

## 2018 Statewide Tribal Consultation

### Discussion Guide

#### ***Supporting the healthy development of young children.***

The earliest years of a child's life are crucial to their health and development. The quality of care that children receive between birth and 5 years old impacts whether they will develop in healthy ways that promote learning. In the broadest sense, healthy development means that children are able to grow up in a safe and loving home where their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being are supported.

From birth to 5 years old, children should reach certain milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave and move. Taking first steps, speaking words or phrases, and emotional self-regulation are examples of developmental milestones. In many communities, these milestones are celebrated through ceremonies or gatherings with families and communities. While each child is unique and will develop at his or her own pace, developmental milestones give a general idea of what typical development looks like and what is reasonable to expect as a child grows.

A child who consistently does not meet the guideposts of healthy development may have a developmental delay. Developmental delays can be a sign of one of two things – either an area where a child needs additional support in order to meet developmental milestones, or a sign of a potential lifelong issue that could significantly impact a child's long-term learning and well-being. Regular monitoring of a child's healthy development ensures that any potential learning and development issues are identified early enough for the child to get the maximum benefit of intervention services and supports. This monitoring can occur prenatally, as well as regularly throughout a child's early years. It may occur in doctor's offices, as well as in early learning settings or through various family support programs. Ideally, it involves the use of valid and reliable screening tools that involve both parent insights, as well as the observations of the monitor/screener.

Identifying and addressing delays as early as possible can assist families in learning how to support their child's healthy development. And, children at risk for delays who are screened are more likely to receive early intervention and other services to support their development than unscreened peers. Without routine screening, only an estimated 30% of children with developmental issues are identified before they reach kindergarten.

First Things First and state agency partners are working together to ensure access to services in which timely quality screening is occurring; and that risk-appropriate referrals are being provided in cases where concerns may exist and further evaluation or assessment is needed, including information with which families can actively support their child in reaching developmental milestones. This includes a focus on ensuring that all of this work is done with profound respect and understanding for tribal values, cultures and practices.

To that end, early childhood partners seek first to understand how Arizona's tribes and nations view early childhood development, healthy milestones and the identification and provision of services to children who need support in reaching those milestones.

Insight is respectfully requested from tribal leaders on the following questions:

1. How does your tribal community view the healthy development of young children?
2. How is healthy development monitored and celebrated for children birth to 5 years old?
3. Where and how often is the development of young children screened?
4. Can you share any information – such as facts, figures or stories – that will help us to understand the status of healthy development among young children in your community?
5. What successes and challenges have you encountered in identifying children who may need developmental support and working with their families?
6. What supports from individuals or organizations are offered in your community to assist with children's healthy development?
7. Do you feel there are adequate supports and resources in your community to support children who face challenges with healthy development and their families?
8. Many times, staff working with families on issues of healthy child development are not from tribal communities. What insight and advice can you provide to them about what helps families in your community feel open and comfortable having conversations about their children's development?
9. Are you aware of any culturally responsive developmental screening or early intervention models being implemented, either in your community or elsewhere in the U.S.?