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 Pascua Yaqui Tribe Region, there are 470 children (under age 6), with 52% 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 Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, Families and Communities, early educator professional development, Dr. Fernando Escalante Tribal Library parenting outreach and awareness and the Pascua Yaqui Head Start summer program.

Regional Key Impact Highlights
[State Fiscal Year 2023]

- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy**
  - 4,549 Books were given to parents and caregivers of infants, toddlers and preschoolers through a local distribution program.
  - 314 Adults attended parenting activities to learn more about the importance of early childhood development.

- **Quality Preschool and Child Care**
  - 45 Preschoolers participated in early learning activities through a summer program helping children transition to kindergarten.
  - 6 Early childhood educators received support through professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of teacher-child interactions.
The First Things First Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council funds the Professional Development for Early Childhood Professionals Strategy which cultivates well-prepared, highly skilled and appropriately compensated early child care professionals. It provides education and training in community settings to professionals providing care and education to babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

"Our Ili uusim, our children, carry the future of our people, our tribe and our culture and ceremony in their hearts. By providing them with the essential tools of early childhood development, we ensure a brighter, stronger and capable child. By providing them with resources to support them, their imagination soars, their learning unfolds and we as a tribal community are assured that our legacy continues with each day the sun rises to shine upon the faces of our children."

Amalia Reyes, FTF Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Council Member

**State Fiscal Year 2023 Total Regional Program Expenditures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Spend</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development and Training</td>
<td>$93,961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Families</td>
<td>$55,903</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
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<td>Quality Child Care and Preschool</td>
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<td>Parent and Community Awareness</td>
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<td>Research and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FTF Pascua Yaqui 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**

Cecilia Garcia

**Vice Chair**

John Jensen

**Members**

Marcus Diaz
Gloria Escalante
Rosie Gutierrez
Shanna Ioane Tautolo

Amalia Reyes
Andrea Romero
Marilynn Sando
Hector Youtsey

**Scan to Learn More and Connect with Staff**

FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Pascua-Yaqui-Tribe