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FP-18-09 Childbearing Desires, Intentions, and Attitudes Among Women 40-44

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Desires to Have a Child in the Future

The first section examines the proportion of women aged 40-44 who want to have children, having responded affirmatively to the question “Looking to the future, do you, yourself, want to have a(nother) baby at some time in the future?” The figure compares those who already have children to those who do not have children.

Between 2002 and 2013, the proportion of 40-44-year-old women who wanted to have a child in the future increased among those with and without children.

In 2002, slightly more than one in three childless women aged 40-44 wanted to have a child compared to one in six mothers.

In 2013, 42% of childless women wanted to have a baby in the future compared to only 20% of their peers who already had children.

More than twice as many childless women reported wanting to have a child in the future than women who already had children.

If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?

More than twice as many childless women expected to fulfill their childbearing desires.

As with desires to have a child, the proportion of women aged 40-44 who intended to have a child in the future was always higher among childless women than among mothers.

In 2002, 16% of childless women intended to have a baby in the future, rising to around 18-19% in the later years.

Among women with children, only 3% intended to have another child in 2002 and 2008, but the percentage rose to 5% in 2013.

The proportion of women intending to have a child in the future increased among those who already had children.

The proportion who would be bothered “some” declined between 2002 and 2013, at 13-14%.

The percentage of childless women who reported they would be bothered “a great deal” stayed fairly constant between 2002 and 2013, at 13-14%.

The proportion who would be bothered “some” declined from almost a third in 2002 to about a fifth in 2013.

There was an increase of ten percentage points among childless women aged 40-44 who reported that they would be bothered “not at all” if they did not have children, from 35% in 2002 to 49% in 2013.

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Intentions to Have a Child in the Future

Wanting to have a child does not necessarily mean a woman actually intends or expects to do so. This section examines the proportion of women who responded affirmatively to the question “Looking to the future, do you, yourself, want to have a(nother) baby at some time in the future?” Again, mothers aged 40-44 are compared to childless women aged 40-44.

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Feelings About Not Having Children Among Childless Women

Finally, this section examines trends from 2002 to 2013 in how childless women would feel about not having children based on responses to the question “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you a great deal, some, a little, or not at all?”

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