

# Families in Transition Survey

## 2007 – 2008

Report prepared by  
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### Summary

Marriage Investors, Inc. and Youth Connections conducted a survey of participants in the Families in Transition (FIT) in order to obtain information about the issues relating to divorce. FIT is a court-ordered educational program facilitated by Youth Connections for divorcing couples with children under the age of 18. The program is designed to make divorce as smooth as possible for families. The information gathered through this research is used to tailor the FIT program as well as develop Marriage Investors' educational programs for ministers, counselors and the general public.

### Methodology

The FIT survey was conducted in 2004 and again in 2007-08. FIT participants attend a one-day program; spouses do not attend the same day. The survey was administered at the beginning of the day. The 2007-08 survey was administered over the period from November 3, 2007 to January 19, 2008, in order to obtain a minimum of 100 respondents. Only 73 respondents completed the 2004 survey.

While the program is court-ordered for persons who file for divorce in Johnson County, there are residents of other communities who attend this program. Only Johnson County residents were included in the 2007-08 survey. Fifteen percent of 2004 respondents lived outside of Johnson County, but are included in the totals for this report.

In order to fully compare results from the two surveys, the 2004 survey tool was used without any changes. Future surveys may be modified in order to ensure that data is relevant, useful and can be effectively interpreted.

### Number of Responses

100 people completed the survey in 2007-08. 73 completed the 2004 survey.

### Conflict and Affection

The first section dealt with issues of conflict and affection. Respondents rated their level of agreement to 12 statements using the following scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The scale was then converted to a numerical scale of 5 = Strongly Agree and 1 = Strongly Disagree to provide an average score. A higher score is indicative of a stronger level of agreement to the statement.

Statement	2007-08	2004
I don't like conflict and will avoid it if at all possible.	3.8	3.9
My spouse doesn't like conflict and will avoid it if at all possible,	2.7	2.9
I enjoy conflict and will sometimes pick fights just for fun.	1.6	1.8
My spouse enjoys conflict and will sometimes pick fights for fun.	2.7	2.5

The scores for these statements did not change dramatically between the 2004 and 2007-08 surveys. In general respondents felt they would avoid conflict whenever possible and did not begin arguments "just for fun." However, they rated their spouse as less likely to avoid conflict and more likely to begin

arguments “just for fun.” This appears to be a common human perception and is understandable given the emotional, and sometimes volatile, nature of divorce.

Statement	2007-08	2004
Conflict in our marriage was usually about important issues.	2.9	3.1

Again, the scores for this statement did not change dramatically between the 2004 and 2007-08 surveys. But the scores indicate that conflict was not always about issues the respondent deemed “important.” Close to half (44%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while an additional 17% were neutral.

Statement	2007-08	2004
When my spouse and I had disagreements, we would not speak to each other for days.	2.4	2.6
When my spouse and I had disagreements, we would typically end up in a shouting match.	3.2	3.4
When my spouse and I had disagreements, we would talk about the situation and work together towards a solution.	2.3	2.6

Again, the scores for this statement did not change dramatically between the 2004 and 2007-08 surveys. Respondents generally indicated that disagreements did not result in not speaking to each other, but were more likely to “end up in a shouting match,” with 47% rating this statement as “Agree” or “Strong Agree.”

Statement	2007-08	2004
I never resorted to physical violence during our disagreements.	4.2	3.8
My spouse never resorted to physical violence during our disagreements.	3.7	3.3

There was a decrease in physical violence by both respondents and their spouses from 2004 to 2007-08, however there is still a significant difference between respondents and their spouses. Seventy-eight percent of respondents in 2007-08 agreed or strongly agreed that they never resorted to physical violence, but only 62% agreed or strongly agreed that their spouse did not.

Statement	2007-08	2004
I always tried to talk out our problems, but my spouse wouldn’t listen to me.	3.6	3.5

The scores for this statement did not change dramatically between the 2004 and 2007-08 surveys. This again indicates a disconnection between the respondent’s willingness to work on solutions compared to their perception that their spouses were not so willing.

Statement	2007-08	2004
Over the course of our marriage, I was happy with the amount of affection I received from my spouse.	2.2	2.9

Fewer respondents agreed with this statement in 2007-08 than they did in 2004, indicating a larger degree of dissatisfaction with affection. Only 16% of respondents in 2007-08 agreed or strongly agreed that he/she was satisfied with the amount of affection compared with 24% in 2004.

### Causes of Marital Conflict

The next section of the survey dealt with six areas of potential marital conflict and the amount of discussion the couples had about these areas prior to marriage. Respondents rated their level of agreement to the amount of conflict each of the issues caused, using the following scale: Extensive Conflict, Moderate Conflict, Slight Conflict, and No Conflict. The scale was then converted to a

numerical scale of 4 = Extensive Conflict and 1 = No Conflict to provide an average score. A higher score is indicative of a high level of conflict regarding the issue.

Question	2007-08	2004
Number of children we would have.	1.4	1.5
Discipline for our children.	2.4	2.3
Which of us would work	1.8	1.6
Number of hours I/spouse would work	2.0	1.9
Frequency of religious activities	1.6	1.5
Spending/saving habits for money	3.1	2.9

There was little change between the scores from 2007-08 and those from 2004. Finances, Parenting and Work were the three issues which resulted in the most conflict. Religion and the number of children resulted in less conflict.

**Prior to your marriage, did you discuss your expectations of the issues listed in the previous question?**

	2007-08	2004
We discussed our expectations about all these issues.	15%	14%
We discussed our expectations about most of these issues.	29%	29%
We discussed our expectations of about half of these issues	9%	14%
We discussed our expectations about one or two of these issues.	19%	21%
We did not discuss our expectations about any of these issues.	26%	21%
No Response	2%	1%

More than one quarter (26%) of respondents to the 2007-08 survey did not discuss any of the potential areas of conflict prior to their marriage, up from 21% in 2004. Approximately the same percentage in both surveys (43% to 44%) discussed their expectations about most or all of these issues. However, we do not know which issues were discussed. It would be helpful to know which of these issues were discussed prior to marriage, compared to the level of conflict the issue created in the marriage.

**Approximately how many hours during a typical week did you and your spouse spend together?**

Respondents were not given a specific number of hours or range of hours to answer this question. They were free to enter any number of hours. These ranged from 0 to 100 in 2007-08 and from 0 to 35 in 2004. “Other” responses in 2007-08 included: “too many,” “not enough” or “every night and weekend.”

	2007-08	2004
5 or Less	17%	44%
6-10	10%	16%
11-20	23%	15%
21-30	12%	4%
31-40	13%	4%
41-50	3%	0%
51-60	3%	0%
61-70	2%	0%
71-80	1%	0%
81-90	0%	0%
91-100	1%	0%
Other	10%	1%
No Response	6%	15%

Respondents to the 2007-08 survey reported spending more time together than those in the 2004 survey. The average number of hours spent together from the 2007-08 survey was 21 hours, compared with almost 9 hours in 2004.

There are 168 hours in a week. If you subtract a generous eight hours per day for sleep (56 hours) and another 45 hours for work/commuting (9 hours per weekday), there are still 112 “leisure” hours per week. This assumes that at least one spouse worked and that they did not work together.

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents to the 2007-08 survey reported that they spent less than 41 hours per week with their spouse – approximately one-third of available “leisure” hours. More than 80% of respondents to the 2004 survey reported they spent less than 41 hours per week with their spouse. What we do not know from these statistics is if the amount of time spent with spouses was considered appropriate or adequate, or if it contributed to the conflicts in the marriage.

### Demographic Information

Routine demographic information was gathered in both surveys.

#### County of Residence

All persons surveyed in 2007-08 were Johnson County residents. Of the 73 persons surveyed in 2004, 62 resided in Johnson County; there were 8 Marion County residents and 1 Shelby County resident who were included in the survey.

#### If Johnson County, what township?

Township	2007-08	2004
Blue River	3%	3%
Clark	4%	4%
Franklin	17%	8%
Hensley	2%	1%
Needham	2%	7%
Nineveh	2%	0%
Pleasant	24%	18%
Union	2%	0%
White River	30%	21%
No Response/Other	4%	38%

For 2007-08 respondents, the township of residence roughly follows the county’s population centers. The two townships which encompass the city of Greenwood (as well as Bartersville and portions of Whiteland and New Whiteland) account for 54% of survey respondents, while the two Greenwood zip codes account for 31% of the county’s population. The three townships with a Franklin zip account for 21% of the 2007-08 respondents and 17% of the county’s population. Rather than requesting residence by township, residence by zip code would be more indicative of how respondents reflect the county’s population.

#### Gender

In both years, women comprised the majority of respondents.

	2007-08	2004
Male	41%	46%
Female	59%	54%

### Age of Respondent

62% of respondents in 2007-08, and 56% in 2004, were between the ages of 25 and 39. Approximately 30% each year were between the ages of 40 and 49. There were no respondents 60 years or older, which is appropriate for the participants in the FIT program (those with children under the age of 18). 66% of respondents' spouses in 2007-08, and 51% in 2004, were between the ages of 25 and 39. In 2007-08 28% were between the ages of 40 and 49, compared with 2004, with 35% between 40 and 49. There were no spouses 55 years or older.

	2007-08	2004
15-19	0%	0%
20-24	3%	10%
25-29	23%	14%
30-34	18%	19%
35-39	21%	23%
40-44	18%	26%
45-49	12%	5%
50-54	4%	1%
55-59	0%	1%
No Response	1%	0%

### Age of Spouse

	2007-08	2004
15-19	0%	0%
20-24	3%	7%
25-29	21%	12%
30-34	18%	23%
35-39	27%	16%
40-44	18%	27%
45-49	10%	8%
50-54	2%	0%
No Response	1%	5%

### Current length of this marriage

Fifty percent of respondents in 2007-08 reported being married for 10 or fewer years, compared with 57% percent in 2004. There were no marriages lasting more than 30 years, which is appropriate for the participants in the FIT program (those with children under the age of 18).

	2007-08	2004
0-5 years	25%	28%
6-10 years	25%	29%
11-15 years	21%	24%
16-20 years	22%	15%
21-25 years	6%	0%
26-30 years	1%	4%
31-35 years	0%	0%
Over 36 years	0%	0%

**Is this your first divorce?**

Approximately three-quarters of respondents in both surveys had not been divorced prior to this dissolution.

	2007-08	2004
Yes	73%	74%
No	27%	26%

**Number of children you and your spouse are legal guardians of.**

The majority of respondents in 2007-08 (52%) had two children, compared with only 32% in 2004.

	2007-08	2004
One	22%	33%
Two	52%	32%
Three	17%	22%
Four	7%	7%
Five	1%	0%
No Response	1%	7%

**Number of children you brought into this marriage.**

Approximately 20% of respondents in both surveys brought one child into the marriage. There was a significant percentage of respondents answering “no response” to this statement both about themselves and their spouse. This is likely due to the fact that the survey did not offer a “zero” option. It appears that spouses brought fewer children into the marriage than respondents. This could be due to the higher percentage of women respondents in both surveys.

	2007-08	2004
One	22%	19%
Two	17%	8%
Three	2%	4%
Four	2%	0%
Five	0%	0%
No Response	57%	68%

**Number of children your spouse brought into this marriage.**

	2007-08	2004
One	16%	16%
Two	18%	8%
Three	3%	0%
Four	2%	1%
Five	0%	0%
No Response	61%	74%

**Your level of education**

Slightly less than one-third (31%) of respondents had at least a high school diploma or equivalent in 2007-08, compared with 28% in 2004. There was also a significant drop in the number of respondents without a high school degree from 2004 to 2007-08 and a higher percentage who completed college.

While respondents were more likely to have a high school diploma in 2007-08, fewer spouses were reported to have that level of education. However, there was also a significant increase in the number of spouses who completed college.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Some High School	6%	15%
High School Diploma	26%	14%
GED	5%	4%
Associate's Degree	15%	15%
Some College	28%	39%
Bachelor's Degree	12%	9%
Master's Degree	5%	4%
Doctorate	1%	0%
No Response	2%	0%

### **Spouse's level of education**

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Some High School	12%	8%
High School Diploma	32%	36%
GED	7%	7%
Associate's Degree	9%	15%
Some College	23%	26%
Bachelor's Degree	14%	5%
Master's Degree	1%	1%
Doctorate	1%	0%
No Response	1%	1%

### **Current total family income**

One-third of respondents reported an annual family income of more than \$90,000, with 57% reporting income of between \$30,000 and \$89,999.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Under \$15,000	1%	3%
\$15,000-29,999	4%	10%
\$30,000-44,999	19%	14%
\$45,000-59,999	15%	21%
\$60,000-74,999	10%	16%
\$75,000-89,999	13%	15%
\$90,000+	33%	19%
No Response	5%	3%

**Your personal contribution to family income**

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Under \$15,000	20%	11%
\$15,000-29,999	13%	19%
\$30,000-44,999	23%	36%
\$45,000-59,999	17%	12%
\$60,000-74,999	6%	4%
\$75,000-89,999	8%	8%
\$90,000+	8%	7%
No Response	5%	3%

**Your spouse's contribution to family income**

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Under \$15,000	24%	19%
\$15,000-29,999	14%	19%
\$30,000-44,999	21%	30%
\$45,000-59,999	15%	11%
\$60,000-74,999	7%	4%
\$75,000-89,999	6%	4%
\$90,000+	8%	1%
No Response	5%	11%

**Were your parents divorced?**

There was a decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported being a "child of divorce" in 2007-08 compared with 2004. However, there was an increase in the percentage of spouses' who were.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Yes	47%	41%
No	53%	59%

**Were your spouse's parents divorced?**

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Yes	57%	48%
No	43%	52%

**How long had you and your spouse been together as a couple prior to marriage?**

Most couples (59% in 2007-08 and 55% in 2004) had been together one to three years prior to marriage. However, due to the way the question was phrased, we do not know how many couples lived together prior to marriage.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Less than 1 year	14%	26%
1-2 years	46%	35%
2-3 years	13%	20%
3-4 years	7%	11%
4-5 years	8%	4%
5 years +	12%	4%

**Did you attend pre-marital counseling prior to this marriage?**

More respondents reported receiving pre-marital counseling in the 2007-08 survey, but the majority (57%) still did not receive counseling.

	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2004</b>
Yes	43%	29%
No	57%	71%