

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

East Maricopa Region



**2022**

NEEDS AND ASSETS  
**REPORT**

# INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

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

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

## Acknowledgements

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

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

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

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

## Overview of the FTF East Maricopa Region

The FTF East Maricopa Region Regional Partnership Council (Council) makes strategic investments to support the healthy development and learning of the young children in the region. The Council's priorities include:

- Distribution of population by race and ethnicity;
- Unemployment or job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Third grade reading and math performance; and
- Improving the quality of child care and preschool programs.

The following section provides a summary of the key findings for each of the six domains of the 2022 Regional Needs and Assets report, highlighting the major data findings, the needs and assets they uncover for the FTF East Maricopa Region, potential considerations and opportunities for further exploration. The considerations provided below do not represent comprehensive approaches and methods for tackling the needs and assets in the region. Instead, the considerations represent possible approaches that early childhood system partners, including FTF, could take to address needs and assets in the region, as conceptualized by the authors of this report.

## Key Findings

### Population Characteristics

The demographic profile of residents in a particular community helps policy and decision makers make effective decisions that will positively impact the community's well-being. The East Maricopa Region has a total population of 896,328 residents and close to 60,000 children under the age of six. Just over half (54%) of these preschool-age children are non-Hispanic white and about a quarter (27%) are Hispanic or Latino. Five percent are African American, seven percent are Asian or Pacific Islander, and three percent are American Indian.

In the East Maricopa Region, 81% of residents (age 5 and older) speak English at home with Spanish (9%) being the second most common home language. The highest proportion of Spanish speakers reside in Downtown Chandler (20%) and Guadalupe (19%). Most of the residents who speak a language other than English at home report that they also speak English very well. About five percent of the population do not to speak English very well. Only three percent of households in the region are classified as limited-English-speaking, which means that there is no adult who speaks English very well.

Over three-quarters of households with children under six are married-couple households, with 14% of households led by single females and seven percent led by single males, slightly less than the state. Additionally, eight percent live in the same household as a grandparent, which is lower than the state and county. Sub-regions with high percentage of young children living in a grandparent's households can be found in Fort McDowell (41%) and Guadalupe (15%). Of children under 18 that live in the same household as a grandparent, 53% are primarily cared for by a grandparent. The high percentage of children growing up in dual-parent households is an asset for the region, as is the experience of children living in a multigenerational household, since this means the children likely have more permanent connections with adult role models. Though living with grandparents can be an asset, it can also indicate that the child's parents are emotionally or financially unable to care for their child on their own and there may be need for resources and parenting education for grandparents who are taking on the task of raising a second generation. Additionally, about a quarter of children are living in single-family households which may indicate a more stressful home environment and less time spent with their parents who are likely the sole breadwinners for their family.

### Economic Circumstances

As children are growing and developing, outcomes such as school achievement, physical health, and emotional well-being are all impacted by a child's economic situation.<sup>1</sup> The average unemployment rates for both the state and county increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but started to decrease in 2021, indicating the county is starting to return to unemployment rates equivalent to pre-pandemic. Almost all households with children under six in the region (94%) have at least one parent

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<sup>1</sup> Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). *The effects of poverty on children. The future of children*, 55-71.

who is employed. The median annual income for families with children under 18 in the county is consistently higher than the statewide median for all household types.<sup>2</sup> Married-couple families in the county have a median income of about \$94,782 while single females have a median income of \$32,479. This suggests that single females may experience financial hardships and need support.

Twelve percent of children in the East Maricopa Region live under the poverty level, less than the state (23%). However, almost three in ten children under age six in Guadalupe (27%) and Tempe (26%) live in poverty. This data may help identify geographic areas and populations to target for further intervention or support around increasing financial resources.

Technology serves many purposes in people's lives, providing access to information and communication resources. As technology becomes increasingly prevalent in daily lives, it is imperative that households have access to a reliable computer and internet. A majority (84%) of households in the region have both a smartphone and computer, a larger proportion than the county (77%) and state (73%). Similarly, the majority (93%) of East Maricopa residents live in households with a computer and internet, which is also a larger proportion than the county (88%) and state (87%). For children specifically, household access to a computer and internet in the region is slightly higher at 94%. However, less children in Fort McDowell (84%) and Guadalupe (82%) have access to a computer and internet. Of people living in households with a computer and internet in the region, 75% have fixed broadband with a cellular data plan. Similar to households with children without access to a computer and internet, less households in Fort McDowell (37%) and Guadalupe (59%) have fixed broadband with a cellular data plan. Though many of the households in the East Maricopa Region have access to technology and internet, some sub-regions (i.e., Fort McDowell and Guadalupe) are less likely to have these resources in their household. This may further the digital divide within the East Maricopa Region.

### **Educational Indicators**

Children's participation in early learning experiences is likely to result in higher academic performance in future years.<sup>3</sup> Participation in early learning experiences is likely to result in higher academic performance in future years. About three in five children between ages three and four (61%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten) in the East Maricopa Region.<sup>4</sup> In addition, about three in five of the third-grade students in the region, scored proficient or highly proficient on the AZ Merit English Language Arts (61%) and Math (64%) assessments. Cave Creek Unified District, Paradise Valley Unified District, and Scottsdale Unified District have the highest percentage of children scoring proficiently in English Language arts. Though higher than the state and county, the finding that 40% of the region's third graders are not proficient in math or English suggests

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<sup>2</sup> Median income is only available at the county level.

<sup>3</sup> Bakken, L., Brown, N., Downing, B. (2017) Early Childhood Education: The Long-Term Benefits. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. Volume 31. Issue 2. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1273285>

<sup>4</sup> The report does not have data on the children between ages three and four who are not enrolled in private or public school.



the need for greater participation in early education.

The percentage of first, second, and third graders missing ten or more days of school slightly decreased between 2019 to 2020 across the East Maricopa Region, county, and state. The region's high school graduation rate has remained fairly steady since 2017 at around 69% and the high school dropout rate has remained around four percent since 2018. High school graduation rate was lower than the county and Arizona. Many of the adults in the region have completed high school/received a GED or pursued further education past high school (80%), more than the state or county. In general, residents in the East Maricopa Region have completed high school or more, indicating the potential understanding of the value and importance of education that will hopefully be incorporated into their parenting. Fort McDowell and Downtown Chandler had the highest percentage of adults that did not complete high school or receive a GED, 18% and 11%, respectively.

### **Early Learning**

Participation in early care and education programs plays an important role in preparing children for kindergarten and beyond.<sup>5</sup> About 63% of households are assumed to need child care based on the employment status of the adults in the household, yet only 61% of preschool-aged children in the region are enrolled in early care and education programs. One factor that may influence this finding is the high cost of child care in the region. Though the number of children receiving child care subsidies decreased between 2019 to 2020, child care subsidies are helpful to children in the region.

According to the most recent data, there are currently 710 early childhood centers and homes with a capacity of 93,325 children in the region.<sup>6</sup> Many of these centers are located in Tempe, Chandler, or Downtown Chandler; there are 10 or fewer in Carefree (3), Fountain Hills (10), and Paradise Valley Village (10). Additionally, over 5,000 children in the region are enrolled in Quality First centers rated between three to five stars. Increasing access to quality early care and education programs is essential for the regions' children.

In the East Maricopa Region, less children were served by the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzeIP) in FY2020 (262) than in either of the two years prior (321 in 2018 and 311 in 2019). The numbers served by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) have also decreased over time. In the region, 524 children (ages birth to 5) were served by DDD in 2017 but only 445 were served in 2020. This decrease may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic when less services were available.

### **Child Health**

Ensuring healthy development through early identification and treatment of children's health issues helps families understand healthy developmental pathways and how health issues affect children and

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<sup>5</sup> *University of Massachusetts Global (2021) What is the purpose of early childhood education? Why it's so important. Retrieved from: <https://www.umassglobal.edu/news-and-events/blog/what-is-purpose-of-early-childhood-education>*

<sup>6</sup> *Enrollment data for early childhood centers and homes was not available.*

their school readiness.<sup>7</sup> According to American Community Survey data averaged over the five years from 2015 to 2019, six percent of young children in the East Maricopa Region are estimated to be without health insurance, along with seven percent of the all-ages population in the region. Forty-three percent of children in Fort McDowell were without health insurance.

In the calendar year 2019, East Maricopa Region residents gave birth to 7,811 babies, which was ten percent of all births in the state. Of the people who gave birth in the region in 2019, 55% were non-Hispanic white, 24% were Hispanic or Latina, 7% were Black or African American, 11% were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3% were American Indian or Alaska Native. Those who gave birth in 2019 in the region had a higher level of educational attainment (50% with a Bachelor's degree or higher), compared to the county (29%) or the state (25%). Those who gave birth under the age of 20 accounted for three percent of the total in the region, and relatively fewer people in the region reported smoking while pregnant (2%) as compared to the state (4%). Sixty percent of those who gave birth who participated in WIC were overweight or obese before becoming pregnant, compared to 64% statewide, and the rate of pre-pregnancy obesity in the region and the state has gradually increased each year since 2017. Nearly all expecting people received at least some form of prenatal care, and only five percent of babies in the region were born to those who had had fewer than five prenatal care visits (which is less than the statewide rate of 8%).

In the region in 2019, eight percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state. The percent of premature births was the same as the region (9%) than in the state (9%). The percentage of infants participating in WIC in the region being breastfed stayed the same at 80% from 2017 to 2020. as 80% in 2017 and 80% in 2020.

Although immunization rates vary by vaccine, over 90% of children in child care and kindergarten in the East Maricopa Region had completed each of the three major (DTAP, polio, and MMR) vaccine series. Rates of personal exemptions for vaccinations among children in child care (6% for religion exemption and 1% for medical exemption) were higher than exemption rates at the county (6% for religion exemption and 0.5% for medical exemption) and state level (5% for religion exemption and 0.4% for medical exemption).

Among children participating in WIC in the East Maricopa Region in 2020, 15% were obese and an additional 17% were overweight. However, the region's proportion of children that are obese or overweight has increased in recent years, from 30% in 2017 to 32% in 2020.

## **Family Support**

Support for young families is an essential piece of the holistic efforts around kindergarten readiness and

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

long-term success for children.<sup>8</sup> The number of families and children receiving assistance from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has decreased over the years. While the number of young children participating in SNAP and TANF has declined since 2017, SNAP still supports 9,926 children while TANF supports 722 children annually in the East Maricopa Region. WIC enrollment has also declined slightly from 2017 (21% of children under five) to 2020 (18%). Almost 30% of all public- and charter-school students in the region have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2018.

The total number of fatal opioid deaths in the East Maricopa Region was 392 from 2017 to 2020, which consisted of seven percent of the total deaths in Arizona. In Maricopa County, the number of the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 963 in 2017 to 2,772 in 2020.

### **Opportunities for Further Exploration**

Most of the findings provided in this report are based on secondary data sources. As the FTF East Maricopa Region Regional Partnership Council continues to make increasingly difficult decisions with diminishing funds, the following suggestions for further data collection and analysis may help inform those decisions in a data-driven way. The following opportunities were identified based on the priorities identified by the Council that data were not available to fully explore. Methods could include gathering existing data from local sources or conducting local focused surveys. Listed in order of the domains in this report, the Council may want to consider collecting additional information regarding:

- Available resources for **non-English speaking guardians or parents**, especially for parents of young children.
- Impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** on young children's mental health and socioemotional well-being.
- School districts with **high third grade proficiency** scores versus those with lower scores and the factors that contribute to those results that can inform policy and practice changes within the lower-performing districts. In addition, looking at scores in relation to socioeconomic status and racial and ethnic identity of students to identify best practices.
- Where families are turning for **child care** if licensed care is too expensive or not available in their communities.

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<sup>8</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy (2013). *Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development*. Retrieved from [http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF\\_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf)

# BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Family well-being is an important indicator of child success.<sup>9, 10</sup> Healthy families and healthy communities create a context in which young children can thrive, developing the cognitive, emotional, motor, and social skills they will need to succeed in school and life.<sup>11</sup> Early childhood interventions promote well-being and impact outcomes for children and adults later in life, including school readiness, parent involvement, K-12 achievement, educational attainment, crime prevention and remedial education.<sup>12</sup>

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

- Distribution of population by race and ethnicity;
- Unemployment or job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Third grade reading and math performance; and
- Improving the quality of child care and preschool programs.

## Methodology

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

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<sup>9</sup> Bøe, T., Serlachius, A., Sivertsen, B., Petrie, K., Hysing, M. (2017) Cumulative effects of negative life events and family stress in children's mental health: the Bergen child study. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-017-1451-4>

<sup>10</sup> Sosu, E., Schmidt, P. (2017) Economic deprivation and its effects on childhood conduct problems: the mediating role of family stress and investment factors. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01580>

<sup>11</sup> Knitzer, Jane. (2000). *Early childhood mental services: a policy and systems development perspective*. In J. Shonkoff & S. Meisels (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 416-438). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>12</sup> Reynolds, A., Ou, S., Mondri, C., Hayakawa, M. (2017) Processes of early childhood interventions to adult well-being. *Child Development*. Volume 88 Issue 2. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12733>

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

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

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

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

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

Furthermore, many agencies are collecting data independent of other public entities which results in

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

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

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

### **Limitations**

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

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

Some of the most recent data was not available for this report. The demographic and economic profile of the region relied mostly on Census and ACS data. For some of the Census indicators, only 2010 Census data were available as 2020 Census data were delayed due to COVID-19. For some of the indicators reported, the most recent data for the region was released in 2018, thus trends may have changed within the past four years, especially due to the pandemic. For example, the most recent data for the Child Care

Market Rate Survey is from 2018. This survey provides the median cost for licensed centers, approved family homes and certified group homes.

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

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



## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS



# POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

## Why It Matters

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

This first domain of the report provides an overview of the geographic region's population dynamics, projected growth, ethnic and racial composition, languages spoken, immigration trends, and household characteristics (e.g., living arrangements for children). Indicators about children living with grandparents are included as well. Although only limited research has been conducted on the influence of grandparents on child development and health, this data provides an overview of their participation in the region's households and shows trends in grandparental care over time.<sup>13</sup> Understanding how the population is changing and where it is growing allows decision makers to strategically and proactively allocate resources.

## What the Data Tell Us

The East Maricopa First Things First Region lies to the east of the city of Phoenix, and includes three cities (Chandler, Scottsdale, and Tempe), five towns (Fountain Hills, Paradise Valley, Guadalupe, Cave Creek, and Carefree), two unincorporated places (Sun Lakes and Rio Verde), two Phoenix neighborhoods (Ahwatukee and Paradise Valley Village) and one Indian reservation (the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation). This region lies entirely within Maricopa County.

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<sup>13</sup> *Sadrudin, A., Ponguta, L., Zonderman, A., Wiley, K., Grimshaw, A., Panter-Brick, C. (2019) How do grandparents influence child health and development? A systematic review. Social Science & Medicine. Volume 239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112476>*

Note that although the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community border the East Maricopa Region, neither is included in this region. Both of them form their own First Things First regions.

The East Maricopa Region includes 31 zip code areas. The region is divided into 14 sub-regions. (Exhibit 1.1.) The data tables in this report will present data for the East Maricopa Region (whenever possible) in the first row, followed by a row for each of the sub-regions, as described below. The last three rows in most data tables will present data for the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Maricopa County in its entirety, and the state of Arizona.

The **Ahwatukee** sub-region is the southeastern corner of the city of Phoenix, and contains three zip code areas: 85044, 85045, and 85048. This sub-region is bounded by South Mountain on the north, the Gila River Indian Community on the south, and the I-10 freeway on the east.

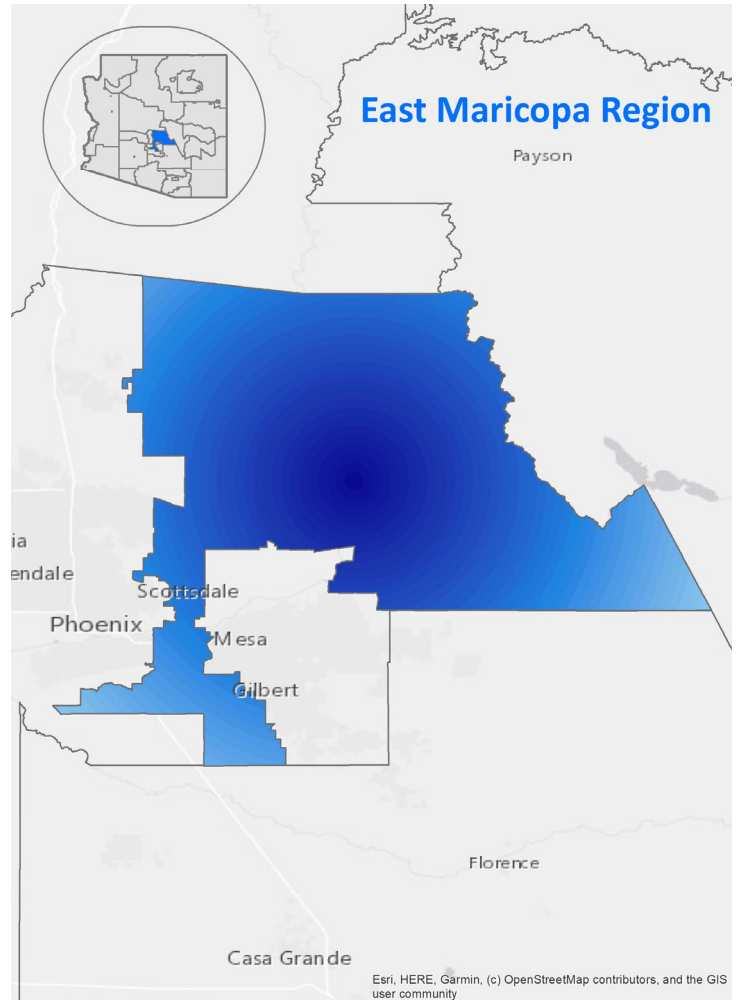
The **Carefree** sub-region is the 85377 zip code area. This sub-region contains almost all of the town of Carefree.

The **Cave Creek** sub-region (85331) includes the entire town of Cave Creek. Most of the people in this sub-region, however, live to the south of the town of Cave Creek, in neighborhoods along Cave Creek Road and 56th Street, as far south as Dynamite Boulevard. (These neighborhoods are partly in the city of Phoenix and partly unincorporated.) The Cave Creek sub-region also includes unincorporated land to the north of the town of Cave Creek, as well as a small portion of the town of Carefree.

The **Chandler** sub-region includes the four zip code areas (85226, 85248, 85249, and 85286) which covers the city of Chandler. The 85248 zip code also includes Sun Lakes.

The **Downtown Chandler** sub-region includes two zip code areas (85224 and 85225) which also covers the city of Chandler.

Exhibit 1.1. Map of Maricopa County and East Maricopa Region boundaries



Bounded by the Fort McDowell and Salt River reservations, the city of Scottsdale, and McDowell Mountain Park, the **Fountain Hills** sub-region (85268) contains the town of Fountain Hills.

The **Guadalupe** sub-region is defined as the town of Guadalupe. Guadalupe does not have its own zip code area, but it shares 85283 with Tempe.

The majority of the **Paradise Valley** sub-region (85253) is the town of Paradise Valley. It also includes small portions of the cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale, as well as some unincorporated land.

**Paradise Valley Village** (85254) is another Phoenix neighborhood which is included in the East Maricopa Region. This sub-region is approximately bounded by Scottsdale Road, Shea Boulevard, 48th Street, and the Central Arizona Project canal. It also includes a small part of the city of Scottsdale.

In the northeast corner of the East Maricopa Region is the **Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch** sub-region. It includes the two zip code areas of 85263 and 85264. There are no incorporated cities or towns in this sub-region. About a third of the population live on the Fort McDowell Reservation. The rest live north of the reservation, in Rio Verde or along 172nd Street, or east of the reservation, in the Goldfield Ranch neighborhood off Highway 87.

**Fort McDowell** sub-region is part of the Rio Verde Goldfield Ranch sub-region. It includes three zip codes (85264, 85545, 85215) and does not have any incorporated cities or towns.

Seven zip code areas (85250, 85255, 85258, 85259, 85260, 85262, and 85266) make up the **Scottsdale** sub-region. Although most of these zip codes lie in the city of Scottsdale, they also include small portions of Phoenix city, Carefree town, and Paradise Valley town, as well as some unincorporated land.

**South Scottsdale**, which another sub-region and lies south of Chaparral Road (zip code areas 85251 and 85257).

The **Tempe** sub-region includes four zip code areas (85281, 85282, 85283, and 85284) except the town of Guadalupe. This sub-region includes the entire city of Tempe plus a small amount of unincorporated land.

## Population Counts and Projections

According to the 2010 Census, the East Maricopa Region has a total population of 896,328 residents. There are 58,035 children under six years old in the region, accounting for seven percent of the total population in the region (Exhibit 1.2). Across the sub-regions, the proportions of young children as a proportion ranged from one percent in the Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch sub-region to 19% in Fort McDowell sub-region.

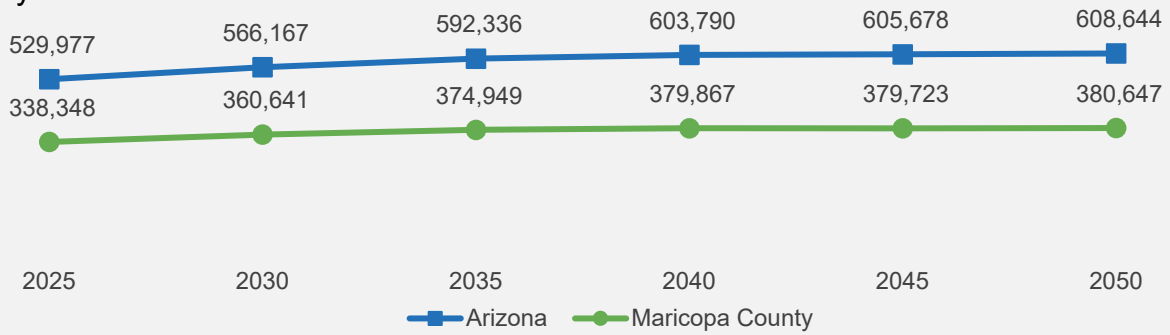
Exhibit 1.2. Population (all ages) in the 2010 Census

	All ages	Ages 0-5	Children (0-5) as a percentage of the total population
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>896,328</b>	<b>58,035</b>	<b>7%</b>
Ahwatukee	78,624	5,176	7%
Carefree	3,051	57	2%
Cave Creek	26,628	1,729	6%
Chandler	142,140	11,910	8%
Downtown Chandler	112,606	9,990	9%
Fort McDowell	681	129	19%
Fountain Hills	22,684	830	4%
Guadalupe	5,523	708	13%
Paradise Valley	16,996	719	4%
Paradise Valley Village	46,053	2,602	6%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,126	28	1%
Scottsdale	217,051	11,293	5%
South Scottsdale	60,377	3,334	6%
Tempe	161,788	9,530	6%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	971	117	12%
Maricopa County	3,817,117	339,217	9%
ARIZONA	6,392,017	546,609	9%

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

The number of children under six in Maricopa County is expected to increase over the next ten years, rising to about 380,650 by 2050 (Exhibit 1.3). About 60% of Arizona’s children under six years old reside in Maricopa County. Over the same time period, the number of children under six is also expected to increase for the state as a whole.

Exhibit 1.3. Projected population of children 0-5 in Arizona and Maricopa County



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

## Demographics and Language

In the East Maricopa Region, more than 70% of adults 18 and over identify as white and 13% identify as Hispanic or Latino (Exhibit 1.4). This compares to 63% and 25%, respectively, for Arizona. A small proportion of adults 18 and over (9%) identify as African American (3%), Asian or Pacific Islander (5%), or American Indian (1%). In some sub-regions, over 90% of adults identify as white: Carefree (94%), Cave Creek (91%), Fountain Hills (93%), Paradise Valley (90%), and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch (97%). In the Guadalupe sub-region, almost two-thirds of adults identify as Hispanic or Latino (63%). In the Fort McDowell sub-region and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation over half of adults identify as a American Indian (79% in Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and 57% in Fort McDowell sub-region).

Exhibit 1.4. Race and ethnicity of the adult population (ages 18 and older) in the 2010 Census

	Number of persons (ages 18 and older)	Hispanic or Latino	White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	American Indian alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	African-American alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	Asian or Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino)
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>709,313</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Ahwatukee	59,489	11%	75%	1%	5%	6%
Carefree	2,738	2%	94%	0%	0%	2%
Cave Creek	20,239	5%	91%	0%	1%	2%
Chandler	104,677	11%	74%	1%	4%	9%
Downtown Chandler	83,417	27%	60%	1%	5%	6%
Fort McDowell	853	11%	30%	57%	0%	0%
Fountain Hills	19,433	3%	93%	0%	1%	2%
Guadalupe	3,538	63%	3%	32%	1%	0%
Paradise Valley	13,437	4%	90%	0%	1%	4%
Paradise Valley Village	36,091	5%	87%	0%	1%	5%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,060	2%	97%	0%	0%	0%
Scottsdale	178,158	7%	86%	1%	2%	3%
South Scottsdale	50,620	15%	77%	1%	2%	2%
Tempe	134,563	18%	66%	2%	5%	6%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	614	14%	4%	79%	0%	0%
Maricopa County	2,809,256	25%	64%	1%	4%	4%
ARIZONA	4,763,003	25%	63%	4%	4%	3%

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

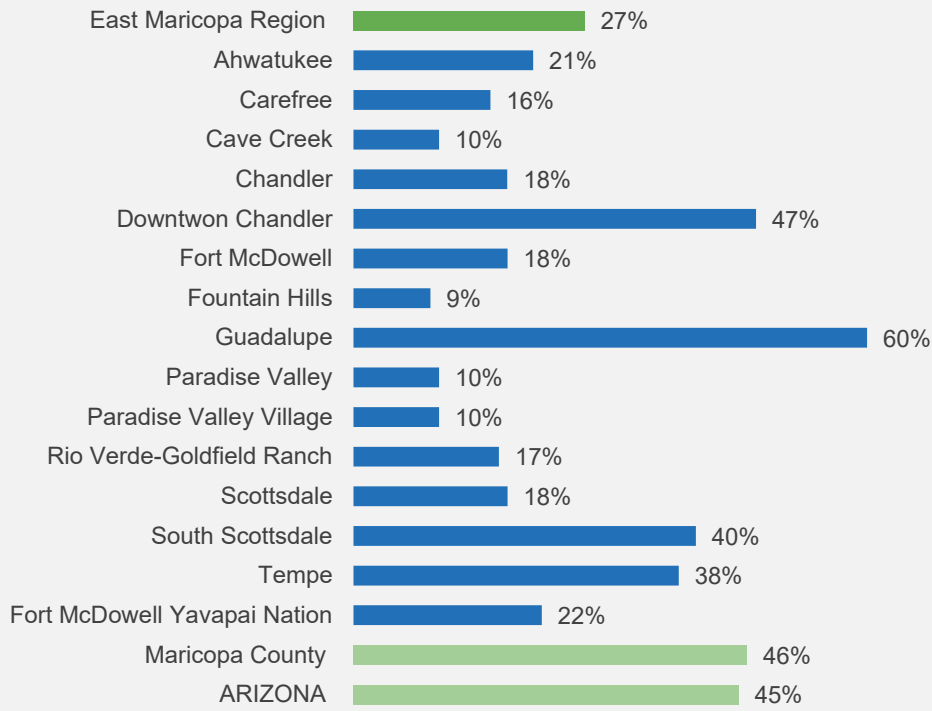
In the region, children under five are more likely to identify as Hispanic or Latino (27%) than the overall population (Exhibit 1.5 and Exhibit 1.6). Across the region, there is considerable variation in the racial and ethnic composition of young children within communities. For example, the majority of children under five in the Guadalupe sub-region (60%) identify as Hispanic or Latino, while less than ten percent in the Fountain Hills sub-region (9%) identify as Hispanic or Latino. In addition, over half of children in the Fort McDowell (68%) and Guadalupe (55%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (92%) identify as American Indian compared to three percent of the whole East Maricopa Region. There is some variation in some sub-regions, like Carefree (82%), Cave Creek (82%), Fountain Hills (82%) and Paradise Valley (82%), where at least 80% of children under five identify as white.

Exhibit 1.5. Race and ethnicity of children (ages 0-4) in the 2010 Census

	Number of persons (ages 0-4)	Hispanic or Latino	White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	American Indian alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	African-American alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	Asian or Pacific Islander (not Hispanic or Latino)
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>47,964</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Ahwatukee	4,220	21%	56%	3%	7%	7%
Carefree	45	16%	82%	0%	2%	0%
Cave Creek	1,392	10%	82%	1%	1%	2%
Chandler	9,726	18%	59%	2%	4%	2%
Downtown Chandler	8,410	47%	36%	3%	5%	3%
Fort McDowell	129	18%	6%	68%	0%	8%
Fountain Hills	681	9%	82%	0%	2%	2%
Guadalupe	572	60%	2%	55%	2%	0%
Paradise Valley	546	10%	82%	0%	1%	4%
Paradise Valley Village	2,146	10%	73%	1%	2%	10%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	24	17%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Scottsdale	9,208	18%	69%	1%	2%	4%
South Scottsdale	2,810	40%	47%	4%	3%	2%
Tempe	8,055	38%	38%	5%	10%	5%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	96	22%	0%	92%	0%	0%
Maricopa County	282,770	46%	40%	3%	6%	4%
ARIZONA	455,715	45%	40%	6%	5%	3%

U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Tables P12B, P12C, P12D, P12E, P12H, and P12I

**Exhibit 1.6. Percent of children (0-4) reported to be Hispanic in the 2010 Census**



*U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Table P12H*

Approximately four out of five people in the region (81%) speak English as their primary language, while nine percent primarily speak Spanish, and an additional ten percent speak a language other than English or Spanish (Exhibit 1.7). Compared to Arizona and Maricopa County, more households speak English at home (73% versus 81%) and less families speak Spanish (20% versus 9%) in the East Maricopa Region. In the Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch (95%), Carefree (92%), Cave Creek (92%), Fountain Hills (92%), and Paradise Valley (91%) sub-regions households that speak another language besides English is rare.



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

	Estimated population (ages 5 and older)	Speak English at home	Speak Spanish at home	Speak another language at home
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>884,526</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Ahwatukee	80,055	82%	8%	10%
Carefree	3,333	92%	2%	6%
Cave Creek	28,883	92%	4%	4%
Chandler	148,765	80%	7%	13%
Downtown Chandler	107,231	71%	20%	9%
Fort McDowell	1,285	75%	4%	21%
Fountain Hills	24,470	92%	3%	5%
Guadalupe	48,755	71%	19%	10%
Paradise Valley	18,123	91%	4%	5%
Paradise Valley Village	45,044	84%	3%	13%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,887	95%	1%	3%
Scottsdale	169,475	88%	3%	8%
South Scottsdale	70,295	83%	12%	4%
Tempe	135,926	74%	13%	13%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	981	80%	5%	15%
Maricopa County	4,050,301	73%	20%	7%
ARIZONA	6,616,331	73%	20%	7%

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

In the East Maricopa Region, 14% of those that speak another language at home report that they speak English “very well,” which is lower than the state (19%) and county (18%; Exhibit 1.8). Many of the residents in the East Maricopa Region speak English at home (81%), which is higher than the state (73%) and county (73%). As previously mentioned, in some sub-regions (i.e., Carefree, Cave Creek, and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch), there is a high percentage of the population that only speaks English at home.

Exhibit 1.8. Proficiency in English (ages 5 and older)

	Population (ages 5 and older)	Speak English at home	Speak another language at home, and speak English "very well"	Speak another language at home, and do not speak English "very well"
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>884,526</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Ahwatukee	80,055	82%	14%	4%
Carefree	3,333	92%	8%	0%
Cave Creek	28,883	92%	6%	2%
Chandler	148,765	80%	15%	5%
Downtown Chandler	107,231	71%	20%	9%
Fort McDowell	1,285	75%	23%	2%
Fountain Hills	24,470	92%	6%	2%
Guadalupe	48,755	71%	21%	9%
Paradise Valley	18,123	91%	7%	2%
Paradise Valley Village	45,044	84%	12%	4%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,887	95%	5%	0%
Scottsdale	169,475	88%	9%	2%
South Scottsdale	70,295	83%	12%	5%
Tempe	135,926	74%	19%	8%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	981	80%	18%	3%
Maricopa County	4,050,301	73%	18%	9%
ARIZONA	6,616,331	73%	19%	9%

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

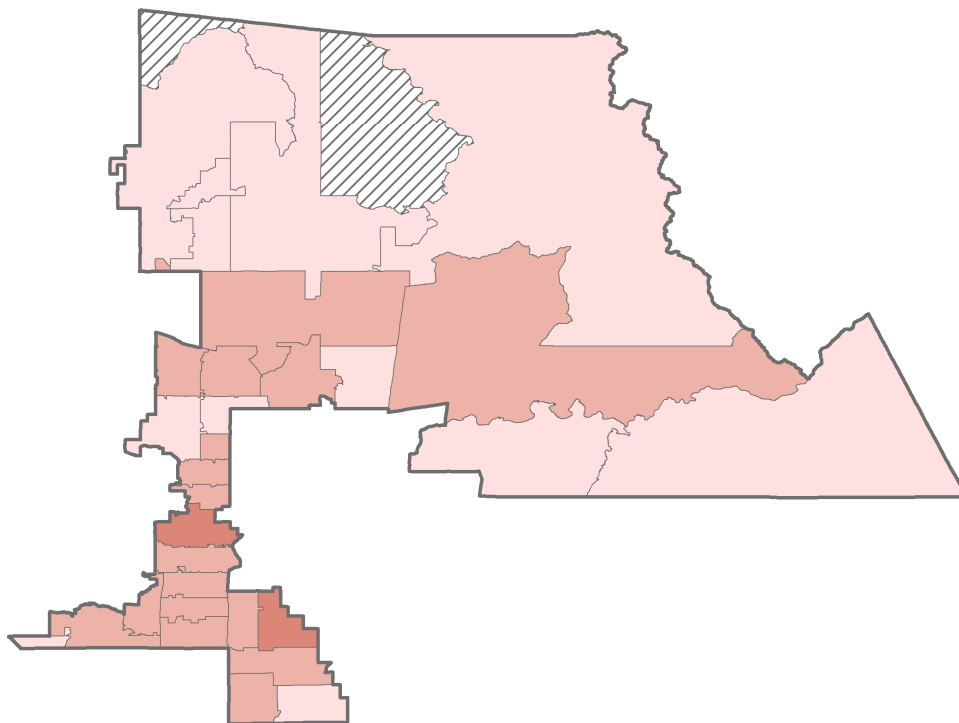
A household is considered “limited-English-speaking” if there is no adult (14 or older) who speaks English well. Three percent of households in East Maricopa Region are classified as limited English-speaking, which is slightly lower than the proportion of households in Arizona (4%) and Maricopa County (4%). Carefree, Paradise Valley and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch are sub-regions with no limited-English households (Exhibit 1.9), which may be due to their low percentage of households that speak a language other than English. The map in Exhibit 1.10 also shows a high concentration of limited- English-speaking households in some parts of Paradise Valley Village and North Tempe.

Exhibit 1.9. Limited-English-speaking households

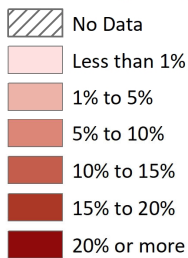
	Number of households	Households which speak a language other than English	Limited-English-speaking households (Total)	Limited-English-speaking households (Spanish)
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>377,751</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Ahwatukee	33,217	22%	2%	1%
Carefree	1,750	8%	0%	0%
Cave Creek	11,899	11%	1%	0%
Chandler	58,930	22%	2%	1%
Downtown Chandler	42,499	29%	5%	3%
Fort McDowell	434	35%	1%	0%
Fountain Hills	12,039	9%	1%	0%
Guadalupe	19,809	31%	4%	2%
Paradise Valley	7,590	13%	0%	0%
Paradise Valley Village	18,711	20%	2%	0%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	1,491	6%	0%	0%
Scottsdale	79,254	13%	1%	0%
South Scottsdale	35,146	17%	2%	1%
Tempe	54,984	29%	5%	2%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	314	32%	2%	0%
Maricopa County	1,552,096	27%	4%	3%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	28%	4%	3%

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

Exhibit 1.10. Limited English-speaking households



**Limited English Speaking Households**



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

There are slightly less children living with parents born outside the United States in the region (26%) compared to the county (29%) (Exhibit 1.11). The highest percentages of children living with parent(s) born outside the United States reside in the sub-regions: Tempe (32%), Downtown Chandler (31%) and Paradise Valley Village (30%), while Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch (0%) and Fort McDowell (5%) subregions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (5%) have five percent or less of children living with parent(s) born outside the United States.

Exhibit 1.11. Children (ages 0 to 5) living with parents born outside the U.S.

	Children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents	Children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents born outside the U.S.
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>51,151</b>	<b>26%</b>
Ahwatukee	5,186	24%
Carefree	-	-
Cave Creek	1,607	16%
Chandler	10,485	26%
Downtown Chandler	7,926	31%
Fort McDowell	78	5%
Fountain Hills	760	14%
Guadalupe	3,201	25%
Paradise Valley	752	26%
Paradise Valley Village	2,740	30%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	66	0%
Scottsdale	7,532	23%
South Scottsdale	3,696	21%
Tempe	7,122	32%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	77	5%
Maricopa County	319,099	29%
ARIZONA	494,590	25%

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

The number of kindergarten through third grade students in the region that are migrants has remained at less than 11 students for each year from 2018 to 2020 (Exhibit 1.12). Arizona defines a migrant child as “child or youth, from birth up to 20 [22 with an IEP], who made a qualifying move in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher; or with, or to join, a parent or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher.”<sup>14</sup>

Exhibit 1.12. Children in grades K to 3 that are migrants from 2018 to 2020

	Arizona	Maricopa County	East Maricopa Region
2018	662	52	<11
2019	570	43	<11
2020	809	33	<11

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

<sup>14</sup> Alvarez, L. (2021) Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Arizona Migrant Education Program. Retrieved from <https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2022/01/Arizona%20Comprehensive%20Needs%20Report%202021.pdf>

The percent of kindergarten through third grade students in the region from 2018 to 2020 who are English Language Learners (ELL) is six to seven percent, which is lower than the county and state (Exhibit 1.13).

**Exhibit 1.13. Percentage of children in grades K to 3 that are English Language Learners from 2018 to 2020**

	Arizona	Maricopa County	East Maricopa Region
2018	10%	12%	6%
2019	9%	11%	6%
2020	10%	12%	7%

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

### Household Characteristics

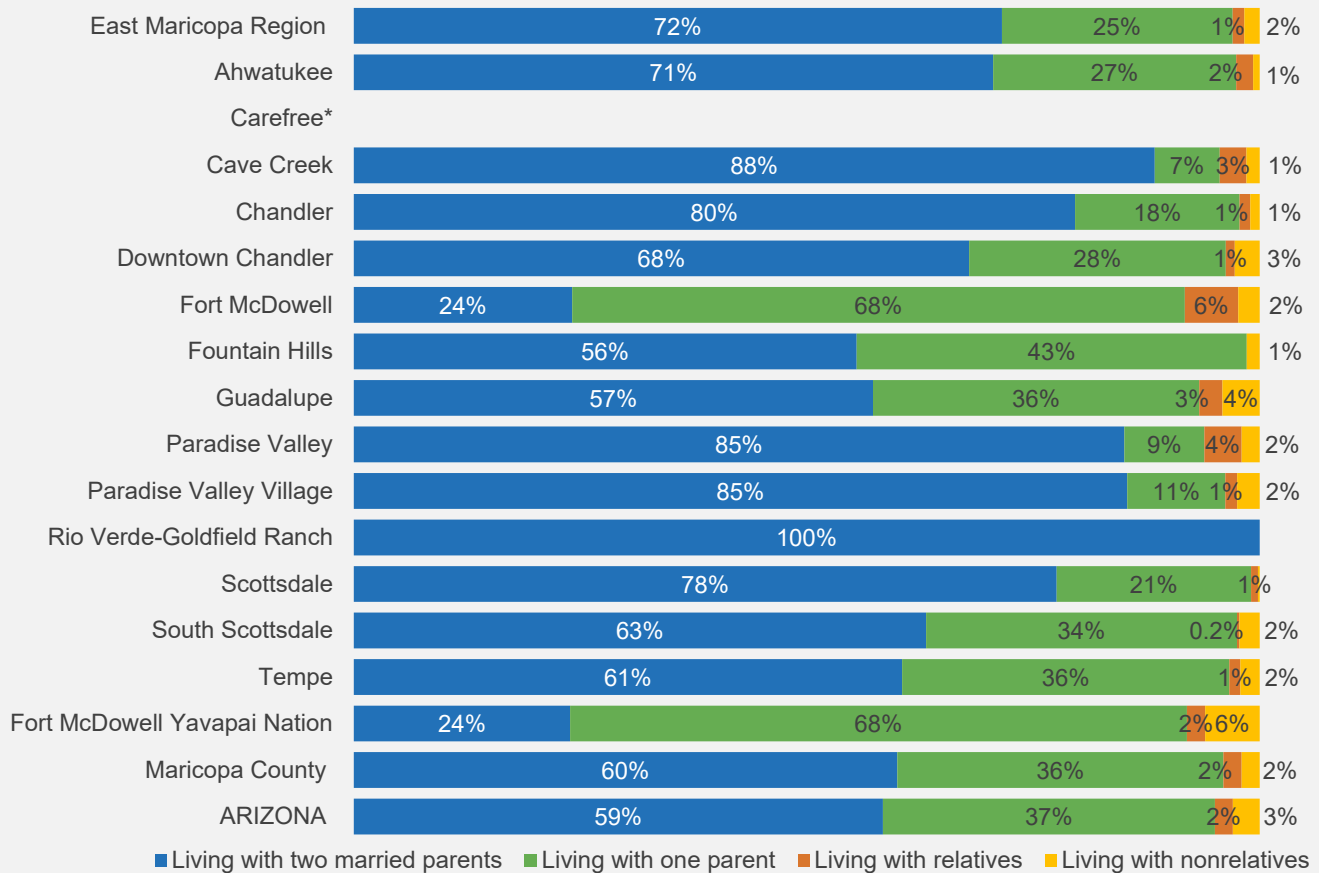
In the East Maricopa Region, there are almost 230,000 households and about 33,000 (14%) include children under six years old (Exhibit 1.14). Sub-regions with the highest proportion of households with children under six years old include Downtown Chandler (19%) and Tempe (18%), while Carefree includes no households with children under six years old.

**Exhibit 1.14. Number of households and household characteristics**

	Total number of households	Total number of households with children 0-5	Percent of households with children 0-5	Percent of married-couple households with children 0-5	Percent of single-male households with children 0-5	Percent of single-female households with children 0-5
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>228,995</b>	<b>32,975</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Ahwatukee	22,268	3,523	16%	79%	8%	13%
Carefree	1,137	0	0%	-	-	-
Cave Creek	8,953	1,094	12%	92%	3%	6%
Chandler	42,163	6,933	16%	86%	5%	9%
Downtown Chandler	26,976	5,231	19%	75%	5%	21%
Fort McDowell	306	28	9%	40%	18%	43%
Fountain Hills	7,836	392	5%	72%	19%	8%
Guadalupe	11,795	1,731	15%	66%	7%	27%
Paradise Valley	5,417	452	8%	97%	0%	3%
Paradise Valley Village	12,674	1,966	16%	92%	2%	6%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	1,233	32	3%	100%	0%	0%
Scottsdale	49,672	4,869	10%	81%	6%	13%
South Scottsdale	14,100	2,329	17%	70%	8%	22%
Tempe	24,466	4,395	18%	71%	13%	16%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	237	28	12%	39%	18%	43%
Maricopa County	1,018,723	188,572	19%	70%	9%	21%
ARIZONA	1,679,198	291,242	17%	68%	10%	22%

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

Exhibit 1.15. Living arrangements of children 0-5



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

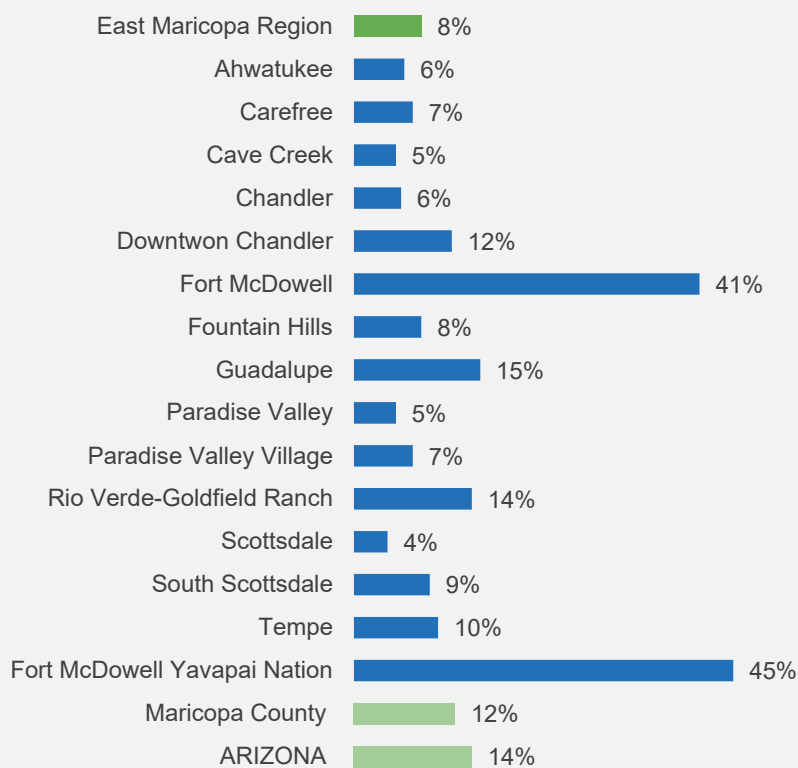
\*No children under the age of five live in the Carefree sub-region.

Additionally, eight percent of young children (ages 0-5) live in the same household as a grandparent in the region, which is lower than the state (14%) and county (12%). High percentage of young children living in the same household as a grandparent can be found in the following sub-regions: Fort McDowell (41%) and Guadalupe (15%) along with the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (45%, Exhibit 1.16). Some these households may be multigenerational, and the grandparent is considered the head of the household—but the child’s parent may also live there. More information about the responsibility of the grandparents for children under 18 is available in Exhibit 1.17. Within the East Maricopa Region, of children under 18 who live in the same household as a grandparent, 53% are primarily cared for by a grandparent and for 20% the grandparent is responsible, and the child’s parent is not present in the household.

There can be several advantages to living in a mutigenerational household, including an increase in emotional well-being and parents serving as role models in the socialization of children. However, this also indicates that young families may not have the resources to live on their own and may be living

with their elderly parents. Grandparents raising their grandchildren may also require additional support due to the nontraditional family structure, changes in parenting practices since grandparents are raising children. In addition, many older adults live on fixed incomes and may struggle with caring for dependents. There may also be cultural factors that result in grandparents living in the same household as their grandchildren. Given particularly high percentages of grandparents involved in the care of grandchildren in several communities, additional supports for grandparents raising grandchildren may be needed.

Exhibit 1.16. Percent of children (0-5) living in a grandparent's household in the 2010 Census



U.S. Census Bureau (2010) Census Summary File 1; SF 1, Table P41



Exhibit 1.17. Children (Ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household

	Number of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household	Percent of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household, and the grandparent is responsible for the child	Percent of children (ages 0-17) living in a grandparent's household, and the grandparent is responsible for the child (with no parent present)
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Ahwatukee	749	62%	19%
Carefree	-	-	-
Cave Creek	192	29%	13%
Chandler	1,351	65%	23%
Downtown Chandler	1,964	54%	29%
Fort McDowell	86	64%	12%
Fountain Hills	233	66%	9%
Guadalupe	1,463	58%	24%
Paradise Valley	228	42%	0%
Paradise Valley Village	378	72%	30%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	0	0	0%
Scottsdale	614	38%	10%
South Scottsdale	550	27%	5%
Tempe	1,503	44%	17%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	86	64%	12%
Maricopa County	84,051	48%	15%
ARIZONA	155,821	50%	16%

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

# POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS HIGHLIGHTS

East Maricopa lies entirely within Maricopa County with a growing population of children under the age of six. The ethnic profile of the region is slightly different from the profile of the State of Arizona with a higher percentage of the adult population identifying as white (76%) and 54% of children under five who identify as Hispanic or Latino. The majority of households speak English as their primary language and less than ten percent primarily speak Spanish. The majority of households with children under six are led by married couples, though this varies widely between the different sub-regions. Only three percent of children under six in the region live with relatives or non-relatives. Eight percent live in the same household as their grandparents and half of those are primarily cared for by a grandparent.

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

Assets	Considerations
The population of children under the age of six is projected to grow at a modest and steady rate, allowing the region to foresee and prepare for the growing demands of their youngest residents.	Discuss tactics for planning ahead for the projected slow, but steady, growth of the under six population and the needs that accompany that growth, such as healthcare and child care needs for young children.
Of the households that speak another language besides English, three percent are Limited-English-speaking households. These households are most likely to be Spanish speaking.	Support services and centers in having bilingual staff (especially staff that speaks English and Spanish) and resources.

Needs	Considerations
According to the American Community Survey, most of the children under six living in single-parent households or cared for by grandparents, both of which face additional barriers and difficulties when compared to two parent households, are in the Fort McDowell and Guadalupe sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.	Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households and targeted in the Fort McDowell and Guadalupe sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation to help them support the young children in their homes.



## **ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

# ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

## Why it Matters

The economic situation of children and their families has a large impact on their ability to access opportunities and services that can contribute to their well-being and healthy development. As children are growing and developing, outcomes such as school achievement, physical health, and emotional well-being are all impacted by a child's economic situation.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, being unemployed or living below the federal poverty level indicates that parents and caregivers have fewer resources to be able to meet their families' basic needs, such as adequate, nutritious food and good quality, stable housing.

Economic stability is critical to supporting young children and families to maintain a household where children can thrive. Recent research has shown that physical housing quality, neighborhood environment and housing stability play an important role in children's development and well-being.<sup>16, 17, 18</sup> Housing instability, which includes frequent moves, difficulty paying rent, being evicted or being homeless, is associated with worse health, academic, and social outcomes.<sup>19</sup> Children without housing stability often experience negative outcomes such as higher grade retention, higher high school dropout rates, and lower educational attainment as adults.<sup>20,21</sup> Unemployment of parents can also affect the psychological well-being of children in the long-term due to negative experiences and stressful events.<sup>22</sup> Lack of access to healthy food and general food insecurity can also lead to numerous issues for children and mothers, including birth complications, delayed development, learning difficulties, and chronic health conditions.<sup>23,24</sup> Thus, housing, families' employment and food security are important components to consider when evaluating the conditions that affect a child's development and well-being during their first five years of life.

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<sup>15</sup> Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). *The effects of poverty on children. The future of children*, 55-71.

<sup>16</sup> Blau, D. M., Haskell, N. L., & Haurin, D. R. (2019). *Are housing characteristics experienced by children associated with their outcomes as young adults? Journal of Housing Economics*, 46, 101631.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/partnership\\_for\\_americas\\_economic\\_success/paeshou singreportfinal1pdf.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/partnership_for_americas_economic_success/paeshou singreportfinal1pdf.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Clair, A. (2019). *Housing: An under-explored influence on children's well-being and becoming. Child Indicators Research*, 12(2), 609-626.

<sup>19</sup> Sandstrom, H. & Huerta, S. (September 2013). *The Negative Effects of Instability on Child Development: A Research Synthesis. Urban Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis/view/full\\_report](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis/view/full_report)*

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis/view/full\\_report](http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis/view/full_report)

<sup>21</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2005.00278.x/full>

<sup>22</sup> Nikolova, M., Nikolaev, B. (2018) *How having unemployed parents affects children's future well-being. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/07/13/how-having-unemployed-parents-affects-childrens-future-well-being/>*

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/child-hunger/child-development.html>

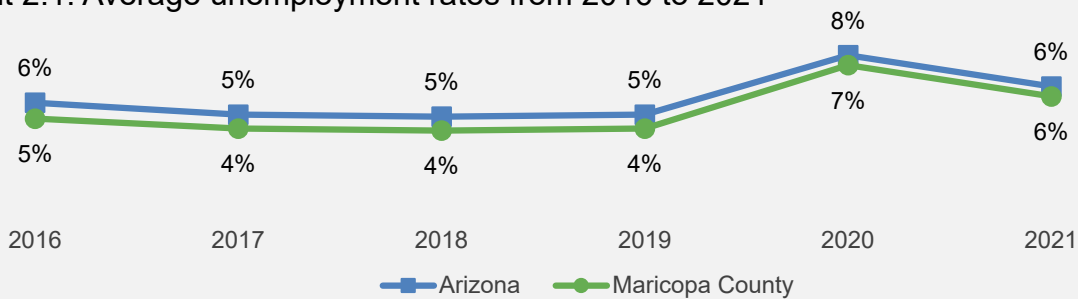
<sup>24</sup> Ke, Janice, and Elizabeth Lee Ford-Jones. "Food Insecurity and Hunger: A Review of the Effects on Children's Health and Behaviour." *Paediatrics & Child Health* 20.2 (2015): 89-91. Print.

## What the Data Tell Us

### Employment Indicators

In Maricopa County the unemployment rate increased between 2016 and 2021 but has consistently been lower than the unemployment rate for Arizona as a whole (Exhibit 2.1). Starting in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates for both Maricopa County and Arizona increased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, those who tended to be affected by unemployment included those with jobs in services, restaurants, transportation, and other fields that typically do not offer long-term contracts, decent wages, and health benefits.<sup>25</sup> The monthly unemployment rate in Maricopa County reached a peak at 14% in March 2020 and started to decline to seven percent in August 2020 (not shown). The yearly unemployment rate in Maricopa County decreased from seven percent in 2020 to six percent in 2021 (Exhibit 2.1). This decrease indicates that more people started to re-enter the labor force as pandemic-related restrictions eased. The number of people in the labor force has consistently increased in Maricopa County from 2016 through 2019 (Exhibit 2.2).<sup>26</sup> In 2020, the number of people employed slightly decreased but increased in 2021.

Exhibit 2.1. Average unemployment rates from 2016 to 2021

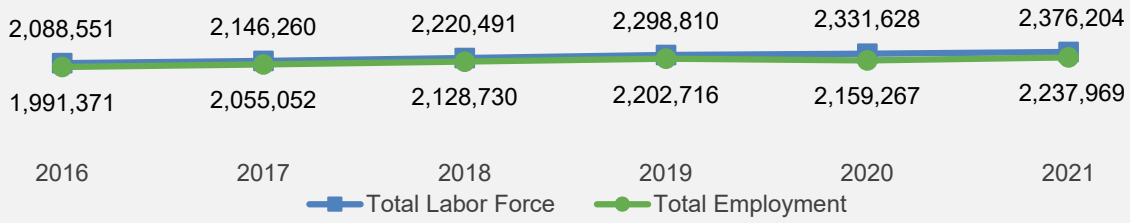


U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021). Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Arizona Office of Employment. Note: The data for 2021 goes up to September 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Blustein, David L., and Paige A. Guarino. "Work and unemployment in the time of COVID-19: the existential experience of loss and fear." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60.5 (2020): 702-709.

<sup>26</sup> "In the labor force" includes persons who are employed and persons who are unemployed but looking for work..

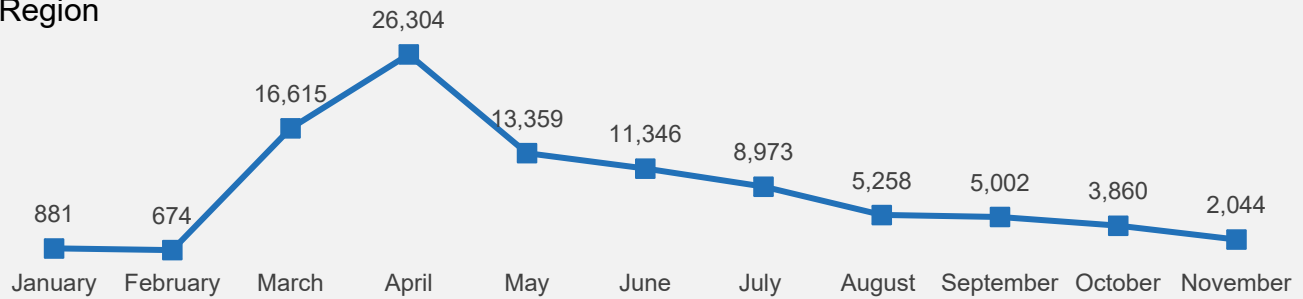
**Exhibit 2.2. Number of people in the labor force and employed in Maricopa County**



*U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021). Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Arizona Office of Employment.*

Unemployment claims provide temporary payments to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own and meet the other eligibility requirements. In order to receive these benefits, an individual that has lost their job completes an application. If they are eligible, they then receive unemployment benefits. In the East Maricopa Region in 2020, the total number of unemployment claims started to dramatically increase in March 2020 as business closures occurred due to stay-at-home orders (Exhibit 2.3). In April 2020, the number of total claims peaked at 26,304 and gradually started to decrease starting in May 2020 to 13,359 then to 5,258 in August 2020. By the end of 2020, the total claims were 2,044, though not down to pre-pandemic levels.

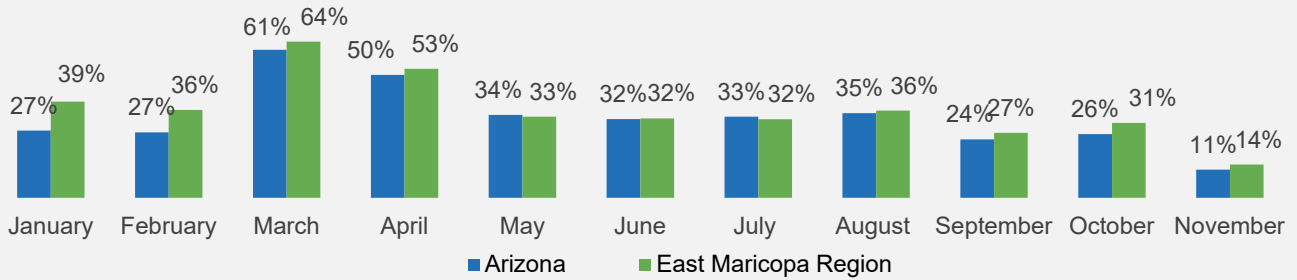
**Exhibit 2.3. Number of total unemployment claims 2020 for East Maricopa Region**



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

In addition to the total number of claims increasing in March and April 2020, the percentage of claims that were eligible also increased in the East Maricopa Region and in Arizona (Exhibit 2.4). Rates for eligible claims were similar in 2020 for Arizona and the East Maricopa Region. In the beginning of 2020, about 36% to 39% of claims were eligible in the East Maricopa Region and this increased to over 50% in March and April 2020. As the number of total claims started to decrease in September 2020, the percentage of eligible claims also started to decrease. By November 2020, 14% of claims were found eligible which was the lowest percentage in 2020.

Exhibit 2.4. Percent of eligible and paid unemployment claims in 2020



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

In the East Maricopa Region, 94% of children under age six live in a household where at least one adult is in the labor force (Exhibit 2.5), which is slightly higher than the percentage for Arizona (90%). Though having neither parent in the workforce is rare (6%), ten percent or more of young children in the Fountain Hills (12%), Fort McDowell (15%) and South Scottsdale (10%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (15%) have neither parent in the workforce. About 64% of children under age six have either both parents in the labor force or a single parent in the labor force, indicating they have some need for child care.

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

	Estimated number of children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents who are both in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, one in the labor force, and one not	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, neither in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is not in the labor force
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>51,194</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Ahwatukee	5,183	47%	26%	1%	19%	7%
Carefree	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cave Creek	1,608	64%	28%	0%	5%	2%
Chandler	10,601	51%	31%	0%	16%	3%
Downtown Chandler	7,926	38%	32%	1%	22%	8%
Fort McDowell	77	21%	5%	0%	63%	10%
Fountain Hills	760	37%	23%	0%	28%	12%
Guadalupe	3,201	25%	36%	0%	30%	8%
Paradise Valley	752	53%	38%	0%	6%	4%
Paradise Valley Village	2,743	52%	36%	1%	9%	2%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	66	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Scottsdale	7,532	42%	38%	1%	16%	3%

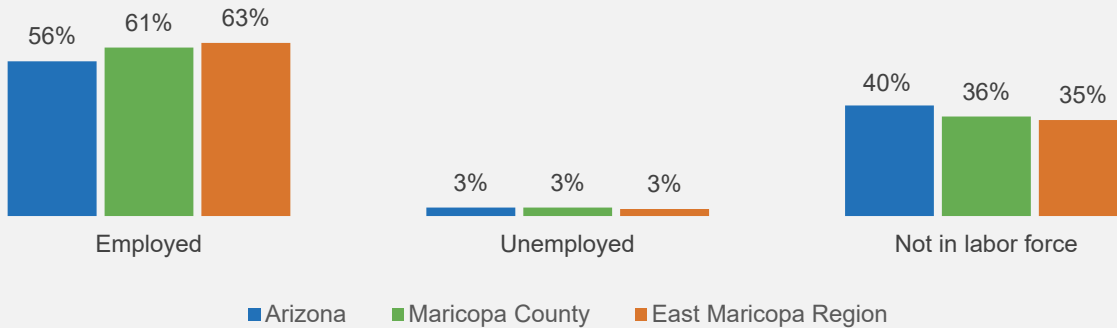
	Estimated number of children (ages 0-5) living with one or two parents	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents who are both in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, one in the labor force, and one not	Children (ages 0-5) living with two parents, neither in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is in the labor force	Children (ages 0-5) living with a single parent who is not in the labor force
South Scottsdale	3,625	39%	21%	5%	30%	5%
Tempe	7,122	40%	22%	2%	30%	6%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	77	21%	5%	0%	64%	10%
Maricopa County	319,099	34%	28%	1%	29%	8%
ARIZONA	494,590	32%	28%	1%	29%	9%

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

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

The overall percentage of adults who are in the labor force in the East Maricopa Region is 63%, which is higher than the proportion in Arizona (56%) and Maricopa County (61%) (Exhibit 2.6).

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



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

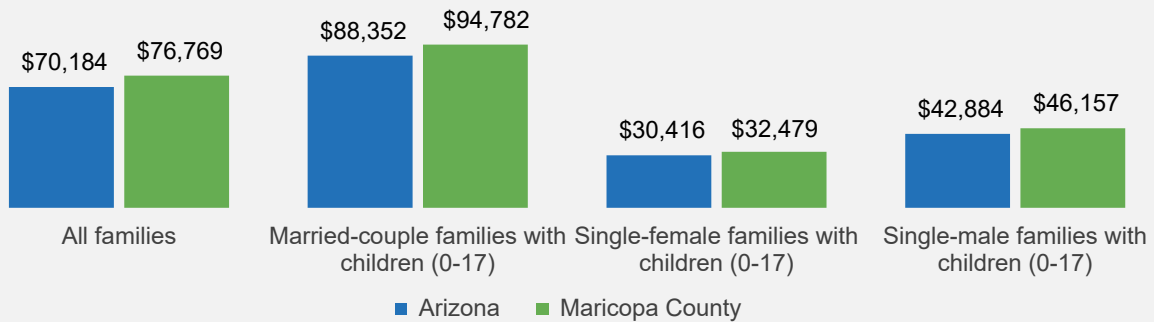
Note: "In the labor force" includes persons who are employed and persons who are unemployed but looking for work.



### Median Income and Poverty

The median income of families with children under age eighteen in Maricopa County is \$76,769, which is higher than the median income statewide. The median income for single-parent families, which comprise about 33% of households with children under age six, is significantly less than for married-couple families. For single-parent households, those headed by female make about \$14,000 less than those headed by males. Exhibit 2.7 shows the difference in median income for married-couple families, single-female families, and single-male families.

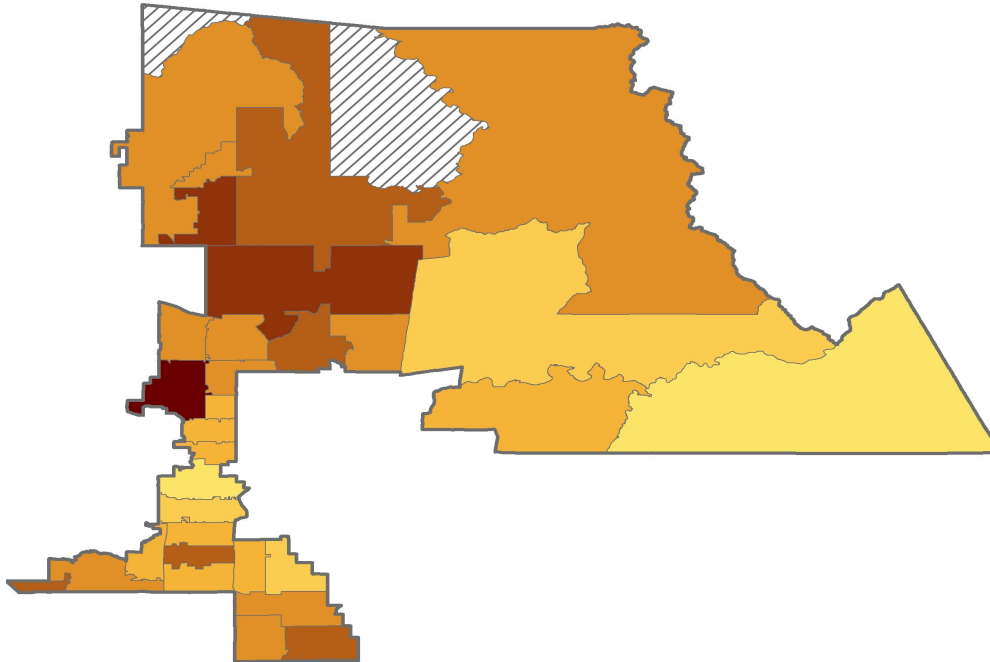
Exhibit 2.7. Median income for families



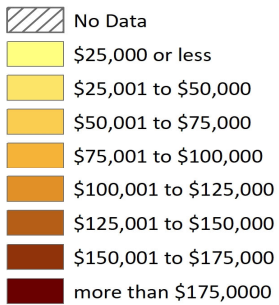
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19126

Exhibit 2.8 shows the median family incomes for each zip code in the region. The lighter areas in the map show that incomes tend to be lower in North Tempe and Roosevelt city as part of the Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch sub-region. The higher incomes as indicated by the darker areas are found in Paradise Valley and northern Scottsdale.

Exhibit 2.8. Median family income



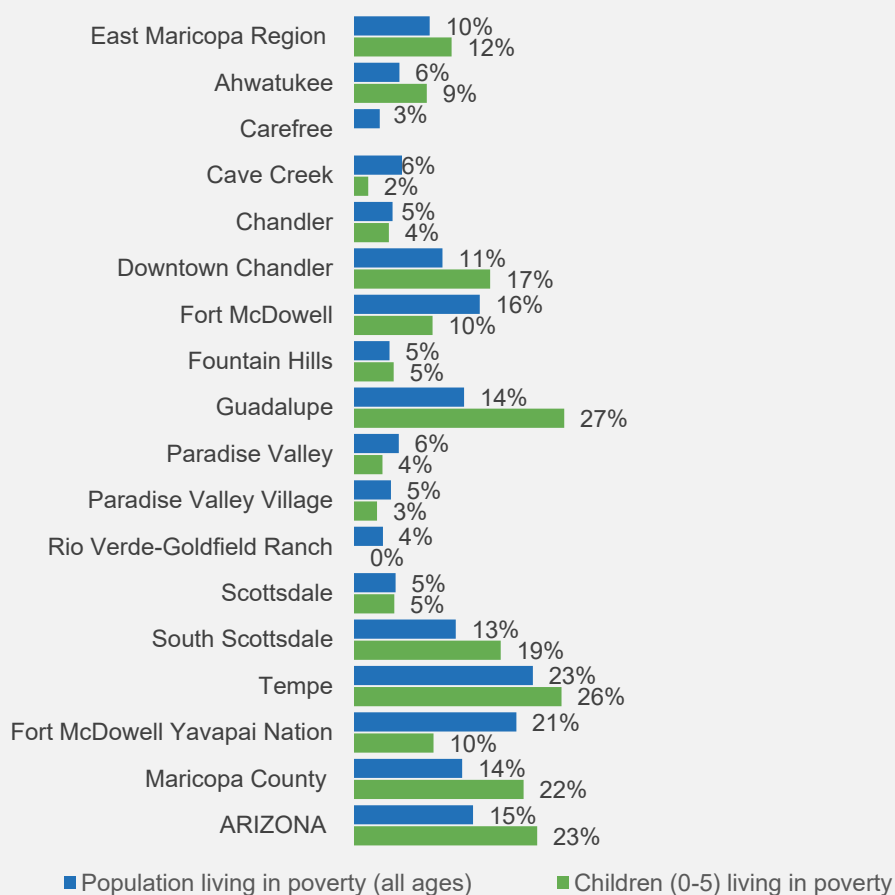
**Median Family Income**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015-2019), Table B19126.

The large number of single-parent families combined with their low median income contributes to a sizable portion of the population in the East Maricopa Region living in poverty.<sup>27</sup> In the East Maricopa Region ten percent of the population and 12% of children under age six are living in poverty (Exhibit 2.9). Although these proportions are lower than Maricopa County and Arizona, more poverty can be found in the Tempe (23% for population and 26% for children under six years old), Guadalupe (14% for population and 27% for children under six years old), and South Scottsdale (13% for population and 19% for children under six years old) sub-regions. In other sub-regions, such as Cave Creek (2%), Paradise Valley Village (3%), and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch (0%), children under six years old in poverty is extremely rare.

Exhibit 2.9. Percentage of population living in poverty

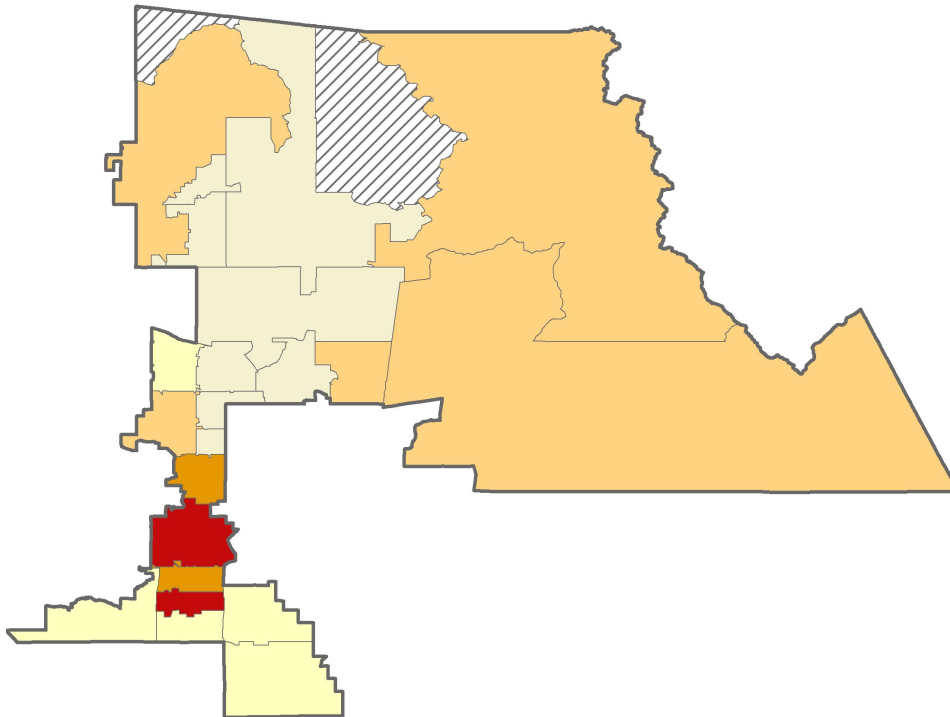


U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17001






<sup>27</sup> To define poverty, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

The relative population and poverty of areas for young children within the East Maricopa Region are mapped in Exhibit 2.10. The Tempe sub-region has a higher rate of poverty and high population, while the Guadalupe and South Scottsdale sub-regions have higher rates of poverty with low population.

Exhibit 2.10. Poverty in the East Maricopa Region<sup>28</sup>



**Poverty and Population**

-  No Data
-  High Poverty-High Population
-  High Poverty-Low Population
-  Low Poverty-Low Population
-  Low Poverty-High Population

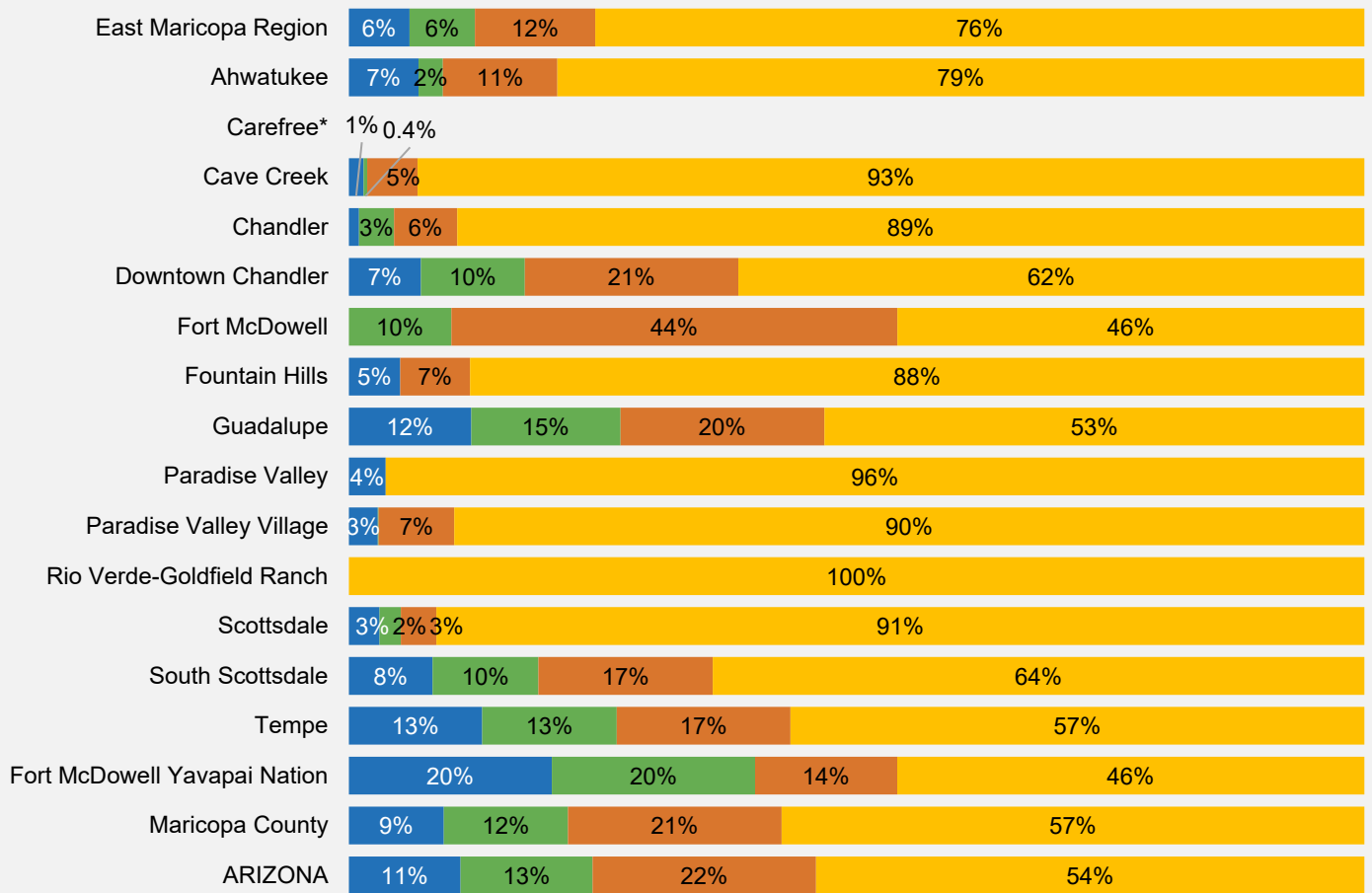
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010.

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<sup>28</sup> Low and high values were determined based on the data in the region. Values below the mean were considered to be low and values above the mean were considered to be high.

Federal poverty levels (FPL) are used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits, including SNAP and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). The federal poverty level changes every year and is based on family size. For example, in 2021, the FPL is \$26,500 for a family of four. A family of four that makes less than or equal to \$26,500 is considered to be in poverty. In the East Maricopa Region, 24% of families with children under age 4 live below 185% of the FPL, which is slightly less than the 43% in the county and 46% across the state (Exhibit 2.11). Across the sub-regions, more than 40% of families with children ages 0 to 4 earn less than 185% FPL in Fort McDowell (54%), Guadalupe (47%), and Tempe (43%) along with Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (54%).

Exhibit 2.11. Families with young children (ages 0-5) living at various poverty thresholds



■ Under 50% of poverty ■ Between 50% and 100% of poverty ■ Between 100% to 185% of poverty ■ Above 185% of poverty

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

\*No children under the age of five live in the Carefree sub-region.

In Maricopa County individuals who identify as white or Asian are the least likely to be living in poverty. In contrast, people who identify as Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or some other race experienced poverty rates above 20% in 2019 (Exhibit 2.12). Compared to the general population, higher proportions of children under five years old are living below the federal poverty level (Exhibit 2.13). In Maricopa County, children under five years old who identify as Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, or some other race have poverty rates over 30%. This trend is similar to the proportions in Arizona indicating that children of color experience high rates of poverty.

**Exhibit 2.12. Percentage of population below the federal poverty level by race/ethnicity\***

	<b>Arizona</b>	<b>Maricopa County</b>
Black or African-American	20%	19%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	33%	23%
Asian	12%	11%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	16%	12%
Other Race	23%	24%
Two or More Races	17%	15%
White, not Hispanic	10%	9%
Hispanic or Latino	22%	22%

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

*\*Estimates for city and sub-regional breakdowns are not presented due to the limited sample size for these indicators*

**Exhibit 2.13. Percentage of children under 5 years old below the federal poverty level by race/ethnicity\***

	<b>Arizona</b>	<b>Maricopa County</b>
Black or African-American	34%	33%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	44%	37%
Asian	11%	11%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	31%	24%
Other Race	53%	52%
Two or More Races	13%	10%
White, not Hispanic	12%	11%
Hispanic or Latino	31%	31%

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

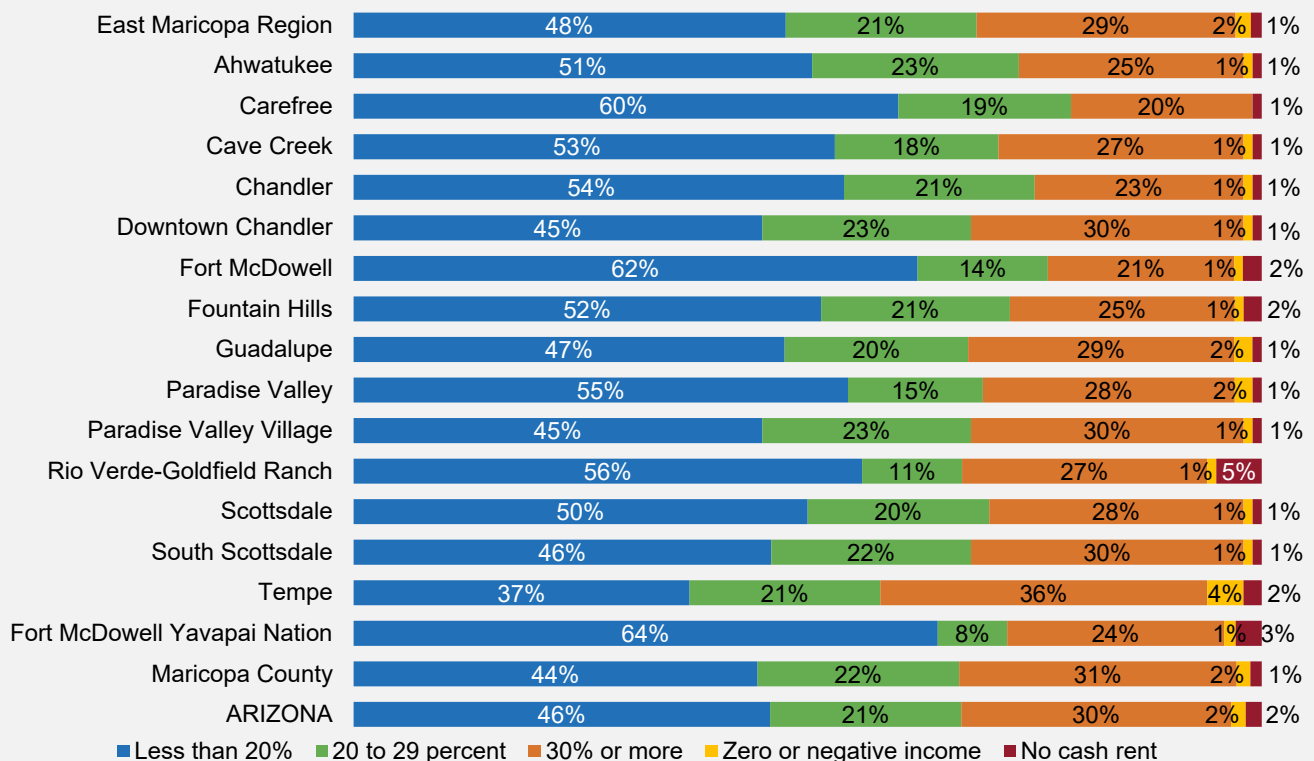
*\*Estimates for city and sub-regional breakdowns are not presented due to the limited sample size for these indicators*

## Housing

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) define "rent burdened" as spending more than 30 percent of income on housing.<sup>29</sup> Residents of the East Maricopa have a similar housing cost burden to residents of the state as a whole: 29% of the region's housing units require their residents to contribute more than 30% of their household income toward housing (Exhibit 2.14).

Housing costs are somewhat more burdensome in the Tempe sub-region than in other sub-regions, where 36% of residents contribute more than 30% of their income to housing costs.

Exhibit 2.14. The cost of housing, relative to household income



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

Children that are homeless qualify for rights and services under the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”<sup>30</sup> The number of homeless children in kindergarten through third grade from 2018 to 2020 is displayed in Exhibit 2.15. From 2018 to 2020, many districts within the East Maricopa Region had less than 11 students that were homeless. Districts with 40 or more homeless students in

<sup>29</sup> PD&R Edge (n.d.) Rental Burdens: Rethinking Affordability Measures. Retrieved from [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr\\_edge\\_featd\\_article\\_092214.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html)

<sup>30</sup> Arizona Department of Education. Welcome to Homeless Education Program. Retrieved from <https://www.azed.gov/homeless>

2020 were Kyrene Elementary District and Tempe School District. Across many of the districts in the East Maricopa Region, the number of homeless students decreased or remained steady from 2018 to 2020, which is a similar trend in both Maricopa County and across Arizona. Tempe School District was the only district that experienced an increase of homeless students in grades kindergarten through third grade from 2018 to 2020.

**Exhibit 2.15. Number of homeless students in kindergarten through third grade, 2018 to 2020**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>198</b>
Cave Creek Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Chandler Unified District #80	110	52	29
East Maricopa Region Charter Schools	15	11	11
Fountain Hills Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Kyrene Elementary District	65	54	42
Maricopa County Regional School District	<11	13	<11
Mesa Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Paradise Valley Unified District	<11	<11	<11
Scottsdale Unified District	18	13	18
Tempe School District	61	46	79
Maricopa County Schools	2,637	2,051	1,841
All Arizona Schools	4,565	3,676	3,191

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

*Note: The school-district data in this table include only the schools that are located within the East Maricopa Region.*

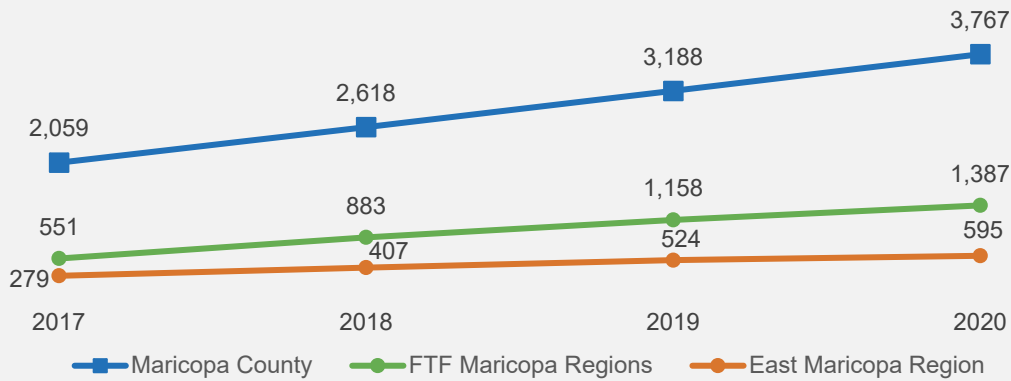
Every year the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care conducts the Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Count, a street and shelter count that determines the number of people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County during a given point in time.<sup>31</sup> This is the primary source of the count of homeless people in the county and helps inform the community on the number of people who need services, such as Emergency Shelters or Transitional Housing. The number of those experiencing homeless and are unsheltered (i.e., on the streets or other place not meant for human habitation) increased from 2017 to 2020 across Maricopa County, FTF Maricopa Regions and East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 2.16). As the number of unsheltered homeless people increases, East Maricopa Region and the county need to strategize how to provide support for the homeless population and those who are experiencing financial hardships.

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<sup>31</sup> AZMAG. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2022, from <https://www.azmag.gov/Portals/0/Documents/MagContent/PIT-Count-Report-2020.pdf?ver=2020-07-27-155257-657>



Exhibit 2.16. Unsheltered homeless count for single adults, 2017 to 2020.



Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Unsheltered Point-in-Time (PIT) Count

Five percent of the households in the East Maricopa Region have no vehicle available to them, according to the American Community Survey (Exhibit 2.17). This is a slightly smaller percentage than in the county and state as a whole (6%). Among the sub-regions, the percentage without vehicles is higher in Tempe (11%) and South Scottsdale (8%), while Carefree had no households without vehicles available.

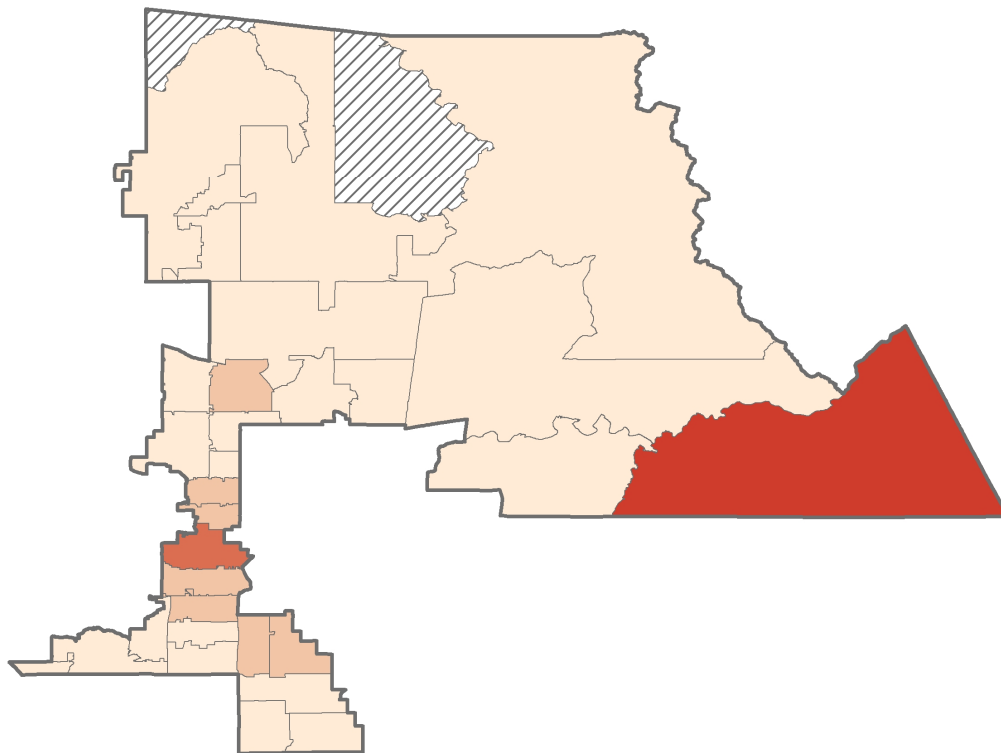
Exhibit 2.17. Estimated percent of households with no vehicle available

	Estimated number of households	Households with no vehicle available
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>377,751</b>	<b>5%</b>
Ahwatukee	33,217	3%
Carefree	1,750	0%
Cave Creek	11,899	2%
Chandler	58,930	2%
Downtown Chandler	42,499	5%
Fort McDowell	434	3%
Fountain Hills	12,039	3%
Guadalupe	19,809	6%
Paradise Valley	7,590	2%
Paradise Valley Village	18,711	3%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	1,491	2%
Scottsdale	79,254	3%
South Scottsdale	35,146	8%
Tempe	54,984	11%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	314	4%
Maricopa County	1,552,096	6%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	6%

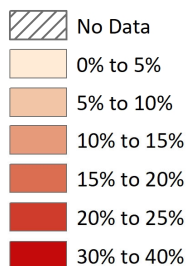
U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B08201

The map in Exhibit 2.18 shows that certain parts of the other sub-regions have concentrations of households without vehicles: Roosevelt city as part of Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch and North Tempe.

Exhibit 2.18. Percent of households without a vehicle



**Percent of households without a vehicle**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2015-2019), Table B08201

About four of five households (84%) have both a smartphone and computer within the East Maricopa Region, which is higher than the proportion in Arizona (73%) and Maricopa County (77%, Exhibit 2.19). Households with neither a smartphone or computer are the most likely to reside in the Fort McDowell (11%) or South Scottsdale (7%) sub-region or Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (16%).

Exhibit 2.19. Households with and without computers and smartphones

	Total number of households	Percent with computer but no smartphone	Percent with smartphone but no computer	Percent with both smartphone and computer	Percent with neither smartphone nor computer
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>377,751</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Ahwatukee	33,217	4%	6%	88%	2%
Carefree	1,750	10%	2%	83%	5%
Cave Creek	11,899	4%	5%	89%	2%
Chandler	58,930	5%	5%	87%	3%
Downtown Chandler	42,499	5%	11%	79%	5%
Fort McDowell	434	3%	33%	52%	11%
Fountain Hills	12,039	8%	6%	83%	4%
Guadalupe	19,809	5%	9%	81%	5%
Paradise Valley	7,590	5%	3%	90%	2%
Paradise Valley Village	18,711	5%	5%	88%	2%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	1,491	4%	6%	88%	1%
Scottsdale	79,254	6%	4%	87%	3%
South Scottsdale	35,146	6%	9%	78%	7%
Tempe	54,984	5%	9%	81%	5%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	314	4%	46%	34%	16%
Maricopa County	1,552,096	6%	11%	77%	7%
ARIZONA	2,571,268	7%	12%	73%	8%

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

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

Over nine out of ten residents in East Maricopa Region (93%) live in households with a computer and internet (Exhibit 2.20), which is higher than the county (88%) and state (87%).

Exhibit 2.20. Persons (all ages) in households with and without computers and internet connectivity\*

	Number of person (all ages) living in households	Percent in households with computer and internet	Percent in households with computer but no internet	Percent in households without computer
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>914,744</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Ahwatukee	84,330	96%	3%	1%
Carefree	3,280	91%	4%	5%
Cave Creek	30,324	97%	2%	1%
Chandler	157,866	95%	3%	2%
Downtown Chandler	113,599	90%	7%	3%
Fort McDowell	1,353	71%	20%	8%
Fountain Hills	24,948	95%	3%	2%
Guadalupe	50,928	85%	9%	6%
Paradise Valley	18,591	96%	3%	1%
Paradise Valley Village	46,715	95%	3%	1%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,923	95%	4%	1%
Scottsdale	174,915	96%	2%	2%
South Scottsdale	72,357	90%	5%	5%
Tempe	132,615	90%	7%	3%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	1,053	74%	15%	11%
Maricopa County	4,274,725	88%	7%	5%
ARIZONA	6,892,175	87%	7%	6%

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

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

\*Internet includes a dial-up internet subscription or a broadband internet subscription.

For households with children under 18 years old, 94% in the region have a computer and internet. During the nationwide closures of elementary and secondary schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more families had to rely on having multiple computers and internet access in their homes which caused the digital divide to become more apparent.<sup>32</sup> Households that were the most impacted by the digital divide included those in rural communities, living in poverty and people of color.<sup>33,34</sup> Even though over 90% of households with children under 18 years old have a computer and internet, Fort McDowell (84%), Guadalupe (82%) and Tempe (87%) sub-regions and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (82%) had the lowest proportion of households within the East Maricopa Region with a computer and internet (Exhibit 2.21).

**Exhibit 2.21. Children (ages 0-17) in households with and without computers and internet connectivity\***

	Number of children (ages 0-17) living in households	Percent in households with computer and internet	Percent in households with computer but no internet	Percent in households without computer
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>175,197</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Ahwatukee	18,704	96%	3%	0%
Carefree	156	100%	0%	0%
Cave Creek	6,157	99%	1%	0%
Chandler	37,295	97%	2%	0%
Downtown Chandler	24,417	92%	6%	1%
Fort McDowell	280	84%	12%	4%
Fountain Hills	2,571	97%	3%	0%
Guadalupe	8,191	82%	11%	7%
Paradise Valley	3,162	99%	1%	0%
Paradise Valley Village	9,735	96%	4%	1%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	82	99%	1%	0%
Scottsdale	28,283	99%	1%	0%
South Scottsdale	9,456	93%	5%	2%
Tempe	16,832	87%	9%	4%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	294	82%	14%	4%
Maricopa County	1,044,531	89%	8%	4%
ARIZONA	1,632,019	88%	8%	4%

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

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

*\*Internet includes a dial-up internet subscription or a broadband internet subscription.*

<sup>32</sup> Masonbrink, Abbey R., and Emily Hurley. "Advocating for children during the COVID-19 school closures." *Pediatrics* 146.3 (2020).

<sup>33</sup> Goldschmidt, Karen. "The COVID-19 pandemic: Technology use to support the wellbeing of children." *Journal of pediatric nursing* 53 (2020): 88.

<sup>34</sup> Dorn, Emma, et al. "COVID-19 and learning loss—disparities grow and students need help." *McKinsey & Company*, December 8 (2020).

Of the people living in households with a computer and internet, 75% have fixed broadband and a cellular data plan as their internet (Exhibit 2.22). Sub-regions that are less likely to have fixed broadband with cellular data plan are in Fort McDowell (37%), Guadalupe (59%), and Tempe (60%) along with Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (26%).

Exhibit 2.22. Households with computer & internet by type (dial-up, broadband, satellite, other)

	People living in households with computer and internet (all ages)	Percent with fixed broadband and cellular data plan	Percent with fixed broadband without cellular data plan	Percent with cellular data plan without fixed broadband	Percent with dial-up internet only
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>851,226</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Ahwatukee	80,714	78%	12%	9%	0%
Carefree	2,994	79%	19%	2%	0%
Cave Creek	29,401	77%	16%	7%	0%
Chandler	150,204	79%	16%	5%	0%
Downtown Chandler	102,552	79%	13%	7%	0%
Fort McDowell	963	37%	16%	47%	0%
Fountain Hills	23,587	78%	16%	6%	1%
Guadalupe	43,395	59%	30%	10%	0%
Paradise Valley	17,877	80%	13%	7%	0%
Paradise Valley Village	44,475	80%	16%	5%	0%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,780	78%	14%	8%	0%
Scottsdale	168,252	81%	13%	6%	0%
South Scottsdale	65,304	70%	17%	13%	1%
Tempe	118,728	60%	30%	10%	0%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	782	26%	16%	58%	0%
Maricopa County	3,773,777	71%	17%	12%	0%
ARIZONA	5,968,639	69%	18%	12%	0%

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

# ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS HIGHLIGHTS

The unemployment rate in Maricopa County has peaked in 2020 (7%) due to the COVID-19 pandemic but started to decline in 2021 (6%). Single-parent families who are working earn significantly less, on average, than dual-parent households. Additionally, 12% of children under age six in the region live in poverty. About three of ten (29%) residents pay 30% or more of their household income towards housing.

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

Assets	Considerations
East Maricopa Region generally has higher employment and lower poverty rates than the state, though this varies among sub-regions.	Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to the sub-regions with higher need to help increase employment and median incomes.

Needs	Considerations
According to the American Community Survey, about 12% of children in the region live in poverty with high rates of poverty in Tempe (26%) and Guadalupe (27%) and 29% of residents in the region spend more than 30% of their income on housing.	Assist community members in navigating social service resources in the region, including housing support (i.e., Public Housing Agency or the Housing Authority of Maricopa County).
Although many households have broadband internet with a cellular data plan (75%), Fort McDowell (37%), Guadalupe (59%), and Tempe (60%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (26%) have households with 60% or less with broadband internet with a cellular data plan.	Partner with local agencies, businesses and stakeholders that could support in technological needs for low-income families. For example, Cox has a package, Connect2Complete, that provides low-cost internet for families with K to 12 students.



## EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS



# EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

## Why it Matters

Early care and education helps children thrive in school. Research shows that children who participate in early care and education programs are more likely to perform better on educational indicators such as math and reading tests, attendance rates, and discipline referrals than children who do not.<sup>35,36</sup>

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

Research indicates an association between high school dropout rates and poor attendance as early as kindergarten; on average, dropouts have missed 124 days of school by the time they reach 8<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>37</sup> In addition, irregular attendance influences school budgets and could potentially lead to fewer funds for essential classroom needs.<sup>38</sup>

Notably, children's participation in quality early care and education can also yield lifelong benefits. Improved performance on standardized tests and lower drop out rates in turn increases children's likelihood of graduating from high school, earning higher monthly earnings, and owning a home. Research shows that high-quality early care and education programs can reduce disparities in college graduation, educational attainment, and wages.<sup>39</sup> Research has also shown that students dropping out of high school have an increased likelihood of earning less than high school graduates, being unemployed, receiving public assistance, and a higher chance of being incarcerated, therefore likely to confront more barriers while raising a family.<sup>40</sup> Essentially, a child's enrollment in early learning provides short-term and long-term benefits that will contribute to the child successfully transitioning into and prospering in adulthood.

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<sup>35</sup> Bakken, L., Brown, N., Downing, B. (2017) *Early Childhood Education: The Long-Term Benefits*. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. Volume 31. Issue 2. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1273285>

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, F., Pungello, E., Kainz, K., Burchinal, M., Pan, Y., Wasik, B., Barbarin, O., Sparling, J., Ramey, C., (2012) *Adult outcomes as a function of an early childhood educational program: an abecedarian project follow-up*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3989926/>

<sup>37</sup> *Why attendance matters*. (2016, June 9). Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/school-attendance-issues/>

<sup>38</sup> *Every school day counts: The forum guide to collecting and using attendance data*. (2009, February). Retrieved December 06, 2016, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp>

<sup>39</sup> Bustamante, A., Dearing, E., Zachrisson, H., Vandell, D. (2021) *Adult outcomes of sustained high-quality early child care and education: Do they vary by family income?* <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13696>

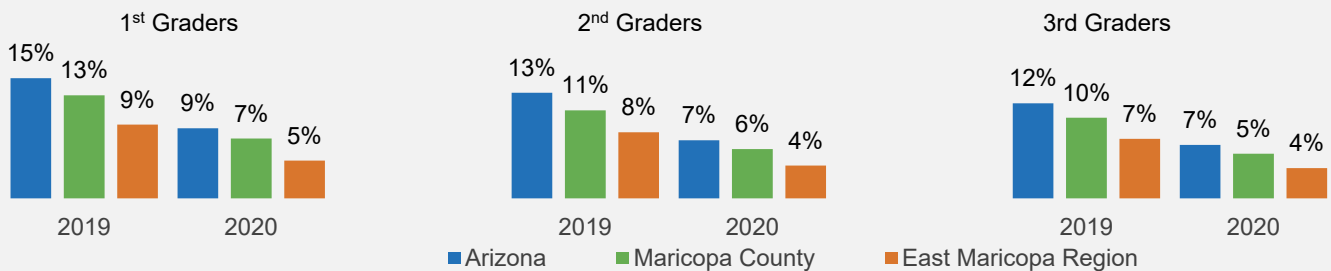
<sup>40</sup> Christle, C. A., Jolivet, K., Nelson, M. C. (2007). *School characteristics related to high school dropout rates*. *Journal of Remedial and Special Education*, 28, 15. [www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ785964](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ785964)

## What the Data Tell Us

### Student Attendance

Between 2019 and 2020, the state, Maricopa County, and the East Maricopa Region experienced a decrease in the percentage of students missing ten or more days of school (Exhibit 3.1). A lower percentage of students in the region missed ten or more days of school than in the county or state as a whole. In addition, the percentage of absences decreased from 2019 to 2020 across all grade levels. It can be observed that the higher the grade level, the lower the rate of absences. There are many potential explanations for such findings, including that younger children may get sick more frequently than older children, parents may be more willing to let their children miss school in earlier years, or that the perception of the value of education changes as children grow. Across all grade levels, the decrease in absences from 2019 to 2020 is likely related to shifts to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Younger children in 2020 remained at higher percentage absences from school. This may be due to virtual learning requiring intensive parental time and attention, so parents who worked were in a bind.

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



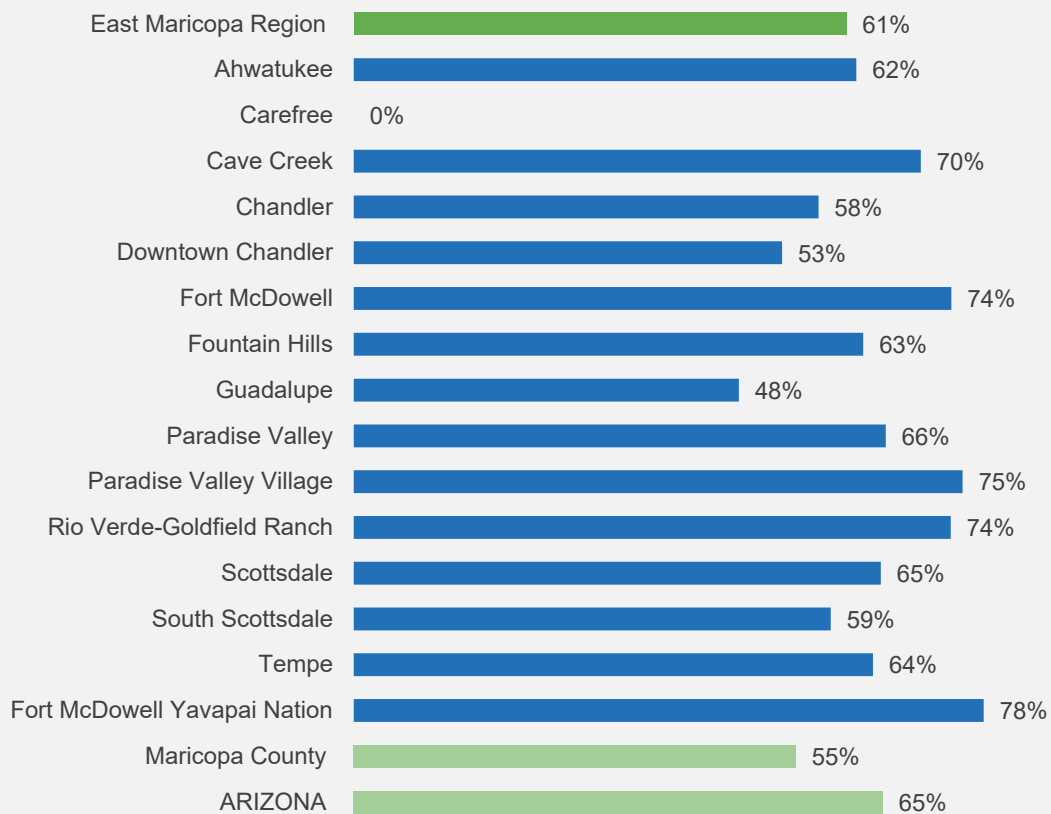
Arizona Department of Education (2021). *Chronic Absences*. Provided by AZ FTF.

\*Data available by school district

## Early Achievement

About 60% of preschool-aged children in the East Maricopa Region (61%) are enrolled in private or public school (i.e., nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten), which is lower than Arizona (65%) but higher than Maricopa County (55%; Exhibit 3.2). Sub-regions with less than half of children ages 3-4 enrolled in school include: Carefree (0%) and Guadalupe (48%). The low rate of enrollment for children ages three to four in the Carefree sub-region may be due to the small population of children in this age group (n=12). High rates of participation occur in Fort McDowell (74%), Paradise Valley Village (75%) and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch (74%) sib-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (78%).

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

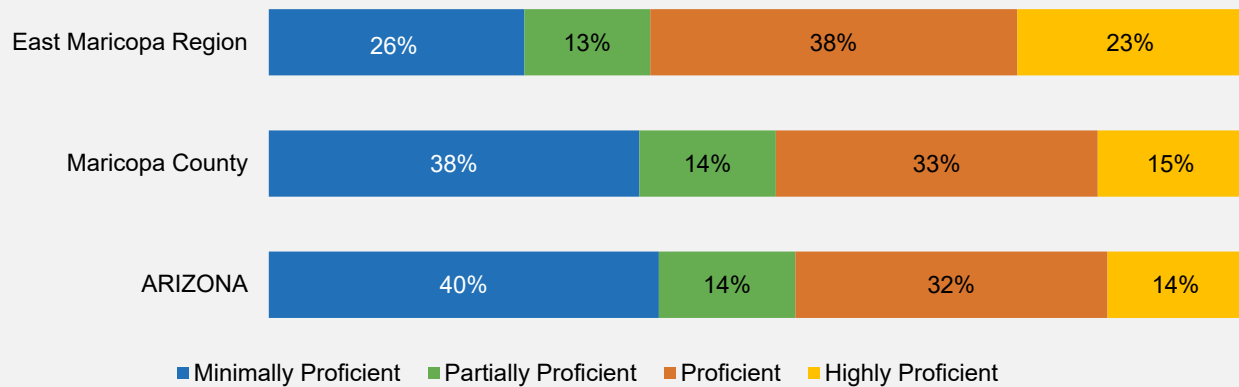


U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B2808.

\*There is no data available on the status of children not enrolled in school.

Research shows that preschool attendance has an effect on future academic performance, specifically English and math scores.<sup>41</sup> The English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results of the AzMERIT demonstrated that 61% of all third graders in the East Maricopa Region scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”, which was higher than Maricopa County’s proficiency rate (Exhibit 3.3). Arizona Progress Meter’s goal for proficiency is 72% by 2030, so East Maricopa Region is about 11 percentage points below the goal.<sup>42</sup> Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.4). For example, some districts (e.g., Cave Creek Unified District, East Maricopa Region Charter Schools, and Paradise Valley Unified District) reported 70% or higher in proficiency, while other districts (e.g., Maricopa County Regional School District and Tempe School District) had less than 40% reaching proficiency.

**Exhibit 3.3. 2018-2019 School Year AzMERIT English Language Arts assessment results for third grade students**



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

<sup>41</sup> Andrews, R. J., Jargowsky, P., & Kuhne, K. (2012). *The effects of Texas's targeted pre-kindergarten program on academic performance* (No. w18598). National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>42</sup> Center for the Future of Arizona (n.d.) *Third Grade Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.arizonafuture.org/progress-meters/education/third-grade-reading/>

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

	Minimally proficient in English Language Arts	Partially proficient in English Language Arts	Proficient in English Language Arts	Highly proficient in English Language Arts	Passing English Language Arts (proficient or highly proficient)
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>61%</b>
Cave Creek Unified District	18%	11%	44%	27%	71%
Chandler Unified District #80	27%	13%	37%	23%	60%
East Maricopa Region Charter Schools	18%	10%	40%	32%	73%
Fountain Hills Unified District	24%	10%	42%	24%	66%
Kyrene Elementary District	26%	13%	37%	24%	60%
Maricopa County Regional School District	88%	*	13%	*	13%
Mesa Unified District	35%	14%	35%	17%	51%
Paradise Valley Unified District	18%	12%	47%	23%	70%
Scottsdale Unified District	22%	13%	40%	25%	65%
Tempe School District	42%	17%	31%	11%	42%
Maricopa County Schools	38%	14%	33%	15%	48%
All Arizona Schools	40%	14%	32%	14%	46%

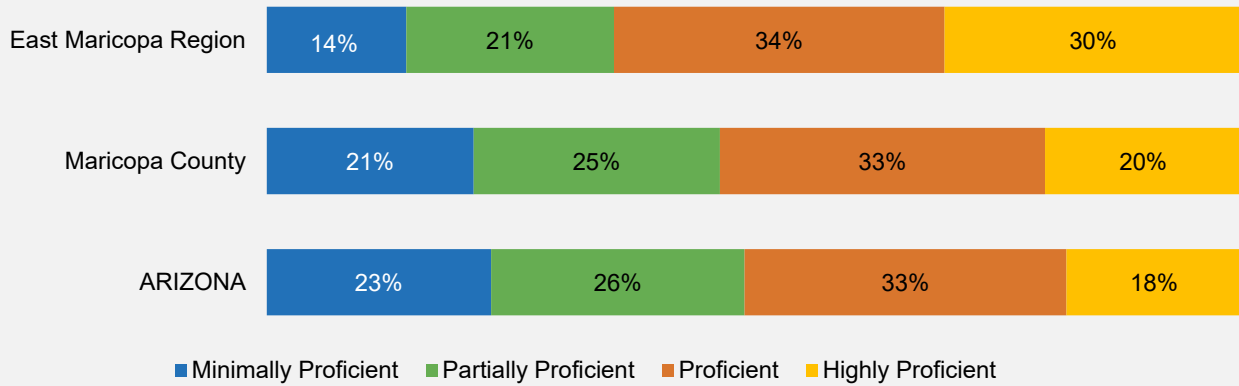
Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

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

\*Values less than two percent are suppressed.

Moreover, 64% of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in the East Maricopa Region, higher than Arizona (51%) and Maricopa County (53%; Exhibit 3.5). Within the region, there were some differences in proficiency by district (Exhibit 3.6). For example, some districts (e.g., Cave Creek Unified District, East Maricopa Region Charter Schools, Kyrene Elementary District, and Scottsdale Unified District) reported 70% or higher in proficiency, while other districts (e.g., Maricopa County Regional School District and Tempe School District) had less than half reaching proficiency. Although math assessment results are slightly higher than the ELA assessment results, overall, about 40% of third graders are not meeting the proficiency standard for the two subjects.

Exhibit 3.5. 2018-2019 School Year AzMERIT Math Assessment results for third grade students



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

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

	Minimally proficient in Math	Partially proficient in Math	Proficient in Math	Highly proficient in Math	Passing Math (proficient or highly proficient)
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>64%</b>
Cave Creek Unified District	7%	22%	43%	27%	70%
Chandler Unified District #80	16%	22%	32%	31%	62%
East Maricopa Region Charter Schools	10%	19%	35%	36%	71%
Fountain Hills Unified District	18%	23%	28%	31%	59%
Kyrene Elementary District	11%	18%	36%	34%	70%
Maricopa County Regional School District	75%	25%	*	*	0%
Mesa Unified District	24%	25%	31%	20%	51%
Paradise Valley Unified District	10%	22%	39%	28%	67%
Scottsdale Unified District	11%	16%	34%	39%	73%
Tempe School District	26%	31%	30%	13%	43%
Maricopa County Schools	21%	25%	33%	20%	53%
All Arizona Schools	23%	26%	33%	18%	51%

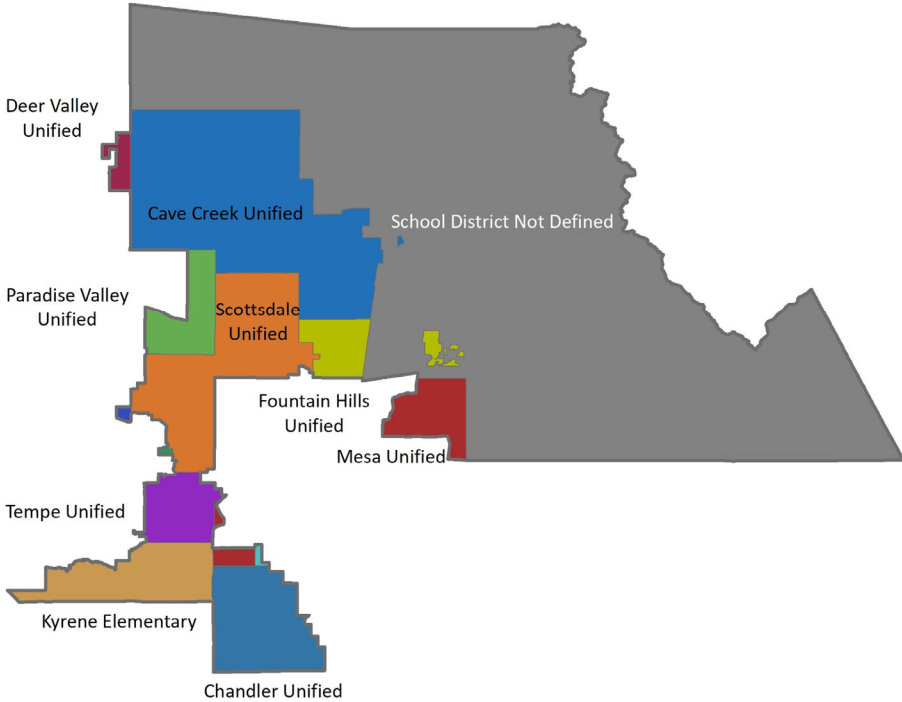
Arizona Department of Education (2019). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.

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

\*Values less than two percent are suppressed.

Exhibit 3.7 shows the school districts within the East Maricopa Region.

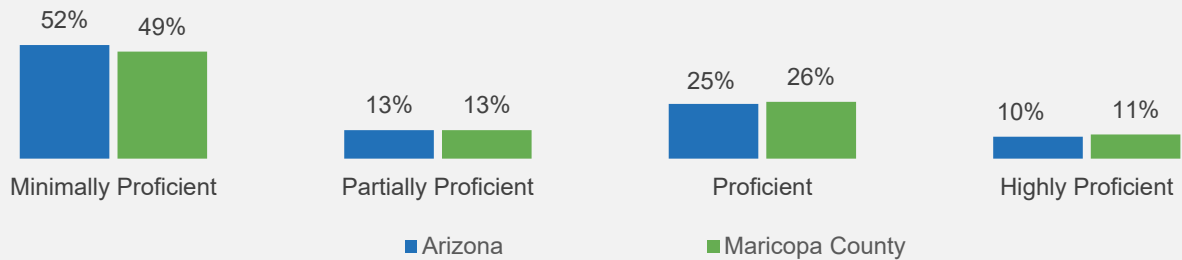
Exhibit 3.7. The school districts of the East Maricopa First Things First Region



Source: Arizona Department of Education (2019).

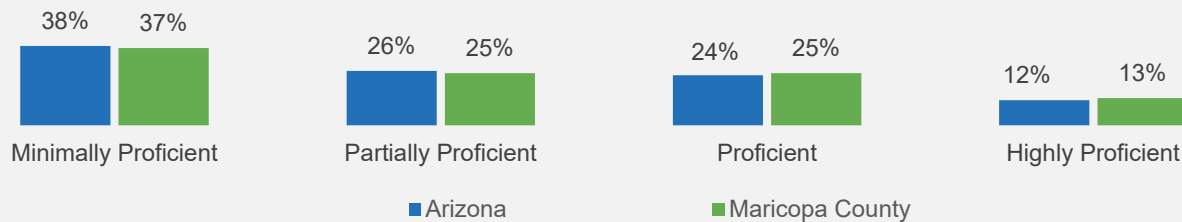
Arizona students in grades third to eighth and tenth grade were not assessed in the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2020-21 school year, the AZMERIT changed the assessment name to AzM2. For the third grade assessment, the content areas and design were similar to the AZMERIT. In the 2021 school year, fewer students participated in the state assessments (88% to 90% of students) so it is impossible to know how the students that did not participate would perform. The ELA assessment results of the AzM2 demonstrated that about 37% of all third graders in the Maricopa County scored “proficient” or “highly proficient”, which is about two percentage points higher than Arizona (Exhibit 3.8).<sup>43</sup> Slightly more, about 38%, of third graders scored “proficient” or highly proficient” on the math assessment test in the Maricopa County, two percentage points higher than the State (Exhibit 3.9). The COVID-19 pandemic was most likely why there was a decrease in statewide assessments from 2019. There were numerous learning disruptions from the pandemic that may have impacted students’ learning, such as technology access, online learning fatigue, losing family members, caregivers losing jobs, social isolation, and mental health.<sup>44</sup>

**Exhibit 3.8. 2021 AzM2 English Language Arts assessment results for third grade students\***



Arizona Department of Education (2021). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.  
 \*2020-21 data was not available at the regional level.

**Exhibit 3.9. 2021 AzM2 Math assessment results for third grade students\***



Arizona Department of Education (2021). AzMERIT Reports. Provided by AZ FTF.  
 \*2020-21 data was not available at the regional level.

<sup>43</sup> 2020-21 data was not available at the regional level.

<sup>44</sup> Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., Viruleg, E. (2021) McKinsey & Company. COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>



## High School Graduation & Dropout Rates

Between 2017 and 2019, high school graduation rates remained steady for the East Maricopa Region, Maricopa County, and Arizona (Exhibit 3.10). In 2019, 69% of students in the region graduated within four-years, which was lower than Maricopa County and Arizona (Exhibit 3.10). The lower graduation rates in the East Maricopa Region may be due to some charter school districts (i.e., Educational Options Fountain, Ombudsman Educational Services, Ltd., a subsidiary of Educational Services of Ame, GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School), which have graduation rates less than 30%. Larger school districts, such as Chandler Unified District #80, Cave Creek Unified School District, Paradise Valley Unified District, Scottsdale Unified District, and Tempe Union High School District, have graduation rates of 90% and above.

Exhibit 3.10. High school graduation rates, 2017 to 2019

	Four-year graduation rate, 2017	Four-year graduation rate, 2018	Four-year graduation rate, 2019	Five-year graduation rate, 2017	Five-year graduation rate, 2018	Five-year graduation rate, 2019
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>
American Virtual Academy	19%	18%	20%	25%	23%	26%
AZ Compass Schools, Inc.	74%	96%	93%	80%	96%	93%
BASIS Charter Schools, Inc.	99%	100%	99%	99%	100%	100%
Blueprint Education	21%	7%	DS	29%	7%	DS
Cave Creek Unified District	95%	94%	94%	97%	96%	96%
Chandler Unified District #80	93%	91%	92%	94%	93%	94%
Daisy Education Corporation dba Paragon Science Academy	84%	75%	100%	89%	75%	100%
Educational Options Foundation	8%	9%	11%	29%	13%	15%
Foothills Academy	92%	84%	90%	92%	87%	90%
Fountain Hills Unified District	93%	94%	88%	93%	94%	91%
GAR, LLC dba Student Choice High School	15%	17%	17%	30%	27%	28%
Horizon Community Learning Center, Inc.	98%	100%	99%	98%	100%	99%
Humanities and Sciences Academy of the United States, Inc.	71%	100%	92%	71%	100%	92%
Integrity Education Incorporated	20%	25%	100%	20%	50%	100%
James Madison Preparatory School	97%	86%	100%	100%	91%	100%
Kaizen Education Foundation dba El Dorado High School	28%	37%	37%	34%	47%	43%
New School For The Arts	87%	81%	92%	89%	81%	92%
Ombudsman Educational Services, Ltd., a subsidiary of Educational Services of Ame	14%	23%	33%	40%	40%	52%
Paradise Valley Unified District	97%	95%	97%	97%	96%	98%
Pinnacle Education-Tempe, Inc.	31%	37%	49%	41%	47%	61%
SC Jensen Corporation, Inc. dba Intelli-School	10%	19%	8%	33%	42%	20%
Scottsdale Unified District	90%	92%	94%	91%	94%	95%

Exhibit 3.10. High school graduation rates, 2017 to 2019

	Four-year graduation rate, 2017	Four-year graduation rate, 2018	Four-year graduation rate, 2019	Five-year graduation rate, 2017	Five-year graduation rate, 2018	Five-year graduation rate, 2019
Tempe Preparatory Academy	96%	94%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Tempe Union High School District	89%	89%	90%	92%	92%	92%
Maricopa County Schools	78%	78%	79%	82%	82%	82%
All Arizona Schools	78%	78%	78%	82%	82%	83%

Arizona Department of Education (2021). Graduation Rate 2019 Cycle. Provided by AZ FTF.

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

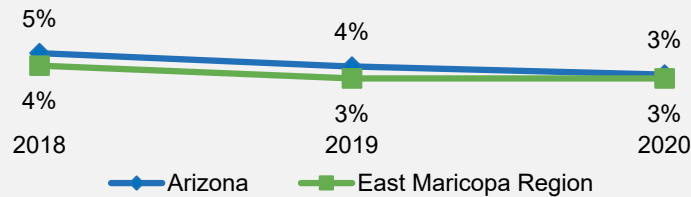
\*\*The four-year graduation rate counts a student who graduates with a regular high school diploma in four years or less as a high school graduate in his or her original cohort

\*\*\*DS data not available.

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

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

Exhibit 3.11. 2018-2020 High school dropout rates



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

## Educational Attainment

In the East Maricopa Region, 80% of adults aged 25 and older have completed at least a high school education, which is higher than the county and state (Exhibit 3.12). However, the highest rate of adults who did not complete high school was seen in the Fort McDowell (18%) and Downtown Chandler (11%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (23%). Adults in the Paradise Valley sub-regions have the highest educational attainment in the sub-regions, with high rates of at least some post-secondary education (22%) as well as bachelor's and advanced degrees (66%). Those with higher levels of education typically earn more and have lower rates of unemployment compared to those with lower education.<sup>45</sup>

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

	Estimated population (ages 25 and older)	Percent less than high school	Percent high school or GED	Percent some college or professional education	Percent bachelor's degree or more
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>660,416</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>51%</b>
Ahwatukee	59,049	4%	14%	31%	51%
Carefree	3,163	0%	19%	28%	53%
Cave Creek	22,636	3%	12%	33%	52%
Chandler	109,830	4%	16%	30%	50%
Downtown Chandler	76,989	11%	21%	33%	35%
Fort McDowell	928	18%	23%	41%	18%
Fountain Hills	21,588	3%	14%	34%	49%
Guadalupe	35,700	9%	18%	32%	41%
Paradise Valley	14,447	3%	10%	22%	66%
Paradise Valley Village	34,821	3%	14%	29%	55%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	2,819	2%	13%	27%	58%
Scottsdale	138,180	2%	11%	24%	63%
South Scottsdale	56,234	7%	16%	30%	47%
Tempe	84,032	8%	14%	32%	47%
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	663	23%	31%	39%	7%
Maricopa County	2,878,815	12%	22%	33%	33%
ARIZONA	4,732,532	13%	24%	34%	29%

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

<sup>45</sup> Torpey, E. (2021) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Education pays, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2021/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>

# EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS HIGHLIGHTS

A child’s development during their first five years of life makes an impact on their performance in future educational endeavors. About 61% of preschool-age children are enrolled in early education, which is higher than Maricopa County (55%) but lower than Arizona (65%). Student absences for students in grades first to third are lower in the region than in Arizona and the county. Additionally, about 60% of third-grade students in the East Maricopa Region are scoring proficiently on the math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments, more than the state and county for ELA and math. The region experienced a lower rate of students graduating from high school compared to the state and county. About five percent of adults 25 and older in the region do not have a high school education and 51% have a bachelor’s degree or more.

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

Assets	Considerations
Over half (51%) of adults 25 and older have a bachelor’s degree or more in East Maricopa, with Paradise Valley (66%) and Scottsdale (63%) having the highest proportions of adults with a bachelor’s degree or more.	Increase awareness for parents to support each other and share knowledge and attitudes around the importance of education.
AzMERIT reports from the Arizona Department of Education show that about 60% third graders are meeting proficiency standards for English Language Arts (61%) and Math (64%), this is higher than the county and state.	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.

Needs	Considerations
In 2019, 69% of high school students graduated within four years in the region, which is lower than the state (79%) and county (79%).	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.



## EARLY LEARNING

# EARLY LEARNING

## Why it Matters

Early care and education (ECE) includes all formal and informal educational programs and strategies designed to contribute to the growth and development of children from birth thru age five.<sup>46</sup> Research suggests that the first five years of life are considered to be the most crucial stage in children's development, as they undergo the most rapid phase of growth during that period.<sup>47</sup> Research also shows when children participate in high-quality learning environments, they learn and develop important skills and abilities such as motivation, self-control, focus and self-esteem. These skills prepare them for educational achievement later in life and reduce the need for special education programs.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the research shows that investments in ECE have long-term health effects and help prevent disease and promote health.<sup>49, 50</sup> For disadvantaged families, early childhood programs has benefits on health, future wages, crime, and education.<sup>51</sup> Children who participate in early care and education programs are better prepared for kindergarten, have greater success in elementary school, and are more likely to graduate from high school and prosper well into adulthood.<sup>52, 53</sup>

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

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<sup>46</sup> *What is the purpose of early childhood education? Why it's so important* (2021) University of Massachusetts Global. Retrieved from: <https://www.umassglobal.edu/news-and-events/blog/what-is-purpose-of-early-childhood-education>

<sup>47</sup> *Early Childhood Education*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://teach.com/where/levels-of-schooling/early-childhood-education/>

<sup>48</sup> McCoy, C., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. (2017) *Impacts of early childhood education on medium- and long-term educational outcomes*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X17737739>

<sup>49</sup> Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Ziff, A. (2019) *Early Childhood education and crime*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21759>

<sup>50</sup> Campbell, F., Conti, G., Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Pungello, E., & Pan, Y. (2014). *Early childhood investments substantially boost adult health*. *Science*, 343(6178), 1478-1485.

<sup>51</sup> Garcia, J., Heckman, J., Leaf, D., Prados, M. (2016) *The life-cycle benefits of an influential early childhood program*. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22993>

<sup>52</sup> Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Ou, S. R., Robertson, D. L., Mersky, J. P., Topitzes, J. W., & Niles, M. D. (2007). *Effects of a school-based, early childhood intervention on adult health and well-being: A 19-year follow-up of low-income families*. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 161(8), 730-739.

<sup>53</sup> Weiland, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2013). *Impacts of a prekindergarten program on children's mathematics, language, literacy, executive function, and emotional skills*. *Child Development*, 84(6), 2112-2130.

## What the Data Tell Us

### Early Care and Education

There are 710 ECE centers and homes with a capacity of 93,325 children in the East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 4.1).<sup>54</sup> Although the total licensed capacity may be high, the actual facility may not choose to enroll the total number of children they are licensed to serve. The number of children served mainly depends on the center’s ability to meet the adult to child ratio, which varies by child’s age and must comply with licensing requirements.

Exhibit 4.1. Childcare capacity

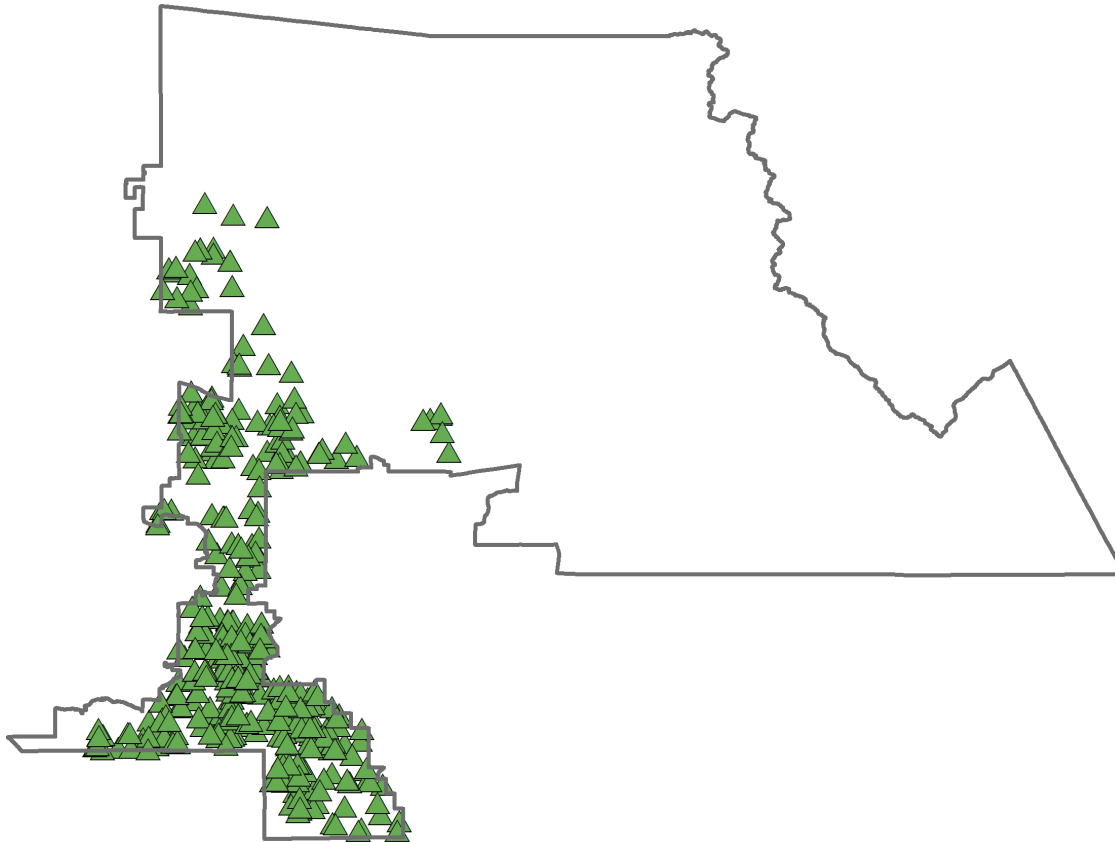
	Number of ECE facilities	Capacity
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>93,325</b>
Ahwatukee	65	8,154
Carefree	3	132
Cave Creek	21	4,353
Chandler	117	16,806
Downtown Chandler	111	12,591
Fort McDowell*		
Fountain Hills	10	672
Guadalupe	65	7,178
Paradise Valley	24	4,128
Paradise Valley Village	10	672
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch*		
Scottsdale	94	16,468
South Scottsdale	25	2,150
Tempe	123	12,168
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation*		
Maricopa County	2,595	285,959
ARIZONA	4,307	395,787

\*Data not available for the sub-region.

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

<sup>54</sup> Arizona Department of Economic Security (2019). *Childcare Providers and Capacity*. Provided by AZ FTF.

Exhibit 4.2. Child care locations in the East Maricopa Region



### Legend

▲ Child Care Resource and Referral Centers

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2019-2020) and Arizona Department of Health Services (2020).  
Provided by AZ FTF.

As previously mentioned, 61% of children between the ages of three and four are enrolled in ECE programs in the East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 3.2). This is slightly lower than what is assumed to meet child care needs since all adults are working in 64% of households (Exhibit 2.5). Parents who do not have access to stable child care may find themselves missing work to care for their children. In addition, research has consistently demonstrated that lack of access to child care has negative effects on families and decreases parents' chances of sustaining employment.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Greenberg, M. (2007). *Next steps for federal child care policy. The Next Generation of Antipoverty Policies*, 17, 2. <http://www.futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=33&articleid=67&sectionid=353>

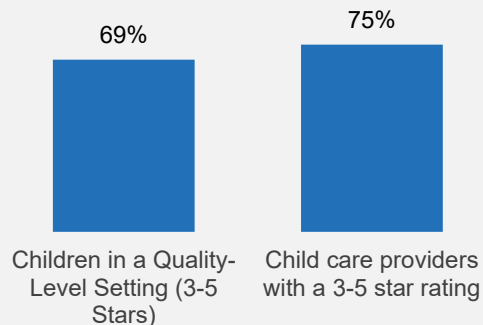


## Quality of Early Care and Education

Quality First is a signature program of FTF that is designed to improve the quality of early learning for children birth to age five. Quality First partners with ECE providers across Arizona to provide coaching and funding that is meant to improve the quality of their services. Quality First implemented a statewide standard of quality for ECE programs along with associated star ratings. The star ratings allow parents to easily take quality into consideration when deciding on care providers. The star ratings range from one to five indicating the level of quality and attainment of quality standards.<sup>56</sup> In the East Maricopa Region, out of the 7,891 children enrolled in a Quality First site, 5,415 are enrolled in three to five star centers or homes (69%). Moreover, 78 out of 104 (75%) childcare providers in Quality First have received a three-to-five-star rating (Exhibit 4.3).

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

Exhibit 4.3. Percentage of 3 to 5 star ratings at Quality First centers in East Maricopa Region



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

<sup>56</sup> Arizona First Things First (October 2021). Quality First.

### Costs of Child Care & Access

In addition to supporting improvements in the quality of child care, FTF provides scholarships for low-income children to attend quality ECE programs. Previous research has shown that low-income mothers who receive child care subsidies, a form of financial assistance, are more likely than other low-income mothers to work, sustain employment, and work longer hours.<sup>55</sup> Further, the negative effects of not accessing child care include the possibility of incurring financial debt, choosing child care that is lower quality and less stable, and losing time from work.

Across the East Maricopa Region, state and Maricopa County, licensed centers have the highest cost per day, certified group homes have the second highest cost per day, and approved family homes have the lowest cost per day (Exhibit 4.4). The median cost per day of licensed centers, approved family homes and certified group homes in East Maricopa Region are greater than the state and Maricopa County. High child care prices likely place a financial strain on families who already report barely making ends meet and having difficulty affording housing and food.

Based on the median cost per day, the median cost of child care per year for one infant in East Maricopa Region totals to approximately \$11,850 a year for licensed centers and approximately \$7,500 a year for approved family homes and \$9,125 per a year for certified group homes. Compared against the median income of families in Maricopa County with children under 18 (Exhibit 2.7), licensed centers comprise approximately 13% and approved family homes and certified group homes comprise about eight to ten percent of the regional median income.

The median cost per year of child care comprises an even higher amount of the median income for single parent led families with children under 18 in Maricopa County and is considerably less for single-female families compared to single-male families. Based on the median income of single-female families (Exhibit 2.7), licensed centers make up 35% of their median income and approved family homes and certified group homes make up 15% to 23% of their median income. High costs can be a barrier in affording quality child care especially for single-female families.

Exhibit 4.4. 2018 Median cost per day of early childhood care

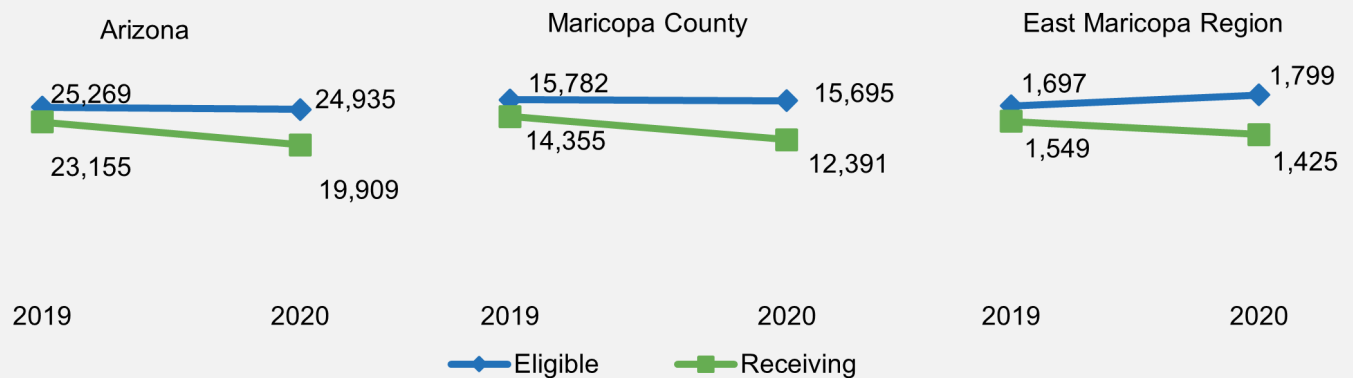
	East Maricopa Region	Maricopa County	Arizona
Cost for one infant Licensed Centers	\$47.40	\$44.99	\$43.03
Cost for one infant Approved Family Homes	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Cost for one infant Certified Group Homes	\$36.50	\$30.00	\$30.00
Cost for one child (1 to 2 years old) Licensed Centers	\$43.00	\$40.00	\$38.00
Cost for one child (1 to 2 years old) Approved Family Homes	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$20.00

	East Maricopa Region	Maricopa County	Arizona
Cost for one child (1 to 2 years old) Certified Group Homes	\$36.50	\$28.50	\$28.00
Cost for one child (3 to 5 years old) Licensed Centers	\$38.00	\$34.00	\$33.00
Cost for one child (3 to 5 years old) Approved Family Homes	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Cost for one child (3 to 5 years old) Certified Groups	\$36.17	\$28.00	\$28.00

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

From 2019-2020, Arizona and Maricopa County and experienced a slight decrease in the number of children eligible for Department of Economic Security (DES) child care subsidies, while the East Maricopa Region experienced an increase (Exhibit 4.5). During the same time period, the state, Maricopa County, and the East Maricopa Region experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving child care subsidies. For example, in 2019 within the East Maricopa Region, 91% of children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 79% of children in 2020. The decrease in the number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies in 2020 may be due to COVID-19 pandemic as centers were closed.

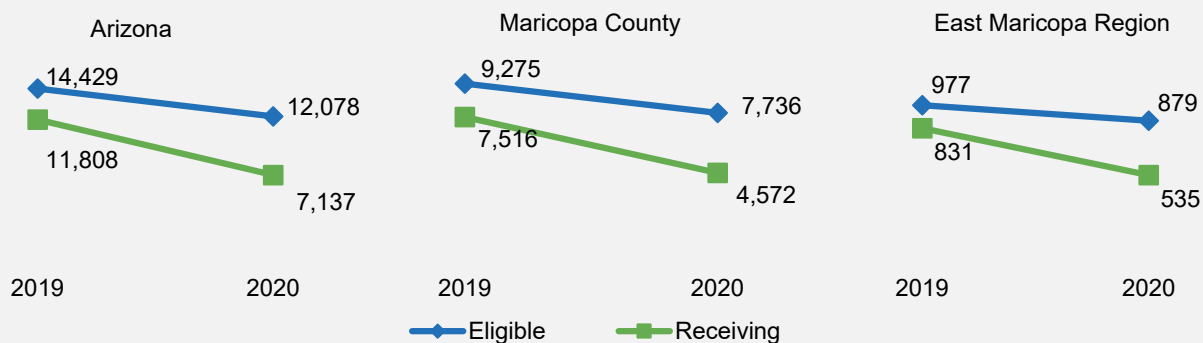
Exhibit 4.5. 2019-2020 Number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies



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

For Department of Child (DCS)-involved children, similar to non-DCS children, there was a decrease in the number of children eligible and receiving child care subsidies across the state and county, while the region experienced an increase (Exhibit 4.6). In addition, the proportion of children eligible for child care subsidies has decreased from 2019 to 2020. For example, in 2019 and within the East Maricopa Region, 85% of DCS-involved children that were eligible for child care subsidies received subsidies compared to 61% of children in 2020. This proportion is also lower than non-DCS children.

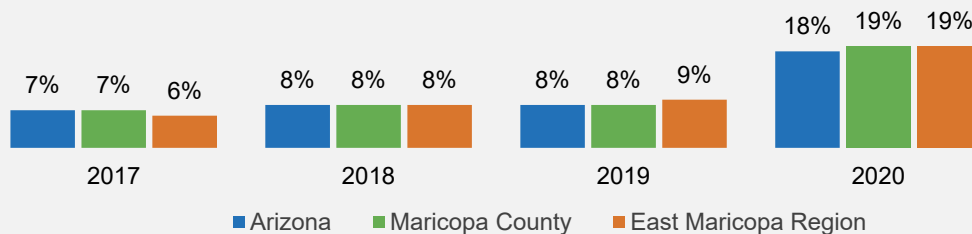
**Exhibit 4.6. 2019-2020 Number of DCS-involved children eligible and receiving child care subsidies**



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

The proportion of eligible families not using DES child care subsidies has remained steady between 2017 to 2019, but increased in 2020 across the state, county and region. In 2020, 19% of families in the East Maricopa Region did not use their child care subsidies compared to six percent of families in 2017 (Exhibit 4.7). The decrease in families using child care subsidies may have been due to the closure of child care sites in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Exhibit 4.7. 2017-2020 Percent of eligible families not using DES child care subsidies**



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

## Developmental Delays and Special Needs

Issues in teaching young children with special needs reflect significant changes in public policy and professional philosophy across the nation. There are diverse perspectives on how to effectively teach young children with developmental delays and special needs.<sup>57</sup> The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (ages zero to two) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages three to 21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.<sup>58</sup>

AzEIP is a statewide system that offers services and assistance to families and their children with disabilities or developmental delays under the age of three. The purpose of the program is to intervene at an early stage to help children develop to their highest potential.<sup>59</sup> Research shows that children and youth with mild intellectual disabilities are behind in academic skills compared to their peers.<sup>60</sup> Without proper intervention, this can lead to delays in learning to read and perform basic math and to further difficulties in other academic areas that require use of those skills. A child is eligible for AzEIP if he/she is between birth and 36 months of age and is developmentally delayed or has an established condition with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay, as defined by the state.<sup>61</sup> A child is considered to be developmentally delayed when s/he has not reached 50% of the milestones expected at her/his chronological age in one or more of the areas of development: cognitive, physical, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive.

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<sup>57</sup> Dyson, A. (2001). *Special needs education as the way to equity: an alternative approach?* *Support for Learning*, 16, 3.

<sup>58</sup> US Department of Education: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/osep-idea.html>

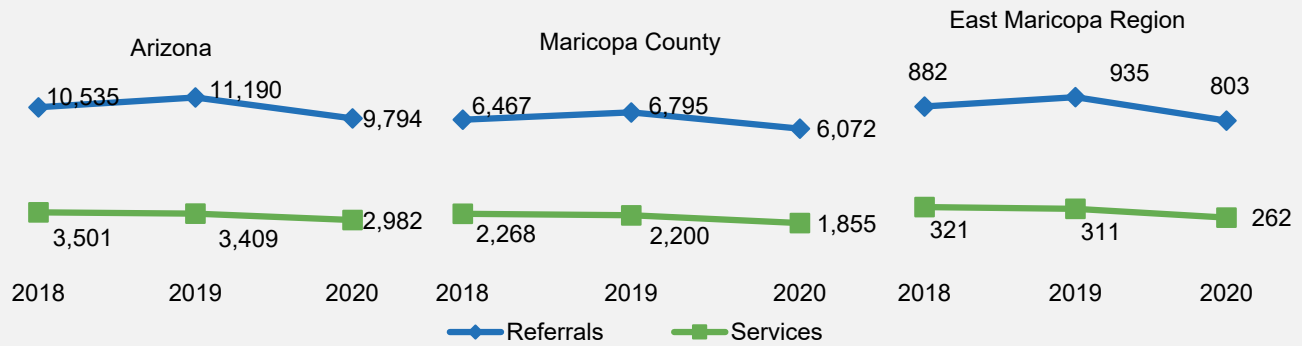
<sup>59</sup> Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.). *Arizona Early Intervention Program*. Retrieved from: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-infant>

<sup>60</sup> Rosenberg, L., Bart, O., Ratzon, N., Jarus, T. (2013) *Personal and Environmental Factors predict participation of children with and without mild developmental disabilities*. Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10826-012-9619-8>

<sup>61</sup> Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.) *Eligibility for the Arizona Early Intervention Program*. Retrieved from: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/early-intervention/arizona-early-intervention-program-azeip-eligibility>

From 2018-2020, East Maricopa Region, Maricopa County and Arizona experienced a decrease in the number of children receiving AzEIP referrals and services (Exhibit 4.8). The number of children receiving referrals in the East Maricopa Region decreased by nine percent (from 882 in 2018 to 803 in 2020) from 2018 to 2020. In the East Maricopa Region, of those who received referrals to AzEIP, about a third (262 out of 803) received services. One reason why all referred children do not receive services may be because of the high eligibility threshold of having a 50% or greater delay in development.

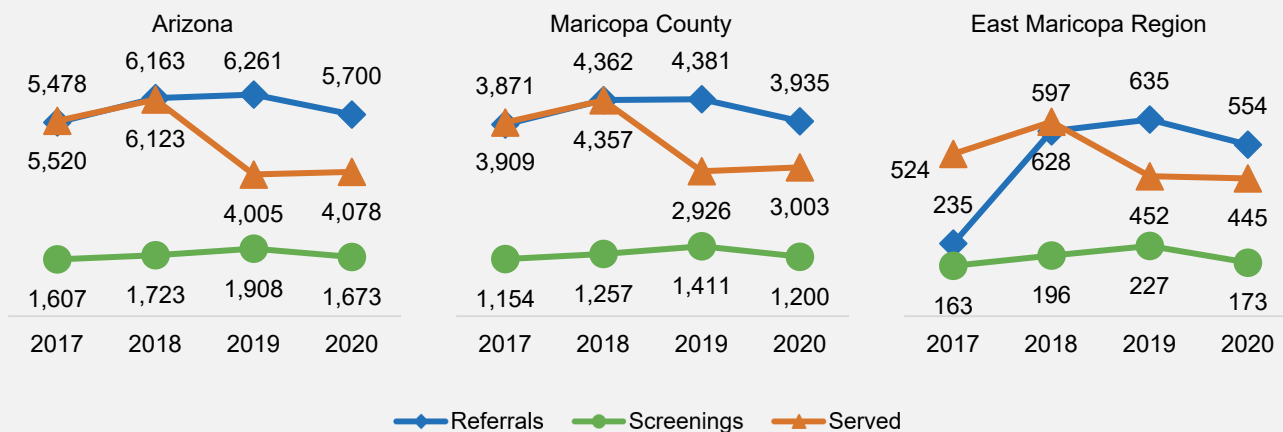
Exhibit 4.8. 2018-2020 Children receiving AzEIP referrals and services in Maricopa County and the East Maricopa Region



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

To qualify for Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services an individual must have a cognitive disability, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, or be at risk for a developmental disability. Children under the age of six are eligible if they show significant delays in one or more of these areas of development: physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, or self-help. Between 2017 to 2020, the rates of children receiving referrals and services through the DDD were similar for Arizona, Maricopa County, and the East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 4.9). Overall, across Arizona, Maricopa County, and the East Maricopa Region, the number of referrals increased each year from 2017 to 2019 but decreased in 2020. In addition, the number of children receiving services peaked in 2018 across the state, county and region but started to decline in 2019 and continued to decline in 2020. This decrease may be due to the limited availability of in-person services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

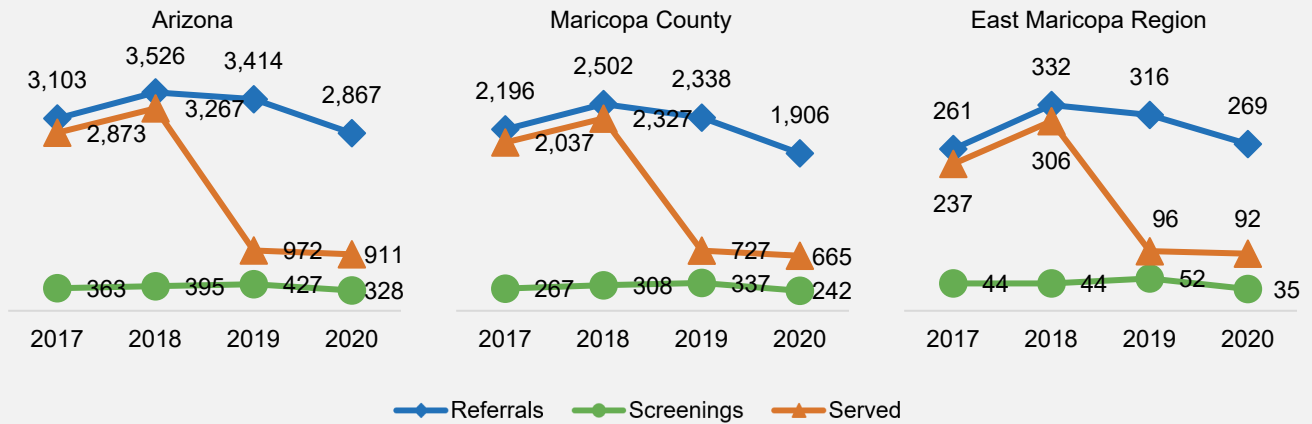
Exhibit 4.9. 2017-2020 Number of children (0-5) receiving referrals, screenings, and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Arizona, Maricopa County, and East Maricopa Region



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

Similar to the total number of children served, the number of children 0 to 2 served declined in 2019 and in 2020 (Exhibit 4.10). In the East Maricopa Region, 92 children 0 to 2 were served, a decline from 306 in 2018. This decrease may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic when less services were available along with changes in agencies' service capacity over time.

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



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



## Special Education

In 2020, the most common types of disabilities for preschool children were developmental delays and speech/language impairments (Exhibit 4.11).<sup>62</sup> Across the East Maricopa Region, there were school districts with high concentrations of preschool students with special needs. In the Cave Creek Unified District (56%) and Paradise Valley Unified District (57%), more than half of preschool students in special education had a speech or language impairment.

For students in Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade within the region in 2020, 11% were enrolled in special education. This percentage was consistent with the county (11%) and the state (12%). Similar to the disabilities of preschool children, the most common disabilities for students in grades K to 3 were developmental delays and speech/language impairments.

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

	Developmental Delay	Hearing Impairment	Other	Preschool Severe Delay	Speech /Language Impairment
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>&lt;2%</b>	<b>&lt;2%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Cave Creek Unified District	36%	<2%	<2%	9%	56%
Chandler Unified District #80	53%	<2%	<2%	9%	37%
Fountain Hills Unified District	50%	<2%	<2%	13%	38%
Kyrene Elementary District	42%	<2%	<2%	27%	30%
Mesa Unified District	50%	<2%	<2%	11%	39%
Paradise Valley Unified District	29%	<2%	14%	<2%	57%
Scottsdale Unified District	49%	<2%	<2%	27%	23%
Tempe School District	49%	<2%	2%	15%	32%
Maricopa County Schools	45%	<2%	<2%	21%	32%
All Arizona Schools	43%	<2%	<2%	20%	34%

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

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

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

<sup>62</sup> Examples of developmental delays for preschoolers include, but not limited to, cognitive, motor, social/emotional/behavioral or speech.

# EARLY LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

About 61% of preschool-aged children in the region are enrolled in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, which is slightly less than the 63% assumed to need child care based on their parents’ employment status. A contributing factor may be the high cost of child care. With respect to child care subsidies, fewer children are becoming eligible for, receiving, and remaining on the waitlist for the subsidies. The most common disabilities for preschoolers are Speech/Language Impairment and Developmental Delays.

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

Assets	Considerations
Quality First has been increasing the quality of child care programs in the region. Of the children enrolled in a Quality First site, 69% are enrolled in a three, four, or five star center or home.	Support Quality First and Department of Economic Security (DES) Expansion efforts in the region to increase the opportunities to recruit and enroll children in quality early care and education.

Needs	Considerations
The cost of early childcare is higher in East Maricopa Region than in the county or state.	Spread awareness about the availability of scholarships and subsidies for child care, especially for low-income families. Support structural improvements that expand the supply of high quality, affordable child care opportunities.
The percentage of eligible families not using DES child care subsidies has increased from six percent in 2017 to nineteen percent in 2020.	Spread awareness about the availability of scholarships and subsidies for child care, especially for low-income families.



## CHILD HEALTH

# CHILD HEALTH

## Why it Matters

Ensuring healthy development through early identification and treatment of children's health issues helps families understand healthy developmental pathways and how health issues affect children and their school readiness.<sup>63</sup> There are many health factors that impact the well-being of young children and their families. Research has shown that high quality prenatal care improves maternal health and health behaviors during pregnancy and after childbirth.<sup>64</sup> For example, during prenatal care visits, expectant people are provided with information and resources to promote a healthy pregnancy and increase the healthy development of their child. At routine prenatal visits, physicians often remind expectant people of the importance of abstaining from substance use, maintaining a healthy diet, and the benefits of breastfeeding, all of which influence a baby's development. For example, maternal overweight and obesity have been associated with risks of gestational diabetes mellitus, caesarean delivery, large for gestational age, pre-eclampsia, preterm birth, and admission to special care nursery or intensive care unit.<sup>65</sup>

Engaging in healthy preventative practices, such as breastfeeding and vaccinating children during early childhood, may help protect children from negative health outcomes and developmental delays. Breastfeeding provides children with the nutrition they need early in life.<sup>66</sup> Children who have not been vaccinated are at a higher risk of contracting diseases and tend to have more health issues later in life. Research has found that it is important for children to receive their immunizations early in life. Children under the age of five are at the highest risk of contracting severe illnesses because their bodies have not built a strong immune system yet.<sup>67</sup> Another factor that may impact health outcomes and may be deemed less important by parents is early screening for hearing loss. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hearing loss can impact a child's ability to develop communication, language, and social skills.<sup>68</sup> Fortunately, early screening for hearing loss can connect children with services that can increase the likelihood of the child reaching their full potential.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Schools & Health* (2016). *Impact of Health on Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/pages/Anthropometricstatusgrowth.aspx>

<sup>64</sup> Yan, J. (2016) *The effects of prenatal care utilization on maternal health and health behaviors*. *Health Economics*. Volume 26 Issue 8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.3380>

<sup>65</sup> Yang, Z., Phung, H., Freebairn, L., Sexton, R., Raulli, A., Kelly, P. (2018) *Contribution of maternal overweight and obesity to the occurrence of adverse pregnancy outcomes*. *ANZJOG*. Volume 59 Issue 3. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajo.12866>

<sup>66</sup> *Office on Women's Health* (2014). *Why breastfeeding is important*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-benefits.html>

<sup>67</sup> *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (2016). *Infant Immunizations*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html>

<sup>68</sup> *Center for Disease Control and Prevention Division* (2020). *Hearing Loss*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/index.html>

<sup>69</sup> *Though hearing loss screenings and oral health screenings is part of healthy preventative practices for children, this data was not available for the 2022 RNA report.*

This chapter provides an overview of the health indicators for this region that highlight the well-being of children under age six and their families. Healthy People 2030 (HP 2030) set 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. Healthy People established these benchmarks to encourage collaborations across communities and sectors, empower individuals to make informed health decisions, and measure the impact of prevention activities.<sup>70</sup> When appropriate, these benchmarks will be presented throughout this chapter as comparison points for local indicators.

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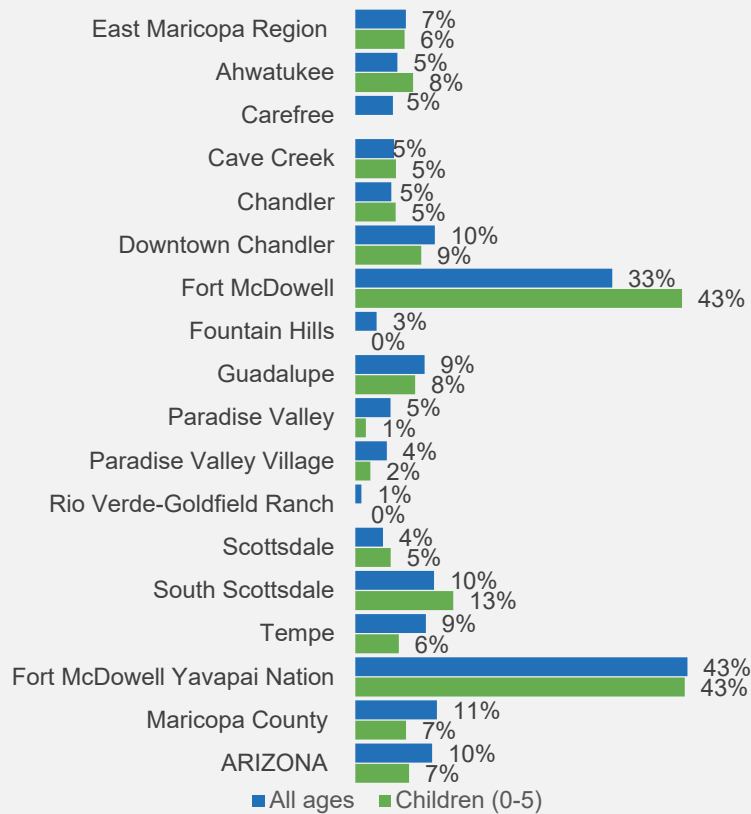
<sup>70</sup> *Healthy People 2030. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ODPHP Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/healthypeople>*

# What the Data Tell Us

## Access to Health Services

One indication of people’s access to health services is whether they have health insurance coverage that helps make health care affordable. When children lack health insurance, they are at risk of poor health outcomes and long-term complications if their families avoid or delay medical care because of cost. The HP 2030 target is for 92.1% of Americans to have medical insurance by 2030.<sup>71</sup> In 2019, 93.4% of the population in East Maricopa Region have health insurance, which exceeds the HP 2030’s targeted goal by 1.3%. In 2019, six percent of children under age six in the East Maricopa Region did not have any health insurance (Exhibit 5.1). Highest proportions of children without health insurance were in Fort McDowell (43%) and South Scottsdale (13%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (43%), while no children in Fountain Hills and Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch were without health insurance.

Exhibit 5.1. Estimated percentage without health insurance



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

<sup>71</sup> Healthy People 2030. About Health People Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality/increase-proportion-people-health-insurance-ahs-01>

## Hospitalizations

In the East Maricopa Region, non-fatal injuries consisted of 199 inpatient hospitalizations and 14,149 emergency department visits for children from 2016 to 2020 (Exhibit 5.2). The most common reasons for non-fatal emergency department visits are for falling, being struck or against an object, or poisoning (not shown in Exhibit). In addition, children that had emergency department visits were the likely to identify as male (56% to 62%) and white (55% to 59%) (not shown in Exhibit). Accidents such as these further emphasize the importance of health insurance coverage for families and their children, as rapid medial response can prevent long term or more severe health complications.

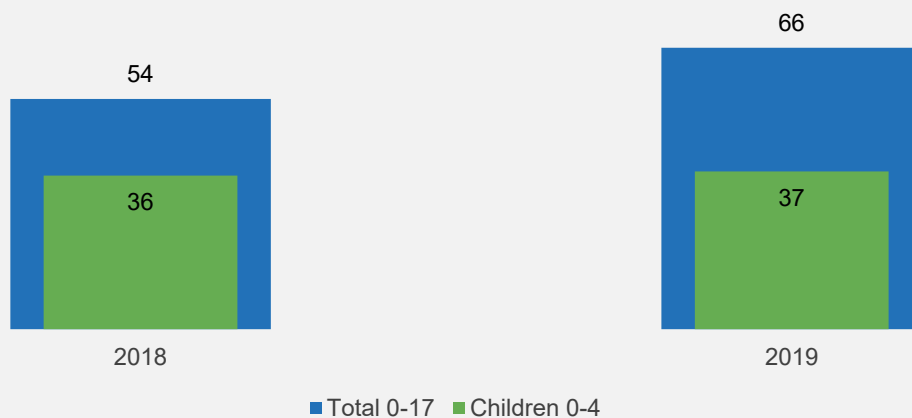
Exhibit 5.2. Injury Hospitalizations and ED Visits for Children 0-4, ADHS. (2016-2020)

Indicator	Arizona	Maricopa County	East Maricopa Region
Number of Non-Fatal Hospitalizations	2,890	1,790	199
Number of ED Visits	181,035	116,180	14,149

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

Between the years 2018 and 2019, in the East Maricopa Region, the total number of deaths for children ages 0 to 17 years increased from 54 to 66 (Exhibit 5.3). In 2018, many of deaths across both years were among young children 0 to 4 years (67%); the of deaths in this age group decreased in 2019 (56%; not shown in Exhibit). Within Arizona, the most common causes of childhood deaths include accidents, congenital malformations, and short gestation and low birth weight.

Exhibit 5.3. 2018-2019 total number of deaths for children 0-17 in East Maricopa Region



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

From 2016 to 2020, there were a total of 440 asthma-related inpatient hospitalizations and 2,988 asthma-related emergency visits for children 0 to 14 years old in East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 5.4). Children ages 0 to 14 years that were hospitalized for asthma were most likely to identify as male (63%) and white, Non-Hispanic (48%) or Hispanic or Latino/a (24%) (not shown in Exhibit). Throughout the East Maricopa Region, 35% of asthma-related inpatient hospitalizations were among children 0 to 4 years old.

**Exhibit 5.4. Asthma-related inpatient hospitalizations for children 0-14 compared to children 0-4 (2016-2020)**

	#Inpatient hospitalization of children 0-4	#Inpatient hospitalization of children 0-14	Percent of children inpatient hospitalization that were 0-4
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>35%</b>
Maricopa County	1,339	3,700	36%
ARIZONA	2,214	5,672	39%

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

From 2016 to 2020, there was a total of 74 diabetes-related emergency visits for children ages 0 to 17 years in East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 5.5). The East Maricopa Region consists of 12% of the diabetes-related emergency room visits in Maricopa County (not shown in Exhibit).

**Exhibit 5.5. Inpatient hospitalizations for diabetes for children 0-17 (2016-2020)**

	#Inpatient hospitalizations	Average length of stay (days) for hospitalization	#Emergency room visits
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	*	*	<b>74</b>
Maricopa County	72	3.2	618
ARIZONA	150	3.0	1,002

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

### Pregnancies and Birth

During calendar year 2019, East Maricopa Region residents gave birth to 7,811 babies, which was 15% of all babies born in Maricopa County and ten percent of all births in the state (Exhibit 5.6).

**Exhibit 5.6. Live Births During Calendar Year 2019, by people giving birth place of residence**

<b>Total number of births to Arizona-residents in 2019</b>	
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>7,811</b>
Maricopa County	50,998
ARIZONA	79,183

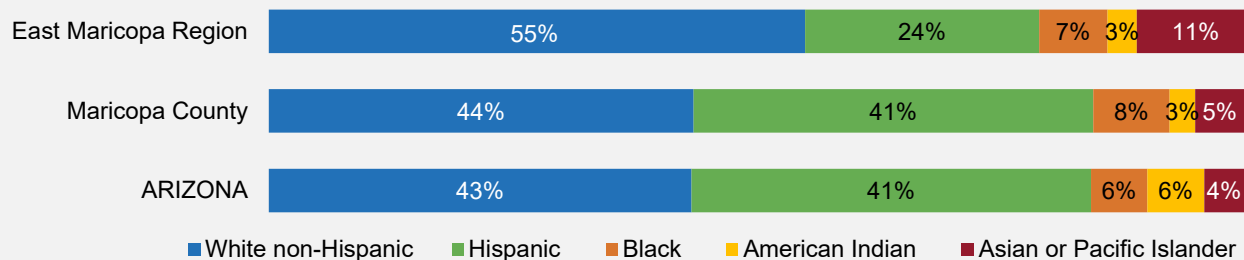
Arizona Department of Health Services (2021). [Vital Statistics Births dataset]. Unpublished data



## Characteristics of People Giving Birth

Of the almost 8,000 people who gave birth in the East Maricopa Region in 2019, 55% were non-Hispanic white, 24% were Hispanic or Latina, seven percent were Black or African American, 11 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, and three percent were American Indian or Alaska Native (Exhibit 5.7). Compared to people giving birth across Maricopa County and the state as a whole, people giving birth in the East Maricopa Region were more likely to be white, non-Hispanic or Asian or Pacific Islander, and less likely to be Hispanic.

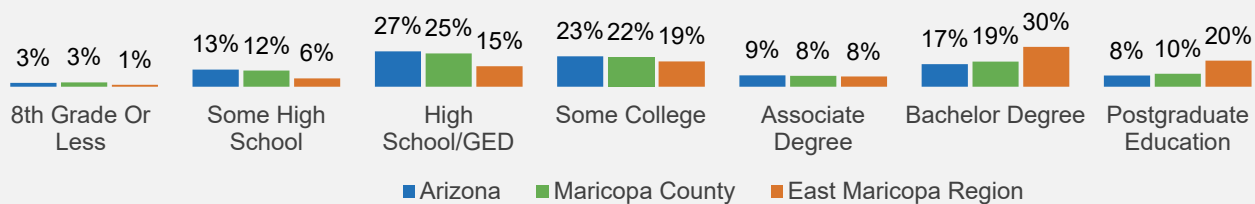
Exhibit 5.7. Race and ethnicity of people giving birth in 2019



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

The population of those who gave birth in the East Maricopa Region had higher levels of educational attainment (77% had some education beyond high school) than their counterparts in the state (57% post-high school) (Exhibit 5.8).

Exhibit 5.8. 2019 Percentage of live births by person's educational attainment



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

The population of those who gave birth in the East Maricopa Region was also different than people across the county and statewide on other attributes. Three percent were in their teens (5% county, 6% statewide) (Exhibit 5.9). In East Maricopa, about a quarter of births (28%) were to people relying on AHCCCS or Indian Health Service (IHS) coverage, which was less than county percentage (46%) and statewide proportion of 50%. In addition, slightly less people in East Maricopa Region reported tobacco use during pregnancy (2%) compared to the statewide (4%) and county (3%) proportion.

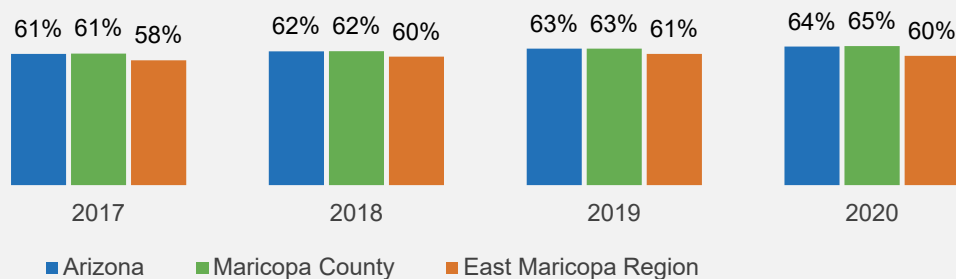
Exhibit 5.9. Other characteristics of people giving birth in 2019

	Person was 19 or younger	Person was 17 or younger	Birth was covered by AHCCCS or Indian Health	Tobacco use during pregnancy
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Maricopa County	5%	1%	46%	3%
ARIZONA	6%	1%	50%	4%

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

Another aspect of maternal health that is linked to both birth outcomes and a child’s subsequent health is maternal obesity. In the East Maricopa Region, and the state as a whole, about 60% of people participating in Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy in 2020 (Exhibit 5.10). The rate of people being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy has steady increased from 2017 to 2020. Families participating in WIC are likely opting for less expensive food options which often tend to be less healthy as well.

Exhibit 5.10. Percentage of people overweight and obese pre-pregnancy



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

### Prenatal Care

Research suggests that a lack of prenatal care is associated with many negative health issues for both the mother and the child.<sup>72</sup> Research also shows that children of people who did not obtain prenatal care were three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to experience fatal

<sup>72</sup> Prenatal Care Effects Felt Long After Birth. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://toosmall.org/blog/prenatal-care-effects-felt-long-after-birth>

outcomes than those born to people who did receive prenatal care.<sup>73</sup> In addition, studies show that people who are at the highest risk of not receiving prenatal care are those younger than 19 years old and single people.<sup>74,75</sup> Educational attainment has also been associated with people receiving prenatal care, such that the higher a person’s educational attainment, the more likely they are to seek prenatal care.<sup>76</sup> It is important that people seek and receive prenatal care at an early stage in their pregnancy so physicians can treat and prevent any health issues that may occur.<sup>77</sup>

HP 2030 aims to bring the proportion of pregnant people who receive early and adequate prenatal care to 80.5%.<sup>78</sup> In 2019, within the East Maricopa Region, the percentage of those who gave birth began prenatal care in the first trimester was 77%, which is about three percent lower than HP goal but higher than the state (69%) and county (72%) proportion (Exhibit 5.11). In 2019, two percent of those who gave birth did not receive prenatal care which is lower the proportion in the state (3%).

Exhibit 5.11. Live births during calendar year 2019, by number of prenatal visits

	No visits	1 to 4 visits	5 to 8 visits	9 to 12 visits	13 or more visits	Percent of births with fewer than five prenatal care visits	Percent of births with prenatal care begun in first trimester
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>77%</b>
Maricopa County	2%	4%	16%	45%	31%	6%	72%
ARIZONA	3%	6%	18%	43%	29%	8%	69%

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

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

<sup>74</sup> *Center for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Vital Statistics Online. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data\\_access/vitalstatsonline.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/vitalstatsonline.htm)*

<sup>75</sup> *Institute of Medicine (US) Committee to Study Outreach for Prenatal Care; Brown SS, editor. Prenatal Care: Reaching Mothers, Reaching Infants. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1988. Chapter 1, Who Obtains Insufficient Prenatal Care? Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK217693/>*

<sup>76</sup> *National Center for Health Statistics (1994). Vital and Health Statistics: Data from the National Vital Statistics System. Retrieved from [https://books.google.com/books?id=zIFPAQAIAAJ&pg=RA2-PA19&lpg=RA2PA19&dq=lack+of+prenatal+care+linked+with+mothers+educational+attainment&source=bl&ots=ilqp\\_JVnA&sig=SQBGbmlhOG9JNrgFLEjMOVkt90&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjM6vH\\_6vfPAhWCjlQKHWRjCwkQ6AEIVDAH#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=zIFPAQAIAAJ&pg=RA2-PA19&lpg=RA2PA19&dq=lack+of+prenatal+care+linked+with+mothers+educational+attainment&source=bl&ots=ilqp_JVnA&sig=SQBGbmlhOG9JNrgFLEjMOVkt90&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjM6vH_6vfPAhWCjlQKHWRjCwkQ6AEIVDAH#v=onepage&q&f=false)*

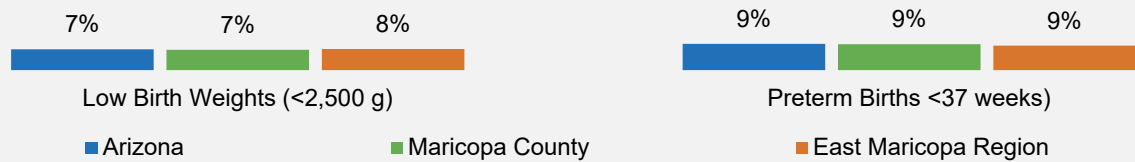
<sup>77</sup> *Womens Health (n.d.). Prenatal care fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.html#b>*

<sup>78</sup> *Healthy People 2030. About Health People Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/pregnancy-and-childbirth/increase-proportion-pregnant-women-who-receive-early-and-adequate-prenatal-care-mich-08>*

## Birth Outcomes

With regard to perinatal health, babies from the East Maricopa Region fared similarly to babies born statewide. In the region in 2019, eight percent of babies were low birth weight, compared to seven percent across the state and the percent of premature births was also the same as the region and state at nine percent (Exhibit 5.12). The Healthy People 2030 objective is fewer than 9.4% are born preterm, meaning that the East Maricopa Region has achieved the Healthy People 2030 goal for preterm births.

Exhibit 5.12. Percentage of births with low birth weights (<2,500 g) and preterm births (<37 weeks) in 2019



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

The percentage of newborns admitted to the NICU in the region (8%) was comparable to that across the county or state (7% for county and 8% for state; Exhibit 5.13).

Exhibit 5.13. NICU admissions

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

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

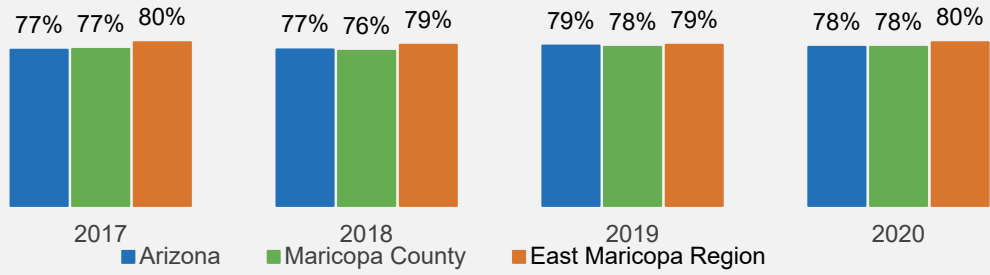
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that people breastfeed for the first six months after giving birth.<sup>79</sup> Breast milk has antibodies that prevent babies from getting ill and it has been show to decrease the likelihood of babies becoming obese.<sup>80</sup> In the East Maricopa Region, the percentage of people participating in WIC who ever breastfed their infant on average at least once per day remained steady from 2017 to 2020 at 80%. In 2020, this percentage was two percent higher than the state and

<sup>79</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics (2012). *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/3/e827.full#content-block>

<sup>80</sup> Office on Women's Health (2014). *Why breastfeeding is important*. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-benefits.html>

county (78% for both; Exhibit 5.14).

Exhibit 5.14. Percentage of people who ever breastfeed their infant



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

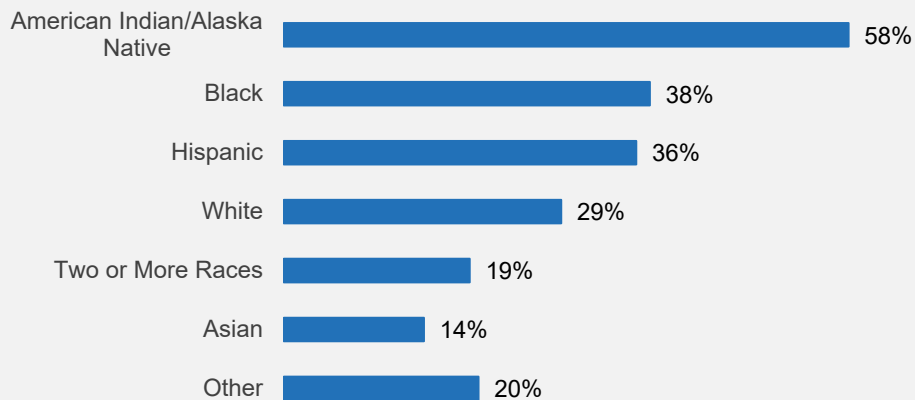
## Obesity

Obesity has been a concern in the US due to associated health outcomes, such as higher risks for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.<sup>81</sup> Diabetes has also been associated with many negative health complications such as blindness, kidney failure, and amputation of limbs.<sup>82</sup>

According to the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), people who are obese during pregnancy are at higher risk of developing gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and sleep apnea.<sup>83</sup>

According to the CDC, diabetes and obesity can be largely prevented by increasing physical activity and maintaining a healthy diet.<sup>84</sup> HP 2030 aims to reduce the proportion of adults who are obese to 36% and the proportion of children and adolescents who are obese to 15.5%.<sup>85</sup> In Arizona overall, the percentage of adults with obesity was 31.4% in 2019, and Exhibit 5.15 shows the differences across racial/ethnic groups.

Exhibit 5.15. Percentage of adults with obesity in Arizona by race/ethnicity, 2019



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

Compared to the proportion of people participating in WIC reported being overweight or obese pre-pregnancy, children participating in WIC were less likely be obese. In the East Maricopa Region, the percentage of children participating in WIC that were obese or overweight was 32% in 2020. This proportion was similar to Maricopa County (33%) and Arizona (32%). The Healthy People 2030 objective is to reduce proportion of children and adolescents with obesity to 15.5%. In 2020, within the East Maricopa Region, 16.6% of children (ages two to five) were considered obese. Across the region,

<sup>81</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Adult Obesity Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

<sup>82</sup> Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). Diabetes At A Glance Reports. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/diabetes.htm>

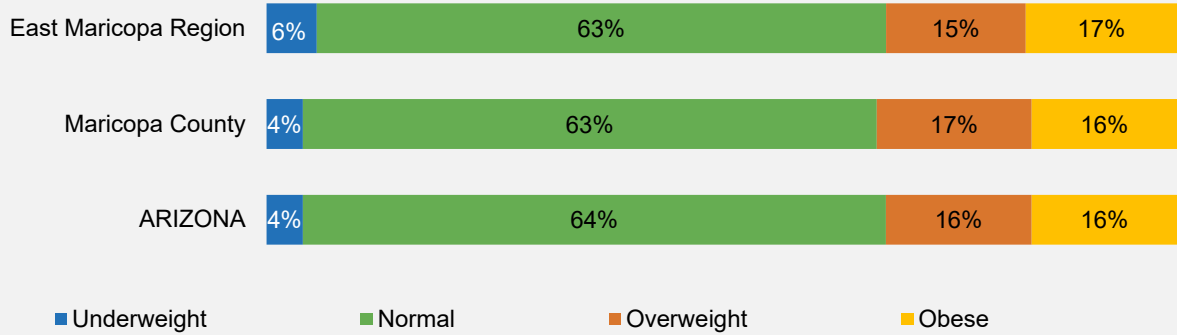
<sup>83</sup> ACOG (2016). Obesity and Pregnancy. Retrieved from <http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Obesity-and-Pregnancy>

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

<sup>85</sup> Healthy People 2030. About Health People Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/overweight-and-obesity/reduce-proportion-adults-obesity-nws-03>

state, and county, about six of ten children are considered to be normal weight (Exhibit 5.16).

Exhibit 5.16. WIC children's weight status (Ages 2 to 5), 2020



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

The proportion of children that are obese or overweight increased from 30% in 2017 to 32% in 2020. This pattern is also similar throughout the county and state (Exhibit 5.17).

Exhibit 5.17. WIC children's overweight and obesity rates (ages 2 to 5), 2017 to 2020

	Childhood rate, 2017	Childhood rate, 2018	Childhood rate, 2019	Childhood rate, 2020	Percentage change from 2017 to 2020
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	30%	30%	30%	32%	+2%
Maricopa County	30%	31%	31%	33%	+3%
ARIZONA	30%	30%	31%	32%	+2%

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

## Immunizations

Routine childhood vaccinations can protect children from many illnesses, including measles, mumps, polio, and whooping cough, which are all severe and potentially fatal to young children.<sup>86</sup> Receiving timely vaccinations is not only protects the children receiving them, but protects the community by reducing the likelihood of disease spread.<sup>87</sup> In the East Maricopa Region, the percentage of children in child care and kindergarten who were exempt from immunizations for religious or medical reasons was slightly higher than the state and county (Exhibits 5.18 and 5.19). The percentage of children in the region who received Hib, DTaP, MMR, Hep B, Polio, and Varicella vaccines was comparable to state levels.

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

	Students enrolled	Four or more DTAP	Three or more Polio	Two or more MMR	Three or more HIB	Two Hep A	Three or more Hep B	One or more Varicella	Religious Exempt	Medical Exempt
East Maricopa Region	14,980	92%	93%	93%	93%	87%	92%	92%	6%	1%
Maricopa County	57,253	91%	92%	92%	93%	87%	92%	92%	6%	0.5%
ARIZONA	85,805	92%	93%	93%	93%	85%	92%	93%	5%	0.4%

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

Exhibit 5.19. Vaccination rates and exemption rates for children in kindergarten

	Students enrolled	Four or more DTAP	DTAP Exempt	Three or more Polio	Polio Exempt	Two or more MMR	MMR Exempt	Three or more Hep B	Hep B Exempt	One or more Varicella	Varicella Exempt
East Maricopa Region	9,776	93%	6%	93%	6%	93%	6%	94%	5%	95%	4%
Maricopa County	54,687	93%	5%	93%	5%	93%	5%	94%	5%	95%	4%
ARIZONA	330,412	93%	5%	94%	5%	93%	5%	95%	4%	96%	4%

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

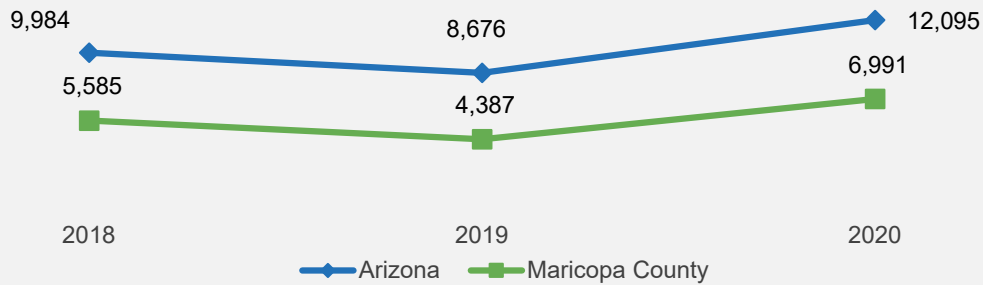
<sup>86</sup> Basic Vaccines (2016). Importance of Vaccines. Retrieved from <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/vaccines-save-lives/>

<sup>87</sup> U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2016). Community Immunity. Retrieved from [http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccine\\_safety/](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccine_safety/)



The number of infectious disease cases per year for children less than five years old in Maricopa County increased from 5,585 cases in 2018 to 6,991 cases in 2020 (Exhibit 5.20). Like Maricopa County, Arizona experienced an increase of infectious diseases among young children from 2018 to 2020 (9,984 cases per year to 12,095 per year).

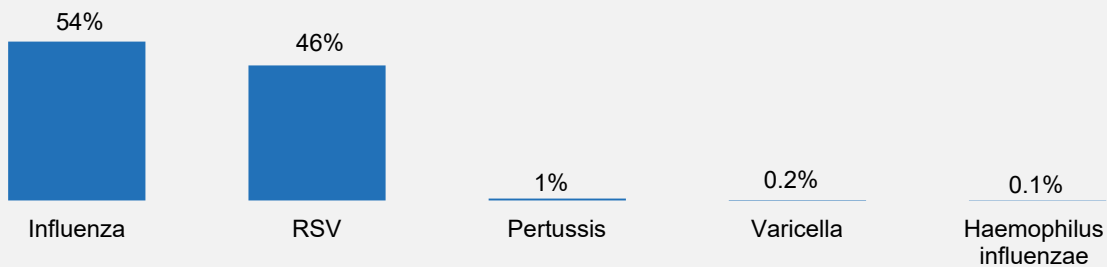
Exhibit 5.20. Number of cases of infectious diseases per year for children (0-4) from 2018 to 2020 in Maricopa County and Arizona\*



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

As seen in Exhibit 5.21, the most common infectious diseases in Maricopa County in 2020 were influenza (3,741 cases; 54%) and respiratory syncytial virus (3,183 cases; 46%). Though influenzas are preventable through the flu shot, influenzas cause the most hospitalizations for young children amongst vaccine-preventable diseases.<sup>88</sup>

Exhibit 5.21. Percentage of occurrence of infectious diseases for children (0-4) in 2020 in Maricopa County\*



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

<sup>88</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) Information for Schools & Childcare Providers. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm#:~:text=Influenza%20causes%20more%20hospitalizations%20among,seasonal%20influenza%20vaccine%20each%20year>

# CHILD HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

The diversity of the East Maricopa Region presents both assets and challenges for supporting the health of pregnant women, young children, and their families. The percentage of young children without health insurance is like the state and county, though variable by area. Additionally, most women are receiving prenatal care and many begun their care in the first trimester. However, the region, just like the state and county has an increasing percentage of children that are overweight or obese.

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

Assets	Considerations
The percentage of people participating in WIC who breastfeed their child reached 80% in 2020.	Continue to provide public education about the benefits of breastfeeding and consider supporting workplace efforts to encourage breastfeeding practices for working parents.
According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, almost all pregnant people (95%) are receiving some prenatal care.	Promote the importance of early prenatal care and provide education on the impact of prenatal care on the parent and child’s future well-being.

Needs	Considerations
The percentage of children (ages 2 to 5) that are enrolled in WIC are overweight or obese has increased from 2017 (29%) to 2020 (32%).	Address root causes of obesity in low-income communities by pursuing improved neighborhood safety, opportunities for outdoor activity, and better access to low-cost healthy food options. Seek ideas from and partnership with community members to create culturally meaningful, lasting change.
In the East Maricopa Region, six percent of children between the ages of 0 to 5 do not have health insurance. Sub-regions with high rates of children with no health insurance include Fort McDowell (43%) and South Scottsdale (13%).	Provide low-income families information and support in enrolling in Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System.



## FAMILY SUPPORT

# FAMILY SUPPORT

## Why it Matters

The first five years of life have a significant impact on children's intellectual, social, and emotional development, and research shows that parents have a profound impact on their child's development during this time.<sup>89</sup> Support for young families is an essential piece of the holistic efforts around kindergarten readiness and long-term success for children. First Things First supports families through home visitation and parent outreach and education programs. Evidence-based Parenting Education and supports to improve parenting practices can reduce stressors and lead to enriched child development and reduction of removals of children from their homes.

Given the importance of the first years of life on children's development and the role that parents can play, it is crucial for parents to receive support and access to programs that provide tools and knowledge about their child's needs and effective parenting techniques. Providing more knowledge about parenting and child development supports parents in improving their parenting practices and providing their children with the experiences they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.<sup>90</sup> Public assistance programs in the United States can play an important role in providing adequate socioeconomic conditions for families to raise their children. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has been associated with helping families move out of poverty, guarantee food security, and improve child health and school performance.<sup>91</sup> Research has also shown that the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) could prevent child maltreatment due to increased cash benefits and access that have been associated with decreased physical abuse.<sup>92</sup> The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has reduced the prevalence of child food insecurity. Further, the revisions made to the WIC food package in October 2009 have been associated with reduced maternal preeclampsia and gestational weight gain, as well as improvements in infant gestational age and birth weight.<sup>93, 94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy (2013). *Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development*. Retrieved from [http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF\\_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Center for the Study of Social Policy (2013). *Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development*. Retrieved from [http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF\\_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/2013/SF_Knowledge-of-Parenting-and-Child-Development.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> Carlson, S., Rosenbaum, D., Keith-Jennings, B., Nchako, C. (2016) *SNAP works for America's Children*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/9-29-16fa.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Spencer, R., Livingston, M., Komro, K., Sroczyński, N., Rentmeester, S., Woods-Jaeger, B. (2021) *Association between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child maltreatment among a cohort of fragile families*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Volume 120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105186>

<sup>93</sup> Kreider, B., Pepper, J., Roy, M. (2016) *Identifying the effects of WIC on food insecurity among infants and children*. *Southern Economic Association*. Volume 82 Issue 4. <https://doi.org/10.1002/soej.12078>

<sup>94</sup> Hamad, R., Collin, D., Baer, R., Jelliffe-Pawłowski, L. (2019) *Association of revised WIC food package with perinatal and birth outcomes*. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2737097>

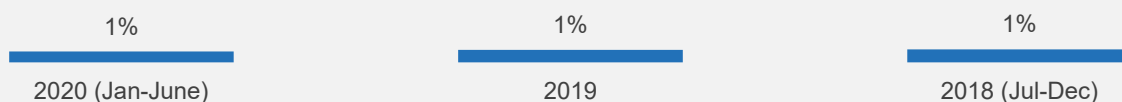
Promoting a safe home environment for children is another key aspect of family support. The adverse and long-term effects of childhood trauma have become well-documented. For example, children who are exposed to domestic violence or experience abuse or neglect are at increased risk of depression, anxiety, physical aggression, and behavior problems.<sup>95</sup> Children who are exposed to opioid misuse are more likely to experience mental health problems, drug use, accidental opioid poisoning, substance use disorder, family dissolution, foster care placement or the death of a parent due to an opioid overdose.<sup>96</sup> Children in foster care are particularly likely to have had trauma exposure and are more likely than other children to have poor mental and physical health.<sup>97, 98</sup> Understanding the impact of trauma has led to identifying opportunities to both prevent and mitigate its adverse effects. Opportunities include family support services like home visitation and parent education, as well as prioritizing out-of-home placements with family members or foster families before turning to congregate care in a residential facility.

## What the Data Tell Us

### Child Safety and Domestic Violence

Understanding the scope of child removals in a region can help policy makers and organizations better support this vulnerable group. The percentage of children removed in Arizona that reside in the East Maricopa Region by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) remained steady at one percent in 2018 to 2020 (Exhibit 6.1).

Exhibit 6.1. Percentage of children removed in Arizona by the Department of Child Safety that resided in East Maricopa Region



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

<sup>95</sup> Evans, S. E., Davies, C., & DiLillo, D. (2008). Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 13(2), 131-140.

<sup>96</sup> Winstanley, E., Stover, A. (2019) The impact of the opioid epidemic on children and adolescents. *Clinical Therapeutics*. Volume 41 Issue 9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clinthera.2019.06.003>

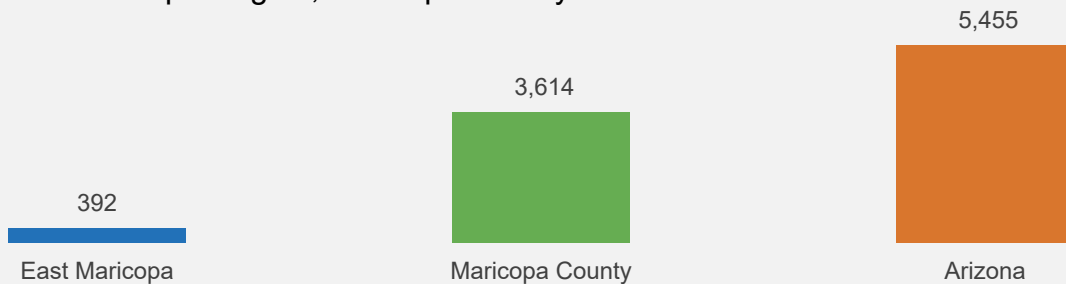
<sup>97</sup> Dorsey S, Burns BJ, Southerland DG, Cox JR, Wagner HR, Farmer EM. Prior Trauma Exposure for Youth in Treatment Foster Care. *J Child Fam Stud*. 2012 Oct;21(5):816-824. doi: 10.1007/s10826-011-9542-4. PMID: 23730144; PMCID: PMC3667554

<sup>98</sup> Turney K, Wildeman C. Mental and Physical Health of Children in Foster Care. *Pediatrics*. 2016 Nov;138(5):e20161118. doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-1118. Epub 2016 Oct 17. PMID: 27940775

## Substance Use

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to address the national opioid crisis.<sup>99</sup> While substance abuse is risky for users themselves, parents who misuse substances also expose their children to risks. Specifically, when parents use opiates or opioids, they are more likely to expose their children to maltreatment and neglect.<sup>100</sup> Children in these situations are more likely to suffer later mental health disorders, their own substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>101</sup>

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



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

From 2017 to 2020, the 392 deaths from opioid overdose occurred in the East Maricopa Region, which was seven percent of opioid-related deaths in Arizona (Exhibit 6.2). In Maricopa County and Arizona, the number of non-fatal overdoses from opiates or opioids increased from 2017 to 2020 (Exhibit 6.3). In Maricopa County, the number of non-fatal overdoses drastically increased by 187% from 963 in 2017 to 2,772 in 2020. This trend was similar in Arizona with a 180% increase of non-fatal overdoses from 2017 to 2020.

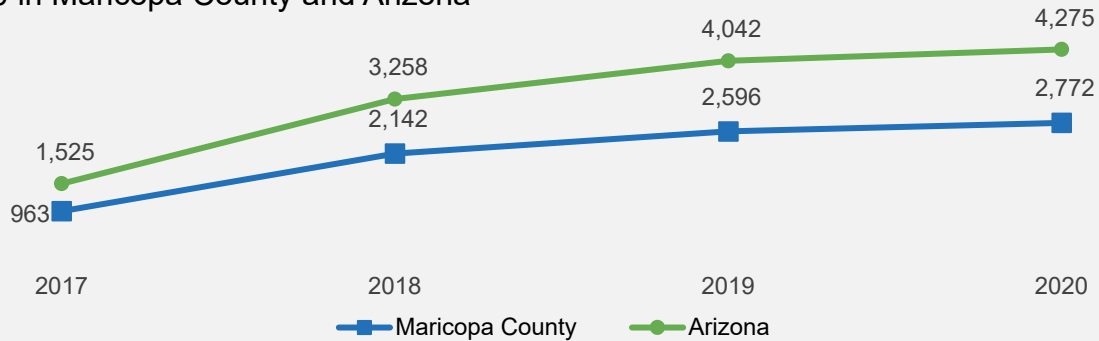
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<sup>99</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2017) HHS Acting Secretary Declares Public Health Emergency to Address National Opioid Crisis. Retrieved from <https://public3.pagefreezer.com/browse/HHS.gov/31-12-2020T08:51/https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2017/10/26/hhs-acting-secretary-declares-public-health-emergency-address-national-opioid-crisis.html>

<sup>100</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis*. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/bhw/impact-substance/opioid-crisis/>

<sup>101</sup> American Society for the Positive Care of Children (n.d.) *The Opioid Crisis and the Effect on Children*. Retrieved from <https://americanspcc.org/the-opioid-crisis-and-the-effect-on-children/>

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



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

### Services to Help Families

Numerous federal and local programs and services aim to provide families with food security, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), TANF, WIC, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Program (SFP), and free and reduced priced lunch programs for children in schools. Despite the prevalence of these programs, the number of children and families receiving assistance in recent years has decreased. Federal programs such as SNAP and TANF have shrunk from 2017 to 2020 due to the expiration of benefit increases instituted during the recession.<sup>102</sup> These decreases come even as the number of families living in poverty has increased nationally.<sup>103</sup> Exhibits 6.4 and 6.6 show how the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased in recent years.

The percentage of families and children that received SNAP benefits decreased by 18% in East Maricopa Region from 2017 to 2020. As of 2020, the program supports approximately 10,000 children and 7,00 families annually in the East Maricopa Region. In the East Maricopa Region, in 2020, more than half of the children that received SNAP benefits identified as white (59%), a third were Hispanic/Latino (33%), and about a quarter were African American (24%; Exhibit 6.5).<sup>104</sup>

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

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>12,067</b>	<b>11,221</b>	<b>10,298</b>	<b>9,926</b>	<b>-18%</b>
Maricopa County	142,724	131,473	120,427	113,174	-21%
ARIZONA	247,414	229,275	211,814	198,961	-20%

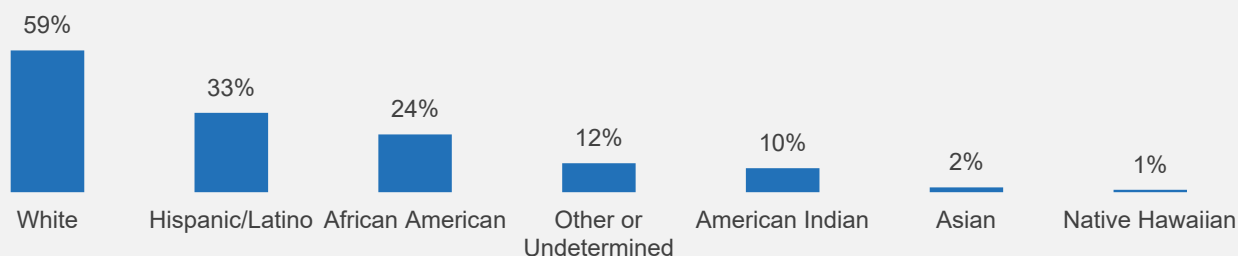
Arizona Department of Economic Security (2020). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*.

<sup>102</sup> Rosenbaum, D. & Keith-Jennings, B. (2016). *Snap Costs and Caseloads Declining*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <http://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-costs-and-caseloads-declining>

<sup>103</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (n.d.) *Tracking the COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-economys-effects-on-food-housing-and>

<sup>104</sup> Respondents were allowed to select more than one response; thus, the total is more than 100%.

**Exhibit 6.5. Young children (0-5) enrolled in SNAP in 2020 by race/ethnicity in East Maricopa Region**



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

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

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>8,197</b>	<b>7,603</b>	<b>6,982</b>	<b>6,779</b>	<b>-17%</b>
Maricopa County	93,992	86,352	78,980	74,572	-21%
ARIZONA	164,092	151,816	140,056	132,466	-19%

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

Similar to SNAP benefits, the number of children and families receiving TANF benefits decreased from 2017 to 2020 in East Maricopa Region, Maricopa County and Arizona (Exhibit 6.7 and Exhibit 6.8). In 2020, approximately 540 families and 700 young children received TANF benefits. TANF benefits can be the primary cash assistance program for families with low incomes.<sup>105</sup> Some research has been critical of TANF for not providing enough assistance to Hispanic/Latino and African American families, especially those who have been the most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>106</sup> In the East Maricopa Region, in 2020, more than half of the children that received TANF benefits identified as white (59%), almost third were African American (31%) and about a quarter were Hispanic/Latino (25%) (Exhibit 6.9).<sup>107</sup>

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

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>-1%</b>
Maricopa County	6,873	5,745	5,063	5,300	-23%
ARIZONA	12,315	10,538	9,360	9,947	-19%

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

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (n.d.) Office of Family Assistance. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf>

<sup>106</sup> Safawi, A., Reyes, C., (2021) States must continue recent momentum to further improve TANF benefit levels. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-benefits-still-too-low-to-help-families-especially-black>

<sup>107</sup> Respondents were allowed to select more than one response; thus, the total is more than 100%.

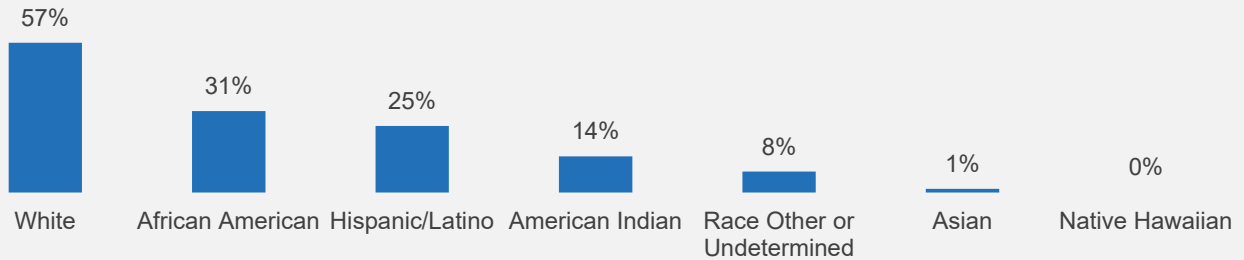


Exhibit 6.8. Numbers of young children (ages 0 to 5) receiving TANF benefits, 2017 to 2020

	FY 2017	F7 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Change from 2017 to 2020
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>-5%</b>
Maricopa County	9,696	8,017	7,103	7,452	-23%
ARIZONA	17,143	14,659	13,029	13,747	-20%

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

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



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

Due to the mandatory school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, and the Arizona Department of Education issued Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits to current SNAP households and non-SNAP households with children eligible for free and reduced price school meals.<sup>108</sup> Enrolled families were given a pre-loaded EBT card to purchase groceries. The number of families with children 0 to 5 years old that were enrolled in P-EBT from March 2021 to May 2021 decreased by about 14 to 19 percent across the East Maricopa Region, Maricopa County and Arizona. Although the number of families with young children using this benefit has decreased, in May 2021, within the East Maricopa Region, P-EBT was able to provide financial relief to 1,996 families (Exhibit 6.10). Families with young children consisted of nine to eleven percent of the families enrolled in P-EBT from March to May 2021.

**Exhibit 6.10. Number of families with children 0-5 enrolled in P-EBT, March 2021 to May 2021**

	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	Change from March 2021 to May 2021
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>1,996</b>	<b>-14%</b>
Maricopa County	23,577	21,438	19,422	-18%
Arizona	36,971	33,431	30,066	-19%

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

Through federal grants, WIC provides nutrition, education and breastfeeding support services, supplemental nutritious foods and referrals to health and social services for women, infants, and children under five years old. In 2020, within the East Maricopa Region, WIC served a total of 13,019 individuals: 3,252 women; 3,593 infants; and 6,174 children. Within the East Maricopa Region, many of WIC enrollees resided in Downtown Chandler or Tempe (Exhibit 6.11).

**Exhibit 6.11. Number of Women, Infants and Children enrolled in the WIC Program during 2020**

	Total	Women	Infants	Children
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>13,019</b>	<b>3,252</b>	<b>3,593</b>	<b>6,174</b>
Ahwatukee	1,054	260	302	492
Carefree	*	*	*	*
Cave Creek	61	19	17	25
Chandler	1,592	382	437	773
Downtown Chandler	4,068	990	1,109	1,969
Fort McDowell	7	*	*	7
Fountain Hills	85	22	24	39
Guadalupe	1,548	383	423	742
Paradise Valley	21	*	6	15
Paradise Valley Village	114	33	39	42

<sup>108</sup> *Arizona Department of Economic Security (n.d.) Arizona P-EBT Benefits. Retrieved from <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food-assistance/other-food-programs/arizona-p-ebt-benefits>*

**Exhibit 6.11. Number of Women, Infants and Children enrolled in the WIC Program during 2020 (continued)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>Children</b>
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	*	*	*	*
Scottsdale	361	106	114	141
South Scottsdale	959	243	252	464
Tempe	3,130	806	865	1,459
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation				
Maricopa County	155,754	38,545	43,050	74,159
ARIZONA	256,733	63,111	70,242	123,380

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

\*cell suppressed due to small size (less than 6)

The WIC enrollment for children under 5 years old decreased slightly from 2017 (21% of children under five) to 2020 (18% of children five) in East Maricopa Region (Exhibit 6.12). The decrease of the use of WIC services in the region may be due to the closure of some on-site WIC clinics since the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Exhibit 6.12. Infants and children (ages 0 to 4) enrolled in the WIC program as a percentage of the population, 2017 to 2020**

	<b>Number of children (ages 0-4) in the 2010 US Census</b>	<b>Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2017</b>		<b>Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2018</b>		<b>Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2019</b>		<b>Number and percentage of children (0 to 4) enrolled, 2020</b>	
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>54,701</b>	<b>11,481</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>10,985</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10,420</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>9,767</b>	<b>18%</b>
Maricopa County	339,217	137,050	40%	130,101	38%	122,607	36%	117,209	36%
ARIZONA	546,609	221,387	41%	211,732	39%	201,644	37%	193,622	37%

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

Exhibit 6.13 provides a single month snapshot of participation in the program in November 2020; 89% of women, 93% of infants, and 87% of children who were enrolled in WIC in the region claimed their benefits in the month of November. There are some differences by sub-region on which sub-regions claimed their benefits: the highest rates of participation included those enrolled in Downtown Chandler (95%) and Chandler (94%) and lowest in Cave Creek (64%). Those enrolled in WIC may not participate due to logistical barriers, such as job conflicts, lack of transportation, not enough time to wait at WIC appointments, and lack of child care.<sup>109</sup> Maricopa County WIC streamlined its services with an electronic portal where participants can make appointments and view their benefits to help enrolled participants claim their benefits.<sup>110</sup> This system may explain the high participation rate within Maricopa County and the East Maricopa Region.

Exhibit 6.13. WIC participation rates during November 2020

	Total	Women	Infants	Children
<b>East Maricopa Region</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Ahwatukee	91%	90%	93%	92%
Carefree	*	*	*	*
Cave Creek	64%	*	89%	76%
Chandler	94%	90%	95%	95%
Downtown Chandler	95%	93%	96%	95%
Fort McDowell	*	*	*	*
Fountain Hills	81%	67%	92%	83%
Guadalupe	90%	86%	92%	89%
Paradise Valley	89%	*	*	89%
Paradise Valley Village	85%	84%	87%	83%
Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch	*	*	*	*
Scottsdale	90%	89%	89%	91%
South Scottsdale	91%	92%	94%	90%
Tempe	86%	84%	91%	86%
Maricopa County	89%	89%	93%	88%
ARIZONA	89%	89%	93%	88%

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

\*cell suppressed due to small size (less than 6)

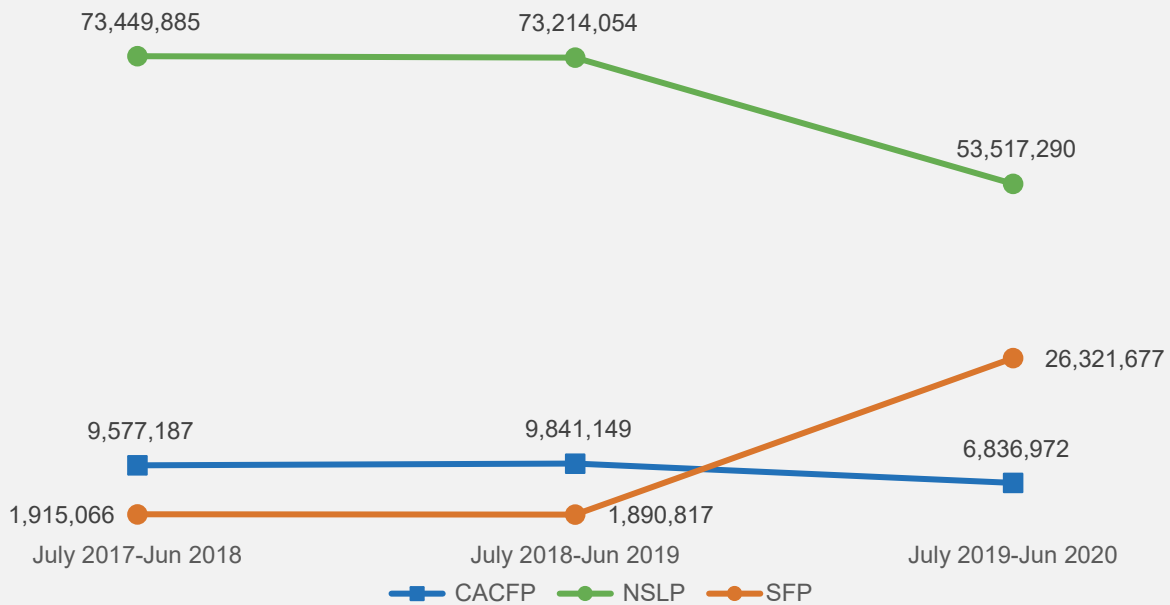
Note: The participation rate is the number of persons receiving WIC benefits during November 2020, divided by the total number of persons enrolled in the program.

<sup>109</sup> Whaley, S. E., Martinez, C. E., Paolicelli, C., Ritchie, L. D., & Weinfeld, N. S. (2020). Predictors of WIC participation through 2 years of age. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 52(7), 672-679.

<sup>110</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2021). *WIC Case Study: Maricopa County, Arizona*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/8-30-19fa-casestudies-maricopa-county.pdf>

Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Summer Food Program (SFP), and free and reduced priced lunch programs for children in schools provide food assistance to eligible families. From June 2018 to June 2020, the number of children and families receiving assistance has decreased for CACFP and NSLP but increased dramatically for SFP (Exhibit 6.14). It is unclear why CACFP and NSLP decreased while SFP increased in 2020.

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



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

Schools are an important part of the nutrition assistance system, especially for children experiencing food insecurity. About 30% of all public- and charter-school students in the East Maricopa Region have been eligible for free or reduced-price lunch since 2018 (Exhibit 6.15). This is lower than the statewide percentage, which has hovered around 55 to 57 percent. Over the last three years, the proportion of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch has stayed fairly constant in most school districts in the region, although the percentage has increased noticeably in the Maricopa County Regional School District (from 67% in 2018 to over 98% in 2020). The school districts in the region with the lowest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch in 2020 are Cave Creek Unified School District (27%) and Paradise Valley Unified District (12%), while Maricopa County Regional School District (>98%) and Tempe School District (67%) had the highest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. (Note that the data in Exhibit 6.15 refer only to schools located inside the East Maricopa Region boundaries).

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

	2018	2019	2020
<b>East Maricopa Region Schools</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Cave Creek Unified District	8%	7%	8%
Chandler Unified District #80	28%	26%	27%
East Maricopa Region Charter Schools	65%	56%	56%
Fountain Hills Unified District	24%	26%	26%
Kyrene Elementary District	30%	29%	29%
Maricopa County Regional School District	67%	>98%	>98%
Mesa Unified District	52%	50%	47%
Paradise Valley Unified District	12%	12%	12%
Scottsdale Unified District	22%	22%	21%
Tempe School District	69%	68%	67%
Tempe Union High School District	30%	29%	21%
Maricopa County Schools	54%	53%	51%
All Arizona Schools	57%	56%	55%

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

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

# FAMILY SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

In the East Maricopa Region there is opportunity to strengthen parental knowledge about child development and engaging in positive parenting practices. With regard to opioid overdoses, in East Maricopa Region, there were 392 fatal overdoses from opiates and opioids from 2017 to 2020 and the percentage of non-fatal overdoses in Maricopa County increased to 187% from 2017 to 2020. The number of families and young children receiving federal program assistance, such as SNAP, WIC and TANF, decreased from 2017 to 2020.

Below are some data trends that highlight the family support related assets, needs, and data-driven considerations for the region.

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
About 90% of women, infants, and children enrolled in WIC claimed their benefits.	Continue to support women, infants and children to participate in WIC and claim their benefits.

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Despite the need of federal program assistance, enrollment in SNAP, WIC, and TANF has decreased.	Encourage grantmaking partners and stakeholders to promote federal program assistance for low-income families.

# CONCLUSION

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

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

Assets	Considerations
<b>Population Characteristics</b>	
The population of children under the age of six is projected to grow at a modest and steady rate, allowing the region to foresee and prepare for the growing demands of their youngest residents.	Discuss tactics for planning ahead for the projected slow, but steady, growth of the under six population and the needs that accompany that growth, such as healthcare and child care needs for young children.
Of the households that speak another language besides English, three percent are Limited-English-speaking households. These households are most likely to be Spanish speaking.	Support services and centers in having bilingual staff (especially staff that speaks English and Spanish) and resources.
<b>Economic Circumstances</b>	
East Maricopa Region generally has higher employment and lower poverty rates than the state, though this varies among sub-regions.	Consider encouraging stakeholders to target job training and employment programs to the sub-regions with higher need to help increase employment and median incomes.
<b>Education</b>	
Over half (51%) of adults 25 and older have a bachelor’s degree or more in East Maricopa, with Paradise Valley (66%) and Scottsdale (63%) having the highest proportions of adults with a bachelor’s degree or more.	Increase awareness for parents to support each other and share knowledge and attitudes around the importance of education.
AzMERIT reports from the Arizona Department of Education show that about 60% third graders are meeting proficiency standards for English Language Arts (61%) and Math (64%), this is higher than the county and state.	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.



<b>Early Learning</b>	
Quality First has been increasing the quality of child care programs in the region. Of the children enrolled in a Quality First site, 69% are enrolled in a three, four, or five star center or home.	Support Quality First and Department of Economic Security (DES) Expansion efforts in the region to increase the opportunities to recruit and enroll children in quality early care and education.
<b>Child Health</b>	
The percentage of people participating in WIC who breastfeed their child reached 80% in 2020.	Continue to provide public education about the benefits of breastfeeding and consider supporting workplace efforts to encourage breastfeeding practices for working parents.
According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, almost all pregnant people (95%) are receiving some prenatal care.	Promote the importance of early prenatal care and provide education on the impact of prenatal care on the parent and child's future well-being.
<b>Family Support</b>	
About 90% of women, infants, and children enrolled in WIC claimed their benefits.	Continue to support women, infants and children to participate in WIC and claim their benefits.

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
<b>Population Characteristics</b>	
According to the American Community Survey, most of the children under six living in single-parent households or cared for by grandparents, both of which face additional barriers and difficulties when compared to two parent households, are in the Fort McDowell and Guadalupe sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.	Discuss supporting services specifically designed for single-parent and grandparent-led households and targeted in the Fort McDowell and Guadalupe sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation to help them support the young children in their homes.
<b>Economic Circumstances</b>	
According to the American Community Survey, about 12% of children in the region live in poverty with high rates of poverty in Tempe (26%) and Guadalupe (27%) and 29% of residents in the region spend more than 30% of their income on housing.	Assist community members in navigating social service resources in the region, including housing support (i.e., Public Housing Agency or the Housing Authority of Maricopa County).
Although many households have broadband internet with a cellular data plan (75%), Fort McDowell (37%), Guadalupe (59%), and Tempe (60%) sub-regions and Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (26%) have households with 60% or less with broadband internet with a cellular data plan.	Partner with local agencies, businesses and stakeholders that could support in technological needs for low-income families. For example, Cox has a package, Connect2Complete, that provides low-cost internet for families with K to 12 students.
<b>Education</b>	
In 2019, 69% of high school students graduated within four years in the region, which is lower than the state (79%) and county (79%).	Increase parent outreach and awareness of early education programs to support learning and school readiness from an early age.
<b>Early Learning</b>	
The cost of early childcare is higher in East Maricopa Region than in the county or state.	Spread awareness about the availability of scholarships and subsidies for child care, especially for low-income

	families. Support structural improvements that expand the supply of high quality, affordable child care opportunities.
The percentage of eligible families not using DES child care subsidies has increased from six percent in 2017 to nineteen percent in 2020.	Spread awareness about the availability of scholarships and subsidies for child care, especially for low-income families.
<b>Child Health</b>	
The percentage of children (ages 2 to 5) that are enrolled in WIC are overweight or obese has increased from 2017 (29%) to 2020 (32%).	Address root causes of obesity in low-income communities by pursuing improved neighborhood safety, opportunities for outdoor activity, and better access to low-cost healthy food options. Seek ideas from and partnership with community members to create culturally meaningful, lasting change.
In the East Maricopa Region, six percent of children between the ages of 0 to 5 do not have health insurance. Sub-regions with high rates of children with no health insurance include Fort McDowell (43%) and South Scottsdale (13%).	Provide low-income families information and support in enrolling in Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System.
<b>Family Support</b>	
Despite the need of federal program assistance, enrollment in SNAP, WIC, and TANF has decreased.	Encourage grantmaking partners and stakeholders to promote federal program assistance for low-income families.

# Appendix A

## Subregional Fact Boxes

The following pages include the subregional fact boxes for fourteen subregions of the East Maricopa Region. The subregions are grouped by zip code as follows:

1. Ahwatukee: 85044, 85045, and 85048.
2. Carefree: 85377
3. Cave Creek: 85331
4. Chandler: 85226, 85248, 85249, and 85286
5. Downtown Chandler: 85224 and 85225
6. Fort McDowell: 85264 and 85215
7. Fountain Hills: 85268
8. Guadalupe: 85283
9. Paradise Valley: 85253
10. Paradise Valley Village: 85254
11. Rio Verde-Goldfield Ranch: 85263 and 85264
12. Scottsdale: 85250, 85255, 85258, 85259, 85260, 85262, and 85266
13. South Scottsdale: 85251 and 85257
14. Tempe: 85281, 85282, 85283, and 85284