**Family Migration Context and Socio-emotional Competence (R01)**

**General Focus-Group Instructions**

***Recording Responses***

We must record the Key Informants’ responses so they can be transcribed into English later. Be sure to have the necessary equipment and back-up equipment. Test your equipment before Key Informants arrive. Often check that you are recording during the focus-group meeting. You may want to have an Assistant manage the audio-recording while the Facilitator asks the questions and moderates the responses.

***Environment***

It is crucial that Key Informants are able to answer questions confidentiality, but that we can identify responses. Thus, we will use first names ONLY during the focus group. If two people have the same first name, you also can use the first letter of their last name (for instance, Maria G.). Key Informants’ first names must be stated before each response.

It is important that the environment is free of background noise and side conversations. This is particularly important because we are recording responses for later transcription. Be sure that background noise is minimal and that Key Informants speak loudly and clearly when responding.

It is important that Key Informants feel free to express their opinions. If a Key Informant judges another Informants’ response, remind the group that people all have different opinions. We are not here to judge others’ opinions or to have a debate. We just want to know what people think.

It is important that Key Informants feel respected. Being interrupted by other Key Informants can make people feel disrespected and they may stop responding. Encourage Key Informants to raise their hands if they have something to contribute and call on them by using their first name to indicate they may respond. If someone interrupts someone else, say something such as, “Please let him/her finish his/her thought. Then, I would like to hear what you think.”

***Focus-Group Facilitator Neutrality***

It is crucial that the questions be asked in a manner that does not influence the Key Informant’s responses. For instance, the Facilitator’s vocal tone and facial expression should remain the same when describing positive and negative behaviors or characteristics. Similarly, you should be unaffected and remain neutral when the Key Informant responds to the items. The Key Informant should not be able to tell if you are shocked, surprised, satisfied, delighted, or disgusted by what he/she says.

***Encouraging Responses***

Encourage a discussion format by arranging chairs or other seating in a circle so that all the Key Informants can see each other.

Encourage responding by listening to and acknowledging responses through nodding, smiling, or other culturally appropriate gestures. After a Key Informant responds, verbally acknowledge their contribution. For instance say, “Thank you. Who else has something to say,” or “Thank you. Let’s talk about the next question.”

Encourage diversity in responses. If a Key Informant is dominating the conversation, ask others directly for their opinion. For instance say, “I would like to hear from (name) this time. (Name) what is your opinion?”

Clarify abstract or unclear responses by asking Key Informants for more information. For example say, “Can you give me an example,” or “Can you explain what you mean by \_\_\_?”

***Staying in Control***

Maintain control of the conversation by reminding the Key Informants of the original question or by moving onto the next question if the conversation gets off topic. For instance say, “That is good information but remember the question was \_\_\_\_. Who has something to say about that topic?”

Stay on time by moving ahead when needed. Be mindful of the time and if too much time is being spent on any one question, you can move ahead. For instance say, “These are very good responses. I want to stay on time so we get to all of the questions. Let’s move onto the next question.”

***Energy***

Provide breaks if you think they are needed to re-energize the group if the meeting is lengthy.

***Standardization***

It is important that the interview is conducted in the same manner at each site. It is crucial to adhere to the protocol (do not skip questions or instructions).