

Participant Guide

Fiscal Year 2016



Quality First Contact Page

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF QUALITY FIRST

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 PARTICIPANT

The Role of the Quality First Participant

The Commitment to Quality

Strategies for Successful Participation

Quality First Timeline

SECTION TWO: QUALITY FIRST COACHING

The Role of the Quality First Coach

Quality First Activities

Quality First Coach Visits

Goal Planning

How to Have a Successful Coaching Partnership

Quality First Timeline

SECTION THREE: QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT

- 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 FOUR: QUALITY FIRST FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

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

SECTION FIVE: QUALITY FIRST SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

- 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 SIX: QUALITY FIRST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Types of Professional Development

Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Network

College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals

Quality First Coach Support

Child Care Exchange Magazin

Successfully Using Professional Development

SECTION SEVEN: QUALITY FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Code of Ethical Conduct (NAEYC)

E-verify and Lawful Presence

Concern Resolution

Informal Dispute Resolution Policy

Confidentiality

Appeals Process

Corrective Action Process

Extranet (Data Source)

Expectation 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

Appeals Form
Assessment Clarification Request Form
AZ Teaching Certificate - CDA Certificate Verification Form
Enrollment Agreement Form
E-Verify Form
Goal Planning Form
Primary Program Designee Form
Quality First Complaint Form
Request for Early Assessment Form
Request for Public Posting Form
Transcript Verification Form

RESOURCES

Extranet User Guide
Expectation of Progress
National Accrediting Organizations
The Day of an ERS Assessment
The Day of a CLASS Assessment
Transcript Timeline
Points Scale Guide



4000 N. CENTRAL AVE., PHOENIX, AZ 85012 STE.800
602.770.5016 • AZFTF.GOV

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

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.



My region _____

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 FY17 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

Benchmark related to Arizona families that spend no more than 10% of the regional median family income on quality early care and education programs to be recommended in FY15.

Developmental Delays Identified in Kindergarten

Benchmark to be recommended in FY15 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

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.

QUALITY FIRST 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 Rising Star (1 star) to Highest Quality (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 cycle. Participants have the option to publicly post their Quality Rating from the first assessment cycle if desired. 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. Rising Star (1) and Progressing Star (2) Star Ratings only require the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Average Program Score. Quality (3), Quality Plus (4), and Highest Quality (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

<p>RISING STAR</p> <p>Committed to quality improvement</p>	<p>PROGRESSING STAR</p> <p>Approaching quality standards</p>	<p>QUALITY</p> <p>Meets quality standards</p>	<p>QUALITY PLUS</p> <p>Exceeds quality standards</p>	<p>HIGHEST QUALITY</p> <p>Far exceeds quality standards</p>
---	---	--	---	--

ERS Average Program Score 1.0 – 1.99	ERS Average Program Score 2.0 – 2.99	ERS Average Program Score 3.0 – 3.99 <i>No classroom score below 2.5</i>	ERS Average Program Score 4.0 – 4.99 <i>No classroom score below 3.0</i>	ERS Average Program Score 5.0 and above <i>No classroom score below 3.0</i>
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)

ERS = Environment Rating Scales

ECERS: Early Childhood Environment
 ITERS: Infant/Toddler Environment
 FCCERS: Family Child Care Environment

CLASS™ = Classroom Assessment Scoring System™

ES*: Emotional Support Domain (Pre-K and Toddler)
 CO: Classroom Organization Domain
 IS*: Instructional Support/Engaged Support for Learning Domain (Pre-K and Toddler)

Quality First Points Scale

SQ: Staff Qualifications
 AP: Administrative Practices
 CA: Curriculum and Assessment

Component Overview

COACHING

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

ASSESSMENT

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

PARTICIPANT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development network

- College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals
- Arizona Workforce Registry
- Professional development Website

Specialized Professional Development

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Financial Incentives
- DHS Licensing Fees

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)

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 ONE:

Quality First Participant

THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST PARTICIPANT

As a Quality First Participant you are the center of your quality improvement process. Your vision for your program will drive the process of improvement within your site, as well as determine the guidance needed from your technical assistance consultants. It is critical to understand the unique perspective that you bring to this process and how your role will support you in achieving your desired outcome of higher quality care.

Participant as the Leader of the Process: Your improvement process will be based on the values, culture, vision and goals that you determine to be central to your program's success. Your technical support consultants will seek to help you determine what these priorities are and how you can implement them using best practices.

Participant as Expert: You as the provider know your program. You understand your program's history, successes and challenges. It will be important to access this information when planning and strategizing with your technical assistance consultants. All goals and strategies should align with what you as the provider are comfortable with implementing and confident in trying.

Participant as Director: With the guidance of your technical assistance consultants you will be the catalyst for change within your program. As the leader in your program you will evaluate your program, staff, and other resources on an ongoing basis to ensure that quality practices are being implemented consistently and that it is meeting your programmatic expectations of care.

THE COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Planning for change is an important part of the improvement process. Working to improve quality alongside your staff will take time, effort and adjustments. Ensuring that change occurs and quality is not only established but sustained is an important role that you will be responsible for. As you make changes to your program as a part of your commitment to continuous quality improvement, you will likely develop new skills, policies, and procedures. To ensure that the positive changes you make in your program are maintained over time, it is key for you to monitor and reflect on the changes you have made to ensure that they become a part of your regular practice. The goal of quality improvement is long-term change. This is crucial to supporting improved outcomes for all children that are cared for in your early care environment.

EXPECTATION OF PROGRESS

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;
- Teacher Scholarships to support the attainment of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

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. For more information about Expectation of Progress please refer to the resource documents provided at the back of this guide and on the Extranet.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION

As you work through the Quality First process you will have the opportunity to work with several different individuals that will provide support to you and your program. Actively working with individuals such as you Quality First Coach will help support you as you improve your program's quality. The following strategies will assist you in your Quality First participation:

- Select a consistent individual onsite that will be the point person for the process. This individual meets with your consultants on a regular basis, and acts as a bridge for information from your technical assistance consultants to onsite staff members.
- Identify necessary program supports. Often times this applies to requests made for technical assistance specialists to do observation and one-on-one work with staff members. In order to ensure your consultants have time to debrief observations and answer questions it is critical to have at least a few minutes with the staff member outside of the classroom, when they are not responsible for supervising children. This requires a floating staff member, or a director who is able to step in for that time.
- Actively planning and assessing your goals with the guidance of your technical assistance consultants. The goals that you will identify for you Quality Improvement Plan will serve as a map for your process. By identifying and monitoring your goals from visit to visit you will be able to determine whether you are reaching your desired outcomes, if strategies need to be varied, or if you need to modify the program support that you are receiving.

SECTION TWO:

Quality First Coaching

THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST COACH

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 their 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 Guide, offer staff development based on the needs of your program, discuss goals that would be achievable and beneficial goals, and assist in the implementation of your Quality Improvement Plan.

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 for growth in your assessment and include 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. Participants at the Rising Star (1 star) and Progressing Star (2 star) levels will receive 6 hours of on site coaching each month to support their quality improvement process. Participants in the Quality (3 star), Quality Plus (4 Star), and Highest Quality (5 Star) levels will receive 4 hours of on site coaching each month to support their quality improvement process. 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 year. 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 assist in documenting 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.

What is my vision for my program and what assistance do I need to accomplish my goals?

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.

SECTION THREE: 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. During the assessment observation, the Assessor will remain objectively removed from social interactions with staff in order 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. During your assessment observation, the assessors 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. Your program's assessment results will be available for your review with your QF Coach once completed and approved.

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 (including coaches, consultants, or other specialists) 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 of classrooms is not conducted for the Points Scale Assessment; classrooms selected for the CLASS assessment will be utilized for the Points Scale Assessment. A random draw of classrooms is not conducted for the Points Scale Assessment; classrooms selected for the CLASS assessment will be utilized 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 1 preschool classroom, if applicable.
- Assessors will complete all Environment Rating Scales Assessments first before conducting any CLASS assessments, with the exception of.
 - 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 results are at the Quality Level (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 Quality Levels (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) documented gifted needs, 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 and your next assessment cycle is scheduled to begin during your summer break, your assessment window will be opened no earlier than October 1st. Nine month programs with an assessment cycle scheduled to begin after April 30th will have their assessment deferred until after October 1st.
- 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 Rising Star (1) and Progressing Star (2) level, your program will have an assessment every 12 to 14 months.
 - o At the Quality Levels (3, 4, and 5 star) level, your program will have an assessment every 24 to 26 months.
 - o If your program achieves a Quality Level (3, 4, or 5) Star Rating in your first assessment, you will be assessed again in 12-14 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 24-26 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 for participants with Rising Star (1) or Progressing Star (2) ratings.
- ▼ A Rating Only program will be assessed every 24 - 26 months due to the fact that your status as a Rating Only participant means you are at the Quality (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 Quality levels (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 in the Points Scale Guidance Document (see resources section) or at Quality First Points 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 for every Points Scale Assessment. Copies of these certificates must accompany this form and be sent to the above address. Transcripts do not need to be resubmitted with each new Points Scale Assessment unless new coursework has been completed and needs to be updated.

QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT REPORTS

For every official assessment you will not receive feedback from the assessor on their observations or any assessment data collected. 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 (see forms). 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.

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 completed 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 FOUR: 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. 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.

There are two different types of financial incentives offered to Quality First Participants

1. **Licensing fee assistance** - for Quality First providers licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS)
2. **Quality First Incentives** - for Quality First providers to support improvement efforts.

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 program and receive technical assistance as needed. For more information on the Empower program, 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**
(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)

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 all Quality First Enrolled participants, including rating only programs to make program improvements. E-verify documentation and/or Lawful Presence documentation must be completed and submitted if applicable to your program's situation as a requirement for Quality First participation. Your Quality First coach will assist you in determining which of these items you need to submit. You will need to submit the required documentation prior to receiving any financial incentives.

Once your program has signed the enrollment agreement for participation, Quality First participation and submitted E-verification paperwork and/or Lawful Presence documentation, 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, 2015 through June 30, 2016). Quality First Incentive funds are available to you each fiscal year and cannot be carried over from year to year if the full amount is unused.

The table below represents the incentive levels based on Quality Star Rating and program size:

PROVIDER TYPE	1 & 2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
LARGE CENTER 151+ CHILDREN	\$8,400.00	\$9,400.00	\$10,400.00	\$11,400.00
MEDIUM CENTER 51-150 CHILDREN	\$5,250.00	\$5,875.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,125.00
SMALL CENTER 0 - 50 CHILDREN	\$3,675.00	\$4,125.00	\$4,575.00	\$5,025.00
GROUP HOME DHS LICENSED	\$2,100.00	\$2,350.00	\$2,600.00	\$2,850.00
FAMILY HOME DES CERTIFIED	\$1,050.00	\$1,175.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,425.00

- The implementation of financial incentives in Fiscal Year 2016 will be as follows:
 - o 1 – 2 star programs will have access to financial incentives to purchase materials, equipment and professional development tied to a program’s Quality Improvement Plan. Materials will be purchased through the coaching agency.
 - o 3 – 5 star programs will receive financial incentives through a check to use at their discretion or through purchasing offered by the coaching agency if preferred. Programs are encouraged to focus on continuation of efforts to maintain the quality of their program through facility improvements, professional development, staff salaries, or materials and resources.

Quality First Incentives are available for a variety of purposes as they are identified in the goal planning process with your Quality First Coach. 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. As you consider purchases required for your program improvements, your coach can assist you in identifying how your desired purchases will support your Quality Improvement Plan.

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 (See process noted under the Quality First Points Scale – Staff Qualifications).
5. **Professional Development-** Incentive funds may be set aside to provide professional development opportunities for staff including: regional and national conferences, online trainings, and professional development materials to be kept in classrooms or onsite.

QUALITY FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS

To better serve the needs of First Things First regional councils and their communities, Quality First Scholarships will be funded directly by the region and not tied to the Quality First package beginning in Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). Regional councils will identify priorities through a strategic planning process that includes reviewing current data about the region. If selected as a priority, the number of Quality First Scholarships funded will be determined by the regional council and will be assigned to programs achieving Quality, Quality Plus and Highest Quality levels after April 1, 2015. 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.

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.

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.

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 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

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.

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.

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

- ▼ 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 completed prior to April 1st will be used to determine a program's incentives and scholarships for the next fiscal year.

SECTION FIVE: 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.

You and 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 College Scholarship 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. The CCHC that is assigned to your program will be identified on your program's Extranet home page. 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 by contacting the CCHC designated on your Quality First Extranet home page.

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" links families of young children 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. You can contact the Arizona Self-Study Project at 800-353-4599 EXT. 1202.

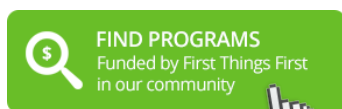
An example of how the Arizona Self-Study Project could support your program would be if you are interested in seeking accreditation for your program. If your program is at a Quality level or above (3,4, or 5), ASSP will work collaboratively with you and your coach to help make the accreditation process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

- **Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Network** - The Purpose of this valuable resource is to 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. The Network is a comprehensive, consistent, and accessible web-based system designed to meet the professional development needs of Arizona's early childhood professionals from entry to advanced levels and promote high quality professional development

The Network includes the following components:

- A Professional Development website to promote and provide access to a variety of professional development, career and higher education resources to assist early childhood professionals in keeping their skills and knowledge up to date.
- A web-based Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry to collect and store data about the early childhood workforce. Information such as college credits, work history, workshops competed, and site training logs will be stored making it easier for early childhood professionals to keep track of their professional development.
- The Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Framework. These are a set of professional standards that identify the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for early childhood professionals across the sectors of early childhood including, early care and education, early intervention, mental health, physical health and social services/child welfare professionals. The Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Framework is comprised of two components:
 - A. The Arizona Career Lattice, a tool that early childhood professionals can use for individualized professional assessment, setting professional development goals, and documenting their progress in their career development.
 - B. The Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies

- Application for First Things First College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals. These scholarships are available to assist early childhood professionals with credential and degree attainment. The application for College Scholarships is housed within the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry website.
- **College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals** - Well-educated and highly skilled early childhood teachers and staff are strongly linked with high quality and optimal child outcomes at entry into kindergarten. First Things First College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals are meant to provide access to higher education for the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth to age five. These scholarships are available to assist early childhood professionals with credential and degree attainment. The application for College Scholarships is housed within the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry website.
- **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 to assist you in reaching your Quality Improvement Goals. Coaches offer professional development on a variety of goal related topics 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.

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.

SECTION SEVEN:

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>.

E-VERIFY AND LAWFUL PRESENCE

First Things First is required to collect documentation related to e-verify participation and Lawful Presence to ensure compliance with federal and state laws. Quality First participants are required to provide proof that they are registered with and participating in the e-verify program if they have employees. If a participant is an individual or sole proprietorship, they will need to submit a completed Statement of Lawful Presence and Eligibility form along with acceptable evidence of eligibility and lawful presence. E-verify forms will be given to participants by their coaches and a link to the Statement of Lawful Presence and Eligibility form will be emailed to participants after enrollment with instructions.

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

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. Quality Star Rating

**If you are appealing your Star Rating, you must first go through the Assessment Clarification process.
(See Assessment Clarification Form)*

2. Termination of your participation

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

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

If you are appealing your termination from Quality First, all services 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 College Scholarship/employee, that person will be able to continue receiving the scholarship for the remainder of their current contract.
- 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.

EXPECTATION 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. 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, or receive reimbursement for quality first child care scholarships during that time. While your program is in regulatory status your Quality Star Rating will not be publicly visible on the internet. Once your program is removed from this status, you will be able to regain access to your incentives , receive reimbursement for all Quality First Scholarships (Including during the time of the enforcement action), and continue Quality First 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)

- **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-completed.pdf>)

Participant Guide Resources

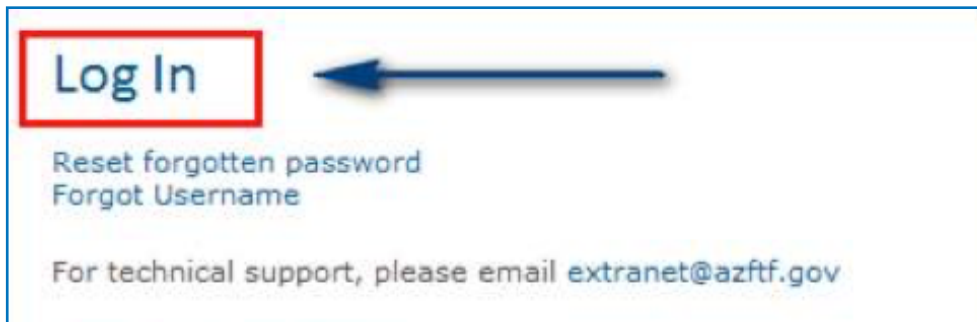
Fiscal Year 2016



User Guide: Extranet Log-in

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.

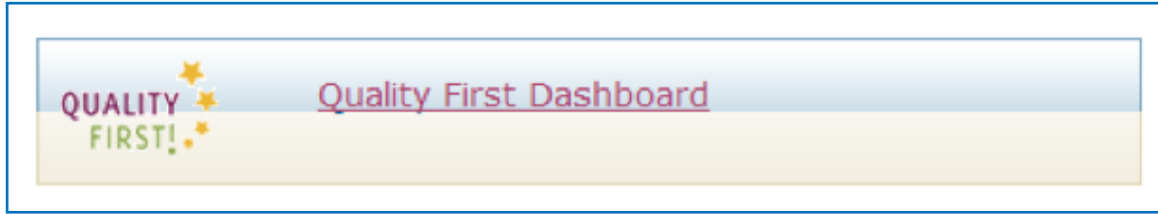
- a. Username must include backslash (\); not a forward slash
 - This is typically the first initial of first name and last name
- b. Password is case sensitive;
 - You will be sent a temporary password, which you can change once logged in. Passwords must be minimum 8 characters and include at least one capital letter and one number.

Username: AZFTF\jsmith

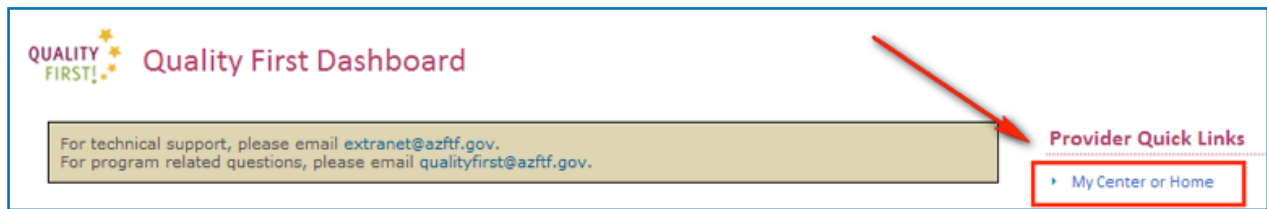
Password: Cartoons8



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.

Show only Inactive Providers

	Organization Name ▲	Site Name	Address	City	Postal Code	Regional Partnership Council	Funding Source	Status	New
Select	Quality First Test Center	Center #1	123456 Test Center	Phoenix	85205	Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council		Data Not Verifiable	

6) The first page is the Profile Summary.

FTF Extranet Welcome Test

FIRST THINGS FIRST
The right system for bright futures

Extranet Administration **Quality First**

Quality First

Profile Summary

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

QUALITY FIRST! Profile Summary

RATING
Not Yet Rated

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 [My Providers](#)

Site Details																				
Provider Type:	Center																			
Contact Information:	Name: Director Title: Center Director Phone: 602-555-1212 Fax: 602-555-1212 Email: njohnson@sufft.gov																			
Hours of Operation:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Days</th> <th>From</th> <th>To</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Monday</td> <td>6:00 AM</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday</td> <td>6:00 AM</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday</td> <td>6:00 AM</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday</td> <td>6:00 AM</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Friday</td> <td>6:00 AM</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		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	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:	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Spanish:</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native American:</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other:</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Spanish:	10	Native American:	2	Other:	5
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.

Extranet Administration

Quality First

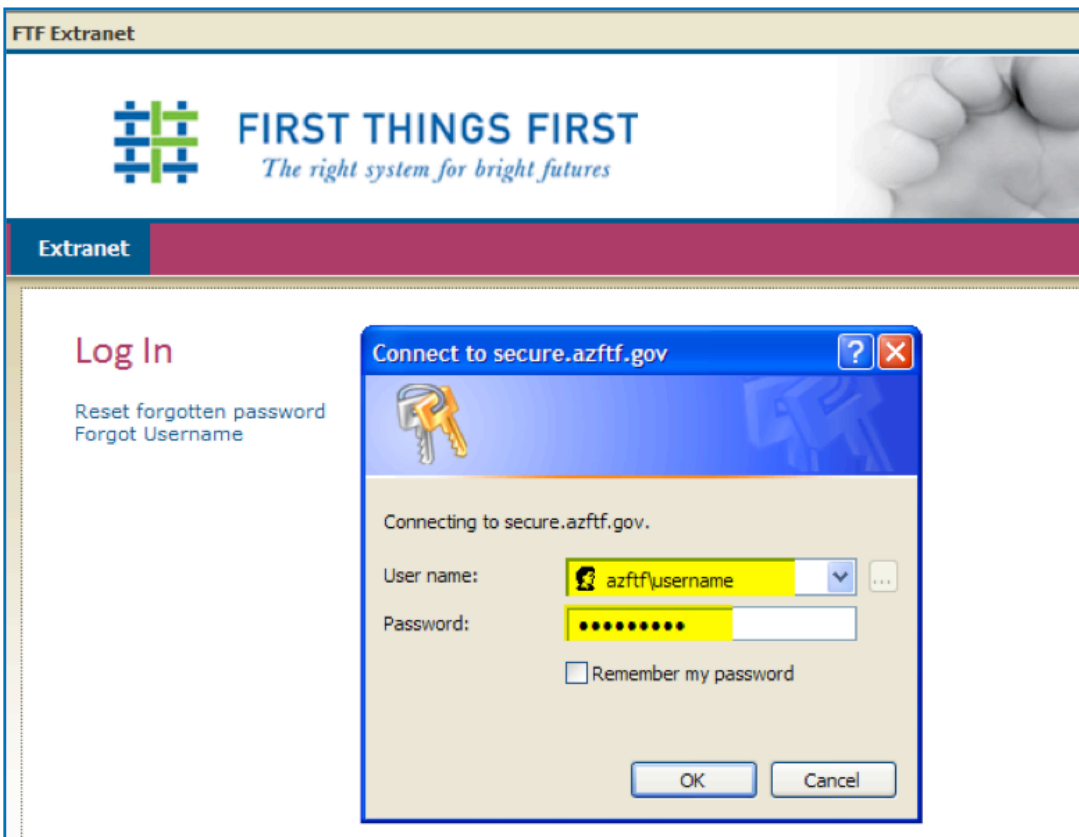
Profile Summary

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:

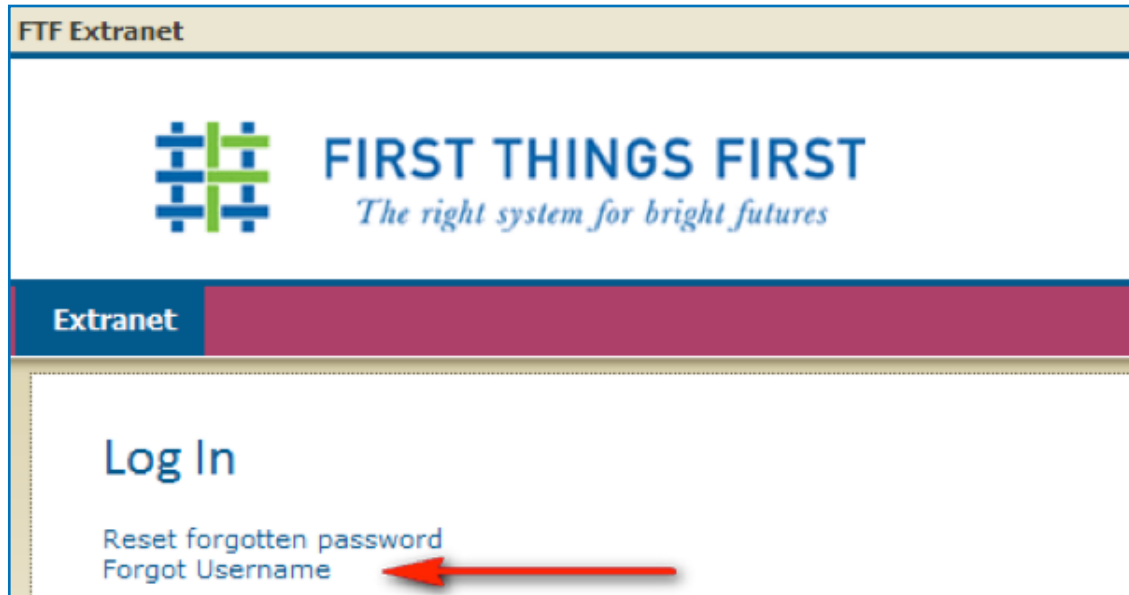
1. Username and Password Error:

- 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.



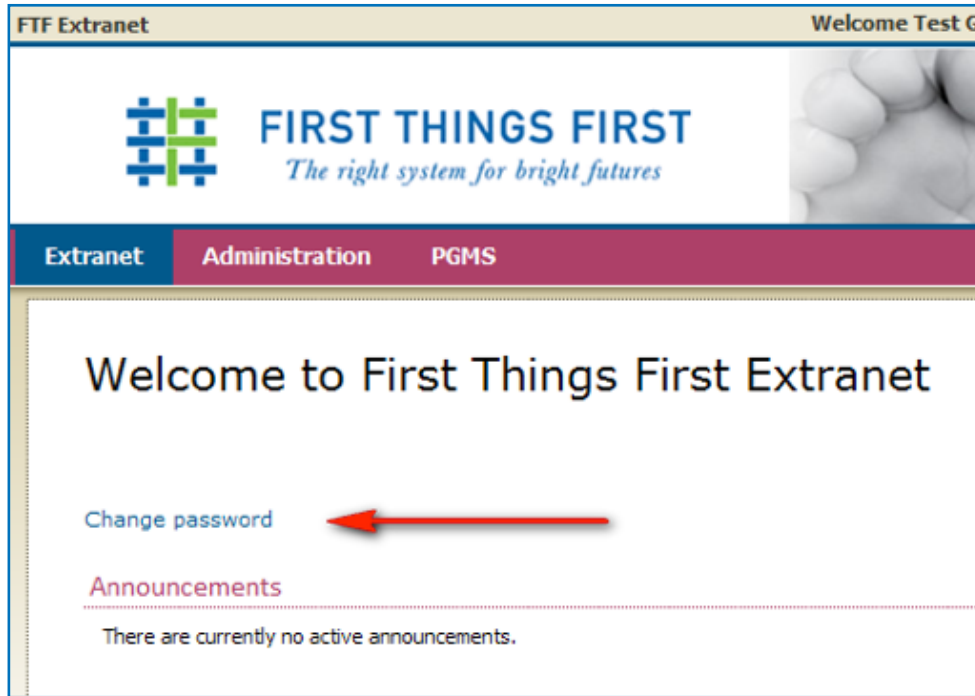
3. Reset Forgotten Password:

- 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



Connecting to secure.azftf.gov.

User name:

Password:

Remember my password

EXPECTATION OF PROGRESS

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 staff, review 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 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;
- College Scholarships to support the attainment of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Regional 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 participants make progress and overcome barriers to increase quality throughout their enrollment in Quality First.

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

- Participants rated at 1 star must increase their rating to a 2 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a participant rated at 1 star will have 2 years of improvement supports before a 2 star or higher is expected.
- Participants rated at 2 stars must increase their rating to a 3 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a participant 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 and review considerations of the particular regional council. 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 Expectation of Progress will:

- have the opportunity to appeal the termination using the Appeal Process outlined in the Quality First Participant Guide;
- be allowed to keep the purchases made with Quality First incentives, as long as the program continues services to children;
- maintain their College scholarship contracts for staff utilizing the scholarships through the end of each staff contract.
- 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 Quality First child care 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 College scholarships, Quality First 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.

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 (ACSI)
- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education (NAC)
- National Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC)

THE DAY OF AN ERS ASSESSMENT

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

A 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 participants cannot choose which classrooms will be assessed in multi-room programs.

The Assessor will remain at your program for at least three hours when conducting the ERS assessment. 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, you and your 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 contact the Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero at 602-633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org. 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.

THE DAY OF A CLASS ASSESSMENT

The Assessor will call to schedule your program's assessment. For centers, the Assessor will assess one-third of your preschool classrooms (ages 3-5) using the Pre-K CLASS and one-third of your toddler classrooms (ages 15-35 months) using the Toddler CLASS. The Assessor will determine the number of classrooms in each age group to be assessed based on the chart below.

- 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

For family child care homes, the Assessor will look at the ages of the children birth to five to determine which CLASS tool is appropriate in the setting using the following guidelines:

- If 51% of the expected attendance at the family child care home on the day of the assessment is made up of children between the ages of 3-5, the Pre-K CLASS will be conducted.
- If 51% of the expected attendance at the family child care home on the day of the assessment is made up for children between the ages of 15-35 months, the Toddler CLASS will be conducted.
- In cases when the expected attendance on the day of the assessment is 50/50, the Toddler CLASS will be conducted.

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, and the age composition of the classroom.

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 participants cannot choose which classrooms will be assessed in multi-room programs.

The Assessor will remain at your program for approximately 2-3 hours for a CLASS assessment. The Assessor will complete four CLASS cycles during the assessment. One cycle includes a 20 minute observation period immediately followed by a 10 minute coding period. The Assessor will conduct another cycle if any of the four cycles are less than 10 minutes in length, making the observation incomplete. The Assessor will not observe and/or score a cycle during outdoor gross motor free play. At the end of the CLASS assessment, the Assessor will ask the staff in the classroom if there are any children with an IEP/ISFP present in the classroom just assessed.

If you have questions or concerns about the assessment, please contact the Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero at 602-633-8652 or **krometro@swhd.org**. 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.

TRANSCRIPT TIMELINE

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 Participant Guide.

1. The participant requests transcripts at the beginning of their six month Points 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. The participant 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 participant and be given 15 business days to rectify the missing transcripts. If there is an issue with requesting official transcripts, unofficial transcripts may be considered at the discretion of the Assessment Grantee in collaboration with the Quality First Team at First Things First on a case by case basis. This is NOT a regular practice and will only be considered in extreme circumstances
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.

NOTE: Any transcripts that are requested after the end of the 6 month prep period will not factor into current Points Scale Assessment cycle.

Points Scale Guidance

Fiscal Year 2016



INTRODUCTION

This Points Scale Guidance Document has been developed to help your staff prepare for your program's Points Scale Assessment. This document is not intended to be used in isolation; rather it is intended to be used alongside the First Thing's First Quality First Points Scale. The Points Scale is the scoring rubric that will be used to assess your program. This Points Scale Guidance Document will help your program gather the evidence needed to demonstrate each concept being assessed.

This document is divided into three sections: Staff Qualifications, Administrative Practices, and Curriculum and Child Assessment. These sections mirror the three domains in the Points Scale Assessment. Within each section, there are best practice statements to inform you of why Quality First is assessing the domain and additional resources if you would like to learn more about the domain's importance. Next, the section will outline what information will be reviewed for each domain during the Points Scale Assessment, and whether the information will be looked at by an Assessor on-site or by reviewing the Quality First Extranet. Following this, there is additional information regarding the requirements for each scoring indicator in the Quality First Points Scale. This includes descriptions of the indicators, how to fill out required forms, and the details to each piece of required evidence. At the end of each section is a checklist to help you track that you have gathered all of the required evidence for each domain. There is also a list of definitions used in the Points Scale and Points Scale Guidance Document and picture directions for how to update the Quality First Extranet with needed information.

You are encouraged to utilize this document alongside your Points Scale. Take the time to match the evidence you have gathered and the indicator(s) it aligns with. You can self-assess where your program should score in each domain and what is needed to achieve full points. While the Points Scale Guidance Document is comprehensive of the entire Points Scale Assessment, you may find you need additional assistance when gathering your evidence. Please feel free to reach out to the Quality First team when this happens, whether by asking additional questions of your Quality First Coach and Quality First Consultants, Quality First Assessment Team, or the Quality First Team at First Things First. We are all here to support you in this process.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

1. WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS?

WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?

NAEYC Program Standard #6: Teachers

The program employs and supports a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests.

RATIONALE:

Children benefit most when their teachers have high levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation. Teachers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create more high-quality learning environments. Opportunities for teaching staff to receive supportive supervision and to participate in ongoing professional development ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession's ever-changing knowledge base.

(National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008)¹

2. HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR STAFF QUALIFICATIONS BE ASSESSED?

The information used to score the Staff Qualifications domain of the Quality First Points Scale is accessed directly from the extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>).

For each lead teacher and administrator, the information reviewed from the extranet includes:

- Months employed at the current program
- Total years of early childhood experience prior to employment at current program
- Educational documentation (highest degree earned and number of ECE and/or related fields credits) **Credit will only be given for courses with a grade C or better.
- For each assistant teacher, the information reviewed from the extranet includes:
 - Months employed at the current program
 - Total years of early childhood experience prior to employment at current program

Please remember that only paid staff members who work directly with children should be included on the extranet's staffing tab. Information will be gathered from the extranet for all active staff members during the Quality First Points Scale assessment.

1. [www.naeyc.org: http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf)

3. WHAT COURSES/SUBJECTS/MAJORS ARE CONSIDERED FOR CREDIT IN THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE?

Fields considered for college credit in ECE or related fields include:

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

4. WHICH OF MY STAFF'S TEACHING CERTIFICATES SHOULD I SUBMIT FOR VERIFICATION?

AZ Teaching Certificates considered for credit in the Quality First Points scale include:

- State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Education
- State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Special Education with ECE endorsement
- State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Elementary Education with ECE endorsement

If you have a staff member with a teaching certificate not listed above, please submit their transcripts instead of their teaching certificate to verify coursework in ECE or a related field. Participants must resubmit a copy of their current Teaching Certificate for verification for each Points Scale cycle. There is no cost to submitting the document and due to the fact that this document can be changed, revoked and/or expires, resubmitting the document each assessment cycle is required.

5. WHAT FORMS DO I NEED TO SUBMIT TO QUALITY FIRST?

The forms you need to submit to Quality First to verify your staff's education information, and the timeline for submission, are located in the link titled "FY16 Forms" on the Quality First extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>) in the Quality First Resources section. (Picture directions on how to access the forms are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section.) The forms are also available in hard copy as part of the Quality First Participant Guide.

The forms include:

- AZ Teaching Certificate Verification/CDA Verification
- Transcript Verification and Fee Request
- Transcript Timeline

The verification forms should be submitted at the beginning of your six month Points Scale prep period. All transcripts, teaching certificates and CDAs should be submitted to Quality First at least three weeks prior to the end of your six month prep period.

6. HOW/WHAT DO I NEED TO UPDATE IN THE QUALITY FIRST EXTRANET (HTTP://EXTRANET.AZFTF.GOV)?

Please update the extranet's staffing tab to include the following information:

- All currently employed staff members who work directly with children should be listed
- Each staff member's position title should be accurate
- Each staff member's "Staff Details" section should be up-to-date
- All lead teachers' and administrators' information should be updated to show whether educational documentation was requested

Picture directions are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section to help perform these tasks.

7. HOW WILL MY PROGRAM SCORE ON THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE'S STAFF QUALIFICATION DOMAIN ACCORDING TO THE FTF BOARD APPROVED POINTS SCALE?

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
2a. July 1, 2011 25% have Education: 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. OR Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college OR CDA AND Experience: 1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program	2b. 50% have experience: 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program.	2c. Education: 6 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. OR Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college OR CDA AND EXPERIENCE: 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	2 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 (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
4a. A total of 75% have the following education. EDUCATION: 25% HAVE 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. OR Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college or CDA AND 50% HAVE AA or AAS in ECE OR AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. AND EXPERIENCE: 1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program.	4b. 50% HAVE EXPERIENCE: 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program.	4c. Education: 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. OR Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college OR CDA AND EXPERIENCE: 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	4 points

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
6a. 25%** HAVE EDUCATION BA or BS in ECE or related field OR State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Education OR State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Special Education with ECE endorsement. OR State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Elementary Education with ECE endorsement. AND EXPERIENCE: 6 months of teaching in an early care and education program AND The remaining percentage of teachers meets the requirements at the 2 point level.	6b. 50% HAVE EXPERIENCE: 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program.	6c. Education: AA or AAS in ECE OR AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section. OR 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. AND EXPERIENCE: 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	6 points

8. AM I READY?

- Are all of my current staff members included on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab?
- Have I updated the Staff Details information for each staff member on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab?
- Have I requested educational documentation (transcripts, teaching certificates, CDAs) for my lead teachers and administrators?
- Have I submitted my program's education verification forms to Quality First?
- Have I updated the Education Documentation section on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab?
- Has Quality First verified my staff's educational documentation? (I'll know this has happened because I will be able to see the information on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab.)
- Have I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale document to see where I believe my program should score in the Staff Qualifications domain of the Points Scale?

9. USEFUL DEFINITIONS:

Administrator: The one who is engaged in administrative duties or program practices and is onsite at the program more than 50% of the time.

Lead Teacher: The 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: For Quality First's purposes, staff includes paid staff members who work directly with children.

10. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1993).

A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development.

Retrieved December 26, 2014, from naeyc.org:

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/positions/PSCONF98.PDF>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009).

Where We Stand on Professional Preparation Standards. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from

[www.naeyc.org:http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/programStandards/pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/programStandards/pdf)

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

1. WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES? WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?

“Group size works to raise program quality, not simply because there is magic in having a particular number of children gathered together, but because when the number of children is small, each child gets more individual attention and interaction is more likely. Small groups do not automatically produce quality; quality lies in what can be achieved because the size of the group is small. Group size is, therefore, a key indicator of program quality.” (Wilson, 2007)

NAEYC Program Standard #10: Leadership and Management

The program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high quality experiences.

RATIONALE:

Excellent programming requires effective governance structures, competent and knowledgeable leadership, as well as comprehensive and well functioning administrative policies, procedures, and systems. Effective leadership and management create the environment for high quality care and education by

- Ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and guidelines;
- promoting fiscal soundness, program accountability, effective communication, helpful consultative services, positive community relations, and comfortable and supportive workplaces;
- maintaining stable staff; and
- instituting ongoing program planning and career development opportunities for staff as well as continuous program improvement. (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008)

2. HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES BE ASSESSED?

The assessor will collect the information used to score indicators related to ratios and group sizes (indicators 2a, 2b, 4a, 4b, 6a and 6b) during the onsite Points Scale assessment visit.

- All open classrooms serving children 0-5 years will be assessed. This includes coming back on a different day if required by classroom configurations, such as a program with M/W/F and T/TH classrooms. AM/PM classrooms will be assessed separately.
- The assessor, accompanied by a program administrator, will visit each open classroom to perform a ratio/group size count. This will be done at two different points in time for each classroom. The ratio counts will be collected at least two hours apart in full day programs. For programs operating four hours or less, the ratio counts will be collected at least one hour apart.

² Wilson, R. A. (2007). Group Size- A Key Indicator of Quality. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from Early Childhood News: http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=576

³ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2008). Early Childhood Program Standards. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from [www.naeyc.org: http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf)

The information used to score the indicators related to staff retention (indicators 2c, 4c and 6c) is accessed from the extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>) and by the assessor during the onsite Points Scale assessment visit.

- For each staff member, the information reviewed from the extranet includes the months employed at the current program.
- The assessor will review the program's written retention plan during the onsite Points Scale assessment visit.

3. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSOR'S ONSITE POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT VISIT?

1. A written retention plan

- A retention plan includes information about the policies and benefits offered to employees that encourage them to stay employed at their current job.
- A retention plan is suggested for any program that employs more than one staff member.
- This information may be included as part of an existing document, for example, a staff handbook, a company's operations manual, or a policy and procedures manual.
- You can also write a new retention plan. The plan can be written in any format, but there is a Quality First Retention Plan form included on the extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>) to use if desired.

Picture directions on how to access the Quality First Retention Plan form are included at the end of the Administrative Practices section.

2. A classroom list for ratios and group sizes

- List each open classroom/childcare group
- Note if the classroom has been newly opened in the last two years, newly opened in the last three years, or has been open for more than three years.
- What is the highest number of children you would allow in the classroom/childcare group at one time? Is this the licensed capacity or did you self-limit at a lower number?
- What is the birthdate of the youngest child enrolled (on the attendance roster) in the classroom/childcare group? The child's name is not needed.
- What staff members are assigned to that classroom/childcare group? What is each staff member's position title? (This position title should match the staff member's position title on the extranet's staffing tab.)
- You can use the assessor's ratio/group sizes form to capture the information, if desired.
- Picture directions on how to access the assessor's Ratio/Group Sizes form for the Quality

First Points Scale are included at the end of the Administrative Practices section.

4. How/what do I need to update in the Quality First extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>)?

- Each staff member’s Staffing Details on the staffing tab should be up-to-date.
- All open classrooms (those with children enrolled on an attendance roster) should be included in the classroom/family group tab.

Picture directions on how to update the Staffing Details section of the staffing tab are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section.

Picture directions on how to update the Classroom/Family Group tab are included at the end of the Administrative Practices section.

5. How will my program score on the Quality First Points Scale’s Administrative Practices domain according to the FTF Board approved Points Scale?

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
<p>2a. 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"> • Infants 1:5, max or 10 children • 12-24 months 1:6, max of 12 children • 2 year olds 1:8, max of 16 children • 3 year olds 1:13, max of 26 children • 4-5 year olds 1:15, max of 30 children 	<p>2b. Ratios and group sizes are the following: Up to 5 children enrolled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:5, max of 5 children 6-10 children enrolled • 1:5, max of 10 children 	<p>2c. In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers or 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 recommendation to be implemented.</p>	2 points

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
<p>4a. Group sizes are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants 1:5, max or 10 children • 12-24 months 1:6, max of 12 children • 2 year olds 1:8, max of 16 children • 3 year olds 1:12, max of 24 children • 4-5 year olds 1:15, max of 26 children 	<p>4b. Ratios and group sizes are the same as the previous level.</p>	<p>4c. In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers or 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 recommendation to be implemented.</p>	4 points

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
<p>6a. Ratios and Group sizes meet the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants 1:4, max or 8 children • 12-24 months 1:4, max of 8 children • 2 year olds 1:6, max of 12 children • 3 year olds 1:9, max of 18 children • 4-5 year olds 1:10, max of 20 children 	<p>6b. Ratios and group sizes are the following:</p> <p>Up to 5 children enrolled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:4, max of 5 children 6-10 children enrolled • 1:4 max of 10 children 	<p>6c.</p> <p>In the past 3 years, the retention rate for all classroom staff or Family Child Care staff does not fall below 65%</p> <p>If a program falls below 65%, 6 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendation to be implemented.</p>	6 points

6. Am I ready?

- Are all of my current staff members included on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab?
- Have I updated the Staff Details information for each staff member on the Quality First extranet's staffing tab?
- Do I have a written retention plan in place for my program? Is it included in the documents for the assessor to review?
- Are all of my open classrooms included on the Quality First extranet's classroom/family group tab?
- Do I have a list of all my open classrooms, the birthdate of the youngest child in each classroom, and the staff assigned to each classroom (including their position title) ready for the assessor?
- Have I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale document to see where I believe my program should score in the Administrative Practices domain of the Points Scale?

7. Useful Definitions

Lead Teacher: The 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.

Open Classroom: A classroom or childcare group in which there are children currently enrolled (on an attendance roster).

Retention Plan: A retention plan includes policies and benefits offered to employees that encourage them to stay employed at their current job.

8. Additional Resources for Information on Administrative Practices

Barnet, S. W. (2003, March). Low Wages = Low Quality: Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from National Institute for Early Education Research: <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/3.pdf>

Schumacher, R. a. (2008, August). Continuity of Care: Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Research-Based Rationale. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from The Center for Law and Social Policy: <http://research.policyarchive.org/13791.pdf>

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

1. WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT? WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?

NAEYC Program Standard #2: Curriculum

The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.

RATIONALE:

A curriculum that draws on research assists teachers in identifying important concepts and skills as well as effective methods for fostering children's learning and development. When informed by teachers' knowledge of individual children, a well-articulated curriculum guides teachers so they can provide children with experiences that foster growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. A curriculum also helps ensure that the teacher is intentional in planning a daily schedule that (a) maximizes children's learning through effective use of time, materials used for play, self-initiated learning, and creative expression as well as (b) offers opportunities for children to learn individually and in groups according to their developmental needs and interests. (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008)⁴

NAEYC Program Standard #4: Assessment of Child Progress

The program is informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children's learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching, and program improvement.

RATIONALE:

Teachers' knowledge of each child helps them to plan appropriately challenging curricula and to tailor instruction that responds to each child's strengths and needs. Further, systematic assessment is essential for identifying children who may benefit from more intensive instruction or intervention or who may need additional developmental evaluation. This information ensures that the program meets its goals for children's learning and developmental progress and also informs program improvement efforts. (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2008)⁵

⁴ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2008). Early Childhood Program Standards. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from www.naeyc.org National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2008). Early Childhood Program Standards. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf

⁵ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2008). Early Childhood Program Standards. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from www.naeyc.org/files/academy/file/OverviewStandards.pdf

2. HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT BE ASSESSED?

The assessor will collect the information used to score indicators related to written lesson plans (indicators 2b, 4b and 6b), child assessment portfolios (indicators 2c and 4c), and written policies/procedures (indicators 2b, 2c, 4a and 6c) during the onsite Points Scale assessment visit.

- The assessor will review written activity plans/lesson plans for all classrooms that received an ERS or CLASS assessment during current assessment cycle.
- The assessor will review child assessment portfolios for all classrooms that received an ERS or CLASS assessment during the current assessment cycle.
- The assessor will review the program's written transition plan, policy for sharing curriculum with families, parent-teacher conference schedule, child assessment procedures, and policy for children's screening and referral.

The information used to score indicators related to staff training requirements (indicators 2a and 6a) is assessed directly from the extranet (<http://extranet.azftf.gov>).

For each lead teacher and administrator, the information reviewed from the extranet includes:

- Which modules of the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS) and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG) trainings have been completed
- Months employed at the current program

3. WHAT TRAININGS DO MY STAFF NEED TO COMPLETE PRIOR TO THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT?

All lead teachers and administrators should participate in trainings regarding the Arizona Early Learning Standards and the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. There are two benchmarks (indicators 2a and 6a) in the Quality First Points Scale that state how many modules must be completed by each lead teacher and administrator to receive credit. When staff have attended a training, please work with your Quality First Coach to update the extranet's staffing tab to reflect completion of a training module.

- For 2016 implementation, the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training is suggested but not required.
- Staff with an ECE endorsement on their Arizona Teaching Certificate may waive the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training.
- The requirement of attending the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training is waived for staff who have been employed in the program for six months or less at the time of their Points Scale assessment.

The introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training and the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines can be facilitated by your Quality First Coach or scheduled through the Arizona Department of Education. All additional modules of the Arizona Early Learning Standards training must be scheduled through the Arizona Department of Education (<http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/>).

4. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSOR TO REVIEW REGARDING WRITTEN ACTIVITY PLANS/ LESSON PLANS?

The most recently completed four weeks of lesson plans will be reviewed by the assessor for each classroom/childcare group that received an ERS or CLASS assessment during the current cycle.

There is not a required format for lesson plans. Your program is encouraged to utilize the lesson planning format that is already in place. Rather than a specific format, assessors are looking for three elements of best practice to be included on the lesson plan, in whatever format works best for you.

- 1. Each lesson plan must include at least one Arizona Early Learning Standard or Infant Toddler Developmental Guideline.** (The requirement for including at least one Infant Toddler Developmental Guideline is encouraged but not required for 2016 implementation.)
- 2. Each lesson plan must include at least one specific learning objective for the children.**
 - The specific learning objective may be included on the written lesson plan itself or on an attached document. If using another document, there must be clear indication for the assessor that the lesson plan and additional sheet go together.
 - To protect the identity of children in your care, initials or other coding systems, such as numbers or shapes, may be used instead of children's names. If using a coding system, you must also attach a key for the assessor.
- 3. In a classroom/childcare group where there is a child with a special need enrolled, each lesson plan must include at least one strategy, adaptation or modification for the child.** You are not required to provide the child's name, their area of special need, or their evaluation/assessment paperwork (for example their IEP or IFSP) to the assessor.
 - The strategy, adaptation or modification may be included on the written lesson plan itself or on an attached document. If using another document, there must be clear indication for the assessor that the lesson plan and additional sheet go together.
 - To ensure confidentiality, initials or other coding systems may be used in place of children's names. If using a coding system, you must also attach a key for the assessor.

Definitions for Early Learning Standards, lesson plan, specific learning objectives for children, and a strategy, adaptation or modification for children with special needs are included at the end of the Curriculum and Child Assessment section.

5. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSOR TO REVIEW REGARDING CHILD ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS?

The assessor will review four child portfolios from each classroom/childcare group that received an ERS or CLASS assessment during the current cycle. The portfolios will be selected through a random draw process on the day of the onsite Points Scale visit. Please have current classroom/childcare group rosters available on the day of the Points Scale visit; they will be used during the random draw process.

There is not a required format for child portfolios. Your program is encouraged to use the documentation system that is already in place. Rather than a certain format, the assessor is looking to see that each portfolio includes three elements of best practice.

- 1. Each child's portfolio has at least one piece of documentation for social development, one piece for emotional development, one piece for cognitive development, and one piece for physical development. (The developmental domains align with the Arizona Early Learning Standards.)**
 - The documentation must have been collected within the last calendar year, as of the date of the onsite points scale visit.
 - The documentation must be labeled with the child's name, the date it was collected, and the domain it represents.
 - One piece of documentation may be credited in more than one domain (i.e. cognitive and physical).
- 2. Within the children's portfolios, there is a variety of methods used to document the children's developmental progress.** These can include work samples, anecdotal notes, and developmental checklists. Definitions for these terms are included at the end of this section.
 - Each developmental domain (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical) does not need to include documentation in all three methods. Rather, across the children and across the developmental domains, different methods should be represented so that looking holistically at the portfolios there is evidence that a teacher is using different documentation methods to capture children's developmental information.
 - One piece of documentation may represent more than one method (i.e. a work sample and an anecdotal note).
- 3. Family input must be included as a part of each child's portfolio.** Families offer insight into their child's development that is occurring outside of the classroom/childcare group environment, and the information is important for consideration in developing learning plans and objectives.
 - The documentation must have been collected within the last calendar year, as of the date of the onsite points scale visit.
 - The documentation must be labeled with the child's name and the date it was collected.
 - If the family input is embedded within another piece of documentation, you are encouraged to highlight or otherwise mark the information for easy review by the assessor.

If your program uses an electronic child assessment/portfolio system, you will need to convert the information into a PDF format for review by the assessor. **Instructions on how to do this for Teaching Strategies Gold are included at the end of the Curriculum and Child Assessment Section.** If the system you use is unable to be converted into PDF, you will need to print out the documentation. Please make sure that once printed, the documentation still reflects the child's name, the date of collection, and the domain it represents.

6. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE ASSESSOR TO REVIEW MY WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DURING THE ONSITE VISIT?

There is no required format for the policies. You are encouraged to use the ones already a part of your employee handbook, parent handbook or other operating manuals, if available.

- 1. Child Assessment Procedures:** A written statement that informs families of the activities and timelines for child assessment. This includes the areas being assessed, the methods used, who collects the information, and what is done with it.
- 2. Parent- Teacher Conference Schedule:** Written documentation of how often parent-teacher conferences occur during a calendar year.
- 3. Policy for children's screening and referral:** A written statement that informs parents of the activities and timelines regarding their child's screening and referrals as a result of those screenings. (Definitions of these terms are included at the end of the Curriculum and Child Assessment section.)
- 4. Transition Plan (indicator 4a):** Outlines the activities and timelines that a program/child/family goes through when transitioning from home to the program (enrolling), within the program (changing classroom's/childcare group's attendance rosters), and exiting the program (withdrawing).
 - There must be at least one timeline and one activity for transitioning into the program. This can be child/family or program based.
 - There must be at least one timeline and one activity for transitions within the program. This can be child/family or program based. **If children do not change classrooms/childcare groups during their enrollment in the program, this is not required.
 - There must be at least one timeline and activity for transitions exiting the program. This can be child/family or program based.
- 5. Written Process for Sharing Curriculum with Families:** A statement that shows how your program informs families of what their children are learning or identifies the curriculum used.

6. How/what do I need to update in the Quality First extranet?

Please update the extranet’s staffing tab to include the following:

- All currently employed staff members who work directly with children should be listed
- Each staff member’s position title should be accurate
- Each staff member’s Staff Details section should be up-to-date
- The modules of the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental **Guidelines each staff member has completed should be marked**

Picture directions are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section to help perform these tasks.

7. How will my program score on the Quality First Points Scale’s Curriculum and Child Assessment domain according to the FTF Board approved Points Scale?

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
<p>2a. 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). The infant - Toddler Developmental Guidelines will be required when written and available. * A valid Arizona Early Childhood Teaching Certificate or Endorsement is accepted in lieu of training.</p>	<p>2b. The Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant-Toddler Development Guidelines (when complete) are clearly reflected in the written activity plans. and There is a written process for sharing curriculum with families.</p>	<p>2c. 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. AND Parent Teacher conferences are offered once per year.</p>	2 points

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
<p>4a. Programs follow the Arizona Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education Birth through Kindergarten. Recommendation for transitions between environments.</p>	<p>4b. Written curriculum plans include specific learning objectives for children based on each child's documented or observed assessment information.</p>	<p>4c. 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. AND Programs use a variety of methods that include observation/anecdotal notes, children's work samples, developmental checklists.</p>	4 points

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
<p>6a. 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>6b. Written activity plans includes 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.) This item may be N/A</p>	<p>6c. 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. AND Parent teacher conferences are offered twice per year.</p>	6 points

8. Am I ready?

- Are all of my current staff members listed on the extranet's staffing tab?
- Have I worked with my coach to update my staff's AZELS and ITDG training information in the extranet's staffing tab? (I'll know this is done by looking at the trainings marked in the staffing tab.)
- Have I collected the most recently completed four weeks of lesson plans for each classroom that received an ERS or CLASS assessment in this assessment cycle?
- Does each lesson plan include the Arizona Early Learning Standards or Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines? Are they clearly marked for the assessor?
- Does each lesson plan include specific learning objectives for children? Are they clearly marked for the assessor?
- Does each lesson plan include adaptations/modifications/strategies for children with special needs, if any are enrolled in the classroom? Are they clearly marked for the assessor?

- Have I collected assessment portfolios for all the children enrolled in classrooms that received an ERS or CLASS assessment this assessment cycle?
- Does each piece of documentation in a child's portfolio have the child's name, the date it was collected, and the developmental domain it represents (social, emotional, cognitive or physical) clearly labeled?
- Does each child's assessment portfolio include family input? Does the input include the child's name and the date it was collected? Is the family input clearly marked/ labeled for the assessor?
- Do I have classroom rosters printed/copied and available for each classroom that received an ERS or CLASS assessment in the current assessment cycle to use during the random draw for child portfolios?
- Do I have a written transition plan for my program? Does it include the activities and timelines for children's transitions 1) into the program (enrolling), 2) within the program (changing classroom's/childcare group's attendance rosters), and 3) exiting the program (withdrawing)? Is it included in the documents for the assessor to review?
- Do I have a written policy for sharing curriculum with families? Is it included in the documents for the assessor to review?
- Do I have written parent-teacher conference schedule? Is it included in the documents for the assessor to review?
- Do I have written child assessment procedures? Are they included in the documents for the assessor to review?
- Do I have a written policy for children's screening and referral? Is it included in the documents for the assessor to review?

9. Useful Definitions

Anecdotal Note: A way for a teacher to document children's development through short descriptions of what they see and hear a child doing throughout the day. A photo may accompany the note as well as an additional way of tracking developmental information about that child; a photo would need to have that written description so there is context about what area of development is being highlighted.

Developmental Checklist: A checklist that shows what developmental milestones a child is reaching at a certain age. Use of the checklist can show whether a child is reaching developmental milestones at the anticipated age range (the rate of a typical peer) or if there is a need for further assessment in a developmental domain because a child is not meeting the anticipated developmental milestones.

Early Learning Standards: Statements that describe the expectations for learning and development of young children. For Quality First's purposes, these include the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS) and the Arizona Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG).

Lead Teacher: The 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.

Lesson Plan: A lesson plan is developed by a teacher to guide instruction throughout the day/week, and as a method of preparation. It usually includes the name or theme of the lesson, the date(s) of the lesson, the objective being focused on (early learning standard and specific learning objective), the materials that will be used (including modifications for children with special needs), and the activities to be done.

Referral: Making a recommendation or referral of a child and family with other professionals or programs, for the purpose of more in-depth assessment.

Screening: A quickly administered assessment used to identify children who may benefit from more in-depth assessment.

Specific Learning Objectives for Children: A concept or skill being taught to an individual child or a small group of children (not the entire classroom/childcare group) based on an identified developmental need or child interest.

Strategies, Modifications or Adaptations for a Child with Special Needs: A change in what or how a concept, skill or activity is presented to a child in order to allow the child to successfully participate with their peers. This can include altering the content, presentation, or materials used in a lesson or activity.

Transition Plan: Outlines the activities and timelines that a program/child/family goes through when transitioning from home to the program (enrolling), within the program (changing classroom's/childcare group's attendance rosters), and exiting the program (withdrawing).

Work Sample: A way to gather information on where is child is developmentally though a tangible piece of evidence that has been created by the child.

11. Additional Resources for Information on Curriculum and Child Assessment Huffman, P.

D. (2007). "Look What I Did!" Why Portfolio-Based Assessment Works. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from Early Childhood News:

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=495

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8. Retrieved December 26, 2014, from www.naeyc.org:

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/position%20statement%20Web.pdf>

Participant Guide Forms

Fiscal Year 2016



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
 (*If appealing your Star Rating, you must first submit an Assessment Clarification)
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



Quality First Assessment Report Clarification Request

Participant Name and Address:		Participant ID#:	
Assessment Tool/Classroom Name:		Requested By:	
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 krometro@swhd.org. Clarification for the Points Scale assessment will be sent to the Quality First team at 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 in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education with an ECE endorsement or Elementary Education with an ECE endorsement; 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. Participants must resubmit a copy of their current Teaching Certificate for verification for each Points Scale cycle. There is no cost to submitting the document and due to the fact that this document can be changed, revoked and/or expires, resubmitting the document each assessment cycle is required.

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. 24th St. Phoenix, AZ 85008, Attention Jeanette Brainard ; E-mail to jbrainard@swhd.org

Date:

Coaching Agency:

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 _____ Date _____

Signature, Coach _____ Print Name, Center Director/Program Designee _____

Print Name, Coach _____ Date _____

Proof of Registration and Participation in E-Verify Program

[A.R.S. §§ 23-211 & 23-214]

Dear Quality First Participant:

An employer must provide proof to First Things First that it is registered with and is participating in the e-verify program before receiving a grant. For the purposes of this requirement, an employer means:

any individual or type of organization that transacts business in this state, that has a license issued by an agency in this state and that employs one or more employees in this state. Employer includes this state, any political subdivision of this state and self-employed persons. In the case of an independent contractor, employer means the independent contractor and does not mean the person or organization that uses the contract labor.

Please check the appropriate box for each statement:

- Yes No I employ staff other than myself as described above.
- Yes No I operate a business in the State of Arizona.
- Yes No I have a license or certification issued by an Arizona state agency.

If any one of the above answers are, “No,” then you are not an employer for the purposes of this requirement. Please return this signed form to First Things First as indicated below.

If all answers above are, “Yes,” proof of e-verify registration and participation is required in addition to this signed form. **Please return this signed form and documentation of e-verify registration and participation to your Quality First Coach.** Before you are able to access Quality First Incentives and/or Quality First Scholarships, documentation of registration and participation in e-verify is required. If First Things First determines an employer is not complying with the requirement to be registered with and to participate in the e-verify program, the employer must repay all grant monies received.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing declaration is true and correct.

Applicant Name	(Authorized) Signature	Date
FTF ID #	Site Name	
Street Address	City	Zip



Quality First Goal Form

Inclusion Contact	Date:
ADE Contact	Date:
Director Contact	Date:
Supervisor Contact	Date:

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 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 my engagement to 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.

Main Contact : _____ Position: _____

Secondary Program Designee: _____ Position: _____

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

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 lltotten@azftf.gov or 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

Please complete the information below to request your program assessment completion be scheduled before the typical time frame. This form must be submitted through the Quality First Coach to the Assessment Grantee for approval. The Grantee 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 Participant, 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 2 months from the cycle end date will not be approved.
- I understand I cannot request an early assessment two years in a row (1-2 star participants).

_____	_____	_____
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

Participant Name:	Address:
Participant ID#:	
Coach Name:	

Participants 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 – 26 months from the date of my current assessment.

 Director/Owner/Designee Name Signature Date

 Coach Name Signature Date

This form must be scanned and/or e-mailed to qualityfirst@aztf.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



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. 24th St. Phoenix, AZ 85008, Attention Jeanette Brainard.
- E-mail to 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 # OR birthdate	Names of Institution	Transcript Fees
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$
				\$

Signature, Center Director/Program Designee

Print Name, Center Director/Program Designee

Date

Signature, Coach

Print Name, Coach

Date