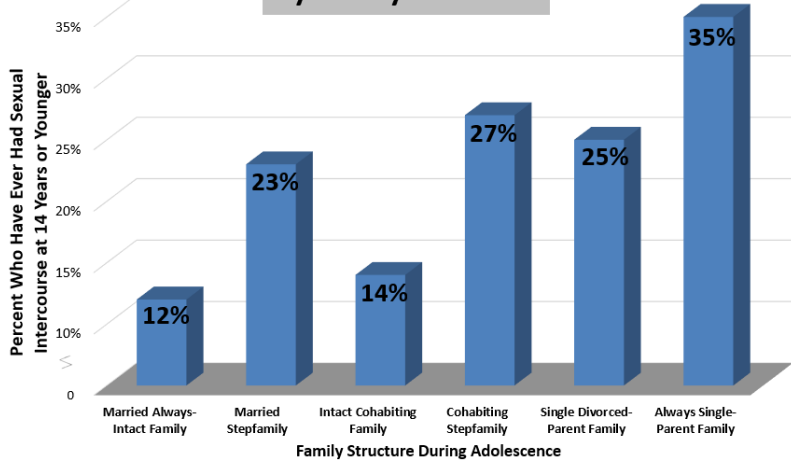


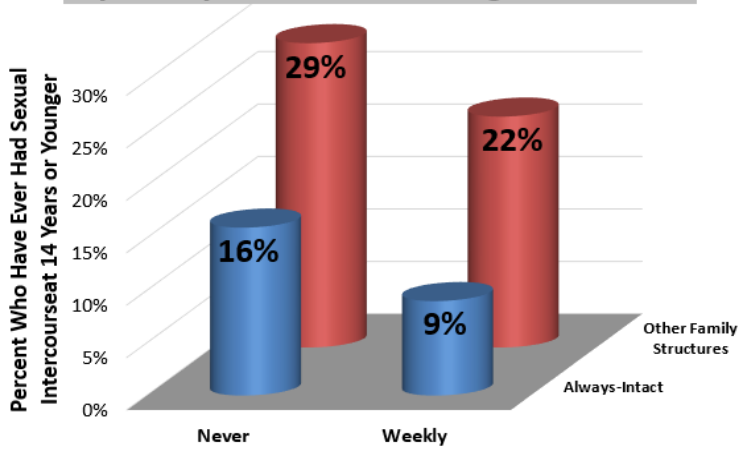
## Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger  
By Family Structure**



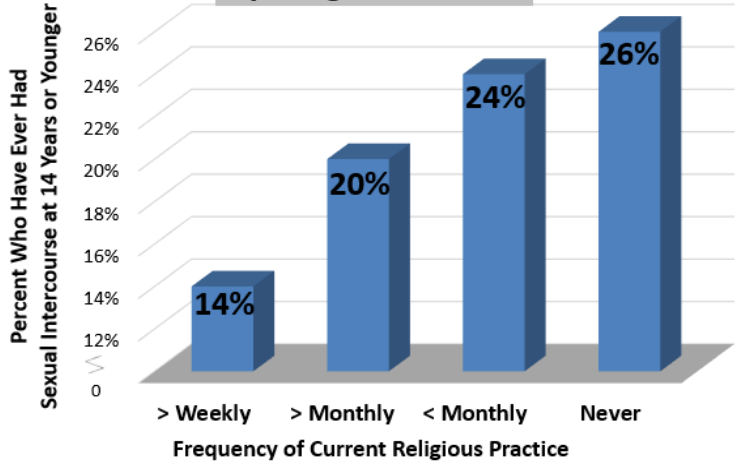
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger  
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

*This chart looks at adolescents who have ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.*

*These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact\*) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

*The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:*

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- All other family structures\* that worship weekly;*
- All other family structures\* that never worship.*

*(\*This group consists of individuals in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always- single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

## **Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger by Family Structure and Religious Practice**

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth showed that, among adolescents 14 and younger, those who grew up in married, intact families and attended weekly religious services at the time of the survey were the least likely to have had sexual intercourse.

**Family Structure:** According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 12 percent of adolescents who grew up in an intact married family ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by children of intact cohabiting families (14 percent), children of married stepfamilies (23 percent), single divorced-parent families (25 percent), cohabiting stepfamilies (27 percent) and always-single parent households (35 percent).

**Religious Practice:** Only 14 percent of adolescents who attended weekly religious services at the time of the survey had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, compared to those who attended church one to three times a month (20 percent), less than monthly (24 percent), and those who never attended church (26 percent).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that 9 percent of adolescents who grew up in intact married families and attended church weekly at the time of the survey had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by those who never attended church but grew up in an always intact married family (16 percent). Twenty-two percent of adolescents from all other family structures who attended church weekly had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by those who never attended church and grew up in all other family structures (29 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Data from the Longitudinal cohort study, Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, found that adolescents aged 11 to 16 who were living with their biological parents were less likely to engage in sexual intercourse than were their peers who lived without both biological parents.<sup>1</sup> Data from a different study confirmed this same trend, that teens that live with both parents are significantly less likely to have ever had intercourse than their peers who do not live with both parents.<sup>2</sup>

Data from the National Survey of Family Growth also found that young girls who lived with both of their biological parents at age 14 had a lower risk of first sexual intercourse than their peers who did not live with both biological parents at 14.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, C.R. T. Leventhal and J. Brooks-Gunn, "Neighborhood context and racial differences in early adolescent sexual activity," *Demography* 41(4) 2004, PP. 697-720.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, R.L., M.N. Elliot, S.H. Berry, D.E. Kanouse, D. Kunkel, S.B. Hunter, "Watching sex on television predicts adolescent initiation of sexual behavior," *Pediatrics* 114( 3) 2004, pp. 280-289.

<sup>3</sup> Brewster, K. L., E.C. Cooksey, D.K. Guiley, R.R. Rindfuss, "The changing impact of religion on the sexual and contraceptive behavior of adolescent women in the United States," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 60(2) 1998, pp. 493-504..

One study found that those adolescents who emphasized the importance of religion in their lives were less likely to engage in premarital sexual activity. In this study, young women who attended church once or more per week were less likely to be sexually active than those who attended less often. Thirty-eight percent of young women who attended church once or more per week were sexually active. Of those who attended church less often, 65.4 percent were sexually active.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Studer, Marlana, Arland Thornton, "Adolescent Religiosity and Contraceptive Usage," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 49(1) 1987, pp. 117-128.