

Social
Development,
Behavioral Health,
and Teen Fertility

(SD)

SD 1.1

LIFE GOALS: THE PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WHO RATED SELECTED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL GOALS AS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

The personal and social life goals of high school students reflect their priorities for the future and provide insights into the positive and negative influences in their lives as they make the transition to adulthood. The percentages of high school seniors who rated selected personal and social life goals as extremely important for selected years between 1976 and 1997 are presented in Tables SD 1.1.A and SD 1.1.B. Personal goals include being successful in their line of work, having a good marriage and family life, and having lots of money. Social goals include making a contribution to society, working to correct social and economic inequalities, and being a leader in their community.

From 1976 through 1997, high school seniors have been fairly consistent in the relative importance they assign to various life goals. Specifically:

- **Having a Good Marriage and Family Life and Being Successful in My Line of Work** have been cited more often than other values by high school seniors as being extremely important. Since 1992, more than three out of four high school seniors have felt it extremely important to have a good marriage and family life, and nearly two out of three have felt it extremely important to be successful at work (see Table SD 1.1.A).
- **Having Lots of Money and Making a Contribution to Society** were the next most likely goals to be considered extremely important by high school seniors. Between 20 and 30 percent of seniors have found these goals extremely important in recent years (see Figures SD 1.1.A and SD 1.1.B).
- **Working to Correct Social and Economic Inequalities and Being a Leader in My Community** are extremely important goals in 1997 for only small percentages of high school seniors: 12 percent and 15 percent, respectively (see Figure SD 1.1.B).

Differences by Race. In 1997, black students were more likely than whites to view as extremely important goals such as being successful at work (81 percent versus 60 percent), having lots of money (45 percent versus 22 percent), and correcting social and economic inequalities (18 percent versus 9 percent). The two groups appeared equally likely to attach extreme importance to having a good marriage and family life, a rate that has hovered around 75 percent for both races over the time period examined.

Differences by Gender. Across the six goals, rates vary little between male students and female students, with several exceptions. In 1997, females were more likely to indicate that having a good marriage and family life was extremely important (81 percent versus 72 percent), and were less likely to report that having lots of money was an extremely important goal (20 percent versus 33 percent).

Table SD 1.1.A

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States who rate selected personal life goals as being "extremely important," by gender and race: selected years, 1976-1997

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Being successful in my line of work										
Total	53	57	61	62	66	65	63	62	65	64
Gender										
Male	53	58	62	60	63	63	61	62	62	65
Female	52	57	60	64	69	67	66	62	68	64
Race										
White	50	55	58	59	65	62	60	59	63	60
Black	67	71	73	75	80	74	79	72	74	81
Having a good marriage and family life										
Total	73	76	75	76	78	79	76	78	78	76
Gender										
Male	66	71	69	71	72	74	70	73	74	72
Female	80	82	82	83	84	85	81	83	81	81
Race										
White	72	77	76	76	79	79	76	78	78	77
Black	75	73	76	78	75	76	72	76	75	76
Having lots of money										
Total	15	18	27	28	29	26	26	25	25	28
Gender										
Male	20	24	34	37	35	32	32	30	33	33
Female	11	13	18	19	22	18	19	19	16	20
Race										
White	12	15	24	25	24	20	22	21	21	22
Black	33	32	38	39	46	45	47	41	43	45

Note: Data are based on one of six questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-sixth of the total sample size for each year.

Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, items A007A, A007B, and A007C.

Table SD 1.1.B

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States who rate selected social life goals as being "extremely important," by gender and race: selected years, 1976-1997

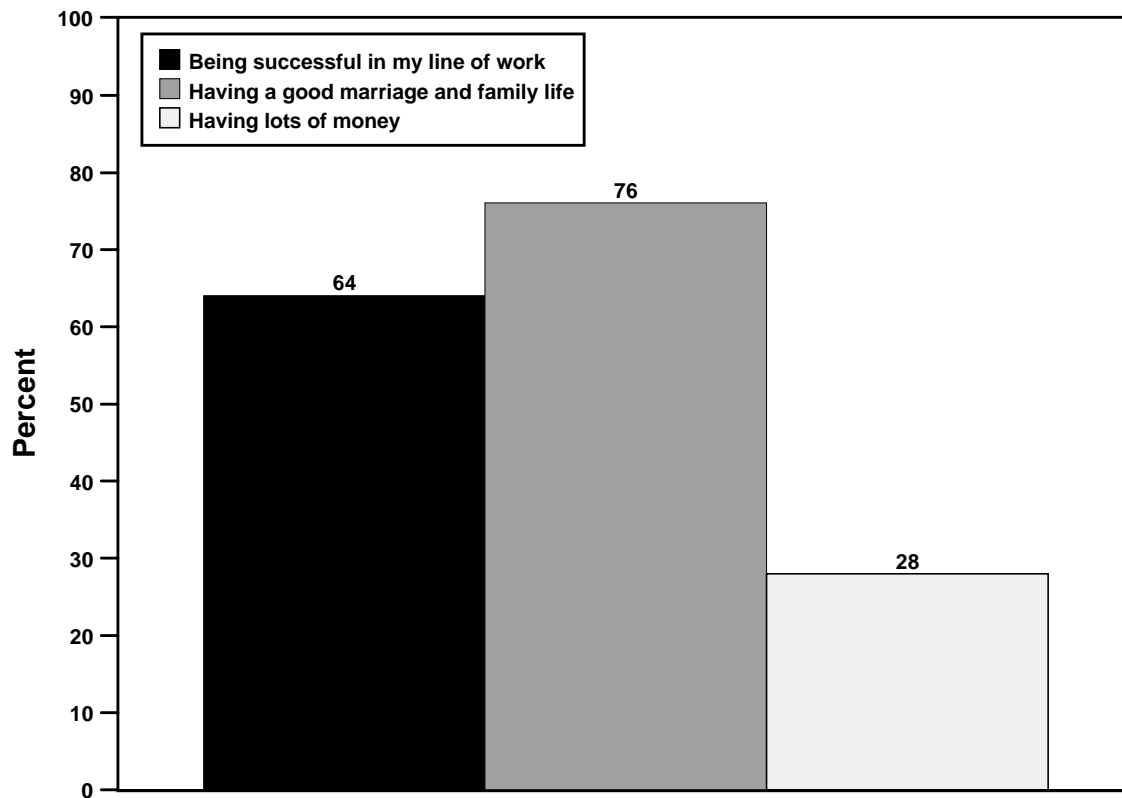
	1976	1981	1986	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Making a contribution to society										
Total	18	18	17	21	22	24	24	20	24	22
Gender										
Male	16	19	18	20	22	25	23	19	23	19
Female	20	17	16	22	23	25	25	21	26	25
Race										
White	18	18	16	20	22	24	23	19	23	22
Black	23	21	20	27	27	25	29	25	29	24
Working to correct social and economic inequalities										
Total	10	10	9	12	15	15	14	10	12	12
Gender										
Male	8	9	7	11	14	14	12	9	11	10
Female	13	10	11	13	17	16	16	10	12	12
Race										
White	8	7	7	10	13	12	11	8	9	9
Black	20	21	19	21	26	21	25	18	19	18
Being a leader in my community										
Total	7	8	9	11	13	13	14	12	15	15
Gender										
Male	8	8	11	12	14	17	14	14	16	16
Female	6	7	6	10	11	10	13	10	13	13
Race										
White	6	7	8	9	11	12	12	10	14	12
Black	14	14	12	17	21	19	21	22	23	24

Note: Data based on one of six questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-sixth of the total sample size for each year.

Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, items A007G, A007H, and A007L.

Figure SD 1.1.A

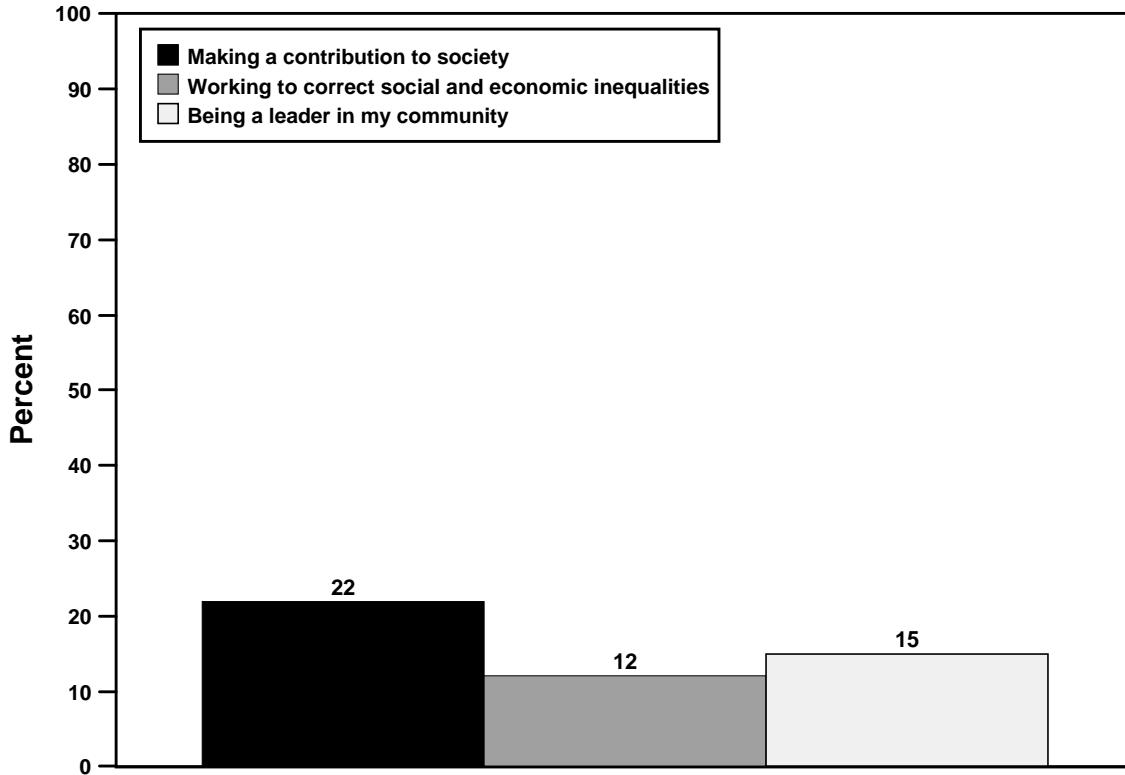
Percentage of high school seniors in the United States who rate selected personal life goals as being "extremely important": 1997



Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. 1997. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, items A007A, A007B, and A007C.

Figure SD 1.1.B

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States who rate selected social life goals as being "extremely important": 1997



Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. 1997. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, items A007G, A007H, and A007L.

SD 1.2

PEER APPROVAL

As children grow older, peer relationships come to play an increasingly important role in determining their own behaviors and attitudes.¹ For example, teenagers reporting that a large proportion of their friends are (or would like to be) sexually active are more likely to become sexually active themselves.²

Two measures of potential peer influence are offered here: the percentage of youth reporting that getting good grades has great or very great importance to their peers, and the percentage reporting that peers would disapprove of intentionally angering a teacher in school. Between 1980 and 1997, the percentage of 12th-graders reporting that their peers value good grades stayed fairly constant, varying between 44 percent and 50³ percent (see Figure SD 1.2.A). During that same time period, the percentage reporting peer disapproval of angering a teacher in school decreased from 41 percent in 1980 to 34 percent in 1997 (see Table SD 1.2.B).

Differences by Age. Eighth-grade students were more likely in 1997 than either 10th- or 12th-graders to report that their peers consider good grades to be of great or very great importance (52 percent versus 43 percent and 45 percent, respectively). In that same year, on the other hand, more 12th-grade students (34 percent) than 8th- or 10th-graders (23 percent) were likely to report peer disapproval of intentionally angering a teacher in school (see Tables SD 1.2.A and SD 1.2.B).

Differences by Gender. Female students were slightly more likely than males to report that their peers value good grades and that they would disapprove of intentionally angering teachers; for example, among 12th-grade youth in 1997, 49 percent of females and 41 percent of males reported that peers hold good grades to be of great or very great importance (see Table SD 1.2.A). In that same year, 38 percent of 12th-grade females and 31 percent of 12th-grade males reported peer disapproval of intentionally angering a teacher in school (see Table SD 1.2.B).

Differences by Race. For all years for which data are presented, black students in all grades were considerably more likely than their white counterparts to report strong peer support for good grades (see Figure SD 1.2.A); for example, in 1997, 41 percent of white and 59 percent of black 12th-graders reported that their peers believed that good grades were of great or very great importance. However, the percentage of black students reporting strong peer support for good grades has dropped from 78 percent in 1980 to 59 percent in 1997. Black students are less likely to report peer disapproval of intentionally angering teachers in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades. The difference by race is largest among high school seniors, in a trend that has been consistent since 1980 (see Figure SD 1.2.B).

¹Hayes, C.D. *Risking the Future*, p. 105; Newcomer, S.F., Gilbert, M. and Udry, J.R. "Perceived and Actual Same-Sex Behavior as Determinants of Adolescent Sexual Behavior." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Montréal, Canada, 1980. Cited in National Commission on Children. 1991. *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*, Final Report of the National Commission on Children, page 351. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²Hayes, C.D. *Risking the Future*, p. 105; Cvetkovitch, G., and Grote, B. "Psychological Development and the Social Problem of Teenage Illegitimacy." In *Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing: Findings from Research* (C. Chilman, ed). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1980. Cited in National Commission on Children. 1991. *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*, Final Report of the National Commission on Children, p. 351. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

³The 50 percent estimate occurred in 1982, not shown in Table SD 1.2.A.

Table SD 1.2.A

Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students in the United States reporting that good grades have great or very great importance to peers, by gender and race: selected years, 1980-1997

	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
8th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	51	52	54	54	55	55	52
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	50	50	54	52	52	54	51
Female	—	—	—	53	53	54	55	56	55	53
Race										
White	—	—	—	47	47	49	49	48	48	46
Black	—	—	—	72	72	70	70	72	77	71
10th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	44	43	39	42	44	45	43
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	42	42	36	39	43	42	40
Female	—	—	—	46	44	42	45	45	47	45
Race										
White	—	—	—	38	38	35	38	39	40	38
Black	—	—	—	67	66	59	64	67	65	62
12th Grade										
Total	48	49	48	44	45	46	45	46	46	45
Gender										
Male	48	50	46	41	42	43	44	41	44	41
Female	48	48	51	47	48	48	46	50	49	49
Race										
White	43	43	43	37	39	40	39	40	42	41
Black	78	77	76	71	70	61	67	67	69	59

Note: Data for 8th- and 10th-grade students based on one of two questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-half of the total sample size for each grade in each year. Data for 12th-grade students are based on one of six questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-sixth of the total sample size for each year. Data for 8th and 10th grades available since 1991.

Sources: Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. 1980. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*, Questionnaire Form 5, item E06D; Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1982-1996. Questionnaire Form 3, item E06D; Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. 1997. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. Questionnaire Form 3, item E04D. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Data for 8th and 10th grades are from unpublished questionnaire responses, Form 1, item E10D, for 1991-1996 and from unpublished questionnaire responses, Forms 1 & 3, item E08D, for 1997.

Table SD 1.2.B

Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students in the United States reporting peer disapproval of intentionally angering a teacher in school, by gender and race: selected years, 1980-1997

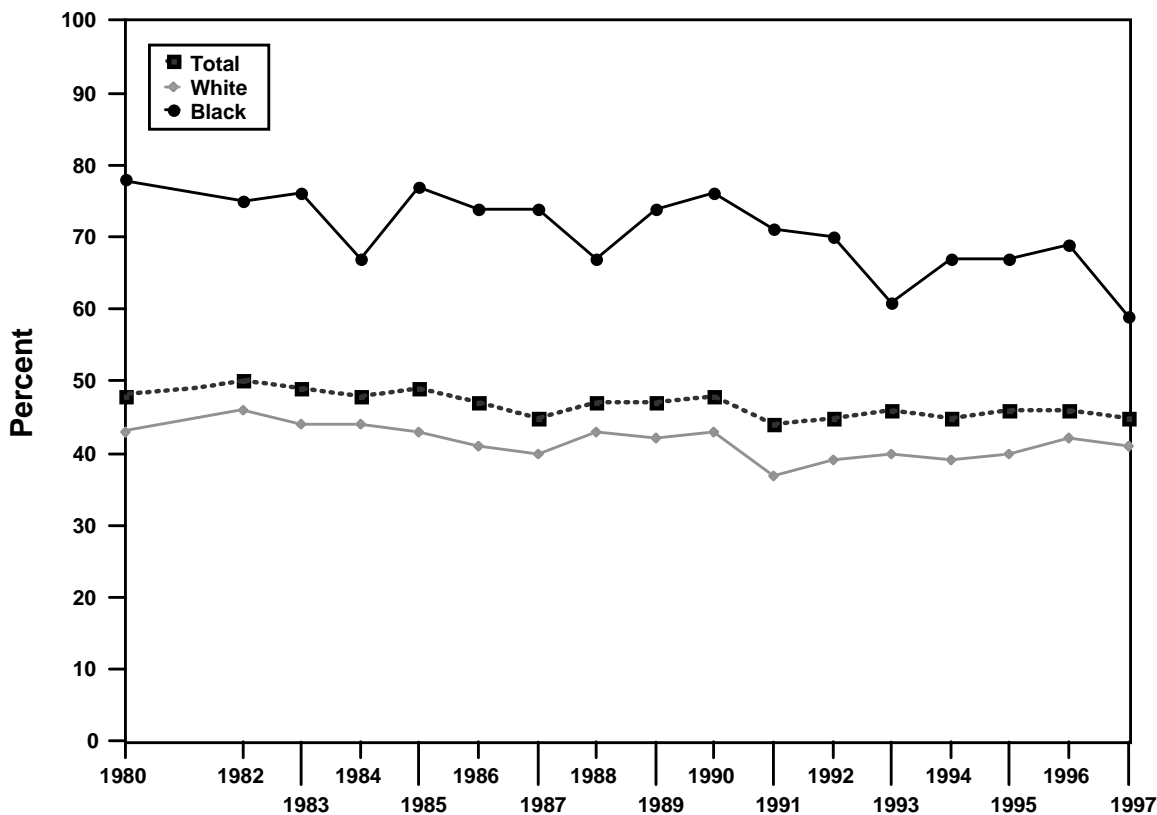
	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
8th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	26	24	24	21	22	23	23
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	22	20	20	18	19	20	21
Female	—	—	—	30	27	26	23	24	26	26
Race										
White	—	—	—	26	24	24	22	22	23	24
Black	—	—	—	23	24	23	22	22	22	20
10th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	26	24	24	26	24	23	23
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	21	19	19	22	21	19	20
Female	—	—	—	31	28	28	30	28	26	27
Race										
White	—	—	—	27	25	25	26	25	23	24
Black	—	—	—	22	21	20	23	19	20	19
12th Grade										
Total	41	42	33	33	34	34	33	36	35	34
Gender										
Male	37	35	29	31	28	30	25	32	29	31
Female	46	48	38	37	39	37	40	41	40	38
Race										
White	44	43	35	34	35	34	34	36	36	36
Black	29	33	30	29	30	27	25	33	28	30

Note: Data for 8th- and 10th-grade students based on one of two questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-half of the total sample size for each grade in each year. Data for 12th-grade students based on one of six questionnaire forms, with a resulting sample size one-sixth of the total sample size for each year. Data for 8th and 10th grades available since 1991.

Sources: Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1980-1997. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, item D007; data for 8th and 10th grades are from unpublished questionnaire responses, Form 1, item E08, for 1991-1996 and from unpublished questionnaire responses, Forms 1 & 3, item E06.

Figure SD 1.2.A

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States reporting that good grades have great or very great importance to peers, by race: 1980-1997^a

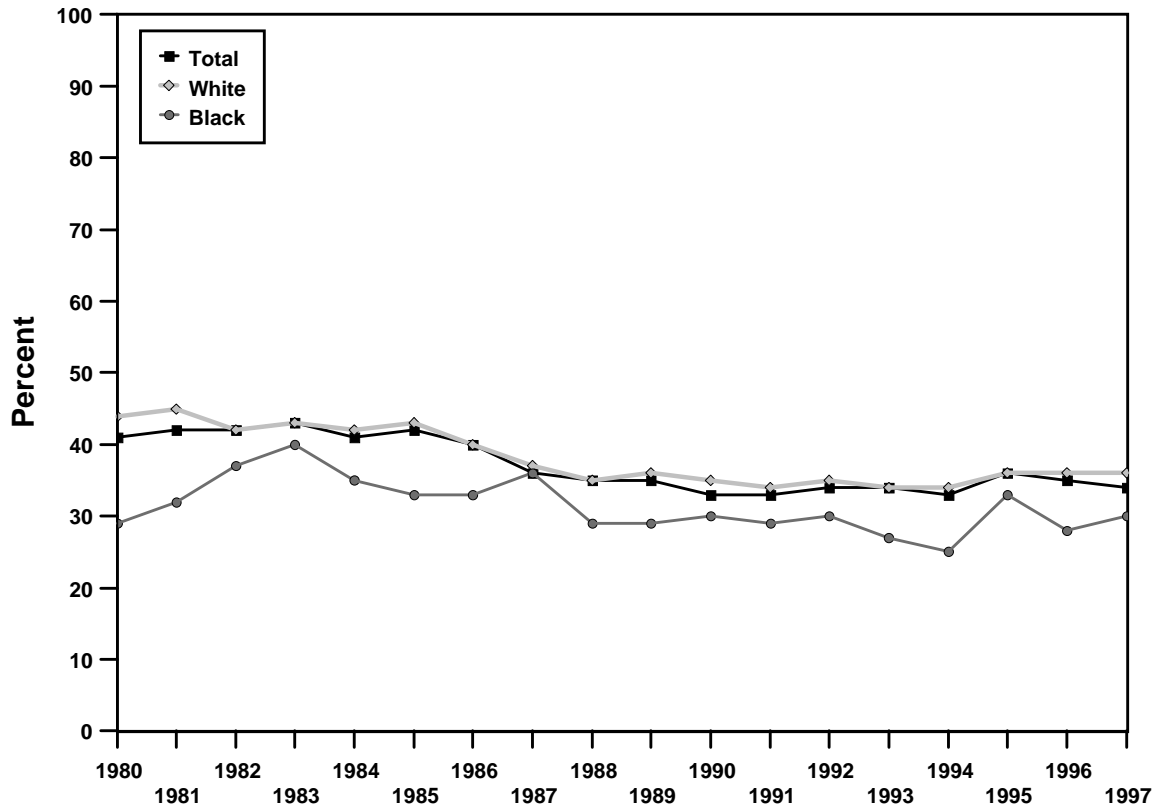


^aThis question was not asked in 1981.

Sources: Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. 1980. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. Questionnaire Form 5, item E06D; Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1982-1996. Questionnaire Form 3, item E06D; Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. 1997. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1997. Questionnaire Form 3, item E04D. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.

Figure SD 1.2.B

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States reporting peer disapproval of intentionally angering a teacher in school, by race: 1980-1997



Source: Bachman, J.G., Johnston, L.D., and O'Malley, P.M. 1980-1997. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. Questionnaire Form 1, item D007.

SD 1.3

RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE AND RELIGIOSITY

Research relating religion to children's day-to-day conduct suggests that teens who are religious are more likely to avoid high-risk behaviors.⁴

The number of 12th-grade students who report weekly religious attendance has declined from two out of every five students (41 percent) in 1976 to one out of every three students (31-33 percent) since 1987. During that same time period, the percentage of 12th-grade students who report that religion plays a very important role in their lives stayed fairly constant, varying between 25 percent and 32 percent (see Figure SD 1.3).

Differences by Age. Data for students in the 8th and 10th grades, available since 1991, indicate that younger adolescents are more likely to report weekly religious attendance but are not more likely to report that religion plays a very important role in their lives (see Tables SD 1.3.A and SD 1.3.B). In 1997, 44 percent of 8th-graders reported weekly religious attendance, versus 38 percent of 10th-grade and 31 percent of 12th-grade students. During that same year, the percentage reporting that religion played an important role in their lives was between 30 percent and 32 percent for all three grades.

Differences by Gender. Females in all grades are somewhat more likely than males to report weekly religious attendance and that religion plays a very important role in their lives (see Tables SD 1.3.A and SD 1.3.B).

Differences by Race. Black students across grades have consistently been nearly twice as likely as their white counterparts to report that religion plays a very important role in their lives; for example, in 1997, 55 percent of black 12th-graders reported that religion played such a role, compared with 24 percent of white 12th-grade students.

⁴National Commission on Children. 1991. *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*. Final Report of the National Commission on Children, p. 352. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Table SD 1.3.A

Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students in the United States who report weekly religious attendance, by gender and race: selected years, 1976-1997

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
8th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	46	43	42	42	42	43	44
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	44	41	39	40	40	40	42
Female	—	—	—	49	46	45	45	45	46	47
Race										
White	—	—	—	48	44	44	44	43	44	46
Black	—	—	—	47	46	42	42	46	45	46
10th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	38	39	40	37	37	38	38
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	35	37	37	35	35	35	36
Female	—	—	—	42	41	43	39	40	40	41
Race										
White	—	—	—	39	39	41	37	37	38	39
Black	—	—	—	44	45	44	41	44	38	43
12th Grade										
Total	41	40	34	31	32	32	32	32	33	31
Gender										
Male	36	36	31	28	31	29	30	30	30	28
Female	46	44	38	34	34	34	35	35	35	33
Race										
White	42	41	35	31	32	31	32	32	32	29
Black	37	40	36	38	35	35	39	40	38	40

Note: Data for 8th and 10th grades available since 1991.

Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1976-1997. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. 8th and 10th grade 1991-1996 Questionnaire Forms 1 and 2, item C12B, and 8th and 10th grade 1997 Questionnaire Core Questions, item C12B. 12th grade 1976-1988 Questionnaire Forms 1-5; 12th grade 1988-1996 Questionnaire Forms 1-6, item C13B; and 12th grade 1997 Questionnaire Core Questions, item C13B.

Table SD 1.3.B

Percentage of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students in the United States who report that religion plays a very important role in their lives, by gender and race: selected years, 1976-1997

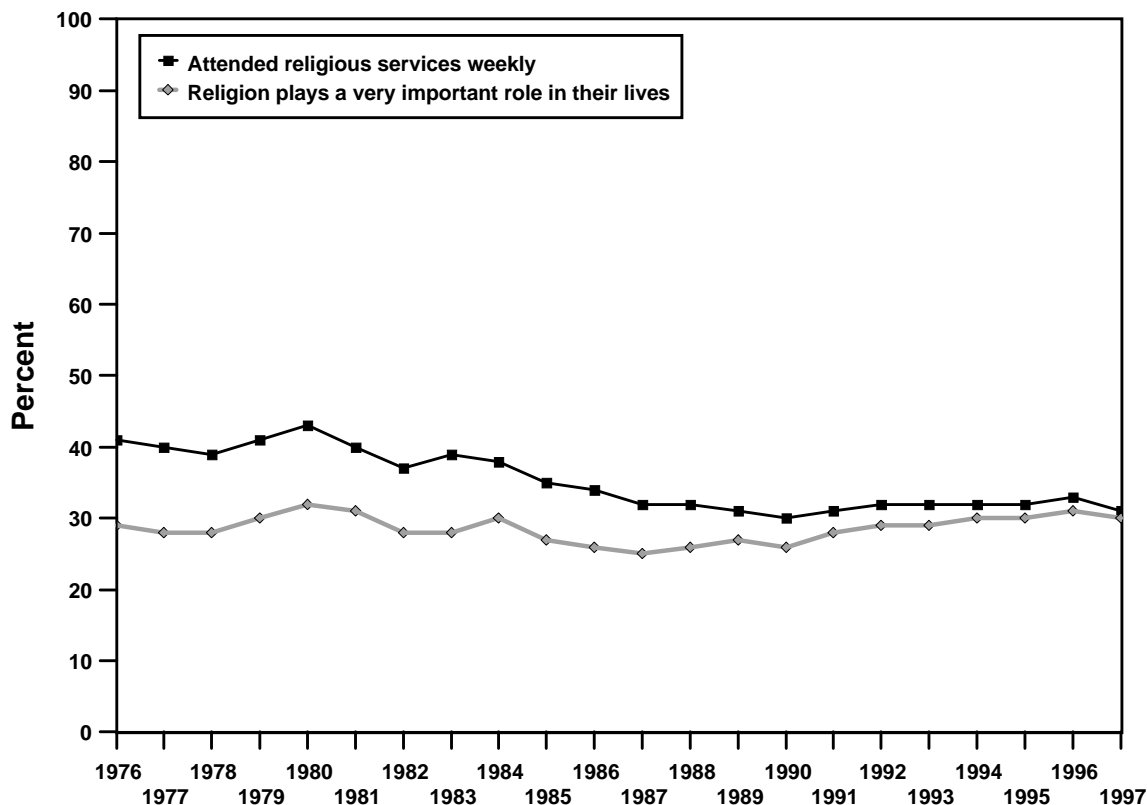
	1976	1981	1986	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
8th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	29	27	30	30	30	32	32
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	27	26	27	29	28	29	30
Female	—	—	—	31	28	32	32	32	34	34
Race										
White	—	—	—	26	23	26	26	26	27	28
Black	—	—	—	46	46	42	47	45	47	48
10th Grade										
Total	—	—	—	29	28	29	28	29	29	30
Gender										
Male	—	—	—	26	26	26	24	26	26	28
Female	—	—	—	31	29	31	32	31	31	33
Race										
White	—	—	—	24	24	26	24	25	26	27
Black	—	—	—	52	50	50	48	49	47	48
12th Grade										
Total	29	31	26	28	29	29	30	30	31	30
Gender										
Male	24	25	23	24	26	26	27	27	27	26
Female	34	36	30	31	33	33	32	33	35	34
Race										
White	26	27	23	24	25	24	26	26	27	24
Black	51	51	51	50	51	51	49	52	55	55

Note: Data for 8th and 10th grades available since 1991.

Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1976-1997.. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. 8th and 10th grade 1991-1996 Questionnaire Forms 1 and 2, item C13 and 8th and 10th grade 1997 Questionnaire Core Questions, item C13; 12th grade 1976-1988 Questionnaire Forms 1-5; 12th grade 1989-1996 Questionnaire Forms 1-6, item C13C; and 12th grade 1997 Questionnaire Core Questions, item C13C.

Figure SD 1.3

Percentage of high school seniors in the United States reporting weekly religious attendance and reporting religion is important in their lives: 1976-1997



Sources: Johnston, L.D., Bachman, J.G., and O'Malley, P.M. *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors*. 1976-1997. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. 12th grade 1976-1988 Questionnaire Forms 1-5; 12th grade 1989-1996 Questionnaire Forms 1-6, items C13B and C13C; and 12th grade 1997 Questionnaire, Core Questions, items C13B and C13C.

SD 1.4

VOTING BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG ADULTS

Voting is a critical exercise of citizenship in a democracy. Measures of the voting behavior of young adults may be seen as indicators of the level of youth commitment to the democratic process.

Rates of reported voter registration and voting among 18- through 20-year-olds during presidential election years declined between 1972 and 1976 and have stayed rather flat through 1996 (see Table SD 1.4.A). In 1972, 58 percent of young adults ages 18 through 20 reported that they had registered to vote, and 48 percent reported that they had voted. By 1996, 46 percent reported that they had registered, and 31 percent reported that they had voted (see Figure SD 1.4.A).

Differences by Gender. Reported rates of voter registration and voting are modestly higher among women both over time and within racial and ethnic groups, particularly during presidential election years; for example, in 1996, 49 percent of females and 43 percent of males ages 18 through 20 reported that they had registered to vote (see Table SD 1.4.A).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. Hispanic young adults are the least likely to report that they had register and vote. In 1996, 27 percent of Hispanic young adults reported that they had registered, and 16 percent reported that they had voted. Comparable numbers for blacks are 43 percent registered and 28 percent voted. Whites were the most likely to report that they had registered (47 percent) and voted (33 percent) in 1996 (see Figure SD 1.4.B). Since 1972, the percentage of Hispanic young adults who reported that they had voted in presidential election years has declined by almost one-half, from 30 percent to 16 percent (see Table SD 1.4.A).

Differences by Electoral Cycle. The percentage of young adults who reported that they had voted in nonpresidential election years since 1974 is substantially lower than the percentage who reported that they had voted during presidential election years (see Table SD 1.4.B). Rates of reported registration and voting have been remarkably stable during such years, across nonpresidential election years, with overall rates varying by only a few percentage points across the years.

Table SD 1.4.A

Percentage of persons ages 18 through 20 in the United States who reported that they had registered to vote and percentage who reported that they had voted in presidential election years, by race and Hispanic origin^a and by gender: selected years, 1972-1996

	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Percentage who reported registering							
All races^a							
Total	58	47	45	47	45	48	46
Male	58	46	44	45	42	47	43
Female	58	48	46	49	48	50	49
White							
Total	60	50	47	48	46	51	47
Male	61	48	45	46	43	49	45
Female	60	51	48	50	48	53	49
Black							
Total	43	34	35	47	43	43	43
Male	37	33	36	43	39	41	38
Female	49	35	35	51	46	44	46
Hispanic							
Total	38	29	20	25	25	23	27
Male	39	31	20	22	22	20	24
Female	37	27	20	28	27	27	31
Percentage who reported voting							
All races^a							
Total	48	38	36	37	33	39	31
Male	48	36	35	34	31	37	28
Female	49	40	37	39	35	41	34
White							
Total	51	41	38	38	35	41	33
Male	51	39	36	35	32	39	30
Female	51	42	39	40	37	43	35
Black							
Total	31	23	25	36	28	32	28
Male	26	22	26	30	26	29	22
Female	35	24	25	41	30	34	34
Hispanic							
Total	30	22	13	18	16	16	16
Male	27	23	12	14	15	13	12
Female	32	21	15	21	16	19	20

^aEstimates for whites and blacks include Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Note: Current Population Survey figures routinely overestimate voter registration and turnout when compared to the official rates.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 253, No. 293, No. 322, No. 344, No. 370, No. 405, No. 414, No. 453, No. 466, and PPL24-RV, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November," report series, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.; Casper, L.M., and Bass, L.E. 1998. "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1996," *Current Population Reports* P20-504 and PPL-89. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table SD 1.4.B

Percentage of persons ages 18 through 20 in the United States who reported that they had registered to vote and percentage who reported that they had voted in nonpresidential election years, by race and Hispanic origin^a and by gender: selected years, 1974-1994

	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994
Percentage who reported registering						
All races^a						
Total	36	35	35	35	35	37
Male	36	34	35	34	34	36
Female	36	36	35	36	36	38
White						
Total	38	36	36	35	37	40
Male	38	36	37	34	36	39
Female	38	37	35	37	38	41
Black						
Total	28	28	31	39	30	32
Male	26	25	25	40	31	31
Female	29	30	36	39	30	34
Hispanic						
Total	20	19	20	20	17	20
Male	18	23	20	19	16	18
Female	22	16	21	21	19	24
Percentage who reported voting						
All races^a						
Total	21	20	20	19	18	17
Male	21	20	20	18	18	16
Female	20	20	19	19	19	18
White						
Total	22	21	20	18	19	18
Male	23	21	22	18	19	17
Female	21	21	19	19	20	19
Black						
Total	14	15	18	21	15	13
Male	13	15	13	21	15	13
Female	14	15	21	20	15	13
Hispanic						
Total	12	11	12	10	10	11
Male	12	14	12	9	8	6
Female	13	8	13	12	12	16

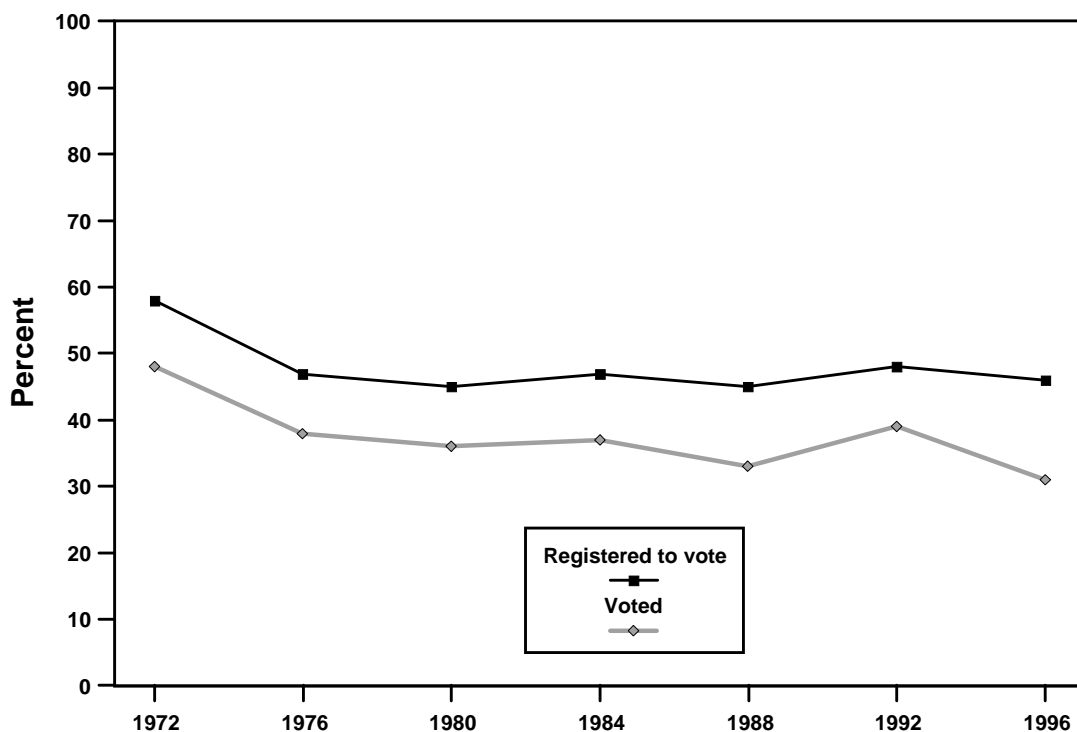
^aEstimates for whites and blacks include Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Note: Current Population Survey figures routinely overestimate voter registration and turnout when compared to the official rates.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 253, No. 293, No. 322, No. 344, No. 370, No. 405, No. 414, No. 453, No. 466, and PPL24-RV, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1972-1994." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure SD 1.4.A

Percentage of persons ages 18 through 20 in the United States who reported that they had registered to vote and percentage who reported that they had voted in presidential election years: selected years, 1972-1996

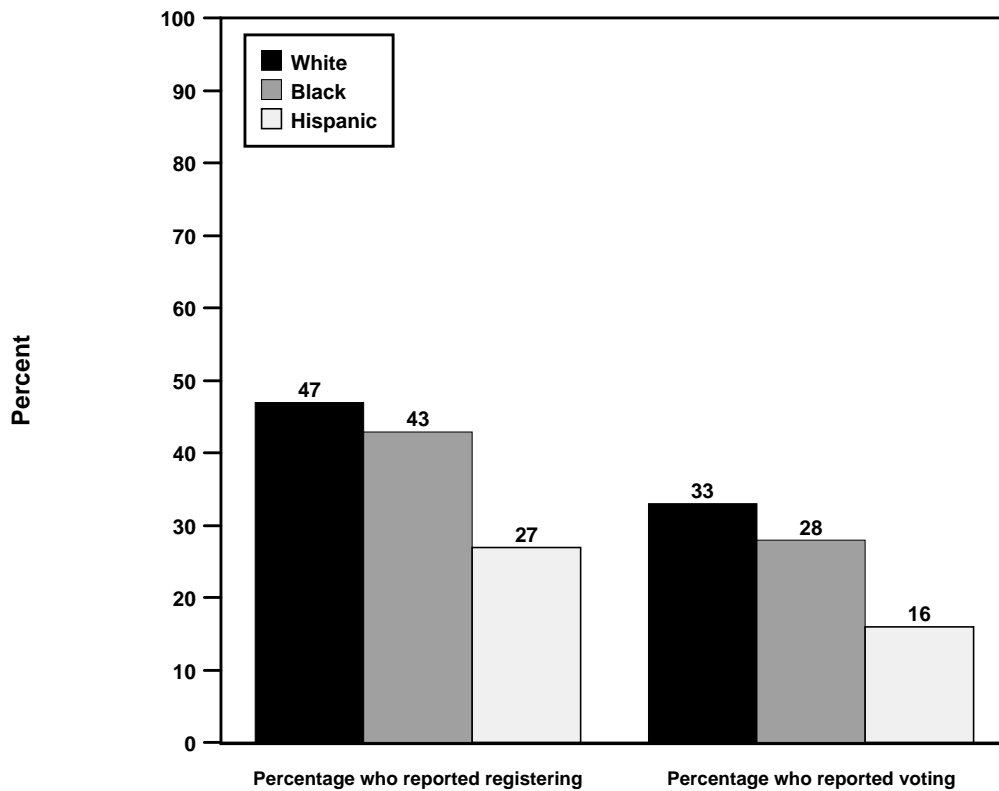


Note: Current Population Survey figures routinely over estimate voter registration and turnout when compared to the official rates.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 253, No. 293, No. 322, No. 344, No. 370, No. 405, No. 414, No. 453, No. 466, and PPL24-RV, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1972-1994." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure SD 1.4.B

Percentage of persons ages 18 through 20 in the United States who registered to vote and percentage who voted in presidential election year 1996, by race and Hispanic origin^a



^aEstimates for whites and blacks include Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Note: Current Population Survey figures routinely overestimate voter registration and turnout when compared to the official rates.

Sources: Casper, L.M., and Bass, L.E. 1998. "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1996," *Current Population Reports* P20-504 and PPL-89. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

SD 1.5

TELEVISION VIEWING HABITS

Some studies indicate that excessive television watching is negatively related to the academic attainment of children and youth; for example, children and adolescents in grades 4, 8, and 11 who watch five or more hours of television per day have substantially lower test scores than other children on average.⁵ Yet, as depicted in Figure SD 1.5, substantial percentages of students report watching large amounts of television on a daily basis. The content of the television programs the students watched was not reported.

Differences by Age. The percentage of children who report watching 6 hour more hours of television declines with age, as indicated in Figure SD 1.5. Among 9-year-olds, 18 percent reported watching six or more hours of television each day in 1996. Among 13-year-old students, 13 percent watched six or more hours of television. Among 17-year-olds, only 7 percent watched this amount of television each day. For all three age groups, the percentage of students spending six or more hours a day watching television increased between 1982 and 1986 and then declined through 1996.

Differences by Gender. Larger proportions of boys than girls at ages 9 and 13 are watching television for long periods of time (see Table SD 1.5.A). In 1996, 20 percent of 9-year-old boys watched television for six or more hours per day, compared with 15 percent of girls in that age group. A similar pattern is evident for 13-year-olds (see Table SD 1.5.B), while for 17-year-olds, the percentages of boys and girls watching television for long periods is the same, at 7 percent (see Table SD 1.5.C).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.⁶ For each age group and for each time point of assessment, larger proportions of black students watch television for six or more hours per day than do either white or Hispanic students; for example, among 9-year-old students, 39 percent of black students, compared with 13 percent of white students and 21 percent of Hispanic students, reported watching television six or more hours per day in 1996 (see Table SD 1.5.A).

Differences by Type of School. In general, smaller percentages of children and adolescents who attend private school spend six or more hours per day watching television than do students who attend public school. The differences between public and private school pupil television viewing habits are more pronounced among 9- and 13-year-old students (see Tables SD 1.5.A, SD 1.5.B, and SD 1.5.C).

Differences by Parents' Educational Level. Children's television viewing habits also vary by parents' educational level. In general, as parents' educational levels increase, the percentages of children watching 6 or more hours of television decline. In 1996, 18 percent of 13-year-olds whose parents had less than a high school education were watching six or more hours of television per day, compared with 13 percent of students with parents who graduated from high school and 10 percent of students whose parents graduated from college (see Table SD 1.5.B). A similar pattern is evident for 17-year-olds (see Table SD 1.5.C).

⁵U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 1994. *Youth Indicators 1993: Trends in the Well-Being of American Youth*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 1.5.A

Percentage of 9-year-old students in the United States who watch six or more hours of television per day, by gender, race and Hispanic origin^a, and type of school: selected years, 1982-1996

	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	1996
Total	26	31	23	19	19	18
Gender						
Male	30	34	27	22	23	20
Female	23	27	20	17	16	15
Race and Hispanic origin^a						
White, non-Hispanic	23	26	18	14	14	13
Black, non-Hispanic	43	53	47	41	40	39
Hispanic	28	33	26	25	22	21
Type of school						
Public	27	32	24	21	19	19
Private	21	24	18	5	11	7

^aEstimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Note: Parents' education is not reported for 9-years-olds because approximately one-third of these students did not know their parents' education level.

Sources: Unpublished tables, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, and 1996 Long-Term Trend Results, Math Assessment data; and unpublished Almanacs, 1978-1990.

Table SD 1.5.B

Percentage of 13-year-old students in the United States who watch six or more hours of television per day, by gender, race and Hispanic origin^a, type of school, and parents' highest level of education: selected years, 1982-1996

	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	1996
Total	16	20	17	13	13	13
Gender						
Male	18	21	18	14	15	15
Female	15	19	15	11	12	11
Race and Hispanic origin^a						
White, non-Hispanic	13	17	12	8	8	7
Black, non-Hispanic	32	40	35	31	35	35
Hispanic	19	21	18	19	19	17
Type of school						
Public	17	20	17	14	14	13
Private	13	*	11	6	4	3
Parents' highest level of education						
Less than high school	23	32	24	21	23	18
Graduated high school	18	22	19	16	17	13
More than high school	13	18	12	9	13	13
Graduated college	12	15	13	9	9	10

*Too few observations for a reliable estimate.

^aEstimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Unpublished tables, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, and 1996 Long-Term Trend Results, Math Assessment data; and unpublished Almanacs, 1978-1990.

Table SD 1.5.C

Percentage of 17-year-old students in the United States who watch six or more hours of television per day, by gender, race and Hispanic origin^a, type of school, and parents' highest level of education: selected years, 1978-1996

	1978	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	1996
Total	5	6	9	9	7	8	7
Gender							
Male	5	7	10	9	7	10	7
Female	5	6	8	8	7	7	7
Race and Hispanic origin^a							
White, non-Hispanic	4	5	6	6	4	5	4
Black, non-Hispanic	13	14	22	23	21	24	21
Hispanic	7	6	12	8	6	9	9
Type of school							
Public	5	7	9	9	7	8	7
Private	3	3	*	*	3	3	6
Parents' highest level of education							
Less than high school	8	10	17	11	10	14	15
Graduated high school	5	8	10	11	10	12	9
More than high school	4	4	9	8	5	8	6
Graduated college	3	4	4	5	5	5	6

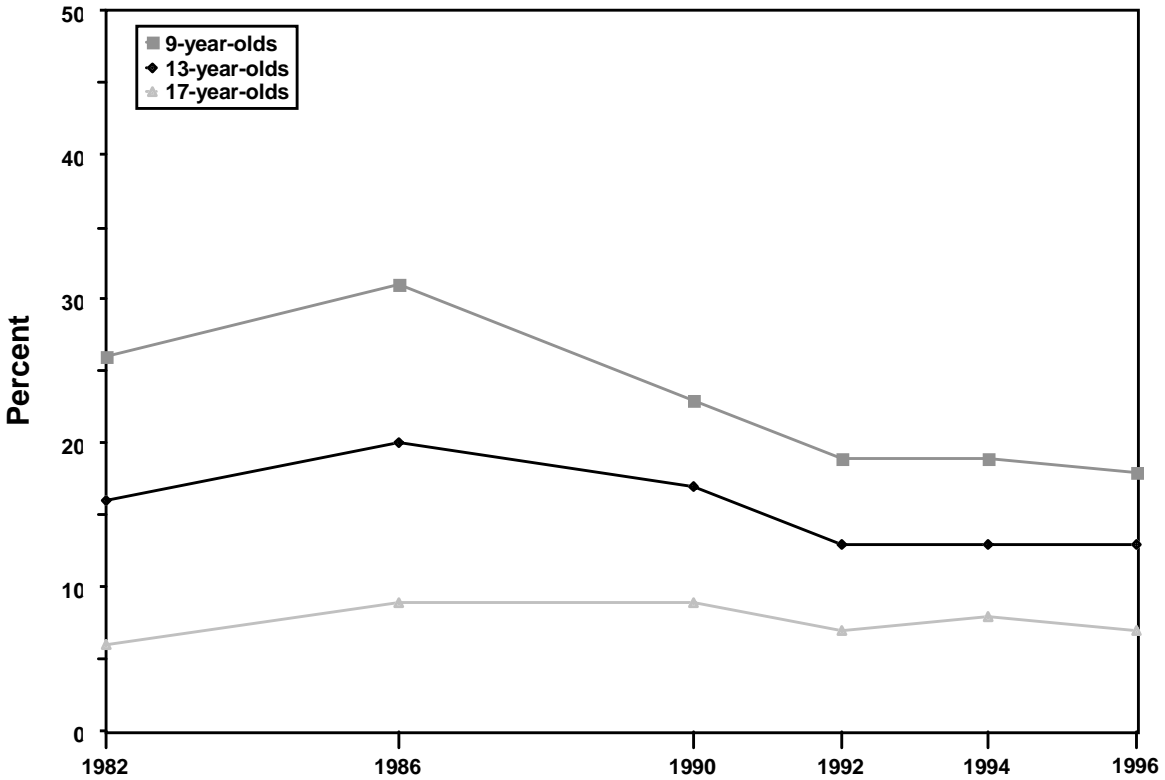
*Too few observations for a reliable estimate.

^aEstimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Unpublished tables, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, and 1996 Long-Term Trend Results, Math Assessment data; and unpublished Almanacs, 1978-1990.

Figure SD 1.5

Percentage of students in the United States who watch six or more hours of television per day, by age: selected years, 1982-1996



Sources: Unpublished tables, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992, 1994, and 1996 Long-Term Trend Results, Math Assessment data; and unpublished Almanacs, 1978-1990.

SD 1.6

YOUTH VIOLENT CRIME ARREST RATES⁷

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Violent Crime Index includes murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.⁸ The rate of youth arrests for these Index crimes increased substantially between 1980 and 1994, from 334 to 528 per 100,000 persons ages 10 through 17, and has been declining since to where it stood in 1997 at 407 per 100,000 persons ages 10 through 17 (see Table SD 1.6).

Differences by Age and Gender. Arrest rates for Violent Index crimes have consistently been much higher among males than among females over time and across all ages (see Figure SD 1.6). Rates for both males and females increased considerably between 1980 and 1994 for males and 1995 for females, with declines in the past several years for both genders. In 1997, rates for males and females were 670 and 132 per 100,000, respectively (see Table SD 1.6).

Youth Violent Crime Index arrest rates climb quickly and steadily with age for males, from 130 per 100,000 for 10- through 12-year-olds to 1,487 per 100,000 among 17-year-olds in 1997 (see Table SD 1.6). The rates for young women in 1997 also increase with age, peaking at age 16 with 233 arrests per 100,000, then declining to 228 per 100,000 for females age 17. Girls ages 10 through 12 are the least likely to be arrested for violent crimes, with only 9 per 100,000 arrested in 1997.

⁷Arrests for violent crimes were chosen in preference to other arrest measures as an indicator both because of the particular hazards that violent crime represents to our society and because arrests for violent crimes are less likely to be affected over time by changes in police practice and policy than other types of crime.

⁸Violent crimes in addition to the four included in the FBI's Violent Crime Index, including kidnapping, extortion, and forcible sodomy, are not included in this indicator.

Table SD 1.6

Violent crime^a arrest rates for youth ages 10 through 17 in the United States, by gender and age (per 100,000): selected years, 1980-1997

	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total										
Ages 10-17	334	303	429	462	483	506	528	512	465	407
Ages 10-12	46	56	71	79	86	86	92	89	81	78
Ages 13-14	261	252	368	405	445	462	494	462	410	368
Age 15	504	446	670	733	770	829	858	810	732	606
Age 16	639	566	876	935	994	1,029	1,056	1,022	907	796
Age 17	740	651	983	1,066	1,057	1,110	1,114	1,110	1,023	867
Male										
Ages 10-17	588	530	740	798	826	858	889	856	773	670
Ages 10-12	82	99	120	135	145	145	154	148	134	130
Ages 13-14	446	426	604	669	726	745	794	738	650	577
Age 15	875	772	1,144	1,251	1,292	1,387	1,422	1,331	1,197	978
Age 16	1,133	997	1,535	1,637	1,731	1,777	1,810	1,734	1,532	1,334
Age 17	1,326	1,166	1,758	1,910	1,878	1,957	1,951	1,934	1,762	1,487
Female										
Ages 10-17	70	67	104	111	126	139	152	154	145	132
Ages 10-12	3	4	7	8	9	10	10	11	10	9
Ages 13-14	47	53	77	83	96	108	122	117	108	99
Age 15	63	55	88	94	112	119	131	135	123	113
Age 16	130	115	187	209	220	250	266	268	257	233
Age 17	131	114	184	189	211	225	247	250	248	228

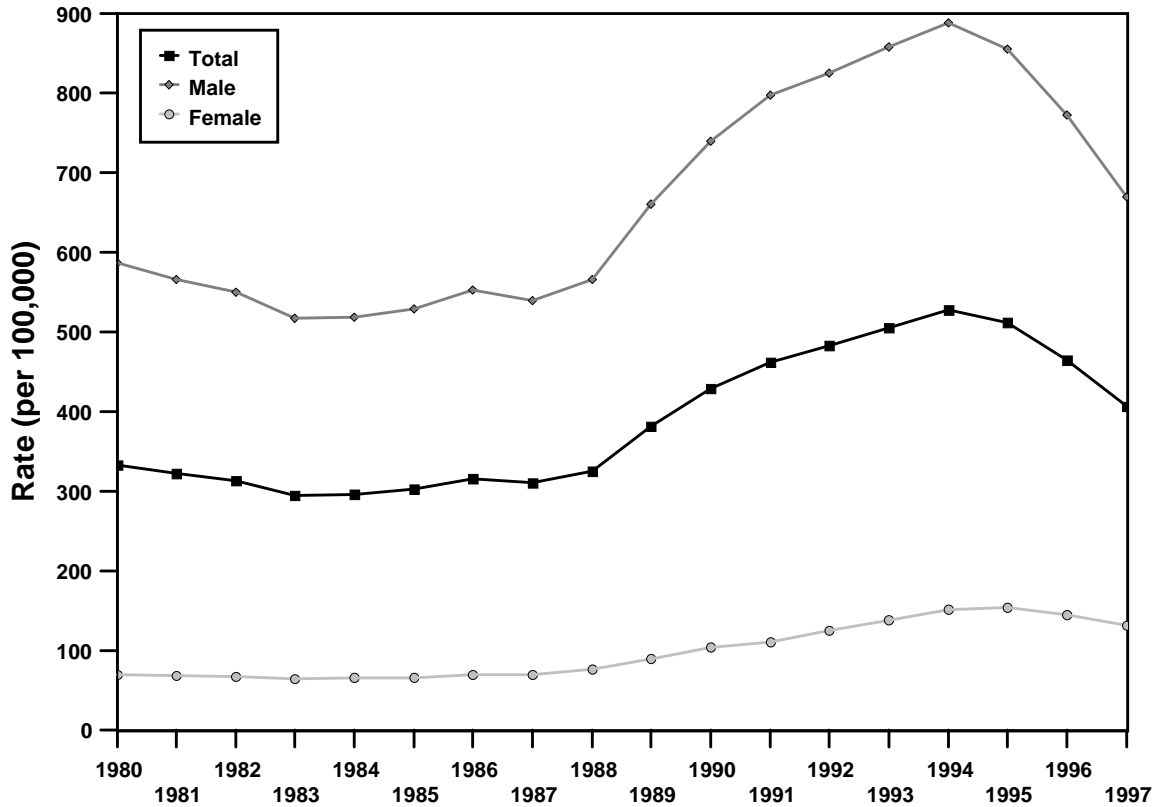
^aViolent crimes include murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Note: Estimates in this table may not be comparable to estimates provided in previous issues of *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth* due to changes in the population estimates provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Sources: Special analysis by Howard N. Snyder, National Center for Juvenile Justice, 1999, using published and unpublished arrest data from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. A portion of this table was originally published in Snyder, H. 1998. *Juvenile Arrests 1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Figure SD 1.6

Violent crime^a arrest rates for youth ages 10 through 17 in the United States, by gender (rate per 100,000): 1980-1997



^aViolent crimes include murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Note: Estimates in this figure may not be comparable to estimates provided in previous issues of *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth* due to changes in the population estimates provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Sources: Special analysis by Howard N. Snyder, National Center for Juvenile Justice, 1999, using published and unpublished arrest data from the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. A portion of this data was originally published in Snyder, H. 1998. *Juvenile Arrests 1997*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

SD 1.7

LOW-RISK TEEN CUMULATIVE RISK INDEX⁹

Statistics often show rates of individual problem behaviors among adolescents, such as drug or alcohol use, school dropout, or early sexual activity. Yet youth engaged in one problem behavior are often engaged in others as well; their risk of immediate and long-term harm increases as the number of risky behaviors increases.¹⁰

Most parents and other members of society believe that the ideal is for youth to avoid all risky behaviors. The Low-Risk Teen Cumulative Risk Index is designed to identify the degree to which adolescents avoid a set of key problem behaviors simultaneously. This measure is created from 1995 youth-report data for five behaviors, where a youth is defined as having no risks if he or she:

- Has not been suspended or expelled from school,
- Has never had sexual intercourse,
- Has never used illegal drugs (including marijuana, cocaine, inhalants, heroin, PCP, ecstasy, amphetamines, LSD, mushrooms, and pills),
- Has never drunk alcohol unsupervised by adults, and
- Has never smoked cigarettes regularly (at least once a day for 30 days).

Differences by Age. The proportion of young people who report avoiding all of these risk behaviors decreases with age (see Figure SD 1.7). By age 15 (by the 15th birthday), slightly more than half of responding young people (53 percent) have avoided all five risk behaviors, and 32 percent have experienced two or more risks. By age 17 (by the 17th birthday), an age at which most young people are still in high school, the proportion with no risks drops to 29 percent, and nearly half (45 percent) have now experienced two or more risk behaviors. Once youth reach their 18th birthday, only 22 percent report having engaged in no risk behaviors, while 48 percent report two or more such behaviors. Table SD 1.7 presents additional data on the percentage who report only one, and two or more, risk behaviors.

No Risk Behaviors by Gender, Family Structure, and Family Income. Across the adolescent years, more girls than boys report being free of any of the five risk behaviors. Similarly, children from two-parent families are more likely than children in single-mother families to avoid risky behaviors. Family income is another mitigating factor, with children in mid- to high-income families somewhat more likely than others to report that they avoid risk behaviors (see Table SD 1.7).

⁹This measure uses different source data than a similar risk index presented in previous editions of this publication and should not be compared.

¹⁰Moore, K.A., and Glei, D.A. 1994. "Taking the Plunge: An Examination of Positive Youth Development." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 10 (11): 15-40.

Table SD 1.7

Percentage of youth by their 12th through 18th birthdays in the United States who have engaged in selected risk^a behaviors, by age,^b gender, family structure, and family income: 1995

	By Age 12	By Age 13	By Age 14	By Age 15	By Age 16	By Age 17	By Age 18
All respondents							
No risks	87	79	66	53	40	29	22
Only one risk	3	5	10	15	21	26	30
Two or more risks	10	16	24	32	39	45	48
Respondents with no risks							
Gender							
Male	84	75	62	49	37	27	21
Female	92	84	71	57	44	32	23
Family structure^c							
Two parents	91	85	73	61	48	36	28
Single-mother	84	73	58	43	32	23	16
Other	82	72	57	42	31	20	15
Family income							
\$15,000 and under	85	76	63	48	37	27	20
\$15,001-\$35,000	85	76	62	52	39	28	22
\$35,001-\$50,000	90	82	70	57	43	31	26
\$50,001 and over	92	85	72	58	45	33	23

^aRisks are drawn from youth reports of selected behaviors in the 1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The behaviors examined for this cumulative index are suspension or expulsion from school, engaging in sexual intercourse, use of illegal drugs, unsupervised consumption of alcohol, and regular smoking of tobacco cigarettes. A status of "no risks" indicates that a youth reported involvement in none of the five tracked behaviors for each of the age periods specified.

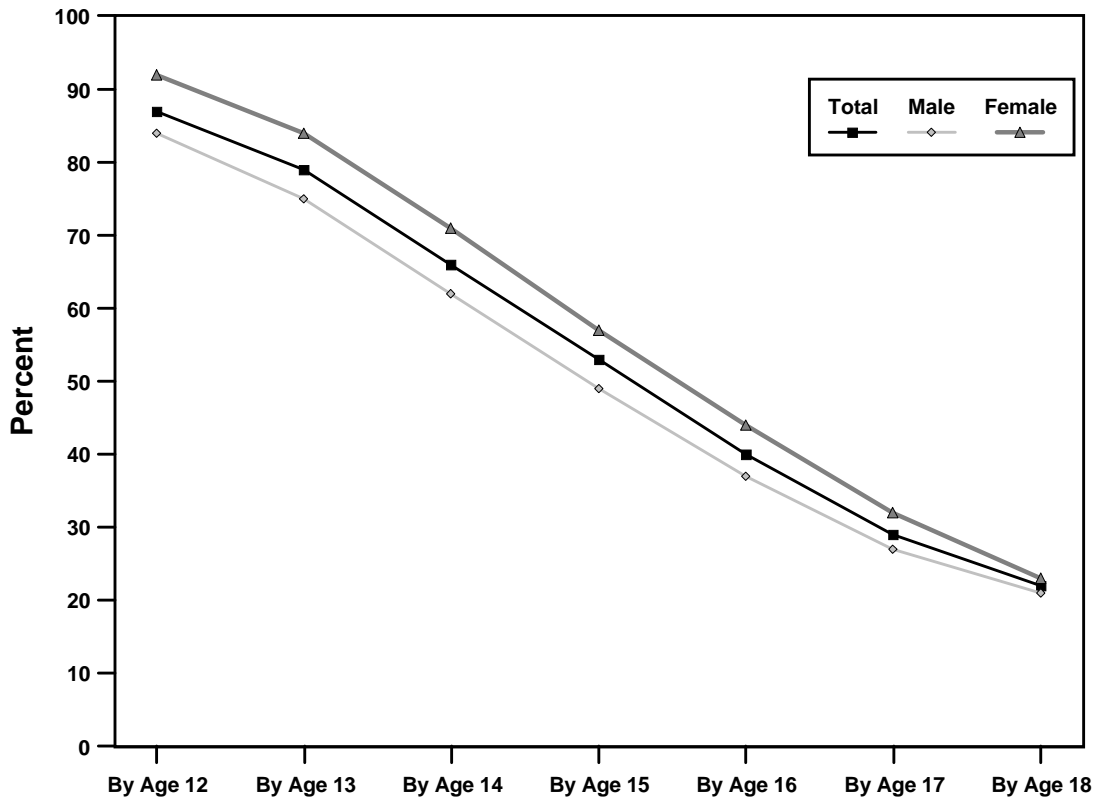
^bAge breaks for this indicator represent percentages of youth who have engaged (or not engaged) in the specified behaviors by the indicated birthdays.

^c"Two parents" includes biological and adoptive parents only. The "other" category includes all family types that are not households with two biological or adoptive parents from birth, or female single-parent households. Stepfamilies, single-father families, and children living with their grandparents are included as "other" families in Table SD 1.7.

Source: The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Wave 1, 1995, tabulations by Child Trends.

Figure SD 1.7

Percentage of youth by their 12th through 18th birthdays in the United States with no risks^a on cumulative risk measure, by age^b and gender: 1995



^aRisks are drawn from youth reports of selected behaviors in the 1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The behaviors examined for this cumulative index are suspension or expulsion from school, engaging in sexual intercourse, use of illegal drugs, unsupervised consumption of alcohol, and regular smoking of tobacco cigarettes. A status of “no risks” indicates that a youth reported involvement in none of the five tracked behaviors for each of the age periods specified.

^bAge breaks for this indicator represent percentages of youth who have engaged (or not engaged) in the specified behaviors by the indicated birthdays.

Source: The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Wave 1, 1995, tabulations by Child Trends.

SD 1.8

CLOSENESS WITH PARENTS

The quality of relationships that youth have with parents is important for several aspects of their development; for example, a positive parent-child relationship can promote an adolescent's ability to handle stress.¹¹ Recent research suggests that closeness with parents serves as a protective factor against emotional distress, substance use, early sexual activity, and suicide thoughts or attempts.¹²

Analyses based on data from the 1995 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health allow for an examination of how emotionally close adolescents feel to their biological and nonbiological mothers and fathers. The data presented in Table SD 1.8 show the proportion of youth ages 12 through 17 who report feeling "very close" to their biological and non-biological parents, resident and nonresident.

Differences by Age. More young adolescents report feeling very close to parents than do older adolescents; for example, more youth ages 12 through 14 (78 percent) report a very close relationship with their resident biological mother than do youth ages 15 through 17 (66 percent). Similar patterns are found for reports of closeness to resident and nonresident biological fathers, as well as resident nonbiological parents (see Figure SD 1.8).

Differences by Gender. Males report feeling closer to their parents than do females; for example, 74 percent of adolescent males compared with 65 percent of adolescent females report feeling very close to their resident biological mothers. Similarly, 64 percent of adolescent males report feeling very close to their resident biological fathers, compared with 51 percent of female youth.

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.¹³ More black and Hispanic youth than white youth report feeling very close to their mothers or mother figures; for example, 78 percent of black adolescents and 74 percent of Hispanic adolescents report feeling very close to their resident biological mother, while only 68 percent of white adolescents report a similar relationship with their resident biological mother. Feelings of closeness with fathers followed the same pattern, with black and Hispanic youth reporting closer relationships than white youth. However, the variations by race or Hispanic origin were not as pronounced for fathers as for mothers (see Table SD 1.8).

Differences by Socioeconomic Status. Generally speaking, youth from low-income families were more likely than other youth to report being very close to their resident parents (biological and nonbiological); for example, youth whose parents earned between \$5,000 and \$9,999 per year were more likely to report very close relationships with their resident biological mother (78 percent) and father (66 percent) than were youth whose parents earned \$25,000 to \$34,999 per year (68 percent and 59 percent for resident biological mother and father, respectively). Similar patterns are observed when considering parent education levels of resident parents. For example, youth of parents with a high school education or less were closer to their resident mothers than were youth of more highly educated parents (see Table SD 1.8).

Differences by Status of Parent. More adolescents report feelings of closeness with resident than with nonresident biological parents. Furthermore, adolescents report feeling closer to nonbiological resident parents than nonresident biological parents. For example, 70 percent of youth report feeling very close to their resident biological mother, compared with 61 percent who report feeling very close to their resident nonbiological mother and 37 percent who report feeling very close to their nonresident biological mother. Similar patterns exist for fathers and father figures.

¹¹Hawes, D. 1996. "Who Knows Who Best: A Program to Stimulate Parent-Teen Interaction." *School Counselor* 44 (2): 115-121.

¹²Resnick, M.D., et al. 1997. "Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 278 (10): 823-832.

¹³Estimates of whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 1.8

Percentage of youth ages 12 through 17 in the United States who report feeling very close to their parents, by parent type and by age, gender, race and Hispanic origin^a, parents' education, and socioeconomic status: 1995

	Resident Biological Mother	Resident Non- Biological Mother	Non- resident Biological Mother	Resident Biological Father	Resident Non- Biological Father	Non- resident Biological Father
Total	70	61	37	58	34	21
Age						
12-14	78	71	38	68	44	29
15-17	66	58	37	53	29	18
Gender						
Male	74	64	41	64	40	25
Female	65	57	32	51	29	17
Race and Hispanic origin^a						
White, non-Hispanic	68	58	31	58	34	20
Black, non-Hispanic	78	65	55	61	33	22
Hispanic	74	67	41	59	35	24
Other ^b	64	63	29	53	43	20
Education of most educated parent						
Less than high school	75	68	38	60	47	19
High school graduate	72	63	42	59	36	20
Some college or postsecondary	67	59	27	54	24	18
College graduate or more	67	56	37	57	34	24
Annual household income						
Less than \$5,000	78	74	48	77	72	31
\$5,000 - \$9,999	78	57	36	66	54	23
\$10,000 - \$14,999	75	71	44	56	36	15
\$15,000 - \$24,999	73	72	38	60	43	20
\$25,000 - \$34,999	68	49	42	59	32	17
\$35,000 - \$49,999	72	51	33	62	34	24
\$50,000 - \$74,999	67	53	47	57	28	23
\$75,000 - \$99,999	65	61	36	56	33	20
\$100,000 and above	64	56	20	53	33	27

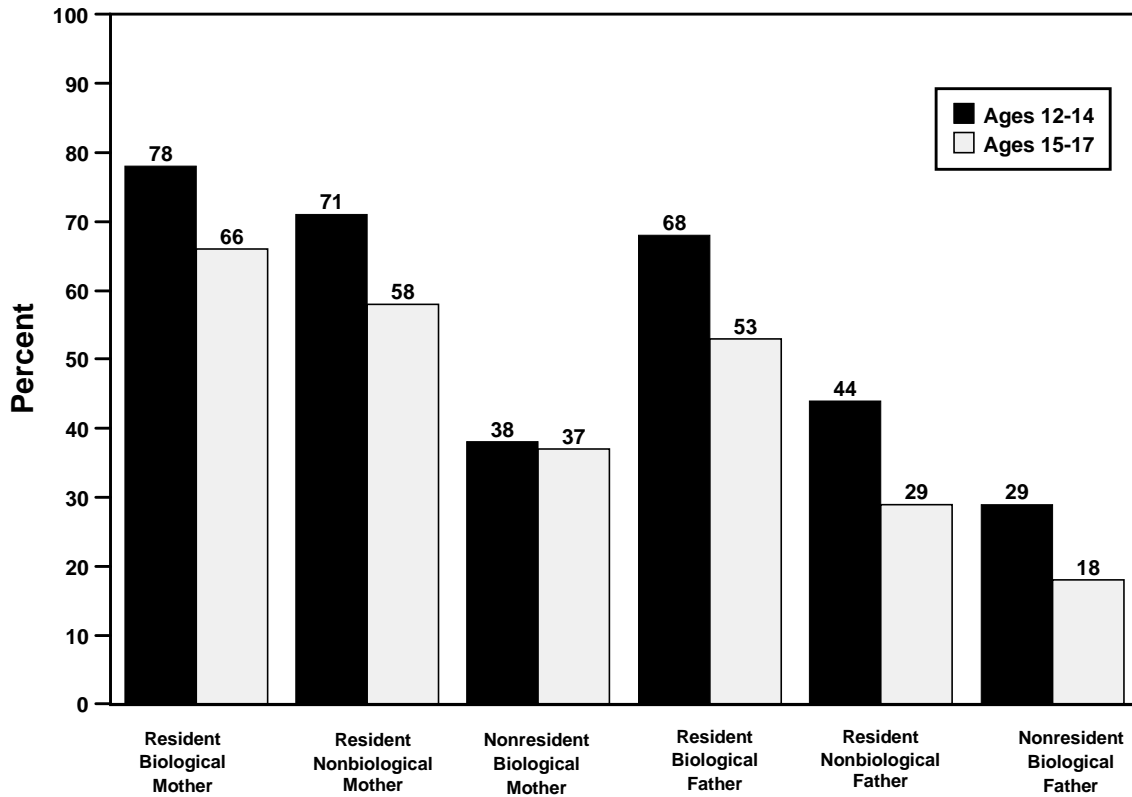
^aEstimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

^b"Other" race category includes respondents who chose Asian, American Indian, or other race and also did not identify themselves (in a separate question) as Hispanic.

Source: The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Wave 1, 1995, tabulations by Child Trends.

Figure SD 1.8

Percentage of youth ages 12 through 17 in the United States who report feeling very close to their parents, by age and parent type: 1995



Source: The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Wave 1, 1995, tabulations by Child Trends.

SD 1.9

PARENTS' ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN

Mothers and fathers are active in children's lives in a variety of ways. In addition to providing for children's basic care and protection, parents also serve as important teachers, mentors, role models, playmates, companions, and confidantes. The common theme of these additional roles is the direct interaction that takes place between parent and child in various contexts. Recent research indicates that positive interactions between parents and children foster positive developmental outcomes for children.¹⁴ Furthermore, there is a growing interest in identifying ways that fathers' involvement in children's lives uniquely contributes to child well-being.¹⁵

Data from the first and second waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH 1988 and 1995) were used to examine mothers' and fathers' interactions with their children (ages 5 through 17) in daily activities. Activities included eating meals together, spending time in activities away from home, working on a project together, having private talks, and helping with reading or homework.

As shown in Table SD 1.9.A, findings from the 1995 data include the following:

- Over half of mothers (55 percent) and two-fifths of fathers (42 percent) eat dinner with their child every day of the week.
- A similar percentage of mothers and fathers report going on outings with their child several times a week (17 percent and 18 percent for mothers and fathers, respectively) as well as almost every day (7 percent and 5 percent, respectively).
- Twenty percent of mothers and 12 percent of fathers worked on a project at home with their child almost every day. An additional 32 percent of mothers and 28 percent of fathers worked on a project with their child several times a week.
- The majority of mothers often engage their children in private conversations, with 22 percent reporting having private talks almost every day and another 31 percent reporting private talks several times a week. Among fathers, 27 percent reported having private talks with their children at least several times a week.
- Mothers are also frequently helping their children with homework and reading. Forty percent report this type of interaction on an almost daily basis, with an additional 29 percent reporting helping their child with homework several times a week. One-third (33 percent) of fathers also report helping with homework several times a week, with a smaller group (13 percent) reporting helping almost every day.

Trends in Parental Activities. There was a significant drop in high levels of parent-child activity between 1988 and 1995 in most activities (see Table SD 1.9.A); for example, 62 percent of mothers reported eating dinner with their child on a daily basis in 1988, but in 1995 only 55 percent reported doing so. Similarly, 50 percent of fathers ate a daily dinner with their child in 1988, but in 1995 this rate dropped to 42 percent. Another example involves the rate at which parents engage their children in private talks. There was a 7 percentage point drop (from 29 to 22 percent) between 1988 and 1995 in the proportion of mothers who had private talks with their children almost every day. Similarly, there was a 5 percentage point drop (from 11 to 6 percent) in the proportion of fathers who had almost daily private talks with their children. Decreases in the amount of time parents spend in activities outside the home and working on projects inside the home were also found.

¹⁴Hawes, D. 1996. "Who Knows Who Best: A Program to Stimulate Parent-Teen Interaction." *School Counselor* 44 (2), 115-121.

¹⁵Lamb, M.E. 1997. "Fathers and Child Development: An Introductory Overview and Guide." In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 1-18). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.¹⁶ In 1995, white (55 percent) and Hispanic mothers (65 percent) were more likely than black mothers (49 percent) to report eating dinner with their child every day (see Table SD 1.9.B). Other racial/ethnic differences were also evident; for example, Hispanic mothers (17 percent) were more likely than white mothers (7 percent) to go on outings with their children almost every day in 1995 (see Table SD 1.9.B). On the other hand, black mothers (50 percent) were more likely than white mothers (38 percent) to help their children with homework or reading almost every day (see Figure SD 1.9). In general, father involvement in 1995 did not appear to vary by race and Hispanic origin; however, black fathers (11 percent) were more likely than white fathers (4 percent) to take their children on outings almost every day (see Table SD 1.9.B).

¹⁶Estimates of whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 1.9.A

Percentage of parents in the United States who engage in selected activities with their children ages 5 through 17, by parent and type of activity: 1988 and 1995

	Mothers		Fathers	
	1988	1995	1988	1995
Days per week eat dinner with at least one child				
0 days	2	2	4	3
1-3 days	9	10	13	15
4-6 days	27	33	33	39
Every day	62	55	50	42
Time spent with children in activities away from home				
Never or rarely	6	5	6	5
Once a month or less	15	20	18	24
Several times a month	25	29	25	29
About once a week	23	22	26	20
Several times a week	18	17	15	18
Almost every day	13	7	9	5
Time spent with children at home working on a project				
Never or rarely	4	4	5	3
Once a month or less	9	9	10	13
Several times a month	14	17	17	27
About once a week	14	18	17	17
Several times a week	28	32	33	28
Almost every day	31	20	18	12
Time spent with children having private talks				
Never or rarely	2	2	8	7
Once a month or less	7	7	17	19
Several times a month	14	17	20	23
About once a week	18	22	22	24
Several times a week	29	31	21	21
Almost every day	29	22	11	6
Time spent with children helping with reading or homework				
Never or rarely	9	7	15	10
Once a month or less	6	6	13	13
Several times a month	9	8	17	16
About once a week	11	11	16	16
Several times a week	27	29	26	33
Almost every day	38	40	14	13

Source: The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Wave 1, 1988, and Wave 2, 1995, tabulations by Randal Day, Washington State University.

Table SD 1.9.B

Percentage of parents in the United States who engage in selected activities with their children ages 5 through 17, by parent, race and Hispanic origin,^a and type of activity: 1995

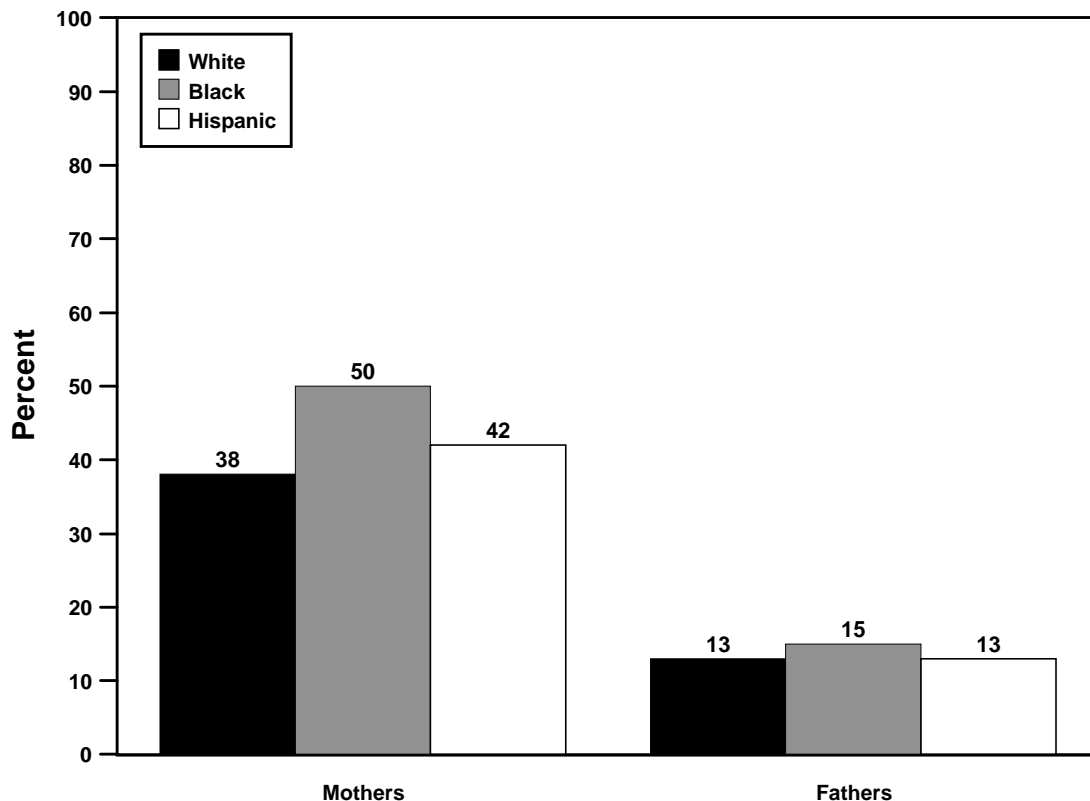
	Mothers			Fathers		
	White	Black	Hispanic ^a	White	Black	Hispanic ^a
Days per week eat dinner with at least one child						
0 days	1	5	1	3	9	2
1-3 days	9	15	9	14	23	19
4-6 days	34	32	24	40	35	37
Every day	55	49	65	43	34	43
Time spent with children in activities away from home						
Never or rarely	4	9	11	4	11	8
Once a month or less	19	22	19	22	26	28
Several times a month	30	27	20	31	26	22
About once a week	23	21	21	21	12	24
Several times a week	19	12	12	19	15	12
Almost every day	6	9	17	4	11	5
Time spent with children at home working on a project						
Never or rarely	3	5	7	2	7	2
Once a month or less	9	8	8	11	23	12
Several times a month	17	21	14	29	18	27
About once a week	18	22	17	18	13	18
Several times a week	34	24	25	28	25	32
Almost every day	19	20	29	12	14	8
Time spent with children having private talks						
Never or rarely	2	2	5	6	10	7
Once a month or less	7	9	7	20	17	17
Several times a month	17	15	18	23	19	23
About once a week	22	22	18	24	26	23
Several times a week	31	30	29	21	22	23
Almost every day	21	22	23	6	7	7
Time spent with children helping with reading or homework						
Never or rarely	7	6	7	9	19	9
Once a month or less	6	5	6	14	9	9
Several times a month	9	7	9	16	14	16
About once a week	11	9	16	15	13	21
Several times a week	31	23	20	33	31	32
Almost every day	38	50	42	13	15	13

^aEstimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Wave 2, 1995, tabulations by Randal Day, Washington State University.

Figure SD 1.9

Percentage of parents in the United States with children ages 5 through 17 who help their child with homework almost every day, by gender of parent and race and Hispanic origin:^a 1995



^aEstimates for whites and blacks include Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Wave 2, 1995, tabulations by Randal Day, Washington State University.