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Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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Over 100,000 Colorado Children Live with a Parent Without a High School Education *Children in Single-Parent Families at Greater Risk*

Table 1. Colorado Children Under Age 18 Living with One or Both Parents by Living Arrangements, March 1998

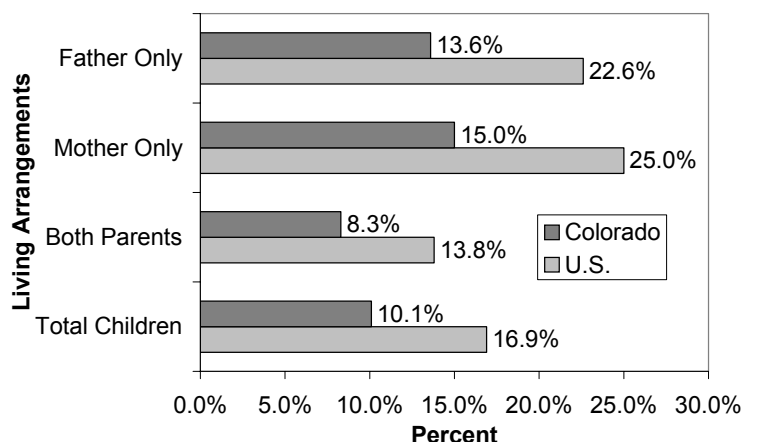
Living Arrangements	Number	Percent
Both parents	719,249	72%
Mother only	229,760	23%
Father only	49,948	5%
Total	998,957	100%

For March 1998, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Colorado had almost one million children under age 18 living with one or both parents (998,957).

State estimates derived from national statistics indicate that one out of seven children in single-parent families (15 percent for mothers, almost 14 percent for fathers) have a parent with less than a high school education. Only one in ten children in two-parent families (just over 10 percent) has a parent with less than a high

How well children perform academically in school is influenced significantly by their parents' level of educational attainment—specifically, whether or not they graduated from high school. For children, parents' educational attainment varies dramatically based on living arrangements—whether children live with one or both parents.

Chart 1. Children with Parents with Less Than a High School Education by Living Arrangements, 1998



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Table 2. Colorado Children Under Age 18 with a Parent with Less Than a High School Education by Living Arrangements, March 1998

Living Arrangements	All children living with one or both parents	With parent with less than high school education	
		Percent	Number
Both parents	719,249	8.3%	59,698
Mother only	229,760	15.0%	34,464
Father only	49,948	13.6%	6,793
Total	998,957	10.1%	100,955

school education. Thus, children in mother-only families are at a 81 percent greater risk of having an under-educated parent than children in two-parent families. This greater risk is only somewhat lower for father-only families at 64 percent.

Applying these percentages to numbers of children by living arrangements, the number of **Colorado children living with parents with less than a high school education** may be estimated at over 100,000. While this figure includes preschoolers as well as school-age children, comparisons to school enrollment statistics lend perspective. That figure is about 15 percent of statewide enrollment in public schools—a proportion equivalent to the combined enrollments of the Denver, Mesa County Valley (Grand Junction) and Greeley school districts.

Through the Center for At Risk Education’s adult and family literacy projects, the Colorado Department of Education seeks to reduce the presence and impact of this risk factor in the lives of the state’s children.

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- 1997 enrollment statistics for Colorado school districts available at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdemgmt/rvpupmem.htm>

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