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FP-19-01 Cohabitors Raising Shared Children

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FP-19-01

Cohabitors Raising Shared Children

Kasey J. Eickmeyer

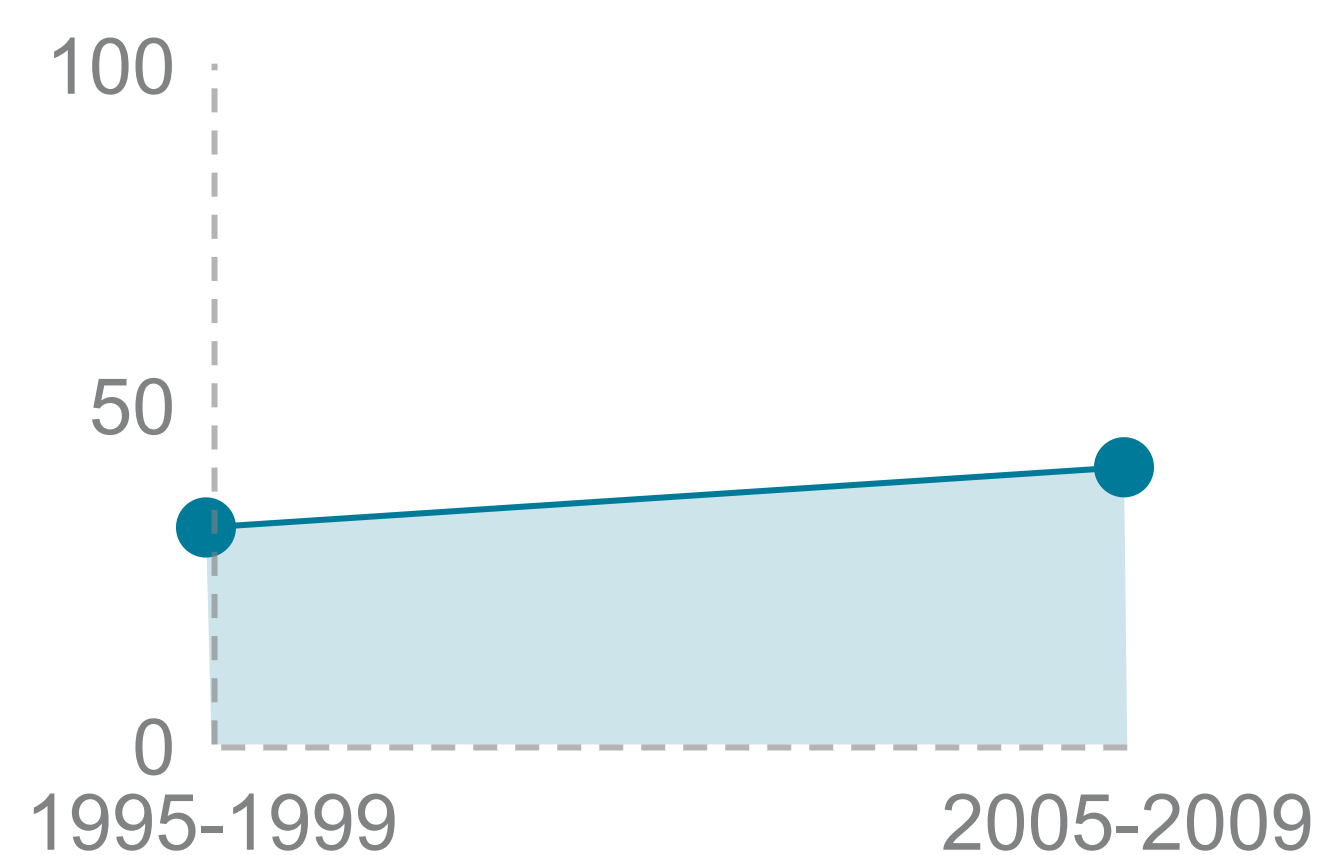


Cohabitation continues to increase in the United States and is viewed as an acceptable family form in which to have children. The majority (64%) of women aged 19-44 have ever cohabited (FP-17-02), and virtually all the increase in nonmarital childbearing is due to childbearing in cohabiting unions (FP-17-04). Using data from the 2002 and 2011-2015 National Survey of Family Growth, this Family Profile charts the growth in cohabiting women living with their partner and their shared biological children. We examine two cohabitation cohorts a decade apart--women who cohabited from 1995 to 1999 and 2005 to 2009. We focus on cohabiting families with at least one shared biological child, recognizing these families may also have stepchildren (children of either partner born in a prior union), and address variation in cohabiting families in FP-19-02.



The proportion of cohabiting couples with shared biological children increased from about 3 in 10 (31%) to 4 in 10 (40%).

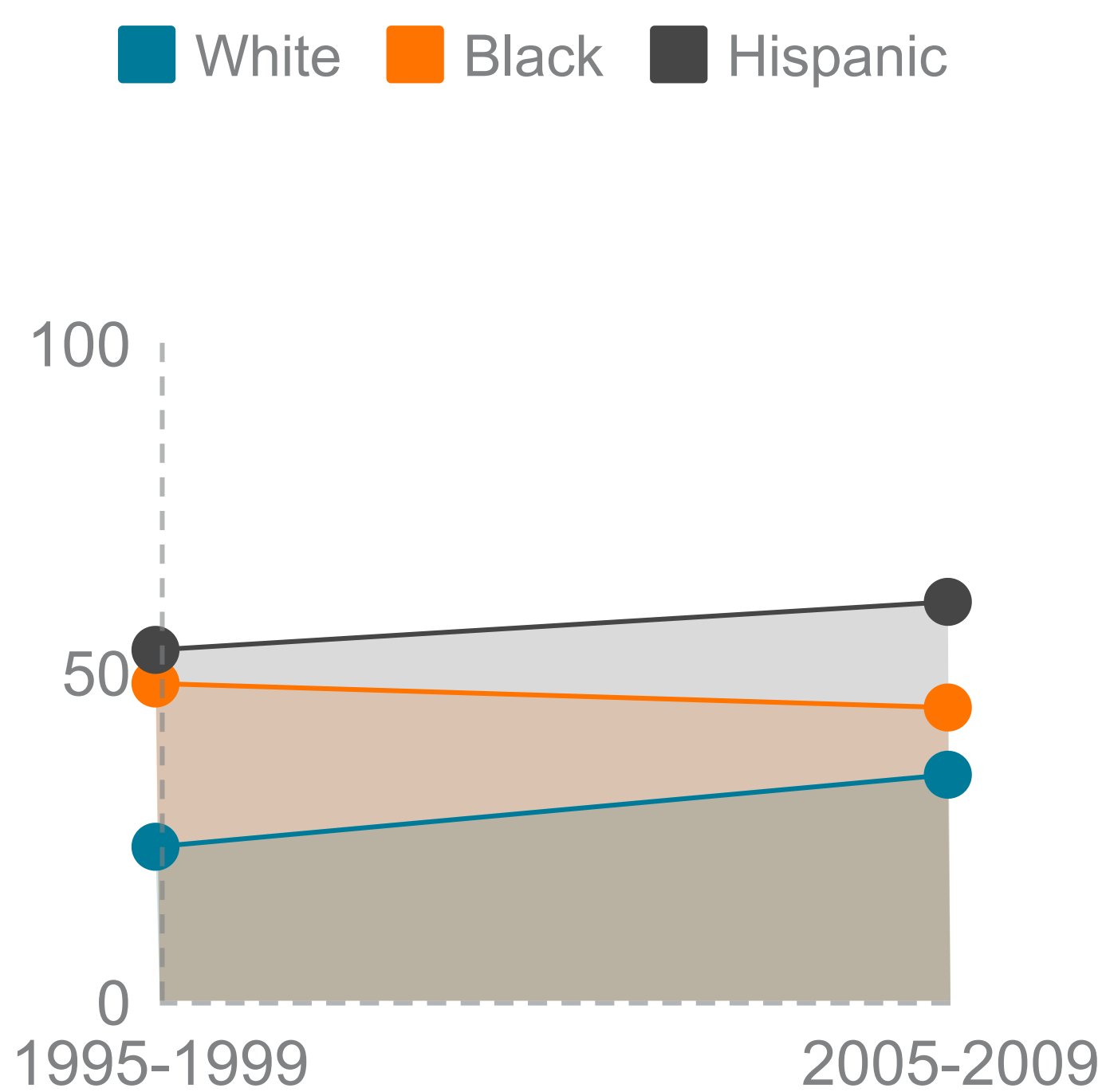
Figure 1. Cohabitors with Shared Biological Children



Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth, 2002, 2011-2013, 2013-2015

Race & Ethnicity

Figure 2. Cohabitors with Shared Biological Children by Mother's Race/Ethnicity



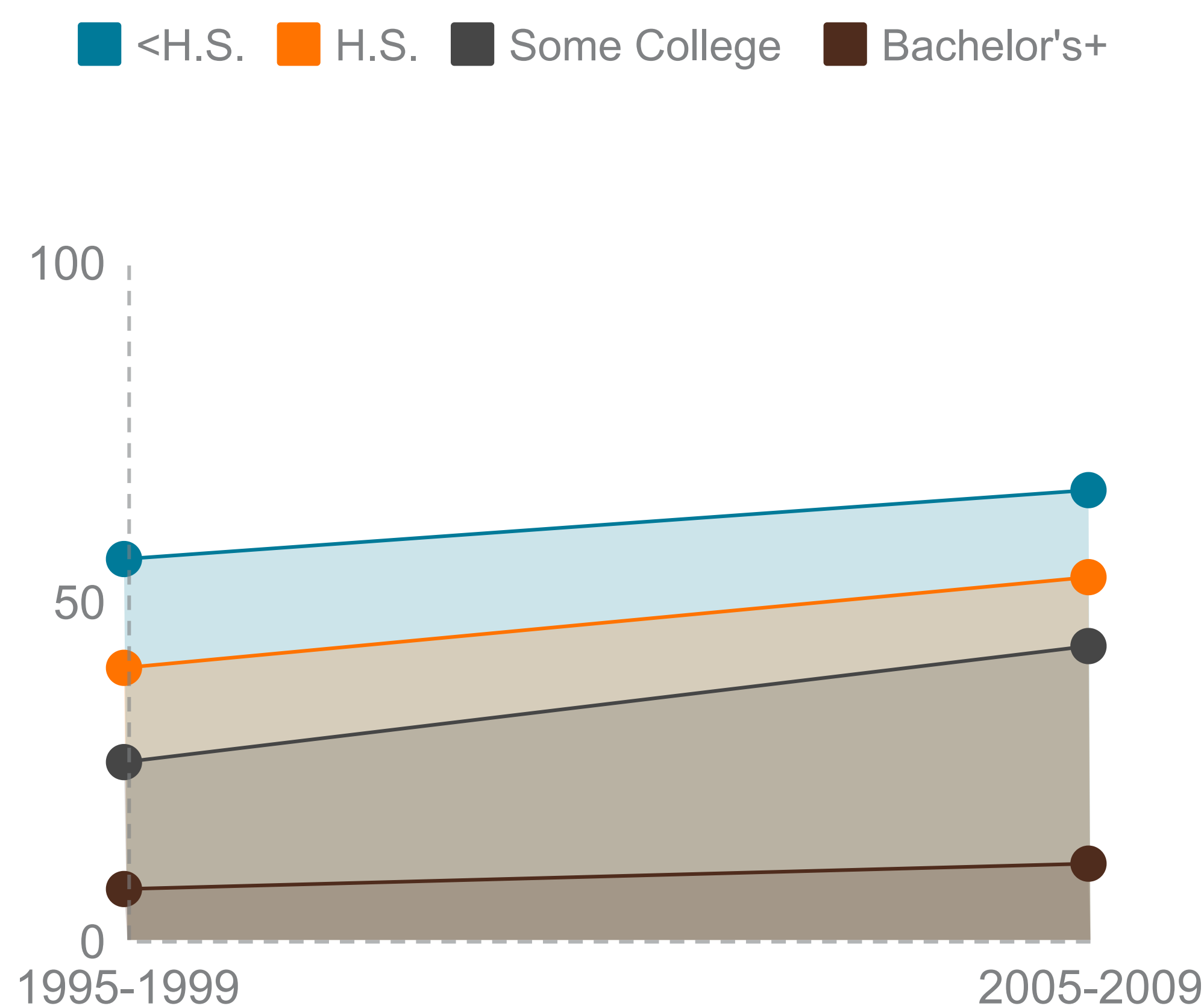
- The majority of Hispanic cohabiting couples were raising a biological child together in contrast to 44% of Black and 34% of White cohabitors.
- Growing shares of White and Hispanic cohabiting couples were raising a shared biological child.
- Among White cohabitors in 1995-1999, about one-quarter were living with biological children, and by 2005-2009, over one-third (34%) were living with biological children.
- Among Hispanics, there was a shift from about 50% in 1995-99 to 60% by 2005-2009.
- Slightly declining shares of Black cohabiting couples were raising biological children together.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth, 2002, 2011-2013, 2013-2015

Educational Attainment

- A negative education gradient persists in the proportion of cohabitators living with a shared biological child.
- Nearly two-thirds (66%) of cohabitators without a high school degree were raising a biological child together in contrast to about 1 in 10 (11%) cohabitators with a college degree.
- Increases in the share of cohabitators raising a biological child occurred across education groups.
- The greatest increase occurred for women with 'some college' shifting from 26% in the early cohabitation cohort to 43% for the recent cohabitation cohort.

Figure 3. Cohabitators with Shared Biological Children by Mother's Education



Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth, 2002, 2011-2013, 2013-2015



Only 1 in 10 cohabiting women with a Bachelor's degree had a shared child with their partner vs. over 6 in 10 among those without a high school diploma.

Data Citations:

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). (2004). Cycle 6: 2002 National Survey of Family Growth Public Use Data and Documentation. Hyattsville, MD: CDC National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/nsfg_cycle6.htm

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Wu, H. (2017). Trends in births to single and cohabiting mothers, 1980-2014. *Family Profiles*, FP-17-04. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/wu-trends-births-single-cohabiting-mothers-fp-17-04.html>

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