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Media contact: 691-5902

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EMPLOYMENT OF TEENAGERS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR AND SUMMER

In 2001, most older teenagers who worked did so during both the school year and the summer months; very few worked solely during the summer. Sixty-five percent of students who were age 17 at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year worked at an employee job at some time during both the school year and the following summer, as did 72 percent of students age 18 and 76 percent of students age 19.

These findings are from the first five annual survey rounds of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, which is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. The survey includes a nationally representative sample of about 9,000 young men and women who were born during the years 1980 to 1984. These respondents were ages 12 to 17 when first interviewed in 1997, and ages 16 to 22 when interviewed for a fifth time in 2001-02. The survey provides information on the employment experiences, schooling, family background, social behavior, and other characteristics of these youths.

This release focuses on the employment experiences of these youths, specifically on “employee jobs,” also known as wage and salary jobs, in which youths have an ongoing formal relationship with a particular employer. Highlights from the longitudinal survey include:

- Over 90 percent of college students age 19 at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year worked at an employee job at some time during that academic year and following summer, with the vast majority working during both the school year and the summer.
- The top five occupations differ greatly between the sexes but change only slightly from school months to summer months. Occupations also change among age groups; while 9 percent of enrolled male youths age 17 on Sept. 1, 2000, were cooks, only 3 percent of enrolled male youths age 19 were cooks.
- The top five occupations of non-enrolled youths were different from those of their enrolled counterparts, and the employment of high school dropouts was more concentrated in those top five occupations. The top five occupations accounted for over half the employment of female 18-year-old high school dropouts, but for only 40 percent of the jobs held by female 18-year-old high school graduates.
- While few overall differences in weeks worked were apparent by enrollment status, differences did exist by gender and high school completion. Enrolled women consistently averaged more weeks worked per year than non-enrolled women, and high school graduates worked more weeks on average than those who had dropped out of school.

Youths in Employee Jobs During the 2000-01 School Year and the Following Summer

Working while in school was common among high school and college students during the 2000-01 school year. (See table 1.) Employment rates rose from 77 percent for those who were age 17 at the start of the 2000-01 school year to 84 percent for those age 19. The vast majority of enrolled youths who worked between the start of the 2000-01 school year and the start of the next school year worked during the school year. Only a small percentage of youths worked exclusively during the summer. While 65 percent of youths who were age 17 at the beginning of the school year worked during both the summer and the school year, only 9 percent worked during the summer only. For those age 19 at the beginning of the school year, 7 percent worked during the summer only.

Enrolled male and female youths were equally likely to have been employed and were also equally likely to work only during the summer. Differences in employment among enrolled youths were apparent by race and Hispanic ethnicity with non-Hispanic whites more likely to be employed at all ages. Non-Hispanic white youths were more likely to combine schooling and employment than their non-Hispanic black or Hispanic counterparts. For example, among youths age 17 at the beginning of the school year, 85 percent of non-Hispanic white youths worked at some time during the school year compared to 66 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and 72 percent of Hispanics. This difference was similar at older ages.

Top Five Occupations of Enrolled Youths with an Employee Job

The composition of the top five occupations of older enrolled male teens changed only marginally between the school year and summer and between ages. Cook and cashier were the most common occupations during both the school year and following summer for male youths enrolled in school who were age 17 or 18 at the start of the 2000-01 school year while cashier or stock handler and bagger were the top occupations for those age 19. The top five occupations for enrolled females remained unchanged from school year to summer, and changed only slightly between age 17 and 18 and not at all from 18 to 19. Even at these comparatively young ages, there was little overlap in the top five occupations between the sexes. (See table 2.)

The greater diversity of occupations held by older youths is illustrated by the percent of enrolled workers employed in the top five occupations. While over 30 percent of enrolled male youths age 17 at the start of the school year worked in the top five occupations during the school year, less than 18 percent of enrolled male youths were employed in the top five occupations during the school year when age 19. The occupational mix of female teens who worked and were enrolled in school changed less dramatically with age. Forty percent of enrolled female youths age 17 at the start of the school year worked in the top five occupations during the school year compared to 31 percent of those age 19.

Top Five Occupations of Non-Enrolled Youths with an Employee Job

Employment of non-enrolled youths was concentrated in the top five occupations, especially for dropouts. Thirty-six percent of male high school dropouts who were age 19 at the start of the 2000-01 school year worked in the top five occupations as did 25 percent of high school graduates. About half of female dropouts who were age 18 or 19 at the start of the school year worked in the top five occupations compared to 40 percent of female high school graduates age 18 at the start of the school year and 30 percent of those age 19 at the start of the school year. (See table 3.)

Moreover, the composition of the top five occupations changed depending on education status. Among non-enrolled males who were 18 at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year, cashier (8.7 percent) was the most common occupation for high school dropouts followed by construction laborer (8.1 percent); however,

high school graduates were more likely to be truck drivers (6.8 percent) or automobile mechanics (5.6 percent). Among non-enrolled males age 18 in September 2000, there was almost no overlap in occupations between high school dropouts and graduates. The top five occupations for females did not change as dramatically depending on enrollment status. Cashier was the most common occupation for non-enrolled female youths regardless of age or educational attainment.

Weeks Employed by Youths While Ages 17, 18, and 19

Older youths are more likely to work more weeks. Enrolled youths worked an average of 33 weeks while age 17, that is, between their 17th and 18th birthdays. In comparison, enrolled youths worked an average of 36 weeks while age 19. (See table 4.)

While overall there were few differences in weeks employed by enrollment status, differences were apparent for women. Enrolled women consistently worked more weeks than their non-enrolled counterparts. For example, enrolled female youths worked an average of 34 weeks per year while age 17 compared to 29 weeks for non-enrolled females. While age 19, enrolled female youths averaged 37 weeks of work and non-enrolled females averaged 34 weeks. Moreover, those with a high school diploma worked more weeks on average than youths of the same age who had dropped out of school. Among non-enrolled youths, high school dropouts averaged 35 weeks of work while age 19 compared with 41 weeks of work for same-aged high school graduates.

At all ages and regardless of education status, non-Hispanic white youths worked more weeks per year than their non-Hispanic black counterparts. However, non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics worked similar numbers of weeks while ages 18 and 19.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained using data from the first five rounds of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). The NLSY97 is the newest survey in the National Longitudinal Surveys program. The NLSY97 collects extensive information on youths' labor market behavior and educational experiences. Information about respondents' families and communities also is obtained in the survey.

This survey is conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago and the Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University, under the direction and sponsorship of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Partial funding support for the survey has been provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sample

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 is a nationally representative sample of 8,984 young men and women who were ages 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996. This sample is composed of two subsamples:

- A cross-sectional sample designed to represent the non-institutionalized, civilian segment of young people living in the U.S. in 1997 and born between January 1, 1980, and December 31, 1984.
- A supplemental sample of youths designed to oversample Hispanic and black youths living in the U.S. in 1997 and born between January 1, 1980, and December 31, 1984.

The fifth round of annual interviews took place between November 1, 2001, and May 1, 2002, and all results are weighted using the fifth-round survey weights that correct for oversampling and nonresponse. When weighted, the data represent all Americans living in the U.S. in 1997 and born in the years 1980 to 1984. Not represented by the survey are U.S. immigrants who were born from 1980 to 1984 and moved to the United States after 1997.

Sample size varies both between and within tables. For example, in table 4, to be included in the section "While age 17," which refers to the entire year between an individual's 17th and 18th birthdays, a youth needs to have reached his or her 18th birthday. To be included in the "Age 17" category in table 2, a youth must be 17 by September 1, 2000, and will reach their 18th birthday during the 2000-01 school year.

Interaction between time and age in a longitudinal survey

Because the NLSY97 is a longitudinal survey, meaning the same people are surveyed over time, the ages of the respondents

change with each survey round. It is important to keep in mind this inherent link between the calendar years and the ages of the respondents. For example, table 4 reports weeks worked by age for the ages of 17, 18, and 19. The youngest respondents in the sample (birth year 1984) were these ages during 2000-02, whereas the oldest respondents (birth year 1980) were these ages from 1997-2001. Some respondents may not be used in all tables as they are not old enough.

Definitions

Employment. Respondents are classified as employed if they did any work as paid employees. This excludes youths who worked in their own businesses (self employed), or unpaid work at a family business.

Age categories. "While age x" refers to the entire year between birthday "x" and the following birthday. The estimates shown in this release for each age category exclude respondents who had not yet reached their next birthday at the time of the interview—and thus were not able to provide the full year's worth of information for that age. For example, "While age 17" refers to the entire year between an individual's 17th and 18th birthdays. The category excludes individuals who had not yet turned age 18 at the time of the interview.

2000-01 school year and following summer. The school term is defined as the period from September 2000 through May 2001. The summer is composed of June, July, and August of 2001.

Enrolled. Individuals were not considered enrolled if they were not enrolled for a period of 3 or more consecutive months during the school year. If an individual was enrolled during the 2000-01 school year, and then also enrolled in school the following September or October, they were considered "enrolled" during the summer and included in both the school year and summer portions of table 2. If they were enrolled during the 2000-01 school year but not enrolled in the following September or October, they would be included in the school year sample of table 2, but not the summer sample. The samples in tables 2 and 3 are mutually exclusive.

Race and ethnic groups. In this release, the findings are reported for non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, and Hispanics. These groups are mutually exclusive but not exhaustive. Other groups, which are included in the overall totals, are not shown separately because their representation in the survey sample is not sufficiently large to provide statistically reliable estimates. In other BLS publications, estimates are published for whites, blacks, and Hispanics, but these groups usually are not mutually exclusive. The term "Hispanic" is considered to be an ethnic group, and Hispanics can be of any race. Most other BLS publications include estimates for Hispanics in the white and black race groups in addition to the Hispanic ethnic group.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Percent of enrolled youths with an employee job during the 2000-01 school year and the following summer by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, grade in school, and timing of employment

Age as of September 1, 2000, and characteristic	Percent of students who ever worked during the school year or following summer	Percent who worked during school year			Percent who worked during summer only
		Total	Worked during school year and summer	Worked during school year only	
Total, age 17	86.0	76.6	65.3	11.3	9.3
Male youths	87.0	77.4	66.6	10.8	9.6
Female youths	84.6	75.7	63.7	12.1	8.9
White non-Hispanic	91.6	84.6	75.4	9.2	7.0
Black non-Hispanic	77.6	65.6	52.3	13.3	12.0
Hispanic origin	83.1	71.7	57.1	14.5	11.5
Grade 11	82.7	70.2	55.4	14.5	12.5
Grade 12	88.7	79.6	69.4	10.2	9.1
Total, age 18	87.6	80.7	71.7	9.0	6.9
Male youths.....	85.9	79.0	69.0	10.0	7.0
Female youths.....	89.9	83.0	75.3	7.7	6.9
White non-Hispanic	93.1	88.0	81.8	6.2	5.1
Black non-Hispanic	79.7	68.2	57.4	10.9	11.5
Hispanic origin	84.0	78.1	65.7	12.4	5.9
Grade 12	81.6	73.9	64.4	9.5	7.7
Freshman in college	92.6	85.7	77.6	8.1	6.9
Total, age 19	91.2	84.3	76.4	7.9	6.9
Male youths	88.6	80.5	73.8	6.7	8.1
Female youths	93.6	87.8	78.8	9.0	5.8
White non-Hispanic	93.6	88.4	82.2	6.1	5.2
Black non-Hispanic	87.8	77.2	64.4	12.9	10.6
Hispanic origin	87.9	80.4	73.5	6.9	7.5
Freshman in college	90.0	81.8	73.5	8.4	8.2
Sophomore in college	92.8	86.4	77.9	8.5	6.4

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 consists of young men and women who were ages 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996. Race and Hispanic-origin groups are mutually exclusive but not exhaustive. Other race groups, which are included in the overall totals, are not shown separately because their representation in the survey sample is not sufficiently large to provide statistically reliable estimates. The school year is defined as September 2000 through May 2001, excluding the last full week of December 2000 and the first week of January 2001. Summer is defined as June, July, and August of 2001.

Table 2. Top five occupations of enrolled youths with an employee job during the 2000-01 school year and the following summer by sex and age

Sex, age as of September 1, 2000, and occupation	Percent of employed
Male youths - Age 17	
School year, top five occupations	31.5
Cooks	9.1
Cashiers	7.4
Stock handlers and baggers	6.6
Construction laborers	4.4
Janitors and cleaners	3.9
Summer, top five occupations	32.8
Cooks	8.6
Cashiers	8.3
Stock handlers and baggers	7.5
Sales workers, other commodities	4.6
Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	3.9
Female youths - Age 17	
School year, top five occupations	40.3
Cashiers	17.6
Sales workers, other commodities	7.1
Waiters and waitresses	6.1
General office clerks	5.2
Supervisors, food preparation and service occupations	4.4
Summer, top five occupations	40.2
Cashiers	16.4
Sales workers, other commodities	8.3
Waiters and waitresses	6.3
General office clerks	5.3
Supervisors, food preparation and service occupations	3.9
Male youths - Age 18	
School year, top five occupations	24.2
Cooks	7.1
Construction laborers	4.9
Cashiers	4.9
Janitors and cleaners	4.0
Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	3.3
Summer, top five occupations	22.1
Cooks	6.5
Cashiers	4.6
Janitors and cleaners	3.7
Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	3.7
Construction laborers	3.6

Table 2. Top five occupations of enrolled youths with an employee job during the 2000-2001 school year and the following summer by sex and age—Continued

Sex, age as of September 1, 2000, and occupation	Percent of employed
Female youths - Age 18	
School year, top five occupations	38.0
Cashiers	15.6
Sales workers, other commodities	7.0
Waiters and waitresses	6.8
General office clerks	4.6
Receptionists	4.1
Summer, top five occupations	38.7
Cashiers	15.5
Sales workers, other commodities	7.3
Waiters and waitresses	6.5
General office clerks	4.5
Receptionists	4.5
Male youths - Age 19	
School year, top five occupations	17.5
Cashiers	4.1
Stock handlers and baggers	4.0
Managers and administrators, not elsewhere classified.....	3.3
Cooks	3.2
Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	2.9
Summer, top five occupations	16.6
Stock handlers and baggers	4.1
Cashiers	3.9
Groundskeepers and gardeners, except farm	3.1
Guards and police, except public service	2.8
Managers and administrators, not elsewhere classified.....	2.7
Female youths - Age 19	
School year, top five occupations	31.3
Cashiers	9.1
Waiters and waitresses	7.1
General office clerks	5.2
Sales workers, other commodities	5.1
Receptionists	4.7
Summer, top five occupations	31.4
Cashiers	8.3
Waiters and waitresses	7.2
General office clerks	5.8
Sales workers, other commodities	5.2
Receptionists	4.9

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 consists of young men and women who were ages 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996. The school year is defined as September 2000 through May 2001, excluding the last full week of December 2000 and the first week of January 2001. Summer is defined as June, July, and August of 2001.

Table 3. Top five occupations of non-enrolled youths with an employee job during the 2000-01 school year and the following summer by sex, age, and high school graduation status

Sex, age as of September 1, 2000, occupation and high school graduation status	Percent of employed
Male youths - Age 18	
High school dropouts, top five occupations	35.7
Cashiers	8.7
Construction laborers	8.1
Farm workers	6.7
Laborers, except construction	6.7
Industrial machinery repairers	5.6
High school graduates, top five occupations	27.4
Truck drivers	6.8
Automobile mechanics	5.6
Stock handlers and baggers	5.3
Construction laborers	5.2
Guards and police, except public service	4.6
Female youths - Age 18	
High school dropouts, top five occupations	51.6
Cashiers	14.3
Waiters and waitresses	12.7
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	11.6
Stock handlers and baggers	7.7
Miscellaneous food preparation	5.2
High school graduates, top five occupations	40.3
Cashiers	17.8
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	7.9
Receptionists	5.5
Sales workers, other commodities	4.8
Waiters and waitresses	4.2
Male youths - Age 19	
High school dropouts, top five occupations	36.4
Construction laborers	11.1
Laborers, except construction	8.0
Cooks	7.0
Janitors and cleaners	6.1
Painters, construction and maintenance	4.1
High school graduates, top five occupations	24.5
Construction laborers	6.3
Cooks	5.8
Laborers, except construction	4.3
Stock handlers and baggers	4.2
Industrial truck and tractor equipment operators	3.8

Table 3. Top five occupations of non-enrolled youths with an employee job during the 2000-01 school year and the following summer by sex, age, and high school graduation status—Continued

Sex, age as of September 1, 2000, occupation and high school graduation status	Percent of employed
Female youths - Age 19	
High school dropouts, top five occupations	47.1
Cashiers	16.1
Receptionists	13.1
Managers, food serving and lodging establishments	6.4
Food counter, fountain and related occupations	6.4
File clerks	5.2
High school graduates, top five occupations	30.2
Cashiers	12.1
Receptionists	5.9
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	5.0
Sales workers, other commodities	4.2
Sales counter clerks	3.0

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 consists of young men and women who were ages 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996. The school year is defined as September 2000 through May 2001, excluding the last full week of December 2000 and the first week of January 2001. Summer is defined as June, July, and August of 2001. A high school graduate may have attended college.

Table 4. Average number of weeks worked by youths with an employee job ages 17 to 19 in 1997-2002 by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin and school enrollment status

Age in 1997-2002 and characteristic	Continuously enrolled	Continuously non-enrolled
Total, while age 17	32.9	30.5
Male youths	32.3	31.6
Female youths	33.8	29.1
White non-Hispanic	36.1	33.5
Black non-Hispanic	28.4	27.6
Hispanic origin	29.2	25.9
High school dropouts	--	30.1
High school graduates	(1)	(1)
Total, while age 18	33.5	33.1
Male youths	32.9	34.7
Female youths	34.3	31.1
White non-Hispanic	35.2	35.5
Black non-Hispanic	29.3	29.9
Hispanic origin	34.5	32.5
High school dropouts	--	31.2
High school graduates	33.6	38.4
Total, while age 19	36.4	36.2
Male youths	36.2	38.0
Female youths	36.7	33.8
White non-Hispanic	37.5	38.2
Black non-Hispanic	32.8	31.6
Hispanic origin	38.6	37.8
High school dropouts	--	34.6
High school graduates	36.4	40.5

¹ A small number of youths report graduating from high school before their 17th birthday.

NOTE: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 consists of young men and women who were ages 12 to 16 on December 31, 1996. Race and Hispanic-origin groups are mutually exclusive but not exhaustive. Other race groups, which are included in the overall totals, are not shown separately because their representation in the survey sample is not sufficiently large to provide statistically reliable estimates. A high school graduate may have attended or be attending college.