

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.

SIGNIFICANCE

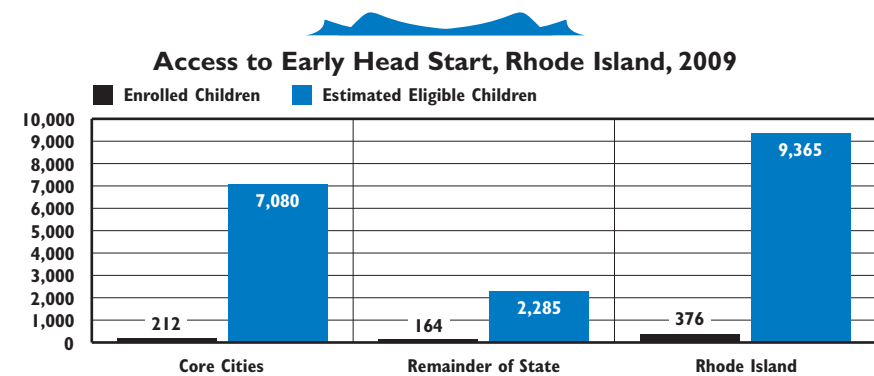
Established in 1994, Early Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program serving low-income children birth to age three, pregnant women, and their families. Early Head Start programs serve children in families with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines, which for a family of three is \$23,803 in 2009.^{1,2,3} Children in families with incomes below the federal poverty line have priority enrollment. 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. Individualized plans are developed to support prenatal health, promote healthy behaviors and prepare 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 2009, there were 381 federally-funded Early Head Start slots. Of these slots, 45% were center-based and 55% 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 2009, 376 infants and toddlers were receiving Early Head Start services in Rhode Island, approximately 4% of the estimated eligible population. In addition, there were 19 pregnant women receiving Early Head Start services designed to improve birth outcomes, maternal health and early childhood development.⁹



Source: Rhode Island Early Head Start program data compiled by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, 2009.

- ◆ In 2009 in Rhode Island, federal funding for Early Head Start enabled services to be provided to 376 children, approximately 4% of the 9,365 income-eligible children ages birth to three and their families.¹⁰
- ◆ Three-quarters of the child population that are income-eligible for Early Head Start reside in the core cities of Rhode Island, yet only 3% of these eligible children have access.¹¹ In 2009, there were 212 children enrolled in Early Head Start from the core cities of Central Falls, Newport, Providence, and West Warwick and 164 children from the remainder of the state. There were no Early Head Start services available to children in the core cities of Pawtucket and Woonsocket.¹²
- ◆ Beginning in 2010, federal stimulus funding to expand Early Head Start services in Rhode Island will bring services to approximately 134 children in Pawtucket, Providence, and the Johnston/North Providence/Smithfield area.¹³

Early Head Start and Children with Special Needs

- ◆ Federal Head Start regulations require programs to make at least 10% of their enrollment opportunities available to young children with disabilities.¹⁴ In 2009, 66 children with disabilities were enrolled in an Early Head Start program in Rhode Island (18% of Early Head Start enrollment).¹⁵
- ◆ Early Head Start providers work closely with the state's Early Intervention system to ensure specialized services and supports for children are delivered in coordination with the Early Head Start program.¹⁶

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Table 33.

Children Ages Birth to Three Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2009

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3	ESTIMATED ELIGIBLE CHILDREN <100% FPL*	ESTIMATED ELIGIBLE CHILDREN 100-129% FPL*	# OF PREGNANT WOMEN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	# OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	ESTIMATED % OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START
Barrington	567	13	0	0	0	0%
Bristol	582	57	9	0	5	8%
Burrillville	525	50	20	0	10	14%
Central Falls	933	400	127	10	48	9%
Charlestown	266	11	25	0	0	0%
Coventry	1,268	72	40	0	16	14%
Cranston	2,499	211	64	0	20	7%
Cumberland	1,232	51	50	0	0	0%
East Greenwich	378	28	4	0	0	0%
East Providence	1,563	204	71	0	21	8%
Exeter	160	26	18	0	0	0%
Foster	126	0	0	0	0	NA
Glocester	261	15	1	0	1	6%
Hopkinton	240	17	29	0	0	0%
Jamestown	153	0	0	0	0	NA
Johnston	951	81	30	0	10	9%
Lincoln	654	33	10	0	0	0%
Little Compton	111	5	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	685	40	42	0	14	17%
Narragansett	346	22	5	0	0	0%
New Shoreham	32	2	0	0	0	0%
Newport	996	371	68	2	53	12%
North Kingstown	1,010	114	20	0	0	0%
North Providence	893	99	57	0	10	6%
North Smithfield	368	26	2	0	0	0%
Pawtucket	2,765	842	178	0	0	0%
Portsmouth	622	33	0	0	4	12%
Providence	7,397	3,092	727	4	55	1%
Richmond	348	10	6	0	0	0%
Scituate	451	17	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	499	6	4	0	3	29%
South Kingstown	807	41	0	0	0	0%
Tiverton	522	25	5	0	3	10%
Warren	329	23	20	0	6	14%
Warwick	2,741	188	72	1	41	16%
West Greenwich	175	8	3	0	0	0%
West Warwick	1,146	299	86	2	56	15%
Westerly	824	77	69	0	0	0%
Woonsocket	2,041	733	156	0	0	0%
Core Cities	15,278	5,737	1,343	18	212	3%
Remainder of State	22,188	1,607	678	1	164	7%
Rhode Island	37,466	7,344	2,021	19	376	4%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2009. Children enrolled are listed by residence of child, not location of the Early Head Start program.

The estimated number of children eligible for Early Head Start is divided into two categories (below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line and between 100 and 129% of the Federal Poverty Line) as described in the 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 from Census 2000, Summary File 3 by the percentage of children under age five living in families with incomes below 100% of the poverty level and between 100 and 129% of the poverty level in that community, according to Census 2000, Summary File 3.

*These are estimates of the income-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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