

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

DEFINITION

Racial and ethnic diversity is the percentage of children under age 18 by racial and ethnic categories as defined by the U.S. Census. Racial and ethnic categories are chosen by the head of household or person completing the Census form.

SIGNIFICANCE

Racial and ethnic diversity has increased in the United States over the last several decades and is projected to rise in the future.¹ Since 2000, all of the growth in the child population in the U.S. has been among groups other than non-Hispanic Whites.² In 2017, 51% of all U.S. children were non-Hispanic White.³ By 2023, more than half of all children in the U.S. will be children of color.⁴ In Rhode Island, the non-Hispanic White child population declined by 21% between 2000 and 2010, while the Hispanic child population grew by 31%.⁵

In 2010, 64% of children in Rhode Island were non-Hispanic White, down from 73% in 2000. The number of children of color grew by about 13,000 between 2000 and 2010, and the number of non-Hispanic White children decreased by over 37,000 during the same period.⁶

Including Hispanics in each race category, in 2010 in Rhode Island, 72% of children under age 18 were White, 8% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, less than 1% were American Indian

or Alaska Native, 9% identified as Some other race, and 7% identified as Two or more races. In 2010, 21% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.⁷

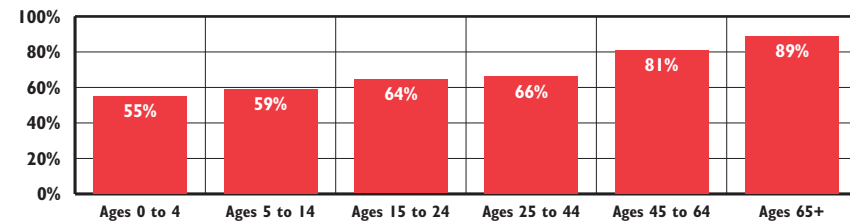
In 2010, more than two-thirds (67%) of all children of color in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. Almost three-quarters (74%) of children living in the four core cities were children of color.⁸

Between 2013 and 2017, there were 8,981 foreign-born children living in Rhode Island, 30% of whom were naturalized U.S. citizens.⁹ Of Rhode Island's immigrant children, 29% were born in Asia, 25% were born in the Caribbean, 20% were born in Central or South America, 13% were born in Africa, 10% were born in Europe, and 1% were born in North America (Canada, Bermuda, or Mexico).¹⁰

Between 2013 and 2017, 23% of children between the ages of five and 17 living in Rhode Island spoke a language other than English at home, 96% of whom spoke English well or very well.¹¹

Diversity presents both opportunities and challenges to schools, child care providers, health care providers, social service agencies, and other community organizations, in terms of adapting current practices to meet the needs of a changing population. Many providers are focusing on a shift toward culturally competent services to serve increasingly diverse populations.¹²

Percent of Population Identified as Non-Hispanic White, by Age, Rhode Island, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2017.

- ◆ Young children in Rhode Island are less likely to be identified as non-Hispanic White than any other age group. Fifty-five percent of Rhode Island children under age five identify as non-Hispanic White, compared with 66% of adults ages 25 to 44 and 89% of people age 65 or over.¹³
- ◆ The median age of Hispanic Rhode Islanders in 2017 was 28 years, compared with 46 years for White Rhode Islanders, 34 years for Native American Rhode Islanders, 32 years for Black Rhode Islanders, 31 years for Asian Rhode Islanders, and 20 years for Rhode Islanders of Two or more races.¹⁴
- ◆ Ninety-six percent of children in Rhode Island were born in the U.S.¹⁵ Twenty-six percent of children in Rhode Island live in immigrant families (either they are foreign-born, or they have at least one parent who is foreign-born), slightly above the US rate of 25%.¹⁶ Nearly all (97%) children in Rhode Island immigrant families have parents who arrived in this country more than five years ago.¹⁷
- ◆ Sixteen percent of Rhode Island children in non-immigrant families are poor, compared with 20% of children in immigrant families.¹⁸ Sixty-seven percent of Rhode Island's poor children live in families with U.S.-born parents.¹⁹
- ◆ Limited English proficiency can be a barrier to employment opportunities, higher earnings, access to health care, and parental engagement with education.²⁰ Sixteen percent of Rhode Island children in immigrant families live in linguistically-isolated households, meaning no one 14 years or older speaks only English and no one over 14 speaks English "very well."²¹

Table 5.

Child Population, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2010

CITY/TOWN	UNDER AGE 18 BY RACE AND ETHNICITY								2010 POPULATION UNDER AGE 18
	HISPANIC OR LATINO	WHITE	BLACK	AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	SOME OTHER RACE	TWO OR MORE RACES	
Barrington	154	4,096	22	8	163	0	13	141	4,597
Bristol	130	3,298	43	4	40	0	3	105	3,623
Burrillville	115	3,310	32	2	12	0	4	101	3,576
Central Falls	3,950	747	492	17	20	2	179	237	5,644
Charlestown	46	1,331	8	50	16	0	1	54	1,506
Coventry	312	7,065	64	19	77	0	14	219	7,770
Cranston	2,966	10,819	693	48	1,075	15	73	725	16,414
Cumberland	542	6,348	154	7	204	3	31	246	7,535
East Greenwich	106	3,014	26	5	174	0	6	105	3,436
East Providence	799	6,619	619	42	142	1	281	674	9,177
Exeter	66	1,216	7	7	10	0	3	25	1,334
Foster	24	913	14	1	16	0	0	18	986
Glocester	63	1,942	13	2	24	0	7	47	2,098
Hopkinton	48	1,690	7	15	16	0	3	66	1,845
Jamestown	36	947	4	1	8	0	2	45	1,043
Johnston	640	4,364	148	1	135	0	22	170	5,480
Lincoln	353	3,885	114	7	164	0	25	203	4,751
Little Compton	18	606	8	1	6	3	2	10	654
Middletown	295	2,779	159	10	124	3	20	262	3,652
Narragansett	91	1,998	30	32	16	0	9	93	2,269
New Shoreham	10	149	1	0	0	0	0	3	163
Newport	703	2,405	337	37	39	1	33	528	4,083
North Kingstown	289	5,598	75	31	85	2	6	236	6,322
North Providence	796	3,833	397	15	158	0	74	241	5,514
North Smithfield	114	2,241	15	2	33	0	4	47	2,456
Pawtucket	4,785	6,513	2,727	83	256	7	1,004	1,200	16,575
Portsmouth	157	3,537	53	11	58	1	13	166	3,996
Providence	23,166	6,737	6,682	375	2,095	15	494	2,070	41,634
Richmond	44	1,729	12	7	15	0	0	42	1,849
Scituate	54	2,145	8	4	29	0	3	29	2,272
Smithfield	117	3,337	46	6	41	0	9	69	3,625
South Kingstown	192	4,687	80	81	115	1	18	242	5,416
Tiverton	84	2,741	31	3	34	2	9	94	2,998
Warren	75	1,736	38	10	11	0	4	66	1,940
Warwick	1,048	13,365	275	38	457	2	39	601	15,825
West Greenwich	60	1,353	15	5	16	0	1	27	1,477
West Warwick	590	4,554	142	11	128	3	20	298	5,746
Westerly	252	4,068	68	52	127	2	10	208	4,787
Woonsocket	2,650	5,147	676	37	592	2	35	749	9,888
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>34,551</i>	<i>19,144</i>	<i>10,577</i>	<i>512</i>	<i>2,963</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>1,712</i>	<i>4,256</i>	<i>73,741</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>11,389</i>	<i>123,718</i>	<i>3,758</i>	<i>575</i>	<i>3,768</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>762</i>	<i>6,206</i>	<i>150,215</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>45,940</i>	<i>142,862</i>	<i>14,335</i>	<i>1,087</i>	<i>6,731</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>2,474</i>	<i>10,462</i>	<i>223,956</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Redistricting File. All categories are mutually exclusive. If Hispanic was selected as ethnicity, individuals are not included in other racial categories. Likewise, if more than one race was selected, individuals are included in Two or more races and not in their individual race categories.

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

References

¹ Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2017). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² O'Hare, W. (2011). *The changing child population of the United States: Analysis of data from the 2010 Census*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2018). *Child population by race—2012 - 2016*. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from www.datacenter.kidscount.org

⁴ Frey, W. H. (2011). *America's diverse future: Initial glimpses at the U.S. child population from the 2010 Census*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

^{5,6,7,8} U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017. Table B05003.

¹⁰ Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2012-2015 American Community Survey PUMS data.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017. Table B16004.

¹² The Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation. (2014). *Enhancing cultural competence in social service agencies: A promising approach to serving diverse children and families*. Retrieved January 11, 2019, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov>

^{13,14} U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2017.

¹⁵ The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2018). *Child population by nativity—2017*. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from datacenter.kidscount.org

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