



Tohono O'odham Nation 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 Tohono O'odham Nation Region, there are **1,180 children** (under age 6) with **69% living in poverty**.

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



My [child care] teachers were passionate about what they did about their education. I learned a lot from every one of them. The environment they gave us and the games they let us play influenced us."



**Mazey Ortega**

*Miss Tohono O'odham Nation 2021, 2023*

## FTF Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

20

Families received support coordination to efficiently connect them to services to meet the needs of their children.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

32

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

14

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

### Additional Strategies

46

#### Early childhood educators

received support through professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of teacher-child interactions.

# Community of practice provides Tohono O'odham early educators with in-depth learning

The First Things First Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council continues to recognize the critical need for high quality early childhood education and the significant role that early care and education professionals have in supporting the optimal development of young children. The regional council also continues to focus on professional development for early care and education professionals, given the significant number of children attending early care and education programs and the ongoing need to support, recruit and retain the early childhood education workforce reflective and informed by O'odham himdag so that all children will have high-quality teachers that reflect the community. Himdag, as defined by Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC), is the O'odham tradition of life, culture and values and includes elements such as community, wellbeing, storytelling, arts, language and beliefs.

The Tohono O'odham Community College (TOCC) Community of Practice, which is one of the 17 communities of practice developed by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona's Great Expectations for Teachers, Children and Families.

The FTF Tohono O'odham Regional Council funds the program, which provides early childhood educators with in-depth professional development that allows them to earn college credit and work toward degrees in early childhood. It's a part of the FTF Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council's work to help boost the quality of child care provided to young children in the region.

The community of practice at the college called, A'al Ha-Mascam, which means children and their learning in O'odham, focuses on improving kindergarten transitions for children.

The early childhood professionals who participated in the TOCC Community of Practice had the opportunity to simultaneously enroll in coursework through the college, creating a pathway of higher learning. The college works closely with other higher education institutions, including Northern Arizona University, to ensure a seamless transition and pathway to see more early childhood professionals on the Tohono O'odham Nation achieve bachelor's degrees.



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

## FTF Tohono O'odham Nation 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.

### FTF Tohono O'odham SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$226,802

Strengthening Families

\$146,888

Workforce Development and Trainings

\$115,503

Parent and Community Awareness

\$41,427

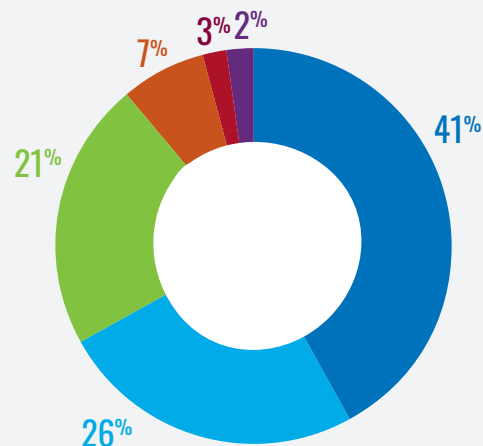
Research and Evaluation

\$15,399

Preventive Health

\$13,830

**Total** \$559,849



### FTF Tohono O'odham Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

**Kymerlii Tenario**

Vice Chair

**Joseph Mease**

Members

**Tara Chicho-Jarillo**

**Jesse Navarro**

**Cheryl Conde**

**Elsa Peterson**

**Mariena Mendez**

**Marisa Werner**

FTF Regional Director

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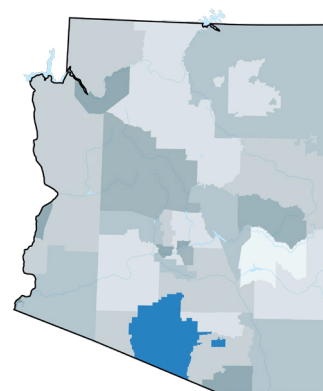
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FTF Community Outreach Coordinator

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The **Tohono O'odham Nation's** lands are located within the Sonoran Desert in south central Arizona. The boundaries of the First Things First Tohono O'odham Region are the same as the Nation's federally-recognized reservation boundaries. These include the noncontiguous San Xavier (Tucson) and San Lucy (Gila Bend & Glendale) districts; Florence Village, a small community outside the City of Florence in Pinal County; and the nine contiguous districts that make up the majority of Western Pima County and small southern portions of Maricopa and Pinal counties. They include Gu Vo, Hickiwan, Sif Oidak, Gu Achi, Pisinemo, Chukut Kuk, Sells, Shuk Toak and Baboquivari districts.

Learn more at

**[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Tohono-Oodham-Nation](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Tohono-Oodham-Nation)**