

# Are Unmarried Cohabiting Parents as Effective as Married Ones?

In recent years, it has become commonplace for young couples to live together and start a family before officially entering their names on the marriage register. But according to a recent chart compiled by [Forbes](#), American couples are not the only ones choosing the cohabitating form of parenthood:

*“In countries around the world, increasing numbers of parents are having children without getting married. [OECD research](#) has shown that in the United States, 2.9 percent of children lived with unmarried parents in 2005, a rate that increased slightly to 4.2 percent in 2014. Out of all countries included in the research, Estonia has the highest rate of children living with cohabiting parents, just under 31 percent, up from 18 percent in 2005.”*



Such massive increases may be a problem, because as research shows, children who live in cohabiting homes:

- Experience more physical, sexual, and emotional [abuse](#).
- Exhibit worse social [behavior](#) and lower confidence levels.
- Enjoy less [life stability](#) as families are more prone to break-ups.
- Encounter greater [poverty](#) both as children and potentially as adults, as children from cohabiting families are more likely to drop out of school and thus have lower life earnings.

Modern society has come to accept cohabitation out of a desire to be open-minded. But in our eagerness to be open-minded, have we forgotten the well-being of the children? In our post-sexual revolution world, is it at all practical to encourage policies which support children by discouraging cohabitation prior to marriage?

*Image Credit: Gareth Beynon [bit.ly/liowB8m](http://bit.ly/liowB8m)*