

2013

ANNUAL REPORT



SOUTHWEST MARICOPA
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 Southwest Maricopa region includes the cities of the Southwest Valley – Avondale, Tolleson, Goodyear, Buckeye, Litchfield Park – as well as Gila Bend and Tonopah.

Regional Council Members

Dr. Carlian Dawson,
Chair

Kimberly Flack, Vice
Chair

Patricia Avery-Schuster

Dora Barrio

Wendy Krisik

Colleen Day Mach

Amanda Reyes Marithe

Denys Sandoval David

Schwake

Kelli Cordova Wright

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN IN OUR REGION

Demographics

23,756

Number of Kids Under 6 in Region

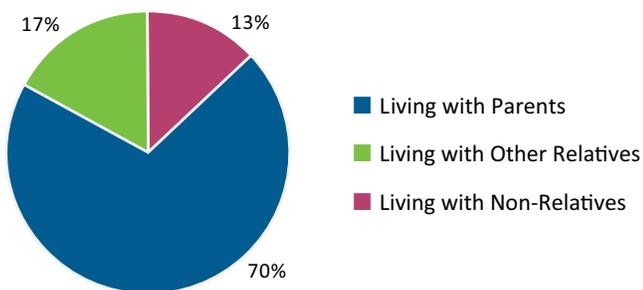
9%

Percentage of Households with Kids Under 6

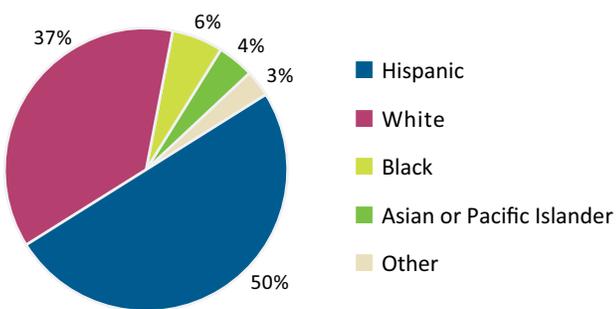
17%

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

22%

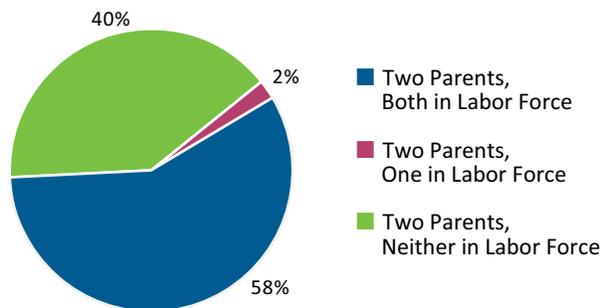
Percentage of Maricopa County 3rd Grade Students Not Passing AIMS in Reading

Economics

\$27,113-76,221

Median Family Income (depending on community)

Employment Status of Parents with Young Kids in Maricopa County



Health

13%

Percentage of Young Children in Maricopa County Without Health Insurance

40%

Percentage of Children 2-4 With Untreated Tooth Decay

OUR REGION'S PRIORITIES

The communities of the Southwest Maricopa region vary dramatically in size and density. For this reason, the Regional Council has focused efforts on ensuring children across the region have access to programs and that those programs contribute to an effective early childhood system. Research regarding children 5 and younger in the Southwest Maricopa region revealed the need for the following programs to promote optimal development and school readiness:

Family Support: Strong families are the cornerstone of strong communities. The region offers a continuum of voluntary programs that help build parents' confidence in their role as their child's first teachers. From community-based parent education at family resource centers to home visitation, parents get the support they want in ways that work best for them and their families.

Quality of and Access to Early Learning: Research shows that children exposed to high quality early learning are more prepared for kindergarten, do better in school and are more likely to graduate and go on to college. The region supports child care centers and homes in their efforts to improve the quality of early learning programs through coaching, resources to purchase books and learning materials and college scholarships to help teachers expand their skills working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Health: Untreated tooth decay can cause speech delays in the early years and may contribute to school absences later on. The region funds screenings for children 5 and younger to detect decay, fluoride varnishes to prevent dental disease, and information to parents on the importance of oral health for young kids.

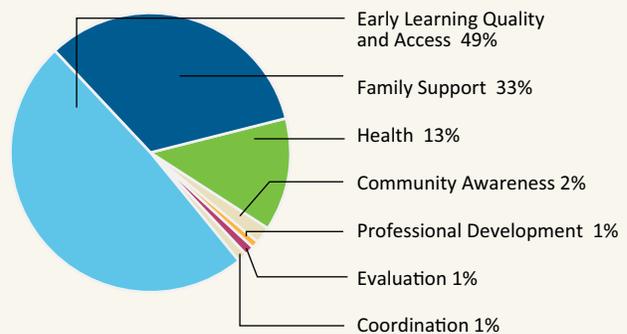
Community Outreach and Awareness: Awareness of the importance of early childhood is crucial so that all stakeholders can do their part to support school readiness. The Community Outreach and Awareness strategy provides grassroots support and engagement to increase parent and community awareness of the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

Financial Report

EXPENDITURES BY GOAL AREA – FY2013

Early Learning Quality and Access	\$1,543,185
Family Support	1,052,392
Health	407,637
Community Awareness	52,643
Professional Development	46,528
Evaluation	40,233
Coordination	24,249

TOTAL **\$3,166,867**



OUR REGION'S IMPACT

Quality Comes First for Child Care Provider

Litchfield Park native Sandra Brown has been a child care provider for more than a decade. As director at Garden Lakes Christian Academy in Avondale, Brown is committed to providing the best possible learning environment for children in her care. She said being part of Quality First, FTF's child care quality improvement and rating system, has helped her do just that.



Through Quality First, Brown has seen many improvements that benefit children. With the help of a Quality First coach, Brown's staff have improved their interactions with children – one of the key components of quality early learning programs. In addition, the program provided funding to improve outdoor recreations areas, which is crucial since play is one of the most important ways in which children learn.

Brown knows that improvements like these will help more of her young students prepare for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Strengthening Families Enhances School Readiness

Raising three children under age 6 would be challenging for anyone, but Elena Del Pilar felt even more overwhelmed when, as a grandmother, she was suddenly faced with raising her grandchildren.

As she embarked on a new round of child-rearing, Del Pilar found the support she needed through a home visiting program, Choices for Families, administered by Child & Family Resource.

For 18 months, a parent educator visited the family in their Buckeye home regularly to help Del Pilar build the skills she needed to be the best caregiver for her grandchildren. This hands-on approach helps parents and caregivers increase their knowledge of early childhood development, gain positive parenting techniques and increase children's school readiness.

With the coaching and mentoring of the parent educator, Del Pilar said she has become a better caregiver. "(The home visitor) really understands our situation," she said. "I learned a lot from her, and now I have more patience because of her help."

109

FAMILIES ENJOY STRONGER, MORE SUPPORTIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

1881

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

419

CHILD CARE CENTERS AND HOMES OFFER CHILDREN A HIGHER STANDARD OF CHILD CARE THROUGH QUALITY FIRST

1819

ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN

1720

FLUORIDE VARNISHES APPLIED TO PROTECT AGAINST TOOTH DECAY

1723

YOUNG CHILDREN ATTENDED COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY, GOOD NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

MOVING FORWARD

The Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council balances efforts to develop an effective early childhood system in the region while addressing some of the immediate needs of children ages birth to 5 in diverse communities.

In the future, the region's Family Resource Centers, in collaboration with other partners, will be strengthened to further enhance delivery of programs to children and families. There also remains a great need for community awareness of the importance of early childhood and the resources available to young children and their families.

The region will continue efforts to expand access to high quality early learning by offering scholarships to help more families afford child care and preschool. And, while the council will continue its support for quality improvement in child care centers and homes, it recognizes that many children birth to 5 in the region are cared for by relatives and neighbors.

Therefore, the council will explore ways to enhance those caregivers' understanding of early childhood development so that they feel more confident in their role as teachers of young kids.

As the regional council sets the strategic direction for the next three years, there is the developing sense that the collective work of the regional council, community partners and families is beginning to take root and that continued collaboration will make this region a place where all children 5 and younger have the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.



Grantees – FY2013

- Arizona Department of Education
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Association for Supportive Child Care
- Central Arizona College
- Child and Family Resources Inc.
- City of Avondale
- Maricopa County Department of Public Health
- Pilgrim Rest Foundation
- Pima County Health Department
- St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
- Sun City Area Interfaith Services, Inc. dba Benevilla
- Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services
- Town of Gila Bend
- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
- Valley of the Sun United Way

Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

14050 N. 83rd Ave., Suite 140
Peoria, AZ 85381

Eric Santiago, Regional Director

Phone: (602) 771-4962 | Fax: (623) 486-0557
esantiago@azftf.gov

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www.readyazkids.com