

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Yavapai Region

# IMPACT REPORT 2021



[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Yavapai](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Yavapai)

90%

of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten.

## Early childhood matters.

First Things First 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 Yavapai Region, there are **12,661 children** (under age 6) with **25% living in poverty**.

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

“ We have a collective responsibility to create systems that will assure children receive the supports they need to develop strong foundations physically, emotionally and intellectually. Their future depends on it.”

**Vickey LaMotte**

*Co-Chair of FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF Yavapai Region Strategic Priorities



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Yavapai region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. The region offers voluntary **home visiting** programs to provide comprehensive, one-on-one support for families with young children. Parents can also attend educational **family activities** to help support their child's healthy development and improve their parenting skills. Families of newborns throughout the region and across the state are provided with the **Arizona Parent Kit**, with helpful information and resources to support new parents.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

Children who attend high-quality early learning programs go on to do better in school and are more likely to graduate. The Yavapai region provides funding for child care providers and preschool programs to participate in FTF's **Quality First** program. Providers benefit from training, coaching and a wide range of evidence-based support to improve the quality of their early learning programs in ways that help children learn, grow and thrive. Early childhood educators living in the region can also apply to receive **college scholarships** to pursue an early education certification or degree. The region also funds **Quality First Scholarships** to help low-income families afford quality early learning for their young children.



### Preventive Health

Undetected or untreated health issues can impact learning later on. Left unaddressed, developmental delays and chronic medical conditions can contribute to serious learning problems. FTF works to support the health and development of young children in the Yavapai region by funding **developmental and sensory screenings** as well as **supportive services** to detect vision, hearing and developmental issues and help prevent later learning challenges. The region also funds **supportive services** for families with children with developmental delays.



## Prescott Valley Quality First center provides stability and learning for 4-year-old boy

As a mother of three, Trisha Shaffer knows that children learn at different paces.

She also saw what a difference it made in learning when she enrolled her second child, Tristan, now 7, in a quality early learning center. She wanted the same experience for her youngest son, Dylan.

“By the time Tristan went to kindergarten he could count to 300,” Shaffer said. “He could spell his name and he knew the alphabet. He knew all his colors and shapes. He would come home all excited and engaged about what he was learning each day.”

Now Dylan, age 4, attends Granny’s House, a home-based Quality First child care center in Prescott Valley. The FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council funds Quality First, which works with home-based and center-based child care providers and preschools across Arizona to improve early learning. Dylan is also a recipient of a Quality First scholarship, which allows eligible families to enroll in participating Quality First programs.

Despite some challenges, Shaffer sees that Dylan’s learning is expanding.

“I am seeing him change from day to day,” she said. “Just in the last two weeks I have noticed significant changes in his speech. Whereas he used to talk more like a toddler in how he pronounced words, the number of words in his vocabulary and the way he put sentences together. Now he is beginning to talk like a little boy. His language is developing so much and it has been very interesting to see.”

Shaffer attributes much of that development to the nurturing learning environment Dylan receives at Granny’s House. She explained how important the stability of consistent care from a quality program was for her family at the time that her husband died nearly two years ago.

“It has given me peace of mind, especially to go through what we’ve been through, to know they have had the quality learning time, but also support for their feelings and emotional development,” Shaffer said. “It has been huge for me in our situation. The teachers at Granny’s House were especially supportive when the boys would be sad or upset. Everyone there has been so caring. It has given my sons the kind, safe space they needed to get through a very difficult time.”

Shaffer spoke about the contrast between the child care options that were available to her oldest child, Aris, now 14, and what the boys have experienced in a Quality First program.

“It has given me peace of mind, especially to go through what we’ve been through, to know they have had the quality learning time, but also support for their feelings and emotional development.”

—Trisha Shaffer, parent

“At Aris’s program, the kids just played all the time. Play is important, but there was no structured focus on learning,” she said. “At Granny’s House, they work with the kids to teach them their letters and numbers. They have set themes for each week, such as focusing on oceans or other things. There is encouragement for each child to accomplish developmental milestones.”

Shaffer gets joy out of seeing her youngest son interested in reading.

“He asks me to read with him more, and he is beginning to understand that the words on the page mean something. Just recently he learned the word: cat. Now he recognizes that word whenever he sees it,” said Shaffer. “He gets so excited to point it out and say “C-A-T, that’s CAT!” The look on his face when he recognizes that he is beginning to read is priceless.”

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

# FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council is made up of volunteers who study the unique needs of the local community and decide 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 Smart Support, Parents as Teachers and Quality First Coaching.

## FTF Yavapai SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$1,942,408

Preventive Health

\$629,136

Strengthening Families

\$455,806

Parent and Community Awareness

\$128,404

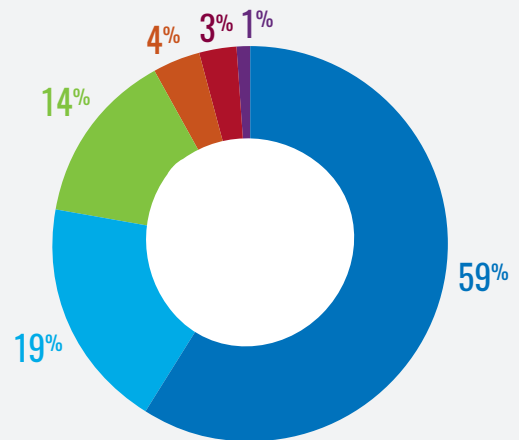
Research and Evaluation

\$109,764

Workforce Development and Training

\$42,698

**Total** \$3,308,216



## FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council and Staff

*Chair*  
**Kathy Watson**

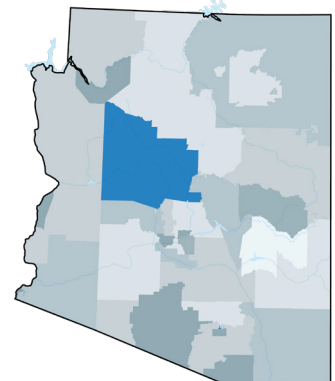
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The **FTF Yavapai Region** covers all of Yavapai County, plus the part of the city of Sedona that lies in Coconino County. The Yavapai-Apache Nation is included in the Yavapai Region. With 38 percent of the land owned by the U.S. Forest Service, the FTF Yavapai Region is known for its four mild seasons, plentiful lakes, mountains and forest and small town atmosphere. The FTF Yavapai Region includes Legislative Districts 1 and 6. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)

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