

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Gila 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.

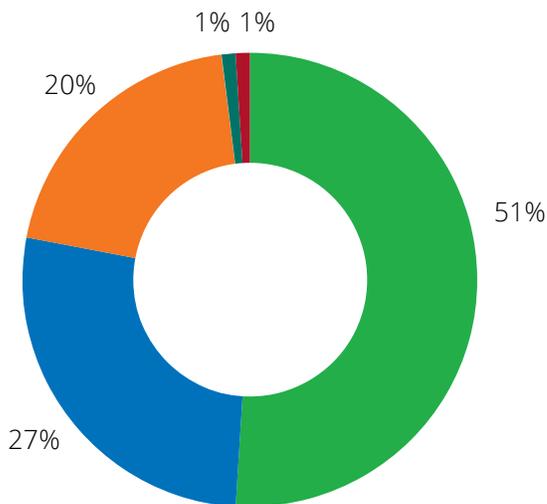
\$1



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

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

GILA FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$422,889.50**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$221,300.94**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$166,342.35**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Research and Accountability \$12,328.94**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$7,154.75**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.

Total = \$830,016.48



234 Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in quality first.



90 Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.



336 Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.



174 Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.



259 Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



GLOBE SISTERS LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH BOOK PROGRAM

Sammi Jenkins signed up her two daughters for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library when her youngest daughter Casper was born.

A Gila County librarian told Jenkins about the First Things First-funded program that mails a developmentally appropriate children's book to the home each month until the child turns 6.

The books prompted Jenkins to start reading daily to her 2-year-old daughter Reevis and baby Casper. As the girls grew older, the bookshelf in their room grew as well.

"Each girl gets to pick out one book a night that we read together," Jenkins said. "They anticipate the books coming and the trip to the mailbox has turned into a fun family routine."

Now that Reevis is in first grade and Casper is in kindergarten, Jenkins said she couldn't be prouder of the girls' reading and credits the program for helping her daughters be ready for school.

"Reevis is at the top of her class in reading and is now reading to her little sister," Jenkins said.

Casper is also an avid reader, who admits to sometimes sneaking a read in with a flashlight after lights out after bedtime. Casper's literacy also inspired her to write a letter to the White House demanding that Cookie Monster be allowed back on Sesame Street despite his unhealthy eating habits, Jenkins said.

Reading continues to be a fun family activity. Both mother and father now take the sisters to the Globe Public Library every week, so they browse for books to read at home for the week.

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Jessica O'Neal
Audrey Opitz
Charles Proudfoot
Tashina Smith
John Wakelin

John Taylor, Regional Director
jtaylor@aztff.gov
928.425.8172

FUNDED PARTNERS - FY2015

Gila County Health Department
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Globe Unified School District
Hayden/Winkelman Unified School District
Maricopa County Department of Public Health
Miami Unified School District
Pima County Health Department
Southwest Human Development

Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services
Tonto Basin School District
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