

**Embargoed for Release**

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**Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Releases National Report**

**Highlights Key Indicators to Track Progress in  
Preparing Our Nation's Children for School Success**

Washington, DC, February 16, 2005 – A new national report being released today by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT shows that policymakers and child advocates can use measures of child well-being to better prepare young children for later school success. *Getting Ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, shows how tracking progress on key indicators of school readiness can lead to more effective policies and investments in early childhood. The report is being released today at the U.S. Capitol to an audience of policymakers, researchers, and child advocates.

The report is based on research that shows that too many young children enter kindergarten unprepared for school success. These children often suffer from physical, social, emotional and cognitive deficits that could have been addressed earlier in their lives. The report is based on a set of core indicators of school readiness that emerged from the work of 17 states involved in the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative.

The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative was implemented over the past three years in 17 states. Rhode Island was one of the states chosen to participate in this national project. In addition, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT was national coordinator of the 17 state partnership. This multi-state initiative developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age eight. The goal is for states to use the school readiness indicators to inform public policy decisions and track progress in meeting key goals for young children.

“While policy makers may recognize the importance of early learning and school readiness, they also need measurable indicators that enable them to track progress,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “We are releasing

this report in Washington, DC because the work of the 17 states has the power to influence the national debate on policies and investments that promote the healthy development of infants, toddlers, and young children.”