

# Racial and Ethnic Diversity

## DEFINITION

*Racial and ethnic diversity* is the percentage of children under age 18 by racial and ethnic categories as defined by the 2000 U.S. Census. Racial and ethnic categories are chosen by the head of household or person completing the Census form.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Racial and ethnic diversity has increased in the United States over the last several decades and is projected to rise in the future.<sup>1</sup> Minority children (all those except White, non-Hispanic children) accounted for 98% of the growth in the U.S. child population during the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, 56% of all U.S. children were White non-Hispanic.<sup>3</sup> According to Census Bureau projections, the U.S. is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. By 2030 more than half of all children in the United States will be children of color.<sup>4</sup>

In 2000, 73% of children in Rhode Island were White, non-Hispanic, down from 84% in 1990. The number of minority children nearly doubled from about 37,000 in 1990 to about 68,000 in 2000. The number of White non-Hispanic children dropped by nearly 9,000 during the same period.<sup>5,6</sup>

Between 2006 and 2008 in Rhode Island, 74% of children under age 18 were White, 7% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, 1% were

Native American, 11% of children were identified as "some other race," and 4% as two or more races. Between 2006 and 2008, 19% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.<sup>7</sup>

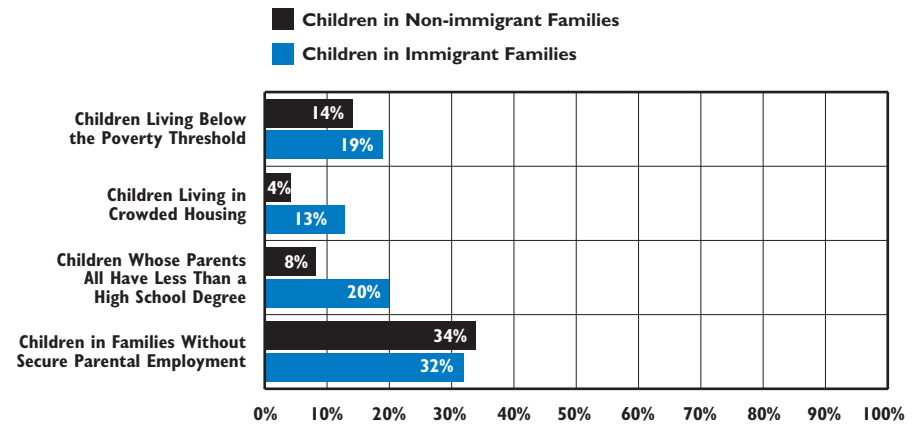
Minority children are concentrated in Rhode Island's six core cities. Core cities are defined as cities in which 15% or more of the children live in poverty. More than half (58%) of children living in the core cities are minority children. More than three-quarters (78%) of all minority children in Rhode Island live in these six communities.<sup>8</sup>

Between 2006 and 2008, there were 9,301 foreign-born children living in Rhode Island, 25% of whom were naturalized U.S. citizens.<sup>9</sup> Of Rhode Island's immigrant children, 28% were born in Central or South America, 21% were born in the Caribbean, 16% were born in Africa, 14% were born in Asia, 13% were born in Europe, and 7% were born in North America (Canada, Bermuda or Mexico).<sup>10</sup>

Between 2006 and 2008, 22% of children ages five to 17 living in Rhode Island spoke a language other than English at home, 93% of whom spoke English well or very well.<sup>11</sup>

Diversity presents both opportunities and challenges to schools, child care centers, health care providers, social service agencies and other community service providers, in terms of adapting current practices to meet the needs of a changing population.<sup>12</sup>

## Characteristics of Children Living in Immigrant and Non-immigrant Families, Rhode Island, 2008



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center. Retrieved February 4, 2010 from [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter)

◆ **Twenty-four percent of children in Rhode Island live in immigrant families (either they are foreign-born or they have at least one parent who is foreign-born), similar to the U.S. rate of 23%.<sup>13</sup> Most immigrant families in Rhode Island are not new arrivals to the United States; 1% of children in Rhode Island immigrant families have parents who arrived in this country fewer than five years ago.<sup>14</sup> Ninety-six percent of children in Rhode Island were born in the United States.<sup>15</sup>**

◆ **Fourteen percent of children in Rhode Island in non-immigrant families are poor, compared with 19% of children in immigrant families.<sup>16</sup> More than two-thirds (69%) of Rhode Island's poor children live in families with U.S.-born parents.<sup>17</sup>**

◆ **The social and economic well-being of immigrant children is influenced by their parents' proficiency in English. Limited English proficiency can be a barrier to employment opportunities, higher earnings, access to health care and parental engagement in schools.<sup>18</sup> Twenty-one percent of children in immigrant families in Rhode Island live in linguistically-isolated households, meaning no one over age 14 either speaks only English or speaks English "very well."<sup>19</sup>**

Table 6.

**Child Population, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2000**

CITY/TOWN	UNDER AGE 18 BY RACE AND ETHNICITY								2000 POPULATION UNDER AGE 18
	HISPANIC OR LATINO	WHITE	BLACK	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	SOME OTHER RACE	TWO OR MORE RACES	
Barrington	59	4,479	29	8	106	0	4	60	4,745
Bristol	88	4,183	30	3	21	4	3	67	4,399
Burrillville	59	3,915	11	8	6	0	11	33	4,043
Central Falls	3,122	1,574	292	29	22	0	225	267	5,531
Charlestown	38	1,597	7	26	12	0	1	31	1,712
Coventry	151	7,975	47	8	46	2	10	150	8,389
Cranston	1,213	14,041	513	59	796	5	71	400	17,098
Cumberland	231	7,185	65	5	70	3	38	93	7,690
East Greenwich	59	3,308	30	1	106	0	11	49	3,564
East Providence	360	8,366	681	48	114	4	323	650	10,546
Exeter	36	1,484	9	9	8	0	0	43	1,589
Foster	17	1,054	2	1	11	2	3	15	1,105
Glocester	31	2,573	15	2	10	0	1	32	2,664
Hopkinton	35	1,889	11	27	10	0	3	36	2,011
Jamestown	19	1,183	14	4	4	0	0	14	1,238
Johnston	203	5,425	63	9	93	1	21	91	5,906
Lincoln	151	4,694	73	2	116	1	21	99	5,157
Little Compton	12	756	1	0	2	0	0	9	780
Middletown	201	3,549	246	23	104	1	15	189	4,328
Narragansett	69	2,566	27	52	25	0	5	89	2,833
New Shoreham	3	175	3	0	3	0	0	1	185
Newport	602	3,485	555	86	55	7	51	358	5,199
North Kingstown	210	6,286	70	37	76	0	11	158	6,848
North Providence	377	5,033	208	12	122	3	48	133	5,936
North Smithfield	17	2,305	13	8	15	0	1	20	2,379
Pawtucket	3,820	10,090	1,776	53	131	7	1,251	1,023	18,151
Portsmouth	114	4,016	55	5	58	0	8	73	4,329
Providence	20,350	10,858	7,606	621	3,043	19	575	2,205	45,277
Richmond	32	1,916	7	19	8	0	0	32	2,014
Scituate	30	2,535	10	1	24	1	5	29	2,635
Smithfield	50	3,880	18	2	29	0	2	38	4,019
South Kingstown	128	5,561	87	126	169	0	19	194	6,284
Tiverton	46	3,234	15	4	18	0	8	42	3,367
Warren	36	2,294	38	4	11	1	6	64	2,454
Warwick	516	17,220	217	50	322	1	35	419	18,780
West Greenwich	13	1,396	4	3	7	0	5	16	1,444
West Warwick	384	5,792	86	29	102	3	26	210	6,632
Westerly	96	4,931	45	45	143	0	11	135	5,406
Woonsocket	2,024	7,272	606	29	591	5	46	582	11,155
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>30,302</i>	<i>39,071</i>	<i>10,921</i>	<i>847</i>	<i>3,944</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>2,174</i>	<i>4,645</i>	<i>91,945</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>4,700</i>	<i>141,004</i>	<i>2,664</i>	<i>611</i>	<i>2,665</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>700</i>	<i>3,504</i>	<i>155,877</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>35,002</i>	<i>180,075</i>	<i>13,585</i>	<i>1,458</i>	<i>6,609</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>2,874</i>	<i>8,149</i>	<i>247,822</i>

**Source of Data for Table/Methodology**

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting File. All categories are mutually exclusive. If Hispanic was selected as ethnicity, individuals are not included in other racial categories. Likewise, if more than one race was selected, individuals are included in two or more races and not in their individual race categories.

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

**References**

- <sup>1</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2009). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being 2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- <sup>2</sup> O'Hare, W. P. (2001). *The child population: First data from the 2000 Census*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Population Reference Bureau.
- <sup>3</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). *Child population, by race: Percent: 2000*. Retrieved February 4, 2010 from www.kidscount.org/datacenter
- <sup>4,18</sup> Mather, M. (2009). *Reports on America: Children in immigrant families chart new path*. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
- <sup>5,6,8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, 2006-2008. Tables B01001, C01001A, C01001B, C01001D, C01001E, C01001G, & C01001I.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, 2006-2008. Table B05003.
- <sup>10</sup> Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2006-2008 American Community Survey data.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, 2006-2008. Table B16004.

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