

Children Receiving Preschool Special Education Services

DEFINITION

Children receiving preschool special education services is the percentage of children ages three to five who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and are receiving special education services in Rhode Island.

SIGNIFICANCE

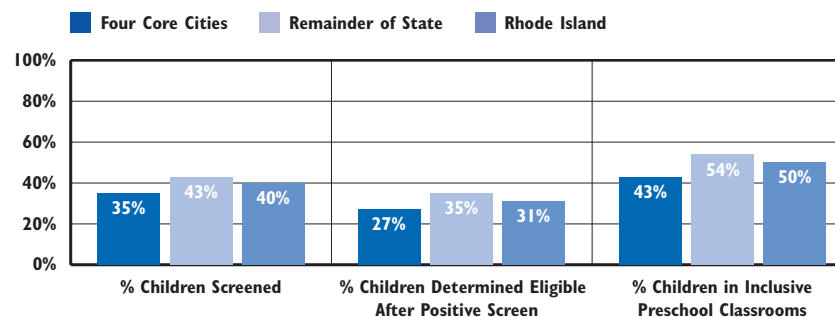
Preschool special education is an important component of the early care and education system, providing access to early learning opportunities. The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* specifies that children ages three to five with developmental delays and disabilities have the same right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment as school-age children with disabilities.¹

Developmental delays and disabilities are identified when a child does not reach developmental milestones at the same time as other children his or her age. Some young children with developmental delays are eventually diagnosed with a disability while others catch up to their peers when provided with high-quality educational opportunities, therapies, or interventions.^{2,3} Routine developmental screening during the early stages of life, followed by evaluation and diagnostic assessment, helps children gain early access to needed services in order to prevent the occurrence of more severe problems.⁴

In Rhode Island, school districts work to screen every child ages three to five every year through the Child Outreach screening program. Screenings are conducted in the child's dominant language.⁵ During the 2016-2017 school year in Rhode Island, districts completed developmental screenings for 40% of children ages three to five. Preschool-age children in the core cities are less likely to receive a developmental screening (35%) than children in the remainder of the state (43%). Of children referred based on positive screens, 31% are determined eligible for preschool special education. Children in the core cities are also less likely to be determined eligible after referral (27%) than children in the remainder of the state (35%).⁶

Approximately 15% of U.S. children ages three to 17 have a developmental disability. Boys and children in low-income families more likely to have a disability than girls and children in higher-income families.⁷ Under *IDEA*, each state sets its own criteria to determine eligibility for special education services, deciding where to draw the line along a continuum of functioning to identify children who are sufficiently delayed to need special education services.⁸ In 2015, Rhode Island ranked in the top ten states for providing preschool special education services by serving 9.1% of children ages three to five compared with a U.S. average of 6.2%.⁹

Preschool Special Education Screening, Eligibility After Positive Screens, and Inclusion Rates, Rhode Island, June 2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2016-2017 Child Outreach Screening Rates and June 2017 Special Education Census. % children determined eligible is of those children referred from Child Outreach screening.

◆ In June 2017, there were 3,045 children ages three to five receiving preschool special education services, 8% of all preschool-age children in Rhode Island. Children in the four core cities are slightly less likely to receive preschool special education services (7%) than children in the remainder of the state (8%).¹⁰

◆ Preschool children with disabilities who attend high-quality preschool with typically developing children and receive special education services in inclusive settings have improved outcomes.¹¹ In June 2017 in Rhode Island, 50% of preschool-age children received special education services within an inclusive early childhood classroom. Children in the four core cities were less likely to receive preschool special education services in an inclusive early childhood setting (43%) than children in the remainder of the state (54%).¹²

◆ About half of the children receiving preschool special education services in Rhode Island receive services outside of inclusive preschool programs, with 14% enrolled in a separate special education preschool class or school, 23% receiving services through “walk-in” visits to a service provider, 1% in a home or hospital, and another 12% enrolled in a preschool setting but receiving special education services in another location.¹³

◆ In June 2017, 43% (1,321) of the 3,045 children receiving preschool special education services in Rhode Island qualified under the developmental delay category, 46% (1,407) had an identified speech/language disability, 7% (211) were diagnosed with autism, and 3% (106) had another diagnosed disability.¹⁴

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Table 40.

Children Ages 3 to 5 Receiving Special Education Services, Rhode Island, 2017

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF CHILDREN AGES 3-5	DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING RATES				PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION BY SETTING				
		% SCREENED 3 YEARS BEFORE K	% SCREENED 2 YEARS BEFORE K	% SCREENED 1 YEAR BEFORE K	% SCREENED AGES 3 TO 5	INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASS	% IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASS	OTHER SETTING	TOTAL # RECEIVING SERVICES	% RECEIVING SERVICES
Barrington	567	40%	66%	88%	66%	33	59%	23	56	10%
Bristol Warren	846	15%	44%	51%	36%	28	41%	40	68	8%
Burrillville	446	19%	45%	64%	42%	27	54%	23	50	11%
Central Falls	1,094	34%	58%	81%	58%	54	44%	69	123	11%
Chariho	703	25%	52%	67%	48%	32	48%	34	66	9%
Coventry	1,032	24%	53%	67%	49%	60	70%	26	86	8%
Cranston	2,759	15%	41%	60%	39%	76	39%	121	197	7%
Cumberland	1,232	7%	41%	59%	36%	51	60%	34	85	7%
East Greenwich	471	13%	57%	58%	43%	25	66%	13	38	8%
East Providence	1,589	13%	38%	65%	38%	37	29%	91	128	8%
Exeter-West Greenwich	345	30%	59%	74%	56%	16	53%	14	30	9%
Foster	117	26%	58%	67%	49%	*	29%	*	*	6%
Glocester	276	26%	58%	67%	49%	12	36%	21	33	12%
Jamestown	139	42%	63%	62%	58%	11	69%	*	16	12%
Johnston	894	26%	64%	76%	55%	34	40%	50	84	9%
Lincoln	701	23%	57%	69%	48%	68	82%	15	83	12%
Little Compton	62	8%	50%	74%	50%	*	100%	0	*	5%
Middletown	873	11%	30%	37%	27%	36	77%	11	47	5%
Narragansett	249	38%	70%	79%	62%	28	80%	*	35	14%
New Shoreham	32	8%	23%	13%	15%	*	75%	*	*	13%
Newport	1,001	17%	29%	46%	31%	44	71%	18	62	6%
North Kingstown	805	37%	65%	80%	59%	57	83%	12	69	9%
North Providence	1,014	18%	47%	67%	44%	35	49%	37	72	7%
North Smithfield	349	18%	60%	70%	50%	22	52%	20	42	12%
Pawtucket	3,196	9%	34%	55%	33%	103	44%	132	235	7%
Portsmouth	538	30%	46%	79%	54%	24	51%	23	47	9%
Providence	8,500	17%	39%	42%	33%	263	53%	236	499	6%
Scituate	267	26%	58%	67%	49%	12	60%	*	20	7%
Smithfield	480	27%	74%	83%	63%	16	47%	18	34	7%
South Kingstown	679	25%	70%	70%	56%	23	34%	44	67	10%
Tiverton	468	9%	27%	70%	38%	23	59%	16	39	8%
Warwick	2,678	10%	32%	54%	32%	111	61%	70	181	7%
West Warwick	1,105	19%	45%	66%	42%	52	39%	81	133	12%
Westerly	649	32%	73%	77%	60%	55	82%	12	67	10%
Woonsocket	2,128	8%	34%	63%	33%	41	19%	175	216	10%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	13	87%	*	15	NA
RI School for the Deaf	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0%	*	*	NA
Four Core Cities	14,918	15%	38%	50%	35%	461	43%	612	1,073	7%
Remainder of State	23,366	19%	47%	64%	43%	1,056	54%	893	1,949	8%
Rhode Island	38,284	18%	44%	59%	40%	1,530	50%	1,515	3,045	8%

Sources of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), June 2017 Special Education Census.

2016-2017 Child Outreach screening data is from the RIDE Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports. Foster, Glocester, and Scituate school districts collaborate to conduct Child Outreach screenings. Separate rates are not available for each of these districts so the same combined rate is used for all three districts.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

The denominator is the number of children ages three to five residing in each district during the 2016-2017 school year from the Rhode Island Department of Health's KIDSNET database shared with RIDE.

Due to changes in the denominator, screening rates and percentage receiving preschool special education services should not be compared with data in Factbooks published before 2016.

Inclusive early childhood class means children receive the majority of their special education services in a general early childhood education class at a public school, a Head Start program, or a community-based child care program or preschool. Data include children who are district-placed and who are parentally-placed.

NA=Not applicable

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Developmental screening fact sheet*. Retrieved January 18, 2016, from www.cdc.gov
- Meisels, S. J. & Atkins-Burnett, S. (2005). *Developmental screening in early childhood: A guide*. (5th edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

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