



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 23, 2011

Broken Homes in the United States Are at Alarming Level, Study Finds

The second annual [Index of Family Belonging and Rejection](#), conducted by the FRC's Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI), also found that high intact family rates and child poverty are inversely related, with states having high "family-belonging" indices also recording low child poverty rates, and vice versa. Additionally, researchers found a significant inverse relationship between intact, traditional families and teen pregnancy.



Dr. Pat Fagan, director of MARRI and one of the study's authors, said that the latest research found "the family is hugely important in determining a child's future success or failure. The report shows that states with higher rates of strong families have higher rates of high school graduation as well as higher average scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Family structure is actually more closely linked to educational outcomes than government spending."

Among the study's findings:

- The highest rate for intact, traditional families is the Northeast (49.6 percent), while the lowest is in the South (41.8 percent).
- Minnesota (57 percent) and Utah (56.5 percent) have the highest rates for intact families, while Mississippi (34 percent) has the lowest.
- Among specific racial and ethnic groups, the highest rates for intact families are found among Asians (65.8 percent), while the lowest rates are found among Blacks (16.7 percent).

"We have never faced anything like this in human history," Fagan said of the high numbers of children growing up in broken homes. "The foundational relationship of marriage has quite an impact on the wellbeing of children, and on the welfare of both the states and the nation. Sad to say, our family culture today is primarily a culture of rejection between parents. Most American mothers and fathers cannot stand each other enough to raise the children they brought into existence."

Following the trail of statistics in the FRC study, [Baptist Press News](#) noted that the "percentage of children who reach age 17 with married biological parents falls drastically as one travels down the river, from 57 percent in Minnesota, to 49 percent in Illinois, 40 percent in Tennessee and 34 percent in



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Mississippi. At the same time, the graduation rate also falls significantly (Minnesota, 86 percent; Illinois, 80 percent; Tennessee, 75 percent; Mississippi, 64 percent)."

Likewise, child poverty correlates to broken families. "The child poverty rate in Minnesota is 14 percent," noted BP News. "It then climbs during the trip down the Mississippi River: Illinois (19 percent), Tennessee (24 percent) and Mississippi (31 percent). Similarly, the unmarried teen birth rate climbs: Minnesota (6 percent), Illinois (9 percent), Tennessee (11 percent) and Mississippi (14 percent)."

Addressing the finding that states with higher rates of intact families have lower child poverty rates, and vice versa, Fagan pointed to the simple fact that a father "is motivated to work harder to support a child when he is the biological parent of the child and lives with the child and mother. Conversely, many non-residential parents do not pay child support, and those that do, do not pay much."

Fagan wrote that the parental relationship within marriage is "the foundational social relationship in all of society. From that, all the rest breaks; without that, everything else is weakened — everything." He added that there is a good reason "why all nations and all cultures over time protected marriage, and we're beginning to see the reasons by neglect. It's a crisis for our culture. We have to figure out how to reverse it."



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