

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 race, ethnic background, language and country of origin. Between 2000 and 2006, the percentage of children under age 18 who were minorities increased from 27% to 32%, a 19% increase. The child population in Rhode Island is more racially and ethnically diverse than the adult population, comparable to the overall U.S. trend.^{1,2,3}

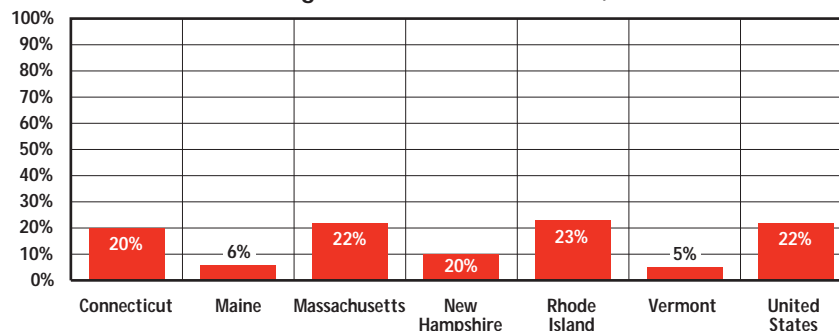
The increasing diversity of children in Rhode Island is not evenly distributed, with minority children concentrated in the core urban communities that have the highest rates of child poverty in the state. In 2000, more than three-quarters (78%) of Rhode Island's minority children lived in one of the six core cities (those cities with 15% or more of children living in poverty). In 2000, approximately three-quarters of the children in Providence (76%) and Central Falls (72%) were of minority racial and ethnic backgrounds.⁴ In several neighborhoods of Providence,

minority children accounted for more than 90% of the total child population, and had some of the highest child poverty rates in the state.⁵

Research demonstrates a significant relationship between residence in low-income or poor neighborhoods and increased teen pregnancy and high school dropout rates.⁶ Nationally in 2006, 18% of all children lived in poverty.⁷ In Rhode Island in 2006, 15% of children were living in poverty, of whom 44% were White, 16% were Black, and 3% were Asian. Forty-two percent of poor children in Rhode Island were Hispanic; Hispanic children are also included in other racial groups.⁸

The overall racial and ethnic segregation of U.S. neighborhoods has decreased over the past three decades. Yet, residential segregation for the child population has shown a less substantial decrease and has been countered by increased school segregation.⁹ The Providence-Fall River-Warwick metropolitan area was the second most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Hispanics in 2000 and was also the metropolitan area with the largest increase in Hispanic segregation between 1980 and 2000.¹⁰

Percentage of Children Living in Immigrant Families, New England and United States, 2006



Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2006 American Community Survey data.

Rhode Island Children in Immigrant Families

- ◆ **Children in immigrant families are defined as children under age 18 who are foreign-born or who have at least one foreign-born parent, regardless of citizenship status or year of arrival in the United States. In 2006, 23% (52,533) of Rhode Island children were living in immigrant families, comparable to the U.S. rate of 22% and the Massachusetts and Connecticut rates of 22% and 20%.^{11,12}**
- ◆ **In 2006, 4% (9,848) of Rhode Island's 237,447 children under age 18 were foreign-born, 21% whom were naturalized citizens of the United States.^{13,14}**
- ◆ **Half of all children in Rhode Island immigrant families live in families with incomes above 200% of the federal poverty level. Almost one-third (31%) of children in Rhode Island's immigrant families have at least one parent with a college or graduate level education, many of whom work in professional capacities as doctors, engineers, teachers or researchers.¹⁵**
- ◆ **Half of the children in immigrant families are poor (17%) or low-income (33%), almost half (48%) of their parents have low levels of education and almost one-quarter (23%) of their parents have limited English-language skills.¹⁶ Understanding the needs of this more vulnerable group of immigrants can help policymakers and community leaders to ensure that all children in Rhode Island grow up with the opportunities they need to succeed.**

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

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

| | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Children in Poverty | 9% | 36% | 36% | 14% | NA | 15% |
| Births to Mothers with < 12 years Education | 14% | 33% | 22% | 16% | 31% | 15% |
| % of Children with All Resident Parents in the Workforce | 71% | 48% | 65% | 54% | 47% | 68% |
| Median Family Income | \$70,468 | \$30,909 | \$43,517 | \$61,129 | NA | \$64,733 |
| Homeownership | 68% | 28% | 32% | 51% | 55% | 63% |

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Tables B17001, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. *Parental Labor Force Participation* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Tables P46, PCT70A, PCT70B, PCT70C, PCT70D & PCT70H. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006, Table B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. Hispanics may also be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race. NA indicates that the data are statistically unreliable due to small population or sample sizes.

- ◆ In 2006, there were 35,456 children under age 18 living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level in Rhode Island, which is a decrease from 2005 of 11,438 children. In 2006, 36% of both Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island lived in poor families, compared with 9% of White children and 14% of Asian children.^{17,18}
- ◆ In 2006 in Rhode Island, approximately one-third of Black and Hispanic households owned their homes, compared with approximately half of Asian and Native American households and two-thirds of White households.¹⁹
- ◆ In 2006, 76% of White children had all of their resident parents in the workforce, compared to 65% of Black children, 54% of Asian children and 48% of Hispanic children.²⁰
- ◆ Education is essential for economic success. Adults with less than a high school diploma are at particular risk of living in poverty and other negative outcomes.²¹ Hispanic, Black and Native American children are all more likely than White and Asian children to be born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.²²

Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

| | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| Women with Delayed Prenatal Care | 9% | 14% | 18% | 19% | 19% | 11% |
| Preterm Births | 11% | 13% | 15% | 14% | 16% | 13% |
| Infants Born Low Birthweight | 8% | 8% | 11% | 10% | 13% | 8% |
| Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births) | 5.5 | 8.0 | 12.3 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 6.2 |
| Asthma Hospitalizations (per 1,000 births) | 3.2 | 6.1 | 9.1 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 4.0 |
| Births to Teens Ages 15 – 19 (per 1,000 teens) | 29.9 | 94.8 | 75.6 | 33.2 | 130.1 | 30.7 |

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database 2002-2006 unless otherwise specified. Information is based on self-reported race and ethnicity. *Asthma Hospitalizations* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 2002-2006. For *Asthma Hospitalizations* the denominators are the child population by race from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF1. For *Births to Teens* the denominators are the child population by race from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF3. NA indicates that the data are statistically unreliable due to small population or sample sizes. For all indicators other than *Asthma Hospitalizations*, Hispanics may also be included in any of the race categories.

- ◆ Although progress has been made on many health indicators across racial and ethnic populations, disparities still exist for a number of maternal and child outcomes. Minority women are far more likely to receive delayed or no prenatal care, to give birth to low birthweight babies and to give birth as teenagers. Minority children are more likely to die in infancy than White children and Black and Hispanic children are more likely to be hospitalized as a result of asthma than White or Asian children.²³
- ◆ In 2005 in the United States, 7% of White non-Hispanic children under age 18 were not covered by health insurance, compared with 22% of Hispanic children, 12% of Black children and 12% of Asian children.²⁴

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

| | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|---|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| Juveniles at the Training School (per 1,000) | 1.7 | 6.8 | 15.6 | 2.2 | 3.0 | 2.9 |
| Children of Incarcerated Parents (per 1,000) | 8.7 | 21.9 | 81.7 | 2.3 | 19.9 | 14.1 |
| Children in Out of Home Placement (per 1,000) | 9.8 | 20.0 | 44.0 | 9.6 | 17.9 | 12.3 |

Sources: *Juveniles at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, January 1, 2008 (includes adjudicated youth). *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2007 (includes only the sentenced population). *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* data are from the Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST Database, December 31, 2007. Population denominators used for *Children of Incarcerated Parents* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1. Population denominators used for *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3. The population denominators used for *Juveniles at the Training School* are the populations ages 14-19 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3.

◆ **Racial and ethnic minority groups continue to be disproportionately represented in juvenile justice systems in the U.S. Minority youth are treated more harshly than White, non-Hispanic youth for the same type and severity of offenses at every critical point in the justice system, from detention and formal processing in juvenile court, to sentencing and incarceration in juvenile and adult correctional facilities.²⁵ Non-Hispanic Black males are far more likely to be incarcerated at any age than youth of other races.²⁶**

◆ **Children and youth of color are also overrepresented in the American child welfare system; they account for 55% of children in foster care despite making up only 33% of the total child population in the United States. The greatest disparities exist for Black children who account for 15% of the U.S. child population and 38% of children in foster care. Higher poverty rates among minority families contribute to this trend. Research also shows disparate treatment of minority children as they enter the foster care system and while they are in the system. Black and Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families under similar circumstances to be reported for child abuse and neglect and to have their child removed. Native American children are also overrepresented in the child welfare system.²⁷**

Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

| | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| 4th Grade Students Reading at or above Proficiency | 72% | 40% | 48% | 64% | 43% | 64% |
| 8th Grade Students Reading at or above Proficiency | 70% | 38% | 41% | 62% | 56% | 61% |
| High School Graduation Rates | 91% | 82% | 86% | 89% | 69% | 89% |
| % of Adults Over 25 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 31% | 13% | 19% | 44% | NA | 30% |

Sources: *4th Grade Reading Proficiency Rates, 8th Grade Reading Proficiency Rates & High School Graduation Rates* are from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006-2007 school year. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006, Tables B15002, B15002A, B15002B, B15002C, B15002D & B15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race; Hispanics may also be included in any of the race categories. NA indicates that data are statistically unreliable due to small population or sample sizes.

◆ **In Rhode Island, Hispanic, Native American and Black children are less likely to be proficient in reading in both 4th and 8th grades than White children. Minority children are also less likely than White children to graduate from high school.²⁸ In 2006 in Rhode Island, Black and Hispanic adults were less likely to have a bachelor's degree than White or Asian adults.²⁹**

◆ **Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian students in Rhode Island are underrepresented in many disability areas, including autism and visual impairments. Asian students are also more likely than others to receive services for hearing impairments. Black, Hispanic and Native American students are disproportionately identified as having mental retardation.³⁰**

◆ **According to the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, during the 2005-2006 school year, children of color were far more likely than White children to attend schools making insufficient progress. Rhode Island's Hispanic and Black children attended schools making insufficient progress at rates about three times greater than White children.**



Rhode Island's Hispanic Children

◆ In 2006, there were 42,141 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 34,924 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2006 the Hispanic child population grew by 21% whereas the total child population in Rhode Island decreased by 4%.^{31,32}

◆ Three-quarters (78%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island live in Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence.³³ While Providence has the largest population of Hispanics overall, the Hispanic population is most densely concentrated in Central Falls.³⁴

Economics

◆ Thirty-six percent of Hispanic children were living in poverty in 2006 in Rhode Island, compared to the national rate of 28%.^{35,36} In 2000, Rhode Island Hispanics had the lowest median family income of all Hispanics in the United States.³⁷

◆ In 2006, the unemployment rate for Hispanics was higher than that of both White and Black Rhode Islanders.³⁸

Health

◆ In Rhode Island, 14% of Hispanic women who give birth receive delayed prenatal care, compared with 11% of all races in 2006. Hispanic female teens between the ages of 15 and 19 in Rhode Island have a birth rate that is more than 3 times as high as the state rate overall (94.8 per 1,000 teens ages 15-19 compared to 30.7 per 1,000).^{39,40}

Education

◆ Hispanics in Rhode Island have lower educational attainment levels than the population overall. In 2007, the high school graduation rate for Hispanic youth was 82%, lower than the overall Rhode Island high school graduation rate of 89%.⁴¹ In 2006, 13% of Hispanics 25 years of age and older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30% of all Rhode Islanders.⁴²

References

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^{2,32,39} U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3.

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^{4,33} U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF 1.

⁵ Providence Plan analysis of U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 data.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2002). *Trends in the well-being of America's children and youth, 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

^{7,36} *Profiles by region: United States: Children in poverty: 2006*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 25, 2008 from www.kidscount.org/datacenter

^{8,17,35} U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Tables B17001, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I.

⁹ *Divided we fail: Coming together through public school choice*. (2002). New York, NY: The Century Foundation.

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¹¹ *State level data online: Comparisons by topic: Children in immigrant families, 2006*. Retrieved January 12, 2008 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center from www.kidscount.org/datacenter

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table B05009.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table B05003.

¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Table B09001.

^{15,16} Population Reference Bureau analysis of American Community Survey 2006 data.

¹⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2005. Table B07001.

¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I.

²⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Tables P46, PCT70A, PCT70B, PCT70C, PCT70D & PCT70H.

²¹ Bridgeland, J., Dilulio, J. Jr. & Morison, K. (2006). *The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises, LLC, in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

²² Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2005-2006 school year.

^{23,40} Rhode Island Department of Health, 2002-2006.

²⁴ *Percentage of children covered by health insurance, by race and Hispanic origin, 2005*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 17, 2007 from www.childtrendsdatacenter.org

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^{28,41} Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006-2007 school year.

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