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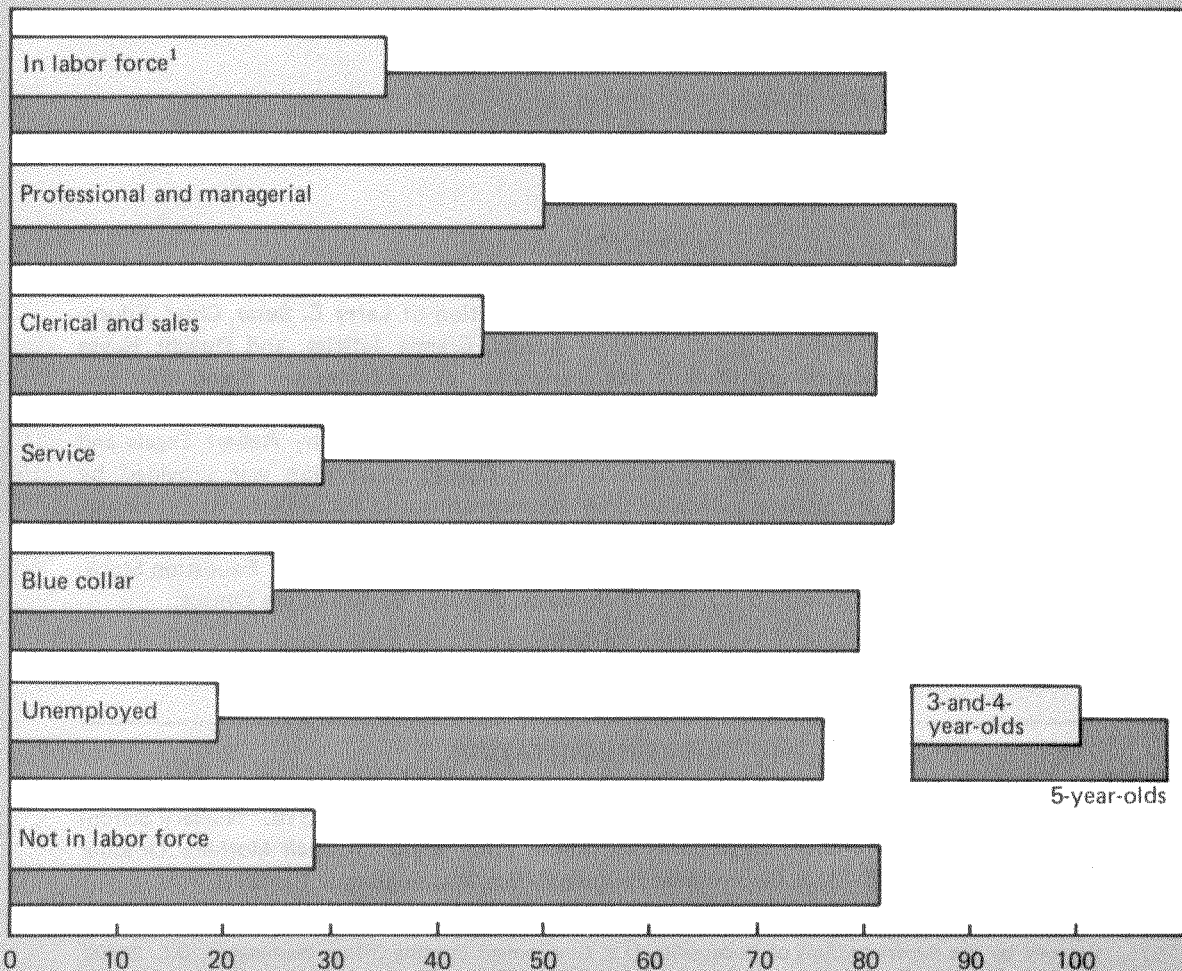
Population Characteristics

Series P-20, No. 318
Issued February 1978

Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrollment of Children and Labor Force Status of Their Mothers: October 1967 to October 1976

Figure 1. Percent of Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in
Nursery School and Kindergarten by Labor Force
Status and Occupation of Mother: October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population)



¹ Farm workers are included in total, not shown separately.

U.S. Department of Commerce

Juanita M. Kreps, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Manuel D. Plotkin, Director

Robert L. Hagan, Deputy Director

Daniel B. Levine, Associate Director
for Demographic Fields

POPULATION DIVISION

Meyer Zitter, Chief

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Issued February 1978

**Nursery School and
Kindergarten Enrollment of Children
and Labor Force Status of Their Mothers:
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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Trends in school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old: 1967 to 1976 | 1 |
| Family size and enrollment of children in preprimary programs | 3 |
| Labor force status of mother and enrollment in preprimary programs | 5 |
| Education and occupation of mother | 8 |
| Related reports | 9 |

TEXT TABLES

| Table | |
|---|---|
| A. Enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old in preprimary schools by race: October 1967 to October 1976 | 1 |
| B. Type of preprimary school attended by children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in school: October 1967 to October 1976 .. | 3 |
| C. Percent of children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in school by age and number of children in household: October 1967 to October 1976 | 5 |
| D. Percent of children 3 to 5 years old with mother in labor force by age, race, and enrollment in preprimary school: October 1967 to October 1976 | 6 |
| E. Percent of children 3 and 4 years old enrolled in school by labor force status and marital status of mother: October 1967 to October 1976 | 6 |
| F. Full-day and part-day attendance status of children 3 and 4 years old enrolled in nursery school by labor force status of mother and race: October 1976 and October 1967 | 7 |
| G. Percent of children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in preprimary school by years of school completed by mother: October 1967 to October 1976 | 8 |
| H. Percent of children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in preprimary school by occupation of employed mother: October 1967 to October 1976 | 9 |

CHARTS

| Figure | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Percent of children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in nursery school and kindergarten by labor force status and occupation of mother: October 1976 | Cover |
| 2. Number of children 3 to 5 years old: October 1967 to 1976 | 2 |
| 3. Number of children 3 to 5 years old enrolled in nursery schools and kindergartens: October 1967 to 1976 | 4 |
| 4. Percent of children 3 and 4 years old enrolled in preprimary school by labor force status of mother: October 1967 to 1976 | 4 |

CONTENTS—Continued

DETAILED TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by age of child, type of program, and labor force status of mother: October 1967 to 1976 | 11 |
| 2. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by age of child and number of other children in household: October 1967 to 1976 | 12 |
| 3. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by labor force status of mother and race: October 1967 to 1976 | 13 |
| 4. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by major occupation group of employed mother and age of child: October 1967 to 1976 | 15 |
| 5. Preprimary enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by educational attainment of mother and age of child: October 1967 to 1976 | 16 |
| 6. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 to 5 years old, by labor force status and marital status of mother: October 1967 to 1976 | 18 |
| 7. Preprimary school enrollment of children 3 and 4 years old, by labor force status and marital status of mother: October 1967 to 1976 | 19 |

APPENDIX

| | |
|---|----|
| Definitions and explanations | 21 |
| Source and reliability of the estimates | 22 |

APPENDIX TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| A-1. Standard errors of estimated numbers | 24 |
| A-2. Standard errors of estimated percentages | 24 |
| A-3. "f" factors to be applied to tables A-1 and A-2 to approximate standard errors | 24 |
| A-4. Parameters for direct computation of standard errors of estimated numbers and percentages of children | 25 |

SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

- Represents zero or a number which rounds to zero.
- < Means less than.
- B Base too small to show the derived measure.
- NA Not available.
- ... Not applicable.
- S Does not meet publication standards.

Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrollment of Children and Labor Force Status of Their Mothers: October 1967 to October 1976

INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on the nursery school and kindergarten enrollment status of children 3 to 5 years old for the years 1967 to 1976. Previous Current Population reports have shown that the number of young persons enrolled increased greatly during this period. Here, the school enrollment of 3- to 5-year-old children is related to several labor force characteristics of their mothers as well as age, race, and number of siblings in the family.

The statistics in this report are based on new tabulations from the October Current Population Survey (CPS). Since 1964, figures on nursery school and kindergarten enrollment based on data obtained from the CPS have been published in reports of the Bureau of the Census or the National Center for Education Statistics; references to these reports are given in the section, "Related Reports".

TRENDS IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD: 1967 TO 1976

While the number of children 3 to 5 years old has declined from 12.2 million in 1967 to 9.7 million in 1976 because of

the decrease in the number of births in recent years (figure 2),¹ enrollment in preprimary programs (kindergartens and nursery schools) increased from about 3.9 million in 1967 to about 4.8 million in 1976 (figure 3). The greatest increase occurred in nursery school enrollment which doubled during the period while the increase in kindergarten enrollment was not significant.

The proportion of children 3 to 5 years of age enrolled in school programs increased from about 32 percent in 1967 to about 49 percent in 1976. The increase was more dramatic for the 3- and 4-year-old children; in 1967, only about 14 percent were enrolled, but by 1976 this rate had increased to about 31 percent. The enrollment rate of 5-year-olds increased by about one-fourth, from an already much higher enrollment rate of 65 percent in 1967 to 81 percent in 1976.

The same general trends in enrollment in preprimary programs occurred for both races (table A); the proportion of Black children 3 to 5 years of age enrolled in preprimary schools did not differ significantly from that of corresponding White children. However, the enrollment rates for Black

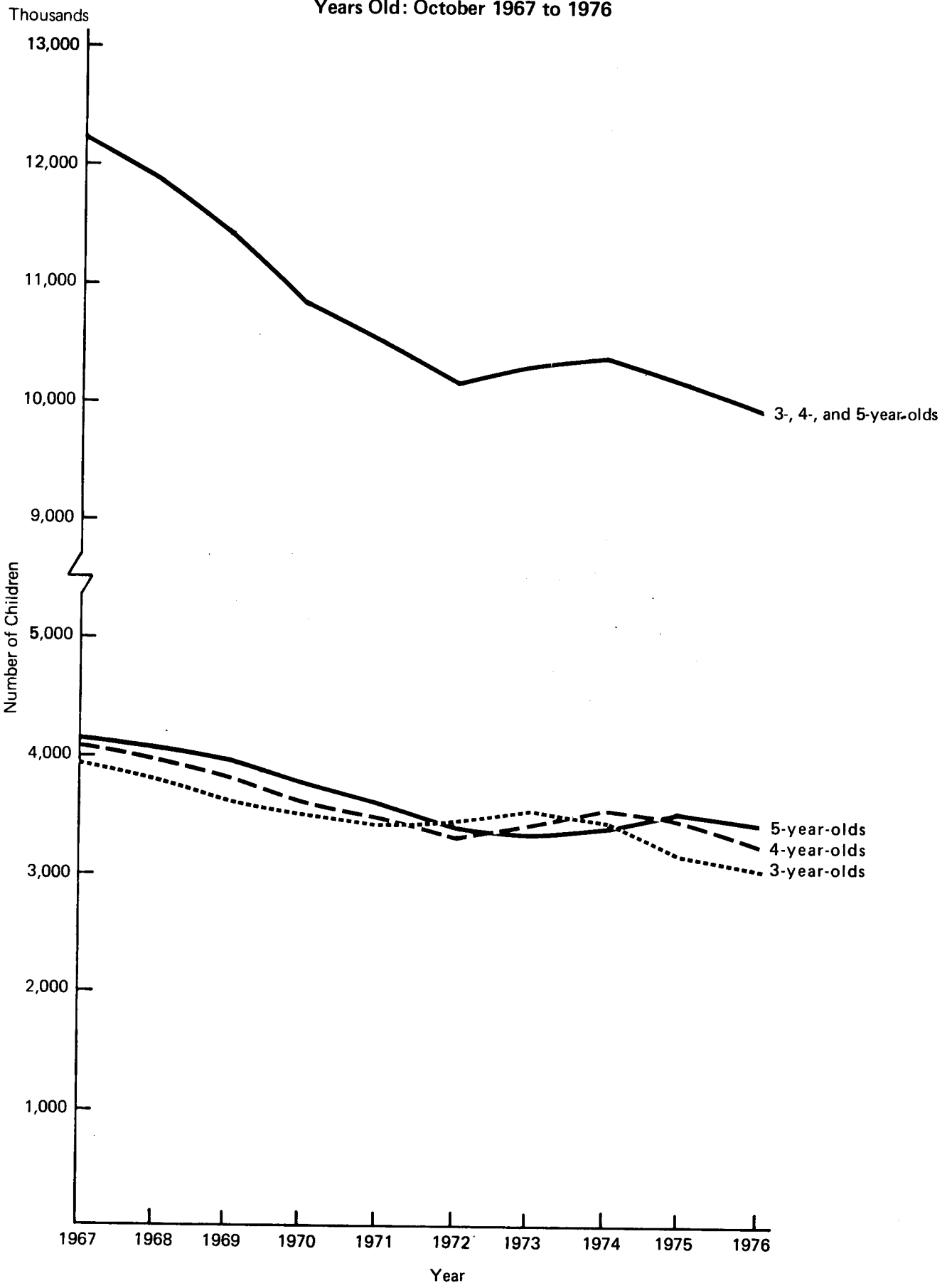
¹ National Center for Health Statistics. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, "Advance Report Final Natality Statistics, 1975," Vol. 25, No. 10, December, 1976. Table 1.

Table A. Enrollment of Children 3 to 5 Years Old in Preprimary Schools by Race: October 1967 to October 1976

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Race and age of child | 1976 | | 1973 | | 1970 | | 1967 | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Number of children | Percent enrolled | Number of children | Percent enrolled | Number of children | Percent enrolled | Number of children | Percent enrolled |
| ALL RACES | | | | | | | | |
| Total, 3 to 5 years old..... | 9,726 | 49.2 | 10,344 | 40.9 | 10,877 | 37.5 | 12,234 | 31.6 |
| 3 and 4 years old..... | 6,238 | 31.3 | 7,000 | 24.2 | 7,096 | 20.5 | 8,075 | 14.2 |
| 5 years old..... | 3,488 | 81.4 | 3,344 | 76.0 | 3,781 | 69.2 | 4,159 | 65.4 |
| WHITE | | | | | | | | |
| Total, 3 to 5 years old..... | 8,008 | 49.1 | 8,698 | 40.5 | 9,029 | 37.8 | 10,280 | 31.8 |
| 3 and 4 years old..... | 5,125 | 30.4 | 5,880 | 23.2 | 5,885 | 20.0 | 6,774 | 13.3 |
| 5 years old..... | 2,884 | 82.3 | 2,817 | 76.6 | 3,144 | 71.1 | 3,505 | 67.4 |
| BLACK | | | | | | | | |
| Total, 3 to 5 years old..... | 1,500 | 49.7 | 1,466 | 42.2 | 1,676 | 34.9 | 1,795 | 29.8 |
| 3 and 4 years old..... | 967 | 34.5 | 1,013 | 28.8 | 1,097 | 22.8 | 1,191 | 17.7 |
| 5 years old..... | 533 | 77.4 | 453 | 71.9 | 580 | 57.8 | 604 | 53.6 |

Figure 2. Number of Children 3 to 5 Years Old: October 1967 to 1976



and White children differed when the children's enrollment was compared by age. In both 1967 and 1976, there was some evidence that Black 3- and 4-year-old children were more likely to be enrolled than their White counterparts.² In contrast, the proportion of White 5-year-old children enrolled in preprimary schools was higher than the proportion of Black children; in 1967, 67 percent of White children were enrolled compared with 54 percent of Black children. This 13 percentage point difference had declined to a 5 percentage point difference by 1976.³

It is often assumed that the enrollment of children in nursery school or kindergarten is determined strictly by age; that is, enrolled 3- and 4-year-olds are in nursery school and enrolled 5-year-olds are in kindergarten. Table B shows that during the past 9 years, about 90 percent of enrolled 3-year-olds have been enrolled in nursery school and at least 90 percent of enrolled 5-year-olds have been enrolled in kindergarten, but 4-year-olds have been more evenly split between nursery school and kindergarten. Between 1967 and 1976, the proportion of the enrolled 4-year-olds in kindergarten shifted downward from about 52 percent to about 36 percent, this shift may be a consequence of the growth in the number of nursery schools. The number of 4-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten stayed about the same, while the number attending nursery schools doubled in the 9-year period. Also, the number of 3-year-olds enrolled in school doubled.

The enrollment rate of 3- and 4-year-old children may differ from that of 5-year-old children because of differences in the cost and accessibility of the schools. Kindergartens, attended mostly by 5-year-olds, are publicly supported,

though not compulsory, in most States, and transportation may be provided. Nursery schools, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly privately controlled with most charging tuitions, and transportation to the school is either provided for a fee or is the parents' responsibility. Another factor for the different rates of enrollment and the different levels of increase is that a large proportion of children were already enrolled in kindergarten by 1967. Also, kindergarten has become increasingly incorporated as an integral part of primary education. Thus the rate of kindergarten enrollment increased but more slowly than that of nursery school.

FAMILY SIZE AND ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN IN PREPRIMARY PROGRAMS

The declining fertility of women has led to smaller American families. As a result, proportionately, more children were living in families which had only one or two children in 1976 than in 1967. Between 1967 and 1976, the proportion of children 3 to 5 years old who had no siblings increased from about 23 to 36 percent and the proportion of children who had only one sibling rose from 29 to 37 percent (not significantly different from the proportion with no siblings in 1976). The proportion of children with two or more siblings, on the other hand, decreased from 48 percent to about 28 percent during the period (table C).⁴

Combined enrollment in nursery school and kindergarten programs increased between 1967 and 1976 for children from both small and large families; thus, the reduction in

² The difference between Black and White enrollment rates for 3- and 4-year-olds was significant in 1967.

³ The difference between Black and White enrollment rates in 1976 was significant at the 90 percent level of confidence.

⁴ The proportion in 1976 of children in families with two or more siblings is not significantly different from the proportion in 1967 of children with one sibling.

Table B. Type of Preprimary School Attended by Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in School: October 1967 to October 1976

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Year | 3 years old | | | 4 years old | | | 5 years old | | |
|-----------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Total enrolled | Percent in nursery school | Percent in kindergarten | Total enrolled | Percent in nursery school | Percent in kindergarten | Total enrolled | Percent in nursery school | Percent in kindergarten |
| 1976..... | 603 | 94.4 | 5.6 | 1,348 | 63.9 | 36.1 | 2,839 | 3.0 | 97.0 |
| 1975..... | 683 | 95.6 | 4.4 | 1,418 | 68.8 | 31.2 | 2,852 | 4.0 | 96.0 |
| 1974..... | 685 | 94.9 | 5.0 | 1,322 | 65.4 | 34.6 | 2,693 | 3.3 | 96.7 |
| 1973..... | 515 | 95.0 | 5.0 | 1,177 | 64.0 | 36.0 | 2,542 | 3.0 | 97.0 |
| 1972..... | 535 | 94.8 | 5.2 | 1,121 | 63.0 | 36.9 | 2,575 | 2.5 | 97.5 |
| 1971..... | 429 | 88.6 | 11.4 | 1,043 | 58.5 | 41.5 | 2,643 | 2.6 | 97.4 |
| 1970..... | 454 | 95.2 | 4.8 | 1,003 | 56.8 | 43.2 | 2,617 | 3.5 | 96.5 |
| 1969..... | 314 | 93.0 | 7.0 | 880 | 55.1 | 44.8 | 2,754 | 2.9 | 97.1 |
| 1968..... | 317 | 93.4 | 6.6 | 911 | 48.5 | 51.5 | 2,698 | 2.9 | 97.1 |
| 1967..... | 273 | 89.7 | 10.3 | 870 | 48.3 | 51.8 | 2,721 | 1.7 | 98.3 |

Figure 3. Number of Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in Nursery Schools and Kindergartens: October 1967 to 1976

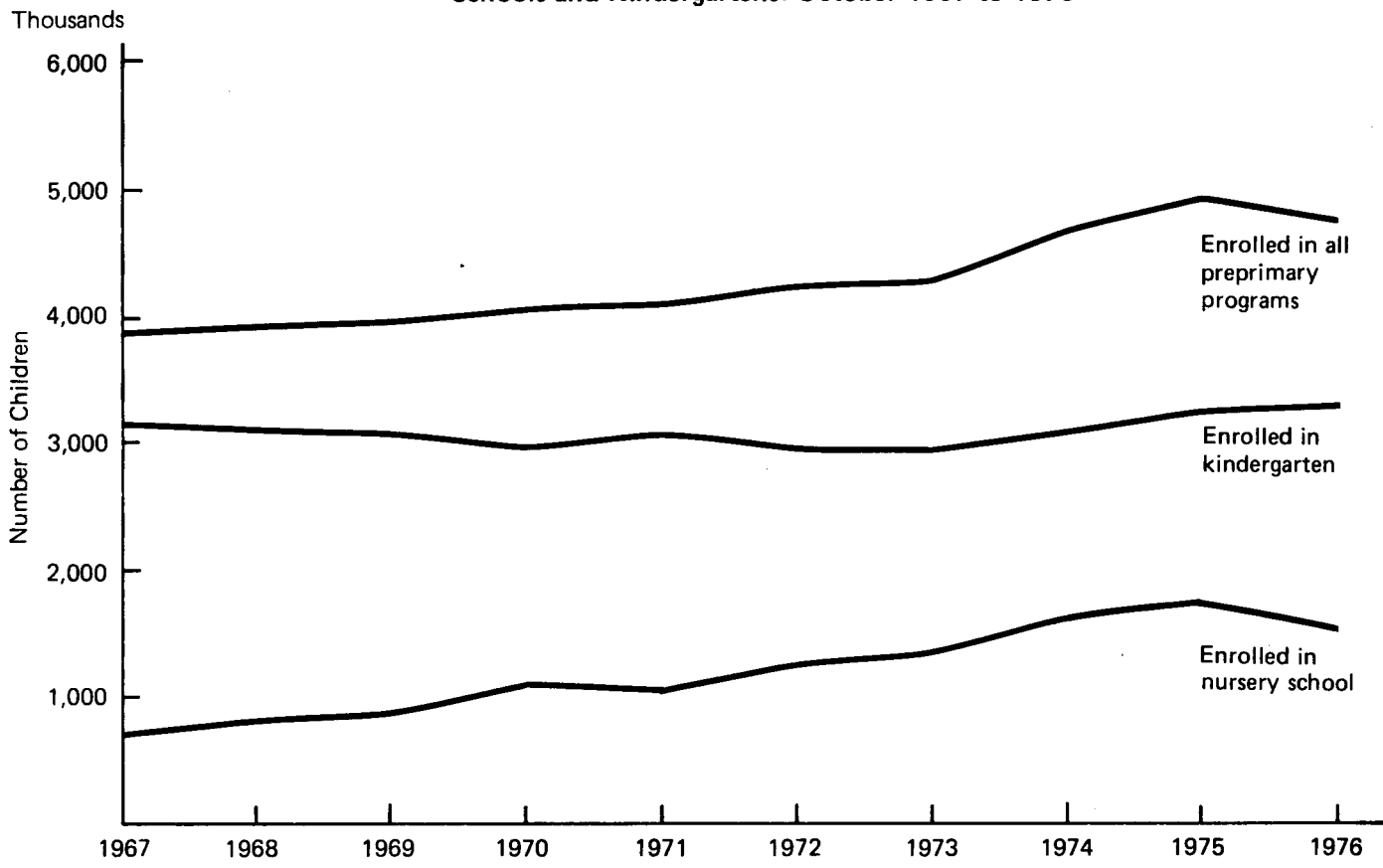


Figure 4. Percent of Children 3 and 4 Years Old Enrolled in Preprimary School by Labor Force Status of Mother: October 1967 to 1976

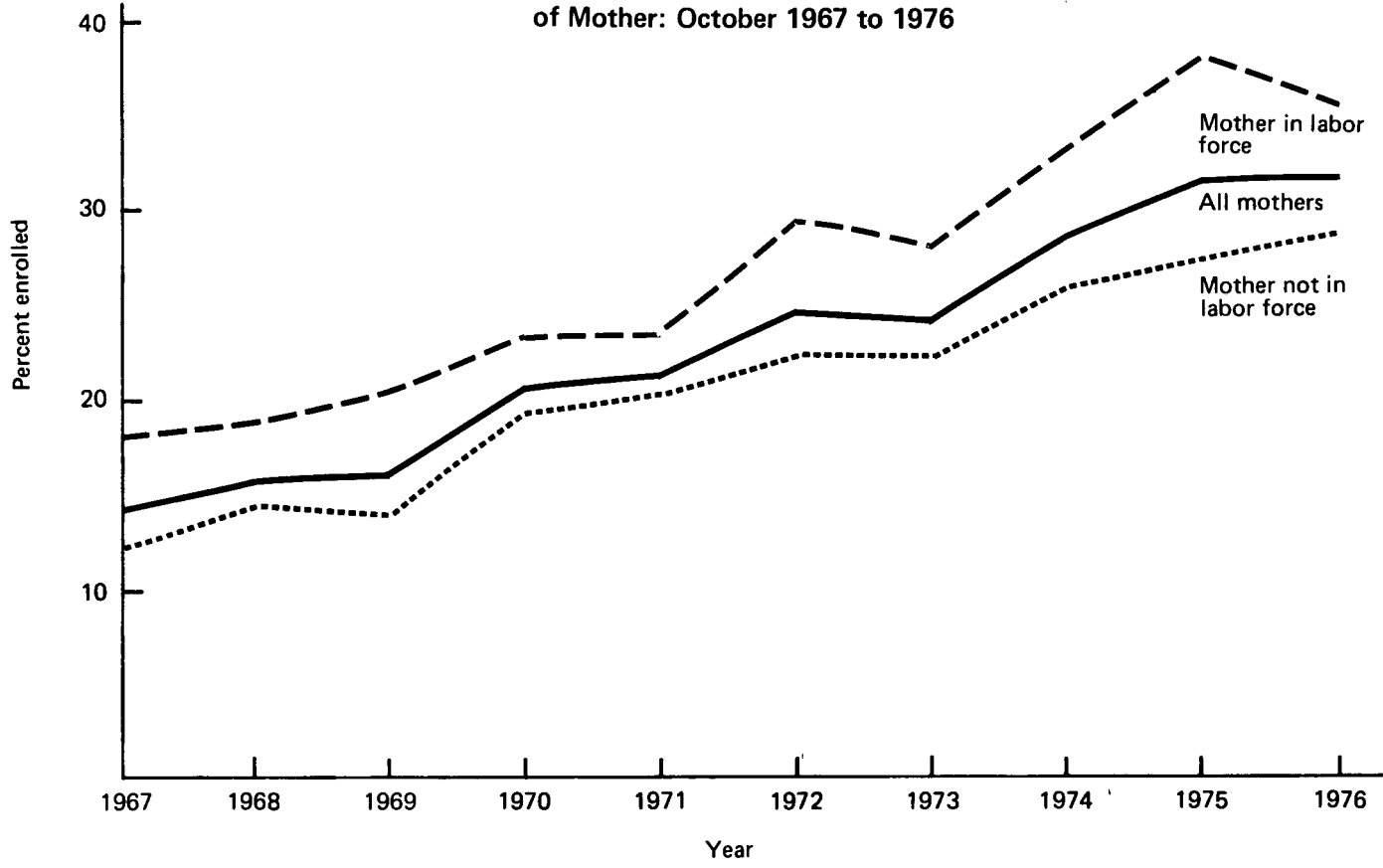


Table C. Percent of Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in School by Age and Number of Children in Household: October 1967 to October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Age of children and number of siblings | 1976 | | 1973 | | 1970 | | 1967 | |
|--|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|
| | Proportion of children by number of other children | Percent enrolled | Proportion of children by number of other children | Percent enrolled | Proportion of children by number of other children | Percent enrolled | Proportion of children by number of other children | Percent enrolled |
| All children 3 to 5 years old | 100.0 | 49.2 | 100.0 | 40.9 | 100.0 | 37.5 | 100.0 | 31.6 |
| No other children..... | 35.8 | 48.0 | 32.6 | 40.2 | 28.2 | 35.1 | 22.7 | 28.8 |
| One other child..... | 36.5 | 52.4 | 34.4 | 43.2 | 30.6 | 41.3 | 29.3 | 35.5 |
| Two or more other children. | 27.7 | 46.7 | 33.0 | 39.2 | 41.2 | 36.2 | 48.0 | 30.5 |
| Children 3 and 4 years old... | 100.0 | 31.3 | 100.0 | 24.2 | 100.0 | 20.5 | 100.0 | 14.2 |
| No other children..... | 39.6 | 33.8 | 35.9 | 27.6 | 32.3 | 22.2 | 26.0 | 15.7 |
| One other child..... | 34.5 | 33.4 | 32.8 | 25.0 | 29.1 | 22.8 | 28.0 | 16.3 |
| Two or more other children. | 25.9 | 24.6 | 31.3 | 19.4 | 38.7 | 17.4 | 46.0 | 12.0 |
| Children 5 years old..... | 100.0 | 81.4 | 100.0 | 76.0 | 100.0 | 69.2 | 100.0 | 65.4 |
| No other children..... | 29.0 | 82.7 | 25.7 | 77.1 | 20.6 | 73.1 | 16.3 | 69.4 |
| One other child..... | 40.0 | 81.7 | 37.6 | 76.6 | 33.5 | 71.2 | 31.9 | 68.3 |
| Two or more other children. | 31.0 | 79.8 | 36.7 | 74.6 | 45.9 | 66.1 | 51.8 | 62.3 |

family size does not explain changes in the tendency to place a child in nursery school or kindergarten. However, among young children, there were differences in enrollment rates according to the number of siblings in the family; by 1976 enrollment rates of 5-year-old children in preprimary programs did not seem to be affected by number of siblings in the family, but differences in enrollment rates by family size did appear for the 3- and 4-year-olds. For the younger ages, children from small families (one or two children) had significantly higher rates of enrollment than those from larger families (three or more children). Among the possible reasons for differences in their enrollment rates by size of family are that large families may be less able to afford the tuition than small families; mothers with more children may be less inclined to join the labor force and more likely to stay home with their children; and large families may be more likely to have older children to care for younger siblings. Rates of enrollment of 5-year-olds did not differ significantly by number of siblings probably because kindergartens are generally free and bound to the public school system's elementary schools and transportation system.

LABOR FORCE STATUS OF MOTHER AND ENROLLMENT IN PREPRIMARY PROGRAMS

Over the past 9 years, both the proportion of children 3 to 5 years old with mothers in the labor force and the proportion of all children enrolled in preprimary programs increased. In 1967, 32 percent of young children had mothers in the labor force; by 1976, this proportion had increased to 42 percent (table D). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between March 1974 and March 1975, "the largest ... increase in labor force participation rates occurred among wives with

children—especially mothers whose youngest child was 3 to 5 years old."⁵ In examining labor force participation rates of women by age of their children, it can be seen that there were no significant differences in rates of participation by whether their child was 3, 4, or 5 years old. These rates by race of the child, however, show significant differences in the labor force participation rates of the mothers of 3- to 5-year-old children. The rates for White mothers increased over the 9-year period from about 30 percent to 40 percent, whereas Black children's mothers' rates of labor force participation remained around 50 percent.

Table D also shows labor force participation rates for mothers by whether or not the child was enrolled in a preprimary program. Of all children 3 to 5 years of age, those who were enrolled in school were more likely to have a mother who was in the labor force than those who were not enrolled. Even when comparing labor force participation rates of mothers of children in school, Black women were more likely to be in the labor force than White women. In 1976, about 56 percent of the mothers of Black schoolchildren were in the labor force compared with about 42 percent of the mothers of enrolled White children.

The data in tables D and E indicate the extent to which the increases in school enrollment of 3- to 5-year-old children between 1967 and 1976 were the result of the increases in labor force participation of their mothers. Clearly the enrollment of 3- and 4-year-old children is higher if their mothers are in the labor force, but the data also show that enrollment

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Special Labor Force Report, No. 183, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force, March 1975."*

Table D. Percent of Children 3 to 5 Years Old With Mother in Labor Force by Age, Race, and Enrollment in Preprimary School: October 1967 to October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Race and age of children | 1976 | 1973 | 1970 | 1967 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| ALL CHILDREN | | | | |
| All Races | | | | |
| Children 3 to 5 years old..... | 41.7 | 35.8 | 31.8 | 32.4 |
| 3 years old..... | 40.8 | 35.6 | 30.7 | 32.0 |
| 4 years old..... | 40.9 | 36.6 | 32.2 | 31.6 |
| 5 years old..... | 43.3 | 35.1 | 32.5 | 33.4 |
| White | | | | |
| Children 3 to 5 years old..... | 39.8 | 33.9 | 29.2 | 29.5 |
| Black | | | | |
| Children 3 to 5 years old..... | 51.6 | 46.8 | 45.5 | 49.2 |
| ENROLLED IN SCHOOL | | | | |
| Children 3 to 5 years old..... | 44.6 | 37.5 | 33.0 | 35.0 |
| 3 years old..... | 50.5 | 42.9 | 43.4 | 49.3 |
| 4 years old..... | 44.1 | 41.3 | 32.8 | 38.0 |
| 5 years old..... | 43.6 | 34.6 | 31.3 | 32.6 |
| NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL | | | | |
| Children 3 to 5 years old..... | 39.0 | 34.6 | 31.1 | 31.1 |
| 3 years old..... | 38.4 | 34.4 | 28.8 | 30.8 |
| 4 years old..... | 38.6 | 34.2 | 32.0 | 29.9 |
| 5 years old..... | 42.2 | 36.5 | 35.2 | 35.0 |

Table E. Percent of Children 3 and 4 Years Old Enrolled in School by Labor Force Status and Marital Status of Mother: October 1967 to October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population. For meaning of symbols, see text)

| Marital status and labor force status of mother | 1976 | 1973 | 1970 | 1967 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All children..... | 31.5 | 24.4 | 20.6 | 14.2 |
| Marital status of mother: | | | | |
| Married, husband present..... | 31.4 | 23.7 | 20.4 | 13.8 |
| Other marital status..... | 32.0 | 28.5 | 22.3 | 16.8 |
| Never married..... | 33.2 | 38.4 | 18.0 | 20.5 |
| Widowed, separated, divorced..... | 31.7 | 26.9 | 22.9 | 16.4 |
| Mothers in labor force..... | 35.2 | 28.1 | 23.4 | 18.1 |
| Married, husband present..... | 34.9 | 26.9 | 23.5 | 17.5 |
| Other marital status..... | 37.2 | 34.1 | 23.3 | 21.4 |
| Never married..... | 42.2 | (B) | (B) | (B) |
| Widowed, separated, divorced..... | 36.0 | 33.0 | 24.7 | 21.1 |
| Mothers not in labor force..... | 28.8 | 22.2 | 19.3 | 12.2 |
| Married, husband present..... | 29.0 | 22.1 | 19.0 | 12.2 |
| Other marital status..... | 27.4 | 22.9 | 21.6 | 12.2 |
| Never married..... | 25.5 | (B) | (B) | (B) |
| Widowed, separated, divorced..... | 27.8 | 20.7 | 21.7 | 11.3 |

rates increased substantially even for women not in the labor force. Between 1967 and 1976, the enrollment rate of children with mothers in the labor force increased from about 18 to about 35 percent, while the enrollment rate of children with mothers not in the labor force increased from about 12 to about 29 percent (there was only some evidence of a difference in the rates of change between the two groups). Also, as White women's labor force participation increased over the period, the participation of Black women remained at about the same level, but the school enrollment rates of children of both races increased greatly. Thus, the enrollment rate for 3- and 4-year-old children would have increased even if no changes in labor force participation rates of the mothers had occurred because even children whose mothers were not in the labor force were increasingly enrolled.

The preprimary school enrollment rates of 3- and 4-year-old children are shown in table E by mother's labor force status and mother's marital status. The striking fact is that for each subcategory shown in that table, significant in-

creases occurred between 1967 and 1976. No matter whether the mother was in the labor force or whether the children's mothers were currently married, with her husband present, or of another marital status, (never married, widowed, separated or divorced), the school enrollment rates of the children increased during the period. It was true, however, that throughout the period a significantly higher proportion of children 3 and 4 years of age whose mothers were in the labor force were enrolled than those whose mothers were not in the labor force. Also, in 1976 it was apparent that labor force status of the mothers was more important than marital status in influencing whether 3- and 4-year-old children were enrolled. Controlling enrollment rates of the children by only their mother's marital status resulted in rates which were not significantly different. Moreover, within a labor force status, there were no significant differences in rates of enrollment by the two different marital statuses examined. Significant differences did occur overall by labor force status and also when controlling for each marital status by mother's labor force status.

Table F. Full-day and Part-day Attendance Status of Children 3 and 4 Years Old Enrolled in Nursery School by Labor Force Status of Mother and Race: October 1976 and October 1967

(Numbers in thousands. Civilian noninstitutional population. For meaning of symbols, see text)

| Race of children and labor force status of mother | October 1976 | | | | October 1967 | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|---------|---------------------|----------|
| | Enrolled in nursery school | | Percent of enrolled | | Enrolled in nursery school | | Percent of enrolled | |
| | Number | Percent | Full day | Part day | Number | Percent | Full day | Part day |
| ALL RACES | | | | | | | | |
| All children..... | 1,430 | 22.9 | 29.5 | 70.5 | 665 | 8.2 | 29.0 | 71.0 |
| Mother in labor force..... | 665 | 26.1 | 48.0 | 52.0 | 292 | 11.4 | 54.1 | 45.9 |
| Employed..... | 622 | 28.1 | 49.4 | 50.6 | 280 | 11.9 | 55.0 | 45.0 |
| Full time..... | 375 | 26.1 | 67.2 | 32.8 | 185 | 11.7 | 69.7 | 30.3 |
| Part time..... | 246 | 31.6 | 22.8 | 77.2 | 96 | 12.4 | 26.0 | 74.0 |
| Unemployed..... | 44 | 13.2 | (B) | (B) | 12 | 5.6 | (B) | (B) |
| Mother not in labor force.. | 748 | 20.9 | 12.8 | 87.2 | 361 | 6.7 | 9.4 | 90.6 |
| WHITE | | | | | | | | |
| All children..... | 1,169 | 22.8 | 23.9 | 76.1 | 533 | 7.9 | 24.8 | 75.2 |
| Mother in labor force..... | 521 | 26.2 | 42.4 | 57.6 | 216 | 11.1 | 48.6 | 51.4 |
| Employed..... | 497 | 28.1 | 43.5 | 56.5 | 211 | 11.7 | 48.8 | 51.2 |
| Full time..... | 275 | 25.5 | 61.8 | 38.2 | 133 | 11.3 | 66.9 | 33.1 |
| Part time..... | 222 | 32.2 | 21.2 | 78.8 | 78 | 12.5 | 17.9 | 82.1 |
| Unemployed..... | 24 | 11.1 | (B) | (B) | 5 | 3.4 | (B) | (B) |
| Mother not in labor force.. | 638 | 20.8 | 8.5 | 91.5 | 308 | 6.5 | 8.1 | 91.9 |
| BLACK | | | | | | | | |
| All children..... | 213 | 22.0 | 61.0 | 39.0 | 122 | 10.2 | 48.4 | 51.6 |
| Mother in labor force..... | 119 | 23.9 | 75.6 | 24.4 | 75 | 12.8 | 70.7 | 29.3 |
| Employed..... | 101 | 25.8 | 82.2 | 17.8 | 69 | 13.2 | (B) | (B) |
| Full time..... | 86 | 27.3 | 87.2 | 12.8 | 51 | 13.4 | (B) | (B) |
| Part time..... | 15 | 19.5 | (B) | (B) | 18 | 12.9 | (B) | (B) |
| Unemployed..... | 18 | 17.3 | (B) | (B) | 6 | (B) | (B) | (B) |
| Mother not in labor force.. | 86 | 19.5 | 43.0 | 57.0 | 45 | 7.7 | (B) | (B) |

Table G. Percent of Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in Preprimary School by Years of School Completed by Mother: October 1967 to October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Age of children and years of school completed by mother | 1976 | 1973 | 1970 | 1967 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| CHILDREN 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD | | | | |
| Years completed by mother, total... | 49.4 | 41.1 | 37.6 | 31.5 |
| Elementary: 8 years or less..... | 38.3 | 31.9 | 22.4 | 20.5 |
| High school: 1 to 3 years..... | 38.6 | 32.7 | 31.9 | 26.1 |
| 4 years..... | 47.9 | 39.2 | 38.0 | 32.2 |
| College: 1 to 3 years..... | 56.6 | 50.1 | 48.7 | 41.3 |
| 4 years or more..... | 70.4 | 60.6 | 55.8 | 48.7 |
| CHILDREN 3 AND 4 YEARS OLD | | | | |
| Years completed by mother, total... | 31.5 | 24.3 | 20.6 | 14.1 |
| Elementary: 8 years or less..... | 18.8 | 13.8 | 10.3 | 8.0 |
| High school: 1 to 3 years..... | 20.5 | 15.3 | 13.7 | 9.6 |
| 4 years..... | 27.3 | 20.5 | 19.1 | 13.3 |
| College: 1 to 3 years..... | 40.2 | 36.1 | 32.9 | 21.9 |
| 4 years or more..... | 62.6 | 50.1 | 44.1 | 31.9 |
| CHILDREN 5 YEARS OLD | | | | |
| Years completed by mother, total... | 81.7 | 76.1 | 69.4 | 65.4 |
| Elementary: 8 years or less..... | 76.8 | 64.4 | 46.7 | 43.8 |
| High school: 1 to 3 years..... | 75.1 | 70.4 | 63.1 | 56.9 |
| 4 years..... | 82.7 | 77.6 | 73.6 | 71.4 |
| College: 1 to 3 years..... | 85.9 | 81.3 | 82.4 | 76.1 |
| 4 years or more..... | 84.6 | 83.8 | 76.0 | 80.8 |

Among working mothers, there is some indication that those who worked full time were less likely to enroll their 3- and 4-year-old children in nursery school than were mothers who worked part time. This may be because mothers who work full time have difficulties arranging for full-day care for their children since most nursery schools offer only part-day programs. In 1976, enrolled children whose mothers worked full time were the most likely to be in full-day programs (table F). Among children enrolled in nursery school, about 77 percent of the enrolled children whose mothers worked part time were in part-day programs. About 87 percent of the nursery school enrollees whose mothers were not in the labor force were in part-day rather than full-day nursery school. When children were enrolled in nursery school, their enrollment in full-day rather than part-day programs appeared to be directly related to mothers' full-time work status. The slightly lower rate of enrollment in nursery school of children whose mothers worked full time than those whose mothers worked part time could be due to the difficulty in finding practical full-day child care accommodations for the children; that is, some other form of care must be found either supplementing part-day nursery school with day care or placing the child in full-day child care.⁶

EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION OF MOTHER

Mothers may be looking for more than day care or baby-sitting services for their children when they enroll them in preprimary programs. In choosing to enroll their children in nursery school or kindergarten, a consideration may be that these schools offer worthwhile educational experience not available in day care centers (see Definitions and Explanations for discussion of preprimary school enrollment). Some evidence for this is that mothers who had completed some college were significantly more likely to enroll their 3- to 5-year-old children in preschool programs than mothers who had less education. These differences in children's enrollment rates seem to indicate greater concern of more educated mothers that their children start school early. For example, the enrollment rate of children with mothers who completed high school but no college was 9 percentage points lower than for those with mothers whose education was only slightly higher, 1 to 3 years of college completed (table G). However, the availability of preprimary schools and the ability to pay for this schooling could also affect the rates.

The enrollment rates of 3- and 4-year-old children also appeared to be more affected by mothers' educational attainment than the enrollment rates of 5-year-olds in 1967 as well as in 1976. Although the enrollment rates of 3- and 4-year-olds increased greatly between 1967 and 1976, the disparities

⁶ See U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 298, "Daytime Care of Children: October 1974 and February 1975."

Table H. Percent of Children 3 to 5 Years Old Enrolled in Preprimary School by Occupation of Employed Mother: October 1967 to October 1976

(Civilian noninstitutional population)

| Age of children and occupation of mother | 1976 | 1973 | 1970 | 1967 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| CHILDREN 3 AND 4 YEARS OLD | | | | |
| Mother employed, total ¹ | 37.6 | 27.9 | 24.3 | 18.6 |
| White collar..... | 46.1 | 35.1 | 30.8 | 25.4 |
| Professional and managerial..... | 50.0 | 41.2 | 36.6 | 32.1 |
| Clerical and sales..... | 44.2 | 32.5 | 28.0 | 22.4 |
| Other ¹ | 26.6 | 19.9 | 17.6 | 12.6 |
| Blue collar..... | 24.8 | 18.7 | 17.2 | 10.1 |
| Service..... | 29.7 | 22.0 | 19.1 | 16.1 |
| CHILDREN 5 YEARS OLD | | | | |
| Mother employed, total ¹ | 82.5 | 74.8 | 66.8 | 63.9 |
| White collar..... | 83.6 | 78.4 | 73.5 | 69.6 |
| Professional and managerial..... | 88.8 | 77.2 | 75.3 | 74.8 |
| Clerical and sales..... | 81.1 | 79.1 | 73.0 | 67.3 |
| Other ¹ | 80.8 | 70.6 | 60.6 | 58.8 |
| Blue collar..... | 82.8 | 74.5 | 58.1 | 55.8 |
| Service..... | 79.6 | 67.0 | 61.3 | 62.1 |

¹Employed mothers and other includes children of mothers who are farm workers, not shown separately.

in enrollment rates between children whose mothers had completed at least 4 years of college and those children whose mothers had completed only 8 years or less of school seemed to increase; in 1967, the difference was about 24 percentage points and in 1976, about 44 percentage points. Over the same period, 5-year-old children were also enrolled at higher levels and disparities in enrollment rates by mothers' education declined. The difference in enrollment rates for 5-year-old children with mothers who graduated from college and those with mothers who completed 8 years or less of school was about 37 percentage points in 1967 and about 8 points in 1976.⁷

The occupations of employed mothers also seemed to have a significant affect on the proportion of children enrolled in preprimary programs. A larger proportion of 3- and 4-year-old children whose mothers were employed as white-collar workers were enrolled than children whose mothers were employed in other occupations. The proportion of children in school whose mothers were employed in professional, managerial, clerical, or sales capacities had increased since 1967 to about 46 percent in 1976. Children whose mothers were working in blue-collar, service, or farm occupations had increased to about 27 percent.

Since 1967, differences in enrollment rates of 5-year-old children by mother's occupation have declined as more of them were being enrolled in preprimary programs. In 1967, about 70 percent of the children whose mothers had white-collar jobs were enrolled and about 59 percent of the children whose mothers were employed in blue-collar, service, or farm occupations were enrolled. By 1976, the enrollment

rates for children from these two groups had increased to around 83 percent, and the differences between the two groups were no longer significant.

RELATED REPORTS

Since 1964, the Office of Education has published an annual report (with the exception of 1973) on the number of children enrolled in preprimary programs (i.e., nursery school and kindergarten) based on the Census Bureau's October Current Population Survey (CPS). Comparable data for October 1973 were published by the Census Bureau as **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 268, "Nursery School and Kindergarten Enrollment: October 1973." The Office of Education series was last published as National Center for Education Statistics, No. 76-147, "Preprimary Enrollment: October 1974."

Data on school enrollment for persons 3 years old and over for October 1975 were presented in the Census Bureau's **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 303. Statistics on school enrollment for October of the years prior to 1975 have been published in other **Current Population Reports** in Series P-20.

Data on the arrangements made for 1974 and 1975 daytime care of 3-to-13-year-olds by labor force status of their mothers are presented in **Current Population Reports**, Series P-20, No. 298, "Daytime Care of Children: October 1974 and February 1975."

Data on the work experience of mothers of young children can be found in U.S. Department of Labor, **Monthly Labor Review**, "Children of Working Mothers, March 1974," January 1975.

The differences in enrollment rates in 1976 was significant at the 90 percent level of confidence.

NOTE

In the past the Census Bureau has designated a head of household to serve as the central reference person for the collection and tabulation of data for individual members of the household (or family). However, recent social changes have resulted in a trend toward recognition of more equal status for all members of the household (or family), making the term "head" less relevant in the analysis of household and family data. As a result, the Bureau is currently developing new techniques of enumeration and data presentation which will eliminate the concept of "head." While much of the data in this report are based on the concept of "head," methodology for future Census Bureau reports will reflect a gradual movement away from this traditional practice.
