



**Pima Early Education  
Program Scholarships**

# PEEPS Primary Goals

The two primary goals of the Pima Early Education Program are to:

- ❑ Increase the number of 3-5 year old children from low-income families attending high quality preschools in Pima County, and
- ❑ Increase the number of high quality preschools in Pima County serving low-income families.



# PEEPS Guiding Principles

Increase high-quality preschool capacity while addressing existing need for financial aid.

Distribute scholarships efficiently and effectively through existing programs and partners.

Do not supplant existing public assistance for preschool and utilize local funding as a “last dollar in” approach.

Coordinate with existing agencies that provide public assistance for high-quality preschool to establish baseline need and simple system-level benchmarks, monitor progress and refine collaborative efforts to improve the system as a whole.

Establish scholarship rates that cover the full cost of providing high-quality preschool per child, based on accepted cost of quality and local market rate studies, considering wages necessary to attract quality teachers, and accounting for current DES subsidy rates and school district in-kind contributions, and pandemic-related increased costs.

Ensure participating preschool providers are geographically dispersed, with priority given to preschools serving lower income/higher need neighborhoods, tribal and rural areas.

Connect eligible families to high-quality preschools and financial assistance, including parents in local workforce development programs.

Collaborate with partners to connect participating families with other community resources to accelerate family and community wide benefits.

Maximize multi-year partner contributions to make the program more sustainable.

Advocate with partners for a long-term state-wide solution.

Remain flexible as providers and families recover and rebuild from the pandemic.

Review, reevaluate, revise, and report regularly with input from stakeholders.

# PEEPS

## Core Components

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### Multi-prong Approach to Expand the Early Learning Mixed Delivery System

- ❑ Expansion of classrooms in school districts;
- ❑ Head Start extended hours of learning;
- ❑ Head Start partnership with Pima Community College; and
- ❑ Scholarships using First Things First Quality First Scholarships Infrastructure.



# PEEPS Eligibility

1. Pima County families with incomes at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level
2. Children ages 3-5 years old (not yet in Kindergarten)

2025 Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) Supplied by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services							
Family Size	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
300% of FPL	\$63,450	\$79,950	\$96,450	\$112,950	\$129,450	\$145,950	\$162,450



# PEEPS Funding Structure

**Where it Started:** The Pima County Board of Supervisors approved the use of **\$30 million between 4 years** of the County's share of American Rescue Plan Act funding to fund scholarships for income eligible children to attend high quality preschool.

**Jurisdictional Partners:** City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, Town of Marana have contributed more than **\$4.6 million** since inception.



**Partner Contributions:** First Things First, School Districts, Head Start



**Private Donations:** through United Way's Accelerate Quality Program



**Where it's At:** In July 2025, the program switched to a dedicated funding source in Pima County's Library Taxing District at **\$10 million** a year for a minimum of 3 years.





Sahuarita Unified School District  
Sunnyside Unified School District  
Amphitheater Public Schools  
Tucson Unified School District  
Flowing Wells Unified School District  
Marana Unified School District  
DES childcare subsidies  
City of Tucson  
Town of Marana  
Town of Oro Valley  
Pima County ARPA  
Pima County Library District

Pima County ARPA  
Pima County Library District  
First Things First

Accelerate Quality

PNC Bank  
El Rio Health  
Private Donors  
Marshall Foundation  
Tucson Medical Center  
Tucson Values Teachers  
Diamond Family Foundation  
Southern Arizona Leadership Council  
United Way  
Community Foundation

Child Parent Centers Inc.  
Pima County ARPA  
Pima County Library District  
Pima Community College  
DES childcare subsidies



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# Program Highlights

Since inception PEEPS has served over **4,000 individual preschool aged children** in Pima County.

In its fourth year, the program served **1,552 children directly** and, together with partner efforts, reached over **5,000 children system wide**. Collectively, PEEPs and our partners are serving about 41% of the need in Pima County.

To ensure all eligible children have the opportunity to access high-quality early childhood programs in Pima County, we must also increase the number of high-quality rated and accredited preschools. At program inception there were **199 high-quality rated preschool providers** in Pima County, **now there are 307!**





# For more information...

Pima County Pima Early Education Program (PEEPS) Website

<https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?pageId=756311>

Child Care Resource & Referral

1.800.308.9000 / [www.azccrr.com](http://www.azccrr.com)

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