

2026

NEEDS AND ASSETS REPORT



 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

Graham/Greenlee Region

Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council 2026 Needs and Assets Report

Funded by the
First Things First Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council

Prepared by the
Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) Team

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INTRODUCTION

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. Arizonans created First Things First (FTF) 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 well-being in our communities and our state. This Needs and Assets Report for the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region helps us in understanding the needs of young children, the resources available to meet those needs and gaps that may exist in those resources.

The 2026 report has been redesigned in response to stakeholder feedback. The revised structure now consists of two parts: the primary report and supplementary sub-regional fact sheets.

The main report is structured around four domains relevant to young children, their families, and the professionals who support them in the region:

- Child, Family & Community Characteristics
- Early Education
- Education & Workforce
- Child Health & Development

This main report uses an infographic and figure-based approach to analyze regional-level data trends, as well as how these regional trends compare to statewide trends. Community-level data, illustrating similarities and differences within the sub-regions of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Region, is detailed separately in the Fact Sheets. The FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of investing in young children and ensuring that families and caregivers have options in 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 FTF Graham/Greenlee Region. To that end, this information may be useful to local stakeholders as they work to enhance the resources available to young children and their families and as they make decisions about how best to support children birth to age 5 in communities throughout the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council wishes to thank all of the federal, state and local partners whose contributions of data, ongoing support and partnership with FTF made this report possible. These partners included the Arizona Departments of Administration (Employment and Population Statistics), Child Safety, Economic Security, Education and Health Services; Child Care Resource and Referral; Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System; and the U.S. Census Bureau. We also want to thank parents and caregivers, local departments and service providers and members of the public who provided local data, 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 FTF Graham/Greenlee Region. Lastly, we want to acknowledge the current and past members of the FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Partnership Council whose vision, dedication and passion have been instrumental in improving outcomes for young children and families within the region. As we build upon those successes, we move ever closer to our ultimate goal of creating a comprehensive early childhood system that ensures children throughout Arizona are ready for school and set for life.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The experiences in the first few years of a child's life lay the foundation for their future. Safe and healthy neighborhood environments, accessible educational opportunities, economically stable families and nurturing social contexts for young children have long-term, positive impacts.¹ This Needs and Assets Report examines the current conditions for young children and their families—including social and economic contexts, early learning systems, education and workforce indicators, health outcomes and supports for children with special needs—in the First Things First (FTF) Graham/Greenlee Region.

Sources and Data: The data in this report come from a variety of sources including federal and state agencies and local agencies or service providers. Federal government sources include publicly available data from the 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (primarily 2019-2023). The 2020 Census faced unprecedented challenges in data collection, the foremost of which was the COVID-19 pandemic and its disruption of local institutions. Due to these challenges, the 2020 Census is widely known to have undercounted young children and particular populations such as American Indians residing on reservations.² Data in this report from the ACS summarize the responses from samples of residents taken between 2019 and 2023. Because these estimates are based on samples rather than the entire population, ACS data should not be considered exact. Estimates for smaller geographies, such as

regions or sub-regions, are less accurate than estimates for larger geographies, such as the state, because they are based on smaller sample sizes.

Data were provided to FTF by state agencies including the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES). FTF strategy data related to quality early education, professional development and home visiting were also provided. FTF partnered with the Arizona State University Center for Health Information and Research (CHiR) to create custom tabulations of claims data for young children from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). In most cases, the data in this report were calculated specifically for the Needs and Assets process and are more detailed than the data that are published by these agencies for the general public. Whenever possible, this report will use data tailored to the region, but in some cases, there are only county-level or statewide data available to report. This report also includes publicly available data for the county and state, including from state agencies such as the Arizona Department of Commerce's Office of Economic Opportunity, Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) semi-annual child welfare reports. When more recent data from public or state agency datasets were not available, this report cites data from past Regional Needs and Assets Reports for the region.

The data in this report are as complete as possible, but there are cases when data for specific years were unavailable or unable to be reported. State agencies have varying policies about reporting small values. Labels such as <10, <6 or "DS" indicate that a count has been suppressed to protect privacy. When data were not available for a given year or geography, the label "N/A" is used.

Color-coding: This report uses color-coding to indicate the relevant geography for each number or percentage discussed in the text as follows: **Graham/Greenlee Region**, **Graham County**, **Greenlee County**, **Arizona** and the **U.S.** Additional important numbers in the text that do not correspond to one of these geographies have been **bolded**.

Data Interpretation Session: The data compiled in this report reflect one way of knowing about the status of young children and their families, but local perspectives on what works well and what needs improvement from community experts who live, work and care for children in the region provide another vital source of information about the needs and assets in the region. First Things First Regional Partnership Council members and other key community experts participated in a facilitated data discussion in the beginning of 2026 to review the data included in this report. During this session, participants shared local knowledge and perspectives to help interpret the data and add additional context about the region. These insights are included throughout the report, attributed to "local key informants" and "local community experts."

Limitations: This report was compiled in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026 during a time of rapid changes in federal funding and policy. The data presented reflect a particular moment in time.

Where possible, potential impacts of currently known policy decisions grounded in high-quality research have been included, but the full extent of the impact of policies implemented in 2025 and 2026 on early childhood well-being will not be fully clear for years to come.

Throughout this report, state-level data is included to help understand how the region is doing in comparison to Arizona overall. For a more comprehensive discussion of needs and assets at the state level, please see the First Things First 2025 Statewide Needs and Assets Report – Building Bright Futures.^a

Analysis of data and reporting of findings contained in this report were completed by Kara Habersstock Tanoue, Rachel Leih, Madeleine deBlois, Deirdre Avery, Vicki Brown, Terrace Ewinghill, Rachel Gildersleeve, Anvi Bhakta, Beatriz Reyna, Deshawna Yazzie, April Horne, Lauren Moxley, Dora Valencia, Claudia Vega and Felicia Zhang from the Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) team in the John and Doris Norton School of Human Ecology at the University of Arizona.

THE GRAHAM/GREENLEE REGION

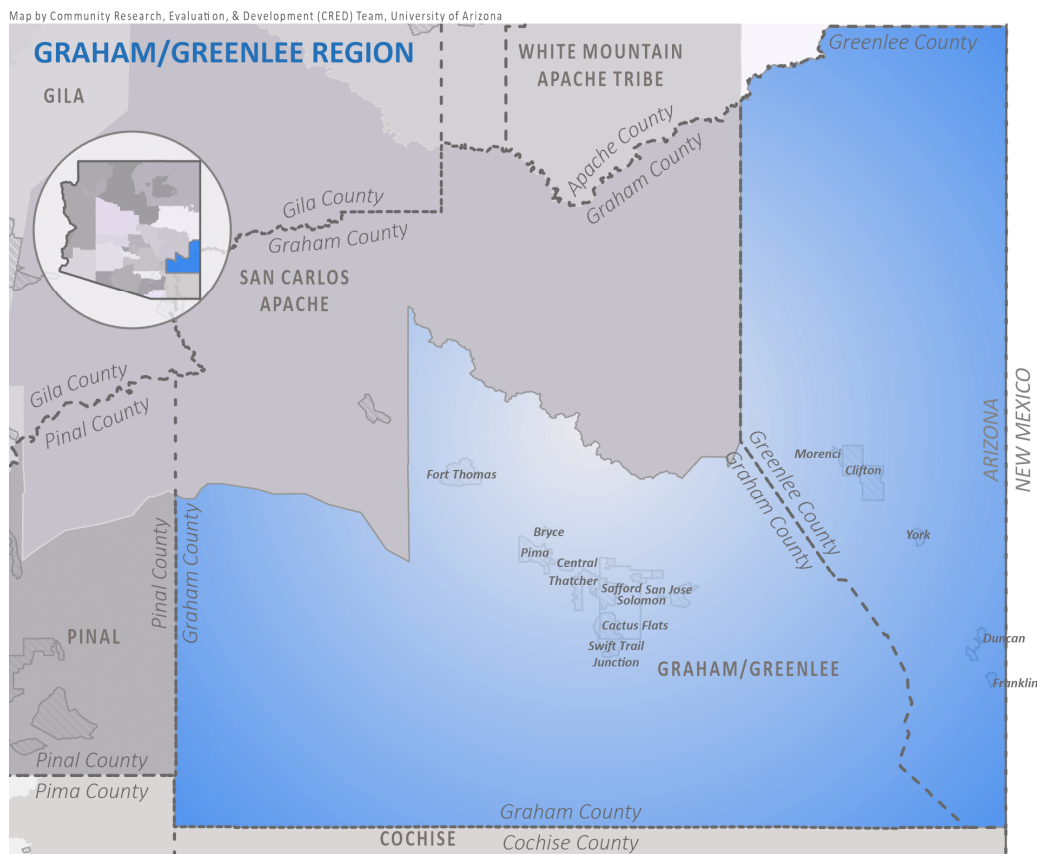
The First Things First regional boundaries were established to create regions that (a) reflect the view of families in terms of where they access services, (b) coincide with existing boundaries or service areas of organizations providing early childhood services, (c) maximize the ability to collaborate with service systems and local governments, (d) facilitate the ability to convene a Regional Partnership Council, and (e) allow for the collection of demographic and indicator data.

The First Things First Graham/Greenlee Region is defined as all of Graham and Greenlee counties, except for the portion of Graham County which is in the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

The map below shows the geographical area covered by the Graham/Greenlee Region. Additional information is available at the end of this report, including a map and table of the region's zip codes and a map of Arizona public school districts in the region in the *Maps & Methods* Appendix II.

^a The full report can be found at <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-State-Needs-and-Assets-Report.pdf>

The First Things First Graham/Greenlee Region



Source: 2020 TIGER/Line Shapefiles prepared by the U.S. Census. Map produced by CRED.

FAMILY, CHILD & COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Young children in the region

While young children make up a small proportion of the overall population, their well-being has wide-reaching impacts on families, social service systems and the state's future population. Continued investment in children's well-being and the well-being of their families was deemed by the National Academy of Sciences as "the most efficient strategy" for strengthening the future workforce and supporting a thriving community.^{3, 4} According to the 2020 Census, the Graham/Greenlee Region was home to about **3,794** young children birth to age 5. Between 2018 and 2023, births in the Graham/Greenlee Region fluctuated but declined overall, beginning at **557** births in 2018, hitting a high of **572** births in 2021, before decreasing over the next two years to a six-year low of **509** births in 2023.^b

Despite a relatively constant number of births in recent years, the number of young children counted in the 2020 Census was lower than in 2010, decreasing by **3%** from **3,903** young children in 2010 to **3,794** in 2020. This decline was a quarter of the rate observed statewide, where there was a **12%** decrease in the population of young children over the same ten-year period. This was also in contrast to the all-age population, which increased in the region (**+6%**), though this growth was half that of the **12%** increase in the overall population statewide (**+12%**). One key stakeholder noted that births in the region are likely influenced by shifting mining opportunities in the region, which lead to families moving in and out of the region.

Characteristics of young children and the population

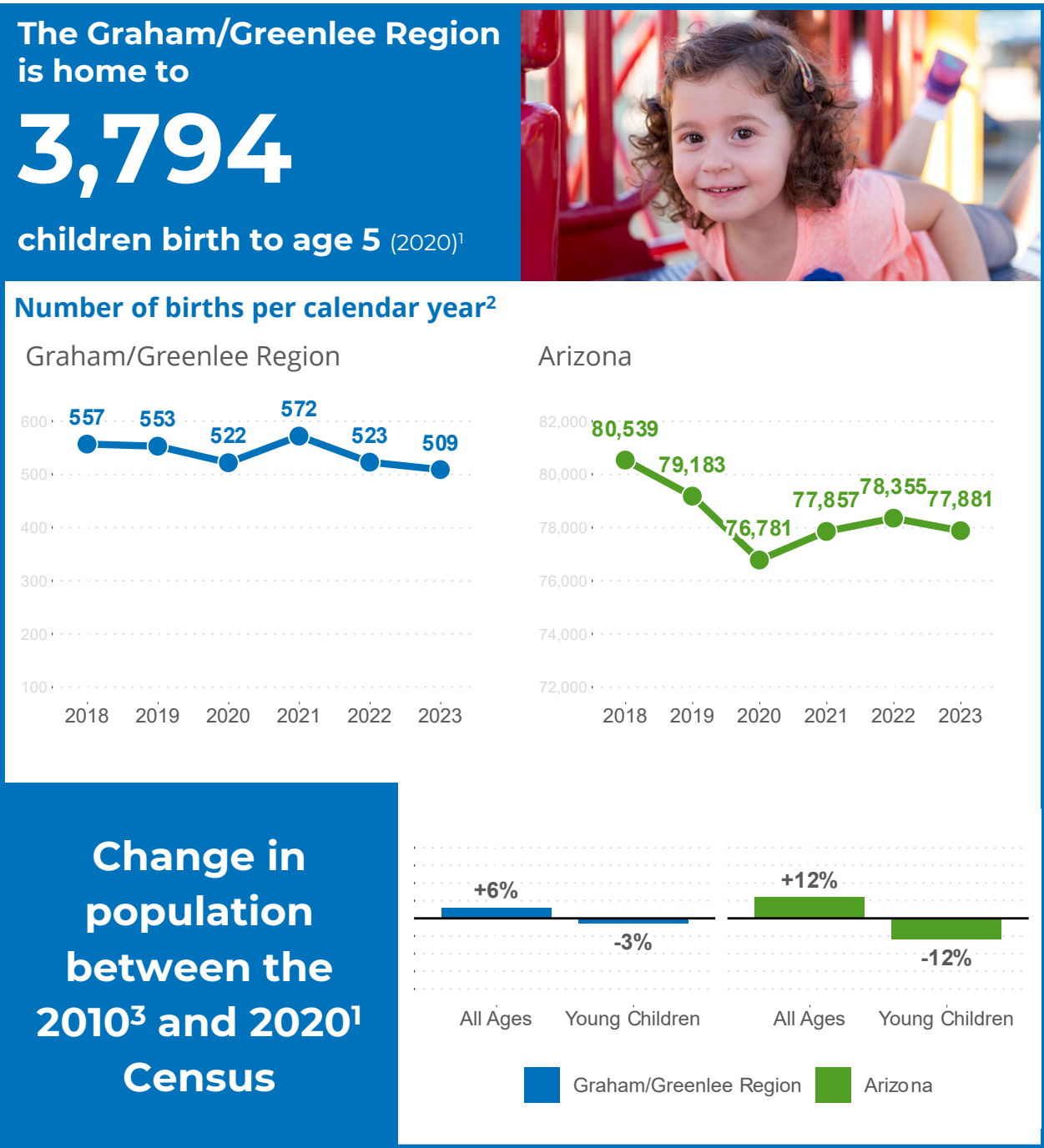
According to the 2020 Census, approximately **43,376** people lived in the Graham/Greenlee Region, in **14,715** households. Just under one in five households (**18%**) in the region included a young child birth to age 5, a slightly lower proportion of households than across Graham County (**19%**) and Greenlee County (**20%**), but a higher proportion than across the state (**13%**) or nation (**13%**).

Understanding the racial-ethnic composition of communities can inform efforts to ensure equitable access to services and resources. According to the 2020 Census, most Graham/Greenlee Region residents identified as non-Hispanic White (**60%** of the total population, **54%** of young

^b Note that births are assigned to the region based on the address that parents list on the birth certificate form. This means that babies born to families residing in the region should be counted in regional birth numbers regardless of the location of the hospital where they were born.

Figure 1.

Young children in the region



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC).

² Arizona Department of Health Services. (2024). [Vital Statistic dataset].

³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Decennial Census.

children birth to age 4). Young children in the region were more likely to be identified as Hispanic or Latino (**43%**) compared to the total population (**36%**), and both proportions were similar to those observed statewide (**44%** of young children and **31%** of the total population).⁵ The vast majority (**83%**) of residents in the Graham/Greenlee Region spoke English at home; the remaining **17%** of region residents spoke Spanish (**15%**) or another language (**2%**). Across the state, nearly three-quarters of residents (**74%**) spoke English at home, **19%** spoke Spanish, and **6%** spoke another language.⁶

Caregivers for young children

Family structure has important effects on children's development.⁷ For example, living in a single-parent household is often linked to implications for poverty, access to health and education resources, parental health and the quality of a child's interactions with adult caregivers.^{8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13} The 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that six in 10 children (**60%**) birth to age 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region lived with two married parents, the same as the proportion statewide (**60%**).¹⁴ Young children in the region were less likely to reside with one unmarried parent^c (**30%**) than children across the state (**36%**).

Multi-generational households, where grandparents, parents and children live together, are also becoming more common across all racial and ethnic groups.^{15, 16, 17, 18} These living arrangements can offer financial and social benefits, but also stressors such as differing parenting styles and family roles.^{19, 20, 21, 22, 23} According to the 2020 Census, **12%** of young children in the Graham/Greenlee Region lived in a grandparent's household, with or without a parent present. Overall, there were **384** grandparents in the region who reported that they were responsible for one or more grandchildren birth to age 17.

Kinship care, where children live with someone other than their parents (such as grandparents, other relatives or close friends), may bring challenges related to informal guardianship (e.g., difficulties in registering children for school), coping with parental absence and being an aging caregiver for a young child.^{24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30} In the Graham/Greenlee Region, **9%** of young children resided with relatives other than parents (e.g., grandparent, aunt or uncle), higher than the proportion across the state (**3%**).³¹ Few young children (**1%**) in the region lived with a non-relative caregiver, just below the rates seen statewide (**2%**).

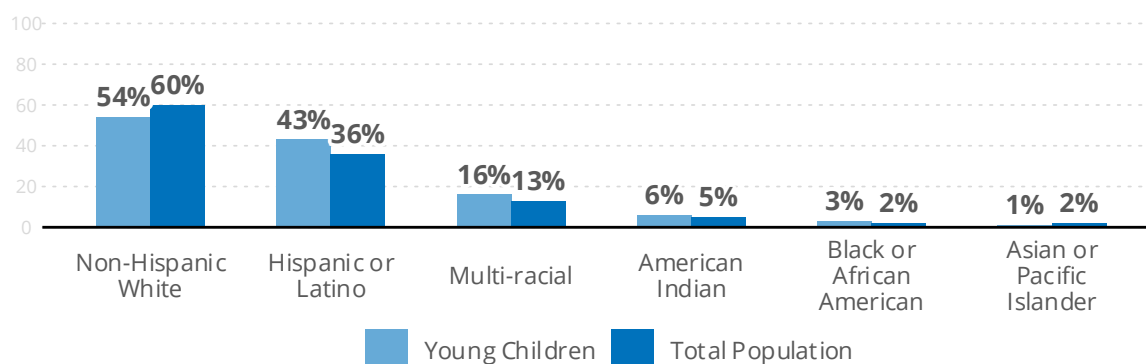
^c The term "parent" includes stepparents. Please note that due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one parent' category).

Figure 2.

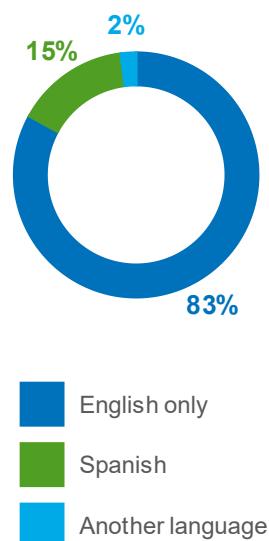
Characteristics of young children and the population

43,376 people live in the Graham/Greenlee Region (2020)¹

Race and ethnicity in the Graham/Greenlee Region (2020)¹



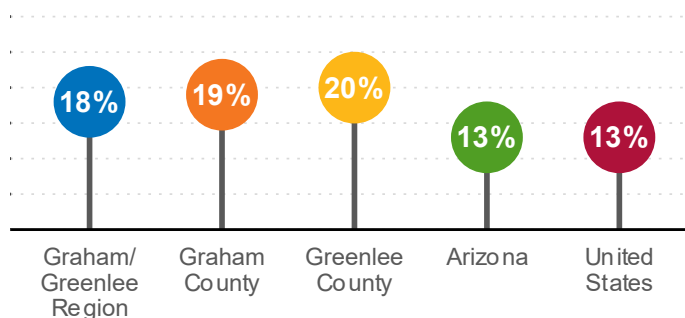
Language spoken at home in the region (2023)²



The region has

14,715
households (2020)¹

Households with young children (2020)¹



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC).

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

Notes: Race and ethnicity data are non-exclusive, meaning that individuals are counted in each category in which they identify. Language data are for the population ages 5 and older. The American Community Survey (ACS) no longer specifies the proportion of the population who speak Native North American languages for geographies smaller than the state. In Arizona, Navajo and other Native American languages (including Apache, Hopi, and O'odham) are the most commonly spoken (2%), following English (73%) and Spanish (20%).

Participation in the labor force can impact families in ways that affect children's health and well-being. For example, unemployment can limit access to resources that support children's physical and mental health.³² An estimated **90%** of young children birth to age 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region lived in families with at least one parent in the labor force. More than half of all young children in the region (**52%**) lived with all parents in the labor force, making it likely that these families need some form of child care.

Income and poverty among families with children

Poverty is associated with reduced access to nutrition, green space and health care and greater exposure to psychosocial stress and environmental toxins; together, these factors may have implications for children's growth and brain development.^{33,34, 35} According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in 2025, a family of two adults and two children was considered to be in poverty if their income fell below \$32,150, while for a single parent with one child the threshold was \$21,150.³⁶ Between 2019 and 2023, an estimated **11%** of young children in the Graham/Greenlee Region lived in poverty, a notable decline from the region's poverty rate between 2014 and 2018 (**25%**). Child poverty rates in Graham County had an even larger decline over the same period (**36% to 17%**) while Greenlee County's rates were lower but declined only 3% during this time (**18% to 15%**). Across the state, child poverty rates decreased 7% during the same period (**25% to 18%**). All these decreases are largely attributed to pandemic relief funding and policies.³⁷

Overall, single-parent families across Arizona earned less than married-couple families in 2023. Married-couple family median incomes in Graham County (**\$104,987**) were close to double that of single-male-headed families (**\$65,101**) and more than four times that of single-female-headed families (**\$22,267**). Greenlee County showed a contrasting pattern, with married-couple family median incomes (**\$83,424**) less than both the median income for single-male-headed families (**\$130,403**) and single-female-headed families (**\$90,500**).

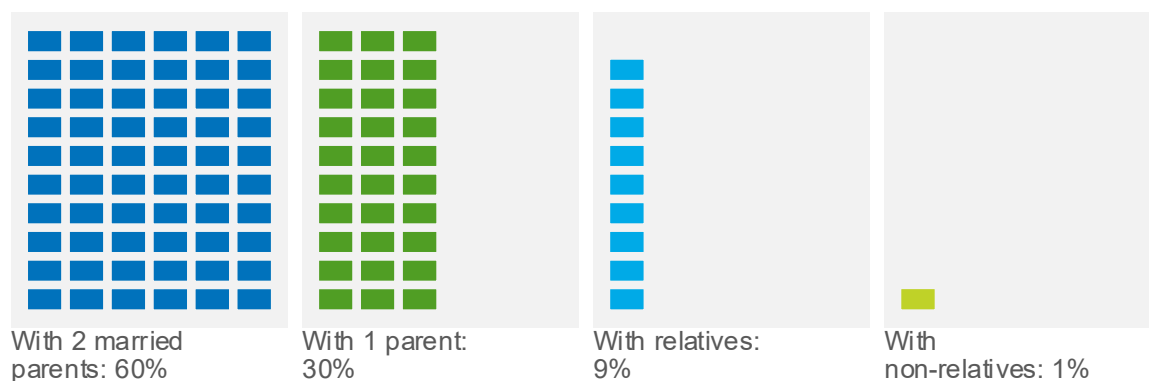
While median family income is a measure of how much families earn, the self-sufficiency standard^d attempts to estimate how much families actually need to earn to fully support themselves. These standards vary by family type and differences in costs of housing, transportation, child care and other budget items across counties and states.^{38, 39} In 2022, the self-sufficiency standard for two parents, one preschooler and one infant was **\$70,981** in Graham County and **\$69,898** in Greenlee County. In both counties, the self-sufficiency standard was lower than the median income for married couples with children. The self-sufficiency standard for one

^d For more information on the Arizona 2022 Self-sufficiency standard, please see https://womensgiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AZ2022_SSS_Web.pdf

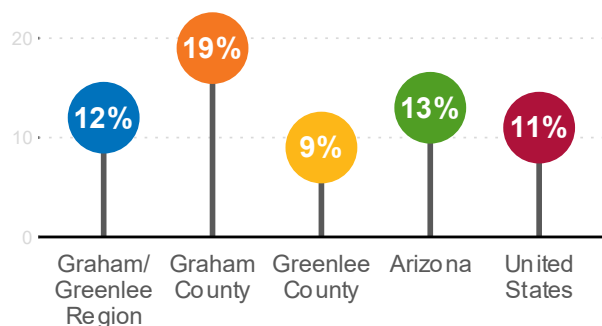
Figure 3.

Caregivers for young children

Living arrangements for children birth to age 5 in the region (2023)¹

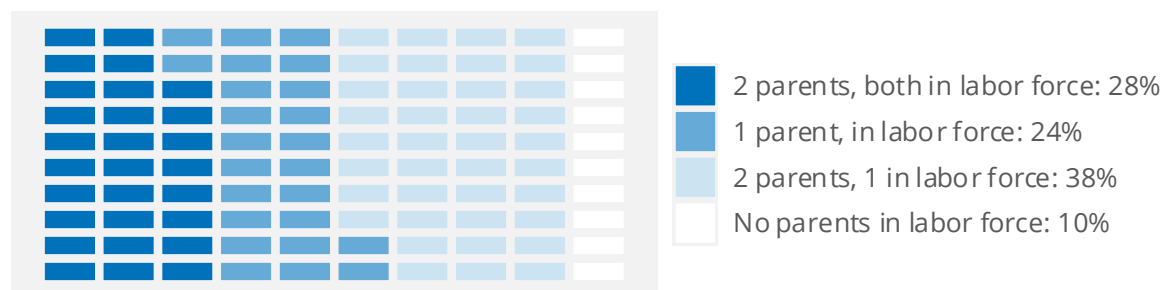


Grandchildren birth to age 5 living in a grandparent's household (2020)²



384
grandparents in the
Graham/Greenlee Region are
responsible for a grandchild
(birth to age 17) (2023)¹

Children birth to age 5 by their parent's employment status in the region (2023)¹



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC).

Notes: The 4 percentages for living arrangements and employment status should sum to 100% but may not because of rounding. The term "parent" here includes stepparents. Due to the way the ACS asks about family relationships, children living with two unmarried, cohabitating parents are not counted as living with two parents (these children are counted in the 'one unmarried parent' category).

parent and one preschooler was **\$47,892** in Graham County and **\$46,521** in Greenlee County, and both were also lower than the median incomes for single-male-headed families with children. In contrast, single-female-headed families in Greenlee County had a median income below the self-sufficiency standard, highlighting the likelihood that many single-female-headed families in Graham County may not be earning enough income to support their families.

The Arizona self-sufficiency standards were updated in 2025 and reflect a significant increase in the cost of basic needs across Arizona since they were first published in 2002.⁴⁰ Greenlee County's self-sufficiency standards increased by **19%** for two parents, one preschooler and one infant (**\$83,444**) and **11%** for one parent and one preschooler (**\$51,652**) between 2022 and 2025. Graham County had slightly smaller increases for the same family types: an increase of **16%** for two parents, one preschooler and one infant (**\$84,660**), and an increase of **10%** for one parent and one preschooler (**\$52,824**).⁴¹

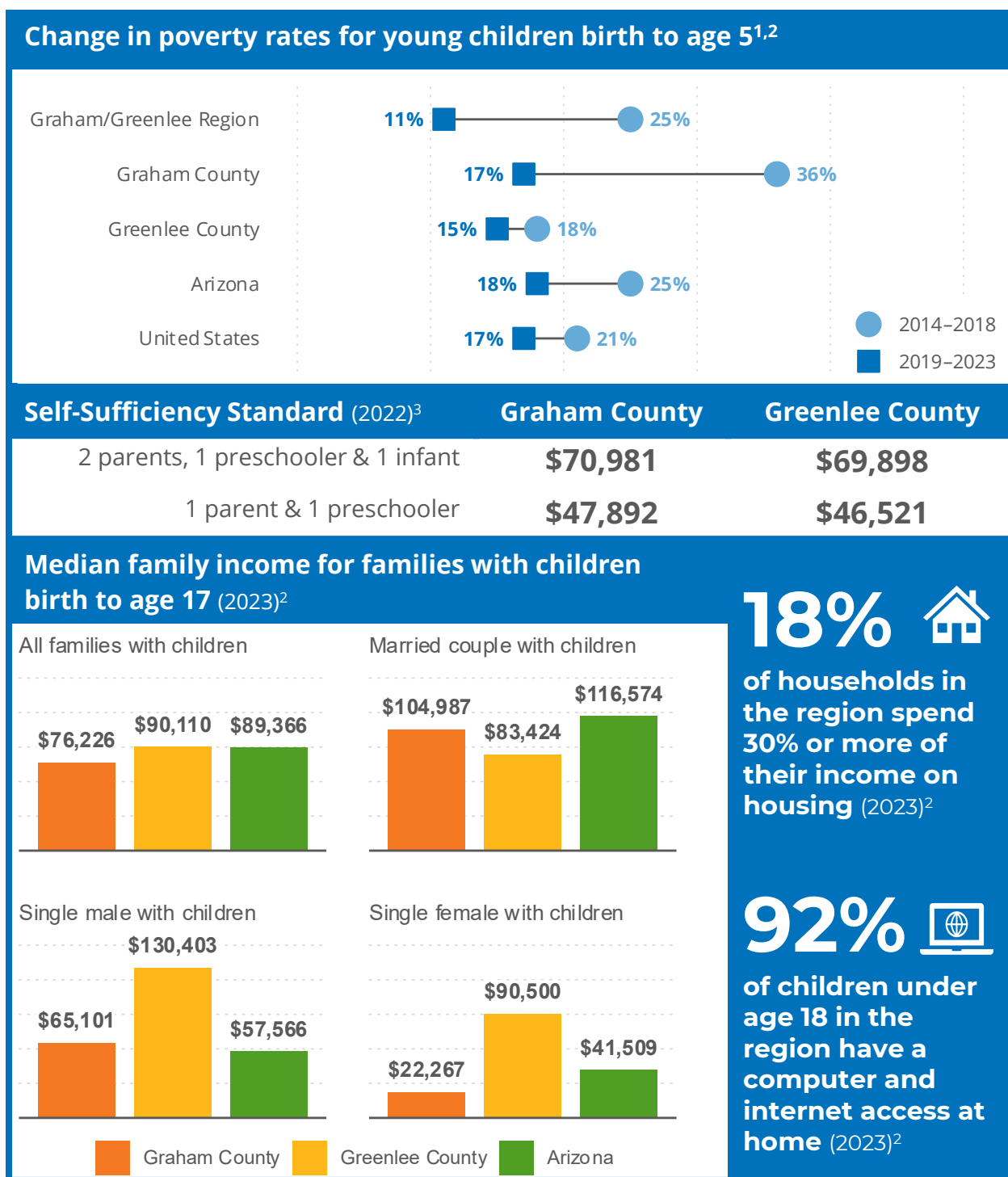
These rising costs have real implications for families' well-being in the Graham/Greenlee Region. When housing costs consume a large percentage of family income, limited funds for basic needs such as food and utilities can influence young children's development.^{42, 43, 44} Traditionally, housing has been deemed affordable for families if it costs less than 30% of annual household income. According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, nearly one in five households (**18%**) in the Graham/Greenlee Region was considered housing cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on housing. This is markedly lower than the **30.8%** of cost-burdened households statewide and means that the region is meeting the Healthy People 2030^e target of **25.5%** or fewer households considered housing-cost burdened.⁴⁵

Internet access is a vital utility in homes in today's interconnected world. Reliable broadband enables access to education, employment, telehealth and social connection, highlighting its importance as a "super determinant" of health.⁴⁶ In the Graham/Greenlee Region, the vast majority (**92%**) of children under age 18 had access to a computer and internet at home. Taken together, relatively lower rates of high housing costs and promising access to internet and computers at home point to strengths of the region in terms of affordability and connectivity for families.

^e Healthy People identifies science-based targets to guide national health promotion and disease prevention efforts. For more information see https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/healthy_people/index.htm

Figure 4.

Income and poverty among families with children



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2018.

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

³ Kucklick, A., Manzer, L., and Mast, A.. (2022). [The Arizona 2022 Self-Sufficiency Standard].

Food security among young children and families

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, provides food assistance, breastfeeding support, nutrition education and referral to other health and community services for women and children, starting in pregnancy until children turn age 5.^f WIC, along with other programs like free and reduced-price school meals, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), can be a key resource for low-income families to ensure they have access to affordable, nutritious food that promotes well-being. Families in Arizona are financially eligible for WIC if their income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.^{g, 47} According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, there were **1,105** children birth to age 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region living in households with qualifying incomes for WIC. This equated to one-third (**34%**) of the young child population in the region. The region had a smaller proportion of young children whose households financially qualified for WIC compared to Graham County (**42%**) and the state (**38%**).

Between 2018 and 2024, the number of young children (birth to age 4) enrolled and participating in WIC in the Graham/Greenlee Region declined overall, to recent lows of **1,183** young children enrolled and **1,127** participating in 2024. The region had consistently high participation rates among young children enrolled in WIC in recent years, evident in the small gap between the number of children enrolled versus the number of children participating in the program. These high participation rates increased in recent years and often exceeded the already high participation rates among young children across the state, with the region reaching **98%** participation in 2022 and 2023 compared to **95%** statewide.

Families' neighborhood environments also influence their access to affordable, nutritious food. Low-income, low-access areas, also known as "food deserts," are geographic areas with high rates of poverty and limited access to fresh food options, a challenge often compounded by limited access to adequate transportation.⁴⁸ Very few children birth to age 5 (**2%**) lived in a community in the Graham/Greenlee Region^h classified as a "food desert" in 2019, much lower than the **15%** across the state.⁴⁹

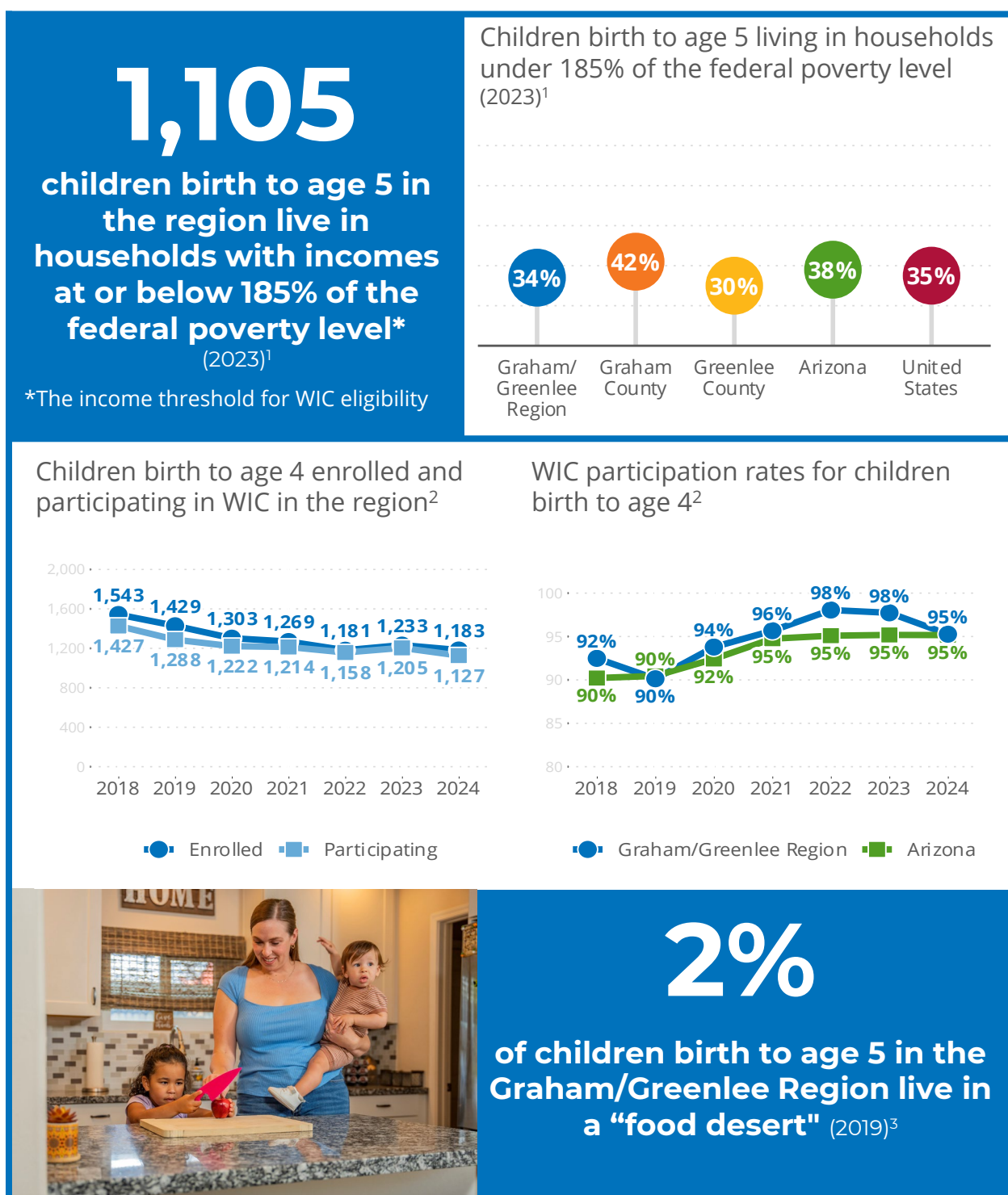
^f For more information see <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

^g In 2026, the 185% FPL threshold was \$61,050 for a family of four and \$40,034 for a family of two. For more information, see <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/b1bfa16b20ae9b89d525bc35de7c1643/detailed-guidelines-2026.pdf>

^h To view a map of low income and low access census tracts, see <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas>

Figure 5.

Food security among young children and families



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

² Arizona Department of Health Services. (2025). [WIC dataset].

³ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2022). Food Access Research Atlas.

Note: WIC participation rates reflect the percent of children already enrolled in WIC who attend visits and receive benefits. These do not reflect the share of potentially-eligible children enrolled in WIC.

Child maltreatment response and prevention

Traumatic or stressful life events experienced in childhood, referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs,ⁱ can have lasting impacts on health and life trajectory beyond childhood, with risk increasing as an individual's number of adverse childhood experiences increases.⁵⁰ In situations of abuse or neglect, the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) is required to intervene to ensure the safety and well-being of children. When DCS determines that the harm in remaining with their family is too great, a child may be removed from their home, either temporarily or permanently. In recent years, DCS has set an overarching goal of safely reducing the number of children removed from their homes and placed in out-of-home care.⁵¹ In line with this goal, the number of children reported to DCS who were removed from their homes and placed in out-of-home care has substantially declined in recent years in Arizona, from a recent high of **13,465** children age birth to 17 in state fiscal year (SFY) 2021 to **8,305** in SFY 2024. While out-of-home placements in Graham and Greenlee counties also reached a five-year low of **134** children birth to age 17 in SFY 2024, county placement trends showed more fluctuation in recent years than the state.

DCS also aims to place children into a permanent, stable housing situation within 12 months, whether that is through reunification, living with other relatives (known as kinship care) or any type of guardianship or adoption.⁵² In SFY 2024, almost half (**47%**) of young children birth to age 17 exiting out-of-home care in Arizona were reunified with their families, one in four (**25%**) were adopted^j and one in six (**16%**) were placed in guardianship.^k The other **12%** exited out-of-home care for some other reason, including children who aged out of the out-of-home care system, transferred to another agency, ran away or exited for another reason.

Home visitation programs are a proven strategy for equipping families with needed resources and referrals to promote healthy child development, reduce parental stress and prevent future child maltreatment.^{53, 54, 55, 56} In SFY 2025, **141** families in the Graham/Greenlee Region participated in home visitation programs, including the Health Start, Healthy Families Arizona, High-Risk Perinatal Program and Maternal Early Childhood Sustain Home-Visiting programs.

ⁱ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include eight categories of traumatic or stressful life events experienced before the age of 18 years. The eight ACE categories are sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, household adult mental illness, household substance abuse, domestic violence in the household, incarceration of a household member, and parental divorce or separation.

^j Adoption by a relative, foster parent or other non-relative

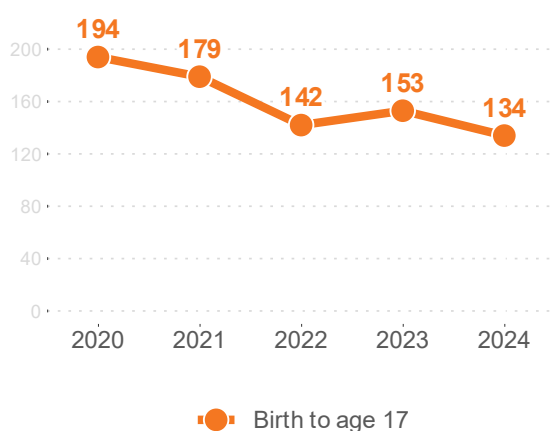
^k Guardianship by a foster parent or other non-relative

Figure 6.

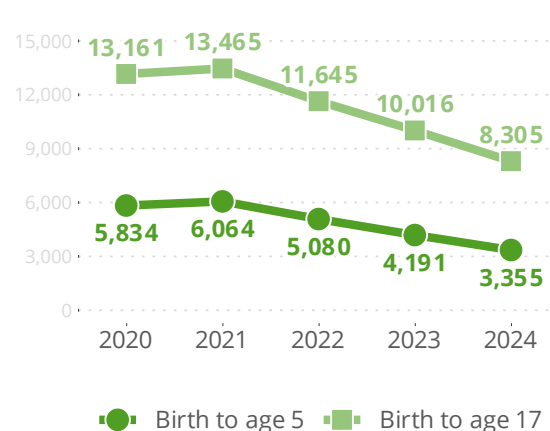
Child maltreatment response and prevention

Children in out-of-home placements with the Department of Child Safety¹

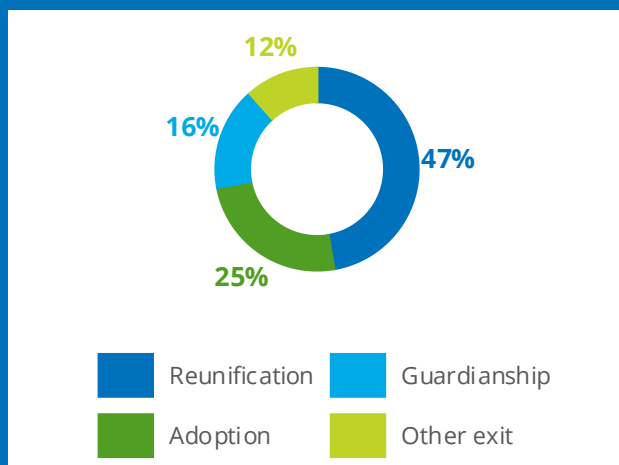
Graham & Greenlee Counties



Arizona



Case outcomes for children birth to age 17 exiting out-of-home care in Arizona (2024)¹



In the Graham/Greenlee Region,

141 families participated in home visitation programs (2025)²

¹ Arizona Department of Child Safety. (2025). Monthly Operational Outcomes Report, May 2025.

² First Things First. (2025). [Home Visitation & Screenings Reach datasets].

Note: Home visitation program data reflects families in the Health Start, Healthy Families AZ, High-Risk Perinatal Program and Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting programs. Families may participate in more than one program (and be counted more than once).

EARLY LEARNING

Availability of quality early care and education

Participating in quality preschool programs can result in between one-third and a full year of additional early learning gains in language, reading and math skills, increasing the academic readiness of children when they enter kindergarten.⁵⁷ According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, **26%** of 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in school^l in the Graham/Greenlee Region, though key informants noted that this was likely an underestimate. This was also lower than the proportion of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school across the state (**36%**).⁵⁸ In the 2024-25 school year, **138** children were enrolled in preschool in public schools in Graham County, and **135** were enrolled in Greenlee County. There is likely more capacity in school-based preschool programs in the county than reflected in these numbers. Not all preschool students are well-captured in ADE enrollment data, particularly typically-developing students in part-day programs and preschool students whose families pay a fee for care at a school.

In 2025, there were **19** early care and education providers in the region with the capacity to serve **1,014** children. Most of this capacity was provided by **12** child care centers with the capacity to serve **795** children, followed by **3** schools (n = **203**), and **4** home-based providers (n = **16**). Between 2023 and 2025, **no** new child care providers opened or closed in the Graham/Greenlee Region.

An area is labeled a child care desert if there are three times as many children as there are available child care slots (a ratio of **3.0** or more).⁵⁹ Communities in both urban and rural areas of Arizona face a gap between the number of young children and licensed child care slots.^{60, 61, 62} Collectively across all children birth to age 5, the Graham/Greenlee Region is considered a child care desert, with a ratio of **5.4** children birth to age 5 per available slot. This is more than twice the ratio for children birth to age 5 statewide (**2** children birth to age 5 per available slot).⁶³ For 1-year-olds, the ratio is higher, with **8.3** 1-year-olds per available slot, and the ratio for regulated infant care is highest, with **20.6** infants per available slot, indicating a scarcity of licensed infant child care in the region.

One particular child care need identified by key informants in the Graham/Greenlee Region is child care providers offering non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends) to meet the needs of parents and caregivers working for the mines and hospitals in the area. There are currently efforts in the region to identify solutions to this need. Key informants also noted the popularity of unlicensed, privately-run preschool and early care sites in the region. The programs are led by

^l School includes nursery school, preschool or kindergarten.

experienced professionals working from their homes or another building on their property outfitted into a functional classroom setting. These sites often operate as LLCs, as many of them remain below Arizona's licensing thresholds for hours of operation or number of children served. The programs typically follow the school year calendar, though they're only open two to three days per week for two to three hours at a time.

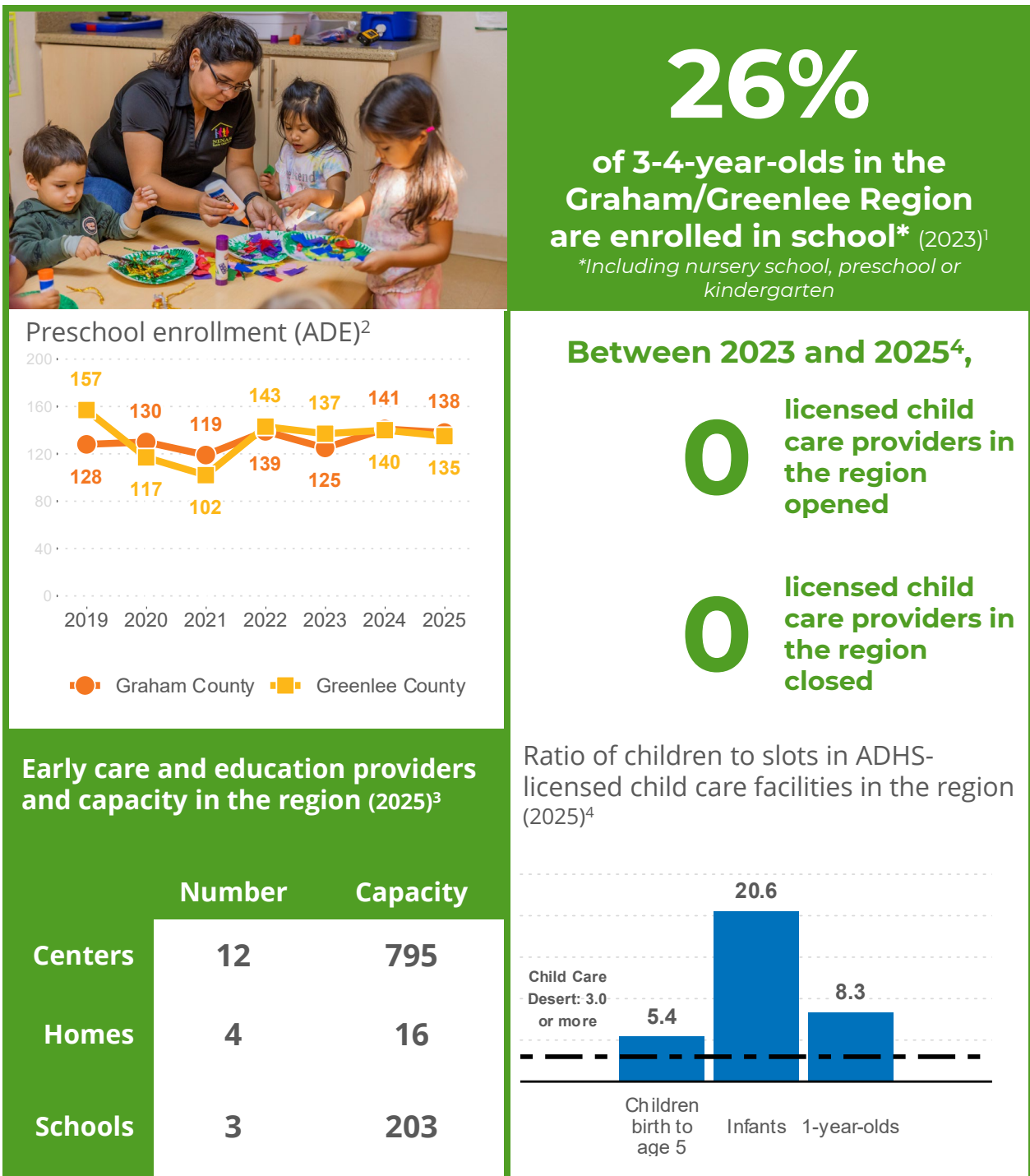
Increasing access to quality early care and education

High-quality early learning experiences lay a strong foundation for children's success in kindergarten, elementary school and beyond.⁶⁴ One way that the quality of early child care and education is measured in Arizona is through the Quality First (QF) program.⁶⁵ The QF program rates the quality of child care providers and preschools on a scale from one to five stars, with providers considered high quality when they have received a 3-star rating or higher.⁶⁶ In the Graham/Greenlee Region, the **7** providers served by Quality First enrolled a total of **303** young children in 2025, and **all** of these seven child care providers had 3-5-star ratings. Three and four-year-olds were most often enrolled in quality settings (**77** and **132** respectively), followed by 5-year-olds (n = **32**), 1-year-olds (n = **27**), 2-year-olds (n = **21**), and infants (n = **14**).

Child care providers enrolled in QF offer scholarships to eligible families to allow those children to access care and to reimburse providers for some of their extra expenses for providing quality care. These scholarships are allocated based on the child care provider's capacity and QF star rating.⁶⁷ However, due to the end of federal pandemic relief funds, statewide allocations for scholarships have decreased by over 3,000 slots from 2024 to 2025.⁶⁸ The number of QF scholarships provided in the region followed the same downward trend from 2024 (n = **47**) to 2025 (n = **37**).

Figure 7.

Availability of quality early care and education



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

² Arizona Department of Education. (2025). [Enrollment].

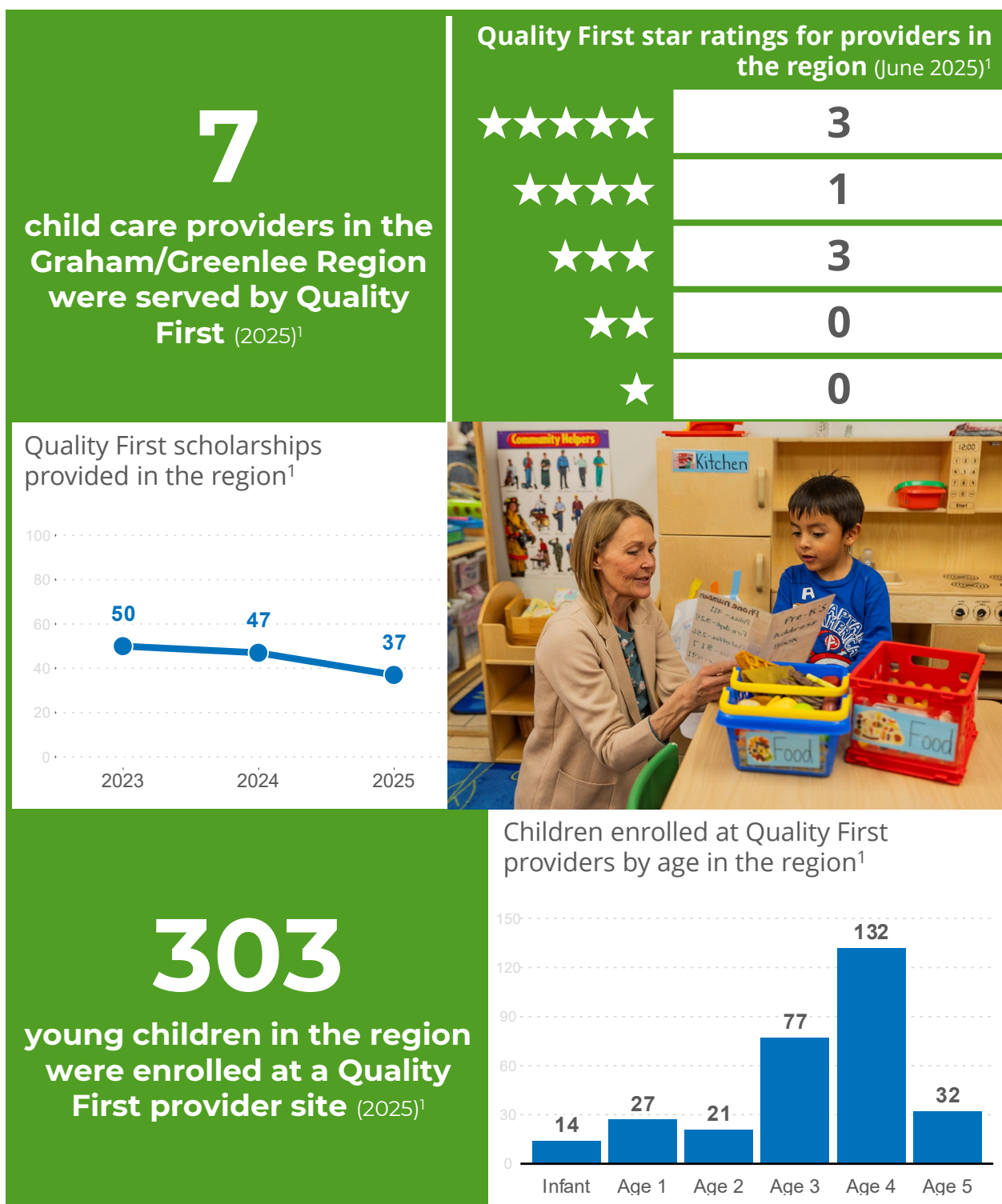
³ Arizona Department of Economic Security. (2025). [National Child Care Data System NCCRAwaredatabase extract].

⁴ Arizona Department of Health Services. (2025). [Child Care Licensing dataset].

Note: Please note that the capacity estimates are based on licensed capacity of the facility (frequently determined by physical building capacity) and may overstate the number of children that are actually enrolled in early education (due to staffing limitations and provider preferences).

Figure 8.

Increasing access to quality early care and education



¹ First Things First. (2025). [Quality First dataset].

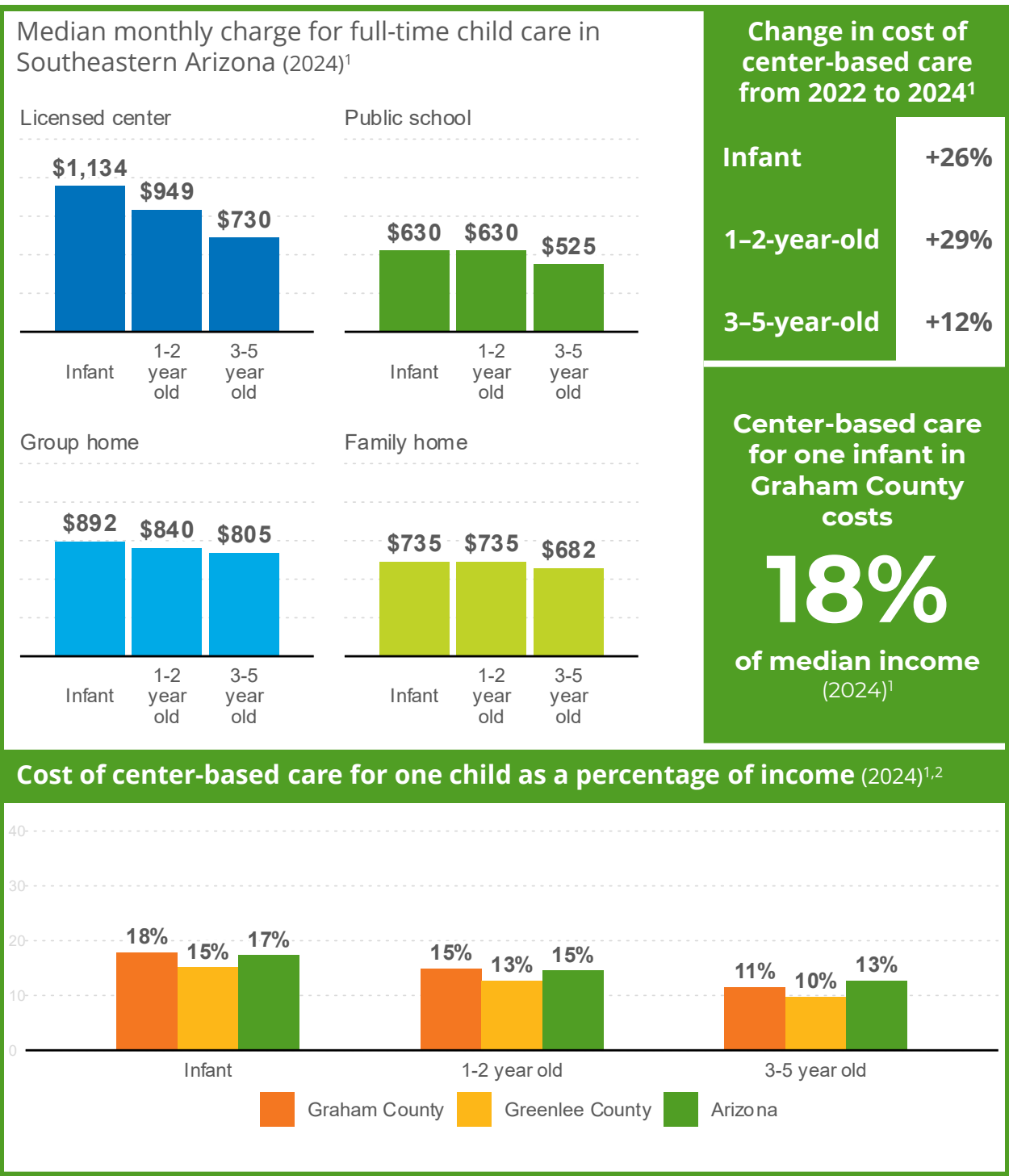
Cost of early care and education

The high cost of formal early care and education can place it out of reach of many families. The average cost of care in Arizona varies by the type of provider and the age of the child, with licensed centers and care for infants the most expensive, largely due to the higher operational costs of center-based care.⁶⁹ The median cost of care for an infant in a licensed center in Arizona in 2024 was **\$1,289** per month.⁷⁰ In Southeastern Arizona (Graham, Greenlee, Santa Cruz and Cochise counties), this type of care was also the most expensive at **\$1,134** per month, followed by licensed center care for 1-2-year-olds (**\$949/month**). The least expensive type of care in Southeastern Arizona was in public schools, where median charges ranged from **\$525** to **\$630** per month based on the age of the child. However, as mentioned above, there were only three public schools in the region providing just 20% of early care and capacity, meaning that care in this setting, while more affordable, may not be a realistic option for many families.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to be considered affordable, a family should spend no more than **7%** of their income on child care.⁷¹ In Arizona, both married and single-parent families are estimated to spend well above the “affordable” share of their income on infant care.^{72, 73} In Graham County, the cost of center-based care for one infant was at least **18%** of the median income for families with children. Graham County families paid a larger proportion of their income for center-based care (**11-18%**), compared to families in Greenlee County (**10-15%**). Both counties had comparable costs to the state (**13-17%**). The cost of care across Southeast Arizona also increased notably in recent years, with the cost of care for 1–2-year-olds increasing the most (**+29%**) between 2022 and 2024. The cost of care for infants rose by nearly as much (**26%**) during the same period, while care for 3–5-year-olds increased by **12%**. A key informant noted that the difference in child care costs between counties may be due to employment with the mine, where Greenlee County residents receive subsidized child care benefits.

Figure 9.

Cost of early care and education



¹ Health Management Associates. (2024). 2024 Child Care Market Rate Survey. Arizona Department of Economic Security.

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

Note: Southeastern Arizona includes Santa Cruz, Cochise, Graham & Greenlee counties.

Early care and education assistance and quality

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) provides child care assistance to financially eligible families, including specific funding for families involved with the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS).⁷⁴ This assistance can make child care possible for families who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Eligibility for and receipt of DES child care assistance among non-DCS-involved families recently reached record highs due to recent statewide investments.^{75, 76} The Graham/Greenlee Region showed more fluctuation in participation over recent years. A recent high of **65** non-DCS-involved children birth to age 5 were found eligible and **53** of those children received DES child care assistance in the Graham/Greenlee Region in 2023. This decreased the following year when **48** young children were eligible and **43** participated. Almost nine in 10 (**88%**) non-DCS-involved eligible families used child care assistance in 2024, and the proportion of these young children receiving child care assistance in quality environments in the region (**77%**) was just below that of non-DCS-involved children across the state (**80%**). Unfortunately, due to insufficient funding the DES child care assistance waitlist was reinstituted statewide in August 2024.^m

Children are automatically eligible for DES child care assistance when they are involved with DCS.ⁿ For DCS-involved children, the number of children birth to age 5 eligible for child care assistance in the Graham/Greenlee Region decreased from a high of **28** in 2019 to lows of **14** in 2023 and 2024. The number of DCS-involved young children receiving child care assistance followed a similar pattern through 2024, when fewer than **10** children received assistance. Those children in the region were more likely to receive this child care assistance in quality environments (**100%**) compared to DCS-involved children across the state (**84%**), and more likely than non-DCS-involved children in the region (**77%**).

To expand access to quality child care, DES provides enhanced reimbursement rates to child care providers that are considered high quality, including having a 3- to 5-star Quality First rating, national accreditation or applying Head Start Performance Standards. As of November 2025, quality child care providers across Arizona were reimbursed an additional **40%** above the standard reimbursement.

^m As of May 1, 2026, there were more than 12,000 children waitlisted statewide. For more information, see <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/child-care/how-apply-for-child-care-assistance>

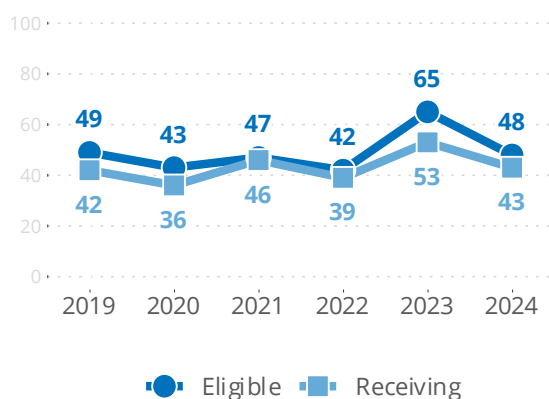
ⁿ Children involved with DCS include children who have been removed by DCS and placed with a foster family or kinship caregiver as well as children who are residing with their own family but receiving services from DCS (such as in-home family support and counseling). Families of these children are not required to pay a co-pay for child care.

Figure 10.

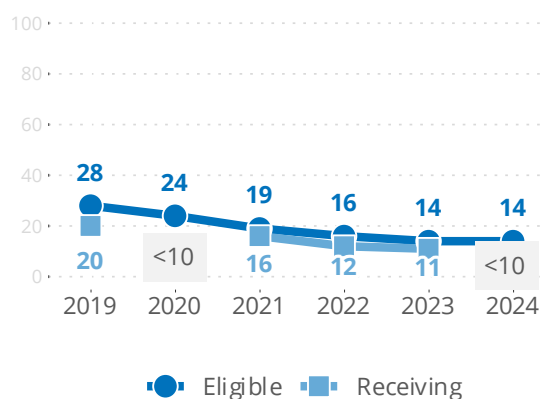
Early care and education assistance and quality

Children receiving child care assistance in the Graham/Greenlee Region¹

Non-DCS-involved children



DCS-involved children



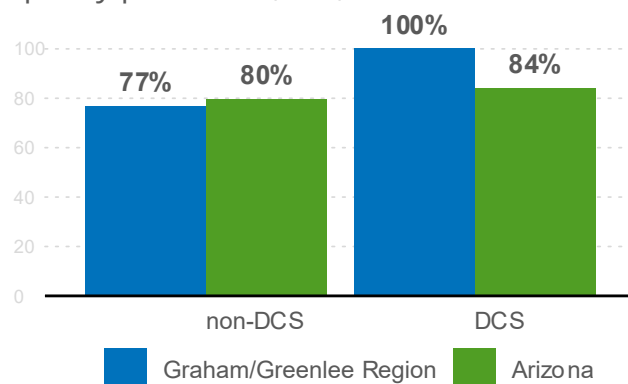
88%

of eligible families* in the region used child care assistance (2024)¹

*Non-DCS-involved families



Children receiving child care assistance in quality providers (2024)¹



+40%

Increased reimbursement rate for quality providers

defined by DES as providers with a 3-5 star Quality First Rating, national accreditation, or applying Head Start Performance Standards (Nov 2025)¹

¹ Arizona Department of Economic Security. (2024). [Child Care Assistance dataset].

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

K-12 education attendance and achievement

In addition to a quality early childhood education system, a community's K-12 education system can support positive outcomes for children, families and the overall well-being of the community. Individuals who have higher levels of education tend to live longer and healthier lives, and graduating from high school, in particular, is associated with better health, financial stability and socio-emotional outcomes.^{77, 78} Across Graham County, kindergarten through third grade enrollment has fluctuated since the 2018-19 school year but decreased slightly overall between the 2018-19 school year (n = **2,133**) and the 2024-25 school year (n = **2,099**). In Graham County, the lowest recent enrollment count was in the 2020-21 school year (n = **1,998**), compared with a high of **2,250** students enrolled in the 2022-23 school year. Greenlee County showed a different pattern, increasing overall from the 2018-19 school year (n = **587**) to the 2024-25 school year (n = **633**).^o

Some Arizona families use Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) to pay for eligible educational expenses, including private or online school tuition, individual public school classes and extracurriculars.⁷⁹ This program was established in 2011 for students with disabilities and expanded to universal eligibility in 2022.^{80, 81} These funds can also be spent on other approved education costs, such as tutoring, technology, textbooks, supplies and national standardized test fees.^{82, 83} In the 2024-25 school year, **484** students (preschool through grade 12) in Graham and Greenlee counties used ESAs, accounting for less than **1%** of Arizona's **94,600** ESA participants.⁸⁴ By comparison, there were **8,617** total students (preschool through grade 12) enrolled in public and charter schools in Graham and Greenlee counties in the 2024-25 school year. Key informants expressed concerns about ESA funds in the region, noting that while the program was necessary prior to universal eligibility, its expansion has contributed to an increase in participation among students who may have otherwise remained in public schools, particularly within an already small student population. This aligns with findings showing growth in ESA funds used for homeschooling and private school following universal eligibility.⁸⁵

Children's 3rd grade reading comprehension and proficiency skills can predict their future academic success, such as their likelihood of graduating high school and attending college.⁸⁶ Although they remain low, 3rd grade math assessment passing rates increased in recent years in both Graham and Greenlee counties and were higher than those rates across the state. Graham

^o Enrollment data were not available for Greenlee County in the 2022-23 or 2023-24 school years due to Arizona Department of Education (ADE) data redaction policies at the time of publication.

County increased from **45%** in the 2021-22 school year to **46%** in the 2023-24 school year, Greenlee County rose from **48%** to **50%**, and the statewide math passing rate rose from **40%** to **43%**. Conversely, 3rd grade reading assessment passing rates decreased or remained consistent in Graham and Greenlee counties from the 2021-22 to 2023-24 school years. Graham County decreased from **41%** to **39%** and Greenlee County stayed at **41%** both years. During that period the statewide reading passing rate declined from **41%** to **39%**.

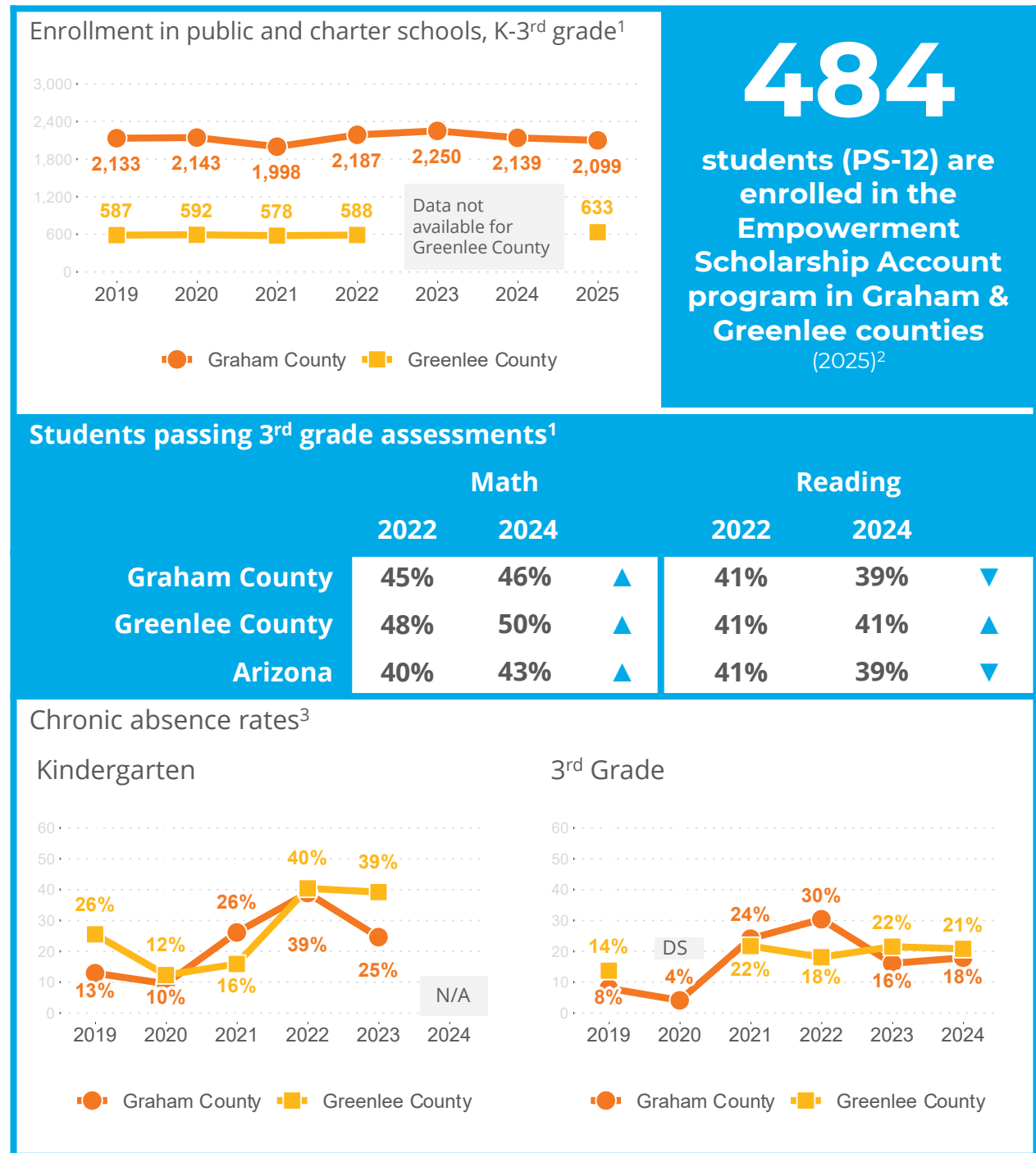
School attendance is an important factor in predicting the academic performance and future health of children. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% of school days in a school year, predicts a student experiencing academic difficulties and even dropping out of school entirely.⁸⁷ Following the COVID-19 pandemic, chronic absenteeism has become a major issue in school districts nationwide.⁸⁸ One-quarter (**25%**) of all kindergarten students and **16%** of 3rd grade students in Graham County were chronically absent from school in the 2022-23 school year, compared to **13%** of kindergarten students and **8%** of 3rd grade students pre-pandemic in the 2018-19 school year. Greenlee County showed different year-to-year fluctuations but a similar pattern overall from before the pandemic to the most recent data available. More than one-third (**39%**) of kindergarteners and about one-fifth (**22%**) of 3rd graders in Greenlee County were chronically absent in the 2022-23 school year, compared to **26%** of kindergarteners and **14%** of 3rd graders in the 2018-19 school year. Statewide, the kindergarten chronic absence rate was **25.5%** and the 3rd grade chronic absence rate was **23.8%** in the 2022-23 school year.⁸⁹ Increasing attendance among kindergarten students can be particularly challenging in Arizona, because the state mandated age of school enrollment is 6 years; absences in kindergarten are often not considered truancy, meaning schools have fewer resources to address them.

Graduation and adult educational attainment

Understanding current high school graduation and dropout rates within the state provides insight into the assets and challenges faced by a community and its future workforce. In contrast to adults who dropped out of high school and even those that received a high school equivalency diploma (HSE, also commonly referred to as a GED), adults who graduated from high school have higher rates of employment, higher incomes and better overall health.⁹⁰ Four-year graduation rates in Graham and Greenlee counties have remained above the state's rates in recent years.⁹¹ In the 2023-24 school year, the four-year graduation rate was **85%** in Graham County and **89%** in Greenlee County, both above the statewide rate of **78%**.⁹² In that same year, the five-year graduation rate was **86%** in Graham County and **89%** in Greenlee County, again, above the **81%** statewide.⁹³

Figure 11.

K-12 education attendance and achievement



¹ Arizona Department of Education. (2025). [October 1 Enrollment, Graduation Rates, Dropout Rates, State Assessment dataset].

² Arizona Department of Education. (2025). [Empowerment Scholarship Account Enrollment].

³ Maricopa Association of Governments. (2026). [ReadOn Arizona MapLIT dashboard reports: enrollment, chronic absences, assessments].

Notes: Chronic absences are defined as children missing 10% or more school days. Schools reported absences data very differently in academic year 2019-20 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote learning. Absences data were not available for kindergarteners in academic year 2023-24.

Compared to the U.S. as a whole, Arizona has a larger proportion of disconnected youth, defined as teenagers ages 16 to 19 who are neither attending school nor employed,^p which has been linked to negative physical and mental health outcomes and higher rates of unemployment.⁹⁴ Dropout rates for 7th to 12th grade students in Graham and Greenlee counties have fluctuated since the COVID-19 pandemic. Rates in Graham County varied between **3%** and **5%** between the 2018-19 and 2023-24 school years. Rates in Greenlee County varied more, ranging from **1%** to **6%** between the 2018-19 and 2023-24 school years. Statewide, the 7th to 12th grade dropout rate was **5.3%** in the 2023-24 school year.⁹⁵

Education is a key mechanism for upward economic mobility. As educational attainment in a population increases, wages increase and rates of unemployment decrease.⁹⁶ Of U.S. adults working full time in 2021, median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree were \$29,000 higher than those with a high school degree.⁹⁷ According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, **86%** of adults 25 and older in the Graham/Greenlee Region had at least a high school education and **17%** had a bachelor's degree or more. Statewide, **89%** of adults had at least a high school education.⁹⁸ Nearly three in 10 (**29%**) adults in the region had some college but no degree; this includes individuals who received a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or other similar post-secondary credential. Key informants also noted a large workforce trained in trade skills in the region who may not be adequately reflected in this data.

Adult employment

Unemployment and underemployment^q can impact families in ways that affect children's health and well-being.⁹⁹ Unemployment can limit access to resources that support children's physical and mental health, like health insurance, and can also contribute to family stress, conflict, homelessness and child abuse.^{100, 101} Children with parents who have lost their jobs may also experience poorer school performance and behavioral issues, resulting in grade repetition, suspension or expulsion.¹⁰² Unemployment rates in Graham County and Greenlee County have followed the same trend over time as the state, but have consistently been equal to or just below state rates. Graham County had unemployment rates equal to or just below the state overall, while Greenlee County's rates were consistently about one to three percentage points lower than the state. After the spike in rates during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020,

^p Age ranges for "disconnected youth" vary by source, with some estimates including both teenagers ages 16-19 and young adults ages 20-24 and others focusing on only teenagers or young adults.

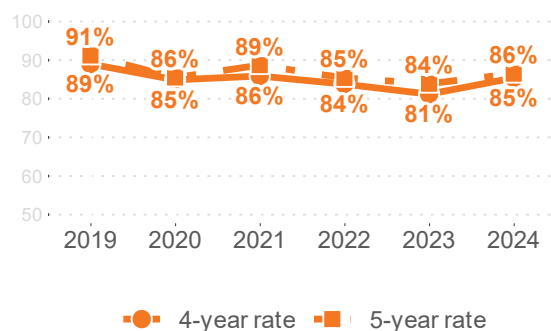
^q Underemployment means that someone works fewer hours than they would like or is in a job that does not require the skills or training that they have.

Figure 12.

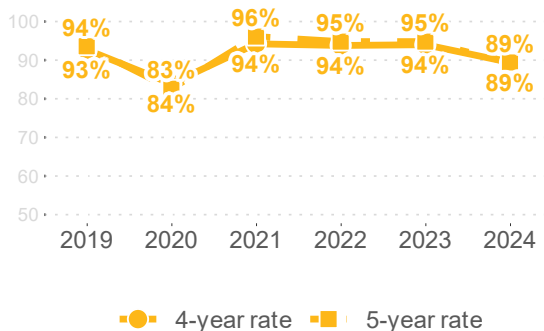
Graduation and adult educational attainment

Trends in 4-year and 5-year graduation rates¹

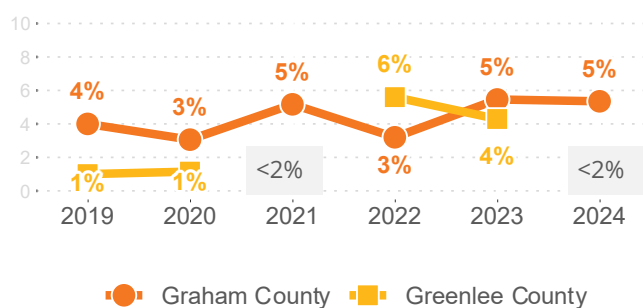
Graham County



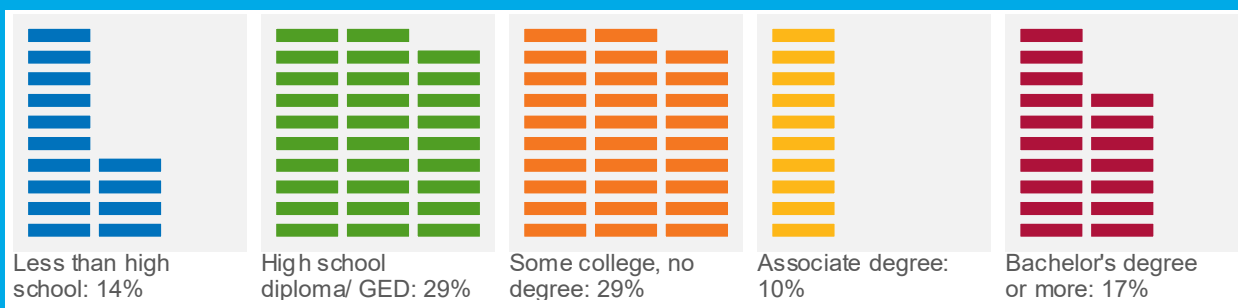
Greenlee County



Trends in 7th to 12th grade dropout rates¹



Level of education of adults in the Graham/Greenlee Region (2023)²



¹ Arizona Department of Education. (2025). [October 1 Enrollment, Graduation Rates, Dropout Rates, State Assessment dataset].

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

Notes: Graduation rates are calculated as the percentage of students in a cohort (typically those who enter ninth grade together) who graduate within 4 or 5 years. "Dropouts are defined as students who are enrolled in school at any time during the school year, but are not enrolled at the end of the school year and did not transfer, graduate or die" [State of Arizona Department of Education Graduation, Dropout & Persistence Rate Technical Manual].

unemployment rates improved and were mostly constant since 2022. In 2024, the unemployment rate was **3%** in Graham County, **2%** in Greenlee County and **4%** across Arizona.

The labor force participation rate includes all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). Persons not in the labor force are largely students, stay-at-home parents, retirees and institutionalized people. According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, over half (**53%**) of the population ages 16 and older were in the labor force in the Graham/Greenlee Region, meaning that nearly half (**47%**) of the population in the region was not working or actively looking for work. This labor force participation rate was notably lower than that for the state (**61%**) and U.S. (**64%**), though the region's unemployment rate mirrored the state (**5%**). Compared to the state, the unemployment rate in Graham County (**6%**) was slightly higher and was slightly lower in Greenlee County (4%). Some key employment sectors in Graham and Greenlee counties include public administration, retail trade, health care and social services, accommodation and food services, and construction. Key informants noted that another critical industry in the region that is not captured in these employment sectors is mining.

Quality early care and education programs rely on a strong workforce, but factors like low pay make it difficult to recruit and retain these educators. Early care and education is also a field with notable pay disparities;^r with those working as a home care provider, in a Head Start program or a public pre-K program getting paid varying amounts despite performing similar work. For example, the average kindergarten teacher's salary in Arizona is about twice that of an early educator for children birth to age 5.¹⁰³ In Arizona, there were **13,260** early education professionals active in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry^s in November 2025. The median wage for registered early education professionals in the state was **\$17/hour**, ranging from **\$21.91/hour** for directors to **\$16/hour** for assistant teachers. Notably, all of these median wages fell below the 2025 self-sufficiency standards for one adult and one infant in Graham (**\$25.79/hour**) and Greenlee (**\$25.23/hour**) counties, pointing to the reality that single parents working in early care in the region are likely to struggle to meet their basic needs.¹⁰⁴

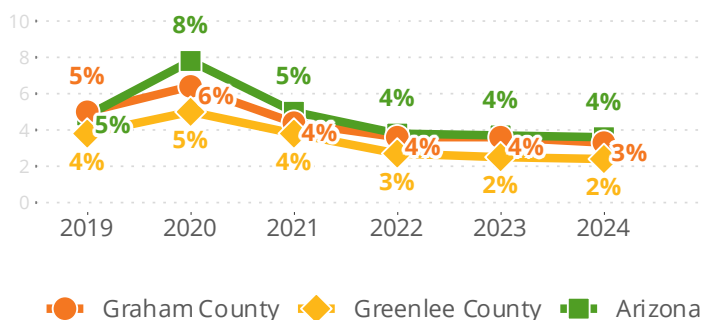
^r Programs such as Head Start and public pre-K programs receive federal funding supports that often allow for better wages and compensation in these settings compared to child care settings that don't receive these funds.

^s The Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry is Arizona's online hub for early childhood educators to track their employment, formal education, and professional development opportunities throughout their career. Early childhood educators access the registry to explore a directory of training, conferences, and other learning opportunities to support career development; fulfill state regulatory training requirements; apply for scholarships to pursue credentials, certificates, and degrees in early childhood education; and to establish career and professional development goals.

Figure 13.

Adult employment

Average annual unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) (2025)¹



Labor force participation (LFP) & unemployment (UE) rates (2023)²

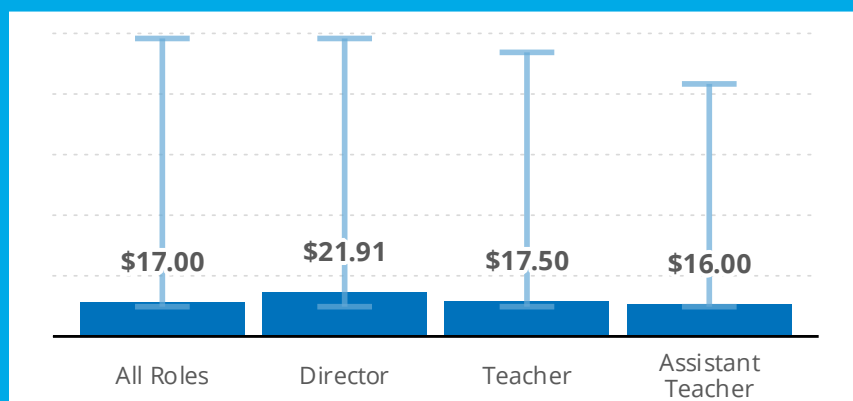
	LFP	UE
Graham/ Greenlee Region	53%	5%
Graham County	51%	6%
Greenlee County	59%	4%
Arizona	61%	5%

Top employment sectors in Southeastern Arizona (2025)¹

1. Public administration
2. Retail trade
3. Health care & social services
4. Accommodation & food services
5. Construction

Early education workforce wages in Arizona (Nov 2025)³

Median hourly wage by role for early education professionals in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (n = 13,260)



¹ Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity. (2025). [Local Area Unemployment Statistics & Industry Employment datasets].

² U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2019-2023.

³ First Things First. (2025). [Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry dataset].

Notes: The "labor force" is all persons who are working (employed) or looking for work (unemployed). The "labor force participation rate" is the fraction of the population who are in the labor force, whether employed or unemployed. Persons not in the labor force are mostly students, stay-at-home parents, retirees, and institutionalized people. The "unemployment rate" is the fraction of the civilian labor force who are unemployed. Southeastern Arizona includes Graham, Greenlee and Cochise counties. Educator wage data from the Early Childhood Workforce Registry reflect wages from a sample of early educators active in the registry including teachers (n=6,054), assistant teachers (n=5,535), and directors (n=1,671).

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

Maternal and infant health

Access to quality health care can promote positive health outcomes for mothers and infants.¹⁰⁵ Prenatal care is associated with reduced complications during pregnancy and birth, while also providing expectant parents with an opportunity to engage with health professionals.^{106, 107} The rate of timely prenatal care (care initiated in the first trimester) in the Graham/Greenlee Region declined steadily from 2019 (**75.4%**) to 2023 (**68.8%**), ending below the rate across the state in 2023 (**71.4%**). The proportion of births to mothers receiving no prenatal care in the region remained at **2.1%** or less during this same time, falling to **0.8%** in 2022 and 2023, while births to mothers with some prenatal care (i.e., one to four prenatal visits) increased from **5.2%** in 2019 to **7.3%** in 2023.

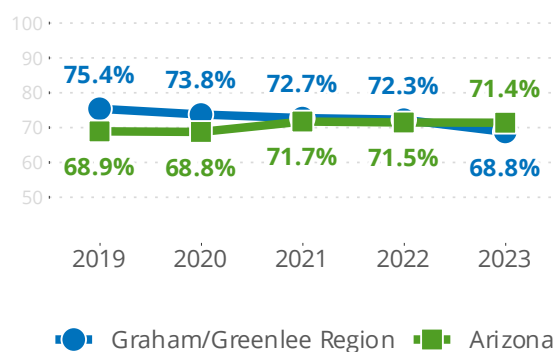
Outside of access to adequate prenatal care, other risk factors like low birth weight, preterm birth and the mother's age at birth can impact child health outcomes.^{108, 109} Low birth weight births (weighing less than 5 pounds and 8 ounces or 2,500 grams) and preterm births (those delivered before 37 weeks of pregnancy) can result in cognitive, respiratory, diabetes and gastrointestinal issues and are one of the largest drivers of infant mortality in the U.S.¹¹⁰ The Graham/Greenlee Region had a slightly larger proportion of low-birth-weight births than Arizona between 2019 and 2022, before decreasing below state rates in 2023 (**5.5%** and **8.1%**, respectively). From 2021 to 2023, there was a decrease in preterm births in the region (**11.9%** to **8.4%**). In both 2022 and 2023, the Graham/Greenlee Region met the Healthy People 2030 target for preterm births (no more than **9.4%**). Conversely, Arizona failed to meet the target since 2020, with **9.9%** of births in the state being preterm in 2023.

Teenage parents often experience increased stress and hardship in comparison to adult parents and other non-parent teenagers. They are less likely to complete high school or college and more likely to maintain a lower socioeconomic status and require public assistance to make ends meet.^{111, 112, 113, 114, 115} Between **6.3%** and **8.6%** of births in the Graham/Greenlee Region were to teenaged mothers (ages 19 and younger) between 2019 and 2023. While births to teenage mothers in the region fluctuated during this time, the state showed a declining trend from **5.5%** in 2019 to **4.5%** in 2023.

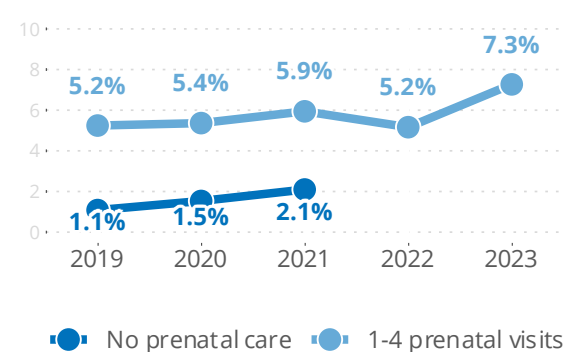
Figure 14.

Maternal and infant health

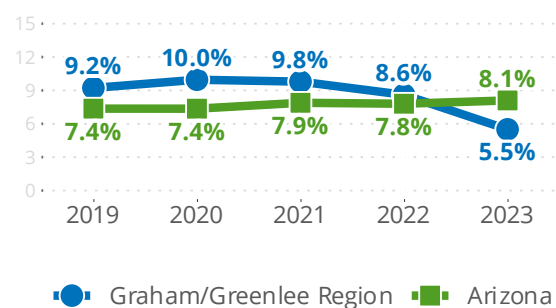
Births to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester¹



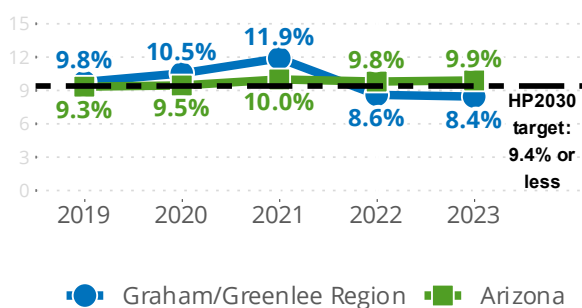
Births to mothers with inadequate prenatal care¹



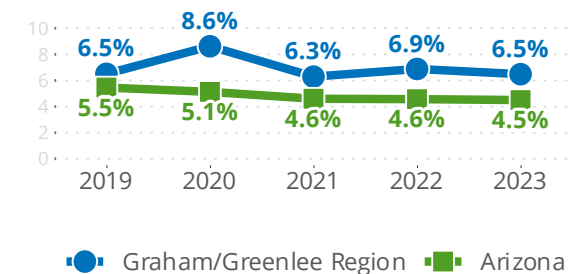
Low birth weight births (less than 2,500 grams)¹



Preterm births (less than 37 weeks gestation)^{1,2}



Births to teenaged mothers¹



¹ Arizona Department of Health Services. (2025). [Vital Statistic dataset].

² Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). [Healthy People 2030 Objectives: MICH-02, MICH-07].

Access to care and service navigation

Health insurance coverage is an important indicator of whether families can access, afford and utilize medical care, including access to well-child visits and developmental screenings at a lower cost. According to 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, **96%** of young children birth to age 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region had health insurance, a higher proportion than the **93%** of young children insured statewide.¹¹⁶ Between 2019 and 2022, the number of young children birth to age 5 in the region enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS; Arizona's Medicaid program) steadily increased, reaching a high of **1,843** young children in 2022. Enrollment declined each year after 2022, following statewide trends and likely influenced by the post-pandemic requirement that all members enrolled in AHCCCS reverify their enrollment starting in April 2023.¹¹⁷

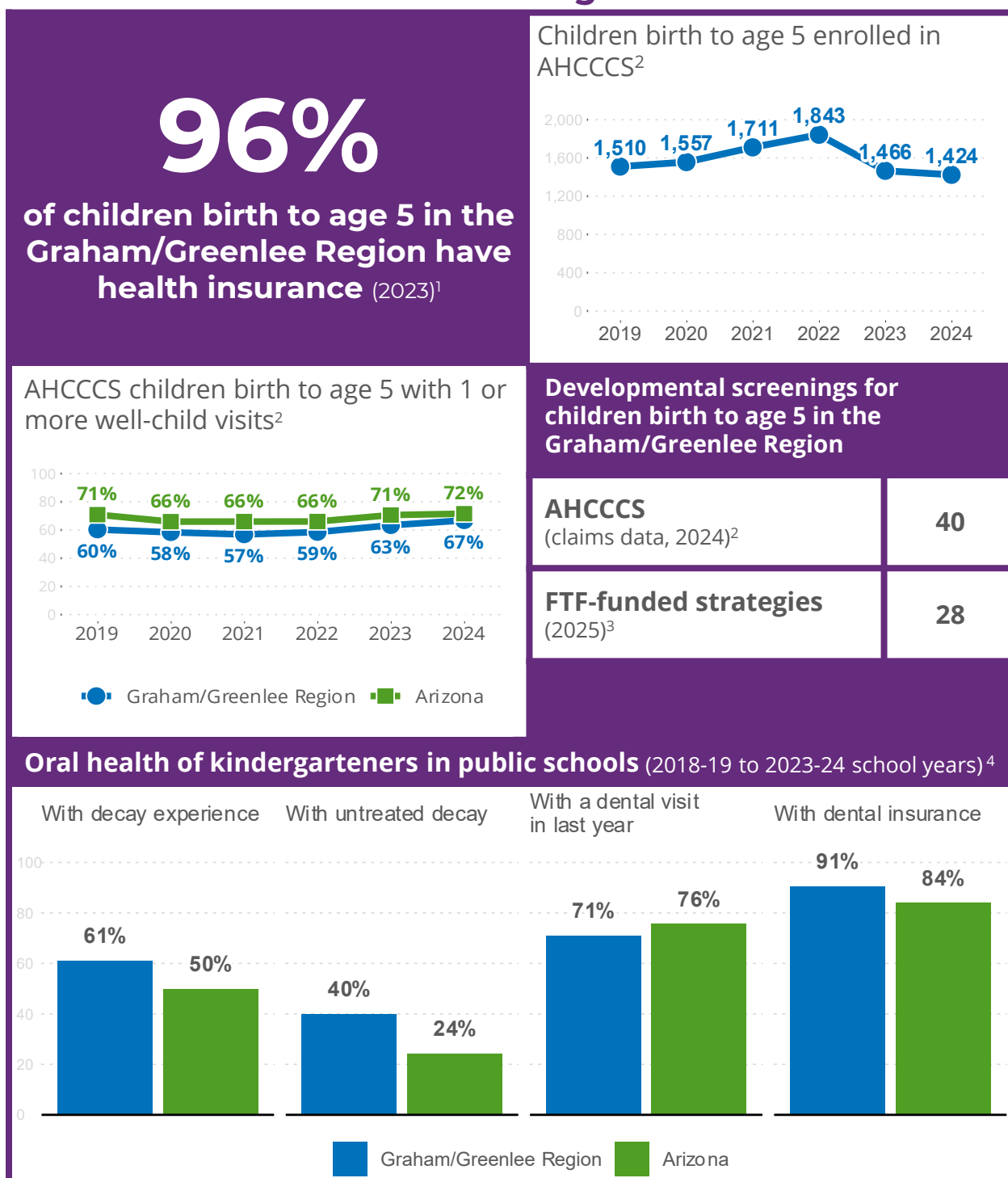
Well-child visits provide scheduled opportunities for pediatricians to monitor growth and development, administer immunizations, observe familial dynamics and provide guidance to caregivers on essential topics and emerging milestones.^{118, 119, 120} Between 2019 and 2024, between **57%** and **67%** of children birth to age 5 enrolled in AHCCCS in the Graham/Greenlee Region had one or more well-child visits, falling just below young children statewide (**66% - 72%**).

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that providers ask parents about developmental concerns at all infant and well-child visits and have parents complete a standardized developmental screening at the 9-, 18- and 30-month appointments.¹²¹ Ensuring that children have access to timely and adequate screening and intervention services from birth to age 5 can be key for preparing children for kindergarten. In 2024, **40** developmental screenings for children birth to 5 in the region were covered by AHCCCS. In state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-25, **28** children birth to age 5 in the region received a developmental screening funded by the Home Visitation strategy. Together, this represented nearly **2%** of children birth to age 5 in the region based on the 2020 Census. Key informants noted that this may be an underestimate, as children with AHCCCS often use the emergency room for well-child visits in the region.

Oral health is a fundamental component of overall health, well-being and self-confidence. Children with dental pain and lower oral health-related quality of life have more school absences and worse academic performance.^{122,123,124} In the Graham/Greenlee Region, **61%** of kindergarteners in public schools experienced some type of tooth decay and **40%** had untreated decay during the 2018-19 through 2023-24 school years, surpassing the state's rates for decay experience (**50%**) and untreated decay (**24%**). While the prevalence of decay was concerning, the Graham/Greenlee Region had a larger proportion of children who had dental insurance (**91%**) than across the state (**84%**), although a lower proportion who had a dental visit in the last year (**71%** and **76%** respectively).

Figure 15.

Access to care and service navigation



Immunization and child mortality

Immunization serves as the best method to prevent communicable childhood diseases in children and their communities. When enough children are immunized, the protection even extends to those who are unable or who choose not to be vaccinated.¹²⁵ In Arizona, one of the required immunizations to enroll in preschool and kindergarten is measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).¹²⁶ Both the Graham/Greenlee Region and Arizona had declining MMR immunization rates in kindergarteners in recent years. Arizona's coverage declined slightly from **89.9%** during the 2022-23 school year to **88.7%** in the 2024-25 school year, while the region's coverage decreased from **89%** in the 2022-23 school year to **87.8%** the following year. This means that MMR coverage in the region and state were below the threshold for herd immunity of **95%**, and neither the region nor the state met the Healthy People 2030 target of **95%** or higher.¹²⁷ This is especially concerning as Arizona has been experiencing an active measles outbreak, although promisingly neither Graham nor Greenlee had any cases of measles as of June 4, 2026.[†]

Children may be exempted from vaccination based on medical restrictions, religious beliefs or personal beliefs. Medical exemptions can apply to students of all ages, while religious belief exemptions apply to students in early care and education programs and personal belief exemptions apply to K-12 students.¹²⁸ Exemptions among kindergarteners in the Graham/Greenlee Region were consistently higher than exemptions among children in child care, and increased overall between the 2020-21 and 2024-25 school years, with **7%** kindergarteners in the region receiving a personal belief exemption in the 2024-25 school year, compared to the **3.1%** of children in child care receiving a religious exemption that same year. For both children in child care and kindergarteners in the region, exemptions from all immunizations gradually increased in recent years, with **0.9%** of children in child care and **3%** of children in kindergarten exempt from all immunizations in the 2024-25 school year. Both of these rates were lower compared to exemptions for children in child care (**4.8%**) and kindergartener (**4.7%**) statewide that year.¹²⁹

Healthy People 2030 set a target of no more than **5.0** infant deaths per 1,000 live births, which neither the Graham/Greenlee Region nor the state met between 2021 and 2023. The infant mortality rate for the region was **7.5** deaths per 1,000 live births, higher than the statewide rate (**5.7**). Graham County's rate was lower (**4.9**) and met the Healthy People 2030 infant mortality target, while Greenlee County had no infant deaths during this time.

In contrast, between 2021 and 2023, mortality for children ages 1-4 was much higher in Graham County (**45.2** deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-4) compared to the state (**29.8**). In Greenlee

[†] For more up-to-date case counts see <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/measles/index.php>

County, there were also no child deaths during this period. It is important to note that Graham County has a relatively small population of young children (**2,556** children age 1-4 according to the 2020 Census), so the young child mortality rate equates to a very small number of child deaths. However, these data do suggest that young children in Graham County face higher risks of death than children statewide.

Young children with special needs

Timely connection with early intervention services—such as speech, physical, occupational and behavioral therapy— can critically shape school readiness and the developmental trajectory of young children with medical conditions, developmental delays and even certain risk factors for delays.¹³⁰ In Arizona, the Department of Economic Security's (DES) Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP), the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), and the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) Early Childhood Special Education Program each play a role in providing services to families with children who have special needs.

AzEIP^u provides early intervention and a variety of supportive services to families of children birth to age 2 with developmental delays or disabilities.¹³¹ In state fiscal year (SFY) 2024, children birth to age 2 in the Graham/Greenlee Region were most frequently referred to AzEIP by parents or other family members (**53%**). Physicians were the second most common referral source, with nearly one-third of referrals (**32%**), followed by a health or service agency (**8%**), a hospital or health facility (**3%**) or the Department of Child Safety (DCS) (**1%**). Less than half (**44%**) of young children referred to AzEIP in the Graham/Greenlee Region were found eligible for or received services, including **43%** who received services and **1%** found eligible without beginning services within the fiscal year. Forty percent of referred children were assessed as not eligible for services (**39%**) or screened out (**1%**). The percentage of children assessed as not eligible for services in the region was notably higher than that seen across the state (**22%**).¹³² In an additional **15%** of referrals, families were either not interested in services (**9%**) or not able to be reached (**6%**).

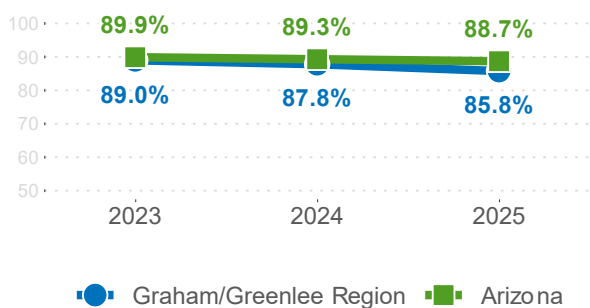
In SFY 2024, the number of children birth to age 2 who received services from AzEIP in the region reached a nearly seven year low, with only **36** children birth to age 2 served that year. The **36** children served by AzEIP in SFY 2024 represents **2.1%** of children birth to age 2 residing in the region per the 2020 Census. This is lower than that seen across the state (**2.5%**) and country (**4.3%**), and national research suggests that many more young children would likely benefit from early intervention than are receiving it.^{133, 134}

^u For more information on AzEIP (which is a division of the Department of Economic Security), visit <https://www.azdes.gov/azeip/>

Figure 16.

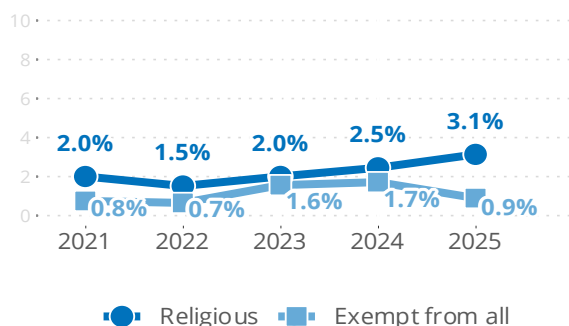
Immunization and child mortality

Kindergarten MMR immunization rates¹

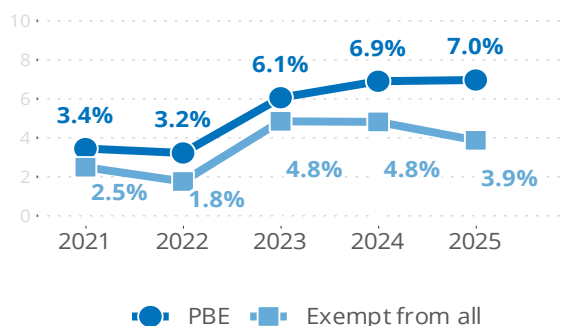


Immunization exemption rates¹

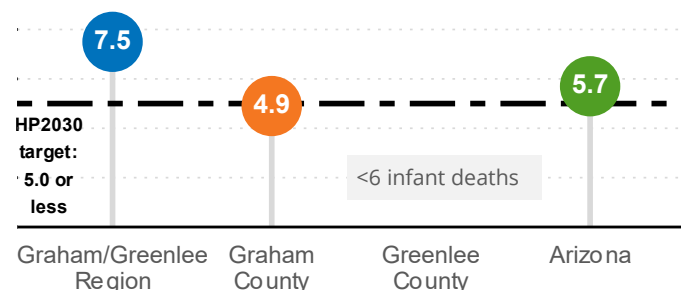
Child care



Kindergarten



Infant mortality rate, deaths per 1,000 live births (2021-2023 combined)^{2,3}



Young child mortality rate, deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-4 (2021-2023 combined)²

Graham County	45.2
Greenlee County	0
Arizona	29.8

¹ Arizona Department of Health Services. (2025). [Child Care & Kindergarten Immunizations datasets].

² Arizona Department of Health Services. (2025). [Vital Statistic dataset].

³ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). [Healthy People 2030 Objectives: MICH-02, MICH-07].

Note: PBE in the kindergarten exemption figure stands for personal belief exemption. There were between 1 and 5 infant deaths in Greenlee County between 2021 and 2023.

Children who receive a diagnosis of autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, cognitive or intellectual disability or down syndrome may also become eligible for services through DDD.^v The number of children birth to age 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region receiving DDD services fluctuated between SFY 2018 and SFY 2024 from highs of **25** young children served in SFY 2018 and 2022 to a low of **10** young children in SFY 2021. Qualifying children may receive services from AzEIP and/or DDD, a number which can be used to estimate the total number of young children receiving early intervention services in a region. A total of **54** children birth to age 5 in the region received services from AzEIP and/or DDD in SFY 2024. This equates to **1.4%** of all children birth to 5 in the Graham/Greenlee Region based on estimates from the 2020 Census.

Preschool to 3rd grade students with special needs

As a child with special needs approaches age 3, they can be transferred from AzEIP to the Early Childhood Special Education Program to receive services through their local education agency (LEA).^w In the Graham/Greenlee Region, the number of children aged 3 to 5 receiving special education services through their LEA decreased from a recent high of **118** in state fiscal year (SFY) 2018 to **105** in SFY 2022, representing an **11%** decrease overall. Across Arizona, the number decreased from a recent high of **10,521** in SFY 2020 to **8,086** in SFY 2022, a **23%** decrease.

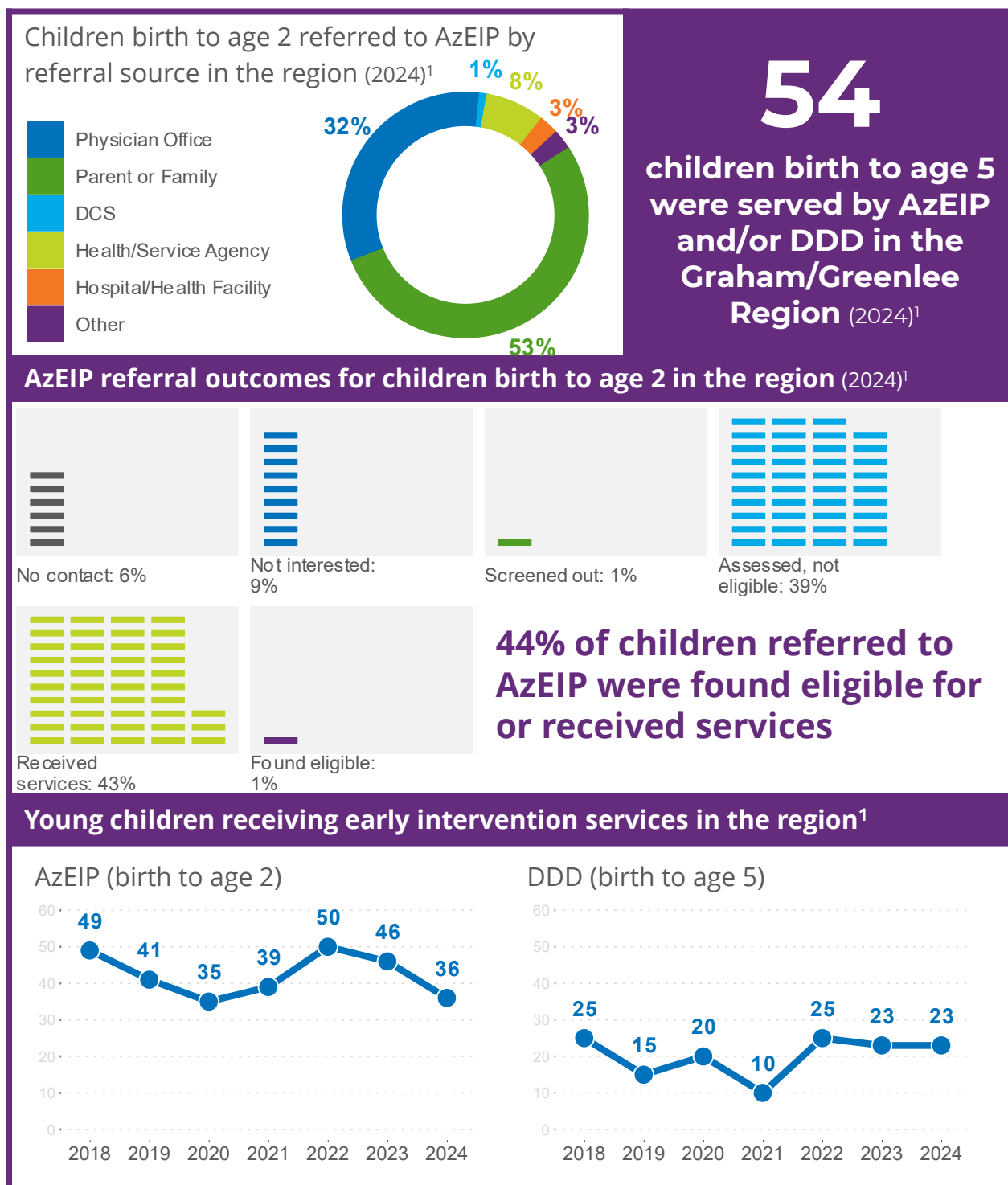
Conversely, the number of K-3rd grade students enrolled in special education across the state showed an overall increase from SFY 2018 (**36,468**) to SFY 2022 (**37,334**). The region had a similar pattern, increasing from **309** K-3rd grade children in SFY 2018 to **394** in SFY 2022. Notably, these numbers are higher than early intervention participation would suggest, which may reflect the number of children not getting an adequate assessment of their needs and abilities until they enter the public school system.

^v For more information on DDD (which is a division of the Department of Economic Security), visit <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities>

^w For more information on ADE's Early Childhood Special Education program, visit <https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/early-childhood-special-education> and <https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/early-childhood-special-education-child-find>

Figure 17.

Young children with special needs



¹ Arizona Department of Economic Security. (2024). [Arizona Early Intervention Program & Division of Developmental Disabilities datasets].

Note: Data on young children receiving services reflect the Oct 1 snapshot of AzEIP services, not a cumulative total throughout the year.

Of children ages 3 to 5 receiving special needs services, most were diagnosed with a speech language impairment (SLI, **46%**) or developmental delay (DD, **39%**) with the remaining **15%** having a diagnosis of preschool severe delay^x (PSD, **14%**) or other diagnosis^y (**1%**). Speech language impairment (**44%**) was also most common among kindergarten through 3rd grade students in special education, followed by developmental delay (**19%**), specific learning disability (SLD, **17%**), autism (**12%**), or another diagnosis (**8%**).

^x In Arizona, preschool severe delay is defined as performance on a norm-referenced assessment that is more than three standard deviations below the mean for typically developing children in the areas of cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional or adaptive development.

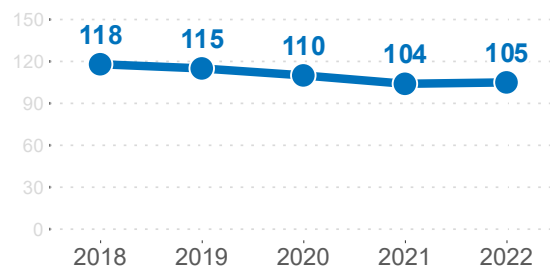
^y The most common disabilities in the "Other" category are other health impairments (these are usually chronic health conditions that affect a child's ability to attend or participate in school), intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, hearing or vision impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments and deaf-blindness.

Figure 18.

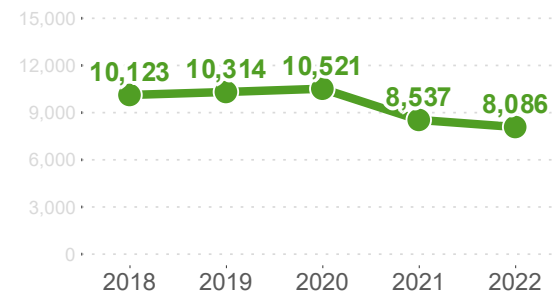
Preschool to 3rd grade students with special needs

Children age 3-5 receiving special education services from local school districts¹

Graham/Greenlee Region

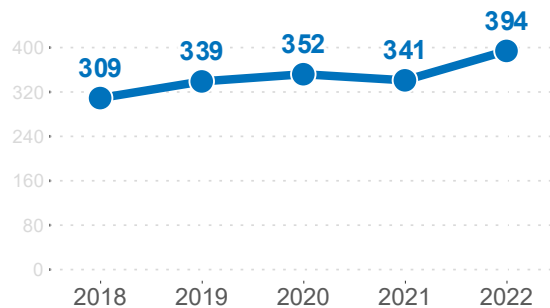


Arizona

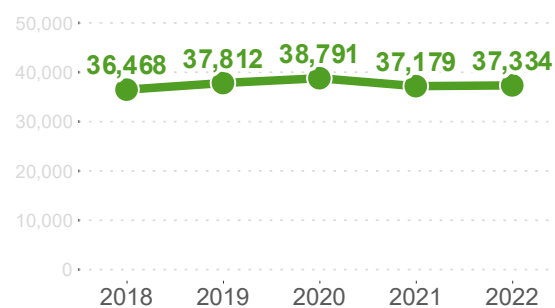


K-3rd grade students enrolled in special education in public and charter schools¹

Graham/Greenlee Region

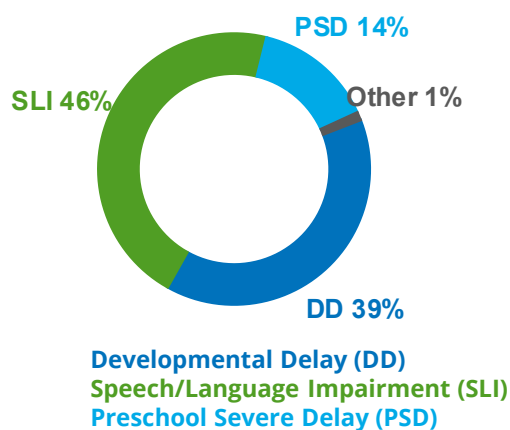


Arizona

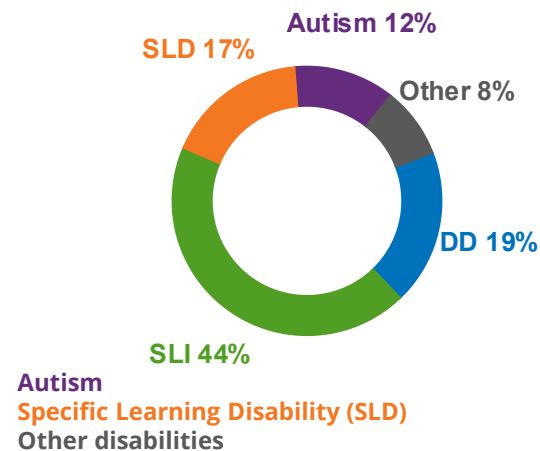


Primary disability for children receiving services in the region (2022)¹

Children ages 3-5



K-3rd grade students



¹ Arizona Department of Education. (2023). [Exceptional Student Services dataset].

Note: Most common disabilities in the "Other" category are other health impairments (these are usually chronic health conditions that affect a child's ability to attend or participate in school), intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, hearing or vision impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, and deaf-blindness.

MAPS & METHODS

Methods

U.S. Census and American Community Survey Data. The U.S. Census^z is an enumeration of the population of the United States conducted every ten years, and includes information about housing, race, and ethnicity. The 2020 U.S. Census data are available by census block. There are about 108,000 inhabited blocks in Arizona, each with an average population of 66 people. The 2020 U.S. Census data for the region presented in this report were calculated by identifying each block in the region and aggregating the data across all of those blocks. With the implementation of new privacy measures by the U.S. Census, some data previously available at the block level, such as grandchildren living in a grandparent's households or counts of households with children birth to age 5, are now only published at the block group or tract level. Regional estimates for these indicators were calculated by aggregating data over the census tracts which are wholly or partially contained within the region. Data from partial census tracts were apportioned according to the percentage of the 2020 U.S. Census population in that tract living inside the region.

The American Community Survey (ACS)^{aa} is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau each month by mail, telephone and face-to-face interviews. It covers many different topics, including income, language, education, employment and housing. ACS data are available by census tract. Arizona is divided into approximately 1,750 census tracts, each with an average population of 3,900 people. ACS data for the region were calculated by aggregating over the census tracts which are wholly or partially contained in the region. The data from partial census tracts were apportioned according to the percentage of the 2020 U.S. Census population in that tract living inside the region. The most recent and most reliable ACS data are averaged over the past five years; those are the data included in this report. They are based on surveys conducted from 2019 to 2023. In general, the reliability of ACS estimates is greater for more populated areas. Statewide estimates, for example, are more reliable than county-level estimates.

Child care capacity calculations. Lists of child care providers are maintained by multiple state agencies in Arizona, including the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), which licenses child care centers; the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), which maintains the list of child care providers in Arizona who are active within the National Data System of Child Care NACCRRAware database; the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), which tracks preschool enrollment in public and charter schools; and First Things First (FTF), which administers the Quality First program. The ADHS child care licensing database was used as the primary source for child

^z For more information, see <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census.html>

^{aa} For more information, see <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html>

care capacity calculations in this report, as analyses of both statewide and region-level data showed that most child care slots for regulated providers in the region are provided by centers. Centers that only serve children ages 5-12 were removed from child care capacity calculations, as these are typically before- & after-school programs that only serve school-age children. This report also used data from the DES child care provider list to estimate the number of registered care providers and their capacity by type of provider: centers (including Head Start centers), schools and homes (both group home and family home providers). For all tables, providers were geocoded to regions and sub-regions using addresses or coordinates provided in the state agency datasets to assign them to regions and sub-regions. Comparisons of child care capacity to the young child population are meant to provide a relative assessment of the abundance or scarcity of child care supply relative to potential demand. The child care data in this report do not reflect the capacity of unlicensed, unregulated or informal child care providers in the region. The estimated supply may also over-estimate availability in regulated care as it did not account for child care providers that operate under licensed capacity by choice or children who enroll in multiple facilities (e.g., a child who attends part-day Head Start or school-based preschool in the morning and a child care center in the afternoon).

First Things First (FTF) strategy data. Data related to FTF-funded strategies were provided for this report by FTF staff. These data included regional estimates of oral health indicators and hearing, vision, socio-emotional and developmental screening reach, zip code-level service data for home visitation programs, statewide workforce registry wage data and provider-level Quality First participation and enrollment data. The vendor used an apportioning file provided by FTF to create regional estimates of home visitation services from the zip-code level file.

Early education and service data from the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES). Data related to child care assistance, Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) referrals, outcomes and services, and Division of Developmental Disabilities services were provided by DES. These data were geocoded to regions and sub-regions by staff at DES using a custom shapefile provided by the vendor.

Health data from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). Data related to births, infant and maternal health, immunization rates at child care and school facilities, infant and child mortality and enrollment and participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) were provided by ADHS. All data apart from immunization data were geocoded to regions and sub-regions by staff at ADHS using a custom shapefile provided by the vendor. The vendor geocoded child care and school facilities to regions using addresses or coordinates provided in the immunization datasets to create custom immunization coverage estimates.

Health data from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). FTF partnered with the Arizona State University Center for Health Information and Research (CHiR) to create

custom tabulations of health claims data for young children birth to age 5 enrolled in AHCCCS health care plans. These estimates, at the state, county, regional and sub-regional levels, were provided to the vendor for inclusion in this report.

Employment and industry data from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Data for unemployment rates^{bb} and major employment sectors^{cc} were obtained from the OEO for counties and multi-county areas (which combine 2-4 small counties to produce a more reliable estimate). The top five employment sectors for each county or multi-county area reflect those with the most overall employees in Quarter 4 of 2024. The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, the underlying data source for these employment estimates, does not capture farm employment, so agricultural workers are not reflected in these data.

Education data from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). For past FTF Regional Needs and Assets reports, regional estimates for education data were obtained through a custom tabulation of unredacted data files provided by ADE. Access to unredacted data files was not available for this report. Instead, publicly-available data files published by ADE^{dd} were used to examine trends in enrollment, assessment results, graduation and dropout rates, and data on chronic absenteeism were obtained via the Maricopa Association of Governments and ReadOn Arizona MAPLit data tool.^{ee} Due to the frequency of data suppression in these files to protect student privacy, data could not be reliably aggregated across schools or districts to create regional estimates. Data on services for students with disabilities by grade are not publicly available for geographies smaller than the state, so custom regional estimates from the 2024 Regional Needs and Assets reports were used in this report.

Change calculations. Unless otherwise specified, changes in counts of data over time (i.e., percent increase or decrease) are calculated by subtracting the earlier number (e.g., a 2010 count) from the later number (e.g. the 2020 count) and dividing the result by the earlier number (e.g. the 2010 count). This calculation provides the percent change between the most recent count and the prior count, relative to the prior count.

Data availability. State agency data in this report were provided to FTF by agency staff through a data request process initiated in February 2025 and extending to March 2026. Wherever possible, data were requested for multiple years to allow for the visualization of trends as well as for the most recent year available. However, due to both the constraints of agency staff and agency-maintained datasets as well as the timing of requests, not all data were available on the same time

^{bb} For more information, see <https://o eo.az.gov/labor-market/unemployment>

^{cc} For more information, see <https://o eo.az.gov/labor-market/industry-employment>

^{dd} For more information, see <https://www.azed.gov/accountability-research/data>

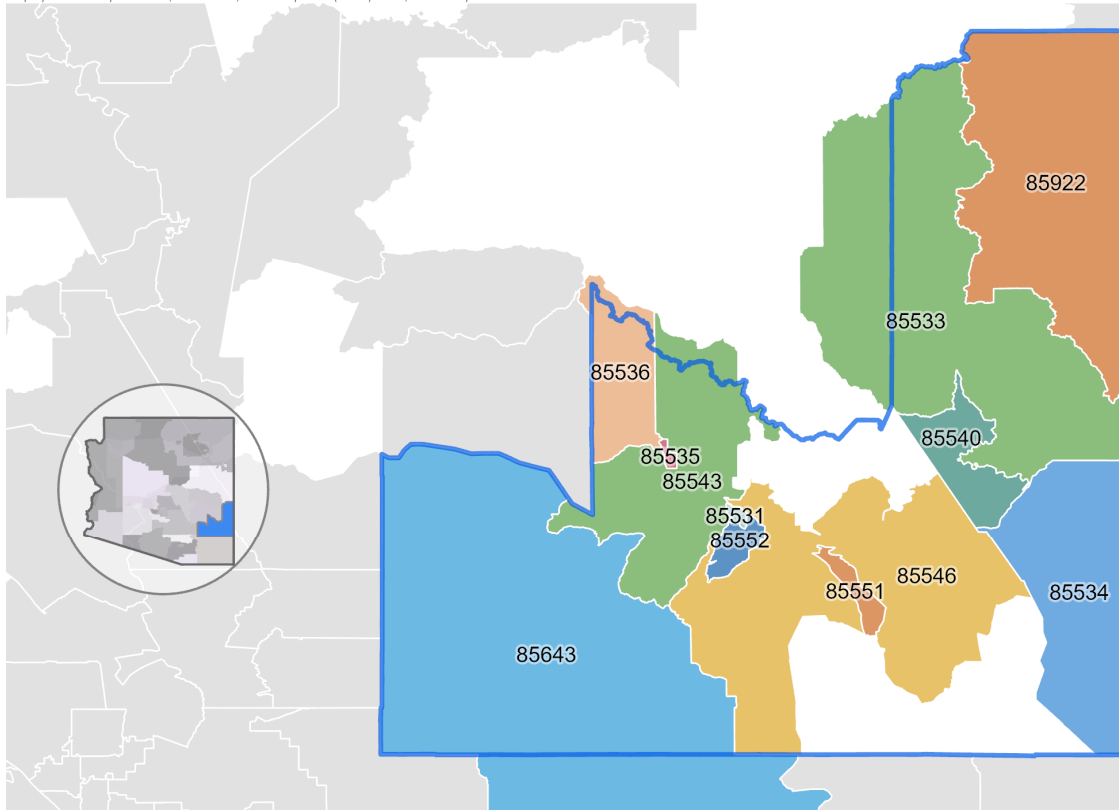
^{ee} For more information, see <https://geo.azmag.gov/maps/readonaz/>

and geographic scales. This report attempts to include the most recent and complete data available, with notes indicating where data were not available for particular time periods or geographies.

Data suppression. To protect the confidentiality of program participants, the FTF Data Dissemination and Suppression Guidelines preclude reporting of social service and early education programming data if the count is less than 10 and data related to health or developmental delay if the count is less than 6. In addition, some data received from state agencies are suppressed according to their own guidelines. ADHS does not report counts between 1 and 5; DES does not report counts between 1 and 9; ADE does not report counts less than 11. Additionally, ADE requires suppression of the second-smallest value or the denominator in tables where a reader might be able to use the numbers provided to calculate a suppressed value. Throughout this report, information which is not available because of suppression guidelines is indicated by entries of "<6" or "<10" or "<11" for counts, or "DS" (data suppressed) for percentages. Data are sometimes not available for particular regions, either because a program did not operate in the region or because data are only available at the county level. Cases where data are not available will be indicated by an entry of "N/A", "NA" or a note that states "data not available."

Map of Zip Codes in the Region

Map by Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team, University of Arizona



Source: Custom map by the Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team using shapefiles obtained from First Things First and the U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Shapefiles (<https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>)

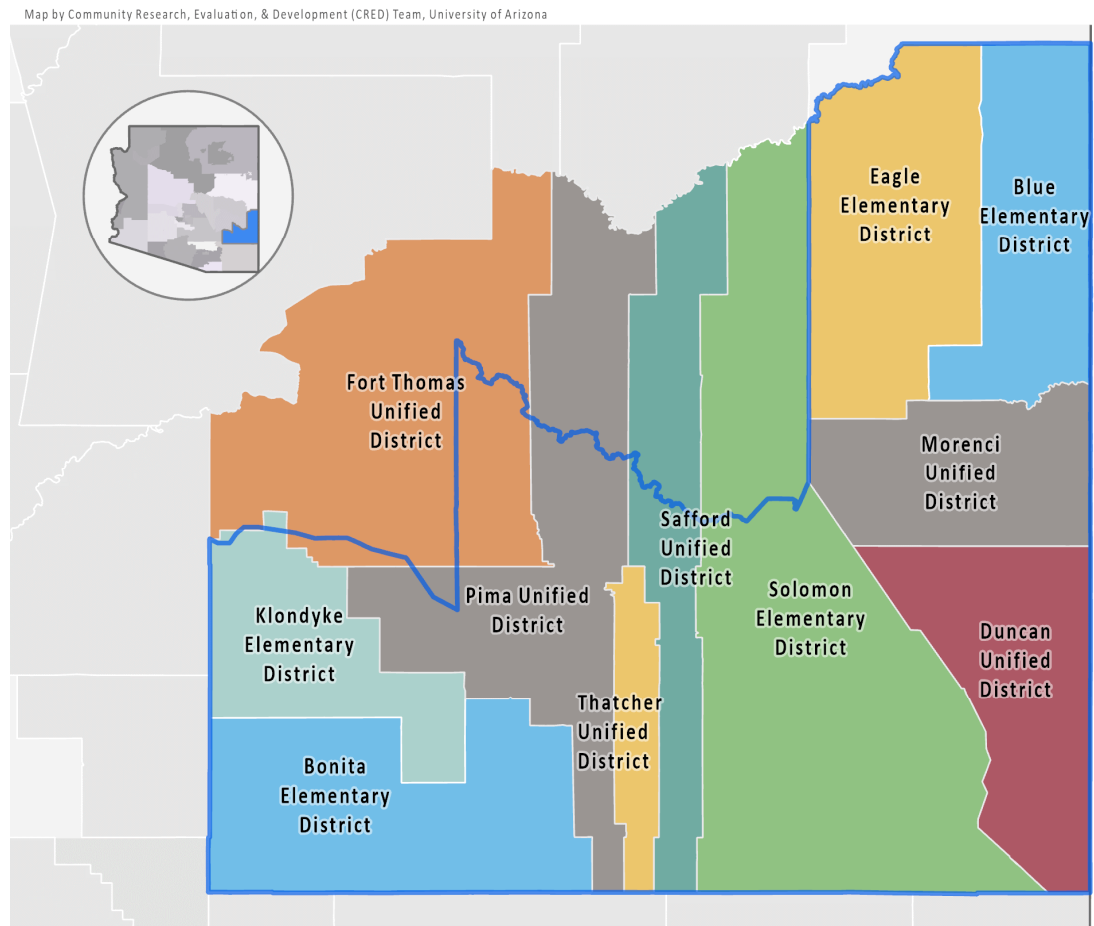
Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) in the Graham/Greenlee Region

Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA)	Population (all ages)	Percent of this ZCTA's total population living in the Graham/Greenlee Region	This ZCTA is shared with
Graham/Greenlee Region	43,376		
85531	761	100%	
85533	2,947	100%	
85534	2522	100%	
85535	28	100%	
85536	369	100%	
85540	4,026	100%	
85543	4,283	100%	
85546	20,100	100%	
85551	396	100%	
85552	6,887	100%	
85643	989	12%	Cochise Region
85922	68	100%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2020). 2020 Decennial Census, Demographic and Housing Characteristics, Table P1

Note: With the implementation of differential privacy in the 2020 Census, small area estimates now have injected 'noise' (error) to prevent accidental disclosure of Census responses. Geographies that are not primary census geographies, like ZCTAs, have noisier (or less accurate) estimates than primary geographies, like tracts.

Map of School Districts in the Region



Source: Custom map by the Community Research, Evaluation, & Development (CRED) Team using shapefiles obtained from First Things First and the U.S. Census Bureau TIGER/Line Shapefiles (<https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>)

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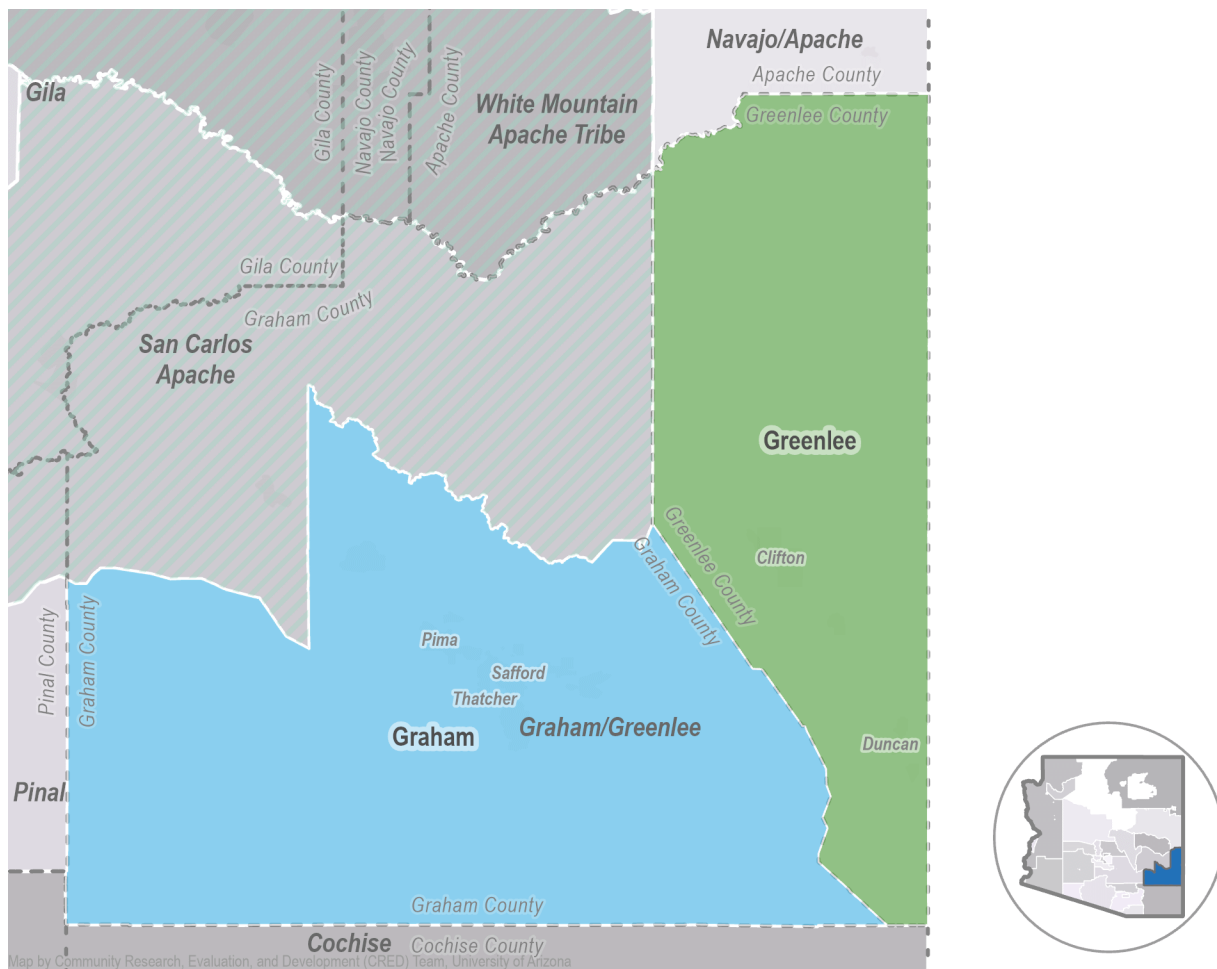
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SUB-REGIONAL FACTSHEETS

Communities vary in terms of needs and assets, even within the same First Things First (FTF) Region. In recognition of this, the following factsheets present a selection of indicators from this Regional Needs and Assets report at the sub-regional level. Examining differences within the region can help Regional Partnership Councils and local stakeholders focus their strategies and efforts to use resources effectively.

Sub-regions in the Graham/Greenlee Region



The factsheets that follow provide information about two sub-regions within the Graham/Greenlee Region.

The **Graham** sub-region is defined as Graham County excluding the San Carlos Apache reservation. It contains the city of Safford, the towns of Thatcher and Pima and the Census Designated Places (CDPs) of Fort Thomas, Bryce, Central, Cactus Flats, Swift Trail Junction, Solomon and San Jose.

The **Greenlee** sub-region is defined as Greenlee County and contains the towns of Clifton and Duncan and the CDPs of Morenci, York and Franklin.

A guide to the factsheets

Each factsheet contains data for a selection of indicators at the state, region and sub-regional level. Where possible, two timepoints are shown for each indicator with an arrow to indicate the direction of the trend (increase, decrease, no change) in the sub-region. In some cases, data were not available for a specific sub-region, indicated with **NA**. Additionally, some data were suppressed to protect individual data privacy in accordance with the FTF Data Policy, indicated with **DS**. The data in these factsheets were obtained through custom tabulations of publicly available data from the U.S. Census Bureau and through FTF requests to state agencies, specifically the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) via a partnership with the Arizona State University Center for Health Information & Research (CHiR). More details on how these tabulations and requests were made can be found in the *Maps & Methods Appendix* of this report.

The indicators included in each tabular factsheet are defined as follows:

Indicator	Description	Source
Total population	Overall population of all ages	2020 U.S. Census
Population of children (0-5)	Population of children birth to age 5	
Population living in poverty	Percent of the overall population living in households with incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold	2014-2018 & 2019-2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates
Children (0-5) living in poverty	Percent of children birth to age 5 living in households with incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold	
Low-income children (0-5) (<185% federal poverty level)	Number of children birth to age 5 living in households with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level (the income eligibility threshold for WIC)	
Housing costs 30% or more of household income	Percent of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs (i.e., considered “housing cost-burdened”)	
Children (0-5) with all present parents in the labor force	Percent of children birth to age 5 who live in households with all present parents who work or are looking for work (i.e., live with one parent who works or live with two parents, both of whom work)	

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Indicator	Description	Source
Language other than English spoken at home	Percent of households that speak Spanish or another language (other than English or Spanish). The most common languages spoken in the “Another” language category in Arizona are Native North American languages.	
Ratio of children (0-5) to licensed child care slots	Number of children birth to age 5 per available licensed child care slots. An area is considered a child care desert when the ratio of children to slots exceeds 3.0.	2020 U.S. Census; Oct 2023 & Jan 2025 ADHS licensing datasets
Registered care providers in 2025	Number of registered early care and education providers and their licensed capacity to enroll children. Providers are shown by type: centers (including Head Start centers), schools and homes (both group home and family home providers). Please note that capacity numbers are often higher than actual enrollment.	2025 DES child care provider dataset
Children (0-5) receiving child care assistance	Number of children birth to age 5 receiving DES child care assistance (not including those involved in the child welfare system)	2023 & 2024 DES
Educational attainment (ages 25 and older)	Percent of adults with at least a high school education (i.e., a high school diploma, some college, an associate, Bachelor’s or advanced degree) or a Bachelor’s degree or more (i.e., a Bachelor’s or advanced degree)	2014-2018 & 2019-2023 ACS estimates
Unemployment rate for the adult population (ages 16 and older)	Percent of adults who self-reported that they were unemployed	
Total births	Total number of births in the area, based on address provided on the birth certificate	2020-2021 & 2022-2023 ADHS Vital Statistics dataset
Maternal age 19 or younger	Percent of births to mothers age 19 or younger	
Low birth weight (<2500 grams)	Percent of babies born weighing 2,500 grams or less	
Preterm births (<37 weeks)	Percent of babies born at 37 weeks of gestation or earlier. The Healthy People 2030 target is 9.4% or less.	
Prenatal care (5+ prenatal visits)	Percent of births to mothers who had at least five prenatal visits	
Number of children (0-5) with AHCCCS	Number of children birth to age 5 enrolled in an insurance plan through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)	2022 & 2024 AHCCCS claims

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Indicator	Description	Source
AHCCCS-enrolled children (0-5) with at least 1 primary care provider visit	Percent of children birth to age 5 enrolled in AHCCCS who had a claim for at least one primary care visit	data processed by ASU CHiR
Children (0-5) receiving AzEIP, DDD or both services	Number of children birth to age 5 who received AzEIP, DDD or both services	SFY 2023 & 2024 DES

Graham	Years	Arizona	Graham/Greenlee Region	Graham	Change over time
Child, Family & Community Characteristics					
Total population ¹	Census 2020	7,151,502	43,376	33,813	
Population of children (0-5) ¹	Census 2020	480,744	3,794	2,813	
Population living in poverty ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	16.1% 12.8%	16.3% 12.5%	17.8% 13.0%	↓
Children (0-5) living in poverty ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	24.9% 17.9%	25.5% 10.5%	27.9% 9.1%	↓
Low-income children (0-5) (<185% federal poverty level) ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	47.2% 38.1%	48.4% 33.7%	50.4% 35.0%	↓
Housing costs 30% or more of household income ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	30.4% 29.4%	19.3% 18.4%	21.6% 21.5%	↓
Children (0-5) with all present parents in the labor force ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	61.1% 64.4%	49.5% 52.2%	52.9% 56.5%	↑
Language other than English spoken at home (2019-2023) ³	Spanish Another	19.2% 6.4%	15.0% 2.3%	14.5% 2.1%	
Early Education					
Ratio of children (0-5) to licensed child care slots ⁵	Oct 2023 Jan 2025	2.0 2.0	5.4 5.4	7.5 7.5	↔
Registered care providers in 2025 ⁴					
Centers	Number Capacity	2,427 260,689	12 795	9 522	
Schools	Number Capacity	714 72,967	3 203	2 88	
Homes	Number Capacity	755 5,063	4 16	2 8	
Children (0-5) receiving child care assistance ⁴	2023 2024	35,375 35,153	64 52	61 51	↓
Education & Workforce					
Educational Attainment (ages 25 and older) ^{2,3}					
At least a high school education	2014-2018 2019-2023	86.8% 89.1%	87.8% 85.7%	87.5% 85.0%	↓
Bachelor's degree or more	2014-2018 2019-2023	28.9% 32.6%	15.6% 16.8%	16.6% 15.8%	↓
Unemployment rate for the adult population (ages 16 and older) ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	6.4% 5.1%	6.7% 4.8%	6.7% 5.2%	↓
Child Health & Development					
Total births ⁵	2020-2021 2022-2023	154,638 156,236	1,094 1,032	855 820	↓
Characteristics of births ⁵					
Maternal age 19 or younger	2020-2021 2022-2023	4.9% 4.5%	7.4% 6.7%	7.7% 7.3%	↓
Low birthweight (<2500 grams)	2020-2021 2022-2023	7.6% 7.9%	9.9% 7.1%	9.4% 6.6%	↓
Preterm birth (<37 weeks)	2020-2021 2022-2023	9.7% 9.8%	11.2% 8.5%	10.3% 7.9%	↓
Prenatal care (5+ prenatal visits)	2020-2021 2022-2023	91.0% 91.7%	92.2% 92.8%	92.2% 93.2%	↑
Number of children (0-5) with AHCCCS ⁶	2022 2024	277,455 223,506	1,843 1,424	1,551 1,189	↓
AHCCCS-enrolled children (0-5) 1+ primary care provider visit ⁶	2022 2024	83.0% 86.0%	81.8% 83.6%	83.2% 86.0%	↑
Children (0-5) receiving AzEIP, DDD, or both services ⁴	SFY 2023 SFY 2024	9,991 10,706	60 54	48 40	↓

SOURCES: (1) US Census 2020; (2) American Community Survey 2014-2018; (3) American Community Survey 2019-2023; (4) Arizona Department of Economic Security; (5) Arizona Department of Health Services; (6) Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System data provided by ASU ChiR

NOTES:

DS: Data has been suppressed to protect privacy.

NA: Not available.

SUBREGION DEFINITION: The Graham sub-region is defined as Graham County excluding the San Carlos Apache reservation. It contains the city of Safford, the towns of Thatcher and Pima and the Census Designated Places (CDPs) of Fort Thomas, Bryce, Central, Cactus Flats, Swift Trail Junction, Solomon and San Jose.

Greenlee	Years	Arizona	Graham/Greenlee Region	Greenlee	Change over time
Child, Family & Community Characteristics					
Total population ¹	Census 2020	7,151,502	43,376	9,563	
Population of children (0-5) ¹	Census 2020	480,744	3,794	981	
Population living in poverty ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	16.1% 12.8%	16.3% 12.5%	11.9% 10.8%	↓
Children (0-5) living in poverty ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	24.9% 17.9%	25.5% 10.5%	18.0% 15.1%	↓
Low-income children (0-5) (<185% federal poverty level) ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	47.2% 38.1%	48.4% 33.7%	42.4% 29.6%	↓
Housing costs 30% or more of household income ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	30.4% 29.4%	19.3% 18.4%	12.2% 8.3%	↓
Children (0-5) with all present parents in the labor force ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	61.1% 64.4%	49.5% 52.2%	39.3% 39.7%	↑
Language other than English spoken at home (2019-2023) ³	Spanish Another	19.2% 6.4%	15.0% 2.3%	16.8% 3.1%	
Early Education					
Ratio of children (0-5) to licensed child care slots ⁵	Oct 2023 Jan 2025	2.0 2.0	5.4 5.4	3.0 3.0	↔
Registered care providers in 2025 ⁴					
Centers	Number Capacity	2,427 260,689	12 795	3 273	
Schools	Number Capacity	714 72,967	3 203	1 115	
Homes	Number Capacity	755 5,063	4 16	2 8	
Children (0-5) receiving child care assistance ⁴	2023 2024	35,375 35,153	64 52	DS DS	
Education & Workforce					
Educational Attainment (ages 25 and older) ^{2,3}					
At least a high school education	2014-2018 2019-2023	86.8% 89.1%	87.8% 85.7%	89.0% 88.1%	↓
Bachelor's degree or more	2014-2018 2019-2023	28.9% 32.6%	15.6% 16.8%	11.9% 20.4%	↑
Unemployment rate for the adult population (ages 16 and older) ^{2,3}	2014-2018 2019-2023	6.4% 5.1%	6.7% 4.8%	6.9% 3.5%	↓
Child Health & Development					
Total births ⁵	2020-2021 2022-2023	154,638 156,236	1,094 1,032	239 212	↓
Characteristics of births ⁵					
Maternal age 19 or younger	2020-2021 2022-2023	4.9% 4.5%	7.4% 6.7%	6.3% 4.2%	↓
Low birthweight (<2500 grams)	2020-2021 2022-2023	7.6% 7.9%	9.9% 7.1%	11.7% 9.0%	↓
Preterm birth (<37 weeks)	2020-2021 2022-2023	9.7% 9.8%	11.2% 8.5%	14.6% 10.8%	↓
Prenatal care (5+ prenatal visits)	2020-2021 2022-2023	91.0% 91.7%	92.2% 92.8%	92.5% 91.5%	↓
Number of children (0-5) with AHCCCS ⁶	2022 2024	277,455 223,506	1,843 1,424	292 235	↓
AHCCCS-enrolled children (0-5) 1+ primary care provider visit ⁶	2022 2024	83.0% 86.0%	81.8% 83.6%	74.3% 71.1%	↓
Children (0-5) receiving AzEIP, DDD, or both services ⁴	SFY 2023 SFY 2024	9,991 10,706	60 54	12 14	↑

SOURCES: (1) US Census 2020; (2) American Community Survey 2014-2018; (3) American Community Survey 2019-2023; (4) Arizona Department of Economic Security; (5) Arizona Department of Health Services; (6) Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System data provided by ASU ChiR

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SUBREGION DEFINITION: The Greenlee sub-region is defined as Greenlee County and contains the towns of Clifton and Duncan and the CDPs of Morenci, York and Franklin.