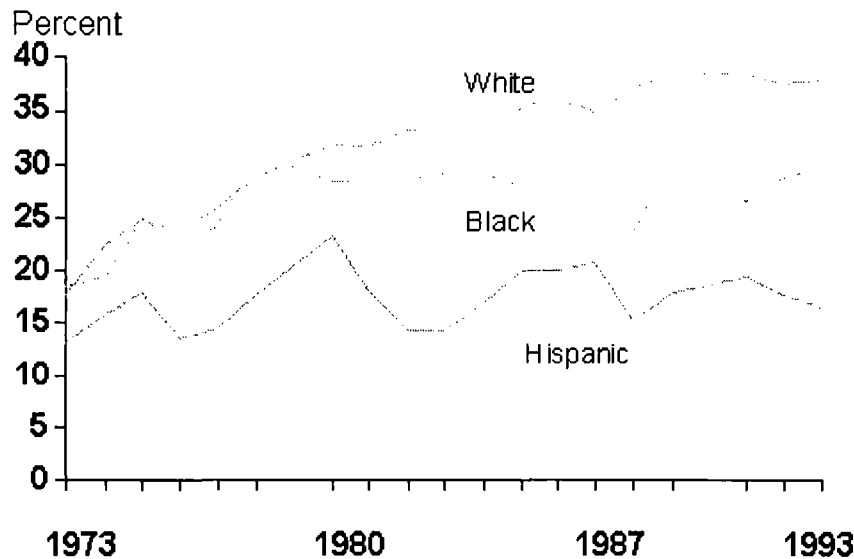


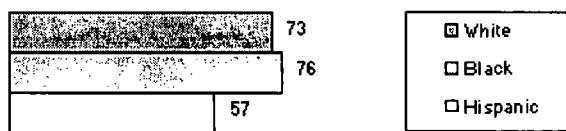
During the mid-1970s, preschool enrollment rates among white and black 3- to 4-year-olds were similar. However, due mostly to increases in preschool enrollment of white 3- to 4-year-olds in the 1980s, average enrollment rates for white preschoolers were nearly 8 percentage points higher than those of blacks and 22 percentage points higher than those of Hispanics by 1993. It should be noted, however, that although white 3- to 4-year-olds were more likely than blacks and Hispanics to be enrolled in preschool, blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be enrolled in kindergarten at that age. As a result, a similar percentage of blacks and whites were enrolled in some type of school program at age 3-4 in 1993. Hispanic school enrollment rates were still substantially lower that year (table 2-1).

Percentage of 3- to 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool



SOURCE: *Indicator 2.*

Percentage of first-graders who participated in center-based early childhood programs before kindergarten: 1993



SOURCE: *Indicator 3.*

How do these enrollment rates change under a broader definition of early childhood education?

Early childhood experts argue that children learn in a variety of settings, and the distinction between "nursery school" (or preschool) and "child care centers" based upon their presumed differential emphasis on educational activities is not meaningful. [3] Participation rates of white and black students become indistinguishable when the definition of early childhood education is broadened to include all center-based programs, including day care. For example, in 1993, 73 percent of white first-graders and 76 percent of black first-graders had attended center-based programs before entering kindergarten. [4] A smaller proportion of Hispanic first-graders (57 percent) had participated in these programs, however (*Indicator 3*).

As with preschool enrollment, students from families with high incomes were more likely to participate in center-based early childhood programs than were students from families of more moderate means. For example, first-graders whose families had incomes greater than \$35,000 were more likely to have attended a center-based early childhood program before kindergarten than first-graders whose families had incomes of \$35,000 or less. Among those who attended such programs, students from families with higher incomes were more likely to attend them for at least 2 years than were students from families with lower incomes (*Indicator 3*).

How do the enrollment rates in preprimary education in the United States compare to rates in other countries?

Enrollment rates in public and private pre-primary education: 1992

Country	Age			Average duration of preprimary education
	3	4	5	
	(percent)			(in years)
Canada	-	46	69	1.2
United States	29	53	83	1.8
Japan	23	58	66	1.5
France	99	101	100	3.4
United Kingdom	37	13	0	0.5
Former West Germany	31	69	79	2.6

- Not available.

SOURCE: OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 1995, table P02.

The number of years in which children typically participate in school before first grade varies greatly across countries. The average duration of preprimary enrollment, which includes enrollment in both preschool and kindergarten in the United States, ranges from .5 years in the United Kingdom to 3.4 years in France. The average duration of preprimary enrollment in the United States is 1.8 years. The average duration of preprimary enrollment is affected by the supply of and demand for preprimary education in each country as well as the normal starting age of primary education (first grade in the United States). For example, in the United Kingdom, where preprimary enrollment rates are relatively low at ages 4 and 5, the enrollment rates in primary education are relatively high (78 percent at age 4 and 99 percent at age 5). Canada also has a significant proportion of 5-year-olds enrolled in primary education (30 percent). [5]

How do the skills and behaviors of children vary before kindergarten?

There are varying opinions about what skills children should possess upon entering kindergarten. Some believe that children should simply be physically and mentally healthy, while others feel it is important for students to have rudimentary skills with such things as numbers, letters, and colors. [6] Children arrive at kindergarten with a wide variety of skills and experiences, and schools must develop programs that are sensitive to these differences. Understanding the wide range of developmental skills in kindergarten classes is an important first step to providing a quality education to the entire range of students.

A majority of parents indicate that their 4-year-olds were able to identify all colors (84 percent), recognize most letters (57 percent), count to at least 20 (62 percent), write their first name (70 percent), button their clothes (93 percent), hold a pencil properly (94 percent), and write or draw rather than scribble (table 4-1).

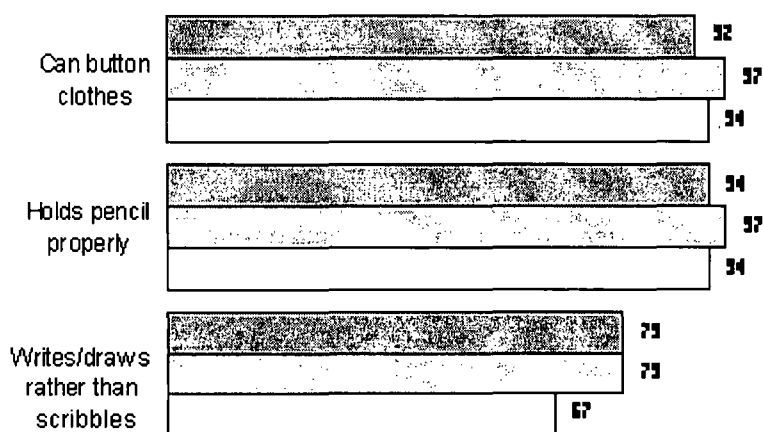
At age 4, a greater percentage of whites were able to identify all colors than were blacks or Hispanics. However, blacks were more likely than whites to demonstrate the ability to hold a pencil properly and button their clothes. Both black and white 4-year-olds were more likely than their Hispanic counterparts

to recognize most letters of the alphabet, count up to at least 20, and write or draw rather than scribble. The parents of Hispanic 4-year-olds were also more likely than the parents of white and black 4-year-olds to indicate that their child fidgets a lot, has a short attention span, and often has tantrums (table 4-1).

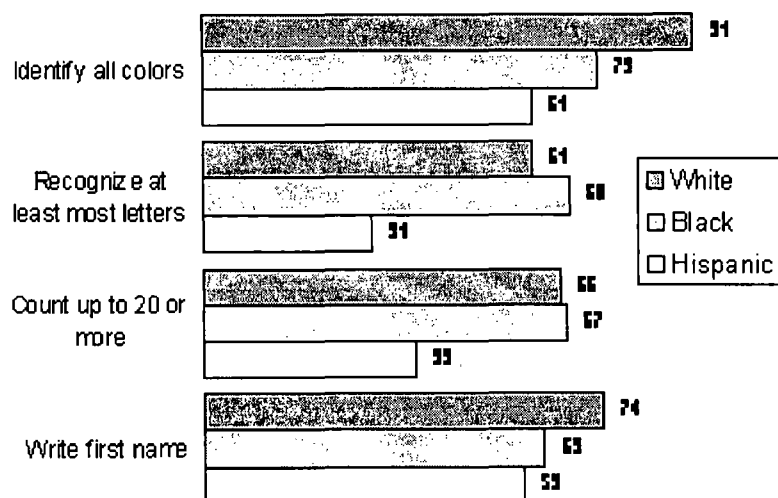
Furthermore, many of the skills of 4-year-olds are strongly associated with level of family income. For example, students from families with incomes above \$35,000 were more likely to be able to identify all colors and to recognize most letters of the alphabet than were students from families with incomes less than or equal to \$35,000. Differences in social and emotional development and in speech development were also associated with family income (table 4-2).

Percentage of 4-year-olds not in kindergarten with selected skills: 1993

Small motor development



Emerging literacy and numeracy



SOURCE: Indicator 4.

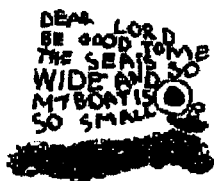
In summary, preschool attendance rates differ by race/ethnicity and level of family income, although

some of these differences attenuate when the definition of early childhood education is expanded to include all center-based care. Moreover, the average duration of preprimary enrollment varies across countries. The average duration of preprimary enrollment in the United States is shorter than among students in France, but longer than among students in the United Kingdom. The skills that children bring to kindergarten also vary by both race/ethnicity and family income, although opinions about how well-prepared children should be upon entering school vary widely.

-###-



Progress in achievement of Hispanic students]



Children's Defense Fund

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

Child care basics

Child care and early education are critical to the success of two national priorities: helping families work, and ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn.



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The need for child care has become a daily fact of life for many parents.

- Sixty-five percent of women with children younger than six, and 78 percent of women with children between the ages of six and 17 are in the labor force.¹ Almost 60 percent of mothers with infants (under age 1) are in the labor force.
- In 1996, only 23 percent of all families with children younger than six and only one-third of married couple families with young children had one parent working and one parent who stayed at home.² The majority (55 percent) of working women in the U.S. provide half or more of their family's earnings.³

Issue Basics

Child care and early education

School-age careHead Start

Fact Sheets

Investigating surplus makes senseChild care is key to school readinessTANF \$ alone is not the solutionParents struggle to afford careParents face locked doorsWhy quality mattersEnd the "Mommy Wars"Help curb teen smokingTax credits are not enough

A look at the states

Child Care Challenges: state factsheets

Opinions

Polls show strong support for child careCDF Funding recommendations

Every day, 13 million preschoolers—including 6 million babies and toddlers—are in child care.⁴

- This is 3 out of 5 young children. Millions more school-age children are in after-school and summer activities, and nearly 5 million children are left home alone after school while their parents work.
- Children enter care as early as 6 weeks of age and can be in care for as many as 40 hours a week until they reach school age.

Child care helps shape children's futures and is key to school readiness.

- The research is clear that the quality of child care has a lasting impact on children's well-being and ability to



children's well-being and ability to learn.⁵ Children in poor quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults.⁶

CDF testimony on TANF and child care

Background

Major federal child care programs

Federal and state partners

- A recent major study found that children in high quality child care demonstrated greater mathematical ability, greater thinking and attention skills, and fewer behavioral problems. These differences held true for children from a range of family backgrounds, with particularly significant effects for children at risk.

Yet, parents struggle to find and afford quality child care environments.

- 5 ✱ • Full-day child care easily costs \$4,000 to \$10,000 per year -- at least as much as college tuition at a public university.⁷ One out of three families with young children earns less than \$25,000 a year.⁸ A family with both parents working full-time at minimum wage earns only \$21,400 per year.
- Even though some subsidies are available for low-income families, funds are severely limited. Currently, no state can afford to serve all families eligible under federal guidelines. Nationally, only 1 in 10 eligible children who need help are getting any assistance.⁹

Good care is hard to find. Recent studies have found that much of the child care in the U.S. is poor to mediocre. One four-state study found fully 40% of the rooms serving infants in child care centers to be of such poor quality as to jeopardize children's health, safety, or development.¹⁰

- Hairdressers and manicurists must attend 1,500 hours of training at an accredited school in order to get a license, yet 40 states (including DC) do not require child care providers to have any early childhood training prior to serving children in their homes.¹¹ Child care teachers and providers do not earn as much as bus drivers (\$20,150) or garbage collectors (\$18,100) -- and often earn less than bartenders (\$14,450).¹² Child care workers earn an average of only \$11,780 per year, and preschool teachers -- many of whom are employed in the public schools -- have an average annual salary of just \$15,580.¹³ In addition, child care workers tend to receive no benefits or paid leave.¹⁴

Scarcity of after-school programs leaves school-age children at-risk.

- Nearly 5 million children are home alone after school each week, during the afternoon hours when juvenile crime peaks.¹⁵

6 ✱
3/4
poor
qual

Conclusion

- A 1990 study found that eighth-graders left home alone after school reported greater use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana than those who were in adult-supervised settings.¹⁶
- Good after-school activities for children and teens can be hard to find because options are inadequate in many communities. This problem is even more serious in low-income neighborhoods -- for example, only one-third of schools in low-income neighborhoods offered before- and after-school programs in 1993.¹⁷

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The Week In Review: Head Start, Everyone: Toddling Off To Preschool

New York Times News Service via Dow Jones

By JODI WILGOREN c.1999 N.Y. Times News Service

What is the right age for children to start school?

✕ Americans quickly say 5 or 6, but it has only been that way in the United States for a couple of generations. In France, Belgium and elsewhere in Europe, 3- and 4-year-olds must attend class. With new research finding that evidence of early education has a lasting impact, along with the continued push of women into the work force, movement for universal preschool is gathering momentum.

campaign { Delaine Eastin, superintendent of public instruction in California, says preschool is "the next big idea," and that by the end of the next decade, school will be a hybrid of day care and kindergarten and begin at age 3. Vice President Al Gore has made the concept a staple of his presidential platform; his rival for the Democratic nomination, Bill Bradley, proposes doubling funds for Head Start, the government's 35-year-old preschool program for poor children. The Republican front-runner, Texas Gov. George W. Bush, has a \$235 million pre-kindergarten program for poor children in his state.

"Anybody interested in education has got to be interested in getting there early," said Edward Zigler, a child psychologist at Yale University and a founder of the Head Start program. "Why is it that in the first five years of life, which we all know to be the foundation years, that every family is out for themselves?"

income ✕ * Today, 55 percent of American children, from 3 to 5, are in some form of preschool, with 79 percent in families earning over \$75,000 a year and 43 percent in those making under \$10,000. The choices range from costly new programs like Creme de la Creme, which offers

** free volunteer*

French and tennis to toddlers, to Montessori method and to day-care centers where television forms the core of a curriculum.

Government spending on pre-kindergarten has more than doubled to \$1.7 billion last year from \$700 million in 1991; public enrollment has risen to 725,000 from less than 300,000. The cost of reaching every 3- and 4-year-old would be an estimated \$30 billion or \$5,000 per child.

Today, 42 states have preschool programs, although they serve only poor children. Georgia, which uses funds from its lottery, is the only state offering preschool to every child; New York, which promised universal preschool in 1997, so far has only 30,000 enrolled.

Fresh from a tour of France's "ecole maternelle," where 3-year-olds bake pies in science lab and learn to count and read, a group of educators met in Washington last week to extol the benefits of preschool for everyone. A recent study by researchers in North Carolina found that poor black children who received high-quality day-care from infancy to 5 outperformed their peers all the way into adulthood.

"It would benefit children, it would benefit parents," said Dr. Barry Zuckerman, a Boston University professor of pediatrics, referring to universal preschool, "and it's probably an appropriate societal response to these demographic changes that we've had. It's literally an evolutionary process."

Issuing a cautionary note, the Cato Institute, a conservative research organization in Washington, said the public schools should not be allowed to expand, since they are increasingly icons of failure. The benefits of Head Start fade over time, said Darcy Ann Olsen, an expert on child care for the institute, and the advantages of nursery school for the middle class have yet to be proved. She also cited a 1991 federal study showing that 96 percent of parents were satisfied with their current child care.

"It really comes down to, who do you trust?" Ms. Olsen said. "The advocates trust themselves to make these policies for millions and millions of children. I think this is a responsibility for parents. They know their children best."

Robert Rector, a senior fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, said parents would prefer a tax credit, which might allow them to stay home with their children, rather than a new government program. Many parents feel guilty about working, he said, and the movement toward preschool is "a justification rather than what's in the best interest of the child."

Even some proponents of preschool worry that if government subsidizes education for toddlers, the market will respond by paying even less attention to day care for babies.

Kindergarten was controversial, too. Once the province of the rich when it was introduced in the 1850s from Germany, it expanded in this century amid worries about immigration and acculturation. Still, kindergarten has no federal mandate.

Betty Caldwell, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, advocates a preschool concept she calls "educare," in which children would learn letters and numbers, and social skills like sharing. A well-trained, nurturing staff would earn salaries equal to schoolteachers (day-care aides' pay is comparable to that of gas-station attendants). "We can't think of them as just warehousing or baby-sitting," Dr. Caldwell said.

enrollment + cost

- France
* NC study

pub. school
conservative arguments

Parents

tax credits

FAMILY

what
how high would
this credit
have to be
to sustain a

family on one income or none?? - flawed argument (and "parents" really mean "mothers")

Kindergarten

teach. training
struggle

Some advocates imagine an extension downward of the public-school system; others envision a grant those students can use at private and public colleges. Zuckerman has a more radical proposal: Why not start school at 3 and end it at 16, enabling graduates to work or do community service until college?

As Zigler noted, "There's nothing magic about starting school at age 5."

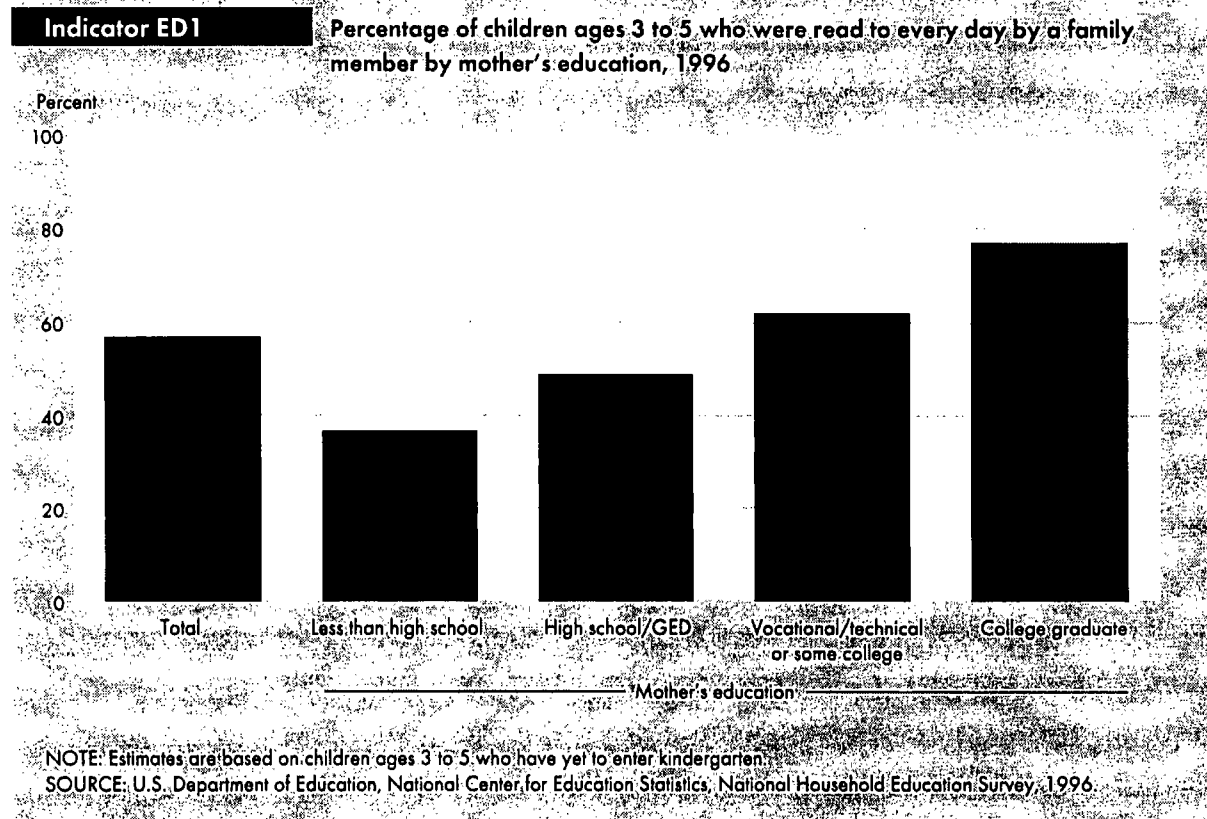
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Indicators of Children's Well-Being

Education Indicators

Family Reading to Young Children

Reading to young children promotes language acquisition and correlates with literacy development and, later on, with achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school.⁸² The percentage of young children read aloud to daily by a family member is one indicator of how well young children are prepared for school.



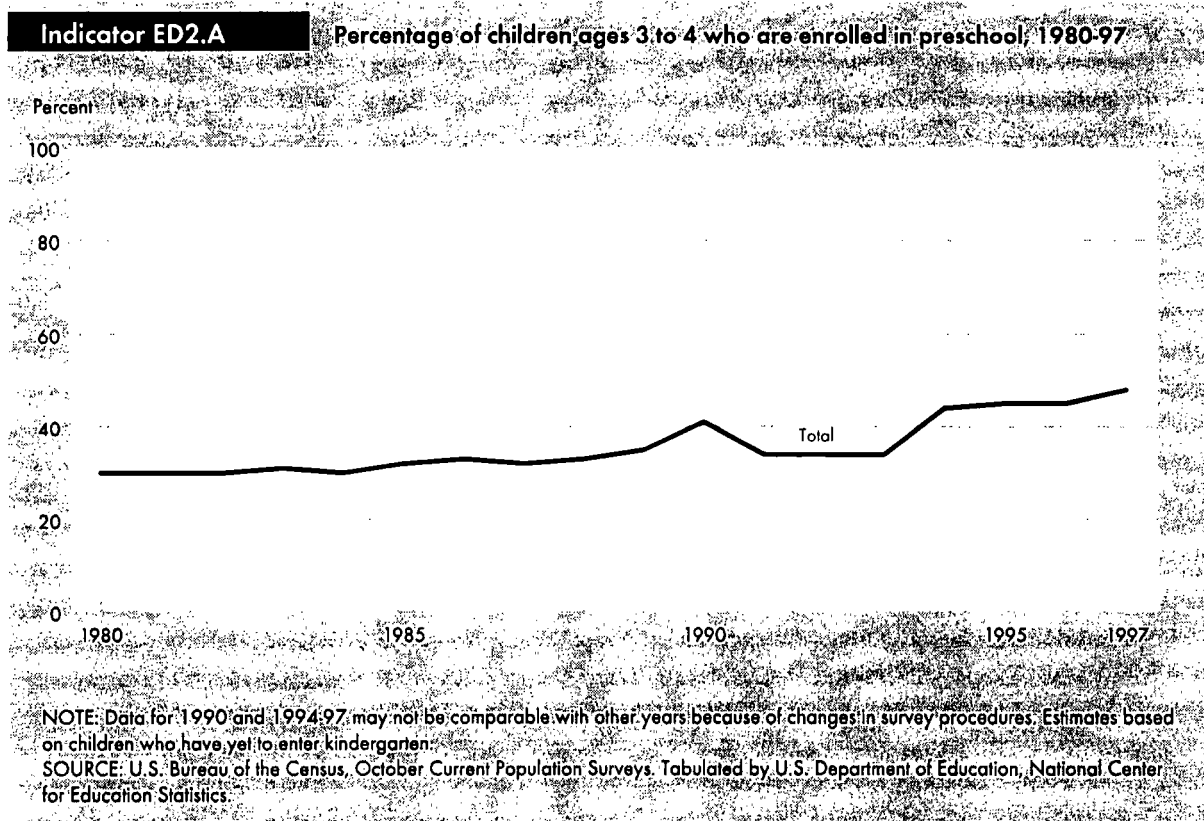
- In 1996, 57 percent of children ages 3 to 5 were read aloud to by a family member every day in the last week, up slightly from 53 percent in 1993.
- As a mother's education increases, so does the likelihood that her child is read to every day. In 1996, about three-quarters (77 percent) of children whose mothers were college graduates were read aloud to every day. In comparison, daily reading aloud occurred for 62 percent of children whose mothers had some postsecondary education, 49 percent whose mothers had completed high school but had no education beyond that, and 37 percent whose mothers had not completed high school.
- White, non-Hispanic children are more likely to be read aloud to every day than either black, non-Hispanic or Hispanic children. Sixty-four percent of white, non-Hispanic children, 44 percent of black, non-Hispanic children, and 39 percent of Hispanic children were read to every day.

- Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read aloud to every day than are children in families with incomes at or above the poverty line. Forty-six percent of children in families in poverty were read to every day in 1996, compared to 61 percent of children in families at or above the poverty line.
- Children living with two parents are more likely to be read aloud to every day than are children who live with one or no parent. Sixty-one percent of children in two-parent households were read to every day in 1996, compared to 46 percent of children living with one or no parent.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table ED1 on page 97. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Early Childhood Education

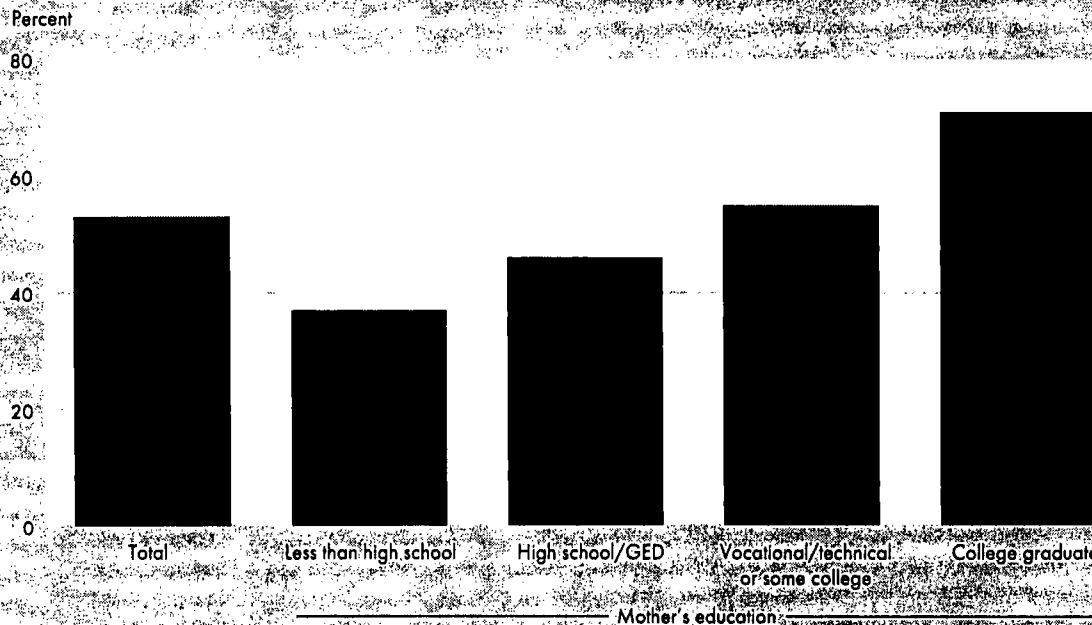
Like family reading, participation in an early childhood education program can provide preschoolers with skills and enrichment that can increase their chances of success in school. Studies have demonstrated that participation in high-quality early childhood education programs has short-term positive effects on IQ and achievement, and long-term positive effects on low-income minority children's school completion.⁸³ Until a direct measure of preschoolers' cognitive, behavioral, and social skills is available for this monitoring report, this indirect indicator monitors the percentage of children who are exposed to potentially beneficial early childhood education.



- In 1997, 48 percent of children ages 3 to 4 yet to enter kindergarten attended preschool, a substantial increase from the 30 percent who attended preschool in 1980, and an increase from 45 percent in 1996.
- Preschool attendance increased 10 percentage points among black, non-Hispanic children between 1996 and 1997—from 45 percent in 1996 to 55 percent in 1997. White, non-Hispanic children were also more likely to attend preschool in 1997 (52 percent) than in 1996 (48 percent). The percentage of Hispanic children attending preschool remained about the same in 1997 (31 percent) as it was in 1996 (33 percent).
- Preschool attendance increased among children living in poverty, from 34 percent in 1996 to 40 percent in 1997. Children not living in poverty had a smaller increase in preschool attendance—from 48 percent in 1996 to 51 percent in 1997.

Indicator ED2.B

Percentage of children ages 3 to 4 who are enrolled in early childhood centers by mother's education, 1996



NOTE: Estimates based on children who have yet to enter kindergarten.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996.

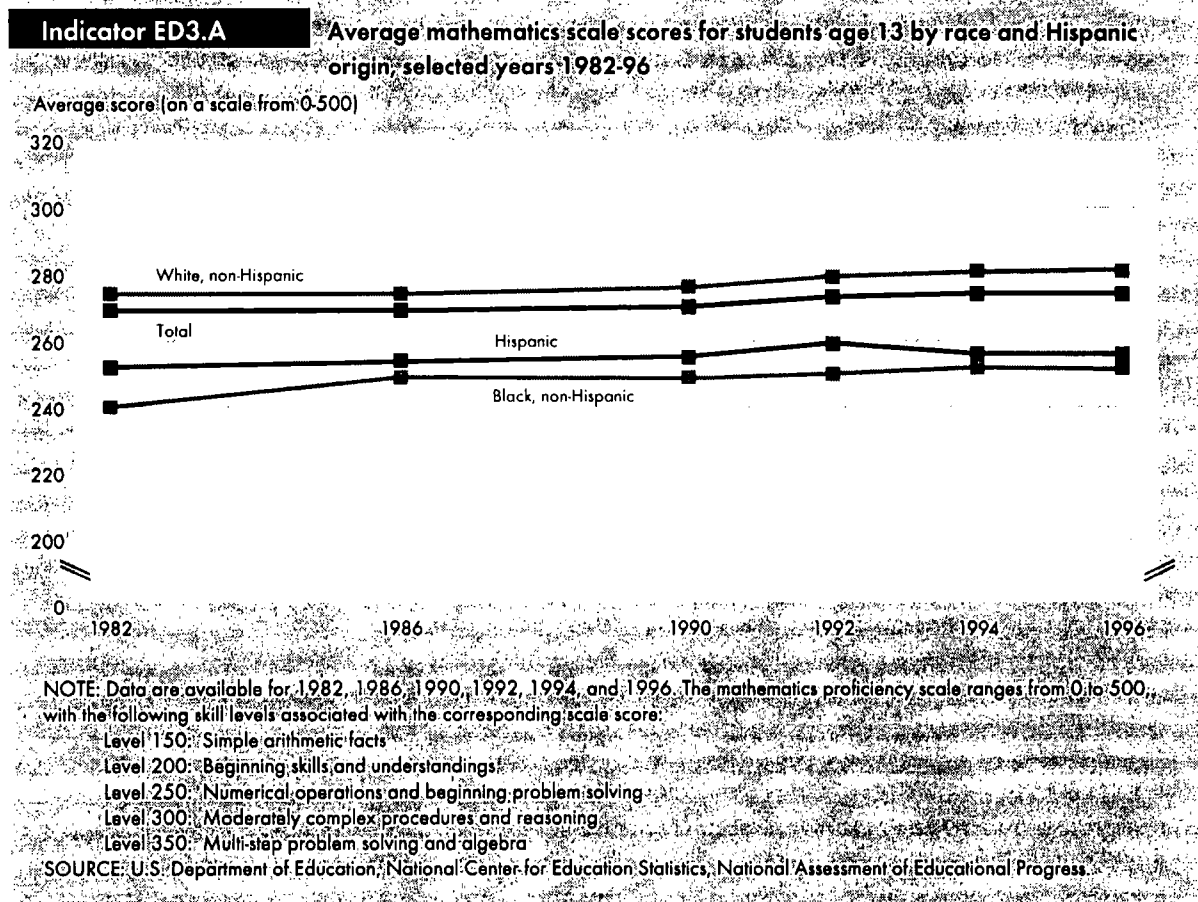
- When a broader group of early childhood programs are included (day care centers, nursery schools, preschool programs, Head Start programs, and prekindergarten programs), a larger percentage (53 percent) of children ages 3 to 4 yet to enter kindergarten attended one of several kinds of center-based early childhood programs in 1996.
- Children with more highly educated mothers are more likely to attend an early childhood center than others. Seventy-one percent of children whose mothers had completed college attended such programs in 1996, compared to 37 percent whose mothers had less than a high school education.

- Black, non-Hispanic children are somewhat more likely than white, non-Hispanic children and much more likely than Hispanic children to attend an early childhood center. In 1996, 63 percent of black, non-Hispanic children ages 3 to 4 attended such programs, compared to 54 percent of white, non-Hispanic children and 37 percent of Hispanic children.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Tables ED2.A and ED2.B on pages 98 and 99. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Mathematics and Reading Achievement

The extent and content of students' knowledge, as well as their ability to think, learn, and communicate, affect their ability to succeed in the labor market well beyond their earning of a degree or attending school for a given number of years. On average, students with higher test scores will earn more and will be unemployed less often than students with lower test scores.⁸⁴ Mathematics and reading achievement test scores are important measures of students' skills in these subject areas, as well as good indicators of achievement overall in school. To assess progress in mathematics and reading, the National Assessment of Educational Progress measures national trends in the academic performance of students at ages 9, 13, and 17.

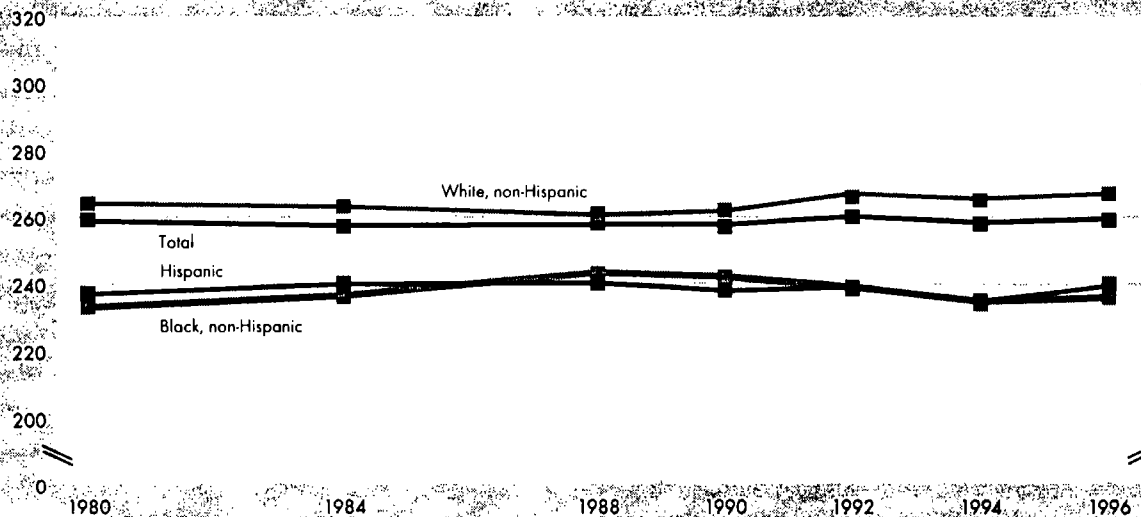


■ Average math scores increased for all age groups between 1982 and 1996.

■ Average reading scores have not improved among students ages 13 and 17 since 1980, and have declined slightly among 9-year-olds.

Indicator ED3.B**Average reading scale scores for students age 13 by race and Hispanic origin, selected years 1980-96**

Average score (on a scale from 0-500)



NOTE: Data are available for 1980, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, and 1996. The reading proficiency scale ranges from 0 to 500, with the following skill levels associated with the corresponding scale score:

- Level 150: Simple, discrete reading tasks
- Level 200: Partial skills and understanding
- Level 250: Interrelates ideas and makes generalizations
- Level 300: Understands complicated information
- Level 350: Learns from specialized reading materials

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress.

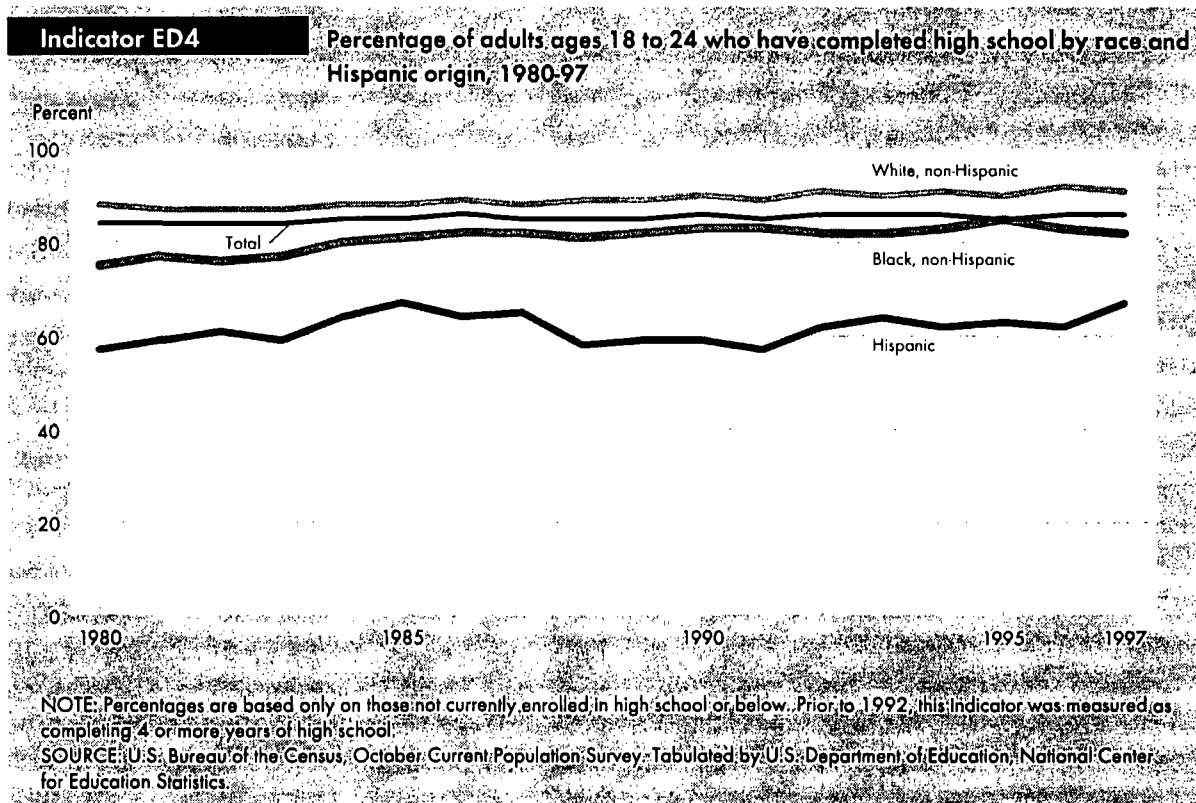
- White, non-Hispanic students consistently have had higher reading and math scores than either black, non-Hispanic or Hispanic students at ages 9, 13, and 17. However, the gaps between non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks and between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics decreased in each subject in some age groups during the 1980s.
- On average, students at ages 13 and 17 whose parents have completed more years of school have higher reading and math scores than do their peers whose parents have had fewer years of education.⁸⁵

- Girls have consistently higher reading scores than boys at all ages. Boys outperformed girls in math at all ages in 1996. For most years, the differences between boys and girls at ages 9 and 13 were not significant and boys slightly outperformed girls at age 17.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Tables ED3.A and ED3.B on pages 100 and 101. Endnotes begin on page 59.

High School Completion

A high school diploma or its equivalent represents mastery of the basic reading, writing, and math skills a person needs to function in modern society. The percentage of young adults ages 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or an equivalent credential is a measure of the extent to which young adults have completed a basic prerequisite for many entry-level jobs as well as higher education.



- In 1997, 86 percent of young adults ages 18 to 24 who were not currently enrolled in high school had completed high school, either with a diploma or an alternative credential such as a General Education Development (GED) test. The high school completion rate has increased slightly since 1980, when it was 84 percent.
- The rate at which non-Hispanic blacks completed high school increased markedly between 1980 and 1990, from 75 percent to 83 percent, and has remained relatively stable since then. Among non-Hispanic whites, high school completion rates increased slightly, from 88 percent in 1980 to 91 percent in 1997.
- Hispanics consistently have lower high school completion rates than either non-Hispanic blacks or non-Hispanic whites, fluctuating between 57

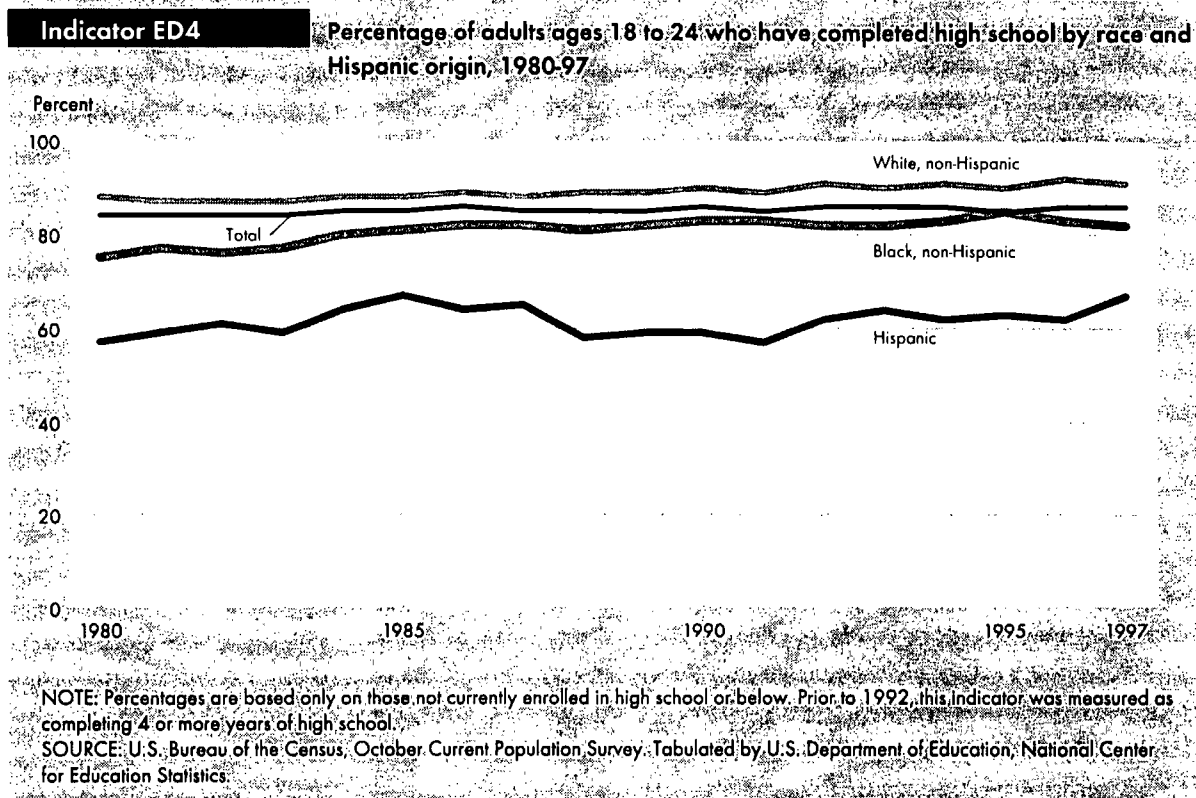
percent (in 1980) and 67 percent (in 1985 and again in 1997).

- Most young adults (77 percent in 1997) complete high school by earning a regular high school diploma. Others complete high school by earning an alternative credential, such as the GED. The proportion of young adults ages 18 to 24 who had earned an alternative credential rose 5 percentage points in 3 years, from 5 percent in 1993 to 10 percent in 1996, while the proportion earning a regular diploma decreased about 5 percentage points over the same period.⁸⁶ Both stayed about the same in 1997 as in 1996.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table ED4 on page 102. Endnotes begin on page 59.

High School Completion

A high school diploma or its equivalent represents mastery of the basic reading, writing, and math skills a person needs to function in modern society. The percentage of young adults ages 18 to 24 with a high school diploma or an equivalent credential is a measure of the extent to which young adults have completed a basic prerequisite for many entry-level jobs as well as higher education.



- In 1997, 86 percent of young adults ages 18 to 24 who were not currently enrolled in high school had completed high school, either with a diploma or an alternative credential such as a General Education Development (GED) test. The high school completion rate has increased slightly since 1980, when it was 84 percent.
- The rate at which non-Hispanic blacks completed high school increased markedly between 1980 and 1990, from 75 percent to 83 percent, and has remained relatively stable since then. Among non-Hispanic whites, high school completion rates increased slightly, from 88 percent in 1980 to 91 percent in 1997.
- Hispanics consistently have lower high school completion rates than either non-Hispanic blacks or non-Hispanic whites, fluctuating between 57

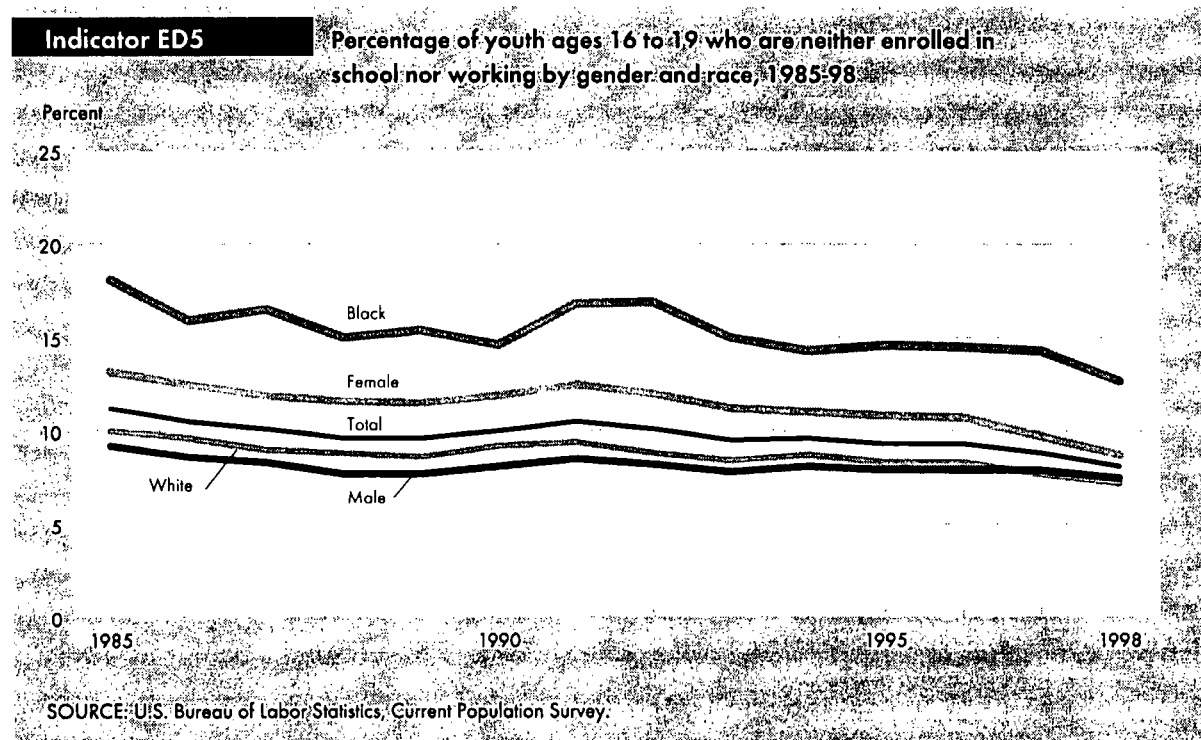
percent (in 1980) and 67 percent (in 1985 and again in 1997).

- Most young adults (77 percent in 1997) complete high school by earning a regular high school diploma. Others complete high school by earning an alternative credential, such as the GED. The proportion of young adults ages 18 to 24 who had earned an alternative credential rose 5 percentage points in 3 years, from 5 percent in 1993 to 10 percent in 1996, while the proportion earning a regular diploma decreased about 5 percentage points over the same period.⁸⁶ Both stayed about the same in 1997 as in 1996.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table ED4 on page 102. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Youth Neither Enrolled in School Nor Working

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a critical period in each individual's life. The percent of youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor working are detached from both of the core activities that usually occupy people during this critical period. Youth who are detached from both activities, particularly if this situation lasts for several years, are at increased risk of having lower earnings and a less stable employment history than their peers who stayed in school and/or secured jobs.⁸⁷ The percentage of youth who are not enrolled in school and not working measures the proportion of young people who are in circumstances that may seriously limit their future prospects.



- In 1998, about 8 percent of the Nation's 16- to 19-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working, a significant decrease from 9 percent in 1997.
- The proportion of youth neither enrolled nor working has been steadily declining since 1991, when it was 11 percent. Most of the decline in the proportion of youth neither enrolled nor working occurred among young women. In 1991, 13 percent of young women were neither in school nor working. By 1998, this proportion had decreased to 9 percent. Nevertheless, young women continue to be more likely to be detached from these activities than young men.
- Black youth are considerably more likely to be detached from these activities than white youth. In 1998, 13 percent of black youth were neither in

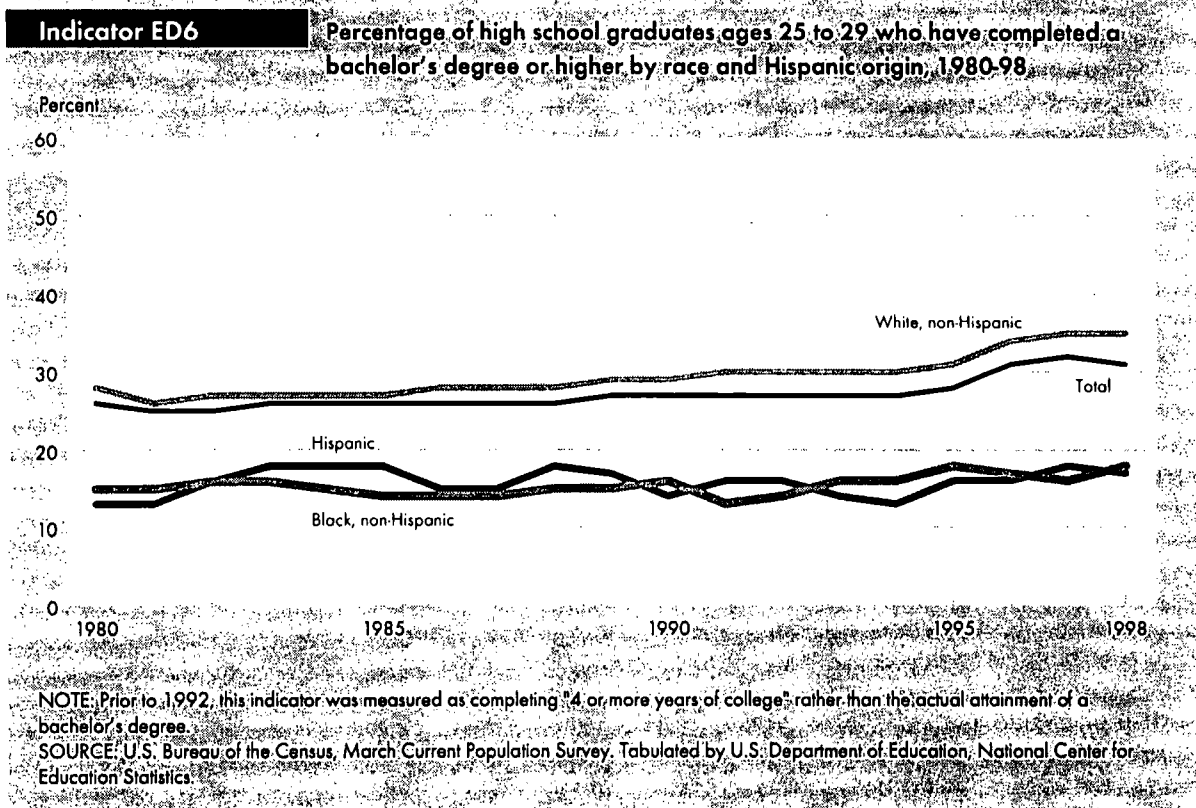
school nor working, compared to 7 percent of white youth. In addition, 14 percent of Hispanic youth were neither in school nor working.

- The proportion of black youth who are neither enrolled in school nor working has decreased from 18 percent in 1985 to 13 percent in 1998.
- Older youth, ages 18 to 19, are three times more likely to be detached from these activities than youth ages 16 to 17. In 1998, 13 percent of youth ages 18 to 19 were neither enrolled in school nor working compared to 4 percent of youth ages 16 to 17.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table ED5 on page 103. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Higher Education

Higher education, especially completion of a bachelor's or more advanced degree, generally enhances a person's employment prospects and increases his or her earning potential.⁸⁸ The percentage of high school graduates who have completed a bachelor's degree is one measure of the percentage of young people who have successfully applied for and persisted through a program of higher education.



- In 1998, 31 percent of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 had earned a bachelor's or a higher degree.
- This percentage increased slightly between 1980 and 1995, from 26 to 28 percent, then increased 3 percentage points between 1995 and 1996 and has remained stable since then.
- White, non-Hispanic high school graduates ages 25 to 29 are more likely than either black, non-Hispanic or Hispanic high school graduates in the same age group to have earned a bachelor's degree. In 1998, 35 percent of white, non-Hispanic, 18 percent of black, non-Hispanic, and 17 percent of Hispanic high school graduates in this age group had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- In 1998, 10 percent of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 had earned an associate degree but not a bachelor's degree.
- In 1998, 10 percent of white, non-Hispanic high school graduates ages 25 to 29 had associate degrees as their highest degree, as did 8 percent of black, non-Hispanic and 9 percent of Hispanic high school graduates in this age group.
- Racial group differences in rates of enrollment in college are smaller than differences in rates of degree attainment. In 1996, 45 percent of white, non-Hispanic high school graduates ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in college, compared to 36 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and 34 percent of Hispanics.⁸⁹

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table ED6 on page 104. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Indicators Needed

Education

Education indicators are needed in two areas that have been found to be critical to a child's development and life chances:

- *Early childhood development.* Although this report offers indicators of young children's exposure to reading and early childhood education, a regular source of data that can be used to monitor specific social, intellectual, and emotional skills of preschoolers over time is needed. By late 1999, a one-time data collection will provide information on the skills found among incoming kindergartners.
- *Course-taking.* Taking higher level courses in middle and high school is linked to higher achievement in those subjects, and to academic opportunity in a student's future academic career. Yet data on student course-taking behavior in middle school are not regularly available. A transcript study of middle school is needed, as is more research on which courses are most predictive of educational opportunity.

Table ED2.8

Early childhood education: Percentage of children ages 3 to 4^a enrolled in center-based programs^b by child and family characteristics, selected years 1991-96

Characteristic	1991	1993	1995	1996
Total	51	51	53	53
Gender				
Male	51	50	52	52
Female	52	52	53	53
Race and Hispanic origin				
White, non-Hispanic	53	52	55	54
Black, non-Hispanic	56	56	57	63
Hispanic ^c	38	42	34	37
Poverty status				
At or below poverty	42	42	41	41
Above poverty	54	55	58	58
Family type				
Two parents	52	51	53	51
One or no parent	47	52	53	56
Mother's education^d				
Less than high school	30	31	31	37
High school/GED	44	41	45	46
Vocational/technical or some college	59	58	55	55
College graduate	72	72	73	71
Mother's employment status^d				
Worked 35 hours or more per week	58	59	58	62
Worked less than 35 hours per week	57	55	60	62
Not in labor force	43	43	43	41

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

^b Center-based programs include day care centers, Head Start programs, preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs.

^c Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

^d Children without mothers in the home are not included in estimates dealing with mother's education or mother's employment status. Not shown separately but included in the total are unemployed mothers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 1996 National Household Education Survey.

Table ED3.A**Mathematics achievement: Average scale scores of students ages 9, 13, and 17 by age and child and family characteristics, selected years 1982-96**

Characteristic	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	1996
Age 9						
Total	219	222	230	230	231	231
Gender						
Male	217	222	229	231	232	233
Female	221	222	230	228	230	229
Race and Hispanic origin						
White, non-Hispanic	224	227	235	235	237	237
Black, non-Hispanic	195	202	208	208	212	212
Hispanic ^a	204	205	214	212	210	215
Age 13						
Total	269	269	270	273	274	274
Gender						
Male	269	270	271	274	276	276
Female	268	268	270	272	273	272
Race and Hispanic origin						
White, non-Hispanic	274	274	276	279	281	281
Black, non-Hispanic	240	249	249	250	252	252
Hispanic ^a	252	254	255	259	256	256
Parents' education						
Less than high school	251	252	253	256	255	254
Graduated high school	263	263	263	263	266	267
Some education after high school	275	274	277	278	277	278
Graduated college	282	280	280	283	285	283
Age 17						
Total	299	302	305	307	306	307
Gender						
Male	302	305	306	309	309	310
Female	296	299	303	305	304	305
Race and Hispanic origin						
White, non-Hispanic	304	308	310	312	312	313
Black, non-Hispanic	272	279	289	286	286	286
Hispanic ^a	277	283	284	292	291	292
Parents' education						
Less than high school	279	279	285	286	284	281
Graduated high school	293	293	294	298	295	297
Some education after high school	304	305	308	308	305	307
Graduated college	312	314	316	316	318	317

^a Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

NOTE: Data on parents' level of education are not reliable for 9-year-olds.

The mathematics proficiency scale ranges from 0 to 500:

Level 150: Simple arithmetic facts

Level 200: Beginning skills and understandings

Level 250: Numerical operations and beginning problem solving

Level 300: Moderately complex procedures and reasoning

Level 350: Multi-step problem solving and algebra

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1996 *Trends in Academic Progress*.

Table ED3.B

Reading achievement: Average scale scores of students ages 9, 13, and 17 by age and child and family characteristics, selected years 1980-96

Characteristic	1980	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996
Age 9							
Total	215	211	212	209	211	211	212
Gender							
Male	210	208	208	204	206	207	207
Female	220	214	216	215	215	215	218
Race and Hispanic origin							
White, non-Hispanic	221	218	218	217	218	218	220
Black, non-Hispanic	189	186	189	182	185	185	190
Hispanic ^a	190	187	194	189	192	186	194
Age 13							
Total	259	257	258	257	260	258	259
Gender							
Male	254	253	252	251	254	251	253
Female	263	262	263	263	265	266	265
Race and Hispanic origin							
White, non-Hispanic	264	263	261	262	266	265	267
Black, non-Hispanic	233	236	243	242	238	234	236
Hispanic ^a	237	240	240	238	239	235	240
Parents' education							
Less than high school	239	240	247	241	239	237	241
Graduated high school	254	253	253	251	252	251	252
Post high school	271	268	265	267	270	269	270
Age 17							
Total	286	289	290	290	290	288	287
Gender							
Male	282	284	286	284	284	282	280
Female	289	294	294	297	296	295	294
Race and Hispanic origin							
White, non-Hispanic	293	295	295	297	297	296	294
Black, non-Hispanic	243	264	274	267	261	266	265
Hispanic ^a	261	268	271	275	271	263	265
Parents' education							
Less than high school	262	269	267	270	271	268	267
Graduated high school	278	281	282	283	281	276	273
Post high school	299	301	300	300	299	299	297

^a Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

NOTE: Data on parents' level of education are not reliable for 9-year-olds.

The reading proficiency scale has a range from 0 to 500:

- Level 150: Simple, discrete reading tasks
- Level 200: Partial skills and understanding
- Level 250: Interrelates ideas and makes generalizations
- Level 300: Understands complicated information
- Level 350: Learns from specialized reading materials

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1996 *Trends in Academic Progress*.

Table ED4

High school completion: Percentage completing high school among 18- to 24-year-olds^a by race, Hispanic origin, and method of completion, selected years 1980-97

Characteristic	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 ^b	1995 ^b	1996 ^b	1997 ^b
Total^c										
Total completing high school ^d	84	85	86	85	86	86	86	85	86	86
Method of completion										
Diploma	—	—	81	81	81	81	79	78	76	77
Equivalent ^e	—	—	5	4	5	5	7	8	10	9
White, non-Hispanic										
Total completing high school	88	88	90	89	91	90	91	90	92	91
Method of completion										
Diploma	—	—	85	85	86	86	84	83	81	81
Equivalent ^e	—	—	5	4	5	5	6	7	11	9
Black, non-Hispanic										
Total completing high school	75	81	83	83	82	82	83	85	83	82
Method of completion										
Diploma	—	—	78	77	76	76	75	75	73	72
Equivalent ^e	—	—	5	5	6	6	8	9	10	10
Hispanic^f										
Total completing high school	57	67	59	57	62	64	62	63	62	67
Method of completion										
Diploma	—	—	55	53	57	58	54	54	55	59
Equivalent ^e	—	—	4	3	6	6	8	9	7	8

— = not available

^a For those not currently enrolled in high school or below.

^b Data for 1994 and subsequent years are not strictly comparable with data for prior years, because of major revisions in the Current Population Survey questionnaire and data collection methodology, and because of the inclusion of 1990 census-based population controls in the estimation process.

^c Percentages not shown separately for non-Hispanic Asians/Pacific Islanders and American Indians/Alaska Natives, but they are included in the total.

^d This was measured as completing 4 years of high school in 1980-1991.

^e Diploma equivalents include alternative credentials obtained by passing exams such as the General Education Development (GED) test.

^f Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Survey (various years); Kaufman, P., Klein, S., and Frase, M. (1999). *Dropout rates in the United States: 1997*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Table ED5

Youth neither enrolled in school nor working: Percentage of youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither enrolled in school nor working by gender, race, Hispanic origin, and age, selected years 1985-98

Characteristic	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a
Total	11.2	10.0	10.5	10.1	9.5	9.6	9.3	9.3	8.8	8.1
Gender										
Male	9.2	8.1	8.5	8.2	7.8	8.1	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.5
Female	13.2	11.9	12.5	12.0	11.2	11.0	10.8	10.7	9.7	8.7
Race and Hispanic origin										
White	10.0	9.2	9.4	8.8	8.4	8.7	8.3	8.3	7.7	7.2 ^d
Black	18.1	14.6	16.8	16.9	15.0	14.3	14.6	14.5	14.3	12.7 ^d
Hispanic ^b	16.5	16.8	16.0	16.5	16.4	16.8	15.9	15.5	14.2	13.7 ^d
Age group										
Ages 16-17	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.3	4.2	4.2	3.8
Ages 18-19	—	—	—	—	—	—	14.6	14.7	13.5	12.5

— = not available

^a Data for 1994 and subsequent years are not strictly comparable with data for prior years, because of major revisions in the Current Population Survey questionnaire and data collection methodology, and because of the inclusion of 1990 census-based population controls in the estimation process.

^b Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

^c Results by age are not comparable to data from previously published tables.

^d The percentages presented above for whites and blacks include Hispanics. In 1998, the percentage for non-Hispanic whites was 5.9 and for non-Hispanic blacks was 12.7.

NOTE: The figures represent an average based on responses to the survey questions for the months that youth are usually in school (January through May and September through December).

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Surveys.

Table ED6

Higher education: Percentage of high school graduates ages 25 to 29 attaining higher degrees by highest degree attained, race, and Hispanic origin, selected years 1980-98

Degree type, race and Hispanic origin	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a
Bachelor's degree or higher^b											
Total	26	26	27	27	27	27	27	28	31	32	31
Race and Hispanic origin											
White, non-Hispanic	28	27	29	30	30	30	30	31	34	35	35
Black, non-Hispanic	15	14	16	13	14	16	16	18	17	16	18
Hispanic ^c	13	18	14	16	16	14	13	16	16	18	17
Associate degree											
Total	—	—	—	—	8	9	10	10	10	9	10
Race and Hispanic origin											
White, non-Hispanic	—	—	—	—	8	9	10	10	10	9	10
Black, non-Hispanic	—	—	—	—	8	6	8	8	8	7	8
Hispanic ^c	—	—	—	—	7	8	9	7	8	9	9

— = not available

^a Data for 1994 and subsequent years are not strictly comparable with data for prior years, because of major revisions in the Current Population Survey questionnaire and data collection methodology, and because of the inclusion of 1990 census-based population controls in the estimation process.

^b This was measured as completed 4 or more years of college, 1980-1991.

^c Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

NOTE: Analyses of the 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal study indicated that about 10 percent of all persons attaining a bachelor's degree in that year had previously earned an associate degree. National Center for Education Statistics.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education, 1998* and tabulations.

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National Household Education Survey

The National Household Education Survey (NHES) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics collects detailed information about education issues through a household-based survey using telephone interviews. The sample for the NHES is drawn from the non-institutionalized civilian population in households having a telephone in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In each survey, between 54,000 and 64,000 households are screened to identify persons eligible for one of the topical components. Generally, each collection covers two topical components, and researchers conduct between 10,000 and 15,000 interviews for each component. The data are weighted to permit estimates of the entire population. In addition, the NHES design samples minorities at a higher rate in order to increase the reliability of estimates for these groups.

The 1991 NHES contained a component on early childhood program participation. Investigators screened approximately 60,000 households to identify a sample of about 14,000 children, 3 to 8 years old. They interviewed parents of the children in order to collect information about the children's educational activities and the role of the family in the children's learning. In 1993, NHES fielded a school readiness component in which parents of approximately 11,000 children age 3 through second grade were asked about their children's experiences in early childhood programs, developmental level, school adjustment and related problems, early primary school experiences, general health and nutrition status, home activities, and family characteristics, including family stability and economic risk factors. In 1995, NCES also fielded an early childhood program participation component, similar to that of 1991. It entailed screening approximately 44,000 households, and the interviewing of 14,000 parents of children from birth through third grade. In 1996, NCES fielded a parent and family involvement in education component, interviewing nearly 21,000 parents of children from age 3 through 12th grade.

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National Immunization Survey

The National Immunization Survey (NIS) is a continuing nationwide telephone sample survey among families with children 19 to 35 months of age. Estimates of vaccine-specific coverage are available for national, State, and 28 urban areas.

The NIS uses a two-stage sample design. First, a random-digit-dialing sample of telephone numbers is drawn. When households with age-eligible children are contacted, the interviewer collects information on the vaccinations received by all age-eligible children. The interviewer also collects information on the vaccination providers. In the second phase, all vaccination providers are contacted by mail. Providers' responses are combined with information obtained from the households to render estimates of vaccination coverage levels more accurately. Final estimates are adjusted for non-coverage of households without telephones.

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National Linked File of Live Births and Infant Deaths

The National Linked File of Live Births and Infant Deaths is a data file for research on infant mortality. Beginning with the 1995 data, this file is produced in two formats. The file is first released as a period data file and then later released as a cohort file. In the birth cohort format, it comprises linked vital records for infants born in a given year who died in that year or the next year before their first birthday. In the period format, the numerator consists of all infant deaths occurring in one year, with deaths linked to the corresponding birth certificates from that year or the previous year. The linked file includes all the variables on the national natality file, as well as medical information reported for the same infant on the death record and the age of the infant at death. The use of linked files avoids discrepancies in the reporting of race between the birth and infant death certificates. Although discrepancies are rare for white and black infants, they can be substantial for other races. National linked files are available starting with the birth cohort of 1983. No linked file was produced for

National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is mandated by Congress to monitor continuously the knowledge, skills, and performance of the Nation's children and youth. NAEP assesses students ages 9, 13, and 17 and students at various grade levels in reading and mathematics at least every 2 years, in science and writing at least every 4 years, and in history or geography and other subjects at least every 6 years. A variation of matrix sampling is used so that the results from a large number of items could be generalized to an entire population. Approximately 2,600 students respond to each block of items. Performance data are reported by scaled proficiency items.

NAEP has been designed to produce a representative sample at the national level. In each of the 1990-96 assessments, investigators collected data from a national probability sample of more than 45,000 students per age/grade or a total of about 146,000 students in nearly 2,100 schools. Performance data are reported for the Nation and for various subgroups categorized by variables such as region, gender, race/ethnicity, parental education, type of school, and type and size of community.

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National Crime Victimization Survey

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is the Nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization. Each year, researchers obtained data from a nationally representative sample of roughly 49,000 households comprising more than 100,000 persons 12 years of age and older on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States. The survey fully reports the likelihood of victimization by rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft for the population as a whole, as well as for segments of the population such as adolescents over the age of 12, women, the elderly, members of various racial groups, city dwellers, or other groups. Victims are also asked about whether they reported the incident to the police and, in the instances of personal violent crimes, they are asked about the characteristics of the perpetrator. The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and the characteristics of

violent offenders. It has been ongoing since 1973 and was redesigned in 1992.

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National Health Interview Survey

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) is a continuing nationwide sample survey of the civilian non-institutionalized population in which data are collected by personal household interviews. Interviewers obtain information on personal and demographic characteristics, including race and ethnicity by self-reporting or as reported by an informant. Investigators also collect data about illnesses, injuries, impairments, chronic conditions, activity limitation caused by chronic conditions, utilization of health services, and other health topics. Each year the survey is reviewed and special topics are added or deleted. For most health topics, the survey collects data over an entire year. During 1994, a special survey supplement to the NHIS was collected, called the National Health Interview Survey on Disability (NHIS-D). The NHIS-D collected data on various impairments, chronic health conditions, health care utilization, and limitations in activities of daily living.

The NHIS sample includes an over-sample of black and Hispanic persons and is designed to allow the development of national estimates of health conditions, health service utilization, and problems of the U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population. The response rate for the ongoing part of the survey has been between 94 and 98 percent over the years. In 1996, interviewers collected information for the basic questionnaire on 63,402 persons, including 18,128 children.

Descriptions of the survey design, the methods used in estimation, and the general qualifications of the data are presented in:

- Massey, J.T., Moore, T.F., Parsons, V.L., and Tadros, W. (1989). Design and estimation for the National Health Interview Survey, 1985-1994. *Vital and Health Statistics*, 2 (110). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- Benson, V. and Marano, M. (1998). Current estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, 1995. *Vital and Health Statistics*, 10 (199). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.



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FACTS AND FIGURES

Key facts about American children

Updated July 9, 1998

- 1 in 2** preschoolers has a mother in the labor force.
- 1 in 2** will live in a single-parent family at some point in childhood.
- 1 in 2** never completes a single year of college.
- 1 in 3** is born to unmarried parents.
- 1 in 3** will be poor at some point in childhood.
- 1 in 3** is a year or more behind in school.
- 1 in 4** is born poor.
- 1 in 4** is born to a mother who did not graduate from high school.
- 1 in 4** lives with only one parent.
- 1 in 5** is poor now.
- 1 in 5** lives in a family receiving food stamps.
- 1 in 5** is born to a mother who received no prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy.
- 1 in 5** is poor today.
- 1 in 6** has a foreign-born mother.
- 1 in 7** has no health insurance.
- 1 in 7** lives with a working relative but is poor nonetheless.
- 1 in 8** is born to a teenage mother.
- 1 in 8** never graduates from high school.
- 1 in 11** lives at less than half the poverty level.
- 1 in 12** has a disability.
- 1 in 13** is born at low birthweight.
- 1 in 24** is born to a mother who received late or no prenatal care.
- 1 in 25** lives with neither parent.
- 1 in 132** dies before age 1.
- 1 in 680** is killed by gunfire before age 20.

Source: *The State of America's Children Yearbook 1998*, available from [CDF Publications](#).

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Support all families: end the "Mommy Wars"

We need to support *all* parents in their child care choices. Helping parents who need to find good child care so they can work, and helping parents who stay at home, are complementary — not competing — efforts.

While support should be made available to help families who have one parent at home to care for the children, it is important to remember that the majority of American families do not fit the picture of one parent working and one parent staying home. Most young children do not have "stay-at-home" moms. Many parents do not have the option of staying at home to care for children. Even many "stay-at-home" mothers use child care at some point — either because they want their child to get a preschool experience, or because they end up going back to work. The Children's Defense Fund supports helping *all* families by:

- ✓ Expanding child care assistance to low-income working parents;
- ✓ Improving the quality of care through the Child Care and Development Block Grant;
- ✓ Expanding the Dependent Care Tax Credit to serve low- and middle-income families and families where one parent stays at home to care for the children;
- ✓ Increasing funding to provide after-school activities for the nearly 5 million children left home alone each week, through the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the 21st Century Learning Centers.

Many parents do not have the option of staying at home to care for children.

- About half of America's families with young children earn less than \$35,000 per year.¹
- One out of three children of working



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! (5)

One out of three children of working mothers are poor even though their mother works, or *would* be poor if their mother didn't work.²

CDF testimony on
TANF and child care

Background

Major federal child
care programs

Federal and state
partners

- A national study found that 55 percent of working women provide half or more of their household income.³
- A significant number of mothers in the labor force are a primary financial support for their children — in 1996, 29 percent of all mothers in the labor force who had children younger than six were single parents.⁴
- A recent study found that the U.S. is one of six out of 150 countries that does not provide *paid* maternity leave that would allow parents to stay home during the first critical months.⁵

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5.

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Most young children do not have "stay-at-home" moms.

FEM

- 60 percent of *children**

under the age of five do not have a "stay-at-home" mom — instead their mothers are in the labor force or in school, or they have a single father in the labor force. More than half of these children have mothers who work full-time.⁶

- 5
- Only 40 percent of *children* under the age of five have at least one parent not in the labor force.⁷

This includes children with single non-employed parents, including an estimated 2 million children younger than five whose parents are on welfare — many of these parents are now required to work under the 1996 welfare law.⁸

- In 1996, only 23 percent of all *families* with children younger than six — and only one-third of married-couple families with young children — had one parent working and one parent who stayed at home.⁹

P + 5

★

Many "stay-at-home" mothers use child care at some point — either because they want their child to get a preschool experience, or because they end up going back to work.

- In 1996, about 2.7 million (or one out of every three) preschool-age children whose mothers were *not* in the labor force were being cared for in non-parental child care on a regular basis. Child care centers were the most common child care arrangement reported for these children.¹⁰
- Many parents, whether or not they are employed, want their child to get some preschool experience before they enter kindergarten. For example, in 1996, 84 percent of all *five-year-old children* who had not yet entered kindergarten were in non-parental care, with *fully 75 percent* of all five-year-olds not yet in school being cared for in a child care center as a regular child care arrangement. This includes children of employed and

non-employed mothers.¹¹

- Many mothers who *do* stay home end up going back to work during their child's life — which means that they will use some form of child care even if they stay at home during the early years. For example, the labor force participation of *mothers* with children of different ages rises from 62 percent of mothers with children younger than three, to 69 percent with children ages 3-5, to 77.5 percent with children ages 6-13. In all of these age ranges, the majority of these mothers worked full-time.¹²

Mothers are still entering the workforce in increasing numbers.

- The proportion of *mothers* who are in the labor force and who have children younger than six rose from 56 percent in 1988 to 65 percent in 1997.¹³
- 5 • The proportion of *children* younger than six whose mothers were in the labor force rose from 51 percent in 1988 to 59 percent in 1997.¹⁴
- More than half — 55 percent — of mothers with infants younger than one were in the labor force in 1995.¹⁵

*Note: this presents the number of children with mothers in the labor force, rather than the more commonly used number of mothers in the labor force -- which is why these percentages may look somewhat different than those that are more commonly reported. Later facts reported below show the proportion of mothers in the labor force. [top](#)

Source Notes

1. US Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P60-197, *Money and Income in the United States: 1996* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1997). [top](#)
2. Calculations of data for 1996 from the 1997 Current Population Survey by the Children's Defense Fund. [top](#)
3. Whirlpool Foundation Study by the Families and Work Institute, *Women: The New Providers* (NY, NY: Families and Work Institute, May 1995). [top](#)
4. U.S. Census Bureau, *Money Income in the U.S.*, 1996, P60-197 (Washington, DC: US Department of Commerce, 1997). [top](#)
5. International Labour Organization, *Maternity Protection At Work*, (Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization, 1998). [top](#)
6. 34 percent have mothers who work full-time, 18 percent of children younger than 5 have mothers who work part-time, and 8 percent of children younger than five have mothers who are looking for work, single employed fathers or single fathers who are looking for work, and mothers who are in education. Reanalysis of Heritage Foundation study. Original data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Who's Minding Our Preschoolers?* Fall 1994 (Update), detailed tables and documentation for P70-62, Issued November 1997, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, *United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin*, release PPL-57, 1990-1996. [top](#)
7. 34 percent have mothers who work full-time, 18 percent of children younger

than 5 have mothers who work part-time, and 8 percent of children younger than five have mothers who are looking for work, single employed fathers or single fathers who are looking for work, and mothers who are in education. Reanalysis of Heritage Foundation study. Original data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Who's Minding Our Preschoolers?* Fall 1994 (Update), detailed tables and documentation for P70-62, Issued November 1997, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division, *United States Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin*, release PPL-57, 1990-1996. [top](#)

8. Estimates of the number of children younger than five whose parents are on TANF in 1997, by the Children's Defense Fund using data on welfare family characteristics from 1995 (the most recent data available) applied to 1997 caseload data. Data on 1997 TANF caseload from the Department of Health and Human Services website -- <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/caseload.htm>. Data on characteristics of welfare families from 1995 Characteristics report also from the website, at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/list.htm>, Tables 7, 11, 18, and 22. [top](#)
9. U.S. Census Bureau, *Money Income in the U.S.*, 1996, P60-197 (Washington, DC: 1997). [top](#)
10. In addition, another 700,000 children whose mothers were looking for work were cared for by someone other than their parents. This represented 42 percent of the children of unemployed mothers -- again, the most common single child care arrangement that was used for these children was child care centers. National Center for Education Statistics, *Child Care and Early Education Program Participation of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers* (Washington, DC: NCES, October 1996). [top](#)
11. National Center for Education Statistics, *Child Care and Early Education Program Participation of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers* (Washington, DC: NCES, October 1996). [top](#)
12. In the labor force includes mothers who are employed as well as mothers who are looking for work. Unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force from the March 1997 Current Population Survey*, (US Department of Labor, Washington, DC: 1997). [top](#)
13. In the labor force includes mothers who are employed as well as mothers who are looking for work. Unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force from the March 1997 Current Population Survey*, (US Department of Labor, Washington, DC: 1997). [top](#)
14. In the labor force includes mothers who are employed as well as mothers who are looking for work. Unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force from the March 1997 Current Population Survey*, (US Department of Labor, Washington, DC: 1997). [top](#)
15. Data from 1995, the most recent available. The vast majority of these women were employed -- 50% of all mothers with children younger than one were working, and another 5% were looking for work. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women: June 1995 Update* Current Population Survey P20-499 (U.S. Department of Commerce: Washington, DC, Oct. 1997). [top](#)

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Investor's Business Daily

June 11, 1999

SECTION: National Issue; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 1435 words

HEADLINE: SHOULD SCHOOL START AT AGE 3?

BYLINE: By Anna Bray Duff, Investor's Daily

BODY:

Not so long ago, all kids started school in first grade. Then kindergarten came along. Is universal preschool next?

Vice President Al Gore thinks it should be. In a recent campaign speech, Gore called for universal - voluntary - preschool as one part of his larger agenda to improve the nation's education system.

If Gore becomes president, he'll push for extra tax dollars to go to preschool programs. Starting school earlier could help kids do better later on, he says.

"First, we must begin at the beginning - by making high- quality preschool fully available to every family, for every child, in every community in America," Gore said.

A startling 42% of the nation's fourth-graders read at a level lower than that deemed "basic" by experts. More and more, educators explain that failure by arguing that as many as a third of kids arrive at kindergarten or first grade not "ready to learn."

But critics say we shouldn't blame the nation's education problems on kids -especially very young ones. Instead, they point to schools that don't teach. And others think making preschool universal is merely a way to have the federal government subsidize day care on the sly.

The lion's share of kids already attend some type of preschool. A 1995 study showed that nearly 80% of 4-year-olds went to preschool either full time or part time. And almost 70% of 3-year-olds did.

We spent \$ 34 billion on child care and preschool in 1998, according to a new study by Merrill Lynch & Co. That included spending for government programs like Head Start, private and nonprofit day-care centers and employer-sponsored operations.

The Families and Work Institute also notes 39 states have some kind of public preschool programs, usually for poor or disabled children. Each year, the

federal Head Start program spends nearly \$ 5 billion serving poor children of preschool age.

So why aren't children doing better in school?

Some say preschool and day-care programs aren't good enough - although there's little agreement on what makes a good program.

'Standards and consistency are pitifully lacking in the preschools in this country,' said Linda Bevilacqua, director of early childhood programs at the Core Knowledge Foundation. 'Many are not even able to say what it is they are trying to do in terms of a curriculum.'

She argues that to work - especially for disadvantaged kids - preschool programs need to stress content areas and language development more than most do now.

Academic preschool programs are common in Europe, Bevilacqua says, where they've helped poor children close the learning gap with wealthier kids. And most experts agree that early intervention is extremely important for kids with special needs.

A study released this week showed that kids in high-quality day-care programs (as judged by researchers) scored slightly higher on a test of language skills by the second grade than those who went through low-quality programs. The study only included kids who were in full-time, year-round day care.

'The benefits were particularly important for very low-income children and for children whose mothers were less educated,' said Lynn Kagan, a Yale University researcher who helped conduct the study.

Indeed, most research on preschool or child care finds that poor children benefit most, at least in the short run. And they're least likely to have what researchers deem quality child care.

Still, those benefits typically fade as kids get further along in elementary school, for reasons that aren't well understood.

Backers of early childhood education often point to the Perry Preschool Project of the 1960s as proof that it can have lasting effects.

That study followed 123 low-IQ, at-risk students until they were 27. Half of them had high-quality preschool as 3- and 4-year-olds; the other half didn't. The kids who were in preschool stayed in school about a year longer and were less likely to go on welfare.

Yet the federal government hasn't been able to duplicate those results on a grander scale. There's little research showing whether the \$ 5 billion Head Start program, which now serves about 860,000 children, has helped kids later on.

Within two years of leaving Head Start's preschool program, a 1985 study by the Department of Health and Human Services found, 'there are no educationally meaningful differences on any of the measures.'

Since then, there's been no research comparing Head Start children to non-Head Start kids, a 1997 report by the General Accounting Office found.

Gore's education agenda doesn't mention reforming Head Start.

Others say the push to get average kids into preschool may hurt them later on.

"What I fear about early childhood programs is that they are turning into mini-elementary schools," said David Elkind, professor of child study at Tufts University. "There is no evidence that starting normal kids early gives them a head start, and there are a lot of risks."

Elkind thinks putting preschool-aged kids into too- structured environments has stressed them out, causing more health, behavior and learning problems.

"Centuries of experience tells us that what kids need to do is to exercise their senses, to learn about their world," he said.

Others say making preschool universal won't improve education because it will ~~merely keep kids in a failed public school system an extra year.~~

"How wise is it to expand the public school system when that is what is inadequate, especially in areas with lots of disadvantaged students?" asked Darcy Olsen, a Cato Institute analyst.

Kids have trouble learning to read because existing schools aren't teaching them properly, says Regna Lee Wood, an analyst at the National Right to Read Foundation who backs teaching phonics. "The answer is there if people will look at it," Wood said.

Wood says preschool-aged children need to develop ~~"phonemic awareness"~~ - the ability to distinguish the different sounds in a word - and a good spoken vocabulary before they can learn to read easily when they get to elementary school.

Helping a child learn phonemic awareness may sound a lot harder than it is. Children learn it by listening to adults talk to them using lots of different words in nursery rhymes, stories and poems. They don't learn this by watching TV, Wood says.

Wood suspects that day care may enhance some problems for those learning to read because kids get so little one-on- one time talking with and listening to adults.

Some critics think the push for universal preschool has less to do with improving education than it has to do with boosting the prospects for subsidizing day care.

"Is this a back-door way to give tax breaks to people who consume day care and put more of a tax burden on people who struggle to stay home and raise their children?" asked Diane Fisher, a psychologist and board member of the Independent Women's Forum.

Investor's Business Daily, June 11, 1999

Just 16% of children younger than 5 are in full-time day care or preschool. Another 11% get care from a nanny. The rest are primarily taken care of by a stay-at-home parent or other relative.

Still, it's not clear parents want subsidized day care. Some federal lawmakers tried to pass subsidies last year. That attempt flopped and hasn't yet been resurrected this year.

Why? Few parents are against quality day care, Olsen says, but what they really want is more time with their kids.

One poll conducted for Glamour magazine in 1997 found that 88% of women agreed with the statement: "If I could afford it, I would rather be at home with my children."

A 1997 study by the Families and Work Institute found that two-thirds of employed parents feel they don't get enough time for their children.

Universal preschool wouldn't be cheap, because it takes a lot of teachers to keep up with toddlers. Gore's campaign staffers insist that all of his education programs would come "within the context of a balanced budget."

That could be tough - especially since the Gore campaign's likely to promise other new spending programs. In New York and Georgia, two states adding universal preschool programs, preschool costs roughly \$ 3,400 per child a year.

A 1998 study by the National Education Association pegs the possible cost of quality universal preschool even higher, close to \$ 150 billion, or between \$ 8,000 and \$ 9,000 for each child younger than 5.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 11, 1999

52ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Chicago Tribune

June 17, 1999 Thursday, CHICAGO SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: COMMENTARY; Pg. 30; ZONE: N; Voice of the people (letter).

LENGTH: 256 words

HEADLINE: LET KIDS BE KIDS

BYLINE: Elizabeth Pearson.

DATELINE: ELMHURST

BODY:

E.J. Dionne Jr. touted Al Gore's "intriguing" idea of a "universal preschool" as something "really big." (Op Ed, June 1) Such a plan instead could prove to be a really big disaster.

If Gore could have his way, we would hook babies up to the computer at birth. He thinks the sooner a child is exposed to organized mental challenge, the better.

Forget about letting kids be kids. Saddle them instead with formal learning and homework from the start--which most kids are sick of by fifth grade--and give them very little time at home and at play. And take away the few years that parents have to instill proper habits, right values, ethnic traditions and loyalties, respect for family and others, which should be taught in these early years

We should build this proper foundation first and let the economic skills they need later be their formal education. Don't sour them on learning even before confining them within the walls of a school.

Unless she is recognized as a genius, it's wrong to start our daughter on piano lessons at age five to give her an early start. Let her wait until she is 8, and she will 'catch up' in 3 months what she would have learned in 3 years.

Dionne and Gore both admit a universal preschool program would not be cheap. No one is better able to handle preschool than live-in teachers-- parents--and the cost is far less. To deprive parents of this privilege will cost our nation an unprecedented number of estranged, alienated children --something which, tragically, we are already witnessing.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 17, 1999

90TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Chicago Sun-Times, Inc.
Chicago Sun-Times

March 17, 1999, WEDNESDAY, Late Sports Final Edition

SECTION: EDT; Pg. 45

LENGTH: 721 words

HEADLINE: Preschool bill flunks reason

SOURCE: RICH HEIN

BYLINE: Dennis Byrne

BODY:

When I briefly mentioned in last Sunday's column that some nanny lawmakers were trying to require your 3- and 4-year-olds to attend "universal preschool," I figured that I'd hear some outrage.

After all, when choice and privacy are considered to be today's highest rights, you'd expect lots of people to object to having their children shipped off, like so many cattle, to school when the kids barely are old enough to understand why they are being taken from their parents.

But aside from people who follow these issues, I heard hardly anything. I fear this means one of two things: (1) We've become so used to the idea that government (read: the education industry) knows so much better how to raise our kids that no one finds it surprising or discomforting that toddlers should be rounded up and shipped off. Or (2) today's parents have become so self-absorbed that they welcome the government taking their pesky brats off their hands.

But for those who care about our children, here are some details of this horrific idea: Darcy Ann Olsen, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, a conservative think tank, has discovered an increasing trend across the country to pass legislation requiring public school districts to provide no-fee pre-kindergarten classes for all 3- and 4-year-olds.

Georgia and New York already have implemented universal preschool programs for 4-year-olds, and other states are moving in that direction. The proposals vary widely, with some advocates wanting to include infants and toddlers and some wanting attendance to be compulsory. Most proposals, however, are "universal," meaning that they are not directed just at someone else's kids, but yours too.

The rationale is research that shows the success of "early childhood interventions," such as Head Start, especially for kids labeled "disadvantaged."

Chicago Sun-Times, March 17, 1999

Never mind that the research is under attack, with some studies showing the benefits wearing off in a year or two, or that "early intervention" may be a danger to middle-class children. Never mind, too, that the idea offends the common-sense truth that most kids that age raised in normal (dare I use such a term?) families benefit more from unstructured, imaginative play than from institutionalized confinement.

In Illinois, we haven't yet arrived at such notions. But we're on our way. House Bill 567, which lowers the compulsory school age from 7 to 6, has passed the state House 95-16, and awaits assignment to a Senate committee. Last year the bill passed the House 102-14, but died in the Senate. If you have any doubt where its left-wing sponsors are leading us, one liberal lawmaker tried to attach an amendment that said, in effect, as long as we're making 6 mandatory, why not 5?

Backers of the bill (mostly organized education special interests) pointed out that so many 6-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten anyway that it would affect only 8,000 children. But do none of these geniuses ask themselves that maybe there is good reason that some of the 8,000 children aren't attending? That maybe their parents don't think they're ready for it; that they're better off at home in their most formative years directly under the influence of a stay-at-home parent? Or more basically, why do we need such a law in the first place?

Nah, no such questions are allowed in the rush to find more ways to "intervene" in parental decisions. Take House Bill 1341. It would require that "child care settings" that don't have to be licensed under the law must register with the Department of Children and Family Services.

Wonderful. That means registration for any civic, charitable, government or religious organizations -- Boy Scouts, Sunday school classes, any group that gets together to watch your kids, even for a Mom's Day Out. DFCS itself isn't thrilled about this costly idea, but its left-wing "take-over-your-job" proponents say it's necessary for -- get this -- notifying parents of things like crib recalls. Actually, the left wing believes it's necessary because it's the first step to full licensing and regulation of child care.

Least I forget before going: There's House Bill 440, which would turn truant kindergartners over to the juvenile court.

With all these "interventions," won't our kids come out just perfect?

E-mail: dbyrnefinteraccess.com

GRAPHIC: Vice President Al Gore -- who supports a large, intrusive federal education bureaucracy -- helps 4-year-old Maggie Butzen classify an earthworm during a 1997 visit to Galileo Academy, 820 S. Carpenter.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: March 17, 1999

78TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

May 23, 1999, Sunday, SUNDAY EDITION

SECTION: A, Pg. 23

LENGTH: 666 words

HEADLINE: Gore's plan: Pricey, trendy and very iffy

BYLINE: Debra J Saunders

BODY:

To go by the education speech Veep Al Gore made in Iowa last Sunday - a speech billed as the first big policy address of his presidential campaign - Gore promises to do as much for public schools as he has done for charisma. That is: Take more than he gives.

Of course, Gore wants to "revolutionize education" by doing what he does best: **spending other people's money**. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to think about spending wisely. And Gore is not so revolutionary as to feel the need to explain how much **his initiatives** would cost taxpayers.

And there are some pricey items in Gore's list of goodies. He has called for universal preschool for America's 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. **The Children's Research Center** estimated good programs would have to cost at least \$ 5,000 per child per year back in 1994. In California alone, up to 1 million students would be eligible. State schools chief Delaine Eastin, who supports the idea, expects it to cost **\$5 billion annually** - just for California.

Gore also said he wants to reduce class size across the country to 18 students per classroom in early grades and 20 students thereafter. That's a huge expenditure that would require building more classrooms as well as hiring more teachers. Again, Gore left out how he'd pay for it.

The No. 2 problem with Gore's seven- point plan: He cites no research that indicates his ideas will improve learning. He's ready to spend billions on a gamble.

No one knows whether national class-size reductions in high school will increase learning. (Countries with classes of 40 students or more have scored higher on international scholastic tests than the United States.) No one knows if universal preschool will help middle-class children. Some studies suggest it could hurt them.

In the true Clinton spirit, Gore has figured that the way to woo America is to send this message: If you have a need, he has a federal government program for it. A program you won't have to pay for.

There's a need for teachers? Gore wants to offer would-be teachers a "\$ 10,000 bonus." Why \$ 10,000? Probably because 10,000 makes a nice round number.

It goes with the 100,000 teachers Clintonia has promised to place in classrooms across the land.

Gore is even ready to show he cares by proposing things schools have been doing for years without him. He called for "second-chance schools" for students who, say, were caught with a gun and expelled from their school. Good idea. California calls those schools continuation schools, and they've been around since 1919.

To his credit, Gore also called for "rigorous" exams for new teachers, then frequent testing of teachers every five years thereafter. His "goodbye tenure" message sounds brave, except that he doesn't have the authority to overturn collective bargaining agreements. And he knows it.

Most infuriating is that the federal government does have a worthy role in public education, but Gore seems clueless as to what it is.

The federal government already funds some studies to determine which curricula work best for large populations of children, particularly poor children. Alas, the fed also pays for trendy experimental programs, and keeps funding them even if there's no proof they improve learning for most students, as long as there is flimsy evidence that they make kids happy.

It would make sense for a presidential candidate to promise to revamp education spending by insisting that taxpayers only fund programs that really work.

He could promise to defund programs that don't show strong results. He could turn the federal government into a clearinghouse for research, the place where local school districts can go to find out what curricula work best. He could have promoted phonics and other basic skills initiatives that help poor kids do well.

Instead he committed billions on guesses. That makes Gore a regular educator and a typical pol: a Santa Claus for dummies.

Ms. Saunders is a columnist for Creators Syndicate.

LOAD-DATE: May 27, 1999

76TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Roanoke Times & World News

May 24, 1999, Monday, METRO EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL, Pg. A8

LENGTH: 414 words

HEADLINE: ALL CHILDREN NEED A PRESCHOOL HEAD START

BODY:

GOALS 2000? At the top of Vice President Al Gore's list, obviously, is winning the presidency.

Recently unveiling nearly two dozen proposals for improving public education, Gore did not mention that America's Goals 2000, set 10 years ago as the national agenda for education, had this at the top of the list: By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

As numerous educators will attest, many children across the economic spectrum are nowhere near ready to learn when they start school, and it appears unlikely that will change by Jan. 1, 2000. America, however, could come closer to achieving its No. 1 educational priority if it would get the lead out and get going on one of Gore's recommendations:

Voluntary preschool programs should be available for every child in every state.

Virginia, to its credit, has made strides in recent years toward extending preschool programs for "at-risk" 4-year-olds - children deemed vulnerable to academic failure because of homelessness, chronic illnesses, unemployed parents, working-poor parents and other factors.

But, largely because of the expense involved, Virginia and most other states have stopped short of mandating that public preschool programs be available to all children whose parents want them to have this early-education opportunity. As a result, many children - and increasingly they are from middle-class families that can't afford private preschool programs - miss out on critically important early-learning experiences they need to be "ready" for kindergarten and the early primary grades.

Gore's proposal that the federal government take the lead in closing this educational gap is sound - both from an educational and financial perspective.

Toddlers' brains are little engines, turned on and ready to go, basically, from birth. If denied knowledge and skills, the engines' power is wasted, and the children are behind by the time their formal education begins at age 5 or 6. Wasted, too, is the opportunity for taxpayers to get the full bang for their education bucks. By one estimate, every \$ 1 invested in quality preschool education saves at least \$ 3 in later bills for special education, remedial education and many social costs associated with school failures and school

dropouts.

The absence of universal preschool opportunities is, in fact, waste in government that must be corrected. That shouldn't await the outcome of the 2000 presidential election.

LOAD-DATE: May 26, 1999

70TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Washington Times

June 9, 1999, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: PART A; NATION; Pg. A3

LENGTH: 577 words

HEADLINE: Study highlights child care benefits, backs calls for more federal funding

BYLINE: Cheryl Wetzstein; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

The benefits of high-quality child care are so significant that they often last through the second grade, a national study released yesterday finds.

The results bolster calls for more government funding to improve the quality of child care, tax incentives to help parents afford good child care, and more training to ensure that teachers give the best care.

"We need to rally even more support for this pivotal family issue," Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said at a press conference to release the Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Study.

"Every child needs intellectual stimulation, trained caregivers, emotional support, a safe and healthy environment and active parental involvement," Mr. Riley said.

Critics said the study glosses over the desires of working parents and the primary need of children for their parents.

America's working parents do not want more government-run child care - they want more time with their children, said Family Research Council leader and talk-show host Janet Parshall.

"I think every child needs security, emotional stability and consistent care provided by somebody who loves them, cares for them and is passionate about them, and in many cases, that care is best provided by Mom," said Marion Gormley of Mothers At Home, a Vienna group.

Meanwhile, the study likely will become fodder in the emerging battle over mandatory, taxpayer-funded "universal preschool" for all 3- or 4-year-olds.

Vice President Al Gore has endorsed such an idea and a handful of states either have, or are strongly considering having, voluntary no-fee preschool classes.

Darcy Olsen of the Cato Institute said that requiring preschool classes is misguided because early intervention programs, including the venerable Head Start program, have been shown to have "no meaningful long-term effects on the

cognitive, social or emotional development of participating children."

"It's irresponsible," she added, "to expand public schools when so many are failing to educate the children already enrolled."

The \$2.3 million study was begun in 1993 to analyze typical child care centers and measure how their care affected children's development.

Researchers at Yale University, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and University of California at Los Angeles looked at 826 children in 401 full-day, full-year child care centers in their regions.

In 1995, researchers released the first findings: three-quarters of 100 centers were of mediocre quality, according to standards set by child care professionals.

The latest results reveal that children who attended high-quality child care centers performed better in both cognitive skills (like math and language abilities) and social skills.

The children maintained these good measures at least through kindergarten and in many cases through the end of second grade.

The study also found that:

- * Children whose mothers had lower levels of education responded most dramatically to high-quality care.

- * The quality of the child care classroom practices affected the children's cognitive development, while the teacher-child relationship influenced their social development.

To date, U.S. working parents have preferred that they or other relatives care for their preschoolers. The Census Bureau found in 1994 that half of the 10.3 million preschoolers whose mothers work were cared for by relatives.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 9, 1999

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Copyright 1999 The Des Moines Register, Inc.
The Des Moines Register

June 19, 1999, Saturday

SECTION: Main News Pg.11

LENGTH: 641 words

HEADLINE: 'Revelations' on child care mask hidden agenda

BYLINE: Kathleen Parker

SOURCE: Orlando Sentinel

BODY:

Kathleen Parker

OK, morons, listen up. The federal government has some important parenting information for you: What happens to babies matters.

I know, I know. Now they tell us.

This riveting revelation was revealed by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley at a recent press conference. Although I wasn't personally able to hear Riley speak, I felt certain upon reading his dumbed-down remarks that he must have changed out of his suit coat into a cardigan sweater and sneakers.

We like you, too, Mr. Secretary -just the way you are. But we liked you better when you spoke to us as fellow adults with measurable brain activity.

Worse than the pabulum-talk is the hidden meaning within the message. Riley, in fact, wasn't talking about the importance of better parenting -more Mom-and-Dad time -only **better institutionalized government care at earlier ages.**

Here's what Riley said:

"The quality of experiences in the early years matters, and there appear to be critical periods in the first few years of life for acquiring certain language and cognitive skills. Therefore, the stakes are highest in the earliest years -the stage in life when children are their most vulnerable, and a stage when it has proved difficult to build support for public investment."

Here's what he meant:

Because children are fragile and learn easily in their early years -and parents are inept, stupid clods who can't balance their own checkbooks, much less read between the lines -we need to raise more taxes to pay for year-round government nurseries.

The stated present goal, which already has been endorsed by aspiring-president Al Gore, is voluntary, universal preschool for all 3-or 4-year-olds.

The Des Moines Register, June 19, 1999

In the current climate of Big-Daddy-Knows-Best, can involuntary "preschool" be far behind?

The government's searing deductions are based on a \$ 2.3 million study begun in 1993 to analyze child-care centers and the effects of early care on child development. Preliminary findings released in 1995 showed that three-quarters of 100 child-care centers studied were of "mediocre quality."

This go-round, they discovered that children who attended high-quality child-care centers performed better in cognitive (math and language abilities) and social skills. High quality is better than low quality? And you say your tax dollars don't work.

Researchers also found (I hope you're sitting down) that children whose mothers had "lower levels of education" responded most dramatically to high-quality care. (Read: Take a kid out of a home absent books, language skills, nutrition and lighting, put him in a room with all of the above, and he'll perform better in first grade.)

Riley further remarked on the need for better day care to accommodate all those "hard-working Americans," former welfare clients who, now forced to pay their own bills, are in a child-care quandary. Ah, the ubiquitous welfare card.

I'm all for rescuing babies who need rescuing and providing temporary assistance to the less fortunate.

What offends thinking Americans is that our government wastes \$ 2.3 million to "discover" the obvious and then double-speaks to cloud the true objective: ~~more taxes, more bureaucracy, more government supplanting family responsibilities and life options.~~

If former welfare mothers need help, let's help them. But let's not presume that because a small segment of society is ailing, everyone needs hospitalization.

We don't need a national day-care system run by the same bureaucrats who, by the way, can't manage to teach basic skills in upper grades.

Nor do we need higher taxes to fund such programs, the effect of which is to further deplete the resources (and freedom) Americans need to run their own lives and raise their own children.

KATHLEEN PARKER writes for the Orlando Sentinel.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: June 22, 1999

29TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Seattle Post-Intelligencer
SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

June 27, 1999, Sunday , FINAL

SECTION: P-I FOCUS, Pg. D1

LENGTH: 637 words

HEADLINE: MR. RILEY'S NEIGHBORHOOD;
WHAT THE EDUCATION SECRETARY IS REALLY ANGLING FOR IS NATIONAL DAY CARE

BYLINE: Kathleen Parker

BODY:

OK, morons, listen up. The federal government has some important parenting information for you: What happens to babies matters.

I know, I know. Now they tell us.

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This article was distributed by Tribune Media Services, Inc.

GRAPHIC: Color Drawing

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 28, 1999

development

20TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Investor's Business Daily, Inc.
Investor's Business Daily

July 9, 1999

SECTION: National Issue; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 1801 words

HEADLINE: DOES DAY CARE MAKE KIDS SMARTER?

BYLINE: By Anna Bray Duff, Investor's Daily

BODY:

President Clinton's \$ 21 billion day-care initiative didn't get very far in Congress last year. But that doesn't mean the issue is gone.

Vice President Al Gore has made ''universal preschool'' - and the needs of two-income families - a campaign theme. Hillary Rodham Clinton's Senate campaign could also resurrect calls for a bigger government role in day care - a position she's held for more than a quarter century.

This time, backers of government-funded day care can point to more than stories of stressed-out parents and latchkey kids. Advocates have seized on newly publicized research on how brains develop from birth to age 3 to argue that top-notch day care isn't just something parents need - it's also good for kids.

Without a stimulating environment provided by well-trained professionals, day-care backers say, children may not develop their full potential. And unless the education system is transformed to include these crucial years, schools will never improve.

Still, few media reports about this research have noted that brain science has not concluded that better day care helps kids develop more than stay-at-home parenting. Brain science may be exciting, but it remains a work in progress. And some say leaping from what we know about the brain to how we raise and teach children is more a leap of faith than science.

''Brain research is being used to rationalize whatever it is that people want to do anyway,'' said John Bruer, president of the James S. McDonnell Foundation, a St. Louis-based organization that funds scientific research.

What has brain research purportedly found?

* Fast development of the brain connections - synapses - in the first years of life happens in response to experience; young children are better primed to learn than they will ever be again.

* If certain skills aren't developed during critical periods, often in the

first years of life, those skills will never develop fully.

* "'Enriched'" environments that expose kids to lots of sights, sounds and other sensory stimulation can help increase brain size, the number of synapses - and thus, intelligence.

To some degree, these findings are true.

For example, it's clear that synapses grow fastest in the brains of young children and other animals. In humans, fully grown adults have about the same number of synapses as they did when they were newborns. People also lose synapses as they grow up; a 3-year-old has about 50% more synapses than an adult.

Harry Chugani, a neuroscientist at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, says the synapses you keep are the ones you've used. So kids who have few experiences early in life will lose more of their synapses, and thus their potential, Chugani argues.

This argument is often used to explain why early intervention programs like Head Start, the federal preschool program for poor children, haven't shown lasting effects on intelligence: The programs don't start early enough to prevent the loss of crucial synapses.

The Clinton administration used this argument to launch an "'Early Head Start'" program in 1994 and expand the number of kids in traditional Head Start.

But losing synapses is not the same thing as losing the potential to learn, cautions Bruer. There's no tight link between the number of synapses and the ability to learn, he says. Cognitive development can happen throughout life.

In some cases, losing synapses actually helps you develop normally. For one, when your brain pares away some synapses in the area that controls vision, you develop depth perception.

"'In some areas, synapses seem to be lost no matter what kind of experiences you have,'" said William Greenough, a neuroscientist at the University of Illinois. "'If you didn't lose them, you might be worse off than if you did.'"

Greenough added: "'I like to think of brain development as creating a sculpture out of stone. You chip away at the parts you don't need, and what remains is the creation of a sculpture.'"

It's also true that certain skills have to be developed early to develop at all.

One famous experiment with cats showed that if they had one eye sewn shut as kittens, they would never learn to see with that eye. Likewise, some human eye defects that aren't corrected early in life may lead to irrevocable damage. And while hearing babies babble with the cadence and sounds of their mother tongue, deaf babies do not.

Such critical periods may suggest that schools ought to teach foreign languages and music earlier, Chugani says, if they want kids to be able to develop expert skills.

But ''critical'' or ''sensitive'' periods mostly cover extremely general skills like speech, sight and coordination, Bruer says.

Those skills are needed for normal human function, and their development depends on human experience. For example, to learn to talk, babies need to hear people talking to them and responding to their babble. They don't need to hear specific words, a specific language or a specific story.

What about enriched environments?

Greenough has done much of the research in this area.

He compared brain development in rats that were left in bare cages to those that were allowed to roam a ''complex'' environment which mimics what a rat in the wild might face. Those in the complex environment had more synapses in their brains - at all ages, not just when they were young.

The ability to face new things kept the rat brains developing; Greenough says the same happens with people.

Bruer counters that a complex environment for rats is not the same as an enriched environment for humans -it's more like the setting a kid might have in a normal household. So Greenough's experiments don't directly apply to humans, Bruer says.

Greenough disagrees: ''With caution, you can generalize a bit. The more experience the rats have, the bigger the effect on the brain. I would assume that's true for children as well.''

Another study by researchers at Baylor University found that children who were not played with or touched a lot as babies had brains that were 20% to 30% smaller than normal.

This is the point where science becomes part of the day-care debate. For years, the government has funded projects to provide ''enriched'' preschool environments for poor children or those with special needs. Some have led to better grades and test scores for the kids in the programs.

But it's unclear whether greater use of early childhood education will improve the development of normal children beyond what they get at home. ''There is no evidence to say that preschool has a beneficial effect on normal children,'' Bruer said.

''A lot of this research is being used to gradually repackage day care as early childhood education,'' said Heidi Brennan, director of Mothers at Home, an advocacy group for stay-at-home parents. ''It's contributing to this notion that child rearing is so complicated and difficult that parents can't do it without being trained by professionals.''

What do brain researchers say kids really need?

To develop fully, ''Children need to be in a nice, colorful environment with toys and books,'' Chugani said. ''It should be a warm environment where the child is cuddled, held, read to. There should be a lot of constant interaction

between the child and adult, and a lot of nurturing.'

Some child psychiatrists, like Stanley Greenspan, author of 'The Growth of the Mind,' say parents should rely less on day care during the critical early years. Why? Because day-care providers often have to care for several babies at a time, and babies get new caregivers as they get older.

Others say day care needs to be improved. With greater public funding, the National Association for the Education of Young Children argues, day-care centers could have lower staff-to-children ratios and still be affordable.

But few brain scientists want to get involved in day-care debate. Greenough worries that a race may develop to create programs to exploit the learning possibilities of the early years.

'I agree that the first years of life are important,' he said. 'But what many advocates want to do would divert dollars now used for education in later years, where we know it can have an impact, to the early years, when we don't know how great the impact will be.'

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 09, 1999

10TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 News World Communications, Inc.
The Washington Times

July 18, 1999, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: PART B; COMMENTARY; EDITORIALS; LETTERS; Pg. B2

LENGTH: 387 words

HEADLINE: Parents need tax cuts, not more government intervention

BODY:

Liberals such as Education Secretary Richard W. Riley, promoting better institutional, governmental care for younger children, and Vice President Al Gore, "advocating voluntary, universal preschools for 3-or-4-year-old children," on the surface always sound benevolent and benign ("Connecting the agenda dots of child care," June 17).

We must look beneath all of the glowing discourse of "family values" that has emerged recently from the left. The real agenda for both radical liberals and some social service professionals is to make day care and before- and after-school care part of the infrastructure of our society. **The intention is to strip parents of their authority and put children under the control of government - all day long and throughout childhood.**

One way this is evidenced is by the push for the expansion of before- and after-school programs. As an example, Sen. Tom Daschle introduced the Public Schools Excellence Act (S.7) at the outset of the 106th Congress. A provision of this bill includes grant money for before- and after-school care as well as weekend, holiday and summer care for school-age children. Do couples really have children in order to farm them out during the entire week, on weekends, on holidays and over the summer? Are mothers crying out for relief from an alleged "crisis" in institutional day care and a lack of before- and after-school care?

On the contrary, women are calling for the ability to spend more time raising their own children. Parents magazine conducted a poll in May 1996 in which 18,000 women responded. The magazine found that if the respondents could do what they wished, only 4 percent of the women would choose full-time employment. The vast majority of the respondents, 61 percent, wanted flexible jobs so they could work part time and have more time with their children.

American families are not looking for an expansion of institutional, government-run child care and before- and after-school programs. Parents across our nation are seeking serious tax relief. Tax reduction would give women the ability to abandon a frantic, harassed lifestyle that expects them to compete full time in the corporate work force and simultaneously run a household, with little time or energy left for their children.

CATHERINE EVANS

Reston

2ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The Weekly Standard
The Weekly Standard

August 9, 1999

SECTION: Pg. 17

LENGTH: 1202 words

HEADLINE: PRESCHOOL IN THE NANNY STATE

BYLINE: by Darcy Ann Olsen;

Darcy Ann Olsen is a policy analyst on children's issues at the Cato Institute.

BODY:

MAKE NO MISTAKE: The push for universal preschool is on. Already the state of Georgia offers free preschool to every 4-year-old, and New York is phasing in a statewide system. Legislators in California, Massachusetts, and New Jersey are itching to follow suit. If Al Gore is elected president in 2000, this state-by-state expansion could be preempted by a federal mandate. As the vice president recently told a Denver audience, "If you elect me president, I will make high-quality preschool available to every child."

Naturally, public officials hedge when asked whether preschool should be mandatory. But supporters call it a "necessity" for every child, a clear indication that calls for compulsory attendance loom in the shadows. Vermont legislator Bill Suchmann, for example, who introduced a bill to study the cost of compulsory preschool, denies that he advocates compulsory attendance -- but says only compulsion can guarantee "equal educational opportunity."

The theory is that putting kids on the "right track" will get them to the "right destination." Gore explains, "The right kind of start -- through quality preschool -- can lead to higher IQs, higher reading and achievement levels, higher graduation rates, and greater success in the workplace." Yet, after hundreds of experimental preschool intervention programs over more than thirty years, there is no evidence that preschool is the cure-all Gore describes.

Supporters of universal preschool, like the church leaders who dismissed the Copernican theory of the solar system, prefer their convictions to the evidence. They invariably point to the Perry Preschool Project to show that preschool confers lasting benefits on kids. That 1960s project tracked 123 children deemed "at-risk" through age 27. Half of them attended preschool as 3- and 4-year-olds, the other half didn't. According to the research team, "Program participation had positive effects on adult crime, earnings, wealth, welfare dependence, and commitment to marriage." The Perry research team seized on these results to produce the oft-cited "fact" that preschool provides "taxpayers a return on investment of \$ 7.16 on the dollar."

It wasn't long before independent peer reviewers uncovered sizable sampling and methodological flaws in the Perry study. For example, preschool participants, but not the control group, had to have a parent at home during the day, which might have inflated the Perry findings. More important, in three

decades the Perry results have never been replicated. Undeterred, both the California Department of Education and the New York State Board of Regents recently relied on the spurious cost-benefit analysis of the Perry Preschool Project to garner support for their universal preschool legislation.

Preschool proponents also shrug off inconvenient findings from Head Start, the federally funded preschool program for low-income children. Like universal preschool, Head Start is largely public-school-based, serves 3- and 4-year-olds, and espouses the mission of "school readiness." As the nation's largest and oldest preschool program, Head Start is filled with lessons for educators.

The most comprehensive synthesis of Head Start impact studies to date was published in 1985 by the Department of Health and Human Services. It showed that by the time children enter the second grade, any cognitive, social, and emotional gains by Head Start children have vanished. By second grade, that is, the achievement test scores, IQs, achievement-motivation scores, self-esteem, and social behavior scores of Head Start students are indistinguishable from those of their demographically comparable peers. The net gain to children and taxpayers is zero.

The first line of defense for Head Start proponents is to complain that the program has had too little money and too little time. But it has spent \$ 35 billion over 34 years, which ought to be enough money and time to create a successful program if that were possible.

The second line of defense is to blame public schools. Head Start defenders claim that the benefits of preschool would be sustained if public schools shaped up. But there is no evidence to support this theory. And even if there were, there is little reason to think that the public schools will rise to the task.

Take Goals 2000, the plan hatched by President Bush and the nation's governors in 1990. One goal was for American schools to rank first internationally in math and science. The most recent findings of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study place U.S. twelfth graders 19th out of 21 countries in math and 16th out of 21 countries in science. Another goal was safe classrooms. A joint report of the National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics published in 1998 shows that more than half the nation's public schools experienced serious crimes in the past few years. Maybe the public schools, too, just "need more time."

The most common line of defense is simply to deny the facts, although a few educators have been willing to be honest. Consider the views of child-development scholar Edward Zigler, a founder of Head Start and director of Yale University's Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy. As far back as 1987, when educators were debating the merits of universal preschool, he warned, "This is not the first time universal preschool education has been proposed. . . . [In the past], as now, the arguments in favor of preschool education were that it would reduce school failure, lower dropout rates, increase test scores, and produce a generation of more competent high school graduates. . . . Preschool education will achieve none of these results."

What Zigler recognized is that a child's academic performance and personal growth turn on a lot more than preschool. Factors such as genetics, family,

neighborhood, and life experiences from birth onward easily outweigh the influence of preschool. Preschools may teach children how to count, follow directions, and get along; Zigler himself favors universal preschool as a means to achieve school readiness. But preschool alone confers no lasting advantage. To put all children on an equal footing would require genetic engineering, surrogate parents, and for many kids, homes away from home.

In any case, the desirability of universal preschool should not hinge only on whether preschool works. Even more basic is the moral question of whether the government should entrench itself still further in the schooling of children. On this question, Al Gore and his allies are swimming against a powerful tide -- witness the grass-roots movement sweeping through the states, offering charter schools, home-schooling, multi-million-dollar private scholarship funds, vouchers, and tax credits. Parents are working to loosen the government's grip on K-12 education, even as the vice president is seeking to extend that hold to preschoolers. The most effective education reforms of the 1990s have featured decentralization, greater parental involvement, and private alternatives -- while universal preschool is a throwback to the era of "government knows best."

GRAPHIC: Picture, no caption, Kevin Chadwick

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: August 10, 1999

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The Times-Picayune

July 11, 1999 Sunday, FIRST

SECTION: NATIONAL; Pg. A8

LENGTH: 1082 words

HEADLINE: REPUBLICANS TRY TO SHED 'ANTI-EDUCATION' IMAGE;
EDUCATION REPLACES ECONOMY AS KEY ISSUE IN ELECTION

BYLINE: By John Hassell Newhouse News Service

BODY:

Trying to erase a Democratic advantage on a key election-year issue, candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000 are rewriting the party's approach to education.

Gone are the days when Republican candidates spoke heatedly of abolishing the federal Education Department. Gone are the days when they expounded on the need to "devolve" decision-making to the state level. These days, Republicans are talking about improving performance, lifting standards and "empowering" parents.

"Clearly, there has been a recognition that education is high on the minds of voters," said John Jennings, executive director of the Center on National Education Policy in Washington. "For a long time, Republicans were perceived as anti-education, and it hurt them."

The front-runner for the Republican nomination, Texas Gov. George W. Bush, has been particularly vocal about education and has enjoyed considerable success improving Texas schools. Others, notably publisher Steve Forbes and former Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, also are stressing the issue.

According to a recent campaign memo distributed to the news media by Greg Mueller, Forbes' communications director, the Democrats are likely to wield education and other domestic issues "like a billy club" in the 2000 race unless Republicans develop "clear, coherent" positions.

This view is shared by a wide collection of party strategists, elected officials and grass-roots organizers.

"Education is a critical issue for the Republican Party, and one we can't afford to cede," said Richard Bond, former chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic front-runner, has already thrown down the gauntlet on education, promising "revolutionary" change including universal preschool, smaller class sizes in all grades through high school, and stronger standards and accountability.

In recent years, Democrats have enjoyed a significant edge with voters when

The Times-Picayune, July 11, 1999

it comes to education. Earlier this month, a poll by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center found that 52 percent of respondents favored Democrats on education issues, compared with 29 percent who preferred Republicans. For parents of children in public schools, this divide is especially sharp.

"The Democratic Party has a history of advocating in a very pro-active manner -- not just in policy but also in funding," said Suzanne Mouldovan, a member of the New Jersey Statewide Parent Advocacy Network. "The Republicans have been generally obstructive to the passage of funding initiatives."

In a post-Cold War climate with a booming economy, a climate in which the traditional Republican issues of tax cuts and defense spending have less appeal to many voters, the GOP's inability to win public trust on education is a growing liability, analysts say.

"This should come as no surprise," said Stephen Hess, a political scientist at the Brookings Institute. "In a country that is prosperous, the issue is not the economy, stupid. In a country at peace, it is not defense spending, either. Things like education are now at the fore."

An NBC/Wall Street Journal poll conducted two months before the 1996 presidential election found that education was second in importance only to the economy in voters' minds. Exit polls conducted by Voter News Service in 1996 found that of those who considered education the most important issue, President Clinton won 82 percent of the vote; 12 percent supported Republican nominee Bob Dole. Education was especially important to suburban voters, who represent a key constituency for the GOP in national elections.

Recent polls show continued voter interest in education, along with a cluster of other domestic issues such as crime, morality, teen violence and guns. The shooting deaths at Columbine High School in Colorado this spring strengthened these public attitudes, pollsters say.

"The Republican Party is trying to find its way, and to find the issues that will get them elected," said Barbara Trish, a political scientist at Grinnell College in Iowa, where the nation's first presidential caucus is traditionally held. "It is pretty clear that they have some work to do -- if, indeed, education is one of those things."

As Republicans struggle to close the gap with Democrats on the education issue, they are looking increasingly to their governors, who control 31 of the nation's 50 statehouses and are directly responsible for education policy.

Bush, in particular, can point to a record in Texas that includes marked increases in student test scores. A report released in November by the National Education Goals Panel, a watchdog group, cited Texas and North Carolina for recent performance results.

"Gov. Bush has a record on education in Texas to be proud of, and he is going to be talking about ways to reform education at the national level," said Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes.

Bush has enjoyed more influence over education policy as governor than he would as president. Federal money accounts for only 6.1 percent of total

The Times-Picayune, July 11, 1999

spending nationally on public education, according to Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the Education Department. The states' share of spending stands at almost 44 percent.

What exactly Bush will propose in the course of his campaign is not clear, but he will almost certainly argue for tougher performance standards for teachers, administrators and students, in return for more control at the state and local levels.

Forbes, meanwhile, is advocating a plan that Bush may later support -- one that would set aside public money for vouchers that would help parents to send their children to private school.

Bush has supported this concept but has failed to persuade the Texas Legislature to approve a pilot voucher plan.

"This has enormous potential as a campaign issue, if we can relate it directly to people's lives and show them that this gives students in the inner city the same rights that wealthy students in the suburbs have," said David Norcross, a national GOP committeeman from New Jersey.

Democrats are skeptical, saying voters are unlikely to accept what they criticize as an election-year conversion.

"The first step to rehabilitation is to realize you have a problem," said Democratic strategist Steve DeMicco.

"The Republicans have come to that realization," DeMicco said. "But seeing that you have a problem and building a coalition around a meaningful and acceptable agenda on education are two different things."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 11, 1999

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HEADLINE: Gore's Plan for Success in 2000: Wide Array of Specific Positions

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BODY:

Vice President Al Gore believes he has a not-so-secret weapon in the Presidential race -- his knowledge of public policy issues. He has staked out positions on scores of topics and suggests that his opponents, both Democratic and Republican, have been vague and therefore undeserving.

On everything from education to crime to cancer research, Mr. Gore has weighed in: preschool for all children, a ban on gang-style clothing, requiring photo licenses for anyone who buys a handgun, and a doubling of financing for cancer research over the next five years.

He pledges to keep "the prosperity going" and to create more time for families to spend together. He wants to end trade barriers and outlaw any tax on sales made over the Internet.

He warns of the "digital divide," in which black and Hispanic Americans have less access to computers than whites, a disparity he says undermines their job training and threatens America's ability to remain the world's economic superpower. Chiefly, he says, he wants to give the country a moral transfusion, making it "not only better off, but better."

On Friday, Mr. Gore plans to offer more specifics, this time on tax cuts. He is to propose his own version of tax cuts for the middle class, aides say. Today, he bashed Republicans for proposing to spend most of the budget surplus on a "risky" tax cut without first shoring up Medicare.

The blizzard of positions is the essence of the Gore-for-President campaign, designed to show voters that the Vice President has ideas and experience and, by contrast, to suggest that his opponents do not.

"I'm campaigning this way because I believe that campaigns ought to be based on ideas, and I think voters have a right to know exactly what a candidate for President is proposing to do as President," Mr. Gore said in an interview. "Our democracy is ill-served by an over-reliance on generalities and fuzzy rhetoric and is much better served by specific, detailed discussions of the tough choices we have to make."

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Mr. Gore's advisers say they have been disappointed that news organizations have dwelt on his political problems despite his focus on issues, although a recent poll by The Dallas Morning News suggests that voters at this point seem to put little stock in issues. The poll found that even though most Americans admit they know little about Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, the Republican front-runner, they strongly favor him over Mr. Gore and former Senator Bill Bradley, Mr. Gore's rival for the Democratic nomination.

But since mid-May, Mr. Gore has delivered five speeches that his aides call major policy addresses, covering education, crime, the economy, faith-based organizations and cancer research.

Many of his positions follow routes laid out by President Clinton, including insisting on a balanced budget. Some bump up against Democratic orthodoxy, like his advocacy of teacher testing. But perhaps the most striking thing about his positions is the sheer volume of them, especially so early in the campaign.

Mr. Gore becomes almost indignant when asked if his avalanche of positions might be overwhelming voters.

"When people say, 'You're giving too many details, you're offering too many specifics,' my response is, too many compared to what?" he asked. "Compared to nothing? And how did we get in a situation where it's considered odd to offer a detailed set of policy proposals for the challenges we face?"

Mr. Gore, who last year floated and then abandoned the slogan of "practical idealism," has not adopted another that melds his various proposals into an overarching theme. Asked what he stands for, he offered the following: "Keep the prosperity going, make certain no one's left behind, bring revolutionary improvement to our public schools, build stronger families and more liveable communities."

He generally stays away from emotional and ideological causes, although he supports abortion rights and the death penalty and has endorsed affirmative action programs. In a visit to Washington State this month, he denounced a ballot initiative, passed by the state's voters in 998, that struck down affirmative action programs in hiring by public agencies and admissions to state colleges.

By de-emphasizing such matters, and supporting Republican ideas like Federal money for churches to help fight social ills, Mr. Gore is placing himself squarely in the school of "New Democrats" that Mr. Clinton pioneered so effectively. But Mr. Clinton has already carved out that territory, leaving his Vice President to cast about for self-definition that does not seem derivative. Even Mr. Gore's pending proposal for a middle-class tax cut has a Clinton provenance. As a candidate in 1992, Mr. Clinton promised a middle-class tax cut, though he soon abandoned it.

Peter Hart, a Democratic consultant who is not involved with the Gore campaign, said Mr. Gore had yet to break through to voters with a clear sense of himself. "The hardest thing for Al Gore is that Clinton put his imprint every place on the issues, so for Al Gore to be able to find 'his' issues is a lot more difficult," Mr. Hart said. "In the end, all of these issues have to tell us something about Gore and what the election is about. The problem is, the

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campaign needs a theme."

Mr. Gore began his strategic rollout of issue speeches with education to signal his belief that a strong educational system is the underpinning of a strong economy. "In order to stay first in the world economically, we must become first in the world educationally," he said.

He called for a substantial but unspecified Federal investment in public education. Few of his proposals provide a specific cost, but Mr. Gore promises to provide all of his programs within a balanced budget.

Apart from universal preschool and teacher testing, he proposed a teacher corps, where young people would teach in needy schools in exchange for \$10,000 for college. He proposed "second-chance" schools, in which students who "are headed for trouble" are put in more disciplined environments.

Mr. Gore said he wants teachers and parents to meet at the start of the school year and sign a strict discipline code, and he would require employers to give time off for such meetings. He also would extend the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow parents to attend parent-teacher conferences. And he wants schools to teach "character education" courses.

The Vice President frequently uses the word "require" when talking about his plans for schools, but the Federal Government has limited authority, and some of his proposals would have to be approved by local school boards.

Mr. Gore also wants to reduce the size of classes to 18 students in early grades and to no more than 20 for all grades. Opposing the use of school vouchers, he said, "We must reject the false promise of siphoning public-school funding away to private schools."

He said he would use the technological revolution to replace standardized textbook learning with individualized learning at each child's own pace. He wants every child computer-literate by the eighth grade. Mr. Gore would also create a nationwide volunteer army of "e-tutors," or on-line instructors.

His broadest high-technology achievement so far is a program that is in the process of hooking up every school and library in the country to the Internet. The program, which is being financed by everyone who pays a monthly telephone bill through a "universal connectivity charge," has already collected \$2 billion.

Mr. Gore also proposed a national tuition savings program, which would extend to the entire country programs now in 30 states to encourage parents and grandparents to contribute to tax-free college education funds. And he wants to create new tax-free 401-J accounts that let workers save for job training and other educational experiences.

Much of what Mr. Gore advocates would require Congressional approval and might be hard to achieve if Republicans maintain control of the House and Senate. In promising an overhaul of the criminal justice system, for instance, he is calling for photo licenses for any purchaser of a handgun and a ban on cheap handguns, and he wants to increase penalties for gun-related crimes.

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Mr. Gore also supports the Administration's proposals for a three-day waiting period before buying a gun, limiting purchases of guns to one a month and requiring child-safety locks on handguns. But some of those proposals were defeated in the House last month after an intense campaign by the gun lobby.

"I will fight to protect America's families by launching the most effective and comprehensive anti-crime strategy our nation has seen," he said. "I will change a political culture in Washington that puts the interests of the gun lobby ahead of the needs of American families."

Mr. Gore said he would quadruple the investment in after-school programs and provide money for computer-mapping software for police, so they can target crime hot spots. And he proposed amending the Constitution to promote victims' rights.

"Victims should have a voice in trial and other proceedings," he said, adding that they should also be notified when an offender is released into the community.

He said he would fight for a Federal anti-gang law that set curfews on specific gang members, a ban on gang-related clothing, which some critics have said would be unconstitutional, and the authority to break up gangs.

In another speech, he advocated using Federal money for religious organizations to help combat social problems like drug addiction, gang violence and homelessness, a proposal Mr. Bush has also made.

"As long as there is always a secular alternative for anyone who wants one, and as long as no one is required to participate in religious observances as a condition for receiving services," Mr. Gore said, "faith-based organizations can provide jobs and job training, counseling and mentoring, food and basic medical care."

He said he would expand a provision in the welfare-to-work law called Charitable Choice, which allows states to enlist faith-based organizations to provide basic welfare services.

He noted that companies usually provide matching gifts for charitable contributions made by employees but that they generally do not match gifts to faith-based organizations. He would encourage them to do so.

On cancer research, he said he would double to \$9 billion the amount the Federal Government spends over five years. He has also set a goal of doubling the declines in cancer deaths over the next 10 years. "This would mean that by 2010 each year, 700,000 fewer Americans would get cancer and 200,000 less would die from it," he said.

In an unusual challenge to the scientific community, Mr. Gore has called for researchers to identify by 2002 every gene that predisposes people to cancer, and to develop blood tests and diagnostic tests for every type of cancer within five years to speed up detection.

He also said he would back legislation to require all health plans to allow patients, including those on Medicare, to participate in clinical trials, where they may receive the most advanced treatments.

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GRAPHIC: Photo: Campaigning in Houston, Vice President Al Gore addressed participants at the National Council of La Raza annual conference yesterday. (Reuters) (pg. A16)

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