

The Condition of Education 2009

Indicator 18 *Grade Retention*

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2009*. 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 2009*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009081>) or contact ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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In 2007, about 10 percent of students in kindergarten through grade 8 had ever been retained in a grade during their school career. A greater percentage of Black students than either White or Hispanic students had ever been retained in this year.

Students may be retained in a grade for reasons including a lack of the academic or social skills needed to advance to the next grade. This indicator examines grade retention rates as reported by parents in the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES). The percentage of students in kindergarten (K) through grade 8 who had ever been retained during their school career has remained between 9 and 11 percent in all survey years between 1996 and 2007 (see table A-18-1). In 2007, about 10 percent of K–8 students had ever been retained.

In each survey year, a greater percentage of male students than female students had ever been retained in a grade. Among K–8 students in 2007, some 12 percent of male students had ever been retained, compared with 8 percent of female students. The percentages of male and female students who had ever been retained in 2007 were not measurably different from the percentages in 1996.

The percentage of K–8 students who had ever been retained differed by race/ethnicity and by region. For example, in 2007, a greater percentage of Black students than either White or Hispanic students had ever been retained. No measurable differences were found between 1996 and 2007 in either the White-Black or the White-Hispanic gap in the percentage of students who had ever been retained. In 2007, the percentages of students in the Northeast and the South who had ever been retained were larger than the percentage of students in the West. Additionally, a larger percentage of students in the South than in the Midwest had ever been retained. The percentages within each racial/ethnic and region category of students who had ever been retained did not measurably differ in 2007 from those in 1996.

In each survey year, the percentage of K–8 students who had ever been retained was greater among students

from poor families than among students from near-poor or nonpoor families. In 2007, for example, 23 percent of students from poor families had ever been retained, compared with 11 percent of students from near-poor families and 5 percent of students from nonpoor families. The percentage of students from poor families who had ever been retained was higher in 2007 (23 percent) than in 1996 (17 percent), while the percentage of students from nonpoor families who had ever been retained was lower in 2007 (5 percent) than in 1996 (7 percent).

The percentage of K–8 students who had ever been retained varied by their mothers' education level. Generally, in each survey year, the percentage of students who had ever been retained was greater among students whose mothers had completed lower levels of education, compared with students whose mothers had completed higher levels of education. In 2007, for example, 20 percent of students whose mothers had less than a high school diploma or its equivalent had ever been retained, compared with 3 percent each of students whose mothers' highest level of education was a bachelor's degree or graduate/professional school.

The percentages of K–8 students who had ever been retained did not measurably differ by school type, primary language spoken in the home, or country of birth in 2007. Between 1996 and 2007 (between 1999 and 2007 for country of birth), there were no measurable differences by these characteristics in the percentage of students who had ever been retained.



For more information: *Table A-18-1*

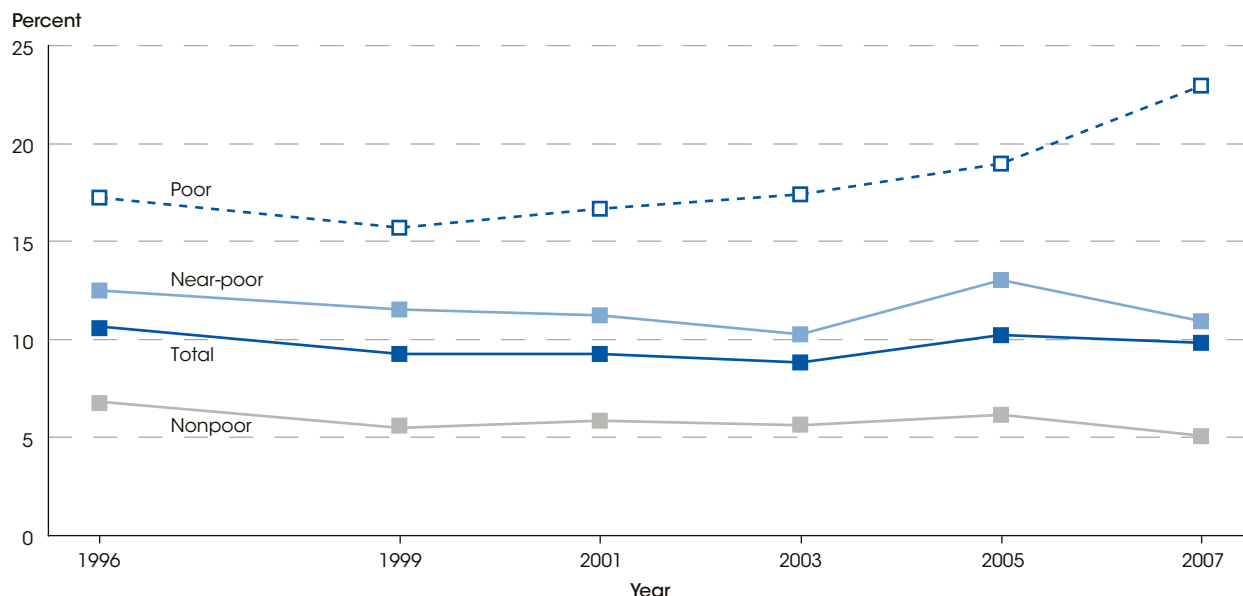
Glossary: *Educational attainment, Private school, Public school*

Technical Notes

All data are based on parent reports. In 2007, administrative record data were also used to establish school type. Estimates exclude homeschooled students. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Estimates for mother's education exclude data for students who were reported to have no mother or female guardian.

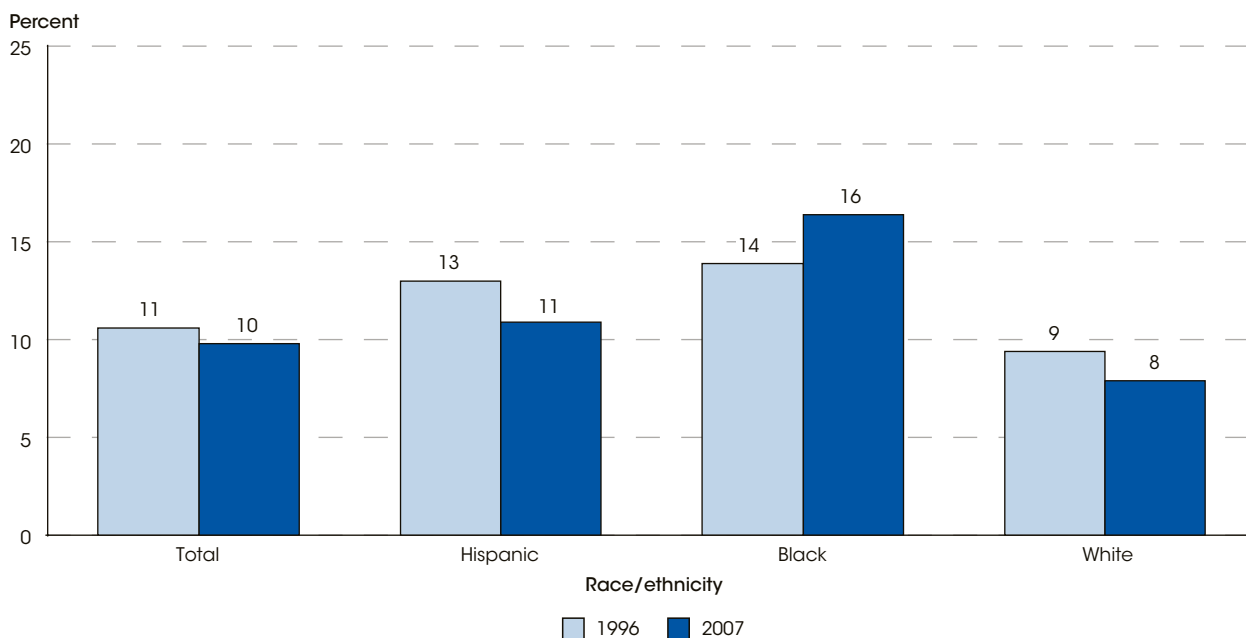
For more information on race/ethnicity, parents' education, poverty thresholds, and a list of the states in each region, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), see *supplemental note 3*.

Figure 18-1. Percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 8 who had ever been retained in a grade during their school career, by poverty status: Selected years, 1996–2007



NOTE: All data are based on parent reports. For more information on poverty thresholds, please see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), see *supplemental note 3*.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent Survey, Before- and After-School Programs Survey, and Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 1996–2007 NHES (Parent-NHES:1999; ASPA-NHES:2001 and 2005; and PFI-NHES:1996, 2003, and 2007).

Figure 18-2. Percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 8 who had ever been retained in a grade during their school career, by race/ethnicity: 1996 and 2007



NOTE: All data are based on parent reports. Not all race/ethnicity categories are shown. Race categories excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), see *supplemental note 3*.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 1996 and 2007 NHES (PFI-NHES:1996 and 2007).

Supplemental Table to Indicator 18

Grade Retention

Table A-18-1. Percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 8 who had ever been retained in a grade during their school career, by selected characteristics: Selected years, 1996–2007

Characteristic	1996	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
Total	10.6	9.2	9.2	8.8	10.2	9.8
School type						
Public	11.0	9.8	9.8	9.2	10.6	10.2
Private	7.3	5.0	4.4	5.1	7.2	6.7
Sex						
Male	13.4	11.3	11.4	10.2	11.9	11.7
Female	7.7	7.1	7.0	7.3	8.3	7.6
Race/ethnicity ¹						
White	9.4	7.6	7.1	7.3	8.0	7.9
Black	13.9	14.5	15.3	14.3	17.7	16.4
Hispanic	13.0	11.4	12.2	9.1	11.7	10.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.4 [!]	3.0 [!]	2.1 [!]	3.7 [!]	1.8 [!]	‡
Other	11.7	10.1	10.7	10.9	10.7	8.8
Mother's education ²						
Less than high school	20.3	17.3	18.9	17.2	19.6	19.7
High school graduate or equivalent	11.7	11.0	10.8	10.8	12.5	12.6
Vocational/technical or some college	7.9	7.1	7.5	7.7	8.5	12.2
Bachelor's degree	4.5	4.2	3.0	3.9	4.9	3.2
Graduate/professional school	5.5	4.5	4.3	3.3	4.4	3.1
Poverty status						
Poor	17.2	15.7	16.6	17.4	18.9	22.9
Near-poor	12.5	11.5	11.2	10.2	13.0	10.9
Nonpoor	6.8	5.5	5.8	5.6	6.1	5.1
Region						
Northeast	10.3	8.7	8.3	8.9	9.8	10.5
South	13.9	11.7	12.4	11.6	13.7	13.2
Midwest	8.9	8.5	7.8	6.3	6.9	7.8
West	7.4	6.4	6.9	7.1	8.3	6.0
Primary language spoken in home						
English	10.6	9.2	9.2	8.8	10.1	9.7
Language other than English	11.4	9.9	9.8	8.1	12.1	10.5
Country of birth						
United States	—	9.2	9.2	8.8	10.1	9.6
Other jurisdictions ³	—	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
Other country	—	10.2	8.9	9.3	12.4	12.5
Of the percentage of students who had ever been retained						
Grade level retained ⁴						
Kindergarten–1st grade	34.4	32.6	27.8	31.0	30.7	34.1
2nd–3rd grade	14.7	12.3 ⁵	17.8	15.6	16.9	15.0
4th–5th grade	7.4	8.3	10.1	8.4	10.2	9.3
6th–8th grade	6.2	13.3	10.6	10.6	9.1	6.9

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

‡ Reporting standards not met.

¹ Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. "Other" includes individuals of more than one race.

² Estimates for mother's education exclude data for students who were reported to have no mother or female guardian.

³ Other jurisdictions includes U.S. territories.

⁴ Includes only students who had ever been retained in their school career. For example, of all students in 2007 who had ever been retained in their school career, 34 percent were retained in kindergarten or 1st grade. Respondents could report retention in more than one grade over the course of the student's school career. For example, a student who had been retained both in kindergarten and in 3rd grade would be counted in both the "kindergarten or 1st grade" category and the "2nd or 3rd grade" category.

⁵ For 1999, the estimate of students ever retained who were retained in 2nd grade (derived from the variable SEREPT2 on the Parent-NHES:1999 data file) is omitted here because it is anomalous. Due to this data anomaly, the "2nd or 3rd grade" category for 1999 includes only students who were retained in 3rd grade. For more information on this data anomaly, see http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/dataproducts_anomaly.asp.

NOTE: All data are based on parent reports. In 2007, administrative record data were also used to establish school type. Estimates exclude homeschooled students. For more information on race/ethnicity, parents' education, poverty thresholds, and a list of the states in each region, see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on National Household Education Surveys (NHES), see *supplemental note 3*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent Survey, Before- and After-School Programs Survey, and Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 1996–2007 NHES (Parent-NHES:1999; ASPA-NHES:2001 and 2005; and PFI-NHES:1996, 2003, and 2007).

Standard Error Table to Indicator 18

Grade Retention

Table S-18-1. Standard errors for the percentage of students in kindergarten through grade 8 who had ever been retained in a grade during their school career, by selected characteristics: Selected years, 1996–2007

Characteristic	1996	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
Total	0.41	0.33	0.39	0.37	0.36	0.56
School type						
Public	0.44	0.35	0.43	0.40	0.38	0.61
Private	0.70	0.67	0.63	0.85	1.16	1.94
Sex						
Male	0.60	0.47	0.59	0.49	0.54	0.86
Female	0.45	0.41	0.51	0.59	0.50	0.76
Race/ethnicity						
White	0.42	0.39	0.45	0.44	0.45	0.67
Black	1.11	1.06	1.02	1.18	1.41	2.38
Hispanic	1.22	0.86	0.91	0.96	0.88	1.42
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.04	1.13	1.04	1.69	0.73	†
Other	1.94	2.33	2.31	2.55	1.53	2.13
Mother's education						
Less than high school	1.39	1.33	1.45	1.65	1.41	2.94
High school graduate or equivalent	0.70	0.77	0.70	0.78	0.86	1.32
Vocational/technical or some college	0.47	0.53	0.66	0.62	0.69	1.34
Bachelor's degree	0.52	0.58	0.51	0.57	0.62	0.57
Graduate/professional school	1.05	0.80	0.88	0.77	1.02	0.61
Poverty status						
Poor	1.33	1.13	1.25	1.26	1.35	2.17
Near-poor	0.69	0.68	0.83	0.93	0.91	1.10
Nonpoor	0.34	0.28	0.37	0.36	0.38	0.40
Region						
Northeast	0.80	0.79	0.90	1.02	0.80	1.84
South	0.79	0.59	0.73	0.76	0.80	1.07
Midwest	0.78	0.70	0.83	0.66	0.71	1.20
West	0.66	0.59	0.69	0.74	0.72	0.79
Primary language spoken in home						
English	0.43	0.34	0.40	0.39	0.35	0.59
Language other than English	2.20	1.29	1.43	1.26	1.71	1.90
Country of birth						
United States	†	0.33	0.41	0.37	0.36	0.59
Other jurisdictions	†	†	†	†	†	†
Other country	†	1.34	1.43	1.73	1.82	2.84
Of the percentage of students who had ever been retained						
Grade level retained						
Kindergarten–1st grade	1.05	1.07	1.22	1.25	1.20	2.36
2nd–3rd grade	1.09	1.48	1.28	1.20	1.02	1.88
4th–5th grade	0.92	1.26	1.13	1.17	1.31	2.10
6th–8th grade	0.86	1.34	1.16	1.55	1.02	1.33

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent Survey, Before- and After-School Programs Survey, and Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 1996–2007 NHES (Parent-NHES:1999; ASPA-NHES:2001 and 2005; and PFI-NHES:1996, 2003, and 2007).