

Family Home Visiting

DEFINITION

Family home visiting is the number of families enrolled in home visiting programs funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

SIGNIFICANCE

Family home visiting is a prevention strategy used to support pregnant and parenting families with babies and young children to promote healthy child development. Programs are voluntary and staffed by nurses, social workers, and child development specialists. Designed to promote strong parent-child attachment, connect families to resources, and guide families through everyday parenting challenges, evidence-based home visiting programs improve outcomes for both parents and children.¹

Since 2010, the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program has provided states with substantial resources for home visiting with a strong focus on implementation of research-based program models.² Rhode Island uses MIECHV funding to implement three of these nationally recognized models.³

1) The **Healthy Families America** model is designed to strengthen parent-child relationships and prioritizes enrollment of families prenatally or

before a baby is three months old. Home visitors have a caseload of 15 to 20 families, so they develop strong, consistent, positive relationships with families through regular visits for a minimum of three years.⁴

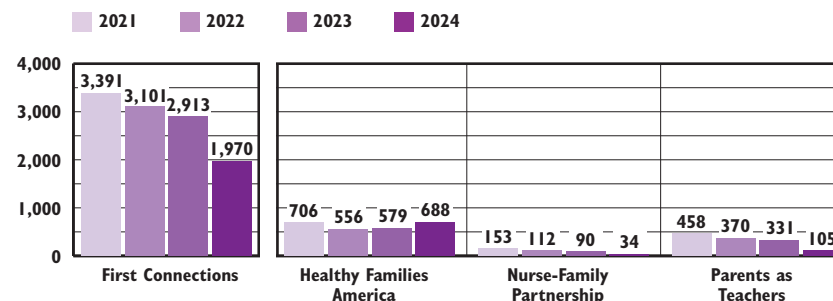
2) The **Nurse-Family Partnership** model focuses on improving birth outcomes, parenting skills, and the life trajectories of families by helping parents develop a vision for their future, continue education, and find work. Families enroll prenatally and receive consistent home visits from their nurse partner who has a caseload of 25 families.⁵

3) The **Parents as Teachers** model helps parents learn about child development and improve parenting practices. Families receive regular visits for at least two years and home visitors have a caseload of 18 families.⁶

Rhode Island also implements a locally designed First Connections family visiting program as a rapid response program for pregnant moms and families with newborns and young children. First Connections helps families get connected to needed resources, including housing, nutrition, and medical care and often helps them enroll in one of the longer-term family home visiting programs to provide ongoing parenting support.⁷



Family Home Visiting Program Participation, Rhode Island, 2021-2024



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Family Home Visiting, Family Visiting Database enrollment in MIECHV-funded programs on October 1, for calendar years 2021-2024, and KIDSNET, unduplicated families receiving at least one First Connections visit in Calendar Year 2024.

◆ The number of families in Rhode Island receiving rapid response and evidence-based home visiting services has continued to decline. In 2024, 1,970 families received at least one First Connections home visit, down 42% from 2021, and 827 families were participating in a long-term evidence-based home visiting program in Rhode Island, down 37% from 2021.⁸

◆ The 827 families participating in an evidence-based home visiting program had 788 children under age five and 77 were receiving services prenatally. Sixty-eight percent of the children were under age two and 32% were ages two through four.⁹

◆ Across the country, home visiting programs are struggling with high staff turnover and unfilled staff positions, which interfere with their ability to serve families. Low pay makes it difficult to hire and retain home visiting staff. Other challenges include working in high stress situations, having heavy workloads, and excessive paperwork.¹⁰

◆ High staff turnover in home visiting programs often leads to disengagement of families in the intervention and can reduce program effectiveness. Effective home visiting interventions depend on strong, consistent, collaborative relationships between home visitors and families to achieve positive outcomes.¹¹

◆ Staffing and financing challenges reduce services for families. In October 2024, both the Healthy Families America and Nurse-Family Partnership programs were significantly under-enrolled due to financing and staffing challenges. Healthy Families America had 71%, Nurse-Family Partnership had 34%, and Parents as Teachers had 95% of enrollment slots filled.¹²

Table 14.

Family Home Visiting, Rhode Island, 2024

CITY/TOWN	COMMUNITY CONTEXT, 2024			# RECEIVED FIRST CONNECTIONS VISIT IN 2024	# FAMILIES ENROLLED IN EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING PROGRAMS, OCTOBER 1, 2024			
	TOTAL # OF BIRTHS	# OF BABIES BORN WHO SCREENED RISK POSITIVE	# OF BIRTHS TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES		HEALTHY FAMILIES AMERICA	NURSE- FAMILY PARTNERSHIP	PARENTS AS TEACHERS	TOTAL
Barrington	112	38	10	5	6	0	0	6
Bristol	119	63	32	16	4	0	0	4
Burrillville	100	52	23	23	0	0	0	0
Central Falls	310	269	253	85	77	4	3	84
Charlestown	42	22	11	8	4	0	1	5
Coventry	290	164	63	55	16	0	4	20
Cranston	757	455	290	167	47	0	23	70
Cumberland	309	146	61	21	6	0	1	7
East Greenwich	136	58	12	10	2	0	3	5
East Providence	412	258	134	33	13	1	0	14
Exeter	49	24	13	9	1	0	0	1
Foster	42	24	14	9	0	0	0	0
Glocester	65	28	11	8	1	0	0	1
Hopkinton	65	39	14	6	3	0	6	9
Jamestown	29	14	3	4	1	0	0	1
Johnston	287	170	102	33	6	2	0	8
Lincoln	158	90	42	11	0	0	0	0
Little Compton	7	6	1	3	2	0	0	2
Middletown	120	53	29	23	8	0	0	8
Narragansett	67	32	8	6	1	0	0	1
New Shoreham	6	4	1	1	0	0	1	1
Newport	198	117	73	43	7	0	1	8
North Kingstown	183	74	35	28	7	0	1	8
North Providence	297	192	119	28	11	0	0	11
North Smithfield	72	26	13	11	1	0	0	1
Pawtucket	814	633	515	139	77	9	3	89
Portsmouth	130	56	25	16	1	0	0	1
Providence	2,107	1,689	1,466	690	303	14	13	330
Richmond	68	29	12	10	0	0	1	1
Scituate	78	36	14	10	0	0	0	0
Smithfield	125	67	27	18	0	0	1	1
South Kingstown	179	89	29	40	3	0	6	9
Tiverton	76	43	23	13	7	0	0	7
Warren	91	49	27	16	3	0	0	3
Warwick	672	399	167	154	29	1	6	36
West Greenwich	43	18	4	8	2	0	0	2
West Warwick	280	194	127	63	17	1	3	21
Westerly	125	71	36	29	3	0	28	31
Woonsocket	449	368	303	112	19	2	0	21
Unknown	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
Four Core Cities	3,680	2,959	2,537	1,026	476	29	19	524
Remainder of State	5,789	3,200	1,605	944	212	5	86	303
Rhode Island	9,469	6,159	4,142	1,970	688	34	105	827

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Evidence-Based Family Home Visiting program data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Family Home Visiting, Family Visiting Database. Birth data and First Connections data are from Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health and Data Analysis, KIDSNET. Number of births with one or more risk factor is the “risk positive” definition from the Developmental Risk Assessment. Births to low-income families are births to families with public health insurance (Medicaid/RIteCare) or no insurance.

Unknown: Specific city/town information is unavailable.

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

References

- ^{1,2} National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021). *Home visiting: Improving outcomes for children*.
- ^{3,7} Rhode Island Department of Health. (2023). *Family visiting legislative report*.
- ^{4,5,6} National Home Visiting Resource Center (2024). Model Profiles: Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers. Retrieved February 21, 2025, from www.nhvr.org
- ^{8,9,12} Rhode Island Department of Health, First Connections and Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program data, 2021 and 2024.
- ¹⁰ Fitzgerald Lewis, E., Voelker, S., Rudick, S., Fields, E., & Elliott, K. (2020). *Recruitment and Retention of Home Visitors*. Education Development Center.
- ¹¹ Kaye, S., Hood, S., Cragun, D., Perry, D. F., Campos, P. C., Ajisope, O., & Schoch, A. D. (2024). Maintaining family engagement during home visitor turnover: A mixed methods study of best practices. *Prevention Science*, 25:470-480.