THE NUCLEAR FAMILY WAS A MISTAKE

The family structure we’ve held up as the cultural ideal for the past half century has been a catastrophe for many. It’s time to figure out better ways to live together.

By David Brooks
Two Types of Women in Today’s Labor Market
Women Are Investing More in Education

Source: SWIFTYOMICS (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
Women Are Spending More Time Alone

Source: SWIFTYMONICS (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
Women Are Not Having Kids

Source: SWIFTY NOMICS (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
Most Women Are Working For Pay

Source: SWIFTYNOMICS (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
Most Mothers Are Working For Pay

Source: SWIFTYNOMICS (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
August 1960 to August 2023

34.2% increase for women aged 25-54

7.8% decrease for men aged 25-54
Gender Gap in Prime-Age Labor Force Participation is Narrowing

1960: 53.7 ppt gap
2023: 11.7 ppt gap

Source: FRED, St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank
Gender Gap in Prime-Age Labor Force Participation of Parents is Narrowing

1960: 65.6 ppt
2021: 18.6 ppt

Parenthood Gap:
DD1960: 11.9
DD2020s: 6.9

~5% increase in prime-age mothers’ LFP since 2000
(~1% decrease for all women)

Source: SWIFTYonomics (2025, UC Press) using ipums.org data, preliminary -- do not cite or source without permission
Given the Lack of Structural U.S. Family Policy, How Is This Possible?
1-in-5 Stay-at-home Parents Today are Dads

Stay-at-home moms and dads cite different reasons for their decision

% of fathers and mothers who are not employed for pay who say they are not working because they are ...

**Fathers**
- 86 Taking care of home/family
- 56 Ill or disabled
- 15 In school
- 10 Retired
- 9 Unable to find work

**Mothers**
- 79 Taking care of home/family
- 34 Ill or disabled
- 23 In school
- 21 Retired
- 9 Unable to find work

Note: Based on parents ages 18 to 69 with own child(ren) younger than 18 in the household. Parents who were not employed in the year prior to the survey are classified as stay-at-home parents. Responses of “other” not shown. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1990-2022 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements (IPUMS).
From a 25-hour gender gap to a 5-hour gap
Two-thirds of grandparents with grandkids under age 13 that live within one hour provide childcare.
Ratio of Children Under Age 5 to Licensed Capacity at Childcare Facilities in Kansas, by County

Pods, Microschools and Tutors: Can Parents Solve the Education Crisis on Their Own?

As school openings remain in flux, families grapple with big questions about safety, money and politics.

Around 80 percent of the learning pods were organized by parents themselves.
When All Else Fails, Moms Bring Kids to Work
When All Else Fails, Moms Bring Kids to Work
Take the Swiftynomics Survey!

https://kusurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bHhjhrpubyz16S
Appendix Tables
August 1960 to August 2023: 34.2% increase
August 1960 to August 2023: 7.8% decrease
Women Are Single Longer

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