



**ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH BOARD  
POLICY AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE  
EARLY LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 6, 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 March 6, 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**

Interim Chair Jonathon Gonzales, Director, Arizona Head Start Association, called the meeting to order and welcomed all members. He thanked everyone for their time and commitment to working with FTF to develop their five-year statewide program and policy strategic plan.

**Members Present:**

Interim Chair, Jonathon Gonzales  
Alecia Jackson  
Amelia Black  
Bill Rosenberg  
James Scott  
Lauren Zbyszinski, Ph.D.  
Lourdes Ochoa  
Melissa Madrid  
Michael Kelley, Ph.D.  
Robert Dooley, Ph.D.  
Suzanne Perry

**Members via WebEx:**

Bill Berk  
Brook Herrera  
Josianne Tyrrell  
Melissa Busby  
Naomi Karp  
Pat Berry

**Members Absent:**

Eva Marie Shivers

**Members of the Public:**

Dawn Craft  
Marissa Hopkins  
Sandy Foreman

**National Content Expert:**

Harriet Dichter (via webex)

**First Things First Staff:**

Ginger Sandweg  
Michelle Katona  
Amy Dixon

**Facilitator:**

Sharon Flanagan-Hyde

**Documents Provided and Publically Posted:**

1. Public Notice and Agenda for March 6, 2017 Early Learning Sub-Committee Meeting
2. Minutes of the Early Learning Sub Committee February 7, 2017 Meeting
3. Quality First Data
4. Early Learning Sub Committee Survey Results and Summary and proposed Goal Statements and Areas of Focus
5. First Things First Guiding Principles

Interim Chair Gonzales requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the February meeting. Member Amelia Black motioned to approve, Dr. Michael Kelley seconded the motion, all were in favor, none opposed, and the minutes were approved.

**Follow-up on requested information**

Interim Chair Gonzales introduced Sr. Director for Early Learning, Ginger Sandweg who presented the Quality First data (see attachment) which was requested by the Early Learning Sub Committee of the Task Force at the February meeting.

- A member asked if the programs not publicly rated are first year programs. Sr. Director Sandweg responded for the most part, yes. Depending on the time of the data pull, there might be some programs that are in the middle of having their rating posted.
- Interim Chair Gonzales made a statement to think about; how does this data form and target the next direction for Quality First and First Things First?

**Review of Survey Summary and Responses**

Sr. Director Sandweg reviewed the survey responses from the survey that was sent out after the meeting in February. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde discussed the objective for the meeting is to identify goals and areas of focus for the prioritized system goals in alignment with the guiding principles that were developed by the Task Force.

**Goals and Areas of Focus**

- Review of Proposed Goals and Areas of Focus
- Considerations from a National Perspective
- Discussion/consensus on goals and areas of Focus

The Proposed Goal Statements and Areas of Focus document was reviewed. The desired system outcome is for all children to have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care and education that promotes their optimal development.

Goal 1: To identify and align early care and education funding, programs, and services to eliminate gaps and prevent unnecessary duplication. Discussion included the following:

- A question was raised about Cultural Responsivity and what this includes? Sr. Director Sandweg responded that all the grayed out areas on the document were identified in the 2010 Task Force. Cultural Responsivity in early care and education is a focus on early care and education being responsive to all children, no matter who they are and where they come from. FTF formed a committee which met on cultural responsivity and developed a statement on cultural responsivity. It was recommended that definitions be added to the document.
- Early Care and Education includes all early care and education from birth through age five before kindergarten. It is any mixed service delivery, public school, private school, community child care programs, head start programs, Department of Economic Security (DES) subsidized programs, etc.
- Leveraging
  - Early care and educational systems are identifying funding and programs including those other systems that are touching young families, including other social service systems (i.e. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)).
    - Content Expert Dichter discussed discretionary opportunities in which an investment in early childhood and early care and education could occur. There are opportunities, not mandates and there are competing purposes for use of these funds. A step here strategically is first to identify the federal ones that provide this opportunity and then to work on a relationship and mutual education so people can determine from their point of view of actually getting involved in the coordination alignment, because it is about those with oversight of these

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- funding streams deciding that it is advantageous to their goals and responsibilities to make a decision about an investment in ECE.
- Equalization money from the state
  - Title 1 funds can be used for preschool programs, but that is a district decision and there are some hoops you have to go through.
- Importance of FTF to leverage their state funds with federal funds to not only draw down CCDBG, but also the support of other federal funds that have a requirement of a non-federal share.
- It was noted that it would be helpful to outline all the various programmatic funding sources that influence families would be important to understand.
- Braiding funding, what you can and cannot do needs to be clearly defined.
- Common intake/eligibility system for families looking for early care and education
  - The whole notion of how do we make this system a little more easy to navigate for families is what the bullet is about. The early care and education system is complicated for families to navigate. Is there a single place for a family to call looking for child care, what should they be looking for? There are multiple different eligibility requirements for Head Start, for Quality First scholarships, for DES subsidy. How does a family navigate through all of those in the most seamless and easy way possible? Rather than going to Head Start and find they don't qualify for that, then they have to go to another place and another, before they find where they fit in the Early Childhood system.
  - It was indicated that common intake/eligibility is a good thing to be investigating for families.
  - Content Expert Dichter added there is a lot to explore in terms of how you might go from your higher level focus into alternative plans. There are examples of states that are trying to construct coordinated systems, trying to break down barriers so that the standards are the same and then there are places that are actually delegating family qualification down to the provider level. Think about this as a focus area. There will be a lot to talk about in terms of what the next step is on policy and practice options on that issue.

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked if the committee would like to add language that would indicate expanding beyond the areas referenced to say that other systems working with families that could also be part of this opportunity. As we move into the discussion of the proposed goals and draft areas of focus, it is important to keep in mind we are looking for descriptions of how FTF will contribute towards achieving goals, with focus being on infrastructure and capacity needs, policy alignment, coordination, leverage of resources, and service delivery. It is sometimes easy to mix tactics for achieving the goals with how FTF will contribute toward achieving those goals which is the charge to the committee. We want to focus on getting to the consensus to the descriptions and how FTF will achieve these goals.

Goal 2: To increase use of a comprehensive curriculum that is informed by consistent use of ongoing progress monitoring of children in early care and education programs. Discussion included:

- Support for Administrators in selecting professional development based on their observation of teachers' performance is important.
- There is a challenge with staff not being fully trained in data analysis and connecting the results of authentic assessment with curriculum and informing curriculum.
- Content Expert Dichter mentioned supporting appropriate training is as important as time to plan and implement and understand. One issue that comes up in standard setting, in pre-k programming, is people actually plan for planning time for teachers. There is some evidence that that leads to better results for children.

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- The intent is not to say there is one set curriculum that everyone across the state needs to use, but rather to identify the components of what a comprehensive curriculum would include and the components of what a comprehensive child assessment would include.
  - Curriculum or curricula needs to be research based.
  - Analyzing what you're getting from the curriculum and assessment and using it to form your teaching practices is important.
  - Monitoring the fidelity of implementation is important.

Chief Program Officer Katona mentioned comments that were made around the survey results and around comprehensive assessment. She also confirmed hearing the language which is included should be more explicit around child assessment and it's not just a term, but also an area of clear definition. As we look to change the wording and language we will be asking to confirm it was appropriately done.

Goal 3: To Increase the number of Arizona children birth through five with access to quality early care and education. Discussion included:

- Quality First (QF) Enrollment
  - Target Centers that work with low income families. Why do programs without a DES contract get to participate in QF? At the beginning of QF, the state enrolled an initial 300 programs and the regions enrolled an additional group of 300 programs. At that time, there was a criterion that regions could select to prioritize specific characteristics that would be selected into QF. That prioritization happened until about 2012. At that point FTF moved away from the priority selection because the priority components didn't yield different results in selecting programs off the wait list.
    - This is something that the group would like to include in the focus areas.
    - Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde mentioned it could be added as an area of focus and asked if there was a consensus in the group to add this as an area of focus.
  - Zip codes used for enrollment might not yield intended results as some zip codes have multiple Socio Economic Status (SES) pockets throughout.
  - It's important to know, while we're doing this work from the overall statewide strategic direction, prior to the Task force, there was a QF subcommittee that met for over a year and one of their key recommendations was how do we get to scope and reach with QF, to support programs that truly want to participate in the quality improvement rating system.
  - Are children from higher quality programs faring better? Are the funds that FTF is spending making a difference for children?
    - FTF doesn't collect child level data on every child that's enrolled at every QF site, so we're not there yet to do some of that. The only child level data collected is for children receiving QF scholarships. There is data on the percentage of the Federal Poverty Level (FDL) which the majority of those children are. The majority are accessing 3 to 5 star programs because those are the requirements many of our regional councils put on QF scholarships. We know through our data agreement with DES how many children in subsidy are accessing QF sites.
- Serving children and families most in need
  - Targeted outreach refers to looking for programs that are finding children most in need rather than waiting for them to come to us.
  - It is important to place children that may be typical developing with those that are not so we can model an inclusionary type classroom.
    - Sr. Director Sandweg mentioned this is why we want to move away from a slot based system to an open enrollment system because we want to have 3 to 5 star programs in a lot of

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different regions so that families have a choice and so that choice can be spread out. We don't have classrooms or centers that have only children receiving DES subsidy enrolled or only children in the child welfare system enrolled, or only children enrolled in QF scholarships enrolled. We do want a mixed group. That's our whole notion in terms of how do we provide access to QF so that there are 3 to 5 star choices everywhere for kids.

- To ensure the makeup of the classroom is a reflection of the community, a balance of all children in the community and if there's a way to accomplish that we need to make that happen.

A program's Human Resources (HR) system is very important. Think about expanding on that bullet point, to talk about all those administrative tasks because providers need help understanding how to manage the funds with the idea of how do I help use it to fund quality for all our programs.

Goal 4: To implement, align, and continuously improve Arizona's Professional Development System that supports the education, recruitment, and retention of early childhood professionals. Discussion included the following:

- Use of videoconferencing to train teachers might be a way to be more efficient with funding rather than sending someone out to train.
  - Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde said this will be captured as a potential tactic.
  - It is important to use research based methods to ensure that Professional Development (PD) for early care and education professionals leads to behavior change/change in classroom practices.
- Leveraging
  - There are a number of resources available. Currently, Arizona State University (ASU) and the Teacher's college have funded the development of the professional learning library and it's completely accessible and it's all online and it's a matter of going in and accessing it.
- We have pieces of a professional development system in place, but it has not been fully pulled together so that a comprehensive system that incorporates all professional development could be communicated to folks.
  - Sr. Director Sandweg indicated that the new PD system is at the point in the registry of not only trying to populate all early care and education staff, teachers and professionals into the registry, but also trying to verify that information and make sure we have comprehensive information. So that we can then pull information like, what is the range of salaries across early childhood teaches, or assistants, or directors. What do we know about wages? What do we know about benefits that these teachers get and not get, so we can start making some informed decisions? We also look forward to data in the registry that links professional development to the workforce knowledge and competencies. There's a whole host of data that we could use and analyze to help us make some decision about where we can go with our professional development system. We are in the building stage right now with the registry being in operation for almost two years now.
- College Scholarships
  - Some Head Start teachers are not eligible for college scholarships due to the higher salary that they make.
  - Developing a system that can help them with all the paperwork would be so helpful.
- Compensation
  - Content Expert Dichter added there are several strategies to address compensation but the problem is so big. There are ideas out there that people have not elected to implement like making compensation a standard in the Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).
  - Chief Program Officer Katona mentioned there was a level of discussion with the professional development workgroup and pulling this together. The information can go back to the



workgroup from this committee and then look at elevating this as an area of focus particularly for compensation.

**Summary and Next Steps**

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde made sure there were no more questions regarding all the information discussed. A revised document will be sent out to the Committee based on the discussion at today's meeting. In preparation for the next meeting, members will be asked to think about measures of success and staff will propose a set of measures for consideration at the April meeting.

**Adjourn**

Interim Chair Gonzales adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:50 a.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 10, 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 29th day of March, 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy L. Dixon", is written over a horizontal line.

Amy L. Dixon, Executive Staff Assistant