

United States

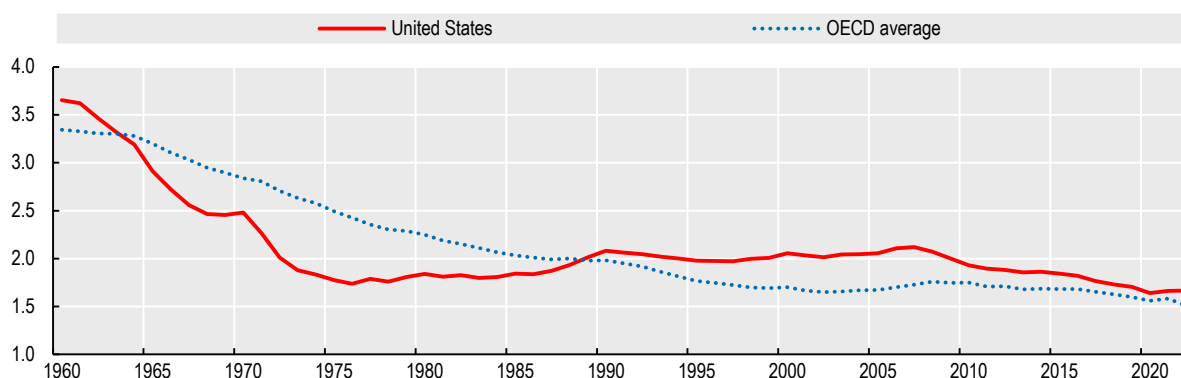
Spotlight on fertility trends

In 2022, 3 661 220 babies were born in the United States, corresponding to a total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.67 children per woman, above the OECD average of 1.51.

Across the OECD on average, the TFR steadily declined from 1960 until 2002. There was a small fertility rebound in the 2000s until 2008, upon which the TFR dropped to an all-time low of 1.5 in 2022. In the United States the TFR halved from over 3.5 children per woman in 1965, to 1.7 in 1976, but the TFR was close to 2 children per woman over the 1990-2010 period. However, afterwards the TFR has fallen, but it remains above the OECD average.

Figure 1. Fertility rates in the United States fell rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, but have been above the OECD average since the early 1990s.

Number of children per woman aged 15 to 49, United States and OECD average, 1960 to 2022



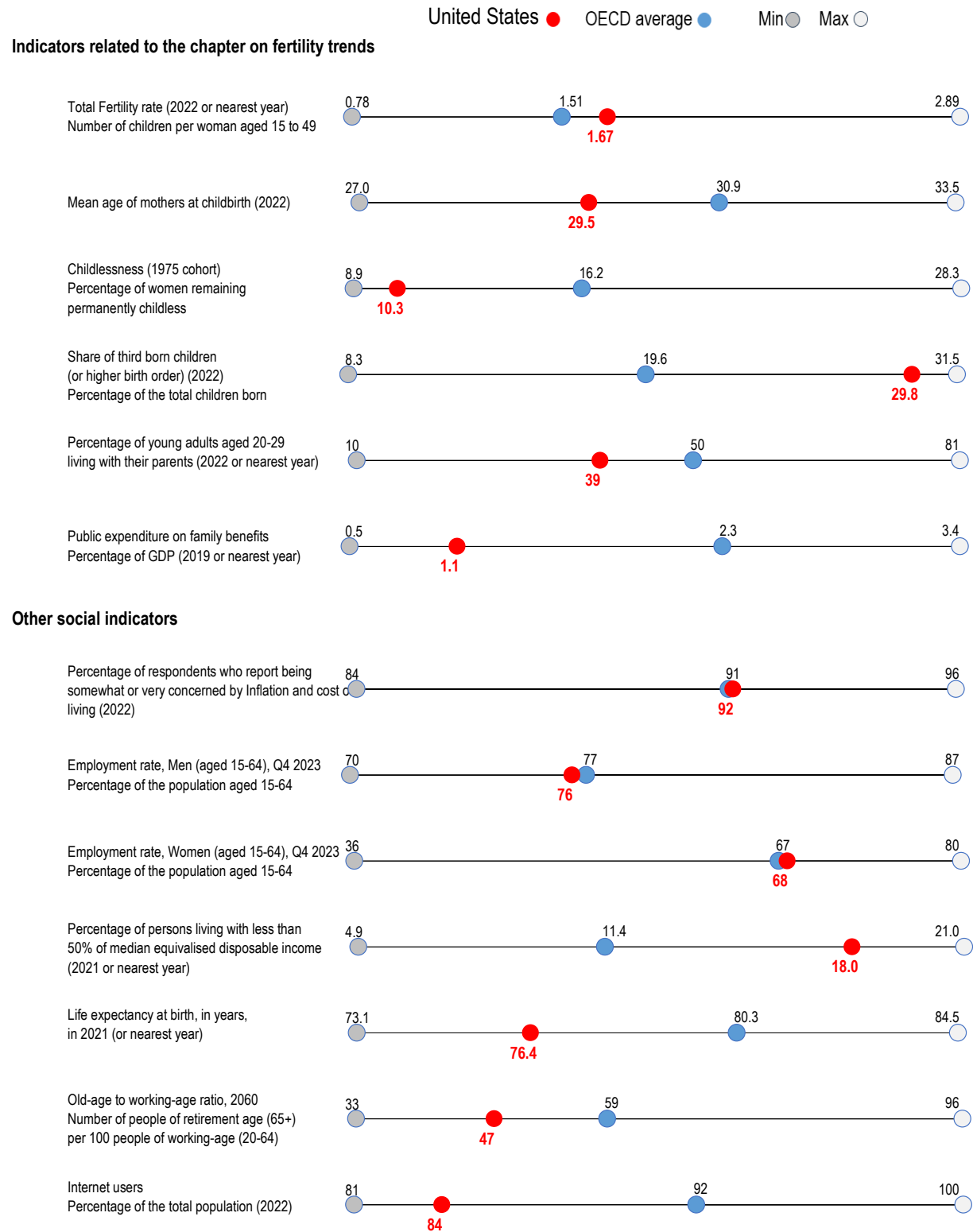
Source: Figure 1.1 in OECD (2024), *Society at a Glance 2024*, <https://stat.link/vxdinc>.

Many factors affect fertility choices, including employment of both men and women, unemployment, financial support for families (e.g. paid parental leave and childcare supports) and housing costs (Figure 1.7, <https://stat.link/8zu7m3> and Figure 1.14, <https://stat.link/ois3k8>). However other factors such as (financial) uncertainty as well as norms and attitudes also play a role. In many OECD countries, the desire to establish oneself in labour and housing markets have contributed to a delay of childbearing. In the United States, the mean age of mothers at childbirth rose from 27.4 years in 2000 to 29.5 years in 2022, around one and a half years below the OECD on average (Figure 1.5, <https://stat.link/163n2d>).

The fall in TFRs is related to women having fewer children and/or none at all. Childlessness has been on the rise across the OECD. However, after the increase in permanent childlessness from 6% for women born in 1935 to around 16% for women born in 1955, the United States bucks the trend as childlessness declined to around 10% for women born in 1975 (Figure 1.3, <https://stat.link/mvkw3b>).

How does the United States compare?

Selection of indicators related to the chapter on fertility trends and other social indicators



Source: OECD (2024), *Society at a Glance 2024*, <https://stat.link/vxdInc>.