

# 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 and country of origin. Between 2000 and 2007, the percentage of children under age 18 who were minorities increased from 27% to 32%. The child population in Rhode Island is more racially and ethnically diverse than the adult population, a trend also seen nationally.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

In 2007 in Rhode Island, 74% of children were White, 8% were Black, 4% were Asian, <1% were Native American, 11% identified as Some Other Race and 4% identified as Two or More Races. Eighteen percent of the Rhode Island child population was Hispanic in 2007.<sup>5</sup>

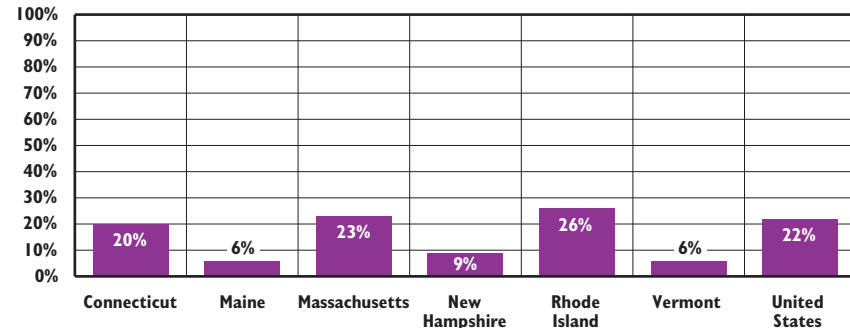
Diversity among children in Rhode Island is not evenly distributed by geographical location, with minority children concentrated in core urban communities that have the highest rates of child poverty in the state. In 2000, more than three-quarters (78%) of Rhode Island's minority children lived in one 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.<sup>6</sup> In several high-poverty neighborhoods of Providence, minority children accounted for more than 90% of all children in 2000.<sup>7</sup>

Research demonstrates a significant relationship between residence in low-income or poor neighborhoods and increased teen pregnancy and high school dropout rates.<sup>8</sup> In 2007, 17% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty.<sup>9</sup> In Rhode Island in 2007, 49% of all children living in poverty were White, 12% were Black, and 6% were Asian. Forty-three percent of all poor children in Rhode Island were Hispanic.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> School segregation remains a problem, as Black and Hispanic students in the U.S. are now more segregated than at any point in the past four decades.<sup>12</sup> The Providence-Fall River-Warwick metropolitan area was the second most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Hispanics in 2000 and also was the metropolitan area with the largest increase in Hispanic segregation between 1980 and 2000.<sup>13</sup>

**Percentage of Children Living in Immigrant Families, New England and the United States, 2007**



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). *Children in immigrant families: Percent: 2007*. Retrieved on February 27, 2009 from [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter)

## 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 2007, 26% (60,110) of Rhode Island children were living in immigrant families, compared to the U.S. rate of 22%.<sup>14,15</sup>
- ◆ In 2007, 4% (9,620) of Rhode Island's 234,821 children under age 18 were foreign-born, 31% of whom were naturalized citizens of the United States.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ Three-quarters of children in Rhode Island immigrant families live in families with incomes above the federal poverty level.<sup>17</sup> Almost one-third (31%) of children in Rhode Island's immigrant families have at least one parent with a college or graduate level education.<sup>18</sup>
- ◆ Of children in immigrant families, one-quarter live in poverty. Almost half (48%) of parents in immigrant families have low levels of education and one-quarter have limited English-language skills.<sup>19,20</sup> 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.

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

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
<b>Children in Poverty</b>	12%	42%	26%	29%	NA	17%
<b>Births to Mothers with &lt; 12 Years Education</b>	14%	34%	23%	16%	31%	15%
<b>% of Children with All Resident Parents in the Workforce</b>	71%	48%	65%	54%	47%	68%
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$76,329	\$37,608	\$44,246	\$61,547	\$30,606	\$70,187
<b>Homeownership</b>	68%	29%	36%	46%	29%	64%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007. Tables R1704, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2003-2007. *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, 2007, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007, 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 unavailable due to small population or sample sizes.

- ◆ In 2007, 17% of Rhode Island children under age 18 lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, an increase from 15% in 2006. In 2007, 42% of Hispanic children, 26% of Black children, and 29% of Asian children in Rhode Island lived in poor families, compared with 12% of White children.<sup>21,22</sup>
- ◆ In 2007 in Rhode Island, one-third of Black, Hispanic and Native American households owned their homes, compared with approximately half of Asian households and two-thirds of White households.<sup>23</sup>
- ◆ 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.<sup>24</sup>
- ◆ 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

## Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
<b>Women with Delayed Prenatal Care</b>	10.6%	16.3%	19.2%	21.1%	19.7%	12.1%
<b>Preterm Births</b>	11.5%	13.3%	14.8%	13.8%	17.2%	12.0%
<b>Infants Born Low Birthweight</b>	7.6%	8.3%	11.1%	9.6%	13.8%	8.1%
<b>Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births)</b>	5.5	8.3	12.1	6.6	11.4	6.3
<b>Asthma Hospitalizations (per 1,000 children)</b>	3.1	6.4	9.6	2.2	0.5	4.0
<b>Births to Teens Ages 15 – 19 (per 1,000 teens)</b>	30.2	100.1	80.2	30.1	125.0	31.1

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database 2003-2007 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, 2003-2007. For *Asthma Hospitalizations* the denominators are the child population under age 18 by race from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF1. For *Births to Teens* the denominators are the female populations ages 15-19 by race from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, SF3. NA indicates that the data are unavailable 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 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 as teenagers, followed by Hispanic and then Black teens.<sup>27</sup>
- ◆ 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.<sup>28</sup> Nationally, Blacks and Native Americans are the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have asthma.<sup>29</sup>
- ◆ In 2006 in the U.S., 7% of White non-Hispanic children under age 18 were not covered by health insurance, compared with 22% of Hispanic children, 14% of Black children and 11% of Asian children.<sup>30</sup> Nationally in 2006, Hispanic adults were the least likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have continuous health insurance coverage, even when a family member had full-time employment and after adjusting for income level.<sup>31</sup>

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities

## Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
<b>Juveniles at the Training School*</b> (per 1,000 males ages 14-19)	2.7	13.7	32.5	7.4	8.5	6.1
<b>Children of Incarcerated Parents</b> (per 1,000 children)	8.6	21.1	83.5	2.9	8.9	14.0
<b>Children in Out of Home Placement</b> (per 1,000 children)	8.5	17.8	36.7	8.3	16.9	10.7

\*Not comparable with previous Factbooks due to a change in methodology.

Sources: *Juveniles at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, January 1, 2009 (includes only male adjudicated youth). *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2008 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, RIC HIST Database, December 31, 2008. 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.**<sup>32</sup>

◆ **Minority children account for 55% of children in foster care despite making up only 33% of the total child population in the U.S. The greatest disparities exist for Black children who account for 15% of the U.S. child population and 38% of children in foster care. 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 families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families under similar circumstances to be reported for child abuse and neglect and to have their children removed.**<sup>33</sup>

◆ **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 federal, state and local policies would reduce child maltreatment and juvenile offending rates, policies that work directly to reduce racial and ethnic disparities are necessary as well.**<sup>34</sup>

## Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
<b>4th Grade Students Reading at or above Proficiency</b>	76%	47%	54%	70%	44%	68%
<b>8th Grade Students Reading at or above Proficiency</b>	73%	40%	45%	72%	46%	65%
<b>Students Attending Schools Making Insufficient Progress</b>	16%	56%	50%	37%	30%	27%
<b>High School Graduation Rates*</b>	78%	62%	64%	74%	63%	74%
<b>% of Adults over Age 25 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>	31%	12%	17%	47%	NA	30%

\*Not comparable with previous Factbooks due to a change in methodology.

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2007-2008 school year or the October 2008 NECAP (Reading Proficiency) unless otherwise noted. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2007, Tables B15002, B15002A, B15002B, B15002C, B15002D & B15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanics may also be included in any of the race categories. NA indicates that data are unavailable 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 and less likely to graduate from high school than White and Asian children.**<sup>35</sup> Black and Hispanic adults living in Rhode Island in 2007 were less likely to have a bachelor's degree than White or Asian adults.<sup>36</sup>

◆ **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.**<sup>37</sup> In Rhode Island, over-representation of Black and Hispanic students occurs most often in the disability categories of learning disabilities, emotional disturbances and other health impairments.<sup>38</sup>

◆ **According to the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, during the 2007-2008 school year Rhode Island's Hispanic and Black children were more than three times more likely to attend schools making insufficient progress than White children.**<sup>39</sup>



## Rhode Island's Hispanic Children

◆ In 2007, there were 42,382 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 34,924 in 2000. Hispanic children made up 18% of Rhode Island's child population in 2007, compared with 14% in 2000.<sup>40,41</sup>

◆ More than three-quarters (78%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island live in Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence.<sup>42</sup> While Providence has the largest population of Hispanics overall, they are most densely concentrated in Central Falls.<sup>43</sup>

### Economics

◆ Forty-two percent of Hispanic children were living in poverty in 2007 in Rhode Island, compared to the national rate of 27%.<sup>44</sup> In 2000, Rhode Island Hispanics had the lowest median family income of all Hispanics in the U.S.<sup>45</sup> In 2007, the median family income for Hispanics was \$37,608, compared to \$70,187 overall in Rhode Island.<sup>46</sup>

### Health

◆ In Rhode Island between 2003 and 2007, 16% percent of Hispanic women who gave birth received delayed prenatal care, compared with 12% of all races. Hispanic female teens between the ages of 15 and 19 in Rhode Island have a birth rate that is more than three times as high as the state rate overall (100.1 per 1,000 teens ages 15-19 compared to 31.1 per 1,000).<sup>47,48</sup>

### Education

◆ Hispanics in Rhode Island have lower educational attainment levels than the population overall. In the 2007-2008 school year, the high school graduation rate for Hispanic youth was 62%, the lowest of any racial/ethnic group in the state and lower than the overall Rhode Island high school graduation rate of 74%.<sup>49</sup>

◆ In 2007, 12% of Hispanics 25 years of age and older in Rhode Island held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30% of all Rhode Islanders.<sup>50</sup> Hispanic immigrants in Rhode Island are more likely to have less than a high school education and also are more likely to have a college degree or higher than Hispanics born in the U.S.<sup>51</sup>

## References

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3. Tables P8 & P145I.
- <sup>2,5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007. Table S0901 Children Characteristics.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007. ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2007.
- <sup>4</sup> Acevedo-Garcia, D., McArdle, N., Osypuk, T. L., Lefkowitz, B. & Krimgold, B. K. (2007). *Children left behind: How metropolitan areas are failing America's children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard School of Public Health & Center for the Advancement of Health.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 1.
- <sup>7</sup> Providence Plan analysis of U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000 data.
- <sup>8</sup> 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.
- <sup>9,21</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006 & 2007. Table R1704.
- <sup>10,22</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007. Tables R1704, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I.
- <sup>11</sup> Mouw, T. & Entwisle, B. (2006). Residential segregation and interracial friendship in schools. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(2), 394-441.
- <sup>12</sup> Orfield, G. (2009). *Reviving the goal of an integrated society: A 21st Century challenge*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at University of California Los Angeles.
- <sup>13</sup> Iceland, J., Weinberg, D. H., & Steinmetz, E. (2002). *Racial and ethnic residential segregation in the United States 1980 - 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- <sup>14</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2009). *Comparisons by topic: children in immigrant families: Percent: 2007*. Retrieved February 27, 2009 from www.kidscount.org/datacenter
- <sup>15,16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007. Tables B05003 & B05009.
- <sup>17,19</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). *Profiles by region: Rhode Island*. Retrieved February 20, 2009 from www.kidscount.org/datacenter
- <sup>18,20</sup> Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2006 American Community Survey Data.
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007. Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I.
- <sup>24</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Tables P46, PCT70A, PCT70B, PCT70C, PCT70D & PCT70H.
- <sup>25</sup> 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.
- <sup>26,27,28</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, 2003-2007. Data for 2007 are provisional.
- <sup>29,31</sup> Mead, H., Cartwright-Smith, L., Jones, K., Ramos, C. Woods, K. & Siegel, B. (2008). *Racial and ethnic disparities in U.S. health care: A chartbook*. New York, NY: The Commonwealth Fund.
- <sup>30</sup> Child Trends Data Bank. (n.d.). *Health care coverage*. Retrieved February 27, 2009 from www.childtrendsdatabank.org
- <sup>32</sup> *A road map for juvenile justice reform: 2008 KIDS COUNT essay summary*. (2008). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>33</sup> Stukes Chipungu, S., & Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2004). Meeting the challenges of contemporary foster care. *The Future of Children*, 14(1), 75-93.
- <sup>34</sup> *Racial and ethnic disparity and disproportionality in child welfare and juvenile justice: A compendium*. (2009). Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform & Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- <sup>35,36</sup> Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, October 2008.

(continued on page 152)