

2013
ANNUAL REPORT



TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION
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.

First Things First respects the sovereignty of all Arizona tribes. Tribes may elect to have their tribal lands treated as a separate region by the statewide FTF Board; or, tribes may elect to participate in the designated geographical region in which their tribal lands are located. The Cocopah Tribe region is comprised of the tribal lands of the three Cocopah Indian Reservations.

Regional Council Members

Louis Johnson, <i>Chair</i>	Janine Prewitt
Mildred Manuel, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Dionne Ramon
Dr. Albert Adler	Kymerlii Tenerario
Ella Begay	
Cheryl Conde	
Joseph Mease	

Tribal Leadership

Ned Norris, Jr., *Chairman*
Wavalene M. Romero, *Vice Chairwoman*

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN IN OUR REGION

Demographics

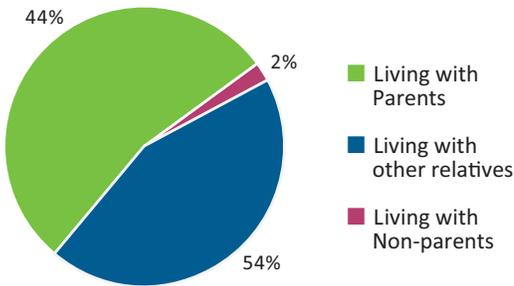
1,180

Number of Kids Under 6 in Region

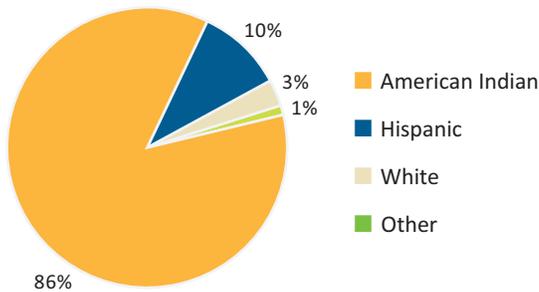
27%

Percentage of Households with Kids Under 6

Living Arrangements of Kids Under 6



Ethnic Breakdown of Kids Under 6



58%

Percentage of Young Kids in Poverty

Education

67%

Percentage of 3-4 Year-olds statewide who don't go to preschool

80%

Percent of 3rd grade students not passing AIMS in reading

Economics

\$27,866

Median Family Income

34%

Unemployment Rate

Health

37%

Percentage of Births without Early Prenatal Care

31%

Percentage of 2 to 4-year-olds who are Obese

OUR REGION'S PRIORITIES

Research regarding children 5 and younger in the Tohono O'odham Nation region revealed the need for the following programs to promote optimal development and school readiness:

Access to Quality Child Care – Research shows that children exposed to high quality early education are more prepared when they enter kindergarten, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate and go on to college. 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.



Professional Development – The region funds a variety of professional development opportunities to expand the skills of those working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, including scholarships to increase access to higher education for child care professionals. The Community-Based Professional Development strategy provides comprehensive professional development tied to college credit. Early childhood professionals gather within a learning cohort, in which they learn from experts in the field and then have opportunities to apply their learning in to practice.

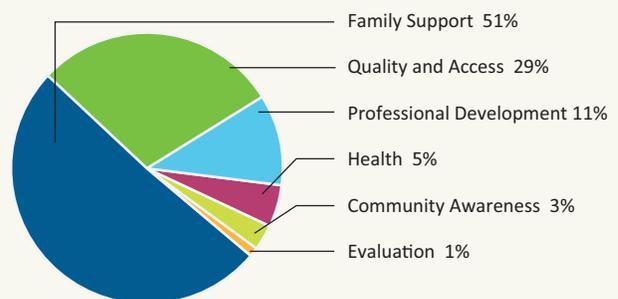
Family Support – The region recognizes parents and caregivers as the first and most important teachers in a child's life, and funds a range of programs to strengthen families. The opportunities offered are voluntary and are offered in a variety of settings to best meet the needs of families – from community-based groups for families who were interested in learning more about child development to one-on-one interaction to the work of the Child and Maternal Health Advocates for families who face multiple challenges.

Health – Good health – including proper nutrition – is crucial to brain development and school readiness. The region funds parent outreach and awareness to help parents connect to nutrition and health programs available in the community.

Financial Report

EXPENDITURES BY GOAL AREA – FY2013

Family Support	\$224,610
Quality and Access	129,376
Professional Development	48,625
Health	22,422
Evaluation	3,396
TOTAL	\$442,964



OUR REGION'S IMPACT

Teacher Expands Skills Working with Young Kids

The Tohono O'odham Nation regional council's community-based professional development strategy aims helps child care providers and teachers expand their skills working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Early childhood professionals participating in the program learn through a cohort model, gathering together multiple times to study and research an identified topic of study. The sessions are facilitated and taught by subject matter experts such as national speakers, visiting faculty, published authors and researchers.

Early childhood professionals then can apply newly learned theories in the early learning setting they work in. College credit for these studies is offered through the Tohono O'odham Community College and other partner institutions.

Vivian Lewis, a Head Start teacher for the Tohono O'odham Nation for 15 years and a participant in the program, recently completed her bachelor's degree. Lewis said she has been most impressed with what she has learned about the need to preserve and promote cultural literacy. She said she has been working to do so in her classroom, learning new vocabulary and making native language books with the help of native speakers. Lewis said her participation helps her to honor herself and her nation.



Children Thrive in Quality Child Care & Preschool

Through participation in Quality First, the dedicated Child Care Services and Head Start staff on the Tohono O'odham Nation are building a strong foundation for the young children in their care. Quality First – a signature program of First Things First – partners with child care and preschool providers to improve the quality of early learning across Arizona. Quality First funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive.

Bernadette Felix, the Child Care Manager for the Nation's Division of Child Care Services, is excited about her program's role in offering quality early learning programs to community members in Sells and San Xavier. "Being able to participate in Quality First has enabled our child care staff and providers to offer high quality early learning opportunities for young children in both center- and home-based environments."

Renea Ventura, a child care trainer monitor, works to ensure that early educators are trained on how to promote learning for infants and toddlers. "We're making sure that all child care specialists and home providers are well trained in all areas of child development for infants and toddlers, so they will be able to prepare children for Head Start or home-based programs here on the Nation or surrounding areas."

818

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

68

CHILDREN HAD ACCESS TO A HIGHER STANDARD OF CHILD CARE THROUGH QUALITY FIRST

84

INFANTS WHOSE PARENTS RECEIVED KITS WITH INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

37

EARLY EDUCATORS RECEIVED TRAINING TO EXPAND THEIR SKILLS WORKING WITH INFANTS, TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS.

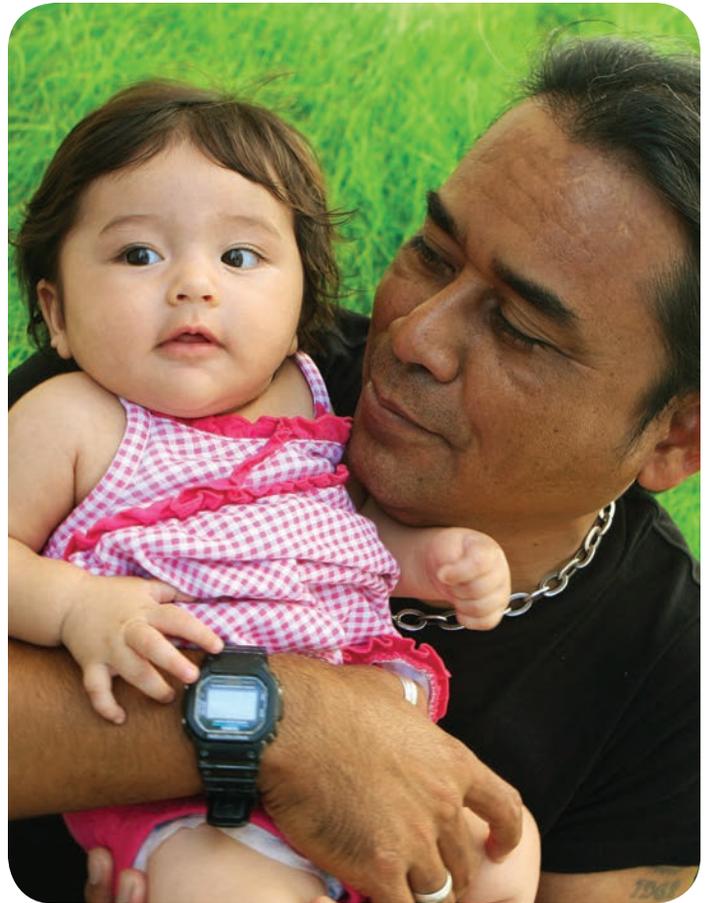
MOVING FORWARD

The regional council is committed to improving outcomes for children across Southern Arizona. Relationships between regional councils and our community partners build the foundation upon which the early childhood system is built. Coordinated services help families gain the tools they need to get their young children ready for school and ensure they will experience lifelong success.

Collaboration between regions in the Southeast Regional Area is of great importance to the regional councils. It is an important way to ensure ease of access to services and supports for families. The regional councils have worked together to issue joint request for grant applications when similar strategies were being implemented in multiple regions.

Professional development opportunities for early childhood educators improve quality in early education programs. With this knowledge, the five regions in Pima County embraced a professional development model which is now working across the county to provide ongoing learning opportunities for teachers and is tied to college credit. The regions look forward to continuing their support for this valuable opportunity and are excited to watch early care and education programs in the community improve their quality.

Regional Council members will continue working together to streamline processes and improve the quality of and access to services for families to ensure that young children are ready for school and set for life.



Grantees – FY2013

- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Community Food Bank Inc.
- Pima County Health Department
- Southwest Human Development
- Tohono O'odham Nation
- United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona
- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Partnership Council

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