



Contact:
Katherine Linwood Chu, kchu@rikidscount.org, 401.351.9400 ext 22

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Presents:

Warwick Data in Your Backyard
Findings from the
2013 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

Nutrition assistance programs reaching more Warwick children

Decreasing rates of child abuse and neglect

Reading, math proficiency rates steadily improving among students

Warwick, RI (November 14, 2013) – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst, John Neubauer, MSW, presented data from the **2013 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook** to an audience of community leaders and policy makers. The *Warwick Data in Your Backyard* presentation included highlights of improvements and declines in the well-being of children and youth in Warwick. After the presentation, audience members discussed opportunities to improve outcomes for children and families. The presentation was brought to the community in partnership with the Warwick Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse and was held on Thursday, November 14, 2013 from 9:30 am – 11:00 am at the Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI.

Neubauer welcomed participants, saying, “Today’s event highlights how community groups can come together to look at how Warwick’s children are doing and discuss ways to improve child outcomes in health, family economic well-being, safety, and education.”

Economic Snapshot

Warwick’s child poverty rate, 8.8%, is less than half the state rate of 17.9%; but with a large population, Warwick has nearly 1,400 children living in poverty.

Nutrition Assistance for Improved Outcomes

Research shows that hunger and lack of regular access to sufficient food are linked to serious health, psychological, emotional and academic problems in children and can impede their healthy growth and development. WIC, SNAP and the School Breakfast Program all improve access to nutritious meals and can help support improved health, academic performance, and behavioral and social success.

- *WIC:* 62% of eligible low-income Warwick children participated in WIC in 2012, compared to 55% in 2011.
- *SNAP:* In 2012, 2,627 eligible low-income Warwick children participated in SNAP, compared to 2,507 in 2011 and 1,136 in 2000.
- *School Breakfast:* During the 2012-2013 school year, 14% of eligible low-income children participated in the School Breakfast Program. This is up from the 2011-2012 school year, when 13% of eligible students received School Breakfast. Offering Universal School Breakfast, which provides free breakfasts to all students regardless of income, could increase the participation rate.

Infant Outcomes

Warwick ranks better than the state as a whole in all four categories of infant health.

- *Delayed prenatal care:* Women receiving late or no prenatal care are at increased risk of poor birth outcomes. In Warwick, 12.5% of pregnant women received delayed prenatal care between 2007-2011, compared to 15% of Rhode Island women as a whole.
- *Low Birthweight:* An infant's birthweight is a key indicator of newborn health, and low birthweight infants are at greater risk for physical and developmental problems than infants of normal weight. At 7.5%, the percentage of infants born low birthweight in Warwick is below Rhode Island's 7.9%.
- *Preterm Births:* At 9.9%, Warwick's rate of preterm births is lower than the state rate of 11.1%.
- *Infant Mortality:* Warwick's infant mortality rate (6.0 deaths per 1,000 births) is lower than the rate for the state as a whole (6.5 deaths per 1,000 births).

Decreasing Rate of Child Abuse and Neglect

Rates of child abuse and neglect are decreasing in Warwick.

- In 2012, there were 118 Warwick children who were victims of child abuse and neglect, a rate of 7.5 victims per 1,000 children ages birth to 18; compared to the 2011 rate of 8.7 victims per 1,000 children.
- The child abuse and neglect rate for Warwick is much lower than the state rate of 13.9 victims per 1,000 children in 2012.

Neubauer noted, "Strong collaborative efforts such as the Warwick Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse are an example of the way Warwick works to improve child well-being, and will help to ensure that progress continues in reducing child abuse and neglect."

Increases in Math and Reading Skills

- *Reading Skills:* Early reading difficulties have an impact on academic achievement and future employment success. Students who do not read proficiently by fourth grade have a much more difficult time with literacy and language development than their peers. Between 2005 and 2012, the percentage of fourth grade students in Warwick public schools who were proficient in reading increased from 71% to 78%. Eighth grade reading proficiency has seen even larger gains, increasing from 59% in 2005 to 80% in 2012.
- *Math Skills:* The ability to understand math is critical for performing many important daily activities of adulthood. Between 2005 and 2012, the percentage of fourth grade students in Warwick public schools who were proficient in math increased from 63% to 70%, and eighth grade proficiency increased from 52% to 57%. Eleventh grade proficiency has also improved from 18% in 2007 to 28% in 2012, but remains below the state rate of 34%.