



FIRST THINGS FIRST

THE BIG PICTURE

of Arizona's Little Kids | 2019

The number of young children in Arizona is expected to grow by 11% by the year 2050. A child's early years hold the key to their success – and our state's. Children who are healthy and prepared when they enter kindergarten do better in school and are more likely to graduate and enroll in college. Well-educated adults are more prepared for the job opportunities of a global marketplace and to contribute to the strength of their communities.

About 90% of a child's brain growth happens before kindergarten, and those early experiences affect whether their brain will develop in ways that promote optimal learning. Poverty, exposure to family violence and lack of access to quality early learning experiences are all factors that can negatively impact a child's early development, and subsequently, their long-term success. A review of some key data points reveals that many of Arizona's babies, toddlers and preschoolers face significant challenges when it comes to stable, nurturing environments and high-quality early learning experiences that will put them on a trajectory for success in kindergarten and beyond.

This document provides state-national comparisons in three key areas: strong families, healthy children and prepared students. In the following pages, additional data points – and trends at the county level – also are identified. Taken together, these data points reveal opportunities across several areas to help more Arizona families provide the stable, nurturing environments children need in order to thrive. This brief also describes ways in which First Things First and its partners in Arizona's early childhood system are working to expand opportunities for children to develop the tools they need to be ready for school and set for life!

Strong Families

Healthy Kids

Educated Young Students

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Strong Families

Young children comprise almost 1 in 5 of our state's residents. They number more than half a million and come from diverse geographic, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The number of young children in Arizona grew much faster between 2000 and 2010 than in the nation as a whole ⁱ

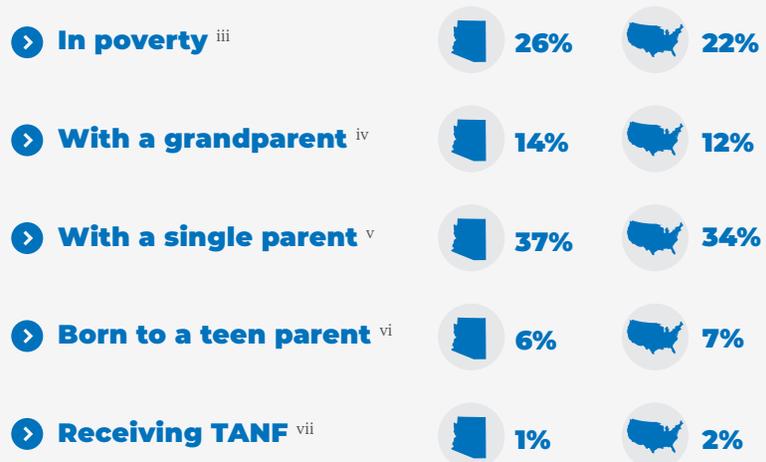


The percentage of households with young children in Arizona is about the same as in the US ⁱⁱ



Family stability can affect the resources a child has that either support or restrict their optimal development. Poverty and its effects – including unreliable access to food, housing and child care – can impact a child's physical and emotional development. Arizona's young children are more likely than their peers nationally to be born into challenging situations like poverty and being raised by single parents, teenage parents or grandparents. They also are less likely to receive the supports that can help mitigate the effects of poverty on their overall well-being. Compared to the U.S. as a whole:

MORE YOUNG CHILDREN IN AZ LIVE



First Things First helps strengthen families by giving parents options when it comes to fulfilling their role as their child's first teachers, including kits for families of newborns with resources to support their child's health and learning, community-based parenting education, voluntary home-based coaching for families with multiple challenges, support for families of children with special needs, and referrals to existing programs that meet families' specific challenges.

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Healthy Kids

Children's health encompasses not only their physical health, but also their mental, intellectual, social and emotional well-being. Factors such as a mother's prenatal care, access to health care and health insurance, and receipt of preventive care such as immunizations and oral health care all influence a child's current health and also their long-term development and success.



Arizona's babies are born as healthy as their peers nationally, which is encouraging.

At birth, AZ babies are no more likely than their national peers to be born:



Yet, too many children lack the necessary immunizations before they enter school, and many lack access to care to prevent oral health problems – a key cause of school absenteeism later on.

More young children in AZ



First Things First supports healthier kids by supporting pregnant mothers with information and referrals to support a healthy pregnancy and birth; giving parents tools to promote good nutrition and healthy weight; expanding children's access to oral health screenings and preventive fluoride varnishes; building awareness of health insurance options available for families with children; helping early educators meet the social-emotional needs of kids in their care; and, improving health practices in home and center-based child care settings.

i. U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, SF 1, Table P14. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

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

iii. United States Census Bureau (2018). 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17020. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>

iv. United States Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Table P41. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

v. United States Census Bureau (2018). 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B05009, B09001, and B17006. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>

vi. Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics Data. Unpublished data received by request. Retrieved from <https://pub.azdhs.gov/health-stats/report/avs/index.php>. Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Osterman, M.J.K., Driscoll, A.K., Drake, P. (2018). Births: Final Data for 2017. National Vital Statistics Reports, 67(8). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

vii. U.S. Census Bureau (2010). 2010 Decennial Census, SF 1, Table P14; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Family Assistance (2016). TANF Caseload Data 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-caseload-data-2018>

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Educated Young Students

Quality early learning promotes success in school and in life. The quality of a child's early experiences impacts whether their brain will develop in ways that promote optimal learning. Research has demonstrated that children with access to quality early learning environments are more prepared for kindergarten: they have increased vocabulary, better language, math and social skills, have more positive relationships with classmates, and score higher on school-readiness assessments. They are less likely to need special education services or be held back a grade, and are more likely to graduate and go on to college.



Compared to the U.S. as a whole:

Far fewer of Arizona's 3- and 4-year-olds attend preschool: ^{xiii}



Healthy development is important for school readiness. Early identification of developmental delays – through regular screenings starting at birth – is a critical first step to ensuring that children receive the intervention and support that can mitigate the impact of the delays on their future learning. Left unaddressed, many developmental issues can become learning problems later in a child's life.

Fewer of Arizona's young children received developmental screenings: ^{xiv}



First Things First promotes early learning by: completing screening for almost 17,200 children to detect developmental or sensory issues that can become learning problems later on; working with more than 1,000 child care and preschool providers statewide to enhance the quality of early learning programs for more than 62,000 young children statewide; funding scholarships for almost 9,200 children to access quality early learning settings in the past year alone; working with relatives and friends who provide child care to increase their knowledge of brain development and young children's learning; and helping early educators expand their skills working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

viii. Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics Data. Unpublished data received by request. Arizona Department of Health services (2018). Advanced Vital Statistics by County 2015-2017, Table 5B-30. Retrieved from <https://pub.azdhs.gov/health-stats/report/avs/index.php>. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2019). Healthy People 2020: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health, Indicators MICH-11.3, MICH-8.1, & MICH-9.1. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/maternal-infant-and-child-health/objectives>

ix. Arizona Department of Health Services (2019). Arizona Health Status and Vital Statistics Data. Unpublished data received by request. Arizona Department of Health services (2018). Advanced Vital Statistics by County 2015-2017, Table 5B-30. Retrieved from <https://pub.azdhs.gov/health-stats/report/avs/index.php>. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2019). Healthy People 2020: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health, Indicators MICH-11.3, MICH-8.1, & MICH-9.1. Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/maternal-infant-and-child-health/objectives>

x. United States Census Bureau (2018). 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B27001. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>

xi. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (2018). National Survey of Children's Health 2016-2017. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved on 08 July 2019 from www.childhealthdata.org

xii. Centers for Disease Control (2019). ChildVaxView: Interactive Viewer for Data from National Immunization Survey-Child (NIS-Child). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/coverage/childvaxview/data-reports/index.html>

xiii. United States Census Bureau (2018). 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B14003. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov>

xiv. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (2018). National Survey of Children's Health 2016-2017. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved on 08 July 2019 from www.childhealthdata.org