

Median Age at Last Birth for Fathers

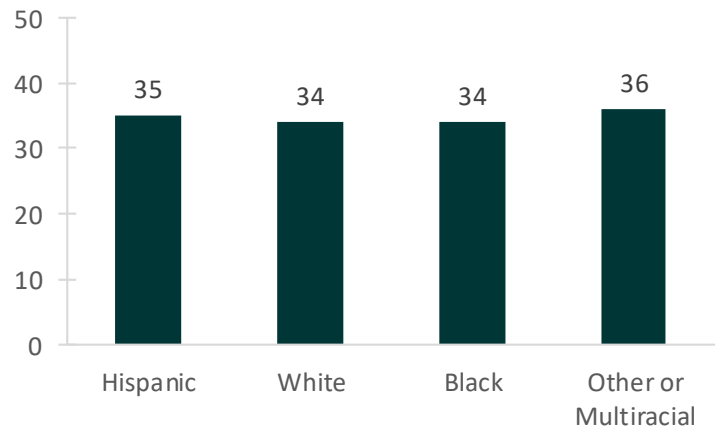
Author: Karen Benjamin Guzzo & Katherine Graham

Most men expect to have children in their lifetime ([FP-21-14](#)), and the age men first become fathers has increased ([FP-19-28](#)). Less is known about when men stop having children. Using the 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), this profile explores the median age at last birth among men at the end of their childbearing years (45 to 49 years old) by race/ethnicity, completed education, number of children, and age at first birth. Men start childbearing at older ages than women ([FP-19-28](#); [FP 21-05](#)), and this profile shows that men also complete childbearing at older ages. The median age at last birth was 34 for fathers aged 45 to 49, and the median age at last birth for mothers aged 45-49 was 31 ([FP 21-05](#)).

Race/ Ethnicity

- Median age at last birth varied slightly among fathers aged 45-49 across racial/ethnic groups.
 - White and Black fathers had the youngest median age at last birth, at 34 years old.
 - The oldest age at last birth, 36 years old, was observed among men classified as multiracial or some race/ethnicity other than Hispanic, White, or Black.

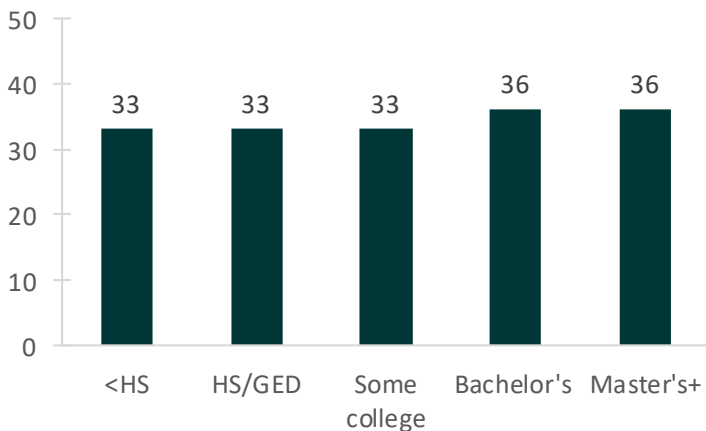
Figure 1. Father's Median Age at Last Birth by Race/Ethnicity



Source: NCFMR calculations of NSFG 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 male data files

Educational Attainment

Figure 2. Father's Median Age at Last Birth by Completed Education



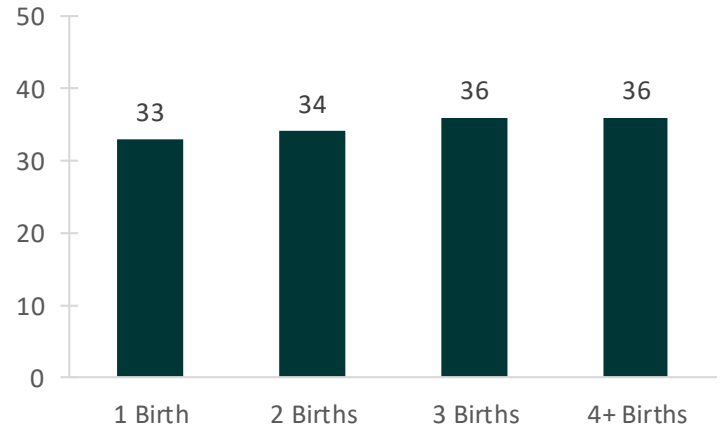
Source: NCFMR calculations of NSFG 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 male data files

- The median age at last birth differed between those with at least a college degree and those without.
 - Men with less than a four-year degree (those with less than high school, high school/GED, or some college) all had a median age at last birth of 33 years old.
 - Median age at last birth was higher for those with at least a bachelor's degree, at 36 years old.

Number of Children

- The more children men had by age 45-49, the older they were at their last birth.
 - Fathers with one or two births had younger ages at last birth (33 and 34, respectively).
 - Fathers with three or more births had the oldest age at last birth (36 years old).

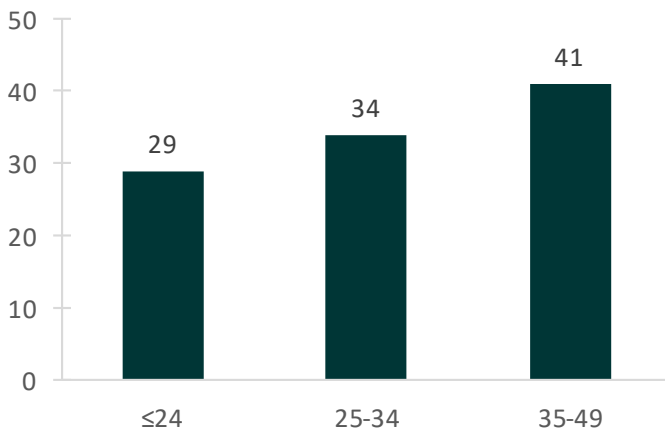
Figure 3. Father's Median Age at Last Birth by Number of Children



Source: NCFMR analysis of NSFG 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 male data files

Age at First Birth

Figure 4. Father's Median Age at Last Birth by Age at First Birth



Source: NCFMR analysis of NSFG 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 male data files

- The older men were when they started having children, the older they were when they had their last child.
 - Fathers who had their first birth before age 25 had their last child at a median age of 29.
- Fathers who had their first birth after age 35 were more than a decade older at their last birth than men who started having children before age 25 (age 41).

Data Source:

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). 2015-17 and 2017-2019 National Survey of Family Growth Public-Use Data and Documentation. Hyattsville, MD: CDC National Center for Health Statistics. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/index.htm>

References:

- Carlson, L. & Guzzo, K. B. (2021). Median age at last birth. *Family Profiles, FP-21-05*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-21-05>
- Guzzo, K. B. (2021). Recent changes in men's childbearing goals. *Family Profiles, FP-21-14*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-21-14>
- Schweizer, V. J. (2019). 30 Years of Change in Men's Entry into Fatherhood, 1987-2017. *Family Profiles, FP-19-28*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-19-28>

Suggested Citation:

Guzzo, K. B & Graham, K. (2022). Median age at last birth for fathers. *Family Profiles, FP-22-05*. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-05>