

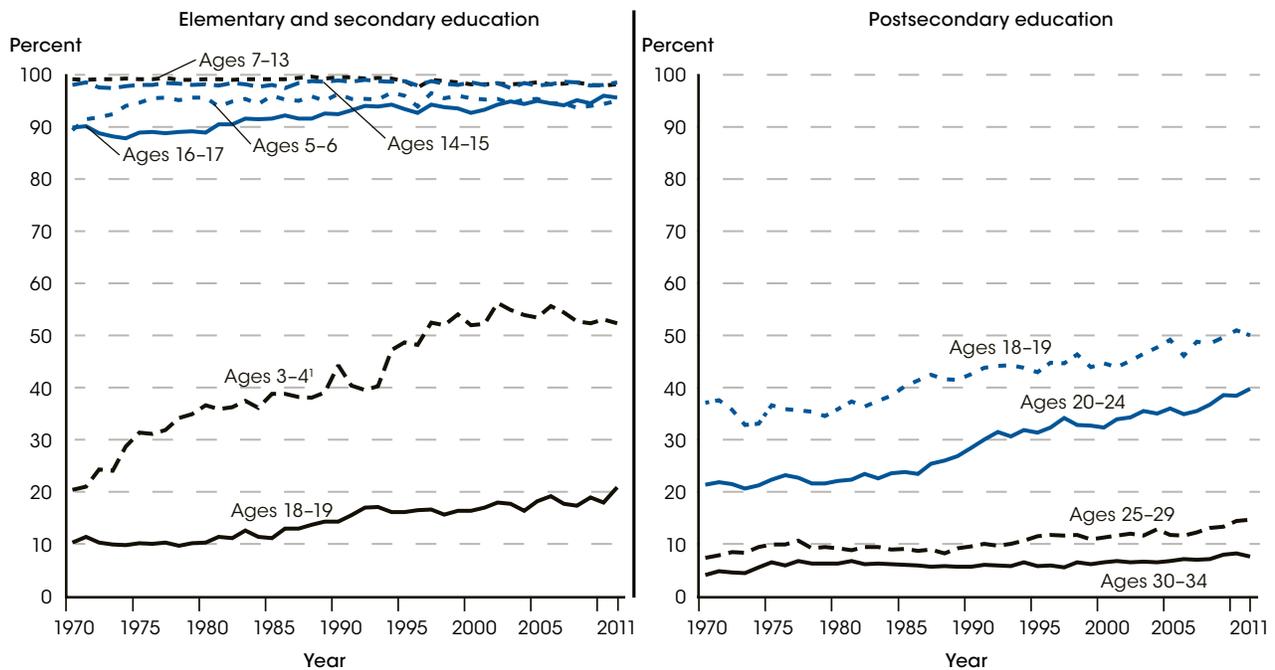
Enrollment Trends by Age

Between 2000 and 2011, enrollment rates increased for age groups between 18 and 34; students in these age groups are typically enrolled in college or graduate school.

Changes in the number of students enrolled can stem from fluctuations in population size or shifts in enrollment rates. Enrollment rates may reflect changes in state compulsory attendance requirements, the prevalence of homeschooling, the perceived value of education, particularly for preschoolers and college students, and the time taken to complete a degree. For most age groups

from 3 to 34, the total school enrollment rate was higher in 2011 than in the 1970s. The only exceptions were for youth ages 7–13 and 14–15, whose enrollment rates fluctuated between 97 and 99 percent over the past four decades. The slight decline for youth ages 7–13, from 99 percent in 1970 to 98 percent in 2011, reflects an increase in the rate of homeschooling.

Figure 1. Percentage of the population ages 3–34 enrolled in school, by education level and age group: October 1970–2011



¹ Beginning in 1994, new procedures were used to collect enrollment data on children ages 3–4. As a result, pre-1994 data may not be comparable to data from 1994 or later.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1970–2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 7.

Between 1970 and 2011, the enrollment rate for children ages 3–4 (the ages at which children are typically enrolled in nursery or preschool) increased from 20 to 52 percent. For children ages 5–6, the biggest increase in the enrollment rate was between 1970 and 1974, when it rose from 90 percent to 94 percent. The enrollment rate has varied between 94 percent and 97 percent from 1974 to 2011. There were no measurable differences in the enrollment rates for children ages 3–4 or for children ages 5–6 between 2000 and 2011.

The enrollment rates for 7- to 13-year-olds and 14- to 15-year-olds were generally higher than the rate for 16- to 17-year-olds from 1970 to 2011, but the rate for 16- to

17-year-olds did increase from 90 percent in 1970 to 96 percent in 2011. Between 2000 and 2011, enrollment rates were not measurably different for either 7- to 13-year-olds or 14- to 15-year-olds, while for 16- to 17-year-olds, the rate increased from 93 to 96 percent.

Young adults at ages 18–19 are typically transitioning into either college education or the workforce. Between 1970 and 2011, the overall enrollment rate (i.e., enrollment at both the secondary level and the college level) for young adults ages 18–19 increased from 48 to 71 percent. During this period, the enrollment rate for 18- and 19-year-olds at the secondary level increased from 10 to 21 percent, while the rate at the college level

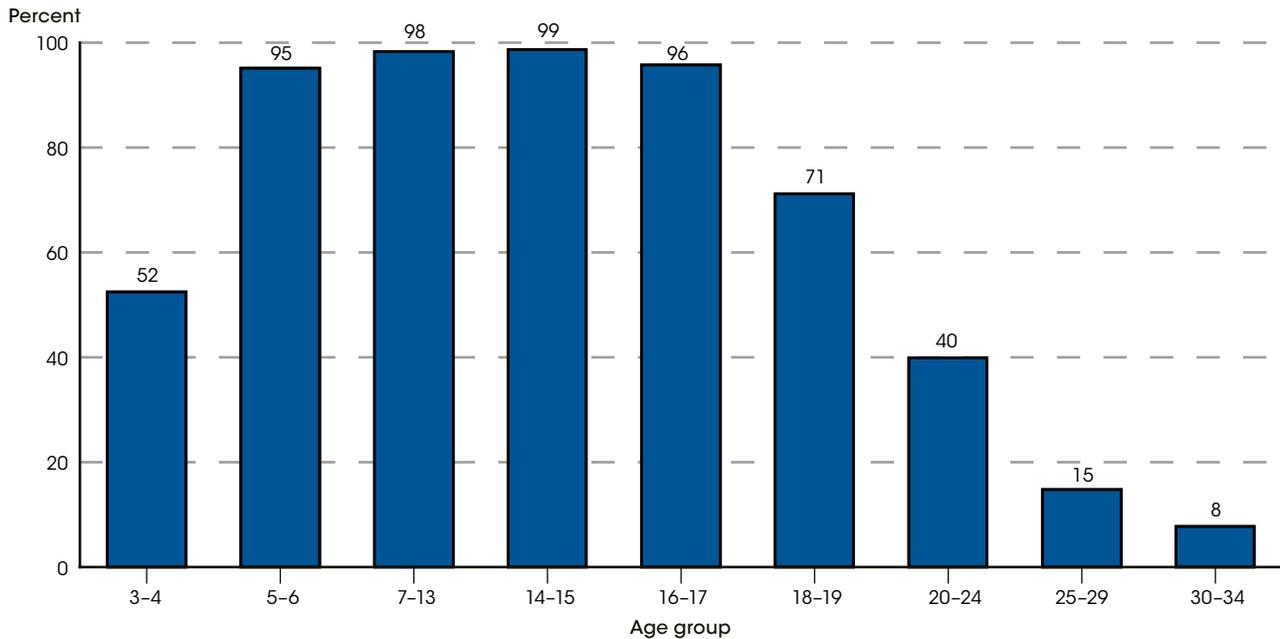
For more information, see the Reader’s Guide and the Guide to Sources.

rose from 37 to 50 percent. Between 2000 and 2011, the overall enrollment rate increased from 61 to 71 percent, the secondary enrollment rate increased from 16 to 21 percent, and the college enrollment rate increased from 45 to 50 percent.

Enrolled adults ages 20–34 are usually in college or graduate school. Between 1970 and 2011, the enrollment

rate for adults ages 20–24 increased from 22 to 40 percent, and the rate for adults ages 25–29 increased from 8 to 15 percent. The enrollment rate for adults ages 30–34 increased from 4 percent in 1970 to 8 percent in 2011. Between 2000 and 2011, the enrollment rate for adults ages 20–24 increased from 32 to 40 percent, for adults ages 25–29, it increased from 11 to 15 percent, and for adults ages 30–34, it increased from 7 to 8 percent.

Figure 2. Percentage of the population ages 3–34 enrolled in school, by age group: October 2011



NOTE: The enrollment rate for those ages 18–19 includes enrollment at both the secondary level and the college level.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 7.

Reference table: *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 7

Glossary: College, Secondary school