Since family factors weigh heavily in determining a child's academic success, we examined their effects in our Riverside School Study.

Whiteman and Deutsch (1968) found that in a sample of fifth-grade Black and White children, the education and occupation of the head of the family correlated +.45 and +.35, respectively, with the Gates Reading Test scores of the children. In addition, they found two other socioeconomic status variables related to achievement: housing condition ($r = +.28$) and the number of children under the age of eighteen in the home ($r = -.29$). Vane (1970), Stodolsky and Lesser (1970), and Deutsch (1960) also reported depressed achievement among children of low socioeconomic status. Vane (1970) found that the achievement and intelligence of Black and White children in elementary school were not related to their ethnic identity but were significantly related to the occupation of their parents. Stodolsky and Lesser (1970) discovered that social class criteria of occupation, education, and neighborhood affect achievement within several ethnic groups.

Coleman (1966) reported that, overall, objective background factors (urbanism of background, migration, parents' education, structural integrity of the home, smallness of family, and items and reading material in the home) accounted for 10–25% of the variance in individual achievement.
verbal achievement. For both Black and White children, the amount of variance accounted for by these background characteristics was relatively constant for children in grades 6–12. For the Mexican-Americans these characteristics accounted for more of the achievement variance in the lower grades.

Family Characteristics

The parent data in the Riverside School Study were obtained from interviews conducted with the parents in their homes in 1966, before the desegregation took place. In general, the mother was the primary source of demographic information about the family; mothers and fathers were interviewed separately on their attitudes and values. Interview data were collected from 976 of the total 1196 families that had children in the study. Of these 556 were Anglo, 254 were Mexican-American, and 166 were Black.

Occupational Position

The occupation of the head of the household (generally the occupation of the father) provided an index of socioeconomic position. The Duncan Socioeconomic Index for Occupations (1961) has a range from 0 to 96; the higher the index the higher the occupational position. The mean Duncan index values for the three ethnic groups were Anglo, 54.3; Mexican-American, 16.6; and Black, 26.1 \((F = 228.9, df = 2/973; p < .01)\). Blacks tended to hold higher occupational positions than Mexican-Americans \((F = 21.2, df = 1/973, p < .01)\), but this difference was relatively small as compared with the occupational advantage of Anglos over both minority groups.

Table 12.1 presents the cumulative percentages of each ethnic group over ascending deciles of this scale. The Anglo families were normally distributed over the entire occupational range, whereas more than 50% of the minority families were classified below the second decile. These figures clearly indicate major differences in the family backgrounds of the children in the study.