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**First Focus on Kids
Early Learning Partnership:
Diamond Challenge Fund
Annual Progress Report
2009-2010**

The logo for LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. features a yellow square tilted to the right. Inside the square is a dark green shield with a yellow star at the top and a white classical column in the center.

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Executive Summary

For almost a decade, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (UWTSA) has undertaken purposeful strategies to create a comprehensive systems initiative designed to build an effective sustainable early childhood system in southern Arizona through the First Focus on Kids/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership (FFK). Beginning in July 2006, the Diamond Challenge Fund for First Focus on Kids was created to encourage other foundations and donors to contribute to early education goals. Donald Diamond, his wife Joan, and their daughter Helaine know that the timing is right to expand and enhance the FFK school readiness goals. The Diamond family has made a five-year, \$1 million funding commitment to the work of United Way's First Focus on Kids (FFK). The information in this report details the fourth year of the challenge grant and provides a summary of the activities and results of the Early Learning Partnership efforts.

The 2009-2010 funding enabled continued growth in the FFK system as new and existing partners worked collaboratively to implement and strengthen community efforts to improve conditions for early childhood in Pima County. Year 4 activities focused on 10 identified system components: professional development, wage enhancement, quality improvement, infant-toddler expansion and support, early literacy support, community mobilization, family support and home visitation, oral health, obesity/nutrition education, and health insurance outreach.

"To sum up, I think FFK is a leader around the state. People around the state are modeling FFK. It has a lot to be proud of. FFK needs to keep doing what its doing. They really do amazing work. It shows what can happen when we work together."

FFK Member

From 2009-2010, the number of FFK connections increased as follows:

- ◇ From seven to 10 connections for funding;
- ◇ From 11 to 14 connections for staff;
- ◇ From four to seven connections for referrals;
- ◇ From four to five connections for training.



UWTSA sets annual benchmarks for each of its strategic workgroups. The First Focus on Kids/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership met or exceeded all of its targets, including the following for early learning:

- ◇ 4,350 children participated in high quality child care;
- ◇ 287 children received hearing screening;
- ◇ 402 children received oral screenings; 245 children received varnish applications;
- ◇ 84,431 books were distributed to 52,984 families;
- ◇ 417 families learned new parenting skills;
- ◇ 183 teachers received REWARD\$ in Pima County.
- ◇ 9 infant-toddler centers received renovation grants and one center received a construction grant;
- ◇ 5 funded scholars earned CDA certificate or AA degree;
- ◇ 60 students graduated with an ECE certificate or AA degree from PCC;
- ◇ 5 centers received NAEYC re-accreditation; 15 centers actively seeking accreditation received coaching;
- ◇ 125 centers and 93 homes received coaching and incentives as a part of Quality First;
- ◇ 1,227 individuals learned developmentally appropriate ECE, evidence-based coaching, and systems building skills;
- ◇ 305 early child care professionals received professional development in their respective regions;
- ◇ 250 families in South Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the annual “Celebrate Kids Festival” in Sahuarita in April 2010;
- ◇ 100 families in North Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the first annual Parent Resource Fair in Marana in May 2010;
- ◇ 25 child care directors regularly attend the Central Pima Accreditation Learning Community and receive professional development around high quality early education and care;
- ◇ Throughout 2010 in South Pima County, at least 35 early child care professionals, including home childcare providers, participated in 19 hours of no-cost professional development early education workshops;



- ◇ At least 35 children and their families participated in Story Time, offered weekly throughout the year in South Pima County;
- ◇ 250 attendees and 40 agencies participated in the Child & Family Festival (April 10, 2010);
- ◇ Burn Buster Blast (summer 2010), a community event focused on health and safety of children, reached 150 people;
- ◇ 613 providers received early literacy training;
- ◇ Nutrition education was provided to 482 children; and
- ◇ More than \$10 million in new funding was infused into early childhood initiatives.

Key:

CDA - Child Development Associates Degree

AA - Associate in Art Degree

NAEYC - National Association for the Education of Young Children

ECE - Early Childhood Education

UWTSA - United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

FFK - First Focus on Kids

FTF - First Things First



Building an Early Childhood System in Southern Arizona

History of the First Focus on Kids Efforts

For over a decade, the First Focus on Kids (FFK) Coalition of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona (UWTSA)/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has undertaken purposeful strategies to build an effective “systems initiative” designed to achieve a common goal – preparing children so they enter school healthy and ready to learn. Essential elements and components are needed to build an effective early childhood support system that can successfully improve the quality of child care, early childhood programs, and children’s health. These elements include early child care and education quality, children’s health and nutrition needs, workforce development, family support, early literacy, and early intervention services.

For the last four years, the Diamond Family Foundation has provided critical support in these efforts, and each year the Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership and FFK have organized efforts around four broad areas of impact: Ready Early Childhood Programs and Schools, Ready Teachers and Staff, Ready Families, and Ready Communities. This has been a year of unprecedented early childhood system growth for the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership, fueled by a statewide infusion of financial resources from First Things First (FTF), a voter-enacted initiative designed to improve the health and education of Arizona children ages zero to five.

Over the past four years, the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has identified and tracked key outcomes achieved by the partners in the early childhood system. With the expansion in funding for the early childhood system efforts in 2009-2010, additional focus has been devoted to building and evaluating the comprehensive infrastructure for the early childhood system that is emerging. Evaluating systems initiatives in ways that capture the efforts and impacts of multiple programs and funding streams, multiple leaders and players, and many political, economic and

cultural contexts is a difficult and long-term process.

“I am proud to be a part of it. When I go to a conference in other cities and ask, ‘How many of you are able to network in this way?’ No one raises their hand. I’m happy we have United Way and FFK.”

FFK Member

In This Report

Reports in previous years were organized around the four main goals of the program: Ready Programs and Schools, Ready Teachers and Staff, Ready Families, and Ready Communities.



The same information is included in full in this year's report, but it is contained within a new organizational framework. As mentioned above, this year's evaluation includes a new effort to chronicle the growth and functioning of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning system of services, not just the outputs and outcomes of the individual components of that system.

This report is organized around a framework developed by the Build Initiative, a consortium of experts in early childhood systems evaluation called the Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative. The Build Initiative framework was adopted because of its suitability to the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership. The framework consists of five areas of system analysis: Context, Components, Connections, Infrastructure, and Scale. These areas are described in detail in ensuing sections of this report. The outputs and outcomes of individual programs and those related to the four goals of creating ready programs and schools, ready teachers and staff, ready families, and ready communities are included within the section on "components" of the system. Recommendations and considerations for future directions are described in the final section of this report.

The Build Initiative Systems Evaluation Model

The FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership evaluation utilizes the Build Initiative framework for evaluating systems initiatives. In consultation with UWTSa, LeCroy & Milligan Associates chose the Build Initiative as the guiding evaluation framework for the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership evaluation as it identifies system stages and various foci the system could have. The framework includes the following key system principles:

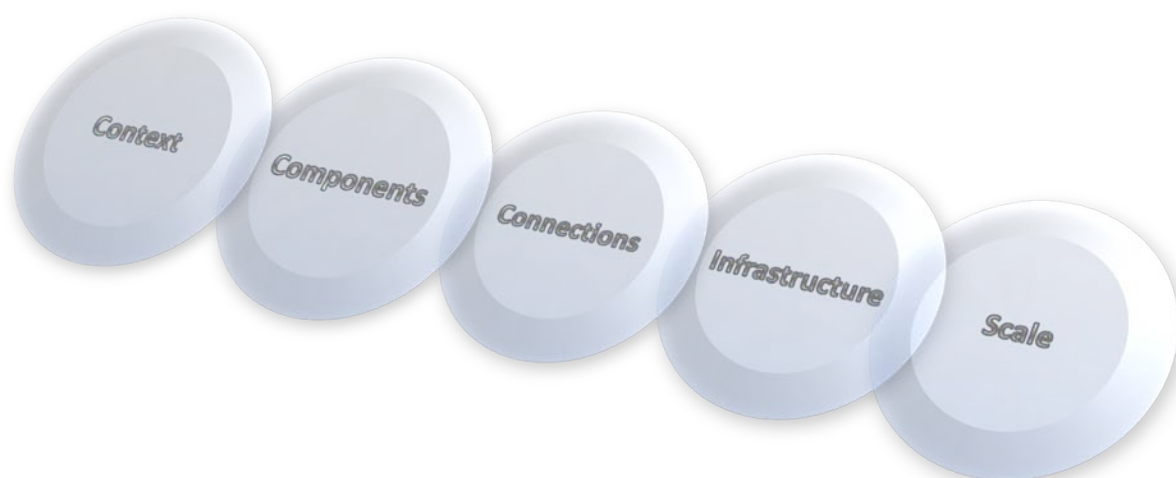
- ❖ Systems have a number of subsystems (called components) that must interact effectively for the larger system to be effective.
- ❖ Systems are described by examining their context, components, connections, infrastructure, and scale.
- ❖ Systems also a part of a larger "macro" system (e.g., FFK is a part of the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health system) and are interacting with and being affected by that larger system's other components.
- ❖ Systems have different stages of development.
- ❖ System initiatives have different foci, and evaluation can utilize their different aspects.

"We need to crack the eggs to make an omelet."

FFK Member



According to the Build Initiative’s systems framework, the impact of system change efforts can happen in one or more of five major areas: **Context, Components, Connections, Infrastructure, and Scale**. A system that focuses on Context works to change policy and funding environments. A Component-oriented systems initiative emphasizes establishing high-quality programs and services to get results for beneficiaries. A systems initiative concentrating on Connections might aim to improve the interconnections between its subsystems as a way to better serve its target population. Infrastructure-directed changes would seek to improve and expand support structures and resources for the constituent subsystems. A focus on Scale in an initiative would bid to expand system’s reach to more beneficiaries.



Evaluation Strategy

The methods used for the evaluation of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership initiative included two main efforts: 1) continued review and revision of the logic model, including resetting goals and objective targets used in past years, and 2) a new analysis of the system’s overall function based on the Build Initiative framework.

For the logic model goals and objectives targets, as in previous years, each partner was responsible for tracking, documenting, and reporting results. All results were reviewed and compiled into the data source table by the evaluator before inclusion in this report.



For the broader systems evaluation, several approaches were used. In consultation with key UWTSa staff, a map of the system was developed and updated at the beginning and end of the fiscal year. The evaluation team also engaged the staff in a year-end discussion of key questions related to the five framework areas, and synthesized their responses to develop an “internal” view of system’s function and progress. In addition to staff consultation, ten key community partner informants were interviewed to gather a broader perspective on the system. These informants were chosen based on recommendations from UWTSa staff, who supplied the evaluators with a list of individuals considered to be “experts” in some aspect of the system’s growth and functioning. The ten individuals interviewed came from diverse backgrounds - agency administration, state organizations, direct service personnel – and had varied involvement and experiences within the system.

The Theory of Change Behind the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Evaluation

A theory of change is essentially a set of assumptions about how change occurs in a system. The theory of change behind the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Systems Approach (to ensure Ready Families, Ready Programs and Schools, and Ready Communities, Ready Teachers and Staff) includes the elements presented in Exhibit 1.

“I just keep looking at the long range thinking that United Way had before FTF was a glimmer in our eye, before a prop number, before signatures. We had the idea of what we wanted to build, and FTF gave us some ability to do that. But if UW hadn’t convened the conversation a decade ago, we wouldn’t be here now.”

FFK Member



Exhibit 1. FFK's Theory of Change



Description of FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Goals

FFK goals are the following:

1. *To identify and create crucial system components.*
2. *To serve as a catalyst for constructing the system (including building leadership, partnership, and coordination).*
3. *To increase public awareness of the necessity of the Early Childhood System and maintain public support for the system.*
4. *To improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the Early Childhood System.*

Evaluation Findings

FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership evaluation findings are organized by the five Build Initiative framework areas: Context, Components, Connections, Infrastructure, and Scale. Each framework area follows the same general format laid out below. For each of these areas, data was gathered using methods deemed most suitable for the area being evaluated.

Framework Focus Area: A brief definition of the area of focus (i.e., Context, Components, Connections, Infrastructure, and Scale) is given at the beginning of each section.

Goal: The goal of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership as it applies to the specific focus area is specified.

Evaluation Questions: This section lists evaluation questions used to guide the evaluation.

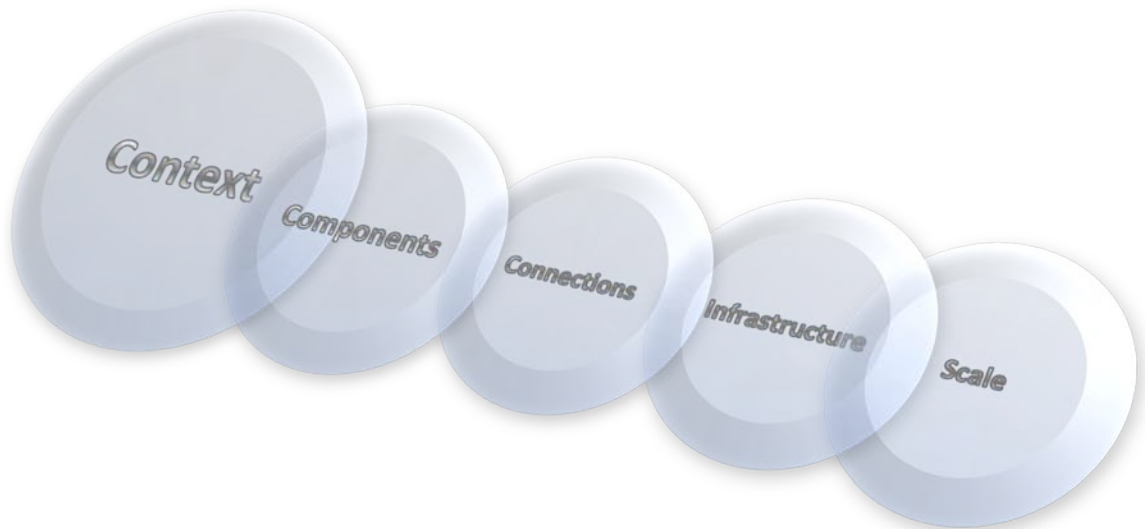
Indicators: Specific indicators that pertain to the area of focus are described in this section.

Accomplishments: This section describes various FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership accomplishments in this focus area for 2009-2010 reporting period.

FFK Interview Results for Focus Area: The findings from the qualitative interviews follow the Accomplishments section. Usually a set of figures accompanies this section which includes quotes from actual participants and main themes emerged during qualitative analyses of interview findings.

Key Findings for the Focus Area: The summary of key findings for the focus area is presented at the end of each section.





FIRST FOCUS ON KIDS
SYSTEM
CONTEXT



Context

In this section the political environment within which FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has operated in the 2009-2010 fiscal year is described.

Goal: To increase public awareness of the necessity of the Early Childhood System and maintain public support for this system.

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership changed the political environment of Pima County / Arizona through its activities? If so, how?
2. Has the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership produced changes to investment, policy, or practice that will enable changes in components, connections, infrastructure, or scale?

Indicators:

- ❖ Increase awareness of the need for ECE funding
- ❖ Change in political will
- ❖ Existence of a new funding stream (FTF funding)
- ❖ Influence on policy
- ❖ A level of public engagement
- ❖ Attendance at FFK meetings

Accomplishments:

FFK partners have placed continuous focus on developing effective strategies to address the ever-changing social/political/economic context affecting public and private investments, policies, and programs that impact the health and readiness of children, families, and communities. The FFK Coalition brings together an average of 40-80 individuals (professionals, parents, and volunteers) monthly who work throughout southern Arizona to strategize, develop, and implement a comprehensive array of services designed to improve the early childhood outcomes for children and families. Monthly meetings maintain the connectivity among partners to purposely address the goal of increasing public support for a comprehensive early childhood system. Meetings focus on discussing legislative updates, sharing effective strategies, initiating or developing collaborative grant applications, mobilizing participants around advocacy efforts, sharing evaluation information, and bringing new resources into the system.



The context for building a comprehensive early childhood system in southern Arizona begins with understanding the status of children and families in the state. Arizona is vibrant, diverse, and ever-changing.

- ◇ It is one of the fastest-growing and most mobile states in the nation, with a population of about 500,000 children under the age of 5. Many of these children come from families with low incomes and little education.
- ◇ About one-fourth of children in Arizona live at or below the federal poverty line (Chau & Douglas, 2008).
- ◇ Many children are being raised by a single parent, or by grandparents.
- ◇ Some have challenges learning and using English.
- ◇ Arizona is home to 20 Native American tribes, many living in isolated areas with limited opportunities and resources.
- ◇ Children in Arizona consistently lag behind the rest of the nation on standardized tests.
- ◇ Arizona's high school graduation rate is also below the national average.

These facts underscore the need for an early childhood system that can improve child outcomes and ensure children are given opportunities to achieve their maximum potential.

A good early childhood system is effective, comprehensive, accessible for children and families, scalable, outcome-focused, and accountable. There have been multiple attempts in Arizona to invest in human capital and promote quality education and health services despite recent economic downturns. Good Start, Grow Smart, the No Child Left Behind Act, and S*CCEEDS are all initiatives that attempted to strengthen early childhood learning for young children and provide accountability and improved quality. During Governor Napolitano's era, the School Readiness Board and the Arizona School Readiness Task Force were convened to develop policy recommendations which focused on improvements in family support, health screenings, and child care and early education.

In 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203 that has since provided funding for a number of quality early childhood development and health services for children from birth to age five. The Early Childhood Development and Health Board was established and adopted the name "First Things First." Since its inception, First Things First (FTF) prioritized and supported six goal areas: quality and accessibility, health, professional development, family support, coordination and integration, and communications.



Needs and assets reports were prepared for 31 regions within the state, and these served as a baseline snapshot of the context of life for 0 to 5 year olds in their local communities. After analyzing these data, several programs were funded as a part of the FTF initiative: Quality First, a voluntary statewide quality improvement and rating system providing coaching, assessment, and improvement incentives; T.E.A.C.H. scholarships; home visitation; health and dental services; and kith and kin professional development.

With the economic recession, the state of Arizona is cutting millions of dollars from its (non-FTF) early childhood budget, potentially reversing years of work aimed at helping young children get ready for school. More than 30,000 families are on a waiting list for child care subsidies after cuts to social services through the Arizona Department of Economic Security. There have been proposals to completely eliminate the state-funded pre-Kindergarten program. Recently, the legislature tried to redirect tobacco tax money, which is the source of the FTF budget, to the state's general fund. Given the voter-protected nature of the initiative, lawmakers must first get voter permission during a general election to be held on November 2, 2010. The redirection of the FTF funds would greatly affect the development of the system of early education in Arizona. Assuming that the FTF system is allowed to continue evolving, the state and Pima County can move towards a systematic and coordinated system of services for young children.

Building a strong early childhood system requires resources and wise policies. FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership sees context to be a continuous focus with securing both public and private investments as well as shifting policies and funding to make children's readiness and better services for children, families, and communities a top priority.

FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Interview Results for Context Question:

To gather multiple perspectives on the Context in which the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership operated during 2009-2010, UWTSA Community Partners were asked the following question, crafted from the Build Initiative's framework:

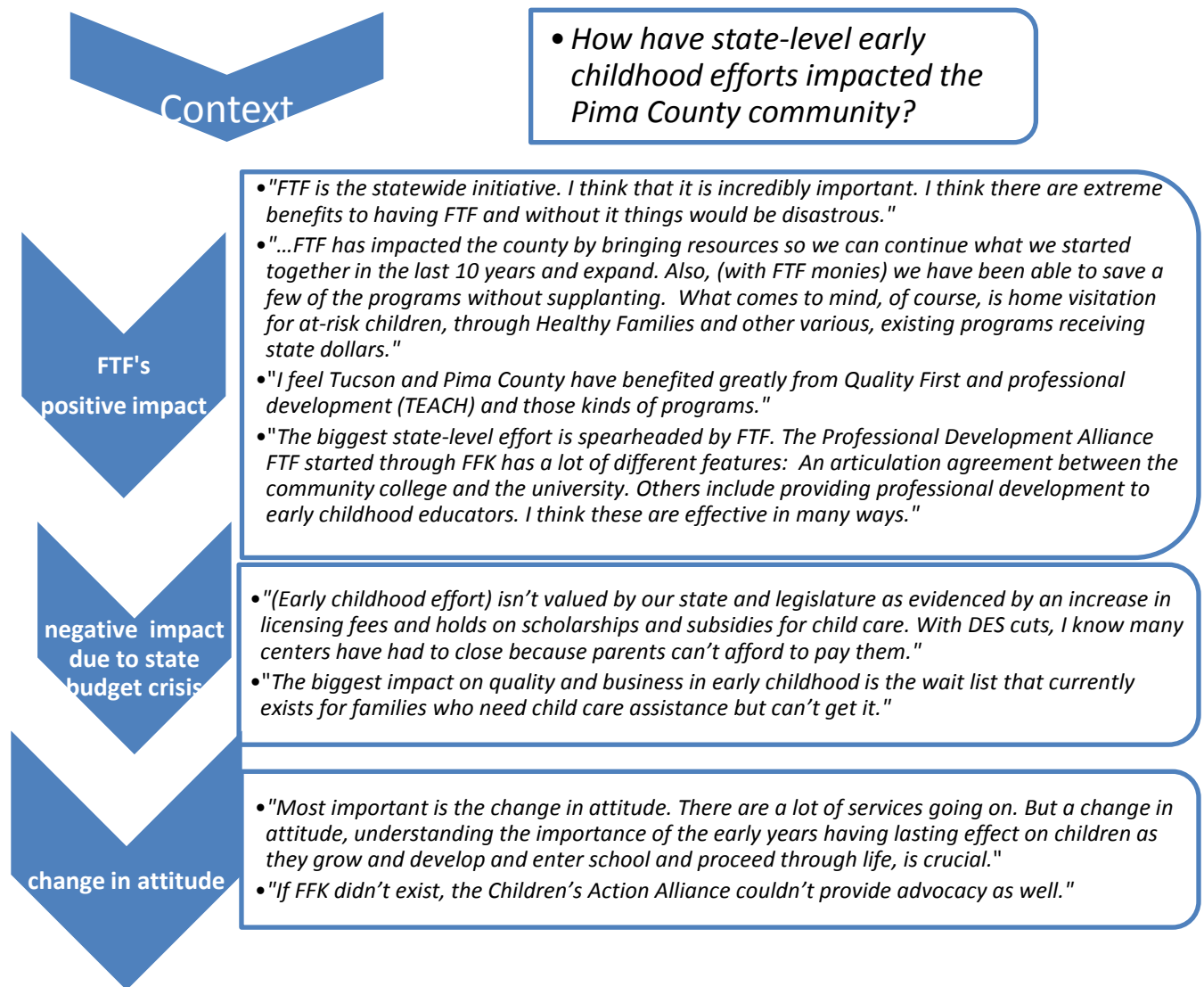
- *How have state-level early childhood efforts impacted the Pima County community?*

Informants interpreted this question by reflecting on the positive impact of programs implemented by state agencies (FTF) and the negative effects of recent cuts to state programs and threats to ongoing FTF funding.



In terms of positive impact, several informants mentioned, in general terms, the significant impact on early childhood efforts of FTF funding while others cited the inauguration or continuation of specific programs. The negative impacts cited by informants were mostly those resulting from the state’s budget crisis. Informants spoke both in terms of cuts in programs and how these cuts directly impacted families.

Figure 1. How Have State-Level EC Efforts Impacted the Pima County Community?



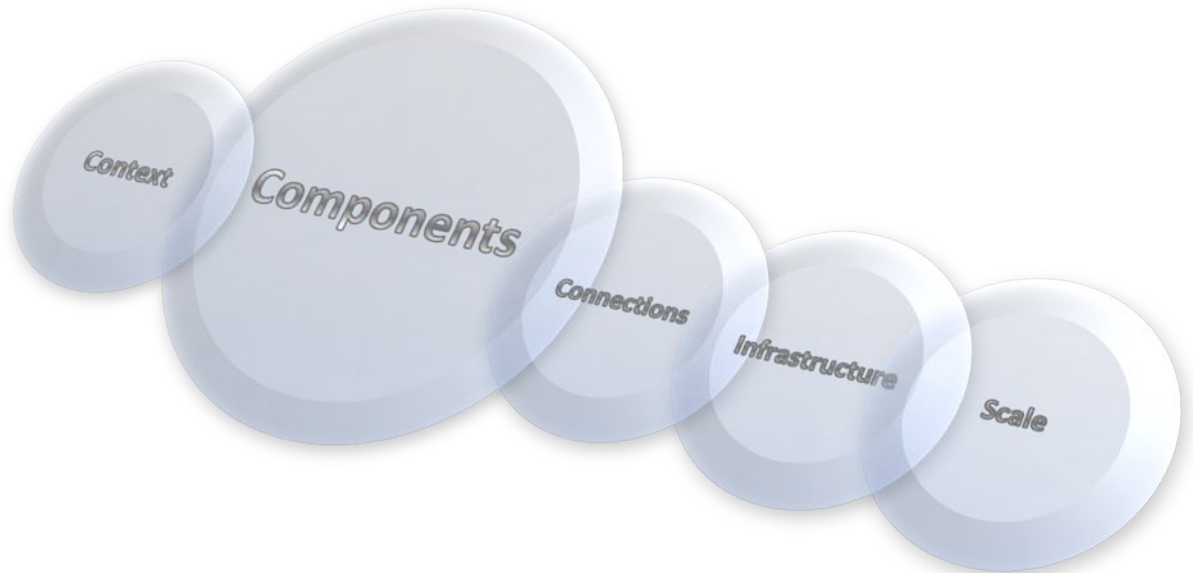
Note: The actual FFK Members’ quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Key Findings for Context

- ❖ There have been multiple attempts in Arizona to invest in human capital and promote quality early education and health services despite recent economic downturns.
- ❖ The economic recession has impacted Arizona's state budget, which has affected state-funded services for children.
- ❖ The First Things First funds and programs have helped reduce the negative impact that cuts to these state-funded-programs have had.
- ❖ While UW TSA community partners expressed mixed opinions about whether Arizona residents actively support early childhood education, there is agreement that with threats to FTF funding, it is crucial that voters understand the importance of these efforts.
- ❖ The FFK partners have maintained a strong focus on advocacy and responsiveness to changing contextual factors.





FIRST FOCUS ON KIDS
SYSTEM
COMPONENTS



Components

A “system” is generally designed to achieve a goal or function through the convergence and interaction of multiple elements or “components.” Essential components of an effective early childhood support system (with the goal of readying children for success in kindergarten and beyond), include: early child care and education quality, children’s health and nutrition resources, workforce development, family support, early literacy, early intervention services, an articulated system of professional development, and other potential components relevant to the local community.

Goal: The FFK system identifies all the necessary system components in order to build a comprehensive approach to supporting ready children, families and communities.

Evaluation Questions:

1. Did the FFK design and implement system components as intended?
2. Did the components produce their intended outcomes/ impacts for Arizona children and their families?

Indicators:

- ❖ A clearly delineated system map that identifies critical components and connections among components.
- ❖ Outputs for each individual component (see the following sections defining individual components).

Accomplishments:

In the last decade, the work of the First Focus on Kids (FFK) Coalition has been a noteworthy part of efforts to build and sustain a comprehensive early childhood system in southern Arizona and statewide. Since 2005, the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has carried out focused efforts to include many community partners in the partnership. In 2009 and 2010, to identify the FFK system components, LeCroy & Milligan Associates convened a team of United Way staff members and asked key questions to help identify what constituted the core elements of the system, the connections among the parts, and how to evaluate systems outcomes. From this process, a “system map” was created to show the July 2009 components of the system (with their subsystem programs) as well as a June 2010 map of system components.



At the beginning of this evaluation year (July 2009), there were seven components of the system, which grew to 10 components by July 2010. New components established in the last year include: wage enhancement, infant-toddler expansion and support, and health insurance outreach. In addition, other components grew in the number and types of programs existing within the component. The maps below show the pre (July 2009) and post (June 2010) components, with their programmatic subsystems identified within each oval.

The maps also display an array of connections between the component parts, including shared funding (green), shared staff (gold), shared referrals (blue), and shared training (black) (see Figure 2, the key map at the bottom left of the page). The comparison of the two maps point to the increase in the number of connections during the year. The maps also show symbols indicating funding sources (federal, state, or private) for each component, and the FTF regions that are served by the programs in each component (see Figure 2, the key map at the bottom right of the page).

Much of the growth in the system was due to grants received from FTF. Just over \$10 million in funding came from FTF allocations from three Pima Regional Partnership Councils or the state FTF office. During this report year, the new FTF-funded programs included:

- The Professional Development Alliance;
- Wage Enhancement, Professional REWARD\$;
- Quality First;
- The programs in the Family Support Alliance;
- Some of the Health Insurance Outreach (the tuSalud project was federally funded);
- Several new community mobilization projects;
- Infant-Toddler Expansion Support.

To understand these components and how they function together as a system, it is necessary to provide a description of each component's purpose and function as well as the evaluations being conducted and outputs being tracked. This information is included on the following pages after the two system maps. The remainder of the report then addresses the key evaluation questions related to connections and infrastructure that support this FFK system.



Figure 2. FFK's System Map, July 2009

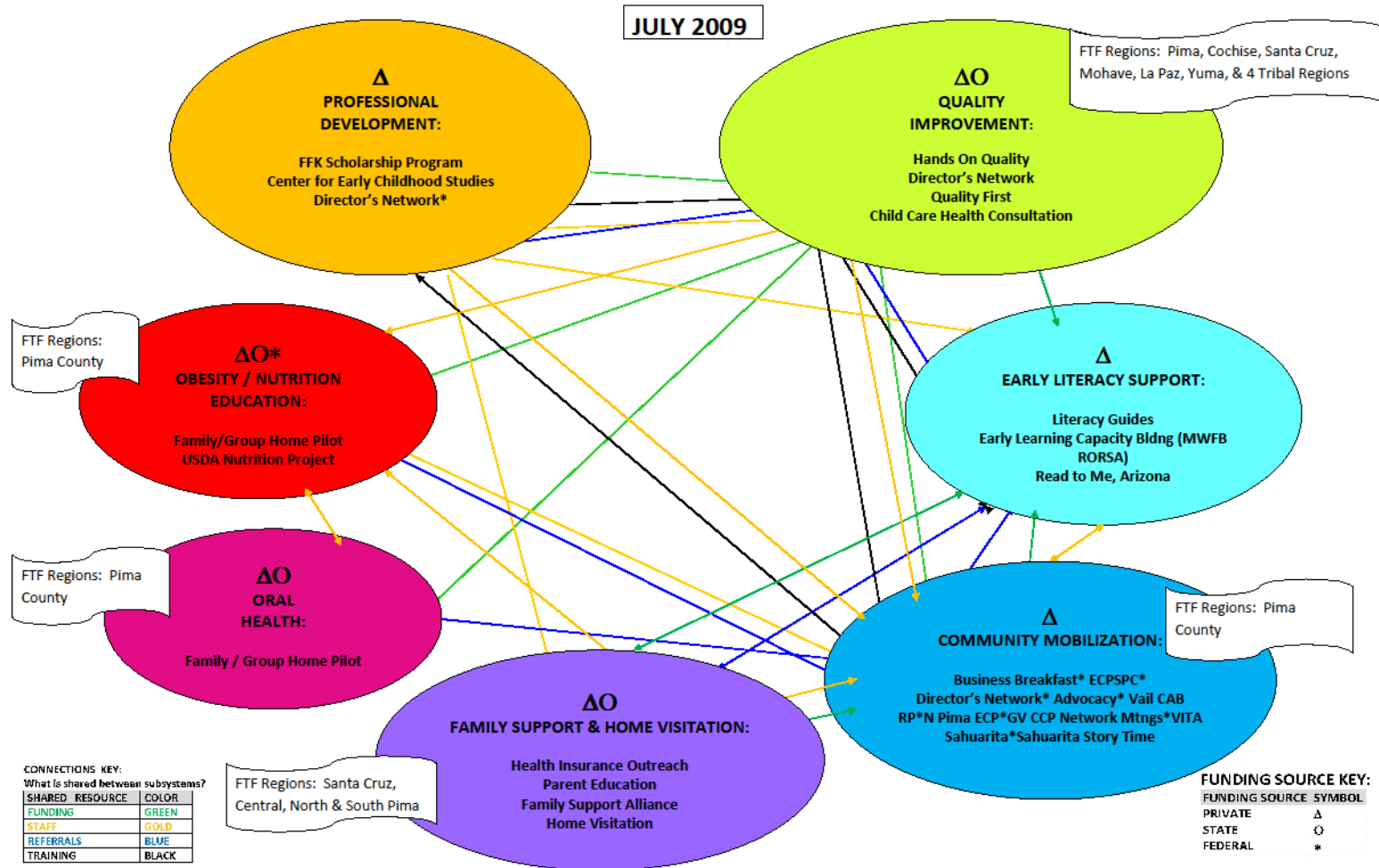
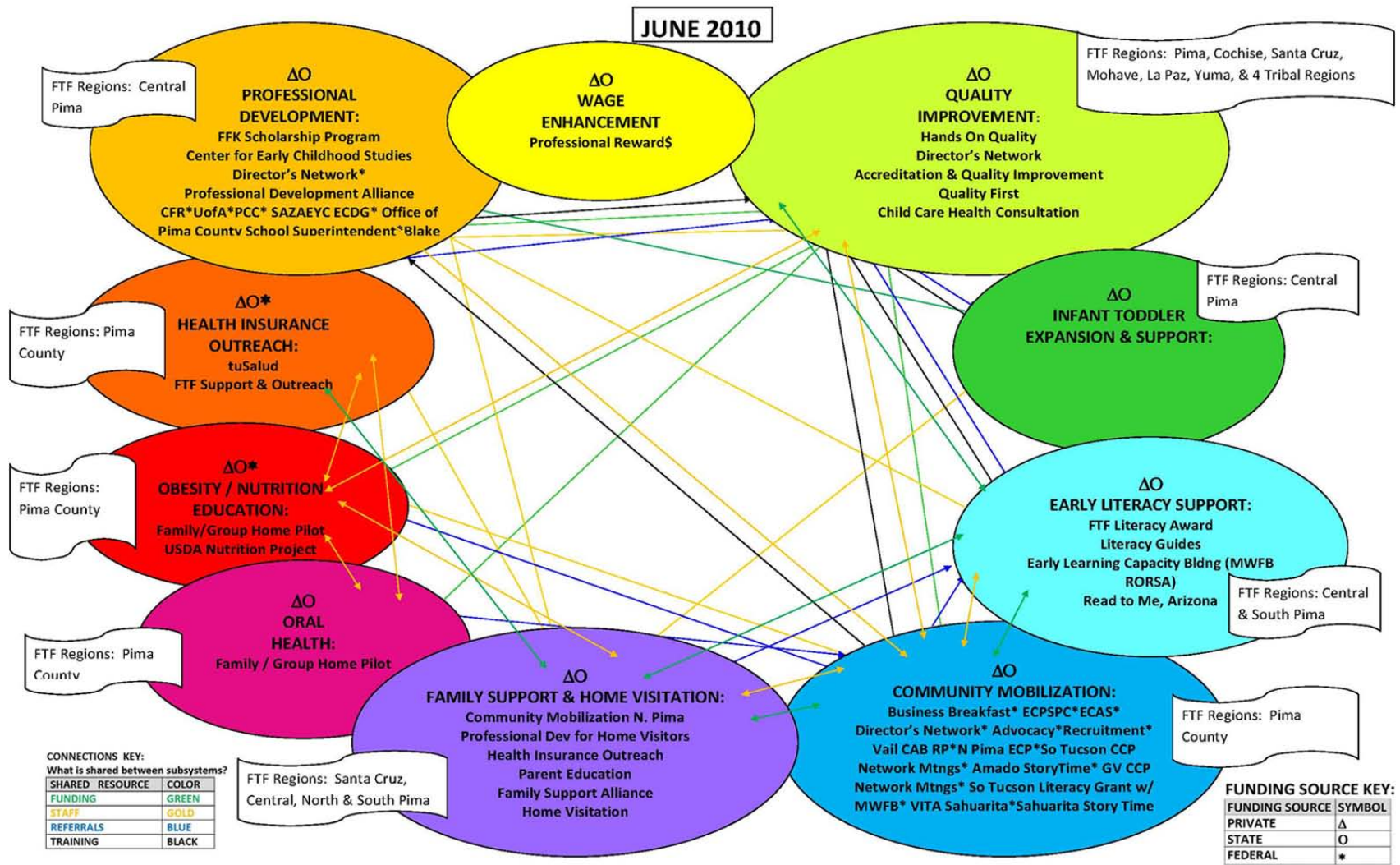


Figure 3. FFK' System Map, June 2010



Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professional Development Component

•FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has been working to enhance professional development in the Early Childhood System since 2005. That year, the Center for Early Childhood Studies at Pima Community College was launched and provided a full-time program manager to provide case management to students in the Early Childhood Studies program. In addition, FFK funded scholarships for teachers working in targeted child care centers to attend PCC and work towards a certificate or degree. To date, FFK has supported 48 scholars, and 37 degrees or certificates have been earned. In 2009 the state-funded FTF initiative to address the problem of undereducated early childhood teachers was launched. A multi-faceted, systems approach was developed, which includes:

- Teaching teachers about implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice in their classrooms with an emphasis on inclusive settings;
- Developing and establishing a non-traditional Early Childhood Master's Degree program at the U of A College of Education;
- Ensuring successful transitions of Pima College Early Childhood Education (ECE) 2-year graduates to the U of A ECE B.A. Degree program;
- The Professional Development Alliance integrates principles of Systems Thinking, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and Evidence-based coaching in these ways:
 - Seven Communities of Practice (COPs) work together to create elements of an ideal regional professional development system. Each Community of Practice represents key aspects of the system—education for those with limited credentials to those with graduate-level early childhood education and development expertise;
 - Each COP focuses on a key component of the system and establishes a learning cohort. The cohorts of learners are taught and coached by a COP coordinator who reinforces learning experiences;
 - Subject experts in Developmentally Appropriate Practice provide educational seminars and follow-up activities with each Community of Practice;
 - All COP leaders attend Systems Thinking seminars to learn new habits, concepts and tools needed to develop systems building capacity;
 - Learning in systems thinking is reinforced during four day educational seminars on Evidence-Based Coaching, and
 - Evaluation and reflection are built into every aspect of the Systems Thinking work.

Targeted Evaluation

•The evaluation of this component by Alta Consulting focuses on changes in the overall PD system that will affect the system over time, and on how individuals improve practice as a result of instruction and ongoing coaching and support for classroom improvement. The evaluation examines both the larger system and individual success in changing the PD of early education teachers and professionals.

Outputs

- 1227 individuals learned new developmentally appropriate ECE, evidence-based coaching, and systems building skills.
- 5 funded scholars earned a CDA certificate or AA degree.
- 613 providers received early literacy training.
- 60 students graduated with an ECE certificate or AA degree from PCC.



Wage Enhancement



- The FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has viewed wage incentive programs as an essential element of containing the costs of child care while supporting professional development and retention of the early childhood education workforce. The FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership staff participated in a First Things First logistics team to develop a wage enhancement program and design a strategy for statewide implementation of the proposed program. The new program, Professional REWARD\$, launched in May 2010 and awards tiered incentives to child care professionals based on having been at their place of employment for at least one year, earning less than \$30,000 annually, and having completed college credits in early childhood education.



- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.



- 183 teachers received REWARD\$ in Pima County.



Quality Improvement



Quality Improvement Component

- Since 2000, UWTSA has been providing coaching and other supports to child care centers as part of its quality improvement efforts. These efforts have been systematic and collaborative, incorporating many evidence-based supports to help participating sites improve levels of quality. Core supports include coaching, small grants/incentives, child care health consultation, early literacy consultation and training, and professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. Quality improvement programs have included establishing an NAEYC accreditation facilitation project (2000-2003, 2006-2010); piloting a quality rating system (2004), and managing coaching and incentives for sites participating in First Things First's statewide quality improvement and rating system, Quality First, in six Arizona counties (2009-present).

Targeted Evaluation

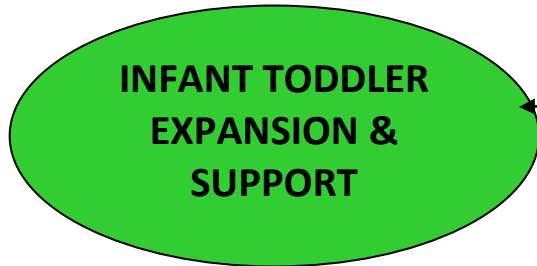
- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- 125 centers and 93 homes in Pima, Cochise, Santa Cruz, Yuma, and Mohave/La Paz counties participating in Quality First.
- 4,350 children are in high quality programs.
- 18 centers have received NAEYC re-accreditation since 2006.
- 15 centers actively seeking re-accreditation received coaching in 2009-2010.
- 5 centers were reaccredited by NAEYC.



Infant-Toddler Expansion and Support



Infant-Toddler Expansion and Support Component

- In 2009-2010, UW TSA received funding from FTF to partner with the City of Tucson and the Microbusiness Advancement Center to address the scarcity of quality infant and toddler care in Central Tucson. Child care centers wanting to increase their capacity in infant-toddler care can apply for up to \$25,000 in planning grants if they complete a business course provided by MAC and commit to certain quality standards and quality improvement efforts. After the planning phase, up to \$150,000 in construction/renovation grants are available to centers who have completed a business plan, submitted an application, and who agree to meet quality standards. When construction/renovation is completed and quality standards are met and maintained, participating child care centers are eligible for a supplement at \$10 per day, per newly created infant/toddler slot.

Targeted Evaluation

- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- 9 child care centers have received grants to plan for expansion and/or renovation.
- One center has received a construction grant. No quality slots have been created yet.



Early Literacy Support



Early Literacy Support Component

- Early Literacy Support has been a key strategy of FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership since it began its work in 2000. Through partner Make Way For Books (MWFB), child care centers and family child care homes receive libraries, literacy training and coaching, and Storytime volunteers. MWFB also provides literacy kits to new parents and hosts Family Read Aloud Nights. Through partner Reach Out & Read Southern Arizona, pediatricians distribute age-appropriate books and tips for reading to children at each well-child visit for children ages birth to five. UW TSA publishes a literacy guide for parents of children birth through age 18 with tips, developmental milestones, and book suggestions.

Targeted Evaluation

- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- 11,566 books were distributed to centers.
- 613 providers received early literacy training.
- Make Way For Books: 2,165 children received 6,570 books.
- Reach Out and Read Southern Arizona: 44,197 children from 39,777 families received 66,295 books.
- 300 families attended Family Read Aloud Nights.



Community Mobilization

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION



Community Mobilization Component

•Community Mobilization began in South Pima County in 2005 and expanded into North Pima County in 2009. In satellite offices for UWTSA in Green Valley and Marana, we have placed full-time Community Mobilization Directors (CMDs). The CMDs facilitate monthly meetings for the Early Childhood Partnership of South Pima County and also the Early Childhood Partnership of North Pima County, which are meetings for key stakeholders and community partners in the early childhood community in both the North and South Regions. Additionally, the CMDs coordinate local workshops/professional development opportunities and conferences, monthly newsletters, and community events to connect parents/caregivers of young children to resources. The CMDs offer a continuum of technical assistance to early childcare professionals and act as a liaison between the outlying rural communities, UWTSA, and its community partners to keep a pulse on issues facing the community with regard to education, income, and health.

Targeted Evaluation

•There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- 305 early child care professionals received professional development in their respective regions.
- 250 families in South Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the annual “Celebrate Kids Festival” in Sahuarita in April 2010.
- 100 families in North Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the first annual Parent Resource Fair in Marana in May 2010.
- 25 child care directors regularly attend the Central Pima Accreditation Learning Community and receive professional development around high quality early education and care.
- Throughout 2010 in South Pima County, at least 35 early child care professionals, including home childcare providers, participated in 19 hours of no-cost professional development early education workshops.
- At least 35 children and their families participated in Story Time, offered weekly throughout the year in South Pima County.
- 250 attendees and 40 agencies participated in the Child & Family Festival (April 10, 2010).
- Burn Buster Blast (summer 2010), a community event focused on health and safety of children, reached 150 people.



Family Support & Home Visitation

FAMILY SUPPORT & HOME VISITATION



Family Support & Home Visitation Component

•The Southern Arizona Family Support Alliance was established in April 2009 through a collaborative effort of the UWTSA and partnering organizations involved in the UWTSA FFK Coalition. It grew out of identified needs in Pima County and southern Arizona for more access to comprehensive family support and education, and health services for families with young children ages 0-5 years old. The Alliance was formed to maximize impact to the community by providing a continuum of services that will provide support to families through a variety of community-based parent education and home visitation programs. The Family Support Alliance was funded by each of the First Things First (FTF) Regional Partnership Councils in Pima County. UWTSA provides critical staff leadership and an administrative home for the Alliance which includes 11 funded partners and 14 affiliated partner organizations.

Targeted Evaluation

•The evaluation of the Southern Arizona Family Support Alliance is designed to provide information about how the programs are being implemented, what outcomes are achieved, and what can be done to help the programs improve and be more effective. Multiple process data and outcome indicators are gathered. The goal of the evaluation is to provide an analysis of the following issues: program description, program implementation; evaluation capacity of partner organizations and the Alliance as a whole; demographic data on numbers and characteristics of families and children served; participant satisfaction with the program, and effectiveness of the home visiting model in terms of identified outcomes. The focus of the LeCroy & Milligan Associates' evaluation effort is to design and collect relevant data at the local program level, and to consult and assist the program in meeting the requirements for the FTF statewide evaluation.

Outputs

- 488 families and 670 children received home visitation services.
- 417 families received community-based parent education.
- 287 children (out of 392 eligible) received a developmental screen (73%).



Oral Health



Oral Health Component

- UWTSA partners with the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) and the Southern Arizona Oral Health Coalition to decrease dental decay and improve the oral health of young children in Southern Arizona. Efforts began in 2007 with funding from the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation. Child care centers with high numbers of low-income children received staff training, oral health screening, fluoride varnish applications, and tooth brushing supplies. In 2009-2010, with support from First Things First, UWTSA and the PCHD piloted a similar oral health program in family and group childcare homes.

Targeted Evaluation

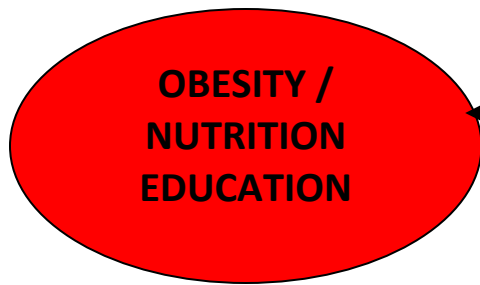
- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- 402 children received an oral screening.
- 96 children received 1 fluoride varnish application, 149 children received 2 applications.
- A total of 13 toothbrushing programs were established in 2 family homes, 7 group homes, and 4 child care centers.



Obesity/Nutrition Education



Obesity/Nutrition Education Component

- Since 2005, UW TSA has provided nutrition education to low-income child care centers by participating in the Arizona Nutrition Network. In 2009-2010, UW TSA received funding from First Things First to pilot a nutrition intervention with 50 family child care homes in collaboration with Child & Family Resources, Inc. The goal of the intervention is to increase the number of homes serving 1% or skim milk to children over the age of two years, decrease the amount of juice served, and decrease the amount of screen time (time spent in front of the television, computer and other electronic devices).

Targeted Evaluation

- There is no targeted component evaluation at this time.

Outputs

- Nutrition education was provided to 482 young children at 16 child care centers and preschools in FY 09-10. Children learned about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and physical activity to stay healthy.



Health Insurance Outreach



Health Insurance Outreach Component

- TuSalud, a collaboration of Pima and Santa Cruz County Federally Qualified Health Centers, Carondelet Health Network, Children's Action Alliance, Pima County Access Program and UWTSA, was formed in 2009 to increase children's enrollment and retention in AHCCCS (Arizona's Medicaid program) and KidsCare (Arizona's State Children's Health Insurance Program). UWTSA played a major role in securing funding under CHIPRA (Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act) to support outreach and eligibility staff, media efforts, and a twice yearly phone-a-thon.

Targeted Evaluation

- The goal of the evaluation of the tuSalud partnership is to determine the successfulness of the outreach strategies used to reach, enroll, renew, and retain eligible children in KidsCare and AHCCCS. Outcomes include the number of families reached through various outreach efforts; the number of children screened for eligibility into KidsCare and AHCCCS; the number of applications completed for each program; and the number of children successfully enrolled into each program.

Outputs

- Over 5,000 individuals were reached through the two phone-a-thons conducted to help people find health care options. Additional outputs regarding the specific number of children reached, screened, and enrolled are still in process.
- 65 children under the age of five years were enrolled or renewed on AHCCCS or KidsCare.



FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Interview Results for Components Questions:

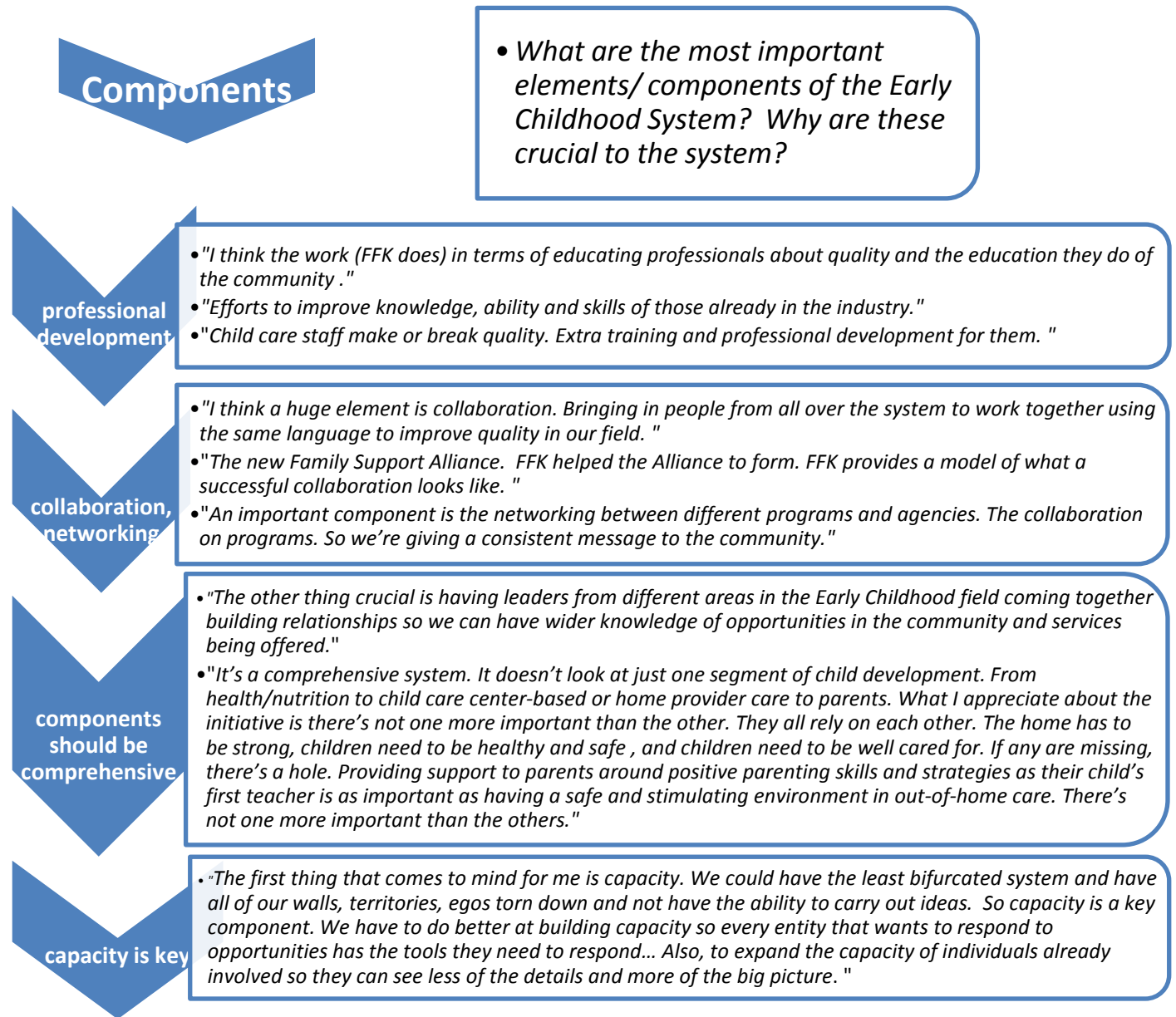
As mentioned, United Way staff were interviewed and consulted to identify the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership components that are represented in the maps and charts presented in this report. To gather FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership community partners' perceptions of what elements constituted components of the system, the following question, based on the Build Initiative's framework, was asked of the interviewees:

- *What are the most important elements/ components of the Early Childhood System? Why are these crucial to the system?*

Results of these qualitative analyses are presented in Figure 4 on the next page.



Figure 4. The Most Important Components of the Early Childhood System, Interview Findings



Note: The actual FFK Members' quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Informants identified a wide range of elements/components as being most important in the Early Childhood System. Some respondents mentioned one or two elements, while other had more extensive lists. As is evident from Figure 4 (see the themes identified on the left of the graphic), the most common responses about system components were related to:

- professional development;
- collaboration, networking;
- building a system that is comprehensive, and
- expanding capacity.

In examining system components, it is also important to determine whether there are any elements missing from the system that would help it to function better.

Community partners were, therefore, asked the following question:

- *What “key players” or “spheres of influence” are missing in the FFK coalition?*

Findings are detailed in Figure 5 on the next page. Several informants cited the business sector as being missing from the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership.

Other groups or areas mentioned as being missing or underrepresented were:

- ❖ pediatricians;
- ❖ business leaders;
- ❖ the DES licensing division;
- ❖ the faith-based community;
- ❖ politicians;
- ❖ parents;
- ❖ law enforcement, and
- ❖ mass media.



Figure 5. Key Players Missing in the FFK, Interview Findings



Note: The actual FFK Member quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Key Findings for Components

- ❖ The system was conceptualized, defined, and mapped, which helped to focus the nature of the system, the system goals being sought, and ways to begin measuring systems level change. This effort engaged the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning partners in an extended process to identify and see the connections among the parts, reflect on the meaning of what the system “is,” begin to generate evaluation questions and the primary focus of the initiative and the evaluation. Systems work led to better identification of components, value of connections, and the role of intentionality and focus in the FFK system building.
- ❖ Despite the context of challenging economic times, the components of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership have increased from seven to 10 in the last year.
- ❖ New components established in the last year include: Wage Enhancement, Infant-Toddler Expansion and Support, and Health Insurance Outreach.
- ❖ Component Outcomes/ Outputs from 2009-2010 include:
 - ◇ 4,350 children participated in high quality child care;
 - ◇ 287 children received hearing screening;
 - ◇ 402 children received oral screenings; 245 children received varnish applications;
 - ◇ 84,431 books were distributed to 52,984 families;
 - ◇ 417 families learned new parenting skills;
 - ◇ 183 teachers received REWARD\$ in Pima County.
 - ◇ 9 infant-toddler centers received renovation grants and one center received a construction grant;
 - ◇ 5 funded scholars earned CDA certificate or AA degree;
 - ◇ 60 students graduated with an ECE certificate or AA degree from PCC;
 - ◇ 5 centers received NAEYC re-accreditation; 15 centers actively seeking accreditation received coaching;
 - ◇ 125 centers and 93 homes received coaching and incentives as a part of Quality First;
 - ◇ 1,227 individuals learned developmentally appropriate ECE, evidence-based coaching, and systems building skills;
 - ◇ 305 early child care professionals received professional development in their respective regions;



- ◇ 250 families in South Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the annual “Celebrate Kids Festival” in Sahuarita in April 2010;
 - ◇ 100 families in North Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the first annual Parent Resource Fair in Marana in May 2010;
 - ◇ 25 child care directors regularly attend the Central Pima Accreditation Learning Community and receive professional development around high quality early education and care;
 - ◇ Throughout 2010 in South Pima County, at least 35 early child care professionals, including home childcare providers, participated in 19 hours of no-cost professional development early education workshops;
 - ◇ At least 35 children and their families participated in Story Time, offered weekly throughout the year in South Pima County;
 - ◇ 250 attendees and 40 agencies participated in the Child & Family Festival (April 10, 2010);
 - ◇ Burn Buster Blast (summer 2010), a community event focused on health and safety of children, reached 150 people;
 - ◇ 613 providers received early literacy training;
 - ◇ Nutrition education was provided to 482 children; and
 - ◇ More than \$10 million in new funding was infused into early childhood initiatives.
- ❖ FFK Partners mentioned collaboration, networking, and professional development as additional “components” of the system.
 - ❖ Key players mentioned by community partners as missing included: pediatricians, business leaders, the DES licensing division, the faith-based community, politicians, parents, law enforcement, and mass media.





FIRST FOCUS ON KIDS
SYSTEM
CONNECTIONS



Connections

In a systems evaluation, it is important to understand the individual elements that comprise the system, but this understanding alone is insufficient. By definition, systems refer to interactive elements. In this section, connections in the FFK system are analyzed to determine how, and how well, the system components are linked.

It may not be practical to evaluate all elements of a system at one time. It is preferable to choose areas of focus. As the system is newly formed, we collected some baseline information on FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership's Components and Connections as the main focus areas that could improve the system's functioning.

Goal: To create strong and effective connections and networks across system components that further improve results for members of the system. The focus is on how these connections are made, sustained, and integrated.

Evaluation Questions:

1. Did FFK design and implement connections and linkages as intended?
2. Did the connections and linkages produce their intended impacts? What were the intended impacts?

Indicators:

- ❖ Increase in FFK component programs that show shared training, shared funding, shared staff, referral systems, and number of community partners (baseline and over a period of time)
- ❖ Increased communication between component leaders (knowledge of other component activities, # of joint meetings, etc.)
- ❖ Create /increase incentives for programs to make connections, types of incentives used and needed
- ❖ Shared knowledge of "whole system functioning" by program component leadership



Accomplishments:

A systems mapping approach was undertaken to demonstrate baseline (June 2009) and the end of the year (June 2010) connections between FFK components. LeCroy & Milligan Associates facilitated a meeting in which connections were identified, defined, and then mapped to the system. These connections included shared funding, training, staff, and referrals. The connections among the parts of the on FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning system are shown on the two system maps (see Exhibits 2 and 3). As can be seen, the number of connections increased from July 2009 to June 2010. The system connections will again be mapped in June 2011 to determine the growth in connections.

There were a number of activities in 2009-2010 that promoted collaborations, shared thinking, vision, and connections of subsystems across the key components, through planning, mobilization, and action strategies. From 2009-2010, the number of FFK connections increased as follows:

"The Infant-Toddler Expansion Program was designed in a way that encourages providers to begin offering high quality infant care. I'm excited to begin offering infant care and know that with FTF's support our center will be able to work together with families to provide a wonderful experience for both infants and their parents."

Bill Berk, Owner and Director of Outer Limits School and participant in the FFK Coalition

"The creation of the Oro Valley Director's Network is our latest success. On July 7, child care directors and home providers met for the first time to begin to mobilize their early childhood community. Projects initiated by members of the network include the creation of a site visitation program, arranging car seat checks with the child care centers through a certified technician, and participation in the national Night Out in Oro Valley on August 3."

Christina Patchett, Director of Community Mobilization in North Pima County.

- From seven to 10 connections for funding;
- From 11 to 14 connections for staff;
- From four to seven connections for referrals;
- From four to five connections for training.

Some of the noteworthy efforts that increased the connectivity among the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership components include:

- ❖ Monthly meetings averaging 40-80 participants representing over 25 organizations. At each meeting all participants introduce themselves, share programmatic or policy updates, receive updates from UWTSA and the regional and state offices of



FTF, meet in subcommittees on advocacy or planning issues, and often hear a speaker on a special topic. A list of partners that regularly attend meetings is included in Appendix A.

- ❖ The Annual Business Leaders for Early Education Breakfast in March 2010 brought together 258 participants concerned about early childhood education with 136 being business leaders.
- ❖ The April 2010 FFK meeting was attended by 85 professionals involved in a wide range of services and efforts in early childhood education. The UWTSA FFK Directors were instrumental in bringing two key leaders to the FFK meeting to provide perspective and motivation in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the ECE community in Arizona and nationally. Steve Lynn, the Board Chair of First Things First, provided an update and call to action regarding the November ballot initiative to eliminate FTF. Jacqueline Jones, Special Advisor on Early Education from the U.S. Department of Education was brought to Arizona by the Professional Development Alliance Director to observe and learn about the Early Childhood Education work in southern Arizona, and she expressed excitement and encouragement regarding the innovative systems level approaches being undertaken in Arizona. Much of the meeting was devoted to an overview of the Professional Development Alliance, made up of seven Communities of Practice working together to ensure a pathway of development for ECE professionals from community college through a Masters degree. Table discussions used the methodologies of the Systems Thinking training and World Café to explore the results being sought by the Alliance.

“Early childhood education research tells us that a well-educated teacher makes a significant positive impact on children’s learning and success in school. Many communities and states have tried, and too-often failed, to apply this research to develop high-quality teacher education programs.”

“The United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ’s Professional Development initiative is an excellent example of how to improve teacher education. Tucson’s early childhood teachers are learning how to improve the quality of early childhood education and better prepare young children to succeed in school and in life. The project’s highly innovative model brings together the best thinking about developmentally appropriate practice, systems change, and evidence-based coaching to achieve real and lasting change in programs for children and professional preparation for teachers.”

Dr. Sue Bredekamp, an early education consultant to the Professional Development Alliance and author of the 2009 book *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs.*



- ❖ Beginning in March 2010, the FFK partners initiated a comprehensive and strategic plan to advocate for preserving the funding for First Things First, which is on the November 2010 ballot to be eliminated. Three subcommittees were formed to implement strategies: Mobilizing Teachers, Parents, and Caregivers; Social Networking and Media; and Mobilizing Key Target Audiences. This process has given more FFK members opportunities for leadership as subcommittee chairs. This legislative challenge has served to focus and mobilize members of FFK into a common purpose, and has resulted in increased skills and tools for advocacy for early childhood issues that will extend beyond the November vote. Examples include the development of advocacy training and voter education events and materials, email distributions, development of a “story bank” to capture parent and caregiver success stories, public awareness events and materials, development of a bureau, mobilizing people to attend candidate forums and be ready with critical questions about ECE issues, engaging editorial and letter writing campaigns. Tracking of events and efforts was made possible with the creation of a database of speakers, events, and activities completed and planned. Social networking efforts grew rapidly with Facebook, email blasts, and other social media outlets. As a result of the several months of activities, FFK partners are better versed and appear more comfortable in undertaking marketing and advocacy efforts.
- ❖ Another FFK meeting in early 2010 featured a speaker from *Expect More Arizona*-- a newly established public-private partnership dedicated to making education the top priority in the state through a public awareness campaign aimed at educating and mobilizing Arizonans about the importance of the entire pre-K through college education continuum.

FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Interview Results for Connections Question:

In addition to mapping the system, the evaluation team asked key questions of both United Way staff and community partners, to gather a variety of perspectives on how the system connections have functioned in the past year. Community partners were asked the following question:

- *In the last year, do you think that the different “components of the system” have increased their ability to work together? If yes, in what ways?*
- *Can you give an example of how different programs or initiatives have shared resources, training, funding, staffing?*

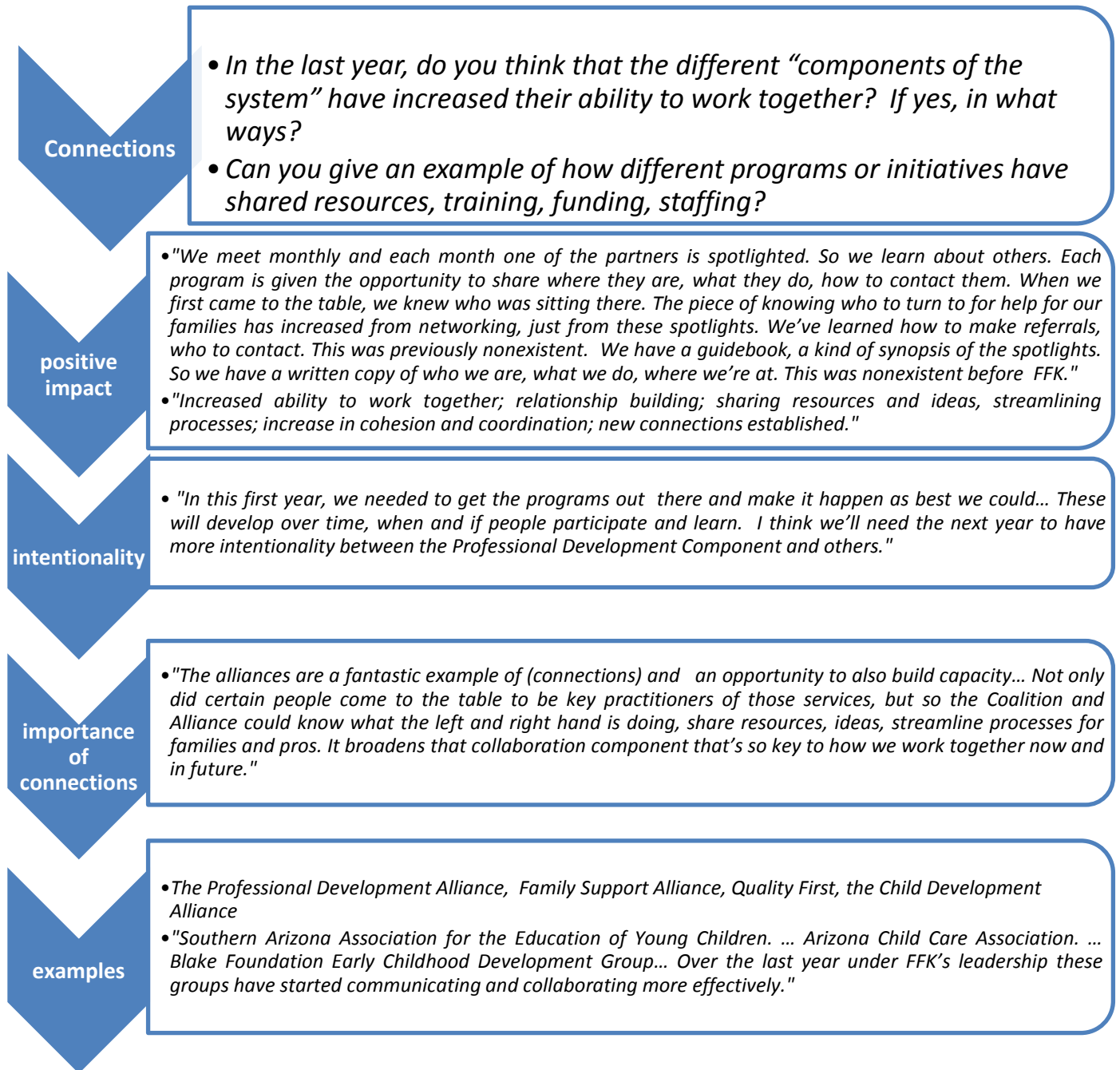
Common themes focusing on connections that emerged over the course of conducting the interviews are summarized in the next section.



As shown in Figure 6 on the next page, all of the community partners interviewed felt that the different components of FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership had increased their ability to work together over the last year. Informants identified two very different factors as being responsible for the increased ability to work together: The First Things First-funded initiative and the organizational structure and processes of FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership. Several informants mentioned specific collaborations or alliances supported by FTF or facilitated by FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership.



Figure 6. FFK Connections, Interview Findings



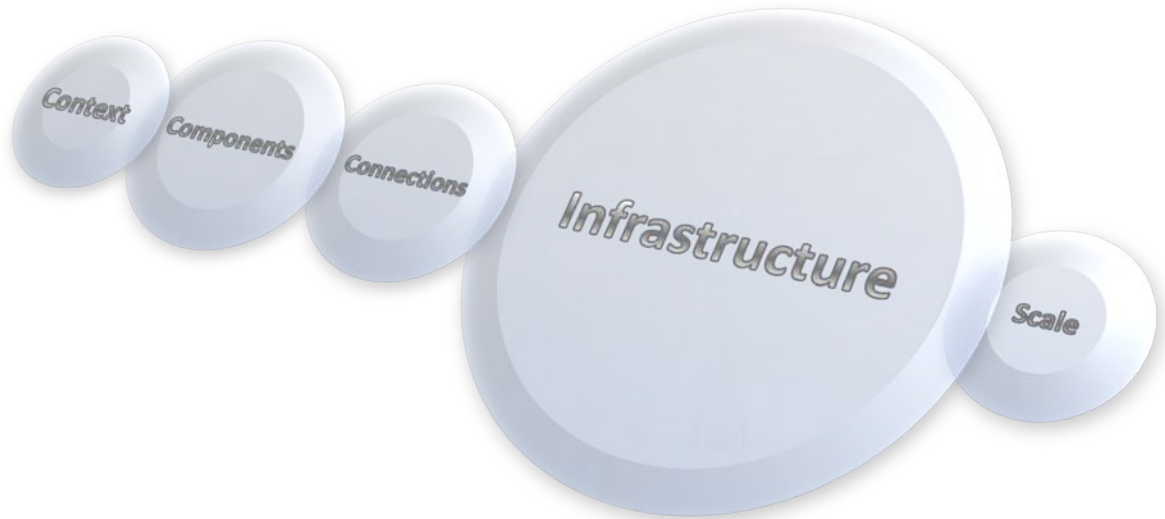
Note: The actual FFK Member quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Key Findings for Connections:

- ❖ From 2009-2010, the number of FFK connections increased as follows:
 - ◇ From seven to 10 connections for funding;
 - ◇ From 11 to 14 connections for staff;
 - ◇ From four to seven connections for referrals;
 - ◇ From four to five connections for training.
- ❖ Multiple respondents offered the Professional Development Alliance as an example of increased connections, mainly within that component.
- ❖ The communications between institutes of higher education (i.e., Pima Community College and the University of Arizona) were also mentioned as key new connections within the alliance.
- ❖ Connections need to be intentional.





FIRST FOCUS ON KIDS
SYSTEM
INFRASTRUCTURE



Infrastructure

Creating and maintaining System infrastructure contributes to the stability of a system. Developing infrastructure in a system can occur naturally, but by evaluating infrastructure efforts, there tends to be a greater intentionality to these efforts. As with other evaluation elements, this year's evaluation provides a "baseline" view of the system's infrastructure.

Goal:

1. To serve as a catalyst for constructing the system (including building leadership, partnership, and coordination)
2. To improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the Early Childhood System.

Evaluation Questions:

1. Did FFK establish infrastructure or supports that are consistent with its objectives?
2. Did the infrastructure or supports achieve their objectives for effectiveness, sustainability, and quality?

Indicators:

- ❖ Identification of program system leaders
- ❖ Identification of shared leadership
- ❖ Identification of emerging leaders
- ❖ Tracking the use of data for decision-making
- ❖ Number of training opportunities that exist to increase leadership skills in systems building
- ❖ Members' perceptions of infrastructure effectiveness, sustainability, and quality

Accomplishments:

The infrastructure of FFK is developed through intentional leadership actions, committee structures, and communication methods. Some noteworthy efforts in building a strong support structure for the FFK include:



- ❖ A consistent subcommittee structure. Participants and agency representatives who attend FFK monthly meetings participate in FFK subcommittees. Standing committees include the Early Childhood Awareness subcommittee, the Health and Special Rights Subcommittee, the Quality Improvement Subcommittee and the Professional Development Subcommittee. In the spring of 2010, ad hoc committees were formed to specifically work on advocacy efforts regarding the preservation of the FTF funding.
- ❖ Regular component meetings. Some of the system components bring together key stakeholders in a monthly meeting; for example, the Family Support Alliance members meet monthly before the FFK meeting, and the Communities of Practice in the Professional Development Alliance met regularly to set goals and develop work plans, participate in training, or implement specific ideas.
- ❖ Facilitated discussions around critical funding decisions. With the difficult economic realities of 2009-2010, funding reductions affected many of the UWTSAs-funded partners involved in FFK. In order to gain input into the decision making process, the UWTSAs FFK staff structured time in the June FFK meeting to reflect on the positive progress made by partners, notify partners of significant upcoming budget cuts, brainstorm how to minimize negative impact of cuts, and discuss how to make decisions about where to make cuts. Together the group developed criteria to consider in decision making, which included how closely a program is aligned to FFK goals, how funds can be leveraged through partnerships, whether the program is using evidence based practices, how cuts would affect the sustainability of the program, and considering how gaps in service could best be addressed. These criteria illustrate how FFK partners embraced a systems viewpoint when providing input into tough funding choices.
- ❖ Training and resource sharing. The UWTSAs develops and distributes a bi-monthly electronic newsletter to all FFK partners, listing upcoming training events throughout the southern region and statewide. The newsletter also includes policy and funding updates, job opportunities, and upcoming advocacy events.

FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Interview Results for Infrastructure Questions:

Because of the importance of leadership, the following question below was posed in a group discussion with United Way staff members, and to individually interviewed community partners.

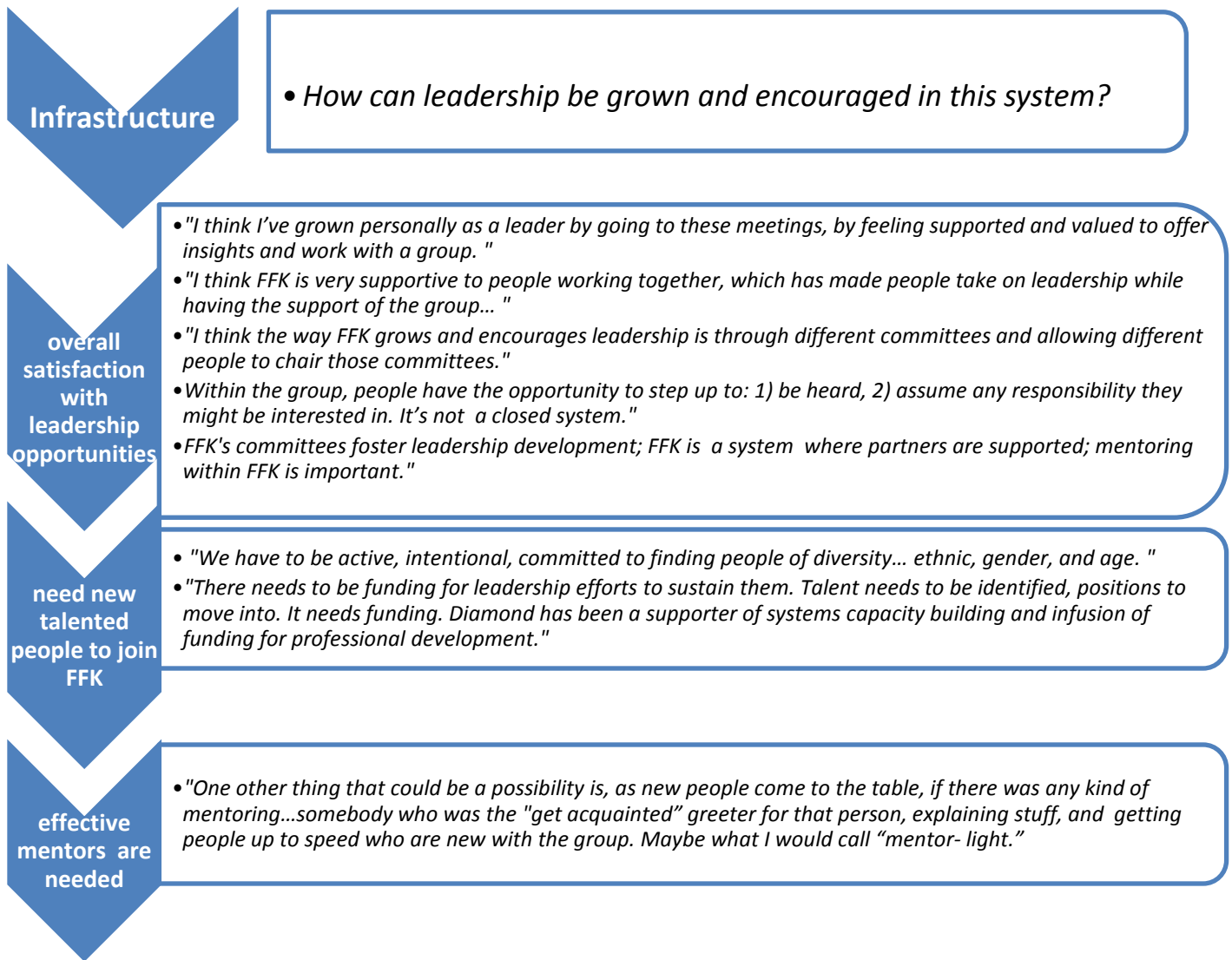


- *How can leadership be grown and encouraged in this system?*

Common themes focused on governance, learning opportunities, and professional development and are summarized in the next section. As is evident from Figure 7 on the next page, several informants expressed the view that the current FFK meeting and committee structure and practices promote the development and taking on of leadership. Some informants identified mentorship as being effective in leadership development. However, a few informants saw FFK leadership development as potentially benefiting from a change from current practices, and at the most requiring changes to ensure sustainability.



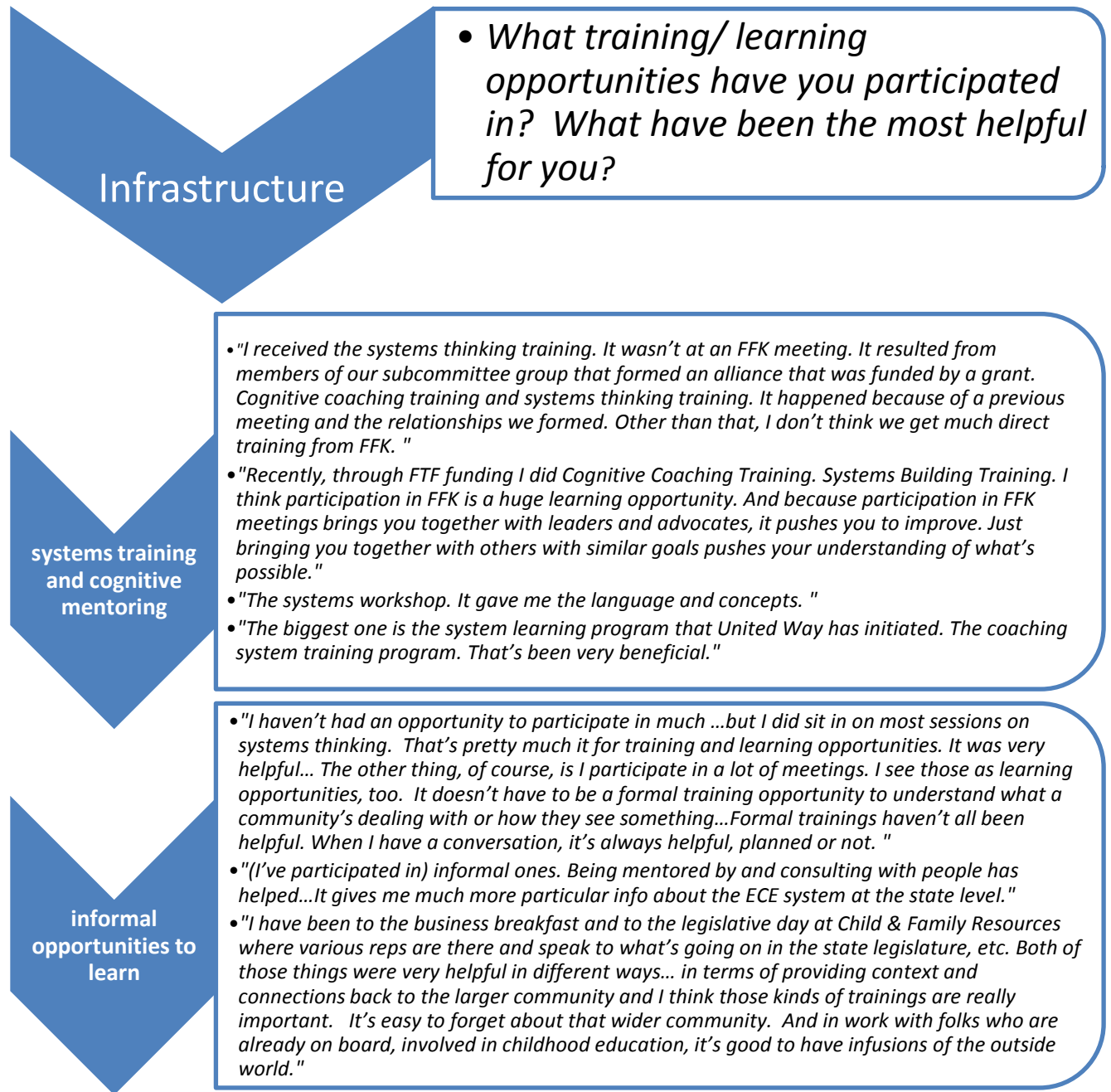
Figure 7. FFK's Leadership, Interview Findings



Note: The actual FFK Member quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Figure 8. Participating in FFK's Training/Learning Opportunities, Interview Findings



Note: The actual FFK Member quotes are provided in boxes. The themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative analyses of the interview data are identified on the left.



Key Findings for Infrastructure

- ❖ Current FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership meeting and committee structure and practices promote system infrastructure and the development and taking on of leadership. Participants reported being satisfied with FFK's leadership.
- ❖ Mentoring, committee work, as well as a supporting atmosphere were identified as characteristics of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership.
- ❖ Systems training and cognitive coaching as well as informal opportunities to learn were identified as helpful to professional development.



Summary

The previous sections detailed findings based on the Build Initiative framework. Progress towards goals was included in the sections. The overall summary and recommendations are provided below.

❖ *To identify and create crucial system components*

In the past year, the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has had great success identifying and creating system components that create a more comprehensive Early Childhood Education system in Southern Arizona. Critical components of the system now include: professional development, wage enhancement, quality improvement, infant-toddler expansion and support, early literacy support, community mobilization, family support and home visitation, oral health, obesity/nutrition education, and health insurance outreach. At the beginning of this evaluation year (July 2009), there were seven components of the system, which grew to 10 components by July 2010. New components established in the last year include: wage enhancement, infant-toddler expansion and support, and health insurance outreach.

❖ *To serve as a catalyst for constructing the system (including building leadership, partnership, and coordination)*

United Way's FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership plays a unique role by providing an opportunity for the system components to connect, and by laying the foundations for the system infrastructure that serve as the "scaffolding" for future efforts. The system was conceptualized, defined, and mapped in 2009 and 2010, which helped to focus the nature of the system, the system goals being sought, and ways to begin measuring system level change. This effort led to better identification of components and further exploration of the role of intentionality and focus in FFK system building. From 2009 to 2010, the number of FFK connections increased as follows:

- ◇ From seven to 10 connections for funding;
- ◇ From 11 to 14 connections for staff;
- ◇ From four to seven connections for referrals;
- ◇ From four to five connections for training.

❖ *To increase public awareness of the necessity of the Early Childhood System and maintain public support for the system*



Since spring 2010, FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has shifted its focus to advocating for the continuing funding of the statewide early childhood development and health system, First Things First. The ability of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership to act quickly shows the system's capacity for responsive action. Committees and leaders quickly emerged to create effective actions for advocacy.

❖ *To improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the Early Childhood System*

The FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership met all of its process and short-term targets:

- ◇ 4,350 children participated in high quality child care;
- ◇ 287 children received hearing screening;
- ◇ 402 children received oral screenings; 245 children received varnish applications;
- ◇ 84,431 books were distributed to 52,984 families;
- ◇ 417 families learned new parenting skills;
- ◇ 183 teachers received REWARD\$ in Pima County.
- ◇ 9 infant-toddler centers received renovation grants and one center received a construction grant;
- ◇ 5 funded scholars earned CDA certificate or AA degree;
- ◇ 60 students graduated with an ECE certificate or AA degree from PCC;
- ◇ 5 centers received NAEYC re-accreditation; 15 centers actively seeking accreditation received coaching;
- ◇ 125 centers and 93 homes received coaching and incentives as a part of Quality First;
- ◇ 1,227 individuals learned developmentally appropriate ECE, evidence-based coaching, and systems building skills;
- ◇ 305 early child care professionals received professional development in their respective regions;
- ◇ 250 families in South Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the annual "Celebrate Kids Festival" in Sahuarita in April 2010;
- ◇ 100 families in North Pima County received information about early childhood programs and resources for families with young children at the first annual Parent Resource Fair in Marana in May 2010;



- ◇ 25 child care directors regularly attend the Central Pima Accreditation Learning Community and receive professional development around high quality early education and care;
- ◇ Throughout 2010 in South Pima County, at least 35 early child care professionals, including home childcare providers, participated in 19 hours of no-cost professional development early education workshops;
- ◇ At least 35 children and their families participated in Story Time, offered weekly throughout the year in South Pima County;
- ◇ 250 attendees and 40 agencies participated in the Child & Family Festival (April 10, 2010);
- ◇ Burn Buster Blast (summer 2010), a community event focused on health and safety of children, reached 150 people;
- ◇ 613 providers received early literacy training;
- ◇ Nutrition education was provided to 482 children; and
- ◇ More than \$10 million in new funding was infused into early childhood initiatives.

Lessons learned and ongoing strategic planning to address potential changes will continue in 2010-2011. As FTF and other state Early Childhood Education systems continue the statewide efforts, they will be able to utilize the experience and expertise of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership. The structure, processes, and components of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership clearly serve as a role model and a leader in the field of early childhood.



Recommendations

- ❖ ***Continue with the system building approach at both the state and national levels.***

The FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership has become a successful collaboration in the state, and as such, has developed skills and methods for communication and decision-making. These skills can be put to good use to help guide strategic thinking and prioritize both short and long-range goals both in Arizona and nationally. The use of high level facilitation and planning models can ensure attention is given to the process of collaboration and helps give voice to emerging ideas and leaders. Continuing to explore and learn from other states' efforts as well as sharing the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership work might be relevant focus areas for partnership.

- ❖ ***Continue identifying the focus of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership.***

System initiatives can have various and multiple foci though some may have greater priorities than others. The four goals identified by the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership point to Components and Connections being the highest focus areas with Scale not being a focus. Further strategizing around focus areas is recommended.

- ❖ ***Continue to measure short-term outcomes and focus on changes needed to reach long-term goals.***

The ultimate outcome of the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership is a positive impact on young children and their families. While long-term strategic thinking is critical for systems development, partners must ensure that their efforts are supported by clear short-term objectives. Further evaluation of each of the components identified should clearly be linked to Context, Components, Connections, and Infrastructure measures. Agreeing upon and pursuing a handful of tangible and meaningful changes creates a series of interim successes and milestones along the way to long-term systems change.



❖ ***Increase various partner engagements in early childhood efforts.***

A key to creating greater understanding and acceptance of early childhood efforts is involving broad audiences. The evaluation findings point to the need for increased involvement of pediatricians, business leaders, the DES licensing division, the faith-based community, politicians, parents, law enforcement, and mass media.

❖ ***Make connection-building intentional.***

Intentionality in building connections within and between components has been identified to be an important factor in building a good system. Evaluation methods and some of the newer statistical analyses (e.g., social network analysis) could be quite helpful in building connections and creating an early childhood system that demonstrates impacts on children and families.

❖ ***Continue to develop new talented leaders to join the FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership to ensure sustainability. Effective mentors may also be needed for new FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning partners.***

Supportive opportunities for some partners to grow in leadership need to be continually explored and developed.

Continuing to develop new talented leaders ensures sustainability. Providing mentoring (especially to new partners just joining the partnership) and supporting new leaders assures the developed system will continue its existence and productive functioning.

“We have to help our FFK partners/collaborators around the table continue to check the way that we talk about the system, to check our language. Language matters, and never ever should it be, in my opinion, framed in such a way that it’s us and them. And it’s not that I hear it all the time, but occasionally it crops up. But we’re all the early childhood. If we’re building a system in FFK, Pima County, there’s no room for that. We’re all in it together.”

“Intentionality is the theme of our whole conversation. Will the system change if we don’t work and talk together? Each individual has responsibility to promote unity in the early childhood system and the education system. The other thing is we still have work to do to understand what language works with what people. To pay attention to what credible messages are and to whom we’re talking and how we’re talking with them.”

FFK Member



- ❖ *Explore the potential for conducting regional analyses from data collected by First Things First would be extremely beneficial.*

Regional FTF data includes a wealth of baseline information on conditions for children and families in the state of Arizona. As new data systems requirements are developed by FTF, FFK can continue to play an important role in utilizing analyses of regional data for planning and strategic purposes.



References

Chau, M. & Douglas-Hall, A. (2008). Basic Facts About Low-Income Children Birth to Age 18. National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved August 30, 2009 from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_845.pdf.



Appendix A

FFK/Diamond Challenge Early Learning Partnership Members

ALTA Consulting, LLC
Amphi Parents as Teachers
Angel Children's Center
Arizona House of Representatives (State Senate/ La Frontera)
AZ Assoc. for the Education of Young Children
AZ Center for the Study of Children & Families
AZ Childcare Association/Outer Limits School
AZAAP/RORSA
Brecon Group
Casa de los Ninos
Central Arizona College
Child & Family Resources
Child-Parent Centers, Inc.
Children's Action Alliance
City of Tucson
CODAC Behavioral Health Services
Community Extensions Program, Inc.
Community Food Bank
Department of Economic Security
Early Childhood Partnership (SPC)
Easter Seals Blake Foundation
Emerge - ACC
Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse
First Things First
Goering, Roberts, Rubin, Brogna, Enos and Treadwell
KUAT
La Frontera Center
LeCroy & Milligan
Literacy For Life Coalition
Literacy Volunteers of Tucson



Make Way for Books
Marana Health Center
Marana Unified School District
Microbusiness Advancement
Nagle & Associates
Northern Arizona University
Parent Aid
Parent Representative
PCC
PCC-Desert Vista Campus
Pima Association of Governments
Pima Community College
Pima Community College-Desert Vista Campus
Pima County Health Department
Pima County Public Library
Pima County School Superintendent
Pima County School Superintendent's Office
Pio Decimo Center
Prescott College Tucson Center
Reach Out & Read
Second Street School
Sunnyside Unified School District
Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services
The Parent Connection
Tucson Chamber of Commerce
Tucson Children's Museum
Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Tucson Postpartum Depression Coalition/Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Tucson Unified School District
United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona
University of Arizona
Vail School District



Voices for Education
Westside Coalition Weed and Seed
Wholonomy Consulting

