

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pima South Region

IMPACT REPORT 2021



FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pima-South

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 Pima South Region, there are **25,171 children** (under age 6) with **28% living in poverty**.

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

“Positive relationships and experiences in the early years will create the foundation and trajectory for the rest of a person's life. High-quality early care and education today will be an investment in the future.”

Jennifer Hook

Director of Creation Preschool

FTF Pima South Region Strategic Priorities



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Pima South region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. The region offers voluntary **home visiting** programs to provide comprehensive, one-on-one support for families with young children. 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 Pima South 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 Pima South region by funding **developmental and sensory screenings** to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and help prevent later learning challenges. **Fluoride varnishes** are also offered to protect children against childhood tooth decay, a leading cause of school absences.



Parents as Teachers provides support to Tucson mom of special needs son

When Jasmine Casasola, her husband and two children moved from Guanajuato, Mexico to Tucson, she felt sad and overwhelmed leaving her family and friends behind. As a parent of her 4-year-old daughter Jasline and her 3-year-old son Jassiel, who was deaf, she needed support.

She signed up for the Sunnyside Unified School District's Parents as Teachers program funded by First Things First Pima South Regional Partnership Council. The program provides parents with free, in-home visits from a parent educator who teaches them how to support their children's emotional, cognitive and physical development. The program supports parents prenatally and families with children, birth to age 5.

Maria Carrillo, a parent educator in the program, visited Casasola and knew right away she could help.

Casasola felt alone. Her son would pull out his hearing aid and cry all the time. Casasola spent a lot of time attending to him, and then her daughter felt neglected. She would throw tantrums. The household stress kept increasing.

"I taught her ways to help manage her stress, like leaving the kids with her husband and going for a walk," said Carrillo. "I taught her to identify her stressors and to understand that if you are stressed out, then your children will feel that and be stressed."

One of the problems was time management. Casasola felt overwhelmed working full time and going back and forth to Jassiel's therapy appointments.

"I helped her organize her time using a chart," said Carrillo. "I told her to start asking the medical specialists to change the time and date of appointments to fit what was convenient for her."

Carrillo also encouraged Casasola to help her children become more independent by encouraging them to make decisions.

"The biggest changes that helped are that my daily routine worked more efficiently with easier transitions," said Casasola. "Both kids are more independent, and they make their own decisions when it comes to reading a book or deciding what they want to play. I learned what my role as a parent is and how to help them to be successful adults."

After Jassiel had a surgery to improve his hearing, Carrillo started working with Casasola on her children's behavior. They learned sign language together, and Jassiel is learning more words to communicate his feelings and having less tantrums.

For Jasline, Carrillo encouraged Casasola to invite her to be a part of her everyday activities like folding laundry, cooking and spending time reading with her.

"This program helped me understand that my daughter needs me just like my son," said Casasola. "I learned to do activities involving both of them equally to prevent my daughter from feeling forgotten."

In addition to getting individualized support, the program connected Casasola and her children to other families in the program. They were also introduced to other resources like a library story hour and stay-and-play groups.

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—Jasmine Casasola, parent

"The Sunnyside Parents as Teachers program provides all the resources the parents need to understand our children's developmental stages through home visits and personalized lesson plans according to the needs of each family," said Casasola. "But the most important thing is that they make us feel like a family. My parent educator has given me the support that I need to be a confident parent."

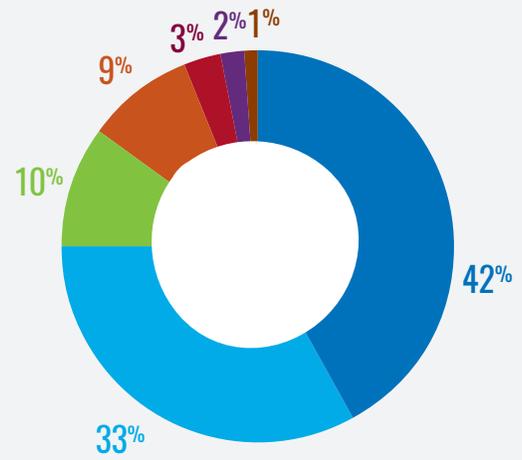
FTF Pima South Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Pima South 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 HealthySteps, Raising A Reader, Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers.

FTF Pima South SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$2,701,760
Strengthening Families	\$2,076,150
Preventive Health	\$631,630
Workforce Development and Training	\$539,974
Research and Evaluation	\$214,641
Coordinating Care	\$138,329
Parent and Community Awareness	\$120,437
Total	\$6,422,920



FTF Pima South Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
David Dumon

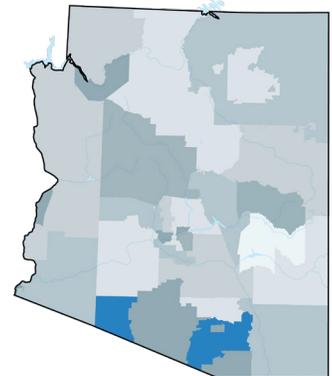
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*The **FTF Pima South Region** is defined as the southern portion of Pima County, not including the lands belonging to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation, plus a small part of Santa Cruz County around the Amado community. The FTF Pima South Region includes Legislative Districts 2, 3, 4 and 14. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)*

Learn more at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pima-South](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pima-South)