

### Strategy 1(d): Pre-Kindergarten Expansion

This is the third strategy of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council focused on expanding access to quality early care and education programs. The La Paz/Mohave Regional Council previously allocated these funds to a cross-regional pilot study on access and affordability that was cancelled because other regions moved funding to emergency child care scholarships. The Pre-Kindergarten Expansion strategy will compliment the other approved early care and education strategies in the Regional Funding Plan (Planning, Start-up and Quality Improvement Grants and Quality First Expansion) by providing grants to public school districts to increase the number of Pre-Kindergarten slots for at-risk children ages 3-5. The proposed strategy will ensure more children in the region have access to high quality early care and education in order to increase school readiness.

Community stakeholders and parents in the region indicate a need to increase the availability of high quality Pre-Kindergarten classrooms to better prepare children for success in school. Other evidence also suggests a need to better support education among young children in the region. One assessment that is used frequently across Arizona schools – the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) – shows that many children in the region may be behind in literacy acquisition when they enter Kindergarten. The DIBELS is used to identify children’s reading skills upon entry to school and to measure their reading progress throughout the year. In 2007, an average of 25% of children entering kindergarten in Mohave and La Paz County School Districts met the DIBELS benchmark standards.

Third grade standardized assessments also suggest that children in the region lag behind their counterparts in mathematics, reading and writing. The Spring 2007 Third Grade AIMS scores show that most La Paz/Mohave Region School Districts fall below other Arizona School Districts in reading, writing, and mathematics. While test scores in the elementary school years are influenced by many factors, these scores may in part be influenced by young children’s school preparedness.

### La Paz/Mohave Spring 2007 AIMS DPA 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Score Achievement Levels in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing

School District	Mathematics				Reading				Writing			
	FFB	A	M	E	FFB	A	M	E	FFB	A	M	E
Mohave County												
Bullhead City Elementary	52	31	17	0	31	56	13	0	26	43	28	4
Colorado City Unified	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Hackberry	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Kingman Unified	35	20	40	5	26	58	16	0	15	35	50	0
Lake Havasu Unified	41	41	19	0	33	44	22	0	15	30	56	0
Littlefield Unified	24	24	52	0	14	57	29	0	10	14	71	5
Mohave Valley Elementary	21	47	32	0	11	58	32	0	16	21	53	11
Peach Springs Unified	39	50	11	0	17	78	6	0	22	22	56	0
Topock Elementary	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
La Paz County												
Parker Unified	17	17	67	0	8	75	17	0	8	50	42	0
Wenden Elementary	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>All Arizona Schools</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>16</b>

Arizona Department of Education AIMS Spring 2007 Grade 03 Summary

FFB = Falls Far Below the Standard, A = Approaches the Standard, M = Meets the Standard, and E = Exceeds the Standard

As noted in the 2008 La Paz/Mohave Regional Needs and Assets Report, early childhood education programs can promote successful school readiness especially for low-income families. Research studies on early intervention programs for low-income children have found that participation in educational programs prior to kindergarten is related to improved school performance in the early years. Studies conducted of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) program – a large scale, high quality, publicly funded half-day early care and education program that has been operating for over 30 years – found that the program had a range of meaningful effects, including:

- Advantages in reading achievement scores as late as age 14
- Lower likelihood of retention in grade by age 15
- Reduced use of special education through age 18
- Lower incidence of child abuse and neglect from ages 4 to 17
- Lower likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system by age 18
- Greater likelihood of high school completion by age 20.

The 2008 La Paz/Mohave Regional Needs and Assets Report also noted low use of fee-paying early care and education settings for the 0-5 population in the region. With only an estimated 1,675 children out of the more than 15,500 children age birth to five in the region in fee-paying child care, it appears that a large number families are not able to access existing early care and education programs. This could be due to a variety of factors including the high cost of care, a preference for family, friend and neighbor care and/or lack of awareness of existing programs.

This strategy would support Public School District programs in the region to:

- Increase Pre-Kindergarten slots and/or allow half-day programs to expand to full day.
- Enroll more children who may not otherwise have access to high quality preschool programs during the two years prior to their kindergarten entry.
- Serve families at 200 percent or below the federal poverty level and/or those families who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

Districts would be required to match funds at a minimum of 20% of the total cost of services so that FTF grant monies would not be the sole funding source. Priority would be given to areas within the region where children may most benefit from the expansion of current capacity, including (but not limited to) areas where insufficient care is available and/or enrollment in regulated programs is limited.

**Goals:**

- FTF will increase availability and affordability of early care and education settings.
- FTF will improve access to quality early care and education programs and settings.

**Key Measures:**

- Current cost of early care and education for families as a proportion of the median income for a family of four
- Total number of children enrolled and vacancies in regulated early care and education programs as a proportion of total population birth to age five

<b>Target Population:</b> Low-income children ages 3-5 in the region.			
<b>Proposed Service Numbers</b>	<b>SFY2010</b> July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010	<b>SFY2011</b> July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011	<b>SFY2012</b> July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012
	50	75	75
<b>Performance Measures SFYs 2010 – 2012</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of publicly-funded preschool slots in the region</li> <li>• Percentage of low-income children attending quality early education programs in the region</li> <li>• Number of children served/proposed service number</li> <li>• Number children receiving part-time services/proposed service number</li> <li>• Number of children receiving full-time services/proposed service number</li> <li>• Cost to parents/proposed target number</li> </ul>			
<b>How is this strategy building on the service network that currently exists?</b>			
The proposed strategy will build on current Pre-Kindergarten programs operating within school districts.			
<b>What are the opportunities for collaboration and alignment?</b>			
Pre-Kindergarten programs could also apply to participate in Quality First and T.E.A.C.H.			
<b>SFY2010 Expenditure Plan for Proposed Strategy</b>			
Population-based Allocation for strategy	\$ 300,000		
<b>Budget Justification:</b>			
<p>The National Association of Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) reports that preschool programs cost from \$3,794 per child in Mississippi to \$10,668 per child in Massachusetts. The average cost nationwide is \$6,582, which is slightly lower than the average Head Start fiscal year 2005 cost of \$7,287 per child. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) estimates the annual cost of providing quality preschool education is \$8,700 per child. This would cover the full costs of the programs; including facilities, administration, and support services. For estimation purposes, a cost of \$6,000 per child was assumed for this strategy based on the average per-day cost of \$21.00 for a preschooler in a licensed center in La Paz and Mohave Counties from the 2008 DES Market Rate Study.</p>			
<b>Sources:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The National Association of Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Agencies, 2007. We Can Do Better.</li> <li>2. Average Head Start cost is reported on the Health and Human Services website at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/research/2006.htm">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/research/2006.htm</a></li> <li>3. Cost of Preschool is reported on the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) website at <a href="http://nieer.org/resources/facts/index.php?FastFactID=5">http://nieer.org/resources/facts/index.php?FastFactID=5</a></li> <li>4. 2008 DES Market Rate Study is available online at <a href="https://egov.azdes.gov/CMS400Min/InternetFiles/Reports/pdf/cca_market_survey_08.pdf">https://egov.azdes.gov/CMS400Min/InternetFiles/Reports/pdf/cca_market_survey_08.pdf</a></li> </ol>			