

# Racial and Ethnic Diversity

## DEFINITION

*Racial and ethnic diversity* is the percentage of children under age 18 by racial and ethnic categories as defined by the U.S. Census. Racial and ethnic categories are chosen by the head of household or person completing the Census form.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Racial and ethnic diversity has increased in the United States over the last several decades and is projected to rise in the future. Since 2000, all of the growth in the child population in the U.S. has been among Children of Color.<sup>1,2</sup> In 2020, 50% of all U.S. children were Children of Color.<sup>3</sup> In Rhode Island between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic child population grew by 22% while the non-Hispanic white child population declined by 22%.<sup>4,5</sup> In 2020, 47% of children in Rhode Island were Children of Color, up from 36% in 2010. The number of Children of Color in Rhode Island grew by over 71,000 between 2010 and 2020, and the number of non-Hispanic white children decreased by over 31,000 during the same period.<sup>6,7</sup>

In 2020 in Rhode Island, less than 1% of children under 18 were American Indian or Native Alaskan, 3% were Asian, 6% were Black or African American, 27% were Hispanic or

Latino, less than 1% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 1% were Some other race, 8% were Two or more races, and 53% were white.<sup>8</sup>

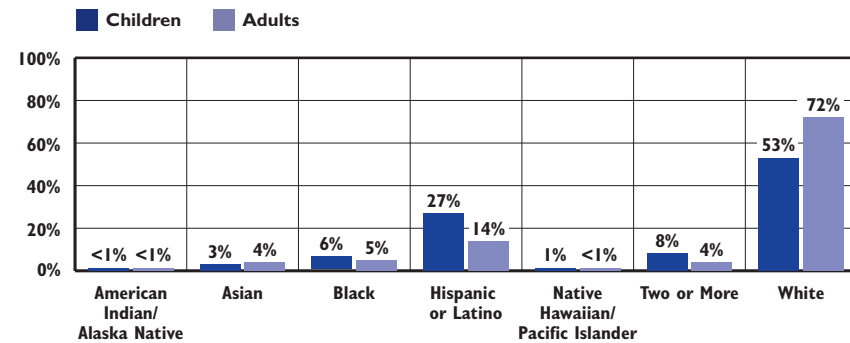
In 2020, more than two-thirds (68%) of all Children of Color in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. More than three-quarters (77%) of children living in the four core cities were Children of Color.<sup>9</sup>

Between 2016 and 2020, there were 9,449 foreign-born children living in Rhode Island, 26% of whom were naturalized U.S. citizens.<sup>10</sup> Of Rhode Island's immigrant children, 37% were born in the Caribbean, 25% were born in Asia, 21% were born in Central or South America, 11% were born in Africa, 3% were born in Europe, and 3% were born in North America (Canada, Bermuda, or Mexico).<sup>11</sup>

Between 2016 and 2020, 23% of children between the ages of five and 17 living in Rhode Island spoke a language other than English at home, 91% of whom spoke English well or very well.<sup>12</sup>

Many schools, child care providers, health care providers, social service agencies, and other community organizations are working to adapt their practices to be more culturally competent and better serve this increasingly diverse child population.<sup>13</sup>

Population by Race/Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020. Table P2 and Table P4.

- ◆ In Rhode Island, children are more likely to be identified as People of Color than adults. In 2020 in Rhode Island, 47% of children under age 18 were People of Color, compared with 28% of adults.<sup>14</sup>
- ◆ The diversity of Rhode Island is an asset; however, there are wide, persistent, and unacceptable disparities in children's economic well-being by race and ethnicity. Between 2016 and 2020, 34% of Native American, 30% of Hispanic, and 26% of Black children in Rhode Island lived in poverty, followed by 11% of white children and 9% of Asian/Pacific Islander children.<sup>15</sup>
- ◆ In 2019, 95% of children in Rhode Island were born in the U.S. Twenty-seven percent of children in Rhode Island in 2019 lived in immigrant families (defined as families that include children who are foreign-born or who have at least one foreign-born parent, regardless of citizenship status or year of arrival in the United States), which is almost the same as the U.S. rate of 25%. Nearly all (97%) Rhode Island children in immigrant families had parents who have been in the United States for more than five years.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ Limited English proficiency can be a barrier to education, employment opportunities, higher earnings, and parental engagement with their children's education.<sup>17</sup> In 2019, 12% of Rhode Island children in immigrant families lived in linguistically-isolated households, meaning no one 14 years or older speaks only English and no one over 14 speaks English "very well."<sup>18</sup>

Table 5.

Child Population, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2020

CITY/TOWN	UNDER AGE 18 BY RACE AND ETHNICITY								2020 POPULATION UNDER AGE 18
	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC OR LATINO	NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	SOME OTHER RACE	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE	
Barrington	0	299	59	252	0	16	400	3,463	4,489
Bristol	7	39	36	200	1	14	180	2,410	2,887
Burrillville	9	16	34	224	2	12	213	2,719	3,229
Central Falls	9	26	368	4,628	1	246	502	631	6,411
Charlestown	29	2	15	45	0	11	102	957	1,161
Coventry	18	105	93	457	1	27	488	5,466	6,655
Cranston	28	1344	747	4,566	2	145	1134	7,778	15,744
Cumberland	10	436	197	941	0	65	527	5,374	7,550
East Greenwich	1	230	34	228	1	8	242	2,721	3,465
East Providence	11	187	415	1171	1	252	1001	4,848	7,886
Exeter	5	17	3	65	0	9	70	1,006	1,175
Foster	0	0	3	48	0	0	31	708	790
Glocester	0	10	6	138	0	19	129	1,594	1,896
Hopkinton	9	6	10	71	0	10	93	1,414	1,613
Jamestown	0	8	6	43	0	3	57	754	871
Johnston	11	157	255	1245	3	43	333	3,072	5,119
Lincoln	12	209	152	544	0	49	388	3,286	4,640
Little Compton	0	3	2	23	0	9	27	504	568
Middletown	6	113	191	504	4	45	374	2,250	3,487
Narragansett	12	24	17	53	4	6	117	1,418	1,651
New Shoreham	0	0	5	26	0	0	12	146	189
Newport	48	55	252	981	1	59	534	1,730	3,660
North Kingstown	37	115	93	404	1	23	465	4,358	5,496
North Providence	12	202	709	1462	6	92	512	2,807	5,802
North Smithfield	1	37	24	171	0	17	133	1,891	2,274
Pawtucket	75	176	2,614	5,488	10	757	2,652	4,683	16,455
Portsmouth	10	52	69	244	1	17	314	2,737	3,444
Providence	205	1,516	5,455	24,570	10	616	2,409	6,240	41,021
Richmond	13	4	7	65	2	17	100	1,419	1,627
Scituate	1	19	14	123	0	8	109	1,592	1,866
Smithfield	7	49	18	257	0	25	233	2,822	3,411
South Kingstown	78	95	79	266	0	22	429	3,370	4,339
Tiverton	0	39	43	131	3	17	236	2,254	2,723
Warren	9	32	39	108	0	17	157	1,464	1,826
Warwick	33	572	366	1,688	0	119	1149	10,107	14,034
West Greenwich	1	41	12	48	0	16	124	1,009	1,251
West Warwick	23	153	205	897	0	42	573	3,894	5,787
Westerly	48	85	26	362	4	22	294	2,985	3,826
Woonsocket	36	482	789	3,376	7	64	979	3,734	9,467
Four Core Cities	325	2,200	9,226	38,062	28	1,683	6,542	15,288	73,354
Remainder of State	489	4,755	4,236	18,051	37	1,256	11,280	96,327	136,431
Rhode Island	814	6,955	13,462	56,113	65	2,939	17,822	111,615	209,785

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020 Table P2 and Table P4. All categories are mutually exclusive. If Hispanic was selected as ethnicity, individuals are not included in other racial categories. Likewise, if more than one race was selected, individuals are included in Two or more races and not in their individual race categories.

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

### References

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- O'Hare, W. (2011). *The changing child population of the United States: Analysis of data from the 2010 Census*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>3,16,18</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center, [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)
- U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.
- <sup>5,7,8,9,14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020. Table P2 and Table P4.
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- López, M., Hofer, K., Bumgarner, E., & Taylor, D. (2017). *Developing culturally responsive approaches to serving diverse populations: A resource guide for community-based organizations*. Retrieved April 6, 2022, from [hispanicresearchcenter.org](http://hispanicresearchcenter.org)
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