



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 Navajo Nation Region, there are **10,894 children** (under age 6), with **49% 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 Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty, Community Outreach & Patient Empowerment’s Fruits and Vegetable Prescription (FVRx) Program, and St. Jude’s Food Bank Healthy Beginnings.

Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2023]



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

137

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 socio-emotional development.



Preventive Health

909

Children benefited from their families receiving food boxes, backpacks and food vouchers to access nutritious meals.

197

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



Quality Preschool and Child Care

464

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

202

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



Teen mom helps twin boys thrive with help from a Quality First center in Kayenta

Rosa Esquivel was in the eighth grade and already a mother to twins. And she wanted her babies to have a good start in life. Her twins, Sky and Sage had just turned 1 when she enrolled them at Child Occupation Parent Education (COPE), a child care center on the campus of Monument Valley High School.



Scan to read the family story

COPE participates in the Quality First program, which the First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council funds Quality First, which partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning development across the Navajo Nation.

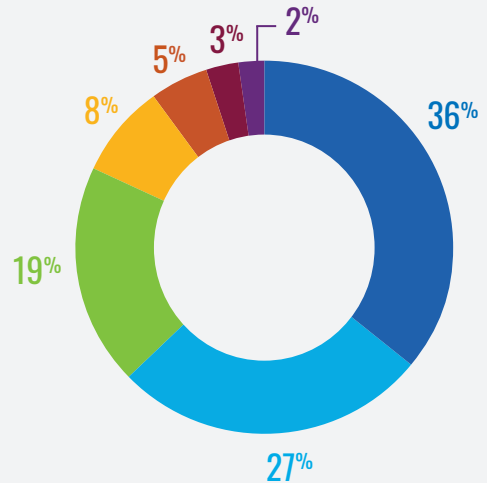


"Early childhood development is as fundamental as K'é (kinship). Our children will be the next caretakers of knowledge, language, culture, and Mother Earth. This early development is our children's first step in learning compassion, respect, self-acceptance, and the value of their voice. Expanding learning opportunities for our children sets the foundation for future learning and ultimately future communities. Reading and talking to your children early and often is a great start. The care and love we put into educating our children will be reflected in our future."

Valentina Clitso, Miss Navajo Nation 2022-2023

State Fiscal Year 2023 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$1,345,861
Preventive Health	\$993,792
Strengthening Families	\$723,904
Workforce Development and Training	\$298,142
Parent and Community Awareness	\$167,696
Coordinating Care	\$106,963
Research and Evaluation	\$86,264
Total	\$3,722,622



FTF Navajo 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.

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