

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community 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.

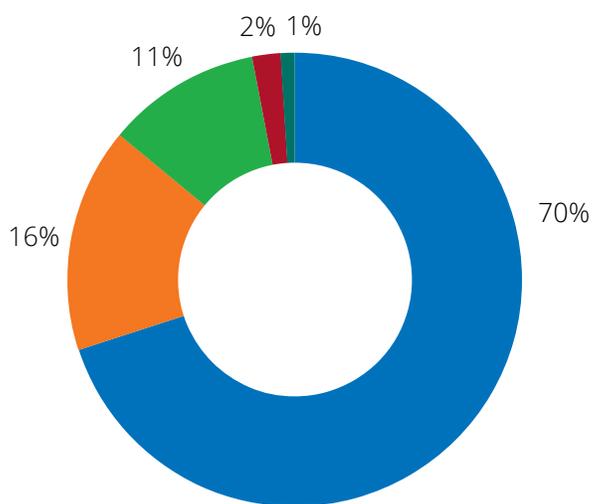
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A \$16 RETURN

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY REGION FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$111,746**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Preventive Health \$25,133.64**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$17,283.84**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$2,427.97**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- Research and Accountability \$2,084.16**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.

Total = \$158,675.61

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30 Preschoolers participated early learning through a Summer Transition to Kindergarten program.
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45 Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
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492 Books getting into the homes of infants, toddlers and preschoolers through a home distribution program.
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208 Food boxes distributed to families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers to meet food insecurity needs.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



SHY PRESCHOOLER TRANSITIONS TO KINDERGARTEN AND BECOMES GO-TO STUDENT

Candice Nomoki was looking for a better way to communicate with her children after she saw herself falling into a similar parenting style that she grew up with.

"I felt myself being that boot camp mom," said Nomoki, who lives in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. "I was boot camp strict, the way my parents were with me growing up. I thought, 'My kids are small. I have to step back. I can't do this to them.'"

With two kids under age 5, the mother of four, signed up for W.I.S.H. Parent Education Program, 10 weeks of weekly classes, funded by First Things First.

"I learned how to speak to my children, not at them," Nomoki said. In turn, her kids began sharing more with her. "They opened up a lot. I found what I was searching for, how to communicate with my kids. I needed to breathe and let my kids be kids."

She also learned how to involve the kids in hands on projects at home. For example, instead of buying toys, the family recycles household items, such as boxes.

"We make robots and build towns out of all kinds of boxes," Nomoki said.

They recently decorated a pastry tart box to be the responsibility box, filled with different types of chores that each child can do to help around the house.

"What you pick is what you're going to do the rest of the week," Nomoki said. "We even have simple chores for our 4-year-old. He's learning simple words, so his chores have one word and a picture. We put a picture of a trash can. He knows his chore for the week is to pick up trash."

Nomoki and her husband also get all the kids involved in cooking healthy meals.

"We let their hands get in the mix. The 6- and 9-year-old know how to scramble eggs and are learning how to use knives properly," she said.

When daughter Ronnie was 4 years old, Nomoki also wanted ways to help her be less shy and more vocal. She signed up Ronnie for the FTF-funded Summer Transition to Kindergarten Program.

"She's the quiet one," Nomoki said, describing how Ronnie would hide under the table when she first started the program. "I had to be there with holding her hand."

Eventually, Ronnie became comfortable in a classroom setting and was excited to start kindergarten. Now in first grade, she was recently selected student of the month and invited to attend the elementary school principal's tea party, an invitation-only event at the school.

"She's the go-to student when the teacher asks to do projects," Nomoki said.

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Darlene Vinarskai, Regional Director
dvinarskai@azftf.gov
(602) 771-4987

FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

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