

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo Nation 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 Nation Region, there are **10,894 children** (under age 6) with **51% living in poverty**.

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



Early education resources support our families to build stable foundations for our children during their most impressionable years of life. First Things First makes it easy to connect to essential outlets that will contribute to a child's healthy development. We need to invest in our children now so that they may grow up to be strong, educated and passionate leaders."



Shaandiin Parrish

Miss Navajo Nation 2019-2020

FTF Navajo Nation Regional Key Impact Highlights [Fiscal Year 2020]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

165

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.



Quality Preschool and Child Care

687

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

243

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



Preventive Health

1,154

Children benefited from their families receiving food boxes, backpacks and food vouchers to access nutritious meals.

491

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

Additional Strategies

5,678

Books

were given to families with children ages birth to 5 years to encourage parent-child interaction and reading.

31

Early childhood educators

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



Home visits help Navajo mother support daughter with speech problems

Years ago, Natasha Naha recalls sitting with her mom during the home visits for her little brother, who was enrolled in a home visitation program in the Seba Delkai Boarding School. The program provided regular in-home visits from a trained professional who provided parenting information, modeled ways to support healthy development and shared connections to other community resources. Naha remembers the remarkable progress her little brother made while in the program.

So Naha, now with a baby of her own, knew she wanted to enroll her baby in a similar home visitation program. The First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council funds the Growing in Beauty home visitation program, which customizes services to meet individual family needs and goals, including enhanced well-child care, home visits, informational material, parent groups, prenatal visits and links to community resources.

Martha Lee, Naha's home visitor, works with parents to help them see that they are their child's first and best teachers. Naha knew Lee from a similar program, where Lee was a home visitor and provided her with information about her baby's development stages, nutrition, exercise, immunizations and prenatal appointments.

When her second child Aaliyah, was born, Naha enrolled in the Growing in Beauty program, where she was reunited with Lee as her home visitor.

Right away, Naha told Lee about concerns she had about her daughter's speech. Naha noticed other kids progressing more than her daughter even though the kids were in the same developmental stages. Lee gave the mother resources while reassuring Naha that children progress at their own unique pace. For example, Aaliyah spoke with a strong and noticeable lisp. So Lee told Naha to encourage talking, but to practice how to enunciate or pronounce loudly, clearly and confidently her "S" sounds. She also encouraged them to sing songs to help with two to three word pronunciations.

"I feel a comfort knowing that my daughter is learning and improving."
-Natasha Naha, mother

The program helped Naha understand the speech problems, help her daughter and minimize the stigma for Aaliyah that comes with a speech impediment.

Talking and asking questions also helped Aaliyah's motor skills. Naha noticed she has improved significantly. Martha provided guidance and to help with motor skills to assist in such tasks as the necklace creating. Lee provided fun activities for Aaliyah to engage her problem solving abilities.

"The program made a huge difference," Naha said. "I feel a comfort knowing that my daughter is learning and improving not only from help in her immediate environment, but through the experts in the Growing in Beauty program."



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

FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Navajo Nation 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 Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty, Community Outreach Patient Empowerment's Fruits and Vegetable Prescription (FVRx) and St. Jude's Healthy Beginnings.

FTF Navajo Nation FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$1,806,729

Preventive Health

\$1,022,225

Strengthening Families

\$733,601

Workforce Development and Training

\$368,483

Parent and Community Awareness

\$139,610

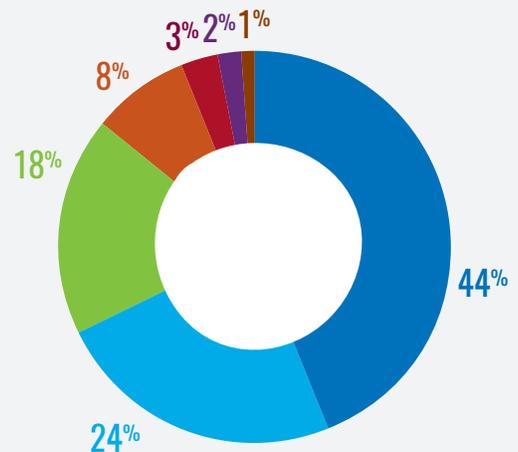
Research and Evaluation

\$109,400

Coordinating Care

\$80,459

Total \$4,260,507



FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
Dawn Yazzie

Vice Chair
Rhonda Etsitty

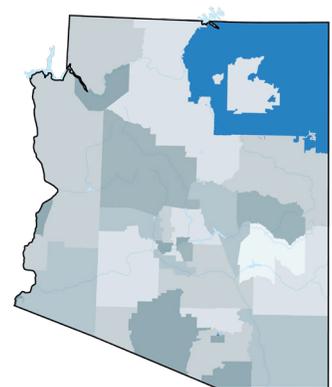
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The **FTF Navajo Nation Region** is defined as the Arizona portion of the Navajo Nation Reservation. The region covers nearly 16,000 square miles in the northeast corner of the state, stretching across Apache, Navajo and Coconino counties. The entire reservation, which dates to the Navajo Treaty of 1868, also includes lands in Utah and New Mexico. The FTF Navajo Nation Region includes Legislative District 7. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

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