

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



SOUTHWEST MARICOPA REGION

2017 IMPACT REPORT

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

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:



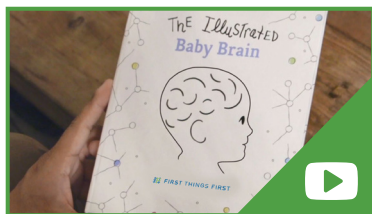
STRENGTHEN FAMILIES in their role as their child's first teacher.



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 SOUTHWEST MARICOPA REGION

“The vision of the Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council is to meet the various needs of all children throughout the region and engage their parents and caregivers through easily accessible programs and services. The goal is to create long-lasting community impact that results in all children being equally ready to start kindergarten.

After studying the needs of young children and families in our community, the council created strategies such as family, friend and neighbor care (FFN), family resource centers, family support for children with special needs, parenting education for grandparents and teens and Quality First. Our region has been able to create strong partnerships within our community to reach the most vulnerable and underserved populations.”

Kimberly Flack
Chair, Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

2017 SOUTHWEST MARICOPA REGION HIGHLIGHTS



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND EARLY LITERACY

13,687 Parents and caregivers accessed early childhood information and/or resources through family resource centers.

206 Families completed a voluntary series of parenting education classes.



QUALITY PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE

2,584 Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

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



PREVENTIVE HEALTH

1,714 Children received screenings to detect vision, hearing, and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

2,597 Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING PROGRAM HELPS GET AVONDALE PRESCHOOLER READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Maria Covarrubias remembers watching her 3-year-old son Cesar, sitting by the door all day waiting for his older sister to return from preschool.

“Can you imagine a 3-year-old sitting still all day?” Covarrubias asked. “But that is what he would do because he missed her so much.”

Cesar is close with his three sisters, and when his older sister Bella began preschool, Cesar suffered from separation anxiety.

“Then after a few weeks, I started noticing he really seemed to lack focus,” she said. “He had the attention span of a goldfish, and I knew he would not be ready for preschool next fall.”

After sharing her concerns with the family resource center staff in Avondale, they referred her to the Building Bright Futures Special Needs program. First Things First funds the free and voluntary program that matches parent educators to families. Parents learn positive parenting techniques, get connected with evaluations for early detection of developmental delays in their children and get training to increase their child’s school readiness.

Cesar loves playing with toy cars and one of the first steps was to approach his learning using toy cars. Covarrubias turned his bedroom into a showroom for letters and numbers on every surface.

“I wanted to expose him to as much reading as possible because I knew that was important,” she said.

Cesar soon began to move quickly through each milestone, and he did so well at home that the family decided to skip preschool. On his first day of kindergarten, Cesar walked to his class, turned to her and said, “See you, mom.”

“I couldn’t believe it,” Covarrubias said. “The boy who wouldn’t let go of me for weeks was so independent now.”

Cesar recently completed the first quarter of kindergarten and his school progress report shows he is performing as a high-achiever.

“I always knew he was smart but to see how far he has come, he is just amazing,” Covarrubias said. “I can’t wait to see what he becomes when he grows up.”









**MORE LOCAL
STORIES**

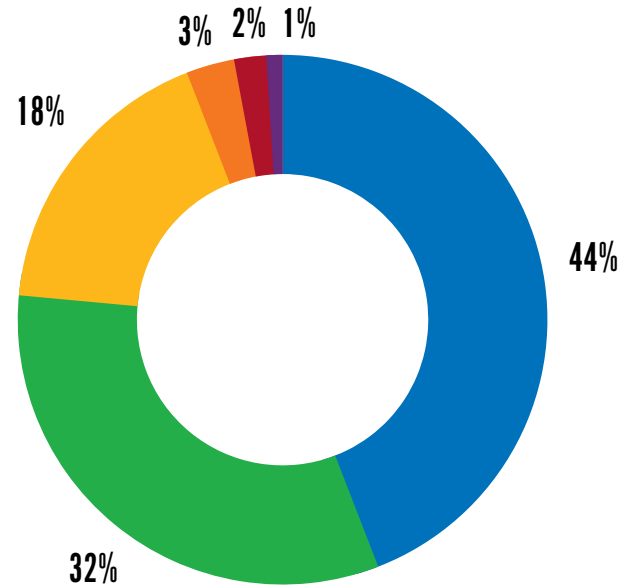
firstthingsfirst.org/regions/southwest-maricopa

FIRST THINGS FIRST SOUTHWEST MARICOPA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

The First Things First Southwest Maricopa 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

 Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$1,933,483
 Strengthening Families	\$1,400,958
 Preventive Health	\$758,774
 Research and Evaluation	\$110,036
 Parent and Community Awareness	\$78,208
 Coordinating Support	\$28,439
TOTAL	\$4,309,897



COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kimberly Flack, *Chair*

Dora Barrio, *Vice Chair*

Carlían Dawson

JoEllen Johnson

Marithe Denys Sandoval

Warner D'Cunha

Jamie Lopez

David Schwake

Lisa Hickman

Amanda Reyes

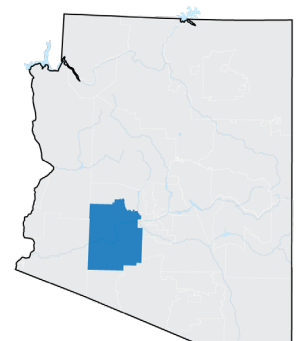
Neil Stafford

Annette Bourne,
FTF Regional Director

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The Southwest Maricopa Region spans 4,804 square miles across the Southwest Valley. The largest region in Maricopa County, it is a predominantly rural area that has been one of the fastest-growing population centers in the state. This expansive region includes Avondale, Buckeye, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Tolleson and Tonopah. The Southwest Maricopa Region includes Legislative Districts 4, 13 and 19. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: firstthingsfirst.org/regions/southwest-maricopa