

Children Enrolled in Early Head Start

DEFINITION

Children enrolled in Early Head Start is the percentage of eligible children enrolled in a Rhode Island Early Head Start program as of October 2008.

SIGNIFICANCE

Established in 1994, Early Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program serving low-income children birth to age three, pregnant women, and their families. Early Head Start programs serve children in families with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines, which for a family of three is \$23,803.^{1,2,3} 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 birth outcomes for pregnant women, and to foster the development of healthy family relationships.⁴

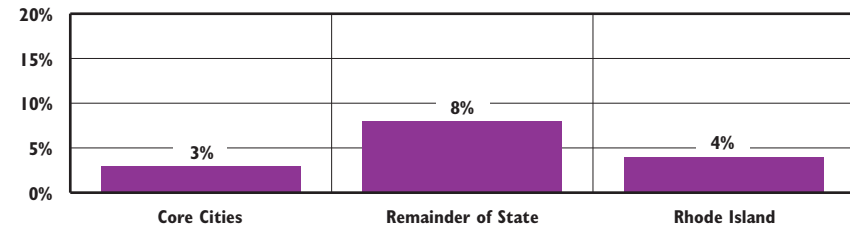
Pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start are assessed for risks to a successful pregnancy and individualized pregnancy plans are developed to support prenatal health, the promotion of healthy behaviors and preparation for the baby's arrival.⁵ After the baby is born, families participate by enrolling 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 center-based early care and education programs and twice yearly home visits.⁶ In Rhode Island in 2008, there were 381 federally-funded Early Head Start slots. Of these slots, 46% were center-based and 54% were home-based.⁷

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 are more likely to participate in education and job-training activities.⁸

As of October 2008, 385 infants and toddlers were receiving Early Head Start services in Rhode Island, approximately 4% of the estimated eligible population. In addition, there were 33 pregnant women receiving Early Head Start services designed to improve birth outcomes and early childhood development.⁹

Access to Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2008



Source: Rhode Island Early Head Start program data compiled by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2008

- ◆ In 2008 in Rhode Island, federal funding for Early Head Start enables services to be provided to approximately 4% of income-eligible children ages birth to three and their families.¹⁰
- ◆ Just over half of the child population that is income-eligible for Early Head Start resides in the core cities of Rhode Island, yet only 3% of these eligible children have access. There are five Early Head Start providers in Rhode Island serving 207 children in the core cities of Central Falls, Newport, Providence, and West Warwick and 177 children in the remainder of the state. There are no Early Head Start services available to children in the core cities of Pawtucket and Woonsocket.¹¹

Early Head Start and Teen Parents

- ◆ Nationally, approximately one-third of the children enrolled in Early Head Start programs have a parent who is a teenager.¹²
- ◆ Children born to teen parents are more likely to have birth complications, experience child abuse and neglect, and have behavior problems. They are also less likely to have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to succeed when they enter school.¹³
- ◆ The national Early Head Start evaluation demonstrated that the program has a positive effect on the social-emotional development of children of teen parents and the supportiveness of teen parents. It also increases teen parents' participation in educational activities.¹⁴

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Table 29.

Children Ages Birth to 3 Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2008

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3	ESTIMATED # OF CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR EARLY HEAD START*	# OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	ESTIMATED # OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START
Barrington	567	13	0	0%
Bristol	582	66	3	5%
Burrillville	525	70	8	11%
Central Falls	933	526	50	9%
Charlestown	266	36	0	0%
Coventry	1,268	112	15	13%
Cranston	2,499	276	18	7%
Cumberland	1,232	102	0	0%
East Greenwich	378	33	0	0%
East Providence	1,563	274	17	6%
Exeter	160	44	0	0%
Foster	126	0	0	NA
Glocester	261	16	2	13%
Hopkinton	240	46	0	0%
Jamestown	153	0	0	NA
Johnston	951	111	10	9%
Lincoln	654	43	0	0%
Little Compton	111	5	0	0%
Middletown	685	83	14	17%
Narragansett	346	27	0	0%
New Shoreham	32	2	0	0%
Newport	996	439	56	13%
North Kingstown	1,010	135	0	0%
North Providence	893	157	9	6%
North Smithfield	368	28	1	4%
Pawtucket	2,765	1,021	1	<1%
Portsmouth	622	33	3	9%
Providence	7,397	3,819	52	1%
Richmond	348	16	0	0%
Scituate	451	17	0	0%
Smithfield	499	10	3	29%
South Kingstown	807	41	0	0%
Tiverton	522	29	4	14%
Warren	329	43	6	14%
Warwick	2,741	260	64	25%
West Greenwich	175	11	0	0%
West Warwick	1,146	386	48	12%
Westerly	824	146	0	0%
Woonsocket	2,041	890	0	0%
Homeless	NA	NA	1	NA
Core Cities	15,278	7,080	207	3%
Remainder of State	22,188	2,285	177	8%
Rhode Island	37,466	9,365	385	4%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2008. Children enrolled are listed by residence of child, not location of the Head Start program.

The estimated Early Head Start eligible population was adjusted in the 2009 Factbook to reflect increased income eligibility guidelines passed as part of the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act* of 2007. The estimated number of Early Head Start eligible children is calculated by multiplying the number of children under age three in each community by the percentage of children under age five living in families with incomes below 130% of the poverty level in that community, according to Census 2000, Summary File 3. These rates cannot be compared with rates in previous Factbooks.

*These are estimates of the eligible population and do not take into account other children who are eligible for Early Head Start services (e.g., children in homeless families) or changes in child population and poverty rates since 2000. Also, Early Head Start regulations allow 10% of enrolled children to be in families with incomes over the threshold.

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 *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, § 42 U.S.C. 9801, § 645 (2007).
- ³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). HHS poverty guidelines. *Federal Register*, 74(14), 4199-4200.
- ⁴ Hoffman, E. & Ewen, D. (2007). *Supporting families, nurturing young children: Early Head Start programs in 2006*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- ⁵ 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.

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