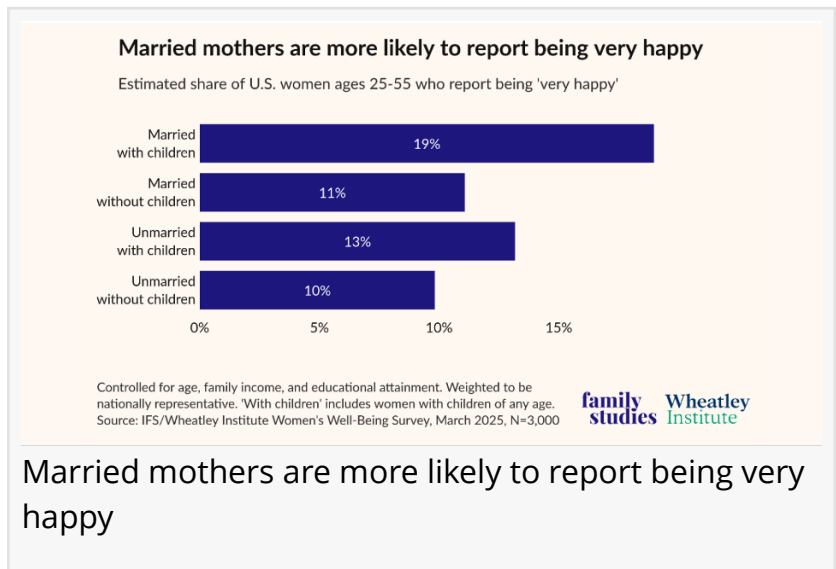


Married Moms Twice as Likely to be ‘Very Happy’ Than Single or Childless Women

Married women receive more physical touch and are less lonely than single or childless women

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new YouGov survey, sponsored by the Institute for Family Studies with the Wheatley Institute, finds that married women are more likely than their unmarried counterparts to report feeling deep connection and meaning in their relationships and are less likely to report being lonely.



The 2025 Women's Well-being Survey (WWS) of 3,000 women in the US aged 25-55 found that married mothers reported higher levels of happiness and physical touch, as well as less loneliness, than their unmarried or childless counterparts.

“

Pop culture portrayals, online forums and media headlines declaring single women without children are happier than married mothers, are simply not true...”

Jean Twenge, Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University

Key data from the survey includes:

HAPPINESS

- * Married mothers are nearly twice as likely to report being “very happy” compared to single, childless women
- * 47% of married mothers and 43% of married childless women say life feels enjoyable, compared to 40% of unmarried mothers and 34% of unmarried childless women

PHYSICAL TOUCH

*47% of married mothers and 49% of married childless women report high levels of regular

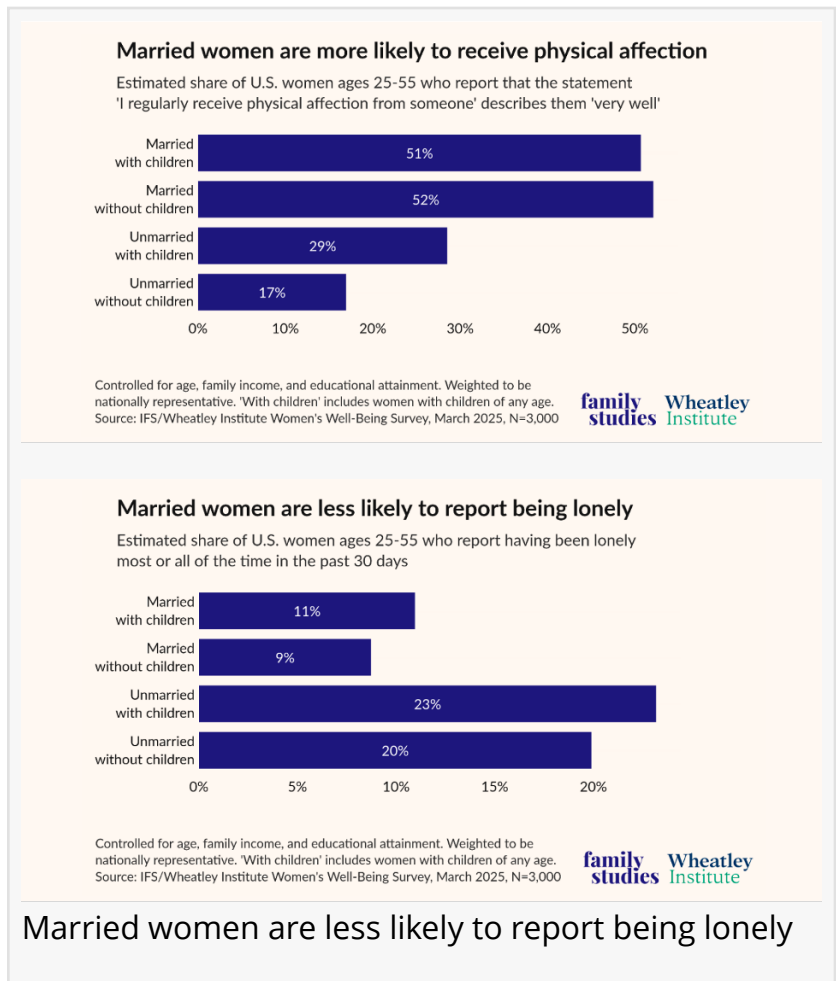
physical touch, compared to only 23% of unmarried mothers and 13% of unmarried childless women

- * Women who experience high levels of physical affection are more than three times as likely to be very happy (22%) compared to women who experience low levels of touch (7%)
- * 58% of married mothers and 61% of married childless women say they often receive hugs or kisses, compared to just 36% of unmarried mothers and just 18% of unmarried childless women

LONELINESS

- *According to the data, married women are about half as likely as unmarried women to experience frequent loneliness

- *Only about 1-in-10 married women report feeling lonely most or all the time, compared to 23% of unmarried mothers and 20% of unmarried childless women



Report co-author Jean Twenge, Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University says:

"Pop culture portrayals, online forums and media headlines declaring single women without children are happier than married mothers are simply not true... our study challenges prominent cultural narratives by revealing that marriage and motherhood provide deep emotional and social benefits."

According to the survey of 3,000 women aged 25 to 55 in the United States, married mothers were also more likely to say that life feels enjoyable most or all of the time.

The study also found that motherhood provides women with a deepened sense of meaning and purpose in life with nearly half of married mothers stating their lives felt meaningful most or all the time, compared to only one-third of single, childless women.

Report co-author Brad Wilcox, Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and Senior Fellow of the Institute for Family Studies says:

"This is the first study to focus on touch, family, and women's happiness, and we find that not

only do married women report significantly higher levels of physical touch but also that their experience of regular physical touch seems to help explain why they are happier. Regular real-world touch may matter more in a world where contemporary Americans spend too much time in the virtual world.”

Report co-author Jenet Erickson, a Fellow at the Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University says:

“While getting married and having children may mean less time hanging out with friends, marriage and children are also associated with other kinds of social engagement, including volunteer work, church attendance, and community connections. In fact, in our study, married mothers are just as likely to say they feel satisfied with their number of friends as other women.”

Report co-author Wendy Wang, Director of Research at the Institute for Family Studies says:

"Women are often told that staying single and child-free leads to the happiest and most fulfilling life, but our findings paint a complex yet hopeful picture of the benefits of marriage and motherhood in women’s lives. While marriage and motherhood are certainly challenging, our research makes it clear that married mothers are thriving in ways that challenge current stereotypes about family life."

The full report is available at:

Jean M. Twenge, Jenet Erickson, Wendy Wang, Brad Wilcox, “In Pursuit: Marriage, Motherhood, and Women’s Well-Being” (The Institute for Family Studies and The Wheatley Institute, August 2025)

NOTES

1. Methodology

The findings in this report are based on the Women's Well-being Survey (WWS), a collaboration between the Institute for Family Studies and the Wheatley Institute. The study was conducted by YouGov between March 1 and 12, 2025, the survey included a representative sample of 3,000 U.S. women aged 25 to 55, with 1,551 respondents having children under 18. The final dataset of 3,000 was derived from 3,035 completed interviews. Survey participants were matched to a sampling frame based on age, race and education. This sampling frame was created from various public data sources to reflect U.S. national demographics. The matched cases were weighted using propensity scores and adjusted for employment patterns, marital status and parental status, ensuring the final sample mirrored the general U.S. female population aged 25 to 55. All reported numbers in the survey are weighted marginal means, controlling for family income, age and education.

2. Authors

Jean Twenge is Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and the author of 8 books, including *Generations* and *10 Rules for Raising Kids in a High-Tech World*.

Jenet Erikson is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies, a Fellow of the Wheatley Institute, and Associate Professor in Religious Education in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University.

Wendy Wang is Director of Research at the Institute for Family Studies. She formerly served as a Senior Researcher at the Pew Research Center.

Brad Wilcox is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies. He is also a Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia.

3. Publishers

The Institute for Family Studies (IFS)

The Institute for Family Studies is a 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of IFS is to strengthen marriage and family life and advance the welfare of children through research and public education. For more information, visit:

<https://ifstudies.org/>

The Wheatley Institute

The Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University engages students, scholars, thought leaders, and the public in research supported work that fortifies the core institutions of the family, religion, and constitutional government. For more information, visit:

<https://wheatley.byu.edu/>

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