

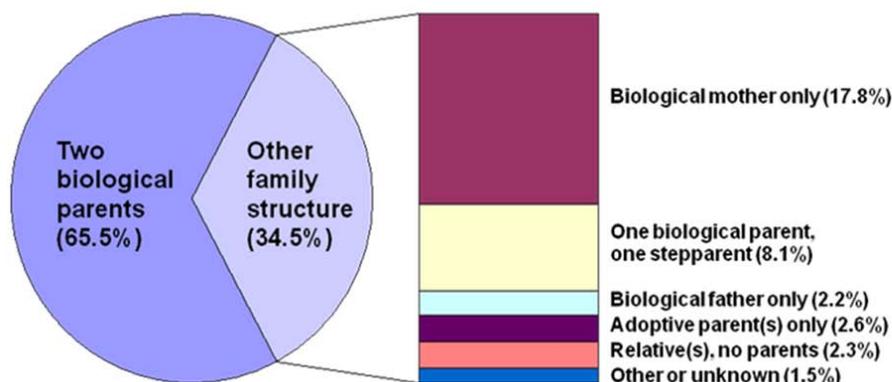
# Parenting & Family Life: A National Profile

Based on data from the 2007 National Survey of Children's Health\*

## OVERVIEW

- Two-thirds of children live with both of their biological parents

### Family composition among U.S. children age 0-17 years



- 40.8% of children in single-mother households live below the federal poverty level (FPL), which was \$20,650 for a family of four in 2007
- 57.5% of children have parents who could probably use more support for their parenting activities in one or more areas (see sidebar at right)

## FAMILY TIME

- 45.8% of children eat a meal with all family members every day
  - Higher income families are less likely to share a meal together
  - Asian and Hispanic families are the most likely to share a meal everyday
- Over half of children attend religious services at least weekly (53.7%)
  - Relative to other groups, non-Hispanic Black children are most likely to attend religious services at least weekly (61.8%)
- 59.1% of children age 0-5 years are told stories or sung to by family everyday
  - Hispanic children whose primary household language is Spanish are the least likely to be told stories or sung to everyday (34.8%)

\* The 2007 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) was sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Health Resources and Services Administration, and it was administered by the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The purpose of the NSCH is to estimate national and state-level prevalence for a variety of physical, emotional, and behavioral child health indicators in combination with information on the child's family context and neighborhood environment. Telephone interviews were completed in 91,642 households. All statistics are based on parent report.

The Data Resource Center is a project of the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative at Oregon Health & Science University and is sponsored by MCHB. Suggested citation: "Parenting & Family Life: A National Profile." Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, 2007 National Survey of Children's Health, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health. October 2009.

## Good News...

A majority of parents are doing well on each of a wide variety of parenting-related indicators

### Emotional Help for Parenting

- 87.3% of children age 0-17 years have parents who have someone to go to for emotional help with parenting when they need it

### Parent/Child Communication

- 69.8% of children age 6-17 years have parents with whom they can share ideas very well or talk with them about things that matter

### Coping with Parental Duties

- 60.2% of children age 0-17 years have parents who are coping very well with the demands of parenting

### Attendance at Child's Activities

- 85.7% of children age 6-17 years have parents who usually or always attend their child's events or activities

### Familiarity with Child's Friends

- 80.6% of children age 6-17 years have parents who have met all or most of their friends

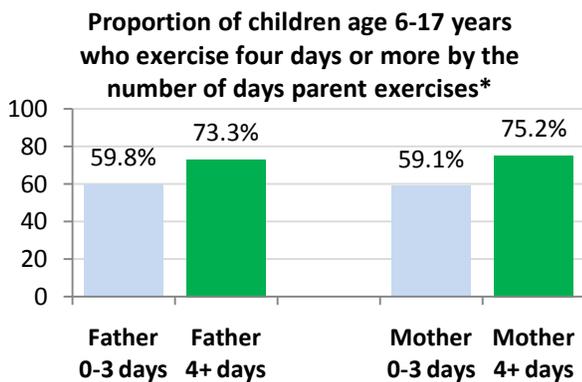
## However...

Less than half of all children (42.5%) have parents who are doing well on all items above

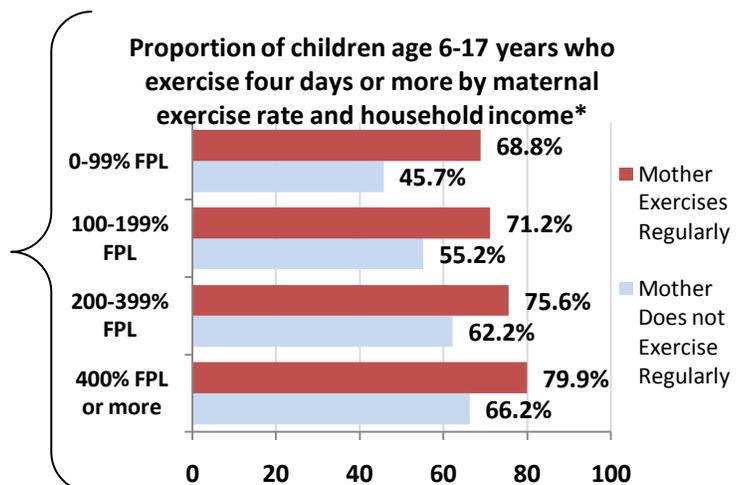
- Children in two-parent families are more likely to meet all 5 criteria (46.8%) than are children in two-parent stepfamilies (31.8%) and single-mother households (35.0%)
- Children who live in households with higher incomes are more likely to have parents who meet all 5 criteria

## HEALTH OF PARENTS

- 56.9% of children have mothers who are in excellent or very good physical and mental health (of children with a mother living in their household)
  - Children with special health care needs (CSHCN\*\*) are less likely to have mothers who are in excellent or very good health (47.8% vs. 59.0% for children without special health care needs)
- 62.7% of children have fathers who are in excellent or very good physical and mental health (of children with a father living in their household)
  - CSHCN are less likely to have fathers in excellent or very good health (58.2% vs. 63.7%)
- 10.2% of children live with parents who experience high levels of stress from parenting (They often feel angry with their child, often feel that their child is much harder to care for than most children, or often feel that their child does things that bother them a lot.)
  - High stress is reported more often by the parents of children living in single-mother households
  - CSHCN have parents who are twice as likely to report high levels of stress
- Of children who live with their mothers, 32.9% have mothers who exercise 4 or more days per week



\* Of children who live with their fathers, 44.9% have fathers who exercise 4 or more days per week. A child who lives with a mother or father who exercises for at least 20 minutes on 4 or more days per week is more likely to also exercise at least 4 days per week.



\* Higher household income increases the likelihood that a child will also exercise regularly, especially for children who have mothers who do not exercise regularly (4+ days/week).

## CHILD CARE

- Children age 0-5 years from single-mother households are more likely to have a parent who cut back or quit working in the past year due to child care issues (18.8% vs. 11.3% for children in two-parent households)
- Among children age 0-5 years who needed child care, over one-third have parents who made different arrangements for care at the last minute during the past month due to circumstances beyond their control (36.9%)
- Each week, nearly one in 10 children (9.3%) age 6-11 years take care of themselves or spend time alone without an adult or teenager for supervision
  - White, non-Hispanic children are more likely to spend time alone (11.7%), while Asian, non-Hispanic children are the least likely to spend time alone (4.4%)
  - Children who live in higher income households (above 400% FPL) are three times as likely to spend time alone as children below the poverty level (12.4% and 4.2%, respectively)

\*\*CSHCN are defined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau as: "...those who have a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required of children generally." For more information on who are children with special health care needs, please see <http://nschdata.org/viewdocument.aspx?item=256>