



FIRST THINGS FIRST

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First – Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on Tuesday, June 9, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. DST. The meeting was held at Red Mesa Unified School District Administration Office, Board Room, Highway 160 Milepost 448, Teec Nos Pos, Arizona 86515.

Member Yazzie called the meeting to order at approximately 10:08 a.m. DST. Vice Chair Boyne was not available to attend the June Regular Meeting of the FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council.

Members Present:

Benjamin Barney
Amelia Black
Rhonda Etsitty
Patricia Gonnie
Valonia Hardy
Paula Seanez
Dawn Yazzie

Members Absent:

Victoria Begay
Grace Boyne

Call to the Public

Sara Stilson, Teacher Coordinator for the Red Mesa Unified School District (RMUSD) preschool program, addressed the Regional Council and provided a history of the development of the Montessori preschool program at RMUSD. Ms. Stilson noted that due to previous closure of local preschool programs, students had been entering kindergarten unprepared, and that the new preschool program at RMUSD will provide service to young children.

Review and Approval of May 12, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

Member Barney moved that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council approve the May 12, 2015 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest at this time.

2014 Navajo Nation Regional Needs and Assets Report

Regional Director Begay provided an update to the Regional Council regarding the progress of the 2014 Navajo Nation Regional Needs and Assets Report. Regional Director Begay reported that feedback provided by the Regional Council during the April 2015 Regular Meeting were reviewed by FTF and incorporated into the final report. Two additional comments since April include a correction to note Dawn Yazzie in place of Jeannette Yazzie in the Regional Council member listing; and a clarification request from Member Barney regarding the population of reported households on Navajo Nation, where Regional Director Begay confirmed that reported households are determined by the U.S. Census and are not exclusive to Navajo households within Navajo Nation.

Member Etsitty moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the final draft of the 2014 Navajo Nation Regional Needs and Assets Report, seconded by Member Seanez. Motion carried.

Community Outreach Report

- a. Monthly Outreach update
Community Outreach Coordinator Beach reported a summary of outreach activities for April and May

including 10 activities, 8 events, 5 networking meetings, 11 one on one meetings, and 3 presentations throughout the region; and noted volunteer opportunities for Regional Council members including hosting an informational booth at Just Move It events and participation in Early Childhood Every Day and The Write Way trainings. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach also noted that future reports will include more specific updates on outreach tactics as well as success stories for the region.

b. SFY2016 Community Outreach Regional Implementation Plan

Community Outreach Coordinator Beach presented the SFY2016 Community Outreach Regional Implementation Plan, which is the final year of the FY2014-2016 Strategic Communications Plan, for review and possible approval. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach reported that the SFY2016 Community Outreach Regional Implementation Plan will continue to strategically raise awareness about the importance of early childhood; however, deliberate focus will be made to engage regional priority audiences in action and events. Regional priority audiences include pre-K through grade 12/Higher Education, faith-based organizations, families, military/veterans, and community leaders. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach asked that the Regional Council consider additional audience groups that could be targeted in the region.

Member Barney inquired about the strategies for engagement of the faith-based audiences, and commented that interacting with faith-based organizations within the region may be challenging as many may not have regular meetings. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach noted that faith-based audiences are not limited to established places of worship, but refer to persons or organizations that are heavily involved in faith-based activities that could complete trainings to help raise awareness about early childhood and First Things First (FTF).

Member Black commented that issues may arise from Navajo Nation chapter houses that serve communities across state borders and recommended inclusion of all individuals in discussion and/or services as families may reside across state borders with primary residence in Arizona. In addition, Member Black asked that Community Outreach Coordinator Beach also be aware that community leaders of the Navajo Nation may also reside in New Mexico and Utah with permanent residence in Arizona.

Member Barney recommended family reunions as a target audience.

Member Seanez recommended Navajo Head Start (NHS) as a target audience in consideration of the 50 year anniversary celebration. Member Seanez asked that consideration be made to meet with NHS to discuss data and areas of needs in the region, which may include discussion of the regional Needs and Assets Report. Member Seanez also recommended regional Child Find events, and external early childhood stakeholder meetings in neighboring states.

Member Hardy recommended pre-natal women as a target audience, and noted opportunities to present in the waiting areas of health facilities for expectant mothers.

Regional Director Begay reminded the Regional Council of the region's unfunded approach, Early Childhood Forums, which are hosted by the regional office to convene early childhood stakeholders with intent to eventually form an early education coalition.

Community Outreach Coordinator Beach also asked the Regional Council for recommendations of trainings that would support and prepare Regional Council members when participating at events.

Member Barney recommended that additional site tours to compliment reading materials.

Member Black asked about materials that could be distributed to community members. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach reported that Early Childhood Every Day and The Write Way trainings are

available to Regional Council members and members of the public, which would allow access to Education Reinforcement Items for distribution.

Member Hardy recommended more use of media outlets to convey early childhood health and development messages. Community Outreach Coordinator Beach noted that the FTF central office continues to provide media pitches across the state. However, efforts can be made to regionalize messages and share with the Regional Council to share through personal networks. Regional Director Begay also noted a Community Awareness Strategy– the Early Childhood Everyday newsletter, which includes regional information, grantees updates for programming, and FTF messages.

Member Barney inquired about messages or information that could be provided to expectant mothers in the community. Member Yazzie agreed that information for expectant mothers is necessary and proposed that an in-depth discussion take place at a later date to strategize about how to incorporating traditional information for prenatal.

Member Yazzie also commented that consideration should be made to include Navajo families that reside close to regional boundary lines, that media continue to be used and heavily inundated with messaging, and that the region consider hosting an early childhood summit for early childhood stakeholders to discuss the state of early childhood issues within the region.

Member Hardy recommended an on-line parent forum where parents are able to ask questions about health, development, and/or traditional Navajo knowledge would be beneficial to younger parents. Member Seanez offered resources from the Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Regional Director Begay also shared that the Birth to Five Helpline is a resource for parents and caregivers to ask questions about early childhood health and development.

Member Etsitty moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the State Fiscal Year 2016 Community Outreach Regional Implementation Plan, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

Update on State Fiscal Year 2015 and 2016 Strategies

Regional Director Begay provided updates for SFY2015 regional strategies and intentions for SFY2016 strategies.

a. Family, Friends, and Neighbors (FFN)

Regional Director Begay reminded the Regional Council that an award was made to Navajo Nation Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) in SFY2015 to serve and assist home care providers. However, recent discussion with CCDF identified barriers including a change in CCDF priorities, limited capacity and transportation resources, and challenges with recruitment that would prevent successful implementation of the strategy. The un-awarded strategy allotment would move to the regional Carry Forward. Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council consider whether the strategy is a need in the region. If identified as a need, the Regional Council was asked to consider program models being implemented in Arizona including a community-base model implemented by the Arizona Kith and Kin Project, the in-home support model, the pathways to certification/regulation model, and the playgroup opportunities or “Play and Learn” model. Regional Director Begay indicated that presentation on the models will be included in the July and/or August meetings.

Member Barney asked if other strategies include a component similar to the FFN strategy, and questioned the need for the FFN strategy in the region. Member Etsitty noted that other strategies may include a similar component. However, scopes of work may identify different priorities. Regional Director Begay confirmed a need in the region as identified by CCDF and data in the 2012 Needs and Assets Report.

Member Black recommended an inquiring to NHS for use of training models for home care providers.

Member Seanez also asked that inquiry be made to CCDF to obtain criteria or implementation plan

templates that may serve as a reference for the Regional Council in developing an implementation plan.

b. Quality First (QF) Scholarships

Regional Director Begay reported that in SFY2015 328 scholarships were available, where 278 scholarships were available to support 24 centers and 50 scholarships were for Navajo college students. Regional Director further explained that 166 of the 328 scholarships went unused as two QF centers declined scholarships due to no need or current funding restrictions. For SFY2016, 231 scholarships are available to support 18 centers in enrolled in Quality First and 75 scholarships for Navajo college students.

Member Etsitty asked if the two centers that declined scholarships are able to request scholarships at a later time should scholarships be needed. Regional Director Begay confirmed that the two centers are eligible to receive scholarships and would be able to request scholarships.

Regional Director Begay also proposed two considerations for SFY2016 QF funding: 1) allocate QF scholarships for the STAR Pre-School and 2) reaffirm QF scholarships for Navajo college students attending any type of post-secondary school. Regional Director Begay reminded the Regional Council that STAR Pre-School has enrolled in the Quality First program funded by the Coconino Regional Partnership Council. However, due to limited funding, Coconino Regional Partnership Council is unable to fund scholarships for STAR Pre-School. Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that the STAR Pre-School completed assessment, and will soon receive a Star Rating and become eligible for scholarships. FTF is currently assessing implications for the Regional Council to fund STAR Pre-School, which will be conveyed to the Regional Council for further consideration. Regional Director Begay asked for the Regional Council for feedback and for information needed to better inform Regional Council member to assist in consideration to provide scholarships for STAR Pre-School in SFY2016.

Member Etsitty expressed concern for other QF centers in the region or in neighboring regions that would be ineligible for scholarships in the first year of implementation, and requested clarification for how to address questions regarding funding for the STAR Pre-School within the first year of implementation.

Member Barney asked for clarification regarding the permanence of funding that would support scholarships for the STAR Pre-School.

Virginia Turner, Senior Regional Director of the FTF Northeast region, noted that the Regional Council is able to discuss and determine whether funding could be provided to neighboring schools or programs that support Navajo students.

Member Etsitty asked that the discussion regarding the determination of funding to neighboring schools or programs that support Navajo students be placed on the next agenda.

Regarding QF scholarships for Navajo college students, Regional Director Begay indicated that in 2010 the Regional Council consented to provide QF scholarships to students attending any type of post-secondary school including vocational/technical schools, community colleges or universities. Currently, thirteen percent of students being awarded the QF scholarships are attending vocational/technical schools. Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council reaffirm or redefine the criteria for Navajo college students' enrollment in type of post-secondary institutions in order to be eligible for QF scholarships.

Member Barney expressed the importance of all Navajo college students being eligible for the QF scholarships regardless of post-secondary institution.

Member Etsitty moved that the Regional Partnership Council continue to allot funding to provide Quality First scholarships to students who are parents attending post-secondary institutions off the Navajo Nation, who are parents of children birth through five years of age. The criterion to receive scholarships

are students who are parents of children birth through five years of age that meet the eligibility requirements to receive Quality First scholarships, who are living off the Navajo Nation that are Arizona residents attending a university, college, community college or a vocational/technical school in Arizona, seconded by Member Gonnie. Motion carried.

c. Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense

Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that one grant award was made in SFY2015 in the amount \$60,000. In SFY2016, the Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense strategy will include one potential expansion project for Concordia Charter School in Round Rock, Arizona. The preschool program served 14 students in 2014-2015 school year. The expansion would allow for a total enrollment of 30 preschool students. Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that discussion with Concordia Charter School began in April 2015 and will continue to better assess the needs of the preschool.

d. Native Language Preservation

Regional Director Begay reported that the recommendation of the Regional Council was establishment of a committee to continue development of the needs assessment. Regional Director Begay identified Member Barney and Maggie Benally, a former member of the FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council, to serve on the committee, and asked for additional recommendations from the Regional Council. In addition, per the regional governance policy, the Regional Council must approve the committee with formal action, which will occur in the July Regular Meeting. Regional Director Begay noted that Member Yazzie also expressed interest in serving on the committee.

Member Barney proposed that a Special Meeting be scheduled for additional discussion of the Native Language strategy by all members of the Regional Council. The Regional Council agreed to schedule a Special Meeting.

e. Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals

Regional Director Begay reported that no applications were received for the Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals RFGA that was released on March 2 on and closed April 13. Regional Director Begay recently communicated with three regional organizations – Northland Pioneer College, Sharing Unlimited Knowledge, and Navajo Technical University – to inquire of awareness of the RFGA and interest to apply for the grant. Each of the organizations expressed interest to apply should a new RFGA grant be released. Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council consider releasing a new RFGA for the Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals strategy.

Member Etsitty moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals Strategy with an allotment of \$125,000 and estimated target service numbers of 20 participating professionals through a Request for Grant Agreement for SFY2016, seconded by Member Gonnie. Motion carried.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair for State Fiscal Year 2016

Regional Director Begay reported that individual discussion with Regional Council members revealed interest by Vice Chair Boyne to be considered for the Chair position and Dawn Yazzie for the Vice Chair position.

The Regional Council collectively discussed and acknowledged that the Chair and Vice Chair need to have the flexibility in their professional careers to be available to regularly attend Council meetings, attend to other duties and participate in other meetings that are required, and allow for more extended discussion of agenda items when needed.

Member Seanez moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve Dawn Yazzie as Chair of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council for SFY2016, seconded by Member Etsitty. Motion carried.

Member Seanez moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve Grace Boyne as Vice Chair of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council for SFY2016, seconded by Member Barney. Motion carried.

State Fiscal Year 2016 Regional Council Meeting Dates

Regional Director Begay presented possible meeting dates for Regular Meetings of the FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council. Regular Meetings were proposed to continue on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. local time with the exceptions of the March and June 2016 meeting locations, which will be determined at a later date. The Regional Council also elected to move the September and October 2015 meetings to the third Tuesday due to recognized holidays preceding the proposed meeting dates.

The Regional Council recommended Red Valley, Kaibeto, Hard Rock, LeChee, Indian Wells, Dilkon, Tsaile, and Ganado as possible meeting locations for the March and June Regular Meetings.

Member Black moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the second Tuesday of each month for Regular Meetings beginning at 10:00 a.m. with the exception of September and October where the meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month, and meeting locations will be determined at a later date, seconded by member Seanez. Motion carried.

Regional Director Report

Regional Director Begay presented a summary of participant feedback provided for the 2015 Early Childhood Workshop and updates on regional meetings including a meet and greet with Henry Haskie, Program Manager II of Navajo Nation Women, Infants, and Children program; and a grantee coordination meeting on May 27 where Four Corners Legal Care presented on free legal services provided to low-income patients.

In addition, FTF will resume the FY15 "Awareness" campaign in June with some mediums extending into September. The media campaign will involve radio stations, newspapers, outdoor board/displays, the Black Mesa Twin Cinema, and online outlets.

Regional Director Begay reported that five Navajo Nation contracts have been selected for a Quality Assurance Site Visit in SFY2016, which effectively and efficiently measures performance and programmatic implementation of programs; and provided the SFY2015 Quarter Three data and financial reports for review by the Regional Council.

Future Agenda Items and Announcements

Member Etsitty announced that Quality First Forums will take place in Flagstaff in July and in October in the region.

Member Barney asked that the Navajo Nation Health, Education and Human Services Committee be invited to attend a Regular Meeting of the Regional Council.

Recognition of Mr. Harry Martin

The Regional Council and FTF staff thanked Mr. Martin for service to FTF and honored Mr. Martin with a plaque and book. Harry Martin, former Chair of the FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council, expressed appreciation to the Regional Council and the FTF staff for the efforts in promoting early childhood.

Next Meeting

July 14, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. DST in Window Rock, Arizona

Adjourn

There being no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:18 p.m. DST.

Respectfully submitted on this 9th Day of June, 2015

Dawn Yazzie, Chair



The Arizona Kith and Kin Project



Caring for your family's, friend's and neighbor's little ones

The Arizona Kith and Kin Project is a program of the Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC)



Impacting a Hidden Population

The **Arizona Kith and Kin Project** improves the quality of care provided by “kith and kin” (family, friend and neighbor) child care providers.

Kith and kin providers care for the children of friends and family members and are, for the most part, unregulated with little formal education. Recent national and local research has shown that kith and kin providers, particularly in low-income communities, care for more than 50 percent of children with working parents.





Working Together to Create Change

The Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC) developed the “Arizona Kith and Kin Project” in March 1999. ASCC, along with a group of community partners, has developed a project to strengthen the quality and reliability of kith and kin child care in Arizona.

ASCC collaborates with community organizations such as Head Starts, resource centers, faith-based organizations, schools, and other non-profits to identify, recruit and deliver project services.



Arizona Kith and Kin Project Objectives

- Provide early childhood training and support to kith and kin child care providers
- Increase participants' knowledge of the elements of quality child care
- Increase participants' understanding of ways to challenge and stimulate young children
- Increase participants' knowledge of childhood injury prevention and distribute safety material and equipment





The Arizona Kith and Kin Project Model

The Arizona Kith and Kin Project delivers services through the following:

- **Traditional training/support group model**

- 14 week training/support group session
- Weekly two to four hour meetings
- On-site child care

- **Currently providing services in:**

- Maricopa County
- Pima County
- La Paz/Mohave County
- Yuma County



Early Childhood Information and Support

The Arizona Kith and Kin Project includes the following curriculum topics:

- Child Development/Ages and Stages
- Daily Schedule Planning
- Parent/Caregiver Relationships and Business Practices
- Guidance and Positive Discipline
- Arranging the Environment
- Language and Literacy
- Nutrition
- Brain Development
- Child Passenger Safety
- Health and Home Safety
- Pediatric First Aid, CPR and AED Certification





Results and Impact

The Arizona Kith and Kin Project will provide training and support to more than 1,700 kith and kin providers and impact more than 3,500 children in Maricopa, Yuma, Pima, La Paz, and Mohave Counties in 2015-2016.

Evaluation is an important component of the Arizona Kith and Kin Project. The program collects data from participants utilizing the following:

- Child Care Assessment Tool for Relatives (CCAT-R)
- Pre and Post Tests
- Interviews regarding Child Rearing Attitudes, Perceived Needs and Resources and Use of Social Support
- Get Ready to Read



Provider Characteristics

Relatives

Motivation - to help families

Average # of children = 2.1

Live close to children

Same ethnic and linguistic background

Often unpaid - sometimes barter

Opportunities

- Low provider:child ratios
- Emotional investment/attachment
- Individualized attention
- Cultural congruency
 - Reinforce family values
 - Language
- Close relationship with parents
 - Bi-directional engagement
- Family support helps parents stay employed

Challenges

- Low incentive for training and formal education
- Similar socioeconomic status as families
 - Fewer material resources
 - Less education
- No regulation
 - Health and safety
 - Child development needs
 - School readiness
- Hard to reach population
 - Less intentionality





Key Findings

- Extremely high participation rates
- Increases in key outcomes:
 - Health and safety
 - Educational material in environment
 - Communication with children
 - Engagement with children
 - Learning activities
 - Knowledge of child development
- Provider feedback
 - More training
 - Connection to formal resources



The Arizona Kith and Kin Project's evaluation component is conducted by Indigo Cultural Resources.



FIRST THINGS FIRST
Ready for School. Set for Life.
firstf.org



For more information on the Arizona Kith and Kin Project please contact:

Sarah Ocampo-Schlesinger, Program Coordinator
p. 480.829.0500, ext. 2243 e. socampo@asccaz.org
p. 800.535.4599, ext. 2243 www.asccaz.org





**APACHE FAMILIES
FIRST**

**Summary
July 2009-June 2012**

July, 2015



A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

between

WHITE MTN. APACHE REGIONAL
PARTNERSHIP FIRST THINGS FIRST
COUNCIL

&

NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE



- Location: Whiteriver NPC Center and Cibecue Child Find Center, Ft. Apache Indian Reservation, Whiteriver, AZ
- Service area: Whiteriver, Cibecue, and surrounding tribal communities
- July 1st – June 30th
- Budget: \$74,395
- Second & Third Year: \$81,834
- Staff: Project Coordinator
- Qualifications: “Kith & kin” providers not presently a part of another early childhood program.



Objectives

- Provide hands-on training for parents or home-based child care providers that promote healthy parenting skills
- Provide resources and supplies that allow parents or home-based child care providers the ability to implement early childhood activities in the home

Activities

- Provision of 4 sessions of the 60 hour Child Care Provider Basic Training.
- First Aid/CPR Training.
- After successful course completion, participants receive child care provider kits valued at \$100.00
- Enrollment in college early childhood courses





Contents of Provider Kit (sample)

- Ethnic doll w/blanket
- Different sizes types of balls
- Puzzles
- Bubbles
- Tote w/2 spray bottles recipe for sanitation; cleaning cloth
- Variety of books

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- Building blocks/farm set
 - Dramatic play props: picnic set
 - Magnetic letters or numbers
 - Scribble pad, crayons, markers
 - Play dough
 - Pair of children's scissors
 - Pamphlets on early childhood topics
 - Stacking rings or sorting box
 - Dice (Counting cube)



- Packets of card games
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Bath toys
- Puppet
- Bat and ball(s)
- Wooden cars
- Beads and laces for stringing





- Bi-weekly trainings (home safety, health, nutrition, early literacy, music and young children, messy media and young children, the value of play, working with special needs, dramatic play, learning environments, dental health, the business aspect of kith and kin/provider care, etc.)
- Attend one day Apache Families First Parenting conference sponsored by Alchesay High School.



Attend one day
Apache Families First
Parenting conference
sponsored by
Alchesay High School,
FTF and NPC.



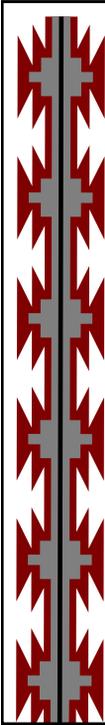


This effort provided training and resource development for kith and kin providers, and increased family support by having more available higher quality, and more dependable child care, and diverse and relevant parenting information and support available. This allowed parents/caregivers the opportunity to increase children's potential and development.



Outcomes

- Provision of Quality Child Care
- Improved self images of providers/parents
- Earned college credits
- Collaboration with WMA Tribal Child Care program and other tribal early childhood programs



- Participation in Child Care Feeding Program
- Met and exceeded participant numbers each year
- Creation of culturally related materials by participants
- Had fun and developed a support system



Challenges

- Locations and availabilities of facilities for trainings were sometimes an issue
- Not budgeting for rental of facilities
- Conflicts with 1st and 3rd of the month(s)
- Transportation for some participants
- Child care during trainings/course
- Lack of pre-planning: started off as soon as funding approved.
- Did not reapply due to having difficulty recruiting participants

Contact Information

Claude S. Endfield
Northland Pioneer College
P. O. Box 610
Holbrook, AZ 86025
cendfield@npc.edu
800-266-7845, ext. 7335



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

Agenda Item #6: Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals

Statement of Need:

There is a significant need in the region to increase the number of degreed and highly trained early childhood professionals in the field of early childhood education and development. The intent of the Regional Council is to provide early childhood education professionals access to professional development and training within the regional area through:

- learning seminar series for professionals
- the establishment of communities of practice

The early childhood workforce is an integral component of the early childhood system. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) indicates that “specialized education in child development is key to positively impacting children. Without such knowledge and information, early childhood professionals will struggle to reach children in a positive light. That is why understanding child development can help the professional practitioner in a variety of ways -- from creating and implementing effective lesson plans to assessing learning delays” (2009). To ensure a continuum of professional development opportunities to facilitate completion of educational milestones will require creating and sustaining coordination and collaboration efforts with local providers in the early education community and community colleges serving the region.

The 2012 Needs and Assets report indicates the number of childcare professionals working in the region at 165 teachers, 191 assistant teachers, 15 teacher/directors and seven administrative directors. Of which, 38 percent of teachers and 75 percent of teacher assistants did not have a degree and only 25 percent of teachers and 15 percent of teacher assistants have a CDA. The data reveals that 206 teachers and teacher assistants are providing services to children without any formal education.

The implementation of this strategy will ensure region-wide opportunities for early education and care professional development to address the individual needs of our region’s existing early childhood workforce. It is understood the large geographic area of the region will present barriers and challenges in implementing the strategy, as well as challenges for the target population in accessing programs and trainings. Therefore, it’s important that this strategy be thoughtful implemented to assure access across the region to reduce the loss of work hours and travel costs to the early childhood professional that will be accessing these services.

Target Population:

The target population for this strategy is a minimum of 20 early childhood educators. The program should target the early childhood workforce, including child care providers, teachers, directors, and others working directly with children birth through age five and their families in an early child care setting.

Implementation Standards:

1. Implement an evidence-based or evidence informed program model that meets First Things First accepted definition:

- **Evidence based programs** are programs that have been validated by documented and scientific research and the evidence has gone through a peer review process. Evidence is established through scientific research that has had a comparison between an intervention group and a control group where the intervention group has had a significant impact. Peer review means that someone external to the program or research team has reviewed the methodology and the findings to determine if standards were met.
 - **Evidence informed** is a program or service that has a clearly articulated theory of change (logic model) and has had some evaluation of the outcomes. This can be based on one program or service model that has been evaluated in multiple settings. An evidence informed program cannot be based on the evaluation of a program in only one setting, even if it has been done for many years in a community and everyone likes it.
- a. Services must include at least two of the following components:
 - Single topic seminar
 - learning seminar series for professionals
 - the establishment of communities of practice
 - individual coaching for leaders and/or practitioners
 - b. Ensure alignment and scaffolding of knowledge between all the components utilized for this strategy.
 - c. For professional development opportunities that include a series of learning seminars, the professional development provider must:
 - Maintain individualized learning seminar attendance records for participants including the hours each participant attended;
 - Provide written resource and referral information to participants on the healthy development of young children and resources available in the community such as early literacy programs, family support agencies, and physical and oral health resources. These resources must be updated at a minimum annually and gathered from trustworthy, reliable sources;
 - Provide written resource and referral information to participants relative to degree and certification programs in early care and education (and related fields), and higher education scholarships including information about FTF funded higher education scholarships;
 - Conduct professional development based on best practices and research, ensuring that subject matter experts (visiting faculty, published authors, researchers, etc.) are registered as trainers in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (Registry) and are used to enhance professional development content and delivery;
 - Materials and sessions should be based on current research, core areas of skills, knowledge and competency, as identified by the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (Registry), and should be responsive to emerging issues in the community and the early childhood field;
 - Topics should address the core competency areas identified by the National Council for Professional Recognition and the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation.
 - Topics must be based on regional needs and interests and clearly linked to:
 - understanding the five domains of early childhood development, and inclusive of early childhood special education
 - observing, documenting, and assessing children’s behaviors
 - ensuring safe and healthy learning environments
 - upholding ethical and professional standards
 - utilizing developmentally appropriate practices
 - advancing physical and intellectual competence including early literacy

- supporting social/emotional development and using positive guidance techniques
- establishing respectful, positive, and productive relationships with families; and,
- ensuring a well-run, purposeful program responsive to child and family needs.
- Additional professional development topics may include, but are not limited to:
 - sensory integration, behavioral health, and special needs
 - role of creativity in learning
 - role of materials in the classroom
 - role of the arts in cognitive and social emotional growth and development
 - role of the environment and environmental design in children’s learning
 - role of the teacher/educator as researcher
 - significance of play
 - written and oral communication skills of providers; and
 - administrative staff or family provider management.
- Ensure that professional development is offered for college credit. Learning seminars should meet the standard requirements for transfer of credit to a certificate or degree in early childhood development or education (or a related field) at Arizona community colleges. Alignment must be clearly documented.
- Maintain flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues in the community and the early childhood field:
 - Develop a collaborative, coordinated response to community professional development needs;
 - Implement continuous quality improvement by reviewing written feedback from program participants collected after every learning seminar; and
 - Ensure appropriate staffing in order to effectively respond to participant questions or thoughts during the seminar series.
- Programs must clearly define, document, and share program objectives with participants to ensure comprehension, engagement, and retention.
- Encourage honest, open communication between participants and instructors;
- Maintain confidentiality, being respectful of program participants;
- Take into consideration emerging needs or topics of research as identified by the participating early childhood professionals and be responsive to professional development needs of the participants;
- Ensure that the curriculum is aligned with Arizona’s Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines, the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten;
- Participants are afforded opportunities for practical application of the theoretical foundation to real-life classroom activities and situations such as providing experiences that are relevant to the participant’s background and current role through case studies;
- Sessions involve adult active learning techniques such as physically manipulating materials, think-pair-share, or role playing;
- Professional development includes opportunities for follow up on-site technical assistance, consultation, and/or coaching;
- A formal assessment is implemented to determine the outcomes (the identified outcomes for this strategy are a change in knowledge or a change in practice) for each participant before a certificate of completion or higher education credit is awarded.

- d. In addition to the guidelines above, for professional development opportunities that include Communities of Practice, the professional development provider must:
- Utilize a Community of Practice model which includes ongoing seminars, lectures and college level classes to enhance skills and knowledge in working with children birth through age 5;
 - Gather peers together, multiple times, to study and research an agreed upon identified topic;
 - Ensure participants have the opportunity to discuss issues and challenges that emerge from their professional practice;
 - Engage participants in a reflective process of sharing perceptions and observations related to specific work practices and then questioning their assumptions about the practices;
 - Provide opportunities for participants to apply newly learned theories and knowledge to hands-on practice in early care and education settings (such as case studies).
 - Ensure that a maximum number of early childhood professionals have the opportunity to participate by providing more than one Community of Practice on multiple topics of study that are occurring simultaneously;
 - Ensure Communities of Practice meeting times and locations are responsive and flexible to the varying educational needs and geographical locations of the participating early childhood professionals;
 - Maintain a group size and appropriate staffing, which ensure individualized attention and active learning for the participants with a maximum group size of 20; and
 - Develop written individualized professional development plans for each participant including an opportunity for the participant to gain information, guidance, and advice about professional growth, career options, and pathways to obtain or meet required qualifications.
- e. In addition to the guidelines above, professional development that includes individual coaching for leaders and/or practitioners, the professional development provider must:
- Establish a coaching program that includes effective/proven components of coaching and that views coaching as a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group. Coaching can be offered to practitioners who are working directly with children or to administrators who are supervising staff and running a center or home based program.
 - Identify and document selection criteria for coaches and participating recipients (administrators or practitioners);
 - Document the expected roles, responsibilities, and expectations of coaches and recipients;
 - Develop cohorts of recipients;
 - The focus of coaching strategies is face-to-face onsite interaction, but programs must create a clear and multi-direction communication system that includes multiple methods of acceptable communication that flows freely between the coach and recipient;
 - Develop written individualized professional development plans that include specific outcomes for the recipient and include opportunities for gaining information, guidance, and advice about professional growth, career options, and pathways to obtain or meet required qualifications;
 - Establish and/or identify opportunities for on-going professional development and additional support for coaches;
 - Ensure alignment and scaffolding of knowledge between the larger professional development learning seminars, communities of practice, and the coaching focus;

- Additional standards for coaching administrative leaders:
 - Provide coaching to administrators that supports leadership development and administrative competency;
 - Provide coaching to recipients that supports development of self-confidence and self-efficacy in teaching (a belief in one’s ability to be effective with children and families);
 - Develop on-site or near-site professional development sessions for center administrators that address fiscal administration, systems management, human resource development, and related administrative skills/tasks;
 - Establish mechanisms that support on-going professional development and support for coaches and recipients.
2. Literacy learning in early childhood provides the foundation for future literacy success and is rooted in exposure to rich language experiences and engaging activities that build knowledge, understanding and speaking, expands vocabulary, and supports a child’s ability to become a successful independent reader.
 - a. Promote and support the professional development of early childhood professionals in understanding and incorporating meaningful early literacy experiences and opportunities for young children in the appropriate context of program implementation.
 - b. Support caregivers in understanding and communicating parenting and child-rearing skills that help increase understanding of early language and emergent literacy development.
 - c. Ensure that early language and literacy development is infused through all parts of the Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals strategy and provide specific professional development on that topic.
 - d. Promote and support meaningful early literacy experiences and opportunities for young children in the appropriate context of program implementation.
 - e. Support early childhood professionals in understanding and communicating parenting and child-rearing skills that help increase understanding of early language and emergent literacy development.
 - f. Engage early childhood professionals in meaningful, day to day two-way communication about how a child develops language and early literacy skills.
 - g. Encourage early childhood professionals to support families in the use the language in which they are most confident and competent.
 - h. Encourage early childhood professionals to learn how to observe, guide, promote, and participate in everyday language and literacy development of their children in early care and education settings and in their communities.
 - i. Encourage early childhood professionals to advance their own learning interests in language and literacy development through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
 - j. Encourage early childhood professionals to support and advocate for their children’s learning and development as they transition to new learning environments.
 3. FTF recognizes the importance of collaborative partnerships among community partners that utilize a variety of formal and informal mechanisms to facilitate coordination of services in the community. The Coordination and Collaboration standard requires a grantee to:
 - a. Develop and implement a plan to understand and make connections with other initiatives, strategies and efforts in the region or state that support the early childhood system.

- b. Develop processes that ensure staff implementing FTF funded strategies understand the connections between this strategy and the early childhood system to avoid duplication of services and promote collaboration between other services and supports offered to children and families in the regions.
 - c. Coordinate with all other regional and statewide professional development providers including institutes of higher education.
 - d. Providers of professional development are expected to partner with FTF during all stages of planning and implementation, and with local early care and education professionals and other early care and education stakeholders, including higher education institutions, in developing and marketing the program.
 - e. Work in partnership with scholarship programs to link participants to financial assistance in achieving college credit to ensure participants access all available financial assistance prior to utilizing funds from this grant;
 - f. Demonstrate pre-existing relationships and develop new partnerships with local organizations, agencies and community networks that offer professional development opportunities and professional memberships.
4. Continuous Quality Improvement
- a. Adopt a process of continuous self-monitoring and reflection to improve program practices that is articulated in a written policy.
 - b. In the written policy, the following should be addressed:
 - How data is used to assess the progress and outcomes of program implementation; and
 - How data collection is used to improve staff performance.
 - c. Design and implement a participant evaluation process to assess changes in behavior and/or increase in knowledge as an outcome of the professional development. The participant evaluation process should include but is not limited to the following evaluation components:
 - Pre and post-test using measurement scales/questions that have been proven valid; and/or,
 - Pre and post-qualitative interview with specific questions that show causal relationships, to assist in the assessment of the quality of the services and/or programming.
5. FTF embraces cultural responsiveness as an intentional life long journey that holistically explores, honors, and values the diversity of the human experience.
- a. Offer programs and services congruent with the needs of diverse children, families and professionals.
 - b. Offer programs and services that are responsive to the impact of cultural factors such as histories, traditions, values, family systems and structures, social class, and religion and spiritual beliefs.
 - c. Create a learning environment conducive to and includes all children, families and professionals no matter their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic backgrounds.
 - d. Use the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of diverse children, families and professionals to make learning more appropriate and effective for them.

Recommendation:

Regional Director recommends approving the scope of work for the SFY2016 Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals' strategy.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

June 2015



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

6/9/15 One On One Meeting with Rhonda Clay

Rhonda is a Nurse with Four Corners Regional Healthcare Center. We discussed the possibility of offering First Things First presentations to expecting moms in the waiting room of the Tuesday prenatal clinic. Rhonda is setting up a pilot presentation with physicians at the clinic in July.

6/18/15 Pinon School District Early Childhood Conference Planning Session

Representatives from Pinon Unified School District came together with myself and Quality First Coach Sharissa Ben to plan for the district's first annual Early Childhood Conference taking place on Wednesday, September 23, 2015.

6/25/15-6/26/15 NARBHA Tribal Summit

This event brought together behavioral health professionals who work in tribal communities throughout Arizona. Through hosting a table at this event I was able to network with behavioral health professionals from across the Navajo Nation Region, and as a result was able to set-up two one on one meetings in July.

7/1/15 Nahata Dziil Early Childhood Focus Group

This networking meeting brought together early childhood professionals, healthcare professionals, communities members and other stakeholders that serve the Nahata Dziil/Sanders communities to discuss taking action in creating quality early childhood experiences.

Earned Media

Beginning in July of 2015 First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council will be hosting an early childhood radio program through the Navajo nation Broadcast Services. Each program will be 10 minutes long and will have material in both Navajo and English.

Get Involved:

Nahata Dziil Focus Group—July 30th Nahata Dziil Chapter House 1:30PM DST

Take a Training: *Early Childhood Every Day* and *The Write Way*

What is coming up for you?

Share this FTF core message:

STRONG FAMILIES ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A STRONG SOCIETY.

It's crucial that parents have the tools they need to support young children with stable, nurturing environments in their earliest years

Jessica Beach

Community Outreach Coordinator
928.810.4306, jbeach@azftf.gov



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

Agenda Item #8: Regional Director's Report

Regional Meetings

- June 10, 2015: Grace Boyne, Department Manager, Child Care and Development Fund Program and Leslie Totten, First Things First Quality First Director
- June 17, 2015: Dr. Tommy Lewis, Superintendent, Department of Diné Education
- June 17, 2015: Alan Taylor, Southwest Human Development
- June 24, 2015: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Tribal Consultation by Arizona Department of Health Services
- June 29, 2015: Mr. Quincy Natay's New Member Orientation
- July 1, 2015: Navajo Nation Human, Education, and Human Service Committee Presentation

Regional Updates:

- Dawn Yazzie hired as Mental Health Consultant for Navajo Nation region
- Proposed Regional Council Work Session on Native Language Preservation and 2018 Regional Needs and Assets Report
 - Proposed Dates
 - July 28, 2015: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 - July 29, 2015: 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 - July 30, 2015: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Forum, July 23, 2015, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Chinle, Arizona
- First Things First Summit, August 24-25, 2015
 - Proposed Regional Council Work Session, Sunday, August 23, 2015
 - Agenda Topics
 - Early Childhood Everyday Training
 - SFY2017 Strategic Planning
 - Review Meeting Protocols/Norms
- Continuing efforts to recruit for the business seat on the Regional Council
- First Things First Tribal Consultation, Public Policymaker Engagement and Cultural Responsivity, September 17, 2015, Phoenix, Arizona
- Sam Leyas, CEO and Candida Hunter, Senior Tribal Affairs Director working on scheduling a meeting with the Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye

Recommendation: For informational purposes only.