

# 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. However, in 2024, the U.S. fertility rate was 54.6 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44, nearly a 1% increase from 2023.<sup>1</sup>

In 2023, Rhode Island had the second lowest fertility rate among states (45.2 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44).<sup>2</sup> The general decline in the fertility rate is due to women delaying childbearing, as well as having fewer total children.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> In 2024 in Rhode Island, 46% of babies born were Babies of Color.<sup>5</sup>

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

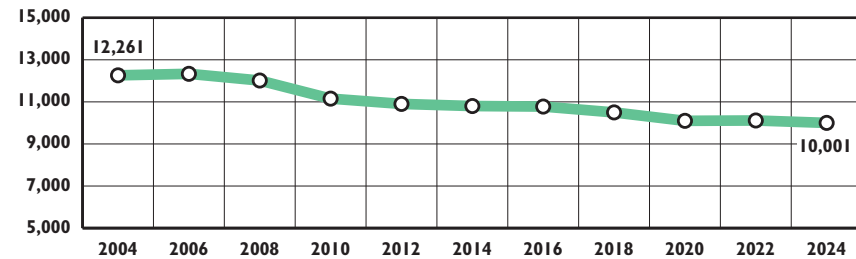
\$310,000 per child from birth to age 17 on housing, child care and other costs.<sup>6</sup> Policies such as paid family leave, subsidized child care, affordable housing, universal preschool, and tax credits can help families afford the high cost of raising a child and improve the health and well-being of children.<sup>7,8</sup>

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 the sturdy foundation they need 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.<sup>9,10</sup>

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, 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.<sup>8,10,11</sup>



## Rhode Island Births, 2004-2024



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Vital Records, Rivers Database 2004-2024. 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 2004 and 2024, from 12,261 babies in 2004 to 10,001 babies in 2024.<sup>12</sup>

◆ The U.S. teen birth rate reached a record low in 2024, with 12.7 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19.<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island had the eighth lowest teen birth rate in the U.S. in 2023, with 3.3 births per 1,000 teens ages 15 to 19.<sup>2</sup>



## Births by Factors, Rhode Island, 2025

◆ In Rhode Island in 2025, 5,133 babies (54%) were born with private insurance, 4,173 babies (44%) were born with Medicaid/RIte Care insurance, 19 babies (<1%) had no insurance, and 151 babies (2%) had an unknown insurance status.<sup>13</sup>

◆ All babies born in Rhode Island are screened through the Rhode Island Department of Health's Newborn Risk Assessment Program. In 2025, there were 6,237 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.<sup>13,14</sup>

Table 2.

Babies, Rhode Island, 2025

CITY/TOWN	# OF BABIES BY MATERNAL RACE/ETHNICITY*						# OF BABIES BORN TO FAMILIES WITH MEDICAID/ RITECARE	# OF BABIES BORN TO UNMARRIED MOMS	TOTAL # OF BIRTHS
	AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC*	SOME OTHER/ TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE			
Barrington	<5	7	<5	<5	5	99	16	13	114
Bristol	<5	6	<5	<5	5	105	24	40	119
Burrillville	<5	<5	<5	7	<5	90	26	39	98
Central Falls	9	<5	34	197	108	107	246	195	285
Charlestown	<5	<5	<5	5	<5	44	10	17	51
Coventry	<5	5	<5	15	11	273	71	84	300
Cranston	6	58	79	241	127	494	297	324	803
Cumberland	<5	35	16	25	21	202	64	78	287
East Greenwich	<5	8	<5	<5	11	78	10	10	101
East Providence	<5	10	31	55	32	289	126	154	375
Exeter	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	47	<5	16	50
Foster	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	39	13	19	46
Glocester	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	53	13	14	59
Hopkinton	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	70	12	20	71
Jamestown	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	30	<5	<5	33
Johnston	<5	13	31	81	45	193	104	115	291
Lincoln	<5	13	11	24	11	123	49	54	161
Little Compton	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	13	<5	6	14
Middletown	<5	6	5	23	14	95	27	29	122
Narragansett	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	61	12	14	67
New Shoreham	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	8	<5	<5	9
Newport	<5	<5	10	53	26	149	70	77	193
North Kingstown	<5	5	<5	10	25	145	33	40	180
North Providence	<5	8	45	102	46	166	119	131	280
North Smithfield	<5	5	<5	15	6	66	18	20	81
Pawtucket	8	11	184	261	134	319	425	427	720
Portsmouth	<5	<5	<5	6	5	102	18	28	114
Providence	55	81	370	1,358	730	801	1,558	1,305	2,185
Richmond	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	63	15	25	70
Scituate	<5	<5	<5	6	5	98	15	17	108
Smithfield	<5	<5	<5	6	7	101	22	31	119
South Kingstown	<5	<5	<5	9	12	129	25	40	153
Tiverton	<5	<5	<5	5	8	60	21	25	74
Warren	<5	<5	<5	10	6	73	17	20	84
Warwick	7	37	30	100	46	565	178	234	702
West Greenwich	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	36	9	10	41
West Warwick	<5	10	27	63	32	227	131	152	302
Westerly	<5	<5	<5	14	5	126	49	52	144
Woonsocket	9	19	67	186	117	244	315	304	468
Five Core Cities	83	116	665	2,055	1,115	1,620	2,614	2,308	3,851
Remainder of State	37	250	312	853	509	4,364	1,559	1,876	5,625
Rhode Island	120	366	977	2,908	1,624	5,984	4,173	4,184	9,476

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, KIDSNET Database, 2025. Birth data from 2025 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 (405 babies had unknown maternal race information, and 14 had unknown maternal ethnicity information)

\*\*Hispanic can be of any race

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

Five core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, B., Martin, J., & Osterman, M. (2025). *Births: Provisional data for 2024*. National Center for Health Statistics (U.S.). <https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc/174587>

<sup>2</sup> Osterman, M., Hamilton, B., Joyce, M., Driscoll, A., & Valenzuela, C. (2025). *Births: Final data for 2023*. National Center for Health Statistics (U.S.). <https://doi.org/10.15620/cdc/175204>

<sup>3</sup> Population Reference Bureau. (2021). *Why is the U.S. birth rate declining?* <https://www.prb.org/resources/why-is-the-u-s-birth-rate-declining/>

<sup>4</sup> Frey, W. H. (2021, August 13). *New 2020 census results show increased diversity countering decade-long declines in America's white and youth populations*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/new-2020-census-results-show-increased-diversity-countering-decade-long-declines-in-americas-white-and-youth->

<sup>5</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2025). *KIDS COUNT Data Center*. [datacenter.kidscount.org](https://datacenter.kidscount.org)

<sup>6</sup> Parker, T. (2025). *The cost of raising a child in the United States*. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/090415/cost-raising-child-america.asp>

(continued on page 172)

# Methodology and References



## Family Income Levels Based on the Federal Poverty Measures

The poverty *thresholds* are the original version of the federal poverty measure.

They are updated each year by the Census Bureau. The thresholds are used mainly for statistical purposes — for instance, estimating the number of children in Rhode Island living in poor families. The poverty threshold is adjusted upward based on family size and whether household members are children, adults, or 65 years of age and over. In 2025, the federal poverty threshold was \$25,938 for a family of three with two children and \$32,649 for a family of four with two children. The *poverty guidelines* are the other version of the federal poverty measure. They are issued each year in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## Family Income Levels Based on the 2026 Federal Poverty Guidelines

FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES	ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF THREE	ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF FOUR
50% FPL	\$13,660.00	\$16,500.00
100% FPL	\$27,320.00	\$33,000.00
130% FPL	\$35,516.00	\$42,900.00
150% FPL	\$40,980.00	\$49,500.00
180% FPL	\$49,176.00	\$59,400.00
185% FPL	\$50,542.00	\$61,050.00
200% FPL	\$54,640.00	\$66,000.00
225% FPL	\$61,470.00	\$74,250.00
250% FPL	\$68,300.00	\$82,500.00

(continued from page 9)

### References for Child Population

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Census bureau releases estimates of undercount and overcount in the 2020 census*.

<sup>15</sup> O'Hare, W. P. (2022). *New Census bureau data show young children have a high net undercount in the 2020 Census*. <https://countallkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CAK-Report-on-Release-of-PES-and-DA-data-March-10-2022-FINAL-3-10-2022.pdf>

(continued from page 11)

### References for Babies

<sup>7</sup> Right from the Start Campaign. (2025). *Right from the Start FY 2026 state budget priorities for kids & families*. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/inbrief-adversity-1.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Surgeon General. (2024). *Parents under pressure: The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory on the mental health & well-being of parents*. <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/parents/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Zero to Three. (2023). *State of babies yearbook: 2023*.

<sup>10</sup> Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. (n.d.). *The impact of early adversity on children's development*. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/inbrief-adversity-1.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. (2018). *What are ACEs and how do they relate to toxic stress?* <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/infographics/aces-and-toxic-stress-frequently-asked-questions/>

<sup>12</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health. (n.d.). *Vital Records, Rivers Database 2004-2025*.

<sup>13</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health. (2025). *KIDSNET Database*.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (2025). *III.E.2.c. state action plan – perinatal/infant health – annual report – Rhode Island - 2025*. <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/Narratives/AnnualReport/2/a9e6648f-c775-41be-816f-9fd5d995b5c>

(continued from page 13)

### References for Family Structure

<sup>4</sup> VanOrman, A. G., & Scommenga, P. (2016). Understanding the dynamics of family change in the United States. *Population Bulletin*, 7(1).

<sup>5</sup> Cohn, D., Horowitz, J., Minkin, R., Fry, R., & Hurst, K. (2022). *Financial issues top the list of reasons U.S. adults live in multigenerational homes*. Pew Research Center.

<sup>6</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2023). *Child Well-Being in Single-Parent Families*. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-well-being-in-single-parent-families>

<sup>7</sup> Generation United. (2021). *Family matters: Multigenerational living is on the rise and here to stay*. <https://www.gu.org/resources/multigenerational-families>

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2020-2024). *Table B09002*.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2020-2024). *Table B09018*.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2020-2024). *Table B11017*.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2010-2014). *Table B11017*.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census. (2020). *PCT14H*.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census. (2020). *PCT14D*.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census. (2020). *PCT14B*.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census. (2020). *PCT14I*.

<sup>16</sup> Rose, J. (2024). *Policies for housing with heart*. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

<sup>17</sup> The Economic Progress Institute. (2024). *The 2024 Rhode Island standard of need*.

<sup>18</sup> Generation United. (2022). *Together at the table: Supporting the nutrition, health and well-being of grandfamilies*.

<sup>19</sup> Lent, J. P., & Otto, A. (2018). Grandparents, grandchildren, and caregiving: The impacts of America's substance use crisis. *Generations*, 42(3), 15–22.

<sup>20</sup> Generations United. (2017). *In loving arms: The protective role of grandparents and other relatives in raising children exposed to trauma*. <https://www.gu.org/resources/the-state-of-grandfamilies-in-america-2017/>

<sup>21</sup> Peterson, T. L. (2018). Grandparents raising grandchildren in the African American community. *Generations*, 42(3), 30–36.

<sup>22</sup> Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. (2021). *Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) Act: Initial report to Congress*. [https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/RAISE\\_SGRG/SGRG-InitialReportToCongress\\_2021-11-16.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/RAISE_SGRG/SGRG-InitialReportToCongress_2021-11-16.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> *Child Support Program Rules and Regulations*, 218-RICR-30-00-1 (2021). [sos.ri.gov](https://sos.ri.gov)

<sup>24</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2024). *RICHIST*.

<sup>25</sup> Children's Defense Fund. (2015). *The Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP): An update on implementation and moving GAP forward*. <https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/Fostering%20Connections/Title%20IV-E%20GAP%20Update.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Children's Bureau. (2023). *Title IV-E guardianship assistance*. <https://acf.gov/cb/grant-funding/title-iv-e-guardianship-assistance>

(continued from page 15)

### References for Mother's Education Level

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). *Characteristics of Children's Families. Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/2024/ccc\\_508c.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/2024/ccc_508c.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2020-2024). *Table B20004*.

<sup>8</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (n.d.). *KIDS COUNT Data Center*. [datacenter.kidscount.org](https://datacenter.kidscount.org)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2020-2024). *Table S1702*.