

# # FIRST THINGS FIRST

Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Region

# IMPACT REPORT

## 2021



[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa-Indian-Community](https://FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa-Indian-Community)

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 Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Region, there are **626 children** (under age 6) with **61% living in poverty**.

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

“Early childhood is the time to enrich the brain. Every relationship, every book, every activity and every word creates new connections in a child's brain that continue to grow as the child grows. What happens in the early years determines the long-term success of every child.”

**Christine McIntier**

*Chair of FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Region Strategic Priorities



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

Families are a child's first and best teachers. FTF programs in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community region give parents choices for how they want to support their child's health and learning. Parents and caregivers can attend evidence-informed **parenting classes** to learn about early child care development. The region also **distributes books** to families with children from birth to age 5 to encourage parent-child interaction and reading.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

Children who are prepared for kindergarten go on to do better in school and are more likely to graduate. This is why the region funds a **transition to kindergarten** program so children can learn how a classroom works and how to prepare for school.



## Scottsdale mom teaches 4-year-old son to regulate his emotions through healthy parenting

Eliza Stevens fled from her husband after enduring five years of abuse. She didn't want herself or children exposed to violence anymore.

"I was technically homeless with two kids," Stevens said. "I came back to Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community to live with my father and had to start over again."

As a single mom, she needed support and decided to enroll her boys in the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) in Scottsdale. The center connected her to resources like the WISH Parenting Education Program, which is funded by the First Things First Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council.

The program teaches parents and grandparents about brain development, milestones, communication, discipline and caring for children from birth to age 5. The class uses curriculum from Conscious Discipline® which is an evidence-based classroom management method that focuses on social-emotional learning and self-regulation.

Stevens said the class appealed to her, because she needed help in parenting her boys, Illias, age 4, and Rellik, age 2.

"I was struggling due to the trauma from the abuse," Stevens said. "The class really helped me by teaching me ways to cope with my stress. It also taught me how my children's brains develop and how trauma effects that development."

"The class teaches parents ways to help regulate their emotions, so they can teach their kids the same skills," said Pamela Prasher, an ECEC family advocate and co-facilitator for the WISH class. "Often times, parents don't know what to do with their anger and stress."

The class teaches them to identify their triggers, pay attention to how their bodies react and then step away from the situation to take deep breaths and relax before disciplining or trying to get their children to change a behavior.

The class also includes tribal traditions and discusses topics in a culturally appropriate way.

"They were culturally sensitive to topics like domestic violence," said Stevens. "They presented it in a way for us to understand how it effects our children in our homes and the reservation. They provided a perspective that opened our eyes to how we can strengthen our community by learning to care for our children."

Stevens said the tips and education about early development really helped her to reduce her own stress and connect with her boys.

"I would have a difficult time getting Illias to listen to me," said Stevens. "There would be times that he would act out, and I didn't know how to handle it. At the time, I thought he was trying to give me a hard time."

She learned to calm down and apply what she knew about his hierarchy of needs to figure out if he was hungry, tired, feeling unsafe or insecure.

"Once I was able to calm down and figure out what was going on with him, everything fell into place," she said. "I could start redirecting him."

Illias also had difficulty talking and expressing his emotions, so Stevens learned to work with him to identify and give names to his feelings.

"I learned from Pam to get down on their eye level and say, 'You look like you're feeling angry,'" Stevens said. "Illias can now tell me he's feeling mad or sad."

Stevens says Illias' behaviors are improving and she is able to communicate better with him.

"Once I was able to calm down and figure out what was going on with him, everything fell into place."

—Eliza Stevens

"It's reduced the stress of trying to figure out what's going on with both my boys and how to deal with them," said Stevens. "They aren't acting out to make me upset. I felt like I should have known that, but I didn't. They get upset when they are hungry or don't feel safe. As their parent, it's my job to identify and provide for their needs."

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



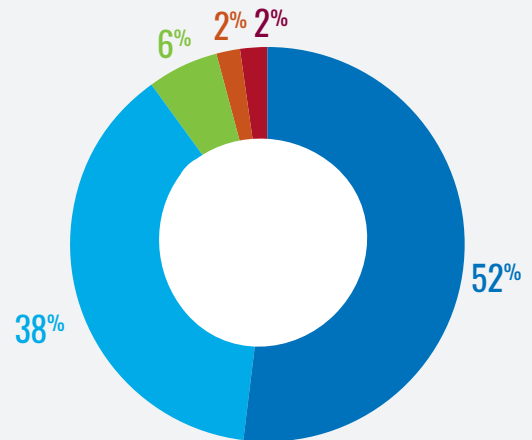
# FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council

The FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community 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 summer transition to kindergarten, mental health consultation and Reach Out and Read.

## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community SFY21 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Strengthening Families	\$33,987
Preventive Health	\$24,459
Research and Evaluation	\$4,104
Parent and Community Awareness	\$1,611
Quality Child Care and Preschool	\$1,501
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$65,661</b>



## FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Partnership Council and Staff

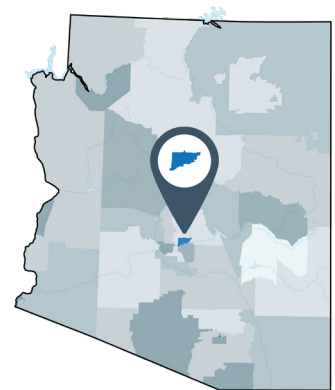
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*The FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, a sovereign tribe located 15 miles northeast of Phoenix, is one of 10 Arizona tribes that have chosen to be designated as its own First Things First region. The region has the same boundaries as the Salt River Reservation and covers about 85 square miles, entirely within Maricopa County, bordering the cities of Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa and Fountain Hills. The Community is home to the Pima ("Akimel O'Odham," River People) and the Maricopa ("Xalychidom Pipaash," People who live toward the water). Legislative districts include: 26. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)*

Learn more at  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa-Indian-Community](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/Salt-River-Pima-Maricopa-Indian-Community)