



90% OF A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN.



SANTA CRUZ REGION

2017 IMPACT REPORT

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

From birth to age 5, the brain develops faster than at any other time in life. And how a child's brain develops in these early years will have a lasting impact on their future.

Science has shown that children with positive, nurturing experiences in their early years go on to be healthier and more successful in school and in life. They're more ready for kindergarten. They're more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. They're more prepared for a successful career and to be contributing members of their communities.



That's why Arizonans created First Things First – to support the development and learning of our youngest children. First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that:



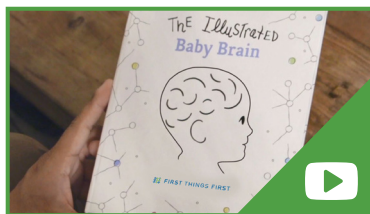
STRENGTHEN FAMILIES in their role as their child's first teacher.



IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EARLY LEARNING in child care and preschool programs.



PROMOTE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT to ensure that kids arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.



WATCH OUR VIDEO

to learn more about early childhood brain development.

<http://www.firstthingsfirst.org/why-early-childhood-matters/the-first-five-years>

EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE SANTA CRUZ REGION

“After studying the needs of young children and families in our community, the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council and our partners have implemented numerous strategies in 2017. They include family resource centers, home visitation, oral health, Child Care Health Consultation and Quality First. Together these approaches help support the growth and development of our region's youngest children and their families.

Our grant partners have had many successes during 2017. One of those is through Child & Family Resources, Inc., which continues to provide in-home, personalized support for children ages birth to 5 and their families through their healthy families program. The program provides parents with the resources and tools necessary to support their child's development. They also do an amazing job of collaborating with our partners in the region, including the family resource centers, to provide families with more access to parenting knowledge and tools.”

Karen Woodford
Chair, Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council

2017 SANTA CRUZ REGION HIGHLIGHTS



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND EARLY LITERACY

3,020 Parents and caregivers accessed early childhood information and/or resources through family resource centers.

658 Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.



QUALITY PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE

167 Children attended preschools and child care programs that participate in Quality First.

61 Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high quality preschools and child care programs.



PREVENTIVE HEALTH

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

1,826 Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

HOME VISITATION PROGRAM PREPARES PRESCHOOLER FOR KINDERGARTEN AND BEYOND

Nicole Velasquez had heard of the Healthy Families AZ program through the family resource center in Nogales, where she took her young daughter for activities.

When Velasquez gave birth to a second daughter, the mom of two knew she wanted to sign up for the voluntary home visitation program, which is funded by the First Things First Santa Cruz Region.

Healthy Families AZ provides a parent coach who visits the family in their home to provide parenting information, teaching strategies and connections to other community resources.

When Velasquez's daughter Nicole was a newborn, the parent coach would visit every week to share information about developmental milestones. "She really helped us," Velasquez said. "She listened to our concerns and gave us advice on what to do."

Now that Nicole is almost age 4, the parent coach visits once a month. Nicole calls her "Teacher."

Velasquez said she sometimes has to laugh when she thinks that Nicole isn't paying attention to the tasks that the coach is giving, because then Nicole does everything she's asked to do.

"She's listening, even when it looks like she's not," Velasquez said. "Everything she is learning will serve her in the future." Recently, when Nicole started Head Start, Velasquez felt she was well prepared and said she is grateful for the help the program has given her daughter.

"(The coach) has given her confidence," she said. "She gives her goals and my daughter achieves them. She can recognize her name, numbers, colors and letters."






**MORE LOCAL
STORIES**

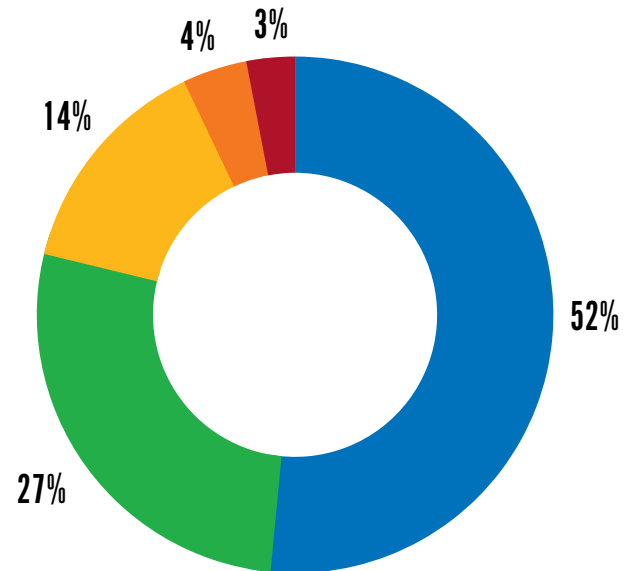
firstthingsfirst.org/regions/santa-cruz

FIRST THINGS FIRST SANTA CRUZ REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

The First Things First Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council is made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and decide how funds will be used to best support the development, education and health of young children birth to age 5. First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families.

FY17 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	Strengthening Families	\$663,577
	Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$349,903
	Preventive Health	\$186,600
	Research and Evaluation	\$51,653
	Parent and Community Awareness	\$39,062
	TOTAL	\$1,290,794

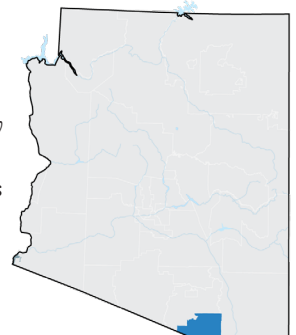


COUNCIL MEMBERS

Karen Woodford, *Chair* William Kirkpatrick, *Vice Chair*
 Chris Ciruli Melisa Lunderville David Verdugo
 Danna Gallardo Patrick Maitrejean
 Norma Garcia Karen Rovang

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The Santa Cruz Region covers almost all of Santa Cruz County, the smallest county in the state of Arizona. Situated in the Sonoran desert of southeast Arizona, Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz Region are home to six communities: Nogales, Patagonia, Rio Rico, Sonoita, Elgin and Tubac. Nogales is the county seat and is one of the largest ports of entry between Mexico and the United States. The area surrounding the Amado community in the northwestern corner of the county is assigned to the Pima South Region. The Santa Cruz Region includes Legislative District 2. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: firstthingsfirst.org/regions/santa-cruz