

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pinal



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.**

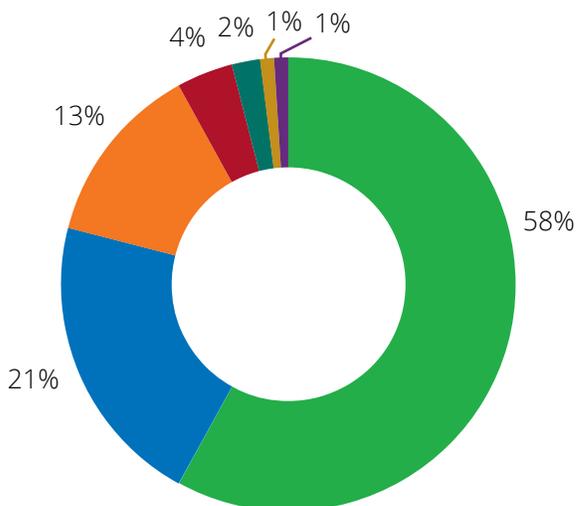


As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; 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

PINAL FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$3,973,287.63**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$1,426,983.38**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$864,499.68**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$243,275.24**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **Research and Accountability \$100,659.12**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$135,570.51**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **System Coordination \$97,006.55**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$6,841,282.11

- 📖 **1,413** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 📖 **815** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧 **1,302** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧 **425** 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.
- 👨👩👧 **329** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 👂 **1,663** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 👂 **5,054** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



PINAL GRANDPARENTS FIND HELP TO OVERCOME TODDLER'S LEARNING DELAYS

Carla Jones of Maricopa suspected that something was wrong when her grandson was just 2 years old. Little Kémon mumbled when he spoke and she and her husband Charles couldn't understand him.

"His words sounded so garbled and he was quiet and stayed to himself most of the time," Jones said.

As Kémon's primary caregiver, Jones would sometimes take the boy to work, where she was a hairstylist. One day, Jones told a client about Kémon and her concerns. Her client—a parent provider specialist with the Family, Friend & Neighbors program of United Way, a caregiver education program funded by First Things First—told Jones how the program helps grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.

"This program has been such a blessing to my family," Jones said. "It's helped us understand how the brain functions and how to curb behavioral problems; it's taught us how to teach our grandchildren to be happier, be stimulated, and have fun learning."

A hearing evaluation showed that chronic ear infections had impacted Kémon's hearing to the point that he had only 30 percent of his hearing.

"At age three, they ended up doing surgery and corrected the problem, but he was already developmentally behind in speech, language, and even socially," Jones said.

The program helped Jones purchase phonics phones for her to work with the boy at home.

"He lit up when he would talk into them and hear his voice repeated," Jones said. "Not only did he begin to learn at home quickly, we saw a great personality change in him too. He was excited to learn."

Kémon went on to high achievement at Maricopa Elementary School, where he ended the year ranked 6 out of 286 kindergarteners.

"Now he's in first grade and he loves math and reading and is sounding words out everywhere we go. Charles and I can't even 'spell' words to one another in front of him as Kémon understands the word immediately," Jones said as she laughed.



PINAL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Kameron Bachert, Chair
Michael Kintner, Vice Chair
Ashlea Anderson
Mariano Baca
Jill Broussard
Stuart Fain

Pauline Haas-Vaughn
Christina Jenkins
Adam Saks
Jan Vidimos
Norma Wyatt

Shannon Fontes, Regional Director
sfontes@azftf.gov
520.836.5838

FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

Apache Junction Public Library
Arizona Department of Economic Security
Arizona's Children Association
Central Arizona College
Child and Family Resources Inc.
Easter Seals Blake Foundation
Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Pima County Health Department
Southwest Human Development
Sun Life Family Health Center
United Way of Pinal County
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Pinal County
Valley of the Sun United Way