

## # FIRST THINGS FIRST

### Case Study: Heights Church and Upside Preschool



#### Challenges

Yavapai County faces a significant child care shortage. While more than 11,000 children under the age of 5 live in the county, less than 4,750 child care slots are available. With a 25% gap in child care, many families are forced to make difficult choices—either leave the workforce or piece together care.

#### Solutions

Leader of Heights Church in Prescott Valley surveyed its members to identify the needs of the community. Many voiced the need for child care. Heights Church took a creative approach. A long-vacant grocery store became the foundation for a new, functional and safe community space called Park Collective. The renovated facility now operates as a hub that serves many needs for the community, including a preschool with room for 85 children.

#### After School Program

Upside Preschool also offers after-school programs for kindergarteners through 5th graders from neighboring schools, providing 50 slots for children.

#### Heights Church After-Hours Child Care

In addition to the preschool, Heights Church uses the facility to meet child care needs for its congregation on Thursday nights and weekends.

#### Park Collective

A climate-controlled, large playground, community spaces design for Prescott Valley residents and families all year-round.

#### Event and Meeting Space

Park Collective offers various event and meeting spaces catering to any occasion, small or large.

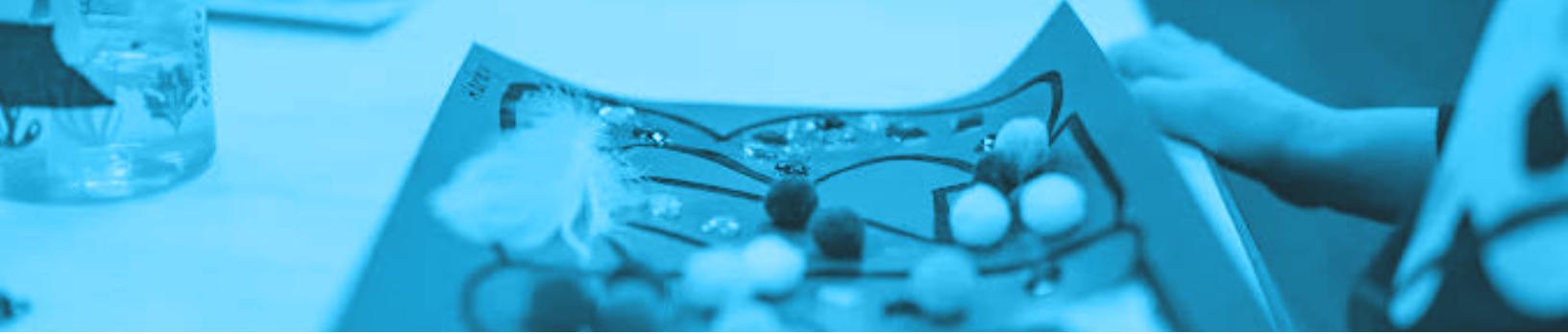
#### At a Glance

After listening to its community, Heights Church in Prescott Valley transformed a former grocery store into a preschool and multi-use facility. Instead of constructing a new church building, church leaders prioritized addressing the overwhelming need for child care—turning an empty space into a thriving community hub.

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**“Community members said instead of another church, they needed child care, after-school care and a safe place for their family to play and hang out. Heights Church made a commitment to best serve their community by addressing their needs.”**

Amy Buettner  
Director of Upside Preschool



## Why It Matters

Economies thrive when organizations can support the needs of their community and working families. As the demand for child care grows, especially in rural communities, finding solutions will be essential infrastructure for economic success.

## Why It Works

According to the U.S. Chamber Foundation<sup>1</sup>, employers that invest in child care supports see:

- 55% lower turnover
- 2x employee engagement
- Up to \$3 ROI for every \$1 invested

And thanks to **First Things First** and their investments<sup>2</sup>, Arizona:

- Generates \$324 million in annual economic output
- Sustains 2,800 jobs, annually
- Produces nearly \$18.2 million in state and local tax revenue

## Download the Toolkit

First Things First offers resources to support your employees and examples of family-friendly workplace policies.

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Business](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Business)



## # FIRST THINGS FIRST

First Things First is Arizona's early childhood agency— supporting families with early childhood resources and partnering with businesses to shape a stronger, more resilient workforce that benefits everyone. Learn more at [FirstThingsFirst.org/business](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/business).

<sup>1</sup> US Chamber roadmap <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/education/ece-employer-roadmap>.

<sup>2</sup> Rounds Consulting Group survey: <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/2025/04/analysis-shows-ftf-investments-contribute-million>