



# Putting First Things First

## Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable

# About First Things First



- Created by a citizen's initiative that passed in November 2006
- Initiative passed in every county in Arizona

- Funded through tobacco taxes
- Established dedicated funding for early childhood programs

# Original Intent

- Expand and enhance early childhood programs
- Not supplant existing early childhood funding





# State General Fund Support for Early Childhood Plummet

## Child Care Subsidies

- High:
  - \$69M
  - 35,000 young children
- Now:
  - \$7M
  - 35,000 young children

## Early Childhood Development Block Grant

- High:
  - \$12M
  - 5,447 young children
- Now:
  - \$0 million
  - 0 young children

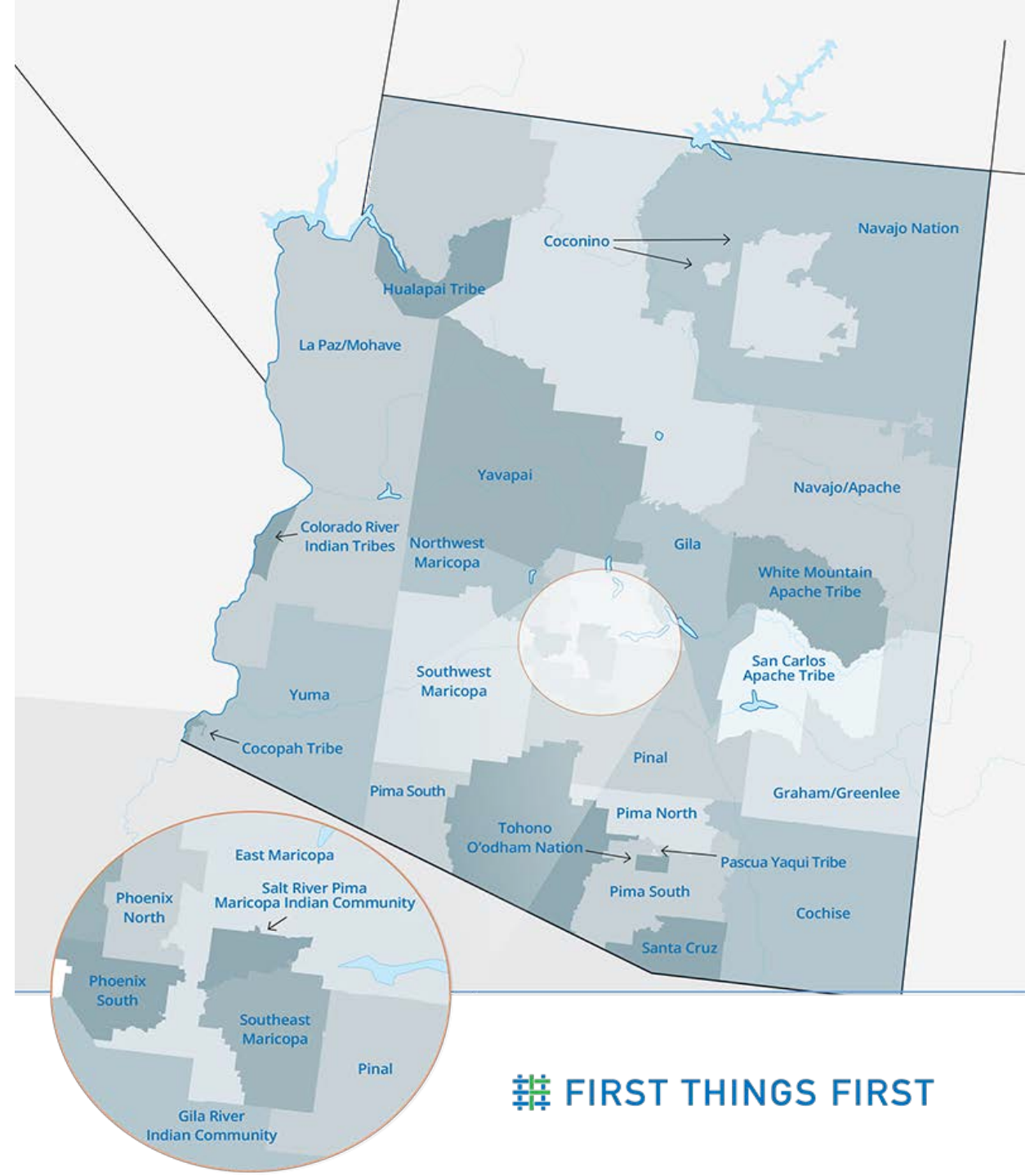
# Current Reality

- Since the Great Recession, First Things First has been the only stable funding source for early childhood programs
- In some programs, First Things First is currently the largest state funder
- In addition, in some communities First Things First is virtually the only early childhood funding that remains



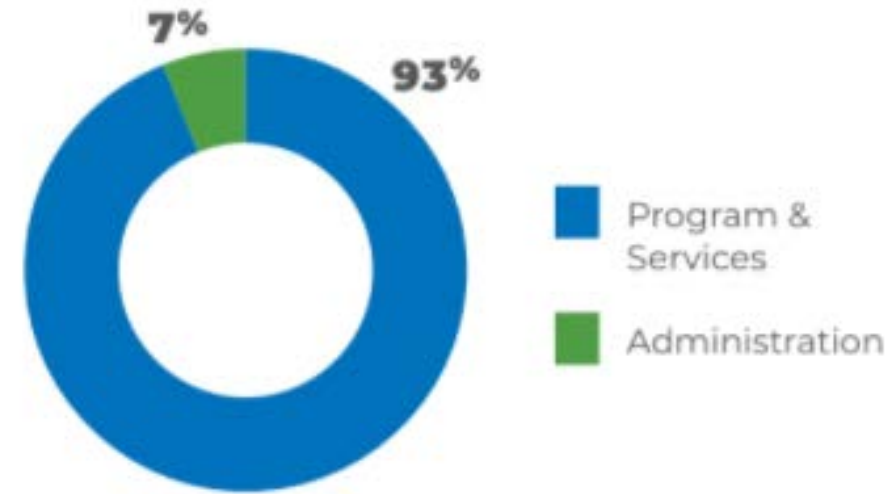
# Shared Governance Structure

- Balances statewide accountability with local flexibility
- Decisions made using detailed data from each region



# Funding

- Allotments to regions are based on the population of children and percentage of children in poverty
- 90% of dollars go to program fund
  - 81% of set aside for regional activities
  - 9% for statewide activities
- 10% of dollars go to administrative fund



# Statute Outlines FTF Priorities

1. Improving the quality of early childhood development and health programs.
2. Increasing access to quality early childhood development and health programs.
3. Increasing access to **preventive health care** and health screenings for children through age five.
4. Offering **parent and family support** and education concerning early child development and literacy.
5. Providing **professional development** and **training** for early childhood development and health providers.
6. Increasing **coordination** of early childhood development and health programs and public information about the importance of early childhood development and health.




*ARS 8-1171*






# Quality Early Learning



## INCREASED

-  High School Graduation
-  College Matriculation
-  Economic Development and Personal Income

## DECREASED

-  Special Education/Remediation
-  Dependence on Social Welfare
-  Crime-Related Costs and Incarceration Rates

*Young children with high quality experiences have been shown to have increased vocabulary, better language, math and social skills, more positive relationships with classmates and higher scores on school readiness assessments.*



## Aspects of Quality

- Health and safety practices
- Teachers who know how to work with young children
- Lower class ratios
- Stimulating indoor/outdoor learning environments
- Evidence based curricula rich in language and literacy

## Cost of Quality

- Quality is costly
- Child care in Arizona can cost **\$10,000** per year for an infant
- Annual Tuition at Universities
  - ASU: \$11,338
  - U of A: \$12,691
  - NAU: \$11,896



# 56% of FTF Funding Designated to Early Learning

- \$43 million for Quality First scholarships
- \$28 million for quality improvement
- \$1.5 million for college scholarships



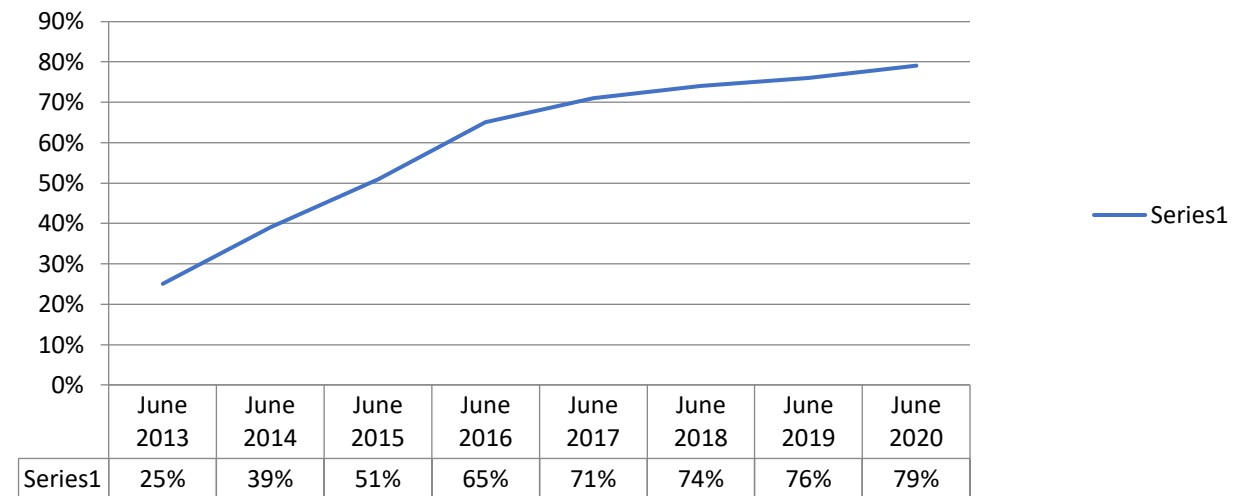


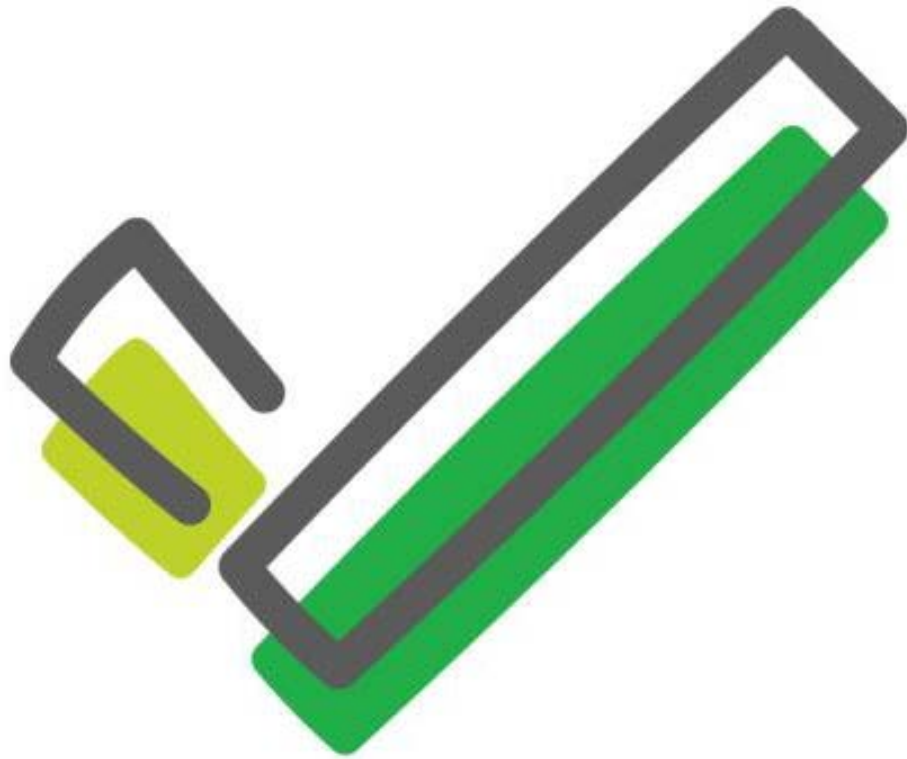
# 79% of Quality First Programs Rated 3-5 Stars

- 4 out of 5 programs now at quality levels
- 61,000 children impacted in enrollment through Quality First enrollment
- 8,043 infants, toddlers and preschoolers from low-income families accessed quality early learning with a scholarship



**Participants with a Quality Level (3-5 stars) Rating**





## Quality Improvement Works

- Research validates the Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Improves quality across a mixed delivery system to meet families needs/preferences
- Quality takes time and financial support to attain and maintain



# Collaborations Expand Access to Quality Care for Vulnerable Children

Federal Fiscal Year	FTF Match Provided	Federal Dollars Drawn Down Through FTF-DES MOA
2011	\$10 M	\$40.5 M
2012	\$30 M	\$37.9 M
2013	\$30 M	\$37.6 M
2014	\$30 M	\$37.5 M
2015	\$34 M	\$37.8 M
2016	\$30 M	\$37.6 M
2017	\$30 M	\$37.4 M
2018	\$30 M	\$38.1 M
2019	\$30 M	*\$37.9 M
2020	*\$30 M	*\$37 M
2021	*30 M	*\$37 M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$314 M</b>	<b>\$416.3 M</b>



# Scale and Sustainability

# Arizona Education Progress Meter

Quality Early Learning



Third Grade Reading



Eighth Grade Math



High School Graduation Rate



Opportunity Youth



Post-High School Enrollment



Attainment



Elementary Teacher Pay

REACH NATIONAL  
MEDIAN BY 2022  
CURRENT -  
ARIZONA RANKS  
49<sup>TH</sup>



# Major State & Federal Programs Only Reaching a Fraction of Children in Need

- Child Care Subsidy = 35,000 young children
- Head Start + Early Head Start = 21,517 preschoolers
- AZ Schools = 19,142 preschoolers
- First Things First = 9,179 young children

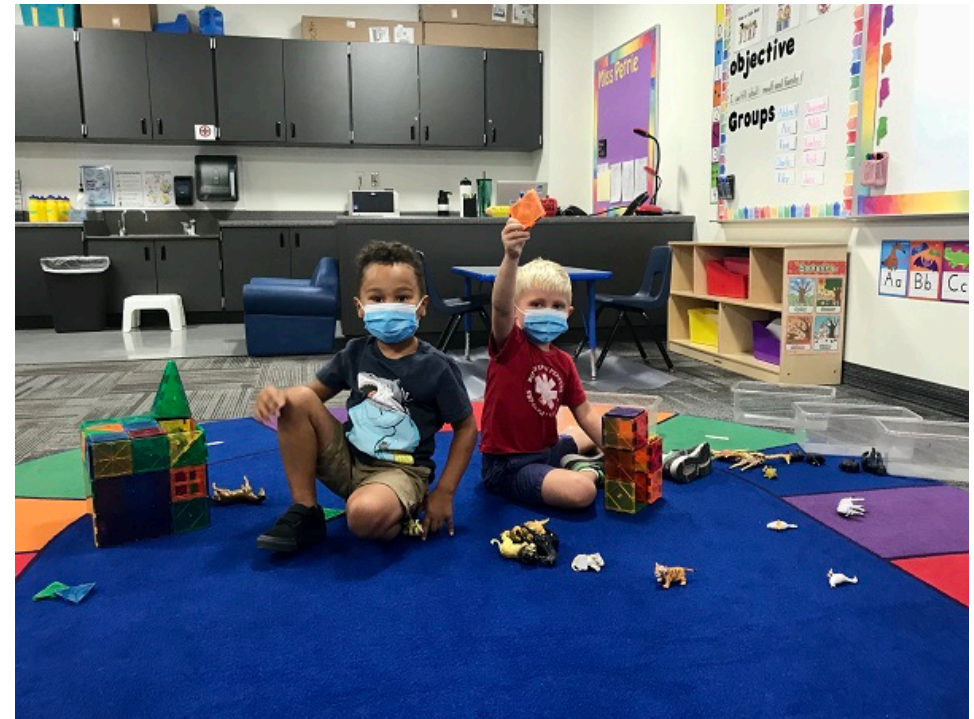
TOTAL = 84,838

As many as 145,000 young children from under resourced families lack access to early learning

# Public Private Partnerships

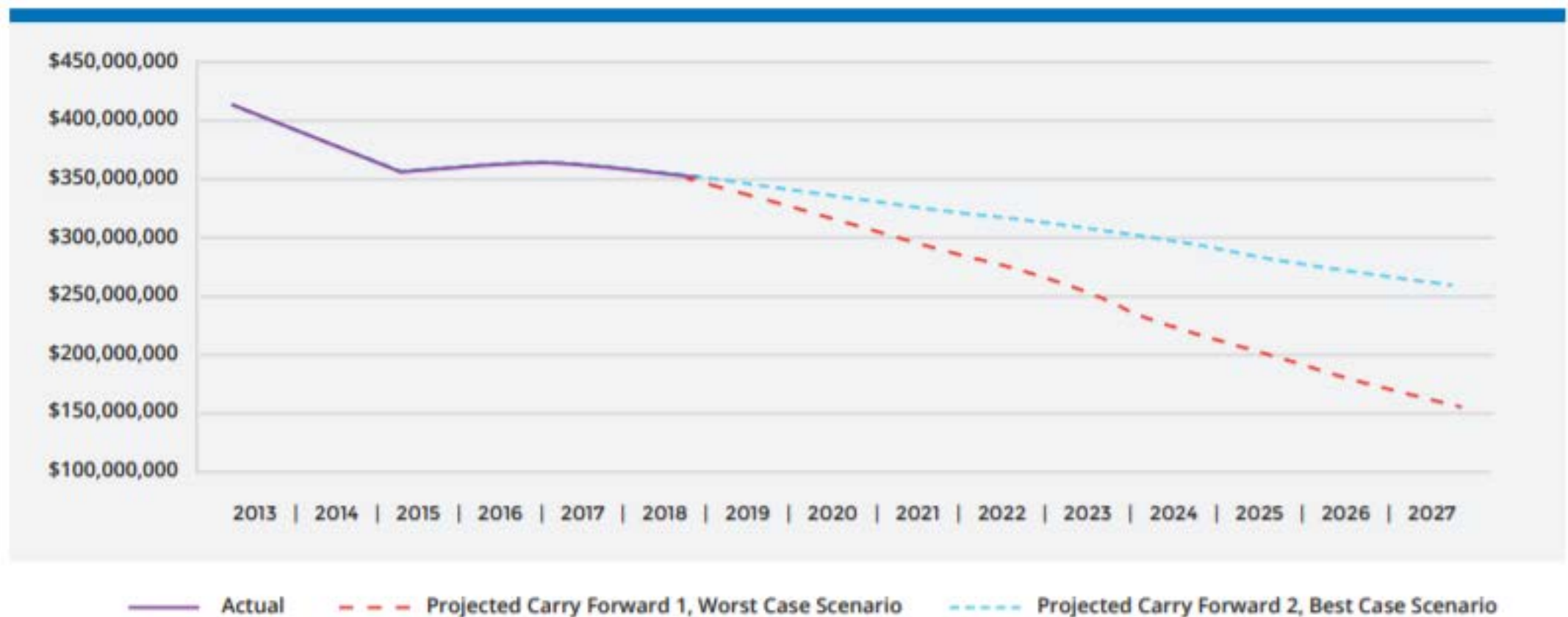
## Tempe PRE

- All Tempe PRE programs are in Quality First
- Preliminary data show Tempe PRE children are meeting or exceeding expectations across six domains and that their scores increased steadily the longer children were in the program



# Sustainability of Funding

- Funding has decreased 7 out of the past 10 years
- Currently, 27% or \$40 million less than when FTF was created



# Bipartisan Support for Early Childhood Investments

- In 2006, FTF passed by simple majority; in 2010, it passed by a 2:1 margin in every county
- In 2019, a statewide survey of 400 likely voters in Arizona shows that more than **70% support** the state investing in high-quality early childhood education opportunities for children from birth to 5 years old



# Thank you!

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Marilee Dal Pra, Chief Executive Officer  
[mdalpra@firstthingsfirst.org](mailto:mdalpra@firstthingsfirst.org)