

Babies

DEFINITION

Babies is the number of babies born to Rhode Island families.

SIGNIFICANCE

Births have been declining for most of the past decade, both nationally and in Rhode Island. In 2022, the U.S. general fertility rate was 56.1 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44, a non-significant decline from 2021.¹

In 2021, Rhode Island had the second lowest fertility rate among states (48.3 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44). The general decline in the fertility rate is due to women delaying childbearing, as well as having fewer total children. Nationally, fertility rates have declined across all racial and ethnic groups; however, Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander women have higher fertility rates than other groups.^{2,3,4}

Fertility rates, as well as immigration, an increase in multiracial marriages, and the proportion of women of childbearing age among racial and ethnic groups has led to an increasingly diverse child population, both in Rhode Island and nationally.⁵ In 2022 in Rhode Island, 45% of babies born were Babies of Color.⁶

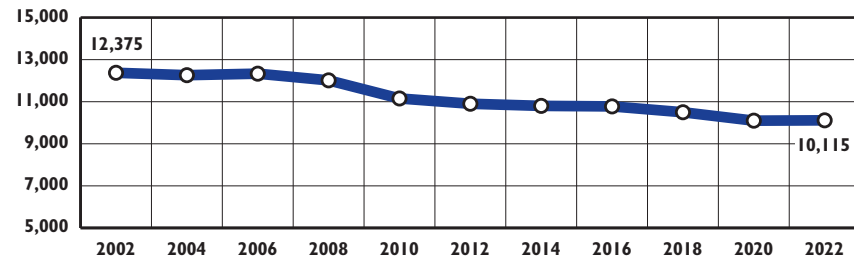
One factor that contributes to the decision to have a child is the high cost of raising a child in the U.S. A middle-class family spends an average of

\$311,000 from birth to age 17 on housing, child care and other costs.⁷ Policies such as paid family leave, subsidized child care and housing, universal Pre-K, and tax credits can help families afford the high cost of raising a child and improve the health and well-being of children.^{8,9}

The basic architecture of the human brain develops during the infant and toddler years. Babies who have positive early childhood experiences, stable, loving relationships with parents and caregivers, and good health and nutrition have a sturdy foundation to thrive. Babies who don't get what they need for healthy growth and development in the first few years of life can encounter lifelong educational, social, health, and developmental challenges.^{10,11}

Infancy is a time of great opportunity and vulnerability. A child's development can be harmed by toxic stress caused by adverse childhood experiences (including extreme poverty, child abuse, caregiver mental health or substance use disorders, and household violence) and factors such as community violence, food insecurity, and racism. These negative experiences in early childhood place a child at increased risk for developmental delays, mental health challenges, and health issues. Timely interventions can prevent or reverse the effects of early adversity.^{12,13,14}

Rhode Island Births, 2002-2022



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Vital Records, Rivers Database 2002-2022. Note: Birth data includes babies born to mothers living in Rhode Island at the time of birth whether the baby was born in Rhode Island or elsewhere.

★ The number of babies born to mothers living in Rhode Island at the time of birth declined 18% between 2002 and 2022, from 12,375 babies in 2002 to 10,115 babies in 2022.¹⁵

★ The U.S. teen birth rate reached a record low in 2022, with 13.5 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19. Rhode Island had the fifth lowest teen birth rate in the U.S. in 2021, with 7.8 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19.^{16,17}

Births by Factors, Rhode Island, 2023

★ In Rhode Island in 2023, 5,092 babies (55%) were born with private insurance, 4,112 babies (44%) were born with Medicaid/RIte Care insurance, 30 babies (<1%) had no insurance, and 37 babies (<1%) insurance status was unknown.¹⁸

★ All babies born in Rhode Island are screened through the Rhode Island Department of Health's Newborn Risk Assessment Program. In 2023, there were 6,090 newborns (66%) who had developmental, socio-economic and/or health factors that potentially put them at risk for later poor outcomes. Babies in families considered "at risk" are referred to First Connections at the Department of Health to help support healthy child development.^{19,20}

Table 2.

Babies, Rhode Island, 2023*

CITY/TOWN	# OF BABIES BORN TO FAMILIES WITH MEDICAID/ RITECARE	# OF BABIES BORN TO SINGLE MOMS	# OF BABIES BY MATERNAL RACE/ETHNICITY						TOTAL # OF BIRTHS
			AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	SOME OTHER/ TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE	HISPANIC	
Barrington	11	12	0	<5	<5	9	74	<5	91
Bristol	23	30	0	<5	0	8	98	12	108
Burrillville	45	52	0	<5	0	<5	114	11	121
Central Falls	214	186	<5	<5	41	86	97	169	250
Charlestown	10	8	0	<5	<5	<5	41	<5	46
Coventry	52	86	<5	10	<5	9	230	21	259
Cranston	330	321	<5	62	84	141	483	249	795
Cumberland	55	76	0	22	14	30	198	28	268
East Greenwich	10	18	<5	6	<5	6	100	7	119
East Providence	147	168	0	18	46	61	303	60	437
Exeter	<5	12	0	<5	0	<5	34	<5	36
Foster	12	18	0	0	0	<5	38	<5	42
Glocester	8	9	0	<5	<5	<5	48	<5	54
Hopkinton	22	22	0	<5	0	5	57	<5	64
Jamestown	<5	5	0	0	0	0	28	0	28
Johnston	93	114	<5	16	20	44	187	69	273
Lincoln	51	56	<5	12	18	9	129	24	173
Little Compton	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
Middletown	33	41	0	<5	7	12	99	16	122
Narragansett	14	21	<5	<5	0	<5	51	<5	58
New Shoreham	<5	5	0	0	0	<5	6	<5	7
Newport	90	82	<5	6	12	25	139	44	190
North Kingstown	22	36	<5	9	5	12	148	8	178
North Providence	111	132	0	12	53	45	172	83	285
North Smithfield	16	22	0	5	<5	6	79	11	93
Pawtucket	461	449	<5	14	205	166	319	254	750
Portsmouth	14	18	0	<5	<5	5	78	<5	91
Providence	1,470	1,288	25	84	341	714	917	1,316	2,136
Richmond	10	17	0	<5	<5	<5	55	<5	62
Scituate	14	23	0	0	<5	<5	80	6	89
Smithfield	14	19	0	<5	0	<5	90	7	99
South Kingstown	35	40	<5	8	6	14	150	15	182
Tiverton	31	32	0	<5	0	<5	77	<5	82
Warren	16	23	0	<5	<5	5	63	<5	70
Warwick	183	239	<5	32	40	48	554	85	682
West Greenwich	8	5	0	<5	<5	<5	38	<5	45
West Warwick	112	137	<5	9	17	34	221	47	288
Westerly	46	54	<5	6	<5	12	103	5	131
Woonsocket	317	298	<5	25	65	99	257	148	458
Four Core Cities	2,462	2,221	33	125	652	1,065	1,590	1,887	3,594
Remainder of State	1,650	1,955	24	257	351	573	4,374	838	5,677
Rhode Island	4,112	4,176	57	382	1,003	1,638	5,964	2,725	9,271

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, KIDSNET Database, 2023. Birth data from 2023 are provisional. Data include only babies born in Rhode Island to Rhode Island residents.

Data for cities and towns with fewer than five babies are suppressed by the Rhode Island Department of Health due to the policy regarding sensitive reproductive health information of a potentially socially-stigmatizing age group. These births are still counted in the remainder of state and state totals.

*Unknowns were excluded for each category (227 babies had unknown maternal race information, nine had unknown maternal ethnicity information)

**Hispanic can be of any Race

“# of Babies Born to Single Moms” include single, separated, divorced, or widowed mothers.

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

References

^{1,3,16} Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., Driscoll, A. K., & Valenzuela, C. P. (2023). Births: Provisional Data for 2022. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 72*(1). Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

^{2,17} Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., Driscoll, A. K., & Valenzuela, C. P. (2023). Births: Final data for 2021. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 72*(1). Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

⁴ Population Reference Bureau. (2021). *Why is the U.S. birth rate declining?* Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.prb.org

⁵ Frey, W. H. (2021). *New 2020 census results show increased diversity countering decades-long declines in America’s white and youth populations.* Retrieved February 9, 2023, from www.brookings.edu

⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

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