Research and Evaluation Plan

2013-2017

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

First Things First (FTF) was established to provide greater opportunities for all children five and under in Arizona to grow up ready to succeed. Established in November 2006 with the passage of Proposition 203, FTF was a citizens' initiative to fund quality early childhood development and health programs throughout the state.

Vision: All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.
Mission: FTF is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health, and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age five.

To fulfill the mission, FTF and critical partners in early childhood have set out the following system outcomes:

- All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care and education that promotes their optimal development.
- All children have access to high quality, preventive and continuous health care, including physical, mental, oral and nutritional health.
- All families have the information, services, and support they need to help their children achieve their fullest potential.
- All early childhood education and health professionals are well prepared, highly skilled, and compensated commensurate with their education and experience.
- The early childhood system is high quality, child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive.
- All Arizonans understand the importance of the early years and the impact of early childhood development, health, and education on Arizona's economy and quality of life and, as a result, substantially support early childhood development and education both politically and financially.

Table 1 presents the FTF Model of Change, an overarching logic model. This model depicts how the system outcomes above are expected to result from FTF activities and achieve children's success. Among all the FTF activities shown in the first column of Table 1, harnessing data is a key means of developing leadership capacity and infrastructure to create and sustain the high-quality service system. This research and evaluation plan presents activities and projects that: 1) support regional and statewide strategic planning through data-driven decision making ; 2) strengthen the continuous improvement of programmatic efforts by providing rigorous and ongoing evaluation; and 3) build capacity to mobilize high-quality findings to obtain maximum positive impact for children, families, and communities.

Table 1. *FTF Model of Change*

If We:	We Create:	Resulting In:	Achieving :
Develop and fund high quality services for children and families that are necessary but not yet available	**Coordinated, high-quality service system for young children**	**Early Learning** All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care & education.	**All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.**
Strengthen already existing high quality services for children		**Family Support/Literacy** All families have the information, services & supports they need to help children achieve their fullest potential.	
Partner to build a system of early childhood services and information for families		**Early Childhood Professional Development** All child care/education & health professionals are well prepared, highly skilled and compensated commensurate with their education & experience.	
		Health All children have access to high quality preventive & continuous health care to promote physical, mental, oral and nutritional health.	
Lead through the synergy of statewide and local strategic planning	**Leadership capacity and infrastructure to create and sustain the high-quality service system**	**Early Childhood System** The early childhood system is high quality, child & family centered, coordinated, integrated & comprehensive.	
Harness data and technology to build infrastructure and support data-based decision making and accountability			
Shift the brand and awareness of early childhood in Arizona		**Public Awareness** All Arizonans understand the importance of the early years & recognize the influence of early childhood development, health & education on Arizona's economy & quality of life and, as a result, substantially support early childhood development, health, and education both politically and financially.	

Evaluation and research have been a critical component of FTF since its inception. FTF strives for complete transparency and holds itself, and its collaborations with partners, accountable for achieving intended outcomes for children. Additionally, high-quality information for decision-making increases the effectiveness of planning and improves the implementation and potential impact of programs. This plan sets out the research and evaluation direction for the next five years, FY13 through FY17.

This plan is a result of the FTF Board's request for a re-examination of FTF's research and evaluation approach. The first step in that re-examination was the creation of the *FTF Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel* (Panel) in January 2012. The Panel was convened to provide recommendations to the FTF Board on developing a comprehensive statewide and regional research and evaluation framework.

The Panel was composed of 12 nationally recognized experts in early childhood research, evaluation, and programs who met three times in the winter and spring of 2012. Panel members' expertise included evaluation design and methodology; Native American early education; placed-based, systems-level evaluation; school readiness, including literacy and language development, cognitive development, and executive functioning; state prekindergarten evaluation; special needs and early intervention; health; and a unique Arizona, state-specific, perspective. Panel member biographies can be found in the full report of the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel at http://www.azftf.gov/whoweare/board/pages/reportsandpubs.aspx.

In addition to setting out a vision and approach for evaluation founded in the Panel recommendations, FTFs Research and Evaluation Plan contains a budget for proposed evaluation activities. All requested resources build on current infrastructure and staffing to accommodate increased work in five main areas:

1. Data coordination and consultation with tribal communities;
2. Development of the comprehensive, longitudinal, integrated database;
3. Enhanced support for dissemination, understanding, and utilization of the increased volume of data and analysis findings;
4. Kindergarten assessment; and
5. Evaluation studies of strategic focus areas.

New evaluation activities in this plan will increase the amount, quality, and utility of information and will be integrated with key system measurement, such as the 10 School Readiness Indicators, and products such as Regional and Statewide Needs and Assets Assessments. FTF is committed to maintaining a maximum of $9 million per fiscal year or approximately 7% of total expenditures for allocation to **statewide** research and evaluation efforts. Budget estimates take into consideration all known factors at this time, though modest changes, in particular for the data system build, are expected to vary. It is recommended that FTF not spend in any given year more than 10% of its total allotted budget on evaluation efforts.

This plan has two major chapters and a conclusion: Chapter Two - Establishing Infrastructure to Support FTF Research and Evaluation - Chapter Three - Evaluating Key FTF Programmatic Strategies – and

Chapter Four – Conclusion and Defining Success. Chapter Two presents, based on the Panel's recommendations, a long-term approach to building the infrastructure that will support ongoing evaluation activities. Chapter Three presents a series of studies to gather and provide meaningful data in key strategic areas. Chapter Four defines success for the plan. The Evaluation Budget is presented in Appendix A.

CHAPTER TWO: ESTABLISHING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT FTF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

FTF is based on the principles that children learn and develop in a complex context of family, school, and community, and that child development is supported by quality early education, strong families, healthy adults, and robust communities.

In line with these principles, FTF funds and supports strategies as diverse as strengthening medical homes, supporting parents to understand the importance of oral health, increasing and improving developmental and sensory screening activities, promoting children's cognitive and language development by supporting parents as children's first teachers, and improving the quality of early education programming. For optimal impact, efforts must be of the highest quality and coordinated.

Adequate measurement of the implementation and impact of all facets of FTF's work will require detailed data on children's receipt of diverse services over time, and service data will need to be linked to children's kindergarten readiness, school-age achievement, and life-long success. Meeting this desired level of measurement and evaluation will require substantial infrastructure development, both in terms of data acquisition and usage, but also in FTF's capacity to analyze, interpret, disseminate, and use information.

Chapter Two presents a long-term approach to building the infrastructure that will support ongoing evaluation activities, based on the Panel's recommendations. Chapter Two has eight subsections, one for each research and evaluation goal.

Research and Evaluation Goal 1: Program Implementation

This section lays out FTF's approaches and proposed enhancements to ensure that program implementation is of high quality, followed by a presentation of the corresponding timeline. For goal 1, because plans will be supported by existing organizational resources, no budget requests are presented.

Current and Enhanced Activities

For most programmatic approaches, FTF uses grant and contract mechanisms to support and improve already existing services in communities and to expand needed services into new areas. To ensure that strategies and programs reflect the needs of communities, families, and children, as well as best practices, all contracts are built on data-based strategic planning and evidence-based standards of practice, where that evidence is available. Programs are implemented and contracts are monitored for timely implementation and adherence to FTF programmatic standards of practice.

The following activities already being planned or implemented form the basis of FTF's focus on implementation: the development of FTF standards of practice for all funded strategies, the ongoing review of standards of practice based on new research and evaluation in Arizona and beyond, and a

comprehensive quality assurance review and assessment process. This section also outlines enhanced data collection and capacity building efforts, as recommended by the Panel, to support these activities.

Development and Ongoing Review of Standards of Practice

Strategy development is initiated either within a community, a region, or at the state level. There are procedures that guide the strategy development process which include gathering information from needs and assets reports, conducting additional research, and gathering feedback at all levels and through groups composed of program, evaluation, regional and finance staff. Responsibility for development of the standard of practice for a new strategy is primarily assigned to the appropriate specialist within the program division and through the cross-divisional teams lead by program staff.

FTF has developed standards of practice for nearly every one of the 50 strategies funded through state or regional investment. For some statewide strategies, an implementation or guidance manual is developed that reflects the standards of practice. Standards of practice are initially created based on best practice and research, and annually, FTF strategy implementation teams identify any of the standards of practice that may require revision to incorporate new research findings and practices toward a goal of continuous improvement. These new findings are then referenced in the scope of work for specific strategies. Additionally, grantee partners are provided with data reporting requirements to enable monitoring and quality assurance of performance. Data are regularly reviewed and examined for trends. Data are then used in the annual review of the standards of practice, and may inform revisions. The following diagram depicts this ongoing cycle of strategy development, review, and revision.

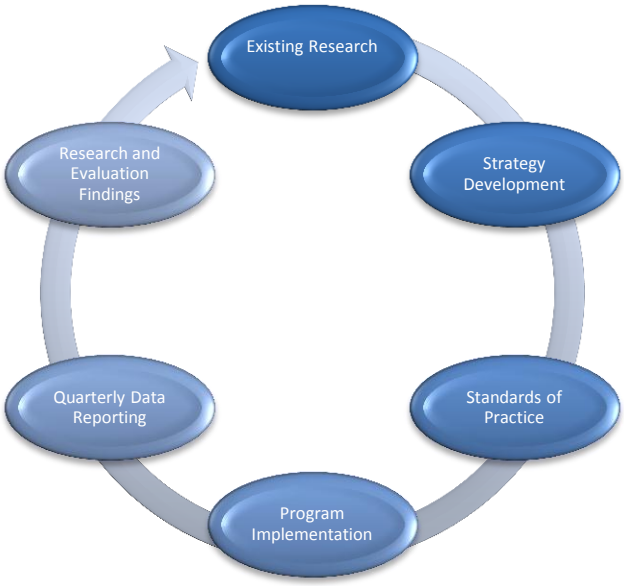

Figure 1. Cycle of Strategy Development

Quality Assurance

FTF quality assurance involves both performance and programmatic monitoring. Performance monitoring is defined as a review of contracts and agreements to assess whether the contractual obligations have been met both programmatically and financially. This is the first line of quality assurance and is undertaken on all contracts. Universal quality assurance is undertaken by FTF cross divisional teams including: program and evaluation staff, regional staff, and finance staff. Each team serves a regional or statewide area and meets regularly to assess whether grantee partners are meeting performance and financial standards as agreed to in the contract. If opportunities for improvement are identified, they are pursued by the cross divisional team through systematic communication. If challenges are determined to be of sufficient scope, intensity, or duration, they are referred to additional in-depth monitoring to resolve the issue. FTF has applied universal performance monitoring on all grantees since 2010.

Programmatic monitoring is defined as an assessment and analysis of the programs administered to determine whether the standards of practice are being met, and whether implementation of the strategy will result in expected positive outcomes for children and families. FTF recently hired three quality assurance specialists to develop the programmatic monitoring component of the FTF quality assurance system, including the assessment communication mechanisms, policies, protocols and rubrics. It is anticipated that all grantees will participate in a programmatic monitoring assessment once every three to five years, with the initial launch of programmatic quality assurance occurring in January 2013.

Research and Evaluation Enhancements to Support Activities

Current data reporting requirements were created to enable monitoring and quality assurance of performance. Typical examples of reporting requirements include the total number of families, children, or teachers served each month and the total number of training opportunities offered. In order to support programmatic quality assurance and to answer questions about interactions of strategic efforts and their outcomes for children over time, reporting requirements must be enhanced.

Enhanced data must answer three key questions:

- What services does each child receive?
- How much service of each kind does each child receive?
- Are services of high quality?

Specific examples of enhancements:

FTF is already collaborating with its grantee partner Valley of the Sun United Way to capture more detailed information on Quality First Scholarship services. Examples of this enhancement will allow us to address child level questions such as: did the child attend part-time or full-time, and for how many days each week? how long has the child received services? and was the attendance continuous?

Results of example enhancements:

These data collection enhancements enable analyses to address such questions as: is the length of time (1-5 years) and intensity (1-7 days per week) of attendance related to Quality First star level? For example, do children tend to remain longer in higher quality care? Also, with the collection of kindergarten entry data (see goal 6); data on Quality First scholarship enables analyses of such questions as: is children's kindergarten readiness related to the amount of time they spend in high quality early care?

Additional enhancements are discussed in goal 2.

Integration of enhancements into current activities:

Just as current data resources are reviewed regularly to assure quality of performance and to examine FTF standards of practice, enhanced data reporting will be integrated into cross-divisional data review for performance and programmatic quality assurance efforts. Additional discussion of ongoing capacity building to use data is found in goal 3.

Timeline

Table 2. *Timeline for Enhancements to Support Activities*

Activity	Status	Due Date
Review of Standards of Practice	Ongoing	annual
Quality Assurance Processes	Ongoing	fully implemented January 2013
Service Data Enhancements	Ongoing	see Table 3 for activity and release dates

Research and Evaluation Goal 2: Comprehensive, Longitudinal, Integrated Database

This section briefly reviews FTF's current data system and enhancements that will create a comprehensive, longitudinal, integrated database. An additional budget allocation of approximately $17.5M over the five year plan is requested to build technology infrastructure as well as to support the coordination, processing, and analysis of data in the database. Comprehensive, longitudinal, integrated database development ensures that the data collected will be organized and available for meaningful use and that data activities are housed within technology structures that facilitate long-term infrastructure building. See Appendix A for the Evaluation Budget.

Current and Enhanced Activities

A comprehensive, longitudinal, integrated, Early Childhood database will serve as a warehouse of data on young children in Arizona and will track progress on the 10 School Readiness Indicators. This plan lays

out a vision for the first five years of development of the database. It builds on currently existing data and data infrastructure and makes recommendations of initial priorities for critical data sources, collaborations, and infrastructure.

The Panel recommendations set out the essential components of an early childhood longitudinal database:

- Unique statewide child identifier
- Child-level demographic and program participation information, including dosage, and types of services received
- Child-level data on key developmental indicators of learning, development, and health
- Ability to link child-level data with K-12 and other key data systems, including the Arizona Department of Education and Department of Economic Security
- Unique program site identifier, for example, school, preschool, or child care provider, with the ability to link with children and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce
- Program site data on the structure, quality, and work environment
- Unique ECE workforce identifier (teacher identifier) with ability to link with program sites and children
- Individual ECE workforce demographics, including education and professional development information
- Transparent privacy protection and security practices and policies

There are two primary approaches to obtaining the data identified in this goal:

1. **Enhancing data collection and data systems already at FTF**

Conditions: For strategies or programmatic approaches in which FTF has developed or is developing a cohesive implementation model with a statewide or extensive scope and scale, FTF will enhance its current data system to capture and analyze key data and work with grantee partners to ensure that those data are submitted to the FTF data system in a timely, secure, and accurate manner.

Table 3 below identifies those strategies recommended for enhanced data reporting. Enhanced data reporting will include submission of service data at the individual level (child, teacher, and/or child care provider depending on the service). Strategies were identified for enhanced data reporting because:

- Data system development to support enhanced data submission was identified as feasible;
- Strategies are of sufficient uniformity and scale to enable coordinated enhanced data collection;

- Identified grant partners have the technology and staffing resources to support the enhanced data submission requirements.

2. **Collaborating with partners to securely share data**

Conditions: For strategies or programmatic approaches in which FTF is a partner and service is provided by a state agency or organization, FTF will collaborate with partners to identify, support, and continue secure sharing of data. In most cases, data will continue to be collected and housed in the partners' data system; information technology infrastructure will facilitate the linking of data for mutually beneficial analysis and data presentation.

Table 3 also identifies those data holdings initially identified for potential collaboration with partners in the **Linking with Partner Data Sets** section. These data were identified based on current knowledge of partner data holdings, feasibility, and integration with the initial reporting products identified in this section. It is critical to note in Table 3 that over two years are laid out for planning and collaboration. During this intensive planning phase, we will work with partners to clearly identify the data to be linked, infrastructure investments that may be necessary to facilitate linkages, and common security and oversight standards. Timelines for proposed data collaboration are also included in Table 3.

Currently, FTF's data warehouse is built on a flexible, SQL based enterprise platform. It holds extensive, critical information on program implementation, finances, and operations. Current data holdings and reporting can answer questions about funding levels, contract status, and basic information, such as how many families is served. Building on the current FTF data warehouse, an integrated, longitudinal database will enable the joining of child-level data on children served by FTF and by other agencies. This information on services will link to data from a kindergarten developmental inventory to allow the analysis of how early experiences relate to kindergarten readiness and later success (see goal 6).

The creation of a child- and service-level database that is comprehensive, longitudinal, and integrated is a complex, long-term undertaking that must incorporate best practices for ensuring child and family confidentiality. Despite the challenges, the development of a longitudinal database is critical to future efforts in program and system evaluation.

The creation of an integrated, longitudinal database will involve the collaboration of all Arizona state agencies including the Arizona Department of Education, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the Arizona Department of Health Services, and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System as well as key partners such as Head Start and home visitation providers. **The Planning and Collaboration** section of Table 3 lays out the planning process for building on currently-existing knowledge of the data and data systems now available, as well as partnering around common goals and potential for data exchange and collaboration.

Table 3. *Strategies for Enhanced Data Reporting*

	2013				2014				2015				2016				2017			
	1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
Planning and Collaboration																				
Develop FTF's Desired Data Architecture (wire frame map of System linkages)																				
Determine common 5-year goals for data exchange and usage with state agency partners																				
ADE																				
DHS																				
DES																				
AHCCCS																				
Determine common 5-year goals for data exchange and usage with grantee/service-provider partners																				
Quality First Scholarships																				
PreK Scholarships																				
Non-ADE																				
ADE																				
TEACH																				
Rewards																				
Child Care Health Consultation																				
Home Visitation																				
Oral Health																				
Expanding FTF's Data Collection and Storage Systems																				
Application Interface and Data Warehouse Integration																				
Quality First Scholarships																				
PreK Scholarships																				
Non-ADE																				
ADE																				
TEACH																				
Rewards																				
Child Care Health Consultation																				
Home Visitation																				
Oral Health																				
Linking with Partner Data Sets																				
Establish Data Linkages/Connections																				
ADE																				
Individual Child Data																				
Public (nonHS) PreK Provider Enrollments																				
DHS																				
Vital Statistics & Community Health																				
Licencing																				
DES																				
Child Care Administration																				
AzEIP																				
AHCCCS																				
Healthcare Utilization and Need																				
Data Sharing/Exchange																				
Aggregated Data of Indentified Sub Populations																				
ADE																				
DHS																				
DES																				
AHCCCS																				
Data Display / Dash Board Reporting																				
Phase I - FTF Current Data Sets																				
Design																				
Build																				
Deploy																				
Phase II - Integration of Partner Data Sets (ADE & DHS)																				
Design																				
Build																				
Deploy																				
Phase III - Expansion of FTF Data Sets																				
Design																				
Build																				
Deploy																				
Phase IV - Integration of Additional Partner Data Sets (DES & AHCCCS)																				
Design																				
Build																				
Deploy																				*into nxt yr*

This process will begin with an assembly of state agency partners to review the database plan and gain commitment to move forward in the following five quarters with goal setting meetings on specific data exchange and usage. The key products need to be a shared vision of an integrated database; necessary IT infrastructure, security and confidentiality protocols; and an agreed-upon implementation timeline with specific deliverables.

This plan will involve intensive collaboration with early childhood partners and a focus of resources on the project. Based on the flexibility of our current data systems and the rich collaboration around data already achieved with partners, we can realize meaningful and user-friendly displays of community-based data.

Timeline

Please refer to Table 3.

Research and Evaluation Goal 3: Data Dashboards— Continuous Quality Improvement

This section briefly reviews FTF's current organizational capacity for continuous improvement and details how database enhancements will be used for capacity building and strategic planning. Because of FTF's staffing and infrastructure strengths related to dissemination and communication, no additional resources are requested for this goal. Staff and technology supports requested as part of goal 2, however, are integral to enabling the user interfaces and community dialogues around data presented here.

Current and Enhanced Activities

As noted by the National Panel, providing data use for continuous improvement depends on the availability of timely, high-quality data. The Panel laid out three examples of data displays enabled by data collection, evaluation study, and warehousing activities. Example recommendations to be developed between FY13 and FY 17 are presented below.

National Panel—Example 1— Early Learning Map

The early learning map (see Figure 2 for example map) could present key data on potential risk factors such as poverty, low-birth weight, and limited accessibility of quality early care and education. These data could be displayed at the community level to create a map of incidence and location of populations who could benefit from targeted early learning services.

Table 4. *Key Data for Early Learning Mapping*

Data needed	Source	Community Display
Child population and Poverty	US Census	By census tract
Low-birth weight and Maternal Risk Factors	DHS	Level of aggregation agreed with DHS –by Regional Council Area or County level
Accessibility of early care and education	DHS/DES/FTF/ADE	Street Address
Accessibility of high quality early care and education	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address

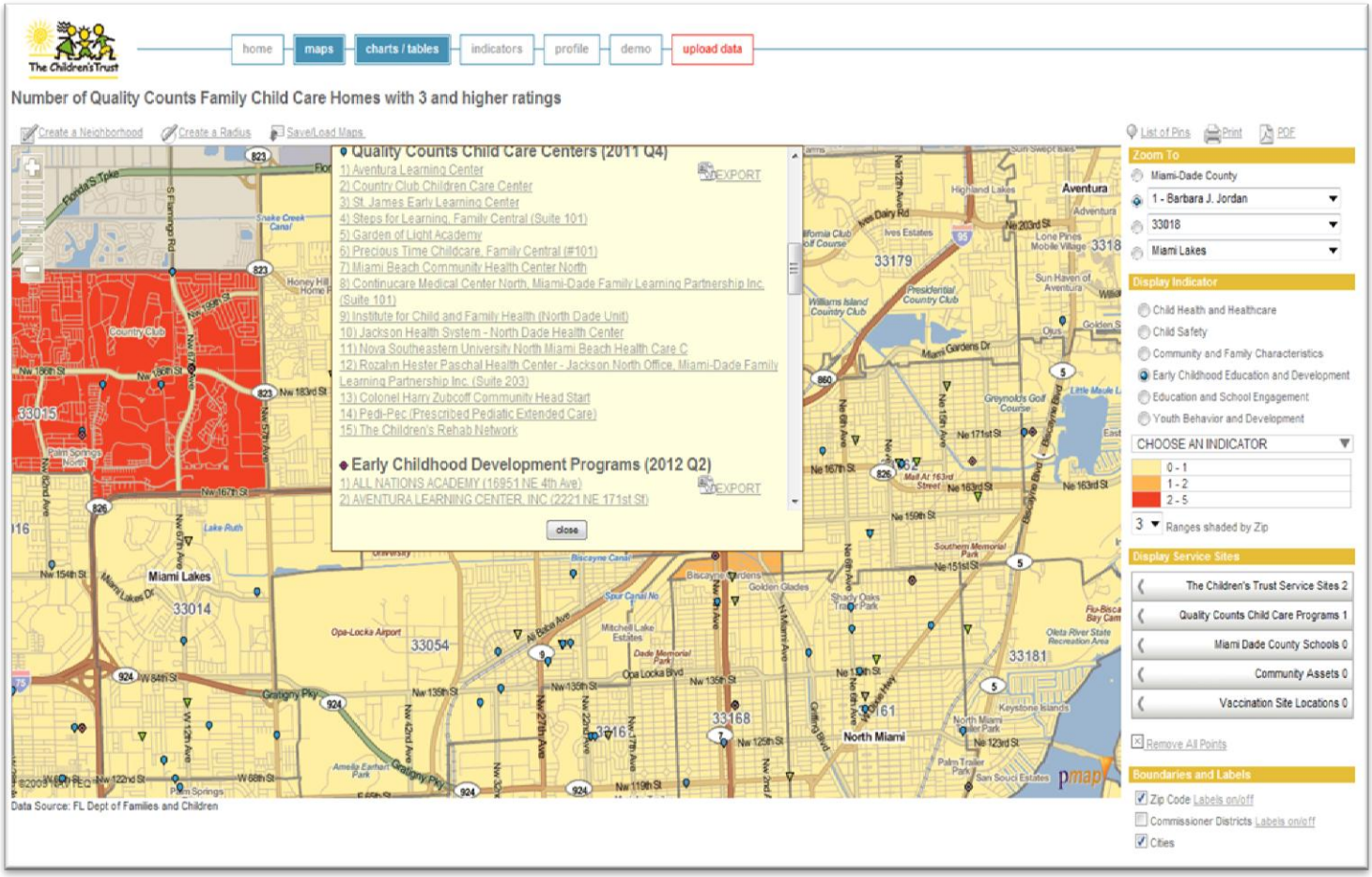

Figure 2. Example of Community Interface and Mapping for Early Learning

The above example of community interface and mapping was developed by the Children's Trust in Miami Dade County and the Florida Department of Children and Families. The actual interface and look for Arizona would be created with regional council and community input; the timeline can be found in the Data Display/Dash Board Reporting section in Table 3.

National Panel—Example 2— Community Risk Profiles

In Community Risk Profiles, data from the Early Learning Map (Figure 2) could be overlaid with other available services. This allows for an immediate and accessible visualization of families and children in need, as well as their proximity to needed services. Using risk profiles, already-existing services can be closely examined to identify gaps and/or redundancies.

Table 5. *Key Data for Community Risk Profile Development*

Data needed	Source	Community Display
Child population and Poverty	US Census	By census tract
Low-birth weight and Maternal Risk Factors	DHS	Level of aggregation agreed with DHS –Regional Council Area
Accessibility of early care and education	DHS/DES/FTF/ADE	Street Address
Accessibility of high quality early care and education	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address
Accessibility of home visitation	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address
Tooth Decay	FTF/ DHS	County
Childhood Obesity	DHS	Regional Council Area or County
Public Insurance	AHCCCS	County
Timely well-child visits	AHCCCS	County
Cost of high-quality early care and education	FTF – Quality First	Regional Council Area

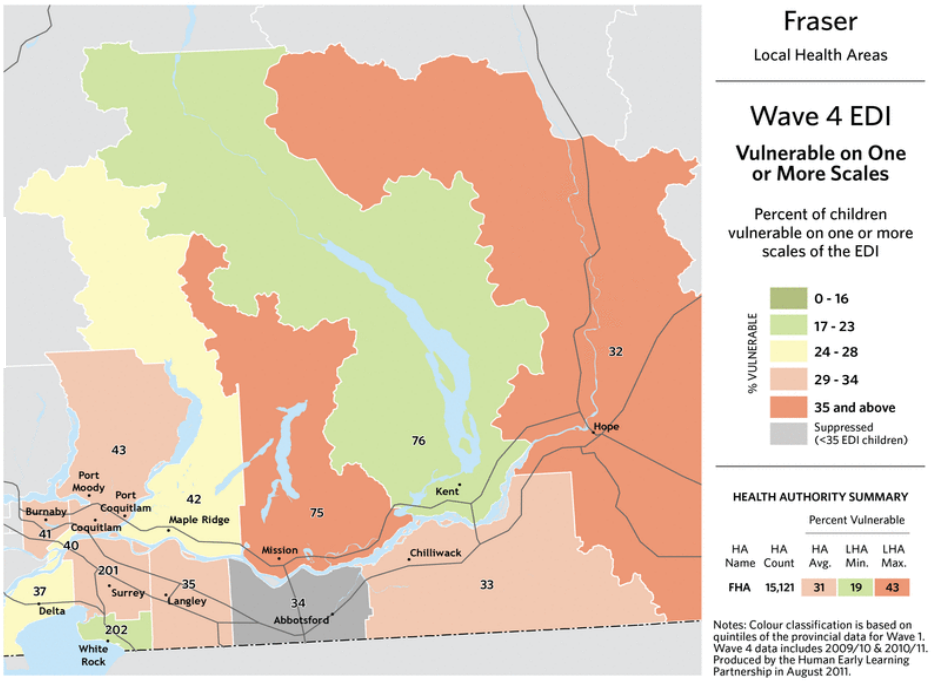

Figure 3. Example of Community Interface and Mapping for Risk Profile Development

The example shown in Figure 3 of community interface and mapping was developed by the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia. This example presents a specific assessment instrument, the EDI; while FTF is not recommending the selection of a specific assessment at this time, this example is presented to show how multiple assessment scores and/or indicators of risk can be presented as an easy-to-use profile of a community. The actual interface and look for Arizona would be created with regional council and community input; the timeline can be found in the Data Display/Dash Board Reporting section in Table 3.

National Panel—Example 3— Profiles of Effectiveness

Over time, populations that received services could be analyzed for decreases in risk factors or improvements in key outcomes such as insurance enrollment, decrease in child abuse, and/or kindergarten readiness.

This National Panel recommendation can be fulfilled with the availability of kindergarten readiness data for children in Arizona. When those data are available, kindergarten readiness data for communities can overlay the risk factor and service data identified in examples 1 and 2 to create an interface for profiles of effectiveness.

Additional Product—Example 4—Regional Profiles

There are two additional potential data interface products that were not specifically identified by the National Panel. Example 4 is a Regional Profile, which presents a detailed picture of a community, specifically each regional council area (special considerations for Arizona Indian tribes are found in goal 5). Data included in this product are similar to those in the risk profiles (example 2); however, the data are presented not as a map, but as a profile, so specific pieces of data can be easily used.

The example below (see Figure 4) is from KidsCount. It is a frequently used and valuable resource for state-level data. An Arizona profile would present data on key indicators as well as School Readiness Indicators for regional councils, counties, and other geographic areas in Arizona. This would supplement and begin to digitize the FTF regional and statewide needs and assets reports. The actual interface and look for Arizona would be created with regional council and community input; the timeline can be found in the Data Display/Dash Board Reporting section in Table 3.

Table 6. *Key Data for Regional Profile Development*

Data needed	Source	Community Display
Child population and Poverty	US Census	By census tract
Low-birth weight and Maternal Risk Factors	DHS	Level of aggregation agreed with DHS –Regional Council Area
Accessibility of early care and education	DHS/DES/FTF/ADE	Street Address
Accessibility of high quality early care and education	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address
Accessibility of home visitation	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address
Tooth Decay	FTF/ DHS	County
Childhood Obesity	DHS/ WIC	Regional Council Area or County
Public Insurance	AHCCCS	County
Timely well-child visits	AHCCCS	County
Cost of high-quality early care and education	FTF – Quality First	Regional Council Area

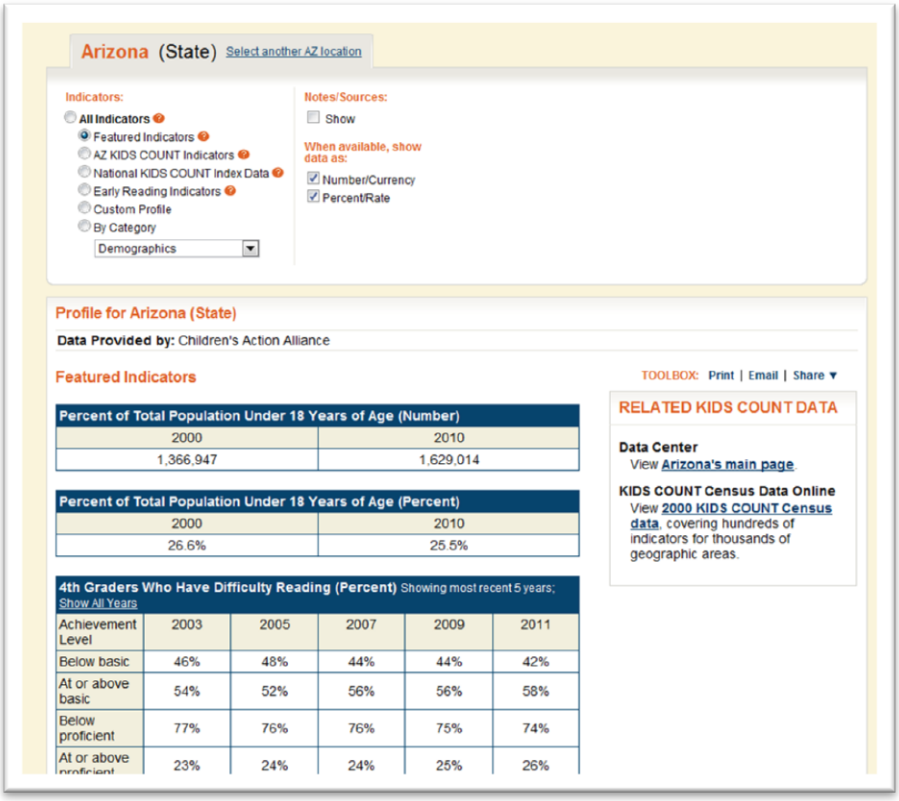

Figure 4. Example of Regional Profiles

Additional Product—Example 5—Quality First Dashboard

The Quality First Dashboard was not a product specifically identified by the National Panel. Currently, regional councils have access to basic information on how many and which providers are participating in Quality First. With the public release of Quality First Star ratings, geographic mapping of Quality First providers and their star ratings will be created for public dissemination.

A Quality First Dashboard could be created that is linked to the Early Learning Map (example 1) and provides - once a user clicks on a Quality First provider - background information on that center or home. Additionally, it will provide a data dashboard that shows the change in that provider's Quality Fist ratings over time. This is intended as a tool for FTF decision-makers, parents, and community members in search of quality early are and education.

Table 7. *Key Data for Quality First Dashboard*

Data needed	Source	Community Display
Background information on each Quality First provider – such as ages of children served and available slots	FTF	Street address
Trend in Star rating level of provider over time	FTF	Street address
Accessibility of high quality early care and education	ADE/FTF – Quality First and Pre-K	Street Address

The example below in Figure 5 is taken from Google Analytics and presents an example of a dashboard display. The actual interface and look for Arizona would be created with regional council and community input; the timeline can be found in the Data Display/Dash Board Reporting section in Table 3.

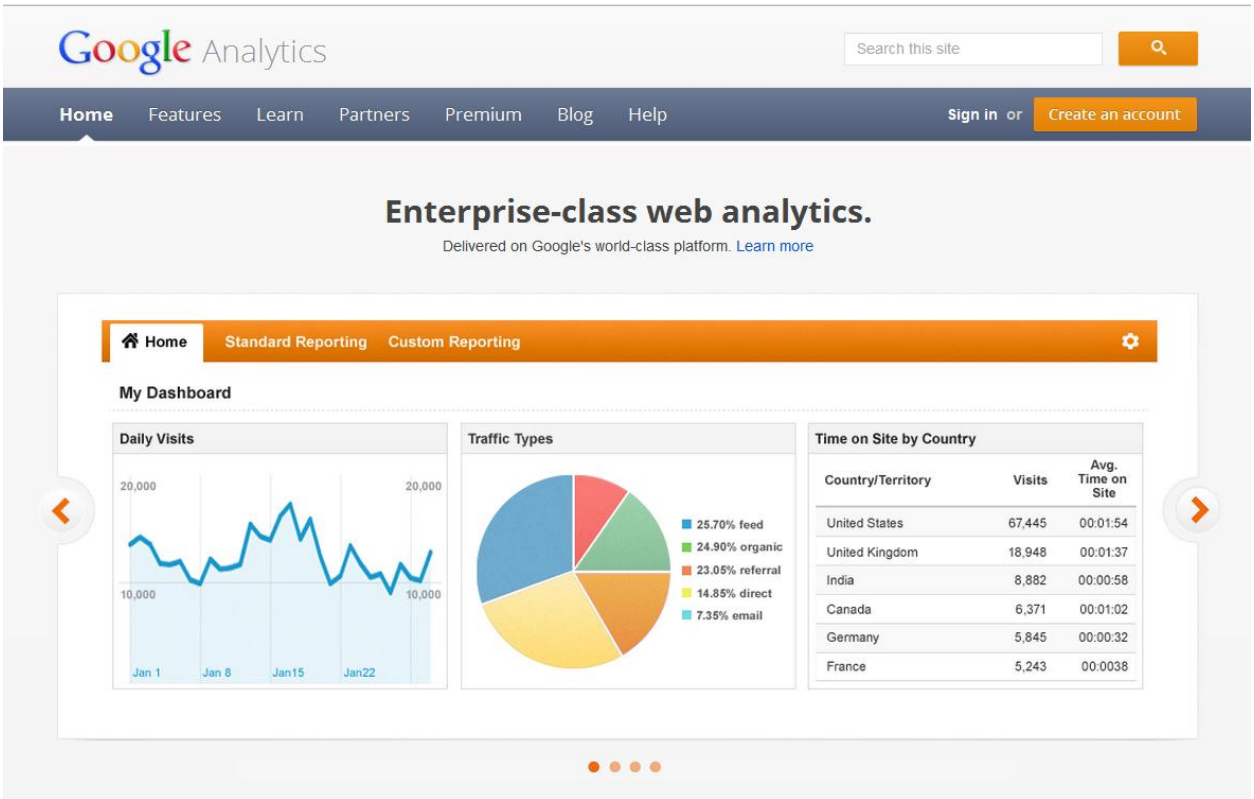

Figure 5. Example of a Data Dashboard

Timeline

Please refer to Table 3.

Research and Evaluation Goal 4: Meaningful Approach to Data Analysis

This section briefly reviews FTF's current approaches and proposed enhancements to ensure that data analysis and evaluation meet regional councils' needs. Because these plans will be supported by existing organizational resources, no budget requests for goal 4 are presented.

Current and Enhanced Activities

Thirty-one regional councils throughout Arizona provide local insights and recommendations for programmatic approaches. They are composed of dedicated volunteers responsible for working with their communities to determine what services children five years and under in their area need to ensure that they arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. Regional councils are supported by a regional director who works with cross-divisional teams to provide support to regional councils; this support currently includes review of data, assistance with data interpretation, and staffing to apply data and analysis to strategic planning. Current support to interpret and use data in regional planning will be enhanced to build capacity of regional councils to use data dashboards, study findings, and other

products to support informed decisions that advance the early childhood system in regions throughout Arizona.

To build on current staffing and supports, research and evaluation goal 4 provides five overarching approaches to ensure that evaluation planning will reflect the information needs of local communities and build capacity for strategic planning and application of evaluation findings. These activities are in addition to evaluation support activities outlined in goal 3 and annual feedback surveys as described in this plan's conclusion.

1. Annual Regional Council Review of Evaluation Progress

A formal evaluation presentation will be made annually at the regional council Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting. FTF will update regional council leadership on new activities and findings as well as receive their feedback on the overall direction for conducting the activities. In addition to an annual meeting with the regional council chairs and vice chairs, evaluation questions will be added to the annual regional council survey to obtain feedback from all members.

2. Regional Representation on the National Advisory Panel

As further detailed in goal 7, FTF will establish an ongoing research and evaluation advisory panel to annually review evaluation activities. A regional council member will be appointed to this panel. Prospective members of the advisory panel will be presented to the FTF Board at their January 2013 meeting.

3. Regional Representation on Advisory Group for Large Scale Studies

For major studies (over $500,000) an advisory group, comprised of program, evaluation, and regional staff members, as well as regional council members, will assist in reviewing the overall direction of the studies, monitoring products, and disseminating findings.

4. Community and Regional Council Forums Related to the Data System and Data Mapping

Research and evaluation goals 2 and 3 lay out an innovative vision for increasing the amount and usefulness of data. A critical component to the overall timeline for the data display development is formal regional council and community input. Over a period of 7-9 months, beginning in January 2014, regional council and community members throughout the State will receive an update on data mapping progress, review and interact with pilot data displays, and offer feedback and insights. This timeline will allow regional council and community members to offer input on the nearly completed first reporting product and offer insights into the planning for future products.

5. Continuing Opportunities to Commission Regional Research Studies

As detailed in the Studies section of this Plan, four of the current and upcoming studies were commissioned and conceptualized by regional councils, developed and monitored collaboratively by regional and evaluation staff, and partially or fully funded by regional councils.

To continue the opportunity for regional council-commissioned studies, in addition to the studies outlined in this plan, the following guidelines for regional planning have been developed:

Regional councils should consider conducting a new study under the following circumstances:

1. The regional council seeks more information on the implementation or effectiveness of a strategy or group of strategies in their community that are not addressed by the statewide studies.
2. The regional council intends to continue financial or policy support of this strategy over time.
3. Long-term support for the strategy is founded on considerations including: this is a prioritized strategy based on needs and assets of the community, contract compliance and implementation success in the region, and ongoing evidence-based practice based on studies in other communities or states. And this study is not addressed by the statewide studies.
4. The regional council may be interested in a study of a pilot project, a strategy that has been implemented in the community over time, or examination of the implementation or effectiveness of a strategy as implemented in their community.
5. There is potential for the strategy to be used outside of the region.
6. More than one regional council or community-based funder is interested in participating in the study and the issue to be studied is not being addressed by the statewide studies.
7. Timeline for ramp-up and implementation of the study is appropriate for the regional council's intentions.

Other considerations and guidelines:

- All regional evaluation allocations will require FTF Board approval and will be considered in the context of the overall statewide evaluation plan.
- Current evaluation and program staffing resources will aid regional staff and regional councils in the development of the vision for the study.
- In considering budget allocations for the study, 10-15% of the total funds (depending on the type of study as well as the number of participating organizations) should be allotted for evaluation staff support to develop the scope of work, monitor the study implementation, and assist in dissemination and utilization of findings.

Timeline

Table 8. *Timelines and Activities for Approaches to Regional Input*

Activity	Status	Due Date
Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting	Ongoing	annual
Regional representation on the National advisory panel	Ongoing	summer 2013
Regional representation on advisory group for large scale studies	Ongoing	spring 2013
Data forums	In development	January, 2014
Data webinars	Ongoing	See Tables 3 and 21 for survey and data activity and release dates
Support for regional evaluation	Ongoing	ongoing

Research and Evaluation Goal 5: Tribal Governments and Data

This section briefly reviews FTF's current approaches and proposed enhancements to ensure that Tribal Governments are full participants in evaluation activities. Additional budget resources totaling approximately $1M over the five year plan are requested to provide support to assist with data coordination as well as to enhance regional needs and assets reports in tribal communities. See Appendix A for the Evaluation budget.

Current Activities

FTF values its government to government relationships with Arizona's Tribal Governments. In its mission to serve all Arizona children, FTF recognizes that Arizona's tribes are sovereign and have complete authority over all research and data collection conducted on their lands; they own all data collected on their lands; and they control the use and dissemination of all those data. This research and evaluation goal reflects FTF's ongoing commitment to continue an open dialogue and consultation with Tribal Governments on potential studies on which to collaborate as well as on specific tribal approval processes necessary for data collection. These relationships and a common understanding of purpose and value *prior to any research being conducted* are essential.

Ten federally recognized tribes in Arizona have worked with the FTF Board to establish their tribal lands as a separate region. In seven additional regional partnership councils, nine tribes have chosen to work within their geographically designated region - with their tribe represented on the regional council. Regional councils are supported by a regional director who works with cross-divisional teams to provide support. Additionally, the FTF Senior Director for Tribal Affairs works to facilitate government to government relations between FTF and Arizona tribes.

Consultation, both formal and informal, will continue to be the primary mechanism for FTF Government to Government relations with tribes. There are three over-arching areas in which we anticipate

consultation with Tribal Governments and coordination with tribal regional partnership councils: 1) the overall programmatic and evaluation direction of FTF, 2) continued individualized consultation on topics of mutual interest and concern, 3) as well as specific data collection and dissemination activities.

To build upon current activities, the following new and enhanced activities dramatically increase data coordination with tribal regional councils and Arizona tribes.

New and Enhanced Activities

These activities have been included in this plan based in large part on identified priorities from tribal leaders at the Tribal Consultation and Summit Tribal Gathering of 2012. The timelines and activities presented in Table 9, set out a vision for increased coordination with Tribal Governments and tribal regional councils as well as organizations serving tribal communities such as Indian Health Service and Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona.

1. **School Readiness Indicators in Tribal Communities**

The 10 School Readiness Indicators (SRIs) adopted by FTF are tools to reflect the effectiveness of funded strategies and collaborations and that serve as key measurements to improve the lives and readiness of all children in Arizona.

SRIs were developed through a committee process with input from tribal representatives as well as regional council, partner, and community stakeholders.

Staff research and consultation have identified existing sources of data to calculate the SRIs in tribal communities. Table 9 presents the timeline and approach for identifying tribe- and community-specific data as well requesting permissions to share and report those data. Specific activities to be included over the next five years include:

- Meeting with Indian Health Services, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, and other organizations to identify their data holdings related to the SRIs
- Identifying necessary permissions to access data and report to FTF regional councils and tribal Communities
- Consulting and undertaking appropriate IRB and tribal approvals to share and report data as agreed
- Working with Regional Staff and Senior Director for Tribal Affairs to update regional councils and tribal authorities regularly on status of data

2. Regional Needs and Assets

The FTF regional needs and assets reports offer a unique process for tribal communities to identify specific data they would find useful for decision making, to work with a consultant to analyze and report those findings, and to disseminate the report in their communities. Three biennial needs and assets reports have been prepared for each FTF regional council, in 2008, 2010, and 2012. In the Tribal Consultation of 2012, FTF received feedback that regional needs and assets reports are helpful in tribal communities, but could greatly benefit from increased coordination of data resources and community input. We propose to provide additional consultant and staff resources for the data permissions, compilation of data, analysis, and writing of those reports in tribal communities. These additional resources are recommended in response to the additional time needed to work with tribal authorities to obtain data permissions; to integrate data and research on topics of key interest in tribal communicates, including native language preservation; and to build the ongoing capacity for communities to undertake this type of reporting and use the findings. Specific timelines and approaches for seeking ongoing tribal approvals for data collection and dissemination are presented in Table 9.

3. Data System Activities

The National Panel recommended that FTF work with tribal regional councils and Tribal Governments to develop data dashboards that display key information for planning and evaluation, as FTF will do with all regional councils. As seen in Table 9, in this plan, the focus will be on current SRI and needs and assets activities, rather than moving immediately towards digital data display in all tribal communities; however, one or two tribal communities that are interested in serving as pilot sites for digital data integration will be identified. In those communities, data collected and permissions granted for SRIs and needs and assets reports, will be built upon to begin to display those data digitally. As seen in the timeline, if tribal communities grant permissions and authorize the digital display of data collected for needs and assets reports as well as SRIs, authorized data can be integrated into the data system. Based on explicit permissions, data displays can be made publically available, or be displayed for authorized users only.

4. Studies

As seen in Table 9, any new data collection, most importantly, for activities involving individual assessment of children or families, will be brought before appropriate tribal authorities for review. Specific studies with anticipated tribal data collection will include requirements for culturally appropriate assessments and analysis, as well as coordination with regional staff to work with tribal community members and appropriate authorities to request permission for data collection (see chapter three).

Timeline

Please refer to Table 9.

Table 9. *Tribal Timelines and Activities*

Consultation and Planning for Tribal Data	2013				2014				2015				2016				2017			
Activities	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
School Readiness Indicators																				
Meet with Indian Health Services, Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, and other bodies on SRIs to identify data holdings	■	■	■	■	■	■														
Identify with other data holders and tribal authorities, necessary permissions to access data to report to FTF Councils					■	■	■	■												
Consult and undertake appopriate IRB and tribal approvals to share and report data as agreed, in an ongoing manner						■	■	■	■	■	■									
Work with Regional Staff and Senior Director for Tribal Affairs to update Councils and tribal authorities regularly on status of data								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Regional Needs and Assets																				
Compile and review current permissions and approaches to conducting FTF tribal needs and assets reports	■	■	■	■	■	■	■													
Develop approach and plan for requesting permission for ongoing data collection and reporting related to needs and assets							■	■												
Request permission for ongoing data collection and reporting related to needs and assets								■	■	■	■	■								
Fulfill requirements of data agreements and integrate SRI and other tribal data into needs and assets reports, as authorized									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Data System																				
Identify 1-2 pilot tribal communities interested in collaborating with data system activities					■	■	■	■												
For pilot sites, identify if specific pieces of data, agreed on for SRIs and needs and assets reports, may be incorporated into the data system for public and/or authorized viewing									■	■	■	■	■							
For pilot sites, integrate authorized data into the data system with appropriate, agreed access for viewing											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Studies																				
Build into each study scope of work requirements for culturally appropriate assessments and analysis	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■										
If a scope of work calls for data collection on tribal lands, work with Regional staff to inform tribal community members of the timeline for a formal data permission request			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■										
In study contract, specifiy how contractor will work with FTF staff and tribal authorities to secure appropriate permissions			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Request permissions for tribal data collection as specified in the study contract(s)							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Fulfill requirements of data agreements and integrate data into evaluation reports and needs and assets reports, as authorized										■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Research and Evaluation Goal 6: Kindergarten Developmental Inventory

This section briefly reviews the importance of a kindergarten developmental inventory and identifies the approach to selecting or creating the tool. Resources totaling approximately $3M over the five year plan are requested to partner in the development, piloting, and implementation of the assessment. See Appendix A for the Evaluation Budget.

Research has established the validity and value of a school readiness assessment conducted at the beginning of kindergarten. Such an assessment has the potential to be a critical tool for early childhood and kindergarten teachers in understanding how best to support the development of young children by providing a valid and detailed snapshot of their readiness for school at a key juncture in their development. Additionally, administering an assessment annually could be the basis for measuring FTF's School Readiness Indicator number 1:

> "The number and percentage of children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the developmental domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical."

These data would be a critical component of the longitudinal data system and enable the systematic review of child development across the five domains of readiness (as identified in indicator one) over time, and the relationship of children's school readiness to services received before kindergarten entry. It would also serve to improve early childhood service provision by enabling a better understanding of what is most effective for children in their early years and beyond.

While some Arizona schools use some type of assessment prior to or just after a child starts kindergarten, the type of instrument or assessment method, as well as collection and use of data is inconsistent. As a result of planning that began with Arizona's application for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant in 2011, FTF will continue to work with the Arizona Department of Education, State Board of Education, and the Governor's Office to develop or adopt a *kindergarten developmental inventory* instrument that is appropriate for all Arizona children to be administered annually at the beginning of the kindergarten year to measure areas of school readiness. Public input will also be solicited and considered in making final recommendations and decisions on the Arizona process and age-appropriate tool used for the kindergarten developmental inventory.

Development and initiation of the kindergarten developmental inventory - including selection or development of an instrument, obtaining approval from state governing bodies, creation of a data collection system, determination of data use policies, training for kindergarten teachers and school administrators, and informing families and the public about the intended and appropriate use of the data - is anticipated by June 2014, with initial pilot of the kindergarten developmental inventory in school year 2014-2015. A private philanthropic organization is also engaged in the development of the kindergarten developmental inventory instrument, intending to provide funding for the initial development and use of the instrument. The budget for this recommendation reflects that initial philanthropic investment, and FTF's investment in subsequent years to sustain the annual assessment.

Timeline

Table 10. *Timeline of KDI and Piloting of the Assessment*

Activity	Status	Due Date
KDI developed or adopted	ongoing	June 2014
KDI piloted	In development	School year 2014 - 2015

Research and Evaluation Goal 7: Evaluation Oversight and Review

This section briefly reviews the importance of oversight and transparency for FTF. It further lays out the approach to establishing an advisory panel to provide this oversight. Resources totaling approximately $450,000 over the five year plan are requested for the ongoing consultation of the advisory panel. See Appendix A for the Evaluation Budget.

FTF is committed to transparency and accountability. All meetings of the FTF Board, regional councils, and other official bodies are conducted openly, in accordance with Arizona Open Meeting Law. FTF's current data system reporting functions, all strategic standards of practice, reports of grantee implementation, and financial information are publically available. In the data system plan outlined in goal 2, we will operate in accordance with the FTF data and security policy as well as with the data security and usage agreements of all data partners and appropriate state, tribal, and federal laws and agreements. In this same vein, our ongoing progress in evaluation and research, in accordance with this plan, will have regular, public review.

FTF will establish an advisory panel to annually review evaluation and research activities. The annual meeting will be conducted in accordance with Open Meeting Law and be widely advertised to interested stakeholders, including regional councils, state agency partners, and tribal leaders. In addition to their annual review of progress and future planning, this panel may serve as an ongoing resource for technical review and advice on evaluation contracting, programmatic monitoring, development of data systems, and reporting and analysis.

The annual meeting is proposed to take place in May or June of each year. The express purpose of the advisory panel will be to review research and evaluation activities for their soundness and utility and provide feedback on planning activities based on their alignment with the National Panel's recommendations and best practices in research and evaluation.

Timeline

Table 11. *Timeline for Evaluation Oversight and Review*

Activity	Status	Due Date
Names of advisory panel members forwarded to the FTF Board	Ongoing	January 2013
Advisory panel meetings	In development	Annual, beginning FY14

Research and Evaluation Goal 8: Tri-University Consortium Data

This section briefly reviews the status of data collected by the Tri-University Consortium. It further lays out specific ways these data can be used by FTF. No additional resources are requested beyond those in goal 2.

In 2008, FTF contracted with the External Evaluation University Consortium (also referred to as the Tri-University Consortium), composed of researchers from Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University, to provide a broad-based evaluation of FTF. In their proceedings, the National Panel reviewed the reports produced by this consortium and examined comments and reviews prepared by FTF regarding the studies' methodologies, analyses, and currently available data.

While recognizing possible limitations, the National Panel recommended that the data collected as part of those efforts be considered as a potential source of population data in areas of children's health, family context, and early experiences. They further recommended that data collected as part of the Consortium efforts continue to be examined by FTF for utility and be integrated into the longitudinal data system.

Specific activities outlined in this plan that use the Consortium data include:

- Pilot testing of the potential for linking child-level data with the Arizona Department of Education
- Quality First Validation and Implementation Study – for use as potential reference or baseline information on children's kindergarten readiness
- Child Care Capacity Study - for use as a potential reference on families using unregulated child care

As recommended by the National Panel, the Tri-University data will continue to be reviewed for its utility in other studies or projects. It will be integrated into the FTF data system.

Timeline

Table 12. *Timeline for Review of Potential Uses of Tri-University Consortium Data*

Activity	Status	Due Date
Pilot testing of child-level data linkage	ongoing	January 2013
Potential use as baseline data in new and current studies	ongoing	ongoing
Review for further uses	ongoing	ongoing

CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATING KEY FTF PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

In addition to the infrastructure-building recommendations in Chapter Two, the National Panel recommended specific evaluation studies. These studies will examine closely the nature and interplay of various aspects of children's lives and the services they receive. The National Panel worked with FTF to identify the key areas where substantial resources were being invested; where programs or strategies offered a robust level of scale across the state; as well as where research evidence indicates areas of potential, positive impacts on children.

The National Panel recommended specific areas for study and an overall approach that is to first, closely examine strategy and program implementation, look for best practices, and understand relationships between implementation and child, family, community, and system outcomes. Once implementation is understood, and findings have been obtained related to the associations between FTF programming and child outcomes, then an examination of the impacts of FTF programming on children's school readiness can begin.

For all current and new studies outlined in this chapter, resources totaling approximately $15M over the five year plan are requested for the purposes of study oversight, data collection, analysis, dissemination of findings, and to support the interpretation and use of study findings.

For major studies (over $500,000), an advisory group, comprising program, evaluation, and regional staff members, inclusive of regional council members, will assist in reviewing the overall direction of the studies, monitoring products, and disseminating findings.

Section A: Access, Affordability, and Quality in Early Learning

The National Panel has recommended an implementation study or series of studies related to Quality First, and a study or series of studies that uses the findings of an implementation study to examine how child outcomes vary according to Quality First Star levels. The Panel also recommended an implementation study related to Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care. Based on these recommendations we present a series of studies framed under the title Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study and detailed in A1 below. We have also built upon an already planned study, the Child Care Capacity Study, in an effort to respond to the Panel's questions related to unregulated care. This study is outlined below in A2.

In this five year plan, we do not present a study related to the implementation of specific models of FFN, a full validation study of Quality First, or a quasi-experimental study of Quality First outcomes, as suggested by the Panel. Those are anticipated in future years as we build on the findings of the studies described here.

In addition to the above studies recommended by the National Panel, a survey is also proposed to gain additional information and better understand the needs of early childhood professionals, the Early

Childhood Workforce Survey. This Survey will take the place of a current survey, the Child Care Compensation and Credential Survey, and is outlined in A3 below. Lastly, we provide an overview of a current regionally funded study of professional development, the Early Childhood Workforce Study in A4.

A1. Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study

The Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation study encompasses the areas of Quality First, Quality First Child Care Scholarships, and Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships. These are areas of substantial strategic importance, as well as areas of focused investment and innovation.

Quality First, Arizona's voluntary Quality Improvement and Rating System, is designed to strengthen the state's regulated early care and education programs by establishing standards for quality care, help providers meet those standards, and share information on program quality with parents and communities. The components of Quality First include: 1) coaching and quality improvement plans, 2) assessment, 3) incentives, 4) DHS licensing fee off-set, 5) Birth to Five Helpline, 6) Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC), 7) child care scholarships, and 8) T.E.A.C.H. The intended outcomes of all coaching and financial supports are an overall increase in program quality, and the enhanced ability to meet child and family needs.

For the current five year plan, FTF recommends a multi-phase study, or series of sequential studies, to evaluate the design and implementation of Quality First. This approach lays the groundwork for a rigorous validation of Quality First ratings and improvement tools and processes, and will also help to determine progress in achieving desired outcomes for early care and education programs, families, children, and the early childhood education system in Arizona.

The multi-phase Quality First study envisioned for the next five years will examine and refine the Quality First logic model (of theory of change), document existing contextual conditions and program operations, examine model design and fidelity of Quality First, and evaluate how effectively all Quality First components are implemented across the state. This will enable FTF to move with confidence into a fuller validation of the rating system and analysis of multi-level outcomes in future years.

Research Questions

- What is the fidelity of implementation of all components of Quality First: 1) coaching and quality improvement plans, 2) assessment, 3) incentives, 4) DHS licensing fee off-set, 5) Birth to Five Helpline, 6) Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC), 7) child care scholarships, and 8) T.E.A.C.H.?
- What are the profiles of the services received by providers, for example, what intensity of each service is received?
- What is the relation between Quality First components and changes in Quality First Star levels?

Timeline

Table 13. *Timeline for the Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study*

Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study (QFS)	2013				2014				2015				2016				2017			
Activities	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
Internal FTF Quality First Data Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting																				
Ongoing Quality First data collection, entry, reporting and quality checks																				
Ongoing internal FTF review of Quality First data collection, patterns of improvement, maintenance, and/or challenges																				
Identify any modifications/additions to Quality First data system needed for QFS																				
Implement identified modifications/additions to Quality First data system needed for QFS																				
Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study (QFS)																				
Phase 1 - Evaluability Assessment																				
Develop study plan, scope of work, and deliverables																				
Engage in national Request for Proposal, review proposals, select research/evaluation team(s)																				
Encourage of existent baseline data and kickoff																				
Study implementation																				
Synthesis and reporting																				
Phase 2 - Implementation I																				
Develop study plan, scope of work, and deliverables																				
Engage in national Request for Proposal, review proposals, select research/evaluation team(s)																				
Encourage of existent baseline data and kickoff																				
Study implementation																				
Synthesis and reporting																				
Phase 3 - Implementation II																				
Develop study plan, scope of work, and deliverables																				
Encourage of existent baseline data and kickoff																				
Study implementation																				
Synthesis and reporting																				
Ongoing integration of FTF-initiated Quality First data collection with QFS efforts																				

Intro next period

A2. Child Care Capacity Study

The Child Care Demand and Capacity studies began as regional council-initiated studies. The Child Care Demand portion of the study will be completed in FY13 and answers key questions about parents' child care usage, preferences, and views on quality and other key factors such as distance, cost, and cultural relevance.

The purpose of the Child Care Capacity Study is to build on the findings of what parents/families want from early care and education to examine individual provider capacity, as well as overall child care/early education capacity in regulated and unregulated care within a region and the state. With this study, we will better understand the existing and/or evolving conditions that strengthen or undermine the availability of quality child care and early education opportunities across Arizona.

Findings from the Child Care Demand Study indicate that available child care options often do not meet the needs of families. The Child Care Capacity study builds on these findings to determine the barriers to access and affordability in regulated early care, as well as to better understand the care that is provided in FFN and barriers to regulation.

Research Questions

The National Panel recommended studies to address multiple questions related to FFN care, including an examination of the implementation of specific FFN programs and their fidelity. In this plan FTF recommends an examination of FFN providers in Arizona, those served by FTF programs as well as those not served by FTF programs. Because of the lack of information on FFN overall, we recommend the examination of FFN overall rather than a focus on specific models. With this approach, the recommended study will fulfill the following National Panel recommended questions:

- Is overall child care (provider) capacity within a community aligned with family needs and parental child care preferences?
- What families use FFN care? How common is family use of FFN care? What are barriers to FFN care providers becoming regulated? What supports could best help FFN care providers improve the quality of care?

Timeline

Table 14. *Timeline for the Child Care Capacity Study*

Activity	Timeline
Develop scope of work	January 2013 - March 2013
Contract procurement process	April - September 2013
Study implementation	Sept 2013 - Sept 2014
Report to Regional Councils	September - October 2014
Final products	October - December 2014

Budget

$1,250,000

A3. Early Childhood Workforce Survey

Overview and Research Questions

This survey will take the place of the Early Childhood Compensation and Credentials Survey completed in FY13. It will provide information on the salaries, benefits, educational background, and job retention of early childhood teachers. Additionally, it will ask teachers to identify their preferences and barriers to accessing professional development and examine key needs and motivations for the early education workforce. This study provides information used in FTF key measures related to early childhood teachers and offers data for ongoing statewide and regional planning.

The Panel did not specifically recommend a study related to the preparation of early childhood teachers. This study is recommended because the strategic area is integrally related to FTF's overall quality improvement efforts for children, and is necessary for ongoing professional development planning efforts.

Timeline

Table 15. *Timeline for the Early Childhood Workforce Survey*

Activity	Timeline
Develop scope of work	May 2013 -July 2013
Contract procurement process	August- Oct 2013
Identify/develop survey instrument	Nov -Dec 2013
Study implementation	January - June 2014
Analysis and Writing	July - September 2014
Final Products	October - December 2014

Budget

$400,000

A4. Early Childhood Workforce Study

Overview and Research Questions

This study is funded by the Central Pima regional partnership council. It focuses on an innovative approach to professional development in Central Pima. Although the study is conducted in only one region, findings can potentially be very useful for all regions considering a "community of practice" model in early childhood professional development.

The study examines whether and to what extent the Communities of Practice strategy, as implemented, meets the needs of current and prospective early childhood professionals, and how the community of practice strategy, in combination with other strategies such as Quality First and T.E.A.C.H., advances desired aims. The study will also include an extensive cost-effectiveness analysis that will provide useful information on the allocation and use of current resources and their relation to implementation.

Timeline

Table 16. *Timeline for the Early Childhood Workforce Study*

Activity	Timeline
Study implementation	Ongoing
Final products	November 2013

Budget

$125,000 – sponsored by Central Pima regional partnership council

Section B: Family Support

The National Panel recommend an implementation study(ies) related to home visitation and a quasi-experimental study that built on the findings of an implementation study to examine home visitation programs' effects on child outcomes. The Panel also recommended implementation study(ies) related to family resource centers and parent education – community based training.

In this current five year plan, FTF does not recommend a study that examines the implementation of family resource centers and parent education – community based training. Currently there is an ongoing, regionally funded study of family support strategies, the Innovative Family Support Study (B2). This study is active in five regional council regions. Future studies of family resource centers and parent education – community based training will build on the region-specific findings of the current study.

In addition to the above studies recommended by the National Panel, there is an ongoing survey recommended to gain additional information on the knowledge, behaviors, and needs of families, the Family and Community Survey, detailed in section B3.

B1. Home Visitation Study

Overview and Research Questions

The Home Visitation Study will build on the findings of the Innovative Family Support Study (B2) and answer the following questions as recommended by the National Panel:

- Are home visitation programs being implemented with fidelity to the evidence-based models they were designed to follow?
- Does each home visitation program reach the intended families and hard-to-reach families?
- What intensity of service (number of visits per year, duration of visits) is delivered in each model and is intensity linked to child and family needs?
- Is the degree of fidelity of model implementation associated with children's school readiness outcomes?

This study will evaluate the implementation and coordination of home visitation programs, investigate which FTF strategies, programs, or models are particularly effective in delivering intended services, and how service delivery and various implementation factors (including fidelity) are related to costs. This study will also provide evidence of the extent to which home visitation implementation quality and quantity are associated with children's kindergarten readiness.

Timeline

Table 17. *Timeline for the Home Visitation Study*

Activity	Timeline
Develop scope of work	October –January 2014
Contract procurement process	February – June 2014
Study implementation	July 2014 - May 2016
Analysis and Writing	June –July 2016
Final Products	August 2016

Budget

$2,250,000

B2. Innovative Family Support Study

This evaluation study examines the quality and implementation of family support strategies implemented in five FTF regions: Santa Cruz, South Phoenix, North Pima, Central Pima and Cochise.

These five regional partnership councils have focused on different strategies and combinations of strategies to meet the unique needs of the children and families in their communities. The evaluation study is examining these unique combinations of strategies, their coordination, and their implementation within the communities served. This also includes an examination of local adaptations made and implemented by regions in an effort to improve programs.

Research Questions

- Are family support services delivered to those most in need?
- Are strategies as implemented consistent with their original intent?
- What is the quality of provided services?
- Is participation in family support services associated with increased child and family well-being, etc.?
- Does the combination and coordination of family support strategies as implemented in a region strengthen the system-of-care for families?

In addressing these questions, this evaluation study will shed light on actual or projected impacts of a strategy or combination of strategies, and inform regional council decision-making and service prioritization consistent with the FTF mission. These findings will be used to inform local decision-making, identify potential best practices that can be applied in other localities, and provide rich findings upon which to build future studies of family support strategies.

Timeline

Table 18. *Timeline for the Innovative Family Support Study*

Activity	Timeline
Study implementation	Ongoing
Final Products	November 2013

Budget

$380,000 – sponsored by Santa Cruz, South Phoenix, North Pima, Central Pima and Cochise regional partnership councils.

B3. Family and Community Survey

Overview and Research Questions

The survey provides data in the following areas, for parents of children five and under: perception and knowledge related to early childhood development; best parenting practice in supporting young children's development; perception of coordination and quality in early childhood services and communication.

The Family and Community Survey provides information on many different aspects of parent and community members' knowledge and behaviors related to children. For example, there are questions related to the frequency with which families read to their children, their knowledge of their children's health care needs as well as their access and practices related to health care providers, their knowledge of early childhood development, and their behaviors to support their children. The survey provides population and regional council level data on many aspects of families' needs and practices. Importantly, it is the source of data for SRI number 10 related to confidence and competence in parenting.

Timeline

Every two years, completed by December 2014 and 2016.

Budget

$280,000 for each survey and completed report.

Section C: Child Health

The National Panel recommended using the integrated database to examine services, and the combinations of services, children and families are receiving. Also recommended by the National Panel was an examination of the implementation and coordination of health care services. Based on these recommendations an implementation study of care coordination/medical home is presented in section C1.

In addition to the study recommended by the National Panel, there is an ongoing survey to gain additional information (including data needed for SRI 9 related to oral health) on the oral health status of children, the Oral Health Survey (C2). Also, currently being implemented, is a needs assessment related to early intervention, the Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment (C3).

C1. Care Coordination/Medical Home Study

Overview and Research Questions

The care coordination/medical home study will examine the implementation and effectiveness of different care coordination models/programs, to answer the following questions:

- To what extent are FTF-supported programs achieving the goal of connecting high risk families with medical homes?
- Based upon the model of care coordination supported regionally, are the care coordination/medical home grantees implementing the evidence based model with fidelity?
- What is the dosage of the intervention per model and how can the models be compared for effectiveness in reaching high risk families?
- Do the care coordination/medical home programs reach their intended at risk families, particularly those that are hard to engage?

Timeline

Table 19. *Timeline for the Care Coordination/Medical Home Study*

Activity	Timeline
Develop scope of work	January - February 2014
Contract procurement process	March -July 2014
Study implementation	August 2014 - May 2015
Analysis and Writing	June -July 2015
Final Products	August - September 2015

Budget

$400,000

C2. Oral Health Survey

The Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health, regularly conducts a survey of preschool and school-aged children's oral health. FTF is partnering with the Office of Oral Health to measure oral health at kindergarten entry and to have those data available at the regional or county level. The survey involves a standardized cross-sectional, open-mouth screening developed by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors and conducted by trained dental staff. FTF is also working with Office of Oral Health staff to add items to the survey to examine body weight and height (for calculating body mass index) as well as asthma incidence. The survey provides population and regional council level data on many aspects of families' needs and practices. Importantly it is the source of data for SRI number 9 related to children's oral health.

Research Questions

- Do young children visit a dentist regularly?
- At what age do children go to the dentist?
- What percentage of children have decay experience or untreated decay at kindergarten entry?

Timeline

Every two years, completed by December 2014 and 2016. Subject to negotiation with the ADHS.

Anticipated Budget

$300,000 for each survey, subject to negotiation with the ADHS.

C3. Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment

Two School Readiness Indicators relate to early intervention. In system-building discussions of, as well as meetings designed to set goals for improvements in detection and treatment of developmental delays, statewide stakeholders have often expressed an interest in having additional information on what services are available in Arizona, as well as how these services are coordinated. FTF has partnered with the St. Luke's Health Initiatives to answer key questions related to early intervention.

This opportunity assessment will utilize a four-step process of:

1. Compiling existing secondary data such as census, national, and state estimates of the prevalence of health and developmental conditions to provide an overall picture of Arizona's children, and their health and developmental risk factors.
2. Analyzing existing administrative data from the current array of services for children and families.
3. Identifying gaps and opportunities for children and making recommendations for improvements in coordination and service.
4. Enlisting the review and commentary of national experts to gain their additional insights.

Research Questions

- What is the prevalence of young children in Arizona at risk of or experiencing poor early developmental outcomes?
- How are systems serving, identifying, and responding to children and family needs?
- Where are the gaps in identification, response, coordination across systems, and the quality and effectiveness of services?

- What could better responses to these children produce in terms of their own developmental and public system costs?

Timeline

Table 20. *Timeline for the Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment*

Activity	Timeline
Study implementation	Ongoing
Final Products	May 2013

Budget

$25,000 (FTF match) - in collaboration with St. Luke's Health Initiatives.

Section D: Additional Data Collection, Studies, and Reports

The Children's Budget, as well as our statutorily mandated needs and assets assessments, present additional opportunities for data collection. These two important areas are detailed in sections D1 through D3 below.

D1. Children's Budget

Overview and Research Questions

The study is conducted every two years and is a summary of all state and federal expenditures beginning with fiscal year 2005 in the state of Arizona for children five and under and their families. It answers the following questions:

- What changes have there been in the programs funded for young children?
- Have overall expenditures for children changed?
- In what areas are there overlaps or potential areas for collaboration with partners?

Timeline

Every two years, completed June 2013, 2015, 2017.

Budget

$90,000 for each data collection and completed report.

D2 and D3. Statewide and Regional Needs and Assets Reports

Overview and Research Questions

Building Bright Futures is FTF's statutorily mandated statewide biennial assessment on the needs of young children in Arizona. This report gives all Arizonans a starting place for conversations about the challenges faced by children five and under and how their communities can best meet those needs. In addition to overviews of data trends and a topical essay, it presents key data on School Readiness Indicators, children's health, early learning, as well as demographic information for all of Arizona's counties. It is conducted every odd numbered year.

Each FTF regional needs and assets report provides a snapshot of the region's young children five and under and their families, identifies the nature and extent of regional assets that support young children and their families, and specifies what the region needs to successfully support young children and their families. Regional councils may opt to supplement the base report (as funded by the statewide evaluation budget) with additional resources, to collect, analyze, and report additional region-specific information. They are conducted every even numbered year.

Budget

Statewide Needs and Assets - $260,000 per report.
Regional Needs and Assets - $950,000 for 31 base reports every two years.

Overview of Study Timelines

Table 21 below presents all planned and ongoing studies conducted during the five years of this research and evaluation plan. The lighter boxes indicate the period in which the study will be ongoing, the darker boxes indicate the timeline for distribution of reporting products.

Table 21. *Overview of Study Timelines*

Section	Projects/Deliverables	FY 2013				FY 2014				FY 2015				FY 2016				FY 2017			
		Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun
Other	Children's Budget																				
Family Support	Family and Community Survey																				
Early Learning	Early Childhood Workforce Study																				
Family Support	Innovative Family Support Study																				
Other	Regional Needs and Assets																				
Health	Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment																				
Other	Statewide Needs and Assets																				
Early Learning	Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation Study																				
Early Learning	Child Care Capacity Study																				
Health	Oral Health Survey																				
Early Learning	Early Childhood Workforce Survey																				
Health	Care Coordination/Medical Home Study																				
Family Support	Home Visitation Study																				

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND DEFINING SUCCESS

Following the recommendations of the National Panel, this plan sets out eight goals for infrastructure development and thirteen studies to span throughout the next five years. The activities presented, as a whole, increase the total amount and relevance of information available for strategic planning and quality assurance; focus intensive data collection and analysis activities in prioritized strategic areas; and build the capacity of FTF, regional councils, the Board, and the early childhood system to use that information to increase actionable knowledge and strategic decision-making capabilities.

Through collaboration with partners on data exchange, increasing data collected and housed at FTF, and commissioning new studies, the overall volume and utility of information will increase dramatically. The integrated longitudinal data system development ensures that the data collected will be organized and available for meaningful use and that data activities are housed within technology structures that facilitate long-term infrastructure building. Furthermore, with the interactive data displays and enhanced dissemination of data and evaluation analysis, regional councils, the Board, FTF staff, and early childhood champions and stakeholders will experience the reality of the increase in information and receive support to integrate it into their decision-making.

In order to measure progress, below are six key indicators of success:

- Community data displays, performance and implementation data reports, needs and assets reports, and other FTF sponsored reports are timely, accurate, relevant, and informative.
- Data displays, program performance data, needs and assets data, and findings of research and evaluation studies provide quality information to track system-wide progress in advancing improvement of key indicators and realize positive system-wide impacts.
- Data displays, reports, and study findings are communicated effectively to the public and elected officials to expand public knowledge of and will for early childhood care and education.
- Collaborations in data exchange and coordination are useful and relevant to all participants.
- Research and evaluation studies and data system interfaces result in useful and timely products consistent with the information needs and interests of the FTF Board and regional councils.
- Research and evaluation processes and capacity building activities help the Board, regional councils, and staff to re-evaluate strategic direction.

To measure these six indicators of success, FTF will develop, administer, analyze, and use three ongoing surveys: Grantee Partner Research and Evaluation Survey; Board, Regional Council, Staff and Community Research and Evaluation Survey; and the Agency Partner Research and Evaluation Survey. All surveys will explore satisfaction with, and recommendations for, improvements in research and evaluation activities and products. Surveys will be administered annually in March, with results available by September.

APPENDIX A

Budget Overview

This plan fulfills the FTF Board's request for a re-examination of FTF's research and evaluation approach and presents an implementation plan for the recommendations of the *FTF Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel* (Panel). It sets out the research and evaluation direction for the next five years, fiscal years 2013 through 2017.

To support these evaluation and data system efforts, the following budget presents a total, five year recommendation of $36,920,300. Of this amount, $4,300,000 is the current evaluation operating budget. Requested new allocations are in expanded evaluation project management, data collection and warehouse improvements, partner agency support, and studies.

Notes related to the evaluation budget:

1. Personnel requests related to FTF Data Collection and Warehouse Improvement assumes a maximum addition of 6.5 FTE IT staff, including 2 data warehouse administrators, 2 application specialists, 2 business analysts, and a part-time web architect/developer. In addition, it is also anticipated that a full time web/content master will be necessary as FTF expands its use of the web to communicate and display both content and data. Vacancies are projected to begin to be filled in late FY13 with all positions filled starting in FY15. The total number of positions filled may be less than the maximum projected; staffing need will be evaluated regularly based on workload. Proposed positions may be filled with contractors rather than staff members.

2. Personnel costs to support Expanded Evaluation Project Management assumes the addition of 4 FTE including 1 Tribal Data Specialist, 1 Evaluation Specialist, 1 Evaluation Project Specialist, and 1 intern. Vacancies are projected to begin to be filled in late FY13 with all positions filled starting in FY15. The total number of positions filled may be less than the maximum projected; staffing need will be evaluated regularly based on workload. Proposed positions may be filled with contractors rather than staff members.

3. During this major IT effort, FTF expects to engage additional IT resources through consulting contracts. This support will likely be directed to project management, design, and systems architecture coordination. The funds to support these costs are found in the P&OS line item.

4. In FY14, it is anticipated that FTF will purchase a Business Intelligence software package which will enable the dashboard presentation of data contained in the warehouse. It is further anticipated that this effort will require specialized programming from the product vendor, which is also contained in the P&OS line item.

5. National Panel Continued Oversight/Participation includes ongoing consultation for an annual meeting as well as interim consultation on specific projects. Additional outside evaluation services are detailed in the studies budget.

FTF Evaluation 5 Year Budget Plan

	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	Total
FTF Budget						
Current Evaluation Operating Budget						
Personnel Services	588,500	588,500	588,500	588,500	588,500	2,942,500
Employee Related Expenditures	195,000	195,000	195,000	195,000	195,000	975,000
Professional & Outside Services	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Other Operating Expenses	75,500	75,500	75,500	75,500	75,500	377,500
	860,000	860,000	860,000	860,000	860,000	4,300,000
Expanded Evaluation Project Management						
FTE	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	
Personnel Services	84,500	169,000	169,000	169,000	169,000	760,500
Employee Related Expenditures	32,090	64,180	64,180	64,180	64,180	288,810
Other Operating Expenses	17,400	34,800	34,800	34,800	34,800	156,600
Equipment (hardware replacement and upgrades)	2,250	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	20,250
	136,240	272,480	272,480	272,480	272,480	1,226,160
Data Collection and Warehouse Improvements						
FTE	3.00	6.75	7.50	7.50	7.50	
Personnel Services	241,000	529,500	577,000	577,000	577,000	2,501,500
Employee Related Expenditures	92,500	203,100	221,100	221,100	221,100	958,900
Professional & Outside Services	316,500	633,000	633,000	633,000	633,000	2,848,500
Other Operating Expenses	7,500	19,400	23,700	23,700	23,700	98,000
Equipment (hardware replacement and upgrades)	47,500	95,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	427,500
One-Time Software Purchase(s)	-	600,000				600,000
Contingency	45,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	405,000
	750,000	2,170,000	1,639,800	1,639,800	1,639,800	7,839,400
Partner Agency Support						
National Panel Continued Oversight/Participation	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	450,000
AZ Department of Education						
IT/Data Warehouse support	200,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	1,800,000
Kindergarten Developmental Inventory	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	3,000,000
AZ Department of Economic Security	200,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	1,800,000
AZ Department of Health Services	200,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	1,800,000
AHCCCS	200,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	1,800,000
	850,000	1,700,000	2,700,000	2,700,000	2,700,000	10,650,000
Professional and Outside Service	754,000	1,508,000	2,508,000	2,508,000	2,508,000	9,786,000
Operations	16,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	32,000	144,000
Equipment (hardware replacement and upgrades)	30,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	270,000
Contingency	30,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	270,000
Studies						
Quality First Implementation and Pre-Validation		800,000	1,300,000	800,000	800,000	3,700,000
Child Care Demand	50,000					50,000
Child Care Capacity		600,000	650,000			1,250,000
Compensation and Credentials	26,000					26,000
Workforce Survey		250,000	150,000			400,000
Home Visitation Study			300,000	1,000,000	950,000	2,250,000
Family and Community Survey	50,000	230,000	80,000	200,000	80,000	640,000
Oral Health		150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	600,000
Care Coordination/Medical Home			200,000	200,000		400,000
Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment	25,000					25,000
Children's Budget	90,000		90,000		90,000	270,000
Regional Needs and Assets	200,000	650,000	300,000	650,000	300,000	2,100,000
Statewide Needs and Assets	90,000	170,000	90,000	170,000	90,000	610,000
Evaluation Contingency	64,860	129,720	129,720	129,720	129,720	583,740
	595,860	2,979,720	3,439,720	3,299,720	2,589,720	12,904,740
Total	3,192,100	7,982,200	8,912,000	8,772,000	8,062,000	36,920,300
Funding Sources						
Statewide Funding Plan	319,210	798,220	891,200	877,200	806,200	3,692,030
Regional Funding Plans	2,872,890	7,183,980	8,020,800	7,894,800	7,255,800	33,228,270
Increase over current regional allotments	(1,060,110)	3,250,980	4,087,800	3,961,800	3,322,800	13,563,270

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADE	Arizona Department of Education
AHCCCS	Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
AzEIP	Arizona Early Intervention Program
CCHC	Child Care Health Consultation
DES	Department of Economic Security
DHS	Department of Health Services
FFN	Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care
FTF	First Things First – Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SRI	School Readiness Indicators
T.E.A.C.H.	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps