



EARLY EXPERIENCES
BUILD THE FOUNDATION
FOR A LIFETIME

GILA REGION

2018 IMPACT REPORT

 FIRST THINGS FIRST

90% OF A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than any other time in life. Research shows that the quality of a child's early life experiences shape how their brain develops.

First Things First partners with families and communities to help our state's youngest children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.



Knowing that 90 percent of a child's brain develops by age 5, it's important to support quality early experiences for young children to have with parents and caregivers, so children can build a foundation for success in their lives. This is important for service clubs, businesses, schools, healthcare and others to help create a positive learning environment for these children, as they are our upcoming generation and future."

Sherri Davis

Rotary Member/Miami Storywalk Organizer
Miami - Copper Cities Rotary Club

That's why Arizonans created First Things First

HOW WE WORK



Early Childhood Funds

Allotted by FTF State Board



Local Decision-Making

Each region has 11 volunteer regional partnership council members representing their community. Based on the area's early childhood needs, each council prioritizes goals and strategies to help children birth to age 5 and their families.



28 FTF Regions

represent diverse communities across AZ

Partnerships with Local Early Childhood Providers

First Things First offers grant opportunities; providers implement programs and services in communities.



Community Collaborations

Regions also collaborate with organizations and entities to build a network of programs and services to better support young children.



THIS RESULTS IN MORE KIDS READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

FISCAL YEAR 2018 GILA REGION IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Here are a few highlights of the proven programs and innovative strategies from this region.



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND EARLY LITERACY

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

210 Families completed a voluntary series of parenting education classes.



QUALITY PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE

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

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

2 Early childhood professionals received college scholarships to improve their skills in working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



PREVENTIVE HEALTH

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

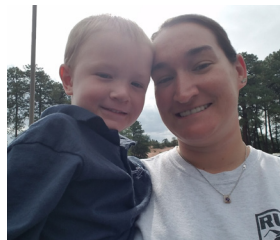
HEARING SCREENING AT QUALITY FIRST CENTER HELPS PAYSON BOY BE SUCCESSFUL

Melissa Ruff's baby, Ruger, seemed detached and in his own world. She'd talk to him and show him toys, but he'd move away.

"We noticed when he was about a year to 18 months, he wasn't making sounds. He wasn't trying to communicate," said Ruff. "He didn't really show any interest in interacting with us."

When Ruff took Ruger to Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center in Payson, the center asked to test him for hearing. The center participates in Quality First, First Things First's signature program, which works with child care providers and preschools throughout Arizona to improve the quality of early learning for children birth to age 5.

One of the requirements of Quality First centers is to conduct early screenings to assess health and developmental issues in children. After the hearing test, Ruff learned that Ruger couldn't hear.



"He had a series of ear infections and fluid had built up behind his ear drum," said Ruff. "We got tubes put in his ears, and since that time, he's taken off developmentally."

Ruger had to catch up verbally, and with his center's low teacher-to-child ratio, his teacher could take time to interact with him one on one.

"It was hard to understand him, but his teacher wouldn't get frustrated," Ruff said. "She encouraged him to talk and interact with people. He was shy at first, because he didn't know what was going on."

Ruger also started seeing a speech therapist to help him articulate words. Now at age 4, he's growing in his ability to put sentences together and socialize.

"He's excited to show us things, where before there was no interest in interacting because he didn't know what was going on," said Ruff. "He's a totally different kid."

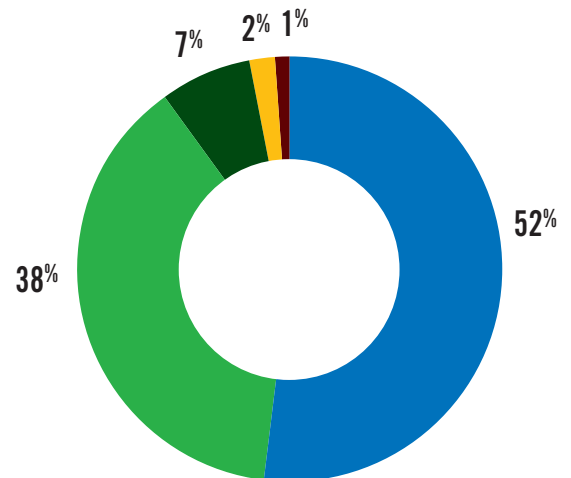
Read more local stories at firstthingsfirst.org/regions

GILA REGIONAL COUNCIL

The FTF Gila 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. FTF invests in proven programs and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families.

FY18 TOTAL REGIONAL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$368,383
Strengthening Families	\$269,328
Preventive Health	\$55,708
Research and Evaluation	\$14,643
Parent and Community Awareness	\$1,240
TOTAL	\$709,303



FIRST THINGS FIRST GILA REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Fernando Shipley,
Chair

Sherry Dorathy,
Vice Chair

Carolyn Haro,
FTF Regional Director
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Members

Debora Bunney

Charles Proudfoot

Jeri Byrne

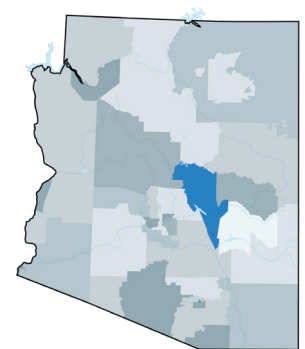
Melissa Ruff

Debbie Leverance

Tashina Smith

Audrey Opitz

Kristen Wade



The Gila Region is defined as Gila County, not including the lands belonging to the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the White Mountain Apache Tribe, which are their own First Things First regions. The Gila Region's population is located in the small towns of Globe, Payson, Miami, Hayden/Winkelman, Pine/Strawberry, the unincorporated areas of Tonto Basin and Young, and a number of rural unincorporated communities. The Tonto Apache Tribe is located within the Gila Region, adjacent to the city of Payson. The Gila Region includes Legislative District 6. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at: FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Gila