

# Providence System Scan

Prepared for the Urban Institute NNIP and Annie E. Casey Foundation

School Readiness and Success Cross Site Initiative

February 20, 2008

## About Ready to Learn Providence

Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP) is a program of The Providence Plan with the vision that *all children in Providence will enter school healthy and ready to learn.* The Providence Plan (ProvPlan) is a private nonprofit organization working to improve the economic and social well being of all Providence residents. ProvPlan is a founding member of NNIP.

Since 2002, R2LP has been building a community that works toward its school readiness vision by *investing in early education* to improve the quality of educational experiences for young children throughout the city; *creating social networks* among early care and public school educators, city librarians, health care professionals, family child care providers, and parents; and *conducting research and raising awareness* about the needs of children, families and early care and education providers in Providence.

R2LP grew out of a citywide task force convened in 2000 that was charged with developing “a coherent and coordinated system of support for city children.” Through working groups, focus groups with families, and extensive data analysis, more than 135 individuals, representing at least 60 city and state organizations, developed strategies to augment and improve services for families. *Raising Our Future: Investing in Providence’s Youngest Children* was the culminating report that outlined findings, recommendations, and next steps of the task force. The work of the task force laid the foundation for the creation of Ready to Learn Providence in 2002.

In 2004, R2LP and ProvPlan released *How Ready Is Providence? Advancing a Community Conversation about School Readiness in Providence*, a community assessment that presents 24 indicators of school readiness. The report focuses on critical issues that need to be considered to develop a holistic approach toward school readiness in the city. Most of the indicators include supporting data at a neighborhood or city level. This report adopts maps, charts, and summary text from *How Ready Is Providence?* where appropriate.

Both *Raising Our Future* and *How Ready Is Providence?* are available electronically at [www.r2lp.org](http://www.r2lp.org).

## Existing Scans and Resources

The Successful Start Partnership is a statewide initiative developed in 2004 and administered by the Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health. The Successful Start vision is “to create a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system that supports families and communities in promoting positive early childhood development so that all children enter school healthy and ready to learn.” The system building goals include filling gaps, coordinating programs, developing effective policies, maximizing resources, reducing inefficiencies, and building capacity for quality. The topical domain areas of Successful Start include

healthy social-emotional development, quality early care and education, coordinated medical homes, and effective parent education and family support services. An environmental scan of state-level programs was conducted by the staff at the Rhode Island Department of Health to inform Successful Start participants. The scan was not released publicly but was reviewed for purposes of this scan. The full report of the Successful Start partnership, released in November 2005, is available at [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov).

*Taking Stock: Services for Families with Children in South Providence, Elmwood and the West End*, authored by Rhode Island Kids Count in 2001, is another important resource for families in Providence. *Taking Stock* is an inventory of programs for families located in four neighborhoods. And given Providence's small geography, most of the organizations identified also serve families beyond the formal neighborhood boundaries. *Taking Stock* can be downloaded at the Kids Count website, [www.rikidscount.org](http://www.rikidscount.org).

Finally, the *Rhode Island Directory of Human Services and Government Agencies* is a resource available to families throughout Rhode Island. Now in its 28th edition, the directory was prepared by Crossroads Rhode Island in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Human Services. The publication has long served as a resource and referral guide for families and social service agencies across the state. The guide references 2,700 private and public agencies in 20 areas including child care, financial assistance, health services, social services and utility assistance. Nearly 1,200 agencies referenced are in Providence. The directory is available in hard copy through Crossroads or in an online searchable format at [www.askrhody.org](http://www.askrhody.org).

## **The Current Landscape**

It is crucial to note that at the time of this writing every support for low income children and families in the state of Rhode Island is threatened. Crushing state budget shortfalls, estimated at \$600 million over the next two years and expected to extend until 2012, are compromising necessary programs designed to meet the needs of Rhode Island's most vulnerable populations.

Children and families are already suffering from the loss of a key support for working families. In September 2007 the Rhode Island Department of Human Services implemented revised eligibility guidelines for the Child Care Assistance Program designed to help cover the cost of child care for working families. Income eligibility was reduced from 225% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 180% FPL by the Rhode Island General Assembly. An estimated 1,900 children living in 1,500 families statewide lost access to child care subsidies, putting entire families and neighborhoods at risk. R2LP is preparing surveys of families and child care providers to better understand the impact of these cuts. Findings from the surveys will inform the final report for Phase I of the NNIP School Readiness and Success Initiative in May 2008.

Over the past several months the Governor has made additional cuts and begun to outline proposed cuts for FY 2008. An estimated 700 state employees and contractors were laid off in December 2007, with most cuts affecting the departments associated with health, human services, and child welfare. According to recent reports in the Providence Journal, more than 18,000 Rhode Islanders, 10,000 of whom are children, stand to lose health

insurance under the state's RIte Care program<sup>1</sup>; 400 children may be forced from Head Start programs<sup>2</sup>; providers who accept children through the Child Care Assistance Program may see a reduction in rates of reimbursement<sup>3</sup> (which are already low having not seen an increase since 2002); and the Governor is beginning to take aim at the Family Independence Program, Rhode Island's cash assistance subsidy.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the programs that currently are, or soon may be, the target of budget cuts are outlined in the pages of this report. Preserving these public supports for children and families will be an enormous challenge in the upcoming months and beyond.

## CHILD CARE LICENSING

### Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families

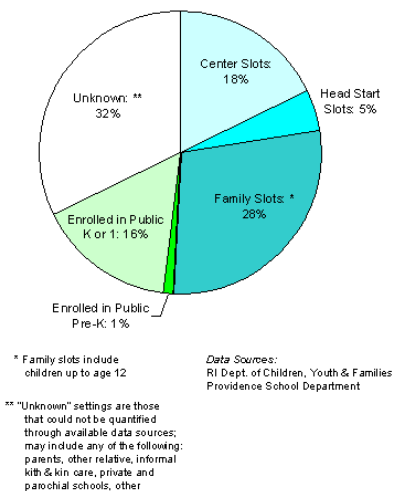
**Role** - The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is the agency responsible for the licensing and certification of all child care centers and family child care home providers in Rhode Island. The Licensing Unit at DCYF reviews all applications and ensures that facilities meet requirements regarding staffing ratios, environmental safety, professional credentials of lead staff at child care centers, and health of staff at family child care homes. Criminal background investigations are also overseen by DCYF in conjunction with the Attorney General's office. Center licenses are valid for one year and family child care home certifications are renewed every two years.

**Scope** - As of March 2007, there were 433 centers statewide providing licensed care for infants, toddler, preschool age children, and school-age care. Sixty-five (15%) of these licensed centers are located in Providence. Of those, 45 provide care for children under the age of 6.<sup>5</sup>

A complete list of certified family child care providers was most recently obtained in October 2007. At that time there were 1,338 certified providers of home child care statewide, 780 (58%) of whom were located in Providence.<sup>6</sup> R2LP reviewed DCYF data online on January 24, 2008. As of that date, there were 612 certified family child care providers, a drop of 168 providers or 20% since October. This is likely due to declining enrollments resulting from the revised eligibility requirements for child care subsidies which eliminated as many as 1,900 children in September 2007.

**Relevant Data** - DCYF routinely provides R2LP with complete datasets of licensed centers and certified providers. Data include name, address, licensing capacity by age (for centers), and Spanish language ability (for home care providers). DCYF also posts names and addresses of providers on their website to facilitate access to child care by families throughout Rhode Island.

Settings for Children Age 5 and Under in Providence



As of Census 2000, there were 15,210 children ages 5 and under in Providence. An analysis of DCYF capacity data was used to estimate the types of care all children in this age range were receiving. Head Start served approximately 5% of children and licensed care served 45% of children. A large portion of children, 32%, were identified as being in an "unknown" setting, meaning they could not be quantified and may include parents, other relatives, informal kith and kin care, and private or parochial schools.<sup>7</sup>

## ADDITIONAL ENTITIES

**Options for Working Parents** is funded through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services and serves as Rhode Island's child care resource and referral program.

## **CHILD CARE QUALITY – BRIGHTSTARS**

**Primary Agencies - Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children,  
Rhode Island Kids Count**

**Role** - BrightStars is Rhode Island's newly launched quality rating and improvement system. Primary financial support for the project is through the United Way of Rhode Island.

**Scope** - BrightStars is being field tested in 2007-2008. Statewide implementation is expected in 2009.

**Relevant Data** - No data are currently available because the program has not been fully implemented.

## **ADDITIONAL ENTITIES**

**ChildSpan** is funded through the Department of Human Services and based at Children's Friend and Service. ChildSpan provides professional development classes for providers caring for children from birth through school age.

**Keys to Quality** at the Rhode Island Department of Education provides technical assistance to child care centers pursuing accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

**Ready to Learn Providence** has provided professional development to approximately 1,500 early care and education providers citywide in the areas of early childhood literacy, child social and emotional development, the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, and early childhood curricula, among others. All classes are offered in both English and Spanish.

**The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards** project at the Rhode Island Department of Education is a set of statewide standards, goals, and expectations for use by parents, caregivers, and educators about what young children should know and be able to do before they enter kindergarten. The Department funds family kits in English and Spanish and professional development for child care providers.

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Ready to Learn Providence's report *How Ready is Providence?* identified five indicators that speak to child care quality: 1) educational attainment of caregivers, 2) wages of caregivers, and 3) caregivers trained in cultural competence, 4) number of types of curricula used in settings, and 5) literacy requirements written into DCYF child care licensing requirements. Highlights from those indicators are provided below.

### *Educational attainment of caregivers*

The Cost, Quality and Outcomes in Child Care Centers report released in 1999 found that "the quality of child care was related to both the formal education levels and the specialized early childhood training of classroom teachers." In Rhode Island, DCYF has varying credentialing requirements for caregivers in center-based settings (from a high school diploma for assistants to a bachelor's degree or higher for lead and associate teachers) and very few requirements for home based providers. Data pertaining to qualifications of providers in Providence is limited to

head teachers at 48 of 52 child care centers. All 48 teachers had a bachelor's degree and 9 of the 48 also had a master's degree.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Wages of caregivers*

Nationally a teacher with a bachelor's degree who works in a child care center makes less than a third that of a public school kindergarten teacher and enjoys far fewer benefits. This is true nationally and in Providence, where the average annual wage of a child care provider in 2004 was \$19,490 compared with that of a Providence kindergarten teacher at \$57,620. A report on income and expense data from members of the Providence-based Day Care Justice Co-op yielded important data on average wages among Providence's family child care provider community. Average net income for Co-op members was \$20,166 in 2002.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Early care and education staff trained in cultural competence*

Recent research indicates that offering culturally and linguistically competent early childhood programming can improve educational outcomes for children from linguistically and ethnically diverse backgrounds.<sup>10</sup> In order to quantify providers' training around issues of cultural competence, ProvPlan accessed information about the number and types of training offered by ChildSpan, the state-funded professional development resource for child care providers. Twenty-three of 290 trainings offered in 2003 were determined to have some relevance to the issue of cultural competence.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Number and types of curricula in child care settings*

A well-designed curriculum articulates clear goals, builds sequentially on earlier skills, and should be based on research that identifies what children are capable of learning and how they best learn it. R2LP conducted a survey in 2004 as a first step in learning what curricula are used in preschool classrooms in the city. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of preschool programs in Providence (30 of 52) responded to the survey and only one of the 30 indicated that they did not use a set curriculum. Eighty percent (80%) of programs use more than one curriculum.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Literacy requirements written into DCYF licensing requirements*

In 1998 NAEYC and the International Reading Association issued the statement that "failing to give children literacy experiences until they are school-age can severely limit the reading and writing levels they ultimately attain." While some providers may not recognize the importance of early literacy activities in daily activities, state requirements for such activities would elevate literacy's importance as providers seek licensing. Existing regulations for child care centers cite the need for activities that "support emergent literacy" and go on to identify specific objects and activities such as writing and reading. However, regulations for home child care providers make no mention of literacy or related activities.<sup>13</sup>

## **HEAD START**

### **Primary Agency - Community Development Institute Head Start**

**Role** - Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start is the National Interim Management Contractor for the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Head Start. CDI Head Start assumes responsibility for Head Start services when the local Head Start grantee can no longer operate the program. In October 2007 the federal Office of Head Start removed management responsibilities from the Providence Head Start Board of Directors. CDI Head Start will continue to operate in Providence until the program is restored to the Providence Head Start Board of Directors or a local, long term grantee is competitively selected by the federal government.

**Scope** - CDI Head Start is responsible for managing eight Head Start centers - five are located in Providence and three in Pawtucket. Enrollment capacity at all sites as of September 2007 was 1,200 with more than 75% of the slots located in Providence.<sup>14</sup> Approximately 2,400 children are enrolled in Head Start programs statewide.

**Relevant Data** - Head Start maintains information on the children enrolled in their programs; however, access to such data is limited given confidentiality issues. Ready to Learn Providence has had a long-standing partnership with Providence Head Start, both as an Early Reading First site from 2004-2007 and through an Early Childhood Educator Professional Development initiative which will provide intensive professional development to every classroom teacher and their assistants over the next two years. As such, R2LP has gained access to data regarding teachers as well as limited child-level information. Summary data are also available through the regional office of the US Department of Health and Human Services; however they have limited value for the purposes of secondary analysis.

## **ADDITIONAL ENTITIES**

**Rhode Island Head Start Association** is a collaboration of nine Head Start providers (including CDI Head Start in Providence) that seeks to strengthen leadership by parents and staff to promote high quality educational experiences for Head Start children and families.

**Early Head Start** in Providence is based at Children's Friend and Services and serves approximately 45 children. Eligibility is limited to families living in Central Falls and the South Providence. Statewide an estimated 400 children were enrolled in Early Head Start in 2006.

**Comprehensive Child Care Services Network (CCSN)** provides supplemental services (similar to Head Start) to three- and four-year old children from income eligible families. In Providence, four child care centers are part of the CCSN network. Approximately 325 children statewide received comprehensive services in 2004. Funding is provided through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services.

## **IDEA SERVICES**

### **Primary Agencies - Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Providence Public School District**

**Role** - The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and its Board of Regents are the governing department and chief policy-setting body for elementary and secondary education in the state. The Department's Office of Special Populations is responsible for implementing federal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA) and advancing the education of Rhode Island children with disabilities who require special education services. This includes children enrolled in public pre-kindergarten programs.

The Providence Public School District (PPSD) provides public special education services to children in the city. PPSD aims to place children who are identified as special needs in the least restrictive environment that will serve their needs, including with children who are non-disabled, called "peer models." Instructional settings include English and bilingual inclusive classrooms, inclusive autism classes, and self-contained classrooms for situations where PPSD believes that "education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily".<sup>15</sup>

Identification of young children with special needs prior to kindergarten entry is conducted by Child Outreach, a screening service designed to identify children between the ages of 3 and 5 with special needs. Sponsored by RIDE, the program aims to ensure that children with suspected disabilities are identified, evaluated and provided with services. Children may be referred through child care provider sites, parent request, or through Early Intervention (administered by the Department of Human Services for children ages birth to three years). If a child has not been screened prior to entering kindergarten, that child will be screened on entry. Pre-kindergarten programming in Providence has typically been available only to those children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). There are also a small number of children without disabilities who are enrolled in inclusive Pre-K classrooms in Providence.

**Scope** - In October 2005, over 153,000 students were enrolled in the public school system statewide. Of these, 32,000 children were in the special education system and nearly 2,900 were between the ages of 3 and 5 years.<sup>16</sup>

According to data obtained from Providence Schools in January 2008, there are currently 359 children enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs in Providence. Approximately 92% of these children have an IEP.<sup>17</sup>

**Relevant Data** - RIDE maintains data on children ages 3-5 years served under IDEA. However, accessing data about children in Providence that receive special education services would be facilitated through the Providence Schools. PPSD and ProvPlan have a long-standing data sharing agreement that has enabled secondary analysis of public school datasets as far back as 1990. The PPSD Registration Database includes a unique child identifier, address, demographics, school, grade, and special programming (i.e. special education or bilingual services).



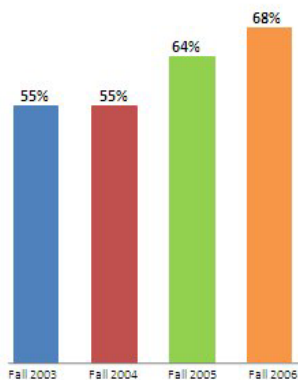
## KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

### Primary Agency - Providence Public School District

**Role** - The Providence Public School District (PPSD) assesses children in kindergarten with a number of tools including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) of receptive vocabulary, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), a measure of early literacy development and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K). PALS is also administered in grades 1-3. PALS performance data is made publicly available through PPSD's website.

**Scope** - In fall 2005, a total of 1,695 kindergarteners were screened using PALS-K and 36% of children were identified as needing additional early literacy support. A second screening of these children in spring 2006 (n=1,756) showed an increase in early literacy skills, with 26% of children in need of specialized early literacy services.<sup>18</sup>

Percentage of Providence kindergarteners meeting fall benchmarks for early literacy on PALS assessments



Data: Providence Public School District

**Relevant Data** - ProvPlan has obtained access to PALS K-3 data for the year 2004-2006 and 2007 data are forthcoming. The datasets include unique child identifier, scores on the PALS subtests, and a total score. The identifier allows ProvPlan to link PALS data with registration data and will enable analysis at a variety of levels including by school and neighborhood.

The number of children requiring additional early literacy support in kindergarten has declined 24% over the past four years, as measured using the PALS-K tool. In 2003 and 2004, 45% of incoming kindergarten children did not meet the fall benchmarks for early literacy. By fall 2006 that figure had declined to 32%.<sup>19</sup> The complete set of fall 2007 data is not yet available.

## ADDITIONAL ENTITIES

### Ready to Learn Providence

For consistency with PPSD and as required by our federal funder, the US Department of Education, R2LP uses the PALS Pre-K and PPVT at our eight Early Reading First (ERF) sites and 120 settings for the purposes of the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development (ECEPD) grant. R2LP has conducted more than 1,050 PPVT assessments and 650 PALS Pre-K screenings at ERF sites since 2005. An additional 1,000 children have been assessed using these same tools through ECEPD. ProvPlan's data sharing agreement with PPSD will enable us to monitor the performance of children who benefitted from ERF and ECEPD over time as they age through the school system.

## **CHILD HEALTH – STATE CHILD HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM**

### **Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

**Role** - In Rhode Island, Federal Medicaid and State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) requirements take the form of RIte Care and RIte Share, both of which are administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

RIte Care provides comprehensive health coverage to families receiving benefits through the Family Independence Program (Rhode Island's cash assistance program), uninsured pregnant women, and children under age 20. Families receive most of their health care through one of three participating health plans: Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, United Healthcare of New England, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

RIte Share can help families acquire health insurance coverage through their employer. If a family qualifies, RIte Share will pay for all or part of the employee's share of the health insurance premium. RIte Share also pays for co-payments in the employer's health insurance plan.

**Scope** - RIte Care "base" enrollment statewide at the end of July 2006 was 117,199; 70,033 of whom were children under the age of 19.<sup>20</sup> Over 900 primary care physicians provide medical services through the RIte Care program.<sup>21</sup>

DHS also employs 48 Family Resource Counselors, individuals who help identify uninsured, low-income families. Counselors work at 21 community health centers, nine hospitals, and one community-based agency in Rhode Island.

**Relevant Data** - DHS maintains expansive administrative datasets on all individuals enrolled in their programs. For RIte Care and RIte Share these include participating families and children, participating physicians, participating health plans, services received and offered as well as frequency of use. ProvPlan is currently in discussions with DHS to develop a data sharing agreement to facilitate future access to administrative data.

## **ADDITIONAL ENTITIES**

**Providence Community Health Centers (PCHC)** connects residents of Providence and surrounding communities to quality medical care regardless of their ability to pay for services. PCHC operates five clinics, a school-based program, as well as a dental clinic. In 2004 PCHC served approximately 38,000 individuals of all ages in a total of 144,000 patient visits. Nearly 50% of the 38,000 patients were children under the age of 18 (17,891). Other patients by age group are adults 19-35 years (10,975), adults 35-55 years (7,074), and adults 56-85 years (2,946). PCHC feeds their data into the KIDSNET data system maintained by the Department of Health. ProvPlan has an existing data sharing agreement to access KIDSNET.

There are numerous community based agencies and institutions that provide health care services to children and families throughout Providence. A review of the DHS online database ([www.askrhody.org](http://www.askrhody.org)) produced the following list:

**Community Based Agencies**

AIDS Care Ocean State  
Banister House  
Bundles of Joy/Federal Hill House  
Childhood Lead Action Project  
Children's Friend and Service  
Crossroads RI  
Family Service of RI  
Groden Center  
John Hope Settlement House  
Kids Link RI  
Mental Health Advocates of RI  
Moshassuck Medical Center  
Nickerson Community Center  
Planned Parenthood of RI  
Project Link  
Providence Center Child and Family Services  
Providence Community Action Program  
Safe Haven Program – Urban League  
Saint Martin de Porres Center

**Health Centers**

Chad Brown Health Center  
Elmwood Community Health Center  
Hartford Park Community Center  
Providence Community Health Centers  
Rhode Island Free Clinic

**Hospitals**

Bradley Hospital Early Childhood Research Center  
Butler Hospital  
Hasbro Children's Hospital  
Miriam Hospital  
Roger Williams Medical Center  
Saint Joseph Hospital & Pediatric Clinic  
Women and Infants Hospital

## **CHILD HEALTH – DENTAL CARE**

### **Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

**Role** - RIte Smiles is Rhode Island's response to the critical issue of child dental care. Administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), children are eligible if they have Medical Assistance coverage, were born on or after May 1, 2000, and do not have other dental coverage. RIte Care's Dental Benefits Managed Program contracted with United Health Care Dental to administer RIte Smiles. The program is financed through reallocated Medicaid dental funds. All children born after May 1, 2000 with Medical Assistance receive dental benefits under a fee-for-service system.

**Scope** - Initial enrollment in 2006 at the implementation of RIte Smiles was approximately 31,000 children statewide.<sup>22</sup>

**Relevant Data** - Detailed data for Providence are not currently available. However, as noted previously, ProvPlan is seeking a data sharing agreement with DHS that will enable access to datasets relevant to our work in Providence.

## **ADDITIONAL ENTITIES**

**Providence Smiles** is a school-based dental treatment and prevention program targeting low-income and immigrant children. The program is administered through St. Joseph's Health Services in Providence and includes oral health classroom education, screenings, and referrals to St. Joseph's Pediatric Dental Center.

During the 2003-2004 school year, 2,280 children received dental screenings, 912 of whom were enrolled in Providence Head Start and the remaining children at 10 Providence elementary schools. Untreated dental decay was reported in 35% of children in Head Start, 42% of kindergarteners, and 50% of third grade students.<sup>23</sup>

## CHILD HEALTH – CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS

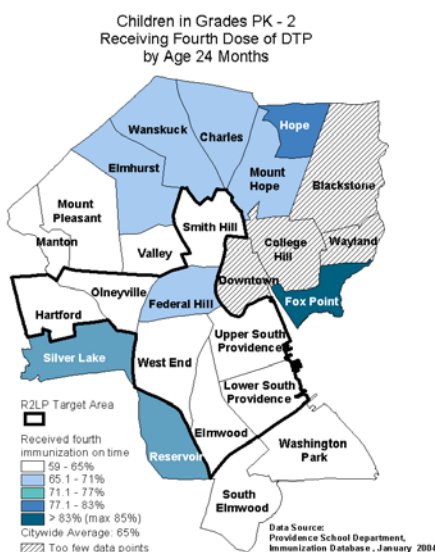
### Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Health

**Role** - The Department of Health (HEALTH) is the entity responsible for overseeing administration of vaccinations for children throughout the state of Rhode Island. Through the federal Vaccines for Children program, the state is able to purchase vaccines at a discounted rate. All children in Rhode Island, regardless of family income, receive these vaccines at no cost through their health care provider. Rhode Island is one of the few states that purchases all vaccines for children.

HEALTH maintains all of the immunization data in a confidential, computerized health information system called KIDSNET. Designed to serve parents, health care providers, and public health programs, the database allows health officials to know if children are receiving proper preventive care at the right time. Health care providers link to KIDSNET to provide pertinent information about services children received in their care. Of the 12,606 children born statewide in 2003, 11,380 (90%) were cared for by a primary care provider who provided immunization data via KIDSNET.

**Scope** - An average of 12,300 children were born annually in Rhode Island between 2002 and 2005 (approximately 3,000 or 25% of whom were born to residents of Providence).<sup>24</sup> HEALTH estimates that 80% of children statewide between the ages of 19 and 35 months were fully immunized in 2005.<sup>25</sup> This represents approximately 14,000 of 18,000 children.

**Relevant Data** - ProvPlan's data sharing agreement with HEALTH has facilitated access to KIDSNET data since 1997. Relevant information include family and child demographics, birth statistics, and all subsequent care including immunizations, lead screenings, and receipt of services such as WIC and home visiting.



## ADDITIONAL ENTITIES

**Providence Public School District** maintains immunization data on children and shared these data with ProvPlan in 2004 for inclusion in *How Ready is Providence?* Analysis of the data (available for 71% of children in pre-K through 2nd grade) indicates that a sizable number of children in the city were not immunized on time.

ProvPlan analyzed the ages at which children received the required third and fourth doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTP) vaccination. Citywide an average of 80% of children received the third dose by 11 months of age (recommended at 6 months) and just 65% of children received the fourth dose by 24 months (recommended at 18 months)<sup>26</sup>. Since regular visits to a pediatrician generally decline

after a child's first birthday, analysis of DTP immunizations also serves as a good indicator of whether families continue pediatric "well visits" over time, rather than only seeking care at times of crisis.

## CHILD HEALTH – BLOOD LEAD SCREENINGS

### Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Health

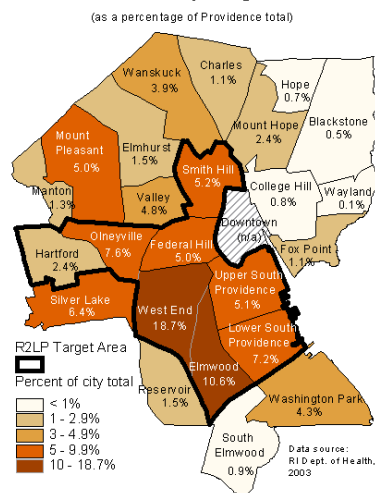
**Role** - The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the Department of Health (HEALTH) helps to implement and enforce the state's lead poisoning and prevention statutes and regulations. Responsibilities include universal screening of all children under age 6, inspection of properties where children have been lead poisoned, enforcement of lead remediation, case management referrals for families whose children are lead poisoned, and general public education regarding the hazards of lead.

**Scope** - In 2006, 33,000 children statewide between the ages of nine months and six years were screened for lead poisoning, 8,200 were children from Providence.<sup>27</sup> Using 2000-2003 data, HEALTH estimates that 70% of all children born during those years were screened at least once by 18 months of age. However, only 40% of these children were screened at least twice, no less than 12 months apart, by 36 months of age as required by law.<sup>28</sup>

**Relevant Data** - Lead screening data is maintained in the KIDSNET database at HEALTH. ProvPlan has a long-standing relationship with HEALTH to analyze lead screening data, including longitudinal trends and geographic distribution. The dataset includes date of lead screening, test result, sample type, and physician.

HEALTH also maintains a list of properties statewide where children were lead poisoned and remediation was not addressed as required. This is available publicly via the HEALTH website and is maintained regularly. It includes property address and municipality.

Concentration of Children under Age 6 with Elevated Blood Levels by Neighborhood, 2003



Rates of lead poisoning in Providence have declined tremendously over the past decade. In 1999 33% of all children entering kindergarten had experienced lead poisoning at some time in the first five years of life. That rate is now 10% for children scheduled to enter kindergarten in fall 2008.<sup>29</sup> Children who experience lead poisoning are concentrated in particular neighborhoods, including R2LP's target area, where poverty is high, home ownership is low, and families face tremendous economic, social, and health care challenges.

## ADDITIONAL ENTITIES

**Childhood Lead Action Project** is a non-profit organization located in Providence that seeks to eliminate childhood lead poisoning through advocacy, public education, and support for parents.

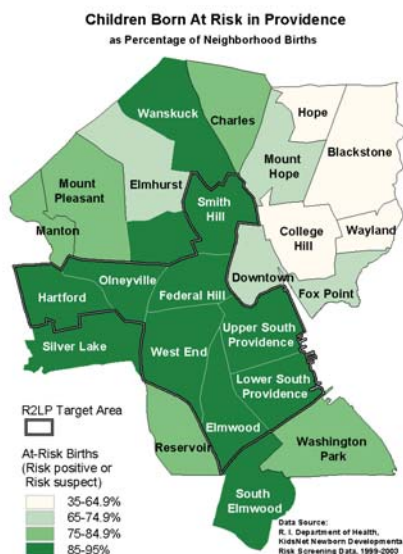
## HOME VISITING

### Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Health

**Role** - The Family Outreach Program is Rhode Island’s home visiting program and a service of the Department of Health (HEALTH). Families of infants identified as “at risk” for developmental delay at birth are routinely offered home visits but any family can request one. Risk factors include low birth weight, neonatal intensive care hospitalization, teen birth, and low maternal education levels. HEALTH works with community based agencies to provide the services. In Providence home visits are provided by Meeting Street Center and Children’s Friend and Service in conjunction with Visiting Nurses Home Health Services. The Family Outreach Program provides parents with information about child development, helps new parents learn to care for their infants, and connects families to resources available in the community.

**Scope** - Statewide, approximately 3,800 families received a home visit through the Family Outreach Program in 2003. This represents 30% of all births that year and 47% of all “at risk” births.<sup>30</sup> Since the home visiting program is free and available to any parent who requests services, the scope could potentially be much greater, given the annual average of 12,000 births in Rhode Island.

**Relevant Data** - KIDSNET database is the repository for HEALTH data related to home visits. ProvPlan has access to KIDSNET via a data sharing agreement with HEALTH. In addition to Family Outreach data, related information includes family and child demographics, birth statistics, and subsequent care including immunizations and lead screenings.



Eighty percent (80%) of births to Providence residents between 1999 and 2003 were identified as risk positive or risk suspect by the Department of Health. Providence rates are considerably higher than the state average, 86% in Providence versus 64% statewide in 2003. Rates of home visits in Providence are also higher than state averages, 59% versus 47%, respectively, that same year.<sup>31</sup>

All eight R2LP target neighborhoods had rates of children born at risk that are 88% or higher between 1999 and 2003. High rates in these target neighborhoods might be expected given that criteria used to identify R2LP’s target area correlate with those used by HEALTH to identify at risk births.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT / PARENT COUNSELING**

No single agency is responsible for providing support and counseling to parents with young children. Most publicly-funded state agencies offer programming that can be classified as such, as do myriad community based organizations. While not an inclusive list, some of the institutions and agencies that provide support to families living in Providence include the following:

Advent House	John Hope Settlement House
AIDS Care Ocean State	Joslin Community Center
AIDS Project Rhode Island	Liberian Community Association of RI Inc
American Red Cross of Rhode Island	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Amos House	MAP Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitative Services Inc
Banister House Inc	McCauley Corporation
Bundles of Joy	Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island
Camp Street Community Ministries	Meeting Street
Casey Family Services	Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island
Center for Hispanic Policy & Advocacy	New Urban Arts
Center for Individualized Training and Education	Oasis International
Center for Non-Violence and Peace Studies	Poverty Institute at RI College School of Social Work
Childhood Lead Action Project	Project Link
Children's Friend and Service	Project Outreach
City Year Rhode Island	Providence After School Alliance
CODAC Behavioral Healthcare Providence	Providence Center
Communities for People	Providence Community Action Program
Crossroads RI	Providence Community Health Centers
DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality)	RI Child Welfare Institute
DaVinci Center for Community Progress	RI Family Life Center
Day Care Justice Corporation	RI Family Literacy Initiative
Defender Community Advocacy Program	RI Community Food Bank
Destiny House	RI for Community and Justice
Developmental Disabilities Program	RI Department of Children, Youth and Families
Dorcas Place Adult & Family Learning Center Inc.	RI Department of Health
Elmwood Community Center	RI Department of Human Services
Families First CEDARR Family Center	RI Free Clinic
Family Outreach Center	RI Housing
Family Service of Rhode Island	RI Office of Child Support Services
Federal Hill Community Center	RI Public Defenders Office
Federal Hill House	Saint Joseph Health Services
Genesis Center	Saint Martin de Porres Center
Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island	Saint Mary's Home for Children
Greater Elmwood Neighborhood Services Inc	Salvation Army
Hasbro Children's Hospital	Silver Lake Community Center
Immigration and Refugee Services	Socioeconomic Development Center for Southeast Asians
International Institute of RI	Sojourner House
Jewish Family Service	Solutions CEDARR



South Providence Neighborhood Ministries  
Southside Community Land Trust  
Stop Wasting Abandoned Property  
Street Health Initiative  
Tanner House  
The Genesis Center  
The Groden Center Inc  
The Housing Network of RI  
The Mediator Fellowship  
The Providence Center  
Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program  
Urban League of RI

Volunteer Center of RI  
Volunteers in Providence Schools  
West Elmwood Housing Development Corp.  
West End Community Center  
Whitmarsh Corporation  
Women and Infants Hospital  
Women's Center of RI  
Year Up Providence  
Youth Build Providence  
Youth in Action  
YMCA of Greater Rhode Island

At this time there are not plans to quantify scope of services or recipients of support or counseling services from these agencies.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

### Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

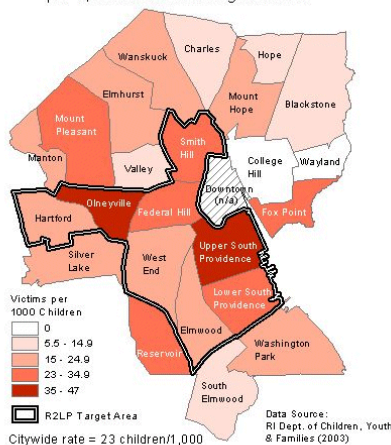
**Role** - The Division of Child Protective Services at the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is the agency responsible for receiving reports of abuse or neglect and conducting an investigation into the allegations.

**Scope** - In 2006 Child Protective Services received 14,957 reports of child maltreatment. Nearly 60% of these reports (8,841) received an investigation by DCYF investigators and 2,862 were found to be situations with indicated abuse or neglect.<sup>32</sup>

DCYF also runs a number of programs designed to support families where there is risk of abuse or neglect or with substantiated cases of abuse or neglect. The Family and Children's Trust provides family support services including parent education groups and in-home services. Comprehensive Emergency Services provides two- and three-month emergency services for families experiencing difficulties resulting from abuse or neglect. Family Renewal provides parent education and case management for families, and Project Connect provides intensive case management to families with substance abuse and substantiated abuse/neglect. Additional services include home-based counseling, parent education, and referrals.

**Relevant Data** - DCYF's Rhode Island Child Information System (RICHIST) is the primary database used to manage and track cases of abuse and neglect. Data available include child demographics, address at the time of investigation, the child's relationship to the perpetrator, and type of abuse. These data, stripped of all identifiers, were made available to R2LP and ProvPlan in 2003 for inclusion in *How Ready Is Providence?*

Victims of Abuse & Neglect - Age 5 and Under  
per 1,000 children in neighborhood



Approximately 824 Providence children under the age of 18 were victims of abuse and neglect in 2003. This is a rate of 18 children per 1,000. Young children are at greater risk for abuse and neglect - those ages 5 years or younger comprised 41% of the victims, a rate of 23 per 1,000.

Nearly 75% of substantiated allegations were cases of neglect (emotional, educational, medical, or physical), 20% of cases were of physical abuse, and 5% were cases of sexual abuse.<sup>33</sup>

Rates vary significantly across Providence with the highest rates in those neighborhoods with associated indicators of family distress such as high poverty and low levels of education.

## ADDITIONAL ENTITIES

**Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island** seeks to keep every child in Rhode Island safe from abuse and neglect through a prevention approach of education, advocacy, and public awareness activities. The organization also serves as the coordinating agency for the statewide **Rhode Island Child Abuse Prevention Network**.

**The Child Safe Clinic at Hasbro Children's Hospital** provides services for children who are victims of neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

**Children's Friend and Service** provides Family Preservation Services through Project Family and Project Connect. Project Family serves families that have been identified by Children's Friend & Service and DCYF as at risk for abuse and neglect. The program aims to keep children safe by increasing family stability and reducing the need to place children in foster care. Project Connect works with parents seeking a substance-free lifestyle. The program is home-based and provides services for an average of one year.

**Providence Children's Museum Families Together** program is a partnership between the museum and DCYF. Children removed from their homes because of neglect or abuse visit with their parents at the Museum.

## **FOSTER CARE**

### **Primary Agency - Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families**

**Role** - The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is the agency responsible for ensuring the well being of children who have been removed from their birth families for reasons of child welfare and safety.

Children in out-of-home placements are waiting permanent placement which may include reunification with their family or adoption. DCYF is also responsible for licensing foster home placements.

**Scope** - As of December 31, 2006, there were 3,311 children under age 21 statewide who were in the care of DCYF. Fifty percent (50%) of these children were in foster care homes, including relative foster care, and the remainder resided in a variety of settings including a residential facility or group home, a medical or substance abuse facility, or the Rhode Island Training School for Youth.<sup>34</sup>

**Relevant Data** - ProvPlan has an existing data sharing and confidentiality agreement with DCYF that permits secondary analysis of foster care data. Relevant fields include child demographics as well as information regarding the reason for a child's removal from their home and placement history.

## **ADDITIONAL ENTITIES**

There are 35 child placing agencies in the state that act as a go-between for children in DCYF custody in need of a foster care placement and families who are seeking licensing by DCYF. Many child placing agencies provide support to foster children and families who are caring for them, as well as support for the birth families as they prepare for the return of their children.

The following 12 child placing agencies are located in Providence:

Adoption Options – Jewish Family Service

Casey Family Services

Children's Friend and Service

China Adoption with Love

Communities for People

Family Service

Groden Center

MAPS

Red Thread Adoption Services, Inc.

The Providence Center

Urban League of Rhode Island

Wide Horizons for Children

## ADDITIONAL INDICATORS IDENTIFIED BY R2LP

*How Ready is Providence?* included 24 indicators of school readiness and child well being. The majority of them have been referenced previously in this report. Those which have not been referenced include the following:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
Education levels of parents	Census, RI Department of Health
Earning levels of families	Census
Percentage of linguistically isolated households	Census, Providence School District
Percentage of children receiving academic and literacy assessments through their early care providers	Limited data available
Percentage of children who receive screenings of speech, language, hearing, vision and early childhood development through their early care providers	Providence School District, RI Department of Health
Social connectedness of parents/guardians to their families	No data available
Library usage by families with young children	Providence Public Library
Percentage of children with incarcerated parents	RI Department of Corrections
Number of children age 5 and under requiring hospitalization as a result of unintentional injuries	RI Department of Health, LifeSpan Injury Prevention Center

For a full discussion of the indicators, their relevance to issues of school readiness in Providence, and related data, visit the R2LP website [www.r2lp.org](http://www.r2lp.org).

## NEXT STEPS

In 2004 when R2LP released *How Ready is Providence?* we intended for it to serve as a baseline perspective of school readiness in the city. Over the next several months we will begin updating several of the indicators by analyzing more recent data. A written summary of updates and findings will be submitted to the Urban Institute as part of the May 2008 reporting.

More critically, R2LP is beginning a survey of providers and families who were impacted by the cuts to child care subsidies that took effect September 1, 2007. As referenced earlier, an estimated 1,900 children and 1,500 families were affected by the revised guidelines that reduced eligibility from 225% of poverty to 180% of poverty.

The primary research questions guiding our survey are:

- 1) Which effects, if any, have the child care subsidy cuts had on families and children in Rhode Island who lost all or part of the subsidy, including impact on child care, employment, household finances and children's development?
- 2) What percentage of licensed child care centers and homes serve families who have lost all of part of the child care subsidy?
- 3) Which effects, if any, have the child care subsidy cuts had on licensed child care centers and homes in Rhode Island who serve families who lost all or part of the child care subsidy?

Using a proportionate stratified random sampling approach, R2LP intends to survey 159 child care centers and 323 family child care providers statewide. During the interview with providers, R2LP will ask for their assistance in identifying families who are or have been served by their programs and who have been affected by the subsidy cuts. We intend to interview at least 250 families statewide with this process.

Staff members from the Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College are conducting surveys with R2LP as part of Care for Kids, a coalition of more than 40 agencies including child care centers, RI Kids Count, and the United Way, working to ensure that all children continue to have access to quality and affordable child care. Findings from the survey will be shared with members of the coalition, R2LP community members, elected officials and others to inform this year's budget discussions.

We will summarize findings from our efforts as part of the May 2008 reporting to the Urban Institute.

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<sup>32</sup> *2007 Rhode Island Kids Count Fact Book*, 98.

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<sup>34</sup> *2007 Rhode Island Kids Count Fact Book*, 102.