INSPIRING INCLUSION
USING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MODEL
NORTH CAROLINA INCLUSION INSTITUTE
MAY 2017

- Ann Turnbull, Ed.D.  Professor and Advocate
- Erin Aguilar – Easterseals Blake Foundation - Tucson
- Naomi Karp - Director, Early Childhood Professional Development, United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ
FROM OUR DISCUSSION TODAY, WE HOPE YOU WILL GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF:

• The history, background, and context behind the need to build a new, comprehensive professional development system to benefit the teachers and young children of Southeastern Arizona;

• The Great Expectations we have for Teachers, Children, Families and Communities and the Communities of Practice model;

• How this work is influencing the values and expectations Tucson and Southern AZ have for young children with disabilities, their families, and their teachers; and

• How this work is influencing the expectations that teachers and children have for themselves and each other.
HISTORY OF OUR WORK

Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families, and Communities
2004: BUILDING BRIDGES
STUDY OF EC TEACHERS IN PIMA COUNTY

• Funded by United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ to gain systemic knowledge about:
  - the numbers of EC teachers in Pima County
  - their education levels
  - barriers faced in furthering their education
  - numbers of children served (10,853)

• Surveyed 166 center directors and owners in Pima County to gain information about their staff members’ education levels
BUILDING BRIDGES RESULTS

Education Level of Center Teaching/Care Giving Staff, 2004 Ami Nagle
## 2004 Building Bridges: Barriers to Higher Education (Ami Nagle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Barriers to CDA</th>
<th>Barriers to AA</th>
<th>Barriers to BA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No money for tuition and books</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time to take classes</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class and work schedule conflicts</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No increases in salary because of</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase in education</td>
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In 2015, United Way repeated parts of the *Building Bridges* study

Biggest barriers to degree completion remained:
- Money for books & tuition
- Lack of time to go to school
- Classes and work schedules conflict
- Family obligations
- Added education does not = added salary
2008-09: WHAT FTF DISCOVERED ABOUT PIMA COUNTY’S EC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development mainly consisted of informal, often random two hour increments of time, with no follow-up or support for applying newly learned concepts.

Little or no ties to college credit, coursework or a pathway that would lead to a degree.

Limited access to subject matter experts.

Professional development opportunities were driven by the need to attain clock hours to maintain adequate standing with licensing.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PIMA COUNTY

TIMELINE OF PROGRESS

Fiscal Year 2010

**Central Pima** Request For Grant Application awarded to United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona and partners

Fiscal Years 2011-2012

**South Pima** Request For Grant Application awarded to United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona and partners

Fiscal Years 2013-2015

Five Regional Partnership Councils in Pima County Request For Grant Application awarded to United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona and partners

*In FY2015, Central and North Pima regions consolidated to become one region, Pima North*
THE VISION AND STRATEGY OF FIVE FIRST THINGS
FIRST REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCILS

Fiscal Years
2016 and 2017

Tohono O'odham Nation
Pima North
Pima South
Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Cochise

5/11/2017 10
OUR GREAT EXPECTATIONS

We want to see the day when:

• Arizona has a culture that believes in the importance of, and then funds and supports, high quality education for young children and their teachers

• In Arizona, an early childhood education degree is the expectation and NOT the exception

• In Arizona, all young children with special needs will be enrolled in high quality, inclusive settings where their teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to reach every child
OVERARCHING GOALS

• Increase access to higher education and degree completion among early childhood educators

• Respect, value, and honor the diversity of teachers, children, and families

• Create and sustain a culture of education that encourages and supports full inclusion
VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

• Research indicates that *training* does not make a difference in changing practice.

• Education:
  --is long-term, intentional, and sequential
  --provides opportunities for hands-on learning
  --allows time for reflection
  --changes behaviors and practices

Therefore, we only talk about education and/or learning opportunities; *training is taboo.*
VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

All learning opportunities are designed to:

• Ensure intentionality in all of our activities

• Create and grow a culture that supports higher education

• Be sequential, developmental, and based on hands-on learning opportunities

• Respect and value diversity
VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

• Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is the underlying foundation and philosophy of all our work

• Adult learners are taught the principles of DAP in developmentally appropriate ways based on adult learning research

• Adult learners, over time, then understand how to implement DAP in their own classrooms
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE STRUCTURE

We have 16 Communities of Practice and each:

• Has at least 1 coordinator (28 total)
• Meets on average 2 times a month with assignments to complete between meetings
• Has 10-20 members, on average, per cohort
• Has a syllabus, written by the Coordinator(s), for the year and/or follows the college-approved syllabus
Communities of Practice (CoP):

- May have a college credit option that will lead to a degree
- Use a research-based or evidence-based curriculum and/or develop an explicit program of learning that has an evidence-based focus
- Learn to connect Conceptual Frameworks
- Meet in an early childhood environment, on a higher education campus, and/or at a sponsoring agency
- Collaborate with other CoPs
- Focus on building a piece of the new system by addressing a specific topic, i.e., infant-toddler development; inclusion; language and literacy development; DAP
Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families, and Communities

Our Mission

- Increase degree completion among early childhood educators
- Honor diversity
- Create a culture that supports education in Southern Arizona

First Focus on Kids
building a developmentally appropriate professional development system.
(United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona)

Quality Connections
focusing on expanding directors' and teachers' skills, knowledge, and practice in Cochise County.
(Easter Seals Blake Foundation)

Linking Leaders
focusing on directors and teachers who serve the most vulnerable children.
(Early Childhood Development Group)

Language, Literacy, and Growing Minds
focusing on increasing family childcare providers' knowledge of language and literacy development in young children.
(United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona)

Whole Teacher Whole Child
focusing on increasing children's social-emotional, brain, and physical development by expanding teachers' knowledge and leadership through coaching and classes.
(United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona)

ENLACE
focusing on creating pathways from associate to bachelor's degrees.
(Pima Community College)

Inspire Inclusion
focusing on supporting high quality inclusion.
(Easter Seals Blake Foundation)

Tohono O'odham Community College
focusing on improving kindergarten transitions for tribal children.
(Tohono O'odham Community College)

The Story Project
focusing on promoting emergent literacy and language in family childcare homes.
(Make Way for Books)

University of Arizona College of Education
focusing on increasing early childhood degree program completion.
(University of Arizona College of Education)

Pascua Yaqui Tribe
focusing on incorporating tribal culture, history, and language into Pascua Yaqui early childhood classrooms.
(Pascua Yaqui Tribe)

Project BEST
focusing on building high quality infant and toddler care and education.
(Easter Seals Blake Foundation)

Quality for All
focusing on strengthening principals' knowledge of early childhood development and learning.
(Tucson Unified School District)

Las Familias
focusing on implementing developmentally appropriate practices in all early childhood classrooms.
(Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children)

Early Learning Connections
focusing on strengthening teachers' and elementary school principals' knowledge about developmentally appropriate practice.
(Vail Unified School District)
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

• Developmentally Appropriate Practice – Copple and Bredekamp
• Evidence-based Practice in the Early Childhood Field – Buysse & Wesley
• Mind in the Making – 7 Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs – Ellen Galinsky
• Systems Thinking Benson & Marlin
• Arizona Early Learning Standards and the Arizona Infant Toddler Guidelines – AZ Department of Education
• Doing the Right Thing for Children: The Eight Qualities of Leadership – Maurice Sykes
• Growth Mindsets – Carol Dweck
• Instructional Support – Strategies that will improve teachers’ and children’s vocabularies and critical thinking skills
WHY THESE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS?

• All are research- or evidence-based
• All have strong links to each other
• All can have a positive impact on executive functioning – for the teachers and the children
• All link to AZ Early Learning Standards
ELLEN GALINSKY’S 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

- Focus and Self-Control
- Perspective Taking
- Communicating
- Making Connections
- Critical Thinking
- Taking on Challenges
- Self-Directed, Engaged Learning
NATIONAL EXPERTS

National, State, and Local Experts reinforce and connect the Conceptual Frameworks

- Tracy Benson & Sheri Marlin – Systems Thinking
- Cheryl Foster – Leadership, coaching and professionalism
- Luis Hernandez – Cultural diversity and families
- DaNel Hogan – STEAM
- Judy Jablon – *Powerful Interactions* and coaching
- Katie Paschall – Translating research to practice with a focus on executive functions in TEACHERS and children
- Maurice Sykes – *Doing the Right Thing for Children*
- Rud and Ann Turnbull – Translating special education laws into inclusive lives for children and families
COACHING

• Provided for CoP members **at least 9 times per year** using multiple strategies, in order to improve classroom practices

• May be offered individually, in small or large groups, face-to-face, and/or by e-mail conversations

• Develop individual Professional Development Plans

• Focus also on values, ethics, and professionalism
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ENGLISH

GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHERS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name: ____________________________
Contact Information: ____________________________
Professional Setting/Workplace: ____________________________
Position/Job Title: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________

A Professional Development Plan is a road map for your professional development and career pathway. This plan, along with the support of your coordinator, will help you develop your strengths and knowledge, focus your energy, and further your career in the field of early childhood education.

Developed by Cherry Foster
Design by Jantina Rose Japer
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Your one-year goal(s): ____________________________
Your three-year goal(s): ____________________________
Your five-year goal(s): ____________________________
Your Great Expectation for yourself is: ____________________________
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – SPANISH

GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHERS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
PLAN DE DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL

Nombre: ____________________________
Número de Teléfono/Correo Electrónico: ____________________________
Lugar de Empleo: ____________________________
posición/Título: ____________________________
Fecha: ____________________________

Un Plan de Desarrollo Profesional es un mapa para su desarrollo profesional en camino a una carrera. Este plan junto con el apoyo de su coordinador, le ayudará a desarrollar sus habilidades y conocimientos, enfocar sus energías, y promover su profesión como educador(a).

Su meta(s) en un año:

Su meta(s) en tres años:

Su meta(s) en cinco años:

Favor de llenar las metas clave y actividades planificadas para el desarrollo profesional.

Su Grande Expectativa para sí mismo es...

[Blank space for writing]
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

• Every CoP member has a plan in English or in Spanish
• The goals/ideas belong to the CoP member
• Members use the plans as guides for goal-setting and goal completion
• Members ask Coordinators for help
• Coordinators give advice, if asked, and offer encouragement and support to reach goals
• Coordinators review plans periodically during the year
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

• Provide Coordinators time together every month or as needed to discuss leadership successes and issues

• Use NAEYC Code of Ethics as a foundation

• Convene local, state, and national consultants to: a) develop and/or refine shared vocabulary, messages and goals for CoPs; and b) build on conceptual frameworks and provide inspiration and information re: best practices in ECE

• Provide Coordinators with coaching and guidance to continuously improve their own coaching and leading roles

• Convene a 5-day summer school for the Coordinators in order to expand their thinking/strategies for integrating the conceptual frameworks into every CoP
NURTURING THE WHOLE CHILD

Focus on

• Pedagogy – Science of teaching; covers everything that goes on; deliberate process that cultivates children’s development

• Curriculum – Content of what goes on in the room;

• Methodology - How teachers teach and bring all parts of the curriculum together

• Strategies for building social and cognitive skills through play and individual and group learning opportunities = 3 Rs of early learning
NURTURING THE WHOLE TEACHER

Focus on:

• Studying pedagogy, curriculum, and methodology

• Understanding and linking First Things First’s Standards of Practice and Conceptual Frameworks

• Providing coaching and using multiple models to fit different strengths and needs of coaches and coachees

• Developing leadership skills
INSPIRING INCLUSION:
HOW A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE WORKS
GOALS

The purposes of the Inspiring Inclusion Community of Practice are:

• To provide early childhood educators with the skills and knowledge about best practices and state-of-the art strategies needed to create high quality, inclusive environments for young children with special needs; and

• To ensure that, upon completion, students should be able to:
  • Recognize diverse abilities
  • Describe the referral process
  • Identify community resources
  • Understand/explain the importance of collaborations between families/professionals
  • Develop appropriate strategies/adaptations to support children in inclusive environments with best practices as defined by laws, policies, and high quality environments
WHO JOINS AND HOW THEY JOIN

• Child care center teachers, directors, assistant directors, public school pre-K teachers, tribal home care providers

• Where CoP members work (2015-2017)
  • 12 CENTER-BASED TEACHERS
  • 4 PUBLIC SCHOOL PRE-K TEACHERS
  • 18 TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS
  • 0 IN SEGREGATED CLASSROOMS
  • 2 HOME-BASED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

• Members join through Great Expectations enrollment process
  • Annual Kickoff Event July-September
  • Enrollment = 1 year commitment
  • No drop-ins allowed
PRACTICE-BASED COACHING

Collaborative Coaching Partnerships

Shared Goals and Action Planning

Focused Observation

Reflection and Feedback
BOOKS AND MATERIALS USED

• Families, Professionals, and Exceptionality: Positive Outcomes Through Partnerships and Trust- Ann and Rud Turnbull, et al
• Early Childhood Inclusion: A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
• Dear Colleague Letter Preschool LRE 1-10-17
• US Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs
• Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
• DEC Recommended Practices
BOOKS AND MATERIALS USED

- Special Quest Video Series
- Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
- Head Start Inclusion Modules
- Raising Special Kids (AZ PTI)
- Zero to Three
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
- Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines
- IDEA
- Connect Modules
- FPG Inclusive Child Care Curriculum
GUEST SPEAKERS

In addition to text books and supplemental materials, CoP members learn through their own experiences and class sessions that have guest speakers, including those who are:

• Occupational Therapists
• Physical Therapists
• Speech and Language Professionals
• Parent Panels- who share their stories of inclusion
• Ann and Rud Turnbull
ENGAGING FAMILIES THROUGH COACHING SUPPORT

• Community of Practice members receive on site support through coaching. Sessions may focus on strategies for specific children, with parental permission

• Technical assistance strategies for classrooms or individual children to support full inclusion

• Support/ facilitation of difficult conversations, such as Child Family Team meetings.

• Community resources for families

• Parent-focused workshops for sharing information and resources
TOUR OF AN INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE ENVIRONMENT

• Each year, CoP members tour the Children’s Achievement Center, a High Quality Inclusive Environment

  • Look at and become familiar with adaptive materials

  • Understand how teachers plan to include different abilities and ages in the same classroom (Infant, 1-2 and 3-5)

  • See first hand through visual examples that inclusion is obtainable even when meeting many standards/requirements

  • Become familiar with Quality First, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Arizona Early Learning Standards, Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Department of Economic Security, Department of Health Services, Head Start and Early Head Start
FOCUS ON SPECIFIC AREAS

• Person First Language

• Typical and atypical patterns of development, observations, and tools

• Creating inclusive environments

• IEP/ IFSP development, implementation and understanding the components

• Differentiated instruction, assistive technology and adaptive materials
FOCUS ON SPECIFIC AREAS

• Characteristics of exceptionalities and delays

• Early Intervention/special education processes

• Transitions

• Adaptations and Modifications

• Collaborating with families and community partners.

• Focus on Access, Participation, and Supports for all children
BLENDING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND INCLUSION

• Developmentally Appropriate Practice - Looking at Best Practices and strategies for supporting individual children to meet needs

• Mind in the Making - 7 Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs - supporting the development of these skills in All children through intentional teaching practices

• Systems Thinking - Supporting members’ abilities to look at challenges from different perspectives so that they can enact change
BLENDING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND INCLUSION

- Arizona Early Learning Standards and the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines - Modifying and adapting lessons to meet everyone’s needs

- Doing the Right Thing for Children: Identifying the Eight Qualities of Leadership in one’s self and using them to advocate for children with special needs

- Powerful Interactions - Supporting members’ abilities to: Be Present, Connect, and Extend Learning for All children
IMPROVING SYSTEMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION: ETHICS, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

POLICIES SUPPORTING INCLUSION
CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

• Committed to ongoing educational sessions over multiple years
• Started with sessions organized by stakeholder group—families, practitioners, and administrators
• Had separate sessions on policy for children birth through two and three to five
• Embedded a culturally relevant child and family to enable immediate application of knowledge to a meaningful context
• Interspersed small and large group problem-solving and discussion
FOCUSED ON 3 KEY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

• Dignity

• Family as foundation

• Community
LONG-TERM GOALS OF DISABILITY POLICY

• Equality of opportunity

• Full participation

• Independent living

• Economic self-sufficiency
POLICY FOR CHILDREN BIRTH THROUGH TWO AND THEIR FAMILIES

• Multi-disciplinary evaluation

• Individualized services

• Natural environment

• Procedural safeguards

• Parent participation
POLICY FOR CHILDREN THREE TO FIVE AND THEIR FAMILIES

• Zero reject

• Non-discriminatory evaluation

• Appropriate education

• Least restrictive placement

• Procedural due process

• Parent/student participation
GREAT EXPECTATIONS AT WORK

EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES
DEGREE COMPLETION

Community College Changes:

• May 2009, Pima College awarded 26 Early Childhood Studies Associate’s Degrees; 44 were awarded in May 2016
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

Achieving Success in Math Classes:

• August 2010 - Had to develop a way to help EC students overcome fear of math/failure; This is one of the biggest barriers to degree completion in US

• All students had access to Pima College general tutors

• Used grant funds to embed student-tutors in the math class; only CoP members could use them

• Dec. 2010 – All CoP members using embedded tutors passed the class

• 2012-13 – 83% of students in CoP passed; 55% of students with regular math tutors passed
MORE EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

• For seven years, Great Expectations’ Coordinators and United Way staff were engaged in discussions with Pima Community College (PCC) faculty to secure classroom credit for the CoP members who are trying to earn an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Studies and participate in CoP education opportunities.

• June 2016 – PCC agreed that CoP members enrolled in coursework will benefit from the extensive coaching opportunities available as part of Great Expectations.

• Therefore, a CoP member can replace 10 hours of PCC seat time with 10 hours of coaching time as long as the coaching is in person, with the coach and student in the same room, and the coaching is related to the learning objectives of the PCC course.

• Courses can also include 5 hours of attendance in professional development offered by the national and state experts who are consultants to the Great Expectations grant. This is a major breakthrough for CoP members.
MORE EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

• After 8 years of discussions, PCC just agreed to create a course in Infant-Toddler Care and Development to start in August 2017
• Semester 1 = an overview of the topic
• Semester 2 = WestEd’s PITC curriculum will be used for credit
• Students in the class also will learn about college entrance tests and how to maneuver through the PCC enrollment maze
• Students will be primarily first-time college attendees
UNIVERSITY OF AZ SYSTEMIC CHANGES

August 2011- With funding from Great Expectations, U of A began an Early Childhood Education (ECE) Master’s Program with 5 students

• May 2013 – All 5 graduated; 2 in Ph.D. program

• May 2017– 8 new Master’s students have enrolled for fall 2017
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

Additional changes:

• In 2013, one funding Council commissioned a study of its Professional Development strategies: CoP model, REWARD$ Scholarships, and TEACH Scholarships. Results showed: a) CoP model had lowest per-participant cost; b) Members ranked CoP model most effective, with coaching being highly valued.

• As of March 2017, we have 518 members in our CoPs

• We have had a total of 1,675 members since 2013, which is when we began collecting data electronically. During the first 3 years of the grant, we collected data by hand and accuracy became a problem.
CHALLENGES REMAIN

We started with a promise to build a pathway between the Community College and the U of A College of Education

• Students from PCC do not have a clear transfer pathway to College of Ed

• Not all courses from Pima transfer to U of A

• ECE courses at U of A are given during hours when PCC graduates are working in EC classrooms

• United Way and U of A remain committed to BA degrees with certification
Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families, and Communities

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- Honor diversity
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Communities of Practice

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