SECTION 5.

Education and Achievement

Enrollment/ Attendance

Achievement/ Proficiency

Related Behaviors and Characteristics

Enrollment/ Attendance

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 center-based early childhood care and education programs (Figure EA 1.1.A).

Table EA 1.1 presents the percentage of children, ages 3 to 5, enrolled in daycare centers, Head Start programs, preschool, prekindergarten, 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, 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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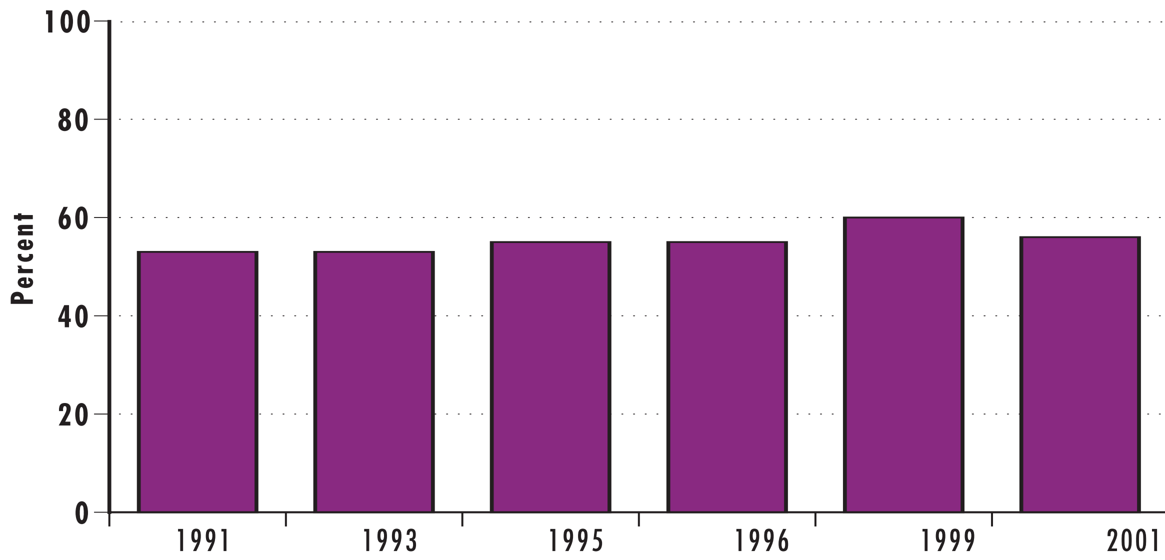
1 Estimates are based on children who have yet to enter kindergarten.

2 Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Figure EA 1.1.A

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in center-based programs: Selected years, 1991-2001



Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Table EA 1.1

Percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in center-based programs, 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						
White, non-Hispanic	54	54	57	57	60	59
Black, non-Hispanic	58	57	60	65	73	64
Hispanic[a]	39	43	37	39	44	40
Poverty status[b]						
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[c]						
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[d]						
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] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

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

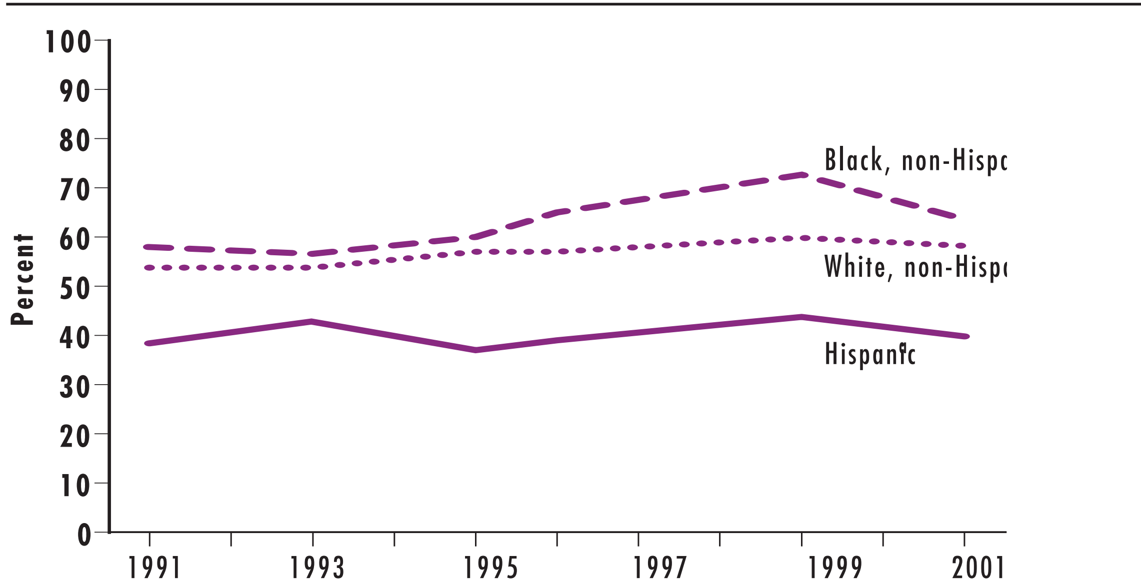
[c] Children without mothers in the home are not included in estimates dealing with mother's education or mother's employment status.

Note: Estimates are based on children who have not yet entered kindergarten. Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start programs, preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.1.B

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

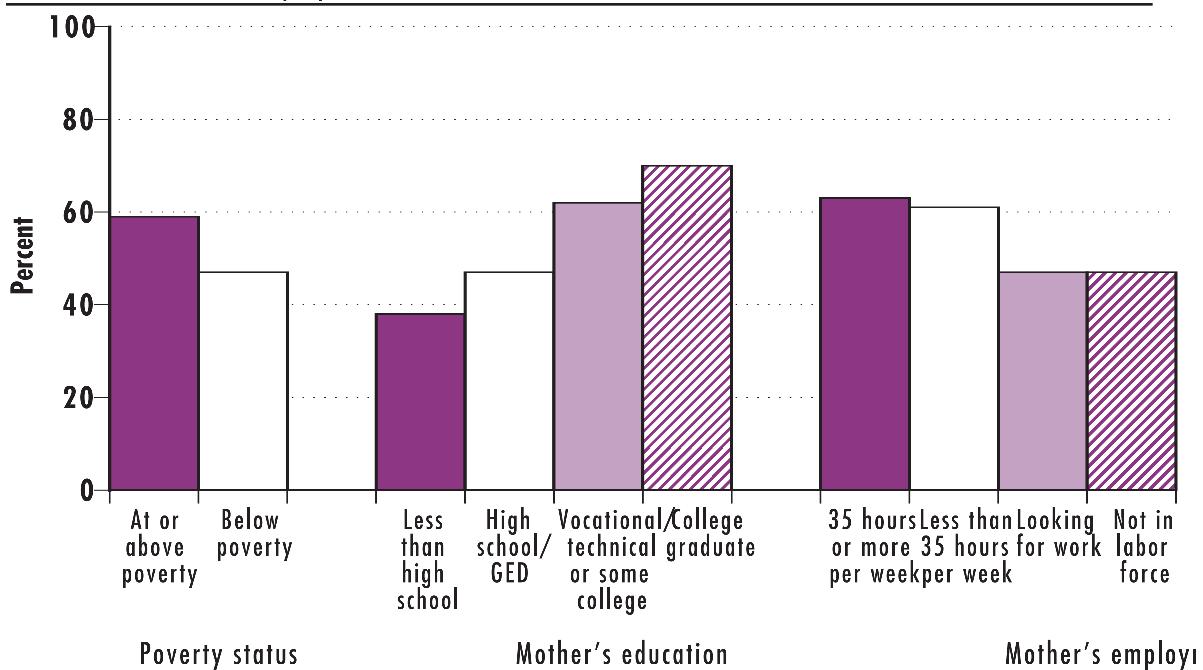


[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.1.C

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



Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. 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 the child's experiences before he or she ever enters a classroom. Historically, school readiness implied 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] The percent of public elementary schools with building deficiencies by enrollment capacity, including 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 Statistics. (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, 1999 and 2001

	Children (*in thousands*)			Recognizes all letters			Counts to 20 or higher			Writes name			Reads (or pretends to)			Has 3-4 skills		
	1993	1999	2001	1993	1999	2001	1993	1999	2001	1993	1999	2001	1993	1999	2001	1993	1999	2001
All Children	8,579	8,549	8,551	21	24	23	52	57	56	50	51	53	72	74	71	35	39	39
Age																		
Age 3	3,889	3,827	3,795	11	15	12	37	41	39	22	24	23	66	70	64	15	20	16
Age 4	3,713	3,722	3,861	28	28	29	62	67	68	70	70	73	75	76	76	49	50	53
Age 5	976	1,001	896	36	44	38	78	81	82	84	87	89	81	77	81	65	69	71
Sex																		
Male	4,453	4,363	4,292	19	21	19	49	54	52	47	47	47	68	70	68	32	35	34
Female	4,126	4,187	4,260	23	27	27	56	60	61	53	56	58	76	77	75	39	43	43
Race and Hispanic origin[a]																		
White, non-Hispanic	5,902	5,296	5,313	23	25	24	56	60	61	52	54	55	76	79	78	39	42	44
Black, non-Hispanic	1,271	1,258	1,251	18	25	23	53	60	57	45	49	52	63	66	66	31	35	35
Hispanic	1,026	1,421	1,506	10	14	14	32	41	39	42	43	43	59	57	53	22	25	22
Mother's language																		
English	7,805	7,599	7,533	22	25	24	55	60	60	51	53	55	73	76	75	37	41	42
Non-English	603	683	820	9	8	6	24	25	27	38	34	34	52	45	37	17	14	11
Mother's highest education																		
Less than high school	1,036	952	996	8	7	9	30	36	30	40	32	37	55	53	47	19	15	14
High school	3,268	2,556	2,712	17	17	16	48	48	50	48	49	48	70	69	65	30	31	30
Some college	2,624	2,586	2,406	23	25	25	59	60	63	51	52	59	79	79	78	39	42	46
College degree	912	1,455	1,418	31	35	33	68	73	70	58	61	57	84	84	83	52	54	52
Graduate degree	569	734	820	39	40	36	68	73	70	59	64	59	83	83	85	55	57	56
Mother's employment																		
Employed	4,486	5,058	5,148	23	24	23	57	59	60	52	53	56	75	75	75	39	40	42
Unemployed	594	452	396	17	15	17	41	53	47	46	39	47	67	64	55	29	32	28
Not in labor force	3,328	2,773	2,809	18	24	22	49	54	52	47	50	48	68	73	68	32	38	34
Family type																		
Two parents	6,226	5,997	6,416	22	26	24	54	58	58	51	53	54	74	75	74	37	41	41
None or one parent	2,353	2,553	2,135	18	19	17	49	54	51	47	48	48	65	69	62	31	33	31
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	—

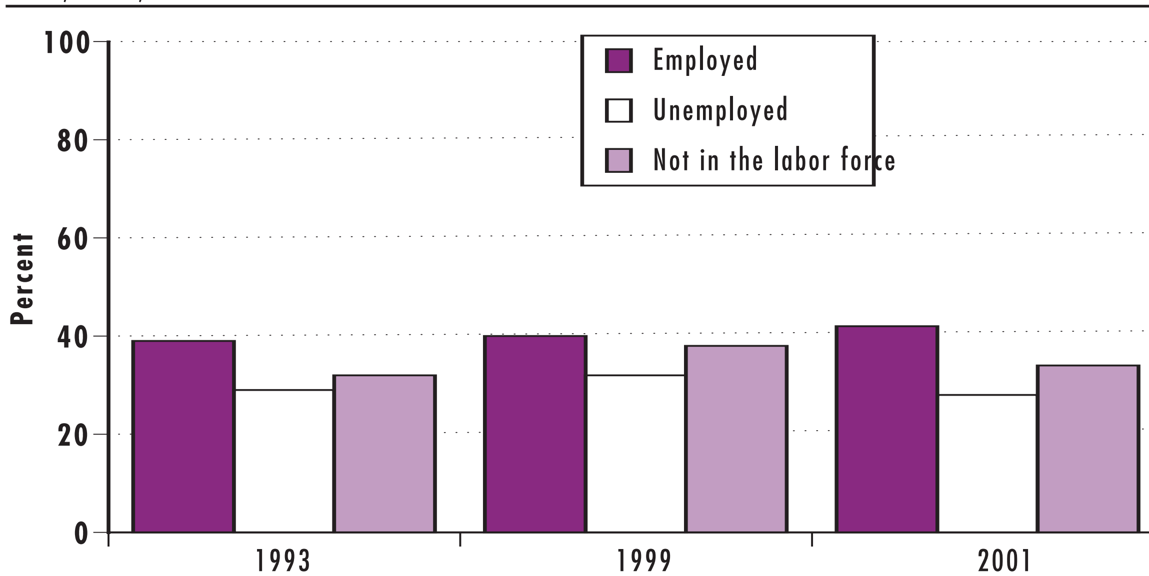
[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

— Data not available.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *National Household Education Survey, Parent and Family Involvement in Education*. 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 mother's employment status: 1993, 1999, and 2001



Sources: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *National Household Education Survey, Parent and Family Involvement in Education*. 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, 1991-1999

	3-year olds					4-year olds					5-year-olds				
	1991	1993	1995	1996	1999	1991	1993	1995	1996	1999	1991	1993	1995	1996	1999
All Children	31.4	34.1	37.4	36.7	39.1	52.7	55.3	60.9	57.7	62.8	86.4	90.0	90.3	90.2	90.6
Race and Hispanic origin[a]															
White	33.4	33.7	40.2	39.6	40.8	52.4	53.7	60.8	58.8	62.0	85.7	88.9	88.6	88.8	90.3
Black	31.6	41.9	41.1	40.5	46.9	57.4	62.9	68.2	67.8	74.1	92.3	93.2	93.7	94.1	96.0
Hispanic	19.8	27.2	21.2	22.1	23.7	47.5	48.9	49.0	45.3	54.7	85.3	91.4	93.4	90.4	87.5
Family income															
$10,000 or less	25.4	32.7	26.2	36.0	33.0	43.3	52.6	54.3	52.7	53.8	86.1	89.2	90.9	92.7	90.5
$10,001-20,000	23.2	21.6	27.0	28.0	29.7	45.0	47.2	52.3	45.3	50.5	84.6	90.4	89.7	87.6	85.7
$20,001-35,000[b]	21.3	22.2	27.7	30.8	31.3	48.0	47.8	49.7	50.6	61.6	85.1	86.8	90.7	87.8	91.4
$35,001-50,000[b]	33.4	37.9	38.1	42.2	36.7	52.3	57.2	59.5	58.2	59.1	87.3	90.6	88.5	89.7	87.4
$50,001 or more	52.9	58.7	61.2	55.0	53.0	74.8	73.2	80.7	75.8	74.1	89.0	93.7	90.9	92.8	93.8
Parent's highest education															
Less than high school	17.3	17.1	16.0	22.0[c]	24.5	33.1	42.8	42.4[c]	47.3[c]	47.2	85.5	79.9	92.5	90.3	94.0
High school	23.0	23.0	26.3	28.9	26.8	40.8	43.2	51.1	47.3	58.4	84.8	89.0	89.2	89.9	88.9
Some college	31.0	35.9	35.6	34.5	38.2	56.3	61.1	63.3	59.8	58.4	87.7	91.1	90.2	88.6	90.0
College degree	41.5	41.1	51.7	49.6	50.9	67.2	64.1	70.7	62.6	70.9	88.1	92.5	91.6	92.6	92.2
Graduate degree	53.0	61.9	60.8	60.4	57.0	72.0	73.3	77.9	78.1	76.8	87.0	94.3	89.8	92.1	91.9
Family type															
Two biological or adoptive parents	—	34.4	38.6	38.0	39.2	—	55.1	61.3	57.8	63.2	—	89.1	88.8	89.0	91.3
One biological or adoptive parent	—	33.8	36.9	37.3	38.7	—	57.2	63.0	58.4	62.8	—	92.1	94.0	91.9	90.4
One biological or adoptive parent and one step-parent	—	32.7[c]	23.1[c]	14.7[c]	25.6	—	49.5[c]	46.9[c]	45.8[c]	56.4	—	87.3	89.4	93.2	85.5

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

[b] The middle two income ranges were $20,001-30,000 and $30,001-50,000, respectively.

[c] Interpret with caution; standard errors are large due to small sample sizes.

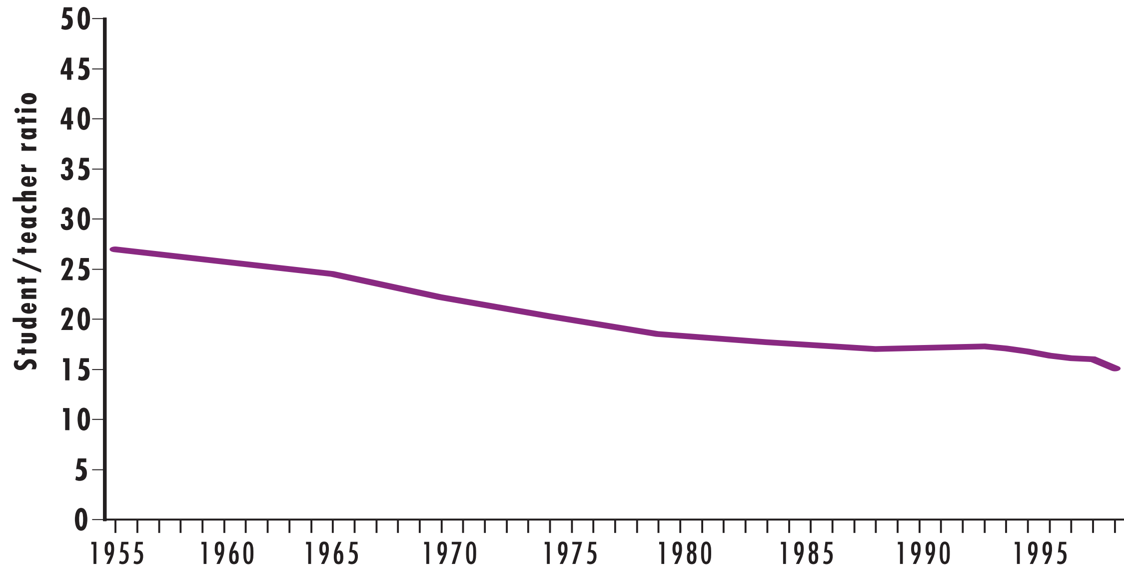
— Data not available.

Note: Included in the total but not 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. (1999). *National Household Education Survey, Parent and Family Involvement in Education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education; 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*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Eduction; 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

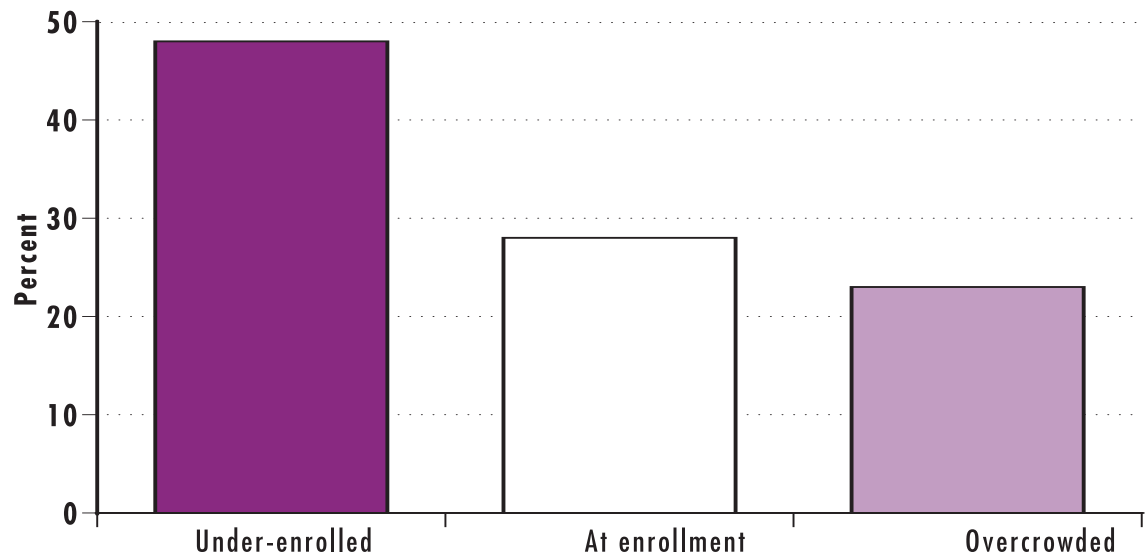
Public elementary and secondary student-teacher ratios: 1955-2001



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2001*. (Issue No. 034). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.2.C

Percent distribution 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. Government Printing Office.

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 2001 (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 2001, American Indian/Alaska Native, at 28 percent, were the most likely to have been absent 3 or more days in the preceding month. Asian youth had the lowest absentee rate at 11 percent, followed by White, non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Black, non-Hispanic youth at 20, 23, and 22 percent, respectively. The patterns are similar for 12th graders, though the differences range from lows of 22 to 31 percent for White, non-Hispanic, Asian, Hispanic, and Black, non-Hispanic youth, to a high of 44 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 2001, for example, 26 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 16 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, parents' education level, and type of school: Selected years, 1990-2001

	8th Grade							12th Grade						
	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2001	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2001
All absent students	23	22	22	23	21	20	20	31	26	28	26	26	26	26
Sex														
Male	21	21	22	22	21	20	20	29	24	27	25	26	24	25
Female	24	24	22	23	22	19	21	32	27	28	28	28	28	26
Race and Hispanic origin[a]														
White, non-Hispanic	22	21	20	21	21	18	20	30	24	26	26	26	24	24
Black, non-Hispanic	23	22	27	25	23	22	22	30	29	32	28	28	31	27
Hispanic	26	31	28	29	25	26	23	34	32	32	29	32	33	31
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	12	21	18	17	10	11	32	19	28	26	26	20	22
American Indian/ Alaska Native	37	38	39	29	34	34	28	—	—	53	30	41	42	44
Parents' highest education[b]														
Less than high school	38	31	33	32	33	28	26	41	30	36	35	32	35	31
High school	27	23	26	26	25	24	25	34	28	30	29	30	29	29
Some college	22	21	22	23	23	21	22	31	26	27	30	27	28	26
College degree	15	19	18	18	17	14	16	26	23	25	21	24	22	22
Type of school														
Public	23	23	23	23	22	20	21	31	27	28	28	28	27	26
Nonpublic	13	14	15	16	15	14	17	24	17	21	18	19	21	22

[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.

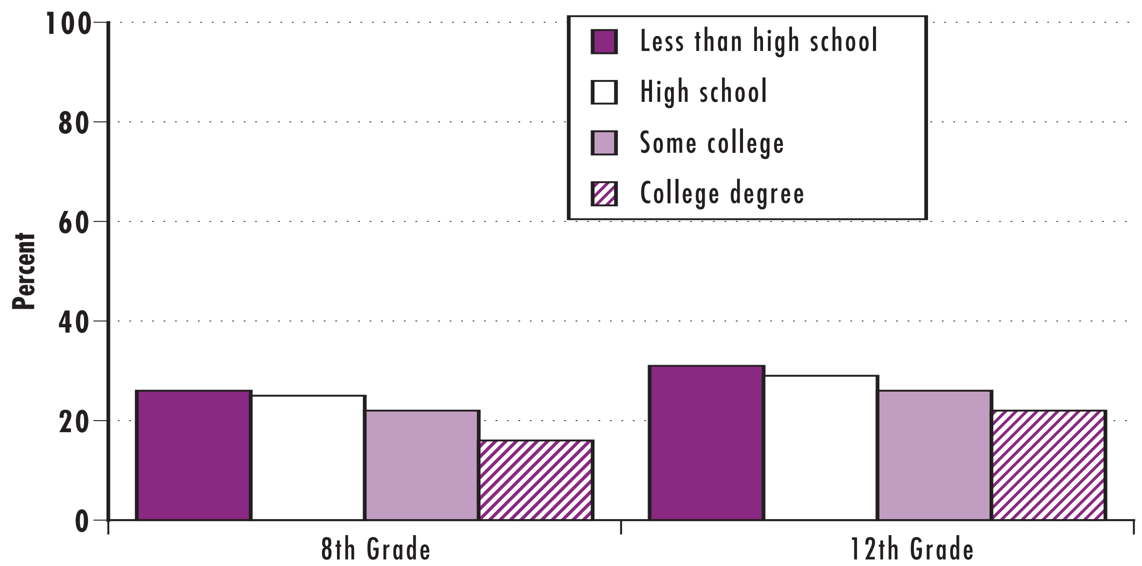
— Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

Note: The sample for this table is based on the 1990, 1992, 1996, and 2000 NAEP Mathematics Assessment; the 1994 and 1998 NAEP Reading Assessment; and the 2001 U.S. History Assessment

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



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *National Assessment of Educational Progress*. 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] 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 1 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 in 2000, were not enrolled in grades 10 to 12 in 2001 (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 2001.[5] Approximately 6 percent of males and 4 percent of females dropped out of high school in 2001.

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. Since 1990, 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 2001 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 2001, 9 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*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

2 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *The Condition of Education, 1998*. 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*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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

5 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

8 Ekstron, R., Goertz, M., Pollack, M., & Rock, D. (1987). *School Dropouts. Patterns and Policies*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Table EA 1.4

Event dropout rate (percentage) of 15- through 24-year-olds who dropped out of grades 10 through 12, by sex, family income, and race and Hispanic origin: Selected years, 1975-2001

	1975	1980	1985	1990[a]	1995[a]	1996[a]	1997[a]	1998[a]	1999[a]	2000[a]	2001[a]
All Youth	6	6	5	4	6	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sex											
Male	5	7	5	4	6	5	5	5	5	6	6
Female	6	6	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4
Family income[b]											
Low income	16	16	14	10	13	11	12	13	11	10	11
Middle income	6	6	5	4	6	5	4	4	5	5	5
High income	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
Race and Hispanic origin[c]											
White, non-Hispanic	5	5	4	3	5	4	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	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	9
Male	10	18	9	9	12	10	—	—	—	—	—
Female	12	7	10	7	13	8	—	—	—	—	—

[a] 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.

[b] 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.

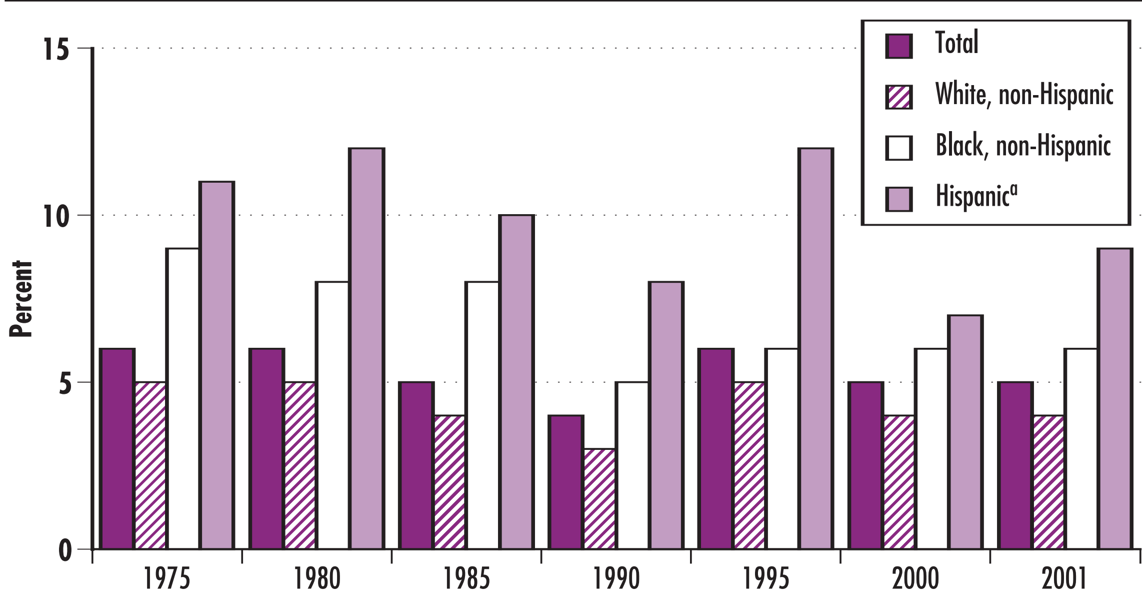
[c] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

— Data not available.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.4.A

Event dropout rate (percentage) for youth in grades 10 to 12, by race and Hispanic origin: Selected years, 1975-2001

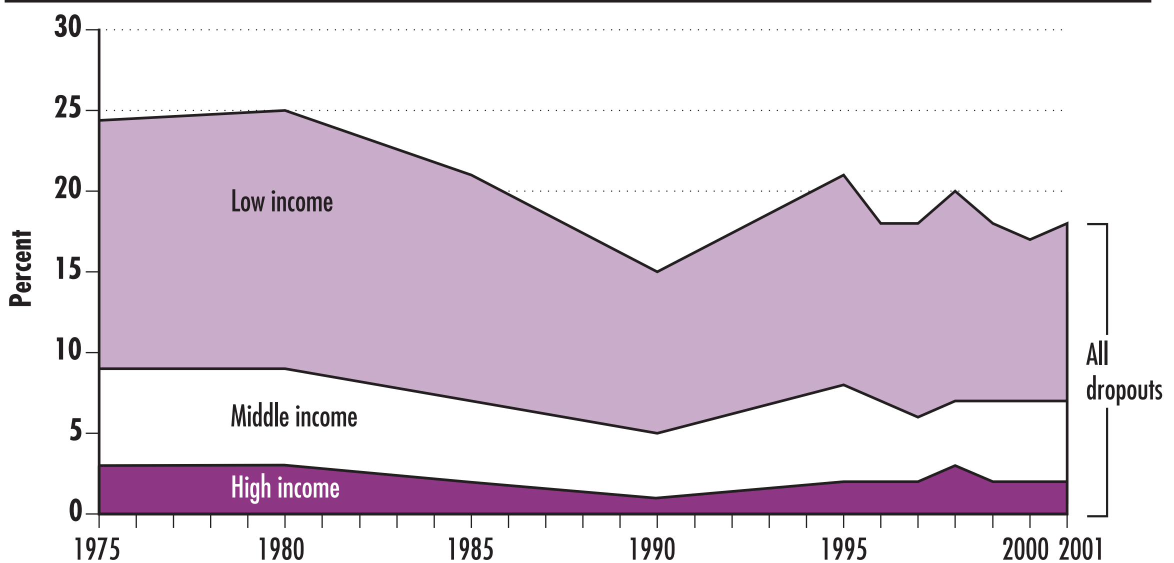


[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.4.B

Event dropout rate for youth in grades 10 to 12 (ages 15 to 24), by family income: 1975-2001



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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 2001, 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 2001 completion rate of 91 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 2001 the gap had closed to 5 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 2001 as it was in 1972 (30- and 25-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). *The Condition of Education, 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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, by race and Hispanic origin: Selected years, 1972-2001

	1972	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995[a]	1996[a]	1997[a]	1998[a]	1999[a]	2000[a]	2001[a]
All youth	83	84	84	85	86	85	86	86	85	86	87	87
Diploma	—	—	—	—	81	78	76	77	75	77	—	—
Equivalent[b]	—	—	—	—	5	8	10	9	10	9	—	—
White, non-Hispanic	86	87	88	88	90	90	92	91	90	91	92	91
Diploma	—	—	—	—	85	83	81	81	80	82	—	—
Equivalent[b]	—	—	—	—	5	7	11	9	10	9	—	—
Black, non-Hispanic	72	70	75	81	83	85	83	82	81	84	84	86
Diploma	—	—	—	—	78	75	73	72	72	73	—	—
Equivalent[b]	—	—	—	—	5	9	10	10	10	11	—	—
Hispanic[c]	56	62	57	67	59	63	62	67	63	63	64	66
Diploma	—	—	—	—	55	54	55	59	52	55	—	—
Equivalent[b]	—	—	—	—	4	9	7	8	11	9	—	—

a 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.

b Equivalents include alternative credentials obtained by passing examinations such as the General Educational Development (GED) exams.

c Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

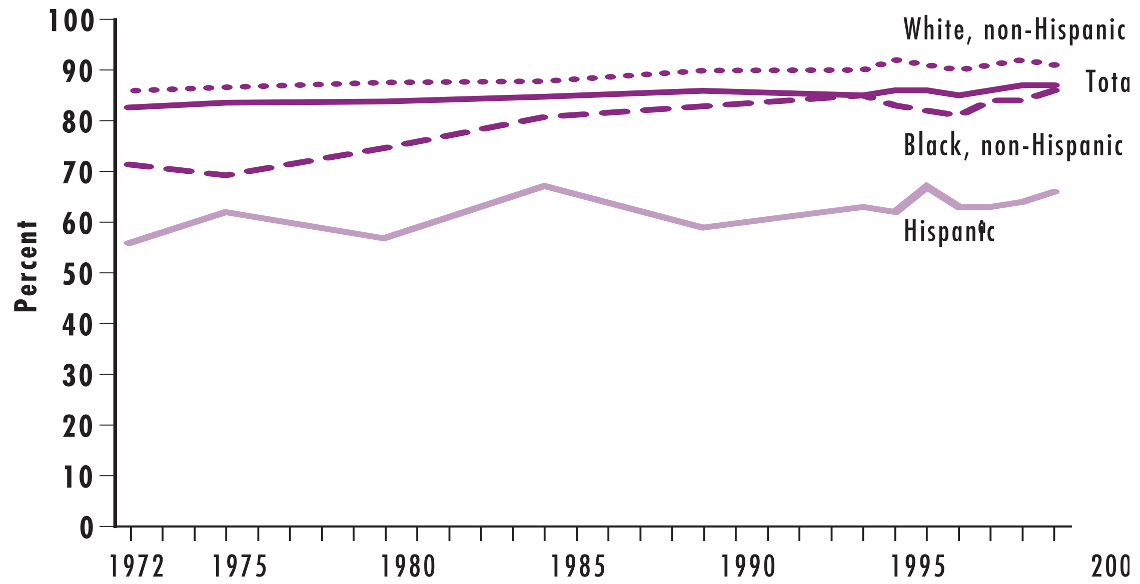
Note: Table refers to 18- to 24-year-olds who are enrolled in high school or below.

— Data not available

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.5

High school completion rates for 18- to 24-year-olds, by race and Hispanic origin: 1972-2001



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

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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-olds 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 2002 (Table EA 1.6 and Figures EA 1.6.A and EA 1.6.B).

Differences by Race and Hispanic origin.[3] In 2002, White, non-Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds were far more likely (36 percent) to complete college than either their Black, non-Hispanic (18 percent) or their Hispanic (9 percent) peers. Furthermore, White, non-Hispanic 25- to 29-year-olds were more likely to have attended college than Black, non-Hispanics and Hispanics (66 versus 53 and 31 percent respectively).

Differences by Sex. In 1971, the percentage of male 25- to 29-year-olds completing college was 6 percentage points higher than the percentage of females. Over the past three decades, however, this gap lessened gradually, and in 1991 more females were completing college. By 2002, 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. (2002). *Digest of Education Statistics: 2001*. 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-olds who have attended some college or have received a bachelor's degree or higher, by race and Hispanic origin, and sex: Selected years, 1971-2002

	1971	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Some college or more[a]	34	42	45	44	45	54	57	57	58	58	58	58	58
Race and Hispanic origin[b]													
White, non-Hispanic	37	44	48	46	48	60	62	63	64	64	64	65	66
Black, non-Hispanic	18	28	32	34	36	45	48	47	50	51	53	51	53
Hispanic	15	22	23	27	23	29	31	33	33	31	33	32	31
Sex													
Male	39	47	48	44	44	52	55	55	55	55	55	54	54
Female	29	36	42	43	45	56	59	59	61	61	62	63	62
Bachelor's degree or higher[c]	17	22	23	22	23	25	27	28	27	28	29	29	29
Race and Hispanic origin[b]													
White, non-Hispanic	19	24	25	24	26	29	32	33	32	34	34	33	36
Black, non-Hispanic	7	11	12	12	13	15	15	14	16	15	18	18	18
Hispanic	5	9	8	11	8	9	10	11	10	9	10	11	9
Sex													
Male	20	25	24	23	24	25	26	26	26	27	28	26	27
Female	14	19	21	21	23	25	28	29	29	30	30	31	32
Associate's degree	—	—	—	—	—	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	8
Race and Hispanic origin[b]													
White, non-Hispanic	—	—	—	—	—	9	9	9	9	10	10	9	9
Black, non-Hispanic	—	—	—	—	—	7	7	6	7	9	8	9	8
Hispanic	—	—	—	—	—	4	5	6	6	6	6	6	6

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

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

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

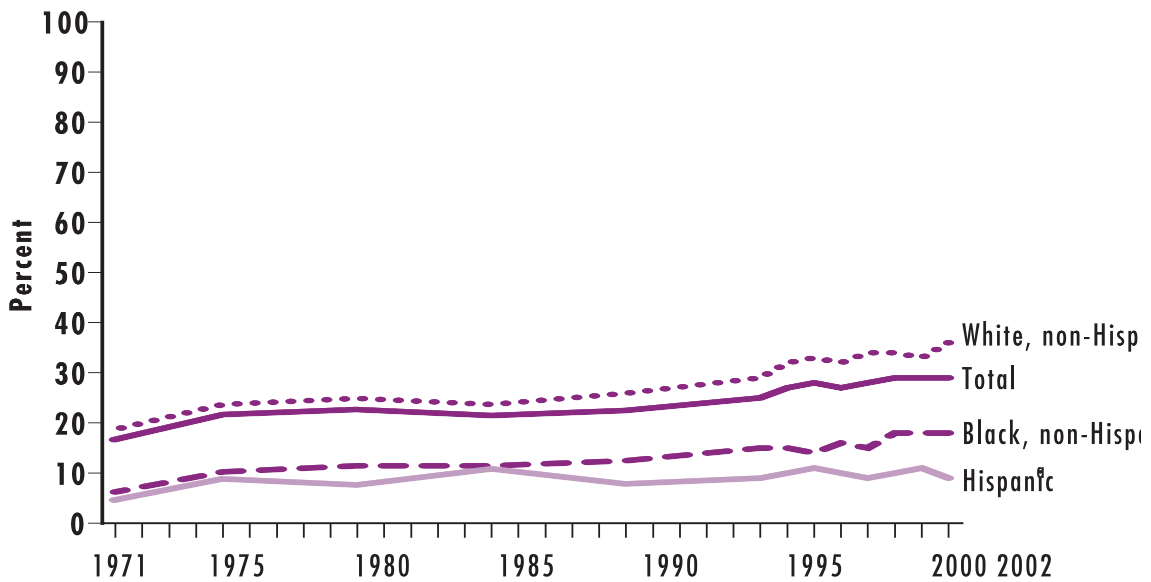
— Data not available.

Note: Data in this table have been revised and therefore do not match data presented in previous issues of this report.

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *The Condition of Education, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.6.A

Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who have received a bachelor's degree by race and Hispanic origin: 1971-2002

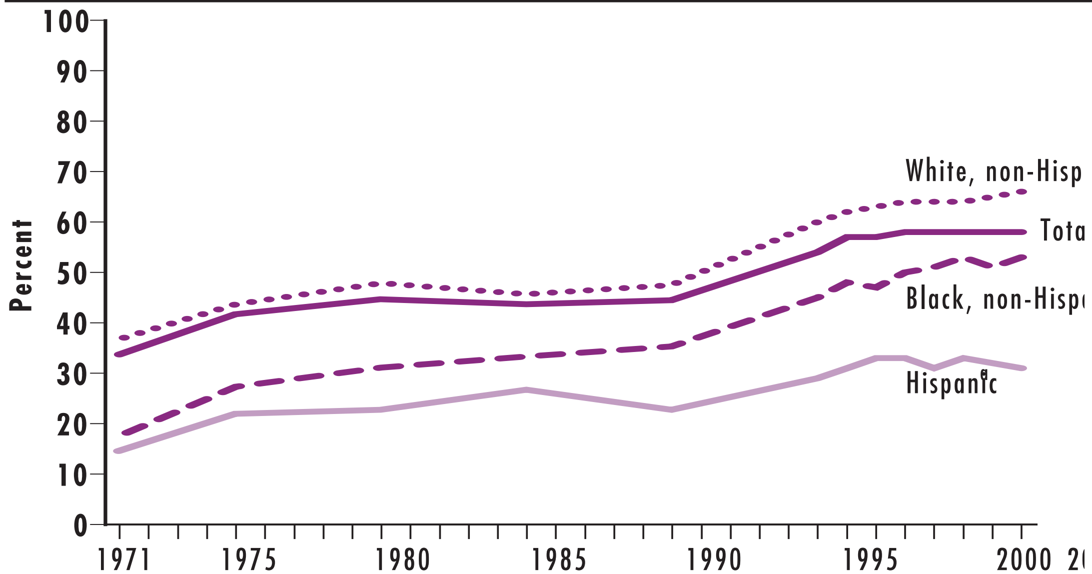


[a] Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *The Condition of Education, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Figure EA 1.6.B

Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who have attended some college by race and Hispanic origin: 1971-2002



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

Sources: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *The Condition of Education, 2002.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.