



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education

The 2007 reauthorization of Head Start Act included a provision for State Governors to designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education to be known as the State Advisory Council.¹ In November 2008, the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First) was designated to serve as Arizona's State Advisory Council.

As outlined in the reauthorization, the role of the State Advisory Council includes most, if not all, of the activities of The Early Childhood Development and Health Board, including the following:

- Conduct periodic statewide needs assessments concerning quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services;
- Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federal and Statefunded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services;
- Develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early education program, including outreach to underrepresented and special population;
- Develop recommendations regarding the establishment of an unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;
- Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;
- Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4- year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start of pre-kindergarten program;
- Make recommendations for improvement in State early learning standards and undertake efforts as appropriate to develop high –quality comprehensive early learning standards;
- Hold public hearings with provisions for public comment;
- Submit a statewide strategic report addressing State Advisory Council activities to the State Director of Head Start Collaboration and the Governor.

To support the work of the Council, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will award, on a competitive basis, a one-time grant of not less than \$500,000 for the purpose of facilitating the development or enhancement of high quality systems of early childhood education and care. Grant funds may be used to foster parental and family involvement in early education; help families and caregivers improve children's early social, emotional and cognitive development; support professional development; promote recruitment and retention initiatives for early childhood educators; enhance quality improvement activities; and engage in any other activities that are consistent with the State's early childhood plan.

Full guidance on the grant application is forthcoming from DHHS. In the interim, First Things First staff will continue to work with the State Head Start Collaboration office to align the provisions specified for the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education with the strategic plans, activities and functions of the Early Childhood Development and Health Board.

¹ Head Start Reauthorization SEC 642B. (b)(1)(A)

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/legislation/HS_act.html#642B