

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

Established in 1995, Early Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program serving low-income children birth to age three, pregnant women, and their families with incomes below the federal poverty level (\$21,720 for a family of three in 2020).^{1,2,3} 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, medical and dental screenings and referrals, and fostering the development of healthy family relationships.⁴

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.⁵ 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 to support child development and twice-monthly group meetings. Children in center-based models attend a center-based early care and education program and families

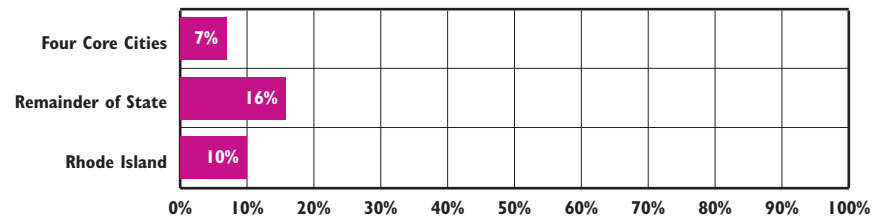
receive at least two home visits per year. Some provide a combination of home-based and center-based services.⁶

As of October 2019, of the 678 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 374 (55%) were enrolled in home-based services and 304 (45%) were in center-based programs.⁷ An Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant awarded in 2015 created 100 new center-based Early Head Start slots in Rhode Island through partnerships with child care programs to increase the number of infants and toddlers enrolled.^{8,9}

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 and more opportunities for language development and learning to their children at home and are more likely to be involved in preschool. Early Head Start parents are less likely to experience depression and more likely to be self-sufficient (higher incomes). Children who enroll in high-quality preschool after Early Head Start have better outcomes at kindergarten entry.^{10,11}

As of October 2019, there were 664 infants and toddlers and 14 pregnant women receiving Early Head Start in Rhode Island, and 167 pregnant women and children on the waiting list.¹²

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Estimated Percentage of Eligible Infants and Toddlers Enrolled in Early Head Start, 2019



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using Early Head Start program enrollment October 2019 as the numerator and number of children under age three from Census 2010, Summary File 1 multiplied by the percentage of children under age six living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level according to the Population Reference Bureau's (PRB) analysis of 2014-2018 American Community Survey data as the denominator.

◆ **As of October 2019 in Rhode Island, there were 678 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 10% of the population in poverty and 5% of the population in low-income families. There were 344 children and pregnant women from the four core cities (7% of the population in poverty and 5% of the population in low-income families). In the remainder of the state, 334 children and pregnant women were enrolled in Early Head Start (16% of the population in poverty and 6% of the population in low-income families).**^{13,14}

◆ **As of October 2019, 2% of Early Head Start clients were pregnant women, 19% were infants under age one, 31% were age one, 39% were toddlers age two, and 9% were age three.**¹⁵

◆ **Rhode Island Early Head Start programs serve significant numbers of children with high needs including: 100 infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities (15% of all children enrolled), 45 children who were in foster care, and 33 children who were homeless.**¹⁶ Early Head Start programs are required to prioritize enrollment for children with special needs and to screen all enrolled children to identify developmental delays and disabilities.¹⁷

◆ **As of October 2019, 37% of the children enrolled in Early Head Start were also participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).**¹⁸ Center-based Early Head Start programs do not cover the entire day for many working parents. CCAP is used to extend program hours to cover the work day.¹⁹

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Table 34.

Children Ages Birth to Three and Pregnant Women Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2019

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ESTIMATED # 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	573	4%	23	1	0	1	4%
Bristol Warren	729	30%	219	4	2	6	3%
Burrillville	441	34%	150	4	8	12	8%
Central Falls	651	95%	618	37	31	68	11%
Chariho	663	17%	113	5	2	7	6%
Coventry	831	29%	241	6	9	15	6%
Cranston	2,019	44%	888	0	22	22	2%
Cumberland	987	21%	207	0	3	3	1%
East Greenwich	489	6%	29	3	0	3	10%
East Providence	1,086	45%	489	13	13	26	5%
Exeter- West Greenwich	333	14%	47	1	0	1	2%
Foster	123	25%	31	0	0	0	0%
Glocester	300	12%	36	0	1	1	0%
Jamestown	102	7%	7	0	1	1	14%
Johnston	669	44%	294	7	6	13	4%
Lincoln	687	28%	192	0	3	3	2%
Little Compton	54	13%	7	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	468	28%	131	9	14	23	18%
Narragansett	183	21%	38	1	0	1	3%
New Shoreham	33	21%	7	0	0	0	0%
Newport	516	68%	351	15	29	44	13%
North Kingstown	777	22%	171	8	2	10	6%
North Providence	765	47%	360	16	10	26	7%
North Smithfield	300	17%	51	0	0	0	0%
Pawtucket	1,968	72%	1,417	33	31	64	5%
Portsmouth	417	17%	71	4	1	5	7%
Providence	5,037	84%	4,231	164	32	196	5%
Scituate	279	11%	31	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	462	14%	65	3	2	5	8%
South Kingstown	552	17%	94	4	3	7	7%
Tiverton	417	21%	88	0	0	0	0%
Warwick	1,914	35%	670	19	36	55	8%
West Warwick	792	51%	404	13	26	39	10%
Westerly	582	35%	204	4	1	5	2%
Woonsocket	1,452	75%	1,089	0	16	16	1%
Charter Schools	2,442	62%	1,514	NA	NA	NA	NA
RI School for the Deaf	21	70%	15	NA	NA	NA	NA
Four Core Cities	9,108	81%	7,377	234	110	344	5%
Remainder of State	18,543	30%	5,563	140	194	334	6%
Rhode Island	30,114	48%	14,455	374	304	678	5%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2019. 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 in each school district is based on October 2019 kindergarten enrollment (3x kindergarten enrollment) multiplied by the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (at or below 185% of the federal poverty level).

Due to changes in methodology, the percentage of children enrolled in Early Head Start should not be compared with Factbooks prior to 2018.

Charter Schools with kindergarten include: Achievement First Rhode Island, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Highlander Charter School, Hope Academy, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, and South Side Elementary Charter School.

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

References

- ¹⁶ Vogel, C. A., et al. (2015). *Toddlers in Early Head Start: A portrait of 2-year-olds, their families, and the programs serving them*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation.
- ² *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, § 42 U.S.C. 9801, § 645 (2007).
- ³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). Annual update of the HHS poverty guidelines. *Federal Register*, 85(12), 3060-3061.
- ⁴ Cosse, R. (2017). *Early Head Start participants, programs, families, and staff in 2016*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Services to pregnant women participating in Early Head Start*. Retrieved March 11, 2019, from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>

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