

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Pima South



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.

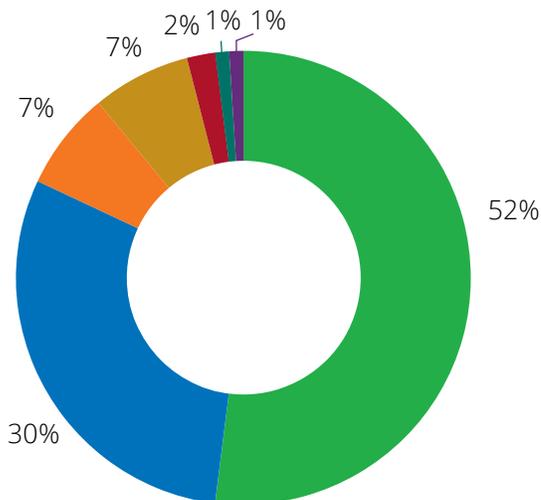
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INVESTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD YIELDS UP TO A **\$16 RETURN**

FISCAL YEAR 2015 IMPACT

PIMA SOUTH FY2015 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



- **Quality Preschool and Child Care \$3,866,669.44**
 Children exposed to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate.
- **Strengthening Families and Early Literacy \$2,218,108.89**
 Families are a child's first and best teachers.
- **Preventive Health \$500,231.69**
 Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on.
- **Workforce Development and Training \$479,367.68**
 A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning.
- **Parent and Community Awareness \$130,481.70**
 We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed.
- **Research and Accountability \$108,306.64**
 Measuring effectiveness and promoting continuous quality improvement rely on robust, accurate data.
- **System Coordination \$99,999.85**
 Collaboration among system partners maximizes resources and effectiveness.

Total = \$7,403,165.89

- 📖 **2,293** Children had access to a higher standard of early learning through preschool and child care programs participating in quality first.
- 📖 **781** Infants, toddlers and preschoolers received scholarships to access high quality early learning through preschool or child care.
- 👨👩👧 **140** 140 Families of newborns left the hospital with tools to help them support their child's health and learning.
- 👨👩👧 **799** 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.
- 👨👩👧 **118** Parents and other caregivers completed a voluntary series of community-based classes on topics like parenting skills, brain development, early literacy and nutrition.
- 👩⚕️ **2,713** Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against dental decay.
- 👩⚕️ **541** Screenings completed to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues in young kids and prevent learning challenges later on.

INVESTING IN SCHOOL READINESS



TUCSON DAD LEARNS HOW TO HELP SON BE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Miguel Cortez has three sons, twins who are in sixth grade, and Christopher, who started kindergarten this fall. Although all of his children participated in the Parents as Teachers program, Cortez said it was different with Christopher.

"Their mom was the one who participated in the program with the twins, but now we have separated and I have the kids," he said.

Cortez and Christopher, who live in Tucson, enrolled in Dad and Me, when the boy was 3. The set of Dad-based parenting classes is organized by Parents as Teachers and funded by First Things First.

"I learned how to better interact with my kids and to be interested in what they are interested in," Cortez said. As he noticed Christopher getting more into books, colors and letters, the PAT coordinator made suggestions of things Cortez could do with his son.

For example, if they were at the grocery store, Cortez would have his son help put together the grocery list. Once they arrived, Cortez would ask his son questions as they shopped. "What letter was that?" he'd say as he pointed to a box of cereal.

The Dad and Me program also had a profound effect on how Cortez viewed his role as a father.

"The class is just for dads; moms can come, but they sit along the side," Cortez said. It was different than the culture that Cortez grew up in, where the father worked and the mother took care of the children.

"I got more involved because of PAT," Cortez said. "Work used to come first for me, then my kids, but now my kids always come first. The program confirms family, that we are better together."

Cortez credits PAT with instilling his children's love of reading, knowing how to behave in school and helping them develop self-control.

When Christopher started kindergarten he could count from 1- 100 all by himself. He was one of only three children in his class who could do it.

"The program taught me to tell Christopher, 'Keep counting!'" Cortez said.

PIMA SOUTH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

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