

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook: What's New in 2005

Overweight Children and Youth → defined as the percentage of children ages 6 to 19 with weight above the 95th percentile for their height, age and gender. Children between the 85th and 95th percentiles are considered “at risk” for overweight.

- ★ Overweight causes hypertension, heart disease, stroke, asthma, sleep apnea, type II diabetes and orthopedic problems. Overweight children are susceptible to psychosocial problems that include depression, low self-esteem and negative self-image.
- ★ The increase in overweight children over the past four decades cuts across all racial, ethnic and economic groups, but some groups are at higher risk (Hispanic, Black and Native American children).
- ★ In 2001 in Rhode Island, 20% of children ages 6 to 19 were overweight, higher than the national rate of 16%.
- ★ According to the SALT survey, 10% of high school students were overweight in 2003, while 44% were trying to lose weight.

Early Intervention → defined as the percentage of children under age 3 who have an active Individual Family Service Plan through a Rhode Island Early Intervention.

- ★ During the first few years of life, children develop the linguistic, cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral capabilities that are the foundation for subsequent development. IDEA, Part C requires states to identify and provide appropriate EI services to children from birth through age 2 who are developmentally delayed or have a physical or mental condition with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.
- ★ During 2004 in Rhode Island, 2,870 children received EI services. This is 8% of the 37,775 RI children under age 3.
- ★ In 2003, 812 children were discharged from RI's EI program upon reaching age 3. Of these children, 594 (73%) were referred to the local school district to continue necessary special education services. 158 children (19%) achieved their goal, 49 (6%) refused service and 11 (1%) were discharged for unknown reasons.
- ★ Distribution by eligibility was predominantly (58%) significant developmental delay. The next largest eligibility was single established mental or physical condition at 25%.

Early Head Start → defined as the percentage of eligible children under age 3 enrolled in a RI Early Head Start program as of October 2004.

- ★ Early Head Start promotes health prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, supports the early care and education of infants and toddlers younger than age three and fosters healthy familial relationships while building community resources.
- ★ During 2004 in Rhode Island, there were 6 Early Head Start Programs serving 31 pregnant women and 379 infants and toddlers received Early Head Start services. This represents 5% of the income-eligible children younger than age 3 in RI.

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Accredited Early Care and Education → defined as the percentage of nationally-accredited child care centers, private preschools and family child care homes.

- ★ Child care centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Family child care homes are accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).
- ★ Research on early care and education reveals associations between the quality of the program and children's developing skills and well-being.
- ★ Nationally and in Rhode Island the percentage of nationally-accredited centers, pre-schools and family child care homes is low. In January 2005 in Rhode Island, 12 of the 67 (18%) of the part-day programs in RI were accredited; 27 of the 274 (10%) of the full-day programs were accredited; and 7 of the 1,316 (1%) family child care homes were accredited/certified. There are currently no incentives in Rhode Island for centers, private preschools or family child care home to seek accreditation.

Math Skills → defined as the percentage of 4th and 8th grade students who scored at or above the proficiency level for math on the *New Standards Reference Exam* in 2004. The exam consists of three parts: *Skills*, *Concepts* and *Problem Solving*. Reported here are the overall score on the exam and data from the *Problem Solving* sub-test.

- ★ In 2004, 51% of RI 4th graders and 40% of 8th graders scored at or above proficiency in math. In the six core cities, all races of fourth and eighth grade students scored below the state average.
- ★ There exists a concerning decline in performance for all races between fourth and eighth grade. This decline is also consistent across economic status and presence of a disability.
- ★ In 2004, 39% of RI 4th graders and 33% of 8th graders scored at or above proficiency in problem solving. Monitoring problem solving performance is particularly important as assessments show that students may fare well when asked to perform straightforward computational procedures, but have limited mathematical skills needed to solve simple problems.

Alcohol, Drug and Cigarette Use → This year includes a new city and town table that looks at middle and high school student reports of alcohol, drug and cigarette use.

- ★ Students in the core cities generally reported lower rates of alcohol, drug and cigarette use than all students statewide at both the middle school and high school levels.
 - 21% of middle school students and 44% of high school students in RI reported using alcohol in the previous month.
 - One in ten middle school student and more than one in four high school students in RI reported using illegal drugs such as marijuana, uppers or downers.
 - 9% of middle school students and 23% of high school students in RI reported using cigarettes in the previous month.

Additional Children's Health → This year discusses developmental assets in young people. Adolescent risk behaviors such as substance use, eating disorders and dropping out of school, can be lessened or prevented by protective factors, sometimes referred to as "developmental assets."

Included in these pages are a list of 40 Developmental Assets from the Search Institute, a look at selected protective factors for Rhode Island high school students and a brief look at the role of assets in substance abuse prevention.