



EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE



Early Childhood System Roles, Opportunities and Summary of Discussion on where FTF should take a Leadership Role

Organized by the six desired outcomes for the early childhood system, this document aligns the opportunities that have been identified by the Task Force over the last two meetings by the 20 system roles. In addition, it summarizes the areas raised during the December meeting where FTF should take a leadership role or continue to serve as a partner.

Desired Outcome: Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education

SYSTEM ROLES (bolded ones are 2010 FTF priority roles)	OPPORTUNITIES (as identified through surveys, interviews, and Task Force meetings)	LEADERSHIP: IDENTIFIED AS AN AREA FOR FTF TO LEAD (bullets reflect examples shared during group discussions)	PARTNER: IDENTIFIED AS AN AREA FOR FTF TO SUPPORT AND PARTNER (bullets reflect examples shared during group discussions)
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage and coordinate other resources such as the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), private and philanthropic sector investments to increase quality and access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for all aspects of the early learning system. • Bring in other partners/players that have a role in convening around early learning and education. • Take early childhood education to scale by expanding reach beyond Quality First. • Convene and bring together early care and education and K-12. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to partner and strengthen partnerships with Arizona tribes and Nations.
<p>Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings – 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of early care and education – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve the overall quality of all licensed and regulated child care providers. ○ Address the Quality First (Arizona’s quality improvement and rating system) waitlist so all programs who want to participate are able to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene and lead agency partners and stakeholders to support and better understand the cost of quality. • Leverage the business community in supporting the push for quality. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Quality improvement efforts should focus on more than educating staff, but also ensure that administrative practices are being improved in order to address staff retention.● Access to and cost of care –<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Children need access to early care and education programs regardless of where they live and this is particularly critical in rural and tribal areas.○ To help support improving access to early care and education the child care subsidy program needs to be expanded.○ Focus on increasing access to high quality in rural and tribal communities where demand exceeds capacity and for target populations such as children in foster care or with special needs.● Coordinate with the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) to work more closely with Arizona tribes and nations on meeting and implementing new requirements.● Children in the child welfare system – Children in foster care are a particularly vulnerable group of children who have disparities in terms of school readiness, later academic and societal outcomes. With the significant number of out of home placements, a significant number of children 0-5 in the foster care system are accessing child care through child care subsidies. Children in the child welfare system and receiving child care subsidies		
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	<p>need access to high quality early care and education. This includes having teachers who are well-trained in trauma-informed care and using evidence based practice that facilitate trust and security.</p>		
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing requirements do not align with quality – The State's child care licensing requirements are intended to ensure the basic health and safety of children. Requirements for staff-child ratios, group size, and training requirements for providers are not aligned with best practices that support quality early care and education. For many parents (and professionals) these requirements are often viewed as the "markers" of adequate care. • Align standards for federally supported child care and state supported child care standards with quality standards. • Universally apply the Kindergarten Development Inventory (KDI) across the state. The KDI provides the opportunity to annually review aggregate data trends for new kindergarten classes across the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene state agency partners and align licensing requirements with quality standards. 	
<p>Quality of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Early Care and Education Settings – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding to improve the quality of culturally responsive early care and education provided by family, friends, and neighbors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support family, kinship and neighbor care in providing quality care for children. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to partner to support family, friend and neighbor care

Desired Outcome: Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals

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<p>Professional Development 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued emphasis on the development of Arizona’s committed early childhood professionals is necessary in order to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The lack of an adequately and appropriately trained professional workforce. ○ The need to provide higher-caliber teachers for early childhood programs, particularly those who serve high risk, vulnerable, and minority populations. ○ Increase the skills of caregivers across the mixed service delivery system, including those in regulated environments (licensed centers and homes, certified homes, Tribal regulated programs, and programs regulated by the military) and family, friend, and neighbor care. ○ Coordination of entry points for professional development across regions. • Increased coordination and alignment with Institutes of Higher Education—a seamless pathway for degree completion is important for effective use of funding, bringing individuals into the workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership to strengthen the early childhood workforce, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional development system, ○ Recruitment and retention, and ○ Support for family support providers. • Convene public schools, community colleges, and institutions of higher education to prepare the early childhood workforce. • Preserve specialized certification for early childhood programs. • Help get information that is used in coursework from institutions of higher education directly into the hands of parents/ caregivers of infants (i.e. attachment). • Increase support for early childhood pathways at institutions of higher education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a vocal partner to strengthen the early childhood workforce, including attraction and retention. • Partner with community colleges to improve early childhood workforce and credentialing process.

	<p>and ensuring coursework that is taken is applicable to degree completion. This includes tribal community colleges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of PD with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies in order to understand the types of topics that are currently available as well as the level of depth within each topic (Core Knowledge Areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the development of early childhood pathways. 	
<p>Recruitment and Retention of Professionals in the Early Childhood System – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the recruitment, adequate compensation, and retention of high quality, culturally diverse early childhood providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation – Balancing quality programs while paying a wage and offering benefits that is enough to sustain an employee. Early childhood often loses the best employees as they "transition" to higher paying jobs. • Provide incentives – Use incentives to entice early childhood professionals to stay in the field over other minimum wage jobs. • Recruitment – Attracting professionals into the early childhood workforce is essential to maintaining a robust and qualified workforce • Retention – Teacher retention and higher pay to truly attract professionals to the field. • Opportunities created through recently passed minimum wage legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership to promote, recruit, and retain the early childhood workforce. • Play a leadership role in recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce, including convening and engaging partners. 	
<p>Specialized Training for Health Services Providers – Collaborate with partners to provide funding and implement strategies for increasing the number of health services providers who have had specialized training in working with young children and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of specialists in rural and tribal areas across the areas of children’s health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to health care services in rural and tribal regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to provide training for health care providers.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to increase credentials and professional capacity in infant-toddler mental health and attachment
<p>Specialized Training for Family Support Providers – Collaborate with partners to provide funding and implement strategies for increasing the number of family support providers who have knowledge and skills required to work with young children and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of specialists in rural and tribal areas across the areas of family support. • Include family support in the professional development (the Registry and College Scholarships) funded by the Department of Economic Security, FTF, and Arizona Department of Education. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner to increase recruitment and retention for the family support workforce.

Desired Outcome: Access to high-quality preventative and continuous health care

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<p>Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Services – Collaborate with partners to increase access to high quality health care services (including oral health and mental health) and affordable health care coverage for young children and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to understand tribal infrastructure to support care coordination. • There is a need to increase the health literacy of families so they can effectively advocate within the health system for timely, appropriate, and coordinated care for their children. • There is a need to continue to increase insurance coverage and ensure that coverage programs such as Medicaid and CHIP have strong benefits for children. • Continue efforts to improve children’s oral health. • Create a mental health referral system network. • Draw down and make smart investments with resources that are available to the state to address children’s health. Leverage flexibility within Medicaid reimbursement to help support services such as home visitation, physical health, and mental health services, particularly at risk families. Work with AHCCCS on issues affecting children. • Access to health care remains a challenge in rural and tribal communities. Issues around transportation, workforce, and local capacity create barriers to care for children in rural and tribal communities. As the health system continue to change, agencies need to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address social determinants health for children and promote it as a key priority. • Care coordination of all resources including use of promotora, a social work and medical model that uses experts in the Hispanic community to support families. • Increase use of promotoras to increase health care access in rural and tribal areas. A promotora is a lay Hispanic/Latino community member who receives specialized training to provide basic health education in the community without being a professional health care worker. • Promote cross-discipline integration of knowledge and practices as a priority to inform and transform practices to adapt to children’s needs (i.e.: inform pediatricians about other early childhood topics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner on navigating the Affordable Care Act and healthcare reform to expand health insurance coverage. • Partner to expand trauma informed care and integrated care.

	<p>adjust to new health system realities and help families navigate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore telemedicine approaches to address access to care and how to build the capacity of local areas to use it. • Improve education and build the capacity of primary care providers/pediatricians about early childhood health and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define, convene partners, and promote integrated care. Specifically, identify how to embed integrated care in early childhood education settings. Explore/define what an integrated system of care looks like brings state partners together. 	
<p>Supply of Health Care Services – Collaborate with partners to assess and expand the supply of high quality, affordable, comprehensive health care services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for innovative efforts to increase health workers in areas where there are workforce shortages. Doing so will increase health access for communities in shortage areas. • Make better connection with work being done on certification of community health workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community health care workers such as promotora in communities. A promotora is a lay Hispanic/Latino community member who receives specialized training to provide basic health education in the community without being a professional health care worker. 	
<p>Medical and Dental Homes – Collaborate with partners to increase access to medical and dental homes for young children and their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the quality of care and ensure parents are attending well child visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead on care coordination and helping families find a medical home. 	
<p>Nutrition and Physical Activity – Collaborate with partners to support improved nutrition and increased age/developmentally appropriate physical activity levels among young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better leverage existing activities on nutrition/obesity prevention occurring through partners. 		

<p>Early Screening and Intervention – Collaborate with partners to increase awareness of and access to a continuum of information, support, and services for families and their children who have or are at risk of having developmental, physical, and/or mental health issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Arizona Academy of Pediatricians, pediatric and family practices to ensure children are receiving appropriate screenings during well visits and appropriately referred for evaluation and connected to appropriate services and treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and help all involved coordinate developmental and sensory screenings. 	
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Desired Outcome: Information, services, and support for families

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Information and Education for Families – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and coordinated dissemination of high quality, diverse, and relevant information and education on the importance of the early years, child development, health, early education, and related resources for families, providers, partners, and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality information and support to effectively receive information to navigate the system of services and supports and access appropriate services, including follow-up – Improve and streamline how families get access to information about quality programs and services. Provide parents and caregivers with the tools to better understand how to navigate the early childhood and related systems, access services, and overcome barriers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner to leverage funding.
Supports and Services for Families – Convene partners, provide leadership, provide funding, and advocate for development, enhancement, and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources for young children and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize families and children most in need, high risk and vulnerable populations access to care and underserved areas, including children with disabilities and developmental delays. Scale and impact on families – There is a need to expand quality and evidence based services and programs for families and reaching families most in need of and who do not have access. Leverage funding and coordination of family services – Capitalize on Medicaid reimbursement to support expansion of home visitation services throughout the state and provide an evidenced based service to families, particularly at risk families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the lead on home visitation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustaining funding, leveraging Medicaid funding, supporting the family as a whole, convening partners such as community health workers, promoting and linking to pediatricians Convening/partnering with other organizations who do home visiting to coordinate better, link and connect to well-child visits and 	

		<p>developmental screening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize the children most in need, including children with disabilities and developmental delays.• Educate the early childhood workforce about other areas they may not know about (e.g. home visiting).• Leverage funding and coordination of family services• Coordinate family support services.	
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Desired Outcome : Public understanding and support

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<p>Building Public Awareness and Support – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for efforts to increase public awareness of and support for early childhood development, health, and early education among partners, public officials, policy makers, and the public.</p>	<p>Public awareness for families that include the importance of early experiences–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parent awareness that learning starts at birth, and how they can impact their child’s health and learning; include the importance of early experiences. • Continue to help parents and caregivers understand the early childhood programs and services available in their communities. • Target specific groups for messaging using blogs and social media such as mom’s/dad’s groups, Tribal, doctor’s offices, etc. • Time messages to correspond with specific times of the year most appropriate for the message (i.e. back to school, flu season, etc.) <p>Policymaker awareness –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone needs to become more involved in political and system advocacy. • Ensure that policymakers understand the importance of early childhood and the role of FTF and the regional councils in the early childhood system. • Include information on how various tax policies can have an implication on families with young children, as well as early childhood programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage social media. • Be a leader in early childhood messaging. • Use a business model to test messaging before full roll out. • Understand legislative perspectives. • Take the lead on and develop an elevator pitch. • Lead in outreach to policymakers. There may be some limitations as a state agency, so FTF must have partners to "do the work." • Clarify misunderstandings in the legislature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to inform and engage the legislature on early childhood (i.e.: Arizona Early Childhood Alliance (AZECA)). • Partner with the foster care system and help identify ways to work together more effectively. • Engage millennials and entrepreneurs to help develop messaging that will help communicate to and engage younger generations. • Help others understand the entire early childhood system and how system partners help children and families.

- Build awareness among policymakers on how early childhood links to their priorities around early literacy, high school graduation rates and college/career readiness.

Leverage partners –

- At a local level, build partnerships and allies that are key to advance the early childhood system and promote the work of early childhood.
- Ensure educational leaders support the mission of FTF and early childhood, such as leaders of Institutions of Higher Education.
- More site visits by community leaders and policymakers are needed statewide. When people see what is happening they get excited and support it.
- There is still a broad based lack of public awareness that presents significant opportunities for further engaging people across the state. Legislators and service providers generally know what FTF does, but increased public awareness and opportunities to participate are necessary to advance the system.
- Need to better connect with business community as spokespeople and resource development.
- Develop public-private partnerships.
- Partner with the foster care system and help identify ways to work together more effectively.

	<p>Building public awareness and support for early childhood and First Things First, including outcome of data/work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our end goal should be to make early childhood a priority in the state, for families, caregivers, policymakers and the general public.• Lead early childhood messaging and focus on "getting the message out" broadly so that all stakeholders understand the benefits of intervening early in a child's life.• Create opportunities for individuals to act on their support for early childhood or to directly support young children and families at a level that meets their ability and interest.• Ensure that FTF is known for making major contributions to school readiness for Arizona kids that are "top of mind" whenever FTF is mentioned or referenced in policymaker conversations or the media (consider top 3).• Reframe the elevator pitch and getting it into the hands of community leaders and champions.		
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Desired Outcome: Coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive system

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<p>Coordinated Use of Early Childhood System Data – Convene and collaborate with partners to identify data needs and resources; define and carry out roles related to collecting, analyzing, and reporting data; and utilize data to design, develop, plan, and evaluate the early childhood system.</p>	<p>Use available evidence to improve the early childhood system, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) can provide a baseline on children’s school readiness and will provide data on areas of focus for families, teachers and the system. • Leverage KDI and data systems to show outcomes across the state. Utilize Quality First and KDI as the universal metrics for sustainable improvement in the area of quality early learning and school readiness. • Need data to determine if strategies implemented are having an impact. • Use data to drive decision-making and target services to those most in need (not only by ZIP code). • Focus beyond a child’s vocabulary as a marker of school readiness. Self-regulatory skills are an important predictor of school readiness and later outcomes along the child and adolescent continuum. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner on early childhood data systems, evaluation, and funding.
<p>Early Childhood System Evaluation – Provide leadership in the evaluation of the early childhood system and collaborate with partners to utilize the results to foster continuous improvement of the system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase communication about regional and statewide outcomes, including lessons learned and changes instituted as the result of data analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide the needs/assets report as a system evaluation tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner on early childhood data systems, evaluation, and funding.

<p>Early Childhood System Funding – Secure, coordinate, and advocate for resources required to develop and sustain the early childhood system.</p>	<p>Create partnerships that increase and leverage public and private funding to develop and sustain the early childhood system. Funding should be prioritized for strategies to support the whole child, focus on prevention, increase alignment and coordination, and expand programs that work.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner on early childhood data systems, evaluation, and funding.
<p>Early Childhood System Leadership – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the conceptualization and implementation of a high quality, child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive early childhood system that includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System infrastructure, including transportation to services – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build the necessary system infrastructure for birth to 5, beyond regional councils, and scale up successful programs particularly in rural and tribal areas. • System coordination – Build on and strengthen the collaboration fostered through the regional partnership councils and regional collaboratives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue partnerships that are effective in coordinating services, resources and supports statewide and local level (examples include Read On Arizona and the Read On Communities) ○ Siloed information makes it difficult to prioritize as a whole system. ○ Engage other state agencies (such as Department of Corrections and child welfare) to address challenges faced by children and families within those systems. ○ Create a system for coordinating the availability of services for the early childhood population that makes services understood, accessible and sustainable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an early childhood system leader. • System infrastructure, system funding, not just from government organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the Navajo Nation to build capacity to be a leader in the community. • State agency coordination collaboration • Partner with the business community to inform and promote business participation (how FTF could support to engage businesses as system partners and supporters of early childhood in their communities). •

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ All state agencies and groups to align their work on behalf of young children and families. Differentiating the roles of all entities involved.○ Policy change and alignment as a continued priority.		
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