



# Children in the States

## RHODE ISLAND

September 2015

### Child Population

**212,852 children lived in Rhode Island in 2014; 39 percent were children of color.**

- 61 percent were White
- 23 percent were Hispanic
- 7 percent were Black
- 3 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**Nearly 1 in 5 (19.8 percent) of Rhode Island's children were poor in 2014, a total of 41,629 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Rhode Island ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 11 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 4 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Rhode Island are disproportionately poor.**

- Nearly 1 in 4 Black children, nearly 2 in 5 Hispanic children, and more than 9 in 10 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 9 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Rhode Island leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- More than 900 Rhode Island public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 21 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 28 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Rhode Island ranked 24<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 16<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 28 percent of Rhode Island children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- More than 83 percent of Rhode Island children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Rhode Island 21<sup>st</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of Rhode Island's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.**

- In 2013, 90.2 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or RItE Care, Rhode Island's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 112,002 Rhode Island children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 26,577 in RItE Care thanks to additional CHIP funding.

<sup>1</sup> A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

- Nearly 12,000 Rhode Island children ages 0-17 (5.4 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 16<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 8,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or RItE Care but not enrolled.

### **Early Childhood and Education**

#### **Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.**

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$12,662 – 15.2 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Rhode Island.
- Rhode Island did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 47 percent of Rhode Island's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013.
- Rhode Island's state-funded preschool program met 10 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

#### **Rhode Island's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.**

- In 2013, 62 percent of Rhode Island's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 58 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 82 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 81 percent could not compute.
  - 83 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 77 percent could not compute.
- 76 percent of Rhode Island public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Rhode Island 42<sup>nd</sup> among states. 66 percent of Black students and 72 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 76 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 14 percent of Rhode Island public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Rhode Island 41<sup>st</sup> among states 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 24 percent and 21 percent, respectively.

### **Children Facing Special Risks**

#### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In Rhode Island, 3,132 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 14.6 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 1,756 Rhode Island children in foster care.

#### **Too many Rhode Island children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 3,763 children were arrested in Rhode Island in 2012 – a rate of 3,701 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 186 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 40 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 23 percent were Hispanic, and 35 percent were White.
- No Rhode Island children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Rhode Island spent 3.1 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

#### **Fewer than 10 children and teens were killed by guns in Rhode Island in 2013.**

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)