

FIRST THINGS FIRST
INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE. IMPACT.



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENT TO ARIZONA'S YOUNGEST KIDS

Dear Fellow Arizonans:

Ten years ago, Arizonans made a commitment to our state's youngest children – that they would have the support they need in order to arrive at kindergarten prepared to succeed. They backed that promise by dedicating funds exclusively to be used for early childhood programs, and they ensured the diverse needs of our kids would be addressed by putting those funds in the hands of local community leaders.

A decade later, First Things First is fulfilling that commitment to Arizona's youngest kids. The funds are being invested to ensure long-term sustainability. Decisions about which programs to fund are being made by communities – parents, business owners, faith leaders, philanthropists, educators and health professionals who know what their kids need. Strategies are being funded that have a history of success. And, most importantly, data is being collected that show these investments are making a difference for Arizona's kids. Among our early successes: more than 38,281 children have access to high quality early learning so they arrive at school prepared to succeed; and 96,207 children received oral health screenings and preventive fluoride varnishes so that dental decay and related problems don't cause them to miss school later on.

The past year has brought great praise and accolades to First Things First. Early in the year, a 10-month state audit showed First Things First to be a highly functioning organization. And near the end of our year, First Things First was recognized by Harvard University as one of their 2017 Innovations in American Government. The accolades are symbols of the passion and commitment everyone at First Things First demonstrates for the responsibility we all share: to give children birth to 5 years old a strong start – in school and in life. Of course we are proud of those accomplishments, but we know the work is far from finished. Too many children in our community face challenges that threaten their healthy development now and their success later on. First Things First is committed to building awareness of those challenges; engaging communities, businesses, elected leaders and charities in partnerships to help overcome those barriers; and ensuring that every child in Arizona has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

We are deeply grateful for the trust that you have placed in us and for your partnership and support in all our efforts. And we thank you for the commitment you have shown to ensuring a brighter future for our state by investing in its greatest natural resource: our children!

Sincerely,



NADINE MATHIS BASHA

Board Chair



JOSHUA J. ALLEN

Interim Chief Executive Officer



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Arizona’s Success Rooted in Early Childhood 4

● A Snapshot of Arizona’s Children 6

Recognition for Excellence & Innovation 8

The Impact of Arizona’s Early Childhood Investment 10

● Impact At-A-Glance 10

● Improving Quality and Access in Early Learning 15

● Strengthening Families as Children’s First Teachers 24

● Expanding the Skills of Teachers & Caregivers 29

● Leveraging Impact through Collaboration 31

Building on Momentum: Strategic Planning 35

National Experts Help Expand Impact Assessment 37

Assessing School Readiness 39

● One Teacher’s Successful Pilot 40

Statewide Financial Report 42

FY2017 Investments Across Arizona 44

Appendix 46

Endnotes 54

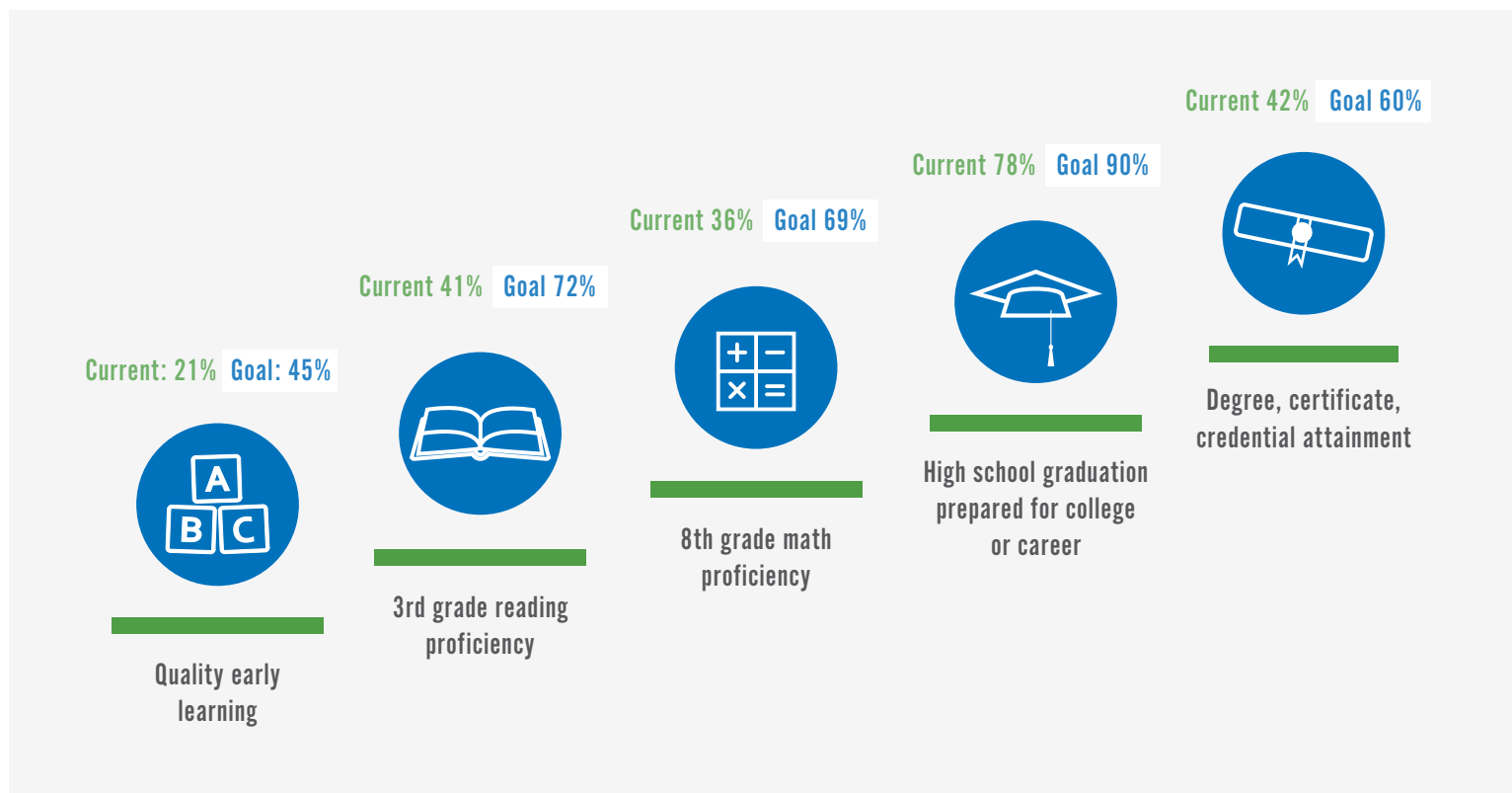


ARIZONA'S SUCCESS ROOTED IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

In 2016, Expect More Arizona and the Center for the Future of Arizona – with support from business leaders, educational organizations and community supporters, including the First Things First Board – worked to develop a unified vision of what a “world class education” looks like for Arizona’s children. They also worked to develop a set of common measures that could be used to monitor Arizona’s progress in moving our students toward an ultimate goal: ensuring that

60 percent of Arizonans have a certificate or college degree by 2030. This consistent framework for gauging our children’s educational success is called the Arizona Progress Meter and can be used by elected leaders when making policy and funding decisions; by businesses and philanthropic organizations in targeting their investments; and by communities when developing partnerships and building educational systems that support student success.

The Arizona Education Progress Meter consists of a variety of measures, including third grade reading proficiency, eighth grade math proficiency, and high school graduation. Most importantly for First Things First, it begins with ensuring that more children in Arizona have access to a high quality early childhood education.



This commitment to early learning is rooted in decades of brain research that shows that a child’s early years hold the key to their success. About 90 percent of a child’s brain growth happens before kindergarten. Between birth and 5 years old, the quality of a child’s environment and their interactions with the adults in their lives impact whether their brains grow in ways that promote learning. Children who are healthy and prepared when they enter kindergarten have better language, math and social skills, are less likely to need special education, and are more likely to read at grade level by third grade. They also are more likely to graduate and enroll in college.

The most recent data reveal that many of Arizona’s young children face significant challenges when it comes to stable, nurturing environments and high quality early learning experiences that will put them on a trajectory for success in kindergarten and beyond. As the snapshot on pages 6–7 shows:

- More than 1 in 4 Arizona children under 6 live in poverty;
- about 2 out of 3 do not go to preschool;
- more than 3 out of 4 do not get the recommended screenings to detect potential developmental delays or disabilities;
- and more than 1 in 100 enters the child welfare system.

While these statistics can be disheartening, Arizonans have made an early childhood investment that is making a difference in the health and learning of thousands of young children statewide: First Things First.

A SNAPSHOT OF ARIZONA'S CHILDREN

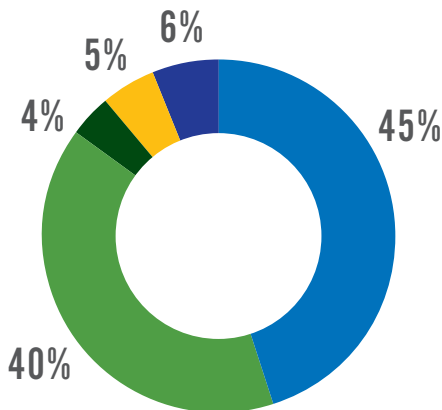
Demographics

546,609 Number of kids under 6 in Arizona

384,441 Households with kids under 6

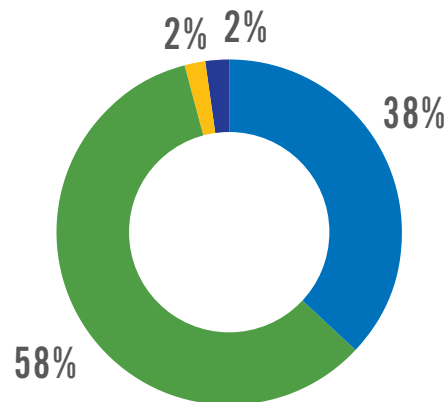
Ethnic breakdown of kids under 6

- Hispanic or Latino
- White, not Hispanic
- Black or African American, not Hispanic
- American Indian, not Hispanic
- Other (including children of two or more races), not Hispanic



Living arrangements of kids under 6

- Living with one unmarried parent or step-parent
- Living with two married parents or step-parents
- Living with relative(s), but not with parent(s) and/or step-parent(s)
- Living with unrelated person(s) /other living arrangements



Education

64% Percentage of 3–4 year-olds who don't go to preschool

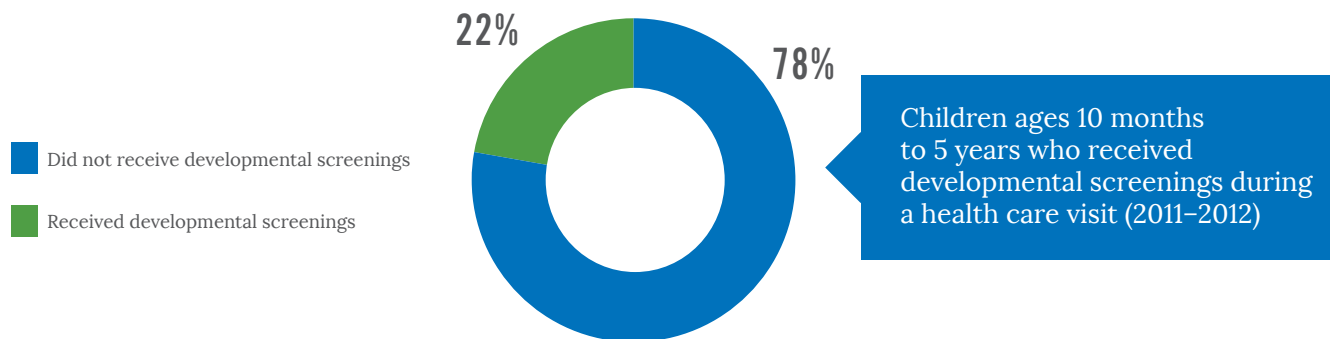
59% Percent of 3rd grade students not passing AzMERIT English Language Arts

22% Percentage of teens who don't graduate high school in four years

Health

6.9% Babies born to teen mothers

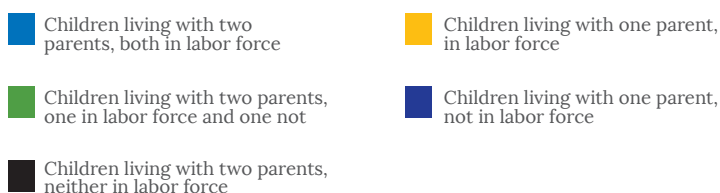
6,845 Number of children (0–5 years) in out-of-home care (as of March 31, 2017)



Economics

28.7% Percentage of young kids in poverty

Employment status of parents with young kids



Median annual income for families with at least one child birth to age 17, by family type

Married-couple families	\$75,018
Families headed by a single male	\$36,495
Families headed by a single female	\$25,646

FIRST THINGS FIRST RECEIVES STATE AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

First Things First is a statewide organization that includes a statewide Board and volunteer regional councils, staff and grant partners. All of these individuals work collaboratively to ensure that programs funded by First Things First meet the needs of Arizona's diverse communities and improve outcomes for children birth to 5 years old throughout our state. In fiscal year 2017, First Things First's effectiveness in partnering with families and communities to promote school readiness for young children was recognized at the state and national levels.

Rigorous State Audit Describes First Things First as a High-Performing Organization

In August 2016, Arizona's Auditor General released an 83-page audit that described First Things First as a high-performing organization while still identifying two specific findings and recommendations for improvement.

The audit was authorized by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee at the behest of the state Senate President the previous fall and included everything from the organization's revenues, spending, financial controls, grant-making processes and performance monitoring to First Things First's methods for research and evaluation of programs, efforts to avoid duplication with other early childhood programs or initiatives, and the purpose of parent and public awareness strategies.

As part of their commitment to continuous quality improvement, the First Things First Board and staff embraced the audit as a means to identify areas of strength for the organization, as well as opportunities for improvement.

The audit – which was performed over 10 months and involved an audit team assigned full-time to the organization – included no findings and no recommendations in five of the seven areas audited. The audit pointed to several areas of strength for the organization, highlighting that First Things First:

-  has taken **proactive steps to manage declining revenues and strategically plan** for its future;
-  spends the **vast majority of funds on grants for early childhood** development and health programs and effectively utilizes best practices in overseeing those grants;

-  has **appropriate financial controls** in place;
-  has implemented a research and evaluation plan informed by national experts to assess progress, as well as **ongoing studies and reports that demonstrate the impact of programs**; and
-  fosters collaboration and coordination of early childhood programs, which helps ensure that **duplicative or unnecessary services are not funded**.

The audit was an extremely rigorous process; there was virtually no part of the organization the audit did not scrutinize. Staff spent more than 2,500 hours in the audit's research and investigative phases, and working with auditors on comparing First Things First's work to both legal requirements and best practices. In the end, that level of rigor proved quite beneficial.

In addition to validating the great work being done by First Things First, the audit recommended a variety of improvements the organization could make to further strengthen its work. By the time auditors followed up with First Things First six months later, all but two of those recommendations had been implemented, and the remaining recommendations were in progress. Auditors will complete their final follow-up with First Things First in fiscal year 2018.

First Things First Selected as One of Harvard University's Top 25 Innovations in American Government

In May 2017, First Things First was announced as a Top 25 program in the 2017 Innovations in American Government Awards competition by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. As a Top 25 program, First Things First represented the top 2 percent of all initial applications for the Innovations Award.



The award recognized First Things First's unique tiered governance structure, through which the organization has engaged hundreds of volunteers to serve on its Board and regional councils and make decisions about how early childhood funds are spent. To date, those volunteers have donated more than 288,000 hours of their expertise, insight and commitment in service to kids birth to 5 across Arizona.

Through its innovative structure, First Things First decisions reflect the perspectives of the array of Arizonans who have a stake in ensuring children arrive at kindergarten prepared to be successful, including parents, tribal representatives, educators, health professionals, and leaders in business, philanthropy and faith. The structure balances statewide impact with local flexibility, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability. The Board is responsible for ensuring that strategies funded by First Things First improve outcomes for young children. The regional councils are responsible for ensuring that those strategies meet local needs and address community nuances, such as cultural considerations and service to families in rural areas.

Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in Government program at the Ash Center, called the finalist programs "the vanguard of creative, solution-oriented governing, demonstrating that the drive to make government work better and do more comes from all levels and jurisdictions of every size."

"These programs are focused on an impressive range of areas and some of the country's most pressing social concerns, including the opioid epidemic, government efficiency and efficacy, environmental conservation, homelessness, and the school and workforce readiness of our citizens."

The Innovations in American Government Awards was created by the Ford Foundation in 1985 in response to widespread pessimism and distrust in government's effectiveness. Since its inception, over 500 government innovations across all jurisdiction levels have been recognized and have collectively received more than \$22 million in grants to support dissemination efforts. Such models of good governance also inform research and academic study around key policy areas both at Harvard Kennedy School and academic institutions worldwide. Past winners have served as the basis of case studies taught in more than 450 Harvard courses and over 2,250 courses worldwide.

While First Things First is honored to be recognized for its outstanding work, the true hallmark of its success is the impact its early childhood investments have on young children, their families and the early childhood system. The following pages describe that impact during fiscal year 2017 across several areas. These successes have been achieved through early childhood investments, as well as coordination and collaboration with families, partner agencies, grantees, community partners and other early childhood stakeholders statewide. They demonstrate the progress made in First Things First's efforts to fulfill Arizona's commitment to our youngest children.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Strengthening Families

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs give parents options when it comes to supporting their child's health and learning. Services are voluntary and provided at levels that meet the family's needs, from community-based parenting education to in-home support from a nurse or parent educator to address tough situations like parenting a child with special needs or dealing with multiple births.



43,073

families increased their knowledge of effective parenting practices through workshops at family resource centers. **276,339 families received** early childhood information and resources and 54,391 families received referrals through these centers.



5,826

families with young children (0–5 years old) 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 socio-emotional development. Also, **3,207 families continued** their participation in home visiting programs from 2016 to 2017.



69,356

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



3,560

families completed a series of classes on topics like brain development, early literacy and nutrition.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Quality Preschool & Child Care

Children with access to high quality early learning do better in school and are more likely to graduate. FTF funds researched-based quality improvements that help children thrive, including learning environments rich in language and literacy, coaching for early learning professionals to better engage young learners, and developmentally appropriate learning materials. Scholarships also are funded to help more infants, toddlers and preschoolers access quality early care and learning.



63,754

young children received their early education from child care and preschool providers committed to continuous quality improvement of their programs through Quality First.

- **38,281** infants, toddlers and preschoolers were in early learning programs that met or exceeded Quality First's rigorous standards.
- **8,809** children from low-income families received a high quality early education with the help of a Quality First preschool or child care scholarship.
- More than **55%** of the children (**4,891** infants, toddlers and preschoolers) were able to remain with the same provider for 9 months of the year or longer, another hallmark of quality care.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Preventive Health

Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on. Left unaddressed, developmental delays and chronic medical conditions can become serious learning problems that require more costly interventions. FTF funds preventive developmental and sensory screenings, parent education and referrals to existing services to ensure that kids arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. FTF also funds oral health screenings and application of fluoride varnish to prevent tooth decay and subsequent dental issues that are a leading cause of school absence later on.



54,514

children received screenings to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and prevent learning challenges later on and **4,485 referrals were provided** to further assess children for developmental delays/sensory issues and possible treatment or early intervention services.



433

child care and preschool providers received consultation proven to enhance teachers' confidence in dealing with students' social-emotional needs, improve teacher-child relationships and prevent expulsions. **199 referrals were given** to children for services to address their mental health needs.



53,047

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



43,160

fluoride varnishes were applied to protect against dental disease, the greatest cause of school absence later on, and **47,542 referrals for follow-up treatment** with an oral health provider were given to young children.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Teacher/Workforce Training and Development

A child's relationships with early caregivers impact whether her brain will develop in ways that promote learning. Children 5 and younger learn differently than school-age children. The quality of early learning depends on the education and skills of the teacher. FTF funds scholarships and training to expand the skills of professionals working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. FTF also sponsors trainings for relatives and others providing informal care to young children to expand their knowledge of ways to promote positive brain development.



1,557

early childhood educators received scholarships for college coursework to expand their skills in teaching infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



1,274

relatives and other community caregivers completed a series of trainings to increase their understanding of brain development and strategies to support young children's learning.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



Parent and Community Engagement

We all have a shared responsibility to help children arrive at school prepared to succeed. FTF works with families, caregivers and community leaders to build awareness of the importance of early childhood and the steps they can take to support the education and health of young children in their communities.



320,922

individuals reached through **1,724** community events, group presentations, individual and group meetings, site tours and trainings to build awareness of the importance of early childhood.

604 actions on behalf of young children taken by community members committed to promote the healthy development of young children.



600,000

visits to the newly revamped FTF website including **33,000+ page views** of the FTF new digital Parent Kit, where families and caregivers can get information to help them support their child's healthy brain development.



3.8 million

complete views of a 30-second video sharing information on how parents and caregivers can promote school readiness through everyday moments such as talking, singing and reading with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

QUALITY FIRST IMPROVES EARLY LEARNING FOR MORE THAN 63,000 CHILDREN

Every young child in Arizona deserves a high-quality early learning experience. In the first five years of life, quality early learning plays a critical role in the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of children. Neuroscientists, economists and educators agree: early care and education pays dividends as children enter kindergarten; and it continues to serve them as they move through elementary school, transition into college and career, and become citizens in their communities.

Science tells us that 90 percent of a child's brain development occurs before they reach kindergarten.ⁱ So, the quality of early learning can have a profound effect during the first five years of life. Longitudinal studies, spanning more than 40 years, demonstrate that quality care and education from birth through age 5 results in higher IQ scores, higher school graduation rates and lower crime rates.^{ii,iii}

Young children with high-quality experiences have been shown to have increased vocabulary, better language, math and social skills, more positive relationships with classmates and higher scores on school-readiness assessments. In short, these children are better prepared for school.^{iv, v}

Nationally, all 50 states are in some stage of implementing quality improvement and rating systems for their early child care and preschool providers to create a unified, measurable standard of care, and inform parents on their local providers' proximity to that standard. Quality Improvement and Rating Systems (QIRS) are designed to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Quality First, Arizona's quality improvement system, was established

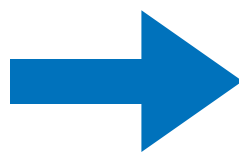
in response to this educational reform effort to improve quality and promote school readiness.

High quality early childhood programs are defined by several characteristics: skilled teachers that know how to engage young learners; indoor and outdoor environments that are safe, child-centered, stimulating and well-stocked with materials; predictable and balanced daily schedules and routines; evidence-based, culturally responsive curriculum; supportive assessments of each child's progress; and ample opportunities for family involvement in their child's education.

The Quality First Rating Scale, which measures quality on a 5-star scale, incorporates evidence-based predictors that lead to positive child outcomes. The scale ranges from a 1-star rating – where the provider demonstrates a commitment to examine practices and improve the quality of care beyond basic health and safety requirements – to a maximum rating of 5 stars, where providers offer lower ratios/group size, higher staff qualifications that support significant positive outcomes for young children, curriculum that aligns with state standards and child assessment and nurturing relationships between adults and children that promote emotional, social and academic development.

38,281

children in Arizona



were in
quality early
learning programs
as a result of First
Things First

The child care options currently available in Arizona’s communities can contain vast differences as to the quality of care and education provided. This puts a substantial burden on families, who must find and accurately assess prospective providers to find good care for their children, at an affordable price. But even the concept of “good” remains vague without an accepted standard of quality. Arizona’s current licensing regulations ensure basic health and safety requirements. But they do not address higher standard issues such as an optimal adult–child ratio, group size, well–qualified personnel and strong curriculum and instruction.

That is why First Things First created Quality First – Arizona’s Quality Improvement and Rating System – to create a unified, measurable standard of care, inform parents on their local providers’ proximity to that standard, improve quality and promote school readiness.

Early learning providers regulated by the state, tribal governments or the Department of Defense who voluntarily apply for and enroll in Quality First receive supports to improve and maintain the quality of their programs. These supports can include: individualized coaching and specifically targeted technical assistance, incentive grants and professional development scholarships.

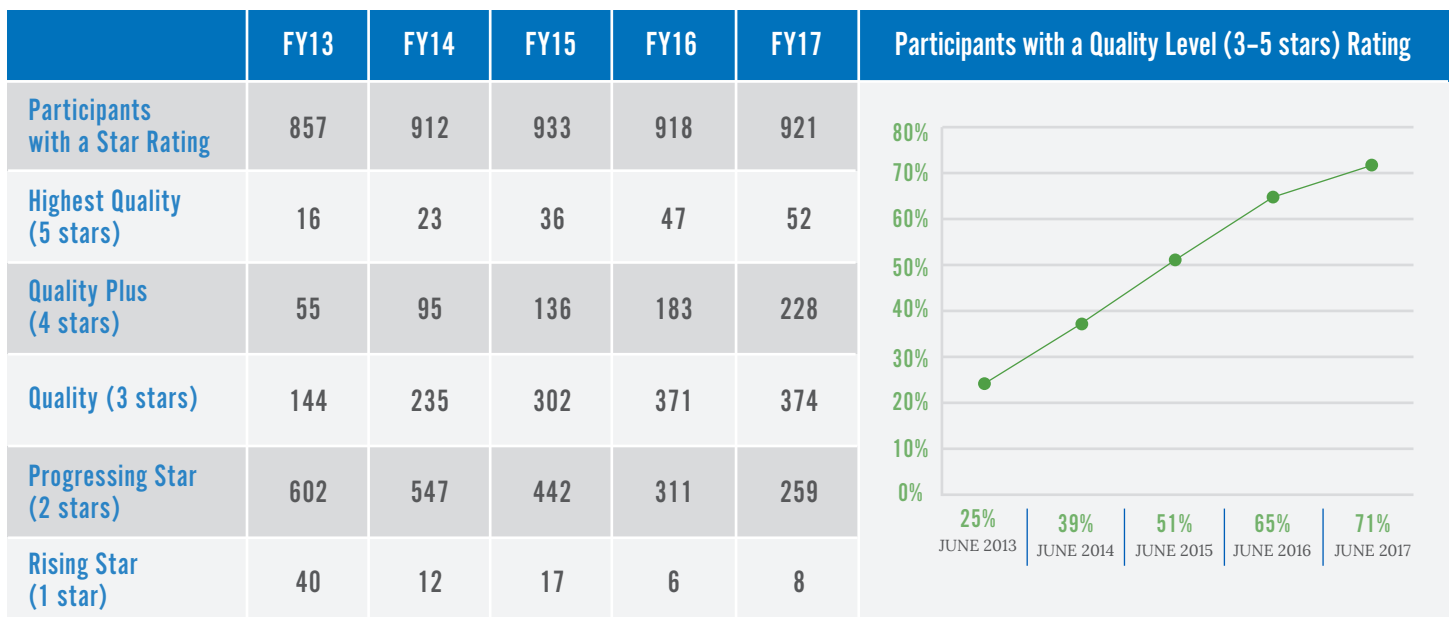


Quality First has Significantly Improved the Quality of Early Learning Throughout Arizona

The latest data indicate that Quality First has significantly improved the quality of early learning options available to Arizona's families (See Figure 1). In fiscal year 2013, 25 percent of 857 participating providers met or exceeded quality standards. Over the past five years, both enrollment and quality have improved. In fiscal year 2017, 71 percent of 921 participating providers met or exceeded quality standards.

This means that 38,281 children in Arizona were in early learning programs that meet or exceed quality standards as a result of First Things First, an increase of 57 percent since 2015 (24,420 children). When combined with providers who continue to work diligently on enhancing the quality of their child care and preschool programs, Quality First has ensured that more than 63,754 children throughout the state have access to a higher standard of early education.

Figure 1. Quality First Works to Improve Early Learning Settings



Quality First providers are publicly rated once they have received at least two assessments (typically around two years of Quality First participation). In order to provide the most comprehensive data possible, these figures include data for both publicly rated programs and not publicly rated programs (those who have been in Quality First less than two assessment cycles).

The quality of early learning has improved regardless of the type of program participating in Quality First: center-based and home-based programs, as well as faith-based, non-profit and for-profit providers. In addition, Quality First is enhancing early learning opportunities throughout the state. Twenty-seven regional councils throughout Arizona invest in Quality First, making it the largest early childhood system initiative funded through First Things First.

Coaches and consultants working with Quality First recognize the unique challenges early learning providers face in the diverse parts of our state and can tailor their support for quality improvement accordingly. As a result, Quality First has been able to enhance the quality of child care and preschool in metropolitan, rural and tribal regions of Arizona. Appendix A demonstrates quality improvement region-by-region.

Scholarships Help More Than 8,800 Low-Income Children Access Early Learning

First Things First also prioritizes access to quality early learning programs by funding Quality First scholarships. The intent of this evidence-based strategy is to provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships for children from low-income families (200% of Federal Poverty Level and below) to attend quality early care and education programs. The intended outcome for children and families is increased access to quality early care and education settings that promote readiness for kindergarten. Access to quality early care and education programs can result in social, developmental and health benefits to young children that help to prepare them for later success in school and in life. Where families choose out-of-home settings, stable and high quality early care and learning experiences help young children develop strong attachments to caregivers and teachers, in addition to their parents. These attachments set the stage for future relationships throughout a child's life. Scholarships support continuity of care for children so that previously formed supportive relationships with caregivers can remain in place. In FY2017, Quality First Scholarships helped 8,809 infants, toddlers and preschoolers throughout Arizona access a higher standard of early learning. More than 55% of the children (4,891 infants, toddlers and preschoolers) were able to remain with the same provider for 9 months of the year or longer, another hallmark of quality care.

87% of Kids in Preschool Expansion are Kindergarten Ready

There is some initial evidence that Arizona's investment in early education quality improvement is making a difference for some of our most vulnerable children. In fiscal year 2015, Arizona was one of five states that

received a federal Preschool Development Block Grant totaling \$80 million over FFY2017–2020. The goals of the grant are to expand quality preschool in underserved areas; implement state-level infrastructure and quality improvements; ensure strong partnerships between school districts and other early learning providers; align preschool programs with a birth through third grade continuum of services; and, create sustainable programs by coordinating existing early childhood funds.

Through a partnership with the Arizona Department of Education, First Things First includes the new preschool development sites in Quality First, giving those programs access to resources that will: ensure their settings are rich in language and literacy opportunities; expand teachers' skills in working with young learners; enhance the programs' ability to meet the social-emotional needs of students; promote the inclusion of children with special needs; and, provide developmentally appropriate learning materials. In FY2017, there were 62 preschool programs in the PDG participating in Quality First, 46 of which met or exceeded quality standards.

This means an additional 4,346 children received their early education from providers committed to continuous quality improvement, including 2,895 children whose early learning provider met or exceeded quality standards.

Arizona's state-approved ongoing progress monitoring tool for preschool is Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TSG). All of the children who were in early learning programs as a result of the Preschool Development Grant were enrolled in TSG. The TSG system is designed to assess the development and learning of children birth to kindergarten, inclusive of children with disabilities and English language learners. Data collected through the use of this valid and reliable assessment tool helps to inform instruction and lesson planning as well as provide information to address individual needs of children. This information assists educators in identifying where a child is at in relation to optimal development. Arizona assesses its progress toward identifying the school readiness of children through the use of TSG to assess children's growth and development in alignment with

the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AzELS) and the five essential domains of school readiness. Data is collected on TSG for 38 objectives in 10 learning areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy, language, mathematics, social studies, science and technology, the arts and English language acquisition.

To determine the number and percentage of children in the PDG programs ready for kindergarten, the Arizona Department of Education sampled data from 50 percent of portfolios of those children enrolled in PDG in the 2015–16 school year (1,252 children, although data was received for 1,007). Samples from 504 portfolios (50%) revealed that 87% were ready for kindergarten, meaning they were meeting or exceeding age-level expectations upon the final reporting point for the school year. ^{vi}

National Foundation Invests \$800K to Expand Quality First

The First Things First Board is committed to continuous quality improvement across all areas, including Quality First. To that end, the Board convened the Quality First Advisory Subcommittee, a diverse group of system partners – including child care and preschool providers, early learning experts, advocates and staff – to make recommendations to the Board on how to enhance efficiency and expand the reach of Quality First.

In October 2016, the Board accepted the recommendations of the Subcommittee, which include increased initial information to providers about Quality First's program standards and what their participation will require; tools to help providers assess their readiness to engage in quality improvement efforts; on-demand technical assistance across a greater variety of topics; and updated costs associated with the program once the aforementioned changes are made.

In May 2017, First Things First was awarded an \$800,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that will support a pilot program to test those modifications to Quality First across an additional 50 programs statewide.

The pilot will focus on child care and preschool settings that serve large numbers of at-risk children, such as children living in poverty and children in the child welfare system. Researchers will follow those programs over the course of two years to determine whether the modifications continue to improve program quality.

Study: Quality First Works to Improve Early Learning Settings

Based on the recommendations of a national panel of experts, First Things First also has initiated a series of studies to ensure that Quality First is improving child outcomes. The studies are being done in several phases. Phase One examined the conceptual framework and design of Quality First; the Quality First data system and related databases, to determine if the existing data elements and infrastructure support effective management, program evaluation, and continuous improvement of the quality improvement and rating process; and the Quality First Star Rating Scale (1 to 5 stars) to validate that the five tiers represent differential levels of quality.

The Phase One work was completed between 2015 and 2017 by Child Trends, a non-profit, non-partisan research organization providing social science research for those who serve children and youth. For more than 35 years, policymakers, funders, educators and service providers in the U.S. and around the world have relied on data and analyses from Child Trends to improve their policies and programs. Additionally, Child Trends worked with an Arizona-based organization, LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc., a full service consulting firm specializing in program evaluation, technical assistance and training, to conduct data collection with Quality First participants.



The findings from the Phase One studies, included:

 **Quality First programs tend to improve in their quality levels between assessments,** meaning they are making improvements necessary to move up in their star ratings.

 **The Quality First Rating Scale does differentiate between various levels of quality.** The various tools used by FTF to assess programs measure different aspects of quality, and taken together, provide a comprehensive picture of the program's overall quality. In addition, when researchers did their own on-site review of programs, they observed that there are notable differences in quality between the different star levels. Recommendations from researchers included specialized support for programs at the various star levels, including more emphasis on improving the educational environment at the lower star ratings and greater support in enhancing child-teacher interactions in the higher rating levels.

 **Perceptions of Quality First components are generally positive among participants, staff, and community stakeholders,** but there is always room for improvement. Recommendations from researchers included greater flexibility for quality improvement coaches, more support for programs in understanding and using the information from their program assessments to improve quality; re-examination of financial incentives provided to programs at the various star levels, and enhanced technical assistance to address specific areas of quality improvement, including better information for providers on the types of technical assistance available.

 **First Things First's data system collects the information necessary to support program improvement efforts.** Researchers made recommendations for additional data collection

to strengthen the system's understanding of how components of the system impact each other and, ultimately, improve outcomes for children.

The study also surveyed directors and teachers working in child care and preschool programs participating in Quality First. Notable results from the surveys included:

 The factors that most motivate providers to participate in Quality First are the desire to increase quality early learning options for Arizona's young children and access to scholarships so that more low-income children can attend high quality programs.

 86% of directors and 65% of teachers believe their program is of higher quality because of Quality First;

 92% of directors and 77% of teachers said they made changes to their program as a result of joining Quality First;

 77% of teachers said they made changes in their classroom as a result of their program participating in Quality First; and

 85% of directors would recommend that other early learning programs join Quality First.

Subsequent studies will include examination of the comprehensive array of Quality First program components, fidelity of implementation of program components, the contribution of program components—alone and in combination—to improve quality, and analysis of the cost of the QRIS system related to overall system improvement (cost of quality). Subsequent studies also will assess differences in quality between Early Care and Education (ECE) programs at various levels on the Quality First rating scale (or with no rating), and to what extent changes in quality are associated

with improved child outcomes. Taken together, these studies will help ensure that Arizona – through Quality First – has a quality improvement and rating system that is valid, highly effective, successfully supports improvements and sustainable changes in quality in

individual ECE programs, and contributes to building a stronger statewide ECE system. For additional information on the study, please visit FirstThingsFirst.org/Quality.

FTF Investments Prevent Loss of Millions in Federal Child Care Funds

In addition to improving the quality of early care and education for thousands of Arizona's young children, FTF's child care quality improvement investments also ensure that the state's child care voucher program is able to make full use of available federal child care funds.

The State of Arizona currently receives more than \$125 million per year in federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant funds. Since the grant's inception, the Department of Economic Security (DES) has been designated by the governor as the lead agency for the CCDF. DES is also responsible for the operation of the State's subsidized child care program, for which CCDF dollars provide the bulk of the funding.

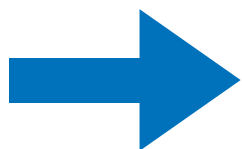
CCDF funds are used in a number of ways, including ensuring that low-income working families have access to safe, reliable child care (which may reduce instances of abuse or neglect because children are not left to be cared for in unsafe environments), and to provide child care for families providing temporary placement to children in the child welfare system (such as foster families and relatives).

The CCDF grant requires that the State provide both Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and matching funds. Specifically, Arizona cannot claim a \$37 million portion of the total CCDF grant unless the State expends \$30 million in non-federal dollars on child care-related activities. Historically the State met the MOE and matching requirement with State General Fund dollars appropriated by the Legislature to DES for additional child care vouchers. Non-CCDF appropriations, including General Fund and other appropriated fund sources, reached a high point of \$69.1 million in fiscal year 2008. Due to significant reductions in General Fund revenues resulting from the economic recession, the Legislature has drastically reduced non-CCDF appropriations since that year. In fiscal year 2012, all General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers were eliminated, although some were briefly restored in fiscal year 2015.

The Legislature's elimination of General Fund appropriations to child care vouchers in 2012 resulted in the State's inability to meet the CCDF's MOE and matching requirements, thus threatening the loss of tens of millions of dollars for child care vouchers annually.

Over the 8 years this MOU has been in place, Arizona has been able to leverage more than

\$300 Million



in federal child care funds that otherwise

WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST.

In order to continue to access Arizona’s full allotment of CCDF dollars, FTF collaborated with the Governor’s Office and DES in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to leverage FTF investments as the MOE and State match. These expenditures have included the various components of quality improvement efforts – including assessing programs, coaching providers on quality improvement and professional development for early educators to expand their skills working with young children – as well as Quality First Scholarships. Throughout the eight years this MOU has been in place (see Figure 2), Arizona has been able to leverage nearly \$302.5 million in federal child care funds that otherwise would have been lost.

Figure 2. First Things First Investments Preserve Millions in Federal Child Care Funds

Federal Fiscal Year	FTF Match Provided	Federal Child Care Subsidy Dollars Drawn Down as Result of FTF–DES MOU
2011	\$10 M	\$40.5 M
2012	\$30 M	\$37.9 M
2013	\$30 M	\$37.2 M
2014	\$30 M	\$37.4 M
2015	\$34 M	\$37.8 M
2016	\$30 M	\$37.6 M
2017	\$30 M	\$37.4 M
2018	*\$30 M	*\$36.7 M
TOTAL	\$224 M	\$302.5 M

*Estimated

The growing importance of this FTF–DES collaboration on the child welfare system’s outcomes is clear. During the past few years, Arizona has seen explosive growth in the number of children in out-of-home care due to abuse or neglect. Between the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 and the middle of FFY2015, the total number of children in out-of-home care grew by 67 percent. As a result, the percentage of children birth to 5 years old served by the child care subsidy program who are involved with the child welfare system continues to rise. In FY2011, 28 percent of young children served by the program were involved with the child welfare system; by FY2017, that number was 44 percent. By ensuring that Arizona is able to draw down all available CCDF funds and by working to improve the quality of care in licensed and certified child care and preschool settings, FTF is helping to promote quality early learning for thousands of Arizona’s youngest

children, including those in out-of-home care whose foster families use DES child care vouchers.

Through all these efforts, Quality First has made quality early learning available throughout the state. Quality early learning experiences are essential to the future of Arizona. High quality early education prepares Arizona’s children for school and lays a strong foundation for their future, and ours. Program improvement and rating efforts, like Quality First, offer transparent measures of Arizona’s earliest educators and the quality of care they provide. When coupled with clear models on the costs of high quality care, these will become a vital resource for parents, advocates and policymakers. They will also mark an important step toward a system which supports improved school readiness, and closes the achievement gaps for Arizona’s children.

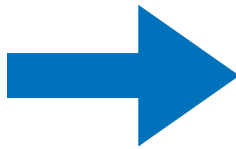


SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S FIRST AND BEST TEACHERS

First Things First honors the role of families as their child's first and best teachers. Programs aimed at strengthening and supporting families in that role range from a statewide helpline staffed by developmental experts to voluntary, one-on-one support in the home from a parent educator who can assist with particularly challenging situations, such as parenting a child with special needs.

54,514

children received screenings



to detect vision,
hearing and
developmental issues
that could become
learning problems
later on

Developmental screenings play a vital role in giving families information about their child's development across all areas: cognitive, physical and social-emotional. The screenings help identify areas in which children are developing typically, as well as areas in which additional assessment is needed to determine if a delay exists and the best course of treatment for the delay. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends a routine standardized screening assessment at well-child visits at 9, 18 and 30 (or 24) months and when there is clinical suspicion of a child being at risk for developmental delay. ^{vii}

Families play a vital role in the screening process because they know their children best and can provide detailed information about their child's behavior and abilities to physicians and other professionals. Some First Things First regions fund specific programs aimed at increasing developmental screenings in under-served areas. In addition, all FTF grantees that implement evidence-based home visiting programs complete developmental screenings at regular intervals during their work with families, so that they are able to tailor their advice to the specific needs of the children and caregivers they serve. In cases where the screenings result in concerns over whether a child is developing typically, screeners refer parents to their physician or, for children birth to 3 years old, to the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP). Inaccurate screenings and

inappropriate referrals have the potential to needlessly worry families, cause doctors to perform unnecessary follow-up screenings, and – in the case of the publicly funded early intervention program – cause scarce resources to be used on follow-up assessments for children who do not need further assessment or early intervention supports.

As part of comprehensive system-building efforts, First Things First and the Department of Economic Security (DES), along with other state agency partners, work to promote the use of evidence-based screening tools and to ensure that the screenings are completed accurately and used effectively in supporting families. In addition – for cases in which follow-up assessments were not recommended, but there are still concerns over a child's development in a specific area(s) – there is a need to provide resources to community partners so that they can help families with specific strategies to address their child's needs.

System-building work convened by First Things First with state agency and nongovernmental partners focused on early intervention has also identified the need to better support families whose children have identified developmental delays or concerns, but who do not qualify for early intervention programs. AzEIP, FTF, the Department of Health Services and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

(AHCCCS) are developing a Developmental Pathways Project to support the early childhood community in understanding the referral and intervention pathways available when there is a concern with a young child's development. The aim is to ensure that all agencies and stakeholders conducting screening are providing high quality screening and risk-appropriate referrals for families of children with concerns about their children's development, along with simultaneous work on the part of state agency policymakers to streamline the referral and service pathways, along with supporting families in navigating a complex system of supports and services.

In September 2016, First Things First and DES/AzEIP partnered in hosting a three-day train-the-trainers workshop for nearly 46 program administrators, AzEIP contractors, program managers and staff to learn how to effectively use two Ages and Stages Questionnaires (the ASQ-3 and the ASQ:SE-2), which are among the most valid and reliable developmental screening tools available.

The training included an in-depth exploration of the importance of screening and how to use the screening tools, how to engage families in the screening process, how to talk with families about the screening results and most importantly, how to partner with families and caregivers in setting the stage for their child's healthy development. This partnering with families includes the use of developmentally appropriate learning activities by developmental areas and stages of growth so that parents could support their child's development at home.

In turn, each of the workshop participants agreed to share with 10 more people over the course of the year the same information shared with them.

"Research shows that early detection of developmental concerns, and timely intervention, results in greater outcomes for that child and family. Having an effective, systematic approach to developmental screenings in Arizona is so important, and critical to assisting in addressing a variety of needs of children and families,"

– Jenee Sisnroy, Acting AzEIP Administrator

Jenee Sisnroy, Acting AzEIP Administrator, stressed the importance of accurate screening and appropriate referrals.

"When developmental screenings are performed by a family with the support of a well-trained professional, families are provided with valuable information on their child's development and supported through any concerns that may have presented during the screening. Families can also be given the support they need to be able to monitor their child's development on their own using developmental screening tools, which in turn will build upon that family's ability to confidently advocate for their child's developmental needs."

Sisnroy added that inaccurate screenings and inappropriate referrals do a disservice to families and strain an under-resourced system.

"There is an increasing strain to Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) specifically. AzEIP provides supports and services to families of children experiencing a significant delay in one or more areas of their development, or have an established condition. Given the fact that AzEIP only provides services for children with a significant delay, this has resulted in more than 66% of the referrals to AzEIP being an inappropriate referral for that child and family. This diminishes the resources available to AzEIP-eligible children and families, as well as results in frustration and a lack of support for families when their child is not experiencing a significant delay but still has developmental concerns," Sisnroy said.

"AzEIP is very thankful for our partnership with First Things First, and was able to benefit from the First Things First funded ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE Train the Trainer session in fall of 2016. This was an incredible opportunity to increase community screening efforts and to educate our early intervention providers and community partners in appropriate screening practices." Sisnroy, a seasoned professional, said she was surprised at the impact of the training.

"Being a provider in the field, I have completed several hundreds of developmental screenings with families, and would say that prior to the training, my confidence level on administering the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE was high. In

fact, in all honesty, it was so high that I really could not wrap my head around how something so simple and so straight-forward, could require a 3-day training. I stood corrected!" Sisnroy said.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of knowledge I gained during this training. We were provided a platform to engage and participate in meaningful conversations and brainstorming sessions, facilitated by subject matter experts. Many participants discovered they had been incorrectly administering and scoring these developmental screenings. This opportunity created a plethora of trainers in Arizona, and many of those participants have been conducting trainings across the state. The training efforts are currently underway, and we are looking forward to comparing data from before and after the training to analyze the outcomes."

Initial data indicate that a focus on professional development and other strategies to promote more accurate screenings and referral may be having a

system-level impact, as well. Between September 2015 and September 2016, AzEIP received referrals for 15,242 children between birth and 3 years old. Of those, 5,687 (37%) exited prior to eligibility, meaning that they were not referred for further assessment. By comparison, data from October 2016 through June 2017 (following the ASQ Training of Trainers) show that of 11,766 referrals, 5,135 (44%) exited prior to eligibility determination. This means that they were screened and not referred for further assessment. As one component of the training of trainers was to help encourage risk-appropriate referrals, this data demonstrates that fewer inappropriate referrals are coming to AzEIP. Increasing the appropriate use of developmental screenings and increasing awareness among providers of which children should be referred for further assessment mean fewer children are being referred inappropriately. It also means that AzEIP can use more of its scarce resources to address the needs of eligible children and that families of children not eligible for AzEIP services can be given other resources to support their child's healthy development.

Over 600,000 Website Page Views in FY2017: Reaching Millennial Families with Digital Resources

When it comes to ensuring that high-quality parenting information is available to all families, First Things First's efforts mirror how today's families access information and the formats that they respond to most. Through a \$300,000 grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, First Things First completed extensive market research to better understand how to more effectively reach today's new parents – 90 percent of whom are millennials – to increase awareness about the importance of the early years and ensure parents have needed tools and resources.

The research revealed that today's parents want information that is convenient to access "in the moment", usually in response to an immediate need

that they face with their young child. Millennial parents are more likely to work outside the home and more likely to be parenting on their own. Not surprisingly, millennial parents – who are digital natives – regularly turn to online sources for parenting information – mainly on mobile devices. In addition, there is immense competition for parents' attention in those digital spaces, coupled with a lack of trusted sources which can lead to parents feeling confused and overwhelmed.

Based on the research, First Things First identified a clear opportunity to better reach Arizona's diverse parents and caregivers with trustworthy, supportive early childhood information through a robust digital content strategy.

1

The first phase of that strategy was completed in November 2016, with the launch of the organization's redesigned website – FirstThingsFirst.org. The site features improved content and functionality – including the ability to respond for best viewing on whatever device is used, including smartphones and tablets.



2

The second phase of the strategy was implemented in late 2016 with production and distribution of digital content – such as short videos, social media posts and infographics. The content was adapted from an existing Resource Guide that is part of the Arizona Parent Kit, which is offered to families as they leave the hospital with their newborn. Research showed that families felt the Guide was the most useful part of the kit because it contains information across a large variety of topics. The result is a series of short, engaging pieces of digital information that parents can readily access. Each piece of content is “tagged” so that parents are offered related content the longer they remain on the site. They also are able to search the entire site for other topics of interest.



3

The third phase of the strategy is on-going: strategically promoting and distributing the content to reach parents where they are online. This includes traditional and digital advertising that targets parents, families and caregivers of young children, with the following specific goals:

- **Raise awareness** of the importance of the early years to future school and life success;
- **Position FTF** as a trusted source of information on children's health and learning;
- **Remind parents** that everyday positive interactions with their babies, toddlers and preschoolers promote healthy development;
- **And connect parents/families** with useful parenting information available via FirstThingsFirst.org and FTF's various social media outlets.

Engagement with the initial content offered is very encouraging. **In FY2017, First Things First's new digital Parent Kit received more than 33,000 page views.** Initial engagement information will be used to develop key performance indicators that will be benchmarked and tracked over time to gauge success, as well as provide data for future decision-making.

In addition, best practice in content marketing requires continuous fresh content to capture audience attention. FTF will continue to explore opportunities to leverage additional resources and develop strategic partnerships to add more depth and breadth to the information available online. In addition, First Things First will continue to improve the functionality of the site, including a searchable online database for families who want to engage with early childhood programs in their community.

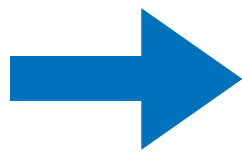


THOUSANDS OF CAREGIVERS EXPAND THEIR SKILLS IN ENGAGING YOUNG MINDS

In Arizona, 60 percent of children birth to 5 years old live in families where all of the adults work. In order to work, families must place their children with paid or volunteer caregivers during all or part of the day. In addition, many families who care for their children at home choose to supplement their child's learning with educational experiences outside of the home.

1,557

Early childhood educators



expanded their
skills with the
help of a college
scholarship.

Numerous studies demonstrate the importance of young children's relationships with their teachers to their future success in school. Highly qualified early childhood teachers can significantly affect a child's cognitive outcomes, specifically early literacy and language development, letter knowledge and writing skills. ^{viii} High quality teacher-child interactions have been found to predict academic skills, language skills and social skills among young children. ^{ix}

The professional development needs of early childhood professionals vary greatly. Some may have very little knowledge of early childhood development and health. Some may be pursuing a college certificate or degree in early childhood. And, others may already have degrees, but need to continue their education in order to keep up with the latest early childhood research or best practice.

Early childhood teachers can face numerous barriers to their professional development, including financial, time and transportation constraints and access to coursework.^x For example, the number and types of educational classes available to working professionals

during evenings and weekends may be limited.

First Things First supports the education and on-going professional development of those caring for and teaching young children in a variety of ways. Through its Career and Professional Development Website, AZEaryChildhood.org, First Things First offers early childhood professionals a one-stop-shop for information to support their on-going skill development. This web-based system enables early childhood professionals and those interested in a career in early education to: 1. Keep a record of their experience, education, professional development and credentials in a central location; 2. Apply for college scholarships and track their certificate/degree achievement; and; 3. Find and register for community-based professional development opportunities. The resources available include information about the standards for early childhood professionals, links to national and state organizations, including community colleges, and a job bank.

In order to access this information, early childhood professionals must sign up on the workforce registry.

The registry gives professionals a centralized location to store and track professional development information, which is often needed to access educational opportunities or apply for jobs. They can also search for a job and apply for college scholarships. **In FY2017, 27,218 early childhood professionals had accounts in the registry, exceeding First Things First's target (25,000) by almost 9 percent.** In addition, 1,557 early childhood educators expanded their skills to provide quality education and developmental supports to infants, toddlers and preschoolers with the help of a college scholarship.

Many families do not choose to put their child in formal early learning settings, either because they prefer to have their child cared for by a relative, friend or neighbor, or because they simply cannot afford a licensed child care provider. Scholars estimate that from a third to one half of all children under 5 in the U.S. are in FFN child care arrangements, rendering this form of care as the most common non-parental child care arrangement for young children in the country. ^{xi}

Although they are not professional educators, these early caregivers are among a child's first teachers. As such, they need information and resources to support the healthy development and learning of children in their care. First Things First supports skill-building of these informal early caregivers through its Family, Friend and Neighbor strategy. Caregivers receive a variety of classes and support aimed at increasing their understanding of health and safety practices and enhancing their knowledge of children's early development. **In FY2017, 1,274 relatives and other community caregivers completed a series of trainings to increase their understanding of brain development and strategies to support young children's learning.**

One program model funded through this strategy is the Arizona Kith and Kin Project, operated by the Association for Supportive Child Care. The program provides a 14-week, two-hour support group training series for family, friend and neighbor caregivers. The training sessions are held at various community locations.

In a four-year study funded by First Things First, researchers observed a variety of improved outcomes as a result of participation in the Kith and Kin Project, including better:

- Health and safety (environment and practices);
- Provider-child communication patterns;
- Provider-child engagement;
- Engagement in learning activities; and
- Providers' basic knowledge about child development. ^{xii}

In addition, researchers found statistically significant increases in the following practices:

- Effective teaching practices;
- Bi-directional and uni-directional communication;
- Children's pre-literacy skills increased from 'Average Skills,' to 'Strong Skills';
- Providers' literacy environment scores increased from 'Poor' to 'Excellent'; and
- Providers' language and literacy instructional and social supports increased from 'Fair' to 'Above Average'. ^{xiii}

Through surveys, researchers also found that providers reported that they:

- Provided more learning activities;
- Had improved their health and safety practices;
- Had better relationships with the children in their care; and
- Felt more confident and competent in their role as a provider. ^{xiv}

PARTNERSHIPS EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG KIDS AND STRENGTHEN ARIZONA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

There are nearly 547,000 young children in Arizona, and their needs are as diverse as our state's communities. No one organization can ensure that children have all of the support they need in order to arrive at school prepared to be successful. First Things First works in a variety of ways to maximize the resources available to support young children's health and learning. These efforts encompass collaborations that impact children statewide, as well as community-based partnerships that enhance opportunities for children at the local level.

FTF Investments Prevent the Loss of \$302.5M in Federal Child Care Funds

As detailed on pages 21–22, FTF's child care quality improvement investments ensure that more children have access to high quality early learning and that the state's child care voucher program is able to make full use of available federal child care funds. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES, administrators of the program), FTF investments in quality early learning allow DES to draw down approximately \$37 million more per year in federal funds. Throughout the eight years this MOU has been in place, Arizona has been able to leverage almost \$303 million in federal child care funds that otherwise would have been lost.

National, State Foundations Invest over \$1.1 million to Enhance Parenting Information, Expand Quality Early Learning

This year marked the culmination of an 18-month project to enhance and expand the parenting education resources available to all Arizona families through First Things First (see pages 26–28). The project was funded in part by a \$300,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg

Foundation (WKKF) of Battle Creek, Michigan. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

In addition to allowing FTF to provide an even more robust array of parenting resources to families, the grant acknowledgement of FTF's position as a recognized and trusted source of quality early childhood information and programs in Arizona.

With the Kellogg Foundation's support, First Things First was able to develop innovative approaches for providing more parenting information to families, including taking advantage of new parents' changing communications preferences by offering an array of web-based parenting resources through a variety of digital platforms (see pages 26–28). Now, Arizona parents of young kids have ready access to credible early childhood information that is engaging, user-friendly and adaptable to their needs.

In addition to the digital resources, parents of Arizona's newborns continue to have access to a wealth of parenting information through the Arizona Parent Kit. First Things First provides the Kit free of charge to parents of all newborns in the state before they leave the hospital or birthing center. The kit includes information about parenting resources, links to the digital site and a board book to encourage daily reading with babies. Now, thanks to support from the Delta Dental Foundation of Arizona, the kit also contains information and tools to support young children's oral health.

The information, developed in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Delta Dental Foundation, reminds young parents of the importance of good oral health to their child's health and success, and helps them to start building those healthy habits early. This partnership has been so successful, that the Delta Dental Foundation will continue to fund it in to the 2018 fiscal year.

Early Learning Opportunities Expanded Statewide and in Local Communities

As detailed on pages 15–21, First Things First's signature strategy, Quality First, has improved the quality of early learning of available to 63,754 young children statewide. Ensuring that educational settings for infants, toddlers and preschoolers are of high quality requires time, periodic assessment to build on strengths and identify areas for improvement, coaching and financial support. Currently, there are not sufficient resources available at First Things First to enroll all programs interested in participating in Quality First. Through collaborative and innovative partnerships, however, enrollment continues to grow, giving more children access to higher quality settings. For example, **an \$800,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation will allow the program to expand by 50 providers statewide in fiscal year 2018.** An emphasis will be placed on recruiting programs in under-served areas and settings that serve high percentages of at-risk children, such as children living in poverty or involved with the child welfare system. The Kellogg Foundation grant also will allow First Things First to test program modifications that may reduce overall program costs and allow more programs to be enrolled in the program.

Partnerships with municipal governments and Arizona corporations also are expanding the number of children served by quality settings. The City of Tempe (located in the FTF East Maricopa Region) recently launched a city-funded initiative to expand preschool availability for approximately 300 children living in poverty.

Through a partnership with First Things First, all 15 preschool expansion sites will be enrolled in Quality First, meaning that they will be receiving support to continuously improve the quality of early learning provided to the vulnerable children they serve.

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, a partnership with a local corporation has expanded learning options available to families in rural communities. Freeport-McMoRan is the world's largest publicly traded copper producer and a significant gold, oil and natural gas producer. Their mining interests in Arizona include Morenci, Sierrita, Bagdad, Safford and Miami. One of the company's core values is to enhance partnerships with governments and stakeholders in the communities where they operate. This is done through community trust funds or social funds which are managed by community members who determine the allocation of funds to programs that focus on education, health and economic development. It is also achieved via direct community investments through organizations such as the United Way. **In fiscal year 2017, Freeport-McMoRan provided an additional \$66,000 in scholarships through their local United Way so that more young children could access early learning through Quality First.**

Local partnerships also are expanding the support given to families to strengthen parents in their role as their child's first teacher. **In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the Arizona Community Foundation of the Gila Valley has provided a \$2,500 grant, renewable for two additional years, to First Things First to provide kindergarten summer camp to children in three communities that lack preschool options, including Duncan, Solomon and Bylas.** At the two-week camp, kindergarten teachers offer fun learning activities that strengthen early literacy and math skills. The camp also gives the children the opportunity to become familiar with their new teacher, meet children who will be in their class and tour the school campus. Parents are asked to attend two days of the camp, so that they can receive a kit with educational materials and tips on how to use the resources in the kit to support their child's learning and prepare them to enter school. The goal of the camp is for children to be prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

Countywide Collaboration Results in True Community School

During summer 2016, First Things First (FTF) Yuma Regional Director Rudy Ortiz started a conversation with his regional council members. What were their thoughts on supporting a Community School in Yuma Elementary School District One? The Community School model integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement with the goal of improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. The model stresses the importance of quality early childhood education as a critical component that helps break the poverty cycle for families.

“Early childhood is the starting place. By locating everything on an elementary school campus, it intertwines it as one. You then have health, social services and early education as part of the fabric for this community.”

– Rudy Ortiz, FTF Yuma Regional Director

Regional council members liked the idea, but they wanted to know what school officials thought.

“Right away we got buy-in from school leaders,” Ortiz said.

The next step was securing support from community leadership. Ortiz began talking with Sunset Community Health Center to discuss the idea of setting up a clinic on campus. By November 2016, the FTF Yuma council felt comfortable supporting the Community School effort as one of its unfunded strategies. The FTF state Board approved the strategy in January. Things moved quickly from there.

O.C. Johnson School was chosen for the pilot. Located in northern Yuma, with nearly 500 students, it is a true neighborhood school with 90 percent of students walking to school. There is high poverty in the area with demographic research showing many rental

homes within the school’s boundaries. There are also many non-traditional families, with many students living in foster homes or with grandparents. O.C. Johnson Principal Angela Logan said she sees many aunts and uncles raising kids.

“I know a lot of our families do the best they can,” she said. “We have a good relationship with our students. They’re open with what they’re dealing with at home.”

A committee of teachers was formed to determine what was needed to support families’ success and which programs could help families gain knowledge to be able to support the students. The preschool, a health clinic and food bank were easy answers, but community members shared a great need for employment resources.

“Sometimes our kiddos come to school worried about outside things, like a parent not having a job,” Logan said. “With the Community School we’re hoping that this will hit all of their needs and meet the basic necessities of our kiddos so they can focus on the fun part of school instead of the stressful part.”

Ortiz compared himself to playing matchmaker with the agencies. Looking for the best fit for both the community organizations and the school community’s needs. Regional Council Member Mary Beth Turner, who is the preschool coordinator for the school district, helped secure an Early Childhood Education–Preschool Development Grant through the Arizona Department of Education to start a preschool on campus.

“There was a need for early childhood education programs on campus,” Ortiz said. “To start a strong foundation, we have to have families engaged from the beginning.”

This type of engagement includes not just the preschool, but family support and early literacy programs, Ortiz said. Arizona PBS will offer early literacy support. Then Sunset Community Health Center approved opening a five-day a week clinic on campus available to the entire community.

“This is a place that then becomes familiar, before a child even reaches preschool,” Ortiz said. “Everyone will feel comfortable.”

The plan was falling into place, which Ortiz credits to partners who were ready to go. Goodwill Yuma, a branch of Goodwill of Central Arizona, agreed to set up a resource center on campus to help families with job searches and resumes.

“Goodwill has been a strong champion,” Ortiz said. “They totally get it. It wasn’t in my original vision, but it is an example of a nontraditional form of collaboration. This came out of the community telling us what was needed and Goodwill stepped up.”

Another example of a nontraditional partner was the Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona, which agreed to host a troop on campus. The Community School pilot will run through the 2017–2018 school year, then the committee will regroup and see what is working and what isn’t. Logan is excited about the changes her school is about to experience.

“We know that we have our kids for seven hours a day. Then they’re away for 17,” she said. “There are opportunities for growth outside of school. As the whole family grows, it will in turn help our students succeed. Since we’re a walking school, all of our students are close. The families don’t have to worry about finding transportation. Everybody is right here.”



BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM AND IMPACT OF FIRST THINGS FIRST

The job of getting kids ready for school starts the day they are born, and no one organization can do it alone. Arizonans created First Things First to be a critical partner in creating a statewide early childhood system that prepared children for success in kindergarten and beyond. In 2010, First Things First convened a statewide Task Force that identified the key components of what that system would look like. At the same time, that Task Force recommended nine areas in which First Things First should focus its work in order to contribute meaningfully to that broader early childhood system.

Since that time, First Things First has made significant progress in its work throughout those nine priority areas; some of those successes are detailed throughout this and previous annual reports.

Highlights include:

-  The percentage of early learning programs meeting or exceeding the rigorous standards of Quality First increased from 25% to 71%.
-  8,809 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers from low-income families have had access to a higher standard of early learning with the help of a preschool or child care scholarship.
-  The percentage of kindergarteners with untreated tooth decay has decreased from 35% to 27%.
-  The percentage of young children who had never been to a dentist was cut by more than half, dropping from 25% to 10%.
-  Mental health consultation programs supported by FTF have been shown to enhance teachers' confidence in dealing with students' social-emotional needs, improve teacher-child relationships and prevent expulsions.
-  Court Teams funded through FTF have been effective in improving outcomes for abused and neglected children, including reducing the amount of time children are in foster care and in reducing returns to state care.

In order to build on those achievements and ensure that First Things First investments continue to advance the work of the broader early childhood system, the First Things First Board convened its 2017 Early Childhood Task Force. The Task Force was charged with the reviewing the progress made to date, analyzing the current challenges and opportunities available in the early childhood system, and making recommendations to the statewide Board for the areas in which FTF should prioritize its work for the next five years.

The Task Force was comprised of almost 60 members, representing various stakeholders of the early childhood system including early educators, health professionals, businesses, faith communities, tribal representatives and state policymakers (see Appendix B for a full list of members).

In the initial stage of its work, the Task Force identified 12 priority roles First Things First should take within the system, and they are outlined in Figure 3. This does not mean that First Things First has sole responsibility for work in these areas of the early childhood system. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that First Things First has made significant progress in those areas already, or is otherwise better positioned to move work forward in those areas. In addition, having these roles identified as priorities for First Things First does not necessarily mean the organization will always lead efforts in those areas. Depending on the focus of the work, First Things First may act as a leader, a convener of system partners, a collaborator in work identified by other system partners, etc.

Figure 3. First Things First Early Childhood System Roles

	2010	2017
1. Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation – comprehensive early care and education system that is aligned both across the educational system.	X	X
2. Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment – quality standards for early childhood care and education program, curricula and assessments.	X	X
3. Quality, Access and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Setting – increase availability of & access to high quality, regulated, culturally responsive, affordable early care and education programs.	X	X
4. Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Service – increase access to high quality health care services and affordable health care coverage for children and their families.	X	X
5. Early Screening and Intervention – increase awareness of and access to a continuum of information, support and services for families and their children who have/are at risk of having developmental, physical and/or mental health issues.		X
6. Information and Education for Families – dissemination of high quality, diverse, and relevant information and education on the importance of the early years, child development, health, early education and related resources for families, providers, partners, and the public.		X
7. Supports and Services for Families – development, enhancement and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive and affordable services, supports and community resources for young children and their families.	X	X
*8. Professional Development System – development and enhancement of an early childhood professional development system that addresses availability, accessibility, affordability, quality and articulation.	X	X
Recruitment and Retention of Professionals in the Early Childhood System – recruitment, adequate compensation and retention of high quality, culturally diverse early childhood providers.		X
9. Early Childhood System Leadership – high quality, child and family centered, coordinated, integrated and comprehensive early childhood system that includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities.		X
*10. Coordinated Use of Early Childhood System Data – define and carry out roles related to collecting, analyzing and reporting data; and utilize data to design, develop, plan and evaluate the early childhood system.		X
Early Childhood System Evaluation – Provide leadership in the evaluation of the early childhood system and collaborate with partners to utilize the results to foster continuous improvement of the system.		X
11. Building Public Awareness and Support – increase public awareness of and support for early childhood development, health and early education among partners, public officials, policy makers and the public.	X	X
12. Early Childhood System Funding – Secure, coordinate and advocate for resources required to develop and sustain the early childhood system.	X	X

*The Task Force determined that both of these priority roles go hand-in-hand and are to be considered as one combined role.

Nine of the 12 roles are the same as those identified by the previous Task Force, and three roles are new to First Things First (although, as mentioned previously, work had already begun in those areas). Based on these roles, the Board convened sub-committees of subject matter experts and First Things First stakeholders, including regional council members, to identify areas within each priority that First Things First could focus on over the next five years. The subcommittee made recommendations for funded programs, as well as areas in which First Things First could promote policy changes and/or foster collaborations to expand services in those areas. The subcommittees also identified systemic measures of progress that they focus areas would contribute to.

On July 11, the First Things First Board approved the Priority Areas, Focus Areas and Systemic Measures of Progress recommended by the Arizona Early Childhood Task Force. A full list is available at FirstThingsFirst.org/Task-Force. In the coming months, organizational action plans will be developed that outline the strategies and tactics First Things First will implement in order to make progress in its priorities and focus areas. In addition, specific measures will be developed that will **a)** measure the annual progress achieved in that area, and **b)** ensure that First Things First is contributing to the systemic Measures of Progress identified by the Task Force.

Don Budinger, founder of the Rodel Foundations and co-chair of the Early Childhood Task Force, described

his view of the work of First Things First and the Task Force.

“I am absolutely, totally and completely impressed with the work of First Things First,” Budinger said.

“I walked away from this venture in wonder at the incredible work of this task force – over 100 people that came to all the meetings. They worked very hard to define and further clarify the work of First Things First.”

“Without First Things First, the state of Arizona would be in a whole lotta trouble,” Budinger said.

“There is no other single organization that is making this level of effort, making this level of sacrifice to serve 500,000 kids birth to 5 in our state.”

– Don Budinger, founder of the Rodel Foundations and co-chair of the Early Childhood Task Force

Budinger said the next step is to engage multiple audiences with the story of the needs of young children and the impact FTF has had on kids birth to 5 across Arizona.

“I think you would find the business community would want to be a good partner,” Budinger said. “And, at some point, perhaps the state would step up and be a partner again in funding early childhood.”

National Panel of 11 Experts Help Build Solid Framework to Assess Impact

Evaluation and research have been a critical component of First Things First since its inception. FTF strives for transparency and holds itself, and its collaborations with partners, accountable for achieving intended outcomes for children, families and the early childhood system. Additionally, high-quality information for decision-making increases the effectiveness of planning and improves the implementation and potential impact of programs.

In January 2012, First Things First convened the Early Childhood Research and Evaluation National Advisory Panel (Panel) to provide recommendations to the First Things First Board on developing a comprehensive statewide and regional research and evaluation framework. Panel members' expertise included evaluation design and methodology, early childhood development and education, place-based systems level evaluation, school readiness, state prekindergarten evaluation, special needs, and health.

Additionally, Arizona early education experts participated to ensure that a unique state-specific perspective was included. The Panel engaged in extensive discussion and worked collaboratively with First Things First to define an overarching, long-term approach to research and evaluation.

The Panel recommended a long-term vision that includes funding of early childhood strategies that already have a significant research or evidence base, capacity-building, data collection and analysis, and strategy-specific research and evaluation to support ongoing program implementation and improvement. In the case of funded programs with a significant research or evidence base, the National Panel recommended that First Things First focus on fidelity in implementation and to consider expanded data collection in those strategies that would demonstrate the long-term impact of those investments for children and families.

To that end, First Things First did an in-depth examination of the research support for three heavily invested strategies: Home Visitation, Parenting Education and Oral Health. The review included examination of almost 50 programs models in an effort to better understand the key program components associated with program implementation of the selected models, and to gain a better understanding of the level of evidence supporting the various models' outcomes for the children and families they are targeted to serve.

Based on this work, FTF conducted revisions to the Standards of Practice for all three strategies that

include expanded guidance to its staff and regional partnership councils on the program components and strategy outcomes, as well as enhanced data collection for each strategy to offer additional support for the short- and long-term outcomes expected or achieved by each strategy. It also included the expansion of the number and types of program models that can be funded in each area, including models that may have a less developed research base, but show promise in meeting the needs of a specific high-needs or at-risk community. In those cases, funding of those models requires that the regional partnership council supporting that strategy include in its funding total sufficient funds to perform an evaluation of the funded strategy.

First Things First contracts with community-based providers to implement the vast majority of its funded programs through multi-year contracts. Since fiscal year 2019 is the first year of the next multi-year funding cycle, the new program and data requirements have been added to the scopes of work and data collection requirements for all grantees across the three strategies.

Combined with strategy specific studies funded by First Things First (including the Quality First studies outlined on pages 19–21 and the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory described on pages 39–41), these expanded data requirements will provide detailed information on the impact of Arizona's early childhood system and contribute to the research base for innovative approaches and promising practices.



FTF Supports 28 Kindergarten Teachers to Pilot School Readiness Assessment

All of First Things First's programmatic efforts are focused on one ultimate goal: ensuring that more Arizona children arrive at school prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Children who are prepared for kindergarten typically do better in school, are more likely to read at grade level by 3rd grade and more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. School readiness means more than knowing your ABCs, colors and numbers. It means that a child is ready for formal learning across all domains of development, including cognitive, social-emotional and physical development. Depending on the child's early learning environment, a variety of tools may be used to gauge the child's growth in all of these areas, but there is no one tool used by all providers. Similarly, there is no one tool used across Arizona school districts to determine children's state of readiness at kindergarten entry.

In 2013, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) with support from First Things First joined a multi-state consortium led by North Carolina to develop and test a Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI). The Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) is an assessment that kindergarten teachers can use to obtain an in-depth understanding of the developmental strengths and needs of every child as they enter kindergarten. It is intended to be used in the context of the formative assessment process. It will be used as the foundation for an ongoing progress monitoring tool to be used throughout the kindergarten school year to help teachers identify the depths of each child's knowledge and abilities in all areas of development:

- Social and Emotional;
- Language and Communication;
- Approaches to Learning;
- Cognitive; and
- Physical.

This dynamic, highly engaging process of monitoring children requires the intentional observation of children in order to truly understand their individual learning needs. Teachers gather multiple forms of evidence that may include observational/anecdotal notes, samples of meaningful work such as drawings or stories written by the child, voice recorded language samples, photographs of meaningful experiences, and videos of children figuring out complex problems or engaging in the process of discovery.

The wealth of information gleaned from this collection of evidence should be used to drive decision-making including:

- the planning of developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning;
- identifying individualized goals and systems of support, when needed; and
- the implementation of effective instructional strategies for individual children, for small groups, and for the classroom community of learners.

The KDI also provides information that teachers can use to partner with parents so that families understand their child's progress in all areas of development and so that they can engage in activities at home that best meet their child's individual needs.

Summary information from the KDI also can be used to inform early childhood decision-making, including the programs and services that are having the most impact on school readiness, and where additional supports may be needed in specific communities. For this reason, First Things First partnered with ADE to ensure that the KDI was tested with a representative group of kindergarten teachers statewide.

Feedback gathered from teachers who piloted the KDI was used by ADE to inform the Request for Proposals to identify a vendor who would develop the tools to train and support teachers as they implemented the KDI.

One of the teachers who participated in the pilot was Lisa Hoelzen, a kindergarten teacher in the Deer Valley Unified School District near Phoenix. Here is a summary of her experience:

Which constructs or domains stood out?

I can't say that any one particular one stood out, because as a collection of data, it allowed me to view my students as "whole" instead of simply looking at each one academically. I was able to see problems that might be holding a child back from reading comprehension that really involved their emotional regulation and not the reading comprehension in itself. The entire KDI encompasses everything I need to make decisions that will direct and alter my children's learning outcomes.

How did you fit the assessment process into your everyday classroom routine?

It is so easy to walk around with my iPad and/or flip video and take short videos of my children's discussions, learning, and misunderstandings and never interfere with what is going on in the classroom. It is quick, always on hand, and I am able to upload and add notes in the evening when everything is quiet and I have chance to reflect on the day. I don't have to add anything new or call over a child to do a one-on-one assessment. It is natural, ongoing and authentic.

How did the tool prove to be beneficial for conducting classroom observations?

It gave me immediate feedback where each child was on the continuum at any given moment. Every piece of data/information was all in one place where I could view it and look to see where the student needed to go. The checklists were so helpful because the details of the construct were included on each sheet.

What changes, if any, did you implement in your environment that allowed you to collect evidence for the domains included in this assessment?

I really didn't have to change my environment at all. My class is structured whereby my students are the leaders and learners and I am the facilitator. I am there to provide the structure needed for my students to take the lead. My physical environment is arranged in a way to make sure all this happens.

How did the tool prove to be beneficial for use during parent-teacher conferences?

I am now able to show parents short videos of their child's learning and/or misunderstanding. It also demonstrates the continuum of learning for my parents and where their child is currently and where he/she needs to progress. It provides me the tools necessary to completely inform my parents/families about their child's learning and growth.

How did you collect evidence for this assessment?

I have utilized all the means of collection – note taking, videos with the iPad, and videos with my flip video, microphone recording and using the checklists.

How did the tool make your teaching easier?

Every piece of data is now stored in one place – easily accessed with reports, Videos, notes and a continuum demonstrating where my students are currently and where I need to take them.

If applicable, can you explain how you implemented the assessment with children with Identified special needs and/or who were dual language learners?

I always have students that are not identified special education and ones that are already identified. I do not treat them any differently than I do all my

students. I assess them the same to see where they are in the continuum. The KDI does allow me, though, to demonstrate where each child is on the continuum when I am referring them for special services. I can pull up a video to show what the child is doing or not doing. It makes the referral process go much smoother and quicker.

How did you utilize the tool/information gathered to change or inform your instruction?

I am now able to immediately see where each child is and where I need to take him/her. I can pull up my data, look at the next step the child needs and I do it. I also look at all the construct data for each child to see if perhaps one construct is affecting another.

What do you think are the benefits to implementing this K-3 Assessment Process?

As stated above, it is non-invasive, timely, and on-going, all housed in one place, easy kid as whole kid – not just academically. It provides the continuum for learning and where my kids are at any given moment and where I need to take them.

The Arizona Board of Education has approved Teaching Strategies GOLD as Arizona's kindergarten developmental inventory and K-3 formative assessment and it will be available for use by any interested school district. A guidance document and other resources are being developed to support districts who want to implement the assessments on their own. As part of its commitment to on-going evaluation of the early childhood system, First Things First in partnership with ADE will work to establish a demonstration project to show how early childhood programs and services funded in a specific community contributed to children's success throughout kindergarten.



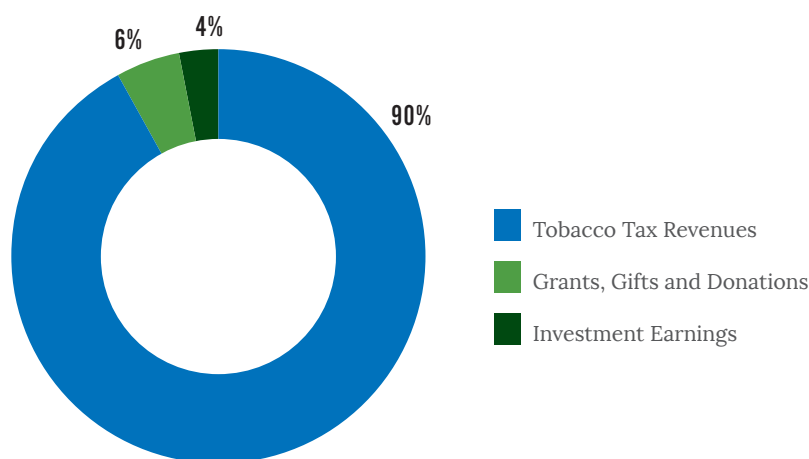
STATEWIDE FINANCIAL REPORT

First Things First is the only public funding source dedicated exclusively to the beginning of the education continuum. Emphasis is placed on getting resources directly to children and families through a network of community providers. In Fiscal Year 2017, First Things First received approximately \$139,733,499 in revenue, with tobacco tax revenues accounting for approximately \$125,496,618 of this total, or 90% of total revenues. Additionally, FTF received approximately \$6,021,748 from investment earnings and \$8,215,133 from gifts, grants and donations. The First Things First Board has strategically planned to ensure the sustainability of FTF's early childhood investments by commissioning independent projections of tobacco revenue, adopting a sustainability plan, and working with both public and private entities to leverage funds and maximize the resources available for early childhood programs. Investments in early childhood development and health programs and services that help prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond constituted approximately 93% of spending in FY2017.

Administrative expenses are kept low – approximately 7% in FY2017.

FY2017 Revenue by Source

Tobacco Tax Revenues	\$125,496,618
Grants, Gifts and Donations	\$8,215,133
Investment Earnings	\$6,021,748
TOTAL	\$139,733,499

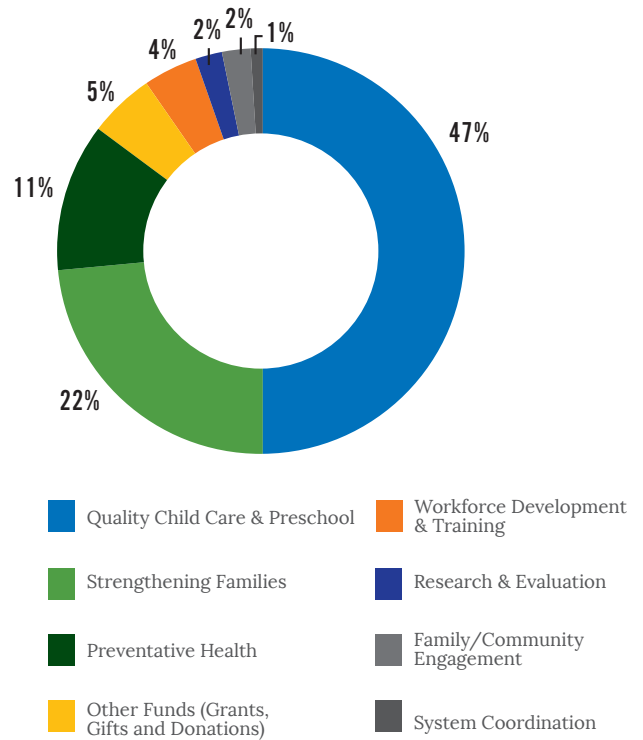


Note: Financial data presented are based on a modified accrual accounting methodology, and are unaudited at time of production and as such are subject to change.

FY2017 Expenditures

Programs and Services

Quality Child Care & Preschool	\$64,600,807
Strengthening Families	\$29,834,973
Preventative Health	\$14,555,145
Other Funds (Grants, Gifts and Donations)	\$6,616,744
Workforce Development & Training	\$5,901,642
Research & Evaluation	\$3,078,575
Family/Community Engagement	\$2,635,704
System Coordination	\$914,120

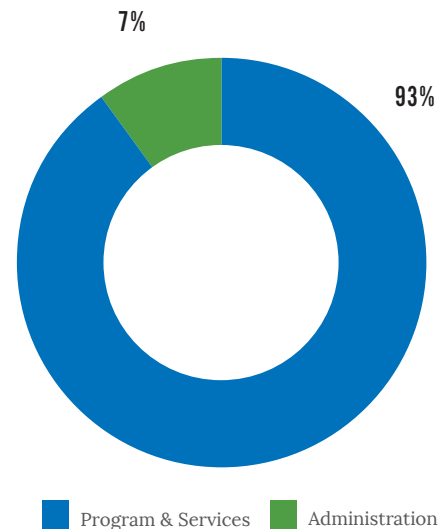


Support Activity

Administration & General	\$10,061,700
--------------------------	--------------

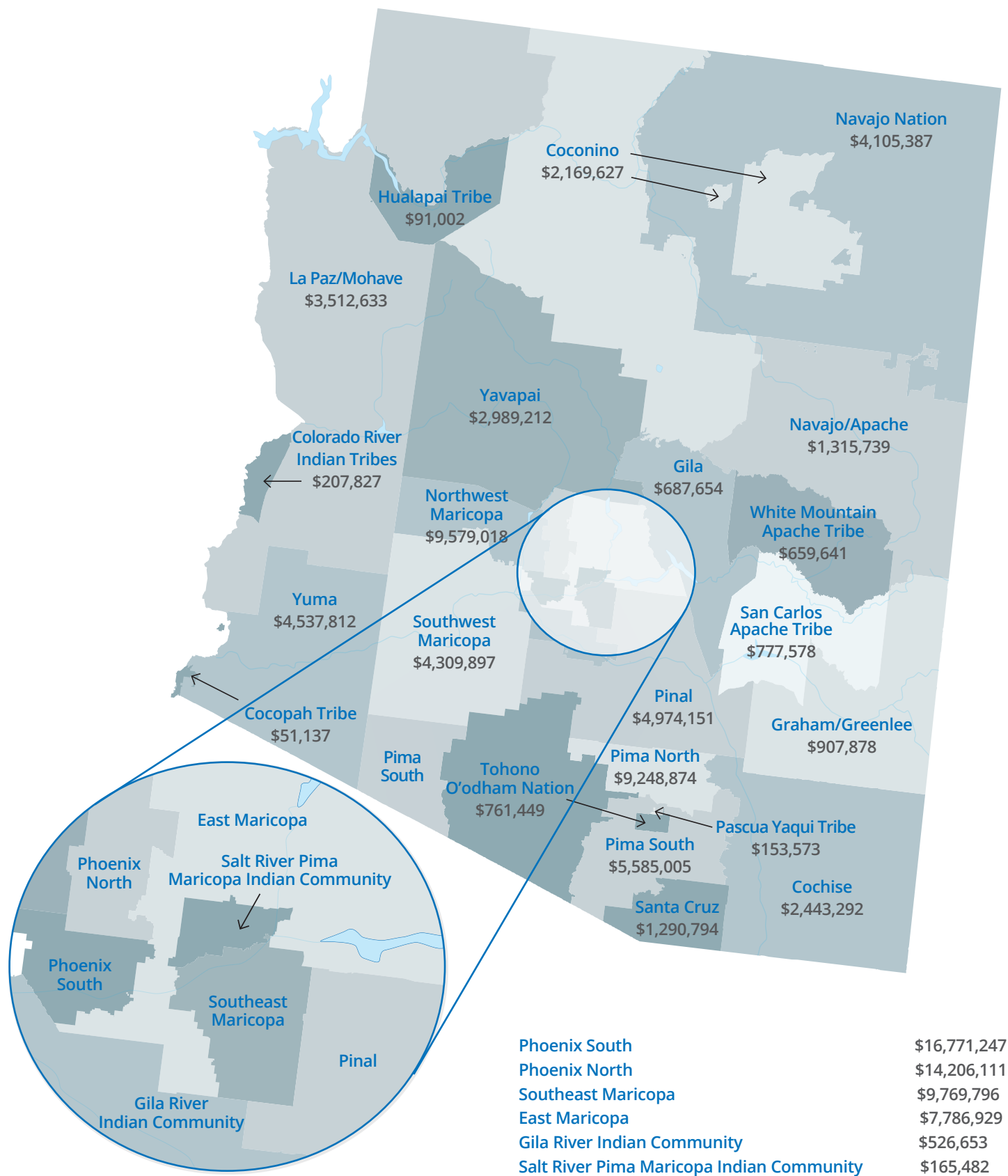
FY2017 Expenses by Category

Programs & Services	\$128,137,710
Administration	\$10,061,700
TOTAL	\$138,199,410



FY2017 INVESTMENTS ACROSS ARIZONA

State Funding Plan Total | \$8,818,778





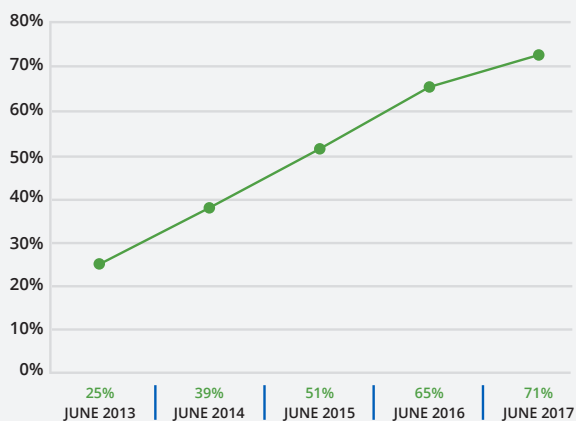
APPENDIX A

Information is not provided for regions where either a) the regional council does not participate in Quality First, or b) the regional councils' provider ratings are suppressed for confidentiality reasons, as the regional area has less than five total providers enrolled. This is consistent with progress data reported monthly to the First Things First Board.

Regional Profiles: Quality Improvement and Rating System Progress and Outcomes

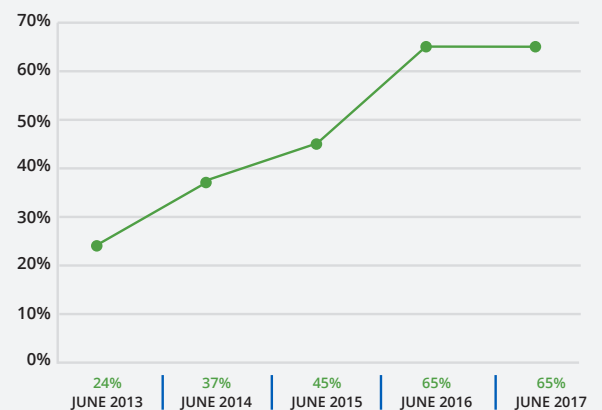
STATEWIDE

Participants with a Quality Level (3–5 stars) Rating



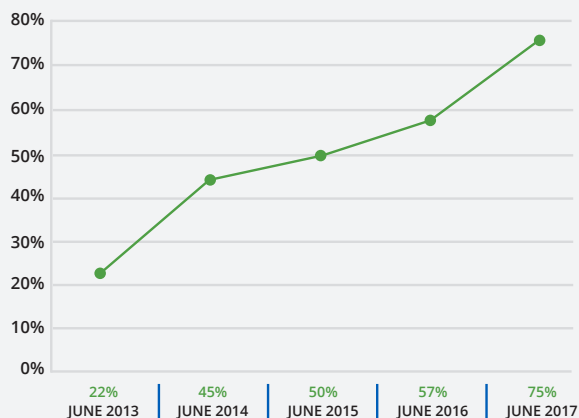
COCHISE

Participants with a Quality Level (3–5 stars) Rating



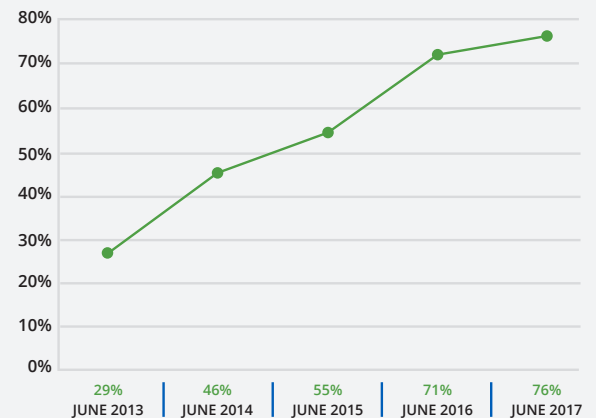
COCONINO

Participants with a Quality Level (3–5 stars) Rating



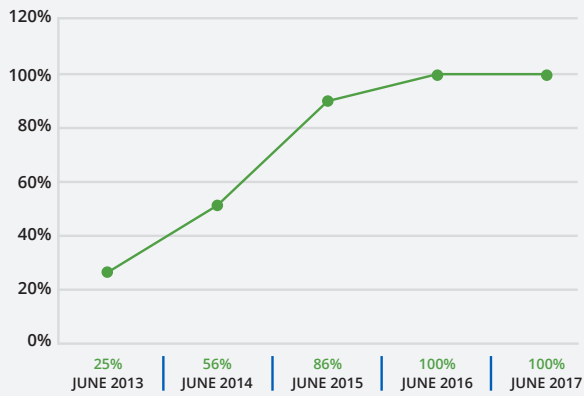
EAST MARICOPA

Participants with a Quality Level (3–5 stars) Rating



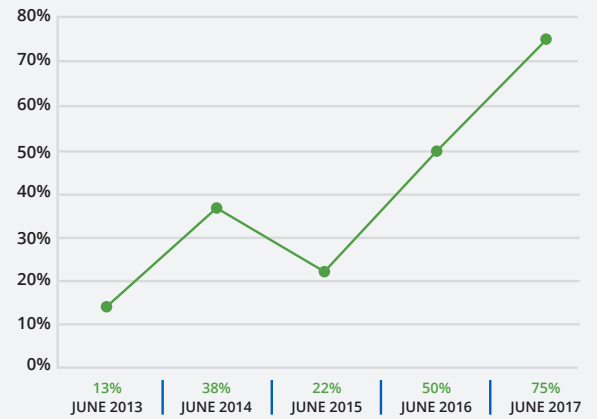
GILA

Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating



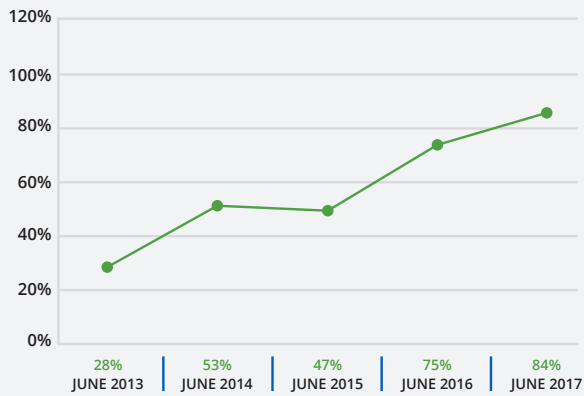
GRAHAM-GREENLEE

Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating



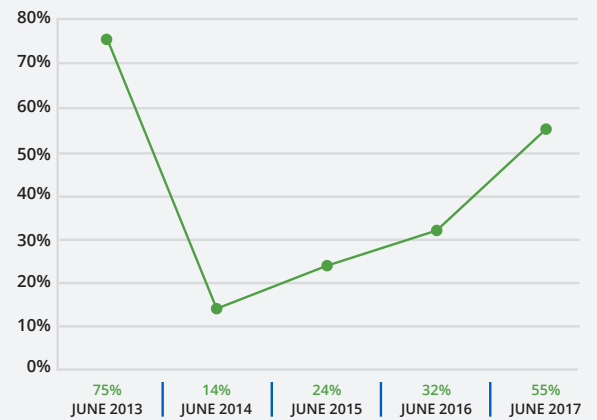
LA PAZ-MOHAVE

Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating



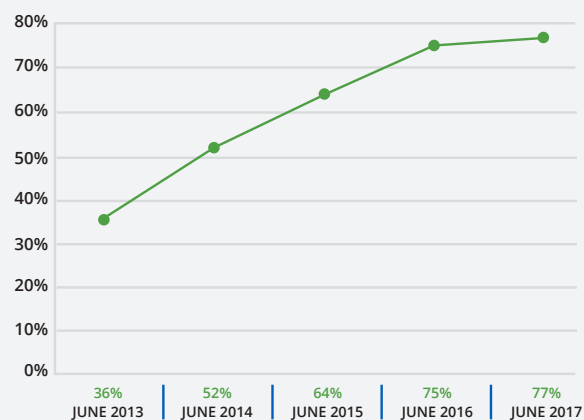
NAVAJO NATION

Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating



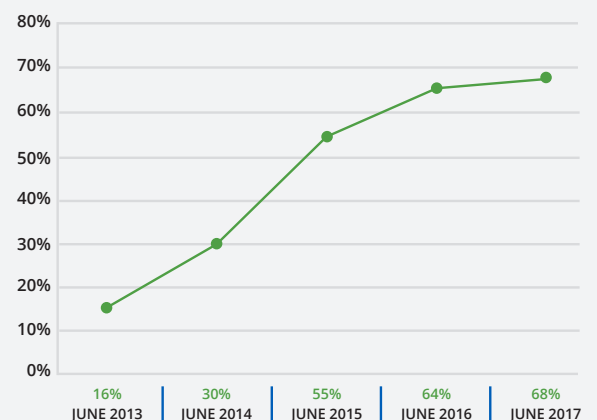
NORTHWEST MARICOPA

Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating

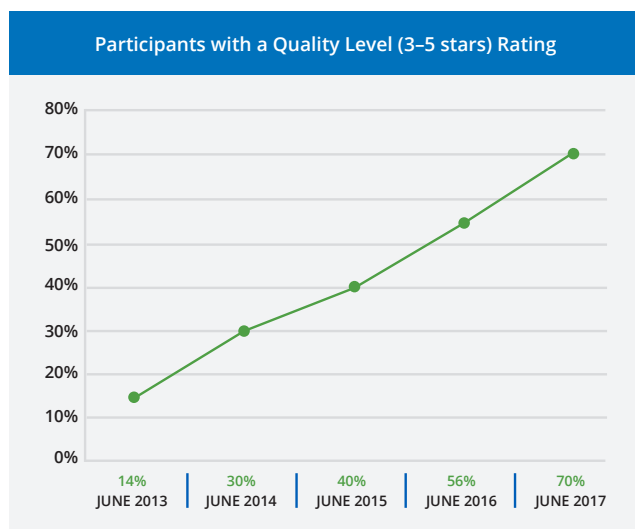


PHOENIX NORTH

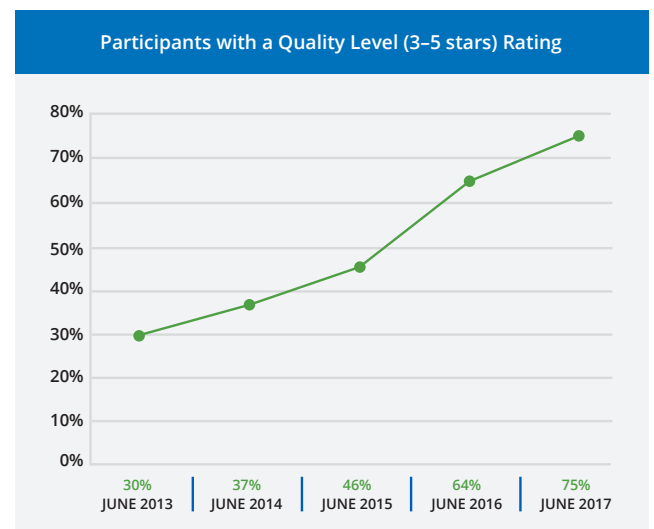
Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating



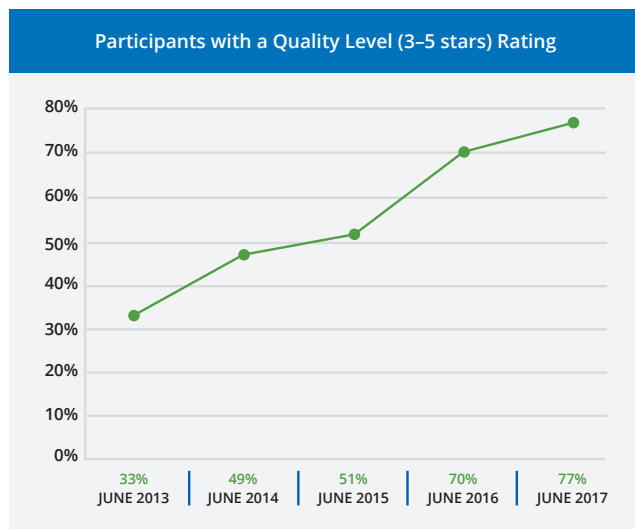
PHOENIX SOUTH



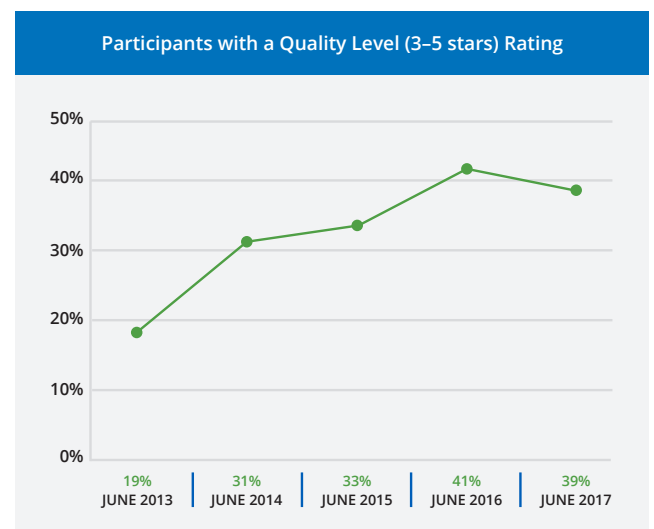
PIMA NORTH



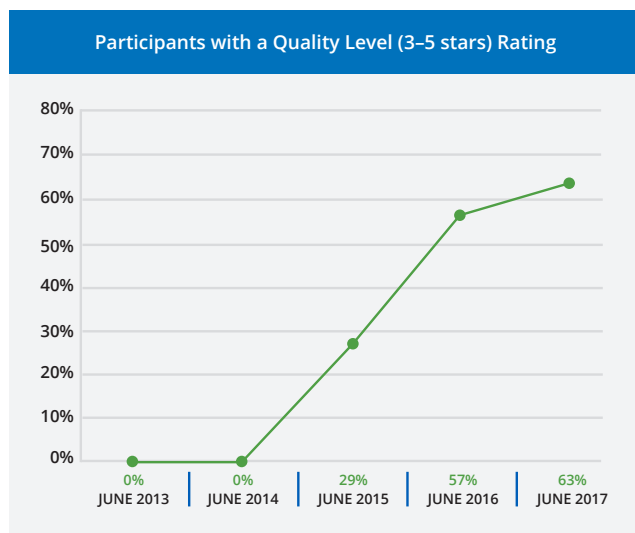
PIMA SOUTH



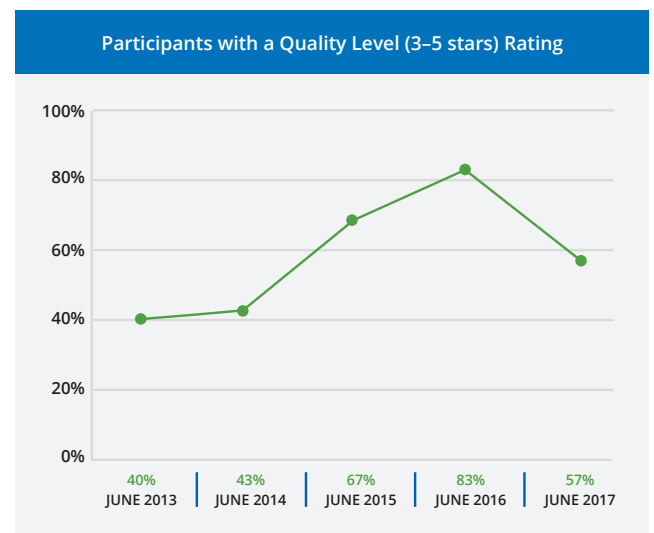
PINAL



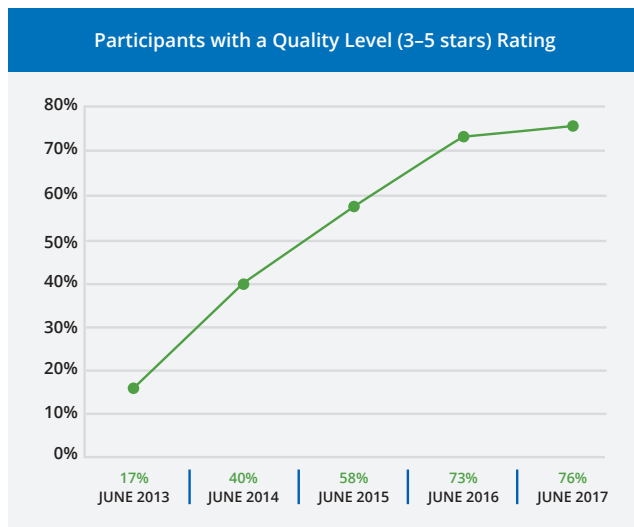
SAN CARLOS APACHE



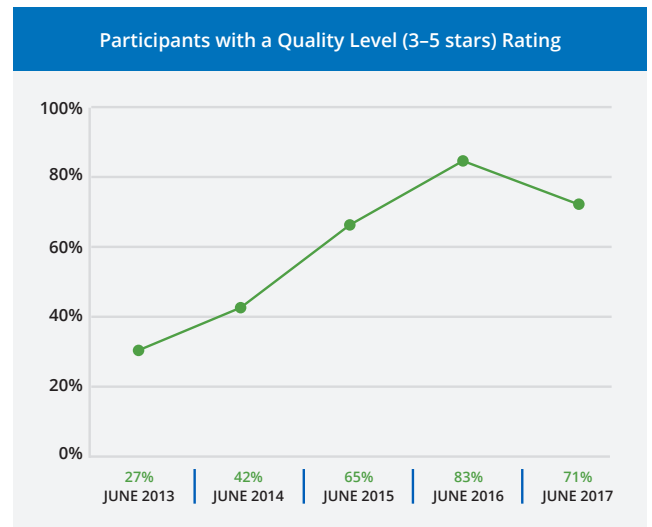
SANTA CRUZ



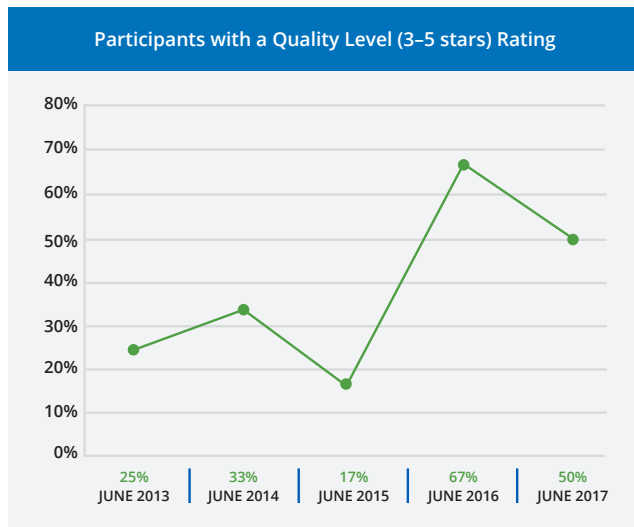
SOUTHEAST MARICOPA



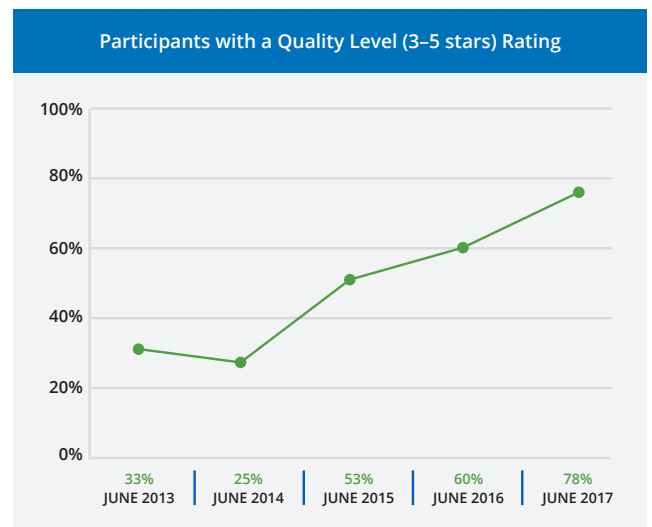
SOUTHWEST MARICOPA



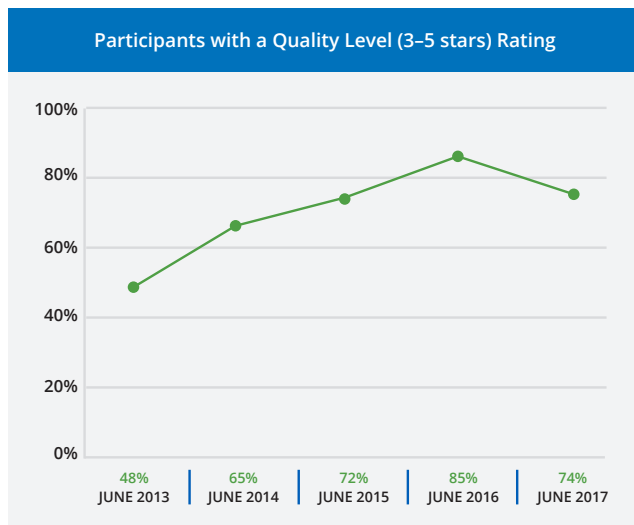
TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION



YAVAPAI



YUMA



Quality First providers are publicly rated once they have received at least two assessments (typically around two years of Quality First participation). In order to provide the most comprehensive data possible, these figures include data for both publicly rated programs and not publicly rated programs (those who have been in Quality First less than two assessment cycles).



APPENDIX B

Arizona Early Childhood Task Force Roster

Name	Title	Organization
Nadine Mathis Basha	Co-Chair, Early Childhood Task Force	Chair, First Things First Board
Don Budinger	Co-Chair, Early Childhood Task Force	Chairman & Founding Director, The Rodel Foundations
Lyn Bailey, Ed.D	Assistant Superintendent	Washington Elementary School District
Mary Baldwin	Community Investor	Boeing Company
Rene Bartos, MD	Vice President of Systems of Care, Medical Director	Mercy Care Plan
Deal Begay	Vice Chair	Cocopah Indian Tribe
Victoria Begay	Enterprise Account Manager	Frontier Communications
Andrea Benkel	Director of Early Childhood Education	Summit School of Ahwatukee
David Bradley	Senator	State of Arizona
Keri Campbell	Senior Director of Preschool Services and Co-Curricular Tuition Programs	Great Hearts Academies
Heather Carter	Representative	State of Arizona
Terri Clark	Arizona Literacy Director	Read On Arizona
Patrick Contrades	Vice President	Arizona Business & Education Coalition
Amy Corriveau	Deputy Human Services Director	City of Phoenix
Marilee Dal Pra	Vice President of Programs	Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

Name	Title	Organization
Lavonne Douville	Senior Vice President Community Development	United Way of Southern Arizona and Tucson
Riley Frei	Superintendent	Bullhead City Elementary School District and Colorado River Union High School District
Annapurna Ganesh, Ph.D	Faculty, Early Care and Education Program	Mesa Community College
John Giles	Mayor	City of Mesa
Neil G. Giuliano	President and Chief Executive Officer	Greater Phoenix Leadership
Erin Hart	Chief Operations Officer	Expect More Arizona
Darren Hawkins, D.Min.	Senior Pastor	Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church
Shalom Jacobs	Deputy Director of Field Operations	Arizona Department of Child Safety
Jessica Jarvi	Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel	Alliance Bank of Arizona
Verna Johnson	Health Program Specialist	Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
Leah Landrum Taylor	Assistant Director for the Director's Office	Arizona Department of Economic Security
Laurie Liles	President and Chief Executive Officer	Arizona Grant Makers Forum
Darlene Little, Ed.D	Chief Executive Officer	Tanner Community Development
Erin Lyons	Chief Executive Officer	Child-Parent Centers
Shana Malone	Critical Initiatives Project Manager	Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
Liz McKenna, MD	Pediatrician, Healing Hearts Pediatrics, PLC	Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Joyce Millard Hoie	Executive Director	Raising Special Kids
Franciso Muñoz	Tribal Council Member	Pascua Yaqui Tribe

Name	Title	Organization
Dana Naimark	President and Chief Executive	Children's Action Alliance
Jill Norgaard	Representative	State of Arizona
Karen Ortiz, Ph.D	Vice President and Program Director for Early Childhood Education	Helios Education Foundation
Marie Peoples, Ph.D	Chief Health Officer	Coconino County Health Department
Suzanne Pfister	President and Chief Executive Officer	Vitalyst Health Foundation
Bryant Powell	City Manager	Apache Junction
Pam Powell, Ed.D	Chair of Teaching and Learning, College of Education	Northern Arizona University
Kim Russell	Executive Director	Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care
Nicol Russell	Deputy Associate Superintendent of Early Childhood Education	Arizona Department of Education
Sheila Sjolander	Assistant Director Public Health Prevention Services	Arizona Department of Health Services
Laurie Smith	Board of Advisors	The Arizona Community Foundation of the Gila Valley
Ruth Solomon	Member	First Things First Board
Brian Spicker	Senior Vice President, Community Impact	Valley of the Sun United Way
Kelly Townsend	Representative	State of Arizona
Ginger Ward	Chief Executive Officer	Southwest Human Development
Robert Weigand	Senior Lecturer, T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics	Arizona State University
Richard Yarbough	Dynamics Administrator	Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Bruner, C., Elias, V., Stein, D. & Schaefer, S. (2004). Early learning left out: An examination of public investments in education and development by child age. Washington, DC: Voices for America's Children and Child & Family Policy Center. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED491074>
- ⁱⁱ Barnett, S. (2008) *Preschool education and its long lasting effects: Research and policy implications*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved from: <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/preschool-education>
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. (1999). *Early learning, later success: The Abecedarian study*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved from http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/EarlyLearningLaterSuccess_1999.pdf
- ^{iv} Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Burchinal, M. R., Clifford, R. M., Culkin, M.L., Howes, C., ... & Zelazo, J. (2000). *The children of the cost, quality, and outcomes study go to school [Technical report]*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. Retrieved from http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/NCEDL_CQO_technical_report.pdf
- ^v Karoly, L., Greenwood, P.W., Everingham, S.S., Hoube, J., Kilburn, M. R, ... & Chiesa, J. (1998). *Investing in our children: What we know and don't know about the costs and benefits of early childhood interventions*. Washington, D.C.: RAND. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/1998/MR898.pdf
- ^{vi} Russel, N. (2017). Arizona's kindergarten development inventory and K-3: Formative assessment. Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Department of Education, Early Childhood Education. Retrieved from <https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=59271b8d3217e1232ce38c2b>
- ^{vii} American Academy of Pediatrics. (2017). *Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care*. Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved from https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/periodicity_schedule.pdf
- ^{viii} Powell, D. R., Diamond, K. E., Burchinal, M.R., & Koehler, M. J. (2010). Effects of an early literacy professional development intervention on Head Start teachers and children. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(2), 299–312.
- ^{ix} Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Burchinal, M. R., Clifford, R. M., Culkin, M. L., Howes, C., Kagan, S. L., & Yazejian, N. (2001). The relation of preschool child-care quality to children's cognitive and social developmental trajectories through second grade. *Child development*, 72(5), 1534–1553.
- ^x Arizona Head Start Association Professional Development Message, May, 2010.
- ^{xi} Shivers, E. M., Farago, F., Goubeaus, P. (2016). *The Arizona Kith and Kin Project: Brief 1, improving quality in family, friend, and neighbor (FFN), child care settings*. Phoenix, AZ: Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change, Indigo Culture Center Inc. Retrieved from: http://www.asccaz.org/pdf/AZ_Kith_and_Kin_Evaluation_FNL_2016.pdf
- ^{xii} Shivers, E. M., Farago, F., Goubeaus, P. (2016). *The Arizona Kith and Kin Project: Brief 1, improving quality in family, friend, and neighbor (FFN), child care settings*. Phoenix, AZ: Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change, Indigo Culture Center Inc. Retrieved from: http://www.asccaz.org/pdf/AZ_Kith_and_Kin_Evaluation_FNL_2016.pdf
- ^{xiii} Shivers, M. E., Yang, C., & Farago, F. (2016). *The Arizona Kith and Kin Project: Brief 2, Latina family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) provider characteristics and features of child care they provide*. Phoenix, AZ: Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change, Indigo Cultural Center, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.familyfriendandneighbor.org/pdf/K-K_Brief-2_Final3_5-24-16.pdf
- ^{xiv} Shivers, E. M., Farago, F., Goubeaus, P. (2016). *The Arizona Kith and Kin Project: Brief 1, improving quality in family, friend, and neighbor (FFN), child care settings*. Phoenix, AZ: Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change, Indigo Culture Center Inc. Retrieved from: http://www.asccaz.org/pdf/AZ_Kith_and_Kin_Evaluation_FNL_2016.pdf





FIRST THINGS FIRST

4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
602.771.5100 • 1.877.803.7234

First Things First partners with parents and communities to strengthen families and give all Arizona children the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

CHAIR

Nadine Mathis Basha

VICE CHAIR

Dr. Pamela Powell

MEMBERS

Gayle Burns

Janice Decker

Heidi Quinlan

Vivian Saunders

Ruth Solomon

Gerald Szostak

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Hon. Diane Douglas

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Michael Trailor

Director, Department of Economic Security

Dr. Cara Christ

Director, Department of Health Services