



Arizona Early Childhood Task Force

MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2010

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Mesa Marriott

Welcome and Introductions

Nadine Mathis Basha, Task Force Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m., welcomed those in attendance, and on the phone. She provided a brief update on the status of First Things First (FTF).

Review of Agenda

Facilitator B. J. Tatro reviewed the agenda with the Task Force.

Finalize System Outcomes

Facilitator B. J. Tatro shared comments received from the web posting of the draft system outcomes and the related survey. Comments were received from approximately 130 people and were supportive of the work done thus far by the Task Force. Dr. Tatro reviewed proposed changes in the system outcomes based on the survey responses. The word “affordable” was added to the first outcome statement.

System Goals

The Task Force worked on goals for the overall system by starting with some goal statements from the current FTF strategic plan (“the Roadmap”). It was quickly noted and agreed that the statements were not really written in goals language, but the decision was to continue the process by describing what would need to be in place in order to achieve each of the system outcomes and figure out what to call these statements later. The draft statements that resulted from the discussion are included in the latest version of the Arizona Early Childhood Model System document.

There was discussion of the need to develop specific indicators for each statement. It was explained that the intent is to develop indicators for the major actions that are deemed to be the responsibility of FTF, which will happen in a subsequent Task Force meeting. It was also noted that it will be important to define words used in the Arizona Early Childhood Model

Systems document, although this could be done with scenarios rather than a conventional glossary.

Role of Multiple Partners in a State Early Childhood System

Consultant Karen Ponder expressed her support for the important work of the Task Force and shared her experiences related to working with multiple partners to build and sustain a statewide early childhood system. She noted that partner agencies and organizations often agree on the desired results but not the process for achieving them. While this can be challenging at times, working with partners can produce more than any one single entity could achieve alone. She shared some examples from North Carolina and from Wisconsin.

Ms. Ponder highlighted the importance of communication when working with partners and noted that there need to be formal, as well as informal, communication mechanisms. There should be agreement to work out differences together and support the process when in public. In her experience, strong and shared leadership is a key to success.

FTF Statutory Requirements

Chairperson Nadine Mathis Basha reviewed the statutory requirements of FTF, commenting on the level of detail in the statute. The Task Force will need to use the statute as a guide when addressing and prioritizing FTF's role in the early childhood system.

FTF Role in the Arizona Early Childhood System

In the next meeting, the Task Force will explore FTF's role in more detail, but today they discussed FTF's role in more general terms. Some of FTF's roles include: defining needs and assets, defining what "high quality" means, funding, fostering integration, collecting and analyzing data, fostering data-driven decision making, fostering understanding of the data, conceptualizing the system, helping to define roles and responsibilities, identifying and helping to fill gaps, identifying and helping to reduce unnecessary duplication, fostering a unified public voice, and coordination. There was discussion of the convening/coordination role. It was noted that convening is an executive role; FTF has no authority over the other agencies, but can help facilitate conversation among them.

It was suggested that FTF can be a catalyst for change and is uniquely positioned by virtue of its extensive regional structure to develop grassroots support for young children and their families. FTF has the opportunity to build on this grassroots support to set the early childhood agenda for Arizona. Supporting the engagement and voice of local communities will strengthen the early childhood system statewide.

As we move into a more specific discussion of FTF's role, it will be important to identify priorities for funding and action. Funding can be used to leverage the change that Arizonans want to see.

Next Steps/Information Needed for the Next Meeting/Meeting Evaluation and Reflection

Meeting documents will be prepared and posted online for review. Comments will be solicited.

Task Force members completed a Meeting Evaluation and Reflections form to help guide planning for the next Task Force meeting.

For the next meeting, Task Force members requested the following information:

- Strategies for survival from North Carolina

The next meeting will be May 11 from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn. At that meeting, the Task Force will review the results of the online survey, continue to identify FTF's role, and begin to identify indicators of success.

Adjourn

Ms. Basha adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.