



Arizona Early Childhood Task Force

Arizona Early Childhood Model System

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 family centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high quality early childhood system that addresses the child's development, health and early education.

The Child

The early childhood system addresses the child's:

- Development (Physical, Cognitive, Speech and Language and Social-Emotional)
- Health (Physical, Mental, Oral, Nutritional)
- Early Education

System Partners

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arizona's young children and their families• Arizona communities, including Tribal communities• Faith-based communities and their programs• Community health organizations and providers including physicians, nurses, dentists and therapists• Early care and education organizations and providers, including those who provide early intervention and address special needs• Family support organizations and providers, including home visitors• Public and private transportation organizations and providers• K-12 educators and administrators• Those who educate providers, including colleges and universities• Researchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community agencies• Foundations/philanthropy• Advocacy organizations• Policy makers at the 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• Media• Elected Officials |
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System Elements

- Leadership
- Governance
- Adequate and secure funding
- Qualified and well-paid workforce
- 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
- Coordination among those involved in the early childhood system

Foundational Elements

- Basic survival elements (food, water, air, shelter)
- Safety and security (nurturance, protection from physical threat, psychological safety)

System Characteristics

- *Child and family centered* – 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
- *Strength based* – 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, their cultures, and their communities
- *Comprehensive* – the system will address all aspects of child development and health
- *Scalable* – the system can be implemented throughout the state and for all families, resources permitting
- *Outcome focused* – goals will be clear and measurable
- *Effective* – outcomes for children and families, as well as the functioning of the system, will be measured and desired results will be achieved
- *Accountable* – 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
- *Well funded* – resources that are adequate to support the development and implementation of the system will be dedicated to this purpose
- *Sustainable* – as the system is developed and implemented, consideration will be given to sustaining the system over time
- *Collaborative* – agencies at all levels, organizations, and individuals involved in the development, funding, implementation, and utilization of the system will help to design, evaluate, and continually improve it
- *High quality* – 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
- *Inclusive and respectful* – the system will encompass all Arizona’s children and will honor their individuality while promoting their inclusion in the system
- *Equitable* – all children, families, and communities will be considered in the assessment of assets and needs and in systems planning and implementation
- *Flexible* – the system will change as conditions and requirements change
- *Clear* – while broad in scope and complex in undertaking, the system will be easy to understand and explain
- *Seamless* – the system will involve many agencies, organizations, and individuals who work together so that services, supports, and funding for them are well-articulated and wrap around the family in a coherent way
- *Community based* – 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
- *Widely known* – Arizonans will have an accurate understanding of the system, how it works, and its goals
- *Publicly supported* – Arizonans will support public policies that foster early childhood development and health
- *Developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive* – 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
- *Available and accessible* 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
- *Affordable* – the system will develop and provide services and supports that Arizona’s families can afford to access when they are needed
- *Innovative and Arizona specific* – 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

System Outcomes

System Outcomes	In order for the System Outcomes to be achieved, the following conditions must be met...
All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education that promotes their optimal development.	Arizona has enough high quality, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education programs and settings to meet the needs of children and families throughout the state. Children and families have access to high quality, culturally responsive, affordable programs where they live and work. Families have a choice of schedules (part-day or full-day, part-year or full-year), type of provider, and type of setting. There are health, safety, and quality standards; support for attaining the standards; and a process for monitoring them.
All children have access to high quality, affordable, comprehensive health care that addresses their physical, mental, oral, and nutritional health.	Arizona has enough high quality, affordable, comprehensive health care services to meet the needs of children and families throughout the state. Children and families have access to high quality, affordable health care coverage and services. Health care for young children is coordinated via a medical and dental home. Early periodic screening and diagnosis is provided to identify physical, mental, and developmental health issues and, if necessary, follow-up treatment/services are provided.
All families have the information, services, and support they need to help their children achieve their fullest potential.	Families receive high quality, diverse, and relevant information and education on the importance of the early years, child development, health, and early education in a variety of formats and from a variety of sources. Families have easy access to information on the quality and availability of programs and services. Families have access to a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources, which promote their child's development (physical, cognitive, speech and language, and social-emotional) and health.

System Outcomes	In order for the System Outcomes to be achieved, the following conditions must be met...
All early childhood and health professionals are well prepared, highly skilled, and compensated commensurate with their education and experience.	Arizona has enough early childhood professionals working in a variety of capacities to meet the needs of Arizona's children and families throughout the state. Early childhood professionals meet specified educational requirements and continue their professional development throughout their career. There are sufficient educational opportunities to meet the needs of early childhood professionals throughout Arizona. Early childhood professionals throughout Arizona have access to the education and ongoing training required to work in the setting of their choice and facilitate their professional growth. High quality professionals are recruited and retained in the early childhood system. Early childhood professionals are paid commensurate with other fields requiring similar education and experience. Arizona has sufficient numbers of health care providers of all types who have had specialized training in working with young children and their families. Family support providers have the knowledge and skills required to work with young children and their families.
The early childhood system is child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive.	There is a clearly articulated process in use for coordinating state, federal, tribal, and local plans, programs, services, data, and resources related to early childhood development, health, and education. There is a coordinated process in use for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing accurate and relevant data related to early childhood development, health, and education and results are used to guide decision making. Early childhood programs, services, and resources are evaluated and results used to foster continuous improvement. The early childhood system as a whole is evaluated to determine if it is child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive and results are used to strengthen the system and guide future planning. Impact of the early childhood system on children and families is evaluated and results are used to guide policy development, public awareness messages, resource allocation, and future planning. Families of young children and other partners are involved in the design and evaluation of Arizona's early childhood system.

System Outcomes	In order for the System Outcomes to be achieved, the following conditions must be met...
All Arizonans understand the importance of the early years, the link between early childhood experiences and subsequent success in school and in life, and the impact of early childhood development and health on Arizona's economy and quality of life; as a result, they substantially support early childhood education and health both politically and financially.	Arizonans receive accurate and data-based information on the importance of the early years, the link between early childhood experiences and subsequent success in school and in life, and the impact of early childhood development and health on the state's economy and quality of life. Elected officials and other policy makers actively support early childhood development, health, and early education. Resources required to develop and sustain the early childhood system are generated from public and private sources.

The Role of First Things First

System Outcomes	In order for the System Outcomes to be achieved, FTF could/should engage in the following major activities, consistent with its statutory requirements...
All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education that promotes their optimal development.	
All children have access to high quality, affordable, comprehensive health care that addresses their physical, mental, oral, and nutritional health.	
All families have the information, services, and support they need to help their children achieve their fullest potential.	
All early childhood and health professionals are well prepared, highly skilled, and compensated commensurate with their education and experience.	
The early childhood system is child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive.	
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