GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
Developing a Generation of Systems Thinkers

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NAEYC PDI – June 8, 2014
In 2009, funding from First Things First created the Professional Development Alliance that is…

- Building a new EC PD system for Pima County, including 2 Tribal Regions; the focus is on children from birth – 5 years of age

- Resulting in 10 Communities of Practice (CoPs) that strengthen teachers’ knowledge and skills and increase systemic capacity of well-prepared center-based, public school pre-k-based, and family-based educators
We want to see the day when:

• Arizona has a culture that supports and understands the importance of high quality education for young children and their teachers.

• An early childhood education degree is the expectation and NOT the exception.

• It is the expectation that all early childhood teachers will have the opportunities and resources needed to earn a college degree.
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:

• ensure intentionality in all our activities
• create and sustain a culture that supports higher education
• are sequential, developmental, and based on hands-on learning
• respect and value diversity
VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice 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 then understand how to implement DAP in their own classrooms.
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE STRUCTURE

Each Community of Practice (CoP):

• Has at least 1 coordinator
• Meets on average 2 times a month
• Has a minimum of 20 members

(per cohort)
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
STRUCTURE

Each Community of Practice (CoP):

- Has a college credit option that will lead to a degree (Associate’s, B.A., Master’s, and/or Doctorate)
- Uses a research-based curriculum and/or develops an explicit program of learning based on research
- Meets in an EC environment, on a higher ed campus, and/or at an agency
- Collaborates with other CoPs
- Focuses on building a piece of the system
Early Childhood Professional Development & Leadership System

Great Expectations for Teachers, Children and Families

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

- Improving the Quality of Infant & Toddler Practice
- Improving Transition Strategies for Tribal Kindergarten Children
- Supporting Higher Education Early Childhood Degree Completion
- Creating Developmentally Appropriate Inclusive Classrooms
- Improving Instructional Support in Public Preschools
- Creating Pathways from Associate’s to Bachelor’s Degrees
- Raising the Quality in Early Childhood Environments
- Improving High Quality Family Childcare Homes
- Developing Developmentally Appropriate Professional Development Systems
- Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice in All Classrooms
- Mind in the Making
- Instructional Support
- Evaluation
- Evidence-Based Coaching
- Systems Thinking
- Arizona Early Learning Standards
- Systems Thinking
1. Building a Developmentally Appropriate Professional Development System  
(United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona First Focus on Kids)

2. Improving and expanding the quality of infant and toddler practice (Child & Family Resources Project Best)

3. Creating Developmentally Appropriate inclusive early childhood education settings (Easter Seals Blake Foundation)

4. Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in classrooms by deepening teachers’ understanding of DAP (Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children Las Familias)

5. Improving public preschool teachers’ understanding and competence in providing sustained and intensive instructional support to all children (Tucson Unified School District)

6. Linking center owners, directors and teachers who serve the most vulnerable children to resources and information that will raise the quality of the children’s environments (Early Childhood Development Group Linking Leaders)

7. Developing family child care home providers’ skills and knowledge about how developmentally appropriate physical activities and quality nutrition help to prepare healthy young children for school (UWTSA ¡Muévete, Muévete!)

8. Improving teachers’ strategies for smooth Kindergarten transitions for tribal preschool children (Tohono O’odham)

9. Facilitating completion of Early Childhood Associate’s degrees at Pima Community College (PCC) and smooth transitions to Early Childhood Bachelor’s degree programs, with a special focus on using Department supports at PCC and the University of Arizona College of Education (Pima Community College ENLACE)

10. Increasing the number of students completing the Early Childhood Education Bachelor’s Degree program or the Early Childhood Education Master’s Degree program by reducing barriers and promoting alternatives that will lead to graduation (University of Arizona)
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

- DAP
- *Mind in the Making*
- Instructional Support, *Powerful Interactions*, and CLASS©
- AZ Early Learning Standards
- Systems Thinking
- Evidence-based Coaching
- Evaluation
“Systems thinking is a vantage point from which you see a whole, a web of relationships, rather than focusing only on the detail of any particular piece. Events are seen in the larger context of a pattern that is unfolding over time.”

High Performance Systems, now I see systems
WHY THESE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS?

• All are research-based
• All impact executive functioning
• All share links with DAP and each other
• All link to AZ Early Learning Standards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Systems Thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children will begin to develop a sense for how the world around them works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Developmentally Appropriate Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children learn in classrooms that support them developmentally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Instructional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use specific teaching strategies to support children’s learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>Seven Essential Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To help children learn for life, and live to learn.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Ellen Galinsky, <em>Mind in the Making</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Today and everyday!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please bring: Systems Thinking
National Experts reinforce and connect conceptual frameworks

- Sue Bredekamp and Carol Copple – DAP
- Luis Hernandez – Cultural diversity
- Rebecca Klemm – STEM with focus on mathematic
- Judy Jablon – Powerful Interactions
- Diane Craft – Physical movement and learning

Also have had 3-day Mind in the Making workshops; 7 days of CLASS; Susan Ochshorn and Edith Goldenhar EC policies

Local experts on topics ranging from leadership to characteristics of ideal teachers
EVIDENCE-BASED COACHING

• Teaches and supports reflection
• Provides participants with strategies for improving their own classroom practices
• Supports leadership development
Where: within Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Teach Young Children

You are invited!

Why: to develop

7 Essential Skills

- Self-directed Learning
- Perspective Taking
- Critical Thinking
- Taking on Challenges
- Communicating
- Focus & Self-control
- Making Connections

What: Systems Thinking explorations

How: by using Instructional Support

Concept Development:
- Analysis + Reasoning
- Integration
- Creating
- Connections to Real World

Language Modeling:
- Open-ended Questions
- Focus + Conversation
- Advanced Language
- Self + Parallel Talk
- Repetition & Reiteration

Facilitation of Learning + Development:
- Children's Active Engagement
- Active Facilitation
- Expression & Cognition

Quality of Feedback:
- Encouragement + Affirmation
- Providing Information

Creating a caring community of learners.

Engaged Support for Learning

Scaffolding
- Feedback Loops
- Encouragement + Information
- Prompting Thought Processes
- Providing Information

Supporting Language Use
- Advanced Language
- Self + Parallel Talk
- Repetition + Reiteration
Developmentally Appropriate Practice (where)

Which Systems Thinking aspect(s) could be explored here? (what)
Habits of a Systems Thinker:

- Seeks to understand the big picture
- Observes how elements within systems change over time, generating patterns and trends
- Recognizes that a system's structure generates its behavior
- Identifies the circular nature of complex cause and effect relationships
- Changes perspectives to increase understanding
- Surfaces and tests assumptions
- Considers an issue fully and resists the urge to come to a quick conclusion
- Considers how mental models affect current reality and the future
- Uses understanding of system structure to identify possible leverage actions
- Considers both short and long-term consequences of actions
- Finds where unintended consequences emerge
- Recognizes the impact of time delays when exploring cause and effect relationships
- Checks results and changes actions if needed: “successive approximation”
Which of the 7 Essential Skills might be nurtured in this activity? (why)
THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS EVERY CHILD NEEDS

1. Focus and Self Control
2. Perspective Taking
3. Communicating
4. Making Connections
5. Critical Thinking
6. Taking on Challenges
7. Self-Directed, Engaged Learning
Which of the 7 Essential Skills might be nurtured in this activity? (why)

As the teacher, how might you apply Instructional Support strategies specifically to support this skill development? (how)
EVALUATION CHALLENGES

- Highly innovative aspects of the work
- Emergent
- On-going changes in systems, people, behaviors, policies, and practices
- Tracking and storing data = new website and database
Community College Changes:

• Focus now is on degree completion and transferability to a BA degree.

• May 2009, College awarded 25 EC Studies Associate’s Degrees; 47 were awarded in May 2013

• May 2014 – College awarded 35 EC Studies degrees; Dip due to addition of 2 more classes before taking required Fieldwork class; Improving program quality negatively impacted degree completion time

• 2014 – NAEYC Accreditation
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

- 2010 - Had to develop a way to help EC students overcome fear of math/failure; This is biggest barrier to degree completion in US
- All students had access to College tutors
- Embedded 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
University of Arizona’s College of Education:

- **August 2011** - began an ECE Master’s Program with 5 students
- **May 2013** – All 5 graduated; 2 now are in ECE doctoral programs
- **August 2013** – 6 new Master’s students enrolled
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

Community and Statewide:

• Systems Thinking and coaching consultants are now used by First Things First across AZ

• First Things First PD staff is moving away from training to education
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

• First grant funded by all Councils in 1 Region

• 9 CoPs offer a college credit option

• Attendance at Southern AZ AEYC PD Conference has risen from under 400 in 2008 to over 700 in 2013
EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMIC CHANGES

- Increase in professional development participation
- July 1, 2013 - May 30, 2014

  - 436 CoP Members
  - 420 Drop-in Participants
  - 141 Earning College Credit
  - 3,523 Member Attendances
  - 1,366 Participant Attendances
  - 2,412 Attendances Earning College Credit
WHAT IS SYSTEMS THINKING?

“Systems thinking is a vantage point from which you see a whole, a web of relationships, rather than focusing only on the detail of any particular piece. Events are seen in the larger context of a pattern that is unfolding over time.”

High Performance Systems, now I see systems
High quality Child Care programs can be important in improving the lives of children, but their accomplishments will be constrained by the quality of the programs themselves, by the larger environment, and by the quality of the schools that the children attend after their early childhood experiences.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WITH REFERENCE TO THE NEW ENGLAND STATES
Arthur MacEwan, Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, January 2013
BUILDING THE SYSTEM: BIRTH TO THIRD GRADE

• Emphasis on Reading Proficiency
• Third Grade Reading Scores
• Implications for School Readiness
READ ON TUCSON

- Build on the Early Years Successes
- Develop New Partnerships
- Strengthen the Ties between Pre-K and Elementary Schools
READ ON TUCSON
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

• Use the Partnership to develop Proven Strategies to improve Child Outcomes
• Decide on Criteria and Select Schools
• Pick the Strategy Options
United Way Third Grade Reading Proficiency Initiative Addressing the Gaps in Kindergarten Readiness, Attendance and Summer Learning Loss
TIE THE SYSTEMS’ WORK TOGETHER: ONE EXAMPLE

• Read On Pre School Success Strategy in Public Preschool
• Great Expectations Preschool Instructional Support
• Both focused on CLASS Instructional Support Elements
• Change recorded in Classrooms
HOPES AND DREAMS

- Children are Ready for Kindergarten
- Kindergarten is Ready for Children
- Parents and Teachers Know How to Make What’s Best for Children a Reality
- Children Learn, Grow & Thrive
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