

# Fertility of American Women: June 2000

Issued October 2001

## Population Characteristics

P20-543RV

### INTRODUCTION

This report profiles current fertility patterns of American women and is based on data collected in the June 2000 supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Unlike annual fertility statistics compiled from birth certificates by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), data collected in the CPS are from two questions asked of women 15 to 44 years old: (1) the number of children they have ever had, and (2) the date of birth of their last child. The report provides current estimates of fertility and out-of-wedlock childbearing, highlighting differences among women by race, ethnicity, and nativity status. Historical data from previous surveys are also used in this report to show the fluctuations since 1990 in the labor force participation rate of women with children under 1 year of age.

Data from NCHS indicate that the fertility rates have fluctuated sharply since the peak of the Baby Boom in the late 1950s when women were having children at a rate of more than 3.5 births per woman. By the mid-1970s, the total fertility rate<sup>1</sup> fell by one-half to about 1.8 births per woman. During the 1990s, fertility rates fluctuated between 2.0 and 2.1 births per woman, a rate still below the level required for the natural replacement of the population (about 2.1 births per woman).

<sup>1</sup> The total fertility rate for a given year is a hypothetical estimate of completed fertility. It indicates how many births a woman would have by the end of her reproductive life, if, for all of her childbearing years, she was to experience the age-specific birth rates for that given year.

### CURRENT FERTILITY

#### Overall patterns of fertility

Table 1 shows fertility levels for women in June 2000 by age, race, and Hispanic origin.<sup>2</sup> Of the 60.9 million women who were 15 to 44 years old in June 2000, 3.9 million gave birth in the preceding 12 months, of which 1.6 million births were first births.<sup>3</sup> This produced an estimated fertility rate of 65 births per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years old and a corresponding first birth rate of 27 births per 1,000 women. The fertility rate in this report is defined as the number of women who reported having a child in the 12-month period ending in June 2000 per 1,000 women in the specified age and/or characteristic group at the time of the survey.

Overall, 43 percent of women in the childbearing ages were childless in 2000. Among women 40 to 44 years old (who were nearing the completion of their childbearing years), 19 percent were childless, almost twice as high as among women who were of the same age in 1980 (10 percent). Women 40 to 44 years in 2000 will probably end their

<sup>2</sup> The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual (population) values because of sampling variation, or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and meet Census Bureau standards for statistical accuracy.

<sup>3</sup> Preliminary vital statistics estimates for the calendar year 2000 indicate that there were almost 4.1 million births, of which 1.6 million were first births (Joyce A. Martin, et al., "Births: Preliminary Data for 2000." *National Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 49, No. 5. National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2001, Table 2).

### Current Population Reports

By  
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Table 1.  
**Fertility Indicators for Women 15 to 44 Years Old by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin:  
 June 2000**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Percent childless	Women who had a child in the last year			First births per 1,000 women	Children ever born per 1,000 women
			Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women			
				Rate	90-percent confidence interval		
<b>AGE</b>							
Total .....	60,873	42.8	3,934	64.6	62.1 - 67.1	26.7	1,218
15 to 19 years .....	9,818	90.5	586	59.7	53.8 - 65.6	38.7	131
20 to 24 years .....	9,258	63.6	850	91.8	84.4 - 99.2	47.1	572
25 to 29 years .....	9,227	44.2	996	107.9	99.9 - 115.9	43.7	1,049
30 to 34 years .....	9,915	28.1	871	87.9	80.9 - 94.9	27.5	1,549
35 to 39 years .....	11,208	20.1	506	45.1	40.3 - 49.9	9.6	1,839
40 to 44 years .....	11,447	19.0	125	10.9	8.5 - 13.3	2.3	1,913
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>							
<b>White</b>							
Total .....	48,506	43.1	3,173	65.4	62.6 - 68.2	27.2	1,205
15 to 19 years .....	7,735	91.3	447	57.8	51.3 - 64.3	37.2	119
20 to 24 years .....	7,287	66.5	650	89.2	81.0 - 97.4	47.4	522
25 to 29 years .....	7,210	44.7	843	116.9	107.6 - 126.2	49.4	1,018
30 to 34 years .....	7,883	28.0	730	92.6	84.6 - 100.6	30.2	1,521
35 to 39 years .....	9,077	19.7	413	45.5	40.1 - 50.9	8.3	1,851
40 to 44 years .....	9,314	19.2	89	9.6	7.1 - 12.1	1.7	1,892
<b>White non-Hispanic</b>							
Total .....	40,939	44.8	2,457	60.0	57.1 - 62.9	25.1	1,147
15 to 19 years .....	6,389	92.8	322	50.3	43.6 - 57.0	31.1	102
20 to 24 years .....	6,025	71.1	455	75.5	68.6 - 82.4	40.8	447
25 to 29 years .....	5,874	48.8	667	113.5	105.0 - 122.0	51.2	910
30 to 34 years .....	6,636	30.0	596	89.8	80.2 - 99.4	30.3	1,425
35 to 39 years .....	7,805	20.5	353	45.2	37.2 - 53.2	8.2	1,789
40 to 44 years .....	8,209	20.3	65	7.9	2.3 - 13.5	1.9	1,806
<b>Black</b>							
Total .....	8,939	39.0	565	63.2	60.9 - 65.5	21.9	1,350
15 to 19 years .....	1,569	85.6	110	70.1	54.2 - 86.0	48.8	197
20 to 24 years .....	1,453	46.1	159	109.4	89.2 - 129.6	40.9	887
25 to 29 years .....	1,413	36.4	110	78.2	60.6 - 95.8	13.6	1,305
30 to 34 years .....	1,433	24.9	94	65.5	49.4 - 81.6	13.1	1,869
35 to 39 years .....	1,557	21.6	66	42.5	29.9 - 55.1	11.1	1,838
40 to 44 years .....	1,514	17.7	25	16.6	8.5 - 24.7	3.1	2,040
<b>Asian and Pacific Islander</b>							
Total .....	2,819	51.1	154	54.6	44.1 - 65.1	31.1	966
15 to 19 years .....	392	95.9	16	40.9	16.3 - 65.5	15.6	85
20 to 24 years .....	422	75.7	25	59.8	31.4 - 88.2	52.9	334
25 to 29 years .....	517	61.2	35	67.9	40.7 - 95.1	45.6	715
30 to 34 years .....	497	40.0	43	87.2	56.0 - 118.4	32.6	1,028
35 to 39 years .....	477	25.1	24	49.7	25.2 - 74.2	27.4	1,572
40 to 44 years .....	514	21.6	10	20.2	4.9 - 35.5	12.2	1,788
<b>Hispanic (of any race)</b>							
Total .....	8,002	34.6	761	95.1	84.2 - 106.0	38.6	1,510
15 to 19 years .....	1,426	84.2	132	92.5	66.9 - 118.1	64.4	206
20 to 24 years .....	1,334	44.6	212	158.9	125.6 - 192.2	79.8	885
25 to 29 years .....	1,395	27.5	185	132.7	102.4 - 163.0	43.0	1,465
30 to 34 years .....	1,342	18.9	141	105.0	77.1 - 132.9	27.7	1,992
35 to 39 years .....	1,342	15.3	64	47.4	28.1 - 66.7	10.0	2,183
40 to 44 years .....	1,162	10.9	28	23.8	8.9 - 38.7	-	2,546

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

childbearing years with an average of 1.9 children, a level below that required for the natural replacement of the population.<sup>4</sup> This average is about one child less than the average for women in this same age group in 1980 (3.0 children).

### **Fertility differences by race and ethnicity**

Hispanic<sup>5</sup> women had the highest fertility rate among all race and origin groups shown in Table 1 (95 births per 1,000 women 15 to 44 years old). Among Hispanic women, 761,000 had a birth in the year prior to the survey, representing 19 percent of all births in 2000. The proportion of all women 15 to 44 years old who were Hispanic in 2000 was 13 percent. The fertility rate for White non-Hispanic women was considerably lower (60 births per 1,000 women) than for Hispanic women (95 births per 1,000 women).

Among women 40 to 44 years old in 2000, only Hispanic women, with an average of 2.5 births, exceeded the level required for the natural replacement of the population (about 2.1 births per woman). Black women had a fertility level not significantly different from the replacement level, while White non-Hispanic women and Asian and Pacific Islander women were significantly below replacement level and averaged only 1.8 births. Corresponding to their relatively

<sup>4</sup> The level required for the natural replacement of the population is the average number of children a woman must have to replace herself with a female living to the average age of childbearing. Taking into account that slightly more boy than girl babies are born and that not all children survive to the childbearing ages, this level is about 2.1 births per woman.

<sup>5</sup> People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population are not shown in this report because of the small sample size in the CPS. Based on the population of women 15 to 44 years old surveyed in the June 2000 CPS, 3.0 percent of the Black population and 1.9 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population were also of Hispanic origin.

high level of completed fertility, only 11 percent of Hispanic women 40 to 44 years old were childless compared with 20 percent of White non-Hispanic women.

### **Fertility differences by nativity status**

Table 2 shows that in June 2000, there were 7.9 million foreign-born<sup>6</sup> women 15 to 44 years old in the United States, representing 13 percent of women in the childbearing ages. In the year prior to the survey, 673,000 foreign-born women gave birth, resulting in a fertility rate of 85 births per 1,000 women. Forty-two percent of births to foreign-born women were first births. The fertility rate for native women was considerably lower at 62 births per 1,000 women, although a similar proportion of births (41 percent) to these women were first births.

Higher fertility rates for foreign-born women are due primarily to higher age-specific fertility rates for women in the principal childbearing years of 20 to 34 years old (Figure 1). In 2000, 69 percent of births were to women 20 to 34 years old. In the age groups 20 to 24 years old through 30 to 34 years old, fertility rates for foreign-born women exceeded those for native women by approximately 30 births per 1,000 women.

Among foreign-born women, those of Hispanic origin had a considerably higher fertility rate in 2000 (112 births per 1,000 women) than those not of Hispanic origin (61 births per 1,000 women), and a higher average number of births per woman (1.8 births per woman

<sup>6</sup> In this report, "native" is used to designate people born in the United States, Puerto Rico, the outlying areas or territories of the United States, or who were born abroad to parents, at least one of whom was a U.S. citizen. "Foreign born" refers to all other people. The present Current Population Survey sample does not include Puerto Rico.

and 1.2 births per woman), respectively<sup>7</sup>. Consistent with their higher fertility rates, foreign-born Hispanic women were less likely to be childless (25 percent) than were foreign-born women not of Hispanic origin (42 percent). Sixty-three percent of births to foreign-born women in 2000 were to women of Hispanic origin, although they represented only 48 percent of foreign-born women in the childbearing ages.

Among native women, fertility rates for Hispanic women were higher than those of non-Hispanic women (80 births per 1,000 and 60 births per 1,000, respectively) as were the average number of children born per woman (1.3 births per woman and 1.2 births per woman, respectively). However, levels of childlessness were not significantly different between the two groups of native women.

### **OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBEARING**

#### **Annual estimates for 2000**

Estimates from the June CPS 2000 indicate that approximately 1.2 million women gave birth out of wedlock in the 12-month period preceding the survey, which represented 31 percent of all births during this period. About 1.1 million births were to never-married women, while 163,000 were to women widowed or divorced at the time of the survey (see Table 2). These estimates may vary slightly from those reported by the NCHS, because marital status in the CPS is recorded at the time of the survey and not at

<sup>7</sup> In order to control for differences in the age distributions of Hispanic and non-Hispanic immigrants, the total fertility for each of these populations was constructed from age-specific fertility rates from the June CPS. Hispanic women who were foreign born had an estimated total rate of 3.4 births per woman compared with 1.8 births per woman for non-Hispanic women who were foreign born. Also, see footnote 1.

Table 2.  
**Fertility Indicators for Women 15 to 44 Years Old by Selected Characteristics: June 2000**

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Number of women	Percent childless	Women who had a child in the last year			Children ever born per 1,000 women
			Number with a birth	Births per 1,000 women	First births per 1,000 women	
Total .....	60,873	42.8	3,934	64.6	26.7	1,218
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>						
Currently married .....	30,497	18.7	2,708	88.8	35.5	1,785
Married - husband present .....	28,215	18.3	2,561	90.8	37.0	1,782
Married - husband absent <sup>1</sup> .....	2,282	22.8	147	64.5	16.6	1,821
Divorced or Widowed .....	5,281	21.3	163	31.0	6.8	1,677
Never married .....	25,095	76.7	1,063	42.3	20.2	431
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Not a high school graduate .....	13,006	58.2	920	70.7	29.5	1,032
High school, graduate .....	17,205	28.7	1,204	70.0	29.5	1,515
College, 1 or more years .....	30,662	44.2	1,810	59.0	24.0	1,130
No degree .....	12,603	45.4	651	51.6	19.2	1,134
Associate degree .....	4,955	31.9	300	60.6	23.6	1,401
Bachelor's degree .....	9,926	48.0	612	61.7	27.7	1,018
Graduate or professional degree .....	3,178	46.9	247	77.7	32.0	1,039
<b>LABOR FORCE STATUS</b>						
In labor force .....	43,862	43.4	2,170	49.5	21.3	1,167
Employed .....	41,369	42.9	1,972	47.7	20.7	1,171
Unemployed .....	2,493	50.5	198	79.4	31.1	1,088
Not in labor force .....	17,011	41.5	1,764	103.7	40.6	1,349
<b>ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME<sup>2</sup></b>						
Under \$ 10,000 .....	4,249	39.4	369	86.8	32.5	1,394
\$10,000 to \$19,999 .....	6,203	37.9	464	74.8	25.3	1,413
\$20,000 to \$24,999 .....	3,439	38.6	262	76.2	37.3	1,319
\$25,000 to \$29,999 .....	3,761	39.9	297	78.9	34.0	1,243
\$30,000 to \$34,999 .....	3,572	43.6	223	62.4	27.3	1,179
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	8,864	41.3	576	64.9	25.3	1,227
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	10,646	42.2	652	61.2	26.8	1,218
\$75,000 and over .....	12,506	48.2	751	60.1	24.3	1,066
<b>REGION OF RESIDENCE</b>						
Northeast .....	11,282	46.2	686	60.8	24.9	1,126
Midwest .....	14,026	43.3	867	61.8	26.4	1,230
South .....	21,692	40.7	1,433	66.0	27.5	1,226
West .....	13,872	42.9	949	68.4	27.3	1,267
<b>METROPOLITAN RESIDENCE</b>						
Metropolitan .....	50,201	44.1	3,225	64.2	26.8	1,182
In central cities .....	18,754	46.8	1,217	64.9	28.5	1,136
Outside central cities .....	31,447	42.5	2,008	63.8	25.8	1,210
Nonmetropolitan .....	10,672	36.7	709	66.4	26.4	1,384
<b>NATIVITY AND HISPANIC ORIGIN</b>						
Native .....	53,001	44.1	3,262	61.5	25.4	1,182
Hispanic (of any race) .....	4,231	42.8	338	79.8	32.6	1,287
Not Hispanic .....	48,770	44.2	2,924	59.9	24.8	1,173
Foreign born .....	7,871	34.1	673	85.4	35.7	1,459
Hispanic (of any race) .....	3,770	25.3	423	112.3	45.3	1,760
Not Hispanic .....	4,101	42.2	249	60.8	26.9	1,183

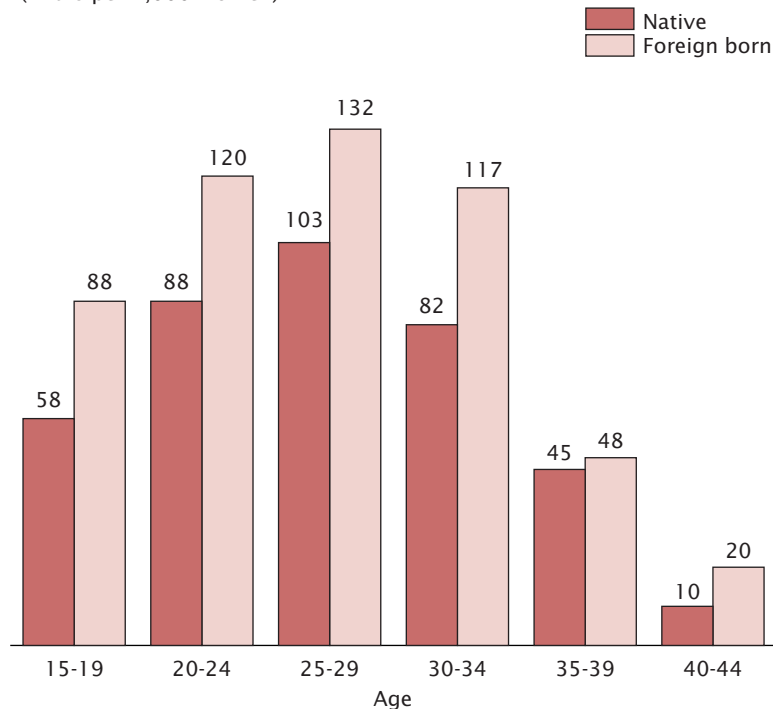
<sup>1</sup>Includes separated women.

<sup>2</sup>Data not shown for people with family income not reported.

Note: Since the number of women who have had a birth during the 12-month period was tabulated and not the actual numbers of births themselves, a small underestimation of fertility for this period may exist because of the omission of: (1) Multiple births; (2) more than one live birth occurring to a woman in a 12-month period (the woman is counted only once); (3) women who had births in the period and who died by the survey date; (4) women who were in institutions and therefore not in the survey universe; and (5) 2 percent of births in a 12-month period (only 51 weeks of data are tabulated in the CPS due to the interview schedule). These losses may be somewhat offset by the inclusion in the CPS of births to immigrants who did not have their children born in the United States and births to nonresident women who had their children born in the United States. These births would not have been recorded in the vital registration system. The ages of the women in this table and similar tables in this report refer to the age of women at the time of the survey and not at the birth of child.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

Figure 1.  
**Fertility Rates by Age and Nativity: June 2000**  
 (Births per 1,000 women)



Note: Refers to women who had a birth in the preceding 12 months.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

the time of the actual birth.<sup>8</sup> Some women in the CPS who had a birth in the last year may have subsequently married or divorced by the time of the survey. In addition, out-of-wedlock birth data from NCHS are recorded by the physician on the birth certificate at the time of the child's birth, whereas CPS estimates of out-of-wedlock births are based on the information provided by the respondent at the time of the interview.

### Characteristics of women with an out-of-wedlock birth

Out-of-wedlock childbearing occurs most frequently among younger

<sup>8</sup> Preliminary vital statistics estimates for calendar year 2000 indicate that there were 1.3 million births to unmarried women (all ages) or 33 percent of all births. (Joyce A. Martin, et al., "Births: Final Data for 2000." *National Vital Statistics Report*, Vol. 49, No. 5. National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 2001, Table C).

women — 83 percent of births to teenagers in 2000 were out-of-wedlock (see Figure 2). Forty-four percent of births to women in their early twenties were out-of-wedlock, with the proportion declining to 13 percent for women 30 years and over. The majority (62 percent) of births to Black women in 2000 were out-of-wedlock, compared with 30 percent for Hispanic women and 26 percent for White non-Hispanic women. The proportion of births born out-of-wedlock among foreign-born women was considerably lower (18 percent) than among native women (34 percent).

Figure 2 shows also that there is an inverse relationship between educational attainment and the proportion of births out-of-wedlock. In 2000, the proportion ranged from 54 percent among mothers who had not graduated from high school

to only 4 percent among women who had either a bachelor's degree or graduate/ professional degree.

## LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS WITH INFANTS

### Change in labor force patterns since 1976

The labor force participation rate for women with infants was 55 percent in 2000, down from an all-time high of 59 percent in 1998.<sup>9</sup> However, the overall participation rate was still much higher than when first recorded by the Census Bureau in 1976 (31 percent). From 1976 to 1998, the labor force participation rate for women with infants either increased or did not change significantly between successive reporting periods. The decline from 1998 to 2000 is the first significant decline in the 1976 to 2000 period.

In June 2000, there were 2,170,000 women in the labor force who had infants — 1,972,000 (91 percent) of these women were employed at the time of the survey, while another 198,000 were unemployed. Changes in the labor force participation of women with infants are important as they could signal changes in the demand for child care arrangements, changes in child rearing and further childbearing and spacing patterns, and the demand for employer-sponsored maternity leave benefits.

<sup>9</sup> The Labor force participation rate is defined as the percentage of people in a specified population group who are either employed or looking for work. Infants are defined as children under 1 year or 12 months old. The Census Bureau first published labor force participation rates for mothers with infants in 1976. For a time series of annual births to women in the labor force from CPS surveys since 1976, see U.S. Census Bureau, "Women 15 to 44 Years Old Who Have Had a Child in the Last Year and Their Percentage in the Labor Force: Selected Years, June 1976 to Present." [www.census.gov/population/socdemo/fertility.html](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/fertility.html). Click on Table H5 at this URL address.

Table 3 shows trends in the labor force participation of mothers with infants from 1990 to 2000. In 1990 and 1994, the overall labor force participation rate was 53 percent. The only group that had a significant increase in their labor force participation in this period was women who were other than “married - husband present” — from 44 percent in 1990 to 50 percent in 1994.

During the next 4-year period, from 1994 to 1998, labor force participation rates increased among many groups. Overall, the rate increased from 53 percent in 1994 to 59 percent. Significant increases in labor force participation occurred among women 25 years old and over, women with two or more children, Black women, both married women and unmarried women, and women who were high school graduates.

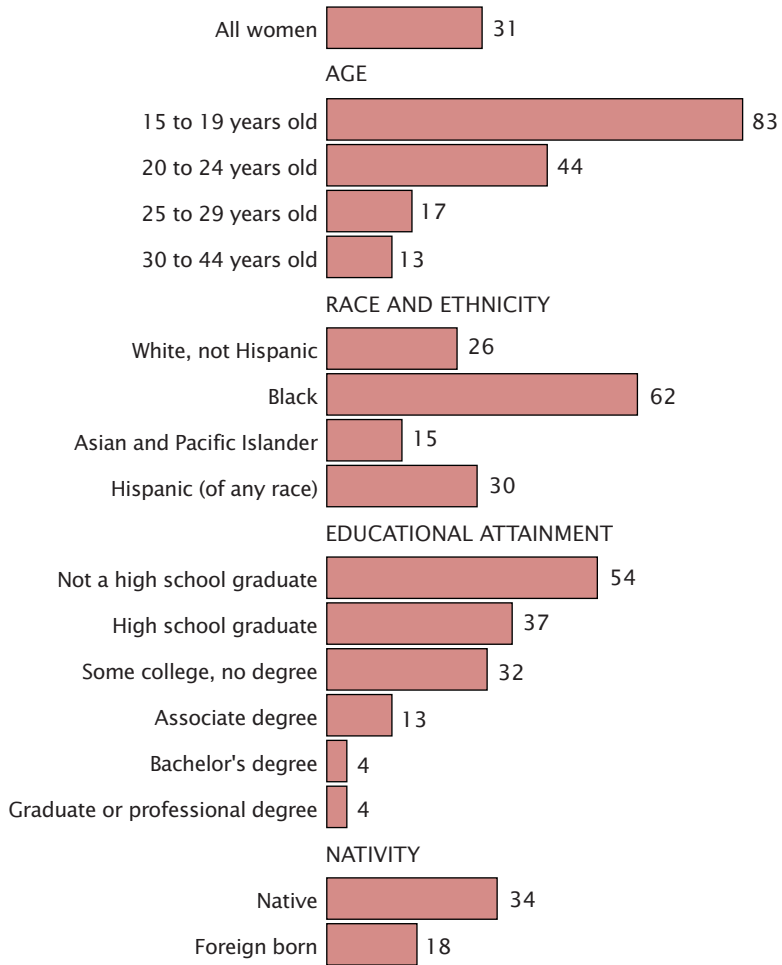
From 1998 to 2000, the overall labor force participation rate of mothers with infants dropped from 59 percent to 55 percent. Significant declines in labor force participation rates occurred in this period among mothers 30 years old and over, mothers who were White, and mothers who had 1 or more years of college. While the rate for married mothers during this period declined from 60 to 54 percent — back to its 1994 level — the rate for unmarried mothers remained unchanged in 2000 at 57 percent.

In contrast, younger mothers, Black mothers, Hispanic mothers, and mothers who had a high school education or less did not experience a decline in their labor or participation rates. Whether these diverging trends are short-lived or will continue depends to a considerable extent on future changes in the economy and changes in the lifestyles of new mothers in balancing their time between work and child rearing activities.

Figure 2.

**Births Out of Wedlock: June 2000**

(Percent of all births to women in specified categories born out of wedlock)



Note: Refers to women who had a birth in the preceding 12 months.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

**Labor force participation among mothers**

Table 4 shows the degree of labor force participation of mothers 15 to 44 years old who have had a child in their lifetime by whether or not they had a child between July 1999 and June 2000. Labor force participation rates of mothers, rather than of all women, are used in this comparison as children require attention and daily supervision, time constraints which are not shared by childless women. These family activities, in turn, influence the

likelihood of being employed. Mothers who had a child in the last year recorded lower labor force participation rates (55 percent) than did other mothers (74 percent).

Women who seek to return to work shortly after giving birth have different maternal responsibilities that are not shared by women with older children. Mothers with infants may want to return to work, but at lower levels of activity, to devote more time to providing care in the first months after childbirth. Figure 3,

Table 3.

### Changes in Labor Force Participation Among Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old With Infants by Selected Characteristics: June 1990, 1994, 1998, and 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to women with at least one child ever born)

Characteristic	Mothers in the labor force								Percentage point difference 1998-2000	Percentage point difference 1994-1998	Percentage point difference 1990-1994
	2000		1998		1994		1990				
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
Total .....	3,934	55.2	3,671	58.7	3,890	53.1	3,913	52.8	*-3.5	*5.6	0.3
<b>AGE</b>											
15 to 19 years .....	586	46.0	460	43.2	397	39.3	338	42.8	2.8	3.9	-3.5
20 to 24 years .....	850	51.9	864	56.4	938	51.0	1,038	45.5	-4.5	5.4	5.5
25 to 29 years .....	996	59.5	950	61.9	1,054	54.5	1,192	55.3	-2.4	*7.4	-0.8
30 to 44 years .....	1,502	57.7	1,397	63.0	1,501	57.1	1,346	58.9	*-5.3	*5.9	-1.8
<b>BIRTH ORDER</b>											
First birth .....	1,626	57.5	1,490	60.8	1,647	59.0	1,540	59.7	-3.3	1.8	-0.7
Second or higher order birth .....	2,308	53.5	2,181	57.3	2,242	48.9	2,374	48.4	-3.8	*8.4	0.5
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>											
White .....	3,173	53.1	2,947	58.4	3,107	55.4	3,148	54.5	*-5.3	3.0	0.9
White non-Hispanic .....	2,457	56.8	2,374	61.6	2,534	59.2	(NA)	(NA)	*-4.8	(NA)	(NA)
Black .....	565	65.8	554	63.0	567	47.0	615	46.9	2.8	*16.0	0.1
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	154	56.3	138	49.9	112	37.7	101	48.0	6.4	12.2	-10.3
Hispanic (of any race) .....	761	41.8	618	45.7	644	37.7	491	43.8	-3.9	8.0	-6.1
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>											
Married - husband present .....	2,561	54.1	2,424	59.5	2,748	54.5	2,826	56.4	*-5.4	*5.0	-1.9
All other <sup>1</sup> .....	1,374	57.2	1,247	57.1	1,142	49.7	1,088	43.5	0.1	*7.4	*6.2
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b> <sup>2</sup>											
Not a high school graduate .....	920	39.0	793	37.7	832	33.5	816	31.5	1.3	4.2	2.0
High school, 4 years .....	1,204	55.0	1,034	58.4	1,303	48.1	1,588	51.9	-3.4	*10.3	-3.8
College, 1 or more years .....	1,810	63.5	1,844	67.9	1,754	66.2	1,509	65.3	*-4.4	1.7	0.9
Some college or associate degree .....	951	63.2	978	67.3	981	63.3	777	62.8	-4.1	4.0	0.5
Bachelor's degree and above .....	859	63.8	866	68.5	773	69.6	732	68.0	-4.7	-1.1	1.6

\* Indicates significant difference at the 90-percent confidence level.

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Includes married spouse absent, separated, divorced, widowed, and never married women.<sup>2</sup>Educational attainment categories in 1990 based on years of school completed.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

shows that a lower proportion of mothers with infants were employed full time<sup>10</sup> than were mothers without infants. Among mothers with infants, twice as many were employed full time (34 percent) as were employed part time (17 percent) compared with mothers without infant children where full-time workers were three times as common (54 percent) as part-time workers (16 percent). Relatively high

ratios of full to part-time employment generally exist for mothers with infants in all age groups — except for teenage mothers. At these young ages, where schooling may compete with the labor force for nonfamilial activities, part-time work rather than full-time work is more frequent.

#### Differences in full-time and part-time employment by characteristics of mothers

Labor force participation among women with infants is appreciably

higher for college-educated women than for women with a high school education or less. In 2000, 64 percent of women with 1 or more years of college who had a child in the previous year were in the labor force, compared with 55 percent for high school graduates and only 39 percent for women who were not high school graduates.

Women with a graduate or professional degree were three times as likely to work at full-time jobs than at part-time jobs. Among women

<sup>10</sup> Full-time workers are employed people who work 35 or more hours per week.

Table 4.

### Labor Force Participation Among Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old by Fertility Status and Selected Characteristics: June 2000

(Numbers in thousands. Limited to women with at least one child ever born)

Characteristic	Mothers who had a child in the last year					Mothers who did not have a child in the last year					
	Number of mothers	Percent in labor force				Number of mothers	Percent in labor force				Unemployed
		Total	Full time	Part time	Unemployed		Total	Full time	Part time	Unemployed	
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>3,934</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>30,871</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	
<b>AGE</b>											
15 to 19 years .....	586	46.0	14.5	20.3	11.2	347	54.7	23.0	22.4	9.3	
20 to 24 years .....	850	51.9	31.2	13.4	7.2	2,517	70.4	48.2	15.0	7.2	
25 to 29 years .....	996	59.5	40.7	15.2	3.6	4,156	70.8	51.9	15.5	3.5	
30 to 44 years .....	1,502	57.7	37.4	18.0	2.3	23,851	74.5	55.6	16.0	2.8	
<b>BIRTH ORDER AND AGE OF WOMAN</b>											
First birth .....	1,626	57.5	34.4	18.3	4.8	9,341	77.9	60.1	14.1	3.6	
15 to 19 years .....	380	47.0	15.6	21.8	9.5	296	53.6	23.1	21.2	9.2	
20 to 24 years .....	436	52.2	29.3	15.5	7.4	1,547	73.5	53.8	13.4	6.3	
25 to 29 years .....	403	68.6	49.3	17.8	1.5	1,769	77.3	58.7	15.7	3.0	
30 to 44 years .....	407	61.9	42.7	18.5	0.7	5,729	80.4	64.2	13.5	2.8	
Second or higher order birth .....	2,308	53.5	32.8	15.5	5.2	21,529	71.6	51.6	16.7	3.2	
15 to 19 years .....	206	44.2	12.4	17.4	14.4	50	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	
20 to 24 years .....	414	51.7	33.3	11.2	7.1	969	65.3	39.2	17.5	8.6	
25 to 29 years .....	592	53.3	34.8	13.5	5.1	2,387	66.1	46.9	15.3	3.8	
30 to 44 years .....	1,095	56.1	35.4	17.8	2.9	18,123	72.6	52.9	16.9	2.9	
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>											
White .....	3,173	53.1	30.9	17.7	4.5	24,422	72.4	52.0	17.6	2.8	
White non-Hispanic .....	2,457	56.8	32.4	20.6	3.8	20,161	74.4	52.8	19.0	2.5	
Black .....	565	65.8	44.8	12.2	8.7	4,885	78.8	63.6	9.0	6.3	
Asian and Pacific Islander .....	154	56.3	39.9	13.7	2.7	1,224	71.8	56.9	11.5	3.3	
Hispanic (of any race) .....	761	41.8	27.7	7.5	6.6	4,475	64.1	48.7	11.0	4.4	
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>											
Married - husband present .....	2,561	54.1	33.9	17.7	2.5	20,485	70.6	50.5	18.0	2.2	
Married - husband absent, separated, divorced or widowed .....	311	60.8	44.4	11.4	5.0	5,604	80.9	65.4	10.6	4.9	
Never married .....	1,063	56.1	29.2	15.7	11.1	4,781	76.8	56.7	13.5	6.6	
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>											
Not a high school graduate .....	920	39.0	18.2	12.3	8.5	4,517	56.5	37.1	12.8	6.7	
High school, 4 years .....	1,204	55.0	32.1	16.0	6.9	11,060	74.4	56.8	14.4	3.2	
College, 1 or more years .....	1,810	63.5	42.2	19.3	2.0	15,294	77.8	57.3	18.0	2.5	
No degree .....	651	64.9	41.1	19.4	4.4	6,230	76.8	57.3	16.2	3.3	
Associate degree .....	300	59.5	40.2	19.0	0.4	3,075	81.5	59.7	19.6	2.2	
Bachelor's degree .....	612	63.2	41.3	21.3	0.7	4,548	75.4	54.8	18.6	2.0	
Graduate or professional degree .....	247	65.2	50.0	14.3	0.9	1,441	81.8	60.2	20.6	1.0	
<b>ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME<sup>1</sup></b>											
Under \$10,000 .....	369	50.6	20.6	12.9	17.1	2,208	54.2	26.8	16.5	10.9	
\$10,000 to \$19,999 .....	464	39.5	24.6	8.8	6.1	3,390	66.4	48.5	11.8	6.1	
\$20,000 to \$24,999 .....	262	46.5	31.2	10.9	4.5	1,849	73.2	56.8	12.6	3.8	
\$25,000 to \$29,999 .....	297	56.5	31.5	20.0	5.0	1,964	76.6	60.4	13.4	2.7	
\$30,000 to \$34,999 .....	223	52.4	27.9	20.2	4.3	1,790	71.6	52.6	15.8	3.1	
\$35,000 to \$49,999 .....	576	55.2	33.2	19.1	3.0	4,631	78.1	58.9	16.3	2.9	
\$50,000 to \$74,999 .....	652	65.4	41.7	20.4	3.3	5,502	80.7	60.5	18.2	2.0	
\$75,000 and over .....	751	61.8	40.1	19.9	1.8	5,729	76.3	56.2	18.9	1.1	
<b>NATIVITY</b>											
Native born .....	3,262	58.4	34.5	18.5	5.4	26,356	75.2	55.0	16.8	3.4	
Foreign born .....	673	39.4	28.5	7.6	3.3	4,515	63.1	49.2	10.8	3.2	

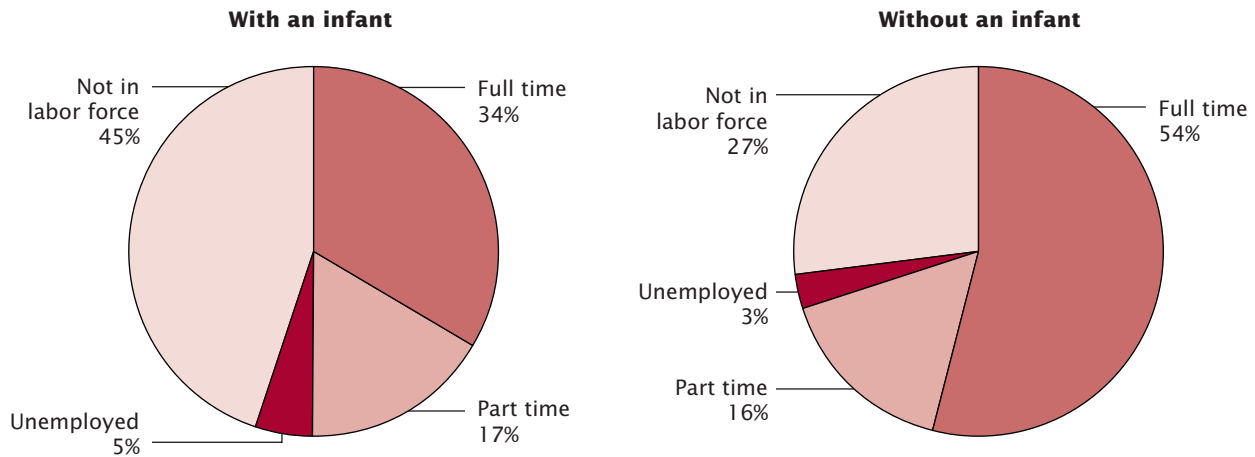
- Represents zero or rounds to zero. B Base too small to show derived estimate.

<sup>1</sup>Data not shown for people with family income not reported.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.



Figure 3.  
**Employment Status Among Mothers 15 to 44 Years Old: June 2000**  
 (Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, June 2000.

who were high school graduates or who attended college and received either no degree or a bachelor's degree, working full time rather than part time was still more common but only twice as likely, while women who did not complete high school were only one and one-half times as likely to work full time as part time. Among mothers with no infant children: college educated and high school graduates are more likely to work at full-time than part-time jobs. This difference also exists in part-time and full-time jobs for women without infants and who have less than high school education.

These data suggest that women with more time invested in their educational careers return to work more rapidly and are more likely to return as full-time workers than do women with fewer years of schooling. Many factors could account for these differences, insofar as educational attainment is related to work experience and salary levels. The likelihood of returning to work after a child's birth is highly related to

work experience prior to and during pregnancy (for example, hours worked per week and when the woman stopped working).<sup>11</sup> In addition to higher initial levels of labor force activity during pregnancy, greater job commitment or available resources to purchase child care services may account for the higher post-childbirth levels of labor force participation levels among mothers with more years of schooling.

What other factors influence the decision to return to work after childbirth? The marital status of the mother is a strong determinant of labor force participation but is not always a reliable predictor. Women who are unmarried and who lack a spouse's income may be in relatively disadvantaged economic circumstances compared with that of

<sup>11</sup> Martin O'Connell. *Maternity Leave Arrangements: 1961-85*. Current Population Reports, P23-165. U.S. Census Bureau: Washington, DC, 1990; Barbara Downs and Kristin Smith, "Maternity Leave Among First-Time Mothers." Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Population Association of America, Washington, DC, March 29-31, 2001.

married women, and may be more dependent on their own employment to support their families. However, the absence of a husband may restrict their ability to obtain child care services due to fewer family economic resources to pay for child care and the lack of a spouse to serve as a potential child care provider. Table 4 shows that despite these potential impediments to working, 44 percent of separated, divorced, and widowed women with infants are employed full time—more than women who are married (34 percent), and also one and one-half times more than as for women who have never married (29 percent). Among mothers with infants in the labor force, never-married women also are most likely to be unemployed and possibly in need of child care services or job training assistance.

An important trend appearing in the last few years has been the narrowing of differences in labor force participation rates among women by the number of children they have. Table 4 indicates that in 2000 the

labor force participation rate for mothers with infants was not significantly different between mothers with only one birth (58 percent) or with two or more births (54 percent). In fact, no differences were found in the participation rates for either full-time or part-time workers by birth order among mothers with infants. In 1995, the overall difference was about 10 percentage points (59 percent and 49 percent, respectively), while in 1976 the difference was about 13 percentage points (39 and 26 percent, respectively.)<sup>12</sup> However, the differences by birth order between these 2 years is not significantly different.

Which other population groups of women with infants have relatively high labor force participation rates in 2000? Black women (66 percent) had a higher rate than either White non-Hispanic women (57 percent) or Hispanic women (42 percent), and also had higher full-time participation rates (45 percent, 32 percent and 28 percent, respectively).

Native women with infants had a considerably higher labor force participation rate (58 percent) than foreign-born women with infants (39 percent). A large difference in overall labor force participation rates also is evident for mothers without infants by their nativity status, which suggests that language or job skills may play an important role in these observed differences.

Which mothers with infants experience the greatest difficulty in finding a job? About one-quarter of teenagers with infants who are in the labor force are unemployed regardless of number of children born. Relatively high proportions of never-married women in the labor force are unemployed compared

with their married or formerly married counterparts. Among those women with infants, a significantly higher proportion of women with a high school education or less were unemployed than women with 1 or more years of college education. Among mothers with infants living in families with incomes under \$10,000 per year, 17 percent were unemployed in 2000, representing 34 percent of all these low-income mothers in the labor force.

In summary, these data indicate that the majority of women with infant children are labor force participants and twice as many are employed full time than part time during their child's first year of life. However, many teenage mothers and women with less than high school education appear to experience considerable difficulty in securing employment.

### **SOURCE OF THE DATA**

Most estimates in this report come from data obtained in the June 2000 Current Population Survey (CPS). Some estimates are based on data obtained by the CPS in earlier years. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts this survey every month, although this report uses only data from the June surveys for its estimates. Comparative estimates on annual births are made with data collected in the Vital Statistics Registration system and are published by the National Center for Health Statistics.

### **ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY OF THE DATA**

All statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may

be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, testing the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The CPS employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact Jana Sphered, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, via Internet e-mail at [dsmd\\_S&A@census.gov](mailto:dsmd_S&A@census.gov).

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Detailed tables with characteristics of women in the childbearing ages by fertility indicators are available on the Internet ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)); search by clicking on "F" for "Fertility" under the "Subjects A-Z" heading on the Census Bureau home page.

To receive a paper copy of these tables, send your request for

<sup>12</sup> Amara Bachu. *Fertility of American Women: June 1995* (Update). PPL-74. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1997, Table H-3 (for the 1995 data).

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"PPL-153, *Fertility of American Women: June 2000*" along with a check or money order in the amount of \$29.00 payable to "Commerce-Census-88-00-9010," to U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing CPR P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report.

Contact our Statistical Information Office on 301-457-2422.

### **CONTACTS**

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### **USER COMMENTS**

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any

suggestions or comments, please write to:

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pop@census.gov

### **SUGGESTED CITATION**

Bachu, Amara and Martin O'Connell. 2001. *Fertility of American Women: June 2000*. Current Population Reports, P20-543RV. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

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Economics and Statistics Administration  
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