



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
ONE UNION STATION  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903  
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

**Contact:**  
Katy Chu Communications Coordinator  
401.351.9400, ext. 22 / kchu@rikidscount.org

## **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Makes Data Local at 'Pawtucket Data in Your Backyard' Event**

*Decreased chronic absence and suspensions; increased high school graduation rates*

*Decreases in teen birth rate, and infants born at highest risk*

*Despite Universal School Breakfast, student participation still low*

**Pawtucket, RI, (June 13, 2014)** - Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst Stephanie Geller presented data from the *2014 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook* to an audience of community leaders and policy makers. The *Pawtucket Data in Your Backyard* presentation included highlights of improvements and declines in the well-being of children and youth in Pawtucket. After the presentation, audience members discussed opportunities to improve outcomes for children in Pawtucket. The presentation was brought to the community in partnership with the Pawtucket School Department Child Opportunity Zone and was held on **Friday, June 13, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 50 Park Place, Pawtucket, RI.**

Geller welcomed participants, saying, "Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is excited to partner with the Pawtucket School Department Child Opportunity Zone, to discuss the well-being of Pawtucket children and families, and work to improve outcomes in health, family economic well-being, and education."

### **Pawtucket has high rates of poverty and extreme poverty among children**

Although childhood poverty exists in every Rhode Island community, it is particularly concentrated in the core cities of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Providence, and Woonsocket. In 2013, the federal poverty threshold was \$18,769 for a family of three with two children and \$23,624 for a family of four with two children. More than one-quarter (27.4% or 4,293) of children in Pawtucket live in poverty. Of these, 2,059 children live in extreme poverty (13.1% of all children in Pawtucket). A family is considered to be in extreme poverty if its income is less than half the poverty threshold (\$9,385 for a family of three).

### **Improvements in key education outcomes**

Children need to be in school to learn, and to remain engaged in school for success. Students are chronically absent if they miss 18 or more days of school per school year. Pawtucket's chronic early absence rate (grades K-3) has decreased from 14% during the 2009-10 school year to 10% during the 2012-13 school year. Pawtucket's chronic absence rate in high school has also fallen, from 37% (2009-10 school year) to 20% (2012-13 school year). Pawtucket's chronic absence rate for K-3, middle, and high school is now lower than the state of Rhode Island as a whole.

Similar to chronically absent students, suspended students are more likely than their peers to experience disengagement from school, academic failure, and dropping out of school. Over the last several years, Pawtucket has seen a substantial decline in school suspensions. During the 2012-13 school year, there were 14 suspensions per 100 students, compared to 55 suspensions per 100 students the year prior.

Pawtucket's high school graduation rate also continues to see steady improvement. In Pawtucket in 2013, 75% of students graduated from high school in four years, which is an increase from 48% in 2007. This is one of the highest increases in graduation rates in Rhode Island for that time period.

"Pawtucket has worked hard to reduce chronic absenteeism and improve school disciplinary practices," said Geller. "As a result of these changes and other district practices, Pawtucket has seen more children in their seats ready to learn, and more students graduating from high school on time. Pawtucket's improvements in these areas highlight the connection between addressing chronic absence, academic engagement, and increasing high school graduation rates."

### **Improvements in several infant outcomes**

The teen birth rate is on the decline across the nation, in Rhode Island, and Pawtucket. The teen birth rate is measured as the number of births per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19. While the teen birth rate is higher in Pawtucket than the state as a whole, the teen birth rate in Pawtucket is moving in the right direction. The most recent teen birth rate in Pawtucket was 44.2 per 1,000 girls, compared to 58.7 per 1,000 girls five years before.

Babies born to unmarried teen mothers without a high school diploma are called *infants born at highest risk*, due to the multiple challenges they face. These babies are more likely to grow up in poverty, are less likely to perform well in school, and are less likely to complete high school than their peers. In 2013, 2% of Pawtucket babies were born at highest risk, down from 7% in 2009.

### **Increased rates of child abuse and neglect**

In 2013, there were 362 victims of child abuse and neglect in Pawtucket (a rate of 21.8 victims per 1,000 children). Pawtucket had the fourth highest rate of child abuse and neglect victims in Rhode Island in 2013. This includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as emotional, educational, physical, and medical neglect.

### **School Breakfast participation low; offering in the classroom could boost participation**

Students who eat breakfast perform better in school – they have higher math and reading scores, fewer absences, improved attentiveness, and lower incidences of social and emotional problems. Pawtucket is one of five school districts in Rhode Island with a Universal School Breakfast Program, which offers free breakfast to all children regardless of income. Despite universal access, only 25% of low-income children in Pawtucket take part in school breakfast. This is the lowest participation rate of all the core cities (of low-income children, 65% in Central Falls, 63% in Providence, and 43% in Woonsocket participate in School Breakfast).

"Communities like Providence and Central Falls have been able to increase school breakfast participation rates by offering breakfast in the classroom at the start of the school day. Pawtucket may be able to increase its participation rate and ensure that more students start their school days with a healthy breakfast by implementing this practice," said Geller.

## Profile of Pawtucket, Rhode Island

<b>Census-Based Indicators</b>		1990	2000	2010		
Child population	Pawtucket	16,719	18,151	16,575		
	Rhode Island	225,690	247,822	223,956		
Children in single-parent families	Pawtucket	NA	NA	43%		
	Rhode Island	NA	28%	31%		
Children living in grandparent-headed households	Pawtucket	NA	NA	7%		
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	6%		
				<b>2008-2012</b>		
			<b>2000</b>			
Median family income	Pawtucket		\$43,917	\$40,602		
	Rhode Island		\$66,156	\$68,326		
Children living in families below the federal poverty threshold	Pawtucket		25.3%	27.4%		
	Rhode Island		16.9%	18.4%		
<b>Economic Well-Being</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cost of rent	Pawtucket	\$982	\$995	\$990	\$1,026	\$1,018
	Rhode Island	\$1,170	\$1,165	\$1,150	\$1,176	\$1,154
Children in families receiving cash assistance*	Pawtucket	6%	4%	6%	6%	6%
	Rhode Island	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Children receiving SNAP benefits	Pawtucket	5,790	6,396	7,153	7,366	7,414
	Rhode Island	53,466	59,652	63,783	64,866	63,971
WIC participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Pawtucket	78%	75%	76%	73%	72%
	Rhode Island	77%	72%	68%	69%	66%
School Breakfast Program participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Pawtucket	25%	25%	27%	24%	25%
	Rhode Island	27%	28%	36%	35%	39%
<b>Health</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children under age 19 receiving Medical Assistance	Pawtucket	9,322	9,742	9,641	9,913	10,436
	Rhode Island	89,746	92,701	93,691	95,248	96,215
Infants born at highest risk	Pawtucket	7%	6%	4%	4%	2%
	Rhode Island	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%
		<b>2004-2008</b>	<b>2005-2009</b>	<b>2006-2010</b>	<b>2007-2011</b>	<b>2008-2012</b>
Births to mothers with less than a high school diploma	Pawtucket	21%	21%	21%	20%	19%
	Rhode Island	16%	16%	16%	16%	15%
Women with delayed prenatal care	Pawtucket	16.4%	17.5%	18.3%	17.7%	16.2%
	Rhode Island	14.0%	14.9%	15.6%	15.0%	13.7%
Infants born with low birthweight	Pawtucket	8.5%	8.4%	8.3%	8.6%	8.7%
	Rhode Island	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	7.9%	7.8%
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	Pawtucket	6.7	6.9	7.0	7.3	6.8
	Rhode Island	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.4
Newborn infants exclusively breastfed	Pawtucket	51%	51%	52%	53%	55%
	Rhode Island	57%	58%	59%	61%	62%
Asthma hospitalization rate (per 1,000 children under age 18)*	Pawtucket	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.5
	Rhode Island	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1
Teen birth rate (per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19)*	Pawtucket	58.7	57.7	53.1	49.2	44.2
	Rhode Island	30.7	30.1	27.0	25.5	23.3

\*Starting with data for 2011 and five-year data for 2006-2010, rates are based on the Census 2010 population. Previous years are based on the Census 2000 population. This change should be noted when looking at trends over time. \*\*Average rent is the HUD Fair Market Rent. Rhode Island Housing Rent Survey data are not available for these years. \*\*\*Estimate has a high margin of error due to small sample size.

<b>Safety</b>		<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Child abuse and neglect indicated victims (per 1,000 children)*	Pawtucket	17.6	17.2	21.7	21.2	21.8
	Rhode Island	11.7	13.3	14.0	13.9	14.0
Rate of children with incarcerated parents (per 1,000 children)*	Pawtucket	11.3	12.7	13.6	15.3	21.7
	Rhode Island	10.2	10.4	10.9	11.0	11.2
Domestic violence incidents with children present	Pawtucket	28%	31%	29%	23%	NA
	Rhode Island	29%	28%	29%	31%	NA
<b>Education</b>		<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Children enrolled in Early Head Start	Pawtucket	0	52	38	34	40
	Rhode Island	376	508	519	522	503
Children enrolled in Head Start	Pawtucket	184	194	206	196	189
	Rhode Island	2,455	2,471	2,432	2,432	2,040
Licensed early learning centers	Pawtucket	17	17	17	17	16
	Rhode Island	338	330	309	314	309
Licensed family child care homes	Pawtucket	47	49	48	43	40
	Rhode Island	705	688	639	585	581
Licensed early learning centers participating in BrightStars	Pawtucket	6%	12%	18%	18%	88%
	Rhode Island	4%	7%	12%	15%	78%
Licensed family child care homes participating in BrightStars	Pawtucket	2%	4%	10%	26%	85%
	Rhode Island	1%	8%	12%	21%	82%
Children receiving child care subsidies (subsidy use by child residence)	Pawtucket	706	762	776	817	797
	Rhode Island	7,457	7,622	7,749	7,868	7,696
Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten	Pawtucket	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Rhode Island	60%	60%	64%	68%	70%
Students who are English Language Learners	Pawtucket	11%	12%	13%	13%	13%
	Rhode Island	5%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Students enrolled in special education	Pawtucket	15%	16%	17%	17%	17%
	Rhode Island	17%	17%	18%	18%	17%
Student mobility rate	Pawtucket	24%	22%	21%	22%	19%
	Rhode Island	16%	14%	14%	14%	13%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Pawtucket	56%	61%	60%	60%	62%
	Rhode Island	67%	69%	71%	69%	71%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Pawtucket	55%	62%	67%	62%	62%
	Rhode Island	70%	74%	77%	77%	74%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Pawtucket	51%	53%	48%	50%	50%
	Rhode Island	62%	63%	65%	64%	63%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Pawtucket	41%	40%	38%	37%	37%
	Rhode Island	54%	54%	58%	58%	57%
11 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Pawtucket	13%	17%	14%	15%	18%
	Rhode Island	27%	33%	30%	34%	36%
Chronic early absence in grades K-3	Pawtucket	13%	14%	13%	12%	10%
	Rhode Island	11%	13%	12%	11%	12%
Chronic absence in high school	Pawtucket	33%	37%	29%	30%	20%
	Rhode Island	21%	25%	25%	25%	24%
Suspension rate (per 100 students)	Pawtucket	37	28	37	55	14
	Rhode Island	30	30	31	30	23
High school graduation rate	Pawtucket	55%	58%	63%	67%	75%
	Rhode Island	75%	76%	77%	77%	80%

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