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## FP-12-10 Mothers and Fathers Exiting the Workforce in 2008

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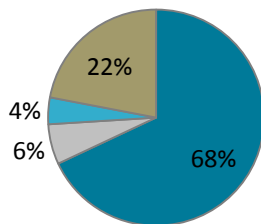
# Mothers and Fathers Exiting the Workforce in 2008

In 2008, both mothers and fathers exited the workforce for various reasons, including caring for a minor child. Estimates from Current Population Survey (CPS) data spanning 1968-2009 indicate the percentage of homes with a stay-at-home father in which the wife earned 100% of the income increased from 1.2% to 3.4% (the percentage of homes with a stay-at-home mother decreased from 47.7% to 25.7%) (Kramer and McColloch, 2010). The increased trend of fathers leaving the workforce to take care of a child is associated with financial reasons (Doucet, 2004), parenting values, career advancement of his partner (Rochlen et al., 2010), and economic conditions (Chelsey, 2011). This profile depicts the reasons mothers and fathers leave the workforce and provides a demographic snapshot of those who left the workforce to care for a minor child versus those who stayed.

## Top Reasons Mothers and Fathers with a Minor Child at Home Exit the Workforce

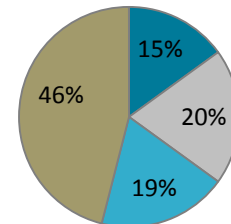
- Among men and women with children, 87% remained in the workforce while 13% exited.
  - Women were more likely to leave the workforce than men, 18% versus 8%.
- Mothers and fathers differed in their reasons for exiting the workforce in 2008.
  - Among mothers who left, the majority (68%) did so to care for a minor child. Mothers also left the workforce to attend school or receive training (6%) and because their current job was temporary (4%).
  - Substantially fewer fathers (15%) than mothers left the workforce to care for children. The care of a minor child was the third most common single reason provided by fathers for leaving the workforce.
  - The most common reason fathers (20%) left the workforce was to go to school or receive more training. A close second reason for leaving the workforce among fathers (19%) was layoffs.

Figure 1. Top Reasons for Mothers Leaving the Workforce in 2008



■ Childcare ■ School/Training ■ Temporary Job ■ Other

Figure 2. Top Reasons for Fathers Leaving the Workforce in 2008



■ Childcare ■ School/Training ■ Layoff ■ Other

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 March Supplement

*This profile draws on research published in the following articles:*

- Chelsey, N. 2011. Stay-at-Home Fathers and Breadwinning Mothers: Gender, Couple Dynamics, and Social Change. *Gender & Society*, 25(5): 642-664.
- Doucet, A. 2004. It's Almost Like I Have a Job, but I don't get paid: Fathers at Home Reconfiguring Work, Care, and Masculinity. *Fathering*, 2:277-303.
- Kramer, K. and McColloch, J. 2010. Stay-at-Home Fathers: Definition and Characteristics Based on 42 years of CPS Data. Paper presented at Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX.
- Rochelen, A., McKelley, R., and Whittaker, T. 2010. Stay at Home Fathers' Reasons for Entering the Role and Stigma Experiences: A Preliminary Report. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 11(4): 270-285.

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

### Race/Ethnicity of Mothers and Fathers with a Minor Child at Home Who Remain or Exit the Workforce

- Regardless of race and ethnicity, the large majority of mothers and fathers remained in the workforce.
  - Among mothers, Blacks (86%) were most likely to remain in the workforce followed by Whites (81%) and Hispanics (79%).
- Mothers, regardless of race and ethnicity, were more likely to leave the workforce than fathers to care for a minor child.
  - There is essentially no variation by race and ethnicity in the percentage of fathers who left the workforce to care for a minor child.
  - Similar proportions of White and Hispanic mothers left to care for a minor child (14% and 15%, respectively). Black mothers were less likely—about half as many (7%) left to care for a minor child.

Figure 3. Mothers

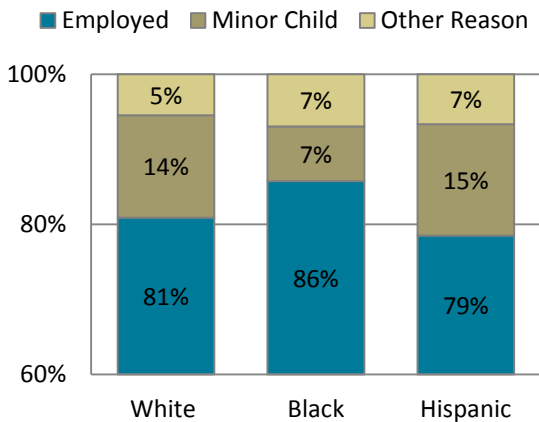
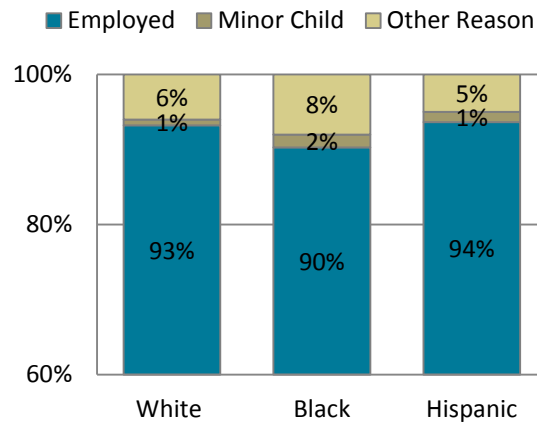


Figure 4. Fathers



Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 March Supplement

### Education of Mothers and Fathers with Minor Child at Home Who Remain or Exit the Workforce

- Regardless of educational attainment, the majority of mothers and fathers remained employed. An educational gradient appears with greater retention in the workforce among the most educated.
- No variation exists in the percentage of parents who leave the workforce to care for a minor child by educational attainment (13% of mothers and 1% of fathers left the workforce to care for a minor child).
  - Yet among mothers who left the workforce, highly educated mothers more often left to care for children (81%) than did mothers with low educational attainment (46%).
  - Similarly, one-third of fathers with a college degree left to care for a child, whereas 8% of fathers without a high school degree left the workforce to care for a child.

Figure 5. Mothers

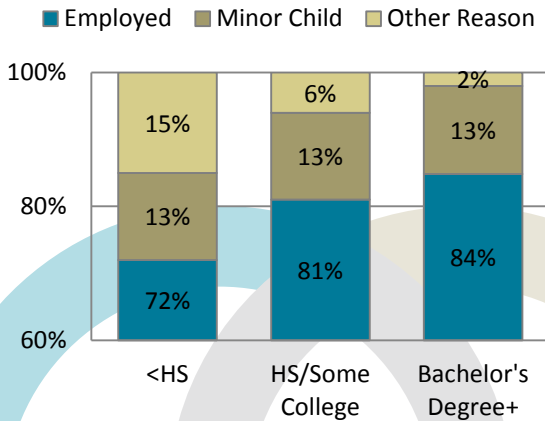
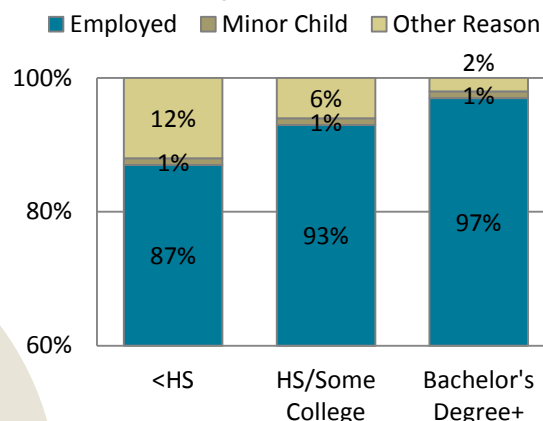


Figure 6. Fathers



Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 March Supplement

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