

FIRST THINGS FIRST

San Carlos Apache Region

IMPACT REPORT

2021



FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/San-Carlos-Apache

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 San Carlos Apache Region, there are **1,435 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.

“ I believe a child's education begins from the day they are conceived, and the more we can do to support and encourage parents to actively be involved in the educational and physical/mental/emotional development of the child upon birth, the better outcomes for the child entering the educational process and developing into a healthy community citizen.”

Christine Carlson

Chair of FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council

FTF San Carlos Apache Region Strategic Priorities



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the San Carlos Apache 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 San Carlos Apache 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 **college scholarships** so early educators can pursue a higher education to help them be better teachers to 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 San Carlos Apache region by funding **developmental and sensory screenings** to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and help prevent later learning challenges. Families can also attend **nutrition classes** to learn about healthy eating and the importance of physical activity.



Nutrition classes help San Carlos family make healthier choices

Octavia Duncan of San Carlos is the mother of two young children, Samara, 3, and Kodah, 18 months. She was concerned about their health and nutrition. Knowing that her family has a history of diabetes, she didn't want her kids to be what she calls, "processed food babies."

So when she saw an opportunity to join a class called, Eating Smart and Being Active, she was happy to join.

The Apache way of life teaches that the best health stems from using a sense of *Shił Gozhóó* in teaching about and eating nutritious food with our children and by attaining a state of *Gozhóó* by living an active and healthy lifestyle.

The sense of *Shił Gozhóó* is the sense of happiness and contentment that comes from understanding the balance between oneself, one's family, one's community and the land. Using this guiding principle, the First Things First San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council funds the classes through its Nutrition and Physical Activity Strategy.

The virtual classes are held weekly for one and a half hours over nine weeks. The classes cover nutrition, food safety, cooking and physical activities with young children.

"My goals when first joining the classes were to gain knowledge about healthier food choices, meal prep and to guide my children early about healthier food choices to give them the best start in life as possible," Duncan said.

"The classes have helped me with healthier choices and recipes as well," Duncan said. "We've tried new recipes with healthy substitutes like cauliflower wings, chicken and rice, whole wheat pizza and oatmeal parfait."

Her daughter Samara was surprised the night they made pizza. "She said, 'Mommy I didn't know we could make pizza at home.'"

"We've learned a lot from the program, and it has motivated us to make healthier choices inside and outside our home."

—Octavia Duncan, parent

The day they made fruit pizza, she had the children naming the colors of the fruit as they were added to the sweet crust. "And of course they loved the whip cream!" Duncan said. "Samara said, 'This is so fun, mommy!'"

The cooking has inspired Samara to be in the kitchen, while her mom cooks.

"She has a whole process she goes through," Duncan said. "She has learned food safety and washes her hands, ties on one of my aprons and proceeds to give me directions. 'Chop up the vegetables, mom and I will put them in the pot.' She also likes to name the ingredients and the colors of the different foods. She knows how to make spaghetti by heart and loves to make bread too. Little brother, Kodah, is starting to get interested as well, watching his sister's excitement!"

There is also a physical fitness portion in the program educating about the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

"We've begun to venture out as a family and find new trails for walks together and the kids got bikes now too and enjoy riding as a family," Duncan said. "We've learned a lot from the program, and it has motivated us to make healthier choices inside and outside our home."



FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council

The FTF San Carlos Apache 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 organizations that provide services to children and families. Some of the programs in this region include nutrition, obesity and physical activity; parenting outreach and awareness; and developmental and sensory screening.

FTF San Carlos Apache SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Preventive Health

\$218,344

Strengthening Families

\$162,238

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$143,868

Parent and Community Awareness

\$99,523

Workforce Development and Training

\$27,167

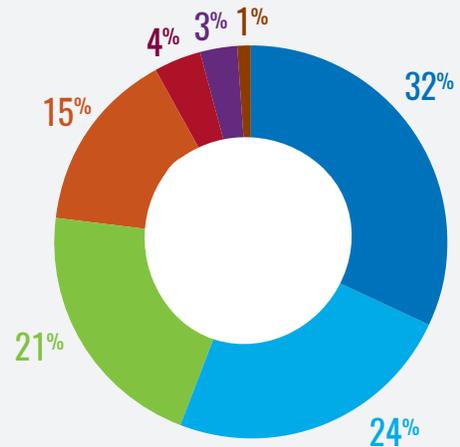
Research and Evaluation

\$22,196

Coordinating Care

\$4,417

Total \$677,753



FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

Christine Carlson

Vice Chair

Jaymie Swift Hooke

Members

Roberta Brown
Randee Kitcheyan
Nolita April Noline
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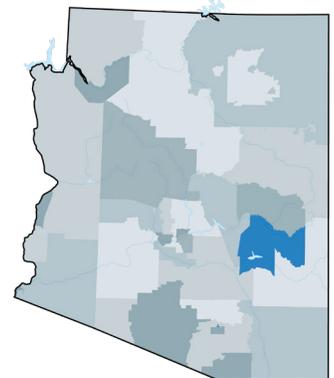
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The boundaries of the **FTF San Carlos Apache Region** are defined to be those of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. The region covers almost 3,000 square miles in east-central Arizona. Most of the region lies within Gila and Graham counties, although there is a small, uninhabited section in Pinal County. The reservation, which was established in 1871, is divided into four districts: Seven Mile Wash, Gilson Wash, Peridot and Bylas. The FTF San Carlos Apache Region includes Legislative District 7. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/San-Carlos-Apache](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/San-Carlos-Apache)