

# Children Enrolled in Early Intervention

## DEFINITION

Children enrolled in Early Intervention is the number and percentage of children under age three who have an active Individual Family Service Plan through a Rhode Island Early Intervention provider.

## SIGNIFICANCE

During the first few years of life, children develop the basic brain architecture and social-emotional health that serves as a foundation for all future development and learning. Infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities and those who face significant family circumstances need extra help and should receive high-quality Early Intervention services to develop essential language, social-emotional, and motor skills to reduce the need for services when they are older.<sup>1</sup>

States are required to provide Early Intervention services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities under Part C of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. States may also choose to serve children who are at risk of falling behind without early supports.<sup>2</sup>

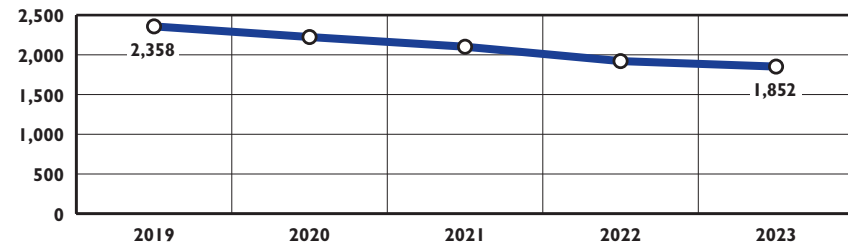
In Rhode Island, children under age three are eligible for Early Intervention (EI) if they have a “single established condition” known to lead to developmental delay (very low birth weight, Down Syndrome, etc.) or if they have a significant developmental delay

in one or more areas of development (cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive). Current eligibility criteria allow children with “significant circumstances” (significant trauma, history of neglect/abuse, significant parental health/mental health or substance use issues, etc.) to qualify through informed clinical opinion under the developmental delay category, if the circumstances impact child or family functioning.<sup>3</sup>

Experts estimate that between 13% and 20% of children under age three have developmental delays or disabilities and would benefit from EI. Nationally, less than a quarter of children with developmental delays and disabilities receive EI before age three. One recent study of a large urban health care system found that only 19% of EI-eligible children were referred to EI and, of those referred, only 26% received EI services, amounting to a net enrollment of 5% of EI-eligible children.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

Routine developmental and Autism Spectrum Disorder screenings using standardized tools at pediatric well-child visits help to identify children who may benefit from Early Intervention services.<sup>7</sup> In Rhode Island in Calendar Year 2022, 73% of children under age one, 76% of children age one, and 70% of children age two (72% of all children under age three) with RIte Care insurance received developmental screenings.<sup>8</sup>

Infants & Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services as of June 30, 2019-2023, Rhode Island



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Children enrolled as of June 30, 2019-2023.

- ★ As of June 30, 2023, 1,852 infants and toddlers were receiving EI services, 6% of the population under age three. The number enrolled was down 21% from June 2019.<sup>9</sup>
- ★ In State Fiscal Year 2023, 3,468 children were referred to Early Intervention. Most referrals came from primary health care providers (30%) or parents/guardians (27%). Of those referred, 67% were evaluated and enrolled, 10% were evaluated and determined not eligible, 18% were not evaluated and were referred to other services, and 5% were still in process.<sup>10</sup>
- ★ In State Fiscal Year 2023, 1,989 children were discharged from EI. Of these, 293 (15%) met their developmental goals and no longer needed EI services, 1,359 (68%) reached the age to transition out of EI and were referred to school districts for evaluation, and 337 (17%) exited for other reasons. Of those who reached the age to transition out of EI, 929 were determined eligible for preschool special education, 203 were determined not eligible, and 227 did not have eligibility determined when they exited EI.<sup>11</sup>
- ★ As of June 30, 2023, in Rhode Island, Early Intervention services for 1,090 children (59%) were paid for by public insurance (RIte Care and Medicaid), 747 children (40%) were paid for by private health insurance providers, and 15 children (1%) were uninsured with services covered by federal *IDEA Part C* funding.<sup>12</sup>
- ★ Since November 2021, infants and toddlers referred to Early Intervention in Rhode Island have had to wait for services due to a staffing crisis caused primarily by inadequate payment rates. In November 2023, Early Intervention agencies reported 42 vacant staff positions. As of February 2024, 623 infants and toddlers in Rhode Island had been waiting for Early Intervention for more than 45 days.<sup>13,14</sup>

# Children Enrolled in Early Intervention

Table 31. Infants and Toddlers Enrolled in Early Intervention (EI) by Eligibility Type, Rhode Island, 2023

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3	STATE FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 REFERRALS	JUNE 30, 2023 ENROLLMENT BY ELIGIBILITY					
		# OF CHILDREN REFERRED TO EARLY INTERVENTION	SINGLE ESTABLISHED CONDITION	MEASURED DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	SIGNIFICANT CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACTING CHILD/FAMILY FUNCTION	NO INFORMATION	# OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EI	% OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3 ENROLLED IN EI
Barrington	412	41	4	15	13	0	32	8%
Bristol	375	36	4	17	9	0	30	8%
Burrillville	388	42	4	15	5	0	24	6%
Central Falls	937	124	3	49	8	2	62	7%
Charlestown	157	12	0	2	2	0	4	3%
Coventry	893	85	5	34	24	1	64	7%
Cranston	2,271	263	11	100	39	3	153	7%
Cumberland	1,097	112	7	44	14	2	67	6%
East Greenwich	353	32	2	10	5	1	18	5%
East Providence	1,237	143	9	48	20	0	77	6%
Exeter	158	12	2	2	3	0	7	4%
Foster	113	13	0	5	2	0	7	6%
Glocester	250	19	0	2	2	1	5	2%
Hopkinton	196	20	2	8	1	0	11	6%
Jamestown	90	6	0	3	0	0	3	3%
Johnston	703	85	3	33	14	0	50	7%
Lincoln	531	65	3	18	11	0	32	6%
Little Compton	73	2	0	0	1	0	1	1%
Middletown	520	55	3	12	9	0	24	5%
Narragansett	175	8	0	4	0	0	4	2%
New Shoreham	14	3	1	1	0	0	2	14%
Newport	606	73	5	25	7	0	37	6%
North Kingstown	729	52	4	13	10	1	28	4%
North Providence	914	86	8	32	11	0	51	6%
North Smithfield	286	29	2	14	5	0	21	7%
Pawtucket	2,652	290	10	99	25	1	135	5%
Portsmouth	441	44	5	17	13	0	35	8%
Providence	6,323	950	45	322	83	11	461	7%
Richmond	234	14	1	1	1	0	3	1%
Scituate	244	23	0	12	2	1	15	6%
Smithfield	445	47	2	22	7	0	31	7%
South Kingstown	501	33	3	17	1	0	21	4%
Tiverton	351	37	8	11	10	0	29	8%
Warren	243	16	2	8	4	0	14	6%
Warwick	2,146	224	6	69	39	2	116	5%
West Greenwich	159	13	1	6	2	0	9	6%
West Warwick	900	90	4	33	10	0	47	5%
Westerly	496	43	7	12	5	1	25	5%
Woonsocket	1,469	213	6	75	15	1	97	7%
Unknown	NA	13	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Four Core Cities	11,381	1,577	64	545	131	15	755	7%
Remainder of State	18,701	1,878	118	665	301	13	1,097	6%
Rhode Island	30,082	3,468	182	1,210	432	28	1,852	6%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Center for Child and Family Health, Early Intervention referrals for State Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) and enrollment as of June 30, 2023 (point-in-time).

The denominator is the number of children under age three, according to Census 2020, PCT 12.

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

### References

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