

2015

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT



PIMA SOUTH  
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 28 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 Pima South region includes mostly rural areas in southern Pima County.**

## Regional Council Members

**Connie Espinoza,**  
*Chair*

**Fran Driver,**  
*Vice Chair*

**Cyndi Barningham**  
**Anthony Bruno**

**Ncioletta Harrington**

**Paul Ohm**

**Linda Kubiak**

**Susan Pace**

**Debbie Palmer**

# A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN IN OUR REGION

## Demographics

**23,474**

Number of Kids Under 6 in Region

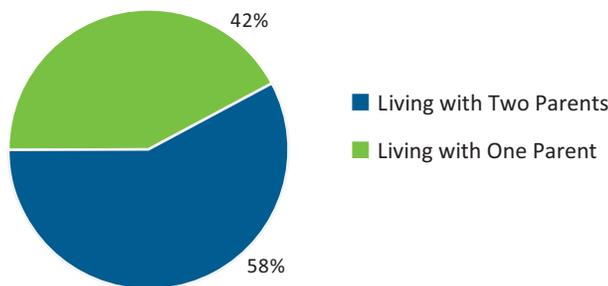
**7,428**

Number of Households with Kids Under 6

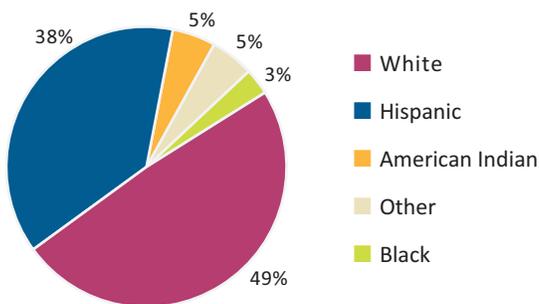
**28%**

Percentage of Young Kids in Poverty

Living Arrangements of Kids Under 6 in Pima County



Ethnic Breakdown of Kids Under 6 in Pima County



## Education

**67%**

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

**26%**

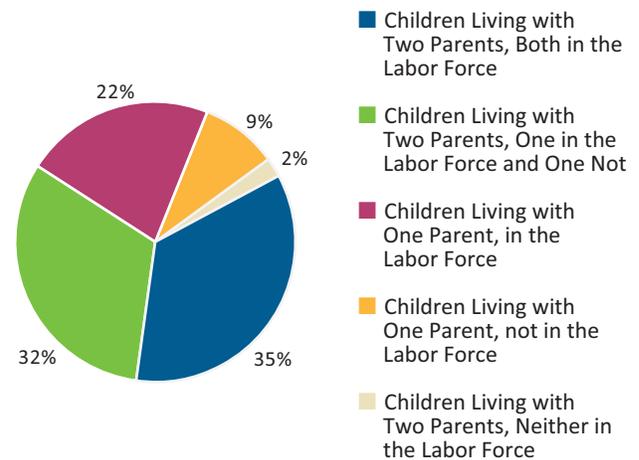
Percentage of Pima County 3rd Grade Students Not Passing AIMS in Reading

## Economics

**\$41,277**

Median Family Income in Pima County

Employment Status of Pima County Parents with Young Kids



## Health

**7%**

Young Children in Pima County without Health Insurance

# OUR REGION'S PRIORITIES

Research regarding children 5 and younger in the Pima South 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.

**Family Support:** The region recognizes parents as the first and most important teachers in their child's life, and funds a range of programs to strengthen families. The programs are voluntary and are offered in a variety of settings to best meet the needs of families – from community-based play groups for families who were interested in learning more about child development to in-home visitation from nurses for families who face multiple challenges.

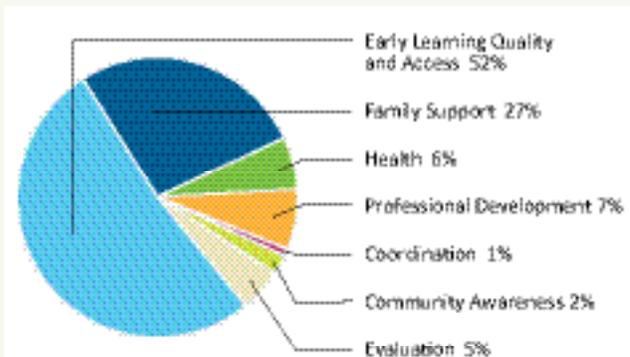
**Health:** Untreated tooth decay can cause speech delays in the early years and may contribute to school absences later on. The region funds screenings for children 5 and younger to detect decay, fluoride varnishes to prevent dental disease, and information to parents on the importance of oral health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

### ALLOTMENTS BY GOAL AREA – FY2015

Early Learning Quality and Access	\$4,361,371
Family Support	2,267,760
Professional Development	608,900
Health	502,960
Community Awareness	132,960
Coordination	100,000
Evaluation	429,032
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,402,943</b>



# OUR REGION'S IMPACT

## Seasoned Educator Sees More Parents More Committed to Early Learning

Gloria Williams has been an educator since 1990 and has been teaching preschool in Sahuarita School District since 2005. Over the past two years, she has noticed exciting changes in parents' awareness of and commitment to early learning for their kids.



"Before First Things First, we had to recruit 3- and 4-year-olds to fill a preschool class and our family literacy programs were not as inclusive," Williams said. Now, less than two years later, the Stay and Plays provided at Sopori Elementary School in Amado by The Parent Connection through First Things First funding seem to be doing the recruiting for them. The sessions introduce families to the preschool and have led to full preschool classrooms and fully enrolled parenting classes.

"Families know it's here and know it's a quality program," Williams said. We are seeing stronger parent networks and increasing interest in learning about brain development. The increase in opportunities for parents has created more parent engagement in our community."

## Community Awareness of Early Childhood Growing

Young children and parents aren't the only ones learning from Stay and Play sessions offered at The Good Shepard United Church of Christ families. Senior citizens are too!

Children birth to 5 have not been the only ones benefitting from Stay and Plays, senior citizens love them too! Kim Metz of the Parent Connection explains, "Because of the location and space we teach in we are observed by senior citizens."

Two things have happened: the experience has turned out to be refreshing for seniors that live away from their grandkids, and the senior citizens have learned what First Things First is doing in the region and throughout the state to help more children arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

**404**

FAMILIES ENJOY STRONGER, MORE SUPPORTIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

**2848**

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

**2775**

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

**621**

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

**50**

EARLY EDUCATORS RECEIVED COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS TO EXPAND THEIR SKILLS WORKING WITH INFANTS, TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

**5367**

ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN AND FLUORIDE VARNISHES APPLIED TO PROTECT AGAINST TOOTH DECAY

\*Service numbers are from FY2013.

# MOVING FORWARD

The Pima South Regional Partnership 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 FTF regions in the southeast regional area is an important way to ensure ease of access to services and supports for families.

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 model 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 – FY2015

- Ajo Community Health Center dba Desert Senita Community Health Center
- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Association for Supportive Child Care
- Casa de los Niños, Inc.
- Central Arizona College
- Make Way for Books
- Pima County Health Department
- Southwest Human Development
- Sunnyside School District
- Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services
- United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

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## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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