Desires to Have a Child in the Future

The first section examines the proportion of women aged 40-44 who want to have children, having responded affirmatively to the question “Looking to the future, do you, yourself, want to have a(n)other baby at some time in the future?” Again, mothers aged 40-44 are compared to childless women 40-44.

More than twice as many childless women reported wanting to have a child in the future than women who already had children.

In 2008, slightly more than one in three childless women aged 40-44 wanted to have a child compared to one in six of mothers 40-44.

In 2013, 42% of childless women wanted to have a baby in the future compared to only 20% of their peers who already had children.

Intentions to Have a Child in the Future

Wanting to have a child does not necessarily mean a woman actually intends or expects to do so. This section examines the proportion of women who responded affirmatively to the question “Looking to the future, do you intend to have a(n)other child at some time in the future?”

As with desires to have a child, the proportion of women aged 40-44 who intended to have a child in the future was always higher among childless women than among mothers.

In 2002, 16% of childless women intended to have a baby in the future, rising to around 18-19% in the later years.

Among women with children, only 3% intended to have another child in 2002 and 2008, but the percentage rose to 5% in 2013.

The proportion who would be bothered “a great deal” stayed fairly constant between 2002 and 2013, at 13-14%.

In 2013, 42% of childless women aged 40-44 who wanted to have a baby intended to have a baby.

The proportion was even lower among mothers aged 40-44, with roughly one-fourth of those who wanted a child intending to have another child.

Feelings About Not Having Children Among Childless Women

Finally, this section examines trends from 2002 to 2013 in how childless women would feel about not having children based on responses to the question “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?”

The percentage of childless women who reported they would be bothered “a great deal” stayed fairly constant between 2002 and 2013, at 13-14%.

The proportion who would be bothered “some” declined from almost one in two in 2002 to about one in six in 2013.

There was an increase of ten percentage points between 2002 and 2013, at 13-14%.

As with desires to have a child, the proportion of women aged 40-44 who intended to have a child in the future was always higher among childless women than among mothers.

In 2002, slightly more than one in three childless women aged 40-44 wanted to have a child compared to one in six of mothers 40-44.

In 2013, 42% of childless women wanted to have a baby in the future compared to only 20% of their peers who already had children.

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Data Source:
Original reports summarizing and analyzing nationally representative data with the goal to provide the latest analysis of U.S. families. These profiles examine topics related to the NCFMR’s core research themes.

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