



EARLY LEARNING FACT SHEET

Promoting early learning and development Birth to 8

Access to High-Quality, Publicly-Funded Preschool

High-quality preschool programs help children gain important early social-emotional, cognitive, and literacy skills so they are better prepared to succeed in school and life.¹ In Rhode Island, 2,584 four-year-olds have access to high-quality, publicly-funded preschool through Head Start and the RI Pre-K program. In addition, Head Start serves 706 three-year-olds.^{2,3}

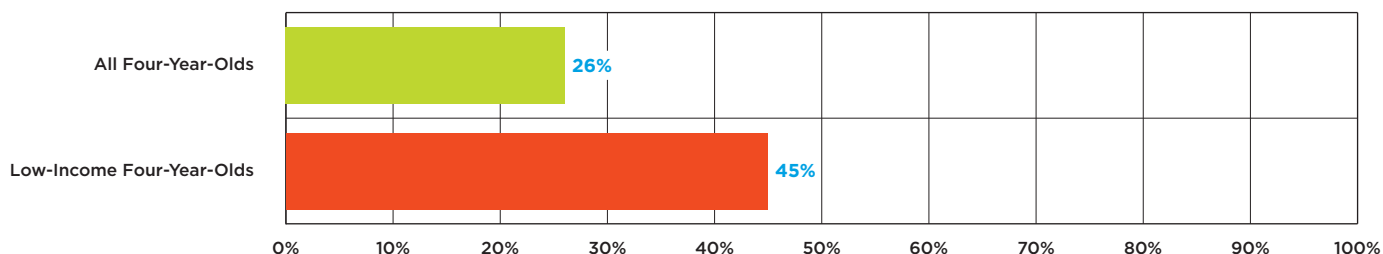
RI Pre-K was launched during the 2009-2010 school year after passage of the *Rhode Island Prekindergarten Education Act*, which required the Rhode Island Department of Education to design a State Pre-K program for three- and four-year-olds that met high-quality standards and was built on the existing early childhood education infrastructure. As of 2020, the RI Pre-K program is one of four state-funded Pre-K programs ranked first in the U.S. for meeting all recommended quality benchmarks but is ranked 35th in the U.S. for percentage of four-year-olds served. Rhode Island is among 19 states that do not serve any three-year-olds. RI Pre-K is included in the state's education funding formula law.⁴

As of the 2019-2020 school year, RI Pre-K served 1,420 four-year-olds with 140 of these children also enrolled in Head Start through braided funding; the program was funded with \$14.9 million in state resources. Children were served in diverse settings (45% Head Start agencies, 31% child care programs, and 24% public schools).⁵

Head Start is funded and managed by the federal government and is a two-generation program that provides preschool and comprehensive family services to very low-income children. Compared to their peers, children who participate in Head Start show improvements in math, language, and literacy skills, have fewer behavior problems, are less likely to repeat a grade or receive special education, and are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.^{6,7}

As of 2019, Rhode Island Head Start grantees received \$22.8 million in federal funds and \$1.2 million in state funds and served 2,010 children ages three (706) and four (1,304). There were 140 four-year-olds enrolled in both Head Start and RI Pre-K through braided funding. There are six federal Head Start grantees in Rhode Island: CHILD, Inc., Children's Friend, Comprehensive Community Action Program, East Bay Community Action Program, Tri-County Community Action Agency, and Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association.^{8,9}

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HEAD START OR RI PRE-K
THE YEAR BEFORE KINDERGARTEN, RHODE ISLAND, 2019-2020



Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using October 2019 enrollment in Head Start and RI Pre-K as numerator and October 2019 enrollment in public kindergarten as denominator with low-income population estimated using the % of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch.

CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HEAD START OR RI PRE-K THE YEAR BEFORE KINDERGARTEN, RHODE ISLAND, 2019-2020

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ESTIMATED # OF CHILDREN AGE 4	% LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN DISTRICT	ESTIMATED # OF LOW-INCOME CHILDREN AGE 4	CHILDREN IN HEAD START (ALL LOW-INCOME)	CHILDREN IN BRAIDED HEAD START AND RI PRE-K (ALL LOW-INCOME)	LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN RI PRE-K	HIGHER-INCOME CHILDREN IN RI PRE-K	ESTIMATED # UNSERVED LOW-INCOME FOUR-YEAR OLDS	ESTIMATED # UNSERVED ALL FOUR-YEAR OLDS
Barrington	191	4%	8	1	0	0	0	7	190
Bristol Warren	243	30%	73	25	0	8	10	40	200
Burrillville	147	34%	50	15	0	0	0	35	132
Central Falls	217	95%	206	46	0	79	11	81	81
Chariho	221	17%	38	7	0	0	0	31	214
Coventry	277	29%	80	3	18	8	10	51	238
Cranston	673	44%	296	81	40	58	64	117	430
Cumberland	329	21%	69	5	0	0	0	64	324
East Greenwich	163	6%	10	0	0	0	0	10	163
East Providence	362	45%	163	23	0	89	89	51	161
Exeter-West Greenwich	111	14%	16	1	0	0	0	15	110
Foster	41	25%	10	0	0	0	0	10	41
Glocester	100	12%	12	1	0	0	0	11	99
Jamestown	34	7%	2	0	0	0	0	2	34
Johnston	223	44%	98	30	0	8	10	60	175
Lincoln	229	28%	64	2	0	0	0	62	227
Little Compton	18	13%	2	0	0	0	0	2	18
Middletown	156	28%	44	9	0	0	0	35	147
Narragansett	61	21%	13	0	0	0	0	13	61
New Shoreham	11	21%	2	0	0	0	0	2	11
Newport	172	68%	117	22	0	24	12	71	114
North Kingstown	259	22%	57	10	0	0	0	47	249
North Providence	255	47%	120	33	0	8	10	79	204
North Smithfield	100	17%	17	1	0	0	0	16	99
Pawtucket	656	72%	472	121	0	95	31	256	409
Portsmouth	139	17%	24	4	0	0	0	20	135
Providence	1,679	84%	1,410	507	0	322	56	581	794
Scituate	93	11%	10	1	0	0	0	9	92
Smithfield	154	14%	22	5	0	0	0	17	149
South Kingstown	184	17%	31	10	0	0	0	21	174
Tiverton	139	21%	29	11	0	0	0	18	128
Warwick	638	35%	223	54	36	18	36	115	494
West Warwick	264	51%	135	30	18	29	25	58	162
Westerly	194	35%	68	19	0	0	0	49	175
Woonsocket	484	75%	363	87	28	123	47	125	199
Charter Schools	814	62%	505	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
RI School for the Deaf	7	70%	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Four Core Cities	3,036	81%	2,459	761	28	619	145	1,051	1,483
Remainder of State	6,181	30%	1,854	403	112	250	266	1,089	5,150
Rhode Island	10,038	48%	4,818	1,164	140	869	411	2,645	7,454

Source: Rhode Island Head Start Programs and Rhode Island Department of Education, children enrolled as of October 2019 who were one year away from kindergarten enrollment. Children enrolled are listed by residence of child, not location of the program. The estimated number of low-income children age four in each school district is based on October 2019 kindergarten enrollment multiplied by the percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch (at or below 185% of the federal poverty level).

References

- ¹ Yoshikawa, H., et al. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development and Society for Research in Child Development.
- ²⁵ Rhode Island Department of Education, October 2019 RI Pre-K enrollment and budget.
- ³⁸ Rhode Island Head Start program reports to Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, October 2019 enrollment.
- ⁴ Friedman-Krauss, A., et al. (2020). *The state of preschool 2019: State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- ⁶ Barnett, W. S. & Friedman-Krauss, A. H. (2016). *State(s) of Head Start*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- ⁷ Ludwig, J. & Phillips, D. (2008). Long-term effects of Head Start in low-income children. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136, 257-268.
- ⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Region 1 Office, 2020.



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
One Union Station
Providence, RI 02903

Phone: 401-351-9400
rikids@rikidscount.org
www.rikidscount.org



*Special thanks to the Alliance for Early Success for its support of
this Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Early Learning Fact Sheet.*