PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD CARE

In 2013, 69.9 percent of women with children under 18 years of age were in the labor force (either employed or looking for work), and 64.8 percent of all women were employed. Among men with children, 92.8 percent were in the labor force and 88.2 percent were employed. Labor force participation and employment among women with children varied by the age of their youngest child (figure 1). Of mothers with children from birth through age 5, 63.9 percent were in the labor force and 58.2 percent were employed. In comparison, 74.7 percent of women whose youngest child was aged 6–17 years were in the labor force and 70.1 percent were employed. Mothers of infants less than 1 year of age were least likely to be employed (51.9 percent); this rate increased to 55.0 percent at 1 year and 59.9 percent at 3 years. Employed mothers with children aged 0–5 years were more likely to be employed part-time than mothers with older children (27.8 versus 23.6 percent, respectively).

The proportion of mothers with children under the age of 18 who were employed was similar regardless of marital status: 64.5 percent of married women with a spouse present versus 65.3 percent of those who were never married, separated, widowed, or divorced.

Unemployment — calculated as the proportion of adults in the labor force who are not employed — among mothers who were married with a spouse present was lower than among mothers of other marital statuses (4.8 versus 12.0 percent, respectively). This is partly due to the significantly higher proportion of mothers of other marital statuses in the labor force. Among mothers, unemployment rates were highest among those who were never married, separated, widowed, or divorced and with children under 3 years of age: Nearly one-fifth (19.0 percent) of these mothers who had a child under the age of 1 year were unemployed, while the same was true of 17.5 percent of those with a 1-year-old child and 14.5 percent of those with a 2-year-old child (data not shown).

In 2011, 12.5 million or 61.3 percent of pre-school aged children (less than 5 years of age) were in some form of child care for at least 1 day each week on a regular basis (figure 2). The most common source of care was a parent or relative. More than 40 percent of children (42.1 percent) were cared for by their mother, father, grandparent, or other relative, with grandparents providing care to nearly one-quarter of children (23.7 percent). Approximately one-third of children in this age group (32.9 percent) received care from a nonrelative, including 23.5 percent who received care in a center-based setting (e.g., day-

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**Figure 1. Parent’s Labor Force Participation Rate, by Age of Youngest Child,** 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labor Force Participation Rate</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Under 18 Years</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Age 0–5 Years</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Age 6–17 Years</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes people who are employed and those who are actively seeking work. **Children include sons, daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children.
care center, nursery school) and 11.2 percent who were cared for by a nonrelative in a home-based setting (e.g., family daycare provider, nanny). Nearly 40 percent of preschool aged children had no regular child care arrangement.

Child care arrangements for pre-school aged children living with their mother varied primarily by maternal employment status. Only 12.3 percent of children of employed mothers did not have a regular child care arrangement compared to 71.8 percent of those whose mother was unemployed. Children of employed mothers were more likely to have multiple arrangements, however, compared to unemployed mothers (26.7 versus 8.0 percent, respectively.) One-third of children of employed mothers received care in an organized facility such as a daycare center. The same was true for 12.4 percent of children of unemployed mothers. Grandparents were a key source of care for employed mothers, as well, providing regular care for nearly one-third of preschoolers. Among children of unemployed mothers, grandparents provided care for 13.3 percent of children.

**Data Sources**


**Suggested Citation**