



## EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE

### **FIRST THINGS FIRST: A CRITICAL PARTNER IN ADVANCING ARIZONA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM**

The organization, its priorities and impact

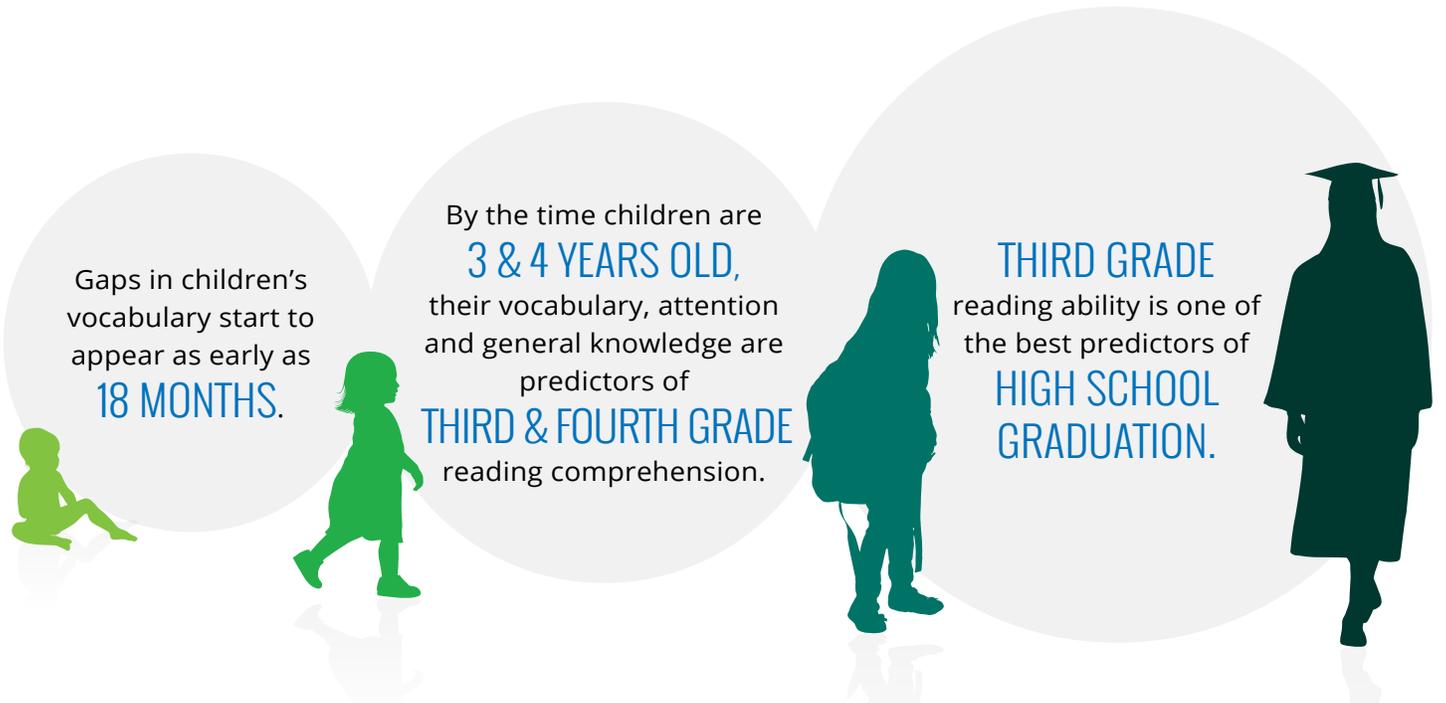
# WHY INVEST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD?



## NINETY PERCENT OF A CHILD’S BRAIN GROWTH HAPPENS BETWEEN BIRTH AND AGE 5.

The quality of a child’s early experiences – including interactions with parents and other caregivers – impacts whether their brain develops in ways that promote positive future learning, behavior and health. For children to be successful in school and beyond, they must start out on the right path.

## CONSIDER THIS:



Many of Arizona’s young children face significant challenges when it comes to stable, nurturing environments and high quality early learning experiences that will put them on a trajectory for success in kindergarten and beyond.

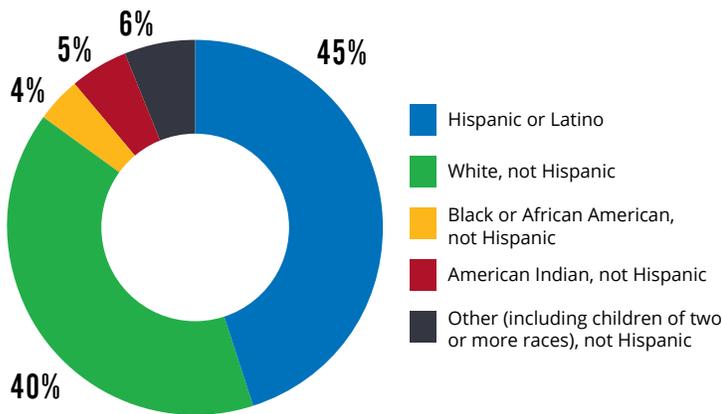
# A SNAPSHOT OF ARIZONA'S CHILDREN

## DEMOGRAPHICS

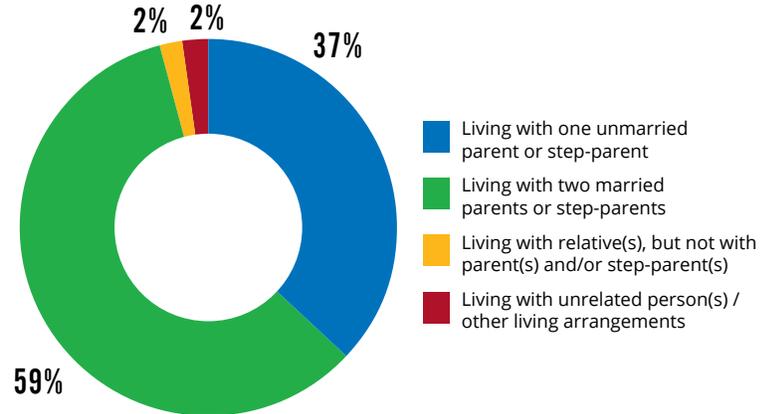
**546,609** Number of kids under 6 in Arizona

**384,441** Households with kids under 6

Ethnic breakdown of kids under 6



Living arrangements of kids under 6



## EDUCATION

**65%** Percentage of 3-4 year-olds who don't go to preschool

**59%** Percentage of 3rd graders not passing AzMerit Language Arts (2015-2016)

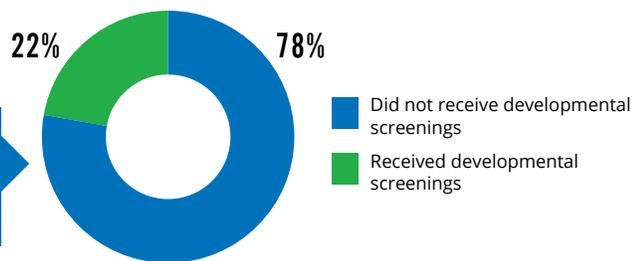
**25%** Percentage of teens who don't graduate high school in four years

Children ages 10 months to 5 years who received developmental screenings during a health care visit (2011-2012)

## HEALTH

**9%** Babies born to teen mothers

**7,050** Number of children birth to 5 entering out of home care



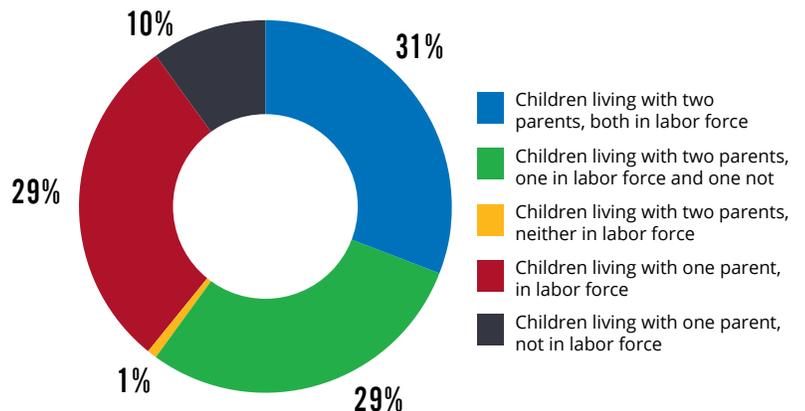
## ECONOMICS

**28%** Percentage of young kids in poverty

Median annual income for families with at least one child birth to age 17, by family type

Married-couple families	\$72,700
Families headed by a single male	\$36,700
Families headed by a single female	\$26,100

Employment status of parents with young kids



Source: Building Bright Futures: Arizona's Early Childhood Opportunities Report 2015

# FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Family and Community survey is a study of parents, other family caregivers, and the general community's knowledge about children's early development and their perceptions of the resources currently available for young children and their families in Arizona. The most recent survey was conducted by phone interview in 2012 with a randomly selected, geographically balanced sample.

## **Parents and caregivers understand the importance of early opportunities for contributing to lifelong advantages in learning and development.**

- 81 percent acknowledged parents can significantly affect children's brain development at or before birth
- 86 percent recognized the importance of very early experiences and later school performance
- There was general recognition that play promotes children's development: On a ten-point scale (where "10" was labelled "crucial"), the average respondent rated the importance of play as 8.5 for a 10-month-old, 9.1 for a 3-year-old, and 9.4 for a 5-year-old
- At least half reported engaging regularly in family-based early literacy activities such as book reading and 53 percent reported reading to their child 6-7 days in the last week, on par with national reports

**However, many respondents did not recognize just how engaged infants are with their early environments and relationships. For example, among caregiver respondents, only about half recognized that:**

- Children react to the world around them in the first month of life (47%)
- Children react to the mood of their caregiver in the first month of life (52%)
- That language is better learned from 'live' face-to-face interactions rather than from watching television (46%)

## **Caregivers may need more information and education about young children's emotional development and ability to control their own behavior.**

- 47 percent of parent and caregiver respondents hold the expectation that 15-month-olds should share
- 26 percent indicated that 3-year-olds should be able to sit still for an hour.

## **Many parents are able to access regular health care for their children.**

- 89 percent reported that their children under age 5 had regular visits to the same doctor's office
- 77 percent reported regular visits to the same dental provider.

## **Disproportionate risks faced by children and families from low socioeconomic status (SES) households.**

- Low SES respondents were less likely to report reading most days of the week with their children.

[2012 Family and Community Survey Summary link here.](#)

# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

## EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE SMARTEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16.

By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.



INVESTED IN EARLY  
CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A  
**\$16 RETURN**

### INCREASED



High School Graduation



College Matriculation



Economic Development and Personal Income

### DECREASED



Special Education/Remediation



Dependence on Social Welfare



Crime-Related Costs and Incarceration Rates

# FIRST THINGS FIRST BACKGROUND

## CREATED BY ARIZONA VOTERS

On November 7, 2006, Arizonans made an historic decision on behalf of our state's smallest citizens. By majority vote, they made a commitment to all Arizona children 5 and younger: that kids would have the tools they need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. The voters backed that promise with an 80-cent per pack increase on tobacco products, so that funding for early childhood services for our youngest children would not be at the mercy of economic and political winds. The initiative also created the statewide First Things First board and regional partnership councils that share the responsibility of ensuring that these early childhood funds are spent on strategies that will result in improved education and health outcomes for kids 5 and younger. [Learn more.](#)

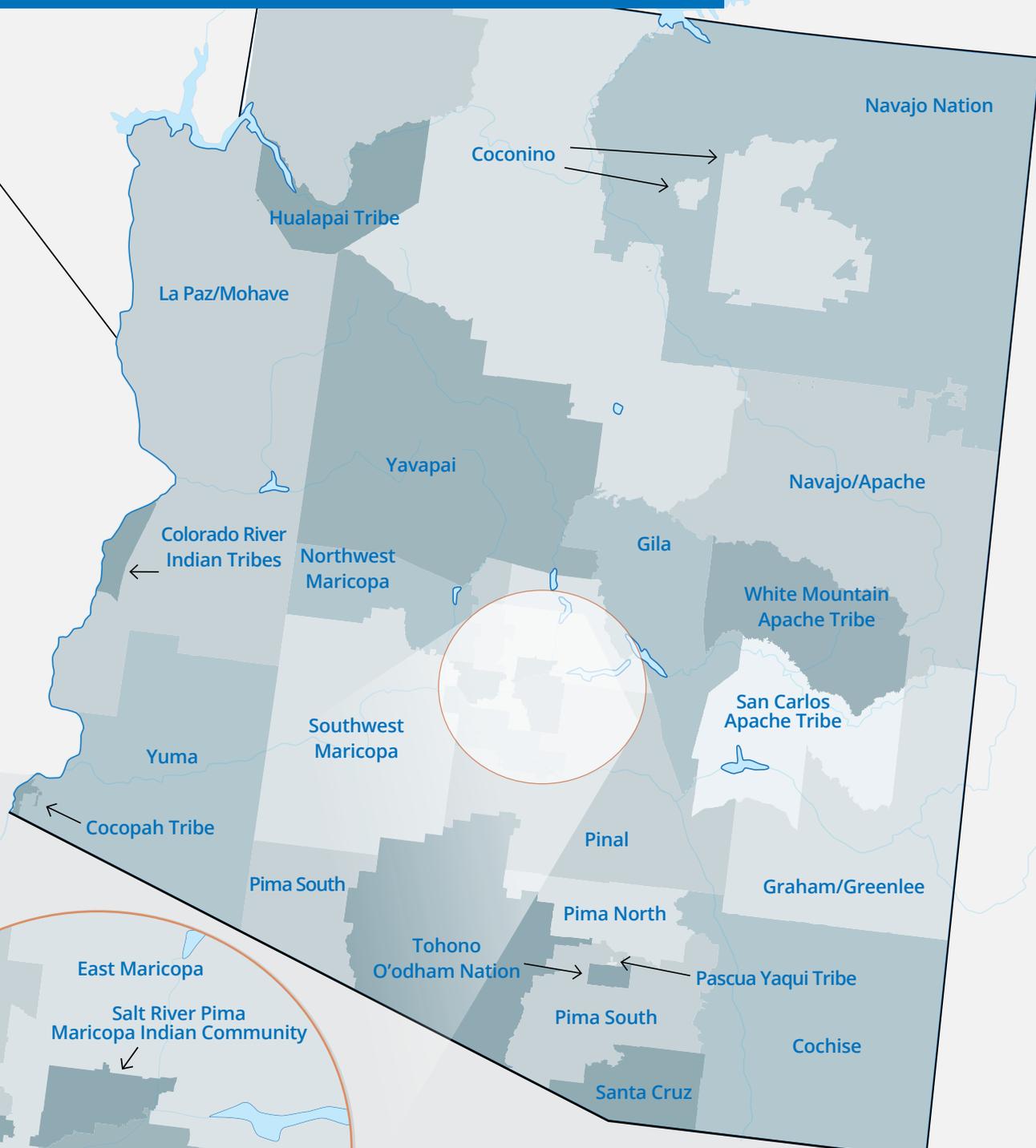
## DRIVEN BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Not all children have the same needs; and voters designed First Things First to meet the diverse needs of Arizona communities. Decisions about which early education and health strategies will be funded are made by regional partnership councils made up of community volunteers, not government bureaucrats. Each regional council member represents a specific segment of the community that has a stake in ensuring that our children grow up to be healthy productive adults, including: parents, tribal representatives, educators, health professionals, business leaders, philanthropists and leaders of faith communities. The regional councils study the challenges faced by children in their communities and the resources that exist to help kids in their area. Because of all these factors, the regional councils know best what their kids need. [Learn more.](#)

## RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY

FTF respects the sovereignty of all Arizona tribes. By law, tribes may elect to have their tribal lands treated as a separate region by the statewide FTF Board; or, tribes may elect to participate in the designated geographical region in which their tribal lands are located. Tribes who choose to participate in the regional council whose area includes their tribal lands have a representative of the tribe on the regional council. [Learn more.](#)

# FIRST THINGS FIRST REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCILS - 2016



## SUSTAINABILITY

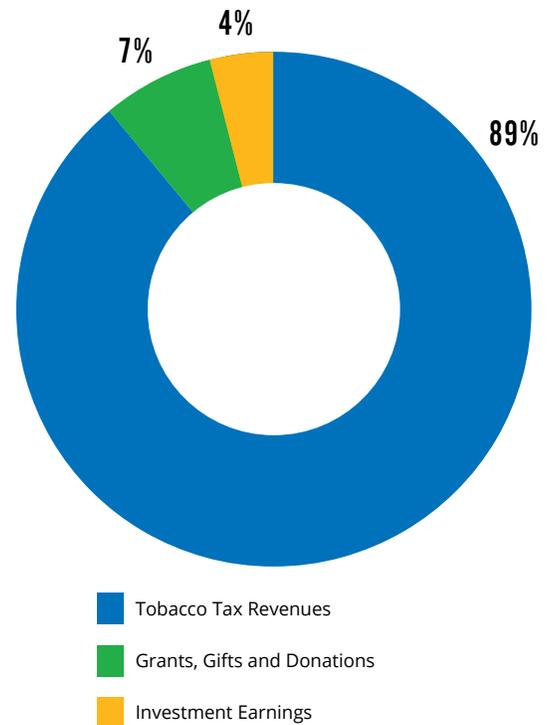
In Fiscal Year 2016, First Things First received approximately \$133,736,646 in revenue, with tobacco tax revenues accounting for approximately \$118,782,961 of this total, or 89% of total revenues. Additionally, FTF received approximately \$5,313,393 from investment earnings and \$9,640,292 from gifts, grants and donations.

Tobacco revenue has decreased 27.9% since the inception of First Things First. The First Things First Board has strategically planned to ensure the sustainability of FTF's early childhood investments by commissioning independent projections of tobacco revenue, adopting a sustainability plan, and working with both public and private entities to leverage funds and maximize the resources available for early childhood programs. The First Things First Board reset the annual budget in order to better align with existing revenue and revenue forecasts. The expenditure budget of \$141.7 million, as set by the Board in July 2014, can be reasonably expected to be sustained 7 to 15 years.

Investments in early childhood development and health programs and services that help prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond constituted approximately 93% of spending in FY2016. Administrative expenses are kept low – approximately 7% in FY16.

## FY2016 REVENUE BY SOURCE

Tobacco Tax Revenues	\$118,782,961
Grants, Gifts and Donations	\$9,640,292
Investment Earnings	\$5,313,393
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$133,736,646</b>



# FTF – A CRUCIAL PARTNER IN AZ’S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

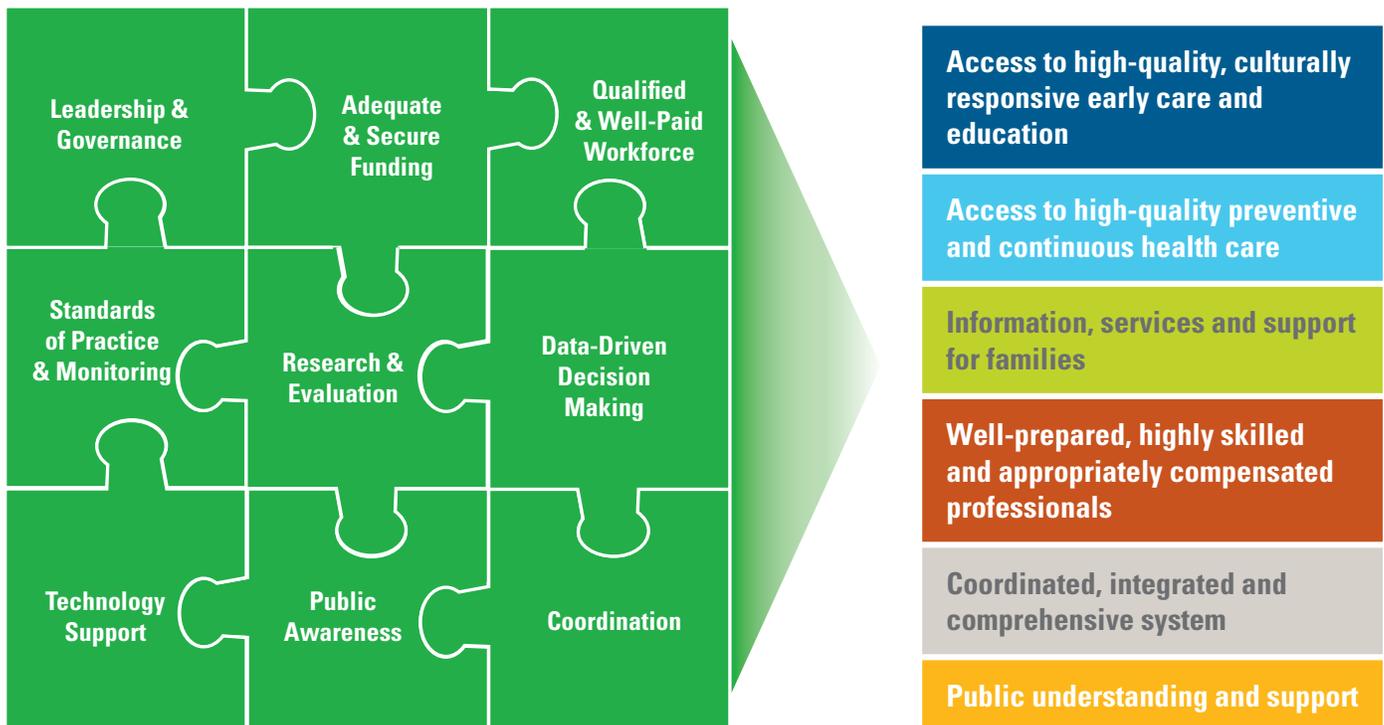
The Early Childhood System Vision: All Arizona children by the time they are 5 years old have a solid foundation for success in school and in life because we have worked together to create a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that addresses the child’s development, health and early education.

Development includes a child’s physical, cognitive, speech and language, and social and emotional development. Health includes a child’s physical, mental, oral and nutritional well-being. Early education includes environments guided by skilled adults and rich in interaction, language, books and materials so that children are cognitively, socially and emotionally prepared for kindergarten.

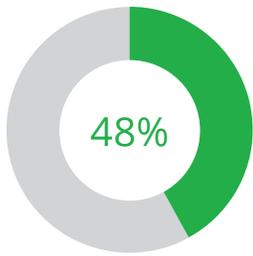
Realizing this vision means more than simply funding programs and services. Success depends on multiple individuals and sectors working collaboratively to serve young children and their families, developing the structures, behaviors, and connections that make all the components of an early childhood system operate as a whole to promote shared results for children and families.

First Things First, as a critical partner in advancing the early childhood system, has focused its work on the 9 priority areas determined by the initial Task Force. This includes developing and strengthening effective collaborations and strategic partnerships, leverage resources and addressing infrastructure and capacity needs, the ability to take strategies to scale as well as reaching targeted populations, and funding strategies.

## Having all elements in place will help accelerate positive outcomes.



# FY2016 INVESTMENTS IN PRIORITY ROLES



## QUALITY CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL

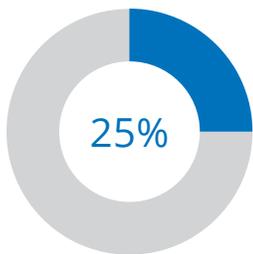
**\$59,731,221**

Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.

FTF funds research-based quality improvements that help children thrive, including learning environments rich in language and literacy, coaching for early learning professionals to better engage young learners, and developmentally appropriate learning materials. Scholarships also are funded to help more babies, toddlers and preschoolers access quality early learning.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Roles:

- **Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings**  
- Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for increased availability of and access to high quality, regulated, culturally responsive, and affordable early care and education programs.
- **Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment**  
- Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and implementation of quality standards for early childhood care and education programs and related curricula and assessments.



## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

**\$30,650,437**

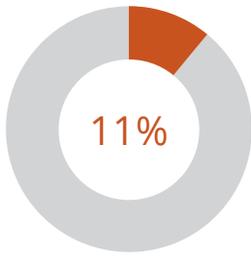
Families are a child's first and best teachers.

FTF programs give parents choices when it comes to supporting their child's health and learning. Services are voluntary and provided at levels that meet the family's needs, from community-based parenting education to in-home coaching to address tough situations like parenting a child with special needs or dealing with multiple births.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Role:

- **Supports and Services for Families** - Convene partners, provide leadership, provide funding, and advocate for development, enhancement, and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources for young children and their families.

# FY2016 EXPENDITURES



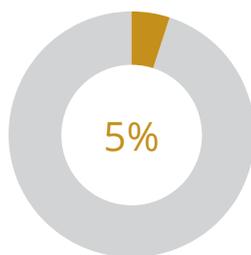
## PREVENTIVE HEALTH \$13,647,219

Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.

Left unaddressed, developmental delays and chronic medical conditions can become serious learning problems that require more costly remediation. FTF funds preventive screenings, parent education and referrals to existing services to ensure that kids arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Roles:

- **Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Services** - Collaborate with partners to increase access to high quality health care services (including oral health and mental health) and affordable health care coverage for young children and their families.
- **Nutrition and Physical Activity** - Collaborate with partners to support improved nutrition and increased age/developmentally appropriate physical activity levels among young children.



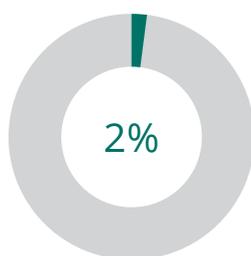
## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING \$5,700,436

A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.

Children 5 and younger learn differently than school-age students. The quality of early learning depends on the education and skills of the teacher. FTF funds scholarships and training to expand the skills of professionals working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Role:

- **Professional Development System** - Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and enhancement of an early childhood professional development system that addresses availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, and articulation.

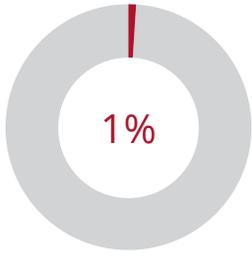


## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION \$2,794,115

Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.

Data collected by FTF are used to inform decision-making, monitor grantee performance, enhance program effectiveness and measure improved outcomes resulting from the collective investments of Arizona's early childhood system.

# FY2016 EXPENDITURES



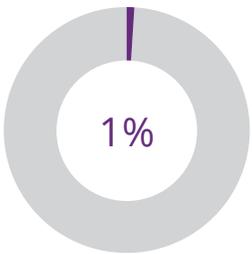
## PARENT/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT \$1,779,576

We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.

FTF works with families, caregivers and community leaders to build awareness of the importance of early childhood and steps they can take to support the education and health of young children in their communities.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Role:

- **Building Public Awareness and Support** - Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for efforts to increase public awareness of and support for early childhood development, health, and early education among partners, public officials, policy makers, and the public.



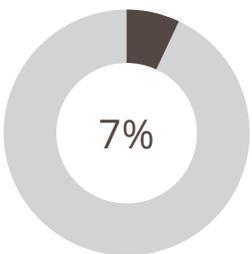
## SYSTEM COORDINATION \$825,135

Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

FTF works with early childhood system partners – like the child welfare system and juvenile courts – to maximize funding, reduce duplication, and ultimately improve outcomes for young children.

### Early Childhood System FTF Priority Roles:

- **Early Childhood System Funding** - Secure, coordinate, and advocate for resources required to develop and sustain the early childhood system.
- **Early Childhood System Leadership** - Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the conceptualization and implementation of a high quality, child and family centered, coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive early childhood system that includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities.



## ADMINISTRATION AND GENERAL \$9,222,516

**TOTAL: \$124,350,655**

# FISCAL YEAR 2016 - IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE

## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND EARLY LITERACY

34,812

Parents and caregivers attended parenting workshops or groups at family resource centers. In addition, more than 232,000 accessed early childhood information, resources or referrals through the centers.

72,058

Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.

6,121

Families received voluntary, evidence-based home visitation from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs or dealing with multiple births.

3,711

Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.

## QUALITY PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE

51,069

Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.

9,250

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers accessed high quality early learning with the help of a preschool or child care scholarship.

812

Early childhood educators expanded their skills to provide better quality education and developmental supports for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with the help of a college scholarship.

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH

27,376

Children received screenings to detect vision, hearing, and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

457

Children received referrals for mental health services as a result of classroom consultation provided to early educators on meeting the social-emotional needs of children in their care.

48,480

Children received an oral health screening to detect tooth decay. In addition, 41,805 fluoride varnishes were applied to protect against dental decay.

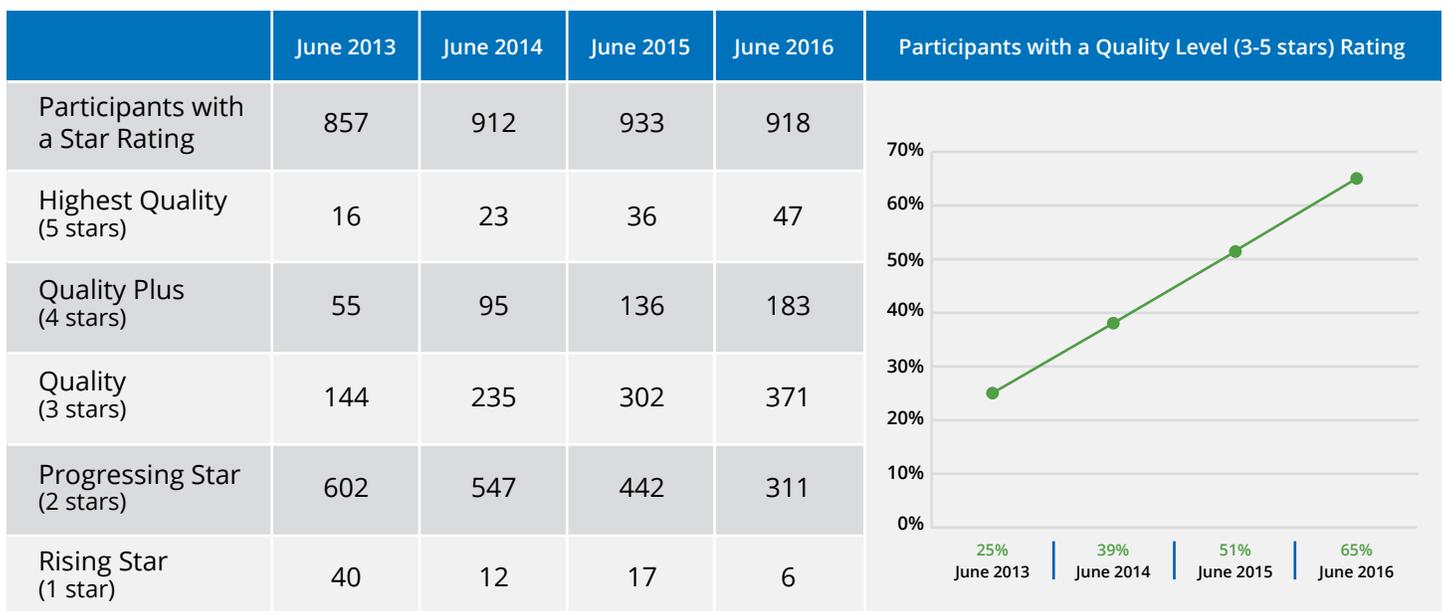
# STUDIES DEMONSTRATE IMPACT OF FTF INVESTMENTS

## QUALITY FIRST HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED EARLY LEARNING THROUGHOUT ARIZONA

The latest data indicate that Quality First has significantly improved the quality of early learning options available to Arizona’s families (See Figure 1). In fiscal year 2013, 25% of 857 participating providers met quality standards. Over the past three years, both enrollment and quality improvement have improved. In fiscal year 2016, 65% percent of 918 participating providers met or exceeded quality standards. When combined with providers who continue to work diligently on enhancing the quality of their child care and preschool programs, Quality First has ensured that more than 51,069 children throughout the state have access to a higher standard of early education.

The quality of early learning has improved regardless of the type of program participating in Quality First: center-based and home-based programs, as well as faith-based, non-profit and for-profit providers. In addition, Quality First is enhancing early learning opportunities throughout the state. Twenty-seven regional councils throughout Arizona invest in Quality First, making it the largest early childhood system initiative funded through First Things First. Coaches and consultants working with Quality First recognize the unique challenges early learning providers face in the diverse parts of our state, and can tailor their support for quality improvement accordingly. As a result, Quality First has been able to enhance the quality of child care and preschool in metropolitan, rural and tribal regions of Arizona.

**Figure 1. Quality Improvement and Rating System Progress and Outcomes**



## **FTF INVESTMENTS PREVENT LOSS OF MILLIONS IN FEDERAL CHILD CARE FUNDS**

In addition to improving the quality of early care and education for thousands of Arizona's young children, FTF's child care quality improvement investments also ensure that the state's child care voucher program is able to make full use of available federal child care funds.

The State of Arizona currently receives more than \$118 million per year in federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant funds. Since the grant's inception, the Department of Economic Security (DES) has been designated by the governor as the lead agency for the CCDF. DES is also responsible for the operation of the State's subsidized child care program, for which CCDF dollars provide the bulk of the funding.

CCDF funds are used in a number of ways, including ensuring that low-income working families have access to safe, reliable child care (which may reduce instances of abuse or neglect because children are not left to be cared for in unsafe environments), and to provide child care for families providing temporary placement to children in the child welfare system (such as foster families and relatives).

The CCDF grant requires that the State provide both Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and matching funds. Specifically, Arizona cannot claim a \$37 million portion of the total CCDF grant unless the State expends \$30 million in non-federal dollars on child care-related activities. Historically the State met the MOE and matching requirement with State General Fund dollars appropriated by the Legislature to DES for additional child care vouchers. Non-CCDF appropriations, including General Fund and other appropriated fund sources, reached a high point of \$69.1 million in fiscal year 2008. Due to significant reductions in General Fund revenues resulting from the economic recession, the Legislature has drastically reduced non-CCDF appropriations since that year. In fiscal year 2012, all General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers were eliminated, although some were briefly restored in FY15.

The Legislature's elimination of General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers in 2012 resulted in the State's inability to meet the CCDF's MOE and matching requirements, thus threatening the loss of tens of millions of dollars for child care vouchers annually.

In order to continue to access Arizona's full allotment of CCDF dollars, FTF collaborated with the Governor's Office and DES in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to leverage FTF investments as the MOE and State match. These expenditures have included the various components of quality improvement efforts – including assessing programs, coaching providers on quality improvement and professional development for early educator to expand their skills working with young children – as well as Quality First Scholarships. Over the six years this MOU has been in place, Arizona has been able to leverage almost \$228 million in federal child care funds that otherwise would have been lost. [Learn more.](#)

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS: IMPROVING EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES**

Research demonstrates that young children's social-emotional skills promote school readiness and future academic success 7,8,9 (e.g. Blair, 2002; Duncan et al., 2007; Raver, 2003). Children with poorer socio-emotional skills may benefit from positive early education experiences that could help facilitate their transition into formal schooling 10 (Entwisle & Alexander, 1993). Unfortunately, children with socio-emotional and behavioral problems may be more at-risk for expulsion from early education programs. Given the high rate of expulsion in preschool and child care programs 11 (Gilliam, 2005), First Things

First has prioritized an evidence-informed Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) strategy to promote positive transition practices and reduce expulsion rates for children in Arizona.

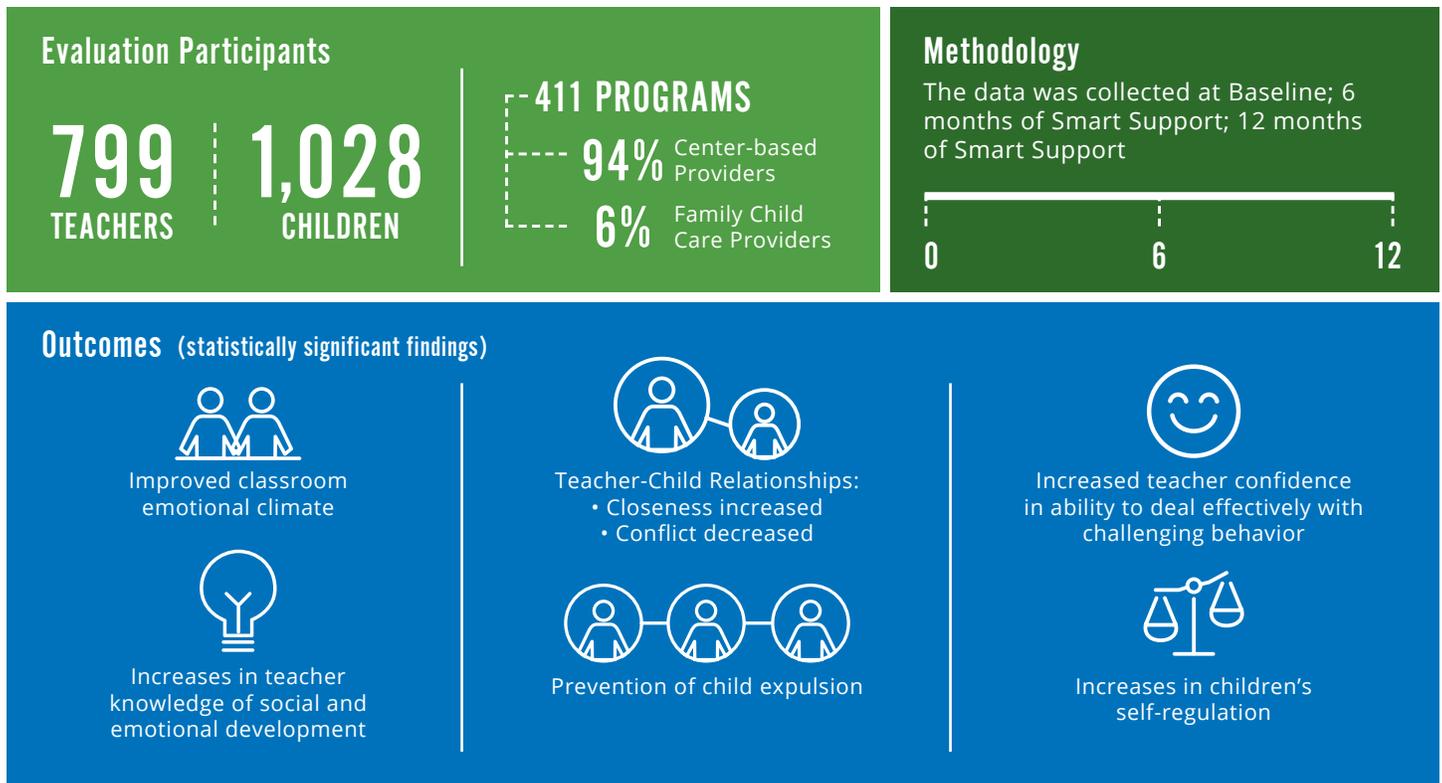
The ECMHC strategy is intended to help early childhood education professionals more effectively interact with children and their families through consultation with trained mental health professionals. Based on evidence found in research on ECMHC programs, ECMHC is effective in preventing and reducing challenging classroom behaviors, improving teacher skills and lowering preschool expulsion rates 12 (Gilliam, 2005; Perry, Dunne, Mcfadden, & Campbell, 2008).

The evidence demonstrating that ECMHC is effective at promoting positive social and emotional outcomes and reducing negative outcomes, has led many states to incorporate the practice in efforts to improve the quality of early learning settings, like child care and preschool.

First Things First has incorporated ECMHC into Arizona’s quality improvement and rating system, Quality First. The program –referred to as Smart Support – is administered through a partnership with a community-based organization. More than 238 providers in 11 regions of the state had access to the ECMHC program to help them address issues at the child, staff or program levels. The federal Preschool Development Grant is expanding quality preschool in 15 high-needs communities statewide who will also have access to ECMHC. ECMHC is also being implemented in Maricopa County’s Head Start programs.

Recently, the results of a four-year evaluation of Smart Support were released. 13 The study – performed by the Institute for Child Development Research and Social Change – found that ECMHC services resulted in improved outcomes for children, teachers and programs. Specifically, data collected from teachers in preschools and child care centers with ECMHC Smart Support demonstrates:

### Summary of Evaluation Findings



Source: Shivers, E. M., (2015). Arizona’s Smart Support Evaluation Report: The First Four Years., Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change

[Learn more.](#)

## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN THEIR ROLE AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM MODELS

Strong families are the building blocks of strong communities. Turns out, they hold one of the keys to their child's academic success, as well. Relationships established with adults in early childhood are important for brain development. There is no question that when children experience abuse or neglect, family violence, poor nutrition, housing instability and infrequent health care, their ability to learn and succeed is severely compromised. Families dealing with these issues often experience high levels of stress, and high-stress environments can substantially impact early development. According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, research on the biology of stress shows that major adversity can weaken developing brain architecture and permanently set the body's stress response system on high alert. Science also shows that providing stable, responsive environments for children in the earliest years of life can prevent or reverse these conditions, with lifelong consequences for learning, behavior and health.

First Things First funds voluntary home visitation programs, which have been shown to be an effective way to improve outcomes for families and children experiencing various risk factors.<sup>17</sup> Although Home Visitation models vary, all programs are designed to improve the lives of at-risk children and families through regular home visits administered by trained providers such as nurses, mental health professionals, social workers, or paraprofessionals. Comprehensive home visitation programs provide participating families of infants and toddlers with information and education on parenting, child development and health topics while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed. Home visitors deliver one-on-one coaching and interaction tailored to the needs of individual families.

In FY 2016, a number of different evidence-based models were being implemented in 21 regions statewide. Three of the most widely implemented FTF funded evidence-based home visitation program models are Healthy Families, Nurse Family Partnership and Parents As Teachers. These three program models have been widely implemented and evaluated. Evidence demonstrates each of these models significantly improve child and family outcomes (see Table 1). Specifically, in randomized control trials or quasi-experimental studies with adequate sample sizes and low attrition, evaluations have found that:

### **HEALTHY FAMILIES PARTICIPANTS DEMONSTRATED:**

- better birth outcomes with fewer birth complications, fewer infants with low birth rate, and more mothers breastfeeding;
- better child cognitive skills with higher scores on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development and the ASQ;
- parents felt more supported by informal and formal organizations;
- improved parenting attitudes and home environment (e.g., positive parent-child interactions, academic toys and materials);
- less frequent family violence and fewer incidents of child abuse and maltreatment

### **NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPANTS DEMONSTRATED:**

- fewer child behavior problems;
- higher child arithmetic and reading scores and better receptive vocabulary;
- fewer child injuries;
- better infant emotional development;
- more stable employment and less dependence on public assistance

## PARENTS AS TEACHERS PARTICIPANTS DEMONSTRATED:

- gains in child cognitive and social skills as well as more self-sufficiency, especially for Latino children;
- improvements in teen mothers life course (e.g., employment, education);
- more developmental advantages for children, especially those whose families received more visits.

[Learn more.](#)

## TAKING A BITE OUT OF SCHOOL ABSENCES

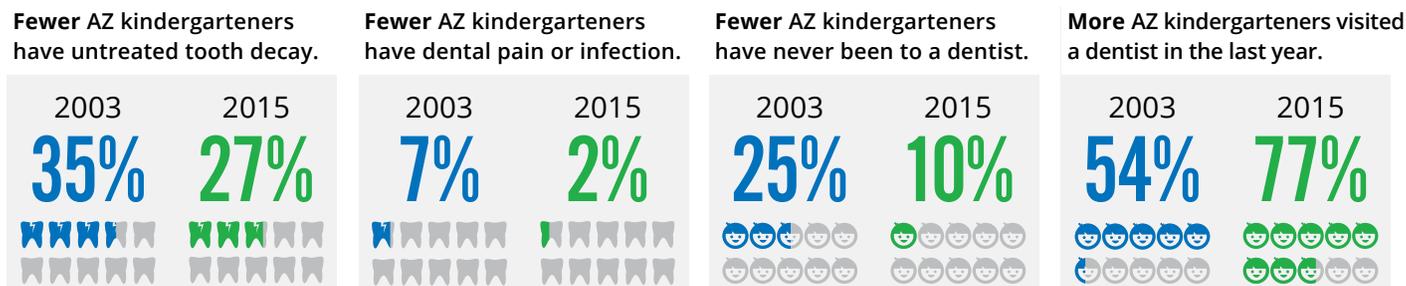
School readiness means more than knowing your ABCs; it means that a child is academically, physically, emotionally, and socially prepared to enter kindergarten and succeed in school. For many children in Arizona, one of the threats to their academic success may not be a lack of knowledge, but a lack of good oral health.

Now the most common disease faced by young children, early childhood caries (a rapid form of tooth decay) can cause lasting harm to a child's oral and general health, as well as impact their intellectual and social development. In fact, one study estimates oral disease nationally causes kids to miss 51 million school hours per year.

Given the link among early oral health, child well-being, school readiness, and academic performance, First Things First and early childhood stakeholders statewide set a collective goal of reducing the percentage of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay to 32% by 2020. Since fiscal year 2010, First Things First has invested almost \$23 million in efforts to prevent ECC and promote positive oral health practices in families and communities. This includes providing a total of 226,430 oral health screenings and 204,045 fluoride varnishes to children birth to 5 years old through fiscal year 2016.

First Things First partnered with the Arizona Department of Health Services in 2014 to coordinate a statewide oral health survey. A total of 3,630 kindergarten children received a dental screening at 84 schools during the 2014-2015 school year. As noted below, the study showed that First Things First and its early childhood system partners' prevention efforts are paying off.

### Something to smile about



[Learn more.](#)

# STRENGTHENING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD TASK FORCE

## ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network (Network) is intended to be a one stop shop for early childhood professionals to seek career and professional development opportunities. The expected results include: elevating and professionalizing the field; recruiting and retaining quality early childhood professionals; supporting continuing education and degree completion; and, increasing the quality of services provided to young children. The Registry and College Scholarships are two components of the Network.

### The Network includes:

- The **Professional Development website** which provides the early childhood workforce access to a variety of professional development resources including competencies and standards, education pathways and opportunities, career pathways, employment opportunities, and the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. <http://www.azearlychildhood.org/>
- The Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (Registry) is a web-based system that enables early childhood professionals and those interested in a career in early childhood to find and register for professional development opportunities and also to keep a record of their experience, education, professional development and credentials in a central location. It is also used to manage application and enrollment in First Things First College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals.
- The **Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (WFKC)** is a uniform set of expectations that identify the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for early childhood professionals across sectors of early childhood including, early care and education, early intervention, mental health, physical health and social services/child welfare professionals. They ensure implementation of quality services for young children and their families. <http://azearlychildhood.org/resources--information/workforce-knowledge--competencies>
- The Arizona Career Lattice is a tool within the Registry that provides the pathway of education, professional development, and work experience for early childhood professionals to use for individualized assessment, setting professional development goals, and documentation of progress in career development.
- The **Professional Development Instructor and Technical Assistance Provider Standards** define the credentials, knowledge and experience necessary to ensure high quality professional development experiences for our workforce from entry through advanced levels. <http://azearlychildhood.org/resources--information/workforce-knowledge--competencies>



ARIZONA  
EARLY CHILDHOOD

Career and Professional Development Network

## ARIZONA WORKFORCE REGISTRY

It is estimated that there are approximately 45,000 early childhood professionals statewide. The Arizona Workforce Registry launched in July 2015 and is Arizona's statewide system that collects data on the early childhood workforce and professional development. The Registry is intended for all early childhood professionals.

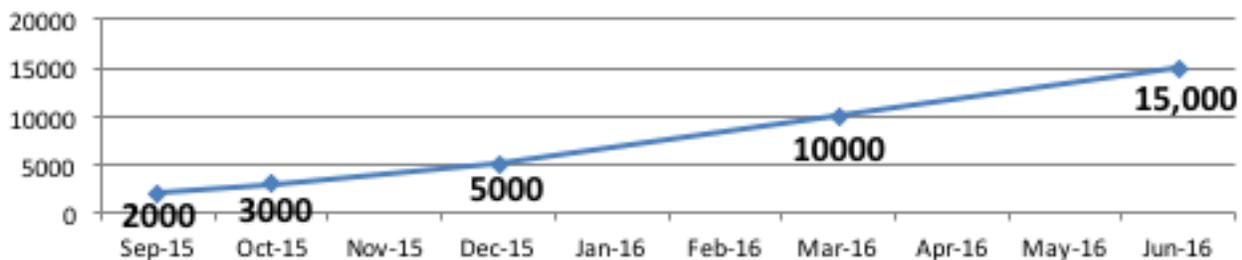
Those working directly with children:

- Teachers
- Assistant teachers
- Child care home providers
- Administrators
- Health/disability specialist
- Home visitors

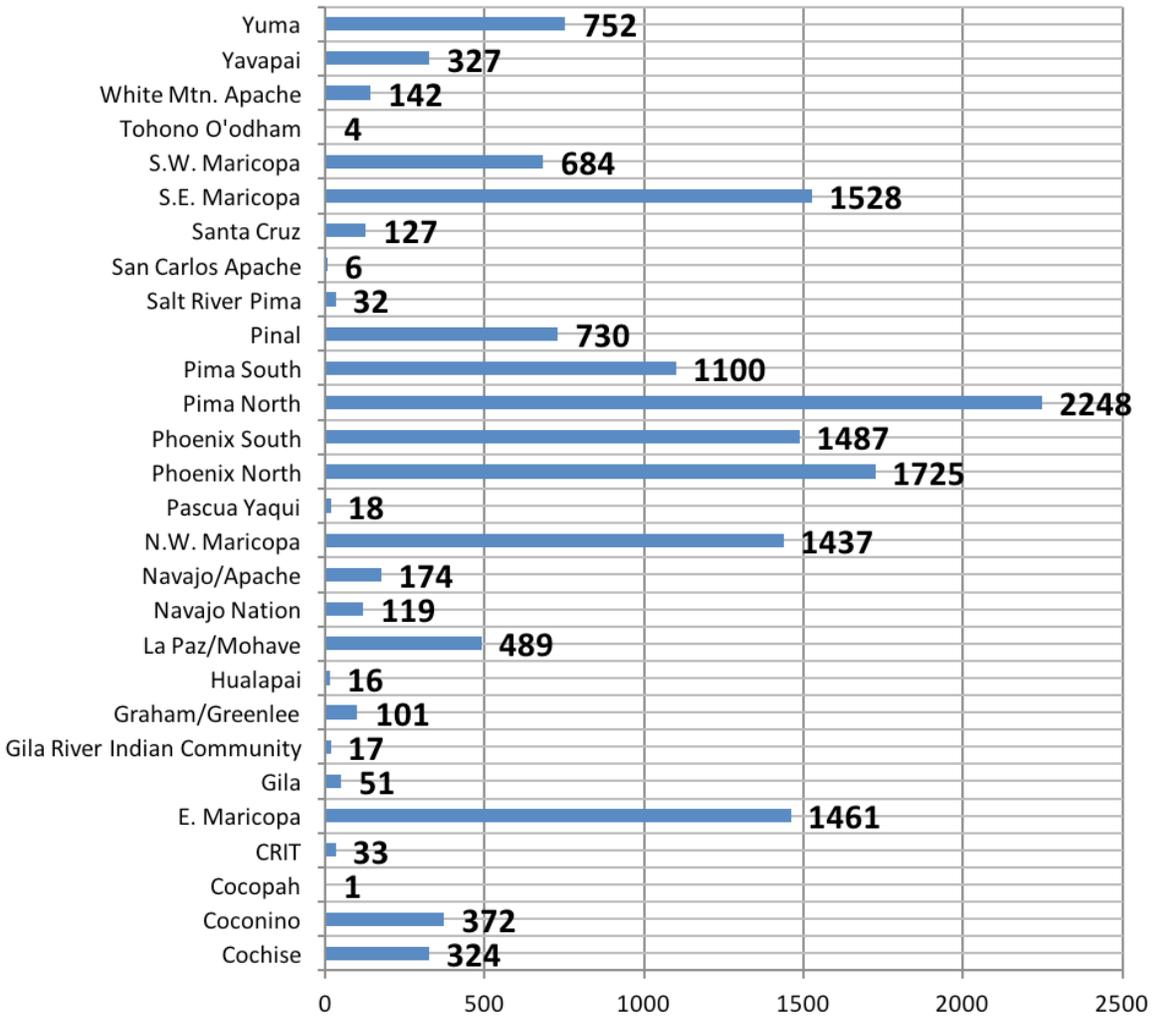
Those working on behalf of young children:

- Professional development instructors
- State agency personnel
- Parent educators
- Students pursuing Early Childhood Education degrees

### Number of Registry Members



## Number of Registry Members by Regional Council

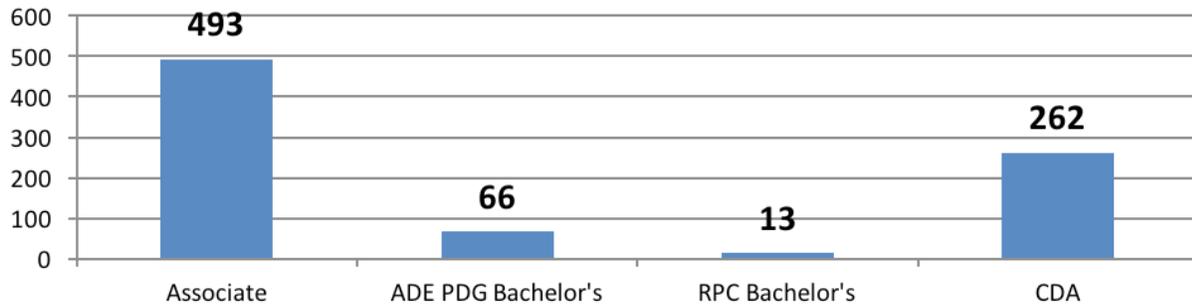


### FTF COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Supporting early childhood teachers to achieve an Associate Degree in early childhood education has been a primary focus for FTF. With the development and implementation of Quality First, a college scholarship strategy was also determined to be a critical component of supporting early care and education teachers and the quality of early care and education programs. The FTF College Scholarships strategy is being fully implemented through the Registry. The FTF College Scholarship provides the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth through age five access to education and training to achieve degrees, credentials and specialized skills to promote children’s development and school readiness.

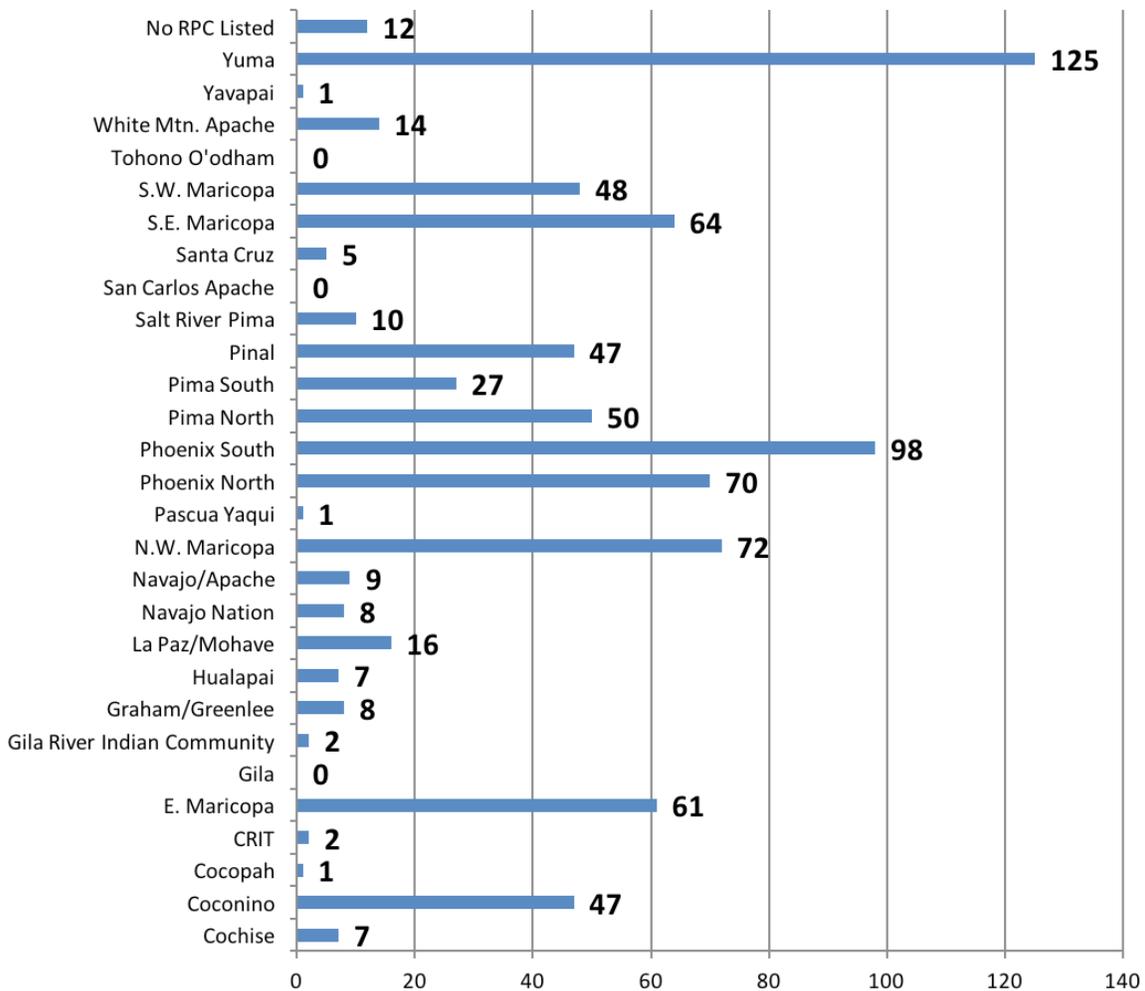
Early childhood professionals working in Arizona with or on behalf of children birth through age 5 and earning \$20.00 per hour or less are eligible for the scholarship. Priority is given to those working directly with young children. Highlights from the implementation of College Scholarships are described below.

## Number of Scholars by Degree Type Duplicated Count



\*Note: The numbers in the chart above are duplicated numbers. There are some scholars requesting scholarships for both Associate level course work as well as CDA assessment fees.

## Number of Scholars by Region Part of Fall 2015, Spring 2016, and Summer 2016 Unduplicated Individuals



[Learn more.](#)

