

2015

FP-15-11 Marital Stability Following Mother's 1st Marital Birth

Bart Stykes

Bowling Green State University, jstykes@bgsu.edu

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Stykes, Bart, "FP-15-11 Marital Stability Following Mother's 1st Marital Birth" (2015). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 76.

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Marital Stability Following Mother's 1st Marital Birth



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Family stability, which is associated with higher average levels of child well-being, is most prevalent among children born within marriage. The majority (55%) of firstborn children are born into marital unions (see Martinez, Daniels, & Chandra 2012), but an increasing share of children are born outside of marriage (FP-15-03). This profile considers marital stability following a mother's first marital birth. Family stability is high with the majority of marriages remaining intact throughout their firstborns' childhoods. This pattern holds regardless of race/ethnicity and education. About two-fifths of these marriages dissolve before the firstborn child's 18th birthday (results not shown).

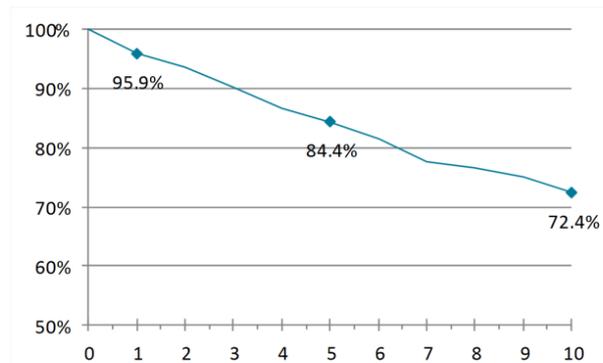
**This profile addresses marital stability in the decade following the first marital birth as data are limited to women aged 15-44. Consideration of marital stability up to 18 years after the first marital birth would include only mothers who were 26 or younger at the time of their first marital birth.*

- Fewer than one in ten mothers experience a marital dissolution within one year of having a first marital birth.
- Almost three-fourths (72%) of marriages remain intact by the firstborn's 10th birthday.



72% MARRIAGES INTACT
@ FIRSTBORN'S
10th BIRTHDAY

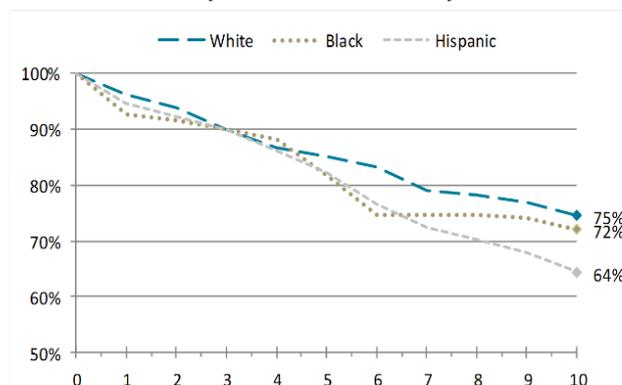
Figure 1. Percentage of Mothers' Marital Unions Enduring 10 Years after First Marital Birth



Race, Ethnicity and Stability Following a 1st Marital Birth

- Marital stability is similar for race/ethnic groups during the preschool years (first four years after childbirth). However, by age 10 there are racial and ethnic differences in stability.
- Approximately three-fourths of white and black mothers' marriages remain intact 10 years after their first marital birth (75 and 72%, respectively).
- Slightly fewer Hispanic mothers' marriages remain intact by their firstborns' 10th birthday (64%).

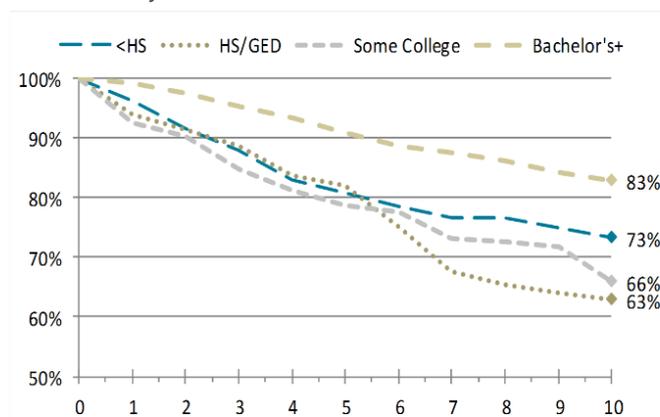
Figure 2. Percentage of Marriages Enduring 10 Years after a First, Marital Birth, by Mothers' Race/ethnicity



Educational Variation in Marital Stability Following a 1st Marital Birth

- Marital stability is highest for mothers with a college degree. The overwhelming majority (90%) of these marriages remains intact through the child's fifth birthday and four in five (83%) marriages lasted through the firstborn child's 10th birthday. Most (71%) college educated mothers had their first child in marriage (result not shown).
- Among mothers without a Bachelor's degree, there is minimal variation in stability in the five years following their first marital birth with about 80% of marriages remaining intact at their child's 5th birthday. By age 5 the groups diverge somewhat such that those without a high school degree are most stable and those with a high school degree are least stable (those with some college are in between). Most mothers without a college degree have their first birth outside of marriage. Just one in three mothers without a college degree has their first child in marriage (result not shown).

Figure 3. Percentage of Marriages Enduring 10 Years after a First, Marital Birth, by Mothers' Education



References:

Data: 2011/13 National Survey of Family Growth, Female Respondent

Martinez, G., Daniels, K., & Chandra, A. (2012). Fertility of men and women aged 15-44 years in the United States: National Survey of Family Growth, 2006-2010. *National health statistics reports*, (51), 1-28.

Suggested Citation:

Stykes, B. (2015). Marital Stability Following a 2nd Marital Birth (FP-15-0?). National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

Retrieved from: <http://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/>



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This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 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 state or federal government.

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005 Williams Hall
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

419.372.3119
ncfmr@bgsu.edu