



# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

2019 IMPACT REPORT

## Phoenix South Region



Early experiences build the foundation for a lifetime



# of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than any other time in life. Research shows that the quality of a child's early life experiences shape how their brain develops.

First Things First partners with families and communities to help our state's youngest children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.

As an educational leader, I have seen firsthand that the trajectory for success in school, career and life starts in early childhood, long before a child enters kindergarten. By giving children the opportunity for a healthy, happy and enriching start in life, we help them build a reliable foundation for continued learning and development throughout their school years and on into adulthood."

**Bill Johnson**

Superintendent, Laveen Elementary School District

## Fiscal Year 2019 Phoenix South Region Impact Highlights

Here are a few highlights of the proven programs and innovative strategies from this region.



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**3,301**

Families or caregivers served by receiving referrals or by participating in activities at family resource centers.

**8,484**

Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**7,744**

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

**1,460**

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



### Preventive Health

**3,953**

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

**4,052**

Children received fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

## Additional strategies:



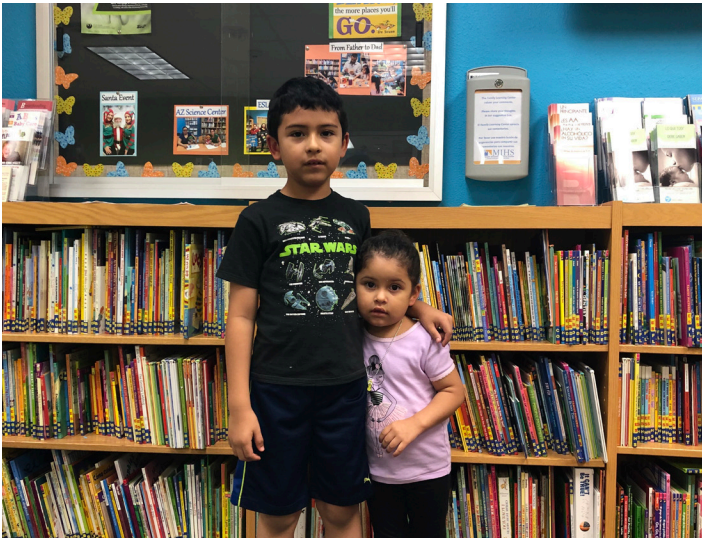
### 586 Families with young children

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.



### 5573 Children received

a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and treated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impaired speech development and failure to thrive.



## Family resource center helps Phoenix boy with quality early childhood experiences

Marta Dardon didn't know she had parenting resources literally in her backyard.

But she did know her 3-year-old son, David, was timid and struggled to express himself. She was concerned that his lack of social skills and limited vocabulary could negatively impact his kindergarten experience.

On a specialist's advice, she started looking for a family resource center nearby. She was surprised to learn that she lived right behind the Maricopa Integrated Health System South Central Family Learning Center in Phoenix.

First Things First funds family resource centers, which offer guidance and support for families with young children. The centers provide access to resources, referrals to support services and access to educational programs to ensure healthy growth and development for Phoenix's youngest learners and their families.

At the Family Learning Center, Dardon learned how to create quality early childhood experiences for her children. Dardon, David and baby daughter Jasmine participated in many parenting classes, including Play & Learn Parenting. The 10-week parenting class is designed for children and parents to bond, play, explore and learn through story time, songs and craft.

It was during this time that Dardon noticed that David was blossoming into an outgoing child. His vocabulary was increasing and he was becoming more self-assured.

During this time, Dardon helped other adults in her family realize how spending quality time with their young children strengthens their family bond. For example, she has the children help her prepare meals at home.

"It gets them active and helps us spend time as a family," Dardon said.

Going to the center has also helped Dardon change her family's cultural views on learning. Her in-laws questioned why children so young were learning sign language when they weren't hearing impaired. Dardon was able to explain that even though the children might not need sign language, "You never know who they might encounter through life," she said.

When it came time for David to start kindergarten, Dardon said the transition was smooth.

"He was super ready," she said. "The first day of class, he knew his numbers, ABCs, was reading and most importantly, he was carrying conversations with others."

David is now in second grade and still visits the center with his young sister. "Taking advantage of the programs available at the family resource center for children and parents helped my children be prepared for school," Dardon said.

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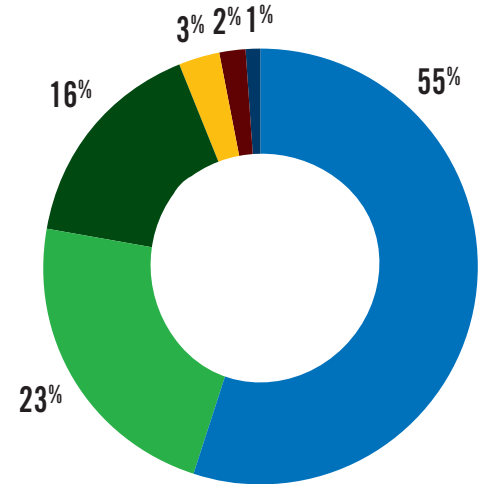
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# FTF Phoenix South Regional Council

The FTF Phoenix South Regional Partnership Council is made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and decide how funds will be used to best support the development, education and health of young children birth to age 5. FTF invests in proven programs and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families.

## FY19 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$9,535,945
Strengthening Families	\$4,018,252
Preventive Health	\$2,826,207
Research and Evaluation	\$478,271
Parent and Community Awareness	\$184,007
Coordinating Care	\$54,785
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,097,468</b>



## FTF Phoenix South Regional Partnership Council

*Chair*  
Karen Stewart

*Vice Chair*  
Jessica Jarvi

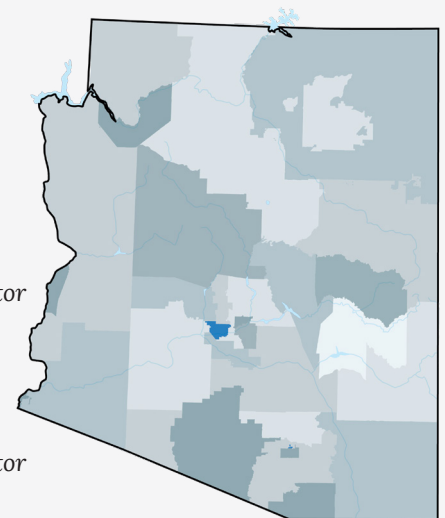
*Members*  
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The Phoenix South Region is primarily the southern part of the city of Phoenix. Phoenix South Regional Partnership Council provides services in the city of Phoenix, south of Thomas Road, but also including the communities of Maryvale, north of Thomas (full ZIP code areas of 85031 and 85033 and the city of Phoenix portion of 85037). The region does not include Ahwatukee. The Phoenix South Region includes Legislative Districts 19, 24, 27, 29 and 30. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

Learn more at:  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Phoenix-South](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Phoenix-South)