



FIRST THINGS FIRST
Ready for School. Set for Life.

2010 Annual Report

Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board



Table of Contents

3	Board Chair Message
5	Executive Director Message
9	Quality Early Learning
17	Family Support
25	Health
35	Regional Partnership Councils
49	System Coordination
51	Funding
57	Accountability
66	Endnotes

Submitted in accordance with A.R.S. § 8-1192 A(4): The early childhood development and health board shall prepare an annual report describing the activities of the board, including a description of funds distributed and spent pursuant to sections 8-1161, 8-1173 and 8-1192 and a description of the outcomes for children and families achieved by the board, the regional partnership councils, and the grant recipients. The board shall submit the report to the governor, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives on or before September 15 of each year, beginning in 2008, and shall provide a copy of this report to the secretary of state and the director of the Arizona state library, archives and public records. The report shall be distributed in accordance with section 41-4153.

Board Chair



Ballot Measure Threatens Arizona's Historic Commitment to Early Childhood

On November 7, 2006, Arizonans made an historic decision on behalf of our state's smallest citizens. They made a commitment to all Arizona children 5 and younger: that they would have the tools needed to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. They backed that promise with an 80-cent per pack increase on tobacco products, so that the education and health of our youngest children would not be at the mercy of the economic or political winds.

These monies were promised four years ago to local communities, along with a vow that local citizens – not government bureaucrats – would decide how they would be spent. In the following pages, you will learn how First Things First is fulfilling the voters' commitment to our youngest kids with statewide initiatives that:

- give parents information so they can support their child's early learning and health;
- improve the quality of educational services provided to kids 5 and younger;
- enhance the professional skills of teachers working with our youngest kids;
- expand preventive medical, behavioral and dental services for children birth to 5; and,
- increase public awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health.

This annual report celebrates those early successes in giving more young children in Arizona the solid foundation upon which they can build success in school, and in life. It also describes two specific challenges Arizona faces in continuing this commitment to children 5 and younger.

The Legislature has placed a measure on the November ballot that would eliminate First Things First and sweep all current and future funds set aside by voters for early childhood in to the General Fund. If voters approve this measure, all early education and health services funded by First Things First statewide will cease on November 30.

If voters reject this measure, FTF will continue to provide young children with the tools they need to be ready for school, but we will face future challenges. The state budget still will need to be balanced, likely leading to renewed attempts to seize early childhood funds. And, tobacco revenues are steadily declining, requiring that we seek ways to raise additional resources for early childhood services in Arizona.

On behalf of the state Board, we thank all Arizonans who have committed themselves to expanding and enhancing early childhood development and health services for all children. And, we ask that they work with their local First Things First regional council and other early

childhood stakeholders to create a robust dialogue and specific action regarding the needs of kids birth to 5 in their area.

Only when all Arizonans believe in the critical importance of early childhood and are actively engaged in supporting young kids in their communities can we say that we are a state that truly values its youngest children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven W. Lynn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven W. Lynn
Chair, First Things First Board

Executive Director

Ready for School. Set for Life.



Late each summer, kindergarten teachers across Arizona greet thousands of kids as they start their elementary school journey. Those teachers will tell you that the first few weeks of school are bittersweet because they know that many of their students are not prepared for success. They also know that – despite the best efforts of our schools – students who start behind, stay behind.

There is a great beacon of hope for students, teachers, parents and all Arizonans who want to see our kids succeed in school and in life. In 2006, our state – via a voter-approved ballot initiative – created First Things First and set aside tobacco tax monies for one purpose: to ensure all Arizona children have the tools they need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

In the following pages, you will see how First Things First partners with parents and communities to make that happen.

Our Signature Programs address critical early childhood needs statewide, including supporting parents in their role as a child’s first teacher (Page 18), improving the quality of early learning in homes and child care centers (Page 9), enhancing the professional skills of teachers working with our youngest kids (Page 10), and helping doctors to address a child’s developmental and physical needs (Page 27).

Our regional strategies – which vary from county to county – have been identified by local communities who know best what their children need. These include Native language development, family literacy, preventive oral health care, early detection of developmental problems, high quality child care and child obesity prevention.

While First Things First is still in its early years, we know science and common sense are on our side. Research has proven what parents and teachers already know: what happens to children in the early years lays the foundation for a lifetime. Kids with quality early childhood experiences are less likely to receive failing grades or be retained, and are more likely to advance into college and successful careers. They also tend to be healthier and demand less from the public service system.

If you are already involved in the early childhood system, we hope that you recognize the data and stories in this report as examples of the difference our collective work is making in the lives of thousands of kids and families throughout Arizona.

If you are new to early childhood development, we hope that you will be inspired to visit our website, ReadyAZKids.com, to learn more about early childhood and what you can do to help our kids, and our state, succeed!



Rhian Evans Allvin
Executive Director

Getting kids ready for school means more than packing their lunches, filling their backpacks and getting them to the bus on time. In fact, the job of helping kids succeed in school starts the day they are born.

With Deepest Gratitude

The board, regional council members and staff would like to express their deepest appreciation to J. Elliott Hibbs, the founding Executive Director of First Things First, who retired in February 2010.



When Proposition 203 was approved by Arizona voters in 2006, there was no infrastructure to support the distribution of the voter-approved early childhood funds, nor any mechanism to ensure that these new monies were, in fact, producing improved outcomes for Arizona's children.

Under Mr. Hibbs' leadership, First Things First:

- Recruited more than 300 volunteers to serve on regional partnership councils statewide;
- Hired the appropriate, highly-qualified staff to support those councils;
- Created the financial and technological systems to ensure early childhood funds were spent effectively;
- Completed one statewide and 31 community-based assessments of the needs of kids 5 and younger;
- Established local priorities and strategies for meeting those needs;
- Approved \$107 million in services for young kids; and,
- Worked with Arizona universities to establish a longitudinal study of the effectiveness of Arizona's early childhood investment.

Mr. Hibbs' commitment to First Things First led to the board creating a special award in his honor. The J. Elliott Hibbs Dedicated Service Award for Exceptional Contribution to the First Things First Community celebrates a positive impact on institutional operations, team performance and workplace effectiveness.

Each year, the award will be presented to a First Things First staff member or team who has exhibited a level of professionalism and initiative for thoroughness and thoughtfulness in reaching First Things First's operational goals and who best displays dedication, knowledge and tenacity in improving the lives of Arizona's youngest children.

The inaugural award was presented to Mr. Hibbs at the board's regular meeting on January 26, 2010.



Quality Early Learning

The Beginning of the Education Continuum

Studies show that children exposed to high-quality early childhood education have better language and math skills, better social skills, and better relationships with classmates. These students score higher on school-readiness tests, are 40 percent less likely to need special education or be held back a grade, and are 70 percent less likely to commit a violent crime by age 18.ⁱ

About 80 percent of a child's critical brain development occurs before age 3.ⁱⁱ The experiences a child has during these critical early years lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning. With more than half of Arizona's kids under 6 living in homes where all of the adults work, choosing an early care and education setting is one of the most important decisions any parent will make.

First Things First signature programs – Quality First, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Arizona, and Professional REWARD\$ – address early learning and its components: quality, access, affordability and professional development. This multi-pronged approach will ensure that parents have options and information when making early education decisions for their kids.



Children exposed to high-quality early childhood education are less likely to need special education or be held back a grade. They score higher on school-readiness tests and are more likely to advance into college and successful careers.

Signature Programs

Quality First!

Quality First is Arizona's statewide quality improvement and rating system for providers of center- or home-based early care and education. In FY 2010, Quality First helped 571 centers and homes improve the quality of care for children with the support of financial incentives, coaching, child care health consultation and scholarships for program personnel. Quality improvements range from upgrading teaching curriculums and materials to enhancing the professional skills of the teachers working with young kids.



Quality First standards go far beyond state licensing and certification requirements, which address basic health and safety issues. Quality First standards are research-based and were developed in partnership with a group of more than 50 community stakeholders. The program includes on-going monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability. A quality rating system pilot program – much like the 5-star system for rating hotels – is in development for fall 2010, and the full rollout is anticipated in 2011.

T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Arizona

Studies show that high educational attainment by early childhood education teachers has a positive impact on young children.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2007 (the latest numbers available), less than half of all Arizona's early care and education teachers were college graduates: 15 percent had an associate degree; 23 percent had a bachelor's degree; and, 9 percent had earned a master's degree.^{iv}

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Arizona is a scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce with access to educational opportunities through coursework at public colleges. Currently, scholars may receive support to complete a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or an associate degree, and future support will consider bachelor's degrees.

In FY 2010, First Things First awarded 474 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to recipients working in more than 280 early care and education facilities throughout Arizona. T.E.A.C.H. is administered by the Association for Supportive Child Care.

Professional REWARD\$

Research confirms that teachers' wages play a significant role in program quality. Higher wages allow centers to hire better-qualified teachers, which contributes to lower turnover rates and more secure attachments between children and their teachers.

Professional REWARD\$ was designed to help retain qualified teachers to care for and educate Arizona's youngest children. Launched in late FY 2010, Professional REWARD\$ offers financial incentives (ranging from \$300 to \$2,000 based on education) to early care and education professionals for progressive education, educational attainment and commitment to continuous employment. The goal is to acknowledge and reward educational advancement and attainment for staff members who have remained with their same employer for at least one year.

Eleven regional partnership councils participate in the program and 415 incentives were awarded to eligible applicants. Expansion plans are underway for FY 2011. Professional REWARD\$ is administered by the Valley of the Sun United Way.

Other Quality Improvement Supports

Early care and education providers enrolled in Quality First also benefit from services provided by Child Care Health Consultants and Mental Health Consultants. Child Care Health Consultants support child care staff in improving the health and safety of their facilities. Child Care Mental Health Consultants help strengthen adult-child relationships and improve the overall quality of the classroom environment to meet each child's needs and promote healthy development. Read more about these strategies on Page 26.



Regional Early Education Quality Improvement Strategies

The quality of early childhood education settings is linked to improved developmental and academic outcomes for young children. Quality care also depends on the professional development of a skilled and educated workforce where caregivers, staff and teachers are qualified to care for and educate children 5 and younger, and receive compensation and benefits that encourage them to remain in their positions. Gaining access to quality early care requires that adequate options be available in safe and healthy environments. It also depends on strategies that ensure access to affordable quality care for all families.



Child Care Scholarships

The current economic crisis has resulted in a combination of factors that threaten the availability of early care and education. Without access to subsidized care, working families may need to choose between quitting jobs or leaving children in settings ill-equipped to meet their developmental and safety needs.

Arizona was the first in the nation to launch a statewide scholarship program through its First Things First Emergency Child Care Scholarships. Implemented in April 2009, First Things First allocated \$23 million to address the sudden economic downturn in the state. More than 11,600 children benefited from the emergency program. In addition, more than one-third of regional partnership councils approved additional funding to continue the scholarship program through the end of FY 2010, serving 3,384 children, and several regions funded scholarships in FY 2011.

Family, Friend and Neighbor Programs

In Arizona, as much as 50 percent of children birth to age 5 are cared for by relatives or neighbors in settings that are often exempt from regulation. Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) programs provide professional development support, access to information, and training on child development, health and safety issues to these relatives and neighbors. In FY 2010, FFN programs supported 738 child care providers and offered 226 training sessions.

Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Programs

The Pre-K expansion program increases the number of high quality Pre-Kindergarten slots available for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. High quality early childhood services are strongly linked to both academic and life-skills success among children, especially those from families with several risk factors such as low income or low education levels of parents/caregivers. In FY 2010, FTF partnered with 13 school districts to expand early education opportunities for 340 children.

In FY 2011, the partnership will expand to include 25 school districts.

BY THE NUMBERS

60% of Arizona children under 6 live in homes where all the adults work^v

571 early care providers are participating in Quality First^{vi}

14% of regulated early care providers in Arizona are participating in quality improvement efforts through Quality First^{vii}

30,335 children are benefiting from quality improvement efforts^{viii}

15,011 children's early education is supported with a child care scholarship^{ix}

474 early childhood scholars currently receiving scholarships to expand professional skills^x

SUCCESS STORY

September Rhoads was two classes shy of earning her associate degree in early childhood education, but with three children of her own (ranging in age from 18 months to 18 years), finding the resources to complete her degree was becoming harder and harder.

Bill Berk, director of the Outer Limits School in Tucson where Rhoads works as the lead toddler teacher, told her about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Arizona and encouraged her to apply.

This year, she became Arizona's first T.E.A.C.H. graduate.

"If it weren't for First Things First, there's no way I would have been able to finish school," Rhoads said. "The scholarship has meant the world to me."

Rhoads said she is considering taking more classes to fulfill her goal of becoming assistant director or director of a child care center one day.

"I love being able to make a difference in a child's life and to be a positive role model. It's exciting to see how much my students have learned when they leave my class at the end of the year," Rhoads said.

“If it weren't for First Things First, there's no way I would have been able to finish school.”

- September Rhoads





Family Support

Helping A Child's First Teachers

Families are their children's first, most important and most influential caregivers and teachers. They play a critical role in shaping their children's lives and future outcomes. Children's health, development and overall well-being depend upon the care, nurturing and education provided by their families. Supporting families is a unique challenge that requires collaboration among parents, service providers, educators and policymakers to promote the health and well-being of young children.

First Things First is committed to supporting Arizona's families through statewide initiatives that include the Arizona Parent Kit and Birth to Five Helpline. We also fund programs that include home visitation, community-based classes and resource centers to ensure that information and education on child development and health topics are readily available in each community.

As Arizonans, we share in the responsibility of ensuring that each child gets a fair, smart start in life. A child who receives early childhood education and healthcare services before age 5 is more likely to succeed in grade school, high school and beyond.



Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. First Things First offers parents voluntary information and support so that they can make the best choices in raising their children.

Statewide Strategies

Arizona Parent Kits

Many new parents often wish their babies came with instruction manuals. In Arizona, they do! Thanks to a partnership between the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and First Things First, the Arizona Parent Kit is available to the parents of every newborn throughout Arizona.

The Piper Trust originally funded the kits for parents in Maricopa County. The partnership with First Things First allowed the kits to be made available at all birthing hospitals statewide. From July 2009 through March 2010, 64,000 kits were distributed across Arizona. Starting in September, the kit also will be available for checkout at public libraries.



Kits include:

- A boxed set of DVDs that give parents critical information and answer their most commonly asked questions about the early years.
- A Parent Resource Guide including contact information for state and national agencies and organizations.
- A board book – ideal for tiny hands – that encourages parents to begin reading to their children at an early age.
- A refrigerator magnet listing the toll-free number for the Birth to Five Helpline, where support from developmental specialists who can answer parents' questions is just a phone call away.

Birth to Five Helpline

The Birth to Five Helpline is a toll-free helpline for parents, families and caregivers of children ages birth to 5. The helpline serves parents in all socioeconomic groups, and provides additional information that focuses on families at risk for abuse and neglect. It is staffed by early childhood development specialists. Callers can get support from psychologists, registered nurses, early literacy specialists and occupational speech/language and physical therapists on a variety of issues including sleep and behavior problems, health, nutrition, potty training, fussy babies and other child development questions.

Under a partnership with Southwest Human Development, a magnet listing the toll-free number is included with each Arizona Parent Kit. The Helpline responded to 3,011 calls from June 2009 through March 2010.

In a recent poll, 96 percent of families who used the Helpline reported they are satisfied with the accessibility of information and resources and feel competent and confident about their ability to support their children's safety, health and wellness.

“Southwest Human Development’s partnership with First Things First has made an incredible difference in the success of our Birth to Five Helpline. Thanks to First Things First, more families than ever, who are struggling with questions about their children’s development, know they have a reliable place to turn for up-to-date, professional information that can truly make a difference in their child’s future.”

*– Ginger Ward, CEO
Southwest Human Development*

BY THE NUMBERS

100% of Arizona's birthing hospitals and medical centers voluntarily distributing Arizona Parent Kits^{xiv}

64,000 kits distributed^{xv}

5,000 kits distributed each month, on average^{xvi}

3,011 calls were made to the Birth to Five Helpline to receive support in making parenting decisions^{xvii}

9,287 families are receiving home visits to strengthen their family and support their children^{xviii}



Home Visitation

Family support is the foundation for enhancing children's positive social and emotional development.^{xi} Home visitation programs deliver education, information and support to families where they are – in their homes. Through stand-alone programs or in partnership with center-based services, voluntary home visitation programs educate families and bring them up-to-date information about health, child development and school readiness, and connect them to critical services.

Research suggests that home visitation programs help parents learn parenting skills and increase confidence in those skills, promote appropriate parent-child interactions and increase links to community supports including health and social services.^{xii} Home visitation is highly effective in promoting effective parenting in the area of preventing abuse and neglect.

At the end of March 2010, 9,287 families were enrolled in a home visitation program through community-based providers funded by First Things First.

Regional Family Support Strategies

At First Things First, we focus on educating and informing parents about child development and health topics to ensure they have the tools to support their child's development. These services are for all parents so that they have the information and support they need to raise their kids the way they think is best.

Early Literacy

Arizona ranks 51st in the nation in the percentage of parents who read daily to their young children, ages birth to 3, and 44th in the nation in the percentage of parents who read daily to their children, ages birth to 5. Research indicates a strong correlation between early language development and future literacy skills as well as social and emotional development. Because language and communication skills and patterns develop during infancy, and are often established by age 3, services ideally target young children who are less likely to engage in significant amounts of language interaction in the home.^{xiii}

First Thing First has allocated funding to support the involvement of language and communication development specialists including speech language pathologists, certified early childhood teachers, and certified early childhood special education teachers in early childhood settings.



Reach Out and Read Arizona

A \$315,769 statewide grant from First Things First expanded the infrastructure for Reach Out and Read Arizona (RORAZ), a program that trains, and provides books for, physicians and other practitioners to distribute to young children during well-child visits. Twenty-two new medical practices joined RORAZ and four new staff members were hired to recruit, enroll and train physicians who participate in the program.

Native Language and Culture Acquisition

In many Native American communities, youth struggle with the loss of Native language and culture. Regional partnership council strategies support and expand Native language enrichment programs for children birth to 5 and their families. These strategies enhance existing early literacy and language development curriculum to incorporate Native language and train teaching staff in the implementation of an evidence-based early language and literacy program that is culturally rooted.



SUCCESS STORY

Hualapai Maternal Child Health Program

The Hualapai Maternal Child Health Program (MCH) provides health services to pregnant women and children birth through age 3 living on the Hualapai Reservation.

Funded by a \$114,185 grant from the First Things First Hualapai Regional Council, FY 2010 services included home visits by two staff members of the Hualapai Health Department: a registered nurse with experience in lactation consultation and maternal healthcare, and

Department. Conversations with Head Start indicated that many children required earlier intervention to prepare them for participation in Head Start. "First Things First initiated an assessment of children from birth to 5 and identified resources we didn't know existed. We're so remote out here. We're not in the city where resources are readily available."

MCH relies on word of mouth to promote the program and most pregnant women in the Hualapai Nation participate.

“First Things First initiated an assessment of children from birth to 5 and identified resources we didn't know existed. We're so remote out here. We're not in the city where resources are readily available.”

*- Sandra Irwin, RN., MPH
Director of the Hualapai Health Department*

a new mother from the community. In-home visits extended to well-child checks for children unable to visit a clinic.

In addition to home visitation, the grant provided funding for group education for new mothers, child care providers, group training for Head Start staff and parents and nonclinical child assessments.

"We started looking at how our children weren't achieving in school," said Sandra Irwin, RN., MPH, director of the Hualapai Health

MCH provided services in FY 2010 to 42 women and children birth through 3. The grant was renewed for \$116,542 in FY 2011 and will continue providing the services established in FY 2010.

"One of the things we lack here is that we don't keep track of the accomplishments and keep everybody informed," Irwin said. "First Things First helps bring structure."



Health

Healthy Kids, Healthy Students

Although some factors that lead to poor health cannot be controlled, many can. A healthy pregnancy, followed by a healthy birth sets the stage for a healthy childhood. Practicing healthy behaviors, including early prenatal care, well baby checkups, on-time immunizations and periodic sensory, developmental and oral health screenings, are all actions that can improve a child's chances of entering school healthy and ready to succeed. When potential health problems or developmental delays are identified early, the chances of successful intervention and treatment are greater.

According to the 2008 First Things First Family and Community Survey, more than one-third of parents are dissatisfied with the information and resources available, and 70 percent of parents of children with health issues express dissatisfaction with available information and resources. Arizona's children have limited options, especially if they have special health care or social-emotional needs. There are not enough doctors or therapists in our state to serve the vast majority of communities, a problem that isn't necessarily unique to rural areas.

First Things First's key health initiatives build on Arizona's existing early childhood efforts to provide meaningful information and resources. Efforts include: child care health consultation, mental health consultation, physician outreach, health insurance outreach, workforce development and preventative oral health.



When potential health problems or developmental delays are identified early, the chances of successful intervention and treatment are greater.

Statewide Health Initiatives

Child Care Health Consultation

In FY 2010, the Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) program included 34 health consultants. CCHCs receive National Training Institute training which prepares them to teach child care staff how to talk with families about health-related topics including oral health, nutritional eating and obesity prevention, developmental screening, and the value of well-child exams and immunizations.

Between October 2009 and March 2010, 874 centers and homes were assigned a CCHC. An important component of Quality First, CCHC is expected to grow to 52 consultants in FY 2011.

Mental Health Consultation

Early education teachers and other child care professionals often describe children's problem behavior as one of the most challenging issues with which they are presented.^{xix} Mental health consultation is a valuable investment some states are making to decrease negative outcomes, including preschool expulsions, and increase positive outcomes, like encouraging competent problem solving and confident learning.^{xx}

Within less than six months of launching the Mental Health Consultation strategy, First Things First has established a



structure for training and supervising providers and connecting them to child care centers in participating regions. First introduced in nine regions as a service for early care and education providers, the strategy expanded to include 13 regions at the end of FY 2010. In addition, 23 mental health consultants and five supervisors provided support to 55 child care facilities. The continuing challenge in FY 2011 will be to identify practitioners with the requisite experience and credentials to serve children birth to 5. A tuition reimbursement is being established to help address this.

Physician Outreach and Education

First Things First is partnering with the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to provide Best Care for Kids. This program coaches medical practices through a self-evaluation process and provides assistance to identify techniques that “tune up” workflows and systems. The strategy is particularly important for strengthening the early identification of developmental delays and encouraging timely intervention.

Between January and March 2010, 211 physicians participated in trainings.



BY THE NUMBERS

477 early care providers have the support of a health professional to ensure a safer and healthier early learning environment for children^{xxv}

211 physicians receiving education on the needs of young children^{xxvi}

1,730 children receiving fluoride varnish^{xxvii}

136,804 food boxes were distributed^{xxviii}



Health Insurance Outreach

Children without medical insurance have a difficult time obtaining primary and specialty care. They are more likely to be sick as newborns, less likely to be immunized as preschoolers, and less likely to receive medical treatment for injuries. Undiagnosed and untreated medical conditions can result in long-term health and learning problems. Families without health insurance experience high out-of-pocket costs when their children lack coverage.

Funding for the first of the regional health insurance outreach programs was awarded in May 2010. The rest of the participating regions will begin funding the program in FY 2011. First Things First is working with other state agencies, regional partnership councils, community-based agencies, philanthropic organizations and

other community advocates to promote policies and funding support for outreach and enrollment or re-enrollment assistance to families eligible for public health insurance, but not yet enrolled.

Workforce Development

Through a partnership with Arizona State University, First Things First is working to increase the knowledge and expertise of speech language pathologists who, upon graduation, will serve children five and younger. Speech language pathology students in ASU's speech and hearing program receive a tuition scholarship and enhanced education related to language and communication services for young children. In return, graduates commit to a two-year service obligation per scholarship year in Arizona working with young children with speech and language delays. Eleven students were enrolled in coursework during the 2009-2010 school year. Thirteen awards have been approved for the 2010-11 school year.

Regional Early Childhood Health Strategies

Recruitment and Retention

The First Things First Loan Repayment and Stipend Program, administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services, provides financial support to increase the availability of therapists in highly underserved communities. Program incentives are available to speech/language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, mental health specialists, and child psychologists who are willing to live and work in underserved communities throughout Arizona. Incentives include loan forgiveness to therapists recruited into these areas as well as sign-on bonuses and paid professional fees. In return, graduates commit to a service obligation in the community.

Oral Health

Tooth decay is one of the most common health issues affecting young children.^{xxi} Almost half of the children in kindergarten have some decay, and about one-third have untreated decay. Nearly one-tenth is in need of urgent dental treatment.^{xxii} To prevent dental caries among young children, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends strategies that include: providing parent information on oral health care, visiting the dentist by age 1, fluoridated public water supplies and topical fluoride application. First Things First regional partnership councils fund a variety of oral health strategies to improve the oral health status of children birth to 5.

In FY 2010, 1,735 children participated in oral health screenings; 1,730 children had fluoride varnish applied; 1,229 children received oral health kits; and, 788 children were referred for further dental services.

Nutrition/Obesity/Physical Activity (Regional Strategies)

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in Arizona. About 14%^{xxiii} of 2- to 4-year-olds and about 31% of 10- to 17-year-olds^{xxiv} are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity is directly linked to many serious health problems including Type 2 Diabetes, metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, asthma and other respiratory problems, sleep disorders, liver disease, heart disease, eating disorders and skin infections. First Thing First strategies provide education, information and support to parents, child care staff, and the community to promote healthy eating and physical activity and decrease the incidence of overweight and obesity.

From July 2009 through March 2010, 2,714 people attended 90 information sessions.



Injury/Abuse Prevention

First Things First supports a variety of educational programs that address safety-related topics including how to install car seats and smoke detectors, the importance of wearing seat belts, water safety and baby proofing homes.

Developmental Screening

Developmental screenings can provide early identification of delays or issues that can negatively affect childhood milestones such as vision, hearing, oral health, healthy physical development and social-emotional health. However, many families face barriers that prevent their children from receiving screenings within a medical setting. These may include lacking a primary care provider or health coverage. To serve as many children as possible, First Things First supports screenings across a variety of settings including child care, community health and care fairs, community-based programs and home-visiting settings.

Regional partnership council strategies are designed to implement, expand and enhance screening efforts aimed at identifying potential delays to ensure that the appropriate follow-up assessments and treatment can occur.



Food Insecurity

Arizona children are at risk for hunger. According to a July 2010 report by Feeding America, almost one-fourth of Arizona's children under 18 are food insecure, the third highest rate in the country. Research shows that even moderate under-nutrition, the type seen most frequently in the United States, can have lasting effects on the brain development of young children. According to the Center on Hunger and Poverty, inadequate nutrition is a major cause of impaired development and is associated with increased school failure in children.

As a result of the First Things First Emergency Response, 136,804 food boxes with more than 2.5 million pounds of food were distributed between April 2009 and June 2010, providing 111,840 families with 125,580 children from birth to 5 with access to nutritious food.

SUCCESS STORY

Oral Health Screenings

Two First Thing First grants totaling \$493,836 are bringing oral health care education and screening to children 5 and younger in the Southeast and Central Maricopa regions.

The grants were awarded to Catholic Health-care West Foundation in September to provide oral health screenings and fluoride varnish treatment for children birth to 5, and oral health education to the children and their families as well as to expectant moms. The grants also provide guidance to teachers in establishing tooth brushing programs for the kids.

An oral health educator and registered nurse visit preschools, child care facilities, immunization clinics, WIC clinics and health fairs to provide group education, fluoride varnishes and oral health screenings.

“One of the things we do in the oral health screening is have the nurse assess urgent or early dental needs,” said Megan Miks, oral health program manager at Chandler Regional Medical Center, a member of Catholic Health-care West. “It’s our hope that we’re reaching

the kids who need to see a dentist. The follow-up piece is very important to us. We’re hearing that 50 percent of the children we’ve seen have either followed up with a dentist or are scheduled to follow up with a dentist.”

Children participating in oral health screenings receive bags with a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss and educational materials. Miks recalled a little girl at one preschool screening who was so excited to get her own tube of toothpaste. “She said ‘My own tube of toothpaste! I’ve never had my own tube of toothpaste!’ Just getting a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste into these children’s’ hands is huge.”

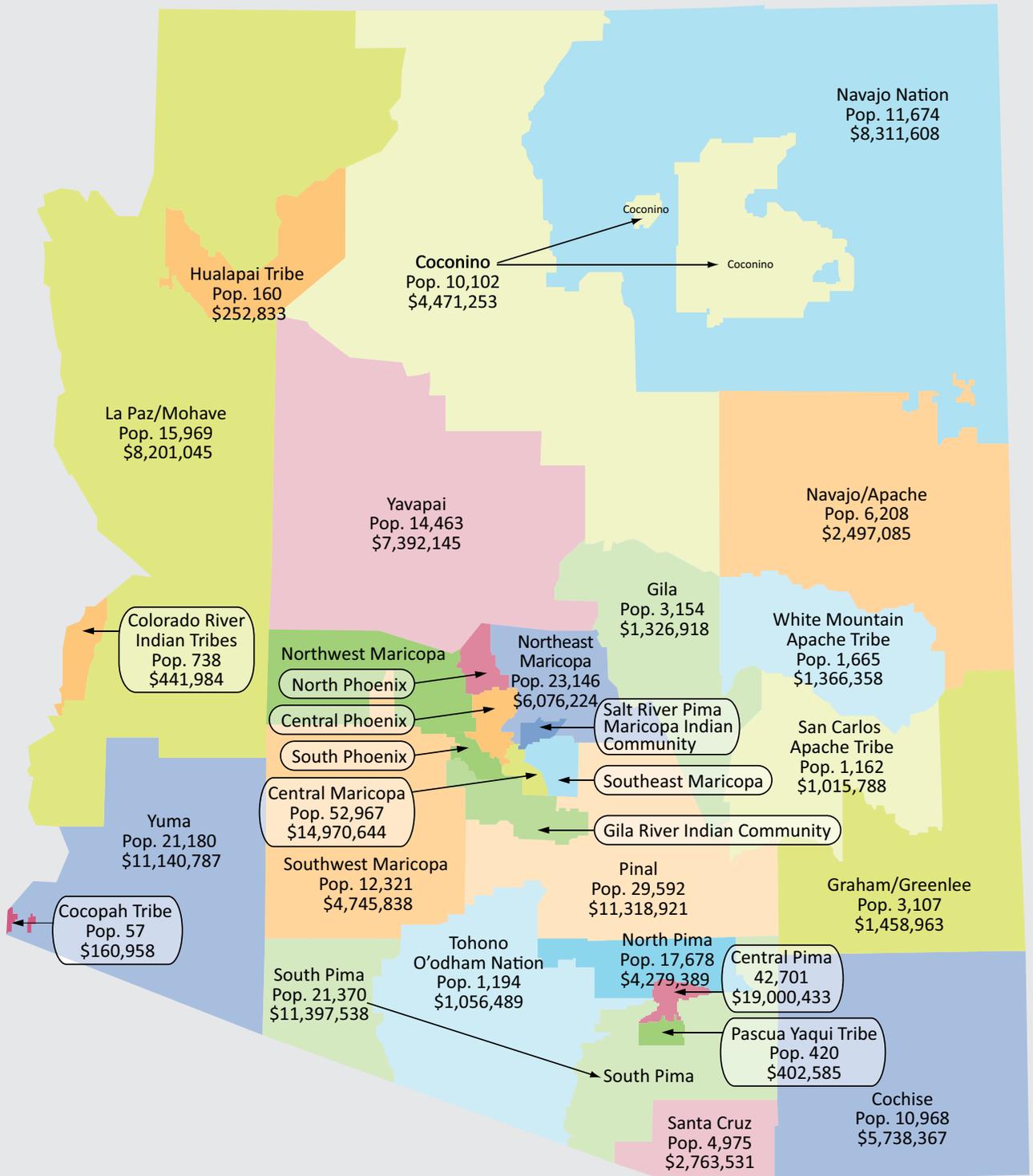
Miks said the program hopes to be able to apply the fluoride varnish on the same children every three- to-six months and track the percentage of decay in each child over the three years that this grant is renewable. The grants were renewed in FY 2011 for a total of \$476,813.

“*She said ‘My own tube of toothpaste! I’ve never had my own tube of toothpaste!’ Just getting a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste into these children’s’ hands is huge.*”

*- Megan Miks, Oral Health Program Manager
Chandler Regional Medical Center*



Fiscal Years 2010 & 2011 Final Funding Allocations



Central Phoenix, Pop. 55,013, Allocation: \$29,465,626

North Phoenix, Pop. 65,510, Allocation: \$20,579,107

Northwest Maricopa, Pop. 50,887, Allocation: \$16,558,938

South Phoenix, Pop. 58,795, Allocation: \$28,397,659

Gila River Indian Community, Pop. 1,741, Allocation: \$1,564,411

Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Pop. 822, Allocation: \$530,978

Southeast Maricopa, Pop. 78,561, Allocation: \$22,089,185

Regional Partnership Councils

Community-Based Leadership in Expanding Education and Health Opportunities for the Youngest Arizonans

Under the law that created First Things First, most of the planning and recommendations about how early childhood funds are spent are in the hands of local communities who know best what their children need. Regional councils are comprised of more than 300 volunteers with two things in common: they have specific expertise in some aspect of early childhood and they are deeply committed to seeing children in their communities succeed in school and beyond.

As trusted voices in their communities, regional council members are invaluable in efforts to engage local stakeholders in conversations about early childhood, forge partnerships to improve outcomes for young kids and maximize resources available to help children and families.

First Things First's 31 Regional Partnership Councils have developed and funded dozens of strategies to meet the unique needs of their communities. The councils are grouped in to six regional areas; the list below includes one success story from each area.

First Things First extends its gratitude to the hundreds of committed volunteers statewide who made a difference for young children in their communities by serving on a Regional Partnership Council in FY 2010. They are listed on Pages 62 and 63. We also extend our deepest appreciation to those who have agreed to serve Arizona's children by participating on a Regional Partnership Council for four-year terms beginning July 1, 2010. They are listed on Pages 64 and 65.



All Arizonans have a shared responsibility to help children build a solid foundation for learning. First Things First partners with communities to make that happen.

Northeast Regional Area

Employer-sponsored Child Care Case Study

A feasibility study commissioned by the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council makes a compelling argument for providing on-site, employer-sponsored child care.

The featured employer, White Mountain Regional Medical Center in Springerville, has operated a child care program on campus for almost two years.

“A study like this would have been helpful for us, but we had to create everything from scratch,” said Michael Zimmerman, CEO of White Mountain Regional Medical Center. “The study accomplished two things: it confirmed a long-held belief of mine that I didn’t have any data to support until now; and it allowed us to go out and publically say ‘look this works.’”

The results were overwhelmingly positive. The center pays for itself after accounting for the cost savings from reduced absenteeism, overtime and turnover. In addition, the program has raised employee morale and significantly enhanced the hospital’s image as an innovative employer that values its employees.

Among the study’s findings:

- Average number of missed days was reduced from 8-10 days to 0-3 days per year.
- 30 percent reduction in the incidence of employees calling in immediately prior to their shift.
- 21 percent reduction in overtime hours.
- 44 percent reduction in overtime costs for people working to cover extra shifts.
- Turnover rate reduced from 20 percent to 12 percent.
- Increase in the number of applications for each open position from one or two to 15.
- A 20 percent vacancy in nursing and professional staff has transformed into a waiting list of qualified applicants.

The quality child care program has space for 60 children and includes a curriculum-based preschool program. It is offered at no cost to employees, resulting in increased productivity and reliability of employees with young children.

“*We now have policies and procedures and screening tools in place. If another company wants to do this, we could help.*”

*- Michael Zimmerman, CEO
White Mountain Medical Center*

"Anybody who has a young workforce can replicate this," Zimmerman said. "We now have policies and procedures and screening tools in place. If another company wants to do this, we could help."

Applied Economics – through a \$50,000 grant from the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council – compiled this information and used it to create a series of engaging informational materials being distributed to businesses in the region. The grant also paid for a series of

informational sessions hosted in the community to share the information with business leaders. The grant was renewed in FY 2011 to allow Applied Economics to continue doing outreach and to provide technical assistance to businesses considering their own employer-sponsored child care effort.



Maricopa Regional Area

Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Home Visitation

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation home visitation program “fills the gap” in programs available through the Yavapai Nation Education Division, according to Gary Loutzenheiser, acting educational director of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Education Division and principal of H’man’shawa Early Childhood Development Center.

“Our previous programs were for children age 3 and up. This is the last gap we’ve filled in, birth to 3,” Loutzenheiser said.

“Our entire program is designed to get kids to graduate from high school. We now have assistance all the way up through high school graduation. And we have a 90 percent high school graduation rate, higher than the national average.”

The home visitation program began in October 2009 with 14 families participating. That number quickly jumped to 29 families. The goal is to reach eligible Tribal families and educate them on proper childhood development from pre-birth through age 3. The program hopes to more than double the number of families participating in FY 2011.

“*It’s not about buying fancy toys, it’s about life experiences. Even taking a walk outside in the desert and picking up a rock and throwing it promotes large motor skills and creates a life experience.*”

- Liela Williams

The program is made possible by a \$150,000 grant from the First Things First Northeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council. The grant covers salaries for two staff members, staff development and training and a contract with Save the Children to collect data.

Many Tribal members are comfortable with sending their children to school when they turn 3, said Andrea LeBeau, one of two Home H’man’shawa Early childhood Development Center liaisons. However, for many families it’s been an “eye opening experience” that their newborns can learn.

LeBeau said she and her home visitation partner, Liela Williams, both members of the Yavapai Nation, visit families twice a month to discuss how parents can support their child’s early development. “We know the people we’re serving on a personal level because Fort McDowell is such a small community.”

LeBeau and Williams use ages and stages questionnaires to help parents develop a child goal plan for their child. “We teach parents simple everyday things they can do with their child, while they’re driving, washing dishes or cleaning house,” LeBeau said.

Adds Williams, "It's not about buying fancy toys, it's about life experiences. Even taking a walk outside in the desert and picking up a rock and throwing it promotes large motor skills and creates a life experience."

Williams, a preschool professional with 29 years experience, earned her CDA certification

and worked as a preschool teacher for 10 years. Over the past three years, she said she noticed that children entering her preschool were not as verbal as those in the past. "What I noticed this year is that with at least seven kids, their communication wasn't really there. I'm guessing their parents probably don't read to them. So with this program, we're really pushing for parents to read to their young children because they do hear it."

In addition to home visits, LeBeau and Williams hold monthly parent/child groups. "We always try to start off with a book being read," Williams said. "Children attend classes with their parents and families participate in activities together. At first, I think the parents thought we were going to come in and do a one-on-one with the children. But we said 'no, we are here to show you what to do and then we will observe you.'"

The grant in the amount of \$157,500 was renewed in FY 2011.



Southeast Regional Area

First Focus on Kids Professional Development Alliance

A Pima County early childhood professional development program is gaining national recognition as a model program. The goal is to replicate the program in other states so that young children can participate in high quality early education that prepares them to do better in school and life.

The number of highly educated early education teachers in central Pima County is low. Of the area's estimated 4,500 early education professionals, only 20 percent of the teachers and 10 percent of the assistants have bachelor's degrees, and only 8 percent of teachers and 6 percent of teaching assistants have their Child Development Associate certificates.

To address this long-standing and systemic problem, First Things First Central Pima Regional Partnership Council awarded a \$584,449 grant to the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona in FY 2010. The grant supports United Way's collaboration with its First Focus on Kids Professional Development Alliance partners to develop a multi-faceted, systems approach to professionalizing the field of early childhood education.

"The purpose of this grant is to change the early childhood system in the Central Pima Region," said Naomi Karp, director of early childhood professional development at United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona.

In an effort to create the elements of an ideal regional professional development system,

alliance members produced seven Communities of Practice, all tied to college credit.

"We hope to improve the skills and knowledge of what is high quality early care and why it's important," Karp said. Other Communities of Practice include:

- implementing developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom
- educating providers on ways to include children with special needs and disabilities in the regular classroom
- ensuring students' timely graduation by aligning and articulating early childhood education courses at Pima Community College with those at the University of Arizona
- establishing a master's degree program at the University of Arizona designed to meet the needs of early childhood educators who can't take time off from work
- educating early childhood providers on how to create child-centered environments
- building developmentally appropriate professional development systems that can be replicated in other communities

Each Community of Practice represents key aspects of the professional development system – education for those with limited credentials to those with extensive early childhood development expertise. In addition, each Community of Practice focuses on a key component of the system and establishes a learning cohort coached by a Community of Practice Leader to reinforce learning experiences.

“ We hope to improve the skills and knowledge of what is high quality early care and why it’s important.”

- Naomi Karp, Director
Early Childhood Professional Development
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

Employees from 36 child care centers and 19 other early education entities are involved in the peer-to-peer program. In addition, an estimated 1,400 community members are participating in at least one seminar, conference or college course while at least 250 people each year will receive intensive education and follow-up coaching.

The grant was renewed and increased to \$701,400 for FY 2011. Over the next three years, First Focus on Kids expects to see more students transferring from community college to university, more students taking course work to earn degrees, a master’s degree program in Early Education at the University of Arizona, specially trained teachers in special needs and infant and toddler care, and hundreds more teachers and educators using developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom. In addition, the Professional Development Alliance will establish the tools necessary to influence major change in the professional development system for early education professionals.



West Regional Area

Court Team for Maltreated infants and Toddlers

An increasing number of infants and toddlers with complex physical, mental health, and developmental problems are being removed from their homes in Mohave County. Eighty children under 5 were in foster care at the end of FY 2010. However, foster parents and providers do not always have the necessary training to help address the unique social and emotional needs of this vulnerable population.

To address this issue, the Mohave County Superior Court established an Infant and Toddler Mental Health Team in FY 2010, made possible by a \$300,000 grant from the First Things First La Paz / Mohave Regional Partnership Council.

the mental problems that children birth to 5 may experience.”

The team provides specialized training for key stakeholders including court personnel, Child Protective Services case workers, court appointed special advocates, dependency attorneys, early childhood specialists from the area’s 16 school districts, foster parents and child-servicing agencies region-wide. The team’s role is to advocate for vulnerable children ages birth to 5.

In the past, it was thought that young children who were abused and neglected did not suffer long-term consequences. However, recent brain research makes it clear that because of the rapid development of their brains, young children are at great risk for long-term harm if they are abused or neglected.

“*There are definitely mental health issues in children who are abused and neglected at that young age. Our goal is to ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands the mental problems that children birth to 5 may experience.*”

*- Tonya Ford, M.Ed.
Mental Health Coordinator*

“There are definitely mental health issues in children who are abused and neglected at that young age,” said Tonya Ford, M.Ed., Mohave County Superior Court Infant/Toddler Mental Health coordinator. “Our goal is to ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands

“We try to make everyone aware of the brain development research for young children,” Ford said. The team creates programs and policies that are scientifically proven to be a best practice for those working with young children and families.

Training is an important component of the program and an average of four or five training sessions are held each month. "We are trying to get everyone to think the same way to streamline our focus," Ford said. "We're trying to work a little smarter to avoid duplicating services and ensure that the best services are available for the children." By the end of FY 2010, 512 people had attended training sessions.

The court team has developed a professional library and website with materials relevant to infant and toddler mental health. Materials are available for checkout and resources will continue to be added.



The grant was renewed in FY 2011 for \$450,000 to continue implementing the techniques and strategies initiated in FY 2010. Additional plans include providing technical assistance for a new visitation center opening for parents and children, training and coaching of personnel who provide visitation assistance, and modeling appropriate visitation including the interaction that should occur between parents and children.

Phoenix/Yavapai Regional Area

Raising A Reader

Raising A Reader (RAR) encourages participating families to embrace a daily routine of book cuddling with their children ages 5 and younger to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills essential for school success.

Designed to educate parents, RAR also offers literacy skills training and resources for the entire family. Trainings occur in relaxed settings, where parents and children can comfortably practice the new strategies they have learned together. Sites include apartment communities throughout north and central Phoenix.

RAR engaged 1,260 families in central and north Phoenix during its first year. The program is administered by Southwest Human Development through two First Thing First grants totaling \$163,776 from the Central Phoenix and North Phoenix Regional Councils.

“The reception from apartment managers and residents has been extremely positive,” said Marlene Moreno, Raising A Reader program coordinator with Southwest Human Development. “Initially, we intended to provide training

in a larger number of apartment communities, but due to such high demand and need, we conducted several rounds of training for different parents at each site.”

RAR established meaningful collaborations with several community services including the Phoenix Public Library, Adelante Health Systems’ WIC On Wheels (WOW), the International Rescue Committee, Asian Pacific Association and United Way Valley of the Sun:

- Area libraries provide children’s story times on-site and during RAR trainings.
- Adelante Health Systems’ WIC On Wheels (WOW) bus visits RAR sites to provide nutrition education for expecting mothers and parents of children ages five and younger. WOW also provides food coupons for select items including infant formula.
- Collaborations with the International Rescue Committee and the Asian Pacific Association support trainings offered in English, Spanish, Burmese and Nepali.
- Valley of the Sun United Way provides School Readiness Kits to parents to aid in preparing their children for school.

“*RAR helps parents understand the powerful role they play in their children’s education.*”

- Marlene Moreno, Program Coordinator
Southwest Human Development

RAR helps parents understand the powerful role they play in their children’s education, Moreno said, and provides exposure to other available community resources. The grants totaling \$202,304 were renewed for FY 2011.



Central East Regional Area

Graham/Greenlee Early Literacy Program

When the Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council wanted to foster a love of reading among the preschool children and their families, they turned to the Safford City – Graham County Library.

With a \$50,000 grant from First Things First, the library implemented an early literacy strategy using the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program.

The strategy is designed to mail a new, age-appropriate book each month to every child under 5 in Graham and Greenlee counties. The first book each child receives is the classic “The Little Engine That Could™.” Every month until they turn five, children can experience the joy of discovering a new book in the family mailbox. The last book each child receives is “Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come.”

“I feel that this has been a fantastically successful project,” said Jan Elliott, director of the

Safford City – Graham County Library. “We were able to sign up a lot more people than we anticipated. The biggest thing is the feedback we’ve been getting from parents.”

“Especially in these times of economic stress, books may not be something that parents spend money on, but the children are very proud of their books,” Elliott said. “One little girl takes the books to bed with her; she puts them all in a backpack and just hangs on to the backpack all night. And more than one child has taken their books to show and tell in preschool. I’ve even heard of one little girl taking them to her dance class.”

In FY 2010, 1,654 children enrolled in the program. “It has been incredibly positive,” said Shari Elkins, Graham/Greenlee regional coordinator for First Things First. “The children love getting books in the mail every month and are so proud to have books to call their own.”

The grant was renewed for FY 2011 and increased to \$60,000. The goal is to increase participation to 2,000 children.

“*The children love getting books in the mail every month and are so proud to have books to call their own. Because the children have the books available, they are read to, and that’s one of the big breakthroughs.*”

- Jan Elliott, Director
Safford City - Graham County Library

“Because the children have the books available, they are read to,” Elliott added. “And that’s one of the big breakthroughs.”



BY THE NUMBERS

31 Regional Partnership Councils

330 Arizonans volunteering on councils

\$107 million awarded in region-specific contracts in FY 2010



System Coordination



The Arizona Early Childhood Task Force is a critical step in helping Arizona build an early learning system that is responsive to the needs of families, careful in the use of private and public resources and effective in preparing our youngest children for a successful future.

Arizona Early Childhood Task Force

In addition to expanding and enhancing the educational and health services available to children 5 and younger, First Things First is responsible for ensuring greater collaboration and coordination among the various stakeholders in the early childhood system, including providers, government agencies and non-profit organizations.

This will ensure that the system meets the needs of children and families, that there are clear outcomes that the system is accountable for, and that everyone understands and agrees on their role and responsibilities in achieving those outcomes.

In February 2010, First Things First convened 35 community leaders from around the state as members of a special Task Force to develop the Arizona Early Childhood Model System and Plan. The Task Force also engaged citizens from around the state to weigh in on the discussions and decisions.

The Task Force was charged with establishing the vision for the state's early childhood development and health system and guiding First Things First's role in the implementation of this comprehensive system for our state's children.

The task force recommendations will be reviewed by the FTF Board in September 2010, followed by aggressive implementation of the priorities identified by the task force and FTF. A list of Task Force members is available on Page 61.



Funding

Funding Overview

First Things First provides coordination and funding for early childhood development and health programs throughout Arizona. By law, 90 cents of every dollar must be spent on education and health services for children 5 and younger. No more than 10 percent may be spent on administrative costs. That is significantly less overhead than many corporations and large non-profit agencies.

FTF bases funding decisions on a rigorous process of review to ensure programs are supported by research, value the family and use approaches considered to be best practices. We use our funds to build, expand and sustain the early childhood development and health system to ensure that all children and families benefit.

First Things First's day-to-day business functions – including its grant-making process – are guided by state law. Each year, First Things First is subject to an independent audit, which is submitted to the state Auditor General's Office once it is completed. In addition to this independent audit, FTF is subject to and participates in the Auditor General's overall annual state audit process.



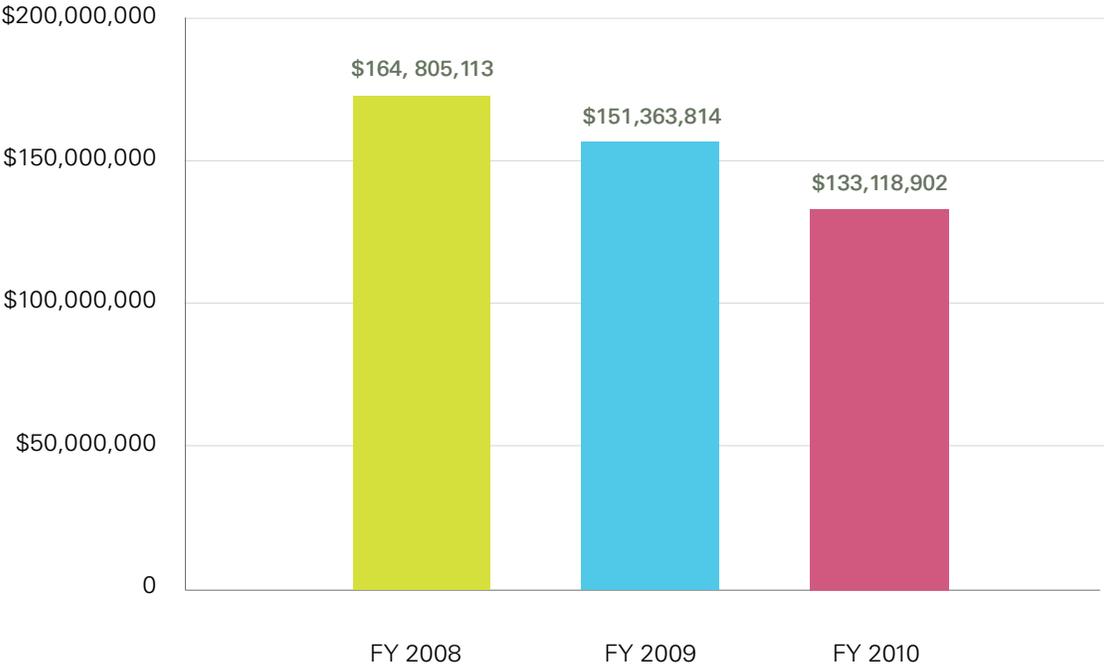
By law, 90 cents of every dollar at First Things First goes to programs and services to benefit children five and younger. No more than 10 percent of FTF funds can be spent on administration. That's a lower overhead than many successful corporations and trusted non-profit organizations.

Declining Tobacco Revenues

As fewer Arizonans consume tobacco products, First Things First’s major funding source – tobacco tax revenues – will continue to decrease before stabilizing in the next 10 to 15 years. Tobacco tax revenue received by First Things First in FY 2010 was more than 19% less than revenue received in FY 2008; revenues fell from almost \$165 million in FY 2008 to just over \$133 million in FY 2010. In addition, changes in the total funds available for investment and lagging interest rates resulted in the interest income for the same period dropping almost 30%, from \$6.1 million in FY 2008 to \$4.3 million in FY 2010.

Fortunately, the authors of First Things First anticipated the decline in tobacco tax revenue. They understood that additional revenue eventually would be needed to reinvigorate funding. And they knew it would take time to set up an appropriate, accountable mechanism to distribute First Things First funding and track the improved outcomes for children. They drafted the proposition so that while First Things First was being established, revenue and the interest garnered would accumulate and become the reserve fund to sustain initiative activities as tobacco revenues declined.

**First Things First’s
Yearly Tobacco Tax Revenue**



Proposition 302 Threatens to Eliminate all First Things First Funding

Earlier this year, state lawmakers voted to refer a measure to the November ballot. If approved by voters, the measure would eliminate First Things First, redirect all funds set aside for early childhood education and health into the General Fund, and allow the Legislature to decide what to do with that money. If the proposition passes, all of the strategies outlined in this report and the early childhood services provided in communities statewide will cease.



In May 2010, the FTF state Board passed a resolution opposing Proposition 302 and urging all Arizonans to get involved in preserving early childhood funding. The full text of the Board resolution can be found on Page 60. Following the Board's action, many First Things First regional councils passed similar resolutions in their communities.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$107 million approved in FY 2010 grants for programs and services to young children

200 grants approved in FY 2010 for community-based services for children

19% reduction in annual tobacco revenues from 2008-2010

\$130+ million per year will be lost to services for young children if Proposition 302 passes.

Financial Report

FY 2010

PROGRAM ACCOUNT BY GOAL AREA

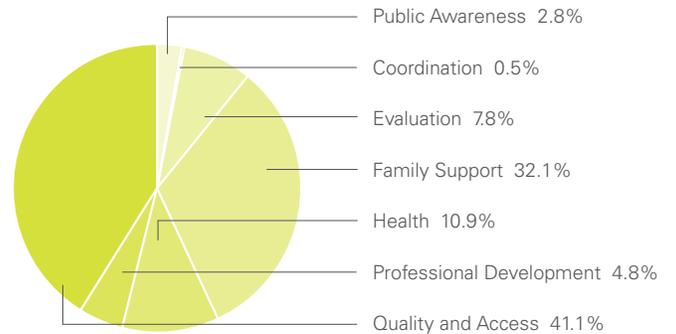
Public Awareness	1,997,846
Coordination	326,608
Evaluation	5,533,566
Family Support	22,723,334
Health	7,723,329
Professional Development	3,390,807
Quality and Access	29,082,047
Total	70,777,537

FIRST THINGS FIRST REVENUES

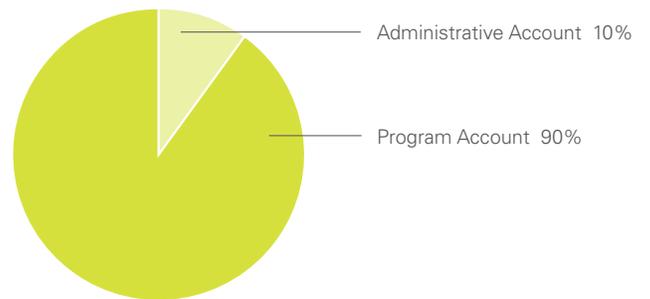
Administrative Account	13,744,300
Program Account	123,698,400
Total	137,442,700

Note: At the time of printing, the final reconciliation of FY 2010 expenditures was not complete. As such, expenditures reported include June plus those expenditures reconciled as part of the state's Period 13, but are not inclusive of final adjustments that tie the appropriation year to the fiscal year under an accrual accounting methodology.

PROGRAM ACCOUNT BY GOAL AREA



FIRST THINGS FIRST REVENUE







Accountability

Establishing Transparency and Accountability

First Things First was founded on three key principles: local control for decisions made about using resources; enough flexibility to serve Arizona's unique needs; and transparency and accountability.

Recognizing the importance of transparency and accountability, in 2009 the First Things First Board awarded an evaluation contract to a consortium of Arizona's three public universities. The independent, external evaluation project includes three simultaneous studies that examine the impact of FTF services on the lives of young children across the state.

Preliminary results from the Kindergarten Readiness study show that, upon entering kindergarten, an achievement gap already exists among Arizona's children. The early results also suggest that early math achievement lags behind language skills. Additional children will be interviewed every two years to provide updated snapshots of kindergarten readiness across the state.

The Longitudinal Child Study will examine the long-term impact of First Things First programs on 8,000 infants, toddlers and kindergartners by understanding how increasing children's opportunities affects their well-being over time. Preliminary results are expected in late fall 2010.



Research has proven what teachers and parents already know, children with quality early childhood experiences do better in school and in life. They tend to be healthier and earn more as adults. And, they demand less from the social service system.

Finally, the Family and Community Case Study includes interviews with a smaller group of families and community members describing how First Things First is affecting opportunities for their young children. These case studies will provide stories from families that illustrate the data compiled from the other studies.

Additional Studies and Surveys

First Things First is funding several other evaluation studies as part of its on-going, rigorous commitment to accountability:

- St. Luke's Health Initiative will focus on health care availability; percentage of children who have regular medical and dental care; preventative health behaviors; mental health issues in families and the effect on young children; insurance and underinsurance; and additional out-of-pocket expenditures. Results will be available in December 2010.
- Child Care Study will identify the estimated number of children served in regulated and unregulated care; how the current supply of early care and education relates to the demand of families; and the role early care quality plays in families' decisions. Results will be available in March 2011.
- Family and Community Survey will report on parents' perception and knowledge related to early childhood development; best practice in supporting young children's development; perception of coordination and quality in early childhood services and communication. Results will be available in 2013.
- Parent Kit Study will determine if parents find the kits helpful, if parenting practice changes after receiving the kit and if the kits are more effective for certain parents. Results will be available in March 2011.



Board Resolution

WHEREAS, the Early Childhood Development and Health Board was established by voters in 2006 to ensure that ALL Arizona children five and younger have the tools they need to enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed; and,

WHEREAS, First Things First funding is currently fulfilling the voters' commitment to positively impact children and families in communities across Arizona; and,

WHEREAS, the current economic crisis – and subsequent budget cuts by the Arizona Legislature – are having a devastating effect on young children and their families; and,

WHEREAS, First Things First repeatedly offered an interest-free loan of \$300 million to the Legislature to mitigate the devastating effects of the budget crisis on Arizona's youngest children; and,

WHEREAS First Things First further offered to discuss funding the state match to KidsCare on a temporary basis to restore health coverage to thousands of Arizona children and eliminate a waiting list of new children needing health care services; and,

WHEREAS, the Arizona Legislature ignored First Things First's attempts to assist with the state budget crisis while ensuring long-term investment in early childhood; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to article IV, part 1, section 1, Constitution of Arizona, the forty-ninth Legislature, 7th Special Session, instead presented House Concurrent Resolution 2001 to the Secretary of State for submission to the voters at the next general election to eliminate First Things First and its programs; and,

WHEREAS, the same ballot measure sweeps all current and future tobacco revenue set aside for early childhood services and deposits it in to the state General Fund for use at the state Legislature's discretion forever:

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First Board) opposes the ballot measure House Concurrent Resolution 2001 from the 7th Special Session of the 49th Legislature; and urges every citizen in our state to do their utmost to preserve early childhood services in Arizona , including:

Informing and educating voters on the devastating effects of the HCR 2001 ballot measure to the education and health of Arizona's youngest children;

Becoming involved in formal efforts to defeat the HCR 2001 ballot measure; and,

Voting NO on the HCR 2001 ballot measure in November.

Adopted May 18, 2010.



Arizona Early Childhood Task Force

MEMBER ROSTER

Kristina Blackledge
Parent Representative

Representative Rich Crandall
Chair, Education Committee
Arizona House of
Representatives

Marilee Dal Pra
Senior Program Director
The Virginia G Piper Charitable
Trust

Member, Central Phoenix
Regional Partnership Council

LaVonne Douville
Vice President
Community Development
United Way of Tucson &
Southern Arizona

Molly Dries Bright
Director, Arizona Early
Intervention Program (AzEIP)
Arizona Department of Economic
Security

Rhian Evans Allvin
Executive Director
First Things First

Pricilla Foote
Director
Behavioral Health Services
Gila River Health Care

Chair
Gila River Indian Community
Regional Partnership Council

Reverend Jackie Garner
Trinity Center for New Thought
Chair, Central Maricopa Regional
Partnership Council

Rufus Glasper
Chancellor
Maricopa Community Colleges

Dr. Arturo Gonzalez
President elect, Arizona Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics

Julianne Hartzell
Chair, Coconino Regional
Partnership Council

Kathy Hrabluk
Associate Superintendent for
School Effectiveness
Arizona Department of Education

Will Humble
Director, Arizona Department of
Health Services
Board Member, First Things First

Naomi Karp
Director, Early Childhood
Professional Development
United Way of Tucson &
Southern Arizona

President, Arizona Association
for the Education of Young
Children

Chair, North Pima Regional
Partnership Council

Beth Lazare
Policy Advisor for Health &
Human Services
Governor's Office

Bruce Liggett
Executive Director
Arizona Child Care Association

Geri Martinez
Director, Alhambra School
District Head Start Program

Ron Marx
Dean, College of Education
University of Arizona

Nadine Mathis Basha
Task Force Chair

Board Member & Finance
Committee Chair
First Things First

Joyce Millard-Hoie
Executive Director
Raising Special Kids

Member, Central Phoenix
Regional Partnership Council

Dana Naimark
President & Chief Executive
Officer
Children's Action Alliance

Jacob Moore
Member, Arizona State Board of
Education

Managing Partner, Generation
Seven Strategic Partners, LLC

Karen Ortiz
Vice President, Early Education
Helios Foundation

Janice Palmer
Director of Governmental
Relations
Arizona School Boards
Association

Jane Pearson
Associate Director for Programs
St. Luke's Health Initiatives

Rosalind Polston
Outreach Program Coordinator
Tanner Community Development

Dr. Pamela Powell
Assistant Professor
College of Education
Northern Arizona University

Board Member & Program
Committee Chair
First Things First

Barbara Ralston
President and Chief Executive
Officer
Fresh Start Women's Foundation

David Reede
Vice Chairman, San Carlos
Apache Tribe

Vice Chair, San Carlos Apache
Regional Partnership Council

Senator Rebecca Rios
Assistant Minority Leader
Arizona State Senate

Jeanette Shea
Assistant Director, Public Health
Prevention Services
Arizona Department of Health
Services

Laurie Smith
Member, Graham County
Community Foundation

Chair, Graham/Greenlee Regional
Partnership Council

Mayor Scott Smith
City of Mesa

Ginger Ward
Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Human Development

The Arizona Institute for Early
Childhood Development

Member, Central Phoenix
Regional Partnership Council

Susan Wilkins
Executive Director, Association
for Supportive Child Care

Member, Central Phoenix
Regional Partnership Council

Neal Young
Director Arizona Department of
Economic Security

Board Member, First Things First

STAFF ROSTER

Karen Ponder
Early Childhood Consultant
Ponder, Inc.

B.J. Tatro, Ph.D.
Facilitator
B.J. Tatro Consulting

Karen Woodhouse
Deputy Director, Early Childhood
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Endnotes

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