

# Measuring Fathers' Participation in Child Care – Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

U.S. Census Bureau  
Lynda Laughlin



## SIPP Data on Child Care and Fathers

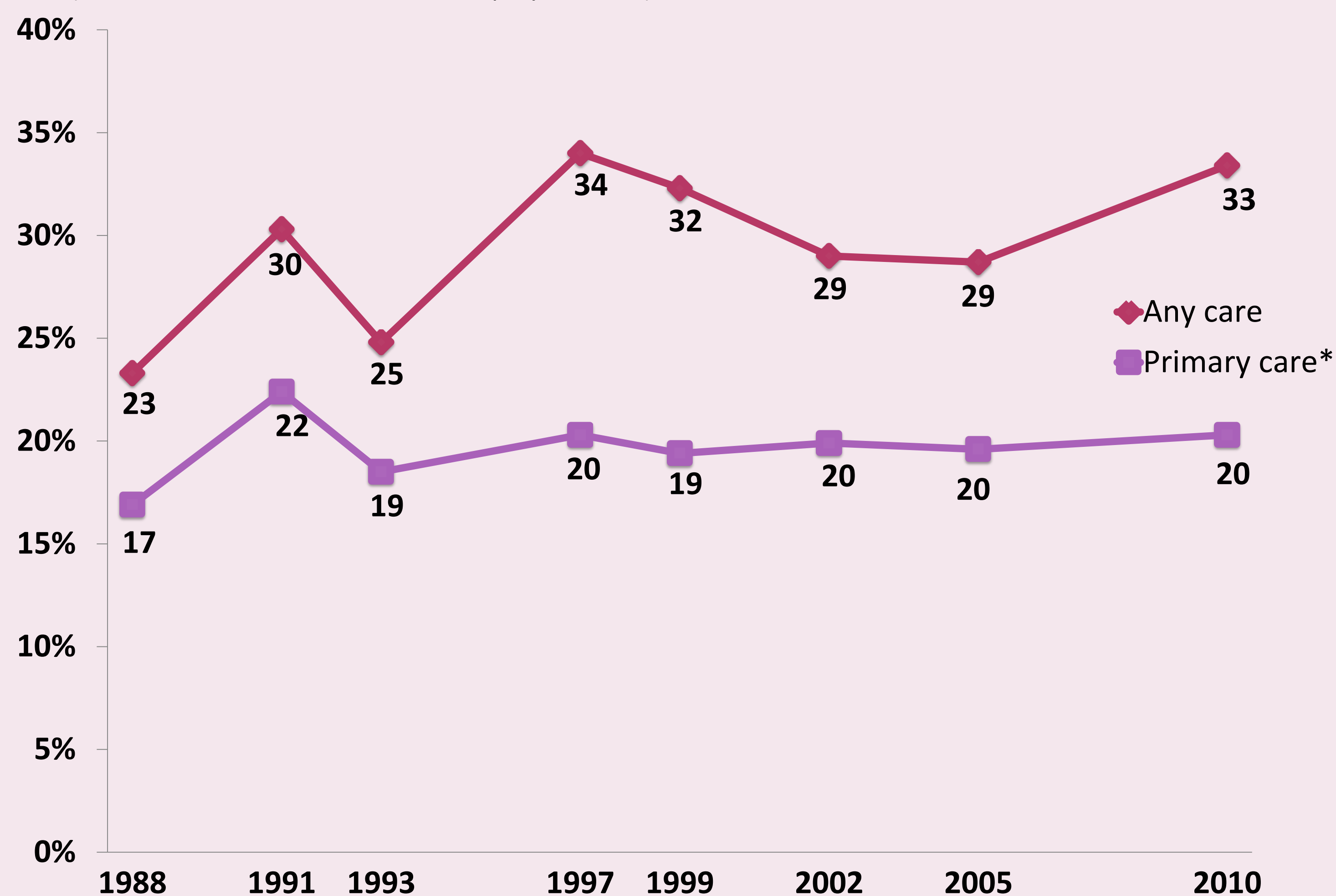
The SIPP is the only nationally representative dataset that can show changes over time in fathers participation in child care in relation to work and income.

Data on father provided child care is collected for mothers who are employed or enrolled in school. Data include:

- Hours of care provided
- Father's social and economic characteristics
- Age of child

**Figure 1. Percent of Fathers Providing Child Care for Children Under 5 with Employed Mothers: Selected Years, 1988 to 2010**

(Limited to married fathers with employed wives)



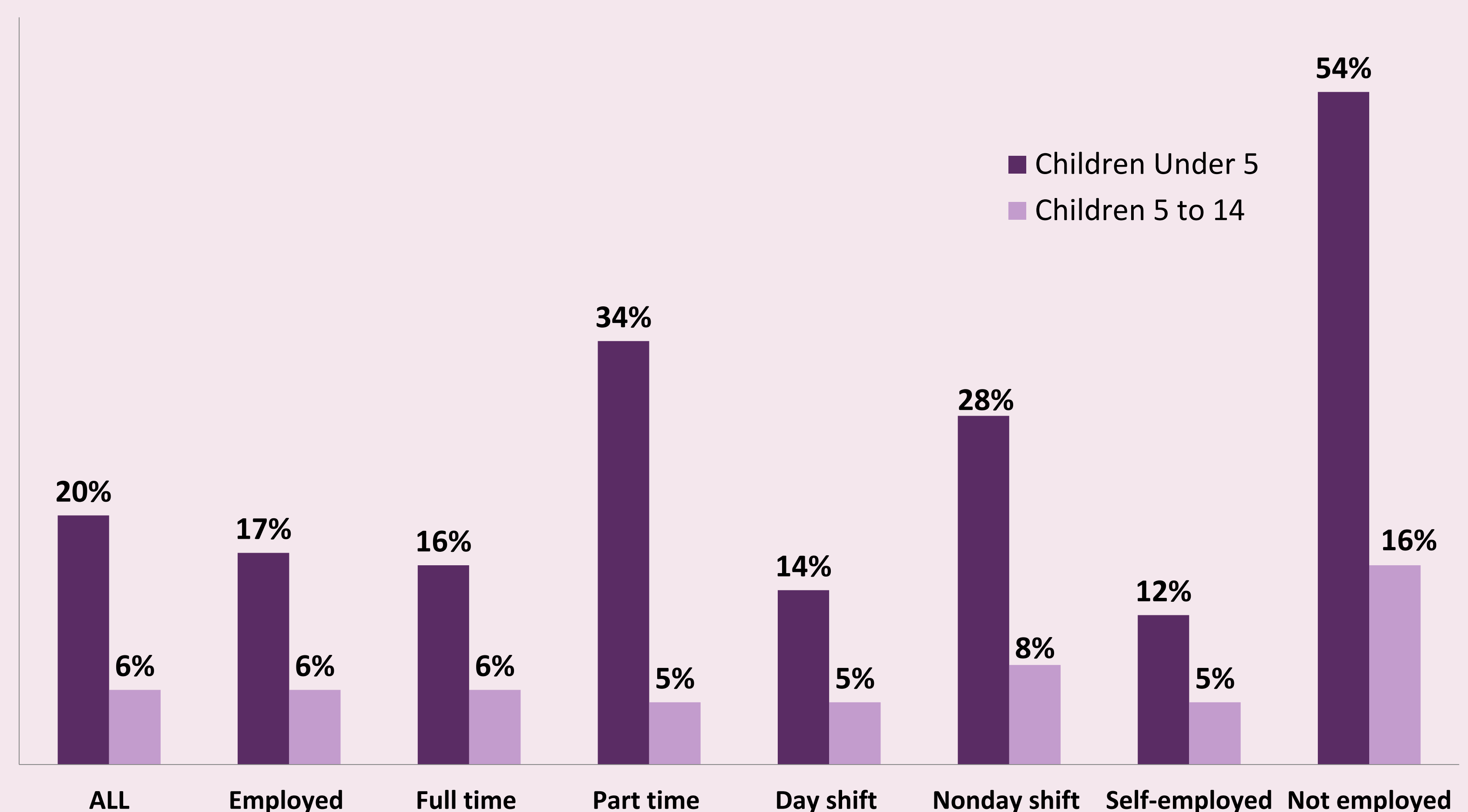
\* Primary care is the arrangement the child spent the most number of hours in per week.  
Source: Tabulations derived from Current Population Reports, Series P-70-59 Tables 1 & 2; SIPP 1996, 2001, 2004, & 2008.

## Fathers as Child Care Providers

- The percentages of fathers who have provided any care for preschoolers have varied between 23 percent in 1988 and 33 percent in 2010. (Figure 1)
- In 2010, one in five fathers were the primary caregiver for their preschoolers while the mother was working. (Figure 1)
- A father's work status often determines his participation in child care. Fathers who are not employed are more likely to care for their young children. (Figure 2)

**Figure 2. Percent of Fathers Who Are the Primary Child Care Provider for Their Children by Father's Employment Characteristics: Spring 2010**

(Limited to married fathers with employed wives)



Source: SIPP 2008.



This poster is released to inform interested parties of research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed on statistical, methodological, technical, operational and any other issues are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

For information on sampling and nonsampling error see [http://www.census.gov/sipp/source/S&A08\\_W1toW6%28S&A-13%29.pdf](http://www.census.gov/sipp/source/S&A08_W1toW6%28S&A-13%29.pdf)