying to just weave it into all of—our foster parents are called resource parents—the knowledge of training the ... or going to be training all of the resource parents in what quality child care looks like. That's the effort that we're undergoing right now. We met yesterday with our consortium that trains all of our new workers, and I think they're going to be working it into all of the certification for new case managers and child welfare ...

Ms. Ahsan: [1:24:14] Jeanne, give me a call sometime. I think there's some tools that some of these other States have developed that you could use in some of the work you're doing.

Ms. Brooks: [1:24:32] OK. That'd be great. I will.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:24:40] Other States want to talk about stuff that they're doing? Does anybody have something that's not working? Something that they've really been struggling with?

Ms. Freeman: [1:25:02] I can ask a question about that. This is Lydia again in South Carolina. We had a phone talk the other day with myself and some of the other trainers that have been helping me get this done across our whole State. One of the comments that was made was they feel like—and I've noticed it too—there's not a lot of compassion on the part of some of our child protective services workers towards families. It takes a little bit of getting them to kind of change where they're at to think that way. Any ideas on things we could do to foster that?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:25:42] That's interesting. This is not anything that we've developed or is part of our Strengthening Families stuff. But I wonder if you took the average statistics for the families who are entering your system and did an exercise. I know that in an organization that I worked with they had done these exercises related to welfare at the time. But did an exercise where you sort of helped workers to see what would it mean to live on that average income? That average income and deal with some of those issues, sort of if you build some case studies around your averages, around the profile of your average child welfare family in your system. That might ... and have the caseworker essentially role play being that family and having to make a set of decisions. That might help.

Ms. Freeman: [1:27:04] That sounds like a new version of the Life game. We might get something and make money for the Alliance!

Ms. Ahsan: [1:27:14] There we go! But the other thing, Lydia, is you might want to try putting that question up on the Strengthening Families network site and see if any other States have ideas or training materials or resources that they're using in that way.

Ms. Freeman: [1:27:31] I can do that.

Mr. Brown: [1:27:33] Is it possible for other folks to maybe provide input into...?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:27:37] Sure, absolutely.

Mr. Brown: [1:27:38] This is Chris again with National Fatherhood Initiative. Before I started with National Fatherhood Initiative, I worked with the Texas State Department of Health, and we encountered a similar problem with the WIC program—I'm sure most of you are familiar with WIC. Essentially, strip away the issue or the subject matter and what you have is a customer service problem. And so one of the things that we realized after doing a comprehensive social marketing research study here in the State that identified what are the key factors that were preventing eligible women from enrolling in the WIC program. We found that at the top of the list was poor customer service provided by staff. Because often what you have is sort of a gatekeeper mentality among certain workers, and it's quite prevalent across different social service agencies where there's almost an attitude that the family or the client has to prove themselves worthy of receiving the services. And so what we did with the WIC program here was implemented a comprehensive customer service strategy that really got the staff to turn their viewpoints around to the point I made just a minute ago. Through things like role plays within the broader context of a customer service effort. So you might think about it a little bit from a customer service prospective and look also to perhaps other public service agencies or programs

that have implemented comprehensive customer service efforts for some ideas on what might work.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:29:19] Actually, Lydia, just in that area the CFSP, not through Strengthening Families, has a customer satisfaction initiative where they've partnered with, what is it? Ralph Nader's group? What is the consumer rights group that he founded? Anyway, they've partnered with them to develop customer satisfaction strategies for the human service sector.

Ms. Freeman: [1:29:48] That sounds like that would be a good thing. So thanks for that and thanks Chris.

Ms. Brodowski: [1:29:56] This is Melissa. I guess this is my other sort of suggestion when any of these things come up. I know when we have calls that come in to our office about issues around, you know, local agencies and things. I mean you have a contact with the child welfare agency whoever that person would be, since you're talking about doing the joint training, obviously having a conversation with those folks either at the program manager level on up.

Do other people have questions or experiences they wanted to share related to your Strengthening Families stuff?

And maybe Nilofer, do you mind passing the controls? I just want to flash one last screen up.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:31:09] Are there other questions or questions from folks who haven't been as engaged in Strengthening Families and want to find out if their State is doing Strengthening Families or how they can get connected?

Audience Member 4: [1:31:35] Yes, this is [inaudible]. I'm an extension specialist in Indiana. I was especially interested in the part about connecting it to the quality rating systems because we are just implementing one in our State. We also have a very strong Healthy Families organization here so I didn't know if there are already contacts working on this with you that perhaps I just need to get in touch with or if perhaps that's something we can explore for our State?

Ms. Ahsan: [1:32:01] I don't think there is anyone in Indiana. Let me clarify ... Indiana is not one of our States at the moment. So if you want to connect with me offline, I'd be happy to just at least have an initial conversation with you about it.

Audience Member 4: [1:32:18] Thank you very much.

Ms. Ahsan: [1:32:19] You're welcome.

Ms. Brodowski: [1:32:26] OK, I didn't want to cut off any kind of questions that people may have, and I think I know that Nilofer's email was flashed up there, so hopefully people got it. I definitely wanted to just thank everyone for joining us today, and I think if you have other questions, feel free to contact Nilofer or Kate at Strengthening Families.

And I just wanted to let folks know about next month. We have a couple of webinars that we're very excited about on June 4 and June 11. Basically, these are two of our CBCAP Tribal and Migrant programs, projects that we've funded. They're in their final year, and they've done a lot of interesting work around implementing evidence-based practices in communities of color.

So on June 4 it will be American Indian Tribal Communities and then June 11 will be our Migrant Program grantee in Washington State. Anyway, the information is up there, as well as my email and Jean Nussbaum's who's been really helping to organize all these webinars to date. So you can contact either of us, and we'll be continually sending out the invitations for folks and also appreciate feedback on the webinar and anything else you want to share about topics that may be of interest for the future.

I really want to thank Nilofer for taking the time to present and really appreciate all that information. I know that we'll be in touch for sure. Thanks everyone.