



## # FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

# Cochise Region



Early experiences build the  
foundation for a lifetime





# of a child's brain growth happens 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.



We know now more than ever that the first several years of our lives are the most impactful years that determine so much of our future. An investment in early childhood is clearly the most important investment a society can make."

**Darlene Melk**

Vice Chair of FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council

## Fiscal Year 2019 Cochise Region Impact Highlights

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



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**574**

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

**114**

Families with young children participated in voluntary home visiting programs proven to reduce parental stress levels, increase connections to community supports, and improve children's cognitive, motor, behavioral and socio-emotional development.

**39**

Parents and other caregivers participated in evidence-based trainings designed to improved knowledge of parenting practices and children's development.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**1,240**

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

**278**

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



### Preventive Health

**197**

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

## Additional strategies:



**172,000**

views of Google and Facebook ads of Sesame Street's "Healthy Teeth, Healthy Me" campaign in the Cochise Region to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood dental care and dental health benefits through Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS).



## Early Childhood Optimum Health program in Douglas helps infant and toddler receive specialized medical services

When Crystal Ray took her 2-year-old daughter, Kaylee, and 6-month-old son, Alexander, for a milestone pediatric check-up, she got overwhelmed.

Alexander needed to see a dermatologist and nutritionist, and Kaylee, “who has dealt with developmental delays since birth, needed behavioral, speech and physical therapy specialist appointments for a checkup. She also needed appointments for audiology and neurology to check out a balance problem,” said Ray, who lives in Lower Huachuca City.

In Cochise County, miles of empty countryside are between towns. Specialists are not easy to find. Ray also had another challenge.

“I’m a single mother of five children, and I’m deaf,” she said. “Using Sprint relay services on my cell phone where an operator will type out the conversation from the caller so I can read it is awesome, and I love it. It is also a pain when doing business calls, because it can take much longer than a regular call. I don’t have much quiet time as my eyes need to be on my children.”

Then she met Enrique Martinez, who works as a case management nurse with Early Childhood Optimum Health (ECOH), a medical home care coordination program funded by the First Things First Cochise Regional Partnership Council in Douglas.

Martinez and other ECOH nurses offer families support at a clinic and mobile clinic for “children who are medically complex, developmentally delayed or who come from low-income families,” said Dr. Darlene Melk, Chiricahua director of Community Pediatrics and medical director of Southern Arizona Children’s Health Project, which includes the ECOH program.

The ECOH case managers work directly with families in finding and coordinating medical appointments with specialists and assisting with transportation. They also go over a medical care plan with families and connect them with resources such as nutrition support, early education classes and Quality First care centers. The nurses are also available by cell phone to answer families’ questions, such as investigating insurance denials or financial options, along with helping with the child’s individualized care plans.

“Since my younger children needed specialist appointments, getting help with making the appointments, communicating between doctor and specialist offices, and help with transportation—all of these were attractive features of the program,” said Ray.

Martinez researched and linked her to specialists who could help.

“I’ve been scheduling appointments for her and dealing with referrals,” said Martinez. “I let the doctors know at the visit they’ll need an interpreter for Crystal.”

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Since that time, Ray’s children are getting the medical care they need to grow up healthy.

“This program has helped me and my children greatly,” said Ray. “My caseworker, Enrique, is always on top of anything needed between the doctor and any specialist office.”

Alexander and Kaylee are on their way to better health, so they can be prepared to start kindergarten ready to succeed.

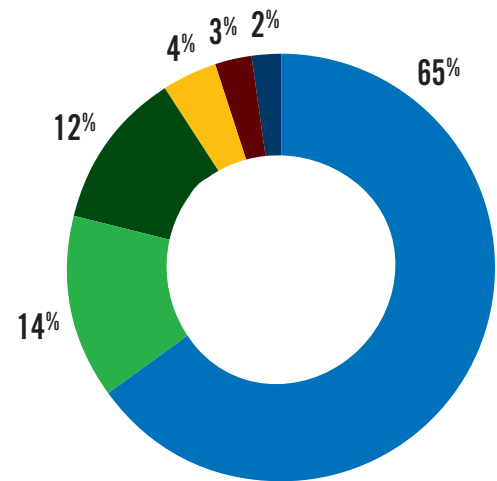


# Cochise Regional Council

The FTF Cochise 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.

## FY19 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$1,601,731
Strengthening Families	\$362,131
Preventive Health	\$280,273
Workforce Development and Training	\$86,505
Research and Evaluation	\$67,035
Parent and Community Awareness	\$32,036
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,429,711</b>



## FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council

**Chair**  
Laura Killberg

**Vice Chair**  
Darlene Melk

**Members**  
Danielle Brownrigg  
Peter Huisking  
Lisa Maddern  
Kelly Norris

Anthony Reed  
Brandi Samaniego  
Lori Silk  
Nancy-Jean Welker

Melissa Avant,  
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The Cochise Region includes all of Cochise County and the northeastern corner of Pima County. The Cochise Region includes Legislative District 14. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at: [FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cochise](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cochise)

