

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Southeast 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.

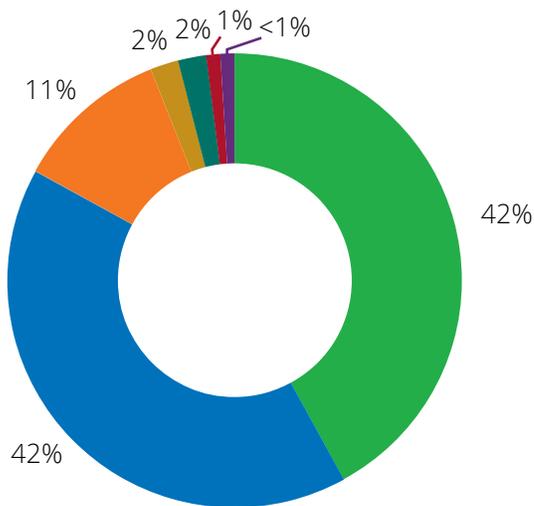
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A **\$16 RETURN**

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

SOUTHEAST MARICOPA FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$4,883,759.37**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$4,866,331**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$1,226,186.93**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$277,768.47**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **Research and Accountability \$182,271.41**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$122,306.43**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **System Coordination \$21,652.77**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$11,580,276

- 📖 **4,560** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 📖 **1,053** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧 **13,962** Families accessed early childhood information, education or referrals through family resource centers.
- 👨👩👧 **13,384** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧 **1,485** 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.
- 👨👩👧 **429** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 👩⚕️ **1,892** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 👩⚕️ **3,446** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



PARENTS AS TEACHERS HELPS GILBERT COUPLE TEACH FRAGILE SON

For Scott and Pat Hall of Gilbert, their adopted son Ethan was a miracle. Born seven weeks early and weighing only 4 pounds, the medical crises with the baby never seemed to stop.

Early on, Pat noticed that Ethan struggled to sit up and had difficulty holding down food. As Ethan approached his first birthday, he still couldn't stand or crawl, couldn't swallow and wasn't sleeping through the night. Pat turned to Parents as Teachers program, which provides voluntary coaching and in-home support for families. The program is housed under Child Crisis Arizona and funded by the First Things First Southeast Maricopa region.

"It is a godsend," said Pat, as she recalled the techniques she learned to use with Ethan to help him develop his motor skills. Patti Watts, the family's parent educator, provided coaching, parenting information and connections to other community resources.

Once a week, Watts would visit the family, work on an activity and leave additional ones for the family to do together. For example, when Ethan turned 2, the focus was on Ethan's hand coordination. Ethan struggled to pick up objects, especially small ones, so Watts showed Pat how putting small objects in an ice cube tray encouraged the boy to use his fingers to get the object out.

Many times, Watts served as a sounding board for the parents when they struggled to understand their son's delays. "We have learned many valuable tips on how to teach my kids," Pat said.

Ethan recently started kindergarten and he was ready, Pat said. "Without the program, Ethan would probably be in a special education classroom. The program helped a lot with his language development and motor skills."



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