

# Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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## Hundreds of Thousands of Colorado Kids At Risk



According to a February 2004 special report from the U.S. Census Bureau, hundreds of thousands of Colorado children under the age of 18 live in socio-economic conditions that put them at risk of educational failure. These conditions put children at risk, because they increase the likelihood that the children's parents themselves did not succeed in school. (See Table 1.)

- **Over 40,000 Colorado children live in households receiving state or local assistance.** Likewise, the link between low educational attainment and receiving public assistance is well-known. (See previous issues of LitScan: volume 5, number 4; and volume 6, number 1. Also available online at: <http://www.coloradoliteracy.net/clri.>)
- **Over 130,000 Colorado children live in poverty and/or with a householder who is not in the labor force** (i.e., not seeking work; rather than unemployed). The links between education, employment, and income are widely recognized. (See

previous issues of LitScan: volume 7, numbers 2, 3, and 9. Available online at:

<http://www.coloradoliteracy.net/clri.>)



**Table 1. Colorado Children (Under 18 Years) With Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics, 2000**

Socio-economic condition	Number	Percent
All children	1,089,191	100.0%
Living in household receiving state or local assistance	43,568	4.0%
Living in poverty	131,792	12.1%
Living with householder not in labor force	136,149	12.5%
Living with foreign-born householder	147,041	13.5%
Not living in married-couple family group	297,349	27.3%
Living in renter-occupied home	312,598	28.7%

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- **Almost 150,000 Colorado children live with a foreign-born householder.**  
 Statistics in Table 2 also indicate that children with foreign-born parents are likelier to have parents who did not complete high school.
- **Almost 300,000 Colorado children do not live in married-couple family groups.**  
 Of all family types, these families are most likely to enjoy socio-economic conditions that improve the odds of educational success for their offspring. National statistics in Tables 2 and 3 indicate that children from two-parent families are more likely to have well-educated parents who have high incomes and own their homes and who are less likely to be poor, or receiving public assistance or food stamps. Children from single-parent homes are most likely to enjoy those advantages and most likely to suffer those disadvantages.
- **Over 300,000 Colorado children live in rented homes.** One of the “gateways to opportunity” is to be raised in a family that makes a decent living and is building wealth. Those who do not own their own homes lack the most common and generally achievable asset required to build wealth. (See <http://www.thebell.org>.)

**Table 2. U.S. Children (Under 18 Years) by Living Arrangements & Householder Nativity and Educational Attainment of Householder, 2000**

Living Arrangements/ Householder Nativity	Educational Attainment of Householder (Percent)		
	Less than high school	High school graduate (including equivalency)	Bachelor's degree or more
All children	19.8	27.0	23.9
<b>Living Arrangements</b>			
Married-couple family group	15.8	25.2	29.9
Mother-only family group	25.6	30.7	11.6
Father-only family group	29.4	32.7	11.9
Living with neither parent	37.4	29.2	9.4
<b>Householder Nativity</b>			
Native-born householder	14.4	29.0	24.9
Foreign-born householder	46.1	17.4	19.5

Note: Row percentages do not add to 100 because the “some college” category is omitted.

**Table 3. U.S. Children (Under 18 Years) by Family Structure & Economic Situation, 2002**

Family structure	Percent of Family Structure Type					
	Number	Family income of \$75,000 and over	Owns/buying home	Below poverty level	Receives public assistance	Receives food stamps
Total	72,321	29.2	67.1	16.9	4.7	10.9
Two parents	49,666	39.2	77.2	7.8	1.6	4.5
Mother only	16,473	6.1	39.8	38.4	12.8	29.2
Father only	3,297	11.5	54.8	19.4	4.7	12.7
Neither parent	2,885	11.0	63.3	47.8	11.8	14.9

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Research consistently demonstrates that socio-economic conditions that tend to be associated with lower educational attainment levels for parents also tend to lower the academic achievement levels of their children. The generational nature of educational success and failure is the strongest argument for close cooperation between mainstream K-12 education and adult education and family literacy efforts.



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### **SOURCES**

- U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Children and the Households They Live In: 2000, Census 2000 Special Reports*, issued February 2004. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/censr-14.pdf>.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, Current Population Reports*, issued June 2003. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p20-547.pdf>.

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### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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