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 East Maricopa Region, there are 58,035 children (under age 6), with 12% 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 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 Family Resource Centers, Healthy Families and Parents as Teachers.

Regional Key Impact Highlights
[State Fiscal Year 2023]

**Strengthening Families and Early Literacy**
- 4,209 Families or caregivers served by receiving referrals or by participating in activities at family resource centers.
- 175 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**
- 11,209 Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 509 Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.

**Preventive Health**
- 1,602 Children received a screening to detect tooth decay, which, left undetected and untreated, could cause damage to permanent teeth, impair speech development and failure to thrive.
- 589 Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.
Healthy Families program helps Chandler girl develop and thrive

When Chandler’s parents Adrianna and Josh Beach had their fifth child, Ruby, they felt their family was complete and knew they wanted the best for all of their kids. To the Beach family, that included providing each child what they needed to thrive and be healthy and happy. During her hospital stay, mom Adrianna learned about a program to help support her as a parent and the health and development of her new baby.

The FTF East Maricopa Regional Partnership Council funds the Healthy Families program, which provides parents with free, in-home visits from a parent educator.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Child Care and Preschool</td>
<td>$4,084,144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Families</td>
<td>$2,254,192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventive Health</td>
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<td>Workforce Development and Training</td>
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<td>Research and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Parent and Community Awareness</td>
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<td>Coordinating Care</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,957,747</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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FTF East Maricopa 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.

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