

# Multiple Partner Fertility in the United States: A Demographic Portrait

Lindsay M. Monte, Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau

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## WHAT IS MULTIPLE PARTNER FERTILITY (MPF)?

A person who has multiple partner fertility is someone who has had biological children with more than one partner. Multiple partner fertility (MPF) is not a new phenomenon; widowhood, divorce, and separation are all common precursors of fertility in a second union. However, because multiple partner fertility families are complex and are almost always spread across multiple homes, measuring the prevalence of MPF has been difficult. New data from the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) provide the first nationally representative estimates of MPF.

## ABOUT THE SIPP

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a nationally representative panel survey administered by the Census Bureau that collects information on the short-term dynamics of employment, income, household composition, and eligibility and participation in government assistance programs.

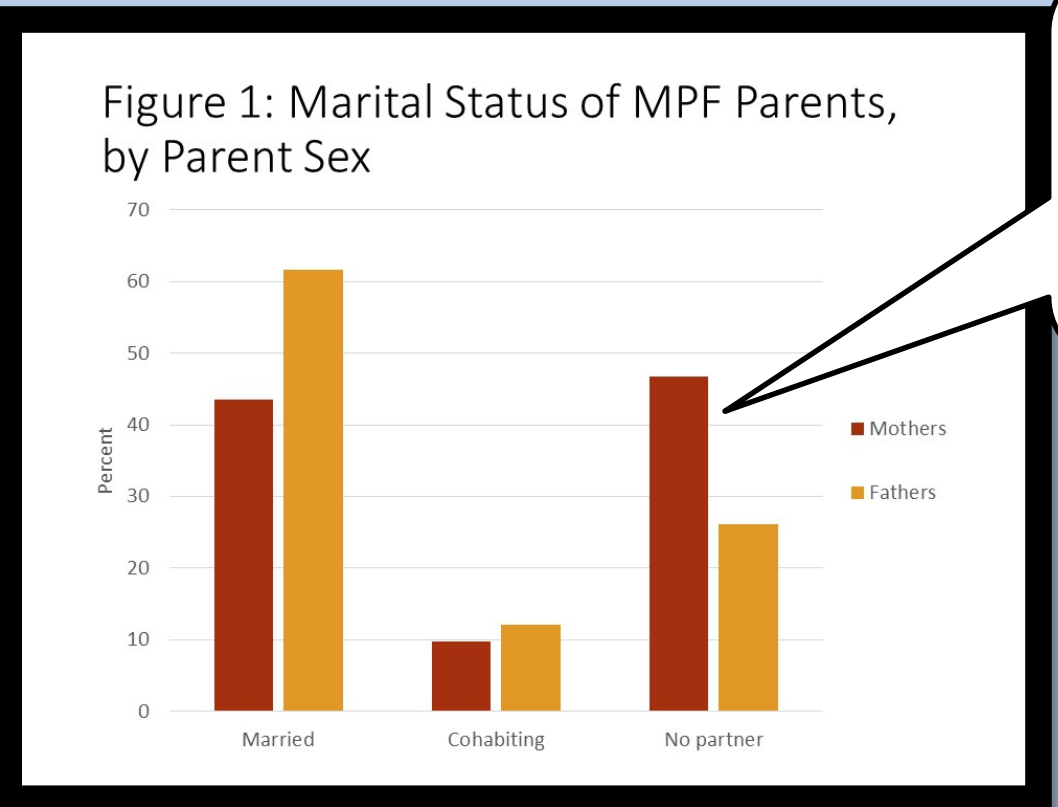
For additional information, please visit the SIPP website at [www.census.gov/sipp](http://www.census.gov/sipp).

## New data in the redesigned 2014 SIPP

Administered by the Census Bureau since 1984, the SIPP was redesigned extensively for the 2014 panel.

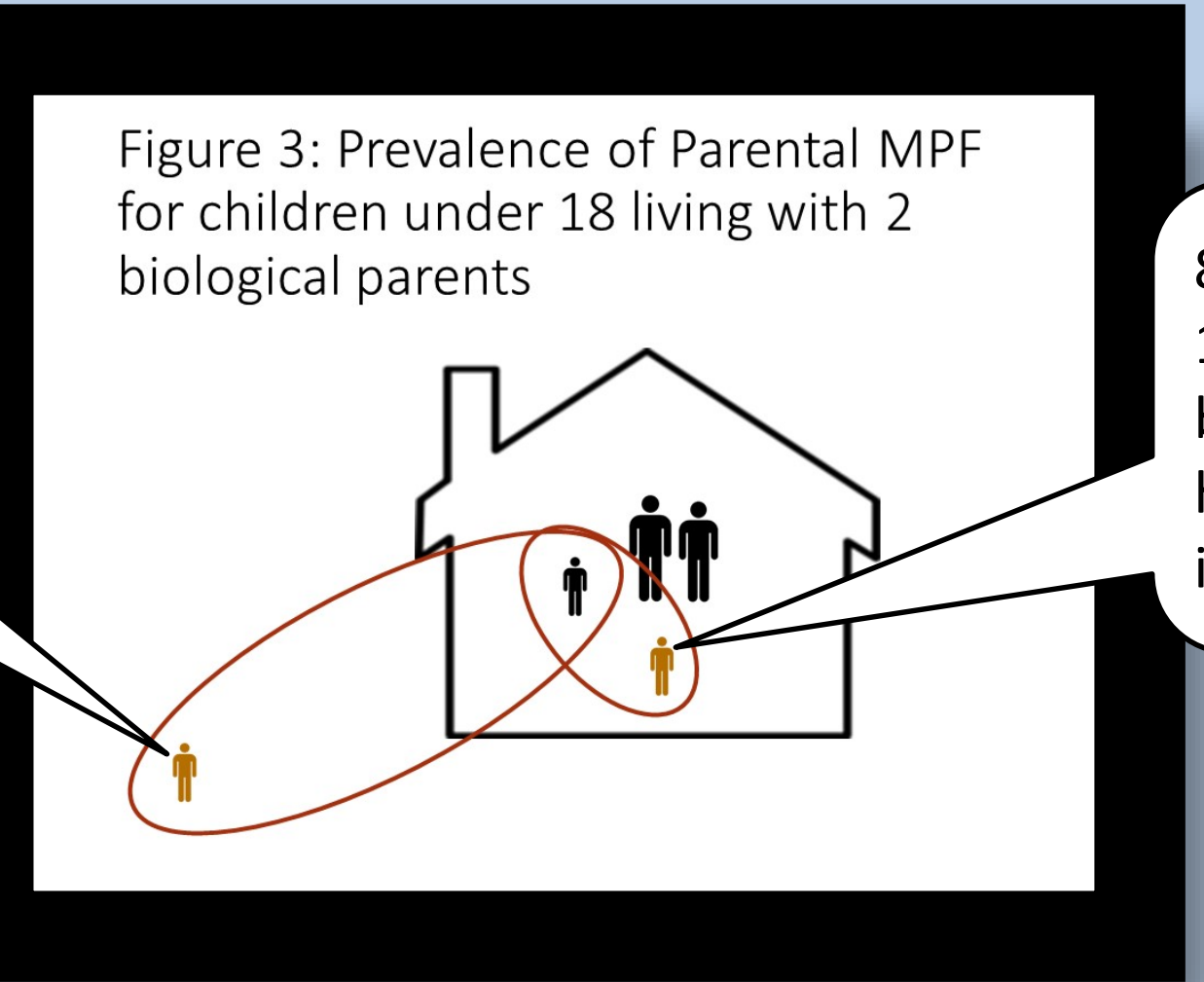
One of the fundamental changes was a switch to annual interviews (instead of every four months). In doing this, the instrument was consolidated. Previously, the survey had a set of "core" questions, asked during each interview, plus "topical modules" which were asked intermittently across the panel. The new SIPP instrument contains both the "core" and the "topical module" questions, asked at each annual interview.

The content previously contained in the Fertility Topical module was reworked to contain a complete fertility history for both men and women, and to include a direct question about multiple partner fertility asked of all adults. The data from this question, in conjunction with numerous other measures contained in the 2014 SIPP Wave 1 data, are the focus of this poster.

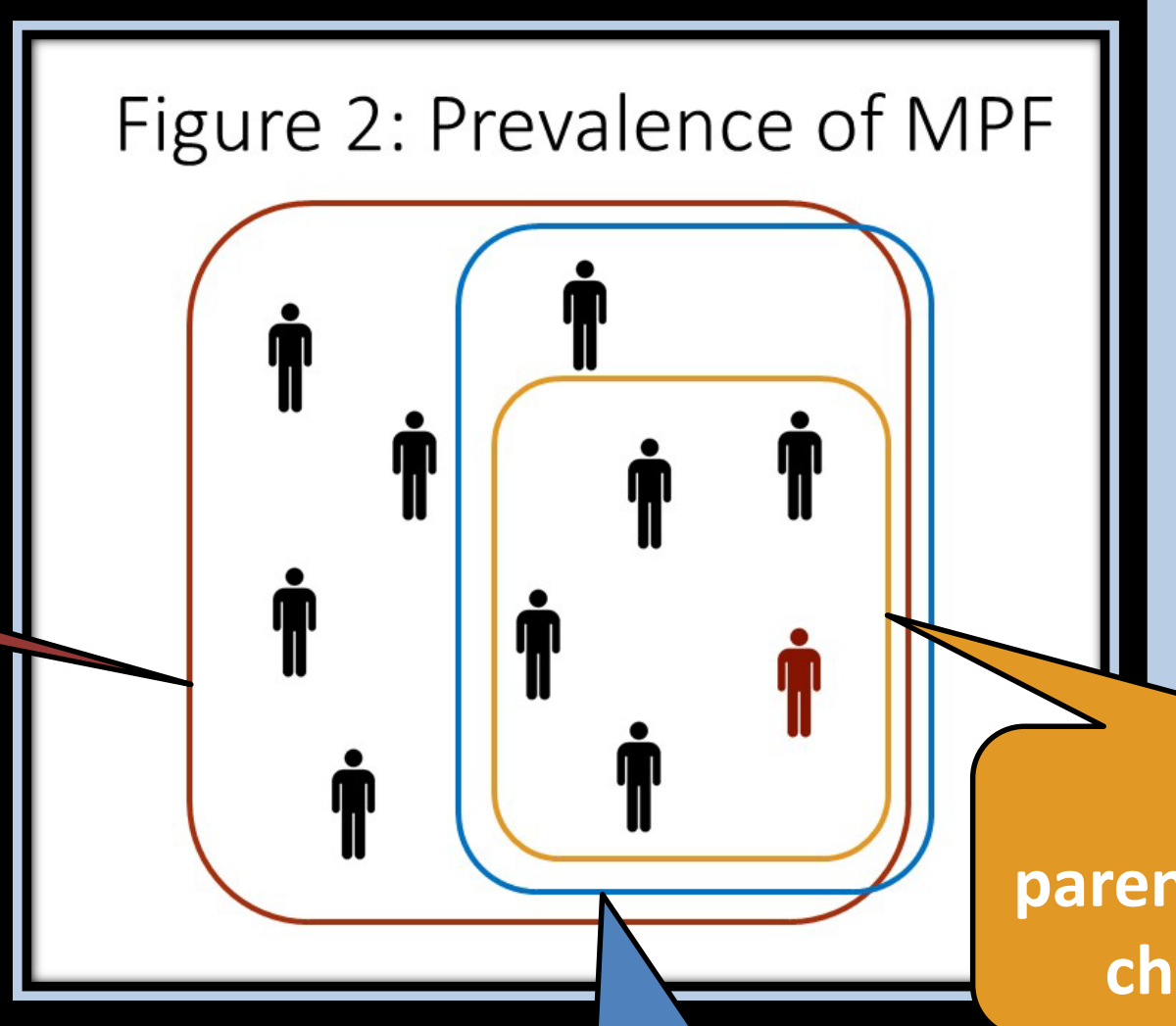


MPF mothers are less likely to be married, and more likely to be single, than are MPF fathers.

15.6% of kids under 18 living with two biological parents have a half sibling who lives elsewhere

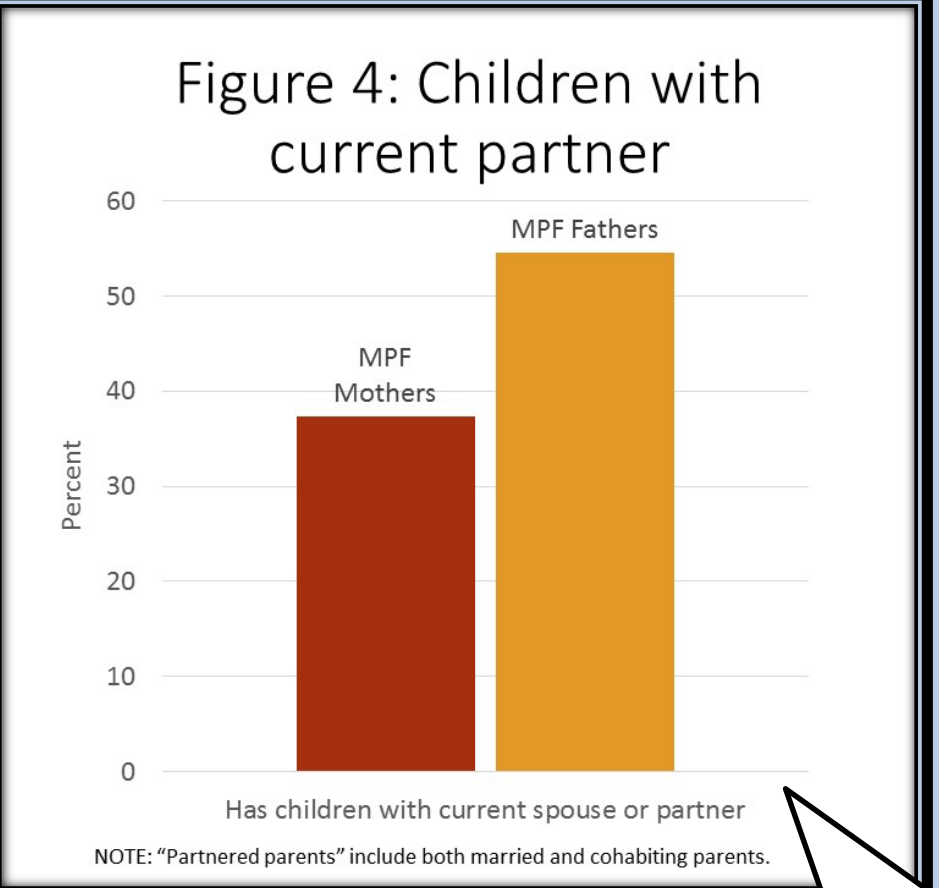


8.4% of kids under 18 living with two biological parents have a half sibling in the house



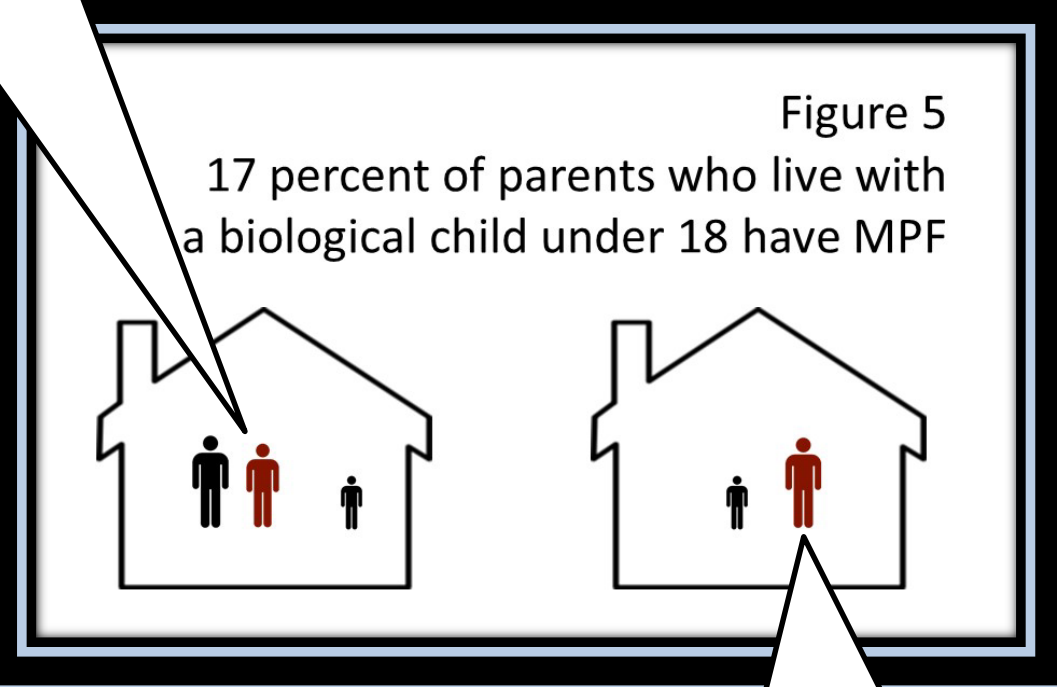
1 in 10 adults has MPF

1 in 5 parents of two or more children has MPF

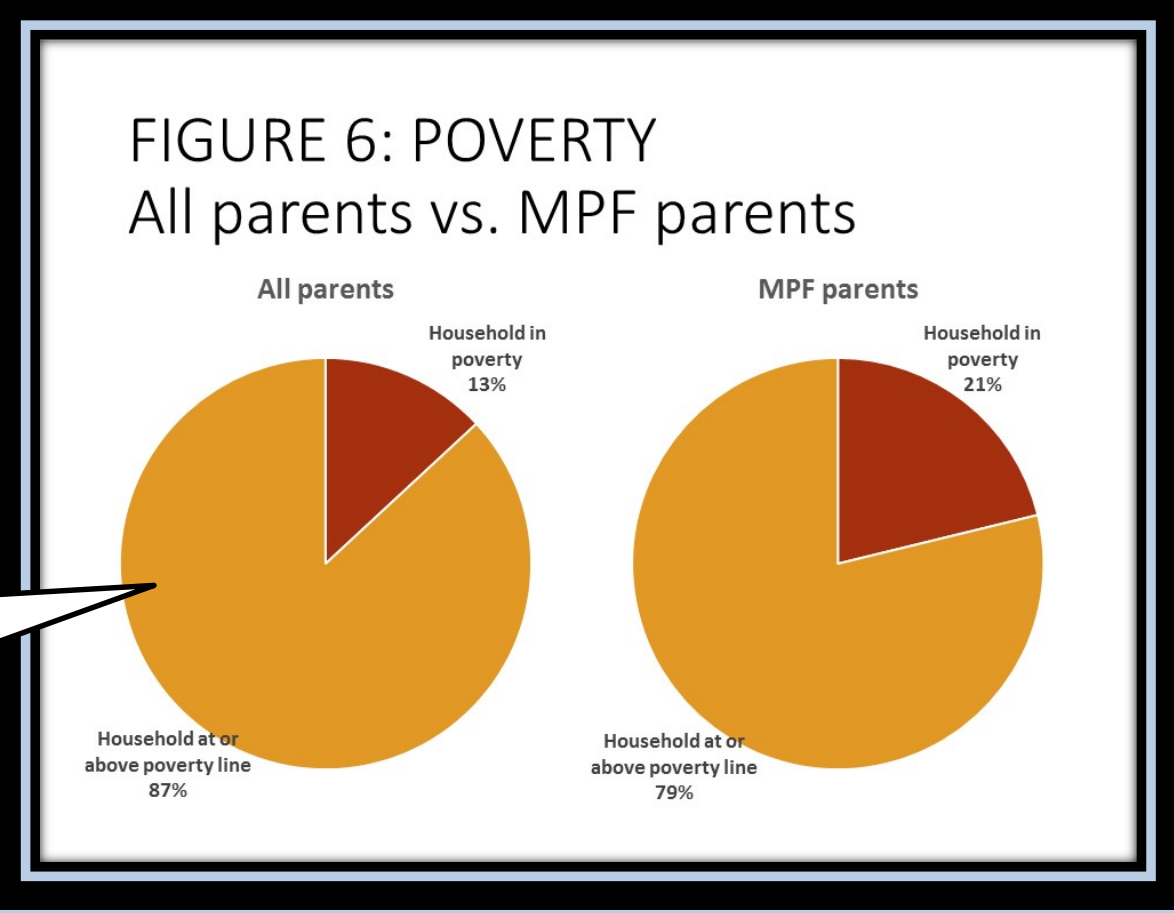


Among MPF parents, MPF fathers are more likely to be in a childbearing relationship\* than are MPF mothers.  
\*Includes both married and cohabiting unions

14% of partnered\* parents living with a child under 18 have MPF  
\*Includes both married and cohabiting parents



31% of single parents living with a child under 18 have MPF



MPF parents have higher rates of poverty than do all parents.

## COMPARABILITY WITH OTHER ESTIMATES

- MPF SOURCE: Direct questions linking births to partners
- MPF SOURCE: household roster data, survey questions on father presence and involvement over time, relationship status data
- MPF SOURCE: household relationship matrix (only captures MPF within the house)
- MPF SOURCE: Direct questions linking births to partners
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Author(s)	Data source(s); estimate year	Overall prevalence	Prevalence among parents with at least 2 children
Author's calculation	National Survey of Family Growth (men aged 15-44), 2006-10	15.1% of all men aged 40-44	22.5% of fathers aged 40-44
Dorius (2011)	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (women aged 14-21 in 1979), 2006	18.7% of all women aged 41-49	27.7% of all mothers aged 41-49
Evenhouse and Reilly (2011)	Survey of Income and Program Participation (women aged 15 and older), 2008	7.7% of all mothers 15 and older who have biological children residing in the household	32.4% of mothers aged 25-32
Author's calculation	National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (enrolled in grades 7-12 in 1990), wave IV, 2007-08	6.9% of all men aged 25-32 12.1% of all women aged 25-32	16.6% of fathers aged 25-32 37.9% of mothers aged 25-32
Scott et al. (2013)	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (men aged 12-16 in 1997), 2008	13.7% of all fathers aged 23-27 47.6% of fathers aged 23-27 who were remarried and non-resident at first birth	18.7% of women who have biological children living in the household have MPF (SIPP 2014)*
Am. Acad. Pol. Sci. author manuscript	Author manuscript	12.2% of fathers and 17.9% of mothers aged 25-32 have MPF (SIPP 2014)*	9.3% of fathers aged 23-27 have MPF (SIPP 2014)*
Source: Guzzo, K.B. (2014), New Partners, Multiple-Partner Fertility in the United States, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 2014 July	Source: Guzzo, K.B. (2014), New Partners, Multiple-Partner Fertility in the United States, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 2014 July	4.5% of men, and 9.9% of women, aged 25-32 have MPF (SIPP 2014)*	21.4% of fathers ages 40-44 with at least two children have MPF (SIPP 2014)

## OTHER SIPP DATA RELATED TO MPF

The 2014 SIPP data have numerous measures that can be used to inform research about MPF and family complexity, including:

- A full household relationship matrix available in every month of the panel
- A full suite of income and program participation measures
- Child support paid and child support received
- Information on benefits received through someone not in the household (i.e., health insurance through a non-resident parent's employer)
- Marital status and marital history
- Child well-being and school engagement

These data can be downloaded from: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/data/2014-panel/wave-1.html>

WORKS CITED  
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Evenhouse, Eirik; Reilly, Siobhán. National Poverty Working Paper Series #11-26. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan; 2011. Women's multipartnered fertility and the criminal justice system.  
Guzzo, K.B. (2014). New Partners, Multiple-Partner Fertility in the United States. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 2014 July ; 654(1): 66-86.  
Scott, Mindy E.; Peterson, Kristen; Ikramullah, Erum; Manlove, Jennifer. Multiple partner fertility among unmarried nonresident fathers. In: Tamis-LeMonda, CS.; Cabrera, N., editors. Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives. 2nd ed.. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 2013. p. 97-115.

SOURCE: 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 1

NOTE: All comparative statements have been tested and are significant at the .1 level.



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