

Section I

MENTAL HEALTH OF PARENTS WHO REPORT AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▲ Half of women who had an unplanned pregnancy and birth reported any depressive symptoms, and nearly one-quarter reported moderate depressive symptoms. Self-reported levels of maternal depression were higher for mothers who reported an unplanned pregnancy and birth compared to mothers who reported a planned pregnancy and birth, net of differences in other background characteristics.
- ▲ Nearly four in ten fathers who reported an unplanned pregnancy followed by a birth reported any depressive symptoms nine months after the birth compared to about one-quarter of fathers who reported a planned pregnancy and birth. These differences remained significant, although smaller when controlling for differences in other background characteristics.
- ▲ Interestingly, both mothers and fathers reported the highest incidence of depressive symptoms when the mother (but not necessarily the father) reported that the pregnancy was unplanned.

This section explores the mental health of mothers and fathers and how it varies by their reports of pregnancy intention among those couples who reported a pregnancy followed by a live birth. Specifically, the data below focus on depressive symptoms nine months after the birth of the child as reported by both mothers and fathers (including non-residential fathers). The data in these charts are based on analyses conducted by Child Trends Inc. using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort. Note that all of these findings refer to pregnancies that resulted in a live birth.

In addition to presenting the overall distribution of report of depressive symptoms among those mothers and fathers who report a planned versus unplanned pregnancy, results based on predictive probabilities from multivariate models are presented to provide more information about how much of the difference between the two groups is attributable to pregnancy planning status.