

🍄 FIRST THINGS FIRST

# White Mountain Apache Tribe Region

## 2020 Impact Report



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

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 White Mountain Apache Tribe Region, there are **2,003 children** (under age 6) with **54% living in poverty**.

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



Investing in children requires studying the past, including cultures and traditions, so we can strengthen the similarities, as well as celebrate the differences. A culture simply cannot survive without its children. We are the caretakers of our own futures."



**Laurel Endfield**

*Chair of FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council*

## FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Key Impact Highlights [Fiscal Year 2020]



### Strengthening Families and Early Literacy

**1,579** Adults attended parenting activities to learn more about the importance of early childhood development.

**1,485** Resources were distributed to adults for connecting parents with parenting tips, services and programs.



### Quality Preschool and Child Care

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

**62** Children birth to age 5 received a Quality First scholarship to attend high-quality preschools and child care programs.

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

### Additional Strategies

**1,998**

#### Books

were given to parents and caregivers of infants, toddlers and preschoolers through a local distribution program.



## Doctors boost literacy through well-child visits in Whiteriver

Joni Shipp takes her 1-year-old daughter, Keirstin, for well-child visits at the Whiteriver Indian Hospital and never leaves empty handed.

"We get a new book with each visit," said Shipp. "It has helped my husband and I want to read to her. When they gave us a book, I realized we could start reading now, because otherwise I would have only been using toys to help her learn."

Every family that comes in for a well-child visit appointment gets an age-appropriate book and development information for their child. Dr. Amy McAuley and Elvia Allen, a nurse practitioner, work at the hospital and partner with the Reach Out and Read program to help boost literacy in the area.

Funded by the First Things First White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council, the program provides medical staff with books for children from birth to age 5. The doctors and nurses hand out the books to parents while discussing the benefits of reading and other early development information.

"During a visit, I'll talk to parents about how reading helps to build attachment," said McAuley. "I'll demonstrate how to read to their child. I'll also share how kids learn better from an adult rather than a screen. So I'm talking with parents about early development and reading at the same time."

Allen, who coordinates the program, said that recommendations coming from a child's health care provider can have a great impact on families. "Parents trust the child's provider to ensure that age-appropriate, developmental milestones such as

language skills are being met," said Allen. "Reading to children promotes the development of language."

Sara Pena-Lee, Reach Out and Read program coordinator for the American Academy of Pediatrics-Arizona, has seen the program work in the region. "Parents are more likely to read at home after the pediatrician advises them to read to their child," she said.

Pena-Lee provides medical staff with training on how to use the Reach Out and Read program, coordinates book drop offs and also provides bookmarks with nutrition tips and other early childhood development information.

The program has gained popularity and familiarity in the Whiteriver and Cibecue communities. Children and parents look forward to receiving a book with each visit and will request books for their other young children.

McAuley said the program is needed due to the difficulty in accessing books as the community is spread over a large geographical area. If a family wants to visit the library, they will have to find transportation. There are also many families living in poverty.

"There are a lot of people who don't have running water or enough food to last them through the month," said McAuley. "So they don't have money for books."

Shipp agreed.

"Books are very expensive," she said. "The program also helped my daughter to have a good experience with the doctor visit and her first book. Just to be given that book, she was so happy. She has ownership of it. She knows the book is hers. We still have it."

**"The program also helped my daughter to have a good experience with the doctor visit and her first book." - Joni Shipp, mother**

Along with the books, McAuley also provides blocks with letters on them for fine motor skill development and coloring pages with Native designs of animals with the names in English and Apache to instill pride in the Apache language. She also hangs posters with Apache language from the Language Conservancy to decorate patient rooms.

"I think that reading will open the world up for a person," said McAuley. "It's really invaluable."



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

# FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council

The FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe 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 Parents as Teachers, Parenting Counts Workshops and Kith and Kin.

## FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe FY20 Total Regional Program Expenditures

Quality Child Care and Preschool

\$344,542

Strengthening Families

\$118,647

Workforce Development and Training

\$44,121

Research and Evaluation

\$22,699

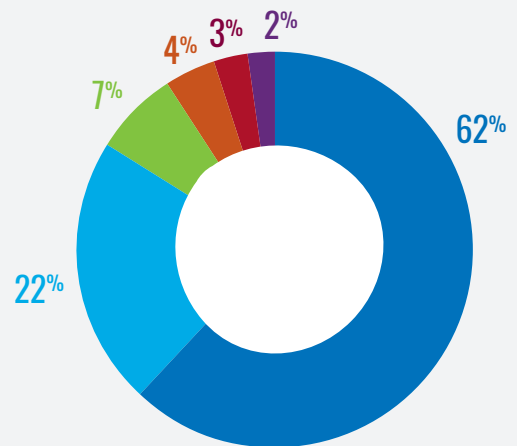
Preventive Health

\$16,650

Parent and Community Awareness

\$5,635

**Total** \$552,294



## FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Regional Partnership Council and Staff

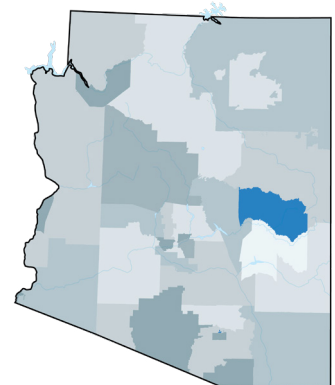
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*The boundaries of the FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Region are the same as the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The region covers more than 2,500 square miles in Apache, Gila and Navajo counties. The larger communities in the region are Whiteriver, Cibecue, North Fork and Canyon Day. The FTF White Mountain Apache Tribe Region includes Legislative District 7. (Legislative districts are not necessarily congruent with regional boundaries.)*

Learn more at  
[FirstThingsFirst.org/Regions/White-Mountain-Apache-Tribe](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/Regions/White-Mountain-Apache-Tribe)