

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

DEFINITION

Racial and ethnic disparities is the gap that exists in outcomes for children of different racial and ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Child well-being outcome areas include economic well-being, health, safety, and education.

SIGNIFICANCE

Rhode Island's children are diverse in racial and ethnic background. In 2010 in Rhode Island, 1% of children under 18 were American Indian or Native Alaskan, 3% were Asian, 8% were Black or African American, 9% were identified as Some other race, 7% were Two or more races, and 72% were white. In 2010, 21% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.¹

Children who live in poverty, especially those who experience deep poverty in early childhood, are more likely to have health, behavioral, educational, economic, and social problems.^{2,3} Between 2015 and 2019, 17% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty, 72% of whom were Children of Color.⁴

Black, Latino, and Native American children are more likely than Asian and white children to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and face challenges above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty.⁵ In Rhode Island, almost one-third (31%) of Hispanic children live in

concentrated poverty, higher than in any other state.⁶

In 2010, two-thirds (67%) of Rhode Island's Children of Color lived in one of the four core cities (those cities with the highest percentage of children living in poverty), and more than three quarters of the children in Central Falls (87%) and Providence (84%) were Children of Color.⁷

Black-white neighborhood segregation has decreased in the U.S. over the past 50 years, but high levels still exist. Asian and Latino residents also experience high levels of neighborhood segregation, but lower than the rates for Black residents. The Providence-Warwick metropolitan area was the second most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Latino residents between 2015 and 2019.⁸

Long-standing disparities in wealth continue to persist between families in different racial and ethnic groups. In 2019 in the U.S., the median net worth of non-Hispanic white households was eight times higher than that of non-Hispanic Black families and five times higher than that of Hispanic families.⁹ In Rhode Island, Black and Latino families have higher rates of unemployment and earn lower wages than white families.¹⁰ Nationally, Black and Latino households have reported the highest levels of economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹

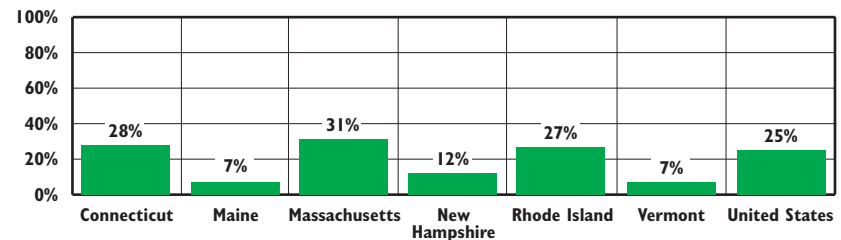


Residential Segregation and Its Impact on Education

- ◆ In the U.S., Black and Latino students have become increasingly segregated from white students over the last 30 years. Black and Latino students generally attend schools in which students are disproportionately Students of Color and high-poverty, while white students attend schools in which students are disproportionately white and low-poverty.^{12,13}
- ◆ Students in schools with high concentrations of low-income students and Students of Color have unequal educational opportunities, with classmates who generally have more absences and lower graduation rates and teachers who have less teaching experience and are more likely to teach outside their subject area of expertise. Students living in poverty often face a host of challenges outside the classroom that can negatively impact academic performance, including inadequate housing, less access to health care, lower parental educational levels, and fewer opportunities for enriching after-school and summer activities.^{14,15}



Percentage of Children Living in Immigrant Families*, New England and United States, 2018-2019



Source: The Urban Institute Children of Immigrants Data Tool, Data from 2018-2019, www.urban.org
 *Percentage reported represents children living in a family with at least one foreign-born parent.

- ◆ Children in immigrant families are defined as children under age 18 living in a family with at least one foreign-born parent. In 2018-2019, 27% (54,000) of Rhode Island children were living in immigrant families.¹⁶
- ◆ Half (50%) of Rhode Island's Hispanic children live in an immigrant family.¹⁷



Economic Well-Being Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE
Children in Poverty	17%	12%	27%	33%	55%	13%
Births to Mothers with <12 Years Education	11%	7%	12%	25%	22%	5%
Unemployment Rate	9.3%	NA	9.4%	15.2%	NA	8.6%
Median Family Income	\$86,258	\$85,378	\$56,681	\$44,704	\$36,447	\$92,986
Homeownership	61%	48%	34%	30%	20%	66%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2015-2019 (race data is non-Hispanic). *Unemployment Rate* data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2020. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanics may be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race. NA indicates that the rate was suppressed because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.

- ◆ Between 2015 and 2019 in Rhode Island, 17% of all children, 55% of Native American children, 33% of Hispanic children, 27% of Black children, 13% of white children, and 12% of Asian children in Rhode Island lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.¹⁸
- ◆ Between 2015 and 2019 in Rhode Island, Native American, Black, and Hispanic households were the most likely to live in rental units, while white households were the most likely to own their homes.¹⁹
- ◆ In 2020 in Rhode Island, the unemployment rate was 15.2% for Hispanic workers, 9.4% for Black workers, and 8.6% for white workers. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 11.4% for Black workers, 10.4% for Hispanic workers, and 7.3% for white workers.²⁰
- ◆ Education is essential for economic success. Adults with less than a high school diploma are at particular risk of living in poverty and other negative outcomes.²¹ Native American, Black, and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are all more likely than Asian and white children to be born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.²²



Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE
Children Without Health Insurance	1.9%	2.0%	4.9%	3.1%	*	1.4%
Women With Delayed or No Prenatal Care	16.1%	17.8%	23.5%	19.0%	21.3%	13.1%
Preterm Births	8.9%	7.7%	11.5%	9.6%	13.7%	8.2%
Low Birthweight Infants	7.7%	7.6%	11.7%	8.1%	11%	6.6%
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	5.4	4.8 [^]	12	6.3	*	3.5
Births to Teens Ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens)	12.4	3.3	14.9	29.5	27.9	6.4

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2015-2019 unless otherwise specified. Race and ethnicity is self-reported. Race data is non-Hispanic, except for *Infant Mortality* where Hispanic can be of any race. *Children Without Health Insurance* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018, Tables B27001, B27001A, B27001B, B27001D & B27001I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanic also may be included in any of the race categories. For *Births to Teens* the denominator is the female population ages 15 to 19 by race and ethnicity from CDC Wonder. Note that the All Races total for *Births to Teens* does not match the Rhode Island total presented by city and town in the *Births to Teens* indicator, which uses American Community Survey data by city and town as the denominator.

*The data are statistically unreliable and rates are not reported and should not be calculated.
[^]The data are statistically unstable and rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution.

- ◆ Although progress has been made on many health indicators across racial and ethnic populations, disparities still exist for a number of maternal and infant health outcomes in Rhode Island. Women of Color are more likely than white women to receive delayed or no prenatal care and to have infants with low birthweight. Native American, Black, and Hispanic women are also more likely to have preterm births than white and Asian women. Black children are more likely to die in infancy than white, Hispanic, or Asian children. Hispanic, Native American, and Black youth are more likely than white and Asian youth to give birth as teenagers.²³
- ◆ Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely to go to the Emergency Department as a result of asthma than white children.²⁴ Nationally, children of two or more races and Black children are the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have asthma.²⁵
- ◆ In 2019, 96% of U.S. children had health insurance coverage. Hispanic (91%) and Native American (86%) children had the lowest rates of coverage.²⁶

Racial and Ethnic Disparities



Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE
Youth at the Training School (per 1,000 youth ages 13-18)	2.4	0.0	10.7	4.7	2.5	1.0
Children of Incarcerated Parents (per 1,000 children)	9.6	1.6	42.2	14.1	35.0	5.6
Children in Out-of-Home Placement (per 1,000 children)	9.1	2.1	19.7	11.8	5.5	6.7

Sources: *Youth at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, Calendar Year 2020. *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2020 and reflect the race of the incarcerated parent (includes only the sentenced population). *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST Database, December 31, 2020. Population denominators used for *Youth at the Training School* are youth ages 13 to 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. Population denominators used for *Children of Incarcerated Parents* and *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1.

◆ Nationally, racial and ethnic disproportionality in the juvenile justice, adult corrections, and child welfare systems is well-documented with disproportionality occurring at multiple steps within each system. While we do not know the exact causes of this disproportionality, structural racism (e.g., policies that concentrate policing in Communities of Color), institutional racism (e.g., policies that disproportionately place Children of Color out of their homes), and racial bias and discrimination (e.g., beliefs held by workers about people from different racial or ethnic groups) all contribute to worse outcomes for Children of Color who come in contact with these systems.^{27,28,29}

◆ During 2020 in Rhode Island, Black youth were four times more likely to be at the Rhode Island Training School compared to youth of all races and almost 11 times more likely compared to white youth. Hispanic and Native American youth were also more likely to be at the Training School compared to white youth.³⁰

◆ In Rhode Island on December 31, 2020, Black and Hispanic children were both more likely than youth of all races to be placed in out-of-home placements through the child welfare system. Asian, Native American, and white children were less likely to be placed out-of-home.³¹



Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	ALL RACES	ASIAN+	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading	48%	58%	33%	33%	23%	57%
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Math	36%	52%	24%	21%	17%	45%
Four-Year High School Graduation Rates	84%	92%	80%	76%	69%	88%
Immediate College Enrollment Rates	67%	76%	61%	56%	48%	72%
% of Adults Over Age 25 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	34%	52%	21%	14%	15%	36%

Sources: *Third Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading and Math* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*, 2019. *Four-Year High School Graduation Rates* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2020. *Immediate College Enrollment Rates* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2019. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Tables B15003, C15002A, C15002B, C15002C, C15002D & C15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanic or Latino also may be included in any of the race categories. +Data for Asian students is not disaggregated by ethnic group. National research shows large academic disparities across Asian ethnic groups.

◆ In Rhode Island, Native American, Black, and Hispanic children are less likely to meet expectations in reading and mathematics in third grade than white or Asian children.³²

◆ Nationally and in Rhode Island, Native American, Hispanic, and Black students are less likely to graduate from high school within four years and are less likely to immediately enroll in college than white or Asian students. Gaps in college enrollment are particularly large for four-year college enrollment.^{33,34}

◆ Nationally, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students are more likely than white and Asian students to be disciplined in school. Schools' disproportionate use of disciplinary techniques that remove children from the classroom, such as out-of-school suspension or expulsion, may contribute to racial and ethnic gaps in academic outcomes and drop-out rates.^{35,36} In Rhode Island during the 2019-2020 school year, Students of Color received 54% of all disciplinary actions, although they made up only 45% of the student population.³⁷



Rhode Island's Hispanic Children and Youth

◆ In 2010, there were 45,940 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 35,326 in 2000. Hispanic children made up 21% of Rhode Island's child population in 2010, compared with 14% in 2000.³⁸

◆ In 2010, three-quarters (75%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. While Providence has the largest Hispanic child population overall, Central Falls has the highest percentage of Hispanic children.³⁹

◆ Rhode Island's Latino children are ranked lowest in the nation on the Race for Results Opportunity Index that measures indicators of child opportunity, including health, education, and economic well-being.⁴⁰

Economic Well-Being

◆ Between 2015 and 2019, 33% of Rhode Island's Hispanic children were living in poverty, compared to 27% of Hispanic children nationally. During that same time period, the median family income for Hispanics in Rhode Island was \$44,704, compared to \$86,258 overall in Rhode Island.⁴¹

Health

◆ In Rhode Island between 2015 and 2019, 19.0% of Hispanic babies were born to women who received delayed or no prenatal care, compared with 16.1% of all babies in the state.⁴²

◆ Between 2015 and 2019, Hispanic teens ages 15 to 19 in Rhode Island had a birth rate that was more than twice as high as the overall teen birth rate (29.5 per 1,000 Hispanic teens ages 15 to 19 compared to 12.4 per 1,000 for all teens).⁴³

Education

◆ The four-year high school graduation rate among Hispanic youth in the class of 2020 was 76%, compared to Rhode Island's four-year high school graduation rate for all students of 84%.⁴⁴

◆ The gap between Latino and white students in Rhode Island is among the largest in the U.S.⁴⁵

References

- ^{1,7,38,39} U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data, Summary File, Tables P1, P2, P3, P4, H1.
- ² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2019). *A roadmap to reducing child poverty*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- ³ Ratcliffe, C. (2015). *Child poverty and adult success*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- ^{4,18,19,26,41} U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019. Tables B17020, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020H, B17020I, B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113I, B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D, B25003I, B27001, B27001A, B27001B, B27001C, B27001D, B27001I, S1701, S2701.
- ⁵ *Children living in high-poverty, low-opportunity neighborhoods*. (2019). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
- ⁸ Frey, William H. (2021). *Neighborhood segregation persists for Black, Latino or Hispanic, and Asian Americans*. Retrieved April 8, 2021, from www.brookings.edu
- ⁹ Bhutta, N., Chang, A. C., Dettling, L. J., & Hsu, J. (2020). *Disparities in wealth by race and ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances, FEDS Notes*. Washington, DC: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.
- ¹⁰ *State of working Rhode Island 2017: Paving the way to good jobs*. (2017). Providence, RI: The Economic Progress Institute.
- ¹¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2021). *Tracking the COVID-19 recession's effects on food, housing, and employment hardships*. Retrieved April 12, 2021, from www.cbpp.org
- ¹² Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., Ayscue, J. B., & Orfield, G. (2019). *Harming our common future: America's segregated schools 65 years after Brown*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at University of California Los Angeles.
- ^{13,14} McArdle, N., Osypuk, T., & Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2010). *Segregation and exposure to high-poverty schools in large metropolitan areas: 2008-2009*. Retrieved March 11, 2020, from www.diversitydata.org
- ¹⁵ Rothstein, R. (2014). The racial achievement gap, segregated schools, and segregated neighborhoods - A constitutional insult. *Race and Social Problems*, 6(4).
- ^{16,17} The Urban Institute, Children of Immigrants Data Tool, Data From 2018-2019, www.urban.org
- ²⁰ *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2020 annual averages - Rhode Island and United States*. (n.d.). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.
- ²¹ Healthy People 2020. (2020). *High school graduation*. Retrieved April 12, 2021, from www.healthypeople.gov
- ^{22,23,42,43} Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2015-2019.
- ²⁴ Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 2015-2019.
- ²⁵ National Health Interview Survey. (2019). *Table C-1a. Age-adjusted percentages (with standard errors) of ever having asthma and still having asthma for children under age 18 years, by selected characteristics: United States, 2018*. Retrieved April 27, 2021, from www.cdc.gov
- ²⁷ Sawyer, W. (2020). *Visualizing the racial disparities in mass incarceration*. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from www.prisonpolicy.org
- ²⁸ Watt, T. & Kim, S. (2019). Race/ethnicity and foster youth outcomes: An examination of disproportionality using the national youth in transition database. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 102, 251-258.
- ²⁹ Apollon, D., Keheler, T., Medeiros, J., Ortega, N.L., Sebastian, J., & Sen, R. (2014). *Moving the race conversation forward: How media covers racism and other barriers to productive racial discourse*. Retrieved April 22, 2021, from www.raceforward.org

(continued on page 174)