

**SNAPSHOT OF STATUS OF YOUNG CHILDREN  
PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA  
Population, 2006 = 101,377  
READY CHILDREN**

CATEGORY	AVAILABLE DATA
Number of children by age (Census, 2006) <i>Trends indicate that the 0-4 age group represented a slightly higher percentage of all children 0-17 in 2005 than in 2001.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 0-4 = 8,099 (8% of population)</li> <li>□ 5-9 = 7,411 (7%)</li> <li>□ 10-14 = 6,599 (7%)</li> <li>□ 15-19 = 7,191 (8%)</li> </ul>
General population, by race (Census, 2005) <i>Between 2001 and 2005, the percentage of whites, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic Americans increased slightly, while that of African-Americans and Native –Americans dropped slightly. *Note: Hispanic may be any race and are included in other races, as well as shown separately.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ White: 42,246 (44.4%)</li> <li>□ African-American: 49,424 (51.9%)</li> <li>□ Native American: 744 (0.8%)</li> <li>□ Asian: 960 (1.0%)</li> <li>□ Hawaiian/PI: 64 (0.1%)</li> <li>□ Other: 537 (0.6%)</li> <li>□ 2+ races: 1,208 (1.3%)</li> <li>□ Hispanic*: 1,766 (1.9%)</li> </ul>
Poverty status of children (2000 census) <i>Note: economic vulnerability of children, particularly the youngest. The poverty rates of children 0-17 in Portsmouth has consistently remained higher than statewide averages.</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Below poverty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <b>Under 5:</b> 1,970 (28.5%)</li> <li>□ <b>Age 5:</b> 398 (31.0 %)</li> <li>□ <b>Ages 6-11:</b> 2,375 (26.2%)</li> <li>□ <b>Ages 12-14:</b> 747 (20.0%)</li> <li>□ <b>Age 15:</b> 215 (15.4%)</li> <li>□ <b>Ages 16-17:</b> 659 (24.6%)</li> </ul>
Poverty status of children by family group and age (2000 census) <i>Note: The most economically vulnerable group is young children living with a single mother; with young children living with single fathers also struggling to a somewhat lesser degree, and children living with married couples being the least likely to fall below poverty.</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Families below poverty</b></p> <p>In 2000 there were 24,791 families with children under 18. Of these, 6,114 (24.7%) lived below poverty. These families under poverty fall in the groups below:</p> <p><b>Married couple families:</b> 985 (7.8%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Under age 5: 333 (9.3 %)</li> <li>□ Age 5: 37 (5.9%)</li> <li>□ Ages 6-17: 615 (7.3%)</li> </ul> <p><b>Single-mother families:</b> 4,902 (45.5%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Under age 5: 1,536 (54.1%)</li> <li>□ Age 5: 361 (57.3%)</li> <li>□ Ages 6-17: 3,005 (41.2%)</li> </ul> <p><b>Single father families:</b> 227 (16.2%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Under age 5: 101 (21.2%)</li> <li>□ Age 5: 0</li> <li>□ Ages 6-17: 126 (14.1%)</li> </ul>
Children living in high poverty neighborhoods (2000)	9,474 (36.6% of children under 18)
Infant mortality rates (2005) <i>The 5-year infant mortality rate in Portsmouth (15.0/1000) was significantly higher than statewide average of 7.4/1000.</i>	17.9/1,000 <i>By 2006, this rate dropped to 12.0/1000.</i>
Low birth weight rates (2005)	182 (11.2%) (as compared with state's 8.4%) <i>This rate increased to 12.1% in 2006.</i>
Elevated lead levels (2004)	26 children of 955 tested (testing rate = 104/1000, as compared with state rate of 113/1000) <i>By 2005, 17.1% were tested, higher than the state average.</i>
Children 5-15 with one or more disabilities	1,283 (8.1%)

**READY FAMILIES**

CATEGORY	AVAILABLE DATA
Births to adolescent women (2004 and 2005) <i>This rate was considerably higher than statewide averages each year between 2002 and 2005.</i>	2004: 231 (33.4/1,000) 2005: 39/1000 (Virginia: 16/1000)

Births to women with less than a 12 <sup>th</sup> grade education (2005, Kids Count)	2004: 726 (23%) 2005: 20% Virginia: 15%
Non-marital births (2006, Kids Count)	52% (Virginia = 34%)
Children 0-5 living with a single mother	5.2% (Virginia: 2.6%)
Parental work status (2000 census)	Among parents of children under 6, families in which all parents are in the labor force: 5,117 (67%).
Levels of educational attainment (2000)	<b>Ages 18-24:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Teen high school dropouts: 719 (12.4%)</li> <li>□ No high school diploma: 2,859 (25.8%)</li> <li>□ High school diploma/GED: 4,351 (39.3%)</li> <li>□ Some college, no degree: 3,187 (28.8%)</li> <li>□ Associate or BA degree: 637 (5.8%)</li> </ul> <b>Ages 25+:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade: 5,076 (8.0%)</li> <li>□ 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, no diploma: 10,747 (16.9%)</li> <li>□ High school diploma/GED: 18,719 (29.4%)</li> <li>□ Some college, no degree: 16,517 (25.9%)</li> <li>□ Associate degree: 3,831 (6.0%)</li> <li>□ Bachelor's degree: 5,791 (9.1%)</li> <li>□ Graduate/professional degree: 3,004 (4.7%)</li> </ul>
Language other than English spoken at home	4.6% (for children over 5 in 2000)
Substantiated cases of child abuse (2004/05)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 60 substantiated reports</li> <li>□ 88 victims (3.4/1000— as compared with state rate of 3.9)</li> <li>□ In 2006, this rate was 3.9</li> </ul>
Juvenile arrest rates	Dropped from 34 in 2002 to 14 in 2006
Children in foster care (2006)	52 (9/1000, over twice as high as state averages)
Grandparents responsible for grandchildren (2000)	1,858
Travel time to work	23.8 minutes
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000 (ages 5+)	51.4%
Home ownership rate (2006)	58.6%/monthly costs = \$1,246
Rental rate (2006)	41.4%/monthly costs = \$776

*Also needed: Data on primary programs and services supporting parents with young children (parent education, home visitation, family support, literacy programs, recreation programs)*

*Portsmouth data*

**READY SERVICES—EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

CATEGORY	AVAILABLE DATA												
Availability in SHR in 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q 1,002 registered facilities</li> <li>q Capacity to serve 42,000 children</li> <li>q 52,000 children in families in which all parents work</li> <li>q Lowest percentage of programs serving infants and toddlers</li> </ul>												
Regulated child care capacity (per 100 children, 0-12) in 2007	24%												
Availability by duration of care in Portsmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q 84% of programs offer full week care</li> <li>q 67% of programs offer year-round care</li> <li>q Low vacancy rate of 3% for the above; supply greater than demand for part-day programs</li> </ul>												
Young children enrolled in school (2000 census)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q Preschool: 1,753</li> <li>q Kindergarten: 1,503</li> </ul>												
Children in public pre-kindergarten (VPI) in 2006	q 562 of 1,420 four-year olds, increasing to 563 in 2007												
Children in Head Start in SHR in 2004-05	1,501 (In 2008, 18% were from Portsmouth)												
Cost: of full-time child care in Portsmouth <i>Note: all rates are significantly higher than state subsidy reimbursement rate.</i>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><b>FCCH</b></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><b>CENTERS</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>q Infants:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$368/month</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$520/month</td> </tr> <tr> <td>q Preschoolers:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$325/month</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$411/month</td> </tr> <tr> <td>q School age:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$303/month</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$411/month</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<b>FCCH</b>	<b>CENTERS</b>	q Infants:	\$368/month	\$520/month	q Preschoolers:	\$325/month	\$411/month	q School age:	\$303/month	\$411/month
	<b>FCCH</b>	<b>CENTERS</b>											
q Infants:	\$368/month	\$520/month											
q Preschoolers:	\$325/month	\$411/month											
q School age:	\$303/month	\$411/month											
Children receiving child care subsidy (2004-2007)	2004: 1,424, with 449 children on waiting list 2005: 1,540; 2006, 1,564; 2007: 1,667												
Programs accepting subsidy <i>(74% of programs in SHR accepting subsidy had a waiting list)</i>	68% of Centers and 46% of Family Child Care Homes												
Education of Child Care Staff: (% with AA degree or higher)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q Center-based teachers: 20%</li> <li>q Center-based directors: 63%</li> <li>q Family Child Care Providers: 28%</li> </ul>												
Experience of Child Care Staff: ( % with 5 or more years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q Center-based teachers: 37%</li> <li>q Center-based Directors: 79%</li> <li>q Family Child Care Providers: 60%</li> </ul>												
Annual turnover rate	19%												
Hourly Compensation of Child Care Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>q Center based teachers: \$7.75</li> <li>q Center-based directors: \$9.75</li> <li>q Family Child Care Providers: \$3.49</li> </ul>												
Nationally accredited programs	2 centers												
Unlicensed child care programs	58.68% of all child care programs were unlicensed, as compared with 31.63% in VA												

*Portsmouth data*

## READY SCHOOLS

CATEGORY	AVAILABLE DATA
Number of students enrolled in school, ages 3-grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Public school: 18,220 (87.1%)</li> <li>□ Private school: 2,704 (12.9%)</li> </ul>
Students with limited English proficiency	1.2%
Assessment of school readiness (2003, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ 21.3% identified as needing additional intervention</li> <li>□ By 2006, only 16.5% were identified as needing additional intervention</li> </ul>
K-3 Retention Rate (2006)	4.9% (Virginia = 2.5%)
Standards of Learning, 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade (2006) <i>Note: These rates increased in every subject each year; however, all remain lower than state averages.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ English: 78%</li> <li>□ Math: 84%</li> <li>□ History: 86%</li> <li>□ Science: 83%</li> </ul>
The graduation/completion rate (2006) <i>This rate remained significantly lower than statewide averages each year between 2004 and 2006.</i>	44.9% (In Virginia, 76.8%)
Students receiving special education (2006)	13.4% (Virginia = 13.1%)
Special education students under 6 (2006)	3.3% (Virginia = 3.0%)
Students receiving free lunch in 2006	6,988 (44.21%)
Students receiving reduced lunch in 2006 <i>Note: When combined free and reduced rates, over half of Portsmouth students have qualified each year (2202-2005), as compared to 33% statewide.</i>	1,211 (7.66%)

*Additional data needed:*

- Early intervention to children >3.
- Class size in kindergarten
- ECE to kindergarten transition activities

## READY SERVICES—FAMILY SUPPORT AND HEALTH

CATEGORY	AVAILABLE DATA
Women receiving early prenatal care (2004-2006) <i>These rates were consistently lower than statewide averages, 2002-2006.</i>	2004: 1,237 (75%) 2005: 29.8% 2006, 74.6% 2006 Virginia: 83.5%
Clients served by home visiting programs	750
Early Intervention (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ &lt; age 1: 6</li> <li>□ Age 1: 16</li> <li>□ Age 2: 43</li> </ul> <i>(About 1% of children under 3 are served)</i>
Eligible children enrolled in public health insurance (Medicaid, FAMIS, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Medicaid: 9,272</li> <li>□ FAMIS: 1,160</li> <li>□ Remaining eligible not served: 836 (17%)</li> <li>□ By 2006, that number dropped to 7%.</li> </ul>
Food Stamps (2006)	14,696 individuals (About 14% of population, the 2000 census reported 16.2% of population below poverty)

*Portsmouth data*

## SOURCES FOR ABOVE DATA

- US Census, 2000
- Kids Count
- Census, American Community Survey, 2005 and 2006
- Virginia's "Indicators of School Readiness"
- "Who's Caring for Our Children," Child Care Workforce Study in South Hampton Roads, 2005
- Local interviews and focus groups

## **ISSUES/GAPS EMERGING FROM REVIEW OF PORTSMOUTH DATA, INTERVIEWS, AND FOCUS GROUPS**

### **General observations:**

- q Children ages 0-4 constitute 8% of the population—a significant proportion.
- q 67% of families that have children under six have both parents working and may need child care.
- q The highest rates of poverty are among children in single-mother families; however, over 25% of all children under 18 Portsmouth live below the poverty line.
- q With 36.6% of children living in high poverty neighborhoods, it may be effective and efficient to focus some efforts on those particular neighborhoods.
- q Given the fact that children of parents not completing high school are five times more likely to drop out of school than children of parents completing high school, Portsmouth should continue working to entice back into education/training the 25% of adults over 25 without a high school diploma.
- q General concerns among focus group participants included the following:
  - o Transportation is often a significant barrier in accessing services.
  - o Families need access to more affordable housing and home repairs.
  - o There is a need for additional parks and free activities for children and families.
  - o Those who home school their children would like to build positive relationships and connections with the school system.
  - o Communication needs to expand and improve about the services that are available in the area.

### **Visible assets on which to build include, but are not limited to...**

- q Steady improvement in PALS-K results—identification of factors contributing to this may provide guidance as to those strategies that should be strengthened and expanded;
- q Expanding numbers of children served by VPI and children receiving child care subsidies—ensuring continuous improvement in the programs serving these children and including parent involvement with these efforts will magnify their impact.
- q Successful efforts to expand the lead testing rate beyond statewide averages may offer a starting point for linking to additional efforts that may be needed, such as a fluoride varnish program to reduce dental decay and attentiveness to securing medical homes and on-time immunizations for the children involved in the lead testing efforts.
- q Portsmouth has experienced recent declines in rates of substantiated child abuse.
- q There is a low turnover rate among child care providers in the city, supporting consistency of care for many children. If factors contributing to this low rate can be identified, perhaps Portsmouth can assist the other SHR cities in similar efforts.

### **Significant challenges include the following:**

- q The data reveals significant concerns related to births and accompanying threats to development, with a number of indicators significantly poorer than state averages, as shown below. Strategies should address these factors, in order to give a greater number of children a healthier start from the very beginning.
  - o Early prenatal care
  - o Births to teen girls
  - o Non-marital births
  - o Births to mothers with less than 12<sup>th</sup> grade education
  - o Infant mortality rates
  - o Low birthweight rates
- q While SOL proficiency rates have improved, they are still below statewide averages; likewise, Portsmouth has low rates of graduation/completion and a significant number of adults without a high school diploma.
- q Lower levels of per capita income than state/regional averages, and a somewhat higher unemployment rate.
- q Higher rates of child poverty than statewide averages.

### **Specific comments related to gaps/issues:**

- q Availability of child care and early education:
  - o The number of spaces for full-day, full year early care and education in SHR is insufficient for the demand. The most pressing need is to expand the availability of infant/toddler child care.
  - o Specifically in Portsmouth, the capacity of regulated child care (ages 0-12) is at 24%--significantly lower than the percentage of working parents with young children.

- Focus groups indicate a need for child care for teen parents, in order to encourage these moms to remain in school.
  - In FY2007 562 children in Portsmouth were served full time in the VPI program; however, 635 four-year olds were considered at risk. There should be an exploration to explore ways both to expand the number of children receiving public pre-K and to offer such classes in child care settings, using this as a vehicle to further improve quality.
  - If there is no Early Head Start program serving the Portsmouth area, there should be an application to the Federal government to offer such services. Applying for an Even Start grant might also be an option for expanding early childhood and family support services, especially targeting low income neighborhoods and/or parents without a high school diploma.
- q Cost of child care:
- The cost of child care in Portsmouth significantly exceeds the reimbursement rate offered by the state, and is burdensome for most private-pay parents. Perhaps one result of this fact is that only 46% of Family Child Care Homes and 68% of Centers in Portsmouth accept child care subsidy in payment for their services. Therefore, it will be important to
    - § First, create a local fund to supplement the subsidy reimbursement rate and entice additional providers to accept subsidy, thus increasing access to care (and hopefully, higher quality care.)
    - § Advocate with the state to increase subsidy reimbursement rates and to require a higher level of quality for children receiving child care subsidies, in order to avoid having children already disadvantaged by low income be further disadvantaged by poor quality child care.
  - In 2004, there were 449 children on a waiting list for child care subsidy. A task force should explore ways to reduce the number of children/families waiting for child care subsidies, as well as to identify/address the difficulties faced by low-income working families not qualifying for child care subsidies, but for whom child care costs are prohibitive.
  - Additionally, given the fact that Portsmouth has a significantly higher rate than state averages of children in foster care, it seems appropriate to explore opportunities for increasing subsidy reimbursement rates for these children, in order to ensure high quality care for them.
- q Quality of care:
- Only 20% child care teachers and 28% of Family Child Care Providers have Associates degrees or higher. Given the research that finds a correlation between the educational levels of providers and outcomes for the children they serve, there should be incentives and supports to encourage providers to continue their education.
  - Only 37% of center-based teachers in child care programs have more than 5 years experience. Factors contributing to this fact should be identified and addressed.
  - The annual turnover rate of child care staff in Portsmouth is 19%--better than in some areas, but still of concern..
  - Compensation for those working in child care is low, particularly for Family Child Care Providers.
  - There are only 2 accredited early childhood education programs in Portsmouth. An effort providing technical assistance and incentives for programs to pursue either accreditation and/or to participate in a pilot Quality Improvement Rating System would be important.
  - *All of the above facts underscore the importance of developing incentives and support designed to increase both the educational levels and compensation rates of those providing early care and education.*
- q School readiness:
- There has been steady improvement in the rates of children needing additional intervention to be ready for kindergarten, as identified by PALS-K screening. In 2003, 21.3% of students entering kindergarten in Portsmouth were assessed as needing additional intervention; by 2006, that figure dropped to 16.%. Nonetheless, if there are not already focused efforts to both reduce that number (by identifying/serving children at ages 3 and 4 most likely to fall in that group) and to provide remediation to any arriving at school poorly prepared, a task group should bring recommendations for such approaches.
  - Similarly, the proficiency rates of third graders on SOL tests improved in every subject between 2003 and 2007. Nonetheless, these rates have consistently remained below the statewide averages. Perhaps of greatest concern is the fact that 22% of students in 2007 were less than proficient in English/Reading at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade--falling behind in the essential skills of language use. It will be important both to identify and assist young children

likely to fall in this group and to provide additional remediation to those students falling behind prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

- Graduation/completion rates in Portsmouth remained at 44.9% in 2006—significantly lower than the statewide averages of about 76%.
- Portsmouth should fully utilize the Virginia Children’s Museum and Safety Town and encourage partnerships between these organizations and early childhood initiatives.
- q Family support:
  - Given the correlation between a mother’s education and a child’s educational success, the fact that 384 babies in 2004 were born to women with less than high school should be a focus of efforts. That rate remained at 20% in 2005. Could these women be targeted at the time of birth and offered a route to return to school?
  - Focus group data suggests that drug use among young parents in Portsmouth is a prevalent problem and a strong contributor to the number of grandparents or other caregivers raising young children. During a focus group among grandparents raising children, it was suggested that transportation services, information about available services and support groups would be beneficial for the 1,858 grandparents responsible for their grandchildren in the city.
  - Housing costs are high in Portsmouth (\$1,246/month per unit with mortgage and \$776 gross rent—with 7,800 renters expending >= 30% of their household income on rent), while per capita income remains below statewide averages. These facts may also contribute to the fact that over 40% of the population moved between 1995 and 2000. Does Portsmouth have a strong IDA program or something similar to support increased home ownership?
  - There are significant numbers of homeless children in Portsmouth. What is the impact of homelessness on these children in terms of development and school success? How effectively are they being identified for services?
  - The latest data available indicates that 750 clients in Portsmouth receive home visiting services. Even without more complete data available on the extent of parenting support services in the area, it would be advisable for a task force to explore ways to provide effective and on-going information and support to parents, as a way of ensuring both effective parenting skills, knowledge of child development, and understanding of available services in the community.
- q Health:
  - Only 79.8% of women received early prenatal care in 2005 and that rate dropped to 74.6% in 2006, as compared to the statewide average of 83.5%. How might this rate be increased?
  - There are significant numbers of births to adolescents, at a rate much higher than statewide averages, which provides two challenges:
    - § How might that birth rate be decreased?
    - § How can high quality care be provided to these infants, simultaneously allowing these teens to remain in school and offering a nurturing start in life to their infants? (In other words, what is a comprehensive approach to serving this population?)
  - The low birth weight of babies in Portsmouth is significantly higher than the rate in the state. Factors contributing to this should be explored and addressed.
  - Only about 1% of children under 3 were served with early intervention, while in the 5-15 age group, 8.1% of children had one or more disabilities. These facts would support efforts to expand the availability of such services.
  - As of 2004 836 children eligible for either Medicaid or FAMIS were not yet enrolled in either. However, the percentage of eligible children enrolled in Medicaid or FAMIS continued to increase, reaching 93% in 2005, but still lower than the statewide average of 98%. Health providers note that children without insurance do not receive the services they need.
  - Portsmouth is to be commended on steadily increasing the percentage of children under 6 tested for lead levels, reaching 17.1% in 2005 and passing the statewide average. On the other hand, while the percentage of children demonstrating lead levels has dropped each year (to .9% in 2005), these levels have continued to be higher than statewide averages.
  - It appears that less than those eligible receive food stamps.

**Additional suggestions from focus groups:**

- q Form a partnership with Channel 48 for distributing information to the public related to the needs of children and services available.
- q Create a core of volunteers and mentors, available to support both parents and child care providers.

