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Fathers' Involvement With Their Children: United States, 2006–2010

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Abstract

Objective—This report measures fathers' involvement with their children. Father involvement is measured by how often a man participated in a set of activities in the last 4 weeks with children who were living with him and with children who were living apart from him. Involvement is measured separately for children aged 0–4 years and children aged 5–18 years. Increased involvement of fathers in their children's lives has been associated with a range of positive outcomes for the children.

Methods—The analyses presented in this report are based on a nationally representative sample of 10,403 men aged 15–44 years in the household population of the United States. The father-involvement measures are based on 2,200 fathers of children under age 5—1,790 who live with their children and 410 who live apart from their children, and on 3,166 fathers of children aged 5–18—2,091 who live with their children and 1,075 who live apart from their children.

Results—Statistics are presented on the frequency with which fathers took part in a set of age-specific activities in their children's lives. Differences in percent distributions are found by whether the father lives with or apart from his children, and by his demographic characteristics. In general, fathers living with their children participated in their children's lives to a greater degree than fathers who live apart from their children. Differences in fathers' involvement with their children were also found by the father's age, marital or cohabiting status, education, and Hispanic origin and race.

Keywords: fathers' activities with children • fathers and children • coresidential and noncoresidential children • National Survey of Family Growth

Introduction

Fathers' involvement in their children's lives has been shown to have a positive effect on children and their

well-being in many areas (1)—for example, on increasing the chances of academic success (2,3) and in reducing the chances of delinquency and substance abuse (4–6). A literature

review found that children whose fathers assumed 40% or more of the family's care tasks had better academic achievement than children whose fathers were less involved (7,8).

In recent decades, fathers who live with their children have become more involved in their children's lives than in previous generations (9,10), although fewer fathers now live with their children because of increases in nonmarital childbearing (9,11–15). The impact of nonmarital childbearing on the presence of fathers is moderated, however, by increases in the proportion of children being born into cohabiting unions (12). For example, Martinez et al. (see Table 12 in reference 12) found that 23% of recent births (those occurring in the 5 years before the interview) to women aged 15–44 in 2006–2010 occurred within cohabiting unions, a significant increase from births to women aged 15–44 in 2002 (14%). Using a national sample of fathers aged 15–44, this report documents how much fathers are involved with their children—both children with whom they live, and children from whom they live apart.

From 1973, when the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) first conducted the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), to 1995, NSFG measured changes in the factors related



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to birth and pregnancy rates and family formation and dissolution by interviewing national samples of women aged 15–44 (16). In 2002, NSFG began collecting data from national samples of men aged 15–44. Collecting information on father involvement was a major reason for including men in the 2002 and 2006–2010 NSFGs, due to, as noted above, a growing body of research showing a positive association between the presence and involvement of fathers and outcomes for their children (7,8,17).

In 1995, President Clinton issued a memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies urging federal surveys to “incorporate fathers, where appropriate, in government-initiated research regarding children and their families” (18). Subsequent consultation by NSFG staff with experts in other federal agencies and the research community showed that collecting data on the role of fathers in their children’s lives was a high priority. It was also recognized that multiple indicators of father involvement were necessary to measure the multidimensionality of fathering (8,17,19). And the continued importance of collecting data directly from fathers about their involvement in their children’s lives was a summary conclusion from a 2012 conference at the National Institutes of Health sponsored by the National Center for Family & Marriage Research (20,21).

Data from the 2002 NSFG on father involvement were published previously (22), based on a sample of 4,928 men aged 15–44. This report builds on that research and is based on a sample of 10,403 men aged 15–44 from the 2006–2010 NSFG. Both reports present national data for fathers aged 15–44 on whether they live with or live apart from their children under age 18 and their involvement with those children. The same eight indicators of father involvement were collected in 2002 and 2006–2010.

Some scholars have suggested that fathers’ involvement in the lives of their children can be classified into three (or four, depending upon how economic support is classified) broad dimensions (8,23):

- Engagement or direct interaction with the child, including taking care of, playing with, or teaching the child
- Accessibility or availability, which includes monitoring behavior from the next room or nearby, and allowing direct interaction if necessary
- Responsibility for the care of the child, which includes “making plans and arrangements for care as distinct from the performance of the care” (8)
- Economic support or breadwinning, which can be considered either as part of responsibility or separate from other measures of father involvement

Other scholars may measure or classify involvement differently.

This report is limited to measures of direct interaction or engagement with children in the last 4 weeks as reported by the father. However, NSFG has other measures on fathers that can be used in future research, including:

- Age and marital or cohabitation status when first becoming a father
- Engagement in activities with children in the last 12 months
- Satisfaction with the amount of contact with children who live apart
- Amount and frequency of child support paid, if any
- Attitudes toward marriage and parenthood

These other measures are outside the scope of this report, but some have been published previously (10,22,24–27).

Methods

Source of the data

This report is based on the 2006–2010 NSFG, which was jointly planned and funded by NCHS and several other programs of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (see Acknowledgments). Data were collected from 12,279 interviews with women and 10,403 men aged 15–44 conducted from June 2006 through June 2010. This report is mainly limited to the data collected from the sample of 3,928 men who are fathers.

Interviews were voluntary; participants were provided information about the survey before being asked for signed informed consent. The survey was reviewed and approved by the NCHS and University of Michigan Institutional Review Boards. The overall response rate in 2006–2010 was 77%; the response rate for women was 78% and for men it was 75% (28). To protect the respondent’s privacy, only one person was interviewed in each selected household. Further information about NSFG’s sample design, sampling and sampling errors, interviewing, and data processing is available elsewhere (28–30).

Statistical analysis

This report presents basic descriptive statistics on father involvement with children living with and living apart from them in the United States in 2006–2010; it does not attempt to demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships. Statistics for this report were produced using SAS software, version 9.3 (<http://www.sas.com>). The SAS procedure PROC SURVEYFREQ is designed to handle the complex sample design of surveys like NSFG and was used to calculate percentages and standard errors (SE). All estimates for 2006–2010 in this report were weighted to reflect the approximately 62 million men aged 15–44 in the household population of the United States at the midpoint of interviewing, June 2008. Men aged 15–44 living on military bases or in institutions were not included in the survey.

Statistically significant differences between percentages were assessed using two-tailed *t* tests at the 5% level. No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. Terms such as “greater than” and “less than” indicate that a statistically significant difference was found. Lack of comment regarding the difference between any two statistics does not mean that the difference was tested and found not to be significant.

In the description of the results below, when the percentage being cited is below 10% or above 90%, the text

cites the percentage to one decimal point. To make reading easier and to remind the reader that the results are based on samples and subject to sampling error, percentages between 10% and 90% are generally shown rounded to the nearest whole percentage. In this report, percentages are not shown if the sample denominator is less than 75 cases or the numerator is less than 5 cases. When a percentage or other statistic is not shown for this reason, the table contains an asterisk (*) signifying that the statistic does not meet standards of reliability or precision. For most statistics presented in this report, the numerators and denominators are much larger.

When discussing results, demographic differences between fathers living with their children and fathers living apart from their children are examined, followed by a discussion of activity-specific results. For each activity, coresidential fathers are first compared with noncoresidential fathers on the percentages who did the activity “every day” in the last 4 weeks and the percentages who did not do the activity at all in the last 4 weeks. Next, comparisons within a residential category are made across age, marital or cohabiting status, education, and Hispanic origin and race by the frequency of doing the activity. The Results section concludes with an examination of fathers’ views of how good a father they are. Only statistically significant differences between any two percentages are mentioned in the text.

As detailed below, about 10% of fathers have children with whom they live and children from whom they live apart, so the residence groups are not independent samples. This lack of independence could affect statistical testing across residence groups. However, when treating the residence groups as independent samples, the significance levels for differences across residence groups were very large; the associated SEs would have to increase dramatically to make the differences nonsignificant. Note that independence was not an issue for comparisons made between categories within a residence

group, which are the majority of comparisons discussed below.

Fathers and measures of father involvement

Not all men are biological fathers and not all fathers have biological children. In addition to fathering a child, men may become fathers through adoption—which confers the same legal status, protections, and responsibilities to the man and the child as fathering a biological child. Men also may become *de facto* fathers when they marry or cohabit with women who have children from previous relationships, that is, they are raising stepchildren or their cohabiting partner’s children. In this report, men were defined as fathers if they had biological or adopted children or if step- or partner’s children were living in the household. The percentage of men raising step- or adopted children who did not also have biological children was very small, 0.2%. In 2006–2010, 44.8% of men aged 15–44 had ever had a biological child (12), and 45.0% of men aged 15–44 (28 million of the 62 million men aged 15–44) were living with biological, adopted, step-, or partner’s children, or had adopted or biological children living elsewhere (analysis of 2006–2010 data not shown.)

Fathers were divided into two categories based on their coresidence with their children aged 18 years and under. Coresidential minor children were children with whom a man lived and included step- or partner’s children who were living in his household, as well as his own biological and adopted children. Noncoresidential minor children consisted of a man’s biological or

adopted children who lived apart from him. Some fathers had both coresidential and noncoresidential children—about 10%. Identical questions about specific activities were asked for both coresidential and noncoresidential children. Analyses were restricted to activities in which the man participated with these children within the 4 weeks preceding the interview.

Table 1 of this report is based on the entire sample of 10,403 men aged 15–44, but Tables 2–10 are based on the 3,928 men who are fathers. Tables 2–5 are based on the 2,200 men who had children under age 5 years, and Tables 6–9 are based on the 3,166 men who had children aged 5–18 years. Some men had children in both age groups, so Table 10 is based on 4,336 men—3,038 men who had coresidential children and 1,298 men who had noncoresidential children. The sample size of men who do not live with their children under age 5 (Tables 2–5) is 410, so the percentages in Tables 2–5 for men who do not live with their children have larger sampling errors than the percentages based on the 1,790 men who live with children. The sample sizes on which the tables are based are shown in Table A.

Results for categories of men based on small sample sizes, or those with large SEs as shown in the detailed tables, should be interpreted cautiously.

Research has shown a number of factors that affect the extent to which fathers are involved in their children’s lives. This report examines five of these factors: whether he lives with the children, his current age, marital or cohabitation status, Hispanic origin and race, and education.

Table A. Distribution of fathers aged 15–44, by living arrangement and age of children: United States, 2006–2010

Living arrangement	With children aged:	
	Under 5 years (Tables 2–5)	5–18 years (Tables 6–9)
Lives with one or more children	1,790	2,091
Does not live with one or more of his children	410	1,075
Total.	2,200	3,166

NOTE: Due to men living with children reporting “don’t know” or “refused” for a specific activity, Table 5 is based on 1,788 men, and Tables 7 and 9 are based on 2,090 men.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Fatherhood, activities with children, and self-rating of fathering

Men were asked about the number and characteristics of children they had fathered or adopted in the context of the relationships they had with women. They were asked if they had fathered or adopted a child with their current wife or partner, with any of their three most recent sexual partners, any former wives who had not been discussed before, and their first cohabiting partner. Lastly, men were asked if they had fathered any other children with sexual partners they had not married, or if they had adopted any other children who had lived with them under their care and responsibility, not discussed in the context of a relationship.

Information from these questions and from the household roster was used to identify men who had children living with them (i.e., coresidential children), and men who had children living apart from them (i.e., noncoresidential children), at the time of the interview. Coresidential children included biological, adopted, step-, or partner’s children who were living in the man’s household at the time of the interview; noncoresidential children included biological or adopted children that were living outside the man’s household at the time of interview. Men who had children were then asked questions about their involvement in these children’s lives.

Men were asked about activities they did with their coresidential and with their noncoresidential children for two broad age groups: preschool-aged children (under age 5 years) and school-aged children (aged 5–18 years), in order to ask age-appropriate questions. The questions about activities that a man engaged in with his children were summary measures asked generally about all of his coresidential and all of his noncoresidential children in the age groups—that is, the questions were not asked for specific children.

This report focuses on activities that men did with their children, separately for coresidential and noncoresidential children, in the last 4 weeks. The

activities by age group are presented below. For children under age 5, activities include:

- Eating meals with or feeding the children
- Bathing, diapering, or dressing the children, or helping the children bathe, dress, or use the toilet themselves
- Playing with the children
- Reading to the children

For children aged 5–18, activities include:

- Talking with the children about things that happened during their day
- Eating meals with the children
- Helping the children with homework or checking that the homework had been done
- Taking the children to or from activities

Men were asked how frequently they did each activity in the last 4 weeks. They were given a “show card” and asked to select one of the following response options:

- Not at all
- Less than once a week
- About once a week
- Several times a week
- Every day (at least once a day)

Because of the relatively small numbers of fathers who engaged in some activities “Less than once a week” and “About once a week,” these categories are combined in this report.

Using a 5-point scale, fathers also were asked to rate how good a job they thought they were doing as a father overall with all of their coresidential and with all of their noncoresidential

children, aged 0–18. Response options were “A very good job,” “A good job,” “An okay job,” “Not a very good job,” and “A bad job.” The latter two categories are combined in this report.

Men were classified by several demographic characteristics: Hispanic origin and race, current age, marital or cohabitation status, and education. Hispanic origin and race were tabulated in accordance with 1997 guidelines from the Office of Management and Budget (31). Estimates for Hispanic men, regardless of their race, are shown separately from non-Hispanic men. For non-Hispanic men, estimates are presented for single-race white and black men. Because of small sample sizes, estimates for men of other racial groups are not shown separately. Education is shown for men aged 22–44 because men aged 15–21 may not have completed their education at the time of the interview. Details on these variables can be found in previous NSFG reports (32,33).

Results

Fatherhood among men aged 15–44

In 2006–2010, about 38% (23.5 million) of men aged 15–44 were living with one or more children, and about 12% (7.5 million) were living apart from one or more of their biological or adopted children (Table 1). Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive—approximately 5% of men had children with whom they lived and children from whom they lived apart. These fathers are included in both panels of Table 1. Figure 1 shows the

Table B. Distribution of fathers aged 15–44, by residential location of children: United States, 2006–2010

Residential location	Sampled number	Weighted percentage	Weighted number (in thousands)
Total	3,928	100.0	27,961
Only coresidential children	2,604	73.2	20,456
Only noncoresidential children	885	15.8	4,414
Both coresidential and noncoresidential children	439	11.1	3,091

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

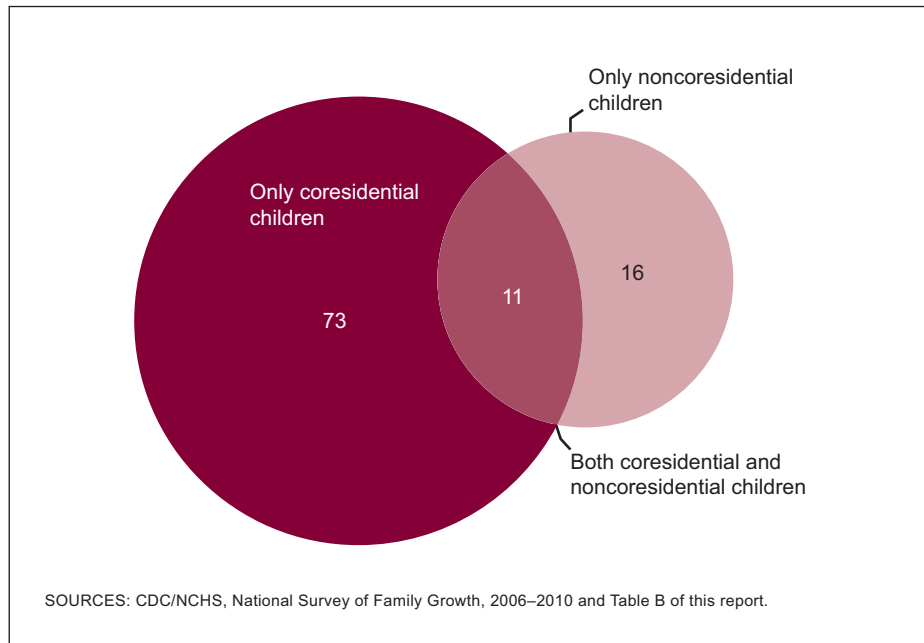


Figure 1. Percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44, by where their children live: United States, 2006–2010

percent distribution, and [Table B](#) shows the number and percentage of fathers who have only coresidential children, only noncoresidential children, or both coresidential and noncoresidential children.

Across most characteristics in [Table 1](#), higher percentages of men aged 15–44 were living with their children than were living apart from their children, but the magnitude of the difference varied by characteristic. For example, about twice as many men aged 15–24 had coresidential children (6.9%) than had noncoresidential children (3.3%). By ages 35–44, three times as many men had coresidential children (64%) than had noncoresidential children (19%). Looking at marital and cohabiting status, six times as many currently married men had coresidential children (75%) than had noncoresidential children (12%). Among currently cohabiting men, almost three times as many had coresidential children (54%) than had noncoresidential children (20%). As expected, of the characteristics shown in [Table 1](#), only among men who were neither married nor cohabiting was the percentage of men who had noncoresidential children (10%) higher than the percentage of men who had coresidential children (6.1%).

More than twice as many men aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education had coresidential children (54%) compared with noncoresidential children (23%). Looking at men with some college or more education, five times as many had coresidential children (45%) than had noncoresidential children (8.7%).

Non-Hispanic white men aged 15–44 had the largest difference between those with coresidential children (37%) and those with noncoresidential children (8.2%). The difference was smallest among non-Hispanic black men, with 33% having coresidential children and 24% having noncoresidential children. Among Hispanic men, more than twice as many had coresidential children (44%) than had noncoresidential children (18%).

The following discussion describes and compares men’s involvement with their children by examining the percentages of fathers aged 15–44 (or aged 22–44 when comparing percentages between educational attainment groups) who participated in a variety of activities in the last 4 weeks with their children. Emphasis is given to comparing the categories “every day” and “not at all,” although for a few measures where these responses are less

common, another category is sometimes cited.

Involvement in activities with children under age 5 years

In general and as expected, a higher percentage of fathers aged 15–44 who lived with their children under age 5 participated in activities with their children more frequently than fathers who lived apart from their children ([Figure 2](#)). Similarly, fathers with noncoresidential children were more likely to **not** have done the activity at all in the last 4 weeks compared with fathers with coresidential children ([Tables 2–5](#)). The magnitude of the differences between coresidential and noncoresidential fathers varied by activity. Differences also were seen by demographic characteristics within groups of coresidential and noncoresidential fathers. These differences are discussed below.

How often fathers fed or ate meals with their children

A higher percentage of fathers who lived with their children under age 5 fed or ate meals with them daily—72% compared with 7.9% of fathers with noncoresidential children. A higher percentage of fathers living apart from their children did **not** feed or eat meals with them at all in the last 4 weeks—43% compared with 0.8% of fathers with coresidential children ([Table 2](#)).

Variation by Hispanic origin and race was seen in the percentages of coresidential fathers who ate meals with their children every day. Specifically, Hispanic fathers were less likely to eat meals with their children every day (64%) than were non-Hispanic white (74%) or non-Hispanic black (78%) fathers ([Table 2](#)).

More differences across demographic categories were seen among fathers who did not live with one or more of their children.

- Higher percentages of older fathers—44% of those aged 25–34 and 60% of those aged 35–44—had **not** eaten a

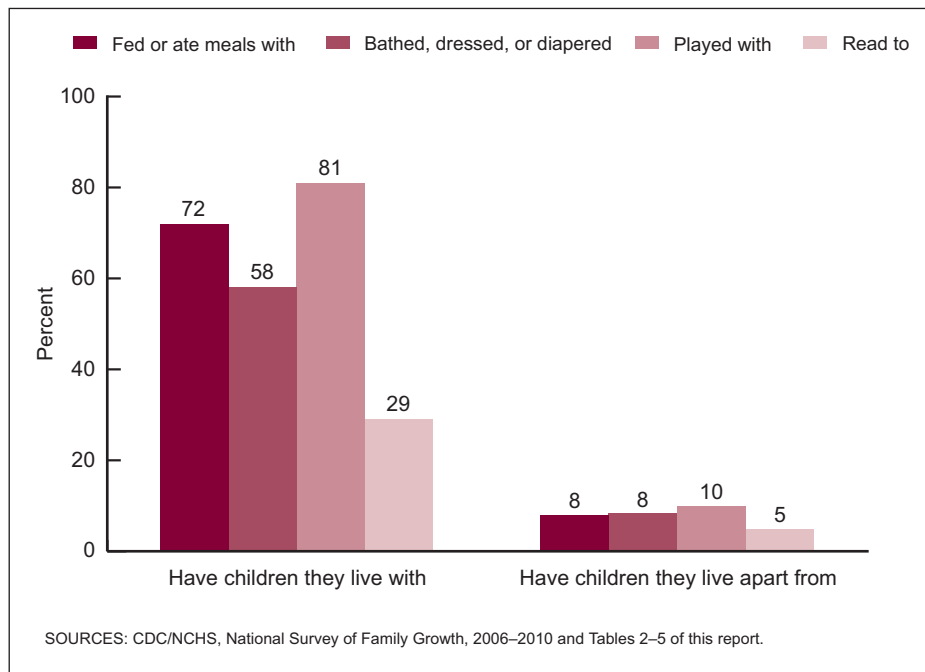


Figure 2. Percentage of fathers aged 15–44 who have children under age 5 years who engaged in the specified activity daily in the last 4 weeks, by whether the children live with or apart from them: United States, 2006–2010

meal with or fed their noncoresidential children in the last 4 weeks, compared with 25% of fathers aged 15–24.

- More than one-half of fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education (54%) had **not** eaten a meal with their noncoresidential children in the last 4 weeks—a significantly higher percentage than fathers with some college or more education (33%).
- Hispanic fathers (58%) aged 15–44 were significantly more likely to have **not** eaten a meal with their noncoresidential children compared with white (35%) or black (31%) fathers.

How often fathers bathed, diapered, or dressed their children

Nine out of 10 fathers (90%) who lived with children under age 5 bathed, diapered, or dressed the children, or helped them bathe, dress, or use the toilet “every day” or “several times a week,” compared with 31% of fathers who lived apart from their children (Table 3). Restricting the figures to those who did these activities “every day,” the figures are 58% for fathers

who lived with their children and 8.3% for fathers who did not live with their children.

There was a significant difference by Hispanic origin and race among fathers with coresidential children: Black fathers (70%) were most likely to have bathed, dressed, diapered, or helped their children use the toilet every day compared with white (60%) and Hispanic fathers (45%).

Some demographic differences were seen among fathers with noncoresidential children:

- Two-thirds of fathers aged 35–44 (68%) had **not** bathed, dressed, or diapered their noncoresidential children in the last 4 weeks. This compares with one-third of fathers aged 15–24 (31%).
- A higher percentage of fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education (60%) had **not** bathed, dressed, or diapered their children in the last 4 weeks compared with fathers with some college or more education (33%).
- About two-thirds of Hispanic fathers aged 15–44 (66%) had **not** bathed, dressed, or diapered their children in

the last 4 weeks, significantly more than black (34%) or white fathers (39%).

How often fathers played with their children

Practically all fathers who lived with children under age 5 played with them: Among coresidential fathers, 81% played with them daily, and 18% played with them several times a week (Table 4). A higher percentage of currently married fathers (82%) played with their coresidential children every day, compared with fathers who were not currently married or cohabiting (68%).

Among fathers with noncoresidential children under age 5, about 4 out of 10 played with them daily (10%) or several times a week (29%), while 37% did **not** play with their children at all in the last 4 weeks. Some differences by demographic characteristics include:

- A larger percentage of older fathers had **not** played with their noncoresidential children compared with the youngest fathers. Forty-seven percent of fathers aged 35–44 and 40% of fathers aged 25–34 had not played with their children at all in the last 4 weeks. This compares with 22% of fathers aged 15–24.
- Fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education were almost twice as likely (47%) to have **not** played with their noncoresidential children in the last 4 weeks compared with fathers with some college or more education (26%).
- A higher percentage of Hispanic fathers aged 15–44 (52%) had **not** played with their noncoresidential children in the last 4 weeks compared with white (30%) and black (25%) fathers.

How often fathers read to their children

Fathers who lived with children under age 5 were six times more likely than fathers who did not live with their young children to have read to them

daily, 29% compared with 4.9% (Table 5). On the other hand, 16% of men with coresidential children and 52% of men with noncoresidential children had **not** read to them at all in the last 4 weeks.

Significant differences were observed in the percentages of fathers with coresidential children who read to them, by age, marital or cohabitation status, education, and Hispanic origin and race (Table 5).

- Older fathers were more likely than younger fathers to read to their coresidential children. Specifically, 34% of fathers aged 35–44 read to their coresidential children every day, significantly more than fathers aged 15–24 (20%). Older fathers were less likely (13%) to have **not** read to their children at all compared with younger fathers (24%).
- Cohabiting fathers were twice as likely (30%) to have **not** read to their children at all in the last 4 weeks compared with married fathers (12%) and fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (14%).
- Fathers aged 22–44 with some college or more education were more

likely to have read to their children every day (33%) compared with fathers with a high school diploma or less education (24%).

- A smaller percentage of white fathers aged 15–44 had **not** read to their coresidential children at all (8.4%) compared with black (19%) or Hispanic fathers (32%).

This difference in reading to their children is less apparent among fathers and their noncoresidential children, with significant differences only by education and Hispanic origin and race.

- A larger percentage of fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education (60%) had **not** read to their noncoresidential children at all in the last 4 weeks compared with fathers with some college or more education (35%).
- A larger percentage of fathers aged 15–44 of Hispanic origin (70%) had **not** read to their noncoresidential children at all in the last 4 weeks compared with black (47%) and white (36%) fathers.

Involvement in activities with children aged 5–18 years

Tables 6–9 show data on fathers' activities with their school-aged children (aged 5–18). As was seen with children under age 5, fathers aged 15–44 who lived with older children were more likely to participate in activities with them every day and less likely to **not** participate at all in activities in the last 4 weeks, compared with fathers who lived apart from their children (Tables 6–9, Figure 3). Additionally, variation across demographic characteristics was found in the level of father involvement for specific activities with coresidential and with noncoresidential school-aged children.

How often fathers ate meals with their children

Among fathers who lived with their school-aged children, 66% ate meals with them every day in the last 4 weeks (Table 6) and only 1.4% did **not** eat any meals at all with them. By comparison, among fathers who did not live with their school-aged children, 2.9% ate meals with them every day, and 53% did **not** eat meals with them at all in the last 4 weeks.

Differences by marital or cohabiting status and Hispanic origin and race were seen among fathers with coresidential children:

- Currently married (68%) and cohabiting (64%) fathers were more likely to eat meals with their school-aged children every day than were fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (47%).
- A larger percentage of Hispanic fathers (71%) ate meals with their children daily than did white fathers (64%).

Differences by marital or cohabiting status and Hispanic origin and race were also seen among fathers who did not live with their children:

- A smaller percentage of fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (38%) did **not** eat any meals at all with these children in the last 4

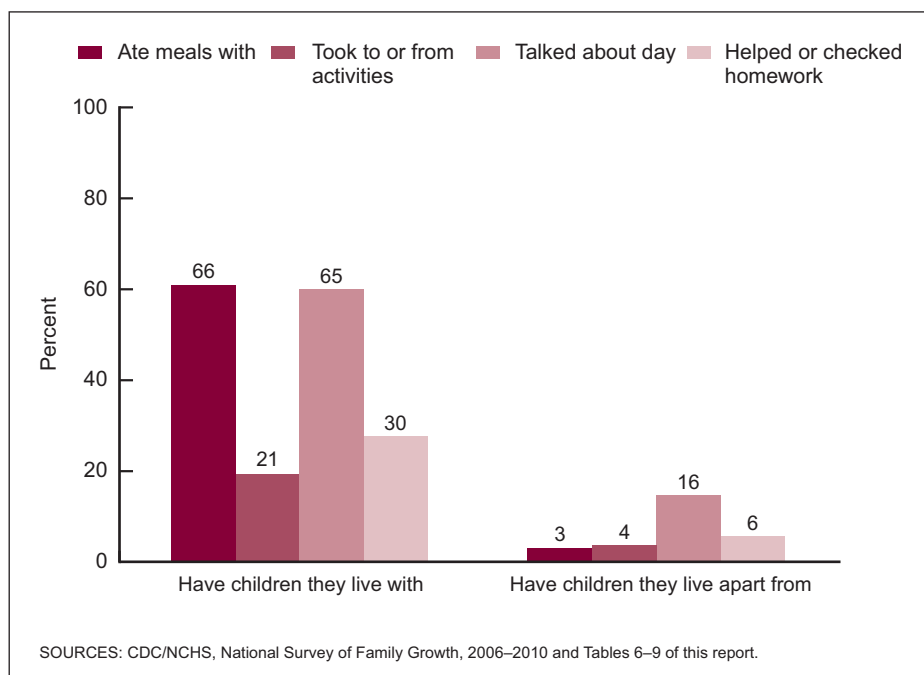


Figure 3. Percentage of fathers aged 15–44 who have children aged 5–18 years who engaged in the specified activity daily in the last 4 weeks, by whether the children live with or apart from them: United States, 2006–2010

weeks compared with married (61%) or cohabiting (61%) fathers.

- Smaller percentages of non-Hispanic white (43%) and non-Hispanic black (46%) fathers did **not** eat meals at all with their noncoresidential children compared with Hispanic fathers (72%).

How often fathers took their children to or from activities

Twenty-one percent of fathers who lived with their school-aged children and 3.9% of fathers with noncoresidential children took them to or from activities every day in the last 4 weeks (Table 7). Conversely, 15% of fathers with coresidential children and 71% of fathers with noncoresidential children did **not** take them to or from activities at all. Significant differences by demographic characteristics were found among coresidential and noncoresidential fathers.

Among fathers with coresidential children:

- A larger percentage of currently married fathers (21%) took their school-aged children to or from activities every day compared with cohabiting fathers (15%).
- Fewer currently married fathers (13%) than cohabiting fathers (21%) did **not** take their children to or from activities at all in the last 4 weeks.
- One in five fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education (21%) did **not** take their school-aged children to or from activities at all in the last 4 weeks. This compares with 8.2% of coresidential fathers with some college or more education.
- A higher percentage of black fathers aged 15–44 (27%) took their children to or from activities every day compared with white fathers (20%).

Among fathers with noncoresidential, school-aged children:

- Three-quarters of currently married (77%) and currently cohabiting (76%) fathers did **not** take their noncoresidential children to or from activities at all in the last 4 weeks compared with 63% of fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting.

- About three of every four fathers aged 22–44 with a high school diploma or less education (75%) had **not** taken their school-aged children to or from activities in the last 4 weeks compared with 64% of fathers with some college or more education.
- A higher percentage of Hispanic fathers aged 15–44 (83%) had **not** taken their children to or from activities compared with white (70%) or black (58%) fathers.

How often fathers talked with children about things that happened during the day

Two-thirds of fathers aged 15–44 who lived with their school-aged children (65%) talked with one or more of these children about things that had happened during the child's day every day, as did 16% of fathers who lived apart from their children (Table 8). Among fathers who did not live with their children, 37% did **not** talk to their children at all about things that happened during the day in the last 4 weeks; this compares with 1.1% of fathers with coresidential children.

The only demographic difference found among men with coresidential children was by marital or cohabiting status. A smaller percentage of cohabiting fathers (58%) talked about things that happened during the child's day with one or more of their school-aged children every day compared with fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (71%) or currently married (66%).

Differences by marital or cohabiting status and Hispanic origin and race were found for fathers with noncoresidential children.

- Currently married fathers (8.0%) were less likely to have talked with their noncoresidential children every day about things that had happened during the children's day compared with fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (20%) and fathers who were cohabiting (23%).
- Married fathers (47%) and cohabiting fathers (43%) were twice as likely to have **not** talked with their noncoresidential children at all in the

last 4 weeks compared with fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (23%).

- Among Hispanic fathers who did not live with their children, 63% did **not** talk with their children at all in the last 4 weeks about things that had happened during the children's day, compared with 29% of white fathers and 21% of black fathers.

How often fathers helped with homework or checked that homework was done

Among fathers who lived with school-aged children, 30% said they helped the children with homework or checked that the children had done their homework every day (Table 9). This compares with 6.0% of fathers who did not live with their children. About 14% of coresidential fathers had **not** helped these children with homework at all in the last 4 weeks, and neither did 69% of fathers with noncoresidential children.

For the most part, there was no difference by demographic characteristic in the percentages of fathers with coresidential, school-aged children who helped their children with homework or checked that the homework had been done.

There were two exceptions:

- A larger percentage of cohabiting fathers with coresidential children (20%) did **not** help their children with homework at all compared with currently married fathers (13%).
- A larger percentage of black fathers (41%) had helped their coresidential children with homework every day in the last 4 weeks compared with Hispanic (29%) or white (28%) fathers.

There were also differences in the percentages of fathers with noncoresidential children who helped with or checked that homework had been done by marital or cohabiting status and Hispanic origin and race.

- Larger percentages of currently married (78%) and cohabiting (71%) fathers had **not** helped their noncoresidential children with

homework at all in the last 4 weeks compared with fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting (58%).

- Larger percentages of Hispanic (82%) and white (70%) fathers had **not** helped their noncoresidential children with homework at all in the last 4 weeks compared with black fathers (56%).

How good a father men perceive themselves to be

In general, fathers aged 15–44 who lived with their children aged 0–18 (44%) were about twice as likely as fathers who did not live with their children (21%) to say they are doing “a very good job” as a father (Table 10). While 0.6% of coresidential fathers think they are doing “a not very good or a bad job,” 24% of noncoresidential fathers think they are doing “a not very good or bad job.”

Conclusion

The goal of this report is to document the extent of father involvement in their children’s lives using the sample of 3,928 fathers aged 15–44 in the 2006–2010 NSFG. While other surveys have collected data on father involvement in recent decades (19,34–37), the NSFG sample is large, recent, and nationally representative. It also has multiple indicators of father involvement for both fathers who live with their children and fathers who live apart from their children.

This report is limited to four measures of father involvement for children under age 5 years and to four measures of involvement for children aged 5–18 years. Identical measures were compared for fathers aged 15–44 who lived with and who lived apart from their children. Parental involvement is complex and multidimensional. The measures selected for the survey and examined here were chosen because previous research has found them to be related to positive outcomes for children (8,19,23). Multiple indicators are shown because no one indicator is the key father-

involvement activity that benefits all children more than others (8,17,37).

Some of the findings shown here are worth reiterating, as there was variation in father involvement by activity. For example, for children under age 5, the study found that 96% of resident fathers ate meals with their children every day or several times a week; 98% played with children that often; 90% bathed, diapered, or dressed their children every day or several times a week; and 60% read to their children that often. For the fathers who did not live with their children, 30% ate meals with them every day or several times a week; 39% played with their children several times a week or more; 31% bathed, diapered, or dressed their children several times a week or more; and 23% read to their children several times a week or more.

Variation in the frequency of doing activities also was evident among fathers with school-aged children (aged 5–18). For fathers who lived with these children, 93.0% ate meals with their children, and 92.5% talked with these children about things that happened during their day several times a week or every day. This compares with 63% of fathers who helped with or checked homework and 55% of fathers who took these children to or from activities.

This variability in involvement by activity is one reason to examine all of the measures available in NSFG, rather than only the ones reported here. Additional research with NSFG could focus on some of the measures of father involvement not included in this report (see Introduction), including involvement in the last 12 months, and correlates of involvement such as work hours and schedules and payment of child support.

The 2006–2010 NSFG data has several limitations in examining father involvement. First, only men aged 15–44 were included in the survey, limiting what can be said about involvement with their children by fathers aged 45 and over. Involvement may differ among these fathers compared with fathers aged 15–44, but this report found very few differences by age in the level of involvement in

activities. The differences by age that were found suggest that older fathers may be less involved than fathers aged 15–44 in their children’s lives, especially fathers with noncoresidential children aged 0–4.

A second limitation is that the father involvement questions were not asked for a specific, focal child if fathers had more than one coresidential or noncoresidential child in an age range. It is not clear, then, how these fathers responded if they had different levels of involvement with the different children. For example, if a man lived with a 6-month-old baby and a 3-year-old child, and he spent more time with the child than with the baby, it is not possible to know whether he “averaged” the time he spent with each child or answered questions in regard to just one.

Another limitation of the 2006–2010 NSFG was the relatively small number of measures across dimensions of father involvement. In response to these limitations, NSFG, which began interviewing in September 2011, was redesigned to include multiple measures of more dimensions of father involvement and to ask these questions about a specific, focal child within each residence category. In this redesigned survey, the youngest coresidential and the youngest noncoresidential children are selected as the focal children when fathers are asked how often they engage in the father-involvement activities. The redesign and the addition of multiple questions will allow researchers to examine father involvement in more depth than was possible here.

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Table 1. Number of men aged 15–44 and number and percentage who have children aged 18 years and under living with and living apart from them, by selected characteristics: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Total number of men (in thousands)	Lives with one or more children		Lives apart from one or more children	
		Number (in thousands) and percentage (SE)		Number (in thousands) and percentage (SE)	
Total ¹	62,128	23,546	37.9 (0.95)	7,505	12.1 (0.60)
Age in years					
15–24	21,210	1,473	6.9 (0.75)	701	3.3 (0.42)
25–34	19,986	8,691	43.5 (1.31)	2,798	14.0 (1.09)
35–44	20,931	13,383	63.9 (1.41)	4,006	19.1 (1.14)
Marital or cohabiting status					
Currently married	23,357	17,596	75.3 (1.54)	2,838	12.2 (0.97)
Currently cohabiting	7,554	4,053	53.6 (2.61)	1,532	20.3 (1.97)
Not currently married or cohabiting	31,217	1,898	6.1 (0.53)	3,135	10.0 (0.62)
Education ²					
High school diploma or GED or less education	21,072	11,334	53.8 (1.46)	4,887	23.2 (1.24)
Some college or more education	25,987	11,711	45.1 (1.71)	2,269	8.7 (0.74)
Hispanic origin and race					
Hispanic or Latino	11,847	5,154	43.5 (1.68)	2,170	18.3 (1.28)
Not Hispanic or Latino					
White, single race	37,283	13,674	36.7 (1.28)	3,059	8.2 (0.69)
Black or African American, single race	7,341	2,453	33.4 (1.77)	1,749	23.8 (1.78)

¹Includes men of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Men who live with their children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.

²Limited to men aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTES: SE is standard error. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 2. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children under age 5 years, by how often they fed or ate meals with their children in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	12,614	100.0	0.8 (0.24)	3.2 (0.63)	24.1 (1.54)	71.8 (1.55)
Age in years						
15–24	1,353	100.0	3.2 (1.73)	4.1 (1.78)	24.2 (4.20)	68.5 (4.45)
25–34	6,314	100.0	0.9 (0.32)	2.7 (0.66)	24.9 (1.96)	71.6 (2.04)
35–44	4,947	100.0	* *	3.8 (1.21)	23.0 (2.32)	73.0 (2.37)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	9,577	100.0	0.6 (0.17)	3.2 (0.77)	23.6 (1.74)	72.6 (1.84)
Currently cohabiting	2,394	100.0	2.0 (1.18)	4.1 (1.34)	24.0 (3.15)	69.9 (3.55)
Not currently married or cohabiting	644	100.0	* *	* *	31.8 (6.10)	66.9 (6.06)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	5,620	100.0	1.4 (0.54)	3.8 (0.96)	24.5 (2.28)	70.3 (2.38)
Some college or more education	6,536	100.0	0.2 (0.08)	2.6 (0.80)	23.8 (2.32)	73.3 (2.48)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	2,948	100.0	1.4 (0.59)	6.3 (1.45)	28.4 (3.81)	63.9 (3.46)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	7,237	100.0	0.3 (0.14)	1.8 (0.73)	24.0 (2.14)	73.9 (2.15)
Black or African American, single race	1,358	100.0	* *	5.7 (1.94)	14.4 (2.72)	78.2 (3.45)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	2,208	100.0	42.8 (3.94)	27.2 (3.71)	22.1 (2.63)	7.9 (1.96)
Age in years						
15–24	589	100.0	24.7 (6.31)	29.0 (6.34)	33.7 (6.12)	12.5 (4.41)
25–34	1,094	100.0	44.1 (5.12)	35.3 (5.66)	16.6 (3.41)	4.0 (1.66)
35–44	525	100.0	60.4 (7.91)	8.2 (2.84)	20.4 (6.19)	11.0 (5.62)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	511	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Currently cohabiting	384	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,313	100.0	31.2 (4.43)	29.5 (4.85)	30.3 (3.63)	8.9 (2.74)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	1,378	100.0	54.0 (5.34)	23.5 (4.86)	16.1 (2.90)	6.4 (2.48)
Some college or more education	481	100.0	32.9 (6.79)	37.4 (8.36)	22.2 (6.23)	7.4 (3.64)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	760	100.0	58.0 (6.41)	14.6 (3.53)	18.7 (4.77)	8.6 (4.15)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	723	100.0	35.2 (7.08)	40.9 (7.80)	20.0 (4.08)	* *
Black or African American, single race	622	100.0	31.0 (4.97)	26.5 (5.44)	29.8 (4.51)	12.6 (3.37)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 3. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children under age 5 years, by how often they bathed, diapered, or dressed the children or helped the children bathe, dress, or use the toilet in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	12,614	100.0	4.0 (0.75)	6.4 (0.77)	32.0 (1.68)	57.6 (2.00)
Age in years						
15–24	1,353	100.0	6.0 (2.39)	4.6 (1.43)	28.3 (4.46)	61.1 (4.90)
25–34	6,314	100.0	3.4 (0.69)	6.9 (0.99)	30.7 (1.94)	59.1 (2.17)
35–44	4,947	100.0	4.3 (1.46)	6.3 (1.46)	34.7 (3.04)	54.7 (3.32)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	9,577	100.0	3.6 (0.83)	6.3 (0.91)	32.8 (2.00)	57.3 (2.39)
Currently cohabiting	2,394	100.0	6.3 (1.87)	7.9 (1.53)	25.7 (2.89)	60.1 (3.59)
Not currently married or cohabiting	644	100.0	1.7 (0.91)	1.9 (0.83)	43.8 (6.30)	52.6 (6.19)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	5,620	100.0	5.4 (1.06)	8.3 (1.37)	32.7 (2.18)	53.6 (2.37)
Some college or more education	6,536	100.0	2.9 (1.05)	4.8 (1.08)	31.8 (2.63)	60.5 (3.00)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	2,948	100.0	7.6 (1.59)	12.7 (2.03)	34.7 (2.76)	45.0 (3.35)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	7,237	100.0	2.1 (0.86)	4.2 (0.99)	33.6 (2.37)	60.0 (2.74)
Black or African American, single race	1,358	100.0	6.5 (2.60)	5.9 (2.04)	17.1 (2.79)	70.4 (3.58)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	2,208	100.0	47.4 (4.03)	21.4 (3.50)	22.8 (2.93)	8.3 (2.01)
Age in years						
15–24	589	100.0	31.4 (6.54)	20.1 (5.39)	33.1 (6.20)	15.3 (5.12)
25–34	1,094	100.0	46.1 (5.45)	29.4 (5.77)	21.2 (4.40)	3.2 (1.47)
35–44	525	100.0	68.1 (6.97)	6.2 (2.91)	14.7 (3.91)	10.9 (5.62)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	511	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Currently cohabiting	384	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,313	100.0	36.6 (4.59)	22.6 (4.44)	30.6 (4.19)	10.2 (2.85)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	1,378	100.0	60.2 (5.29)	17.4 (4.16)	16.6 (3.53)	5.8 (2.34)
Some college or more education	481	100.0	33.2 (6.43)	34.9 (8.48)	24.6 (6.52)	7.3 (3.64)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	760	100.0	65.7 (5.94)	11.3 (3.41)	15.7 (3.85)	7.3 (3.94)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	723	100.0	38.6 (7.34)	27.5 (7.51)	27.3 (6.48)	6.6 (3.10)
Black or African American, single race	622	100.0	34.2 (4.53)	24.4 (5.30)	28.7 (4.39)	12.7 (3.31)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 4. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children under age 5 years, by how often they played with their children in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	12,614	100.0	0.4 (0.18)	1.3 (0.30)	17.6 (1.28)	80.7 (1.32)
Age in years						
15–24	1,353	100.0	* *	* *	14.9 (3.08)	81.1 (3.32)
25–34	6,314	100.0	0.3 (0.11)	1.7 (0.47)	16.1 (1.53)	82.0 (1.63)
35–44	4,947	100.0	* *	0.6 (0.34)	20.4 (2.41)	79.0 (2.45)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	9,577	100.0	* *	0.9 (0.33)	17.4 (1.39)	81.6 (1.46)
Currently cohabiting	2,394	100.0	1.3 (0.88)	2.7 (1.11)	15.4 (2.71)	80.7 (2.72)
Not currently married or cohabiting	644	100.0	* *	1.6 (0.85)	29.8 (6.27)	68.3 (6.22)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	5,620	100.0	0.7 (0.39)	1.7 (0.53)	17.9 (1.70)	79.7 (1.70)
Some college or more education	6,536	100.0	* *	1.0 (0.44)	17.6 (2.13)	81.4 (2.20)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	2,948	100.0	0.5 (0.26)	2.7 (0.92)	22.6 (2.40)	74.1 (2.38)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	7,237	100.0	* *	0.6 (0.28)	16.6 (1.81)	82.7 (1.86)
Black or African American, single race	1,358	100.0	* *	* *	13.9 (2.64)	82.2 (3.64)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	2,208	100.0	37.0 (3.96)	24.1 (3.09)	28.5 (3.20)	10.4 (2.14)
Age in years						
15–24	589	100.0	22.4 (6.49)	24.5 (5.61)	34.5 (6.11)	18.7 (5.35)
25–34	1,094	100.0	40.4 (5.09)	25.5 (4.38)	28.7 (4.91)	5.4 (1.80)
35–44	525	100.0	46.5 (7.85)	20.6 (7.59)	21.4 (6.20)	11.5 (5.63)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	511	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Currently cohabiting	384	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,313	100.0	25.2 (4.42)	24.1 (3.74)	37.9 (4.09)	12.8 (3.06)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	1,378	100.0	47.3 (5.59)	20.8 (3.99)	24.4 (4.21)	7.5 (2.55)
Some college or more education	481	100.0	26.4 (6.11)	38.6 (8.51)	27.0 (6.82)	8.1 (3.66)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	760	100.0	52.3 (7.64)	17.6 (5.03)	20.1 (4.97)	10.0 (4.17)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	723	100.0	29.7 (6.68)	28.0 (7.02)	35.8 (7.06)	6.6 (3.12)
Black or African American, single race	622	100.0	24.8 (4.64)	26.1 (5.56)	32.7 (4.68)	16.5 (3.60)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 5. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children under age 5 years, by how often they read to their children in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children		Percent distribution (standard error)				
Total ¹	12,611	100.0	15.7 (1.39)	24.5 (1.46)	30.9 (1.42)	28.9 (1.62)
Age in years						
15–24	1,353	100.0	23.5 (4.11)	27.2 (4.74)	28.8 (4.68)	20.4 (4.65)
25–34	6,312	100.0	15.9 (1.64)	26.0 (1.86)	30.9 (1.67)	27.2 (2.05)
35–44	4,946	100.0	13.3 (2.40)	21.9 (2.69)	31.3 (3.00)	33.5 (2.99)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	9,575	100.0	12.3 (1.44)	24.1 (1.76)	32.8 (1.62)	30.8 (1.83)
Currently cohabiting	2,394	100.0	29.5 (3.11)	27.2 (3.34)	20.0 (3.08)	23.3 (2.94)
Not currently married or cohabiting	642	100.0	14.4 (5.78)	20.0 (4.75)	43.2 (6.84)	22.5 (4.91)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	5,617	100.0	23.7 (2.10)	27.7 (1.95)	24.3 (2.11)	24.3 (2.00)
Some college or more education	6,536	100.0	8.4 (1.48)	20.9 (2.12)	37.4 (2.43)	33.3 (2.42)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	2,945	100.0	31.8 (2.74)	28.4 (2.91)	17.9 (2.17)	21.9 (3.97)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	7,237	100.0	8.4 (1.25)	24.9 (1.99)	36.5 (1.94)	30.2 (2.13)
Black or African American, single race	1,358	100.0	18.5 (3.13)	17.4 (2.88)	29.2 (4.49)	34.9 (4.78)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	2,208	100.0	52.0 (3.95)	25.5 (3.63)	17.6 (3.07)	4.9 (1.72)
Age in years						
15–24	589	100.0	48.3 (6.11)	28.6 (6.01)	18.4 (5.67)	4.7 (2.91)
25–34	1,094	100.0	50.7 (5.56)	28.0 (5.28)	19.4 (4.33)	1.8 (0.91)
35–44	525	100.0	59.0 (8.09)	16.6 (6.28)	12.9 (5.04)	11.5 (5.63)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	511	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Currently cohabiting	384	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,313	100.0	45.9 (4.98)	26.1 (4.33)	20.9 (4.03)	7.2 (2.77)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	1,378	100.0	60.3 (5.26)	20.4 (3.93)	15.4 (3.58)	3.9 (2.10)
Some college or more education	481	100.0	34.5 (6.45)	40.7 (8.27)	17.3 (5.79)	7.4 (3.64)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	760	100.0	70.0 (5.83)	11.0 (2.59)	14.6 (4.35)	* *
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	723	100.0	36.1 (7.21)	34.5 (7.81)	26.2 (7.10)	3.2 (1.88)
Black or African American, single race	622	100.0	47.4 (6.40)	31.2 (6.03)	13.5 (4.09)	7.8 (2.83)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 6. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children aged 5–18 years, by how often they ate meals with their children in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	16,980	100.0	1.4 (0.42)	5.7 (0.64)	27.5 (1.56)	65.5 (1.63)
Age in years						
15–24	275	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	5,115	100.0	2.5 (0.80)	3.8 (0.81)	24.5 (2.09)	69.2 (2.41)
35–44	11,591	100.0	0.9 (0.35)	6.5 (0.91)	28.9 (1.94)	63.7 (2.05)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	12,997	100.0	0.9 (0.32)	4.7 (0.71)	26.5 (1.80)	67.9 (1.90)
Currently cohabiting	2,540	100.0	2.0 (0.99)	7.7 (1.84)	26.3 (3.46)	63.9 (3.37)
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,444	100.0	* *	10.7 (2.98)	38.5 (5.32)	46.5 (4.88)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	8,496	100.0	1.1 (0.51)	6.9 (0.98)	23.7 (2.18)	68.3 (2.33)
Some college or more education	8,423	100.0	1.6 (0.67)	4.5 (0.83)	31.1 (2.28)	62.8 (2.44)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	3,697	100.0	1.2 (0.64)	6.1 (1.09)	21.6 (2.61)	71.1 (2.27)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	9,790	100.0	1.0 (0.48)	4.4 (0.81)	30.3 (2.19)	64.2 (2.23)
Black or African American, single race	1,797	100.0	* *	10.5 (2.09)	25.6 (3.75)	61.7 (4.67)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	6,280	100.0	52.5 (2.57)	31.5 (2.33)	13.0 (1.48)	2.9 (0.82)
Age in years						
15–24	141	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	2,329	100.0	53.0 (4.19)	30.4 (4.11)	13.6 (2.20)	3.0 (1.27)
35–44	3,809	100.0	51.9 (3.34)	32.0 (3.09)	13.1 (1.89)	3.0 (1.22)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	2,685	100.0	60.7 (4.41)	29.2 (4.03)	8.2 (2.28)	1.9 (1.21)
Currently cohabiting	1,304	100.0	61.3 (5.00)	25.0 (4.31)	9.6 (2.77)	4.1 (2.66)
Not currently married or cohabiting	2,290	100.0	38.0 (3.47)	37.9 (3.51)	20.6 (3.58)	3.5 (1.28)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	4,278	100.0	54.8 (3.05)	30.3 (2.63)	12.3 (1.86)	2.6 (0.98)
Some college or more education	2,002	100.0	47.7 (4.86)	34.1 (4.57)	14.5 (3.35)	3.7 (1.62)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	1,769	100.0	71.8 (3.72)	15.0 (2.76)	11.3 (3.13)	1.9 (0.70)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	2,702	100.0	43.3 (4.71)	38.0 (4.50)	14.5 (2.34)	4.2 (1.84)
Black or African American, single race	1,336	100.0	45.9 (3.43)	40.7 (3.17)	11.3 (2.06)	2.1 (0.98)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 7. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children aged 5–18 years, by how often they took their children to or from activities in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children		Percent distribution (standard error)				
Total ¹	16,976	100.0	14.5 (1.16)	31.0 (1.59)	34.0 (1.64)	20.5 (1.14)
Age in years						
15–24	275	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	5,110	100.0	18.0 (1.78)	27.5 (2.09)	31.7 (2.34)	22.8 (2.30)
35–44	11,591	100.0	12.7 (1.55)	32.8 (2.16)	35.1 (2.17)	19.3 (1.46)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	12,992	100.0	12.8 (1.18)	32.7 (2.00)	33.3 (1.94)	21.2 (1.49)
Currently cohabiting	2,540	100.0	21.3 (2.49)	25.9 (2.84)	37.6 (3.76)	15.3 (1.93)
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,444	100.0	17.8 (4.04)	25.2 (4.39)	34.1 (4.70)	22.9 (3.41)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	8,491	100.0	20.8 (1.70)	30.1 (1.94)	30.5 (1.96)	18.6 (1.42)
Some college or more education	8,423	100.0	8.2 (1.41)	32.0 (2.21)	37.5 (2.52)	22.2 (1.90)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	3,697	100.0	18.2 (1.85)	28.5 (2.22)	30.5 (1.89)	22.8 (2.44)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	9,785	100.0	13.1 (1.60)	30.6 (2.29)	36.8 (2.39)	19.5 (1.56)
Black or African American, single race	1,797	100.0	14.8 (3.17)	28.8 (2.75)	29.4 (2.81)	27.1 (3.08)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	6,280	100.0	71.4 (2.11)	17.4 (1.72)	7.3 (1.15)	3.9 (1.07)
Age in years						
15–24	141	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	2,329	100.0	69.2 (3.59)	19.9 (3.07)	7.5 (1.58)	3.5 (1.46)
35–44	3,809	100.0	72.7 (2.51)	15.6 (1.97)	7.4 (1.68)	4.3 (1.32)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	2,685	100.0	76.7 (3.58)	14.1 (2.59)	6.6 (2.26)	2.5 (1.38)
Currently cohabiting	1,304	100.0	76.2 (4.66)	13.8 (3.65)	4.3 (1.37)	5.7 (2.86)
Not currently married or cohabiting	2,290	100.0	62.5 (3.76)	23.4 (2.83)	9.7 (1.92)	4.5 (1.42)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	4,278	100.0	75.1 (2.38)	16.2 (1.96)	5.8 (1.00)	2.9 (1.04)
Some college or more education	2,002	100.0	63.6 (4.30)	20.0 (3.03)	10.4 (2.99)	6.0 (2.09)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	1,769	100.0	82.8 (2.86)	8.0 (1.93)	7.1 (1.67)	2.0 (0.82)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	2,702	100.0	70.0 (3.93)	17.9 (2.90)	7.2 (2.29)	5.0 (2.28)
Black or African American, single race	1,336	100.0	58.2 (3.96)	27.8 (3.70)	8.9 (2.09)	5.1 (1.69)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 8. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children aged 5–18 years, by how often they talked with their children about things that happened during the day in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children		Percent distribution (standard error)				
Total ¹	16,980	100.0	1.1 (0.38)	6.3 (0.86)	27.2 (1.47)	65.3 (1.52)
Age in years						
15–24	275	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	5,115	100.0	1.6 (0.58)	6.8 (1.28)	23.9 (2.57)	67.7 (2.57)
35–44	11,591	100.0	0.9 (0.49)	6.0 (0.97)	28.7 (1.77)	64.3 (1.87)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	12,997	100.0	0.8 (0.43)	5.5 (1.03)	27.6 (1.88)	66.1 (1.86)
Currently cohabiting	2,540	100.0	3.3 (1.21)	10.2 (2.38)	28.5 (2.91)	57.9 (3.31)
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,444	100.0	* *	7.3 (2.68)	21.5 (3.38)	70.9 (4.19)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	8,496	100.0	1.0 (0.33)	8.2 (1.29)	26.7 (2.23)	64.1 (2.20)
Some college or more education	8,423	100.0	1.3 (0.68)	4.5 (1.07)	27.6 (2.01)	66.7 (2.24)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	3,697	100.0	0.6 (0.28)	9.5 (2.35)	26.5 (2.65)	63.4 (2.98)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	9,790	100.0	0.8 (0.54)	3.9 (0.87)	28.3 (2.14)	67.0 (2.13)
Black or African American, single race	1,797	100.0	3.2 (1.44)	8.6 (2.11)	20.8 (2.74)	67.4 (3.42)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	6,280	100.0	37.3 (2.76)	27.0 (2.77)	20.1 (1.95)	15.5 (2.04)
Age in years						
15–24	141	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	2,329	100.0	37.8 (4.12)	19.5 (2.81)	25.4 (3.57)	17.2 (3.11)
35–44	3,809	100.0	36.5 (3.24)	31.1 (3.57)	17.4 (2.12)	15.0 (2.55)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	2,685	100.0	46.7 (4.44)	29.0 (3.80)	16.3 (2.69)	8.0 (1.90)
Currently cohabiting	1,304	100.0	43.0 (5.21)	18.7 (4.05)	15.8 (3.99)	22.6 (4.94)
Not currently married or cohabiting	2,290	100.0	23.0 (2.72)	29.5 (3.48)	27.1 (3.04)	20.4 (3.72)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	4,278	100.0	40.7 (3.30)	25.7 (2.94)	20.5 (2.23)	13.1 (2.22)
Some college or more education	2,002	100.0	30.0 (4.10)	30.0 (5.44)	19.3 (3.19)	20.8 (4.02)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	1,769	100.0	62.9 (4.47)	12.8 (2.74)	12.5 (3.14)	11.8 (2.58)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	2,702	100.0	29.4 (3.94)	36.4 (5.18)	18.1 (3.14)	16.1 (3.41)
Black or African American, single race	1,336	100.0	20.7 (2.59)	27.4 (3.53)	34.1 (3.93)	17.8 (2.79)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 9. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children aged 5–18 years, by how often they helped their children with homework or checked that the children had completed their homework in the last 4 weeks, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not at all	Once a week or less	Several times a week	Every day
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	16,970	100.0	14.1 (1.24)	23.2 (1.40)	33.1 (1.56)	29.7 (1.53)
Age in years						
15–24	275	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	5,105	100.0	14.3 (2.06)	18.9 (2.01)	31.5 (2.41)	35.3 (2.52)
35–44	11,591	100.0	14.0 (1.52)	25.1 (1.89)	34.0 (1.93)	27.0 (1.75)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	12,997	100.0	12.9 (1.55)	23.4 (1.62)	34.7 (1.92)	29.1 (1.88)
Currently cohabiting	2,529	100.0	20.0 (2.97)	22.2 (3.02)	25.8 (2.87)	32.1 (3.35)
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,444	100.0	14.3 (3.40)	23.1 (4.08)	31.0 (4.82)	31.6 (4.54)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	8,485	100.0	15.3 (1.86)	21.9 (1.63)	30.8 (2.02)	32.0 (2.41)
Some college or more education	8,423	100.0	12.8 (1.76)	24.4 (2.25)	35.4 (2.33)	27.3 (2.00)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	3,686	100.0	14.0 (2.31)	21.8 (2.27)	35.0 (2.94)	29.3 (2.88)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	9,790	100.0	14.7 (1.89)	23.4 (2.22)	33.8 (2.27)	28.1 (2.13)
Black or African American, single race	1,797	100.0	10.8 (1.80)	20.3 (2.79)	28.4 (3.13)	40.6 (3.31)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	6,280	100.0	69.1 (2.37)	17.2 (1.95)	7.6 (1.15)	6.0 (1.28)
Age in years						
15–24	141	100.0	* *	* *	* *	* *
25–34	2,329	100.0	65.3 (4.04)	18.4 (3.08)	9.5 (2.39)	6.8 (2.06)
35–44	3,809	100.0	71.2 (2.83)	16.4 (2.23)	6.6 (1.26)	5.8 (1.58)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	2,685	100.0	78.1 (3.78)	12.9 (2.70)	6.1 (1.84)	2.9 (1.29)
Currently cohabiting	1,304	100.0	70.6 (5.00)	11.6 (3.65)	7.9 (2.34)	9.9 (3.42)
Not currently married or cohabiting	2,290	100.0	57.7 (3.82)	25.6 (3.27)	9.1 (2.01)	7.6 (2.37)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	4,278	100.0	71.1 (2.67)	16.4 (2.03)	6.8 (1.37)	5.6 (1.47)
Some college or more education	2,002	100.0	64.9 (4.47)	19.0 (3.71)	9.2 (2.37)	7.0 (2.38)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	1,769	100.0	81.6 (2.99)	10.3 (1.96)	4.9 (1.90)	3.2 (1.73)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	2,702	100.0	70.0 (4.34)	19.9 (3.33)	5.1 (1.67)	5.0 (2.04)
Black or African American, single race	1,336	100.0	55.7 (3.62)	18.2 (2.45)	16.4 (2.90)	9.7 (2.27)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 10. Number and percent distribution of fathers aged 15–44 with children aged 18 years and under, by how good a job they think they do as a father, according to their living arrangement: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Total	Not a very good job or a bad job	An okay job	A good job	A very good job
Lives with one or more children			Percent distribution (standard error)			
Total ¹	23,496	100.0	0.6 (0.18)	11.1 (0.82)	43.8 (1.45)	44.4 (1.49)
Age in years						
15–24	1,473	100.0	* *	12.0 (3.37)	35.4 (4.29)	52.3 (3.97)
25–34	8,662	100.0	0.5 (0.17)	10.8 (1.11)	41.1 (2.28)	47.5 (2.21)
35–44	13,361	100.0	0.7 (0.31)	11.2 (1.20)	46.5 (1.99)	41.6 (1.88)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	17,596	100.0	0.5 (0.18)	10.7 (1.01)	45.2 (1.73)	43.7 (1.84)
Currently cohabiting	4,007	100.0	* *	13.2 (1.84)	41.9 (3.37)	44.5 (3.27)
Not currently married or cohabiting	1,893	100.0	2.3 (1.52)	10.5 (2.46)	35.6 (4.28)	51.6 (4.22)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	11,299	100.0	1.0 (0.32)	13.1 (1.45)	43.0 (2.06)	42.9 (2.03)
Some college or more education	11,696	100.0	0.3 (0.20)	9.4 (1.17)	44.8 (2.16)	45.5 (2.18)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	5,146	100.0	1.1 (0.39)	14.5 (1.74)	41.0 (2.24)	43.4 (2.60)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	13,637	100.0	0.5 (0.26)	9.4 (1.16)	46.5 (1.94)	43.6 (1.90)
Black or African American, single race	2,449	100.0	* *	12.6 (2.13)	32.6 (3.12)	54.3 (2.88)
Does not live with one or more of his children						
Total ¹	7,327	100.0	23.8 (2.00)	22.6 (1.92)	32.3 (1.97)	21.3 (1.98)
Age in years						
15–24	701	100.0	22.3 (5.25)	20.5 (4.67)	32.6 (5.52)	24.6 (5.51)
25–34	2,703	100.0	21.5 (2.73)	22.2 (2.83)	35.8 (3.29)	20.6 (2.74)
35–44	3,922	100.0	25.6 (2.72)	23.2 (2.55)	29.9 (3.20)	21.3 (2.69)
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	2,782	100.0	28.7 (3.81)	29.4 (3.77)	28.1 (3.23)	13.7 (2.45)
Currently cohabiting	1,478	100.0	29.5 (4.51)	19.1 (3.66)	24.4 (4.31)	27.0 (4.21)
Not currently married or cohabiting	3,067	100.0	16.5 (2.27)	18.1 (2.10)	40.0 (2.99)	25.5 (2.88)
Education ²						
High school diploma or GED or less education	4,766	100.0	24.2 (2.26)	24.2 (2.16)	32.0 (2.40)	19.6 (2.18)
Some college or more education	2,212	100.0	23.0 (3.67)	20.8 (4.04)	33.2 (3.92)	23.0 (4.00)
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	2,110	100.0	29.3 (3.23)	18.2 (2.48)	29.8 (3.26)	22.8 (2.79)
Not Hispanic or Latino						
White, single race	2,967	100.0	20.8 (3.24)	24.0 (3.51)	37.8 (4.02)	17.4 (2.98)
Black or African American, single race	1,729	100.0	19.1 (2.64)	24.5 (3.14)	30.9 (2.93)	25.5 (4.15)

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes fathers of other or multiple-race and origin groups, not shown separately. Fathers who live with children also may have children they do not live with currently; they are included in both categories.²Limited to fathers aged 22–44 at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

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