

K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services

DEFINITION

K-12 students receiving special education services is the percentage of students in grades K-12 who received special education services in Rhode Island public schools or who were placed in private special education programs by their district of residence.

SIGNIFICANCE

Early and accurately targeted special education services help students with developmental delays and disabilities improve their academic outcomes and prevent grade retention.¹ Approximately 17% of U.S. children ages three to 17 have a developmental delay or disability. Children in low-income families, children with non-college-educated mothers, children with rural residences, children with low birthweight, and boys are more likely to have a delay or disability.²

The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* guarantees a free appropriate public education to every child with a disability. Prior to passage of the original 1975 federal law, many children with disabilities were excluded from public school. Since passage, outcomes for children with disabilities have steadily improved. More students with disabilities are being educated in neighborhood schools, included in general education classrooms, reaching proficiency standards, graduating from

high school, enrolling in postsecondary education programs, and becoming employed as adults.³ Concerns remain that not all children who could benefit from services are identified, that Children of Color are less likely to receive special education services than their white peers, and that special education funding is not adequate.⁴

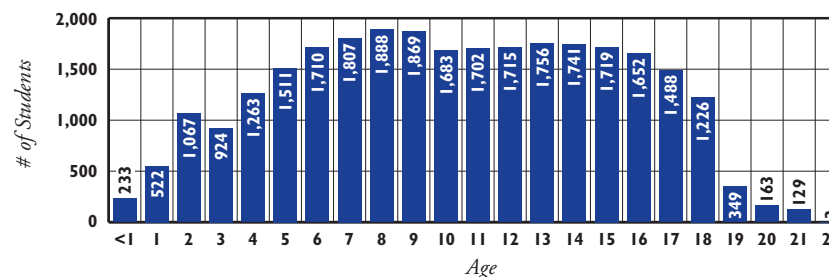
Despite improvements in high school graduation rates and postsecondary school enrollment, students with disabilities are still less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be suspended than students without disabilities.^{5,6} Nationally, 65% to 75% of juvenile justice-involved youth under age 18 have mental, emotional, behavioral, and/or physical health problems and 33% qualify for special education.⁷

Students with disabilities are much less likely to meet or exceed expectations on the *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*. In 2022-2023, only 11% of third graders with a disability met or exceeded expectations in ELA and 12% in math, compared with 43% in ELA and 40% in math for students without special education needs.⁸

In Rhode Island, the four-year graduation rate for the class of 2023 was 66% for students receiving special education services, compared to 88% for students not receiving these services. Some students enrolled in special education may take additional time to graduate.⁹



Students Ages Birth to 22 Receiving Early Intervention and Special Education Services, Rhode Island, June 2023



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Center for Child and Family Health, Early Intervention enrollment, June 30, 2023. Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Diverse Learners, Special Education Census, June 30, 2023. Includes parentally-placed students.

★ As of June 2023, there were 22,120 students in grades K-12 (16% of all kindergarten through grade 12 students) receiving special education services through Rhode Island public schools. Thirty-six percent of these students had a learning disability, 19% had a health impairment, 12% had a speech/language impairment, 12% had an autism spectrum disorder, 8% had a developmental delay, 6% had an emotional disturbance, 4% had an intellectual disability, and 3% had other disabilities.¹⁰

★ Students in grades K-12 enrolled in a traditional school district in one of the four core cities were more likely to be receiving special education services (19%) than those enrolled in traditional districts in the remainder of the state (16%), in public charter schools (13%) or in state-operated public schools (12%).¹¹

★ As of June 2023, 73% of students were in their regular classroom for 80% of the day or more, 21% were in their regular classroom for less than 80% of the day, 5% were in a separate school, 1% were in a residential facility, were homebound, or were hospitalized.¹²

★ Of students ages six to 22 receiving special education services in June 2023, 65% were boys, 35% were girls, and <1% identified as another gender. By identified race/ethnicity, 2% were Asian, 10% were Black, 30% were Hispanic, 1% were Native American, <1% were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6% were Multiracial, and 51% were white. The majority were low-income (58% receiving free or reduced-price lunch) and 14% were Multilingual Learners.¹³

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Table 44.

K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services by Primary Disability, Rhode Island, 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER	DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE	HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	LEARNING DISABILITY	SPEECH/LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT	OTHER	TOTAL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	% STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Barrington	3,341	53	10	46	96	10	102	52	14	383	11%
Bristol Warren	2,831	49	20	29	76	15	164	115	11	479	17%
Burrillville	2,005	39	19	20	58	17	179	35	*	376	19%
Central Falls	2,466	46	72	12	75	27	213	44	19	508	21%
Chariho	2,970	61	39	19	80	*	165	48	19	440	15%
Coventry	4,107	99	36	46	126	30	222	95	14	668	16%
Cranston	10,131	207	83	94	362	43	567	101	32	1,489	15%
Cumberland	4,664	121	47	35	70	23	230	94	57	677	15%
East Greenwich	2,499	47	34	*	59	14	83	32	*	283	11%
East Providence	5,062	132	68	78	204	34	322	96	18	952	19%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,463	31	16	*	36	*	52	19	*	168	11%
Foster	201	*	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	30	15%
Foster-Glocester	1,351	16	0	*	30	*	48	*	*	113	8%
Glocester	574	*	*	0	11	0	21	32	*	74	13%
Jamestown	394	11	*	*	21	*	25	15	*	84	21%
Johnston	3,028	84	49	17	117	29	223	64	23	606	20%
Lincoln	3,219	91	43	36	91	12	190	56	12	531	16%
Little Compton	197	*	*	*	12	*	20	*	0	44	22%
Middletown	1,956	37	32	38	92	15	115	31	*	369	19%
Narragansett	1,064	14	*	*	27	*	54	22	*	136	13%
New Shoreham	132	*	*	*	12	0	*	*	0	27	20%
Newport	1,867	55	22	26	35	31	163	42	10	384	21%
North Kingstown	3,725	56	31	27	94	*	170	83	13	483	13%
North Providence	3,449	77	44	39	89	29	230	88	15	611	18%
North Smithfield	1,593	26	21	10	33	10	114	44	*	263	17%
Pawtucket	7,782	168	130	62	274	48	631	141	24	1,478	19%
Portsmouth	2,152	42	21	26	76	10	93	46	14	328	15%
Providence	20,628	266	334	230	551	176	1,211	440	85	3,293	16%
Scituate	1,174	17	*	*	28	*	60	36	*	166	14%
Smithfield	2,382	62	29	13	69	*	119	26	*	333	14%
South Kingstown	2,439	48	11	16	85	11	102	32	11	316	13%
Tiverton	1,613	44	26	22	58	11	116	27	*	311	19%
Warwick	7,821	191	159	91	276	48	489	124	38	1,416	18%
West Warwick	3,435	91	72	60	160	34	202	79	14	712	21%
Westerly	2,226	49	54	25	83	11	101	59	14	396	18%
Woonsocket	5,567	151	106	128	341	74	465	193	29	1,487	27%
Charter Schools	11,262	89	105	63	297	33	613	257	15	1,472	13%
State-Operated Schools	1,764	*	*	*	40	0	82	*	68	216	12%
UCAP	127	0	0	*	*	0	10	0	0	15	12%
YouthBuild	79	0	0	0	*	0	*	0	0	3	4%
Four Core Cities	36,443	631	642	432	1,241	325	2,520	818	157	6,766	19%
Remainder of State	84,989	1,863	1,012	848	2,673	489	4,756	1,610	397	13,648	16%
Rhode Island	134,742	2,592	1,760	1,351	4,256	847	7,983	2,694	637	22,120	16%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Office for Diverse Learners, Special Education Census June 30, 2023. Data do not include parentally-placed students. The denominator (number of students) is the "resident average daily membership" (RADM) for grades K-12 in the 2022-2023 school year provided by RIDE.

As of the 2022-2023, students in DCYF care and those receiving instruction through DCYF operated schools (the Training School) remain enrolled with their home district/the district they were in at the time of entering DCYF care so IEP data on these youth are included in their home district's data. Data about youth with IEPs receiving educational services at the Training School are included in the Youth in the Juvenile Justice System indicator. As of May 2023, there were 0 individuals with an IEP in the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Due to changes in methodology, *K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services* in this Factbook cannot be compared with Factbooks prior to 2015. Data about preschool students receiving special education services can be found in the *Children Receiving Preschool Special Education Services* indicator.

* 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.

Totals of students and percentages of students receiving special education may not sum due to rounding.

The category "other" includes students who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, deaf/blind, multi-handicapped, orthopedically impaired, and/or have traumatic brain injury.

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

(continued with References on page 189)