

Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2017

Current Population Reports

By Timothy Grall
Issued May 2020
P60-269

INTRODUCTION

Over one-quarter of all children under 21 years of age have one of their parents living outside of their household. When this occurs, it is often the legal obligation of the noncustodial parent to provide financial support to help pay for the costs associated with raising their children. This report provides an overview of these children and their custodial parents, including their socioeconomic characteristics and the types and the amount of child support received from noncustodial parents.¹

The most recent data in this report are from the Child Support Supplement (CSS) to the April 2018 Current Population Survey (CPS).^{2,3} The CPS-CSS provides demographic information about custodial parents as of 2018, as well as child support and other income or program data for the 2017 calendar year.⁴ In addition to this most recent data, this report also provides historical statistics over the past 24 years by comparing data collected from the April 1994 CPS-CSS and subsequent biennial surveys. (See text box “Limitations of the Data” for additional survey information.)

¹ For the purposes of this report, the custodial parent is the parent with whom their own biological or adopted child(ren) lived at the time of the survey interview when the child’s or children’s other parent (or parents, where multiple resident children have different non-resident parents) lived outside the household. There may also be equal, joint, or split-custody arrangements of children between parents, also known as shared or co-parenting. In these types of arrangements, child support may or may not be exchanged between parents.

² For information about how child support paid is collected in CPS, see <www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2011/demo/spm-cps-sipp-cs-paid-comparison.pdf>.

³ The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and has approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. CBDRB-FY19-ROSS-B0156.

⁴ The population primarily represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States, 15 years or older, who have their own children under 21 years old living with them while the other parent lives outside the household. Also included in the population universe are the children of the custodial parents, who have a parent living outside the household.

HIGHLIGHTS

Current Statistics

- About 21.9 million children had a parent who lived outside their household in 2018, representing more than one-fourth (26.5 percent) of all children under 21 years of age.
 - Approximately 30.1 percent of these children were in poverty, about three times the rate of children in households with both parents present (11.1 percent).
 - Approximately half (48.8 percent) of all Black children had a parent who lived outside their household.
- One-half of all custodial parents (49.4 percent) had either legal or informal child support agreements.
- About 7 in 10 custodial parents (69.8 percent) who were supposed to receive child support in 2017 received at least some payments.
 - Less than half (45.9 percent) of custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support received full child support payments.
 - The aggregate amount of child support that was supposed to have been received in 2017 was \$30.0 billion; 62.2 percent of that amount was received, averaging \$3,431 per custodial parent for the year.
- Over half (58.0 percent) of custodial parents received some type of noncash support on behalf of their children from noncustodial parents.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

Since child support can be ordered by a court in some states until a child is 21 years old or completes college, this report covers parents' own children under 21, rather than applying the U.S. Census Bureau's usual definition of children as those under 18 years of age. Some children who do not live with any biological parent, such as those living with grandparents or foster parents, may also be eligible to receive child support but are not part of the universe in the Current Population Survey (CPS) Child Support Supplement (CSS).

Substantial changes made to the April 1994 CPS-CSS do not allow comparisons to data collected before that year. These changes included refining the screening of potential respondents, restructuring the questionnaire to accommodate electronic data collection, revising terminology that refers to types of child support agreements or awards, increasing the detail in questions about the amount of child support supposed to be received, including overdue child support (back support), and adding new questions on pass-through payments (child support collected for public assistance recipients by a state enforcement office, some of which passes through to recipients).

The amount of child support payments received by recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is likely underreported because some states retain some or all child support

collected on behalf of children of custodial parents.

Most households in the April 2018 CPS-CSS sample also participated in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the CPS, where additional information, such as income and health insurance coverage in the preceding year, was also collected and matched to the respondent. Matching was done to the 2018 CPS ASEC file using the legacy processing system in order to maintain the consistency of demographic edits between the two files. The 2018 CPS ASEC directed a small portion (5,000 households) of its sample to those income and health insurance questions asked prior to the redesign in 2014, thus reducing the sample universe of matching April respondents. To account for this reduction in sample, a weighting adjustment was performed on all CSS weights to bring them back to population controls. Additional information about the CPS ASEC legacy file can be found at www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-asec-design.html.

Additional information and detailed tables are available via the Internet at the child support page on the Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support-publications.html.

HISTORICAL STATISTICS

- Custodial parents have become more likely to be fathers over the past 24 years, increasing from 16.0 percent in 1994 to 20.1 percent in 2018.
- The proportion of custodial parents who were supposed to receive support, but received none, increased from 24.2 percent in 1993 to 30.2 percent in 2017 (Figure 1).

- The number of custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support has decreased from 7.3 million in 2003 to 5.4 million in 2017.
- The proportion of custodial mothers who had agreements for child support increased from 59.8 percent in 1994 to 64.2 percent in 2004 but has since decreased to 51.4 percent in 2018.

- About \$30.0 billion of child support was supposed to be received in 2017, a decrease of \$19.5 billion from 2003.⁵

⁵ In this report, child support supposed to be received refers to the amount due as self-reported by the custodial parent. This amount includes both formal, court-ordered support (awards), as well as informal support agreed to between parents. All dollar values in this report are in constant 2017 dollars, unless otherwise noted.

CUSTODIAL PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

In April of 2018, 12.9 million parents (who are referred to as custodial parents in this report) lived with 21.9 million children under 21 years of age, while the child's other parent lived somewhere else (Appendix Table 1, Appendix Table 2).⁶ The 21.9 million children living with their custodial parent represented over one-fourth (26.5 percent) of all 82.6 million children under the age of 21 living in families.⁷

Approximately half (48.8 percent) of all Black children lived in families with their custodial parent, while their other parent lived outside their household, more than twice as large as the proportion of

White children (22.7 percent).⁸ Among children of other races—including American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander—13.6 percent lived in custodial-parent families. Over one-quarter (28.7 percent) of Hispanic children, who may be any race, lived with their custodial parent in 2018 (Appendix Table 1).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

In 2018, about 4 of every 5 (79.9 percent) of the 12.9 million custodial parents were mothers. One of every five custodial parents were fathers (20.1 percent) (Appendix Table 2).

Custodial fathers tended to be older than custodial mothers. Over half (54.6 percent) of custodial fathers were 40 years or older, while the proportion for custodial mothers was 41.6 percent.^{9, 10}

The distribution of custodial parents by marital status differed between mothers and fathers. Custodial mothers were more likely to have never married (40.4 percent) than to have been divorced (30.1 percent) or be currently married (16.3 percent), separated (11.9 percent), or widowed (1.3 percent). Custodial fathers were more likely than mothers to be divorced (39.1 percent) and less likely to be never married (29.3 percent).¹¹

The proportions of custodial fathers who were currently married (18.5 percent), separated (11.4 percent), and widowed (1.8 percent) were not statistically different from the corresponding proportions for custodial mothers.¹²

Less than half (44.2 percent) of custodial mothers were non-Hispanic White, 28.1 percent were Black, and 24.1 percent were of Hispanic origin. Custodial fathers were more likely than custodial mothers to be non-Hispanic White (62.9 percent) and less likely to be Black (15.1 percent). The proportion of custodial fathers who were Hispanic (18.4 percent) was not statistically different from the

⁶ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. The count and demographic characteristics of custodial parents and their children reflect information current as of April of the even-numbered survey year. Financial characteristics about child support amounts, employment status, income, health insurance, program participation, and poverty status refer to information for the odd-numbered calendar year prior to the April survey.

⁷ A family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. Beginning with the 1980 Current Population Survey, unrelated subfamilies (referred to in the past as secondary families) are no longer included in the count of families, nor are the members of unrelated subfamilies included in the count of primary family members. See Detailed Table 10 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>. All detailed tables referenced in this report are available on the Internet at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

⁸ Federal surveys give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as White may be defined as those who reported White and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported White, regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). The body of this report (text, figures, and most tables) shows data using the first approach (race alone). The single race "Other" category includes American Indian and Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Use of the single-race population does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. See Detailed Table 11 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html> for a listing of custodial parents by race alone or in combination.

⁹ In addition to the tables and figures shown in this report, the Census Bureau also prepares an extensive table package including many additional details about these populations and programs. When the text refers the reader to a Detailed Table, it is indicating that the information appears in, or was computed based on, the online table package available here: <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

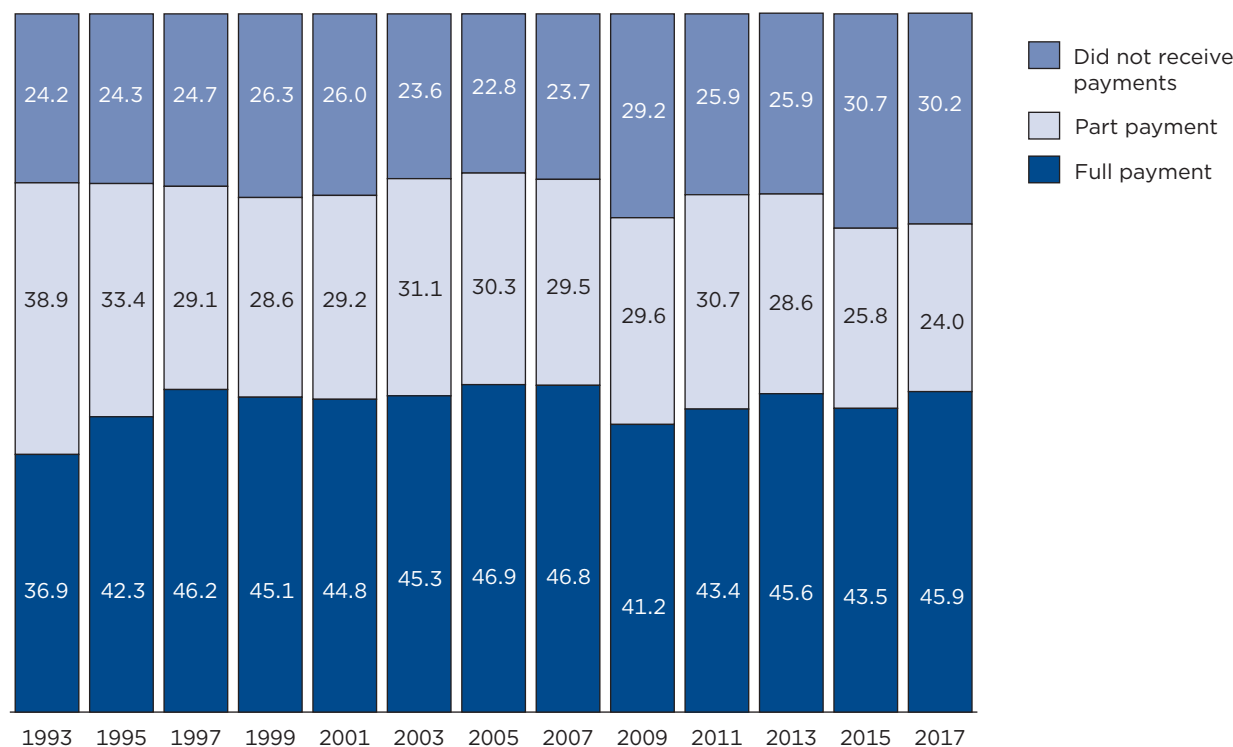
¹⁰ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

¹¹ The current marital status of widowed includes custodial parents who have children whose parents are not the deceased spouse. The proportion of never married custodial mothers (40.4 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of divorced custodial fathers (39.1 percent). The proportion of never married custodial fathers (29.3 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of divorced custodial mothers (30.1 percent). See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

¹² See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

Figure 1.
**Payments Received by Custodial Parents Who Were Supposed to Receive
 Child Support Payments: 1993–2017**

(In percent)



Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.
 For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 1994 to 2018.

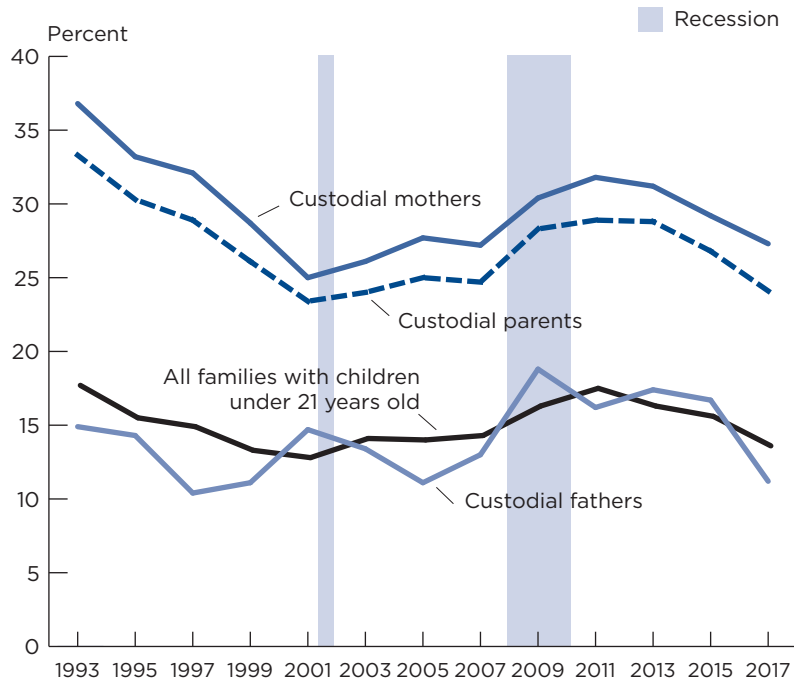
proportion of custodial mothers who were Hispanic (24.1 percent).¹³

¹³ The proportion of custodial fathers who were Black (15.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial fathers who were Hispanic (18.4 percent). Hispanics may be any race and in this report data for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population. Based on the April 2018 CPS supplement, 6.8 percent of Black custodial parents were Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population are not shown in this report because of their small sample size. See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

While the majority of custodial parents had one child whose parent lived outside the household (55.1 percent), custodial mothers were more likely than custodial fathers to have two or more of their children living with them in 2018 (46.7 percent and 37.5 percent, respectively). Custodial parents with one child had a family poverty rate of 16.7 percent. The poverty rate for custodial parents with two or more children was

about twice as high, 33.1 percent. Among custodial parents who had one child, 11.3 percent of parents had less than a high school education and 23.5 percent had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. For custodial parents with two or more children, 14.8 percent had less than a high school education and 18.3 percent had a bachelor’s degree or more. A higher proportion of custodial parents with one child were 40 years and older (48.8

Figure 2.
Poverty Status of All Families and Custodial Parent Families With Children Under 21 Years Old by Sex: 1993–2017



Note: For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>. Recessions are defined by the National Bureau of Economic Research and more information is available here: <https://nber.org/cycles/cyclesmain.html>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement and Annual Social and Economic Supplements, April 1994 to 2018.

percent) than custodial parents with two or more children (38.6 percent).¹⁴

POVERTY

The poverty rate in 2017 of all custodial-parent families with

¹⁴ The proportion of custodial mothers with two or more children (46.7 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents with one child and aged 40 or older (48.8 percent). The proportion of custodial fathers with two or more children (37.5 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents with two or more children and aged 40 or older (38.6 percent). See Detailed Table 12 at www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html.

children under 21 years of age was 24.1 percent, 10.5 percentage points higher than the poverty rate of all families with children under 21 years old (13.6 percent) (Figure 2). Approximately 6.6 million (30.1 percent) of all children in custodial-parent families lived in poverty in 2017 (Appendix Table 1).

Poverty rates vary greatly among types of custodial-parent families. The poverty rate of custodial-mother families in 2017 (27.3 percent) was statistically higher than the poverty rate for

custodial-father families (11.2 percent).¹⁵

Custodial parents with more children had a greater likelihood to be living below poverty. Among custodial mothers with one child who had a parent living outside their household, 18.7 percent were in poverty. The poverty rate increased to 29.2 percent for those with two children and 50.8 percent for custodial mothers with three or more children in their custodial family.¹⁶

EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

One-half (51.4 percent) of custodial mothers were employed full-time, year-round in 2017, while 21.6 percent did not have a job. Full-time, year-round employment for custodial fathers in 2017 was higher, 74.3 percent, and 9.2 percent did not work at any point in the year. For custodial-parent families below poverty, 18.4 percent were employed full-time, year-round, while 44.6 percent were not employed at any time in 2017 (Figure 3).¹⁷

In 2017, custodial mothers were more likely than custodial fathers to participate in at least one public assistance program (44.7 percent

¹⁵ See Detailed Table 4 at www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html.

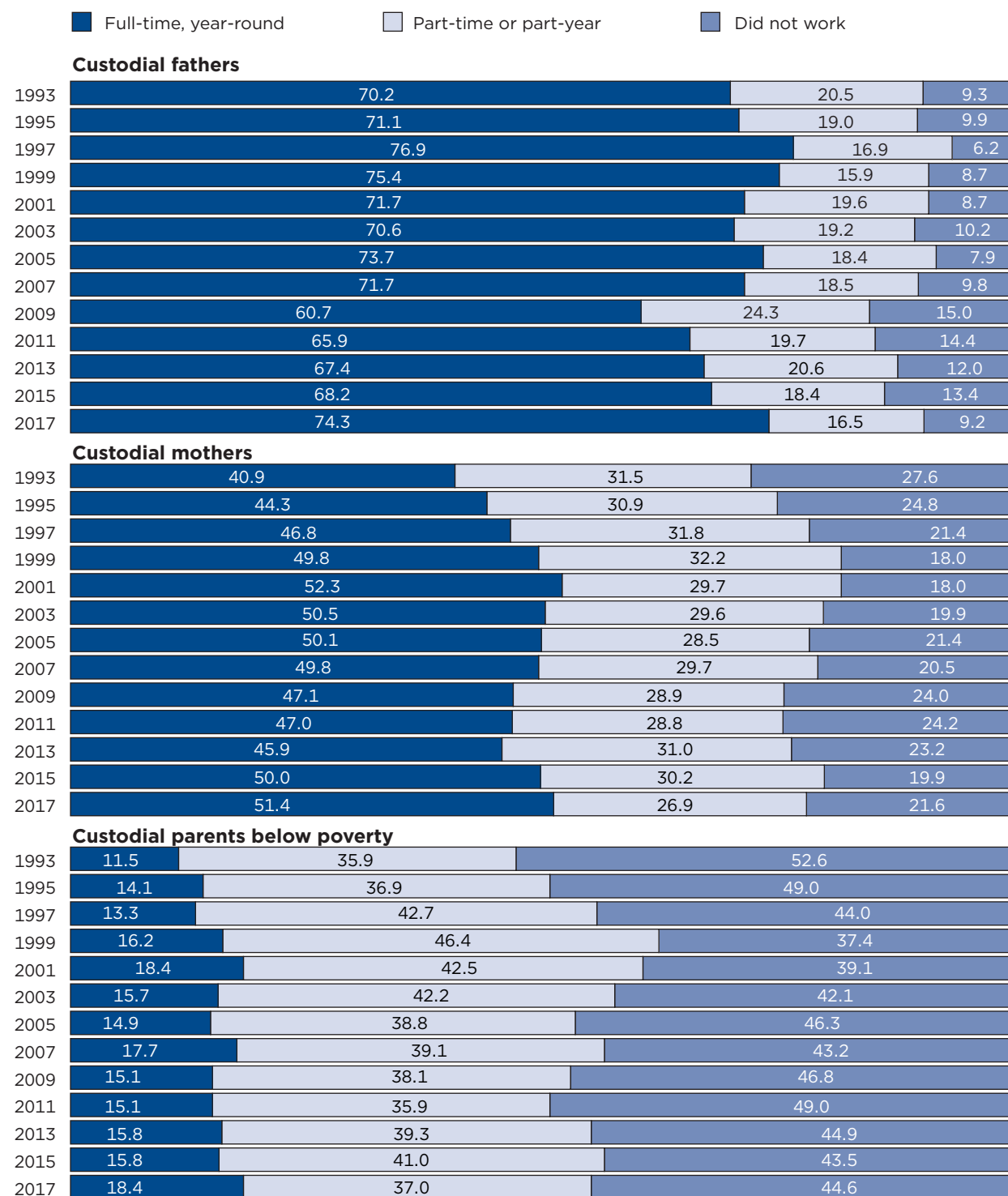
¹⁶ See Detailed Table 4 at www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html.

¹⁷ The proportion of custodial parents below poverty that were not employed (44.6 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion who worked part-time, part-year (37.0 percent). The proportion of custodial mothers who did not have a job in 2017 (21.6 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents below poverty working full-time, year-round in 2017 (18.4 percent).

Figure 3.

Employment Status of Custodial Parents by Sex and Poverty Status: 1993–2017

(In percent)



Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 1994 to 2018.

and 26.2 percent, respectively).¹⁸ Benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously referred to as food stamps, were received by 30.5 percent of custodial mothers and 15.7 percent of custodial fathers in 2017.¹⁹

CHILD SUPPORT AGREEMENTS AND CUSTODY

One-half (49.4 percent) of all 12.9 million custodial parents had a court order, child support award, or some other type of agreement to receive financial support from the noncustodial parent(s) in 2018 (Appendix Table 3). Of the 6.4 million custodial parents with child support agreements, 88.2 percent reported that these agreements were formal legal orders—established by a court or other government entity—while 11.8 percent reported informal agreements or understandings. Custodial mothers were more likely to have a child support order or agreement

in place (51.4 percent) than were custodial fathers (41.4 percent).²⁰

Child support order or agreement rates varied by the characteristics of the custodial parents. For example, 56.5 percent of non-Hispanic White custodial parents had child support orders or agreements, higher than the rate for Black custodial parents, 40.1 percent. Custodial parents whose child(ren) had contact with their other parent had child support order or agreement rates of 53.1 percent, higher than the rate for parents whose child(ren) did not have contact with their other parent, 42.3 percent (Appendix Table 3).²¹

Of the 6.4 million custodial parents who had some type of order or agreement for child support in 2018, 50.0 percent of noncustodial parents had visitation privileges with their children but did not have shared legal or physical custody. An additional 30.6 percent of noncustodial parents had some type of joint-custody arrangement (physical and/or legal), and 19.4 percent had neither noncustodial parental visitation nor any type of joint custody.²²

²⁰ An informal agreement is any written or verbal agreement or understanding that was never approved or ordered by a court or a government agency and is generally considered not legally binding. See Detailed Table 8 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>. The proportion of custodial parents with agreements (49.4 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers with agreements (51.4 percent).

²¹ The proportion of Black custodial parents with child support orders or agreements (40.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents whose child(ren) did not have contact with their other parent (42.3 percent).

²² See Detailed Table 8 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

In 2018, 7.1 million custodial parents were without any type of legal child support agreement. When asked why a legal child support agreement was not established, the top reasons cited were that they did not feel the need to have a legal agreement (39.1 percent), the other parent(s) provided what he or she could for support (38.1 percent), and that they thought the other parent(s) could not afford to pay child support (29.6 percent) (Figure 4).^{23, 24}

CHILD SUPPORT RECEIPT

Of the 6.4 million custodial parents with child support agreements, orders, or awards, 5.4 million (85.1 percent) were supposed to receive child support payments from the noncustodial parent in 2017. The remaining 1.0 million custodial parents with child support agreements, orders, or awards were not expected to receive child support payments for a variety of reasons, such as the child being too old or the noncustodial parent had died.²⁵

In 2017, about 7 in 10 custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support from noncustodial parents received either full or partial child support payments (Figure 1). Approximately 45.9 percent of custodial parents received all payments they

²³ Respondents could choose more than one reason why a formal legal agreement was not established. See Figure 4. The proportion who answered that they did not feel the need to make a legal agreement (39.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion who said the other parent provided what they could for support (38.1 percent).

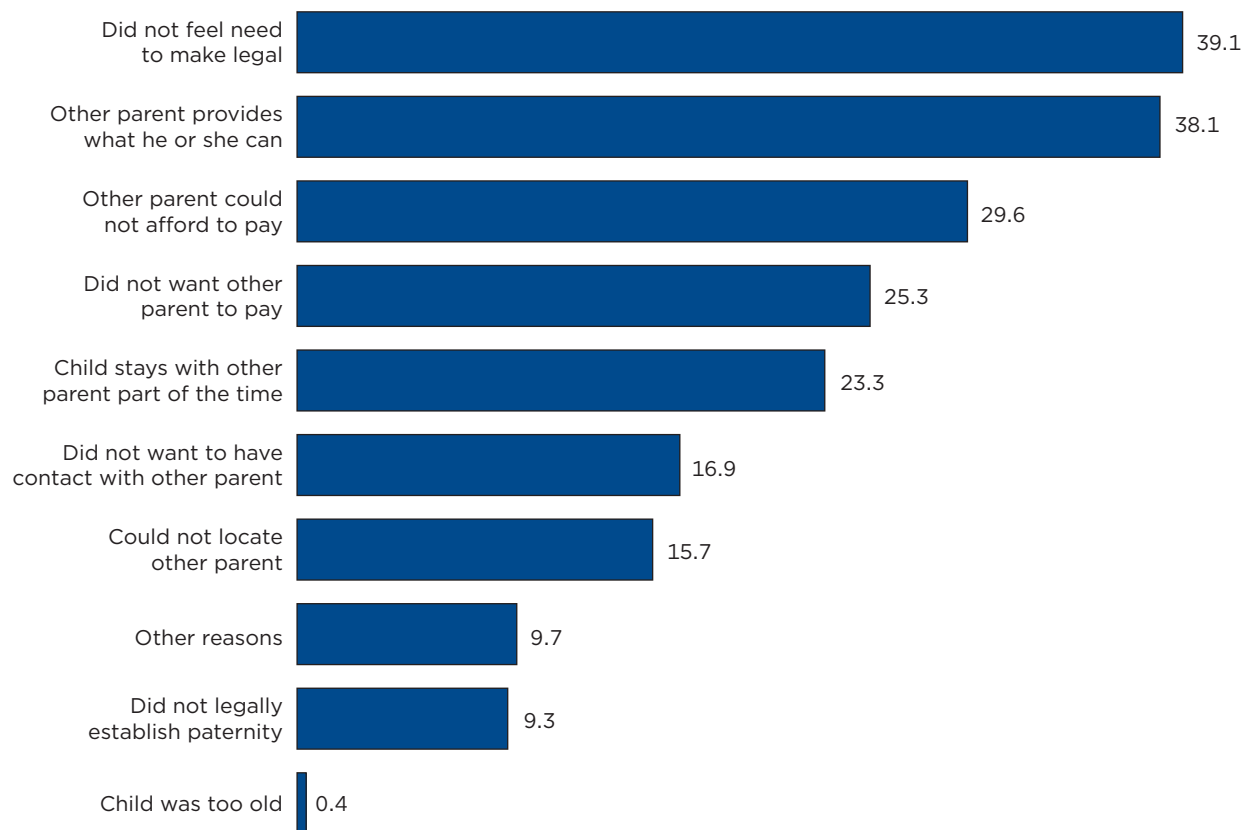
²⁴ See Detailed Table 3 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

²⁵ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

¹⁸ Public assistance program participation includes those directly receiving, or in a household where someone receives, at least one of the following benefits: Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), public housing or rent subsidy, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or general assistance. The proportion of custodial fathers participating in at least one assistance program (26.2 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers who received SNAP (30.5 percent).

¹⁹ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

Figure 4.
Reasons No Legal Agreement Established for Custodial Parents
(In percent)



Note: Universe is 7.1 million custodial parents without child support agreements or with informal agreements; excludes those with pending agreements. The total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could list more than one reason. The data are presented in ranked order for presentation purposes, but no statistical differences are indicated or implied. Refer to the text for discussion of comparisons and statistically significant differences. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 2018.

were supposed to receive, while 24.0 percent received some, but not all, payments. The remaining 30.2 percent of custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support in 2017 received no payments.²⁶

There was no statistical difference between the proportions of custodial mothers who received full child support payments in 2017 (46.4 percent) and custodial fathers (43.1 percent). However, a larger

²⁶ See Figure 1 and Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

proportion of custodial fathers (38.4 percent) compared with custodial mothers (28.7 percent) did not receive any child support payments in 2017 (Appendix Table 3).²⁷

For the 1.2 million custodial parents below poverty who were supposed to receive child support in 2017, 40.0 percent received full

²⁷ The proportion of custodial fathers who received full child support payments in 2017 (43.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion who received none (38.4 percent), neither of which were statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers who received full payments (46.4 percent).

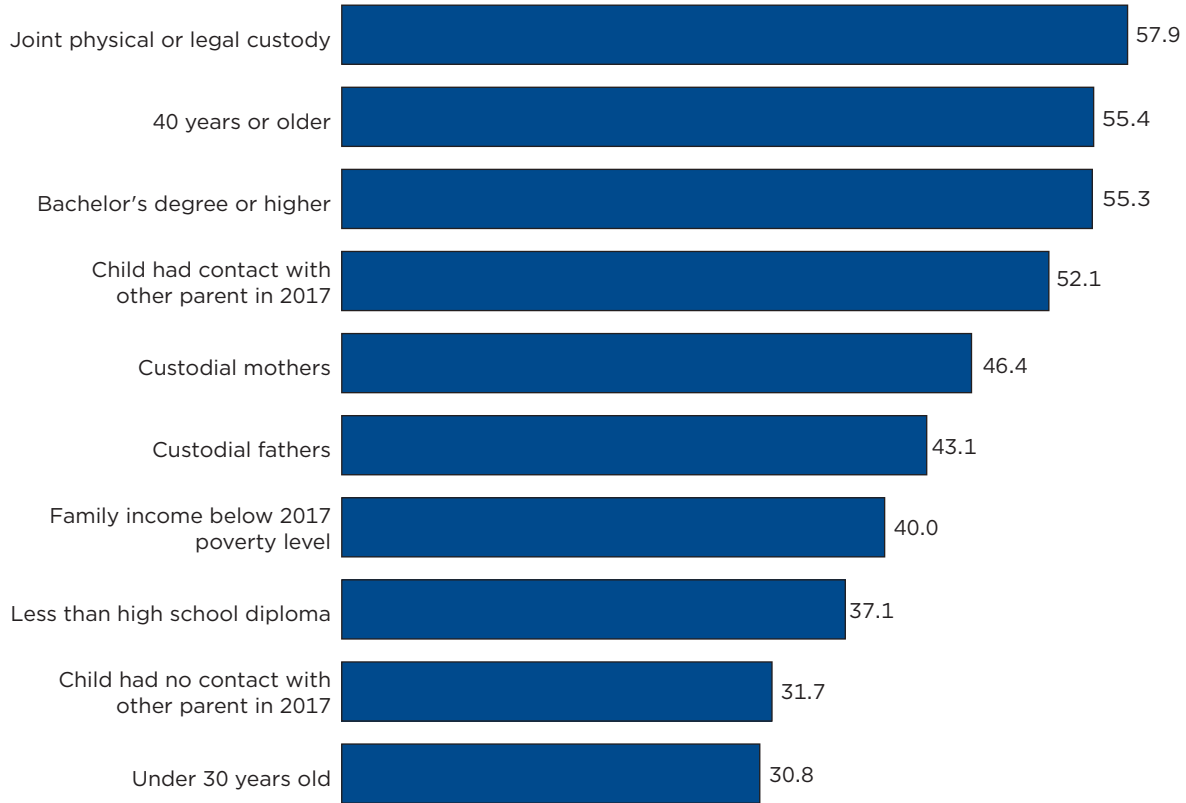
payments, 28.7 percent received partial payments, and 31.2 percent received none—proportions that were not statistically different from each other.²⁸

Receipt of full child support differed widely by the demographic characteristics of the custodial parent. In 2017, in situations where there was court-ordered joint physical or legal custody of children, 57.9 percent of custodial parents received full child

²⁸ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

Figure 5.
Custodial Parents Who Were Supposed to Receive Child Support Who Received Full Amount, by Selected Characteristics: 2017

(In percent)



Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could have more than one type of characteristic. The data are presented in ranked order for presentation purposes, but no statistical differences are indicated or implied. Refer to the text for discussion of comparisons and statistically significant differences. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 2018.

support.²⁹ Only 30.8 percent of custodial parents under 30 years of age received the full amount of

child support that was supposed to be received (Figure 5).³⁰

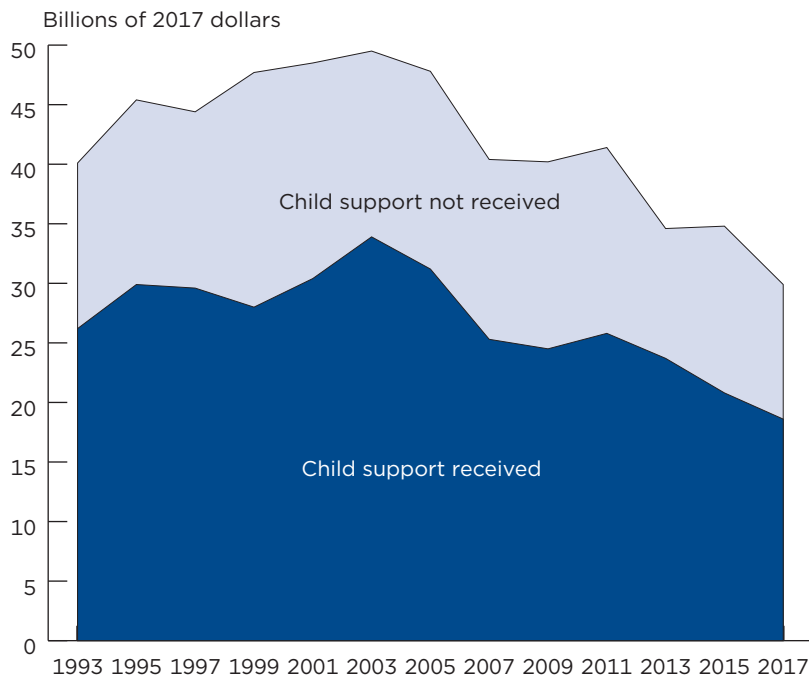
²⁹ The proportion of custodial parents with court-ordered joint physical custody and who received full child support (57.9 percent) was not statistically different from other estimates in Figure 5 including custodial parents with children who had contact with their other parent(s) (52.1 percent), custodial mothers (46.4 percent), custodial parents with less than a high school diploma (37.1 percent), and custodial parents with child(ren) who had no contact with the other parent(s) (31.7 percent).

³⁰ The proportion of custodial parents under 30 years old who received full child support (30.8 percent) was not statistically different from other estimates in Figure 5, including custodial parents aged 40 and older (55.4 percent), custodial parents with a bachelor's degree or higher (55.3 percent), custodial parents whose child(ren) had contact with the other parent, custodial parents below poverty (40.0 percent), and custodial parents whose child(ren) had no contact with the other parent(s) (31.7 percent). The proportion of custodial parents under 30 years old who received full child support (30.8 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents aged 30 to 39 who received full child support (53.8 percent).

AMOUNTS OF CHILD SUPPORT

In 2017, custodial parents with legal orders or informal agreements for child support were supposed to receive, on average, \$5,519, or approximately \$460 per month. The median amount of child support supposed to be received in 2017 was \$4,356, meaning half of custodial parents were supposed to receive less than that amount and half were supposed to receive more. Among

Figure 6.
Aggregate Child Support Received and Not Received for Child Support That Was Supposed to Be Received: 1993-2017



For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 1994 to 2018.

custodial parents who had agreements for child support, a total of \$30.0 billion in child support payments was supposed to be received in 2017.³¹

The mean annual amount received by custodial parents with legal or informal child support agreements in 2017 was \$3,431 or \$286 per month. However, the median annual amount of child support received was lower at \$1,800.³²

³¹ See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

³² See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

A total of \$18.6 billion of child support was reported as received by custodial parents, amounting to 62.2 percent of the \$30.0 billion that was supposed to be received in 2017 (Figure 6).^{33, 34}

³³ Overall, custodial parents reported receiving \$20.6 billion directly from non-custodial parents for support of their shared children in 2017, which included \$2.0 billion received by 505,000 parents without child support agreements. Custodial parents receiving child support without current awards include those with prior awards for children past the age of eligibility for payments, those with awards officially starting after 2017, and those with no legal awards or informal arrangements. These parents received a mean annual amount of \$3,908 in child support in 2017, not statistically different from the mean child support received by custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support (\$3,431).

³⁴ See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

In 2017, custodial mothers received \$16.1 billion of the \$25.7 billion in support that was supposed to be received (62.8 percent), and custodial fathers received \$2.5 billion of the \$4.3 billion that was supposed to be received (58.4 percent). The proportional amounts of child support received by custodial mothers, custodial fathers, and all custodial parents were not statistically different from each other.³⁵

CHILD SUPPORT AND INCOME

The 2017 median personal income for the 5.4 million custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support amounted to \$29,030. The median annual family income (\$47,501) and the median annual household income (\$55,251) amounts were higher. The 2017 median household income for custodial fathers who were supposed to receive child support (\$70,029) was statistically higher than the median household income for custodial mothers who were to receive support (\$52,000).^{36, 37}

The mean annual child support amount of \$3,431 received by the 5.4 million custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support payments in 2017 represented 8.8 percent of their personal income on average. The mean amount of child support received by the 3.8 million custodial parents who received at least some of the support they were supposed to receive (\$4,912)

³⁵ See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

³⁶ The median annual household income of custodial parents who were to receive child support in 2017 (\$55,251) was not statistically different from the median annual household income of custodial mothers who were to receive support (\$52,000).

³⁷ See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

CHILD SUPPORT PAID

In 2010, the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) began asking a series of additional questions about a variety of topics in order to develop a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) to serve as an additional indicator of economic well-being. Included were questions that asked respondents if they had children living elsewhere and how much child support they paid during the previous calendar year.

Analysis of these data show that an estimated 2.1 million people paid child support for their children in 2017, 1.7 million less than the number of custodial parents who reported receiving child support in 2017 (3.8 million) in the 2018 CPS Child Support Supplement (CSS). The annual mean amount of child support paid in 2017 from the CPS ASEC was \$6,760. These payments may have been paid

directly to the custodial parent, or to the state child support enforcement agency, which, depending on the state, may have passed all, some, or none of these payments on to the custodial parent. This annual mean amount of child support paid was \$3,329 more than the average mean amount of child support reported as received by custodial parents who were supposed to receive support in 2017 from the 2018 CPS-CSS.

For additional information about the SPM, please see: <www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html>.

For information about how child support paid is collected in CPS, please see: <www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2011/demo/spm-cps-sipp-cs-paid-comparison.pdf>.

represented 12.0 percent of their mean personal income in 2017 (\$40,795). Child support represented 6.9 percent of personal income for the 1.3 million parents who received only part of the full support they were supposed to receive and 14.0 percent for the 2.5 million custodial parents who received the full amount of child support that they were supposed to receive.³⁸

Among the 5.4 million custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support in 2017, 1.2 million or 22.2 percent had family incomes below the poverty threshold. If all of these custodial parents had received the full amount of child support they were supposed to receive, 1.1 million custodial parents would be in poverty (not statistically different from the

current 1.2 million), and their poverty rate would be 20.1 percent (not statistically different from the current 22.2 percent).³⁹

Child support was greater for some lower income parents, representing a substantial portion of income. For example, among custodial parents below poverty who received full payments, the mean annual child support received in 2017 (\$5,581) represented 57.1 percent of their mean personal income.⁴⁰

The 2017 mean personal income for the 1.6 million custodial parents who had support agreements but received no child support payments was \$35,189, while for the 6.5 million custodial parents

with no support agreements, mean personal income was \$36,172—amounts not statistically different from each other.⁴¹

NONCASH CHILD SUPPORT

In 2017, 58.0 percent of all custodial parents reported receiving at least one type of noncash support for their children, such as gifts or coverage of expenses, from the noncustodial parent(s). Custodial fathers (64.5 percent) were more likely than custodial mothers (56.4 percent) to receive noncash support. Custodial parents with child support agreements were more likely to receive noncash support (63.7 percent) than

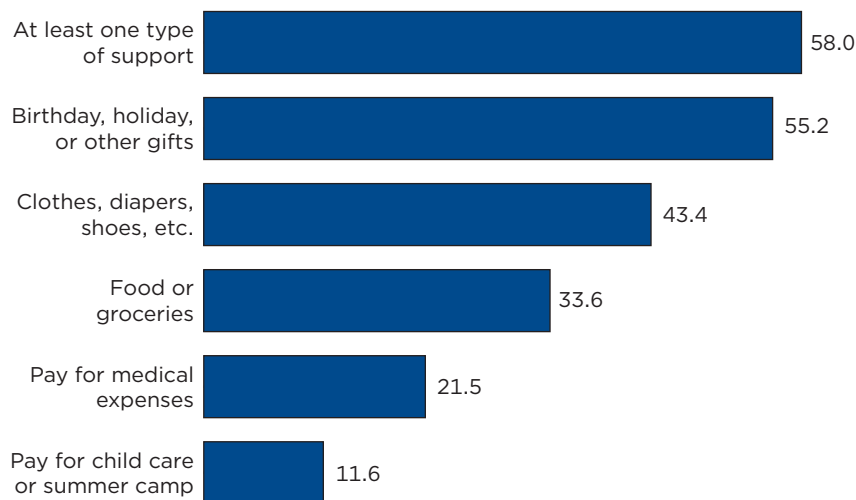
³⁸ See Detailed Tables 4, 5, and 6 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

³⁹ See Detailed Table 7 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

⁴⁰ See Detailed Table 6 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

⁴¹ See Detailed Table 5 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

Figure 7.
Noncash Support Received by Custodial Parents: 2017
(In percent)



Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could list more than one type. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 2018.

those without agreements (52.4 percent).⁴²

The most common type of noncash support received was gifts for birthdays, holidays, or other occasions (55.2 percent), followed by clothes (43.4 percent), food or groceries (33.6 percent), medical expenses other than health insurance (21.5 percent), and full or partial payments for

child care or summer camp (11.6 percent) (Figure 7).⁴³

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE

In 2018, 20.9 percent of all custodial parents had ever contacted a child support enforcement office, state department of social services, or other welfare or TANF office for child support-related assistance. Contacts were made for many reasons. The most

⁴² The proportion of custodial parents who received noncash support (58.0 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers who received noncash support (56.4 percent). The proportion of custodial fathers who received noncash support (64.5 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents with child support agreements who received noncash support (63.7 percent). See Detailed Table 9 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

⁴³ The total of percentages exceeds 100 because more than one type of noncash support may have been received. See Detailed Table 9 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

frequently provided reasons were to collect child support that was supposed to be received (27.3 percent) and to establish a legal agreement or court award (26.0 percent)—proportions not statistically different from each other.⁴⁴

HISTORICAL STATISTICS—DEMOGRAPHIC

The number of custodial parents has varied somewhat over the past 24 years, including the proportion of fathers who are custodial parents. In 1994, about 1 of every 6 custodial parents were fathers (16.0 percent). By 2018, that proportion reached 1 in 5 (20.1 percent) (Appendix Table 2).⁴⁵

The proportion of custodial parents over 40 years of age has increased over the past 24 years. In 1994, one-quarter (25.4 percent) of custodial mothers were 40 years or older. By 2018, the proportion had grown to 41.6 percent. The proportion of custodial fathers who were 40 or older also increased from 44.7 to 54.6 percent.⁴⁶

The level of education for custodial mothers has increased during this period as well. In 1994, 22.2 percent of custodial mothers had less than a high school education, and 17.1 percent had at least an

⁴⁴ See Detailed Table 2 at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/families/p60-269-tables.html>.

⁴⁵ See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>. These historical tables provide data referencing 1993 to 2017 from the April CPS-CSSs conducted from 1994 to 2018. Demographic characteristics are based on the even-numbered interview year.

⁴⁶ The proportion of custodial mothers who were 40 years or older in 2018 (41.6 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial fathers who were 40 years or older in 1994 (44.7 percent). See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

associate's degree. By 2018, the proportion of custodial mothers who had not graduated from high school decreased to 13.1 percent, and the proportion with at least an associate's degree increased to 33.8 percent.⁴⁷

The poverty rate of custodial-parent families declined from 1993 (33.3 percent) to 2001 (23.4 percent). Following the most recent recession which spanned December 2007 to June 2009, the poverty rate for all custodial parents dropped from 28.9 percent in 2011 to 24.1 percent in 2017 (Figure 2).⁴⁸ In 2017, 11.2 percent of custodial fathers were below poverty, not statistically different from 1993. The poverty rate for custodial mothers declined 9.5 percentage points between 1993 (36.8 percent) and 2017 (27.3 percent).⁴⁹

The level of full-time, year-round employment for custodial mothers has increased from 40.9 percent in 1993 to 51.4 percent in 2017. Custodial fathers have historically had higher full-time, year-round employment rates than custodial mothers, with the level in 2017 (74.3 percent) not statistically different from 1993.⁵⁰

The rate of receipt from at least one public assistance program has fluctuated over the past 24 years, and decreased from 45.0 percent

to 41.1 percent between 2015 and 2017. For custodial mothers, participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly referred to as food stamps, decreased from 36.6 percent in 2015 to 30.5 percent in 2017.⁵¹

HISTORICAL STATISTICS—CHILD SUPPORT

The proportion of custodial mothers who had formal child support agreements or awards increased from 59.8 percent in 1994 to 64.2 percent in 2004. Since that time, the percentage has declined to 51.4 percent as of 2018. Historically, the proportion of custodial fathers with child support agreements has been considerably lower than that of custodial mothers. The proportion of custodial fathers with child support agreements or awards was 41.4 percent in 2018, not statistically different from 1994 (Appendix Table 2).

In 2017, 69.8 percent of custodial parents who were supposed to receive child support received either full or partial payments. This was a decrease from 1993, when 75.8 percent of custodial parents who were supposed to receive support received at least some payment. The proportion of custodial parents who were to receive child support, but received none, increased from 24.2 percent in 1993 to 30.2 percent in 2017 (Appendix Table 2).

Among custodial parents who had agreements for child support, a total of \$30.0 billion in child support payments was supposed to be received in 2017, a decrease

of \$19.5 billion from 2003, when \$49.5 billion was supposed to be received. Much of the decrease in the aggregate amount of child support supposed to be received over the past 14 years can be attributed to the drop in the number of custodial parents who were supposed to receive support, which fell from 7.3 million to 5.4 million between 2003 and 2017 (Appendix Table 2).

Both the average annual amount of child support that was supposed to be received, as well as the average annual amount actually received decreased between 1993 and 2017. The average amount that was supposed to be received dropped from \$5,999 in 1993 to \$5,519 in 2017. The average amount of child support that was received fell from \$3,917 in 1993 to \$3,431 in 2017 (Appendix Table 2).

SUMMARY

Many children today live with one parent while their other parent lives elsewhere. Without the advantage of both parents in the same household, a large number of these custodial parents and their children are economically disadvantaged and live below poverty. The cash and noncash contributions received from noncustodial parents are often an important resource to help pay for the costs of raising children, maintaining economic stability, and increasing overall child well-being. This report has shown many of the socioeconomic characteristics of custodial parents as well as the degree to which they receive support for their children.

⁴⁷ See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

⁴⁸ Business cycle peaks and troughs used to delineate the beginning and end of recessions are determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research, a private research organization. More information is available at <www.nber.org>.

⁴⁹ See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

⁵⁰ See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

⁵¹ See Detailed Table 4 for the years 1993 to 2017 at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support.Tables.html>.

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the Child Support Supplement (CSS) to the April 2018 Current Population Survey (CPS) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (94 percent of the 4.0 million institutionalized people in the 2010 Census). Approximately 0.3 percent of all children under 21 years old were institutionalized in the 2010 Census.

The estimates in this report are from the April 1994 through 2018 biennial supplements to the CPS. The Census Bureau conducts the April supplement sponsored, in part, by the Office of Child Support Enforcement of the Department of Health and Human Services. Data from the April 1992 and earlier supplements are not directly comparable with data from 1994 and later years because of changes made to the questionnaire (see Text Box, “Limitations of the Data” for more detail). Because of changes made to the allocation procedures, data for custodial parents supposed to receive and receiving child support were revised starting with the April 1994 survey. Reported estimates may differ from those published previously due to these changes.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures in sample selection, the wording of questions, interviewing, coding, data processing, and data analysis.

The CPS weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other

than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

Further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, can be found at <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>> or by contacting the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via e-mail at <dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tabulations, related information, and historic data are available on the Internet at the child support page on the Census Bureau’s Web site at <www.census.gov/topics/families/child-support-publications.html>.

For additional questions or comments, contact Timothy Grall at (301) 763-6685 or via e-mail at <Timothy.Scott.Grall@census.gov>.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Grall, Timothy, “Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2017,” *Current Population Reports*, P60-269, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2020.

Appendix Table 1.

Children Under 21 Years of Age by Family Type, Poverty Status, Race, and Hispanic Origin of Child: 2018

(Numbers in thousands. Universe: People under 21 years of age living in families as of April 2018)

Characteristic	Children in all family groups ¹				
	Total	In custodial-parent families		Not in custodial-parent families	
		Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total children in families.	82,637	21,870	26.5	60,768	73.5
Race and Ethnicity of Child					
White alone.	59,826	13,591	22.7	46,235	77.3
White alone, non-Hispanic.	41,854	8,818	21.1	33,036	78.9
Black alone	12,446	6,074	48.8	6,371	51.2
Other race alone	6,182	841	13.6	5,341	86.4
Hispanic (any race)	20,787	5,958	28.7	14,828	71.3
Percent distribution.	100.0	100.0	N	100.0	N
White alone.	72.4	62.1	N	76.1	N
White alone, non-Hispanic.	50.6	40.3	N	54.4	N
Black alone	15.1	27.8	N	10.5	N
Other race alone	7.5	3.8	N	8.8	N
Hispanic (any race)	25.2	27.2	N	24.4	N
Poverty Status in 2017					
With family income below 2017 poverty level.	13,347	6,588	49.4	6,759	50.6
Percent of total or family group total	16.2	30.1	N	11.1	N

N Represents not applicable.

¹ Excludes families where a child under 21 years old is listed as the family reference person or is a spouse of the family reference person.Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 2018.

Appendix Table 2.

Comparison of Custodial Parent Population and Those With Child Support Agreements, Supposed to Receive Child Support, and Received Child Support: 1993-2017

(Numbers in thousands as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Parents 15 years and older living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Amounts in 2017 dollars. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>)

Characteristic	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009	2007	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995	1993
ALL CUSTODIAL PARENTS													
Total	12,918	13,573	13,416	14,440	13,672	13,743	13,605	13,951	13,383	13,529	13,949	13,715	13,690
With child support agreements	6,376	6,807	6,528	7,057	6,914	7,428	7,802	8,376	7,916	7,945	7,876	7,967	7,800
Percent	49.4	50.2	48.7	48.9	50.6	54.0	57.3	60.0	59.1	58.7	56.5	58.1	57.0
Supposed to receive child support	5,429	5,845	5,697	6,262	5,897	6,375	6,809	7,256	6,924	6,791	7,018	6,958	6,688
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	5,519	5,960	6,086	6,611	6,820	6,341	7,026	6,819	7,001	7,018	6,337	6,517	5,999
Average child support received (in dollars)	3,431	3,567	4,167	4,119	4,162	3,975	4,584	4,675	4,386	4,119	4,223	4,294	3,917
Received any child support	3,792	4,049	4,222	4,641	4,174	4,864	5,259	5,548	5,119	5,005	5,282	5,269	5,070
Percent	69.8	69.3	74.1	74.1	70.8	76.3	77.2	76.5	73.9	73.7	75.3	75.7	75.8
Received full amount of child support	2,491	2,543	2,595	2,716	2,428	2,986	3,192	3,290	3,093	3,066	3,240	2,945	2,466
Percent	45.9	43.5	45.6	43.4	41.2	46.8	46.9	45.3	44.7	45.1	46.2	42.3	36.9
Not awarded child support	6,542	6,766	6,891	7,383	6,759	6,315	5,803	5,576	5,466	5,584	6,074	5,747	5,889
CUSTODIAL MOTHERS													
Total	10,319	10,918	11,069	11,797	11,237	11,356	11,406	11,587	11,291	11,499	11,872	11,607	11,505
With child support agreements	5,301	5,756	5,879	6,297	6,174	6,463	7,002	7,436	7,110	7,150	7,080	7,123	6,878
Percent	51.4	52.7	53.1	53.4	54.9	56.9	61.4	64.2	63.0	62.2	59.6	61.4	59.8
Supposed to receive child support	4,600	4,961	5,049	5,588	5,278	5,551	6,131	6,516	6,212	6,133	6,342	6,224	5,913
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	5,580	5,990	5,997	6,679	6,868	6,360	7,122	6,915	8,036	7,087	6,366	6,627	6,078
Average child support received (in dollars)	3,505	3,612	4,048	4,218	4,240	3,976	4,605	4,782	4,666	4,234	4,249	4,347	3,987
Received any child support	3,282	3,530	3,743	4,182	3,723	4,253	4,754	5,018	4,639	4,578	4,802	4,742	4,501
Percent	71.3	71.2	74.1	74.8	70.5	76.6	77.5	77.0	74.7	74.6	75.7	76.2	76.1
Received full amount of child support	2,133	2,229	2,331	2,438	2,217	2,615	2,900	2,948	2,815	2,818	2,945	2,674	2,178
Percent	46.4	44.9	46.2	43.6	42.0	47.1	47.3	45.2	45.3	45.9	46.4	43.0	36.8
Not awarded child support	5,018	5,162	5,280	5,499	5,063	4,893	4,404	4,151	4,181	4,349	4,792	4,484	4,627

See note at end of table.

Appendix Table 2.

Comparison of Custodial Parent Population and Those With Child Support Agreements, Supposed to Receive Child Support, and Received Child Support: 1993-2017—Con.

(Numbers in thousands as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Parents 15 years and older living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Amounts in 2017 dollars. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>)

	2,598	2,655	2,350	2,643	2,435	2,387	2,199	2,364	2,092	2,030	2,077	2,108	2,184
CUSTODIAL FATHERS													
Total	1,075	1,051	739	760	740	965	800	940	807	795	796	844	922
With child support agreements	41.4	39.6	31.4	28.8	30.4	40.4	36.4	39.8	38.6	39.2	38.3	40.0	42.2
Percent													
Supposed to receive child support	828	884	648	674	619	825	678	740	712	658	676	733	775
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	5,177	5,794	6,783	6,037	6,415	6,209	6,159	5,973	5,858	6,368	6,056	5,571	5,402
Average child support received (in dollars)	3,022	3,311	5,081	3,293	3,503	3,962	4,393	3,737	3,999	3,043	3,992	3,854	3,386
Received any child support	510	519	479	459	451	611	505	530	480	427	479	527	569
Percent	61.6	58.7	73.9	68.1	72.9	74.1	74.5	71.6	67.4	64.9	70.9	71.9	73.4
Received full amount of child support	357	314	264	279	211	371	292	342	278	248	295	270	288
Percent	43.1	35.5	40.7	41.4	34.1	45.0	43.1	46.2	39.0	37.7	43.6	36.8	37.2
Not awarded child support	1,524	1,604	1,610	1,883	1,695	1,422	1,399	1,424	1,285	1,235	1,281	1,263	1,262

Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. All child support income amounts are adjusted to reflect 2017 dollars using the CPS-U-RS. For more information on the CPI, go to <www.bls.gov/cpi/research-series/home.htm>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 1994-2018.

Appendix Table 2a.

Standard Errors for Appendix Table 2: 1993-2017

(Numbers in thousands as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Parents 15 years and older living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home as of April of the even-numbered interview year. Amounts in 2017 dollars. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>)

Characteristic	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009	2007	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995	1993
Total	303	311	283	293	286	286	285	288	282	299	303	301	286
With child support agreements	215	222	200	208	205	213	218	225	219	232	231	232	219
Percent	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Supposed to receive child support	199	206	187	196	190	197	204	210	205	215	218	217	204
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	134	141	131	149	179	135	154	124	326	201	139	170	142
Average child support received (in dollars)	136	130	145	133	247	119	133	180	176	121	131	146	144
Received any child support	167	172	161	169	160	173	180	184	177	185	190	190	178
Percent	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
Received full amount of child support	135	137	127	130	123	136	140	143	138	145	149	142	125
Percent	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5
Not awarded child support	218	222	205	212	203	197	189	185	183	195	203	198	192
CUSTODIAL MOTHERS													
Total	272	280	258	266	260	261	262	264	260	277	281	278	264
With child support agreements	197	205	188	196	194	199	207	213	208	220	219	220	207
Percent	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Supposed to receive child support	183	190	176	185	180	184	194	199	195	204	208	206	192
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	148	150	133	158	189	146	164	134	361	214	147	186	157
Average child support received (in dollars)	151	136	144	143	271	126	140	196	185	130	141	152	159
Received any child support	155	161	152	161	152	162	171	176	169	177	181	180	168
Percent	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4
Received full amount of child support	125	128	120	123	117	127	134	135	132	139	142	136	118
Percent	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6
Not awarded child support	191	194	180	184	176	173	165	160	160	172	181	175	170
CUSTODIAL FATHERS													
Total	138	140	121	128	123	122	117	121	114	118	120	121	118
With child support agreements	89	88	68	69	68	78	71	77	71	74	74	76	77
Percent	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7
Supposed to receive child support	78	78	64	65	62	72	65	68	67	68	68	71	70
Average child support supposed to be received (in dollars)	297	365	504	401	544	341	434	298	351	555	431	317	293
Average child support received (in dollars)	295	372	609	336	473	350	458	374	566	294	368	513	312
Received any child support	61	62	55	53	53	62	56	58	55	54	58	60	60
Percent	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.2	4.1	4.4	4.9	4.6	4.4	4.0
Received full amount of child support	51	48	41	42	36	48	43	46	42	42	45	43	43
Percent	4.7	4.4	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.3	4.8	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.4
Not awarded child support	106	106	100	108	103	94	93	160	89	92	94	93	90

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 1994-2018.

Appendix Table 3.

Characteristics of Custodial Parents by Agreement Status and Payments Received: 2017

(Numbers in thousands as of April 2018. Parents 15 years and older living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home as of April 2018. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsapr18.pdf>>)

Characteristic	With child support agreements or awards											
	Total	Total	Percent	Supposed to receive child support payments in 2017								
				Total	Average sup-posed to receive	Average received	Percent received	Received all payments		Did not receive payments		
								Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
ALL CUSTODIAL PARENTS												
Total	12,918	6,376	49.4	5,429	\$5,519	\$3,431	62.2	2,491	45.9	1,637	30.2	
Standard error	303	215	1.2	199	\$134	\$136	1.8	135	1.8	110	1.7	
Sex												
Male	2,598	1,075	41.4	828	\$5,177	\$3,022	58.4	357	43.1	318	38.4	
Female	10,319	5,301	51.4	4,600	\$5,580	\$3,505	62.8	2,133	46.4	1,318	28.7	
Age												
Under 30 years	2,664	1,051	39.5	864	\$3,716	\$1,962	52.8	266	30.8	325	37.6	
30 to 39 years	4,539	2,440	53.8	2,093	\$5,049	\$3,006	59.5	856	40.9	569	27.2	
40 years and over	5,715	2,885	50.5	2,472	\$6,546	\$4,305	65.8	1,369	55.4	743	30.1	
Race and Ethnicity¹												
White alone	8,712	4,630	53.1	3,991	\$5,595	\$3,656	65.3	1,880	47.1	1,103	27.6	
White alone, not Hispanic ..	6,195	3,498	56.5	3,055	\$5,762	\$3,906	67.8	1,450	47.5	853	27.9	
Black alone	3,293	1,319	40.1	1,125	\$4,864	\$2,577	53.0	493	43.8	394	35.0	
Hispanic (any race)	2,970	1,340	45.1	1,080	\$4,952	\$2,727	55.1	487	45.1	319	29.5	
Current Marital Status²												
Married	2,165	1,285	59.4	1,134	\$5,433	\$3,353	61.7	505	44.5	329	29.0	
Divorced	4,122	2,318	56.2	1,969	\$5,976	\$3,761	62.9	963	48.9	564	28.6	
Separated	1,521	633	41.6	538	\$6,015	\$3,878	64.5	269	50.0	163	30.3	
Never married	4,929	2,073	42.1	1,727	\$4,922	\$2,955	60.0	717	41.5	562	32.5	
Educational Attainment												
Less than high school diploma	1,665	701	42.1	529	\$4,825	\$2,214	45.9	196	37.1	184	34.8	
High school graduate	3,901	1,810	46.4	1,609	\$5,024	\$2,697	53.7	628	39.0	565	35.1	
Less than 4 years of college ..	4,620	2,419	52.4	2,066	\$5,590	\$3,761	67.3	990	47.9	574	27.8	
Bachelors degree or more	2,732	1,445	52.9	1,224	\$6,348	\$4,367	68.8	677	55.3	313	25.6	
Selected Characteristics												
Family income below 2017 poverty level	3,110	1,452	46.7	1,207	\$4,756	\$2,868	60.3	483	40.0	377	31.2	
Worked full-time, year-round	7,239	3,604	49.8	3,110	\$5,818	\$3,616	62.2	1,513	48.6	909	29.2	
Public assistance program participation ³	5,293	2,484	46.9	2,095	\$5,001	\$2,780	55.6	824	39.3	673	32.1	
With 1 child	7,123	3,082	43.3	2,653	\$5,261	\$3,156	60.0	1,252	47.2	799	30.1	
With 2 or more children	5,795	3,294	56.8	2,776	\$5,764	\$3,695	64.1	1,239	44.6	838	30.2	
Child had contact with other parent in 2017	8,411	4,470	53.1	3,770	\$5,716	\$3,905	68.3	1,965	52.1	901	23.9	
Child had no contact with other parent in 2017	4,507	1,905	42.3	1,659	\$5,069	\$2,355	46.5	526	31.7	736	44.4	
Court ordered physical or legal joint custody	3,261	1,951	59.8	1,702	\$6,254	\$4,900	78.3	985	57.9	396	23.3	

¹ Includes those reporting one race alone and not in combination with any other race.

² Excludes 181,000 with marital status of widowed.

³ Received any of the following: Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, public housing or rent subsidy, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or general assistance.

Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Child Support Supplement, April 2018.