One of our major goals is to assess how people feel about having children. Whether their intention is to be childless or have three children, we want to understand whether it is easy or difficult for them to reach their goals and the consequences for them and their partners. We have now interviewed 1,000 women and about 200 of their partners.

We asked women to rate the importance of three life goals. For the sample as a whole, raising children and having a family was far more important than being successful in work, or having leisure time: 76% rated raising children as very important, 51% said being successful at work was very important, and 44% said leisure time was very important. Raising children was very important at all ages. Women who have no children told a different story though: 60% of them said time to pursue their leisure interests was very important and only 40% said raising a family was important.

Approximately one quarter of our sample has no biological children. These women tend to be younger than average and are less likely to be married. About 40% of the women with no biological children expect that they will never bear children, but only half of them said this is because they don't actually want any children. Approximately 20% of our biological parents and 15% of the biologically childless have adopted or stepchildren. Many respondents also have parenting experiences through foster care programs or caring for children of friends and relatives.

We have a special interest in whether men and women have the same responses to fertility decisions. We do not have enough male interviews yet to see what men think, but women report that their partners agree with them on issues of future fertility plans and on the importance of children. Nearly half of the married women said it was very important for their husbands to have children.

We asked a lot of questions about pregnancies and fertility-related health problems. Many of our respondents had had some fertility-related problems:

- 31% reported a miscarriage and 2% had had a stillbirth. 9% had 2 or more miscarriages
- 22% reported that, on at least one occasion, they had tried to get pregnant for more than a year without success
- 25% think of themselves as someone who has had or will have problems getting pregnant
- 8% have health problems that would prevent additional pregnancies
- 7% have sought medical help to help them get pregnant