



Fact Sheet: Families and the Workplace

In 1947 only 32% of all adult females were in the labor force¹; by 1997 this percentage increased to roughly 60%.²

In 1947 less than 20% of women with children under age 18 were employed¹; by 1997 nearly 72% of these women were employed or looking for employment. ³

In 1997, 75% of unmarried mothers (single, widowed, divorced, or separated) were in the labor force.³

Among married-couple families with children, the number in which both parents are employed has increased.³

In the past 3 decades, both the number of single-parent families and the number of mothers who work regardless of marital status has increased. As a result, the percentage of children who have at least one parent at home full time has been declining.⁴

There has been an increase in mothers in the work force (mothers who work or are looking for work) with children under 1 year of age from 54% in 1996 to 58% in 1997.³

The percentage of mothers who are employed increases with the age of the youngest child.⁴

Of all children under the age of five, 60% do not have a “stay at home mom”. More than 50% of these children have mothers who work full-time.⁵

In 1980, the percentage of children living with two parents was 77%. In 1997, this percentage decreased to 68% (the number of children living with two parents has been declining among all racial and ethnic groups).⁶

It is estimated that 60% of children will spend some time in a single parent family before age 18.⁷

In 1997, 24% of children lived only with their mothers, 4% lived only with their fathers, and 4% lived with neither parent.⁶

Children who are born to single mothers are more likely to become single parents themselves.⁸

Close to 50% of families with young children earn less than \$35,000 per year.⁵

An estimated 2 million children under the age of 5 have parents on welfare.⁵



The number of parents living with a child is linked to the quantity and quality of human and economic resources available to that child.⁶

Children in a household with only one parent are more likely to have family incomes below the poverty line than are children who grow up in a household with two parents.⁶

One of every three children of working mothers are poor, or would be poor if their mothers didn't work.⁵

During 1994-1996, 1 in every 10 children lived in families in which all resident parents were unemployed.⁴

Maternal employment increases financial resources available to families and is often the only source of income for families headed by single mothers.⁴

More working mothers with preschool children (8% in 1965 & 34% in 1993) are choosing day care centers and preschools for child care).⁴

The US is one of six countries (out of 150 countries total) that does not provide paid maternity leave.⁵

Sources

- 1) Coolsen, Peter, Strengthening Families through the Workplace. (Chicago: National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, 1983).
- 2) "Employment Situation Summary", Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 21, 1998). Washington, DC.
- 3) "Employment Characteristics of Families Summary", Bureau of Labor Statistics (May 21, 1998). Washington, DC.
- 4) "Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children & Youth, 1997 Edition", Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, 1997 (Section 3, ES 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5).
- 5) "The facts about child care: Ending the 'mommy wars' ", Children's Defense Fund (June 4, 1998).
- 6) "America's Children 1998", Forum on Child and Family Statistics (website: childstats.gov).
- 7) "Family and Community", Rhode Island Kids Count, March 28, 1997.
- 8) "Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children & Youth, 1997 Edition", Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, 1997 (Section 1, PF 2.2).

Acknowledgment

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