



## Investing in Our Future: Positive Outcomes of Early Childhood Investments

First Things First (FTF), Arizona’s early childhood agency, represents a commitment Arizonans made to our youngest children – that they would have the support they need to start school healthy and ready to succeed. Many young children in Arizona face significant barriers to their success, including poverty, trauma and lack of access to needed resources. In the FTF Gila River Indian Community Region, there are **65 children** (under age 6), with **59% living in poverty**. Here is how FTF is working to support young children and their families in this region.



**90%** of a child’s brain grows before kindergarten.  
**Early childhood matters.**



FTF invests in proven programs, like Quality First, and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families. Some of the FTF-funded services in this region include Early Steps Home Visitation Program and Nutrition and Let’s Cook, Let’s Eat, Let’s Play Nutrition and Physical Activity Program.

## Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2023]

### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

- 2** Adults attended parenting activities to learn more about the importance of nutrition and physical activity in young children.
- 4** 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 social-emotional development.

### Quality Preschool and Child Care

- 20** Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 5** Early Childhood Educators received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

### Preventive Health

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



Scan to read the family story

## Somerton early childhood program reaches for the stars to provide quality care

Cocopah Head Start recently reached a milestone and teacher assistant Alicia Mills couldn't be more excited. They recently received a four-star rating for providing quality child care. The higher rating not only meant more funding support for age-appropriate books and other learning materials, but – for the benefit of children – it also consisted of intensive professional development for Cocopah's staff members.

The First Things First Cocopah Tribe Regional Council Quality First to help early care and education providers in our state improve the quality of their programs in ways that help young children learn, grow and thrive.



### Strengthening Families

Positive early experiences, like nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers, promote healthy brain development and learning. First Things First expands families' access to the information, services and supports they need to help their young children achieve their fullest potential.

## State Fiscal Year 2023 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$36,333

Strengthening Families

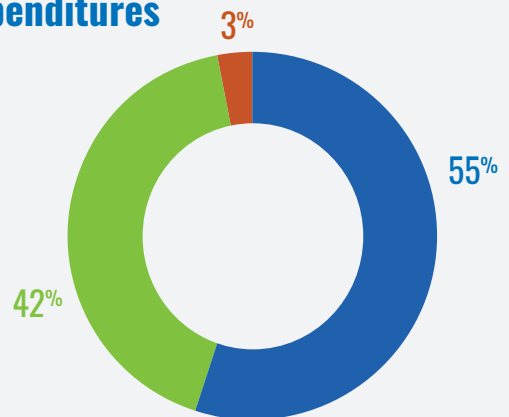
\$27,874

Research and Evaluation

\$2,320

Total

\$66,527



## FTF Cocopah Tribe 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.

*Chair*

**Esteban Escobar**

*Vice Chair*

**Wilana Ortega**

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**Sheena Alvarez**

**Joena Ezroj**

**Elizabeth Garcia**

**Diana Navarro**

**Tabatha Novotny**

**Elizabeth Renaud**

**June Stillings**

**Sheryl Taylor**

**Paula Twist Koolick**

## Scan to Learn More and Connect with Staff

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cocopah-Tribe](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Cocopah-Tribe)

