First Things First
State Fiscal Years 2024-2027
Strategic Plan
FTF Strategic Planning Process

**Jan 2020 – May 2021**
- Discovery Phase
- Strategy Area Work Groups with Board, Regional Council, Staff and External Expert members

**June 2021 – July 2021**
- Vision & Mission
- Guiding Principles
- Strategic Plan Goals
- Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)

**July 2021 – Aug 2021**
- Strategy Area Assessments
- Utilize Work Group SWOT & Summaries
- Draft foundational questions & recommendations

**Aug 2021 – Dec 2021**
- SPC guidance & direction
- Regional Council leadership input
- Board approval of priorities & direction

**Dec 2021 – Feb/Mar 2022**
- Exec Staff & Consultant write plan
- Public Comment
- Board final approval
Next Level of FTF Excellence

The FTF state Board is committed to an FTF-centric strategic plan that:

- is clear, concise, data-informed, equity- and outcome-focused ensuring equity in all FTF’s work;
- coordinates, collaborates and seeks to achieve collective impact with other state agencies;
- includes appropriate metrics for informative and accountability purposes; and
- provides a path for a more stable and sustainable funding structure.
FTF Values

1. **Arizona’s children, birth to age 5, and their families are our central focus.** We provide the best opportunities to prepare Arizona’s children for success in school and life, while ensuring each child’s well-being.

2. **Equity-Focused** – We acknowledge, address and work to solve the unique challenges facing many children and their families.

3. **Innovative and Continuously Improving** – We are flexible, open and do what is best for children and their families.

4. **Accountable** – We demonstrate that our work truly improves the lives of children and their families.

5. **Strong Stewards** – We demonstrate transparency and sound financial management of public and private funds and advocate for additional investments in early childhood development and health to address unmet needs.

6. **Diverse and Inclusive** – Our partners, regional council members, staff and Board are essential to the equitable delivery of the mission. We are inclusive and strive to reflect the diversity of our state. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

7. **Collaborative and Cooperative** – The success of our work depends on others and we maintain a diverse, inclusive and equitable culture of strong collaboration and cooperation both internally and externally.
1. With an emphasis on the whole child, FTF will serve Arizona’s children:
   • birth to age 5, and their families and caregivers,
   • across diverse socio-economic, geographic, cultural, and educational backgrounds;
   • with a priority on lower socio-economic, at-risk children and their families; and
   • a focus on the cognitive, physical, health, and social and emotional well-being of each child.

2. FTF’s Board in conjunction with the Regional Councils will continue to partner to:
   • equitably and effectively serve both urban and rural communities
   • collaborate with state agencies and tribal nations; and
   • foster public/private collaboration and collective impact.

3. FTF will continue to lead the early childhood system, with a focus to:
   • leverage its subject matter expertise across the state
   • convene and align stakeholder partners, and
   • position for sustainable equitable statewide future funding

4. FTF will foster a data-informed approach that:
   • continuously improves programs and strategies; and
   • actively promotes a more vibrant data sharing network amongst our partners.
MODEL EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM – 6 DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education
2. Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals
3. Access to high-quality preventative and continuous health care
4. Information, services, and support for families
5. Public understanding and support
6. Coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive system
SWOT ANALYSIS OF 13 STRATEGY AREAS

Strategy Area Review Groups align with the 6 desired outcomes of Arizona’s early childhood system that were identified by the Early Childhood Task Force.
Prioritization was based on assessment of strategy area importance to FTF vision, mission, statutory objectives and priority system roles. Supporting importance was based on FTF’s role, other’s roles and responsibilities and statewide pervasiveness.
6 Prioritized Strategy Areas:

- Quality First
- Building Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years
- Professional Development for Early Childhood Education Professionals
- Access to Quality Early Learning
- Educating Families and Caregivers
- Navigating and Connecting Families to Resources
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<th>DESIRED SYSTEM OUTCOMES</th>
<th>PRIORITIZED STRATEGY AREAS AND INCLUDED PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES</th>
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<td>Access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care and education</td>
<td>Quality First</td>
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<td>Information, services and support for families</td>
<td>Quality First Program Assessment</td>
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<td>Well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated professionals</td>
<td>Quality First Coaching and Incentives</td>
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<td>Public understanding and support</td>
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<td>Access to Quality Care</td>
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<td>Start-Up Expansion and Learning Lab</td>
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<td>Educating Families and Caregivers</td>
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<td>Parenting Education</td>
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<td>Family, Friend and Neighbor Care</td>
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<td>Professional Development for ECE Professionals</td>
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<td>Language, Communication &amp; Literacy in Early Care and Education Settings</td>
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Achieving Statewide Impact with Regional Flexibility:

- Recommendation that each region allocate 80% of funding to 6 prioritized areas

- If no regional need exists, or, if lack of capacity prevents implementing services in these strategy areas, regional funding plans will include this rationale for funding below 80%

- If funding is below 80% for other reasons, regional plan will include rationale; if there are public system partners who hold primary responsibility in a different strategy area that region seeks to fund, the plans should explain how those partners will be engaged

- In recognition of FTF commitment to equity and prioritization of under-resourced and underserved children and families, regional funding plans shall include a description of how the plan promotes equity and support of these children and families
SFY24-27 Strategic Plan
Unknowns: Rapidly changing external context