

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

Graham/Greenlee Region



2022

NEEDS AND ASSETS
REPORT

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ninety percent of a child's brain growth occurs before kindergarten and the quality of a child's early experiences impacts whether their brain will develop in positive ways that promote learning. First Things First (FTF) was created by Arizonans to help ensure that Arizona children have the opportunity to start kindergarten prepared to be successful. Understanding the critical role the early years play in a child's future success is crucial to our ability to foster each child's optimal development and, in turn, impact all aspects of wellbeing in our communities and our state.

This Needs and Assets Report for the Graham/Greenlee Region helps us in understanding the needs of young children, the resources available to meet those needs and gaps that may exist in those resources. An overview of this information is provided in the Executive Summary and documented in further detail in the full report.

The report is organized by topic areas pertinent to young children in the region, such as population characteristics or educational indicators. Within each topic area are sections that set the context for why the data found in the topic areas are important (Why it Matters), followed by a section that includes available data on the topic (What the Data Tell Us).

The First Things First Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of investing in young children and ensuring that families and caregivers have options when it comes to supporting the healthy development and education of young children in their care. It is our sincere hope that this information will help guide community conversations about how we can best support school readiness for all children in the Graham/Greenlee Region. To that end, this information may be useful to local stakeholders as they work to enhance the resources available to young children and their families and as they make decisions about how best to support children birth to 5 years old in communities throughout the region.

Acknowledgements

The Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council wishes to thank all of the federal, state and local partners whose contributions of data, ongoing support and partnership with First Things First made this report possible. These partners included the Arizona Departments of Administration (Employment and Population Statistics), Child Safety, Economic Security, Education and Health Services; the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System; Child Care Resource and Referral; and the U.S. Census Bureau. We are especially grateful for the spirit of collaboration exhibited by all our partners during an unprecedented time of crisis for our state and our nation.

We also want to thank parents and caregivers, local service providers and members of the public who attended regional council meetings and voiced their opinions, as well as all the organizations working to transform the vision of the regional council into concrete programs and services for children and families in the Graham/Greenlee Region.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the current and past members of the Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council whose vision, dedication, and passion have been instrumental in improving outcomes for young children and families within the region. As we build upon those successes, we move ever closer to our ultimate goal of creating a comprehensive early childhood system that ensure children throughout Arizona are ready for school and set for life.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First Things First (FTF) is the only state agency in Arizona dedicated exclusively to investing in and enhancing the early childhood system. FTF works through regional partnership councils that partner with local communities to create a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative, and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health, and early education of all Arizona children, from birth to age five.

Every two years, each regional partnership council develops a report detailing the needs and assets of the region's youngest children and their families. The intent of the report is to inform the council and the local community about the overall status of children zero to five years of age in the region, in order to support data-driven decision making around future funding and programming. Data for this report were gathered from federal and local data sources, as well as provided directly to FTF by state agencies.

Overview of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region

The First Things First (FTF) Graham/Greenlee Region is located on Arizona's eastern border with New Mexico and occupies all of Greenlee County and the non-tribal portion of Graham County. The surrounding counties are Pima, Pinal, Gila, Navajo, and Apache. The region is primarily rural and has a large mining industry.¹ The cities in Greenlee County are Clifton, Duncan, and Morenci, and each have a population of less than 3,000.² The cities in Graham County are Safford, Thatcher, and Pima, and each have a population of less than 10,000.

The Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council (Council) makes strategic investments to support the healthy development and learning of the young children in the region. The Council's priorities include:

- Improving the quality of child care and preschool programs;
- Scholarships for children to access high-quality early learning;
- Strengthening families through voluntary home visiting;
- Supporting literacy opportunities through book distribution and literacy activities; and
- Improving the overall health in young children through mental health consultation.

The following section provides a summary of the key findings for each of the six domains of the 2022 Regional Needs and Assets report, highlighting the major data findings, the needs and assets identified for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, potential considerations, and opportunities for further

¹ *Greenlee County History*. Greenlee County. Retrieved from <http://www.co.greenlee.az.us/history.aspx>

² *Greenlee County Demographics*. Greenlee County. Retrieved from <http://www.co.greenlee.az.us/demographics.aspx>

exploration. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Key Findings

Population Characteristics

The demographic profile of residents in a particular community helps policy and decision makers make effective decisions that will positively impact the community's well-being. According to the 2010 Census, the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region has a total population of 40,877 residents. There are nearly 4,000 children under six-years-old in the region, accounting for ten percent of the total population in the region. Graham County has more than five times the population of Greenlee County, with 37,220 residents compared to 8,437. The population of children under six in Graham County is 3,830 compared to 794 in Greenlee County.

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 35% of adults ages 18 and over identify as Hispanic or Latino and 60% identify as white. This compares to 25% and 63%, respectively, for Arizona. In the region, children ages zero to four have relatively similar characteristics as adults, where 44% identify as Hispanic or Latino and 52% identify as white. Approximately four out of five people (81%) in the region speak English as their primary language, while 17% speak primarily Spanish, and an additional two percent speak a language other than English and Spanish. In addition, five percent speak English less than "very well." The percent of kindergarten through third grade students in the region who are English Language Learners (ELL) is less than two percent, which is lower than the state. These percentages remained consistent from 2018 to 2020.

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there are 9,191 households and 20% include children under six years old. Although the majority of children under six live in married-couple households, almost one-quarter live in single-female households. Over half of children under six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (57%) live in two parent households. Of children under 18 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 52% are primarily cared for by a grandparent, which is higher than for Arizona (50%).

Population Characteristics Considerations:

- Discuss tactics for continuing to meet the needs of the under six population.
- Provide culturally appropriate services and interpretation and translation assistance for families that are more comfortable speaking in a language other than English.
- Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households to help them support the young children in their homes.

Economic Circumstances

As children are growing and developing, outcomes such as school achievement, physical health, and emotional well-being are all impacted by a child's economic situation.³ In Graham and Greenlee Counties, the unemployment rate declined slightly each year from 2016 through 2019. Both Graham and Greenlee Counties had the highest rates of unemployment in 2016 (7% for Graham County and 8% for Greenlee County). From 2019 to 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for Graham County, Greenlee County, and Arizona increased. In 2020, for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the total number of unemployment claims started to increase in March 2020 as businesses closed or paused operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In May 2020, the number of total claims peaked at 584 and gradually started to decrease in July 2020 to 391 then to 188 in August 2020. By the end of 2020, the total unemployment claims were 75. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 86% of children under age six live in a household where at least one adult is in the labor force, which is slightly lower than Arizona (89%).

The median income of families with children under age eighteen in Graham County and Greenlee County is lower than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families, which comprise over 30% of households with children under age six, is significantly less than for married-couple families. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 18% of the population and 28% of children under age six are living in poverty. Over a third of children under age six live in poverty in Graham County (36%), compared to about a quarter of children under age six in Greenlee County (22%) and Arizona (23%). Residents of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region have a lower housing cost burden to residents of the state as a whole: 21% of the region's housing units require their residents to contribute more than 30% of their household income toward housing.

Economic Considerations:

- Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes.
- Future efforts should emphasize tracking population characteristics in order to be responsive to the needs of the community.

Educational Indicators

Children's participation in early learning experiences is likely to result in higher academic performance in future years.⁴ A little over a third of preschool-aged children in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (37%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten), which is

³ Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. (1997). *The effects of poverty on children. The future of children*, 55-71.

⁴ Bakken, L., Brown, N., Downing, B. (2017) *Early Childhood Education: The Long-Term Benefits. Journal of Research in Childhood Education. Volume 31. Issue 2. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1273285>*

lower than Arizona (65%). In both Graham County and Greenlee County, about about half of preschool-aged children enrolled in private or public school (47% and 50% respectively). The English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results of the AzMERIT demonstrated that 48% of all third graders in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”. Arizona Progress Meter’s goal for proficiency is 72% by 2030, so FTF Graham/Greenlee Region is about 24 percentage points below the goal.⁵ Moreover, 54% of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, compared to 51% of third graders in Arizona. Although math assessment results are slightly higher than the ELA assessment results, overall, about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standard for the two subjects.

Between 2017 and 2019, high school graduation rates remained steady for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, Graham County, Greenlee County, and Arizona. In 2019, 90% of students graduated within four-years in the region, which was higher than Arizona (79%). From 2018 to 2020, the percent of students dropping out of high school in Arizona remained steady. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, two percent of students dropped out in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2020, Greenlee County had a one percent high school dropout rate, while Graham County had a dropout rate of three percent.

Educational Considerations:

- Increase awareness for parents to support each other and share knowledge and attitudes around the importance of education.
- Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.

Early Learning

Participation in early care and education programs plays an important role in preparing children for kindergarten and beyond.⁶ There are 24 ECE centers and homes with a capacity of 1,347 children in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region. Graham County has 16 centers, while Greenlee County has eight. The actual facility may not choose to enroll the total number of children they are licensed to serve. The number of children served mainly depends on the center’s ability to meet the adult to child ratio, which varies by child’s age and must comply with licensing requirements. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, out of the 339 children enrolled in a Quality First site, 314 are enrolled in three to five star center or home (93%). Moreover, six out of seven (86%) childcare providers in Quality First have received a three-to-five-star rating.

⁵ Center for the Future of Arizona (n.d.) *Third Grade Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.arizonafuture.org/progress-meters/education/third-grade-reading/>

⁶ University of Massachusetts Global (2021) *What is the purpose of early childhood education? Why it’s so important*. Retrieved from: <https://www.umassglobal.edu/news-and-events/blog/what-is-purpose-of-early-childhood-education>

Across the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, Graham County, and Greenlee County, and the state, licensed centers have the highest cost per day compared to family homes. The median cost per day of licensed centers in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region are lower than the state. The median cost per day of approved family homes in the region are higher compared to the state. Based on the median cost per day, the median cost of child care per year for one infant in Graham County totals to \$6,250 for licensed centers and \$5,875 a year for approved family homes.⁷ Compared against the median income of families in Graham County with children under 18, licensed centers comprise 11% and approved family homes comprise 10% of the county median income.

Early Learning Considerations

- Support Quality First efforts in the region to continue to increase the opportunities for children to receive quality early care and education experiences.
- Work with school districts to refer children identified with special needs to support services.

Child Health

Ensuring healthy development through early identification and treatment of children's health issues helps families understand healthy developmental pathways and how health issues affect children and their school readiness.⁸ The HP 2030 target is for 92.1% of Americans to have medical insurance by 2030.⁹ In 2019, 95.1% of the population in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region had health insurance, which exceeds the HP 2030's targeted goal by 3.0 percentage points. In 2019, three percent of children under age six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region did not have any health insurance which is less than the state (7%). Slightly more children in Graham County do not have health insurance compared to Greenlee County (5% versus 4%, respectively).

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there have been 20 non-fatal inpatient hospitalizations and 1,791 non-fatal emergency department visits among children from 2016-2020. Children that had emergency department visits were most likely to identify as male (56%) and white (59%). Between 2018 and 2019, in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the total number of deaths among children 0 to 17 years old slightly decreased from eight to seven. In 2018, most of those deaths occurred among of young children 0 to 4 years (75%). During calendar year 2019, FTF Graham/Greenlee Region residents gave birth to 553 babies, which was one percent of all births in the state. Most of the births in the regions occurred in Graham County (n=493; 81%). Of the about 550 people who gave birth in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region in 2019, 58% were non-Hispanic white, 38% were Hispanic or Latino/a, 3% were American

⁷ *Costs per day in Greenlee County are not available for licensed centers.*

⁸ *Schools & Health (2016). Impact of Health on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/pages/Anthropometricstatusgrowth.aspx>*

⁹ *Healthy People 2030. About Health People. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/increase-proportion-people-health-insurance-ahs-01>*

Indian and 1% were Black.

HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%.¹⁰ In 2019, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester was 75%, which is about five percentage points lower than the HP goal but higher than the state proportion (69%). In 2019, only one percent of women did not receive prenatal care which is lower than the proportion in the state (3%). With regard to perinatal health, babies from the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region fared similarly to babies born statewide. In the region in 2019, nine percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state. The percent of premature births in the region was higher than Graham County and the state at nine percent. In 2019, 9.8% of births in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region were preterm which was slightly below the Healthy People 2030 goal of 9.4%. The percentage of newborns admitted to the NICU in the region (6%) was slightly lower than the state proportion (8%).

Child Health Considerations

- Promote the importance of early prenatal care and provide education on the impact of prenatal care on the mother and child's future well-being.
- Work with partners to ensure access to health care for all children in the region.

Family Support

Support for young families is an essential piece of the holistic efforts around kindergarten readiness and long-term success for children.¹¹ In Graham County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2017 to 2020. In Graham County, the number of non-fatal overdoses increased by 13 percentage points from 24 in 2017 to 27 in 2020. Meanwhile, Arizona had a 180% increase of non-fatal overdoses from 2017 to 2020.

Numerous federal and local programs and services are aimed at providing families with food security, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Program (SFP), and free and reduced priced lunch programs for children in schools. Despite the prevalence of these programs, in recent years, the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased for some programs but increased for other programs. Federal programs such as SNAP have decreased from 2017 to 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. These decreases come even as the

¹⁰ *Healthy People 2030. About Health People. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/pregnancy-and-childbirth/increase-proportion-pregnant-women-who-receive-early-and-adequate-prenatal-care-mich-08>*

¹¹ *Center for the Study of Social Policy (2013). Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. Retrieved from http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf*

number of families living in poverty has increased nationally.¹² Unlike SNAP benefits, the number of children and families receiving TANF benefits increased from 2017 to 2020 in FTF Graham/Greenlee and Graham County. In 2020, 89 families and 110 young children received TANF benefits.

Family Support Considerations

- Continue to provide public education about the benefits.
- Consider examining alternative strategies to support food security for children and families.

¹² Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (n.d.) *Tracking the COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-economys-effects-on-food-housing-and>

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Family well-being is an important indicator of child success.^{13, 14} Healthy families and healthy communities create a context in which young children can thrive, developing the cognitive, emotional, motor, and social skills they will need to succeed in school and life.¹⁵ Early childhood interventions promote well-being and impact outcomes for children and adults later in life, including school readiness, parent involvement, K-12 achievement, educational attainment, crime prevention and remedial education.¹⁶

First Things First (FTF) is one of the critical partners in the family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative, and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health, and early education of all Arizona children from birth to age five. FTF is intent on bolstering current child-focused systems within Arizona as a strategic way to maximize current and future resources. The Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council (Council) makes strategic investments to support the healthy development and learning of the young children in the region. The Council's priorities include:

- Improving the quality of child care and preschool programs;
- Scholarships for children to access high-quality early learning;
- Strengthening families through voluntary home visiting;
- Supporting literacy opportunities through book distribution and literacy activities; and
- Improving the overall health in young children through mental health consultation.

Methodology

This is the eighth Needs and Assets report conducted on behalf of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Council. It fulfills the requirement of ARS Title 8, Chapter 13, Section 1161, to submit a biennial report to the Arizona Early Childhood Health and Development Board detailing the assets, coordination opportunities, and unmet needs of children from birth to age five and their families in the region. This report is designed to provide updated information to the FTF Graham/Greenlee Council about the needs and assets in their region to help them make important programmatic and funding decisions. This report

¹³ Bøe, T., Serlachius, A., Sivertsen, B., Petrie, K., Hysing, M. (2017) Cumulative effects of negative life events and family stress in children's mental health: the Bergen child study. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-017-1451-4>

¹⁴ Sosu, E., Schmidt, P. (2017) Economic deprivation and its effects on childhood conduct problems: the mediating role of family stress and investment factors. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01580>

¹⁵ Knitzer, J. (2000). *Early childhood mental services: a policy and systems development perspective*. In J. Shonkoff & S. Meisels (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 416-438). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Reynolds, A., Ou, S., Mondri, C., Hayakawa, M. (2017) Processes of early childhood interventions to adult well-being. *Child Development*. Volume 88 Issue 2. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12733>

describes the current circumstances of young children and their families as it relates to unmet needs and assets for the region.

This report is organized by topic area followed by subtopics and indicators. When available, data are presented for the state, county, region, and subregional breakdowns as appropriate. Key data indicators are represented in this report in six unique domains:

- Population characteristics;
- Economic circumstances;
- Educational indicators;
- Early learning;
- Child health;
- Family support;

A systematic review designed to reveal the needs and assets of the Graham/Greenlee Region was used to collect and summarize data for this report. Quantitative data components included a review and analysis of current and relevant secondary data describing the FTF Region, Graham County, Greenlee County, and State of Arizona. Wherever possible, data throughout the report are provided specifically for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region and are often presented alongside data for the County and the State of Arizona for comparative purposes. Subregional data from the American Community Survey and 2010 Census were calculated by aggregating the ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTA) in each subregion. ZCTAs were assigned to a subregion by FTF, and Harder+Company then used those assignments to determine which ZCTAs belonged to each subregion. For ZCTAs that are in more than one subregion, a percentage of the tabulation area was assigned to each subregion based upon the population living in ZCTA within the subregions' portion of the ZCTA.

Secondary data was gathered to better understand demographic trends for the Graham/Greenlee Region. The assessment was conducted using data from state and local agencies and organizations who provided public data or who have an existing data sharing agreement with FTF. A special request for data was made to the following state agencies by First Things First on behalf of Harder+Company Community Research: Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Department of Child Safety (DCS) and First Things First itself.

Further secondary data were gathered directly from public databases. For example, demographic data included in this report were primarily gathered from the US Census and the American Community Survey. Understanding the true needs and assets of the region required extracting data from multiple data sets that often do not have similar reporting standards, definitions, or means for aggregating data. This suggests that, for some indicators, data were only available at the county level, for small towns, or certain zip codes, whereas for other indicators, data were available at all levels. Whenever possible this

report presents all data available. In some cases, not enough data is available to make meaningful conclusions about a particular indicator within a region, city, or county.

Furthermore, many agencies are collecting data independent of other public entities which results in duplication of data efforts, gaps in the collection of critical indicators, or differences in method of collection, unit of analysis, or geographic level. Many indicators that are of critical importance to understanding the well-being of children under age six and their families were not available for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, such as more detailed data on housing or homelessness, home visiting, oral health, hearing loss and child welfare. The analysis presented in this report aims to integrate relevant data indicators from a variety of credible sources, including regional and subregional, and/or community-level analyses for a subset of data indicators. This report represents the most up-to-date representation of the needs and assets of young children and their families in the region and interpretation of the identified strengths of the community (i.e., the assets available in the region).

In addition to systematically reviewing secondary data, key findings and data trends were synthesized and presented to the FTF Regional Council and community members, FTF Research and Evaluation Unit, and FTF Regional Directors which allowed for a deeper discussion on the interpretation of the findings. Whenever possible, the rich context provided by these stakeholders is incorporated throughout the report to help contextualize the findings. To further expand the meaningfulness of data trends, a brief literature review was conducted to ensure the inclusion of other relevant research studies that help explain the needs and assets of the region.

Per FTF guidelines, education data from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), with counts of or percentages related to fewer than eleven, excluding counts of zero (i.e., all counts of one through ten) are suppressed. Percentages greater than 98% or less than 2% were presented as >98% and <2% respectively. For data related to health or developmental delay, all counts and rates/ratios/percentages are based on non-zero counts less than six, excluding counts of zero (i.e., all counts of one through six, depending on the indicator) are suppressed.

Limitations

In the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 and continues through the writing of this report. Thus, it is important to contextualize how the pandemic impacted data availability and the process to develop this report. First, public agencies had limited capacity to support data requests while they focused on their pandemic response, therefore some data sets could not be provided. For this reason, the timeline for the 2022 RNA report was modified to adapt to the barriers in collecting data and moving forward with the report process.

This report relied primarily on secondary data. Most of the data were extracted by teams other than the evaluation team conducting the asset and needs assessment, except for the data of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) which the evaluation team accessed through the ADE data system.

Some of the most recent data was not available for this report. The demographic and economic profile of the region relied mostly on Census and ACS data. For some of the Census indicators, only 2010 Census data were available as 2020 Census data were delayed due to COVID-19. For some of the indicators reported, the most recent data for the region was released in 2018, thus trends may have changed within the past four years, especially due to the pandemic. For example, the most recent data for the Child Care Market Rate Survey is from 2018. This survey provides the median cost for licensed centers, approved family homes and certified group homes.

Another limitation impacting the findings and interpretation of findings is the targeted population included in each of the different data sources. For many domains reported, data were often available only at the county level rather than the region, and data for children often includes children under 18 rather than children under six. Additionally, ACS estimates are less reliable for small geographic areas or areas with smaller populations. Similarly, rural areas tend to be undercounted, along with non-white populations. Federal data also have similar limitations. For example, WIC data only includes a sample of the young children and families' served. In regards to education data, ADE provided AZMerit only for 2018-2019 school year (prior to COVID-19) since this assessment was not administered during the 2019-2020 school year. The report uses public data for the 2020-2021 school year at the state and county level.

Another major limitation is the discrepancy in the definitions and criteria used by each agency that is collecting the data. Because various different data sources are used for each domain and they each have different definitions, it is difficult to make confident comparisons on indicators between data sources. Given these limitations, interpretation of key findings requires a deep understanding of the region. Contextualizing the findings is equally important as what the data tell us.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Why It Matters

The demographic profile of residents in a particular community helps inform the types of services needed in that community. Policy and decision makers need to understand the demographic profile of the communities they serve in order to make effective decisions that will positively impact the community's well-being. Timely information about the demographics of a region, such as the number of children and families, number and composition of households, racial and ethnic composition, languages spoken, and living arrangements help policy makers identify the needs of the region they serve and the services and resources that would benefit the community. For example, knowing where non-English speakers live and what their primary languages are can inform translation and interpretation services to help these families access health care and other social services. Knowing where children and families are located will help identify the needs for early childhood services to support their development and well-being.

This first domain of the report provides an overview of the geographic region's population dynamics, projected growth, ethnic and racial composition, languages spoken, immigration trends, and household characteristics (e.g., living arrangements for children). Indicators about children living with grandparents are included as well. Although only limited research has been conducted on the influence of grandparents on child development and health, this data provides an overview of their participation in the region's households and shows trends in grandparental care over time.¹⁷ Understanding how the population is changing and where it is growing allows decision makers to strategically and proactively allocate resources.

What the Data Tells Us

The First Things First (FTF) Graham/Greenlee Region is located on Arizona's eastern border with New Mexico and occupies all of Greenlee County and the non-tribal portion of Graham County. The surrounding counties are Pima, Pinal, Gila, Navajo, and Apache (Exhibit 1.1). The region is primarily rural and has a large mining industry.¹⁸ The cities in Greenlee County are Clifton, Duncan, and Morenci, and each have a population of less than 3,000.¹⁹ The cities in Graham County are Safford,

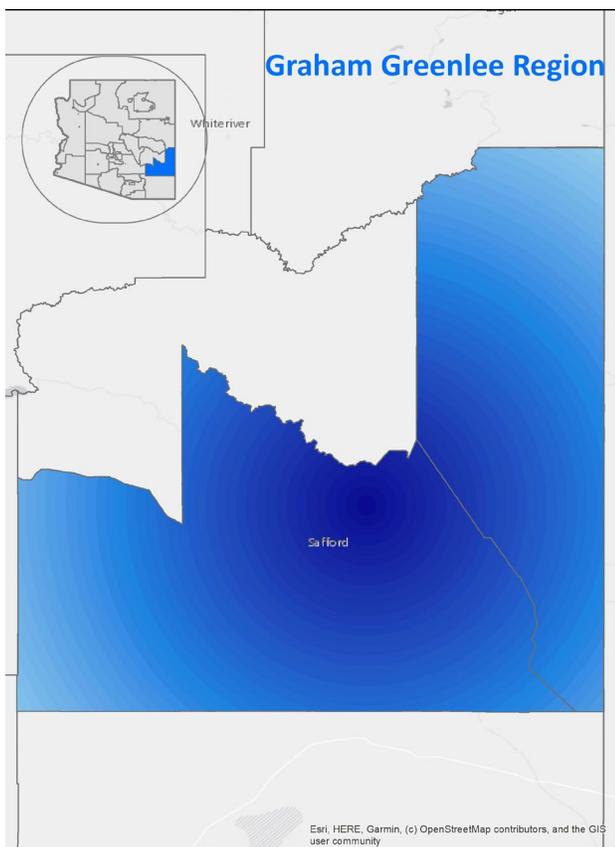
¹⁷ Sadruddin, A., Ponguta, L., Zonderman, A., Wiley, K., Grimshaw, A., Panter-Brick, C. (2019) *How do grandparents influence child health and development? A systematic review. Social Science & Medicine. Volume 239.* Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112476>

¹⁸ Greenlee County. *Greenlee County History.* Retrieved from <https://www.co.greenlee.az.us/history>

¹⁹ Greenlee County. *Greenlee County Demographics.* Retrieved from <https://www.co.greenlee.az.us/demographics>

Thatcher, and Pima, and each have a population of less than 10,000. To fully understand the demographic profile of the region, this section of the report provides data on current population characteristics to showcase the current status of young children and their families. The following section provides a more detailed breakdown of the population characteristics of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region and how these characteristics compare to the state.

Exhibit 1.1. Map of FTF Graham/Greenlee Region boundaries



Population Counts and Projections

According to the 2010 Census, the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region has a total population of 40,877 residents. There are nearly 4,000 children under six-years-old in the region, accounting for ten percent of the total population in the region. (Exhibit 1.2). Graham County has more than five times the population of Greenlee County, with 37,220 residents compared to 8,437. The population of children under six in Graham County is 3,830 compared to 794 in Greenlee County.

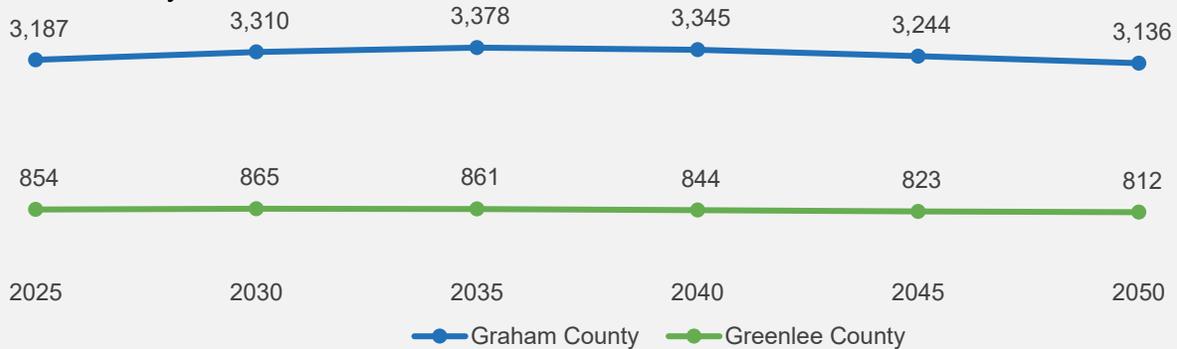
Exhibit 1.2. Population (all ages) in the 2010 Census

	Arizona	Graham County	Greenlee County	FTF Graham/Greenlee Region
Total Population	6,392,017	37,220	8,437	40,877
Population of children 0-5	546,609	3,830	794	3,903
Percent of children 0-5 out of total population	9%	10%	9%	10%

U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; Tables P11 & P14

The number of children ages zero to five is expected to remain steady over the next ten years for both counties (Exhibit 1.3). Over the same time period, the number of children ages zero to five are expected to increase for the state as a whole (not shown).

Exhibit 1.3. Projected population of children 0-5 in Graham County and Greenlee County

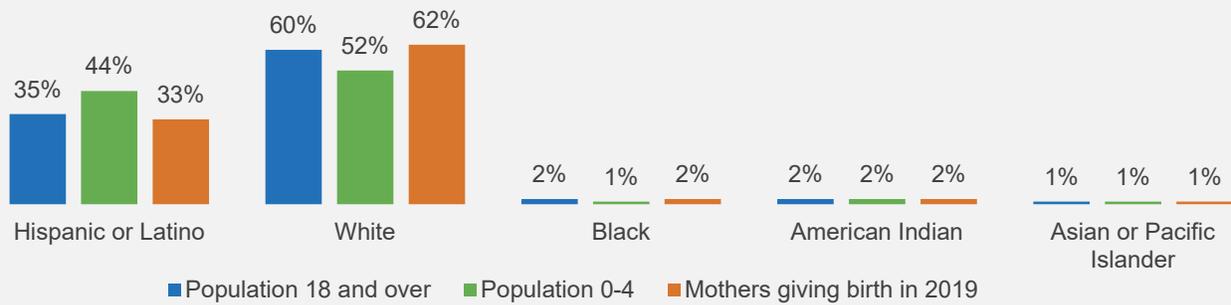


Arizona Department of Administration, Office of Employment & Population Statistics (2017). Arizona Population Projections: 2020 to 2050, Medium Series

Demographics and Language

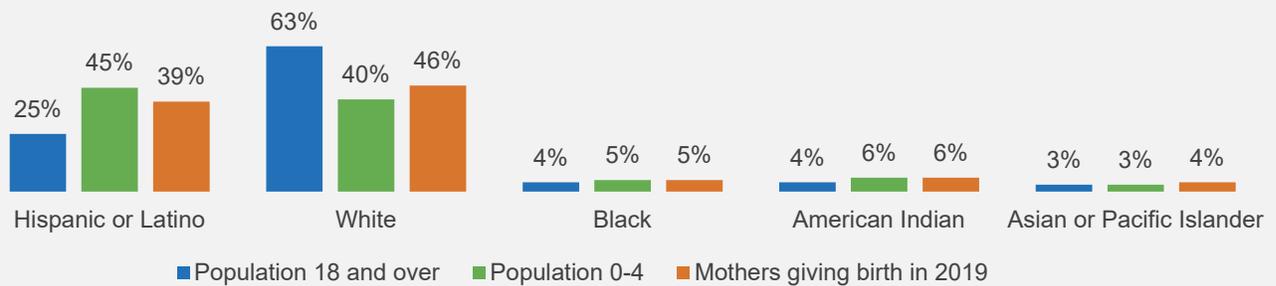
In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 35% of adults ages 18 and over identify as Hispanic or Latino and 60% identify as white. This compares to 25% and 63%, respectively, for Arizona. In the region, children ages zero to four have relatively similar characteristics as adults, where 44% identify as Hispanic or Latino and 52% identify as white (Exhibits 1.4 and 1.5).

Exhibit 1.4. Distribution of race/ethnicity in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region



*U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; Tables P11 & P14
 U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Tables P12B, P12C, P12D, P12E, P12H, and P12I
 ADHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2021). Arizona Health Status and V*

Exhibit 1.5. Distribution of race/ethnicity in Arizona



*U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; Tables P11 & P14
 U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Tables P12B, P12C, P12D, P12E, P12H, and P12I
 ADHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2021). Arizona Health Status and V*

Approximately four out of five people (81%) in the region speak English as their primary language, while 17% speak primarily Spanish, and an additional two percent speak a language other than English and Spanish (Exhibit 1.6). In addition, five percent speak English less than “very well” (Exhibit 1.7).

Exhibit 1.6. Primary language spoken at home for population ages 5 and over

	Estimated population (ages 5 and older)	Speak English at home	Speak Spanish at home	Speak another language at home
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	38,699	81%	17%	2%
Graham County	35,231	80%	15%	5%
Greenlee County	8,773	79%	18%	3%
ARIZONA	6,616,331	73%	20%	7%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B16001

Exhibit 1.7. Proficiency in English (ages 5 and older)

	Population (ages 5 and older)	Speak English at home	Speak another language at home, and speak English “very well”	Speak another language at home, and do not speak English “very well”
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	38,699	81%	14%	5%
Graham County	35,231	80%	15%	6%
Greenlee County	8,773	79%	16%	5%
ARIZONA	6,616,331	73%	19%	9%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B16001

A household is considered “limited-English-speaking” if there is no adult (14 or older) who speaks English well. Two percent of households in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region are classified as limited English-speaking, which is similar to the proportion of households in Arizona (3%) (Exhibit 1.8).²⁰

Exhibit 1.8. Limited-English-Speaking Households

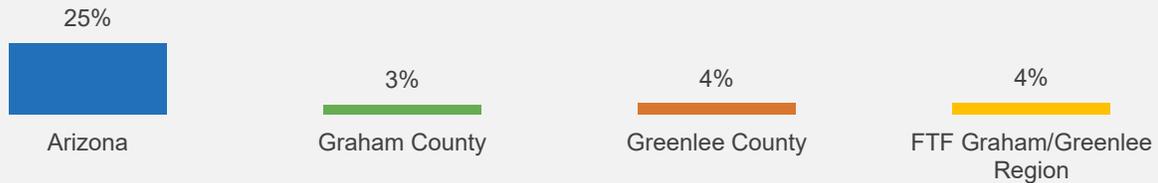
	Number of households	Households which speak a language other than English	Limited-English-speaking households (Total)	Limited-English-speaking households (Spanish)
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	12,959	26%	2%	2%
Graham County	11,017	29%	2%	2%
Greenlee County	3,132	33%	3%	3%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	28%	4%	3%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B16002

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, four percent of children ages zero to five live with parents born outside the U.S which is less than in the state of Arizona (4% versus 25%, respectively) (Exhibit 1.9).

²⁰ The United States Census Bureau defines limited English speaking households as a “household in which no one 14 and over speaks English only or speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English very well.”

Exhibit 1.9. Percent of children (ages 0 to 5) living with parents born outside the U.S.



U.S. Census Bureau (2019) American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B05009

The number of kindergarten through third grade students in the region that are migrants is less than 11 students (Exhibit 1.10).

Exhibit 1.10. Children in grades k to 3 that are migrants from 2018 to 2020

	Arizona	Graham County	Greenlee County	FTF Graham/Greenlee Region
2018	662	<11	<11	<11
2019	570	<11	<11	<11
2020	809	<11	<11	<11

Arizona Department of Education (2021). Migrant Children. Provided by AZ FTF

The percent of kindergarten through third grade students in the region who are English Language Learners (ELL) is less than two percent, which is lower than the state (Exhibit 1.11). These percentages remained consistent from 2018 to 2020.

Exhibit 1.11. Percentage of children in grades k to 3 that are English Language Learners from 2018 to 2020

	Arizona	Graham County	Greenlee County	FTF Graham/Greenlee Region
2018	10%	<2%	<2%	<2%
2019	9%	<2%	<2%	<2%
2020	10%	<2%	<2%	<2%

Arizona Department of Education (2021). English Language Learners. Provided by AZ FTF

Household Characteristics

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there are 9,191 households and 20% include children under six years old (Exhibit 1.12). Although the majority of children under six live in married-couple households, almost one-quarter live in single-female households (Exhibit 1.12).

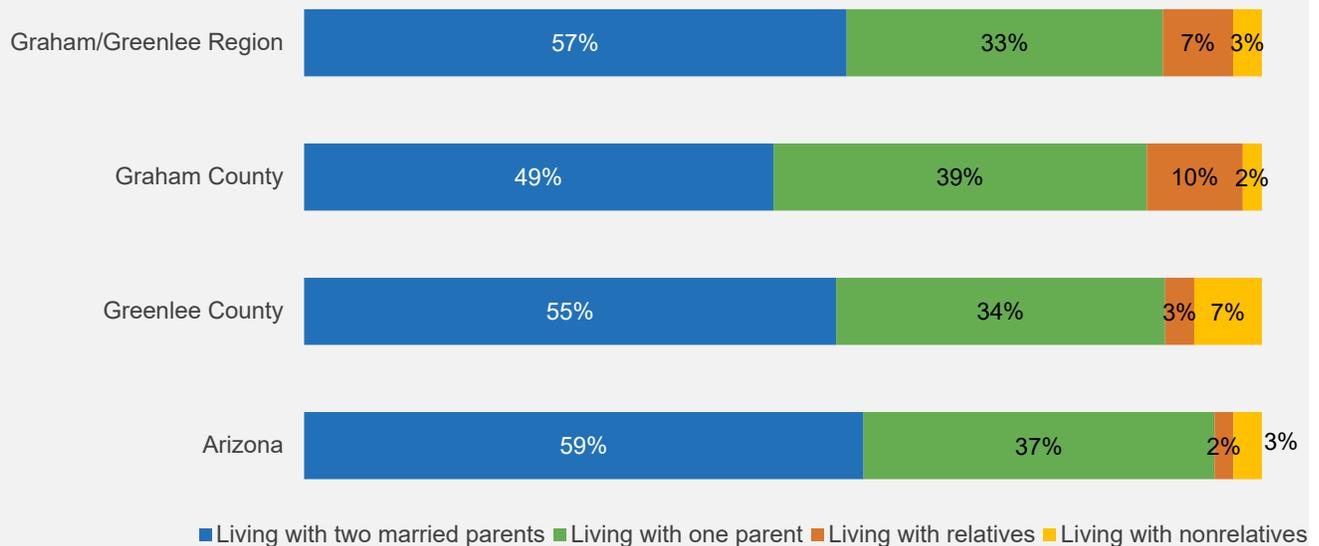
Exhibit 1.12. Number of households and household characteristics

	Total number of households	Total number of households with children 0-5	Percent of households with children 0-5	Percent of married-couple households with children 0-5	Percent of single-male households with children 0-5	Percent of single-female households with children 0-5
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	9,191	1,815	20%	68%	9%	23%
Graham County	7,786	1,490	19%	66%	6%	29%
Greenlee County	2,339	452	19%	69%	23%	8%
ARIZONA	1,679,198	291,242	17%	68%	10%	22%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019) American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B11003

Over half of children under six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (57%) live in two parent households (Exhibit 1.13). Out of children ages zero to 17 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 52% are primarily cared for by a grandparent (this is slightly higher than the 50% for Arizona) (Exhibit 1.14).

Exhibit 1.13. Living arrangements of children 0-5



U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015-2019), Table B05009, B09001, B17006

Exhibit 1.14. Children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household

	Number of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household	Percent of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household, and the grandparent is responsible for the child	Percent of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household, and the grandparent is responsible for the child (with no parent present)
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	958	52%	34%
Graham County	1,615	45%	18%
Greenlee County	231	39%	39%
ARIZONA	155,821	50%	16%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015-2019), Table B10002

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key findings that highlight the demographic assets, needs and data-driven considerations for the region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
The population of children under the age of six is projected to remain steady, allowing the region to prepare for the growing demands of their youngest residents.	Discuss tactics for continuing to meet the needs of the under six population.

Needs	Considerations
<p>In the region, more children ages zero to five identify as Hispanic or Latino than adults (44% vs. 35%).</p> <p>Five percent in the region speak English less than very well.</p>	Provide culturally appropriate services and interpretation and translation assistance for families that are more comfortable speaking in a language other than English.
Out of children ages zero to 17 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 52% are primarily cared for by the grandparent.	Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households to help them support the young children in their homes.



ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Why it Matters

The economic situation of children and their families has a large impact on their ability to access opportunities and services that can contribute to their well-being and healthy development. As children are growing and developing, outcomes such as school achievement, physical health, and emotional well-being are all impacted by a child's economic situation.²¹ Additionally, being unemployed or living below the federal poverty level indicates that parents and caregivers have fewer resources to be able to meet their families' basic needs, such as adequate, nutritious food and good quality, stable housing.

Economic stability is critical to supporting young children and families to maintain a household where children can thrive. Recent research has shown that physical housing quality, neighborhood environment and housing stability play an important role in children's development and well-being.^{22, 23, 24} Housing instability, which includes frequent moves, difficulty paying rent, being evicted or being homeless, is associated with worse health, academic, and social outcomes.²⁵ Children without housing stability often experience negative outcomes such as higher grade retention, higher high school dropout rates, and lower educational attainment as adults.^{26, 27} Unemployment of parents can also affect the psychological well-being of children in the long-term due to negative experiences and stressful events.²⁸ Lack of access to healthy food and general food insecurity can also lead to numerous issues for children and mothers, including birth complications, delayed development, learning difficulties, and chronic health conditions.^{29, 30} Thus, housing, families' employment and food security are important components to consider when evaluating the conditions that affect a child's development and well-being during their first five years of life.

²¹ Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. (1997). *The effects of poverty on children. The future of children*, 55-71.

²² Blau, D., Haskell, N., Haurin, D. (2019). *Are housing characteristics experienced by children associated with their outcomes as young adults? Journal of Housing Economics*, 46, 101631.

²³ Roy, J., Maynard, M., Weiss, E. (2008) *Partnership for America's Economic Success. The Hidden Costs of the Housing Crisis*. Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/partnership_for_americas_economic_success/paeshousingreportfinal1pdf.pdf

²⁴ Clair, A. (2019). *Housing: An under-explored influence on children's well-being and becoming. Child Indicators Research*, 12(2), 609-626.

²⁵ Sandstrom, H. & Huerta, S. (2013). *The Negative Effects of Instability on Child Development: A Research Synthesis*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis/view/full_report

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kushel, M., Gupta, R., Gee, L., Haas, J. (2006) *Housing Instability and Food Insecurity as Barriers to Health Care Among Low-Income Americans*. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2005.00278.x/full>

²⁸ Nikolova, M., Nikolaev, B. (2018) *How having unemployed parents affects children's future well-being. Brookings*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/07/13/how-having-unemployed-parents-affects-childrens-future-well-being/>

²⁹ *Feeding America*. Retrieved from <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/child-hunger/child-development.html>

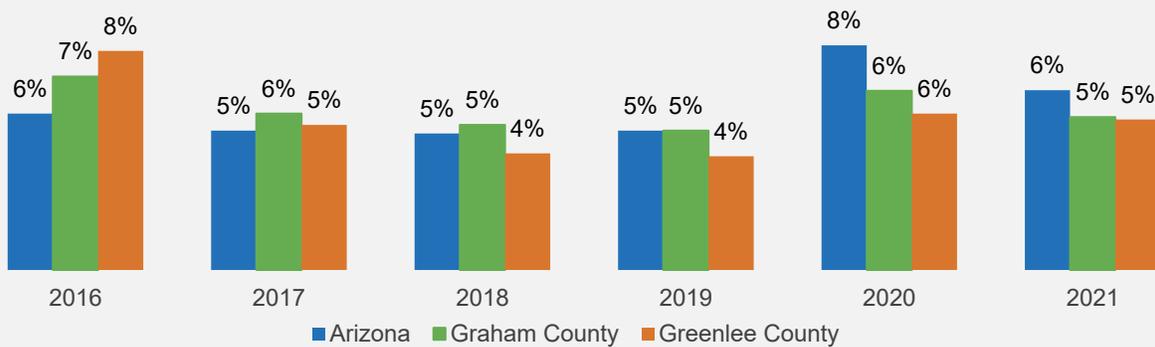
³⁰ Ke, J., Lee Ford-Jones, E. (2015) "Food Insecurity and Hunger: A Review of the Effects on Children's Health and Behaviour." *Paediatrics & Child Health* 20.2.89

What the Data Tell Us

Employment Indicators

In Graham and Greenlee Counties, the unemployment rate declined slightly each year from 2016 through 2019 (Exhibit 2.1). Both Graham and Greenlee Counties had the highest rates of unemployment in 2016 (7% for Graham County and 8% for Greenlee County). From 2019 to 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for Graham County, Greenlee County, and Arizona increased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, those who tended to be affected by unemployment included those who worked in services, restaurants, transportation, and other fields that typically do not offer long-term contracts, decent wages, and health benefits.³¹ In July 2020, the unemployment rate reached a peak for both Graham County (10%) and Greenlee County (8%) and started to decline to six percent in both counties in August 2020. The overall unemployment rate in both Graham County and Greenlee County decreased from six percent in 2020 to five percent in 2021. This indicates that more people started to go to back to the labor force as stay-at-home orders were lifted and businesses reopened.

Exhibit 2.1. Average unemployment rates from 2016 to 2021



U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*, Arizona Office of Employment. Note: The data for 2021 goes up to September 2021.

Unemployment claims provide temporary payments to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own and meet the other eligibility requirements. In order to receive these benefits, an individual that has lost their job completes an application. If they are eligible, they then receive unemployment benefits. In 2020, for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the total number of unemployment claims started to increase in March 2020 as businesses closed or paused operations during the COVID-19 pandemic (Exhibit 2.2). In May 2020, the number of total claims peaked at 584 and gradually started to decrease in July 2020 to 391 then to 188 in August 2020. By the end of 2020, the total unemployment claims were 75.

³¹ Blustein, D., Paige, G. (2020) "Work and unemployment in the time of COVID-19: the existential experience of loss and fear." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60.

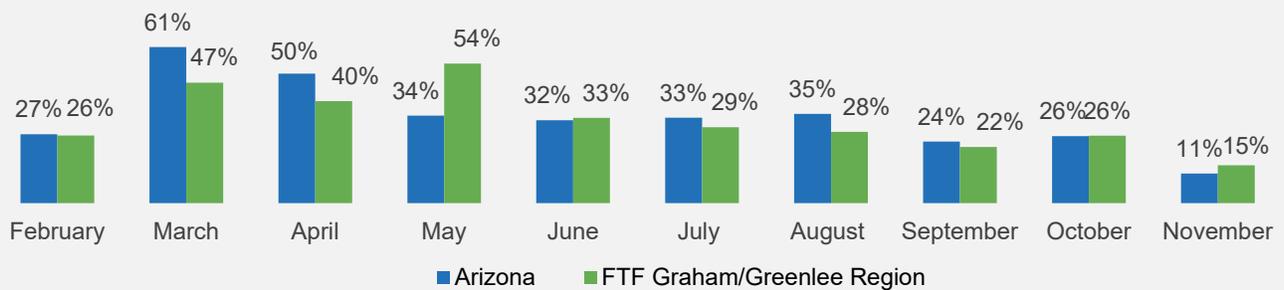
Exhibit 2.2. Number of total unemployment claims 2020 for FTF Graham/Greenlee Region



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Unemployment claims. Provided by AZ FTF

In addition to the total number of claims increasing in March and April 2020, the percentage of eligible and paid unemployment claims also increased in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region and in Arizona (Exhibit 2.3). In February 2020, 26% of claims were eligible in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region and this increased to over 40% in March and April with a peak in May 2020 at 54%. As the number of total claims started to decrease in September 2020, the percentage of eligible claims also started to decrease. By November 2020, 15% of claims were found eligible which was the lowest percentage in 2020.

Exhibit 2.3. Percent of eligible and paid unemployment claims in 2020



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Unemployment claims. Provided by AZ FTF

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 86% of children under age six live in a household where at least one adult is in the labor force (Exhibit 2.4), which is slightly lower than Arizona (89%). Forty-five percent of children under age six have either both parents in the labor force or a single parent in the labor force, indicating they have some need for child care. In Greenlee County, almost half of young children living with two parents have one parent in the labor force (47%), which is greater than Graham

County (33%) and Arizona (28%).

Exhibit 2.4. Employment status of parents with children 0-5

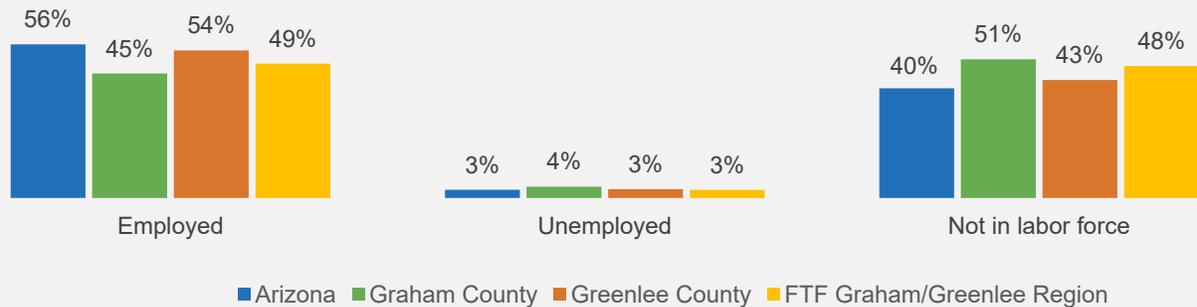
	Estimated number of children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents who are both in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, one in the labor force, and one not	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, neither in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is not in the labor force
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	3,006	20%	41%	1%	25%	11%
Graham County	2,886	21%	33%	1%	30%	14%
Greenlee County	780	14%	47%	1%	27%	11%
ARIZONA	494,590	32%	28%	1%	29%	9%

U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015–2019), Table B23008

Note: “In the labor force” includes persons who are employed and persons who are unemployed but looking for work. Persons who are “not in the labor force” include stay-at-home parents, students, retirees, and others who are not working or looking for work.

The overall percentage of adults who are in the labor force in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region is 49%, which is lower than the proportion in Arizona (56%) (Exhibit 2.5). Adults in Greenlee County (54%) are more likely to be employed than those in Graham County (45%).

Exhibit 2.5. Employment status of adult population (ages 16 and older) who are employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey Table B23025

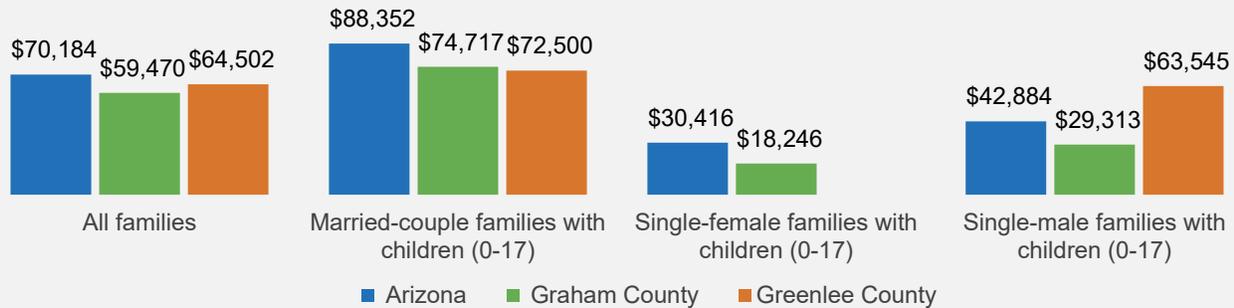
Note: “In the labor force” includes persons who are employed and persons who are unemployed but looking for work.

Median Income and Poverty

The median income of families with children under age eighteen in Graham County and Greenlee County is lower than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families, which comprise over 30% of households with children under age six, is significantly less than for married-

couple families. Exhibit 2.6 shows the difference in median income for married-couple families, single-female families, and single-male families.

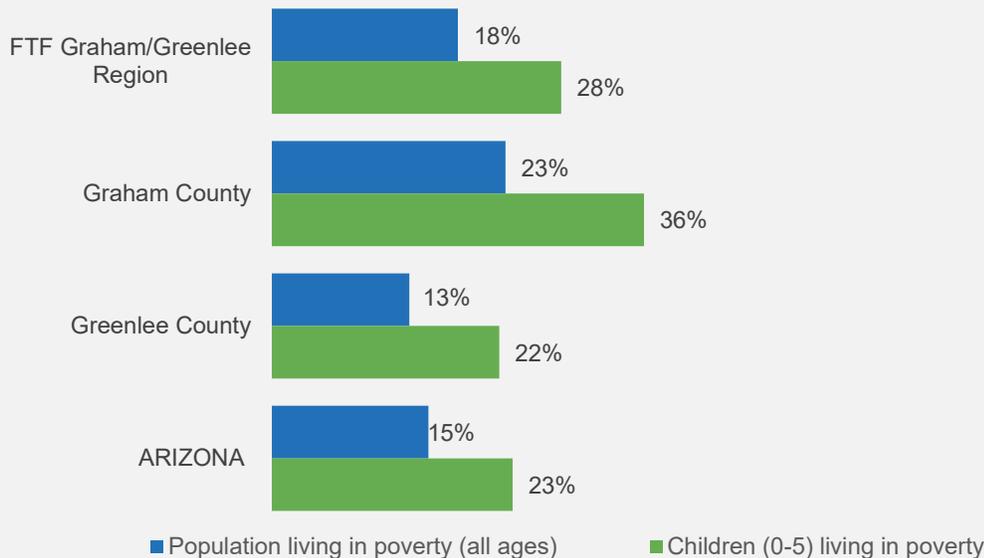
Exhibit 2.6. Median income for families*



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19126
 *Data not available for Greenlee County single-female families with children (0-17)

The large number of single-parent families combined with their low median income contributes to a sizable portion of the population in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region living in poverty. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 18% of the population and 28% of children under age six are living in poverty (Exhibit 2.7). Over a third of children under age six live in poverty in Graham County (36%), compared to about a quarter of children under age six in Greenlee County (22%) and Arizona (23%).

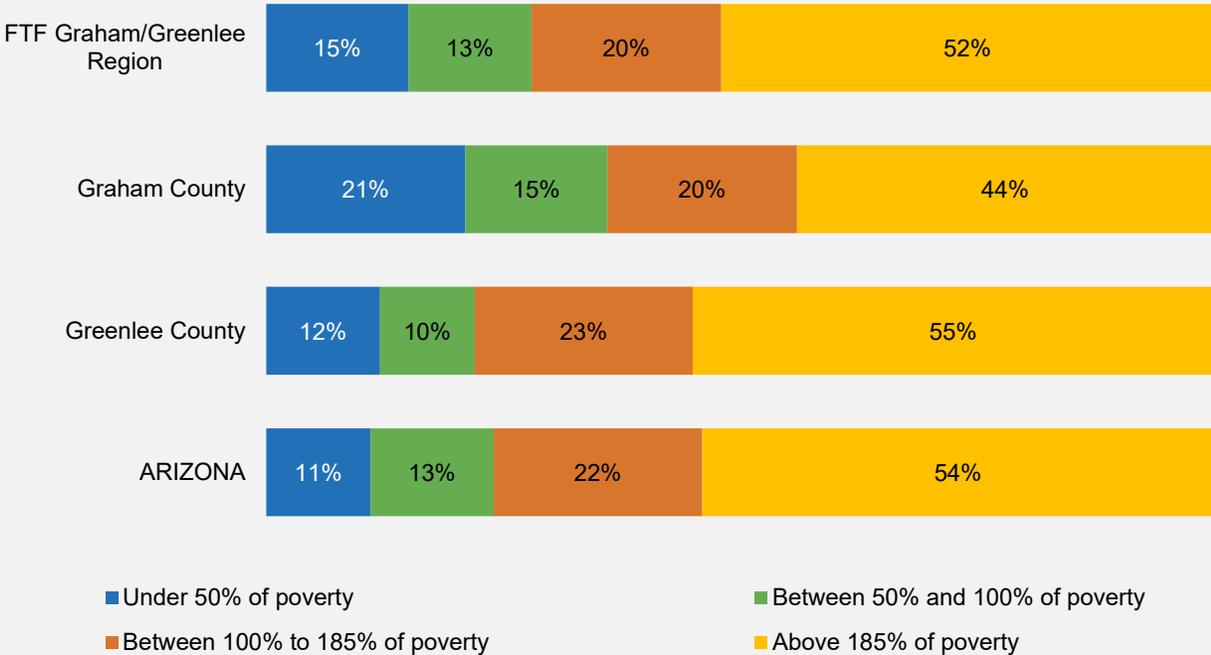
Exhibit 2.7. Percentage of population living in poverty



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001

Federal poverty levels (FPL) are used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits, including SNAP and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). The federal poverty level changes every year and is based on family size. For example, in 2021, the FPL was \$26,500 for a family of four. In FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 48% of families with children under aged five live below 185% of the FPL (that is, they earned less than \$26,500 a year for a family of four), which is slightly more than Arizona (46%; Exhibit 2.8). Similar to the percentage of young children living in poverty, more families with young children in Graham County (56%) live below 185% of the FPL, compared to those in Greenlee County (45%).

Exhibit 2.8. Families with young children (ages 0-5) living at various poverty thresholds



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B17001 & B17022.

Race, identity, and poverty are closely related. In Graham County, individuals who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino are more likely to be in poverty than people of other races and ethnicities. In Greenlee County, people who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, or as two or more races, are more likely to be in poverty than their white counterparts (Exhibit 2.9).

Exhibit 2.9. Percentage of population below the federal poverty level by race/ethnicity*

	Arizona	Graham County	Greenlee County
Black or African-American	20%	23%	11%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	33%	41%	31%
Asian	12%	1%	12%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	16%	0%	No data
Other Race	23%	4%	29%
Two or More Races	17%	22%	0%
White, not Hispanic	10%	18%	16%
Hispanic or Latino	22%	23%	9%

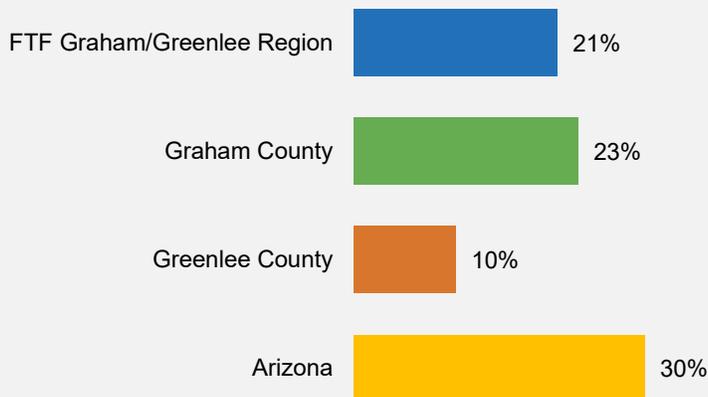
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B17001B, Table B17001C, Table B17001D, Table B17001E, Table B17001F, Table B17001H, Table B17001I.

*Estimates for city and subregional breakdowns are not presented due to the limited sample size for these indicators

Housing

Residents of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region have a lower housing cost burden to residents of the state as a whole: 21% of the region’s housing units require their residents to contribute more than 30% of their household income toward housing (Exhibit 2.10). Housing costs are more burdensome in Graham County (23%) than in Greenlee County (10%).

Exhibit 2.10. Percent of residents spending 30% or more of income on housing



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25106

Children that are experiencing homelessness qualify for rights and services under the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”³² The number of children experiencing homelessness in kindergarten

³² Arizona Department of Education. Welcome to Homeless Education Program. Retrieved from <https://www.azed.gov/homeless>

through third grade from 2018 to 2020 is displayed in Exhibit 2.11. From 2018 to 2020, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there were less than 11 students that were experiencing homelessness.

Exhibit 2.11. Number of students experiencing homelessness in kindergarten through third grade, 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region Schools	<11	<11	<11
Graham County Schools	<11	<11	<11
Greenlee County Schools	<11	<11	<11
All Arizona Schools	4,565	3,676	3,191

Arizona Department of Education (2020). [homeless students]. Unpublished data.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the Graham/Greenlee Region.

Sixty-four percent of households within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region have both a smartphone and computer, which is lower than the proportion in Arizona (73%) (Exhibit 2.12). Eighty-five percent of households in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region live in households with a computer and internet (Exhibit 2.13). For households with children under 18 years old, nearly nine out of ten households (88%) have a computer and internet in the region. Greenlee County had more households with computer and internet (92%) than Graham County (80%) (Exhibit 2.14). During the nationwide closures of elementary and secondary schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more families had to rely on having multiple computers and reliable internet in their homes which caused the digital divide to become more apparent.³³ Households that were the most impacted by the digital divide included those in rural communities, living in poverty and people of color.^{34, 35} Of the people living in households with a computer and internet, 70% have fixed broadband and a cellular data plan (Exhibit 2.15).

Exhibit 2.12. Households with and without computers and smartphones

	Total number of households	Percent with computer but no smartphone	Percent with smartphone but no computer	Percent with both smartphone and computer	Percent with neither smartphone nor computer
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	12,959	6%	21%	64%	9%
Graham County	11,017	7%	20%	61%	12%
Greenlee County	3,132	5%	27%	59%	8%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	7%	12%	73%	8%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25106

Note: In this table, "computer" includes both desktops and laptops.

³³ Masonbrink, A., Hurley, E. (2020) "Advocating for children during the COVID-19 school closures." *Pediatrics* 146.3.

³⁴ Goldschmidt, K. (2020) "The COVID-19 pandemic: Technology use to support the wellbeing of children." *Journal of pediatric nursing* 53.

³⁵ Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J, Viruleg, E. (2020) "COVID-19 and learning loss—disparities grow and students need help." *McKinsey & Company*.

Exhibit 2.13. Persons (all ages) in households with and without computers and internet connectivity

	Number of person (all ages) living in households	Percent in households with computer and internet	Percent in households with computer but no internet	Percent in households without computer
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	38,397	85%	10%	4%
Graham County	34,164	80%	12%	8%
Greenlee County	9,428	88%	8%	3%
ARIZONA	6,892,175	87%	7%	6%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B28005

Exhibit 2.14. Children (ages 0-17) in households with and without computers and internet connectivity

	Number of children (ages 0-17) living in households	Percent in households with computer and internet	Percent in households with computer but no internet	Percent in households without computer
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	11,001	88%	11%	1%
Graham County	10,265	80%	13%	6%
Greenlee County	2,628	92%	8%	0%
ARIZONA	1,632,019	88%	8%	4%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B28005

Exhibit 2.15. Households with computer & internet by type (dial-up, broadband, satellite, other)

	People living in households with computer and internet (all ages)	Percent with fixed broadband and cellular data plan	Percent with fixed broadband without cellular data plan	Percent with cellular data plan without fixed broadband	Percent with dial-up internet only
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	32,800	70%	17%	13%	0%
Graham County	27,289	64%	22%	13%	0%
Greenlee County	8,336	69%	17%	14%	0%
ARIZONA	5,968,639	69%	18%	12%	0%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B2808.

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key findings that highlight the economic assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
<p>Eighty-five percent of households in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region live in households with a computer and internet. For households with children under 18 years old, nearly nine out of ten households (88%) have a computer and internet in the region. Greenlee County had more households with computer and internet (92%) than Graham County (80%).</p>	<p>Consider engaging families using technology-based and online engagement tools.</p>

Needs	Considerations
<p>The median income of families with children under age eighteen in Graham County and Greenlee County is lower than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families, which comprise over 30% of households with children under age six, is significantly less than for married-couple families.</p>	<p>Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes</p>
<p>In Graham County, individuals who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino are more likely to be in poverty than people of other races and ethnicities. In Greenlee County, people who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, or as two or more races, are more likely to be in poverty than their white counterparts.</p>	<p>Future efforts should emphasize tracking population characteristics in order to be responsive to the needs of the community.</p>



EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

Why it Matters

Early care and education helps children thrive in school. Research shows that children who participate in early care and education programs are more likely to perform better on educational indicators such as math and reading tests, attendance rates, and discipline referrals than children who do not.^{36, 37}

Educational indicators that affect student outcomes and are likely related to participation in early care and education include, but are not limited to, school attendance, proficiency exams, grades, graduation and dropout rates, and educational attainment. For example, poor attendance in school affects student outcomes because it limits children from gaining knowledge and thriving in an academic setting.

Research indicates an association between high school dropout rates and poor attendance as early as kindergarten; on average, dropouts have missed 124 days of school by the time they reach 8th grade.³⁸ In addition, irregular attendance influences school budgets and could potentially lead to fewer funds for essential classroom needs.³⁹

Notably, children's participation in quality early care and education can also yield lifelong benefits. Improved performance on standardized tests and lower drop out rates in turn increases children's likelihood of graduating from high school, earning higher monthly earnings, and owning a home. Research shows that high-quality early care and education programs can reduce disparities in college graduation, educational attainment, and wages.⁴⁰ Research has also shown that students dropping out of high school have an increased likelihood of earning less than high school graduates, being unemployed, receiving public assistance, and a higher chance of being incarcerated, therefore likely to confront more barriers while raising a family.⁴¹ Essentially, a child's enrollment in early learning provides short-term and long-term benefits that will contribute to the child successfully transitioning into and prospering in adulthood.

³⁶ Bakken, L., Brown, N., Downing, B. (2017) *Early Childhood Education: The Long-Term Benefits*. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. Volume 31. Issue 2. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1273285>

³⁷ Campbell, F., Pungello, E., Kainz, K., Burchinal, M., Pan, Y., Wasik, B., Barbarin, O., Sparling, J., Ramey, C., (2012) *Adult outcomes as a function of an early childhood educational program: an abecedarian project follow-up*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3989926/>

³⁸ GreatSchools staff. *Why attendance matters*. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/school-attendance-issues/>

³⁹ National Center for Education Statistics (2009). *Every school day counts: The forum guide to collecting and using attendance data*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp>

⁴⁰ Bustamante, A., Dearing, E., Zachrisson, H., Vandell, D. (2021) *Adult outcomes of sustained high-quality early child care and education: Do they vary by family income?* Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13696>

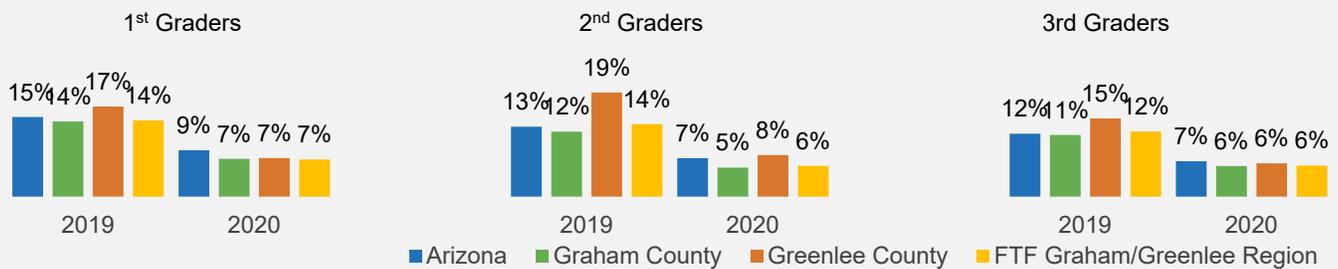
⁴¹ Christle, C., Jolivet, K., Nelson, M. (2007). *School characteristics related to high school dropout rates*. *Journal of Remedial and Special Education*, 28, 15. Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ785964

What the Data Tell Us

Student Attendance

Between 2019 and 2020, Graham County, Greenlee County, FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, and the state experienced a decrease in the percentage of students missing ten or more days of school (Exhibit 3.1). A lower percentage of students in the region missed ten or more days of school than in the county or state as a whole. In addition, the percentage of absences decreased from 2019 to 2020 across all grade levels. The higher the grade level, the lower the rate of absences, suggesting that parents are more willing to let their children miss school in earlier years. There are many potential explanations for such findings, including that younger children may get sick more frequently than older children, parents may be more willing to let their children miss school in earlier years, or that the perception of the value of education changes as children grow. As for the percent change from 2019 to 2020, it may have been easier for students to attend virtual learning than attending in-person learning.

Exhibit 3.1. Percentage of students absent ten or more days from school



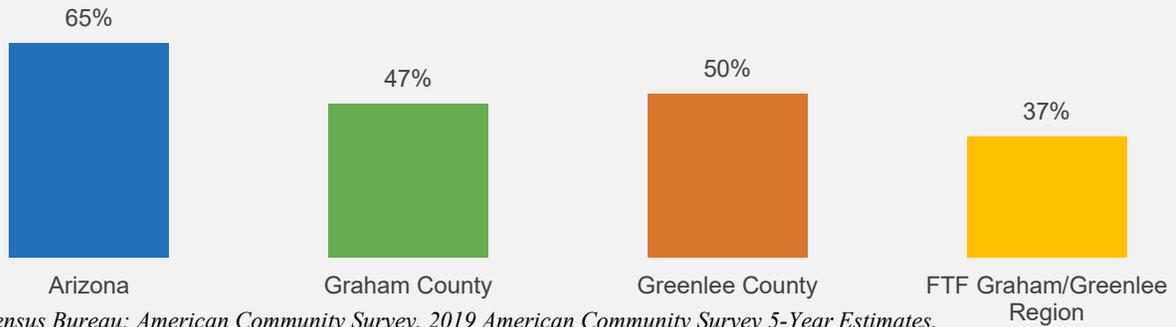
Arizona Department of Education (2021). *Chronic Absences*. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Data available by school district

Early Achievement

A little over a third of preschool-aged children in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (37%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten), which is lower than Arizona (65%) (Exhibit 3.2). Both Graham County (47%) and Greenlee County (50%) have about half of preschool-aged children enrolled in private or public school.

Exhibit 3.2. Percent of children ages 3-4 enrolled in private or public school



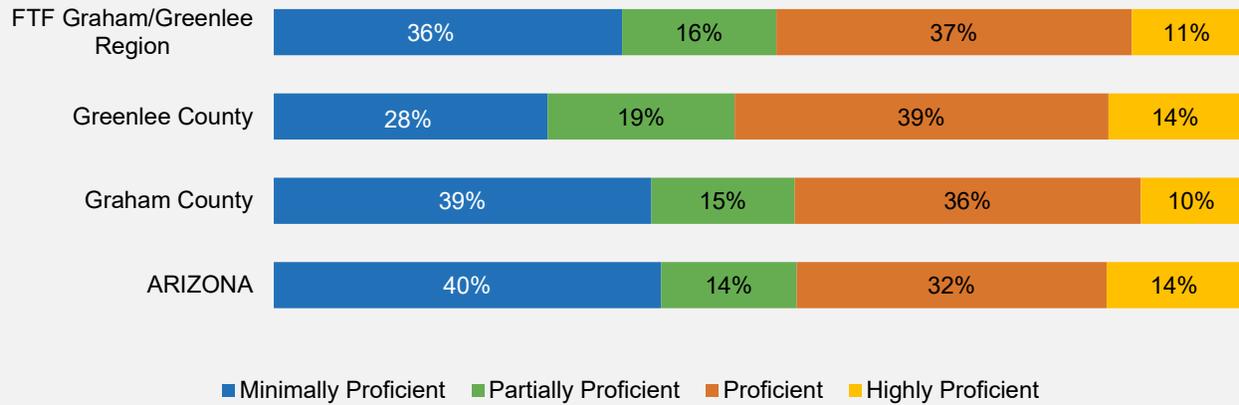
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B2808.

Research shows that preschool attendance has an effect on future academic performance, specifically English and math scores.⁴² The English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results of the AzMERIT demonstrated that 48% of all third graders in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region scored “proficient” or “highly proficient” (Exhibit 3.3). Arizona Progress Meter’s goal for proficiency is 72% by 2030, so FTF Graham/Greenlee Region is about 24 percentage points below the goal.⁴³ Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.4). For example, in some districts (e.g., Bonita Elementary District, Discovery Plus Academy and Triumphant Learning Center) at least 60% of students scored proficient, while in other districts (e.g., Fort Thomas Unified District, Pima Unified District and Safford Unified District) less than 45% scored proficient.

⁴² Andrews, R., Jargowsky, P., Kuhne, K. (2012). *The effects of Texas's targeted pre-kindergarten program on academic performance* (No. w18598). National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁴³ Center for the Future of Arizona (n.d.) *Third Grade Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.arizonafuture.org/progress-meters/education/third-grade-reading/>

Exhibit 3.3. 2018-2019 school year AzMERIT English Language Arts assessment results for third grade students



Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 3.4. AzMERIT English Language arts test results for third-graders in 2018-19, by school district

	Minimally proficient in English Language Arts	Partially proficient in English Language Arts	Proficient in English Language Arts	Highly proficient in English Language Arts	Passing English Language Arts (proficient or highly proficient)
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region Schools	36%	16%	37%	11%	48%
Blue Elementary District	50%	*	50%	*	50%
Bonita Elementary District	15%	23%	38%	23%	62%
Discovery Plus Academy	26%	*	63%	11%	74%
Duncan Unified District	41%	6%	29%	24%	53%
Fort Thomas Unified District	55%	26%	16%	3%	19%
Graham County Special Services	*	>98%	*	*	*
Morenci Unified District	26%	21%	40%	13%	52%
Pima Unified District	38%	21%	33%	8%	41%
Safford Unified District	45%	13%	32%	9%	42%
Solomon Elementary District	42%	11%	37%	11%	47%
Thatcher Unified District	28%	15%	42%	15%	57%
Triumphant Learning Center	*	10%	70%	20%	90%
Graham County Schools	39%	15%	36%	10%	46%
Greenlee County School	28%	19%	39%	14%	52%
All Arizona Schools	40%	14%	32%	14%	46%

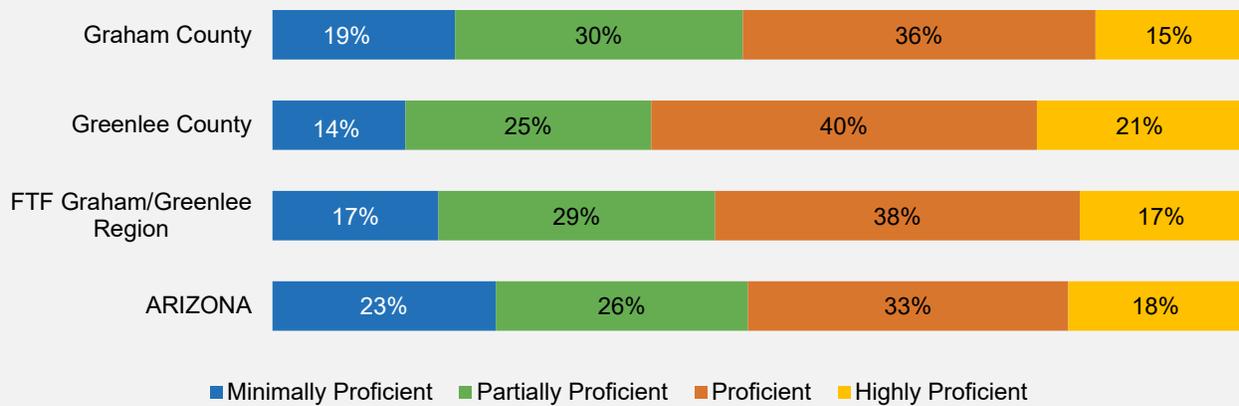
Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the Graham/Greenlee Region.

*Values less than 2% are suppressed.

Moreover, 54% of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, compared to 51% of third graders in Arizona (Exhibit 3.5). Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.6). For example, in some districts (e.g., Bonita Elementary District and Triumphant Learning Center) 70% or more of students scored proficient, while in other districts (e.g., Discovery Plus Academy and Solomon Elementary District) about a third of students reached proficiency. Although math assessment results are slightly higher than the ELA assessment results, overall, about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standard for the two subjects.

Exhibit 3.5. 2018-2019 school year AzMERIT math assessment results for third grade students



Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 3.6. AzMERIT Math Assessment results for third-graders in 2018-19, by school district

	Minimally proficient in Math	Partially proficient in Math	Proficient in Math	Highly proficient in Math	Passing Math (proficient or highly proficient)
Graham/Greenlee Region Schools	17%	29%	38%	17%	54%
Blue Elementary District	50%	50%	*	*	*
Bonita Elementary District	*	23%	54%	23%	77%
Discovery Plus Academy	11%	58%	26%	5%	32%
Duncan Unified District	12%	24%	24%	41%	65%
Fort Thomas Unified District	23%	32%	35%	10%	45%
Graham County Special Services	*	*	>=98%	*	>=98%
Morenci Unified District	13%	25%	43%	19%	61%
Pima Unified District	21%	33%	32%	14%	45%
Safford Unified District	18%	30%	36%	16%	52%
Solomon Elementary District	16%	47%	26%	11%	37%
Thatcher Unified District	19%	22%	39%	20%	59%
Triumphant Learning Center	10%	10%	70%	10%	80%
Graham County Schools	19%	30%	36%	15%	52%
Greenlee County School	14%	25%	40%	21%	61%
All Arizona Schools	23%	26%	33%	18%	51%

Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the Graham/Greenlee Region.

*Values less than 2% are suppressed.

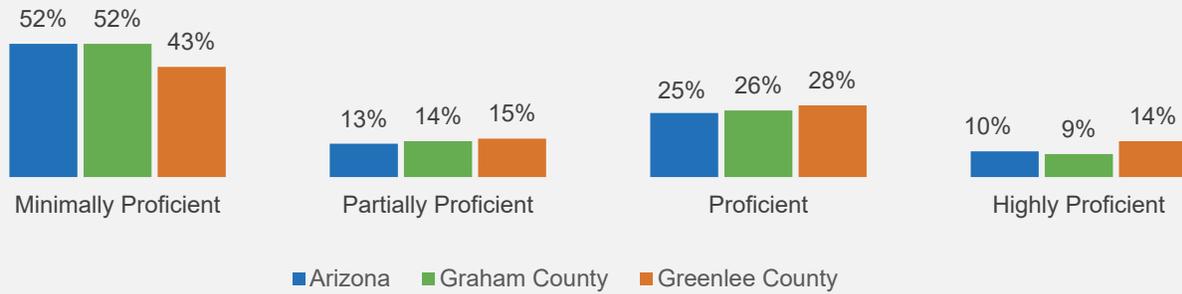
For the 2020-21 school year, the AZMERIT changed the name to AzM2.⁴⁴ For the third grade assessment, the content areas and design were similar to the AZMERIT. In the 2021 school year, fewer students participated in the state assessments (88% to 90% of students); thus, it is impossible to know how the students that did not participate would perform. The ELA assessment results of the AzM2 demonstrated that more third graders in Greenlee County (42%) scored “proficient” or “highly proficient” than third graders statewide (35%) or in Graham County (35%) (Exhibit 3.7).⁴⁵ Slightly more third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in Greenlee County (61%) and Graham County (44%), compared to the state (36%) (Exhibit 3.8). Although there was a statewide decrease in assessments, Graham County and Greenlee County remained consistent in their passing rates. For some students, there could have been learning disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic that may have impacted students’ learning, such as technology access, online learning fatigue, losing family members, caregivers losing jobs, social isolation, and mental health.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ No statewide assessments were given in the 2019-2020 school year.

⁴⁵ 2020-21 data was not available at the regional level.

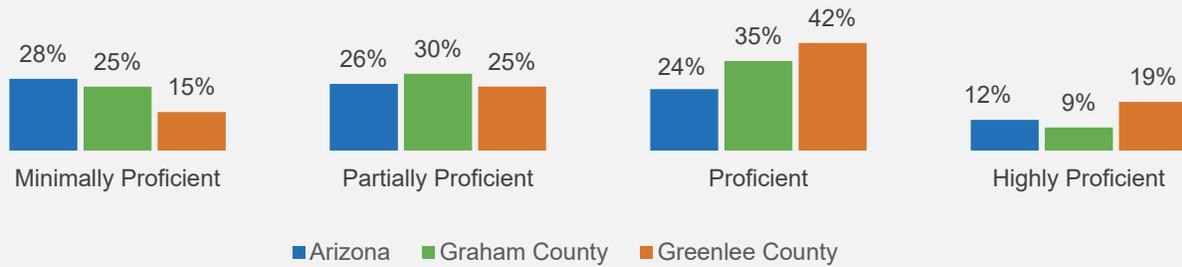
⁴⁶ Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., Viruleg, E. (2021) McKinsey & Company. COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>

Exhibit 3.7. 2021 AzM2 English Language Arts assessment results for third grade students



Arizona Department of Education (2021). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 3.8. 2021 AzM2 Math assessment results for third grade students

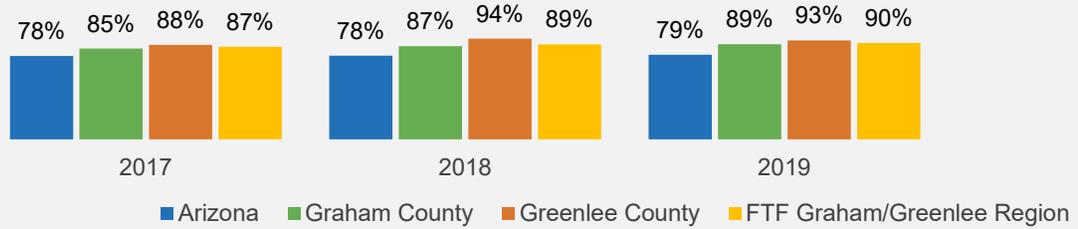


Arizona Department of Education (2021). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

High School Graduation & Dropout Rates

Between 2017 and 2019, high school graduation rates remained steady for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, Graham County, Greenlee County, and Arizona (Exhibits 3.9 and 3.10). In 2019, 90% of students graduated within four-years in the region, which was higher than Arizona (79%) (Exhibit 3.9).

Exhibit 3.9. 2017-2019 High school graduation rates: 4-year cohort

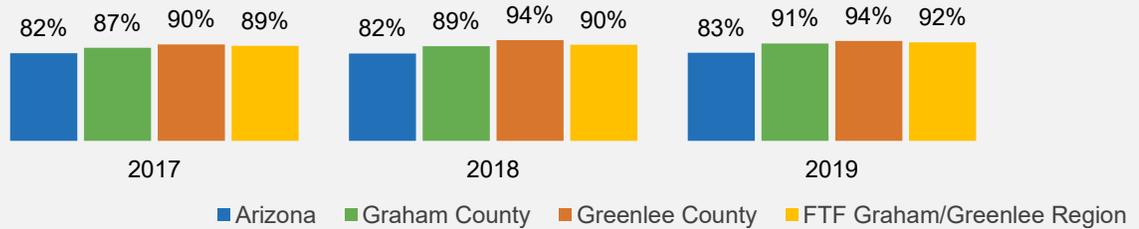


Arizona Department of Education (2021). Graduation Rate 2018 Cycle. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Data available by breakdown city, school district, school, and zip code

**The four-year graduation rate counts a student who graduates with a regular high school diploma in four years or less as a high school graduate in his or her original cohort

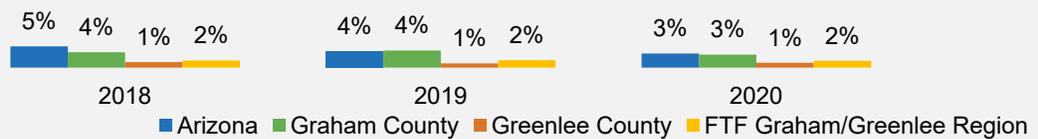
Exhibit 3.10. 2017-2019 High school graduation rates: 5-year cohort



Arizona Department of Education (2021). Graduation Rate 2018 Cycle. Provided by AZ FTF.

From 2018 to 2020, the percent of students dropping out of high school in Arizona remained steady (Exhibit 3.11). In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, two percent of students dropped out in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2020, Greenlee County had a one percent high school dropout rate, while Graham County had a dropout rate of three percent.

Exhibit 3.11. 2018-2020 High school dropout rates



Arizona Department of Education (2021). Graduation Rate 2018 Cycle. Provided by AZ FTF.

Educational Attainment

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 88% of adults ages 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is similar to the state (Exhibit 3.12). Fewer adults within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region earned at least a bachelor’s degree than adults in Arizona (16% versus 29%, respectively). Those with higher levels of education typically earn more and have lower rates of unemployment compared to those with lower education.⁴⁷

Exhibit 3.12. Level of education for the adult population (ages 25 and older)

	Estimated population (ages 25 and older)	Percent less than high school	Percent high school or GED	Percent some college or professional education	Percent bachelor’s degree or more
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	26,182	13%	29%	43%	16%
Graham County	23,706	13%	27%	44%	17%
Greenlee County	5,854	12%	35%	40%	14%
ARIZONA	4,732,532	13%	24%	34%	29%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002

⁴⁷ Torpey, E. (2021) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Education pays, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2021/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>

EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key findings that highlight the educational assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 88% of adults ages 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is similar to the state.	Increase awareness for parents to support each other and share knowledge and attitudes around the importance of education

Needs	Considerations
AzMERIT reports show that about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standard for English Language Arts and Math.	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.



EARLY LEARNING

EARLY LEARNING

Why it Matters

Early learning fosters children's development and well-being at a critical time in their lives. Early learning is supported by early care and education (ECE), a constellation of all formal and informal educational programs and strategies designed to contribute to the growth and development of children from birth through age five.⁴⁸ Research suggests that the first five years of life are considered to be the most crucial stage in children's development, as they undergo the most rapid phase of growth during that period.⁴⁹ Research also shows that when children participate in high-quality learning environments, they learn and develop important skills and abilities such as motivation, self-control, focus and self-esteem. These skills prepare them for educational achievement later in life and reduce the need for special education programs.⁵⁰ In addition, research shows that investments in ECE have long-term health effects, helping to prevent disease and promote health.⁵¹ For disadvantaged families, early childhood programs have benefits on health, future wages, crime reduction, and education.⁵² Children who participate in early care and education programs are better prepared for kindergarten, have greater success in elementary school, and are more likely to graduate from high school and prosper well into adulthood.^{54, 55}

Key indicators of early learning that help identify the needs of children include, but are not limited to, the availability of ECE centers and homes; enrollment in ECE programs; compensation and retention of ECE professionals; costs of child care and availability of child care subsidies or scholarships; and capacity to serve children with special needs.

⁴⁸ University of Massachusetts Global (2021) *What is the purpose of early childhood education? Why it's so important*. Retrieved from: <https://www.umassglobal.edu/news-and-events/blog/what-is-purpose-of-early-childhood-education>

⁴⁹ Teach.com powered by 2U (n.d.). *Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved from <https://teach.com/where/levels-of-schooling/early-childhood-education/>

⁵⁰ McCoy, C., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. (2017) *Impacts of early childhood education on medium- and long-term educational outcomes*. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X17737739>

⁵¹ Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Ziff, A. (2019) *Early Childhood education and crime*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21759>

⁵² Campbell, F., Conti, G., Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Pungello, E., Pan, Y. (2014). *Early childhood investments substantially boost adult health*. *Science*, 343(6178), 1478-1485.

⁵³ Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Leaf, D., Prados, M. (2016) *The life-cycle benefits of an influential early childhood program*. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22993>

⁵⁴ Reynolds, A., Temple, J., Ou, S., Robertson, D., Mersky, J., Topitzes, J., Niles, M. (2007). *Effects of a school-based, early childhood intervention on adult health and well-being: A 19-year follow-up of low-income families*. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 161(8), 730-739.

⁵⁵ Weiland, C., Yoshikawa, H. (2013). *Impacts of a prekindergarten program on children's mathematics, language, literacy, executive function, and emotional skills*. *Child Development*, 84(6), 2112-2130.

What the Data Tells Us

Early Care and Education

There are 24 ECE centers and homes with a capacity of 1,347 children in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (Exhibit 4.1). Graham County has 16 centers, while Greenlee County has eight. The actual facility may not choose to enroll the total number of children they are licensed to serve. The number of children served mainly depends on the center's ability to meet the adult to child ratio, which varies by child's age and must comply with licensing requirements.

Exhibit 4.1. Childcare capacity

	Number of ECE facilities	Capacity
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	24	1,347
Graham County	16	720
Greenlee County	8	627
ARIZONA	4,307	395,787

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020) and Arizona Department of Health Services. Provided by AZ FTF.

As previously mentioned, 37% of children between the ages of three and four are enrolled in ECE programs in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (Exhibit 3.2). This is lower than the 45% assumed to need child care since all adults in the household are employed (Exhibit 2.4). Parents who do not have access to stable child care may find themselves missing work to care for their children. In addition, research has consistently demonstrated that lack of access to child care has negative effects on families and decreases parents' chances of sustaining employment.⁵⁶

Quality of Early Care and Education

Quality First is a signature program of FTF that is designed to improve the quality of early learning for children birth to age five. Quality First partners with ECE providers across Arizona to provide coaching and funding that is meant to improve the quality of their services. Quality First implemented a statewide standard of quality for ECE programs along with associated star ratings. The star ratings allow parents to easily take quality into consideration when deciding on care providers. The star ratings range from one to five indicating the level of quality and attainment of quality standards.⁵⁷ In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, out of the 339 children enrolled in a Quality First site, 314 are enrolled in three to five star center or home (93%). Moreover, six out of seven (86%) childcare providers in Quality First have received a three-to-five-star rating (Exhibit 4.2).

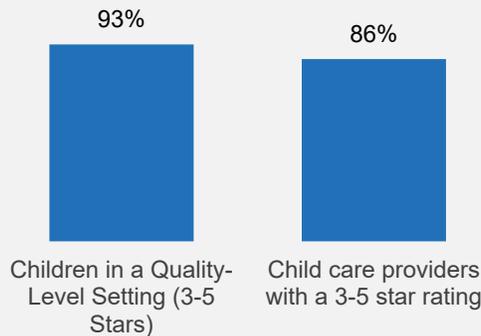
⁵⁶ Greenberg, M. (2007). Next steps for federal child care policy. *The Next Generation of Antipoverty Policies*, 17, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=33&articleid=67§ionid=353>

⁵⁷ Arizona First Things First (October 2021). *Quality First*. Retrieved from: <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/quality-first/>



Highest Quality	Far exceeds quality standards
Quality Plus	Exceeds quality standards
Quality	Meets quality standards
Progressing Star	Approaching quality standards
Rising Star	Committed to quality improvement
No Rating	Program is enrolled in Quality First but does not yet have a public rating

Exhibit 4.2. Percentage of 3 to 5 star ratings at Quality First centers in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region



Arizona First Things First (July 2020). Quality First. Data retrieved July 2021.

Costs of Child Care & Access

In addition to supporting improvements in the quality of child care, FTF provides scholarships for low income children to attend quality ECE programs. Previous research has shown that low-income mothers receiving child care subsidies, a form of financial assistance, are more likely than other low-income mothers to work, sustain employment, and work longer hours.⁵⁶ Further, the negative effects of not accessing child care include the possibility of incurring financial debt, choosing child care that is lower quality and less stable, and losing time from work.

Across the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, Graham County, and Greenlee County, and the state, licensed centers have the highest cost per day compared to family homes (Exhibit 4.3). The median cost per day of licensed centers in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region are lower than the state. The median cost per day of approved family homes in the region are higher compared to the state. High child care prices likely place a financial strain on families who already report barely making ends meet and having difficulty affording housing and food.

Based on the median cost per day, the median cost of child care per year for one infant in Graham County totals to \$6,250 for licensed centers and \$5,875 a year for approved family homes.⁵⁸ Compared

⁵⁸ Costs per day in Greenlee County are not available for licensed centers.

against the median income of families in Graham County with children under 18 (Exhibit 2.6), licensed centers comprise 11% and approved family homes comprise 10% of the county median income.

The median cost per year of child care comprises an even higher amount of the median income for single parent led families with children under 18 in Graham County and is considerably less for single-female families compared to single-male families.⁵⁹ Based on the median income of single-female families (Exhibit 2.6), licensed centers make up 34% of their median income and approved family homes make up 25% of their median income. High costs can be a barrier in affording quality child care especially for single-female families.

Exhibit 4.3. 2018 Median cost per day of early childhood care

	FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	Graham County	Greenlee County	Arizona
Cost for one infant Licensed Centers	\$25.00	\$25.00	N/A	\$43.03
Cost for one infant Approved Family Homes	\$20.00	\$23.50	\$15.00	\$20.00
Cost for one infant Certified Group Homes	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$30.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Licensed Centers	\$25.00	\$25.00	N/A	\$38.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Approved Family Homes	\$23.50	\$23.50	\$23.50	\$20.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Certified Group Homes	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$28.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Licensed Centers	\$25.00	\$25.00	N/A	\$33.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Approved Family Homes	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$21.00	\$20.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Certified Group	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$28.00

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2018). Child Care Market Rate Survey. Provided by AZ FTF.

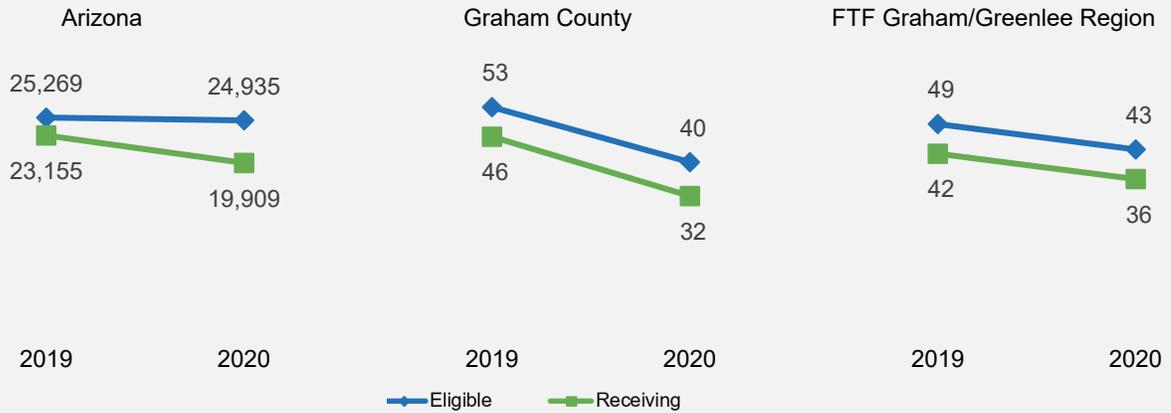
From 2019-2020, Arizona, Graham County, and the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region all experienced a slight decrease in the number of children eligible for Department of Economic Security (DES) child care subsidies (Exhibit 4.4). During the same time period, Graham County, FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, and the state experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving child care subsidies. For example, in 2019 within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 86% of children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 84% of children in 2020.

Department of Child (DCS)-involved children had similar trends of a decrease in the number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies across Graham County, the region and the state (Exhibit

⁵⁹ Median income for single-female families not available for Greenlee County. Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression.

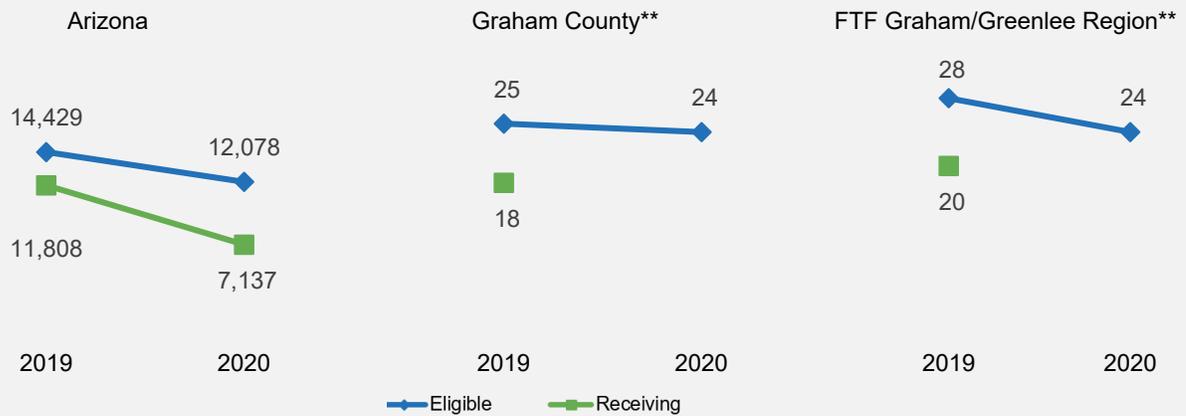
4.5).⁶⁰

Exhibit 4.4. 2019-2020 Number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies*



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Child Care (CCA) Subsidies. Provided by AZ FTF.
 *Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression

Exhibit 4.5. 2019-2020 Number of DCS-involved children eligible and receiving child care subsidies*



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Child Care (CCA) Subsidies. Provided by AZ FTF.
 *Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression
 **Number omitted due to data suppression

Developmental Delays and Special Needs

Advances in teaching young children with special needs reflect significant changes in public policy and professional philosophy across the nation. There are diverse perspectives on how to effectively teach young children with developmental delays and special needs.⁶¹ The Individuals with Disabilities

⁶⁰ Given the data was suppressed in 2020, we can conclude there was a decrease for number of children receiving services.

⁶¹ Dyson, A. (2001). Special needs education as the way to equity: an alternative approach? *Support for Learning*, 16, 3.

Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (ages zero to two) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages three to 21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.⁶²

AzEIP is a statewide system that offers services and assistance to families and their children with disabilities or developmental delays under the age of three. The purpose of the program is to intervene at an early stage to help children develop to their highest potential.⁶³ Research shows that children and youth with mild intellectual disabilities are behind in academic skills compared to their peers.⁶⁴ Without proper intervention, this can lead to delays in learning to read and perform basic math and to further difficulties in other academic areas that require use of those skills. A child is eligible for AzEIP if he/she is between birth and 36 months of age and has a developmental delay or has an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, as defined by the State.⁶⁵ A child is considered to be developmentally delayed when s/he has not reached 50% of the milestones expected at her/his chronological age in one or more of the areas of development: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive.

From 2018 to 2020, FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, Graham County and Arizona experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving AzEIP referrals and services (Exhibits 4.6 and 4.7). In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, of those who received referrals to AzEIP, about a third received services.

⁶² US Department of Education: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/osep-idea.html>

⁶³ Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.). Arizona Early Intervention Program. Retrieved from: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-infant>

⁶⁴ Rosenberg, L., Bart, O., Ratzon, N., Jarus, T. (2013) Personal and Environmental Factors predict participation of children with and without mild developmental disabilities. Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-012-9619-8>

⁶⁵ Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.) Eligibility for the Arizona Early Intervention Program. Retrieved from: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/early-intervention/arizona-early-intervention-program-azeip-eligibility>

Exhibit 4.6. 2018-2020 Children receiving AzEIP referrals in Graham County and the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region*



*Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression
 Arizona Department of Economic Security (2021). AzEIP Referred and Served Children. Provided by AZ FTF.

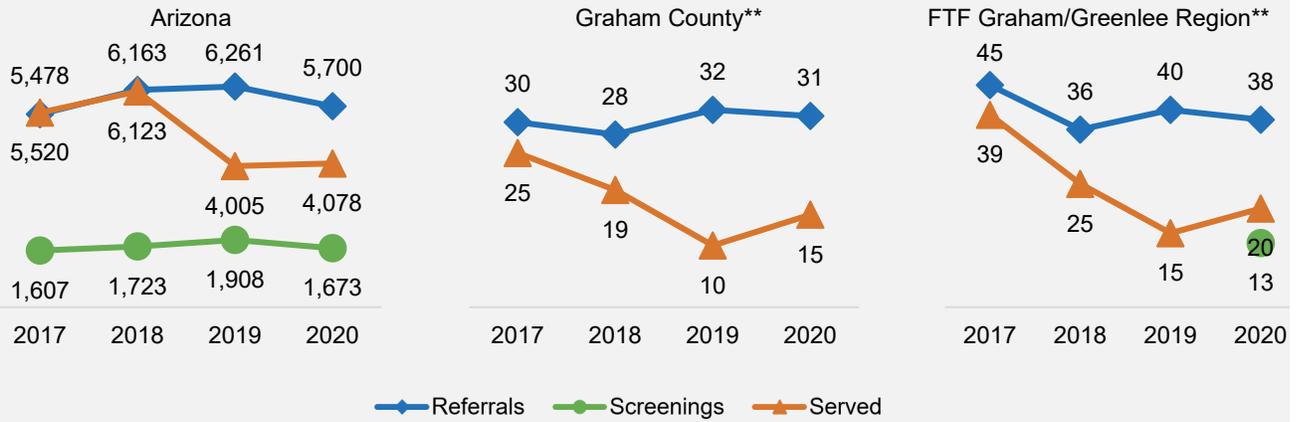
Exhibit 4.7. 2018-2020 Children receiving AzEIP referrals in Arizona



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2021). AzEIP Referred and Served Children. Provided by AZ FTF.

To qualify for Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services, an individual must have a cognitive disability, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, or be at risk for a developmental disability. Children under the age of six are eligible if they show significant delays in one or more of these areas of development: physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, or self-help. Between 2017 to 2020, the rates of children receiving referrals and services through DDD were similar for Graham County, the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, and Arizona (Exhibit 4.8). Overall, Graham County, the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, and Arizona the number of referrals increased between 2017 and 2019 but decreased in 2020. In addition, the number of children receiving services peaked in 2018 across the state, county and region but started to decline in 2019. Similar to the total number of children served, the number of children 0 to 2 served started to decline in 2019 (Exhibit 4.9).

Exhibit 4.8. 2017-2020 Number of children (0-5) receiving referrals, screenings, and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Arizona, Graham County, and FTF Graham/Greenlee Region*

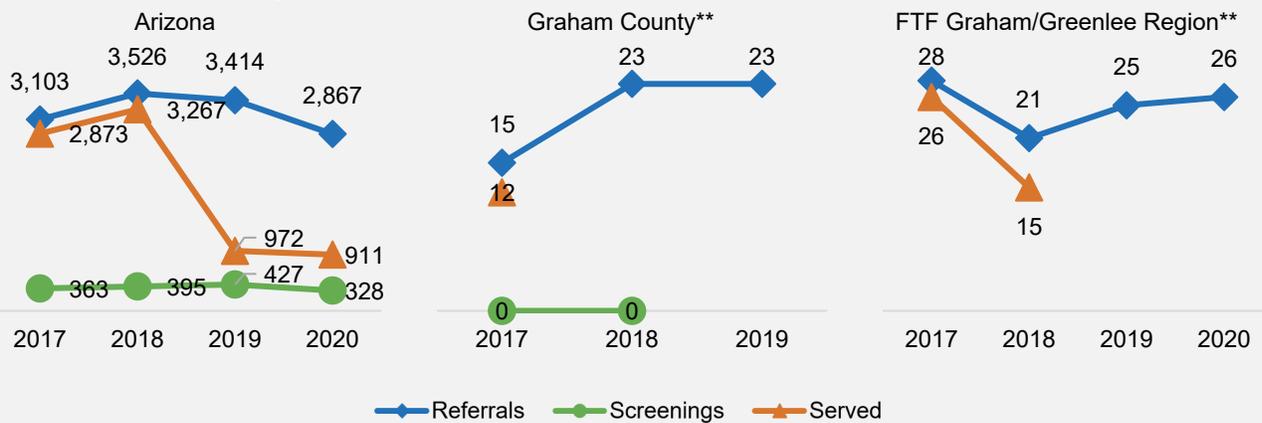


Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Division of Developmental Disabilities. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression

**Screening data for Graham County and Graham/Greenlee Region have been omitted due to data suppression

Exhibit 4.9. 2017-2020 Number of children (0-2) receiving referrals, screenings, and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Arizona, Graham County, and FTF Graham/Greenlee Region*



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Division of Developmental Disabilities. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Greenlee County omitted due to data suppression

**Some data for Graham County and Graham/Greenlee Region have been omitted due to data suppression

Special Education

In 2020, the most common types of disabilities for preschool children were developmental delays and speech/language impairments (Exhibit 4.10). Across the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there were school districts with high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In Morenci Unified District, 64% of preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment. Moreover, a high percentage of preschool students in special education had a developmental delay at Duncan Unified District (>98%) and Solomon Elementary District (>98%).

For students in kindergarten to 3rd grade within the region in 2020, 13% were enrolled in special education. This percentage was consistent with Graham County (13%), Greenlee County (12%) and the state (12%). Similar to the disabilities of preschool children, the most common disabilities for students in grades kindergarten to 3rd grade were developmental delay and speech/language impairment (Not shown).

Exhibit 4.10. Types of disabilities among preschoolers in special education, 2020

	Developmental Delay	Hearing Impairment	Other	Preschool Severe Delay	Speech/Language Impairment
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region Schools	44%	<2%	<2%	10%	46%
Duncan Unified District	>98%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%
Graham County Special Services	45%	<2%	<2%	13%	43%
Morenci Unified District	36%	<2%	<2%	<2%	64%
Safford Unified District	46%	<2%	<2%	11%	43%
Solomon Elementary District	>98%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%
Graham County Schools	40%	<2%	<2%	<2%	60%
Greenlee County Schools	44%	<2%	<2%	12%	44%
All Arizona Schools	43%	<2%	<2%	20%	34%

Arizona Department of Education (2020). [Special education]. Unpublished data.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region.

Note: The data presented in this table are unduplicated (i.e., children diagnosed with multiple disabilities are counted only one time in the Federal Primary Need (FPN) category)

EARLY LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key findings that highlight the early learning assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
Quality First has been increasing the quality of child care programs in the region.	Support Quality First efforts in the region to increase the opportunities for children to receive quality early care and education experiences.

Needs	Considerations
In 2020, in Graham/Greenlee Region, less children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 2019.	Identify gaps in child care subsidies to ensure that children in need are receiving these subsidies.
Across the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there were school districts with high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In Morenci Unified District, 64% of preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment. Moreover, a high percentage of preschool students in special education had a developmental delay at Duncan Unified District (>98%) and Solomon Elementary District (>98%).	Work with school districts to refer children identified with special needs to support services.



CHILD HEALTH

CHILD HEALTH

Why it Matters

Ensuring healthy development through early identification and treatment of children's health issues helps families understand healthy developmental pathways and how health issues affect children and their school readiness.⁶⁶ There are many health factors that impact the well-being of young children and their families. Research has shown that high quality prenatal care improves maternal health and health behaviors during pregnancy and after childbirth.⁶⁷ For example, during prenatal care visits, expectant mothers are provided with information and resources to promote a healthy pregnancy and increase the healthy development of their child. At routine prenatal visits, physicians often remind expectant mothers of the importance of abstaining from substance use, maintaining a healthy diet, and the benefits of breastfeeding, all of which influence a baby's development. For example, maternal overweight and obesity have been associated with risks of gestational diabetes mellitus, caesarean delivery, large for gestational age, pre-eclampsia, preterm birth, and admission to special care nursery or intensive care unit.⁶⁸

Engaging in healthy preventative practices, such as breastfeeding and vaccinating children during early childhood, may help protect children from negative health outcomes and developmental delays. Breastfeeding provides children with the nutrition they need early in life.⁶⁹ Children who have not been vaccinated are at a higher risk of contracting diseases and tend to have more health issues later in life. Research has found that it is important for children to receive their immunizations early in life. Children under the age of five are at the highest risk of contracting severe illnesses because their bodies have not built a strong immune system yet.⁷⁰ Another factor that may impact health outcomes and may be deemed less important by parents is early screening for hearing loss. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hearing loss can impact a child's ability to develop communication, language, and social skills.⁷¹ Fortunately, early screening for hearing loss can connect children with services that can increase the likelihood of the child reaching their full potential.

⁶⁶ *Schools & Health* (2016). *Impact of Health on Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/pages/Anthropometricstatusgrowth.aspx>

⁶⁷ Yan, J. (2016) *The effects of prenatal care utilization on maternal health and health behaviors*. *Health Economics*. Volume 26 Issue 8. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.3380>

⁶⁸ Yang, Z., Phung, H., Freebairn, L., Sexton, R., Raulli, A., Kelly, P. (2018) *Contribution of maternal overweight and obesity to the occurrence of adverse pregnancy outcomes*. *ANZJOG*. Volume 59 Issue 3. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajo.12866>

⁶⁹ *Office on Women's Health* (2014). *Why breastfeeding is important*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-benefits.html>

⁷⁰ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (2016). *Infant Immunizations*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html>

⁷¹ *Center for Disease Control and Prevention Division* (2020). *Hearing Loss*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/index.html>

This chapter provides an overview of the health indicators for this region that highlight the well-being of children under age six and their families. Healthy People 2030 (HP 2030) set 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. Healthy People established these benchmarks to encourage collaborations across communities and sectors, empower individuals to make informed health decisions, and measure the impact of prevention activities.⁷² When appropriate, these benchmarks will be presented throughout this chapter as comparison points for local indicators.

What the Data Tell Us

Access to Health Services

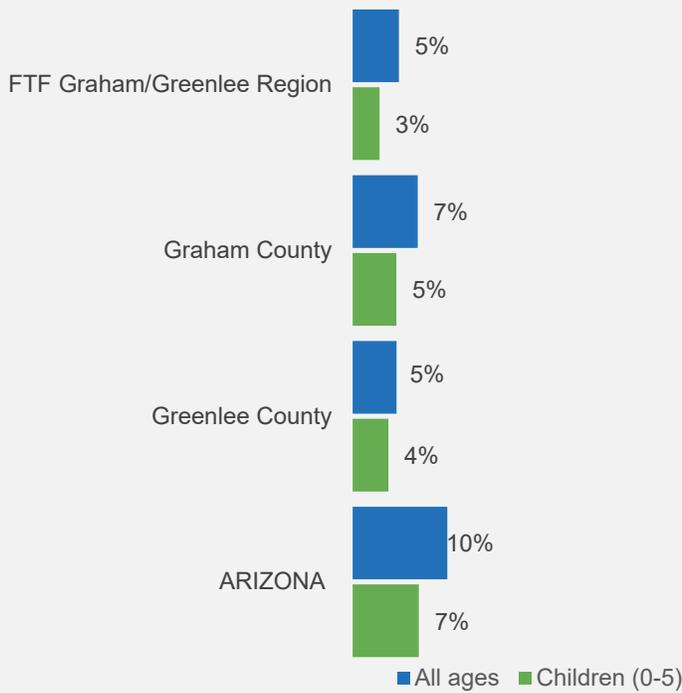
One indication of people's access to health services is whether they have health insurance coverage that helps make health care affordable. When children lack health insurance, they are at risk of poor health outcomes and long-term complications if their families avoid or delay medical care because of cost. The HP 2030 target is for 92.1% of Americans to have medical insurance by 2030.⁷³ In 2019, 95.1% of the population in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region had health insurance (Exhibit 5.1), which exceeds the HP 2030's targeted goal by 3.0 percentage points.

In 2019, three percent of children under age six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region did not have any health insurance (Exhibit 5.1), which is less than the state (7%). Slightly more children in Graham County do not have health insurance compared to Greenlee County (5% versus 4%, respectively). When children lack health insurance, they could potentially be at risk for long term health complications if they fall ill and their parents do not have the sufficient funds to seek care.

⁷² *Healthy People 2030. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ODPHP Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople>*

⁷³ *Healthy People 2030. About Health People. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/increase-proportion-people-health-insurance-ahs-01>*

Exhibit 5.1. Estimated percentage without health insurance



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001

Hospitalizations

In FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there have been 20 non-fatal inpatient hospitalizations and 1,791 non-fatal emergency department visits among children from 2016-2020 (Exhibit 5.2). Children that had emergency department visits were most likely to identify as male (56%) and white (59%) (Not shown). The most common reasons for non-fatal emergency department visits are for falling, being struck or against an object, or poisoning. Accidents such as these further emphasize the importance of health insurance coverage for families and their children, as early care can prevent long term or more severe health complications later in life.

Exhibit 5.2. Injury hospitalizations and ED visits for children 0-4, ADHS (2016-2020)

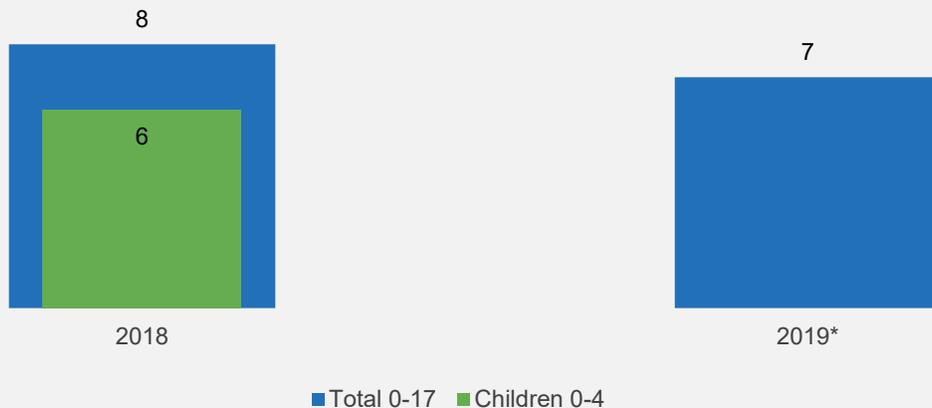
Indicator	Arizona	Graham County	Greenlee County	FTF Graham/Greenlee Region
Number of Non-Fatal Hospitalizations	2,890	43	*	20
Number of ED Visits	181,035	1,827	140	1,791

Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Unintentional Injuries in Children 0-5, Arizona 2016-2020. Provided AZFTF
 *Numbers have been suppressed due to low values.

Between the years 2018 and 2019, in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the total number of deaths among children 0 to 17 years old slightly decreased from eight to seven (Exhibit 5.3). In 2018, most of

those deaths occurred among young children 0 to 4 years (75%). Within Arizona, the most common reason for childhood deaths include accidents, congenital malformations, and short gestation and low birth weight (Not shown).

Exhibit 5.3. 2018-2019 total number of deaths for children 0-17 in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region



Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Child mortality, Arizona 2018-2019. Provided AZFTF
 *Value has been suppressed for Children 0-4 in 2019.

Asthma and diabetes are chronic diseases that often affect children. An examination of children’s hospitalization data for these conditions helps show the disease burden among children in the FTF region compared to the county and state.

From 2016 to 2020, there were a total of 12 inpatient hospitalizations in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region for asthma (Exhibit 5.4). Children 0 to 14 that were hospitalized for asthma were most likely to identify as white, Non-Hispanic (50%) (Not shown). Throughout the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 50% of child inpatient hospitalizations were 0 to 4 years old (Exhibit 5.4).

Exhibit 5.4. Inpatient hospitalizations for asthma for children 0-14 (2016-2020)

	#Inpatient hospitalization of children 0-4	#Inpatient hospitalization of children 0-14	Percent of children inpatient hospitalization that were 0-4
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	6	12	50%
Graham County	*	10	*
Greenlee County	*	*	*
ARIZONA	2,214	5,672	39%

Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Asthma, Arizona 2016-2020. Provided AZFTF
 *cell suppressed due to small size (less than 6)

Pregnancies and Birth

During calendar year 2019, FTF Graham/Greenlee Region residents gave birth to 553 babies, which was one percent of all births in the state (Exhibit 5.5). Most of the births in the regions occurred in Graham County (n=493; 81%).

Exhibit 5.5. Live births during calendar year 2019, by mother’s place of residence

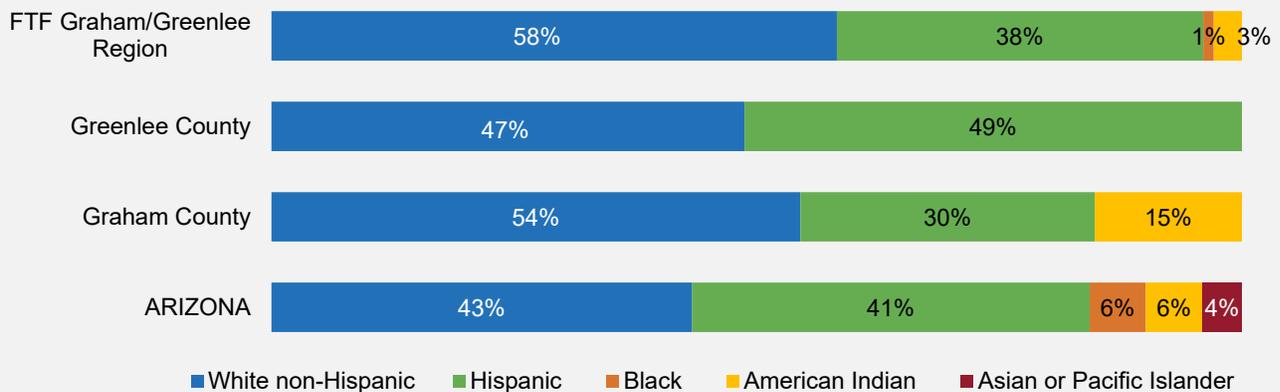
Total number of births to Arizona-resident mothers in 2019	
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	553
Graham County	493
Greenlee County	124
ARIZONA	79,183

Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data

Characteristics of People Giving Birth

Of the about 550 people who gave birth in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region in 2019, 58% were non-Hispanic white, 38% were Hispanic or Latino/a, 3% were American Indian and 1% were Black (Exhibit 5.6)). Fifteen percent of those who gave birth in Graham County identified as American Indian, while no one identified as American Indian in Greenlee County. Compared to the state as a whole, people who gave birth in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region were most likely to be white, non-Hispanic and less likely to be Hispanic.

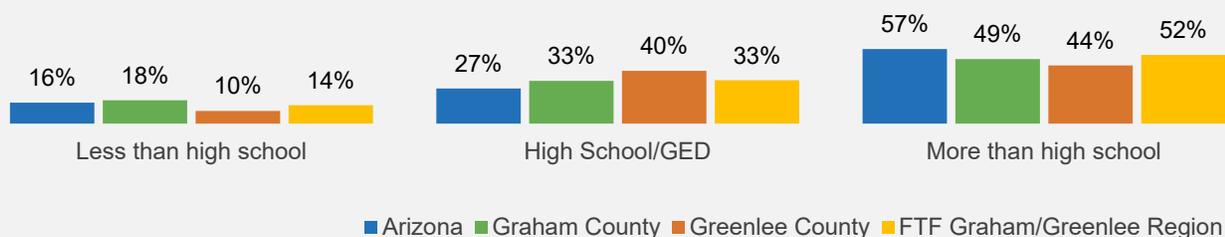
Exhibit 5.6. Race and ethnicity of mothers giving birth in 2019



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data

Those who gave birth in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region had a slightly lower level of educational attainment (52% had some education beyond high school) than people who gave birth across the state (57% post-high school) (Exhibit 5.7).

Exhibit 5.7. 2019 Percentage of live births by mother’s educational attainment



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). Vital Statistics. Provided by AZ FTF.

The population of those who gave birth in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region was also different to mothers across the county and statewide on other attributes. Six percent were in their teens (compared to 8% Graham County, and 6% statewide; Exhibit 5.8). In FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 40% of births were to mothers relying on AHCCCS or Indian Health Service (IHS) coverage. The coverage of births through AHCCCS or IHS was greater in Graham County (49%) than in Greenlee County (26%). In addition, slightly more mothers in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region reported tobacco use during pregnancy (10%) compared to the statewide (4%) proportion.

Exhibit 5.8. Other characteristics of mothers giving birth in 2019

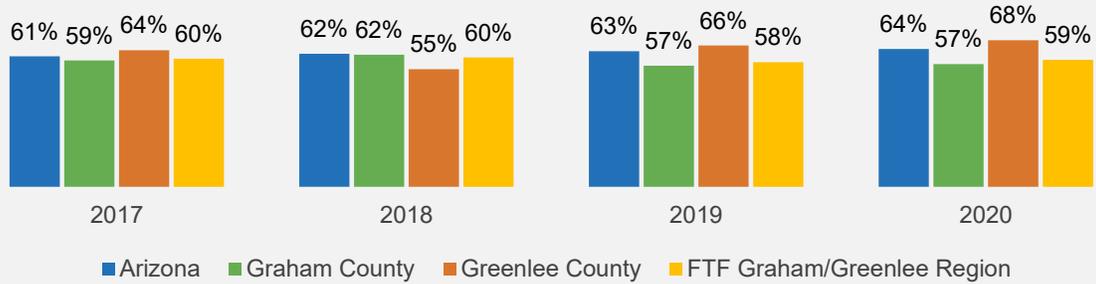
	Mother was 19 or younger	Mother was 17 or younger	Birth was covered by AHCCCS or Indian Health	Tobacco use during pregnancy
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	6%	2%	40%	10%
Graham County	8%	3%	49%	10%
Greenlee County	*	*	26%	12%
ARIZONA	6%	1%	50%	4%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). Vital Statistics. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Values suppressed due to small sample size. "The percentage cannot be calculated for Greenlee county due to low count." "For data related to health or developmental delay, all counts and rates/ratios/percentages are based on non-zero counts less than six, excluding counts of zero (i.e., all counts of one through six, depending on the indicator) are suppressed."

Another aspect of maternal health that is linked to both birth outcomes and a child’s subsequent health is maternal obesity. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, and the state as a whole, about 60% of mothers participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC) reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy in 2020 (Exhibit 5.9). In Greenlee County, the rate of mothers being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy has increased steadily from 64% in 2017 to 68% in 2020. On the other hand, within Graham County, the rate of overweight or obese mothers pre-pregnancy has decreased steadily from 59% in 2017 to 57% in 2020. Families participating in WIC are likely opting for less expensive food options which often tend to be less healthy as well.

Exhibit 5.9. Percentage of mothers overweight and obese pre-pregnancy



Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Prenatal Care

Research suggests that a lack of prenatal care is associated with many negative health issues for both the mother and the child.⁷⁴ Research also shows that children of mothers who did not obtain prenatal care were three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to experience fatal outcomes than those born to mothers who did receive prenatal care.⁷⁵ In addition, studies show that women who are at the highest risk of not receiving prenatal care are mothers younger than 19 years old and single mothers.^{76,77} Educational attainment has also been associated with mothers receiving prenatal care; the higher a mother’s educational attainment, the more likely they are to seek prenatal care.⁷⁸ It is important that mothers seek and receive prenatal care at an early stage in their pregnancy so physicians can treat and prevent any health issues that may occur.⁷⁹

HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%.⁸⁰ In 2019, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester was 75%, which is about five percentage points lower than the HP goal but higher than the state proportion (69%; Exhibit 5.10). In 2019, only one percent of women did

⁷⁴ Prenatal Care Effects Felt Long After Birth. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://toosmall.org/blog/prenatal-care-effects-felt-long-after-birth>

⁷⁵ Womens Health (n.d.). Prenatal care fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html#b>

⁷⁶ Center for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Vital Statistics Online. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/vitalstatsonline.htm

⁷⁷ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee to Study Outreach for Prenatal Care; Brown SS, editor. Prenatal Care: Reaching Mothers, Reaching Infants. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1988. Chapter 1, Who Obtains Insufficient Prenatal Care? Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK217693/>

⁷⁸ National Center for Health Statistics (1994). Vital and Health Statistics: Data from the National Vital Statistics System. Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?id=zIFPAQAIAAJ&pg=RA2-PA19&lpg=RA2PA19&dq=lack+of+prenatal+care+linked+with+mothers+educational+attainment&source=bl&ots=ilqp_JVnA&sig=SQBGBmlhOG9JNrgFLEjMOVkt90&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjM6vH_6vfPAhWCjIQKHWRjCwkQ6AEIVDAH#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁷⁹ Womens Health (n.d.). Prenatal care fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html#b>

⁸⁰ Healthy People 2030. About Health People. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/pregnancy-and-childbirth/increase-proportion-pregnant-women-who-receive-early-and-adequate-prenatal-care-mich-08>

not receive prenatal care which is lower than the proportion in the state (3%).

Exhibit 5.10. Live births during calendar year 2019, by number of prenatal visits

	No visits	1 to 4 visits	5 to 8 visits	9 to 12 visits	13 or more visits	Percent of births with fewer than five prenatal care visits	Percent of births with prenatal care begun in first trimester
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	1%	5%	19%	46%	28%	6%	75%
Graham County	2%	8%	21%	43%	26%	11%	71%
Greenlee County	*	8%	20%	44%	27%	8%	78%
ARIZONA	3%	6%	18%	43%	29%	8%	69%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). Vital Statistics. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Data suppressed due to small sample size.

Birth Outcomes

With regard to perinatal health, babies from the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region fared similarly to babies born statewide. In the region in 2019, nine percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state. The percent of premature births in the region was higher than Graham County and the state at nine percent (Exhibit 5.11). In 2019, 9.8% of births in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region were preterm which was slightly below the Healthy People 2030 goal of 9.4%. The percentage of newborns admitted to the NICU in the region (6%) was slightly lower than the state proportion (8%) (Exhibit 5.12).

Exhibit 5.11. Percentage of births with Low Birth Weights (<2,500 g) and Preterm Births (<37 weeks) in 2019



Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). Vital Statistics. Provided by AZ FTF.

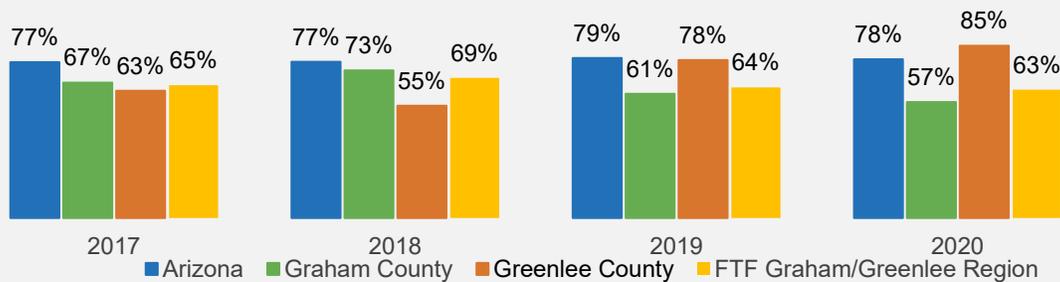
Exhibit 5.12. NICU admissions in 2019

Newborns admitted to intensive care unit	
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	6%
Graham County	6%
Greenlee County	6%
ARIZONA	8%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers breastfeed for the first six months after giving birth.⁸¹ Breast milk has antibodies that prevent babies from getting ill and it has been shown to decrease the likelihood of babies becoming obese later in life.⁸² In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of mothers participating in WIC who ever breastfed their infant on average at least once per day remained steady from 2017 to 2020 at around 60%. In 2020, the region's percentage was lower than the state (63% versus 78%, respectively) (Exhibit 5.13). Moreover, in 2020, mothers participating in WIC in Greenlee County were more likely to breastfeed their infant than mothers in Graham County (85% versus 57%, respectively). In Greenlee County, the percentage of mothers who breastfed their infant increased from 63% in 2017 to 85% in 2020, while the percentage in Graham County decreased from 67% in 2017 to 57% in 2020.

Exhibit 5.13. Percentage of mothers who ever breastfeed their infant



Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF

⁸¹ American Academy of Pediatrics (2012). Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/3/e827.full#content-block>

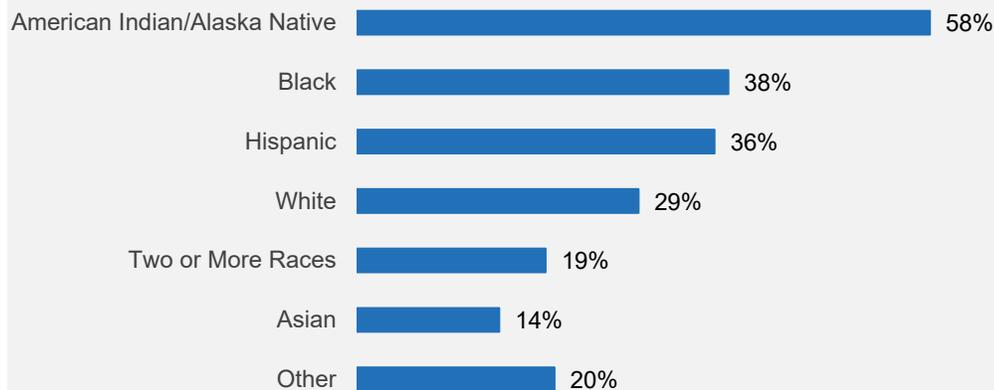
⁸² Office on Women's Health (2014). Why breastfeeding is important. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-benefits.html>

Obesity

Obesity has been a concern in the US due to associated health outcomes, such as higher risks for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.⁸³ Diabetes has also been associated with many negative health complications such as blindness, kidney failure, and amputation of limbs.⁸⁴

According to the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), mothers who are obese during pregnancy are at risk of developing gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and sleep apnea.⁸⁵ According to the CDC, diabetes and obesity can be largely prevented by increasing physical activity and maintaining a healthy diet.⁸⁶ HP 2030 aims to reduce the proportion of adults who are obese to 36% and the proportion of children and adolescents who are obese to 15.5%.⁸⁷ In Arizona overall, the percentage of adults with obesity was 31.4% in 2019, and Exhibit 5.14 shows the differences across racial/ethnic groups.

Exhibit 5.14. Percentage of adults with obesity in Arizona by race/ethnicity, 2019.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Obesity.

Compared to the proportion of mothers participating in WIC who reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy, children participating in WIC were less likely to be obese. In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of children participating in WIC that were obese or overweight was 29% in 2020. This proportion was lower than Arizona (32%) and consistent between Graham County (29%) and Greenlee County (28%). Across the region and counties, about seven out of ten children are considered to be normal weight (Exhibit 5.15).

⁸³ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Adult Obesity Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

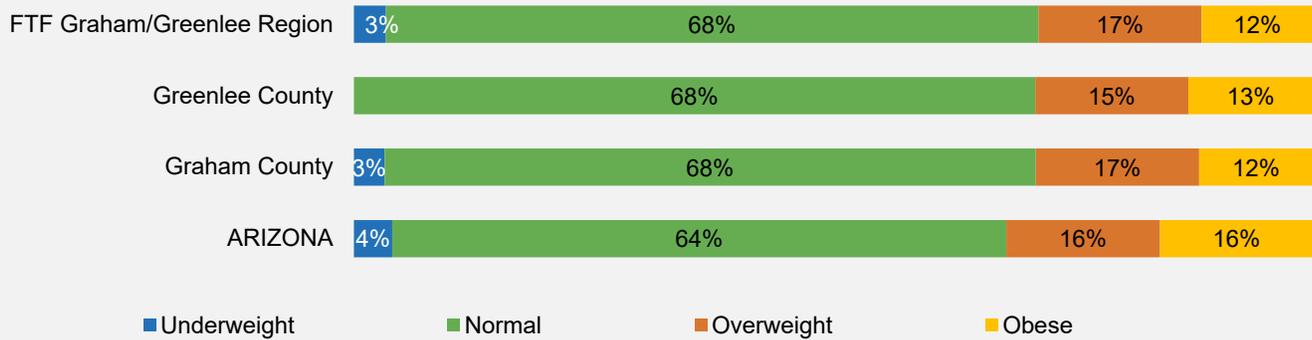
⁸⁴ Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Diabetes At A Glance Reports*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/diabetes.htm>

⁸⁵ ACOG (2016). *Obesity and Pregnancy*. Retrieved from <http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Obesity-and-Pregnancy>

⁸⁶ Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Diabetes At A Glance Reports*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/diabetes.htm>

⁸⁷ *Healthy People 2030. About Health People*. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/overweight-and-obesity/reduce-proportion-adults-obesity-nws-03>

Exhibit 5.15. WIC children's weight status (ages 2 to 5), 2020



Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the proportion of children that are obese or overweight decreased from 2017 and 2020, decreasing from 33% in 2017 to 29% in 2020. In the state, children that were obese or overweight increased by two percentage points from 30% in 2017 to 32% in 2020 (Exhibit 5.16).

Exhibit 5.16. WIC children's overweight and obesity rates (ages 2 to 5), 2017 to 2020

	Childhood rate, 2017	Childhood rate, 2018	Childhood rate, 2019	Childhood rate, 2020	Percentage change from 2017 to 2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	33%	33%	30%	29%	-4%
Graham County	34%	34%	32%	29%	-5%
Greenlee County	32%	31%	26%	28%	-4%
ARIZONA	30%	30%	31%	32%	+2%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Immunizations

Routine childhood vaccinations protect children from many illnesses, including measles, mumps, polio, and whooping cough, which are all severe and potentially fatal to young children.⁸⁸ Receiving timely vaccinations not only protects the child who receives them, but protects the community by reducing the likelihood of disease spread.⁸⁹ Both the state and the region had a similar percent of children who received Hib, DTaP, MMR, Hep B, Polio, and Varicella vaccines (Exhibits 5.17 and Exhibit 5.18). In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of children in child care and kindergarten who were exempt from immunizations for religious reasons or medical was slightly higher than the state and county (Exhibits 5.17 and 5.18).

⁸⁸ Basic Vaccines (2016). Importance of Vaccines. Retrieved from <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/vaccines-save-lives/>

⁸⁹ U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2016). Community Immunity. Retrieved from http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccine_safety/

Exhibit 5.17. Vaccination rates and exemption rates for children in childcare

	Students enrolled	Four or more DTAP	Three or more Polio	Two or more MMR	Three or more HIB	Two Hep A	Three or more Hep B	One or more Varicella	Religious exemption	Medical exemption
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	436	97%	98%	98%	97%	92%	99%	98%	2%	0%
Graham County	244	98%	99%	98%	98%	87%	99%	98%	2%	0%
Greenlee County	192	96%	97%	99%	96%	97%	98%	99%	1%	0%
ARIZONA	85,805	92%	93%	93%	93%	85%	92%	93%	5%	0.4%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Immunization Data Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 5.18. Vaccination rates and exemption rates for children in kindergarten

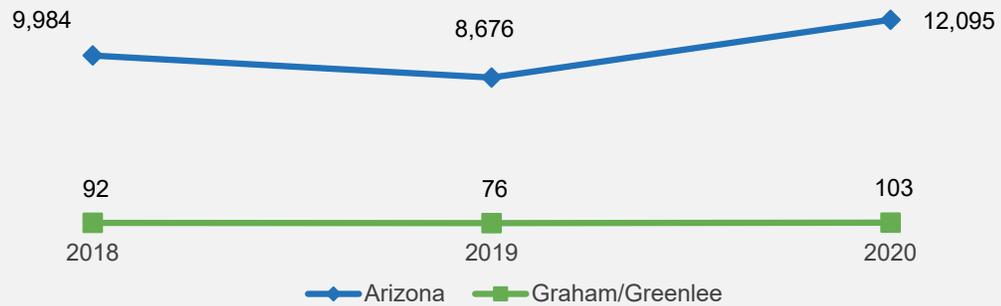
	Students enrolled	Four or more DTAP	DTAP Exempt	Three or more Polio	Polio Exempt	Two or more MMR	MMR Exempt	Three or more Hep B	Hep B Exempt	One or more Varicella	Varicella Exempt
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	724	95%	3%	96%	3%	95%	3%	97%	3%	98%	2%
Graham County	580	95%	4%	96%	3%	95%	4%	97%	3%	97%	3%
Greenlee County	174	96%	1%	98%	1%	98%	1%	98%	1%	98%	1%
ARIZONA	330,412	93%	5%	94%	5%	93%	5%	95%	4%	96%	4%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Immunization Data Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

The number of infectious disease cases per year for children less than five years of age in Graham/Greenlee County increased from 92 cases in 2018 to 103 cases in 2020 (Exhibit 5.19). Like Graham/Greenlee County, Arizona experienced an increase of infectious diseases from 2018 to 2020 (9,984 cases per year to 12,095 per year). As seen in Exhibit 5.20, the most common infectious disease in Graham/Greenlee County in 2020 was influenza (74 cases; 1%) and 1% of cases were for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (27 cases). Though influenzas are preventable through the flu shot, influenzas cause the most hospitalizations for young children amongst vaccine-preventable diseases.⁹⁰

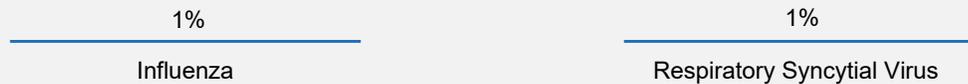
⁹⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) Information for Schools & Childcare Providers. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm#:~:text=Influenza%20causes%20more%20hospitalizations%20among,seasonal%20influenza%20vaccine%20each%20year>

Exhibit 5.19. Number of cases of infectious diseases per year for children (0-4) from 2018 to 2020 in Graham and Greenlee Counties and Arizona*



Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). *Infectious Diseases*. Provided by AZ FTF.
 *Data was not available at the regional level.

Exhibit 5.20. Percentage of occurrence of infectious diseases for children (0-4) in 2020 in Graham/Greenlee County*



Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). *Infectious Diseases*. Provided by AZ FTF.
 *Data was not available at the regional level.

CHILD HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key data trends that highlight the health assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
Three percent of children under age six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region did not have any health insurance	Work with partners to ensure access to health care for all children in the region.
Needs	Considerations
HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%. In 2019, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester was 75%.	Promote the importance of early prenatal care and provide education on the impact of prenatal care on the mother and child's future well-being.



FAMILY SUPPORT

FAMILY SUPPORT

Why it Matters

The first five years of life have a significant impact on children’s intellectual, social, and emotional development, and research shows that parents have a profound impact on their child’s development during this time.⁹¹ Support for young families is an essential piece of the holistic efforts around kindergarten readiness and long-term success for children. First Things First supports families through home visitation and parent outreach and education programs. Evidence-based Parenting Education and supports to improve parenting practices can reduce stressors and lead to enriched child development and reduction of removals of children from their homes.

Given the importance of the first years of life on children’s development and the role that parents can play, it is crucial for parents to receive support and access to programs that provide tools and knowledge about their child’s needs and effective parenting techniques. Providing more knowledge about parenting and child development supports parents in improving their parenting practices and providing their children with the experiences they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.⁹² Public assistance programs in the United States can play an important role in providing adequate socioeconomic conditions for families to raise their children. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has been associated with helping families move out of poverty, guarantee food security, and improve child health and school performance.⁹³ Research has also shown that the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) could prevent child maltreatment due to increased cash benefits and access that have been associated with decreased physical abuse.⁹⁴ The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has reduced the prevalence of child food insecurity. Further, the revisions made to the WIC food package in October 2009 have been associated with reduced maternal preeclampsia and gestational weight gain, as well as improvements in infant gestational age and birth weight.^{95, 96}

⁹¹ Center for the Study of Social Policy (2013). *Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development*. Retrieved from http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Carlson, S., Rosenbaum, D., Keith-Jennings, B., Nchako, C. (2016) *SNAP works for America’s Children*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/9-29-16fa.pdf>

⁹⁴ Spencer, R., Livingston, M., Komro, K., Sroczyński, N., Rentmeester, S., Woods-Jaeger, B. (2021) *Association between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child maltreatment among a cohort of fragile families*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Volume 120. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105186>

⁹⁵ Kreider, B., Pepper, J., Roy, M. (2016) *Identifying the effects of WIC on food insecurity among infants and children*. *Southern Economic Association*. Volume 82 Issue 4. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/soej.12078>

⁹⁶ Hamad, R., Collin, D., Baer, R., Jelliffe-Pawlowski, L. (2019) *Association of revised WIC food package with perinatal and birth outcomes*. Retrieved from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2737097>

Promoting a safe home environment for children is another key aspect of family support. The adverse and long-term effects of childhood trauma have become well-documented. For example, children who are exposed to domestic violence or experience abuse or neglect are at increased risk of depression, anxiety, physical aggression, and behavior problems.⁹⁷ Children who are exposed to opioid misuse are more likely to experience mental health problems, drug use, accidental opioid poisoning, substance use disorder, family dissolution, foster care placement or the death of a parent due to an opioid overdose.⁹⁸ Children in foster care are particularly likely to have had trauma exposure and are more likely than other children to have poor mental and physical health.^{99, 100} Understanding the impact of trauma has led to identifying opportunities to both prevent and mitigate its adverse effects. Opportunities include family support services like home visitation and parent education, as well as prioritizing out-of-home placements with family members or foster families before turning to congregate care in a residential facility.

What the Data Tell Us

Child Safety and Domestic Violence

Understanding the scope of child removals in a region can help policy makers and organizations better support this vulnerable group. The percentage of child removals in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) remained steady in 2018 to 2020 at less than one percent (Exhibit 6.1). These percentages represent the percentage of removed children in Arizona that were removed in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region.

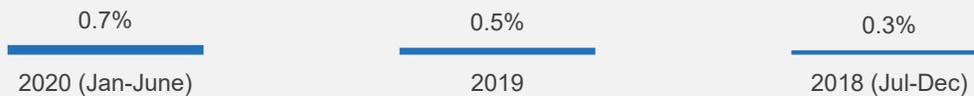
⁹⁷ Evans, S. E., Davies, C., & DiLillo, D. (2008). *Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. Aggression and violent behavior, 13(2), 131-140.*

⁹⁸ Winstanley, E., Stover, A. (2019) *The impact of the opioid epidemic on children and adolescents. Clinical Therapeutics. Volume 41 Issue 9.* Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clinthera.2019.06.003>

⁹⁹ Dorsey, S., Burns, B., Southerland, D., Cox, J., Wagner, H., Farmer, E. (2012) *Prior Trauma Exposure for Youth in Treatment Foster Care. J Child Fam Stud.* Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3667554/>

¹⁰⁰ Turney K, Wildeman C. (2016) *Mental and Physical Health of Children in Foster Care. Pediatrics.* Retrieved from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27940775/>

Exhibit 6.1. Percentage of children removed in Arizona by the Department of Child Safety that resided in Graham/Greenlee Region



Source: Arizona Department of Child Safety. (2019). *Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report*.

Substance Use

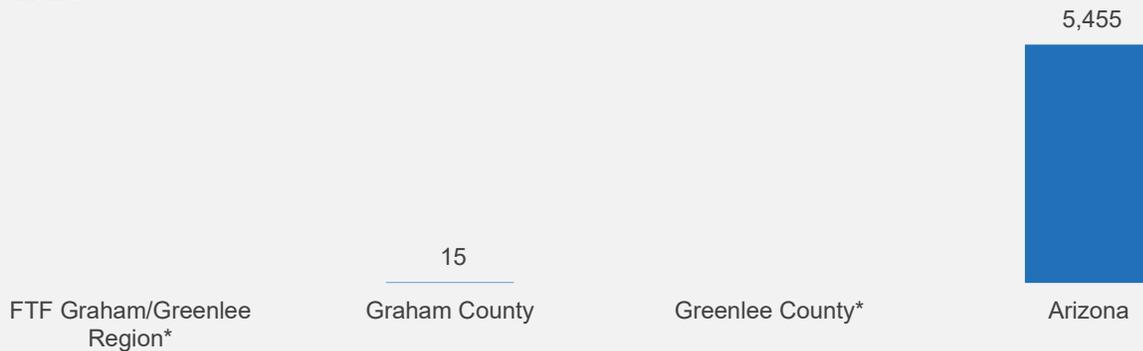
In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to address the national opioid crisis.¹⁰¹ While substance abuse is risky for users themselves, parents who misuse substances also expose their children to risks. Specifically, when parents use opiates or opioids, they are more likely to expose their children to maltreatment and neglect.¹⁰² Children in these situations are more likely to suffer later mental health disorders, their own substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁰³ From 2017 to 2020, the number of fatal opioid deaths in the Graham County was fifteen (Exhibit 6.2).

¹⁰¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2017) HHS Acting Secretary Declares Public Health Emergency to Address National Opioid Crisis. Retrieved from <https://public3.pagefreezer.com/browse/HHS.gov/31-12-2020T08:51/https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2017/10/26/hhs-acting-secretary-declares-public-health-emergency-address-national-opioid-crisis.html>

¹⁰² Child Welfare Information Gateway (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis*. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/bhw/impact-substance/opioid-crisis/>

¹⁰³ American Society for the Positive Care of Children (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis and the Effect on Children*. Retrieved from <https://americanspcc.org/the-opioid-crisis-and-the-effect-on-children/>

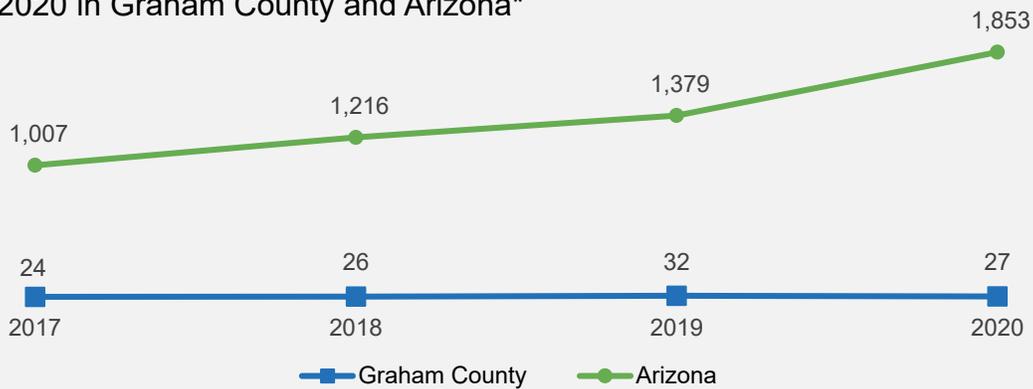
Exhibit 6.2. Number of fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids from 2017 to 2020



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). *Opioids Overdoses*. Provided by AZ FTF
 *Data suppressed for counts less than 10.

In Graham County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2017 to 2020 (Exhibit 6.3). In Graham County, the number of non-fatal overdoses has increased by 13 percentage points from 24 in 2017 to 27 in 2020. Meanwhile, Arizona had a 180% increase of non-fatal overdoses from 2017 to 2020. When parents of children and youth use opiates or opioids, then they are more likely to experience child maltreatment and neglect.¹⁰⁴ These can lead to children suffering later mental health disorders including substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁰⁵

Exhibit 6.3. Number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids from 2017 to 2020 in Graham County and Arizona*



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). *Opioids Overdoses*. Provided by AZ FTF
 *Data for Greenlee County was omitted due to counts of less than 10.

¹⁰⁴ Child Welfare Information Gateway (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis*. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/bhw/impact-substance/opioid-crisis/>

¹⁰⁵ American Society for the Positive Care of Children (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis and the Effect on Children*. Retrieved from <https://americanspcc.org/the-opioid-crisis-and-the-effect-on-children/>

Services to Help Families

Numerous federal and local programs and services aimed at providing families with the food they need, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Women, Infants & Children (WIC), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Program (SFP), and free and reduced priced lunch programs for children in schools.

Despite the prevalence of these programs, in recent years the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased for some programs but increased for other programs. Federal programs such as SNAP have decreased from 2017 to 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic (Exhibits 6.4 and 6.6). These decreases come even as the number of families living in poverty has increased nationally.¹⁰⁶ Exhibits 6.7 and 6.8 show how the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased in recent years.

For SNAP benefits, the percentage of families and children that received benefits decreased by 21% in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region from 2017 to 2020. As of 2020, the program supports approximately 1,200 children and 820 families annually in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (Exhibits 6.4 and 6.6). In 2020, most of the young children enrolled in SNAP were white (90%) and over 40% were Hispanic/Latino (43%), and less than ten percent were either American Indian (6%), another race (5%), or African American (4%) (Exhibit 6.5).¹⁰⁷

Exhibit 6.4. Numbers of young children (ages 0 to 5) receiving SNAP benefits, 2017 to 2020

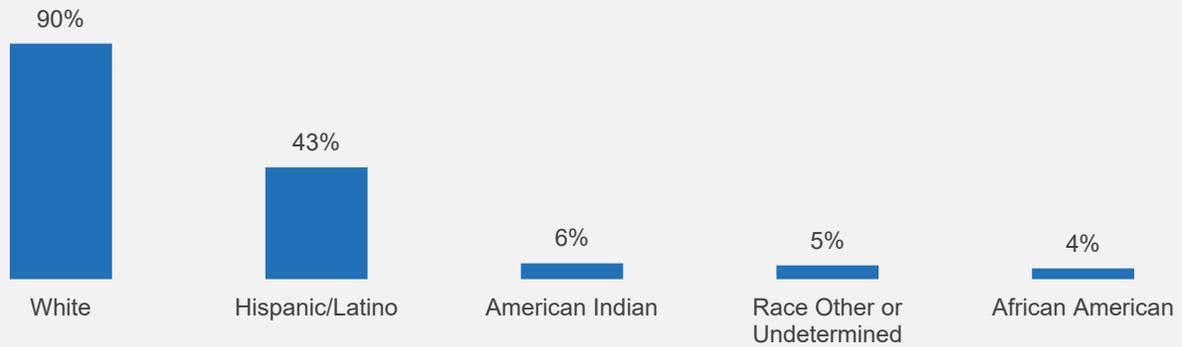
	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	1,563	1,452	1,386	1,237	-21%
Graham County	1,730	1,563	954	1,317	-23%
Greenlee County	206	210	123	168	-20%
ARIZONA	247,414	229,275	211,814	198,961	-20%

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

¹⁰⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (n.d.) Tracking the COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-economys-effects-on-food-housing-and>

¹⁰⁷ Participants could identify as multiple races/ethnicities. Percentages may add up to more than 100.

Exhibit 6.5. Young children (0-5) enrolled in SNAP in 2020 by race/ethnicity in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Exhibit 6.6. Numbers of families receiving SNAP benefits, 2017 to 2020

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	1,041	973	912	820	-21%
Graham County	1,116	1,020	954	858	-23%
Greenlee County	143	146	123	115	-20%
ARIZONA	164,092	151,816	140,056	132,466	-19%

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Unlike the SNAP benefits, the number of children and families receiving TANF benefits increased from 2017 to 2020 in FTF Graham/Greenlee and Graham County (Exhibits 6.7 and 6.8). In 2020, 89 families and 110 young children received TANF benefits. TANF benefits can be the primary cash assistance program for families with low incomes.¹⁰⁸

Exhibit 6.7. Numbers of families receiving TANF benefits, 2017 to 2020

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	76	74	80	89	+17%
Graham County	69	64	62	68	-1%
Greenlee County	****	****	****	21	****
ARIZONA	12,315	10,538	9,360	9,947	-19%

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

**** is used to protect client confidentiality for any areas that had between 1 and 9 members/clients.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.) Office of Family Assistance. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf>

Exhibit 6.8. Numbers of young children (ages 0 to 5) receiving TANF benefits, 2017 to 2020

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	105	97	104	110	+5%
Graham County	96	83	84	87	-9%
Greenlee County	****	****	****	12	****
ARIZONA	17,143	14,659	13,029	13,747	-20%

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*.

Due to mandatory school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, and the Arizona Department of Education issued the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) to current SNAP households and non-SNAP households with children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.¹⁰⁹ Enrolled families were given a pre-loaded EBT card to purchase groceries. The number of families with children 0 to 5 years old that were enrolled in P-EBT from March 2021 to May 2021 decreased by 25% in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region. In May 2021, P-EBT was able to provide financial relief to 136 families within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, (Exhibit 6.9). Most of these families resided in Graham County (n=122). Families with young children consisted of about six to eight percent of the families enrolled in P-EBT from March to May 2021.

Exhibit 6.9. Number of families with children 0-5 enrolled in P-EBT, March 2021 to May 2021

	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	Change from March 2021 to May 2021
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	181	163	136	-25%
Graham County	165	144	122	-26%
Greenlee County	37	36	28	-24%
Arizona	36,971	33,431	30,066	-19%

Arizona Department of Economic Security (2021). *EBT Enrollment*.

Through federal grants, WIC provides nutrition, education and breastfeeding support services, supplemental nutritious foods and referrals to health and social services for women, infants, and children under five years old. In 2020, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, WIC served a total of 1,968 women (n=457), infants (n=512), and children (n=999). Within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, many of the WIC enrollees resided Graham County (Exhibit 6.10). The WIC enrollment for children under five years old slightly decreased from 2017 (45% of children under five) to 2020 (39% of children five) in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region (Exhibit 6.11).

¹⁰⁹ Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.) *Arizona P-EBT Benefits*. Retrieved from <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food-assistance/other-food-programs/arizona-p-ebt-benefits>

Exhibit 6.10. Number of women, infants and children enrolled in the WIC program during 2020

	Total	Women	Infants	Children
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	1,968	457	512	999
Graham County	1,593	367	410	816
Greenlee County	387	93	107	187
ARIZONA	256,733	63,111	70,242	123,380

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 6.11. Infants and children (ages 0 to 4) enrolled in the WIC program as a percentage of the population, 2017 to 2020

	Number of children (ages 0-4) in the 2010 US Census	Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2017		Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2018		Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2019		Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2020	
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	3,903	1,767	45%	1,742	45%	1,615	41%	1,511	39%
Graham County	3,830	1,398	37%	1,373	36%	1,291	34%	1,226	32%
Greenlee County	794	380	48%	386	49%	333	42%	294	37%
ARIZONA	546,609	221,387	41%	211,732	39%	201,644	37%	193,622	37%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 6.12 provides a single month snapshot of participation in the program in November 2020; 88% of women, 96% of infants, and 89% of children who were enrolled in WIC in the region claimed their benefits in the month of November. Those who were enrolled in Greenlee County were more likely to claim their benefits than those who lived in Graham County (93% versus 89%).

Exhibit 6.12. WIC participation rates during November 2020

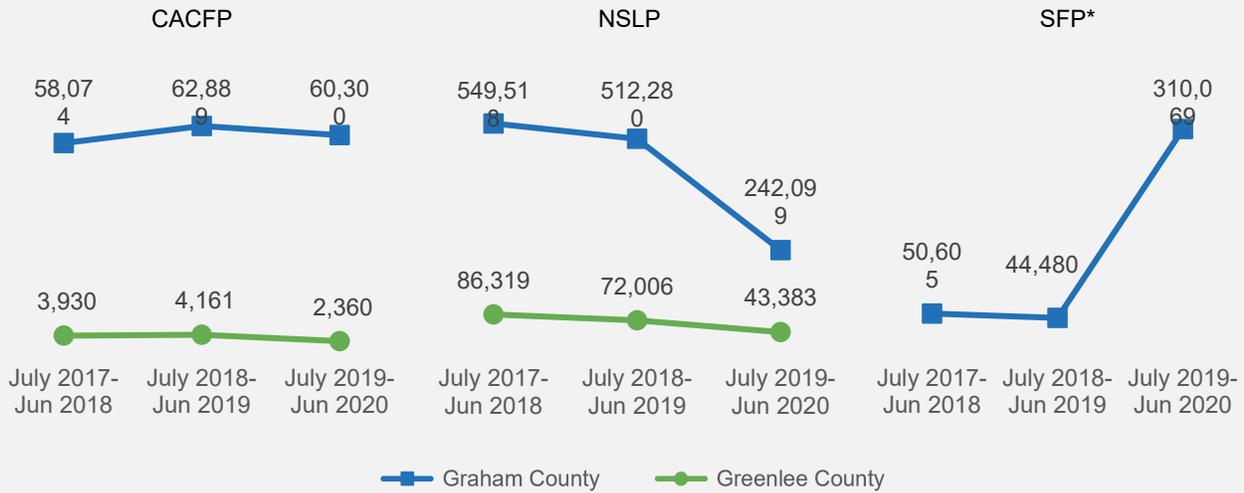
	Total	Women	Infants	Children
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region	90%	88%	96%	89%
Graham County	89%	87%	96%	88%
Greenlee County	93%	91%	94%	94%
ARIZONA	89%	89%	93%	88%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Note: The participation rate is the number of persons receiving WIC benefits during November 2020, divided by the total number of persons enrolled in the program.

Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Program (SFP), and free and reduced priced lunch programs for children in schools are able to provide assistance to families experiencing food insecurity. Despite the prevalence of these programs, from June 2018 to June 2020, the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased for CACFP and NSLP but increased dramatically for SFP (Exhibit 6.13).

Exhibit 6.13. Number of free meals provided by CACFP, NSLP and SFP to children and adults in Graham County and Greenlee County



Arizona Department of Education (2020). Child and Adult Care Food Program. Provided by AZ FTF.

Arizona Department of Education (2020). National School Lunch Program. Provided by AZ FTF.

Arizona Department of Education (2020). Summer Food Program. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Data not available for Greenlee County.

Schools are an important part of the nutrition assistance system, especially for children that may be food insecure. Almost half of all public- and charter-school students in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2018 (Exhibit 6.14). This is comparable to the statewide percentage, which has hovered about 55% to 57%. Over the last three years, the proportion of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch has stayed fairly constant in most school districts in the region, although the percentage has noticeably decreased in the Discovery Plus Academy (from 40% in 2018 to 23% in 2020) and Pima Unified District (from 51% in 2018 to 39% in 2020). The school districts in the region with the lowest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch in 2020 were Discovery Plus Academy (23%) and Thatcher Unified District (32%), while Fort Thomas Unified District (93%) had the highest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. (Note that the data in Exhibit 6.14 refer only to schools located inside the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region boundaries).

Exhibit 6.14. Proportion of students (pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade) eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020
FTF Graham/Greenlee Region Schools	48%	47%	46%
Graham/Greenlee Bonita Elementary District	54%	53%	60%
Discovery Plus Academy	40%	32%	23%
Duncan Unified District	55%	59%	59%
Fort Thomas Unified District	94%	94%	93%
Graham County Special Services	77%	71%	76%
Morenci Unified District	39%	41%	37%
Pima Unified District	51%	41%	39%
Safford Unified District	51%	49%	51%
Solomon Elementary District	60%	64%	58%
Thatcher Unified District	32%	34%	32%
Graham County Schools	51%	49%	48%
Greenlee County Schools	42%	45%	42%
All Arizona Schools	57%	56%	55%

Arizona Department of Education (2020). [Free and reduced lunch dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region.

FAMILY SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Below are key data trends that highlight the health assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the region. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

Assets	Considerations
The percentage of child removals in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) remained steady in 2018 to 2020 at less than one percent.	Continue to provide family support services like home visitation in targeted areas to provide support and resources to families

Needs	Considerations
The percentage of families and children that received SNAP benefits decreased by 21% in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region from 2017 to 2020.	Consider examining alternative strategies to support food security for children and families.

CONCLUSION

The FTF Graham/Greenlee Region has both strengths and opportunities for improvement. The region has lower employment, median income and economic resources than other parts of the state and county. Parents in the region are educated but may benefit from more information and awareness of age-appropriate child development and the impact they have on their child’s readiness to learn and grow.

The region has many strong providers who are continuing to build a more efficient system of care dedicated to the well-being of the region’s youngest children and their families yet could use support to overcome barriers like limited funding and competition for resources. First Things First is a great asset in the region as they play a large role in funding and supporting the area’s early childhood system. The following tables include the assets, needs and considerations from the six domains presented in this report. These key findings are intended to provide information to the FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council and the community as a whole around the needs and assets of the region’s zero to five population and their families.

Assets	Considerations
Population Characteristics	
The population of children under the age of six is projected to remain steady, allowing the region to prepare for the growing demands of their youngest residents.	Discuss tactics for continuing to meet the needs of the under six population.
Economic Circumstances	
Eighty-five percent of households in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region live in households with a computer and internet. For households with children under 18 years old, nearly nine out of ten households (88%) have a computer and internet in the region. Greenlee County had more households with computer and internet (92%) than Graham County (80%).	Consider engaging families using technology-based and online engagement tools.
Education	
In the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, 88% of adults ages 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is similar to the state.	Increase awareness for parents to support each other and share knowledge and attitudes around the importance of education.
Early Learning	
Quality First has been increasing the quality of child care programs in the region	Support Quality First efforts in the region to continue to increase the opportunities for children to receive quality early care and education experiences.

Child Health	
Three percent of children under age six in the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region did not have any health insurance	Work with partners to ensure access to health care for all children in the region.
Family Support	
The percentage of child removals in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) remained steady in 2018 to 2020 at less than one percent.	Continue to provide family support services like home visitation in targeted areas to provide support and resources to families.

Needs	Considerations
Population Characteristics	
In the region, more children ages zero to five identify as Hispanic or Latino than adults (44% vs. 35%). Five percent in the region speak English less than very well.	Provide culturally appropriate services and interpretation and translation assistance for families that are more comfortable speaking in a language other than English.
Fifty-two percent of children (ages 0-17) live in a grandparent's household, and the grandparent is responsible for the child	Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households to help them support the young children in their homes.
Economic Circumstances	
The median income of families with children under age eighteen in Graham County and Greenlee County is lower than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families, which comprise over 30% of households with children under age six, is significantly less than for married-couple families.	Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes
In Graham County, individuals who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino are more likely to be in poverty than people of other races and ethnicities. In Greenlee County, people who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, or as two or more races, are more likely to be in poverty than their white counterparts	Future efforts should emphasize tracking population characteristics in order to be responsive to the needs of the community.
Education	
AzMERIT reports show that about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standard for English Language Arts and Math.	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.
Early Learning	
In 2020, in Graham/Greenlee Region, less children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 2019.	Identify gaps in child care subsidies to ensure that children in need are receiving these subsidies.
Across the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, there were school districts with high concentrations of	Work with school districts to refer children identified with special needs to support services.

<p>preschool students with special needs. In Morenci Unified District, 64% of preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment. Moreover, a high percentage of preschool students in special education had a developmental delay at Duncan Unified District (>98%) and Solomon Elementary District (>98%).</p>	
<p>Child Health</p>	
<p>HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%. In 2019, within the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester was 75%.</p>	<p>Promote the importance of early prenatal care and provide education on the impact of prenatal care on the mother and child's future well-being.</p>
<p>Family Support</p>	
<p>The percentage of families and children that received SNAP benefits decreased by 21% in FTF Graham/Greenlee Region from 2017 to 2020.</p>	<p>Consider examining alternative strategies to support food security for children and families.</p>