

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 racial and ethnic background. Between 2006 and 2008, 74% of Rhode Island children were White, 7% were Black, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 11% identified as "some other race," 4% identified as two or more races, and 19% of the Rhode Island child population were Hispanic. (Hispanic children are also included in the other racial categories).¹

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to be exposed to social and environmental factors that can have a negative impact on their opportunities to thrive.² Between 2006 and 2008, 16% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty, 52% of whom were minorities.^{3,4}

Black and Hispanic children are more likely than White children to live in neighborhoods that lack the resources needed for them to grow up healthy and successful, regardless of family income levels.⁵ 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. In several high-poverty neighborhoods of Providence, minority children accounted for more than 90% of all children in 2000.^{6,7}

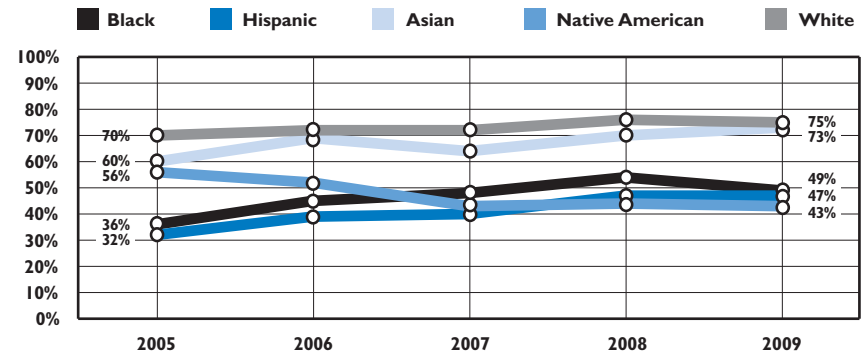
Residential segregation between Whites and Blacks has decreased in the U.S. since the 1960s, but high levels of residential segregation still exist, particularly in urban areas. Hispanic and Asian residential segregation from Whites has been increasing in recent years.⁸ The Providence-Fall River-Warwick metropolitan area was the second most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Hispanics in 2000.⁹

In good economic climates, minority families are less likely to be employed, have higher poverty rates and receive lower wages than White families. Minority families also face greater negative impacts during economic recessions and their recovery from economic downturns is slower than that of White families. Even when controlling for educational achievement, age and gender, minority workers have consistently higher unemployment rates than White workers.^{10,11}

Residential Segregation in the United States

- ◆ As a result of significant residential segregation in the U.S., Black and Hispanic students are now more segregated from White students than at any point in the past four decades. The vast majority of educational segregation occurs between (not within) school districts, with very high concentrations of minority students in urban districts.^{12,13}
- ◆ Most urban communities have high concentrations of poverty, which can be related to unequal educational opportunities. School district boundaries often determine access to challenging curricula, academic expectations, educator quality, facilities quality, adequacy of school funding, access to instructional supports (like technology), and school safety.^{14,15}

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Fourth Grade Reading Proficiency Rates, Rhode Island, 2005-2009



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, 2005-2009.

- ◆ In Rhode Island between 2005 and 2009, White fourth-graders were more likely to achieve the proficient level on the NECAP exam than minority fourth-graders.¹⁶
- ◆ Minority students are much less likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and graduate from college than their White peers. Poverty has been shown to drive much of the racial difference in these outcomes.^{17,18,19,20}
- ◆ Factors that contribute to educational achievement gaps include school factors, family participation and inclusion in schools, and non-school factors (e.g., poor child health and access to out-of-school learning opportunities).^{21,22,23}

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

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Children in Poverty	10%	34%	30%	16%	37%	16%
Births to Mothers With <12 Years Education	15%	35%	22%	15%	31%	16%
% of Children With All Resident Parents in the Workforce	71%	48%	65%	54%	47%	68%
Median Family Income	\$76,910	\$35,798	\$46,535	\$62,091	\$42,847	\$71,081
Homeownership	67%	30%	37%	51%	42%	63%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008, Tables B17001, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2004-2008. *Parental Labor Force Participation* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Tables P46, PCT70A, PCT70B, PCT70C, PCT70D & PCT70H. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race.

- ◆ Between 2006 and 2008 in Rhode Island, 16% of all children, 37% of Native American children, 34% of Hispanic children, 30% of Black children, 16% of Asian children and 10% of White children lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.²⁴
- ◆ Between 2006 and 2008 in Rhode Island, White households were the most likely to own their homes and Hispanic households were the most likely to live in rental units.²⁵
- ◆ In 2000, 71% of White children in Rhode Island had one or both of their resident parents in the workforce, compared to 65% of Black children, 54% of Asian children, 48% of Hispanic children, and 47% of Native American children.²⁶
- ◆ 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.²⁷ Hispanic, Black and Native American children in Rhode Island are all more likely than White and Asian children to be born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.²⁸

Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Women With Delayed Prenatal Care	12.3%	19.1%	21.4%	24.2%	21.6%	14.0%
Preterm Births	11.4%	13.4%	14.8%	13.3%	17.3%	11.9%
Infants Born Low Birthweight	7.4%	8.2%	10.9%	9.2%	13.3%	8.0%
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births)	5.4	8.2	12.1	6.2	9.3	6.2
Asthma Hospitalizations (per 1,000 children)	1.3	3.2	5.0	0.9	0.1	1.8
Births to Teens Ages 15 – 19 (per 1,000 teens)	29.5	101.7	79.5	28.1	110.3	30.9

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database 2004-2008 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, 2004-2008 and refer only to hospitalizations due to primary diagnoses of asthma. For *Asthma Hospitalizations*, the denominators are the child population under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF1. For *Births to Teens*, the denominators are the female populations ages 15-19 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3. For all indicators other than *Asthma Hospitalizations*, Hispanics also may 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 infant health outcomes in Rhode Island. Minority women are more likely than White women to receive delayed or no prenatal care and to have preterm births. Minority children are more likely to die in infancy than White children. Native Americans are the most likely to give birth to teens, followed by Hispanic and Black teens.²⁹
- ◆ Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely to be hospitalized as a result of asthma than White, Asian and Native American children.³⁰ Nationally, Blacks and Native Americans are the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have asthma.³¹
- ◆ Approximately one in ten children in the U.S. does not have health insurance coverage. White non-Hispanic children are much more likely to be insured (93%) than Hispanic children (80%) and Black children (88%). Only two-thirds of citizen children with non-citizen parents have health insurance. Approximately two-thirds of uninsured children in the U.S. are eligible for but not enrolled in public health insurance programs.³²

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 males ages 14-19)	1.8	10.6	25.8	4.7	2.8	4.6
Children of Incarcerated Parents (per 1,000 children)	7.2	20.1	73.2	1.8	15.1	12.3
Children in Out-of-Home Placement (per 1,000 children)	7.5	16.1	29.7	7.1	13.8	9.4

Sources: *Juveniles at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, January 1, 2010 (*includes only male adjudicated youth). *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, December 31, 2009 and reflect the race of the incarcerated parent (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, 2009. 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 male populations ages 14-19 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, SF3.

◆ **Racial and ethnic minority youth continue to be disproportionately represented in juvenile justice systems in the U.S. Minority youth (especially non-Hispanic Black youth) are treated more harshly than White youth for the same type and severity of offenses at every critical point in the justice system, from detention to processing to incarceration in juvenile and adult correctional facilities.³³ A recent study found that Rhode Island's juvenile justice system has some of the widest residential placement disparities between White and minority youth in the nation.³⁴**

◆ **Hispanic, Black and Native American children in Rhode Island are more likely than their White and Asian peers to be placed out of home through the child welfare system.³⁵ Research shows disparate treatment of minority children as they enter the foster care system and while they are in the system. Black, Hispanic and Native American children are more likely than non-Hispanic White children under similar circumstances to be placed in foster care, remain in placements for longer times, have less contact with child welfare staff and to have lower reunification rates.³⁶**

◆ **Disproportionality in child welfare and juvenile justice systems are in part a reflection of differential poverty rates between minority and White communities. However, while addressing poverty through policies would reduce child maltreatment and juvenile offending rates, policies that work directly to reduce disparities are necessary as well.³⁷**

Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
4th Grade Students Reading at or Above Proficiency	75%	47%	49%	73%	43%	67%
8th Grade Students Reading at or Above Proficiency	78%	48%	50%	75%	56%	70%
Students Attending Schools Making Insufficient Progress	13%	38%	34%	28%	20%	20%
High School Graduation Rates	80%	64%	67%	73%	71%	75%
% of Adults Over Age 25 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	31%	13%	19%	46%	11%	30%

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008-2009 school year or the October 2009 NECAP (Reading Proficiency) unless otherwise noted. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008, Tables C15002, C15002A, C15002B, C15002C, C15002D & C15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories.

◆ **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 and Asian children.³⁸ Black, Hispanic and Native American adults living in Rhode Island are less likely to have a bachelor's degree than White or Asian adults.³⁹**

◆ **Nationally, Black and Native American students are more likely than White and Hispanic students to receive special education services. Asians are the least likely to receive services for disabilities. Mental retardation and emotional disturbance rates are about twice as high among Black students as the national average. Disproportionality is most likely in categories that involve subjective diagnoses.⁴⁰ In Rhode Island in 2007 and 2008, 15 public school districts had significant racial and ethnic over-representation among students receiving special education services.⁴¹**

◆ **According to the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, during the 2008-2009 school year, Rhode Island's Hispanic and Black children were almost three times more likely than White children to attend schools making insufficient progress.⁴²**



Rhode Island's Hispanic Children and Youth

◆ In 2008, there were 43,821 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 35,282 in 2000. Hispanic children made up 19% of Rhode Island's child population in 2008, compared with 14% in 2000.⁴³

◆ In 2000, more than three-quarters (78%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island lived in Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence.⁴⁴ While Providence has the largest population of Hispanics overall, they are most densely concentrated in Central Falls.⁴⁵

Economics

◆ Thirty-six percent of Rhode Island's Hispanic children were living in poverty in 2008, compared to the national rate of 28%.⁴⁶ The median family income for Hispanics in Rhode Island is \$35,798, compared to \$71,081 overall in Rhode Island.⁴⁷

Health

◆ In Rhode Island between 2004 and 2008, 19.1% percent of Hispanic babies were born to women who received delayed or no prenatal care, compared with 14.0% of all babies in the state.⁴⁸

◆ Hispanic female teens between the ages of 15 and 19 in Rhode Island have a birth rate that is over three times higher than the overall teen birth rate in Rhode Island (101.7 per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19 compared to 30.9 per 1,000).^{49,50}

Education

◆ The Hispanic high school graduation rate for the class of 2009 was 64%, the lowest of any racial/ethnic group in the state and lower than the overall Rhode Island high school graduation rate of 75%.⁵¹

◆ Hispanic immigrants in Rhode Island are less likely to have a high school diploma but more likely to have a college degree or higher than U.S.-born Hispanics.⁵²

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