TRANSITION DYNAMICS FOR STAY-AT-HOME PARENTHOOD

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For presentation at the Annual Population Association of America Meeting,
Boston, MA, April 1-3, 2004

Introduction

Strategies to balance work and family are at the forefront of concerns facing many American parents. Since most women and men are employed prior to the birth of their first child, childbirth and subsequent family building signal numerous changes in the daily schedule at work and at home.

Recently, the media has focused attention on "stay-at-home" parents – defined as married couples with children where one of the parents choose to be out of the labor force while the other parent works. Reports on the rise of stay-at-home dads have hit the media stands, making the cover of *Life* magazine (Fonda 1999) and placing in question the traditional breadwinning role of men in families. Likewise, reports of an increase in stay-at-home mothers since the early 1990's (Downs 2003; Fields 2003; O'Connell and Bachu 2001) spurred the media to forecast the return to the traditional family.

This analysis uses longitudinal data from the 1996 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to examine the dynamic nature of the stay-at-home parent family. Profiles of stay-at-home parents from the Current Population Survey (CPS) are presented as a comparison for the number and characteristics of these families using a similar definition. Using the SIPP, we look at characteristics of stay-at-home parents and their entries and exits from this family state. These transitions are placed in the context of the household and family characteristics immediately prior to the change.

This analysis differs from previous research on mother's labor force participation in several important ways. First, previous studies have focused on specific groups of mothers (first-time mothers) or specific time frames (within a year after a child's birth) (Downs and Smith 2002; Smith, Downs, and O'Connell 2001). Other studies analyze the

length of time spent on maternity leave and the factors that contribute to quick returns to work (Klerman and Leibowitcz 1999; Smith, Downs, and O'Connell 2001). Still other studies look at the factors associated with labor force exits or entrances, without considering the reason for being out of the labor force (Femlee 19XX; Waite, Haggstrom, and Kanouse 1985). Most studies look at all women, regardless of their marital status, but control for marital status. This analysis is unique in that the sample is constricted to married women with children under 15, and it examines the labor force transition dynamics regardless of the age of the mother's youngest child, with explicit consideration of the main reason for being out of the labor force. The analysis is not focused on those women who take maternity leave surrounding a child's birth and then return to their same job without severing their relationship with their pre-birth job, but rather it is about women who quit their job to become stay-at-home mothers and about women who enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood.

Background

Research on work and family balance has focused on the strategies or adaptations that mothers tend to make during pregnancy and after child birth, likely due to the fact that fathers tend to maintain their work schedule or work even more hours compared with nonfathers (Waite, Haggstrom, and Kanouse 1985). One such adaptation mothers make is to cut back their obligations to the work place and work part-time hours when they have young children (Spain and Bianchi 1996). Another strategy is to switch employers or to seek employment in family friendly, or female dominated occupations in order to make parenthood easier to balance with work. And finally, another strategy is to quit work and

avoid the balancing act all together, which may in fact represent a family level work and family balance strategy, rather than an individual level strategy.

New Home Economics theories suggest that a gender stratified household where women specialize in housework and child care and men specialize in market work will maximize the efficiency of the entire family unit (Becker 1981). In general, this theory is based on the assumption that couples make decisions considering the well-being of the entire family to maximize household utility. According to Becker, women are more efficient at housework and develop "tastes" or "preferences" for it, since they are biologically more involved in the bearing and rearing of children. Men on the other hand, are more efficient at market work because they spend more time doing it. Labor specialization is a central component in the family's cost-benefit calculation, as individuals invest more time and energy in those activities at which they are most efficient.

The labor market tends to economically reward fathers better than mothers, with men receiving higher pay and more promotions to a greater extent than women of similar education levels and types of jobs. Many studies find that labor markets are structured to exclude women from the high paying and high status jobs, and therefore their market labor becomes less valuable than men's (Coltrane 1996; England and Farkas 1986; Fenstermaker Berk 1985; Ferree 1990). Due to this external market force, families may have an incentive to choose fathers to specialize in the market and mothers to specialize at home. When making important labor force decisions such as going from a dual-earner family to a single-earner family, which undoubtedly impacts the family economic situation, married couples consider the relative economic contribution of each spouse in

conjunction with the individual earnings of the spouse with the highest income. We suspect that mothers who contribute a small amount of the total family income, relative to their husbands, will exit the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood, while mothers who are the primary breadwinner will not.

According to Economic Theory, individuals with high market potential – high educational attainment, job continuity and a full-time job, and high personal earnings – would be more efficient at market work and more attached to the labor force. If this is the case, when applied to a mother's decision to exit the labor force and take on full-time mothering, we expect that those mothers with lower market potential – those with low education, loose ties to the labor force, and low earnings – will be more likely to become stay-at-home mothers because the rewards from staying in the market are less than the costs, once child care and other work-related expenses are considered. Mothers with high market potential, on the other hand, may be more likely to remain in the labor force because they may feel more connected to their job and gain economic and other personal rewards from working. Likewise, one might expect that in regards to labor force entrances, mothers with low market potential may remain out of the labor force while mothers with high market potential may enter.

Considering the independent effect of family economics aside from the mother's market potential, we reason that both high-income and low-income families could chose to become a "stay-at-home" family as a way to maximize their family economic situation. Low-income families can be overburdened by the concomitant expenses of having two working parents, such as the high cost of child care, transportation to and from work, and other work-related expenses. For these reasons, choosing a stay-at-home parent family

type may be the most rational economic decision. Correspondingly, high-income families may be able to afford to live off of one income, and would be willing to forego additional income from having two parents working.

Family economics also play a role in labor force entries from stay-at-home parenthood. On the one hand, if high spousal earnings provide mothers with the luxury of being a stay-at-home mother and low spousal earnings indicate a need for the mother to work due to family economic need, then those mothers married to spouses with lower earnings would be more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. However, it is entirely possible that families with low earning fathers are the same families with mothers with low earnings potential, who cannot afford the work-related expenses associated with the mother working.

Families often have specific views on how they want to raise their children. Child care preferences can include the specific characteristics or components of child care programs; the desire for a provider with shared values, religion, and culture; the convenience of the arrangement; or the reliability of the provider. In addition, other preferences not directly related to child care play a role in the child care decision, such as tastes for other consumer goods and the importance of leisure time (Blau 1991). Trade-offs will occur among all of these factors based on the relative costs and perceived benefits attached to them.

Social norms can also affect child care choice. Preferences for child care may be shaped by gender ideologies that prescribe appropriate employment and family behaviors for women (Riley and Glass 2002). Families that value mother care (or parental care) for children over extrafamily care will allow this to weigh in more in their child care

decision-making. These norms can also be especially poignant for fathers when they are by choice or by necessity in a nontraditional family role (Elder 1984??).

When making child care decisions, families weigh all of these factors, including the cost of child care, against the decision of whether the mother, as "designated care giver," [1] will work in the market and use nonfamily child care (Connelly 1991). Connelly (1991) argues that this decision is based on the costs and benefits of working in the labor market, which is calculated by subtracting the cost of child care from the wage earned in the market, resulting in what economists call the effective wage. As nonfamily child care costs rise, the effective wage decreases, which the theory stipulates would unambiguously decrease the probability of staying in the labor market.

Where the family is in their life course – that is, the number of children they have and the age of their youngest child – plays a role in work and family decision-making. While a mother's earnings may exceed the cost of nonfamily child care for one child, the costs of child care for two or three children may well push the family to consider having one parent stay home with the children. Recent research has documented the social and cognitive benefits for children with mothers who do not work in their first year of life (Waldfogel, Han, and Brooks-Gunn 2002). Research on child care suggests that mothers may feel an increased attachment to their new infants and value mother care over other forms of child care, but as a child ages prefer organized child care arrangements for socialization, cognitive development, and school readiness (Sonenstein 1991; Smith 2002).

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[1] Connelly (1991) discusses the family decision making process of choosing the "designated care giver" by considering the parents' respective market wages, whether they believe that children are better off being cared for by mothers, and who enjoys caring for children and concludes that in most cases the "designated care giver" will be the mother.

Profile of stay-at-home parents from the CPS

A misused 1993 estimate of 2 million stay-at-home fathers has been widely publicized.[2] This figure was based on the number of fathers who were the primary child care provider for their children under 15 years old while their spouses were at work. This number, however, includes 1.6 million fathers who actually were employed.[3] Additionally, simply using labor force participation as an indication of being a stay-at-home parent can be faulty since many fathers not in the labor force do not leave the labor force primarily to care for children.

Estimates of the number of stay-at-home parent families ideally would be based on both the parents' activities as child care providers, daily time use, and the primary reason they were not in the labor force. However, to date, no estimates of stay-at-home parenting have relied on data sets with detailed child care information as well as detailed labor force participation information.

According to 2002 CPS data, there were 23.1 million married-couple family groups with children under 15 years old. Table 1 shows that many of these families have mothers or fathers out of the labor force for the preceding 52 weeks, and the reasons that they stayed out of the labor force. Most parents in these married-couple families participated in the labor force for at least one week of the prior year (72 percent of mothers and 96 percent of fathers). However, there were 6.5 million mothers and 849,000 fathers who were out of the labor force all year. To get closer to the popular

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[2] See, for example, reports on the following websites (www.babycenter.com, and www.dadstayhome.com) and in the media (Washington Post, etc).

[3] See Lynne Casper, (1997). *My Daddy Takes Care of Me! Fathers as Care Providers.* Current Population Reports - P70-59 http://www.census.gov/prod/3/97pubs/p70-59.pdf and PPL-53 (U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC - Table 5).

stay-at-home parent definition – one parent working in the labor market and the other working in the home – we must also consider the reason for being out of the labor force and the employment status of the spouse. Table 1 shows that 5.2 million mothers and 105,000 fathers were not in the labor force in the previous year because they wanted to take care of children, and their spouse was in the labor force for the entire year. These estimates are more direct measures of the number of parents who chose to stay out of the labor force to care for home and family.

The characteristics of these stay-at-home parent families are shown in the bottom panel of Table 1. Fifty-three percent of stay-at-home mothers had children under 3 in the household, compared with 36 percent for stay-at-home fathers. Stay-at-home mothers were also more often under 35 years old compared with stay-at-home fathers, 46 percent and 22 percent respectively. Related to both the differences in earnings between men and women, and the family decisions about who might stay home, stay-at-home mother families were more likely to have incomes of $75,000 or more versus families with a stay-at-home father, 31 percent and 17 percent respectively.

The CPS estimates lack the ability to provide details about the family situation before and after the parents decide to leave the labor force, as well as lacking information about the actual time use of the nonworking parents. The preliminary analysis below addresses the first of these shortfalls using longitudinal panel data from the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation, using a slightly different definition of stay-at-home parenthood.

Data

The remainder of the analyses for this paper will use data from the 1996 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Data from the entire 48-month longitudinal public use file will be used to evaluate the labor force exits to stay-at-home parenthood and the entries from stay-at-home parenting. The panel consists of 12 waves of data collection in which information is collected about the prior four months (the reference period). The four-month reference period is sufficiently short to minimize recall errors, and provide reliable monthly data for the prospective panel. Approximately 37,000 households were interviewed in the initial data collection for the 1996 SIPP. For this analysis, all respondents are included, regardless of whether they are original sample members. Tables 2 and 3 and Figure 1 present weighted distributions for the portion of the sample present at wave 1 of the survey. The remaining analyses are not weighted because appropriate weights are not available to the full analytic sample.

Dependent Variables

Our dependent variable, stay-at-home parenting, is defined by the decision of one parent in a married-couple family with children under 15 to stay home from the labor force for the primary purpose of taking care of children or others or because of pregnancy/child birth while the other parent remains in the labor force. Respondents are asked once per wave whether they had at least one job for an employer, a business, or some other work arrangement during the reference period of the last 4 months. For those who responded "no," a follow-up question of the main reason for not having a job during the reference period was asked. Because we are interested in using the main reason out

of the labor force data which is collected once per wave, and basing our stay-at-home parenthood definition on those who give "to take care of children or others" or "pregnancy/childbirth" as their main reason, we are limited to a minimum spell duration of at least 4 contiguous months out of the labor force and the full reference period of at least one wave of data collection. This reference period in the SIPP – 4 months of continuous absence from work – differs from the CPS criteria, as the CPS estimate did not provide the option for respondents to state the length of time absent from the labor force, and only asked for those who were absent for one year or more. In this paper, we explore stay-at-home parenting transitions observable during the panel, specifically labor force exits into stay-at-home parenting and labor force entrances from stay-at-home parenting.

Independent variables

Market potential. We use three variables to measure the individual's market potential. The first measure is education level. Dummy variables of the parent's education level are included, one for less than high school graduate, one for some college, and another for college graduates. The reference category is high school graduate. The second measure is the hours worked prior to the labor force exit, divided into 2 categories: full time (35 or more hours per week, reference category), and less than full time (0 to 34 hours per week). Our third measure of market potential is monthly personal earnings. Monthly personal earnings is grouped into three categories: less than $1,500, $1,500 to $4,499 (the reference category), and $4,500 or more.

Economic measures. A measure of relative earnings is included in the analysis prior to a spell of stay-at-home parenting. We construct the relative earnings variable by comparing the monthly personal earnings of the husband and wife. We then create the following five categories to include in our analysis: husband earns at least $2,500 more than wife, husband earns $500 to $2,499 more than wife, husband and wife earn within $499 of each other (the reference category), wife earns $500 to $2,499 more than husband, and wife earns at least $2,500 more than husband. A second measure of family economic situation is the spouse's monthly personal earnings. Spouse's monthly personal earnings is grouped into three categories: less than $1,500, $1,500 to $4,499 (the reference category), and $4,500 or more.

Family life course. The first measure of family life course is the number of own children under 15 living in the household. We include two dummy variables indicating the number of children: one for those with two children, and another for those with three or more children. Those with one child are the reference group. The second measure is the age of the youngest child. The age of the youngest child is recoded into a set of dummy variables as follows: less than 1 year, 1 and 2 years, 3 through 5 years, 6 through 9 years, and 10 through 14 years (reference category).

Demographic controls. Two demographic controls are included in our models: race/ethnicity and parent's age. Three dummy variables to measure race/ethnicity are included, one each for Black, non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Other, non-Hispanic. White, non-Hispanic is the reference category. We also include five dummy variables for the parent's age measuring the following age groups – 15-24, 25-29, 35-39, 40-44, and 45 and older. The age group 30-34 is the reference group.

Methods

We construct two data sets to complete our analysis. The first data set is a person level file with each record encompassing all the longitudinal data. Our sample consists of 23,366 unweighted married individuals with own children under 15 living with them at some point in the panel who are observed in our 48-month panel, of which 11,672 are women and 11,694 are men. This data set is used to present the characteristics of the sample at wave 1 (Table 2), the characteristics at wave 1 of those who experience a stay-at-home parenting transition in the panel (Table 3), and to provide unweighted numbers of individuals experiencing labor force transitions during the panel (Table 4).

The second data set is a person-wave file, where each record encompasses the information specific to the wave. We use event history analysis techniques to study the stay-at-home parenting transitions. Discrete-time hazard models have two major advantages over other types of regression techniques. First, these models allow the independent variables to change over time, variable such as age, income, or household composition. Research has shown that this leads to less bias in the estimates (Allison 1982). Another advantage of discrete-time hazard models is that they allow the inclusion of censored observations, that is, families who have not experienced a transition into a stay-at-home parent family at the end of the survey (Gupta and Leite, 1999).

The model is essentially a logistic regression, with the dependent variable measuring the occurrence of a married mother with children under 15 experiencing a stay-at-home mother transition in a particular wave. Specifically, the transitions measured at each wave are labor force exits into stay-at-home parenthood or labor force

entrances from stay-at-home parenthood. The ratios represent the increased (or decreased) odds of experiencing a stay-at-home parenthood transition for each wave.

Results

Table 2 presents weighted numbers of the women (29.3 million) and men (29.0 million) present at Wave 1 of the 1996 SIPP panel who at some time during the panel were married and living with children under 15. Of the 29.3 million women, 8.3 million were not employed in wave 1 and 6.1 million were not employed with the main reason to care for children or due to pregnancy or childbirth. Of the 29 million men, 2.3 million were not employed in wave 1, and only 141,000 were not employed with the main reason to care for children or due to pregnancy or childbirth.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of main reasons men and women were not employed in wave 1. The majority of women are out of the labor force because they are stay-at-home mothers – 73 percent say they are not working because they are taking care of children/others or because of pregnancy or childbirth. Conversely, only a small minority (7 percent) of men are not employed because they are stay-at-home fathers, but larger proportions say they are not working because they are ill or disabled (36 percent), retired (21 percent), or because they are unable to find work or are on layoff (20 percent).

Table 2 also presents the characteristics of the women and men present at Wave 1 of the 1996 SIPP panel who at some time during the panel were married and living with children under 15. The characteristics of this portion of the sample are similar to the general characteristics of all married couples with children under 18.[4] Most women and

[4] See detailed table FG-3 - Married Couple Family Groups, by Presence of Own Children Under 18, and Age, Earnings, Education, and Race and Hispanic Origin of Both Spouses: March 2002

men are White, non-Hispanic. Most women are in their 30's, while the distribution of men is shifted slightly older. The women and men in this portion of the sample have similar education levels, with only 13 percent having less than a high school degree and about 25 percent having attained a college education.

Forty-eight percent of women and 87 percent of men were working full time at Wave 1. Twice the proportion of women earned less than $1,500 per month than men (68 percent versus 30 percent). Women were correspondingly far less likely to earn $4,500 or more per month compared with men (4 percent of women and 17 percent of men). For those women and men who were married at Wave 1, their spouse's monthly earnings follows this pattern: for both married men and women 65 percent of the husbands earned more than their wives, and wives earned more than their husbands 14 percent of the time. The remaining earned within $499 of each other.

Not all of the respondents included in this table had children as of wave 1; for example, 11 percent of women and 12 percent of men present in the panel at wave 1 had a first birth during the panel after wave 1. Most (about 70 percent) had 1 or 2 children at the beginning of the panel. The distribution of men and women by the age of the youngest child in the house is fairly evenly distributed among children under 15.

Table 3 presents characteristics of the subgroups of mothers and fathers who experience labor force exits into stay-at-home parenthood and those who return to the labor force from stay-at-home parenthood. Women exiting the labor force into stay-at-home parenthood are younger than the total sample of women – 24 percent of those exiting are 25-29 years old, compared with 16 percent of the full number of women in

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(http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2002/tabFG3.pdf) for recent national estimates of the characteristics of married couple family groups with children under 18.

Table 2. Many fewer are older as well, 4 percent of the women exiting are 45 years old or older compared with 13 percent in Table 2. The race distributions in Table 3 are similar to those in Table 2.

Table 3 shows an indication that those women who exit into stay-at-home parenthood during the panel may have a slightly lower overall education distribution, they are more likely to work part time, and more likely to be in the lowest monthly income category, compared with all women. As one might expect, the age of the youngest child in the household is also shifted lower for the women experiencing an exit compared with the full universe of married women, however the number of children in the household is quite similar. Husbands earned more than wives more often among those women who experienced an exit than among the full sample.

Characteristics of those women who make returns to the labor force were similar to the characteristics of those exiting. Exceptions to this include – fewer women returning to the labor force return to a full-time job (24 percent) than either the full sample (48 percent) or women who exited (40 percent).

Table 4 shows the unweighted number of mothers and fathers who experience a labor force transition during the panel. Of the original 11,672 unweighted women who were present in wave 1, 2,913 experienced a labor force exit for any reason and 1,761 experienced an exit into stay-at-home parenthood. Further, 2,927 experienced any labor force entrance, and 1,780 experienced a return to the labor force from stay-at-home parenthood during the panel. Fathers experience transitions into and from stay-at-home parenthood at much lower levels than mothers. There were 11,694 men in the sample at wave 1, and 1,310 experienced a labor force exit for any reason, while only 100

experienced a transition from the labor force into stay-at-home parenthood. Likewise, 1,262 experienced any labor force entrance, yet only 89 returned to the labor force during the panel from stay-at-home parenthood. We will largely focus our analysis on stay-at-home motherhood due to the relative paucity of stay-at-home fathers, however Appendix Table 1 shows some summary analysis for comparison.

Multivariate Analysis

We used discrete-time hazard analysis to study the stay-at-home parenting transitions. Table 5 presents the coefficients, standard errors, and the odd ratios per wave of exiting the labor force into stay-at-home motherhood.[5]

A mother's market potential is significantly related to whether she exits the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood. Mothers who never completed high school are more likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood compared with those with a high school diploma. The level of work effort prior to the transition is an important factor involved in whether a mother exits into stay-at-home parenthood. The odds that mothers who worked less than full time will become stay-at-home mothers are 1.5 times as high as the odds that mothers who work full time will become stay-at-home mothers. Mothers who earn less than $1,500 per month are much more likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood than mothers who earn between $1,500 and $4,499 per month. Taken all together, these findings show that our measures of market potential are important indicators of a mother's connection to the labor force and her likelihood of becoming a stay-at-home mother. These results support the theory that mothers with

[5] The multivariate analyses do not use weighted data, therefore the results are applicable to the sample population and do not necessarily reflect the entire nation.

lower market potential are more likely to exit the labor force and become stay-at-home mothers.

A mother's relative contribution to the family income is an important factor in determining whether she will exit the labor force for stay-at-home parenting. Mothers in families where the husband's monthly earnings exceed their wives' by $500 or more are more likely to experience a labor force exit and become stay-at-home mothers compared with mothers in families where the husband and wife are more equal contributors to total family income. Similarly, mothers in families where the wife earns $500 to $2,499 more than their husband are less likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood. These results are in line with our expectations that mothers who contribute less than their husbands to the total family income will be more likely shed their worker role for the homemaker role, while mothers who contribute more than their husbands to the total family income will maintain their worker role as they are the primary breadwinner.

The results presented in Table 5 suggest that family life course factors are related to labor force exits for stay-at-home parenting. As hypothesized, the number of own children under 15 is positively related to labor force exits. The odds of exiting the labor force are greater for mothers with two or more children than they are for mothers with one child. The youngest child's age is also significantly related to stay-at-home parenting transitions – mothers with younger children are more likely to exit the labor force and become stay-at-home mothers than mothers with children 10 to 14 years old. These findings support the notion that where the family is in their life course plays a role in work and family decision-making. The pull of family appears to be a strong indicator of

whether a mother will exit the labor force during times that family responsibilities are greatest for mothers – that is, when she has very young children or more than one child.

Being Hispanic increases the odds of exiting the labor force into stay-at-home motherhood compared with White, non-Hispanics. The model shows that a mother's age plays an important role in determining whether she will exit the labor force and become a stay-at-home mother. Younger mothers (those 15-24 and 25-34) are more likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood, while older mothers (those 35 and older) are not. For example, the odds of exiting the labor force into stay-at-home motherhood are 45 percent greater for mothers aged 15-24 and 43 percent lower for women 45 years and over, compared with mothers 30-34 years old, net of other factors.

In sum, our model of labor force exits for stay-at-home motherhood supports the theoretical concepts as expected. From these results, we see that our measures of market potential all work as expected. Mothers with lower market potential – indicated by low education levels, fewer hours on the job per week, and lower monthly earnings – seem to have looser ties to the labor force since they are more likely to experience a labor force exit for stay-at-home parenthood. These women may have little to lose from a labor force exit since the costs of continued employment may be greater than a labor force exit. Likewise, families seem to be considering the economic implications of a mother's labor force exit for stay-at-home parenting, with mothers who contribute less financially than their husbands being more likely to exit the labor force and mothers who contribute more than their husbands being less likely to become stay-at-home mothers. As hypothesized, our results show that a wife's earnings in relation to her husband's earnings is clearly an important factor in the decision to leave the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood.

The family life course measures clearly play a role in a mother's labor force exit for stay-at-home motherhood as we expected. It is likely that the desire to balance work and family responsibilities falls heavier on mothers, since women are still primarily responsible for the care of children and other household functions (Berk and Berk 1979; Bianchi et. al 2000; Casper and Bianchi 2002; Hochschild 1989). Some mothers may feel that the best way to maximize family functioning and balance their worker and homemaker roles is to shed the former and become a full-time mother.

Labor force returns from stay-at-home parenting

Table 6 presents the regression results for mothers at risk of experiencing a labor force entrance from stay-at-home parenting. For this analysis, we limit the universe to those at risk of a labor force entrance from stay-at-home motherhood in each wave. Again, the results suggest that market potential plays a role in whether a mother returns to the labor force from stay-at-home parenting, yet not along the theoretical grounds as described previously for the labor force exits. If we expect that mothers with greater market potential will be more likely to enter the labor force net of other factors, then mothers with higher education levels should be more likely to enter the labor force. However, our results indicate the opposite. Mothers with some college and college graduates are less likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood, all else equal. It is possible that highly educated mothers who become stay-at-home mothers are married to men who have high earnings, or they have accumulated resources to allow them to remain out of the labor force for extended periods.

The husband's monthly earnings provide a measure of the economic stability of the household. Our model shows a curvilinear relationship between spouse's income and the likelihood of a mother leaving stay-at-home motherhood. Mothers with husband's who earn less than $1,500 per month are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood than those who earn between $1,500 and $4,499 per month, potentially indicating a need for the mother's income among low-income families. Yet, this result contradicts the theory that the costs of a mother working exceed the costs of being a stay-at-home mother among low-income families. On the other end of the income spectrum, mothers with husband's who earn more than $4,500 per month are also more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood compared with those mothers whose husband's earn between $1,500 and $4,499. This finding may actually be tapping into her market potential since high earning wives tend to be married to high earning husbands.

Table 6 shows that the number of children and the age of the youngest child are related to whether a stay-at-home mother enters to the labor force. The odds of entering the labor force are lower when a mother has two or more children than when she has one child. However, contrary to our hypotheses, mothers with preschool-age children (less than five years old) are more likely to enter the labor force after a stay-at-home motherhood spell than mothers with children ten to fourteen years old. Net of other factors, the odds of entering the labor force from stay-at-home parenthood are 1.6 times greater if the mother's youngest child is less than one year.

A different yet consistent pattern exists for labor force entrances by mother's age compared with the previous model of labor force exits -- the model now shows that

young mothers are less likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home parenting while older mothers are more likely to do so. Hispanic mothers are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood than White, non-Hispanic mothers.

In sum, the labor force entrance from stay-at-home motherhood model does not support the theoretical concepts as well as the labor force exits model. We do not find support for the theory that mothers with high market potential are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. Our model shows the contrary – mothers with higher education levels are less likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. However, we were unable to include other direct measures of a mother's market potential, such as her potential wage or number of hours per week she would potentially work. The family economic situation appears to play a role in whether a mother will enter the labor force as our results indicate a curvilinear relationship between husband's earnings and a labor force entrance from stay-at-home motherhood. Mothers living in both low earning families and very high earning families (indicated by the husband's monthly earnings) are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. One may expect that a mothers entry into the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood to be based on a family financial need – with mothers in low-income families being called upon to provide some income to help make ends meet and mothers in high-income families having the "luxury" of the choice of working or not. If this is the case, then many mothers of high earning spouses are not taking advantage of their "privileged" situation as they are 37 percent more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood than stay-at-home mothers whose husband's earn between $1,500 and $4,499 per month. It is possible that these high earning families have more

bills and loans making the wives economic contribution essential, or the husband's earnings measure is also tapping into the wives' earnings potential. Our results from the life course measures provide mixed support for our hypotheses. In line with our expectations, mothers with more children are less likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. Yet, contrary to our expectations, mothers with preschoolers are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home motherhood. Our model does not control for the length of time the mother has been a stay-at-home mother. It is possible that this measure is picking up a tendency for short labor force exits among mothers with young children as they switch jobs when compared with "career stay-at-home mothers" whose youngest child is 10-14 years old and they have been out of the labor force since their child was young.

Discussion

These results, taken altogether indicate that mothers with lower market potential are more likely to exit the labor force and become stay-at-home mothers. Given the high costs of child care and other work-related expenses, this finding is not surprising. This supports the theory that when the economic costs of working are greater than the benefits, and a mother's effective wage is reduced, she will exit the labor force. However, this same line of thinking is not supported in the results for the labor force entrances. In this case, mothers with higher market potential were less likely to enter the labor force. It may be that these mothers are married to men with high earnings such that their economic contribution to the family is not necessary to keep the family at some desired level of economic well-being. It may be that higher income mothers with older children

have more family demands acting to keep them out of the labor force. In fact, Fields et. al. (2001) found that children in high-income families are more likely to participate in enrichment activities, signaling the potential for an increased role of mother as chauffeur and the need for increased parental time available to the family.

It is also possible that that highly educated mothers have more potential resources in the form of assets that were accumulated in the past such that they can stay out of the labor force. Given the results from the labor force exits model showing that women with high market potential are less likely to become stay-at-home mothers in the first place, it is possible that those who do become stay-at-home mothers value mother care for children over market work, despite their potential for high earnings in the market.

The importance of who is the main economic contributor is clearly intertwined in family decisions of whether the family will rely on one paycheck and become a stay-at-home mother family. When the husband is the main breadwinner, wives are more likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home parenting. When the wife is the main breadwinner, wives are less likely to exit the labor force for stay-at-home. Mothers in low-income families tend to enter the labor force, presumably because the family needs the additional income. Yet, mothers in very high-income families also tend to enter the labor force, perhaps indicating their potential to earn high wages. Overall, families appear to be taking family economic well-being into consideration and acting in a fundamentally rational economic manner when making stay-at-home parenthood family decisions.

Clearly, family life course measures play a role in family-work decisions. As expected, mothers with more children and mothers of young children (under two years of

age) have a higher propensity of leaving the labor force for stay-at-home motherhood. In regards to labor force entrances from stay-at-home motherhood, having more than one child acts to keep mothers in the home. However, contrary to our expectations, mothers with younger children are more likely to enter the labor force from stay-at-home parenting. Coupled with the finding that mothers with infants are more likely to exit the labor force, this finding suggests that these mothers may be finding new, more flexible jobs and are stepping out of the labor force to become stay-at-home mothers for a relatively short period in between jobs. If this is the case, then there is a certain amount of fluidity in mother's labor force participation when young children are present.

We might think that stay-at-home mothers with older children would be more likely to enter the labor force because their children are in school and thus their home responsibilities are reduced or because they feel that their child is mature and old enough to care for themselves for small amounts of time after school. Research has found a positive and strong relationship between a child's age and the incidence of self care (Casper and Smith 2002, 2004 (forthcoming); Cain and Hofferth 1989; Smith 2000, 2002). However, without knowing how long the mothers in our sample have been out of the labor force or if they ever worked, we are unable to control for this. It is entirely possible that stay-at-home mothers whose youngest child is 10-14 years old are "career stay-at-home mothers," who have chosen the life course of family first and the homemaker role. In addition, we are not able to control for how stay-at-home mothers use their time, whether their children are in child care, or for the child care use and costs

of dual-earner families.[6] Smith (2002) reports that 14 percent of preschoolers with two working parents are cared for only by their parents, suggesting that these parents have arranged their work schedules such that they do not need to rely on anyone else to provide care.

This preliminary analysis examines the labor force transitions of married women with children under 15, paying particular attention to the main reason they are out of the labor force. In this paper, we attempt to further the conceptualization and measurement of this important family type – the stay-at-home mother family. The results show that the process of family formation and labor force behavior are a seemingly rational process based on predictable characteristics among married mothers with children, rather than haphazard occurrences. Our dynamic models, using prospective data measuring change in "real time" or as the change occurs, shows the power of using the SIPP longitudinal data, with it's excellent labor force, economic, and family formation measures, to conduct work and family analysis. This analysis provides further contextual understanding of the processes involved in family decision-making, and shed light into what factors play a role in one strategy that married couples' use to balance work and family – that being the strategy of family labor specialization, with the father in the work force and the mother in the home.

[6] With extensive data work, it is possible that we could look at some of these issues for a limited number of the mothers in our sample by including information collected in the child care and work schedule topical modules, however it would not be a straight forward process and it would greatly diminish our sample size.

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Table 1. Married-Couple Family Groups with Stay-At-Home Parents: March 2002
(In thousands)

Characteristic	Mothers		Fathers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All married-couple family groups with children under 15 years old	23,135	100.0	23,135	100.0
Labor force participation last year and stay-at-home parent families				
In labor force 1 or more weeks last year	16,655	72.0	22,286	96.3
Out of labor force all 52 weeks last year	6,480	28.0	849	3.7
Primary reason out of the labor force all 52 weeks last year				
To care for home and family	5,787	25.0	171	0.7
Spouse in labor force all 52 weeks last year	5,189	22.4	105	0.5
Ill/disabled	673	2.9	662	2.9
Retired	-	-	6	-
Going to school	14	0.1	6	-
Could not find work	1	-	3	-
Other	5	-	1	-
Stay-at-home family groups	5,189	100.0	105	100.0
Type of family group				
Family household	5,070	97.7	102	97.1
Related subfamily	119	2.3	3	2.9
Unrelated subfamily	-	-	-	-
Presence of children				
With own children under 15	5,189	100.0	105	100.0
With own children under 12	4,744	91.4	98	93.3
With own children under 6	3,346	64.5	56	53.3
With own children under 3	2,110	40.7	29	27.6
With own children under 1	659	12.7	9	8.6
Number of own children under 15				
1 child	1,667	32.1	44	41.9
2 children	2,196	42.3	42	40.0
3 children	937	18.1	14	13.3
4 or more children	389	7.5	5	4.8
Age of stay-at-home parent				
15 to 24 years old	434	8.4	6	5.7
25 to 34 years old	1,973	38.0	17	16.2
35 to 44 years old	2,180	42.0	52	49.5
45 to 54 years old	565	10.9	26	24.8
55 to 64 years old	29	0.6	4	3.8
65 years old and over	7	0.1	-	-
Family income				
Under $10,000	114	2.2	9	8.6
$10,000-$14,999	198	3.8	4	3.8
$15,000-$19,999	327	6.3	7	6.7
$20,000-$24,999	351	6.8	10	9.5
$25,000-$29,999	343	6.6	5	4.8
$30,000-$39,999	639	12.3	13	12.4
$40,000-$49,999	574	11.1	14	13.3
$50,000-$74,999	1,038	20.0	24	22.9
$75,000 and over	1,605	30.9	18	17.1
Poverty status				
Below poverty level	558	10.8	16	15.2
At or above poverty level	4,631	89.2	89	84.8
Metropolitan status				
Metropolitan	4,428	85.3	91	86.7
In central cities	1,381	26.6	36	34.3
Outside central cities	3,047	58.7	55	52.4
Non-metropolitan	762	14.7	14	13.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2002

TABLE 2. WAVE 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS & FATHERS IN THE SAMPLE
(Numbers in thousands)

CHARACTERISTIC	MOTHERS		FATHERS	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL[1]	29,314	100.0	29,085	100.0
Not employed in wave 1	8,316	28.4	2,266	7.8
Stay-at-home parent in wave 1	**6,046**	**20.6**	**141**	**0.5**
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	21,633	73.8	21,496	73.9
Black, non-Hispanic	2,283	7.8	2,387	8.2
Other, non-Hispanic	1,659	5.7	1,480	5.1
Hispanic	3,739	12.8	3,722	12.8
Age				
15-24	3,113	10.6	1,858	6.4
25-29	4,673	15.9	3,696	12.7
30-34	6,600	22.5	5,709	19.6
35-39	6,464	22.0	6,464	22.2
40-44	4,662	15.9	5,253	18.1
45 and over	3,802	13.0	6,106	21.0
Education level				
Less than high school	4,012	13.7	3,941	13.6
High school	9,152	31.2	8,910	30.6
Some college	9,086	31.0	8,507	29.3
College graduate	7,064	24.1	7,727	26.6
Hours worked				
Full time (35+ hrs)	14,096	48.1	25,148	86.5
Part time (1-34 hrs)	6,903	23.6	1,671	5.7
Zero hours	8,316	28.4	2,266	7.8
Monthly earnings				
Less than $1,500	19,857	67.7	8,729	30.0
$1,500-$2,999	6,345	21.6	9,472	32.6
$3,000-$4,499	2,088	7.1	5,864	20.2
$4,500 or more	1,024	3.5	5,020	17.3
Number of children				
No children	3,091	10.5	3,554	12.2
One child	10,505	35.8	10,198	35.1
Two children	10,306	35.2	10,083	34.7
Three or more children	5,413	18.5	5,250	18.1
Age of youngest child				
No children	3,091	10.5	3,554	12.2
Less than one year	4,240	14.5	4,092	14.1
One to two years	5,115	17.4	4,924	16.9
Three to five years	5,737	19.6	5,582	19.2
Six to nine years	5,667	19.3	5,563	19.1
Ten to fourteen years	5,465	18.6	5,371	18.5
MARRIED AT WAVE 1	26,874	100.0	26,893	100.0
Earnings difference (monthly)				
Husband earns $2,500+ more	7,725	28.7	7,728	28.7
Husband earns $500 to $2,499 more	9,770	36.4	9,783	36.4
Within $499 of each other	5,544	20.6	5,543	20.6
Wife earns $500 to $2,499 more	2,987	11.1	2,991	11.1
Wife earns $2,500+ more	848	3.2	848	3.2
Spouse's monthly earnings				
Less than $1,500	7,753	28.9	18,183	67.4
$1,500-$2,999	8,709	32.4	5,825	21.7
$3,000-$4,499	5,563	20.7	1,954	7.3
$4,500 or more	4,849	18.0	979	3.6

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

[1] Includes those who are present in wave 1 of the panel and have a wave 1 weight.

TABLE 3. WAVE 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTHERS & FATHERS WITH STAY-AT-HOME TRANSITIONS DURING THE PANEL
(Numbers in thousands)

	LABOR FORCE EXIT INTO STAY-AT-HOME PARENTHOOD DURING THE PANEL				LABOR FORCE ENTRANCE FROM STAY-AT-HOME PARENTHOOD DURING THE PANEL			
	MOTHERS		FATHERS		MOTHERS		FATHERS	
CHARACTERISTIC AT WAVE 1	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
TOTAL[1]	4,587	100.0	255	100.0	4,624	100.0	233	100.0
Race/ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic	3,439	75.0	184	72.4	3,365	72.8	164	70.4
Black, non-Hispanic	291	6.4	25	9.7	263	5.7	18	7.5
Other, non-Hispanic	195	4.3	18	7.1	215	4.7	17	7.2
Hispanic	662	14.4	27	10.9	780	16.9	35	14.9
Age								
15-24	764	16.7	25	9.9	739	16.0	31	13.4
25-29	1,119	24.4	31	12.3	981	21.2	24	10.2
30-34	1,200	26.2	71	27.8	1,136	24.6	62	26.7
35-39	826	18.1	65	25.3	979	21.2	40	17.1
40-44	479	10.4	38	14.9	521	11.3	45	19.4
45 and over	200	4.4	25	9.8	269	5.8	31	13.3
Education level								
Less than high school	729	15.9	40	15.7	816	17.6	34	14.8
High school	1,395	30.4	101	39.4	1,529	33.1	83	35.7
Some college	1,479	32.2	56	22.1	1,400	30.3	40	17.0
College graduate	984	21.4	58	22.7	880	19.0	75	32.4
Hours worked								
Full time (35+ hrs)	1,837	40.0	177	69.3	1,111	24.0	131	56.1
Part time (1-34 hrs)	1,683	36.7	47	18.3	968	21.0	33	14.0
No paid job (0 hrs)	1,067	23.3	31	12.4	2,545	55.0	69	30.0
Monthly earnings								
Less than $1,500	3,652	79.6	110	42.1	4,073	88.1	128	54.8
$1,500-$2,999	592	12.9	72	29.3	360	7.8	56	23.9
$3,000-$4,499	209	4.6	50	19.5	124	2.7	40	17.0
$4,500 or more	134	2.9	23	9.2	68	1.5	10	4.3
Number of children								
No children	483	10.5	22	8.4	263	5.7	15	6.4
One child	1,322	28.8	85	33.3	1,389	30.1	84	36.2
Two children	1,744	38.0	86	33.7	1,788	38.7	78	33.3
Three or more children	1,039	22.7	63	24.6	1,184	25.6	56	24.1
Age of youngest child								
No children	483	10.5	22	8.4	263	5.7	15	6.4
Less than one year	897	19.6	24	9.4	895	19.4	28	12.2
One to two years	1,031	22.5	56	22.1	1,130	24.4	55	23.6
Three to five years	988	21.5	75	29.5	1,053	22.8	64	27.5
Six to nine years	785	17.1	53	20.9	785	17.0	52	22.3
Ten to fourteen years	404	8.8	25	9.7	499	10.8	19	8.1
MARRIED AT WAVE 1	4,136	100.0	233	100.0	4,325	100.0	216	100.0
Earnings difference (monthly)								
Husband earns $2,500+ more	1,439	34.8	29	1.5	1,696	39.2	22	10.0
Husband earns $500 to $2,499 more	1,687	40.8	59	25.4	1,830	42.2	39	17.9
Within $499 of each other	645	15.6	77	33.1	565	13.1	63	29.3
Wife earns $500 to $2,499 more	269	6.5	47	20.1	182	4.2	59	27.3
Wife earns $2,500+ more	97	2.3	21	8.9	57	1.3	33	15.5
Spouse's monthly earnings								
Less than $1,500	1,102	26.6	118	50.6	1,208	27.9	94	43.3
$1,500-$2,999	1,357	32.8	65	27.9	1,446	33.4	64	29.4
$3,000-$4,499	879	21.3	35	15.2	889	20.6	38	17.8
$4,500 or more	798	19.3	15	6.3	782	18.1	20	9.5

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

[1] Includes those who are present in wave 1 of the panel and have a wave 1 weight.

TABLE 4. UNWEIGHTED NUMBER OF LABOR FORCE TRANSITION EVENTS DURING THE PANEL

	MOTHERS		FATHERS	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
TOTAL IN PANEL	11672	100.0	11694	100.0
Exit labor force for any reason during the panel	2913	25.0	1310	11.2
into stay-at-home parenthood	1761	15.1	100	0.9
Enter labor force during the panel	2927	25.1	1262	10.8
from stay-at-home parenthood	1780	15.3	89	0.8

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

TABLE 5. LABOR FORCE EXIT INTO STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERHOOD

CHARACTERISTIC AT TIME OF EXIT	Coefficient		Standard error	Odds ratio
Education level				
Less than high school	0.467	***	0.055	1.595
High school (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Some college	-0.009		0.040	0.991
College graduate	-0.043		0.048	0.958
Hours worked[1]				
Full time (35+ hrs) (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Less than full time (0-34 hrs)	0.389	***	0.035	1.476
Monthly earnings[1]				
Less than $1,500	0.634	***	0.042	1.885
$1,500-$4,499 (Ref)	-		-	1.000
$4,500 or more	-0.199		0.129	0.820
Earnings difference[1] (monthly)				
Husband earns $2,500+ more	0.478	***	0.050	1.612
Husband earns $500 to $2,499 more	0.166	***	0.045	1.181
Within $499 of each other (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Wife earns $500 to $2,499 more	-0.524	***	0.071	0.592
Wife earns $2,500+ more	0.017		0.131	1.017
Number of children				
One child (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Two children	0.099	***	0.038	1.104
Three or more children	0.206	***	0.047	1.228
Age of youngest child				
Less than one year	0.356	***	0.068	1.428
One to two years	0.422	***	0.058	1.524
Three to five years	0.192	***	0.056	1.211
Six to nine years	0.089	*	0.054	1.094
Ten to fourteen years (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Black, non-Hispanic	0.099		0.063	1.104
Other, non-Hispanic	0.055		0.078	1.056
Hispanic	0.256	***	0.049	1.292
Age				
15-24	0.391	***	0.067	1.479
25-29	0.133	**	0.051	1.142
30-34 (Ref)	-		-	1.000
35-39	-0.187	***	0.047	0.829
40-44	-0.243	***	0.054	0.784
45 and over	-0.556	***	0.069	0.574
Number of observations	56,361			
Degrees of Freedom	24			
Likelihood Chi Square	2121.360	***		

[1] Characteristic at month prior to transition.

p-values: * p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.01

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

TABLE 6. LABOR FORCE ENTRANCE FROM STAY-AT-HOME MOTHERHOOD

CHARACTERISTIC AT TIME OF ENTRANCE	Coefficient		Standard error	Odds ratio
Education level				
Less than high school	0.087		0.058	1.091
High school (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Some college	-0.207	***	0.049	0.813
College graduate	-0.126	**	0.061	0.882
Spouse's monthly earnings				
Less than $1,500	0.217	**	0.048	1.242
$1,500-$4,499 (Ref)	-		-	1.000
$4,500 or more	0.315	***	0.053	1.370
Number of children				
One child (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Two children	-0.185	***	0.048	0.831
Three or more children	-0.053	**	0.055	0.949
Age of youngest child				
Less than1 years	0.446	***	0.086	1.562
One to two years	0.309	**	0.074	1.362
Three to five years	0.153	**	0.069	1.165
Six to nine years	-0.075		0.067	0.928
Ten to fourteen years (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Race/ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic (Ref)	-		-	1.000
Black, non-Hispanic	0.045		0.087	1.046
Other, non-Hispanic	0.179	**	0.089	1.196
Hispanic	0.122	**	0.054	1.130
Age				
15-24	-0.389	***	0.078	0.678
25-29	-0.173	***	0.062	0.841
30-34 (Ref)	-		-	1.000
35-39	0.129	**	0.056	1.137
40-44	0.338	***	0.066	1.403
45 and over	1.021	***	0.081	2.777
Number of observations	23,777			
Degrees of Freedom	19			
Likelihood Chi Square	496.579	***		

p-values: * p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.01

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

APPENDIX TABLE 1. LABOR FORCE EXIT INTO AND ENTRANCE FROM STAY-AT-HOME FATHERHOOD

CHARACTERISTIC AT TIME OF LABOR FORCE TRANSITION	LABOR FORCE EXIT INTO STAY-AT-HOME FATHERHOOD			LABOR FORCE ENTRANCE FROM STAY-AT-HOME FATHERHOOD		
	Coefficient	Standard error	Odds ratio	Coefficient	Standard error	Odds ratio
Education level						
High school or less (Ref)	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
Any college	-0.304 **	0.119	1.031	-0.468 **	0.202	0.626
Hours worked[1]						
Full time (35+ hrs) (Ref)	-	-	1.000	NA	NA	NA
Less than full time (0-34 hrs)	1.206 ***	0.144	4.534	NA	NA	NA
Monthly earnings[1]						
Less than $3,000	-0.032	0.143	1.228	NA	NA	NA
$3,000 or more (Ref)	-	-	1.000	NA	NA	NA
Earnings difference[1] (monthly)						
Husband earns $500+ more	-0.850 ***	0.150	0.761	NA	NA	NA
Within $499 of each other (Ref)	-	-	1.000	NA	NA	NA
Wife earns $500+ more	0.793 ***	0.148	4.833	NA	NA	NA
Spouse's monthly earnings						
Less than $3,000	NA	NA	NA	0.992 ***	0.229	2.695
$3,000 or more (Ref)	NA	NA	NA	-	-	1.000
Number of children						
One child (Ref)	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
Two or more children	0.440 ***	0.120	1.676	-0.007	0.195	0.993
Age of youngest child						
Less than three years	-0.351 **	0.138	1.066	0.088	0.224	1.092
Three to fourteen years (Ref)	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
Race/ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic (Ref)	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
Not white, non-Hispanic	-0.199	0.132	1.040	-0.009	0.197	0.991
Age						
15-34 (Ref)	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000
35 and over	-0.252 **	0.127	0.857	1.121 ***	0.206	3.069
Number of observations	74,272			5,620		
Degrees of Freedom	9			6		
Likelihood Chi Square	266.059 ***			52.857 ***		

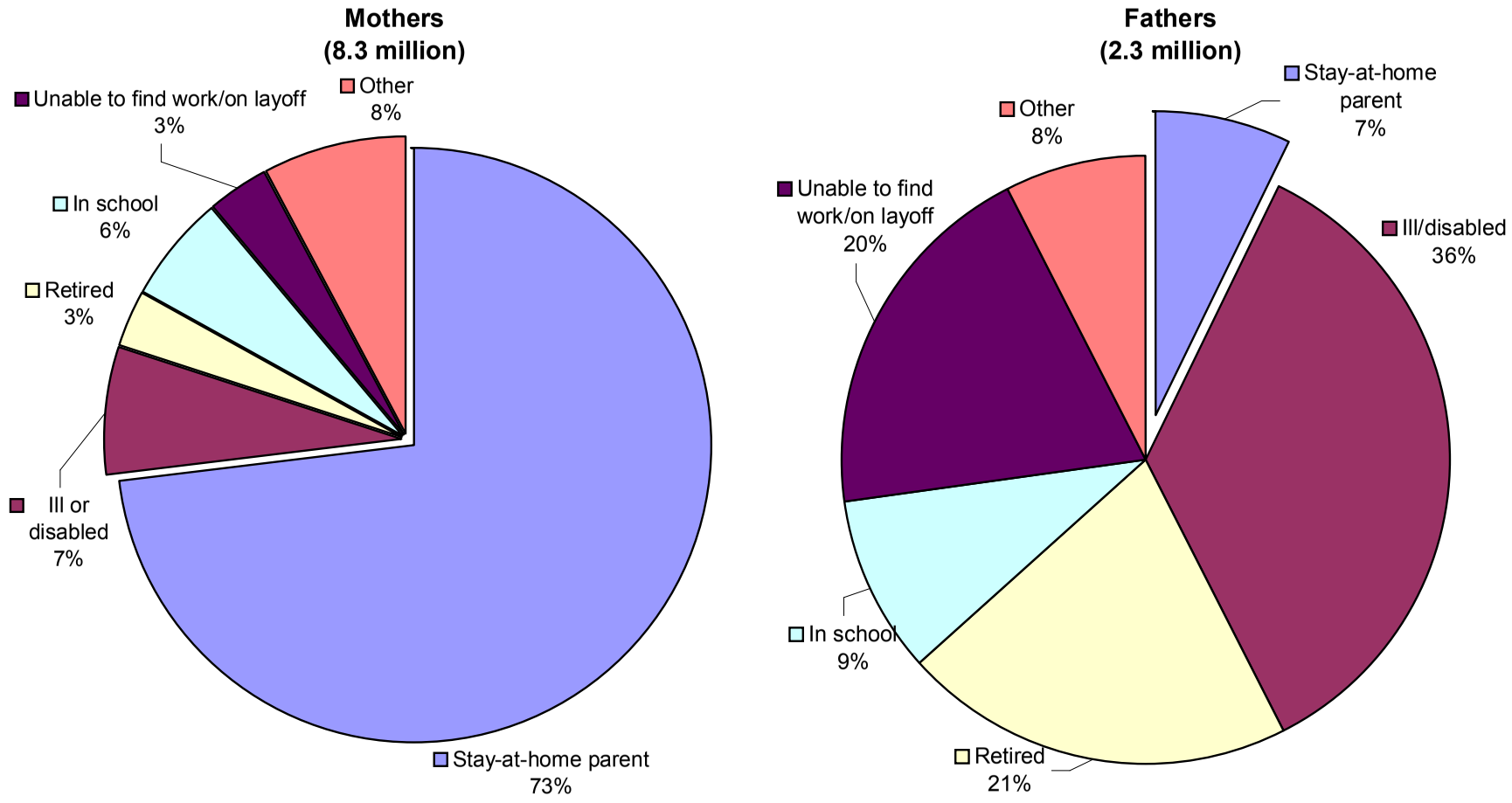
[1] Characteristic at month prior to transition.

p-values: * p<.1 ** p<.05 *** p<.01

NA Not included in the model.

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel

Figure 1. Reasons Not Employed In Wave 1 for Married Mothers and Fathers with Children Under 15



Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 longitudinal panel.