

Intergenerational Transmission of Education Among Parents and Their Children

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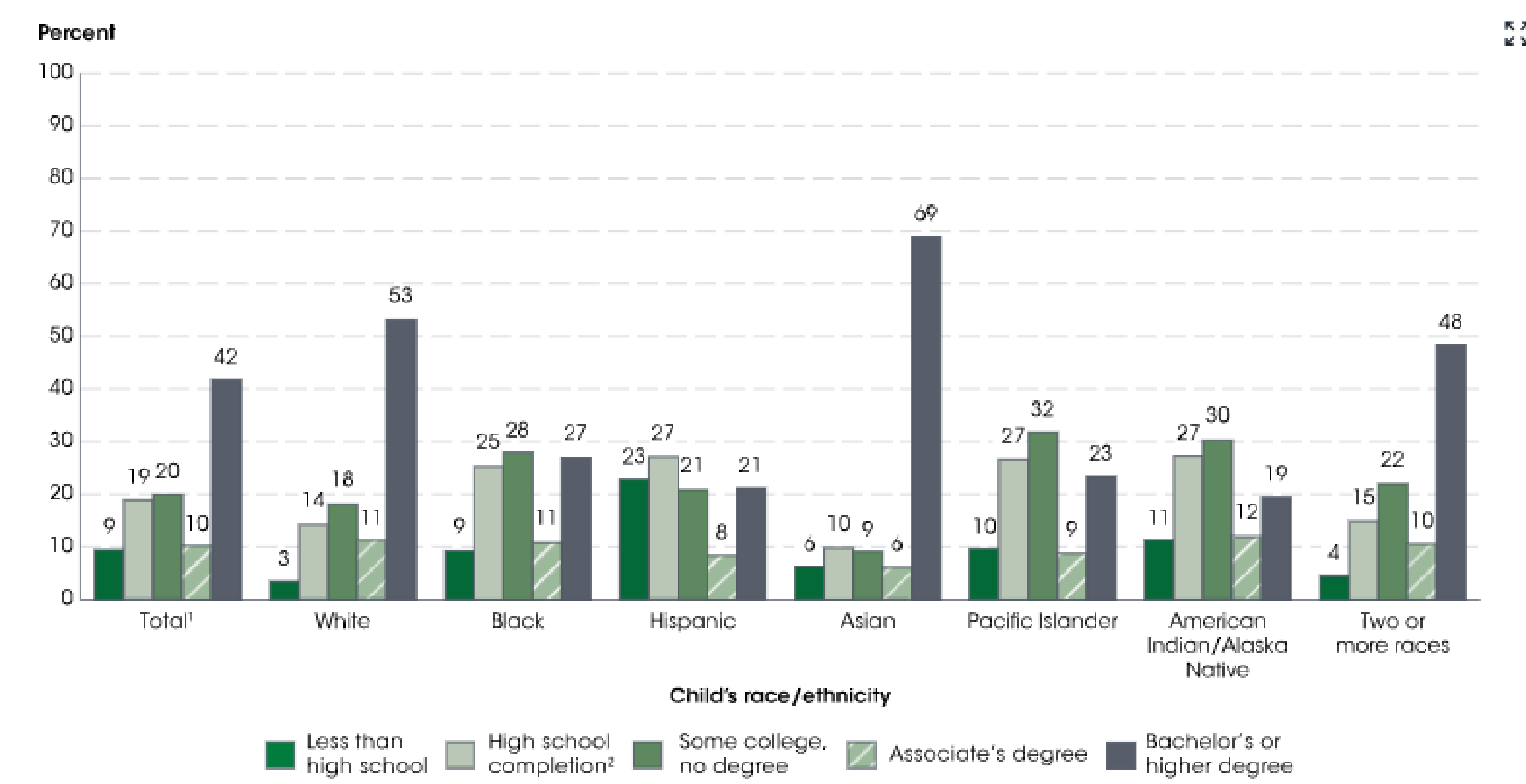
Introduction

Differences among the intergenerational transmission of education between parents of differing income levels and their children contributes to rising inequalities in education levels and poverty status. This presentation examines the role that intergenerational transmission of education plays on the potential educational attainment and potential poverty status of children in relation to their parents. Access to high quality education has been recognized as a possible method of breaking the cycle of poverty among families.

Current Statistics

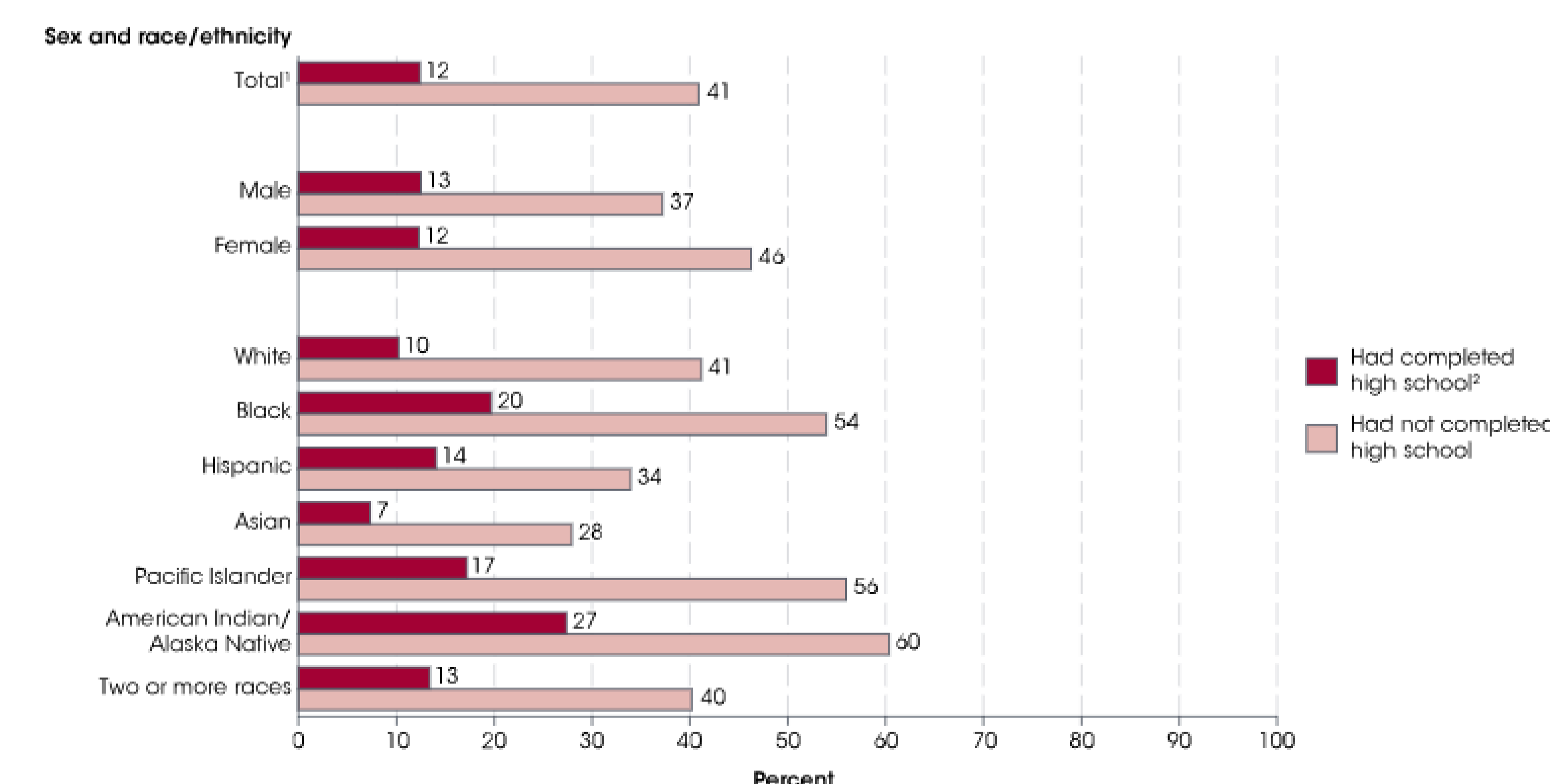
In 2018, some 9 percent of children under the age of 18 lived in households where no parent had completed high school. Highschool diploma or less are most at risk of being in poverty.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of children under age 18, by child's race/ethnicity and parents' highest level of educational attainment: 2018



The below graph looks at those young adults with a high school diploma or less and their school/work situation.

Figure 4. Percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds who were neither enrolled in school nor working, by sex, race/ethnicity and high school completion status: 2018



IES National Center for Education Statistic

Prior Studies

Prior research has examined parental education levels on children in various household settings: such as two parent households, single mothers, and adopted children. Most sources find that, while other factors play a role, the education of a parent or guardian does have some effect on children's educational attainment level and potential poverty status.

There are many studies that have looked at this issue and give unique perspectives regarding intergenerational education affects.

The intergenerational transmission of education: Evidence from Taiwanese adoptions (Tsou et al. 2012).

This study finds that each additional year of father's/mother's education is associated with 0.19/0.15 additional years of child's schooling. They also find evidence that adoptive father's education is more important for sons' and adoptive mother's education is more important for daughters' educational attainment.

Table 1 Estimates of intergenerational effects of schooling: own-birth children and adopted children.

	Years of schooling			University education		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Own-birth children						
Biological father	0.1855 (0.0005)***		0.1235 (0.0006)***	0.2522 (0.0010)***		0.1968 (0.0012)***
Biological mother		0.1512 (0.0006)***			0.2177 (0.0016)***	0.1258 (0.0022)***
Adopted children						
Biological father	0.0691 (0.0105)**		0.0452 (0.0110)**	0.1153 (0.0437)**		0.0650 (0.0484)
Biological mother		0.0690 (0.0110)**	0.0397 (0.0118)**		0.1854 (0.0756)**	0.1235 (0.0877)
Adoptive father	0.1185 (0.0090)**		0.0778 (0.0106)**	0.2455 (0.0218)**		0.2172 (0.0172)**
Adoptive mother		0.1213 (0.0099)**	0.0724 (0.0116)**		0.2548 (0.0348)**	0.1173 (0.0469)**

Notes: Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses. All regressions include controls for child's gender, low birthweight dummy, birth order, birth year, region of birth, and the respective parents' age at birth.
*** Represents statistical significance at 1% level.

The Causal Effect of Parents' Schooling on Children's Schooling: A Comparison of Estimation Methods (JEL I21, J13)

This study finds similar results that find the estimate is 0.23 for fathers' education and 0.28 for mothers' education. When we control for spouse's education, the estimates fall to 0.15 for fathers and 0.19 for mothers.

Each of these studies account for limitations within their data and attempt to limit the outside factors that could also affect children's education.

Results

Multiple sources agree that education of parents affects their children's education in some way.

Parents of lower educational attainment translates to lower educational attainment for their children, which makes those children much more likely to be in poverty over their lifetime. To combat these issues, a possible solution is to implement ongoing education programs for parents in poverty to help with increasing educational attainment of those parents.

- Education offers some of the best policy options available for tackling long-term poverty, and is one of the single best means of preventing the transmission of intergenerational poverty.
- Children from chronically poor backgrounds are typically the hardest to reach and teach.

Successful ongoing education programs can be a way to help reach parents and children trapped in the cycle of poverty and can greatly improve the lives of chronically poor children. These programs represent one options to help educate parents and could result in more educated children in the future to reduce poverty.

Conclusion

Parent's education plays a role in the educational attainment and future poverty status of those children. While other factors play a role, education remains a significant factor in determining a child's future attainment. Parents with low levels of education result in children with low education, which leads to higher levels of poverty for those children in the future. Ongoing educational programs represent a solution to help parents and their children.

Sources

- Holmlund, Helena, Mikael Lindahl, and Erik Plug. 2011. "The Causal Effect of Parents' Schooling on Children's Schooling: A Comparison of Estimation Methods." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 49 (3): 615-51.
- Tsou, Meng-Wen, Jin-Tan Liu, and James K. Hammitt. "The intergenerational transmission of education: Evidence from Taiwanese adoptions." *Economics Letters* 115.1 (2012): 134-136.
- National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cce.asp.