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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Makes Data Local at 'Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard' Event

Woonsocket has the highest rates of child poverty and extreme poverty in the state

School Breakfast Program participation rates continue to increase

Education outcomes need improvement

Woonsocket, RI, (September 25, 2015) – At the *Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard* presentation, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Policy Analyst John Neubauer led a data-driven community discussion on the well-being of Woonsocket children and families. The presentation's data comes from the *2015 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*, and includes improvements and declines in economic well-being, education, health, child welfare, and safety.

The *Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard* presentation was held on Friday, September 25, 2015 from 9:00am – 10:30am at Connecting for Children and Families at The Chaplin-Perez Center, 37 Center Street, Woonsocket, RI.

Improvements and declines discussed at the *Data in Your Backyard* presentation include:

Woonsocket has the highest rates of poverty and extreme poverty among children in the state

Although childhood poverty exists in every Rhode Island community, it is particularly concentrated in the core cities of Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, 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.

The poverty data are based on the federal poverty threshold which is defined for 2014 as an income of \$19,073 for a family of three with two children and \$24,008 for a family of four with two children. A family is in extreme poverty if their income is less than half the poverty threshold (\$9,537 for a family of three). In Woonsocket, 42.8% of all children live in poverty, and 19.5% of all children live in extreme poverty. These rates are the highest in the state.

“We know that living in poverty negatively impacts children now, and far into their future. Having the highest child poverty rate in the state is a strong call to action for Woonsocket,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “Today’s *Data in Your Backyard* event is an important opportunity to discuss strategies that can be implemented for children and families in Woonsocket to succeed.”

School Breakfast Program participation rates continue to increase

Students who eat breakfast have higher math and reading scores, fewer absences, improved attentiveness, and lower incidences of social and emotional problems.

Woonsocket offers Universal School Breakfast, which provides free breakfast to all students regardless of income. In many Woonsocket schools, breakfast is offered right in the classroom, which helps more children get a healthy meal to start the day.

In October 2014, 44% of eligible Woonsocket children participated in the Universal School Breakfast Program. With an average of 1,885 children participating out of 4,287 eligible, Woonsocket has the fourth highest school breakfast participation rate in the state.

“Woonsocket’s strategies to increase school breakfast participation are paying off,” said Neubauer. “Woonsocket’s participation rate is now 44%, compared to 35% in 2012. By offering Universal School Breakfast – and in some cases, breakfast right in the classroom – Woonsocket prioritizes the health and education of their most vulnerable children.”

Education outcomes continue to need improvement

High rate of chronic absence: Regular attendance at school is an essential step for children to succeed academically and do well in life. Students who are frequently absent from school miss critical academic and social learning opportunities and are at risk of disengagement from school, academic failure, and dropping out.

- In Woonsocket, almost one in three (31%) K-3 students missed 18+ days of school during the 2013-2014 school year, tied for highest in the state.
- Woonsocket’s chronic absence rate in high school was 45% during the 2013-2014 school year, the highest in the state.

Low high school graduation rate: High school graduation is the minimum requisite for college and most employment. In Rhode Island, adults without high school diplomas are over four times as likely to be unemployed as those with bachelor’s degrees or more.

- The Woonsocket 4-year graduation rate for the Class of 2014 was 58%, the dropout rate was 25%, 6% completed their GED within 4 years of entering high school, and 12% were still in school in the fall of 2014.
- Woonsocket had the highest dropout rate and lowest 4-year graduation rate in the state.

All data and information presented at *Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard* is available on Rhode Island KIDS COUNT’s website: www.rikidscount.org.

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island children.

Rhode Island Kids Count 2015 Factbook

Indicators of Child Well-Being

Snapshot of Woonsocket, Rhode Island



Census-Based Indicators		1990	2000	2010		
Child population	Woonsocket	10,617	11,155	9,888		
	Rhode Island	225,690	247,822	223,956		
Children in single-parent families	Woonsocket	NA	NA	46%		
	Rhode Island	NA	28%	31%		
		2009-2013				
Median family income	Woonsocket	\$45,099	\$31,307			
	Rhode Island	\$66,156	\$67,904			
Children living in families below the federal poverty threshold	Woonsocket	31.8%	42.8%*			
	Rhode Island	16.9%	19.5%			
Economic Well-Being		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Cost of rent	Woonsocket	\$974	\$968	\$1,021	\$955	\$983
	Rhode Island	\$1,165	\$1,150	\$1,176	\$1,154	\$1,172
Children in families receiving cash assistance	Woonsocket	8%	12%	14%	12%	10%
	Rhode Island	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Children receiving SNAP benefits	Woonsocket	4,847	4,964	5,117	5,064	4,913
	Rhode Island	59,652	63,783	64,866	63,971	60,982
WIC participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Woonsocket	74%	74%	76%	71%	72%
	Rhode Island	72%	68%	69%	66%	65%
School Breakfast Program participation (% income-eligible children participating)	Woonsocket	36%	40%	35%	43%	44%
	Rhode Island	28%	36%	35%	39%	39%
Health		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Children under age 19 receiving Medical Assistance	Woonsocket	6,505	6,578	6,647	6,657	7,011
	Rhode Island	92,701	93,691	95,248	96,215	104,532
Infants born at highest risk	Woonsocket	10%	8%	6%	6%	4%
	Rhode Island	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
		2005-2009	2006-2010	2007-2011	2008-2012	2009-2013
Births to mothers with less than a high school diploma	Woonsocket	24%	24%	24%	23%	21%
	Rhode Island	16%	16%	16%	15%	14%
Women with delayed prenatal care	Woonsocket	16.8%	17.4%	16.9%	16.1%	15.8%
	Rhode Island	14.9%	15.6%	15.0%	13.7%	12.8%
Preterm births	Woonsocket	13.2%	12.8%	12.5%	12.5%	11.9%
	Rhode Island	11.8%	11.6%	11.1%	10.9%	10.7%
Infants born with low birthweight	Woonsocket	10.3%	10.3%	10.1%	10.0%	9.2%
	Rhode Island	8.0%	8.0%	7.9%	7.8%	7.6%
Newborn infants exclusively breastfed	Woonsocket	42%	43%	47%	50%	53%
	Rhode Island	58%	59%	61%	62%	64%
Asthma hospitalization rate (per 1,000 children under age 18)	Woonsocket	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.7
	Rhode Island	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1	1.9
Teen birth rate (per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19)	Woonsocket	66.6	75.1	71.4	67.3	63.8
	Rhode Island	30.1	27.0	25.5	23.3	21.0
Safety - Child Welfare		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Child abuse and neglect indicated victims rate (per 1,000 children)	Woonsocket	27.3	27.4	27.5	35.3	37.6
	Rhode Island	13.3	14.0	13.9	14.0	14.5
Children with incarcerated parents rate (per 1,000 children)	Woonsocket	19.6	19.5	22.5	25.7	24.3
	Rhode Island	10.4	10.9	11.0	11.2	11.8
Domestic violence incidents with children present	Woonsocket	29%	37%	40%	40%	NA
	Rhode Island	28%	29%	31%	40%	NA

*Estimate has a high margin of error due to small sample size.

For more information, please contact Rhode Island KIDS COUNT - (401) 351-9400 - www.rikidscount.org

Safety - Juvenile Justice		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Youth Violence (# of juvenile arrests for assault and weapons offenses)	Woonsocket	50	53	62	32	NA
	Rhode Island	885	797	739	660	NA
Youth at the Training School	Woonsocket	39	30	35	28	38
	Rhode Island	790	641	578	482	482
Education		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Children enrolled in Early Head Start	Woonsocket	2	0	1	0	0
	Rhode Island	508	519	522	503	527
Children enrolled in Head Start	Woonsocket	204	190	190	160	190
	Rhode Island	2,471	2,432	2,432	2,040	2,295
Licensed early learning centers	Woonsocket	12	11	11	11	9
	Rhode Island	330	309	314	309	311
Licensed family child care homes	Woonsocket	10	10	7	7	7
	Rhode Island	688	639	585	581	552
Licensed early learning centers participating in BrightStars	Woonsocket	17%	36%	45%	100%	89%
	Rhode Island	7%	12%	15%	78%	78%
Licensed family child care homes participating in BrightStars	Woonsocket	10%	20%	29%	100%	86%
	Rhode Island	8%	12%	21%	82%	77%
Children receiving child care subsidies (subsidy use by child residence)	Woonsocket	537	489	522	516	602
	Rhode Island	7,622	7,749	7,868	7,696	9,060
Children enrolled in State Pre-K	Woonsocket	NA	NA	18	36	36
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	144	234	306
Children receiving preschool special education services	Woonsocket	NA	NA	238	178	211
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	2,927	2,565	2,786
Public school enrollment (total enrollment)	Woonsocket	6,127	5,999	6,024	5,920	5,995
	Rhode Island	143,928	142,854	142,481	142,008	141,959
Public school enrollment (% low-income)	Woonsocket	63%	70%	72%	75%	72%
	Rhode Island	43%	44%	46%	47%	47%
Children enrolled in full-day kindergarten	Woonsocket	5%	4%	3%	3%	100%
	Rhode Island	60%	64%	68%	70%	81%
Students who are English Language Learners	Woonsocket	6%	7%	8%	8%	9%
	Rhode Island	5%	6%	6%	7%	7%
Student mobility rate	Woonsocket	21%	23%	21%	23%	22%
	Rhode Island	14%	14%	14%	13%	13%
4 th graders at or above reading proficiency level	Woonsocket	59%	59%	56%	53%	NA
	Rhode Island	69%	71%	69%	71%	NA
4 th graders at or above math proficiency level	Woonsocket	56%	59%	56%	50%	NA
	Rhode Island	63%	65%	64%	63%	NA
8 th graders at or above reading proficiency level	Woonsocket	60%	63%	56%	55%	NA
	Rhode Island	74%	77%	77%	74%	NA
8 th graders at or above math proficiency level	Woonsocket	33%	36%	35%	33%	NA
	Rhode Island	54%	58%	58%	57%	NA
11 th graders at or above math proficiency level	Woonsocket	15%	16%	21%	20%	NA
	Rhode Island	33%	30%	34%	36%	NA
Schools identified for intervention	Woonsocket	NA	NA	0%	0%	0%
	Rhode Island	NA	NA	10%	10%	12%
Chronic early absence in grades K-3	Woonsocket	23%	26%	25%	34%	31%
	Rhode Island	13%	12%	11%	12%	12%
Chronic absence in high school	Woonsocket	45%	48%	48%	46%	45%
	Rhode Island	25%	25%	25%	24%	24%
Suspension rate (per 100 students)	Woonsocket	83	132	93	87	102
	Rhode Island	30	31	30	23	22
High school graduation rate	Woonsocket	63%	63%	65%	61%	58%
	Rhode Island	76%	77%	77%	80%	81%