



Intentions and Planning Status of Births: 2000-2010

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Unintended childbearing is linked to negative health and well-being among mothers, children, and families (Logan et al., 2007). Increasing the proportion of births that are wanted and planned is one of the goals presented in the government’s Healthy People initiatives. This profile examines two components of childbearing for births from 2000-2010: birth intentions and birth planning, utilizing the National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2010 data. Birth intentions are retrospective subjective reports asked of each woman for each birth whether she wanted to get pregnant at that particular time, wanted to get pregnant not at that time but within the next 2 years (“slightly mistimed”), wanted to get pregnant not at that time but sometime after 2 years (“seriously mistimed”), did not want to get pregnant, or did not care or know how she felt about getting pregnant. Planning status is an objective retrospective measure about birth control use at conception, asked for each birth: using birth control, not using birth control and trying to get pregnant, and not using birth control but not trying to get pregnant.

Birth Intentions and Planning Status

- Figure 1 shows the intention status of births in the last decade.
 - The majority of births in the last decade are reported as wanted (62%). Nine percent are reported by mothers to be slightly mistimed, and 14% are classified as seriously mistimed.
 - One in seven births is considered unwanted.
- Figure 2 presents the planning status of births by incorporating birth control behavior at the time of conception.
 - Half of births are planned, born to women who are not using birth control and trying to get pregnant.
 - Slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of births in the last decade are born to women who reported using birth control at conception.
 - Just under one-quarter (23%) of births are to women who reported not using contraception but not trying to get pregnant.
- Taken together, 74% of births that are reported as wanted were to women who were not using any birth control and trying to get pregnant. Among unwanted births, about half (48%) were to women who were using birth control (results not shown).

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR’s core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Figure 1. Birth Intentions, 2000-2010

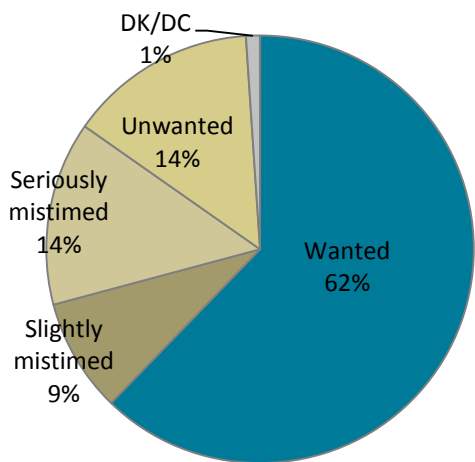
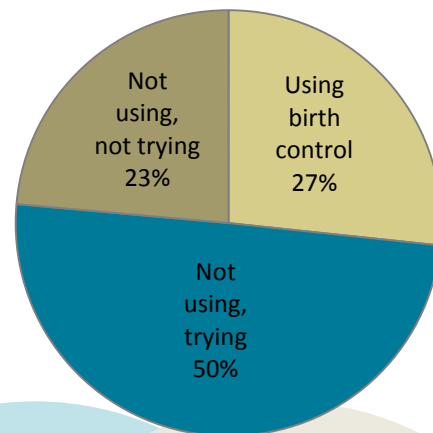


Figure 2. Planning Status of Births, 2000-2010



Source: NSFG 2006-10 Pregnancy Data Files

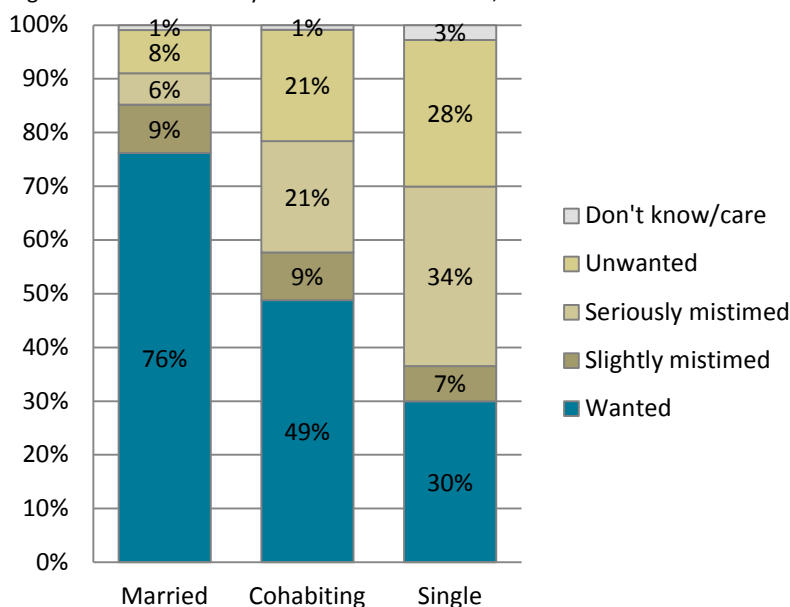
Union Status of Births

- Sixty percent of all births in the last decade occurred in marriage, 23% in a cohabiting union, and 17% to women not in a co-residential union ('single' women).

Union Status and Intended Status of Births

- Marital births are most likely to be reported as wanted (76%) and just under half of cohabiting births are wanted (49%). Among births to single women, less than one-third of women report they are wanted (30%). Overall, about 40% of nonmarital (single and cohabiting) births are wanted.
- Similar proportions of births to married, cohabiting and single women are reported as slightly mistimed, whereas seriously mistimed births are more prevalent among births to cohabiting (21%) and single women (34%).
- Less than one-tenth (8%) of births to married women are reported as unwanted in contrast to over one-fifth of births to cohabiting women (21%) and over one-fourth of births to single women (28%).
- Few women report not knowing or caring about their birth intentions. The largest percentage is found among single mothers (3%).

Figure 3. Intendedness by Union Status of Mother, 2000-2010

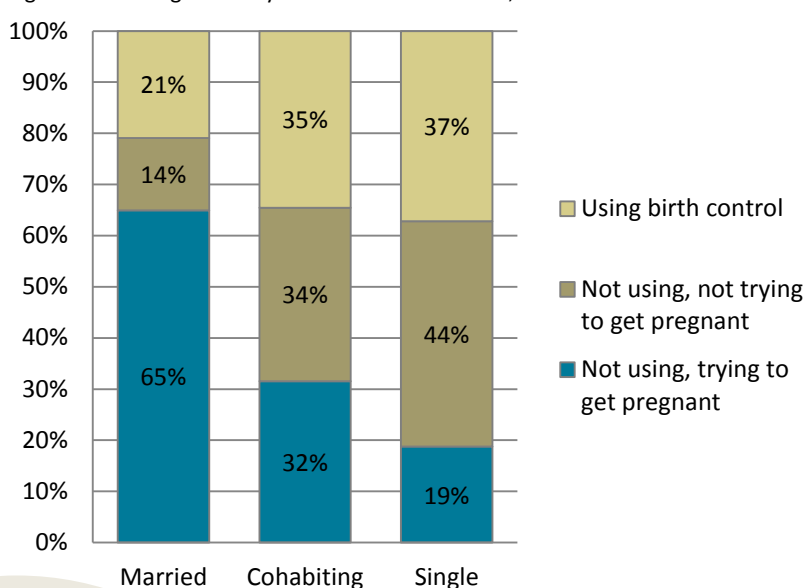


Source: NSFG 2006-10 Pregnancy Data Files

Union Status and Planning Status of Births

- One-fifth (21%) of marital births were to women who were using birth control when they got pregnant in contrast to over a third of births to cohabiting (35%) and single women (37%).
- Relatively few (14%) marital births were to women not using birth control but not trying to get pregnant compared to more than 40% of births to single women, with births to cohabiting women falling in between (34%).
- About two-thirds (65%) of marital births, but about a third (32%) of births to cohabiting women and about a fifth (19%) of births to single women were reported as planned (not using birth control and trying to get pregnant).

Figure 4. Planning Status by Union Status of Mother, 2000-2010



Source: NSFG 2006-10 Pregnancy Data Files

Sources:

1. Logan, C., Holcombe, E., Manlove, J., & Ryan, S. (2007). The consequences of unintended childbearing: A white paper. Washington, DC: Child Trends, and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2012, September 6). Healthy People Family Planning Overview. Retrieved from <http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicId=13>

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