

First Things First

Early Childhood Development and Health



In November 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, a citizen's initiative that funds quality early childhood development and health at the local level.

The Proposition created a new state level board known as the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board. This Board consists of nine members recently appointed by Governor Napolitano as well as ex-officio members comprised of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Directors of the Departments of Health, Economic Security and AHCCCS. The nine members appointed by Governor Napolitano in December 2006 are: Nadine Basha, Rhian Evans Allvin, Jack Jewett, Vivian Juan-Saunders, Paul Luna, Gary Pasquinelli, The Honorable Cecil B. Patterson, Jr., Retired, Dr. Pam Powell and Dr. Gene Thompson.

Proposition 203, First Things First establishes Regional Partnership Councils throughout the state, in yet to be determined regions. The Councils are to include eleven members who reside or work in the region and meet the following descriptions: parent of a child age five or younger, child care provider, health services provider, public school administrator, early childhood educator, member of the business community, member of the faith community, representative of a philanthropic organization, and if an Indian Tribe is located in the region, one public official or employee of a Tribal Government.

First Things First specifies that programs undertaken by the Board and the Regional Partnership Councils are to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

1. Improve the quality of early childhood development and health programs.
2. Increase the access to quality early childhood developmental and health programs.
3. Increase access to preventive health care and health screenings for children through age five.
4. Offer parent and family support and education concerning early childhood development and literacy.
5. Provide professional developmental and training for early childhood development and health providers.
6. Increasing coordination of early childhood development and health programs and provide public information about the importance of early childhood developmental and health.

The Early Childhood Development and Health Initiative provides for the distribution of funding through both statewide and regional grants. Funding to the regions is based on the approval of the Regional Partnership Council plans submitted to the nine-member Board and will take into account the population of children aged five or younger and the population of children aged five or younger whose family income does not exceed 100% of the federal poverty level. Programs approved by the Board may be conducted either by grantees in the region or directly by the Regional Council.