



**Contact:**

Katherine Linwood Chu, [kchu@rikidscount.org](mailto:kchu@rikidscount.org), 401.351.9400 ext 22

## **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Makes Data Local at *Central Falls Data in Your Backyard Event***

*Central Falls using proven strategies to ensure that children have access to School Breakfast*

*Largest improvement in high school graduation rate in the state since 2007*

*High rates of poverty, extreme poverty, and chronic absenteeism persist*

**Central Falls, RI (October 20, 2014)** – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst Stephanie Geller, EdM, presented data from the *2014 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook* to an audience of community leaders and policy makers. The *Central Falls Data in Your Backyard* presentation included highlights of improvements and declines in the well-being of children and families in Central Falls. 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 Central Falls School Department and was held on **Monday, October 20, 2014 from 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm at the Central Falls High School Library**, 24 Summer Street, Central Falls.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, opened the meeting saying, “The Data in Your Backyard series brings local data to the community. We’re glad to partner with the Central Falls School Department to examine trends in child and family well-being, identify successes and challenges, and develop strategies to improve outcomes for Central Falls children and families.”

### **Highest Rate of School Breakfast Participation in Rhode Island**

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. The School Breakfast Program offers nutritious meals and can help support academic success and improved attendance, behavior, and health. The Central Falls School District has implemented two proven strategies to increase school breakfast participation. Schools offer the Universal School Breakfast Program, which provides free breakfasts to all students, regardless of income, and they also serve breakfast in the classroom (rather than in the cafeteria or other location). In 2013, an average of 1,416 (65%) of all low-income children in Central Falls participated in the Universal School Breakfast Program. This is the highest participation rate in the state.

### **Highest Rate of Infants Born at Highest Risk in Rhode Island**

Infants born at highest risk are those babies born to unmarried teenage mothers without a high school diploma. When a child is born to a teenage, unmarried mother who has not graduated from high school, he or she is nine times more likely to grow up in poverty than a child born to a married woman over age 20 with a high school diploma. While the percentage of infants born at risk has been decreasing over the past few years, both in Central Falls and statewide, 8% of all babies born in 2013 to mothers living in Central Falls were born at highest risk, the highest rate in the state. Providing early and intensive support to families with multiple risk factors can improve a child’s health, development, and home environment.

Central Falls also has the highest:

- Teen birth rate in the state for all age groups (78.1 births per 1,000 teen girls ages 15-19),
- Percentage of children living in single-parent families (49%), and
- Percentage of children born to a mother with less than a high school diploma (37%).

### **Poverty and Extreme Poverty among Central Falls Children**

Although childhood poverty exists in every Rhode Island community, it is particularly concentrated in the core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. Children in poverty, especially those who experience poverty in early childhood and for extended periods, are more likely to have physical and behavioral health problems, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents, and earn less or be unemployed as adults. 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. Extreme poverty is defined as incomes below 50% of the federal poverty level, \$9,385 family of three with two children and \$11,812 for a family of four with two children. In 2013, over 40% (41.5% or 2,213) of children in Central Falls lived in poverty, and 18.4% (or 980) lived in extreme poverty.

### **High Rates of Chronic Absenteeism**

Students are defined as chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year (18 days or more of school). Students who are frequently absent from school miss critical academic and social learning opportunities, and are at risk of failure and dropping out. In Central Falls, the following percentages of students were chronically absent:

- 24% of Central Falls students in grades K-3 (the second highest in the state),
- 24% of Central Falls middle school students (the third highest in the state), and
- 47% of Central Falls high school students (the second highest in the state).

Dr. Frances Gallo, Superintendent of Central Falls Schools, said, “Every Central Falls school has a Student Issues and Response Team looking at our absenteeism and tardiness data. By digging into the data, we have discovered true family circumstances that can cause attendance issues. This has allowed us to build better and deeper responses. Preliminarily, the results are positive with a 7% drop in high school chronic absenteeism for the 2013-2014 school year.”

### **Increase in High School Graduation Rate, but Math and Reading Proficiency Rates Remain Low**

- *Reading Skills:* Early reading difficulties have an impact on academic achievement and future employment success. Students who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade have a much more difficult time with literacy and language development than their peers. In 2013, 44% of fourth-grade students in Central Falls were reading proficiently, far below the state rate of 71%.
- *Math Skills:* The ability to understand math is critical for performing many important daily activities of adulthood. Math proficiency rates remain far below the state rate, but there have been improvements in fourth and eleventh-grade math proficiency rates since 2005, especially in eleventh-grade math proficiency which increased from 3% to 13% from 2005 to 2013.
- *Graduation Rate:* Since 2007, Central Falls has seen the largest improvements in graduation rates of any school district in Rhode Island, increasing from 46% in 2007 to 74% in 2013.

“Central Falls is implementing innovative efforts to improve attendance, student engagement, and student achievement. These efforts are gaining attention across Rhode Island and nationally,” said Geller.

Profile of Central Falls, Rhode Island

<b>Census-Based Indicators</b>		1990	2000	2010		
Child population	Central Falls	4,810	5,531	5,644		
	Rhode Island	225,690	247,822	223,956		
Children in single-parent families	Central Falls	NA	NA	49%		
	Rhode Island	NA	28%	31%		
Children living in grandparent-headed households	Central Falls	NA	NA	8%		
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	6%		
				<b>2008-2012</b>		
Median family income	Central Falls	\$28,798	\$29,396			
	Rhode Island	\$66,156	\$68,326			
Children living in families below the federal poverty threshold	Central Falls	40.9%	41.5%***			
	Rhode Island	16.9%	18.4%			
<b>Economic Well-Being</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cost of rent	Central Falls	\$902	\$933	\$849	\$863	\$876
	Rhode Island	\$1,170	\$1,165	\$1,150	\$1,176	\$1,154
Children in families receiving cash assistance*	Central Falls	11%	8%	10%	9%	10%
	Rhode Island	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Children receiving SNAP benefits	Central Falls	2,917	3,270	3,372	3,459	3,502
	Rhode Island	53,466	59,652	63,783	64,866	63,971
WIC participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Central Falls	77%	79%	84%	79%	79%
	Rhode Island	77%	72%	68%	69%	66%
School Breakfast Program participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Central Falls	25%	43%	49%	43%	65%
	Rhode Island	27%	28%	36%	35%	39%
<b>Health</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children under age 19 receiving Medical Assistance	Central Falls	4,225	4,426	4,379	4,475	4,695
	Rhode Island	89,746	92,701	93,691	95,248	96,215
Infants born at highest risk	Central Falls	10%	6%	9%	10%	8%
	Rhode Island	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%
		2004-2008	2005-2009	2006-2010	2007-2011	2008-2012
Births to mothers with less than a high school diploma	Central Falls	36%	36%	37%	38%	37%
	Rhode Island	16%	16%	16%	16%	15%
Women with delayed prenatal care	Central Falls	19.0%	19.8%	21.2%	20.1%	17.6%
	Rhode Island	14.0%	14.9%	15.6%	15.0%	13.7%
Infants born with low birthweight	Central Falls	6.9%	7.1%	7.3%	7.6%	7.4%
	Rhode Island	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	7.9%	7.8%
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	Central Falls	8.4	10.7	9.5	7.3	4.6
	Rhode Island	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.4
Newborn infants exclusively breastfed	Central Falls	43%	43%	44%	46%	48%
	Rhode Island	57%	58%	59%	61%	62%
Asthma hospitalization rate (per 1,000 children under age 18)*	Central Falls	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.7
	Rhode Island	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1
Teen birth rate (per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19)*	Central Falls	95.5	91.7	85.5	79.7	78.1
	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)*	Central Falls	19.3	23.3	23.4	20.2	30.8
	Rhode Island	11.7	13.3	14.0	13.9	14.0
Rate of children with incarcerated parents (per 1,000 children)*	Central Falls	17.9	19.3	18.1	20.6	17.2
	Rhode Island	10.2	10.4	10.9	11.0	11.2
Domestic violence incidents with children present	Central Falls	38%	34%	33%	37%	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	Central Falls	48	48	40	26	40
	Rhode Island	376	508	519	522	503
Children enrolled in Head Start	Central Falls	98	110	93	107	81
	Rhode Island	2,455	2,471	2,432	2,432	2,040
Licensed early learning centers	Central Falls	4	4	3	4	3
	Rhode Island	338	330	309	314	309
Licensed family child care homes	Central Falls	25	22	19	18	21
	Rhode Island	705	688	639	585	581
Licensed early learning centers participating in BrightStars	Central Falls	0%	0	33%	25%	100%
	Rhode Island	4%	7%	12%	15%	78%
Licensed family child care homes participating in BrightStars	Central Falls	0%	5%	16%	28%	95%
	Rhode Island	1%	8%	12%	21%	82%
Children receiving child care subsidies (subsidy use by child residence)	Central Falls	294	337	365	326	340
	Rhode Island	7,457	7,622	7,749	7,868	7,696
Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten	Central Falls	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Rhode Island	60%	60%	64%	68%	70%
Students who are English Language Learners	Central Falls	21%	23%	24%	25%	27%
	Rhode Island	5%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Students enrolled in special education	Central Falls	23%	25%	23%	23%	23%
	Rhode Island	17%	17%	18%	18%	17%
Student mobility rate	Central Falls	27%	13%	14%	25%	24%
	Rhode Island	16%	14%	14%	14%	13%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Central Falls	52%	58%	45%	42%	44%
	Rhode Island	67%	69%	71%	69%	71%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Central Falls	43%	53%	51%	41%	39%
	Rhode Island	70%	74%	77%	77%	74%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Central Falls	41%	55%	37%	35%	42%
	Rhode Island	62%	63%	65%	64%	63%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Central Falls	28%	28%	25%	20%	14%
	Rhode Island	54%	54%	58%	58%	57%
11 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Central Falls	7%	8%	7%	13%	13%
	Rhode Island	27%	33%	30%	34%	36%
Chronic early absence in grades K-3	Central Falls	17%	20%	11%	18%	24%
	Rhode Island	11%	13%	12%	11%	12%
Chronic absence in high school	Central Falls	39%	40%	44%	49%	47%
	Rhode Island	21%	25%	25%	25%	24%
Suspension rate (per 100 students)	Central Falls	3	30	5	28	18
	Rhode Island	30	30	31	30	23
High school graduation rate	Central Falls	47%	51%	70%	68%	74%
	Rhode Island	75%	76%	77%	77%	80%

\*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. For more information, please contact Rhode Island KIDS COUNT - (401) 351-9400 - [www.rikidscount.org](http://www.rikidscount.org)

## Profile of Providence, Rhode Island

<b>Census-Based Indicators</b>		1990	2000	2010		
Child population	Providence	37,972	45,277	41,634		
	Rhode Island	225,690	247,822	223,956		
Children in single-parent families	Providence	NA	NA	46%		
	Rhode Island	NA	28%	31%		
Children living in grandparent-headed households	Providence	NA	NA	7%		
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	6%		
				<b>2008-2012</b>		
Median family income	Providence		\$32,119	\$35,375		
	Rhode Island		\$66,156	\$68,326		
Children living in families below the federal poverty threshold	Providence		40.5%	37.2%		
	Rhode Island		16.9%	18.4%		
<b>Economic Well-Being</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cost of rent	Providence	\$1,111	\$1,086	\$1,048	\$1,120	\$1,136
	Rhode Island	\$1,170	\$1,165	\$1,150	\$1,176	\$1,154
Children in families receiving cash assistance*	Providence	10%	9%	13%	12%	10%
	Rhode Island	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Children receiving SNAP benefits	Providence	20,771	22,933	23,803	24,034	23,238
	Rhode Island	53,466	59,652	63,783	64,866	63,971
WIC participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Providence	80%	78%	76%	74%	76%
	Rhode Island	77%	72%	68%	69%	66%
School Breakfast Program participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Providence	34%	34%	51%	56%	63%
	Rhode Island	27%	28%	36%	35%	39%
<b>Health</b>		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Children under age 19 receiving Medical Assistance	Providence	30,694	31,458	31,756	31,957	31,787
	Rhode Island	89,746	92,701	93,691	95,248	96,215
Infants born at highest risk	Providence	9%	7%	7%	5%	5%
	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	Providence	30%	30%	30%	29%	27%
	Rhode Island	16%	16%	16%	16%	15%
Women with delayed prenatal care	Providence	20.5%	22.1%	22.9%	20.9%	19.2%
	Rhode Island	14.0%	14.9%	15.6%	15.0%	13.7%
Infants born with low birthweight	Providence	9.4%	9.3%	9.3%	9.1%	9.1%
	Rhode Island	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	7.9%	7.8%
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	Providence	9.3	9.5	9.3	8.7	8.9
	Rhode Island	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.4
Newborn infants exclusively breastfed	Providence	49%	49%	51%	52%	53%
	Rhode Island	57%	58%	59%	61%	62%
Asthma hospitalization rate (per 1,000 children under age 18)*	Providence	3.0	2.3	4.0	3.9	3.7
	Rhode Island	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1
Teen birth rate (per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19)*	Providence	48.0	46.6	40.6	38.3	34.6
	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)*	Providence	14.1	19.1	18.4	20.1	18.0
	Rhode Island	11.7	13.3	14.0	13.9	14.0
Rate of children with incarcerated parents (per 1,000 children)*	Providence	23.9	21.7	23.0	22.1	22.2
	Rhode Island	10.2	10.4	10.9	11.0	11.2
Domestic violence incidents with children present	Providence	35%	33%	33%	36%	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	Providence	55	123	154	163	149
	Rhode Island	376	508	519	522	503
Children enrolled in Head Start	Providence	797	790	777	768	641
	Rhode Island	2,455	2,471	2,432	2,432	2,040
Licensed early learning centers	Providence	50	49	47	47	46
	Rhode Island	338	330	309	314	309
Licensed family child care homes	Providence	428	415	376	338	335
	Rhode Island	705	688	639	585	581
Licensed early learning centers participating in BrightStars	Providence	14%	22%	26%	32%	83%
	Rhode Island	4%	7%	12%	15%	78%
Licensed family child care homes participating in BrightStars	Providence	0%	10%	14%	25%	91%
	Rhode Island	1%	8%	12%	21%	82%
Children receiving child care subsidies (subsidy use by child residence)	Providence	2,864	2,809	2,976	2,941	2,845
	Rhode Island	7,457	7,622	7,749	7,868	7,696
Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten	Providence	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Rhode Island	60%	60%	64%	68%	70%
Students who are English Language Learners	Providence	15%	16%	17%	19%	21%
	Rhode Island	5%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Students enrolled in special education	Providence	18%	17%	19%	19%	18%
	Rhode Island	17%	17%	18%	18%	17%
Student mobility rate	Providence	28%	25%	25%	24%	21%
	Rhode Island	16%	14%	14%	14%	13%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Providence	44%	47%	46%	45%	52%
	Rhode Island	67%	69%	71%	69%	71%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the reading proficiency level	Providence	45%	44%	52%	56%	49%
	Rhode Island	70%	74%	77%	77%	74%
4 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Providence	35%	42%	42%	43%	39%
	Rhode Island	62%	63%	65%	64%	63%
8 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Providence	28%	25%	31%	34%	34%
	Rhode Island	54%	54%	58%	58%	57%
11 <sup>th</sup> graders at or above the math proficiency level	Providence	11%	12%	11%	15%	14%
	Rhode Island	27%	33%	30%	34%	36%
Chronic early absence in grades K-3	Providence	21%	22%	22%	20%	19%
	Rhode Island	11%	13%	12%	11%	12%
Chronic absence in high school	Providence	43%	45%	46%	41%	37%
	Rhode Island	21%	25%	25%	25%	24%
Suspension rate (per 100 students)	Providence	49	53	48	49	35
	Rhode Island	30	30	31	30	23
High school graduation rate	Providence	66%	68%	66%	65%	71%
	Rhode Island	75%	76%	77%	77%	80%

\*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. For more information, please contact Rhode Island KIDS COUNT - (401) 351-9400 - [www.rikidscount.org](http://www.rikidscount.org)