

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 (EI) services to develop essential language, social-emotional, and motor skills to reduce the need for services when they are older.¹

States are required to provide EI 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.¹

In Rhode Island, children under age three are eligible for 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

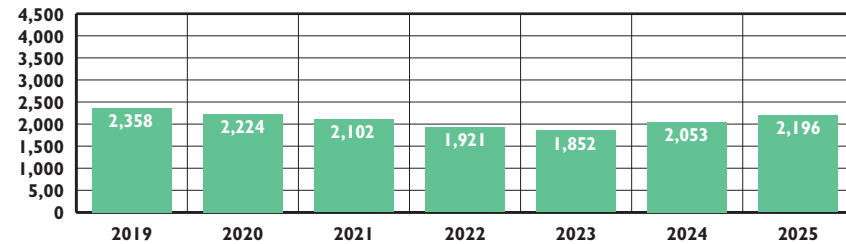
development (cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive). Current eligibility criteria allow children with “significant circumstances” (significant trauma, history of neglect/abuse, significant parental health/mental health or substance use issues, etc.) to qualify through informed clinical opinion under the developmental delay category, if the circumstances impact child or family functioning.²

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.³⁻⁵

Routine developmental and Autism Spectrum Disorder screenings using standardized tools at pediatric well-child visits help identify children who may benefit from EI services.⁶ In Rhode Island in Calendar Year 2024, 62% of children under age one, 63% of children age one, and 64% of children age two (63% of all children under age three) with Medicaid insurance received developmental screenings, all down from 2023.⁷



Infants & Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services as of June 30, 2019-2025, Rhode Island



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Children Enrolled in Early Intervention as of June 30, 2019-2025.

- ◆ As of June 30, 2025, there were 2,196 infants and toddlers receiving EI services, 7% of the population under age three. The number of children enrolled was up 7% from the previous year but down 7% overall from June 2019.⁸
- ◆ In State Fiscal Year 2025, 3,701 children were referred to EI. Most referrals came from parents/guardians (31%) or pediatric primary health care providers (30%). Of those referred, 65% were evaluated and enrolled, 15% were evaluated and determined not eligible, 19% were not evaluated and were referred to other services, and 1% were still in process.⁸
- ◆ In State Fiscal Year 2025, 2,174 children were discharged from EI. Of these, 326 (15%) met their developmental goals and no longer needed EI services, 1,381 (64%) reached the age to transition out of EI and were referred to school districts for evaluation, and 467 (21%) exited for other reasons. Of those referred to the school district for evaluation, 935 (68%) were determined eligible for preschool special education, 240 (17%) were determined not eligible, and 206 (15%) did not have eligibility determined when they exited EI.⁸
- ◆ As of June 30, 2025, in Rhode Island, EI services for 1,248 children (57%) were paid for by public insurance (RIte Care and Medicaid), 919 children (42%) were paid for by private health insurance providers, and 29 children (1%) were uninsured with services covered by federal *IDEA Part C* funding.⁸
- ◆ After two Medicaid rate increases, Early Intervention staffing challenges and waiting lists have significantly improved.⁹ As of January 2026, 134 infants and toddlers in Rhode Island had been waiting for EI for more than 45 days, down from 283 in January 2025.^{9,10}

Children Enrolled in Early Intervention

Table 29. Infants and Toddlers Enrolled in Early Intervention (EI) by Eligibility Type, Rhode Island, 2025

SCHOOL DISTRICT	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3	STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 REFERRALS	JUNE 30, 2025 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	35	4	13	13	0	30	7%
Bristol Warren	618	75	10	21	15	0	46	7%
Burrillville	388	27	5	11	10	0	26	7%
Central Falls	937	152	11	68	12	2	93	10%
Charlho	587	60	5	15	9	0	29	5%
Coventry	893	91	5	43	26	0	74	8%
Cranston	2,271	245	30	85	45	0	160	7%
Cumberland	1,097	87	8	22	23	0	53	5%
East Greenwich	353	39	3	6	7	0	16	5%
East Providence	1,237	135	8	36	31	0	75	6%
Exeter-West Greenwich	317	23	1	5	6	0	12	4%
Foster-Glocester	363	24	2	6	8	0	16	4%
Jamestown	90	7	0	1	3	0	4	4%
Johnston	703	87	5	25	18	0	48	7%
Lincoln	531	54	2	15	10	0	27	5%
Little Compton	73	5	1	1	2	0	4	5%
Middletown	520	60	6	9	8	0	23	4%
Narragansett	175	29	2	9	5	0	16	9%
New Shoreham	14	5	1	1	1	0	3	21%
Newport	606	84	8	12	14	0	34	6%
North Kingstown	729	78	10	16	25	0	51	7%
North Providence	914	78	5	45	14	0	64	7%
North Smithfield	286	32	1	12	6	0	19	7%
Pawtucket	2,652	314	24	109	39	0	172	6%
Portsmouth	441	52	7	11	14	0	32	7%
Providence	6,323	997	76	374	117	5	572	9%
Scituate	244	27	1	11	7	0	19	8%
Smithfield	445	36	5	12	11	0	28	6%
South Kingstown	501	61	6	17	16	0	39	8%
Tiverton	351	54	8	8	16	0	32	9%
Warwick	2,146	207	13	85	56	0	154	7%
West Warwick	900	69	3	9	12	0	24	3%
Westerly	496	119	13	42	23	0	78	16%
Woonsocket	1,469	236	18	71	34	0	123	8%
Unknown	NA	17	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Five Core Cities	11,987	1,783	137	634	216	7	994	8%
Remainder of State	18,095	1,901	170	592	440	0	1,202	7%
Rhode Island	30,082	3,701	307	1,226	656	7	2,196	7%

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 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) and enrollment as of June 30, 2025 (point-in-time). As of 2025, Early Intervention data is available by school district service area where infants and toddlers reside. Early Intervention is delivered by non-profit agencies and not by school districts. Children under age three are not enrolled in school districts.

The denominator is the number of children under age three, according to Census 2020, Summary File 1.

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

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(continued on page 186)

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(continued from page 113)

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