

Fertility Falls Again, Hitting 42-Year Low

Less Educated, Younger Fertility Keeps Falling • Unmarried Share of Births Down

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. July 31, 2018—Even though the economy is rebounding, births continue to fall in 2018, according to the July edition of the [U.S. Fertility Forecast™](#) from [Demographic Intelligence](#). Driven by continued declines in teenage and 20-something births, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in the U.S. is predicted to fall from 1.76 in 2017 to 1.74 children per woman in 2018. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control today released [data](#) showing that the annualized total fertility rate through the first quarter of 2018 is estimated to be 1.75.

“Younger and less-educated women are hesitant to have children,” said Sam Sturgeon, Ph.D., president of Demographic Intelligence (DI). “They are more determined than an earlier generation of women to have ‘all their ducks in a row’—in terms of their education, income, and relationship—before having kids. So, they’re taking longer to have kids, and having fewer of them.”

Sturgeon noted this also has implications for trends in nonmarital childbearing, which is projected to fall to 38% in 2018, down from 41% in 2009. “Indeed, one reason that the ratio of nonmarital childbearing has fallen since 2009 is that younger and less educated women are having fewer children.”

Among the trends highlighted in today’s CDC release of quarterly provisional estimates and DI’s latest forecast:

- The annualized total fertility rate (TFR) fell from 1.76 in 2017 to 1.75 for the annualized total fertility rate through the first quarter of 2018, according to DI. This is a 42-year low in the TFR.
- The 12 month-ending general fertility rate (GFR) decreased from 2017 Q1 (61.5) to 2018 Q1 (60.1), according to the CDC. This is a record low in the GFR.
- The annualized GFR fell for women 34 and under, according to the CDC. The declines were biggest for women in their teens and twenties. There was no change for women 35-39 years old, and a modest increase for women in their 40s.
- Even though the number of unmarried women of childbearing age has risen since 2007, the share of births to unmarried women is falling to 38% in 2018. This is because the rate of childbearing among unmarried women has fallen much more than the rate of childbearing among married women.

The [U.S. Fertility Forecast™](#) is typically more than 98 percent accurate in predicting U.S. birth trends. “The newest CDC data are right in line with our predictions about the direction of U.S. fertility,” noted Dr. Sturgeon. “DI’s projections are particularly important because the economic and cultural drivers of fertility are changing so much today. Thus, Demographic Intelligence gives companies a clear sense of the demographic road ahead.”

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About Demographic Intelligence

[Demographic Intelligence](#) (DI) is the premier provider of U.S. birth forecasts and fertility analytics for businesses with an interest in birth trends in the United States. DI provides reports and consulting services to companies in the following sectors: juvenile products, healthcare, media, financial services, consumer food, and household products. Demographic Intelligence is advised in its work by five leading family scholars: Princeton economist Alicia Adsera, University of Pennsylvania demographer Hans-Peter Kohler, University of North Carolina demographer Philip Morgan, economist Lyman Stone, and University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox.