

FIRST THINGS FIRST EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Guide to the Representation of Study Results

From its beginning, the First Things First External Evaluation project (FTFEE) has established a goal of authentically portraying the experiences of Arizona's children and their families. The project was charged with including Arizonans from *all groups* to ensure a comprehensive answer to the question, 'what impact is there on the lives of young children when the state supports new and expanded initiatives in early childhood care, health and education?', FTFEE has sought to accurately and fully portray Arizona's children.

Aiming to include all groups and to keep the tribal communities informed, FTFEE has presented at each Tribal Regional Partnership Council across the state of Arizona. At the request of one tribal member to provide examples of how FTFEE will present and summarize data from statewide study in future reports, this document was created. This document provides an outline of the three studies being conducted and illustrates how data collected *may* be used in future reports. No data will be collected from any tribal members residing on tribal lands prior to obtaining tribal permission.

To determine whether there is a positive increase in the educational and health outcomes for young children, FTFEE feels it is vital that all groups are represented across the distinctive geographic, demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic regions of the state of Arizona.

SUMMARY OF THREE STUDIES

Longitudinal Child Study of Arizona (LCSA)

The Longitudinal Child Study of Arizona, originally referred to as the Longitudinal Child Cohort Study (L-CCS), is designed to assess three cohorts of Arizona children during early childhood. In Year 1 (2010), approximately 8,000 families will be involved. Children will be assessed in terms of physical (e.g., height and weight) and developmental (e.g., social-emotional skills, academics, motor skills) growth at one year, three years, and five years of age. Parents, guardians, primary caregivers, child care providers and administrators will complete surveys and/or be interviewed.

This study will follow up with participants in the younger cohorts (1 and 3 year olds) when they are 3 and 5, respectively, in Years 2 and 3 (2012 and 2014). Thus, the oldest cohort will participate once, the middle cohort twice, and the youngest cohort three times, throughout the duration of the LCSA study. Results will be reported in aggregate; no individual participant information will be included or identifiable in the reports. In addition, no data will be released at a tribal level.

Readiness Study

The purpose of the Readiness Study is to provide a snapshot of Arizona children's overall health and readiness for school. Children are assessed in terms of physical (e.g., height and weight) and developmental (e.g., social-emotional skills, academics, motor skills) growth. The Readiness Study will facilitate analysis of group differences in school readiness in relation to the continuum of the First Things First system of services. Every other year of the study (2009, 2011, and 2013), data will be gathered from approximately 1,200 children across 90 randomly-selected schools, in the fall of their kindergarten year. Results will be reported in aggregate; no individual school or student information will be included or identifiable in the reports. Again, no tribes will be identified in the data.

Family & Community Case Study (FCCS)

The Family and Community Case Study sample is intended to complement the large sample of the child cohort study. The purpose of the study is to address issues of access, cultural relevance of programs, and other more subtle issues in the availability, accessibility, visibility, quality, and utilization of early childhood care and health services. The use of information gathered through such interviews is crucial in providing understanding of the complex variables addressed in any in-depth study of factors associated with children's well-being, early learning, care, health and various support systems. We are also interviewing 5-year-old children, as part of the focal family interviews.

Over 200 families and children and over 120 community stakeholders will be selected from 15 Regional Partnership Councils statewide and interviewed twice per year. Portraits of families as well as service providers and other stakeholders will be generated. A preliminary family portrait is attached, as a sample of how information from this study will be shared. Again, any identifying information will be removed and all people will be given pseudonyms.

TIMELINE

Readiness & Longitudinal Child Study of Arizona Study

Readiness Study (Tribal)	Priority Deadline	Late Deadline	Studies Conducted during:
Parents & Kindergarten age children	December 2010	January 2011	Months of Aug-Sept 2011
Longitudinal Study (Tribal)	Priority Deadline	Late Deadline	Studies Conducted during:
Primary Caregiver/Child	ASAP	October 2010	Months of Oct – Dec
Providers	ASAP	October 2010	Months of January/February

Family and Community Case Study (FCCS)

FCCS (Tribal)	Priority Deadline	Late Deadline	Studies Conducted during:
Primary Caregiver/Child	September 15, 2010	October 15, 2010	Months of Oct – Dec
Stakeholder	November 15, 2010	January 1, 2011	Months of January/February
Primary Caregiver/Child	January 15, 2011	February 15, 2011	Months of March/April

Entrance into the FCCS – Stakeholder portion of the study occurs once yearly and for the Primary Caregiver entrance into the study it occurs twice yearly.

Primary Caregiver: FCCS recruits on tribal land for a period of 3 – 4 weeks following the deadline (priority/late). From the families recruited, FCCS selects 15 families to interview. The interview is conducted at the home of the primary caregiver or a site of their choosing. Following these interviews, 8 families are selected to participate as focal families for the remaining duration of the study. Children of the families selected as focal families will be interviewed when they reach the age of five.

Stakeholder: FCCS recruits for a period of 3 – 4 weeks following the deadline (priority/late). A sample of up to 10 stakeholders is selected who provide services to young children on tribal lands. Stakeholders will be interviewed within 3 weeks following sample selection.

SAMPLE FAMILY PORTRAIT FOR THE FAMILY & COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

* Pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality of the family

*Rita is a 35 year-old Navajo woman living in a rural community in northern Arizona. Rita lives with her husband, teenage son, and 3 year old daughter, *Janice. Rita and her husband have also recently gained legal guardianship of a niece and nephew due to circumstances not disclosed by the family.

The family has lived in their current rent-to-own home for the past year. Previously they lived on the Navajo Reservation in a relatives' home while they searched for affordable and adequate housing. Rita's home is located on a dirt road in the open countryside a few miles outside the nearest town center. A handful of homes are dispersed around them.

Rita commutes two hours to work each day, as well as to a local university on the weekends to complete classes towards an advanced degree. Rita's youngest daughter, Janice has attended daycare provided by the school district where Rita works, this being the most affordable option.

Rita describes her income and qualification situation as, "...if you don't income qualify [for child care] then you are slapped with a big fee and I don't have any additional money to pay for all these things." Many families in northern Arizona do not use childcare services and Rita represents the thematic notion behind this issue when she said:

There are not enough preschools to provide for this area. I know in some communities they have a nesting "grandparent" program and that is for children zero to five years old where they have grandparents coming in and teaching cultural values. That is a big thing for me – I can't teach my child all the values because I'm a working mother.

Health care has also been a cause of financial hardship and emotional stress for Rita's family. Rita finds herself within an economic gap, earning too much income to qualify for AHCCCS, but experiencing difficulty in affording the \$500 per month premium for family insurance through her employer. When asked about the challenges of raising children in northern Arizona Rita stated:

My biggest concern is health care. As a working parent and a parent going to school, it's tough...it's always tough to get adequate coverage. When I have gone to AHCCCS for help they say that I make enough to afford health insurance but to me that is crazy.

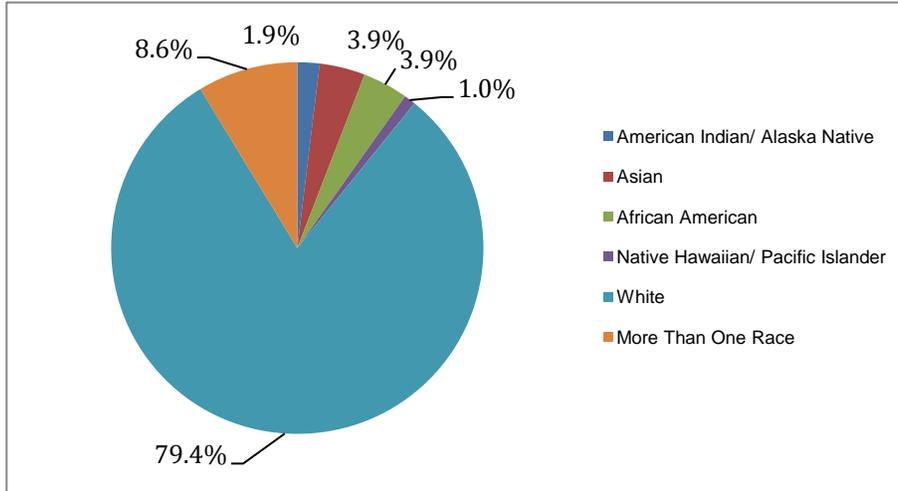
Rita and Janice are both eligible for care through Indian Health Services (IHS); however, access to IHS care is not always feasible. The closest IHS facility, located 1½ hour from the family's home will not accept Rita and her son based on their residential zip code. Instead the family travels for 2½ hours to access the IHS center at which they are eligible.

Rita has been a educator for 15 years and holds two degrees. She believes in formal education, but also sees a need to incorporate Native American values into the lessons her children learn at home, as well as in school. At home, Rita teaches her son the Navajo language, stating that from it "stems a lot of self identity". However, Rita continued, "I feel this is lacking in my daughter...I don't want her to be looking at the TV and learning from things that have no value or connection to who we are." Rita is aware that the daycares and schools in her community serve a high percentage of Native American children but she says they do not teach traditional cultural practices. She believes other Native parents desire traditional educational experiences within the school, but most are completely unaware of the channels through which Native families may influence the school system.

Rita hopes to finish her advanced degree within one year. Professionally, she hopes to use her degree to improve conditions in the school system for people of all ethnicities and income levels. Personally, she is counting on her degree to qualify her for a higher-paying position so she can better provide for her family's needs.

SAMPLE DATA FOR THE READINESS STUDY AND THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Children – Race/Ethnicity

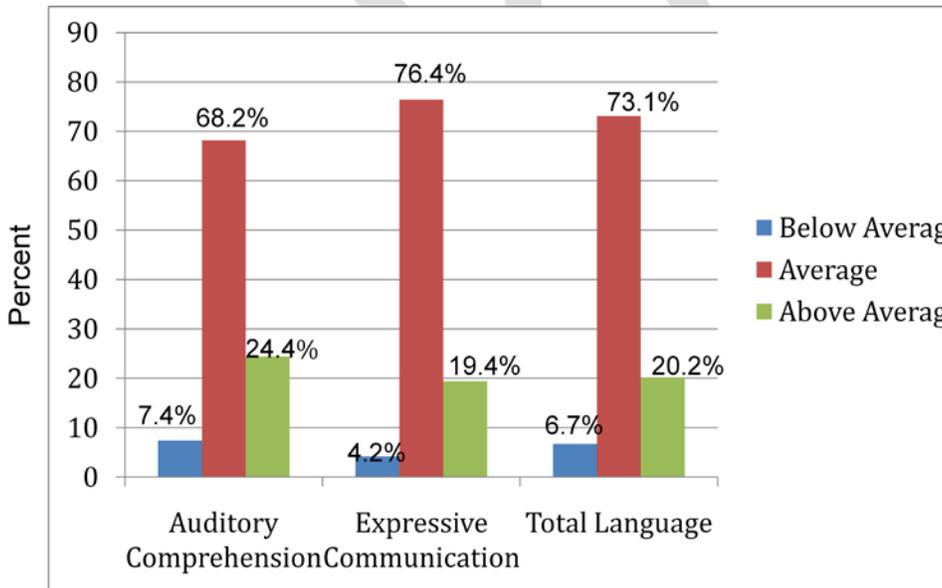


-Participation broken down by race and ethnicities from the Kindergarten readiness Study from Fall 2009.

- American Indian participants are from the urban communities, not from tribal communities.

-The race and ethnicity breakdown is not representative of Arizona’s population.

Preschool Language Scale - English



Auditory Comprehension
Children’s understanding of the English spoken language.

Expressive Communication
Children’s use of the English language.

Total Language
A combined score of the two subscales.

- The Preschool Language Scale (PLS) is a commonly used language assessment that provides percentile scores in Auditory and Expressive Communication with specific age groups.
- This graph represents the Auditory and Expressive Communication of kindergartners tested by FTTEE in comparison to the PLS age expectations.

Guardian Questionnaire – Math Activities

Participants of the study provided FTFEE with information about the frequency of engaging in Math activities with their children.

This data captures in a graph data from one question from a guardian questionnaire completed by the guardian of the child participating in the Longitudinal Child Study of Arizona.

