



2016

NEEDS AND ASSETS REPORT

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

La Paz/Mohave

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

2016

Needs and Assets Report

Prepared by

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Funded by

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

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February 10, 2017

Message from the Chair:

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Needs and Assets Report is conducted every two years. The assessment provides a snapshot of the current status of children and families in the region. It is a collection of useful data and community information that is used to help determine how to best invest resources to improve the lives of young children and families in the region.

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council takes great pride in the progress made over the years. Together with our partners and allies, we are delivering on our promise to help build a solid foundation for young children and their families. Strong relationships with partners throughout the region have allowed us to continue expanding access to quality early learning, health and family support services. Along the way, we've also endeavored to help improve coordination and communication among early childhood service providers and raise awareness of the importance of early childhood.

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council would like to thank our Needs and Assets vendor, the Community Research, Evaluation & Development (CRED) team in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona, for their knowledge, expertise and thoughtful analysis of the region.

Thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners, First Things First is making a real difference in the lives of our youngest citizens, not only in La Paz and Mohave counties, but throughout the entire State of Arizona.

We thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Riley

Frei,

Chair

Introductory Summary and Acknowledgments

Ninety percent of a child’s brain develops before kindergarten and the quality of a child’s early experiences impact whether their brain will develop in positive ways that promote learning. Understanding the critical role the early years play in a child’s future success is crucial to our ability to foster each child’s optimal development and, in turn, impact all aspects of wellbeing of our communities and our state.

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

The First Things First La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council recognizes the importance of investing in young children and ensuring that families and caregivers have options when it comes to supporting the healthy development of young children in their care. This report provides information that will aid the Council’s funding decisions, as well as our work with community partners on building a comprehensive early childhood system that best meets the needs of young children in our community.

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 La Paz/Mohave region. This information may also be useful to stakeholders in our area as they work to enhance the resources available to young children and their families and as they make decisions about how best to support children birth to 5 years old in our area.

Acknowledgments:

We want to thank the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the Arizona Child Care Resource and Referral, the Arizona Department of Health Services, the Arizona Department of Education, the Census Bureau, the Arizona Department of Administration- Employment and Population Statistics, and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System for their contributions of data for this report, and their ongoing support and partnership with First Things First on behalf of young children.

To the current and past members of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council, your vision, dedication, and passion have been instrumental in improving outcomes for young children and families within the region. Our current efforts will build upon those successes with the ultimate goal of building a comprehensive early childhood system for the betterment of young children within the region and the entire state.

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Executive Summary

Regional Description

The First Things First La Paz/Mohave Region is defined as the combined area of the two counties, not including the lands belonging to the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Hualapai Tribe, and the Kaibab Paiute Tribe. The region does include the Arizona portion of the land belonging to the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe.

Data Sources

The data contained in this report come from a variety of sources. Some data were provided to First Things First by state agencies, such as the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). Other data were obtained from publically available sources, including the 2010 U.S. Census, the American Community Survey (ACS), the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). In addition, regional data from the 2012 First Things first Family and Community Survey (FCS) are included.

Population Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census, the La Paz/Mohave Region had a population of 211,922 in 2010, of whom 13,469 (6%) were children under the age of six. According to the Arizona Department of Administration, the populations of children under six in both La Paz and Mohave counties (and statewide as well) were projected to decrease from 2010 to 2015. But by 2020, those populations are projected to be greater than the 2010 Census numbers. In both counties, the number of children under six is projected to grow by 6 percent from 2010 to 2020. Statewide, the number of children under six is projected to grow by 12 percent during the decade.

Some of the demographic characteristics of families in the La Paz/Mohave Region show interesting differences compared to the rest of the state. For example, in the state as a whole, 28 percent of children aged birth to 5 live with a foreign-born parent. The rate in La Paz County (31%) is similar to the state, but the rate is much lower in Mohave County (15%). Family living arrangements also vary by geographical level; among children living in a grandparent's household, a higher percentage reside in a grandparent's household with no parent present in the region (21%) than the state (15%), suggesting that resources supporting grandparents as primary caregivers may be valuable in the region, especially in Mohave County.

Differences also exist between the region, counties, and state relating to race, ethnicity, and language. Twenty-eight percent of young children in the La Paz/Mohave Region are Hispanic or Latino, including 50 percent in La Paz County and 27 percent in Mohave County, compared to 45 percent in the state of Arizona. The ethnicity of adults is quite different from that of the children at all geographical levels. Fewer adults (those aged 18 and older) in the region identify as Hispanic or Latino (12% in the region, 18% in La Paz County, and 12% in Mohave County), compared to 25 percent across the state. Household language use also reflects these

demographic patterns; Mohave County has a lower proportion of limited-English-speaking households (2%) than La Paz County (5%) and the state overall (5%).

Economic Circumstances

For the total population (of all ages) in the region, the two counties, and the state, poverty rates are roughly equal (19% in the region, in La Paz County, and in Mohave County; 18% in Arizona as a whole). Child poverty is an even greater concern in the region. Within the region, nearly twice the proportion of young children live in poverty (39%) compared to the total population. Moreover, the child poverty rate in the region is also markedly higher than that across the state overall (28%). When drawing a comparison between Mohave and La Paz Counties, a slightly higher percentage of young children in Mohave County are living in poverty (40%) than in La Paz County (36%). In addition to the families whose incomes fall below the federal poverty level, a substantial proportion of households in the region and counties are considered low income (i.e., near but not below the federal poverty level). Almost two-thirds (64%) of families with children aged four and under are living below 185 percent of the federal poverty level in the region, compared to less than half (48%) across the state. The concern is even greater in La Paz County; four out of five (81%) families with children aged four and younger live on incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, meaning that they subsist on less than \$3,677 a month for a family of four.

Unemployment rates have been dropping in La Paz County, Mohave County, and the state since 2010. The unemployment rate in La Paz County has been similar to the state since that time, whereas the unemployment rate in Mohave County has been consistently higher than the rate in La Paz County or the state since 2009.

In terms of housing, fewer housing units are occupied in the region (71%), La Paz County (64%) and Mohave County (72%) compared to the state (83%), reflecting a large percentage of vacant seasonal housing units in the region (20%), La Paz County (28%), and Mohave County (18%). The foreclosure rate in the region (6.5 per 10,000 homes) is lower than the rate across the state (7.2 per 10,000), but higher than in Mohave County (5.9 per 10,000).

The percentages of children aged 5 and under receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from 2012 to 2014 were low for the region, both counties and the state, although rates have been slightly higher in La Paz County. Other safety net programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the school-based free or reduced-price lunch program, reached more children. In La Paz County, four out of every five young children (80%) received SNAP benefits in 2012, and although participation has declined slightly since then, SNAP still helps to feed over 70% of the population aged 5 and under. Approximately two-thirds (65% to 71%) of young children in Mohave County were supported by SNAP dollars from 2012-2014, compared to about half of young children (51% to 54%) across the state as a whole. For both TANF and SNAP, the proportion of young children receiving benefits decreased between 2012 and 2014. More than three-quarters of students in La Paz County have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2012, and the same was true for

two-thirds of students in Mohave County. At the same time, the percent across the state has remained stable at 57 or 58 percent.

Educational Indicators

Education appears to be a challenge for the region, particularly in La Paz County. Seventeen percent of adults aged 25 and older in the La Paz/Mohave Region lack a high school degree or GED; in La Paz County, one quarter of adults (25%) did not complete high school. This is a substantially higher percentage than in Mohave County (16%) or across the state as a whole (14%). Adults in La Paz County are also less likely to have earned a bachelor's or higher degree (9%) than adults in Mohave County (12%) or across Arizona (27%). Adults in Mohave County are slightly more likely to have some college or professional training (37%) than adults in La Paz County (32%) or across Arizona (34%). Drop-out rates were slightly higher in La Paz County (5%) than in Mohave County (4%) and the state of Arizona (3%). In addition, four- and five-year graduation rates in 2013 in La Paz County (67% and 69% respectively) were lower than in Mohave County (76% and 79%) and the state (75% and 79%), and had decreased from highs in 2011 of 75 and 81 percent, respectively.

Child academic achievement reflects the patterns seen in adult education, again suggesting particular challenges in La Paz County. For example, results on Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) third grade Reading and Math assessments were similar for Mohave County and the state of Arizona in 2014. In Mohave County, 71 percent of third graders passed the Math test, and 78 percent passed the Reading test (where "passing" is the total of the percentages for "meets" and "exceeds"). In La Paz County however, third graders were less likely to pass in each subject; fewer than half (47%) passed the AIMS Math test, and 65 percent passed the AIMS Reading test.

Early Learning

In 2014 there were 62 licensed child care providers in the La Paz/Mohave Region, licensed to serve up to 3,280 children. Most of these providers were classified as child care centers (n=52), followed by group homes (n=8). Reflective of population size, child care providers were much more abundant in Mohave County than La Paz County. The cost of care was generally lower in both counties than the state for all types of care (i.e., licensed child care centers, approved family homes, and certified group homes) and all ages (i.e., infants, 1-2 year olds, and 3-5 year olds). For example, the median daily cost of infant care in each of the counties is \$26, compared to \$42 per day statewide.

According to data from the American Community Survey, one third of children (33%) ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten in the La Paz/Mohave Region. This was similar to enrollment rates in La Paz County (32%), Mohave County (36%), and the state as a whole (35%).

In the La Paz/Mohave Region, most referrals made to the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) in FY 2014 were for children aged 13 to 24 months (n=95), followed by children aged 25 to 35 months (n=88). This pattern was different across the state with many more 25-to 35-

month-olds referred to AzEIP (n= 5,421) than 13 to 24 month olds (n=3,669). In both the region and the state, more children aged 25 to 35 months were served by AzEIP in 2014 than children younger than 25 months. The numbers of Division of Developmental Disabilities service visits for children aged 0-2 and 3-5 years increased in the La Paz/Mohave Region from 2013 to 2014, although they decreased for the state of Arizona across that timespan.

Child Health

Characteristics of mothers giving birth differed between the La Paz/Mohave Region, La Paz and Mohave Counties, and the state of Arizona in 2013. Six percent of women giving birth in the La Paz/Mohave Region had had fewer than five prenatal visits, which was slightly higher than the proportion across the state (5%). Mohave County mirrored the region, but 9 percent of women giving birth in La Paz County had had fewer than five prenatal visits. Although the region as a whole appears similar to the state overall, several indicators differed markedly for La Paz County. For example, more mothers in La Paz had less than a high school education (La Paz/Mohave Region, 19%; La Paz County, 26%; Mohave County, 18%; Arizona, 18%), more were under 20 years of age (La Paz/Mohave Region, 10%; La Paz County, 16%; Mohave County, 10%; Arizona, 9%), and more used AHCCCS or IHS coverage for the birth (La Paz/Mohave Region, 65%; La Paz County, 75%; Mohave County, 65%; Arizona, 55%).

The La Paz/Mohave Region is meeting several of the Healthy People 2020 infant and child health objectives. Healthy People 2020 objectives include that fewer than 7.8 percent of babies are born at low birth weights and fewer than 11.4 percent are born preterm. In the region in 2013, only 6 percent of babies were low birth weight and only 8 percent were premature. However, at the county level, babies born in La Paz County were more likely to be born with high birth weight (11%) or premature (12%) than babies across the region (7% and 8% respectively), Mohave County (7% and 8% respectively), or the state (8% and 9% respectively). On the proportion of expectant mothers who receive prenatal care in the first trimester objective, both the La Paz/Mohave Region (19%) and the state (19%) are within the Healthy People 2020 guideline of no more than 22.1 percent lacking first trimester care. On the proportion of women who smoke while pregnant objective, however, both the region (13%) and the state (4%) are notably higher than the Healthy People 2020 goal of only 1.4 percent.

Between 2012 and 2014, the number of non-fatal emergency department visits for unintentional injuries to children aged birth to 5 decreased in both La Paz and Mohave County and across the state as a whole.

A key factor in health care is health insurance, and young children in the La Paz/Mohave Region were slightly more likely to be uninsured (12%) than children elsewhere in Arizona (10%). Across the region, counties, and state, young children were less likely to be uninsured than members of the total (all-age) population. For example, although 16 percent of the total population of La Paz County lacked health insurance, only seven percent of young children in La Paz County were uninsured.

Over 90 percent of children in child care in the La Paz/Mohave Region, as well as in La Paz and Mohave counties and the state were immunized against seven important diseases. The Healthy

People 2020 target for vaccination coverage for children ages 19-35 months for the DTAP, polio and MMR vaccines is 90 percent, suggesting that the region is meeting this goal. However, given that state regulations require children enrolled in child care to be up to date on immunizations, it is possible that the rates of immunization for children in child care are higher than immunization rates for children not in child care. If that is the case, the rates for the entire population of children in these areas may be lower than the Healthy People 2020 goal. Although still vaccinated at rates at or near 90 percent, children in kindergarten in the La Paz/Mohave region and La Paz and Mohave Counties were slightly less likely to have received immunizations than children across the state.

Family Support and Literacy

The First Things First Family and Community Survey is a phone-based survey designed to measure many critical areas of parents' knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to their young children. In the La Paz/Mohave Region, 150 people responded to the 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey. Among other topics, the 2012 survey collected data about parent and caregiver knowledge of children's early development and their involvement in a variety of behaviors known to contribute positively to healthy development. Families in the La Paz/Mohave Region were somewhat more likely to report reading to their children (58%), telling stories to their children (54%) and drawing with their child (50%) six or seven days a week compared to families across the state (51%, 51% and 47% respectively). Over three-quarters (76%) of families in the La Paz/Mohave Region demonstrated an understanding that brain development can be affected prenatally or right from birth, slightly less than the proportion in the state as a whole (80%).

Communication, Public Information and Awareness

In addition to measuring parent knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to their young children, the 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey collected data on parents' perceptions regarding resources available to young children and their families across Arizona. Results from the survey demonstrated that residents of the La Paz/Mohave Region had higher levels of satisfaction with available information and resources, and agreement with ease of locating services than residents elsewhere in the state. Almost half (48%) of La Paz/Mohave Region respondents indicated they were "very satisfied" with the community information and resources available to them about their children's development and health, compared to 39 percent of respondents across the state. Four out of five (81%) La Paz/Mohave Region respondents "strongly" or "somewhat agreed" that it is easy to locate services that they want or need, compared to 74 percent of respondents across the state.

Systems Coordination among Early Childhood Programs and Services

The 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey also collected data on parents' perceptions regarding how well agencies that serve young children and their families coordinate and collaborate. One item from the survey addresses the issue of perceived early childhood system coordination. In the La Paz/Mohave region, 43 percent of parents expressed

some level of satisfaction while 34 percent of parents expressed some level of dissatisfaction. Satisfaction rates in the region were similar to those across Arizona, although a lower proportion of La Paz/Mohave respondents were very dissatisfied (5%) compared to other Arizona residents (11%).

The La Paz/Mohave Region

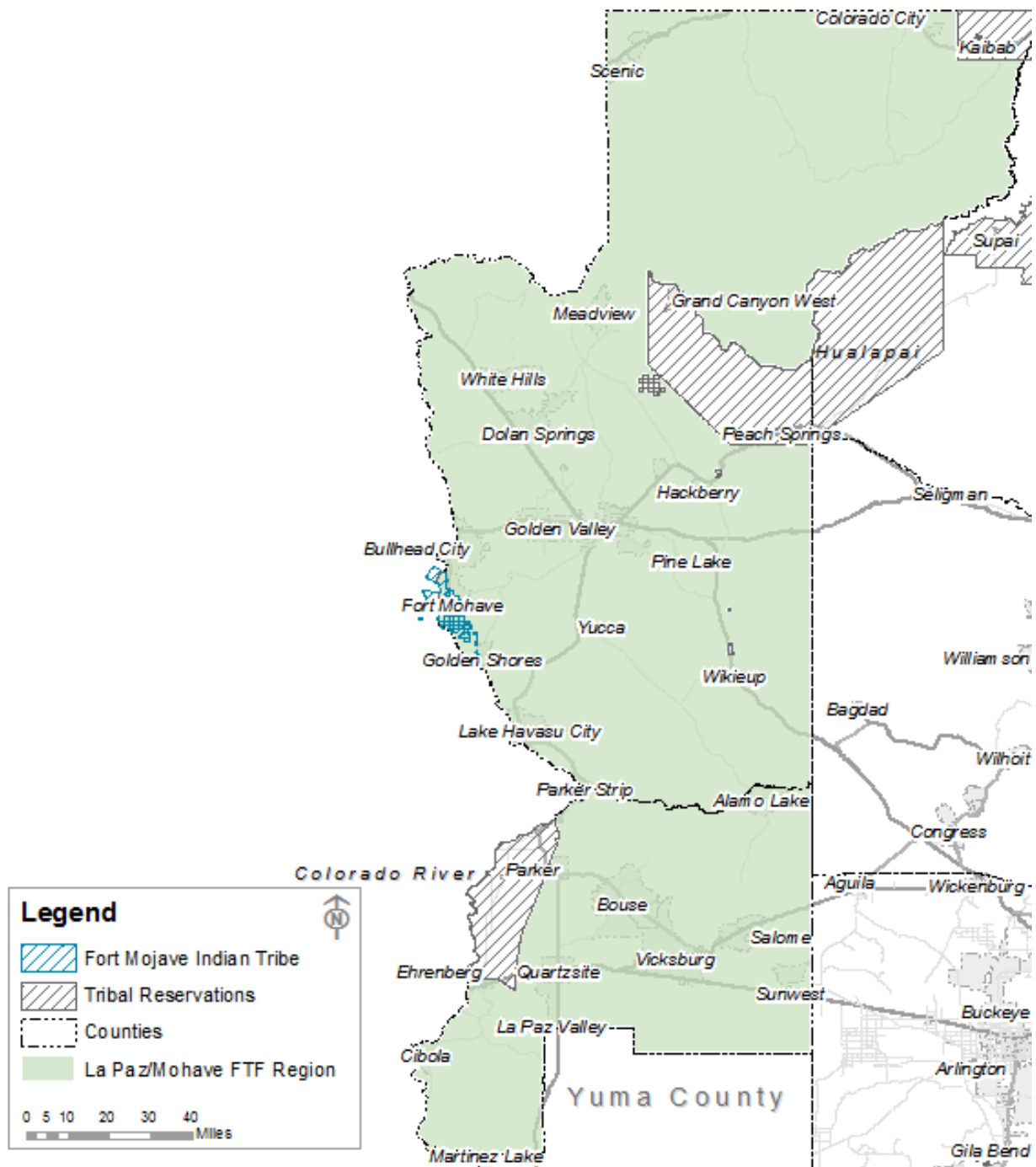
Regional Description

The First Things First regional boundaries were initially established in 2007, creating 31 regions which were designed to (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, and facilitate the ability to convene a Regional Partnership Council, and (d) allow for the collection of demographic and indicator data. The regional boundaries are reviewed every two years. In fiscal year 2015, the boundaries were modified using census blocks, creating 28 regions. This report uses the 2015 definition of the regional boundaries.

The First Things First La Paz/Mohave Region is defined as the combined area of the two counties, not including the lands belonging to the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Hualapai Tribe, and the Kaibab Paiute Tribe. The region does include the Arizona portion of the land belonging to the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. The region covers about 16,700 square miles, with its northern end separated from the rest by the Grand Canyon. The communities of the region are diverse in population density and in demographics, and are often isolated by large areas of unpopulated land. People and services are concentrated in larger places in the region such as Bullhead City, Kingman, Lake Havasu City, and Parker.

Figure 1 shows the geographical area covered by the La Paz/Mohave Region. Additional information available at the end of this report includes a map of the region by zip code in Appendix 1, a table listing zip codes for the region in Appendix 2, and a map of school districts in the region in Appendix 3.

Figure 1. The La Paz/Mohave Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). TIGER/Line Shapefiles: TabBlocks, Streets, Counties, American Indian/Alaska Native Homelands. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-line.html>

Data Sources

The data contained in this report come from a variety of sources. Some data were provided to First Things First by state agencies, such as the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). Other data were obtained from publically available sources, including the 2010 U.S. Census, the American Community Survey (ACS), the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). In addition, regional data from the 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey (FCS) are included.

The U.S. Census¹ is an enumeration of the population of the United States. It is conducted every ten years, and includes information about housing, race, and ethnicity. The 2010 U.S. Census data are available by census block. There are about 115,000 inhabited blocks in Arizona, with an average population of 56 people each. The Census data for the La Paz/Mohave Region presented in this report were calculated by identifying each block in the region, and aggregating the data over all of those blocks. (Note that the Census 2010 data in the current report may vary to a small degree from census data reported in previous Needs & Assets reports. The reason is that in the previous reports, the Census 2010 data were aggregated by zip code; the current report uses aggregation by census blocks.)

The American Community Survey² 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. The ACS data are available by census tract. Arizona is divided into about 1,500 census tracts, with an average of about 4,200 people in each. The ACS data for the La Paz/Mohave 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 2010 Census population in that tract living inside the La Paz/Mohave 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 2009 to 2013. In general, the reliability of ACS estimates is greater for more populated areas. Statewide estimates, for example, are more reliable than county-level estimates.

To protect the confidentiality of program participants, the First Things First Data Dissemination and Suppression Guidelines preclude our reporting social service and early education programming data if the count is less than ten, and preclude our reporting data related to

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (May, 2000). *Factfinder for the Nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/history/pdf/cff4.pdf>

² U.S. Census Bureau (April, 2013). *American Community Survey Information Guide*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/about/ACS_Information_Guide.pdf

health or developmental delay if the count is less than twenty-five. In addition, some data received from state agencies may be suppressed according to their own guidelines. The Arizona Department of Health Services, for example, does not report counts less than six. Throughout this report, information which is not available because of suppression guidelines will be indicated by entries of “N/A” in the data tables.

Population Characteristics

Why it Matters

The characteristics of families living within a region can influence the availability of resources and supports for those families.³ Population characteristics and trends in family composition are often considered by policymakers when making decisions about the type and location of services to be provided within a region such as schools, health care facilities and services, and social services and programs. As a result of these decisions, families with young children may have very different experiences within and across regions regarding access to employment, food resources, schools, health care facilities and providers, and social services. It is important, therefore, that decision-makers understand who their constituents are so that they can prioritize policies that address the needs of diverse families with young children. Accurate and up-to-date information about population characteristics such as the number of children and families in a geographic region, their ethnic composition, whether their parents were born abroad, living arrangements and languages spoken can support the development or continuation of resources that are linguistically, culturally, and geographically most appropriate for a given locale.

In addition to being affected by community resources, the likelihood of a child reaching his or her optimal development can also be affected by the supports and resources available within the family.^{4,5} The availability of family resources can be influenced by the characteristics of the family structure, such as who resides in a household and who is responsible for a child's care. Children living with and being cared for by relatives or caregivers other than parents, is increasingly common.⁶ Those providing this type of care, such as friends, aunts, uncles, siblings and grandparents, may be in need of special support. Raising or supporting young children may pose a particular challenge for aging grandparents, as they often lack information on resources,

³ US Department of Health and Human Services. Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. *Child Health USA 2014. Population Characteristics*. Retrieved from: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa14/population-characteristics.html>

⁴ Center for American Progress. *Valuing All Our Families. Progressive Policies that Strengthen Family Commitments and Reduce Family Disparities*. Retrieved from: <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FamilyStructure-report.pdf>

⁵ Kidsdata.org. (n.d.). *Summary: Family Structure*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/8/family-structure/summary>

⁶ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. *ASPE Report. Children in Nonparental Care: A Review of the Literature and Analysis of Data Gaps*. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/children-nonparental-care-review-literature-and-analysis-data-gaps>

support services, benefits and policies available to aid in their caregiving role.⁷ Often, grandparents take on child rearing responsibilities when parents are unable to provide care because of the parent's death, unemployment or underemployment, physical or mental illness, substance abuse, incarceration, or because of domestic violence or child neglect in the family.⁸ Caring for children who have experienced family trauma can pose an even greater challenge to grandparents, who may be in need of specialized assistance and resources to support their grandchildren.

Understanding language use in the region can also contribute to being better able to serve the needs of families with young children. Language preservation and revitalization have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services as keys to strengthening culture in Native communities and to encouraging communities to move toward social unity and self-sufficiency.⁹ Special consideration should be given to respecting and supporting the numerous Native languages spoken by families, particularly in tribal communities around the state. In addition, assuring that early childhood resources and services are available in Spanish is important in many areas of Arizona, given that five percent of the households in the state are limited English speaking households (that is, a household where none of the members speak English very well). Language barriers for these families can limit their access to health care and social services, and can provide challenges to communication between parents and their child's teachers, which can impact the quality of education children are able to receive.¹⁰

⁷ American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (2015). *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*. Retrieved from http://www.aamft.org/imis15/AAMFT/Content/Consumer_Updates/Grandparents_Raising_Grandchildren.aspx

⁸ Population Reference Bureau. (2012). More U.S. Children Raised by Grandparents. Retrieved from <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2012/US-children-grandparents.aspx>

⁹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Native Americans. (n.d.). *Native Languages* <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana/programs/native-language-preservation-maintenance>

¹⁰ Shields, M. & Behrman, R. (2004). *Children of immigrant families: Analysis and Recommendations*. The Future of Children. 14(2). Retrieved from: https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/14_02_1.pdf

What the Data Tell Us

According to the U.S. Census, the La Paz/Mohave Region had a population of 211,922 in 2010, of whom 13,469 (6%) were children under the age of six (see Table 1). According to the Arizona Department of Administration, the populations of children under six in both La Paz and Mohave counties (and statewide as well) were projected to decrease from 2010 to 2015 (see Table 3). But by 2020, those populations are projected to be greater than the 2010 Census numbers. In both counties, the number of children under six is projected to grow by 6 percent from 2010 to 2020. Statewide, the number of children under six is projected to grow by 12 percent during the decade.

Some of the demographic characteristics of families in the La Paz/Mohave Region show interesting differences compared to the rest of the state. For example, in the state as a whole, 28 percent of children aged birth to 5 live with a foreign-born parent. The rate in La Paz County (31%) is similar to the state, but the rate is much lower in Mohave County (15%) (see Table 4). Family living arrangements also vary by geographical level; among children living in a grandparent's household, a higher percentage reside in a grandparent's household with no parent present in the region (21%) than the state (15%), suggesting that resources supporting grandparents as primary caregivers may be valuable in the region, especially in Mohave County (see Table 6).

Differences also exist between the region, counties, and state relating to race, ethnicity, and language. Twenty-eight percent of young children in the La Paz/Mohave Region are Hispanic or Latino, including 50 percent in La Paz County and 27 percent in Mohave County, compared to 45 percent in the state of Arizona (see Table 7). The ethnicity of adults is quite different from that of the children at all geographical levels. Fewer adults (those aged 18 and older) in the region identify as Hispanic or Latino (12% in the region, 18% in La Paz County, and 12% in Mohave County), compared to 25 percent across the state (see Table 8). Household language use also reflects these demographic patterns; Mohave County has a lower proportion of limited-English-speaking households (2%) than La Paz County (5%) and the state overall (5%) (see Table 9).

Population and Households

Table 1. Population and households, 2010

	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION (AGES 0-5)	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE CHILDREN (AGES 0-5)	
La Paz/Mohave Region	211,922	13,469	88,926	9,168	10%
La Paz County	20,489	1,227	9,198	822	9%
Mohave County	200,186	13,218	82,539	8,981	11%
Arizona	6,392,017	546,609	2,380,990	384,441	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14, P20.
Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 2. Population of children by single year-of-age, 2010

	AGES 0-5	AGE 0	AGE 1	AGE 2	AGE 3	AGE 4	AGE 5
La Paz/Mohave Region	13,469	2,128	2,218	2,253	2,376	2,245	2,249
La Paz County	1,227	178	199	203	244	204	199
Mohave County	13,218	2,093	2,174	2,214	2,322	2,202	2,213
Arizona	546,609	87,557	89,746	93,216	93,880	91,316	90,894

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Table P14.

Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Children age 0 were born between April 2009 and March 2010; children age 5 were born between April 2004 and March 2005.

Table 3. State and county population projections, 2015 & 2020

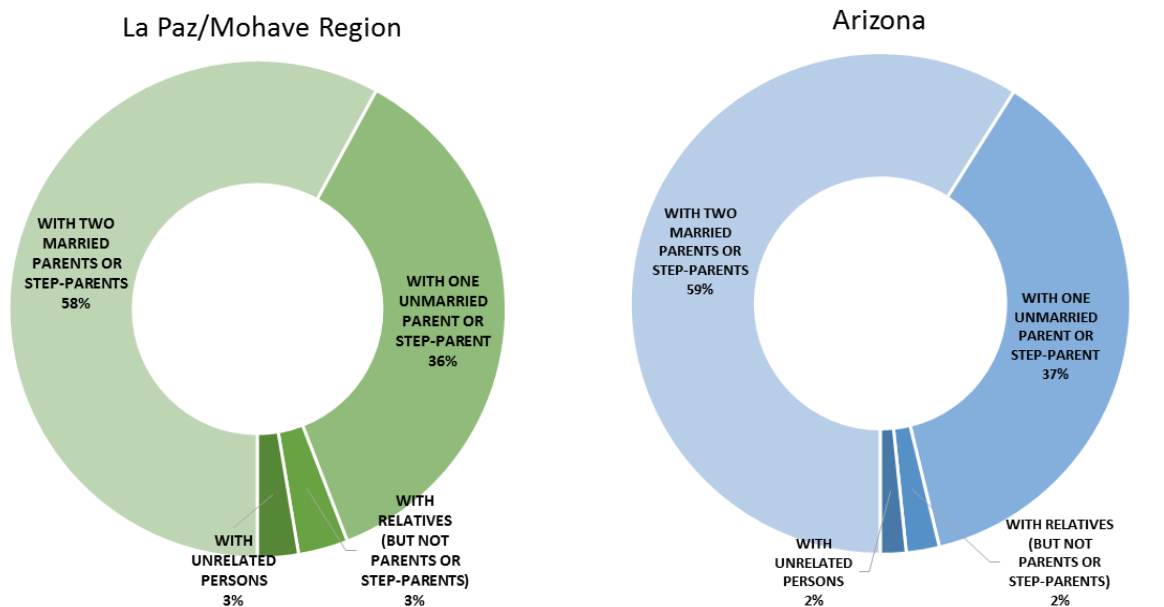
	POPULATION (AGES 0-5) IN 2010 CENSUS	PROJECTED POPULATION (AGES 0-5) IN 2015	PROJECTED POPULATION (AGES 0-5) IN 2020	PROJECTED CHANGE FROM 2010 TO 2020
La Paz County	1,227	1,200	1,300	6%
Mohave County	13,218	12,000	14,000	6%
Arizona	546,609	537,200	610,400	12%

Sources: Arizona Dept. of Administration (2015). 2012-2050 State and county population projections & U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

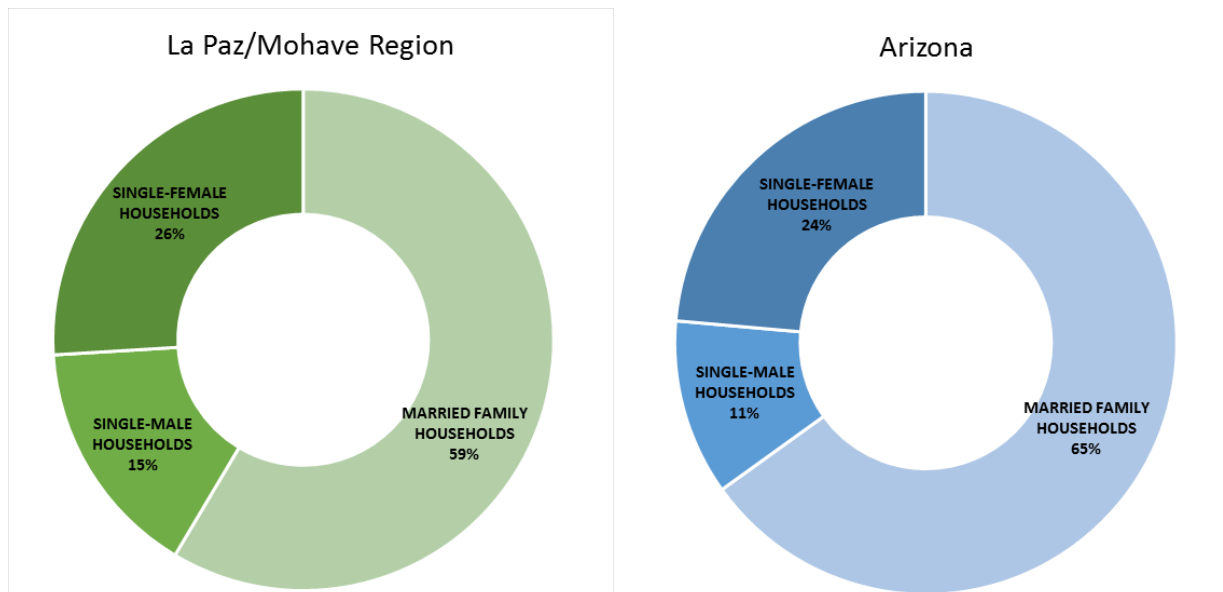
Living Arrangements for Young Children

Figure 2. Living arrangements for children (ages 0-5), 2009-2013 five-year estimate



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2009-2013), Tables B05009, B09001, B17006
 Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Figure 3. Heads of households in which young children (ages 0-5) live, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P20, P32.
 Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 4. Children (ages 0-5) living with one or two foreign-born parents, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

CHILDREN (0-5) LIVING WITH ONE OR TWO FOREIGN-BORN PARENTS	
La Paz/Mohave Region	16%
La Paz County	31%
Mohave County	15%
Arizona	28%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B05009. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 5. Children (ages 0-5) living in the household of a grandparent, 2010

CHILDREN (0-5) LIVING IN A GRANDPARENT'S HOUSEHOLD	
La Paz/Mohave Region	14%
La Paz County	16%
Mohave County	14%
Arizona	14%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Table P41 Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 6. Grandparents responsible for grandchildren (ages 0-17) living with them, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	GRANDCHILDREN (0-17) LIVING WITH GRANDPARENT HOUSEHOLDER	GRANDPARENT HOUSEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE FOR OWN GRANDCHILDREN (0-17)	GRANDPARENT HOUSEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE FOR OWN GRANDCHILDREN (0-17) WITH NO PARENT PRESENT
La Paz/Mohave Region	3,529	2,115	60%
La Paz County	567	280	49%
Mohave County	3,319	2,061	62%
Arizona	137,753	73,467	53%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B10002. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Race, Ethnicity, and Language

Table 7. Race and ethnicity of the population of young children (ages 0-4), 2010

	Total Population (Ages 0-4)	Hispanic or Latino	White, Not Hispanic	Black or African American	American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander
La Paz/Mohave Region	11,220	28%	65%	1%	2%	1%
La Paz County	1,028	50%	24%	1%	27%	0%
Mohave County	11,005	27%	65%	1%	4%	1%
Arizona	455,715	45%	40%	5%	6%	3%

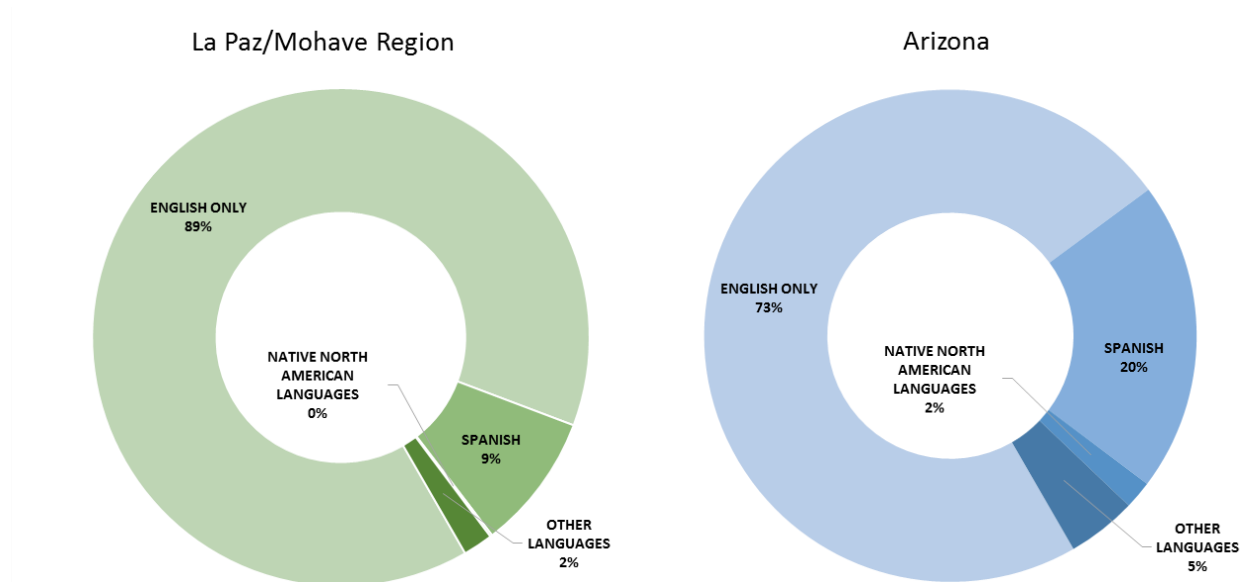
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P12A-H.
Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 8. Race and ethnicity of the adult population (ages 18 and older), 2010

	Total Population (Ages 18+)	Hispanic or Latino	NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO				
			White	Black or African American	American Indian	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other
La Paz/Mohave Region	169,706	12%	84%	1%	1%	1%	1%
La Paz County	16,811	18%	70%	1%	9%	0%	2%
Mohave County	158,921	12%	83%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Arizona	4,763,003	25%	63%	4%	4%	3%	1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Table P11
Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Figure 4. Language spoken at home, by persons ages 5 and older, 2009-2013 five-year estimate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B16001. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 9. Household use of languages other than English, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS IN WHICH A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH IS SPOKEN	LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING HOUSEHOLDS (TOTAL)	LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING HOUSEHOLDS (SPANISH)	LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING HOUSEHOLDS (NOT SPANISH)
La Paz/Mohave Region	86,945	11%	2%	1%	0%
La Paz County	10,221	16%	5%	5%	0%
Mohave County	80,230	11%	2%	1%	0%
Arizona	2,370,289	27%	5%	4%	1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B16002. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Economic Circumstances

Why it Matters

Many economic factors contribute to a child's well-being, including family income, parent employment status, and the availability of safety-net programs such as housing and nutrition assistance.^{11,12} Understanding the economic context in which families with young children live is crucial when designing programs and policies intended to assist them.

Employment rates and income are common indicators of economic well-being. Unemployment and job loss often results in families having fewer resources to meet their regular monthly expenses and support their children's development. Family dynamics can be negatively impacted by job loss as reflected in higher levels of parental stress, family conflict and more punitive parental behaviors.¹³ Parental job loss can also impact children's school performance (shown by lower test scores, poorer attendance, higher risk of grade repetition, suspension or expulsion among children whose parents have lost their jobs.)¹⁴ Unemployment rates, therefore, can be an indicator of family stress, and are also an important indicator of regional economic vitality.

Employment rates and job opportunities contribute to the income families have available. It is estimated that families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level (FPL)¹⁵ to meet basic needs.¹⁶ Families earning less may experience unstable access to basic resources like food and housing. Food insecurity – the lack of reliable access to affordable, nutritious food – negatively impacts the health and well-being of children, including a heightened risk for developmental delays.¹⁷ High housing costs, relative to income, are associated with increased risk

¹¹ Annie E Casey Foundation. (2015). *Kids Count 2015 Data Book – State Trends in Child Well-being*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/aecf-2015kidscountdatabook-2015-em.pdf>

¹² Kalil, A. (2013). Effects of the Great Recession on Child Development. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 650(1), 232-250. Retrieved from <http://ann.sagepub.com/content/650/1/232.full.pdf+html>

¹³ Isaacs, J. (2013). *Unemployment from a child's perspective*. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001671-Unemployment-from-a-Childs-Perspective.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ The 2015 FPL for a family of four is \$24,250. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2015). *2015 Poverty Guidelines*. Retrieved from: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/2015-poverty-guidelines>

¹⁶ National Center for Children in Poverty. (2015). *Arizona Demographics of Low-income Children*. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/profiles/AZ_profile_6.html

¹⁷ Rose-Jacobs, R., Black, M. M., Casey, P. H., Cook, J. T., Cutts, D. B., Chilton, M., Heeren, T., Levenson, S. M., Meyers, A. F., & Frank, D. A. (2008). Household food insecurity: associations with at-risk infant and toddler development. *Pediatrics*, 121(1), 65-72. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/121/1/65.full.pdf>

for homelessness, overcrowding, poor nutrition, frequent moving, lack of supervision while parents are at work, and low cognitive achievement.¹⁸ Poverty, especially among children, can have far reaching negative consequences, including an effect on brain development and later cognitive ability.¹⁹

Public assistance programs are one way of combating the effects of poverty and providing supports to children and families in need. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families²⁰ (TANF, which has replaced previous welfare programs) provides cash assistance and services to the very poor and can help offset some of the economic circumstances of families that may have a detrimental effect on young children. Another safety net program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also referred to as “Nutrition Assistance” and “food stamps”) has been shown to help reduce hunger and improve access to healthier food.²¹ SNAP benefits support working families whose incomes simply do not provide for all their needs. For low-income working families, the additional income from SNAP is substantial. For example, for a three-person family with one person whose wage is \$10 per hour, SNAP benefits boost take-home income by ten to 20 percent.²² Similarly, the National School Lunch Program²³ provides free and reduced-price meals at school for students whose families meet income criteria. These income criteria are 130 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) for free lunch, and 185 percent of the FPL for reduced price lunch.

¹⁸ The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2015). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.childstats.gov/pdf/ac2015/ac_15.pdf

¹⁹ Noble, K.G., Houston, S.M., Brito, N.H., Bartsch, H. Kan E., et. al. (2015). Family Income, parental education and brain structure in children and adolescents. *Nature Neuroscience*, 18, 773–778. Retrieved from <http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/v18/n5/full/nn.3983.html#close>

²⁰ In Arizona, TANF eligibility is capped at \$335 per month, or \$4020 annually for a family of four, and has recently undergone significant changes. Beginning in 2016, Arizona will become the first and only state that limits a person’s lifetime benefit to 12 months. In addition, since 2009, a steadily decreasing percentage of Arizona TANF funds have been spent on three of the key assistance categories: cash assistance to meet basic needs, helping connect parents to employment opportunities, and child care. In 2013, Arizona ranked 51st, 47th, and 46th respectively in proportional spending in those categories across all states and the District of Columbia. Meanwhile, since 2009, an increasing percentage of Arizona TANF funds have been spent on other costs such as child protection, foster care, and adoption. Sources: Reilly, T., and Vitek, K. (2015). *TANF cuts: Is Arizona shortsighted in its dwindling support for poor families?* Retrieved from: https://morrisoninstitute.asu.edu/sites/default/files/content/products/TANF.doc_0.pdf ; Floyd, I., Pavetti, L., and Schott, L. (2015). *How states use federal and state funds under the TANF block grant*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/how-states-use-federal-and-state-funds-under-the-tanf-block-grant>;

²¹ Food Research and Action Center. (2013). *SNAP and Public Health: The Role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Improving the Health and Well-Being of Americans*. Retrieved from http://frac.org/pdf/snap_and_public_health_2013.pdf

²² Ibid

²³ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2015). *National School Lunch Program (NSLP)*. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

What the Data Tell Us

For the total population (of all ages) in the region, the two counties, and the state, poverty rates are roughly equal (19% in the region, in La Paz County, and in Mohave County; 18% in Arizona as a whole) (see Figure 5). Child poverty is an even greater concern in the region. Within the region, nearly twice the proportion of young children live in poverty (39%) compared to the total population. Moreover, the child poverty rate in the region is also markedly higher than that across the state overall (28%). When drawing a comparison between Mohave and La Paz Counties, a slightly higher percentage of young children in Mohave County are living in poverty (40%) than in La Paz County (36%). In addition to the families whose incomes fall below the federal poverty level, a substantial proportion of households in the region and counties are considered *low income* (i.e., near but not below the federal poverty level [FPL]). Almost two-thirds (64%) of families with children aged four and under are living below 185 percent of the federal poverty level in the region, compared to less than half (48%) across the state (see Table 10). The concern is even greater in La Paz County; four out of five (81%) families with children aged four and younger live on incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, meaning that they subsist on less than \$3,677²⁴ a month for a family of four.

Unemployment rates have been dropping in La Paz County, Mohave County and the state since 2010. The unemployment rate in La Paz County has been similar to the state since that time, whereas the unemployment rate in Mohave County has been consistently higher than the rate in La Paz County or the state since 2009 (see Figure 7).

In terms of housing, fewer housing units are occupied in the region (71%), La Paz County (64%), and Mohave County (72%) compared to the state (83%), reflecting a large percentage of vacant seasonal housing units in the region (20%), La Paz County (28%), and Mohave County (18%) (see Table 12). The foreclosure rate in the region (6.5 per 10,000 homes) is lower than the rate across the state (7.2 per 10,000), but higher than in Mohave County (5.9 per 10,000) (see Table 13).

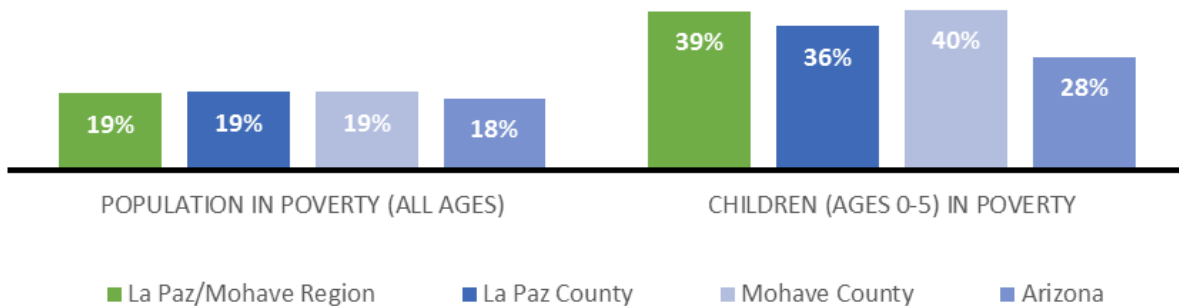
The percentages of children aged 5 and under receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from 2012 to 2014 were low for the region, both counties and the state, although rates have been slightly higher in La Paz County (see Table 14). Other safety net programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the school-based free or reduced-price lunch program, reached more children. In La Paz County, four out of

²⁴ Based on 2014 FPL Guidelines, see <http://aspe.hhs.gov/2014-poverty-guidelines>.

every five young children (80%) received SNAP benefits in 2012, and although participation has declined slightly since then, SNAP still helps to feed over 70% of the population aged 5 and under (see Table 15). Approximately two-thirds (65% to 71%) of young children in Mohave County were supported by SNAP dollars from 2012-2014, compared to about half of young children (51% to 54%) across the state as a whole. For both TANF and SNAP, the proportion of young children receiving benefits decreased between 2012 and 2014. More than three-quarters of students in La Paz County have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2012, and the same was true for two-thirds of students in Mohave County (see Table 16). At the same time, the percent across the state has remained stable at 57 or 58 percent.

Poverty and Income

Figure 5. Percent of population in poverty, 2009-2013 five-year estimate



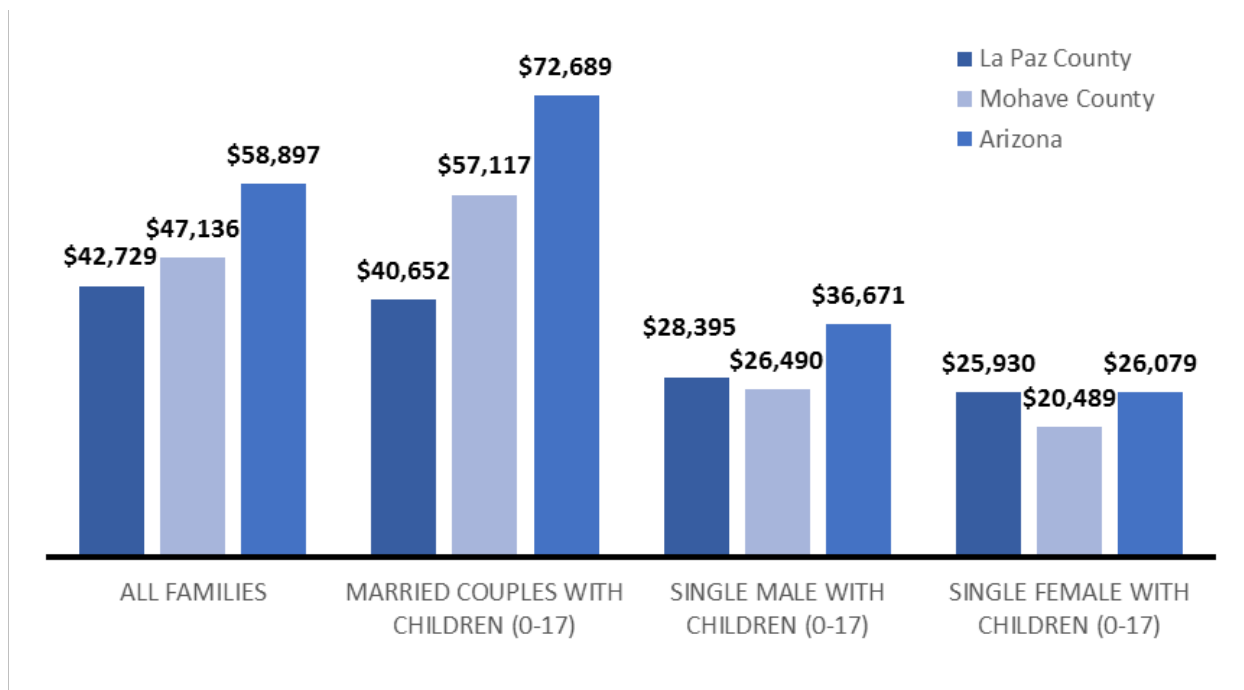
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B17001. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 10. Federal poverty levels for families with young children (ages 0-4), 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-4	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 0-4			
		BELOW POVERTY	BELOW 130% POVERTY	BELOW 150% POVERTY	BELOW 185% POVERTY
La Paz/Mohave Region	7,147	34%	46%	56%	64%
La Paz County	864	32%	42%	73%	81%
Mohave County	6,884	35%	47%	54%	62%
Arizona	307,126	26%	35%	40%	48%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Tables 17010 and 17022. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

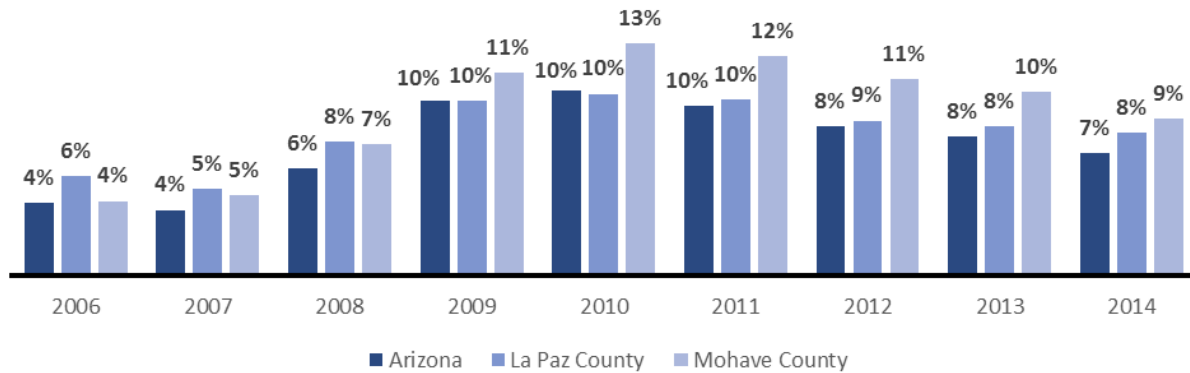
Figure 6. Median annual family incomes, 2009-2013 five-year estimate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B19126. Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Employment and Housing

Figure 7. Average annual unemployment rates, 2006-2014



Source: Arizona Labor Statistics (2015). Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Retrieved from: <https://laborstats.az.gov/local-area-unemployment-statistics>

Table 11. Parents of young children (ages 0-5) who are or are not in the labor force, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN (AGES 0-5) LIVING WITH ONE OR TWO PARENTS	CHILDREN (0-5) LIVING WITH TWO PARENTS			CHILDREN (0-5) LIVING WITH ONE PARENT	
		BOTH PARENTS IN LABOR FORCE	ONE PARENT IN LABOR FORCE	NEITHER PARENT IN LABOR FORCE	PARENT IN LABOR FORCE	PARENT NOT IN LABOR FORCE
La Paz/Mohave Region	12,468	32%	29%	1%	31%	7%
La Paz County	1,040	29%	17%	0%	41%	13%
Mohave County	12,279	31%	29%	1%	32%	7%
Arizona	517,766	31%	29%	1%	29%	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B23008.

Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Persons who are unemployed but looking for work are considered to be "in the labor force."

Table 12. Vacant and occupied housing units, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	VACANT HOUSING UNITS (NON-SEASONAL)	VACANT HOUSING UNITS (SEASONAL)
La Paz/Mohave Region	122,716	71%	9%	20%
La Paz County	16,062	64%	8%	28%
Mohave County	111,051	72%	10%	18%
Arizona	2,859,768	83%	10%	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B25002, B25106.

Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Note: Seasonal units are intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekends or other occasional use.

Table 13. Occupied housing units, costs relative to income, and foreclosures, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	UNITS WHICH COST THE OWNER OR RENTER MORE THAN 30% OF THEIR INCOME	FORECLOSURE RATE (PER 10,000 HOUSING UNITS)
La Paz/Mohave Region	86,945	27,734	32%
La Paz County	10,221	1,766	17%
Mohave County	80,230	26,701	33%
Arizona	2,370,289	847,315	36%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B25002, B25106. RealtyTrac (2015). Real Estate Trend & Market Info.

Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>; <http://www.realtytrac.com/statsandtrends/az>

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression or are otherwise not available.

Economic Supports

Table 14. Children (ages 0-5) receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), 2012-2014

	CENSUS 2010 POPULATION (AGES 0-5)	CHILDREN (AGES 0-5) RECEIVING TANF			CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014
		2012	2013	2014	
La Paz/Mohave Region	13,469	6%	6%	4%	-32%
La Paz County	1,227	9%	8%	5%	-43%
Mohave County	13,218	6%	6%	4%	-32%
Arizona	546,609	5%	5%	4%	-26%

Source: The Arizona Department of Economic Security (July 2015). [SNAP/TANF Dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: The data reflect unduplicated counts of children served during each calendar year.

Table 15. Children (ages 0-5) in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), 2012-2014

	CENSUS 2010 POPULATION (AGES 0-5)	CHILDREN (AGES 0-5) RECEIVING SNAP			CHANGE FROM 2012 TO 2014
		2012	2013	2014	
La Paz/Mohave Region	13,469	70%	69%	65%	-8%
La Paz County	1,227	80%	79%	73%	-9%
Mohave County	13,218	71%	69%	65%	-8%
Arizona	546,609	54%	53%	51%	-7%

Source: The Arizona Department of Economic Security (July 2015). [SNAP/TANF Dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: The data reflect unduplicated counts of children served during each calendar year.

Table 16. Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, 2012-2014

	STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH		
	2012	2013	2014
La Paz County	80%	79%	77%
Mohave County	65%	67%	67%
Arizona	57%	57%	58%

Source: The Arizona Department of Education (July 2015). [Education Dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

Educational Indicators

Why it Matters

Characteristics of educational involvement and achievement in a region, such as school attendance, standardized tests scores, graduation rates, and the overall level of education of adults, all impact the developmental and economic resources available to young children and their families. Education, in and of itself, is an important factor in how able parents and caregivers are to provide for the children in their care. Parents who graduate from high school earn more and are less likely to rely on public assistance programs than those without high school degrees.^{25,26} Higher levels of education are associated with better housing, neighborhood of residence, and working conditions, all of which are important for the health and well-being of children.^{27,28}

Early school attendance and performance can set the stage for later achievement.

Absenteeism in kindergarten is already an indicator of the likelihood of higher rates of absences later in a student's school career, as well as lower achievement in reading and math.²⁹ By third grade, reading ability is strongly associated with high school completion. One in six third graders who do not read proficiently will not graduate from high school on time, and the rates are even higher (23%) for children who were both not reading proficiently in third grade and living in poverty for at least a year.³⁰ In recognition of the importance of assuring that children are reading by the third grade, legislators enacted the Arizona Revised Statute §15-701 (also known as the *Move on When Reading* law) which states that as of school year 2013-2014 a student shall not be promoted from the third grade if the student obtains a score on the statewide reading assessment "that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the

²⁵ Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Provasnik, S., Kena, G., Dinkes, R., KewalRamani, A., & Kemp, J. (2008). *The Condition of Education 2008* (NCES 2008-031). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008031.pdf>

²⁶ Waldfogel, J., Garfinkel, I. and Kelly, B. (2007). Welfare and the costs of public assistance. In C.R. Belfield and H.M. Levin (Eds.). *The price we pay: Economic and social consequences for inadequate education*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 160-174.

²⁷ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). *The First Eight Years. Giving kids a foundation for lifelong success*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-TheFirstEightYearsKCPolicyreport-2013.pdf>

²⁸ Lynch, J., & Kaplan, G. (2000). Socioeconomic position (pp. 13-35). In *Social Epidemiology*. Berkman, L. F. & Kawachi, I. (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁹ Romero, M., & Lee, Y. (2007). *A National Portrait of Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades*. New York, NY: The National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_771.pdf

³⁰ Hernandez, D. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED518818.pdf>.

third-grade level.” Exceptions exist for students identified with or being evaluated for learning disabilities, English language learners, and those with reading impairments.

From 2000-2014, the primary in-school performance of students in the public elementary schools in the state has been measured by Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).³¹ AIMS scores were used to meet the requirement of *Move on When Reading*.

However, a new summative assessment system which reflects Arizona’s K-12 academic standards, Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT), was implemented in the 2014-2015 school year.³² This assessment replaced the reading and mathematics portions of the AIMS test. Although it is not a graduation requirement, it will still be used to determine promotion from the third grade in accordance with Arizona Revised Statute §15-701.³³

AIMS results are included in this report, but future reports will use AzMERIT scores as they become available.

In order for children to be prepared to succeed on tests such as the AIMS or AzMERIT, research shows that early reading experiences, opportunities to build vocabularies and literacy rich environments are the most effective ways to support the literacy development of young children.³⁴

What the Data Tell Us

Education appears to be a challenge for the region, particularly in La Paz County. Seventeen percent of adults aged 25 and older in the La Paz/Mohave Region lack a high school degree or GED; in La Paz County, one quarter of adults (25%) did not complete high school (see Figure 8). This is a substantially higher percentage than in Mohave County (16%) or across the state as a whole (14%). Adults in La Paz County are also less likely to have earned a bachelor’s or higher degree (9%) than adults in Mohave County (12%) or across Arizona (27%). Adults in Mohave County are slightly more likely to have some college or professional training (37%) than adults in La Paz County (32%) or across Arizona (34%). Drop-out rates were slightly higher in La Paz County (5%) than in Mohave County (4%) and the state of Arizona (3%). In addition, four- and five-year graduation rates in 2013 in La Paz County (67% and 69% respectively) were lower than

³¹ For more information on the AIMS test, see <http://arizonaindicators.org/education/aims>

³² For more information on AzMERIT, see <http://www.azed.gov/assessment/azmerit/>

³³ For more information on Move on When Reading, see <http://www.azed.gov/mowr/>

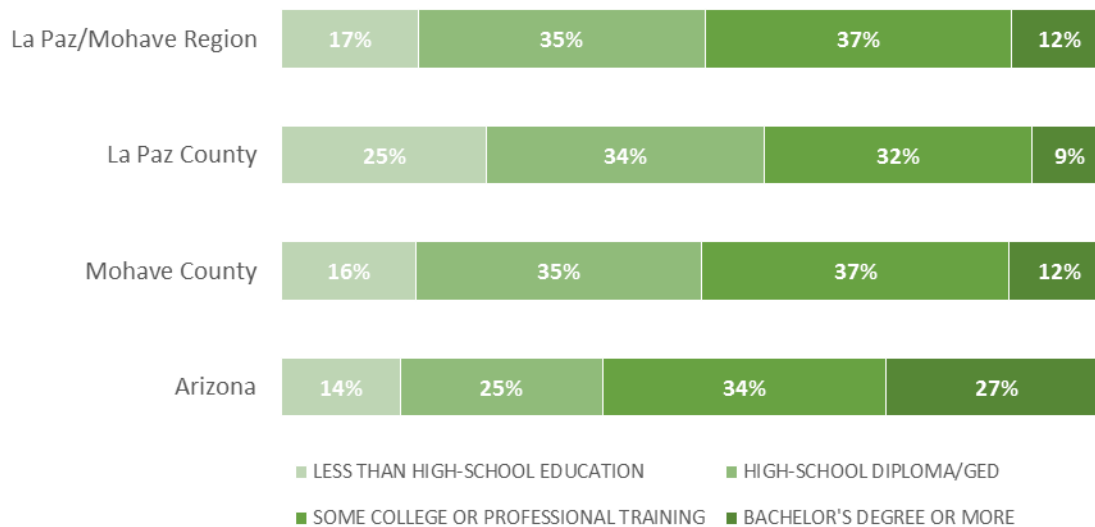
³⁴ First Things First. (2012). *Read All About It: School Success Rooted in Early Language and Literacy*. Retrieved from http://www.aztf.gov/WhoWeAre/Board/Documents/Policy_Brief_Q1-2012.pdf

in Mohave County (76% and 79%) and the state (75% and 79%), and had decreased from highs in 2011 of 75 and 81 percent, respectively (see Table 17).

Child academic achievement reflects the patterns seen in adult education, again suggesting particular challenges in La Paz County. For example, results on Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) third grade Reading and Math assessments were similar for Mohave County and the state of Arizona in 2014 (see Figure 9 and Figure 10). In Mohave County, 71 percent of third graders passed the Math test, and 78 percent passed the Reading test (where “passing” is the total of the percentages for “meets” and “exceeds”). In La Paz County however, third graders were less likely to pass in each subject; fewer than half (47%) passed the AIMS Math test, and 65 percent passed the AIMS Reading test.

Educational Attainment of the Adult Population

Figure 8. Level of education for the population ages 25 and older, 2009-2013 five-year estimate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B15002

Graduation and Drop-out Rates

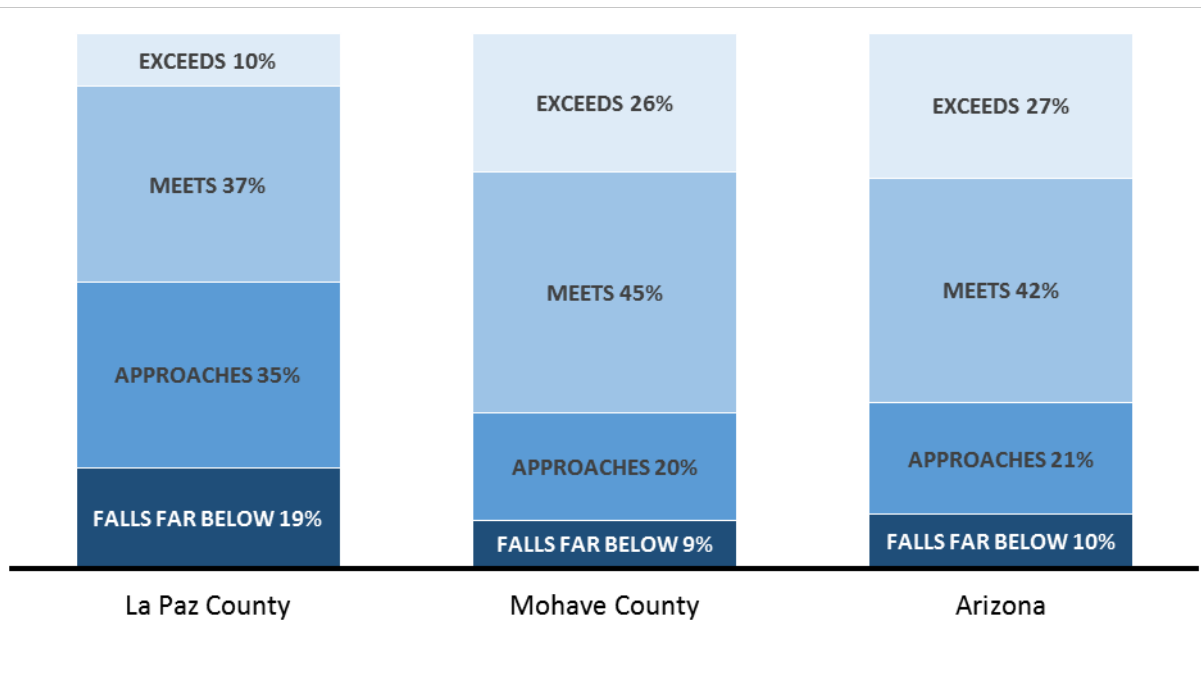
Table 17. Drop-out and graduation rates, 2012-2014

	DROPOUT RATE			FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE			FIVE-YEAR GRADUATION RATE		
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	2011 COHORT	2012 COHORT	2013 COHORT	2011 COHORT	2012 COHORT	2013 COHORT
La Paz County	5%	6%	5%	75%	72%	67%	81%	78%	69%
Mohave County	3%	3%	4%	73%	76%	76%	75%	78%	79%
Arizona	4%	4%	3%	78%	77%	75%	81%	80%	79%

Source: The Arizona Department of Education (July 2015). [Education dataset]. Unpublished data.
 Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

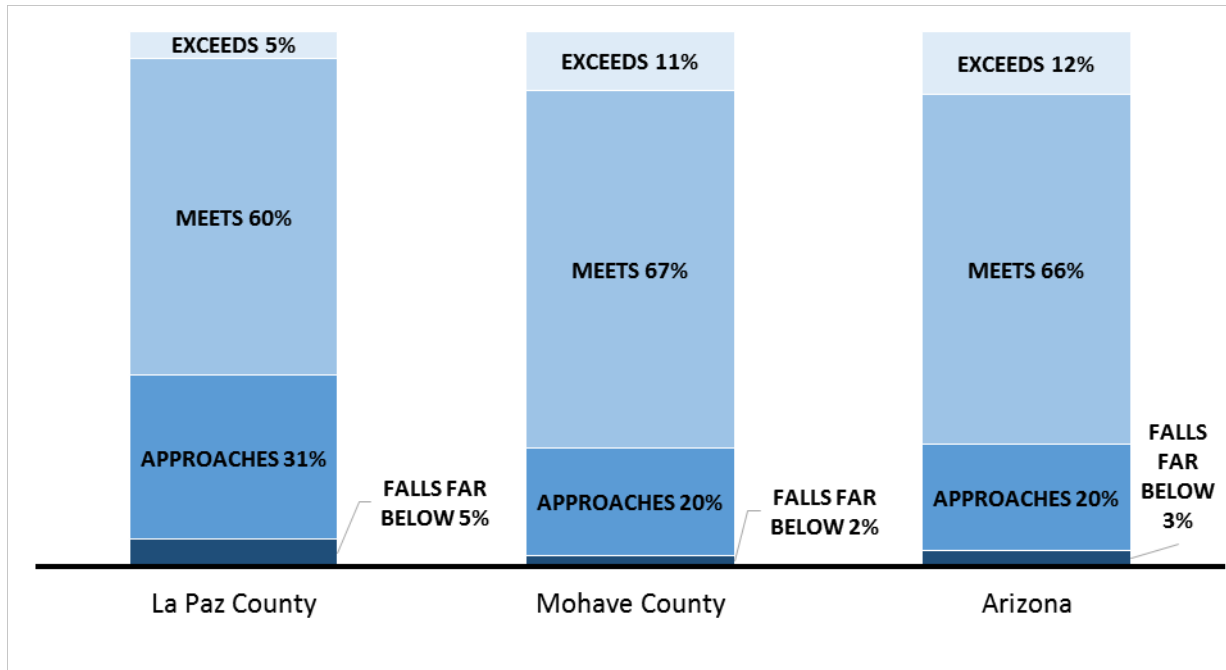
Third-grade Test Scores

Figure 9. Results of the 2014 third-grade AIMS Math test



Source: Arizona Department of Education, Research and Evaluation (2015). AIMS Assessment Results.
 Retrieved from: www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/aims-assessment-results

Figure 10. Results of the 2014 third-grade AIMS Reading test



Source: Arizona Department of Education, Research and Evaluation (2015). AIMS Assessment Results. Retrieved from: www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/aims-assessment-results

Other Educational Indicators

Table 18. Percent of students (Pre-K through third grade) who were homeless, 2012-2014

	HOMELESS IN 2012	HOMELESS IN 2013	HOMELESS IN 2014
La Paz County	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mohave County	2%	3%	1%
Arizona	2%	2%	2%

Source: The Arizona Department of Education (July 2015). [Education dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression or are otherwise not available.

Table 19. Attendance rates for first-, second-, and third-graders, 2014

	FIRST-GRADE ENROLLMENT	FIRST-GRADE ATTENDANCE RATE	SECOND-GRADE ENROLLMENT	SECOND-GRADE ATTENDANCE RATE	THIRD-GRADE ENROLLMENT	THIRD-GRADE ATTENDANCE RATE
La Paz County	196	94%	204	94%	173	95%
Mohave County	1,763	94%	1,635	95%	1,625	95%
Arizona	79,826	95%	76,666	95%	75,029	96%

Source: The Arizona Department of Education (July 2015). [Education dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

Early Learning

Why it Matters

Early childhood marks a time of peak plasticity in the brain, and early adversity can weaken the foundation upon which future learning will be built; in other words, positive developmental experiences in early life are crucial.³⁵ Research has shown that the experiences that children have from birth to five years of age influence future health and well-being, and that supporting children during this time has a great return on investment.³⁶ Investing in high-quality early childhood programs, particularly for disadvantaged children, provides substantial benefits to society through increased educational achievement and employment, reductions in crime, and better overall health of those children as they mature into adults.^{37,38} Children whose education begins with high-quality preschool repeat grades less frequently, obtain higher scores on standardized tests, experience fewer behavior problems, and are more likely to graduate high school.³⁹

The ability of families to access quality, affordable early care and education opportunities, however, can be limited. The annual cost of full-time center-based care for a young child in Arizona is only slightly less than a year of tuition and fees at a public college.⁴⁰ Although the Department of Health and Human Services recommends that parents spend no more than 10 percent of their family income on child care,⁴¹ the cost of center-based care for a single infant, toddler, or 3-5 year old is an estimated 17, 15 and 11 percent, respectively, of an average Arizona family's income.⁴²

³⁵ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Foundations-of-Lifelong-Health.pdf>

³⁶ Executive Office of the President of the United States. (2014). *The Economics of Early Childhood Investments*. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_report1.pdf

³⁷ The Heckman Equation. (2013). *The Heckman Equation Brochure*. Retrieved from <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/heckman-equation-brochure-0>

³⁸ The Heckman Equation. (n.d.) *Research Summary: Abecedarian & Health*. Retrieved from <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/research-summary-abecedarian-health>

³⁹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). *The First Eight Years. Giving kids a foundation for lifelong success*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-TheFirstEightYearsKCPolicyreport-2013.pdf>

⁴⁰ Child Care Aware® of America. (2014). *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2014 Report*. Retrieved from https://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/2014_Parents_and_the_High_Cost_of_Child_Care.pdf

⁴¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Bureau (2008). *Child Care and Development Fund: Report of state and territory plans: FY 2008-2009*. Section 3.5.5 – Affordable co-payments, p. 89. Retrieved from <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/14784/pdf>

⁴² The cost of center-based care as a percentage of income is based on the Arizona median annual family income of \$58,900.

Child care subsidies can help families who otherwise would be unable to access early learning services.⁴³ However, the availability of this type of support is also limited. The number of children receiving Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies in Arizona is low. In 2014, only 26,685 children aged birth to 5 (about 5% of Arizona’s children in this age range) received CCDF vouchers. With half of young children in Arizona living below the federal poverty level, the number in need of these subsidies is likely much higher than those receiving them.

The availability of services for young children with special needs is an ongoing concern across the state, particularly in more geographically remote communities. The services available to families include early intervention screening and intervention services provided through the Arizona Department of Education AZ FIND (Child Find),⁴⁴ the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP)⁴⁵ and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).⁴⁶ These programs help identify and assist families with young children who may need additional support to meet their potential. Timely intervention can help young children with, or at risk for, developmental delays improve language, cognitive, and social/emotional development. It also reduces educational costs by decreasing the need for special education.^{47,48,49}

What the Data Tell Us

In 2014 there were 62 licensed child care providers in the La Paz/Mohave Region, licensed to serve up to 3,280 children (see Table 20). Most of these providers were classified as child care centers (n=52), followed by group homes (n=8). Reflective of population size, child care providers were much more abundant in Mohave County than La Paz County. The cost of care was generally lower in both counties than the state for all types of care (i.e., licensed child care centers, approved family homes, and certified group homes) and all ages (i.e., infants, 1-2 year

⁴³ For more information on child care subsidies see <https://www.azdes.gov/child-care/>

⁴⁴ For more information on AZ FIND see <http://www.azed.gov/special-education/az-find/>

⁴⁵ For more information on AzEIP see <https://www.azdes.gov/azeip/>

⁴⁶ For more information on DDD see https://www.azdes.gov/developmental_disabilities/

⁴⁷ The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (2011). *The Importance of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/importanceofearlyintervention.pdf>

⁴⁸ Hebbeler, K, Spiker, D, Bailey, D, Scarborough, A, Mallik, S, Simeonsson, R, Singer, M & Nelson, L. (2007). *Early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families: Participants, services and outcomes. Final Report of the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS)*. Retrieved from http://www.sri.com/sites/default/files/publications/neils_finalreport_200702.pdf

⁴⁹ NECTAC Clearinghouse on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. (2005). *The long term economic benefits of high quality early childhood intervention programs*. Retrieved from <http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/econbene.pdf>

olds, and 3-5 year olds). For example, the median daily cost of infant care in each of the counties is \$26, compared to \$42 per day statewide (see Table 21).

According to data from the American Community Survey, one third of children (33%) ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten in the La Paz/Mohave Region. This was similar to enrollment rates in La Paz County (32%), Mohave County (36%), and the state as a whole (35%) (see Table 23).

In the La Paz/Mohave Region, most referrals made to the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) in FY 2014 were for children aged 13 to 24 months (n=95), followed by children aged 25 to 35 months (n=88) (see Table 24). This pattern was different across the state with many more 25-to 35-month-olds referred to AzEIP (n= 5,421) than 13 to 24 month olds (n=3,669). In both the region and the state, more children aged 25 to 35 months were *served* by AzEIP in 2014 than children younger than 25 months. The numbers of Division of Developmental Disabilities service visits for children aged 0-2 and 3-5 years increased in the La Paz/Mohave Region from 2013 to 2014, although they decreased for the state of Arizona across that timespan (see Table 25 and Table 26).

Early Care and Education

Table 20. Child care providers, number of providers and total licensed capacity, 2014

	CHILD CARE CENTERS		GROUP HOMES		FAMILY CHILD CARE		NANNY OR INDIVIDUAL		ALL TYPES OF CARE	
	NUM	LICENSED CAPACITY	NUM	LICENSED CAPACITY	NUM	LICENSED CAPACITY	NUM	LICENSED CAPACITY	NUM	LICENSED CAPACITY
La Paz/ Mohave Region	52	3,192	8	80	1	4	1	4	62	3,280
La Paz County	6	353	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	353
Mohave County	50	3,182	8	80	1	4	1	4	60	3,270
Arizona	2,020	219,482	272	2,683	833	3,312	54	211	3,179	225,688

Source: The Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [Child care dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: "Licensed Capacity" refers to the number of children (of all ages) who may be served, according to the provider's license.

Table 21. Median daily charge for full-time child care, 2014

	MEDIAN DAILY CHARGE FOR FULL-TIME CHILD CARE IN LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS			MEDIAN DAILY CHARGE FOR FULL-TIME CHILD CARE IN APPROVED FAMILY HOMES			MEDIAN DAILY CHARGE FOR FULL-TIME CHILD CARE IN CERTIFIED GROUP HOMES		
	INFANT	1 OR 2 YEAR OLD	3 TO 5 YEAR OLD	INFANT	1 OR 2 YEAR OLD	3 TO 5 YEAR OLD	INFANT	1 OR 2 YEAR OLD	3 TO 5 YEAR OLD
La Paz County	\$26	\$24	\$23	\$20	\$20	\$18	\$25	\$24	\$23
Mohave County	\$26	\$24	\$23	\$20	\$20	\$18	\$25	\$24	\$23
Arizona	\$42	\$38	\$33	\$22	\$20	\$20	\$27	\$25	\$25

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). Child Care Market Rate Survey. Received by request.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

Table 22. Cost of child care in a licensed center as a percentage of median family income

	MEDIAN ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME	CHARGE FOR FULL-TIME CHILDCARE IN A LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTER AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN INCOME		
		INFANT	1 OR 2 YEAR OLD	3 TO 5 YEAR OLD
La Paz County	\$42,700	15%	13%	13%
Mohave County	\$47,100	13%	12%	12%
Arizona	\$58,900	17%	15%	11%

Source: United State Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B19126. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>; Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [Child care market rate survey data]. Received by request.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

Table 23. Estimated number of children (ages 3 or 4) enrolled in nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten, 2009-2013 five-year estimate

	ESTIMATED POPULATION (AGES 3-4)	ENROLLED IN NURSERY SCHOOL, PRESCHOOL, OR KINDERGARTEN (AGES 3-4)	
		Number	Percentage
La Paz/Mohave Region	4,373	1,460	33%
La Paz County	489	156	32%
Mohave County	4,246	1,508	36%
Arizona	185,310	65,591	35%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B14003.

Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Families with Children Who Have Special Needs

Table 24. AzEIP referrals and children served, 2014

	NUMBER OF AzEIP REFERRALS DURING FISCAL YEAR 2014			NUMBER OF CHILDREN BEING SERVED BY AzEIP ON OCTOBER 1, 2014		
	LESS THAN 1 YEAR OLD	FROM 13 TO 24 MONTHS OLD	FROM 25 TO 35 MONTHS OLD	LESS THAN 1 YEAR OLD	FROM 13 TO 24 MONTHS OLD	FROM 25 TO 35 MONTHS OLD
La Paz/Mohave Region	61	95	88	N/A	36	54
La Paz County	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
Mohave County	60	92	83	N/A	35	53
Arizona	2,651	3,669	5,421	746	1,659	2,843

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (July 2015). [Special needs dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression, or are otherwise not available.

Table 25. Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services to children (ages 0-2), 2013-2014

	CHILDREN (AGES 0-2) REFERRED TO DDD		CHILDREN (AGES 0-2) SCREENED BY DDD		CHILDREN (AGES 0-2) SERVED BY DDD		NUMBER OF DDD SERVICE VISITS TO CHILDREN (AGES 0-2)	
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014
La Paz/Mohave Region	29	39	N/A	N/A	35	35	1,513	2,178
La Paz County	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A	62	N/A
Mohave County	29	39	N/A	N/A	35	35	1,513	2,178
Arizona	2,186	2,479	314	216	2,693	2,341	158,496	130,486

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (July 2015). [Special needs dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression, or are otherwise not available.

Table 26. Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services to children (ages 3-5), 2013-2014

	CHILDREN (AGES 3-5) REFERRED TO DDD		CHILDREN (AGES 3-5) SCREENED BY DDD		CHILDREN (AGES 3-5) SERVED BY DDD		NUMBER OF DDD SERVICE VISITS TO CHILDREN (AGES 3-5)	
	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2014
La Paz/Mohave Region	33	33	N/A	N/A	50	43	3,962	4,184
La Paz County	N/A	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	81	68
Mohave County	33	33	N/A	N/A	49	42	3,895	4,116
Arizona	1,401	1,804	731	727	2,600	2,533	374,440	367,590

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (July 2015). [Special needs dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression, or are otherwise not available.

Child Health

Why it Matters

The Institute of Medicine defines children’s health as the extent to which children are able or enabled to develop and realize their potential, satisfy their needs, and develop the capacities that allow them to successfully interact with their biological, physical, and social environments.⁵⁰ Health therefore encompasses not only physical health, but also mental, intellectual, social, and emotional well-being. Children’s health can be influenced by their mother’s health and the environment into which they are born and raised.^{51,52} The health of a child in utero, at birth, and in early life can impact many aspects of a child’s development and later life. Factors such as a mother’s prenatal care, access to health care and health insurance, and receipt of preventive care such as immunizations and oral health care all influence not only a child’s current health, but long-term development and success as well.^{53,54,55} In addition, nonfatal unintentional injuries substantially impact the well-being of children,⁵⁶ and injuries are the leading cause of death in children in the United States.⁵⁷

Healthy People is a science-based government initiative which provides 10-year national objectives for improving the health of Americans. Healthy People 2020 targets are developed

⁵⁰ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2004). *Children's Health, the Nation's Wealth: Assessing and Improving Child Health*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92198/#ch2.s3>

⁵¹ The Future of Children. (2015). *Policies to Promote Child Health*, Vol 25, No. 1, Spring. Retrieved from <http://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/FOC-spring-2015.pdf>

⁵² Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Foundations-of-Lifelong-Health.pdf>

⁵³ Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.) *Prenatal services*. Retrieved from <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/womeninfants/prenatal.html>

⁵⁴ Patrick, D. L., Lee, R. S., Nucci, M., Grembowski, D., Jolles, C. Z., & Milgrom, P. (2006). Reducing oral health disparities: a focus on social and cultural determinants. *BMC Oral Health*, 6(Suppl 1), S4. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2147600/>

⁵⁵ Council on Children With Disabilities, Section on Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, Bright Futures Steering Committee, and Medical Home Initiatives for Children With Special Needs Project Advisory Committee. (2006). Identifying Infants and Young Children with Developmental Disorders in the Medical Home: An Algorithm for Developmental Surveillance and Screening. *Pediatrics*, 118s(1), 405-420. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/1/405.full>

⁵⁶ Danesco, E.R., Miller, T.R., & Spicer, R. S. (2000). Incidence and costs of 1987-1994 childhood injuries: demographic breakdowns. *Pediatrics*, 105(2) E27. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/105/2/e27.long>

⁵⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2013). *10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States-2013*. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/injury/images/lc-charts/leading_causes_of_death_by_age_group_2013-a.gif

with the use of current health data, baseline measures, and areas for specific improvement. Understanding where Arizona mothers and children fall in relation to these national benchmarks can help highlight areas of strength in relation to young children’s health and those in need of improvement in the state. The Arizona Department of Health Services monitors state level progress towards a number of maternal, infant and child health objectives for which data are available at the regional level, including increasing the proportion of pregnant women who receive prenatal care in the first trimester; reducing low birth weight; reducing preterm births; and increasing abstinence from cigarette smoking among pregnant women.⁵⁸ Although not a target of a Healthy People 2020 objective, high-birth weight, or macrosomia, is also associated with health risks for both the mother and infant during birth. These children are also at increased risk for obesity and metabolic syndrome (which is linked to an increase risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes).⁵⁹

The ability to obtain health care is critical for supporting the health of young children. In the early years of a child’s life, well-baby and well-child visits allow clinicians to offer developmentally appropriate information and guidance to parents and provide a chance for health professionals to assess the child’s development and administer preventative care measures like vaccines and developmental screenings. Without health insurance, each visit can be prohibitively expensive and may be skipped.⁶⁰

What the Data Tell Us

Characteristics of mothers giving birth differed between the La Paz/Mohave Region, La Paz and Mohave Counties, and the state of Arizona in 2013 (see Table 27). Six percent of women giving birth in the La Paz/Mohave Region had had fewer than five prenatal visits, which was slightly higher than the proportion across the state (5%). Mohave County mirrored the region, but 9 percent of women giving birth in La Paz County had had fewer than five prenatal visits. Although the region as a whole appears similar to the state overall, several indicators differed markedly for La Paz County. For example, more mothers in La Paz had less than a high school education (La Paz/Mohave Region, 19%; La Paz County, 26%; Mohave County, 18%; Arizona, 18%), more were under 20 years of age (La Paz/Mohave Region, 10%; La Paz County, 16%;

⁵⁸ Arizona Department of Health Services. (2013). *Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics 2013 Annual Report. Table 6A: Monitoring Progress Toward Arizona and Selected Healthy People 2020 Objectives: Statewide Trends* Retrieved from: http://www.azdhs.gov/plan/report/ahs/ahs2013/pdf/6a1_10.pdf

⁵⁹ Mayo Clinic Staff. (2015). *Fetal macrosomia*. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fetal-macrosomia/basics/complications/con-20035423>

⁶⁰ Yeung, LF, Coates, RJ, Seeff, L, Monroe, JA, Lu, MC, & Boyle, CA. (2014). *Conclusions and Future Directions for Periodic Reporting on the Use of Selected Clinical Preventive Services to Improve the Health of Infants, Children, and Adolescents — United States*. MMWR 2014;63(Suppl-2):[99-107]. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/other/su6302.pdf>.

Mohave County, 10%; Arizona, 9%), and more used AHCCCS or IHS coverage for the birth (La Paz/Mohave Region, 65%; La Paz County, 75%; Mohave County, 65%; Arizona, 55%).

The La Paz/Mohave Region is meeting several of the Healthy People 2020 infant and child health objectives. Healthy People 2020 objectives include that fewer than 7.8 percent of babies are born at low birth weights and fewer than 11.4 percent are born preterm. In the region in 2013, only 6 percent of babies were low birth weight and only 8 percent were premature (see Table 28). However, at the county level, babies born in La Paz County were more likely to be born with high birth weight (11%) or premature (12%) than babies across the region (7% and 8% respectively), Mohave County (7% and 8% respectively), or the state (8% and 9% respectively). On the proportion of expectant mothers who receive prenatal care in the first trimester objective, both the La Paz/Mohave Region (19%) and the state (19%) are within the Healthy People 2020 guideline of no more than 22.1 percent lacking first trimester care (see Figure 11). On the proportion of women who smoke while pregnant objective, however, both the region (13%) and the state (4%) are notably higher than the Healthy People 2020 goal of only 1.4 percent.

Between 2012 and 2014, the number of non-fatal emergency department visits for unintentional injuries to children aged birth to 5 decreased in both La Paz and Mohave County and across the state as a whole (see Table 29).

A key factor in health care is health insurance, and young children in the La Paz/Mohave Region were slightly more likely to be uninsured (12%) than children elsewhere in Arizona (10%). Across the region, counties, and state, young children were less likely to be uninsured than members of the total (all-age) population (see Figure 15). For example, although 16 percent of the total population of La Paz County lacked health insurance, only seven percent of young children in La Paz County were uninsured.

Over 90 percent of children in child care in the La Paz/Mohave Region, as well as in La Paz and Mohave counties and the state were immunized against seven important diseases (see Table 31). The Healthy People 2020 target for vaccination coverage for children ages 19-35 months for the DTAP, polio and MMR vaccines is 90 percent,⁶¹ suggesting that the region is meeting this goal. However, given that state regulations require children enrolled in child care to be up to date on immunizations, it is possible that the rates of immunization for children in child care are higher than immunization rates for children not in child care.⁶² If that is the case, the rates

⁶¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2015). *Immunization and Infectious Diseases*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases/objectives>.

⁶² For example, the National Immunization Survey (NIS) monitors vaccination coverage among U.S. children aged 19–35, and estimates the Arizona statewide rate for DTAP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, 4 or more doses) to be about 81 percent and the statewide rate for MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella, 1 or more doses) to be about 84 percent. Source: Hill, H., Elam-Evans,

for the entire population of children in these areas may be lower than the Healthy People 2020 goal. Although still vaccinated at rates at or near 90 percent, children in kindergarten in the La Paz/Mohave region and La Paz and Mohave Counties were slightly less likely to have received immunizations than children across the state (see Figure 32).

Mothers Giving Birth

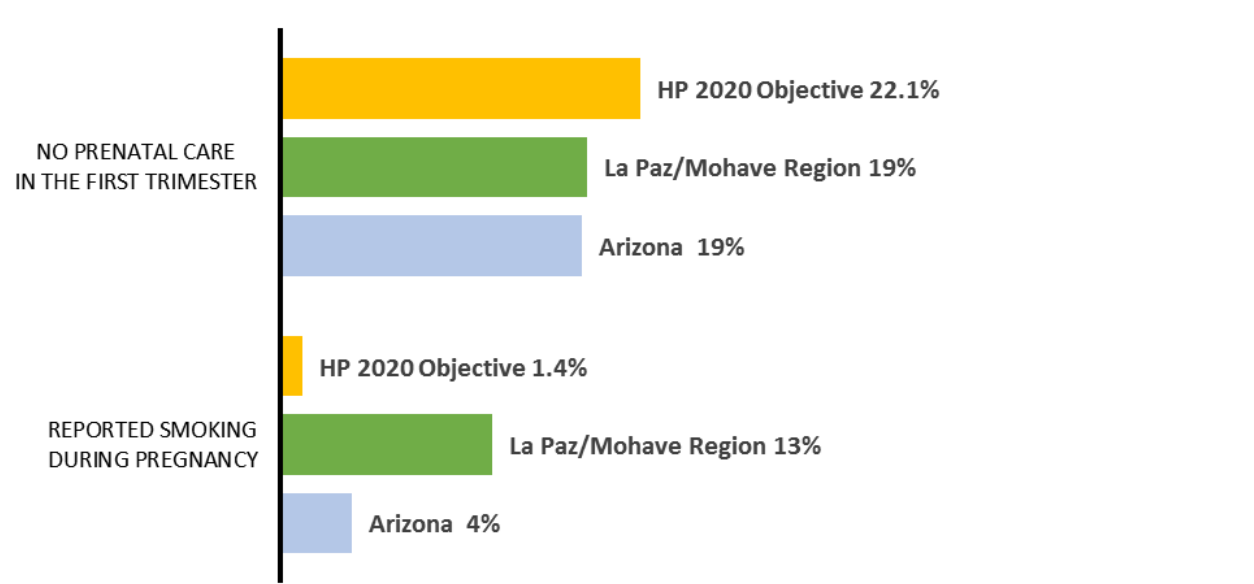
Table 27. Selected characteristics of mothers giving birth, 2013

	TOTAL NUMBER BIRTHS TO ARIZONA- RESIDENT MOTHERS, 2013	HAD FEWER THAN 5 PRENATAL VISITS	HAD NO PRENATAL CARE IN FIRST TRI- MESTER	MOTHER REPORTED SMOKING DURING PREG- NANCY	MOTHER REPORTED DRINKING DURING PREG- NANCY	MOTHER HAD LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL- EDU- CATION	MOTHERS YOUNGER THAN 20 YEARS OLD	MOTHERS YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OLD	BIRTH WAS PAID FOR BY AHCCCS OR IHS (PUBLIC PAYOR)
La Paz/Mohave Region	1,778	6%	19%	13%	1%	19%	10%	N/A	65%
La Paz County	204	9%	20%	N/A	0%	26%	16%	4%	75%
Mohave County	1,742	6%	19%	13%	1%	18%	10%	2%	65%
Arizona	84,963	5%	19%	4%	0%	18%	9%	2%	55%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2015). [Vital statistics dataset]. Unpublished data.

Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression, or are otherwise not available.

Figure 11. Healthy People 2020 objectives for mothers, compared to 2013 region and state data



Source: Data provided to First Things First by the Arizona Dept. of Health Services (ADHS), Bureau of Public Health Statistics (July 2015)

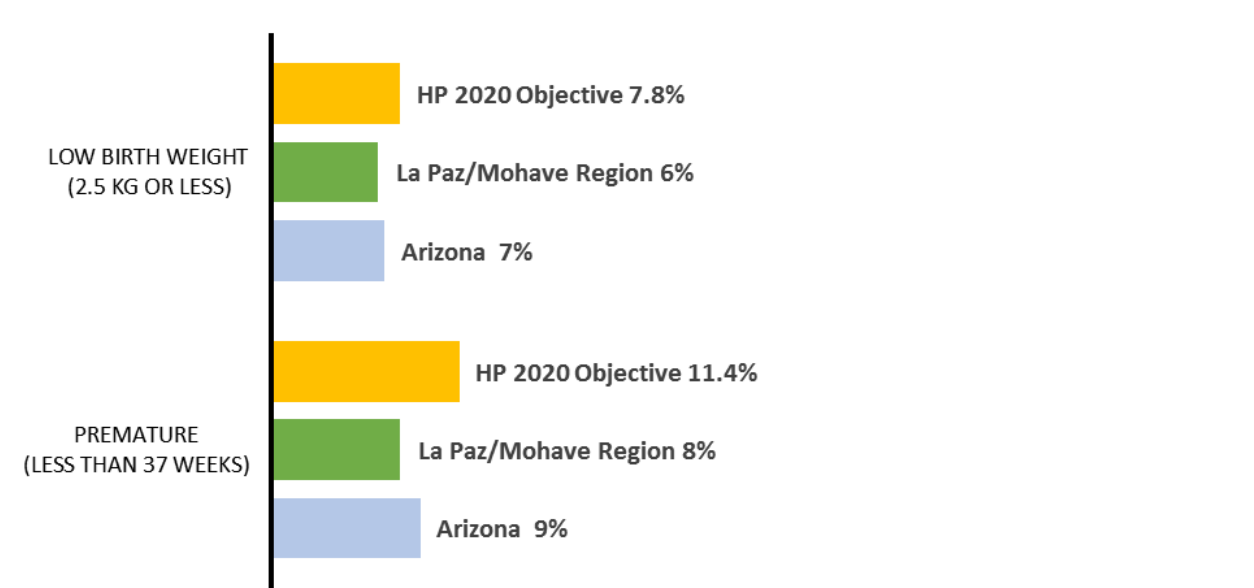
Infant Health

Table 28. Selected characteristics of babies born, 2013

	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO ARIZONA-RESIDENT MOTHERS, 2013	BABY HAD LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (2.5 kg OR LESS)	BABY HAD HIGH BIRTH WEIGHT (4 kg OR MORE)	BABY WAS PREMATURE (LESS THAN 37 WEEKS)	BABY WAS IN NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE
La Paz/Mohave Region	1,778	6%	7%	8%	2%
La Paz County	204	7%	11%	12%	3%
Mohave County	1,742	6%	7%	8%	2%
Arizona	84,963	7%	8%	9%	5%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2015). [Vital statistics dataset]. Unpublished data.

Figure 12. Healthy People 2020 objectives for babies, compared to 2013 region and state data



Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (July 2015). [Vital statistics dataset]. Unpublished data. Arizona Department of Health Services (2015). Status on Healthy People 2020 Objectives, Table 6A. Retrieved from <http://www.azdhs.gov/plan/menu/info/status.php>

Table 29. Unintentional injuries to children (ages 0-5), 2012-2014

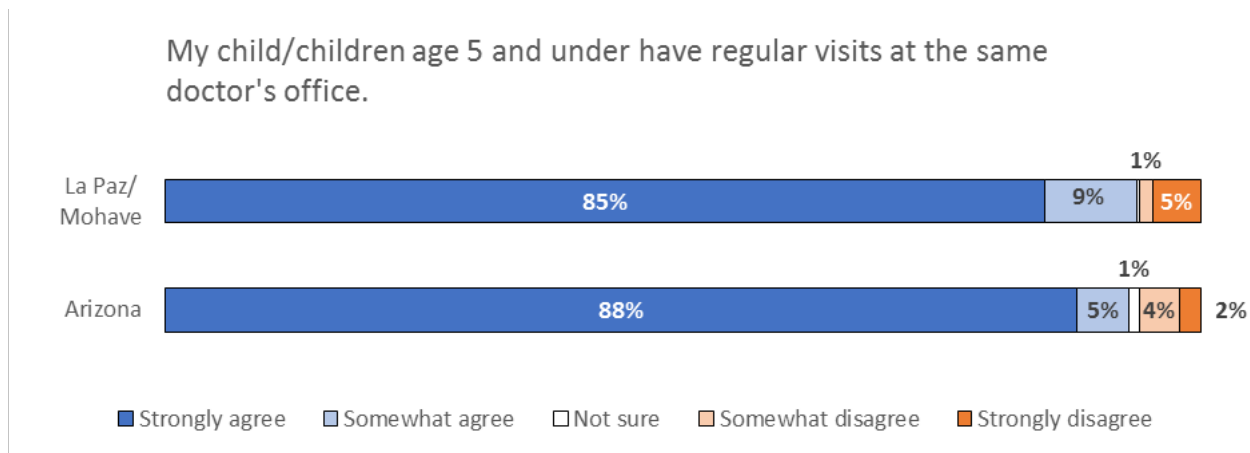
	NON-FATAL INPATIENT HOSPITALIZATIONS			NON-FATAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
La Paz County	N/A	N/A	N/A	94	82	83
Mohave County	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,424	1,337	1,326
Arizona	1,306	1,049	901	49,453	46,407	46,033

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (June 2015). [Injury report]. Received by request.

Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator.

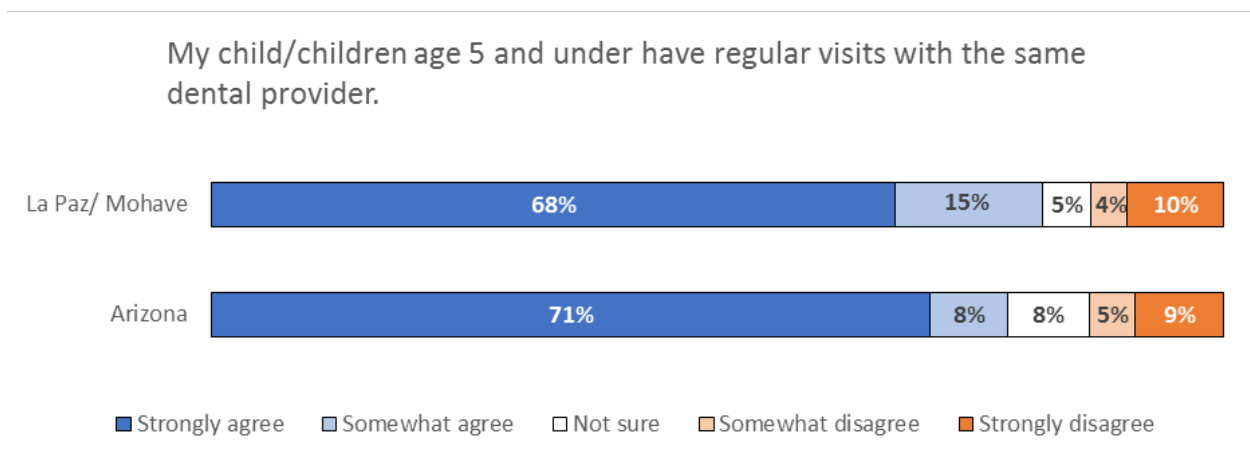
Note: Entries of "N/A" indicate percentages which cannot be reported because of data suppression or are otherwise not available.

Figure 13. Regular visits at the same doctor's office (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

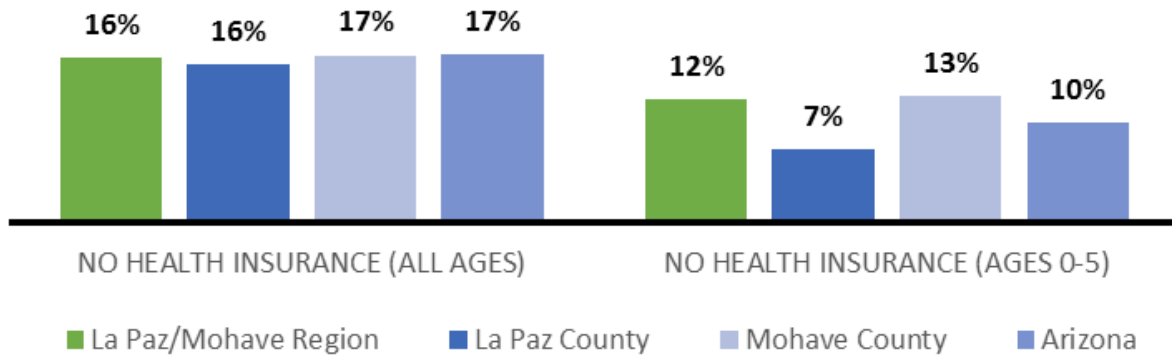
Figure 14. Regular visits with the same dental provider (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Health Insurance

Figure 15. Estimated percent of population without health insurance, 2009-2013 five-year estimate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2014). 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, Table B27001.
Retrieved from: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 30. Number of children (all ages) enrolled in KidsCare, 2005-2014

	JAN 2005	JAN 2006	JAN 2007	JAN 2008	JAN 2009	JAN 2010	JAN 2011	JAN 2012	JAN 2013	JAN 2014
La Paz County	156	179	151	176	170	153	69	45	93	133
Mohave County	1,250	1,445	1,422	1,497	1,466	1,212	532	293	961	1,148
Arizona	48,075	55,996	58,612	63,527	61,198	45,809	22,943	12,837	34,127	42,686

Source: Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (2014). KidsCare Population Reports
Note: Regional data were not available for this indicator

Immunizations

Table 31. Immunizations for children in child care, school year 2014-2015

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	DTAP (DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS, PERTUSSIS), 4 OR MORE DOSES	POLIO, 3 OR MORE DOSES	MMR (MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA), 1 OR MORE DOSES	RELIGIOUS BELIEFS EXEMPTIONS	MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS
La Paz/Mohave Region	2,152	91%	94%	94%	4.7%	0.7%
La Paz County	100	94%	97%	98%	3%	0.0%
Mohave County	2,084	91%	94%	94%	4.7%	0.7%
Arizona	84,778	93%	95%	96%	3.6%	0.5%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2015). [Regional immunization dataset]. Unpublished data. Arizona Department of Health Services (2015). Arizona childcare immunization coverage. Retrieved from: <http://azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#reports-immunization-coverage>

Table 32. Immunizations for children in kindergarten, school year 2014-2015

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	DTAP (DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS, PERTUSSIS), 4 OR MORE DOSES	POLIO, 3 OR MORE DOSES	MMR (MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA), 1 OR MORE DOSES	PERSONAL BELIEFS EXEMPTIONS	MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS
La Paz/Mohave Region	1,818	92%	92%	92%	5.0%	0.1%
La Paz County	179	92%	92%	93%	2.8%	0.0%
Mohave County	1,817	92%	92%	92%	5.1%	0.1%
Arizona	84,651	94%	95%	94%	4.6%	0.3%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services (2015). [Regional immunization dataset]. Unpublished data. Arizona Department of Health Services (2015). Arizona kindergarten immunization coverage. Retrieved from: <http://azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/index.php#reports-immunization-coverage>

Family Support and Literacy

Why it Matters

Parents and families have a crucial role in providing nurturing and stable relationships for optimal brain development during their child's first years.^{63,64,65} When children experience nurturing, responsive caregiving, they face better life prospects across a number of social, physical, academic and economic outcomes.^{66,67} Consequently, healthy development depends on positive relationships between children and their caregivers from an early age.⁶⁸ For parents of young children, reading aloud, singings songs, practicing nursery rhymes, and engaging in conversation primes children to reach their full potential. Such interactions not only support literacy skills, but also offer exposure to a range of ideas, including recognizing and naming emotions, an important socio-emotional skill. Parents and family are children's first teachers; the most rapid expansion in vocabulary happens between ages one and three.⁶⁹ In fact, literacy promotion is so central to a child's development that the American Academy of Pediatrics has recently focused on it as a key issue in primary pediatric care, aiming to make parents more aware of their important role in literacy.⁷⁰

Data on the amount and quality of the interaction parents typically have with their children can be useful to inform programs and policies to encourage positive engagement. Communities may employ many resources to support families in engaging with their children. Examples of

⁶³ Evans, G. W., & Kim, P. (2013). Childhood Poverty, Chronic Stress, Self-Regulation, and Coping. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(1), 43-48. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdep.12013/abstract>

⁶⁴ Shonkoff, J. P., & Fisher, P. A. (2013). Rethinking evidence-based practice and two-generation programs to create the future of early childhood policy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 25, 1635- 1653. Retrieved from http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FDPP%2FDPP25_4pt2%2FS0954579413000813a.pdf&code=aeb62de3e0ea8214329e7a33e0a9df0e

⁶⁵ Shonkoff, J. P. & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1>

⁶⁶ Magnuson, K. & Duncan, G. (2013). Parents in poverty (95-121) In Bornstein, M. *Handbook of Parenting: Biology and Ecology of Parenting Vol. 4: Social Conditions and Applied Parenting*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

⁶⁷ Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

⁶⁸ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (n.d.). Category: Working Papers. Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resourcecategory/working-papers/>

⁶⁹ Read On Arizona. (n.d.). "As a parent what can I do at home to support early literacy?" Retrieved from <http://readonarizona.org/about-us/faq/>

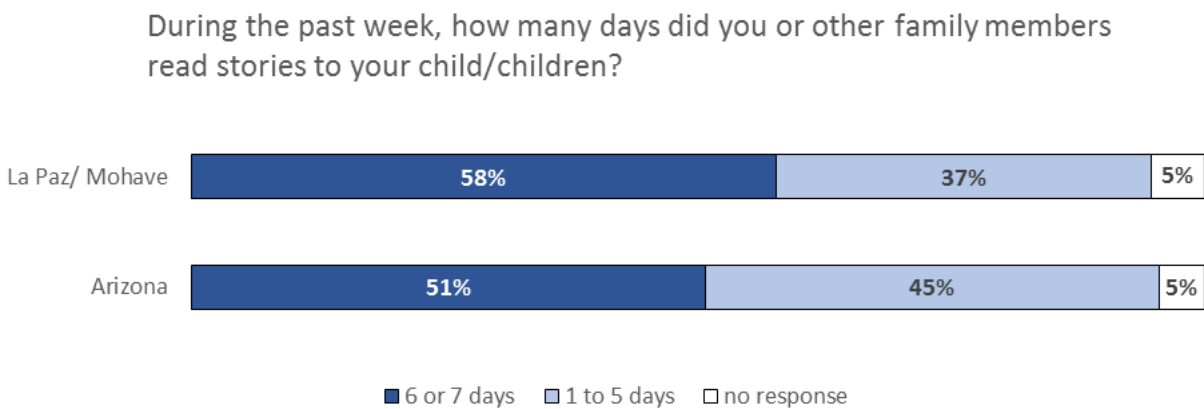
⁷⁰ American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.). *Pediatric Professional Resource: Evidence Supporting Early Literacy and Early Learning*. Retrieved from https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/booksbuildconnections_evidencesupportingearlyliteracyandearlylearning.pdf

these opportunities include: home visitation programs; “stay and play” programs featuring developmentally appropriate activities for children and their parents; Read On Arizona, a program that promotes early literacy; and the national “Reach Out & Read” program, in which nearly 200 clinics and pediatric practices across the state seeing children for a well-child visit provide them with a book to take home.⁷¹

What the Data Tell Us

The First Things First Family and Community Survey is a phone-based survey designed to measure many critical areas of parents’ knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to their young children. In the La Paz/Mohave Region, 150 people responded to the 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey. Among other topics, the 2012 survey collected data about parent and caregiver knowledge of children’s early development and their involvement in a variety of behaviors known to contribute positively to healthy development. Families in the La Paz/Mohave Region were somewhat more likely to report reading to their children (58%), telling stories to their children (54%) and drawing with their child (50%) six or seven days a week compared to families across the state (51%, 51% and 47% respectively) (see Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure 18). Over three-quarters (76%) of families in the La Paz/Mohave Region demonstrated an understanding that brain development can be affected prenatally or right from birth, slightly less than the proportion in the state as a whole (80%) (see Figure 19).

Figure 16. Reading stories to young children (Family and Community Survey, 2012)

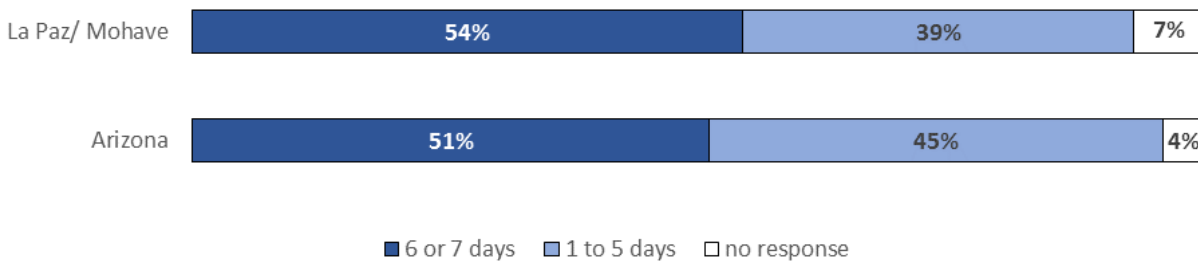


Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

⁷¹ Reach Out and Read. (n.d.). “Programs Near You.” Retrieved from <http://www.reachoutandread.org/resource-center/find-a-program/>

Figure 17. Telling stories or singing songs to young children (Family and Community Survey, 2012)

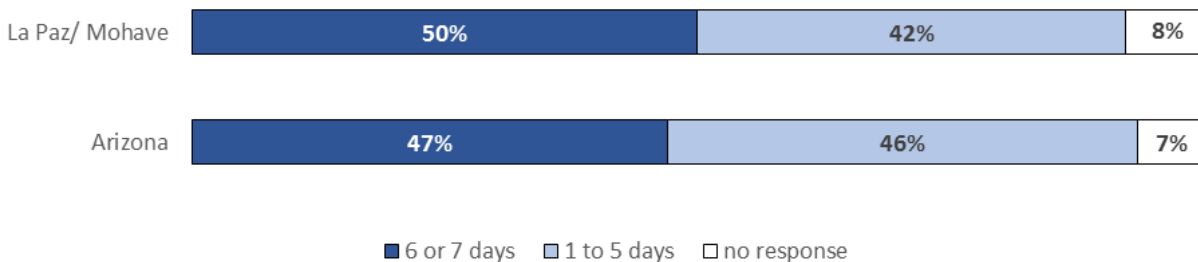
During the past week, how many days did you or other family members tell stories or sing songs to your child/children?



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

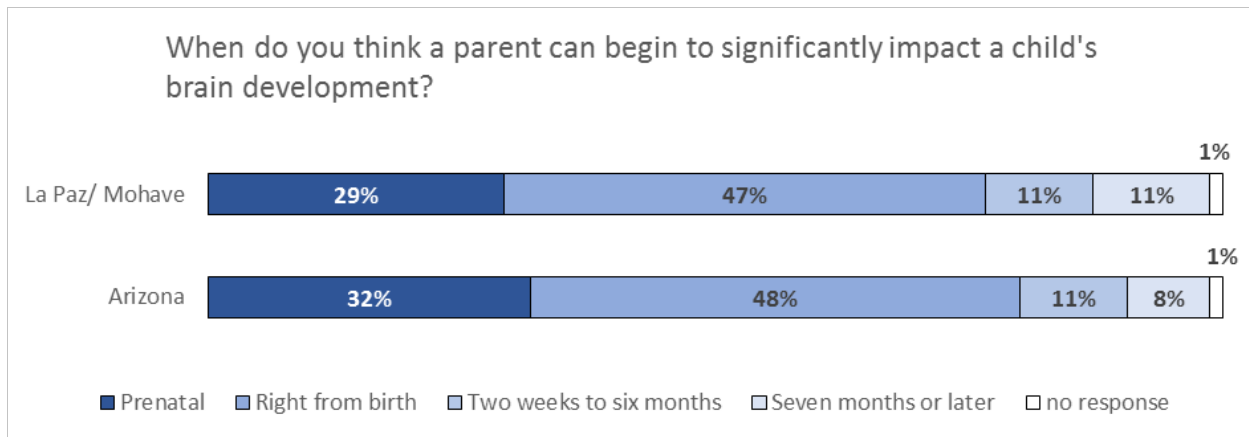
Figure 18. Drawing and scribbling with young children (Family and Community Survey, 2012)

During the past week, how many days did your child/children scribble, pretend draw or draw with you or another family member?



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Figure 19. Understanding of prenatal brain development (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Communication, Public Information and Awareness

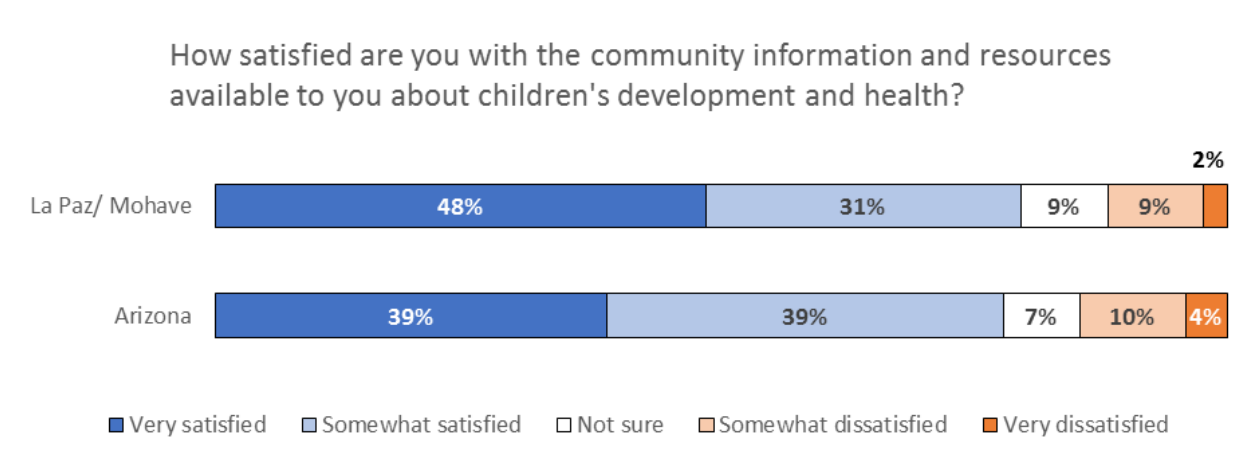
Why it Matters

To create a strong, comprehensive, and sustainable early childhood system, communities need an awareness of the importance of the first five years in a child’s life, and a commitment to align priorities and resources to programs and policies affecting these first years. Supporting public awareness by providing accessible information and resources on early childhood development and health, and educating community members about the benefits of committing resources to early childhood, are key to supporting and growing this system. Assessing the reach of these educational and informational efforts in First Things First regions across the state can help early childhood leadership and stakeholders refine, expand or re-direct these efforts.

What the Data Tell Us

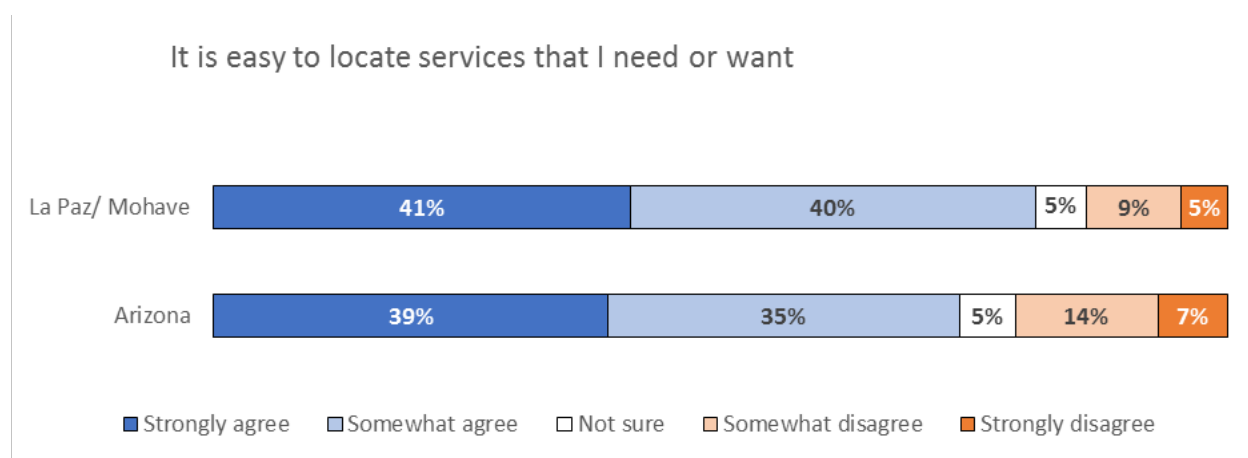
In addition to measuring parent knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to their young children, the 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey collected data on parents’ perceptions regarding resources available to young children and their families across Arizona. Results from the survey demonstrated that residents of the La Paz/Mohave Region had higher levels of satisfaction with available information and resources, and agreement with ease of locating services than residents elsewhere in the state. Almost half (48%) of La Paz/Mohave Region respondents indicated they were “very satisfied” with the community information and resources available to them about their children’s development and health, compared to 39 percent of respondents across the state (see Figure 20). Four out of five (81%) La Paz/Mohave Region respondents “strongly” or “somewhat agreed” that it is easy to locate services that they want or need, compared to 74 percent of respondents across the state (see Figure 21).

Figure 20. Satisfaction with information and resources (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Figure 21. Ease of locating needed services (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Systems Coordination among Early Childhood Programs and Services

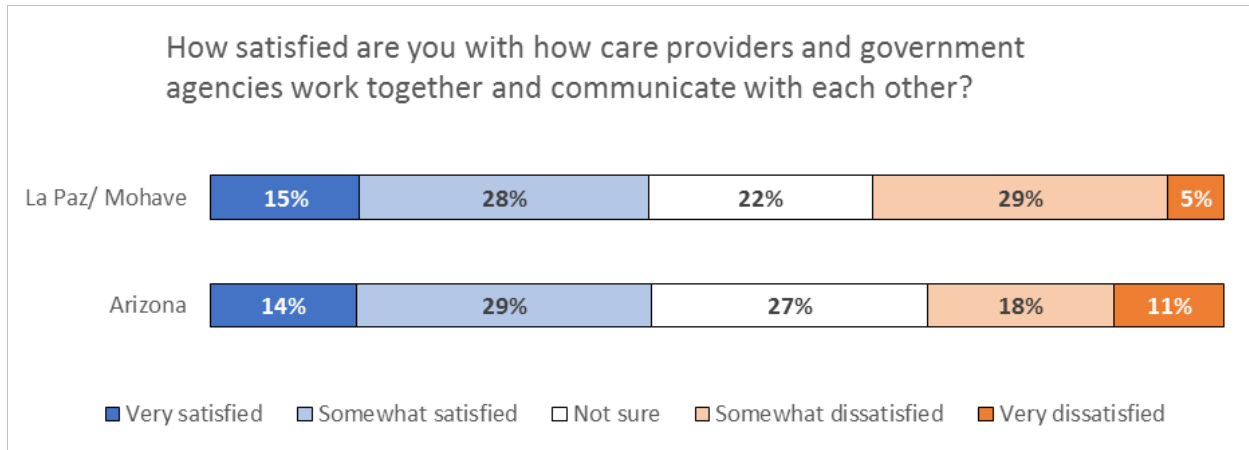
Why it Matters

Through system-building, First Things First is focused on developing approaches to connect various components of the early childhood system. This is done in an effort to create a more holistic system that operates to promote shared results for children and families. Agencies that work together and achieve a high level of coordination and collaboration are often easier for families to access and the services provided are more responsive to the needs of the families. Coordination efforts may also result in an increased capacity to deliver services because of the work that organizations do to identify and address gaps in the service delivery continuum. By supporting a variety of coordination efforts, First Things First aims to create a high quality, interconnected, and comprehensive early childhood service delivery system that is timely, culturally responsive, family driven, community based, and directed toward enhancing children's overall development. Determining how these efforts are impacting regions and the families within them can help inform service, program and policy decisions that will benefit families and young children across the state.

What the Data Tell Us

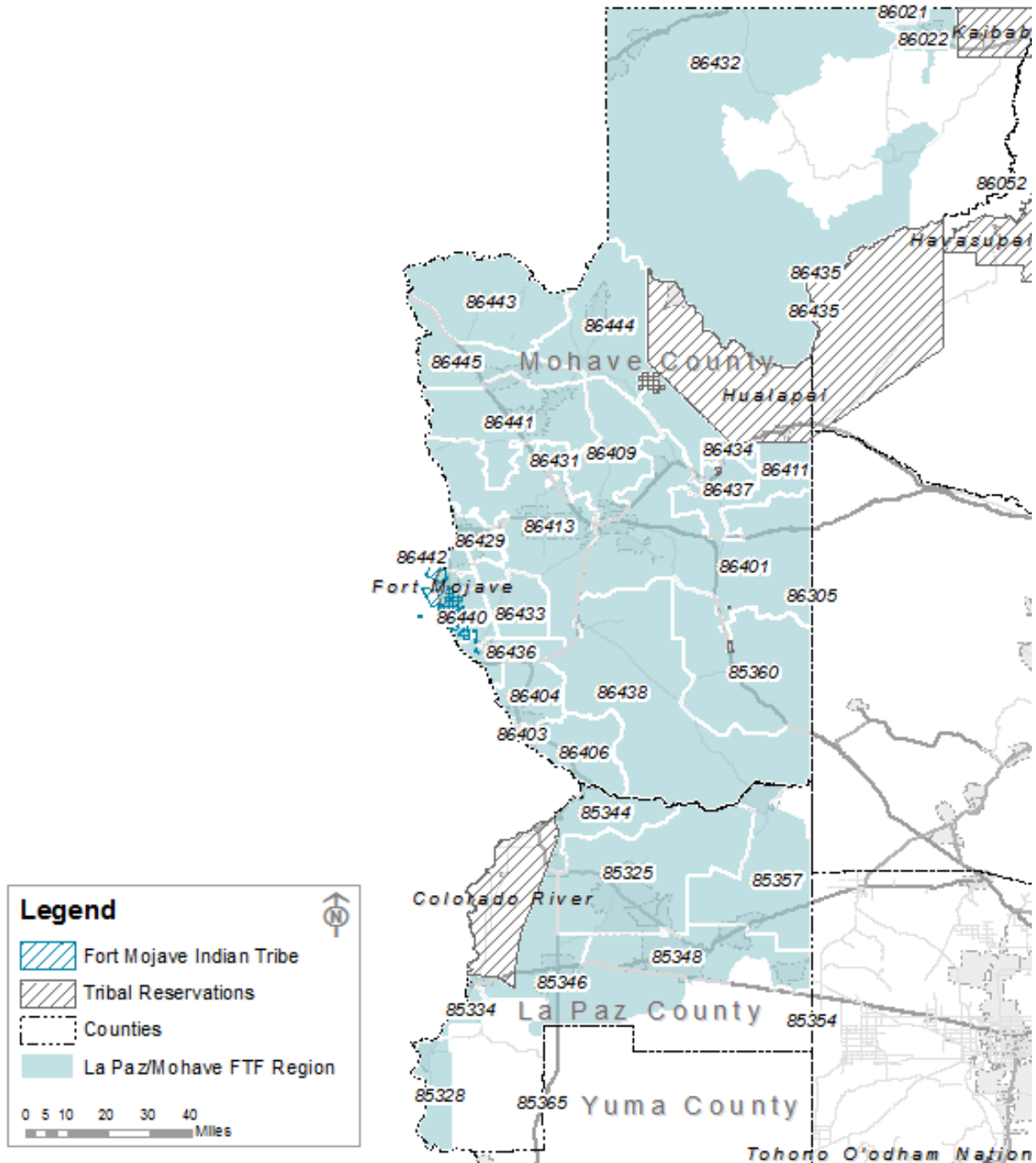
The 2012 First Things First Family and Community Survey also collected data on parents' perceptions regarding how well agencies that serve young children and their families coordinate and collaborate. One item from the survey addresses the issue of perceived early childhood system coordination. In the La Paz/Mohave region, 43 percent of parents expressed some level of satisfaction while 34 percent of parents expressed some level of dissatisfaction (see Figure 22). Satisfaction rates in the region were similar to those across Arizona, although a lower proportion of La Paz/Mohave respondents were very dissatisfied (5%) compared to other Arizona residents (11%).

Figure 22. Satisfaction with coordination and communication (Family and Community Survey, 2012)



Source: First Things First (2014). [2012 Family and Community Survey data]. Unpublished data.

Appendix 1: Map of zip codes of the La Paz/Mohave Region



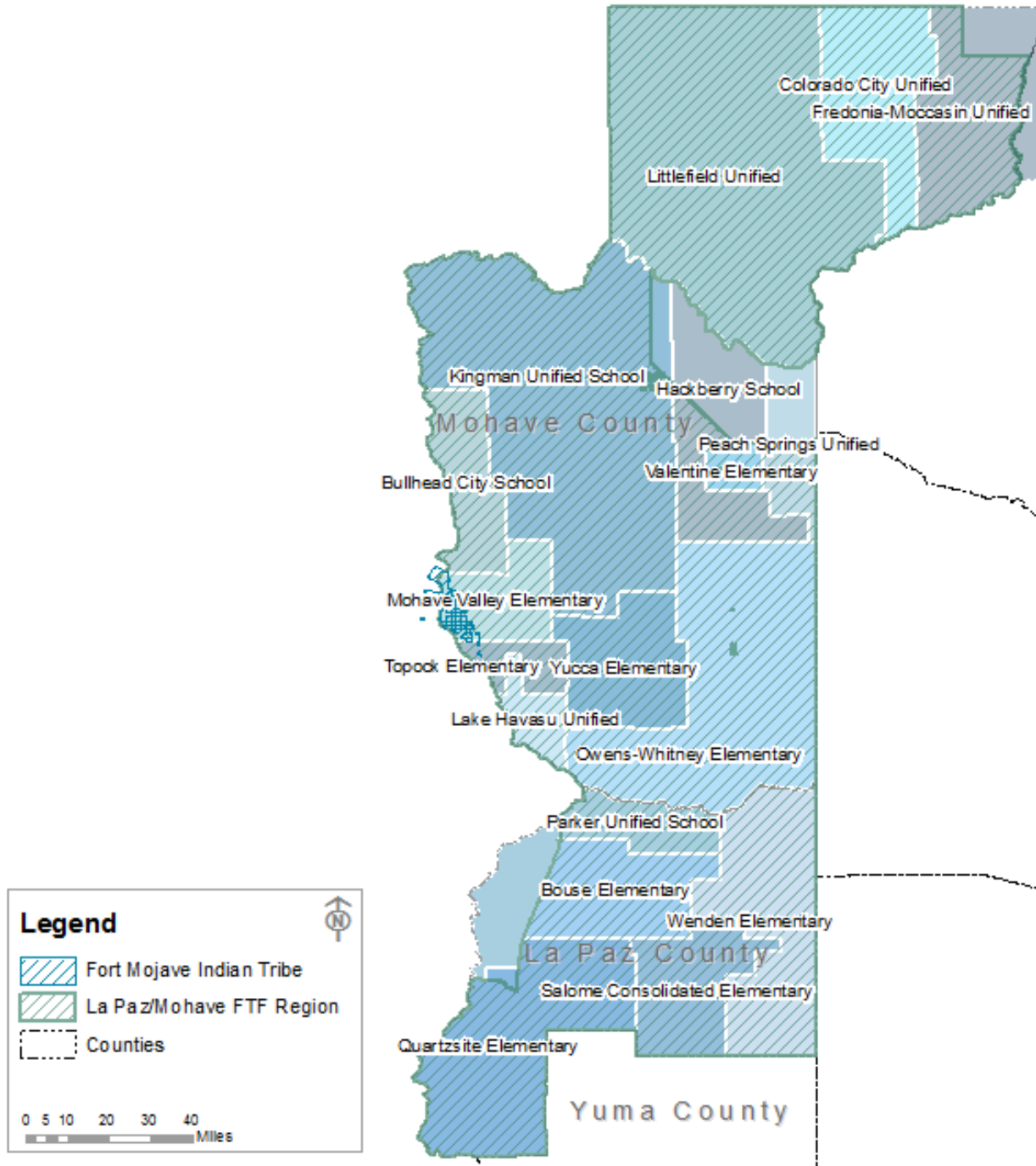
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). TIGER/Line Shapefiles: ZCTAs, Counties, American Indian/Alaska Native Homelands. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-line.html>

Appendix 2: Zip codes of the La Paz/Mohave Region

ZIP CODE TABULATION AREA (ZCTA)	TOTAL POPULATION	POPULATION (AGES 0-5)	TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONE OR MORE CHILDREN (AGES 0- 5)	PERCENT OF ZCTA'S TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN THE LA PAZ/MOHAVE REGION	THIS ZCTA IS SHARED WITH
La Paz/ Mohave Region	211,922	13,469	88,926	9,168		
85325	1,212	32	655	19	100%	
85328	259	10	126	7	100%	
85334	1,482	90	650	66	100%	
85344	2,489	86	1,304	69	27%	Colorado River Indian Tribes
85346	4,423	104	2,423	72	100%	
85348	2,786	87	1,403	59	100%	
85357	761	79	301	45	100%	
85360	218	7	104	5	98%	Hualapai Tribe
86021	6,085	1,441	782	529	100%	
86022	486	72	154	39	22%	Coconino Region
86401	24,289	1,669	9,625	1,199	100%	
86403	15,802	919	7,074	672	100%	
86404	16,243	829	7,322	638	100%	
86406	23,763	1,250	10,343	932	100%	
86409	26,471	1,875	10,990	1,303	100%	
86411	224	9	100	6	100%	
86413	12,103	491	4,637	326	100%	
86426	13,863	834	5,556	617	100%	
86429	7,162	397	3,307	288	100%	
86431	403	8	228	5	100%	
86432	3,933	280	1,556	196	100%	
86433	111	6	61	5	100%	
86434	110	5	45	4	7%	Hualapai Tribe & Yavapai Region
86436	2,104	47	1,040	37	100%	
86437	39	3	17	1	51%	Hualapai Tribe
86438	913	29	462	26	100%	
86440	6,906	456	2,771	320	100%	
86441	2,224	67	1,106	49	100%	
86442	33,382	2,259	13,880	1,614	100%	
86443	76	4	45	2	100%	
86444	1,289	21	697	16	100%	
86445	311	3	162	2	100%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P14, P20.

Appendix 3: Map of Elementary and Unified School Districts in the La Paz/Mohave Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015). TIGER/Line Shapefiles: Elementary School Districts, Unified School Districts. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-line.html>

Appendix 4: Data Sources

- Arizona Department of Administration, Office of Employment and Population Statistics (December 2012): “2012-2050 State and county population projections.” Retrieved from <http://www.workforce.az.gov/population-projections.aspx>
- Arizona Department of Administration, Office of Employment and Population Statistics (2014). Local area unemployment statistics (LAUS). Retrieved from <https://laborstats.az.gov/local-area-unemployment-statistics>
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). Child Care Market Rate Survey 2014. Data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [Attendance data set]. Unpublished raw data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [AzEIP Data]. Unpublished raw data received through the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [DDD Data]. Unpublished raw data received through the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [Drop-Out and Graduation data set]. Unpublished raw data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [Homeless data set]. Unpublished raw data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [SNAP data set]. Unpublished raw data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
- Arizona Department of Economic Security (2015). [TANF data set]. Unpublished raw data received from the First Things First State Agency Data Request
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