FIRST THINGS FIRST
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.
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.

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.
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 lower levels of education among early childhood professionals in the region, the high number of these professionals engaged in professional development, and the significant number of children attending early care and education programs.

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
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 eight 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.