



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

Strategic Plan Roadmap

Overview

The Strategic Plan Roadmap illustrates the strategic direction for First Things First. This plan was approved by the First Things First Early Childhood Development and Health Board in March 2008.

Components of the Roadmap include:

What We Believe and How We Conduct Business - System Framework

The System Framework communicates the Vision, Mission and Principles that guide the work of First Things First, leading to desired long-term System Outcomes.

What We Want – System Outcomes

System Outcomes represent the outcomes desired from the entire early childhood system in Arizona. Contributors to system outcomes include state agencies, community partners, philanthropic and business organizations and the citizens of Arizona. System Outcomes indicate what we want the comprehensive early childhood system to look like in 10 years.

Measures of Success – System Measures

System Measures will determine if the comprehensive early childhood system outcomes have been achieved within 10 years and indicate if the comprehensive early childhood system is functioning effectively and as envisioned. These Measures will be a component of the long-term evaluation plan to be developed in the near future.

What We Will Do – Goals

Goals are aligned with the System Outcomes and indicate what FTF will do as part of the comprehensive early childhood system to make progress toward System Outcomes in the next three to five years. *Each Goal is a piece of a larger picture and is inextricably interrelated and linked with the other Goals.*

What We Want to Change - Key Measures

Key Measures align directly with Goals and indicate what we want to change. Many Key Measures listed will indicate whether regular progress toward First Things First Goals will be achieved within three to five years. Other Key Measures listed will provide important data to determine ongoing impact on and progress of the early childhood development and health system.

How We Will Do It - Statewide Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions are strategies which work together and indicate how we will implement the Goals. The Strategic Directions represent infrastructure elements of a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system. The strategies listed **with an asterisk (*)** are receiving First Things First statewide program funds to support their development.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK

The First Things First **Vision** is that all Arizona children birth through age five are afforded opportunities to achieve their maximum potential to succeed in school and life.

The First Things First **Mission** is to increase the quality of, and access to, the early childhood development and health system that ensures a child entering school comes healthy and ready to succeed.

The First Things First Mission and Vision will be attained through a comprehensive early childhood system that values children as our greatest asset, and recognizes families and communities at the center of decision making.

First Things First programs, services and supports will be offered through a high quality, interconnected, comprehensive delivery system that is timely, culturally responsive, family driven, community based, and directed toward enhancing a child's overall development.

First Things First will partner with public and private sectors to ensure a seamless and coordinated system, advocate on behalf of children, and leverage and sustain investments necessary for success.

First Things First will be guided by the following strength-based principles:

- ***Decisions are Made***

By involving public and private partners and communities

By focusing on desired outcomes for all children

By emphasizing local planning and implementation

By utilizing ongoing and rigorous analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, proven best practices, and system and program outcomes

- ***Programs, Services and Supports are Offered***

Through an integrated, seamless and accessible system based on high quality standards and proven best practices

By focusing on the strengths of the whole child

- **Funding Decisions Are Made**

By careful planning and long range forecasting to ensure the level and quality of services are sustained over time

To leverage public and private resources that will enhance the ability to deliver high quality services and supports for children

By utilizing local decision making for resource allocation

- **Accountability is Achieved**

By establishing and tracking key measures of early childhood development and health system improvements

By ensuring a rigorous, independent evaluation of the service delivery system and its outcomes

- **We will know the Mission and Vision are realized if the following First Things First Outcomes are achieved:**

All children have access to high-quality early care and education.

All children have access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care.

All early childhood development and health professionals are well prepared and highly skilled.

All families actively engage in children's success.

The early childhood system is coordinated, integrated and comprehensive.

Arizonans substantially support early childhood development efforts both politically and financially.

VISION
Framework

All Arizona children birth through age five are afforded opportunities to achieve their maximum potential to succeed in school and life.

WHAT WE WANT
System Outcomes

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MEASURES OF SUCCESS
(System Measures)

These Measures will be a component of the long-term evaluation plan to be developed in the near future.

**WHAT WE WILL DO
TO BUILD THE ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH SYSTEM
Goal Areas and Goals**

Quality and Access

1. FTF will improve access to quality early care and education programs and settings.
2. FTF will lead efforts to improve early care and education regulatory and monitoring standards as a foundation for quality in early care and education settings.
3. FTF will increase availability and affordability of early care and education settings.

Health

4. FTF will collaborate with existing Arizona early childhood health care systems to improve children's access to quality health care.
5. FTF will build on current efforts to increase the number of health care providers utilizing a medical and dental home model.
6. FTF will expand use of early screening in health care settings to identify children with developmental delay.
7. FTF will advocate for timely and adequate services for children identified through early screening.

Professional Development

8. FTF will build a skilled and well prepared early childhood development workforce that will address the strengths and needs of the whole child, including cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor development, creativity, and physical health.
9. FTF will increase retention of the early care and education workforce.
10. FTF will enhance specialized skills of the early childhood development and health workforce to promote the healthy social-emotional development of young children.

Family Support

11. FTF will coordinate and integrate with existing education and information systems to expand families' access to high quality, diverse and relevant information and resources to support their child's optimal development.
12. FTF will increase the availability, quality and diversity of relevant resources that support language and literacy development for young children and their families.

Coordination

13. FTF will lead cross-system coordination efforts among state, federal and tribal organizations to improve the coordination and integration of Arizona programs, services, and resources for young children and their families.
14. FTF will collect and disseminate accurate and relevant data related to early childhood development and health.

Communication

15. FTF will expand public awareness of, and financial and political support for, early childhood development and health efforts in Arizona.

WHAT WE WILL CHANGE

KEY MEASURES

Note: Key Measures may be aligned with the **Goal Area** as listed or with any other applicable **Goal Area**.

Quality and Access

- a. Total number of early care and education programs participating in the QIRS system
- b. Total number of children enrolled in early care and education programs participating in the QIRS system
- c. Total number and percentage of early care and education programs participating in the QIRS system with a high level of quality as measured by an environmental rating scale
- d. Total number and percentage of early care and education programs participating in the QIRS system improving their environmental rating score
- e. Total number of identified improvements in regulatory and monitoring standards
- f. Current cost of early care and education for families as a proportion of the median income for a family of four
- g. Total number of children enrolled and vacancies in regulated early care and education programs as a proportion of total population birth to age five
- h. Number and percentage of early care and education programs with access to a Child Care Health Consultant

Health

- a. Total number and percentage of children with health insurance
- b. Total number and percentage of children receiving appropriate and timely oral health visits
- c. Total number and percentage of children receiving appropriate and timely well-child visits
- d. Total number and percentage of health care providers utilizing a medical home model
- e. Total number and percentage of oral health care providers utilizing a dental home model
- f. Ratio of children referred and found eligible for early intervention

Professional Development

- a. Total number and percentage of professionals working in early childhood care and education settings with a credential, certificate, or degree in early childhood development
- b. Total number and percentage of professionals working in early childhood care and education who are pursuing a credential, certificate, or degree
- c. Total number and percentage of children expelled from early care and education services
- d. Retention rates of early childhood development and health professionals
- e. Total number and percentage of professionals who work with young children, outside of early care and education, who hold a credential, certificate, or degree in early childhood development or other appropriate specialty area
- f. Total number and percentage of professionals who work with young children, outside of early care and education, who are pursuing a credential, certificate, degree in early childhood development or other appropriate specialty area

**WHAT WE WILL CHANGE
KEY MEASURES**

Note: Key Measures may be aligned with the **Goal Area** as listed or with any other applicable **Goal Area**.

Family Support

- a. Percentage of families with children birth through age five who report they are satisfied with the accessibility of information and resources on child development and health
- b. Percentage of families with children birth through age five who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child’s safety, health, and well-being
- c. Percentage of families of children birth through age five who report they maintain language and literacy rich home environments (e.g. children hear language throughout the day, children have opportunities for listening and talking with family members, books and other literacy tools and materials are available and accessible to children)
- d. Percentage of families with children birth through age five who report reading to their children daily in their primary language

Coordination

- a. Percentage of families who report they are satisfied with the level of coordination and communication among agencies serving their children
- b. Percentage of families who report they are satisfied with the decision making and planning opportunities in the early childhood system
- c. Total number and percentage of public and private partners who report that FTF planning process and activities use family centered practices (e.g. builds on family strengths, connects families with community resources, facilitates family interaction with early care and education professionals, offers the possibility of family and community input at all levels of decision-making)
- d. Total number and percentage of public and private partners’ who report they are satisfied with the extent and quality of coordination between public, private, and tribal systems
- e. Total number and percentage of public and private partnerships using the database who report the information to be accurate
- f. Total number and percentage of public and private partnerships using the database who report the information to be helpful in determining outcomes and promoting continuous improvement

Communication

- a. Percentage of Arizonans who report that early childhood development and health issues are important
- b. Percentage of Arizonans who identify themselves as strong supporters of early childhood and health matters
- c. Total funds generated from business, philanthropic, and other public and private sources to support early childhood development and health efforts

FIRST THINGS FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN ROADMAP

HOW WE WILL DO IT STATEWIDE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (* indicates strategies with statewide funding)

Quality and Access

- 1. FTF will improve access to quality early care and education programs and settings.**
 - a. Establish and implement a comprehensive quality improvement and rating system to improve quality across early childhood education and care settings utilizing public and private funding and resources to develop the statewide infrastructure.*
 - b. Increase child care health and mental health consultants to improve children's health, safety and quality of interactions with providers and increase early identification of health or developmental concerns.*
 - c. Increase use of screening activities across early care and education settings to improve early identification and receipt of appropriate services.
 - d. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 2. FTF will lead efforts to improve early care and education regulatory and monitoring standards as a foundation for quality in early care and education settings.**
 - a. Coordinate and advocate for the improvement and alignment of early care and education regulatory standards and monitoring activities.
 - b. Coordinate use of the Arizona Early Learning Standards across all early care and education to improve quality of curriculum and assessment.
 - c. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 3. FTF will increase availability and affordability of early care and education settings.**
 - a. Identify and seek financial incentives (private and public funding for scholarships, tax incentives, tuition stipends to quality settings, etc.) to programs so they can maintain affordable prices while improving quality.
 - b. Advocate for increasing availability of new early care and education settings or expanding existing settings.
 - c. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*

Health

- 4. FTF will collaborate with existing Arizona early childhood health care systems to improve children's access to quality health care.**
 - a. Increase outreach and enrollment assistance for public health insurance to eligible but not yet enrolled families.
 - b. Identify and seek opportunities to increase the number of qualified infant mental health and early intervention specialists.
 - c. Advocate for and collaborate with Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Arizona Medical and Dental Universities, AHCCCS and ADHS to increase the percent of children that have an oral health visit by age one.
 - d. Advocate for Increase rate of early and continuous prenatal care through collaboration and coordination with the various state and public health agencies.
 - e. Advocate for medical professional's use of recommended guidelines for preventive medical and oral health care.
 - f. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 5. FTF will build on current efforts to increase the number of health care providers utilizing a medical and dental home model.**
 - a. Collaborate with Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American Dental Association, Arizona Department of Health Services, and AHCCCS to increase the use of medical and dental homes.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 6. FTF will expand use of early screening in health care settings to identify children with developmental delay.**
 - a. Advocate for the expansion of implementation of the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) screening for all children to promote the early identification and intervention of children with special needs.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 7. FTF will advocate for timely and adequate services for children identified through early screening.**
 - a. Advocate for and coordinate with early intervention agencies to increase recruitment and retention of providers of specialized intervention services, such as, occupational and physical therapy, and speech language development therapy.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*

HOW WE WILL DO IT
STATEWIDE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

(* indicates strategies with statewide funding)

Professional Development

- 8. FTF will build a skilled and well-prepared early childhood education and development work force that will address the strengths and needs of the whole child, including cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor development, creativity, and physical health.**
 - a. Establish and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive statewide scholarship system to improve quality in the professional workforce. ***
 - b. Advocate and coordinate efforts to increase the number of colleges and universities with formal articulation agreements that share core competencies in early childhood education and health specialties to improve flexibility of educational pathways.
 - c. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 9. FTF will increase retention of the early care and education workforce.**
 - a. Design, develop and phase-in a salary incentive program in a sequential and timely manner.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 10. FTF will enhance specialized skills of the early childhood development and health workforce to promote the healthy social-emotional development of young children.**
 - a. Advocate for coursework and training programs with enhanced focus in the area of social-emotional development of young children to increase qualifications of early childhood development and health professionals.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*

Family Support

- 11. FTF will coordinate and integrate with existing education and information systems to expand families' access to high quality, diverse and relevant information and resources to support their child's optimal development.**
 - a. Support statewide distribution of parent education kits to parents of newborns.**
 - b. Expand an existing statewide web-based information and education system to increase access to and coordination of statewide and regional information for families, professionals, and the general public related to early childhood development and health.
 - c. Increase information for families to identify and locate high-quality programs and settings.
 - d. Collaborate with family support and education programs to expand services to include the development, enhancement, or implementation of home visiting programs.
 - e. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 12. FTF will increase the availability, quality and diversity of relevant resources that support language and literacy development for young children and their families.**
 - a. Advocate for expanded availability and access to early literacy and adult language acquisition programs.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*

HOW WE WILL DO IT
STATEWIDE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

(* indicates strategies with statewide funding)

Coordination

- 13. FTF will lead cross-system coordination efforts among state, federal and tribal organizations to improve the coordination and integration of Arizona programs, services, and resources for young children and their families.**
- a. Collaborate among all systems to coordinate and improve child find and early intervention efforts.
 - b. Collaborate with public and private organizations to identify and apply for grants that support the First Things First goals.
 - c. Involve families in the development of policies and cross system coordination activities by supporting family representation at all levels of First Things First governance.
 - d. Coordinate with other agencies to align standards that impact quality practices, program access and service delivery across early childhood systems.
 - e. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*
- 14. FTF will collect and disseminating accurate and relevant data related to early childhood development and health.**
- a. Develop a statewide database for the collection, dissemination, reporting and accuracy to of data collection.
 - b. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*

Communication

- 15. FTF will expand public awareness of and financial and political support for early childhood development and health efforts in Arizona.**
- a. **Develop an awareness campaign about early childhood development and health. ***
 - b. Leverage private funding to implement a campaign to build and sustain financial and political support for early childhood development and health.
 - c. Support legislative changes and organizations that positively impact early childhood development and health.
 - d. *Potential Regional strategies based on Regional Funding Plan.*