

Strategy: Learning Labs**Strategy Description**

Utilizes a quality early education program to provide practical experiences for college students enrolled in early childhood degree programs.

Strategy Narrative

The Learning Lab funded and implemented under this strategy will be a quality early education program that will be a venue to provide hands-on experiences to high school, college and university students enrolled in dual-enrollment or college level courses in early childhood, or related areas. The Learning Lab will provide a high quality early care and education program that will be open to the community on a full-day, full-year basis, utilizing a tuition schedule and all available revenue streams and partnerships to be financially sustainable.

The Learning Lab will encompass the following components:

- will be inclusive to all children,
- will practice continuity of care between teachers and children, keeping teachers with the same group of children
- will have low teacher-child ratios
- will be of the highest quality and will work toward achieving a rating of 5 Stars,
- will be a Quality First participating site,
- will achieve national accreditation,
- will utilize the Creative Curriculum Gold Strategies to align with the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines,
- will be available to high-school and college students, who are enrolled in early childhood classes, as a placement site to gain practical experience in working with young children, their parents, and Lab faculty in all facets of the early care and education program and early childhood development, and
- will support faculty, lead and assistant teachers to meet or exceed the 2020 Benchmarks for professional development attainment set by First Things First in the POINT scale.

Participating scholars will have access to TEACH and Professional Career Pathways Project Scholarships. Faculty and staff will have access to FTF Professional REWARD\$. Through a separate agreement, Northland Pioneer College (NPC) will provide an ECE faculty member who will mentor and advise participating high school and NPC students to assist them with completion of financial aid, grant and scholarship application forms, and will develop individual education plans with each student.

The FTF School Readiness Indicators that this strategy will impact are:

- #/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical
- % of children with newly identified developmental delays during the kindergarten year

The Learning Lab will function as a local facility to host professional development opportunities for regional community partners, including family, friend and neighbor providers. The Learning Lab is founded on a network of collaboration between Northland Pioneer College (NPC), the Northern Arizona Vocational Institutes of Technology (NAVIT), the Navajo County Educational Service Agency, the First Things First

Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council, Navajo/Apache Regional Grantees and other regional partners. As such, it will be a visible example of collaboration and coordination between multiple partners. It is recognized that renovations and/or tenant improvements may be required for any space that is identified; therefore, capital expenditures will be approved under this strategy with a 50% match and the presentation of a plan for ongoing maintenance and ownership of the building, structure or materials following the completion of the work. The purchase of playground equipment, furniture, fixtures, computers, other technology and related items will be approved if they are directly related to the work of the Learning Lab.

Target Population Description

High school, community-college and university students enrolled in early childhood, education or other related degree programs will be eligible for placement in the Learning Lab. High school dual-enrollment early childhood programs are available at Holbrook and Show Low High Schools. Programming implemented under this strategy will provide an opportunity to reach additional interested high school students, as well as provide a location for internships and apprenticeships.

To ensure that a high quality program is provided, for both children enrolled and scholars placed in the program, a target service number of 10 participating professionals has been set. It is envisioned that 5 students may participate per semester, and it is reasonable to expect that up to 5 new participating professionals might be identified for each subsequent semester. The remainder of SFY2013 will be a start-up period, and it is envisioned that the first year of full program implementation will be SFY2014.

Funding will be allotted for this strategy over the next three fiscal years on a schedule of a 20% reduction each year. Since actual expenditures are not yet known, the full amount of funding is allotted in fiscal year 2013 and the funding allotments in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 are dependent on carry forward funds from previous fiscal years. It is expected that carry forward funds from fiscal year 2012 will be sufficient to adequately fund this strategy in fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of children served	0	0	0
Number of participating professionals	0	10	10
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Learning Labs	\$300,000	\$180,000	\$100,000