



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

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First Things First Approves Over \$700,000 in Funding to Benefit Young Children

On December 8, 2009 the State Board for First Things First approved over \$700,000 in funds specific to improving the health and development for children birth through age five residing on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. This is a slight increase in the amount of funding available in the previous year.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council recognizes that parents and families are one of the most valuable resources our community has and, as such, should be supported to provide for their child's optimal health and developmental growth. As a result, the State Board approved allocation funding in the amount of \$499,900 toward family support programs and services in the region.

In addition to supporting families, the Regional Partnership Council has seen an increased demand for affordable, quality child care. The State Board approved funding in the amount of \$92,400, that will go toward increasing the affordability of child care by providing child care scholarships to families who qualify.

Third, ensuring that children are healthy when they enter kindergarten is a big component to ensuring a child's success in school. The White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council has devoted \$82,500 of their state fiscal year 2011 budget to the prevention of dental disease in children birth through age five. Other Regional Partnership Councils in the state will also be focusing on a dental varnish program in order to prevent dental disease in young children.

Lastly, the White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council will devote \$19,500 to increasing awareness about early childhood development and health throughout the region. They will also be investing money to increase U.S. Census participation among all community members. Not only will this help to ensure that Tribal members are more accurately counted in the Census but it will also help to bring in additional federal and state dollars that rely on U.S. Census numbers for distribution of funds.

With the funding amounts approved by the First Things First State Board, the next phase will be to roll out Requests for Grant Application in the community with funds being awarded and disseminated in July

2010. However, the work cannot be successful without the support of community members, programs and service providers that want to improve the health and development of the youngest members of our population.

If you would like more information about First Things First early childhood development and health or would like to be added to our email list, please feel free to contact Rochelle Lacapa, Regional Coordinator at (928) 532-5041 or via email at rlacapa@azftf.gov.