

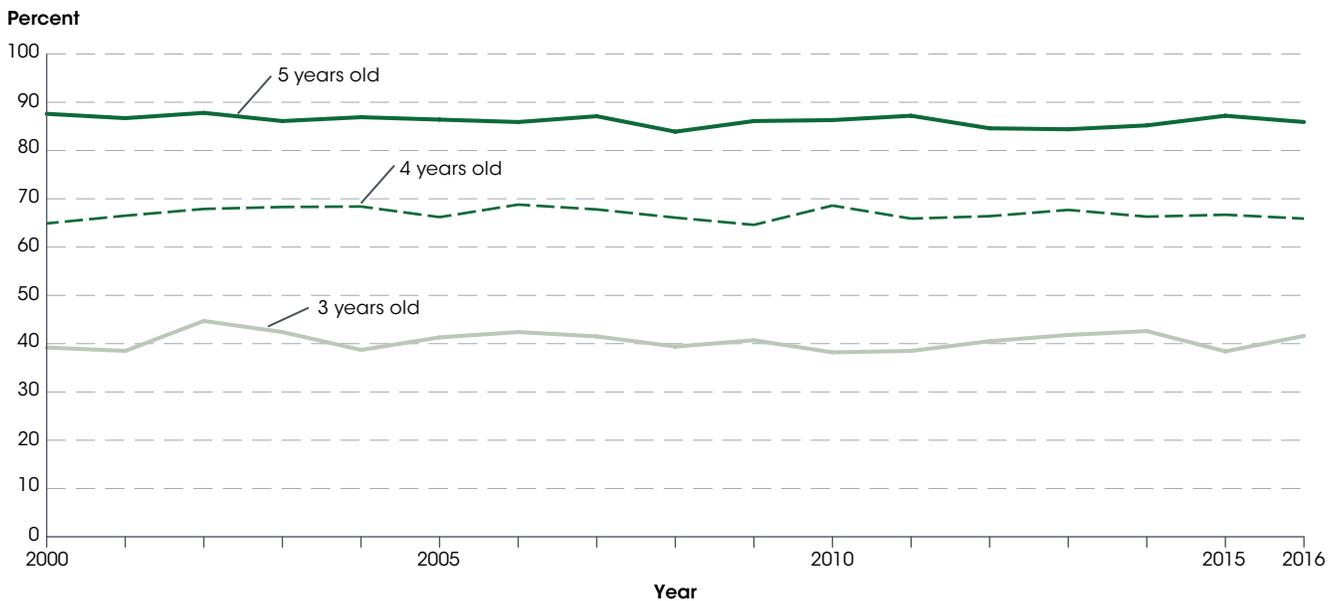
# Preschool and Kindergarten Enrollment

In 2016, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs was higher for those children whose parents had a graduate or professional degree (54 percent) than for those whose parents had a bachelor's degree (41 percent), an associate's degree (35 percent), some college but no degree (37 percent), a high school credential (33 percent), and less than a high school credential (30 percent).

Preprimary programs are groups or classes that are organized to provide educational experiences for children, including kindergarten and preschool programs.<sup>1</sup> Child

care programs that are not primarily designed to provide educational experiences, such as daycare programs, are not included in preprimary programs.

Figure 1. Percentage of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children enrolled in preprimary programs: 2000 through 2016

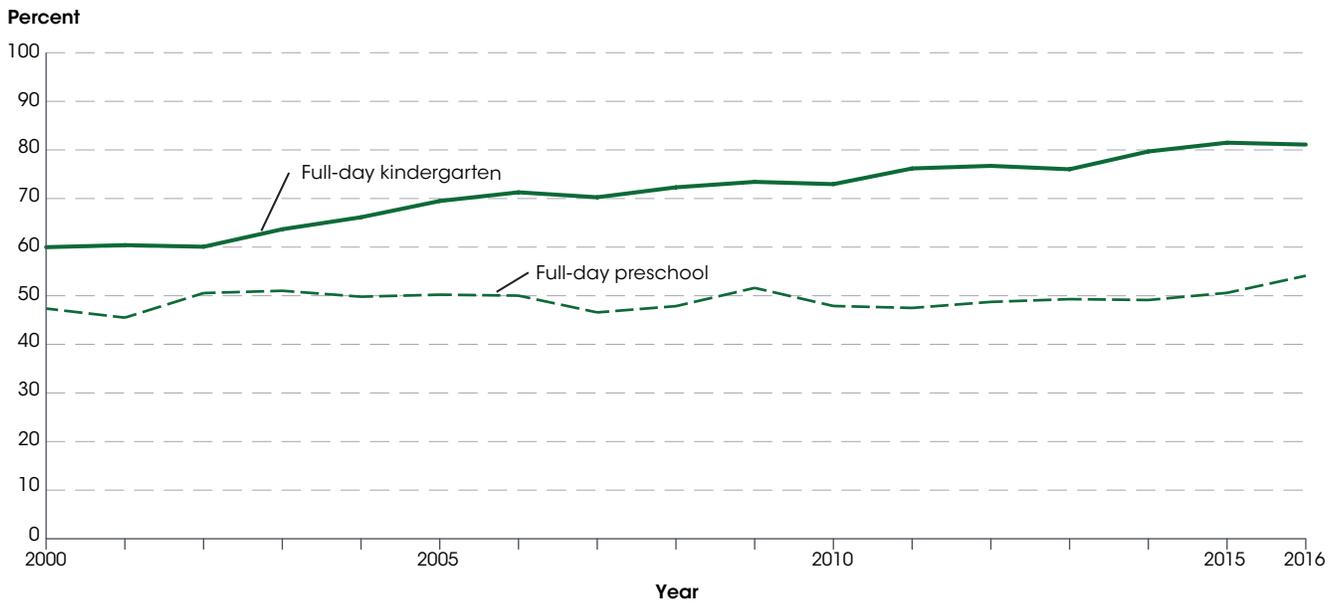


NOTE: "Preprimary programs" are groups or classes that are organized to provide educational experiences for children and include kindergarten, preschool, and nursery school programs. Enrollment data for 5-year-olds include only those students in preprimary programs and do not include those enrolled in primary programs. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutional population.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2000 through 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2006*, table 41; *Digest of Education Statistics 2009*, table 43; *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 53; and *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017*, table 202.10.

In 2016, some 42 percent of 3-year-olds, 66 percent of 4-year-olds, and 86 percent of 5-year-olds were enrolled in preprimary programs, which were not measurably different from the percentages enrolled in 2000. In 2016, the

percentage of children enrolled in preprimary programs was higher for 5-year-olds than for 4-year-olds, and higher for 4-year-olds than for 3-year-olds.

**Figure 2. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children in preprimary programs attending full-day programs, by program type: 2000 through 2016**

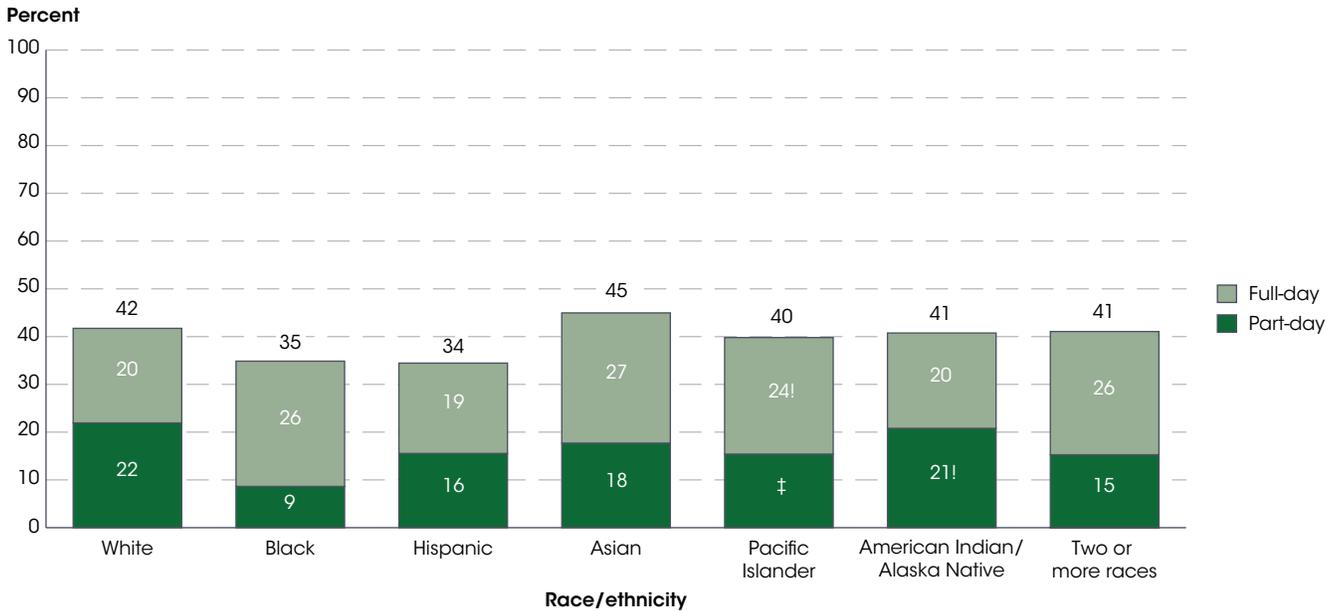


NOTE: "Preprimary programs" are groups or classes that are organized to provide educational experiences for children and include kindergarten, preschool, and nursery school programs. Enrollment data for 5-year-olds include only those students in preprimary programs and do not include those enrolled in primary programs. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutional population.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2000 through 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2006*, table 41; *Digest of Education Statistics 2009*, table 43; *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 53; and *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017*, table 202.10.

Among 3- to 5-year-olds who were enrolled in preschool programs in 2016, some 54 percent attended full-day programs, which was higher than the percentage who attended full-day programs in 2000 (47 percent). Among 3- to 5-year-olds attending kindergarten, the percentage attending full-day programs increased from 60 percent

in 2000 to 81 percent in 2016. In every year from 2000 to 2016, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-old kindergarten students enrolled in full-day programs was higher than the percentage of 3- to 5-year-old preschool students enrolled in full-day programs.

**Figure 3. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool programs, by race/ethnicity and attendance status: October 2016**



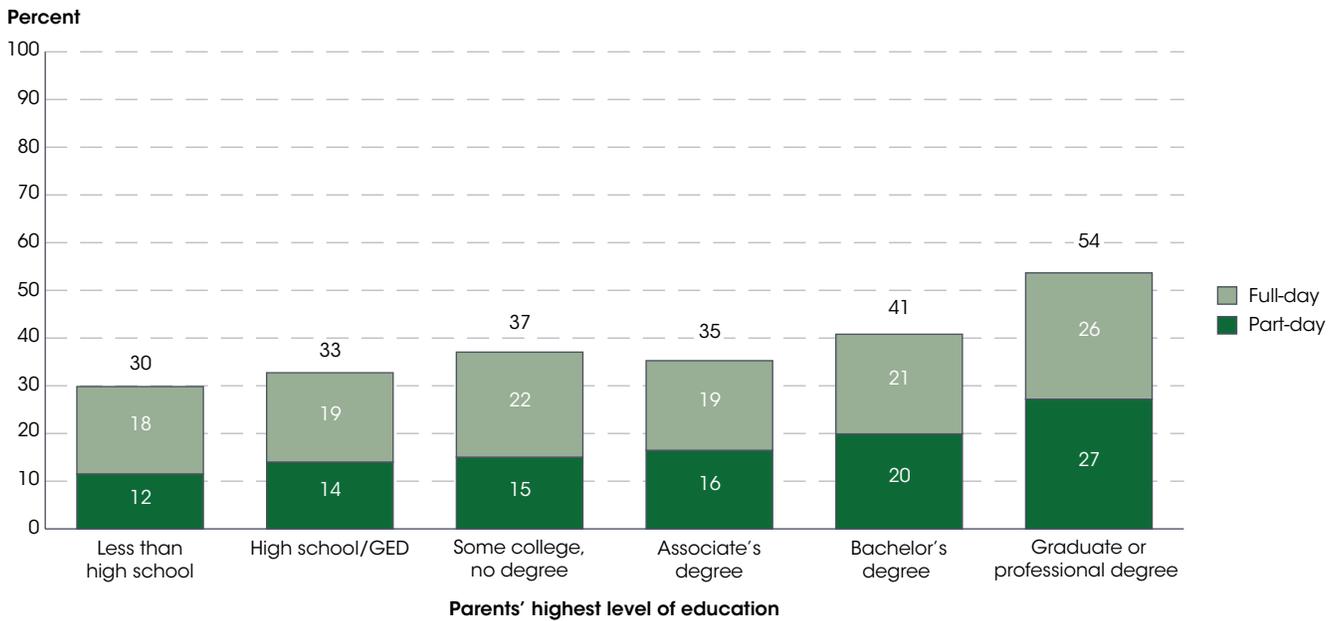
! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.  
 ‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.  
 NOTE: Data shown are based on unrounded estimates. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Enrollment data include only those children in preschool programs and do not include those enrolled in kindergarten or primary programs. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutional population. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 202.20.

In 2016, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs was lower for Black (35 percent) and Hispanic (34 percent) children than for Asian (45 percent) and White (42 percent) children. The preschool enrollment rates of 3- to 5-year olds who were Pacific Islander (40 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (41 percent), and of Two or more races (41 percent) were not measurably different from the preschool enrollment rates of children from other racial/ethnic groups.

In terms of attendance status, a higher percentage of Black 3- to 5-year-olds attended full-day than part-day preschool programs (26 vs. 9 percent) in 2016. Similar patterns were observed for Asian children (27 vs. 18 percent) and

children of Two or more races (26 vs. 15 percent). For children in the other racial/ethnic groups, there were no measurable differences in the percentages enrolled in full-day compared to part-day programs. Enrollment in full-day preschool programs was higher for Asian (27 percent) and Black (26 percent) children than for White (20 percent) and Hispanic (19 percent) children. The full-day preschool enrollment rates of 3- to 5-year-olds who were of Two or more races (26 percent), Pacific Islander (24 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (20 percent) were not measurably different from the full-day preschool enrollment rates of children who were White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian.

**Figure 4. Percentage of 3- to 5-year-old children enrolled in preschool programs, by parents' highest level of education and attendance status: October 2016**



NOTE: Enrollment data include only those children in preschool programs and do not include those enrolled in kindergarten or primary programs. "Parents' highest level of education" is defined as the highest level of education attained by either parent in the child's household. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutional population. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 202.20.

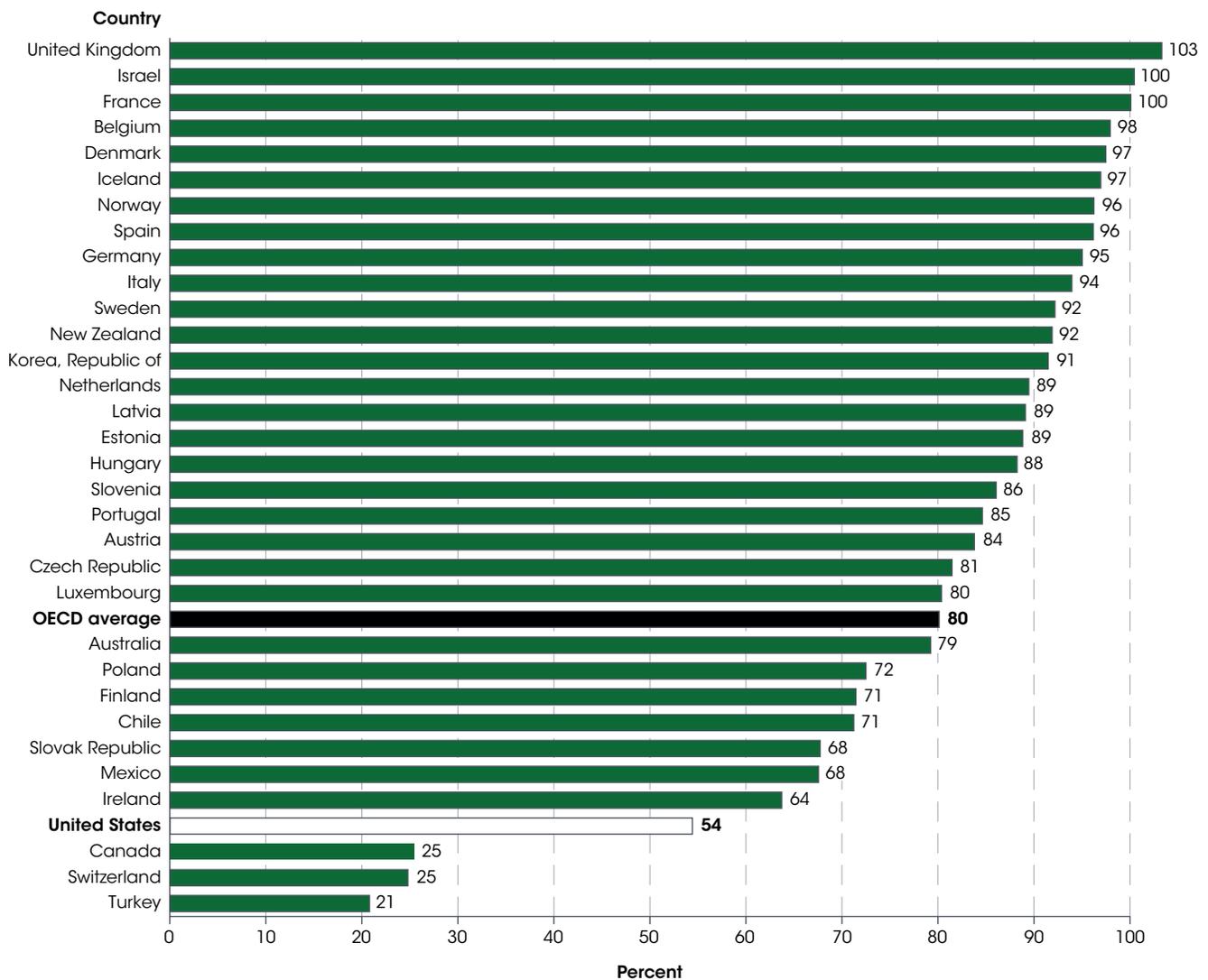
Enrollment in preschool programs varied by parents' highest level of education, defined as the highest level of education attained by either parent in the child's household. In 2016, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs was higher for those children whose parents had a graduate or professional degree (54 percent) than for those whose parents had a bachelor's degree (41 percent), an associate's degree (35 percent), some college but no degree (37 percent), a high school credential (33 percent), and less than a high school credential (30 percent). The preschool enrollment percentage was also higher for those children whose parents had a bachelor's degree than for those whose parents had a high school credential and less than a high school credential.

The percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in part-day and full-day preschool programs also varied by parents' highest level of education. In 2016, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in full-day preschool programs was

higher for those children whose parents had a graduate or professional degree (26 percent) than for those children whose parents had a bachelor's degree (21 percent), an associate's degree (19 percent), a high school credential (19 percent), and less than a high school credential (18 percent).

For the following groups, the percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds who were enrolled in full-day preschool programs was greater than the percentage enrolled in part-day preschool programs: children whose parents had less than a high school credential (18 vs. 12 percent), children whose parents had a high school credential (19 vs. 14 percent), and children whose parents had some college but no degree (22 vs. 15 percent). Among children whose parents had higher levels of educational attainment (i.e., an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate or professional degree), there were no measurable differences between the percentages of children enrolled in full-day and part-day programs.

Figure 5. Percentage of 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in school, by OECD country: 2015



NOTE: Data shown are based on unrounded estimates. The enrollment rate is calculated as the number of persons in each age group who are enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population in the specified age group. However, some of a country's population may be enrolled in a different country, and some persons enrolled in the country may be residents of a different country. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the country's total population in the specified age group can be smaller than the total number enrolled, resulting in enrollment estimates exceeding 100 percent. "OECD average" refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 601.35.

In 2015, some 54 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in school,<sup>2</sup> compared to the average enrollment of 80 percent for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. The OECD is an organization of 35 countries whose purpose is to promote trade and economic growth. The OECD also serves as a statistical agency, collecting

and publishing an array of data on its member countries. Among the 33 OECD countries reporting data in 2015, the percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school ranged from 25 percent or less in Turkey, Switzerland, and Canada to 95 percent or more in Germany, Spain, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Belgium, France, Israel, and the United Kingdom.

**Endnotes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Preschool programs are also known as nursery school programs.  
<sup>2</sup> The international data represent 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school at any level, rather than specifically in preprimary

or preschool programs. The distinctions between preprimary, preschool, and elementary schools may vary by country.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2006*, table 41; *Digest of Education Statistics 2009*, table 43; *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*, table 53; *Digest of Education Statistics 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017*, table 202.10; *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, tables 202.20 and 601.35

**Glossary terms:** Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, College, Educational attainment (Current Population Survey), Enrollment, High school completer, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Preschool, Racial/ethnic group

**Related indicators and resources:** [Early Childcare and Education Arrangements](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Early Childhood Care Arrangements: Choices and Costs](#) [*The Condition of Education 2018 Spotlight*]; [Elementary and Secondary Enrollment](#); [Kindergarten Entry Status: On-Time, Delayed-Entry, Repeating Kindergartners](#) [*The Condition of Education 2013 Spotlight*]; [Kindergartners' Approaches to Learning Behaviors and Academic Outcomes](#) [*The Condition of Education 2015 Spotlight*]; [Kindergartners' Approaches to Learning, Family Socioeconomic Status, and Early Academic Gains](#) [*The Condition of Education 2016 Spotlight*]; [Private School Enrollment](#); [Risk Factors and Academic Outcomes in Kindergarten Through Third Grade](#) [*The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight*]