

FIRST THINGS FIRST

East Maricopa



2015 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as **18 MONTHS.**



By the time children are **3 & 4 YEARS OLD,** their vocabulary, attention and general knowledge are predictors of **THIRD & FOURTH GRADE** reading comprehension.



THIRD GRADE reading ability is one of the best predictors of **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.**



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

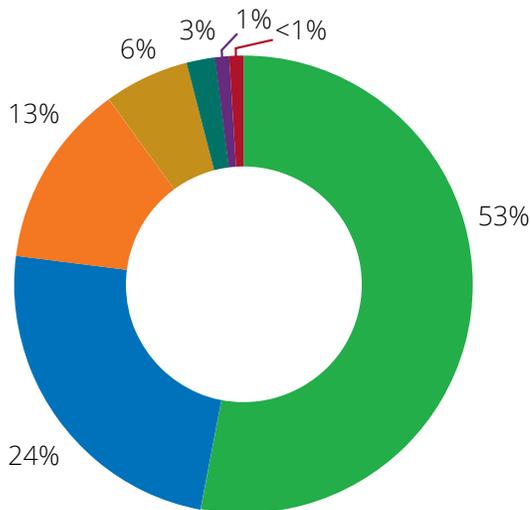
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A **\$16 RETURN**

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

EAST MARICOPA FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$5,909,840.51**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$2,634,525.11**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$1,430,131.38**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$675,790.62**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$297,897.05**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **Research and Accountability \$145,157.42**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **System Coordination \$21,652.75**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$11,114,994.84

- 📖 **5,500** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 📖 **1,415** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧👦 **51,639** Families accessed early childhood information, education or referrals through family resource centers.
- 👨👩👧👦 **7,546** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧👦 **259** Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.
- 👨👩👧👦 **1,620** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 👂 **3,095** Oral health screenings completed and fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 👂 **666** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



TEMPE MOM CREDITS KIDS' SCHOOL SUCCESS TO EMPOWERING PARENTING PROGRAM

Liliana Acosta had five children's books in her home and would read them to her children every night. But, her daughter's preschool teachers told the mother of two that she needed to read more to her 4-year-old daughter Camila. Acosta didn't know what to do.

As Acosta dropped Camila off one day, she saw a flier for the Frank Family Resource Center in Guadalupe. The sign read, "Parents, want support in your job as your child's first teacher? Workshops offered at Frank Family Resource Center."

"Child's first teacher? What does that mean?" Acosta thought. She was curious.

Acosta began attending classes at the center, which is funded by the First Things First East Maricopa Region. The center offers parenting classes on child development, parenting skills and discipline. There, Acosta learned about early brain development and that the words she shared with Camila and her son, 1 year old Alberto, actually built the architecture of their brain and impacted their reading level in third and fourth grade.

Many classes gave books to the parents as they completed a workshop. The home's library grew and so did reading time. The drive to and from school became a game to find letters on billboards and traffic signs.

Nearly five years later, Camila is in third grade and Alberto is in kindergarten at Wood School in Tempe. Both are doing well in school. Camila's favorite subject is math and Alberto's teachers describe him as an outstanding student.

For Acosta, the classes at the center awakened her as a parent and empowered her see herself as her children's first teacher. "If my children are to do well in school, I have to take my job as their first teacher seriously and communicate more; ask questions, be involved at school," Acosta said.

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