

Tribal Consultation Discussion Guide and Questions for Consideration

Topic 1: FTF Evaluation Plan

Evaluation and research have been a critical component of First Things First (FTF) since its inception. FTF strives for complete transparency and holds itself, and its collaborations with partners, accountable for achieving intended outcomes for children. Additionally, high-quality information for decision-making increases the effectiveness of planning and improves the implementation and potential impact of programs. In October of 2012, the Board approved the FTF Research and Evaluation Plan. This plan sets out the research and evaluation direction for the next five years. In addition to setting out a vision and approach for evaluation, FTF's Plan contains evaluation activities for increased work in data coordination and consultation with tribes and nations. The activities included in this plan are based in large part on identified priorities from tribal leaders at the Tribal Consultation and Summit Tribal Gathering of 2012. The plan sets out a vision for increased coordination with tribal governments and tribal regional councils as well as organizations serving tribal communities, such as Indian Health Service and Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona. As a part of this consultation session, we invite your input on the following questions:

- 1. Do you have any feedback or overall comments about the content of the First Things First Research and Evaluation Plan and its potential impact on your tribe/nation?**
- 2. As outlined in the Research and Evaluation Plan, First Things First is currently in the process of seeking approval from tribes to collect and obtain data related to 10 school readiness indicators in order to measure the impact and effectiveness of early childhood strategies in the FTF regions. Much of this data already is collected by other state agencies and organizations, however, because of our respect for tribal sovereignty and to honor our working relationships with tribes, we will seek each tribe's approval to collect data from our state agency partners. In addition, the collection of the data for the School Readiness Indicators will occur regularly over time. With both those issues in mind, do you have any recommendations for how we could enter into long-term data agreements that are consistent and flexible?**
- 3. What are the evaluation and data priorities and needs of your tribe related to early childhood development and health? (For example, what type of data is your tribe/nation interested in capturing around early childhood programmatic areas such as Head Start, Native language preservation, and/or wellness programs?)**

Topic 2: Quality First Program Model Changes

Quality First was launched in 2009, as Arizona's Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS). Thirty-one states have implemented QIRS initiatives in an effort to overlay a systems approach to early learning. In recognition that there is no one specific program approach to enhance quality, Quality First leverages multiple approaches—consultation, financial incentives and assessment to create a continuous loop of quality improvement. While it is clear that children with risk factors, particularly children living in poverty, benefit from high quality early childhood experiences, as program quality increases so do costs, making it difficult for low income families to access programs. For the past few months, a team at FTF has been discussing and evaluating potential updates to the Quality First model. These discussions have resulted from quantitative data that has been gathered and qualitative feedback we have received from staff, regional council members, coaching and assessment staff and providers enrolled in Quality First. There are several tribes and nations across the state that have tribal child care centers, home-based child care, tribal Head Start centers, and other pre-kindergarten settings enrolled in the Quality First program. As a part of this consultation session, we invite your input on the following questions:

- 1. Are any of the updates to the Quality First model problematic for your tribe/nation?**
- 2. To participate in Quality First, a child care center or home must be regulated by a state or tribal entity. First Things First defines tribal regulation as programs that are regulated through a tribal regulation process and/or programs operating on tribal lands that are accountable to regulatory standards such as the Indian Health Service Environmental Safety Assessment. From your perspective, does this definition adequately reflect the concept of a tribally regulated child care program?**
- 3. The Quality First program has various elements, such as Child Care Health Consultation and Mental Health Consultation. Are there any tribal resources that could help to support the various elements of Quality First in your community? (For example, does the tribe have a health program that could potentially provide some of these elements in partnership with Quality First?)**