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NAC Undercount of Young Children Working Group

Meeting 4

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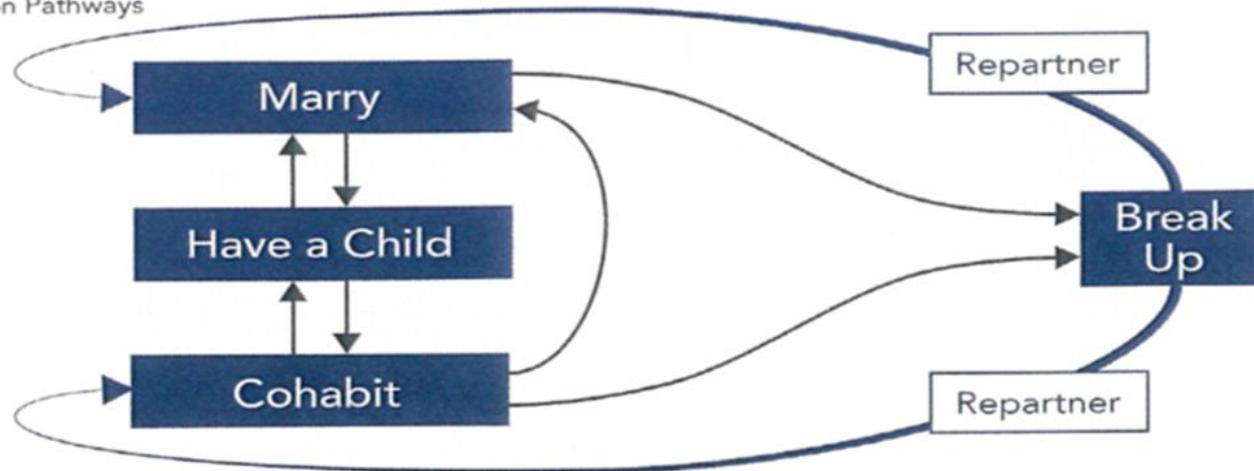
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Changes in Family Formation

FIGURE 1

Families Are Formed Via Marriage, Cohabitation, or Childbearing.

Family Formation Pathways



Source: PRB, "Understanding the Dynamics of Family Change in the United States", *Population Bulletin* 71.1, 2016.

Key Trends in Family Formation

- A majority of women (65%) ages 19-44 has cohabited
 - 76% - less than high school
 - 67% - high school
 - 58% - Bachelor's degree or more
- Cohabiting unions last 2-3 years on average
- Most marriages preceded by cohabitation
 - 1970s: 10 percent
 - 2010s: 70 percent

Key Trends in Family Formation

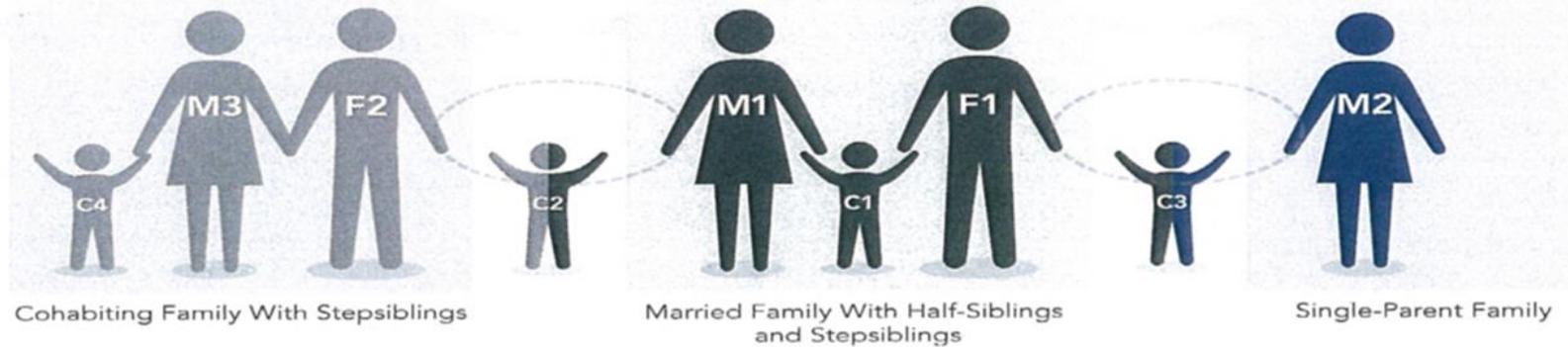
- Increase in nonmarital births
 - 1980-84: 21 percent: 6% to cohabiting mother
 - 2009-13: 43 percent: 25% to cohabiting mother
- Nonmarital births are higher among racial/ethnic minorities
 - Blacks
 - 2009-13: 75% nonmarital: 29% to cohabiting mothers
 - Hispanics
 - 2009-13: 60% nonmarital: 40% to cohabiting mothers
- Increase in multi-partner fertility

Changes in Living Arrangements

FIGURE 2

Families Can Span Multiple Households.

Stylized Example of Complex Family Ties



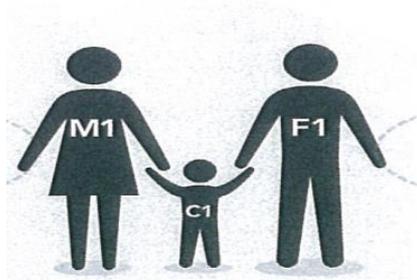
Source: PRB, "Understanding the Dynamics of Family Change in the United States", *Population Bulletin* 71.1, 2016.

Why Do These Changes Matter?

- Living arrangements are more fluid and transitory
 - Children are more likely to split time between multiple households
 - More confusing for respondents to understand who should be counted
- Household structure is more complex
 - Can't determine if other adult in cohabiting household is a resident child's parent
 - In cohabiting households, whether a child is counted as "own" or "unrelated" is arbitrary based on which unmarried partner is Person 1

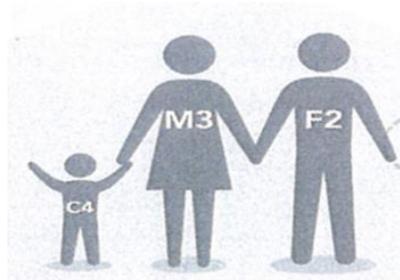
Classification of Cohabiting Couple Households with Children

Person 1



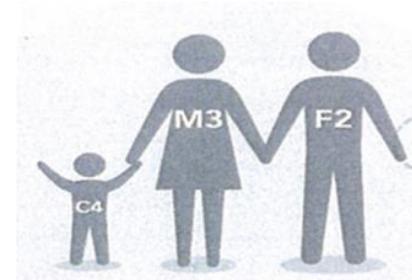
Own child,
Family HH, with
unmarried partner
(Don't know
that F1 **is**
child's father)

Person 1



Own child,
Family HH, with
unmarried partner
(Don't know that
F2 is **not** child's
father)

Person 1



Unrelated child,
Nonfamily HH, with
unmarried partner
(Don't know that
M3 **is** child's
mother)

Why Do These Changes Matter?

- They are more concentrated among racial and ethnic minorities and those with less education and lower incomes
- They are contributing to an increase in the net undercount of young children (0-4) in the Census
 - 1980: 1.8 percent
 - 2010: 4.6 percent
 - Research shows that unrelated children and children who are “other relatives” are more likely to be missed (Konicki, 2016; Fernandez, 2016)

Options to Consider

- Add questions or pointers to identify relationship of children to adults other than Person 1
- Continue research to identify causes of undercount of young children
 - Conduct studies to ask respondents why children were not included, especially unrelated and other relatives
- Evolve our concepts of residency and instructions for respondents