2013
ANNUAL REPORT

PINAL
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

Why Early Childhood Matters

Research shows that 80% of a child's brain is formed by age 3; more than 90% by age 5. Because of this rapid development, what happens to children in the early years lays the foundation for a lifetime. Research has demonstrated that kids with quality early childhood experiences do better in school. They are more likely to advance into college and successful careers. They also tend to be healthier and demand less from the public welfare system.

On November 7, 2006, Arizonans made a historic decision on behalf of our state's smallest citizens. By majority vote, they made a commitment to all Arizona children 5 and younger: that kids would have the tools they need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

The voters backed that promise with an 80-cent per pack increase on tobacco products, so some reliable funding for early childhood services for our youngest children would be available.

The initiative also created the statewide First Things First Board and the 31 regional partnership councils that share the responsibility of ensuring that these early childhood funds are spent on strategies that will result in improved education and health outcomes for kids 5 and younger.

Not all children have the same needs; and voters designed First Things First to meet the diverse needs of Arizona communities. Decisions about which early education and health strategies will be funded are made by the 31 regional partnership councils made up of community volunteers. Each regional council member represents a specific segment of the community that has a stake in ensuring that our children grow up to be healthy productive adults, including: parents, tribal representatives, educators, health professionals, business leaders, philanthropists and leaders of faith communities. The regional councils study the challenges faced by children in their communities and the resources that exist to help kids in their area. Because of all these factors, the regional councils know best what their kids need.

The Pinal region comprises the geographic boundaries of Pinal County including the tribal lands of the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

Regional Council Members

Stuart Fain, *Chair*
Dr. Richard Saran, *Vice Chair*
Bryant Powell
Christina Jenkins
Michael Kintner
Pauline Hass-Vaughn
Angela Philpot
Julie Dale-Scott
Kameron Bachert
Adam Saks

Tribal Leadership

Tribal Council
Louis Manuel Jr., *Chairman*

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN IN OUR REGION

Demographics

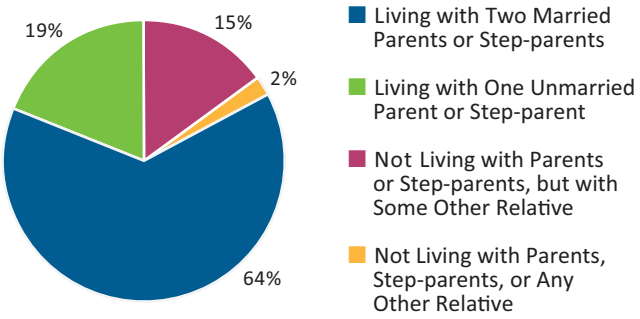
32,513
Number of Kids Under 6 in Region

5,527
Number of Households with Kids Under 6

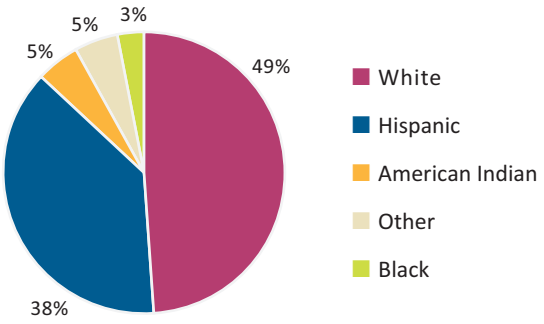
17%
Percentage of Households with Kids Under 6

14%
Percentage of Young Kids in Poverty

Living Arrangements of Kids Under 6



Ethnic Breakdown of Kids Under 6



Education

67%
Percentage of 3- to 4-Year-Olds Statewide Who Don't Go to Preschool

28%
Percentage of 3rd Grade Students Not Passing AIMS in Reading

Economics

$54,896
Median Family Income

10.3%
County Unemployment Rate

Health

7%
Percentage of Kindergarteners Who Lack All the Necessary Immunizations

OUR REGION'S PRIORITIES

Research regarding children 5 and younger in the Pinal region revealed the need for the following programs to promote optimal development and school readiness:

Early Learning: The region has addressed the need for high quality early learning by funding strategies to improve the quality of child care in the region and expand the skills of early educators working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. In addition, the region has funded scholarships that allow more children ages 5 and younger to access early learning programs.

Family Support: The region partners with parents to help them feel more confident in their role as their child's first teacher. Voluntary programs are available in the community or in homes, depending on the needs and desires of the family. In order to maximize resources, reduce duplication and ensure improved outcomes for young kids, the region has taken a leadership role in promoting collaboration and coordination among the programs working with young children and their families.

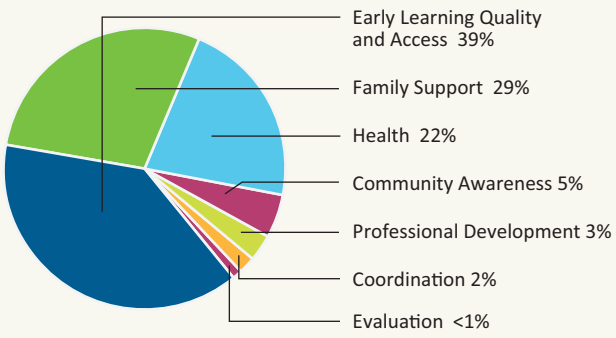
Health: The region funds screenings in a variety of settings to help prevent or identify health and developmental issues early on. These programs include an educational component for parents and child care providers so that they can continue to support healthier behaviors for young kids in their care. Appropriate referrals are made for follow-up services. In addition, the region works with health care providers to increase awareness of the specific needs of kids 5 and younger in the community and to make more health care providers aware of the resources that exist for young children in the area.

Community Outreach and Awareness: Awareness of the importance of early childhood is crucial so that all stakeholders can do their part to support school readiness. The Community Outreach and Awareness strategy provides grassroots support and engagement to increase parent and community awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health.

Financial Report

EXPENDITURES BY GOAL AREA – FY2013

Early Learning Quality and Access	$2,035,609
Family Support	1,511,071
Health	1,128,872
Community Awareness	274,767
Professional Development	155,413
Coordination	96,293
Evaluation	43,885
TOTAL	**$5,245,910**



OUR REGION'S IMPACT

Caregivers Become Teachers of Young Kids

The Pinal region's Family, Friend and Neighbor strategy is helping home-based child care providers expand their skills in supporting early learning for kids 5 and younger in their care.

Because of her involvement in the program, Ida Osuna – owner of Kidz Choice Home Daycare in Casa Grande – can now provide educational activities for the children as well as a safe, nurturing environment. And, local families have a place where their children will be well cared for and learn.

"My son is enriched with social skills by activities with all the kids and has an opportunity to interact with other toddlers," one mom stated. "There is structure and routine."

Through the program, Ida has taken Early Childhood Education classes at Central Arizona College and has received her First Aid/CPR certification.

"I wanted my daycare to be a place where kids wanted to be," Ida said. "And, thanks to the support and resources I received, it has turned out that way."

Teen Mom Gains Skills to Support Infant Son's Learning

At 14, Faviola found out she was pregnant. She soon found out about Parents As Teachers, a program funded by First Things First through Arizona's Children Association.

PAT partners with parents in their role as their child's first teachers through in-home services on topics including parenting skills, early childhood development and literacy. It also connects parents with community resources to help them better support their child's health and early learning.

"I wanted someone to teach me how to work with him," Faviola said. "(The home visitor) asked about certain benchmarks and if he wasn't doing them, she would help me."

Now, little Channing is meeting all of his developmental milestones. Faviola is taking online classes to complete high school.

"I think it's nice to be advised. Sometimes there's stuff you don't want to talk to family members about," Faviola said. "(The home visitor) knows what she is talking about, and I trust her opinion."

407

FAMILIES ENJOY STRONGER, MORE SUPPORTIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

2729

ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN

2488

FLUORIDE VARNISHES APPLIED TO PROTECT AGAINST TOOTH DECAY

4077

PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ATTENDED VOLUNTARY CLASSES IN COMMUNITY-BASED SETTINGS ON TOPICS SUCH AS PARENTING SKILLS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, LITERACY AND NUTRITION

304

INFANTS, TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS TO ACCESS EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

9749

SCREENINGS COMPLETED ON YOUNG KIDS TO DETECT DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS OR VISION/HEARING PROBLEMS

MOVING FORWARD

The Pinal Regional Partnership Council is intentional in its focus and support of the mission of First Things First to give all children the opportunity to start school healthy and ready to succeed.

The regional council is helping to build and implement an early childhood system which supports families and communities in raising healthy children who enter kindergarten prepared to be successful. The council has been very deliberate about the selection of strategies, focusing on three key factors: strategies directly linked to the identified needs of young kids in the region; programs that will have the greatest impact, and, approaches that can best be supported by the funding criteria.

In fiscal year 2012, the regional council added strategies which further support more targeted services, given the economic challenges faced by many families in the Pinal region. The combination of strategies within the three focused goal areas of strengthening families, improving the quality of and access to early learning and promoting better health for young kids was carefully selected to achieve the desired outcomes for the region and contribute in meaningful ways to the further development of the region's early childhood system.

Grantees – FY2013

- Apache Junction Public Library
- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona's Children Association
- Central Arizona College
- Child and Family Resources Inc.
- Community Action Human Resources Agency
- Easter Seals Blake Foundation – Tucson
- 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

Pinal Regional Partnership Council

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