What is a nonstandard schedule?  

Any work schedule that is outside the traditional Mon-Fri, daytime hours. It includes evenings, nights, weekends, and rotating or irregular shifts.

**BACKGROUND**

- The 24-Hour economy has pushed many working adults into work schedules that fall outside traditional work hours (McMenamin 2007).
- Coupled parents may use nonstandard work hours to desynchronize schedules so that one parent is always available to care for their child(ren) (Täht and Mills 2012).
- Some parents fall into nonstandard work schedules because of the inflexibility of their job (Lesnard 2008).
- It is not uncommon for a parent to work a schedule outside the traditional Monday through Friday, daytime hours.
- Parents living in poverty and those with only a high school education are more likely to work a nonstandard schedule.
- Both mothers and fathers, with or without another parent in the home, engage in nonstandard work schedules.
- Mothers more often report working a nonstandard schedule for family reasons.
- Parental nonstandard schedules are not negatively associated with children’s school outcomes or involvement in extracurricular activities.

**DATA**

- The 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) collects detailed demographic and work schedule information from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households.

**Work Schedule Data in SIPP:**

- Employed respondents are asked to pick a best description of their work schedule for each job: daytime, evening, night, rotating (that changes day to day), or “other” schedule type.
- Some parents fall into nonstandard work schedules because of the inflexibility of their job (Lesnard 2008).
- Little is known about parents who work nonstandard schedules and the children of those parents.

**WHO ARE THE PARENTS WORKING A NONSTANDARD SCHEDULE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Type</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daytime</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotating (changes day)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Other&quot;</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOW MANY CHILDREN LIVE WITH A PARENT WORKING A NONSTANDARD SCHEDULE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Type</th>
<th>Children Living with a Parent Working a Nonstandard Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daytime</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DO THEY REPORT WORKING NONSTANDARD SCHEDULES FOR FAMILY REASONS?**

- Parents working nonstandard schedules are more likely to work a nonstandard schedule for family reasons.

**ARE PARENTAL NONSTANDARD SCHEDULES ASSOCIATED WITH CHILDREN’S SCHOOL AND EXTRACURRICULAR OUTCOMES?**

- Mothers working a nonstandard schedule are more likely to report their child as highly engaged in school, does just enough to get by in school, and does not do work when bored.

**RESULTS SUMMARY**

- It is not uncommon for a parent to work a schedule outside the traditional work schedule.
- Parents living in poverty and those with only a high school education are more likely to work a nonstandard schedule.
- Both mothers and fathers, with or without another parent in the home, engage in nonstandard work schedules.
- Mothers more often report working a nonstandard schedule for family reasons.
- Parental nonstandard schedules are not negatively associated with children’s school outcomes or involvement in extracurricular activities.

**CONCLUSION**

Weekends and nights are often seen as opportunities for families to relax and share time together. However, many children live with a parent who works at least some of the time in late (or very early) parts of the day or during the weekend.

This research offers a snapshot of families with a parent working a nonstandard schedule, providing insight into demographic patterns and experiences of both parents and children. Fortunately, parental nonstandard schedules do not appear to be negatively associated with children’s school outcomes and extracurricular activities. Potential negative effects of nonstandard schedules on parents’ well-being were not analyzed here but warrant future investigation, considering the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities.

**REFERENCES**


This poster is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. Any views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.