

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

## Yuma 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 Yuma Region, there are **17,983 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.



As both the City of Yuma Mayor and a father, I believe it is extremely important to ensure our youngest in the community have every opportunity to succeed in life. Actively participating in early childhood development and education from day one is key to building strong families, and strong families are a vital component to building strong communities."



**Douglas Nicholls**

*City of Yuma Mayor*

## FTF Yuma Regional Key Impact Highlights

[Fiscal Year 2020]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**3,402** Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.

**374** 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.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**1,372** Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

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



### Preventive Health

**2,016** Children received a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and untreated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impair speech development and failure to thrive.

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

### Additional Strategies

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

**79** **Parents and other caregivers** participated in evidence-based trainings designed to improve knowledge of parenting practices and children's development.



## Quality First preschool helps three sisters from San Luis succeed in kindergarten and beyond

Emma Reyes, a mother of three young girls living in San Luis, never realized the importance of early education until she attended a First Things First presentation, where she learned how early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life.

She also learned about FTF's signature program, Quality First, which partners with child care and preschool providers across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning. More than 95 percent of the preschools and child care providers in the Yuma region have achieved Quality First ratings of 3 to 5 stars, which means they meet or exceed quality standards.

"When my first daughter was born, Niltza, I did not know what to do to get her ready for school, but knew I wanted her to learn English and not be behind in school," said Reyes.

Reyes was urged to contact the San Luis Preschool for support, knowing the preschool participated in Quality First.

The First Things First Yuma Regional Partnership Council invests in the Quality First program and scholarships to help eligible families afford to send their children to quality child care centers and preschools. Reyes decided to send all three of her

daughters to the San Luis Preschool and was amazed at how they've been prepared to succeed in school.

"Niltza's preschool teachers encouraged her creativity through art and allowed her to use her imagination," said Reyes of her first daughter, who is now age 11.

Her second daughter, Brianna, now age 5, started attending the preschool last year to help her prepare for kindergarten.

Brianna enhanced her early literacy and math skills. "She learned to write her name and family members' names," Reyes said.

Her third and youngest daughter, Khiara age 4, had a speech delay prior to entering preschool. After an assessment, her teacher provided a plan and began encouraging her to speak by asking her open ended questions.

"Through play, my daughters have learned to socialize with their peers, build friendships and are able to get along with others." - Emma Reyes, mother

"This led to back and forth conversations," Reyes said. "We also started reading books and working on her word pronunciation. Her teacher made it a priority to get her up to speed with the rest of the class."

Reyes said her daughters also learned through consistent care and a routine how to self-regulate, express their emotions and have healthy social skills.

"All of my daughters were encouraged to join peer groups, as well as to lead activities," she said. "Through play, my daughters have learned to socialize with their peers, build friendships and are able to get along with others."

Now, Khiara is caught up with her class and can speak clearly. Brianna transitioned well from preschool to kindergarten and is reading and writing. Niltza received the Ambassador of Excellence Award, Student of the Month Award and has received a scholarship for John Hopkins University to learn robotics.

"Thanks to San Luis Preschool and First Things First, my three daughters are ready for school and to be successful in their lives," Reyes said.



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

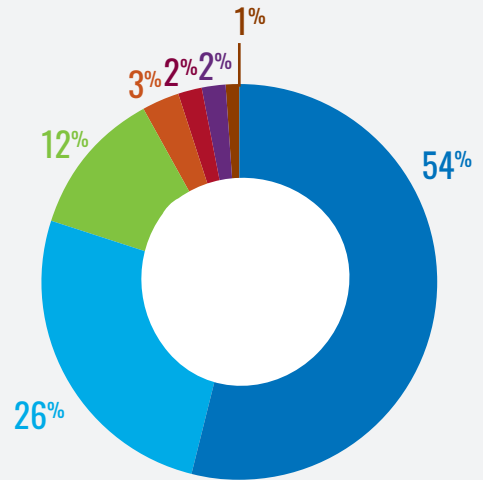
# FTF Yuma Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Yuma 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. Some of the programs in this region include Parents as Teachers, Quality First and Healthy Families.

## FTF Yuma FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$2,839,402
Strengthening Families	\$1,410,664
Preventive Health	\$628,721
Workforce Development and Training	\$162,265
Research and Evaluation	\$145,495
Parent and Community Awareness	\$125,485
Coordinating Care	\$19,677
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,331,710</b>



## FTF Yuma Regional Partnership Council and Staff

*Chair*  
**Mary Beth Turner**

*Vice Chair*  
**Emilia Cortez**

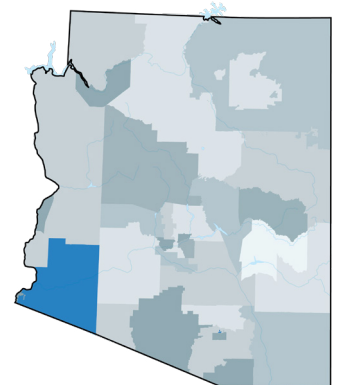
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**Marla Ford**  
**Deborah Guerrero**  
**Miriam Limon**

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The **FTF Yuma Region** is defined as Yuma County, not including the lands belonging to the Cocopah Indian Tribe. The Arizona portion of the Fort Yuma Quechan Reservation is also located within the region along the Colorado River near the city of Yuma. The FTF Yuma Region includes Legislative Districts 4 and 13. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

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