

The Impact of Education on: *Health & Well-Being*

Six million students throughout America are currently at risk of dropping out of school. Evidence suggests that the health and well-being of an individual drastically improves just by obtaining a high school diploma. High school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, produce healthier and better educated children, and rely less on social services.

- Education means better health. The U.S. death rate for those with fewer than twelve years of education is 2.5 times higher than the rate of those with thirteen years of education or more. (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003)
- Keeping a young woman from dropping out of high school creates an annual savings in Medicaid expenses of \$800 for a black woman and \$900 for a Hispanic woman. (Vernez, 1999)
- High school graduation is positively related to lower mortality rates, and lower medical-care time and money expenditures. (Wolfe and Haveman, 2002)
- Teen girls in the bottom 20 percent of basic reading and math skills are five times more likely to become mothers over a two-year high school period than teen girls in the top 20 percent. (Arizona Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting, 2003)
- Male and female students with low academic achievement are twice as likely to become parents by their senior year of high school compared to students with high academic achievement. (Arizona Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting, 2003)
- Higher levels of schooling among parents are positively correlated with better levels of health in infants and children, specifically lower rates of infant mortality and low birth weight. (Wolfe and Haveman, 2002)
- Children in the lowest-income families were more than twice as likely as children in the highest-income families to have school absences of eleven or more days. (National Health Interview Survey, 2000)
- In terms of the cognitive development of a child, having a parent with a high school diploma is worth approximately \$350 more in average annual family gains than having a parent who did not finish high school. (Angrist, 1996)

- In 2001, 73 percent of children whose mothers were college graduates were read to every day. In comparison, daily reading occurred in 60 percent of children whose mothers had some postsecondary education, 49 percent of children whose mothers had completed high school but had no further education, and 42 percent of children whose mothers had not finished high school. (America's Children, 2003)

| Activity/Characteristics | No HS Diploma | HS Diploma or GED | Some College: AA or BA | BA or Higher |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Have health insurance (25 and older) | 76% | 82% | 85% | 92% |
| Ever had a mammogram (age 35+) | 45% | 59% | 66% | NA |
| Exercise/play sports regularly | 26% | 37% | 52% | NA |
| Smoke cigarettes | 32% | 30% | 18% | NA |
| Aware of sodium/hypertension link | 27% | 39% | 51% | NA |
| Read newspapers | 66% | 81% | 87% | 91% |
| Read literature in last 12 months | 32% | 49% | 65% | 71% |
| Employer provides/supports adult education | 35% | 62% | 76% | 71% |
| Life expectancy—white men | 71 | 71 | 72 | NA |
| Life expectancy—white women | 78 | 77 | 81 | NA |
| Births per 1,000 women aged 18 to 34 | 1776 | 1325 | 887 | 644 |

(American Council on Education, 2001)