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March 10, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

First Things First, Arizona's Early Childhood State Agency, is pleased to provide this letter of recommendation for the exemplary work of Dr. Carlian Dawson in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Dr. Dawson was instrumental in preparing our executive level staff to embark on a DEI initiative to examine our work from an equity lens. She developed highly effective training to build our understanding of implicit bias and its effect on decision-making and facilitated courageous conversations to help us recognize the unique needs of African American children and families in Arizona.

Dr. Dawson is a masterful trainer who beautifully navigates the complexities and sensitivities entangled in this area of work. Our team felt comfortable sharing personal stories and wading through thorny issues, as a result of Dr. Dawson's compassionate and supportive approach. She is an excellent communicator with strong DEI knowledge and expertise.

Thanks to our engagement with Dr. Dawson, we have moved into the early stages of conscientization – the process of becoming aware of the contradictions existing within oneself and in society and gradually being able to bring about personal and social transformation.

We are extremely pleased with the work performed by Dr. Dawson and I am happy to provide additional details regarding our experience if helpful. I can be reached via email at mdalpra@firstthingsfirst.org or by phone at 602-771-5074.

Sincerely,

Marilee L. Dal Pra
CEO