



# PARTICIPANT IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

FISCAL YEAR 2015





# Quality First Contact Page

Please be sure to fill in the contact information on this page as your Quality First Team is assigned.

<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>
Quality First Coach				
Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)				
Mental Health Consultant (Smart Support)				
Early Care and Education Inclusion Coach (ECEI)				
Teacher Scholarship Specialist				
ADE Early Childhood Program Specialist				
Arizona Self-Study Specialist				
DHS Licensing Surveyor/DES Certification Specialist				
Other				

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF QUALITY FIRST ..... 8**

First Things First	
Regional Councils And Local Flexibility	
Future Funding	
Arizona School Readiness Indicators	
What is Quality First?	
Philosophy	
What Does a Quality Early Care and Education Program Look Like?	
Quality First Component Overview	
Star Ratings	
What Quality First Star Ratings Mean	
Quality First Star Rating Scale	
Quality First Website	
Promoting your Commitment to Quality	

## **SECTION ONE: QUALITY FIRST COACHING..... 16**

The Role of the Quality First Coach	
Quality First Coach Activities	
Quality First Coach Visits	
Goal Planning	
How to Have a Successful Coaching Partnership	
Quality First Timeline	

## **SECTION TWO: QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT ..... 22**

The Role of the Quality First Assessor	
Quality First Assessment Activities	
Quality First Assessment Tools	
Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	
Quality First Points Scale	
Quality First Assessment Reports	
How to Prepare for a Successful Assessment	

**SECTION THREE: QUALITY FIRST FINANCIAL INCENTIVES..... 30**

- Licensing Fee Assistance
- Quality First Incentives
- Quality First Scholarships

**SECTION FOUR: QUALITY FIRST SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE ..... 36**

- Types of Specialized Assistance
- Child Care Health Consultation
- Additional Specialized Assistance
- Birth to Five Helpline
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Smart Support)
- Early Care and Education Inclusion (ECEI)
- Arizona Department of Education
- Arizona Self-Study Project
- How to Benefit From Specialized Assistance

**SECTION FIVE: QUALITY FIRST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ..... 40**

- Types of Professional Development
- Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Arizona
- Professional Career Pathways Project (P.C.P.P.)
- Quality First Coach Support
- Child Care Exchange Magazine
- The Professional Development Website
- Successfully Using Professional Development

QUALITY FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES ..... 42

- Code of Ethical Conduct (NAEYC)
- Concern Resolution
- Informal Dispute Resolution Policy
- Confidentiality
- Appeals Process
- Corrective Action Process
- Extranet (Data Source)
- Expectations of Progress
- Lack of Enrollment of Children 0-5
- Mandated Reporting
- Ownership Change
- Program Closure
- Regulatory Status
- State Standards
- Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines
- Arizona Early Learning Standards
- Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth - Kindergarten

**FORMS** ..... 48





# OVERVIEW OF QUALITY FIRST

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

In November 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, a citizen's initiative that funds quality early childhood development and health. The Proposition created a new state level board, the Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board, also known as First Things First. First Things First was established to help provide greater opportunities for all children birth through five in Arizona to grow up healthy and ready to succeed.

At First Things First, getting Arizona's children ready for kindergarten means a statewide financial commitment. Ninety cents of every tobacco tax dollar goes to programs like yours that benefit children, birth to five years old. Volunteer councils – people familiar with local priorities and needs – decide the best ways to apply those funds for the children in their communities.

First Things First works at both the state and the local level to ensure that all children have opportunities that will help them be successful in school and in life. At the state level, First Things First has a nine-member Board of Directors that determines statewide child development goals. At the regional level the volunteers on our regional partnership councils – teachers, parents, community leaders, development experts and health care professionals – decide the best ways money can be used to support the needs of young children in their communities.



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## OUR VISION

All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

## OUR MISSION

First Things First is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age five.

## **REGIONAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL FLEXIBILITY**

First Things First’s regional partnership councils represent the richly diverse communities across Arizona. Members of each council are appointed by the Board and have direct responsibility to: collect information on the strengths and desires of their community, prioritize the specific needs, plan how to address those needs, choose who to partner and collaborate with to ensure success for the children in their communities, and identify the funding necessary to carry out their plan. Regional councils determine the number of Quality First programs they will be funding on an annual basis. Programs are selected by region based on the applications submitted by providers on a first-come first-served basis. Some regions may choose to prioritize selecting programs into Quality First in high need areas to support the specific needs of the community. The selection schedule for enrolling new Quality First programs, although set annually, may change throughout the year based on the number of Quality First applicants in the system and changes in regional funding. Programs that have applied for Quality First will remain on a waitlist until selected or the application is withdrawn. Regular communication is sent to waitlisted providers regarding upcoming selections.

For more information on regional partnership councils and to find your local regional partnership council, please visit: <http://www.azftf.gov/pages/yourlocalcouncil.aspx>. Contact information for all regional directors can be found at this website. Programs are encouraged to participate in their local regional partnership council meetings and become an active part in the process.

## **FUTURE FUNDING**

First Things First desires the collection of benefits – services and financial incentives – available to providers under the Quality First program to continue in future years. Nevertheless, First Things First reserves the right to alter or eliminate these benefits at any time in whole or in part for any reason, including available funding, the availability of third party service partners, the cost of services, the effectiveness of the benefits or changes in funding priorities.



# Arizona School Readiness Indicators

The following indicators are designed to guide and measure progress in building an effective early childhood system in Arizona. Taken collectively, they provide a comprehensive picture of how our state is preparing its youngest children for success in kindergarten and beyond.



## CHILDREN'S HEALTH

### Well-Child Visits

*% of Arizona children receiving at least six well-child visits within the first 15 months of life*

2010: 64%      2020 Goal: 80%

### Healthy Weight

*% of Arizona children age 2-4 with body mass index (BMI) in healthy weight range*

2010: 65%      2020 Goal: 75%

### Dental Health

*% of Arizona children age 5 with untreated tooth decay*

2007: 35%      2020 Goal: 32% or less



## FAMILY SUPPORT & LITERACY

### Confident Families

*% of Arizona families report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being*

2012: 42%      2020 Goal: 52%



## CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EARLY LEARNING

### School Readiness

*Benchmark related to developmental domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical to be recommended in FY15 based on baseline data from Arizona kindergarten developmental inventory*

### Quality Early Education

*% of Arizona children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars*

2013: 9%      2020 Goal: 29%

### Quality Early Education – Special Needs

*% of Arizona children with special needs/rights enrolled in an inclusive early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars*

2013: 53%      2020 Goal: 73%

### Affordability of Quality Early Education

*% of Arizona families that spend no more than 10% of the regional median family income on early care and education programs with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars*

2013: N/A      2020 Goal: 100%

### Developmental Delays Identified in Kindergarten

*Benchmark to be recommended in 2014 after completion of the comprehensive opportunity analysis on the Arizona early intervention system for children birth to age 5*

### Transition from Preschool Special Education to Kindergarten

*% of Arizona children exiting preschool special education enrolled in kindergarten regular education*

2010: 22%      2020 Goal: 30%



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

[www.azftf.gov](http://www.azftf.gov)

## WHAT IS QUALITY FIRST?

Quality First – a signature program of First Things First – partners with child care and preschool providers across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning for children birth to 5. Quality First has established a statewide standard of quality for early care and education programs and funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive. This includes training for teachers to expand their skills in working with young children and coaching to help programs provide learning environments that nurture the emotional, social, language and cognitive development of every child.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Research tells us that eighty-five percent of a child's brain is fully developed by age three, and both in-home and out-of-home experiences can positively or negatively impact that development. The relationship between children and their caregivers profoundly impacts children's learning and healthy development. That is why early childhood caregivers and teachers are so important to the future of young children. Participation in quality early care and education programs means children are engaged in activities with responsive, nurturing adults who stimulate development and learning and prepare children to successfully enter school.

### **WHAT DOES A QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?**

A high-quality child care or preschool setting has teachers and caregivers with expertise in working with children 5 and younger, includes a learning environment that nurtures the emotional, social, and academic development of every child, and prepares children for kindergarten.

Quality child care and preschool settings build on basic health and safety to include:

- Teachers and caregivers who know how to work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers
- Positive, nurturing relationships that give young children the individual attention they need
- Learning environments that encourage creativity and imaginative play
- Hands-on activities that stimulate and encourage positive brain connections in children
- Caregivers who provide regular feedback to parents on the development of their child

All of these elements combined make a child care environment that prepares children for kindergarten.

## STAR RATINGS

An important component of Quality First is the assignment of your Star Rating. Your Quality First Star Rating identifies the level of quality of early care and education that your program delivers to young children and their families based on the Quality First Assessments. The Quality First Assessments use valid and reliable tools that focus on what research shows are the key components of quality early care, including adult-child interactions, learning environments and staff qualifications. Based on these assessments, your program is given a Quality First Star Rating, ranging from 1 to 5 stars.

### WHAT QUALITY FIRST STAR RATINGS MEAN

Quality early learning settings build on basic health and safety regulatory standards. Quality settings include teachers who know how to work with young children, learning environments that nurture the development of every child, and positive, consistent relationships and interactions that give children the individual attention they need. This is what your Star Rating represents. The Star Rating of your program is made public after at least one year of participating in Quality First and is posted at the program's location as well as on the Quality First website.

All Quality First programs will have their Star Rating posted on the Quality First website on the 2nd assessment. You have the option to publicly post your rating after your first assessment if you desire. Please contact your Quality First Coach to discuss a Request for Public Rating. The Request for Public Rating (see forms) allows your program's star rating to be displayed on the public website for family review.

### QUALITY FIRST STAR RATING SCALE

The Quality First Star Rating Scale details the necessary scores of the assessments for each Quality First Star Rating. For each Star Rating level, a participant must meet the scores indicated for all required assessments. 1 and 2 Star Ratings only require the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Average Program Score. 3, 4, and 5 Star Ratings require the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Average Program Score, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Average Program Score and the Quality First Points Scale Scores.

## QUALITY FIRST WEBSITE

**QualityFirstAZ.com** gives families information about why quality matters in child care and preschool and what quality looks like. It also gives parents tools they can use to find a quality child care and preschool setting that meets their needs.

At **QualityFirstAZ.com**, your information will be listed according to your program information that is currently active on the Quality First Extranet. This information includes your program name, address, contact person, phone, email, and ages of the children served. Your program's Star Rating will be posted on the website after the second assessment unless your program has chosen to post the rating prior to that time. If your program has a specific website, **QualityFirstAZ.com** will provide a link to the site for further information.

The website is available for families to search for a program based on the specific name, address or zip code. A map will display programs in a particular area based on the search parameters. Home providers will be listed by city and zip code only, without a designated street address. **QualityFirstAZ.com** offers information for Parents & Families regarding quality care as well as information for all Providers about Quality First and supplemental resources that support quality care for young children.

## **PROMOTING YOUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY**

Quality is an extremely important factor for families in choosing a child care setting for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Participation in Quality First is a clear sign to families in your community that you are committed to improving the quality of your program to best serve the children in your care. Your program will be provided with a marketing toolkit, including signs and website graphics, to promote your participation in Quality First. These items are sure to catch the eyes of visiting families and start conversations about quality early care and education and your participation in Quality First. The Quality First marketing toolkit includes talking points and key messages to make it easy for you and your staff to have these conversations and spread the word about the great things happening in your program. This toolkit is available on the Quality First Extranet and will be sent directly to your program once you have a star rating.



## STAR RATINGS



RISING STAR



PROGRESSING STAR



QUALITY



QUALITY PLUS



HIGHEST QUALITY

Committed to quality im-

Approaching quality stand-

Meets quality standards

Far exceeds quality stand-

ERS Average Program Score <b>1.0 – 1.99</b>	ERS Average Program Score <b>2.0 – 2.99</b>	ERS Average Program Score <b>3.0 – 3.99</b>	ERS Average Program Score <b>4.0 – 4.99</b>	ERS Average Program Score <b>5.0 and above</b>
CLASS™ Average Program Score N/A	CLASS™ Average Program Score N/A	CLASS™ Average Program Score ES 4.5 CO 4.5 IS 2.0	CLASS™ Average Program Score ES 5.0 CO 5.0 IS 2.5	CLASS™ Average Program Score ES 6.0 CO 6.0 IS 3.0
Quality First Points Scale N/A	Quality First Points Scale N/A	Quality First Points Scale <i>6-point minimum</i> SQ 2 AP 2 CA 2	Quality First Points Scale <i>10-point minimum</i> SQ 2 AP 2 CA 2	Quality First Points Scale <i>12-point minimum</i> SQ 4 AP 4 CA 4
No classroom score below 2.5		No classroom score below 3.0		No classroom score below 3.0

ERS = Environment Rating Scales  
ECERS: Early Childhood Environment  
ITERS: Infant/Toddler Environment

CLASS™ = Classroom Assessment Scoring System™  
ES: Emotional Support Domain

Quality First Points Scale  
SQ: Staff Qualifications  
AP: Administrative Practices

# Component Overview

## SECTION ONE COACHING

- Individualized guidance and support
- Monthly on-site visits
- Targeted training and technical assistance
- Support of goal development and implementation

## SECTION TWO ASSESSMENT

- Environment Rating Scales (ERS)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Quality First Point Scale
- Star Rating Calculated from Assessment

### PROVIDER

## SECTION THREE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Financial Incentives
- Quality First Scholarships
- DHS Licensing Fees

## SECTION FIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or Associate's Degree in ECE or related field
- Varied supports for continuing education

## SECTION FOUR SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

- Birth to Five Helpline 1-877-705-5437
- Child Care Health consultation on-site
- Mental Health consultation (regional funding)
- Inclusion coaching (regional funding)
- Department of Education Early Childhood Program Specialist (regional funding)

# SECTION ONE:

## Quality First Coaching

### **THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST COACH**

One of the most important components of the Quality First program is the coach and the relationship that is established between the coach, you and your program's staff. The Quality First Coach is assigned to your program to offer continuing guidance and support through regular and ongoing visits, communication and assistance. This partnership will establish a strong foundation for all quality improvement efforts and can provide added value to your program, staff, and administration. Your program's improvement and progress in Quality First is driven by you. A Quality First Coach can bring additional insights to the program practice and support movement toward quality goals.

Quality First Coaches are selected based on well-established knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood education with a focus on promoting adult learning and positive interactions. Coaches receive initial and ongoing training in the quality improvement process, all assessment tools, early learning standards and development guidelines to help partner with providers in creating quality environments for young children. Every effort is made to create positive connections between providers and coaches, and the Quality First team will work diligently to make sure that a good fit is established. The Quality First Coach will make it a priority to respect your program, its practices and culture and create a trusting relationship with an emphasis on confidentiality.

### **QUALITY FIRST COACH ACTIVITIES**

The primary role of the Quality First Coach in working with your program is to partner with you in support of all improvement efforts to create quality learning environments for the children you serve. The coach will be available to fully explain the process and the assessment tools, review the Participant Implementation Guide, offer staff development based on the needs of your program, discuss goals that would be achievable and beneficial, and assist in the quality improvement planning and implementation.

The coach is your primary contact in Quality First. Once an initial contact has been made and the coach has had the opportunity to visit your program and meet your staff, there will be a review of the assessment results and a discussion about the strengths of your program and areas where improvements can be made. Goals will be established by you with support from your coach. The goals will address areas identified in the assessment and action steps with a timeline created to move forward in the process. The coach will be able to help in determining purchases for your program based on the goals established and how the Quality First Financial Incentives can best be used to create high quality environments and interactions.

Once goals and action plans have been established, the coach will meet with you and your staff to offer assistance and guidance in a number of ways based on the specific needs of your program. It is important to remember that quality improvement is a process that takes time and practice and through the shared partnership with your coach, you will continue to successfully work through challenges.

## **QUALITY FIRST COACH VISITS**

Your Quality First Coach will schedule regular visits to your program that best meet your needs. Visits will ideally occur at least 4-6 hours per month based on the identified needs of your program as designated by the assessment and star rating. These visits will be planned in advance with a common understanding of what will occur during the coach's time at your program. In the event you are unavailable or unable to meet for a planned visit, it is your responsibility to notify your coach in advance and make plans for a follow up visit to be scheduled. This will provide a more consistent relationship between the coach and your program and allow more time for shared work toward goals.

Coaching visits may include but are not limited to meeting with the program director/administration for planning, observing in classrooms to offer assistance and feedback to teachers, offering staff development through new materials and resources, and continuing open and consistent communication about progress. Coaches may use videotaping equipment with permission from the program to highlight staff successes and opportunities for growth. Flexibility and adaptability are key to making the most of coaching visits, and it is your responsibility to provide input based on what you see are the primary needs of your program in reaching set goals and quality levels.

To make the most of your coaching visits, let the coach know your desires for the quality improvement process and how you can work together to achieve quality goals. If you work with a staff, it is helpful to let them know of the process and how the coach can best support staff needs as well. The staff will be an important part of the overall program improvement. Consider what quality might look like in your program and then share your thoughts with your coach in order for him or her to best assist you in creating a realistic plan to work toward improvement. Take advantage of the resources available to you through Quality First and collaborate with your coach to make the most of these opportunities.

After each visit, the Quality First Coach will write a summary of the activities accomplished and any plans for upcoming visits. After you and the coach sign the document, a copy will be given to you for your own records and a copy kept with the coach for your program file. The information will also be uploaded in the Quality First Extranet to track visits and improvement efforts in the First Things First system database.

- ▼ A Rating Only program has access to coaching support for up to 24 hours per assessment cycle. This time can be scheduled on an as needed basis throughout the span of the cycle in order to best meet the needs of your program and staff. Coaching support can be used for Extranet updates, trainings, professional development, assessment review and goal planning.

## **GOAL PLANNING**

As part of the quality improvement process, you will establish goals with the assistance of your Quality First Coach. The goals will be based on information gained through the assessment report(s), observations and additional feedback you may provide regarding your program's specific needs. For each assessment cycle, you will have goals established that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (S.M.A.R.T.). These goals will also have action steps to provide a framework and timeline to achieve the desired outcomes. Your Quality First Coach will document these goals and provide you with a copy to work together in reviewing steps toward quality improvement (see forms). This document will also be uploaded to your program profile in the First Things First database (Quality First Extranet) where progress will be noted as steps are completed and goals accomplished. As each year's assessment cycle is renewed, new goals and action steps will be established to continue working toward creating high quality learning environments for the children you serve. Some goals may be carried through from year to year to establish strong practices and sustained improvement.

## **HOW TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL COACHING PARTNERSHIP**

Working with your Quality First Coach is a partnership and requires a commitment to a strong working relationship. Here are some tips to make the most of this partnership:

- Talk with your coach about the type of communication that works best for you. If you prefer to meet at a certain time or would appreciate regular emails, let your coach know so that he or she is able to best work within your preferences.
- Introduce your coach to your entire staff at the beginning of your participation. This will help to establish a familiarity and a comfort level for activities within your program. Be sure that the children are introduced to your coach as well to alleviate any stranger anxieties.
- Let your families know that your program is participating in Quality First and that you will have regular visits from a coach and potentially other consultants to provide ongoing support for your program. Families will appreciate knowing who will be working in your program and how your improvement efforts can benefit their children.
- Set aside time to meet with your coach in order to create a protected time for you to focus on your program's improvement efforts. This will not only help you in planning ahead but also demonstrate for your staff the importance of the Quality First process.
- For center based programs, be sure that the coach is able to continue with visits even if the Director is not available to work directly with the staff to support overall program improvement.
- Be sure to choose a program designee (see forms) to act on your behalf when you may not be available.
- Keep all of your documentation regarding Quality First in one place so that it is easy to access and refer back to as needed. This information can contain all of your Quality First contacts, forms, reports and resources you may want to share with your staff.
- Plan ahead for your visits with your coach with questions, needs, clarifications or plans. This will save time during your on-site meetings so that you and your coach are ready to accomplish any activities you have planned.

- This is YOUR improvement process; let your coach know your preferences about how you will be implementing change, your program philosophy and how you want your staff involved in the process. Your commitment to the process will create ongoing sustainability.

## **QUALITY FIRST TIMELINE**

- Your program is selected for participation and your coach will be your first point of contact.
- An assessor will contact you to schedule your initial assessment within the first 4-6 weeks.
- All assessment results are completed and approved and available for your review within 14-16 weeks of your selection notification. The timing of the availability of these results depends on the number of assessments to be completed and the size of your program.
- Your Quality First Coach will meet with you to review the assessment results, and you will sign the Enrollment Agreement to begin participation. Your Star Rating will be available for your own review but not posted on the public website unless you choose to request a public posting. Your Enrollment Agreement will begin your official participation and the availability of your incentives package.
- Goals will be established in partnership with your Quality First Coach and uploaded to the Extranet.
- The Quality First improvement process begins with regular coaching visits, ongoing assessment cycles, and program participation. The timeline listed below provides a general guideline; your program may advance more quickly or require more time.

## Timeline

**WEEK 1**

Selection Notification

**WEEK 2-3**

Contact from your quality first coach

**WEEK 4-6**

Assessment contact and scheduled visit

**WEEK 14-16**

Assessment results available for review

**WEEK 15-19**

Sign enrollment agreement; participation begins

**WEEK 20  
AND ONGOING**

Goal development; quality improvement begins

## SECTION TWO: Quality First Assessment

The Quality First Assessment is a valuable support for your program in the improvement process. The purpose of receiving ongoing assessments is to offer objective and reliable measures of the everyday experiences the children in your program are having and to provide a guide for achieving best practices.

### **THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST ASSESSOR**

Quality First Assessors are trained professionals in the field of early childhood and receive extensive training on the assessment tools to ensure they are measuring program practices accurately. The assessment provides important information for you to build upon your strengths as well as to identify areas where improvements can be made. The Assessor will remain objectively removed from the environment to gather as much information as possible according to the tools that are being used.

A Quality First Assessor will visit your program to complete an assessment at the very beginning of your participation. This assessment provides a baseline of information that is the foundation for you to build on in establishing program improvements. The assessors will strive to represent a positive demeanor and will focus on maintaining a professional stance at all times. While the assessors will be in your program, they will not initiate or extend an interaction with a child, but will never ignore a question, curiosity, or request for attention.

The Quality First Assessor is dedicated to the same measures of confidentiality as coaches and will show respect in a professional and respectful manner. Although the assessor will be collecting information during the visit, no feedback will be provided at that time. The assessment results will be shared through your Quality First Coach once the information is available for review.

### **QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Quality First process begins with your initial assessment, which will set a foundation for all quality improvement efforts. This is the beginning stage and will provide information to help you move forward – setting a baseline for quality improvement efforts. This baseline Star Rating will not be posted publicly on the Quality First website unless you choose to do so.

The following represents some general activities related to your Quality First Assessment:

- An assessor will contact your program to schedule an actual date for your initial assessment. It is your responsibility to contact the assessor within 72 hours of a phone or email message. In subsequent years, you will be provided a three week time frame in which the assessment will be conducted. The assessor can come at any time within these three weeks other than specified blackout dates.

- You will have an opportunity to inform the assessor of dates that would preclude an assessment visit. For instance, days that your program is closed, planned field trips, special events, scheduled Quality First partner visits and days when you will typically have low attendance may all interfere with a proper assessment.
- More than one assessor may attend a program assessment at one time for the purpose of training, reliability testing and/or to accommodate the size of your program. You will be notified in advance if this is the case.
- Before conducting the assessment, assessors will review your information from the Extranet (Contact information, Staffing tab, Classroom tab) to determine how many classrooms to assess and which tools to use during assessment based on the age groups you serve. Assessors will contact you in advance to confirm this number and to determine your typical daily enrollment per classroom or group.
- If your program has more than one classroom or group, the assessor will conduct a random draw to determine which classrooms/groups to assess upon arrival. The assessor will ask that the random draw be witnessed to ensure accuracy and also have a program designee signature at the time. A random draw is not conducted for the Points Scale Assessment.
- Assessors will assess  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the number of classrooms/groups for your program to include at least 1 infant/toddler classroom and one preschool classroom, if applicable.
- Assessors will complete all Environment Rating Scales Assessments first before conducting any CLASS assessments, with one exception.
  - o If your program is accredited by a nationally recognized organization (see forms) or is a Head Start program, the CLASS assessment will be conducted first. This is to recognize your efforts to support quality standards through accreditation or Federal Head Start regulations.
  - o If your accredited/Headstart program's CLASS assessment meets the 3, 4, or 5 star levels, you will start the process to prepare for the Quality First Points Scale assessment. Your program will be given 6 months to prepare for the Points Scale Assessment the first time you go through the process.
  - o If your accredited/Headstart program's CLASS assessment scores do not meet the 3, 4, or 5 star levels, the assessor will call to schedule the ERS assessment.
- If your program begins with an ERS assessment and receives an average program score of 3.0 or higher with no individual classroom score below 2.5, the assessor will conduct a CLASS assessment in  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the program's toddler environments and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the preschool environments. The CLASS assessment will not be conducted during the same visit as the ERS assessment, but you will be contacted to schedule this next level of assessment.
- Whenever possible, assessors who conduct the ERS assessments should not be the same assessors who conduct the CLASS assessments.

- Prior to assessing a classroom, the assessor will ask you if there are any enrolled children with an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and/or medically diagnosed conditions (i.e., asthma, diabetes, severe allergies) to determine if accommodations need to be taken into account. As this information is confidential, assessors will not need to view the individual plans.
  - If any of your program classrooms have more than 50% of the children present on the day of the assessment with an approved IEP/IFSP, the CLASS score for this particular group will not be calculated in the Star Rating. The assessment report will be made available for your review for the purposes of classroom feedback and professional development. Another classroom will be selected if possible to determine your program's star rating.
  - If your program is closed for the summer, your assessment will be planned between October and April.
  - Once all of the assessment reports have been completed and approved, you will have the opportunity to review this information on the Quality First Extranet. Your program's assessment reports will remain confidential and are only available for review by you and your Quality First team.
  - Your program will receive ongoing assessments on a regular basis:
    - o At the 1 and 2 star level, your program will have an assessment every 12 to 15 months.
    - o At the 3, 4, and 5 star level, your program will have an assessment every 24 to 27 months.
    - o If your program achieves a 3, 4, or 5 Star Rating in your first assessment, you will be assessed again in 12-15 months unless you submit a Request for Public Rating. A public rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars will move your program into an assessment cycle of 24-27 months.
  - You have the option of requesting your assessment to be completed up to two months prior to the end of your assessment cycle using Request for Early Assessment form (see forms). The request will be reviewed in advance to determine if this option is available, and you will be notified by the assessment team. A Request for Early Assessment cannot be made two assessment cycles in a row.
- ▼ A Rating Only program will be assessed every 24 months due to the fact that your status as a Rating Only participant means you are at the 3, 4, or 5 star levels.

## **QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

There are three different assessment tools used in the Quality First program. Each one is used to determine the level of quality your program exhibits in the areas of environments, interactions and program administration. Each assessment builds on the next as you advance in your quality levels. The three tools are listed as follows with the general area of focus and a link to where more information can be found.

### **ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES (ERS) – The beginning measurement of the quality levels.**

Establishing high quality learning environments has been shown to positively support the development of young children and their early education. The Environment Rating Scales (ERS; Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer) are observational tools used to assess

the quality of the environment in early care settings. Observations using the Environment Rating Scales provide a brief snapshot of the classroom environment, as well as the children's experiences in that classroom. There are three versions of the Environment Rating Scales, each designed to assess a specific age group and early care setting.

**1. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)**

This scale is designed to assess the quality of preschool environments (children 2 ½ - 5 years of age) located in center-based child care settings.

**2. Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)**

This scale is designed to assess the quality of care environments serving children birth to 30 months of age and is used in infant and toddler center-based child care settings.

**3. Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS)**

This scale is designed to assess the quality of the environment in family child care settings with mixed-age groups.

When an assessor conducts the ERS assessment, expect them to be in the classroom for 3 hours to complete the observation. The assessor will also ask to conduct an interview with the teacher observed once the assessment is complete to follow up on any information that wasn't collected during the observation. Although the assessor will not be in the classroom for the entire day, the interview will give the teacher the opportunity to share information about the children's experience that may not be observed on that day. **More information can be found at <http://ersi.info/>**

**CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM (CLASS) – a next step in measuring quality interactions.** Research demonstrates that positive teacher-child interactions in early care and education settings are a vital part of supporting children's learning and development. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is the next step in the assessment of your program's quality. This tool is used when your program's ERS Average Program Score is 3.0 or above, with no individual classroom scoring below a 2.5 or if your program is currently accredited by a national accrediting organization or as a federally recognized Headstart program.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS PreK; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2005) is a system for observing and assessing the quality of interactions between teachers and students in toddler and preschool classrooms. The CLASS examines social-emotional and instructional interactions that contribute to student's social competence and academic achievement in center and home based programs serving children from 18 months to five years of age.

There are two versions of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System that Quality First uses in the Rating Scale, each designed to assess a specific age group and early care setting.

**1. CLASS Pre-K**

This scale is designed to assess the quality of preschool environments (children 3 - 5 years of age) located in center-based and family child care settings.

**2. CLASS Toddler**

This scale is designed to assess the quality of toddler environments (children 15 - 36 months of age) located in center-based and family child care settings.

A CLASS assessment will be conducted differently than the ERS assessment where the assessor will observe the classroom in at least four back-to-back 20 minute observations with a designated scoring time in between. The assessor will conduct the scoring between observations. More information can be found at: <http://www.teachstone.com/about-the-class/>

**QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE – a finishing stage in the assessment cycle measuring program practices.** Administrative practices are an important part of high quality early care and education programs. The Quality First Points Scale is a tool designed by First Things First that provides evidence of the quality levels of your program’s administrative practices. Information will be collected when your program meets both the ERS Average Program Score and the CLASS average program scores at the 3, 4, or 5 star levels. This assessment will be scored using both on-site observation and reviewing documentation that you will collect and present to the assessor during the scheduled visit. Curriculum and Child Assessment documents will be reviewed from classrooms that were selected in the current assessment cycle.

The Quality First Points Scale was developed by First Things First to measure three additional areas of quality:

1. Staff qualifications\*
2. Administrative practices, which includes Ratios and Group Sizes and Staff Retention
3. Curriculum and Child Assessment, which includes the use of the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant/Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education, Curriculum and Developmental/Progress Assessment of individual children.

The initial Points Scale Assessment will normally be scheduled ahead of time and will take place at your program. For all subsequent Points Scale Assessments, you will be given a three week window to notify you of the upcoming visit. The assessor will be reviewing the documentation that you have collected based on the Points Scale requirements and will be conducting a count of children in each classroom to establish the ratios and group sizes your program represents. No formal observations of classroom practice will take place at this time. In the event the assessor does not find the required documentation, you will be given a Missing Documents form and allowed 30 minutes to collect the documentation for assessor review.

More information can be found at **Quality First Point Scale.pdf** (see forms)

- ▼ If any of your Lead Teachers/Administrators have college credits, official college transcripts must be received from a nationally accredited college and must be submitted for each staff member in their original, sealed envelope to:

*Quality First Assessment Transcript Verification  
2850 North 24th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008*

Transcripts that have been removed from their original, sealed envelope or not received directly from the sending educational institution are not able to be accepted. As the provider, you are responsible for completing the Transcript Verification forms (see forms) and include the name of each staff member who has requested a transcript(s) and send the form directly to Quality First Assessment Transcript Verification. If a staff member has requested transcripts from more than one accredited college, each college should be listed individually. The Arizona Teaching Certificate/

CDA Verification form (see forms) must be completed by those with an Arizona teaching certificate or CDA certificate. Copies of these certificates must accompany this form and be sent to the above address. See the Transcript Timeline (see forms) for information about the process.

## **QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

For every official assessment that is conducted at your program, you will receive an assessment report. The report is available online through the Quality First Extranet (Assessment Report tab) and can be printed to obtain a hard copy. Each tool that is used to conduct an assessment has a unique report with specific scores related to the indicators identified in each. You will find areas designated as strengths in your program as well as areas that can be used to focus your efforts in making improvements. Your Quality First Coach will thoroughly review these assessment reports with you and highlight specific areas for goal setting.

In the event that you have a question about your assessment report or if you find any inaccurate information based on your program specifics, you have the opportunity to submit an Assessment Clarification Request. The request will be reviewed with your Quality First Coach and if no resolution is found, then sent on to either the Assessment team or to First Things First depending on the content of your question. The Assessment Clarification must be submitted within 30 business days of the assessment results being approved and a response will be provided within 15 business days as possible. If the clarification warrants a change in scores, this will be noted in the Extranet and your program assessment report updated. The goal of the Assessment Clarification Request (see forms) is to ensure clear communication about your assessment and to ensure the accuracy of the reports.

Any video or audio recordings or photographs will not be considered in the assessment clarification process. The assessment process is conducted in live, on-site observations to capture the entire context of the classroom learning environment and interactions. In the event you are having difficulty reviewing your assessment reports online, please contact the Extranet Help Desk for assistance at ***Extranet@azftf.gov***

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT**

In order to make the most of your Quality First participation and to help prepare your program for successful assessments, here are some considerations:

- Review the assessment tools in advance with your Quality First Coach to ensure that you have a complete understanding of how your program will be evaluated.
- Share this information about the Quality First assessment tools with your staff, if applicable, potentially through a staff meeting prior to the assessment.
- Talk to your staff about what to expect in the assessment – how the assessor will be in the classroom, how long the assessor will be there, what the assessor will be looking for, and how to create a natural environment for the children.
- Be sure that your program information is up to date in the Extranet and that all class rosters are accurate in advance. Gathering all of the birthdates of the children in the classroom is helpful in planning ahead.

- Although assessors will not need to look at the individual plans for children with special needs, it is helpful to make them aware so that they are able to focus on the environment in terms of the child's unique needs.
- Prepare your families for the assessment so they understand your program's involvement in Quality First and your commitment to improvement.
- Consider the unique needs of your program in planning for your assessment, you will be asked by the assessor about specific language of instruction or a unique population served in order to support individual requirements.
- Plan your time accordingly so that you are available if the assessor may need additional information. Sometimes, a Lead Teacher may be asked for supporting information and need to have substitute coverage.
- Have the teachers talk to the children about the role of the assessor to alleviate any fears and to help them to feel comfortable with the assessor's presence.
- You have the option of introducing the Quality First Assessor to the children when he or she is ready to assess the classroom.
- If you are unsure about any part of the process before, during, or after the assessment is complete, be sure to ask questions of the assessor or through your Quality First Coach.
- Understand that the assessment is a valuable piece of information to help provide guidance for your quality improvement efforts.
- All assessment information collected prior to April 1st will be used to determine a program's incentives and scholarships for the next fiscal year.
- See The Day of Assessment (see forms) for more detailed information about the process.

## SECTION THREE: Quality First Financial Incentives

Every program that is enrolled in Quality First has access to different forms of financial incentives to support the improvement process and to provide access to children in quality early learning environments. Regional Partnership Councils budget an allotted amount of money for each Quality First participant in their region per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The amount budgeted supports all of the different components of the Quality First package including coaching, assessment, financial incentives, specialized technical assistance and professional development. The financial incentives are a part of this package of services offered.

For a Rating Only participant, Quality First Financial Incentives will be offered only through the Quality First Scholarships.

There are three different types of financial incentives offered to Quality First providers depending on the type of enrollment in which they are participating. Financial incentives begin once your program has signed the enrollment agreement to begin participation in Quality First.

1. **Licensing fee assistance** – for Quality First providers licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS).
2. **Quality First Incentives** – for Quality First providers at the Rising (1) and Progressing (2) Star levels to support improvement efforts.
3. **Quality First Child Care Scholarships** – for Quality First providers rated at a Progressing (2) Star level or above to provide access to children in quality learning environments. (Beginning in fiscal year 2016 – only programs rated at a Quality (3) Star level or above will receive scholarships.)

### LICENSING FEE ASSISTANCE

Once you have signed your enrollment agreement and are actively enrolled in Quality First, you will receive assistance with payment of licensing fees if you are regulated by the Department of Health Services (DHS). Fifty percent (50%) of your licensing fees will be paid by Quality First and you will pay the additional fifty percent (50%) when your license is renewed every three years. The Quality First assistance with licensing fees is automatically paid directly to the Department of Health Services (DHS) by First Things First so this payment is taken care of on your behalf. As part of your participation in Quality First, in collaboration with the Department of Health Services, you will need to participate in the Empower Pack program and

- ▼ **SMALL CENTER**  
(0-5 licensed capacity = 50 or less)
- ▼ **MEDIUM CENTER**  
(0-5 licensed capacity = 51-150)
- ▼ **LARGE CENTER**  
(0-5 licensed capacity = 150+)
- ▼ **GROUP HOME**  
(DHS licensed capacity = 10)
- ▼ **FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME**  
(DES certified for 4 children or less)

receive technical assistance as needed. For more information on the Empower Pack, visit <http://www.azdhs.gov/empower-program/index.htm>.

The licensing fee assistance does not apply to family child care programs certified by the Department of Economic Security (DES) or tribal programs unlicensed by DHS.

The chart below demonstrates the 50% amount you will be responsible for paying to the Department of Health Services every three years:

SMALL CENTER	MEDIUM CENTER	LARGE CENTER	GROUP HOME
\$500	\$2,000	\$3,900	\$500

### **QUALITY FIRST INCENTIVES**

Making improvements in your program often is a challenge due to the associated costs and can become a barrier in the process toward providing high quality care. To assist you overcoming these challenges, Quality First Incentives are available to programs at the beginning rating (1, 2) levels to make program improvements.

Once your program has signed the enrollment agreement for participation, Quality First Incentives will be available to your program. The following represents the total incentive amount that will be available to you for the fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015). Quality First Incentive funds are available to you each fiscal year at the Rising (1) and Progressing (2) Star levels and cannot be carried over from year to year if the full amount is unused.

SMALL CENTER	MEDIUM CENTER	LARGE CENTER	GROUP HOME	FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME
\$3,675	\$5,250	\$8,400	\$2,100	\$1,050

Quality First Incentives are available for a variety of purposes as they are identified in the goal planning process with your Quality First Coach. The coach will provide assistance as you consider purchases required for your program improvements and orders will be submitted through the coaching agency. In order to support continuous quality improvement and applicable use of incentives, all purchases must be tied to a specific goal that has been developed for your program. Goals can be determined through the review of assessment reports, coach/consultant observations, and specific identified needs of your program.

Some examples of how the Quality First Incentive funds can be used include:

- 1. Materials and Equipment:** If your program has a specific need for additional learning materials and equipment, incentive funds can be used to purchase these items through an approved vendor.
- 2. Consultation and Specialized Services:** Incentive funds can be used for consultation and specialized services. Your coach will provide this information to their agency who will work with the vendor to submit payment for services rendered.

**3. Facility Improvements:** Examples of facility improvement projects might include shelving, cement slabs, fencing, painting and carpet installation. You will work with your coach to complete a facility projects liability release for approval of these types of projects. Incentive checks will be made payable and mailed to the vendor delivering the service after it has been provided. Incentive funding requests for facility improvement projects cannot exceed 30% of the total incentive funds. Supportive documentation for these projects will be required for payment; your coach will provide the needed forms for your completion.

**4. Transcript Payment:** Incentive funds may be used to cover the cost of requesting transcripts for staff during the Quality First Points Scale preparation process. To receive a prepayment or reimbursement for transcript request, you will work with your Quality First Coach to fill out the Transcript Verification Form.

**5. Staff Release Time:** Incentive funds may be used to cover the cost of staff release time for scholars using T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.

Quality First Incentives are not available to programs at the 3, 4, and 5 Star Rating levels as the incentives will be offered through the Quality First Child Care Scholarships.

## **QUALITY FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS**

Quality First Scholarships are part of the financial incentive package available to you at the Progressing (2) Star level and above. Scholarships will provide you with payments to support families who qualify at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to pay the full or partial cost of care for their children age five and younger. Quality First Scholarships are considered an ongoing commitment to help families afford higher levels of quality care and to support your achievement and maintenance of quality improvements. Access to high quality early care and education is an important factor in school readiness and is particularly important for high-risk children living in poverty. Most of the evidence for providing scholarships rests on what we know about children who cannot access high quality early care and education programs. Without access, these children are less ready to begin and realize success in school and later in life.

The number of scholarships and payment rate of scholarships are determined by the size of your program and your Quality First rating. Your program's Star Rating as of April 1st will determine your scholarship allotment for the upcoming year. If your program is in the Points Scale Assessment process, your estimated Star Rating will be used in determining your scholarship allocation.

Scholarships are most often used for full-time care, but a full time scholarship can be split into two part-time slots. Part-time slots could be considered if a child is attending less than 28 hours per week or a part-time model best meets the needs of the families.

The number of Quality First Scholarships available to you in the “Base” Model are:

	SMALL CENTER	MEDIUM CENTER	LARGE CENTER	GROUP HOME
2 STAR	4	6	9	1
3 STAR	6	9	12	2
4 STAR	8	11	15	3
5 STAR	9	12	17	4

The annual amount you will be reimbursed for scholarships per child is noted below. If your program does not operate for twelve months out of the year, this amount will be prorated:

TYPE	AGE	2 STAR	3 - 5 STAR
CENTER	0-36 MONTHS	\$7,969.00	\$11,300.00
	37-72 MONTHS	\$6,000.00	\$7,300.00
HOME	0-36 MONTHS	\$5,625.00	\$7,600.00
	37-72 MONTHS	\$4,875.00	\$6,200.00

Some Regional Councils may approve funding for additional scholarships if a specific community need has been identified. The additional scholarships may be awarded based on your program’s ability to use them and you will be contacted in advance to make this determination.

If you choose to charge a copayment to families, it is the recommendation of First Things First that families receiving scholarships would pay no more than 10% of their gross monthly income on any co-payments that would be charged to the family. If your program charges tuition that is less than the scholarship amount you are receiving, it is recommended that these additional funds be used to support your ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Beginning July 1, 2015, only programs that receive a Star Rating at the Quality level and above (3, 4, and 5) will receive Child Care Scholarships. Programs at the Rising and Progressing Star levels (1 & 2) will continue to receive Quality First Incentives for program improvements.

- Rating Only programs may receive scholarships as an incentive depending on the regional funding available.

The number of scholarships your program receives can be found on the Quality First Extranet under the Scholarship Tab with specific contact information. For more information about Quality First Scholarships, you can visit the <http://qfscholarshipsreporting.org/> website or contact the Valley of the Sun United Way – Scholarship Team using the contact information noted below:

**Valley of the Sun United Way - Scholarship Team**

1515 East Osborn Road

Phoenix, Arizona 85014

Provider helpline: (602)240-6325

Parent helpline: (602)240-6324 or (866)973-0012

Fax: (602)240-6326

[regionalscholarships@vsuw.org](mailto:regionalscholarships@vsuw.org)

The primary purpose of these Quality First Financial Incentives are to provide support for quality care and learning experiences for the children and families in your community. All assessment information collected prior to April 1st will be used to determine a program's incentives and scholarships for the next fiscal year.

## SECTION FOUR: Quality First Specialized Assistance

Through your ongoing participation in Quality First, you will have the opportunity to receive additional services through various specialized assistance to support the individual needs of your program as you work toward quality improvement. Specialized assistance basically gives you the chance to really look at the unique needs of your program to determine what services would be most beneficial.

The Quality First Specialized Assistance that is offered also provides a foundation for ongoing collaboration. Collaboration is the act of working together to coordinate service efforts to meet a common goal. The process involves teams that partner with one another to obtain greater resources, share knowledge, learn together and build consensus. Collaboration does not imply any type of authority or hierarchy, but a group of people with similar interests and complementary areas of expertise participating equally.

Your Quality First Coach will collaborate with other early childhood education consultants including, but not limited to Child Care Health Consultants, Mental Health Consultants, Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Coaches, Arizona Self Study Project Specialists, ADE Early Childhood Specialists, DHS Surveyors, DES Certification Specialists and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARIZONA Specialists as they are available to help with goal setting and quality improvement planning.

Joint collaboration activities may include:

- Joint visits with you and your coach and other consultants/specialists
- Collaboration on goal setting and planning visits
- Feedback and input on your program needs and where to place your focus
- Sharing of training resources and materials
- Joint trainings and/coordination of events

### **TYPES OF SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE**

#### **Child Care Health Consultants**

All programs enrolled in Quality First have access to a Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC), either through phone consultation or on-site visits. Since 1987, CCHCs have been working side by side with early childhood programs to support their efforts in providing a healthy and safe environment for the children, staff, and families they care for every day. In Arizona, a CCHC is a Nurse or Professional Health Educator who has completed specialized training based on the most currently established best practice standards. CCHCs provide health and safety trainings and

are familiar with licensing requirements and local resources to link early care providers to their community. You and your CCHC can work as a collaborative team to develop a customized plan for health and safety for your unique environment and the specific needs of your program. A few examples of topics you might collaborate on include: development of health and safety policies to support your staff and children's well-being, development of an oral health program and how to incorporate tooth brushing with young children, education and training on nutrition through family style meals, and how to promote daily physical activity both inside and in the outdoors. You can seek more information on working with a CCHC through your Quality First Coach or by contacting the Birth to Five Helpline at (877)705-KIDS (5437).

### **Additional Specialized Assistance**

There are a number of additional support services that may be available to your program depending on which region you are located. Please understand that not all specialized assistance services are available in all regions; therefore, the Birth To Five Helpline offers assistance via the phone for ALL participants who may need support in a specific area.

- The "Birth to Five Helpline" for Quality First participants links callers to experts who will provide telephone consultation in the areas of child care health, early childhood mental health and inclusion of children with special needs.  
The Birth to Five Helpline telephone number is (877)705-KIDS (5437).

An example of a how you could use the Helpline would be in the event a child is exhibiting some questionable behaviors and a teacher is looking for some guidance in how to respond appropriately or to offer valuable resources to the family.

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation System (Smart Support) - Smart Support is an evidence-based strategy proven to support the social and emotional development of all children in care and help providers respond to children with behavioral challenges. In regions that offer this support, consultants are available to work directly with teachers to develop strategies to work most effectively with children in early learning settings. Contact your Coach to find out if Smart Support is available in your area and a specific contact.

An example of services that might be provided through Smart Support would be training for teachers on helping children to label emotions and create helpful activities that assist children in learning how to deal with strong feelings.

- Early Care and Education Inclusion (ECEI+) - ECEI+ is to address the need of quality early care and education for young children with special needs ages birth to five. Specific focus is on improving the skill of child care staff and providing training and assistance to support quality inclusive settings for children. Contact your coach to find out if Early Care and Education Inclusion is available in your area and a specific contact.

An example of how this specialized assistance could be provided would be in helping you find assistive learning devices for children who may have developmental or learning delays and using these learning tools effectively for the child's benefit.

- Arizona Department of Education (ADE) - ADE offers free training to all early childhood professionals throughout the state in a number of areas including the Arizona Early Learning Standards, the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, and the Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education. An ADE Early Childhood Program Specialist may also be available to participants in some regions to support the transition of children from early care and education settings into Kindergarten.

An example of the services offered through the Department of Education could be to invite a representative to your facility to offer hands-on training for you and your staff to discuss and learn more about the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. If your group is too small to have a representative at your site, you could partner with another provider in your area or have your staff attend a regularly scheduled training that is listed on the ADE website.

- Arizona Self-Study Project (ASSP) – ASSP is an accreditation facilitation project for early care and education programs committed to improving the quality of child care for Arizona’s children. ASSP staff provides technical support throughout the accreditation process and assists programs with integrating developmentally appropriate practices into the learning environment.

An example of how the Arizona Self-Study Project could support your program would be if you are interested in seeking accreditation for your program. If your program is at a Quality level or above (3,4, or 5), ASSP will work collaboratively with you and your coach to help make the accreditation process seamless and ASSP Specialists, who are accreditation experts, will provide specialized support.

## HOW TO BENEFIT FROM SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

In order to make the most of the Specialized Assistance available to you as a Quality First participant, here are some considerations:

- Do some research to find out what types of Specialized Assistance services are available in your area. Visit the [www.azftf.gov](http://www.azftf.gov) website and input your program zip code in the box “Find Your Local Council” – this is the Regional Council that represents your area and funds the services available to you.

Once you are directed to the appropriate page, click on the link on the right hand side of the page.



- Talk with your Quality First Coach to discuss your specific needs. Consider some of the goals you have established for program improvement and how the Specialized Assistance can be used to meet these unique needs.
- Reach out to the staff you work with. What are their needs in providing the best care to the children and families they serve? What types of Specialized Assistance could they engage in to support their teaching?
- Review your Assessment reports and find areas that may indicate more work is needed to provide quality care. If it is in the area of creating appropriate lesson plans with the Arizona Early Learning Standards, call the Arizona Department of Education. If it is in the area of Personal Care Routines, call your Child Care Health Consultant.
- Communicate with your families about the types of Specialized Assistance that you are using in your program. Help your families know the coaches and consultants who will be supporting your program as they may see them in your program on a regular basis.
- Quality First financial incentives can be used to support payment for professional membership in early childhood organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the Family Child Care Association (NAFCC).

## SECTION FIVE:

# Quality First Professional Development

Professional Development is an important part of your Quality First participation and in working towards providing quality care to the children in your program. The opportunity to engage in professional development offers continuous learning for anyone working in the field of early education. Growing in levels of knowledge and the development of current skills based on the most recent research and standards of best practice can only benefit your program, the staff and the children. There are a variety of ways in which professional development can be offered to you and your staff based on your goals, staff qualifications, unique program needs and availability.

### **TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- **Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® ARIZONA** - T.E.A.C.H. is a comprehensive scholarship program that links education, compensation, and commitment to promote professional development and improve the quality of early childhood care and education experiences for young children. As a Quality First provider, you and your staff will receive priority in awarding these scholarships, which can be used to obtain an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or to pay for the cost of an assessment for a CDA credential. T.E.A.C.H. Specialists are available to help connect you with local colleges and universities that offer courses to support your professional development and can assist you in the process of getting started. For more information on T.E.A.C.H. as a professional development opportunity, contact (480)829-0500 or (800)535-4599 at the Association for Supportive Child Care.
- **Professional Career Pathways Project (P.C.P.P.)** - The Professional Career Pathways Project is a professional development program available to you as an early care and education provider. The Pathway offers financial assistance for tuition and textbooks for those interested in taking courses in early childhood education in the majority of community colleges across the state of Arizona. Participants can pursue coursework for a CDA credential, and the CDA Assessment fee and/or a CDA Mentor are also services where financial assistance may be provided. This professional development opportunity is only available in certain areas; please consult with your coach or contact the P.C.P.P. specialist for more information at (520)494-5077.
- **Quality First Coach Support** - Your Quality First Coach is another source of professional development for you and your program and can provide trainings and workshops in a variety of areas including Classroom Environments, Positive Guidance, Child Development and other relevant topics in the field of early childhood. Your coach is also an excellent resource for helping you to find community resources to meet your professional development needs. Local and national conferences, workshops and seminars can all be funded using Quality First Incentives that align with your goals for quality improvement.

- **Child Care Exchange Magazine** – This professional journal is provided to you free of charge as a Quality First participant and offers valuable information about the field of early care and education with resources to support your staff, the families you serve and ideas for program practice.
- **The Professional Development Website** for the State of Arizona will be available to all early care and education professionals sometime in 2015. This valuable resource will provide information on Workforce Knowledge and Competencies, Training and Workshop offerings, Career Opportunities, as well as a Registry component for early childhood professionals to document and track their experience, education and knowledge over time. More information about this website will be available as plans are finalized.

## **SUCCESSFULLY USING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In order to make the most of Professional Development, here are some considerations:

- Take advantage of professional development opportunities as often as possible to not only increase your knowledge, but also to support your understanding of the needs of today's children and how best to support them. It is never too late to learn new things!
- When you or your staff members attend professional development events or complete course work through a college or university, provide opportunities for the information to be shared among all members of your team. This will not only create common learning opportunities but also create an advanced skill for the individual sharing the information.
- Create a mentor role in your program for a staff member who has specialized or advanced knowledge or skills so that others can receive ongoing support and mentoring from within your own team.
- Consider the philosophy and values of your program in establishing professional development plans for you and your staff. As you and your staff learn more ways to support the uniqueness of your program, the greater opportunities for unity and common understanding. For instance, if your program believes that “risk-taking” for young children is a part of your program philosophy, send your staff to training on how to create safe outdoor play environments that support these types of behaviors.
- Read your Exchange magazine and share it with all of your staff. Copy articles for families, do an article review with a group, or experiment with new ideas you find on the pages. The Exchange magazine also often publishes opportunities for continuing education credits available online or through correspondence.
- Seek out opportunities to learn about quality improvement efforts and how to be a leader in your program in supporting these changes. Make professional development a part of your goal planning process and have your coach or specialized assistance team help you to grow in this area.

# QUALITY FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

This section offers guidance on policies and state standards to support your participation in Quality First. These practices are listed in alphabetical order for easy review.

## **CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT (NAEYC)**

The Code of Ethical Conduct is a document that provides a framework and guidance for the early childhood professional in working with families and young children. The Code outlines the Core Values of the early childhood profession and details the Ethical Responsibilities to children, to families, to colleagues, and to the community. This Code is a recommended tool for your work and can help in making ethical decisions and to develop sound policy and practice guidelines for your program. The Code of Ethical Conduct can be found on line at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011.pdf>.

## **CONCERN RESOLUTION**

If you have a concern regarding your Quality First participation, the following processes are in place for your reference:

- **Informal Dispute Resolution Policy**

If you have a concern or disagree with a Quality First program decision that cannot be resolved through informal methods of discussion with your coach or coach supervisor, you have the opportunity to submit a Quality First Complaint form. In the Complaint form (see forms), you will provide a description of your concern and any attempts made to resolve the issue as well as recommendations of possible solutions.

The form will then be submitted to the Quality First Director at:

**Quality First Director**

*First Things First*

4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 800

Phoenix, Arizona 85012

Email: [qualityfirst@azftf.gov](mailto:qualityfirst@azftf.gov)

Fax: (602) 274-6351

The Quality First Director will attempt to resolve the dispute through a meeting with all involved parties, ideally within 14 days of receiving the Complaint form. A decision will be made by the Director and you will be notified of the decision within 14 days of the meeting. The goal of this process is to come up with a mutually agreed upon decision that supports your participation and compliance with the Quality First policies and procedures.

- **Confidentiality**

All Quality First partners (coaches, assessors, child care health consultant, supervisors, and other support services) are expected to maintain confidentiality about your program in their work with others in the process. Program records, staff information, assessment

results and quality improvement efforts are not made public, nor are they shared with individuals outside of the Quality First program, except as required by law. If you feel your confidentiality has not been maintained, please discuss this with your coach or coach supervisor to address this issue.

- **Appeals Process**

There are two scenarios in which you have the opportunity to file an Appeal within Quality First:

1. Star Rating\*
2. Termination of your participation

*\*If you are appealing your Star Rating, you must first go through the Assessment Clarification process.*

The first step in filing an Appeal in one of these two scenarios is a review of the Appeal by the Quality First Director at First Things First. You have 60 days to file your Appeal after your Star Rating has been assigned or your program has been disenrolled.

The Appeal must be submitted in writing using the Request for Appeal form (see forms) to:

**Quality First Director**

*First Things First  
4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012  
Email: [qualityfirst@azftf.gov](mailto:qualityfirst@azftf.gov)  
Fax: (602) 274-6351*

Once received, the Quality First Director and the Senior Director for Early Learning, the Chief Program Officer (CPO), and/or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will review the Request for Appeal and provide a written response, which includes a scheduled meeting date, to you within 14 days of the receipt of your Appeal.

At the conclusion of this process, if you remain unsatisfied with the result, you will have the opportunity to appeal further by requesting a formal hearing conducted by an Administrative Law Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. First Things First will notify you in writing when the opportunity to request a formal hearing is available. After receipt of that notice, you will have 30 days to appeal further by requesting a hearing in writing. The request must include the name and address of the program seeking the hearing, the decision being appealed and a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal.

Written requests must be submitted to:

**General Counsel**

*First Things First  
4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85012  
Fax: (602) 274-7040*

All Quality First services and benefits, including incentives, coaching, assessment and consultation services, will be placed on hold during the hearing process. The only possible exceptions to this hold are listed below:

- If you have a current T.E.A.C.H. scholar/employee, that person will be able to continue receiving the scholarship for the remainder of their current contract.
- Quality First Child Care Scholarships will continue until a final decision has been made through the Administrative Hearing.
- If an employee has been deemed eligible for an award through FTF Professional REWARD\$, that award will remain valid for the timeframe for which it was awarded.
- Once a recommendation decision is made by the Office of Administrative Hearings, the First Things First Board will review the decision and take action to accept, reject or modify the recommendation. You will receive a written copy of the final Board decision.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCESS**

As a Quality First participant, you have a key responsibility in the overall improvement process and working together with your coach and other consultants to implement the necessary policies and procedures noted in this Participant Guide. If additional support is needed to regain compliance with these standards, your coach will partner with you in the Corrective Action process to designate specific steps to be taken to get back on the right track. In the event that you continue to struggle in complying with these standards, your participation may be reconsidered through a collaborative discussion between your Quality First Coach, the Coaching Grantee (Valley of the Sun United Way), and the Quality First Director at First Things First.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRESS**

A significant investment is being made through Quality First to support the achievement and maintenance of quality early experiences for children birth – age five. The expectation is that all programs make progress and overcome barriers to increase quality throughout enrollment in Quality First. If progress is not made, your ongoing participation in Quality First may be terminated. The guidelines below outline the expectations for progress:

- Programs rated at 1 star must increase their rating to a 2 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 1 star will have 2 years of improvement supports before a 2 star or higher is expected.
- Programs rated at 2 stars must increase their rating to a 3 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 2 stars will have 2 years of improvement supports before a 3 star or higher is expected.

After the third assessment has been finalized, the First Things First Quality First Team will review each program individually that has not achieved the expectations above to determine next steps.

- See the Quality First Expectation of Progress policy for more detailed information (see forms).

## **EXTRANET (DATA SOURCE)**

The Extranet is where you can access all of your Quality First information in one place and track all of your improvement data over time to note your progress and program status. As a Quality First participant, you have the responsibility of updating your information on a quarterly basis in the areas of program information, classroom enrollment, identification of children with special needs, staffing information and your ongoing Quality Improvement plans. This data is extremely helpful in keeping up to date on staffing trends, enrollment changes, and your movement in scores across time.

Your Quality First Coach will invite you to the Extranet with your own personal log in and password. If you have challenges logging in or navigating this database for your program, assistance is available at [Extranet@azftf.gov](mailto:Extranet@azftf.gov). See the Extranet User Guide for more detailed information (see forms).

## **LACK OF ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN 0-5**

If you are at a place where you have no enrollment of children in your program that are age birth to five, your Quality First Coach will partner with you to consider how to support new enrollments. You will have up to 45 days from the last day of care to replace enrollment. During this 45 day period, your Quality First Coach will offer assistance in developing a marketing plan to recruit new families. After the marketing plan is developed, your coach will maintain contact through phone calls and email communication. If there are still no children enrolled in your program at the end of 45 days, your continuation of Quality First services will be reconsidered.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

As an early childhood provider, you are a designated Mandated Reporter by law (as outlined in A.R.S. § 13-3620). Mandated reporters are individuals who are obligated by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. In general, any person who has contact with children in a professional capacity is a mandated reporter. Mandated reporter laws are designed to catch child abuse in its early stages, so that children are protected from physical or emotional trauma. If you reasonably believe a child in your program is a victim of abuse or neglect, you are required to report this information to Child Protective Services or your local law enforcement authority. If you have an incidence of child abuse in your program, it is your responsibility to contact your regulatory agency to make a report – DHS, DES or a tribal authority.

## **OWNERSHIP CHANGE**

If your program has an ownership change, you will need to notify Quality First to update your information and ensure continuous participation. The following information will help to guide you in the process:

- DHS licensed programs must remain in good standing and work with their licensing surveyor to ensure that the proper paperwork has been filed and approved.
- Any change in information must be communicated to your Quality First Coach in order to ensure your program information is accurate and up to date on the Extranet, including updating Extranet access.

- A new enrollment agreement must be signed by the new owner to ensure understanding of the Quality First program guidelines and responsibilities.
- If a new license is issued, this information will need to be shared with your Quality First Coach and any modifications to the program size or licensed capacity updated in the Extranet.

## **PROGRAM CLOSURE**

In the event your program has an unexpected closure, your Quality First Coach will work with you to establish a modified schedule to support continued participation during this time. Some examples of a temporary program closure include:

- Facility/property damage due to natural disasters such as fire or flooding
- On-site staff/child medical emergency
- Health epidemic/personal medical conditions

If your program does not resume services after a 30 business day period, your ongoing enrollment in Quality First will be reconsidered, taking into account any extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis. If your program chooses to close and will be disenrolling from Quality First, it is recommended that all materials purchased with your financial incentives be redistributed to other providers serving children in your region. Your Quality First Coach will provide assistance to you in this process. If you will be disenrolling from Quality First, but continue to serve children, you may retain the materials purchased with your financial incentives to support the ongoing development of the children.

For programs that may be moving to a new location, it is important to discuss this move with your Quality First Coach to ensure that the new location has Quality First funding available. A program staying in the same region can maintain participation in Quality First with an update in the program information and licensing.

## **REGULATORY STATUS**

As part of your participation in Quality First, you are required to maintain your regulatory status and remain in 'good standing' to ensure compliance with state regulatory standards (DHS, DES, and/or tribal or military authority). If your program experiences an event that causes you to be placed in enforcement action with DHS or on probation with DES, you will not be able to access your Quality First Financial Incentives during that time. Once your program is removed from this status, you will be able to regain access to your incentives and continue participation.

If your program is noted as not in good standing with your regulatory agency for over 60 days or if you have more than one incident in a twelve month period, your participation in Quality First may be jeopardized. It is important for you to maintain open communication with your Quality First Coach and other consultants to help in supporting your compliance with state standards. Your licensing surveyor or certification specialists are also available to support you in the process of creating a plan of improvement for your success.

## **STATE STANDARDS**

The State of Arizona through its various agencies has a wealth of resources available to you as an early childhood professional in your work with young children. Quality First, through First Things First, partners with these state agencies in providing documentation to guide your practice. The following tools are available to you free of charge and are excellent sources of information for you and your program to establish best practices in your work with the children you serve.

- **Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines**

Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines are part of a continuum of early learning guidelines which provide a framework for understanding and communicating a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for young children, presented within a context of shared responsibility and accountability for helping young children meet these expectations. Specifically, these guidelines will describe expectations about what infants and toddlers should know (understand) and do (competencies and skills) across multiple domains of development during specific age ranges, as well as what adults can do to support children's optimal learning and development. (Click on the link below to access these Guidelines)

***Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines***

([http://www.azftf.gov/WhoWeAre/Board/Documents/az\\_infant\\_toddler\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.azftf.gov/WhoWeAre/Board/Documents/az_infant_toddler_guidelines.pdf))

- **Arizona Early Learning Standards**

The Arizona Early Learning Standards have been developed to provide a framework for the planning of quality learning experiences for all children three to five years of age. The standards cover a broad range of skill development and provide a useful instructional foundation for children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. The standards are intended for use by all those who work with young children in any early care and education setting in urban, rural and tribal communities. (Click on the link below to access these Standards)

***Arizona Early Learning Standards***

(<http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/files/2011/11/arizona-early-learning-standards-3rd-edition.pdf>)

- **Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth Through Kindergarten**

The Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten are not a list of requirements, but rather a set of recommended practices for programs to use as they strive for excellence in the care and education of young children throughout Arizona. This document is intended to provide guidance by delineating quality and providing a set of indicators that concretely describe what a program will look like when providing high quality early care and education for children birth through age six. (Click on the link below to access these Guidelines)

***Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth Through K.***

(<http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/files/2011/10/program-guidelines-complete.pdf>)



## Quality First Assessment Report Clarification Request

Participant Name and Address:		Participant ID#:	
Assessment Tool/Classroom Name:		Requested By:	
Date of Assessment:		<input type="checkbox"/> (. Coach	<input type="checkbox"/> (. Participant
Date of Assessment:		Date of Assessment Report Clarification:	

The coach and/or participant will use this form to identify questions or comments that are not resolved through review of the All About book and clarifications on the ERS website or CLASS tool. Please use one form per classroom and assessment (i.e. One form for ECERS in Classroom A and a separate form for CLASS in Classroom A).

Clarification questions regarding ERS and/or CLASS assessments will be sent on to the Assessment Program Manager at [kromero@awhd.org](mailto:kromero@awhd.org). Clarification for the Points Scale assessment will be sent to the Quality First team at [qualityfirst@aztf.gov](mailto:qualityfirst@aztf.gov). The Assessment Clarification must be submitted within **30 business days of the assessment results being approved** and a response will be provided within 15 business days as possible. If the clarification warrants a change in scores, this will be noted in the Extranet and your program assessment report updated. The goal of the Assessment Clarification Request is to ensure clear communication about your assessment and to ensure the accuracy of the reports.

Any video or audio recordings or photographs will not be considered in the assessment clarification process. The assessment process is conducted in live, on-site observations to capture the entire context of the classroom learning environment and interactions.

Item/Indicator	Comments/Questions	Assessor Comments



## AZ Teaching Certificate Verification/CDA Verification

Please use the following form to list all staff members who have a current Arizona State Teaching Certificate or a current Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA). The certificates will be verified with the Arizona Department of Education or with the Council for Professional Recognition as part of the Quality First Point Scale Assessment process. Include current name, previous or maiden name, and attach a copy of the Arizona Teaching Certificate or the CDA Certificate. Please use one row per staff member. Multiple forms may be used as necessary.

**Please use one of the ways below to submit this form to Southwest Human Development Transcript Verification Team and provide a copy to your Quality First Coach:**

- Fax to (602) 468-3402
- Mail to 2850 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St. Phoenix, AZ 85008, Attention Jeanette Brainard.
- E-mail to [jbrainard@swhd.org](mailto:jbrainard@swhd.org)

**Date:**

**Coaching Agency:**

Participant Name:
Participant ID #:
Address:

Participant Name:
Participant ID #:
Address:

Name	Previous/Maiden Name(s)	Last four digits of Social Security #	Educator ID Number (N/A for CDA Verification)	ADE Verification/CDA Verification (This is for ADE Certification Office and CDA Certification use only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Center Director/Program Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name, Center Director/Program Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Coach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name, Coach

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Participant Name and Address:	Participant ID#:
	Telephone Number:
	Coaching Agency Name:
Director/Owner Name:	Date Form Completed:

**Directions:** Please complete this form and submit to the Quality First Director at [btravis@azftf.gov](mailto:btravis@azftf.gov) or [qualityfirst@azftf.gov](mailto:qualityfirst@azftf.gov). All submissions will be reviewed by First Things First.

The questions below are to be answered by the person making the complaint or by a person acting with knowledge and consent of the person making the complaint.

1. Describe the complaint/issue.
  
2. Has there been any attempt to resolve the complaint with the Quality First team (coach, assessor, consultant, supervisor etc.)? If so, please describe details of the telephone discussion, meetings, or written correspondence. Please also include a copy of the Corrective Action Plan as applicable.
  
3. Do you have recommendations for possible solutions?

_____ Signature of Person filing the complaint	_____ Print Name	_____ Date
_____ Signature of person completing the form (if other than the person filing the complaint)	_____ Print Name	_____ Date

The purpose of Quality First, Arizona's Quality Improvement and Rating System, is to support the quality of the early care and education provided to children birth – age 5.

The Quality First Rating Scale indicates the quality of programs from a Rising Star through the Highest Quality (1 star through 5 stars).

Once a program is rated, supports are provided to help remove barriers to increasing quality within the program. Supports include:

- A Quality First Coach who partners on-site with the provider to develop quality improvement goals, provide classroom observations and feedback, customize training for the program staff, review program policies to support best practices in implementation and provide resources;
- Financial incentives that can be used to purchase materials and supplies that enhance the learning environment, offset costs of facility improvements that enhance the environment, and to support professional development opportunities for program staff;
- Formal assessment reports that provide the program an outside look at the environment and practices based on standardized program assessment tools;
- Child Care Health Consultation, either on-site or over the phone, to ensure that best practices in health and safety are incorporated in the program;
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arizona® Scholarships to support the attainment of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Phone consultation in Early Childhood Mental Health and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs.

A significant investment is being made to support the achievement and maintenance of quality early experiences for children birth – age five. The expectation is that programs make progress and overcome barriers to increase quality throughout their enrollment in Quality First.

If progress is not made by a program, termination from Quality First may occur. The guidelines below outline the expectations for progress:

- Programs rated at 1 star must increase their rating to a 2 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 1 star will have 2 years of improvement supports before a 2 star or higher is expected.
- Programs rated at 2 stars must increase their rating to a 3 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 2 stars will have 2 years of improvement supports before a 3 star or higher is expected.

After the third assessment has been finalized, the First Things First Quality First Team will review each program individually that has not achieved the expectations above. The individual review will include obtaining information and communicating as identified below:

1. A Quality First Team Member will contact the program Director/Owner to inquire about barriers to achieving expectations.
2. A Quality First Team Member will contact the Coaching Grantee, Coaching Agency and Coach to inquire about the program's participation in Quality First.
3. The First Things First Early Learning Implementation Team will review the information and make a final determination regarding the enrollment status of the program.
4. A Quality First Team Member will communicate the final enrollment decision, in writing, to the program with a copy to the Quality First Coaching Grantee, Quality First Coach, and First Things First Regional Director.

Programs that are terminated from Quality First due to not meeting the Expectations of Progress will:

- have the opportunity to appeal the termination using the Appeal Process outlined in the Quality First Implementation Guide;
- be allowed to keep the purchases made with Quality First incentives, as long as the program continues services to children;
- maintain their T.E.A.C.H scholarship contracts for staff utilizing the scholarships through the end of each staff contract with T.E.A.C.H.
- have access to the Birth to Five Helpline for technical assistance and support, although on-site CCHC services may discontinue if the region has not funded CCHC outside of the Quality First package;
- **not be reimbursed** for child care and/or Pre-K scholarships as of the date of termination;
- have their Star Rating and Program information removed from the Quality First Website; and
- not be able to reapply for Quality First for three (3) years from the date of termination. First Things First will monitor applications to ensure this policy.

Programs that are not terminated from Quality First:

- May go through the corrective action process.
- Will maintain access to their T.E.A.C.H scholarships, child care scholarships, CCHC services, and incentives.

Starting August 1, 2013, all programs enrolled in Quality First will be monitored on the expectations listed above. The expectations will not be retroactive to programs that have been enrolled in Quality First prior to August 1, 2013. The timeline for monitoring the above expectations starts on August 1, 2013.



## Quality First Goal Planning Form

**Goal Statement (one per form):**

Action Steps	Enhancement Funds Required?	Persons Responsible	Expected Completion
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

List purchases and/or services necessary for this goal (i.e. shelves, tables, chairs, art supplies, math supplies, block supplies, changing table, etc.):

Comments / Notes:

### National Accrediting Organizations

Transcripts must be received from an accredited institution. “Accredited” means approved by the:

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges,
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools,
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools,
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges,
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or
- Western Association of Colleges and Schools

### **National Early Childhood Education Accrediting Organizations**

- Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission (NECPA)
- Association for Christian Schools International
- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education (NAC)
- National Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC)

Participant Name and Address:	Coaching Agency:
Participant ID#:	Quality First Coach:

I \_\_\_\_\_ designate authority to the program staff identified below to serve as the primary onsite contact for all programmatic decisions regarding Quality First improvement activities. I have read the Quality First Enrollment Agreement and understand the commitment of the director and staff that is required to ensure success and improve program quality. I understand the role and responsibilities of the Quality First coach and support all activities that are outlined in the quality improvement process.

I further understand that the responsibilities of the designated program staff identified below include following all participant responsibilities outlined in the Enrollment Agreement:

- Participation in onsite coaching visits that may include coordination of staff training, classroom observations, and technical assistance.
- Cooperation in the scheduling and administration of all assessment and rating activities including an initial rating and rating renewal assessments for the purpose of receiving a public star rating.
- Shared decision making with the Quality First coach and any technical assistance providers working with the program regarding the development and prioritization of goals identified in the quality improvement plan and the expenditure of program improvement grants.

Designated Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ **do not** designate authority to any program staff to serve as the primary onsite contact for all programmatic decisions regarding Quality First. I have read the Quality First Enrollment Agreement and understand the commitment of the director and staff that is required to ensure success and improve program quality. I understand the role and responsibilities of the Quality First coach and support all activities that are outlined in the quality improvement process.

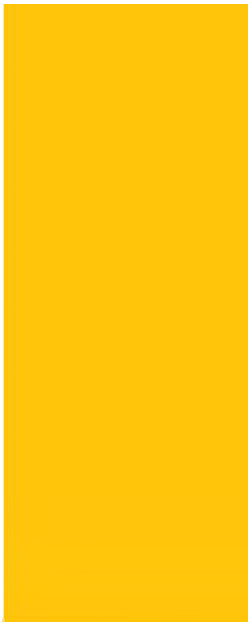
**As the designated authority and primary contact, I understand that my responsibilities include following all participant responsibilities as outlined in the Quality First Enrollment Agreement:**

- Participation in at onsite coaching visits that may include coordination of staff training, classroom observations, and technical assistance.
- Cooperation in the scheduling and administration of all assessment and rating activities including an initial rating and rating renewal assessments for the purpose of receiving a public star rating.
- Shared decision making with the Quality First coach and any technical assistance providers working with the program regarding the development and prioritization of goals identified in the quality improvement plan and the expenditure of program improvement grants.

I recognize that if I am unable to fulfill the responsibilities as outlined in the enrollment agreement, my Quality First participation may be terminated.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Participant Owner/Regional Manager      Type Name      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Participant Director      Type Name      Date



5.6.2014



# QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE

- Staff Qualifications
- Administrative Practices
- Curriculum and Child Assessment



## DIRECTIONS

1. The Quality First Points Scale will be reviewed and assessed for programs that meet the 3-, 4- and 5-Star Rating scores for the ERS and CLASS assessments (see *Quality First Star Ratings Scale*).
2. If all indicators in one column are “yes”, continue to the next column.
3. If any indicator is “no”, stop.
4. All indicators in each column must be marked “yes” in order to earn the points indicated at the end of each column.

**Staff Qualifications – OFFICE OF CHILD CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS (regulations are paraphrased)**

<p><b>Center Based - One Administrator (Director or Assistant Director) has the following education and experience:</b></p>	<p><b>Center Based - Teachers have the following education and experience:</b></p>	<p><b>Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:</b></p>	<p><b>Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:</b></p>	<p><b>Points Earned</b></p>
<p><b>R9-5-401</b></p> <p>1. At least 24 months of child care experience, a high school or high school equivalency diploma, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six credit hours or more in early childhood, child development, or a closely-related field from an accredited college or university</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 60 hours of training in early childhood, child development, or a closely-related field, and an additional 12 hours of training in program administration, planning, development, or management;</li> </ul> <p>2. At least 18 months of child care experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An N.A.C., C.D.A., or C.C.P. credential</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 24 credit hours from an accredited college or university, including at least six credit hours in early childhood, child development, or a closely-related field;</li> </ul> <p>3. At least six months of child care experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An AA or AAS in ECE, child development or closely related field.</li> </ul> <p>4. At least three months of child care experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A BA or BS in ECE, child development or a closely-related field.</li> </ul>	<p><b>R9-5-401</b></p> <p>1. Six months of child care experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 12 credit hours from an accredited college or university, including at least six credit hours in early childhood, child development, or a closely-related field;</li> </ul> <p>2. Associate or bachelor degree from an accredited college or university in early childhood, child development, or a closely-related field</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>N.A.C., C.D.A., or C.C.P. credential;</p>	<p><b>R9-5-401</b></p> <p>1. Current and continuous enrollment in high school or a high school equivalency class;</p> <p>2. High school or high school equivalency diploma</p> <p>3. Enrollment in vocational rehabilitation, as defined in A.R.S. § 23-501</p> <p>4. Employment as a teacher-caregiver aide for 12 months</p> <p>5. Service as a volunteer in a child care facility for 12 months;</p>	<p><b>R9-3-303</b></p> <p>1. If the staff member will work with enrolled children only while supervised by the provider or assistant provider, be at least 16 years of age or registered as a Level I with S*CCEEDS;</p> <p>2. If the staff member will work with enrolled children without being supervised by the provider or assistant provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma, high school equivalency diploma, associate degree, or bachelor degree</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be registered as a Level II-A with S*CCEEDS</li> </ul>	<p><b>N/A</b></p>

**Staff Qualifications (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)**

<b>Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>2a. July 1, 2011</b>  <b>25% have</b>  <u>Education:</u>                      12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.  <b>OR</b>                      Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college  <b>OR</b>                      CDA  <b>AND</b>  <u>Experience:</u>                      1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>2b. 50% have</b>  <u>Experience:</u>                      6 months of experience working in an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>2c.</b>  <u>Education:</u>                      6 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.  <b>OR</b>                      Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college  <b>OR</b>                      CDA  <b>AND</b>  <u>Experience</u>                      1 year of experience in an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>2</b>                      points</p>

*\*Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental progress.*

**Staff Qualifications (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)**

<b>Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>4a. A total of 75% have the following education</b></p> <p><b>Education:</b></p> <p><b>25% have</b> 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>CDA</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>50% have</b> AA or AAS in ECE</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>BA in any field w/at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>Experience:</b> 1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>4b. 50% have</b></p> <p><b>Experience:</b> 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>4c.</b></p> <p><b>Education:</b> 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>CDA</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>Experience</b> 1 year of experience in an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p>

*\*Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental progress.*

Staff Qualifications (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)			
<i>Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:</i>	<i>Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:</i>	<i>Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:</i>	Points Earned
<p><b>6a. 25%** have</b>  <b>Education:</b>            BA or BS in ECE or related field  <b>OR</b>            State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Education  <b>OR</b>            State of AZ Provisional / Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Special Education with ECE endorsement.  <b>OR</b>            State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Elementary Education with ECE endorsement.  <b>AND</b>  <b>Experience:</b>            6 months of teaching in an early care and education program  <b>AND</b>            The remaining percentage of teachers meets the requirements at the 2 point level.</p>	<p><b>6b. 50% have</b>  <b>Experience:</b>            6 months of experience working in an early care and education program</p>	<p><b>6c.</b>  <b>Education:</b>            AA or AAS in ECE  <b>OR</b>            AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.  <b>OR</b>            BA or BS in any field w/at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section.  <b>AND</b>  <b>Experience:</b>            1 year of experience in an early care and education program</p>	6 points

*\*Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental progress.*

### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS - Documentation Requirements

- Official Transcripts for all staff with college credits or diplomas. **Only courses with a grade of C or better will be accepted.**
- Complete staffing tab in the Quality First Dashboard, for each employee. **\*\*coach verifies**
  - Enter each staff using the [Add new row](#) link.
  - Enter Director, Assistant Director, Teacher, and Assistant Teachers are included. **Do not include staff who do not work directly in the classroom with children.**
  - Click on [Edit Details](#) for each staff member and enter the information required. **Do not enter college credits or degrees.**

**The related fields below are considered for college credits and degrees:**

- Child and Family Studies
- Human Development
- Elementary Education
- Special Education
- Developmental Psychology
- Social Work
- Consumer Studies
- Human Services

**Administrative Practices - OFFICE OF CHILD CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS (regulations are paraphrased)**

<b>Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes</b> <i>Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.</i>	<b>Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes</b>	<b>All Programs - Retention</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>R9-5-404.A</b>                      Infants 1:5 or 2:1:1                      1-year-old children 1:6 or 2:1:3                      2-year-old children 1:8                      3-year-old children 1:1:3                      4-year-old children 1:1:5                      5-year-old children not school-age 1:20</p>	<p><b>R9-3-306</b>                      1. The provider or the assistant provider is present and actively involved at the child care group home when one to five enrolled children are at the child care group home                      2. At least one adult staff member in addition to the provider or the assistant provider is present and actively involved at the child care group home when six to 10 enrolled children are at the child care group home.</p>	None	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Administrative Practices (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)</b>			
<p><b>Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes****</b>  <i>Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.</i></p>	<p><b>Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes****</b></p>	<p><b>All Programs - Retention</b></p>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>2a.</b>                      Group sizes are a maximum of no more than two times the ratio of children per a single adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Infants</b> 1:5, max of 10 children</li> <li>• <b>12-24 months</b> 1:6, max of 12 children</li> <li>• <b>2 year olds</b> 1:8, max of 16 children</li> <li>• <b>3 year olds</b> 1:13, max of 26 children</li> <li>• <b>4-5 year olds</b> 1:15 max of 30 children</li> </ul>	<p><b>2b.</b>                      Ratios and group sizes are the following:</p> <p><b>Up to 5 children enrolled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:5, max of 5 children</li> </ul> <p><b>6 – 10 children enrolled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:5, max of 10 children</li> </ul>	<p><b>2c.</b>                      In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers <b>or</b> Family Child Care Provider does not fall below 60%.                      If a program falls below 60%, 2 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendations to be implemented.</p>	<b>2 points</b>

Administrative Practices (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)			
<p><b>Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes***</b> <i>Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.</i></p>	<p><b>Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***</b></p>	<p><b>All Programs - Retention</b></p>	<p><b>Points Earned</b></p>
<p><b>4a.</b> Group Sizes are the following:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Infants</b> 1:5, max of 10 children</li> <li>● <b>12-24 month</b> 1:6, max of 12 children</li> <li>● <b>2 Year Olds</b> 1:8, max of 16 children</li> <li>● <b>3 Year Olds</b> 1:12, max of 24 children</li> <li>● <b>4-5 Year Olds</b> 1:13, max of 26 children</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>4b.</b> Ratios and group sizes are the same as the previous level.</p>	<p><b>4c.</b> In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers <b>or</b> Family Child Care Provider does not fall below 65%. If a program falls below 65%, 4 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendations to be implemented.</p>	<p><b>4 points</b></p>

Administrative Practices (must meet standards in all columns of each row to receive points)			
<p><b>Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes***</b> <i>Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.</i></p>	<p><b>Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***</b></p>	<p><b>All Programs - Retention</b></p>	<p><b>Points Earned</b></p>
<p><b>6a.</b> Ratios and Group Sizes meet the following:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Infants</b> 1:4, max of 8 children</li> <li>● <b>12-24 months</b> 1:4, max of 8 children</li> <li>● <b>2 year olds</b> 1:6, max of 12 children</li> <li>● <b>3 year olds</b> 1:9, max of 18 children</li> <li>● <b>4-5 year olds</b> 1:10, max of 20 children</li> </ul>           Ratios and groups sizes at the 6 point level are based on NAEYC Accreditation Standards.         </p>	<p><b>6b.</b> Ratios and group sizes are the following:  <b>Up to 5 children enrolled</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1:4, max of 5 children</li> </ul> <b>6 – 10 children enrolled</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1:4 max of 10 children</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>6c.</b> In the past 3 years, the retention rate for all classroom staff <b>or</b> Family Child Care staff does not fall below 65%. If a program falls below 65%, 6 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendations to be implemented.</p>	<p><b>6 points</b></p>

**ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES – Documentation Requirements**

- Complete staffing tab in the Quality First Dashboard, for each employee.
  - Ensure that hire date and termination date is accurately reflected for each employee, including those that are no longer employed.
  - Do not remove any employees that are no longer employed. The “Active?” checkbox should be empty for people no longer employed.
  - Complete the classroom ratios and group sizes form.
- \*\*\***Group Size.** There may be more than one group in a particular room. When more than one group occupies the same classroom, staff must be able to identify which children they are responsible for supervising at any time during the day. The ratios and group sizes at each point level will be assessed for each group that occupies the same classroom.

**Curriculum and Child Assessment - OFFICE OF CHILD CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS (regulations are paraphrased)**

All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	Center Based - Curriculum	Family Child Care - Curriculum	All Programs – Child Assessment	Points Earned
None	<p><b>R9-5-501.C.5</b></p> <p>1. Prepares and posts a dated lesson plan in each indoor activity area for each calendar week, which is maintained on facility premises for 12 months after the lesson plan date and provides opportunities for each child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain a positive self-concept</li> <li>• Develop and practice social skills</li> <li>• Think, reason, question, and experiment</li> <li>• Acquire language skills</li> <li>• Develop physical coordination skills</li> <li>• Participate in structured large muscle physical activity</li> <li>• Develop habits that meet health, safety, and nutritional needs</li> <li>• Express creativity</li> <li>• Learn to respect cultural diversity of children and staff</li> <li>• Learn self-help skills</li> <li>• Develop a sense of responsibility and independence</li> </ul>	<p><b>R9-3-401</b></p> <p>6. The program at the child care group home is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structured to meet the following:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The age and developmental level of each enrolled child;</li> <li>ii. The needs of each enrolled child; and</li> <li>iii. The enrolled children's need for familiarity, consistency, and routine; and</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Based upon a weekly schedule that includes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Routines, such as meals and snacks and rest periods, that follow a familiar and consistent pattern;</li> <li>ii. If weather and air quality permit, outdoor activities;</li> <li>iii. Stories, music, dancing, singing, and reading;</li> <li>iv. Listening and talking opportunities; and</li> <li>v. Creative activities such as water play, cutting and pasting, painting, coloring, dramatic play, and playing with blocks;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	None	N/A
<b>Curriculum and Child Assessment (must meet all columns of each row to receive points)</b>				
<b>All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines</b>	<b>All Programs - Curriculum</b>	<b>All Programs - Child Assessment****</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>	
<p><b>2a.</b></p> <p>Teachers*, Directors and Assistant Directors have completed the approved 2 hour training on the Introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS)* and Infant – Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG).</p> <p><b>The Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines will be required when written and available.</b></p> <p><b>* A valid Arizona Early Childhood Teaching Certificate or Endorsement is accepted in lieu of training.</b></p>	<p><b>2b.</b></p> <p>The Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant-Toddler Developmental Guidelines (when complete) are clearly reflected in the written activity plans.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>There is a written process for sharing curriculum with families.</p>	<p><b>2c.</b></p> <p>Assessment of children's growth and development is an ongoing process and is conducted during children's daily activities and routines to assess progress in the 4 domain areas of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Parent Teacher conferences are offered once per year.</p>	<b>2 points</b>	

*\*Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental process.*

Curriculum and Child Assessment (must meet all columns of each row to receive points)			
<b>All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines</b>	<b>All Programs - Curriculum</b>	<b>All Programs - Child Assessment****</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>4a.</b> Programs follow the Arizona Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education Birth through Kindergarten. recommendations for transitions between environments.</p>	<p><b>4b.</b> Written curriculum plans include specific learning objectives for children based on each child's documented or observed assessment information.</p>	<p><b>4c.</b> Assessment of children's growth and development includes gathering and documenting information received from families either from child information surveys, daily communications with families, or formal conferences held with the families. <b>AND</b> Programs use a variety of methods that include observation/aneccdototal notes, children's work samples, developmental checklists.</p>	<b>4 points</b>

Curriculum and Child Assessment (must meet all columns of each row to receive points)			
<b>All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines</b>	<b>All Programs - Curriculum</b>	<b>All Programs - Child Assessment****</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<p><b>6a.</b> Teachers*, Directors and Assistant. Directors have completed the approved training on at least two of the modules of the Arizona early Learning Standards or Infant – Toddler Development Guidelines (when written and available).</p>	<p><b>6b.</b> Written activity plans include strategies, modifications, and/or adaptations to fully involve all children with special health and/or developmental needs, including gifted and talented (e.g. adaptive materials are listed to be gathered, wide range of materials allow for individual use based on development, etc.). <b>This item may be N/A</b></p>	<p><b>6c.</b> Additional child assessment strategies include developmental and sensory screening activities (either provided directly or arranged for by the provider) and, when necessary, families are referred to appropriate health or intervention agencies. <b>AND</b> Parent teacher conferences are offered twice per year.</p>	<b>6 points</b>

*\*Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental progress.*

## CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT – Documentation Requirements

- AZELS and/or ITDG training certificates for all Lead Teachers, Directors, Assistant Directors and Family Child Care Providers.
- Certificates for the Introduction to the standards.
- Certificates for individual modules.
- Curriculum plans for each classroom/group for the most recent full month (4 weeks of plans per classroom).
- (2 points) AZELS or ITDG is indicated on each curriculum plan.
- (4 points) individual children's goals are reflected on the curriculum plan or documented and linked to the curriculum plan.
- (6 points) Modifications for children with special health and/or developmental needs are indicated on the curriculum plan or documentation is provided that links to the curriculum plan.

## CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT – Documentation Requirements

- Five child assessments including at least one child in each classroom in the program. **Assessor will choose randomly.**
  - Documentation of social development is included in each child's assessment.
  - Documentation of emotional development is included in each child's assessment.
  - Documentation of cognitive development is included in each child's assessment.
  - Documentation of physical development is included in each assessment.
  - Parent-teacher conference schedule which indicates how many time per year conferences are offered.
  - Observation/aneccotal records are included in each child's assessment.
  - Children's work samples are included in each child's assessment.
  - Developmental checklists are included in each child's assessment.
  - Information received from families is included in each child's assessment. Documentation includes, but is not limited to the following:
    - Family surveys about child's growth and development.
    - Documentation of communications with families about child's growth and development.
    - Documentation of formal conferences that include the family's perspective.
    - Documentation of parent interviews to understand the child's development from the family perspective.
  - Developmental Screening and/or referral forms for families to receive screenings.

\*\*\*\*Recommendations have been made to First things First to designate a standardized, statewide child assessment tool. First things First will consider this recommendation for future implementation in the Quality First Points Scale.

**Directions:** Please complete this form and submit to the Quality First Director. All appeal requests are reviewed by First Things First. In addition, please include all documentation that has been received in regards to enrollment termination or Star Rating. Documentation may include but is not limited to: Corrective Action Plans, Quality Improvement Plans, Assessment Reports, meeting notes, emails or any written correspondence.

Participant Name and Address:	Telephone Number:
Participant ID#	Email Address:
Director/Owner Name:	Date Form Completed:

The questions below are to be answered by the person making requesting the appeal.

1. What is reason for the appeal?  Star Rating  Enrollment Termination
2. Have you reviewed the Quality First Star Rating Policy and/ or the Participant Selection Policy?  Yes  No
3. Provide the reason for appealing the action.
4. Have you met with the Quality First coaching team to discuss the action? If so, please describe details of the telephone discussion, meetings, or written correspondence.
5. Is there any other information you would like to share relevant to this appeal request?

_____ Signature of Person requesting the appeal	_____ Type Name	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Person requesting the appeal (if other than the person filing the complaint)	_____ Type Name	_____ Date

Please complete the information below to request your program assessment completion be scheduled before the typical time frame. Submit this form to the Quality First Coach. The form will be forwarded to the Coaching Grantee and Assessment Grantee within 5 business days. The Grantees will recommend to approve (A) or not approve (N) the request and forward to First Things First within 5 business days. First Things First will approve (A) or not approve (N) the request and notify the Provider, Coaching Grantee and Assessment Grantee of the decision. When not approved, rationale will be provided within 5 business days.

Participant Name and Address:	Participant ID#:
Current Assessment Cycle End Date:	Requested Assessment Time Period:

**Please attach a statement of the reason for requesting an early assessment**

Please initial each statement of understanding:

- I understand that the First Things First, Quality First Team will review the rationale and decisions of the Coaching and Assessment Grantees to make a final decision of approval.
- I understand that by requesting an early assessment, the results will be based on a reduced Quality Improvement time period (less than the typical 12 – 15 month timeline).
- I understand that these assessment results will be effective throughout the assessment cycle. Another assessment will not be completed prior to 12 – 15 months from the assessment completion date.
- I understand that I am not guaranteed an early assessment. The assessment grantee will review the request to determine feasibility in the assessment schedule.
- I understand that requests to schedule earlier than 10 months from the last assessment will not be approved.

_____	_____	_____
Participant Name	Participant Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Coach Grantee Name	Coach Grantee Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Assessment Grantee Name	Assessment Grantee Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
FTF Quality First Director	FTF Quality First Director Signature	Date

<b>Participant Name:</b>	<b>Address:</b>
<b>Participant ID#:</b>	
<b>Coach Name:</b>	

Programs who achieve a Star Rating of 3, 4 or 5 in their initial rating cycle have an option to publicly post the Star Rating at that time rather than waiting for the Rating Assessment.

- “Grandfathered’ programs that enrolled in Quality First prior to July 1, 2011 have an assessment cycle schedule as follows:
  1. Initial Assessment (not public) – year one
  2. Progress Assessment (not public) – year two
  3. Rating Assessment (public) – year three
  4. Rating Renewal (public) – year 4 – ongoing
- Programs that enrolled in Quality First after July 1, 2011 have an assessment cycle schedule as follows:
  1. Initial Rating (not public) – year one
  2. Rating Renewal (public) – year 2 – ongoing

**My program has achieved a Star Rating of 3, 4 or 5 at the Initial, Progress or Initial Rating cycle.**

€ I choose to have the current Star Rating publicized and receive a Rating Assessment 24 – 27 months from the date of my current assessment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director/Owner/Designee Name                      Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Coach Name                      Signature                      Date

This form must be faxed to Quality First at 602-274-6351, scanned and e-mailed to [qualityfirst@azftf.gov](mailto:qualityfirst@azftf.gov), or mailed to:  
 First Things First  
 Quality First Team  
 4000 N. Central Ave. Ste. 800  
 Phoenix, AZ 85012

***Please maintain a copy of this form for your records***

Copy sent by FTF to:                       assessment grantee                       coaching agency                       coaching grantee

The Assessor will call to schedule your program's assessment. For centers, the assessor will assess your classrooms based on the chart below. If you care for infants and toddlers, both an ITERS and ECERS will be completed.

- 1 classroom = 1 classroom assessment
- 2-6 classrooms = 2 classroom assessments
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classroom assessments
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classroom assessments
- 12 + classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

Family child care home will have the areas assessed which are part of the child care program.

When the assessor arrives, they will need to gather some initial information regarding the total number of children enrolled, the number of children in attendance that day, information about children with special needs and the birthdates of the youngest and oldest child enrolled in the classroom selected.

If more than one classroom is being assessed, the Assessor will ask you to randomly draw which classroom will be assessed that day. In order to maintain the integrity of the assessment, the providers cannot choose which classrooms will be assessed in multi-room programs.

The assessor will remain at your program for at least three hours. They may stay longer if they need to gather information they were unable to collect during the first three hours. The Assessor will not talk to the staff during the assessment. They are unable to answer questions or provide information during the assessment. They will move around the classroom, collect data on materials, watch interactions and routines, and write notes. After they have completed collecting the data, they will request an interview with the Lead Teacher from the classroom. The interview may be arranged (time and location) before the assessment begins.

It is required that the Lead Teacher be allowed to participate in the interview process, as this is a part of the overall assessment. The questions asked will relate to things the assessor did or did not see during the assessment, and a series of other questions relating to the program. In some cases, the Assessor may ask for clarification from program administration.

Once the interview is completed, the Assessor will leave the site and begin their scoring and report writing using the notes they collected at your site. Once the report is complete, the Quality First Coach will receive notice that the assessment is ready for review. You and the Coach will review the results and move forward with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

If you have questions or concerns about the assessment, please discuss them with your Coach. The Assessor is not permitted to share any results or information about the assessment with the program, nor are they allowed to provide technical assistance.

It is important to prepare the classroom staff for the assessment. Your Coach can facilitate a meeting to discuss further the assessment process with the teaching staff. It is important to inform them that an assessment will occur as part of your participation with Quality First.

In order to ensure efficient processing of transcripts as well as respect the timeline of the program's assessment cycle, the following timeline has been created. This timeline will be included as part of the transcript verification process in the Quality First Implementation Guide.

1. Program requests transcripts at the beginning of their six month Point Scale preparation period and submits the Transcription Verification and Fee Request form to Southwest Human Development Transcript Verification Team and provides a copy to the Quality First Coach. The program is encouraged to also keep a copy for their own records.
2. Program ensures that for each staff member, the date transcripts requested is input on the Staffing Tab in each staff member's details page.
3. When a program is three months away from their Point Scale preparation end period the coach will check the Extranet to see which staff member's transcripts have been received by the Southwest Human Development Transcript Verification Team. If a staff member's transcripts are not showing as received in the Extranet the staff member is responsible for working directly with the accredited college/university to obtain official transcripts or determine why the transcript has not been sent.
4. If transcripts have not been received by the end of the Point Scale preparation period, the Southwest Human Development Verification Team will contact the provider and be given three weeks to rectify the missing transcripts. If official transcripts are not received within this three week period, the staff member may submit unofficial transcripts as a temporary measure until the official transcripts are received. The unofficial transcripts will be verified with the accredited college/university.
5. If a participant has already gone through the Points Scale Assessment and transcripts have been submitted, there is no need to request new transcripts unless additional coursework has been completed or new staff members have been hired who have college coursework to be reviewed.



## Transcript Verification and Fee Request

Please use the following form to list all staff members who will be requesting transcripts for the Quality First Point Scale Assessment process. Include current name, previous or maiden name, and the name of the institutions sending the transcript. Please use one row per transcript requested (i.e. one staff member that is requesting multiple transcripts would list their name on multiple lines). This will ensure that the transcript evaluation grantee includes all transcripts prior to identifying the highest education achieved and the number of ECE/related field credits. Multiple forms may be used as necessary.

**Please use one of the ways below to submit this form to Southwest Human Development Transcript Verification Team and provide a copy to your Coach:**

- Fax to (602) 468-3402
- Mail to 2850 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St. Phoenix, AZ 85008, Attention Jeanette Brainard.
- E-mail to [jbrainard@swhd.org](mailto:jbrainard@swhd.org)

Date:	
Coaching Agency:	Participant Name:
	Participant ID #:
	Address:

**Please check one of the options below:**

Request for Pre-Payment (receipts must be submitted within 2 weeks of pre-payment)

Request for Reimbursement (receipts must be attached to this request)

Name	Previous/Maiden Name(s)	Last four digits of Social Security # OR birthdate	Name of Institution	Transcript Fees
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$

Date:  
Coaching Agency:


Participant Name:  
Participant ID #:  
Address:


Name	Previous/Maiden Name(s)	Last four digits of Social Security # <u>OR</u> birthdate	Names of Institution	Transcript Fees
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$

Signature, Center Director/Program Designee

Print Name, Center Director/Program Designee

Date

Signature, Coach

Print Name, Coach

Date

2014

# User Guide: Extranet Log in – Quality First



1/1/2014

## Welcome to FTF Extranet!

To access FTF Extranet, please go to the following website or click here:

<https://extranet.azftf.gov/Extranet/Pages/default.aspx>

### 1) Click Log In



### 2) Log in window will pop up to enter Username and Password.

#### a. Username must include backslash (\); not a forward slash

- This is typically the first initial of first name and last name

#### b. Password is case sensitive;

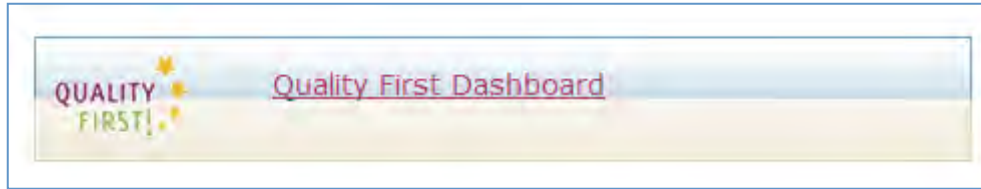
- You will be sent a temporary password, which you can change once logged in. Passwords must be minimum 8 characters and include at least one capital letter and one number.

**Username:** AZFTF\jsmith

**Password:** Cartoons8



3) Click Ok. You will be on the main Dashboard. Click in Quality First Graphic.



4) Click on My Center or Home link.



5) Click Select to access your Provider Profile.

A screenshot of the 'My Child Care Providers' page. It includes a checkbox for 'Show only Inactive Providers' and a table with columns for Organization Name, Site Name, Address, City, Postal Code, Regional Partnership Council, Funding Source, Status, and New. A red arrow points to the 'Select' button in the first row of the table.

<a href="#">Organization Name</a> ^	<a href="#">Site Name</a>	<a href="#">Address</a>	<a href="#">City</a>	<a href="#">Postal Code</a>	<a href="#">Regional Partnership Council</a>	<a href="#">Funding Source</a>	<a href="#">Status</a>	<a href="#">New</a>
<a href="#">Select</a> Quality First Test Center	Center #1	123456 Test Center	Phoenix	85205	Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council			

6) The first page is the Profile Summary.

**Quality First Profile Summary**

**Quality First Test Center Center #1**  
Address: 123456 Test Center Phoenix, AZ 85205  
Regional Partnership Council: Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council  
Main Contact: Director 602-555-1212

**Not Yet Rated**

**Site Details**

Provider Type: Center  
Contact Information:  
Name: Director  
Title: Center Director  
Phone: 602-555-1212  
Fax: 602-555-1212  
Email: njohnson@aztf.gov

**Hours of Operation:**

Days	From	To
Monday	6:00 AM	6:30 PM
Tuesday	6:00 AM	6:30 PM
Wednesday	6:00 AM	6:30 PM
Thursday	6:00 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:00 AM	6:30 PM

Days Open Year: 0

**Program Snapshot**

Size of Center:	Large
Number of Staff:	25
Classrooms:	5
Total Enrolled:	55
Ages Served:	Infants, Toddlers, 2 Yr Olds, 3 Yr Olds, 4 Yr Olds, 5 Yr Olds
Number of children whose primary language is:	
Spanish:	10
Native American:	2
Other:	5
Number of children who are Mono-Lingual:	62
Primary Language Used for Instruction:	English

**QF Activities**

Orientation Completed: Yes  
Orientation Completed Date: 6/5/2009  
Status: Data Not Verifiable

7) To update our provider profile, click on the Left Navigation Link to access each area of your profile.

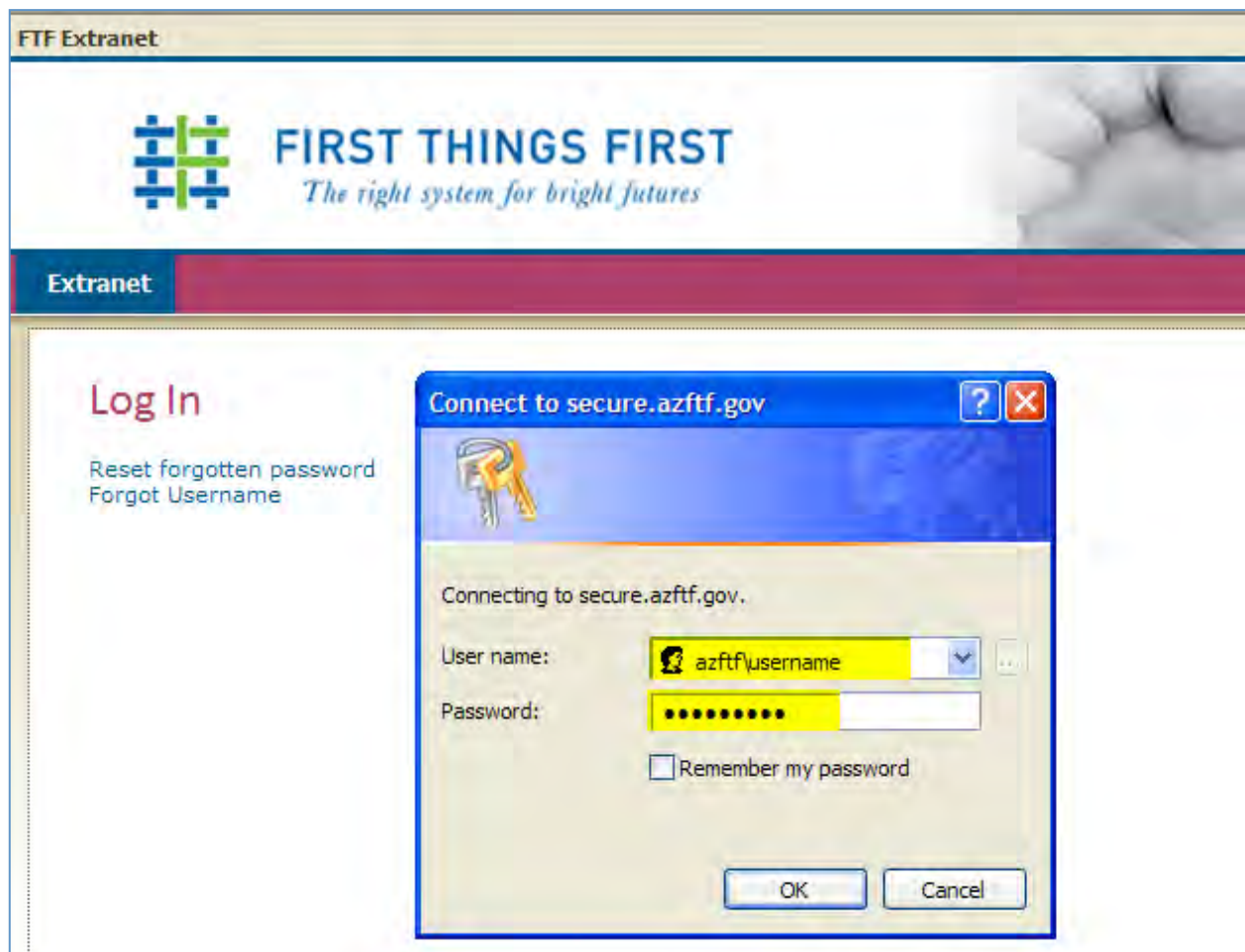
**Profile Summary**

- Site
- Program
- Language/Special Needs
- Staffing
- Classroom / Family Group
- Assessment Summary
- Activity Log
- Quality Improvement Plans
- Print Application

# Troubleshooting Username and Password Issues for FTF Extranet:

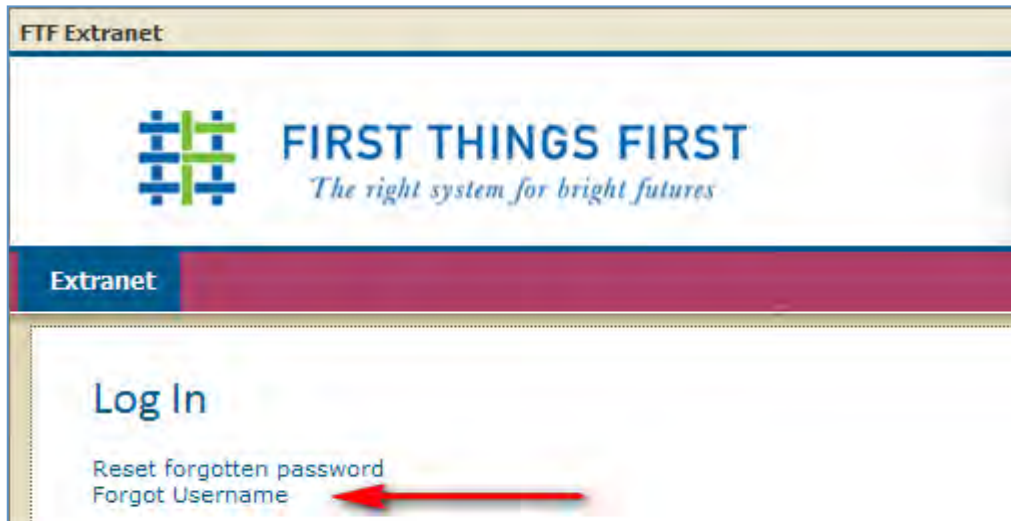
## 1. Username and Password Error:

- Check that your username is being entered correctly.
  - The back slash is a “\” and must be entered as AZFTF \username.
  - A **common error** is for users to put in their username with the forward slash AZFTF/username; this will cause an error.
- Your Password is case sensitive.



## 2. Forgotten Your Username:

- a. You can request to have your username sent to you via email by accessing the main FTF Extranet Dashboard and selecting the FORGOT USERNAME link. (<https://extranet.azftf.gov/Extranet/Pages/Default.aspx>)
- b. You will be requested to enter in the email address that was used to provide your original username and password. Your username will be emailed to you.



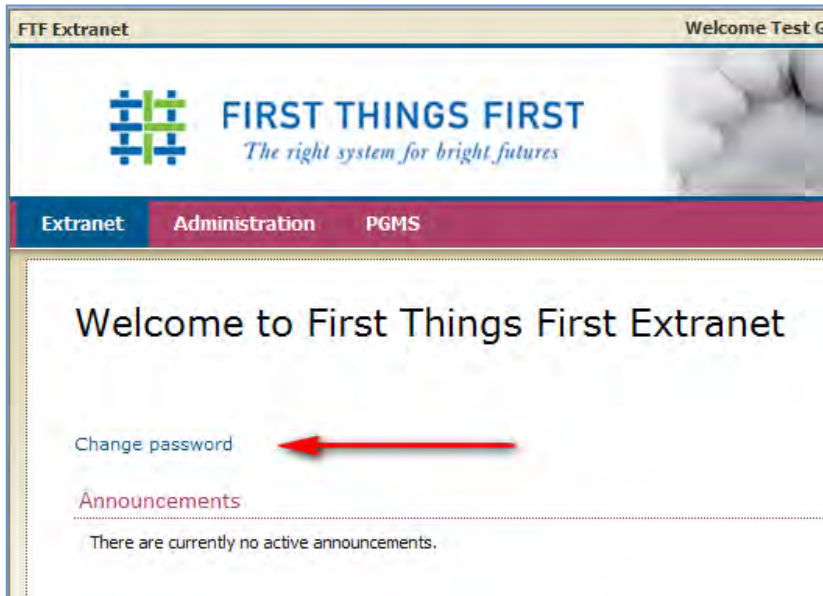
## 3. Reset Forgotten Password:

- a. If your username is correct and you need to **Reset Forgotten Password** you can request a reset password be sent to you by accessing the FTF Extranet Dashboard and selecting the FORGOT PASSWORD link. (<https://extranet.azftf.gov/Extranet/Pages/Default.aspx>) You will be requested to enter in your username (AZFTF\username) that was provided to you. A temporary new password will be emailed to you. If you do not have your username, you must complete steps in #2 to obtain your username.



4. **To Change a Password** (not FORGOT Password),

- a. You can change your password by logging in to the Extranet with your AZFTF\username and password.
- b. Once logged in, you will be at the main Welcome Page of the Extranet.
- c. Select the CHANGE PASSWORD link.



- a. You will be prompted to enter in your current password along with your New Password and Confirm.
- b. Next, select Change Password.
- c. **IMPORTANT:** a pop up window will appear after you click Change Password; you will need to enter your Username AND your NEWLY CHANGED password.

## Change Your Password

Your new password must be a minimum of 8 characters and contain 3 of the 4 groups of following characters:

- Alpha uppercase
- Alpha lowercase
- Numeric
- Non-alphabetic characters (for example, !, \$, #, %)

Your password must not contain more than 2 consecutive characters of your user ID.


**Current Password: \***

**New Password: \***

**Confirm Password: \***

**IMPORTANT:** a pop up window will appear after you click Change Password; you will need to enter your Username AND your NEWLY CHANGED password.

FTF Extranet



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**  
*The right system for bright futures*

Extranet

### Log In

Reset forgotten password  
Forgot Username

Connect to secure.azftf.gov ? X

Connecting to secure.azftf.gov.

User name:  v ...

Password:

Remember my password