



FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

Pinal 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.



As a business leader, I see early childhood education as the foundation for our future workforce, providing the framework for a child's future success. Invest in a child in their early years and you could actually be launching their career."

Adam Saks

Vice Chair of FTF Pinal Regional Partnership Council and Chief Operating Officer of UltraStar Multi-tainment Centers

Fiscal Year 2019 Pinal Region Impact Highlights

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



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

1,946

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

526

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

2,039

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

431

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



Preventive Health

3,015

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

1,253

Children received fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

Additional strategies:



2025 Children received

a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and treated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impaired speech development and failure to thrive.



34 Early childhood educators

received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



Quality First preschool sets up San Tan Valley boy for kindergarten success

Ryker Davis has been excited about starting kindergarten for a while now; patiently waiting throughout the summer to meet his new teacher, knowing his big day was just around the corner. Ryker's start has been part of a journey coordinated between his mom, Jaqueline Davis, and his preschool teacher, Connie Hardenburg, to ensure that Ryker was ready to thrive in kindergarten.

"They set him up for success," Davis said of Hardenburg and her staff at Wonderwise Preschool and Childcare in San Tan Valley.

Ryker's birthday fell at a time when his mother had two options; start him in 2018, or wait until 2019. Academically, Ryker was doing great, but he struggled just a bit with managing the expectations of a school

setting. Hardenburg, who runs Wonderwise, counseled Davis to keep Ryker back a year. Davis said that the decision to keep Ryker in preschool another year was based on her and Hardenburg's mutual desire to see Ryker not just get by in kindergarten, but love school and excel in it.

Wonderwise Academy, attached to Life Point Church in San Tan Valley, is a Quality First center. Quality First, is First Things First's signature program that works to improve the quality of care and learning for children birth to age 5, by providing continued innovation in how child care centers and preschools can support and strengthen young children and their families.

Research shows that quality early learning settings help children develop key skills – like motivation, self-control, focus and self-esteem – that are crucial to their success in school and in life. Gaining these skills at Wonderwise will help Ryker be ready to learn, problem solve, think critically, and be socially and emotionally prepared for school. In fact, recent data has shown that children who gain these skills in early childhood pass them on to their children as they grow into adulthood as well.

That communication was key for Davis as she made choices for Ryker starting kindergarten.

"Wonderwise wants to keep key communications open," Davis said. "They tell you where [your children] are in all aspects."

Now, with support from a quality childcare site, Ryker is excelling in kindergarten. In fact, Ryker's only struggle so far is that he's a bit bored, already knowing many of the basics being reviewed in the first weeks of school, but his teachers are excited to start working with him on new skills, Davis said.

Meanwhile, Davis is feeling confident about Ryker's future, and the future of her two younger children, also enrolled in Wonderwise. She likes knowing she has a child care center she can depend on.

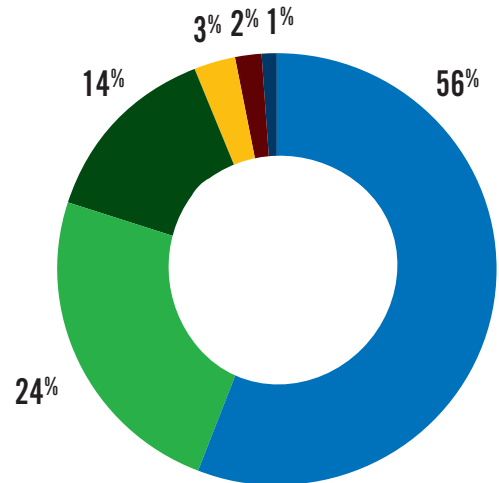
"It makes a difference having a place you feel safe even as a parent," she said.

FTF Pinal Regional Council

The FTF Pinal 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	\$3,244,375
Strengthening Families	\$1,382,439
Preventive Health	\$775,502
Parent and Community Awareness	\$179,838
Research and Evaluation	\$146,898
Coordinating Care	\$100,900
TOTAL	\$5,829,953



FTF Pinal Regional Partnership Council

Chair
Michael Kintner

Vice Chair
Adam Saks

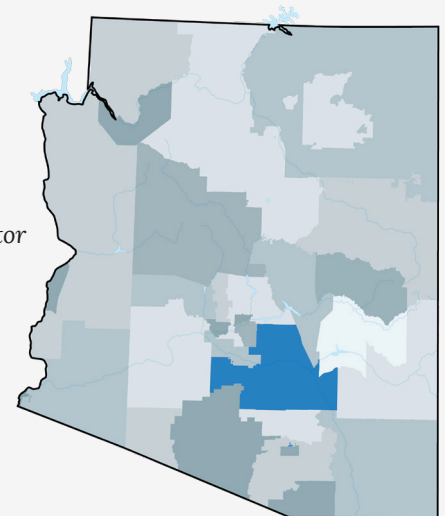
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The Pinal Region is defined as Pinal County, not including the lands belonging to the Gila River Indian Community, the Tohono O'odham Nation or the San Carlos Apache Tribe. The region does include the land belonging to the Ak-Chin Indian Community. The Pinal Region includes Legislative Districts 8 and 11. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pinal