



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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The timing of motherhood appears to have a significant bearing on the wages of Canadian women, according to a new study using data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

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MAJOR RELEASES

Wives, mothers and wages: Does timing matter?

1998

The timing of motherhood appears to have a significant bearing on the wages of Canadian women, according to a new study using data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

Trends in fertility patterns suggest that young women are delaying having a family to concentrate on developing their careers. In 1996, mothers were 27.1 years old on average at the birth of their first child, compared with 25.7 in 1986.

The study shows that the work experience of women that postponed motherhood was different from that of women who had children early.

In 1998, women who postponed having a family averaged roughly 1.7 more years of full-year, full-time work experience, and spent a larger proportion of potential years working full year and full time.

The study found that, among women of the baby boom generation, mothers who delayed having children spent 80% of their career working full year, full time compared with 68% for mothers who had children early.

The wages of women who postponed motherhood were different from those of women who had children early, the study showed.

Women who had postponed having children until later in life earned at least 6% more in 1998 than women who had their children early. This observation takes into account important differences in work histories and education.

Why the wage gap?

There are several possible reasons for this 6% wage gap between mothers who interrupted their careers early to have children and those who waited until later.

Wage growth and promotion opportunities are substantial early in one's career. If women miss this stage due to child-rearing, they may not recover, relative to others who do not miss this stage.

Women who postpone childbirth may be exiting during a period when interruptions are less critical for their careers, and consequently may have higher wages in the longer run.

Furthermore, women who do not have children early in their careers might be more flexible making decisions on training, promotions, travel, and other factors that affect job advancement. Those who have children early

Note to readers

This release is based on the report, Wives, mothers and wages: Does timing matter?, which sheds light on the association between family formation decisions and wages using data from the 1998 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

The study investigates whether the timing of family formation decisions has an impact on women's wages, and whether these decisions have a permanent or transitory impact on the earnings of mothers.

*The concept of **delaying parenthood** refers to the difference between a woman's actual age at the birth of her first child and an average age at first birth, for groups determined by education level, major field of study, urban size class and birth year of the mother.*

may be more restricted in their choices because of the presence of young children.

In addition, women who postpone children may be inherently more career-oriented and may have had higher wages at the beginning of their careers than those women who had children early.

Wage gap decreases as children grow older

The wage advantage of mothers who delayed parenthood persisted after the birth of their first child, but decreased as children grew older. This may reflect the fact that mothers who delayed parenthood may assume traditional family roles that may in turn limit their involvement in the labour market.

The wage gap between mothers who delayed having children and those who had children early was widespread among mothers of all ages, but was greatest among younger women.

This may reflect changes in the types of careers available to women born at different times. For example, from 1971 to 1991, the share of women increased in male-dominated occupations such as management, and occupations in natural sciences, engineering and mathematics.

Older groups of women may have had fewer initial career opportunities and flatter age-earnings profiles than more recent age cohorts. Thus, the wage advantage associated with delaying motherhood may have mattered less in the types of careers entered by older women.

Among younger groups of mothers, the wage advantage of delaying motherhood tended to erode slightly. However, at this point it is impossible to ascertain whether these gaps will persist or disappear completely by the end of their careers.

The report *Wives, mothers and wages: Does timing matter?* (11F0019MIE, no. 186, free) is now available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the *Our products and services page*, choose *Research papers (free)*, then *Social conditions*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Marie Drolet (613-951-5691; drolmar@statcan.ca), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division. ■

OTHER RELEASES

Electric power statistics

February 2002

Warmer-than-normal temperatures across the country led to lower net generation of electricity in February. Net generation was 49 456 gigawatt hours (GWh), down 2.1% from February 2001. Exports decreased 15.7% to 2 690 GWh, and imports fell to 2 145 GWh from 2 757 GWh.

Lower reservoir levels in Manitoba and Quebec contributed to a 0.8% decrease in net generation of hydroelectricity to 30 337 GWh. Thermal conventional generation was down 0.6% to 13 344 GWh due to higher hydro generating capability in British Columbia. Generation from nuclear sources was down 11.2% to 5 775 GWh, the result of increased hydro capability in Ontario.

Year-to-date net generation to the end of February totalled 100 745 GWh, down 2.7% from the same period in 2001. Year-to-date exports were down 7.3% to 6 121 GWh, and year-to-date imports fell 24.9% to 3 281 GWh from the same period in 2001.

Available on CANSIM: table 127-0001.

The February 2002 issue of *Electric power statistics* (57-001-XIB, \$9/\$85) will be available in May. See *How to order products*.

To order data, or for general information, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; energ@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Melanie Murray (613-951-3560; melanie.murray@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

National income and expenditure accounts, Fourth quarter 2001, Vol. 49, no. 4
Catalogue number 13-001-XIB (\$33/\$109).

National income and expenditure accounts, Fourth quarter 2001, Vol. 49, no. 4
Catalogue number 13-001-XPB (\$44/\$145).

Wives, mothers and wages: Does timing matter?, no. 186
Catalogue number 11F0019MIE02186 (free).

Cereals and oilseeds review, February 2002, Vol. 25, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-007-XIB (\$11/\$112).

Cereals and oilseeds review, February 2002, Vol. 25, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-007-XPB (\$15/\$149).

Canada's international transactions in securities, February 2002, Vol. 68, no. 2
Catalogue number 67-002-XIB (\$14/\$132).

Canada's international transactions in securities, February 2002, Vol. 68, no. 2
Catalogue number 67-002-XPB (\$18/\$176).

Science statistics, Vol. 26, no. 3
Catalogue number 88-001-XIB (\$6/\$59).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

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
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Thursday, June 3, 1997 For release at 9:30 a.m.	
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• Urban transit, 1996 Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 2.1 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.	2
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