



**ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH BOARD
POLICY AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE
EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE
EARLY LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 7, 2017**

A meeting of the First Things First (FTF) - Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, Policy and Program Committee, Early Childhood Task Force, Early Learning Sub-Committee was held on February 7, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was held at First Things First, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Boardroom, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Melissa Busby called the meeting to order and welcomed all members. She thanked everyone for their time and commitment to working with FTF to develop their five-year statewide program and policy strategic plan. Chair Busby reviewed the open meeting law requirements and noted that the meetings would be open to the public. She encouraged everyone to be active participants and ask questions whenever needed. Chair Busby asked all members present and on the telephone to introduce themselves and their organization.

Members Present:

Melissa Busby, Chair
Alecia Jackson
Amelia Black
Bill Berk
Bill Rosenberg
James Scott
Jonathon Gonzales
Josianne Tyrrell
Lauren Zbyszinski, Ph.D.
Lourdes Ochoa

Michael Kelley, Ph.D.
Naomi Karp
Robert Dooley, Ph.D.
Suzanne Perry

National Content

Expert:
Harriet Dichter

Members via WebEx:

Brook Herrera
Pat Berry

Members Absent:

Eva Marie Shivers
Melissa Madrid

Members of the Public:

Dawn Craft
Sandy Foreman

First Things First Staff:

Ginger Sandweg
Michelle Katona
Leslie Totten
Amy Dixon

Facilitator:

Sharon Flanagan-Hyde

Documents Provided and Publically Posted:

1. Public Notice and Agenda for February 7, 2017 Early Learning Sub-Committee Meeting
2. Early Learning Sub-Committee Roster
3. SFY17 Tobacco Fund for FTF Areas for Strategies by Goal Area
4. National Early Childhood Policies and Funding Priorities and Arizona’s Early Childhood System
5. Arizona’s Early Childhood Model System - Desired Outcomes, Conditions, System Roles and Opportunities
6. FTF Presentation for February 2017 Meeting
7. Goals, Areas of Focus and Measures of Success Definitions and Examples
8. 2010 and 2016 System Roles Prioritized by Task Force
9. Presentation: Arizona First Things First Planning: Early Learning Discussion, Harriet Dichter, February 2017
10. Article: Dichter, H. (2016). Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education. *National Association*

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of State Boards of Education, Education Leaders Report, 2(3), 1-13.

Charge to the Sub-Committee and Guiding Principles

Chair Busby gave a short introduction on the Board's charge to the Task Force to recommend a five-year strategic plan. She also updated the committee on the progress of the Task Force to date and then reviewed the charge of the Early Learning Committee which included the following:

- Recommend a set of goals, areas of focus and measures for the prioritized roles identified by the Task Force. The Committee will be specifically focusing on the early learning system roles that have been prioritized. It was shared that the professional development system roles will be addressed by the Professional Development Work Group that has been meeting for over five years. The workgroup is made up of a cross sector of stakeholders from throughout Arizona and includes Institutes of Higher Education, State agency partners and community based organizations that provide professional development, among other key stakeholders. I also serve on the workgroup. It was determined that this group of stakeholders was best positioned to develop the goals, focus areas and measures for the professional development system roles. In March, the Early Learning Committee will have an opportunity to review and discuss their recommendations. The Early Learning Committee will present one set of recommendations that will include the work from the professional development workgroup to the Task Force in May.
- In developing the goals, focus areas and measures the Committee should utilize its expertise and knowledge and that of the content expert, the background materials developed for the Task Force, and the feedback from the Task Force and regional councils;
- Cross cutting themes across the committees will be identified; and
- The Committee's recommendations on measures will be presented to the National Advisory Panel for Research and Evaluation that FTF will be convening in April and May for feedback and guidance.

The Task Force also identified a set of guiding principles that FTF will use in carrying out the priority system roles. These guiding principles emerged over the course of the Task Force meetings and discussion and include the following:

- FTF will emphasize the whole child including the cognitive, physical, social and emotional health and development of young children.
- FTF will support children across diverse socio-economic, geographic, cultural, and educational backgrounds.
- FTF will prioritize serving underserved and at-risk children and their families.
- FTF will continue to foster, leverage, and promote collaboration with partners committed to child well-being.
- FTF will continue to serve in a leadership, convening, and funder capacity in advancing the early childhood system

Chair Busby introduced the facilitator, Sharon Flanagan-Hyde.

Group Norms

Facilitator Sharon Flanagan-Hyde reviewed group norms with the committee. Create an environment that allows all to speak freely and without concern by doing the following:

- Listen with an open mind and a collaborative mindset.
- Speak concisely and respectfully.
- Monitor yourself. Don't dominate the conversation and interrupt your colleagues. Everyone should have the opportunity to fully participate in the discussion.
- Be honest. It is okay to disagree.

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- If you dissent with ideas, offer up an alternative, rather than just saying you disagree.
- When expressing agreement with other speakers, don't use up time repeating what has been said.
- Articulate hidden assumptions.
- Be respectful about cell phones: Put phones on vibrate and leave the room if you need to take or make a call.
- Be mindful of side conversations as they can disrupt group progress.
- Work towards consensus on recommendations.

Overview of the Early Childhood System

Michelle Katona, Chief Program Officer, reviewed the Model Early Childhood System and the work of FTF over the past six years using the FTF Presentation for the February Committee meetings. Two documents were also referenced and included the 2010 and 2016 System Roles Prioritized by the Task Force and the Desired Outcomes, Conditions, System Roles and Opportunities.

It was highlighted that in 2010 FTF convened the first Early Childhood Task Force which spent a considerable amount of time mapping out the system and creating the Model Early Childhood System and how it serves young children and families in Arizona. The 2016 Task Force used the Model System to carry out their charge to prioritize a set of system roles for FTF to focus on over the next five years. The six desired outcomes and the 20 system roles related to the desired outcomes were reviewed. Also noted was the work of the Governor's office, Education Matters Arizona, and the recognition that the education continuum begins with the early childhood years. Statistics of children in Arizona under the age of six, including those by ethnic breakdown and the employment status of parents with young children were highlighted. With FTF serving as a critical partner, initiated by Arizona voters, focused on children birth to age five, driven by local communities and respect for tribal sovereignty, its work and impact over the past six years was then reviewed across the six desired outcomes. To close the presentation, the system roles prioritized by the 2016 Early Childhood Task Force in comparison to the system roles prioritized in 2010 were reviewed, highlighting the system roles that are the focus for the Committee.

Chair Busby introduced Ginger Sandweg, FTF Senior Director for Early Learning.

Opportunities related to Early Learning

Ginger Sandweg reviewed the items prioritized by the Task Force and its opportunities. It was noted that FTF funds strategies to address programmatic priorities for the Early Learning and Professional Development areas. The Desired Outcomes, Conditions, System Roles and Opportunities and Strategies Funded documents were referenced and the Quality and Access roles prioritized by the Task Force were discussed: Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation, Quality Early Care and Education Standards Curriculum and Assessment, and Quality Access and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings for children to access the childhood system. The work currently underway in these prioritized role areas was highlighted and included the following:

- Statewide system of Quality currently exists – Quality First provides assessment of quality standards across the mixed service delivery system and provides supports for continuous quality improvement of regulated Early Childhood Education (ECE) providers. Currently just fewer than 50% of regulated providers are participating and of those over 70% have achieved quality levels.
- Recommendations for the continuous quality improvement of Quality First will be addressed through a pilot study.

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- Early education standards developed by the Department of Education that identify high quality practices across the birth to kindergarten age exist.
- FTF funds \$42M in Quality First scholarships to support access to quality early learning for low income families.
- The Arizona Early Childhood Alliance represents a unified voice of the Early Childhood (EC) community in advocating for EC programs and services.
- A foundation for specialized consultation to regulated Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs exists and includes Mental Health Consultation, Inclusion Consultation, and Child Care Health Consultation.
- The development and field testing of the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory has progressed and will be available for full implementation in fall 2017.
- Through Federal resources, Arizona also has:
 - Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds that support quality improvement as well as access to services.
 - Head Start funding that supports access to comprehensive services for low income families.
 - Preschool Development Grant that supports access to services, Quality First enrollment, Mental Health Consultation, Inclusion Consultation, and Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC).
- In partnership with Arizona Tribes, a need has been identified to align Quality First standards with Tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Tribal Head Start and other Tribal regulations.
- Highlighted areas of opportunity identified by the Task Force included:
 - There is still a waiting list for Quality First participation, so an opportunity exists to increase enrollment.
 - A small percentage of the most vulnerable children are enrolled in quality settings, so an opportunity exists to support children involved in the Department of Child Safety (DCS) and children receiving Department of Economic Security (DES) subsidy in enrolling in higher quality settings.
 - There is an opportunity to support administrative practices that would improve the retention of qualified staff to deliver quality ECE services.
 - An opportunity exists to strengthen licensing requirements to better align with quality.
- Lastly, there is an opportunity to universally apply the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory which includes ongoing formative assessment of children so that aggregate data can be reviewed and inform the EC system.
- It was noted that while not prioritized in 2010 or 2016, the quality of Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care has been an area of focus. First Things First invests about \$3.6M in FFN strategies. There is also an Alliance for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care that brings together partners in supporting FFN providers.

It was asked how large the wait list is for Quality First and is the wait list due to the funding. Leslie Totten, FTF Director for Quality First, shared that there are 233 programs on the wait list. Ginger Sandweg shared that Regional partnership councils determine the level of funding in their region for Quality First and thus there is a financial limitation, but there are areas being explored through the Quality First Pilot that could support expansion of Quality First such as leveraging other resources. Ginger Sandweg continued the presentation focusing on Professional Development and the work currently underway in this area:

- There is a website that has information for current professionals in the field and prospective professional in the field, understanding the requirements in the field, pathways, colleges and

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universities that offer Professional Development. It includes the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies that describes what workforce skills and knowledge is necessary to deliver quality services.

- A set of Technical Assistance and Instructor Standards ensures that those who are teaching the workforce are skilled and knowledgeable.
- The workforce registry is gathering baseline data to determine what kind of professional development is missing across our state, what is the rate of compensation that our workforce is making and what does that information tell us. There are 24,000 that have registered currently.
- There are also Associates and Bachelor degrees for our Early Childhood workforce.
- There is a system of Professional Development opportunities across the State from different organizations.
- Rewards is not funded statewide, but is an enhanced bonus that have maintained employment in Early Learning.
- While there is a lot going on, several opportunities regarding Professional Development exist such as:
 - Coordination of entry points to ensure there is an alignment into the Early Childhood field.
 - The alignment of community based professional development with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies.
 - Increase in professional development and college coursework that is aligned with the birth to three population and focuses on trauma informed care.
 - An increased partnership with tribes was noted as important in the area of Professional Development and higher education with the workforce knowledge and competencies and services that are provided.
 - Compensation parity was also identified for the workforce.

National perspective on the Early Childhood System and Early Learning

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde introduced Harriet Dichter, the National Content Expert for Early Learning who reviewed data and slides on the following:

- Information from Federal and State Early Learning Policy to inform Committee deliberations on FTF priorities in the areas of:
 - Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation.
 - Quality Access and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings.
 - Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment.
 - Leading with Quality. We need to change the frame of Early Childhood from the early 90's view.
 - Head Start has new rules. Early childcare is early education.
 - Requirement if in a public funding stream it needs to be in the Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS). The examples given are from Washington and Ohio. In the District of Columbia there is an elevation of quality for infants and toddlers.
 - The framework for our early childhood system has changed. People are actively and intentionally focusing on the whole child, quality a priority, children with the greatest need, State and local driven and systems approach.
 - It's not just about services, but recognition of systems perspective.

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked if there were any questions.

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A question was asked about Preschool development grants. Harriet Dichter noted she did not preface it specifically, but there is a section in Federal law, in title 9, that has nothing to do with the current preschool Development Grants everyone is receiving.

A question was asked; how do children with disabilities fit into all this as they are the only ones that have a law. Harriet Dichter stated she was looking at reauthorization regarding inclusion. Great care has been taken that basically all children need to be welcomed and need to be included in all types of programs. It was also noted that we have a very primitive system regarding children with disabilities in this State and we need to think about this as we build a new system.

It was further noted there are states where the legislature has been involved in Quality improvement. Harriet Dichter stated some states have passed laws and many states say they can't get that done or maybe it's just too big. She has a paper on this and can share it with the Committee.

Discussion

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde opened the floor for discussion and the following questions were asked:

- Who are the participants in Quality First and what does access look like, are there pockets of poverty? What are the services that Quality First centers provide and are they providing full day and a full year ECE?
- Something has to be addressed regarding third grade testing and looking at Read on. Tribal lands are allowed to teach languages so their kids score higher and are tri-lingual. Arizona is linguistically diverse. There are 22 federally recognized tribes in Arizona; tribal languages are in the decline. We need to look at that because it is an important part of who we are.
- In looking at the capacity to increase screening, has the capacity to provide intervention increased as well?
- The impact for moving the minimum wage for child care providers, that reimbursement rates are not changing, and how will ECE programs stay in business was raised. Raising minimum wage in the child care workforce and increasing policy or support that might help our providers.
- Can we look at extended year child care programs or provide some incentive to licensed care providers to provide quality child care? It prevents parents from finding and keeping employment. When schools are out for summer months, there is difficulty in finding licensed child care. There is a high level of poverty for some of these children.
- How many degreed child care professionals do we have? Are there numbers to back up what we are talking about?
- In regard to Public/Private partnerships, what does the infrastructure resources, Professional Development look like regarding Read On and the early literacy work through Helios?

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked if there were additional opportunities not identified by the Task Force.

- It is assumed we have an understanding of systems development. What are the systems, what is the research of current systems we are expanding?
- Opportunities to think about aligning the systems for ongoing monitoring. Most of us that work under this field are monitored by licensing entities. How do we align some of those monitoring activities so they are informing one another? There are duplicating monitoring systems.
- Quality Care needs coordination to ensure requirements and expectations in Arizona are consistent.
- The Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) is a voluntary assessment. Maybe it should be the regulatory requirement and it should be discussed for it to be mandatory.

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- It was noted that in coming from the Navajo Nation, there are many challenges when meeting the qualifications for Quality First. There are grandparents and families that do not have running water, or electricity, and the internet is not a priority for them. How is that going to be addressed? When there is funding for people to go to training that couldn't qualify according to the QF assessment checklist or that have to access the registry and again, they don't have internet service. There is good service at the college campus, but the information that is required on the registry can be time consuming for someone who only speaks Navajo like the elderly, this could take two or three days to do. Is this a balanced amount of time?

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde went through the Early Childhood Task Force Committees Goals, Areas of Focus and Measures of Success handout. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked everyone to think about the Committee's charge during the next two meetings and what the thoughts are on this approach. What have you found helpful or not in doing this kind of work. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde reviewed how the handout will assist all three committees in using consistent language. This will assist us in determining whether a goal should be carried out by FTF. All of this should align with the guiding principles. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde reviewed the example given for Early Learning.

It was asked if the measures of success would be set by FTF. Chief Program Officer Katona responded by saying the National Advisory Panel will provide guidance on the measures identified and then there will be a process for setting benchmarks. This would be the next phase and it would be done with a participatory process.

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked what the thoughts are on how to approach the work of goal setting.

A comment was made that materials should be received ahead of time. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked if 3 days prior to the meeting would be good or 5 days prior. The Committee indicated a week would be ideal.

It was asked if this group will work as a large sub-committee or will it be broken down to various tasks. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde responded by saying it will work as a subcommittee. Everyone will be receiving a survey and this will help us in goal setting.

It was shared that it was important to have the state agency partners present and participating. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde responded by saying for that reason we need 100% attendance. It was also shared that it would be helpful to have teachers from Quality First programs participate in the Committee.

A comment was made regarding opportunities like this don't come along often, we should be risk takers without being reckless, to create a state of the art system we are happy to own. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked what type of approaches would support that. A member noted that everyone needs to respect one another. We have to be very thoughtful and not be afraid to express our feelings and we need to do a good job and always have children's faces in our heads.

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked in meeting the sub-committee's charge during the next two meetings, what are everyone's thoughts on the approach? A member noted that they need to remind themselves this is not their agenda and it's a collective effort. In March, we need to ensure that everyone engages and not pick at the edges and remember why we are all here. Another member noted that homework

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in between meetings is critical. We need to ensure we are reading all the materials and coming into the meeting with a thought process and the other is momentum to keep it going. Another comment was made on the outcome, stating it starts with all the children, sometimes we forget why we are here.

Summary and Next Steps

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde noted that a survey will be sent in a day or two. That will be the only homework until the next meeting.

Adjourn

Chair Busby noted there was a lot of discussion and a lot to do in a short amount of time. She thanked everyone for a great first meeting. She looks forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting in March. She asked that everyone complete the survey, because everyone's feedback is important and will prepare to start goal setting.

There being no further discussion, Chair Busby adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:49 a.m.

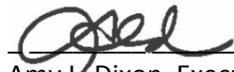
Next Meeting

To be held on Monday, March 6, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at First Things First, Boardroom, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Telephone Procedures

First Things First provided a teleconference line to allow for any members of the public to hear the Early Learning Sub-Committee meeting. Speakers physically present at the meeting spoke into microphones to ensure that members on the telephone could hear. All callers were muted upon connection.

Respectfully submitted on this 27th day of February, 2017.



Amy L. Dixon, Executive Staff Assistant