

Section G

STABILITY OF PARENT RELATIONSHIPS FOLLOWING AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▲ Most women who report having an unplanned pregnancy followed by a birth were unmarried at the time of conception, and over half remained unmarried two years after the birth of their child.
- ▲ Mothers who report an unplanned pregnancy followed by a birth also reported high levels of relationship instability in the two years following the birth, net of other background characteristics.
- ▲ Father's reports of pregnancy intention are also associated with relationship stability, particularly among cohabiting couples. However, in analyses that control for mother's reports of pregnancy intention as well, the role of fathers' intentions becomes minimal.

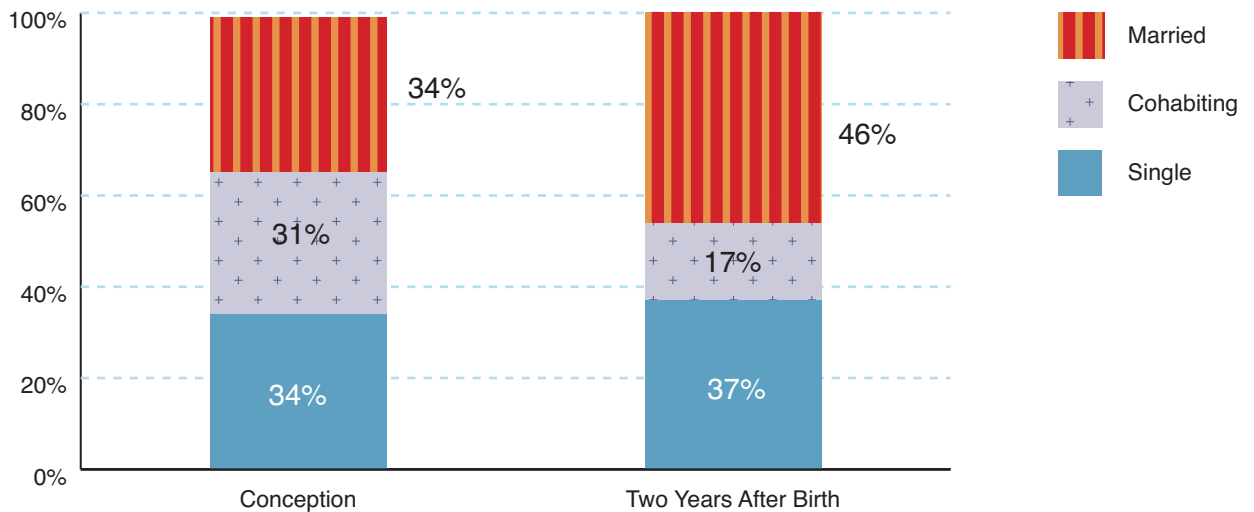
This section focuses on relationship stability among parents following an unplanned pregnancy and birth. The data in these charts are based on analyses conducted by Child Trends Inc. using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort.

The findings pertaining to mothers' intentions reflect all births within the survey, whereas the findings pertaining to fathers' intentions reflect only the subset of births for whom the father could be located and who agreed to participate in the survey—75% of the total sample. Note that all of these findings refer to pregnancies that resulted in a live birth rather than all pregnancies.

In addition to presenting the overall reports of relationship stability among parents having an unplanned or planned pregnancy and birth, estimates of the predictive probabilities from multivariate models are presented as well in order to provide more information about how much of the difference between the two groups is attributable to pregnancy planning status.

G-1. Mothers Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth—Proportion Who are Single, Married, and Cohabiting at Conception and at Two Years After Birth¹

- ▲ A majority of women who report an unplanned pregnancy resulting in a birth were unmarried at the time of conception. Nearly one-third were cohabiting and roughly one-third were neither cohabiting nor married.
- ▲ Two years after the birth, it is still the case that a majority of mothers who report an unplanned pregnancy and birth were unmarried.
- ▲ The table below includes these results along with additional findings comparing unplanned versus planned pregnancies. The findings indicate, for example, that mothers who gave birth following an unplanned pregnancy were significantly less likely to be married both at conception and at two years following the birth compared to mothers whose pregnancy was planned.



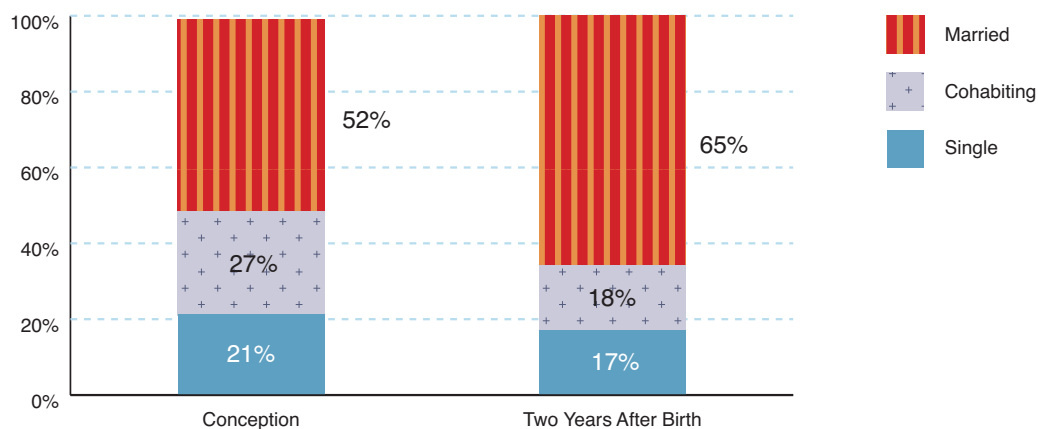
Relationship Status at Conception and Two Years After Birth by Mother's Pregnancy Intention				
	Relationship Status at Conception		Relationship Status Two Years After Birth	
	Unplanned*	Planned*	Unplanned*	Planned*
Single (not married, not cohabiting)	34%	10%	37%	8%
Cohabiting	31%	16%	17%	9%
Married	34%	74%	46%	83%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant (for all relationship categories) p <0.05

1. Child Trends Inc., analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey—Birth Cohort, 2008.

G-2. Fathers Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth— Proportion Who are Single, Married, and Cohabiting at Conception and Two Years After Birth²

- ▲ Among the subset of fathers who could be located and included in the survey, slightly more than half who report an unplanned pregnancy resulting in a birth were married at the time of conception. While this is higher than among women who report an unplanned pregnancy and birth, readers should note that 25% of fathers were missing from this survey, and this likely includes a disproportionate share of fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting with the child’s mother.
- ▲ Two years after the birth, nearly two-thirds of fathers who report an unplanned pregnancy and birth were married—significantly less than the 86% of fathers who were married among fathers reporting that the pregnancy was planned.
- ▲ The table below includes these results along with additional findings comparing unplanned versus planned pregnancies. The findings indicate, for example, that fathers who report an unplanned pregnancy and birth were significantly less likely to be married both at conception and at two years following the birth compared to fathers who report a planned pregnancy and birth.



Relationship Status at Conception and Two Years After Birth by Father’s Pregnancy Intention				
	Relationship Status at Conception		Relationship Status Two Years After Birth	
	Unplanned*	Planned*	Unplanned*	Planned*
Single (not married, not cohabiting)	21%	5%	17%	5%
Cohabiting	27%	16%	18%	9%
Married	52%	79%	65%	86%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

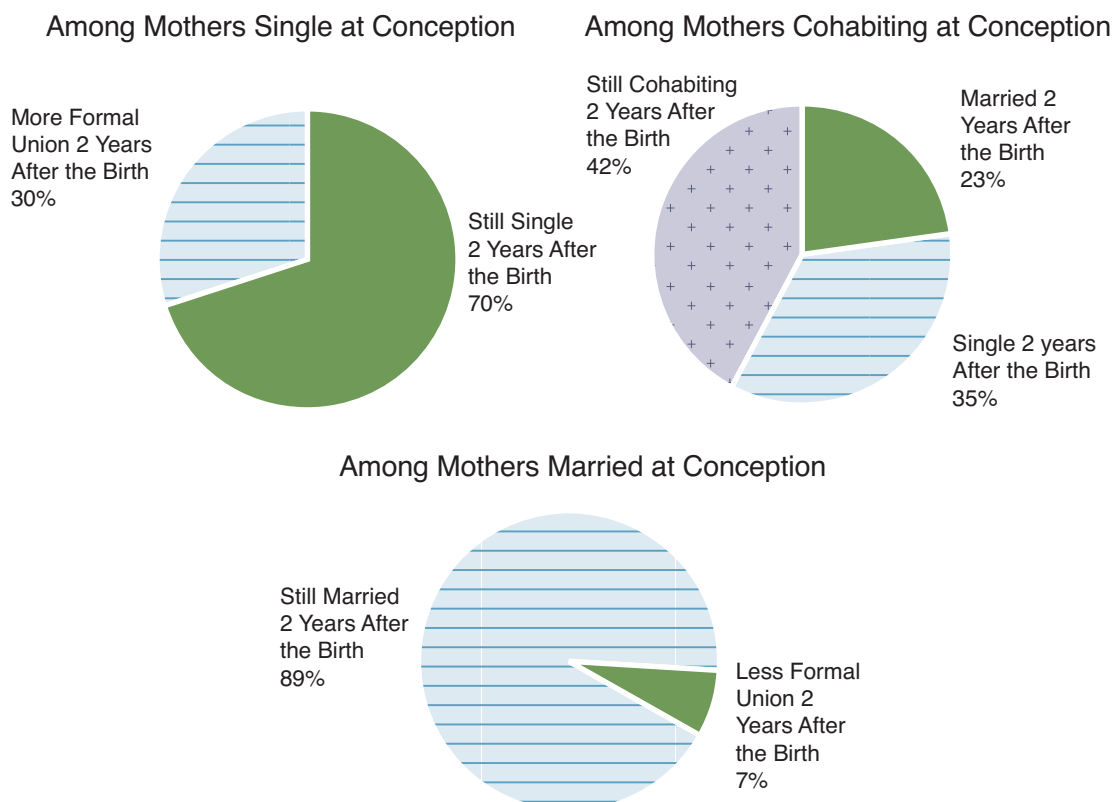
*Difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant for all relationship categories, p <0.05

2. Child Trends Inc., analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey—Birth Cohort, 2008.

G-3. Mothers Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth— Proportion whose Relationships Change over Time³

- ▲ While Chart G-1 shows the percentage of mothers who are single, cohabiting, and married at two points in time, these figures do not reveal the full extent to which women in a particular type of relationship at conception changed their relationship status over time. The figures below show mothers' relationship changes over time and provide a more complete picture of whether women having a birth following an unplanned pregnancy moved into more formal unions or not.
- ▲ For example, among mothers who were single (that is, neither cohabiting nor married) at conception and whose pregnancy was unplanned, fully seven in ten remained single by the baby's second birthday.
- ▲ More than one-third of women who were cohabiting at conception and whose pregnancy was unplanned broke up with their partner by the baby's second birthday.
- ▲ Even among married women whose pregnancy was unplanned, 7% separated from their partner within two years of their child's birth.

Relationship Changes Between Conception and Two Years after the Birth Among Women Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth



3. Child Trends Inc., analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey—Birth Cohort, 2008.

- ▲ The table below shows these results along with more detailed findings on relationship transitions. In addition to reflecting the overall period between conception and two years after the child’s birth, the findings also depict the initial period between conception and birth. There are also comparisons of births that followed a planned versus an unplanned pregnancy.
- ▲ The table indicates that between both conception and birth as well as between conception and two years after the birth, transitions to more formal unions were significantly less likely among mothers who gave birth following an unplanned pregnancy versus a planned pregnancy.

Relationship Changes Following an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth, by Mother’s Pregnancy Intention—Without Controlling for Background Characteristics						
	Relationship Status at Conception					
	Single at Conception		Cohabiting at Conception		Married at Conception	
	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned
Relationship Change Between Conception and Birth						
Less Formal Union at Birth	—	—	19%*	9%*	3%*	1%*
Same Relationship at Birth	71%*	63%*	65%	67%	97%*	99%*
More Formal Union at Birth	29%*	37%*	15%*	25%*	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Relationship Change Between Conception and 2 Years After Birth						
Less Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	—	—	35%*	16%*	7%*	2%*
Same Relationship 2 Years after Birth	70%*	54%*	42%*	51%*	93%*	98%*
More Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	30%*	46%*	23%*	33%*	—	—
Total	100%	100	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Note that the difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant p <0.05

- ▲ In addition, the table below presents estimates based on predicted probabilities from multivariate models that control for a number of child, mother, grandparent, and family characteristics. These estimates suggest how much of the difference between outcomes following planned versus unplanned pregnancies would remain even among mothers who are otherwise quite similar. The characteristics controlled for include child’s age at baseline, child’s race/ethnicity, child’s birth order, child’s gender, mother’s age at the child’s birth, mother’s relationship status at birth, mother’s previous marital status, mother’s education status, mother’s work history, whether or not the mother lived with both of her parents until age 16, maternal grandparent’s highest level of education, poverty status, language spoken in the home, and parent’s relationship status at birth.
- ▲ These estimates suggest that even among mothers who are quite similar with respect to these characteristics, mothers whose birth followed an unplanned pregnancy as opposed to a planned pregnancy still experienced significantly higher relationship instability.

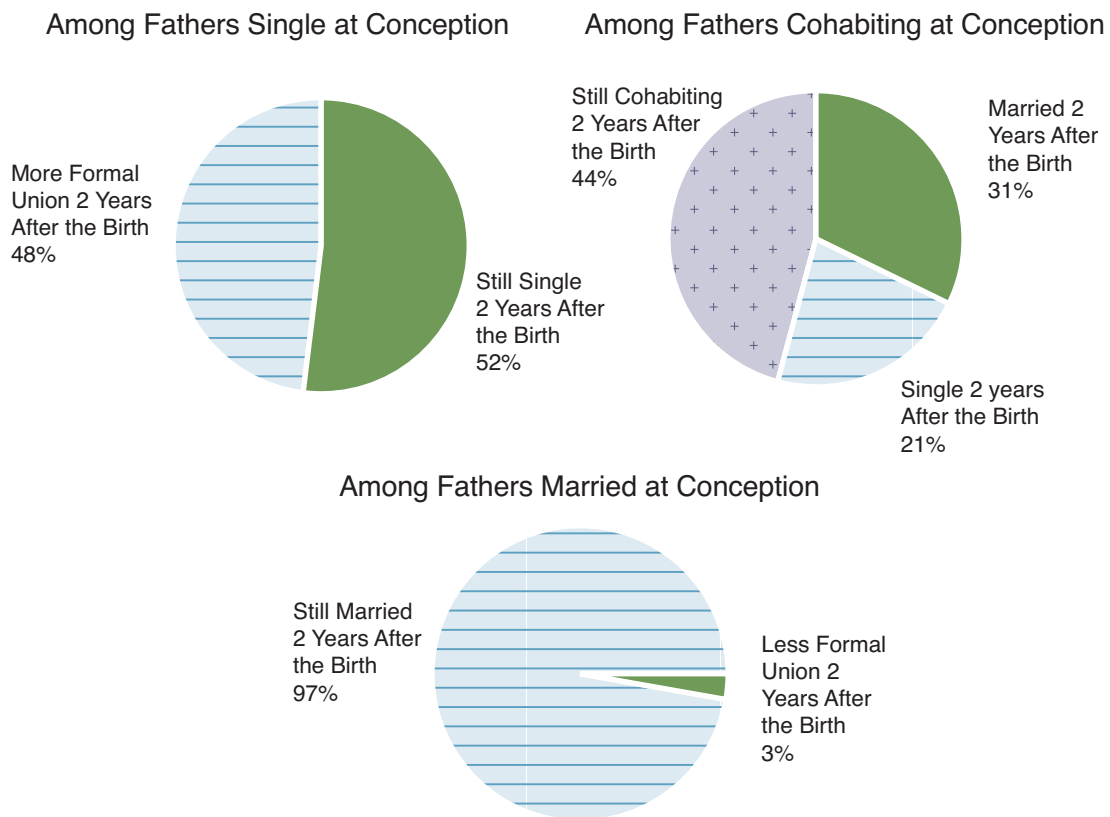
Relationship Changes Following an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth, by Mother’s Pregnancy Intention – Controlling for Background Characteristics						
	Relationship Status at Conception					
	Single at Conception		Cohabiting at Conception		Married at Conception	
	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned
Relationship Change Between Conception and Birth						
Less Formal Union at Birth	—	—	15%*	8%*	24%*	12%*
Same Relationship at Birth	61%*	52%*	64%	61%	76%*	88%*
More Formal Union at Birth	39%*	48%*	21%*	32%*	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Relationship Change Between Conception and 2 Years After Birth						
Less Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	—	—	25%*	14%*	11%*	6%*
Same Relationship 2 Years after Birth	56%*	43%*	42%	45%	89%*	94%*
More Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	44%*	57%*	32%*	42%*	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note that the difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant p <.05

G-4. Fathers Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth— Proportion whose Relationships Change over Time⁴

- ▲ Just as Chart G-3 tracks changes in mothers' relationships over time, this chart tracks fathers' relationship changes over time, and provides a more complete picture of whether fathers who became a parent following an unplanned pregnancy moved into more formal unions or not. Readers should note that 25% of fathers were missing from this survey, and this likely includes a disproportionate share of fathers who were less connected with the child's mother.
- ▲ Almost half (48%) of men who were single at conception and report an unplanned pregnancy and birth moved into a more formal union by the child's second birthday. It is also the case that 31% of men who were cohabiting at conception reported getting married within two years of the baby's birth, while 21% reported breaking up.

Relationship Changes Between Conception and Two Years after the Birth Among Men Who Report an Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth



4. Child Trends Inc., analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey—Birth Cohort, 2008.

- ▲ The table below shows these results along with more detailed findings on relationship transitions. In addition to reflecting the overall period between conception and two years after the child’s birth, the findings also depict the initial period between conception and birth, as well as comparisons between births following a planned versus an unplanned pregnancy.
- ▲ The findings indicate that there are few significant differences in the relationship stability of couples based on fathers’ report of pregnancy intention. One notable exception is the results for men in cohabiting relationships—a breakup was nearly twice as likely when the birth followed an unplanned pregnancy compared to a planned pregnancy.

Relationship Changes Following and Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth, by Fathers’ Pregnancy Intention – Without Controlling for Background Characteristics						
	Relationship Status at Conception					
	Single at Conception		Cohabiting at Conception		Married at Conception	
	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned
Relationship Change Between Conception and Birth						
Less Formal Union at Birth	—	—	13%*	5%*	2%	0%
Same Relationship at Birth	42%	48%	68%	65%	98%	100%
More Formal Union at Birth	58%	52%	18%*	30%*	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Relationship Change Between Conception and 2 Years After Birth						
Less Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	—	—	21%*	11%*	3%*	1%*
Same Relationship 2 Years after Birth	52%	51%	48%	52%	97%*	99%*
More Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	48%	49%	31%	37%	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant p <0.05

- ▲ In addition, the table below presents estimates based on predicted probabilities from multivariate models that control for a number of child, father, and family characteristics. These estimates suggest how much of the difference between outcomes following planned versus unplanned pregnancies would remain even among fathers who are otherwise quite similar. The characteristics controlled for include child’s age at baseline, child’s race/ethnicity, child’s birth order, child’s gender, father’s age at birth, father’s work status, father’s education, poverty status, language spoken in the home, parent’s relationship status at birth, and mother’s pregnancy intention.
- ▲ These results suggest that while relationship stability does differ between fathers experiencing a planned versus an unplanned birth, once other family characteristics and mother’s pregnancy intentions are controlled for, there is little additional influence of fathers’ intentions. The one notable exception is that fathers experiencing a birth following an unplanned pregnancy are less likely to transition from cohabitation to marriage than fathers experiencing a birth following a planned pregnancy.

Relationship Changes Following and Unplanned Pregnancy and Birth, by Fathers’ Pregnancy Intention—Controlling for Background Characteristics						
	Relationship Status at Conception					
	Single at Conception		Cohabiting at Conception		Married at Conception	
	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned	Unplanned	Planned
Relationship Change Between Conception and Birth						
Less Formal Union at Birth	—	—	7%	4%	2%	3%
Same Relationship at Birth	40%	34%	59%	53%	98%	97%
More Formal Union at Birth	60%	66%	34%*	44%*	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Relationship Change Between Conception and 2 Years After Birth						
Less Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	—	—	10%	8%	4%	4%
Same Relationship 2 Years after Birth	32%	62%	44%	42%	96%	96%
More Formal Union 2 Years after Birth	68%	39%	47%	50%	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Difference between planned and unplanned is statistically significant p <0.05