

**East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council  
Meeting Minutes  
January 21, 2015**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the First Things First East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council was held on January 21, 2015 at the Vista del Camino Park & Community Center, 7700 E. Roosevelt Street, Scottsdale 85257.

Chair Frank Narducci welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at approximately 4:38 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Chair Frank Narducci, Vice Chair Marie Raymond, Council Members Trinity Donovan, Cheryl Foster, Beth Haas, Becky Henry, Bill Myhr, Mary Permoda and Marin Velarde, with Council Members Donovan and Foster appearing telephonically.

There were 12 members of the public present.

Council Member Permoda arrived at 4:40 p.m.

**Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2014**

Council Member Myhr moved to approve the special meeting minutes of November 19, 2014. Council Member Velarde seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 8-0, Council Member Henry not yet having arrived.

**Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of December 3, 2014**

Council Member Myhr moved to approve the special meeting minutes of December 3, 2014. Vice Chair Raymond seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 8-0, Council Member Henry not yet having arrived.

Council Member Henry arrived at 4:42 p.m.

**Call to the Public**

There were no Calls to the Public forms submitted.

**First Things First Quality Assurance Overview**

Quality Assurance Specialist Christine Bach presented on the Quality Assurance process and answered Council members' questions.

**First Things First Quality Assurance Site Visits**

Regional Director Lindo provided information about the Quality Assurance site visits for the TEACH and REWARD\$ strategies and answered Council members' questions.

**Early Childhood Every Day Training**

Community Outreach Coordinator Joy Leveen presented a portion of the Early Childhood Every Day Training to the Council members. The remainder of the training will be presented at the February Council meeting. Community Outreach Coordinator Leveen encouraged community members to contact her if they wished to attend a training session for Early Childhood Every Day and/or The Write Way training.

**Community Outreach Update**

Community Outreach Coordinator Leveen reviewed her January Community Outreach report with the Council members and answered their questions.

**Unfunded Approaches**

Regional Director Lindo presented information to the Council members on the Read On Arizona cities identified in the 2016 Funding Plan and answered their questions. The Read On Arizona cities include: Read On Chandler, Read On Tempe and Read On Scottsdale.

**Financial Report**

Regional Director Lindo reviewed the grantee contract detail report with the Council members and answered their questions.

Council Member Myhr left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Director Updates**

Regional Director Lindo shared information on the following: upcoming RFGA releases; legislative email update to Council members from Senior Director of Government Affairs Benjamin Alteneader; Kellogg Foundation meeting with Regional Council member representatives; update on the parent seat vacancy and future council meetings in Ft. McDowell, Guadalupe, Chandler and Tempe.

**Regional Council Updates**

Council Member Permoda reported that the Faith Forum for the regional councils’ Faith representatives will be held on February 4, 2015 from 10:00a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church.

Chair Narducci stated that he and Vice Chair Raymond presented the East Maricopa funding plan to the First Things First Board yesterday and the Board was extremely complimentary of the Council members and their ability to work together in a newly formed region and to complete our regional funding plan.

Chair Narducci stated the social networking event for the council members will be held on February 3 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Thirsty Lion.

Regional Director Lindo thanked Chair Narducci and Vice Chair Raymond for their presenting the funding plan to the First Things First Board.

**Adjournment**

Chair Narducci asked for any additional questions or comments from the Council and receiving none adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Submitted By \_\_\_\_\_

Caitlyn Hollins, Administrative Assistant III

Approved By \_\_\_\_\_

Frank Narducci, Chair



FindHelpPhx/EncuentraAyudaPhx.org

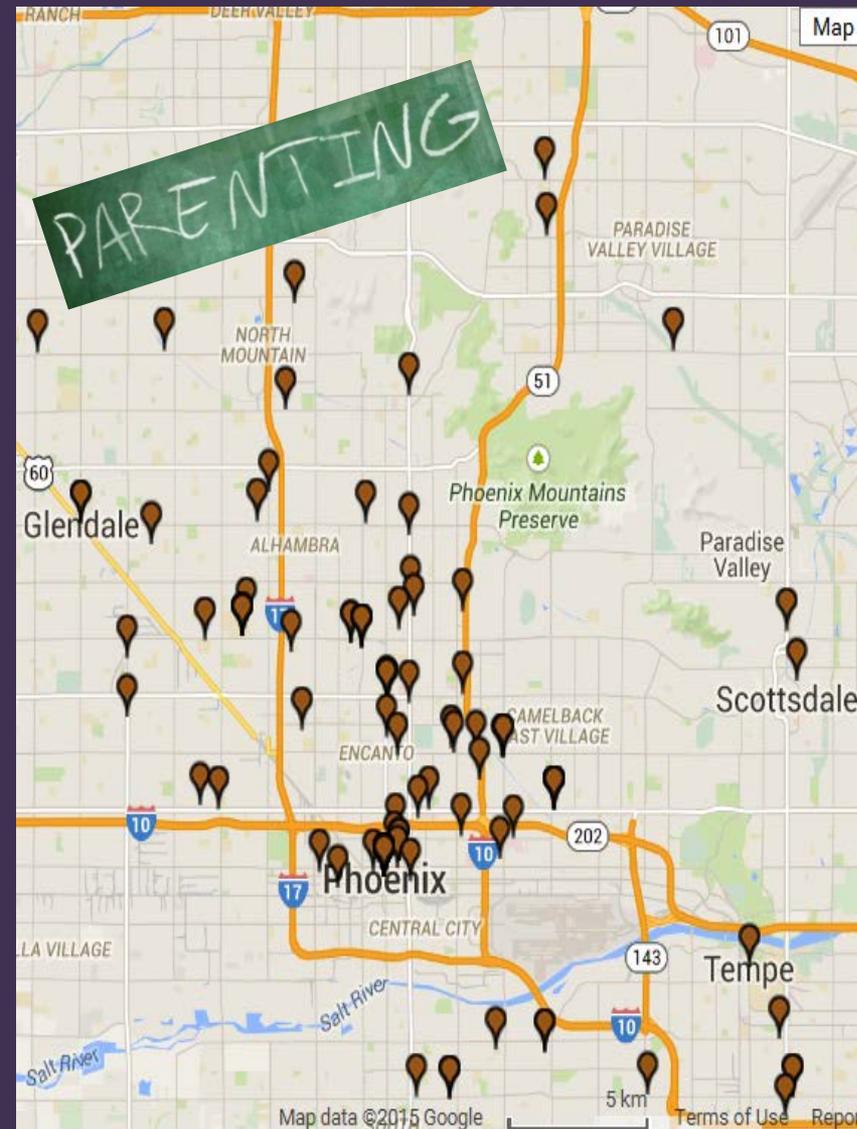
*Adrienne Decker Delgado and Antoinette Martinez*

## Strengthening Families...

[FindHelpPhx.org](http://FindHelpPhx.org)

[EncuentraAyuda.org](http://EncuentraAyuda.org)

- Almost 2,000 holistic free and low-cost services
- Reflects a Total Family Strategy
- Almost 100,000 hits since 10/12
- Bilingual to reflect the diverse population



## 8. House of Refuge- East Mesa

House of Refuge  
6935 East Williams Field Road  
Mesa, Arizona 85212  
(480) 988-9242

 [Get Directions](#)

 [Visit the website](#)



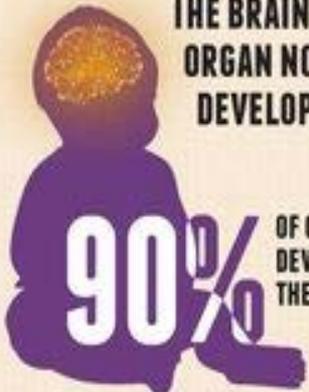
House of Refuge provides housing and social service programming for homeless families and victims of domestic violence. Services offered are individualized Case Management, employment services, resources for continued education, financial literacy and budget planning, post program housing services, on-site Early Head Start and Community Center, food, clothing and other basic need services through the Donation Center and assistance with additional referrals as identified. Go to [www.houseofrefuge.org](http://www.houseofrefuge.org) or call (480) 988-9242 for eligibility requirements.



Each resource is vetted once yearly.

Agencies can update information anytime.

**THE BRAIN IS THE ONLY ORGAN NOT FULLY DEVELOPED AT BIRTH.**



**90%** OF CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF LIFE.

**First 2000 DAYS**  
Early Development of America

There are only 2,000 days from the time a child is born to when that child begins kindergarten. Learn more at [www.first2000days.org](http://www.first2000days.org)

**ACEs = ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

*The three types of ACEs include*

**ABUSE**



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

**NEGLECT**



Physical



Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse



Divorce



Prevention and Early Intervention happen only when families know where to go for services...



FindHelpPhx outreached to over 300 parent and provider audiences on finding services.





We couldn't do it without intern support!

# Collaboration: The Family Resource Network

- ☐ Presentations offered at all 28 centers with 75% completion
- ☐ Print materials provided

Contact | Member Login | SEARCH

FIRST THINGS FIRST  
FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK

About the Family Resource Network | Locations

FIND A FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER NEAR YOU

YOUR ADDRESS | YOUR ZIP | 🔍

SPOTLIGHT: DEER VALLEY FRC

The Deer Valley Family Resource Center helps strengthen families living in North Phoenix and Northwest Maricopa County by offering parents and caregivers the tools they need to support their children's healthy early childhood development.





Our Kiosk reaches underserved populations at the Mexican Consulate.



HEALTHY MOTHERS HEALTHY BABIES,  
MARICOPA COUNTY COALITION



We participate in 15 diverse coalitions



Media strategy- Reach large populations...



**THE ARIZONA  
REPUBLIC**



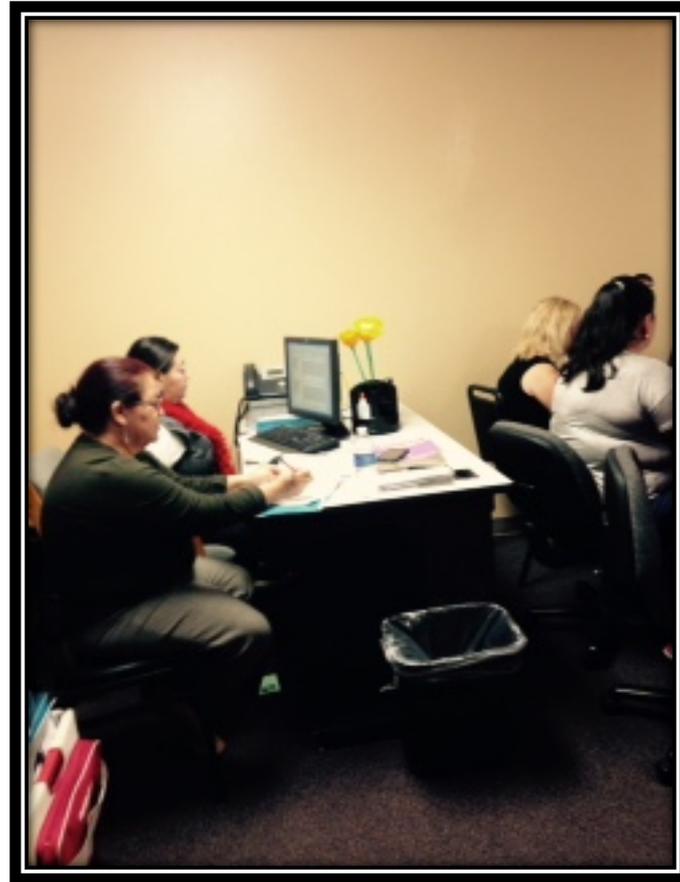


# Focus Groups: Residents decided how to improve ease-of-use among users.



## Top three suggestions:

1. Prominent keyword search function
2. Zip code search to show 10-15 mile radius
3. Subcategories within categories



*Another popular idea: "Just for Kids" category*

SEARCH [input] NEAR Downtown Phoenix [dropdown] SEARCH

### FIND HELP PHOENIX

Finding Resources for Ourselves  
In Medical and Social Services

<b>HOUSING/ LEGAL</b> 62 Locations 12 Free 50 Almost Free		<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b> 31 Locations 11 Free 20 Almost Free	
<b>MEDICAL WELLNESS</b> 27 Locations 10 Free 60 Almost Free		<b>JOBS / MONEY</b> 20 Locations 5 Free 15 Almost Free	
<b>FOOD / CLOTHING</b> 10 Locations 3 Free 7 Almost Free		<b>HEALTH INSURANCE</b> 15 Locations 5 Free 10 Almost Free	



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation FindHelpPhx



# Map Page with Filters

**Find Help PHOENIX**

**Filter** F Free F Almost Free

- Elder
- LGBTQ
- Parenting
- Disabled
- Immigrant
- Refugee
- Children
- Volunteering

**1. Hope Women's Center (Education, Mentoring, and Resources) - Coolidge** F

850 N. California Street  
Coolidge, Arizona 85128  
(520) -723-8888

Faith-based education, mentoring, and resource program for women and families. We offer a variety of classes such as parenting, family relationships, sewing, ESL, prenatal care, nutrition, etc. We also offer individual and group mentoring, and referrals to community resources such as housing, food, medical care, and more. All services are free and clients can earn points to spend in our Boutique on clothing, diapers, baby items and toiletries.

The support of First Things First makes it easier for families to find resources for themselves- when they need them and without delay!



**Thank you, First Things First!**



Adrienne Decker Delgado (602) 290-0058  
adriennedeckerdelgado@mail.maricopa.gov



Antoinette Martinez (602) 679-4747  
antoinettemartinez@mail.maricopa.gov



# Contact Information

## Council members **Overall Impressions – Tempe Community Council – December 2014 QA Site Visit**

Overall, the Tempe Community Council's Thrive to Five program provides services in line with the Scope of Work and Standards of Practice for Family Resource Centers, Parent Education Community Based Training, and Health Insurance Enrollment. The Food Security SOP reflects activities outside of the original intent of the council, however TCC partners with United Food Bank, who is providing services in line with requirements. The program consists of five Family Resource Centers, four in Tempe and one in Ahwatukee, located within elementary schools (Wood, Curry, Kyrene de las Lomas, Kyrene de los Nines FRC) and one preschool (Getz school). The program utilizes FRC liaisons employed by the school to oversee the daily operations of the centers. TCC employees one Health Insurance Enrollment Specialist, housed in the Westside Community Center, who can serve families accessing all the resource centers and in the community. Parent classes are facilitated by a group of agencies who are subcontracted to provide facilitators to deliver curriculum series at the FRCs. Through the support of TCC, the FRCs obtain Emergency Food Boxes from United Food Bank which are available for families coming into the centers.

### **Identified strengths of the program:**

1. Through the established partnerships between Tempe Community Council and the school districts, it not only allows for outreach to the families enrolled within the districts but also for extensive outreach to the larger community using FRC-specific resources and materials, such as the Thrive to Five website, Facebook, and program information distributed to partners within the community. The shared resources within the schools, including staff, room space and amenities supports a model that is useful of internal resources and build upon established collaborations. The liaisons and TCC staff highlighted the ongoing support they receive from the school staff including principals and social workers.
2. The dedication and expertise of the staff providing the services is of high quality and staff meet the needs of families accessing the services based on their knowledge, education, and experience. The FRC liaisons are dedicated to serving their areas and the families who come in to access support and services. Through observations, the liaisons greeted each family individually and knew them by name and knew their children.
3. TCC has worked with subcontractors to offer a wide variety of parent education class series reflective of the needs reported by families. The parent educators are well-educated and knowledgeable about the series they facilitate. Topics of the sessions include brain development, health and safety, nutrition, parenting skills, discipline, and kindergarten preparedness. The liaisons are always present when the classes are held and present to offer extra, individualized support to families before and after the class. Families are given information on all of the services at each FRC when they access one. This was evidenced by the observation of two mothers participating in different series at different FRCs.
4. The focus on offering ongoing opportunities for professional development was clear through review of trainings and professional development plans submitted by TCC. All of the Thrive to Five staff have

completed the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support and participate in ongoing education to build upon their knowledge and abilities in serving families and children. A particular strength to note is also the ongoing access of the Health Insurance Enrollment Specialist to trainings to support understanding of the Arizona health insurance system and also for education on all areas of family support and cultural competency.

5. The web of services offered through the FRCs including parent education, health insurance enrollment, and access to food boxes is comprehensive and in accessing one of these services, families can then be referred to the wealth of other community programs outside of the FRCs through established relationships and referral systems. The FRCs themselves also contain resources accessible to families on-site, such as computers, Brain Boxes they can check out to support their child's development, and lending libraries of books and activities. Two Thrive to Five staff also have the qualifications to complete developmental screenings using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire which is available to families by appointment and partner to offer dental screenings and fluoride varnishes at the FRCs.

**Observations of parenting classes were held at all five family resource centers during the site visit.**

–The first visit was at Kyrene de los Lomas. The center is located within the school with billboards to advertise the classes, which on this day was Positive Discipline. The FRC has a conjoined room where child care is held during this session as this was not a class with an adult-child interaction component. Healthy snacks were offered for the adults and children and there was time before and after the class for discussion between the FRC liaison, parent educator, and the adults participating in the class. The structure of the class contained ongoing discussion, interactive activities, and sharing among the participants and parent educator of their own experiences, strengths and challenges.

–The second observation occurred at Wood Elementary School who was hosting the final series of the Family Fuel nutrition class offered by the YMCA. The FRC is located in a dedicated room within the school and the class was held at in the staff break room as the FRC space itself is not large enough to facilitate a class. The liaison acknowledged the barrier with the limited space, but noted she has been successful in mitigating this barrier by being open and welcoming families and creating a safe space. For this particular series the space was appropriate as the adults and children were learning about how to make nutritious smoothies with fruits and vegetables and were able to explore items, prepare and create their own smoothies with their children. As this was the last class of the series, the families who had completed the series were given a book and a USDA plate for each child under five.

–The Infant Massage class was observed at the Kyrene de los Niños FRC, which is a stand-alone building located next to the school which is shared with them in the mornings. The class was facilitated by TCC staff on the floor of the room for caregivers and their children to develop techniques to deliver infant massage using the Loving Touch method. The families all sat on the floor and engaged in practice with their own children.

–The fourth observation occurred at Getz of the Ready to Read series delivered by the FRC liaison. Getz is a special education preschool which, based on their location, can reach families who may have increased needs before their children go to kindergarten. The FRC is located within the school across from the main office. Kid Zone had provided two child care staff but were able to leave after the first half hour based on the lack of need. The Ready to Read curriculum is delivered through adult-child interaction, activities, books and songs while the facilitator, caregivers and children are on the floor engaging in the activities. The facilitator uses a PowerPoint overview of the curriculum and key information through the delivery of the class ensuring adults are following along and understanding the key principles of the session.

–The final observation occurred at Curry Elementary school where the FRC is located within the school in a separate room off of the library. During the Positive Discipline class, participants were engaged in the discussion with the parent educator as well as in sharing ideas and experiences with each other. The liaison was able to support the parents in accessing their children in the child care room if needed. The development of peer relationships and natural support systems was evident through the observations at all of the FRCs.

#### **Development Areas:**

Overall, the program continues to operate a well-coordinated system of partnerships between the FRCs, school districts, and community programs offering comprehensive services to families. TCC staff continue to work to identify and address barriers, such as building an approach to ensure all of the subcontracted agencies providing services under this FTF grant receive trainings required in the Standard of Practice and engage in ongoing exploration and identification of professional development opportunities. The program continues to reflect on the best way for TCC to support the Thrive to Five Family Resource Centers and possible alternative methods of grant oversight. TCC staff also continue to reflect on opportunities for continuous quality improvement in supporting families, such as increasing competencies and resources for families with children with special needs.



# Early Childhood, Every Day, Pt. 2

*Simple ways to spread the word about early childhood and First Things First in your community.*



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*



## CORE MESSAGE: “STRONG FAMILIES”

Strong families are the building blocks of a strong society.





## CORE MESSAGE: “LEARNING BEGINS AT BIRTH”

About **90% of a child’s brain develops before age 5**. So the job of helping kids succeed in school starts the day they are born.





## CORE MESSAGE: “LITERACY”

More than 40% of Arizona’s 4<sup>th</sup> graders are not reading at grade level. The best way to reverse this trend is to help children develop language and expose them to books before they enter kindergarten.





## CORE MESSAGE: “QUALITY EARLY LEARNING”

Critical skills, like motivation, self-discipline, focus and self-esteem, begin to take root from birth to 5 years old. Successful people share these traits and we must give children the tools to develop these essential skills.





**PRACTICE**



## PRACTICE SCENARIO #1

You're hosting a table at the local public library's literacy event and a woman walks up to your booth, admires your First Things First *'Proud Supporter'* pin and says, "First Things First... isn't that like child care?"



## PRACTICE SCENARIO #2

You are speaking to a reporter at your organization's event. Your colleague begins telling the reporter about First Things First. "First Things First is important because it helps poor kids," she says.



FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

# Thank You For Your Participation!

If you need any support please  
contact Joy Leveen, Community  
Outreach Coordinator:  
[jleveen@azftf.gov](mailto:jleveen@azftf.gov)



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

East Maricopa

February 6, 2015



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

January 2015

### Early Childhood, Every Day and The Write Way Training

In addition to presenting the first half of the Early Childhood, Every Day training during January's East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council meeting, Joy Leveen and Isela Blanc conducted a combined *Early Childhood, Every Day* and *The Write Way* training for 20 staff at Child and Family Resources. Child and Family Resources is an FTF grantee in multiple Maricopa regions.

### Events

Joy Leveen participated in three community events in January: the Chandler Family Learning Center Anniversary Health Fair, the Hohokam Elementary School Family, Fun, and Fitness Night, and the inaugural Kyrene Community Play Date. The Kyrene Community Play Date hosted 1,200 community participants and the First Things First table engaged parents and children around the importance of early childhood.

### Networking Meetings

Outreach staff attended 2 community networking meetings to secure trainings, presentations and recruit supporters, including the Maricopa Family Support Alliance

### Presentations

Outreach staff conducted four presentations to 56 newly informed East Maricopa residents, including 15 members of the Scottsdale Kiwanis Club.

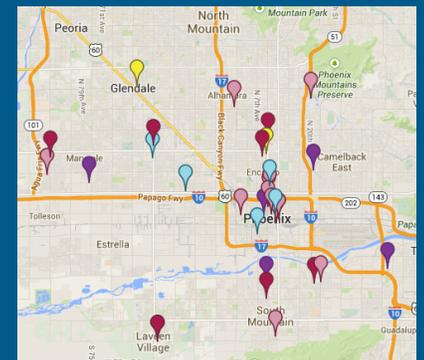
### 1:1 Meetings

First Things First staff conducted 6 one on one meetings with early childhood community stakeholders. New connections, including two referrals from Scottsdale Unified School District Elementary School Principals, were formed with the U of A Cooperative Extension and the Asian Pacific Community In Action.

## FTF Core

## Message of the Month

First Things First partners with parents to give them the information and support they need to make the best choices for their families and to feel confident in their role as their child's first teachers.



## Google Maps

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zGNXIBQCerYg.kcblEe8a8AD8>



### **SPEAKERS' SERIES TRAINING**

**Early Childhood, Every Day and The Write Way Training, February 19, 2015**

**1-4 pm at the FTF Mesa Office, 1839 S. Alma School Rd., Suite 100, Mesa, AZ 85210**

**Early Childhood, Every Day at American Business Women's Association, Monthly Meeting, March 12, 2015 at 6 pm**

### **BRUSH, RINSE, FLOSS, AND READ**

**February 25, 2015 10:30-11:30 am at Guadalupe Public Library, 9241 S. Avenida del Yaqui**

### **EXCLUSIVELY LITTLES**

**March 7, 2015 10 am to 3 pm at McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park**

### **CELEBRATIONS OF DR. SEUSS' BIRTHDAY**

**Dr. Seuss Oobleck Science—Scottsdale Public Library**

March 4, 4 pm at Civic Center Library; March 5, 3 pm at Palomino Library; March 10, 4 pm at Appaloosa Library

**Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss—Scottsdale Public Library**

"Dr. Seuss Bingo" based on characters from his books. March 3, 4 pm at Appaloosa Library

**Read Across America Day - Guadalupe Branch Library on March 2nd from 4-5 pm**

**Celebrate Seuss—Tempe Public Library**

Make Seuss-inspired crafts on March 2, 2015 from 10:00-5:00pm at Tempe Public Library (3500 S. Rural Road) in the children's library.

**Want to volunteer at an FTF event table? Mark your calendar for the Scottsdale Public Library Ultimate Play Date, April 4, 2015 and volunteer with Joy Leveen!**

**Joy Leveen**

**Community Outreach Coordinator, East Maricopa**

[jleveen@azftf.gov](mailto:jleveen@azftf.gov)

Office 602.771.4992

Cell 602.708.4866



## REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

We are pleased to announce that currently 47% of Quality First participants have achieved ratings in the quality levels. As the number of programs in the quality levels continues to rise, we are also seeing a rise in participants connecting with one another to support learning. Programs seeking to advance in quality levels or programs seeking to learn about different ways of implementing quality are encouraged to access the Quality First website at [www.qualityfirstaz.com](http://www.qualityfirstaz.com) to find other programs in your area. By reaching out to neighboring programs, you will create opportunities to support collaboration and networking. Scheduling a visit or even a simple conversation over coffee with another program is a great way to learn about what other Quality First programs in your area are doing to increase and maintain quality.



## ATTENTION: DIRECTORS

Earn your director credential online! Through a Department of Economic Security grant, Southwest Human Development is offering the Aim 4 Excellence program. Aim 4 Excellence is a convenient, flexible and FREE way to attain a director credential from the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. An orientation for the Aim 4 Excellence program will be held in February at a location to be determined. Space is limited!

**For additional information, contact:**

Mary Jamsa at 602-633-8801 or [mjamsa@swhd.org](mailto:mjamsa@swhd.org)



## INFORMAL CLASS ASSESSMENT

To best support participants' work toward improved classroom interactions and instructional support, you now have the opportunity to request an informal Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) assessment. These informal CLASS assessments are offered for informational purposes only and will not impact your Quality First Star Rating. Feedback regarding classroom interactions and instructional support strategies will not include scores but will be provided in the form of a written summary. There are a limited amount of openings each month for informal CLASS feedback.

**If your program is interested, please contact:**

Katie Romero at [kromero@swhd.org](mailto:kromero@swhd.org)



**Arizona Department of  
Child Safety**



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

February 1, 2015

Dear Chairman Olson and Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee:

In recent months, Arizona's child welfare system has been improving: wait times to report child maltreatment have been greatly reduced; new staff have been hired; and, more reports of child abuse or neglect are being investigated.

This initial progress is encouraging; but it will take some time before we realize the full impact of the Legislature's increased investment in child welfare, and perhaps longer still until Arizona can realize its vision that all children are safe, healthy and learning. A crucial part of realizing that vision is prevention – a responsibility we all share.

As requested by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, this report details how the Department of Child Safety and First Things First –two partners in Arizona's prevention and early intervention community – are working more effectively on ensuring that families of vulnerable children in our community have options when it comes to getting the information and resources they need to support their child's safety and learning.

These efforts include:

- Leveraging existing resources to maximize the funding available for resources that benefit vulnerable young children in our communities;
- Increased collaboration to avoid duplication of services and ensure that families can access resources appropriate to their needs and risk level;
- Training for child welfare and early education system partners on the specific developmental needs of children birth to 5 years old; and,
- Ensuring that contracted service providers have information about mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting requirements.

The individual missions of DCS (child safety) and FTF (school readiness) share a common foundational element: strong families. We are committed to on-going collaboration to find innovative approaches to our collective work in strengthening Arizona's families so that, together with our system partners, we can achieve a safer and brighter future for all Arizona children.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Charles Flanagan, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Charles Flanagan  
Director  
Arizona Department of Child Safety

A black ink signature of Sam Leyvas, featuring a stylized 'S' and 'L' followed by a horizontal line.

Sam Leyvas  
Chief Executive Officer  
First Things First

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY / FIRST THINGS FIRST  
**PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM PARTNERS**  
A Report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee

## **BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION**

Arizona's 2014 child welfare crisis raised numerous questions about how to better serve the needs of children/families engaged in the child welfare system and how to prevent child abuse or neglect in our communities. A number of measures were passed in the 51st Legislature aimed at providing greater clarity around those efforts. In an effort to better understand some of those efforts related to children birth through 5 years old, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) asked the Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) to jointly report on their collaborative efforts to address child welfare issues of common concern. This report includes information about the level of coordination among these agencies and community groups to promote the well-being of children and families that are identified in reports of abuse or neglect.

Subsequent to the JLBC request, legislation was passed and signed in to law by Governor Janice K. Brewer separating the child welfare responsibilities of DES in to a new agency, the Department of Child Safety (DCS). Since the intent of this report was to show coordination/collaboration related to child welfare, much of the information contained herein will describe those efforts as they relate to DCS and FTF.

The Department of Child Safety is required by law to investigate reports of child abuse or neglect and provide services to children and families that either: allow the child to remain safely in their own home; provide children with temporary homes while services are provided that allow the child to return home safely; or, locate permanent new families for children that the court has determined cannot be safely returned to their homes.

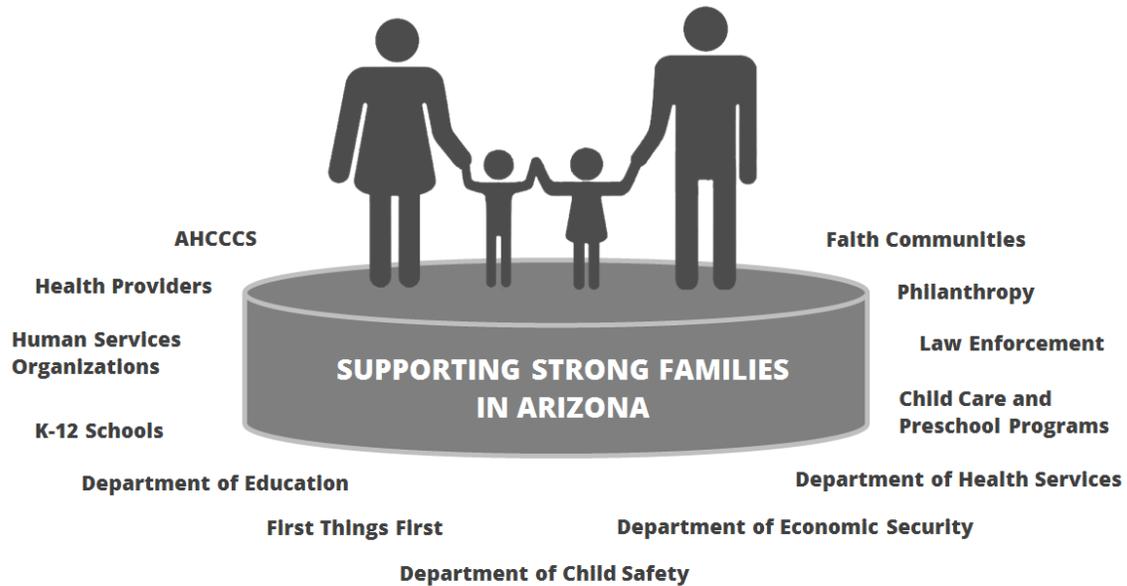
In the course of its work, however, DCS also interacts with families whose challenges do not rise to the level of formal involvement with the child welfare system, but whose issues – including poverty, substance abuse, mental health challenges, inadequate housing and homelessness, domestic violence, or a combination of these factors – place the children at risk for future abuse or neglect. These families can benefit most from a having a robust system of voluntary prevention and early intervention programs and services available within the community.

First Things First was created to enhance school readiness for children 5 and younger, and aligned with that mission, FTF is a partner in Arizona's prevention/early intervention system. FTF recognizes the family's critical role as their child's first teacher and offers resources that strengthen families in that role. All families – including birth families, kinship care families, adoptive families and foster families – experience challenges raising their children. FTF's programs and services provide families voluntary, community-based choices when accessing services that meet their needs. Because strengthening families is foundational to FTF's mission, the organization is also one of many prevention/early intervention system partners – including child care and early learning programs, K-12 schools, health providers, human services organizations, faith communities and law enforcement – that provides programs, information and resources to help families provide safe nurturing environments for their children to live, grow and learn. This report focuses on the collaborations/interactions between DCS and FTF; however, the responsibilities and contributions of all those system partners should not be discounted.

## SECTION ONE: SYSTEMIC COLLABORATION

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### Prevention and Early Intervention: A Shared Responsibility



While DCS has the primary statutory responsibility for serving these children and families, there are a variety of strategies and initiatives funded by First Things First that are implemented in collaboration/coordination with the Department of Economic Security (DES)/DCS that significantly impact children engaged in the child welfare system. Two programs have direct impact: access to child care and court teams.

The State of Arizona currently receives more than \$118 million per year in federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant funds. Since the grant's inception, DES has been designated by the Governor as the lead agency for the CCDF. DES is also responsible for the operation of the State's subsidized child care program, for which CCDF dollars provide the bulk of the funding.

The CCDF grant requires that the State provide matching funds. Specifically, Arizona cannot claim a \$37 million portion of the total CCDF grant unless the State expends \$34 million in non-federal dollars on child care-related activities. Historically the State met this matching requirement with State General Fund dollars appropriated by the Legislature to DES for additional child care vouchers. Non-CCDF appropriations, including General Fund and other appropriated fund sources, reached a high point of \$69.1 million in fiscal year 2008. Due to significant reductions in General Fund revenues resulting from the economic recession, the Legislature has drastically reduced non-CCDF appropriations since that year. In fiscal year 2012, all General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers were eliminated, although some was restored in FY15.

The Legislature's elimination of General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers in 2012 resulted in the State's inability to meet the CCDF's matching requirements, thus threatening the loss of tens of millions of dollars for child care vouchers.

At the same time, First Things First (FTF) – established by voter initiative in 2006 – began to make significant investments in child care-related initiatives. Thus, in order to continue to access Arizona’s full allotment of CCDF dollars, FTF collaborated with DES in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to leverage FTF expenditures as the State match. These expenditures have included Quality First Scholarships (similar, but not identical, to child care vouchers) and a variety of quality-driven initiatives such as technical assistance for child care providers and training for child care staff.

CCDF funds are used in a number of ways, including ensuring that low-income working families have access to safe, reliable child care (which may reduce instances of abuse or neglect because children are not left to be cared for in unsafe environments), and to provide child care for families providing temporary placement to kids in the child welfare system (such as foster families and relatives). Over the five years this MOU has been in place, DES has been able to draw down \$190 million in federal child care funds. Table 1 details annual amounts of CCDF funds DES has drawn down as the result of this MOU with FTF. The impact of this collaboration on child welfare system outcomes is clear as the latest DES Child Care Administration Cash Report shows that – of the 25,224 children receiving child care vouchers in the month of December 2014 – 9,123 (more than 1 in 3) were involved with the child welfare system.

**Table 1**

Federal Fiscal Year	FTF Match Provided	Federal Child Care Subsidy Dollars Drawn Down as Result of FTF-DES MOU
2011	\$10 M	\$40.5 M
2012	\$30 M	\$37.9 M
2013	\$30 M	\$37.2 M
2014	\$30 M	\$37.4 M
2015	\$34 M	*\$36.9 M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$134 M</b>	<b>\$189.9 M</b>

*\*Estimated*

The Court Teams program is focused on improving how the courts, child welfare, and child serving organizations work together, share information and expedite services for infants and toddlers in the child welfare system so that research informed decisions combined with developmentally appropriate services are provided to this highest risk population of children. Court Teams are led by a judge who specializes in child welfare cases and is uniquely positioned to bring stakeholders – including families, child welfare officials and community providers – together to focus on protecting babies from further harm. Court Team goals are achieved by developing court-community teams to:

- Raise awareness of the developmental needs of maltreated infants and toddlers;
- Ensure that case plans support the developmental needs of the youngest children;
- Promote a permanency plan that results in stable placements for the youngest children with foster families, relatives, or other caretakers; and,
- Ensures that there is a continuing focus on child well-being when young children are returned to parents, relatives or other caretakers.

Research on the outcomes for young children under the jurisdiction of juvenile courts that utilize Court Teams has shown:

- A significant increase in the services provided to eligible children and their parents, particularly in access to health care and early intervention services;
- Decrease in the number of foster home moves for infants and toddlers;
- An increase in parent-child visits; and,
- An increase in relative/kinship placements.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, there are FTF-funded Court Teams working in the La Paz/Mohave, Yavapai, South Phoenix, North Phoenix and Colorado River Indian Tribes regions of First Things First. In fiscal year 2014, the actions of these Court Teams impacted 5,062 infants, toddlers and preschoolers involved in the child welfare system. In addition, 165 trainings provided by Court Teams impacted approximately 3,513 professionals including early childhood /early intervention system partners as well as Court Appointed Special Advocates and Baby Court Appointed Special Advocates. Currently, there are community discussions and planning underway to expand Court Teams into the Pinal, Navajo/Apache and Gila River Indian Community regions of First Things First.

Several other DCS/FTF collaborations have the potential to impact families involved with the child welfare system. Those include:

**Continuous Targeted Communication** – over the past several months, staff from DCS and FTF have been meeting to further understand the mission and structure of each agency and to develop relationships to support additional collaboration, particularly at the community level. At a systemic level, this communication has led to improvements in helping staff in FTF-funded programs better identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect and has led to the creation of a process for (and increased collaboration in) transitioning families between FTF and DCS programs, where appropriate for their risk level (see Mandatory Reporting and Child Welfare Policy items below). At the community level, this will allow both agencies to understand the needs of families and what programs or services are available through both agencies to assist at-risk families.

**FTF Suspected Child Maltreatment Mandatory Reporting Policy** – requires that all FTF community grant partners providing direct support to children and families report all suspected child abuse and neglect to the statewide Hotline. In addition to the creation of this policy, additional training is now provided to FTF community grantee partners in what to look for that might indicate abuse or neglect and the specific processes for reporting child maltreatment. FTF community grantee partners interact with thousands of families every year; this requirement and the subsequent training/guidance ensures they have the capacity to recognize and report situations that may place young children at risk of neglect or abuse.

**FTF Child Welfare Policy** – developed in partnership with DCS and to be fully implemented by July 1, 2015. In cases where a family is receiving FTF-funded services and subsequently becomes involved with

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<sup>1</sup> Zero to Three, *Changing the Odds for Babies: Court Teams for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers*, Fact Sheets. [Zero to Three Funded Projects - Court Team](#).

the child welfare system, requires the community grantee partner to work directly with DCS case managers to re-assess the family situation, ensure that the resources being received are still appropriate to the family's needs, and – where additional or different services are needed to keep kids safe and meet the goals of the family's case plan – to transition the family to those resources as quickly and efficiently as possible. This will ensure that the family receives resources appropriate to their needs and risk level, that services are not interrupted at a time when families need support the most, and that services are not duplicated. The FTF-funded strategies this policy will apply to include: home visitation, family support coordination, support for families of children with special needs and parenting education programs.

**Support for Statewide Training & Development** – DES/DCS has hosted the Child Abuse Prevention Conference for nineteen years. Since 2008, due to significant budget reductions, Arizona's prevention programs creatively leveraged local resources for their professional development needs. In FY14, FTF was a key funder of the 20<sup>th</sup> Statewide Child Abuse Prevention Conference produced by Prevent Child Abuse Arizona. Almost 600 child welfare and abuse prevention professionals attended the conference, which offered national expert keynotes and two full days of workshops on topics aimed at preventing child maltreatment and improving Arizona's child protection system at the local and statewide levels. Sessions offered to child welfare professionals and community organizations working with children and families included: healing childhood trauma; positive parenting; protective factors; working with substance exposed or medically fragile children; engaging reluctant parents; evidence-based practice in child welfare; overcoming adverse events; and, preventing generational violence. DCS and FTF provided opportunities for staff to learn from and network with Arizona and national child welfare experts. The focus of the Conference is prevention, protection, permanency and well-being.

DCS and FTF staff presented various sessions. Michelle Katona, FTF Chief Regional Officer, and Jenna Shroyer, DCS Manager of the Office of Prevention and Family Support, are members of the Interagency Leadership Team for the federal home visiting grant (MIECHV) awarded to the Department of Health Services (DHS). The team provided a panel session to share how the state agency partners are working together to develop a statewide home visiting system. These evidenced-based home visitation programs often serve high risk families with young children and have proven to decrease incidences of abuse and neglect. The partners in the panel included DCS, DES Arizona Early Intervention Program, FTF, Arizona Department of Education and DHS. The panel discussed the coordination and expansion of home visiting services across the state, the development of and increased access to effective high quality professional development for home visitors, and provided examples of the work around domestic violence and strengthening knowledge and relationships between state agency partners and home visitors. Director Flanagan was a keynote speaker at the conference. Director Flanagan shared his vision for the new Department of Child Safety by ensuring child safety is paramount in the work that we do. He called for a multi-disciplinary approach by working together with other state agencies to focus on enhancing child abuse prevention. Director Flanagan is committed to building capacity for providing home visiting services statewide and he fully supports additional efforts toward early intervention and prevention.

## **SECTION TWO: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES**

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The individual missions of DCS (child safety) and FTF (school readiness) depend on one common factor: strong families. Strong families are the building blocks of a strong society.

From a child welfare perspective, strong families have the information and support to make the choices that ensure their children's basic needs are met and that they have safe, healthy environments in which to live and grow. When issues arise, families are aware of the resources that exist in their communities to help them address those challenges.

From a school readiness perspective, strong families *also* feel confident and competent in their role as their child's first teachers. They have the information and support they need to create nurturing, supportive environments that support their children's learning.

Many of the factors that put children at risk for abuse or neglect and that put them at risk for school failure are the same: poverty combined with a lack of supports, substance abuse, mental health challenges, lack of awareness of developmentally appropriate parenting practices, inadequate housing, domestic violence, or a combination of these and other risk factors. Because of this, each agency independently funds programs that complement each other and are vital components of a broader prevention and early intervention system.

### **DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY**

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) has a number of programs and services that strengthen communities and families facing a wide variety of needs. All families can benefit from information in helping to connect with resources to help them with the challenges of parenthood and family life. The programs range from primary prevention to intervention services. The parent's involvement in these programs may be voluntary or as a result of a referral from DCS. The goal of DCS is to help parents create safe, stable and nurturing home environments that promote the safety of all family members and healthy child development. To accomplish these goals, DCS partners with local agencies and organizations to provide services to families across Arizona.

#### ***Regional Child Abuse Prevention Councils, April Child Abuse Prevention Activities, and Promotion of the Six Protective Factors***

Child abuse is a community-based problem and the success of prevention efforts demands a community-based response. Child abuse prevention highlights programs and services that promote the general welfare of children and families, preventing the first occurrence of child abuse and neglect. The Regional Child Abuse Prevention Councils are primarily voluntary groups of child advocates, social service professionals, school personnel, business representatives, and community members located in 16 different areas of the state of Arizona. The Councils organize public engagement campaigns to heighten public awareness of child abuse and neglect, and most of all, what the community can do to assist in prevention. Councils also advocate for effective prevention programs and policies that ensure the safety and well-being of children. The Regional Child Abuse Prevention Councils are also

instrumental in the annual statewide campaign by conducting workshops on the devastating effects of adverse childhood experiences and the healing community solutions that focus on the development of the Six Protective Factors. The Six Protective Factors are: (1) knowledge of parenting and child development, (2) social/emotional competence of children, (3) nurturance and attachment, (4) social connections, (5) parental resilience, and (6) concrete supports. The Department is promoting the Protective Factors by educating DCS staff and integrating the concept across a service array for families.

Each protective factor is supported by research from several fields of study. An extremely important understanding that runs throughout the explanations of the Strengthening Families protective factors – and that emerges from a significant part of the research behind the framework – is “nurturing and attachment.” For example, research studies show:

1. **Parental resilience** occurs when parents are able to effectively manage stressors. By managing stressors, parents feel better and can provide more nurturing attention to their child, which enables their child to form a secure emotional attachment.
2. Understanding early brain development is essential in increasing **knowledge of parenting and child development**. Developing brains need attuned caregivers who interact with them in an affectionate, sensitive and nurturing manner. Such care gives rise to the development of a secure attachment between the child and the adult.
3. The course of a **child’s social-emotional development** depends on the quality of nurturing attachment and stimulation that a child experiences.

Many family- and child-serving programs, organizations, agencies and systems have incorporated the Strengthening Families protective factors into their practices and policies.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Consortium***

DCS and FTF are included among the founding members of the ACE Consortium which is a group of Arizona professionals and organizations devoted to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The ACE Consortium has developed a statewide media campaign called “Strong Communities Raise Strong Kids.” The goal of the campaign is to get the message out to the public, as well as to the professionals that are working with children and families, that ACEs can last a lifetime, but they don’t have to. Our community can become well-versed in how to heal the effects of abuse, prevent it from happening, and create stronger communities in which everyone understands the implications of abuse on the emotional and physical lives of all, especially children. DCS spearheaded the development of a multi-media campaign that includes a day-long ACE Train the Trainer workshop; a five to seven hour ACE community and family presentation/workshop; a PBS Television Special, called “Ask a Child Trauma Expert,” during which experts in all areas of childhood trauma were in the studio taking viewer phone calls; and ACE brochures and posters. Since this campaign began five years ago, thousands of Arizona residents have received this valuable information.

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<sup>2</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy, *Strengthening Families, A Protective Factors Framework*, [Fact Sheet](#)

### ***The “Who Do You Trust With Your Child?” Campaign***

DCS worked with representatives from the child welfare and prevention community on the “Who Do You Trust With Your Child?” campaign. Although most caregivers give loving attention to children and keep them safe, unfortunately some children are abused and suffer tragic circumstances at the hands of an unsafe caregiver. Protecting Arizona’s children requires a coordinated effort by all who care for them, including community and faith-based organizations; state and local governments; law enforcement officials; and, schools. This child abuse prevention and awareness campaign helps parents choose a safe caregiver and prevent child maltreatment. The campaign includes a dedicated website containing posters and brochures that provide Arizonans with valuable and precise information about choosing a safe caregiver. The “Who do you trust with your child?” posters and brochures were distributed statewide to child welfare offices, child care centers and community organizations.

### ***Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) Initiative***

DCS has been participating in a broad-based consortium of community stakeholders who are interested in implementing the Triple P model in Arizona. The consortium is comprised of professionals from Phoenix Children’s Hospital, Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, Parenting Arizona, the Child Crisis Center, Southwest Human Development, Eight – Arizona PBS, Arizona Partnership for Children and many other organizations. Triple P is an evidenced-based parenting program that has had impressive results increasing parenting skills and reducing child abuse and neglect. DCS supports a community-based approach to elevating the quality of parenting programming for families served by the child welfare system and other families who have risk factors for abuse or neglect. Arizona’s families can benefit from the use of a strong parenting program that is implemented consistently with a high degree of fidelity and monitored at the state level. The consortium is moving forward with its efforts to educate key stakeholders and attempt to secure multiple streams of private funding for a larger roll-out of this ambitious program. Currently, there are 60 practitioners trained to implement the Triple P model across Arizona.

### ***Healthy Families Arizona, Home Visitation Program***

DCS is the administrative home of the Healthy Families Arizona evidenced based, home visitation program. The program is nationally credentialed by Prevent Child Abuse America. Healthy Families Arizona is designed to help expectant and new parents get their children off to a healthy start. Families are screened according to specific criteria and participate voluntarily in the program. Program services are designed to strengthen families during the critical first years of a child’s life – the time when early brain development occurs, laying the foundation for a lifetime of memories, behaviors and outcomes. Home visits can impart positive benefits to families by influencing parenting practices and improving the quality of the child’s home environment and development. Through its efforts to support and educate families, the program has shown to reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect, provide stability for at-risk families and has grown a new generation of healthy families in the state. Healthy Families services may continue if needed until the child turns 5 years old. DCS and FTF also are both members of the Strong Families Alliance – a consortium of agencies statewide whose work with families includes some aspect of home visitation. The alliance promotes collaboration and the sharing of resources and best

practices. Due to the significant research demonstrating the positive impact that home visitation programs have in strengthening families and preventing abuse or neglect, both DCS and FTF are committed to on-going collaboration to identify any additional funding streams that may exist for the expansion of these programs to serve more at-risk children and their families throughout Arizona.

### ***Parent Aide Services***

Through a range of support services, the purpose of parent aide is to enhance the parenting skills and abilities of the parents/caregivers of children involved with DCS. The provision of services is aimed to address the identified safety threats, risks, and behavioral changes specified by DCS staff. The program provides a range of support services, instruction and assistance to parents to improve their skills and ability to fulfill parenting roles and responsibilities. Supervised visitation between children in out of home placements, siblings, and parents/caregivers may be requested to promote a continued relationship. Services are referral driven and are for children and their families who have an open DCS case due to a report of child abuse or neglect. Parent aide services are available statewide.

### ***In-Home Services***

A very important function of DCS is to identify services that assist in supporting and improving the family unit with the goal of maintaining children safely in the home. Services include, but are not limited to: crisis intervention; individual, family, and marital counseling; conflict resolution and anger management; problem solving and stress management; home management and nutrition education; job readiness training; case planning ; linkages with community resources; and facilitation of family meetings. The in-home service program also assists families to access services such as substance abuse treatment, housing, and child care. Services may be provided within the home of a birth parent, guardian, adoptive parent, kinship caregiver, or foster family. Services are referral driven and are for children and their families as part of a case plan that are a result of a child abuse or neglect report, or for children and families who have a potential risk of abuse or neglect. The intensity of services is based on the risks, needs, concerns and stressors of the child and family. In-home services are available statewide.

### ***Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. (Families in Recovery Succeeding Together)***

The Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. program helps parents address substance abuse issues that are affecting their ability to care appropriately for their children or to get and keep a job. It provides the opportunity for families to overcome the barrier of substance abuse in order to reach the outcomes of safety and permanency for children, family reunification and self-sufficiency. The goal of the program is to reduce or eliminate abuse of and dependence on alcohol and other drugs and to address other adverse conditions related to substance abuse. This is accomplished through the provision of family-centered substance abuse and support services, using modalities that include educational, outpatient, intensive outpatient, residential treatment and recovery services. Services are referral driven and are for children and their families as part of a case plan that is a result of a child abuse or neglect report and for families involved with the DES Jobs program. Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. services are available statewide.

## **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

First Things First programs engage caregivers to build their awareness of the importance of the first five years to a child's success – in school and beyond. Although most services are available to all families, FTF targets families whose children face multiple risk factors impacting success. Therefore, work with these families focuses on both – linking families to programs and supports that reduce those risk factors, and building caregivers' knowledge and use of strategies that promote their child's learning and healthy development. Below is a list of some of the early intervention/prevention strategies funded by FTF. The programs are voluntary, evidence-based and focus on building upon the family's individual strengths and desire. Because of their emphasis on strengthening families and building caregivers' capacity to provide stable, nurturing environments in which children can grow and learn, these strategies may contribute to one or more of the protective factors described on Page 8. At the end of each program listed, the protective factors it may contribute to are included.

### **Quality First Scholarships**

Available to families at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, these scholarships help children in low-income working families to access early learning programs for their infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The scholarships may only be used at state licensed or certified child care or preschool programs that have shown a commitment to quality improvement or achieved quality standards. In FY14, child care scholarships helped 19,492 infants, toddlers and preschoolers access safe, reliable child care in learning environments committed to quality. *(Knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and social-emotional competence of children)*

### **Home Visitation**

Through a variety of evidence-based models (such as Healthy Families, Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers), home visitation supports pregnant women and families and helps parents of children from birth to age 5 tap the resources and develop the skills they need to raise children who are physically, socially and emotionally healthy and ready to continue learning. These family support and coaching programs empower parents and caregivers with better knowledge, better health, and better opportunities for their children. Trained educators work with participating families in the comfort of their own home, in areas such as parenting, child development, dealing with challenging behaviors, school readiness and health topics, while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed, on a voluntary basis. First-time parents, parents of children with special needs, single parents or families with multiple births and families without any support are among those who benefit most from these programs. In FY14, 7,453 families enjoyed healthier, more supportive parent/child relationships through FTF-sponsored home visitation. *(All protective factors)*

### **Developmental Screening/Support for Parents of Children with Special Needs**

Early identification of developmental issues or delays – and linking parents to available resources to help – is crucial. This can prevent the delay from impacting later school performance and/or reduce the impact on school performance. The intent of the evidence-based Developmental and Sensory Screening strategy is to support regular and appropriate screening of all young children. The expected result is

early identification of a developmental, hearing or vision concern, and referral for further evaluation if necessary.

The intent of the evidence-informed Family Support for Children with Special Needs strategy is to promote healthy physical, social and emotional developmental support to children and their families. The expected result is children and their families will gain knowledge about developmental concerns they may have and that the child's development will progress as a result of the supportive interactions.

The target population for this strategy is children with mild to moderate developmental concerns, and their families, who do not qualify for services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) for ages birth to 3, or preschool special education services for ages 3 to 5 provided through public school districts. These programs are also known as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Part B programs, respectively.

In FY14, FTF-sponsored programs completed 16,721 screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on. *(Knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, social-emotional competence of children, and – in the case of support for parents of children with special needs – parental resilience and nurturing and attachment)*

### **Birth to 5 Helpline**

Toll-free and statewide, this Helpline is staffed by nurses and early childhood development experts. Answers to caregivers' toughest parenting questions are just a phone call away. Available to any caregiver with a child 5 or younger, including parents, grandparents and child care providers, the Helpline is administered by community grantee partner Southwest Human Development with support from FTF. By calling the Helpline, caregivers can access support as needed from a wide range of early childhood development staff experts, including psychologists, master's level counselors, registered nurses, disabilities specialists, early literacy specialists and occupational, speech/language and physical therapists. In addition to providing caregivers with counseling and resource/referral information, caregivers can receive individualized child development information as applicable.

In FY14, the Helpline answered 7,268 calls from families of children 5 and younger and from professionals working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. *(Parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, and concrete support in times of need)*

### **Parent Kits**

Comprehensive informational kit offered to the parents of every newborn so they know how to support their baby's safety, health and brain development. In FY14, 70,364 parent kits were distributed. *(Parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, nurturing and attachment, and social-emotional competence of children)*

### **Community-Based Parenting Education**

Available in a variety of settings, these educational sessions address crucial topics such as brain development, dealing with challenging behaviors and early literacy. The intent of the evidence informed Parenting Education strategy is to offer learning activities designed to increase the knowledge and skills of parents and families to promote positive parenting practices that result in enhanced child health and development when utilized by parents and caregivers. The expected results of effective parenting education programs are increased parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills, improved parent and child interactions, and more effective parental monitoring and guidance, decreased rates of child maltreatment, and better physical, cognitive and emotional development in children.

In FY14, 66,786 caregivers of children 5 and younger attended these voluntary classes. (*Knowledge of parenting and child development, nurturing and attachment, social-emotional competence of children, and social connections*)

### **Family Resource Centers**

Located throughout Maricopa and Santa Cruz counties, these centers offer families a one-stop shop to find the information to make the best choices for their families. The intent of the Family Resource Centers strategy is to serve as a community hub for connecting families with children birth to age 5 to the information, resources and services they need to support their child's optimal health and development. The expected results are improved parenting skills and social supports for families; increased knowledge of child development; and, support for their child's school readiness. Family Resource Centers offer a variety of services for families so they can access information and education.

In FY14, families accessed early childhood information, training or referrals through Family Resource Centers 101,114 times. (*All protective factors*)

## **MOVING FORWARD**

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Preventing child abuse or neglect is a responsibility we all share. The preceding pages have given some insight in to how the Department of Child Safety and one of its community partners – First Things First – are working together and independently to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children throughout Arizona. One thing is clear; no one agency or organization can do it all. Through open and regular communication, a commitment to collaboration and a willingness to innovate, all of Arizona's partners in prevention and early intervention can become more efficient and effective in our respective work; and, we can leverage our resources to produce the greatest impact on kids and families.