

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT 

# Graham/Greenlee Region



Early experiences build the foundation for a lifetime

90%

# 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.

“Providing children with the tools to become educated, employed, and engaged members of society is the job of our entire community. No single entity or group can solve the challenges that face our students, our families, our schools, or our community. It takes commitment from all sectors—education, business, community, higher ed, civic, and philanthropy. We all need to work together with shared accountability and high expectations for every child in our communities, regardless of background or circumstance.”

**Adam O'Doherty**

CEO of United Way of Graham and Greenlee counties

## Fiscal Year 2019 Graham/Greenlee Region Impact Highlights

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



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

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

**26,617** Books were given to families with children ages birth to 5 years to encourage parent-child interaction and reading.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

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

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

**5** Early childhood educators received support through professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of teacher-child interactions.



### Preventive Health

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

## Additional strategies:



**2,037 Adults** attended parenting activities to learn how about early childhood development in a fun setting.



**5 Early childhood educators** received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



## Safford library story time helps instill love of learning in girl

When Chandler Aaron was 9 months old, her mom went back to work as a school teacher. Luckily for Chandler, her grandma Barbara Matthews became her full-time caregiver while mom was teaching.

Having raised three daughters, Matthews was thrilled to have this opportunity, but also a little overwhelmed at the prospect of “starting over” with a new little one.

Her biggest concern was filling Chandler’s time with quality interactions.

Having a love of reading herself, Matthews read stories to Chandler from the time she was born, but as the young girl grew a little older, a visit to the local library was a natural choice for an outing.

Upon arriving at the Safford Public Library, they found not only a large selection of children’s books, but so much more. The Safford Library hosts daily programs, such as Baby Story Time, Toddler Story Time and Preschool Story Time. These programs are made possible by funding from the First Things First Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council. The council members understand the importance of early literacy and the need to provide a variety of literature

options for families. They also want to encourage families to become involved with programming at their local libraries and continue the love of books outside of the home.

Now that Chandler is 3, she’s moved through the different levels of story times and loves to participate in the stories and songs at Preschool Story Time. Her favorite part is the craft activity at the end.

She also loves to play with the other children and the toys in the early childhood room. She typically goes straight to the dress up area to choose an appropriate costume for the day, Matthews said. Sometimes she is a princess, a dancer, doctor or nurse.

“One of the best parts of playing at the library has been the socializing,” said Matthews, who lovingly refers to her granddaughter as a “lonely only” because she doesn’t have siblings or cousins to play with. Instead, Chandler has found friends she sees regularly during story time.

“While participating in story time, she has learned to follow directions, take turns, share and interact with other children in a safe environment,” Matthews said.

Chandler will be starting preschool in the fall, and her mom and grandma are confident that the skills she has learned at the library have set her firmly on the path to a lifelong love of learning.

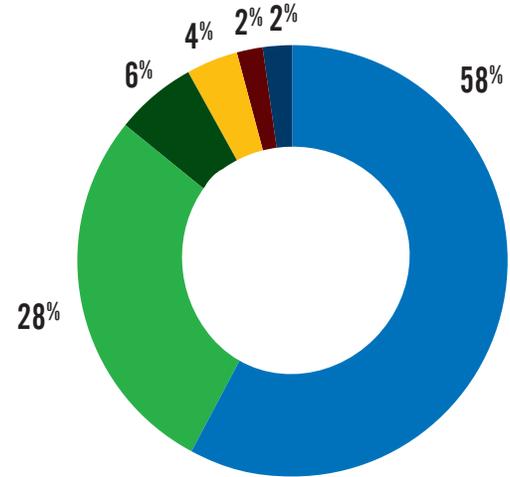


# FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Council

The FTF Graham/Greenlee 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	\$479,375
Strengthening Families	\$220,152
Preventive Health	\$56,992
Parent and Community Awareness	\$41,530
Research and Evaluation	\$22,903
Workforce Development and Training	\$21,665
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$842,616</b>



## FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council

*Chair*  
Laurie Smith

*Vice Chair*  
JoAnn Morales

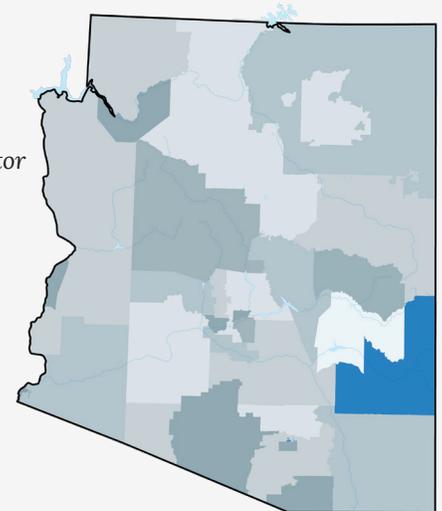
*Members*  
Loretta Desaulniers  
Kacey Ekman  
Donna McGaughey  
Stacy Morris

Susan Norton,  
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The Graham/Greenlee Region is defined as the combined area of the two counties, not including the lands belonging to the San Carlos Apache Tribe within Graham County. Legislative districts include: 14. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: [FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Graham-Greenlee](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Graham-Greenlee)