

# Little Giants · Spanish Immersion Preschool

## A Provider Success Story from Maricopa County



### Little Giants Spanish Immersion Preschool

- Opened 2022
- ADHS Licensed Child Care Center
- For infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (0-5 years)
- Phoenix, Maricopa County
- Quality First: 3-star
- \$175,000 Grant

[littlegiantspreschool.com](http://littlegiantspreschool.com)

**“Being known for quality makes us proud. The parents and grandparents show their appreciation through hugs every time we see them.”** – Lupita Guerrero

With Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Early Childhood and 23 years of experience working with children and families, including at Head Start and Early Head Start, Lupita Guerrero’s child care and teaching skills are second to none. Lupita and her husband, José, opened Little Giants Spanish Immersion Preschool in September 2022 as new business owners ready for the adventure. As a native Spanish speaker born in Mexico, Lupita is proud to offer instruction to children in Little Giants’ care 100% in Spanish.

The timing of the \$175,000 grant was perfect for Little Giants. As Lupita reflected, “We opened Little Giants with mismatched furniture and toys bought on OfferUp with our own money.” Having just applied for Quality First, Lupita was ready with a list of improvements to increase their 3-star rating.

First and foremost, Lupita wanted to increase the safety and security of her child care center. A new fire panel, fire bell, water sprinklers, and LED exit signs improved fire safety throughout the preschool. Security increased with locking gates, self-closing safety doors, and a video surveillance system with sound notifications in the office. A drinking water filtration system and instant hot water in bathroom and classroom sinks have improved the quality of water.

The funding enabled Lupita to make many other quality improvements. She completely renovated bathrooms: repairing the plumbing, adding new partitions, touchless soap dispensers, and mirrors, and replacing toilets and sinks. These repairs and modifications brought the bathrooms into ADA compliance. To

care for more children still in diapers, Lupita bought new diaper changing stations for the three classrooms.

After record-breaking heat this summer—Phoenix had more than 50 days of temperatures over 110 degrees—providing comfortable environments for children, staff, and families has never been more important. To meet the challenges of extreme heat, Lupita replaced the center’s air conditioning system. Outside, children can now cool down by playing in a misting system.

Communications improved with speakers and iPads for singing and learning in the classroom and radios to help teachers stay in touch. The outside space was spruced up as well with a new storage shed to hold tools purchased to maintain the yard, professionally trimmed trees, and a sound system for outdoor activities and community events.

Little Giants has been a labor of love for Lupita and José. Lupita’s mother-in-law previously cared for their two grandchildren. When Lupita’s mother-in-law sadly passed away from COVID in 2021, opening Little Giants was a way for Lupita to help care for their grandchildren while leveraging her passion for early childhood. “This grant has made it so much easier to become sustainable quickly while caring for our community,” Lupita said. “And my grandchildren being able to be here makes it so special.”

The community has responded so positively to the quality of care Little Giants provided during its first year that Lupita and her team have opened a second location. Now they can care for an additional 65 children in midtown Phoenix.

The Arizona Child Care Infrastructure Grant program was funded by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) and First Things First (FTF) through Child Care Stabilization Grants appropriated in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

**LLSC PHOENIX**



## Arizona Child Care Infrastructure Grant

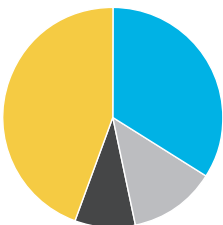
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is one of the country's largest community development organizations, helping forge vibrant, resilient communities across America. In 2022-23, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) and First Things First (FTF) awarded \$65 million to LISC Phoenix 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

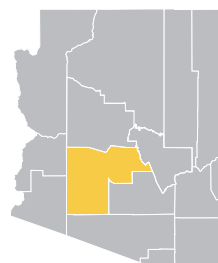


#### Grants Awarded by Provider Type

- 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