

Marital Stability Following Mother's 1st Marital Birth



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Family stability, which is associated with higher average levels of child well-being, is most prevalent among children born within marriage. The majority (55%) of firstborn children are born into marital unions (see Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra 2012), but an increasing share of children are born outside of marriage (FP-15-03). This profile considers marital stability following a mother's first marital birth. Family stability is high with the majority of marriages remaining intact throughout their firstborns' childhoods. This pattern holds regardless of race/ethnicity and education. About two-fifths of these marriages dissolve before the firstborn child's 18th birthday (results not shown).

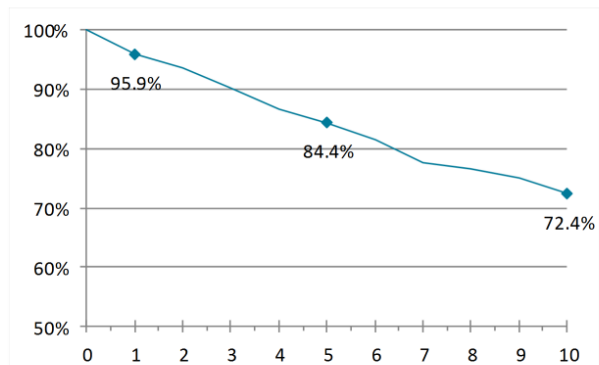
**This profile addresses marital stability in the decade following the first marital birth as data are limited to women aged 15-44. Consideration of marital stability up to 18 years after the first marital birth would include only mothers who were 26 or younger at the time of their first marital birth.*

- Fewer than one in ten mothers experience a marital dissolution within one year of having a first marital birth.
- Almost three-fourths (72%) of marriages remain intact by the firstborn's 10th birthday.



72% MARRIAGES INTACT
@ FIRSTBORN'S
10th BIRTHDAY

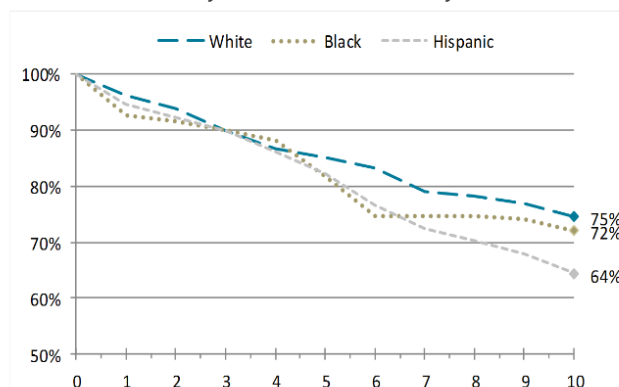
Figure 1. Percentage of Mothers' Marital Unions Enduring 10 Years after First Marital Birth



Race, Ethnicity and Stability Following a 1st Marital Birth

- Marital stability is similar for race/ethnic groups during the preschool years (first four years after childbirth). However, by age 10 there are racial and ethnic differences in stability.
- Approximately three-fourths of white and black mothers' marriages remain intact 10 years after their first marital birth (75 and 72%, respectively).
- Slightly fewer Hispanic mothers' marriages remain intact by their firstborns' 10th birthday (64%).

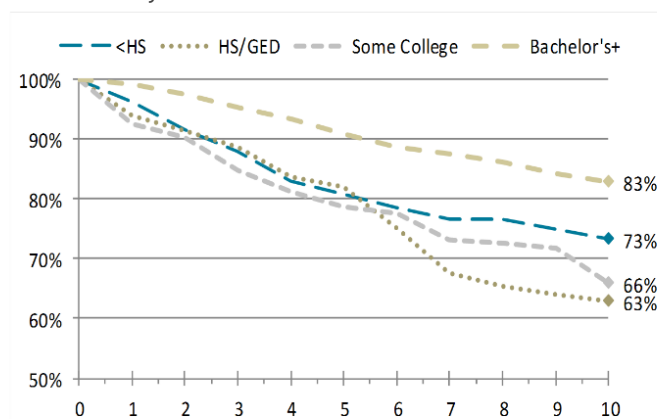
Figure 2. Percentage of Marriages Enduring 10 Years after a First, Marital Birth, by Mothers' Race/ethnicity



Educational Variation in Marital Stability Following a 1st Marital Birth

- Marital stability is highest for mothers with a college degree. The overwhelming majority (90%) of these marriages remains intact through the child's fifth birthday and four in five (83%) marriages lasted through the firstborn child's 10th birthday. Most (71%) college educated mothers had their first child in marriage (result not shown).
- Among mothers without a Bachelor's degree, there is minimal variation in stability in the five years following their first marital birth with about 80% of marriages remaining intact at their child's 5th birthday. By age 5 the groups diverge somewhat such that those without a high school degree are most stable and those with a high school degree are least stable (those with some college are in between). Most mothers without a college degree have their first birth outside of marriage. Just one in three mothers without a college degree has their first child in marriage (result not shown).

Figure 3. Percentage of Marriages Enduring 10 Years after a First, Marital Birth, by Mothers' Education



References:

Data: 2011/13 National Survey of Family Growth, Female Respondent

Martinez, G., Daniels, K., & Chandra, A. (2012). Fertility of men and women aged 15-44 years in the United States: National Survey of Family Growth, 2006-2010. *National health statistics reports*, (51), 1-28.

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