



**ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH BOARD  
POLICY AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE  
FAMILY SUPPORT SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES  
MARCH 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, Family Support Sub-Committee was held on March 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 Irene Burnton called the meeting to order and welcomed all members and staff. She thanked everyone for making the time and commitment to working with FTF to develop their five-year statewide program and policy strategic plan that will guide the work of First Things First. All members present and on the telephone were asked to introduce themselves and their organization.

**Members Present:**

Irene Burnton, Chair  
Anne-Marie Salazar  
Becky Ruffner  
Darcy Dixon  
Esther Turner  
Irene Garza  
Jessica Begay  
Jessica Stewart  
Madge Haynes  
Marcia Stanton

Mayra Flores  
Paula Seanez  
Sue Smith  
Wendy Resnik

**Members via WebEx:**

Joanne Karolzak

**Members Absent:**

Christine Scarpati  
Vickie French

**Members of the Public:**

Dawn Craft  
Kimberly Flack

**National Content Expert:**

Amanda Szekely (via webex)

**First Things First Staff:**

Carol Lopinski  
Michelle Katona  
Amy Dixon

**Facilitator:**

Sharon Flanagan-Hyde

**Documents Provided and Publically Posted:**

1. Public Notice and Agenda for March 7, 2017 Family Support Sub-Committee Meeting
2. Minutes of the Family Support Sub Committee Meeting of February 10, 2017
3. Family Support Survey Results and Summary and Proposed Goal Statements and Areas of Focus
4. Guiding Principles
5. Strategic Plans and Areas of Focus for Arizona State Agencies

**Review of additional information requested**

Carol Lopinski, Sr. Director of Family Support and Literacy, reviewed the Strategic Plans and Areas of Focus from the Arizona State Agencies document as requested during the February meeting.

**Review of Survey Responses, Goals and Focus Areas**

Sr. Director Lopinski introduced the summary of survey results. An asterisk indicated multiple respondents identified the focus area. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde reminded everyone about the Committee’s overall objective for today and reviewed the guiding principles. The goal is to reach consensus on the goals and areas of focus. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde reviewed the definitions for goals

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and areas of focus and then provided an overview of the proposed goals and areas of focus under each System Role for the Committee to consider. The Committee then had discussion about the goals and areas of focus which included the following:

Information and Education for Families Goal 1: To increase families' understanding and use of parenting practices that promote positive child development, health and literacy outcomes for their children.

- Discussion regarding families accessing information and the challenges they may experience due to isolation, an inability to access information due to not knowing where to look, or use the Internet. Geography and lack of transportation is also a factor to consider. When supporting families to access information, it is important to remember that our focus needs to be in helping families make connections, to resources, not just the distribution of information.
- Discussion regarding the role of community partners having the tools and resources they need to be informed and interact with families in any setting such as a WIC office, well-child visits, etc., in order to connect families to the appropriate resources in the community.
- Universal and targeted information to families and the community is important with consistent, basic messaging all will use. This should include social media and mobile platforms.
- It was commented that parents sharing their own experiences and knowledge is an under-utilized method of information-sharing.

Supports and Services for Families Goal 1: To increase the availability and access of high quality family support services for families with young children; Goal 2: To continuously improve the quality of family support services; and Goal 3: To increase coordination of planning, developing, funding and delivering family support services to meet the needs of families and leverage available resources.

- A question was asked about kinship providers and the need to develop targeted programs for those types of caregivers. Chief Program Officer Katona responded that discussion about this occurred in the Task Force specifically about kinship care as part of the continuum of the early care and education system and seen as the informal mechanism for early care and education and trying to identify how to increase the quality of those that are providing the Friend Family and Neighbor (FFN) care. These FFN providers are not interested in developing and operating a small business. When we to put this population in the FFN continuum of quality early care and education, it really doesn't fit, therefore it is important to consider a change in how we support and engage this population and provide information and access to services they may need, which may align better under family support.
- It was recommended that a professional development component be included in the areas of focus.
- It was commented that there is a need to expand the use of evidence based practice in the early childhood family support service system. And although this is important, it is also important to allow for models with less research and evidence and support evaluation with these. Evidence based and evidence-informed models should be considered. A question was asked about the definitions of quality and evidence based. Chief Program Officer Katona responded that recently FTF has reviewed the evidence-based parenting education and home visitation models to understand levels of evidence and impact. Some models may state they are evidence-based, yet when there is a review of the research, they are weak. Other models may have less evidence due to a lack of research, yet they meet the needs of specific target populations. Perhaps FTF can then support additional research when these models are chosen to increase their level of

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evidence and outcomes. National Content Expert Szekely shared although MIECHV focuses on evidence based practices, they have also supported an innovative strategy where a portion of the resources are intended to support models that don't have the evidence based criteria, yet meet the need of special populations and support research to determine outcomes and results of this investment.

- It was raised that it is important to not only focus on coordination, but complimentary services are also as important. As an example, Home Visitation works perfectly for high risk families and it's also very expensive. Family Resource Centers (FRC) help support the reduction of isolation and help parents build relationships and social connections. These two strategies can support each other in a complimentary way by having Home Visitors bring their families to the FRC to help make the connection to supports. A member commented that we are working closely with Pediatricians as they don't have time to talk to parents about basic issues, yet if informed about home visitation programs or family resource centers, they could be referring parents to these supports.
- It was asked if FTF funds evaluations for programs. Chief Program Officer Katona responded when we put out an RFGA we don't ask for an evaluation of the strategy, however, we have some grant partners that include dollars for evaluation, or research of a strategy and it's probably less than a dozen. We are working to be more explicit in the application process to know who is doing evaluation to work closer in partnership. Evaluation and impact is a core principle of the work that we do and we have a variety of ways we look at evaluation and research. We brought in the National Advisory Panel which is a group of experts throughout the country to recommend the best approach for FTF in the area of research and evaluation. One area of focus has been on the implementation of the strategies FTF funds. The emphasis was placed on evidence based practice and ensuring fidelity to the model as well as the data to collect to understand impact. In addition, the National Advisory Panel recommended a number of studies for specific strategies, one being Home Visitation. We held off on the study while work was underway on the integrated home visitation data system through MIECHV. It is likely when the National Advisory Panel is reconvened that there is a recommendation to conduct a study on parenting education particularly when models of less evidence are chosen.
- It was recommended that the focus area around a statewide central outreach and referral line be reconsidered based on previous work through MIECHV. There have previously been many meetings and communication that the regions want local centralization, not statewide. So they do what we need to do to send people to the right place on the local level.
- In regards to focusing on families not in the child welfare system for home visitation it was raised that if the goal is not to involve these families, then we are losing major opportunities for families to prevent further involvement and child maltreatment. Is there a way for home visitors to support the transition of child welfare families into the community and provide "aftercare" so the families have an increased opportunity for success? Another member commented they read the same statement differently, rather they feel it speaks to the concern regarding home visitation receiving significant referrals from the child welfare system and not serving families at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Need to integrate professional development in the focus area under providing specializing support for families. Professional development for home visitors is necessary to provide the level of service and support for families. We need to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the professionals working in this system have access to training and professional development. Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde mentioned professional development is also being looked at by some of the other committees. It was noted that sometimes folks that work in family support are not

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always seen as part of the early childhood system because they come from a different professional background, i.e. human services, social work, parent education or parenting. Another member commented they feel it is important that we improve the quality of family support services by moving deeper into how the training is applied in the work, moving away from “I simply went to training.” Content Expert Szekely provided information from her last presentation and some examples on professional development. When you think about early care and education and family support you can have a more coordinated system of professional development and it recognizes the specialized skill that each professional needs to have. Another member agreed professional development should be a separate Area of Focus.

- It was recommended that the focus area on Partner with faith based initiatives like AZ127 and Governor’s Office read as Partner with Faith Based Initiatives.
- Discussion occurred around how best to support employers in family-friendly policy practices. This includes supporting parents and reducing their stress by engaging in strategies that support work/life balance. What can we do to support work community partners and businesses to make progress in this area? If the system role is about providing the funding of support services and resources for children and families, then the development of information and the coordination of the dissemination of information may be necessary as a focus area.
- Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde asked if there are any geographic concerns.
  - A member commented they face different challenges. People in the city mean well, but people sometimes can’t make their appointments in a rural community due to geography and transportation challenges. Families may not have access to the Internet, have limited data packages on their phones or poor connectivity. A member mentioned all materials should be available in English and Spanish. Spanish is the primary language of many of the families in rural communities.
  - A reminder was made that those living in and serving rural communities are indeed the experts regarding their community and should be seen as such.

### **Summary and Next Steps**

Facilitator Flanagan-Hyde made sure there were no more questions regarding all the information discussed. The goals and areas of focus will be revised and sent out to the Committee based on the discussion at today’s meeting. The focus for the next meeting will be on measures of success. Committee members will be asked to provide their ideas prior to the next meeting so staff can draft proposed measures for the Committee to consider.

### **Adjourn**

Chair Burnton adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:49 a.m.

### **Next Meeting**

Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 12, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 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", written over a horizontal line.

Amy L. Dixon, Executive Staff Assistant