



# Education of primary caregiver: schooling

An increasing proportion of primary caregivers of school aged children have at least a degree level qualification, with Māori and Pasifika primary caregivers showing the greatest increase since 2001.

## Indicator Description

Highest qualification of primary caregivers of children aged 5 to 17 years-old.

## Why This Is Important

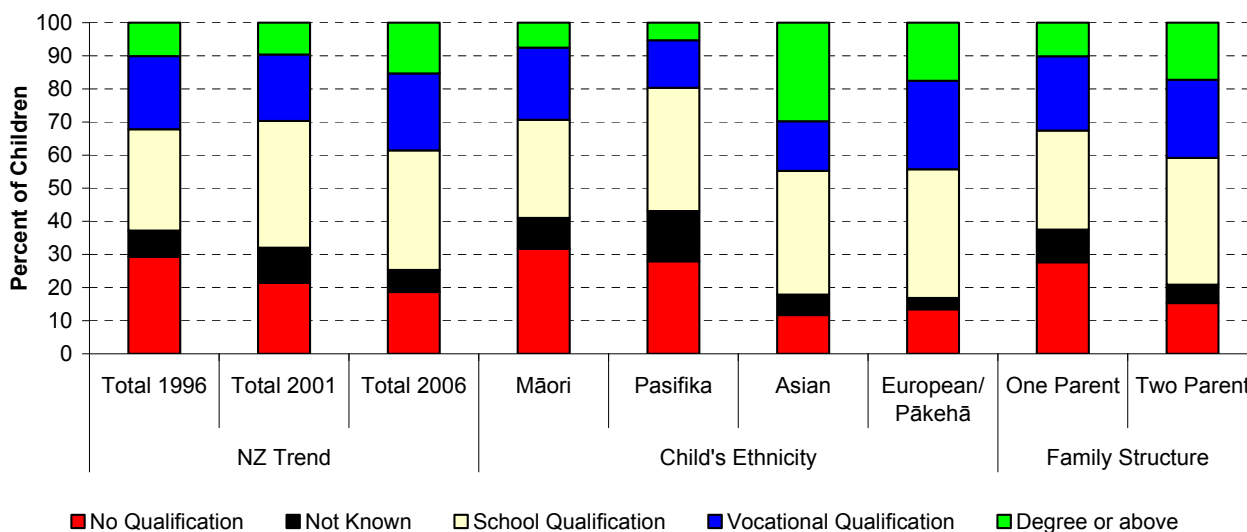
Parental education, in particular mother's education, is linked to higher student achievement and longer participation in schooling. Parental education has more influence on average than parental income. However, it is what parents do in their interactions with children that is important. Higher parental education can influence the provision of rich home learning environments that facilitate children's success at school.

Family processes that are emotionally supportive and involve varied language, literacy and numeracy experiences that are linked to a child's experience of the world are particularly influential. Parents who have difficulties with literacy are more likely to exert a positive influence on their children's achievement when they are able to enhance their own skills.

## How We Are Going

This indicator reports the highest qualification gained by a primary caregiver of children aged 5 to 17 years-old. In two parent families this is deemed to be the mother.

**Highest qualification of mother/primary caregiver of children aged 5 to 17 years-old (2006)**



In 2006, 15% of primary caregivers of children aged 5 to 17 years-old had a qualification at degree level or higher. That is a significant increase since 1996 and 2001 when in both years only 10% of children had parents with that level of qualification. Twenty-three percent of primary caregivers had vocational qualifications, a slight increase since 2001.

The percentage of primary caregivers with a school qualification as their highest qualification has increased by 18% since 1996 but changed very little over the last five years. Over the ten-year period the data show a steady decrease in percentage of primary caregivers with no qualification. In 1996 there were 29% of primary caregivers with no qualification whereas in 2001 and 2006 it was 21% and 19% respectively.

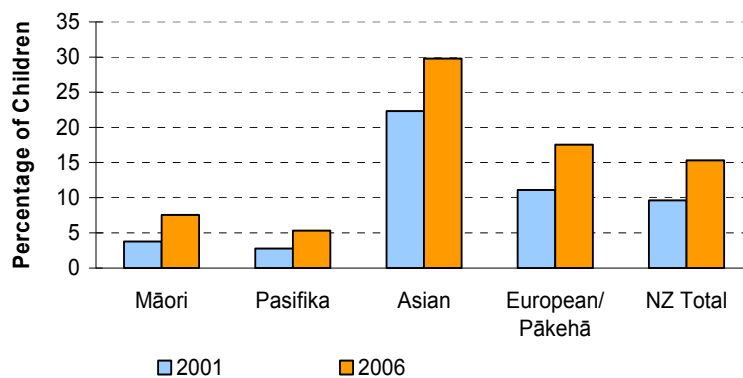
In one-parent families the proportion of primary caregivers that attained any level of qualification was lower than the primary caregiver of two parent families, particularly at degree level or higher (10% compared to 17% in two parent families) and school qualification (30% compared to 38% in two parent families). Conversely, the proportion of primary caregivers with no qualification was substantially

higher in one-parent families (28%) compared to two parent families (15%).

The proportion of primary caregivers with no qualification has dropped steadily since 1996. While the situation appears to have improved for all ethnic groups, the exact extent of any change can not be gauged accurately due to inconsistencies in the data for ethnic groups between censuses.

Thirty percent of Asian children in 2006 had a primary caregiver with at least a degree level qualification. This compares to 18% for primary caregivers of European children. For Māori and Pasifika children, 7.5% and 5.3% of their primary caregivers respectively, had at least a degree level qualification. Even though these rates are

**Percentage of children aged 5 to 17 years-old with mother/primary caregiver holding qualification at degree level or higher (2006)**



still significantly lower than those of other ethnic groups, Māori and Pasifika rates showed the highest increase since 2001 when only 3.8% and 2.8% of primary caregivers had at least a degree level qualification.

In 2006, 32% and 28% of primary caregivers of Māori and Pasifika children aged 5 to 17 years-old respectively had no qualification. Among European (14%) and Asian (12%) children the proportions of primary caregivers without a qualification were considerably lower.

### Where To Find Out More

Parental education is one of a cluster of proxy indicators for family processes that contribute to a rich learning environment linked to school achievement. Other indicators to consider are:

- Education of primary caregiver: early childhood.

The Ministry of Education has established an Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis Programme to systematically identify, evaluate, analyse, synthesise and make accessible, relevant evidence linked to a range of learner outcomes. Information relative to this indicator can be found in:

- The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence.

### References

- Biddulph, F., Biddulph, J. and Biddulph C. (2003). *The complexity of community and family influences on children's achievement in New Zealand: Best evidence synthesis*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.