

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Hualapai Tribe Region

# IMPACT REPORT 2021



[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Hualapai-Tribe](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Hualapai-Tribe)

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 Hualapai Tribe Region, there are **197 children** (under age 6) with **49% living in poverty**.

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

“ The Hualapai Language Books promotes early childhood education through literacy and cultural identity. It also brought family units together and saved pieces of the Hualapai language for generations to come. Hualapai looks forward to our future leaders and speakers with this impactful strategy and growing a library of knowledge.”

**Heather Nieto**

*Vice Chair of FTF Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF Hualapai Tribe Region Strategic Priorities



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Hualapai Tribe region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. The region offers parents a voluntary **home visiting** program to provide comprehensive, one-on-one support for families with young children. The region also funds **native language preservation**, which connects Native American families and children to their language while promoting early literacy.



### Preventive Health

Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on. Left unaddressed, developmental delays and chronic medical conditions can contribute to serious learning problems. FTF works to support the health and development of young children in the Hualapai Tribe region by funding **developmental and sensory screenings** to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and help prevent later learning challenges.



## Mom gets support to handle crisis with 5-year-old son through Hualapai Tribe

Donnyell Walker of Peach Springs found it challenging to co-parent her 5-year-old son, Brayan Bob, with his father. Walker and Brayan's father lived in separate homes with different rules for their son, which sometimes caused stress for everyone.

Walker enrolled in the Hualapai Early Childhood Home Visitation program to learn how to better parent Brayan through the challenging time.

"There were certain situations between me and his father that would affect Brayan," said Walker. "He would act out. It was a hard adjustment for him."

Walker began working with Sashay Alvarez, the program's parent educator, who taught her communication strategies on how to give emotional support to Brayan and co-parent with his father.

"She gave me forms to work off of and helpline information if I needed it," said Walker. "I followed her advice in working with my son's father."

As some aspects in the parenting relationship became more complicated, Walker reached out to Alvarez for advice. The parent educator wanted a deeper understanding of how to support the family's difficult situation, so she reached out to

Virginia Hout, who is a supervisor and mental health consultant through the Smart Support program run by Southwest Human Development and funded by the FTF Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council. Smart Support provides mental health consultant support to parent educators when dealing with high-risk family situations that might involve more specialized resources or information on mental health issues.

"We offer professional development and support on mental health topics," said Hout. "Each month, we talk about the cases and cover topics that apply like maternal depression, substance abuse, adult mental health issues, screenings and family issues."

"I learned how to communicate to him that I was always there for him."

—Donnyell Walker, parent

Hout also takes direct calls from parent educators when they need immediate help.

"The situation with Donnyell and her family had gotten to the point where I needed more information on how to support them," Alvarez said. "We didn't have anything in our curriculum for their specific situation, so I reached out to Virginia on how I could support this family. Virginia coached me on how to help them."

Alvarez first taught Walker how to manage her own stress through journaling, meditating and breathing. Walker also learned to pay closer attention to her son.

"I learned how to communicate to him that I was always there for him," Walker said. "He would feel overwhelmed, so I would do breathing techniques with him to help him calm down."

She learned to encourage him to talk, but not to push him. She said that Brayan is now able to regulate his emotions better and talk through situations that frustrate him.

"I think the program helped him to be more mature," said Walker. "He can express and manage his emotions really well."

Walker credits the home visitation program and the help from the mental health consultant for helping her navigate a difficult situation and helping her son.

"If I hadn't gone through this program, I still would be trying to figure out the situation," said Walker. "I wouldn't notice my child's feelings or know how to work through his feelings with him."



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

## FTF Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Hualapai Tribe 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 program in this region include mental health consultation, home visitation and native language preservation.

### FTF Hualapai Tribe SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Strengthening Families

\$40,690

Coordinating Care

\$12,367

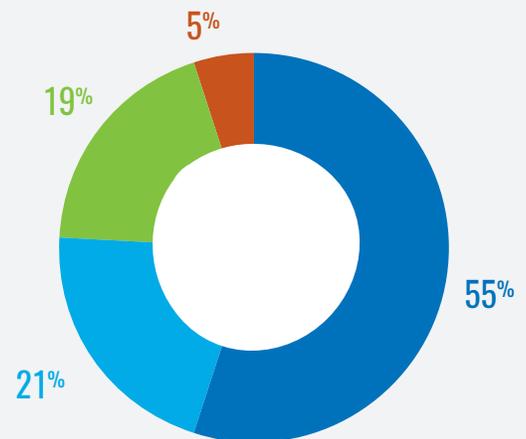
Preventive Health

\$6,086

Research and Evaluation

\$3,910

**Total** \$63,053



## FTF Hualapai Tribe Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

**William Santiago**

Vice Chair

**Heather Nieto**

Members

**Renee Beecher**  
**Omaovensi Coochwytewa**  
**Leon Ghahate**  
**Wanda Quasula**

**Amelia Sullivan**  
**Pearl Sullivan**  
**Chira Walema**

FTF Regional Director

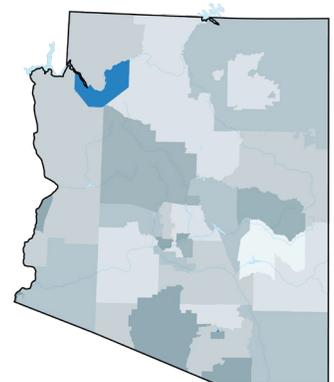
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The boundaries of the **FTF Hualapai Tribe Region** are the same as those of the Hualapai Indian Reservation. Although the reservation includes lands in Coconino and Yavapai counties, most of the population live in or near Peach Springs in Mohave County. Separate pieces of the reservation lie to the south of Peach Springs, near Valentine and Wikieup. The FTF Hualapai Tribe Region includes Legislative District 7. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at  
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