

# Why does Rhode Island need MediKids?

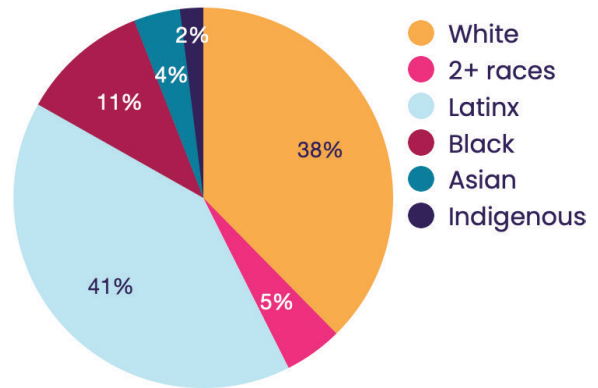
**ALL MEANS ALL KIDS**  
Making Racial Equity a Cornerstone of MediKids

**6,000** children in Rhode Island are uninsured

↪ **66%**

of uninsured children in Rhode Island are people of color

Share of uninsured children in the US, by race/ethnicity



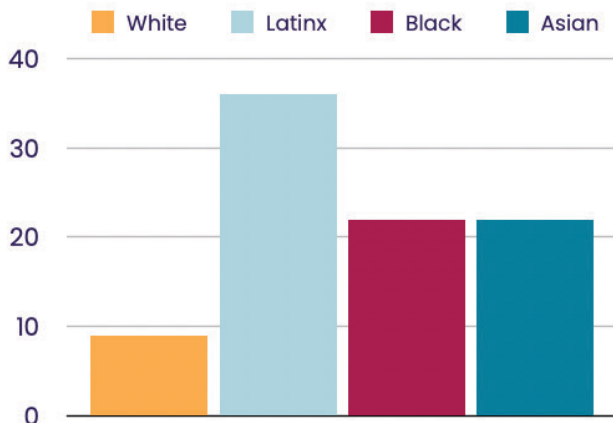
## Demographics

- 42% of Rhode Island's child population are people of color
- Children of color are more likely to be uninsured
- Poverty disproportionately impacts communities of color in Rhode Island

US Infant Mortality (rate per 1,000 births)



RI child poverty rate, by race/ethnicity



**Rhode Island  
needs  
MediKids**

## America's Uninsured Children are Majority People of Color

As projected by the US Census, in 2020 the majority of America's child population are people of color. Our health care system has failed in many ways to meet these new demographics. Prior to the pandemic, 62% of America's uninsured children were from non-white backgrounds. **In Rhode Island, 66% of uninsured children are people of color.**

Consistent, high-quality coverage for health care is critical for all of us but particularly for children and adolescents. Right now, children gain and lose coverage as their families change employment, incomes, addresses, or as other changes happen in life: a parent graduates from school/college; a guardian marries or divorces; a breadwinner is injured or retires; etc. **MediKids extends health care as a basic human right to every child living in America.** Every child is automatically enrolled, and the coverage moves with children over the course of their childhoods and into early adulthood, no matter what their families do for a living or where they live.

**Rhode Island's child population is on the verge of being majority people of color.** In 2018, non-white children made up 45% of the population. Racial disparities in coverage for health care are unsustainable. Equity and fairness must be cornerstones for the health and well-being of all of Rhode Island's young people. We can build health justice with urgency through MediKids.

## MediKids Addresses Minority Health Disparities

Universal coverage is not enough for children of color, many of whom do not have consistent access to high-quality, culturally competent care. **MediKids directs resources and research to improve health equity at state and national levels for all medically underserved children.** Through this work, we can upgrade services, deliver high-quality medical care, and improve outcomes.

## We Must End Systemic Racism in Health Care and Elsewhere

Even with the passage of MediKids, we will still need to dismantle racism, the biggest contributor to minority health disparities and poor health outcomes across all age groups, including children. **Because the federal government will finance and administer MediKids, state governments will have increased freedom to improve a range of social determinants of health.** Prior to the Covid19 pandemic, **18% of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty**, with children of color being disproportionately affected. In 2019, among Rhode Island's 4th graders, 85% of Black, 80% of Latinx, and 55% of white students were not proficient in reading. State governments can lift these young lives at the local level as MediKids guarantees their health care at the national level.

MediKids is a critical tool for building racial justice, but it is by no means a cure-all. Building and maintaining equity will require levels of diligence and vigilance our country has not deployed yet but certainly must if we are to thrive. By guaranteeing every child in America the basic human right of health care under MediKids, we take an important step forward.

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