

First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa

A Provider Success Story from Maricopa County



First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa

- Opened 1986
- ADHS Licensed Child Care Center
- For preschool (3-5 years)
- Mesa, Maricopa County
- Quality First: 4-star to 5-star with improvements from this grant
- Increased enrollment by 8 children
- \$253,771 Grant

fpcmesa.org/preschool

“The campus is much more secure—this was the top priority. Parents are already noting the increased safety and security.” — Shiloh Murillo

First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa is a pillar of the community, providing a faith-based program as an extension of First Presbyterian Church of Mesa. As director, Shiloh Murillo takes pride in the family-oriented atmosphere of her center which serves a low-to-moderate income community with limited access to child care. Her approach to child care is to “help raise each other’s children to grow them into the adults we want them to be.”

Like so many other child care centers, the pandemic hit First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa hard and enrollment dropped quickly. Once kids began returning to early care, Shiloh strove to embrace modernization and improve the quality of the facility. With a grant just over \$250,000, Shiloh made updates to nearly every aspect of First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa, addressing licensing concerns and prioritizing safety and security for the children.

A fire inspection had previously revealed concerns with the accessibility of the fire escape. To fix this, the center installed new security gates to create easier access to the fire escape. Fire doors with lock bars now allow teachers to lock down classrooms in the event of an emergency, while a new security system with cameras keeps the campus safer.

Improvements were made throughout the center. The warped Formica countertops in the bathrooms are gone, leaking toilets replaced, new tile flooring installed, and dark wallpaper replaced

with bright fresh paint on the walls. Shiloh encouraged her teachers and staff to pick inviting paint colors to set the mood for learning in their classrooms, creating more engaging spaces. They were also able to rearrange their space to care for more toddlers to better serve the community need.

Community partnerships enabled the preschool to tackle larger projects, amplifying the impacts of the grant further. The preschool partnered with the First Presbyterian Church to purchase and install two new air conditioning units and repave the main parking lot, sharing the costs. No longer hindered by potholes, the parking lot is safer for families entering the center. Everyone benefited from these projects, including the co-located [Maricopa County Early Head Start and Head Start](#) program. With these changes, First Presbyterian Preschool of Mesa achieved a five-star [Quality First](#) rating, the highest possible rating.

Previously, Shiloh and her team were limited by costs to make repairs and improvements, but they’ve now created a space that meets their community’s needs. They are focused on giving the families and children what they deserve, and the teachers are thrilled to be and work there. Shiloh knows the benefits from the grant will only grow: “We’re still seeing the changes over time. We can see the delight in our parents’ faces when they tour the facility or pick up their kids. We’ve planted the seeds for growth and are working hard to improve the community.”



Arizona Child Care Infrastructure Grant

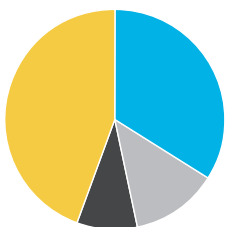
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is one of the country's largest community development organizations, helping forge vibrant, resilient communities across America. In 2022-23, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) and First Things First (FTF) awarded \$65 million to LISC Phoenix for child care infrastructure grants, training, and technical assistance. This funding came from the Child Care Stabilization Grants appropriated in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. Child care providers received nearly \$60 million to rapidly improve and expand their facilities increasing access to high-quality early childhood learning environments statewide.

The need was substantial: Arizona providers submitted 969 applications requesting more than \$176 million in funding in just two weeks. Providers from 14 of Arizona's 15 counties applied.

Equity was a focus: Child care providers located in low-to-moderate income areas with limited access to child care were the first priority. Additional priorities included providers caring for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children who receive child care assistance through the ADES, as well as providers with waitlists and those open nights and weekends.

Ultimately, 478 sites received grants with an average award of \$124,750.

Statewide

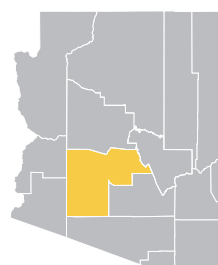


Grants Awarded by Provider Type

- 323 ADHS Licensed Centers received \$52,615,115
- 88 ADHS Certified Group Homes received \$4,312,397
- 63 ADES Certified Family Child Care Homes received \$1,600,000
- 4 Tribal Providers received \$1,103,048

Total: \$59,630,560

Maricopa County



Highlights

- 475 applications requesting \$99,495,890
- 207 grants awarded totaling \$31,105,945
 - 1,205 new child care slots created
 - 89% of grantees increased quality of outdoor play space
 - 1 in 5 grantees increased care for infants and toddlers
 - 45% of grantees removed hazards in outdoor activity spaces