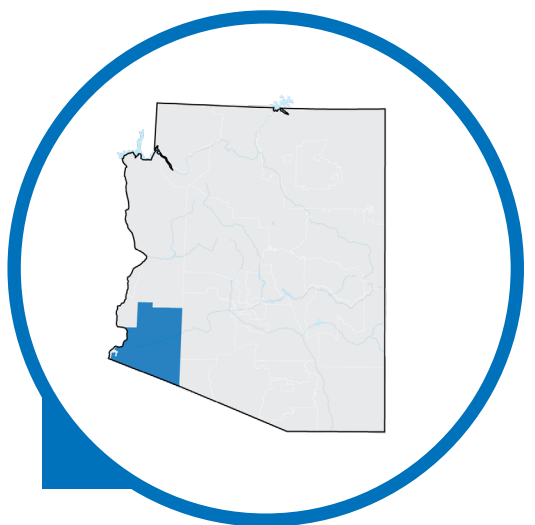




**90%** OF A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPS  
BEFORE KINDERGARTEN.

# YUMA 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:



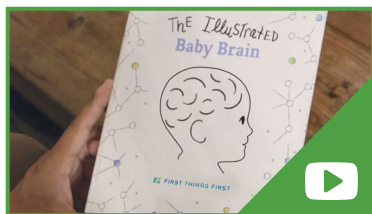
**STRENGTHEN FAMILIES** in their role as their child's first teacher.



**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 YUMA REGION

“In addition to work done to provide 41 quality preschools, 279 full-time scholarships, 315 home visitations (including 70 families with children with special needs), the Yuma Regional Partnership Council invested in professional development for early educators and health screenings, oral health and literacy for children. This work is being done to meet the expressed needs of quality early childhood education and family support in the Yuma Region.

In 2017, the Yuma Regional Partnership Council increased its impact on the Yuma community through collaboration with the Yuma Early Childhood Collaborative. In October, in working with schools and other agencies, Yuma opened its first ‘community school’ at O.C. Johnson Elementary School. Through collaboration with the council, Yuma Early Childhood Collaborative, Department of Child Services and the faith community, Yuma will also be the third county in the state to host the CarePortal, which connects churches to local families in need.”

Mary Beth Turner  
Chair, Yuma Regional Partnership Council

# 2017 YUMA REGION HIGHLIGHTS



## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND EARLY LITERACY

**2,380**

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

**244**

Families received voluntary in-home coaching from trained providers to improve their parenting skills.



## QUALITY PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE

**1,957**

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

**479**

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



## PREVENTIVE HEALTH

**497**

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

**3,195**

Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

## QUALITY FIRST PRESCHOOL PREPARES YUMA SIBLINGS FOR KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS

As a divorced single mother of 2-year-old twin boys and a 9-month-old daughter, Laura Elena Torres struggled to make rent, food and other monthly payments.

She knew she needed to find a more lucrative career to better support her kids, but needed support.

Torres' parents welcomed their daughter and grandchildren into their home in Yuma as Laura worked full-time. The family knew they wanted the three young children in a safe and high quality environment where they would start to prepare the kids for kindergarten and success.



A friend told Torres about Preschool Express, which participates in Quality First, a signature program of First Things First. Quality First partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning across Arizona. Quality First funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as training for teachers to expand their skills and to help create learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child.

"The center became one of our biggest blessings," said grandmother, Emma Torres. "Not just for our grandchildren but for their mom and us who excitedly witnessed their early learning process. They were so motivated to go to school and learn every day that it was a joy for us to greet them every day with their new learning phrase, word or song."

After two years in a Quality First star-rated child care center, the twins were accepted into kindergarten before turning age 5 and continue to excel as honor roll students.

"I want to say how grateful I am to First Things First's Quality First program for their impact in our grandchildren's lives," Emma Torres said.

**MORE LOCAL  
STORIES**

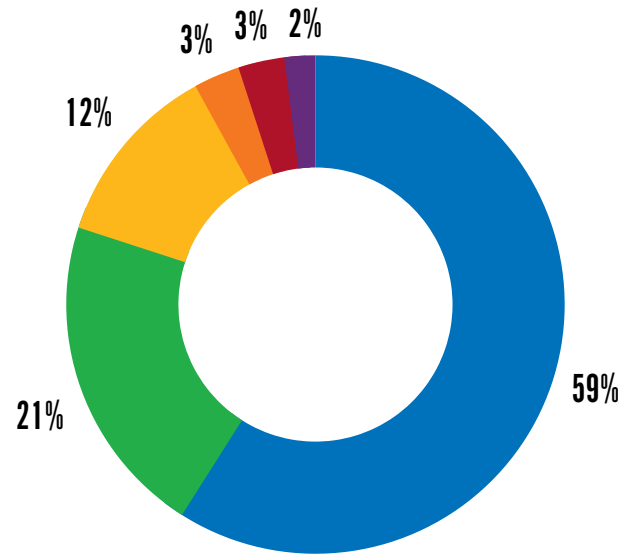
[firstthingsfirst.org/regions/yuma](http://firstthingsfirst.org/regions/yuma)

# FIRST THINGS FIRST YUMA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

The First Things First Yuma 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	\$2,677,937
Strengthening Families	\$974,445
Preventive Health	\$528,457
Workforce Development and Training	\$131,404
Research and Evaluation	\$120,300
Parent and Community Awareness	\$105,269
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,537,812</b>

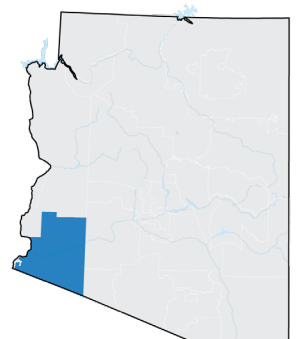


## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mary Beth Turner, <i>Chair</i>	Madeleine Coil, <i>Vice Chair</i>	
Emilia Cortez	Ricardo Perez	Mario Ybarra
Irene Garza	Rebecca Ramirez	
Irish Holtry	Judy Watkinson	

Rudy J. Ortiz,  
FTF Regional Director  
rjortiz@firstthingsfirst.org  
928.343.3020

The Yuma Region is defined as Yuma County, not including the lands belonging to the Cocopah Indian Tribe. The Arizona portion of the Fort Yuma-Quechan Reservation is also located within the region along the Colorado River near the city of Yuma. The Yuma Region includes Legislative Districts 4 and 13. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: [firstthingsfirst.org/regions/yuma](http://firstthingsfirst.org/regions/yuma)