

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Coconino



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.

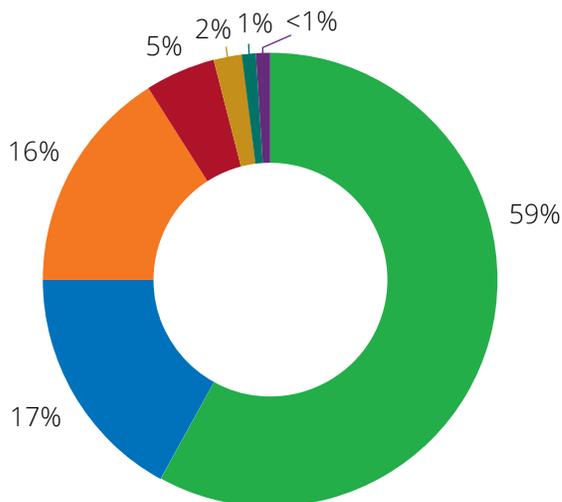
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A \$16 RETURN

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

COCONINO FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$1,718,392.49**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$490,072.71**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$480,863.20**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$135,346.24**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$44,074.89**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **Research and Accountability \$40,911.8**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **System Coordination \$13,292.38**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$2,922,953.71

- 📖 **613** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in Quality First.
- 📖 **298** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧 **1,400** Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧 **179** 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.
- 👨👩👧 **1,233** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 👨👩👧 **966** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



QUALITY LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL AND AT HOME BOOSTS GRAND CANYON KINDERGARTNER'S SUCCESS

When her son Demetrius was 3 years old, Kate Maragos felt guilty. As a mom of three, a Sunday school teacher, a volunteer and a long-term placement foster mom, Maragos was stretched thin.

"Honestly I didn't have much left in me to do educational things with the kids, especially Demetrius," Maragos said. She had recently participated in a First Things First-funded caregiver training where she learned how critical it is to nurture learning and healthy development during the early years. Because of this, she knew that a quality preschool could boost her son's success when he got to kindergarten.

Maragos decided to enroll her son in preschool at the Kaibab Learning Center. The center participates in Quality First, a signature program of First Things First, which 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, such as training for teachers to expand their skills and to help create learning environments that nurture the emotional, social and academic development of every child.

Enrolling the boy was made possible with the help of a Quality First scholarship.

"One day I heard him singing his alphabet song while he was washing his hands," Maragos said. "I was amazed he learned his letters, shapes, colors, months and days of the week, all before kindergarten. And he was coming home happy and singing!"

It encouraged the mother to do more at home, including read, play, and most of all listen and talk with Demetrius. "The more you can get in from an earlier age, the more prepared they will be when they get to school. And it will benefit your child exponentially for the rest of their life," said Maragos, who was so inspired that she eventually became a full-time teacher at the center.

"Now Demetrius is one of the top students in his kindergarten class!" Maragos said.

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FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

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