



EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE

Early Learning Committee Revised Goal Statements and Areas for Focus and Proposed Measures of Success

Desired System Outcome	All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care and education that promotes their optimal development.			
Conditions to be Met	There is a comprehensive early care and education system that is aligned both across the spectrum of settings and with the full continuum of the educational system.	There are health, safety, and quality standards for early care and education; support for attaining the standards; and a process for monitoring them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Arizona has enough high quality, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education programs and settings to meet the needs of children and families in all communities throughout the state. B. Children and families have access to high quality, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education programs where they live and work. C. Families have a choice of schedules (part-day or full-day, part-year or full-year), type of provider, and type of setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Arizona has enough culturally diverse early childhood professionals working in a variety of capacities to meet the needs of Arizona’s children and families in all communities throughout the state. B. Early childhood professionals meet specified educational/professional development requirements and continue their professional development throughout their careers. C. There are sufficient educational opportunities to meet the needs of early childhood professionals throughout Arizona. D. Early childhood professionals throughout Arizona have access to the education and ongoing professional development required to work in the setting of their choice and facilitate their professional growth. E. High quality professionals are recruited and retained in the early childhood system.

				F. Early childhood professionals are paid commensurate with other fields requiring similar education and experience.
Priority System Role	Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation Convene partners and provide leadership in the development and implementation of a comprehensive early care and education system that is aligned both across the spectrum of settings and with the full continuum of the educational system.	Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and implementation of quality standards for early childhood care and education programs and related curricula and assessments.	Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Setting Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for increased availability of and access to high quality, regulated, culturally responsive, and affordable early care and education programs.	Professional Development System and Recruitment and Retention of Professionals in the Early Childhood System Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and enhancement of an early childhood professional development system that addresses availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, and articulation. Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the recruitment, adequate compensation, and retention of high quality, culturally diverse early childhood providers.
Goals	1. To identify and align early care and education programs and services to ensure a comprehensive early childhood system with coordinated and efficient use of resources.	1. To increase use of research/evidence-based curriculum and comprehensive assessment that is aligned with the Arizona State Standards for birth – pre-k.	1. To increase the number of Arizona children birth through five with access to and participation in quality early care and education.	1. To implement, align, and continuously improve Arizona’s Professional Development System that supports the education, recruitment, and retention of early childhood professionals.
Areas of Focus <i>These focus areas include topics identified through the EL Committee survey, Task Force opportunities and staff considerations.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination, alignment and leveraging of resources in state and federal programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support continued alignment of state and federal programs with explicit purpose of providing early learning or child care services (i.e. Child Care and Development Block Grant – CCDBG, Head Start) ○ Identify state and federal programs that permit use funds for early care and education (i.e. Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act – WIOA, Child and Adult Care Food Program – CACFP, Title I, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – TANF). ○ Identify and explore relationships with state, federal, and tribal programs that include funding streams able to support parts of the early care and education system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of curriculum and child assessment components with Federal, State, and Tribal requirements. • Support early care and education programs in the use of research/evidence-based curriculum and comprehensive assessment, including the program’s processes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ monitoring fidelity of implementation ○ using data to inform instructional practices that support growth and development ○ interplay between curriculum and child assessment. ○ Practices that support data sharing with families • Supports early care and education programs in establishing at minimum, an assessment process for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ screening measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused outreach to ensure access to early care and education programs serving the following populations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tribal and rural ○ infants and toddlers ○ children in the child welfare system ○ children with special needs ○ high poverty and unemployment areas. • Focus on management systems and administrative practices to support human resource and fiscal practices that sustain staff and maintain program operations. • Redesign, test, and move toward implementation of the recommendations of the Quality First Advisory Sub-Committee to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ quality improvement ○ scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Professional Development Workgroup as a statewide advisory structure for all sectors of the early childhood professional development system. • Support partners across the early childhood system to promote and utilize the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network, including the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WFKC), Workforce Registry, and Instructor and Technical Assistance Provider Standards. • Collection and maintenance of accurate and comprehensive early childhood workforce data to inform and support decision making. • Develop and strengthen a continuum of intentional educational and professional development career pathways for the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the implementation of braiding funding streams. ● Common intake/eligibility system to support families in enrolling their children in early care and education programs. ● As needed, FTF should remain a source of federal match to continue the ability for the state of Arizona to draw down federal funds. ● Build an integrated data system to provide data that can be used to evaluate and monitor the Early Care and Education System. ● Educate and inform policy makers in their understanding and knowledge of how a comprehensive early childhood system is aligned with and supports education, workforce development, and the state's economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ formative assessment for all children ○ kindergarten entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ participant readiness, and ○ create a participant driven process. ● Alignment of Quality First standards and comprehensive assessment processes with federal, state, and tribal regulation. 	<p>early childhood workforce, specifically ensuring resources as well as access in rural, tribal, and high poverty areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify barriers that limit progression along the continuum. ● Use of research-based instructional strategies that support behavior change in teachers' implementation of best practices in early care and education. ● Support early childhood workforce compensation, incentives, benefits, work environment, and employee retention efforts through the review of research and use of data from the Registry.
<p>MEASURES OF SUCCESS <i>Specific, measurable outcomes, determined by existing data or data that could be obtained that FTF will set a benchmark to achieve at the end of the five year strategic plan. Programmatic measures will be identified as part of the action planning and strategy development by FTF.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality First has a comprehensive resource and finance plan that incorporates state partners including, First Things First, Arizona Department of Education, Arizona Department of Economic Security, Arizona Department of Health Services, Head Start, and Tribal partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of agency partners that provide a letter of commitment for the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inventory of curriculum and assessments used by regulated early care and education programs across the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How many programs are implementing an evidence-based curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● %/# number of children 0 – 5 enrolled in a program participating in Quality First by age groups. ● %/# of children 0 – 5 enrolled in a 3 – 5 star program participating in Quality First by age groups. ● Retention of programs maintaining a Quality First rating of 3 – 5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # Institutes of Higher Education with degree requirements and pathways aligned with the WFKC that support the movement from high school career and technical education program to an Associate degree and completion of a Bachelor's degree. ● %/# of Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators, separately, with college degree(s) and/or relevant experience. ● # of programs offering professional development across the state to the early childhood workforce that are aligned with the WFKC. ● %/# Professionals participating in professional development across the state.

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Data Points to Track/Inform Progress Towards Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted measurements should include tracking the movement towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a comprehensive data system ○ common intake/eligibility infrastructure ○ increased funds being used for early care and education ○ decreasing and/or leveraging areas of duplication 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed capacity of programs that have achieved a Quality First rating of 3 – 5 • Length of time for a program to achieve a Quality First rating of 3 – 5. • # Program closures • # Children receiving DES subsidy enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First • # Children in the child welfare system enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First • # infants and toddlers enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First • # Children in high poverty/high unemployment zip codes enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First • # Children with an IFSP or IEP enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First • # Tribal children enrolled in a 3 – 5 star programs participating in Quality First 	
Data Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTF - QF Redesign Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTF - QF Extranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTF - Workforce Registry • Consider gathering data from the Department of Labor and Head Start to measure the average annual earnings of early childhood educators.

Cross-Cutting Themes

The following themes emerged across the Children’s Health, Early Learning, and Family Support Committees of the Early Childhood Task Force.

- **Outreach:** Increase effective outreach to families to connect them with appropriate information, services, and support. Understanding that there are multiple ways to connect families to information, services and supports, focus on coordination and alignment of this work across the goal areas.
- **Public Awareness:** Strengthen partnerships with effective messengers (for example, pediatric and family practices) to increase parents’ awareness of the services and supports available and increase the general public’s awareness of the importance of early childhood and the work of FTF.
- **Policy Maker Engagement:** Strengthen engagement with legislators and public policy-makers on early childhood issues.
- **Professional Development:** Promote a professional development system that is inclusive of efforts to support early childhood professionals from multiple professional backgrounds across early learning, family support, and children’s health.
- **Partnerships:** Increase coordination and alignment with partners and leveraging resources.
- **Environmental factors:** Conditions in the environments in which children are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. This includes but is not limited to safe and affordable housing, access to education and healthcare, public safety, availability of healthy foods, local emergency services, health services, and environments free of life-threatening toxins.
- **Data:** Coordination and sharing of data across agencies and sources. Identifying new data sources on health and wellbeing of children.

Definitions:

- **Early Care and Education**

A mixed delivery system of early childhood education that includes services offered through a variety of programs and providers such as Head Start, licensed family and center-based child care, public schools, and community-based organizations supported with a combination of public and private funding. (<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/ESSA%20One%20Pager%20-%20Early%20Childhood%20education.pdf>)

- **Cultural Responsiveness**

First Things First embraces cultural responsiveness as an intentional life long journey that holistically explores, honors, and values the diversity of the human experience. Using a culturally responsive stance ensures that programs and services are:

- congruent with the needs of diverse children and families;
- responsive to the impact of regional and cultural factors such as histories, traditions, values, family systems and structures, social class, and religious and spiritual beliefs;
- conducive to and inclusive of all children and families, and;
- respectful of families’ composition, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

- **Comprehensive Assessment**

The process of gathering information about children from several forms of evidence, then organizing and interpreting that information to find out what the child knows and can do in relation to optimum development. With that knowledge, an appropriate plan for effective instructional strategies to help the child develop and learn can be identified, monitoring their progress along the way. (National Association for the Education of Young Children - NAEYC position statement and The Assessment Continuum Guide for Pre-K through Third Grade in Arizona – Arizona Department of Education).