



## Neighborhood Spotlight *Laveen/Southwest Suburban*

### Overview of the Region

The Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood is located on the southwest side of the First Things First South Phoenix Region. There were 8,643 children ages birth through five living in the neighborhood in 2010. These very young children represented 13% of the neighborhoods' total population of 66,146 individuals. Sixty percent of the children ages birth to five identified as Latino, 16% White, 11% Black/African American, 4% American Indian, and 4% Asian. One in nine children ages 5-17 years old in the neighborhood were living in non-English speaking households, most often in Spanish-speaking households.

### The Neighborhood Economy

Though there is no reliable data on children birth through 5 in poverty in the South Phoenix Neighborhood, we know many local families were facing financial burdens. Thirty-one percent of the children ages 5-17 in the area served by the Fowler Elementary School District were living in families in poverty. One in five children ages 5-17 living in the area served by the Laveen Elementary School District, were living in families in poverty.



### FIRST THINGS FIRST SOUTH PHOENIX REGION

To better understand the diversity within the region, the South Phoenix Regional Council has divided the region into regional neighborhoods. They have defined four neighborhood areas in the region: Maryvale; a portion of Central City South; Laveen/Southwest Suburban; South Phoenix. These divisions are used to better identify and target the needs and assets of children in the region.



## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is an important indicator of future economic success because those with at least a high school diploma have better employment opportunities. Limited education and employment can also impact other quality of life areas including access to health care and life expectancy.

Nearly 24% of residents 25 years and over in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood had less than a high school diploma or GED. Twenty-seven percent had completed high school, 30% had completed some college coursework, 12% held a bachelors, and 7% held a graduate degree.

## 3rd Grade Reading Scores

Third grade reading scores are an excellent predictor of later school success, including high school graduation rates and career success. Seventy percent of third graders in the Laveen Elementary School District, 63% in the Riverside Elementary School District, and 58% of 3rd graders in the Fowler Elementary School District were meeting or exceeding reading standards in 2010.

## School Success

In the three districts serving the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood, there were 167 children enrolled in preschool and 1,175 children in kindergarten. Research shows that children who have the early learning skills that allow them to be prepared to enter kindergarten, do better on standardized tests in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The DIBELS Assessment is one way to measure children's readiness for kindergarten.

At the beginning of the 2010/2011 school year, children in the Fowler Elementary School District and Riverside Elementary School District were given the DIBELS assessment to measure their literacy skills. At the time, 18% of kindergarten children in the Fowler Elementary School District were at grade level, while 60% needed intensive intervention. In the Riverside Elementary School District, 14% of kindergarten children were at grade level, while 43% needed intensive intervention.

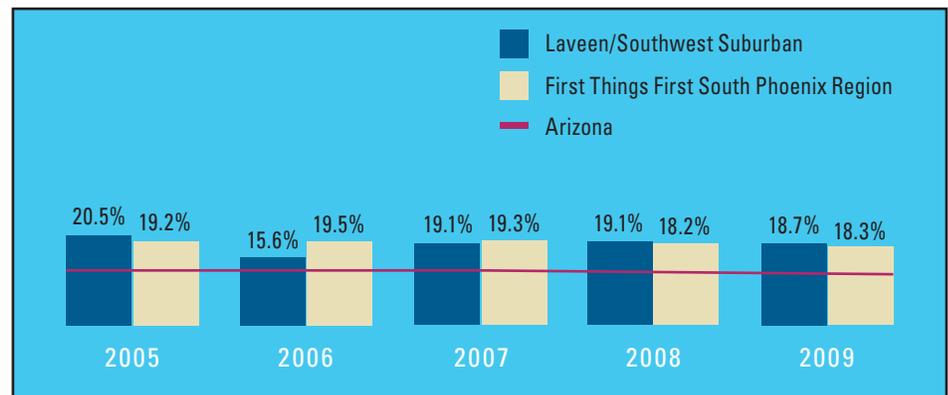
## The Health of Mothers and Babies

There were 310 children born to mothers in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood in 2009. Seventy-six percent of mothers received prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy. Women who receive adequate prenatal care are more likely to have better birth outcomes. Babies born to mothers who receive no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), and five times more likely to die. Mothers in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood had a higher percentage of babies born at low birth weights than mothers in the First Things First South Phoenix Region as a whole (11% and 8% respectively).

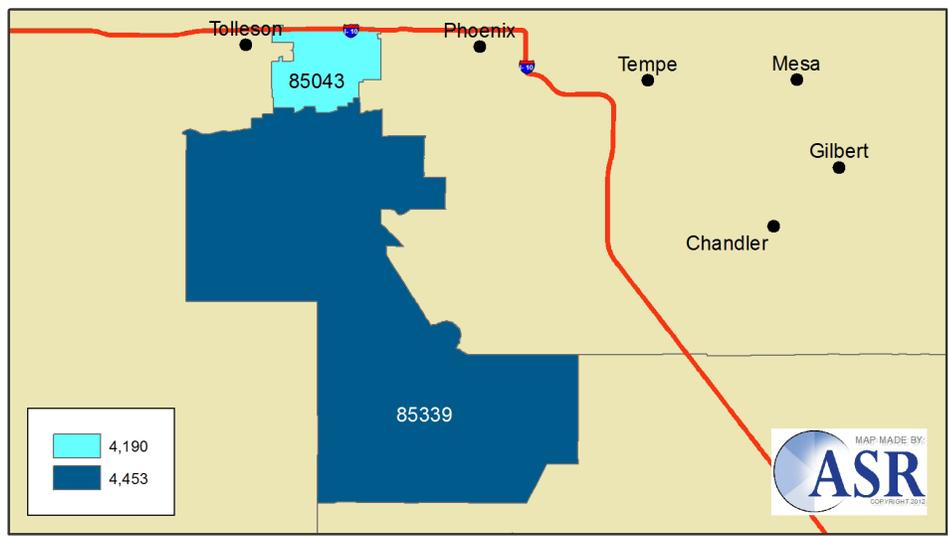
Nineteen percent of births in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood were to mothers under the age of 20. This was similar to other neighborhoods within the region but higher than the state average (12%).

Teen mothers tend to give birth prematurely, have babies born at low birth weights, are less likely to complete high school, and have lower earning power in their careers. Children born to teens are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school.

*Laveen/Southwest Suburban, Teen Births*



*Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood, Population Birth through 5, by Zip Code*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). Table QT-P2- Single years of age and Sex. Retrieved 2011 from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

## Food Insecurity

When children suffer from lack of food, it can lead to poor health, difficulty learning and more school absences. Low income children may receive

free and reduced price meals at school; 87% of children in the Fowler Elementary School District and 71% of children in the Laveen Elementary School District were eligible for free and reduced price meals in 2011. Over 41% (2,000) of families with children ages birth through five in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood were receiving SNAP benefits (also known as Food Stamps).



## Special Needs

Early identification of children with special needs helps ensure these children get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive, and hearing screenings, are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth, setting them up for success by identifying early on when services are needed. In 2010, 191 children in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood were referred to Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) services and 48 children received services.

## Child Care

The first five years of a child's life are the most important years for a child's brain development. Quality child care helps children develop social and cognitive skills in preparation for school and life success. Child care, and in particular, subsidized care for low-income families, also provides critical support for parents while they are at work. There were 47 child care programs that were capable of serving 2,260 children in the Laveen/Southwest Suburban Neighborhood in 2011. Thirty-one of the programs were licensed through ADHS which promotes quality care and safe classrooms. Seventeen percent of the child care programs are known as Quality First Programs, which means programs work with First Things First to provide safe, healthy environments; highly educated teachers; classrooms and materials that stimulate children at different stages of learning; and low staff to child ratios so that children get the attention and support they need.

### SOURCES

For sources and neighborhood data, please view the complete First Things First South Phoenix Region 2012 Needs and Assets Report at <http://www.aztf.gov>.



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*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

First Things First is committed to helping Arizona kids five and younger receive the quality education, healthcare and family support they need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.



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