

Planning Information Center

Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM



Rhode Island Division of Planning
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Planning and Children in Rhode Island

Planning affects children's lives in many ways, from quality of housing and accessibility of transit to workforce opportunities for parents and for teenagers and involvement in civic decision-making. This month's Bulletin explores some of the data collected and presented by KIDS COUNT, a national project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and its state partner, Rhode Island Kids Count. The national Kids Count initiative releases an annual report that compares child and adolescent wellbeing in all 50 states, and Rhode Island Kids Count produces a factbook that explore the state's children and teens in depth. Links to these two reports can be found on page 2.

Child Demographics

In Rhode Island, the population of children under the age of 18 declined nearly 10 percent between 2000 and 2010. Only two other states lost as much or more of their child population during the decade, although Rhode Island is not alone in the region: the child population of all six New England states declined between 2000 and 2010. Three Rhode Island municipalities increased their child population by up to three percent between 2000 and 2010: North Smithfield, West Greenwich and Central Falls. Other cities, including Warren, Glocester, and Newport, lost over 20 percent of their child population during the same period. Planners working with school districts, libraries, youth services, and parks and playgrounds will need to make sense of these trends for the near future, and make projections for the longer term.

BY THE NUMBERS

223,956 R.I. residents under age 18, or

21.3% of the state population

9.6% decrease in child population since 2000

124,603 households with children under 18

38,733 children living in poverty, or

17.4% of all children in the state

Source: Census 2010 and 2008-2010 3-year American Community Survey, cited in 2012 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

Rhode Island's children are more racially and ethnically diverse than the population at large. Twenty-one percent of children in the state are Hispanic or Latino compared with 12 percent of the entire population; eight percent of children are Black, compared with six percent of the state as a whole, and seven percent of children are two or more races versus three percent of the entire state. Young people are leading demographic changes in the state, and planners who want to engage a broad audience face the challenge of engaging young people in culturally and socially relevant ways.

In Comparison with the Nation

Among all 50 states, Rhode Island scores about average in the national Kids Count indices for economic well-being, education, health, and family and community, but the state lags behind the rest of New England. At 19th in the nation, Rhode Island's highest ranking is in the health index, which takes into account low birth weight babies, child and teen death rates, children without health insurance, and

ABOUT THE DATA

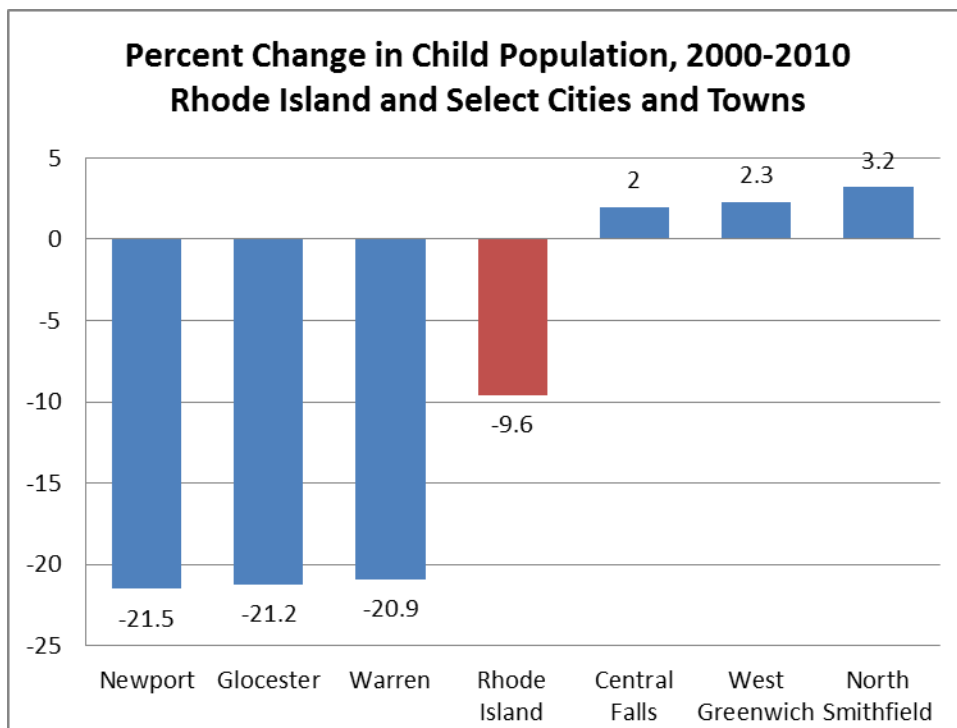
Data in this Bulletin are drawn from the 2012 KIDS COUNT Data Book and the 2012 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook. These two publications draw data from a variety of federal, state, and other data sources. Both publications are available online; see "To Learn More" on page 2 for links.

teens who abuse alcohol or drugs. However, the other five New England states are in the top ten for this index. Rhode Island ranks lowest in the family and community index, which considers children in single-parent families, children living in high-poverty areas, children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma, and the teen birth rate. For this index, Rhode Island comes in 30th in the nation and last among New England states, due in part to the relatively high share of children in single-parent families. The report notes that while quality of parenting is more important to child outcomes than number of parents, single-parent households are at higher risk for financial troubles that affect kids.

The Built Environment

Factors of the built environment, such as quality of housing, affect child wellbeing in many ways. Rhode Island has an older housing stock than some states, which puts children at higher risk for lead poisoning, asthma, and accidents or falls. The state has made major advancements in the reduction of lead poisoning, and the share of new kindergarteners with a history of lead poisoning has fallen from 20% in 1997 to an expected 3% of kindergarteners in 2013. Rhode Island's core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket have made particular strides, going from 40% to 4% of kindergarteners in the same time period. However, childhood asthma rates are on the rise in the United States. In Rhode Island, asthma hospitalizations vary widely based on race; Black children have three times the asthma hospitalization rate of white children.

Housing cost is another significant area of concern to households with children, as 25% of working households in Rhode Island spent over half of their income on housing in 2009. Families struggling with housing costs may not have the choice to live in healthier or safer homes for their children.



Source: U.S. Census, reported in 2012 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook

TO LEARN MORE...

The national KIDS COUNT initiative is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Its most recent report, *The 2012 KIDS COUNT Data Book* tracks trends in child well-being for all 50 states, at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/DataBook/2012/#downloadbook>.

Rhode Island Kids Count is an independent non-profit affiliated with the national Kids Count project. The *2012 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook* takes an in-depth look at many indicators related to Rhode Island's children, at http://www.rikidscount.org/matriarch/documents/2012_Factbook_FINAL.pdf.

For additional demographic information about children in Rhode Island, visit the U.S. Census website, *American FactFinder*, at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

For further information about Planning Information Center resources, contact Amanda Martin at Rhode Island Statewide Planning: amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov or (401) 222-4720.