

Creating an Early Childhood System

Adapted from Karen Ponder, February 9, 2010 presentation to the Arizona Early Childhood Task Force



An organized, inter-related network of elements, programs and services for all children.



Purpose of System Planning in Arizona

To get measureable results for Arizona's young children and their families



Why is a System Important?

- Affecting school readiness requires comprehensive approaches and involvement from all sectors: health, mental health, family support, early care and education, parents, higher education, faith communities, business, the media and many others



Why is a System Important?

- To maximize resources including multiple funding streams with their own regulations and requirements
- To improve the performance of multiple systems impacting young children and their families



Why is a System Important?

- There are individual variations in the circumstances and needs of children and their families
- There is duplication of services and a lack of coordination and many children are not being served



Why is a System Important?

- There are inefficiencies in service delivery and varied quality in programs
- Current services are both market based and government financed and both public and private issues must be addressed



Why is a System Important?

- To reduce turf issues through a shared vision and agreed-upon goals and objectives
- Helps to secure needed policy changes and improvements
- Better communication among partners



Characteristics of an Effective System

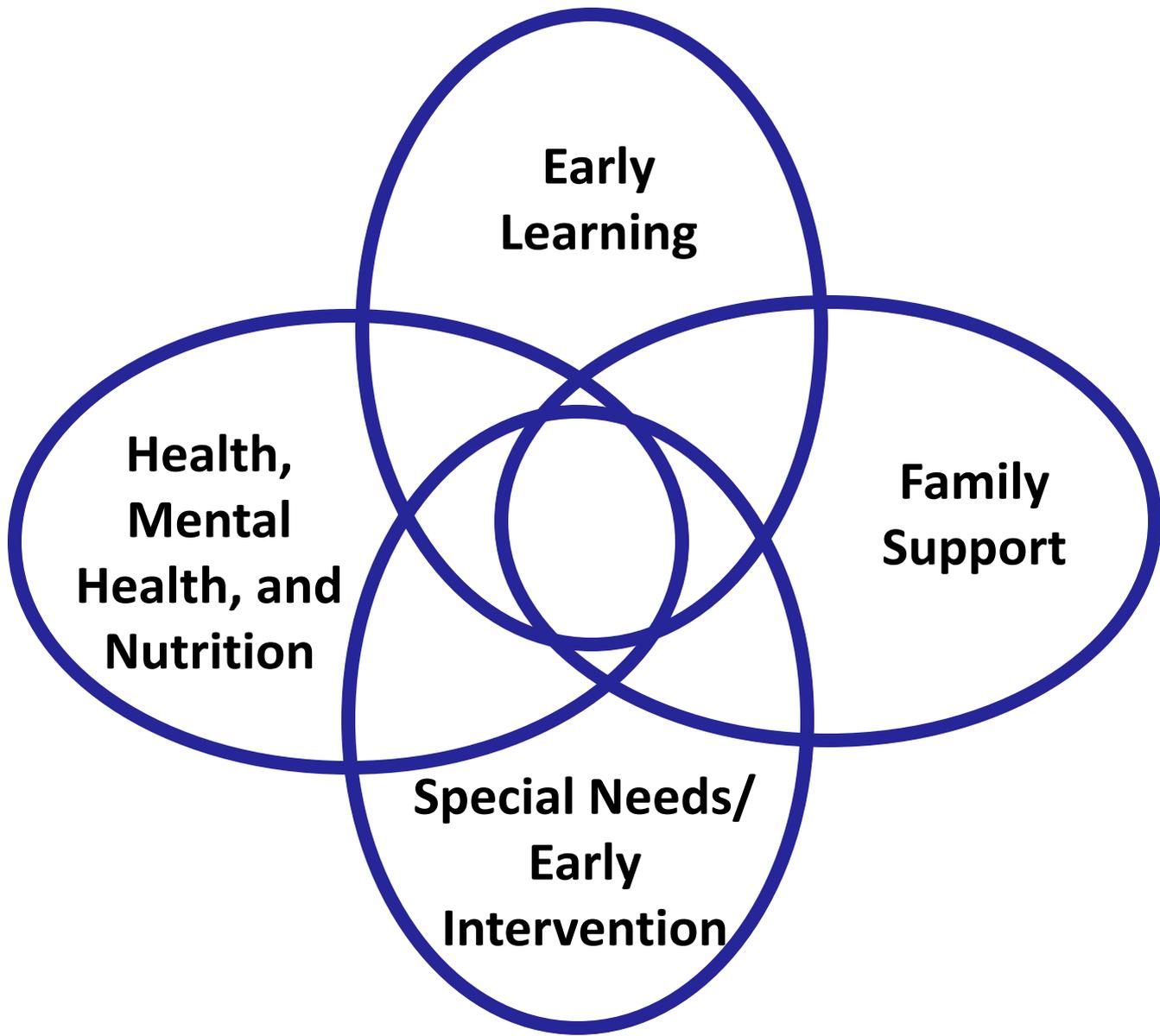
- Comprehensive
- Accessible for children and families
- Scalable
- Outcome focused
- Accountable



Components to Consider Early Childhood Goal Areas

- Early Care and Education
- Family Support and Education
- Health, Mental Health and Nutrition
- Special Needs and Early Intervention





Early Learning

**Health,
Mental
Health, and
Nutrition**

**Family
Support**

**Special Needs/
Early
Intervention**

System Areas to Consider

- Context—successfully building a political context that leads to resources
- Components—establish effective programs and services
- Connections—create better linkages between components
- Infrastructure—create supports that enable continuous improvement
- Scope and Scale—the system can produce broad impacts for system beneficiaries



System Areas to Consider



<p>Changing the political environment that surrounds the system and affects its success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy changes that expand or enhance programs • Funding streams that are more flexible across programs • Public engagement or mobilization • New advocates or champions • New knowledge and perspectives 	<p>Establishing high-performing and quality programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded program reach or coverage • Improved program quality • Increased operational efficiency • New programs or services 	<p>Creating strong and effective linkage across the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated eligibility assessments and applications • Referrals occurring from one program to another • Joint planning across system components • Shared data systems for tracking individuals 	<p>Developing the supports the system needs to function effectively and with quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent standards of quality across the system • Education and training to ensure an appropriately skilled systems workforce • Technical assistance to support systems development • Defined roles and mechanisms for accountability 	<p>Ensuring the system is comprehensive and works for all children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of programs and services throughout a geographic region • A comprehensive array of programs and services for system beneficiaries • Long-term financial security to maintain the system over time • Shifts in system ownership, meaning that a broad array of people involved in the system, especially those on the frontlines, assume responsibility for maintaining the system
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Arizona's Early Childhood System

If We:	We Create:	Resulting In:	Achieving:
Develop and fund high quality services for children and families that are necessary but not yet available	Coordinated, high-quality service system for young children	Early Learning All children have access to high quality, culturally responsive early care & education.	All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.
Strengthen already existing high quality services for children		Family Support/Literacy All families have the information, services & supports they need to help children achieve their fullest potential.	
Partner to build a system of early childhood services and information for families		Early Childhood Professional Development All child care/education & health professionals are well prepared, highly skilled and compensated commensurate with their education & experience.	
	Health All children have access to high quality preventive & continuous health care to promote physical, mental, oral and nutritional health.		
Lead through the synergy of statewide and local strategic planning	Leadership capacity and infrastructure to create and sustain the high-quality service system	Early Childhood System The early childhood system is high quality, child & family centered, coordinated, integrated & comprehensive.	
Harness data and technology to build infrastructure and support data-based decision making and accountability		Public Awareness All Arizonans understand the importance of the early years & recognize the influence of early childhood development, health & education on Arizona's economy & quality of life and, as a result, substantially support early childhood development, health, and education both politically and financially.	
Shift the brand and awareness of early childhood in Arizona			



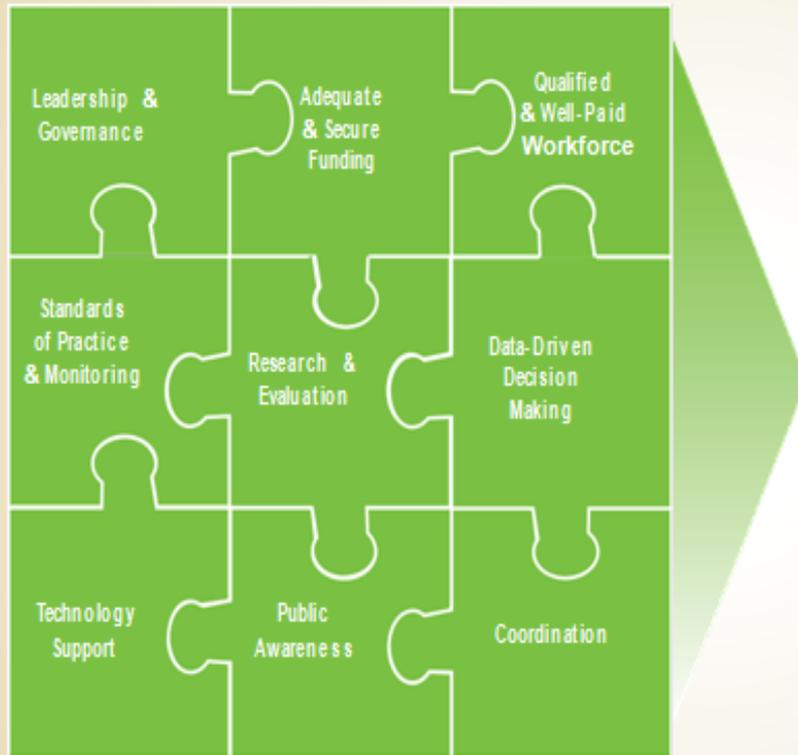
Developing a Model Early Childhood System

SYSTEM VISION: All Arizona children by the time they are 5 years old have a solid foundation for success in school and in life because we have worked together to create a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that addresses the child's development, health and early education.



Key System Elements and System Outcomes

Having all elements in place will help accelerate positive outcomes.



Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education

Access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care

Information, services and support for families

Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals

Coordinated, integrated and comprehensive system

Public understanding and support



10 School Readiness Indicators

1. #/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical
2. #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars
3. #/% of children with special needs enrolled in an inclusive early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars
4. #/% of families that spend no more than 10% of the regional median family income on quality care and education with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars
5. % of children with newly identified developmental delays during the kindergarten year
6. # of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education
7. #/% of children ages 2-4 at a healthy weight (Body Mass Index-BMI)
8. #/% of children receiving at least six well child visits within the first 15 months of life
9. #/% of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay
10. % of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being



Roles of the System Partners

- Leader—convening and facilitating
- Partner—co-convene and facilitate or participant
- Participant



Lessons Learned

- An open, visible process is needed
- A diverse group of thinkers is important
- Choose strategic areas of focus for an actionable agenda
- Need to consider breadth and depth of system
- Need to determine if components are equally weighted or some areas emphasized?



Lessons Learned

- Strategic decisions are required: Slicing the pie doesn't work because of too many needs and not enough money
- Draw from knowledge base that already exists

