



## Neighborhood Spotlight *Central City South*

### Overview of the Region

The Central City South Neighborhood is located southwest of downtown Phoenix in the First Things First South Phoenix Region. With 6,210 children ages birth through five in the neighborhood, it is home to the smallest number of children ages birth through five in our First Things First South Phoenix Region. These young children represented 12% of the neighborhoods' total population of 52,520 individuals, according to 2010 U.S. Census data. Most of the children from birth to five identified as Latino (92%), 3% White, 3% Black/African American and less than 1% American Indian. One-third of children ages 5-17 in the neighborhood were living in non-English speaking households in 2010, most often in Spanish-speaking households.

### The Neighborhood Economy

Though there is not reliable information on children under 5 living in poverty in the South Phoenix Neighborhood, we know many local families were struggling. Forty-three percent of the children ages 5-17 in the area served by the Isaac Elementary School District were living in families in poverty. Forty-four percent of children ages 5-17 living in the area served by Murphy 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.



## Graduation Rate and Educational Attainment

One high school serves teens in the Central City South Neighborhood. The graduation rate at Carl Hayden High School in 2010 was 81%. 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.

More than half (52%) of residents 25 years and over in the Central City South Neighborhood had less than a high school diploma or GED. Twenty-eight percent had completed high school, 12% had completed some college coursework, 4% held a bachelors, and 1% 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. Fifty-nine percent of third graders in both the Isaac Elementary and Murphy Elementary School Districts were passing reading grade standards in 2010.

## School Success

In the two districts serving the Central City South Neighborhood, there were 446 children enrolled in preschool and 1,087 children in kindergarten in the 2010/2011 school year. 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 Isaac Elementary School District were given the DIBELS assessment to measure their literacy skills. At that time, 15% of kindergarten children were at grade level, 13% needed strategic intervention, and 72% needed intensive intervention. At the end of the school year, the children's learning had increased, yet 17% still needed strategic intervention and 25% needed intensive intervention.

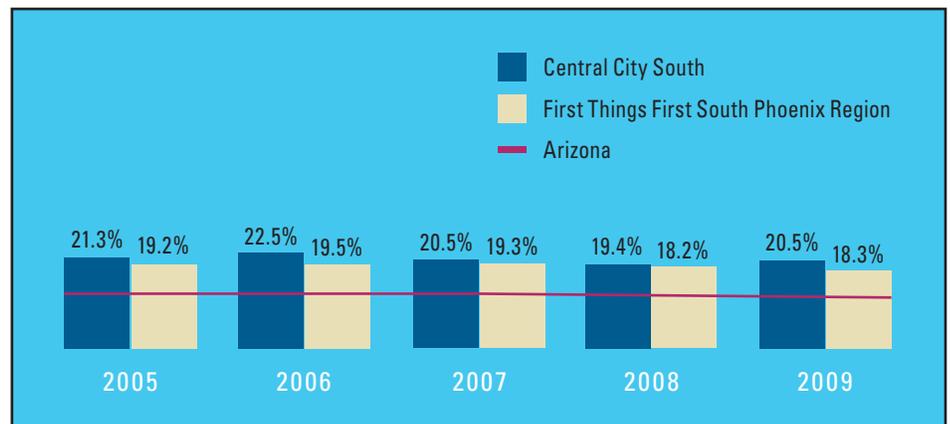
## The Health of Mothers and Babies

There were 1,050 children born to mothers in the Central City South Neighborhood in 2009. Seventy-two 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 Central City South Neighborhood had a higher percentage of low birth weight babies than mothers in the First Things First South Phoenix Region as a whole (9% and 8% respectively).

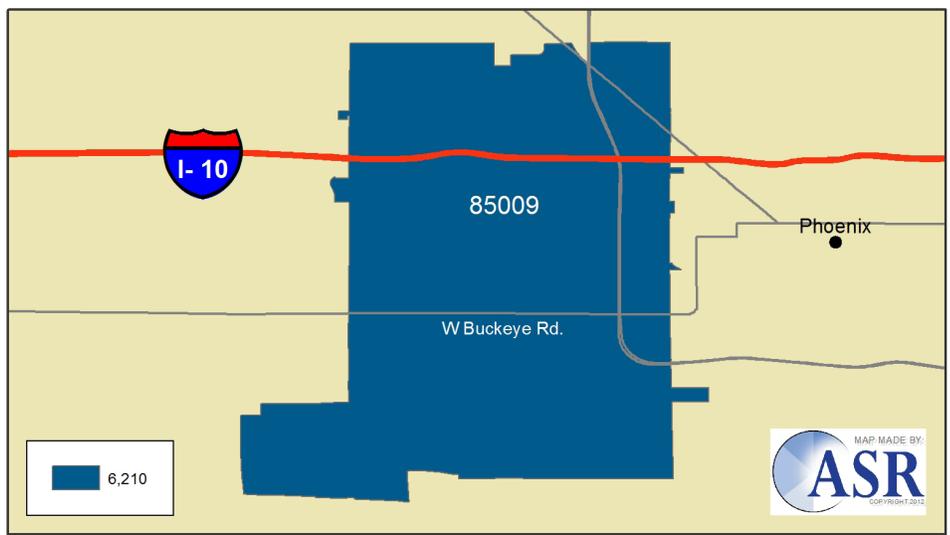
Twenty-one percent of births in the Central City South Neighborhood were to mothers under the age of 20. This was similar to other neighborhoods within the region but higher than the state average (12%).

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, and perform lower on standardized tests than children of older mothers.

*Central City South, Teen Births*



*Central City South Neighborhood, Population Birth through 5*



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, more school absences, and lower test scores. One way for children to receive additional nutrition is to qualify for free and reduced price meals at school; 89% of children in the Isaac Elementary District were eligible for free and reduced price meals in 2011. Over 90% (nearly 2,700) of families with children ages birth through five in the Central City South Neighborhood were receiving SNAP benefits (also known as Food Stamps) of January of 2011.

## Special Needs

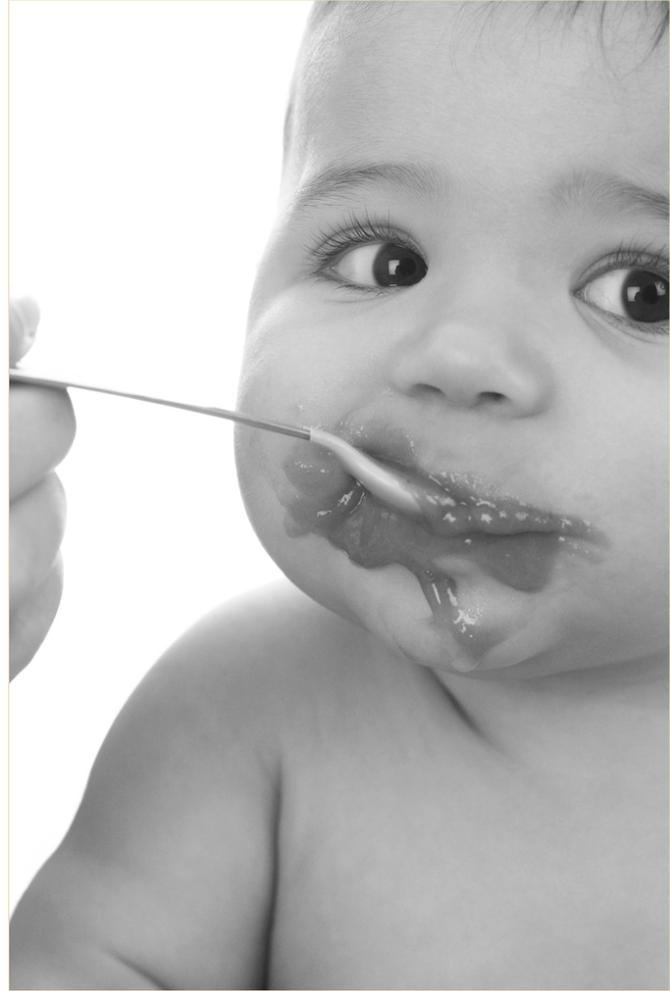
Early identification of children with special needs helps ensure these children get the support and opportunities they need to achieve success in school and in the community. Developmental screenings including oral, vision, cognitive, and hearing screenings, are an important practice to ensure children's optimal growth, setting them up for success by identifying early on when services are needed. In 2010, 172 children in the Central City South Neighborhood were referred to Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) services and 44 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 16 child care programs that were capable of serving a combined 1,654 children in the Central City South Neighborhood in 2011. Sixteen of the programs were licensed through ADHS which promotes quality care and safe classrooms. Thirty-eight 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 kids at different stages of learning; and low staff to child ratios so that kids 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.azftf.gov>.



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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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