



Arizona Early Childhood Task Force

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH SYSTEM MODEL

System Description	Comments
<p>Vision: All Arizona children by the time they are five years old have a solid foundation for success in school and in life because we have worked together to create a comprehensive, collaborative, and high quality early childhood development and health system.</p>	<p><i>“All” means all, including children with special needs and children throughout the state. Some will need more support and others less but all are part of the system. The vision statement could stop before the word “because” but the last part of the vision speaks to the vision for this task force and is included at this point for that reason.</i></p>
<p>The early childhood development and health system addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Development (Physical, Cognitive, Social-Emotional) [Early Learning] • Children’s Health (Physical Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition) 	<p><i>The system is designed to encompass all aspects of child development and health. Some services and supports address both, but these two elements (development and health) define the boundaries of the system. Early learning is primarily within the realm of development, but is not exclusively so. Health services address prevention and treatment of health conditions, but also have a developmental component. Family support services strengthen the family’s ability to foster the child’s development and health.</i></p>
<p>The early childhood development and health system is built on foundational elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic survival elements (food, water, air, shelter) • Safety and security (protection from physical threat, psychological safety) 	<p><i>The early childhood development and health system does not duplicate these foundational elements but rather builds on them. Without this foundation in place, the child’s development and health will not be optimal. Families may or may not require public or private services and supports in these areas. The early childhood development and health system’s role in these foundational elements is to link families to services and supports if needed.</i></p>



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<p>Arizona’s young children and their families have requirements for information, services, and support, but these will vary with the child and family. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on availability of health and early learning resources so they can make informed choices • Education on health and early learning so they can make informed choices • Access to high quality, affordable, and developmentally and culturally appropriate health and early learning resources, including those that address special needs • Support for families to foster their success and that of their children 	<p><i>In order to be successful, all families require information, education, access, and support. These are the components of a comprehensive early childhood development and health system. Some families will need more external support to meet these requirements than others do. The early childhood development and health system has a role to play in development and utilization of natural supports (families, friends, and communities), as well as creating a responsive service delivery system.</i></p>
<p>The key partners involved in this system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona’s young children and their families • Arizona communities, including Tribal communities • Community health and early learning service providers, including those who provide early intervention and address special needs • Family support providers • K-12 educators • Those who educate providers, including colleges and universities • Researchers • Community agencies • Community foundations/philanthropy • Advocacy organizations • Policy makers at federal, state, and local levels • State agencies, notably First Things First and its Regional Councils, Department of Economic Security, Department of Education, Department of Health Services, and AHCCCS • Professional associations • Business community 	<p><i>The early childhood development and health system requires the active participation of all of these partners if it is to be successful. They will need to work together in a collaborative manner that focuses on the child and family and that overcomes intrinsic and extrinsic challenges to working together. As the early childhood development and health system is built, it is likely that there will continue to be a need for convening these partners.</i></p>
<p>In order to realize the vision, we must have a solid infrastructure that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Governance • Adequate and secure financing • Qualified and well-paid workforce 	<p><i>The early childhood development and health system will require all of these elements of infrastructure. Each element will require a clear, feasible, and sustainable plan for implementation.</i></p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of practice and a means for monitoring them • Needs/asset assessment, research/evaluation, and planning/development based on findings • Technology support • Public awareness and support 	
<p>The Arizona system will have the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child and family centered</i> – the system will focus on the child and family, recognize that each child and family is unique, and be developed and implemented in a manner that facilitates their engagement in the system; the system will be driven by Arizona’s families • <i>Strength based</i> – the system will be built and implemented in a manner that identifies, builds on, and strengthens the many assets of Arizona’s children and families • <i>Comprehensive</i> – the system will address all aspects of child development and health • <i>Scalable</i> – the system can be implemented throughout the state and for all families, resources permitting • <i>Outcome focused</i> – goals will be clear and measurable • <i>Effective</i> – outcomes for children and families, as well as the functioning of the system, will be measured and desired results will be achieved • <i>Accountable</i> – the system will be transparent, subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and responsive to Arizona’s children, families, and the communities of which they are an integral part • <i>Well funded</i> – resources that are adequate to support the development and implementation of the system will be dedicated to this purpose • <i>Sustainable</i> – as the system is developed and implemented, consideration will be given to sustaining the system over time • <i>Collaborative</i> – all agencies, organizations, and individuals involved in the development, funding, implementation, and utilization of the system will help to design, evaluate, and continually improve it • <i>High quality</i> – the system will be designed, developed, and implemented with recognition of lessons learned from research, evaluation, and experience; the system will seek to meet or exceed standards of good practice in all aspects • <i>Inclusive and respectful</i> – the system will encompass all Arizona’s children and will honor their differences while promoting their inclusion in the system • <i>Equitable</i> – all children, families, and communities will be considered in the assessment of assets and needs and in systems planning and implementation • <i>Nimble</i> – the system will change as conditions and requirements change • <i>Clear</i> – while broad in scope and complex in undertaking, the system will be easy to understand and explain • <i>Seamless</i> – the system will involve many agencies, organizations, and individuals who work together so that 	<p><i>These are the desired characteristics of the early childhood development and health system and services and supports within it. They constitute a list of descriptors that can be used to evaluate Arizona’s system building efforts along the way.</i></p>



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<p>services, supports, and funding for them are well-articulated and wrap around the family in a coherent way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Community based</i> – like children and families, communities are unique; the system recognizes, supports, and builds on the key role communities play in early childhood development and health• <i>Widely known</i> – Arizonans will have an accurate understanding of the system, how it works, and its goals• <i>Publicly supported</i> -- Arizonans will support public policies that foster early childhood development and health• <i>Developmentally and culturally appropriate</i> – the system will promote the creation of and support for services that address the unique needs and preferences of each child and family within the context of their culture and community• <i>Available and accessible</i> to families – the system will encompass services and supports for families throughout Arizona and will function in a manner that overcomes barriers to utilization of these services and supports• <i>Affordable</i> – the system will develop and provide services and supports that Arizona’s families can afford to access when they are needed• <i>Innovative and Arizona specific</i> – the system envisioned will not be a replication of another system, but will incorporate lessons learned from others and be designed with an understanding of Arizona’s unique assets and conditions; it will be inspired by a commitment to Arizona’s children and families and serve as a model for other states	



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<p>What families might say when the Arizona early childhood development and health system is in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child is learning so much. • I found a great child care center close to my work. • My child has the best teachers and I know I am one of them. • Everyone seems to know about my child’s needs and how to help him be successful. • My child is getting the healthcare she needs. • I have someone who can help me when I don’t know where to turn. • My community really supports me and my family. • Arizona is the best place for families with young children to live! <p>What partners might say when the Arizona early childhood development and health system is in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know exactly what my role is in the early childhood development system. • I can depend on others in the system to do what they say they will do. • We work so well together. • Arizona children and families are the best – we value them, respect their uniqueness, build on their strengths, and support them when, where, and how they need us. • We have what we need to do what we do on behalf of Arizona families. • Academics, practitioners, and policy makers in our state work together to create policies and build practice that supports the success of young children and their families. • Arizona businesses really understand that an investment in young children and their families is an investment in Arizona’s economic success. 	<p><i>We want to foster an ongoing focus on future success. One way to do that is to envision what it will look and feel like when we get there. These comments are a beginning attempt to get that “look and feel.”</i></p>