



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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#RIFactbook

## **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Releases 27th Annual *Factbook* Focusing on the Status of Rhode Island's Children**

*Annual Factbook charts improvements and declines in the well-being of Rhode Island's 203,575 children. The Factbook allows us to assess how Rhode Island effectively supports children's development and where we need to focus increased attention*

*Low-income families and Families of Color in marginalized communities have been hit hardest both by the COVID-19 pandemic itself and the resulting economic impact, which have exacerbated longstanding racial and ethnic disparities. Now is the time to ensure that families have the support they need to recover and thrive as we turn the curve on the pandemic.*

Providence, RI (May 6, 2021) –Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will release its twenty-seventh annual report on the well-being of Rhode Island's children and families on Monday, May 10, 2021 from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. via Zoom. The **2021 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook** charts improvements and declines in the well-being of Rhode Island's 203,575 children. Data are presented for the state and for each of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns. The *Factbook* indicators are grouped into five interrelated categories: family and community, economic well-being, health, safety, and education. There are a total of 70 indicators of child well-being in the *2021 Factbook*.

"Healthy, well-educated children and strong families are the foundation of Rhode Island's well-being," said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. "Too many Rhode Island families were struggling to survive economically before the pandemic. Now that we are turning the curve on the pandemic, we need to ensure that long-term supports are in place that will yield the best outcomes for Rhode Island's children and families, particularly the most vulnerable who were hardest hit by the pandemic and the resulting economic impact. "

"The *Factbook* allows us to take stock of how Rhode Island effectively supports our children's development and where we need to focus increased attention and efforts. Unacceptable gaps continue to exist between Children of Color and white children in nearly every *Factbook* indicator. These gaps have persisted because of systemic racism and barriers to opportunity that must be addressed and dismantled to ensure that every child can succeed. The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on stark economic, education, and other disparities and challenges to children's success. We call on lawmakers to prioritize equitable solutions to ensure that children and families can move forward with the health, educational, and economic supports they need to thrive," she said.

Bryant concluded, "The data and policy analysis from the *Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook* provides the base of information we need to advocate for policies and investments that will improve child outcomes. To support families through the pandemic and beyond, we need to make important, cost effective investments in child care, RI Works, affordable housing, children's behavioral health, mental health professionals in schools, support for Multilingual learners, out-of-school-time programs, health insurance coverage for all children, including undocumented children, doula services as a strategy to improve Black maternal outcomes, and supports and services for youth in the Voluntary Extension of Care program who are aging out of DCYF care. Working together we can ensure that children and families reach their full potential and lead the way for Rhode Island's future success."

## **A Virtual Gathering for The *Factbook* Release**

Over 300 people are registered to attend the *Factbook* release event, including Governor Dan McKee, Senator Jack Reed, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Congressman James Langevin, Congressman David Cicilline, Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi, Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, General Assembly members, policymakers, and community leaders from education, health, and human services. The event will take place [via Zoom](#).

**Geoffrey Canada, President of Harlem Children's Zone**, will give keynote remarks. **Rhode Island Deputy Youth Poetry Ambassador Eugenie Rose Belony** – a Rhode Island high school student at Providence Career & Technical Academy – will recite her poem *I Am Black*. Every year at the release event, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT presents the *Factbook* to a community leader who is working to make things better for children and families. This year, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will recognize and present a *Factbook* to **Marcela Betancur, Executive Director of the Latino Policy Institute**, and thank her for her leadership.

## **The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rhode Island Children**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has been focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the toll it has taken on Rhode Island children and families, particularly our most vulnerable children and families. Low-income families and Families of Color in marginalized communities have been hit hardest both by the disease itself and the resulting economic impact, which have exacerbated longstanding racial and ethnic disparities.

In this year's *Factbook*, we highlight the impact of the pandemic on Rhode Island children and families' economic well-being, physical and mental health, safety, access to education, and educational outcomes as well as the strategies that the federal government, state government, and community agencies have put in place to support Rhode Island children and families during the pandemic.

COVID-19 has taken a serious toll on child and family well-being in very concrete, tangible ways. Many families have weathered unemployment and associated financial stress, food and housing insecurity; and the continuing need for stable, affordable child care as parents balance work and caring for children. Over the past year, for many children and youth, access to in-person learning was replaced by distance learning/hybrid learning – a new venture for educators, students, and families. Children's mental health and the needs of children and youth in the child welfare system are other key areas of focus.

## **Persistent, Unacceptable Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Child Outcomes**

Throughout the *Factbook*, data on racial and ethnic disparities are presented in as many indicators as possible and summarized in the Racial and Ethnic Disparities indicator. Collecting and reporting on data disaggregated by race and ethnicity is an important first step to identifying ways to eliminate them. Data on disparities and information about the historical and systemic racism that has resulted in these disparities can be used to identify policies to dismantle racism and reduce and eliminate disparities.

Please see the accompanying Executive Summary for more detailed information on trends observed in the *Factbook* indicators.

Some of the *Factbook* indicators are particularly relevant to moving forward to strengthen families emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing longstanding racial and ethnic inequities:

- **Family and Community**

- Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren...*Factbook pages 12-13*
- Racial and Ethnic Diversity... *Factbook pages 16-17*
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities... *Factbook pages 18-21*
- **Economic Well-Being**
  - Cost of Housing...*Factbook pages 26-27*
  - Secure Parental Employment...*Factbook pages 30-31*
  - Paid Family Leave...*Factbook pages 32-33*
  - Children in Poverty...*Factbook pages 36-39*
  - Children Receiving SNAP Benefits...*Factbook pages 44-45*
  - Women and Children Participating in WIC...*Factbook pages 46-47*
  - Children Participating in School Breakfast....*Factbook pages 48-49*
- **Health**
  - Children’s Health Insurance...*Factbook pages 52-53*
  - Children’s Mental Health...*Factbook pages 58-59*
  - Children With Special Needs...*Factbook pages 60-61*
  - Women with Delayed Prenatal Care....*Factbook pages 66-67*
- **Safety**
  - Youth Referred to Family Court...*Factbook pages .96-97*
  - Youth in the Juvenile Justice System....*Factbook pages 98-101*
  - Children Witnessing Domestic Violence...*Factbook pages 104-105*
  - Child Abuse and Neglect...*Factbook pages 106-109*
  - Children in Out-of-Home Placement...*Factbook pages 110-111*
  - Permanency for Children in DCYF Care....*Factbook pages 112-113*
- **Education**
  - Licensed Capacity of Early Learning Programs...*Factbook pages 120-121*
  - Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies...*Factbook pages 122-123*
  - High Quality Early Learning Programs...*Factbook pages 124-127*
  - Public School Enrollment and Demographics...*Factbook pages 134-135*
  - Multilingual Learners/English Learners...*Factbook pages 140-141*
  - Chronic Early Absence....*Factbook pages 154-155*
  - College Preparation and Access....*Factbook pages 162-163*

*Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education, and development of Rhode Island children, with a core focus on equity.*