

Enrollment Trends by Age

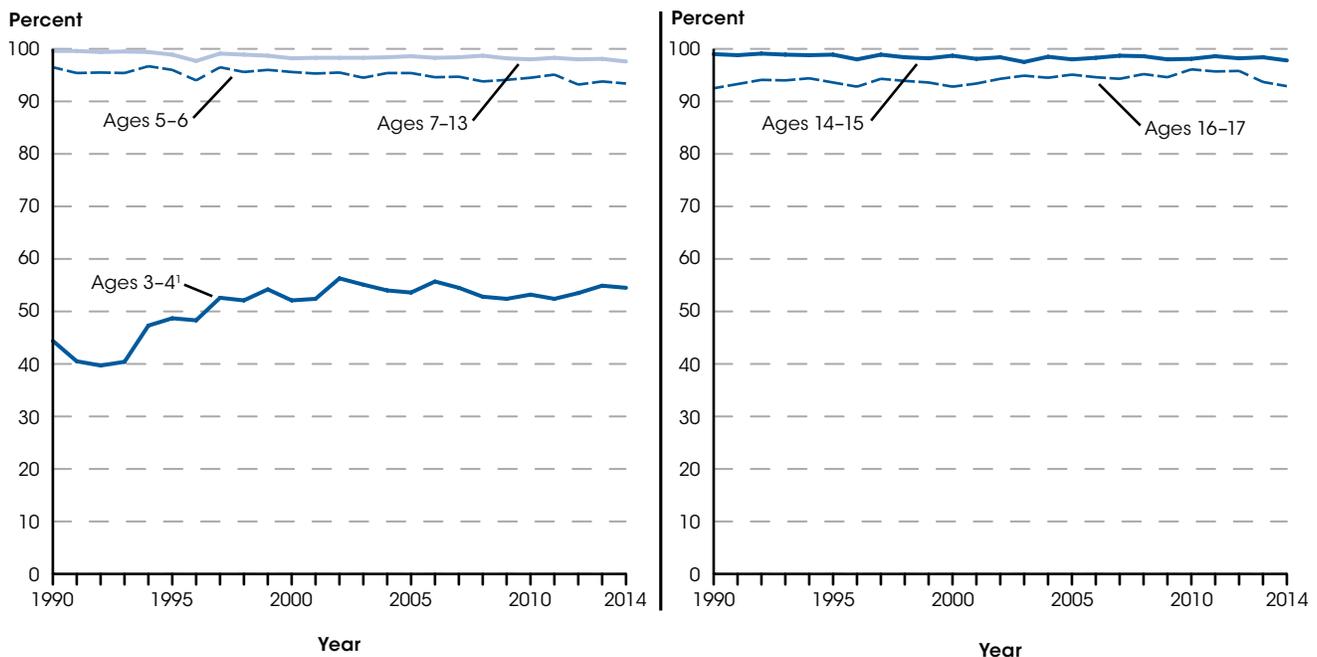
In 2014, some 93 percent of 5- to 6-year-olds and 98 percent of 7- to 13-year-olds were enrolled in elementary or secondary school. In that same year, 68 percent of 18- to 19-year-olds and 38 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in a secondary school or postsecondary institution. For all age groups from 3 to 34, total school enrollment rates were not measurably different in 2014 than they were in 2013.

From 1990 to 2014, school enrollment rates increased for those ages 3–4, 18–19, 20–24, and 25–29; however, enrollment rates decreased for those ages 5–6, 7–13, and 14–15, and enrollment rates for those ages 16–17 and 30–34 did not change measurably. In addition, for all age groups from 3 to 34, total school enrollment rates were not measurably different in 2014 than they were in 2013.

Changes in the number of students enrolled in school can stem from fluctuations in population size or shifts in enrollment rates. Enrollment rates may

also vary in response to changes in state compulsory attendance requirements, changes in the prevalence of homeschooling, changes in perceptions regarding the cost or value of education (particularly at the preschool and college levels), and changes in the amount of time it takes to complete a degree. The enrollment rates presented in this indicator reflect enrollment in public, parochial, or other private schools, including nursery schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools.¹

Figure 1. Percentage of the population ages 3–17 enrolled in school, by age group: October 1990–2014

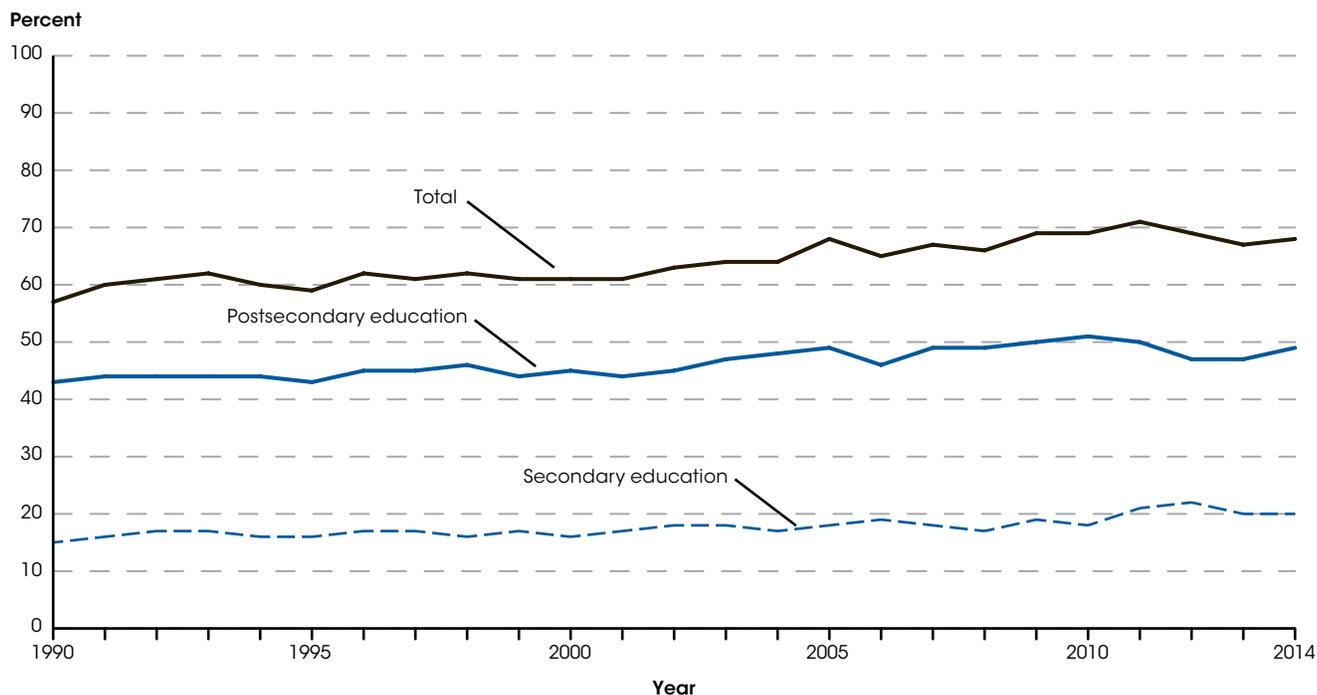


¹ Beginning in 1994, preprimary enrollment data were collected using new procedures. As a result, pre-1994 data may not be comparable to data from 1994 or later.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 103.20.

Between 1990 and 2014, the enrollment rate for children ages 3–4, who are typically enrolled in nursery school or preschool, increased from 44 to 54 percent, with most of the growth occurring between 1990 and 2000. Despite an overall decrease from 1990 to 2014, the enrollment rate for children ages 5–6, who are typically enrolled in kindergarten or first grade, fluctuated between 94 and 97 percent in the 1990s, and then declined

from 96 percent in 2000 to 93 percent in 2014. The enrollment rate for 7- to 13-year-olds decreased from nearly 100 percent in 1990 to 98 percent in 2014, while the enrollment rate for 14- to 15-year-olds decreased from 99 percent to 98 percent during the same period. Meanwhile, the enrollment rate for 16- to 17-year-olds in 2014 was not measurably different from the rate in 1990.

Figure 2. Percentage of the population ages 18–19 enrolled in school, by education level: October 1990–2014

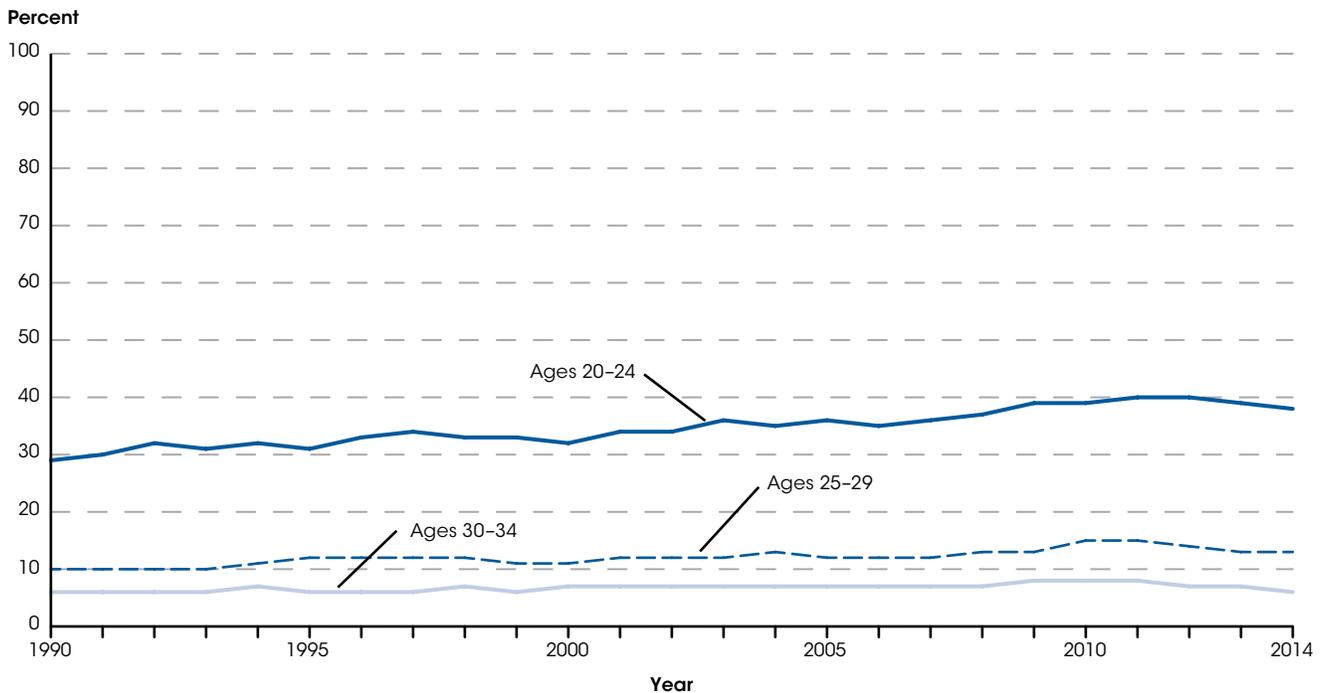


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 103.20.

Young adults ages 18–19 are typically transitioning into postsecondary education or the workforce. Between 1990 and 2014, the overall enrollment rate (i.e., enrollment at both the secondary level and the postsecondary level) for young adults ages 18–19 increased from 57 to 68 percent. The enrollment rate during this period for these young adults increased from 15 to 20 percent at the secondary level and from 43 to 49 percent at the postsecondary

level. Most of the increase in the overall enrollment rate for this age group took place during the later part of this period. From 2000 to 2014, the overall enrollment rate for those in this age range increased from 61 to 68 percent; the enrollment rate increased from 16 to 20 percent at the secondary level and from 45 to 49 percent at the postsecondary level.

Figure 3. Percentage of the population ages 20–34 enrolled in school, by age group: October 1990–2014



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October Supplement, 1990–2014. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 103.20.

Most 20- to 34-year-old students are enrolled in college or graduate school. Between 1990 and 2014, the enrollment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds increased from 29 to 38 percent, while the enrollment rate increased from 10 to 13 percent for 25- to 29-year-olds. During this same period, the enrollment rate for 30- to 34-year-olds did not change measurably. Between 2000 and 2014,

the enrollment rate for 20- to 24-year-olds increased from 32 to 38 percent and the rate for 25- to 29-year-olds increased from 11 to 13 percent. Although the enrollment rate for 30- to 34-year-olds in 2014 (6 percent) was not measurably different from the rate in 2000, the enrollment rate for this age group fluctuated over this period.

Endnotes:

¹ Schooling other than in regular, graded schools is counted only if the credits obtained are regarded as transferable to a school in the regular school system.

Changes in enrollment rates over time may also reflect changes in participation in regular, graded schools.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 103.20

Related indicators: Preschool Enrollment and Kindergarten Enrollment, Public School Enrollment, Charter School Enrollment, Private School Enrollment, Undergraduate Enrollment, Postbaccalaureate Enrollment

Glossary: College, Elementary school, Enrollment, Postsecondary education, Secondary school