

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Yavapai Region



2015 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS AT BIRTH



90% OF A CHILD'S CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT HAPPENS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN,

so early experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) to give more children the tools they need to arrive at school prepared to meet our state's high expectations. FTF provides resources and professional expertise then combines it with local decision-making to build on the work of community organizations impacting children and families. Local volunteers – parents, educators, business professionals, philanthropists, faith leaders and tribal representatives – decide how the funds will be used to best improve school readiness for children in their area.

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS A STATE CAN MAKE

Research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman showed that every \$1 invested in early childhood can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. Early literacy and its impact on school success is one of the best examples of the return on investment in early childhood. High quality early learning experiences, rich in language and literacy, reduce early learning gaps and ensure that children are ready to start reading when they enter kindergarten.



Gaps in children's vocabulary start to appear as early as **18 MONTHS.**



By the time children are **3 & 4 YEARS OLD,** their vocabulary, attention and general knowledge are predictors of **THIRD & FOURTH GRADE** reading comprehension.



THIRD GRADE reading ability is one of the best predictors of **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.**



As an early childhood system partner, First Things First invests in proven programs and innovative strategies that: strengthen families in their role as their child's first teacher; improve the quality of early learning environments like preschool and child care, and expand access to those programs; and, promote prevention and early identification of health problems that could impact learning later on. By getting more Arizona kids ready for school, FTF helps put children on a path to academic success that benefits them, our communities and our state.

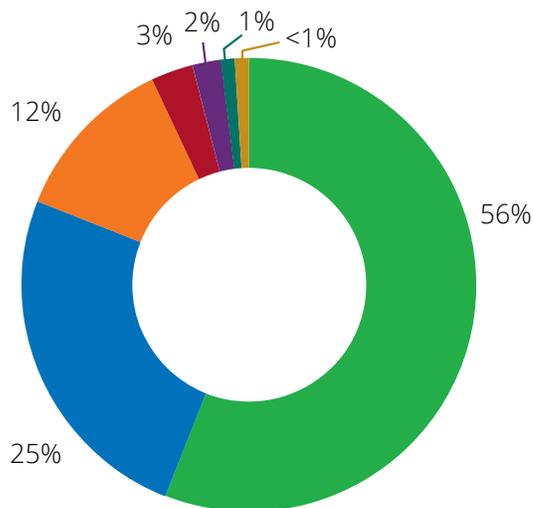
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A **\$16 RETURN**

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

YAVAPAI FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- Quality Preschool and Child Care \$2,123,969.74**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$928,597.75**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- Preventive Health \$460,935.48**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- Parent and Community Awareness \$107,225.72**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- System Coordination \$60,911.79**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.
- Research and Accountability \$55,350.06**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- Workforce Development and Training \$25,587.77**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.

Total = \$3,762,578.31

- 1,326** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 498** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 1,316** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 313** Families received voluntary in-home visits from trained providers to enhance their parenting skills and deal with specific challenges, including first-time parenting, parenting a child with special needs, or dealing with multiple births.
- 345** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 212** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.
- 335*** Infants and toddlers involved with the child welfare system benefitted from training and coordination efforts provided to caseworkers, attorneys, judges, court advocates and foster parents, to meet their unique developmental needs.

*This number includes current and newly enrolled children in this program and may include children who are no longer in the program, but due to privacy concerns, the grantee cannot provide data on the number of disenrolled children from the program.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



SCHOLARSHIP ALLOWS PRESCOTT PRESCHOOLER TO SOAR

When Dove Gunderman decided to restart her academic journey to become a speech therapist, her youngest daughter Juliette was 4 years old. The single mom of two knew that in order to be successful academically and at home, she would need to find high quality child care for Juliette. Once she toured the Del E Webb Family Enrichment Center at Yavapai College, Gunderman knew this would be a perfect environment for her daughter to grow, learn and thrive.

The preschool is enrolled in First Things First's signature program, Quality First, which supports early care and education programs as they help prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Gunderman didn't think she could afford to send her daughter there.

"I joked that we would have to live in a cardboard box if we had to, just so Juliette could attend," Gunderman said. Luckily, Gunderman qualified for First Things First Quality First Scholarship, which helps eligible families afford quality early care and education for their young children.

Juliette soon enrolled and quickly excelled. Now in first grade, Juliette continues to soar. "She was student of the week within the first month of school," Gunderman said.

Juliette recently started reading more challenging chapter books. It's a love of reading that started in preschool. "They instilled her love of stories there," Gunderman said. "She'll ask what words mean if she's not familiar with them. The other day we were getting ready to leave and Juliette couldn't put her book down. 'I need to finish my book!' she said. I couldn't ask for more."

YAVAPAI REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

Arizona Department of Economic Security*
Arizona's Children Association
Association for Supportive Child Care
Community Counts (formerly Youth Count)
Maricopa County Department of Public Health*
Pima County Health Department
Prevent Child Abuse Arizona

Southwest Human Development
University of Arizona Cooperative Extension*
Valley of the Sun United Way*
Yavapai College
Yavapai County Community Health Services
Yavapai Regional Medical Center

*After a competitive process, these grantees were selected by the First Things First Board to implement statewide and/or multi-regional strategies that the Yavapai Regional Partnership Council voted to participate in.