

2013
ANNUAL REPORT



GRAHAM/GREENLEE
REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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 Graham/Greenlee region encompasses the communities of both counties, not including the tribal lands of the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

Regional Council Members

Laurie Smith, <i>Chair</i>	Dr. Richard Keith
JoAnn Morales, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Donna McGaughey
Dena Barentine	Stacy Morris
Jan Elliott	Susan Norton
Ryan Henry	Pamela Patt
Ann Johnson	

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN IN OUR REGION

Demographics

3,870

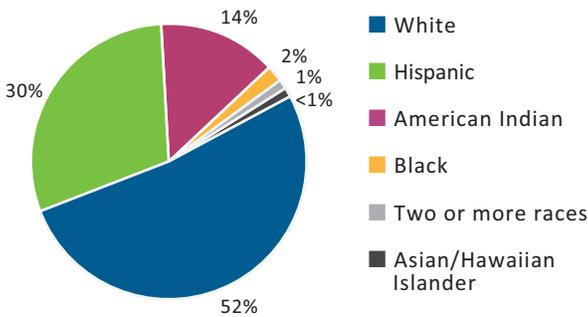
Number of Kids Under 5 in Region

5% Graham **8%** Greenlee

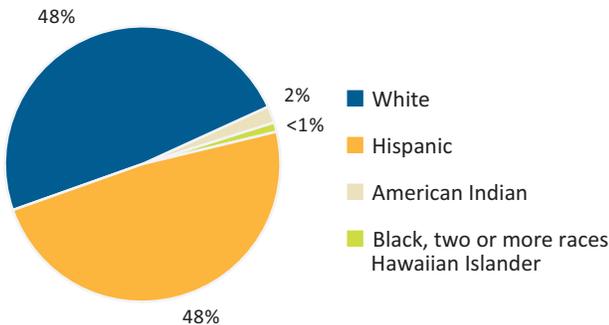
Percentage of Population 5 or Younger

Ethnic Breakdown

Graham



Greenlee



26% Graham **17%** Greenlee

Percentage of Children in Poverty

Education

67%

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

24% Graham **26%** Greenlee

Percent of 3rd grade students not passing AIMS in reading

Economics

\$66,504

Median Family Income

11%

Unemployment

Health

18%

Percentage of births to teenage mothers.

OUR REGION'S PRIORITIES

Research regarding children 5 and younger in the Graham/Greenlee 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 literacy classes to in-home visitation from early childhood professionals for families who face multiple challenges.

Health – Families with young children in the region have limited access to oral health providers and therapists with expertise in the birth to 5 population. The region funds screenings and fluoride varnish applications as well as the recruitment of a therapist to the region through stipends and loan forgiveness.

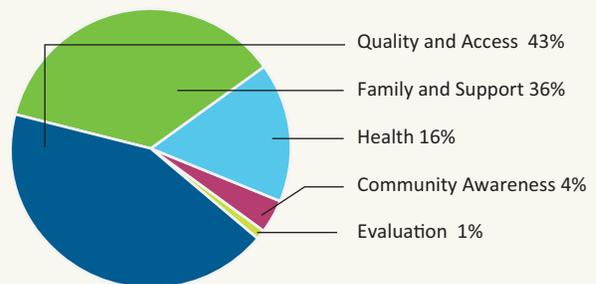
Community Outreach and Awareness - Awareness of the importance of early childhood is crucial so that all stakeholders can do their part to support school readiness. The Community Outreach and Awareness strategy provides grassroots support and engagement to increase parent and community awareness of the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

Financial Report

EXPENDITURES BY GOAL AREA – FY2013

Quality and Access	\$291,603
Family Support	242,614
Health	106,450
Community Awareness	29,136
Evaluation	4,130

TOTAL **\$673,933**



OUR REGION'S IMPACT

Teen Mother Gains Parenting Skills Through Home Visitation Program

As a teen mother who lived in Safford with her parents, Cassy received support from the Healthy Families home visitation program funded through the First Things First Graham/Greenlee Regional Council. "As a first time mom, I was overwhelmed. Louise (her home visitor) was so helpful. She shared information at each visit about child and brain development," Cassy said. "She taught me to play developmental games with Mayson. She shared wonderful ideas for good meals and snacks. She even gave me suggestions on discipline."

Four years later, Cassy gave birth to her second child, Colton. Cassy agrees she was more confident as a parent by the time her second child was born. Her concerns were different, but still critical. She and Louise decided to renew their home visitation relationship to address her new challenges: parenting two young children, nursing the new baby, positioning herself for employment, and finding child care for Mayson to encourage social interaction.

Cassy said one of her main goals right now is to read every day to her children. "Louise brings books and CD's to us. And, I always have my eyes open for great deals at yard sales," she said. "We enjoy the reading part of our day! The Little Wild Horse is our favorite. Louise is a wonderful resource."



Foods That Stick, Cavity Bugs and Toothbrushes

"Let's count teeth today", coached Rexann Rogers while she visited a room of 3-year-olds at the Palomita Children's Center in Safford. "And, let's talk about cavity bugs. Hmmm. What do you think they look like?" This is how Rexann Rogers, First Smiles Registered Nurse, starts her series of lessons that build up to a dental screening for all the children in the classrooms she visits.

"There is nothing more important than early intervention", states Rexann. "Children are not healthy if their mouths aren't healthy. We as healthcare professionals are continually discovering the correlation between oral health and learning. Poor oral health has been related to decreased school performance, poor social relationships, and less success later in life. When children's acute dental problems are treated and they are not experiencing pain, their learning and school attendance improves."

21

FAMILIES ENJOY STRONGER, MORE SUPPORTIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

8

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

90

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

355

ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN

344

FLUORIDE VARNISHES APPLIED TO PROTECT AGAINST TOOTH DECAY

1980

BOOKS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO PRESCHOOLERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

MOVING FORWARD

The Graham/Greenlee Regional Council is working to develop an early childhood system that ensures all children have the tools they need to be successful in school and in life. The regional council will build on its successes in family support, access to affordable high quality child care, preventative health services and education, and coordination of services in the region.

In order to expand and build a comprehensive early childhood system, the regional council will continue to work with grantees to connect families to programs, particularly those focused on children's well-being and healthy development to prepare young children for success in school and life.



Grantees – FY2013

- American Academy of Pediatrics - AZ Chapter
- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Child and Family Resources Inc.
- Graham County Interfaith Care Alliance, Inc.
- Pima County Health Department
- Safford City-Graham County Library
- Southwest Human Development
- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
- Valley of the Sun United Way

Graham/Greenelee Regional Partnership Council

504 South 2nd Avenue
Safford, AZ 85546

Shari Elkins, Regional Director

Phone: (928) 428-0193 | Fax: (928) 428-2878
selkins@azftf.gov

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Twitter: @AZFTF

Facebook: /AZFirstThingsFirst

www.readyazkids.com