

# Cradle to Prison Pipeline

## Rhode Island



Children's Defense Fund

2007

### Poverty

**Poverty is the largest driving force of the Cradle to Prison Pipeline crisis.**

- In Rhode Island, among all children, **1 in 5** (19.5 percent or 46,894) **was poor**.
  - For **Black** children **5 in 9** (53.2 percent or 9,036) were poor.
  - For **Latino** children **4 in 9** (46.7 percent or 19,045) were poor.
  - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 11** (9.1 percent or 15,179) was poor.
- In Rhode Island, a **baby is born poor every 3 hours**.
  - A **Black** baby is born poor every **16 hours**.
  - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **8 hours**.
  - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **9 hours**.

### Health Care

**Disadvantages in health care increase the risk that poor children and particularly poor children of color will be trapped in the pipeline.**

- In 2005, an estimated **18,000 children (6.9%)** were **uninsured** in Rhode Island.
- In 2004, **1,025 babies (8.0%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Rhode Island. This included:
  - 11.0% of Black, non-Latino babies;
  - 8.3% of Latino babies; and,
  - 7.3% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **19.9%** of two-year-olds in Rhode Island **did not receive** all recommended **immunizations** in 2005.

### Early Childhood

**Children who do not participate in high-quality early education have higher rates of juvenile delinquency, arrests, and juvenile court petitions.**

- In the 2004-2005 school year, **12.2% of 3-year-olds** and **22.7% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Rhode Island.
- In 2005, **3,150 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Rhode Island. Of these:
  - 24.6% were Black, non-Latino;
  - 32.7% were Latino; and,
  - 53.4% were White, non-Latino.

### Child Welfare

**Children in foster care or with a history of abuse and neglect are at higher risk of being trapped in the pipeline.**

- In 2003, there were **2,334 children in foster care** in Rhode Island.
- In 2004, there were **3,068 victims of child maltreatment** in Rhode Island.

## Education

**Educational disadvantages make it more likely that children will enter the juvenile justice system.**

- In 2005, a **disproportionate number** of Black and Latino **fourth graders could not read at grade level**. In Rhode Island:
  - 85% of Black, non-Latino;
  - 89% of Latino; and,
  - 64% of White, non-Latino fourth graders could not read at grade level.
- **Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether**. In Rhode Island:
  - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 21.8 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 15.4 suspensions.
  - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 7.5 suspensions.
  - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 11.2 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 10.7 suspensions.
- In Rhode Island, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
  - Providence School District (20 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled) and
  - Pawtucket School District (9 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In Rhode Island, **8.2% of youth ages 16 to 19 were neither enrolled in school nor high school graduates**.

## Juvenile Justice System and Incarceration

**Children of color are disproportionately represented in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems.**

- In Rhode Island, there were **5,286 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **342 youth in residential placement in Rhode Island** in 2003:
  - 117 (34.2%) were Black, non-Latino;
  - 30 (8.8%) were Latino; and,
  - 168 (49.1%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **6 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Rhode Island.
- Rhode Island spends **4.0 times as much per prisoner as per public school pupil**.

## Community Violence

**Between 1979 and 2004, gunfire killed 101,413 children and teens in America, destroying countless families and communities.**

- In 2004, **4 children and teenagers** in Rhode Island **died of firearm injuries**, including: **2 homicides** and **2 suicides**.
- In 2005, **28.4%** of Rhode Island's high school students were **involved in a physical fight**.
- In 2005, **8.7%** of Rhode Island's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property**.
- **12.4%** of Rhode Island's high school students **carried a weapon 2 or more times** in the preceding month.