



## # FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

# Cocopah Tribe 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.



Since being part of the FTF Cocopah Regional Partnership Council this past year, my level of knowledge of and respect for the work that First Things First does throughout Arizona and specifically, the Cocopah Tribal community, is awe-inspiring. From the professional development opportunities, the social media presence to the strategic grassroots approaches to early childhood development, the impact is wide, broad and yet close to home and heart. The far-reaching arms of FTF impact entire households, which in turn strengthen the entire community. I am very honored to be part of this great work."

**Onawa M. Allen**

Vice Chair of FTF Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council

## Fiscal Year 2019 Cocopah Region Impact Highlights

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



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**14**

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.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**19**

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



### Preventive Health

**17**

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

## Additional strategies:



### 2 professionals

attended the Yuma County Home Visitor Community of Practice and received monthly professional development learning new tools and strategies to implement in their work with families.



## Cocopah Early Steps helps both mom and toddler with smooth transitions

Stephanie Ramirez thought she was done raising young children. Her two oldest children were in their late teens when Ramirez had her daughter, Olivia.

“It was starting all over and learning some things I had forgotten in raising a young child,” she said.

Stephanie was looking for help parenting her toddler when she learned of the Cocopah Early Steps program, which provides voluntary coaching and in-home support for families.

The staff made her feel comfortable as she shared her concerns about being a busy working mom and needing help.

The First Things First Cocopah Tribe Regional Council funds the home visitation program, which provides bi-weekly visits from a trained parent educator, who provides parenting information and models ways to support healthy development in the young child.

When Olivia was 18-months-old, Stephanie enrolled in the Early Steps program and began learning more about brain development and how all children develop at a different pace. One thing Ramirez knew she needed help with was potty training. As Olivia became ready, Stephanie made the necessary accommodations in her house, dressed her with elastic waist pants and pull-ups to ease the process, and also was consistent in teaching her to use the toilet. All recommendations from the parent educator.

Stephanie also learned new ways to increase Olivia’s language development.

She committed to reading to her daughter daily and having conversations with her about their everyday activities using full sentences and avoiding “baby talk.” The parent educator told her children learn through repetition and she began repeating words to Olivia, which she soon started to also repeat.

Now 3 years old, when it came time for Olivia to attend Cocopah Head Start, Olivia became anxious. She didn’t want to go. One tool that helped was taking pictures of family members and making a photo album. “Olivia was the decorator and was in control of the decision which person or item went into the photo album,” Stephanie said. “Now she brings the photo album with her to preschool and looks at the pictures when she feels it is necessary.”

Providing Olivia with the needed comfort made the new experience less frightening and made for a smoother transition, Ramirez said.

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**“With the challenges our children encounter, the vision of FTF has created an efficient foundation.**

**With traditional values of the Tribes added to FTF’s vision, it is a framework for success. This partnership produces unique development for each region: helping children’s brain development, health, and learning, for a successful life!”**

**Deal Begay, Vice Chair, Cocopah Tribe Council**

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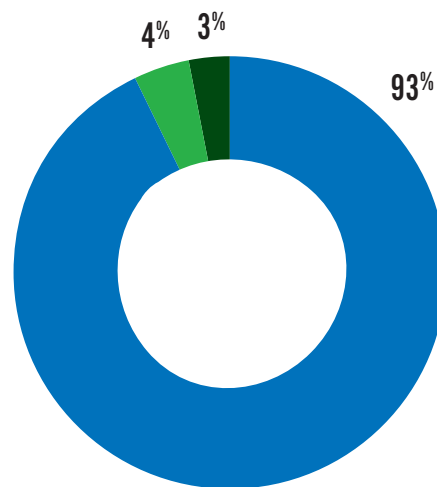


# Cocopah Tribe Regional Council

The FTF Cocopah Tribe 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

Strengthening Families	\$55,646
Research and Evaluation	\$2,692
Workforce Development and Training	\$1,997
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60,335</b>



## FTF Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council

*Chair*  
Deal Begay

*Vice Chair*  
Onawa Allen

*Members*

Bianca Demara

Elizabeth Renaud

Paula Twist Koolick

Paul Soto

Patricia R. Peterson

Elizabeth Twist-Harvey

Nohemi Ortega,  
FTF Regional Director

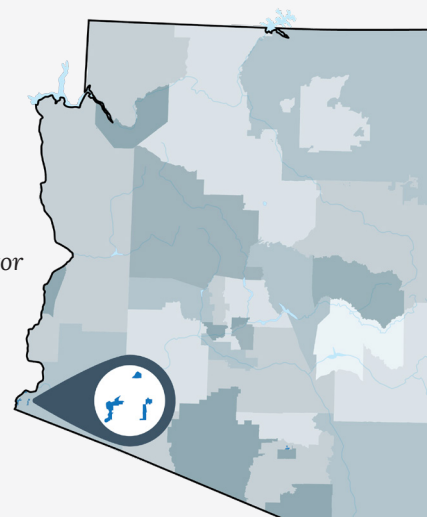
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The Cocopah Indian Tribe is a federally recognized, sovereign tribe located in the most southwestern corner of Arizona, 13 miles south of Yuma and along the Colorado River. The Cocopah (Kwapa), also known as the River People, have historically lived along the lower Colorado River and delta. They are descendants of the Yuman-language speaking people that occupied the lands along the Colorado River. The current Cocopah Reservation is comprised of three noncontiguous regions: East, North and West Reservations. The boundaries of the First Things First Cocopah Tribe Region match those of the Cocopah Reservation. The Cocopah Tribe Region includes Legislative District 4. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at: [FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cocopah-Tribe](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cocopah-Tribe)