



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

- Agenda Item:** Presentation on Early Learning Update and Possible Discussion
- Attachment:** Early Learning Update (Attachment 06)
- Background:** The First Things First Policy staff will present periodic updates to the Regional Council.
- Recommendations:** The information is presented as an update and possible discussion. No action is required.
-

First Things First Updates

Early Learning Advisory Committee

EL Team

- Working on revisions to Scopes of Work, Data Templates and Data Reports for implementation in FY2016.
- Working on process for a “Buy In” model for QF to be implemented in FY2015

Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI)

A KDI taskforce was convened that included early childhood experts, K-12 administrators and teachers (including those from schools in Tribal communities), policymakers, program directors, higher education faculty and nonprofit executives. The taskforce completed a report that will be available on the FTF webpage in December, 2013 that describes key considerations related to the KDI instrument, necessary professional development and training and communication strategies.

- Five Domains of Learning Represented
 1. Physical well-being and motor development
 2. Social and emotional development
 3. Approaches toward learning
 4. Language and literacy development
 5. Cognitive development and general knowledge
- Essential Features of the KDI
 1. Formative in nature (that extends to 3rd grade)
 2. Defines learning holistically and accounts for children’s diverse learning styles
 3. Teacher friendly, using smart technologies
 4. Family and student friendly
 5. Builds on existing state work to develop KEAs and other educational assessments
 6. Relies on stakeholder engagement

Quality First Validation Study

- Two sequential studies will be conducted:
 1. Validation the Quality First Rating Scale (expected completion by June 30, 2015)

Findings from this question will be essential for continuous program improvement to inform decisions about whether and how to change or adapt resources and activities in ways that could improve Quality First implementation.

Primary Question to be answered: Do the tier levels of the Quality First Rating Scale represent differential levels of quality?

- Do providers that receive higher rating provide higher quality care than those who receive a lower rating?
- How do rating distributions for programs of different types vary?
- What is internal consistency of the rating scale components? How does each observational and structural component contribute to the overall rating? Does the rating scale range assess program quality in valid and expected ways?

- Do cut scores measure meaningful differences between rating levels?
- Is the Quality First Star Rating Scale reliable and valid?
- Are data for Quality First gathered with high levels of quality control and prospect and sardined procedures in place? What additional data elements are required to answer the second primary question below?
- Are the quality improvement components, including incentives, implemented as intended (fidelity of implementation)? Which ones or which combination works best in moving program to higher quality levels?
- Is the technical assistance provided by Quality First Coaching and the Specialized Technical Assistance Consultants (CCHC, MCH, and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs) adequate and effective in supporting programs and moving them to the next level of quality?

2. Evaluation of Changes in program quality and its relation to child progress outcomes (expected completion by June 30, 2017)

Primary Question to be answered: To what extent are changes in quality associated with improved child outcomes?

Quality First Website (qualityfirstaz.com)

- Spanish translation will be live in late November/early December.

CEO Search

- Anticipated date of CEO recommendation will be made to the FTF Board at the April meeting.

Professional Development Workgroup

- A two-year strategic plan finalized in January, 2013 is available on the First Things First website [Professional Development Two Year Strategic Plan](#)
- There are 3 subgroups:
 1. Degrees and Credentials a.
 - a. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) – preliminary report of current successful PLA’s in other states submitted November 25, 2013.
 - b. Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Education (AAECE) - Central Arizona College, Eastern Arizona College, Northland Pioneer College and Northern Arizona University are working to develop and pilot an AAECE that can be implemented at the community college and transfer to NAU as a junior in the Bachelor’s program.
 2. Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework a.
 - a. Career lattice and final competency revisions are under development and will be presented to the Professional development Workgroup on December 5, 2013.
 3. Registry and Website a.
 - a. Registry software has been purchased (Registry One) – full launch expected August, 2014
 - b. Website Launch has been delayed due to domain change

Home Visiting

FTF and MIECHV are currently collaborating to develop:

- a statewide referral system, and
- a statewide data collection and reporting system to measure and report on benchmarks for family and system outcomes.

- This is a major requirement of the federal Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program and a component of Arizona's MIECHV plan.
- The Arizona Outcomes Workgroup identified that current home visiting data systems of almost all funding partners had limitations and those data systems would present barriers to data sharing needed to compare and report on common outcomes.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant (ECCS)

- During this past year, the ECCS grant has been used to support the work of the Professional Development Workgroup...the registry software was recently purchased
- We were awarded new funding for the ECCS grant in August and will be focusing on the following for the coming years:
 - Map the system of screening and treatment services available to children 0-5 within the state.
 - Build a consistent database system that maps children from birth through school age; Include FTF QF data, FTF health and family support programs, Early Head Start, Head Start, Home visitation programs, immunization registry, Department of Economic Security (Part C); Department of Education (Part B and Special Education GOLD assessment data), AHCCCS –EPSDT, and Indian Health Services data to track screening, intervention and remediation of developmental delays to maximize a child's development.
 - Identify what kinds of supports desired by families with children with special needs
 - Conduct a survey of developmental screening tools being used within different sectors/agencies
 - Policy development and improve cross agency communication development

Quality Assurance

First Things First (FTF) has developed a quality assurance system that includes continuous performance and program monitoring. The quality assurance model will use a team approach conducted in collaboration with grant partners. A strength-based, comprehensive assessment will be used to evaluate the implementation of FTF standards of practice and to support grant partners to address specific issues and concerns. Results will be used to inform and strengthen FTF standards of practice and the early childhood system.

- State Fiscal Year: 2014, Quarter: 2, Month: November, Strategy/Strategies Assessed:
 - Family, Friends and Neighbors
 - Recruitment into Field
 - Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals
- Exemplary Practices Identified
 - Family, Friends and Neighbors:
 - The diverse skills of the coaches (social work, early education, etc.) and the commitment to match the most fitting coach with each provider
 - Recruitment into Field:
 - The organic cohort aspect of the participant group built an environment of connectedness and support among the participants
 - Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals:
 - Utilization of local presenters that are responsive to the participants' needs (including language and community knowledge)

Standard of Practice Suggested Revisions/Additions by Strategy:

- Family, Friends and Neighbors:
 - Ensure the target population for this strategy (non-Arizona Department of Health Services and non-Department of Economic Security) is clearly indicated in the Standard of Practice

- Recruitment into Field:
 - Possible clarity or additional explanation needed on the data reporting instructions for this strategy
- Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals:
 - Option for providing on-site childcare with any appropriate standards

Arizona Town Hall on Early Learning

- Arizona Town Hall on Early Learning occurred in the Grand Canyon, November 3 – 6th.
- Participants recommended the following cohesive set of actions:
 - Restoring and/or increasing funding to increase affordability and availability of early childhood care and educational programs
 - Focusing on the quality of educational opportunities and care through a cohesive vision and consistent standards
 - Encouraging collaboration and coordination across the early childhood community
 - Engaging in a comprehensive media, branding, and outreach campaign to communicate the importance of early childhood education and care and the availability of resources
 - Recruiting, developing, and retaining qualified early childhood educators

Visit <http://www.aztownhall.org/> for a full set of documents regarding the Town Hall including: ○ Discussion Outline

- List of participants
- Press Release
- Overview of the Town Hall Process
- Final Recommendations (full report that includes the above recommendations)
- Background Report