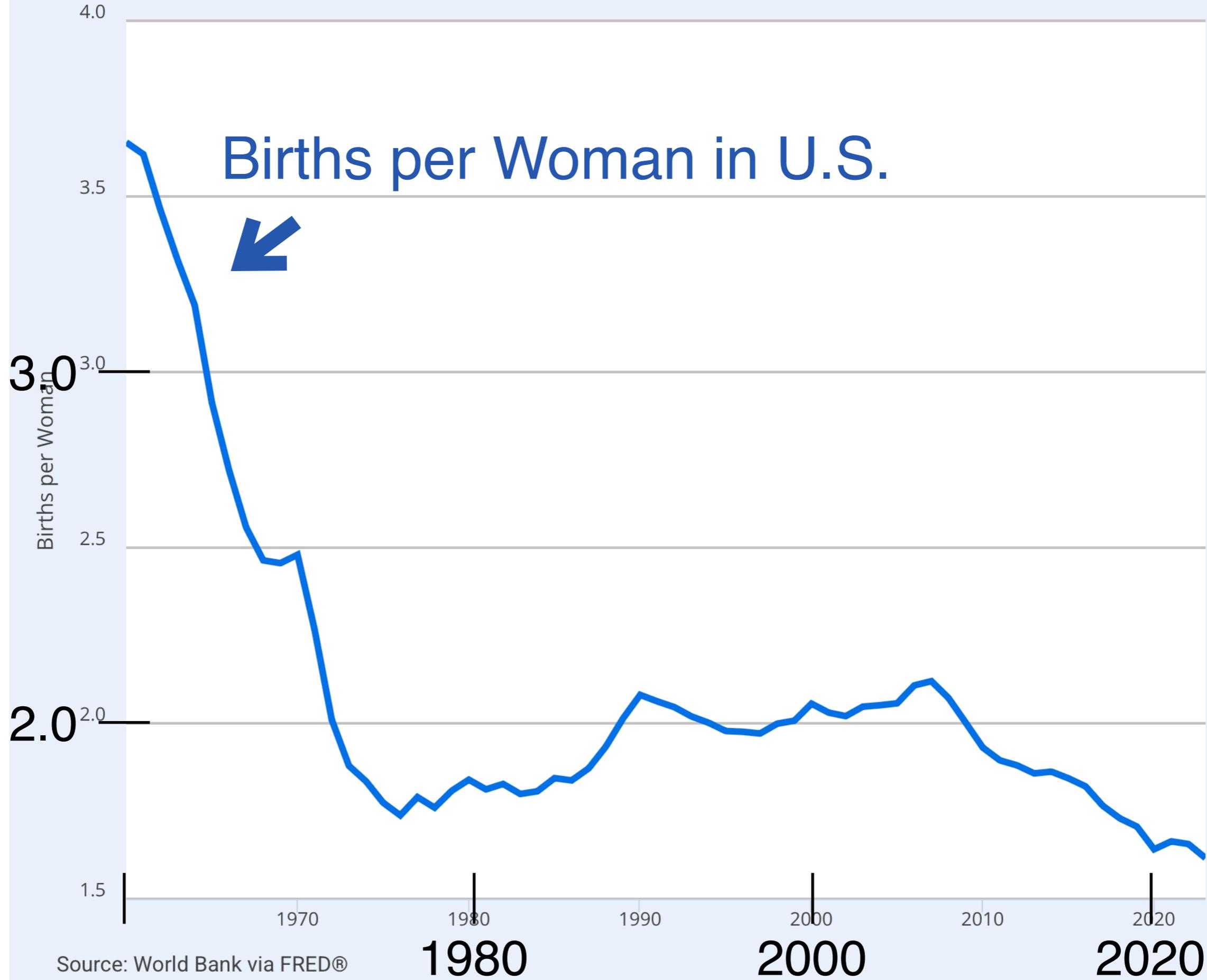


Affordable Children



Source: World Bank via FRED®



FAMILY

How the cost of raising a child has skyrocketed over 25 years

Starting a family is a big decision--one that younger generations are waiting longer to make.

Posted 9:01 a.m. Oct 14, 2023 - Updated 8:07 a.m. Oct 16, 2023



Western & Southern Financial Group

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How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Child?

Raising a child is a rewarding journey but comes with significant financial responsibilities. The average 18-year cost for a child born in 2023 is nearly \$375,000.¹ Learn more about the breakdown of childcare expenses and get some practical tips for managing your family's finances.

Updated July 8, 2025

Family

How much it costs to raise a child

The cost of raising a child varies by state, by as much as \$439,000.

By [Bethany Braun-Silva](#)

April 7, 2025, 3:02 AM

How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Child?

Part of our [Finance Fundamentals](#) series

NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL | SEP 19, 2025





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The U.S. fertility rate has fallen to about 1.6 children per woman, which is too low to keep the population constant. Recent news reports tell us it costs around \$300,000 to \$400,000 to raise each child to age 18. College is extra. It's not surprising that many Americans feel they can't afford children.

There are many factors that contribute to the expense of raising children. I want to focus on education.

In the past, parents expected their children to support them in their old age. Today we have Social Security plus 401K, IRA, and various other retirement accounts. These accounts invest in our economy through assets such as stocks, bonds, and real estate. They depend on a steady supply of well educated young workers to keep the economy running strong.

So all of us depend on all the children in our country to keep our retirement accounts in good shape. More education corresponds to more productivity. So the more we invest in giving American children a good education, the better the returns we can expect from our retirement plans.

Public education covers the minimum requirements for an educated workforce, but many parents pay for a lot more, starting at a very early age. Good quality day care for young children gives them a head start in school, as well as allowing mothers to work. For school age children, parents often pay for supplemental education in music, sports, foreign language, and even computer skills.

We could expand the public school system to provide these supplemental education programs as pre-school, after school, or summer options. This would raise the long-term earning potential of low income children. In addition it would be a good first step to making children affordable.