

# Children Enrolled in Early Head Start

## DEFINITION

*Children enrolled in Early Head Start* is the number and percentage of low-income infants and toddlers enrolled in a Rhode Island Early Head Start program.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Early Head Start is an intensive, comprehensive early childhood program serving low-income children birth to age three, pregnant women, and their families. Early Head Start programs serve families with the greatest needs, including families living in or near poverty and families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The federally-funded Early Head Start program is designed to address the comprehensive needs of low-income infants and toddlers and pregnant women by providing high-quality early education, nutrition and mental health services, health and developmental screenings and referrals, and fostering the development of healthy family relationships.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start are assessed for risks to a successful pregnancy. Individualized plans are developed to support prenatal health, promote healthy behaviors, and prepare for the baby's arrival. After the baby is born, families participate by enrolling in either a center-based or a home-based program. Home-based

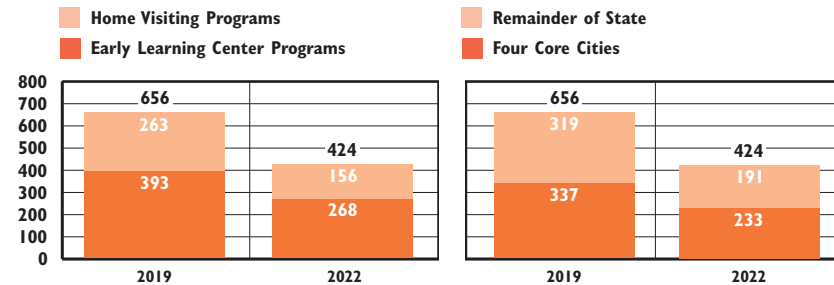
programs use weekly home visits and twice-monthly group meetings to support child development. Children in center-based models attend a center-based early care and education program and families receive at least two home visits per year. Some provide a combination of home-based and center-based services.<sup>4,5</sup>

Federal funding for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships layers Early Head Start resources on top of the child care subsidy program to provide comprehensive and continuous services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families.<sup>6</sup>

Early Head Start has been shown to produce significant cognitive, language, and social-emotional gains in participating children and more positive interactions with their parents. Early Head Start parents provide more emotional support, more opportunities for language development, read more to their children, are less likely to use physical discipline, and are more likely to create a stimulating environment at home. Early Head Start parents are less likely to experience depression and more likely to be self-sufficient with higher incomes. Children who enroll in high-quality preschool after Early Head Start have better outcomes at kindergarten entry.<sup>7,8</sup>



## Early Head Start Enrollment, 2019 and 2022



Source: Rhode Island Early Head Start program reports to Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, October 2019 and 2022.

- ◆ As of October 2022 in Rhode Island, there were 424 individuals (412 infants and toddlers and 12 pregnant women) enrolled in Early Head Start, down 35% from 656 individuals in 2019. An estimated 3% of the infants and toddlers in low-income families in Rhode Island were enrolled.<sup>9,10</sup>
- ◆ Of the 424 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start in 2022, 268 (63%) were participating in a home visiting program and 156 (37%) were enrolled in a licensed early learning center. Three percent of Early Head Start clients were pregnant women, 18% were infants under age one, 32% were age one, 43% were age two, and 4% were age three.<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ In 2022, Rhode Island Early Head Start programs served children with high needs including: 49 infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities (12% of all children enrolled), 11 children who were in foster care, and six children who were homeless. Early Head Start programs are required to enroll children with disabilities and to screen all enrolled children to identify developmental delays and disabilities.<sup>12,13</sup>
- ◆ As of October 2022, 22% of the children enrolled in Early Head Start were also participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) through the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and to provide wrap-around hours for working parents.<sup>14,15</sup>

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Table 33.

## Children Ages Birth to Three and Pregnant Women Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2022

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF CHILDREN <AGE 3	% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN DISTRICT	ESTIMATED # LOW-INCOME CHILDREN <AGE 3	# ENROLLED IN HOME-BASED EARLY HEAD START	# ENROLLED IN CENTER-BASED EARLY HEAD START	# ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START	ESTIMATED % OF LOW-INCOME INFANTS AND TODDLERS ENROLLED IN EARLY HEAD START
Barrington	366	6%	23	0	0	0	0%
Bristol	507	29%	145	0	0	0	0%
Burrillville	460	32%	147	2	2	4	3%
Central Falls	1,028	96%	982	34	16	50	5%
Charlestown	186	17%	32	0	0	0	0%
Coventry	940	28%	267	3	0	3	1%
Cranston	2,318	39%	898	4	18	22	2%
Cumberland	970	18%	177	1	0	1	1%
East Greenwich	299	7%	21	0	3	3	14%
East Providence	1,560	47%	727	1	8	9	1%
Exeter	166	14%	23	0	0	0	0%
Foster	113	31%	35	0	0	0	0%
Glocester	247	13%	33	0	2	2	6%
Hopkinton	258	17%	45	2	0	2	4%
Jamestown	85	7%	6	0	0	0	0%
Johnston	816	43%	349	9	4	13	4%
Lincoln	587	25%	146	0	0	0	0%
Little Compton	68	12%	8	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	502	34%	170	1	2	3	2%
Narragansett	271	14%	37	0	0	0	0%
New Shoreham	21	12%	2	0	0	0	0%
Newport	820	63%	516	9	14	23	4%
North Kingstown	728	22%	157	2	1	3	2%
North Providence	851	40%	336	13	5	18	5%
North Smithfield	290	18%	52	0	1	1	2%
Pawtucket	2,959	61%	1,816	20	4	24	1%
Portsmouth	429	13%	58	0	1	1	2%
Providence	7,609	77%	5,885	120	28	148	3%
Richmond	235	17%	41	0	0	0	0%
Scituate	193	14%	26	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	402	14%	57	0	1	1	2%
South Kingstown	640	17%	111	5	7	12	11%
Tiverton	398	22%	86	1	0	1	1%
Warren	296	29%	85	2	1	3	4%
Warwick	2,322	34%	800	31	16	47	6%
West Greenwich	178	14%	25	0	0	0	0%
West Warwick	1,044	51%	533	6	10	16	3%
Westerly	726	32%	231	2	1	3	1%
Woonsocket	1,900	77%	1,460	0	11	11	1%
Four Core Cities	13,496	75%	10,139	174	59	233	2%
Remainder of State	20,292	29%	5,843	94	97	191	3%
Rhode Island	33,788	45%	15,269	268	156	424	3%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2022. Children enrolled are listed by residence of child, not location of the Head Start program.

The estimated number of low-income children under age three is based on the number of children under age 3 according to Census 2010, Summary File 1 multiplied by the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (at or below 185% of the federal poverty level) in each city or town's school district. Free and reduced-price lunch data are from Rhode Island Department of Education, 2022-2023 school year.

Due to changes in methodology, the percentage of children enrolled in Early Head Start should not be compared with previous Factbooks.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

### References

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2020). *Early Head Start programs*. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Eligibility: Determining need and meeting expectations*. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

<sup>3,7</sup> Shaffner, M. & Cole, P. (2021). *Early Head Start: An essential support for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2018). *Services to pregnant women and expectant families in Early Head Start*. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2018). *Early Head Start program options*. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

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