



## # FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

# La Paz/Mohave 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.

“Our Council's focus on service coordination is intended to build a stronger early childhood system with our grantees and community partners throughout our region so that families are better supported with local resources.”

**Pastor Jose Garcia**

Chair, FTF La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

## Fiscal Year 2019 La Paz/Mohave Region Impact Highlights

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



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**1,232**

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

**36**

Infants and toddlers involved with the child welfare system benefitted from coordinated efforts to meet their unique developmental needs.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**1,098**

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

**359**

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

**211**

Early childhood educators attended a training or session to improve their skills in working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. and child care programs.



### Preventive Health

**251**

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

## Additional strategies:



### 174 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 social-emotional development.



### 3,240 Adults

attend parenting activities to learn more about the importance of early childhood development.





## Lake Havasu City preschool helps twin sisters learn social emotional skills to be ready for kindergarten

Stacey Wood's twins are age 8 now, but she says attending Little Knights Preschool in Lake Havasu City as toddlers helped prepare the two girls with different personalities for the expectations of school.

"They really loved going to Little Knights, so it set the tone for them loving school," Wood said. "They weren't as intimidated going into kindergarten because they were prepared for what was going to be put in front of them."

Wood described Daisy as more independent than her more outgoing sister Jenna, but by the time preschool rolled around, both girls were ready to spend time around other children.

"They needed to interact with other kids beside themselves and learn not to be so dependent on each other," she said.

Little Knights Director Marie Hendry said preschool is a great time for young children to learn the value of teamwork and cooperation. Critical skills such as self-esteem, confidence, motivation and cooperation all start to take shape before a child enters kindergarten, she said.

Little Knights is a part of First Things First's signature program, Quality First, which helps centers make

quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as creating learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child.

Attending a preschool or child care center can also prepare a child emotionally for the transition from home to school. Hendry said first-day tears quickly disappear as the child gains more confidence in handling the new environment.

"We tell the parent to give us three weeks for that separation anxiety to go away, but a lot of times it's faster than that," Hendry said.

In addition to meeting new classmates, preschool can often be the first setting where a child develops a relationship with an adult who is not a relative. At Little Knights, located on the campus of Lake Havasu High School, those teachers include high school students learning about early childhood education through the Lake Havasu Unified School District's Career Technical Education program.

All teachers receive coaching through Little Knights' participation in Quality First. The center also receives Quality First scholarships to offset families' costs. Wood said the scholarships were helpful especially since twins would mean twice the costs for both years they attended Little Knights.

"(Attending preschool) was such a big part of their development at that time," Wood said. "They're both doing great in school and a lot of that started right here."

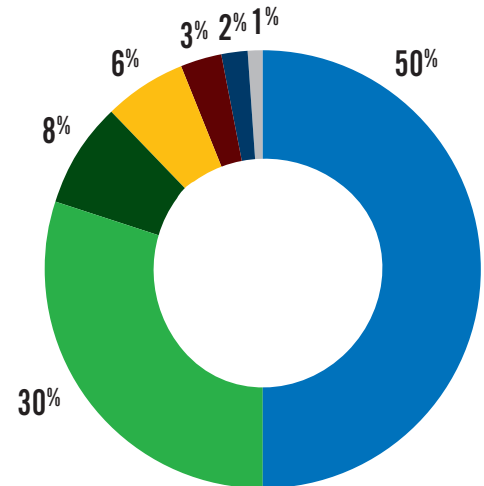


# FTF La Paz/Mohave Regional Council

The FTF La Paz/Mohave 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	\$1,916,445
Strengthening Families	\$1,240,156
Workforce Development and Training	\$349,710
Preventive Health	\$123,923
Research and Evaluation	\$98,115
Parent and Community Awareness	\$88,414
Coordinating Care	\$45,948
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,862,710</b>



## FTF La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Chair  
Jose Garcia

Vice Chair  
Christy Rail

### Members

Kip Anderson

Betsy Lewis

Denise Burley

Lori Long

Alisa Burroughs

Debbie Justice

Marguerite Chieffo

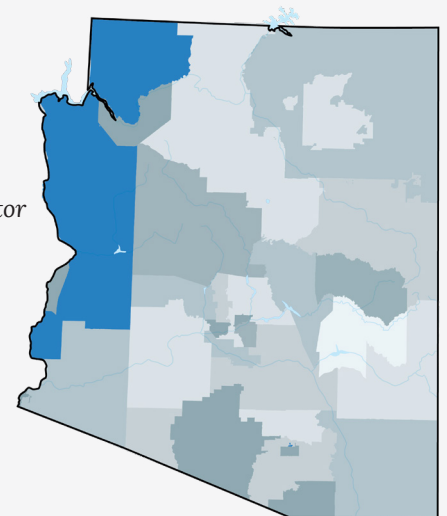
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The La Paz/Mohave Region is defined as the combined area of the two counties, not including the lands belonging to the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Hualapai Tribe and the Kaibab Paiute Tribe. The region does include the Arizona portion of the land belonging to the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. The region covers about 16,700 square miles, with its northern end separated from the rest by the Grand Canyon. The communities of the region are diverse in population density and in demographics, and are often isolated by large areas of unpopulated land. People and services are concentrated in larger places in the region such as Bullhead City, Kingman, Lake Havasu City and Parker. The La Paz/Mohave Region includes Legislative District 5. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: [FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/La-Paz-Mohave/](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/La-Paz-Mohave/)