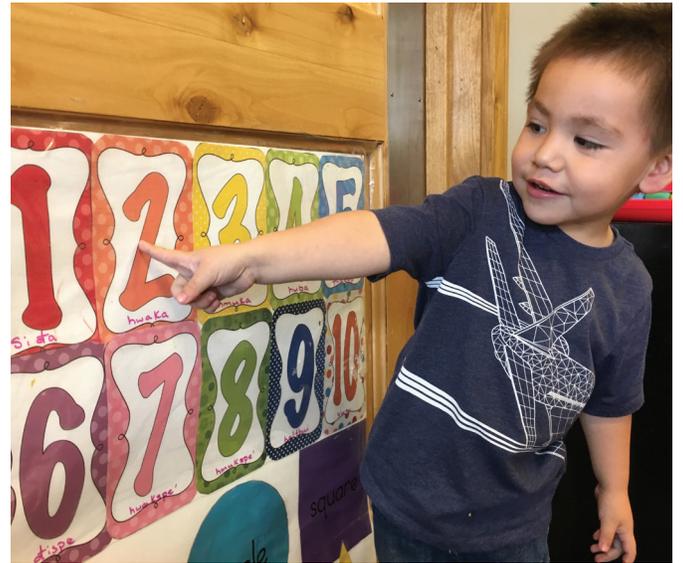


# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

San Carlos Apache Region

## 2022 Impact Report



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

90%

of a child's brain grows before kindergarten.

## Early childhood matters.

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

Many young children in Arizona face challenges that threaten their healthy development and learning. In the FTF San Carlos Apache Region, there are **1,435 children** (under age 6) with **56% living in poverty**.

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



Early childhood is a time of tremendous growth across all areas of development and the first five years of a child's life are fundamentally important. These years are the foundation that shapes children's future health, happiness, growth, development and learning achievement at school, in the family and community, and in life in general."



**Randee Kitcheyan**

*Member of FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Key Impact Highlights [State Fiscal Year 2022]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

4,632

Books got into the homes of infants, toddlers and preschoolers through a local distribution program.

101

Adults attended classes on the importance of nutrition and physical activity for the healthy development of young children.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

139

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

1

Early childhood educator received college scholarships to improve their qualifications for working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



### Preventive Health

165

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

### Additional Strategies

280

Adults

attended parenting activities to learn about early child care development in a fun setting.



## Vision screenings help San Carlos grandkids see clearly

Rachel Long and her husband Jeff of San Carlos started raising several of their grandchildren a few years ago. They have seven altogether ranging in age from age 1 to 12 and are happy to have the second chance that raising grandchildren gives them.

Long learned of the importance of early developmental and sensory screenings a few years ago while attending a local community event. The grandmother already had concerns with a few of her grandkids squinting.

The health educator from the developmental and sensory screening program in San Carlos shared with Long that they could even come to her home and do the screenings, which made it easier. The program is offered across the region. The First Things First San Carlos Apache Region funds developmental, hearing and vision screenings to improve the number of screenings for young children in the region.

Research shows that a child's vision starts to develop from the time they are born until kindergarten, so it is critical to identify issues with eye health and vision development at a young age, when problems are easier to correct with early treatment. Especially since young children rarely complain about vision problems because they believe everyone sees the world as they do.

The health educator screened the children, who were all under age 5 at the time, and referred the family for exams at the local Peridot eye clinic, which is part of the San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation. The exams resulted in all of the children needing glasses.

"I am so thankful for the developmental and sensory program because without them I would not have known they couldn't see," Long said.

Mariah, who is 8 now, started drawing beautifully after she got her glasses and Long thinks she will be an artist. Mariah tells her grandmother, "I like my glasses, I can see now!"

Joseph, who is 7, says excitedly, "Grandma, I can see the pictures in my books now!" Eva, who is 5, says, "I like my glasses!"

"The kids all communicate more and are asking more questions now that they can see well," Long said. "They seem to have much more confidence in themselves, as well."

After seeing the success of getting the children's vision screened, Long shares her family's story with everyone.

"I shared the information with my Pastor David Miles of the American Indian Church and Pastor Miles allowed the developmental and sensory screening program to offer screenings at the church so parents and caregivers could easily get their kids screened," she said. "I want all parents and caregivers to know that this program is available to our community and most importantly that they should get their children screened early."

Long and her husband are learning right along with their grandkids.

"With this second chance that Jeff and I have in raising our grandchildren we have learned to pay closer attention to the kids," Long said. "Parents need to look for signs their children may need a little help and make sure that you get their screenings done early so they have the best possible chance of success."



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

## FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council

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

and innovative strategies through grants to community organizations that provide services to children and families. Some of the programs in this region include Grow It, Try It, Like It!, developmental and sensory screenings and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

### FTF San Carlos Apache SFY22 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Preventive Health

\$214,953

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$133,959

Strengthening Families

\$125,142

Parent and Community Awareness

\$103,352

Workforce Development and Training

\$29,377

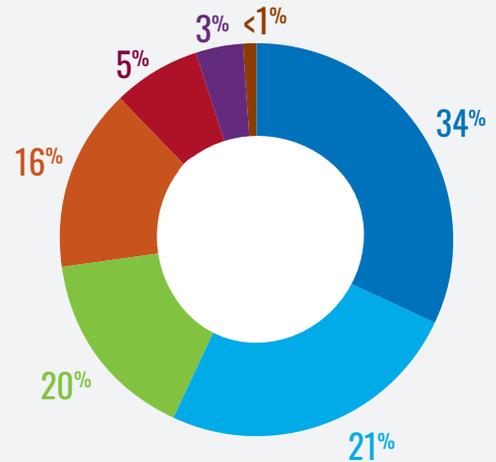
Research and Evaluation

\$19,056

Coordination

\$1,260

**Total** \$627,098



## FTF San Carlos Apache Regional Partnership Council and Staff

Chair

**Christine Carlson**

Vice Chair

**Ronald Ritter**

Members

**Tristan Kitch**

**Randee Kitcheyan**

**Nolita April Noline**

**Kelly Pahe-Reede**

**Jaymie Swift Hooke**

**Flora Talas**

**Elliot Talgo, Sr.**

FTF Regional Director

**LaToya Beatty**

LBeatty@FirstThingsFirst.org

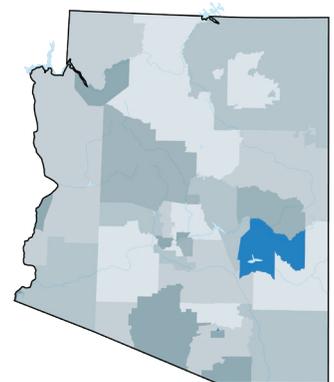
928.425.8172

FTF Community Outreach Coordinator

**Veronica Gossett**

VGossett@FirstThingsFirst.org

928.425.8172



The boundaries of the **FTF San Carlos Apache Region** are defined to be those of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. The region covers almost 3,000 square miles in east-central Arizona. Most of the region lies within Gila and Graham counties, although there is a small, uninhabited section in Pinal County. The reservation, which was established in 1871, is divided into four districts: Seven Mile Wash, Gilson Wash, Peridot and Bylas.

Learn more at

[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/San-Carlos-Apache](https://www.FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/San-Carlos-Apache)