



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

This fact sheet is a public service from Prevent Child Abuse America that has been made possible through grants from the Sigma Delta Tau Sorority. Fact sheets are issued periodically on a variety of subjects as needs arise. Fact sheets may be reproduced without notice to Prevent Child Abuse America; however we request that the author, if any, and Prevent Child Abuse America be credited as the source if reproduced in part or in whole in other publications or products.

228 S. Wabash Avenue
10th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604
312.663.3520 *tel*
312.939.8962 *fax*
mailbox@preventchildabuse.org
www.preventchildabuse.org