

# 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 (\$23,030 for a family of three in 2022).<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 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

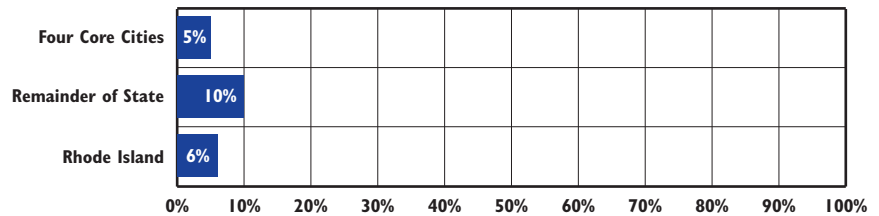
receive at least two home visits per year. Some provide a combination of home-based and center-based services.<sup>6</sup>

As of October 2021, of the 396 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 241 (61%) were enrolled in home-based services and 155 (39%) 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, 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 (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 2021, there were 383 infants and toddlers and 13 pregnant women receiving Early Head Start in Rhode Island.<sup>11</sup>

**Estimated Percentage of Eligible Infants and Toddlers Enrolled in Early Head Start, 2021**



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using Early Head Start program enrollment October 2021 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 2016-2020 American Community Survey data as the denominator.

◆ As of October 2021 in Rhode Island, there were 396 children and pregnant women enrolled in Early Head Start, 6% of the population in poverty and 3% of the population in low-income families, a decline from 678 children and pregnant women in 2019 (pre-pandemic). There were 215 children and pregnant women from the four core cities (5% of the population in poverty and 2% of the population in low-income families) and 181 children and pregnant women from the remainder of the state (10% of the population in poverty and 4% of the population in low-income families).<sup>12,13,14</sup>

◆ As of October 2021, 3% of Early Head Start clients were pregnant women, 15% were infants under age one, 29% were age one, 50% were toddlers age two, and 3% were age three.<sup>15</sup>

◆ Rhode Island Early Head Start programs served children with high needs including: 55 infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities (14% of all children enrolled), 32 children who were in foster care, and 14 children who were homeless.<sup>16</sup> Early Head Start programs are required to enroll children with disabilities and to screen all enrolled children to identify developmental delays and disabilities.<sup>17</sup>

◆ As of October 2021, 27% 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, 2021

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	4%	15	0	0	0	0%
Bristol	507	22%	113	0	1	1	1%
Burrillville	460	27%	126	0	3	3	2%
Central Falls	1,028	82%	847	23	9	32	4%
Charlestown	186	17%	32	0	0	0	0%
Coventry	940	16%	153	2	4	6	4%
Cranston	2,318	33%	775	2	18	20	3%
Cumberland	970	13%	129	2	0	2	2%
East Greenwich	299	5%	14	4	2	6	44%
East Providence	1,560	28%	432	1	16	17	4%
Exeter	166	12%	20	0	2	2	10%
Foster	113	26%	30	0	0	0	0%
Glocester	247	9%	22	1	0	1	5%
Hopkinton	258	17%	44	0	0	0	0%
Jamestown	85	4%	4	0	0	0	0%
Johnston	816	39%	319	4	1	5	2%
Lincoln	587	24%	141	0	0	0	0%
Little Compton	68	10%	7	0	0	0	0%
Middletown	502	26%	131	1	4	5	4%
Narragansett	271	11%	29	0	0	0	0%
New Shoreham	21	4%	1	0	0	0	0%
Newport	820	64%	527	8	19	27	5%
North Kingstown	728	15%	106	0	4	4	4%
North Providence	851	38%	327	11	8	19	6%
North Smithfield	290	11%	32	0	0	0	0%
Pawtucket	2,959	70%	2,060	22	7	29	1%
Portsmouth	429	9%	39	1	0	1	3%
Providence	7,609	82%	6,224	124	17	141	2%
Richmond	235	17%	40	0	0	0	0%
Scituate	193	10%	19	0	0	0	0%
Smithfield	402	7%	29	3	0	3	10%
South Kingstown	640	13%	83	4	3	7	8%
Tiverton	398	17%	66	1	1	2	3%
Warren	296	22%	65	0	0	0	0%
Warwick	2,322	27%	630	11	9	20	3%
West Greenwich	178	12%	22	2	2	4	18%
West Warwick	1,044	46%	480	11	13	24	5%
Westerly	726	30%	218	1	1	2	1%
Woonsocket	1,900	73%	1,390	2	11	13	1%
Four Core Cities	13,496	78%	10,522	171	44	215	2%
Remainder of State	20,292	23%	4,707	70	111	181	4%
Rhode Island	33,788	41%	13,749	241	155	396	3%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Early Head Start Programs, children enrolled as of October 2021. 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 2021.

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

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2020). *Early Head Start programs*. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from [eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov)
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