



To: First Thing's First
 From: Advocacy & Communication Solutions, LLC
 Subject: Strategic Communication Plan Review: Stakeholder Survey Results
 Date: October 2012

In order to gather feedback on the First Things First Strategic (FTF) Communication Plan, a survey was conducted among FTF staff and current and recent members of regional partnership councils. Feedback from local level FTF staff and council members will be used to inform the development of the focus groups and the rewrite of the Strategic Communications Plan.

The survey gathered information about:

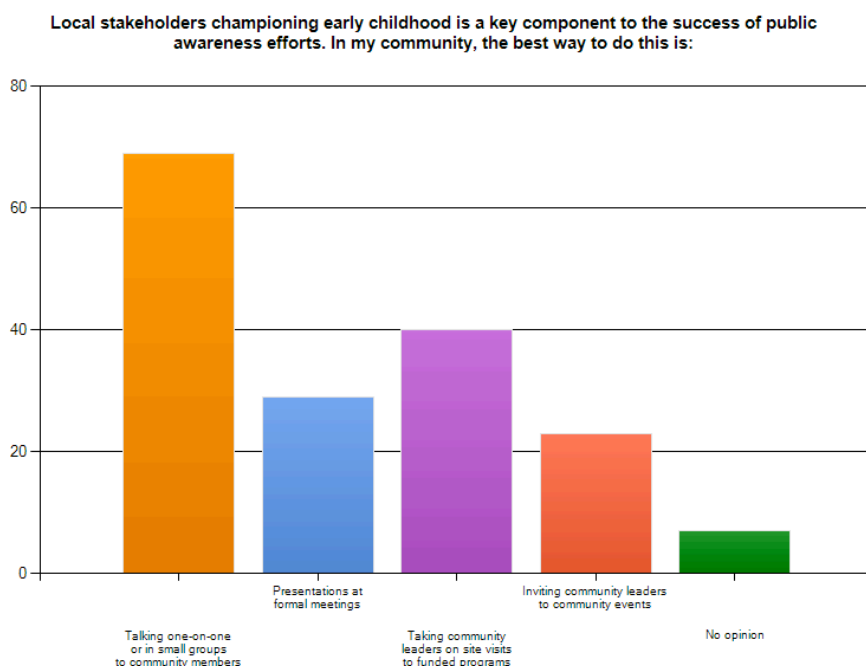
- The perception of the Strategic Communication Plan and its implementation;
- Raising awareness about early childhood education;
- The use of FTF resources such as the website and social media to obtain and share information; and
- Engagement in training sessions and activities related to the Strategic Communication Plan.

Of the 360 people who received the Regional Partnership Council strategic communication plan survey, 171 regional council members responded. There were at least 2 respondents from each of the 31 regions represented in the survey and there were no more than 9 respondents from any one region. Slightly more than 50 percent of survey respondents report being on a regional council for more than two years. Of the 171 regional council respondents, 44 indicate a willingness to participate in a focus group on strategic communications. Of the 35 First Things First staff that received the communication survey, 27 responded. Of those who responded, approximately 80% have been on staff for more than two years.

The table below highlights the significant responses from the survey that will provide significant information in development of the next Strategic Communication Plan.

Feedback from RPC members and FTF staff about the Strategic Communication Plan	
Strategic Communication Plan	• 92% of respondents identified the need to build and drive support for early childhood as a goal of the Strategic Communication Plan • Respondents believe there has been progress on communication goals, but also believe more work is necessary to achieve the goals • More than 70% of RPC members prefer either face to face training during council meetings or community trainings that members and staff are invited to
Raising Awareness	• More than half of the respondents identified public recognition of FTFs name and mission, public awareness of ECE, and support from elected officials as the most significant improvements in their community • Respondents identified the need to raise parent, public and elected officials' awareness of FTF services, name and mission. • Talking one on one to community members and taking community leaders on site visits were identified as ways to help get stakeholders to champion early childhood

Communicating ECE Information	• 66% of respondents use FTF websites in communications efforts in their community • 70% of respondents do not use social media platforms to disseminate information to community • Stakeholders believe direct person to person forms of communication are the most successful communication tactics
Participation In Strategic Communication Activities	• Community volunteerism and small group meetings are the most engaged-in communication activities • Stakeholders do not participate in activities because they are not asked, were not aware of the opportunity to participate or did not have time to participate



Conclusions

The survey results were helpful in confirming that FTF is on the right track in its overall communication efforts. The survey also gave important guidance in areas where RPC members and staff believe there are opportunities for improvement. These issues will be explored further during the upcoming focus groups and as part of the strategic plan development. A few examples of opportunities include:

- a. Stakeholders want to have a better understanding of how communication efforts are aligned with other strategic initiatives.
- b. While the sentiment among survey respondents is that site visits are critical and need to be done more often there continues to be a challenge in conducting site visits in various regions. Understanding and addressing this split, and fully integrating the solution into the final plan will be an important next step.
- c. The use of social media is a growing tactic in communication efforts yet most respondents have not or do not use social media in supporting FTF's efforts. Identifying the reasons why social media is not being used and solutions to address those identified challenges must be explored.
- d. There is a challenge in determining priority targets as message movers in the statewide communication plan, and this challenge may be best served by implementing a grassroots strategy where stakeholders are trained to identify messengers and influencers.