



FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

Southwest Maricopa 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.



A child's learning begins at birth. When we provide resources and training for parents so that they can help their child from a young age, we are forging a strong relationship that will help to ensure great outcomes for kids."

Kyann McMillie

Executive Director of Special Programs, Buckeye Elementary School District

Fiscal Year 2019 Southwest Maricopa Region Impact Highlights

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



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

1,808

Families or caregivers served by receiving referrals or by participating in activities at family resource centers.

72

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

2,301

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

282

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



Preventive Health

675

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

893

Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay

Additional strategies:



1,243 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.



Home visitation program helps Buckeye boy expand his vocabulary

Reina Jimenez began having concerns for her son Randy's development at the age 2. She noticed that he did not have an appropriate vocabulary for his age.

"I was very worried," Jimenez said. "Randy only spoke five words."

That is when Jimenez decided to visit a local health fair, hosted at the Care1st Avondale Family Resource Center, in the hopes of finding some help.

There she met up with Melisa Mendoza, a parent educator with Child and Family Resources. Mendoza suggested that Jimenez enroll in the home visitation program, which provides parents with the support needed to be their child's first and best teacher.

The First Things First Southwest Maricopa Region funds the program that provides regular in-home visits from a trained professional who provides parenting information, models ways to support healthy development and shares connections to other community resources.

Once a month, Mendoza would visit Jimenez at home in Buckeye to work with the mom and young boy on his school readiness, by targeting Randy's language development. Mendoza told Jimenez to use her speech to label items throughout the house. Even if he wasn't

ready to speak, she would label things around them, like during dinner, labeling the carrots they were eating and kept referring to them.

She also encouraged Jimenez to expand and recast when speaking to Randy. For example, if he said, "apple," then mom would expand the phrase with, "yes, it's a shiny, red apple" or if he said, "baby sleeping," she would recast and emphasize his missing words in the phrase, "yes, the baby is sleeping."

Mendoza also suggested Jimenez incorporate dialogic reading into their story time, where Jimenez would read a book to Randy and they would have a conversation about the book they were reading, which encouraged new vocabulary words and helped Randy with his verbal fluency and comprehension.

"I have learned about the importance of dedicating time to my children, to focus on specific skills and to read to them often," Jimenez said.

Randy, now age 5, can identify and write his colors, alphabet and numbers and recently was evaluated by his local school, where he demonstrated that he belonged in the advanced kindergarten class.

"I know that this program is what helped his progress the most and I am happy and relieved about his development," Jimenez said. "The program gave me the foundational tools to teach my children, I am now able to take what I have learned and use it with Randy's two siblings."

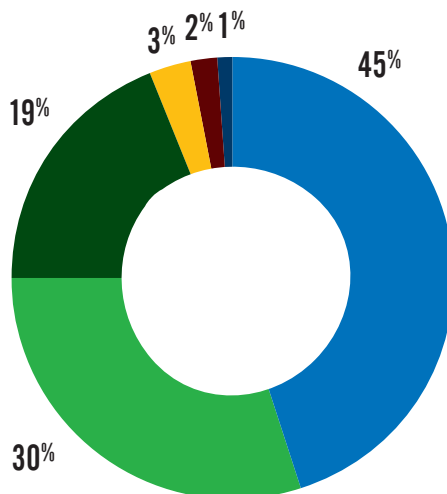
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FTF Southwest Maricopa Regional Council

The FTF Southwest Maricopa 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	\$2,045,222
Strengthening Families	\$1,396,627
Preventive Health	\$820,531
Research and Evaluation	\$121,380
Parent and Community Awareness	\$103,564
Coordinating Care	\$54,698
TOTAL	\$4,542,021



FTF Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

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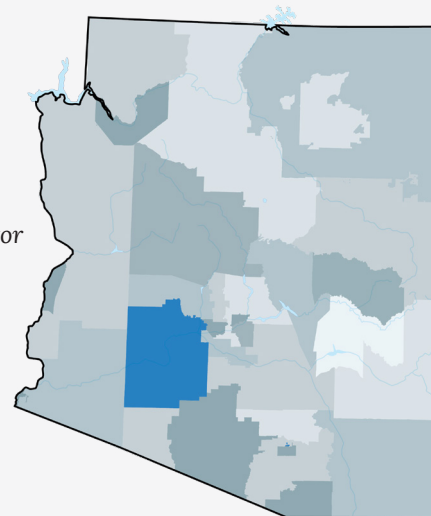
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The Southwest Maricopa Region spans 4,325 square miles across the Southwest Valley. The largest region in Maricopa County, it is a predominantly rural area that has been one of the fastest-growing population centers in the state. This expansive region includes Avondale, Buckeye, Gila Bend, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Tolleson and Tonopah. The Southwest Maricopa Region includes Legislative Districts 4, 13 and 19. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)



Learn more at: FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Southwest-Maricopa