



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT to host Celebrating Young Children Luncheon

Early Experiences & Relationships Have a Profound Impact on Brain Development

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will highlight 2020 Policy Priorities for Young Children

RIght from the Start campaign will be introduced

Providence, RI (January 24, 2020) – More than 200 state and community leaders will gather on January 27, 2020 to celebrate the progress Rhode Island has made in ensuring a strong start for children birth through age 8.

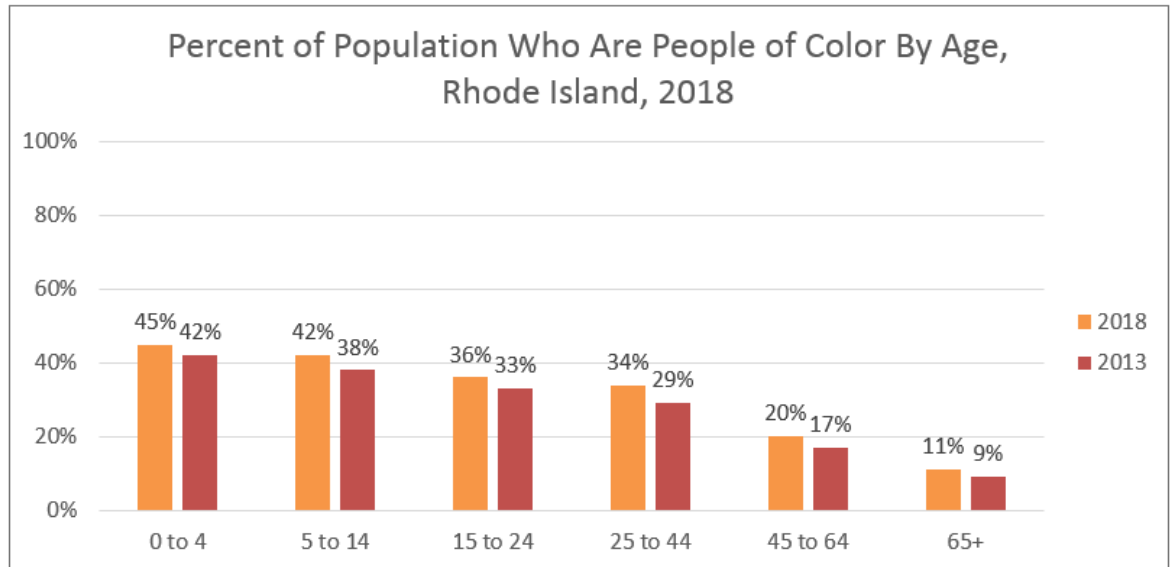
At the luncheon, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Executive Director Elizabeth Burke Bryant will kick off the event by highlighting Rhode Island's strong track record of investing in programs and policies that support our youngest children. Central Falls Mayor James Diossa will speak about the importance of counting young children in the 2020 Census, and Senior Policy Analyst Leanne Barrett will present information on progress and potential for children birth through age eight. Mikki Goddard will provide a Rhode Island family perspective, and RI Department of Human Services Director Courtney Hawkins will outline Governor Raimondo's 2020 Priorities for Young Children.

The *RIght from the Start Campaign* – a campaign to advance policies for young children and their families in Rhode Island - will also be introduced at the Luncheon. Organizations that will receive 2020 Young Children's Champion Awards for making a critical difference for young children and families in Rhode Island include:

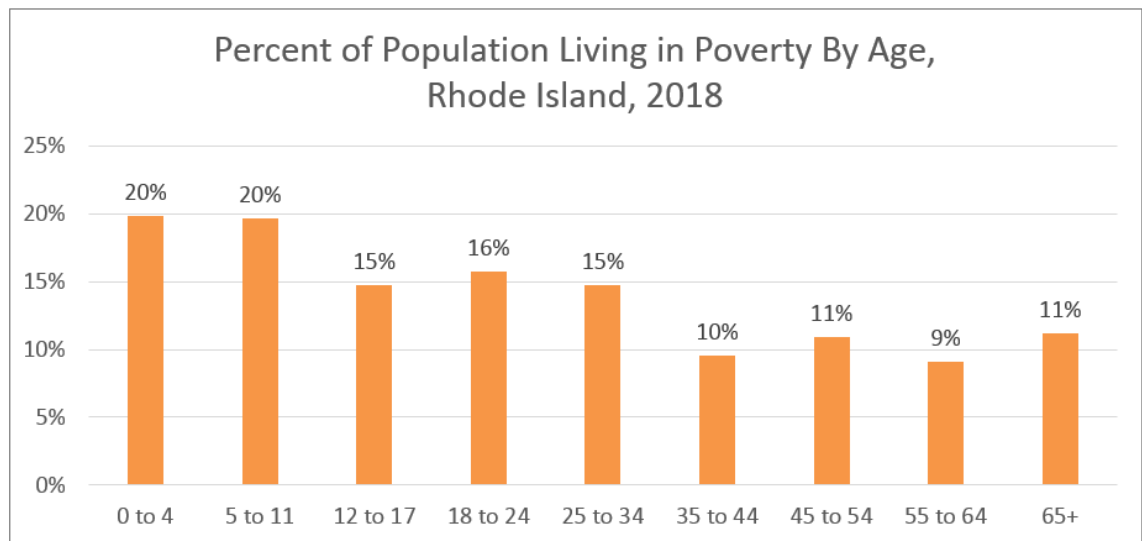
- Joyful Hearts Childcare Center
- Happykids Home Childcare
- Children's Friend
- Woonsocket Education Department

Data Presentation: Young Children are More Diverse, Often Live In or Near Poverty

- As of 2018, more than half of U.S. children under age 15 were children of color.



- The proportion of the population who are people of color continues to grow in Rhode Island and the U.S. In 2018, almost half (45%) of children birth to age 4 were children of color.



- In Rhode Island, young children are twice as likely to live in poverty as people who are 35 or older.
- 41% of infants and toddlers (under age 3) live in households with incomes less than twice the poverty level.
- More than 60% of mothers of infants and toddlers are working.
- Living in poverty in infancy and the early childhood years is harmful to brain development and can compromise lifetime health, achievement, and employment.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Priorities for Young Children

At the event, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will highlight 2020 policy priorities for young children in key areas, including:

- Closing Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health
- Community-Based Doula Services
- Paid Family Leave
- High-Quality, Affordable Child Care & Pre-K
- Family Home Visiting
- Health Care & Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health
- Affordable Housing, Food/Nutrition, & Economic Security
- Effective & Supportive Public Schools

Right from the Start

A number of organizations have come together to advance key policy priorities for young children through *Right from the Start*, a campaign to advance policies for young children and their families in Rhode Island. Rhode Island can be a great state to raise a family. But today, too many families struggle to support their young children during the critical early years of brain development. We need strong policies and programs, sustainable state funding, and additional state revenue to support more Rhode Island families and their children from prenatal to Pre-K. These investments will pay dividends for our children's success and our state's economy today and tomorrow.

Right from the Start 2020 Legislative and Budget Priorities:

- Paid Family Leave
- Family Home Visiting Prevention Program
- Community-Based Doula Services
- Child Care Assistance Program
- Early Educator Workforce Development
- Pre-K Expansion
- Housing/Early Learning Facilities Bond

Right from the Start Campaign Steering Committee members include Beautiful Beginnings, Economic Progress Institute, Latino Policy Institute, Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health, Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.

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[Rhode Island KIDS COUNT](#) is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island children.