Transcript of School Readiness, More Than Just ABCs

Alexia Brown: Good morning. I am Alexia Brown, a family support technical assistance coordinator with the Pennsylvania Family Support team based at the Center for Schools and Communities. I will be your moderator for today. It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's webinar session School Readiness, More Than Just ABCs. Today's session is an intermediate level learning opportunity. Our presenter today is Mimi Loughead. Mimi Loughead is the quality initiative specialist at Trying Together formerly the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children. She holds a bachelor of science and a master's degree in education. Mimi is a Pennsylvania certified in elementary education and education of the hearing impaired and PQA certified instructor for the PA Early Learning Key.

Alexia Brown: Her professional roles have included preschool and kindergarten teacher and home therapist for birth through three years old, teacher mentor, family education and engagement coordinator, early childhood coordinator, and dependent evaluator for early intervention, professional development instructor, and admissions coordinator. The core focus running throughout her career has been supporting families and young children and developing a lifelong love for language and literacy. It is my pleasure to welcome Mimi Loughead this morning. Please be patient while I pass the presenter privileges to her. Mimi, thank you for joining us, the microphone is now yours.

Mimi Loughead: Trying to understand their feelings and their world, trying to please the people they love, trying to grow. When grown-ups and children are trying together, just about anything can be possible. Today, we're going to be talking about school readiness more than just the ABCs. Throughout the webinar, please feel free to ask any questions as Alexia mentioned to you. I'm a firm believer in learning from each other as we're talking about this topic. I think this cartoon depicts our history of school readiness, unfortunately, as it says, the educator is there saying for a fair selection, "Everybody has to take the same exam, please climb that tree." As you can see, there are many different creatures there, different abilities, different skills.

Mimi Loughead: Fortunately, we've seen some changes in the past few decades. We've moved away from judging whether a child is mature enough to come to school or in other words, is ready to succeed in a structured learning center. However, this maturational view didn't take into account the three critical factors. One being the diversity of children's early life experiences as well as the inequity in those experiences. Two, the wide variation in young children's development and learning. And finally, the degree to which school expectations of children entering kindergarten are reasonable, appropriate, and supportive of all the individual differences we see in young children. When we look at the cartoon, we can really see that all three factors are obviously represented.

Mimi Loughead: As we start exploring a more appropriate definition of school readiness, I'd like to share a research study with you that was completed by the US Department of
Education and the National Center for Education Statistics. It surveyed over 800 public school kindergarten teacher from a variety of settings and asked them to rate by importance a variety of qualities that are seen as indicators of kindergarten readiness. I've selected five of the qualities across the list and would like you to select the one you feel is the most important for a child to demonstrate as they're entering kindergarten. The next slide will randomly list the qualities for you to choose when completing the polls. The qualities are knows the letters of the alphabet, sit still and pays attention, communicates needs and wants and thoughts, identifies primary colors and basic shapes and is enthusiastic and curious in new situations.

Mimi Loughead: Take a moment to complete the poll and think about which quality do you feel is the most important. It looks like the majority of you, almost half put communicates needs, wants, and thoughts as the most important quality for children. And then we can see enthusiastic and curious in new situations next. Sitting still and paying attention, knowing the letters of the alphabet and identifying primary colors. Great, let's move on to the next slide. And we're going to look at how the kindergarten teachers responded to this. And then we're going to talk about it for a few minutes afterwards. The top five qualities, before we go through them, I just did want to mention that there was one quality that I didn't put on the list, which is physically healthy, rested, and well nourished.

Mimi Loughead: This is the quality that all the teachers on the survey really put as number one. But I took it off for our purposes because I really wanted to look at qualities that children learn. And really being from birth to five, young children generally aren't responsible for their own health and sleep habits and food habits. I really wanted to look it that way. As you all, a lot of you predicted, the first quality is that children need to be able to communicate their needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language. And this brings up a question, I think underlying the primary language because a lot of times, there's the question as to whether we should encourage families to use their home language or English in the home. Children who are dual language learners, those are the children who are learning English and their home language at the same time really need to develop language. And that's the most important thing.

Mimi Loughead: For children to develop language, their families are generally the most capable of doing this in their home language. Asking a family to start using English all the time in the home when they're not comfortable or their vocabulary is limited is then going to limit the child's ability to learn language in both languages. If their English skills are limited, the child's learning will be limited. We're going to look at some brain pathways later, and those aren't going to be developing either. But then you can see the next four, enthusiastic and curious, not disruptive of the class, sensitive to other children's feelings. What do we notice about all of these qualities? Mainly that they're social-emotional, the qualities also that children begin learning at birth. Now, just to let you know, these rankings are from the original study, which was done in the 1990s. But I spoke with the researcher recently, and she said that the current indicators pretty much stayed in the same
order except for number three is not disruptive of the class, that moved up to number one.

Mimi Loughead: The bottom five qualities were finishes tasks, identifying primary colors, using pencils and paintbrushes, knowing the letters of the alphabet, and counting to 20 or more. And these when we look at them are really what we think of as academic readiness skills. Unfortunately, these are also the skills that many families really become overly concerned about especially in the pre-K year. That isn’t to say that they’re not important at all, just that they shouldn’t be our primary and our only focus and there’s so much learning that happens for young learners before they start to identify letters of the alphabet or start counting. What do you think about the ratings? And the question I have is, how do you think our families, your families would rate these qualities? Do you think families would really look at those top five that we saw a moment ago or do you think they really look at these bottom ones as important? You can go ahead and put any of your thoughts in the chat box, but we’ll continue to go through there.

Mimi Loughead: But just kind of think of that because that might be where your families are coming from, and you might have a little bit more work to do as we’re trying to encourage them that learning really starts at birth and is more than just those ABCs. We’re going to redefine school readiness and really look at it from a different perspective. One of the handouts is the NAEYC summary of their position statement on school readiness. And NAEYC is the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Their position statement really looks at three main factors while we’re defining school readiness. One is ready children, looking at children’s learning and development. Next is ready schools. And this focuses on the school environment along with those practices and policies that schools have that either foster and support or maybe don't a smooth transition for children into primary school and advance and promote the learning of all children that come to the doors of the school.

Mimi Loughead: And then the final area that we look at is ready families. And this really focuses on parental and caregiver attitudes and involvement in their children’s early learning and development and then transition to school. We’re going to be talking a lot today about ready children and ready families. But I'd like to talk for a few minutes about ready schools. It's the responsibility of the schools to meet the needs of children as they come to school and to provide whatever services each child needs. I remember a time when school districts, a child would come to school and they might have some developmental delays or other needs. And the school district would say, "Keep them home another year, they'll do much better if you wait one more year." In fact, I talked to a gentleman from one of the neighboring counties of Allegheny County and we were just discussing that and I asked, "Does this still happen?" And he said, "I have had a few calls where parents have said, "I went to register my child and they told me I was too late, and I couldn't do it, that I should wait until next year."

Mimi Loughead: Hopefully, we've moved away from that in most areas because really, it's the school's responsibility to provide whatever service that child needs and staying
home or staying in a preschool program another year is not going to make the issue or the need go away. Emily Neff who is our public policy associate at Trying Together has put together a great white paper on kindergarten transition and how early care providers and school districts are working together to make the transition a smooth one for our families and children. The white paper is available on our website, which is www.tryingtogether.org. And it really outlines some great state and national examples of successful transition teams and policies as well as some next steps that districts need to do, and also ways for you to get involved, and all of us as community members to really work together to foster those relationships between early learning programs and school districts and also to hold our school districts responsible for supporting our families and helping that transition from early learning programs or home to our formal school setting that we all think of as primary school.

Mimi Loughead: When we look at a broader definition when we're looking at our ready children, we really want to take into account the physical, the developmental domains and how they relate to each other because they all really do relate and build on each other. We're looking at the physical well-being and motor area and think back to those top five qualities too because a lot of them are incorporated into these domains. Social and emotional skills, we mentioned are really those top qualities. Emotional regulation, peer and adult relationships, being sensitive to others feelings, cognition and basic knowledge, going past those early literacy and numeracy skills to memory and following directions. Language and communication is just key, we noticed that was the top quality. Vocabulary is critical for children to develop and have as they enter school. And then approaches to learning, which really looks at attention and creativity initiative, curiosity.

Mimi Loughead: In a moment, we're going to look at a video. But what I want us to think about instead of thinking about school readiness, I want us to think about children being ready to learn. All children are born with that characteristic certainly at varying degrees if there's other complicating issues, but all children are born ready to learn. And the learning occurs long before a child ever enters a pre-K program or a kindergarten classroom. We're going to watch a video that describes the importance of learning from birth and how it has laid the foundation for all later learning. It's going to be looking at brain architecture, how our pathways are formed. After the video, I'd like you to please share your thoughts and reactions in the chat room. Then we're also going to take a short break to answer any questions you might have at this time. Sit back and relax, it's four and a half minutes or so. And let's talk about it after you've watched the video.

Megan Gunnar: More and more of our children are growing up under conditions where their brain architecture is threatened by the experiences they are having or the experiences that they are not getting.

Speaker 4: The first four years of a child's life are crucial to her later development. It's during those years that the brain has its largest period of growth in the areas of hearing,
vision, language, and communication. However, many children are not getting the basic care required to support this phase of their development.

Jordan Hart: Especially in these times, parents get busy. It's easy to plop a child in front of the television set. Parents need to be very aware that engagement is one of the most important things that they can do for their child.

Speaker 4: What's missing for many young children is something called serve and return. Serve and return describes the fundamental adult-child interactions which help a baby reach her full potential. Serve and return is something as basic as playing peekaboo or adults talking to an infant as they go about their daily routine.

Megan Gunnar: Babies are actually learning words, they're forming language. The part of their brain that is able to produce language is working long before the first word is heard.

Jordan Hart: It's simple things like getting on the floor and playing with kids, looking into their eyes when you're speaking to them, reading to them, singing to them. What that interaction does is it provides a solid framework for kids.

Speaker 4: Serve and return doesn't always mean verbal interaction between an adult and child especially in infancy, it could occur during feeding or bathing as long as the adult is responsive, the child's brain is getting the stimulation it needs to develop.

Megan Gunnar: The brain will formulate an idea, I'm going to smile and smiles and someone responds to that smile. And the very process of organizing that smile, that gets confirmed with a positive feedback. And that confirms those neurons, it says, "Oh, you sent a good signal. This is a pathway we're going to keep."

Speaker 4: Research shows that a child surrounded by caring and responsive adults will start elementary school with better social skills, better emotional regulation, and a better ability to focus than a child lacking in positive adult attention. While it may not be readily apparent, children in infancy are developing the parts of the brain that are crucial to their later social and academic lives. Moreover, science shows that it's easier and more effective to strengthen these pathways while still developing rather than to try and rebuild them later.

Megan Gunnar: The question is if you want your child to be a good reader, when do you start putting effort into that? Well, you start at birth with serve and return and communication because really, reading, writing, it's all communication. It's about communicating information.

Speaker 4: A lack of serve and return is one of the causes of the education gap seen in society today.

Megan Gunnar: The most common form of maltreatment is that babies are neglected and young children experience neglect of their basic needs. The absence of stimulation, the lack of sufficient serve and return means that I can't confirm much and more than should, get spared away.
Speaker 4: Without healthy brain architecture, children are at risk of falling behind and never catching up. Asking elementary schools to fix problems that are rooted in infancy sets schools up to fail and is not the best way to use resources. It's imperative that communities come together to provide at-risk families with the educational and financial support that can make a difference in the lives of infants and preschoolers. Strong communities create strong brain architecture.

Anjali Goel: I often talk to parents about building scaffolding for their children as they develop. And when we build scaffolding, it's not just the family that's building it, but it's the entire neighborhood and the community.

Megan Gunnar: There are a lot of people in children's lives who help to fill up that healthy brain architecture by being a part of that serve and return where the child's brain is being able to think about important and wonderful things.

Mimi Loughead: Okay. I'd like to take a few moments to see if anybody has any questions or your thoughts or some experiences you've had kind of in relationship to what you saw in the video. I think we all really noticed that with all the brain research that's going on these days, it's amazing what they can look at and measure and monitor. But I think really what the video was highlighting was that children who've had at least one responsive nurturing adult in their lives come to school with much better social skills, emotional regulation, abilities to focus. And we know those are the qualities that really lead to better outcomes for kiddo. Really if we're thinking about it, the best predictor of a child's success in school and life is a brain that develops in healthy ways. And that comes from having great relationships and attachments with their family especially their parents.

Mimi Loughead: Okay. We're going to move on, but if anyone has any questions, please feel free to post them and we can stop and answer a few.

Alexia Brown: Mimi, can I interrupt for just a minute? I know some people are not able to view the video, we will post that at the end of the session. It's also available on one of the handouts called school readiness, you'll see a link to a YouTube video. You'll be able to view that at the end of the session or after the webinar.

Mimi Loughead: Great, yes. And also, there's a series of videos around this one. I used the core development video part two, but there's also a part one and a part three and four. They might really be interesting for you to view also whenever you have the time maybe.

Alexia Brown: And Mimi, we also have a few questions that just came in. There's one that says, it said that the first four years were important, I've heard that the first three years is the most rapid growth and three to five are also foundational years. Can you give some insight to that?

Mimi Loughead: Yes. We're going to be looking at a diagram which really kind of looks at that. There's a lot of different viewpoints on exactly the years. Birth to three, they really look at as the most critical time for language development. It certainly doesn't
stop after that, but those are the most critical years. But when we look at all areas of development, then it kind of ranges a little bit higher up to five, sometimes people even say six. I know when I worked with children with hearing loss, and a lot of our children were receiving cochlear implants because they were profoundly deaf, the younger the child received the implant, obviously, the better. But they really felt that it would be very difficult to get great outcomes and typical outcomes if you implanted a child much after three. The work was going to be harder, and a lot of those neuron pathways were already going to have been pruned away.

Mimi Loughead: We're going to look at that a little bit more in a moment, but you do hear the different ranges, but certainly majority of it happens before they get to kindergarten.

Alexia Brown: Okay, here's another question that just came in. What do you feel about children that have been fostered and adopted that did not have the best first four years? Is there any hope in a child being resilient and catching up in social and emotional development and language and literacy even though they may have been globally delayed in an emotional support classroom?

Mimi Loughead: I think we know that it's going to be much more difficult, but I do think there's a possibility to catch up. The thing I think we have to focus on is a lot of really intentional teaching of social and emotional skills because they missed a lot of that and don't have that experiential background. We can't just assume that by putting them with other children, for example, and telling them you take turns, you do this, you do that. It has to be intentional teaching. We a lot of times have to set up situations, tell them exactly what they're learning and give them intentional and also more intensive. I think that's a lot of times why we provide those services in schools with emotional support, learning support is because we need that intensity. And then I think if they're in that supportive home environment, that certainly makes a difference. It's just going to be a lot harder work, but I do feel those children can catch up.

Mimi Loughead: Okay. We're ready to move on, let's see, okay. Let's just look at a few of the skills that begin before birth. We know that usually around 20 weeks, mom's first feel that baby moving. That's evidence that those motor skills are developing along with others. At about 25 to 30 weeks is when babies hear and recognize their mother's voice, which is I think just pretty fascinating. They're already developing being listening and language and hearing. The third trimester, we know babies become responsive to light and touch. All this is evidence that babies are developing a lot of those skills long before birth. This is the document that I was talking about, and it is one of your handouts. And I think it's a great resource because it breaks down, describes what circuits are forming to develop certain skills, what parts of the brain they're forming in and during what time frame, which is what we talked about a little bit.

Mimi Loughead: And then it also gives ideas under each area on how families can develop those skills with their children. It really reinforces, like the participant said those first
three, four or five years that are so important because when you look at it, there's so many skills that are developing in the first year or two. Things like hearing, learning, and emotions, language and touch, balance and coordination. All those circuits are forming during those first few years. Then we look at concrete thinking and problem-solving. A lot of times, those start forming around 3 and continue through 12 years. And then when we look at that prefrontal cortex where those judgment and those skills can develop really don't start till around 12 and continue through about 22 years. Hence, we have those teenagers that we just don't quite understand why they're making the decisions that they make. But we have to understand that prefrontal cortex is still really developing. Unfortunately, it hasn't developed by the time they hit high school.

Mimi Loughead: Now, we're going to think about those ready families and think about some things we can do to help the families that we all work with. We know a lot of them have stress in their lives, those are the ones you get to see on a daily basis in your work. I think we have to remember too that a lot of these families have had really frustrating school experiences themselves and they have developed really negative attitudes towards our schools. And remember, when we're thinking about ready families, we're really thinking where it talked about their attitudes and involvement. Sorry, I had to stop there for a moment, the lights went out and I had to wave my arms to get them back on. This is why I like to stay away from the term school readiness when I'm working with families and instead really focus on that their children are ready to learn.

Mimi Loughead: My oldest daughter worked on a Lakota reservation for three years out in South Dakota. And I would say you probably 90 percent of the families she worked with had not had great experiences with the school, and extreme poverty situations, and a lot of other trauma. But she learned very quickly that if she wanted to engage those families in anything with the children, she couldn't have anything at the school because they didn't want to come to the school. That was not a happy place for them to be even if their children were happy. She had parent conferences in the bowling alley. I think that just highlights that a lot of our families didn't enjoy school themselves. I think we can really stay away from that because we're trying to engage them in their child's learning on a daily basis, not really focusing on we need to get your child ready for kindergarten, we just need to get your child engaged in learning. And you can do that.

Mimi Loughead: I think it's a little bit less daunting than that whole idea of getting ready for school. And we know that those responsive interactions and stimulating experiences are that foundation. One thing we can do is really model and confirm when we see our families using the serve and return during their daily routines and their interactions with their children. When we see them engaged in joint attention and serve and return, we can verbally affirm it and name it for them, name what they're doing. And then most importantly, connect it to what their child is learning so they see that it has an impact. That way, we're working from those perspectives of strengthening families and also giving them that knowledge of child development at the same time. A lot of our families do engage responsively with their children, maybe not always, but they do at times. But they may not
realize or recognize that that's what they're doing or that it has any impact on what their child is learning.

Mimi Loughead: Also, when we're modeling interactions for them, we always need to explain what we're doing. I found myself when I was a younger therapist, a lot of times assuming what families when they were watching when I was modeling something that they knew what I was doing. And I quickly found out that they didn't, I had to describe it as I was doing it and make that connection. At the end of the session, I'm going to share some family resources that you can use that will help focus on those families strengths. As we're doing that, we can highlight for them the skills that the children are learning as they play with them, as they're changing their diapers, as they're feeding them. When a parent puts a toy slightly out of a young infants reach, they're developing independence and persistence and gross and fine motor skills. When a parent is able to control their own emotions during a child's tantrum, which we know is really difficult to do, we can let them know that they're helping their own child learn self-control and emotional regulation.

Mimi Loughead: I think this is where we really need to start with a lot of our families to encourage the engagement. It can't be seen as a separate time of the day where they need to work on skills like they need to sit down with their child in the evening and work on naming colors or letters. Even though we know parents are a child's first teacher, I think there's a lot of parents that don't feel like they're capable of being that 'teacher' or they just don't know where they'll find a minute in the day to do that. They have so many other tasks and stressors and getting food on the table and getting their child dressed to go out the door is sometimes all that they can accomplish that day. But during those times, they can also be interacting with their child and their child can be learning. I think we just need to really focus on that. There's so much learning that can be happening when you're dressing your child, sorting grocery shopping, things you do every day.

Mimi Loughead: They mentioned in the video about singing to children, which I think we all know is great prenatal, postnatal. You certainly don't need to be an Ariana Grande or anything like that. Most children especially little children aren't music critics yet, you don't embarrass them when they're at that young age. And singing is a great way to learn language, besides, it's a pleasant experience. I really encourage families to sing anything as long as it's appropriate, but it's all about the interaction that singing brings. We heard in the video that when we're talking about communication, we're talking about listening, speaking, reading, and writing. And we know that it begins prenatally, babies are listening. We know that your oral language, you're listening vocabulary builds your speaking vocabulary, which then does your reading and then your writing. We've all heard how many children are coming to school through the research having heard 30 million less words than the little child who might be sitting right next to them. And that's, the gap is real and it really impacts the child's educational outcomes.

Mimi Loughead: There's been a lot of research that show reading aloud to children is critical for language and vocabulary development, social-emotional, a lot of skills. And one
of the things I think is so interesting is that children's books have much richer vocabulary than even we as adults use when we speak to each other. We want to be talking to our children and talking to each other, our children hearing all these interactions, but we limit our vocabulary. I'm just going to read a really short example from a children's book, Bear Feels Sick, which is part of a series. There's Bear Feels Sick, Bear Feels Tired, bear feels a whole lot of different things in all the books.

Mimi Loughead: Just real quickly, here's an excerpt from the book. Raven says, "Caw, come along owl and wren." Let us go gather herbs to bring back to the den. They coax bear to sip just a smidgen of tea, "You'll feel better soon," says Mouse, "wait and see." Bear shakes any shivers, he coughs any quivers and he still feels sick. Well, I don't know about you, but I know when I'm speaking to friends, my co-workers, my husband, I don't often use words like smidgen and quiver and coax, den. But these are all words that our children are going to have to learn, are going to be reading when they're in school. They have to have that vocabulary. There's nothing worse than a child decoding a word, working through that, finally sounding the word out and then realizing they don't know what the word means anyways. They have to have that rural vocabulary. And reading aloud is one of the best ways to get that.

Mimi Loughead: In a minute, we're also going to look at a way website that has a lot of resources around reading aloud. It's really something that has such a great impact. It's also free, it's easy. I know a lot of our families have very limited literacy skills themselves, but parents can get books from the library and just read the pictures. The little ones don't know that you're not reading the words, and they're still getting the attention, the intimacy that comes from sharing a book. It's still that nice interaction. We can also encourage families to model reading aloud in front of their children. You can read your street signs, your shopping lists, maybe your Facebook feed. I don't know, I'm not on Facebook. But it's not as important what you're reading as really that your children see that you are reading information and for fun. Oops, let's see.

Mimi Loughead: Okay. We're going to look at a few communication strategies just before we look at a video. And these are really strategies that you can encourage families to use with as they're reading aloud, but also just during their interactions. I have attached this as a handout. It's in a very parent friendly form, and I used to use them a lot just talking about maybe one strategy a week with a family. And sometimes, they'd post it on their fridge or we'd staple it together. Anyways, those are a few of the strategies that we're going to talk about. The first one is mirror talk, which is describing what children are seeing, hearing or doing. You're narrating what the child is doing. It might look like you saying, "Oh, look, you are pushing the red truck," or, "you touched my glass of water, it feels cold and made your hand wet." Then the reverse is self-talk, which is where you narrate what you yourself are doing. It could be, "I'm washing the dishes in the sink because they're dirty. I'm holding your hand because we're going for a walk."
Mimi Loughead: Only caution here is you really want to encourage parents not to do it all the time because not only will you drive your other family member crazies, but also yourself. And also it leaves the next two strategies of wait time and expectant look. As adults, we tend to talk a lot and sometimes don't pause to even allow a child to get a word in or to answer. We need to give children time to process what they've heard. And we can do that by smiling, nodding your head, giving that look that you're waiting for them to respond. Another strategy is open-ended questions. This is how we get children to expand their language and do that higher-level thinking. The difference between asking a child while you’re reading, "Is the girl sad?" Or, "why do you think the girl is sad?" is huge. The first one, they can answer yes and they just need to be able to identify a picture of a child looking sad. The second one requires a longer answer and they have to do some inferencing to figure out, "I wonder why the child is sad."

Mimi Loughead: During your routines, it could be something like, "Let's put your boots on. Why do you think we need to wear our boots today?" Thinking out loud in changing your mind are also good strategies to use while reading aloud that our families can do. You can say, "Hey, I think the dog in the book is going to run out the door." You turn the page, "Oh, no, look, he ran and hid under the couch." It's also a great opportunity to admit that you make mistakes and that they're okay, the grown-ups make mistakes in kind of a non-threatening way. And then the last strategies are making connections to yourself and others. If you're playing outdoors, share, encourage those families to share what they did when they were young, things that they enjoyed. Saying, "Hey, I loved playing outside in the leaves when I was little. I used to throw them in the air and run under them. What do you like to do with the leaves?" Those are all some things that we can really encourage our families to do.

Mimi Loughead: Right now, I'd like us to watch this short video and kind of watch it through the lens. This is a childcare provider and a young child on their first day together. Watch it through the lens of some of the strategies we've talked about, and then we're going to talk about it afterwards. And remember, look for the strengths of just like you would with your families.

Speaker 7: The sun is striking you, it's cold out there.

Speaker 8: Mommy.

Speaker 7: Mommy's at work.

Speaker 8: Mommy.

Speaker 7: Come on, come on, just sit down with me. Let's [inaudible 00:44:38] come on, come on. See that book, Harriet Carter, fresh vines. I never got that one before. I don't know if I want to look on that one because they might get me. Published [inaudible 00:44:52] laws are always telling you you want something. And that's [inaudible 00:44:56] four, rush processed four. Let's open that and see what that is. [inaudible 00:45:10] it says, folder long perforation and remove. Would you
hold that for me? Thank you. Hold that one for me too, thank you. What do you think is inside here? Do you know what's inside here? I know I don't. Another Visa card, takecreditone.com. Preferred customer, pre-approve for up to $1,500 [inaudible 00:45:54] a platinum Visa card with the starting credit line up to 1,500 plus. This offer has no enrollment fee and no [inaudible 00:46:05] fees. And we'll award you efforts with automatic reviews of your account for credit line increases.

Speaker 7: We want you to zero fraud liability if your car is even lost or stolen. Do you know what any of that means? I don't think you know what any of that means. It sounds good though. Three easy ways to accept your credit. [inaudible 00:46:40], do you know that?

Mimi Loughead: Okay. Any thoughts, you can enter in the chat room? What were some of the skills you saw this provider doing with this child. It was a very simple interaction, she was reading the mail. But what were some of the strategies that you saw? You can go ahead and put them in the chat room if you like. I think one thing, just the fact that she was reading the mail, we saw that it really doesn't matter what she's reading. But she was modeling reading to that child. Now, again, she was also trying to get that child ready to go to sleep, but that's something that families do all the time. She was responsive to the child, the child was missing her mom. Right away, she picked her up, plopped her on her lap. They had joint attention.

Alexia Brown: We also have a few comments Mimi. One comment is she is holding her close, she was asking questions, self-talk, language development. She had her close to her on her lap, she allowed her to help by holding the paper. Thinking out loud, involved in a child as helper. Rocked and soothe, accomplished goal of getting her to sleep. Staying calm when the child could have become distressed.

Mimi Loughead: Those are all great points, and really highlight the strategies. I think if maybe someone watches this video without that lens, they probably wouldn't see all of that. But we do see that, and we also see that these are things families do. And that we can highlight to them just how important reading the mail can be to your child if you're holding them close, if you're asking questions. I really just wanted to sort of use this as an example of how simple interactions can have such an impact on learning and how we can really work with our families to understand that and encourage that. And just as a quick comment on the academic skills, I'm not saying that those aren't important, but again, those are things we can encourage families to do during their routine. When you are playing, you're naming colors. When you're reading a book, you might point out some letters. Those kind of things that again, we're not adding another task to that family to use.

Mimi Loughead: While we have a few minutes left, I'd like us to look at, we've talked about our ready families, our ready children. We did a little bit about ready schools. And I mentioned the websites. The first one is the CDC, and they learn the signs, actor early. And these are all listed on the one handout. This one I really like because if you go under milestones, you can look at different ages. For example, the nine months, and then they have a milestone checklist. And the information is all in
English and Spanish, which is great. Let me see if I can pull up the actual ... Okay, here it is. I really like it because the front side gives you the developmental areas and some milestones of what it looks like for children that age. And on this back side, let me see if I can get to that. It then gives another checklist of what you can do, activities that families can do for their children.

Mimi Loughead: Now, milestones are tough, I don't ever really use these with families unless I'm with them because families can get very worked up if their child isn't doing a certain skill. But I use the backside a lot in sitting down with a family and looking through and talking about the things they're already doing. We can really highlight it and say, "You know what, you're already reading and talking to your baby," and then making that connection. When you do that, this is what your child is learning. And then I generally then try to say, "Hey, is there another activity on here that you would like to try?" That's what I really like with that one. Now, let me see if I can get rid of that. I may need some technical help here. Let's see, get back here. Thank you.

Mimi Loughead: The next one is Zero to Three, again, great resource for if you're working with families with infants and toddlers. When you go to Zero to Three, they have wonderful articles. Go up to where they have topics. They have articles, videos on school readiness, on social-emotional. Another great website. Also, the Read aloud.org has great creative resources on reading to children, why it's important. Again, you go under their downloads and, again, it breaks it down by age and gives great activities for you to suggest to your families and work with your families. I think we can really important thing, maybe the most important thing I'd like to end with is that working from that strengths approach of our families, we know a lot of them have so many struggles.

Mimi Loughead: I think the more we can engage them in their daily routines and activities and help them to see how important they are, how they can enhance them, how their children are learning from them can just really be a big support and can hopefully then by working with those families, maybe advocating with the schools and us as community members make sure that those children get to school with better skills and then have better outcomes. Before we end, I'd like to just ask if there's any other questions. Oops, sorry. I'd like to also let you know a question that someone had asked was about scissor skills, how do we encourage families to let their children use scissors? We all know people have these horror stories of children losing their hair, the dog being bald. The important thing, again, is encouraging a family to get a pair of child appropriate scissors, but talking to them about all the skills that that child will learn by using scissors and helping them learn how to scaffold it if the child doesn't know how to do an open and closed.

Mimi Loughead: Children can start using scissors to snip around too. Saying, "Hey, let's use some tongs or some tweezers, and then let's use scissors and cut things of playdoh or those foam sheets," and talking to them about how important eye hand coordination is, and bilateral body coordination, that those are things that are so important. Try to encourage families to do that always under supervision because
I think if we say that when you do it with your child, they're not going to cut the dog's hair. That should be helpful. Someone had asked about how can we get schools and early care programs to get the same definition of school readiness? I think some of the things we talked about today, again, I would refer you to that white paper because I think we have to as community members go to our schools, see if they have. Do you have a transition team? Encourage our families and our early care programs to make sure that our families register their children for kindergarten when they're supposed to because that's when the school districts get involved.

Mimi Loughead: And if they do have a transition team, that's when they'll invite the families to the schools and do some really nice activities. But they have to know that the children are out there. There's examples in the white paper of school districts who send their kindergarten teachers to early care programs to visit and then also invite the early care educators to the kindergarten classrooms to see what goes on so they can have a joint conversation. There's some really great things going on across the state. And like I said, that's available on our website. But I think it’ll give you some ideas on maybe how you can work with your local district or local preschool. Head Start and pre-K do a lot of great transitions, but there's a lot of programs out there where our children are that don't have established transitions and support. Know if there's any other questions, feel free to contact me. I'd love to continue the conversation or if you have any other questions or resources, I'd be happy to share them with you.

Alexia Brown: Hey Mimi, there were a few questions. There were questions about the cost of the sites that you referenced.

Mimi Loughead: All of the sites are free, all of the resources are also free, which is, woops, why I love them so much. Zero To Three has great, great articles for you to read. And each article has more ideas for activities to do. And then even the readaloud.org, all their downloads are free and they’re really creative, really engaging for families. And talk about reading at every age and every stage.

Alexia Brown: Thank you. There were a few comments including, there was some feedback or some input about cutting. And some folks offered the idea of cutting straws, grass, and objects that are firm, maybe a little easier. Other input included using activities with spray bottles and clothespins to help increase the skills needed for the use of scissors especially when parents are hesitant, so using other activities that are going to develop the same skills or similar skills. But overall, we’re getting a lot of positive feedback about how great this was and that this information was perfect and a lot of appreciativeness for the information you’re sharing.

Mimi Loughead: Great, great. Well, I have enjoyed spending the time with everyone, and I hope it's been helpful. And like I said, please email me. If you have any other questions, I'd really be happy to continue talking with you and share any other resources I have.
Alexia Brown: Awesome. All right, thank you very much Mimi, thank you all for joining us today. The archive session will be at the PAT website within the week. When you receive the electronic evaluation via email, please take a couple of minutes to complete it as your feedback helps us to offer professional development of the highest quality. There is no webinar for July; however, August webinar topic will be determined at a later date and will be emailed to you soon. It will be also placed on the Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers website. Please remember you can join family support webinars in multiple ways including on mobile devices such as a phone and your tablets. Thank you again for joining us, this concludes today's webinar.