

**TRIBAL CONSULTATION ON THE FTF RESEARCH AND
EVALUATION PLAN AND THE QUALITY FIRST PROGRAM**

Thursday, August 15, 2013



2013 Tribal Consultation Summary Report

Pursuant to the First Things First (FTF) Tribal Consultation Policy and AZ Executive Order (EO) 2006-14, Consultation and Cooperation with Arizona Tribes, FTF convened a formal consultation session on Thursday, August 15, 2013, for the purpose of better meeting the needs of Native American children and families, taking into consideration FTF evaluation and data activities, and other issues affecting the delivery of early childhood strategies in their geographic locations.

First Things First is committed to meaningful consultation with tribes through which elected officials and other authorized representatives of the tribal governments have the opportunity to provide meaningful and timely input regarding the development of policies or procedures that affect Arizona's tribes and Native American children and families.

The following summary reflects comments and questions raised by Arizona's Tribal Leaders and representatives/designees.

Participants

Tribal Leaders and Tribal Representatives:

Gregory Mendoza, Governor, Gila River Indian Community
Terry Rambler, Chairman, San Carlos Apache Tribe
Herman G. Honanie, Hopi Tribe
Philbert Watahomigie Sr., Vice-Chairman, Hualapai Tribe
Wavalene Romero, Vice-Chairwoman, Tohono O'odham Nation
Robert Jackson, Sr., Vice-Chairman, Yavapai Apache Nation
Amelia Flores, Tribal Council Member, Colorado River Indian Tribes
Dale Enos, Tribal Council Member, Gila River Indian Community
Theresa Larzelere, Tribal Council Member, White Mountain Apache Tribe
Rosie Soto Alvarez, Tribal Council Member, Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Dr. William Myhr, Director of Education Department, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Betsy Lewis, Director of Fort Mojave Childcare, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
Noreen Sakiestewa, Director for Education, Hopi Tribe
Nicole Honanie, Chief of Staff, Tribal Chairman, Hopi Tribe
Victoria Hobbs, Executive Director, Education Department, Tohono O'odham

First Thing First:

Steven Lynn, Chairman of the FTF Board; Vivian Saunders, Member of the FTF Board; Sam Leyvas, Interim Chief Executive Officer; Karen Woodhouse, Chief Program Officer; Beverly Russell, Senior Director of Tribal Affairs

In addition to First Things First representatives and tribal leaders and their representatives, representatives from the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Arizona Department of Health Services, Department of Economic Security, and the Arizona American Indian Oral Health Coalition were in attendance.

Summary

Although all of the tribal leaders spoke to the consultation topics with regard to their specific communities, the discussion presented some common themes around the First Things First Research and Evaluation plan. During this session, several tribal leaders referenced historical misuses of tribal data by other entities. It was recommended that First Things First continue to be mindful of this history as the organization develops data partnership with Arizona tribes and nations.

Tribal leaders also emphasized the sensitivity of the data that is collected from tribal members on tribal lands. Attendees acknowledged that this information tells a piece of their story and must be treated with great care and understanding. Attending leaders also underscored the importance of tribal data ownership noting that all tribal data should continue to be presented to tribes by First Things First for approval unless otherwise directed by the tribe.

Finally, a collective sentiment from tribal leaders came in the form of a request for First Things First to continue to stay in regular dialogue with tribes including the submission of reports to tribes to share progress related to data partnerships.

The following are some specific notes emphasized through dialogue with participating Arizona tribes.

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Recommendations on FTF Research and Evaluation Plan

- Several tribal leaders recommended that FTF consider entering into Memorandums of Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding to address data sharing agreements. Other recommendations related to data sharing agreements included the use of open-ended agreements or renewal models that are currently utilized by federal agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- A comment was made about geography and data. It was noted that location is a big factor to consider for tribes as it relates to data acquisition and analysis. First Things First was reminded that data statistics will not be the same for every tribe therefore a tribal number or an aggregate tribal number may not be accurate. FTF also was asked to be mindful that small tribes may need technical assistance around data efforts and he also stressed the importance of clarifying the difference between research and evaluation when working on these efforts with tribes.
- Several tribal leaders expressed the need for data to make connections to issues that are co-occurring in tribal communities. One example presented mentioned how data related to an increase use of illegal drugs can also be connected to a decrease in health and wellness of children in the tribal communities.
- It was noted that the data collected by FTF could be helpful to the tribe by painting a picture of the state of health and family and parental support for the tribe.
- A question was raised about how the plan will address tribes within a region and how data efforts impact non-tribal/state schools on tribal lands.

Comments/Question/Concerns/Recommendations on Quality First Programs

- Comments addressed the need for funding for the Quality First programs and scholarships for children in rural areas.
- A question was raised about Quality First programs addressing the common core testing for older children in preparation for Kindergarten. Further, a comment was made that participation in Quality First is expensive and for smaller tribal regions it may be difficult to fund a slot for their region.
- A recommendation was made that Quality First Program keep in mind that that majority of tribal early learning programs are not state regulated and may never be regulated by the state. Further, the importance of cultural competency in the Quality First Program was discussed.
- The majority of tribal leaders expressed concern about the star ratings in the Quality First programs in their tribal communities. Some tribal leaders expressed concern that the ratings are difficult to achieve in some aspects of the assessment evaluation.
- Tribal leaders expressed the need to align the quality and rating system standards with the regulations of other tribal program standards such as tribal Head Start and the Child Care Development Fund.
- Several comments also addressed the need for early childhood teachers in their communities to achieve the highest educational degree possible.
- A comment was made by one tribe that Quality First gives them a great opportunity to measure their work. It was noted that measurement is historically not an effort that has been infused in the child care setting.
- A comment was made that the alignment of Quality First and pre-k has not necessarily been a great fit for one tribe.