



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE

### ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

#### Policy and Program Committee

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the First Things First Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board, Policy and Program Committee and to the general public that the Committee will hold a *meeting open to the public on Thursday, October 15, 2015 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the 8<sup>th</sup> floor Boardroom of First Things First's Office located at 4000 North, Suite 800, Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.* Members of the Committee may attend either in person or by telephone, video or internet conferencing.

*The Committee may hear items on the agenda out of order. The Committee may discuss, consider, or take action regarding any item on the agenda. The Committee may elect to solicit public comment on any of the agenda items.*

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1.	Welcome and Call to Order	Mary Ellen Cunningham, Interim Chair
2.	Roll Call	Mary Ellen Cunningham, Interim Chair
3.	Meeting Minutes, May 7, 2015 (Review and Possible Approval)	Mary Ellen Cunningham, Interim Chair
4.	Advisory Subcommittees Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality First</li> <li>• Early Identification of Developmental Delay</li> </ul> (Presentation and Discussion)	Kameron Bachert, Chair, Quality First Advisory Subcommittee Karen Piefer, Sr. Director for Children's Health
5.	FTF Approach to Capacity Building, Coordination and Collaboration (Presentation and Discussion)	Karen Woodhouse, Chief Program Officer
6.	FY16 Meeting Dates (Discussion)	Committee Members
7.	Adjourn	Mary Ellen Cunningham, Interim Chair

Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day in October 2015

Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board

Program Committee

Karen Woodhouse, Chief Program Officer

*A person with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter by contacting Cynthia Chavarria, at 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012, telephone (602)771-5023. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.*



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH BOARD Draft Meeting Minutes

### Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First - Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board – Policy and Program Committee was held on May 7, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held at First Things First, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Chair Decker called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

### Roll Call

Cynthia Chavarria performed a roll call.

#### Members Present:

Janice Decker, Chair  
Bill Berk (via telephone)  
Dr. Randal Christensen  
Mary Ellen Cunningham  
Verna Johnson (via telephone)  
Vivian Juan Saunders  
Naomi Karp  
Wendy Resnik  
William Rosenberg  
Laurie Smith  
Senator Ruth Solomon (via telephone)  
Kim Van Pelt

#### Members Absent:

Amy Corriveau  
Colleen Day Mach  
Kevin Earle  
Alan Taylor  
Brad Willis

#### Invited Guests:

Kameron Bachert (via telephone)

#### Staff:

Karen Woodhouse  
Ginger Sandweg  
Dr. Karen Peifer  
Cynthia Chavarria

Chair Decker welcomed new Members Verna Johnson and Wendy Resnik. Chair Decker announced this would be her last meeting as Chair and reintroduced incoming Chair, Vivian Juan Saunders who will commence her role starting in July 2015.

Chair Decker announced that First Things First (FTF) is in the process of reviewing FY16 Requests for Grant Applications (RFGAs) and the Board will review and consider them at the May and June meetings. Related to the solicitation and award process, Chair Decker asked Ginger Sandweg to speak related to Quality First (QF) Scholarship funding. Ms. Sandweg relayed that after the FTF Board approved the FY 2016 Program Committee recommendations for funding options, FTF communicated with QF providers. The main talking points focused on: 1) FTF’s fiscal changes to ensure consistent and sustained funding over time; 2) the process of regional and community decision making that impacted QF Scholarship funding; and, other FTF and community supports that were available to families who might be losing scholarships. FY 2016 scholarship allocations were sent to providers on May 1, 2015. Member Cunningham asked whether each scholarship was tied to a specific child care slot or child. Ms. Sandweg replied that the scholarships were not based on a 1-1 child-scholarship basis and provided an example that if a provider has six full time scholarships the scholarships could be split in half to support 12 part time slots. Member Solomon asked if a provider split a scholarship, how this might affect the quality rating of a program because for example, if studies have determined that \$1,000 is what it takes to provide quality services per child, if that scholarship is split in half to cover two slots at \$500 each, that’s less funding available to provide the level of quality care. Ms. Sandweg noted that even if a provider chooses to split scholarships they are continuing to provide the same level of quality service and usually making up the difference through tuition or other revenue sources, although, providers may not charge the families the difference. Member Berk shared that providers work with blended funding streams and with QF funding increases made last year, even with scholarships being cut this year, the recent increase helped fund more services overall. If scholarships were to be

cut too low, then it would be difficult to provide the same level of quality services.

### **Review and Possible Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chair Decker called for a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2015. Member Cunningham motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Member Smith. All in favor, none opposed. Chair Decker voted aye, motion passed.

### **Advisory Subcommittees Update**

Kameron Bachert, Chair of the Quality First Advisory Sub-Committee gave a brief update on the work of the Sub-Committee. While only two meetings have been held, great strides have been made. They have adopted the "North Star" for their strategic direction that Quality First is the designation of quality. They have also established guiding principles and three workgroups: 1) Quality Standards; 2) Planning, Monitoring and Accountability; and, 3) Financial Supports. Quality Standards will look at meaningful standards for all participants and equity to support all children, ensuring culturally responsiveness. Planning, Monitoring and Accountability will look at the quality benchmarks and how assessments are conducted and measured. Financial Support will look at the sustainability of supporting and incentivizing continuous improvement. During the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the workgroups will begin discussion of expectations, additional data needs and who to engage with to obtain community and stakeholder feedback.

Linda Lopez, Chair, Early Identification School Readiness Indicator Advisory Sub-Committee was not able to participate today and Dr. Peifer presented on her behalf. Two meetings have been held and at the last meeting, the Sub-Committee considered various data sources including national sources such as Head Start, and local sources such as the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP). The national Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has a new measure on the percent of children receiving screening before ages one, two and three, and AHCCCS will be adopting this new measure for Arizona. FTF is also planning to add questions to the Family and Community Survey related to early intervention. FTF is drafting a request for data from AHCCCS, and the Sub-Committee will meet again after FTF meets with AHCCCS representatives. The data request will also address Tribal data, and FTF is having discussions on possible data from Indian Health Services. Member Cunningham shared that as the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) prepares their application for federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding, they will select eight measures from a menu of 15, and one measure pertains to percentage of children ages 9-71 months receiving a development screening. DHS can share this data in the future. Member Rosenberg stated that Head Start programs have a Program Information Report (PIR) and this might be a good source of data. Dr. Peifer relayed that FTF does have this Head Start data for 2013. In the future, these PIRs will contain data for Tribal Head Start data. Member Juan Saunders asked for clarification on what is meant by care giver behavior on the FTF Family and Community Survey. Dr. Peifer replied that it relates to whether parents and/or care givers are aware of developmental benchmarks their children should be at and whether they are confident enough to advocate and seek help for their child.

### **FY16 FTF Systems Approach Framework for Programmatic Priorities: Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development System**

FTF has a clear mandate to support and improve the quality of the early childhood workforce and provide professional development opportunities. Karen Woodhouse reviewed data from the 2012 Early Childhood Work Force Survey and Ginger Sandweg provided an update on the Professional Development Work Group (in partnership with BUILD Arizona), and the development of the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network, which includes a Workforce Registry, Workforce Knowledge and Competencies notice of professional development opportunities and FTF College Scholarships for early childhood professionals. First Things First (FTF) is currently in an open RFGA process seeking an organization to administer the Registry and FTF College Scholarships components, with expected launch on July 1, 2015. FTF College Scholarships will cover tuition, books and course work fees for students who are working toward a child development credential, associates or bachelor's degree in early childhood. Member Solomon asked if participants could be tracked after graduation in this field. Ms. Sandweg replied that the Registry will track scholars' educational progress as well as employment. Member Cunningham commented that she personally logged on to the Network and found it to have very helpful information. Member Christensen expressed his satisfaction at seeing something that was first discussed a decade ago coming to fruition.

Member Karp asked how many professional development grant strategies First Things First (FTF) is currently funding and their congruence with the Network. Ms. Sandweg responded that the Standard of Practice for all FTF Professional Development and Quality First Strategies, as well as most other health and family support strategies will require staff implementing these strategies, as well as professional impacted by these strategies, to be enrolled in the Registry by June 30, 2016.

Ms. Woodhouse noted the infrastructure development of the Network was financed through two federal grants, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant and the State Advisory Council Grant. FTF is providing statewide program funding to maintain the administration of the Network. Member Van Pelt questioned if on-line trainings from national organizations can be included in the Network. Ms. Woodhouse replied yes, and any local and national partners will be included. Benchmarks for the first year of implementation are five thousand professionals enrolled in the registry and over 900 scholars using college scholarships.

The Committee discussed workforce retention in the early childhood system and two FTF strategies were noted: 1) FTF College Scholarships, which awards a yearly bonus for scholars if they achieve a certain educational level and remain working in the early childhood workforce; 2) FTF Professional REWARD\$, which also provides a financial award tied to a certain educational level and retention with an employer for a determined length of time. Member Cunningham questioned if Registry participants' employers would be able to see employees' account information. Ms. Sandweg responded that there will be privacy protections on Registry data. Although at some level, employers need to verify an employee's data, but participants will not be able to see each other's information. Member Rosenberg shared that at the National Head Start Director's Association meeting he was informed that the Obama administration is proposing approximately \$1.1 billion towards early childhood education and asked if any of these funds would come to Arizona and how that could be supported. Ms. Woodhouse noted that the Preschool Development grant awarded \$20 million to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for the next four years to expand high quality preschool programs. Member Rosenberg believes the information he heard on the President's proposal relates to a different grant, so FTF staff will do further research on it and report back at the next meeting.

Member Van Pelt requested information on what other states are doing in terms of policy efforts and on other workforce retention and incentive programs. Ms. Sandweg noted that some of the state's efforts reviewed by FTF were Oklahoma, New Jersey and Minnesota.

Member Karp mentioned that the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona is hoping to receive another three years of funding for their professional development work and if awarded, they will host a kick-off event on July 18<sup>th</sup> in Tucson.

#### **FY16 Meeting Dates Discussion**

The Committee would like to continue meeting on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Staff will work with new Chair Vivian Juan Saunders to identify future meeting dates and staff will send out by e-mail in early summer.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Decker thanked the Committee and staff for their commitment and for allowing her to have shared in the work during the last two years as the Chair. Incoming Chair Juan Saunders thanked Chair Decker for the opportunity and is pleased to accept reappointment to the FTF Board.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:55 a.m.

#### **Telephone Procedures**

The Board Room telephone was used for members participating by telephone. Members on the telephone were identified when they spoke for the benefit of those physically present at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted on this 21<sup>st</sup> Day of May, 2015

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Cynthia Chavarria, Executive Staff Assistant

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**To:** First Things First

**From:** Advocacy & Communication Solutions, LLC

**Re:** September 29<sup>th</sup> Quality First Advisory Subcommittee Meeting Summary

**Date:** October 13, 2015

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First Things First (FTF) has convened the Quality First Advisory Subcommittee (QFASC) to reach consensus on recommendations that will be made to the Policy and Program Committee of FTF's state board regarding continuous quality improvement of the Quality First program. The objectives of the QFASC are to:

1. Engage in a visioning process and agree on the strategic direction for and expected outcomes of the Quality First initiative;
2. Utilize data to develop recommendations on how to continuously improve Quality First components, standards, and implementation;
3. Examine overall costs of the Quality First model and program participation;
4. Provide input on how to increase integration and coordination of the Quality First initiative in the comprehensive early childhood system.
5. Make recommendations for strategy, model, and/or policy changes to enhance participation in Quality First and contribute to the system goal of reaching statewide scale.

The fourth of the six full QFASC meetings was held on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at FTF's offices. This memorandum summarizes the content, conclusions, and next steps from that meeting.

## **Content**

This meeting was the fourth convening of the QFASC. Key elements of this meeting were the following:

- an overview of the Quality First validation study approach, content, and timeline;
- a presentation of the recommendations from the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup;
- a presentation of the financial implications of the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup's recommendations on the Quality First model; and
- a group discussion about the impact and financial implications of the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup's recommendations.

## **Summary of Content**

### **Overview of the Quality First Validation Study**

The purpose of the Quality First validation study is to evaluate the Quality First model and its' outcomes for children and families in Arizona. The validation study will take place in three phases.

Phase I of the validation study will occur between October 2015 and May 2017, and last approximately 18 months. Phase I will review the conceptual elements of the currently implemented Quality First model. As part of Phase I, Child Trends, the vendor conducting the validation study, will review best practices for Quality Improvement and Rating Systems (QRIS) across the nation as well as the current data system for Quality First. During the review of the data system, Child Trends will determine if FTF is collecting the right kind of data as well as validating the scale itself to determine if the star ratings and transitions are weighted correctly. Child Trends will engage some members of the Quality First Advisory Subcommittee during an initial round of stakeholder focus groups, and will look to the recommendations of QFASC to determine what additional research may be needed to support the validation study. Updates on the results of Phase I will be reported out quarterly through spring of 2017.

Phase II, which will take between 12 and 18 months and occur after June 2018, will help to prepare Quality First participants to implement recommendations on data collection points. Phase III, which will launch at the earliest in mid-2019, will look at child-level outcomes to determine if children who are at the 3-to-5-star levels show higher early learning results than others.

In addition to the three phases, FTF also announced that they do have a 10-year data sharing agreement with the Arizona Department of Education (AZDOE), which will allow them to track long-term child-level outcomes.

The recommendations of QFASC will be integrated into the beginning of the validation study for deeper evaluation through best practices research, potential pilot programming, and/or further testing.

### **Presentation of Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability Workgroup Recommendations**

Katie Romero, workgroup chair for the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup, presented the workgroup's recommendations to QFASC. This workgroup proposed a participant-driven model that includes a readiness level for star levels 1 and 2, a verification process, and support for quality maintenance for star levels 3-5.

#### *Readiness*

Recommendation: For star levels 1 and 2, the Quality First model should support increased readiness in quality attainment at each level.

In star level 1, participants who enter must be in good standing with a regulatory authority, complete professional development and orientation, make a commitment to quality improvement, and work with an assigned a navigator. After these entry requirements are met, a participant will complete a self-assessment process (ERS/CLASS)<sup>1</sup>, and develop a quality improvement plan (QIP). The participant also will certify that group size, ratio, and staff qualifications meet quality standards and curriculum and assessment practices that are aligned

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<sup>1</sup> ERS is the Environment Rating Scale and CLASS is Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

with Arizona early learning standards and ITDG (Points Scale documentation). At this point, the participant will be eligible to apply for an incentive award, access technical assistance at a level they desire and have a peer-review.

Quality First will support star level 1 participants through:

- providing information on Quality First participation through regulatory agency staff, website, and webinars that includes a strong orientation and a professional development approach for assessment. This orientation will teach participants why and how to conduct assessments and how to use the resulting data.
- using reliable assessors to provide professional development on self-assessment tools and process;
- providing a technical assistance navigator (coach) to shadow the assessment and support the QIP development;
- approving incentive awards;
- providing available technical assistance; and
- coordinating a peer-review process.

In star level 2, accredited and Head Start Programs already meet the self-assessment process and are ready to move to the verification process once they certify points scale documentation. Participants that applied for verification and met the threshold for ERS, but not CLASS may need more time for readiness.

In the readiness stage, the participant will apply for Quality First verification when they are prepared.

### *Verification*

Recommendation: A participant will receive a rating when they meet both the ERS and CLASS quality thresholds during the verification process. Quality First will support verification by ensuring reliable assessors conduct verification on ERS and CLASS, and then assign a rating of a 2, 3, 4, or 5-star level.

### *Star Levels 3-5*

Recommendation: In star levels 3-5, participants must meet CLASS and Points Scale threshold every 3 years, submit an annual update on quality through the Quality First extranet, and will be eligible to apply for an incentive award for continuous quality improvement. Quality First will support these participants by assessing CLASS and points scale indicators (online) every 3 years and approving incentive awards.

### **Financial Implications of Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability Workgroup Recommendations**

Ginger Sandweg and Lindsay Kaid of First Things First presented a financial model scenario to illustrate the impact of the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup recommendations on the finances for the Quality First model. The financial model for the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup is attached as a separate document in the email sent along with this meeting summary.

QFASC discussed potential changes to the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup recommendations. As a follow up to this discussion, FTF will rerun the financial model to show the impact of:

- potential changes in cost if there was a slower onboarding process for bringing new providers into Quality First;
- potential changes in real costs by assuming a take-up rate of 80% of providers, instead of 100%; and
- potential changes in costs if navigator caseloads were increased.

### **Next Steps**

- Members of the Finance workgroup will:
  - rerun the financial modeling for the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup to reflect potential areas of cost savings highlighted above, as requested by QFASC;
  - meet to discuss recommendations for incentives and wages and benefits; and
- The Quality Standards workgroup will:
  - meet during the week of October 12 to finalize recommendations to present to QFASC;
  - discuss and develop a recommendation about peer assessment;
  - discuss how the coaching and navigation recommendations from the Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup will align with the Quality Standards workgroup and propose new recommendations related to coaching and navigation (if needed); and
  - address the inclusion of unique populations into the Quality Standards workgroup's recommendations.
- The Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability workgroup will meet one time during the weeks of October 12<sup>th</sup> or October 19<sup>th</sup> to have a deeper conversation about the role of the navigator.
- The Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability and the Quality Standards workgroups will have a joint meeting during the week of October 19<sup>th</sup> to align their recommendations. FTF representatives for the Finance workgroup will attend this meeting to determine the financial modeling needs in preparation for the November 10 meeting.

**Next QFASC Meeting:** November 10, 2015, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at First Things First.



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## FTF Capacity Building and Communities of Practice Strategies

### Background:

FTF funded two separate strategies in the statewide funding plan beginning in FY2013

#### 1. Capacity Building

- Alliance of Arizona Non-Profits
  - The Capacity Building strategy had two phases: Phase 1 consisted of developing a capacity building approach and a capacity-building plan based on an assessment of grantees and other organizations. Phase 2 was implementation of the planned capacity building strategies.
  - Funding amount: \$200,000 in FY13 and 14; \$300,000 in FY15

#### 2. Communities of Practice

- Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers
  - The Communities of Practice strategy was funded to improve coordination among FTF grantees, across disciplines and geographical areas. The project began with a needs assessment among FTF grantees in 2013 and included an intended implementation phase of development and launch of a web portal to support community of practice formation, communications, education, and sharing of best practices, with targeted outreach to regions to support grantees implementing specific FTF strategies.
  - \$150,000 in FY13; \$123,000 in FY14; no funding in FY15

### Potential Future Capacity Building and Communities of Practice Approach:

- Networking opportunities for partners in early childhood system—convening entities/partners through learning collaboratives with specific interest topics to build capacity
  - Convening partners to support/improve service delivery—strategy or region specific
  - Convening partners to support infrastructure and capacity building for service provision
- Opportunities for communicating and building capacity of partners and community entities related to the FTF process for Request for Grant Application (RFGA)
- Identify in the RFGA Scope of Work a set of priority areas to focus on to advance capacity in the field:
  - Data capacity/quality
  - Evidence-base models and practice
  - Return on investment
  - Scaling up