



Mission, Vision & Values

Founded in 1981, the mission of Southwest Human Development is to strengthen the foundation Arizona's children need for a great start in life. Our vision is a positive future for every child. The agency strives to help children establish a healthy foundation by preventing problems before they arise, or when they already exist, intervening as early and effectively as possible. Recognizing a child's earliest experiences and relationships establish the foundation for all future development, Southwest Human Development focuses on very young children ages birth to 5, and their families.

Annually, the agency serves 140,000 children, families and early childhood professionals. We are Arizona's largest nonprofit dedicated to early childhood, and one of the largest of its type in the nation. SWHD helps build healthy Arizona communities by identifying specific needs not being addressed through existing agencies and developing programs that will meet those needs, a vision that we have held for over 40 years.

SWHD currently operates more than 40 public and private programs in six primary categories: child health, development and mental health services, Early Head Start and Head Start, early communication, language and literacy, family support and child welfare and professional development and training. Our programs are grounded in the latest research and proven best practices.

The agency takes an active leadership role in the early childhood community at the state and national level as evidenced by the fact that we are continually invited to participate in initiatives related to systems change, quality improvement, public policy and advocacy for young children and families. Agency leadership and staff have extensive experience in implementing professional development programs, have a broad knowledge of the targeted population, and are part of a wide-ranging network of collaborative relationships with other early childhood organizations across the nation.

Core Values

Preamble

The Core Values of Southwest Human Development (SWHD) embody the agency's commitment to services that uplift the lives of children, families and other care providers, and the communities in which they live. They are further intended to guide the professional development, ethical conduct and skilled practice of all our staff, whatever their specific role within the agency. All staff are valued as making essential contributions to the agency's overall mission of "strengthening the foundation that Arizona's children need for a great start in life." The Core Values are meant to describe expectations for staff as well as aspirations.

Core Values

- High Quality Services
- Lifelong Learning
- Fairness
- Partnerships
- Reflective Practice
- Innovation
- Responsible Stewardship

High-Quality Services

Southwest Human Development makes every effort to ensure that agency programs and services are of the highest quality and reflective of "best practice" standards. The use of evidence-based or evidence-informed programming is a priority. SWHD participates in program evaluations and research projects to appraise and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of our work and to contribute to the knowledge base of the infant and early childhood field. Individual staff may be additionally accountable to the ethical guidelines of their home disciplines. Staff are supported, through supervision and other professional development opportunities, to provide services which reflect the most up-to date research and standards of practice in their field. They are also helped to anticipate, identify, and resolve ethical dilemmas that arise in their work. The following practices support high quality and ethical services:

- All services are provided within the framework of strong, respectful partnerships with families, caregivers, providers, and community partners.
- Staff recognize that children develop within multiple contexts and relationships and that integrated and holistic services best meet the needs of children and families.
- All programs promote caregiver-child relationships that support optimal child development.
- Staff seek to understand the unique relationships that caregivers and children co-create and recognize and respect the wide range of caregiving practices that support children's healthy development and well-being.

- There is an ongoing emphasis on quality assurance and improvement, including routine evaluation of program goals and outcomes.

Learning as a Lifelong Process

Southwest Human Development is committed to providing ongoing education and professional development for staff in support of their work with families, caregivers, and other professionals served by the agency. All agency staff share a responsibility for planning and participating in professional development activities that are beneficial to the individual and the agency as a whole. As part of this commitment, the agency provides high-quality learning opportunities for staff, families, local community members, and professionals throughout the nation who work with or on behalf of young children and their families and caregivers.

- Education is encouraged for employees and the families and caregivers we serve.
- Staff take responsibility for staying current with the literature and developments in their field of practice and organizational role.
- Professional development is planned collaboratively with each employee and supervisor and supported with resources allocated to each department.
- Staff take responsibility for maintaining an awareness of policies, regulations, legislation and current events that affect the lives of the children, families and caregivers with whom we work.

Promoting Fairness

Southwest Human Development promotes fairness by embracing the variety of individuals and families in our community and in our country including, race, creed, color, national, origin, sex, political affiliations, or beliefs.

- The agency welcomes staff with a variety of backgrounds, traits and ways of thinking as assets to excellent work and innovative approaches.
- Staff strive for self-awareness as an essential process for understanding others and for providing services that match the needs of all clients.
- Programs and services support all cultures, languages, races, ethnicities and family structures of the children, families and caregivers with whom we work, enabling every child and family to full participate and be successful.

Working in Partnership with Families, Caregivers, and Community Providers

Southwest Human Development is dedicated to partnering with families to enhance the well-being of all family members and to increase their confidence, competence, and self-reliance. Establishing a supportive alliance with each family, on behalf of their child, is a primary goal. The agency is also committed to developing strong partnerships with other caregivers and community providers in order to better serve children and families.

- Staff serve families, caregivers, and community providers in a respectful, non-judgmental, and family-centered manner.
- Effective services include families, other caregivers, and community providers as active participants in setting goals, determining services, carrying out the service plan, and providing feedback and evaluation of services.
- Staff facilitate family development through the promotion of positive parent-child relationships, acknowledgment of conditions of risk, enhancement of protective factors, and increased security through community connections.
- Staff advocate for systems that are flexible, reciprocal and responsive to identified family/caregiver needs.

Reflective Practice in Support of Relationship-Based Work

Southwest Human Development promotes reflective practice as a critical element of quality services for children and families and central to relationship-based work. Reflective practices include being able to step back, slow down, and fully explore a situation before taking action. It involves considering multiple perspectives, and also being aware of the impact of one's own values, feelings, and experiences on the way we do our work. Southwest Human Development recognizes that the nature and complexity of its work require staff to have the opportunity for regular reflection and supervisory support. Supervisors have responsibility for:

- Promoting professional growth and development of staff
- Providing motivation and support
- Maintaining ideals, standards, quality assurance, and safety
- Facilitating open, clear communication
- Providing team and agency leadership

The following principles and practices reflect the agency's model of Reflective Supervision. Supervision is:

- Scheduled on a regular basis, rather than (solely) in response to a specific crisis or need, in order to promote a reflective and proactive approach to the work. All staff receive regular, reflective, supervision.
- Understood to be a collaborative partnership that is most effective when it takes place in an atmosphere of mutuality, safety, trust, and respect.
- Reflective in nature. It offers an opportunity to slow down, step back, and fully explore a situation before developing an action plan. It helps staff develop the self-awareness they need in order to provide high-quality services.
- A blended model which focuses on both administrative and clinical aspects of the work. Supervisors integrate their mentoring and monitoring responsibilities.

Innovative Responsiveness to Community Needs

Southwest Human Development is committed to effectively responding to the changing needs of children, families and the early childhood professionals in our community.

- Staff are encouraged and supported to implement strategies known to address problems and improve outcomes and also to use imagination and creative thinking--informed by the current professional literature and guided by supervision and professional ethics--to solve problems.
- The agency identifies gaps in services and actively seeks solutions through creative program development, often in collaboration with other community organizations.

Responsible Stewardship

Southwest Human Development serves as a careful, ethical, and responsible steward of the resources entrusted to us by donors, institutions, and government agencies. The agency recognizes these resources are supplied for the express purpose of fulfilling the agency's mission through its various programs. The agency is further committed as a protector and promotor of a vision for the healthy development and well-being of the children and adults whose lives we influence.

- The agency's leadership and staff support an organizational dynamic which is ethical, efficient, productive, and continuously improving.
- Technology ensures the safety and accuracy of data, reporting, communication and coordination. Technology promotes efficiency and is used to as a tool to optimize staff time.
- Staff are responsible for the care and maintenance of the agency's facilities, equipment, and furniture. This prolongs their use and reflects positively on the agency.
- The agency uses funds from donors, institutions, and government entities for the specific purposes intended.
- Staff commit to these Core Values as guideposts for responsible stewardship of the agency's mission and vision.