

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Phoenix North Region

IMPACT REPORT 2021



FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Phoenix-North

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 Phoenix North Region, there are **66,337 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.

“Quality early education is so much more than child care or kindergarten prep. It creates the foundation for lifelong learning and opportunity that every child deserves.”

Wendy Resnik

Chair for FTF Phoenix North Regional Partnership Council

FTF Phoenix North Region Strategic Priorities



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Phoenix North region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. **Family resource centers** in the region offer a wide range of family activities, programs and referrals to additional services, and voluntary **home visiting** programs provide comprehensive, one-on-one support for families with young children. Families of newborns throughout the region and across the state also receive the **Arizona Parent Kit**, with helpful information and resources to support new parents.



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 Phoenix North region provides funding for child care providers and preschool programs to participate in FTF's **Quality First**. Providers benefit from training, coaching and a wide range of evidence-based supports to improve the quality of their early learning programs in ways that help children learn, grow and thrive. The region also funds **Quality First Scholarships** to help low-income families afford quality early learning for their young children.



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 Phoenix North region by funding **developmental and sensory screenings** to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and help prevent later learning challenges. **Oral health screenings and fluoride varnishes** are also offered to protect children against childhood tooth decay, a leading cause of school absences.



Nurse-Family Partnership Home visitation supports new mother through her anxiety in Phoenix

Claire Holt was a first-time mom and anxious about having a baby.

"I kept thinking something was going to go wrong or something bad was going to happen. I had many negative thoughts," Holt said.

Holt's supervisor at work knew she had gone through an unsuccessful pregnancy in the past and suggested a home visitation program called Nurse-Family Partnership.

Holt called the program and began services. "We talked about interventions that could happen during birth. I felt more prepared," Holt said.

The First Things First Phoenix North Regional Partnership Council funds the Nurse-Family Partnership program, which provides regular visits by trained nurses starting early in pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. The program is designed to support first-time moms in finding a path to a healthy pregnancy, a strong network of support and positive parenting practices.

When it came time for the delivery of her baby daughter, Maddie, Holt described her delivery experience as "traumatic" because of complications, but being able to talk to nurses from Nurse-Family Partnership after the difficult birth was instrumental for her.

"Nurse Partnership was a godsend for me. I needed the extra support," Holt said.

In addition to giving birth, Holt and her husband were in the process of moving to Phoenix from Tucson.

"I stayed with my in-laws in Paradise Valley for four months while looking for a family home," she said.

Holt was happy to find out she could continue the program at her temporary home in Paradise Valley. She reached out to her nurse in the program for support when breastfeeding became a challenge.

The program's nurses provided articles that helped her work through difficulties with breastfeeding and other issues like, thrush, tongue tie, reflux and milk protein allergy.

While in the program, Holt's nurse also directed her to resources and additional programs funded by First Things First to support Holt's self-care needs as a parent.

"There are resources everywhere," said Holt. "I used the Birth to Five Helpline at various times, when Maddie had croup and sleep regression. The line was very helpful."

Now Maddie is 2 years old and currently attending a 4-star rated First Things First Quality First preschool program that is close to home.

"I was ecstatic to find a Quality First school," Holt said. "I appreciate the curriculum. It's focused on positive discipline

"Nurse Partnership was a godsend for me. I needed the extra support."

—Claire Holt, parent

techniques, sensory play and interactive STEM activities. One day, I had the opportunity to observe Maddie cutting spaghetti for a sensory activity."

Holt shared she has referred a friend to the Nurse-Family Partnership program and suggests every parent with their first child, take the opportunity to enroll in the program because of its convenience and pre- and post-partum support.

FTF Phoenix North Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Phoenix North 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 mental health consultants, scholarships for early childhood educators and professional development.

FTF Phoenix North SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$9,900,838

Strengthening Families

\$2,995,343

Preventive Health

\$1,255,951

Research and Evaluation

\$512,027

Workforce Development and Training

\$230,310

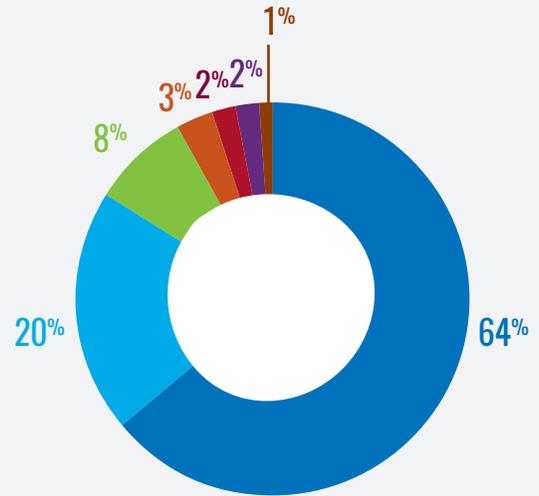
Parent and Community Awareness

\$179,592

Coordinating Care

\$53,854

Total \$15,127,915



FTF Phoenix North Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
Wendy Resnik

Vice Chair
Lyn Bailey

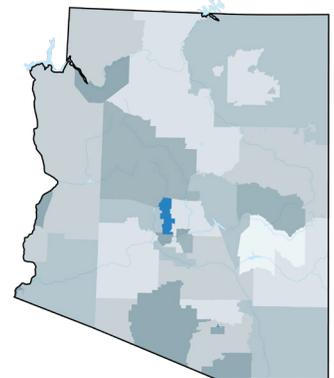
Members
Eric Bucher
Tyron Ivy
Matt Jewett
Rebecca Lindgren
Martin Perez

Ana Stigsson
Josh Stine
Kathleen Sprute
Kathryn Wauters

FTF Regional Director
Karyn Parker
kpark@firstthingsfirst.org
602.771.5056

FTF Community Outreach Coordinator
Nicole Berndt
nberndt@firstthingsfirst.org
602.771.5073

FTF Community Outreach Coordinator
Shontel DixonMulato
sdixonmulato@firstthingsfirst.org
602.771.5049



The **FTF Phoenix North Region** is primarily the City of Phoenix north of Thomas Road. The region also includes the unincorporated communities of Anthem and New River to the north. Note that the Phoenix neighborhoods of Ahwatukee and Paradise Valley Village are assigned to the East Maricopa Region, and some Phoenix neighborhoods adjacent to Glendale are assigned to the Northwest Maricopa Region. The FTF Phoenix North Region includes legislative districts 1, 15, 20, 23, 24, 28 and 30. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

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