

What is The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study?

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is a national study that follows a cohort of roughly 5,000 children born to parents living in cities with at least 200,000 residents between 1998 and 2000. Most of the children in the study were born to unmarried parents; however, Fragile Families also contains a sub-sample of married parents. Fragile Families addresses issues concerning the needs and capabilities of unmarried parents, well-being of children within these families, extent of the relationship among the unmarried parents, and policies that affect families and children. Interviews were conducted with both mothers and fathers at birth, age one, age three, age five, and age nine. The fifth and most recent wave of data (nine-year follow-up) was collected between 2007 and 2010 and contains information from the core biological parents (mothers $n = 3,515$; fathers $n = 2,652$), primary caregivers ($n = 3,630$), focal children ($n = 3,377$), teachers ($n = 2,254$), and home visits ($n = 3,392$). In-home assessment of children included cognitive tests, in-home observations, home environment information, saliva collections, and a parent self-administered questionnaire. Fragile Families data are representative of non-marital births in U.S. cities with populations over 200,000. Response rates for the nine-year follow-up were 76% of biological mothers and 59% of biological fathers.

What's new in The Fragile Families Nine-Year Follow-Up?

Data collected in the year nine follow-up maintains many of the longitudinal items from previous years while also adding new questions to reflect changes in the age of the focal children. In years five and nine, kindergarten or elementary school teachers of the focal children were mailed a survey if the primary caregiver of the child provided consent. Information was collected on teacher characteristics and experience with the focal child. Teachers also provided information on the child's social skills, parent/guardian involvement, classroom characteristics, and school climate. Year nine also includes interviews with the focal children. Information was gathered on the child's perception of parental supervision and relationship with the focal child, parental discipline, sibling relationships, daily routines, school, early childhood delinquency, task completion and behavior, health, and safety.

What does the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study offer family scholars?

Unique to this study, Fragile Families follows a cohort of new parents and their children from birth and contains information about the capabilities of parents and the well-being of their children. These longitudinal data provide opportunities to examine how experiences during early childhood influence later outcomes. A notable feature is that biological mothers and fathers are interviewed at each survey wave.

Fragile Families covers a variety of topics amenable to family research. Specifically, the data contain information on several contexts in addition to the family, such as neighborhood, community and school. Extensive questions about parenting behaviors, home environment, and relationships with the other biological parent and new partners were collected. Information was gathered on specific health outcomes and factors such as health care, prenatal care, safety, parental mental and physical health, and child physical health and development across interviews. Key socioeconomic indicators are part of the data including public assistance, income, work activities, and employment.

How do I use The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study data?

Related literature, file manifest, and codebooks can be accessed through the [The Fragile Families data website](#) or via the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research ([ICPSR](#)).

Information regarding sampling weights can also be found on the [The Fragile Families data website](#) as well as on [ICPSR's website](#).

How do I access the data?

Data for the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study are available in both public and restricted formats. Researchers can access the public use data through the Office of Population Research at Princeton University ([OPR](#)). Public use data are also available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research ([ICPSR](#)). Public use data can be downloaded in SAS, SPSS, and Stata formats. To download data through ICPSR, users must be registered and associated with a member institution.

In order to access the restricted data, researchers must agree to terms and conditions in the [Contract Data Use License](#). Furthermore, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be acquired. Lastly, researchers must submit an extended abstract, curriculum vitae, and further information to the [Center of Research and Child Wellbeing](#).

Where can I learn more about The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study data?

Users can learn more about the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study in general at [The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study website](#) or the [Office of Population Research website](#). Periodically, workshops are offered to introduce users to the data.

Suggested Citation

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