

The Women's Foundation of Colorado

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to spread the knowledge
to power the change
to alter the future
for women and girls
in Colorado.

Girls Drop-out Fact Sheet – November 2009

- During the 2006-2007 school year, over **8000** Colorado girls dropped out of 7th through 12th grade, and during the 2007-2008 school year, over **7000** Colorado girls dropped out of 7th through 12 grade.
- In 2004, the graduation rate in Colorado was 69%, and for girls it was 73%, meaning that only 73% of the girls that enter 9th grade eventually graduate from 12th grade.
- For the 2007-2008 school year, 2440 girls (7.5%) dropped out of the 12th grade. For the 2006-2007 school year this number was 2,088 (6.7%)
- Of the total drop-outs in Colorado, approximately 55% are boys and 45% are girls, although it varies by year and district. For example, in 2006-07, Pueblo experienced 52% boys and 48% girls.
- The financial impact of dropping out is greater for a girl than for a boy.
 - According to REFT Institute research funded by The Women's Foundation of Colorado, a white female drop-out earns \$7,800/year, whereas a white male drop-out earns \$22,800/year. A female Hispanic drop-out earns \$9,900/year, while her male counterpart earns \$21,400.
- The cost of drop-outs to our state and nation is staggering.
 - It is estimated that each drop-out costs the nation \$260,000 in their lifetime
 - The 2008 drop-outs alone will cost Colorado \$4.3 billion in lost wages and income taxes, and we will spend \$52.1 million for their health care.
- An initial study by Johns Hopkins University of the Denver public school system and the factors that help predict which children will drop out found that:
 - Attendance:
 - The available data (which could be biased in some way) indicated that dropouts missed 35 days of school on average in their 9th grade year, compared to 28 days on average for non-dropouts. Significantly more dropouts (60%) than nondropouts (44%) missed 20 or more days of school in 9th grade.
 - Behavior
 - Suspension data were available for 2005-06 and 2006-07. A total of 10% of dropouts (compared to 6% of graduates) had at least one suspension (either in-school or out-of-school) during that two-year period. It is possible that dropouts had higher levels of suspension in earlier years (when they were attending more days of school), but data were not available to verify this. Female dropouts were significantly less likely to have a record of suspensions than were male dropouts.

- Course failure
 - Analyses indicated that dropouts failed significantly more courses than did non-dropouts during their 9th grade year. Over three-quarters of dropouts (77%) failed one or more semester courses in 9th grade compared to about half of non-dropouts (53%). Female dropouts had a somewhat lower rate of 9th grade failure (75%) than male dropouts (79%).
- According to Colorado Graduates Initiative research funded by The Women’s Foundation of Colorado and executed by the National Center for School Engagement and Johns Hopkins University, girls drop out for different reasons than boys.
 - Boys are more frequently “pushed” out of school, or asked not to come back because of attendance, behavior, or course failure, whereas girls are more frequently “pulled” out of school.
 - Interviews conducted with Colorado Youth for Change indicate three themes relative to girls
 - Behavior – girls who are disengaged frequently “drift away”
 - Relationships- “for girls more than boys, their relationships appear to be the driving force in whether they go to school, stay home, or go to the mall.”
 - Responsibility for others and for self – “their lives are fraught with expectations that they care for and support their family members, their community, and their peers.”
- According to REFT Institute, the “pull-out” factors that most affect girls are:
 - Adult roles of care giving, marriage, and parenting
 - Family stress – abuse, divorce, illness, death and stepfamily formation
 - Family structures of single mother homes or home where either parent has dropped out
 - Safety of the neighborhood
- According to REFT Institute, the “push-out” factors that most affect girls are:
 - Absenteeism or lack of school engagement
 - Safety, especially sexual harassment
- The ICF International and National Drop-out Prevent Center identified these best practices for intervention:
 - Family engagement
 - Mentoring
 - Tutoring
 - Alternative schooling
 - School/community collaboration
 - Career and technical education
 - Safe learning environment
 - Active learning
- Additional strategies include:
 - Service learning
 - After school opportunities
- There is very little research on the role of pregnancy and parenting on drop-outs.
- According to Colorado Graduates Initiative research funded by The Women’s Foundation of Colorado and executed by the National Center for School Engagement and Johns Hopkins University, interventions to reduce drop-out include “flexibility” in educational delivery, “fit”, i.e. creating relationships that draw girls in to school, and “framing”, or convincing girls that receiving a diploma is worthwhile.