

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region

IMPACT REPORT 2021



FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pascua-Yaqui-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 Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region, there are **470 children** (under age 6) with **56% living in poverty**.

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

“Children are our future, and therefore it is imperative that they have strong stakeholders and advocates in their lives. FTF does just that. The partnership of FTF and Tribes provides a sound foundation for our Native children to ensure that they are ready for school and ready to succeed in life. Strong tribal nations begin with strong and healthy tribal children and families! Someday those children will become educated, compassionate and brave leaders for future generations in years to come.”

Marilynn Correa Sando

FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Council Member

FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region Strategic Priorities



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Pascua Yaqui Tribe region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. Parents can attend educational **family activities** to help support their child's healthy development and improve their parenting skills. The region also **distributes books** to families with children from birth to age 5 to encourage parent-child interaction and reading.



Quality Preschool and Child Care

Children who attend high-quality early learning programs go on to do better in school and are more likely to graduate. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe region provides funding for **college scholarships and professional development** opportunities for early childhood educators, so they can learn to enhance the quality of their interactions with children. The region also offers a **summer transition program** to help prepare children to be successful in kindergarten.



Professional development helps Pascua Yaqui early childhood teachers build a learning foundation for their young students

As the Pascua Yaqui Tribe went into lockdown at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ili Uusim Mahtawa'apo Pascua Yaqui Head Start teachers Maria Wilson and Yvette Rodriguez were left wondering about the safety and future of the young children they teach.

The Head Start teachers were sent home and continued teaching their young students through online learning. Despite the obstacles these educators faced, Wilson and Rodriguez confronted each challenge with a positive attitude.

"Last year, I didn't have my usual classroom, but instead helped facilitate remote learning by editing videos recorded by teachers," Rodriguez said.

In Wilson's case, she began to view these challenges as professional development opportunities.

"I was able to strengthen my technology skills using Zoom and other video platforms, and we were able to deliver our early literacy curriculum using take-home activities and virtual lessons," Wilson said.

The Ili Uusim Mahtawa'apo Pascua Yaqui Head Start teachers benefited from a professional development program that the First Things First Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council funds.

Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families and Communities is a professional development strategy that offers 17 communities of practices developed by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. Two of these communities are offered on the reservation: The Story Project Community of Practice and Inspire Inclusion Community of Practice.

For Inspire Inclusion, Easterseals Blake Foundation works with Ili Uusim Mahtawa'apo Pascua Yaqui Head Start teachers to increase their knowledge to support high-quality inclusive classrooms for young Pascua Yaqui children with special needs. And for the Story Project, Make Way for Books works with the teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in order to promote emergent literacy and language in Pascua Yaqui children.

Joseph Swartz, a lead teacher at Ili Uusim Mahtawa'apo Head Start, attended professional development sessions for both communities of practice, as well as a course in leadership training for early childhood programs.

"It has given me a clear understanding of developmental and professional standards within the field," Swartz said. He said he plans to use these new tools and skills to offer families of the young children he teaches the best support possible.

The skills acquired have inspired the teachers to incorporate their new knowledge and share the importance of early childhood education and development with the families they serve.

"It has given me a clear understanding of developmental and professional standards within the field."

—Joseph Swartz, early childhood teacher

"We, as teachers, are building the foundation of young children's learning experiences," said Head Start teacher Maria Louisa Vega. "Our role in their education is crucial because we are teaching them the stepping stones. It's their first experience, and we are here to help them fall in love with learning."

FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Pascua Yaqui 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 from birth to age 5. FTF invests in proven programs and innovative strategies through grants to

community partners that provide services to children and families. Some of the programs in this region include Pascua Yaqui Head Start summer program, Dr. Fernando Escalante Tribal Library parenting outreach and awareness and United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona's Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families and Communities.

FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Workforce Development and Training

\$109,141

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$53,312

Strengthening Families

\$47,389

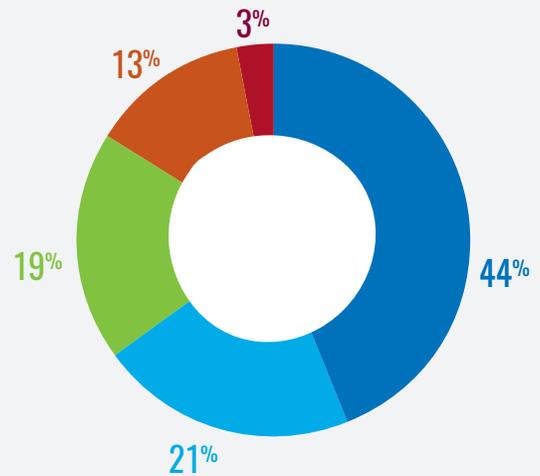
Parent and Community Awareness

\$32,819

Research and Evaluation

\$7,353

Total \$250,012



FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
Cecilia Garcia

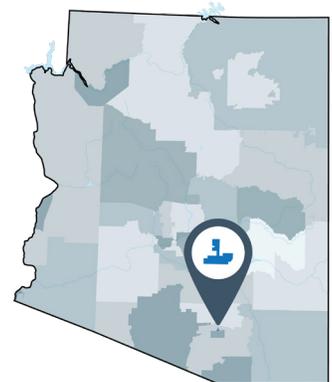
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The **FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region** is defined by the borders of the Pascua Pueblo Reservation in Pima County. The region covers approximately 2.2 square miles. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe is one of 10 Arizona tribes that has chosen to be designated as its own First Things First region. The FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region includes Legislative District 4. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pascua-Yaqui-Tribe](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pascua-Yaqui-Tribe)