

2011

FP-11-04 Fatherhood in the U.S.: Men's Age at First Birth, 1987-2008

Bart Stykes

Bowling Green State University - Main Campus

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Stykes, Bart, "FP-11-04 Fatherhood in the U.S.: Men's Age at First Birth, 1987-2008" (2011). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 13.

https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ncfmr_family_profiles/13

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

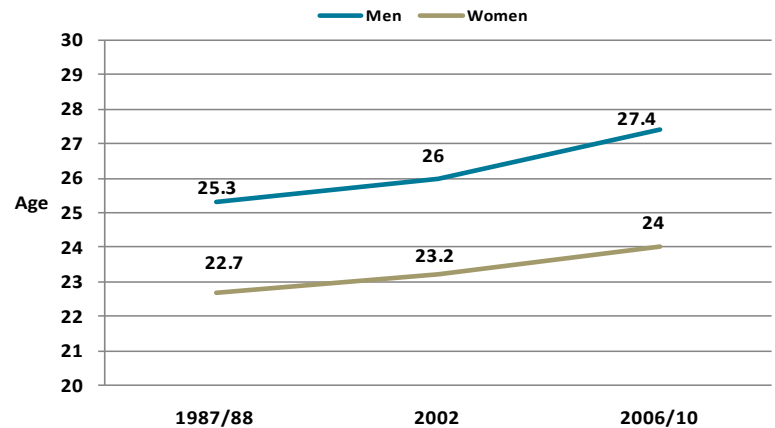
Fatherhood in the U.S.: Men's Age at First Birth, 1987-2010

This Profile focuses on men's age at first birth using nationally representative survey data. The sample is limited to men and women ages 40-45 to capture their experiences near the end of their fertility careers.

Trends in Age at First Birth for Men and Women

- The average age men become fathers is 27.4.
- The average age women become mothers is 24, consistent with findings from the U.S. Census Bureau (2011).
- Men, on average, are three years older than women when they become parents. This gap has remained fairly stable over the past two decades.
- A delay in fertility exists among both men and women. On average, men are 1.8 years older when they become fathers today than they were twenty years ago. Women are 1.6 years older when they become mothers today than they were two decades ago.

Figure 1. Mean Age at First Birth of U.S. Men and Women (aged 40-45), 1987-2010

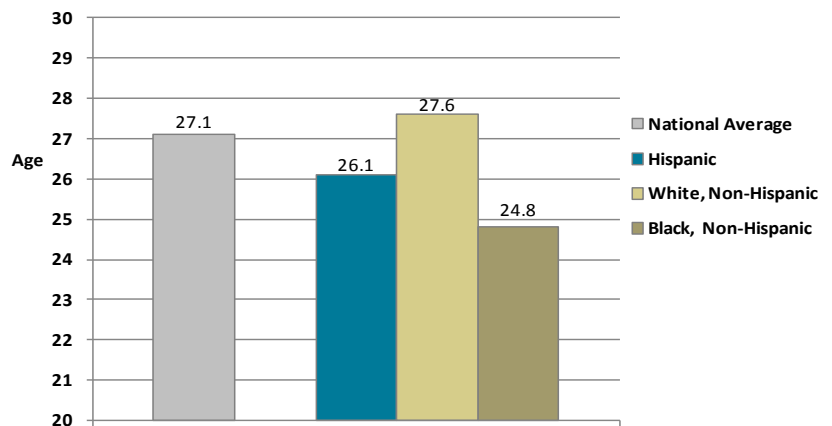


Sources: 1987/88 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) Data; 2002, 2006/10, National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) Data.

Race and Ethnicity and Mean Age at Fatherhood

- Mean age at first birth is highest among White men at nearly 28 years old followed by Hispanic men who become fathers at age 26, on average. Finally, non-Hispanic Black men are typically the youngest first-time-fathers at about 25 years of age.
- On average, White men become fathers significantly later (1.43 years) than non-White men, while Black men become fathers significantly earlier (2.5 years) than non-Black men. However, Hispanic men are not significantly different from non-Hispanic men in terms of their age at first birth.

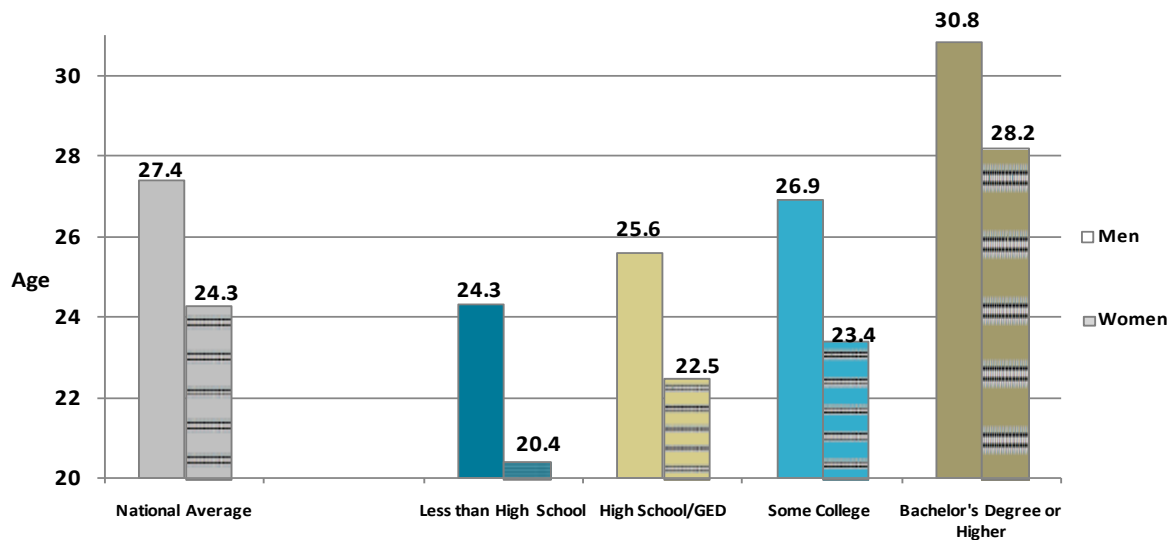
Figure 2. Men's Mean Age at First Birth According to Race and Ethnicity, 2006/2010



Source: NSFG Male Data 2006/2010 (significance testing conducted at $p < 0.05$)

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.

Figure 3. Mean Age at First Birth According to Education, 2006/2010



Source: NSFG 2006/2010 (significance testing conducted at $p < 0.05$)

Education and Mean Age at First Birth

- Men and women with a Bachelor's degree are significantly older (approximately five years for both men and women), on average, at their first birth than those earning less than a Bachelor's degree. This finding reflects the effect of education on women's age at first birth highlighted by the U.S. Census Bureau report (2011).
- There is not a significant difference in age at first birth between men who earn a high school degree and those who fail to earn a high school diploma/GED.
- The gender gap in age at parenthood is greatest (about four years) among the least educated.

References

U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. "Census Reports 'Delayer Boom' as More Educated Women have Children Later." Retrieved May 16, 2011 (<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/fertility/cb11-83.html>).

Suggested Citation:
Stykes, J. (2011). Fatherhood in the U.S.: Men's Age at First Birth, 1987-2010 (FP-11-04). National Center for Family & Marriage Research. Retrieved from http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/family_profiles/file99036.pdf

This project was supported with a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, grant number 5 UOI AEOOOOOI-05. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the federal government.