

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Hualapai Tribe Region



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.

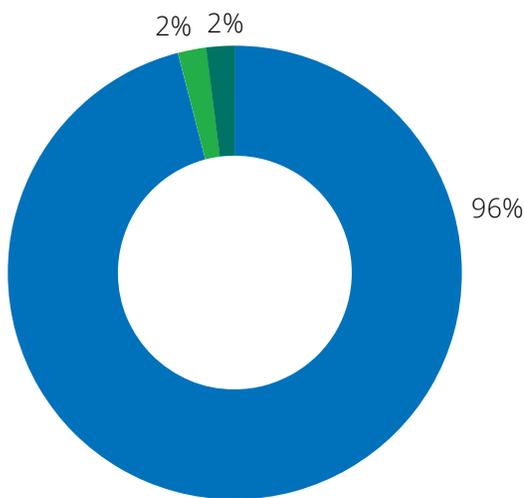
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A **\$16 RETURN**

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

HUALAPAI FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$117,747.63

Families are a child's first and best teachers.

Quality Preschool and Child Care \$2,468.55

Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.

Research and Accountability \$1,929.04

Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.

Total = \$122,145.22



47 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.



63 Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.



833 Food boxes distributed to families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers to meet food insecurity needs.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



BILINGUAL BOOKS BUILD EARLY LITERACY AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR PEACH SPRINGS SISTERS

After almost two years, 7-year-old Lena Montana and her little sister, Alyssa, 5, still carry around their bilingual children's books filled with striking colors and words in both English and Hualapai.

The set of five books was given to the Peach Spring girls in 2014 as part of a Native Language project between the Hualapai Tribe's Cultural Resources Department and First Things First.

The FTF Hualapai Tribe Region funded native language preservation strategies in FY15 to give parents and other caregivers in their community tools to promote their children's language development that are appropriate to their children's age and culture.

Research demonstrates the importance of language development to a child's future academic success; in fact, a child's vocabulary, attention and general knowledge at ages 3 and 4 are good predictors of reading comprehension levels at ages 9 and 10. In order to develop language and crucial pre-literacy skills, children need to hear words often, from a variety of caregivers and in a context that is meaningful.

In addition, young children who have a strong foundation and are literate in their first language (the language of their family or community) are more successful in acquiring a second language.

For the sisters, it was the vibrant artwork that first attracted them to the storybooks. For their parents, it was the chance to connect their children to their heritage.

"It's important to us for them to know who they are and where they came from," said the girls' mother Marie Montana.

The children's books were published with a special audio component as read by Tribal Elders living in Peach Springs. The books, which were illustrated by local artists, were developed around different themes: common words and phrases; kinship terms; body parts; animals and geography; and, lullabies. For example, one page contains a drawing of a rabbit sitting in the grass with the words Gul-Jack in Hualapai and rabbit in English. Followed by the sentences: Gula-ch wil vasu ma: kwi. The jack rabbit is eating green grass.

In addition to encouraging caregivers to read to children, the books have sparked a community-wide conversation around how learning begins early on and on how important story-telling/reading is in the preservation of the Hualapai language.

Montana grew up hearing her Grandmother speak Hualapai. Her husband, Joe, still knows a few words. Reading the books turned into a fun family activity to learn how to say common terms such as "uncle" and "coyote" in Hualapai.

"It is important to us that the kids know their background, and seeing it in one of their favorite books helps them relate to that, and they are excited to learn new words at the same time," Montana said.

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FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

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Hualapai Tribe Cultural Resource Department
Southwest Human Development

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
Valley of the Sun United Way