

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

Cochise 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 Cochise 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 Cochise 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 Cochise 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 Cochise 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 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 Cochise Region.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the current and past members of the Cochise 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 Cochise Region

The First Things First (FTF) Cochise Region and Cochise County share roughly the same boundaries and occupy the southeastern corner of Arizona. The Cochise landscape consists of scenic country with the Chiricahua Mountains and the Dragoon Mountains. Cochise is bordered to the south by Mexico and to the east by New Mexico. The surrounding counties are Pima, Santa Cruz, Graham, and Greenlee. The region is largely rural and consists primarily of small towns with populations of less than 17,000 people. The largest city in the FTF Cochise Region is Sierra Vista, which includes the Fort Huachuca Military Base, housing a population of over 40,000.¹ The region's economy is primarily based on agriculture, mining, and tourism, with the exception of Sierra Vista and Douglas.

The Cochise 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:

- Strengthening families through voluntary home visiting and parent education;
- Improving the quality of childcare and preschool programs;
- Offering scholarships for children to access high-quality early learning; and
- Providing developmental and sensory screening to support the health and development of young children.

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

¹ *Statistical Atlas. Cochise County. Retrieved from <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/Arizona/Cochise-County/Population>*

for the FTF Cochise Region, potential considerations, and opportunities for further 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 Cochise Region has a total population of 132,279 residents. There are nearly 10,000 children under six years old in the region, accounting for eight percent of the total population in the region.

In the FTF Cochise Region, 64% of adults ages 18 and over identify as white and 28% identify as Hispanic or Latino. This compares to 63% and 25%, respectively, for Arizona. In the region, children under five are more likely to identify as Hispanic or Latino than the overall population. Approximately three out of five people in the region (72%) speak English as their primary language, while 25% primarily speak Spanish and an additional three percent speak a language other than English or Spanish. Eight percent of the population in the region speaks English less than 'very well'² and four percent of households are limited English speaking households. The percent of kindergarten through third grade students in the region who are English Language Learners (ELL) is 15%, which is more than in the state (10%).

In the FTF Cochise Region, there are about 33,000 households and 18% include children under six years old. Although the majority of children under six live with two parents (57%), 40% live in single-parent households. Three percent of children under six in the FTF Cochise Region live with relatives or non-relatives. Of children under 18 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 72% 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

² 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."

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 Cochise County, the unemployment rate decreased between 2016 and 2021, though it has consistently been higher than the unemployment rate for Arizona as a whole. Starting in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for both Cochise County and Arizona increased. Also, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the total number of unemployment claims increased in the Cochise Region. In April 2020, the number of total claims peaked at 2,043 and gradually started to decrease. By the end of 2020, the total claims were 318.

In the FTF Cochise Region, 23% of children under age six live in a household with both parents in the labor force. A third of children under age six live in a household with a single parent in the labor force (31%), which is similar to the percentage for Cochise County and Arizona. The overall percentage of adults who are in the labor force in the Cochise Region is 43%, which is lower than the proportion in Arizona (56%) but equal to the County (43%).

The median income of all families in Cochise County is \$59,657, which is slightly less than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families is significantly less than for married-couple families. In the FTF Cochise Region, 17% of the population and 26% of children under age six are living in poverty. This is slightly more than the 15% of the population and 23% of the population under age six that live in poverty in Arizona. In the Cochise Region, 55% of families with children 0-5 live below 185% of the FPL (that is, they earned less than \$26,500 a year for a family of four), which is the same as the county at 55% but higher than the state at 46%.

Economic Considerations:

- Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes.
- Promote supports and resources that can help subsidize child care and other expenses for single parent households.

Educational Indicators

Children's participation in early learning experiences is likely to result in higher academic performance

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

in future years.⁴ About 40% of preschool-aged children in the Cochise Region (41%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten), which is lower than Cochise County (52%) and Arizona (65%). The English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results of the AzMERIT demonstrated that 44% of all third graders in the Cochise Region scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”, which was slightly lower than Arizona’s proficiency rate. Arizona Progress Meter’s goal for proficiency is 72% by 2030; thus, Cochise Region is 28 percentage points below the goal.⁵ Moreover, 48% of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment in the Cochise Region, compared to 51% in Arizona. Although math assessment results are slightly higher than the ELA assessment results, about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standards for the two subjects.

Between 2017 and 2019, high school graduation rates remained steady for the Cochise Region, Cochise County, and Arizona. In 2019, 85% of students graduated within four-years in the region, which was higher than Cochise County and Arizona. From 2018-2020, the percent of students dropping out of high school in Arizona and Cochise Region remained steady. In the Cochise Region, about three percent of students dropped out in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

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 121 ECE centers and homes with a capacity of 5,541 children in the Cochise Region. However, 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 Cochise Region, out of the 1,098 children enrolled in a Quality First site, 824 are enrolled in a three-to-five-star center or home (75%). Moreover, 24 out of 31 (77%) childcare providers in Quality First have received a three-to-five-star rating.

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>

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 Cochise Region and Arizona, licensed centers have the highest cost per day, certified group homes have the second highest cost per day, and approved family homes have the lowest cost per day. The median cost per day of licensed centers, approved family homes and certified group homes in the Cochise Region are similar to the costs in Arizona. The median cost for one infant in Cochise County is approximately \$9,000 a year for licensed centers; approximately \$5,000 a year for approved family homes; and \$5,750 per a year for certified group homes (based on median cost per day).

In 2020, the most common types of disabilities for preschool children were developmental delays and speech/language impairments. Across the Cochise Region, some districts had high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. For students in grades kindergarten to 3rd grade within the region in 2020, 12% were enrolled in special education. This percentage was consistent with the county (12%) and the state (12%).

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.⁷ The HP 2030 target is for 92.1% of Americans to have medical insurance by 2030.⁸ In 2019, 92% of the population living in poverty in the Cochise Region had health insurance, leaving eight percent without health coverage. Three percent of children under age six living in poverty in this region lacked health insurance.

From 2016-2020, in the FTF Cochise Region, non-fatal unintentional injuries have led to 53 inpatient hospitalizations and 3,546 emergency department visits for children ages 0 to 4. Between the years 2018 and 2019, in the Cochise Region, the total number of deaths for children 0 to 17 years old increased from 11 to 17. In 2019, 71% of these deaths across both years were among young children 0 to 4 years.

In 2019, Cochise Region residents gave birth to 1,324 babies, which was two percent of all births in the state. HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%.⁹ In 2019, in the Cochise Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the

⁷ *Schools & Health (2016). Impact of Health on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/pages/Anthropometricstatusgrowth.aspx>*

⁸ *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>*

⁹ *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>*

first trimester was 42%, which is about 39 percentage points lower than the HP goal and also lower than the state proportion (69%). In 2019, nine percent of women did not receive prenatal care which is higher than the proportion in the state (3%). With regard to prenatal health, babies from the Cochise Region fared similarly to babies born statewide. In the region in 2019, eight percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state and the percent of premature births was slightly lower than the state (8% in Cochise Region versus 9% in the state). In 2019, the percentage of newborns admitted to the NICU in the region (7%) was less than the state (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.¹⁰ From 2017 to 2020, the number of fatal opioid deaths in the Cochise Region was 50, which consisted of one percent of the total deaths in Arizona. In both Cochise County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2018 to 2020. In Cochise County, the number of non-fatal overdoses has drastically increased by 85% from 26 in 2018 to 48 in 2020. This trend was similar in Arizona with a 180% increase of non-fatal overdoses from 2018 to 2020.

Numerous federal and local programs and services aim to provide families with food security, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 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. Federal programs such as SNAP and TANF have decreased from 2017 to 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. These decreases come even as the number of families living in poverty has increased nationally. For SNAP benefits, the percentage of children and families that received benefits decreased by 18% in the Cochise Region from 2017 to 2020. As of 2020, the program supports approximately 4,000 children and 2,800 families annually in the Cochise Region. Similar to SNAP benefits, the number of children and families receiving TANF benefits decreased from 2017 to 2020 in Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona. In 2020, approximately 200 families and 300 young children received TANF benefits.

¹⁰ 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

Family Support Considerations

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

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Family well-being is an important indicator of child success.^{11, 12} 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴

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 Cochise 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:

- Strengthening families through voluntary home visiting and parent education;
- Improving the quality of child care and preschool programs;
- Offering scholarships for children to access high-quality early learning; and
- Providing developmental and sensory screening to support the health and development of young children.

Methodology

This is the eighth Needs and Assets report conducted on behalf of the FTF Cochise 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 Cochise Council about the needs and assets in their region to help them make important programmatic and funding decisions. This report describes the current circumstances of young children and their families as it relates to unmet needs and assets for

¹¹ 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>

¹² 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>

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Reynolds, A., Ou, S., Mondt, 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>

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 Cochise 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, Cochise County, and State of Arizona. Wherever possible, data throughout the report are provided specifically for the FTF Cochise 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 Cochise 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 Cochise Region, such as more detailed data on housing or homelessness, home visiting, oral health, hearing loss screenings, 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 regard 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.¹⁵ Understanding how the population is changing and where it is growing allows decision makers to strategically and proactively allocate resources.

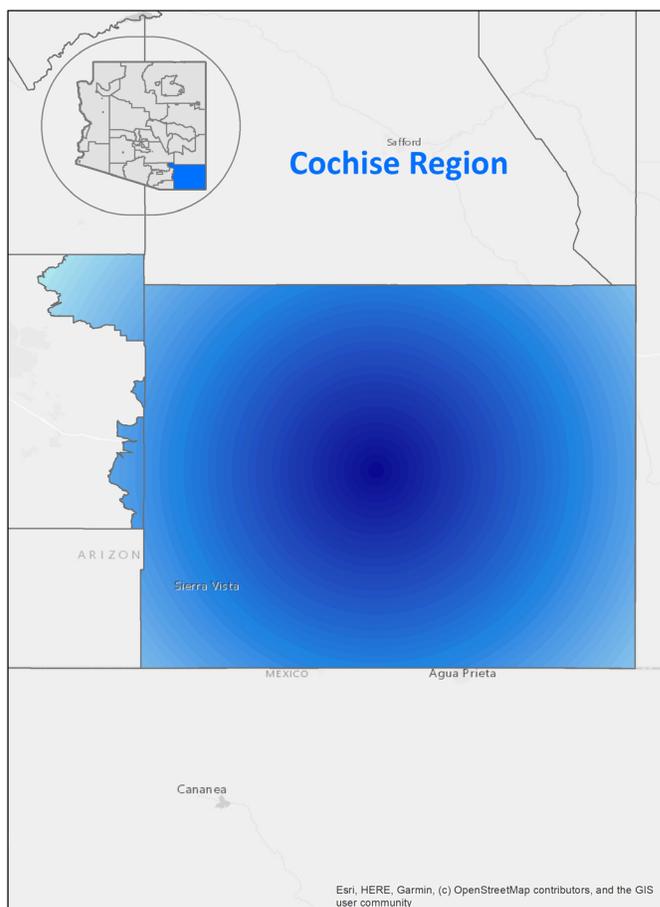
What the Data Tells Us

The First Things First (FTF) Cochise Region and Cochise County share roughly the same boundaries and occupy the southeastern corner of Arizona. The Cochise landscape consists of scenic country with the Chiricahua Mountains and the Dragoon Mountains. Cochise is bordered to the south by Mexico and to the east by New Mexico. The surrounding counties are Pima, Santa Cruz, Graham, and Greenlee (Exhibit 1.1). The region is largely rural and consists primarily of small towns with populations of less than 17,000 people. The largest city in the FTF Cochise Region is Sierra Vista, which includes the Fort

¹⁵ 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>

Huachuca Military Base, housing a population of over 40,000.¹⁶ The region’s economy is primarily based on agriculture, mining, and tourism, with the exception of Sierra Vista and Douglas. To fully understand the demographic profile of the region, this section of the report will provide data on the current population characteristic indicators to help 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 Cochise Region and how those characteristics compare to the state.

Exhibit 1.1. Map of Cochise County and FTF Cochise Region boundaries



¹⁶ *Statistical Atlas. Cochise County. Retrieved from <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/Arizona/Cochise-County/Population>*

Population Counts and Projections

According to the 2010 Census, the FTF Cochise Region has a total population of 132,279 residents. There are nearly 10,000 children under six years old in the region, accounting for eight percent of the total population in the region (Exhibit 1.2).

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

	All ages	Ages 0-5	Children (0-5) as a percentage of the total population
Cochise Region	132,279	10,177	8%
Cochise County	131,346	10,125	8%
Arizona	6,392,017	546,609	9%

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

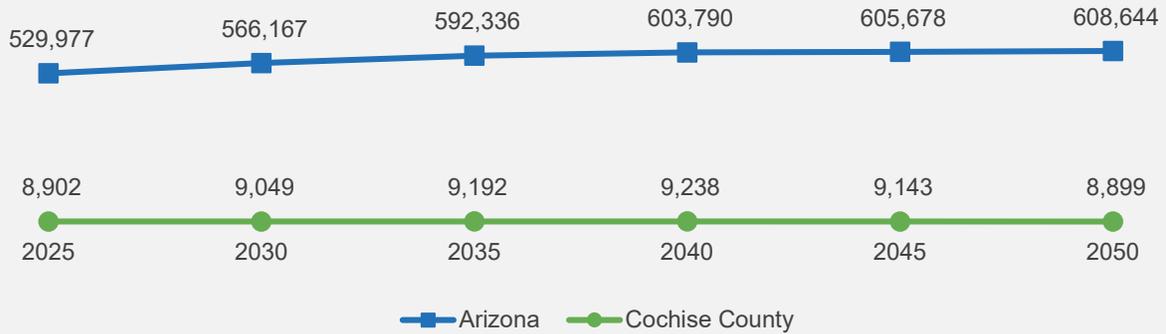
The number of births in the FTF Cochise Region was around 1,000 per year in both 2018 and 2019, accounting for about two percent of the births in Arizona (Exhibit 1.3). The number of children under six in Cochise County is expected to remain steady over the next ten years (Exhibit 1.4). Over the same time period, the number of children under six is expected to increase slightly for the state as a whole.

Exhibit 1.3. Number of births from 2018-2019 in Cochise Region



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

Exhibit 1.4. Projected population of children 0-5 in Arizona and Cochise 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 Cochise Region, 64% of adults ages 18 and over identify as white and 28% identify as Hispanic or Latino. This compares to 63% and 25%, respectively, for Arizona. In the region, children under five are more likely to identify as Hispanic or Latino than the overall population (Exhibit 1.5 and Exhibit 1.6).

Exhibit 1.5. Race and ethnicity of the adult population (ages 18 and older) in the 2010 Census

	Number of persons (ages 18 and older)	Hispanic or Latino	White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	American Indian alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	African-American alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	Asian or Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino)
Cochise Region	132,279	28%	64%	1%	4%	2%
ARIZONA	6,392,017	25%	63%	4%	4%	3%

U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; Table P11; generated by Harder+Company using American FactFinder; <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

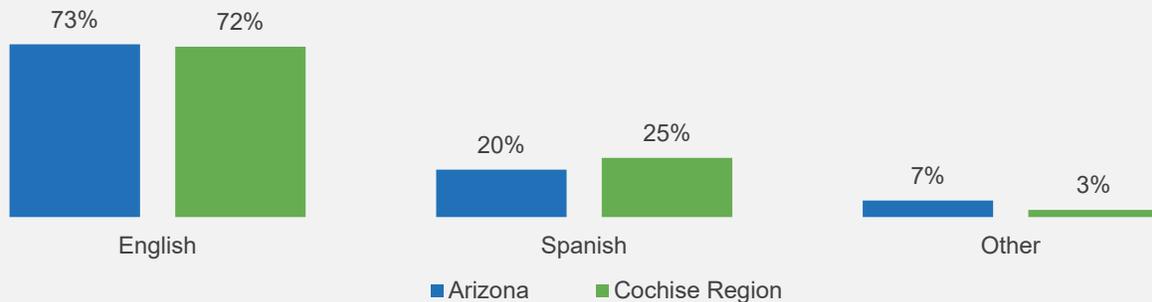
Exhibit 1.6. Race and ethnicity of children (ages 0-5) in the 2010 Census

	Number of persons (ages 0-5)	Hispanic or Latino	White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	American Indian alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	African-American alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	Asian or Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino)
Cochise Region	10,177	47%	42%	1%	5%	2%
ARIZONA	546,609	45%	40%	6%	5%	3%

U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Tables P12B, P12C, P12D, P12E, P12H, and P12I; generated by Harder+Company using American FactFinder; <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Approximately three out of five people in the region (72%) speak English as their primary language, while 25% primarily speak Spanish and an additional three percent speak a language other than English or Spanish (Exhibit 1.7). Eight percent of the population in the region speaks English less than ‘very well’¹⁷ and four percent of households are limited English speaking households (Exhibit 1.8). As the young population grows to be Hispanic/Latino, the cultural diversity of the region may change as well, indicating a need for more culturally responsive services.

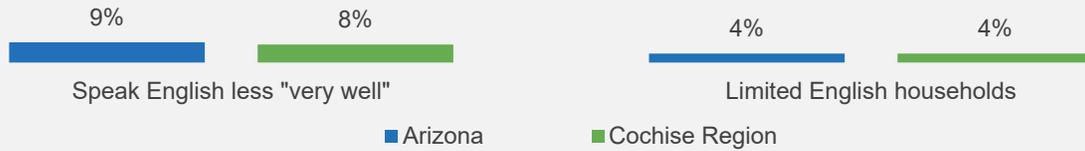
Exhibit 1.7. Primary language spoken at home for population ages 5 and over



U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B16001; generated by AZ FTF using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>

¹⁷ 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 1.8. Percentage of population that speaks English less than "very well" and percentage of limited English households



U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B16001 & B16002; generated by AZ FTF using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>

Children 0-5 in the Cochise Region and county (16% for both) are less likely to be living with parent(s) born outside the United States than children 0-5 in Arizona (25%) (Exhibit 1.9).

Exhibit 1.9. Children (ages 0 to 5) living with parents born outside the United States

	Children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents	Children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents born outside the U.S.
Cochise Region	1,426	16%
Cochise County	1,428	16%
ARIZONA	126,028	25%

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

In 2020, the number of kindergarten through third grade students in the region that are migrants was 34 (Exhibit 1.10).

The percent of kindergarten through third grade students in the region who are English Language Learners (ELL) is 15%, which is more than in the state (10%) (Exhibit 1.11).

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

	Arizona	Cochise Region
2018	662	35
2019	570	44
2020	809	34

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

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

	Arizona	Cochise Region
2018	10%	15%
2019	9%	16%
2020	10%	15%

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

Household Characteristics

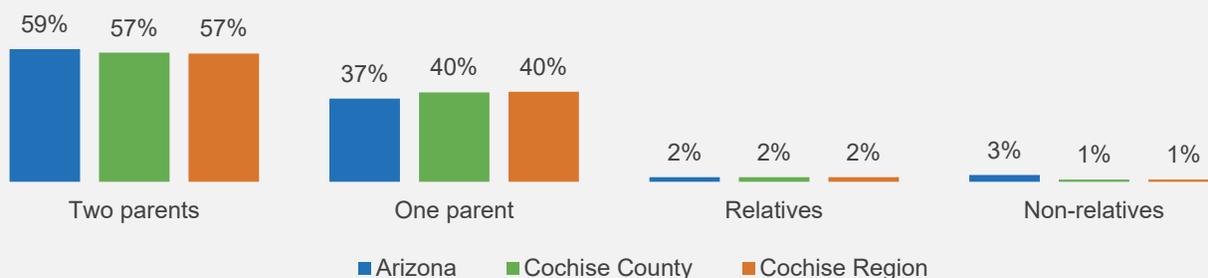
In the FTF Cochise Region, there are about 33,000 households and 18% include children under six years old (Exhibit 1.12). Although the majority of children under six live with two parents (57%), 40% live in single-parent households (Exhibit 1.13). Three percent of children under six in the FTF Cochise Region live with relatives or non-relatives (Exhibit 1.13).

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
Cochise Region	32,782	5,821	18%	66%	11%	23%
Cochise County	32,462	5,830	18%	66%	11%	23%
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

Exhibit 1.13. Living arrangements of children 0-5



U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B05009, B09001, & B17006; generated by AZ FTF using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>

Of children under 18 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 72% are primarily cared for by a grandparent, which is higher than for Arizona (50%; Exhibit 1.14). There are several advantages to living in a multigenerational household, including an increase in emotional well-being and grandparents serving as role models in the socialization of children. However, this also indicates that young families

may not have the resources to live on their own and may be living with their elderly parents as a result. Grandparents raising their grandchildren may also require additional support due to the nontraditional family structure, changes in parenting practices since grandparents were raising their children, and the fact that many older adults live on fixed incomes and may struggle with caring for dependents.

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)
Cochise Region	3,281	72%	20%
Cochise County	3,146	73%	20%
Arizona	155,821	50%	16%

U.S. Census Bureau; 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B10002; generated by AZ FTF using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>

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
<p>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.</p>	<p>Discuss tactics for continuing to meet the needs of the under six population.</p>

Needs	Considerations
<p>In the region, more children ages zero to five identify as Hispanic or Latino than adults (47% vs. 28%).</p> <p>Eight percent in the region speak English less than very well.</p>	<p>Provide culturally appropriate services and interpretation and translation assistance for families that are more comfortable speaking in a language other than English.</p>
<p>Out of children ages zero to 17 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 72% are primarily cared for by the grandparent.</p>	<p>Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households to help them support the young children in their homes.</p>



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.¹⁸ 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.^{19, 20, 21} Housing instability, which includes frequent moves, difficulty paying rent, being evicted or being homeless, is associated with worse health, academic, and social outcomes.²² Children without housing stability often experience negative outcomes such as higher grade retention, higher high school dropout rates, and lower educational attainment as adults.^{23, 24} Unemployment of parents can also affect the psychological well-being of children in the long-term due to negative experiences and stressful events.²⁵ 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.^{26, 27} 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.

¹⁸ Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G. (1997). *The effects of poverty on children. The future of children*, 55-71.

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ 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

²¹ Clair, A. (2019). *Housing: An under-explored influence on children's well-being and becoming. Child Indicators Research*, 12(2), 609-626.

²² 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

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ 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>

²⁵ 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/>

²⁶ *Feeding America*. Retrieved from <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/child-hunger/child-development.html>

²⁷ 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

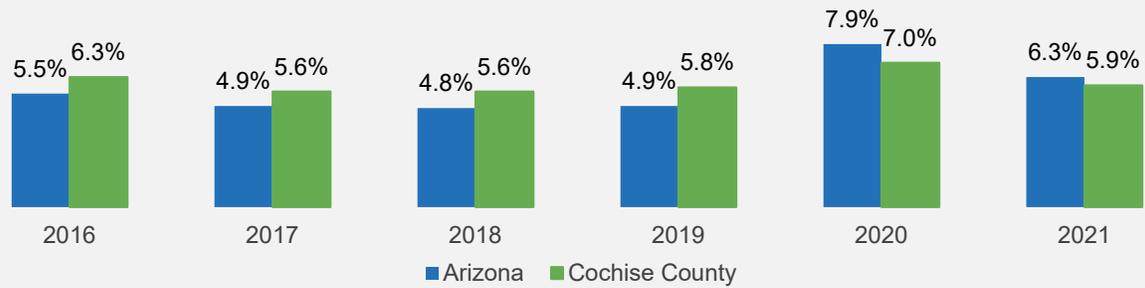
What the Data Tells Us

Employment Indicators

In Cochise County, the unemployment rate decreased between 2016 and 2021, though it has consistently been higher than the unemployment rate for Arizona as a whole (Exhibit 2.1). Starting in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for both Cochise County and Arizona increased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, those who tended to be affected by unemployment included those in jobs in services, restaurants, transportation, and other fields that typically do not offer long-term contracts, decent wages, and health benefits.²⁸ The unemployment rate reached a peak of 12% in April 2020 and started to decline to six percent in August 2020 (not shown). The overall unemployment rate in Cochise County decreased from seven percent in 2020 to six percent in 2021. This indicates that more people started to go to back to the labor force as stay-at-home orders were lifted. The number of people in the labor force and the number of people employed has consistently increased in Cochise County from 2016 through 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic (Exhibit 2.2).

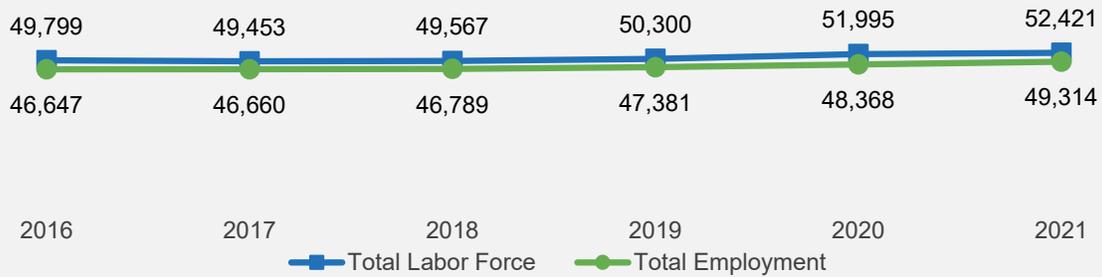
²⁸ Blustein, D., Paige, G. (2020) "Work and unemployment in the time of COVID-19: the existential experience of loss and fear." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60.

Exhibit 2.1. 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.

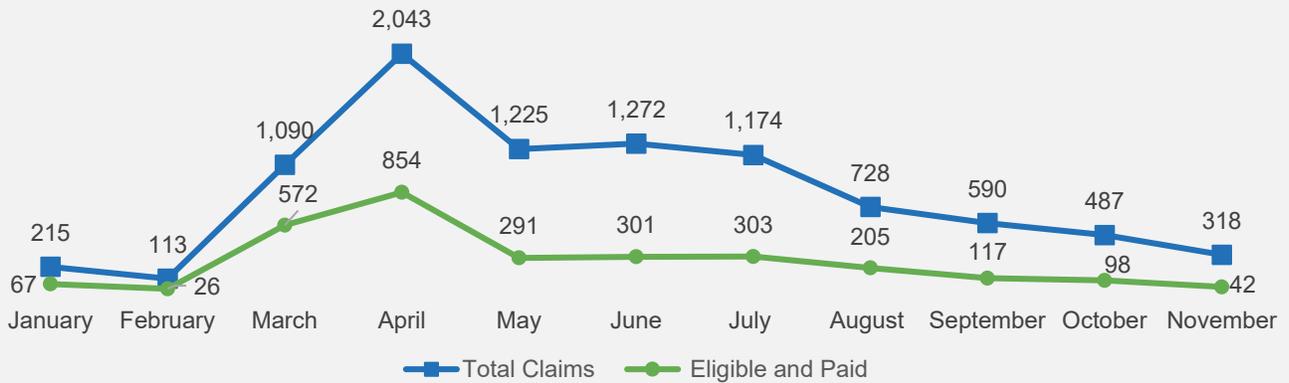
Exhibit 2.2. Number of people in the labor force and employed in Cochise County



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 and submits an application. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the total number of unemployment claims increased in the Cochise Region. In April 2020, the number of total claims peaked at 2,043 and gradually started to decrease. By the end of 2020, the total claims were 318 (Exhibit.2.3).

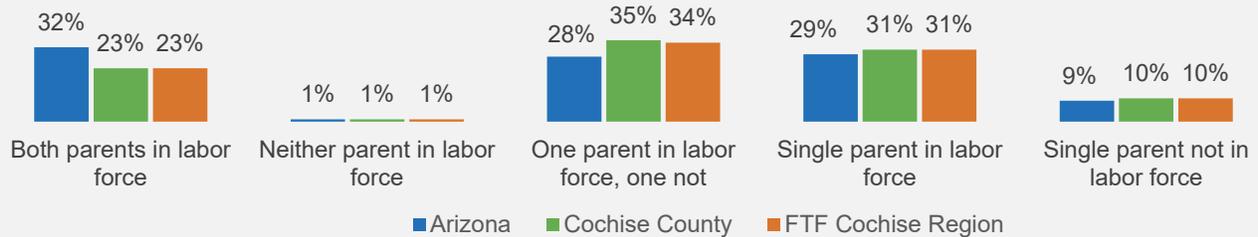
Exhibit 2.3. Number of total unemployment claims with eligible and paid claims in 2020 for Cochise Region



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

In the FTF Cochise Region, 23% of children under age six live in a household with both parents in the labor force. A third of children under age six live in a household with a single parent in the labor force (31%) which is similar to the percentage for Cochise County and Arizona (Exhibit 2.4 and 2.5). The overall percentage of adults who are in the labor force in the Cochise Region is 43%, which is lower than the proportion in Arizona (56%) but equal to the County (43%) (Exhibit 2.6).

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



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey Table B23008.

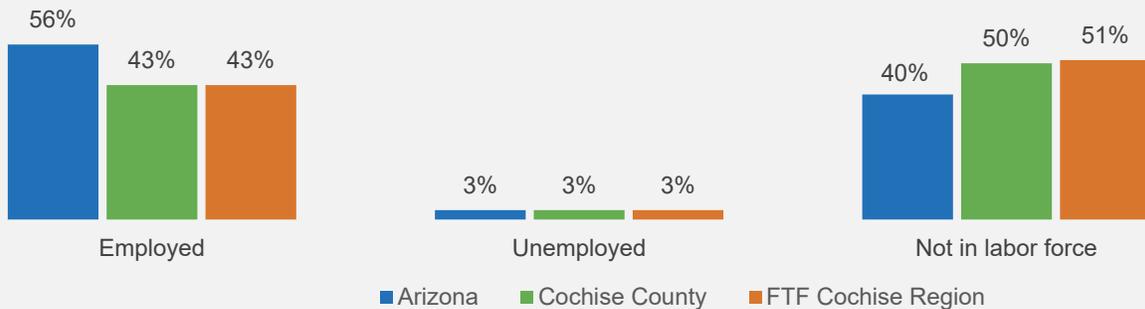
Exhibit 2.5. Employment status of parents with children 0-5

	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
Cochise Region	8,797	23%	34%	1%	31%	10%
Cochise County	8,813	23%	35%	1%	31%	10%
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.

Exhibit 2.6. Employment status of adult population (ages 16 and older) who are employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force



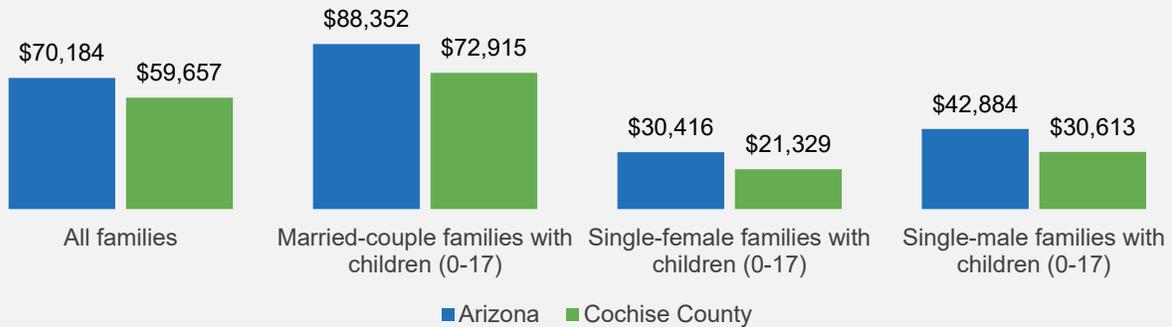
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey Table B23025.

Note: The labor force includes all persons who are currently employed, including those on leave, furlough, or temporarily laid off. Persons who are unemployed but a

Median Income and Poverty

The median income of all families in Cochise County is \$59,657, which is slightly less than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families is significantly less than for married-couple families (Exhibit 2.7).

Exhibit 2.7. Median income for families



U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19126

The large number of single-parent families combined with their low median income contributes to a sizable portion of the population in the FTF Cochise Region living in poverty. In the FTF Cochise Region, 17% of the population and 26% of children under age six are living in poverty (Exhibit 2.8). This is slightly more than the 15% of the population and 23% of the population under age six that live in poverty in Arizona.

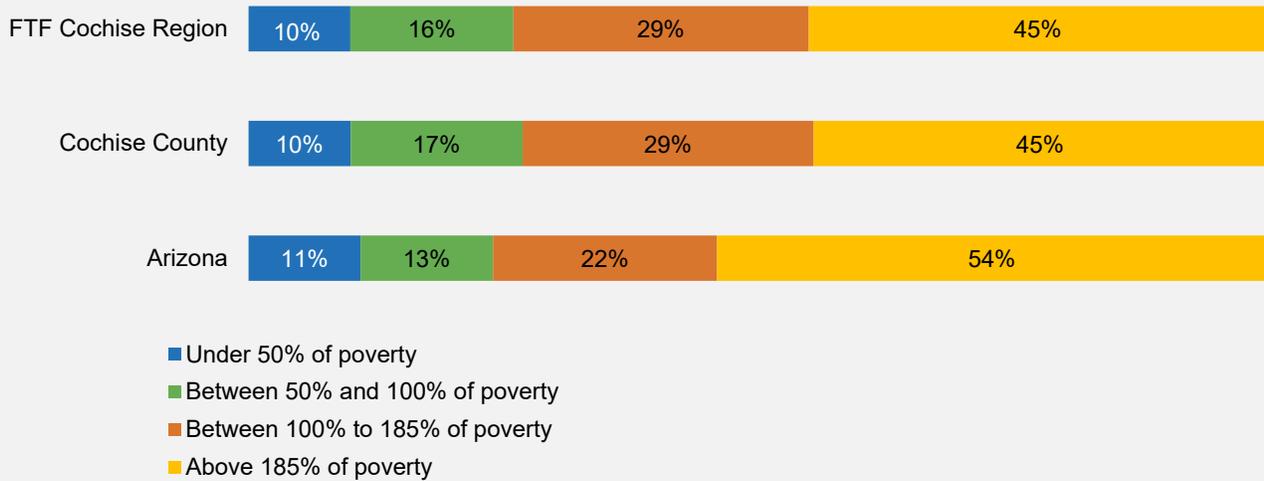
Exhibit 2.8. Percentage of population living in poverty



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, currently, the FPL is \$26,500 for a family of four. A family of four that makes less than or equal to \$26,500 is considered to be in poverty. In the Cochise Region, 55% of families with children 0-5 live below 185% of the FPL (that is, they earned less than \$26,500 a year for a family of four), which is the same as the county at 55% but higher than the state at 46% (Exhibit 2.9).

Exhibit 2.9. 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.

In Cochise County, individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaskan Native are most likely to live in poverty (Exhibit 2.10).

Exhibit 2.10. Percentage of population below the federal poverty level by race/ethnicity

	Arizona	Cochise County
Black or African-American	20%	7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	33%	32%
Asian	12%	14%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	16%	57%
Other Race	23%	25%
Two or More Races	17%	22%
White, not Hispanic	10%	12%
Hispanic or Latino	22%	23%

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001B, Table B17001C, Table B17001D, Table B17001E, Table B17001F, Table B17001H, Table B17001I; generated by Harder+Company; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>.

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander children under five years old are even more likely to live below the federal poverty level. In Cochise County, over 30% of children under five years old who identify as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, other race or Hispanic or Latino living in poverty (Exhibit 2.11).

Exhibit 2.11. Percentage of children under 5 years old below the federal poverty level by race/ethnicity*

	Arizona	Cochise County
Black or African-American	34%	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	44%	56%
Asian	11%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	31%	86%
Other Race	53%	40%
Two or More Races	13%	15%
White, not Hispanic	12%	25%
Hispanic or Latino	31%	33%

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 Cochise Region have a similar housing cost burden to residents of the state as a whole: 25% of the region’s and county’s housing units require their residents to contribute more than 30% of their household income toward housing (Exhibit 2.12), compared to 30% in Arizona.

Exhibit 2.12. The cost of housing, relative to household income

	Number of occupied housing units	Occupied housing units which cost 30% of household income, or more
Cochise Region	50,632	25%
Cochise County	50,163	25%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	30%

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

Children 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.”²⁹ The number of children experiencing homelessness in grades kindergarten

²⁹ 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 2.13. In the Cochise Region and County, the number of children experiencing homelessness decreased from 123 in 2018 to 69 in 2020. In most districts, there were less than 11 children experiencing homelessness. However, in 2020, Center for Academic Success Inc. reported 34 students experiencing homelessness in grades kindergarten through third, which is 49% of all students experiencing homelessness across school districts.

Exhibit 2.13. Number of homeless students in grades kindergarten through third grade, 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020
Cochise Region Schools	123	61	69
Apache Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Ash Creek Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Benson Unified School District	<11	<11	<11
Bisbee Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Bowie Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Center for Academic success, Inc.	69	14	34
Cochise Community Development Corporation	<11	<11	<11
Cochise Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Double Adobe Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Douglas Unified District	21	23	13
Elfrida Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Fort Huachuca Accommodation District	<11	<11	<11
Liberty Traditional Charter School	<11	<11	<11
McNeal Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Naco Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Omega Alpha Academy	<11	<11	<11
Palominas Elementary District	<11	<11	11
Pearce Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
Pomerene Elementary District	<11	<11	<11
San Simon Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Sierra Vista Unified District	26	19	<11
St. David Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Tombstone Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Wilcox Unified District	<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 Cochise Region.

A total of 68% of households have both a smartphone and computer in Cochise Region and County, which is lower than the proportion in Arizona (73%) (Exhibit 2.14). Almost nine of ten (85%) residents

in Cochise Region live in households with a computer and internet (Exhibit 2.15). For households with children under 18 years old, 91% have a computer and internet in the region and county (Exhibit 2.16). 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.³⁰ Households that were the most impacted by the digital divide included those in rural communities, living in poverty and people of color.^{31, 32}

Exhibit 2.14. 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
Cochise Region	50,632	9%	11%	68%	12%
Cochise County	50,163	9%	11%	68%	12%
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.

Exhibit 2.15. 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
Cochise Region	118,554	85%	7%	8%
Cochise County	117,305	85%	7%	8%
ARIZONA	6,892,175	87%	7%	6%

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

Exhibit 2.16. 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
Cochise Region	27,561	91%	6%	3%
Cochise County	27,304	91%	6%	3%
ARIZONA	1,632,019	88%	8%	4%

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

³⁰ Masonbrink, A., Hurley, E. (2020) "Advocating for children during the COVID-19 school closures." *Pediatrics* 146.3.

³¹ Goldschmidt, K. (2020) "The COVID-19 pandemic: Technology use to support the wellbeing of children." *Journal of pediatric nursing* 53.

³² Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J, Viruleg, E. (2020) "COVID-19 and learning loss—disparities grow and students need help." *McKinsey & Company*.

Of the people living in households with a computer and internet, 69% have fixed broadband with cellular data plan as their internet across the region, county and state (Exhibit 2.17).

Exhibit 2.17. 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
Cochise Region	100,824	69%	20%	11%	0%
Cochise County	9,726	69%	20%	10%	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
Almost all households in the Cochise Region and County have a computer and internet.	Consider engaging families using technology-based and online engagement tools.

Needs	Considerations
Cochise Region and County have slightly more children 0-5 living with one/a single parent in the labor force than the State.	Promote supports and resources that can help subsidize child care and other expenses for single parent households.
Median income for families is lower in Cochise County than in the State with a higher percent of the population living in poverty. Employment status is also lower than the State.	Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes.
In Cochise County, almost triple the percent of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders live below the federal poverty level compared to the State.	Ensure social service resources for the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations.



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.^{33, 34}

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.³⁵ In addition, irregular attendance influences school budgets and could potentially lead to fewer funds for essential classroom needs.³⁶

Notably, children's participation in quality early care and education can also yield lifelong benefits. Improved performance on standardized tests and lower dropout 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.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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.

³³ 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>

³⁴ 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/>

³⁵ GreatSchools staff. *Why attendance matters*. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/school-attendance-issues/>

³⁶ 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>

³⁷ 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>

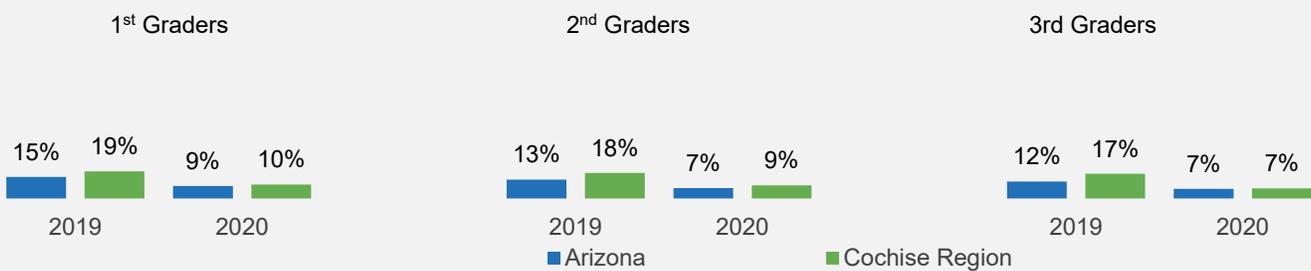
³⁸ Christle, C., Jolivet, K., Nelson, M. (2007). *School characteristics related to high school dropout rates*. *Journal of Remedial and Special Education*, 28, 15. Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ785964

What the Data Tells Us

Student Attendance

Between 2019 and 2020, Cochise Region and the state as a whole experienced a decrease in the percentage of students missing ten or more days of school (Exhibit 3.1). A smaller 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 may be 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 percentage change from 2019 to 2020, it is possible that it was 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



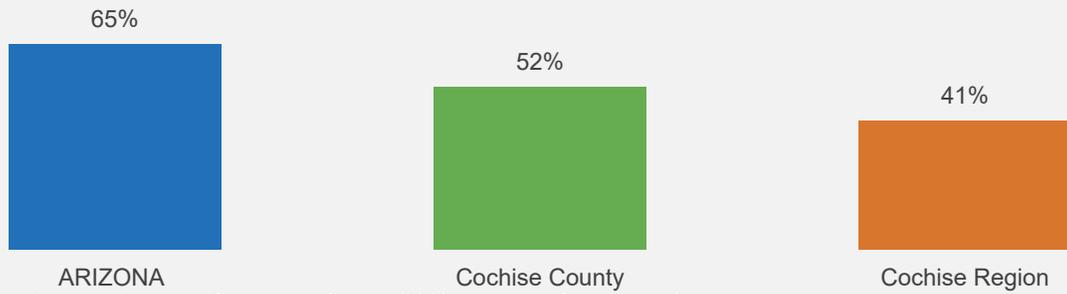
Arizona Department of Education (2021). *Chronic Absences*. Provided by AZ FTF.

*Data available by school district

Early Achievement

About 40% of preschool-aged children in the Cochise Region (41%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten), which is lower than Cochise County (52%) and Arizona (65%, Exhibit 3.2).

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



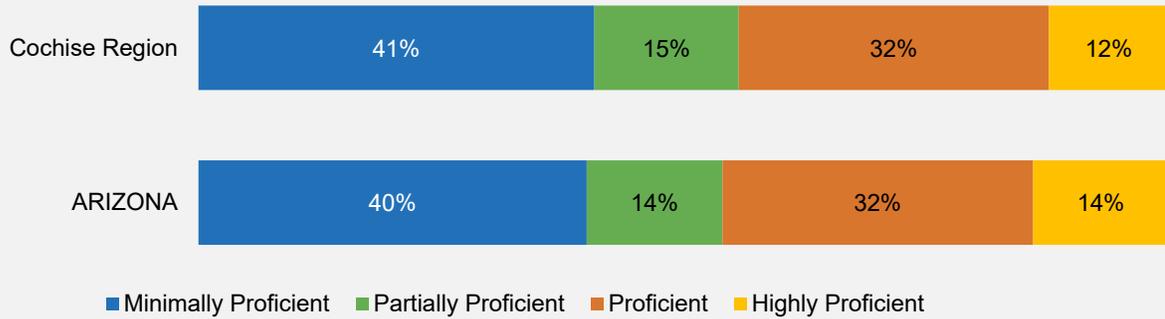
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B2808.

Research shows that preschool attendance has an effect on future academic performance, specifically English and math scores.³⁹ The English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results of the AzMERIT demonstrated that 44% of all third graders in the Cochise Region scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”, which was slightly lower than Arizona’s proficiency rate (Exhibit 3.3). Arizona Progress Meter’s goal for proficiency is 72% by 2030; thus, Cochise Region is 28 percentage points below the goal.⁴⁰ Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.4). For example, some districts (e.g., Center for Academic, Inc., Cochise Elementary School, and Fort Huachuca Accommodation District) reported 60% or more students are proficient, while in other districts (e.g., Apache Elementary District, Double Adobe Elementary District, Elfrida Elementary District, Naco Elementary District, and Omega Alpha Academy) less than 20% are proficient.

³⁹ Andrews, R. J., Jargowsky, P., Kuhne, K. (2012). *The effects of Texas's targeted pre-kindergarten program on academic performance* (No. w18598). National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁴⁰ 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)
Cochise Region Schools	41%	15%	32%	12%	44%
Apache Elementary District		*			0%
Ash Creek Elementary District	50%	0%	50%	0%	50%
Benson Unified School District	37%	11%	36%	17%	52%
Bisbee Unified District	58%	21%	15%	6%	21%
Bowie Unified District	50%	0%	50%	0%	50%
Center for Academic success, Inc.	22%	12%	45%	21%	66%
Cochise Community Development Corporation	55%	20%	20%	5%	25%
Cochise Elementary District	18%	18%	55%	9%	64%
Double Adobe Elementary District	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Douglas Unified District	52%	17%	25%	5%	31%
Elfrida Elementary District	58%	25%	17%	0%	17%
Fort Huachuca Accommodation District	20%	17%	40%	24%	64%
Liberty Traditional Charter School	37%	4%	44%	15%	59%
McNeal Elementary District	80%	0%	20%	0%	20%
Naco Elementary District	75%	6%	19%	0%	19%
Omega Alpha Academy	63%	20%	7%	10%	17%
Palominas Elementary District	41%	19%	33%	7%	41%
Pearce Elementary District	60%	0%	40%	0%	40%
Pomerene Elementary District	50%	13%	25%	13%	38%
San Simon Unified District	50%	17%	25%	8%	33%

Sierra Vista Unified District	30%	16%	37%	17%	54%
St. David Unified District	50%	14%	32%	5%	36%
Tombstone Unified District	57%	13%	22%	7%	30%
Wilcox Unified District	57%	8%	28%	7%	35%
All Arizona Schools	40%	14%	32%	14%	46%

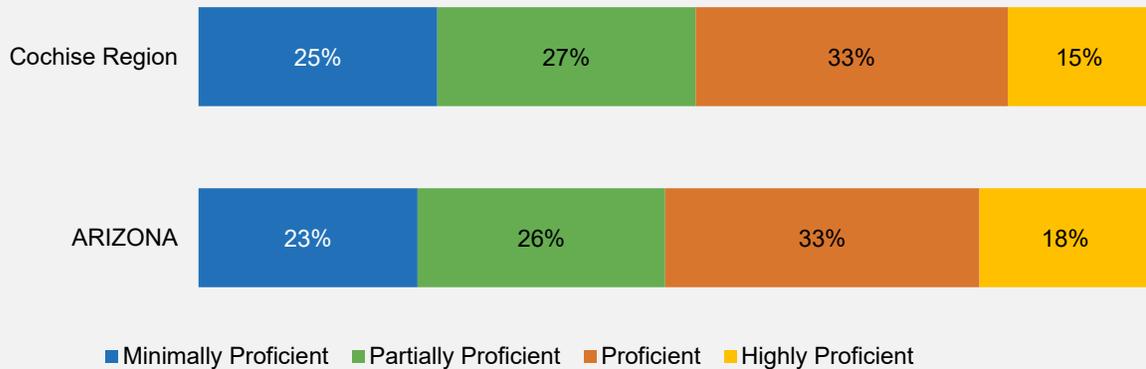
Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the Cochise Region

*Values more than 98% are suppressed.

Moreover, 48% of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment in the Cochise Region, compared to 51% in Arizona (51%, Exhibit 3.5). Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.6). For example, in some districts (e.g., Cochise Elementary District, Fort Huachuca Accommodation District, and Liberty Traditional Charter School) 70% of student or more are proficient, while in other districts (e.g., Apache Elementary District and Ash Creek Elementary District) none of the students are proficient. Although math assessment results are slightly higher than the ELA assessment results, about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standards 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)
Cochise Region Schools	25%	27%	33%	15%	48%
Apache Elementary District	0%	*	0%	0%	0%
Ash Creek Elementary District	0%	*	0%	0%	0%
Benson Unified School District	18%	14%	39%	29%	68%
Bisbee Unified District	36%	27%	18%	18%	36%
Bowie Unified District	0%	*	0%	0%	0%
Center for Academic success, Inc.	14%	34%	40%	13%	53%
Cochise Community Development Corporation	40%	25%	35%	0%	35%
Cochise Elementary District	0%	9%	55%	36%	91%
Double Adobe Elementary District	0%	80%	20%	0%	20%
Douglas Unified District	29%	33%	29%	10%	38%
Elfrida Elementary District	31%	46%	15%	8%	23%
Fort Huachuca Accommodation District	9%	14%	41%	36%	77%
Liberty Traditional Charter School	7%	22%	48%	22%	70%
McNeal Elementary District	40%	20%	40%	0%	40%
Naco Elementary District	58%	27%	12%	3%	15%
Omega Alpha Academy	27%	27%	30%	17%	47%
Palominas Elementary District	31%	25%	30%	15%	44%
Pearce Elementary District	20%	40%	40%	0%	40%
Pomerene Elementary District	0%	63%	13%	25%	38%
San Simon Unified District	31%	46%	15%	8%	23%
Sierra Vista Unified District	23%	25%	38%	14%	52%
St. David Unified District	32%	32%	18%	18%	36%
Tombstone Unified District	48%	28%	15%	9%	24%
Wilcox Unified District	29%	32%	28%	11%	39%
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 Cochise Region

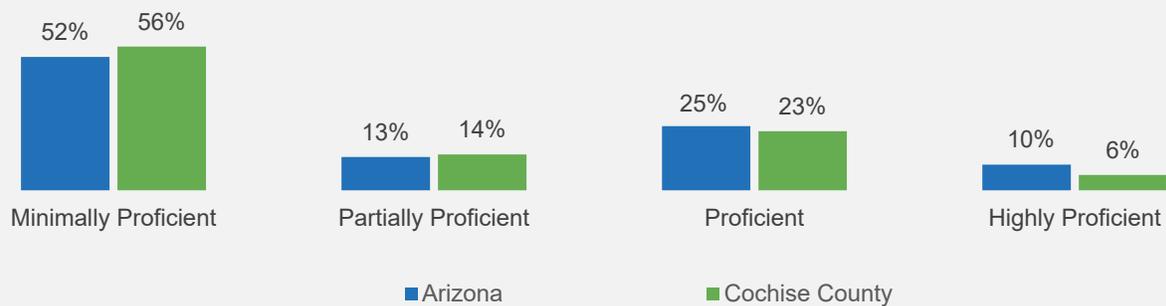
*Values more than 98% are suppressed.

For the 2020-21 school year, the AZMERIT changed the name to AzM2.⁴¹ 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; thus, it is impossible to know how the students that did not participate would perform. The ELA assessment results of the AzM2 demonstrated that about 29% of all

⁴¹ No statewide assessments were given in the 2019-2020 school year.

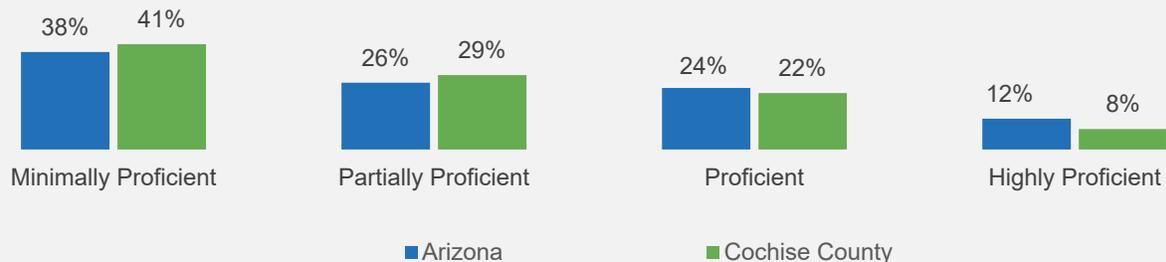
third graders in Cochise County scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”, which is lower than 35% in Arizona (Exhibit 3.7).⁴² Slightly more third graders (30%) scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in Cochise County, six percentage points lower than the State (Exhibit 3.8). The COVID-19 pandemic-related school disruptions were most likely a key reason for the decrease in statewide assessments from 2019. There were numerous learning disruptions from the pandemic that may have impacted students’ learning, such as technology access, Zoom fatigue, losing family members, caregivers losing jobs, social isolation, and mental health.⁴³

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.

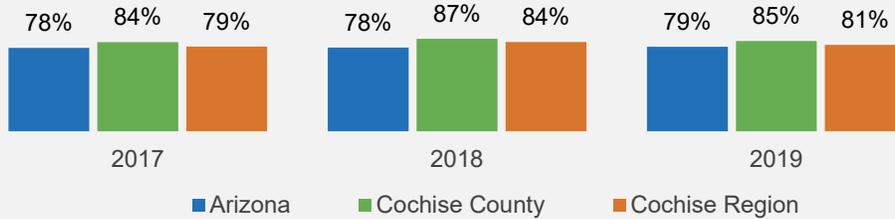
⁴² 2020-21 data was not available at the regional level.

⁴³ 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>

High School Graduation & Dropout Rates

Between 2017 and 2019, high school graduation rates remained steady for the Cochise Region, Cochise County, and Arizona (Exhibit 3.9). In 2019, 85% of students graduated within four-years in the region, which was higher than Cochise County and Arizona (Exhibit 3.10).

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

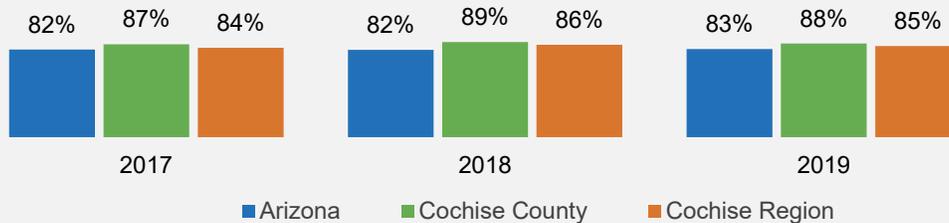


Arizona Department of Education (2021). Graduation Rate 2018 Cycle. Provided by AZ FTF.

*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

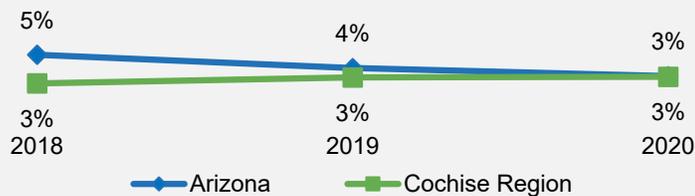
Exhibit 3.10. 2017-2019 High school graduation rates: 5-year cohort



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

From 2018-2020, the percent of students dropping out of high school in Arizona and Cochise Region remained steady (Exhibit 3.11). In the Cochise Region, about three percent of students dropped out in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

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 Cochise Region and Cochise County, 87% of adults aged 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is the same than the state (Exhibit 3.12). Moreover, almost a quarter of adults in Cochise Region and Cochise County (23%) earned a bachelor's degree or more. Those with higher levels of education typically earn more and have lower rates of unemployment compared to those with lower education.⁴⁴

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
Cochise Region	88,743	13%	24%	40%	23%
Cochise County	87,639	13%	24%	40%	23%
ARIZONA	4,732,532	13%	24%	34%	29%

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

⁴⁴ 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
The high school graduation rates of adults in the region are higher than the State. In Cochise Region, 87% of adults aged 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is a slightly higher percentage than 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 more than half of third graders are not meeting proficiency standards for English Language Arts.	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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ In addition, research shows that investments in ECE have long-term health effects, helping to prevent disease and promote health.⁴⁸ For disadvantaged families, early childhood programs have benefits on health, future wages, crime reduction, and education.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ ⁵¹ ⁵²

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.

⁴⁵ 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>

⁴⁶ Teach.com powered by 2U (n.d.). *Early Childhood Education*. Retrieved from <https://teach.com/where/levels-of-schooling/early-childhood-education/>

⁴⁷ 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>

⁴⁸ Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Ziff, A. (2019) *Early Childhood education and crime*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21759>

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Leaf, D., Prados, M. (2016) *The life-cycle benefits of an influential early childhood program*. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22993>

⁵¹ Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Ou, S. R., Robertson, D. L., Mersky, J. P., Topitzes, J. W., & Niles, M. D. (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.

⁵² 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 121 ECE centers and homes with a capacity of 5,541 children in the Cochise Region (Exhibit 4.1). However, 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
Cochise Region	121	5,541
ARIZONA	4,307	395,787

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

As previously mentioned, 41% of children between the ages of three and four are enrolled in ECE programs in the Cochise Region (Exhibit 3.2). This is much lower than the 54% assumed to need child care since all adults in the household are employed (Exhibit 2.5). 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.⁵³

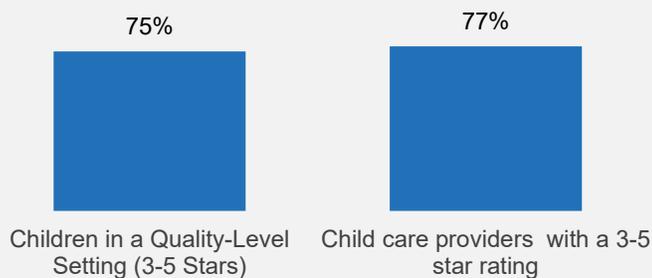
⁵³ Greenberg, M. (2007). Next steps for federal child care policy. *The Next Generation of Antipoverty Policies*, 17, 2. Retrieved from <http://www.futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=33&articleid=67§ionid=353>

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.⁵⁴ In the Cochise Region, out of the 1,098 children enrolled in a Quality First site, 824 are enrolled in three to five star center or home (75%). Moreover, 24 out of 31 (77%) childcare providers in Quality First have received a three-to-five-star rating (Exhibit 4.2).

	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 Cochise 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.⁵³ Further, the negative effects of not accessing child care include the possibility of incurring financial debt, choosing child care that is lower

⁵⁴ Arizona First Things First (October 2021). *Quality First*. Retrieved from: <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/resources/quality-first/>

quality and less stable, and losing time from work.

Across the Cochise Region and Arizona, licensed centers have the highest cost per day, certified group homes have the second highest cost per day, and approved family homes have the lowest cost per day (Exhibit 4.3). The median cost per day of licensed centers, approved family homes and certified group homes in the Cochise Region are similar to the costs in Arizona. 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.

The median cost for one infant in Cochise County is approximately \$9,000 a year for licensed centers; approximately \$5,000 a year for approved family homes; and \$5,750 per a year for certified group homes (based on median cost per day). Compared to the median income of two-parent families in Cochise County with children under 18 (Exhibit 2.7), licensed centers comprise approximately 15% and approved family homes and certified group homes comprise about eight to ten percent of the regional 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 Cochise County and is considerably less for single-female families compared to single-male families. Based on the median income of single-female families (Exhibit 2.7), licensed centers make up 42% of their median income and approved family homes and certified group homes make up 23% to 27% 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

	Cochise Region	Arizona
Cost for one infant Licensed Centers	\$36.00	\$43.03
Cost for one infant Approved Family Homes	\$20.00	\$20.00
Cost for one infant Certified Group Homes	\$23.00	\$30.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Licensed Centers	\$33.40	\$38.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Approved Family Homes	\$20.00	\$20.00
Cost for one child (1-2) Certified Group Homes	\$23.00	\$28.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Licensed Centers	\$25.00	\$33.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Approved Family Homes	\$20.00	\$20.00
Cost for one child (3-5) Certified Group	\$23.00	\$28.00

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

From 2019 to 2020, the Cochise Region, Cochise County, and Arizona 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, the Cochise region, county, and state and experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving child care subsidies. For example, in 2019 and within the Cochise Region, 95% of children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 86% of children in 2020.

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.

Department of Child (DCS)-involved children had similar trends and saw a decrease in the number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies across the state, county and region (Exhibit 4.5). In addition, the proportion of children eligible for child care subsidies has decreased from 2019 to 2020. For example, in 2019 in the Cochise Region, 92% of DCS-involved children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 66% of children in 2020. This proportion is also lower than non-DCS children.

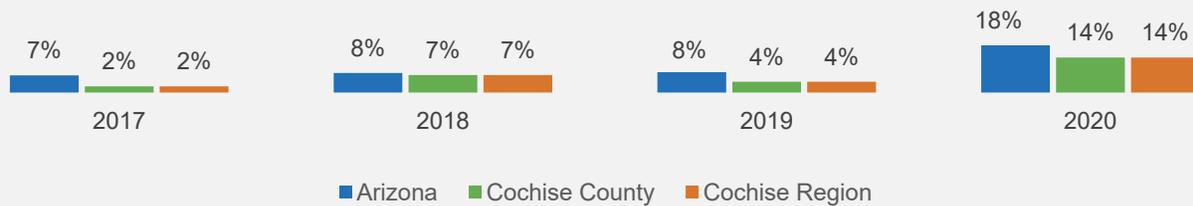
Exhibit 4.5. 2019-2020 Number of DCS-involved children eligible and receiving child care subsidies



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Child Care (CCA) Subsidies. Provided by AZ FTF.

The proportion of eligible families not using child care subsidies remained steady between 2017 to 2019, but increased in 2020 across the state, county and region. In 2020, 14% of families in the Cochise Region did not use their child care subsidies compared to two percent of families in 2017.

Exhibit 4.6. 2017-2020 Percent of eligible families not using DES child care subsidies



Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). *Child Care (CCA) Subsidies*. Provided by AZ FTF.

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.⁵⁵ The Individuals with Disabilities 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.⁵⁶

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.⁵⁷ Research shows that children and youth with mild intellectual disabilities are behind in academic skills compared to their peers.⁵⁸ 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

⁵⁵ Dyson, A. (2001). *Special needs education as the way to equity: an alternative approach?* *Support for Learning*, 16, 3.

⁵⁶ 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>

⁵⁷ Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.). *Arizona Early Intervention Program*. Retrieved from: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-infant>

⁵⁸ 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>

is between birth and 36 months of age and is developmentally delayed or has an established condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, as defined by the State.⁵⁹ 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 2018-2020, Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving AzEIP referrals and services (Exhibit 4.7 and 4.8). Compared to 2018, the number of children receiving referrals in the Cochise region in 2020 decreased by 18 children. In the Cochise Region, of those who received referrals to AzEIP, about a quarter received services.

Exhibit 4.7. 2018-2020 Children receiving AzEIP referrals and services in Cochise Region



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

Exhibit 4.8. 2018-2020 Children receiving AzEIP referrals and services 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

⁵⁹Arizona 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>

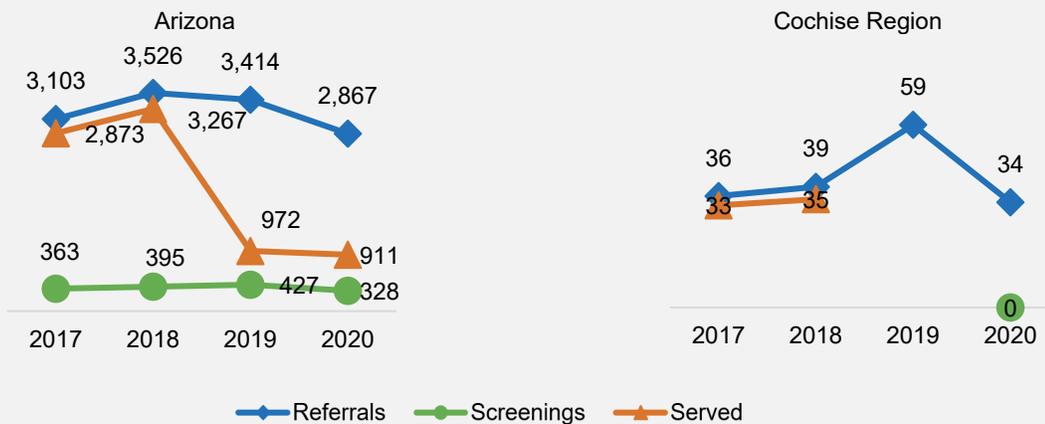
cognitive disability, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, or be at risk for a developmental disability. Children under the age of six are eligible if they show significant delays in one or more of these areas of development: physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, or self-help. Between 2017 to 2020, the rates of children receiving referrals and services through the DDD were similar for Arizona and the Cochise Region (Exhibit 4.9). Overall, across Arizona and the Cochise Region, the number of referrals increased from 2017 to 2018 and 2019 but decreased in 2020. In addition, the number of children receiving services peaked in 2018 across the state and region but started to decline in 2019 and continued to decline in 2020. Similarly, the number of children 0 to 2 served declined in 2019 and this trend continued in 2020 (Exhibit 4.10). In the Cochise Region, 35 children 0-2 were served in 2018.

Exhibit 4.9. 2017-2020 Number of children (0-5) receiving referrals, screenings, and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Arizona and Cochise Region



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

Exhibit 4.10. 2017-2020 Number of children (0-2) receiving referrals, screenings, and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Arizona and Cochise Region



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

*Values between one and nine were redacted.

Special Education

In 2020, the most common types of disabilities for preschool children were developmental delays and speech/language impairments (Exhibit 4.11). Across the Cochise Region, some districts had high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In Benson Unified School District and Pearce Elementary District, 70% or more 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 Double Adobe Elementary District (>98%), Tombstone Unified District (67%), and Wilcox Unified District (67%).

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

Exhibit 4.11. Types of disabilities among preschoolers in special education, 2020

	Developmental Delay	Hearing Impairment	Other	Preschool Severe Delay	Speech/Language Impairment
Cochise Region Schools	39%	<2%	<2%	6%	53%
Benson Unified School District	30%	<2%	<2%	<2%	70%
Double Adobe Elementary District	>98%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%
Douglas Unified District	61%	<2%	<2%	9%	30%
Fort Huachuca Accommodation District	40%	<2%	<2%	<2%	60%
Palominas Elementary District	40%	<2%	<2%	<2%	60%
Pearce Elementary District	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%	>98%
Sierra Vista Unified District	53%	<2%	<2%	14%	33%
St. David Unified District	50%	<2%	<2%	<2%	50%
Tombstone Unified District	67%	<2%	<2%	<2%	33%
Wilcox Unified District	67%	<2%	<2%	17%	17%
Cochise County Schools	24%	<2%	19%	24%	47%
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 Cochise 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 Cochise 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>Quality First has been increasing the quality of child care programs in the region. Seventy-seven percent are quality-level settings (public 3-5 stars).</p>	<p>Support Quality First efforts in the region to continue to increase the opportunities for children to receive quality early care and education experiences.</p>

Needs	Considerations
<p>In 2020, in Cochise Region, 86% of children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to nine percent of children in 2019.</p>	<p>Identify gaps in child care subsidies to ensure that children in need are receiving these subsidies.</p>
<p>Across Cochise Region districts, there were districts with high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In Benson Unified School District and Pearce Elementary District, 70% or more preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment. A high percentage of preschool students in special education had a developmental delay at Double Adobe Elementary District (>98%), Tombstone Unified District (67%), and Wilcox Unified District (67%).</p>	<p>Work with school districts to refer children identified with special needs to support services.</p>



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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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.⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ Fortunately, early screening for hearing loss can connect children with services that can increase the likelihood of the child reaching their full potential.

This chapter provides an overview of the health indicators for this region that highlight the well-being of

⁶⁰ *Schools & Health* (2016). *Impact of Health on Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/pages/Anthropometricstatusgrowth.aspx>

⁶¹ 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>

⁶² 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>

⁶³ *Office on Women's Health* (2014). *Why breastfeeding is important*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-benefits.html>

⁶⁴ *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (2016). *Infant Immunizations*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html>

⁶⁵ *Center for Disease Control and Prevention Division* (2020). *Hearing Loss*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/index.html>

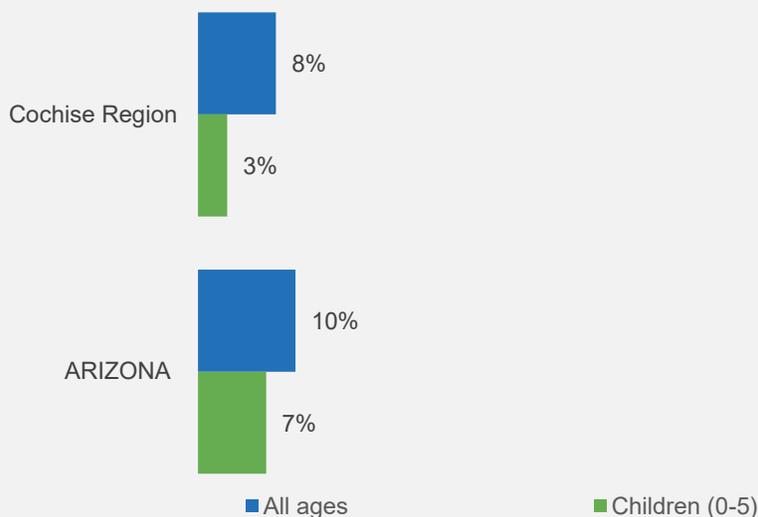
children under age six and their families. Healthy People 2030 (HP 2030) set 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. Healthy People established these benchmarks to encourage collaborations across communities and sectors, empower individuals to make informed health decisions, and measure the impact of prevention activities.⁶⁶ When appropriate, these benchmarks will be presented throughout this chapter as comparison points for local indicators.

What the Data Tells 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 2030.⁶⁷ In 2019, 92% of the population living in poverty in the Cochise Region had health insurance, leaving eight percent without health coverage. Three percent of children under age six living in poverty in this region lacked health insurance (Exhibit 5.1).

Exhibit 5.1. Estimated percentage without health insurance



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

⁶⁶ 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>

⁶⁷ 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>

Hospitalizations

From 2016-2020, in the FTF Cochise Region, non-fatal unintentional injuries have led to 53 inpatient hospitalizations and 3,546 emergency department visits for children ages 0 to 4 (Exhibit 5.2).

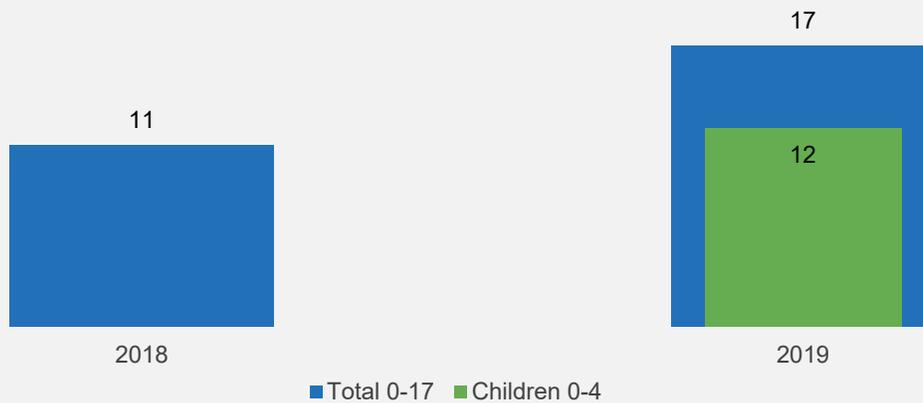
Exhibit 5.2. Injury hospitalizations and ED visits for children 0-4, ADHS (2016-2020)

Indicator	Arizona	Cochise Region
Number of Non-Fatal Hospitalizations	2,890	53
Number of ED Visits	181,035	3,546

Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Unintentional Injuries in Children 0-5, Arizona 2016-2020. Provided AZFTF

Between the years 2018 and 2019, in the Cochise Region, the total number of deaths for children 0 to 17 years old increased from 11 to 17 (Exhibit 5.3). In 2019, 71% of these deaths across both years were among young children 0 to 4 years. Within Arizona, the most common deaths among children include accidents, congenital malformations, and short gestation and low birth weight.

Exhibit 5.3. 2018-2019 total number of deaths for children 0-17 in Cochise County



Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Child mortality, Arizona 2018-2019. Provided AZFTF

* Children 0-4 for 2018 number has been redacted due to low value.

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, asthma led to a total of 109 inpatient hospitalizations for children 0-14 years old in the Cochise Region (Exhibit 5.4). Children 0 to 14 years old in the Cochise Region that were hospitalized for asthma were most likely to identify as male (68%) and Hispanic or Latino/a (43%) or white non-Hispanic (44%, not shown).

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
Cochise Region	49	109	45%
ARIZONA	2,214	5,672	39%

Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Asthma, Arizona 2016-2020. Provided AZFTF

From 2016 to 2020 in the Cochise Region, diabetes led to a total of 32 emergency room visits for children 0 to 17 years old. (Exhibit 5.5).

Exhibit 5.5. Hospitalizations for diabetes for children 0-17 (2016-2020)

	#Inpatient hospitalizations	Average length of stay (days) for hospitalization	#Emergency room visits
Cochise Region	*	*	32
ARIZONA	150	3.0	1,002

Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2020). Asthma, Arizona 2016-2020. Provided AZFTF

*Values suppressed due to small size of less than six.

Pregnancies and Birth

In 2019, Cochise Region residents gave birth to 1,324 babies, which was two percent of all births in the state (Exhibit 5.6).

Exhibit 5.6. Live births during calendar year 2019, by mother's place of residence

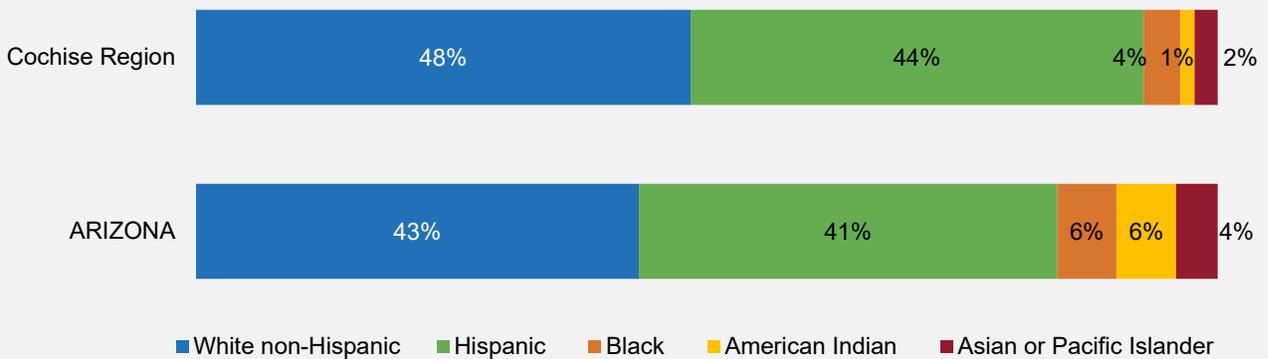
Total number of births to Arizona-resident mothers in 2019	
Cochise Region	1,324
Cochise County	1,344
ARIZONA	79,183

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

Characteristics of People Giving Birth

Of the 1,324 people who gave birth in the Cochise Region in 2019, 48% were white non-Hispanic, 44% were Hispanic or Latina, four percent were Black or African American, two percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, and one percent were American Indian or Alaska Native (Exhibit 5.7).

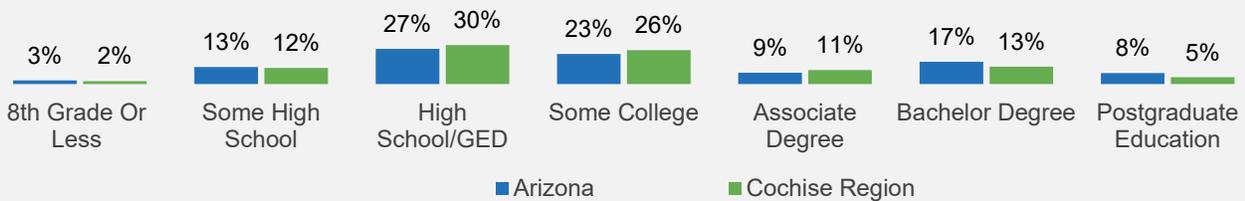
Exhibit 5.7. Race and ethnicity of mothers giving birth in 2019



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

Those who gave birth in the Cochise Region had similar levels of educational attainment (55% had some education beyond high school) compared to people who gave birth in the state as a whole (57% post-high school) (Exhibit 5.8).

Exhibit 5.8. 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 Cochise Region was also similar to their counterparts across the county and statewide on other attributes. About eight percent were in their teens compared to seven percent in the state. In Cochise Region, a little less than half of births (49%) were to mothers relying on AHCCCS or Indian Health Service (IHS) coverage, which was similar to the statewide proportion of 50%. However, slightly more mothers in Cochise Region reported tobacco use during pregnancy (9%) compared to four percent statewide (Exhibit 5.9).

Exhibit 5.9. 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
Cochise Region	6%	2%	49%	9%
ARIZONA	6%	1%	50%	4%

Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). *Vital Statistics*. 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.⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ Educational attainment has also been associated with mothers receiving prenatal care, such that the higher a mother's educational attainment, the more likely they are to seek prenatal care.⁷² 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.⁷³

HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%.⁷⁴ In 2019, in the Cochise Region, the percentage of women who began prenatal care in the first trimester was 42%, which is about 39 percentage points lower than the HP goal and also lower than the state proportion (69%). In 2019, nine percent of women did not receive prenatal care which is higher than the proportion in the state (3%) (Exhibit 5.10).

⁶⁸ *Prenatal Care Effects Felt Long After Birth*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://toosmall.org/blog/prenatal-care-effects-felt-long-after-birth>

⁶⁹ *Womens Health* (n.d.). *Prenatal care fact sheet*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html#b>

⁷⁰ *Center for Disease Control and Prevention* (n.d.). *Vital Statistics Online*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/vitalstatsonline.htm

⁷¹ *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/>

⁷² *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_6vPAhWCjlQKHWRjCwkQ6AEIVDAH#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁷³ *Womens Health* (n.d.). *Prenatal care fact sheet*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html#b>

⁷⁴ *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>

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

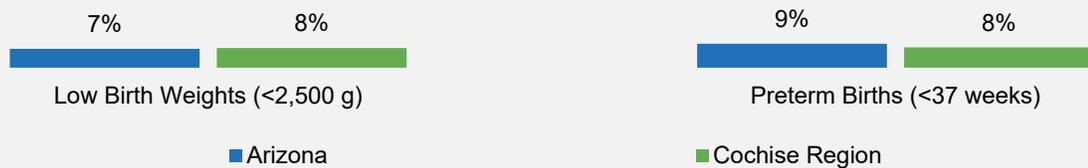
	No visits	1 to 4 visits	5 to 8 visits	9 to 12 visits	13 or more visits	Percent of births with fewer than five prenatal care visits	Percent of births with prenatal care begun in first trimester
Cochise Region	9%	11%	26%	40%	13%	21%	42%
ARIZONA	3%	6%	18%	43%	29%	8%	69%

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

Birth Outcomes

With regard to prenatal health, babies from the Cochise Region fared similarly to babies born statewide. In the region in 2019, eight percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state and the percent of premature births was slightly lower than the state (8% in Cochise Region versus 9% in the state) (Exhibit 5.11). Healthy People 2030 objectives fewer than 9.4% are born preterm, meaning that the Cochise Region has achieved the Healthy People 2030 goal for preterm births.

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.

In 2019, the percentage of newborns admitted to the NICU in the region (7%) was less than the state (8%) (Exhibit 5.12). Moreover, from 2016 to 2020, 183 newborns were hospitalized after birth because they were affected by maternal use of drugs during pregnancy. They consisted of two percent of the newborns hospitalized after birth due to material use of drugs during pregnancy in Arizona.

Exhibit 5.12. NICU admissions in 2019

Newborns admitted to intensive care unit	
Cochise Region	7%
Cochise County	7%
ARIZONA	8%

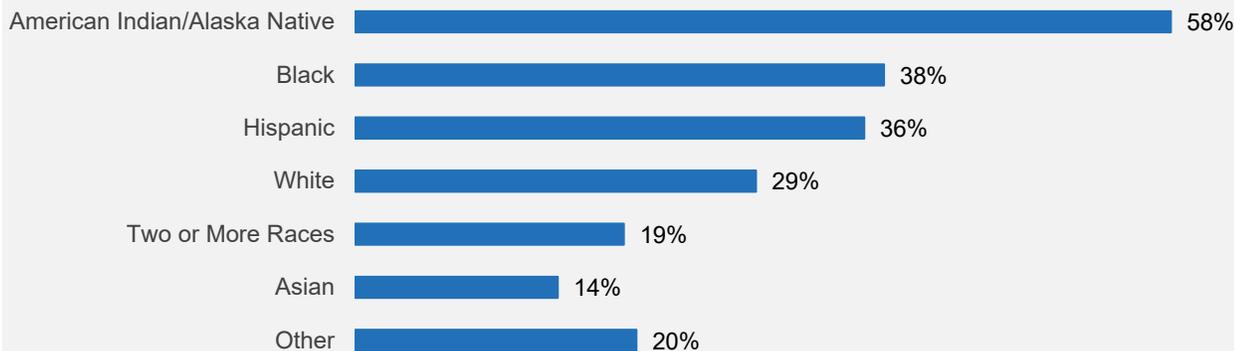
Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data

Obesity

Obesity has been a concern in the US due to associated health outcomes, such as higher risks for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.⁷⁵ Diabetes has also been associated with many negative health complications such as blindness, kidney failure, and amputation of limbs.⁷⁶

According to the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), mothers who are obese during pregnancy are at higher risk of developing gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and sleep apnea.⁷⁷ According to the CDC, diabetes and obesity can be largely prevented by increasing physical activity and maintaining a healthy diet.⁷⁸ 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%.⁷⁹ In Arizona overall, the percentage of adults with obesity was 31% in 2019, and Exhibit 5.13 shows the differences across racial and ethnic groups. Among racial and ethnic groups, American Indians and Alaska Natives adults have the highest rates of obesity (58%) followed by Black adults (38%) and Hispanic adults (36%).

Exhibit 5.13. Percentage of adults with obesity in Arizona by Race/Ethnicity, 2019.



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

⁷⁵ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Adult Obesity Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

⁷⁶ 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>

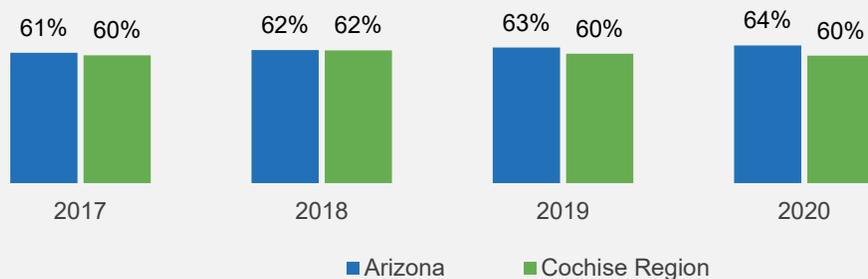
⁷⁷ ACOG (2016). Obesity and Pregnancy. Retrieved from <http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Obesity-and-Pregnancy>

⁷⁸ 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>

⁷⁹ 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>

In the Cochise Region, and the in the state as a whole, 60% or more of mothers participating in WIC reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy in 2020 (Exhibit 5.14). The rate of mothers being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy has remained consistent from 2017 to 2020. Families participating in WIC are likely opting for less expensive food options which often tend to be less healthy as well. Furthermore, there are very few recreation and fitness facilities where residents of Cochise Region can stay active.⁸⁰ The combination of having only a few grocery stores and places where residents can engage in physical activity may contribute to the increasing rate of obesity and diabetes in the area.

Exhibit 5.14. Percentage of mothers overweight and obese pre-pregnancy

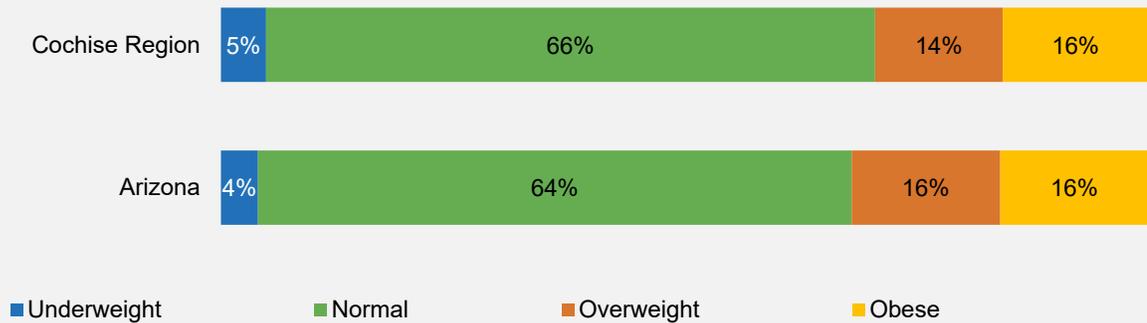


Arizona Department of Health Services (2020). Women, Infants & Children (WIC). Provided by AZ FTF.

Compared to the proportion of mothers participating in WIC reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy, children ages 2 to 5 participating in WIC were less likely be obese. In the Cochise Region, the percentage of children participating in WIC that were overweight or obese was 30% in 2020. This proportion was slightly less than Arizona (32%). Across the region, state and county, about six of ten children are considered to be normal weight (Exhibit 5.15). Over time, the proportion of children that were obese or overweight increased between 2017 and 2020, increasing from 26% in 2017 to 29% in 2020 (Exhibit 5.16). This pattern is also similar throughout the county and state.

⁸⁰ United States Department of Agriculture and Economic Research Service (2012). Food Environment Atlas. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas.aspx>

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.

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
Cochise Region	26%	27%	27%	29%	+3%
ARIZONA	30%	30%	31%	32%	+2%

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

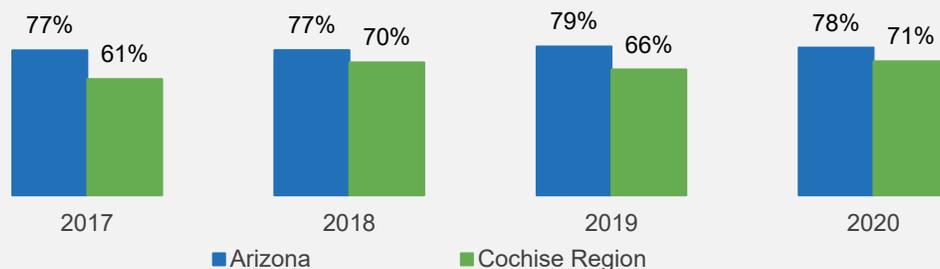
Engaging in Healthy Preventive Practices

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 Cochise Region, the percentage of mothers participating in WIC who ever breastfed their infant on average at least once per day increased from 2017 to 2020 by ten percent (61% to 71%). In 2020, this percentage was seven percent lower than the state (Exhibit 5.17).

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>

Exhibit 5.17. Percentage of mothers who ever breastfeed their infant



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

Routine childhood vaccinations protect children from many illnesses including measles, mumps, and whooping cough, which are all severe and potentially fatal to young children.⁸³ Receiving timely vaccinations is not only a protective factor to oneself, but to the community's immunity.⁸⁴ In the Cochise Region, the percentage of children in child care who were exempt from immunizations for religious reasons was lower than the state (Exhibit 5.18). Compared to the state, the region has a slightly higher percentage of children who received Hib, DTaP, MMR, Hep B, Polio, and Varicella vaccines (Exhibits 5.19).

Exhibit 5.18. 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
Cochise Region	1,156	96%	97%	98%	97%	87%	98%	98%	2%	0.1%
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 5.19. 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
Cochise Region	1,308	95%	3%	95%	3%	95%	3%	96%	3%	96%	2%
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.

⁸³ Basic Vaccines (2016). Importance of Vaccines. Retrieved from <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/vaccines-save-lives/>

⁸⁴ U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2016). Community Immunity. Retrieved from http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccine_safety/

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 Cochise Region did not have any health insurance.	Work with partners to ensure access to health care for all children in the region.
In the Cochise Region, the percentage of mothers participating in WIC who ever breastfed their infant on average at least once per day increased from 2017 to 2020 by ten percent (61%-71%).	Continue to provide public education about the benefits of breastfeeding and consider supporting workplace efforts to encourage breastfeeding practices for working mothers.

Needs	Considerations
HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%. In the FTF Cochise Region, 42% of women began their prenatal care in the first trimester with 13% receiving 13 or more visits.	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.
In 2020, in the Cochise Region and in the State as a whole, 60% of mothers participating in WIC reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy. The rate of mothers being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy has remained steady from 2017 to 2020.	Support programs that educate pregnant and parenting mothers about healthy eating, active living, and maintaining healthy weight.



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.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶ 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.⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸ 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.^{89, 90}

⁸⁵ 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

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ 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>

⁸⁸ 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>

⁸⁹ 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>

⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹ 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.⁹² 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.^{93, 94} 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 Tells 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 Cochise Region by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) remained steady in 2018 to 2020 (Exhibit 6.1). These percentages represent the percentage of removed children in Arizona that were removed in Cochise Region.

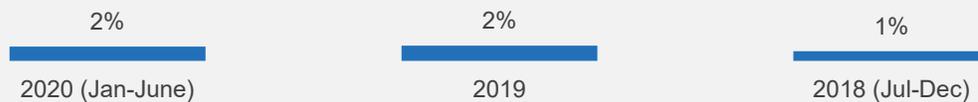
⁹¹ Evans, S. E., Davies, C., & DiLillo, D. (2008). *Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. Aggression and violent behavior, 13(2), 131-140.*

⁹² 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>

⁹³ 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/>

⁹⁴ 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 Cochise 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.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ Children in these situations are more likely to suffer later mental health disorders, their own substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁹⁷

From 2017 to 2020, the number of fatal opioid deaths in the Cochise Region was 50, which consisted of one percent of the total deaths in Arizona (Exhibit 6.2). In both Cochise County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2018 to 2020 (Exhibit 6.3). In Cochise County, the number of non-fatal overdoses has drastically increased by 85% from 26 in 2018 to 48 in 2020. This trend was similar in Arizona with a 180% increase of non-fatal overdoses from 2018 to 2020.

⁹⁵ 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>

⁹⁶ Child Welfare Information Gateway (n.d.) The Opioid Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/bhw/impact-substance/opioid-crisis/>

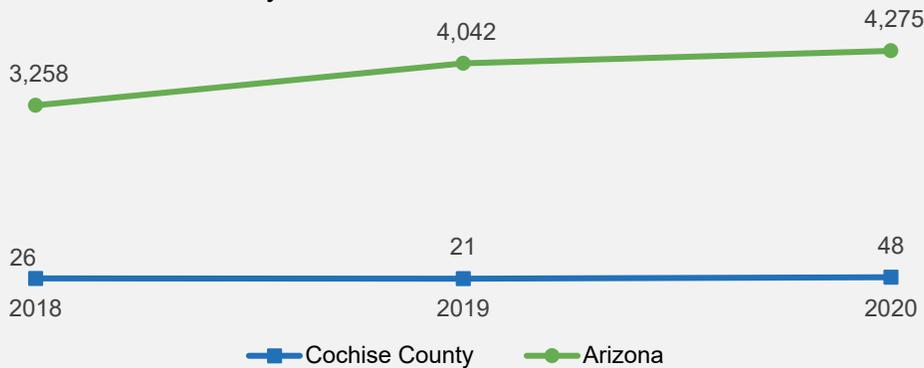
⁹⁷ American Society for the Positive Care of Children (n.d.) The Opioid Crisis and the Effect on Children. Retrieved from <https://americanspcc.org/the-opioid-crisis-and-the-effect-on-children/>

Exhibit 6.2. Number of fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids from 2017 to 2020 in Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). Opioids Overdoses. Provided by AZ FTF

Exhibit 6.3. Number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids from 2018 to 2020 in Cochise County and Arizona



Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). Opioids Overdoses. Provided by AZ FTF

Services to Help Families

Numerous federal and local programs and services aim to provide families with the food security, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 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. Federal programs such as SNAP and TANF have decreased from 2017 to 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. These decreases come even as the number of families living in

poverty has increased nationally.⁹⁸ Exhibits 6.4 and 6.6 show how the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased in recent years.

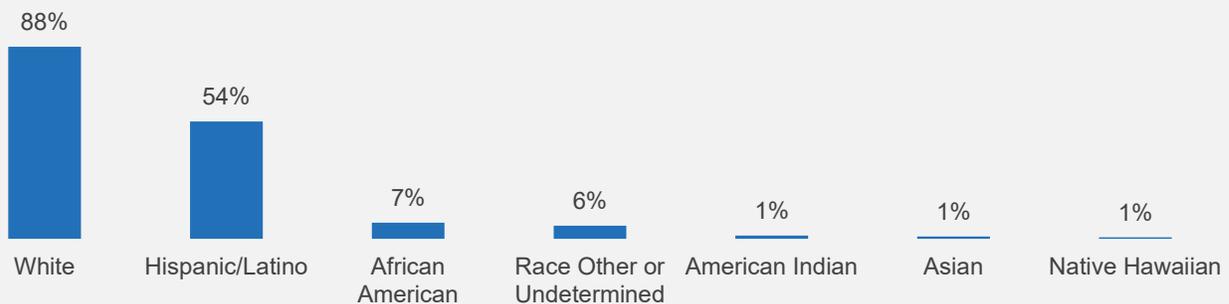
For SNAP benefits, the percentage of children and families that received benefits decreased by 18% in the Cochise Region from 2017 to 2020. As of 2020, the program supports approximately 4,000 children and 2,800 families annually in the Cochise Region. In 2020, most of the young children enrolled in SNAP were white (88%), over half were Hispanic/Latino (54%), and less than ten percent were African American (7%) (Exhibit 6.5).⁹⁹

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
Cochise Region	4,902	4,573	4,309	4,000	-18%
Cochise County	4,880	4,554	4,291	3,975	-18%
ARIZONA	247,414	229,275	211,814	198,961	-20%

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

Exhibit 6.5. Young children (0-5) enrolled in SNAP in 2020 by race/ethnicity in Cochise 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
Cochise Region	3,364	3,188	2,981	2,766	-18%
Cochise County	3,352	3,177	2,970	2,752	-18%
ARIZONA	164,092	151,816	140,056	132,466	-19%

⁹⁸ 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-economy-effects-on-food-housing-and>

⁹⁹ Participants could identify as multiple races/ethnicities. Percentages may add up to more than 100.

Similar to the SNAP benefits, the number of children and families receiving TANF benefits decreased from 2017 to 2020 in Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona (Exhibits 6.7 and 6.8). In 2020, approximately 200 families and 300 young children received TANF benefits. TANF benefits can be the primary cash assistance program for families with low incomes.¹⁰⁰ In Cochise Region, in 2020, most of the children that received TANF benefits identified as white (84%) or Hispanic/Latino (45%) (Exhibit 6.9)¹⁰¹.

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
Cochise Region	297	254	214	218	-27%
Cochise County	296	253	211	217	-27%
ARIZONA	12,315	10,538	9,360	9,947	-19%

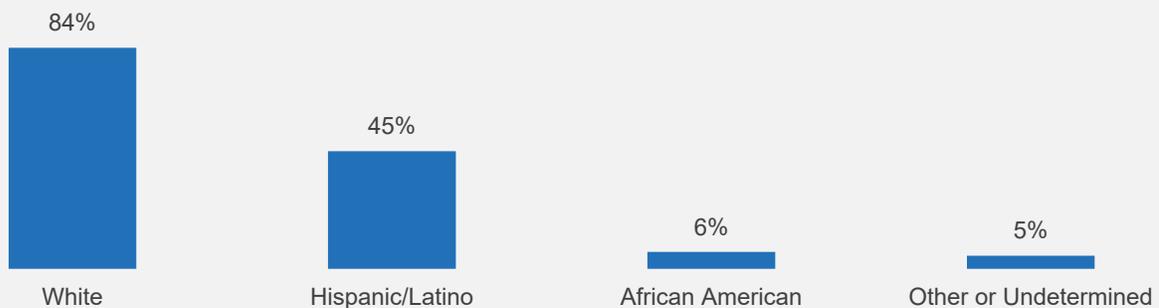
Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

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
Cochise Region	382	305	274	279	-27%
Cochise County	378	304	271	278	-26%
ARIZONA	17,143	14,659	13,029	13,747	-20%

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

Exhibit 6.9. Young children (0-5) enrolled in TANF in 2020 by race/ethnicity in Cochise Region



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

¹⁰⁰ 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>

¹⁰¹ Participants could identify as multiple races/ethnicities. Percentages may add up to more than 100.

Due to mandatory school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the US 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.¹⁰² 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 about 19% to 24% across the Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona. Although the number of families with young children have decreased, in May 2021, within the Cochise Region, P-EBT provided financial relief to 531 families (Exhibit 6.10). Families with young children consisted of five to seven percent of the families enrolled in P-EBT from March to May 2021.

Exhibit 6.10. 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
Cochise Region	698	606	531	-24%
Cochise	692	602	527	-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, in the Cochise Region, WIC served a total of 5,634 individuals including women (n=1,342), infants (n=1,481), and children (n=2,811) (Exhibit 6.11). The WIC enrollment for children under 5 years old slightly decreased from 2017 (50% of children under five) to 2020 (42% of children five) in Cochise Region (Exhibit 6.12).

Exhibit 6.11. Number of women, infants and children enrolled in the WIC program during 2020

	Total	Women	Infants	Children
Cochise Region	5,634	1,342	1,481	2,811
Cochise County	5,792	1,379	1,524	2,889
ARIZONA	256,733	63,111	70,242	123,380

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

¹⁰² *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 6.12. 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
Cochise Region	10,177	5,054 50%	4,761 47%	4,575 45%	4,292 42%
Cochise County	10,125	5,167 51%	4,881 48%	4,700 46%	4,413 44%
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 6.13 provides a single month snapshot of participation in the program in November 2020; 88% of women, 92% of infants, and 89% of children who were enrolled in WIC in the region claimed their benefits in the month of November.

Exhibit 6.13. WIC participation rates during November 2020

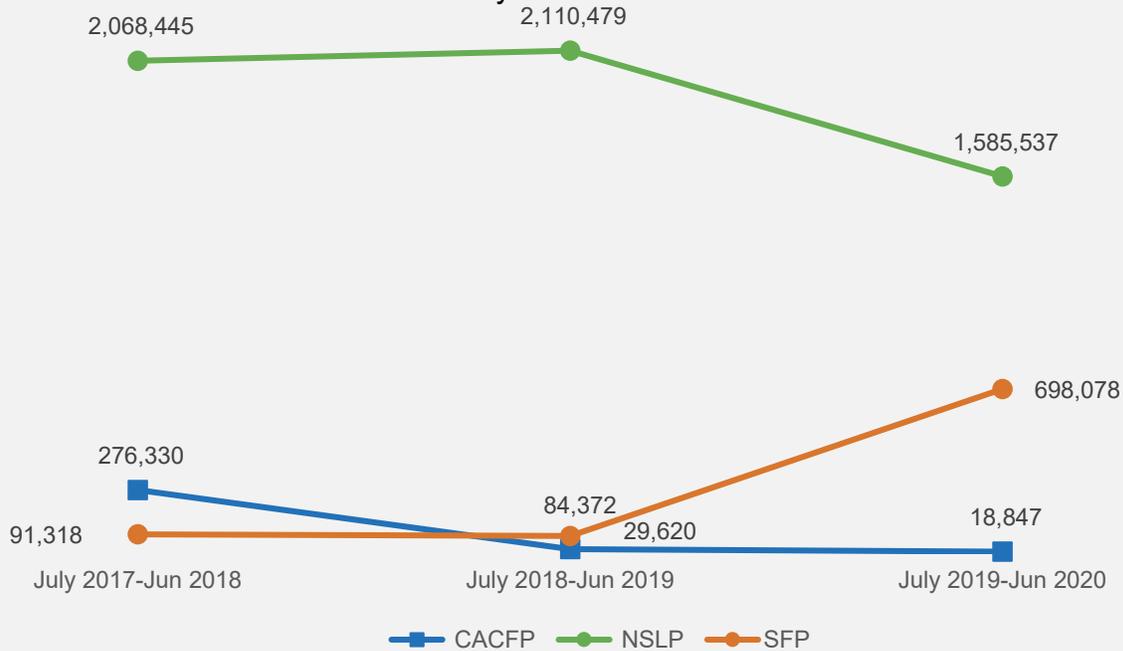
	Total	Women	Infants	Children
Cochise Region	89%	88%	92%	89%
Cochise County	89%	88%	92%	89%
ARIZONA	89%	89%	93%	88%

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 provide food assistance to families that meet income eligibility. 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 6.14).

Exhibit 6.14. Number of free meals provided by CACFP, NSLP and SFP to children and adults in Cochise 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 b

Schools are an important part of the nutrition assistance system, especially for children experiencing food insecurity. Sixty-five percent of all public- and charter-school students in the Cochise Region have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2018 (Exhibit 6.15). This is higher than 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 at Cochise Elementary District (from 35% in 2018 to 27% in 2020) and Pearce Elementary District (from 63% in 2018 to 58% in 2020). The school districts in the region with the lowest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch in 2020 were Cochise Elementary District (27%) and Fort Huachuca Accommodation District (30%), while Ash Creek Elementary District (>98%) and Omega Alpha Academy (96%) had the highest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. (Note that the data in Exhibit 6.15 refers only to schools located inside the Cochise Region boundaries).

Exhibit 6.15. Proportion of students (pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade) eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 2018 to 2020

	2018	2019	2020
Cochise Region Schools	65%	65%	65%
Ash Creek Elementary District	>98%	>98%	>98%
Benson Unified School District	47%	44%	46%
Bisbee Unified District	68%	70%	68%
Bowie Unified District	94%	>98%	79%
Center for Academic success, Inc.	78%	77%	78%
Cochise Community Development Corporation	62%	61%	75%
Cochise Elementary District	35%	40%	27%
Douglas Unified District	85%	84%	86%
Elfrida Elementary District	64%	64%	71%
Fort Huachuca Accommodation District	28%	33%	30%
Liberty Traditional Charter School	81%	88%	87%
McNeal Elementary District	66%	63%	70%
Naco Elementary District	90%	89%	88%
Omega Alpha Academy	91%	94%	96%
Palominas Elementary District	49%	48%	47%
Pearce Elementary District	63%	63%	58%
Pomerene Elementary District	58%	50%	53%
Portable Practical Educational Preparation, Inc. (PPEP, Inc.)	91%	91%	90%
San Simon Unified District	67%	68%	74%
Sierra Vista Unified District	52%	53%	52%
St. David Unified District	40%	53%	43%
Tombstone Unified District	71%	65%	66%
Valley Union High School District	56%	49%	49%
Wilcox Unified District	74%	62%	58%
Cochise County Schools	63%	63%	62%
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 Cochise 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
Two percent of children removed in Arizona were removed in the Cochise Region.	Continue to provide family support services like home visitation in targeted areas to provide support and resources to families.

Needs	Considerations
In Cochise County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2018 to 2020.	Consider including substance abuse prevention resources and referrals in home visitation and parent education programs
The number of children and families receiving SNAP benefits has decreased from 2017 to 2020 in Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona.	Consider examining alternative strategies to support food security for children and families.

CONCLUSION

The FTF Cochise 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 Cochise 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	
Almost all households in the Cochise Region and County have a computer and internet.	Consider engaging families using technology-based and online engagement tools.
Education	
The high school graduation rates of adults in the region are higher than the State. In Cochise Region, 87% of adults aged 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is a slightly higher percentage than 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. Seventy-seven percent are quality-level settings (public 3-5 stars).	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 Cochise Region did not have any health insurance.	Work with partners to ensure access to health care for all children in the region.

<p>In the Cochise Region, the percentage of mothers participating in WIC who ever breastfed their infant on average at least once per day increased from 2017 to 2020 by ten percent (61%-71%).</p>	<p>Continue to provide public education about the benefits of breastfeeding and consider supporting workplace efforts to encourage breastfeeding practices for working mothers.</p>
<p>Family Support</p>	
<p>Two percent of children removed in Arizona were removed in the Cochise Region.</p>	<p>Continue to provide family support services like home visitation in targeted areas to provide support and resources to families.</p>

Needs	Considerations
Population Characteristics	
In the region, more children ages zero to five identify as Hispanic or Latino than adults (47% vs. 28%). Eight 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.
Seventy-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	
Cochise Region and County have slightly more children 0-5 living with one/a single parent in the labor force than the State.	Promote supports and resources that can help subsidize child care and other expenses for single parent households.
Median income for families is lower in Cochise County than in the State with a higher percent of the population living in poverty. Employment status is also lower than the State.	Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to help increase employment and median incomes.
In Cochise County, almost triple the percent of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders live below the federal poverty level compared to the State.	Ensure social service resources for the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations.
Education	
AzMERIT reports show that more than half of third graders are not meeting proficiency standards for English Language Arts.	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.
Early Learning	
In 2020, in Cochise Region, 86% of children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to nine percent of children in 2019.	Identify gaps in child care subsidies to ensure that children in need are receiving these subsidies.
Across Cochise Region districts, there were districts with high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In Benson Unified School District and Pearce Elementary District, 70% or more preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment. A high percentage of preschool students in special education had a developmental delay at Double Adobe Elementary District (>98%), Tombstone Unified District (67%), and Wilcox Unified District (67%).	Work with school districts to refer children identified with special needs to support services.
Child Health	
HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%. In the FTF Cochise Region, 42% of women began their prenatal care in the first trimester with 13% receiving 13 or more visits.	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.
In 2020, in the Cochise Region and in the State as a	Support programs that educate pregnant and parenting

whole, 60% of mothers participating in WIC reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy. The rate of mothers being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy has remained steady from 2017 to 2020.	mothers about healthy eating, active living, and maintaining healthy weight.
Family Support	
In Cochise County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2018 to 2020.	Consider including substance abuse prevention resources and referrals in home visitation and parent education programs
The number of children and families receiving SNAP benefits has decreased from 2017 to 2020 in Cochise Region, Cochise County and Arizona.	Consider examining alternative strategies to support food security for children and families.