

Summer 2024

# FAMILY ECONOMICS STUDY (FES) NEWS

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## Directors' Note

Dear FES Families,

We would like to start by thanking each and every one of you for your continued support and participation in the FES.

What a busy year! Since early 2023, nearly 10,000 families participated in the main FES, about 2,300 young adults participated in the Transition into Adulthood Study (TAS), and nearly 3,000 families participated in the Child Development Supplement (CDS)! All of us here at the FES know that our study members live busy lives and that it is not always easy to find the time to take part in the studies, but please know that your contributions are extremely valuable, not only to us, but to researchers around the world.

Starting in 2021, we began offering an online version of the interview in addition to the telephone version. We will continue to work toward improving your experience with both online and telephone versions. Regardless of which way you choose to complete your interview, please know that the top priority of our team is the protection of your confidentiality. All of the procedures used by the University of Michigan are designed to ensure that your confidentiality and anonymity are protected at each stage of the research. Very careful safeguards are built into everything we do. All employees who work for our study sign a pledge of confidentiality to adhere to these procedures and safeguards.

We are excited that the 44th wave of FES will be launched in spring 2025. We are very eager to hear from all of our families so we can understand how recent changes in the world have affected you and your family. We will also launch supplemental studies later in 2025 for eligible individuals and families. Updated information can be found on the FES website: <https://fes.isr.umich.edu/>.

None of this would be possible without you! Whether you have been providing information to the FES since the beginning in 1968, or you are answering your first questions this year, we are so happy that you are part of America's Family Tree.

Sincerely,



Katherine McGonagle and Tom Crossley  
FES Co-Directors



<https://fes.isr.umich.edu/>



## Welcome Tom Crossley!

Tom Crossley is a new co-director of the FES. He is a Research Professor at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and has been with the study since August 2023. Professor Crossley is an economist with decades of experience across the globe with interests in economic data, survey methods, and household financial behavior.

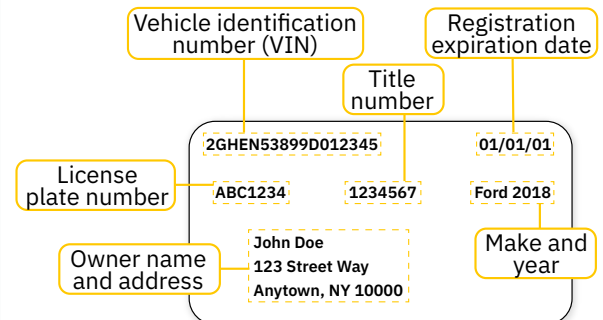
“*The FES is the longest running, most prestigious and most important study of its kind in the world. I am thrilled to be joining the FES team!* -Tom”

## Announcements

This coming year we are going to try something new! We are hoping that in the future we can skip many of the questions we ask about the vehicles you drive by collecting your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). The vehicle's VIN is a unique code that would allow us to look up your vehicle's make, model, and characteristics. For vehicles manufactured in 1981 and beyond, there is a standardized 17-digit alpha-numeric code assigned to it (before 1981 VINs may have a slightly different format). The VIN can be found on your vehicle registration, your insurance card, vehicle's title, and also on your vehicle itself — typically stamped on the dashboard on the driver's side near the windshield. In preparation for your interview in 2025, it would be very helpful if you wrote down your VIN or have a document handy with your VIN included.

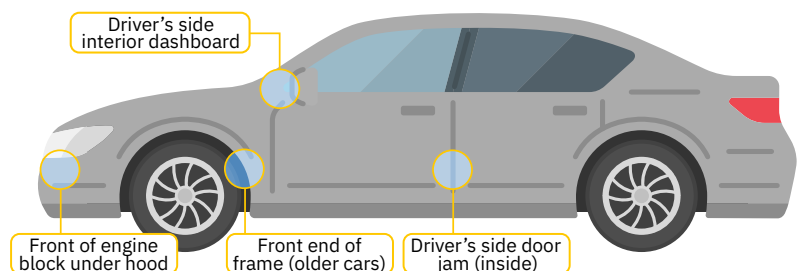
### What's on a vehicle registration card?

Information on a registration card varies by state, but often includes the following:



### Where is my VIN?

The four most common locations



# RECENT RESEARCH



## Who does the housework when mom earns more than dad?

On average, women do more housework than men, especially in families with children. Historically, this difference has been explained by the idea that men work more hours outside the home and earn more money than women, that women are expected to do more housework. FES shows a different story, though. Researchers examined 18 years of FES information and have found that the amount of housework done by moms actually increases when they earn more than her husband.

<https://myumi.ch/23xq4>

## Food Assistance Programs and Food Insecurity

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are food assistance programs funded by the federal government that help low-income families, pregnant women, infants, and young children. Researchers have used FES information to study how much impact the programs have had on those enrolled. They looked at an individual's level of food security as an adult and compared it to their parent's reports from when they were children. They found that adults who received SNAP and WIC as children were 4 times more likely to report improved food security as adults as compared to those who were eligible, but did not receive benefits, in childhood.

<https://myumi.ch/DrzZ7>



# RECENT RESEARCH (cont'd)



## Ties in Stepfamilies

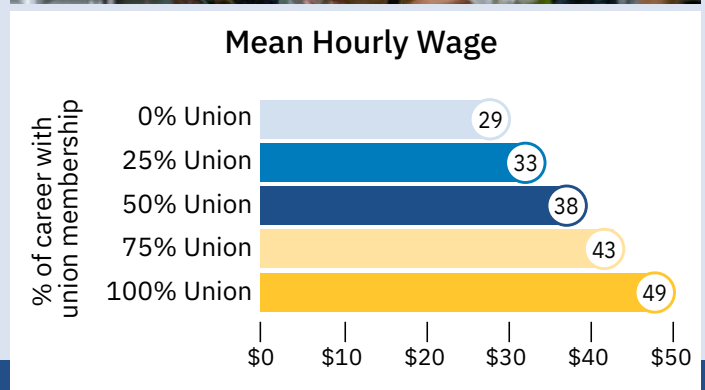
In the past, it was thought that the ties between those living in stepfamilies were weaker than those living with their biological families. New research using FES shows this may not be the case. The researchers think that instead of comparing stepfamilies to biological families, we should look at the ties in stepfamilies where the parents share at least one biological child. This research shows that in those types of stepfamilies, the ties are just as strong as those in biological families.

<https://myumi.ch/8rEQM>

## Career Earnings and Union Participation

Researchers used FES information collected over a span of 50 years to show that men who belonged to a union their entire career made over \$1 million more than men who did not belong to a union. Even being a union member for only half of their career earned them almost \$500,000 more than men who had never been in a union or had been in one less than half of their career.

<https://myumi.ch/AZ4GG>



## RECENT RESEARCH (cont'd)

### Positive Childhood Experiences and Later Life Outcomes

For a long time, scientists have been studying the negative effects adversity in childhood can have on people later in life, including problems in school, poor mental health, increased use of drugs and alcohol, and issues at work and with other people. Researchers using FES are also interested in the positive experiences a child might have, like positive adult relationships with teachers or coaches, good relationships with friends, or living in a safe neighborhood. They found that these positive experiences can protect children from competing negative experiences.



<https://myumi.ch/7PXMm>



### Time, money, and becoming a parent: The role of (grand) parental support

Because the FES interviews families across generations, it is possible to look at parents, their children, and their children's children. Researchers who are interested in how young people make the decision to become parents have used FES to see how the support of their own parents may influence that decision. They looked at the amount of time and money that young adults might receive from their parents and found that it mattered a great deal, but more for daughters than sons.

<https://myumi.ch/9gbnW>

# FIND OUT MORE!



Did you know that the FES website is updated regularly to provide information about your participation? It also includes supplemental study information, past study newsletters, and recent FES research.

**Check it out today**

<https://fes.isr.umich.edu>



## Truly Unique

What makes FES truly unique is that the children of FES families join the study when they become adults. This feature allows us to understand how families change from one generation to the next.

## 50+ years and 5,000 families

The FES began in 1968 with 5,000 families from all across the United States. Thanks to your participation, FES has been used to understand the progress of Americans over the last half century. FES tracks not only income and wealth but other important aspects of life as well like health and wellbeing.

## Data that are changing the world

The FES is directed by faculty at the University of Michigan. FES data are used by researchers, policy analysts, and teachers around the globe, and have been cited in over 7,500 publications peer-reviewed publications.

