

East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council
Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2015

Welcome and Call to Order

A regular meeting of the First Things First East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council was held on February 18, 2015 at the Vista del Camino Park & Community Center, 7700 E. Roosevelt Street, Scottsdale 85257.

Chair Frank Narducci welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Chair Frank Narducci, Vice Chair Marie Raymond, Council Members Trinity Donovan, Cheryl Foster, Becky Henry, Bill Myhr, and Emily Rajakovich

Members Absent:

Council Members Beth Haas, Mary Permoda and Marin Velarde

There were eight members of the public present.

Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2015

Council Member Donovan moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 21, 2015. Council Member Foster seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously, 7-0.

Call to the Public

Chelsea Grieve with Thrive to Five provided an update on their program.

Find Help Phoenix Presentation

Adrienne Decker Delgado with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health/Find Help Phoenix presented information about their program and about their upcoming new website which will make it easier for the public to find the services they are looking for. This website has been developed using the input from five focus groups with a total of 38 individuals providing feedback on both of the website versions. Ms. Delgado also answered questions from the Council members about the website and Find Help Phoenix's services.

First Things First Quality Assurance Site Visits

Regional Director Conrad Lindo provided information to the Council members about the Quality Assurance site visit to Tempe Community Council's Thrive to Five program in December, 2014.

Early Childhood Every Day Training

Community Outreach Coordinator Joy Leveen continued with Part 2 of the Early Childhood Every Day training which she had begun at the last council meeting on January 21, 2015. Joy also asked the Council members for their assistance at events and introducing her to community members. Council members were encouraged to approach community members about First Things First and share the core messages. Joy further asked Council members to think of who else might benefit from this training and what the Council members may need to feel

confident to approach individuals about First Things First. She will be calling or emailing Council members within the next two weeks to follow up.

Chair Narducci asked Community Outreach Coordinator Leveen to contact him to set up presentations to his school principals and health employees for the district and he volunteered to co-present.

Community Outreach Update

Community Outreach Coordinator Joy Leveen updated the Council on community outreach activities for the month of January and upcoming activities listed on her monthly report. Mrs. Leveen also outlined the Champion Recognition Program and provided names to the Council members for consideration to be nominated for the award from this region.

Director Updates

Regional Director Lindo stated he attended a meeting hosted by Quality First with providers in the East Maricopa and Southeast Maricopa regions to explain the strategic planning process, budget cuts and the resultant cuts in funding for scholarships in FY2016 in the regions. He stated that the information was very well received by the providers.

Regional Director Lindo referred the Council members to the Quality First update which was part of the meeting packet.

Regional Director Lindo discussed the report which was sent jointly by the Arizona Department of Child Safety and First Things First to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. He noted that there is now a process mandating all First Things First grantees to report suspected child abuse and neglect and that provision has been added to the scopes of work. In response to a question from Chair Narducci, Regional Director Lindo stated that the Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Coalition has put together a speaker series to train providers about how to identify suspected abuse and they are more than happy to present the training to anyone who would like to receive it. Child Help provides the annual mandatory training on this issue. In response to a question from Council Member Donovan, Regional Director Lindo stated he will find out whether or not the matching funds from First Things First for the Child Care and Development Fund are in danger due to the reductions in scholarship funding in some regions or if funding in other areas can be considered as the match to draw down the funds.

Regional Director Lindo stated that Dr. Myhr will be hosting the April council meeting at Fort McDowell. In addition, due to the necessity to have all Request For Grant Applications and grant renewals submitted to the First Things Board by May 15, the May 20 East Maricopa council meeting will be held on May 13 versus May 20 as presently scheduled.

Regional Council Updates

Council Member Rajakovich presented information about a conference she will be attending on February 26 entitled, "Funding Civic Engagement in Arizona" about how to foster civic engagement in the grant-making and decision-making processes to provide more effective outcomes.

Everyone congratulated Vice Chair Raymond on her new position with the City of Tempe as their Education Coordinator, which is the city's liaison with the school districts.

Chair Narducci stated that everyone enjoyed getting together last month and that quarterly socials will be held, with the next one being scheduled before the summer. Attendance at these socials is not mandatory.

In response to a question from Council Member Foster, Regional Director Lindo clarified that the First Things First Summit will be held on August 24 and 25 and that while there is no obligation for Council members to attend, it would be nice to have Council members attend at least on Tuesday for the luncheon and closing.

Regional Director Lindo reported on the Faith Forum he and Council Member Permoda attended. The forum was for the Faith representatives from each of the regions with 18 of the regions' Faith representatives in attendance. The forum was held at the request of the Faith representatives for First Things First to further develop a job description of the role of the Faith seats in each of the Councils. Council Member Permoda participated in a panel discussion and shared examples of successes of Faith representatives engaging the community.

Adjournment

Chair Narducci asked for any additional questions or comments from the Council and receiving none adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted By _____
Caitlyn Hollins, Administrative Assistant III

Approved By _____
Frank Narducci, Chair

DRAFT



FIRST THINGS FIRST

EAST MARICOPA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

SFY 2015

2nd Quarter Grantee Data and Narrative Summary Report

for Community Awareness and

Family Support Strategies

City of Chandler
Community Awareness Strategy

TOTAL AWARD: \$20,000	SFY15 Q2 FUNDS EXPENDED: 0.0%	\$0
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		N/A
TOTAL NUMBER		N/A

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

We have expanded our outreach to include churches and college campuses. We are getting more requests for speaking events. In July (2014) the IRS granted the CAPAC 501(c)(3) status.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

We have added two more position to the board and have begun expanding the membership. Right now things are moving forward and we are starting to see improvements. Since expanding the board, we are seeing a new momentum in the coalition.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

None at this time, since adding board members, we have seen more success.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

We have been successful in reaching out to new groups, such as Cornerstone Church, Chandler Gilbert Community College and Mesa Community College. Most recently we have had great exposure with the Exchange Club. We will continue to grow these relationships.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Nothing at this point, we are expanding and working on new ideas. The Speakers Bureau has starting gaining momentum and we are seeing an increase in requests, as listed above in the first quarter presentations. Very Exciting!

Chandler Christian Community Center
Family Support Strategy- Family Resource Center

TOTAL AWARD: \$400,000	SFY15 Q2 FUNDS EXPENDED: (24.9%)	\$99,411
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT:		12,000
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	8938
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING RESOURCE & REFERRAL INFORMATION	Q2:	10,522
NUMBER OF FAMILIES (0-5 YRS) REFERRED TO SERVICES OFFERED AT THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	8,022
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING REFERRALS TO AGENCIES OUTSIDE OF THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	916
NUMBER OF FOOD BOXES DISTRIBUTED	Q2:	2,685
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO COMPLETED A PROGRAM MODEL SERIES	Q2:	48

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

40 families, 10% of all Operation Santa families, attended classes to increase skills in many different areas, including parenting, nutrition, child safety, story times and many others. Parents had the opportunity to attend classes to earn points for higher end gifts for their children. This enables parents to be involved in the process of providing Christmas gifts for their children when they are unable to financially.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

None at this time.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

We continue celebrating that we are undergoing an expansion project that will provide us with additional classroom space, yet the adjustments to our classroom space in order to accommodate the construction project has brought some challenges. This has reduced our child watch area, yet we are continuing to provide quality programs and care during this time of transition. We have initially reduced the number of children in the Giggles, Squiggles and Squirms early literacy program by 5 children until the completion of the project.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

In a collaborative effort 1,150 children received assistance for the holidays. Of this number 584 were 5 and under members of the families. This event brought together over 200 volunteers, and 30 agencies, who together, worked to provide the much needed assistance to Chandler's most vulnerable children, helping to bring smiles and joy to families in need. Reduced duplication of services continues as collaborative efforts increase to share lists of families registered for various program throughout the community, increasing the level of efficiency and effectiveness in reaching as many in need as possible.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Chandler Christian Community Center continues to strive to work collaboratively and build relationships with other service providing agencies to maximize the services available to our families. Our volunteer base is crucial to the success of our programs, including the distribution of food boxes, and in the outreach area, which has provided us with a connection for recruitment.

Chandler Unified School District
Family Support Strategy – Family Resource Center

TOTAL AWARD: \$398,568	SFY15 Q2 FUNDS EXPENDED: (42.6%)	\$169,914
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT:		5,491
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	11,444
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING RESOURCE & REFERRAL INFORMATION	Q2:	12,438
NUMBER OF FAMILIES (0-5 YRS) REFERRED TO SERVICES OFFERED AT THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	9,997
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING REFFERALS TO AGENCIES OUTSIDE THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	1,447
NUMBER OF FOOD BOXES DISTRIBUTED	Q2:	2,815
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO COMPLETED A PROGRAM MODEL SERIES	Q2:	147

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

In December, The Chandler CARE Center had its traditional toy distribution event. During a month, the CARE Center and the Title I parent liaisons registered about 475 Chandler families and their children 0 to 18 years-old. 1110 children including more than 350 FTF received gifts.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

During this second quarter, a new FTF clerk was hired to assist with health insurance enrollment application. The number of applications has been sustained, but it is expected to increase as the new member of our team gets familiar with the enrollment process. Also, the new staff member is providing assistance to the parent program coordinator.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

No barriers this quarter.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

J. is a devoted mother of four. Several years ago, when her oldest son was three, she registered for Giggles, Squiggle, and Squirms program. She was successfully able to prepare him for school. Three more children were born in the next few years, and J. invested all her efforts to take care of her children's needs. While her two older children go to CUSD's gifted academy, her younger children stay at home with mom. In January 2014, while she was looking for inexpensive and enriched programs for her two younger children, she found out about the First Things First parent education program at the CARE Center. J. was very interested in the several programs offered at different locations such as musicology, and Brain Time. While attending to these classes, one of her children had occasional temper tantrums, and J. would get frustrated and leave the class. We realized that her daughter was young, and lacked the maturity to stay engaged during some of the longer classes. We encouraged J. to continue attending to classes and activities. Parents and instructors provided a welcoming environment for her and her children. As J. and her children became more comfortable, we started to notice improvement in her daughter's behavior. She was more engaged and able to follow routines and directions. Now J. is able to help her daughter without getting frustrated, she thinks that the classes had provided the social interaction, the structured routines, and the learning opportunities that capture her daughter's attention. The classes have also provided the social interaction and down time that J. needs to face another day in a mother's busy schedule.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Chandler CARE Center parent program coordinator is working with Conley Elementary staff members to bring additional classes to prepare children going to school for the first time in July. We will offer two Kinder Prep classes during April, giving priority to children that register for kindergarten at Conley Elementary.

Lately, parents have been requesting more information about programming at our different locations. Through word of mouth parents who are required by CPS to take parenting classes have found out that our parent education program is good resource for them.

**Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. – Parenting Arizona
Family Support Strategy - Guadalupe Family Resource Center**

TOTAL AWARD: \$149,946	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (51.7%)	\$77,587
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT:		1500
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2	357
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING RESOURCE & REFERRAL INFORMATION	Q2:	578
NUMBER OF FAMILIES (0-5 YRS) REFERRED TO SERVICES OFFERED AT THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	326
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING REFFERALS TO AGENCIES OUTSIDE THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	31
NUMBER OF FOOD BOXES DISTRIBUTED	Q2:	173
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO COMPLETED A PROGRAM MODEL SERIES	Q2:	32

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

Cumulatively for SFY15, there have been seven sessions of classes that have competed. Four sessions in the first reporting period were completed and three sessions in the second reporting period were completed. The first quarter of classes had 28 participants enrolled 14 completed at 100% and 1 completing at 75%-99%. Of the 28 participants, 13 did not complete. In the second quarter, 35 participants enrolled, 16 completed at 100%, 1 completed at 75%-99%. Of the 35 participants, 18 did not complete. For the year, 32 out of 63 participants have completed at a 75%-100% completion rate.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

There are no staffing issues at this time. The family resource center is fully staffed.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

The Guadalupe Family Resource Center staff is currently trained to facilitate AHCCCS applications however, the staff had not been able to access the HEA-Plus system during this reporting period. The HEA-Plus system is what is used to help applicant’s complete AHCCCS enrollment applications. The Guadalupe Family Resource Center staff/management was able to access the HEA-Plus system at the end of December. Although the Guadalupe Family Resource Center staff was able to direct participants to other resources for their applications, the resource center staff was not able to complete any applications during much of this reporting period.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Staff Training

Date	Staff Name (attending)	Topics	Hour(s)
10/7/2014	Renato Ramos	HEA Plus Training	8
12/2-12/4	Renato Ramos & Jessica Gutierrez	Nurturing Parenting Training	24

**Tempe Community Council – Thrive to Five
Family Support Strategy - Family Resource Center**

TOTAL AWARD: \$460,000	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (18.3%)	\$84,301
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT:		7,500
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	9287
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING RESOURCE & REFERRAL INFORMATION	Q2:	8,161
NUMBER OF FAMILIES (0-5 YRS) REFERRED TO SERVICES OFFERED AT THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	8,157
NUMBER OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (0-5 YRS) RECEIVING REFFERALS TO AGENCIES OUTSIDE THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER	Q2:	1,130
NUMBER OF FOOD BOXES DISTRIBUTED	Q2:	892
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO COMPLETED A PROGRAM MODEL SERIES	Q2:	195

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

Thrive to Five experienced our first site visit at the beginning of December 14. We worked hard preparing for the visit, and our specialist visited a class in all five family resource centers. She seemed impressed by each site. In our final report, we received 4 exemplary practice notices.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

Our only change in staffing occurred when our project coordinator, Deb Baldemore, took a job with the Department of Education. In her stead, we have hired a new part time administrative assistant, Crystal Carrillo. Crystal is a student at ASU. She is scheduled to graduate in December 2015 with a BA in Global Health and a Certificate in Non-profit Leadership and Management. Crystal began at the beginning of December 2014 and has already provided a great deal of support to Thrive to Five.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

Our most current challenge is the transition of Thrive to Five to the school district, and it will continue to be ongoing until details are finalized. The current issues include human resources as well as determining how finances will be handled with the program. These are normal challenges when any program considers transitioning, and Thrive to Five staff are confident the program will remain successful.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

In Fall 2014, a new family from California enrolled their children in Curry Elementary. As Mom registered her older children, parent liaison Vycki noticed a little one lingering by Mom's side. Vycki gave Mom a flyer for the Curry Family Resource Center Thrive to Five classes and explained what Thrive to Five had to offer as well as the importance of early childhood learning. Mom was very surprised the family resource centers offered free classes to help with literacy and parenting. She said she was unaware of any programs like this in California. Excited, she enrolled in parent/child interactive classes. According to Mom, free childcare for her older children makes it easier to concentrate with her little one while in the class. She also appreciates the dinners provided as part of the evening classes. Since discovering Thrive to Five at Curry, Mom and family have participated in many fun Curry events, such as Winter Wonderland and Coffee Talk. According to Mom, she is grateful that the Curry Family Resource Center offers so many wonderful classes; the classes help her feel part of the Curry Community while also helping her to prepare her little one for Kindergarten. As a parent liaison, it is always wonderful to see a family interact and become part of the school community.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Thrive to Five will offer 1 hour **Hooked on Phonics** classes to explain to caregivers how to use Hooked on Phonics kits at home. Each family who attends the class will receive a Hooked on Phonics kit worth approximately \$200. The first two classes will take place at the Curry Family Resource Center in January. The Thrive to Five Program Manager will teach the class.

The Thrive to Five Facebook page is steadily gaining more "likes" and interactions. Families are beginning to ask Thrive to Five questions about classes and services on posts.

In the fall, our two literacy instructors attended Books Can training with Scottsdale Public Library to learn about the changes in the Books Can curriculum. Beginning in January 2015, Thrive to Five Books Can classes will follow the new curriculum.

**Arizona Partnership for Children (AzPaC) –
Home Visitation Strategy (Parents As Teachers) -**

TOTAL AWARD: \$305,309	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED YTD: (56.7%)	\$173,163
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		125
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	94
NUMBER OF HEARING SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	35
NUMBER OF VISION SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	45
NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS CONDUCTED	Q2:	62
NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SCREENING	Q2:	142

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

This quarter we were able to fill staff vacancies and are fully staffed as of the end of the quarter. We are in the process of ensuring the new employees are fully trained, including certification in the Parents as Teachers curriculum.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

This quarter we were able to fill staff vacancies and are fully staffed as of the end of the quarter. We are in the process of ensuring the new employees are fully trained, including certification in the Parents as Teachers curriculum.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

We continue to have a wait list for the Central Region. Ten families were accepted from the Wait List in the 2nd Quarter. All ten of these families have enrolled. Twenty-three families are still on the waiting list. Serving the families who have been waiting a long time on the Central Region wait list continues to be a priority for AzPaC.

The program is working on successfully implementing the National Parents as Teachers Quality Assurance Guidelines. Many of these guidelines are not an issue for the program including the number of required visits for non-high needs families, providing resources to families, setting goals, and hosting Group Connection events. However, it has proven challenging to meet with families who qualify as “high needs” twice each month, as these are the families who cancel most frequently. The program staff has worked very diligently on meeting with high needs clients twice each month.

Accurate data collection for the information newly added to the FTF data templates continues to be challenging. We utilize the Visit Tracker database system recommended by the Parents as Teachers National Center. Results for vision, hearing, and developmental screenings are entered into the system, yet Visit Tracker is not currently capable of running a report that summarizes the number of children whose screening indicated a delay and subsequently received an additional evaluation. At this time there are also items on the health insurance enrollment report that we do not have a method for collecting, including the number of families requesting assistance with re-enrollment and the number of families ineligible for insurance who were referred to low cost or sliding scale health services. We have been actively working with other FTF grantees and PAT providers in seeking clarification from FTF on the definitions of these data points as well as data collection methods and approaches for staff training on these new areas.

Parent Educators reported the following challenges:

It has been difficult to get our parents to interact more during our group connections. We are planning to change the format of our play groups to see if the families open up more and get to know one another better.

I have continued to struggle with meeting the visit frequency with my high needs families as they deal with crisis: relationship problems, job instability, and conflicting appointments with other service providers. I continue to staff these cases during supervision and work with the families to improve the consistency of visits.

A number of families cancelled visits due to illness or the holiday season.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

Below are some successes shared by Parent Educators:

I have had several comments from families about the PAT curriculum activities: One mom commented to me that she loves the part of the PAT program where she can talk to someone about her son's behavior, and know that this is 'typical' of a 2 year old. Another mom told me that the program gives her more confidence in her parenting skills.

Families continue to join us for our Spanish Play groups at the park. We've had several families who have become familiar faces we see every month. We had 2 new faces at last month's Spanish Play Group.

A single mother of a 4 month old child shared that as a result of the learning the benefits of tummy time and utilizing the information; her child is attempting to crawl and is becoming more mobile.

This quarter I had a child who aged out of the program with improved language development and social skills. The parents feel more confident that the child will be successful in school since an IEP is in place at school.

2 of my families attended the Spanish Play Group for the first time in November, and I was able to introduce them to the other moms. The parents were able to share ideas and exchanged contact information.

I worked with a child in need of evaluation and services for ADHD. The mother was very concerned about the child's behavior and possibility of him getting removed from his preschool. After working with the mom and addressing

barriers, she was able to talk to the school and work on a behavior plan that is a good fit for the child and his classroom. The child has since done very well and recently won an award at a poetry contest.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

The two agencies of AzPaC (Devereux and Catholic Charities) are committed to the recruitment and retention of dedicated and qualified staff members. Both agencies post open positions internally first. If the open position is not filled by an internal candidate, Catholic Charities then posts on Career Builder and Devereux posts on Jobing.com. Job fairs and staff member recruitment are two other ways AzPaC recruits for open positions.

The Program Coordinators have come up with some great staff retention activities, including regular teambuilding activities and a "Parent Educator of the Month" award. Additionally, both agencies of AzPaC have employee recognition programs in place. A Celebrations Committee, consisting of staff from both agencies, is responsible for holiday, birthday and team celebrations.

It is very important for management to address any needs, wants, and concerns of the staff members in a timely manner. Program Supervisors actively work toward streamlining processes for paperwork and documentation requirements. Management also strives to address any needs for program supplies or trainings in a timely manner. Both agencies actively support professional development.

Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation
Home Visitation Strategy (Early Steps to School Success)

TOTAL AWARD: \$165,809	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (50.0%)	\$82,905
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		40
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	27
NUMBER OF HEARING SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	0
NUMBER OF VISION SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	0
NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS CONDUCTED	Q2:	99
NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SCREENING	Q2:	98

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation: FMYN

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

There are currently 43 children at the ‘Hman ‘shawa Early Childhood Development Center who are participating in the Book Exchange Program. There were 147 home visits conducted during this reporting period.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

There were no issues related to staffing during this reporting period.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

The Early Steps to Success Program received telephone support from Save the Children as they were searching for a new Program Specialist who would normally visit the Site monthly. Save the Children hired a new Program Specialist and monthly visits will resume in January.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

Staff and Mom have been working with Emilio since he was he was 3 months old. Emilio was born 4 weeks early. Staff provided Mom with a Raising a Reader book bag and encouraged her to begin reading daily to her infant son. Throughout her time in the program, Mom has maintained a solid reading routine with Emilio. Around 18-20 months, staff and Mom began discussing Emilio’s use of language. He typically babbled still and barely spoke any clear words. Staff and Mom discussed the progression of typically language development and decided that

we would evaluate Emilio further using our Ages and Stages Questionnaires. Around 23-24 months, staff and Mom began discussing AZEIP services. Mom decided she would like to give it a try. Staff referred Mom to AZEIP in 12/2014. Mom has begun the process of receiving AZEIP assessments and is currently also deciding on speech therapy services offered through her child's day care. ESSS staff is providing supportive services to help guide Mom through the AZEIP process by being present at all screenings, as well as acting as liaison between Mom and her daycare therapist.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Nothing further at this time.

Southwest Human Development
Home Visitation Strategy (Healthy Families)

TOTAL AWARD: \$252,919	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (55.4%)	\$140,185
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		75
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	Q2:	90
NUMBER OF HEARING SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	0
NUMBER OF VISION SCREENING CONDUCTED	Q2:	0
NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS CONDUCTED	Q2:	73
NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SCREENING	Q2:	52

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

- Healthy Families utilizes the Ages and stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social emotional (ASQ-SE) with each child in the family who is under 5 years old.
- Home visitors utilize the information to set child development goals with the family. If a child is suspected to have a developmental delay based on the screen, a referral for further testing is given to the family.
- This past quarter Healthy Families has identified 1 child as having a possible developmental delay and referred the children to the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) or the appropriate school district.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

As of December 2014, a new manager came on board for one of the teams serving SEM. She will begin interviews in January 2015 to fill the one open FSS slot on that team.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

We continue to hope for the development of a contractual relationship with more birthing hospitals in the region to ensure the program is meeting the needs of as many families as possible. Our plan is to continue to serve at capacity in order to support the families who need the intensive services Healthy Families provides.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

Family Story #4:

Mom and dad wanted to be sure they were providing all the best for their child. The FSS had focused on the importance of interactions with their daughter. She explained it didn't mean buying a lot of toys especially since this young couple had a limited budget. The FSS incorporated curriculum into home visits that focused on developmental skills. When it came time to create a goal for this family, the parents chose to make an activity calendar to enhance and support their daughter's development. The FSS provided a calendar template and the parents reviewed curriculum until they had 30 activities they could do every day with their child. This included walks around the block pointing out birds, flowers and colors so baby would hear a lot of language. They spent time on the floor with baby to help her motors skills. Each month for six months, a new calendar page was created and the parents became very adept at choosing activities that would support her development. During this time frame, two child development assessments were administered and baby scored typical in all areas.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

There are numerous risk factors for families who participate in the Healthy Families program within Maricopa County. All enrolled families have at least one of the following risk factors however, more often than not; a multitude of risk factors will exist for both the parents and children.

- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Mental or behavioral health issues
 - *Parents who are depressed, anxious, suicidal*
- Financial stressors
 - *Unemployed*
 - *Foreclosure*
- Isolated
 - *Lack transportation or have limited social support network*
- Lack of or limited access to health care
 - *Children born prematurely, with birth defects or disabilities*
- Single parenthood
- History of parental child-abuse
 - *We parent as we have been parented*

Home visiting is not a program; it is a *strategy* to provide a myriad of services directly to families within the home. All home visits are continually linked one visit to another in a variety of ways. Home visitors regularly update and discuss all families with their managers and utilize specialized consultants such as a mental health professional, nurse, and child development/disabilities specialist.

Arizona Children’s Association
Parent Education Community Based Training Strategy

TOTAL AWARD: \$389,411	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (41.9%)	\$163,328
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		474
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS SERVED	Q2:	195

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation:

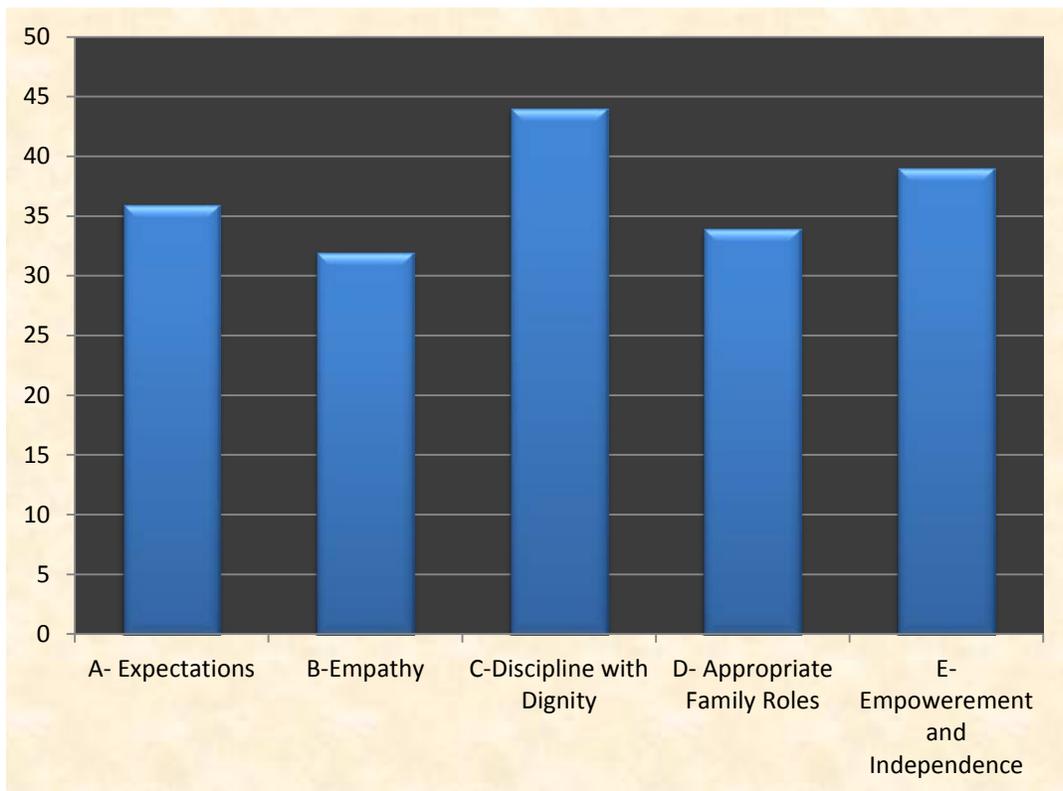
Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

Attendance and makeup classes for participants of *Nurturing Parenting* series held at Chandler Christian Community Center, East Valley Academy and Mesa SPOT has been wonderful. Participants are happy to attend makeup sessions by flexing their personal schedules to accommodate their attendance.

We had a total of 84 participants enrolled in *Nurturing Parenting* during this second quarter with 61 having completed the series at 80% or higher. The majority of participants were Hispanic (43) with Caucasian and Asian rounding out the remainder. The majority were females in their 30’s, high school graduates and a few with some college. 49% indicated that they would spend more time with their children and were very satisfied with the series. 97% of the participants who completed the series showed gains in one or more of the AAPI Concepts. The following breakdown is significant.

- 6 participants showed gains in 5 out of 5 of the *Nurturing Parenting* concept areas
- 20 showed 4 out of 5 gains
- 16 showed 3 out of 5 gains
- 9 showed 1 out of 5 gains
- 2 showing no gains

The greatest gains were in the area of Discipline (see chart below), which is a major accomplishment given the number of DCS referrals we get into the program.



Twelve (12) participants were enrolled in the *S.T.E.P.S.® Plus* series, 10 completing the series at 80% or higher. The majority were Caucasian females in their 30's with college, undergraduate and some graduate level course work. Parents indicated that they wanted to spend more time with their child now that they have attended the series and they were very satisfied with the quality of the series.

- 2 participants (20%) showed 5 out of 5 gains in the concept areas
- 2 (20%) showed 4 out of 5
- 1 (10%) showed gains in 3 out of 5
- 2 (20%) showed gains in 2 out of 5
- 3 (30%) showed gains in 1 out of 5
- 0 (0 %) showed 0 gains

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

We are adequately staffed for program implementation.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

No systemic barriers to successful implementation were experienced.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

NDI has had amazing success providing our workshop series to teen parents at the **East Valley Academy**. Staff worked with the teachers to add more contact hours for the students in order to get HS credit for their attendance. We added our 3 session *Brain Time* to the end of the *Nurturing Parenting* series. All the moms brought their babies and toddlers to *Brain Time* sessions and learned the importance of attention, bonding and communication with their child. Adding these sessions provided additional support staff felt the teens needed to promote the quality of their interactions with their children. We are scheduled to provide another series because this one was so successful. In fact, this venue/series was chosen by FTF for the site visit.

A mother of two children enrolled in the Gilbert Nurturing Parenting class reported that she is using the new communication strategies she's learned in class with her two year old son and finding that her eight year old daughter is seeing its effectiveness. She shared that her eight year old daughter announced she would try talking to her little brother calmly too.

Another Gilbert mother shared that she was noticing a shift in her priorities since starting the Nurturing Parenting class. She is engaging in more time with her daughters (3 yrs. and 6 yrs. old). She reported that she usually feels like she's achieved success when the house is organized and clean but now she felt a little lost with things being disorganized around her while she spent her time with her children. When she approached her husband about the house work not being finished all the time and her feelings of discomfort. When he questioned why there was a difference in house work, she explained her time was being spent engaged with the girls now. He supported her new behaviors and she said she is working on accepting the shift in priorities.

Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Date	Staff Name (attending)	Topics	Hour(s)
10/11	DyAnn O'Brien, Yaneth Laird, Dr. Jill Stamm	<i>Difficult Behavior in Toddlers and Preschoolers</i> , a 4-part training by Bob and Barb Weigand of the ASU Child Development Lab	3.0
10/18	Kelly Burgess	<i>Wired For Success</i> ®	4.0
11/7	Yaneth Laird, Tessa Nussbaum	<i>CPR, AED and Basic First Aid</i>	4.0
11/19	Rebecca Chriss, Wendy Puga, Linda Taroli, Paula Joseph, Heather Dennis, Tessa Nussbaum, Yaneth Laird, Amy Martin, Tracie Radawec, Pamela Webb, DyAnn O'Brien	<i>Reflective Supervision</i> , Holly King (CFR) presented	1.25
Nov, Dec	Yaneth Laird, newly hired Parent Educator	<i>Program Specific Orientation, NDI Nurturing Parenting and Brain Time workshop observations</i>	31.0
12/2-4	Yaneth Laird	<i>Nurturing Parent Trainer Workshop</i> in Tucson with Dr. Stephen Bavolek	21.0
12/19	Wendy Puga	<i>Mandatory Reporter Training</i>	2.0
12/22	Rebecca Chriss	<i>Mandatory Reporter Training</i>	2.0

City of Scottsdale
Parent Education Community Based Training Strategy

TOTAL AWARD: \$165,000	SFY15 FUNDS EXPENDED: (48.6%)	\$80,190
CONTRACTED SERVICE UNIT		83
TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS SERVED	Q2:	84

Narratives Reports Summary

Program Implementation: City of Scottsdale

Are there any specific outcomes that have been achieved during this reporting period that may not be reflected in the data reporting you have completed?

We have noticed a 20% increase overall in the number of adults completing our classes. We attribute this to continued encouragement by staff to let adults know about the importance of attending all the classes and by incentivizing attendance for those adults who complete 75% or 100% of the classes.

Describe current issues related to staffing necessary for program implementation.

One of our well-liked Bilingual Parent Educators moved out of Arizona in October. We were fortunate to be able to hire a replacement immediately and could begin training and incorporating the new staff member into classes before the previous staff person left.

Describe any barriers to successful implementation or other challenges. If the challenge is ongoing, what is your plan for resolving these issues?

We are not currently finding any barriers or challenges that impact implementation of our programs.

Collaboration and Communication:

Are there successes that can be shared during this reporting period? Include success stories that would be of interest to stakeholders including First Things First Regional Partnership Councils, the Board of First Things First or the general public.

Comment from a Parent Educator from a Fun with Math and Science class:

Last fall I was teaching Fun With Math and Science at Mustang Library. Every week, I had a little girl, Samantha come with her Grandma and Grandpa. They participated enthusiastically each week. One week, her Grandma came up to me after class to thank me for the lesson. She told me they had enjoyed the classes very much. She said that not only did they love being able to spend the time with their granddaughter but that she had never thought about using picture books to talk about math and science concepts. She thanked me again and told me she was going to be sure to sign up for more of our classes when the new schedule came out.

Written comment from a parent at an Appaloosa Stay and Play class:

After living in Washington State for a number of years, my husband's new job brought us to Arizona in 2012. After visiting the Appaloosa Library we found out about First Things First program. My daughter and I have attended many of the Knowing and Growing programs they have offered. The Knowing and Growing programs have benefitted our family greatly.

They have helped our family navigate through some of the many challenges that have arisen in the first years of childhood. *The Common Sense Parenting of Toddlers and Preschoolers* program was a great resource for both my husband and I. We learned what our daughter was able to grasp and how to approach common challenges that she was going to facing in the near future. This program tackled topics like tantrums, potty training, and communication. This program was unique because the speaker and other seasoned parents brought up great tips and ideas. This was especially helpful because my daughter is our first and only child.

The Stay and Play program has also been beneficial. We have learned about local resources, water safety, and overall health. We have found some great meal ideas and learned about some great parks and splash pads at Stay and Play. My daughter and I enjoyed the ever changing art activities and hands-on toys.

Perhaps the most beneficial programs we have attended are *The Get Ready to Read* and *Books Can* programs. My daughter loves books and we have been introduced to some exceptional authors like Mo Willems, Karma Wilson, and Janan Cain, just to name a few. These programs have only added to her love for reading. In addition to fostering her reading, these programs have helped her vocalize her emotions through fun books and creative follow-up activities.

The Knowing and Growing programs have provided us with important information about local resources, great tips, and given us a fun and comfortable place to meet and interact with other caregivers and their children. Throughout our experience we have listened to some wonderful professionals and have been able to meet great families. We are very fortunate to have been able to attend the programs offered by The First Things First grant.

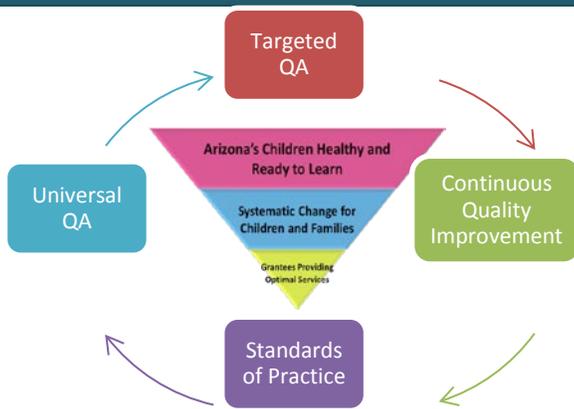
Support or Additional Information:

Describe any additional information you would like to share about program implementation.

Staff Training

Date	Staff Name (attending)	Topics	Hour(s)
10/3/14	Mirna Smith	Storytime Training	6
10/20/14	Mirna Smith Paul Whitney Ann Lynn DiDomenico	Books Can... curriculum training	8
10/25/14	Cheryl Garnice	Arizona Reading Association Institute, "Core, Comprehension, Collaboration	6
11/21/14	Cheryl Garnice Mirna Smith	Examining Early Dual Language Learners from a Strength Based Perspective	6
12/10/14 12/1 2/14	Marie Raymond	Zero to Three Training Institute	21
12/11/14	Cheryl Garnice	Best of the Best: Footprints from the States, Greater Paradise Valley Reading Council	2

First Things First Quality Assurance Site Visit



Grantee Name: American Academy of Pediatrics - AZ Chapter
Contract ID: FTF-MULTI-14-0461-04-Y2, FTF-MULTI-14-0467-02-Y2
Strategy: Care Coordination/Medical Home
Regional Partnership Council: Phoenix South, East Maricopa, Southeast Maricopa
Site Visit Date: 12/8/2014-12/12/2014

Overall Impression

It was evident during the assessment with Arizona American Academy of Pediatrics (AzAAP) program for Care Coordination and Medical Home, that they are dedicated to building their program to support the values of care coordination in private pediatric practices. According to AzAAP through their partnerships in the community “AzAAP is the only organization testing multiple care coordination programs in private practice for pediatric patients. The information gathered will leave a legacy footprint on the State as we continue exploring ways that pediatric practices can best improve the health of their patients”. AzAAP’s role as a chapter is to influence and educate other professionals on the importance of implementing high quality developmental screening methods. Currently, AzAAP hosts the statewide training for the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) Tool. In addition, AzAAP has partnered with the University of Arizona in the creation of the online Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) system. Over the last three years, AzAAP reported having a high turnover rate in leadership and as a result each manager has brought a different approach and management style creating continuous modifications to implementation. A by-product of this continuous modification is management reflecting on what they have learned from the pediatrician offices they are currently with and trying to find ways to support offices that are unable to afford implementing Care Coordination and Medical Home into their practices. As a result of turnover, AzAAP has recently hired Cheryl Swain as an Independent Consultant to support the development of the Care Coordination program. Ms. Swain’s duties will also include meeting with current and new Care Coordinators, pediatric practices, and pediatricians to support collaboration. Based on the Quality Assurance site visit, a Corrective Action Plan was developed in collaboration with AzAAP to ensure they are moving forward with implementing services that align with the expectations outlined in the Standard of Practice (SOP). Based on areas of development identified, AzAAP will complete the following:

- Ensure business practices are in compliance with the SOP and their contract, including but not limited to services provided to children, program materials, and Care Plan implementation.
- AzAAP moving forward will provide services to demographic outlined in their contractual agreement.
- Ensure that Care Coordinators’ caseloads will provide them with ample opportunity to effectively track and support the families they are serving.
- Obey HIPAA and FERPA laws and obtain appropriate consent.
- Create guidelines and policies for training requirements.
- Provide clear and concise training for pediatricians regarding the role and structure of the Care Coordinator and the Care Coordination/Medical Home model.
- Provide clear and concise training for Care Coordinators regarding their role, boundaries, and structure of implementation.
- Develop policies and procedures regarding mandatory reporting and ensure they are in compliance with the state law. Care Coordinators will be trained and supported on the AzAAP policy.



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Ready for School. Set for Life.

First Things First Quality Assurance Site Visit



Grantee Name: American Academy of Pediatrics - AZ Chapter
Contract ID: FTF-MULTI-14-0461-04-Y2, FTF-MULTI-14-0467-02-Y2
Strategy: Care Coordination/Medical Home
Regional Partnership Council: Phoenix South, East Maricopa, Southeast Maricopa
Site Visit Date: 12/8/2014-12/12/2014

- Provide structured and consistent one-on-one supervision.
- Develop and/or implement a flow/structure of service delivery that supports the Care Coordinators.
- While each program can be unique in implementation, they still must align with the SOP. To provide Care Coordinators with a more comprehensive understanding of the Care Coordination/Medical Home model, a review of the most current SOP is recommended for all Care Coordinators.





SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

February 2015

Early Childhood, Every Day and The Write Way Training

In addition to presenting the second half of the Early Childhood, Every Day training during February's East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council meeting, Joy Leveen conducted a combined *Early Childhood, Every Day* and *The Write Way* training for 3 community partners.

Events

Joy Leveen participated in or provided materials for four community events in February: a dental screening at Tavan Elementary School with First Teeth First, Brush, Floss, and Read at Guadalupe Public Library, the Chandler Sci-Tech Festival with the Arizona Science Center, and the Ahwatukee Transportation Day at God's Garden Preschool.

Networking Meetings

Outreach staff attended 6 community networking meetings to secure trainings, presentations and recruit supporters, including the Read On Tempe, Community Navigators, and the East Maricopa Collaboration.

Presentations

Outreach staff conducted two presentations to over 100 newly informed East Maricopa residents, including 17 parents at the Celebrate Books and Babies group through the Scottsdale Public Library.

1:1 Meetings

First Things First staff conducted 4 one on one meetings with early childhood community stakeholders. New connections, including three referrals from Pastor Bruce Johnson at Scottsdale Presbyterian Church, were formed with the First Thursdays Networking group and the Family Support representatives from the Arizona National Guard base.

Upcoming Opportunities

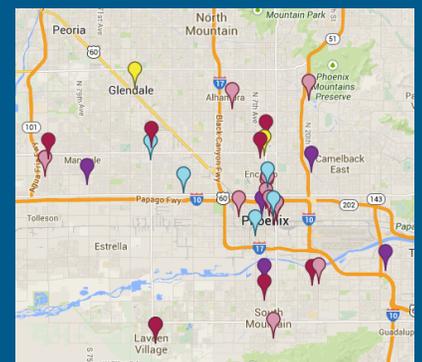
Scottsdale Ultimate Play Date, April 4th from 9 am to 3 pm
Scottsdale Civic Center Library

Inspire Early Childhood Leadership Conference, April 11 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at Pinnacle Presbyterian Preschool

FTF Core

Message of the Month

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



Google Maps

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=zGNXIBQCerYg.kNfi95RuNOUA>

A 4 year old girl leans forward, peering into the dinosaur's mouth. Two full rows of teeth gaze back at her. "Do you want to brush his teeth?" A pair of eyes peeks over the mask covering her nose and mouth, but the 4 year old can tell she is kind when the speaker's eyes smile at her. The young girl enthusiastically nods her head.

This scene was repeated 10 more times this February morning in Tavan Elementary School's Pre-Kindergarten classroom. Kearsten and Jamal from First Teeth First are visiting Mrs. Quihuis's pre-k students and it will be repeated again in the afternoon class.

Kearsten demonstrates how to brush the dinosaur's teeth – top, bottom, inside and out, finish with the tongue – before offering the toothbrush to each child. Then it's time to examine the child's teeth; Kearsten calls out numbers and descriptions to Jamal so that he can communicate with parents how urgent it is to take their child to the dentist, followed by "painting" each child's top and bottom teeth with varnish to protect them from "sugar bugs." Each child left with a smile and a new toothbrush kit.



According to the Arizona Department of Public Health, Arizona leads the nation (with Texas and Louisiana) in untreated tooth decay among 3 year olds. But today, in this classroom, 11 children are less likely to miss school due to extensive tooth extractions or toothaches. More kids are on the right track to health and school success.

The job of helping kids succeed in school starts the day they're born. Programs funded by First Things First, like First Teeth First, give children the health and tools they need to make that happen. To learn more about what First Things First does for children birth to five in Arizona, please visit azftf.gov.

Joy Leveen

Community Outreach Coordinator, East Maricopa

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

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YOU'RE INVITED



SPEAKERS SERIES TRAINING

Do you want to learn simple ways to talk about early childhood and First Things First? Do you want to more about First Things First funded programs and see how you can get involved? *You* understand how important the early years are—now, learn how to spread the word about it!

BECOME A CHAMPION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Training Part 1 & Part 2:
Tuesday, March 24, 2015
1:00-4:00 p.m.
First Things First East Valley Office
1839 S. Alma School Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85210

Space is limited to 10 attendees so please RSVP to: Joy Leveen at 602-771-4992 or email jleveen@azftf.gov .

About Our Trainings

Early Childhood, Every Day

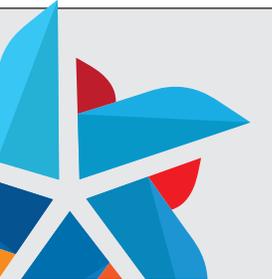
You understand how important the early years are – now, learn how to spread the word about it. This workshop teaches you simple ways to share your support of early childhood and First Things First. First, you will learn and practice elevator speeches and core messages used by early childhood supporters across Arizona. Then, you will review how to use common outreach tactics in your own community to help grow Arizona’s early childhood movement. Finally, we’ll share the tools available to help you in your efforts.

The Write Way

Do you want to learn how to write effective impact stories about your program’s successes? This workshop provides you with basic formats to tackle writing and sharing stories about early childhood programs. The training includes practicing interview skills to capture great quotes, crafting compelling story beginnings that will hook readers, and taking engaging photos that bring your stories to life.

About First Things First

First Things First is a voter-created, statewide organization that funds early education and health programs to help kids be successful once they enter kindergarten. Decisions about how those funds are spent are made by local councils staffed by community volunteers. To learn more, visit azftf.gov.



SCHOLARSHIPS REMINDER...

Just a reminder to everyone, Quality First Scholarships will be determined on April 1, 2015. If your program is in the preparation period for the Points Scale Assessment, your preliminary star rating that you have achieved will be used to determine scholarships. If you have a final star rating as of April 1, that will be used to determine scholarships. It is important to remember that beginning July 1, 2015, First Things First's policy is to award scholarships to programs achieving Quality levels (3, 4, 5 star). Although few, some regions will allow Progressing Star (2 star) programs to receive scholarships for this upcoming fiscal year. Current Quality First scholarships will end as of June 30, 2015. Your award for new scholarships will be communicated via letter and/or email as well as on your extranet profile page by May 1, 2015.



QUALITY FIRST PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

This year's Quality First survey should be in your hands or completed and sent off to our office for review! If you have not yet completed your survey, remember your opinion matters and we want to give you the opportunity to share your feedback with us so we can make quality improvements to our practice as well. The deadline for the survey to be returned is March 13, 2015 and we will be compiling all the information to share with everyone no later than May 2015. Thank you!



UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS BEST FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Establishing environments and experiences for young children that support development is a central feature of quality improvement. Assessments are used to capture this information and it is important that all participants understand the reasons behind these practices. Based on feedback that First Things First has received, we have decided to start devoting a section of the Quality First Update to better communicate why these practices are important to high quality early childhood experiences.

This month we are looking at "most of the day" and "substantial portion of the day." These terms are used during assessments to determine if children have sufficient time to deeply engage with learning materials and other self-selected learning experiences. Research has demonstrated that having enough time and space to engage with the materials is important to optimizing children's development. Having sufficient time to explore allows for deeper involvement in the learning process and facilitates increased understanding of the concepts being explored. You can discuss "most of the day," "substantial portion of the day," and how to use them to impact the quality of the children's experiences in your program with your Quality First coach.



February 25, 2015

Dear Mr. Lindo and the First Things First East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council,

Thank you for your \$700 sponsorship of Arizona Science Center's community engagement program "Imagination Playground" at the Chandler Science Saturday event on February 21, 2015. Your support helped Arizona Science Center promote First Things First-sponsored programming, engage the community with quality school-readiness experiences, and increase the community's awareness about First Things First and its mission to support all Arizona's children to be ready to succeed in school and in life.

We are pleased to share some of the exciting outcomes from this sponsorship. Overall, the booth directly engaged approximately 711 people from communities all around the East Maricopa region, including nearly 446 children infant to age 12. Arizona Science Center passed out "First Things First Programs for Families in East Maricopa" collateral in both English and Spanish to families. We ran out of the 100 English fliers within the first three hours! After that, we invited families to visit azffft.gov and the First Things First Facebook page for more information regarding resources that support school-readiness in the community. The First Things First East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council and Arizona Science Center Early Childhood Programs banners were displayed side-by-side, showcasing that collaborations like this help share the importance of early education and health and strengthen the early childhood community in Arizona.

Please find attached documentation evidence from the event including photographs of children and families engaged, what children did, what they learned, and how it impacted school readiness in the East Maricopa region.

Feel free to contact me at 602-716-2000 ext. 287 or buchere@azscience.org with any questions or comments. Thank you again for your sponsorship, and we look forward to the possibilities of future collaboration between First Things First and East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council and Arizona Science Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Bucher". There is a small 'x' above the 'i' in "Eric".

Eric Bucher
Early Childhood Professional Learning Specialist
Arizona Science Center



Arizona Science Center designs a beautiful outdoor space that invites children and their families to play with science concepts and content that help support school-readiness skills, such as problem-solving, communication, and language and literacy.

The First Things First East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council and Arizona Science Center Early Childhood Programs banners are displayed side-by-side to showcase the impactful collaboration between early childhood organizations and increase awareness of First Things First and sponsored resources in the community.



Strengthening School-Readiness Skills with Arizona Science Center's Imagination Playground



A child, 5 years old, and his mother work together to formulate and construct a robot out of gigantic foam blocks with Arizona Science Center's community engagement activity: "Imagination Playground".

He strengthens cognitive skills by taking time to think about, plan, then carry out his actions. This type of experience can help him lay the foundation to think logically and creatively as he enters Kindergarten.



A boy who is 3-years-old practices math skills as he categorizes the balls by figuring out into which holes in the foam blocks they may fit best.

As he works, Arizona Science Center mentions, "Are you doing some planning to figure out which pieces fit where?" The use of scientific vocabulary in conjunction with active investigation helps promote language and literacy development which can support future reading skills.



A 1-year-old girl is very curious about the pathways that her older brother constructs. She pauses for a moment to contemplate what she may do next.



Research published by Office of Head Start suggests (2015), "Self-regulation and joint attention build the base for skills that children will need for success in school and later in life."

She is a young scientist: she wonders if her body fits within an area, she tests out her theory, and she communicates her findings by smiling with her mother and laughing. This experience helps her connect a feeling of joy with learning and understand the basic principles of physics, or that objects take up space.





A young boy engineers by creating a mental representation of his construction then applying his thinking in action.

However, he notices that the foam tube keeps bending! He attempts several different positions before finally solving the problem.

He learns how to be persistent and attend to an experience for a period of time. These executive functions signify that he is engaging in higher level thinking skills, an indicator of school-readiness.

A boy who is 2-years-old recognizes that he has skills that he can capitalize on To problem-solve with the foam blocks. He strengthens his social-emotional capacity by developing a strong image of self-identity in his capabilities as a learner.

His mother explains, "I am so excited to see the Science Center out here in Chandler! It is sometimes hard to get downtown. I like that you come to the community. My son is having fun learning with science."

For more information on early childhood school-readiness programs, please visit azscience.org.

