

Children Enrolled in Early Head Start

DEFINITION

Children enrolled in Early Head Start is the percentage of eligible children under age 3 enrolled in a Rhode Island Early Head Start program as of October 2007.

SIGNIFICANCE

Established in 1994, Early Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program serving low-income children prenatal to age 3, pregnant women and their families. Early Head Start programs serve children in families with incomes at or below the federal poverty guidelines, which for a family of four in Rhode Island is \$21,200.^{1,2} Funded almost entirely by the federal government, Early Head Start is designed to provide high quality early care and education and comprehensive services to infants and toddlers, to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, and to foster the development of healthy family relationships.³

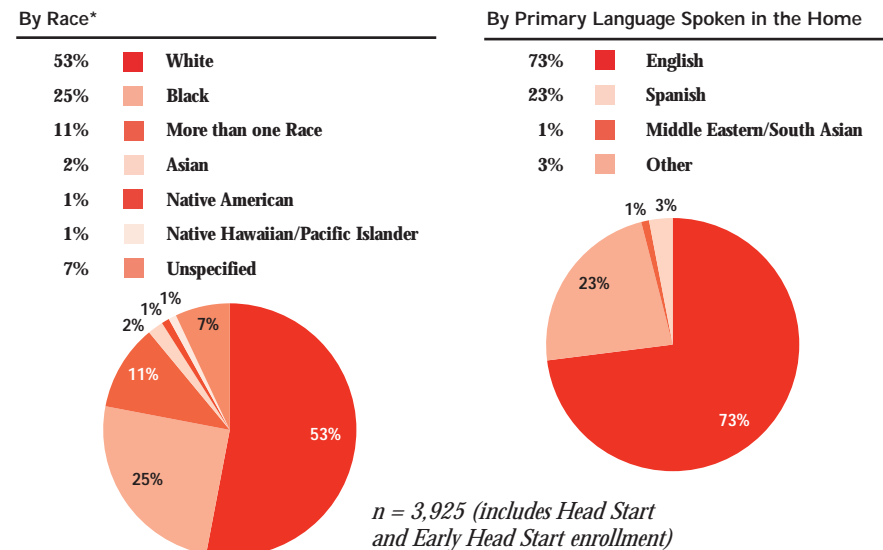
Pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start are assessed for risks to a successful pregnancy and individualized pregnancy plans are developed to support prenatal health, the promotion of healthy behaviors and preparation for the baby's arrival.⁴ After the baby is born, families participate by enrolling in either a center-based program or a

home-based program. Home-based programs use weekly home visits to support child development. Center-based programs provide enrollment for children in a center-based early care and education program and twice yearly home visits.⁵ In Rhode Island in 2007, there were 381 federally-funded Early Head Start slots. Of these slots, 45% were center-based and 55% were home-based.⁶

The National Evaluation of Early Head Start showed that the program produced significant cognitive and language development gains in participating children and more positive interaction with their parents. Early Head Start parents provided more emotional support and greater opportunities for language and learning to their children than a comparable group of parents not participating in Early Head Start. Early Head Start mothers also have fewer subsequent births within two years of enrollment and Early Head Start parents are more likely to participate in education and job-training activities.⁷

In October 2007 in Rhode Island, 6 pregnant women and 380 infants and toddlers were receiving Early Head Start services, approximately 5% of the estimated eligible population.^{8,9}

Head Start and Early Head Start Participant Information, Rhode Island, 2005



Source: *Head Start by the numbers: Rhode Island*. (2006). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
*Of the 3,925 participants, 33% identified as Hispanic. Hispanics may be of any race.

State Initiatives to Expand Access to Early Head Start

- ◆ States across the country are finding creative ways to expand Early Head Start services. The most common strategy states use is to blend child care subsidy funding with Early Head Start funding to help extend the Early Head Start day or year for eligible working families.¹⁰ In 2007 in Rhode Island, 153 children (89% of the children enrolled in center-based Early Head Start) also were receiving child care assistance.¹¹
- ◆ Some states provide grants or supplemental funding to expand the capacity of Early Head Start programs to increase the number of children and pregnant women served.¹²
- ◆ A few states provide resources and assistance to child care providers to help them deliver services meeting Early Head Start standards. Early Head Start standards for center-based programs are higher quality than typical child care.¹³ Some states support partnerships between Early Head Start and local child care programs to improve the quality of care.¹⁴

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Table 29. Percent of Eligible Children Under Age 3 Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2007

CITY/TOWN	ESTIMATED ELIGIBLE CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3*	NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	% OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3 ENROLLED
Barrington	13	0	0%
Bristol	57	0	0%
Burrillville	50	6	12%
Central Falls	400	59	15%
Charlestown	11	0	0%
Coventry	72	22	31%
Cranston	211	23	11%
Cumberland	51	0	0%
East Greenwich	28	0	0%
East Providence	204	25	12%
Exeter	26	0	0%
Foster	0	0	N/A
Glocester	15	2	13%
Hopkinton	17	0	0%
Jamestown	0	0	N/A
Johnston	81	13	16%
Lincoln	33	0	0%
Little Compton	5	0	0%
Middletown	40	13	33%
Narragansett	22	0	0%
New Shoreham	2	0	0%
Newport	371	60	16%
North Kingstown	114	0	0%
North Providence	99	9	9%
North Smithfield	26	0	0%
Pawtucket	842	0	0%
Portsmouth	33	2	6%
Providence	3,092	36	1%
Richmond	10	0	0%
Scituate	17	2	12%
Smithfield	6	2	33%
South Kingstown	41	0	0%
Tiverton	25	3	12%
Warren	23	5	22%
Warwick	188	66	35%
West Greenwich	8	0	0%
West Warwick	299	32	11%
Westerly	77	0	0%
Woonsocket	733	0	0%
Core Cities	5,737	187	3%
Remainder of State	1,605	193	12%
Rhode Island	7,342	380	5%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled October 1, 2007.

*The denominator is the estimated number of eligible children based on the number of children under age 3 in each community multiplied by the poverty rate for children under 5, according to Census 2000, Summary File 3 tables P87 and P8. This is an estimate of the eligible population and does not take into account any increases or decreases in the number of children eligible for Early Head Start since 2000. Also, children younger than age 3 are more likely to be poor than children ages 3 to 5. Thus, using the poverty rate for children under age 5 probably underestimates the numbers of children younger than age 3 who are below poverty and therefore eligible for Early Head Start.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ *Head Start basics*. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: National Head Start Association.
- ² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). HHS poverty guidelines. *Federal Register*, 73(15), 3971-3972.
- ^{3,9,10,12,13,14} Hoffman, E. & Ewen, D. (2007). *Supporting families, nurturing young children: Early Head Start programs in 2006*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- ⁴ Kanda, M. B. & Askew, G. L. (2004). The whole 9 months and beyond: Early Head Start services for pregnant women. In J. Lombardi & M. M. Bogle (Eds.). *Beacon of hope: The promise of Early Head Start for America's youngest children* (pp. 63-76). Washington, DC: Zero to Three Press.
- ⁵ Mann, T. L., Bogle, M. M. & Parlakian, R. (2004). Early Head Start: An overview. In J. Lombardi & M. M. Bogle (Eds.). *Beacon of hope: The promise of Early Head Start for America's youngest children* (pp.1-19). Washington, DC: Zero to Three Press.
- ^{6,8,11} Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs reports to Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, October 2007.
- ⁷ *The national evaluation of Early Head Start: Early Head Start works*. (2005). Washington, DC: Zero to Three Policy Center.
- ⁹ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT analysis of U.S. Bureau of the Census, Summary File 3. Tables P87 & P8.