SECTION 5.

# Education and Achievement

Enrollment/Attendance

Achievement/Proficiency

Related Behaviors and Characteristics

## Achievement/Proficiency

## Related Behaviors and Characteristics

## EA 1.1 Early Childhood Program Enrollment

Enrollment in an early childhood program is one indicator of readiness to learn in elementary school that may be especially relevant for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2001, 56 percent of children ages 3 to 5 who had not yet entered kindergarten attended a nursery school program (Figure EA 1.1.A). This represents a substantial increase from the 30 percent who attended nursery school in 1980.

When a broader set of center-based programs is considered, the increase in early childhood program enrollment is even more substantial. Table EA 1.1 presents the percentage of children, ages 3 to 5, enrolled in day care centers, Head Start programs, preschools, prekindergartens, and other early childhood programs.[1] In 2001, 56 percent of all 3- to 5-year-old children were enrolled in a center-based program. This reflects a modest decrease from 60 percent in 1999 (Table EA 1.1).

**Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.**[2] There are notable differences in center-based early childhood program enrollment rates among racial and ethnic groups (Figure EA 1.1.B). In 2001, only 40 percent of Hispanic children were enrolled in a center-based program, compared with 59 percent of White, non-Hispanic children and 64 percent of Black, non-Hispanic children.

Throughout the 1990s, Black, non-Hispanic and White, non-Hispanic 3- to 5-year-olds have had the highest enrollments in center-based programs, with lower enrollments among Hispanics (Figure EA 1.1.B).

**Differences by Poverty Status.** There are substantial differences in center-based enrollment rates by socioeconomic status, including poverty status and maternal education (Table EA 1.1). In 2001, enrollment rates were higher among families that were at or above the poverty threshold (59 percent) than those who were below the poverty threshold (47 percent). Enrollment rates also differ by maternal education, with the highest enrollment (70 percent) among children whose mothers were college graduates and the lowest (38 percent) among children whose mothers lacked a high school diploma.

**Differences by Mother's Employment Status.** There are also differences in enrollment rates by maternal employment status (Figure EA 1.1.C). In 2001, children whose mothers were working either full-time (35 hours or more per week) or part-time (less than 35 hours per week) had substantially higher enrollment rates than children whose mothers were not in the labor force.

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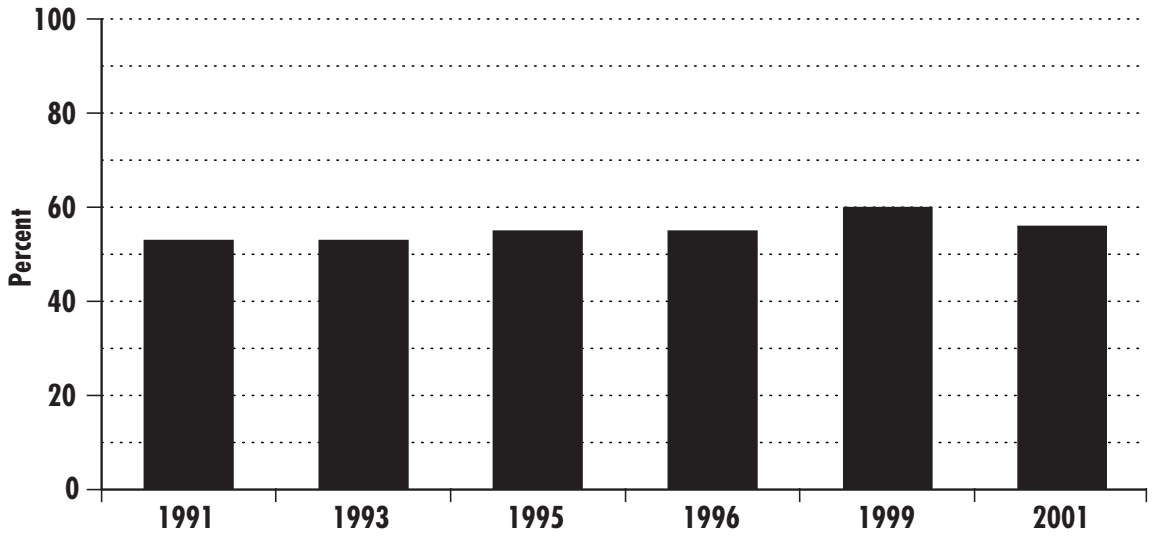
1 Estimates are based on children who have yet to enter kindergarten.

2 Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Figure EA 1.1.A**

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds[a] enrolled in nursery school: Selected years, 1991-2001




[a] Estimates are based on children who have not yet entered kindergarten.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

## Table EA 1.1

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds[a] enrolled in center-based programs,[b] by child and family characteristics: Selected years, 1991-2001

| | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1996 | 1999 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All enrolled children** | 53 | 53 | 55 | 55 | 60 | 56 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | |
| Male | 52 | 53 | 55 | 55 | 61 | 54 |
| Female | 53 | 53 | 55 | 55 | 59 | 59 |
| **Race and Hispanic origin[c]** | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 54 | 54 | 57 | 57 | 60 | 59 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 58 | 57 | 60 | 65 | 73 | 64 |
| Hispanic | 39 | 43 | 37 | 39 | 44 | 40 |
| **Poverty status[d]** | | | | | | |
| At or above poverty | 56 | 53 | 59 | 59 | 62 | 59 |
| Below poverty | 44 | 49 | 45 | 44 | 52 | 47 |
| **Family structure** | | | | | | |
| Two parents | 50 | 52 | 55 | 54 | 59 | 57 |
| One or no parent | 54 | 54 | 56 | 58 | 62 | 56 |
| **Mother's education[e]** | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | 32 | 33 | 35 | 37 | 40 | 38 |
| High school/GED | 46 | 43 | 48 | 49 | 52 | 47 |
| Vocational/technical or some college | 60 | 60 | 57 | 58 | 63 | 62 |
| College graduate | 72 | 73 | 75 | 73 | 74 | 70 |
| **Mother's employment status[e]** | | | | | | |
| 35 hours or more per week | 59 | 61 | 60 | 63 | 65 | 63 |
| Less than 35 hours per week | 58 | 57 | 62 | 64 | 64 | 61 |
| Looking for work | 43 | 48 | 52 | 47 | 55 | 47 |
| Not in labor force | 45 | 44 | 47 | 43 | 52 | 47 |

[a] Estimates are based on children who have not yet entered kindergarten.

[b] Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start programs, preschools, prekindergartens, and other early childhood programs.

[c] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

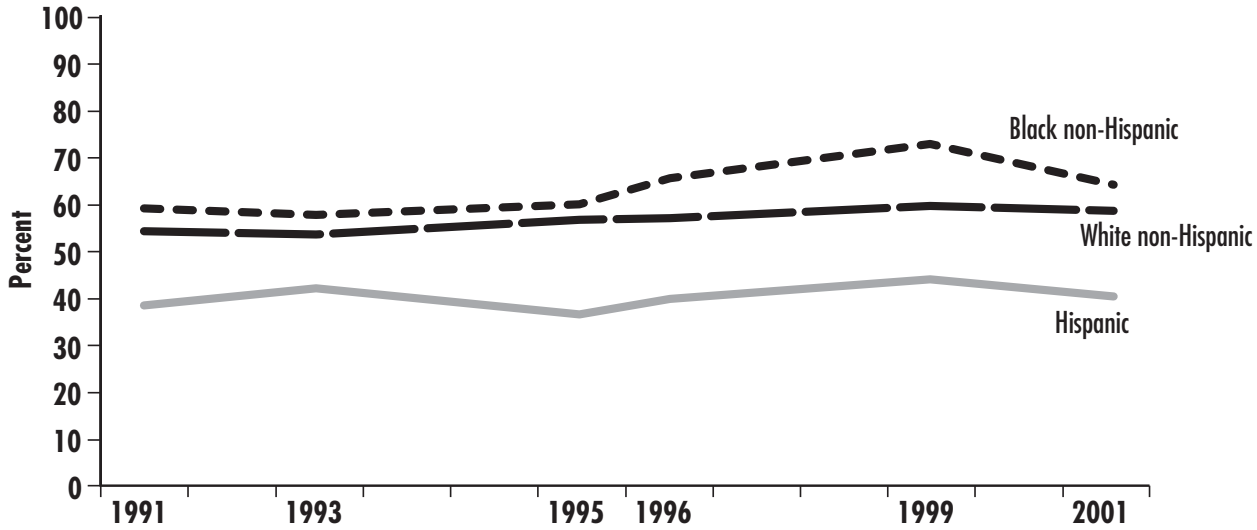
[d] Poverty estimates for 1991 and 1993 are not comparable to later years because respondents were not asked exact household income.

[e] Children without mothers in the home are not included in estimates dealing with mother's education or mother's employment status.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

**Figure EA 1.1.B**

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds[a] enrolled in center-based programs,[b] by race and Hispanic origin:[c] 1991-2001




[a] Estimates are based on children who have not yet entered kindergarten.

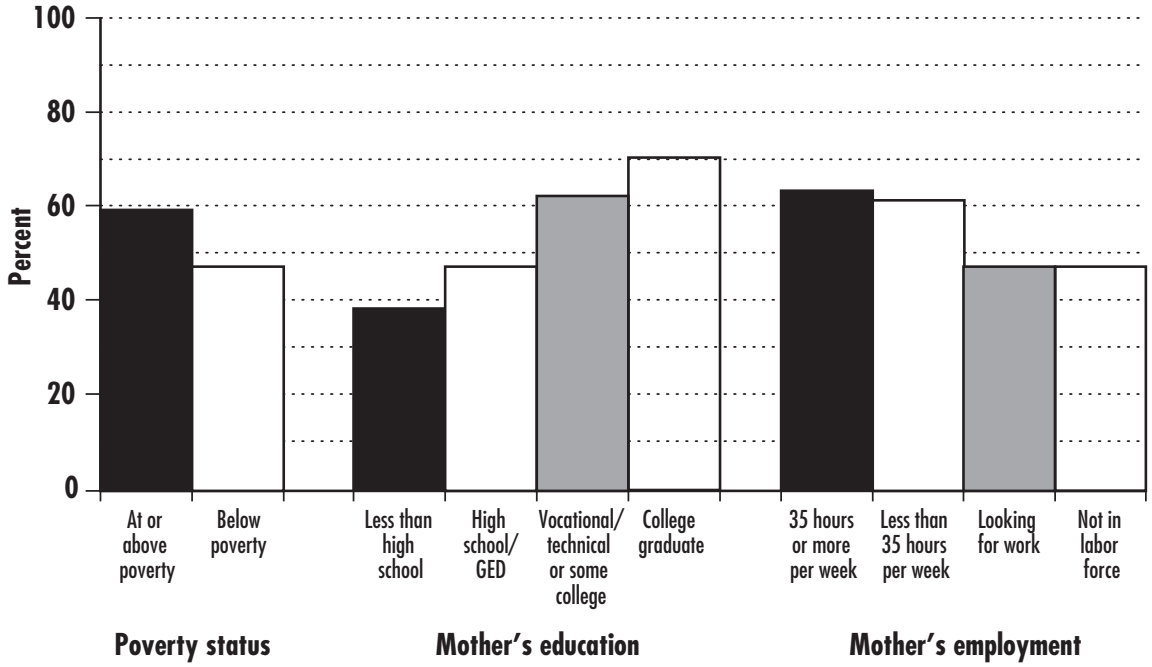
[b] Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start programs, preschools, prekindergartens, and other early childhood programs.

[c] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

**Figure EA 1.1.C**

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds[a] enrolled in center-based programs,[b] by poverty status,[c] mother's education,[d] and mother's employment status:[d] 2001




[a] Estimates are based on children who have not yet entered kindergarten.
[b] Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start programs, preschools, prekindergartens, and other early childhood programs.
[c] Poverty estimates for 1991 and 1993 are not comparable to later years because respondents were not asked exact household income.
[d] Children without mothers in the home are not included in estimates dealing with mother's education or mother's employment status.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

## EA 1.2 Ready Schools, Ready Children

The school readiness of young children is an area of considerable interest and debate in current educational policy. There is general agreement, however, that how a child performs in school depends in part on things that happen before that child ever enters a classroom. Historically, school readiness implies fixed standards of physical, intellectual, and social development sufficient to enable children to meet school requirements.[1] More recent discussions have broadened the framework to include the need for schools to be ready for children.[2] This indicator reports on selected characteristics representing both the child's readiness to begin school as well as the school's readiness to effectively teach the child.

Measures of both types of school readiness can provide important indications of how young children are being nurtured in our society and of the challenges faced by teachers and schools in preparing to meet the needs of diverse populations of children. The measures provided here include specific school readiness skills exhibited by young children before entering kindergarten (Table EA 1.2A, Figure EA 1.2.A). The second measure provides the percentage of children in center-based programs (Table EA 1.2.B, Figure EA 1.2.A). Many policymakers and educators believe that participating in early childhood programs such as Head Start, child care, prekindergarten, and kindergarten can better prepare a child to enter first grade.[3] The ratio of students to teachers in elementary schools can be indicative of the readiness of schools to adequately instruct entering students, and these data are provided in Figure EA 1.2.B. Lastly, many educators fear that schools with poor or overcrowded conditions are being associated with decreases in both teacher and student performance.[4] Therefore the percent of public elementary schools experiencing overcrowding are presented in Figure EA 1.2.C.

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1 Crnic, K. & Lamberty, G. (1994). Reconsidering School Readiness: Conceptual and Applied Perspectives. *Early Education and Development, 5*(2).

2 Zill, N & Collins, M. (1995). *Approaching Kindergarten: A Look at Preschoolers in the United States.* Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

3 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1999). *Indicator of the Month: Preprimary Education Enrollment.*

4 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education (2001). *The Condition of Education, 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

**Table EA 1.2.A**

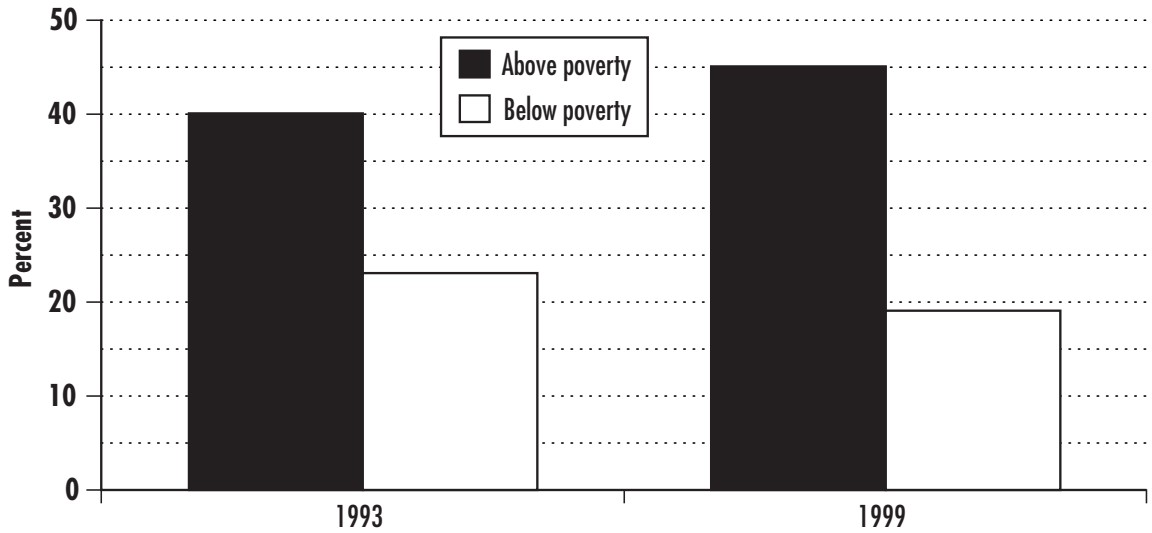
Percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children not yet enrolled in kindergarten with specific school-readiness skills, by selected child and family characteristics: 1993 and 1999

| | Children *(in thousands)* | | Recognizes all letters | | Counts to 20 or higher | | Writes name | | Reads (or pretends to) | | Has 3-4 skills | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1993 | 1999 | 1993 | 1999 | 1993 | 1999 | 1993 | 1999 | 1993 | 1999 | 1993 | 1999 |
| **Total** | 8,579 | 8,549 | 21 | 24 | 52 | 57 | 50 | 51 | 72 | 74 | 35 | 39 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 years old | 3,889 | 3,827 | 11 | 15 | 37 | 41 | 22 | 24 | 66 | 70 | 15 | 20 |
| 4 years old | 3,713 | 3,722 | 28 | 28 | 62 | 67 | 70 | 70 | 75 | 76 | 49 | 50 |
| 5 years old | 976 | 1,001 | 36 | 44 | 78 | 81 | 84 | 87 | 81 | 77 | 65 | 69 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 4,453 | 4,363 | 19 | 21 | 49 | 54 | 47 | 47 | 68 | 70 | 32 | 35 |
| Female | 4,126 | 4,187 | 23 | 27 | 56 | 60 | 53 | 56 | 76 | 77 | 39 | 43 |
| **Race and Hispanic origin** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 5,902 | 5,296 | 23 | 25 | 56 | 60 | 52 | 54 | 76 | 79 | 39 | 42 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 1,271 | 1,258 | 18 | 25 | 53 | 60 | 45 | 49 | 63 | 66 | 31 | 35 |
| Hispanic | 1,026 | 1,421 | 10 | 14 | 32 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 59 | 57 | 22 | 25 |
| **Mother's home language** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| English | 7,805 | 7,599 | 22 | 25 | 55 | 60 | 51 | 53 | 73 | 76 | 37 | 41 |
| Non-English | 603 | 683 | 9 | 8 | 24 | 25 | 38 | 34 | 52 | 45 | 17 | 14 |
| **Mother's highest education** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | 1,036 | 952 | 8 | 7 | 30 | 36 | 40 | 32 | 55 | 53 | 19 | 15 |
| High school | 3,268 | 2,556 | 17 | 17 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 49 | 70 | 69 | 30 | 31 |
| Some college | 2,624 | 2,586 | 23 | 25 | 59 | 60 | 51 | 52 | 79 | 79 | 39 | 42 |
| College degree | 912 | 1,455 | 31 | 35 | 68 | 73 | 58 | 61 | 84 | 84 | 52 | 54 |
| Graduate degree | 569 | 734 | 39 | 40 | 68 | 73 | 59 | 64 | 83 | 83 | 55 | 57 |
| **Mother's employment** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employed | 4,486 | 5,058 | 23 | 24 | 57 | 59 | 52 | 53 | 75 | 75 | 39 | 40 |
| Unemployed | 594 | 452 | 17 | 15 | 41 | 53 | 46 | 39 | 67 | 64 | 29 | 32 |
| Not in labor force | 3,328 | 2,773 | 18 | 24 | 49 | 54 | 47 | 50 | 68 | 73 | 32 | 38 |
| **Family type** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Two parents | 6,226 | 5,997 | 22 | 26 | 54 | 58 | 51 | 53 | 74 | 75 | 37 | 41 |
| None or one parent | 2,353 | 2,553 | 18 | 19 | 49 | 54 | 47 | 48 | 65 | 69 | 31 | 33 |
| **Poverty status** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Above poverty | 6,323 | 6,575 | 24 | 28 | 57 | 62 | 53 | 56 | 74 | 77 | 40 | 45 |
| Below poverty | 2,256 | 1,975 | 12 | 10 | 41 | 39 | 41 | 37 | 64 | 63 | 23 | 19 |

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *National Household Education Survey, Parent Interview.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1993). *National Household Education Survey, School Readiness File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.2.A**

Percentage of children with three to four school-readiness skills, by poverty level: 1993 and 1999




Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *National Household Education Survey, Parent Interview.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1993). *National Household Education Survey, School Readiness File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Table EA 1.2.B**

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children enrolled in center-based programs or kindergarten: Selected years, 1991-1996

| | 3-year-olds | | | | 4-year-olds | | | | 5-year-olds | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1996 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1996 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1996 |
| **All children** | 31.4 | 34.1 | 37.4 | 36.7 | 52.7 | 55.3 | 60.9 | 57.7 | 86.4 | 90.0 | 90.3 | 90.2 |
| **Race and Hispanic origin** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White | 33.4 | 33.7 | 40.2 | 39.6 | 52.4 | 53.7 | 60.8 | 58.8 | 85.7 | 88.9 | 88.6 | 88.8 |
| Black | 31.6 | 41.9 | 41.1 | 40.5 | 57.4 | 62.9 | 68.2 | 67.8 | 92.3 | 93.2 | 93.7 | 94.1 |
| Hispanic | 19.8 | 27.2 | 21.2 | 22.1 | 47.5 | 48.9 | 49.0 | 45.3 | 85.3 | 91.4 | 93.4 | 90.4 |
| **Family income** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $10,000 or less | 25.4 | 32.7 | 26.2 | 36.0 | 43.3 | 52.6 | 54.3 | 52.7 | 86.1 | 89.2 | 90.9 | 92.7 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 23.2 | 21.6 | 27.0 | 28.0 | 45.0 | 47.2 | 52.3 | 45.3 | 84.6 | 90.4 | 89.7 | 87.6 |
| 20,001-35,000[a] | 21.3 | 22.2 | 27.7 | 30.8 | 48.0 | 47.8 | 49.7 | 50.6 | 85.1 | 86.8 | 90.7 | 87.8 |
| 35,001-50,000[a] | 33.4 | 37.9 | 38.1 | 42.2 | 52.3 | 57.2 | 59.5 | 58.2 | 87.3 | 90.6 | 88.5 | 89.7 |
| 50,001 or more | 52.9 | 58.7 | 61.2 | 55.0 | 74.8 | 73.2 | 80.7 | 75.8 | 89.0 | 93.7 | 90.9 | 92.8 |
| **Education level of parent** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | 17.3 | 17.1 | 16.0 | 22.0[b] | 33.1 | 42.8 | 42.4[b] | 47.3[b] | 85.5 | 79.9 | 92.5 | 90.3 |
| High school | 23.0 | 23 | 26.3 | 28.9 | 40.8 | 43.2 | 51.1 | 47.3 | 84.8 | 89.0 | 89.2 | 89.9 |
| Some college | 31.0 | 35.9 | 35.6 | 34.5 | 56.3 | 61.1 | 63.3 | 59.8 | 87.7 | 91.1 | 90.2 | 88.6 |
| BA degree | 41.5 | 41.1 | 51.7 | 49.6 | 67.2 | 64.1 | 70.7 | 62.6 | 88.1 | 92.5 | 91.6 | 92.6 |
| Graduate school | 53.0 | 61.9 | 60.8 | 60.4 | 72.0 | 73.3 | 77.9 | 78.1 | 87.0 | 94.3 | 89.8 | 92.1 |
| **Family type** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Two biological or adoptive parents | — | 34.4 | 38.6 | 38.0 | — | 55.1 | 61.3 | 57.8 | — | 89.1 | 88.8 | 89.0 |
| One biological or adoptive parent | — | 33.8 | 36.9 | 37.3 | — | 57.2 | 63.0 | 58.4 | — | 92.1 | 94.0 | 91.9 |
| One biological or adoptive parent and one step-parent | — | 32.7[b] | 23.1[b] | 14.7[b] | — | 49.5[b] | 46.9[b] | 45.8[b] | — | 87.3 | 89.4 | 93.2 |

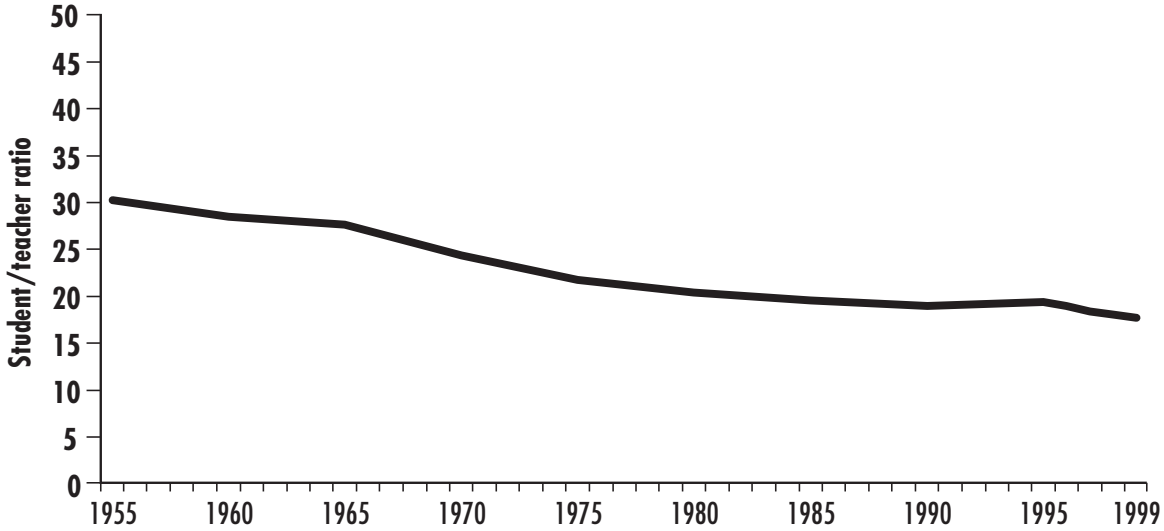
[a] The middle two income ranges were $20,001-30,000 and $30,001-50,000, respectively.
[b] Interpret with caution; standard errors are large due to small sample sizes.
— Data not available.

Note: Included in the total but now shown separately are children from other racial/ethnic groups and other types of family structures. This analysis includes children ages 3-5 who were not enrolled in first grade. Age is as of December 31 of the prior year.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1996). *National Household Education Survey, Parent and Family Involvement in Education File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1993). *National Household Education Survey, School Readiness File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1991). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Education File.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.2.B**

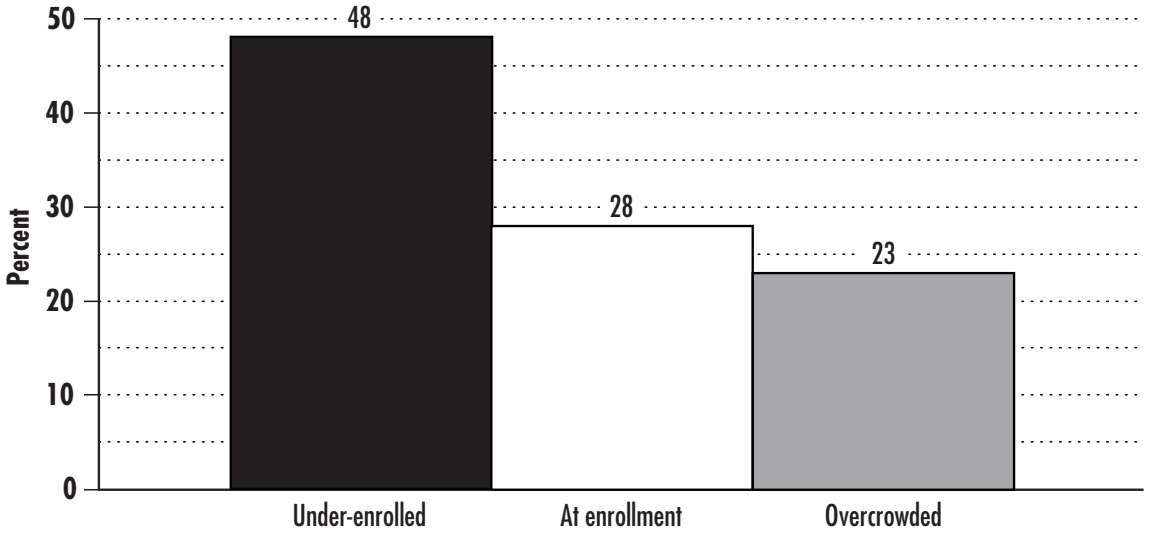
Public elementary student-teacher ratios: 1955-1999




Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools: Common Core of Data Surveys, 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.2.C**

Percent of public elementary schools with building deficiencies, by enrollment capacity: 1999




Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1999). *Condition of America's Public School Facilities, 1999.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## EA 1.3 School Absenteeism

An important aspect of youths' access to education is the amount of time actually spent in the classroom. When students are absent from school, they forgo opportunities to learn. As a result, nonattendance is considered detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, and employment potential.

**Differences by Grade.** The percentage of 8th graders who were absent from school 3 or more days in the preceding month has remained relatively constant between 20 and 23 percent from 1990 to 2000 (Table EA 1.3). During the same time period, a slightly larger percentage of 12th graders were absent from school for that length of time, with percentages ranging between 26 and 31 percent.

**Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.**[1] Among 8th graders in 2000, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic students, at 34 percent and 26 percent respectively, were the most likely to have been absent 3 or more days in the preceding month. White, non-Hispanic and Asian youth had the lowest absentee rates at 18 and 10 percent, respectively, followed by Black, non-Hispanic youth at 22 percent. The patterns are similar for 12th graders, though the differences range from lows of 20 to 33 percent for White, non-Hispanic, Asian, and Black, non-Hispanic youth, to a high of 42 percent for American Indians/Alaska Natives.

**Differences by Parents' Education Level.**[2] Absences from school were highest for youth whose parents had less than a high school education (Figure EA 1.3). In 2000, for example, 28 percent of 8th graders whose parents lacked a high school diploma were absent from school 3 or more days in the preceding month, compared with 14 percent of their peers who had at least one parent with a college degree. Similar differences were reported for 12th graders.

**Differences by Type of School.** Students who attended private or Catholic schools had fewer school absences than did students from public schools, across all grades and years (Table EA 1.3).

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1 Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

2 Parents' education level refers to the highest level of education completed by either parent.

**Table EA 1.3**

Percentage of 8th and 12th graders who were absent from school 3 or more days in the preceding month, by sex, race and Hispanic origin[a], parents' education level,[b] and type of school: Selected years, 1990-2000

| | 8th Grade | | | | | | 12th Grade | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 | 1990 | 1992 | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 |
| **All absent students** | 23 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 21 | 20 | 31 | 26 | 28 | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 21 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 21 | 20 | 29 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 26 | 24 |
| Female | 24 | 24 | 22 | 23 | 22 | 19 | 32 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| **Race and Hispanic origin[a]** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 22 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 18 | 30 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 24 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 23 | 22 | 27 | 25 | 23 | 22 | 30 | 29 | 32 | 28 | 28 | 31 |
| Hispanic | 26 | 31 | 28 | 29 | 25 | 26 | 34 | 32 | 32 | 29 | 32 | 33 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 9 | 12 | 21 | 18 | 17 | 10 | 32 | 19 | 28 | 26 | 26 | 20 |
| American Indian/ Alaska Native | 37 | 38 | 39 | 29 | 34 | 34 | — | — | 53 | 30 | 41 | 42 |
| **Parents' education level[b]** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | 38 | 31 | 33 | 32 | 33 | 28 | 41 | 30 | 36 | 35 | 32 | 35 |
| Graduated high school | 27 | 23 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 34 | 28 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 29 |
| Some education after high school | 22 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 31 | 26 | 27 | 30 | 27 | 28 |
| Graduated college | 15 | 19 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 14 | 26 | 23 | 25 | 21 | 24 | 22 |
| **Type of school** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 20 | 31 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 27 |
| Nonpublic | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 24 | 17 | 21 | 18 | 19 | 21 |

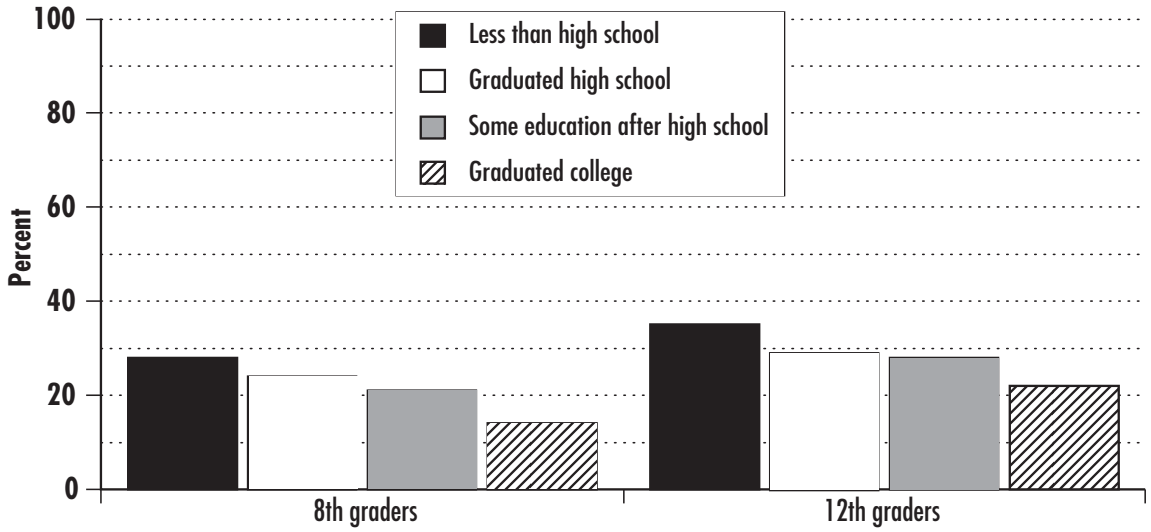
[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[b] Parents' education level refers to the highest level of education completed by either parent.
— Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Note: The sample for this table is based on the 1990, 1992, 1996, and 2000 NAEP Mathematics Assessment and the 1994 and 1998 NAEP Reading Assessment.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.3**

Percentage of 8th- and 12th-graders who were absent from school 3 or more days in the preceding month by parents' education level:[a] 2000




[a] Parents' education level refers to the highest level of education completed by either parent.

Note: The sample for this table is based on the 1990, 1992, 1996, and 2000 NAEP Mathematics Assessment and the 1994 and 1998 NAEP Reading Assessment.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## EA 1.4 High School Dropouts

Because high school completion has become a requirement for accessing additional education, training, or the labor force, the economic consequences of leaving high school without a diploma are severe. On average, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates and to earn less money when they eventually secure work.[1] High school dropouts are also more likely to receive public assistance than high school graduates who do not go on to college.[2] This increased reliance on public assistance is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and more likely to be single parents than high school graduates.[3] Lastly, dropouts make up a disproportionate percentage of the nation's prison and death row inmates.[4]

There are several ways to calculate dropout rates. The one used here is the event dropout rate, which is the proportion of students who were enrolled in one year who were then not enrolled in the following year and did not earn a high school credential in the intervening year. According to this measure, 5 percent of all young people 15 to 24 years old who were enrolled in school dropped out of grades 10 to 12 in 2000 (Table EA 1.4 and Figure 1.4.A).

**Differences by Sex.** The dropout rate for male students was slightly higher than the dropout rate for female students in 2000.[5] Approximately 6 percent of males and 4 percent of females dropped out of high school in 2000.

**Differences by Family Income.**[6] Family income serves as a good indicator for other social and economic factors that are likely to be related to a young person's decision to stay in school. Since the mid-1970s there has been an overall downward trend in the dropout rates for young adults living in families at all income levels. Most of the declines in dropout rates for all income groups occurred in the 1970s and 80s. In the early 1990s, event dropout rates for all income groups have stabilized (Table EA 1.4 and Figure EA 1.4.B).

**Differences by Race and Hispanic origin**. The 2000 data on event dropouts by race and ethnicity confirm some earlier findings about the strong association between race/ethnicity and the likelihood of dropping out of school.[7] For example, the High School and Beyond Study shows that Hispanics and Blacks are at greater risk of dropping out than Whites.[8] In 2000, 7 percent of Hispanic and 6 percent of Black, non-Hispanic youth dropped out of school compared to 4 percent of White, non-Hispanic youth.

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1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2000). *The Condition of Education, 1999.* (Issue No. 022). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

2 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1999). *The Condition of Education, 1998.* (Issue No. 013). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

3 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1997). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996.* (Issue No. 863). Washington, DC: U.S. U.S. Department of Education.

4 U.S.Bureau of Justice Statistics (1991). *Comparing Federal and State Prison Inmates, 1991.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

5 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2000). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999.* (Issue No. 022). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

6 The variable used to assess family income is derived from a single question asked of the household respondent in the October *Current Population Survey*.

7 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2000). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1999.* (Issue No. 022). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

8 Ekstron, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock (1987). Who Dropouts of High School and Why? Findings from a National Study in School Dropouts. *Patterns and Policies.*

**Table EA 1.4**

Event dropout rate (percentage) for youth in grades 10 through 12 by sex, family income, and race and Hispanic origin:[a] Selected years, 1975-2000

| | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990[b] | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All youth** | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 5 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Female | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| **Family income[c]** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Low income | 16 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 10 |
| Middle income | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| High income | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| **Race and Hispanic origin** | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Male | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | — | — | — | — |
| Female | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | — | — | — | — |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 9 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| Male | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 5 | — | — | — | — |
| Female | 9 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 9 | — | — | — | — |
| Hispanic | 11 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Male | 10 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | — | — | — | — |
| Female | 12 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 8 | — | — | — | — |

[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[b] Numbers after 1990 reflect new editing procedures instituted by the Census Bureau for cases with missing data on school enrollment items. Numbers after 1992 reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the Current Population Survey. Numbers after 1994 may reflect changes in the Current Population Survey due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercount.

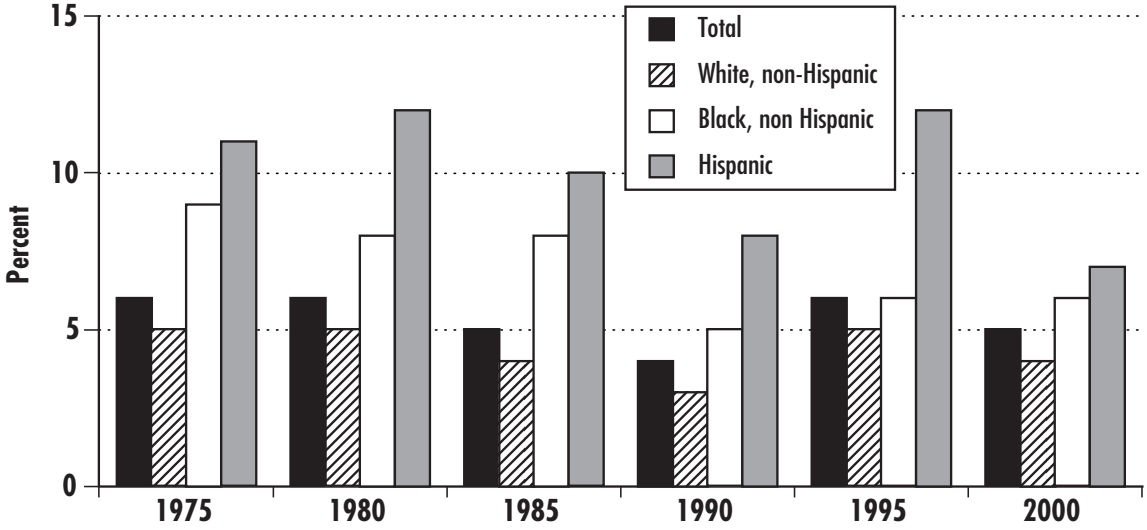
[c] Low income is defined as the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes for the year; middle income is between 20 and 80 percent of all family incomes; and high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes. See the glossary for a full definition of family incomes.

— Data not available.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Current Population Survey;* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.4.A**

Event dropout rate (percentage) for youth in grades 10 to 12 by race and Hispanic origin:[a] Selected years, 1975-2000

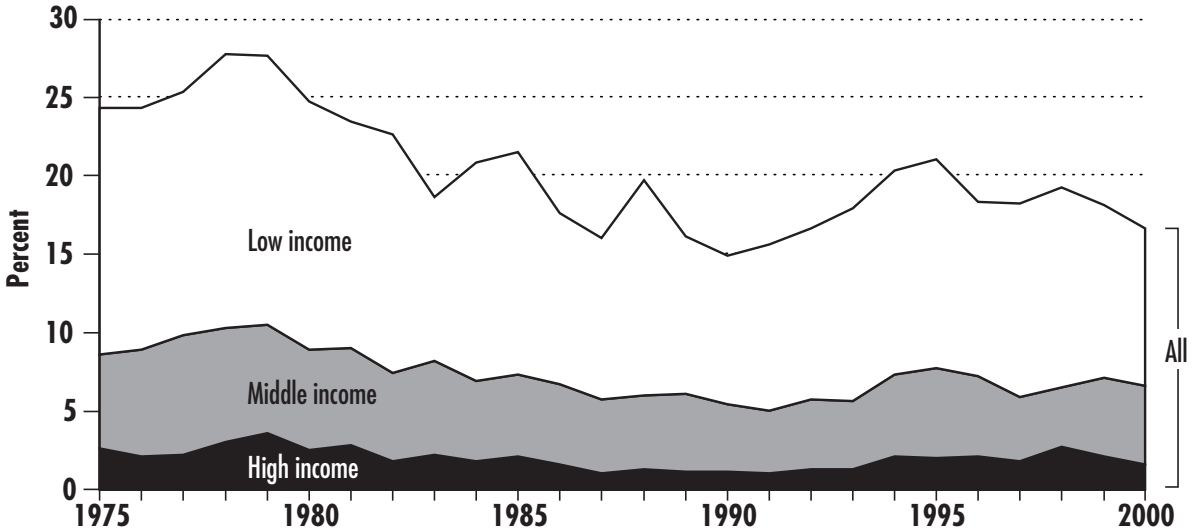



[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Current Population Survey;* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.4.B**

Event dropout rate for youth in grades 10 to 12 (ages 15 to 24), by family income: 1975-2000




Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Current Population Survey;* U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2000). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## EA 1.5 High School Completion

The differences in employment rates and earnings between youth who have completed high school and those who have not have been growing over the past two decades. In 1998, young males and females ages 25 to 34 who dropped out of high school scored 30 and 31 percent less than their peers who received a high school diploma.[1]

The high school completion rate represents the proportion of 18- to 24-year-olds who have earned a high school diploma or alternative credential, such as the General Education Development (GED) credential. In 2000, the high school completion rate for the country was 87 percent; a slight increase since 1972 (Table EA 1.5). Between 1972 and 1985, the high school completion rate climbed 2 percentage points from 83 to 85 percent. Since 1985 the completion rate has remained steady at around 86 percent.

Although the overall completion rate has remained steady in recent years, the number of youth earning a traditional high school diploma has been decreasing. In 1990, 81 percent of high school completers earned a diploma, compared with 77 percent in 1999. However, the alternative credential has become more common in recent years—between 1990 and 1999 the number of youth earning an equivalent credential almost doubled, rising from 5 to 9 percent.

**Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.**[2] The high school completion trend data for different racial/ethnic groups are similar to the national trend data, with positive increases in completion early in the last quarter century, and rates stabilizing in the last decade. Specifically, high school completion rates for White, non-Hispanic students climbed from 86 percent in 1972 to about 90 percent in the early 1990s (Figure EA 1.5). Since that time, the completion rate has fluctuated around 90 percent. However, the 2000 completion rate of 92 percent for Whites was significantly higher than their completion rates in every year before 1990.[3]

The high school completion rate for Black, non-Hispanic youth has also increased significantly since 1972 but has stabilized in the 1990s. Furthermore, the gap between Black, non-Hispanic and White, non-Hispanic completion rates has narrowed during that timeframe. In 1972, the completion gap was 14 percent, while in 2000 the gap had closed to 8 percent.

In contrast to the closing of the Black–White gap in high school completion rates, the Hispanic–White completion gap was about the same in 2000 as it was in 1972 (30 and 28 point differences, respectively). Although the Hispanic high school completion rate increased during this period, it did so at a rate that was no faster than that for Whites, non-Hispanic.

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1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2001). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

2 Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

3 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2001). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Table EA 1.5**

High school completion rates (percentage) and method of completion for 18- to 24-year-olds,[a] by race and Hispanic origin:[b] Selected years, 1972-2000

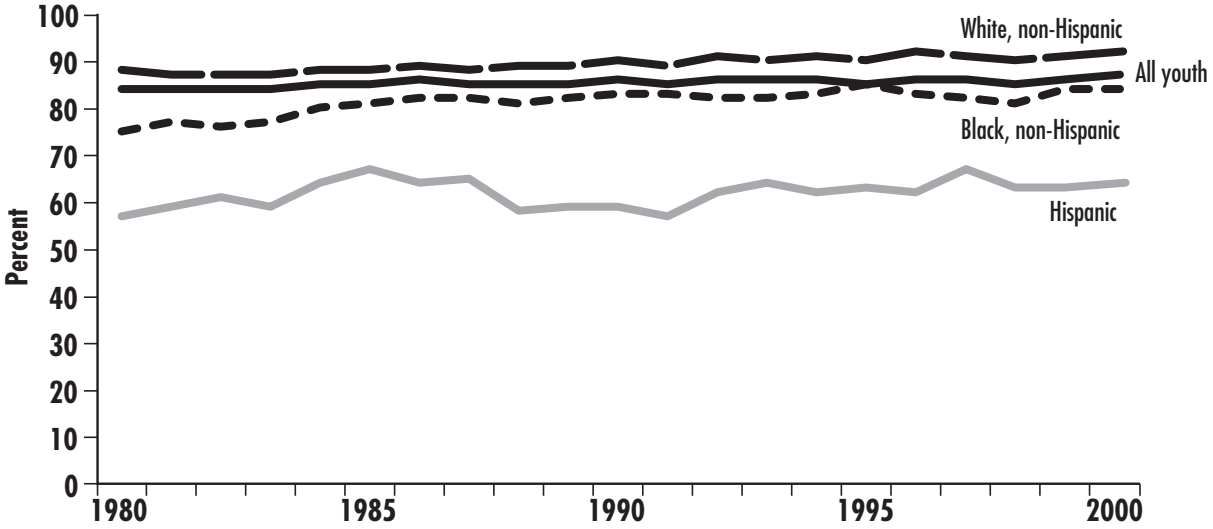
| | 1972 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995[c] | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All youth** | 83 | 84 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 85 | 86 | 86 | 85 | 86 | 87 |
| Diploma | — | — | — | — | 81 | 78 | 76 | 77 | 75 | 77 | — |
| Equivalent[d] | — | — | — | — | 5 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 | — |
| **White, non-Hispanic** | 86 | 87 | 88 | 88 | 90 | 90 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 91 | 92 |
| Diploma | — | — | — | — | 85 | 83 | 81 | 81 | 80 | 82 | — |
| Equivalent | — | — | — | — | 5 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 9 | — |
| **Black, non-Hispanic** | 72 | 70 | 75 | 81 | 83 | 85 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 84 | 84 |
| Diploma | — | — | — | — | 78 | 75 | 73 | 72 | 72 | 73 | — |
| Equivalent | — | — | — | — | 5 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 11 | — |
| **Hispanic** | 56 | 62 | 57 | 67 | 59 | 63 | 62 | 67 | 63 | 63 | 64 |
| Diploma | — | — | — | — | 55 | 54 | 55 | 59 | 52 | 55 | — |
| Equivalent | — | — | — | — | 4 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 9 | — |

[a] Refers to persons not currently enrolled in high school or below.
[b] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[c] Numbers from 1992 on reflect new wording of the educational attainment item in the Current Population Survey. Numbers from 1994 on may reflect changes in the Current Population Survey due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing and/or due to the change in the population controls used this year to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments for undercount.
[d] Equivalents include passing the General Educational Development (GED) exam.
— Data not available.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education. Statistics (2001). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

**Figure EA 1.5**

High school completion rates for 18- to 24-year-olds,[a] by race and Hispanic origin:[b] 1980-2000




[a] Refers to persons not currently enrolled in high school or below.
[b] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2001). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## EA 1.6 College Attendance and Completion

College attendance and receipt of a bachelor's degree increase employment opportunities and income potential. Adults with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in the labor force. For example in 1999, 80 percent of adults over age 25 who had completed college participated in the labor force compared to 65 percent of high school graduates and 43 percent of high school dropouts.[1] Furthermore, between 1979 and 1999, median real weekly wages increased by almost 15 percent for males age 25 and over who had completed college, while falling by 12 percent for men with only a high school diploma. Thus, college graduates earned 68 percent more than high school graduates in 1999, up from 29 percent in 1979.[2]

The past three decades have witnessed a growth in the number of young adults completing college-level work. The percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school graduates who had completed at least some college and the percentage who received a bachelor's degree or higher have both increased by 50 percent between 1971 and 2001 (Table EA 1.6 and Figure EA 1.6.B).

**Differences by Race and Hispanic origin.**[3] In 2001, White, non-Hispanic high school graduates were far more likely (35 percent) to complete college than either their Black, non-Hispanic (20 percent) or their Hispanic (18 percent) peers. Furthermore, White, non-Hispanic youth were more likely to have attended college than Black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic youth (69 versus 58 and 51 percent respectively) (Figure EA 1.6.A). The gap between White, non-Hispanic and minorities in college attendance and completion has not decreased over time.

**Differences by Sex.** In 1971, the percentage of males completing college was 8 percentage points higher than the percentage of females. Over the last three decades, however, this gap lessened gradually, and in 1991 more females were completing college. By 2001, 5 percent more females than males completed college. A similar trend was observed for college attendance (Table EA 1.6).

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1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2001). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2000.* (Issue No. 034). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

2 White House Council of Economic Advisors (2000). *Teens and their Parents in the 21st Century.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

3 Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Table EA 1.6**

Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school graduates[a] who have attended some college or have received a bachelor's degree or higher, by race and Hispanic origin,[b] and sex: Selected years, 1971-2001

| | 1971 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Some college or more[c]** | 44 | 50 | 52 | 51 | 52 | 62 | 65 | 65 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 67 |
| Race and Hispanic origin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 45 | 51 | 54 | 52 | 54 | 65 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 69 | 68 | 69 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 31 | 39 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 52 | 56 | 54 | 57 | 58 | 61 | 58 |
| Hispanic | 31 | 41 | 40 | 44 | 40 | 50 | 51 | 54 | 52 | 51 | 52 | 51 |
| Sex | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 49 | 56 | 56 | 52 | 52 | 61 | 63 | 64 | 63 | 64 | 64 | 63 |
| Female | 38 | 44 | 49 | 50 | 52 | 64 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 69 | 71 |
| **Bachelor's degree or higher[d]** | 22 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 |
| Race and Hispanic origin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 23 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 31 | 34 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 36 | 35 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 12 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 21 | 20 |
| Hispanic | 11 | 17 | 13 | 18 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 14 | 15 | 18 |
| Sex | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 26 | 30 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 30 |
| Female | 18 | 23 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 32 | 33 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| **Associate's degree** | — | — | — | — | — | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Race and Hispanic origin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | — | — | — | — | — | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | — | — | — | — | — | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| Hispanic | — | — | — | — | — | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

[a] High school completion or high school graduate is defined as 12 years of school completed for 1971-1991 and high school diploma or equivalency certificate for 1992-1997. Beginning in 1992, the *Current Population Survey* changed the questions used to obtain educational attainment of respondents.

[b] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[c] This was measured as "1 or more years of college" for 1971-1991 and as "some college or more" for 1992-1997.

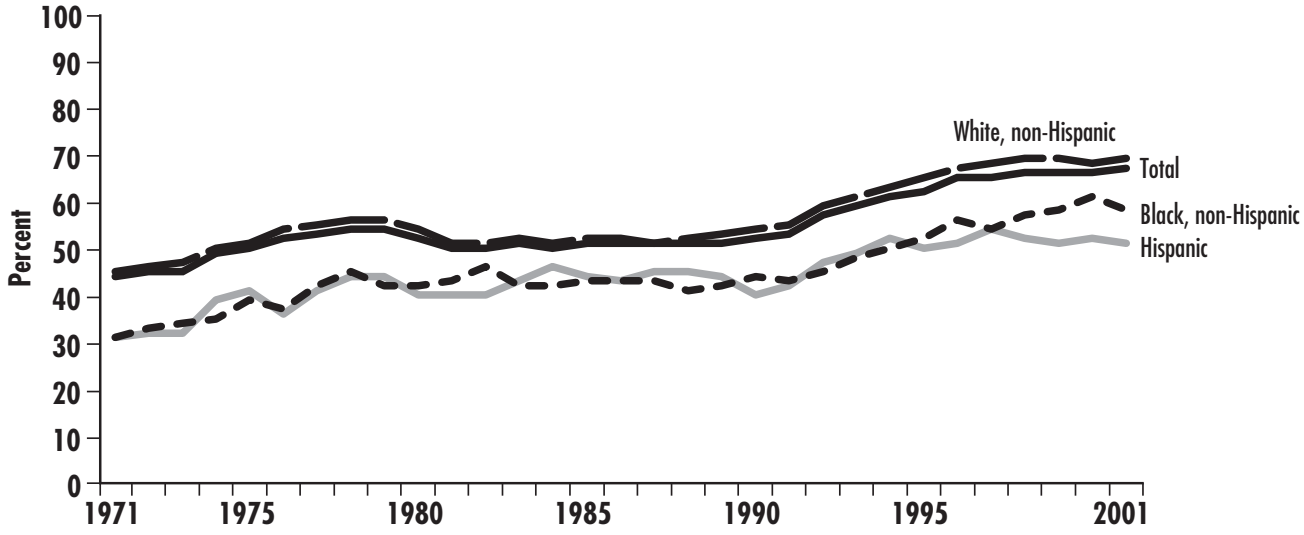
[d] This was measured as "4 or more years of college" for 1971-1991 and as "bachelor's degree or higher" for 1992-1997.

— Data not available.

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

**Figure EA 1.6.A**

Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school graduates[a] who have attended some college by race and Hispanic origin:[b] 1971-2001



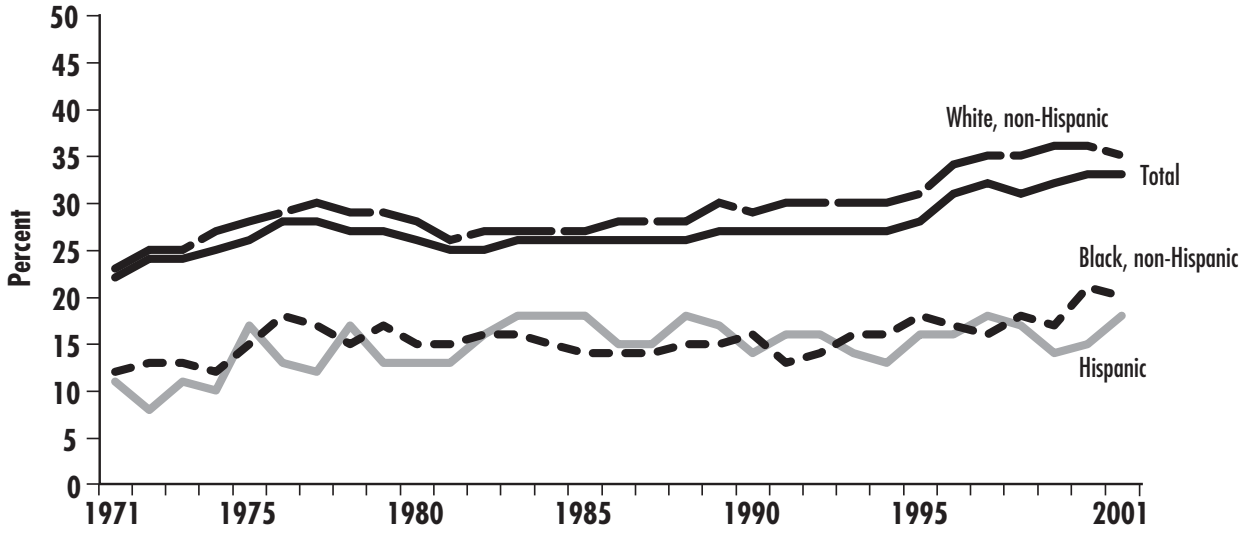

[a] High school completion or high school graduate is defined as 12 years of school completed for 1971-1991 and high school diploma or equivalency certificate for 1992-1997. Beginning in 1992, the *Current Population Survey* changed the questions used to obtain educational attainment of respondents.

[b] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

**Figure EA 1.6.B**

Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school graduates[a] who have received a bachelor's degree[b] by race and Hispanic origin:[c] 1971-2001




[a] High school completion or high school graduate is defined as 12 years of school completed for 1971-1991 and high school diploma or equivalency certificate for 1992-1997. Beginning in 1992, the *Current Population Survey* changed the questions used to obtain educational attainment of respondents.

[b] This was measured as "4 or more years of college" for 1971-1991 and as "bachelor's degree or higher" for 1992-1997.

[c] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.