



## 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 Southwest Maricopa Region, there are **28,512 children** (under age 6), with **16% 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 Family, friend and neighbor, nutritional and physical activity, and family resource centers.

## Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2023]

### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**3,561** Families or caregivers served by receiving referrals or by participating in activities at family resource centers.

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

### Preventive Health

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

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

### Quality Preschool and Child Care

**2,910** Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

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



Scan to read the family story

## Buckeye caregiver provides developmental support for daughter and others

Baby Naiya struggled to calm down by herself and was crying most of her days. Raquel Escobar, did what a parent might do during a time of social distancing and lockdowns. She went to Google. That's when she found the Family, Friend, and Neighbor program, which provides access to high-quality, culturally responsive early care information, services and support for families.

The First Things First Southwest Maricopa Regional Council funds the program through Candelen to empower caregivers with tools to encourage healthy development in the children in their care.

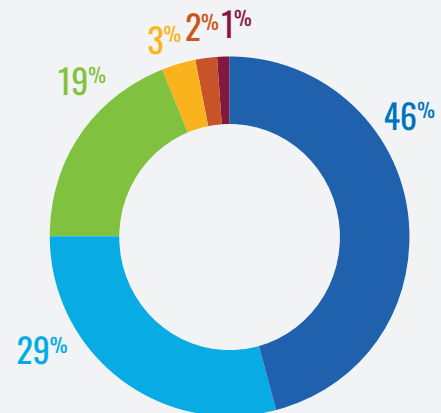


### Strengthening Families

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.

## State Fiscal Year 2023 Total Regional Program Expenditures

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Quality Child Care and Preschool | \$2,032,615        |
| Strengthening Families           | \$1,257,174        |
| Preventive Health                | \$819,540          |
| Parent and Community Awareness   | \$114,495          |
| Research and Evaluation          | \$104,600          |
| Coordinating Care                | \$68,210           |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>\$4,396,635</b> |



## FTF Southwest Maricopa 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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## Scan to Learn More and Connect with Staff

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Southwest-Maricopa](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Southwest-Maricopa)

