



Early Childhood Education Task Force

January 15, 2016

Mesa Counts on College Access Center
635 East Broadway Road, Mesa, AZ (South entrance)
(Take stairs to 2nd floor meeting room)
Meeting Begins at 1 p.m.

Dr. David Luna, Chair	Rhonda Anderson, Member	Jake Brown, Member
Mike Hutchinson, Member	Paul Luna, Member	Dr. Anjum Majeed, Member
Cynthia Melde, Member	Linda McKeever, Member	Allison Mullady, Member
Nancy Salmon, Member	Dr. James Zaharis, Member	Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Member
Dr. Dawn Foley, Member		

1. Call to order and welcome by Task Force Chair and D5 Councilmember, Dr. David Luna.
2. Review and take action on the Task Force meeting minutes of January 8, 2016.
3. Hear opening remarks by Chair, Dr. David Luna.
4. Hear an overview of the Draft Task Force Report by Natalie N. Lewis, Deputy City Manager
5. Participate in a facilitated discussion to reflect on and evaluate the content of the report related to these topics:
 - a. Does the report adequately articulate the Task Force's key findings that define the challenge and opportunity related to early childhood care and learning in Mesa?
 - b. Does the report accurately convey the Task Force's sense urgency and importance around the need to ensure that Mesa's children arrive at kindergarten ready and able to learn?
6. Discuss scheduling of future Task Force meetings February-April 2016.
7. Adjourn meeting (Motion and Second)

Task Force Members are highly encouraged to attend each meeting in person. By special request to the Chair, members might also attend by telephone conference call, if needed. City Council members may elect to attend the meeting for their own information, not for purposes of any legal action nor decision making by the Council. The City is committed to making its public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. For special accommodations, please contact the City Manager's Office at 480-644-3333 at least two days before the meeting. Si necesita asistencia o traducción en español, favor de llamar al menos 48 horas antes de la reunión al 480-644-2767.

Agenda Item 2

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF MESA
Early Childhood Education Task Force
Mesa Counts on College Access Center
635 E. Broadway Rd, Mesa, AZ 85201

Date: January 8, 2016 Time: 1:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF & GUESTS
Dr. David Luna, Chair	Rhonda Anderson	Alfred Smith
Dr. Dawn Foley	Jake Brown	Marrisa Ramírez-Ramos
Mike Hutchinson	Dr. Anjum Majeed	Natalie Lewis
Paul Luna		Amy Trethaway
Linda McKeever		Niel Curley
Cynthia Melde		Margaret Robertson
Dr. Allison Mullady		Ian Linssen
Nancy Salmon		Heather Wolf
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo	FACILITATOR:	Brian Peterson
Dr. James Zaharis	Karen Kurtz	Debbie Mulgrew

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Task Force Chair and D5 Councilmember, Dr. David Luna, called the meeting of the Early Childhood Education Task Force to order at 1:03 P.M.

2. **DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON DECEMBER 14, 2015 TASK FORCE MINUTES:** Chair Luna called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2015 meeting.

MOTION: Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo made a Motion to approve the minutes as presented

SECOND: Cynthia Melde

DECISION: Passed unanimously

3. **HEAR OVERVIEW OF PROCESS TO DATE, PROCESS FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK, AND GOALS FOR TODAY'S MEETING:**

Introduction of new members: Chair Luna introduced new member Dr. Dawn Foley, appointed to the Task Force by Council on January 7th, 2016. Dr. Foley is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Mesa Public Schools. She previously served as Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Higley School District for 6 years, and Professor at ASU over early childhood programs at the Polytechnic Campus. Early childhood is her passion. She worked closely with Dr. Jill Stamm and her mother, Billie Enz, was one of Jill Stamm's partners. She is the mother of two children and is thrilled to be part of this team.

This is the first Task Force meeting for Paul Luna, President and CEO of Helios Education Foundation. He is an Arizona native, born and raised in Miami, Arizona. He previously worked at both the Mesa United Way and the Valley of the Sun United Way engaged in early childhood education and early brain development. He served as one of the original board members of First Things First. He brings a commitment, passion and perspective to help the Task Force.

The remainder of the Task Force introduced themselves to the new members. Cynthia Melde advised that there will be volunteer council seat openings coming up for the First Things First Southeast Maricopa Region.

Staff Liaisons to the Committee:

Amy Trethaway, Director, Mesa Counts on College
Niel Curley, Special Projects Manager, City Manager's Office
Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager
Marrisa Ramirez-Ramos, Assistant to Councilmember David Luna

City of Mesa Staff in attendance:

Ian Linssen, Chief of Staff for Mayor Giles
Heather Wolf, Director, Mesa Public Library
Alicia White, Assistant to Councilmember Richins, District 1
Albert Smith, Deputy City Attorney

Guests in attendance:

Brian Peterson, Development Executive with Apple, formerly a 5th grade teacher, assistant principal and principal for 20+ years in Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada. He had the opportunity to meet with Councilman Luna and Mayor Giles and is here to listen, learn and to offer support.

Debbie Mulgrew, Compliance Coordinator in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community serving over 500 kids from birth to age 5 feeding into Mesa schools.

Overview and Goals for Today: A PowerPoint outline and Early Child Care Information Packet were provided to the Task Force. At the last meeting we discussed the need to better understand and define the challenges that we face here in Mesa as it relates to childhood education. Goals for today are to define the key findings as they relate to Mesa's challenges for early childhood education and to draw a shared conclusions based on the data presented. A draft report will be put together to be finalized by the Task Force at the Jan. 15th meeting.

Community Feedback: Anyone in the community is welcome to provide information or comments to Marrisa Ramirez-Ramos.

4. HEAR A PRESENTATION BY CITY STAFF AND PARTICIPATE IN A FACILITATED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTED AND RELATIVE TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND TOPIC AREAS:

Niel Curley gave a PowerPoint presentation of research data covering demographics, population, statistics on household income, labor force, poverty level, education attainment and early child care facilities, enrollment and cost. This includes data from the 2014 Census, the Arizona Department of Health, Arizona Department of Economic Security and First Things First.

Some key points from the presentation:

- Total Mesa Population 452,091
- Mesa median family income \$58,369, below county, state and national average

- One in 4 children under 5 live in poverty in Mesa
- Poverty rate increases with lower levels of education attainment
- 50.7% of children under 6 have both parents in the labor force
- 55.2% of single mothers with children under 6 are in the labor force
- 6.9% of Mesa's population is under 5 years old (31,238)
- Of Mesa's 31,238 children, 18,651 are under 3 and 12,587 are 3 to 4 years old
- Mesa early childhood education facilities have the capacity to serve 14,886 children
- 36% of Mesa children are enrolled in Pre-K, below the national figure of 48%
- The US Department of Health and Human Services considers 10% of family income for child care as a benchmark for affordable care

Task Force Discussion Points:

The First Things First Quality First five star rating scale was discussed. There has been significant improvement and 50% of participants across the state now meet the 3, 4 and 5 star ratings. They now need a 3, 4 or 5 star rating to receive a scholarship from the First Things First Quality First program. Of the 967 facilities across the state, 39 have a five star rating. There is a waiting list of 74 agencies currently to get into the Quality First program.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a national accreditation system which sets professional standards for early childhood education programs. There are 2 facilities in Mesa and about 67 statewide that are NAEYC accredited. Institutions may choose to obtain accreditation at a cost. If a school is not participating in Quality First or is not accredited, that does not mean it is not a quality facility.

The state funds full-day kindergarten, although parents may choose to opt out. Preschools are not funded by any state agency. The terms daycare and preschool are used interchangeably and are regulated by DES, but not held to any academic or learning standard. Tuition-based public school Pre-K programs do follow state standards.

Kids in foster care have a greater achievement gap than those in poverty. The Mesa Unified School District has the second highest enrollment of kids in foster care in the state (542 or 5%).

Research indicates that the key variable is poverty, rather than race or ethnicity.

a. Based on reviews of the data presented, do you believe there is a defined challenge/problem related to early childhood education in Mesa?

All of the Task Force members agreed that there are challenges in Mesa relating to early childhood education.

b. Based on what we know now, what key findings define the state of early childhood education in Mesa and impact the ability to ensure that Mesa's children arrive at kindergarten ready and able to learn?

- ❖ The entire Mesa community has an opportunity to ensure that every child has an optimal early education experience no matter what setting they are in.
 - Accessibility – setting, geography, capacity
 - Infrastructure, resources not scaled
 - Access to resources in multiple settings
 - Affordability
 - People are working
 - There are gaps in financial access
 - State and federal funding cuts
 - Awareness
 - Do parents/caregivers know what readiness is
 - Do caregivers know they can influence that experience
 - Does the community have awareness of their responsibility to associate child care with kindergarten readiness
 - Connection to economic development, future employment and success
 - Different cultures gain awareness through different avenues (faith based or pediatrician)
 - Early awareness of learning disabilities
 - Academic Quality
 - Readiness gaps – academic as well as social and emotional development
 - Early education begins at home. Parents are their child's first teachers.
 - How to raise the bar on quality
 - Importance of quality care with all providers
 - Look into professional development for all Pre-K through 3rd Grade teachers

Discussion Points:

- Mesa has a good base of early ED assets-- focus on creating positive opportunities
- Use the term “early childhood care and education”
- It is not the same kindergarten today as the parents had; nationwide discussion.
- Exposure does not necessarily yield readiness
- What is the impact of culture, ethnicity, mono-language-- culturally receptive programs
- Learning disabilities

c. Is there a need for additional information? If so, what information is needed and where can it be found?

- ❖ Geographic map with overlays for poverty, density, language and ethnicity
- ❖ Data on Pre-K experience. No single assessment tool.
- ❖ Possibility of public service announcement on importance of early childhood education and resources
- ❖ Use existing info. to spread awareness... example, First Things First has good info.
- ❖ Family Literacy Council advocacy for early childhood education and literacy

- ❖ Return on investment information on early childhood development (Heckman Equation)
- ❖ Information on funding for developmental preschool
- ❖ Foster home shortage in Mesa – kids are going into group care
- ❖ Children's Action Alliance and the City of Phoenix are also working on early childhood education

d. Any new information to be provided from task force members today?

No new information was identified.

e. What are the task force's key conclusions as it relates to 'defining Mesa's challenge(s) for early childhood education?

- ❖ There is no single assessment tool to evaluate a child's kindergarten readiness today.
- ❖ The goal is to ensure that all Mesa children enter kindergarten with enhanced skills and abilities to master the standards, to ensure long term success, utilizing all local institutions in Mesa, leveraging their resources for quality, accessibility and affordability.
- ❖ No single organization or agency has the resources to address this issue alone. The entire Mesa community needs to collaborate to make sure every child has an optimal early education experience no matter what setting they are in.
- ❖ We need a variety of affordable options. Not everyone will want or be able to send their children to preschool.
- ❖ Success in college and career begins with early education.
- ❖ New opportunities for high-quality professional development for our early education and care teachers are important.
- ❖ Poverty is the key, consistent factor. We need to understand where under-resourced families are located and how to connect with them.
- ❖ Quality kindergarten readiness benefits the entire community and economy.
- ❖ There is an opportunity for Mesa to take a leadership role in showing the importance of early childhood education and what our community can do.

5. NEXT STEPS AND NEXT MEETING DATE: During the next Task Force meeting we will review and finalize the draft report of today's information and determine our next steps.

Next meeting date: **January 15, 2016, 1:00 p.m., Mesa Counts on College Access Center.**

Chair Luna invited the committee to attend the Mayor's State of the City Breakfast on February 4th, 2016, 7:00 A.M. at the Mesa Convention Center. MARRISA RAMÍREZ-RAMOS will send out the invitation and members may reply to her by email if they would like to attend.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Luna entertained a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:58 P.M.

MOTION: Mike Hutchinson moved to adjourn the meeting

SECOND: Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo

DECISION: Passed unanimously

Submitted By:

Dr. David Luna, Chair

(Prepared by Dana Desing, TE: 14082507)

Agenda Item 4



(Draft) Memorandum

January 15, 2016

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Chair Dr. David Luna, Mesa Councilmember District 5

Through: Rhonda Anderson, Banner Cardon Children's Medical Center
Jake Brown, Maricopa County Attorney's Office
Dr. Dawn Foley, Mesa Public Schools
Mike Hutchinson, East Valley Partnership
Paul Luna, Helios Foundation
Dr. Anjum Majeed, Self Development Academy
Cynthia Melde, First Things First
Linda McKeever, Gilbert Public Schools
Allison Mullady, ASU Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College
Nancy Salmon, Hacienda Healthcare
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo, Maricopa Community Colleges, Mesa Public Schools
Dr. James Zaharis, Greater Phoenix Partnership

Subject: Defining Mesa's Challenges for Early Childhood Care and Education

As Councilmember of District 5, I am honored to serve as Chair of the Mayor's Early Childhood Education Task Force. In this capacity, I have been able to convene three meetings thus far of the appointed Task Force. The Task Force discussions have been robust and progress has been made.

At this juncture and before moving to the next "phase" of the Task Force's work, I wanted to take a moment to review the Task Force's initial shared conclusions relative to "defining the challenge(s) in Mesa for early childhood care and education."

The Task Force will continue meeting this spring to explore ways to expand awareness about this need in our community, to explore how to build on Mesa's existing assets, and to consider best practices in early childhood care and education that may be relevant to Mesa's needs.

Early Childhood Care and Education

31,238



**children under 5 in
Mesa**

36%



of Mesa 3 and 4 year olds are enrolled in early care and education compared to 48% nationally

14,886



is the maximum number of children under 5 who can be served by existing early care and education facilities

\$8,400



annual median cost to provide care to 3-5 year olds, or 14.39% of Mesa median family income. The Department of Health and Human Services considers 10% affordable

1 in 4



children in Mesa under 5 and under live in poverty

A Snapshot

As a visual tool, the Task Force has created this (left) summary graphic to more visually outline the key challenges related to early childhood care and education in Mesa today.

Why Early Childhood Care and Education is Important to Mesa

Approximately 90 percent of a child's brain development occurs before kindergarten. Research demonstrates that quality early childhood care and education has the most impact for a community in helping children to learn and read on grade-level. This makes them less likely to fall behind their classmates and more likely to graduate, attend higher learning or continue building technical skills that help them become economically independent members of Mesa's work force.

With today's ever-changing global markets and the need to continue to attract innovative, market-driven industry and jobs to Mesa—it is in our community's best interest to recognize that there is a critical intersect between quality, early childhood care/education and a talented, skilled work force that serves a strong economy.

This an opportunity for Mesa (as a community) to coalesce, join forces and to work together toward optimizing the experiences of existing early childhood learning assets and creating additional opportunities for Mesa's youngest students to have access to affordable and quality early childhood care and education. Mesa's shared economic success and community health depend on it.

Task Force – Initial Shared Conclusions

Building on our existing assets and creating new opportunities for early childhood care and education isn't just a Mesa issue, it's a systems transition issue being experienced on a national level. Today, people refer to "1st Grade as the new Kindergarten," and "Preschool/Pre-K as the new Kindergarten." Nationally, 48% of children under five are enrolled in Pre-K. In Mesa, 36% are enrolled and in Arizona 34% are enrolled.

The Mesa community has an opportunity to ensure that every child has an optimal early education experience, no matter what setting they are in. Moving forward, there are a few shared observations/conclusions the task force believes deserve further research, including but not limited to:

- **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Tool.** Today, there is no single assessment tool that is integrated community wide to clearly define which of Mesa's children are arriving to Kindergarten ready to learn and those with varying degrees of readiness. How can Mesa as a community implement an assessment tool that helps us target our community's awareness, response and outcomes?
- **Quality Matters in any Educational Setting/Pathway.** Mesa is fortunate to have a healthy base of early childhood learning assets, through our public/charter schools, libraries, publicly funded First Things First and other public/private agencies, Head Start and other non-profits who serve low-to-moderate income families. How can these programs work even more collaboratively to optimize existing or new resources and results for Mesa's children?
- **Retain and Build a Variety of Affordable Early Learning Options.** In addition to optimizing existing assets, what are other best practice programs for free/affordable early childhood learning models in the United States that Mesa should consider? There is no one size fits all in early childhood learning.
- **Where are the Under-Resourced Families in Mesa and How Can the Community Connect?** Today, one in four of Mesa's children 5 and younger live in poverty. What are other cities and states doing to reach out to these under-resourced families to provide low-cost/income eligible early childhood learning programs? How can we expand community awareness to parents and family members caring for our youngest students to provide them with existing information about kindergarten standards, resources, parent kits, etc.?
- **Professional development:** How can the community of Mesa provide additional high-quality professional development for all Pre-K through 3rd Grade teachers in the City? Mesa's teachers are a huge asset for Mesa and our children.

Next Steps

The Task Force recognizes that there is no single organization or agency that has the resources to address the gap/challenges related to providing affordable, quality early childhood care and learning opportunities.

Therefore, the Task Force plans to continue meeting again beginning in mid-February during the next few months to explore ways to expand awareness about this need in our community, to recommend how to build on Mesa's existing assets, and to consider best practices in early childhood care and education as well as professional development strategies that may be appropriate for Mesa.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Again, thank you for the opportunity to Chair this Task Force. The work of this Task Force matters and I believe is critical to Mesa's economic future.