



## 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 **756 children** (under age 6), with **57% 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 Baby Smarts Home Visitation Program.

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

### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

40

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.

### Preventive Health

55

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

### Quality Preschool and Child Care

116

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

8

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

5

Preschools and child care programs participated in Quality First, receiving coaching, quality improvement supports, health consultation and access to professional development.



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## Quality First uses research to help children thrive

The First Things First Gila River Indian Community Regional Partnership Council recognizes the important need for quality early childhood education in Cochise County. The regional council continues to fund Quality First, which partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning development in Arizona. Quality First provides quality improvements that research proves help children thrive, such as training for teachers to expand their skills and to help create learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child.

The early childhood years, from birth to age 5, are when a child's brain is growing faster than at any other time in life. And early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. The brain connections needed for many important abilities like motivation, self-regulation, problem-solving and communication are formed in these early years through positive, nurturing interactions with caring adults.



### 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

Strengthening Families

\$123,823

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$116,631

Preventive Health

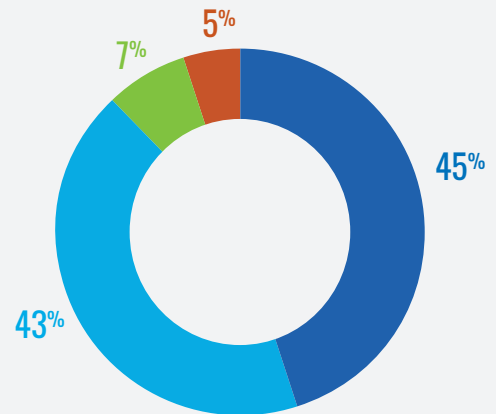
\$19,630

Research and Evaluation

\$12,462

Total

\$727,546



## FTF Gila River Indian Community 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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Members

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## Scan to Learn More and Connect with Staff

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Gila-River-Indian-Community](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Gila-River-Indian-Community)

