



National Youth Survey Family Study



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Welcome Back!

As 2004 began, the 11th wave of interviews and the 28th year of the study were coming to an end. With the completion of the most recent survey, information has been collected from three generations! We would like to thank you, the participants, for the continuing success of the National Youth Survey Family Study.

This year, respondents included the original participants, their parents, spouses/partners, and children who were at least 11 years old - the same age as the original participants were when they were first interviewed almost thirty years ago. The study has received a great deal of positive feedback! Many of the original participants' children told interviewers that they enjoyed the opportunity to take part in the study their parents had been involved in for so long. Many of the participants, regardless of age, said they were proud to be part of a nationally recognized study.

The information that you provide is important enough that agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice continue to provide funding for this research, and respected journals continue to be interested in publishing the results of the study. Your participation in the study helps develop better programs and more informed policies that effect our society.

Thank you once again for your continuing interest and participation in the National Youth Survey Family Study. Your continued support has helped create a study that is unique because it is a *long term* and a *national* survey. This success is only possible because of your continuing generosity and involvement with the survey. We appreciate the way you have all shared your beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors over the years.



You've been asking....

For years, the National Youth Survey (1976-1993) and now the National Youth Survey Family Study (2000-present) have been collecting information about a wide range of topics, including education, family relationships, neighborhood conditions, and attitudes. Many of you have asked what we are doing with this information and where you can find out more about it. Because the National Youth Survey Family Study (NYSFS) is such a widely known and respected study, there are people all over the country who are interested in information collected during the many rounds of surveys. Many articles have been written using the information from the National Youth Survey Family Study— a complete list of articles, as well as other interesting information, can be found on our website,

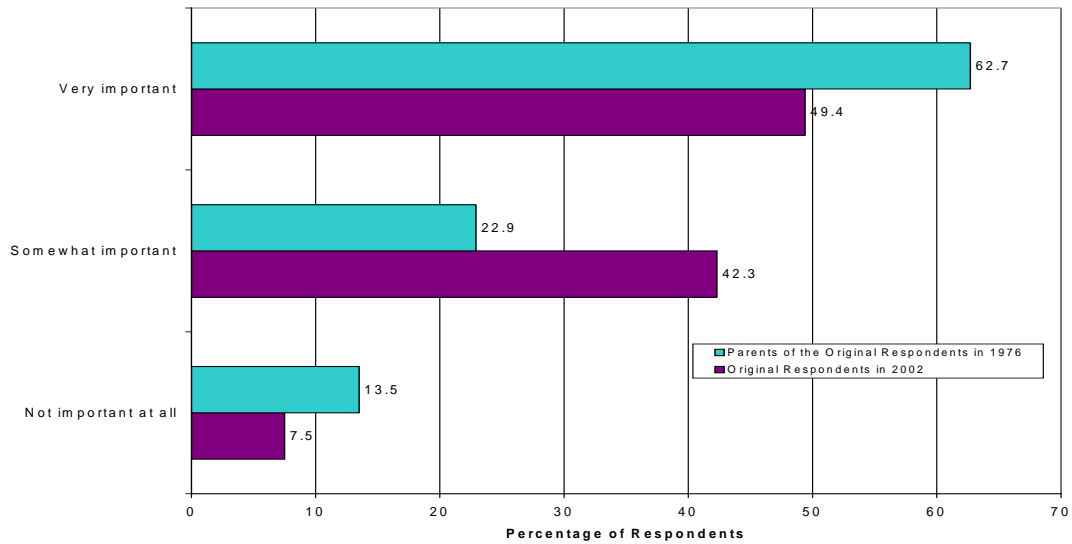
www.colorado.edu/IBS/NYSFS

While we encourage you to visit the NYSFS website, we know that most of you are busy and don't have a lot of time to spend surfing the web. In *this* newsletter, there are a few graphs using information from both the original respondents and the parents of the original respondents. Because data are available for two generations, it is possible to compare the original respondents answers from 2002 to those of their parents' from the first surveys in 1976. Why were these two years selected? In 1976, the parents of the original respondents were about the same age as the original respondents were in 2002. This places both groups of people at similar stages in life. The next two pages contain some of the information you've been asking about. We hope you enjoy the information in these graphs!

Is Marriage Important?

In 1976, over half of the parents of the original respondents said that it was very important that their children get married. This is interesting because in 2002, the original respondents told us how important it was for them to be married. Though nearly half of the original respondents said that getting married was “very important”, a high percentage of them also said it was only “somewhat important”.

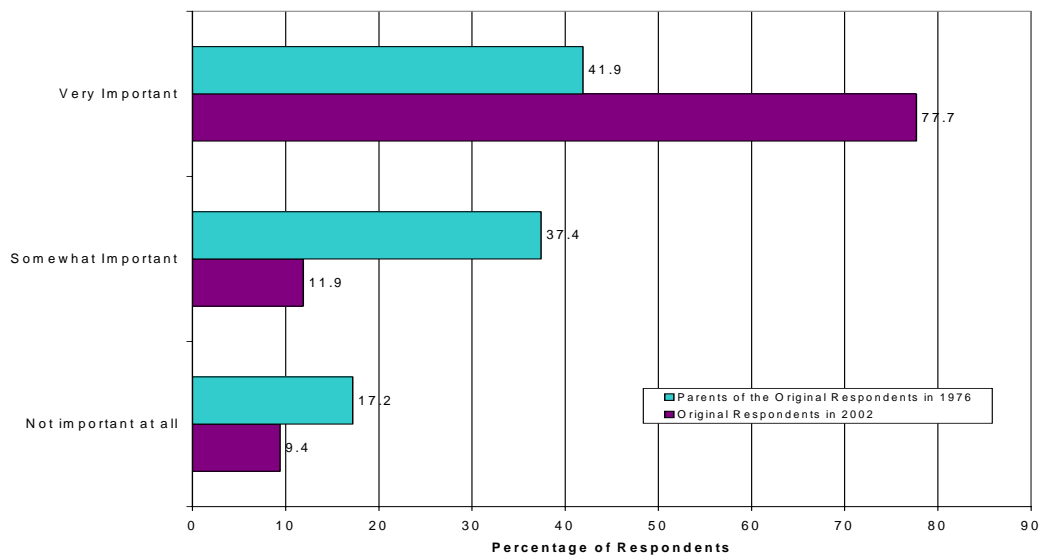
Importance of Being Married



What about the families?

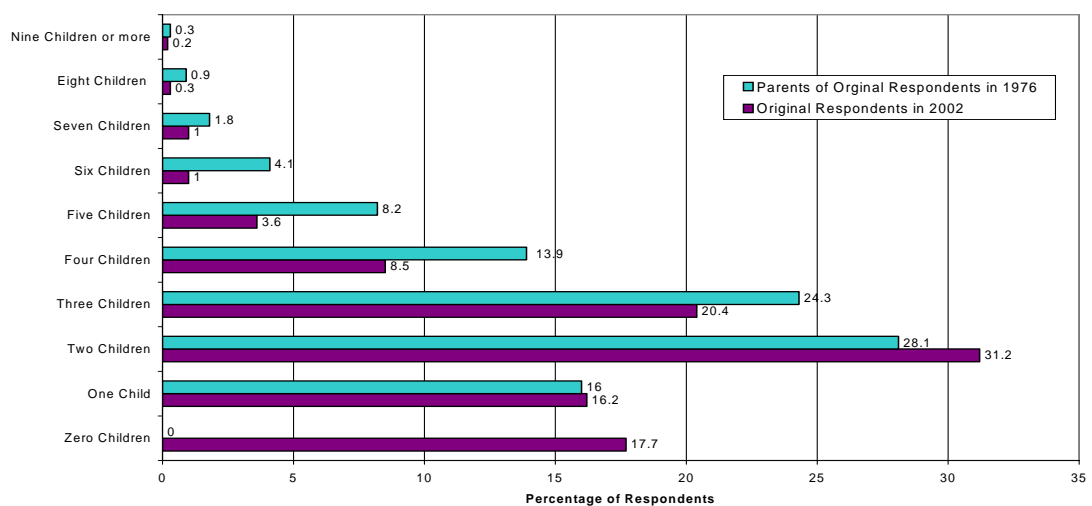
In the graph to the right, over 3/4 of the original respondents indicated that it is very important to have a family of their own. In 1976, their parents, on the other hand, were more likely to say that it was “somewhat important” or “not important at all” for their children to have a family of their own.

Importance of Having a Family

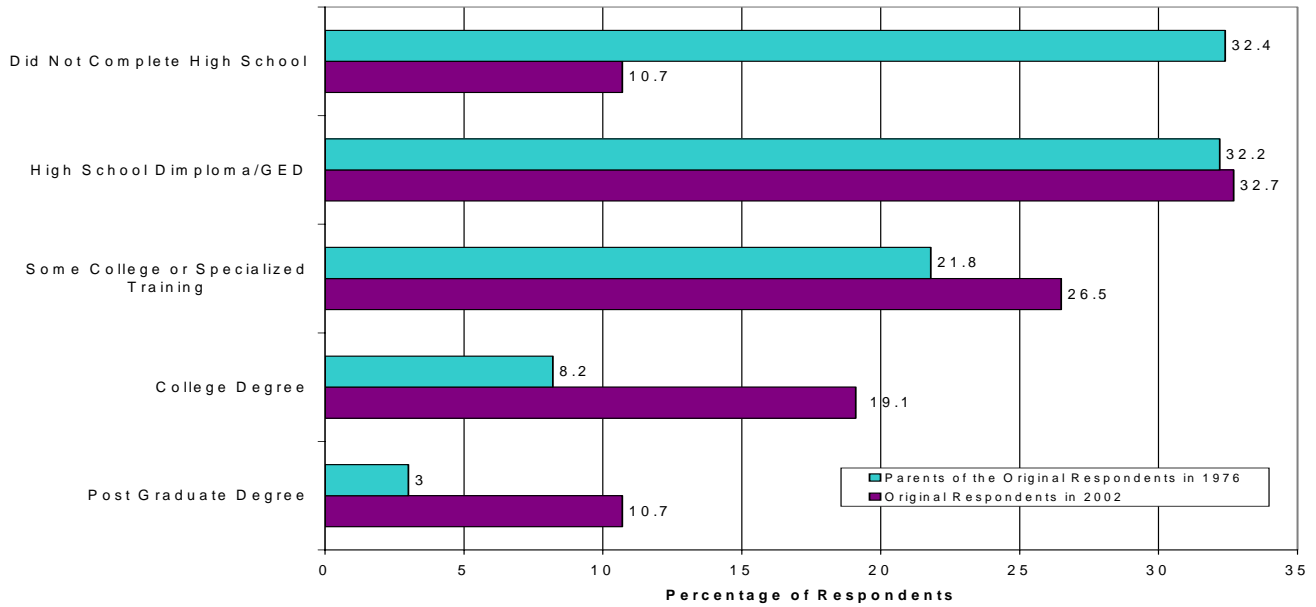


When you look at the graph at the bottom of the page, you will see that in general, the parents of the original respondents had more children than did the original respondent generation. As you can see, most of the original respondents have between 0 and 2 children. You may also notice that 0% of the original respondents’ parents indicated having 0 children. This is because in order to be surveyed in 1976, they had to have at least one child participating in the survey.

Number of Children per Household Compared Across Two Generations



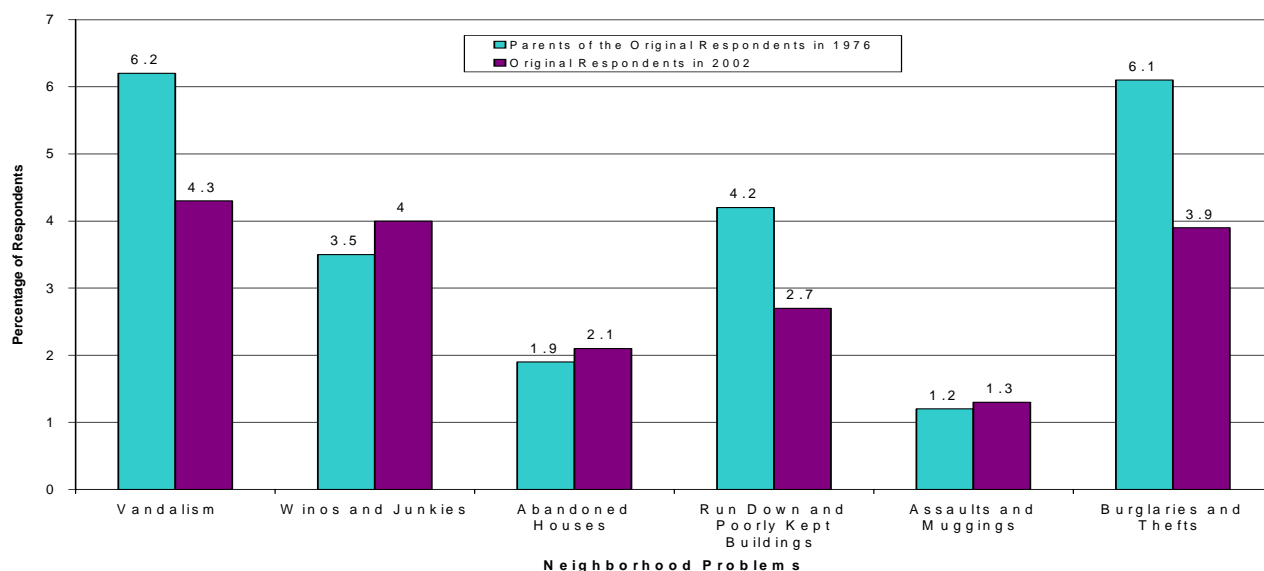
Educational Attainment of Two Generations



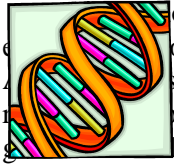
In the graph above, we have compared the level of education achieved by both the original respondents, and their parents at approximately the same point in life. As you can see, the general level of education attained by the original respondents is higher than that of their parents. More of their parents stopped going to school before finishing high school. The original respondent generation was much more likely to graduate from high school and continue on in college or some form of specialized training than were their parents.

Although you might not know it from listening to the nightly news, crime rates in the United States have actually gone down since this study started in 1976. Not so sure about that? Look at the graph comparing neighborhood problems as reported by parents of the original 11-17 year old respondents in 1976 and the original respondents themselves in 2002. Presence of winos and junkies is up a little, abandoned houses and assaults and muggings are practically the same, but vandalism and burglaries and thefts are down substantially - this is the experience of your own families, not just some statistic about other people. Part of what you are reporting is that on average, the neighborhoods in which the original respondents and their families live in now actually seem more secure than the ones the original respondents and their parents lived in nearly thirty years ago.

Comparison of Neighborhood Problems



DNA: What are we doing with it?



Now, the collection of DNA from our respondents has been an important component of the more recent waves of NYS interviews. Advances in technology have made the collection and analysis of DNA more reliable and inexpensive, which has made it possible to research genetic characteristics as behavioral and attitudinal characteristics. Now, the Institute of Behavioral Science and the Institute for Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado are working together to study the influence of heredity, social and environmental factors on a person's behavior. The collection of *your* DNA, along with your survey responses allow researchers to look at how certain behaviors may be related to the genetic codes that are unique to each individual.

Some of you asked questions about the DNA portion of the survey and want to know whether your DNA may be used in ways other than described by the NYS research staff. For example, some have asked if their DNA could be used for cloning purposes, to provide paternity test information, or if their DNA will be used by insurance companies. **We will not do any of these things with your DNA.** Just as we have kept your survey responses confidential for the past 30 years, we will continue to keep your survey answers **and** your DNA samples confidential.

As you may already know, the DNA from the National Youth Survey Family Study (NYSFS) participants is representative of the DNA of people all over the United States. Data from the DNA samples collected helps to provide valuable information about our society. Your participation in the survey is an important piece of the success of the NYSFS, and in a few easy steps, you can help to make the NYSFS one of the most respected and valuable studies in the country. How? By providing *your* DNA. It is simple and doesn't hurt a bit! It only takes a few seconds to rub a cotton swab on the inside of your cheek and then you are done! It is quick, painless, and yet, incredibly important.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of the NYSFS research staff or talk to your interviewer. Contact information for the NYSFS is located in the green box to the right of this article. Thank you for all of your questions and feedback!

How to contact us:

Please help us stay in touch with you so we can share some of the NYSFS results. Please return the reply card that is included in this newsletter ASAP!

You may also contact us via e-mail, phone, or US Mail.

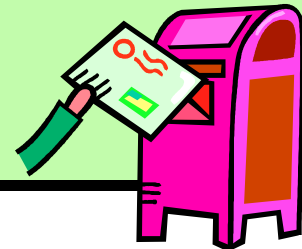
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Thank you for all of your years of participation in the National Youth Survey! We are only able to provide valuable information to policymakers, educators, and researchers because of your help!

Please return the enclosed postcard ASAP so that we will know where to contact you about participating in the next round of the NYSFS. And, at any time, please call (800) 954-7587 if you need to change your address.

Thank you!

