

Okay. Well, I want to welcome you to this webinar! This is Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Education here at ACF, and I'm here with a group of folks from the Office of Child Care. We really do want to thank you for joining us today to have this conversation, specifically around child care monitoring and regulation and where we are and where we see this all going. Those of you who know me know very well how important this issue is to me, and it is something that I've spent a lot of my life working on and have a lot of interest and concern for, where we are in this country with the whole issue of licensing. I do believe that licensing is the foundation for quality and that if we don't put this foundation underneath child care, we're trying to build systems in this country that are basically built on sand. So we really do need to focus on what we're doing around licensing, regulations, etcetera.

I think it's also the foundation for beginning to look into the future about how we finance Early Care and Education, because I also believe that with the amount of license-exempt care that we haven in this country that we are continuing to undermine quality improvements in license care until we examine what we're doing with that whole category of exempt providers. So I think it's very important that we look at that -- at this in the future and that this is essentially a defining moment for us in Early Care and Education in terms of how we decide to move forward and bring people into this system. Licensing I think is a vehicle for work quality for a number of reasons. If licensing and regulations is done correctly, there will be a comprehensive look at how we link licensing and inspections to training and to technical assistance in a substantive way, not just in a sort of let's give it lip service. But if we are looking at our licensing and looking at what we're finding, we'll look at trends, we'll look at where are the repeat findings that we keep seeing over and over again and we need to take action on those. So how we design our training programs and our technical assistance systems should begin with a look at licensing and how we are enforcing them. It also should help us with investments in our other quality improvement funds. Because if we have programs that repeatedly have the same finding, how are we going to invest in getting these programs up to standard? And we have the opportunity to do more to help providers to improve the quality of their space, their programs, their training, etcetera.

I also think that the other piece of licensing is that it be transparent to parents. And you will see on this webinar that there has been major movement in this area of parents having access to licensing databases and what's going on. It is to me obscene in a country like ours that parents don't have access to that information, that they're just basically putting their children blindly into programs that may not be meeting basic regulations. So as many of you know, we've been working for the last several months on looking at monitoring and we will be issuing a white paper on where we should be thinking and where we should be headed in terms of monitoring and oversight. And of course that sort of builds on the whole issue of what are the basic standards of health, safety, and quality that we should be looking at. I also -- you know, when we issue that, we'll have some conversations around how do we really begin to align programs across Early Care and Education.

We know that on this call we have a number of people that represent various agencies, Head Start, Child Care, and other Early Care and Education systems, and that is a very positive thing that we want to support and foster more relationships and more alignment across these programs. We're going to be looking at differential monitoring, risk assessment, and other methodologies that you can use

to make your systems more efficient and more effective. And we'll be calling for more use of technology and shared databases which we are calling for in the State Advisory Council Work. So there's a lot of work to do.

One of the things that we have learned over the last six months of having focus groups around the country with many of you who are on this call is that we know we need more research. We do not have good research in what works and what doesn't work for the inspections, monitoring, and oversight of child care. So as we begin to move forward I want to basically call attention to the fact that we are looking for partnerships with States and Communities that are doing interesting things around monitoring and oversight. We're taking very seriously the Office of Management and Budget's guidance on use of administrative data to look at improvements and to do research on and partnerships for things that are already in process so that we can see the results and the learning experience, and not take several years but in fact cut that time down. So as you go through and you look at what -- you know, what is in this presentation, I mean I read the slides and I just have to say I felt really happy to see as much progress as we've made over the last few years. We've got a long way to go, we're getting much smarter. We certainly want to hear your questions and comments at the end of this briefing. Any thoughts that you may have thought of as you read -- as you look at the slides and hear the presentations. Or if you've been part of one of our monitoring focus groups, if you've thought of things since then, we really would like to hear that. So with that being said, I'm going to turn it over to Shannon Rudisill, our Director of the Office of Child Care and she's going to say a few more remarks before we get going. Shannon!

Thanks! So it's great to be on this call to talk about monitoring and licensing. And I have to say that this little series that we've been having was Linda's idea, a fantastic idea to bring together cross-sector partners across education Head Start and child care to look at some specific issues. And we chose the issues carefully. And so I feel like this one has some analogous purpose to the one that we did on Child Care Subsidy Management, and that is to look at some areas of the early learning system that are maybe more challenging or folks perceive as a little bit outside of the typical quality systems building and to help articulate a framework for how you would think of that in your quality systems building. And I think that that's what Linda was getting at in her remarks. And that's why we really felt it was important to pull together a cross-sector group to think about licensing and monitoring and articulate why we here at ACF see it as critical to quality systems building, even for folks who aren't just child care.

There are a couple of examples that I just wanted to mention about that, to help explain a little bit of how I see that playing out. I mean, first is, licensing really is, and has the potential to be, when it covers enough of the universe, our primary universal protection system for kids who are in out of home care. And that sounds obvious, but those words I think I heard at NARA Conference and they really stuck in my head, about a universal system of protection that we lack in some States right now, too many States. But just embracing that is a goal within your State Advisory Council, you know, within your early learning community that that's what you're after, I think is a powerful goal. And I'll tell you how we're seeing that play out right now in the Hurricane Sandy, which Linda and I have been working on sort of nonstop since right before the storm, and Yvette is right now still up in New Jersey touring sites today, Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, our Head Start Director. It

really has shown the power of licensing and why it's important to have good licensing capacity. Because right now in the media -- the day after the storm hit, first question is, where are our providers? Where are our families? Can we find them? Can we figure out how long it's going to take for them to be back in operation? And honestly there's only one place to go to, to try to figure that out, and that is the licensing system. They're the only folks that have a database that theoretically has everybody in it, but you might be -- you know, that's unfortunately not true in many States. But theoretically, if done well, if it was the universal system of protection, would have everybody in it.

So that's a gap right there, where there's going to be entire groups of providers that no one really has a way to know about and find. But the other great virtue and asset the licensing system has are trained professional staff who are used to going out and assessing conditions and providers, which is, you know, so critical in this hurricane response to have folks who are familiar. And honestly, the expertise have been invaluable, because they've been able to work on, and I know this has happened in the Gulf and other places, okay, we can be flexible too, right, it really is about protection of life and safety.

I heard a fantastic example out of Mississippi where the licensing folks partnered with the NGO to put up child care in an Army tent, and as the infrastructure got built back in the community, licensing systematically ratcheted up the requirements months after months when it was feasible to do so. So there's, you know, great opportunities for partnerships like that. So you may be thinking, yes, but this is the exception, not the rule. So I kind of want to take it back to, it may be true, the State that you're in will not experience something like that, we all hope that's the case, but we know just from the past few years, we've gone everywhere from the Gulf, to the Northeast, to the Midwest with the Joplin Tornado, and it seems like nobody is immune. But even so it just shows the power of licensing. There was nobody else to really call that had the same potential to know everybody and know how to find them and have trained boots on the ground about health and safety in facilities. And that's an asset everyday, even not in a disaster. And the other thing that I was thinking about where I feel like we have, I think missed opportunities is a fair word to say, when it comes to scale up of our Early Learning Initiatives, when you think about the universal nature of licensing, where we have in fact made it universal, there's so much power in the realm of scale up for our Early Learning Initiatives.

You can see it in the participation rates in QRIS for States that have licensing as the base of the QRIS. You can also see it when we think about building out our professional development system. If licensing is connected to the PD Registry, i.e., you have to put your providers in your registry as a condition of licensing, it helps us immediately have a better handle on who are our teachers and our assistant teachers and our directors, where are they, what programs are they in, what kind of training do they have and do they need, how frequently do they move, all of these data questions. And I know a lot of States are building PD Registries and participation rates again are an issue, but I feel like that's where sometimes we don't recognize the extreme value of linking to our universal system, which is licensing.

So those are just a couple of examples; an extreme and a more day-to-day systems building one, to illustrate, you know, why we wanted to have a focus on licensing in a cross-sector call like this, hoping that we could stimulate

conversations at the State level between our Head Start, Child Care, and SAC or State Advisory Council, and private partners, and registry partners, and university partners, around how we really recognize the importance of the strength of this system and then integrate it in. So one thing that OCC has done over the past couple of years is we've actually started a different PA system and a new center focused specifically on this topic.

So our National Center for Quality Improvement is a center that launched this year. It was very intentionally for the first time in the life of the PA system designed with a focus on licensing and QRIS, we put them together, because for most States those are linked and they kind of play off of each other in different ways. So our center has a focus on both of those areas. We can already see in the first year that, that has been a tremendous asset to us in terms of being able to help States move forward on licensing and licensing as part of their system. So that is why we naturally turn to our partners at the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement to produce the sort of introductory slides here to get this conversation started. So I'm going to turn it over to some of our best leaders there; Nancy vonBargen, who is our Project Director; and Sheri Fischer, who has really been our lead on all things licensing and health and safety over a number of years now. Nancy!

Thank you, Shannon! Good afternoon everyone! In our time with you today we hope to provide you with a better understanding of how licensing serves as the foundation of quality and its role in the Early Care and Education system. We'll share some trends that we're seeing, both in terms of licensing standards or regulations, and also in the licensing policies that guide how the agency implements its program. And then we'll talk about the increasing use of technology that is helping improve linkages with other Early Childhood Initiatives and sectors. If we can see the next slide. And just as a point of clarification, we will use the term licensing but we're using that term very broadly to include all the various types of regulation. So in some States it may be called registration or certification, but what matters really is the strength of the standards and the policies, regardless of what it's called.

Next slide. So people in our profession refer to licensing as the Foundation of Quality in a Cross-Sector System for several reasons. First, to protect and prevent the harm of children, and that's always been the primary goal of licensing. The standards really set our expectations for what is needed to ensure that children are kept safe. And when we learn more about safe sleep practices or we see a rise in children being left in vans during the summer months, then licensing provides a vehicle to address those issues.

Secondly, to improve the quality of care. And what we're learning about school readiness is helping us to understand that there's more to ensuring a child's health than physically safe and clean environments. Things like the level and quality of staff-child interaction, the amount of time children spent in front of the screen; they also have a major impact on their wellbeing. So licensing is more and more expanding its oversight into areas such as early learning that will have an impact on the quality of care. To help providers in ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children. Providers want what's best for the children in their care, but as you know they often need assistance, in both knowing what's best and how to do things differently. I mean, we didn't use to know that propping bottles and

putting babies to sleep on their stomachs was a problem. And the vast majority of programs welcome that kind of guidance to support parents in assessing and choosing child care.

As you all know, parents want quality care for their children, but often they don't know what that looks like or how to ask the right questions. And parents generally assume that child care is regulated, especially if the State helps pay for that care. So it's important to help parents understand what is regulated and be able to sort through all their options to ensure the appropriate use of State and Federal funds. States and territories are accountable for the funds they use to purchase child care. So requiring oversight and monitoring of those settings provide the level of protection that they are purchasing safe and beneficial care and not care that could place children at risk. And lastly, licensing serves as a source of information for parents and for many others as Linda mentioned.

When decision makers want to know where the children are, when resource and referral programs want to assess the availability of care, or legislators wanting to understand a constituent's concern, or training and educational organizations wanting to offer needed coursework, licensing is the place that has that information, like Shannon said. And we're certainly seeing after Hurricane Sandy when an emergency or disaster occurs, licensing is there to first ensure the safety of children and then help restore services so that a community can recover and parents can return to work.

Next slide. So it's also important to remember that licensing protects the greatest number of children; over 312,000 centers and homes with over 10 million licensed slots. So improvements in licensing standards and investments in the administration of the licensing program can have a very significant impact on the daily lives of young children, who are often in care 10 hours a day. Licensing is generally viewed as specific to child care, but that's not always the case. Head Start and prekindergarten programs are generally licensed by States, unless there is a specific exemption in State statute. For example, 19 States exempt part-day programs, which could apply to part-day Head Start or preschool programs, and 18 States exempt programs operated by public schools. Many States though will issue licenses to exempt programs, especially if it's needed for QRIS participation. And licensing is the prerequisite for the first level of a QRIS. While some States have created a simplified process or they've aligned standards to encourage the participation of Head Start in a QRIS, almost all have licensing as the foundation to ensure children's safety.

Okay, the next slide talks about Family Child Care Homes. And so just a word about that; so 48 States do regulate Family Child Care, but as you can see in this slide there's a lot of variation in when licensing is required. So there are 10 States that require homes to be licensed when one or more unrelated children are in care. The most common threshold for Family Child Care licensing is when either 3 or 4 children are in care, and there are 19 States that use that threshold. 7 States set their threshold at 6 or more children, and 3 states do not require home licensure. So we're doing well in that area.

The next slide is Elements of a Licensing Program. And I won't go through these elements, but I did want you to see and get a sense that there are many components to a strong comprehensive licensing program. Beginning with the Authority that's given in statute, down through the Licensing Staff Development,

which include the licensing staffs' qualifications, their skills, the ongoing training that they get, it's really needed to ensure that they have the knowledge of quality care, of regulatory administration, and really importantly the ability to balance enforcement with technical assistance, and always moving providers toward quality improvement.

I also wanted to note that States vary significantly in how well they implement each of these elements. So you may have some States that have strong standards but they rarely monitor; while other States have weaker standards but very rigorous enforcement. Again, there's a lot of variability in programs. Okay, the Essentials of Requirements. So in talking about Standards or Requirements, if you'll go to the next slide; the Standards are fundamental to a good licensing program, so they need to be clearly written and easy to understand language, because we want the programs, we want parents, we want licensing staff, to all be clear on what's being required. They have to be reasonable and achievable. We would all love highly qualified teachers and low ratios, but as we all know the industry is very much limited by what parents and the government is able to afford. Enforceable and measurable; of course we all want teachers who love children, but we need to be able to put that in language that can be observed and measured or enforcement will become to subjective. Requirements need to reflect community and State support. They're sometimes referred to as the conscience of the State. And if licensing gets out ahead of what the community understands to be important, such as what kind of play equipment is needed, then you can end up undermining political and media support for the program. But this also really illustrates the importance of an ongoing public awareness campaign on what children need to be school ready and the role that licensing plays in that. And then lastly, fiscal impact.

Many States are required to provide a fiscal analysis of the cost to providers if they are recommending improvements to the licensing standards. And because this cost could probably be passed on to families, this has to be considered very carefully. But do keep in mind that there are many improvements, like Back to Sleep, that have little or no fiscal impact.

Next slide. So the Revision Process; regarding this process some States have a specific review cycle, most commonly every five years. But I can tell you that 12 States revised regulations in 2011 and our center is providing technical assistance to many States that are currently in that process. And States have generally created a very inclusive and transparent process that includes getting feedback from providers, from parents, from other State agencies, like the fire and health inspectors, and from advocates. So this is really a tremendous opportunity for you in your State to advocate for improved protection of children. And some of the reasons that States make revisions are new research, which is really a very compelling reason, and a good example of that is what we're learning about screen time and its impact on children. Requirements to support Healthy Way are getting a lot of attention right now. And again, those requirements may have very little fiscal impact.

A single incident, such as when a child is left at a park or in a van on a hot day, often the families that are affected want to see some good come out of their tragedy. So educating the public and child care providers and improving the requirements are all very positive responses. State legislation. When a legislator has a constituent concern such as secondhand smoke, or possibly they want to see

stronger criminal background checks. The Consumer Product Safety Commission requirements. And a perfect example of that are the new crib regulations that go in to effect on December 28. *Caring for Our Children*, which I was amazed that it was first adopted in 1992, but when they recently released their 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition States really paid attention. It provides great guidance by recommending standards and then providing the research and the rationale for each one, and we find that virtually every State reports using this as a resource. And then there's good old competition. States really pay close attention to what's happening in other States and resources like our Trends Document that you received often motivate them to make improvements. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Sheri Fischer, who will tell you about some of those trends that we're seeing.

Good afternoon everyone! This is Sheri. Before I start I was asked to remind everyone that you can use the Question or the Chat feature on your screen to ask us questions. If you just would please type in any questions that you have and then we're going to be leaving some time at the end of the presentation to address your questions. So again, please use the Chat or the Question feature and please type them in. And actually I can address one of them that I see that we've already got, which is whether or not a copy of the PowerPoint will be sent to you? And yes, it will. We will be sending the PowerPoint out after the meeting to all the attendees. Okay. So I'm going to talk with you today about trends in licensing that we found by looking at licensing regulations and policies in 2011.

Licensing regulations are the standards that programs are required to meet to operate in the States. And the information about trends in regulations was compiled from those that are posted on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education Web site, where they have all of the States' licensing regulations up to be -- to be viewed and read. We looked at the requirements that were posted up through December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2011. So as I said, these trends are for the year of 2011.

The licensing policies that we track includes facility monitoring, enforcement of regulations, licensing program staff, just to name a few. And these data comes from a survey sent by the National Association for Regulatory Administration, called NARA. They sent out the Licensing Programs and Policy Survey for 2011 and it was sent by them to all of the State licensing agencies and responses were received from all of the States. In the past NARA and the National Child Care Information Center, which was a previous contract with the Office of Child Care to provide TA to States, collaborated on three child care licensing studies, for 2005, 2007, and 2008, and the reports from those studies live on the NARA web site, and the link to that site is at the end of our presentation.

The Quality Improvements Center, which is our -- the current technical assistance center that Shannon mentioned, has collaborated with NARA, we've continued that collaboration, on the 2011 study, and did an analysis of trends by going back to the data from those previous studies. The results have been published in the documentary called *Trends in Child Care Center Licensing Regulations for 2011*, which was sent to all of you who had registered for the webinar. The Quality Improvement Center is also working on a similar analysis of regulations and policies for Family Child Care home. So today I'm going to be talking mostly about trends related to the regulation of child care centers. The next slide please. I'd like to share with you some highlights from the analysis of Licensing

Regulations and Policies from 2011; as I said, looking back to previous licensing studies, which in the most case we look back to the study that was done in 2005. There are some positive changes to report in the Licensing Regulations and Policies, and more details and additional findings are written in the brief that you received. So as you can see, for child care center licensing regulations, some of the areas where we found some positive changes were in safe sleep, preservice training for directors, ongoing training hours, background checks, and ratios and group size. And then for licensing policies we saw some positive trends related to frequency of inspections and differential monitoring. Next slide please.

So now I'm going to give you some data and go into a little bit more detail on each of these areas where we have seen some positive trends. The first one is Back to Sleep. Of all of the hundreds of requirements that we track in regulation over time the one that the largest number of States have added over time is requiring center staff to place infants on their backs to sleep. 18 States have added this requirement since 2005. This largely has been due to the research, public awareness campaigns, and general acceptance that placing infants on their backs to sleep is an effective way to prevent sudden infant death syndrome and other such tragedies from happening. In addition, other requirements have also been added to State regulations related to SIDS prevention. Only physicians can authorize a different sleep position and more States prohibit soft bedding and materials from being in cribs. One of the -- one thing that has not changed is the number of States that specifically requires center staff to complete training about SIDS prevention. However, that practice may be covered in other required health and safety trainings, but just is not specified in the regulations. So I'm thinking that perhaps in some of the first aid and other kinds of health and safety trainings, there is content about SIDS prevention, but it's still just these seven States that are listed in the chart that have training requirement that specifically says SIDS prevention. Next slide please.

Preservice Qualifications is the training and education required before working in a particular center staff role. Changes have been made to preservice requirements for directors more than any other role. Seven States have improved qualifications since 2005. The most common qualification is the Child Development Associate Credential, the CDA, for Directors and also for States that have a master or a lead teacher role, which is usually a supervisory role over teachers in the classroom. If we compare States for the recommendations that are in *Caring for Our Children*, then we see that minimum requirements fall short of the recommendation of a Bachelor's degree with administration and ECE coursework that they have for Directors. However, most of the States' Quality Rating and Improvement System Standards (QRIS) include qualifications for Directors and they are setting standards that are closer to the *Caring for Our Children* guidelines.

For Center Teachers who are -- and the way we define them in our research is anyone who could be alone with a group of children in a classroom. Only two States have changed the requirements for Center Teachers, and they still remain very low. The most common qualification is experience-either alone or with a high school diploma. *Caring for Our Children* recommends a Bachelor's degree or an Associate's degree with the teacher working toward a Bachelor's. QRIS Standards are being raised for teachers, but it's in a voluntary way, but most are -- and mostly are requiring teachers to have a CDA or a similar amount of education and training. Next slide please.

I just want to share with you an example of a State, Georgia that is implementing higher qualifications in the very near future. This requirement is for Center Directors, Lead Teachers, and Large Family Child Care Home Providers. And in the past their requirement has just been for those roles to have a High School Diploma in order to work in a facility. But on December 1 2012, which is just a couple of weeks from now, that requirement will be raised to a CDA credential or equivalent credential. The same requirement was implemented for New Family Child Care Home Providers in 2009. The Family Child Care Providers who were licensed prior to 2009 did not have to meet this new requirement. However, all Directors, Lead Teachers, and Large Family Child Care Home Providers will be required to meet the requirement that goes into effect on December 1. Let me now describe some of the ways that Georgia is implementing these rule changes. Next slide.

Providers had 3 years to get the training and education needed to meet this new requirement. It actually went into effect in 2009. There is no grandfathering, meaning that it applies to all current and new Lead Teachers, Directors, and Large Home Providers. However, there will be a waiver process in place for Lead Teachers who worked in licensed programs for at least 7 years. The State also has made scholarships and grants available to help with the cost of attaining the qualifications. And Georgia has a program that awards financial incentives for educational attainment. So as providers improve their qualifications, they can also get a small financial reward for doing that. There are also several alternatives to the CDA that are accepted, but all of them require some coursework in early childhood and are much more rigorous than the previous requirement of just a High School Diploma. It will be interesting to watch how Georgia proceeds with implementing these new requirements. Next slide.

Next I'm going to talk about Ongoing Training Hours, and this is the training that is typically required on an annual basis in order -- usually the States will check to make sure the providers have completed this at the time of a license renewal or during an annual inspection and things like that. There have been several States that have made changes in the ongoing training hours required for center staff since 2005. Five States added a requirement for at least one center role, where previously there was no training required at all. A large number of States, ten States, have increased the number of hours required. In fact, the median number of hours have increased from 12 to 15; meaning that a larger number of States have 15 or more hours today than in the past. It brings States close to being equal with Head Start requirement of 15 hours per year, but still far from the 24 hours recommended by *Caring for Our Children*. Once again, States with the Quality Rating and Improvement System are using that mechanism to increase the amount of training required for center staff. Some have graduated numbers of training hours in their levels of standards. Next slide.

Background Checks. Another area related to the qualifications of staff and to the protection of children is background checks. Currently all States require at least one type of check for center staff prior to working in a licensed facility. This chart shows the different types of checks and how many States require each type. There have been significant increases in the number of States requiring Federal fingerprints and checks of the sex offender registry. This comparison goes back to 2007, because these data were not collected in 2005. There are currently 12 States that require all five of these checks; criminal history records, Federal fingerprints, State fingerprints, a check of the child abuse and neglect registry, and the sex offender registry, and they could be considered having a comprehensive

background check requirement. In addition, there are 40 States that require center staff to also sign a statement attesting to their criminal status. Next slide please.

Let's take a look at Ratios and Group Size. It takes very little money for providers to implement Back to Sleep requirements, it is very costly to providers to implement changes in child-staff ratios group size. Since 2005 only six States have lowered ratios for at least one age group of children. In some States in the Quality Rating and Improvement System, they have included lower ratios in the levels of standards. Those standards again are voluntary. In terms of group size, there are still 21 States that do not regulate group size. Half of them do not require group size limits at all and half do not require it for at least one age group of children. Since 2005, four States have lowered the group size, but only one has added it as a requirement for at least one age group. The most common ratios and group sizes in licensing requirements are still higher than those recommended by *Caring for Our Children*, as shown in the table on the next slide. Next slide please.

This table shows the range of Child-Staff Ratios, the most common ratios in the *Caring for Our Children* guidelines, if you look from left to right. For instance, for example, the range of Child-Staff Ratios is 3:1 for 9 months old in 3 States, up to 6:1 in 5 States. The most common ratio in 32 States is 4:1. The *Caring for Our Children* recommendation is 3:1, but that is currently only met by 3 States. The States that have lower ratios tend to be at the higher end of the range and lower just by one child per adult. Only a handful of States meet the *Caring for Our Children* guidelines at this time. The States with QRIS see more providers meeting higher standards, perhaps it will be a trend to make the lower QRIS levels into the minimum licensing requirements. This may be several years away, but it is something to watch. Next slide please.

Now let's move on to some of the licensing policies where there have been some positive changes in the last six years. One exciting finding from the NARA Survey is that more than 20 percent of States reported an increase in the number of inspections they conduct each year. There is now a larger number of States that inspect more than once a year. *Caring for our Children*, NARA, and other national organizations recommend that States conduct licensing inspections separate from health and safety inspections at least twice a year. States are moving in that direction. There are now fewer States that inspect less than once a year; another positive trend. Next slide please.

This table shows the numbers of States with the different Frequencies of Inspection. Now, there are 21 States that inspect two or more times per year and there were 13 States with that frequency in 2005. You can see the four States that now inspect more than once every 2 years. And the line that says once every 2 years, the number has gone down from 6 States to 2. And as you can see the numbers of States that inspect more than once a year have increased. Next slide.

Finally I will show you some trends in the way States are conducting monitoring visits. A larger number of States are now using differential monitoring, where their frequency and/or depth of monitoring is based on a facility's compliance history; the number of States has more than doubled since 2005 that are doing this. Also, more than 55 States report using an abbreviated compliance form. A shortened list of requirements checked during inspections. States most often select rules to check on these abbreviated forms use rules -- select rules to check on these abbreviated forms based on those they consider to be most critical to protecting children's

health and safety. Dr. Richard Fiene at the University of Pittsburgh has worked for many years on developing scientific methods for determining key indicators for licensing inspections. He continues to work on this and it will be interesting to see how many States adopt his method in the years to come. Lastly, there are now 13 States that have ranked or weighted their licensing requirements relative to the risk of harm to children. In our technical assistance work with States, the Quality Improvement Center has gotten many requests from States who are looking to implement these monitoring tools. We plan to work with them over the next few years to develop some written products from this topic and share lessons learned. I will now turn this back to Nancy who will talk about trends related to the use of technology in licensing.

Thank you, Sheri!

You're welcome!

Okay, so you received a copy of the paper called *Licensing and Technology: The Next Generation*, that goes into much more detail on these and also some other ways that licensing has really embraced technology. But today I just want to whet your interest by saying a little about these five areas. Next slide.

So first if we talk about Mobile Technology for Monitoring Visits, we again looked at the NARA Child Care Licensing Programs and Policy Survey for 2011 and we found 33 States that are now using portable devices or laptops or notebooks in the field, and virtually all other States report that they're considering it. So in six years, from 2005 to 2011, 19 States adopted this technology. So we're learning a lot about the best hardware, about software designs, and the benefits that the States are seeing of having immediate access to data. Next slide.

So Support for Risk Management and Consistency in Enforcement Actions, and I can tell you as a former licensing manager I think that this is probably the most exciting benefit of a licensing database, the ability to ensure that enforcement, beginning with the first, noncompliance or violation, all the way through revocation of license, that those are done appropriately and consistently. And NARA has a physician paper that suggest the use of data to examine associations between and among specific program requirements, violations, compliance histories, and relative risk for licensed facilities, then tailor the scope or frequency of inspections or greater attention to those requirements and facilities. So I think this is really the future. Next slide.

So to support greater consistency, 33 States report using their database to assess potential enforcement actions. And as Sheri mentioned, Dr. Rick Fiene's work on key indicators is really getting a lot of attention, because as licensing programs face increasing demands with limited resources, States are looking for ways to target their efforts on the programs that need more intensive monitoring or support. And Dr. Fiene is working with California and Georgia and really looking at their data to determine if the identification of key indicators can be used to statistically predict overall compliance with all of the licensing rules, and then this could really assist the licensing program in a more targeted approach to monitoring. Next slide.

So I wanted to talk a little bit about Linkages with Other Systems, because this really makes the case of licensing as a key player in the Early Care and Education system. So as you know linked databases are going to provide a lot of benefits to partners and it's going to let us all access more information in a more efficient way. And linkages with other data systems also supports licensing in doing their jobs, whether it's preparing for a monitoring visit, or investigating a complaint, and the child care subsidy system needs licensing data to be sure they're making payment to an approved facility. For QRIS, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, since licensing is the foundation of most States' QRIS, access to licensing records is really an essential part of the rating process. Licensing staff may be the first to know when significant changes have occurred, such as a new Director, or when an enforcement action is being taken that could affect the QRIS rating. So 15 States report having this linkage, and I know it's going to grow rapidly. Links with Child Protective Services provide information that obviously would benefit both programs in evaluating providers. And then the criminal background check databases that Sheri mentioned, those are becoming much more sophisticated in the processes and in notifications, and we know that in 15 States the Licensing Manager is notified if a provider's criminal record has changed from the time they had their first check, which just obviously is invaluable information. Next slide.

Ten States link to Child Care Resource and Referral. So in addition to efficiencies in data entry, this goes to what Linda was saying about technical assistance providers being able to benefit from access to the licensing database so that they can better target their services and they can prepare the most appropriate training and resources for providers. Traditionally, licensing and the Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsors have communicated on license status and how many children were observed in care when each made visits, which was really a good validation check. But today States are looking at using licensing and subsidy information as a way to reduce the reporting burden on providers, so that more will participate and be able to benefit from this opportunity. An increasing number of States are including participation in a practitioner professional development registry, either as a minimum licensing requirement or as a QRIS criteria. And so this is really a great tool to monitor compliance with staff qualifications and saves licensing a lot of time during their visit so they can focus on other things. And another trend is that the provider training needed to meet licensing requirements will have to come from an approved source. So links to the training registry makes this much more manageable for everyone. Next slide.

So we're seeing really exciting things with Online Licensing Information for Consumers. Licensing programs are doing a much better job of providing monitoring information to parents to help them make more informed choices. So 30 States post licensing information on the Internet for parents, and that's up from 10 States in 2005. And as you can see here, the amount of information, the type of information that is accessible, varies, but what really is most important, if I looked at these websites, is that the website be customer friendly, easy to understand, and that there is guidance in very plain language on how to understand the findings. You know, we just assume people speak our language and we need to make it easy for them to understand. Next slide.

So I've been really impressed with Texas' recently redesigned website, so I want to use them as an example of the kinds of resources that can be found on licensing websites. So there is Search Texas Child Care, and that allows parents to

search for an existing program or for a list of programs that meet their criteria for the services that they need. And then in most States parents can also search by QRIS level. Texas provides a Parent's Guide to Child Care and a long list of frequently asked questions, so parents can really understand all the terminology and all of their options. Then inspection reports and complaints; that includes a two year inspection and compliance summary; it shows how many deficiencies were documented; and the weight or risk level of each deficiency. And then they also provide a link to their minimum requirements for each type of programs so parents can also be better informed about licensing requirements. A *Don't Be in the Dark* consumer education campaign, which strongly encourages parents to only use regulated care, and you can click on it to watch this really compelling public service announcement. I'm sure some of you have seen it. It shows a mother leaving her child in an unsafe situation and then she turns back to the car, you can see that she's wearing a blindfold. And then they have another really funny one with the baby driving the car and dropping off the parent and the parent is really unhappy about it. They have links to Child Safety campaigns. They have tips on topics such as safe sleep and water safety. They have links to online training that was developed with ARRA funding, and is specifically for parents of infants and toddlers. And then of course links to other State agencies. So I've given you that website and I hope you'll take a look, because there's great information there. Next slide.

So a word on Resources and Alerts for Providers; so similarly licensing programs are using their websites to provide more and better information to child care providers. Most States now have their licensing regulations online and a licensing website is really a great place to post updates, such as the status of revisions. 24 States now have interpretive guidelines which are really helpful for providers to have access to, because it helps them understand the rationale for standards and also how compliance is measured. Seven States have developed online applications, which is a time saver for providers and obviously an efficiency for licensing. They provide links to training resources, where the licensing website is kind of becoming the go-to place for resources, such as links to online training or training calendars. And if you're soliciting feedback from providers, accepting comments online encourages a lot better participation say in the revision process from all different sectors, and it can also assist the licensing agency in capturing and analyzing the feedback. And many States are collecting provider email addresses or encouraging providers to voluntarily sign up to receive notices so that they can be notified of important issues, you know, from flooding, to West Nile, to H1N1, States are using alerts to communicate with providers and then provide information. Next slide.

So in closing, these are the points that I hope you will remember. Licensing is a key element of a Cross-Sector Early Care and Education system and it has the widest reach to the largest number of Early Care and Education providers. Through frequent communication and the on-site technical assistance they provide at every monitoring visit, they build relationships with providers that are often in the very best position to move the needle on quality. Licensing has the widest reach to the largest number of children, as I said earlier, with more than 10 million licensed slots. And because on average, 80% of children in the subsidy program are in regulated care each month, they are impacting low income children who benefit the most from higher quality care. And they have the data that we all need to make decisions on accessibility and quality of care, and they're able to provide valuable information to parents about the health and safety

conditions of programs so that they can be better consumers. So licensing really needs and deserves our support and I hope that you all will take the time to look at the licensing requirements and the policies in your State, that you'll be an active participant in the revision process, that you'll reach out to the licensing program and look for ways to align your programs and your standards, and really look for any opportunity you have to be an advocate for the program. Next slide.

So these are the Resources that we've mentioned and I hope you'll take a look at those. And now we do have time for questions. So as has been mentioned, you can type them in, in the Chat feature and we'll try to respond.

We do have two questions that came in so far. The first question is what is the difference between key indicators and weighted rules?

Okay, Sheri, I'll give this a shot and then you can help me. Weighted rules are when you take all of your licensing requirements and you weight them as to the risk to children. And this was done in Texas and I think they had six different levels; so it would be very little risk, all the way up to medium and to high risk. And they use that to determine monitoring processes, like how quickly you would go back, and enforcement actions. Key indicators is similar, however it's a much more statistical process, where you're trying to predict. They're not necessarily the requirements that place children at risk. They're the requirements that best predict overall compliance. And so after analyzing the data you can say, if a center meets these 20 requirements, there is a statistically good chance that they're going to meet the rest. And we do hope to have more products and either peer-to-peer calls or webinars on this subject, because I know there's a lot of interest among States.

Okay. The next question is in reference to the emergency preparedness during Hurricane Sandy and other natural disasters. How many other States have established partnerships with local emergency management offices, law enforcement, or the fire department to register child care facilities of all capacities with dispatch system notifications stating multiple children and adults are present at an address, or utilized Reverse 911 systems to alert providers of impending and threatening weather?

That's a lot. I'll start and then maybe somebody else can add to this. I know that we have some good resources on emergency preparedness. I know that Child Care Aware of America, formerly NACCRRA, has really good resources on their website, and the Office of Child Care has posted some really good materials as well. So we have a wealth of resources on this. I can't tell you the number of States, although I think we have access to that number, but I think it's important to remember that there's a full range of resources. And some States, like North Carolina, have really good materials posted on their website for providers. So part of it is the coordination at the State level with the emergency response teams. Part of it is the subsidy policies that you put in place to make sure that families with all their new circumstances can continue to get support. Part of it is the whole licensing process of being able to approve facilities that may not have full compliance with requirements, but certainly can ensure the safety of children in the interim. So there are a whole lot of different elements. There's the centers and the Family Child Care Home's individual emergency plans that you need to make sure, and that's the most common

thing, I think, in licensing requirements is to require that the individual facilities have a plan. So it's a very multifaceted response and I think we have good resources on almost all of that.

Nancy, this is Shannon, and I think I'll just add a little bit to that, but I want to add a preface to what I'm about to say, which is, it's a little early to start assessing lessons of the current situation, but since the question was kind of specific to licensing and what we're learning, I'm going to give a couple of sort of first impressions. And I already told all of our Regional Program Managers on our Manager Call preceding this one that this is something we need to work on this year. We work hard with the partners that Nancy talked about; the National Commission on Children and Disasters, Child Care Aware of America, many States, Save the Children, on having States work on disaster preparedness plans, and we now ask that in our biannual Child Care and Development Fund State Plan, so we could pull that, but I don't have it on the top of my head.

I can tell you a couple of things that were really -- I think are early emerging lessons from what we're seeing right now that we're going to come back now and figure out, okay, you've written a plan, but what do you really need in it? So for an example, in both New Jersey and New York we saw licensing agencies, funding agencies, and RNRs, all mobilized immediately to start to try to figure out what's going on in child care, to their great credit. They did this when they were leaving their own homes in some disarray or damage to come to the office and try this, when they didn't have power in the office, I mean really amazing response. What I think we're learning though is that is not the best time to figure out who is going to do what off of what database and make what calls. You know, everybody mobilized into action, but what I think and I'd hope if we have partners from those States on the phone they won't mind me saying, what I think I kind of wish we had had or they had had in those early days was had already thought about, all right, here's the data, here's where it sits, here's where it's backed up if there's no power, here's who could make calls to different types of providers if the licensers can't come to work because actually they've got to take care of their own family needs, here's how we're going to mobilize people from different regions to come in and be sure they have data or they could do phone. I mean, it was sort of that sort of thing that knowing in advance, and you might decide that plan isn't going to work when you get in a moment, but if you have a plan to pick up, I think we would have -- it would have eased their minds a little bit and really enabled them to capitalize on their amazing commitment and energy and mobilization.

A couple of other things that we're learning is that when you really can't get to places and when providers aren't coming to work, if you want to know if they're operating or not, dialing them at their place of business over and over again for days on end is not necessarily going to get you the information you're looking for, we need to think about ways to have cellphone contacts and other types of contacts for Directors and have them understand who they call to report in, in an emergency situation like that. And the other thing that was mentioned by the caller was about notifications and pushing out. I think that we don't know yet, but I've heard pockets of places where they had capacity to reach out. I would say texting might emerge, because cellphone coverage is spotty, I think text sometimes goes through when a phone call can't. And so that cellphone contact and possibly being able to text something like, we need to know if your child care is operating, call 1-800 or whatever, you know, those are some things that

I think we're starting to get some impressions of. So those are just first impressions, but I think it's responsive directly to what we're seeing and how it might help States with emergency planning in the future.

Okay, one more question, how many State licensing agencies give citations with fines out to noncompliant providers?

Oh, this is Sheri, I can tell you from the survey results is that there are currently 27 States that -- I'm assuming you're talking about fines, assessing fines for noncompliance, so there are about 27 States that use civil fines as an enforcement action.

Okay, one last question, someone wanted to know will there be a webinar put together with more information on Family Child Care State Licensing Regulation? This is Sheri again. There isn't any plan to do that, but we'd be happy to once we finish that analysis.

Yeah, if people think that they'd like to focus on that area, I'm going to look at my colleague Trisha here, could they comment in the Comment box so we get a sense of interest, or is there going to be like a response form about what else folks want at the end of the webinar?

Yeah, I think we're doing -- Kim, correct me if I'm wrong, I think we're doing a very short evaluation following this that will land in your inbox almost immediately after the webinar. So one of the questions involved in that is, is what folks think would be helpful in the future, so that would be a good place to let us know.

And you know, I don't know if it's anonymous or not, this is Shannon, but if you identify who you are, what State you're from, and how we could contact you, we might be able to follow up on some of those specific ones, even if we don't make a whole webinar about your question.

Kim, do we have other questions?

I have one more that just came in. The question is, will you also invite child care provider associations to listen to these webinars?

Yeah, we weren't trying to be exclusive. I mean, we can certainly consider that. We were doing sort of State teams, you know, idea, but we certainly could open it up more broadly. And of course this is not exclusive. Anytime you get something like this, it seems like a webinar and you know people you think would be interested, unless it's some sort of invitation-only thing for a specific purpose, you should feel free to forward.

I'll also mention, we are going to send PowerPoint slides for this webinar out following this call to everyone who attended. Feel free to forward those on. It's a much slower process, but we're also trying to get to the webinars posted. We want to make sure that they're finally compliant, so it takes a little bit longer to get those posted. But like I said, you should be getting the slides probably before close of business today.

By the way, compliance for non-government folks is accessible to people using different kinds of adaptive technologies on the web, and so it just takes a little bit longer to be sure that there is transcripts and audio files and all kinds of means of accessibility.

That's it. No other questions have come in.

Okay. So this is Shannon, I think I'll just say thank you so much for your interest and for your really fantastic questions! So as I mentioned, I think our goal, meaning Linda, mine, and all the staff, was to sort of whet your appetite for understanding how licensing could be a key component of early childhood systems building -- is a key component, but if strengthened and if made more universal and thoughtfully linked to other parts of the system, from professional development systems, quality rating systems, to technical assistance targeting, you know, is a really valuable asset. So we hope that you found it valuable, and most importantly, we hope that you will sit with others in your State and follow on this conversation with your own Statewide, cross-sector conversations about the role that your licensing and monitoring systems could play in your systems building efforts. So we appreciate your attention! We hope you have a great afternoon!