

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

# Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Region

## 2020 Impact Report



From birth to age 5, a child's brain grows more than any other time in life.

# 90% of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten. Early childhood matters.

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

Many young children in Arizona face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Region, there are **626 children** (under age 6) with **61% living in poverty**.

Here is how FTF is working to support young children and their families in this region.

“There is so much value in investing in early childhood due to the brain development that takes place at an early stage in children, which we emphasize in our parenting programs in our region.”

**Chris McIntier**

*Chair of FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Key Impact Highlights

[Fiscal Year 2020]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

319

Books were given to families with children birth to age 5 to encourage parent-child interaction and reading.

92

Adults attended parenting classes to learn about early child care development.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

4

Early childhood educators received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



## Parent education class helps multigenerational household in Scottsdale address 4-year-old's challenging behaviors

Asa Padilla's 4-year-old son, Azias, used to push down bookshelves in his classroom and scream in the car rides to the grocery store. He didn't know how to manage his emotions. The more Padilla yelled at him to behave, the more Azias felt scared and his behaviors got worse.

"I am a single mom, so finding the right way to discipline him was really hard," said Padilla. "I watched his disruptive behaviors, so I wanted to learn how to parent him in a positive way that worked, instead of yelling at him."

Padilla and her mom, Morningstar Miles, joined the WISH Parent Education Program funded by the First Things First Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council.

The program supports two 10-week classes to teach parents and grandparents about brain development, milestones, communication, discipline and caring for children from birth to age 5.

Pamela Prasher, a family advocate at the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) in Scottsdale, taught the class to Padilla, Miles and 20 other parents using curriculum from Conscious Discipline® which is an evidence-based classroom management method that focuses on social-emotional learning and self-regulation.

"When Asa initially took the class, she shared that her parenting style was different," Prasher said. "She's a single mom and lives in a multigenerational home with her mom, Morningstar Miles, who helps her to raise her son. Morningstar shared that they were hesitant to take the class, because they didn't know if the parenting style was the Native way. After the class, Morningstar felt very comfortable."

The grandmother described the class as inspiring, informative and supportive.

"We were able to laugh together, cry together and encourage each other," Miles said. "It would be nice to see council members, grandparents and parents take the class and see how beneficial this program is to our community."

**"I work hard to communicate with him using these new methods, and it works."  
- Asa Padilla, mother**

While taking the class, Padilla and Miles realized that they were breaking a cycle of generational abuse.

"I grew up with my mom shouting at us," said Padilla. "My parents were verbally abusive and used corporal punishment. It's really been a good experience as mother and daughter to take this class together. We are changing the cycle of abuse. She can help me raise my son in a new way. I don't want him to grow up with the resentment and anger from verbal abuse that I had, because I didn't talk to my mom for several years. Now, we have a relationship and it's a blessing to have her in our life."

After taking two parenting classes, Padilla taught Azias to regulate his emotions by using a technique of breathing and exhaling that helps him to imagine, "Smelling the flower. Blowing the windmill." Now he can calm himself down in five minutes, where before it would take hours. He now uses his words to express his emotions instead of physically acting out.

Padilla also stopped yelling and uses a calm voice when talking to Azias, telling him what he can do instead of what not to do.

"I have learned to tone myself down so I can communicate with him, because he gets scared when I yell," said Padilla. "I work hard to communicate with him using these new methods, and it works."

 Read more FTF stories at  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories)

# FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council is made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and decide how funds should be used to best support the healthy

development and early learning 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.

## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Strengthening Families

\$43,346

Preventive Health

\$24,478

Research and Evaluation

\$3,442

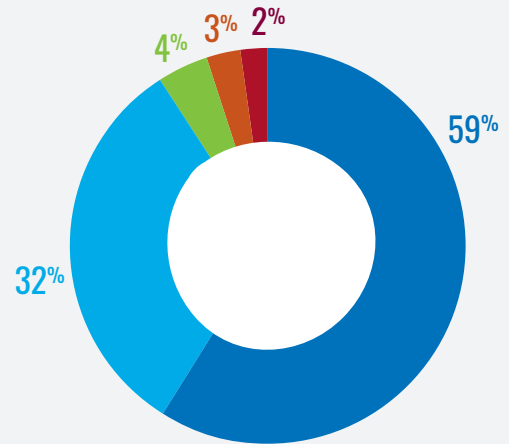
Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$2,282

Parent and Community Awareness

\$1,013

**Total** \$74,560



## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

**Christine McIntier**

Vice Chair

**Felicia Panana**

Members

**Deborah DeVold**

**Paula Flores**

**Joyce Helmuth**

**Felicia Jimerson**

**Virginia Loring**

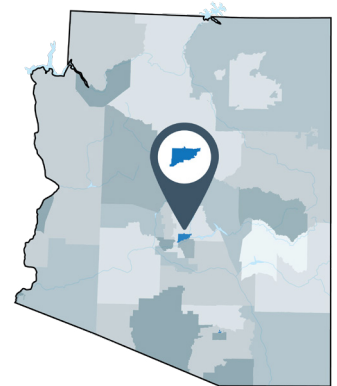
**Debbie Nez-Manuel**

FTF Regional Director

**Darlene Vinarskai**

[dvinarskai@firstthingsfirst.org](mailto:dvinarskai@firstthingsfirst.org)

602.771.4987



*The FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, a sovereign tribe located 15 miles northeast of Phoenix, is one of 10 Arizona tribes that have chosen to be designated as its own First Things First region. The region has the same boundaries as the Salt River Reservation and covers about 85 square miles, entirely within Maricopa County, bordering the cities of Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa and Fountain Hills. The Community is home to the Pima ("Akimel O'Odham," River People) and the Maricopa ("Xalychidom Pipaash," People who live toward the water). Legislative districts include: 26. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)*

Learn more at  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa)