

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pinal 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 Pinal Region, there are **34,984 children** (under age 6) with **24% living in poverty**.

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

“As a social worker and researcher within the criminal justice system, I know that making the most of limited resources by caring for people during early childhood improves our society for pennies on the dollar. The well-being of young children is a reflection of the well-being of families. Ensuring quality care for our most vulnerable people makes the most impact for our society.”



Briana Frenzel

Member of FTF Pinal Region Partnership Council

FTF Pinal Regional Key Impact Highlights [Fiscal Year 2020]

Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

2,282 Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.

340 Parents and other caregivers participated in evidence-based trainings designed to improve knowledge of parenting practices and children's development.

Quality Preschool and Child Care

1,748 Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

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

Preventive Health

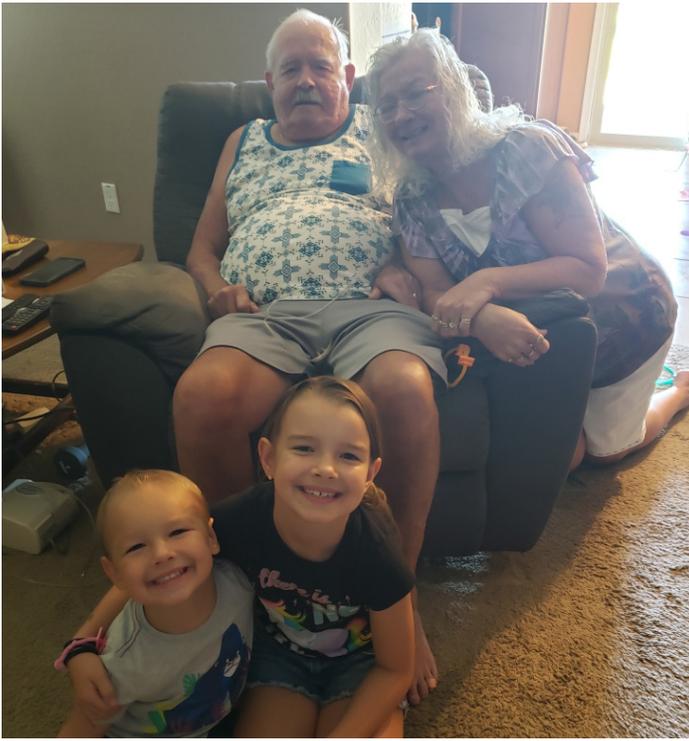
2,243 Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

1,070 Children received fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

Additional Strategies

1,731 Children received a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and untreated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impair speech development and failure to thrive.

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



Family, Friends and Neighbor program helps Maricopa grandmother prepare granddaughter for kindergarten

When Katelyn Redlin gave birth to her first child, Brooke, she found it difficult to leave her baby at a child care center. She convinced her mom and dad, Karen and Michael Redlin, to move to her hometown of Maricopa to help care for her daughter while she worked.

Karen Redlin was excited to be a grandmother and her granddaughter's caregiver during the day. Despite her excitement, Redlin felt like she needed support to give Brooke the best care, so she signed up for the Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN) program, which focuses on supporting in-home child care providers.

The First Things First Pinal Regional Partnership Council funds the program through the United Way of Pinal County. The program provides in-home child care providers no-cost assistance to help ensure young children get access to quality education outside of a licensed child care setting.

After the first meeting, Redlin knew the program was a good fit for her and her husband.

"It was such a warm and loving group of people," Redlin said. "We left the meeting that night, and shortly thereafter, we received this tote of educational toys for Brooke. I just cried about how much this group cares."

The FFN program is free and open to child care providers, foster and adoptive parents or family and friends that are responsible for any child age 5 years and younger for more than five hours a week.

The community created by FFN participants has been an essential support for Redlin.

"It's so nice to be able to know if we have questions or a problem, that we can reach out to the group Facebook page and get suggestions," said Redlin.

The strong community comes from the passion of caregivers, said FFN Program Director Liz Santiago.

"We work with such a diverse population of grandparents, great-grandparents, foster families, aunts and uncles," Santiago said. "So many different families with unique needs, but as different as they are, they are all so passionate about the children they care for."

"So many different families with unique needs, but as different as they are, they are all so passionate about the children they care for."
- Liz Santiago, FFN program director

While social distancing requirements have forced some changes as the group moves to interacting online only, Santiago said that it hasn't changed the community connection.

"We really do have an FFN family," she said. "They are always checking in. We have to start trainings 15 minutes early so that everyone can virtually love on each other."

Brooke, who is 8 years old now, was ready for kindergarten and continued to excel in school.

"This program and all the educational materials and trainings has really helped to get Brooke to where she is today in school," Redlin said. "She likes to be challenged. She was so ready for school. FFN has helped her, not only education wise, but in developing social skills, too."



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

FTF Pinal Regional Partnership 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 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.

FTF Pinal FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$3,303,229

Strengthening Families

\$1,509,467

Preventive Health

\$829,536

Parent and Community Awareness

\$197,755

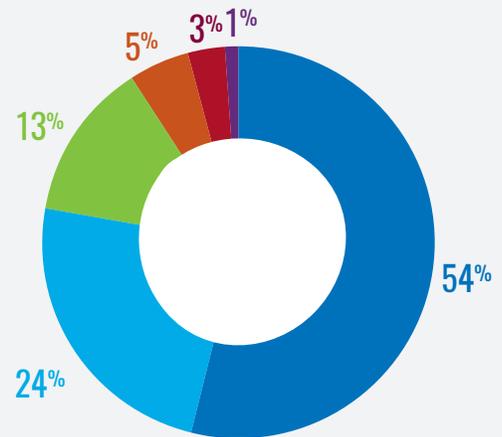
Research and Evaluation

\$160,536

Coordinating Care

\$100,900

Total \$6,101,424



FTF Pinal Regional Partnership Council and Staff

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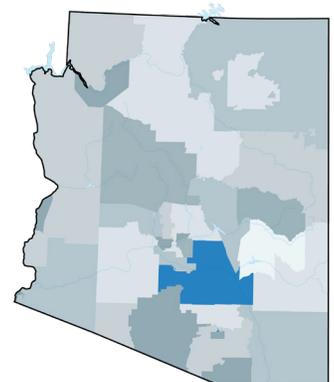
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The **FTF Pinal Region** is defined as Pinal County, not including the lands belonging to the Gila River Indian Community, the Tohono O'odham Nation or the San Carlos Apache Tribe. The region does include the land belonging to the Ak-Chin Indian Community.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

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