



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Social Justice Outcomes Framework: Family Stability Indicator

Update

March 2015

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Headline Figures

This publication presents an update of the Family Stability indicator contained in the report [Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on](#) published by Department for Work and Pensions in April 2013.

Figures are obtained from the analysis of the latest data release of the Understanding Society: The main headlines figures are

- In 2012-13, the percentage of children living with both birth parents was 70 per cent.
- In 2012-13 the percentage of children in low income households living with both birth parents was 45 per cent.
- The figures show small increases in the percentage of all children, and low income children, living with both birth parents between 2011-12 and 2012-13. However, these changes are not statistically significant.
- In 2011-12 the percentage of children living with both parents where parents report happiness in their relationship is 76 per cent.

Background

In April 2013 the Department for Work and Pensions published [Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on](#). The report, and supporting documentation, set out the seven key indicators, and their baselines, against which progress in delivering social justice will be measured.

This followed the publication of [Social Justice: Transforming Lives](#) in March 2012 which set out the Government's vision for providing the support needed to turn around the lives of those experiencing multiple disadvantages.

The figures presented here set out the latest results for the Family Stability indicator.

The Family Stability indicator measures:

- a) The percentage of all children who are not living with both their birth parents, by age of child.
- b) The percentage of children in low income households not living with both parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to higher income households.
- c) The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship¹.

¹ The measure of parental relationship happiness was reported in March 2014 and has not been updated in this publication as collection for this question occurs on a biannual cycle.

Results

Table 1: Percentage of children living with both birth parents, by age of child

Age	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		Unweighted base
	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	
<1	85	15	79	21	79	21	660
1	78	22	82	18	80	20	720
2	77	23	74	26	79	21	730
3	75	25	76	24	73	27	795
4	72	28	76	24	74	26	809
5	76	24	73	27	76	24	837
6	72	28	76	24	72	28	822
7	72	28	71	29	73	27	795
8	67	33	72	28	72	28	770
9	64	36	67	33	71	29	767
10	62	38	65	35	67	33	746
11	61	39	65	35	65	35	833
12	60	40	61	39	63	37	764
13	56	44	62	38	60	40	842
14	59	41	58	42	63	37	804
15	54	46	57	43	59	41	831
16	53	47	56	44	58	42	820
Total	67	33	69	31	70	30	13345

Source: *Understanding Society, 2010-2013*

Note:

1. The percentage of all children living and not living with both birth parents in 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.7%.

Table 2: The percentage of children in low-income households living with both birth parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to high-income households, by child age group

Year	Age group	Children in low income households		Children in middle/high income households		All		Unweighted base
		Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	Living with both birth parents	Not living with both birth parents	
2010-11	0-5	47	53	84	16	77	23	5180
	6-11	40	60	73	27	66	34	5007
	12-16	35	65	62	38	56	44	4396
	All	41	59	74	26	67	33	14583
2011-12	0-5	45	55	85	15	77	23	5301
	6-11	44	56	75	25	69	31	5238
	12-16	40	60	64	36	59	41	4655
	All	43	57	76	24	69	31	15194
2012-13	0-5	47	53	85	15	77	23	4551
	6-11	46	54	76	24	70	30	4733
	12-16	43	57	65	35	61	39	4061
	All	45	55	76	24	70	30	13345

Source: *Understanding Society, 2010-2013*

Notes:

1. The percentages of all children in low income households living and not living with both birth parents in 2010-11 have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 1.5%. In 2011-12 the percentages have a confidence interval of +/- 1.6%. In 2012-13 the percentages have a confidence interval of +/- 1.7%.
2. The percentages of all children in middle/high income households living and not living with both birth parents in 2010-11 and 2011-12 have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.7%. In 2012-13 it has a confidence interval of +/- 0.8%.

Table 3: The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship

	Happy parental relationship	Unhappy parental relationship	Unweighted base
2011-12	76	24	9403

Source: *Understanding Society, 2011-2012*

Notes:

1. The percentage of all children living with both birth parents where parents report happiness or unhappiness in 2011-12 each have a 95% confidence interval of +/- 0.8%.

Table notes (all):

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest percent.
2. Percentages have been weighted in accordance with the survey guidance issued.
3. Children's ages are at the time of survey.
4. Data is for the United Kingdom

Methodology

The analysis uses data taken from the latest release of Understanding Society (USoc) which was released in November 2014; USoc is a household survey covering the UK.

Results for 2012-13 use wave 4 of USoc, 2011-12 use wave 3, while those relating to 2010-2011 use wave 2.

Since the first ad-hoc publication in April 2013 and the update of the family stability indicator in March 2014, USoc have made revisions to the early waves of data. Therefore, figures for the earlier waves of data (2010-11 and 2011-12) have been recalculated. Results for 2012-13 should not be compared with figures available from previous publications.

For details on the latest revisions that USoc have made to the data, please see:

http://doc.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doc/6614/mrdoc/pdf/6614_w1-3-revisions2014.pdf

General details on USoc can be found at the following link:

<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>

The analysis is presented as follows:

Table 1: Percentage of children living with both birth parents, by age of child

1. Shows the percentage of children at each age between 0-16 that live with both of their birth parents, the percentages that do not live with both birth parents, and informs on the comparison between 2012-13, 2011-12 and 2010-11.
2. Children have been identified as living with both birth parents where an adult within the household has reported the child's natural mother and father as being resident.
3. Children not living with both birth parents include those born into or living with a step-parent, in lone parent families, adoptive families, foster families or those who are in the care of relatives.

Table 2: The percentage of children in low-income households living with both birth parents compared to the percentage of children in middle to high-income households, by child age group

1. Children are categorised into low and middle to high income groups to show, by age group, the proportion in each that live with both of their birth parents and the proportion that do not. Results are compared between 2012-13, 2011-12 and 2010-11.
2. Children in low income are defined as the 20% of children living in households with the lowest income, and children in the middle to high income group are the 80% of children living in households with an income above this; based on relative gross household income, before housing costs.

3. To ensure figures presented are robust ages have been grouped when split by income group.
4. This type of analysis only shows association and is unable to show if there is a causal relationship between children living with both birth parents and income.

Table 3: The percentage of children living with both birth parents where the parents report happiness or unhappiness in their relationship

1. As the measure of parental relationship happiness is reported by USoc on a biannual cycle, this table is not updated in this publication.
2. Results presented are based on parents' self-reported level of happiness. Parents are asked to report the degree of happiness, all things considered, with their relationship. A relationship is classified as unhappy based on it being reported as 'extremely unhappy', 'fairly unhappy' or 'a little unhappy'. Where each parent within a couple responded but gave different answers, we use the answer of the least happy parent. Where only one parent within the couple responded, the happiness of the relationship has been classified according to that reply. This has the potential to introduce some degree of bias where relationships classified as happy would have been classified differently if the non-responding partner was unhappy. An analysis of cases where both partners answered suggests that in 78 per cent of cases they would have been classified in the same way irrespective of which partner's response we relied upon. Our overall judgment is that the potential bias introduced by our choice of treatment of such cases is likely to be small.
3. In *Social Justice: transforming lives – one year on* it was estimated that of children living with both birth parents between 11-28 per cent reported an unhappy relationship, and 72-89 per cent of parents reported a happy relationship. This was reported as a range to account for uncertainty caused by a high proportion of missing data for this question in USoc wave 1, 2009-10. The same question in 2011-12 was subject to lower missing response, following a change in survey methodology, and can therefore be benchmarked as a point estimate for comparative purposes in future. Due to the change in survey methodology results for 2011-12 are not comparable to those for 2009-10.

Notes applying to all tables:

1. All figures are based on survey data and are therefore subject to a degree of uncertainty. Small differences should be treated with caution as these will be affected by sampling error, variability in non-response and could be revised by future adjustments to underpinning data.
2. Understanding Society is a Longitudinal Survey: interviewing the same group of people in each wave. Differences between annual figures reported in tables 1 and 2 may be affected, in particular, by unequal attrition between survey waves of children living, or not, with both birth parents.

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3. The binomial proportion confidence intervals presented in the table notes have been calculated for overall figures using the normal approximation interval.

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