



# Tempe: A Community for Kids

## Plan for Action

With Support from the  
Arizona Community Foundation

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## Executive Summary

The value of engaging a community in the healthy development of its youngest residents is the focus of more than a year's effort on the part of key Tempe agencies and individuals. The opportunity for this discussion was presented by the Arizona Community Foundation in January 2002, with a planning grant to develop a "Community For Kids". A growing body of research supports the claim that community policies and practices affect individual outcomes for children. The *Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children* suggests that improving community support for families with young children can have substantial long-term pay-offs including a decrease in the number of high school drop outs, reducing the numbers of people receiving public assistance, and a reduction in those entering the criminal justice system.

Beginning with the need to start a community discussion on this topic, the *Community For Kids* steering committee convened five focus groups in the fall of 2002. The purpose was to glean from parents, child care providers and teachers what Tempe was doing well to support families with young children and what is needed. This information, along with a demographic analysis, was presented to Roundtable Participants in January of 2003. The resulting discussion yielded consensus on the following four goals to move Tempe in the direction of being a community where "all children are well:"

- Increase public awareness and knowledge of Birth-5 development
- Support comprehensive and systemic change aimed at ensuring that all parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children's early success
- Mobilize the community of Tempe to advocate and act on behalf of all children
- Develop sustained community engagement around our youngest citizens

The next steps are to build the infrastructure in Tempe to address the above goals. This will include hiring a *Communities For Kids* coordinator who will be responsible for supporting community change which is responsive to the needs of families with young children.

# Tempe: A Community For Kids Final Report

## Background

The purpose for initiating Tempe as a *Community For Kids* was grounded in the benefit for our community to have an intentional and intelligent on-going process to increase the health and well being of our next generation. The process will strengthen strategic partnerships among the institutions that serve children and families and, more importantly, improve the outcomes for our youngest citizens.

*Communities For Kids* is a statewide initiative designed to engage Arizona communities in the lives of young children, from birth to 5 years. Through strategic and synergistic partnerships, a *Community For Kids* will have formulated a clear vision and created a sustainable infrastructure for providing the resources and nurturing support that families need to raise children who are healthy and ready to succeed in school. The Arizona Community Foundation convened a statewide consortium to support this initiative, which including the following partners:

**Children's Action Alliance**  
**American Academy of Pediatrics – Arizona Chapter**  
**Libraries for the Future**  
**New Directions Institute for Infant Brain Development**  
**Prevent Child Abuse, Inc.**  
**Southwest Human Development Inc.**  
**Arizona's Children Association**  
**Arizona Department of Economic Security**

## Research

The science of early brain development and the role of early experience has expanded dramatically in the past ten years, replacing many myths and erroneous beliefs which have guided parents for many years. This emerging knowledge can be put to use to dramatically improve the lives of children in our community. In 2000, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine published **From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development**. Three key points have specific implications for policy development around early childhood:

- Society is changing, and the needs of young children are not being addressed
- Early environments matter, and nurturing relationships are essential
- Children's emotional and social development is as important to school readiness as their cognitive and language development

In 1990, the National Governor's Association outlined six educational goals aimed at ensuring that "all children will start school ready to learn by the year 2000." In 2000, the Tempe Elementary School District reported that children entering kindergarten were beginning their school career with fewer skills than ever before. What happens in those years prior to kindergarten are critical to later school success. Yet very few parents are aware of what their

child needs to know in order to be ready for school. A large part of the core issue is that there is no state or city organization or system responsible for ensuring that children are ready for success in school.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2003) puts it this way:

**We can invest now in our children and families and enjoy long-term savings, with a more vibrant nation of healthy, achieving children and more stable families. Or, we can fail to make the investment and pay the price: increased delinquency, greater educational failures, lowered productivity, less economic competitiveness, and fewer adults prepared to be effective, loving parents to the next generation of children. Federal, state and local government, communities, parents and the private sector must share in the responsibility of ensuring the well being of children and families.**

According to the National League of Cities, (Supporting Early Childhood Success, 2002), every \$1 invested in early childhood yields a \$7 return in long-term benefits to the community. The returns come in the form of lower crime rates, a better educated workforce, increased opportunities for economic development and a decreased need for intervention programs to address social problems. This much we know; if children are not ready to learn by age five, their chances of being successful in school are greatly diminished.

Simply helping children gain a few important skills before they begin kindergarten is only a small part of the issue. According to the Child Mental Health Foundations and Agencies Network, "children who do not begin kindergarten socially and emotionally competent are often not successful in the early years of school-- and can be plagued by behavioral, emotional, academic, and social development problems that follow them into adulthood." (A Good Beginning: Sending America's Children to School with the Social and Emotional Competence They Need to Succeed, 2000). Viewing school readiness in a holistic manner requires the expertise and commitment of the entire community with an agenda of shared responsibility.

Research has demonstrated that quality early childhood care, available health care, and exposure to early learning does have a real long-term benefit. In a study conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, 111 children were tracked for twenty years. The children were placed in one of two groups. Each group was matched on economic variables, education of the parents and several other variables. The experiment placed 57 of the children from infancy through age five years in a high-quality early childhood program. The other 54 received no special program. At age 21, those who received early intervention were more likely to:

- Score higher on IQ, reading, and math tests
- Be enrolled in or graduated from a 4 year college
- Delay parenthood
- Be gainfully employed

Tempe is in good company by considering how to address the needs of young children. Examples of what other communities are doing to improve outcomes for young children include:

- Officials in San Jose, California created an “Office on Childcare” to ensure affordable, accessible, and high-quality childcare for local families.
- The City of Seattle, Washington passed the “Families and Education Levy.” This property tax levy has collected \$69 million over seven years and has been a significant source of funding for early childhood programs run through the city’s human services department.
- In New Haven, Connecticut, the Mayor and Superintendent of Schools established the “Mayor’s Task Force on Universal Access to Early Care and Education.” The group is charged with developing a plan to make sure all New Haven children arrive at kindergarten with the skills, knowledge and support they need to be successful.

### ***Communities For Kids in Tempe***

In January 2002, Prescott, representative of a small community, and Tempe, representative of a diverse urban city, were selected as demonstration *Communities For Kids* sites and were allocated dollars by the Arizona Community Foundation to begin a discovery and planning stage. A \$25,000 planning grant was given to each community to discover, consider, and move into action a plan that would guide the community toward ensuring that all children could have the best possible chance for success in school and life. Tempe Community Council and the Tempe Elementary School District took a lead role in moving the process forward. Key stakeholders representing organizations that have significant impact on families with young children were asked to participate on the Steering Committee.

Early in the process, the Steering Committee determined the mission, vision and goals of the initiative for Tempe.

#### **Mission**

*To ensure that Tempe is organized, prepared, and committed to providing the resources and support families need to raise healthy children with cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competence, and the confidence for school and lifelong success.*

#### **Vision**

*All Tempe children thrive in nurturing families and supportive communities.*

#### **Goals**

Goal 1: Increase public awareness and knowledge of Birth-5 development

Goal 2: Support comprehensive and systemic change aimed at ensuring that all parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children's early success

Goal 3: Mobilize the community of Tempe to advocate and act on behalf of all children

Goal 4: Develop sustained community engagement around our youngest citizens

A Steering Committee was formed to guide the planning, gather the community data, and determine the course for public input.

Members of the Steering Committee are:

Tempe Elementary School District	Andrea Colby
Arizona Community Foundation	Patricia Goubeaux
Staff in assignment from CIS	Erin Hunt
Association for Supportive Child Care	Barb Milner
Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools	Lynette Stonefeld
City of Tempe Social Services	Judy Tapscott
Tempe Public Library	Sherry Warren
Association for Supportive Child Care	Susan Wilkins
Tempe St. Luke's Hospital	Jennifer Zuccone

### **Data Collection**

The Steering Committee determined what information would be gathered for use in planning. Three methods of information gathering were determined; statistical information, perceptions of the target populations, and interests and concerns of involved citizens and institutions. Statistical information was gathered from the City of Tempe, Tempe Elementary and Kyrene School Districts, Tempe Union High School District, the 2000 Census, Maricopa Association of Governments, Association for Supportive Child Care and the Arizona Department of Health Services. This data was compiled and published in the State of Tempe's Children which is available on the web at [www.tempe.gov/tcc](http://www.tempe.gov/tcc).

To gather the perceptions of parents and caregivers of young children, the Steering Committee conducted a series of five focus groups in different areas of Tempe. Four groups of parents and one group of child care providers responded to questions developed by the Steering Committee. The results are summarized in the following section.

Finally, a diverse community group was asked to participate in a series of roundtables. Forty-eight representatives of local governments, education, faith, social service, business, and non-profit organizations took time over four months to study the community data and input from the focus groups to determine if there is a desire and a means by which the community could work together to improve outcomes for our youngest citizens. The resulting plan by this group begins on page 7.

## **Focus Group Summary of Results**

The purpose of the focus groups was to provide an assessment of issues affecting families with young children, not to necessarily develop recommendations or solutions. Participants answered thirteen questions during the group sessions, including what services they use now and how their community could be more supportive of them. The information was summarized by a facilitator and used to provide insight to the Roundtable participants. The following eight statements sum up the main points.

1. Participants expressed a need for more child care choices, especially options for occasional childcare use and after-hours care.
2. Language is a significant barrier that diminishes a non-English speaking parent's confidence and sense of belonging in the community.
3. Participants receive nutrition and health information for their children primarily from the schools or government-sponsored programs such as WIC, their doctor, if they have health insurance, or from the media.
4. Government agencies such as police and fire departments and the media are the main sources of safety information for parents.
5. Participants value their children's education and want to ensure that their children are recognized and treated as individuals by the school system.
6. Parks and libraries provide a significant source of low-cost social, recreational and educational activities for families. Participants expressed a need for more free recreation options for teens.
7. Participants need help keeping their children safe from outside influences such as peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, and drug dealers in their neighborhood.
8. Participants expressed a desire for opportunities to connect with other parents and discuss issues related to caring for their children.

## **Community Roundtables**

A series of four Community Roundtables were held for the purpose of developing a Tempe *Community For Kids* Plan. Participants represented a wide variety of public and private agencies and organizations. A list of participants is included in Appendix C. All of the Community Roundtables were held in the Board Room of the Tempe Elementary School District #3. The process was facilitated by Dr. B.J. Tatro.

### ***Community Roundtable #1 (1/31/03)***

The purpose of the first Community Roundtable was to review and draw conclusions from the community data that had been collected and to identify any additional data that was needed. Patricia Goubeaux, from the Arizona Community Foundation, presented information on the importance of early brain development. Lynette Stonefeld, director of Tempe/Kyrene Communities in Schools, presented census and school-related data. Susan Wilkins, director of the Association for Supportive Child Care, presented findings of the five focus groups that were conducted for parents. Community Roundtable participants discussed the implications of the information presented and identified major themes.

### ***Community Roundtable #2 (2/28/03)***

The purpose of the second Community Roundtable was to increase awareness of existing community resources. Presenters covered the following areas: safety, child care, school-based programs, colleges and universities, physical health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, recreation, libraries, social services, parent education, faith-based programs, Tempe's Promise to Youth, and others. Representatives presented information on available services, target groups, number of persons served, service locations and contact information. Community Roundtable participants were asked to identify any additional community resources or leads for resource information. Following the presentations, participants reviewed the themes that emerged from Community Roundtable #1, which focused on community data. Participants considered the community resource information presented in light of the community data presented at the first Community Roundtable and identified implications for the community planning process.

### ***Community Roundtable #3 (3/28/03)***

The purpose of the third Community Roundtable was to identify issues. In preparation for the identification of issues, Community Roundtable participants reviewed the implications for planning from the data presented in Community Roundtable #1 and the resources presented in Community Roundtable #2, then identified issues, gaps, barriers, and other challenges. Following this, participants generated ideas about promising approaches to address the issues and identified potential partners.

### ***Community Roundtable #4 (4/25/03)***

The purpose of the fourth Community Roundtable was to prioritize solutions. Community Roundtable participants reviewed the mission, vision, and goals of *Communities For Kids*, as well as the results of the three prior Community Roundtables. Using the list of promising approaches created at the third Community Roundtable, participants expanded, revised, and grouped some of the strategies, then selected the approaches with the most support and energy behind them. Participants discussed the priority strategies and identified next steps.

## **Tempe Communities For Kids Plan**

This plan was developed based on the results of the four Community Roundtables.

## **Tempe *Communities For Kids* Plan**

### **Mission**

To ensure that Tempe is organized, prepared, and committed to providing the resources and support families need to raise healthy children with cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competence, and the confidence for school and lifelong success.

### **Vision**

All Tempe children thrive in nurturing families and supportive communities.

### **History**

The Arizona Community Foundation's *Communities For Kids*/Arizona Early Childhood Strategic Partnership is a statewide initiative designed to engage Arizona communities in the lives of young children, from birth to 5 years. Tempe and Prescott were selected as pilot sites in early 2002. The goal is to formulate a clear vision and create a sustainable infrastructure for providing the resources and nurturing support that families need to raise children who are healthy and ready to succeed in school.

### **Goals**

Goal 1: Increase public awareness and knowledge of Birth-5 development

Goal 2: Support comprehensive and systemic change aimed at ensuring that all parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children's early success

Goal 3: Mobilize the community of Tempe to advocate and act on behalf of all children

Goal 4: Develop sustained community engagement around our youngest citizens

### **Objectives and Potential Strategies**

Objective 1: Develop an organizational infrastructure within Tempe which ensures that families have the resources and supports needed to raise healthy children with cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competence, and the confidence for school and lifelong success.

Strategy 1.1: Explore models of city-level early childhood coordination from other municipalities throughout the world.

Strategy 1.2: Create a *Communities For Kids* Steering Committee to oversee and nurture Tempe's progress toward ensuring that families have the resources and support they need

to raise healthy children with cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competence, and the confidence for school and lifelong success.

Strategy 1.3: Present the *Communities For Kids* Plan to the City Council and relevant committees.

Strategy 1.4: Identify an organizational home and create a position for an early childhood coordinator who can facilitate the implementation of the *Communities For Kids* Plan and coordinate early childhood community collaborations.

Strategy 1.5: Create a highly visible, citywide, Mayor's Task Force to champion the *Communities For Kids* initiative and other early childhood efforts.

Strategy 1.6: Create a citywide early childhood agency networking group and hold regularly scheduled meetings.

Strategy 1.7: Continue the development and enhancement of **the Tempe's Promise to Youth** website as a vehicle for sharing information on resources and supports available to Tempe families.

Strategy 1.8: Continue to gather, share, and utilize information on community needs and best practices to guide the development and implementation of the Tempe *Communities For Kids* initiative and other early childhood efforts.

Objective 2: Work in coordination with other Valley organizations to provide action-oriented, multilingual education about early childhood brain development to high school students, young families, business leaders, community agencies who interact with young families, and the general public, using a variety of communication strategies.

Strategy 2.1: Identify and coordinate planning and implementation of community education with other Arizona agencies, organizations, and institutions who are similarly committed to the purpose of increasing awareness of the importance of early brain development.

Strategy 2.2: Prioritize target audiences; identify the messages to be sent to each and the action desired as a result of increased awareness and knowledge; and develop and implement educational approaches accordingly.

Strategy 2.3: Engage a variety of partners in community education efforts, including business leaders, human resources directors, the media, child care providers, schools and other educational institutions, community resource agencies and organizations, and other "gatekeepers" who come into regular contact with young families.

Strategy 2.4: Establish a community-based committee to guide the development and implementation of early childhood community education.

Objective 3: Identify and implement a levy or other mechanism to produce sustainable, public funding for early childhood programs and services.

Strategy 3.1: Identify and evaluate the benefits and impacts of municipal revenue-producing models for financing early childhood programs and services in Tempe; take action as deemed appropriate after study of financing strategies.

Strategy 3.2: Establish a community-based committee to guide the study and possible implementation of a municipal financing strategy for early childhood programs and services in Tempe.

### **Next Steps**

The Steering Committee reconvened in mid-May 2003 to determine the next steps. The decision was made to move forward and hire an early childhood coordinator. Agreement was reached for Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools to oversee the project for the first two years of implementation, with the hope that it could be raised to the level of a City staff position. A proposal is pending before the state office of the Corporation for National Service for two full-time AmeriCorp VISTAs who would act in supportive roles in the early childhood office. Office space for the coordinator and VISTAs is currently being sought.

The roundtable participants will reconvene in November 2003 to be updated on the progress of this initiative. Several roundtable participants asked to join the Steering Committee. They will be invited to attend. Other roundtable members requested to be involved in certain issue areas identified in the plan.

This report will be presented to the Arizona Community Foundation and the *Communities For Kids* partners at their next quarterly meeting.

## Communities For Kids Roundtable Participants

Organization	Name
Arizona Public Service	Cathy Newby
Arizona Action for Foster Children	Marcia Reck
Arizona Literacy and Learning	Rachel Passon
Association for Supportive Child	Susan Wilkins
ASU Child Development Lab	Mary Zuzich
AZ Community Foundation	Patricia Goubeaux
AZ House of Representatives	Meg Cahill
Chicanos Por La Causa	Andres Contreras
Children's Action Alliance	Karen Ortiz
City Council Member	Pam Goronkin
City Council member	Dennis Cahill
City of Tempe Adapted Recreation	LindaCano
City of Tempe Counseling	Tim Cox
City of Tempe Social Services	Kim Bauman
City of Tempe Transit Office	Amanda Nelson
City of Tempe Transit Office	Sue Taaffe
Citizen participant	Joyce Longfellow
Citizen participant	Darlene Pany
Community Action Agency	Dana King
Community Bridges, (EVAC)	Kristen Polin
Community Bridges, EVAC	Ann Warner
Community Education, Kyrene	Bonni Pomush
Director, Tempe Public Library	Teri Metros
Early Childhood Consultant	Barb Milner
East Valley RSVP	Fran White
Escalante Center	Keith Burke
Escalante Center	Diane Nunez, FNP
Getz Preschool	Dr. Elliot Gory
Governor's Office of Highway Safety	Sgt. John Butler
Grace Community Church	Debby Debernardi
KAET Channel 8	Jeannine Berg
KAET Channel 8	Mary Ann Dillon
Kid Zone	Jane Romatzke
Kyrene Early Childhood	Candy Roush
Libraries for the Future	Megan Kinney
Maricopa County Head Start	Cheryle Phelan
Medtronic Microelectronics	Bob Enderle
Mental Health Association	Debbie Wuellner
Open Horizons	Jennifer Johnson
Senior Services	Lyn Ramirez
smartschoolsplus.inc	Sandra McClelland
TD#3 School Board	Karen Arredondo

Tempe Community Action Agency	Marta Monyer
Tempe Community Council	Kate Hanley
Tempe Diablos	Rich Pitman
Tempe Elementary School District	Dr. John Baracy
Tempe Elementary School District	Andrea Colby
Tempe Elementary School District	Debra Gomez
Tempe Family YMCA	Allison Alguilar
Tempe Fire Department	Beverly Burns
Tempe Parks and Recreation	Mark Richwine
Tempe Police Department	Sgt. Charlie Barrett
Tempe Public Library	Nancy Petrie
Tempe Public Library	Sherry Warren
Tempe Social Services	Judy Tapscott
Tempe St. Luke's Hospital	Lois Kramer
Tempe St. Luke's Hospital	Jennifer Zuccone
Tempe/Kyrene Communities In	Erin Hunt
Tempe/Kyrene Communities In	Gail Paredes-Ewen
Tempe/Kyrene Communities In	Lynette Stonefeld
Tempe Union High School District	Zita Johnson
Thew Elementary School	Jean Mills
Trinity Center for New Thought	Rev. Jackie Garner
Valley of the Sun United Way	Sue Clark
Youth Health Center	Tony Pinson

## **Communities for Kids Coordinator**

### **Purpose:**

To actively support the ability of parents and institutions which serve young children to raise healthy children with cognitive, social-emotional, and physical competence and confidence for school and lifelong success.

**Examples of Duties** *Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:*

### **Increase public awareness and knowledge of Birth-5 development.**

Mobilize the community of Tempe to advocate and act on behalf of all children.

Research, recommend, and develop programs that will increase children's ability to come to school prepared for learning.

Develop sustained community engagement around our youngest citizens.

Support comprehensive and systemic change aimed at ensuring that all parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children's early success.

Assist in the development of long term support for early childhood programs and services.

Provide staff support to the Communities for Kids Steering Committee.

Write grants to increase funding for early childhood programs.

Assisting in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services.

Maintain records and prepare report to stakeholders.

Provide public presentations on areas related to early childhood.

Train parents and childcare providers in current early childhood practices.

### **Experience and Skill Guidelines:**

Four years of progressively responsible experience managing early childhood, or human service-related programs.

Equivalent to a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in early childhood, education, psychology, social work or related field. A Master's degree is highly desirable.

Must possess the ability to work with a wide variety of people in the public and private sector.

Must be knowledge in the areas of cultural diversity and the culture of poverty.

Also necessary: public speaking skills, grant writing and fund raising experience, good computer skills.

Supervision Received and exercised:

Receives supervision and support from the Communities In Schools Director. Provides guidance and supervision to the AmeriCorp VISTAs assigned to the project.