

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. Although a father's education level has a major impact on his child's development, this indicator uses mother's education level because a significant number of birth records lack information on father's education level.

SIGNIFICANCE

The level of parental educational attainment can affect many aspects of child well-being. Research shows strong links between parental education levels and children's health and health related behaviors, the level of education children will ultimately achieve, and their access to material, human and social resources.¹ Increases in maternal education levels have also been associated with improvements in children's academic performance.²

Higher education levels typically lead to higher earnings.³ Even if a child's parents work full-time, children are more likely to be low-income if their parents do not have a college education.⁴ Children of immigrants and minority children are less likely to have parents with high education levels and more likely to be low-income than their peers.^{5,6}

One of the best ways parents can raise their families' incomes is through higher education.⁷ Women with a bachelor's degree in Rhode Island earn more than twice as much as those with less than a high school diploma.⁸

In 2005, 15.4% of Rhode Island births were to mothers with less than a high school degree, the 15th lowest among the 38 comparable states and lower than the U.S. rate of 20.8%.⁹ Educational attainment levels vary widely across cities and towns in Rhode Island.¹⁰

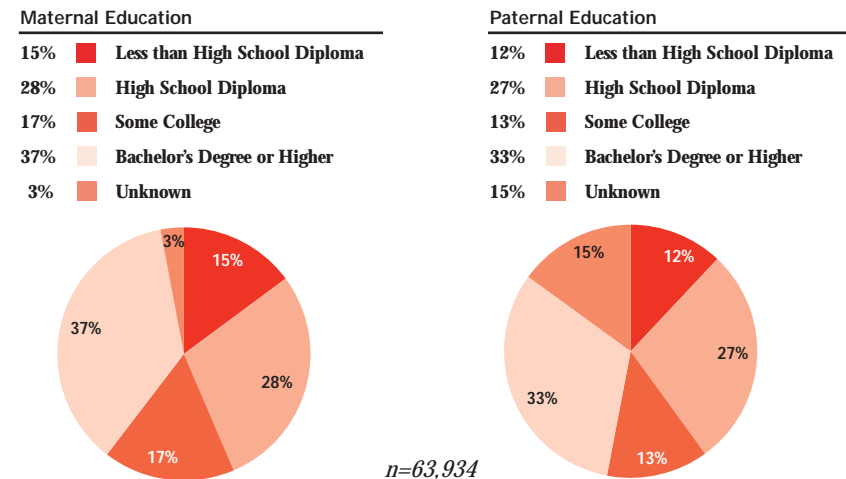
Of the 9,597 Rhode Island children born to mothers with less than a high school diploma between 2002 and 2006, 3,275 were to teen mothers (under age 20).¹¹ Nationally, teen mothers attain an average of 3 fewer years of education than older mothers.¹²

% of Births to Mothers with Less than High School Diploma

City/Town	% of Children
Central Falls	37%
Newport	16%
Pawtucket	21%
Providence	28%
West Warwick	14%
Woonsocket	24%
Remainder of State	6%
Rhode Island	15%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 2002-2006.

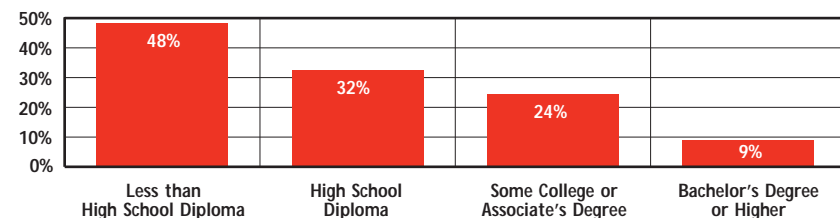
Births by Parental Education Levels, Rhode Island, 2002-2006



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

◆ In Rhode Island between 2002 and 2006, 39% of infants were born to fathers with a high school diploma or less, and 43% were born to mothers with a high school diploma or less.¹³

Poverty Status of Families Headed by Single Females by Educational Attainment, Rhode Island, 2006



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table S1702.

◆ The poverty status of families headed by single females is directly correlated with the householder's educational level. In Rhode Island in 2006, the poverty rates for families headed by single females ranged from 48% for women with less than a high school diploma to 9% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁴

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Table 5.

Births by Education Level of Mother, Rhode Island, 2002-2006

CITY/TOWN	TOTAL # OF BIRTHS	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR ABOVE		SOME COLLEGE		HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA		LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barrington	774	625	81%	73	9%	56	7%	7	1%
Bristol	1,010	511	51%	204	20%	220	22%	57	6%
Burrilville	807	303	38%	193	24%	225	28%	68	8%
Central Falls	2,012	197	10%	252	13%	753	37%	737	37%
Charlestown	419	209	50%	90	21%	86	21%	28	7%
Coventry	1,863	864	46%	369	20%	507	27%	107	6%
Cranston	4,427	2,080	47%	778	18%	1,130	26%	362	8%
Cumberland	1,862	1,081	58%	346	19%	340	18%	68	4%
East Greenwich	539	400	74%	58	11%	52	10%	17	3%
East Providence	2,589	930	36%	546	21%	773	30%	275	11%
Exeter	300	154	51%	45	15%	76	25%	18	6%
Foster	222	118	53%	40	18%	53	24%	11	5%
Glocester	423	217	51%	88	21%	89	21%	23	5%
Hopkinton	445	181	41%	97	22%	129	29%	31	7%
Jamestown	210	156	74%	23	11%	22	10%	4	2%
Johnston	1,387	597	43%	268	19%	399	29%	104	7%
Lincoln	932	510	55%	180	19%	176	19%	43	5%
Little Compton	165	108	65%	27	16%	28	17%	1	1%
Middletown	1,023	504	49%	213	21%	249	24%	39	4%
Narragansett	558	325	58%	99	18%	88	16%	25	4%
New Shoreham	59	31	53%	20	34%	7	12%	0	0%
Newport	1,530	653	43%	225	15%	351	23%	250	16%
North Kingstown	1,388	826	60%	202	15%	264	19%	64	5%
North Providence	1,703	703	41%	358	21%	475	28%	113	7%
North Smithfield	485	266	55%	88	18%	88	18%	25	5%
Pawtucket	5,616	1,274	23%	1,003	18%	1,980	35%	1,160	21%
Portsmouth	890	546	61%	143	16%	156	18%	29	3%
Providence	14,943	3,319	22%	1,907	13%	4,849	32%	4,239	28%
Richmond	501	281	56%	84	17%	102	20%	26	5%
Scituate	454	249	55%	88	19%	94	21%	17	4%
Smithfield	743	428	58%	144	19%	128	17%	25	3%
South Kingstown	1,247	783	63%	162	13%	215	17%	49	4%
Tiverton	686	338	49%	172	25%	139	20%	31	5%
Warren	570	231	41%	128	22%	148	26%	56	10%
Warwick	4,337	2,046	47%	808	19%	1,115	26%	288	7%
West Greenwich	273	162	59%	51	19%	47	17%	11	4%
West Warwick	2,002	621	31%	359	18%	710	35%	278	14%
Westerly	1,306	507	39%	265	20%	399	31%	120	9%
Woonsocket	3,233	475	15%	557	17%	1,266	39%	791	24%
Unknown	1	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
Core Cities	29,336	6,539	22%	4,303	15%	9,909	34%	7,455	25%
Remainder of State	34,597	17,270	50%	6,450	19%	8,075	23%	2,142	6%
Rhode Island	63,934	23,809	37%	10,753	17%	17,984	28%	9,597	15%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional. 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 cities, towns and the state because of unknown education levels. Between 2002 and 2006, maternal education levels were unknown for 1,791 births (3%).

References

- ¹ *Parental Education*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 11, 2006 from Child Trends Databank at www.childtrends.org
- ² National Center for Family Literacy. (2003). *All about families: The effects of maternal education on child achievement*. Retrieved January 9, 2007 from www.familit.org
- ^{3,4,7} National Center for Children in Poverty. *Parents' low education leads to low income, despite full-time employment*. (2007). Retrieved January 24, 2008 from www.nccp.org
- ⁵ National Center for Children in Poverty. *The racial gap in parental education*. (2006). Retrieved January 9, 2007 from www.nccp.org
- ⁶ Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2007*. (2007). Retrieved January 24, 2008 from www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/
- ⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table B20004.
- ⁹ *The right start online: 2008*. (2008). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ^{10,11,13} Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional.
- ¹² *2004 KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being*. (2004). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table S1702.