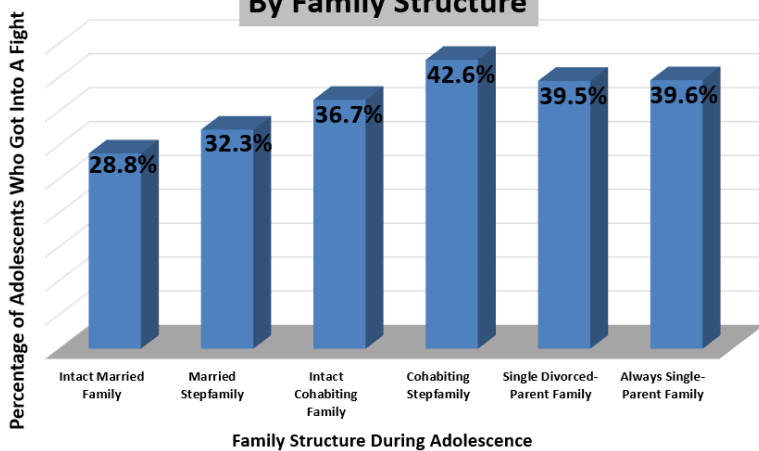


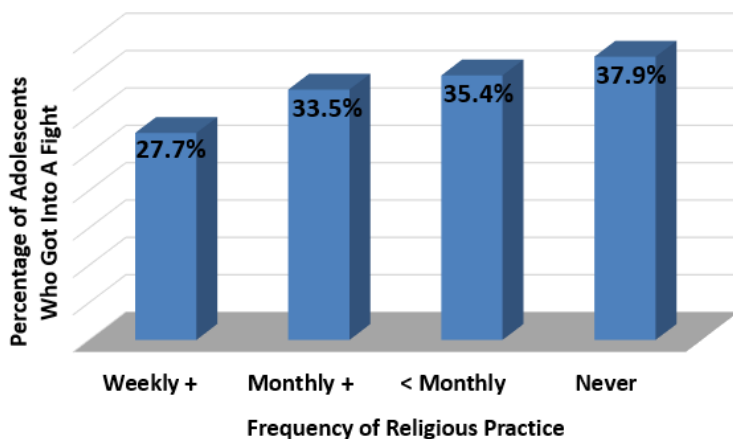
Adolescents Who Have Ever Been In a Fight By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescents Who Have Ever Been In A Fight
By Family Structure



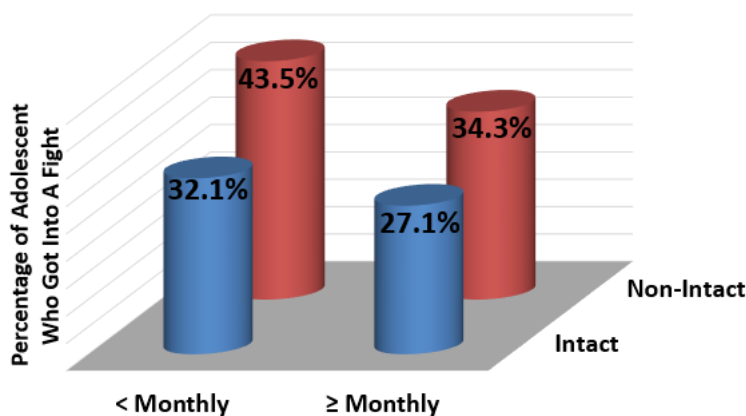
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Adolescents Who Have Ever Been In A Fight
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Adolescents Who Have Ever Been In A Fight
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever been in a fight, correlated with religious attendance and family structure.

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Family Structure: According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health Waves I and II, 42.6 percent of adolescents living in a cohabiting stepfamily had been in a fight, whereas only 28.8 percent of children with married parents had ever been in a fight. Among other family structures, 32.3 percent of adolescents living in stepfamilies, 36.7 percent of those living with cohabiting biological parents, 39.5 percent of those with divorced parents, and 39.6 percent of those with never married parents had ever been in a fight.

Religious Practice: Waves I and II of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health showed that 37.9 percent of students in Grades 7-12 who never worshipped had been in a fight, whereas only 27.7 percent of adolescents who worshipped at least weekly had been in a fight. Of those who attended religious services between one and three times a month, 33.5 percent had been in a fight, and of those who worship less than once a month, 35.4 percent had been in a fight.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Only 27.1 percent of adolescents who lived with both biological parents and worshipped at least monthly had ever been in a fight. By contrast, 43.5 percent of adolescent students who worshipped less than monthly and came from single-parent or reconstituted families had ever been in a fight. In between were those in non-intact families who worshipped at least monthly (34.3 percent) and those who lived with both biological parents and worshipped less than monthly (32.1 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Many other studies confirm the direction of these findings. Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb of Bowling Green State University reported that teens who were more religious had less behavioral problems than other teens. They also found that adolescents living with married biological parents were less delinquent than those living within any other family structure.¹

Michelle Pearce of Yale University and colleagues found that “a greater level of parent involvement and private religious practices were associated with a decrease in conduct problems over a 1-year period.”²

Lela McKnight and Ann Loper of the University of Virginia also reported that residing in a single-parent household was one of only two significant risk factors associated with delinquency in female adolescents. Degree of religious belief was one of five significant resilience factors.³

¹ Wendy D. Manning and Kathleen A. Lamb, “Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 876-893.

² Michelle J. Pearce, Stephanie M. Jones, Mary E. Schwab-Stone, and Vladislav Ruchkin, “The Protective Effects of Religiousness and Parent Involvement on the Development of Conduct Problems among Youth Exposed to Violence,” *Child Development* 74.6 (2003): 1682-1696.

Christian Smith of the University of Notre Dame found that adolescent children whose parents attended church regularly were more likely to expect their parents to be upset if they discovered their children had been fighting.⁴

When it comes to keeping children from getting into fights, the intact married family that worships regularly is the most effective peacekeeping force.

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³ Lela Renee McKnight and Ann Booker Loper, "The Effect of Risk and Resilience Factors on the Prediction of Delinquency in Adolescent Girls," *Social Psychology International* 23.2 (2002): 186-198.

⁴ Christian Smith, "Religious Participation and Parental Moral Expectations and Supervision of American Youth," *Reviews of Religious Research* 44.4 (2003): 414-424. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.