



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

AGENDA ITEM: Report on Building Public-Private Partnerships

BACKGROUND: In Arizona and across the country, foundations, corporations and private individuals enthusiastically support early childhood health and development initiatives in a variety of ways. Many philanthropic organizations recognize that investments in young children strongly contribute to their education and health goals. In fact, in Arizona throughout the past decade more than \$26 million has been invested in the field of early childhood development and education.

The timing is right for First Things First to more intentionally explore how we can strategically leverage local, state, and national resources — public and private— to advance Arizona’s early childhood system. This report outlines eight strategies to achieve this goal, with action steps and a timeline related to developing a plan that guides these efforts for the next several years.

RECOMMENDATION: The CEO recommends approval of the report and proposed direction for plan development.

## Building Public Private Partnerships

### Background

In Arizona and across the country, foundations, corporations and private individuals enthusiastically support early childhood health and development initiatives in a variety of ways. Recent scientific evidence substantiates the positive impact of high-quality early experiences. Informed by this research many philanthropies recognize that investments in young children strongly contribute to their education and health goals. In fact, in Arizona throughout the past decade more than \$26 million has been invested in the field of early childhood development and education.

For example, Tucson’s Diamond Foundation has made a substantial investment in early childhood throughout the past 10 years with its commitment of more than \$1 million to First Focus on Kids, the early childhood education initiative of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. These grant funds seeded a variety of initiatives—including innovative approaches to professional development for early childhood educators – and helped raised equal matching funds. Early literacy is another area of significant investment both nationally and in Arizona. Private foundations, charities, and corporate donors have contributed to Reach Out and Read, a program designed to engage pediatricians to read to their children from birth.

Other state and local philanthropies also have substantial investments in Arizona’s young children. When First Things First was just an idea on paper, Arizona’s foundations invested in the research to determine if such an initiative was viable. The Arizona Community Foundation provided seed funding to launch the Arizona Early Education Funds—a regional capacity building effort that was the precursor to First Things First. In more recent years, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust has invested more than \$18 million in early childhood health and development programs. The Trust’s early childhood strategies include the Quality Preschool Curricula Project, a model program advancing early learning practices, training and curricula, including standardized orientation for new teachers and accreditation for community-based preschools. The Trust launched the Arizona Parent Kit, which is now funded by FTF and reaches every parent of a newborn with critical health, safety, and learning information. Currently, The Trust is collaborating with First Things First and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to implement a kindergarten developmental inventory that will assess the learning status of all young children as they begin kindergarten in Arizona’s public schools.

The Helios Education Foundation, one of Arizona’s largest private philanthropies has made early care and education one of their core areas and invested over more than \$6.5 million throughout the past three years. The focus of their investments are improving teacher quality, bridging early childhood and K-3 education, and integrating literacy and language acquisition curriculum into early childhood education and related degree programs. Helios also supports the development and alignment of the early childhood system through their support of the Arizona BUILD initiative. St. Luke’s Health

Initiatives, an Arizona public charity, continues to inform the work of early childhood system building through its ongoing support of the Arizona Health Survey that provides a lens to the status of children's health and parent's access to health care for them.

Corporations are investing in early childhood health and development in the communities in which their employees live and work. For the past eight years, the Boeing Corporation has focused its investments in programs that increase the capacity of parents to support school readiness. Through corporate initiatives and Employees Community Fund grants, Boeing supports early learning programs in the communities where the company has a presence including its facilities in Mesa, Arizona.

Tribal gaming operations also make significant investments to ensure that young children are prepared to succeed in school and life. The Tohono O'odham Nation built three new Head Start facilities. Since the land base of the Nation is larger than the state of Connecticut, these locations mean facilities are closer to families' homes providing more parents and children access to Head Start programming. Since the 1960s, programs for pre-school children of the Ak-Chin Indian Community have been housed in the old Community Center. In 2006, the Community broke ground for a separate school for the Ak-Chin Early Childhood Development Program.

At the national level, private philanthropic organizations are aligning and collectively increasing their investment in young children. In 2002, the Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative, a coalition of eleven foundations dedicated to the positive development of young children, launched the BUILD Initiative to support policymakers and childcare providers and advocates in four states. By 2012, BUILD expanded its efforts and now has fourteen participating funders and projects in nine states, including Arizona. BUILD works to help achieve comprehensive, coordinated systems of early childhood programs, policies and services. The Birth to Five Policy Alliance is another such collaborative established in 2008 with pooled funds of seven philanthropic funders. The Alliance fosters policy change through one or more of three basic activities: building capacity in states for policy innovation and investment; supporting policymakers; and analyzing and tracking policies that address the early learning needs of at-risk infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families.

Another example of such partnership is the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's award of \$5,000,000 to the American Indian College Fund to establish four early childhood development centers to be located at tribal colleges and universities and serving Native children. The program, titled Wakanyeja "Sacred Little Ones" Early Childhood Development Initiative, is a five-year project intended to improve young Native students' skill acquisition; prepare them for grades K-12 and post-secondary education; improve the quality of early childhood teachers in Native communities through partnership opportunities with post-secondary teacher training programs at the tribal colleges; bridge early childhood and K-3 education; integrate Native language and culture into early childhood curriculum; and empower Native families and communities as change agents in education for their children.

This cross-sector commitment to early childhood health and development has been growing in Arizona for several decades. For example, a consortium of public and private agencies formed in 1993 to establish The Arizona Partnership for Infant Immunization (TAPII). This partnership included the Arizona

Department of Health Services, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Arizona Medical Association, The Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, The Flinn Foundation, and businesses and corporations throughout Arizona. The partnership was formed to dramatically improve Arizona's dismal childhood immunization rate. The Flinn Foundation provided the core funding to build a statewide immunization registry. Today, this partnership, now known as the Arizona Partnership for Immunizations, is still vibrant and can claim among its accomplishments legislation that supports a model statewide immunization registry system as well as higher immunization rates for two year olds. Another example of innovative cross-sector collaboration grew in an effort to find community-generated solutions to a long standing health issue for Indian children. In 2011, the Arizona American Indian Oral Health Coalition comprised of Arizona Tribes, Indian organizations, state agencies and the Arizona Dental Association, convened to tackle the severe oral health disparities among the Native American community in Arizona, where children have decay rates that are 400% greater than the national average.

Federal initiatives and grant opportunities have also increased to support states' efforts to build and support early childhood development and health programs or systems. These federal funds have supported several Arizona initiatives. The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grants were announced to states in 2003. This initiative continues through 2013 and supports states to plan, develop and implement collaborations that support families and communities in establishing effective early childhood systems. Nationally, nearly \$100 million in Federal funds have been allocated to support this initiative since its inception. Arizona ECCS grant awards cumulatively total \$1.37 million, with ECCS funds currently supporting the work of the Arizona Professional Development System-Building Workgroup.

Arizona also received two Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting grants (MIECHV). MIECHV was established through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in 2010. MIECHV provides funds for evidence-based home visiting to families in at-risk communities. Annual grants of approximately 1.8 million are allocated to Arizona's Department of Health Services (ADHS). A capacity building grant was also awarded to ADHS that will provide \$36 million in home visiting program funds over four years. First Things First staff members serve on working committees funded by both grants, and advance efforts to build a robust home-visiting system in Arizona. The Native American Community Health Center (Native Health) also received a MIECHV grant to provide effective coordination and delivery of critical health, development, early learning, child abuse and neglect prevention, and family support services to American Indian children and families residing in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Arizona tribes have received several tribal specific federal grants available to support early childhood education. These funding sources include the U.S. Department of Education Demonstration Grants for Indian Children Programs. This grant supports projects to develop, test and demonstrate the effectiveness of services and programs to improve educational opportunities and achievement of Indian children. This year, twelve (12) tribes across the United States were funded through this grant. Arizona's San Carlos Apache Tribe was among those awarded for their Child Readiness Project which serves a pre-school population in three sites with an emphasis on school readiness.

The idea of First Things First working to expand public private partnerships began as the initiative ballot language was drafted. In fact, First Things First enabling language establishes a formal mechanism by which to account for government grants and private funding at the regional and state levels. Additionally, there is a philanthropist and business representative on each of the 31 regional partnership councils. This framework was established after policy analysis found that many states across the country were establishing robust public-private partnerships. For example, North Carolina’s Smart Start requires that for every \$10 in public funding spent, a \$1 must be raised in matching funds. A key component of Michigan’s Great Start initiative is a public-private partnership, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC). ECIC uses public and private dollars to promote early childhood infrastructure development at the local level, and it then coordinates the resulting efforts statewide. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act established a Foundation to accept private funding on behalf of early childhood programs. Through Smart Start Oklahoma, the agency that staffs the School Readiness Initiative, 18 local coalitions have been established to implement the program. Both the Foundation and the local coalitions raise funds to support early childhood. Private contributions have exceeded \$8.7 million since its inception.

As First Things First develops in communities across Arizona and as a statewide organization, the timing is right to explore how First Things First can strategically leverage local, state, and national resources — public and private— to advance Arizona’s early childhood system.

### **Our Purpose**

Our purpose for developing a strategic approach to public-private partnerships and seeking and leveraging federal funds is clear: We know sustainable, high-impact early childhood system-building requires the collective efforts of a variety of partners. To that end, we must devise an approach that helps us strategically identify new opportunities and resources that will extend and leverage statewide initiatives (signature programs) and regional funding. Our strategies must encompass and be tailored to the diverse needs of our Regions as well as maximize opportunities for statewide system building.

### **Our Approach**

1. **Identify and leverage additional federal resources.** Federal sources provide opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and support for research and evaluation. Seeking and winning federal funds requires mechanisms for continuous surveillance of these opportunities as well as established relationships with potential partners. Time frames for applications are often short and require a state of readiness to successfully compete. While there are currently multiple federal opportunities in which First Things First has been involved and has agreed to sign on as a partner, a more intentional approach is necessary. The timeline on page 6 articulates a systematic approach to identifying federal opportunities, determining their viability and developing the internal capacity for which to apply. Federal grants could potentially support system building outside of First Things First (e.g., DHS Home Visiting Grants), multi-regional collaborative efforts or statewide infrastructure building.

2. **Build relationships with national philanthropies to tell the Arizona story and identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives.** Many national foundations and philanthropic trusts select and fund projects or initiatives of interest that align with their mission or that of their founders rather than issuing calls for proposals. Strategic relationships must be developed with the grant officers and other leadership of those organizations to nurture interest and generate invitations to submit proposals. First Things First has developed an inventory of national funders who support early childhood education and many local philanthropies have established extensive partnerships with these national funders. The next step is to identify priority initiatives to discuss with potential national partners and a short list of funders that appear to be the most likely partners.
3. **Build relationships with tribes, tribal corporations, organizations and philanthropies both nationally and statewide to learn more about resources available for creative collaborations to strengthen early childhood development and health efforts in Arizona's tribal communities.** This effort requires more specific attention because gift giving may look and sound different for tribal philanthropies and other organizations with respect to tribal culture.
4. **Partner with Arizona private sector philanthropies by participating in a cross-sector systems approach to early learning.** Several of Arizona's largest foundations are investing in early childhood initiatives and a variety of partnerships have already been created. Most recently the Rodel Charitable Foundation of Arizona will add a preschool component to the Exemplary Teacher Initiative. Beginning at the December 2012 Board meeting, First Things First staff will include an update report on these partnerships as a consent agenda item.
5. **Develop, in partnership with regional councils, a standard of practice by which regions can collaborate and develop local public private initiatives.** A standard of practice provides best practice approaches and guidance to achieve consistent and uniform approaches for Regional Partnership Councils and staff. In addition, a public-private partnership tool kit, technical assistance and tailored guidance will be developed to help Regional Councils build capacity to seek partnerships and leverage funding from regional, tribal, state, and national funders.
6. **Build the procedural infrastructure within First Things First to support, receive, and account for public or private grants revenue sources.** Policies and procedures are needed to support First Things First's Regions and statewide efforts in seeking, accepting and accounting for partnerships funds. These will provide a clear framework on necessary steps to assure fiduciary requirements are met in accounting for funds and reporting to donors.
7. **Explore a First Things First Early Childhood Endowment.** At its retreat in December 2011, the state board expressed the desire to look at sustainability in the broadest sense, including the possibility of building an early childhood endowment. Without any solicitation, there have been a limited number of private individuals who have expressed interest in contributing financially to First Things First efforts statewide. For example, a family requested that donations be made to First Things First in honor of a deceased family member.
8. **Research and determine approaches for earned income.** There are various ways to approach earned income including the sales of products and services, copy-writes and patents. A public agency has specific limitations and restrictions, but also opportunities in exploring earned income. Examples of potential earned income include entities outside of Arizona purchasing

products and services developed by First Things First and full fee paying providers buying into Quality First. Only with caution and significant deliberation should these options be considered. However, there is also potential to develop and generate earned income to further First Things First’s mission.

### Recommended Next Steps

With the guidance and involvement of the CEO, the First Things First Strategic Initiatives team will lead these efforts, which will include strong support and input from the External Affairs team. Because building public private partners crosses multiple domains within First Things First, it is recommended that the Board’s Executive Committee, under the leadership of the Board Chair, serve as the oversight committee for this work. In order to establish a specific framework moving forward it is recommended that a small subcommittee of the executive staff team, to include regional representation, be convened and present recommendations to the Board Executive Committee and ultimately the entire Board.

The following table highlights the actions and timeline for FY 2013:

Actions	Deliverable & Timeline
<p>1. Convene a Public Private Partnership Committee (Committee) of the Board’s Executive Committee, with the Board delegating to the Board Chair the authority to seat a committee comprised of Board and Regional Council members, and private sector partners to provide input and take appropriate action on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A conceptual framework for establishing public-private partnerships;</li> <li>b. Target goals, strategies, and tactics;</li> <li>c. Standards of practice for partnership development;</li> <li>d. Exploration and possible development of a First Things First endowment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of Board action establishing Committee (10/2012);</li> <li>• Convene initial Committee meeting (by 12/31/2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Calendar of 2013 Committee meeting dates &amp; times (by 12/31/2012).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>2. Develop Public-Private Partnership FY 2014-2016 Plan (Plan) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Finalized conceptual framework;</li> <li>b. Mechanism to track inventory of ongoing efforts.</li> <li>c. Target goals and objectives (for example, number of grants written and secured, number of foundation relationships developed, number of Regional projects advanced);</li> <li>d. Methods to evaluate effectiveness;</li> <li>e. A description of the infrastructure needed, and plan to develop and implement needed infrastructure;</li> <li>f. A description of the technical assistance needed to develop central office and Regional capacity to build public-private partnerships, and to secure and manage external funding;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Public-Private Partnership FY 2014-2016 Plan to Committee for review and comment (by 3/31/2013);</li> <li>• Near-final-draft Public-Private Partnership FY 2014-2016 Plan to Committee for final review and approval (by 4/30/2013);</li> <li>• Present Plan to Board for review (by 6/30/2013)</li> </ul>

g. Standards of Practice	
3. Develop a regular update report for the Board on the cross-sector early learning opportunities and activities with private sector philanthropies in Arizona.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present report to Board beginning in December 2012</li> </ul>
4. Develop and disseminate interim guidance to Regions including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Sample letters requesting funding;</li> <li>b. Interim procedures and forms for processing funds received;</li> <li>c. How to proceed if asked to partner in or write a grant;</li> <li>d. Recognizing potential opportunities for partnership development (which strategies are potential possibilities; how to identify potential partners);</li> <li>e. Consultant list of grant writers and procedures for acquiring grant-writing services;</li> <li>f. How to write an MOU (including examples and procedures for approval);</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and disseminate interim guidance by 2/28/13.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

As policymakers and the general public grow increasingly aware of the benefits of strengthening early childhood development and health, First Things First is ideally positioned to expand systems-building efforts through strategic public-private partnerships. Our approach and next-step recommendations are designed to propel our efforts forward, building greater engagement in early childhood work, across both public and private sectors. Our efforts will help Arizona’s early childhood system leverage even more opportunities for young children, and provide a clear path for building strong partnerships for long-term sustainability.