

Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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One-Third of Colorado's Three to Five Year Olds Not Enrolled in Early Childhood Education Programs *Odds Even Worse—Two Out of Five—for Hispanics*

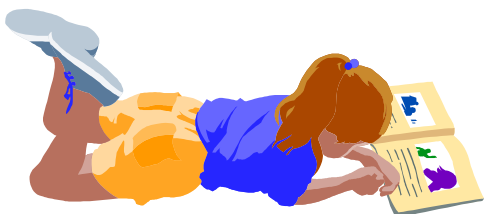
Highlights

- Almost 60,000 Colorado preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) were not enrolled in early childhood education programs in 1996.
- Among Colorado preschoolers ...
 - 2 out of 5 Hispanics,
 - 1 out of 3 Whites, and
 - 1 out of 4 African Americans were not enrolled in early childhood education programs in 1996.
- Other risk conditions for not starting school ready to learn include low parental educational attainment and poverty.

According to **The Condition of Education 1999**, alarmingly high percentages of three to five year olds do not participate in early childhood education programs such as Head Start, Even Start, nursery school, pre-kindergarten, or kindergarten before entering first grade. Children who are denied these experiences are not likely to start elementary school ready to learn.

Table 1 – U.S. Percentages of Three to Five Year Olds Not Enrolled in Preprimary Education Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 1996

Race/ Ethnicity	3 year olds	4 year olds	5 year olds
White	55%	35%	8%
Hispanic	72%	51%	10%
Black	50%	21%	5%
Other	61%	49%	4%



CARE
Center For At-Risk Education cde

Colorado Literacy Research Initiative (CLRI)
CARE—Family Literacy/Adult Literacy
201 East Colfax Avenue ♦ Denver, Colorado 80203-1799
(303) 866-6737 ♦ fax (303) 866-6940
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Table 2 – Numbers of Three to Five Year Olds in Colorado by Race/Ethnicity, 1996

Race/ Ethnicity	3 year olds	4 year olds	5 year olds	Total
White	39,406	41,602	41,713	122,721
Hispanic	10,348	10,549	10,273	31,170
Black	2,691	2,434	2,728	7,853
Other	1,840	1,739	1,782	5,361
Total	54,285	56,324	56,496	167,105

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were over 167,000 Coloradans ages three to five in 1996. Figures are reported by year of age by race and ethnicity. Applying U.S. percentages for non-participation in early childhood education programs by racial/ethnic group to these Colorado population figures

yields an estimate of almost 58,000 children likely to start first grade not ready to learn.

While the Colorado preschooler population is not disaggregated for variables other than race and ethnicity, national data point to other conditions that discourage participation in early childhood education programs.

■ **Parental Educational Attainment.**

In 1996, 73

percent of three year olds and 45 percent of four year olds in households where parents never completed high school themselves did not participate in early childhood education programs. That same year, only 38 percent of three year olds and 17 percent of four year olds in households where parents earned graduate degrees were non-participants.

- **Household Income.** In 1996, 70 percent of three year olds and 41 percent of four year olds in households with annual incomes under \$10,000 did not participate in early childhood education programs. That same year, a relatively small 40 percent of three year olds and only 19 percent of four year olds in households with annual incomes over \$50,000 were non-participants.

Table 3 – Estimates of Three to Five Year Old Coloradans Not Enrolled in Preprimary Education Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 1996

Race/ Ethnicity	3 year olds	4 year olds	5 year olds	Total
White	21,831	14,436	3,420	39,687
Hispanic	1,351	504	123	1,977
Black	7,409	5,401	1,017	13,827
Other	1,113	852	78	2,044
Total	31,704	21,193	4,639	57,536

SOURCES

National Center for Education Statistics. **The Condition of Education 1999**. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=1999022>

U.S. Census Bureau. **State Population Projections: 1995 to 2005**. Available at: http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/st_yr95to00.html

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about this study or other projects of the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative, contact: Keith Curry Lance, Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax Ave., Suite 309, Denver, CO 80203-1799, (303) 866-6737, fax (303) 866-6940, e-mail klance@sni.net