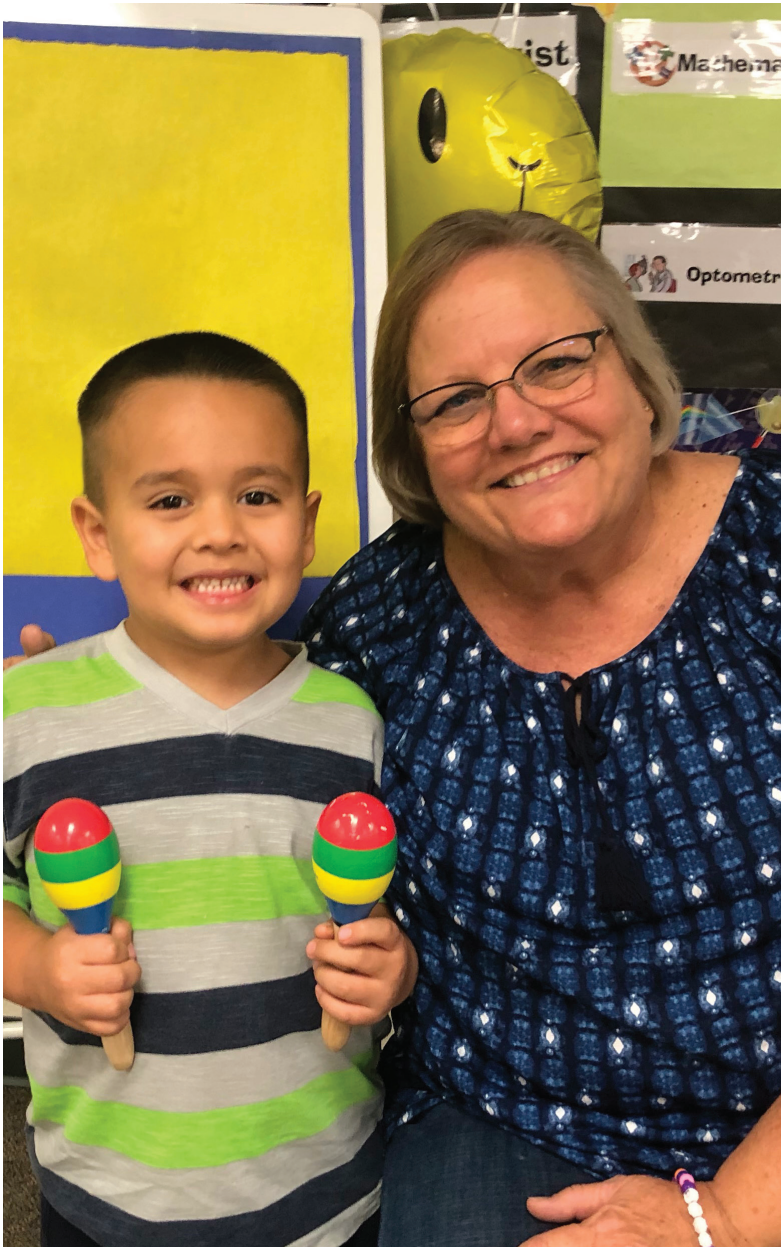


FIRST THINGS FIRST

Cochise Region

2022 Impact Report



From birth to age 5,
a child's brain develops more than
any other time in life.

90%

of a child's brain grows before kindergarten.

Early childhood matters.

First Things First (FTF) 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 Cochise Region, there are **10,177 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.



Experts tell us 90% of all brain development occurs by the age of five. Investing in the prosperity of our community, we must invest in the education of our youngest citizens so that their talents may be fully employed."



Clea McCaa

Sierra Vista Mayor

FTF Cochise Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

616

Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.

91

Families with young children participated in voluntary home visiting programs proven to reduce parental stress levels, increase connections to community supports and improve children's cognitive, motor, behavioral and socio-emotional development.

69

Parents and other caregivers participated in evidence-based trainings designed to improve knowledge of parenting practices and children's development.



Quality Preschool and Child Care

1,023

Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

165

Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.



Preventive Health

338

Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.



Quality First scholarships help Sierra Vista sisters thrive

After nearly a decade of juggling motherhood and a job as a licensed practical nurse, Serena Hernandez decided to go back to school. She was ready to make the next stride in her career.

"I wanted to open up the opportunities for myself," the single mom said. But the high cost of child care, especially a high-quality child care, gave her pause.

She didn't want to sacrifice her 3-year-old daughter's care. When her daughter, Aniyah, received a Quality First scholarship to continue attending Great Expectations Early Learning Center in Sierra Vista, it brought immediate relief to Hernandez, whose budget tightened while taking classes.

"It was a huge blessing for me," she said of her child's scholarship. "It allowed me to not have to work so I could focus on school because the program was full time."

First Things First created the Quality First program to help child care providers in the state improve the quality of their programs in ways that help young children be ready for kindergarten. Participating in Quality First is free for regulated child care centers, homes and preschool programs in Arizona.

The scholarships, funded through the FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council, are available for children birth to age 5, so families in Cochise County can afford to send their children to providers who offer quality care and education.

The scholarship allowed Aniyah, to stay at Great Expectations, where she had been enrolled since she was 10 months old. Hernandez sees a positive impact on her daughter's growth and development.

"She's definitely become more social. She's learned how to play with other kids better, she's learned songs, she's learned her colors," said Serena Hernandez.

Hernandez has no doubts that her preschool activities will serve her well as she enters kindergarten, just as they did for Aniyah's big sister, Kaliyah. Now 12, she attended the same early learning center and received a scholarship. When she turned 5, Kaliyah not only recognized letters and colors, but was also starting to write, her mother said.

"She was really prepared for kindergarten," Hernandez said.

Kaliyah, who will start seventh grade this year, through the years has continued doing well academically, Hernandez said.

The scholarship assistance has been crucial for her family.

"It's really been a big help because I got through my first round of school when Kaliyah was little and then my second round now that I am with my next little girl," Hernandez said.

Knowing that Aniyah is receiving high-quality care makes her mother feel confident that she will have the skills needed to succeed in kindergarten.

"She's just not playing, she's learning all the time," said Serena Hernandez.



Read more FTF stories at
FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories

FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council

FTF regional partnership councils are made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and inform 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 Parents as Teachers, Quality First and Parenting Education trainings.

FTF Cochise SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$1,248,416

Preventive Health

\$408,625

Strengthening Families

\$346,875

Research and Evaluation

\$74,997

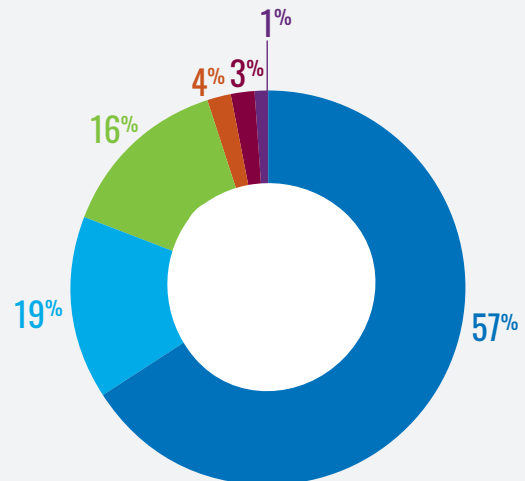
Workforce Development and Training

\$63,049

Parent and Community Awareness

\$21,838

Total \$2,163,800



FTF Cochise Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

Darlene Melk

Vice Chair

Danielle Brownrigg

Members

Elisa Castro

Peter Huisking

Kalman Mannis

Anthony Reed

Terri Romo

Brandi Samaniego

Demetry Simonton

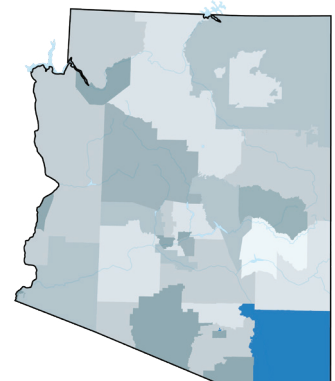
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The **FTF Cochise Region** includes all of Cochise County and the northeastern corner of Pima County.

Learn more at
FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cochise