

the condition of education 2003



INDICATOR 37

Early Literacy Activities

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2003*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2003*, visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003067>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

Suggested Citation:

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2003*, NCES 2003-067, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003.

Family Support

Early Literacy Activities

The percentage of poor and nonpoor children who participated in literacy activities with a family member increased between 1993 and 2001.

Children whose parents read to them become better readers and perform better in school (Snow, Burns, and Griffin 1998). Other family activities such as telling stories and singing songs also encourage children's acquisition of literacy skills (Moss and Fawcett 1995). This indicator, drawn from data collected by the National Household Education Surveys Program, examines the frequency at which parents reported engaging in various literacy-building activities with children ages 3–5 who were not yet enrolled in kindergarten in 1993 and 2001.

The percentage of children read to by a family member frequently (i.e., three or more times per week) increased from 78 percent in 1993 to 84 percent in 2001. There were also increases in the percentage of children whose family members frequently told them a story (from 43 to 54 percent), taught them letters, words, or numbers (from 58 to 74 percent), and taught them songs or music (from 41 to 54 percent) (see supplemental table 37-1).

Increases in the percentage of children who were read to or who participated in other literacy activities were evident regardless of the poverty status of the child. Poor children and nonpoor

children were each more likely to participate in literacy activities in 2001 than they were in 1993.

Despite the increase in participation in literacy activities by all children regardless of their poverty levels, nonpoor children were more likely than poor children to engage frequently in certain literacy activities in 2001. For instance, 87 percent of nonpoor children were frequently read to by a family member, compared with 74 percent of poor children. However, in 2001, no relationship was found between poverty status and engaging in the two other literacy activities—teaching letters, words, or numbers or teaching songs or music.

The percentage of children who engaged in certain literacy activities in 2001 also varied by the child's race/ethnicity. White children were more likely than Black or Hispanic children to be read to or told a story frequently. They were also more likely than Hispanic children to be taught letters, words, or numbers. However, no differences were found in the percentage of Black, Hispanic, or White children who were taught songs or music (see supplemental table 37-1).

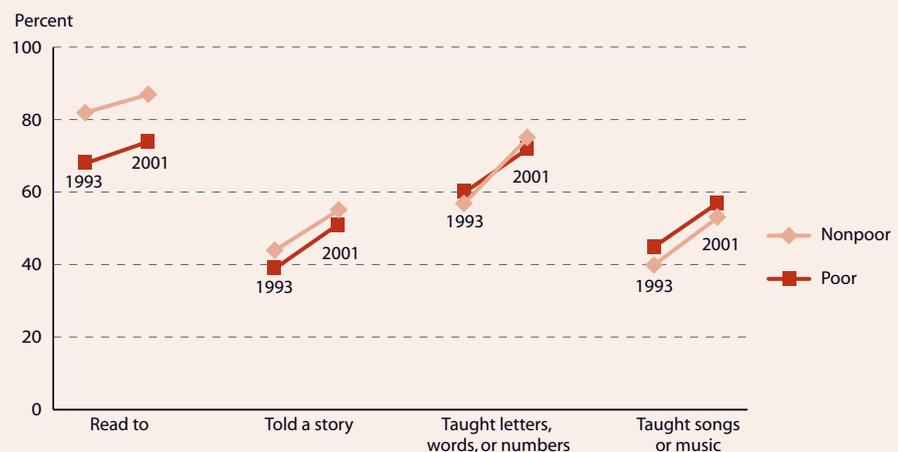
NOTE: See *supplemental note 1* for information on poverty status.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Program Participation Surveys of the National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993 and ECPP-NHES:2001).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 3
Supplemental Table 37-1
Indicator 36
NCES 2000–026
Moss and Fawcett 1995
Snow, Burns, and Griffin 1998

EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES: Percentage of children ages 3–5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten who participated in home literacy activities with a family member three or more times in the week before the survey, by poverty status: 1993 and 2001



Early Literacy Activities

Table 37-1. Percentage of children ages 3–5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten who participated in home literacy activities with a family member three or more times in the week before the survey, by selected child and family characteristics: 1993 and 2001

Child and family characteristics	Read to ¹		Told a story		Taught letters, words, or numbers		Taught songs or music	
	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001
Total	78.3	84.1	43.0	54.3	57.7	74.2	41.0	54.1
Age								
3	79.4	83.6	46.4	54.5	57.2	71.2	45.0	59.9
4	77.8	85.2	41.2	54.6	58.1	77.1	38.9	51.7
5	75.9	81.5	35.8	52.0	57.9	74.6	33.1	40.6
Sex								
Male	77.4	82.1	42.6	53.2	57.7	72.8	38.3	51.4
Female	79.2	86.1	43.4	55.4	57.7	75.7	43.8	56.9
Race/ethnicity²								
Asian/Pacific Islander	68.8	87.4	52.1	58.1	61.8	77.9	35.9	50.4
Black	65.9	76.7	39.0	51.2	62.7	77.5	48.9	53.9
White	84.8	89.4	44.3	57.9	57.2	74.8	40.2	53.4
Other ³	75.9	86.5	48.1	61.8	56.0	78.4	31.3	57.9
Hispanic	58.2	70.7	37.7	42.3	53.9	68.2	38.7	56.6
Mother's home language⁴								
English	81.4	87.7	43.7	56.3	58.4	76.0	42.0	55.2
Not English	42.1	59.4	35.7	34.2	51.9	62.1	32.6	50.0
Mother's education⁴								
Less than high school	59.7	69.0	36.6	43.2	56.4	66.6	39.8	54.4
High school diploma or equivalent	75.5	80.8	41.2	53.0	56.4	73.1	41.3	54.6
Some college, including vocational/technical	83.3	85.6	45.1	53.5	60.4	76.0	42.4	55.3
Bachelor's degree	90.0	93.0	47.9	57.9	56.6	75.8	38.5	51.6
Graduate/professional degree	89.9	96.0	49.6	67.2	59.5	80.0	43.8	56.8
Mother's employment status⁴								
Employed full time or part time	79.3	85.6	43.6	53.8	56.5	73.5	41.2	54.6
35 hours or more per week	77.9	83.5	42.7	51.3	55.7	73.1	41.9	52.5
Less than 35 hours per week	81.5	89.4	45.0	58.6	57.7	74.2	40.2	58.5
Looking for work	70.9	76.5	42.9	55.9	65.8	72.8	49.2	40.1
Not in the labor force	78.9	83.1	42.5	54.3	58.3	75.8	40.0	56.1
Family type								
Two-parent household	81.1	86.7	43.8	55.3	57.1	74.5	39.9	54.1
None or one-parent household	70.8	76.3	40.7	51.3	59.1	73.5	43.9	54.2
Poverty status⁵								
Below poverty threshold (poor)	67.5	73.7	39.1	50.7	59.6	72.4	45.2	57.0
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	82.1	87.1	44.3	55.3	57.0	74.7	39.5	53.3
Between 100 and 200 percent of poverty threshold	75.5	80.8	42.5	54.4	58.1	72.1	39.4	53.0
Above 200 percent of poverty threshold	86.8	90.1	45.6	55.8	56.2	76.0	39.5	53.4
Number of children								
1	80.9	84.3	45.9	52.7	65.0	77.1	44.0	54.6
2–3	78.7	84.6	43.1	54.1	55.8	73.6	39.7	52.9
4 or more	72.4	81.8	38.3	56.9	56.8	73.4	43.3	59.1

¹In 1993, respondents were asked about reading frequency in one of the two versions of the survey questionnaire. The percentages presented in the table are for all of the respondents who answered three or more times on either version of the questionnaire.

²Black includes African American, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

³Other includes American Indian and Alaska Native.

⁴Children without mothers (birth, adoptive, step, or foster) residing in the household are not included in estimates dealing with mother's education, mother's language at home, or mother's employment status. Excludes 86 children in 1993 and 65 children in 2001 when there was no mother (birth, adoptive, step, or foster) residing in their household and the survey respondent on the telephone was not a female.

⁵See *supplemental note 1* for additional information on poverty status.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Program Participation Surveys of the National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993 and ECPP-NHES:2001).

Early Literacy Activities

Table S37. Standard errors for the percentage of children ages 3–5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten who participated in home literacy activities with a family member three or more times in the week before the survey, by poverty status: 1993 and 2001

Poverty status	Read to		Told a story		Taught letters, words, or numbers		Taught songs or music	
	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001
Below poverty threshold (poor)	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.7	2.0	2.4	2.1	2.3
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Program Participation Surveys of the National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993 and ECPP-NHES:2001).

Early Literacy Activities

Table S37-1. Standard errors for the percentage of children ages 3–5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten who participated in home literacy activities with a family member three or more times in the week before the survey, by selected child and family characteristics: 1993 and 2001

Child and family characteristics	Read to		Told a story		Taught letters, words, or numbers		Taught songs or music	
	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001
Total	0.66	0.75	0.89	0.90	0.79	1.00	0.86	1.11
Age								
3	0.99	1.07	1.33	1.35	1.27	1.73	1.33	1.57
4	1.00	1.15	1.52	1.40	1.11	1.27	1.24	1.72
5	2.09	2.65	2.70	3.01	2.81	2.53	2.56	3.36
Sex								
Male	1.04	1.19	1.26	1.37	0.97	1.55	1.31	1.45
Female	1.00	1.03	1.24	1.32	1.35	1.32	1.22	1.43
Race/ethnicity								
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.83	4.06	7.35	6.85	4.90	5.80	4.65	7.23
Black	2.36	2.63	2.69	2.90	2.69	3.44	3.10	3.17
White	0.71	0.83	0.98	1.13	0.93	1.23	1.00	1.52
Other	5.69	3.37	6.63	4.96	7.00	4.54	4.31	5.01
Hispanic	2.38	1.92	2.18	2.06	1.94	2.01	1.99	1.99
Mother's home language								
English	0.66	0.76	0.92	1.04	0.84	1.09	0.93	1.24
Not English	3.02	2.62	2.86	2.88	2.78	2.99	2.56	2.88
Mother's education								
Less than high school	2.69	2.78	3.20	3.67	2.73	3.03	2.80	3.16
High school diploma or equivalent	1.33	1.62	1.34	1.73	1.35	1.54	1.25	2.03
Some college, including vocational/technical	1.39	1.61	1.76	1.96	1.54	1.62	1.35	2.10
Bachelor's degree	1.59	1.16	2.45	2.24	2.24	1.91	2.57	2.15
Graduate/professional degree	2.11	1.15	3.17	3.58	2.73	2.77	3.60	3.31
Mother's employment status								
Employed full time or part time	1.00	0.98	0.98	1.28	1.17	1.29	1.13	1.43
35 hours or more per week	1.20	1.33	1.23	1.58	1.47	1.59	1.55	1.77
Less than 35 hours per week	1.67	1.57	1.94	2.47	1.95	2.39	1.81	2.08
Looking for work	3.45	5.05	2.91	5.58	3.65	4.96	4.41	4.55
Not in the labor force	1.26	1.41	1.46	1.97	1.49	1.65	1.36	1.77
Family type								
Two-parent household	0.71	0.75	0.96	0.97	0.91	1.10	0.89	1.24
None or one-parent household	1.71	2.03	1.97	2.16	2.13	2.24	1.93	2.19
Poverty status								
Below poverty threshold (poor)	1.59	2.27	1.83	2.68	2.00	2.40	2.05	2.30
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	0.71	0.77	0.92	0.94	0.83	1.08	0.91	1.18
Between 100 and 200 percent of poverty threshold	1.46	1.57	1.55	1.89	1.59	1.94	1.34	1.81
Above 200 percent of poverty threshold	0.77	0.84	1.26	1.13	1.05	1.11	1.26	1.43
Number of children								
1	1.52	1.81	1.93	2.19	1.74	1.80	1.67	2.37
2–3	0.80	1.01	1.10	1.20	0.87	1.25	1.01	1.33
4 or more	2.62	2.39	2.90	2.75	3.01	2.54	2.23	3.04

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Program Participation Surveys of the National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993 and ECPP-NHES:2001).

Early Literacy Activities

Table S37-1. Standard errors for the percentage of children ages 3–5 not yet enrolled in kindergarten who participated in home literacy activities with a family member three or more times in the week before the survey, by selected child and family characteristics: 1993 and 2001

Child and family characteristics	Read to		Told a story		Taught letters, words, or numbers		Taught songs or music	
	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001	1993	2001
Total	0.66	0.75	0.89	0.90	0.79	1.00	0.86	1.11
Age								
3	0.99	1.07	1.33	1.35	1.27	1.73	1.33	1.57
4	1.00	1.15	1.52	1.40	1.11	1.27	1.24	1.72
5	2.09	2.65	2.70	3.01	2.81	2.53	2.56	3.36
Sex								
Male	1.04	1.19	1.26	1.37	0.97	1.55	1.31	1.45
Female	1.00	1.03	1.24	1.32	1.35	1.32	1.22	1.43
Race/ethnicity								
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.83	4.06	7.35	6.85	4.90	5.80	4.65	7.23
Black	2.36	2.63	2.69	2.90	2.69	3.44	3.10	3.17
White	0.71	0.83	0.98	1.13	0.93	1.23	1.00	1.52
Other	5.69	3.37	6.63	4.96	7.00	4.54	4.31	5.01
Hispanic	2.38	1.92	2.18	2.06	1.94	2.01	1.99	1.99
Mother's home language								
English	0.66	0.76	0.92	1.04	0.84	1.09	0.93	1.24
Not English	3.02	2.62	2.86	2.88	2.78	2.99	2.56	2.88
Mother's education								
Less than high school	2.69	2.78	3.20	3.67	2.73	3.03	2.80	3.16
High school diploma or equivalent	1.33	1.62	1.34	1.73	1.35	1.54	1.25	2.03
Some college, including vocational/technical	1.39	1.61	1.76	1.96	1.54	1.62	1.35	2.10
Bachelor's degree	1.59	1.16	2.45	2.24	2.24	1.91	2.57	2.15
Graduate/professional degree	2.11	1.15	3.17	3.58	2.73	2.77	3.60	3.31
Mother's employment status								
Employed full time or part time	1.00	0.98	0.98	1.28	1.17	1.29	1.13	1.43
35 hours or more per week	1.20	1.33	1.23	1.58	1.47	1.59	1.55	1.77
Less than 35 hours per week	1.67	1.57	1.94	2.47	1.95	2.39	1.81	2.08
Looking for work	3.45	5.05	2.91	5.58	3.65	4.96	4.41	4.55
Not in the labor force	1.26	1.41	1.46	1.97	1.49	1.65	1.36	1.77
Family type								
Two-parent household	0.71	0.75	0.96	0.97	0.91	1.10	0.89	1.24
None or one-parent household	1.71	2.03	1.97	2.16	2.13	2.24	1.93	2.19
Poverty status								
Below poverty threshold (poor)	1.59	2.27	1.83	2.68	2.00	2.40	2.05	2.30
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	0.71	0.77	0.92	0.94	0.83	1.08	0.91	1.18
Between 100 and 200 percent of poverty threshold	1.46	1.57	1.55	1.89	1.59	1.94	1.34	1.81
Above 200 percent of poverty threshold	0.77	0.84	1.26	1.13	1.05	1.11	1.26	1.43
Number of children								
1	1.52	1.81	1.93	2.19	1.74	1.80	1.67	2.37
2–3	0.80	1.01	1.10	1.20	0.87	1.25	1.01	1.33
4 or more	2.62	2.39	2.90	2.75	3.01	2.54	2.23	3.04

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, School Readiness and Early Childhood Education Program Participation Surveys of the National Household Education Surveys Program (SR-NHES:1993 and ECPP-NHES:2001).