PF 2.1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES BY NUMBER OF PARENTS IN HOUSEHOLD

Family structure is one of many factors that contributes to child well-being. It also is associated with the well-being of the child as an adult. For example, children from disrupted families or families where the parents never married are somewhat more likely to use alcohol and drugs, to become teen parents, and to achieve lower earnings than are children from intact families, and they are less likely to attain a high school diploma. These associations are evident even after controlling for family socioeconomic status, race, and other background factors.[3] Nevertheless, the great majority of children brought up in single-parent families do well. In particular, differences in well-being between children from divorced and those from intact families tend, on average, to be moderate to small.[4]

Between 1970 and 1998, the proportion of children in two-parent families (about 84 percent of whom live with both biological parents present)[5] decreased from 85 percent to 68 percent (see Table PF 2.1.A).

In 1998, 23 percent of children lived with mother only; 4 percent lived with father only;[6] and 4 percent lived with neither parent (see Table PF 2.1.A).[7] Of those who lived with neither parent, more than one-half were residing with one or more grandparents as of 1993 (see Table PF 2.1.C).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. The decrease in the proportion of children living in two-parent families is evident for black, white, and Hispanic children, though the decline is somewhat steeper for black children. Between 1970 and 1998, the proportion of black children living in two-parent families fell by 22 percentage points from 58 percent to 36 percent, though between 1996 and 1998 that percentage increased modestly from a low of 33 percent. The drop for white children was 16 percentage points, from 90 percent to 74 percent. For Hispanic children, the percentage living in two-parent families decreased from 78 percent to 64 percent.

Table PF 2.1.B presents 1980 and 1990 census data for Asian and Native American families in addition to data on white, black, and Hispanic families. The percentage of children living in two-parent families dropped for all five groups during that period. In 1990, Asian children were the most likely to live in a two-parent household (84 percent), followed closely by whites (82 percent), then Hispanics (71 percent), Native Americans (64 percent), and blacks (47 percent).

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[3] Amato, P.R. 1993. "Children's Adjustment to Divorce: Theories, Hypotheses, and Empirical Support." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55: 23-58.

[4] Zill, N., Morrison, D., and Coiro, M. 1993. "Long-Term Effects of Parental Divorce on Parent-Child Relationships: Adjustment and Achievement in Early Adulthood." *Journal of Family Psychology* 7 (1): 91-103.

[5] Analyses by Child Trends of the 1993 Survey of Income and Program Participation indicates that 84 percent of children in married-couple families live with both biological parents (see Table PF 2.1.C).

[6] The Current Population Survey overestimates the proportion of children living in father-only families, because it identifies many cohabiting biological-parent couples as father-only. Though the precise size of the overestimate is not known, analyses of the 1993 Survey of Income and Program Participation indicate that a little over 2 percent of all children actually lived in father-only families in that year (see Table PF 2.1.C).

[7] Data from the 1996 Current Population Survey (not shown) indicate that 11 percent of all children under age 18 who are living in families live with single parents who are divorced. See Saluter, A. 1997. *PPL-66, Household and Family Characteristics: March 1996 (Update)*, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table PF 2.1.A

Percentage distribution of living arrangements of children under age 18 in the United States, by race and Hispanic origin:[a] selected years, 1970-1998

	1970	1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995[b]	1996[b]	1997[b]	1998[b]
Total											
Two parents	85	77	73	72	71	71	69	69	68	68	68
Mother only	11	18	22	22	23	23	23	23	24	24	23
Father only	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
No parent	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
White											
Two parents	90	83	79	78	77	77	76	76	75	75	74
Mother only	8	14	16	17	18	17	18	18	18	18	18
Father only	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5
No parent	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Black											
Two parents	58	42	38	36	36	36	33	33	33	35	36
Mother only	30	44	51	54	54	54	53	52	53	52	51
Father only	2	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	5	4
No parent	10	12	8	7	7	7	10	11	9	8	9
Hispanic[a]											
Two parents	78	75	67	66	65	65	63	63	62	64	64
Mother only	—	20	27	27	28	28	28	28	29	27	27
Father only	—	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
No parent	—	3	3	4	3	4	5	4	5	5	5

[a]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

[b]Numbers in these years may reflect changes in the Current Population Survey because of newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing techniques and/or because of the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 410, No. 461, No. 468, No. 478, No. 491, No. 496u, No. 506u, No. 514u (Table 4 in each); and No. 484, Table A-5; also unpublished data, U.S. Bureau of the Census. As published in America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 1998. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Table POP5.

Table PF 2.1.B

Percentage distribution of families in the United States with own children under age 18, by race and Hispanic origin[a] and family structure: 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990
Total		
Married couple	81.5	77.1
Female head	16.1	17.7
Male head	2.4	4.1
White		
Married couple	85.7	82.2
Female head	12.1	14.0
Male head	2.2	3.7
Black		
Married couple	54.3	46.9
Female head	41.7	47.6
Male head	4.0	5.5
Hispanic		
Married couple	76.6	71.4
Female head	20.4	22.1
Male head	3.1	6.5
Asian/Pacific Islander		
Married couple	88.5	84.3
Female head	9.4	9.8
Male head	2.1	2.9
American Indian/Alaska Native		
Married couple	71.5	63.6
Female head	24.2	28.7
Male head	4.3	7.8

[a]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites, blacks, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and American Indian/Alaska Natives include persons of Hispanic origin.

Sources: "The Challenge of Change: What the 1990 Census Tells Us About Children," Table 14, prepared by the Population Reference Bureau for the Center for the Study of Social Policy, with data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, "General Social and Economic Characteristics," PC80-1-C1, United States Summary, Tables 100, 121, and 131; and Census of Population and Housing 1990, Summary Tape File 3, Tables P-19, P-20, and P-21.

Table PF 2.1.C

Percentage distribution of children under age 18 in the United States in two-parent, one-parent, or no-parent families, by age, race and Hispanic origin[b], poverty status, and parent's education level: 1993

	Two-Parent Families			Single-Parent Families			No Parents Present	
	Total[a]	Biological Parents	One Biological, One Step-parent	Total[a]	Biological Mother	Biological Father	Total[a]	Grandparents
All children	**70.8**	**59.8**	**7.1**	**26.5**	**22.6**	**2.1**	**2.4**	**1.5**
Ages 0-5	72.8	67.4	1.8	25.4	22.5	1.2	1.8	1.3
Ages 6-11	70.8	58.9	7.9	26.7	22.8	1.9	2.4	1.8
Ages 12-17	68.8	52.3	12.2	27.5	22.4	3.2	3.2	1.6
Race and Hispanic origin[b]								
White, non-Hispanic	80.1	67.8	8.2	18.4	15.2	2.2	1.4	0.9
Black, non-Hispanic	35.9	28.2	4.4	56.9	48.9	2.2	7.1	4.7
Hispanic	61.5	52.9	5.6	35.3	32.6	1.4	2.7	1.6
Poverty status								
Below poverty	37.1	31.1	3.5	58.4	52.4	1.9	4.2	2.5
At or above poverty	80.6	68.2	8.2	17.2	13.9	2.1	1.9	1.2
Parent's education level[c]								
Less than high school	45.2	38.7	4.3	54.8	47.3	2.6		
Completed high school	67.8	55.8	8.1	32.2	27.2	2.8		
At least some college	76.5	63.1	9.4	23.5	20.3	1.9		
Four or more years of college	90.3	79.1	6.2	9.7	7.8	1.3		

[a]Totals for two-parent, one-parent, and no-parent families include categories beyond those presented separately.
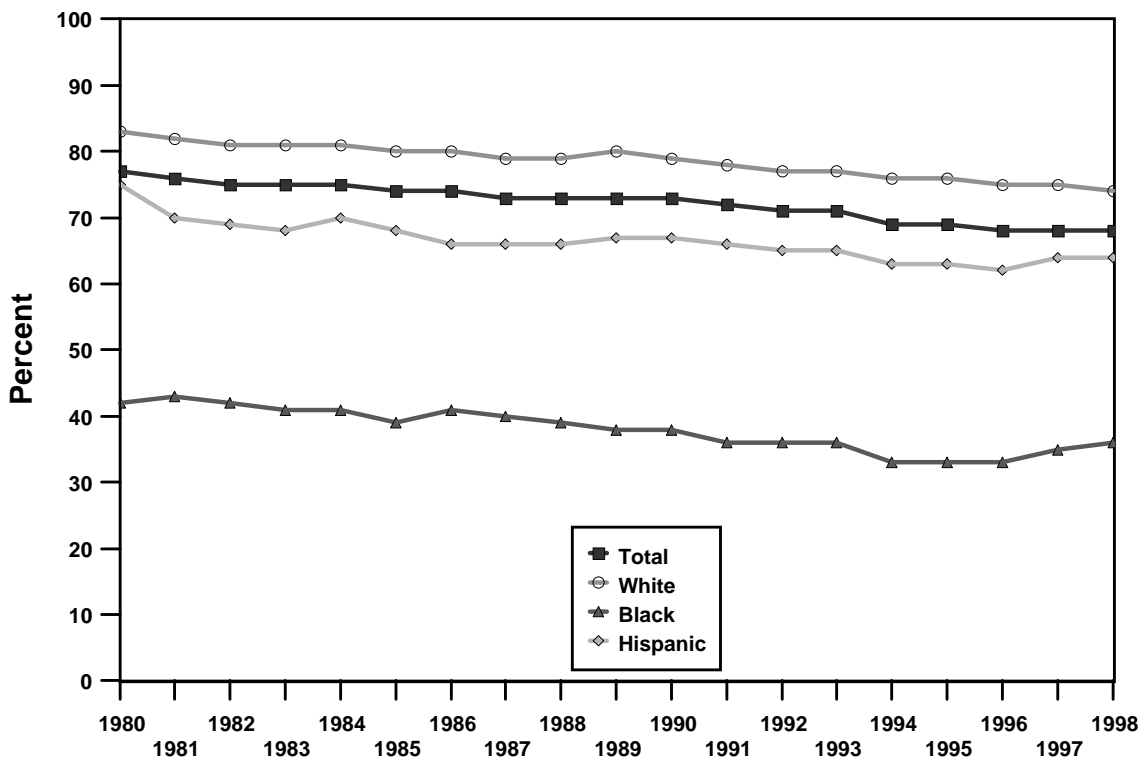
[b]Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[c]Education level in two-parent families is determined by the higher educated parent.

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1993. Analysis by Child Trends.

Figure PF 2.1

Percentage of children under age 18 in the United States who are living with two parents, by race and Hispanic origin:[a] 1980-1998[b]

[a]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

[b]Numbers in the years 1994 and beyond may reflect changes in the Current Population Survey because of newly constituted computer-assisted interviewing techniques and/or because of the change in the population controls to the 1990 Census-based estimates, with adjustments.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 410, No. 461, No. 468, No. 478, No. 491, No. 496u, No. 506u, No. 514u (Table 4 in each); and No. 484, Table A-5; also unpublished data, U.S. Bureau of the Census. As published in America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 1998. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Table POP5.

PF 2.2
PERCENTAGE OF ALL BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED WOMEN

Children who are born to single women, regardless of the age of the women, are considerably more likely than children born to two parents to grow up poor, to spend large portions of their childhood without two parents, and to become single parents themselves.[8]

Between 1960 and 1994, there was a considerable increase in the percentage of all births to unmarried women, from 5.3 percent in 1960 to 32.6 percent in 1994 (see Figure PF 2.2). The percentage has been fairly stable in the last several years and was 32.4 percent in 1997.

Differences by Age. Nonmarital childbearing increased among women of all age groups between 1960 and 1994 before dropping off modestly in 1995 (see Table PF 2.2). However, data for 1996 and for 1997 show slight increases for women ages 15 through 19 and 20 through 24. Younger mothers are far more likely than older mothers to be unmarried. In 1997, 77.8 percent of births to women ages 15 through 19 were to unmarried women. In contrast, 46.6 percent of births to women ages 20 through 24 were to unmarried women, and only 14.1 percent of births to women ages 30 through 34 were to unmarried women.

Contrary to popular opinion, nonmarital childbearing does not occur primarily among teenagers. In 1997, about 31 percent of nonmarital births were to teenagers (women under age 20), about 35 percent were to women ages 20 through 24, and 34 percent were to women ages 25 and older.[9]

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. The percentage of all births to unmarried women increased steadily for whites, blacks, and Hispanics between 1980 and 1994, before declining for these three groups in 1995.[10] Data for 1997, however, indicate that whites have resumed their upward trend at 25.8 percent. Among American Indian women, percentages have increased steadily between 1980 and 1997. Asian women have experienced a steady increase in the percentage of all births to unmarried women from 1980 to 1996, but the percentage decreased in 1997.

In 1997, Asian and white women had the lowest percentage of nonmarital births at 15.6 and 25.8 percent, respectively.[11] Hispanics were next at 40.9 percent, followed by American Indian and black women at 58.7 percent and 69.2 percent, respectively. This ordering is the same for most age groups, though the size of the difference can vary substantially by the age of the mother. For young women ages 15 through 19 in 1997, for example, whites and Hispanics have very similar percentages of births to unmarried women—71.1 and 71.6 percent, respectively—while the percentage among young black women ages 15 through 19 is much higher at 95.7 percent. By ages 25 through 29, however, percentages for Hispanic women move midway between white and black rates, with whites at 16.9 percent, Hispanics at 30.4 percent, and blacks at 56.8 percent (see Table PF 2.2).

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[8] See Ventura, S.J. 1995. "Births to Unmarried Mothers: United States, 1980-1992." *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 21, No. 53, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. See also McLanahan, S., and Sandefur, G. 1994. *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. See also U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 1995. *Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing*. DHHS Publication Number (PHS) 95-1257. Hyattsville, Md.

[9] Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1997." *National Vital Statistics Reports* 47 (18). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1999, Table 17.

[10] Data are available for whites from 1960 and for blacks from 1970, indicating that the percentage of births that were nonmarital had also been increasing prior to 1980 for those races. Data for Hispanics are only available starting in 1980.

[11] Percentages for non-Hispanic whites (not shown) are even lower at 21.5 percent in 1997. See Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1997." *National Vital Statistics Reports* 47 (18). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1999, Table 17.

SEE TABLE FOLLOWING PAGES

Table PF 2.2 (Part 1)

Percentage of all births to unmarried women in the United States, by race and Hispanic origin[a] and by age: selected years, 1960-1997[b]

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980[b]	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
All races														
All ages	5.3	7.7	10.7	14.3	18.4	22.0	28.0	29.5	30.1	31.0	32.6	32.2	32.4	32.4
Ages 15-19	14.8	20.8	29.5	38.2	47.6	58.0	67.1	68.8	70.0	71.3	75.5	75.2	75.9	77.8
Ages 20-24	4.8	6.8	8.9	12.3	19.4	26.3	36.9	39.4	40.7	42.2	44.9	44.7	45.6	46.6
Ages 25-29	2.9	4.0	4.1	5.4	9.0	12.7	18.0	19.2	19.8	20.7	21.8	21.5	22.0	22.0
Ages 30-34	2.8	3.7	4.5	5.3	7.5	9.7	13.3	14.0	14.3	14.7	15.1	14.7	14.8	14.1
Ages 35-39	3.0	4.0	5.2	7.0	9.4	11.2	13.9	14.6	15.2	15.6	16.1	15.7	15.7	14.6
White[c]														
All ages	2.3	—	5.7	—	11.2	14.7	20.4	21.8	22.6	23.6	25.5	25.3	25.7	25.8
Ages 15-19	7.2	—	17.1	—	33.1	44.8	56.4	58.8	60.4	62.3	67.6	67.7	68.7	71.1
Ages 20-24	2.2	—	5.2	—	11.7	17.7	27.8	30.2	31.7	33.4	36.3	36.5	37.5	38.4
Ages 25-29	1.1	—	2.1	—	5.2	8.1	12.6	13.7	14.3	15.2	16.5	16.4	16.9	16.9
Ages 30-34	1.0	—	2.1	—	4.6	6.3	9.3	9.8	10.2	10.6	11.1	10.9	11.1	10.5
Ages 35-39	1.3	—	2.7	—	6.4	8.1	10.3	10.9	11.4	11.7	12.3	12.0	12.2	11.2
Black[c]														
All ages	—	—	37.6	—	56.1	61.2	66.5	67.9	68.1	68.7	70.5	69.9	69.8	69.2
Ages 15-19	—	—	62.7	—	85.7	90.2	92.0	92.3	92.6	92.9	95.3	95.2	95.4	95.7
Ages 20-24	—	—	31.3	—	57.0	65.4	72.6	74.7	75.2	76.7	79.0	79.1	79.7	79.8
Ages 25-29	—	—	20.3	—	36.8	45.2	53.3	54.7	55.0	55.8	57.3	56.8	57.4	56.8
Ages 30-34	—	—	19.6	—	29.6	37.0	45.2	46.5	46.7	46.9	47.4	46.5	45.7	44.1
Ages 35-39	—	—	18.6	—	28.4	35.1	42.0	43.8	44.7	44.8	45.8	45.3	44.3	42.7

[a]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[b]Births from 1980 onward by race of mother. Tabulations prior to 1980 are by race of child, which assigns the child to the race of the nonwhite parent, if any, or to the race of the father, if both are nonwhite.

[c]Includes persons of Hispanic origin.

Sources: Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1997." National Vital Statistics Reports 47 (18). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1999, Tables 2 and 7; Ventura, S.J. "Births to Unmarried Mothers: United States, 1980-1992." Vital and Health Statistics, Series 21, No. 53. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. 1995, Table 5; Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1996." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 46 (11, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md: National Center for Health Statistics, 1998, Table 17. Also previous issues of this annual report (Volume 45, no. 11; Volume 44, no. 11; Volume 44, no. 3, Table 14 in each); Ventura, S.J. "Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1985." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 36 (11, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md.: Public Health Service, Tables 6 and 7; Ventura, S.J. "Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1980." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 32 (6, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md.: Public Health Service. 1983, Table 11; unpublished data from S. Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics.

Table PF 2.2 (Part 2)

Percentage of all births to unmarried women in the United States, by race and Hispanic origin[a] and by age: selected years, 1960-1997[b]

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980[b]	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Hispanic[a]														
All ages	—	—	—	—	23.6	29.5	36.7	38.5	39.1	40.0	43.1	40.8	40.7	40.9
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	41.9	51.3	53.7	61.2	61.9	62.8	69.7	67.3	67.7	71.6
Ages 20-24	—	—	—	—	23.8	30.9	35.1	41.5	42.3	43.4	47.0	45.0	45.2	46.1
Ages 25-29	—	—	—	—	15.9	22.2	25.7	30.3	30.8	31.7	33.2	31.1	31.2	30.4
Ages 30-34	—	—	—	—	15.2	19.6	23.0	26.6	27.2	27.5	28.6	26.4	26.0	24.6
Ages 35-39	—	—	—	—	16.2	20.8	23.2	27.6	28.5	29.0	30.3	27.4	26.9	25.7
Asian/Pacific Islander[c]														
All ages	—	—	—	—	7.3	9.5	13.2	13.9	14.7	15.7	16.2	16.3	16.7	15.6
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	40.6	47.7	57.0	58.4	59.6	60.7	62.7	63.1	62.7	72.0
Ages 20-24	—	—	—	—	10.9	15.5	23.5	25.1	27.0	29.0	30.0	30.1	31.0	31.8
Ages 25-29	—	—	—	—	4.2	5.7	8.3	8.8	9.6	10.6	11.3	12.1	12.9	11.5
Ages 30-34	—	—	—	—	3.0	4.6	6.3	6.4	7.1	7.7	8.0	8.0	8.9	6.6
Ages 35-39	—	—	—	—	4.0	5.8	7.5	7.9	8.4	9.0	8.8	8.9	9.2	6.9
American Indian[c]														
All ages	—	—	—	—	39.2	46.8	53.6	55.3	55.3	55.8	57.0	57.2	58.0	58.7
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	61.9	72.5	78.9	79.1	80.3	80.6	82.9	82.5	84.1	84.4
Ages 20-24	—	—	—	—	38.6	48.5	57.2	58.7	58.6	59.5	60.6	60.7	61.7	63.2
Ages 25-29	—	—	—	—	28.1	35.9	43.2	45.2	45.3	45.2	45.5	45.7	46.4	47.3
Ages 30-34	—	—	—	—	22.2	31.8	38.3	39.0	39.6	40.0	40.6	40.6	41.4	41.2
Ages 35-39	—	—	—	—	22.5	27.7	35.5	38.8	38.2	38.1	38.5	40.6	40.1	40.3

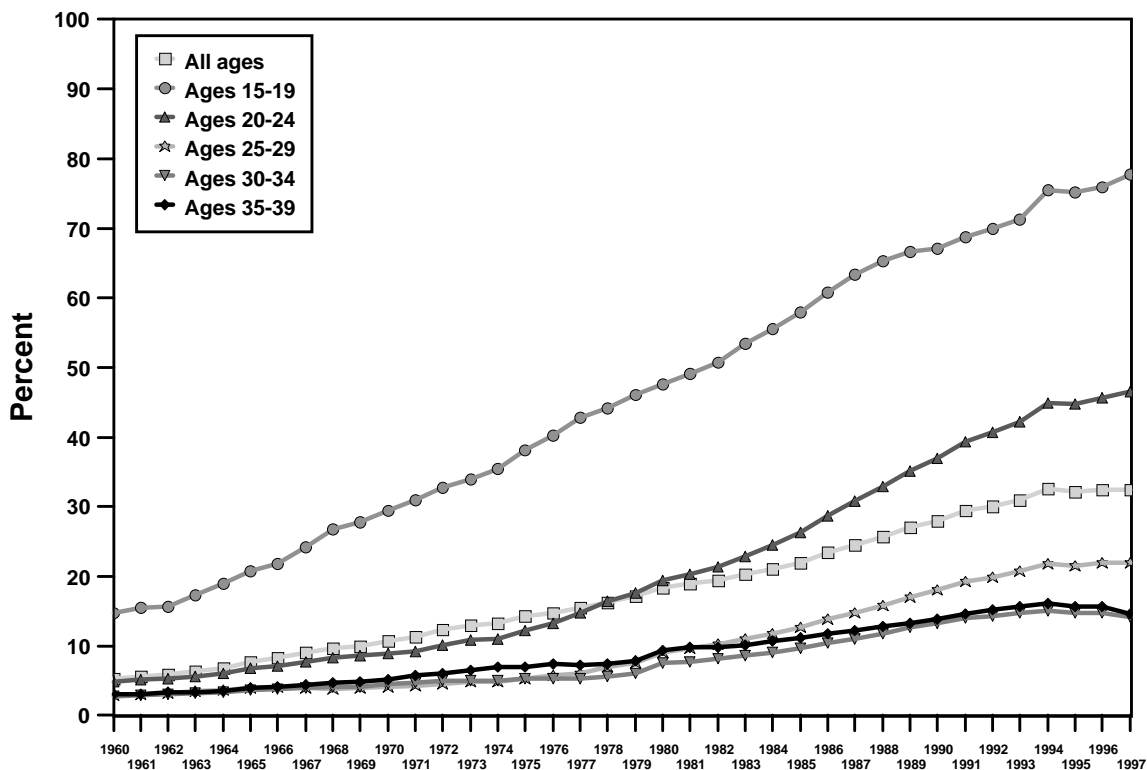[a]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

[b]Births from 1980 onward by race of mother. Tabulations prior to 1980 are by race of child, which assigns the child to the race of the nonwhite parent, if any, or to the race of the father, if both are nonwhite.

[c]Includes persons of Hispanic origin.

Sources: Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1997." National Vital Statistics Reports 47 (18). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1999, Tables 2 and 7; Ventura, S.J. "Births to Unmarried Mothers: United States, 1980-1992." Vital and Health Statistics, Series 21, No. 53. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. 1995, Table 5; Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1996." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 46 (11, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md: National Center for Health Statistics, 1998, Table 17. Also previous issues of this annual report (Volume 45, no. 11; Volume 44, no. 11; Volume 44, no. 3, Table 14 in each); Ventura, S.J. "Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1985." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 36 (11, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md.: Public Health Service, Tables 6 and 7; Ventura, S.J. "Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1980." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 32 (6, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md.: Public Health Service. 1983, Table 11; unpublished data from S. Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics.

Figure PF 2.2

Percentage of all births to unmarried women in the United States, by age: 1960-1997

Sources: Ventura, S.J. "Births to Unmarried Mothers: United States, 1980-1992." Vital and Health Statistics, Series 21, No. 53. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. 1995, Table 5; Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1996." Monthly Vital Statistics Report 46 (11, Supp.). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1998, Table 17. Also previous issues of this annual report (Volume 45, no.11; Volume 44, no. 11; Volume 44, no. 3, Table 14 in each); Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., and Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1997." National Vital Statistics Reports 47(18). Hyattsville, Md.: National Center for Health Statistics, 1999, Table 17; unpublished data from S. Ventura, National Center for Health Statistics.

PF 2.3
CHILDREN LIVING IN FOSTER CARE[12]

A child is placed in foster care when a court determines that his or her family cannot provide a minimally safe environment. This determination often follows an investigation by a state or county child protective services worker. Placement most commonly occurs either because a member of a household has physically or sexually abused a child or because a child's caretaker(s) has severely neglected the child. In some cases, children with severe emotional disturbances may also be put into foster care.

Since both federal and state laws discourage removal of children from their families unless necessary to ensure a child's safety, placement in foster care is an extreme step taken only when a child is in immediate danger or when attempts to help the family provide a safe environment have failed; thus, the frequency of placements in foster care is an indicator of family dysfunction that is so severe that a child cannot remain safely with his or her family.

The number of children in foster care rose sharply from 262,000 in 1982 to 507,000 in 1996 (see Table PF 2.3). Estimates for 1997 indicate a further increase to 516,000. As shown in Figure PF 2.3, the rate of children living in foster care (i.e., the number of children in foster care per thousand children under age 18) also rose dramatically during the same time period, from 4.2 per thousand children under age 18 in 1982 to 7.3 per thousand in 1996, with preliminary data for 1997 showing an increase to 7.4 per thousand.

Table PF 2.3

Number and rate (per 1,000) of children in the United States living in foster care: 1982-1997

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total number (in thousands)	262	269	276	276	280	300	340	383	400	414	427	445	468	483	507	516
Rate (per thousand)	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.8	5.4	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.4

Note: Estimate of total is the number of children in foster care on the last day of the fiscal year. 1996 is the last year in which data on foster care are collected through the Voluntary Cooperative Information System (VCIS). The Administration on Children and Families (ACF) has implemented the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) as a replacement for VCIS. While VCIS was a voluntary reporting system, states are required to participate in AFCARS and must use uniform definitions. Most importantly, AFCARS collects case-level foster care data.
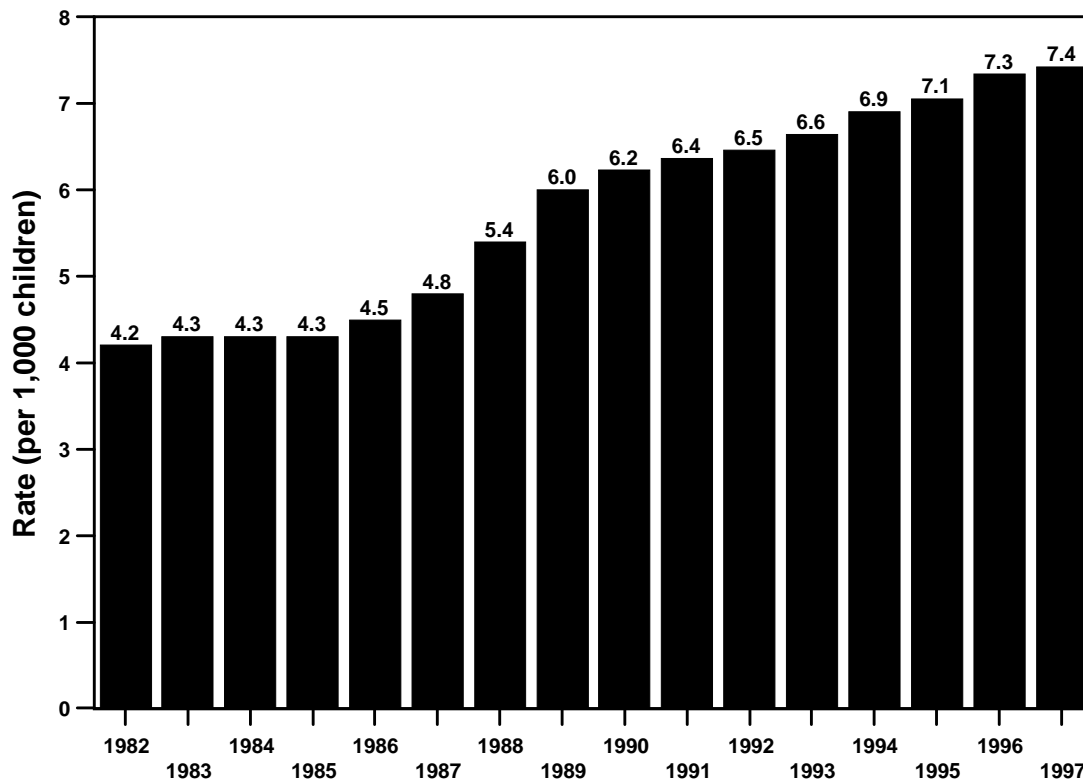
Note: Estimates in this table may not be comparable to estimates provided in previous issues of Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth due to changes in the population estimates provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Sources: Estimate of children in foster care for 1997 from special analysis by John Hargrove, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, 1999; estimates of children in foster care for years 1982-1996 from Tatara, Tashio, VCIS Research Notes, No. 11, August 1995, and VCIS Research Notes, No. 13, March 1997. population estimates for 1982-1990 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1996. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1996; population estimates for 1990-1997 from http:www.census.gov/population/estimates/state/97agesex.txt.

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[12] For purposes of this report, "foster care" is defined as a living arrangement where a child resides outside his or her own home, under the case management and planning responsibility of a state child welfare agency. These living arrangements include relative and nonrelative foster homes, group homes, child-care facilities, emergency shelter care, supervised independent living, and nonfinalized adoptive homes.

Figure PF 2.3

Children in the United States living in foster care (rate per 1,000 children): 1982-1997

Note: Estimate of total is the number of children in foster care on the last day of the fiscal year. 1996 is the last year in which data on foster care are collected through the Voluntary Cooperative Information System (VCIS). The Administration on Children and Families (ACF) has implemented the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) as a replacement for VCIS. While VCIS was a voluntary reporting system, states are required to participate in AFCARS and must use uniform definitions. Most importantly, AFCARS collects case-level foster care data.

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