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 Pima South Region, there are 25,171 children (under age 6), with 26% 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 Home Visitation, Family resource Centers and Professional Development of Early Childhood Practitioners.

Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2023]

**Strengthening Families and Early Literacy**
- **570** 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**
- **2,010** Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.
- **708** Children received fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

**Quality Preschool and Child Care**
- **2,729** Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- **398** Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.
- **168** Early childhood educators attended a training or session to improve their skills in working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
Home visitation program helps Tucson family encourage daughter’s social and emotional growth

Four-year-old Camila loves to dress up and rarely leaves the house without lipstick. Camila's mother Annette Vea Lopez didn't always know how to respond to Camila's self-expression, but since participating in the Casa de los Ninos Parents as Teachers program, she now embraces her daughter's fashion choices.

The First Things First Pima South Regional Partnership Council funds home visitation to help parents become their child's first and best teacher. Parents as Teachers gives families personalized, in-home support through a trained parent educator.

State Fiscal Year 2023 Total Regional Program Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Child Care and Preschool</td>
<td>$2,683,102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Families</td>
<td>$1,982,355</td>
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<td>Preventive Health</td>
<td>$742,321</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>Coordinating Care</td>
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<td>Parent and Community Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$6,267,009</td>
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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.

FTF Pima South 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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