



**Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**  
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**Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Presents:**  
***Warwick Data in Your Backyard***

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**Warwick, RI, September 28, 2005** - Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst, Kat Keenan will present data from the *2005 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook* to an audience of community and advocacy leaders. As part of the *Data in Your Backyard Series*, the presentation will include indicators of child well-being in Warwick and a community discussion about the data's implications. The presentation will take place on **September 28th from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI.**

The data reveals that Warwick is doing well in many of the health and education indicators. In 1999-2003, the teen birth rate was 9.7 births per every 1,000 teen girls ages 15-17, a decrease of 15% since the previous five year period of 1998-2002. The percentage of women receiving delayed prenatal care has declined over the last decade to 5.0% and remains lower than the state rate of 8.9%. In education in 2004, 82% of Warwick 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored at or above proficiency in reading for *Basic Understanding*; 73% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Warwick scored at or above proficiency in reading for *Analysis and Interpretation*. Warwick's 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores were higher than the state levels in both categories. In 2004, Warwick made significant improvement in the percentage of schools classified as high performing increasing from 9 in 2003 to 19 in 2004. However, Warwick has significantly low rates of children enrolled in full-day kindergarten at 6%, compared to 45% for the state. Research shows that children in full-day kindergarten benefit academically and are more likely to be ready for first grade than children in half-day kindergarten.

While Warwick has reason to celebrate the progress it has made in many of the health and education indicators of child well-being there is room for

improvement in the area of economic well-being. According to *Census 2000*, 6.7% of all children in Warwick under age 18 lived below 100% of the federal poverty threshold (\$19,157 for a family of four). Research shows that families who live just over the federal poverty threshold also struggle to make ends meet. One in five children in Warwick under age 18 live below 200% of the federal poverty threshold (\$38,314 for a family of four). The number of people seeking emergency shelter who claim Warwick as their last city of residence increased from 161 people in 2002 to 223 people in 2004. There was a 12% increase in the cost of rent for Warwick in the last year. Family homelessness continues to be a problem across the state, with 1,325 Rhode Island children receiving housing in emergency or domestic violence shelters last year. Research shows that inadequate, costly or crowded housing has a negative impact on children's health, safety, emotional well-being and education.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT commented, "The city of Warwick has a track record of leadership on children's health and education issues. The trends in health and education indicators in Warwick are encouraging. But there is still work to do. Over the past several years, the rising cost of rent in Warwick and other communities across the state is resulting in increased need for emergency shelter. Families that spend more than one-third of their income on rent are likely to go without other basic necessities, such as food, medicine or clothing in order to pay their rent. We need to continue our wise investments in the creation and rehabilitation of affordable housing in Warwick and across the state. We must also continue to work to ensure that child care and health care continue to be available to families and that community leaders ensure access to support services for families who are struggling to make ends meet."

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve and ensure the economic security, health, safety and education of Rhode Island children.