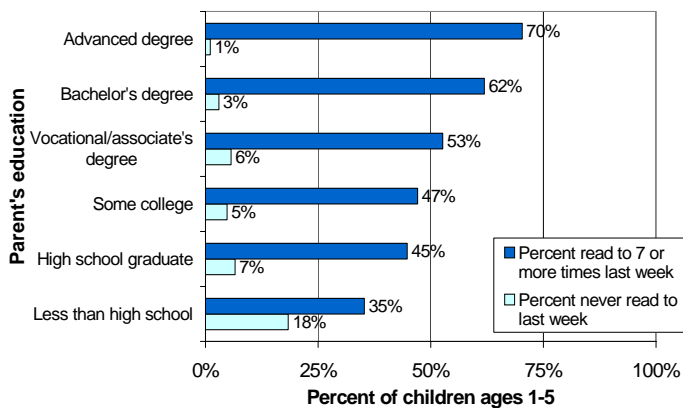


How Parental Education Influences Children's Learning Environments

Chart 1. Reading to Children Ages 1 to 5 by Parent's Education, 2003



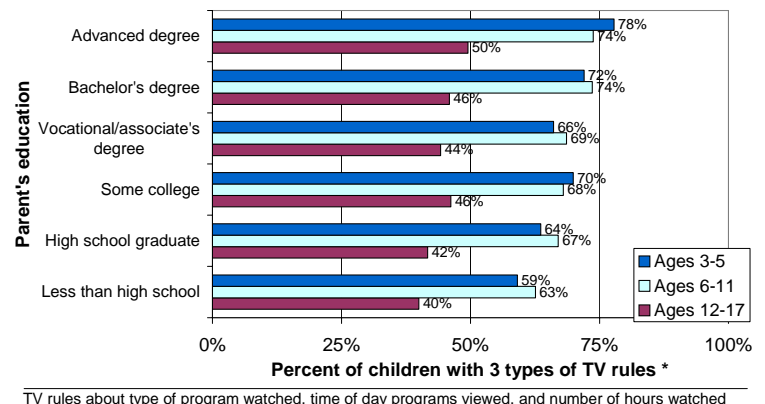
According to a January 2007 U.S. Census Bureau report—*A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)*—parent's education is strongly associated with several aspects of a child's learning environment:

- How much a child is read to during pre-school years;
- To what extent there are rules for TV viewing;
- The extent to which a child participates in extra-curricular activities;
- Whether the child performs well or poorly academically; and
- Parents' educational expectations of their children.

Being Read to During Preschool Years

Children of better-educated parents are more likely to be read to before they start school. Those whose parents had advanced degrees were twice as likely as those with parents who did not graduate from high school to be read to seven or more times per week (70% vs. 35%).

Chart 2. Family TV Rules for Children Ages 3-17 by Parent's Education



Conversely, those whose parents did not complete high school were 18 times more likely than those whose parents had advanced degrees not to be read to at all on a weekly basis (18% vs. 1%). (See Chart 1.)



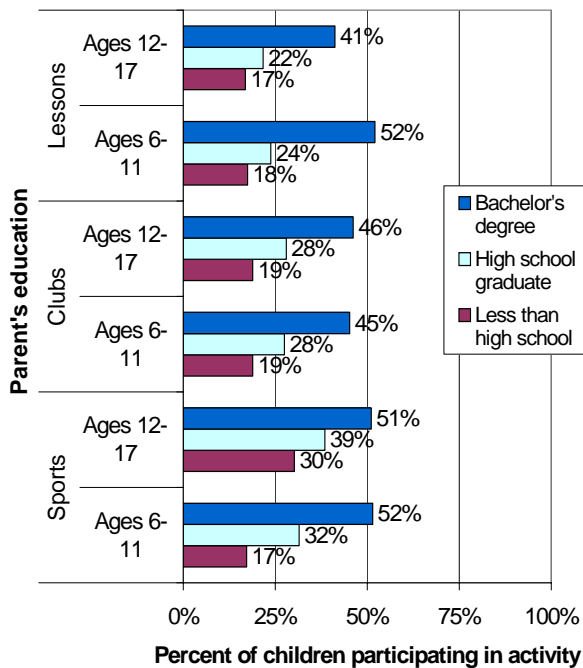
How Parental Education Influences Children’s Learning Environments



TV Rules

As parent’s education increases, so does the likelihood that there are household rules about television viewing—what types of programs the child is allowed to watch, the time of day when TV viewing is allowed, and the number of hours of TV-watching permitted. For instance, such rules are in place for more than three-quarters of children whose parents have advanced degrees, versus only two-thirds of children whose parents did not finish high school (78% vs. 59%) (See Chart 2.)

Chart 3. Extra-Curricular Activities of School-Age Children by Parent's Education, 2003



Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

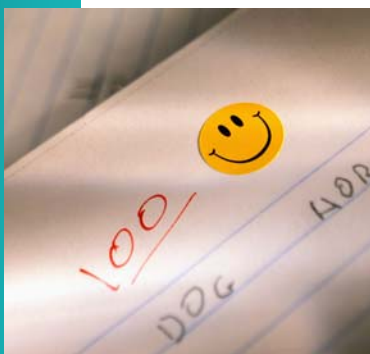
Children’s participation in extra-curricular activities related to their education—lessons, clubs, and sports—is also strongly related to their parent’s education. Those whose parents have advanced degrees are more than twice as likely as those whose parents did not finish high school to be involved in lessons (41% vs. 17% for ages 12-17, 52% vs. 18% for ages 6-11) and clubs (46% vs. 19% for ages 12-17, 45% vs. 19% for ages 6-11). (See Chart 3.)



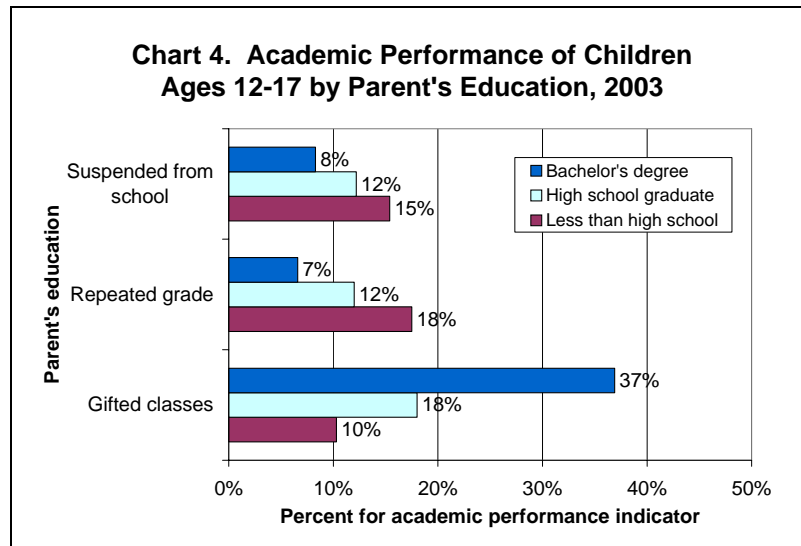
Academic Performance

Parent’s education even affects key measures of their children’s academic performance, such as: whether or not the child has ever been suspended from school, repeated a grade, or been placed in gifted classes.

Children whose parents did not graduate from high school are twice as likely as those whose parents have advanced degrees to have been suspended from school and to have repeated a grade. Conversely, children whose parents have advanced degrees are almost four times as likely as those with parents who did not finish high school to be placed in gifted classes. (See Chart 4.)

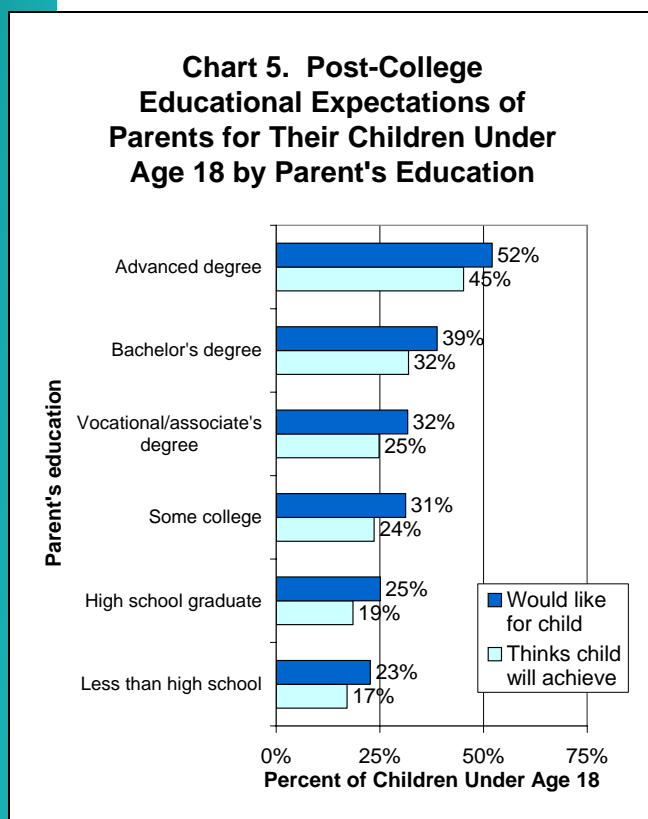


How Parental Education Influences Children's Learning Environments



Parent's Post-College Educational Expectations

Parents' ambitions for their children's post-college education are also related to the parents' own education level. As parent's education rises, so do parents' wishes that their children pursue further education after college as well as the parents' expectations that their children will actually do so. Such ambitions are twice as likely among parents with advanced degrees, compared to those without high school diplomas (52% vs. 23% for parents' wishes in this area, 45% vs. 17% for their expectations of their children pursuing post-college education). (See Chart 5.)



While schools do a lot to try to level the playing field between children of parents with different levels of education, there is just so much they can do. Inevitably, the home environments of children and the example, actions, and expectations of their parents regarding education exert powerful influences on their children—influences that contribute to whether those students succeed or fail themselves. This is why community-based programs such as those funded by the Colorado Department of Education through the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) are so important. They recognize and do what they can, within the limits of available resources, to address the intergenerational factors that might otherwise tend to perpetuate low educational attainment from parents to their children.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Household Economic Studies, *A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)*. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/p70-109.pdf>