

Child Care

Headline

In 2005, 61 percent of children from birth through age six (and not in kindergarten) spent time in nonparental child care.¹ ([See Figure 1](#))

Importance

A substantial percentage of children spend time in either center- or home-based child care. There is no conclusive evidence that child care is either better or worse for children than being cared for solely by a parent. However, researchers have found that consistent, developmentally sound, and emotionally supportive care has a positive effect on both children and families.² In general, high quality child care is more beneficial for children's cognitive, language, and social development than low quality child care.³

Low income children who attend intensive, high quality early education programs have greater school success, higher graduation rates, lower levels of juvenile crime, decreased need for special education services, and lower teen pregnancy rates than their peers.⁴ Nonetheless, no more than half of U.S. child care centers meet minimum American Public Health Association/American Academy of Pediatrics (APHA/AAP) standards, with most rating poor to mediocre in quality.⁵ Cost may also limit access to quality non-familial care. In many states, the cost of early education is nearly twice as expensive as paying for a year of tuition at a 4 year public college.⁶

Trends

Estimates for 1995, 2001 and 2005 show similar patterns and levels of child care for young children ([See Table 1](#)). In 2005, 61 percent of children ages 0 to 6 (and not yet in kindergarten) spent time in nonparental care. Twenty-two percent were cared for by a relative, 14 percent by a nonrelative but in a home, and 36 percent in center-based programs ([See Figure 1](#)).⁷ Center-based programs may include day care centers, pre-kindergartens, nursery schools, Head Start programs, and other early childhood education programs.

Differences by Age/Grade in School

Children ages 0 to 2 are much more likely to be cared for by their parents only than are those ages 3 to 6 (and not yet in kindergarten) (49 percent compared with 24 percent in 2005). They are also much less likely to be in center-based care than the older children (20 percent compared with 57 percent). ([See Table 1](#))

As children enter school, child care patterns continue to change. Almost half of children in kindergarten through third grade spend time in center-based care or non-parental home-based care. Older children (grades 4 through 8) appear somewhat less likely to

experience those forms of care, but are much more likely to spend time looking after themselves either before or after school (22 percent versus 3 percent). ([See Figure 2](#))

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin

Among children ages 0 to 6 (and not yet in kindergarten), 70 percent of black non-Hispanic children spend time in nonparental child care of some sort, compared with 63 percent of white non-Hispanic children, 50 percent of Hispanic children, and 57 percent Asian children. ([See Figure 3](#))

At older ages, black non-Hispanic children continue to have the highest rates of nonparental care receipt. ([See Table 2](#))

Differences by Mother's Employment Status

As one might expect, young children with working mothers are more likely than other children to be cared for by someone other than a parent. In 2005, 85 percent of children ages 0 to 6 (and not yet in kindergarten) with mothers who worked 35 hours or more per week spent time in nonparental care. In contrast, 70 percent of children of mothers who worked less than 35 hours per week spent time in nonparental care, compared with 47 percent of children whose mothers were looking for work, and 34 percent whose mothers were not in the labor force. ([See Figure 4](#))

State and Local Estimates

State estimates for 2003 are available through the *National Survey for Children's Health* at <http://nschdata.org/dataquery/surveyareas.aspx> (Select Family Health and Activities under Child Health Measures)

International Estimates

Kamerman, S. B. (2000). Early childhood education and care: An overview of developments in the OECD countries. *International Journal of Education Research*, 33, 7-79. www.childpolicyintl.org (See Table 1.21)

National Goals

Good Start, Grow Smart: The Bush Administration's Early Childhood Initiative. Child Care Bureau. National Child Care Information Center: <http://www.nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/index.html>

Definition

Nonparental care is defined as care in a home by either a relative (other than a parent) or nonrelative, or care in a center-based program such as a day care center, pre-kindergarten, nursery school, Head Start, or other early childhood program. For children in

kindergarten and beyond, nonparental care can also include self care. Self care is defined as looking after oneself regularly before or after school.

Data Source

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2006). *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <http://childstats.gov/amchildren06/index.asp> (See Tables POP7.A and POP7.C)

Raw Data Source

National Household Education Survey, 1995, 2001, and 2005
<http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/>

Approximate Date of Next Update

2007

¹ See Definition section.

² “Quality Early Education and Child Care from Birth to Kindergarten.” Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care. *Pediatrics*, 115(1), 187-191.

³ For a summary of the research on these issues, see National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Child Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips, Eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309069882/html/>

⁴ “Quality Early Education and Child Care from Birth to Kindergarten.”

“Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study: Executive Summary.” Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina. Available: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/summary.cfm>

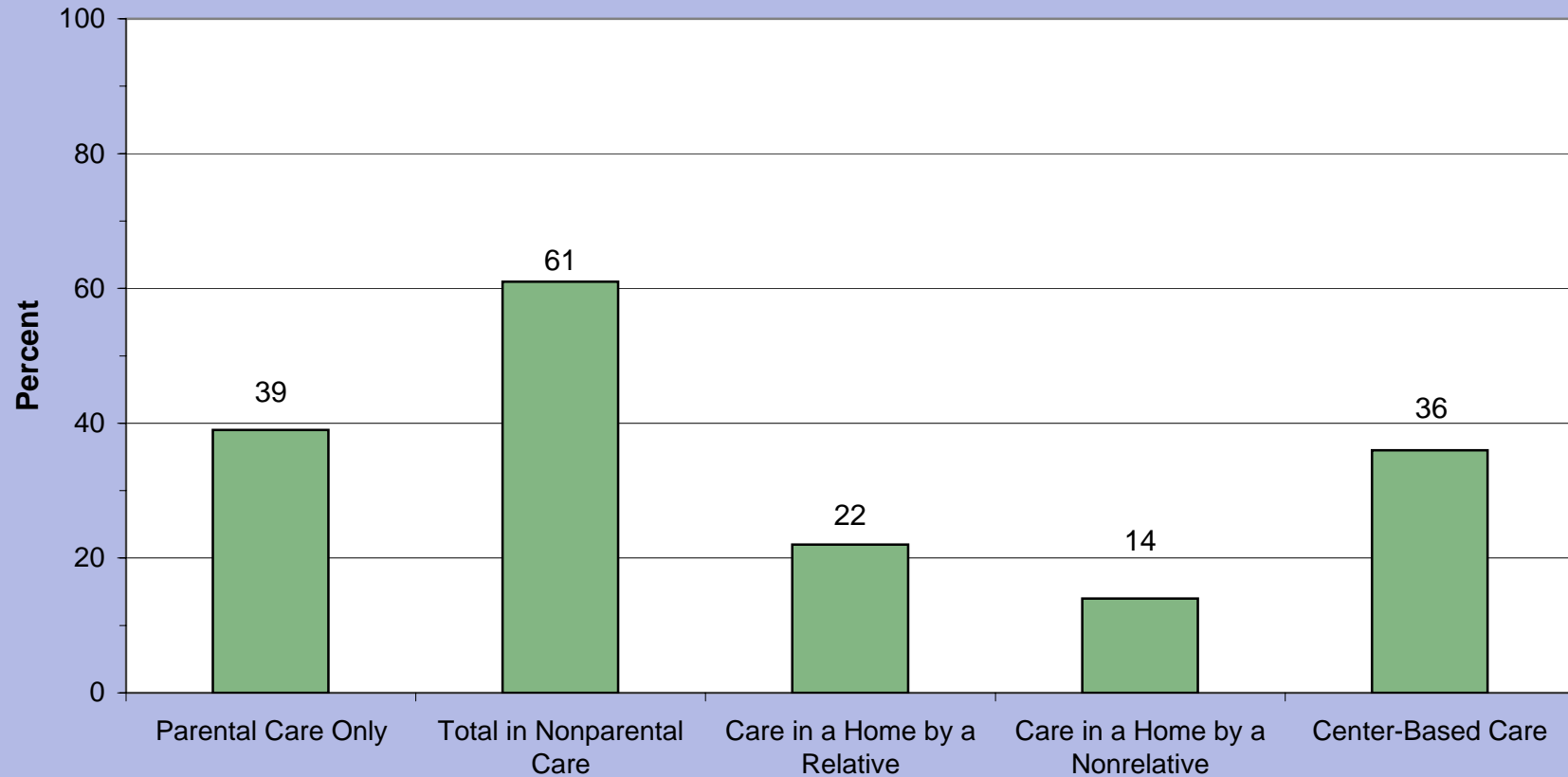
⁵ Patten, P. and Ricks, O.B. (2003). “Child Care Quality: an Overview for Parents.” Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting. Available: <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eecearchive/digests/2000/patten00.html>

⁶ Giannarelli, L., Barsirmantov, J. (2000). *Child Care Expenses of America's Families*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Available: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310028_occa40.pdf

⁷ Children may be in more than one type of nonparental care, so the sum of all arrangements exceeds 100 percent.

Figure 1

Percentage of Children from Birth through Six Years Old, who are not yet in Kindergarten, in Various Child Care Arrangements, 2005

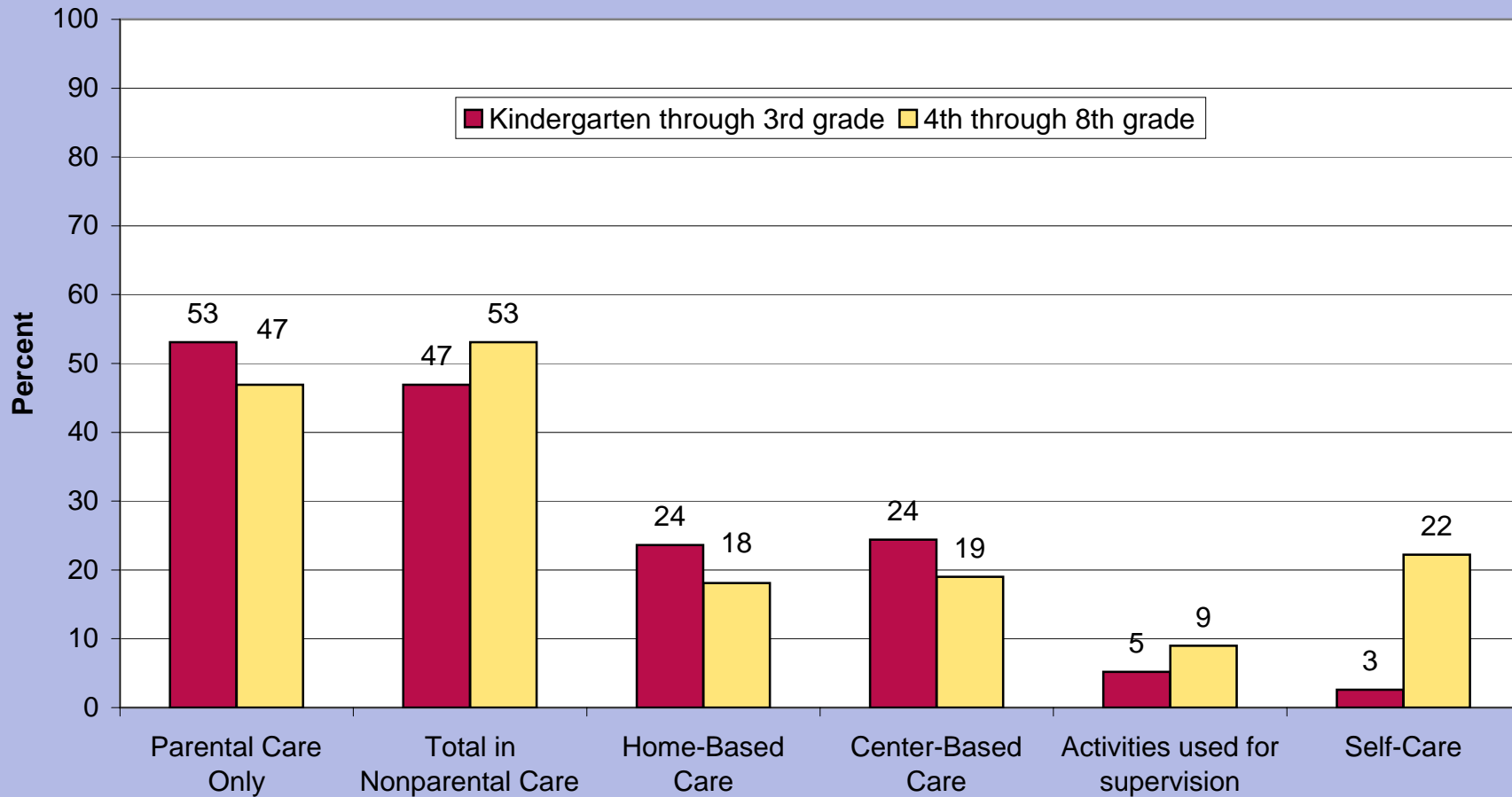


Note: Some children participate in more than one type of nonparental care arrangement. Thus, details do not sum to the total percentage of children in nonparental care.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*, Table POP7.A. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.

Figure 2

Percentage of School-Aged Children in Parental and Nonparental Care by Grade and Type of Care, 2005

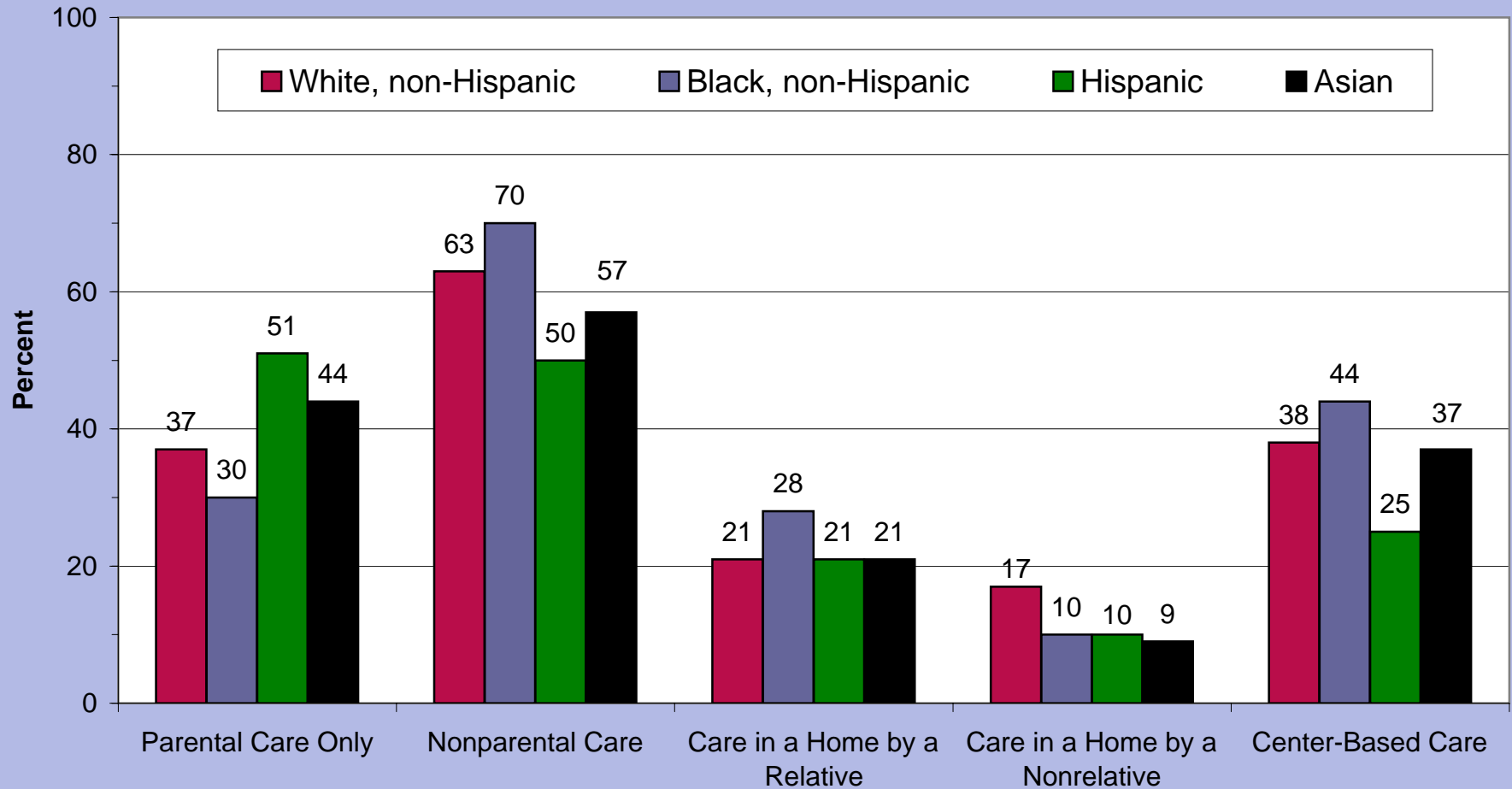


Note: Some children participate in more than one type of nonparental care arrangement. Thus, details do not sum to the total percentage of children in nonparental care.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006* Table POP7.C. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.

Figure 3

Type of Child Care Arrangements for Children Ages 0-6, by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2005



Note: Some children participate in more than one type of nonparental care arrangement. Thus, details do not sum to the total percentage of children in nonparental care.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*, Table POP7.A. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.



Figure 4

Percentage of Children Ages 0-6 (and Not Yet in Kindergarten) in Nonparental Child Care, by Mother's Employment Status, 2005



Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*, Table POP7.A. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.

Table 1

Child Care: Percentage of Children by Type of Care Arrangement for Children from Birth through Age 6, Not Yet in Kindergarten, by Child and Family Characteristics, 1995, 2001, and 2005

| | Parental care only | | | Total in nonparental care ² | | | Care in a home ¹ | | | | | | Center-based program ³ | | |
|--|--------------------|------|------|--|------|------|-----------------------------|------|------|------------------|------|------|-----------------------------------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | By a relative | | | By a nonrelative | | | | | |
| | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 | 1995 | 2001 | 2005 |
| Total | 40 | 39 | 39 | 60 | 61 | 61 | 21 | 23 | 22 | 18 | 16 | 14 | 31 | 33 | 36 |
| Age/grade in school | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ages 0-2 | 51 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 52 | 51 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 19 | 18 | 16 | 12 | 17 | 20 |
| Ages 3-6, not yet in kindergarten | 26 | 26 | 24 | 74 | 74 | 74 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 17 | 14 | 12 | 55 | 56 | 57 |
| Race and Hispanic origin⁴ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 38 | 38 | 37 | 62 | 62 | 63 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 17 | 33 | 35 | 38 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 34 | 26 | 30 | 66 | 74 | 70 | 31 | 35 | 28 | 12 | 13 | 10 | 33 | 40 | 44 |
| Hispanic | 54 | 52 | 51 | 46 | 48 | 50 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 17 | 21 | 25 |
| Asian | 42 | 43 | 44 | 58 | 57 | 57 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 30 | 34 | 37 |
| Poverty Status | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Below 100% poverty | 50 | 45 | 49 | 50 | 55 | 51 | 23 | 27 | 23 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 24 | 27 | 28 |
| 100-199% poverty | 48 | 46 | 47 | 52 | 54 | 53 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 24 | 28 | 29 |
| 200% poverty and above | 30 | 33 | 32 | 70 | 67 | 68 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 25 | 21 | 18 | 38 | 39 | 42 |
| Family Type | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Two parents | 42 | 43 | 43 | 58 | 57 | 57 | 17 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 16 | 14 | 30 | 32 | 34 |
| Two parents, married | - | 42 | 42 | - | 58 | 58 | - | 18 | 19 | - | 17 | 14 | - | 33 | 36 |
| Two parents, unmarried | - | 47 | 53 | - | 53 | 47 | - | 24 | 20 | - | 12 | 13 | - | 25 | 22 |
| One parent | 33 | 27 | 25 | 67 | 74 | 75 | 33 | 37 | 36 | 15 | 17 | 13 | 32 | 36 | 42 |
| No parents | 45 | 18 | 33 | 55 | 82 | 67 | 17 | 39 | 28 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 31 | 48 | 44 |
| Mother's highest level of education⁵ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 62 | 56 | 64 | 38 | 45 | 36 | 20 | 22 | 16 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 16 | 21 | 19 |
| High school graduate/GED | 44 | 42 | 44 | 56 | 58 | 56 | 23 | 26 | 24 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 26 | 28 | 31 |
| Vocational/technical or some college | 34 | 37 | 37 | 66 | 63 | 64 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 19 | 15 | 15 | 34 | 36 | 35 |
| College graduate | 28 | 32 | 31 | 72 | 69 | 70 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 28 | 24 | 19 | 43 | 42 | 46 |
| Mother's employment status⁶ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35 hours or more per week | 12 | 15 | 15 | 88 | 85 | 85 | 33 | 34 | 32 | 32 | 26 | 23 | 39 | 42 | 48 |
| Less than 35 hours per week | 25 | 29 | 30 | 75 | 71 | 70 | 30 | 32 | 31 | 26 | 20 | 18 | 35 | 36 | 38 |
| Looking for work | 58 | 57 | 53 | 42 | 43 | 47 | 16 | 17 | 21 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 25 | 25 | 23 |
| Not in the labor force | 68 | 68 | 66 | 32 | 32 | 34 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 22 | 24 | 26 |

¹ Relative and nonrelative care can take place in either the child's own home or another home.

² Some children participate in more than one type of nonparental care arrangement. Thus, details do not sum to the total percentage of children in nonparental care.

³ Center-based programs include day care centers, prekindergartens, nursery schools, Head Start programs, and other early childhood education programs.

⁴ Estimates for 2005 by race have been revised to reflect the new OMB race definitions, and include only those who are identified with a single race. Hispanics may be of any race.

⁵ Refers to adults' relationship to child and does not indicate marital status.

⁶ Children without a mother in the home are excluded from estimates of mother's highest level of education and mother's employment status.

Source: Reproduced from Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*, Table POP8.A. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.



Table 2

Percentage of Children in Parental and Nonparental Care, Kindergarten Through Eighth Grade, 2005

| | Nonparental care | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| | Parental care only ¹ | Total | Home-based care ² | Center-based care | Activities used for supervision | Self care |
| Kindergarten through 3rd grade | 53.1 | 46.9 | 23.6 | 24.4 | 5.2 | 2.6 |
| Poverty Status | | | | | | |
| Below 100% poverty | 52.0 | 48.0 | 25.2 | 25.0 | 3.1 | 5.1 |
| 100-199% poverty | 54.5 | 45.5 | 24.5 | 21.6 | 5.3 | 3.6 |
| 200% poverty and above | 53.0 | 47.0 | 22.6 | 25.2 | 6.0 | 1.3 |
| Race and Hispanic origin³ | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 58.3 | 41.7 | 22.0 | 20.5 | 4.8 | 1.6 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 34.6 | 65.4 | 32.2 | 39.8 | 5.8 | 4.1 |
| Hispanic | 55.3 | 44.7 | 20.4 | 23.4 | 3.2 | 4.2 |
| Asian | 49.9 | 50.1 | 26.5 | 21.4 | 13.4 | 3.6 |
| 4th through 8th grade | 46.9 | 53.1 | 18.1 | 19.0 | 9.0 | 22.2 |
| Poverty Status | | | | | | |
| Below 100% poverty | 46.7 | 53.3 | 15.0 | 21.3 | 7.8 | 23.5 |
| 100-199% poverty | 45.2 | 54.8 | 20.0 | 21.3 | 6.9 | 23.8 |
| 200% poverty and above | 47.6 | 52.4 | 18.4 | 17.4 | 10.2 | 21.2 |
| Race and Hispanic origin³ | | | | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 51.2 | 48.8 | 16.4 | 14.2 | 8.9 | 21.1 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 34.5 | 65.5 | 24.1 | 28.9 | 10.5 | 27.1 |
| Hispanic | 45.0 | 55.0 | 18.6 | 25.4 | 7.5 | 19.6 |
| Asian | 44.2 | 55.8 | 17.5 | 21.9 | 11.9 | 21.0 |

¹ Children may have multiple nonparental child care arrangements, as well as be involved in more than one activity; thus the total of the three kinds of nonparental arrangements may not sum to the category, "Nonparental care, Total."

² Home-based care includes care that takes place in a relative or nonrelative's private home.

³ Estimates reflect the new OMB race definitions, and include only those who are identified with a single race. Hispanics may be of any race.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006*, Table POP7.C. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Based on National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 2005.

