

# Lit Scan

## Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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### One Out of Five Colorado Babies Born to Under-Educated Mother, 1999

**Table 1. Percentages of Total Births to Mothers with Less than 12 Years of Education, U.S., Colorado, and Major Metropolitan Areas, 1990 & 1999**

| Geographic Area  | 1990 | 1999 | 1990-1999 Percent Change |
|------------------|------|------|--------------------------|
| United States    | 23.8 | 21.7 | -8.8%                    |
| Colorado         | 17.8 | 20.0 | 12.4%                    |
| Denver           | 31.0 | 36.4 | 17.4%                    |
| Colorado Springs | 12.5 | 12.7 | 1.6%                     |

Denver, but less than 2 percent for Colorado Springs.

Lack of maternal education is associated with a number of other problematic circumstances for newborns, including:

- being premature and underweight at birth,
- having mothers who smoked during pregnancy and received little or no prenatal care, and
- having mothers who are both young and unmarried.

Adult education and family literacy programs can assist young women in remaining in school, reducing their chances of becoming mothers at too young an age or at least reducing the risk of their experiencing other risk factors that jeopardize the health of their children.

The latest data available from Kids Count (<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/rightstart2002/>) indicates that 20 percent of Colorado births are to mothers with less than 12 years of education. In other words, one out of five Colorado babies has a mother who did not graduate from high school.



Nationwide, the percentage of births to under-educated mothers dropped almost nine percent between 1990 and 1999. During the same interval, such births increased more than 12 percent in Colorado. The increase in such births was over 17 percent for

**Table 2. Other Key Indicators of Child Well-Being, U.S., Colorado, and Major Metropolitan Areas, 1999**

| Percent of ...   | United States | Colorado | Denver | Colorado Springs |
|--|---------------|----------|--------|------------------|
| Total births to teens                                      | 12.3          | 11.8     | 15.7   | 12.1             |
| Teen births to women already mothers                       | 21.2          | 19.6     | 22.5   | 18.3             |
| Total births to unmarried women                            | 33.0          | 25.4     | 34.9   | 26.5             |
| Total births to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care | 3.8           | 4.3      | 7.6    | 3.8              |
| Total births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy        | 12.6          | 10.4     | 10.0   | 10.6             |
| Low-birthweight births (less than 5.5 lbs.)                | 7.6           | 8.3      | 9.1    | 9.7              |
| Preterm births (less than 37 weeks gestation)              | 11.8          | 11.3     | 12.3   | 11.6             |