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Fathers: Attitudes, Values, Expectations, and Motivations

Responses from Men (Ages 15-44) who Have No Children to the Question, “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you?” by Age (2002)

Age	A great deal	Some	A little	Not at all
15-24 years	34.6%	31.1%	15.6%	18.7%
25-29 years	32.1%	36.8%	19.1%	12.1%
30-44 years	18.1%	29.1%	18.4%	34.5%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Younger men ages 15-24 who have not had children are the most likely to say that they would be bothered a great deal by not having any children (34.6%), while older men ages 30-44 are least likely (18.1%).

Responses from Men (Ages 15-44) who Have No Children to the Question, “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you?” by Current Religion (2002)

Current Religion	A great deal	Some	A little	Not at all
None	22.7%	29.8%	18.1%	29.3%
Fundamentalist Protestant	35.1%	21.1%	23.0%	20.8%
Other Protestant	32.1%	33.0%	15.7%	19.2%
Catholic	31.7%	31.4%	16.7%	20.2%
Other Religion	27.5%	32.1%	17.5%	22.9%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Men who do not identify with any formal religion are the least likely group to be bothered a great deal by the idea of not having any children (22.7%). Men who identify themselves as Fundamentalist Protestants are the most likely group to be bothered a great deal by the idea of not having any children (35.1%), with Other Protestants and Catholics close behind at 32.1% and 31.7% respectively.

Responses from Men (Ages 15-44) who Have No Children to the Question, “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you?” by Union Status (2002)

Union Status	A great deal	Some	A little	Not at all
Currently Married	28.8%	32.0%	15.7%	23.5%
Currently Cohabiting	21.5%	35.3%	24.8%	18.4%
Never Married, Not Cohabiting	30.8%	30.9%	16.2%	22.1%
Formerly Married, Not Cohabiting	22.9%	31.0%	21.6%	24.5%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Unmarried men who are not currently in cohabiting relationships are the most likely group to report that they would be very bothered by not ever having children (30.8%). This group is followed closely by currently married men (28.8%), formerly married men (22.9%), and men who are currently cohabiting (21.5%).
- Currently cohabiting men are the least likely to report that they would be not at all bothered by not having children (18.4%).

Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “It is much better for everyone if the man earns the living and the woman takes care of the home and family” by Importance of Religion (2002)

Importance of Religion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Very Important	9.2%	39.4%	3.2%	42.3%	5.9%
Somewhat Important	5.4%	28.4%	3.9%	50.2%	12.1%
Not Important	4.3%	19.6%	4.3%	55.2%	16.6%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Men for whom religion is very important are the most likely to agree or strongly agree that it is better for everyone if the man earns the living and the woman takes care of the home and family (48.6%), followed by those for whom religion is somewhat important (33.8%), and finally those for whom religion is not important (23.9%).

Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “It is much better for everyone if the man earns the living and the woman takes care of the home and family” by Parity (2002)

Parity	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
No children	5.4%	27.5%	3.8%	50.2%	13.1%
1 or more children	7.8%	33.1%	3.7%	46.7%	8.6%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- More men without children disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, “It is much better for everyone if the man earns the living and the woman takes care of the home and family” (63.3%) than do men with children (55.3%).

Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “It is more important for a man to spend a lot of time with his family than to be successful at his career,” by Age (2002)

Age	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15-24	14.5%	56.9%	4.8%	22.6%	1.2%
25-29	14.6%	58.5%	5.9%	19.6%	1.4%
30-44	24.1%	56.3%	4.2%	14.1%	1.4%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- In comparison to younger men, males ages 30-44 are more likely to strongly agree that it is more important for men to spend a lot of time with their families than to have a successful career, 24.1 percent compared to less than 15 percent.

Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “It is more important for a man to spend a lot of time with his family than to be successful at his career,” by Poverty Level (2002)

Percent of Poverty Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0-149 percent	19.0%	51.4%	6.2%	21.0%	2.3%
150-299 percent	20.8%	58.7%	5.3%	13.7%	1.5%
300 percent or higher	22.0%	57.6%	3.9%	15.6%	1.0%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Men living below 150 percent of the poverty level are less likely than non-poor men to agree or strongly agree that time with family is more important than success in one's career, 70.4 percent compared to over 79 percent.

Responses of Men (Ages 15-44) to the Statement, “It is more important for a man to spend a lot of time with his family than to be successful at his career,” by Union Status (2002)

Union Status	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Currently Married	25.8%	56.4%	3.9%	12.8%	1.2%
Currently Cohabiting	15.1%	56.5%	8.7%	18.6%	1.1%
Never Married, not Cohabiting	13.9%	57.2%	5.0%	22.3%	1.7%
Formerly Married, not Cohabiting	21.0%	57.6%	1.7%	18.8%	1.0%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma, J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Currently married men are less likely than others to disagree or strongly disagree that spending time with family is more important than being successful at one's career, 14.0 percent compared with 19.7 percent to 24.0 percent for men in other types of unions.

Cohabitation and Expectations about Marriage, Men Ages 15-44 (2002)

Age	Distribution of cohabiting men's answers to the question, "What is the chance that you and your partner will marry?"				
	No chance	A little chance	50-50 chance	A pretty good chance	An almost certain chance
15-24 years	6.0%	6.4%	21.2%	23.8%	42.5%
25-29 years	*	*	18.5%	28.8%	49.2%
30-44 years	5.5%	9.9%	13.5%	20.3%	50.9%
Total	4.5%	6.6%	17.0%	23.8%	48.1%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma JC, Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Cohabiting young men ages 15-24 appear somewhat less likely than older men to say that there is "an almost certain chance that they will marry their partner."

Men's Cohabitation and Expectations about Marriage (Ages 15-44), by Fatherhood Status with Current Partner (2002)

	Distribution of cohabiting men's answers to the question, "What is the chance that you and your partner will marry?"				
	No chance	A little chance	50-50 chance	A pretty good chance	An almost certain chance
Had a child with this partner	4.5%	4.6%	18.8%	21.8%	50.3%
Did not have a child with this partner	4.4%	8.2%	15.7%	25.3%	46.4%
Total	4.5%	6.6%	17.0%	23.8%	48.1%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma JC, Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Cohabiting men who had a child with their current partner were moderately more likely than those who had no had a child with their current partner to report "an almost certain chance" that they would marry (50.3% compared with 46.4%).

**Men's Cohabitation and Expectations about Marriage (Ages 15-44),
by Importance of Religion (2002)**

Importance of Religion	Distribution of cohabiting men's answers to the question, "What is the chance that you and your partner will marry?"				
	No chance	A little chance	50-50 chance	A pretty good chance	An almost certain chance
Very Important	2.6%	5.7%	10.5%	26.4%	54.8%
Somewhat Important	7.3%	8.2	22.1%	26.8%	35.7%
Not Important	4.1%	6.3%	19.3%	18.6%	51.7%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Cohabiting men who hold religion as somewhat important were less likely to say that they were almost certainly going to marry their current partners (35.7%) than those for whom religion is very important (54.8%) or not important (51.7%).

Men's Beliefs about the Rewards of Parenting, by Age (2002)

Age	Distribution of men's responses to the statement, "The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes."				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15-24 years	38.7%	52.7%	1.9%	5.6%	1.1%
25-29 years	54.4%	40.8%	1.5%	2.8%	*
30-44 years	59.4%	35.5%	1.3%	3.3%	.6%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma JC, Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Across all age groups, the vast majority of men agree or strongly agree that the rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and work it takes.
- Men in the youngest age group (15-24 years old) are least likely to strongly agree that the rewards of being a parent are worth it, 38.7 percent compared with 54.4 percent for ages 25-29 and 59.4 percent for ages 30-44.

Men's Beliefs about the Rewards of Parenting (Ages 15-44), by Parental Status (2002)

Age	Distribution of men's responses to the statement, "The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes."				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
No Children	38.0%	52.1%	2.7%	6.2%	1.0%
1 or More Children	67.5%	30.4%	.2%	1.4%	.5%

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma J.C., Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- More than 97 percent of men with at least one child either agree or strongly agree with the statement that the rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.

Men's Beliefs about the Rewards of Parenting (Ages 15-44), by Union Status (2002)

Age	Distribution of men's responses to the statement, "The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes."				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Currently Married	66.8%	30.8%	.4%	1.9%	*
Currently Cohabiting	50.2%	40.8%	2.7%	5.6%	*
Never Married, not Cohabiting	36.4%	54.0%	2.4%	5.9%	1.4%
Formerly Married, not Cohabiting	54.6%	39.8%	1.5%	2.9%	1.2%

Figure does not meet standard of reliability or precision

Source: Martinez GM, Chandra A., Abma JC, Jones J, Mosher WD. *Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women From Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth*. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(26).

- Currently married men are the most likely to strongly agree with the statement that the rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes (66.8%), while never married not cohabitating men are the least likely (36.4%).

Single Mothers' and Fathers' Beliefs about Marriage and Cohabitation

	Percent who Agree with the Statement	
	Mothers	Fathers
Cohabiting produces benefits of marriage.	58%	66%
Cohabiting without marriage is okay.	66%	78%
Cohabiting reduces the chances of divorce.	55%	66%
Single parents can raise children as well as married couples.	87%	64%

Source: Mincy, R. et al., (2004). *Fragile families in focus: Executive summary*. Baton Rouge, LA: TANF Executive Office of Oversight and Evaluation, 12, Chart VIII. National Fatherhood Initiative. (2007). *Father Facts 5*. Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative. Pg. 89. Data are representative of fathers in U.S. cities with populations over 200,000.

- Single mothers are more likely than single fathers to believe that single parents can raise children as well as married couples can (87% versus 64%).
- Single fathers are more likely than are single mothers to believe that cohabiting produces the same benefits as marriage (66% versus 58%).
- Single fathers are also more likely than single mothers to believe that cohabiting without marriage is okay (78% versus 66%).

Men's and Women's Attitudes about the Fulfillment of Having Children (Ages 18-64), by Educational Attainment (1994)

Educational Attainment	Percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that people who have never had children lead empty lives	
	Men	Women
Less than High School	41%	38%
High School/GED	20%	17%
Vocational/Technical or Some College	12%	12%
College Graduate	13%	7%

Note: Estimates calculated by Child Trends based on analyses of the 1994 and 1998 General Social Surveys. Child Trends. (2002).
Source: "Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers." Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- Men who have attained less than a high school education are the most likely to agree that people have never had children lead empty lives, 41 percent compared to 20 percent or less for men with higher levels of education. Women show a similar pattern.
- Men of all educational levels are equally or more likely than are women to agree that people who have never had children lead empty lives.

Quality that Fathers Think is the Most Important for their Child (under 13) to Learn, by Race of Father (1997)

	Race of Father		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Obey	16%	28%	50%
Be Liked	1%	0%	9%
Think for Oneself	59%	40%	18%
Work Hard	17%	26%	13%
Help Others in Need	7%	6%	11%

Note: Estimates calculated by Child Trends based on analyses of the 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics – Child Development Supplement. Child Trends. (2002).
Source: "Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers." Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- The ability to think for oneself was the most important quality for children to learn for both white and black fathers (59% and 40%, respectively).
- Hispanic fathers were most likely to view obedience as the most important quality for their children to learn, 50 percent compared with 28 percent of black fathers and 10 percent of white fathers.

- Parents of all races were least likely to count “being liked” as the most important quality for their children to learn compared to other qualities.
- Hard work was valued most highly by black fathers (26%) as important for their children to learn.

**Adults’ Attitudes about Spanking (Ages 18-65),
by Educational Attainment and Gender (2000)**

Educational Attainment	Percent of males and females who agree that it is sometimes necessary to give a child a good, hard spanking.	
	Male	Female
Less than High School	87%	80%
High School/GED	82%	75%
Vocational/Technical or Some College	88%	73%
College Graduate	66%	55%

Note: Estimates calculated by Child Trends based on analyses of the 1994 and 1998 General Social Surveys. Child Trends. (2002).
Source: “Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers.” Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- Regardless of educational level, the majority of men and women in 2000 agreed that it is sometimes necessary to give a child a good, hard spanking.
- Men of all levels of educational attainment were more likely than women to agree that it is sometimes necessary to give children a good, hard spanking.
- Both men and women who graduated from college were less likely to agree that it is sometimes necessary to spank children than were those who attained lower levels of education.

**Fathers' Attitudes about Responsibility for Various Aspects of Child Care
(Children under age 13), 1997**

Childcare Activities	Locus of Responsibility		
	Someone Else	Shared	Father Only
Playing with children	4%	91%	6%
Disciplining children	3%	89%	8%
Choosing child care, preschool, or school	34%	60%	7%

Note: Estimates calculated by Child Trends based on analyses of the 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics – Child Development Supplement. Child Trends. (2002).

Source: "Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers." Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- The majority of fathers reported that they shared responsibility for playing with children (91%), disciplining children (89%), and choosing child care, preschool, or school (60%).