



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance



## NRFC Data Snapshots 2018

### Family Formation: Men's Attitudes, Values, and Expectations

Men's family formation behaviors have changed in recent decades. Men are delaying marriage and increasingly living with partners prior to getting married.<sup>i</sup> Additionally, they are becoming fathers at increasingly older ages.<sup>ii</sup> These changes in behavior are mirrored by changes in men's attitudes towards children, family life, marriage, and cohabitation.

In this data snapshot, we report data from original analyses of the National Survey of Family Growth and the General Social Survey, as well as from published resources on men's attitudes, values, and expectations about family formation (see Data box, page 17).

#### Highlights

##### *Children and Family Life*

- The majority of men ages 15-44 believe that:
  - Being able to support a family financially is very important for a man to be a good husband/partner, but not necessarily important for a woman to be a good wife/partner.
  - Parenting is rewarding all or most of the time.
  - Disciplining a child by spanking can be necessary.
  - It is okay for a young, unmarried woman to have and raise a child.
- Approximately half of childless men report they would be bothered some or a great deal if they did not have children.

##### *Marriage*

- The majority of men ages 15-44 believe that:
  - Marriage has worked out for most people they know.
  - Divorce is not the best solution when a couple cannot work out marriage problems.
- The majority of unmarried men ages 15-44 believe that they will marry or remarry in the future.

##### *Cohabitation*

- The majority of men ages 15-44 have lived with a partner before marriage and believe:
  - It is okay for a young couple to live together without being married.
  - Living together before marriage may help prevent divorce.
- The majority of men ages 15-44 who are not currently married or cohabitating believe that they will live with a partner they are not married to in the future.

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## Attitudes Towards Children and Family Life

### Men’s attitudes about having children, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 1 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, “People can't be really happy unless they have children.” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 1. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “People Can't be Really Happy Unless They Have Children,” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	1%	6%	51%	41%	-
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	2%	9%	57%	31%	1%
High school/GED	1%	6%	57%	36%	1%
Some college	1%	5%	48%	46%	-
Bachelor’s or more	2%	4%	43%	51%	-
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	3%	12%	54%	30%	1%
Non-Hispanic white	1%	3%	50%	46%	-
Non-Hispanic black	2%	5%	50%	42%	1%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,500).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

#### Total

- Most men **disagreed** (51 percent) or **strongly disagreed** (41 percent) with the statement, “People can't be really happy unless they have children.” Six percent **agreed** with the statement, while only 1 percent **strongly agreed** with the statement.

#### Education

- Across level of completed education, most men reported that they **disagreed** or **strongly disagreed** with the statement, “People can't be really happy unless they have children.” However, men with a **high school diploma/GED or less** were somewhat less likely to be on the **disagree/strongly disagree** side of the scale than men with higher levels of education.
  - For example, just under one-third of men with **less than a high school diploma** reported that they **strongly disagreed** (31 percent) with the statement, compared to 51 percent of men with a **bachelor’s degree or more**.

#### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Similarly, across race and ethnicity, most men reported that they **disagreed/strongly disagreed** with the statement, “People can't be really happy unless they have children.” However, **Hispanic** men were more likely to be on the **agree or strongly agree** side of the scale than **non-Hispanic black** and **non-Hispanic white** men.

## Childless men’s attitudes about fatherhood, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 2 shows the responses of childless men ages 15 to 44 to the question “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you?” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from a great deal to not at all) are shown for men overall, and separately by men’s completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 2. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “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?” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	A great deal	Some	A little	Not at all
<b>Total</b>	24%	28%	19%	29%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	22%	28%	18%	32%
High school/GED	26%	20%	19%	35%
Some college	25%	27%	18%	30%
Bachelor’s or more	23%	36%	22%	19%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	23%	28%	15%	35%
Non-Hispanic white	23%	28%	22%	28%
Non-Hispanic black	27%	24%	14%	35%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=2,769).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Just over half of men responded that it would bother them **a great deal** (24 percent) or **some** (28 percent) if they never had any children; 19 percent responded that it would bother them **a little** and 29 percent responded that it would **not bother them at all**.

### Education

- Men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** were more likely to indicate they would be bothered **some or a great deal** if they did not have children.
  - For example, 59 percent of men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported they would be bothered **some or a great deal**, compared to 52 percent or less of men with lower levels of education.

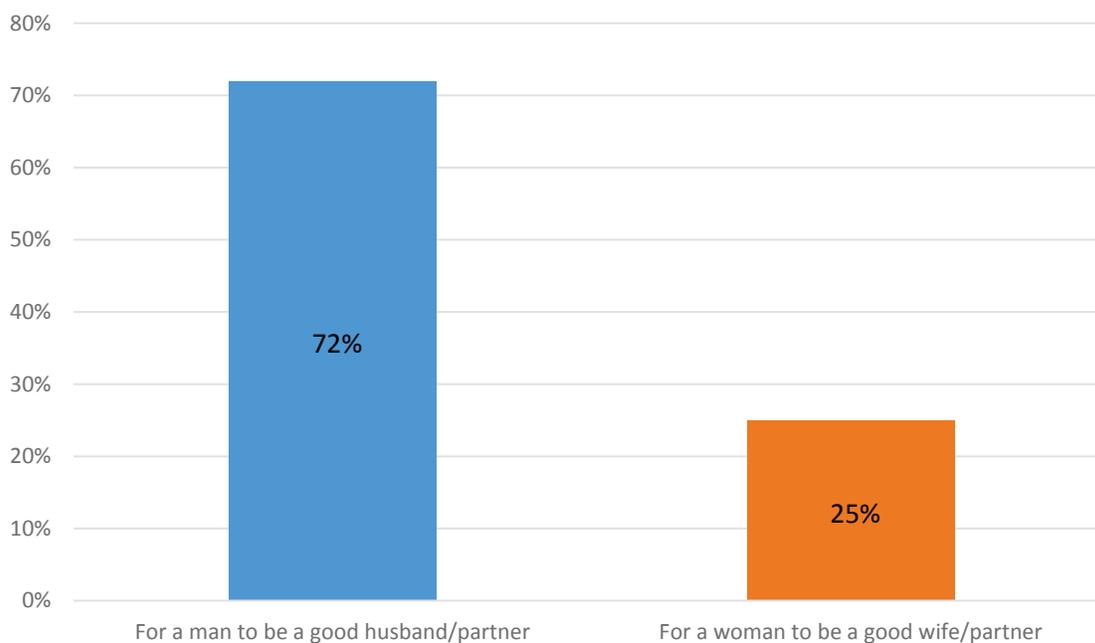
### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- There were no differences in responses across race and Hispanic ethnicity. Approximately half of **Hispanic, non-Hispanic black, and non-Hispanic white** men reported they would be bothered **some or a great deal** if it turned out they did not have children (51 percent for each group).

## Men's attitudes about family financial support

Figure 1 shows the percentage of married or cohabiting men ages 18 and older who agree with the statements, “Being able to support a family financially is very important for a man to be a good husband/partner,” and “Being able to support a family financially is very important for a woman to be a good wife/partner.” The percentage of men who responded “yes” to each question are shown below.

**Figure 1. Percentage of Married and Cohabiting Men (18 Years or Older) Who Agree that, “Being Able to Support a Family Financially is Very Important,” 2017**



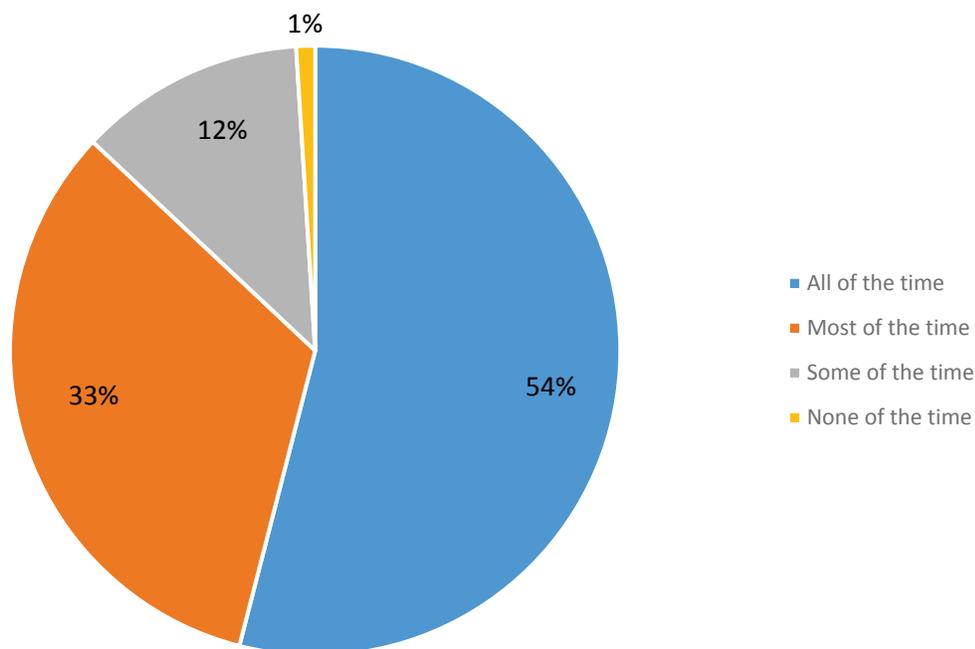
Source: Parker, K. & Stepler, R., 2017

- Nearly three quarters of married and cohabiting men (72 percent) **agreed** with the statement, “Being able to support a family financially is **very important for a man to be a good husband/partner.**”
- Conversely, only one quarter of married and cohabiting men (25 percent) **agreed** with the statement, “Being able to support a family financially is **very important for a woman to be a good wife/partner.**”

## Father's attitudes about the rewards of being a father

Figure 2 shows the responses of fathers (with a child ages 0-17) to the statement, "Would you say being a parent is rewarding all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, or none of the time?" The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from all of the time to none of the time) are shown below.

**Figure 2. Responses of Fathers (with a Child Ages 0-17) to the Statement, "Would You Say Being a Parent is Rewarding All of the Time, Most of the Time, Some of the Time, or None of the Time?", 2015**



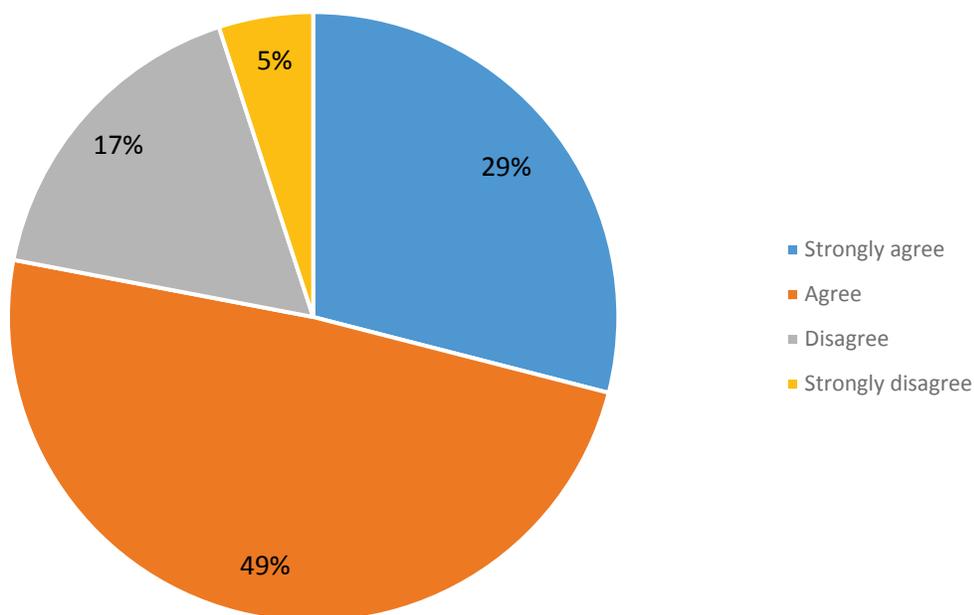
Source: Parker, K., Menasce-Horowitz, J. & Rohal, M., 2015

- More than half (54 percent) of fathers with a child ages 0-17 reported that parenting is rewarding **all of the time**.
  - An additional 33 percent reported that parenting is rewarding **most of the time**.
  - Twelve percent of fathers with a child ages 0-17 reported that parenting is rewarding only **some of the time**, while only 1 percent reported that it is rewarding **none of the time**.

### Men's attitudes about disciplining children with spankings

Figure 3 shows the responses of men ages 18 or older to the question, "Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard, spanking?" The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown below.

**Figure 3. Responses of Men (Ages 18 or Older) to the Question, "Do You Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree that it is Sometimes Necessary to Discipline a Child with a Good, Hard, Spanking?", 2016**



Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2016 General Social Survey (n=11,409). Notes: Data are weighted.

- Most men **agreed** (49 percent) or **strongly agreed** (29 percent) that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard, spanking.
  - Only 17 percent of men **disagreed** that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard, spanking, while five percent **strongly disagreed**.

## Men's attitudes about young single mothers raising children, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 3 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, "It is okay for a young, unmarried woman to have and raise a child." The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 3. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, "It is Okay for a Young, Unmarried Woman to Have and Raise a Child," by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	19%	54%	21%	6%	1%
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	12%	50%	27%	9%	2%
High school/GED	14%	57%	22%	6%	1%
Some college	23%	52%	19%	5%	1%
Bachelor's or more	27%	55%	14%	3%	1%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	16%	55%	23%	6%	1%
Non-Hispanic white	21%	57%	17%	4%	1%
Non-Hispanic black	13%	45%	29%	12%	-

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,491).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Most men **agreed** (54 percent) or **strongly agreed** (19 percent) that "it is okay for a young, unmarried woman to have and raise a child;" 21 percent of men **disagreed**, and 6 percent **strongly disagreed** with the statement.

### Education

- The percentage of men who **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that "it is okay for a young, unmarried woman to have and raise a child" increased with higher levels of educational attainment.
  - Sixty-two percent of men with **less than a high school diploma agreed** or **strongly agreed** with the statement, compared to 82 percent of men with a **bachelor's degree or more**.

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Non-Hispanic black** men were more likely to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** with the statement, "It is okay for a young, unmarried woman to have and raise a child," than **Hispanic** and **non-Hispanic white** men.
  - Twelve percent of **non-Hispanic black** men **strongly disagreed** with the statement, compared to 6 percent of **Hispanic men** and 4 percent of **non-Hispanic white** men.

## Attitudes Towards Marriage

### Unmarried men’s attitudes about marrying in the future, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 4 shows the responses of unmarried men ages 15-44 to the question, “Do you think you will get married (again) someday?” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from “yes, definitely” to “no, definitely not”) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 4. Responses of Unmarried Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “Do You Think You Will Get Married (Again) Someday,” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, probably not	No, definitely not
<b>Total</b>	52%	36%	8%	4%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	56%	35%	5%	4%
High school/GED	48%	34%	11%	7%
Some college	53%	37%	8%	2%
Bachelor’s or more	48%	42%	6%	4%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	52%	39%	5%	4%
Non-Hispanic white	50%	37%	8%	5%
Non-Hispanic black	57%	26%	12%	4%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=3,259).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

#### Total

- Most unmarried men reported that they would **definitely** (52 percent) or **probably** (36 percent) marry or remarry someday; 8 percent reported they would **probably not**, and 4 percent reported they would **definitely not**.

#### Education

- There were few differences by education, although unmarried men with a **high school diploma/GED** were more likely than other men to indicate they would **probably not** or **definitely not** marry or remarry someday.
  - Eighteen percent of men with a **high school diploma/GED** reported they would **probably not** or **definitely not** marry or remarry, compared to 9 percent with **less than a high school diploma**, ten percent with **some college**, and ten percent with a **Bachelor’s degree or more**.

#### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Ninety-one percent of unmarried **Hispanic** men indicated that they would **definitely** or **probably** marry or remarry someday, compared to 87 percent of **non-Hispanic white** men and 83 percent of **non-Hispanic black** men.

## Men’s attitudes about marriage success, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 5 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, “Marriage has not worked out for most people I know.” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 5. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “Marriage Has Not Worked Out for Most People I Know,” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	6%	26%	56%	11%	1%
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	6%	32%	53%	8%	1%
High school/GED	7%	33%	51%	8%	1%
Some college	6%	24%	56%	12%	1%
Bachelor’s or more	2%	14%	65%	18%	1%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	6%	31%	53%	9%	1%
Non-Hispanic white	4%	24%	59%	12%	1%
Non-Hispanic black	9%	31%	50%	9%	1%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,499).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Most men **disagreed** (56 percent) or **strongly disagreed** (11 percent) with the statement, “Marriage has not worked out for most people I know.” However, 26 percent **agreed** with the statement, while another 6 percent **strongly agreed**.

### Education

- Men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** were more likely than men with lower levels of educational attainment to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** with the statement “Marriage has not worked out for most people I know.”
  - Eighty-three percent of men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported that they either **disagreed** or **strongly disagreed** with the statement, compared to 68 percent of men with **some college**, 59 percent of men with a **high school diploma/GED**, and 61 percent of men with **less than a high school diploma**.

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- **Non-Hispanic white** men were more likely than **Hispanic** and **non-Hispanic black** men to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** with the statement, “Marriage has not worked out for most people I know.”
  - Seventy-one percent of **non-Hispanic white** men either **disagreed** or **strongly disagreed** with the statement, compared to 62 percent of **Hispanic** men and 59 percent of **non-Hispanic black** men.

## Men's attitudes about divorce, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 6 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, "Divorce is the best solution when a couple cannot work out marriage problems." The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 6. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, "Divorce is the Best Solution When a Couple Cannot Work Out Marriage Problems," by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	7%	31%	41%	19%	-
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	10%	38%	36%	16%	-
High school/GED	9%	33%	39%	19%	-
Some college	6%	26%	45%	22%	1%
Bachelor's or more	4%	30%	45%	21%	1%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	11%	34%	38%	17%	-
Non-Hispanic white	6%	31%	43%	20%	-
Non-Hispanic black	9%	28%	42%	20%	-

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,503).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Most men **disagreed** (41 percent) or **strongly disagreed** (19 percent) with the statement, "Divorce is the best solution when a couple cannot work out marriage problems." However, 31 percent **agreed** with the statement, while an additional 7 percent **strongly agreed**.

### Education

- Men with **some college** or a **bachelor's degree or more** were more likely than men with lower education levels to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** with the statement, "Divorce is the best solution when a couple cannot work out marriage problems."
  - Two-thirds of men with a **bachelor's degree or more** (66 percent) and with **some college** (67 percent) either **disagreed** or **strongly disagreed** with the statement, compared with 58 percent of men with a **high school diploma/GED** and 52 percent of men with **less than a high school diploma**.

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Although more men disagreed than agreed with the statement, "Divorce is the best solution when a couple cannot work out marriage problems," Hispanic men were more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement than black or white men.
  - 45 percent of **Hispanic** men, 37 percent of **non-Hispanic black**, and 37 percent of **non-Hispanic white** men indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

## Attitudes Towards Cohabitation

### Men’s attitudes about young couples cohabiting, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 7 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, “A young couple should not live together unless they are married.” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Figure 7. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “A Young Couple Should Not Live Together Unless They are Married,” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	7%	17%	54%	22%	1%
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	6%	25%	56%	13%	-
High school/GED	6%	16%	59%	18%	-
Some college	6%	15%	54%	25%	1%
Bachelor’s or more	9%	12%	44%	34%	1%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	5%	24%	54%	16%	-
Non-Hispanic white	7%	13%	55%	26%	-
Non-Hispanic black	9%	21%	52%	18%	1%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,495).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

#### Total

- More than three in four men either **disagreed** (54 percent) or **strongly disagreed** (22 percent) with the statement, “A young couple should not live together unless they are married.”

#### Education

- Men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** were more likely to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** that “a young couple should not live together unless they are married” than men with lower levels of education.
  - Thirty four percent of men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported **strongly disagreeing** with the statement, compared to one quarter or less of men with lower levels of completed education.

#### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- **Non-Hispanic white** men were more likely to **disagree** or **strongly disagree** that “a young couple should not live together unless they are married” than **Hispanic** and **non-Hispanic black** men.

### Unmarried men’s thoughts on their likelihood of premarital cohabitation, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 8 shows the responses of unmarried men ages 15-44 to the statement, “You will definitely or probably live together with your future wife before getting married.” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from “yes, definitely” to “no, definitely not”) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 8. Responses of Unmarried Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “You Will Definitely or Probably Live Together with Your Future Wife Before Getting Married,” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, probably not	No, definitely not
<b>Total</b>	42%	39%	12%	7%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	33%	47%	14%	6%
High school/GED	42%	39%	14%	5%
Some college	48%	34%	11%	7%
Bachelor’s or more	45%	37%	9%	8%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	41%	42%	10%	6%
Non-Hispanic white	43%	39%	11%	7%
Non-Hispanic black	44%	34%	17%	6%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=3,076).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

#### Total

- More than eight in ten unmarried men reported that they would either **definitely** (42 percent) or **probably** (39 percent) live together with their future wife before getting married.

#### Education

- There was little difference in response to this statement by level of completed education.
  - Eighty percent of unmarried men with **less than a high school diploma**, 81 percent of unmarried men with a **high school diploma/GED**, 82 percent of unmarried men with **some college**, and 82 percent of unmarried men with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported that they would **definitely** or **probably** live together with their future wife before getting married.

#### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Similarly, there was little difference in response to this statement by race and ethnicity.
  - Eighty-three percent of **Hispanic** men, 82 percent of **non-Hispanic white** men, and 78 percent of **non-Hispanic black** men reported that they would **definitely** or **probably** live together with their future wife before getting married.

## Men’s thoughts on living together with a woman they are not married to, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 9 shows the responses of men ages 15-44 who are not currently married or cohabiting to the question, “Do you think you will ever (again) live together with a woman to whom you are not married?” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from “yes, definitely” to “no, definitely not”) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 9. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “Do You Think that You Will Ever (Again) Live Together with a Woman to Whom You are Not Married?” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, probably not	No, definitely not
<b>Total</b>	20%	47%	21%	12%
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Less than high school	12%	53%	25%	11%
High school/GED	23%	45%	20%	12%
Some college	26%	44%	19%	11%
Bachelor’s or more	18%	46%	18%	18%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic	17%	54%	18%	11%
Non-Hispanic white	23%	45%	21%	11%
Non-Hispanic black	17%	42%	25%	16%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=2,751).

Notes: Analyses include men who are not currently married or cohabiting. Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Two in three men who were not married or cohabiting reported that they would either **definitely** (20 percent) or **probably** (47 percent) live together with a woman to whom they are not married.

### Education

- There was little difference in responses to this statement by level of education.
  - Sixty-five percent of men with **less than a high school diploma**, 68 percent with a **high school diploma/GED**, 70 percent with **some college**, and 64 percent with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported that they would **definitely** or **probably** live together with a woman to whom they are not married.

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- **Non-Hispanic black** men who were not married or cohabiting were more likely to respond “**probably not**” or “**definitely not**” to the question, “Do you think you will ever (again) live together with a woman to whom you are not married?” than **non-Hispanic white** and **Hispanic** men.
  - Sixteen percent of **non-Hispanic black** men responded “**definitely not**” to the statement, compared to 11 percent of **non-Hispanic white** and **Hispanic** men.

## Percentage of ever-married men who cohabited prior to marriage, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 10 shows the percentage of ever-married men ages 15-44 who have ever cohabited prior to getting married. The percentage of men who fall into each response category (no or yes) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 10. Percentage of Ever-Married Men (Ages 15-44) who Cohabited Premaritally, by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	No	Yes
<b>Total</b>	34%	66%
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	33%	67%
High school/GED	24%	76%
Some college	33%	67%
Bachelor's or more	43%	57%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic	42%	58%
Non-Hispanic white	28%	72%
Non-Hispanic black	34%	66%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=1,611).

Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Sixty-six percent of men who have ever been married reported that they **cohabited with a partner before marriage**.

### Education

- Ever-married men with a **bachelor's degree or more** were less likely to **have cohabited with a partner before marriage** than those with lower education levels.
  - Fifty-seven percent of ever-married men with a **bachelor's degree or more** reported that they had **cohabited with a partner before marriage**, compared to more than two-thirds of those with **less than a high school diploma** (67 percent), a **high school diploma/GED** (76 percent), or **some college** (67 percent).

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Ever-married **Hispanic** men were less likely to **have cohabited with a partner before marriage** (58 percent) than **non-Hispanic white** men (72 percent). Approximately two-thirds of ever-married **non-Hispanic black** men reported that they **had cohabited with a partner before marriage** (66 percent).

## Men’s attitudes about whether cohabiting may help prevent divorce, by education and race/ethnicity

Table 11 shows the extent to which men ages 15 to 44 agree or disagree with the statement, “Living together before marriage may help prevent divorce.” The percentage of men who fall into each response category (on a scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree) are shown for all men combined, and separately by completed level of education (for those ages 22-44) and race and Hispanic ethnicity.

**Table 11. Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “Living Together Before Marriage May Help Prevent Divorce” by Education and Race/Ethnicity, 2014**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
<b>Total</b>	18%	52%	22%	6%	2%
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Less than high school	12%	56%	28%	4%	1%
High school/GED	17%	56%	19%	7%	1%
Some college	23%	50%	20%	6%	1%
Bachelor’s or more	22%	45%	21%	9%	3%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	17%	53%	24%	4%	1%
Non-Hispanic white	20%	51%	19%	7%	2%
Non-Hispanic black	17%	48%	26%	7%	1%

Source: Child Trends analyses of the 2013-2015 National Survey of Family Growth (n=4,492).  
Notes: Education statistics are limited to men ages 22-44. Data are weighted. Due to rounding some rows may not total 100 percent.

### Total

- Most men **agreed** (52 percent) or **strongly agreed** (18 percent) with the statement, “Living together before marriage may help prevent divorce.”

### Education

- There was little difference in response to this statement by completed level of education.
  - Sixty-eight percent of men with **less than a high school diploma**, 73 percent with a **high school diploma/GED**, 73 percent with **some college**, and 67 percent with a **bachelor’s degree or more** reported they **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that living together before marriage may help prevent divorce.

### Race and Hispanic ethnicity

- Similarly, there was little difference in response to this statement by race and Hispanic ethnicity.
  - Seventy percent of **Hispanic** men, 71 percent of **non-Hispanic white** men, and 65 percent of **non-Hispanic black** men reported they **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that living together before marriage may help prevent divorce.

## Data box

This NRFC Data Snapshot draws from a combination of 1) published reports that use nationally representative data and 2) the authors' analyses of [The General Social Survey](#) data and 2013-2015 [National Survey of Family Growth \(NSFG\)](#) data. The General Social Survey collects household level data on what Americans think and feel about issues, such as child discipline. The National Survey of Family Growth collects data on family life from a nationally representative sample of men and women between the ages of 15 and 44. When weighted, the 2013-2015 wave of the NSFG is representative of men ages 15-44 in 2014. Group differences across scales were calculated using the *lincom* command in the Stata statistical software package. Only differences that are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) are discussed in the text.

Published sources include:

Parker, K., Menasce-Horowitz, J. & Rohal, M. (2015). *6 facts about American fathers*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from [http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2015/12/2015-12-17\\_parenting-in-america\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2015/12/2015-12-17_parenting-in-america_FINAL.pdf)

Parker, K. & Stepler, R. (2017). *Americans see men as the financial providers, even as women's contributions grow*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/20/americans-see-men-as-the-financial-providers-even-as-womens-contributions-grow/>

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<sup>i</sup> McLanahan, S., & Sawhill, I. (2015). Marriage and Child Wellbeing Revisited: Introducing the Issue. *The Future of Children*, 25(2), 3-9. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43581969>

<sup>ii</sup> Yash S. Khandwala, Chiyuan A. Zhang, Ying Lu, Michael L. Eisenberg. (2017). The Age of Fathers in the USA is Rising: An analysis of 168,867,480 births from 1972 to 2015. *Human Reproduction*, 32(10), 2110-2116. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dex267>