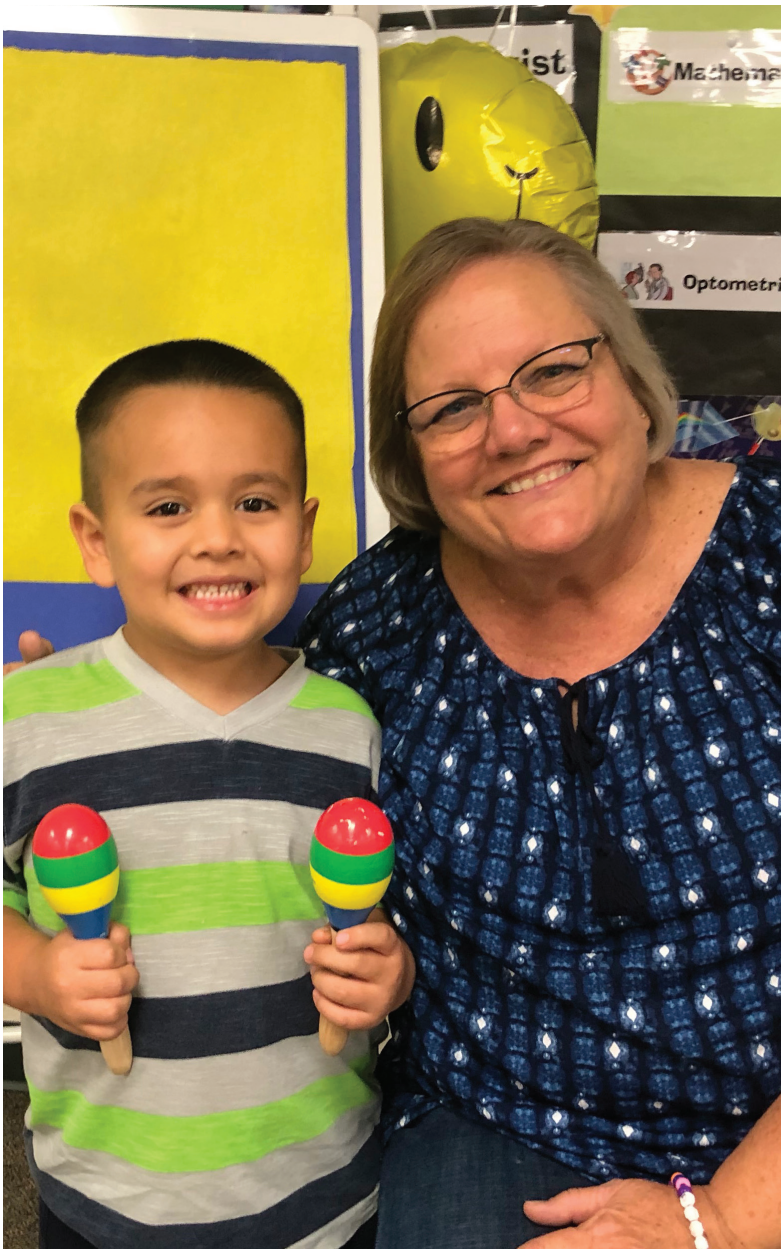


FIRST THINGS FIRST

Coconino Region

2022 Impact Report



From birth to age 5,
a child's brain develops more than
any other time in life.

90% of a child's brain grows before kindergarten. Early childhood matters.

First Things First (FTF) partners with families and communities to help our state's youngest children prepare for kindergarten and beyond.

Many young children in Arizona face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the FTF Coconino Region, there are **9,652 children** (under age 6) with **27% living in poverty**.

Here is how FTF is working to support young children and their families in this region.

“Children are not our future; they are our present. If we wait until the future to care for them, we will have waited too long. Here and now, they matter. Here and now..”

Brittany Baker

*Coconino Regional Council Member
Philanthropic Seat*

FTF Coconino Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]

Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

1,484 Families of newborns received the Arizona Parent Kit, filled with tips and tools to help support their child's healthy development.

46 Families with young children participated in voluntary home visiting programs proven to reduce parental stress levels, increase connections to community supports, and improve children's cognitive, motor, behavioral and social-emotional development.

Quality Preschool and Child Care

1,085 Children attended preschools and child care programs participating in Quality First.

141 Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.

Preventive Health

1,444 Children monitored to receive appropriate screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues to prevent learning challenges later on.

224 Fluoride varnishes applied to protect against childhood tooth decay.

Additional Strategies

457 Children received a screening to detect tooth decay, which left undetected and untreated could cause damage to permanent teeth, impair speech development and failure to thrive.

11 Parents and other caregivers participated in evidence-based trainings designed to improve knowledge of parenting practices and children's development.



HealthySteps provides Winslow family with one-on-one support to help overall health

When Evan Bengson and his girlfriend found out they were pregnant, they were surprised.

Doctors had told Bengson he was infertile, so the news left the Winslow couple shocked and unprepared. At the time, mom was an active user of substances and struggled with addiction during her pregnancy.

Their son, Grant, was born early and had to have his stomach pumped the day after his birth. He was also born with jaundice and spent the first month of his life in the neonatal intensive care unit.

As Grant grew, his parents realized there was something wrong. They sought help and enrolled in HealthySteps, a Well-Child Pediatric Visits program, which is funded by the First Things First Coconino Regional Partnership Council.

The intent of the program is to ensure that all children have access to high-quality preventive and continuous health care, including physical, mental, oral and nutritional health. It enhances well-child visits and pediatric care by embedding a developmental specialist within the practice who provides families of young children with support to promote children's overall health and wellness, positive parenting guidance and navigation of the health care and social services systems.

The toddler was found to have major developmental delays. And the HealthySteps program helped the family get the help they needed. One-on-one support from Michelle Simmons, a developmental specialist, helped answer their questions and arrange services for their family.

The program proved to be essential for the Bengson family. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the family's stressors and Grant's mother was incarcerated by the time Grant started showing signs of delay. Bengson was struggling with phone calls and had a hard time navigating the health care system — scheduling medical appointments, dealing with insurance and knowing what services were available to help Grant.

Simmons helped with things like coordinating medical appointments with doctors and specialists, getting developmental and sensory screenings, enrolling in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and KidsCare, as well referrals to other community resources for both parents.

Grant has autism and two speech delays. With help from the program, they were able to get Grant the services he needed to get on track with his development.

The process also helped mom enroll in Cognitive Behavioral Interventions, which focus on increasing positive behaviors, reducing undesirable or inappropriate behaviors and promoting self-control, including actionable goals that promote problem-solving, communication, relaxation, and self-awareness.

"She's doing a lot better and has become an amazing mother," said Bengson, describing themselves as a great team.

Before the family enrolled in HealthySteps, the parents didn't know what types of activities to do — from reading to the baby to age-appropriate activities to help Evan with his developmental delays.

"We didn't even know we were supposed to talk to him, read to him, or give him crayons," Bengson said. "So we really needed all the coaching we could get. Like giving him stuff to watch him stack. Michelle got us hooked up with Toys for Tots. That was amazing, his birthday is December 24."

Now, the family is on track with schedules and appointments for Grant, who is almost 3 years old, and are planning for his future. Knowing the difficulty of getting enrolled in high quality early learning centers in Winslow, Simmons helped them get on the waiting list for the Winslow Head Start.



Read more FTF stories at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Region-Stories)

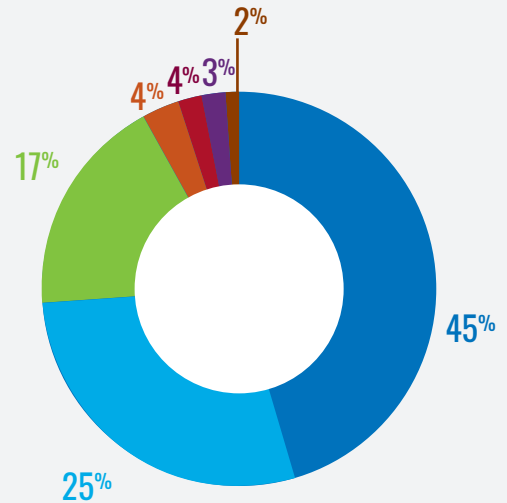
FTF Coconino Regional Partnership Council

FTF regional partnership councils are made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and inform how funds should be used to best support the healthy development and early learning of young children birth to age 5. FTF invests in proven programs

and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families. Some of the programs in this region include Parents as Teachers, Smart Smiles and Healthy Steps.

FTF Coconino SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$990,505
Preventive Health	\$546,854
Strengthening Families	\$376,347
Parent and Community Awareness	\$97,651
Coordination	\$74,000
Research and Evaluation	\$69,609
Workforce Development and Training	\$47,288
Total	\$2,202,255



FTF Coconino Regional Partnership Council and Staff

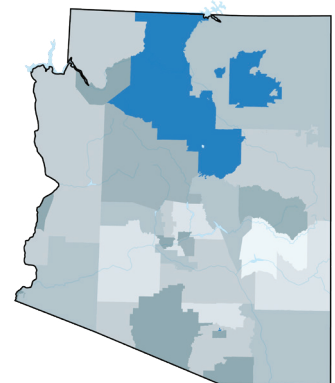
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The **FTF Coconino Region** includes most of Coconino County, minus the Navajo Nation and the Hualapai Reservation, plus Winslow, the Hopi Reservation, and the Kaibab Paiute Reservation. The Havasupai Reservation is also part of the region. While the majority of the region's young children live in or near Flagstaff, many live in towns or rural areas.

Learn more at
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Coconino](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Coconino)