

MOTHER'S EDUCATION

What does this indicator measure?

Mother's Education examines the varying rates of self-reported education attained by women who gave birth during 2001.

Why is this indicator important?

A parent's level of educational attainment is an important indicator of present and future family well-being. Parental education, income, and occupation collectively define a family's socio-economic status and can predict whether or not children have access to resources that stimulate their growth and development. In today's competitive job market, a college or technical school degree is needed to obtain a well-paying job. In the case of single parents, where only one income supports a family, higher education is particularly important.

Maternal education has been directly associated with children's developmental outcomes such as cognitive and language development, a child's ability to get along with others, the probability that a child will be enrolled in an early care and education program before kindergarten, and the ability of low-birthweight babies to adjust to life outside the womb. When a mother has not completed high school and earns low wages, her child's development and future success predictably are at risk.¹

The influences of a mother's education, a warm and secure relationship between parent and child, and positive support for the cognitive, physical and social development of the child all combine to support the child's success in school.

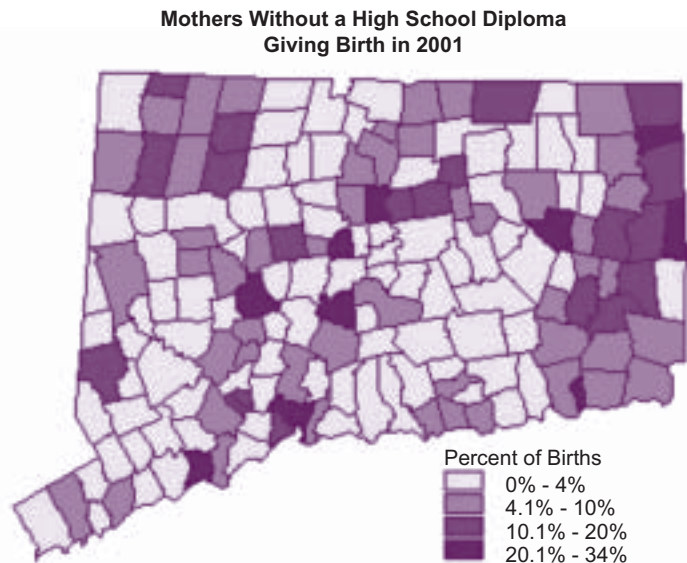
Maternal Education and Family Economic Security

Educational attainment has increased over the past 50 years and, in turn, so have the benefits to children of parents with more advanced education. One longitudinal study of families conducted between 1980 and the mid-1990s found that children of more highly educated parents were better off economically, experienced greater satisfaction in life, had stronger social networks, married later in life, and were less likely to divorce.²

How are Connecticut children and families faring?

In 11 Connecticut towns, one out of five mothers giving birth in 2001 did not have a high school diploma. These are our largest and poorest cities, as well as smaller cities and inner-ring suburbs (i.e., New Britain, East Hartford, Meriden, West Haven, New London, and Norwich). Concentrations of mothers without a high school diploma can also be found in Manchester, Bristol, Danbury, Torrington, Middletown, and some towns in the Naugatuck Valley. As with the other family economic indicators, the disparities in maternal education are also seen in the more rural sections of the state: northwestern and northeastern Connecticut.

According to the *State Asset Development Report Card*, produced by the Corporation for Enterprise Development, Connecticut ranks 42nd in the educational gap in college attainment between whites and nonwhites, and 47th in the gap in college attainment between men and women, well behind the majority of other states.³



What can be done: Increasing educational opportunities

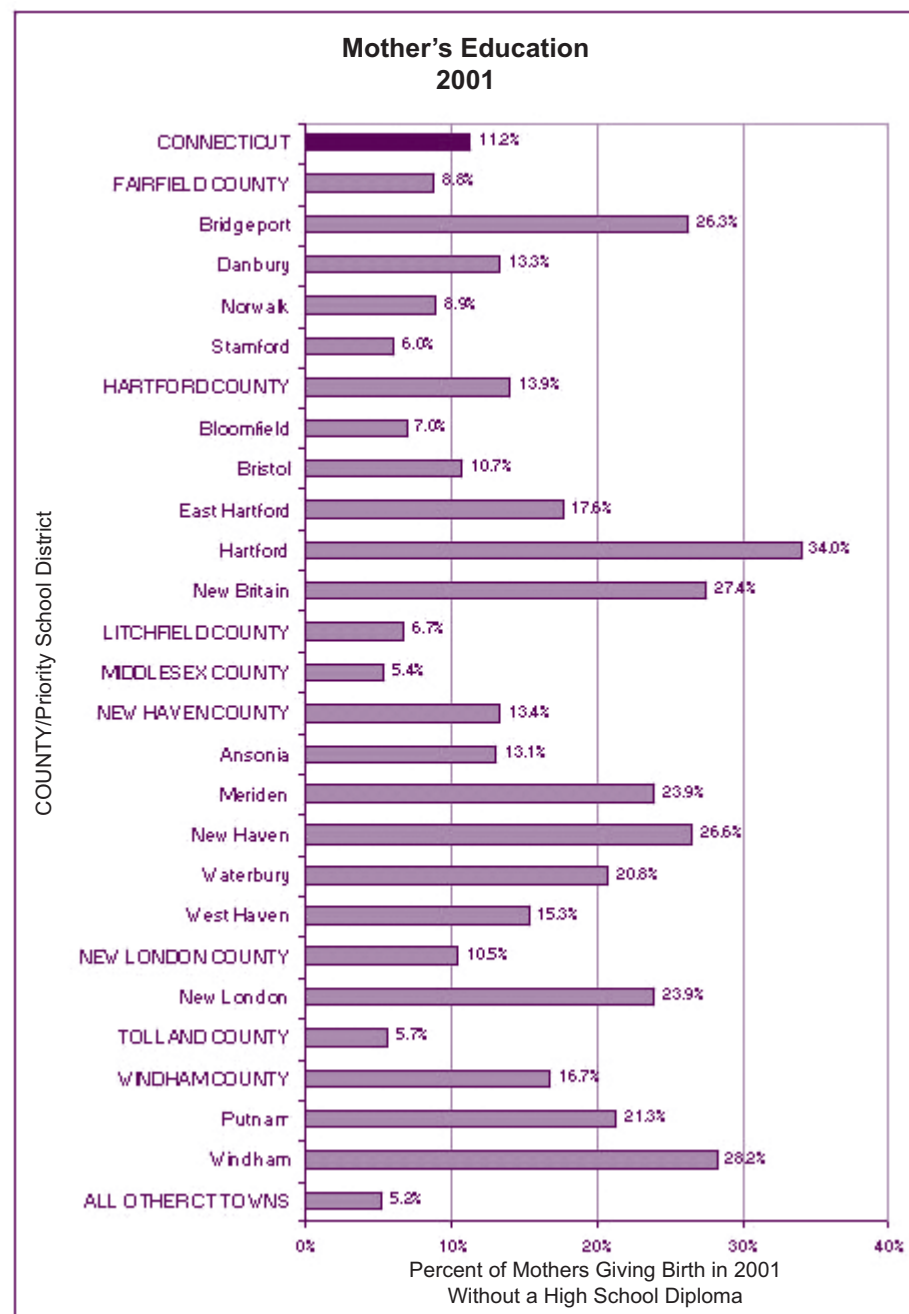
Several policy options should be considered to improve the earning capacity of mothers without a high school diploma.

- ▶ Allow the pursuit of 2- and 4-year degrees as valid work activity under Temporary Family Assistance;
- ▶ Conduct a statewide public education campaign directed to all grade levels, including pre-kindergarten, about the importance of education, the correlation between education and income, and the impact of poverty on long-term economic well-being;
- ▶ Increase state spending on Individual Development Accounts for the education of parents and children;
- ▶ Provide loan forgiveness, scholarships, tuition and stipends for certain vocations and for students who stay in state after earning a college degree; and
- ▶ Expand the state's School Readiness program for 3- and 4-year-olds to all Severe Needs Schools, and eventually make the program universal.⁴

Where can I get more information?

More information can be found using the following sources:

- ▶ Currie, J. & Moretti, E. (2002). *Mother's Education and the Intergenerational Transmission of Human Capital: Evidence from College Openings and Longitudinal Data*. NBER Working Paper No. w9360. Washington, DC: National Bureau of Economic Research
- ▶ Connecticut Department of Labor at: www.dol.state.ct.us
- ▶ Magnuson, K. A., & McGroder, S. M. (in review). The effect of increasing welfare mothers' education on their young children's academic problems and school readiness. Manuscript, at: <http://www.adulthoodeducation.smartlibraryinfo/NewInterface/segment.cfm?segment=2671>



Endnotes

¹ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, (Eds.). Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. (pp. 97, 267-296). Washington, DC: National Academy Press; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2003*. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Amato, P. R. & Booth, A. (1997). *A Generation at Risk: Growing up in an Era of Family Upheaval*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

³ Corporation for Enterprise Development. (n.d.). *State Asset Development Report Card: Benchmarking Asset Development in Fighting Poverty*. Retrieved on April 1, 2004, from <http://sadc.cfed.org/states/measures/ct.php>

⁴ "Severe Needs Schools" are defined as those where 40% of meals served are to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

What we need to know

- More information is needed about the correlation between a mother's education, adult income, and long-term earning potential
- Correlations between mother's education and children's academic achievement by town

Mother's Education - 2001											
Location	Total Births	<HSD	HSD	Some College	4 YRS +	Location	Total Births	<HSD	HSD	Some College	4 YRS +
Fairfield County	11,750	8.8%	23.8%	17.3%	50.1%						
Bethel	210	3.3%	23.3%	21.4%	51.9%	Norwalk	1,243	8.9%	24.1%	18.8%	48.2%
Bridgeport	2,199	26.3%	39.6%	24.1%	10.1%	Redding	101	0.0%	7.9%	13.9%	78.2%
Brookfield	191	1.6%	17.8%	17.8%	62.8%	Ridgefield	252	0.4%	6.3%	11.5%	81.7%
Danbury *	1,009	13.3%	38.1%	17.4%	31.2%	Shelton	414	4.1%	22.9%	25.6%	47.3%
Darien *	299	0.3%	2.0%	6.7%	91.0%	Sherman	46	0.0%	21.7%	23.9%	54.3%
Easton	97	1.0%	5.2%	19.6%	74.2%	Stamford	1,804	6.0%	31.2%	11.6%	51.2%
Fairfield	756	0.9%	7.0%	13.5%	78.6%	Stratford	551	6.5%	24.3%	32.3%	36.8%
Greenwich *	683	1.5%	13.8%	8.5%	76.3%	Trumbull	397	0.8%	10.3%	17.9%	71.0%
Monroe	199	1.0%	10.1%	20.1%	68.8%	Weston *	125	0.8%	2.4%	4.8%	92.0%
New Canaan *	193	0.0%	5.7%	8.8%	85.5%	Westport *	258	0.4%	4.7%	6.6%	88.4%
New Fairfield	177	2.8%	20.9%	23.7%	52.5%	Wilton	199	1.5%	5.5%	8.0%	84.9%
Newtown	347	0.3%	13.8%	16.4%	69.5%						
Hartford County	10,421	13.9%	28.0%	22.3%	35.7%						
Avon	165	1.8%	7.3%	20.0%	70.9%	Manchester	663	10.1%	27.8%	27.5%	34.7%
Berlin	170	1.8%	16.5%	18.8%	62.9%	Marlborough	87	0.0%	16.1%	26.4%	57.5%
Bloomfield	201	7.0%	31.3%	27.4%	34.3%	New Britain *	942	27.4%	33.0%	21.0%	18.6%
Bristol	718	10.7%	35.4%	30.8%	23.1%	Newington	283	1.4%	21.9%	30.0%	46.6%
Burlington	90	1.1%	11.1%	17.8%	70.0%	Plainville	164	7.3%	31.1%	31.1%	30.5%
Canton	105	1.9%	12.4%	23.8%	61.9%	Rocky Hill	169	3.6%	19.5%	23.1%	53.8%
East Granby	58	1.7%	13.8%	22.4%	62.1%	Simsbury	245	2.0%	12.2%	13.5%	72.2%
East Hartford	654	17.6%	41.6%	26.0%	14.8%	Southington	453	3.8%	17.9%	27.8%	50.6%
East Windsor	108	5.6%	36.1%	23.1%	35.2%	South Windsor	229	1.7%	22.3%	21.4%	54.6%
Enfield	448	8.7%	35.5%	28.8%	27.0%	Suffield	140	0.7%	17.9%	23.6%	57.9%
Farmington	231	0.9%	13.4%	19.9%	65.8%	West Hartford	728	5.2%	12.5%	12.6%	69.6%
Glastonbury	342	0.6%	10.2%	15.5%	73.7%	Wethersfield	278	2.9%	18.0%	19.1%	60.1%
Granby	132	1.5%	13.6%	22.0%	62.9%	Windsor	319	6.3%	21.6%	26.6%	45.5%
Hartford	2,153	34.0%	40.7%	17.9%	7.3%	Windsor Locks	129	9.3%	37.2%	29.5%	24.0%
Hartland	17	0.0%	23.5%	35.3%	41.2%						
Litchfield County	1,931	6.7%	29.9%	24.6%	38.8%						
Barkhamsted	47	2.1%	8.5%	25.5%	63.8%	Norfolk	18	5.6%	27.8%	38.9%	27.8%
Bethlehem	23	8.7%	21.7%	17.4%	52.2%	North Canaan	31	19.4%	41.9%	12.9%	25.8%
Bridgewater	13	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%	Plymouth	106	7.5%	43.4%	30.2%	18.9%
Canaan **	16	6.3%	18.8%	43.8%	31.3%	Roxbury	18	0.0%	33.3%	11.1%	55.6%
Colebrook	11	9.1%	27.3%	9.1%	54.5%	Salisbury	26	0.0%	15.4%	19.2%	65.4%
Cornwall	12	16.7%	16.7%	25.0%	41.7%	Sharon	15	6.7%	40.0%	33.3%	20.0%
Goshen *	15	6.7%	20.0%	33.3%	40.0%	Thomaston	101	3.0%	35.6%	23.8%	37.6%
Harwinton	46	0.0%	21.7%	26.1%	52.2%	Torrington	408	10.3%	39.5%	27.2%	23.0%
Kent	35	2.9%	28.6%	22.9%	45.7%	Warren	13	0.0%	23.1%	30.8%	46.2%
Litchfield	61	3.3%	18.0%	27.9%	50.8%	Washington	29	3.4%	13.8%	24.1%	58.6%
Morris	23	4.3%	17.4%	30.4%	47.8%	Watertown	197	5.6%	29.9%	23.4%	41.1%
New Hartford	86	1.2%	10.5%	23.3%	65.1%	Winchester	142	19.0%	36.6%	19.7%	24.6%
New Milford	335	4.5%	28.7%	23.6%	43.3%	Woodbury	104	1.0%	19.2%	20.2%	59.6%
Middlesex Co.	1,771	5.4%	22.0%	24.4%	48.2%						
Chester	41	0.0%	17.1%	22.0%	61.0%	East Hampton	145	3.4%	23.4%	19.3%	53.8%
Clinton	183	5.5%	20.2%	32.8%	41.5%	Essex *	56	1.8%	12.5%	16.1%	69.6%
Cromwell	131	2.3%	24.4%	24.4%	48.9%	Haddam	74	2.7%	16.2%	29.7%	51.4%
Deep River	68	5.9%	25.0%	29.4%	39.7%	Killingworth	77	0.0%	15.6%	20.8%	63.6%
Durham	80	2.5%	11.3%	23.8%	62.5%	Middlefield	45	0.0%	20.0%	24.4%	55.6%
East Haddam	83	3.6%	24.1%	24.1%	48.2%	Middletown	529	10.0%	27.4%	23.1%	39.5%

Mother's Education Level

Source:

Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2001). Unpublished data.

Methodology:

The education level of mothers giving birth in 2001 as a percentage of total live births. Denominator (total births) is the number of births where the education level of the mother was self-reported. Births to mothers who did not report their educational attainment or that occurred out-of-state are not included in the denominator.

Key:

<HSD = Did not obtain a high school diploma

HSD = Obtained a high school diploma

Some College = Has taken college courses, no degree

4 YRS+ = Has obtained a college degree or above

* = >5% Mother's education not reported on birth certificate

** = >10% Mother's education not reported on birth certificate

Mother's Education - 2001					
Location	Total Births	<HSD	HSD	Some College	4 YRS +
Middlesex Co. contd.					
Old Saybrook	86	5.8%	12.8%	29.1%	52.3%
Portland	105	2.9%	18.1%	26.7%	52.4%
New Haven Co.					
	10,084	13.4%	29.2%	24.6%	32.9%
Ansonia	245	13.1%	38.8%	26.1%	22.0%
Beacon Falls	70	4.3%	27.1%	30.0%	38.6%
Bethany	52	1.9%	1.9%	21.2%	75.0%
Branford	259	3.5%	16.2%	24.7%	55.6%
Cheshire	307	0.7%	12.4%	20.5%	66.4%
Derby	151	12.6%	35.1%	29.8%	22.5%
East Haven	304	9.2%	38.5%	27.3%	25.0%
Guilford	222	0.9%	11.7%	23.0%	64.4%
Hamden	620	4.4%	18.4%	26.9%	50.3%
Madison	184	0.5%	9.8%	22.3%	67.4%
Meriden	746	23.9%	31.4%	27.1%	17.7%
Middlebury	66	1.5%	15.2%	27.3%	56.1%
Milford	590	3.4%	19.7%	26.8%	50.2%
Naugatuck	378	6.9%	35.7%	29.9%	27.5%
New London Co.					
	3,015	10.5%	34.2%	25.3%	30.0%
Bozrah	21	9.5%	19.0%	38.1%	33.3%
Colchester	216	3.2%	22.7%	24.5%	49.5%
East Lyme	150	2.7%	22.7%	23.3%	51.3%
Franklin	14	0.0%	28.6%	35.7%	35.7%
Griswold	102	10.8%	39.2%	32.4%	17.6%
Groton	639	8.3%	40.1%	27.4%	24.3%
Lebanon	64	0.0%	29.7%	23.4%	46.9%
Ledyard	164	6.1%	25.6%	32.9%	35.4%
Lisbon	35	5.7%	42.9%	20.0%	31.4%
Lyme	14	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%
Montville	180	9.4%	39.4%	27.2%	23.9%
Tolland County					
	1,443	5.7%	21.6%	27.0%	45.7%
Andover	42	4.8%	16.7%	31.0%	47.6%
Bolton	43	7.0%	20.9%	25.6%	46.5%
Columbia	56	1.8%	16.1%	28.6%	53.6%
Coventry	132	2.3%	27.3%	28.8%	41.7%
Ellington	162	3.1%	21.0%	30.2%	45.7%
Hebron	125	0.8%	5.6%	20.8%	72.8%
Mansfield	111	6.3%	14.4%	24.3%	55.0%
Windham County					
	1,290	16.7%	38.1%	24.5%	20.7%
Ashford	38	2.6%	23.7%	31.6%	42.1%
Brooklyn	63	6.3%	33.3%	33.3%	27.0%
Canterbury	64	14.1%	34.4%	21.9%	29.7%
Chaplin	15	0.0%	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%
Eastford	12	0.0%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%
Hampton	18	0.0%	38.9%	22.2%	38.9%
Killingly	214	15.9%	44.4%	21.0%	18.7%
Plainfield	205	15.6%	44.4%	26.8%	13.2%
CONNECTICUT					
	41,705	11.2%	27.5%	22.1%	39.2%