



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elizabeth Burke Bryant Stepping Down by End of Year After 28 Years as Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

The Board of Directors of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is announcing that Elizabeth Burke Bryant will step down from her position as Executive Director by the end of the year, after 28 years of service. During her tenure, Elizabeth has been one of Rhode Island's most influential leaders and greatest champions for the well-being of children and their families.

Elizabeth has been Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT since its inception in 1994. Under her leadership, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has become the state's premier child advocacy organization with a national reputation for its work to improve the health, education, early childhood development, economic well-being, and safety of Rhode Island's children, with a commitment to equity. The annual *Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*, a widely used source of data and policy information for 70 indicators of child-well-being, informs data-driven advocacy across the state.

She and the organization have consistently focused on the glaring and unacceptable disparities in child outcomes by race, ethnicity, and income — and have called for dismantling racism that has led to these inequities.

Among the policy victories that Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has contributed to during her tenure are the establishment of the RI Pre-K program (ranked first in the nation for quality), Full-Day Kindergarten, children's health insurance coverage (RI is ranked 4th best in the nation and provides health coverage to eligible children regardless of immigration status), a significant reduction in childhood lead poisoning, extension of DCYF services for foster youth up to age 21, and a reversal of a law that allowed 17-year-olds to be tried as adults and sent to adult prison.

Under her leadership, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has had a strong focus on equitable policies and investments to promote early learning and development beginning at birth, improving K-12 education, third grade reading proficiency, the need for high-quality Multilingual Learner programs, out-of-school time opportunities, child welfare and juvenile justice reforms, and children's mental health. Since Rhode Island KIDS COUNT began, a key focus has been on reducing childhood poverty, and increasing access to childhood nutrition programs and affordable housing.

Elizabeth has been a tireless leader and advocate for legislative and policy reforms. She has testified often before the RI General Assembly to advocate for important investments and policies to improve the lives of the state's children, youth, and families. She has worked with the Executive Branch, including governors, state agency directors and staff on strategies for the effective implementation of programs serving children and families. She has also worked closely with Rhode Island's Congressional delegation on a variety of federal issues affecting children.

Elizabeth has also built an exemplary team of child advocates within the organization who collaborate with other advocates, community-based organizations, and partners inside and outside of government to promote equitable policies and to elevate the voices of those most affected by these policies, including parents and youth.

The Board of Directors thanks Elizabeth for her outstanding leadership as Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. The Board is undertaking a search, beginning with an internal search.

Marisa Albanese, Board Chairperson
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education, and development of Rhode Island children with a core focus on equity.