



PATERNAL STATUS IN TARRANT COUNTY

- **Paternity Acknowledgment** is recorded on the birth certificate for mothers who are unmarried at the time of birth
 - When Paternity Acknowledgement was unavailable, the **presence of father data** (such as age) were used as a **proxy** for Paternity Acknowledgement among births to unmarried mothers
- In 2021, the **majority** of live births in Tarrant County were to **married parents** (59%), 30% of live births were to non-married parents with paternity acknowledgement, and **11% of live births had no paternity acknowledgement**
- Live births with **no recorded paternity acknowledgement** had **significantly higher** rates of:
 - Pregnancy spacing <18 months
 - Medicaid as payment source
 - Enrolled in WIC during pregnancy
 - Maternal infections
 - Preterm birth
 - NICU admission
 - Infant mortality
- Live births with **no recorded paternity acknowledgement** had **significantly lower** rates of:
 - Starting prenatal care on time
 - Breastfeeding at discharge from place of birth

Numerous studies show that increased father involvement is associated with improved cognitive, academic, psychological, emotional, and social-adaptive outcomes for children. In addition, father involvement has other positive effects on maternal-child health outcomes such as prenatal care initiation, reduced maternal smoking, reduced stress, and lower levels of post-partum depression.[†]

Figure 1. Paternity status among live births, Tarrant County, Texas, United States, 2021

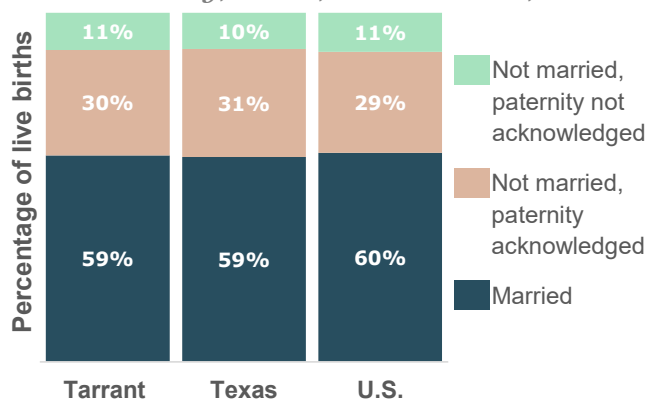
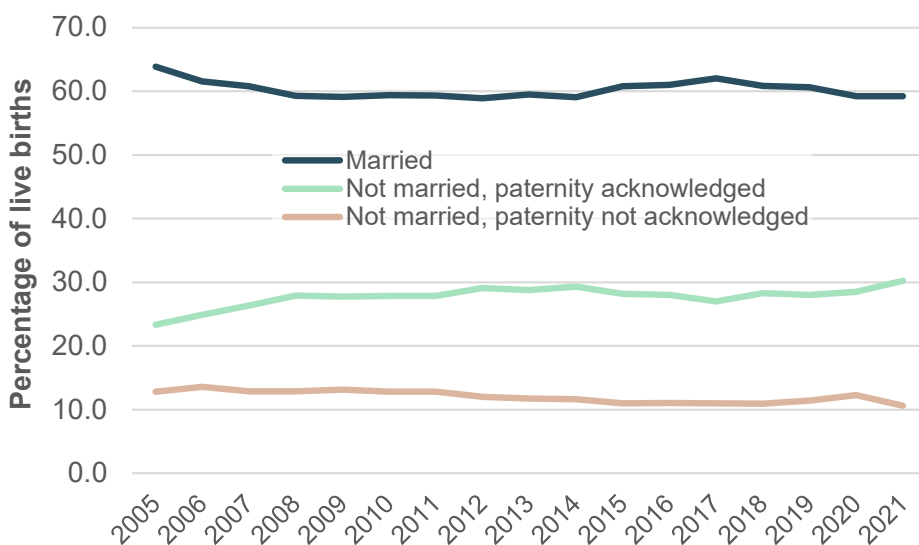


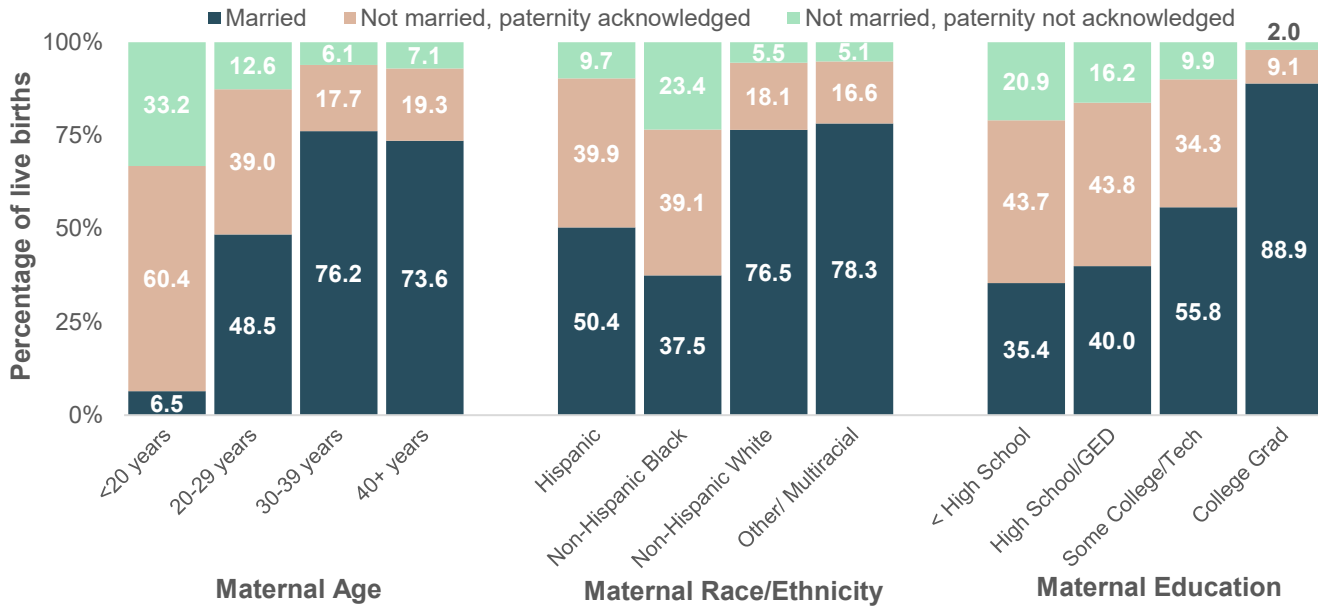
Figure 2. Paternity status among Tarrant County live births, 2005-2021



From 2005 to 2021, the percentage of live births to not married parents with paternity acknowledged increased significantly, while births to married parents and not married parents with no paternity acknowledged decreased significantly.

[†] Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs; Giurgescu C, Templin TN. Father Involvement and Psychological Well-Being of Pregnant Women. MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs. 2015 Nov-Dec;40(6):381-7.
Data sources: Texas Department of State Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Data Brief provided by: Office of Data and Informatics

Figure 3. Paternity status at time of birth by maternal characteristics, Tarrant County, 2021



The percentage of live births with no paternity acknowledgement was highest among mothers under the age of 20, non-Hispanic black mothers, and mothers with less than a high school education

Figure 4. Infant and maternal characteristics among Tarrant County live births by paternity status, 2021

Infant characteristics	Married		NM, paternity acknowledged		NM, paternity not acknowledged
Preterm birth (<37 weeks)	10.3%	↑	11.5%	↑	15.2%
NICU admission	10.6%	↑	11.9%	↑	14.8%
Infant mortality rate (2017-2019)	5.16	↓	5.18	↑	9.10
Maternal characteristics					
Started prenatal care on time	68.6%	↓	52.7%	↓	44.2%
<18 months between pregnancies	9.0%	↑	13.5%	↑	16.5%
Medicaid	25.6%	↑	61.9%	↑	71.1%
Enrolled in WIC during pregnancy	11.8%	↑	30.6%	↑	33.1%
Maternal infection [†]	0.8%	↑	3.6%	↑	7.3%
Cesarean delivery	35.1%	↓	32.0%	↓	32.1%
Breastfeeding at discharge	92.9%	↓	87.7%	↓	79.0%

NM = not married; Infant mortality rate = number of deaths among infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births
[†]Maternal infections of Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chlamydia, Hepatitis B, or Hepatitis C present and/or treated during pregnancy
 Note: Any up or down arrows denote statistically significant difference between the two values (p<0.05)
 Comparisons are between 1. Married and Not married with paternity acknowledged and 2. Not married with paternity acknowledged and Not married with paternity not acknowledged

Fatherhood resources:

ANTHEM Strong Families [<http://anthemstrongfamilies.org/>]
Arlington ISD Fathers and Families [<http://www.aisd.net/>]
Parenting and Paternity Awareness (P.A.P.A.) [<http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/>]
National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse [<http://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads/>]