

# 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 (\$21,960 for a family of three in 2021).<sup>1,2,3</sup> 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>4</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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

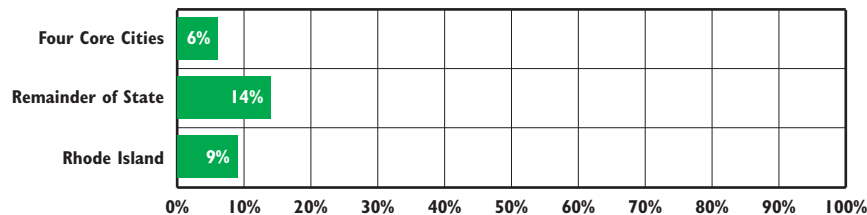
As of October 2020, of the 537 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 324 (60%) were enrolled in home-based services and 213 (40%) were in center-based programs.<sup>7</sup> Federal funding for Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships layers Early Head Start resources on top of the child care subsidy program to provide comprehensive and continuous services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families.<sup>8</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 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.<sup>9,10</sup>

As of October 2020, there were 526 infants and toddlers and 11 pregnant women receiving Early Head Start in Rhode Island.<sup>11</sup>



**Estimated Percentage of Eligible Infants and Toddlers Enrolled in Early Head Start, 2020**



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using Early Head Start program enrollment October 2020 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 2015-2019 American Community Survey data as the denominator.

◆ As of October 2020 in Rhode Island, there were 537 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 9% of the population in poverty and 3% of the population in low-income families, a decline from 678 children and pregnant women in 2019. There were 281 children and pregnant women from the four core cities (6% of the population in poverty and 3% of the population in low-income families) and 256 children and pregnant women from the remainder of the state (14% of the population in poverty and 4% of the population in low-income families).<sup>12,13,14</sup>

◆ As of October 2020, 2% of Early Head Start clients were pregnant women, 20% were infants under age one, 36% were age one, 36% were toddlers age two, and 6% were age three.<sup>15</sup>

◆ Rhode Island Early Head Start programs served significant numbers of children with high needs including: 84 infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities (16% of all children enrolled), 41 children who were in foster care, and 21 children who were homeless.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

◆ As of October 2020, 25% of the children enrolled in Early Head Start were also participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup>

# Children Enrolled in Early Head Start

Table 34.

## Children Ages Birth to Three and Pregnant Women Enrolled in Early Head Start, Rhode Island, 2020

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF CHILDREN UNDER <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	4%	15	3	0	3	20%
Bristol	507	28%	142	2	0	2	1%
Burrillville	460	35%	161	2	7	9	6%
Central Falls	1,028	87%	894	19	24	43	5%
Charlestown	186	19%	35	2	0	2	6%
Coventry	940	29%	273	6	4	10	4%
Cranston	2,318	42%	974	0	21	21	2%
Cumberland	970	20%	194	6	0	6	3%
East Greenwich	299	5%	15	1	0	1	7%
East Providence	1,560	51%	796	9	13	22	3%
Exeter	166	11%	18	2	1	3	16%
Foster	113	25%	28	0	0	0	0%
Glocester	247	11%	27	0	1	1	4%
Hopkinton	258	19%	49	1	0	1	2%
Jamestown	85	5%	4	0	1	1	24%
Johnston	816	42%	343	6	2	8	2%
Lincoln	587	27%	158	0	0	0	0%
Little Compton	68	14%	10	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	502	27%	136	7	7	14	10%
Narragansett	271	16%	43	2	1	3	7%
New Shoreham	21	17%	4	0	0	0	0%
Newport	820	70%	574	8	27	35	6%
North Kingstown	728	20%	146	2	2	4	3%
North Providence	851	45%	383	17	9	26	7%
North Smithfield	290	18%	52	0	0	0	0%
Pawtucket	2,959	71%	2,101	31	16	47	2%
Portsmouth	429	14%	60	3	0	3	5%
Providence	7,609	84%	6,392	155	25	180	3%
Richmond	235	19%	45	0	1	1	2%
Scituate	193	11%	21	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	402	9%	36	2	2	4	11%
South Kingstown	640	19%	122	3	2	5	4%
Tiverton	398	24%	96	0	0	0	0%
Warren	296	28%	83	1	2	3	4%
Warwick	2,322	31%	720	19	22	41	6%
West Greenwich	178	11%	20	0	0	0	0%
West Warwick	1,044	52%	543	9	11	20	4%
Westerly	726	34%	247	6	1	7	3%
Woonsocket	1,900	76%	1,444	0	11	11	1%
Four Core Cities	13,496	80%	10,797	205	76	281	3%
Remainder of State	20,292	29%	5,885	119	137	256	4%
Rhode Island	33,788	46%	15,542	324	213	537	3%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2020. 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, October 2020.

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

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- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2020). *Poverty guidelines and determining eligibility for participation in Head Start programs*. Retrieved April 2, 2021, from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov>
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