

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Navajo/Apache 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 Navajo/Apache Region, there are **6,166 children** (under age 6) with **30% living in poverty**.

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



I feel that First Things First is a great organization to take on teaching about caring for our young children to get them on the right track for a better life."



Terry Linn

2022 FTF Navajo/Apache Champion for Young Children

FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

658

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

157

Adults attended parenting activities to learn more about the importance of early childhood development.



Quality Preschool and Child Care

377

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

42

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



Preventive Health

3,685

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

Additional Strategies

1,225

Books

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

24

Infants and toddlers

involved with the child welfare system benefitted from coordinated efforts to meet their unique developmental needs.



Parenting classes help mother of four prepare her daughter for kindergarten

Jenn Russell, a mother of four children under the age of 6, was delighted when she learned of parenting programs being offered at the Snowflake-Taylor Public Library.

She was interested in finding activities and resources local to her area that would benefit her children's development. The First Things First Navajo/Apache Regional Council funds the Arizona's Children Association to host programs such as Kinder Prep and Brain Time at the Snowflake library.

Parents and caregivers can attend the classes with their children, while they learn about important development strategies.

The First Things First Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council funds the program, which also provides parents and caregivers with materials and resources to use at home to encourage the continued practice of important child development concepts learned in class.

"I really enjoyed seeing my kids' excitement of new information, interacting with other kids, and learning new social skills," Russell said. "My daughter, Mallory would ask me 'is it my Kinder Class time yet?' because she was so excited to attend!"

Mallory loves routine and leans toward patterns in her environments, Russell said. She found comfort in the routine of the class opening with the same hello song, and closing with the same goodbye song each time. Mallory's confidence was boosted and she began coming out of her shell to socialize with the other children more as she learned the importance of routine.

"Mallory blossomed in this class and gained new found confidence," Russell said.

Russell watched her daughter become more social in the Kinder Prep class because of the feeling of stability created by routines she learned. These routines created an environment where Mallory spoke more with the other children and learned much more than just letters and numbers, she learned socialization and developed learning skills.

"One of my favorite things that the 'Kinder Prep,' and 'Brain Time' programs taught me was the more one-on-one attention I give to my kids, the greater their attention span will be," Russell said. "We spend more quality time outside together and less time using screens."

Kimberly Whitely, the parent educator with Arizona's Children Association, said the collaborative classes provide parents and caregivers with creative ways to interact with their children to strengthen attention, bonding and communication skills.

"We empower parents with the tools and resources they need to be successful in helping their child to be ready to enter kindergarten," Whitely said.

For Russell, the classes gave her a better understanding to help with her other children, such as how to handle her son biting those around him.

"They helped give me a different view of how to address it," she said. "I learned to have a conversation with my kids. I began being proactive and intentional before and after the behavior occurred. I would remove my son from the situation after he would bite, and then stop to show him how his behavior hurt or caused an 'ouchie,' to someone else."

Russell, who teaches preschool in her home, found the information taught in class about brain development enlightening.

"The classes taught me how to use household items in a creative way to teach and stimulate a child's growth," Russell said. "The use of everyday household items made it easy to talk about things we were doing together like cooking, and turn it into a creative learning experience."

Mallory is now in first grade and excelling as a student.

The Kinder Prep class prepared Mallory to enter kindergarten confident and excited to learn academically and socially, Russell said.

"She started out on the right foot because she went to Kinder Prep class that helped prepare her for a learning mindset," she said.



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

FTF Navajo/Apache 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 Early Childhood Learning Collaboratives, Summit Healthy Steps and North Country Healthcare Healthy Steps.

FTF Navajo/Apache SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Preventive Health

\$851,567

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$248,179

Workforce Development and Training

\$215,225

Strengthening Families

\$157,014

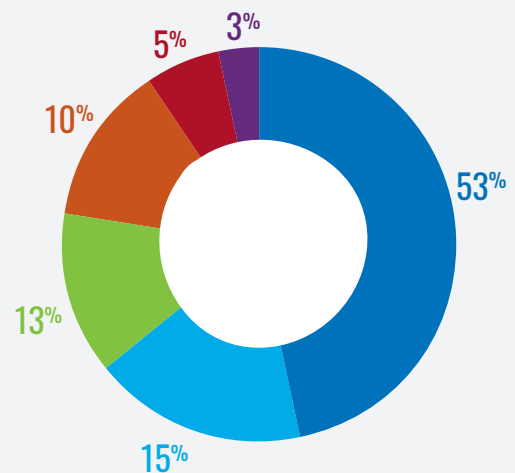
Parent and Community Awareness

\$82,149

Research and Evaluation

\$44,231

Total \$1,598,364



FTF Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

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Vice Chair

Mary “Katherine” Larson

Members

**Kimberly Avery
Elizabeth Bierer
Manuela Bowler
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FTF Regional Director

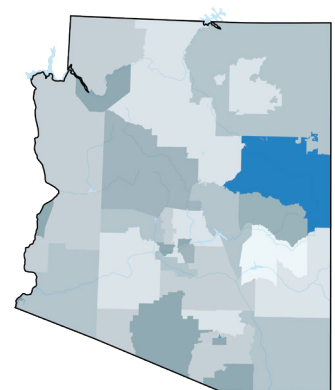
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The **FTF Navajo/Apache Region** encompasses the central areas of Navajo and Apache counties, excluding the lands belonging to the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe in the north and the land belonging to the White Mountain Apache Tribe in the south. The region also includes the Forest Lakes community in Coconino County, east of Heber-Overgaard. The region does not include the city of Winslow, which is in Navajo County but is assigned to the FTF Coconino Region.

Learn more at

FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Navajo-Apache-Region