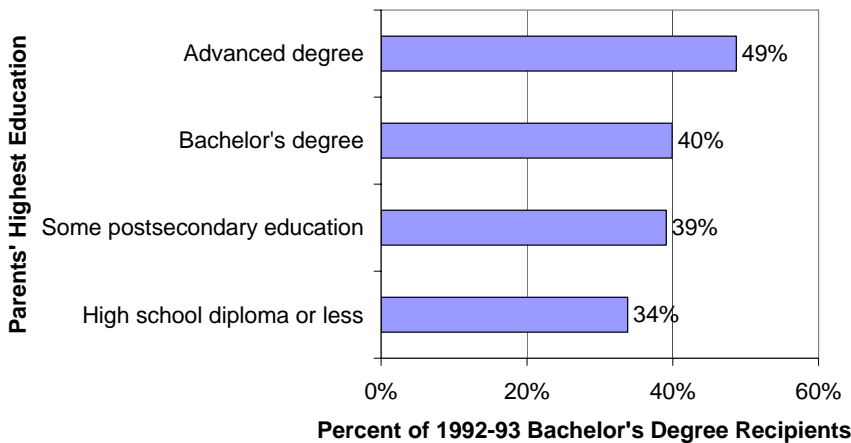


Where Are They Now? The Intergenerational Impact of Low Educational Attainment

An October 2006 report from the National Center for Education Statistics offers some revealing facts about the intergenerational impact of low educational attainment across three generations. In 2003, individuals who graduated from college in 1992-93 were surveyed to learn if they had pursued advanced degrees, what level of education they expected to achieve ultimately, whether or not they had dependents of various ages, and whether or not they were saving for their own children's education. Responses to the survey are detailed for several characteristics, including the 1992-93 graduate's parents' highest education. Thus, answers to question on the above-mentioned topics spanned three generations.

Chart 1. Percentage of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients Who Enrolled in an Advanced Degree Program by Parents' Highest Education, 2003



Pursuit of Advanced Degrees

Whether or not a 1992-93 bachelor's degree recipient pursued an advanced degree over the following decade could be predicted by their parents' highest level of education. Of those whose parents earned only a high school diploma or less, only about a third pursued advanced degrees. Of those whose parents had earned advanced degrees, almost half pursued such a degree, too. (See Chart 1.)

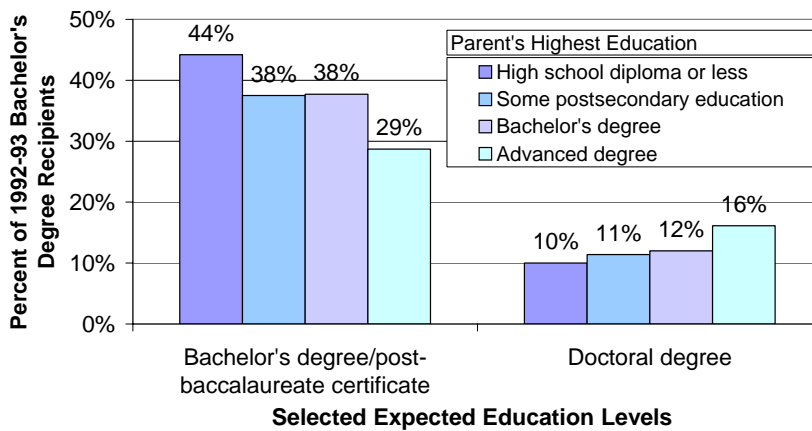


Highest Level of Education Expected

Survey respondents were also asked to report the highest level of education they expect to complete. The enduring influence of parents' educational attainment was most evident among those who indicated no further educational ambitions and those who aspire to earn doctorates.

Where Are They Now? The Intergenerational Impact of Low Educational Attainment

Chart 2. Percentages of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients by Highest Level of Education Expected as of 2003



Dependents of Various Ages

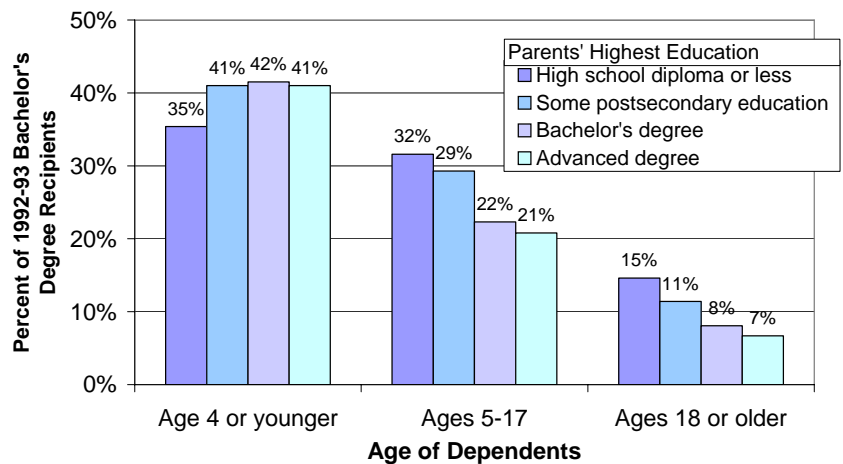
The reach of the intergenerational impact of low educational attainment into the third generation begins to become evident in the findings about the presence of dependents of various ages in the lives of 1992-93 bachelor's degree recipients.

Respondents were least likely to have dependents age four or younger if their parents' highest level of education was a high school diploma or less. They were much more likely to have school age children (ages 5 to 17) and college age young adults (age 18 or older)

who were still dependents. Indeed, respondents whose parents went no further than high school, if that far, were more than twice as likely to have adult dependents.

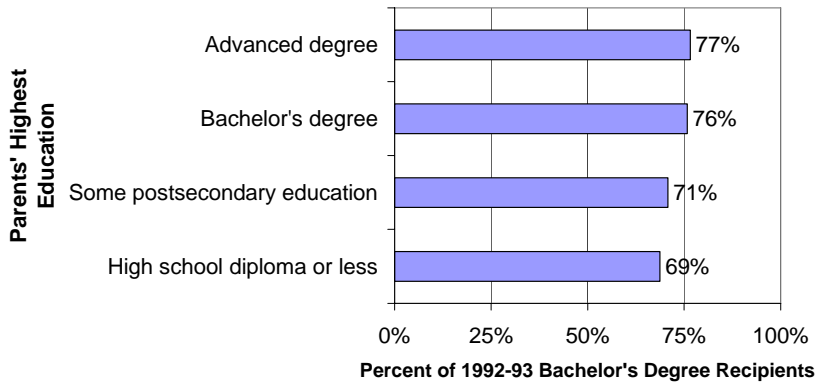


Chart 3. Percentages of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients with Dependents of Various Ages, by Parents' Highest Education, 2003



Where Are They Now? The Intergenerational Impact of Low Educational Attainment

Chart 4. Percentage of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients with Dependents Younger than Age 18 Who are Saving for Their Children's Education by Parents' Highest Education



Saving for Children's Education

Majorities of 1992-93 bachelor's degree recipients reported saving for their children's education, regardless of their own parents' highest education level. But, the percentage of respondents who reported such savings could be predicted by the education level of the children's grandparents. If the grandparents earned advanced degrees, more than 75 percent of their grandchildren's parents were saving for college expenses. If the grandparents had a high school education or less, only 69 percent were saving for college. Doubtless, this is just one of many ways in which the impact of low educational attainment can reach from grandparents to grandchildren.



Because low educational attainment demonstrates such a strong tendency to perpetuate itself across generations, the Colorado Department of Education's concern for the educational success of Coloradans is not limited to school age children. Research and statistics demonstrate with remarkable consistency how much children's educational success can be influenced by their parents and even their grandparents. This is why CDE's Adult Education and Family Literacy efforts place so much emphasis on trying to ensure that the adults in children's lives get second chances to improve their own educational status.

Source: *Where Are They Now? A Description of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients 10 Years Later. Statistical Analysis Report*, National Center for Education Statistics, October 2006. Available at: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007159>.