



Graham/Greenlee 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 Graham/Greenlee Region, there are **3,903 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.



One of the best tools we have in preventing future crime and ensuring safe neighborhoods and communities is nurturing our children by providing a strong foundation. By supporting them in their formative years, we can set them on a course of learning and confidence, and instill a sense of civic responsibility that will last a lifetime. First Things First is focused on ensuring the education and development of our children are invaluable, not only to the individual, but essential to our communities."



L. Scott Bennet

Graham County Attorney

FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

23,314

Books were given to families with children ages birth to 5 years to encourage parent-child interaction and reading

714

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



Preventive Health

33

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



Quality Preschool and Child Care

345

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

38

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

8

Early childhood educators received a financial incentive for continuing employment with the same program for at least 12 months and advancing their education and credentials.

Additional Strategies

280

Adults

attended parenting activities to learn how about early child care development in a fun setting.

7

Early childhood educators

received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



Home visitation program helps Thatcher family navigate young daughter's complex medical needs

About halfway through her second pregnancy, Malia Mullenaux and her husband, Reagan got some scary news.

Doctors told them that their daughter Addelyn would have complex medical needs. Addy was diagnosed in utero with chromosome 6q26.27 deletion syndrome, which means that part of her body's chromosomes has been lost or deleted and could cause severe congenital anomalies and significant intellectual and physical disability.

There was so much that Reagan and Malia didn't know, but they knew that Addy was meant to be their daughter. They also knew that they would love her and care for her to the best of their abilities.

The Mullenaux family lives in Thatcher, which is three hours away from the high-level medical care that their soon-to-be born daughter would need. As Malia's due date approached, she stayed with family in Phoenix to safely await Addy's arrival.

Shortly before Addy was born, a friend told Malia about a voluntary home visitation program called Healthy Families. The First Things First Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council funds Healthy Families to provide parenting information, teaching strategies and connections to community resources.

Malia quickly bonded with her home visitor, Stephanie, who immediately helped Malia navigate as she worked with at least a dozen specialists including a cardiologist, ophthalmologist, neurologist and endocrinologist, to help give Addy the best quality of life.

All specialists are in Phoenix, so every week the family ventures in to the city, sometimes three or four times in the same week.

After a craniotomy due to epileptic seizures, Addy was left legally blind. Stephanie worked with Mullenaux to provide Addy with sensory experiences like music, textures (especially rocks), and smells.

"She especially loves the feeling of bubbles being blown on her hands and face, the wind in her hair and the taste of mac and cheese," Mullenaux said. "Her very favorite sensation is touch. She loves to cuddle, and gives the best hugs!"

The home visits never felt like appointments, Mullenaux added.

"We say, 'We have a friend coming to check on us,'" she said. "So much love and support was provided. No judgements were ever made, and our home visitors felt like family. When people ask what this program is and why we are a part of it, I tell them that a kind friend is sent to give us parenting tips, advice on mental health for each of us, and the we learn so much on top of having direct access to resources we may need help finding for our girls, and even for us as parents."

Mullenaux describes Stephanie as a steady influence through the ups and downs.

"She has seen me at my best and at my worst, yet she always came with a bright smile and a kind hug," Mullenaux said. "She became a shoulder to cry on, and a friend to laugh with. The difference the program made in our family is priceless.

"I've learned so many things to make me a better wife, mom and person. Addelyn and her big sister, Chloe, benefitted from Healthy Families in countless ways, too. Starting with learning techniques for comforting a newborn in sensory overload, to potty-training tips, to preparing for preschool and beyond."

Addy recently turned 5, and is now ready for school. The family will miss their association with their Healthy Families friends, but they are excited watch Addy continue to grow and thrive in her new learning environment at Brighter Day Transition Kindergarten.



Read more FTF stories at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories)

FTF Graham/Greenlee 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 Healthy Families, Quality First, Parenting Outreach and Awareness and Literacy Programs.

FTF Graham/Greenlee SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$340,910

Strengthening Families

\$228,536

Preventive Health

\$56,288

Parent and Community Awareness

\$32,965

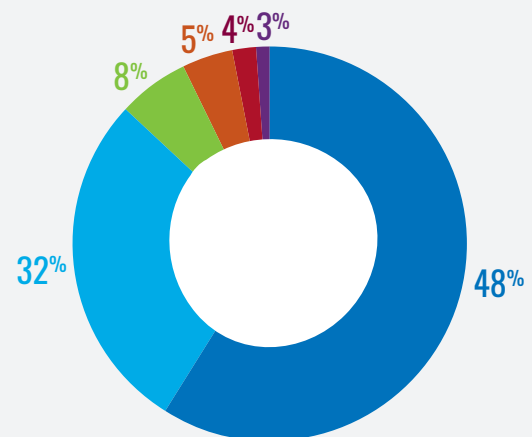
Research and Evaluation

\$25,623

Workforce Development and Training

\$24,241

Total \$708,563



FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair
Laurie Smith

Vice Chair
Susan Norton

Members

Sarah Camacho
Loretta Desaulniers
Kacey Ekman
Donna McGaughey

Jessamyn Messick
Mark Smith
Dustin Welker
Susan Wood

FTF Regional Director

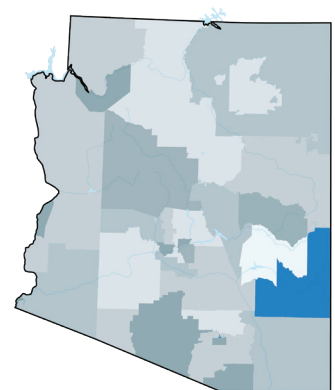
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*The **FTF Graham/Greenlee Region** is defined as the combined area of the two counties, not including the lands belonging to the San Carlos Apache Tribe within Graham County.*

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