

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE

Ninety cents of every dollar goes directly to benefit Arizona's children, and decisions about those funds are made by local volunteer councils who know best what kids in their communities need.

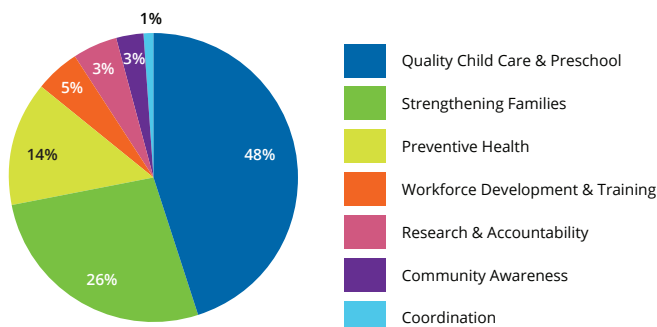
When Arizona voters approved First Things First (FTF) in 2006, they created a statewide early childhood system that balances statewide accountability for improving education and health outcomes for kids birth to 5. Voters also ensured that the majority of funds raised through tobacco surcharges would fund programs and services for kids, not a government bureaucracy.

Dollars and Sense

Currently, tobacco sales in Arizona generate approximately \$120 million per year to be used for the youngest kids through FTF. For every dollar collected, 90 cents is deposited into a program account to be used for programs and services to benefit young children. Only 10 cents of every dollar can go towards administrative costs. 90% of all funding deposited in the program account is allocated by formula to local communities.

Between fiscal years 2009 and 2017, FTF has committed almost \$969 million to statewide and local school readiness programs for kids 5 and younger.

First Things First
Priority Funding Areas FY09-17*



* This figure represents actual expenditures through FY16 and FY17 funding awards through October 14, 2016.

The commitment the voters made to children ensures:

1. Children of all socio economic backgrounds are in high quality environments rich in words, books and materials.
2. Parents are strong and supported in their role as nurturer and first teacher.
3. Early childhood educators are well educated and make every interaction with young children a learning moment.
4. Early developmental screenings are available so that detection occurs early when the most significant development is occurring, thus mitigating the need for costly remediation.
5. And finally, that children have access to the health care services they need to maximize optimal health and development.

The First Things First Board

The statewide FTF Board is responsible for ensuring that Arizona's early childhood funds are spent on services that help Arizona's young children be healthier and start kindergarten ready to succeed. The Board sets the vision for FTF, determines the priorities for FTF within Arizona's broader early childhood system, and – through approval of local funding plans and contracts – ensures that services funded at the statewide and local levels are resulting in improved education and health outcomes for kids 5 and younger.

The Board consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and approved by the state Senate. By law, members of the Board must be representative of Arizona's diversity – they must include Republicans and Democrats, as well as residents of both metropolitan and rural areas.

Our Kids, Our Choices

FTF's Regional Partnership Councils are comprised of volunteers who determine which early childhood services will be funded in their communities. They do this by combining three important components in their decision-making: experience, research and community input.

- **Experience:** Each regional council member represents a specific segment of the community that has a stake in ensuring that our children grow up to be healthy productive adults, including: parents, tribal representatives, educators, health professionals, business leaders, philanthropists and leaders of faith communities.
- **Research:** Every two years, each regional council does a study of the education and health services that are available to kids in their communities, and what children's needs are unmet.
- **Community Input:** Working with local stakeholders, the regional councils determine which services to fund to improve education and health outcomes for kids in their communities.



the expected outcome for children who receive that service. Emphasis is given to providing services that are culturally respectful and responsive. Providers submit applications that are evaluated in a competitive process that includes regional volunteers and state staff. Successful applicants are awarded grants based on their ability to provide the required services and achieve the desired outcomes for kids, as well as their ability to provide the comprehensive financial accountability required by FTF. Each grantee must then submit quarterly progress reports that outline the number of children and families served, as well as narrative information about the impact of those services.

Respect for Sovereignty

FTF respects the sovereignty of all Arizona tribes. By law, tribes may elect to have their tribal lands treated as a separate region by the statewide FTF Board; or, tribes may elect to participate in the designated geographical region in which their tribal lands are located. Tribes who choose to participate in the regional council whose area includes their tribal lands have a representative of the tribe on the regional council.

Local Services, Statewide Results

Services funded by FTF are provided in local communities by providers who have met rigorous statewide standards. Those providers include non-profit organizations, city, county, state and tribal agencies. For each service provided by FTF, a standard of practice has been developed that outlines the research-based justification for that service and

FTF monitors the impact of its programs and services in three tiers:

- **Grantee Accountability** – each grantee must provide information that shows they are providing the services to children required in their contracts with FTF.
- **Programmatic Accountability** – Programs at FTF are evaluated on whether the services provided are achieving the desired result in that area. For example, did the Arizona Parent Kit effectively impact parental knowledge and behavior?
- **Statewide Accountability** – Statewide studies determine whether the services funded by FTF collectively are resulting in children arriving at school healthier and ready to succeed.