

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pima North



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.

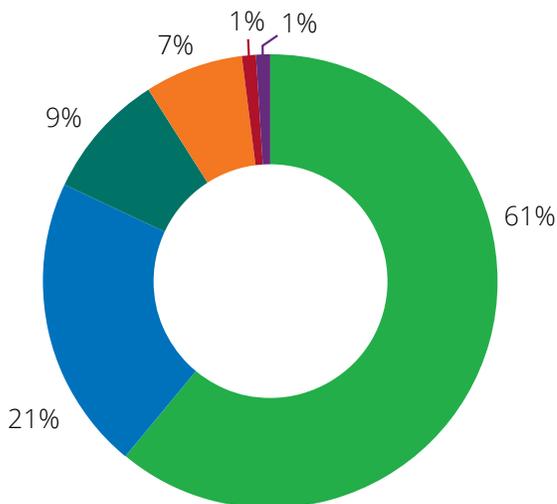
# \$1



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

# FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

## PIMA NORTH FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$7,529,935.62**  
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$2,598,804.11**  
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$1,036,063.81**  
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **Preventive Health \$821,270.85**  
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$123,291.56**  
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **Research and Accountability \$173,178.49**  
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.

**Total = \$12,282,544.44**

- 📖 **5,946** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 📖 **1,849** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧👦 **13,328** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧👦 **1,042** 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.
- 👨👩👧👦 **442** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 👨👩👧👦 **1,019** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.
- 👨👩👧👦 **53** Children and their families received support from trained providers (including voluntary in-home visits, if desired) to link with resources to support their child's health and learning, enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births. coordination efforts to meet their unique developmental needs.

# INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



## FAMILIES BUILD CONFIDENCE IN ROLE AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER

Angie Hitt had been an elementary school teacher for eight years before she had her first child. She enrolled in the Parents as Teachers home visiting program when her daughter, Delaney, was 6 months old, and was surprised when she started learning more about the tremendous amount of brain development that happens before age 5.

"I probably underestimated the importance of focusing on 0 to 5 years old," Hitt said. "I think I viewed that time in their lives as less structured. Having kids and learning more, it really is important to have more structure. Not in a way that limits creativity, but it's important to know those brain connections are built through those experiences."

Hitt said the program is especially helpful for parents who don't have a background in education. "Very young children learn differently than school-aged children," Hitt said. "Sometimes people try to push certain learning styles on young children, because that's what they remember from elementary school."

Delaney is going to be a second grader this year and is reading at a third grade reading level, Hitt said. Aside from academics, Hitt said the program helped Delaney prepare socially for kindergarten.

"An advantage to her being in the program was that when she came to school, she was socially and emotionally ready to learn," Hitt said. "Delaney wasn't intimidated by being at school. Those are things that are really important, too."



## PIMA NORTH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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## FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

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