

The Racial Gap in Parental Education

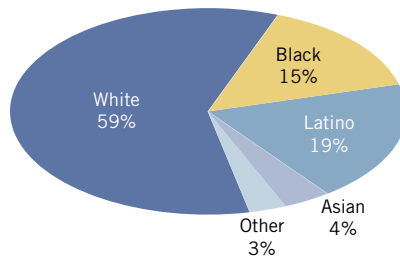
MAY 2006

This fact sheet includes children who live apart from both parents, such as foster children or children being raised by grandparents. Fact sheets published prior to January 2006 did not; therefore, comparisons should not be made.

Although education is one of the most effective ways that parents can raise their families' incomes, black and Latino children benefit less from higher levels of parental education¹ than do white and Asian children.² Latino children are the least likely to have a parent who attended college. Both black and Latino children are more likely to be low income,³ even when their parents have some college education and are employed full-time.

Of the 74 million children in the United States, over 40 percent belong to a minority racial/ethnic group.

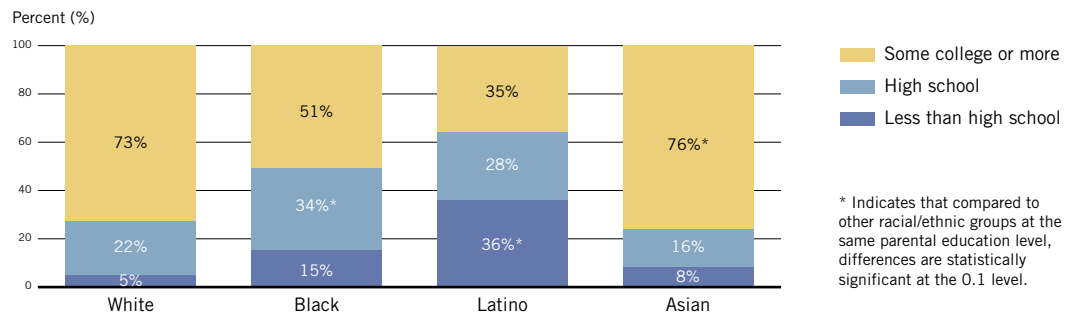
Children in the United States, by race/ethnicity, 2004



Latino children are least likely to live with parents who have at least some college education beyond a high school diploma.

- 76% of Asian children have parents with at least some college education.
- 51% of black children have parents with at least some college education.
- 35% of Latino children have parents with at least some college education.
- 73% of white children have parents with at least some college education.

Children by parental education levels and race/ethnicity, 2004



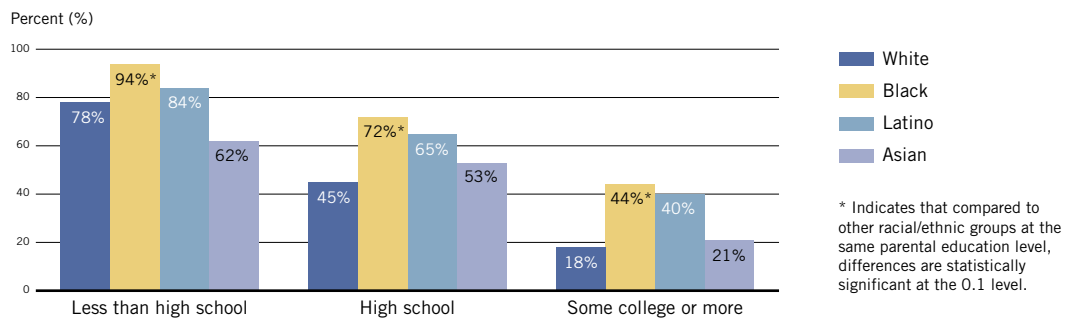
Although higher education leads to higher earnings for all racial/ethnic groups, black and Latino children are more likely to be low income even when parents have some college education.

Among children whose parents have some college education or more:

- 21% of Asian children live in low-income families.
- 44% of black children live in low-income families.
- 40% of Latino children live in low-income families.
- 18% of white children live in low income families.

These income differences remain even when parents hold a college degree.

Children living in low-income families, by parental education and race/ethnicity, 2004



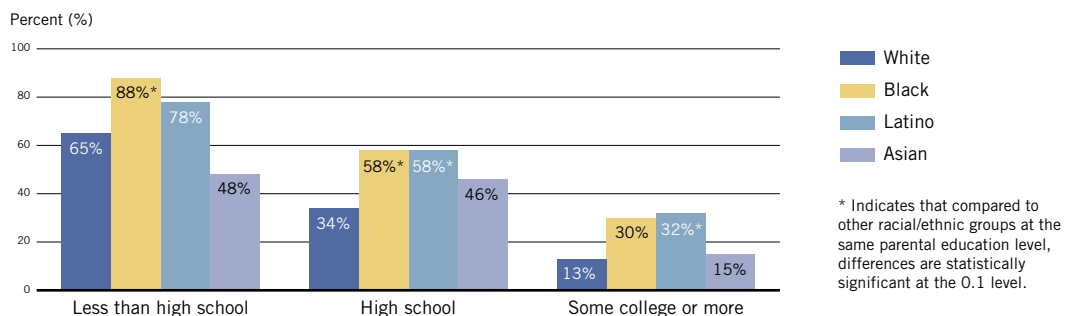
Full-time parental employment does not explain income differences across race/ethnicity. Black and Latino children whose parents work full-time, year-round⁴ and have at least some college education, are more than twice as likely to be low income compared to their white and Asian counterparts.

Among children whose parents are employed full-time, year-round and have some college education or more:

- 15% of Asian children live in low-income families.
- 30% of black children live in low-income families.
- 32% of Latino children live in low-income families.
- 13% of white children live in low-income families.

These income differences remain even when parents hold a college degree.

Children with parents employed full-time, year-round living in low-income families, by parental education and race/ethnicity, 2004



Endnotes

This fact sheet is part of the National Center for Children in Poverty's demographic fact sheet series. Estimates were prepared by Heather Koball, Michelle Chau, and Ayana Douglas-Hall based on data calculated from the U.S. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, March 2005, representing information from the previous calendar year. This fact sheet includes children who live apart from both parents (e.g., foster children or children being raised by grandparents). For children who do not live with at least one parent, parental characteristics are those of the householder and/or the householder's spouse.

1. Parental education is defined as the education level of the most highly educated parent who lives with the child.
2. Children are identified in five mutually exclusive racial/ethnic categories. Children were categorized as "Latino," if their parents reported their ethnicity as Latino, regardless of reported race. Children were categorized as "white," "black," "Asian," or "other" if their reported ethnicity was non-Latino. Among all children, 43.1 million are white; 10.9 million are black; 14.3 million are Latino; 3.0 million are Asian; and 2.3 million are either American Indian/Aleut Eskimo or of more than one race and are categorized as "other."
3. Low income is defined as twice the federal poverty level or \$40,000 for a family of four in 2006. More information about federal poverty measures is available at aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml.
4. Parental employment is the employment level of the parent in the household who maintained the highest level of employment in the previous year. Full-time is defined as working at least 50 weeks per year and at least 35 hours for the majority of those weeks.