



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board Cochise Regional Partnership Council

Work Session Meeting Minutes October 12, 2010

Call to Order

The Work Session Meeting of the First Things First Cochise Regional Partnership Council was held on Friday, October 12, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Things First Regional Office, 3643 South Highway 92, Suite B, Sierra Vista, Arizona 85650.

Council Members Present:

Ana Bae, David Howe, Renae Humburg, Jane Strain

Council Members Absent:

Marge Dailey, Mario Gonzales, Chuck Hoyack, Melodi Polach, Ginger Ryan, Michael Vetter, Nancy-Jean Welker

Others Present:

Melissa Avant, Cristal Martin

Regional Coordinator Melissa Avant welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at approximately 10:20 a.m.

Call to the Public

There was no response to Call to the Public

Discussion of Quality and Access Strategies

Melissa Avant, Regional Coordinator, First Things First Cochise Regional Partnership Council, provided the Regional Council with handouts for Quality and Access strategies and discussed Strategy 3; Quality First. Ms. Avant informed the Regional Council that the statewide slots for Quality First! in Cochise County has gone from 10 to 9 due to the costs associated with Quality First. For Cochise County there is currently a waiting list for Quality First! For SFY 2011, ten regional slots (5 centers and 5 homes) were expanded for a total of 31 Quality First! slots. In 2013, 21 centers and homes will graduate and receive their star rating. Currently, in the process of selecting programs for participation in Quality First for the 2011 fiscal year, Cochise County is mapped to have centers and homes selected in August 2010, January 2011, March 2011 and May 2011.

The Regional Council requested information on First Things First branding in participating centers and homes.

Priority/Need within Cochise County: The Cochise Regional Partnership Council strongly supported expanding the Quality First program thus ensuring the capacity of the early childhood workforce in Cochise County, to provide quality early education.

Funding Plan: Funding can come out of population based allocation.

First Things First Approved Priority: Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings. Supports and Services to Families, Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Services. This strategy provides a quality environment for children placed in child care.

Sustainability: The current numbers can be maintained until 2012 and then be reassessed in SFY2013

Ms. Avant discussed Strategy 10; Partial Scholarships with the Regional Council. For SFY 2010 there are 28 Infant/Toddler Scholarships and 30 three to five year old scholarships for a total of 58 scholarships. All partial scholarships are tied to Quality First! centers and homes. Currently all centers and homes are accessing the scholarships. The cost per scholarship varies by region, age of the child and type of provider. The rate is tied to the most recent Market Rate Survey. Dramatic decreases in enrollment since the scholarship program ended, increasing cost in licensing fees, and decreased DES child care reimbursements have resulted in severe financial pressures experienced by child care providers in both center and group homes. Providers across the state, including those in Cochise County, are threatened with closure without an infrastructure in place to help them stabilize their financial situations. With improved financial stability, centers and group homes have the increased ability to maintain staff which contributes to the stability of the environment and quality of care to enrolled children. Partial scholarships can play a strong role in achieving and maintaining high quality care and education.

Priority/ Need within Cochise County: The high cost of early care and education is one of the most difficult obstacles to obtaining and maintaining employment for many low-income or single-parent families.

Funding Plan: Funding can come out of carry forward.

First Things First Approved Priority: Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings, Supports and Services for Families. With improved financial stability, centers and group homes have the increased ability to maintain staff which contributes to the stability of the environment and quality of care to enrolled children. Partial scholarships can play a strong role in achieving and maintaining high quality care and education.

Sustainability: For 2011, additional scholarships can be added for a total of 98 to 100 scholarships. The numbers can be maintained for SFY 2012 and reassessed in SFY 2013.

Ms. Avant discussed Strategy 11; Pre-K Expansion with the Regional Council. In early 2010 (SFY 2011) Cochise Regional Partnership released an RFGA for proposals to help with Pre-K expansion; unfortunately there was no response to the RFGA. The Council then moved the \$100,000 from Pre-K Strategy to Child Care Scholarships for 3-5 year olds. The Regional Council could consider a one-time

grant coming from Discretionary dollars and should estimate approximately \$100,000 for a three phase grant to include a potential building. This proposal would expand access to high quality child care in a rural area by providing a planning grant. Funds would be used to support the development of a plan to assess the need and feasibility of providing child care within the community.

Pre-K Expansion can be reassessed in 2012.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Howe adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Dated this 21st day of Oct, 2010.

Submitted By: Cristal Martin
Administrative Assistant

Approved By: 
Chair, David Howe