

Family and Community

Mother's

by Arianna Pena Acosta

Mother, Mama, Mami
I call your name in every way I know how,
like you told me If I need you,
You would be around.
Safe in your arms I feel, dentro de tu brazo se que eres mía.
My fiercest protector, my biggest defender
I know that this bond is just nuestro.
Cuando las cosas se ponen oscuras y malas tu luz aclaras.
A parent is what I needed.
a parent is what you gave.
I hope someday I can do the same.
Mother, keep showing me the way
because I know I will always need you
and that will never change.



Child Population

DEFINITION

Child population is the total number of children under age 18 and the percentage change between 2010 and 2020 in the total number of children under age 18.

SIGNIFICANCE

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, there were 1,097,379 Rhode Island residents in 2020. Children under age 18 make up 19% of the population. Rhode Island's child population decreased from 247,822 in 2000 to 223,956 in 2010 and then further to 209,785 in 2020 (15% decrease from 2000 to 2020).^{1,2,3} Between 2017 and 2021, there were 118,465 households with children under age 18 in Rhode Island, representing 28% of all households.⁴ Between 2017 and 2021, 26% of Rhode Island children were under age five, 27% were ages five to nine, 29% were ages 10 to 14, and 18% were ages 15 to 17.⁵

In Rhode Island, between 2017 and 2021, 124,467 (59%) children under age 18 lived in married-couple households, 66,397 (31%) children lived in single-parent households, and 17,257 (8%) children lived with relatives, including grandparents. A total of 3,928 (2%) children lived with foster families or other non-relative heads of household. There were 568 (<1%) children and youth under age 18

who lived in group quarters and 46 (<1%) youth who were householders or spouses.^{6,7,8}

Rhode Island's children are diverse in race, ethnicity, language, and country of origin. Mirroring the national trend, the Hispanic child population in Rhode Island has grown since 2000, both in numbers and as a percentage of the child population. Hispanics make up 25% of children under age 18 in the United States and 27% of children under age 18 in Rhode Island.^{9,10,11}

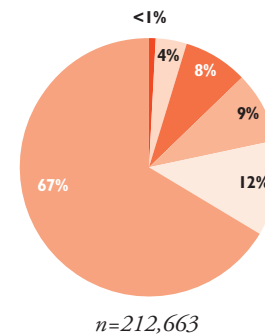
Between 2017 and 2021, there were 10,336 foreign-born children under the age of 18 living in Rhode Island, representing approximately 5% of the child population.¹² Of Rhode Island children ages five to 17, 77% speak only English at home, 17% speak Spanish, 4% speak other Indo-European languages, 2% speak Asian or Pacific Island languages, and 1% speak other languages at home.¹³

Sexual orientation and gender identity are other important facets of diversity among youth. According to the *2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, 16% of high school students in Rhode Island described themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This does not include students who responded "not sure" (5%). Among high school students, 3% described themselves as transgender, and 3% said they were "not sure."¹⁴

Rhode Island Children Under Age 18, 2017-2021

By Race/Ethnicity*

<1%	American Indian and Alaska Native
4%	Asian
8%	Black
9%	Some Other Race
12%	Two or More Races
67%	White

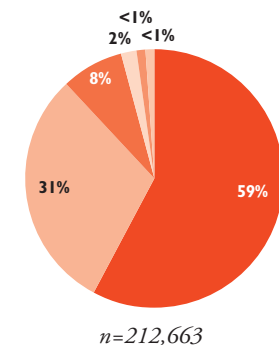


*Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Of Rhode Island's 212,663 children, 56,996 (27%) were Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Tables B01001A, B01001B, B01001C, B01001D, B01001E, B01001F, B01001G, and B01001I.

By Family Structure

59%	Married-Couple**
31%	Single-Parent**
8%	Other Relatives
2%	Foster Family or Other Unrelated Household
<1%	Group Quarters
<1%	Child is Head of Household



**Only includes children who are related to the head of household by birth or adoption.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Tables B09001, B09002, and B09018.

Decennial Census 2020

◆ In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted its most recent decennial Census. Although the overall population of Rhode Island (1,097,379) grew by 4.3% from 2010 to 2020, the child population (209,785) declined by 6.3% over this same period.^{15,16}

◆ Certain populations have been historically hard to count in the decennial Census, including young children under age five, immigrants, low-income populations, People of Color, people experiencing homelessness, and people in non-traditional households.¹⁷ The 2020 Census reveals that People of Color and young children continue to be undercounted, and Children of Color were undercounted at an even higher rate than in 2010.^{18,19}

Table 1.

Child Population, Rhode Island, 2010 and 2020

CITY/TOWN	2010 TOTAL POPULATION UNDER AGE 18	2020 TOTAL POPULATION UNDER AGE 18	CHANGE IN POPULATION UNDER AGE 18	% CHANGE IN POPULATION UNDER AGE 18
Barrington	4,597	4,489	-108	-2.3%
Bristol	3,623	2,887	-736	-20.3%
Burrville	3,576	3,229	-347	-9.7%
Central Falls	5,644	6,411	767	13.6%
Charlestown	1,506	1,161	-345	-22.9%
Coventry	7,770	6,655	-1,115	-14.4%
Cranston	16,414	15,744	-670	-4.1%
Cumberland	7,535	7,550	15	0.2%
East Greenwich	3,436	3,465	29	0.8%
East Providence	9,177	7,886	-1,291	-14.1%
Exeter	1,334	1,175	-159	-11.9%
Foster	986	790	-196	-19.9%
Glocester	2,098	1,896	-202	-9.6%
Hopkinton	1,845	1,613	-232	-12.6%
Jamestown	1,043	871	-172	-16.5%
Johnston	5,480	5,119	-361	-6.6%
Lincoln	4,751	4,640	-111	-2.3%
Little Compton	654	568	-86	-13.1%
Middletown	3,652	3,487	-165	-4.5%
Narragansett	2,269	1,651	-618	-27.2%
New Shoreham	163	189	26	16.0%
Newport	4,083	3,660	-423	-10.4%
North Kingstown	6,322	5,496	-826	-13.1%
North Providence	5,514	5,802	288	5.2%
North Smithfield	2,456	2,274	-182	-7.4%
Pawtucket	16,575	16,455	-120	-0.7%
Portsmouth	3,996	3,444	-552	-13.8%
Providence	41,634	41,021	-613	-1.5%
Richmond	1,849	1,627	-222	-12.0%
Scituate	2,272	1,866	-406	-17.9%
Smithfield	3,625	3,411	-214	-5.9%
South Kingstown	5,416	4,339	-1,077	-19.9%
Tiverton	2,998	2,723	-275	-9.2%
Warren	1,940	1,826	-114	-5.9%
Warwick	15,825	14,034	-1,791	-11.3%
West Greenwich	1,477	1,251	-226	-15.3%
West Warwick	5,746	5,787	41	0.7%
Westerly	4,787	3,826	-961	-20.1%
Woonsocket	9,888	9,467	-421	-4.3%
Four Core Cities	73,741	73,354	-387	-0.5%
Remainder of State	150,215	136,431	-13,784	-9.2%
Rhode Island	223,956	209,785	-14,171	-6.3%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Summary File 1 and Census 2020, Table P2 and Table P4.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

^{1,16} U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020. Table P2 and Table P4.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1. Table DP-1.

^{3,15} U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Table DP-1.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table DP02.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B01001.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B09002.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B09018.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B09001.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting Summary File. Table QT-PL.

¹⁰ O'Hare, W. (2011). *The changing child population of the United States: Analysis of data from the 2010 Census*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B01001I.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B05003.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B16007.

¹⁴ 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Rhode Island Department of Health.

¹⁷ 2020 Census: Counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place. (2018). Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

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Babies

DEFINITION

Babies is the number of babies born in Rhode Island to families that reside in Rhode Island.

SIGNIFICANCE

Births have been declining for most of the past decade, both nationally and in Rhode Island. In 2021, the U.S. general fertility rate was 56.3 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44, the first increase since 2014. Rhode Island has the second lowest fertility rate among states (48.3 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44). The general decline in the fertility rate is due to women delaying childbearing, as well as having fewer total children.^{1,2}

Nationally, fertility rates have declined across all racial and ethnic groups; however, Black and Hispanic women have higher fertility rates than other groups.^{3,4} Fertility rates, as well as immigration, an increase in multiracial marriages, and the proportion of women of childbearing age among racial and ethnic groups has led to an increasingly diverse child population, both in Rhode Island and nationally.⁵ In 2020 in Rhode Island, 46% of babies born were Babies of Color.⁶

One factor that contributes to the decision to have a child is the high cost of raising a child in the U.S. A middle-class family spends an average of

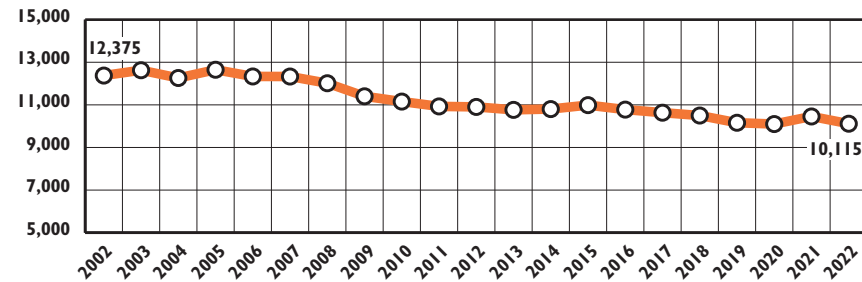
\$311,000 from birth to age 17 on housing, child care and other costs.⁷ Policies such as paid family leave, subsidized child care and housing, universal Pre-K, and tax credits can help families afford the high cost of raising a child and improve the health and well-being of children.^{8,9}

The basic architecture of the human brain develops during the infant and toddler years. Babies who have positive early childhood experiences, stable, loving relationships with parents and caregivers, and good health and nutrition have a sturdy foundation to thrive. Babies who don't get what they need for healthy growth and development in the first few years of life can encounter lifelong educational, social, health, and developmental challenges.^{10,11}

Infancy is a time of great opportunity and vulnerability. A child's development can be harmed by toxic stress caused by adverse childhood experiences (including extreme poverty, child abuse, caregiver mental health or substance use disorders, household violence) and factors such as community violence, food insecurity, and racism. These negative experiences in early childhood place a child at increased risk for developmental delays, mental health challenges, and health issues. High-quality early childhood programs can prevent or reverse the effects of early adversity.^{12,13,14}



Rhode Island Births, 2002-2022



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Vital Records, Rivers Database 2002-2022. Note: Birth data includes babies born to mothers living in Rhode Island at the time of birth whether the baby was born in Rhode Island or elsewhere. Birth data for 2022 is provisional.

◆ The number of babies born to mothers living in Rhode Island at the time of birth declined 18% between 2002 and 2022, from 12,375 babies in 2002 to 10,115 babies in 2022.¹⁵

◆ The U.S. teen birth rate reached a record low in 2021, with 13.9 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19. Rhode Island had the fifth lowest teen birth rate in the U.S. in 2021, with 7.8 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19.¹⁶



Births by Key Risk Factors, Rhode Island, 2022

◆ All babies born in Rhode Island are screened through the Rhode Island Department of Health's Newborn Risk Assessment Program. In 2022, there were 6,346 newborns (65%) who had developmental, socio-economic and/or health factors that potentially put them at risk for poor outcomes later in life. Babies in families considered "at risk" are referred to First Connections at the Department of Health to help support healthy child development.^{17,18,19}

◆ Of the 9,691 babies born in Rhode Island in 2022, 4,029 (42%) had a mother with a documented history of treatment for mental health conditions, 751 (8%) had a mother with a documented history of substance use disorders, and 267 (3%) had a mother with documented involvement in the child welfare system (either as an adult or as a child).²⁰

Table 2.

Babies, Rhode Island, 2022

CITY/TOWN	# OF BABIES BORN TO FAMILIES WITH MEDICAID/RITECARE	# OF BABIES BORN TO MOTHERS YOUNGER THAN AGE 20	# OF BABIES BORN WHO SCREENED RISK POSITIVE	TOTAL # OF BIRTHS
Barrington	11	0	41	114
Bristol	26	0	70	127
Burrillville	36	0	63	110
Central Falls	213	16	236	275
Charlestown	13	0	27	51
Coventry	91	5	198	327
Cranston	267	14	474	754
Cumberland	63	5	141	294
East Greenwich	15	*	53	141
East Providence	142	10	265	418
Exeter	11	0	22	49
Foster	11	*	23	38
Glocester	12	0	44	70
Hopkinton	8	0	24	55
Jamestown	*	*	8	19
Johnston	87	*	167	263
Lincoln	51	*	109	193
Little Compton	*	0	*	7
Middletown	36	*	65	138
Narragansett	13	0	34	65
New Shoreham	*	0	6	10
Newport	84	6	127	190
North Kingstown	35	*	90	204
North Providence	94	*	191	311
North Smithfield	17	0	40	79
Pawtucket	464	33	622	805
Portsmouth	21	*	49	111
Providence	1,440	130	1,780	2,245
Richmond	17	*	37	89
Scituate	16	*	39	86
Smithfield	32	*	77	157
South Kingstown	35	5	73	159
Tiverton	19	*	39	62
Warren	23	0	49	80
Warwick	171	16	382	663
West Greenwich	7	*	26	48
West Warwick	105	9	183	274
Westerly	47	*	84	142
Woonsocket	304	16	384	468
Four Core Cities	2,421	195	3,022	3,793
Remainder of State	1,624	102	3,324	5,898
Rhode Island	4,045	297	6,346	9,691

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, KIDSNET Database, 2022. Birth data from 2022 are provisional. Data include only babies born in Rhode Island to Rhode Island residents.

*Data for cities and towns with fewer than five babies are suppressed by the Rhode Island Department of Health due to the policy regarding sensitive reproductive health information of a potentially socially-stigmatizing age group. These births are still counted in the remainder of state and state totals.

“Babies who Screened Risk Positive” are newborns who had one or more developmental, socio-economic, and/or health factors that potentially put them at risk for later poor outcomes in the Rhode Island Department of Health’s Newborn Risk Assessment Program.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

- ^{1,3,16} Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., Driscoll, A. K., & Valenzuela, C. P. (2023). Births: Final data for 2021. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 72(1). Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ² The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2022). *The long-term decline in fertility—and what it means for state budgets*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from [pewtrusts.org](https://www.pewtrusts.org)
- ⁴ Population Reference Bureau. (2021). *Why is the U.S. birth rate declining?* Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.prb.org
- ⁵ Frey, W. H. (2021). *New 2020 census results show increased diversity countering decades-long declines in America’s white and youth populations*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.brookings.edu
- ⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
- ⁷ Parker, T. (2022). *The cost of raising a child in the United States*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.investopedia.com
- ⁸ Gibb, H. & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (2022). *Limited family support policies create a powder keg for our nation’s future*. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.brookings.edu

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Children in Single-Parent Families

DEFINITION

Children in single-parent families is the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families headed by an unmarried person of any gender regardless of whether both parents live in the home but are unmarried or if only one parent lives in the home. These numbers include “own children” defined as never-married, under age 18, and related to the family head by birth, marriage, or adoption.

SIGNIFICANCE

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, there were 190,864 children living with one or more parents in Rhode Island between 2017 and 2021. Of these, 35% (66,397) were living with an unmarried parent, down from 36% of children between 2012 and 2016.^{1,2}

Between 2017 and 2021, 76% of children living in poverty in Rhode Island were living in single-parent families. Children in single-parent families in Rhode Island were five times more likely to be living in poverty than those in married-couple families. Between 2017 and 2021 in Rhode Island, 32% of children in single-parent families lived in poverty, compared to 6% of children in married-couple families.³

Single-parent families led by mothers were more likely to live in poverty than single-parent families led by fathers.⁴ Between 2017 and 2021, the median

family income for married two-parent families (\$116,567) was twice that of male-headed single-parent families (\$56,827) and more than three times that of female-headed single-parent families (\$35,658).⁵

The financial hardship, and associated stress of single parenthood can contribute to differences in the socioeconomic well-being of children in single-parent households compared to those in two-parent households.⁶ Increasing parents’ education levels can make a significant difference in their earning power. Single mothers with associate degrees earn an average of \$152,927 more over their lifetimes than those with high school diplomas, and single mothers with bachelor’s degrees earn \$296,044 more. Increasing the incomes of low-income families with young children under age six by \$3,000 per year can improve long-term outcomes for their children.⁷ Supports like child care assistance, paid family leave, and paid sick time are also vital supports for single parents and their children.⁸

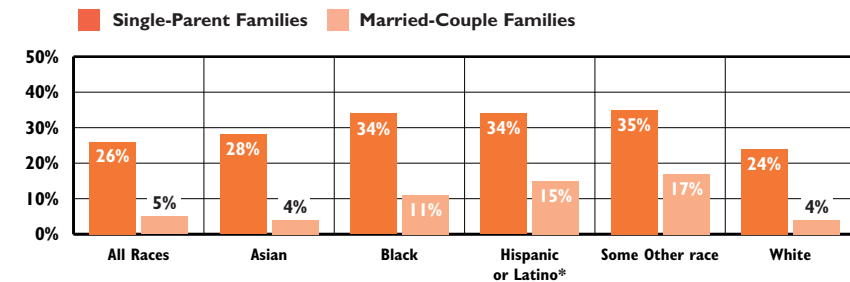
Single-Parent Families		
	2011	2021
RI	38%	37%
US	35%	34%
National Rank*		41st
New England Rank**		6th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

Families With Children Under Age 18 and Income Below the Poverty Threshold, by Race & Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2017-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Tables B17010, B17010A, B17010B, B17010D, B17010F, B17010I. *Hispanic or Latino may be in any race category.

◆ **Hispanic and Black single-parent families in Rhode Island are almost one and a half times as likely as white single-parent families to live in poverty. Hispanic and Black married-couple families are more likely than white and Asian married-couple families in Rhode Island to live in poverty.⁹**

Family Structure and Child Well-Being

◆ **In the United States, one in four parents living with a child is unmarried (25%). This marks a dramatic change from 50 years ago, when fewer than one in 10 parents living with their children was unmarried (7%). At the same time, the profile of unmarried parents has shifted so that now 35% of all unmarried parents are living with a partner.¹⁰**

◆ **Children in the U.S. live in a variety of family structures. Among those who live with at least one of their biological parents, 59% live in families with only biological parent(s) and full sibling(s), and 41% live in families with single parents, stepparents, stepsiblings, and/or half siblings.¹¹**

◆ **After increasing for several decades, the proportion of births to unmarried families in the U.S. has decreased and has been close to 40% since 2009.^{12,13} Babies born to cohabiting couples comprise 25% of all births and 60% of nonmarital births in the U.S., and they account for nearly the entire increase in nonmarital births.¹⁴**

Children in Single-Parent Families

Table 3.

Children's Living Arrangements, Rhode Island, 2010

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS	CHILDREN WHO ARE A HOUSEHOLDER OR SPOUSE		CHILDREN LIVING WITH NON-RELATIVES		CHILDREN LIVING WITH OTHER RELATIVES		CHILDREN LIVING IN MARRIED-COUPLE FAMILIES		CHILDREN LIVING WITH GRANDPARENTS		CHILDREN LIVING IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barrington	4,597	2	<1%	31	1%	15	0%	3,871	84%	85	2%	593	13%
Bristol	3,621	1	<1%	37	1%	51	1%	2,564	71%	225	6%	743	21%
Burrillville	3,548	0	0%	110	3%	26	1%	2,353	66%	232	7%	827	23%
Central Falls	5,634	3	<1%	90	2%	209	4%	2,159	38%	429	8%	2,744	49%
Charlestown	1,506	0	0%	15	1%	20	1%	1,059	70%	106	7%	306	20%
Coventry	7,762	2	<1%	148	2%	72	1%	5,343	69%	549	7%	1,648	21%
Cranston	16,262	5	<1%	226	1%	324	2%	10,462	64%	1,027	6%	4,218	26%
Cumberland	7,535	0	0%	97	1%	53	1%	5,651	75%	334	4%	1,400	19%
East Greenwich	3,436	0	0%	21	1%	13	0%	2,889	84%	71	2%	442	13%
East Providence	9,100	2	<1%	127	1%	154	2%	5,329	59%	675	7%	2,813	31%
Exeter	1,300	0	0%	23	2%	16	1%	996	77%	82	6%	183	14%
Foster	986	0	0%	24	2%	10	1%	741	75%	69	7%	142	14%
Glocester	2,098	0	0%	39	2%	26	1%	1,581	75%	137	7%	315	15%
Hopkinton	1,845	0	0%	46	2%	24	1%	1,327	72%	113	6%	335	18%
Jamestown	1,043	0	0%	3	0%	5	0%	799	77%	49	5%	187	18%
Johnston	5,473	2	<1%	90	2%	114	2%	3,591	66%	380	7%	1,296	24%
Lincoln	4,743	3	<1%	61	1%	52	1%	3,270	69%	211	4%	1,146	24%
Little Compton	654	0	0%	5	1%	1	0%	528	81%	42	6%	78	12%
Middletown	3,634	3	<1%	45	1%	38	1%	2,606	72%	166	5%	776	21%
Narragansett	2,240	2	<1%	35	2%	25	1%	1,533	68%	105	5%	540	24%
New Shoreham	163	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	111	68%	4	2%	46	28%
Newport	4,060	2	<1%	66	2%	56	1%	2,034	50%	204	5%	1,698	42%
North Kingstown	6,322	1	<1%	57	1%	49	1%	4,639	73%	247	4%	1,329	21%
North Providence	5,481	0	0%	81	1%	131	2%	3,266	60%	378	7%	1,625	30%
North Smithfield	2,456	0	0%	40	2%	13	1%	1,831	75%	96	4%	476	19%
Pawtucket	16,550	17	<1%	239	1%	460	3%	7,488	45%	1,228	7%	7,118	43%
Portsmouth	3,940	2	<1%	47	1%	24	1%	2,977	76%	172	4%	718	18%
Providence	41,497	41	<1%	632	2%	1,663	4%	16,931	41%	3,094	7%	19,136	46%
Richmond	1,836	0	0%	32	2%	16	1%	1,437	78%	104	6%	247	13%
Scituate	2,272	0	0%	24	1%	22	1%	1,731	76%	139	6%	356	16%
Smithfield	3,615	2	<1%	46	1%	29	1%	2,802	78%	164	5%	572	16%
South Kingstown	5,364	0	0%	81	2%	31	1%	3,951	74%	248	5%	1,053	20%
Tiverton	2,998	1	<1%	41	1%	20	1%	2,109	70%	162	5%	665	22%
Warren	1,935	4	<1%	42	2%	19	1%	1,124	58%	136	7%	610	32%
Warwick	15,795	3	<1%	308	2%	223	1%	10,476	66%	1,109	7%	3,676	23%
West Greenwich	1,468	2	<1%	22	1%	13	1%	1,131	77%	79	5%	221	15%
West Warwick	5,746	1	<1%	151	3%	121	2%	3,118	54%	365	6%	1,990	35%
Westerly	4,787	4	<1%	82	2%	83	2%	3,012	63%	269	6%	1,337	28%
Woonsocket	9,842	10	<1%	203	2%	176	2%	4,237	43%	683	7%	4,533	46%
Four Core Cities	73,523	71	<1%	1,164	2%	2,508	3%	30,815	42%	5,434	7%	33,531	46%
Remainder of State	149,621	44	<1%	2,304	2%	1,890	1%	102,242	68%	8,534	6%	34,607	23%
Rhode Island	223,144	115	<1%	3,468	2%	4,398	2%	133,057	60%	13,968	6%	68,138	31%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.

The denominator is the number of children under age 18 living in family households according to Census 2010. A family household is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as consisting of a householder and one or more people living together in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption – it may include others not related to the householder.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

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Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren

DEFINITION

Grandparents caring for grandchildren is the percentage of family households in which a grandparent is financially responsible for food, shelter, clothing, child care, etc. for any or all grandchildren under age 18 living in the household.

SIGNIFICANCE

The number of grandparents raising grandchildren is on the rise. In the United States, eight million children live in households headed primarily by grandparents or other relatives, and 2.5 million of these children are in families where grandparents or other relatives or a close family friend serve as the primary caregiver. Children of Color are more likely to be cared for by grandparents than other groups.¹

A grandparent caregiver reduces the trauma of separation when a child cannot remain with their parents and provides better outcomes for children than those who are placed with non-relatives. Children may be in a grandparent's care because of child neglect or abuse, unemployment, or incarceration. Increasingly, parental substance use is the reason a grandparent becomes the primary caregiver.^{2,3}

Twice as many grandmothers are involved in raising grandchildren than grandfathers. Forty percent of grandmother-only caregivers live below

the poverty line, and 76% receive public assistance. Nearly one in five grandparent caregivers lives in poverty.^{4,5}

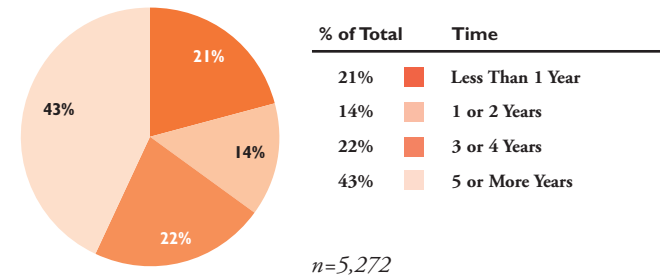
Many grandparents have informal custody arrangements and are not involved with child welfare agencies, often receiving fewer services than traditional foster parents.⁶ Compared to the general population, children in informal kinship care are more likely to live in poverty, less likely to be covered by health insurance, and are more likely to have physical and mental disabilities.⁷

Grandparents and other relative caregivers often lack information about the support services (such as training, respite, and peer support), resources, programs, and policies available to them. Nearly all children in kinship care are eligible for cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families regardless of their household's income level, yet children in informal custody arrangements are much less likely to receive these payments.^{8,9}

Grandparent caregivers are at risk for poor physical and mental health.¹⁰ They may have difficulty enrolling children in school and/or seeking health insurance or medical care for the children in their care. Many caregivers do not pursue the legal process required for permanent status to avoid strain on family relationships and due to cost.¹¹ Grandparents make up the largest percentage of relative caregivers, but other family members may face similar obstacles.¹²



Rhode Island Grandparents Financially Responsible for Their Grandchildren, by Length of Time Responsible, 2017-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B10050.

◆ Between 2017 and 2021, there were a total of 13,316 children in Rhode Island living in households headed by grandparents.¹³ During this time period, there were 5,272 grandparents who were financially responsible for their grandchildren, 65% of whom had been financially responsible for three or more years.¹⁴

◆ In the 2010 Census, 6% (13,968) of all children in Rhode Island lived with a grandparent caregiver and 2% (4,398) lived with other relatives.¹⁵

◆ Children in kinship foster care have better physical and mental health outcomes, more stability, and are more likely to have a permanent home than children in foster care with non-relatives.¹⁶ Rhode Island regulations state that the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) must give priority to relatives when placing a child in out-of-home care.¹⁷ On December 31, 2022, there were 669 children and youth in DCYF care who were in out-of-home placements with a grandparent or other relative. Children in kinship foster care made up 43% of all children in out-of-home placements in Rhode Island.¹⁸

◆ The federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act* of 2008 helps keep families together and improve outcomes by allowing federal dollars to support children exiting foster care to permanent homes with relative guardians.¹⁹ Rhode Island is one of 40 states with a Guardianship Assistance Program that provides financial assistance payments to grandparents and other relative caregivers who assume legal guardianship.²⁰

Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren

Table 4.

Children's Living Arrangements, Rhode Island, 2010

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS	CHILDREN WHO ARE A HOUSEHOLDER OR SPOUSE		CHILDREN LIVING WITH NON-RELATIVES		CHILDREN LIVING WITH OTHER RELATIVES		CHILDREN LIVING IN MARRIED COUPLE FAMILIES		CHILDREN LIVING IN SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES		CHILDREN LIVING WITH GRANDPARENTS	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barrington	4,597	2	<1%	31	1%	15	0%	3,871	84%	593	13%	85	2%
Bristol	3,621	1	<1%	37	1%	51	1%	2,564	71%	743	21%	225	6%
Burrillville	3,548	0	0%	110	3%	26	1%	2,353	66%	827	23%	232	7%
Central Falls	5,634	3	<1%	90	2%	209	4%	2,159	38%	2,744	49%	429	8%
Charlestown	1,506	0	0%	15	1%	20	1%	1,059	70%	306	20%	106	7%
Coventry	7,762	2	<1%	148	2%	72	1%	5,343	69%	1,648	21%	549	7%
Cranston	16,262	5	<1%	226	1%	324	2%	10,462	64%	4,218	26%	1,027	6%
Cumberland	7,535	0	0%	97	1%	53	1%	5,651	75%	1,400	19%	334	4%
East Greenwich	3,436	0	0%	21	1%	13	0%	2,889	84%	442	13%	71	2%
East Providence	9,100	2	<1%	127	1%	154	2%	5,329	59%	2,813	31%	675	7%
Exeter	1,300	0	0%	23	2%	16	1%	996	77%	183	14%	82	6%
Foster	986	0	0%	24	2%	10	1%	741	75%	142	14%	69	7%
Glocester	2,098	0	0%	39	2%	26	1%	1,581	75%	315	15%	137	7%
Hopkinton	1,845	0	0%	46	2%	24	1%	1,327	72%	335	18%	113	6%
Jamestown	1,043	0	0%	3	0%	5	0%	799	77%	187	18%	49	5%
Johnston	5,473	2	<1%	90	2%	114	2%	3,591	66%	1,296	24%	380	7%
Lincoln	4,743	3	<1%	61	1%	52	1%	3,270	69%	1,146	24%	211	4%
Little Compton	654	0	0%	5	1%	1	0%	528	81%	78	12%	42	6%
Middletown	3,634	3	<1%	45	1%	38	1%	2,606	72%	776	21%	166	5%
Narragansett	2,240	2	<1%	35	2%	25	1%	1,533	68%	540	24%	105	5%
New Shoreham	163	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	111	68%	46	28%	4	2%
Newport	4,060	2	<1%	66	2%	56	1%	2,034	50%	1,698	42%	204	5%
North Kingstown	6,322	1	<1%	57	1%	49	1%	4,639	73%	1,329	21%	247	4%
North Providence	5,481	0	0%	81	1%	131	2%	3,266	60%	1,625	30%	378	7%
North Smithfield	2,456	0	0%	40	2%	13	1%	1,831	75%	476	19%	96	4%
Pawtucket	16,550	17	<1%	239	1%	460	3%	7,488	45%	7,118	43%	1,228	7%
Portsmouth	3,940	2	<1%	47	1%	24	1%	2,977	76%	718	18%	172	4%
Providence	41,497	41	<1%	632	2%	1,663	4%	16,931	41%	19,136	46%	3,094	7%
Richmond	1,836	0	0%	32	2%	16	1%	1,437	78%	247	13%	104	6%
Scituate	2,272	0	0%	24	1%	22	1%	1,731	76%	356	16%	139	6%
Smithfield	3,615	2	<1%	46	1%	29	1%	2,802	78%	572	16%	164	5%
South Kingstown	5,364	0	0%	81	2%	31	1%	3,951	74%	1,053	20%	248	5%
Tiverton	2,998	1	<1%	41	1%	20	1%	2,109	70%	665	22%	162	5%
Warren	1,935	4	<1%	42	2%	19	1%	1,124	58%	610	32%	136	7%
Warwick	15,795	3	<1%	308	2%	223	1%	10,476	66%	3,676	23%	1,109	7%
West Greenwich	1,468	2	<1%	22	1%	13	1%	1,131	77%	221	15%	79	5%
West Warwick	5,746	1	<1%	151	3%	121	2%	3,118	54%	1,990	35%	365	6%
Westerly	4,787	4	<1%	82	2%	83	2%	3,012	63%	1,337	28%	269	6%
Woonsocket	9,842	10	<1%	203	2%	176	2%	4,237	43%	4,533	46%	683	7%
Four Core Cities	73,523	71	<1%	1,164	2%	2,508	3%	30,815	42%	33,531	46%	5,434	7%
Remainder of State	149,621	44	<1%	2,304	2%	1,890	1%	102,242	68%	34,607	23%	8,534	6%
Rhode Island	223,144	115	<1%	3,468	2%	4,398	2%	133,057	60%	68,138	31%	13,968	6%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.

The denominator is the number of children under age 18 living in family households according to Census 2010. A family household is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as consisting of a householder and one or more people living together in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption – it may include others not related to the householder.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ *Together at the table: Supporting the nutrition, health, and well-being of grandfamilies.* (2022). Washington, DC: Generations United.
- ^{2,5,12} Lent, J. P., & Otto, A. (2018). Grandparents, grandchildren, and caregiving: The impacts of America's substance use crisis. *Generations* 42(3), 15-22.
- ^{3,6,16} *In loving arms: The protective role of grandparents and other relatives in raising children exposed to trauma.* (2017). Washington, DC: Generations United.
- ⁴ Peterson, T. L. (2018). Grandparents raising grandchildren in the African American community. *Generations*, 42(3), 30-36.
- ^{7,8,10} Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. (2021) *Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) Act*. Initial Report to Congress.
- ⁹ Walsh, W. A., & Mattingly, M. J. (2014). *Related foster parents less likely to receive support services compared with nonrelative foster parents.* Durham, NH: Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire.
- ¹¹ *A place to call home: Building affordable housing for grandfamilies.* (2019). Washington, DC: Generations United.
- ¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table B09018.

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Mother's Education Level

DEFINITION

Mother's education level is the percentage of total births to women with less than a high school diploma. Data are self-reported at the time of the infant's birth.

SIGNIFICANCE

Parental educational attainment can have an impact on many aspects of child well-being, including children's health and health-related behaviors, school readiness, educational achievement, and involvement in pro-social activities.¹ Children of parents without high school degrees are more likely to struggle in school, including receiving lower achievement scores, repeating grades, and failing to graduate from high school.²

Infant mortality rates increase as mother's education levels decrease.³ In Rhode Island between 2017 and 2021, babies born to mothers with a high school degree or less had a higher infant mortality rate (5.5 per 1,000) than babies born to mothers with more advanced education (3.3 per 1,000 births).⁴

Children of more educated parents participate in early learning programs and home literacy activities more frequently and enter school with higher levels of academic skills. Increasing maternal education can improve children's school readiness, language and

academic skills, health, and educational attainment. Higher levels of parental education can decrease the likelihood that a child will live in poverty.^{5,6,7,8} Between 2017 and 2021, women with bachelor's degrees in Rhode Island earned twice as much as those with less than a high school diploma and 1.7 times more than women with a high school diploma.⁹

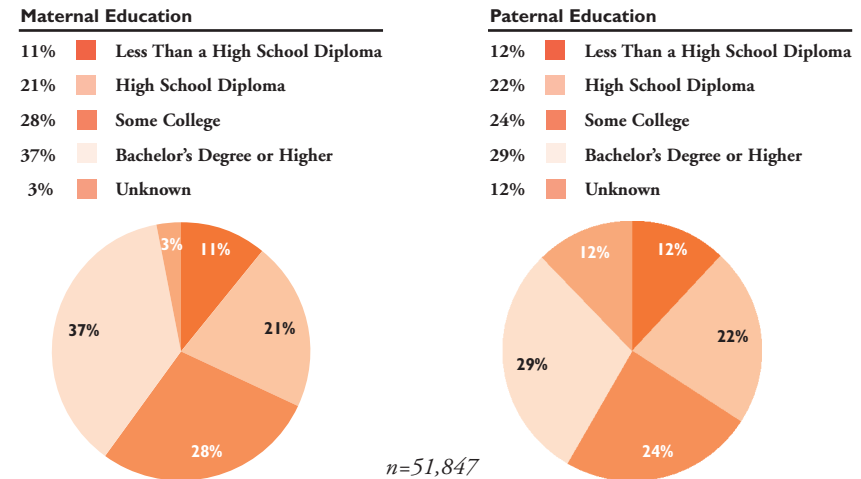
Between 2017 and 2021, 11% of Rhode Island births were to mothers with less than a high school diploma and 65% were to mothers with at least some college education.¹⁰ Nationally in 2021, 11% of children under age 18 lived in families in which the head of household had less than a high school diploma, and 47% lived in families in which the head of household had an associate degree or higher.¹¹

Births to Mothers with Less Than a High School Diploma, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2017-2021

RACE/ETHNICITY	% OF BIRTHS
All Races	11%
American Indian	23%
Asian	7%
Black	12%
Hispanic	25%
White	7%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal Child Health Database, 2017-2021.

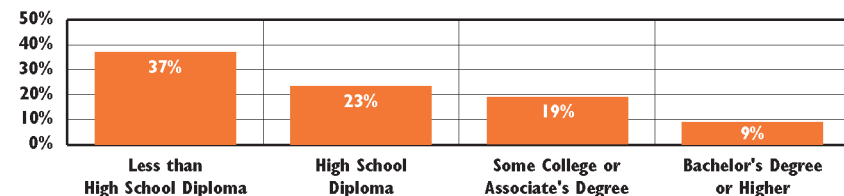
Births by Parental Education Levels, Rhode Island, 2017-2021



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal Child Health Database, 2017-2021. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

◆ In Rhode Island between 2017 and 2021, 32% of all infants were born to mothers with a high school diploma or less, and 34% were born to fathers with a high school diploma or less.¹²

Poverty Rates for Families Headed by Single Women by Educational Attainment, Rhode Island, 2017-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Table S1702.

◆ In Rhode Island between 2017 and 2021, 37% of families headed by single women with less than a high school diploma lived in poverty, compared with 9% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.¹³

Mother's Education Level

Table 5.

Births by Education Level of Mother, Rhode Island, 2017-2021

CITY/TOWN	TOTAL # OF BIRTHS	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR ABOVE		SOME COLLEGE		HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA		LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barrington	567	456	80%	61	11%	24	4%	5	*
Bristol	679	361	53%	186	27%	91	13%	29	4%
Burrillville	650	241	37%	234	36%	133	20%	28	4%
Central Falls	1,540	116	8%	368	24%	474	31%	505	33%
Charlestown	270	128	47%	70	26%	47	17%	14	5% [^]
Coventry	1,463	641	44%	481	33%	250	17%	59	4%
Cranston	3,797	1,617	43%	1,117	29%	682	18%	282	7%
Cumberland	1,713	1,007	59%	375	22%	202	12%	56	3%
East Greenwich	551	430	78%	70	13%	28	5%	7	*
East Providence	2,247	901	40%	677	30%	443	20%	159	7%
Exeter	237	138	58%	46	19%	33	14%	13	6% [^]
Foster	205	91	44%	68	33%	32	16%	8	*
Glocester	345	167	48%	121	35%	45	13%	4	*
Hopkinton	334	156	47%	93	28%	64	19%	13	4% [^]
Jamestown	136	99	73%	25	18%	6	*	3	*
Johnston	1,338	509	38%	428	32%	282	21%	81	6%
Lincoln	898	492	55%	227	25%	118	13%	39	4%
Little Compton	76	51	67%	18	24%	2	*	0	*
Middletown	805	435	54%	188	23%	127	16%	47	6%
Narragansett	266	159	60%	62	23%	32	12%	8	*
New Shoreham	25	9	36% [^]	11	44% [^]	3	*	1	*
Newport	1,092	495	45%	210	19%	208	19%	161	15%
North Kingstown	1,098	672	61%	236	21%	127	12%	45	4%
North Providence	1,576	628	40%	528	34%	273	17%	101	6%
North Smithfield	469	239	51%	142	30%	60	13%	10	*
Pawtucket	4,417	956	22%	1,412	32%	1,214	27%	620	14%
Portsmouth	665	442	66%	153	23%	50	8%	11	2% [^]
Providence	11,913	2,585	22%	3,066	26%	3,049	26%	2,630	22%
Richmond	307	159	52%	87	28%	47	15%	7	*
Scituate	432	234	54%	123	28%	53	12%	13	3% [^]
Smithfield	734	408	56%	216	29%	78	11%	16	2% [^]
South Kingstown	830	546	66%	153	18%	76	9%	32	4%
Tiverton	565	260	46%	184	33%	77	14%	25	4%
Warren	419	199	47%	133	32%	66	16%	17	4% [^]
Warwick	3,620	1,686	47%	1,120	31%	612	17%	138	4%
West Greenwich	247	134	54%	71	29%	35	14%	5	*
West Warwick	1,512	406	27%	559	37%	389	26%	127	8%
Westerly	907	397	44%	259	29%	173	19%	54	6%
Woonsocket	2,668	383	14%	770	29%	882	33%	532	20%
Unknown**	234	80	34%	76	32%	48	21%	24	11%
Four Core Cities	20,538	4,040	20%	5,616	27%	5,619	27%	4,287	21%
Remainder of State	31,075	14,993	48%	8,732	28%	4,968	16%	1,618	5%
Rhode Island	51,847	19,113	37%	14,424	28%	10,635	21%	5,929	11%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal Child Health Database, 2017-2021. Data are self-reported and reported by the mother's place of residence, not the place of the infant's birth.

Percentages may not sum to 100% for all communities and the state because the number and percentage of births with unknown parental education levels are not included in this table. Between 2017 and 2021, maternal education levels were unknown for 1,746 births (3%).

*The data are statistically unreliable, and rates are not reported and should not be calculated.

[^]The data are statistically unstable, and rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution.

**Unknown births have missing maternal residence data.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

¹ *Parental education*. (2015). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

^{2,5} Hussar, B., et al. (2020). *The condition of education 2020* (NCES 2020-144). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

³ Green, T., & Hamilton, T. G. (2019). Maternal educational attainment and infant mortality in the United States: Does the gradient vary by race/ethnicity and nativity? *Demographic Research*, 41, 713-752.

^{4,10,12} Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal Child Health Database, 2017-2021.

⁶ Napoli, A., Korucu, I., Lin, J., Schmitt, S., & Purpura, D. (2021). Characteristics related to parent-child literacy and numeracy practices in preschool. *Frontiers in Education*, 6:535682.

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Characteristics of Children's Families. Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/ccc>.

(continued on page 174)

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

DEFINITION

Racial and ethnic diversity is the percentage of children under age 18 by racial and ethnic categories as defined by the U.S. Census. Racial and ethnic categories are chosen by the head of household or person completing the Census form.

SIGNIFICANCE

Racial and ethnic diversity has increased in the United States over the last several decades and is projected to rise in the future. Since 2000, all of the growth in the child population in the U.S. has been among Children of Color.^{1,2} In 2021, 51% of all U.S. children were Children of Color.³ In Rhode Island between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic child population grew by 22% while the non-Hispanic white child population declined by 22%.^{4,5} In 2020, 47% of children in Rhode Island were Children of Color, up from 36% in 2010. The number of Children of Color in Rhode Island grew by over 70,000 between 2010 and 2020, and the number of non-Hispanic white children decreased by over 31,000 during the same period.^{6,7}

In 2020 in Rhode Island, 53% of children under age 18 were white, 8% were Two or more races, 6% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, 1% identified as Some other race, and less than 1% were American Indian or

Alaska Native. In 2020, 27% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.⁸

In 2020, more than two-thirds (68%) of all Children of Color in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. More than three-quarters (77%) of children living in the four core cities were Children of Color.⁹

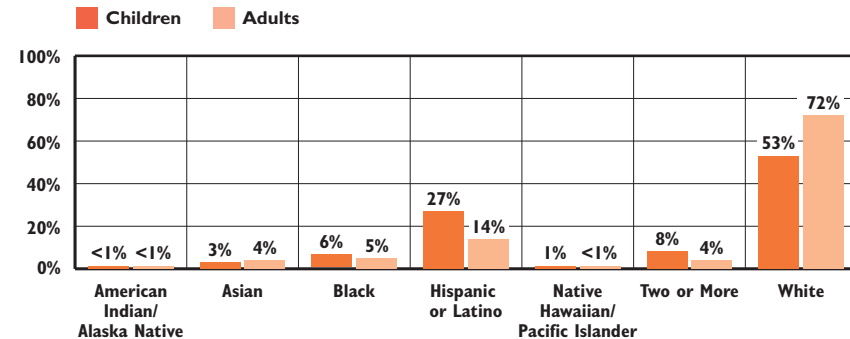
Between 2017 and 2021, there were 10,336 foreign-born children living in Rhode Island, 24% of whom were naturalized U.S. citizens.¹⁰ Of Rhode Island's immigrant children, 41% were born in the Caribbean, 21% were born in Asia, 21% were born in Central or South America, 12% were born in Africa, 3% were born in Europe, and 1% were born in North America (Canada or Mexico).¹¹

Between 2017 and 2021, 23% of children between the ages of five and 17 living in Rhode Island spoke a language other than English at home. During this same time, 17% of children spoke Spanish, 4% spoke other Indo-European languages, and 2% spoke Asian and Pacific Island languages.¹²

Many schools, child care providers, health care providers, social service agencies, and other community organizations are working to adapt their practices to be more culturally competent and better serve this increasingly diverse child population.¹³



Population by Race/Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020. Table P2 and Table P4.

- ◆ **Children in Rhode Island are more likely to be identified as People of Color than adults.** In 2020 in Rhode Island, 47% of children under age 18 were People of Color, compared with 28% of adults.¹⁴
- ◆ **The diversity of Rhode Island is an asset; however, there are wide, persistent, and unacceptable disparities in children's economic well-being by race and ethnicity.** Between 2017 and 2021, 56% of American Indian and Alaska Native, 30% of Hispanic, and 25% of Black children in Rhode Island lived in poverty, followed by 12% of Asian children and 10% of white children.¹⁵
- ◆ **In 2021, 28% of children in Rhode Island lived in immigrant families, which is somewhat higher than the U.S. rate of 25%.** Nationally, nearly all children in immigrant families (97%) have parents who have been in the United States for more than five years.¹⁶
- ◆ **Limited English proficiency can be a barrier to education, employment opportunities, higher earnings, and parental engagement with their children's education.**¹⁷ Providing translators, offering child care, and asking parents about other barriers can improve parent involvement. Improving communication between immigrant families and schools increases students' attendance and homework completion rates.^{18,19}

Table 6.

Child Population, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2020

CITY/TOWN	UNDER AGE 18 BY RACE AND ETHNICITY								2020 POPULATION UNDER AGE 18
	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC OR LATINO	NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	SOME OTHER RACE	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE	
Barrington	0	299	59	252	0	16	400	3,463	4,489
Bristol	7	39	36	200	1	14	180	2,410	2,887
Burrillville	9	16	34	224	2	12	213	2,719	3,229
Central Falls	9	26	368	4,628	1	246	502	631	6,411
Charlestown	29	2	15	45	0	11	102	957	1,161
Coventry	18	105	93	457	1	27	488	5,466	6,655
Cranston	28	1344	747	4,566	2	145	1134	7,778	15,744
Cumberland	10	436	197	941	0	65	527	5,374	7,550
East Greenwich	1	230	34	228	1	8	242	2,721	3,465
East Providence	11	187	415	1171	1	252	1001	4,848	7,886
Exeter	5	17	3	65	0	9	70	1,006	1,175
Foster	0	0	3	48	0	0	31	708	790
Glocester	0	10	6	138	0	19	129	1,594	1,896
Hopkinton	9	6	10	71	0	10	93	1,414	1,613
Jamestown	0	8	6	43	0	3	57	754	871
Johnston	11	157	255	1245	3	43	333	3,072	5,119
Lincoln	12	209	152	544	0	49	388	3,286	4,640
Little Compton	0	3	2	23	0	9	27	504	568
Middletown	6	113	191	504	4	45	374	2,250	3,487
Narragansett	12	24	17	53	4	6	117	1,418	1,651
New Shoreham	0	0	5	26	0	0	12	146	189
Newport	48	55	252	981	1	59	534	1,730	3,660
North Kingstown	37	115	93	404	1	23	465	4,358	5,496
North Providence	12	202	709	1462	6	92	512	2,807	5,802
North Smithfield	1	37	24	171	0	17	133	1,891	2,274
Pawtucket	75	176	2,614	5,488	10	757	2,652	4,683	16,455
Portsmouth	10	52	69	244	1	17	314	2,737	3,444
Providence	205	1,516	5,455	24,570	10	616	2,409	6,240	41,021
Richmond	13	4	7	65	2	17	100	1,419	1,627
Scituate	1	19	14	123	0	8	109	1,592	1,866
Smithfield	7	49	18	257	0	25	233	2,822	3,411
South Kingstown	78	95	79	266	0	22	429	3,370	4,339
Tiverton	0	39	43	131	3	17	236	2,254	2,723
Warren	9	32	39	108	0	17	157	1,464	1,826
Warwick	33	572	366	1,688	0	119	1149	10,107	14,034
West Greenwich	1	41	12	48	0	16	124	1,009	1,251
West Warwick	23	153	205	897	0	42	573	3,894	5,787
Westerly	48	85	26	362	4	22	294	2,985	3,826
Woonsocket	36	482	789	3,376	7	64	979	3,734	9,467
Four Core Cities	325	2,200	9,226	38,062	28	1,683	6,542	15,288	73,354
Remainder of State	489	4,755	4,236	18,051	37	1,256	11,280	96,327	136,431
Rhode Island	814	6,955	13,462	56,113	65	2,939	17,822	111,615	209,785

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020 Table P2 and Table P4. All categories are mutually exclusive. If Hispanic was selected as ethnicity, individuals are not included in other racial categories. Likewise, if more than one race was selected, individuals are included in Two or more races and not in their individual race categories.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

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⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Redistricting Data Summary File. Table QT-PL.

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Racial and Ethnic Disparities

DEFINITION

Racial and ethnic disparities is the gap that exists in outcomes for children of different racial and ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Child well-being outcome areas include economic well-being, health, safety, and education.

SIGNIFICANCE

Rhode Island's children are diverse in racial and ethnic background. In 2020 in Rhode Island, less than 1% of children under 18 were American Indian or Alaska Native, 3% were Asian, 6% were Black or African American, 27% were Hispanic or Latino, less than 1% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1% were Some other race, 8% were Two or more races, and 53% were white.¹

Children who live in poverty, especially those who experience deep poverty in early childhood, are more likely to have health, behavioral, educational, economic, and social problems.^{2,3} Between 2017 and 2021, 15% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty, 76% of whom were Children of Color.⁴

Black, Latino, and American Indian children are more likely to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and face challenges above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty.⁵ In Rhode Island, 16% of Black children and 13% of Hispanic children live in concentrated poverty compared to only 1% of white

children.⁶ In 2020, more than half (59%) of Rhode Island's Children of Color lived in one of the four core cities (those cities with the highest percentages of children living in poverty), and more than three quarters of the children in Central Falls (90%) and Providence (85%) were Children of Color.⁷

Racial and ethnic disparities in child well-being can be traced to the founding of the United States and the inequitable practices and policies that harmed Families of Color. From the removal of American Indians from their lands and the use of Africans as enslaved labor, the country's first People of Color were prevented from fully participating in the economy while simultaneously building wealth for the country and its white citizens. Racism became an economic tool infused into laws, policies, and practices. Substantial changes to these laws and policies did not occur until the late 1960s, and the harm continues to reverberate in the lives of Children of Color.^{8,9,10}

Long-standing disparities in wealth continue to persist between families in different racial and ethnic groups.¹¹ Children in immigrant families (defined as children living with at least one foreign-born parent) also face additional barriers. In 2021, 28% (58,000) of Rhode Island children were living in immigrant families. More than half (54%) of Rhode Island's Hispanic children live in an immigrant family.^{12,13}



Root Causes of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Child Well-being

- ◆ **Economic Well-being:** Historic policies such as the *Homestead Acts* and the *Federal Housing Act* built the foundation of the American middle class by facilitating homeownership; however, People of Color were excluded from many of these wealth-building opportunities due to discriminatory policies in housing and banking.^{14,15} The results of this past discrimination and current systemic racism can be seen in current disparities in homeownership, an important component of wealth for many families in the United States and a tool to building intergenerational wealth.¹⁶
- ◆ **Health:** Health care only accounts for 10-20% of an individual's overall health outcomes and is just one of the social determinants of health, which is defined as the conditions and environments where people are born, live, learn, work, and play that greatly impact health outcomes.¹⁷ These social determinants of health, including economic stability, education access, neighborhood and the built environment, and social context account for over 80% of health outcomes. Inequities in these determinants along with pervasive racial bias and unequal treatment of Communities of Color from the medical system contribute to significant unintended outcomes and disparities.^{18,19}
- ◆ **Safety:** Structural racism (e.g., policies that concentrate policing in Communities of Color), institutional racism (e.g., policies that disproportionately place Children of Color out of their homes), and racial bias and discrimination (e.g., beliefs held by workers about people from different racial or ethnic groups) all contribute to worse outcomes for Children of Color who come in contact with these systems.^{20,21,22}
- ◆ **Education:** An increase in segregation of schools has resulted in students in schools with high concentrations of low-income students and Students of Color having unequal educational opportunities.²³ Additionally, students living in poverty often face a host of challenges outside the classroom that can negatively impact academic performance, including inadequate housing, less access to health care, lower parental educational levels, and fewer opportunities for enriching after-school and summer activities.^{24,25}

Racial and Ethnic Disparities



Economic Well-Being Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE
Children in Poverty	15%	56%	12%**	25%	30%*	12%**	10%
Births to Mothers with <12 Years Education	11%	23%	7%	12%	25%	24%^	7%
Unemployment Rate	3.5%	NA	NA	5.0%	6.0%	NA	3.0%
Median Family Income	\$95,198	\$40,053	\$108,345	\$69,481	\$52,473	\$43,692	\$103,555
Homeownership	62%	22%	50%	34%	36%	14%	67%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021. Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. **Data is for Asian/Pacific Islanders. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2017-2021 (race data is non-Hispanic). *Unemployment Rate* data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2022. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113E & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D, B25003E & B25003I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanics may be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race. NA indicates that the rate was suppressed because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.

◆ Between 2017 and 2021 in Rhode Island, 15% of all children, 56% of American Indian children, 30% of Hispanic children, 25% of Black children, 12% of Asian/Pacific Islander children, and 10% of white children lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.²⁶

◆ In 2022 in Rhode Island, the unemployment rate was 6.0% for Hispanic workers, 5.0% for Black workers, and 3.0% for white workers. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 6.1% for Black workers, 4.3% for Hispanic workers, and 3.2% for white workers.²⁷

◆ People of Color are overrepresented among low-income working families. In Rhode Island, 51% of Latino two-parent families earn less than the income required to meet their basic needs, compared to 19% of white two-parent families.²⁸

◆ In Rhode Island, white residents have a homeownership rate almost double the rate of Black and Latino residents, and higher than Asian residents.²⁹ About 40% of Black and Latino homeowners experience cost burdens and 17% of Black homeowners spend more than 50% of their income on housing.³⁰ Nationally, median Black and Latino households would require 242 and 94 years respectively to gain wealth equal to that of white families.³¹



Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE
Children Without Health Insurance	2.5%	NA	2.0%	2.5%	3.7%	NA	1.8%
Women with Delayed or No Prenatal Care	15.9%	21.7%	17.9%	21.5%	18.4%	44.4%^	13.2%
Low Birthweight Infants	7.6%	10.5%	8.2%	11.3%	8.0%	*	6.6%
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	5.1	*	5.6^	10.6	6.2	0.0	2.9
Any Infant Breastfeeding	73%	62%	81%	64%	65%	71%	77%
Combined Overweight and Obesity	39%	NA	NA	46%	50%	NA	33%

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2017-2021 unless otherwise specified. Race and ethnicity is self-reported. Race data is non-Hispanic. Children Without Health Insurance data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2021, Tables B27001, B27001A, B27001B, B27001D & B27001I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanic also may be included in any of the race categories. For Combined Overweight and Obesity data are from Brown University School of Public Health analysis of BMI clinical and billing records of children ages two to 17 in Rhode Island from KIDSNET, Current Care, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, United Healthcare, and Tufts Health Plan collected by the Department of Health, 2022. NA data not available. *The data are statistically unreliable and rates are not reported and should not be calculated. ^The data are statistically unstable and rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution.

◆ Rhode Island ranks fourth in the nation for children's health insurance coverage. However, Black and Hispanic children are more likely to be uninsured than white children.^{32,33}

◆ Although progress has been made on many health indicators across racial and ethnic populations, disparities still exist for a number of maternal and infant health outcomes in Rhode Island. Women of Color are more likely than white women to receive delayed or no prenatal care and have infants with low birth weight. The Black infant mortality is the highest of any racial and ethnic group even after controlling for socioeconomic factors.^{34,35}

◆ American Indian and Alaska Native and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely to live in older housing (which increases risk for lead exposure, environmental allergens and dust).^{36,37} Black and Hispanic children have higher rates of asthma than non-Hispanic white children, and between 2016-2020 were more likely to visit the emergency room due to asthma.³⁸

Racial and Ethnic Disparities



Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE
Youth at the Training School (per 1,000 youth ages 13-18)	2.1	7.4	0.4	7.9	4.9	0.7
Children of Incarcerated Parents (per 1,000 children)	11.1	22.1	2.0	57.1	10.8	8.1
Children in Out-of-Home Placement (per 1,000 children)	8.1	7.4	1.7	14.8	8.2	7.2

Sources: *Youth at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, Calendar Year 2022. *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2022 and reflect the race of the incarcerated parent (includes only the sentenced population). *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST Database, December 31, 2022. Population denominators used for *Youth at the Training School* are youth ages 13 to 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. Population denominators used for *Children of Incarcerated Parents* and *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020, P2,P4.

- ◆ Nationally, racial and ethnic disproportionality in the juvenile justice, adult corrections, and child welfare systems is well-documented with disproportionality occurring at multiple steps within each system.^{39,40}
- ◆ During 2022 in Rhode Island, Black youth were 11 times more likely to be at the Rhode Island Training School compared to white youth and were four times more likely compared to youth of all races. American Indian/Alaska Native youth were 10 times more likely and Hispanic youth were seven times more likely to be at the Training School compared to white youth. While Black youth have remained 11 times more likely to spend time at the Rhode Island Training School compared to white youth for the past three years, 2022 saw a considerable increase in the rate of Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native youth.⁴¹
- ◆ In Rhode Island on December 31, 2022, Black children were both more likely than white youth and youth of all races to be put in out-of-home placements through the child welfare system. Asian and white children were less likely to be placed out-of-home.⁴²



Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	ASIAN*	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading	37%	52%	22%	19%	12%	48%
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Math	35%	56%	23%	18%	14%	46%
Four-Year High School Graduation Rates	83%	92%	80%	77%	69%	87%
Immediate College Enrollment Rates	63%	72%	61%	51%	42%	68%
% of Adults Over Age 25 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	35%	55%	25%	16%	19%	37%

Sources: *Third Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading and Math* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*, 2022. *Four-Year High School Graduation Rates* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2022. *Immediate College Enrollment Rates* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2022. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017-2021, Tables B15003, C15002A, C15002B, C15002C, C15002D & C15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanic or Latino also may be included in any of the race categories. *Data for Asian and Pacific Islander students is not disaggregated by ethnic group. National research shows large academic disparities across Asian ethnic groups.

- ◆ Educators of Color benefit all students, especially Students of Color.⁴³ In October 2021, 47% of Rhode Island public school students identified as Students of Color while 88% of Rhode Island public school educators identified as white.⁴⁴
- ◆ In Rhode Island, Black and Hispanic children are more likely to attend school in the four core cities and less likely to meet expectations in reading and mathematics in third grade than white or Asian children.^{45,46}
- ◆ The students with the highest levels of chronic absence were also in the populations hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Rhode Island during the 2021-2022 school year, Native American (51%), Hispanic (49%), and Black (39%) K-12 students had higher rates of chronic absence than Asian (27%) and white (27%) students.⁴⁷
- ◆ In Rhode Island, Native American, Hispanic, and Black students are less likely to graduate from high school within four years and are less likely to immediately enroll in college than white or Asian students. Gaps in college enrollment are particularly large for four-year college enrollment.⁴⁸



Rhode Island's Southeast Asian Children and Youth

- ◆ The Asian American community is diverse, the fastest-growing, and the most economically divided racial and ethnic group in the United States.⁴⁹ Southeast Asian children and youth identify with one or more ethnic groups originating from countries in Southeast Asia including Burma, Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.⁵⁰
- ◆ Cambodians make up the largest Southeast Asian population in Rhode Island. Providence has the eighth highest Cambodian population (8,000) in the United States.^{51,52}
- ◆ The disparity across Asian subgroups can be attributed to differences in immigration origins, educational attainment, occupations, and generational wealth. The lack of disaggregated data for the Asian population contributes to the misperception that all Asian Americans are excelling, resulting in underrepresentation in equity initiatives, especially for Southeast Asians where the largest disparities are found.^{53,54}

Economic Well-Being

- ◆ Nationally, from 1970 to 2016, the gap in the standard of living between higher-income Asian households and lower-income Asian households has nearly doubled.⁵⁵
- ◆ Cambodian children in the U.S. and Rhode Island have higher poverty rates, lower median household incomes, and lower postsecondary attainment rates compared to all Asians.^{56,57}

Health

- ◆ Nationally, although the Asian population has the lowest infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (3.39), there are significant differences within subgroups. The Filipino (4.52) and Vietnamese (3.62) infant mortality rates are significantly higher than Korean (2.43) and Chinese rates (1.96).⁵⁸

Education

- ◆ In 2017, The Rhode Island General Assembly passed the *All Students Count Act* which requires the Rhode Island Department of Education to collect and publicly report disaggregated education data on the many subgroups within the Asian American and Pacific Islander population and requires disaggregation of this data by gender, disability, and English proficiency.⁵⁹ Rhode Island was the third state in the country to pass this law.⁶⁰
- ◆ The Rhode Island Department of Education does not currently report disaggregated data for Asian students by ethnic group.

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