

FIRST THINGS FIRST
Navajo/Apache Region
2020 Impact Report



From birth to age 5, a child's brain grows more than any other time in life.

90%

of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten.

Early childhood matters.

First Things First partners with families and communities to help our state's youngest children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.

Many young children in Arizona face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the FTF Navajo/Apache Region, there are **6,166 children** (under age 6) with **30% living in poverty**.

Here is how FTF is working to support young children and their families in this region.

“Early childhood intervention is an essential step in supporting our youngest community members. This is the key to ensuring that intentional intervention, as early as possible, will prevent or lessen the complications as the child grows and matures.”



Heather Gray

FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Champion 2020

FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Key Impact Highlights [Fiscal Year 2020]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

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

190 Adults attended parenting activities to learn more about the importance of early childhood development.



Quality Preschool and Child Care

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

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



Preventive Health

2,119 Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

Additional Strategies

1,151 Books were given to families with children ages birth to 5 years to encourage parent-child interactions and reading.

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



Quality First scholarship in Show Low helps shy 3-year-old boy socially prepare for kindergarten

Alex and April Gage realized a lifelong dream of opening a business together as husband and wife in May 2019. As the owners of Play Date, an indoor play center for children, they faced the difficulty of caring for their 3-year-old son, Levi, and working more than 40 hours a week.

They knew Levi needed preschool. He struggled with shyness and needed help learning how to socialize with other children and teachers to get ready for kindergarten.

The Gages were relieved to learn about availability of a Quality First scholarship at Sprouts Preschool in Show Low.

Quality First is a signature program of First Things First that partners with child care and preschool providers across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning. Quality First funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as training for teachers to expand their skills and achieve their best.

The Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council funds Quality First scholarships in the area so families can afford to send their children to centers that provide quality care and education. The Gages applied for a scholarship and received one for Levi.

Within weeks of attending Sprouts Preschool, Levi began to develop his social skills and also learned his ABCs and how to write his name. He also learned how to be kind and respectful to others, which he demonstrated at preschool and at home.

"The teachers were so great with our son," said April Gage. "He had started the school year very shy, but as time progressed, we saw him gain confidence and become extremely social."

"This program gave our son the opportunity to learn and grow while preparing him for kindergarten." - Alex Gage, father

When it came time to test into kindergarten, his kindergarten teacher said she was impressed with how much he already knew and his social skills. By being prepared, Levi made an easy transition from preschool into kindergarten and started his elementary school experience with confidence.

"We are so thankful for the Quality First program and First Things First for making it available to our family and other families who attend Sprouts Preschool," said Alex Gage. "This program gave our son the opportunity to learn and grow while preparing him for kindergarten."



Read more FTF stories at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories)

FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council is made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and decide how funds should be used to best support the healthy development and early learning 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. Some of the programs in this region include Early Childhood Learning Collaboratives, Summit Healthy Steps and North Country Healthcare HealthySteps.

FTF Navajo/Apache FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Preventive Health

\$624,392

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$236,717

Strengthening Families

\$177,219

Workforce Development and Training

\$176,298

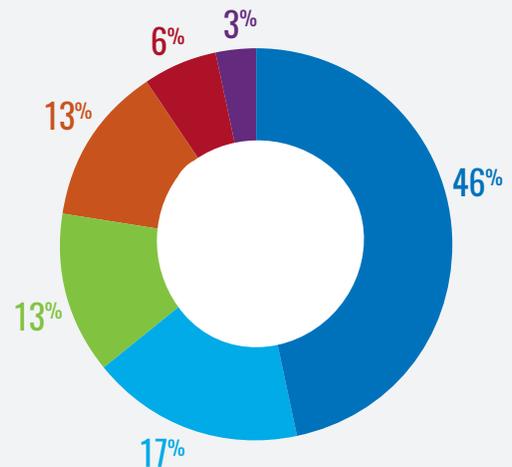
Parent and Community Awareness

\$87,096

Research and Evaluation

\$43,206

Total \$1,344,927



FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
Byron Lewis

Vice Chair
Kimberly Avery

Members
Manuela Bowler
Becky Benda-Dodd
Claude Endfield
Doug Harris

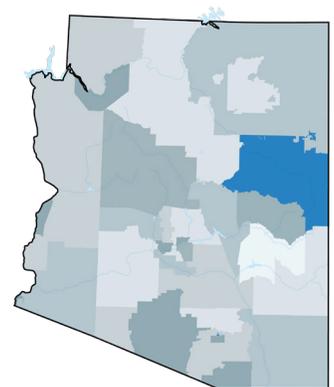
Jill Hoover
Jeffrey Oakes
Kristen Orton

FTF Senior Regional Director

K Vilay
kvilay@firstthingsfirst.org
928.776.0062

FTF Community Outreach Coordinator

Mike Caruth
mcaruth@firstthingsfirst.org
928.177.2572



The **FTF Navajo/Apache Region** encompasses the central areas of Navajo and Apache counties, excluding the lands belonging to the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe in the north and the land belonging to the White Mountain Apache Tribe in the south. The region also includes the Forest Lakes community in Coconino County, east of Heber-Overgaard. The region does not include the city of Winslow, which is in Navajo County but is assigned to the FTF Coconino Region. The FTF Navajo/Apache Region includes Legislative Districts 6 and 7. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Navajo-Apache-Region](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Navajo-Apache-Region)