

FAMILY TRENDS REPORT

JULY 2024

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B. INTRODUCTION

Strong and stable families are the bedrock of our society. As a society, we strive to make Singapore a place where families can grow and thrive at every stage, and in every season of life – from getting married, having children, in their golden years, and even when facing challenges. In 2022, the Government released the “A Singapore Made For Families 2025” plan, which reflected our whole-of-society commitment to a family-friendly society.

This Family Trends Report provides key annual updates on Singapore’s family trends as we work towards achieving a Singapore Made For Families. We have seen encouraging trends that demonstrate our whole-of-society commitment towards families, such as increasingly stable marriage cohorts, and moderate to high family resilience. The key trends are:

Lower number of marriages.

There were slightly fewer marriages in 2023, 3.7% lower than the record high of marriages registered in 2022. The slightly fewer marriages in 2023 was driven by fewer civil marriages of males aged 25 to 34 and females aged 20 to 29 and fewer Muslim marriages of those aged 20 to 29. Based on a 5-year moving average which helps to smooth out year-on-year fluctuations and provide clearer direction of the trend, we observed that the moving average trend for marriages is stable overall.

Having two children remains most common for ever-married resident females.

Among ever-married resident females aged 40 to 49 years, those with two children continued to form the largest group.

More fathers are involved in caring for their children and more employers and co-workers are also offering flexibility to help working parents balance their childcare needs with their career aspirations.

The take-up rates of Government-Paid Paternity Leave increased from 47% for children born in 2016 to 53% for children born in 2021. The number of employees who have access to flexible work arrangements that they required increased over the past ten years, from 65.9% in 2014 to 84.1% in 2022.

Greater access to affordable and quality preschools, and support for young children with developmental needs.

The number of full-day infant care places nearly tripled and the number of childcare places more than doubled over the past ten years to cater to growing demand. The industry median fee and out-of-pocket expenses for both infant care and childcare for Singapore Citizen children also decreased. With more dual-income families and greater recognition of the importance of early childhood care and education, the enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 4 years increased over the years from 75% in 2013 to 90% in 2023. For young children with developmental needs, the number of referrals for medium to high levels of early intervention support has increased due to greater parental awareness and earlier detection. The total number of children served in Early Intervention (EI) programmes more than doubled, from 3,824 in 2015 to 9,850 in 2023.

Increased marriage stability in more recent cohorts of marriages.

Marriage dissolution rates before the 10th marriage anniversary fell among 2006 – 2012 marriage cohorts compared to the 2005 cohort, which signifies greater marriage stability among recent cohorts of married couples. The most significant improvement was seen in the fall in dissolution rates for Muslim marriages.

Family remains the key support for seniors.

The majority of survey respondents aged 65 years old and above will turn to their families when they need physical support such as caregiving or assistance with running errands. Findings also showed that most respondents aged 15 to 64 years old agreed that it is their responsibility to take care of their parents regardless of their parents’ qualities and faults.

Families are resilient and have the capacity to tide through challenges together.

The majority of families reported moderate to high family resilience scores. The majority of survey respondents also reported having a close-knit family and that they maintained close ties with family members outside of their immediate family.

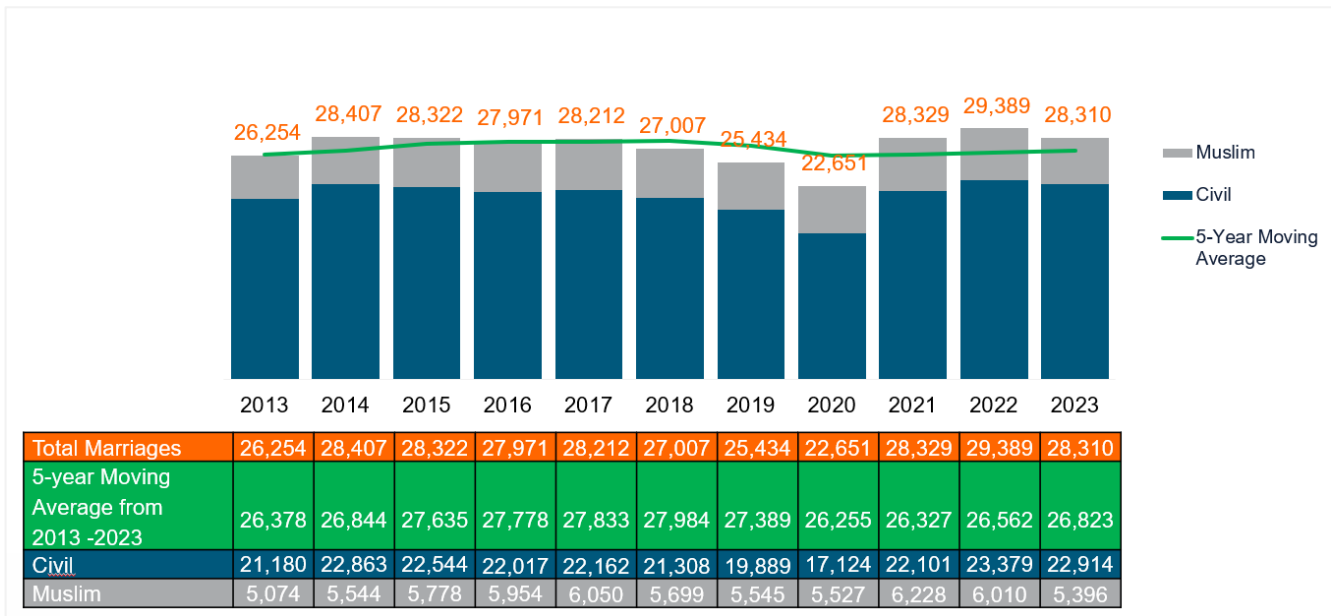
C. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY FORMATION

C1. MARRIAGES

Slightly fewer marriages in 2023...

There were 28,310 marriages registered in 2023, 3.7% lower than the record high of 29,389 marriages registered in 2022 (Chart 1). Based on a 5-year moving average which helps to smooth out year-on-year fluctuations¹ and provide a clearer direction of the trend, we observed that the moving average trend for marriages is stable overall.

Chart 1: Total Marriages Registered



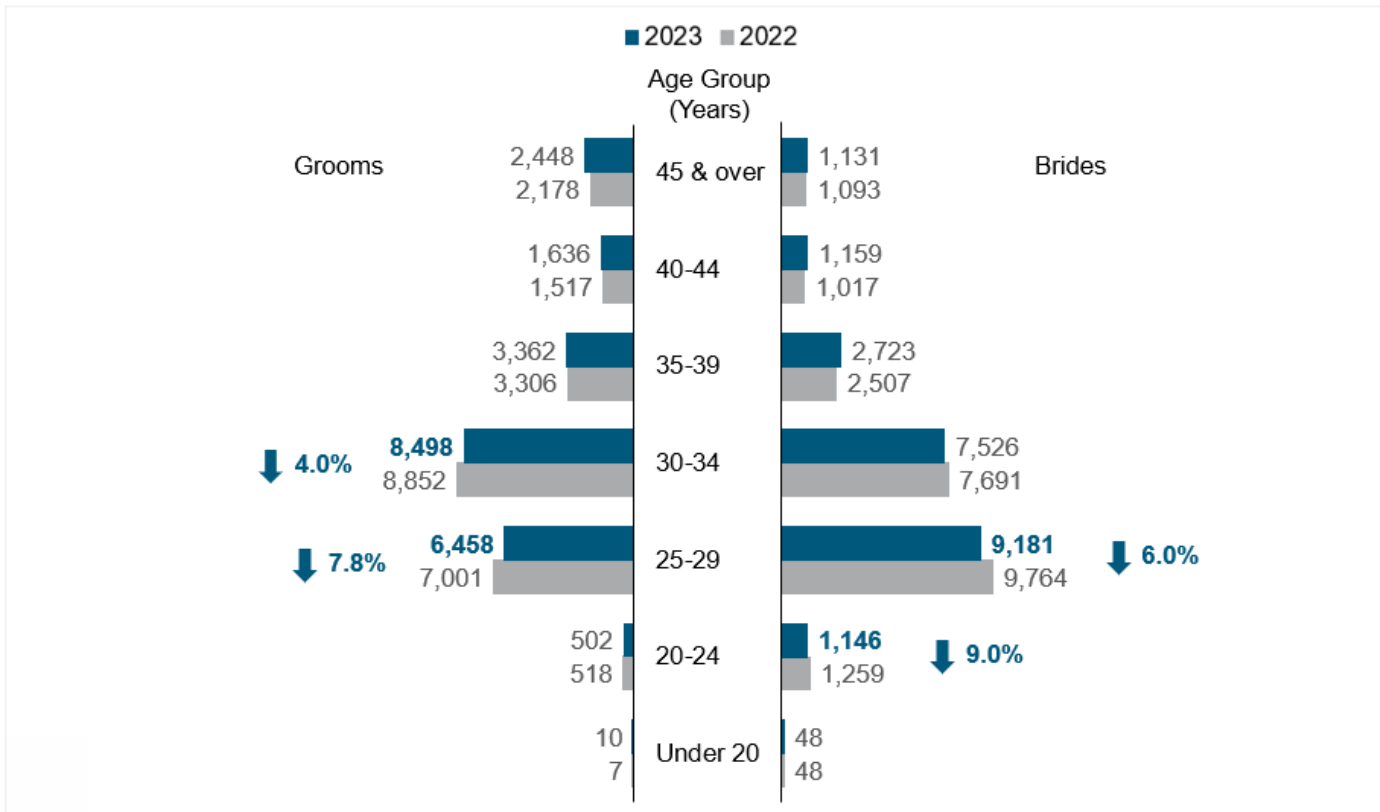
Source: Department of Statistics (DOS)

¹ Fluctuations observed in 2020 and subsequent increases in 2021 and 2022 were because of disruptions in marriage plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

... driven by fewer civil marriages of males 25 – 34 and females 20 – 29...

The decline in civil² marriages was mainly due to the larger fall in marriages involving grooms aged 25 – 34 and brides aged 20 – 29 (Chart 2). Compared to 2022, the number of civil marriages involving grooms aged 25 – 29 and 30 – 34 decreased by 7.8% and 4.0% respectively in 2023. The number of civil marriages involving brides aged 20 – 24 and 25 – 29 decreased by 9.0% and 6.0% respectively in 2023 as compared to 2022.

Chart 2: Civil Marriages by Age Group of Grooms and Brides



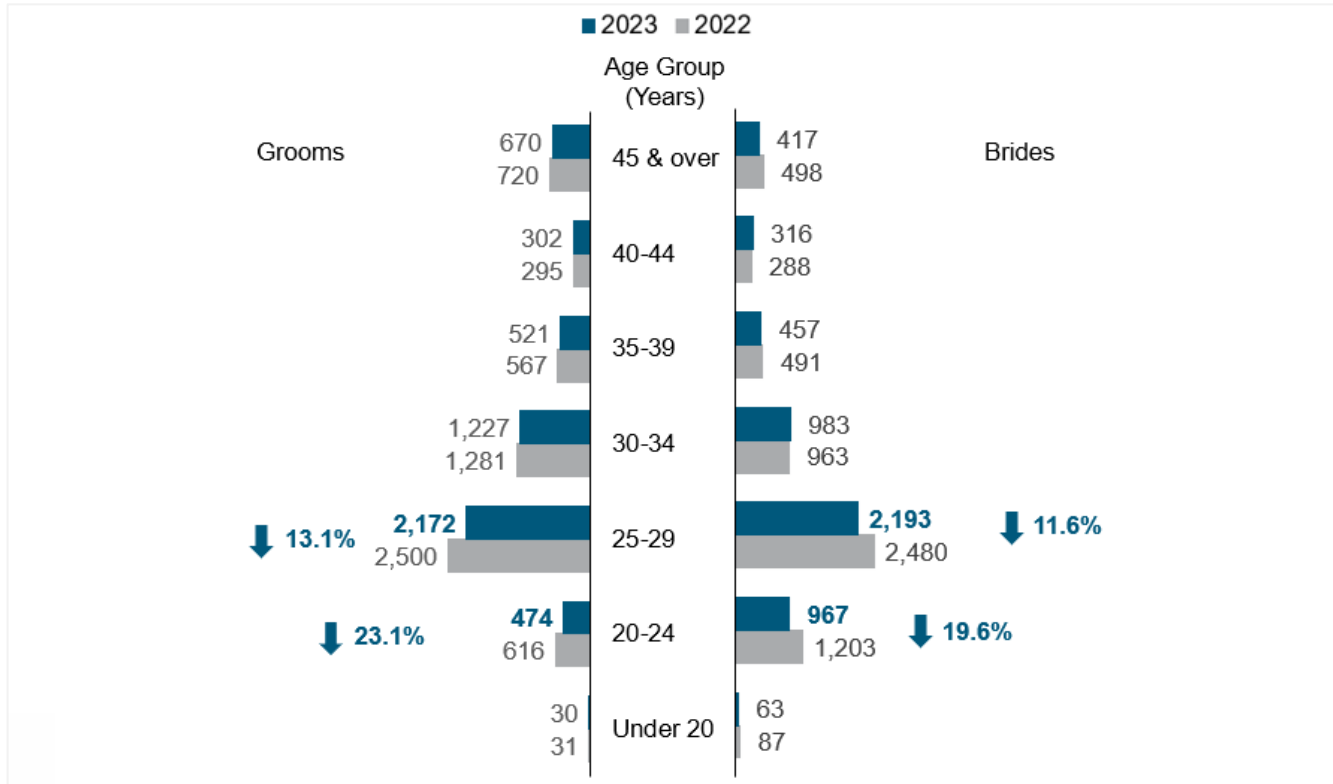
Source: DOS

² Civil marriages refer to marriages registered under the Women's Charter.

... and fewer Muslim marriages of those aged 20 – 29

The decline in Muslim³ marriages was mainly due to the fall in marriages involving grooms and brides aged 20 – 29 (Chart 3). Compared to 2022, the number of Muslim marriages involving grooms aged 20 – 24 and 25 – 29 decreased by 23.1% and 13.1% respectively in 2023. The number of Muslim marriages involving brides aged 20 – 24 and 25 – 29 decreased by 19.6% and 11.6% respectively in 2023 as compared to 2022.

Chart 3: Muslim Marriages by Age Group of Grooms and Brides



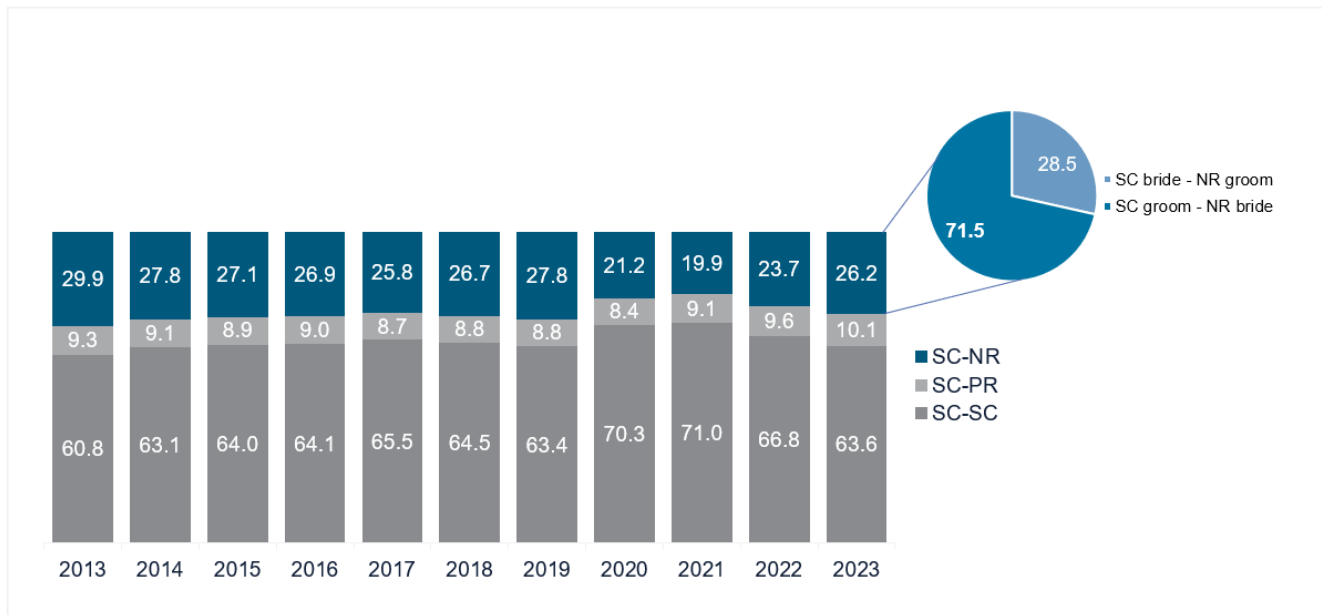
Source: DOS

³ Muslim marriages refer to marriages registered under the Administration of Muslim Law Act.

About 1 in 4 citizen marriages were with a Non-Resident (NR)

Over the last ten years, about 1 in 4 citizen marriages were between a Singapore Citizen (SC) and a NR⁴ (Chart 4). Among SC-NR marriages in 2023, 71.5% were between a SC groom and NR bride.

Chart 4: Citizen Marriages by Residential Status of Couple (Per Cent)



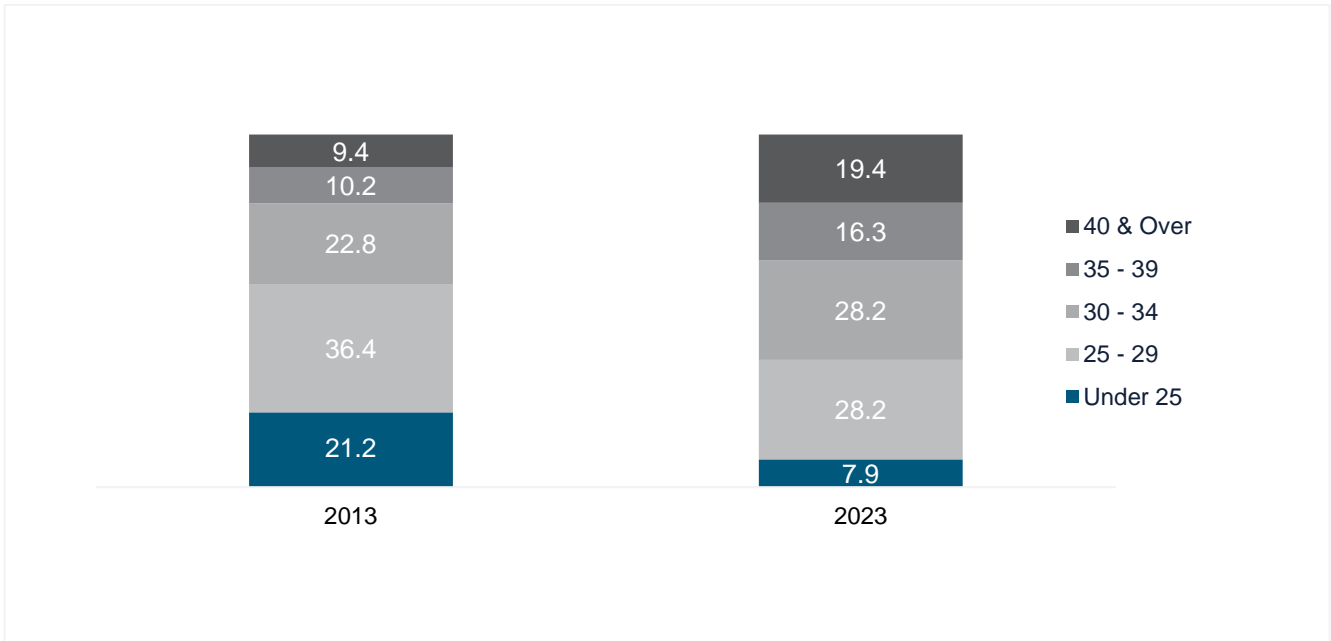
Source: DOS

Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

⁴ Refers to non-Singapore Citizen and non-Permanent Resident

NR brides were older and had higher educational qualifications in 2023 compared to 2013. The proportion of NR brides aged below 25 decreased from 21.2% in 2013 to 7.9% in 2023 (Chart 5). The proportion of NR brides with a degree increased from 30.9% in 2013 to 38.0% in 2023 (Chart 6).

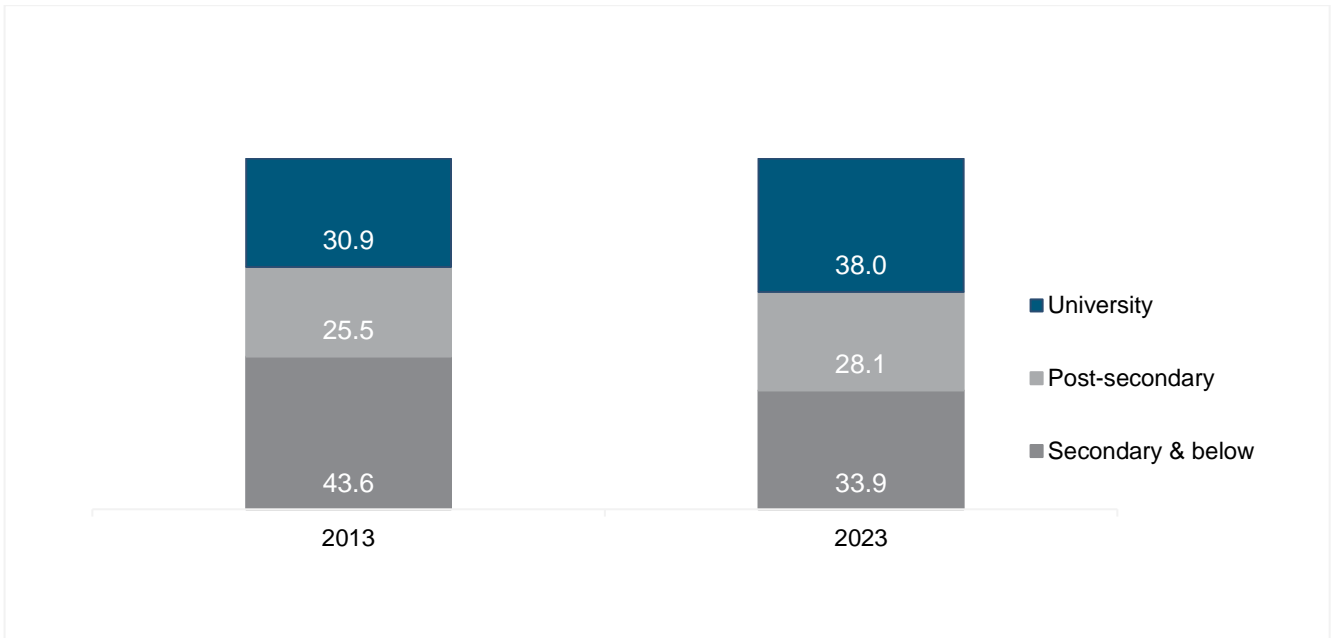
Chart 5: Age Group of NR Brides Married to SC Grooms (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Chart 6: Educational Qualification Attained of NR Brides Married to SC Grooms (Per Cent)

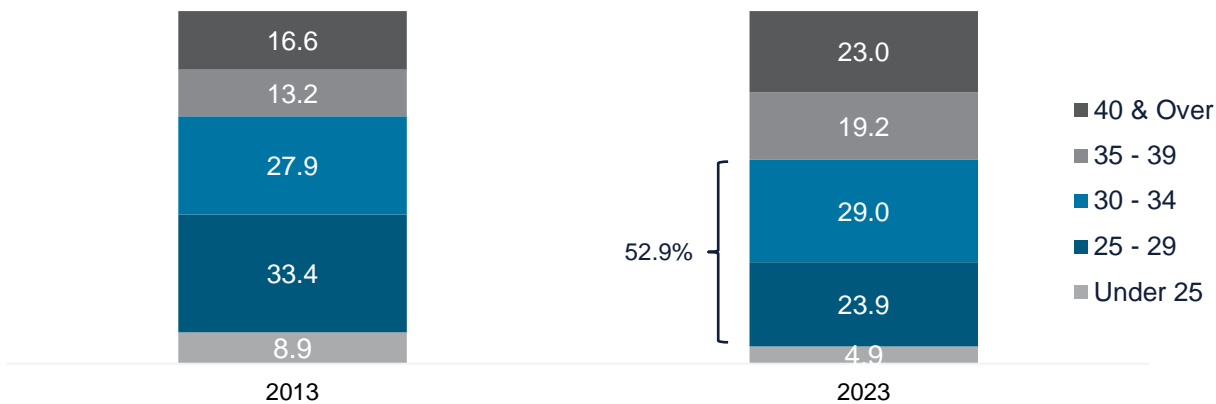


Source: DOS

Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

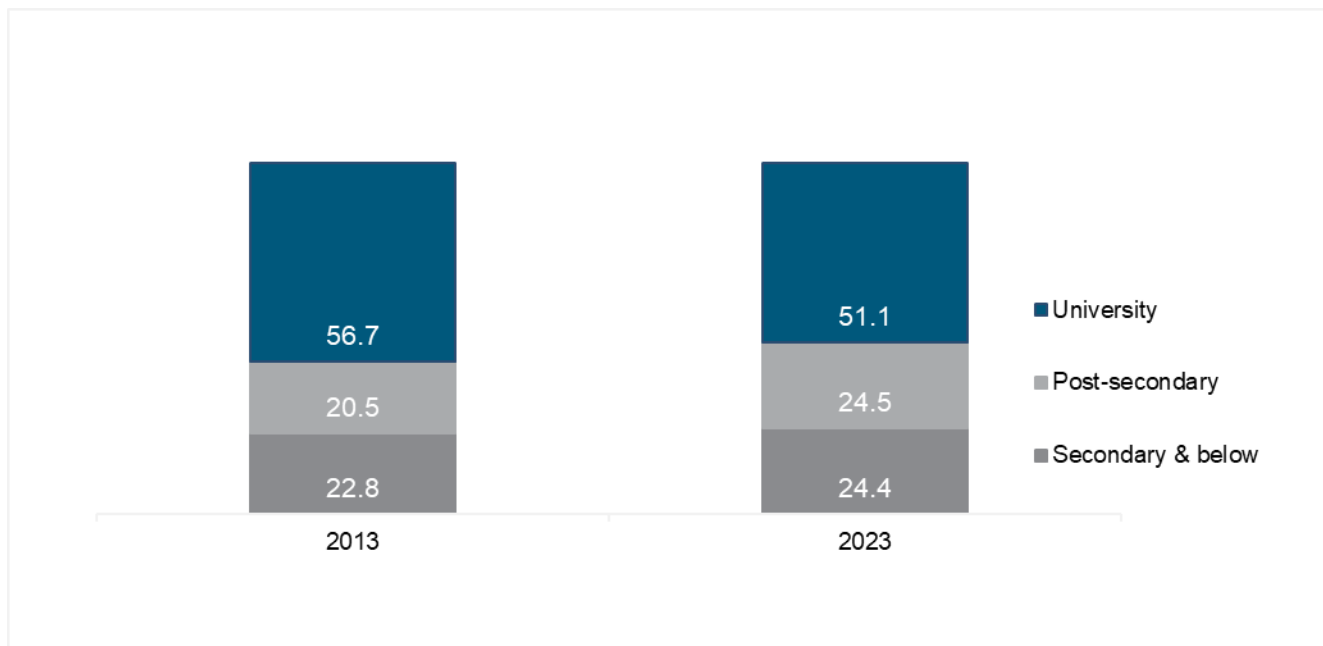
As for NR grooms, 52.9% were aged 25 – 34 in 2023 (Chart 7). Half of the NR grooms (51.1%) were also degree holders (Chart 8).

Chart 7: Age Group of NR Grooms Married to SC Brides (Per Cent)



Source: DOS
 Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Chart 8: Educational Qualification Attained of NR Grooms Married to SC Brides (Per Cent)

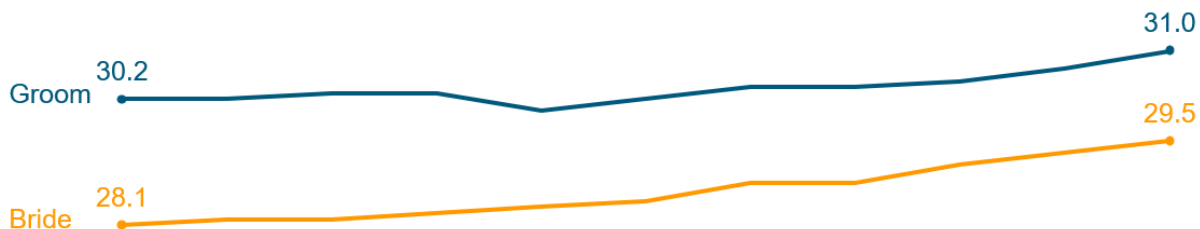


Source: DOS
 Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Median age at first marriage rose

The median age at first marriage for grooms increased from 30.2 years in 2013 to 31.0 years in 2023 (Chart 9). The median age at first marriage for brides also increased from 28.1 years in 2013 to 29.5 years in 2023.

Chart 9: Median Age at First Marriage (Years)



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grooms	30.2	30.2	30.3	30.3	30.0	30.2	30.4	30.4	30.5	30.7	31.0
Brides	28.1	28.2	28.2	28.3	28.4	28.5	28.8	28.8	29.1	29.3	29.5

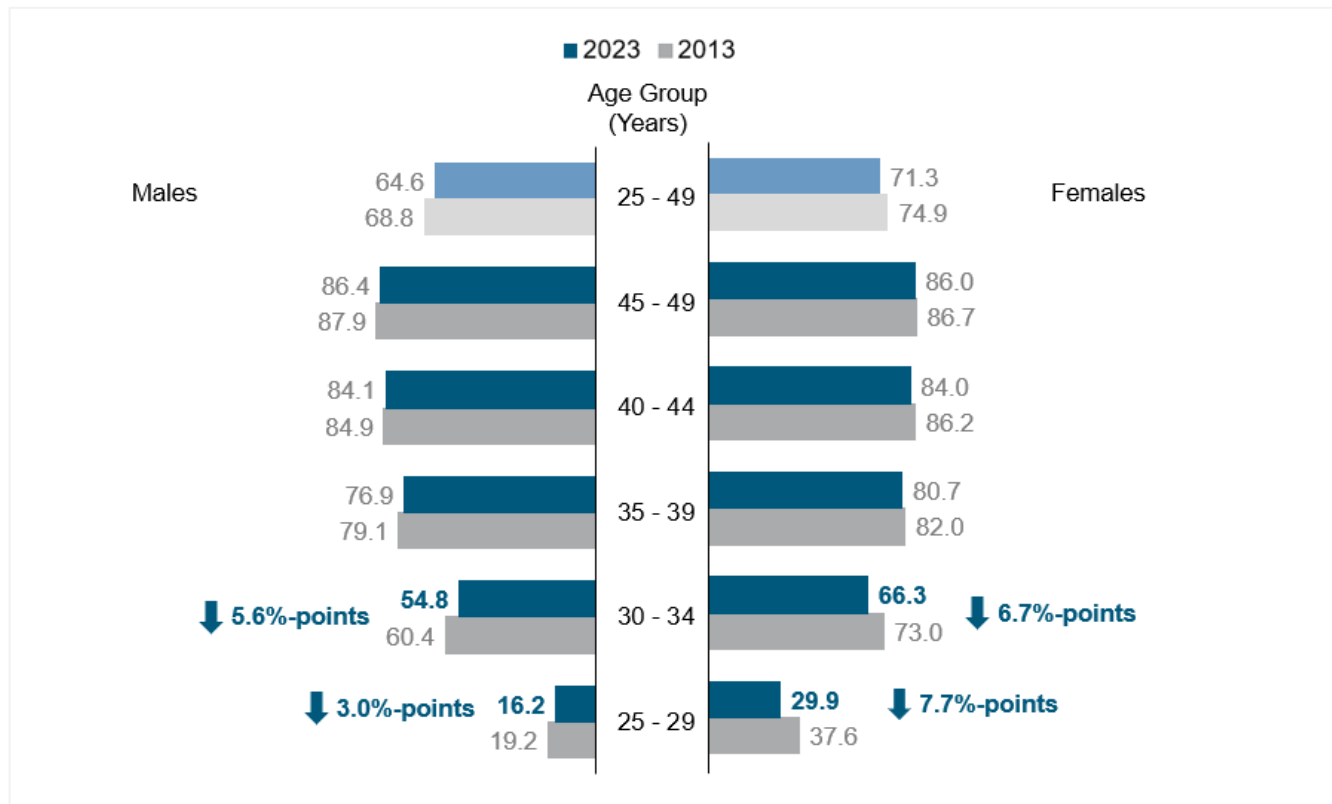
Source: DOS

Decrease in proportion of ever-married residents aged 25 – 49

The proportion of residents aged 25 – 49 who were ever-married⁵ decreased from 68.8% in 2013 to 64.6% in 2023 for males and from 74.9% in 2013 to 71.3% in 2023 for females (Chart 10).

Compared to 2013, ever-married resident males aged 30 – 34 registered the largest decline in proportion in 2023, followed by those aged 25 – 29. Ever-married resident females aged 25 – 29 registered the largest decline in proportion, followed by those aged 30 – 34 compared to 2013.

Chart 10: Proportion of Ever-Married Among Residents by Age Group and Sex⁶ (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

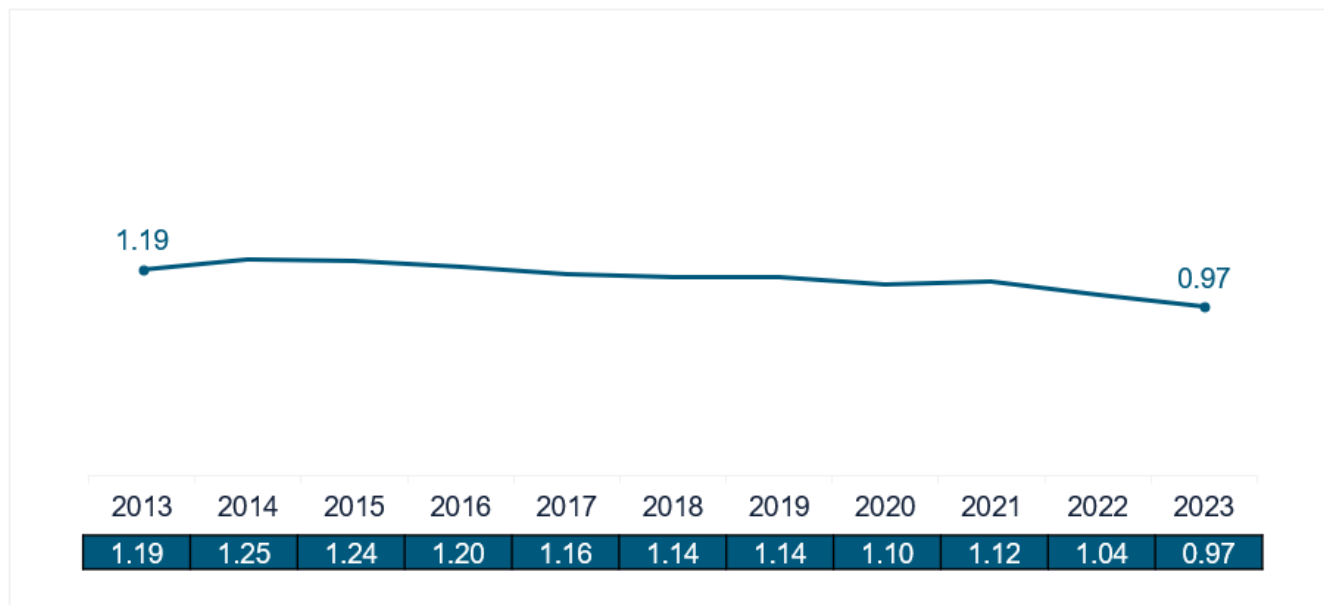
⁵ Ever-married refers to those who have been married before, i.e. includes those currently married, widowed, divorced or separated.

C2. BIRTHS

Total Fertility Rate reached a historic low in 2023

The resident Total Fertility Rate (TFR) decreased to 0.97 in 2023 from 1.19 in 2013 (Chart 11).

Chart 11: Total Fertility Rate (Per Female)

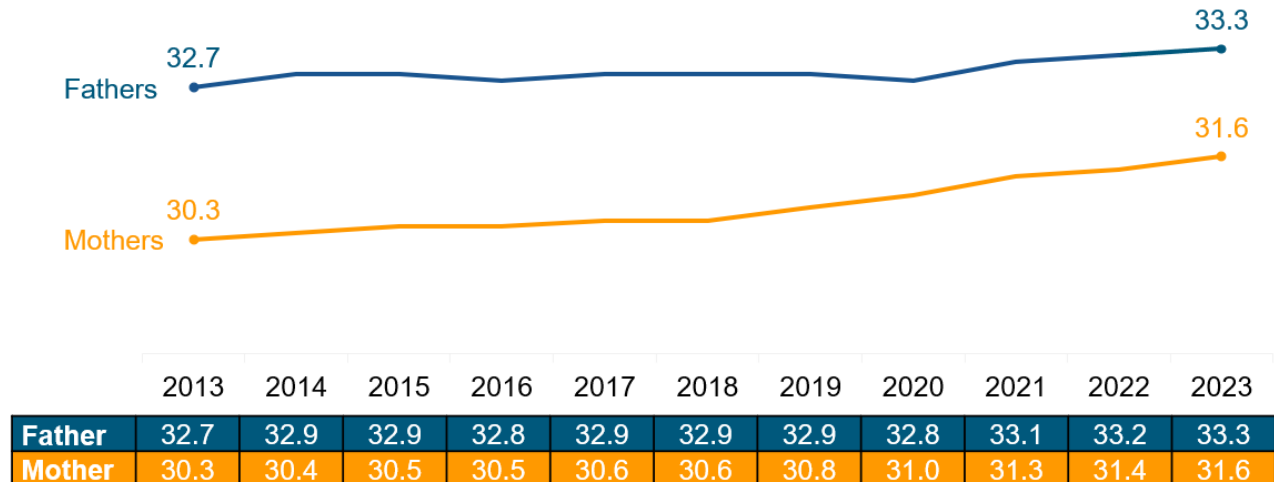


Source: DOS

Median age of first-time fathers and mothers continue to trend upward

The median age of first-time fathers⁷ increased from 32.7 years in 2013 to 33.3 years in 2023 (Chart 12). Similarly, for first-time mothers, the median age increased from 30.3 years in 2013 to 31.6 years in 2023.

Chart 12: Median Age of First Time Fathers and Mothers to Resident Births⁸



Source: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)

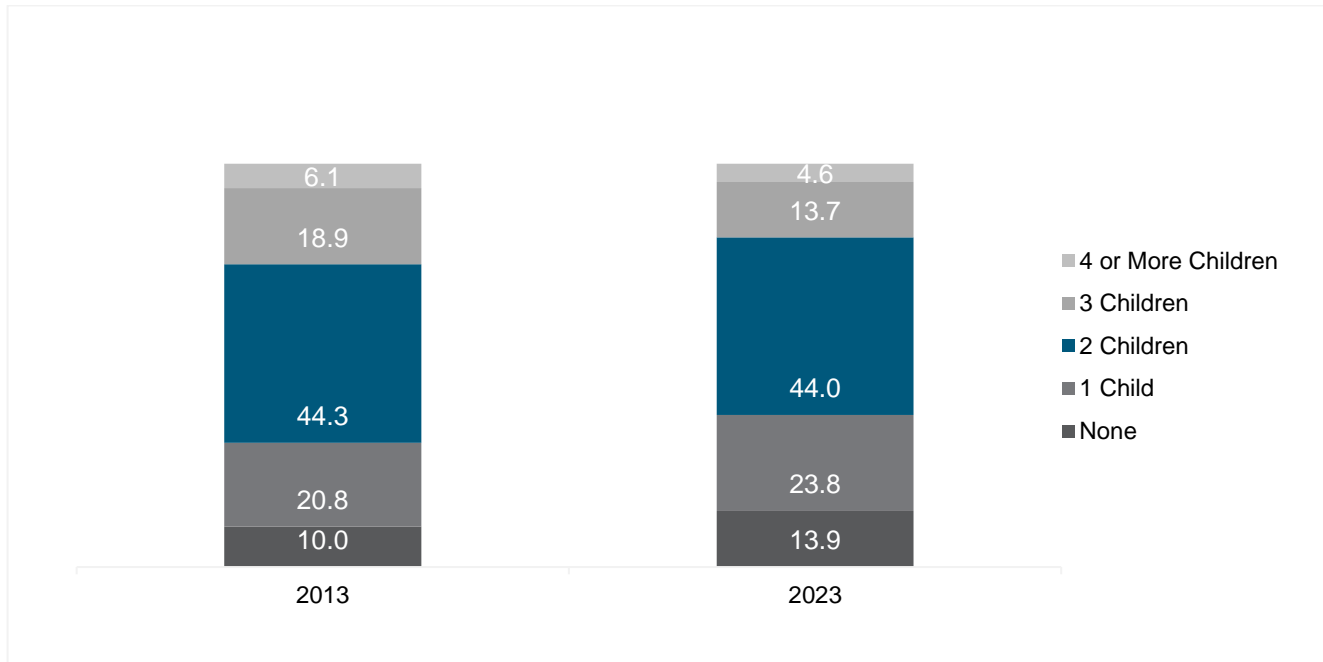
⁷ As not all births are registered with father's particulars, the median age of father are computed for births registered with father's particulars at mother's first birth.

⁸ Resident births refer to births born to at least one resident (i.e. Singapore citizen/permanent resident) parent.

Having two children remains most common for ever-married resident females

Among ever-married resident females aged 40 – 49 years, those with two children continued to form the largest group (44.3% in 2013 and 44.0% in 2023) (Chart 13). The proportion of those who had no children rose from 10.0% in 2013 to 13.9% in 2023, and the proportion of those who had one child rose from 20.8% to 23.8%.

Chart 13: Ever-married Resident Females Aged 40 – 49 by Number of Children Born (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

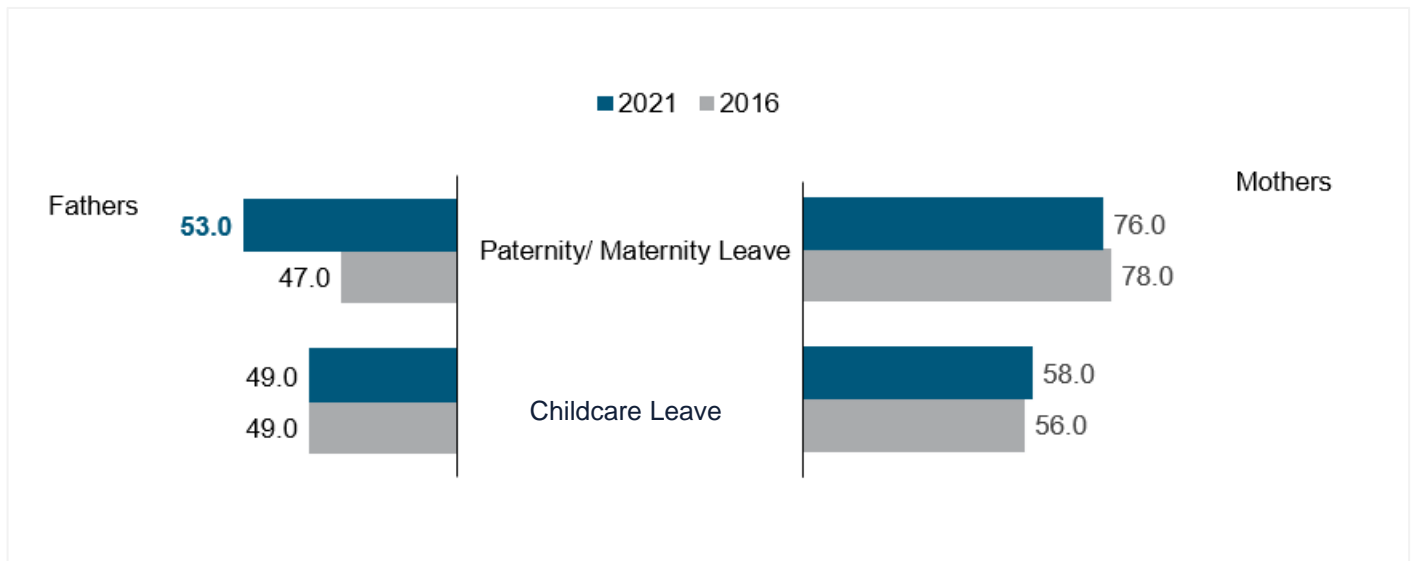
Note: Proportions may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

C3. GOVERNMENT PAID LEAVE SCHEME AND FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWAs)

More fathers taking up Government-Paid Paternity Leave...

Fathers are taking a more active role in the family. The proportion of fathers who took Government-Paid Paternity Leave increased from 47% for children born in 2016 to 53% for children born in 2021. The take-up of Government-Paid Maternity Leave and childcare leave remained stable between 2016 and 2021 (Chart 14).

Chart 14: Take-up Rate of Government-Paid Leave Scheme⁹ (Per Cent)



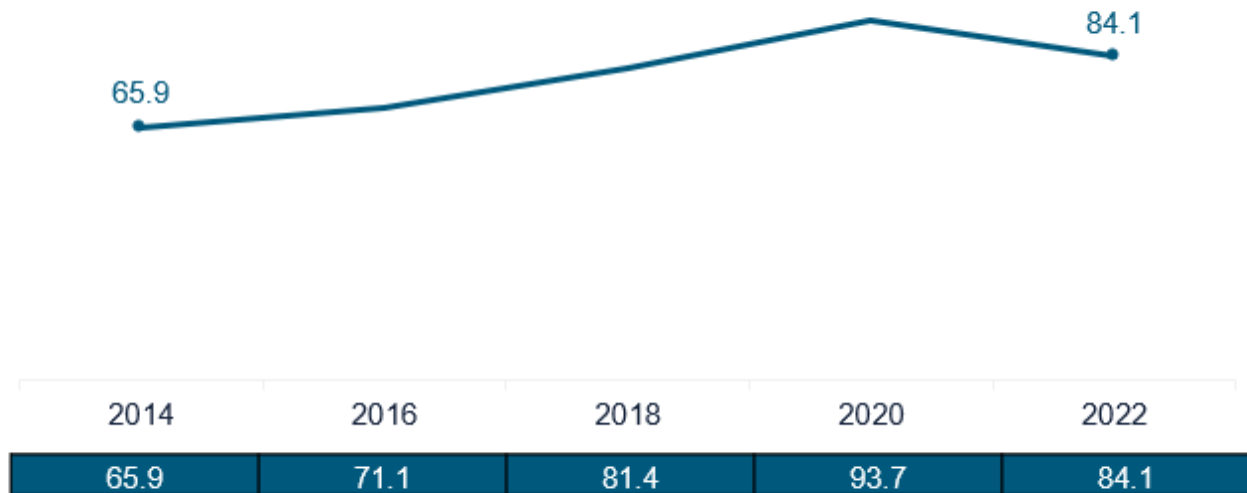
Source: Ministry of Social & Family Development (MSF)

⁹ Take-up rates are by child's year of birth for maternity leave and paternity leave and by year of taking leave for childcare leave. For paternity and maternity leave, 2021 was the latest available year as parents have up to one year after their Singaporean child's birth to consume the leave, and employers have three months after that to submit claims. For childcare leave, 2021 was the latest available year as parents have the entire year to consume their entitled leave, and employers have three months after that to submit claims. The data excludes parents whose employers did not submit claims.

... and employees more likely to have access to FWAs

Among employees aged 25 – 64 who required FWAs, 84.1% had access to the FWA that they required in 2022, up from 65.9% in 2014 (Chart 15). The spike in 2020 was due to companies adopting the work-from-home arrangement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart 15: Employees Aged 25-64 Who Were Provided With At Least 1 FWA¹⁰ They Required (Per Cent)



Source: Prevalence of Work Life Harmony Initiatives in Singapore' Report (2022), Ministry of Manpower

¹⁰ 'At least 1 FWA' covers part-time work, staggered hours, flexi-hours, scheduled tele-working, home-working, job sharing, and compressed work-week. There were newly collected forms of FWA in 2022. They include three types of scheduled FWA (employees' choice of days off, shift swapping, time banking), as well as the non-scheduled FWAs (time-off to attend to personal matters, non-scheduled tele-working). The figure in 2022 would be 88.2% if the newly collected types of scheduled FWA were included.

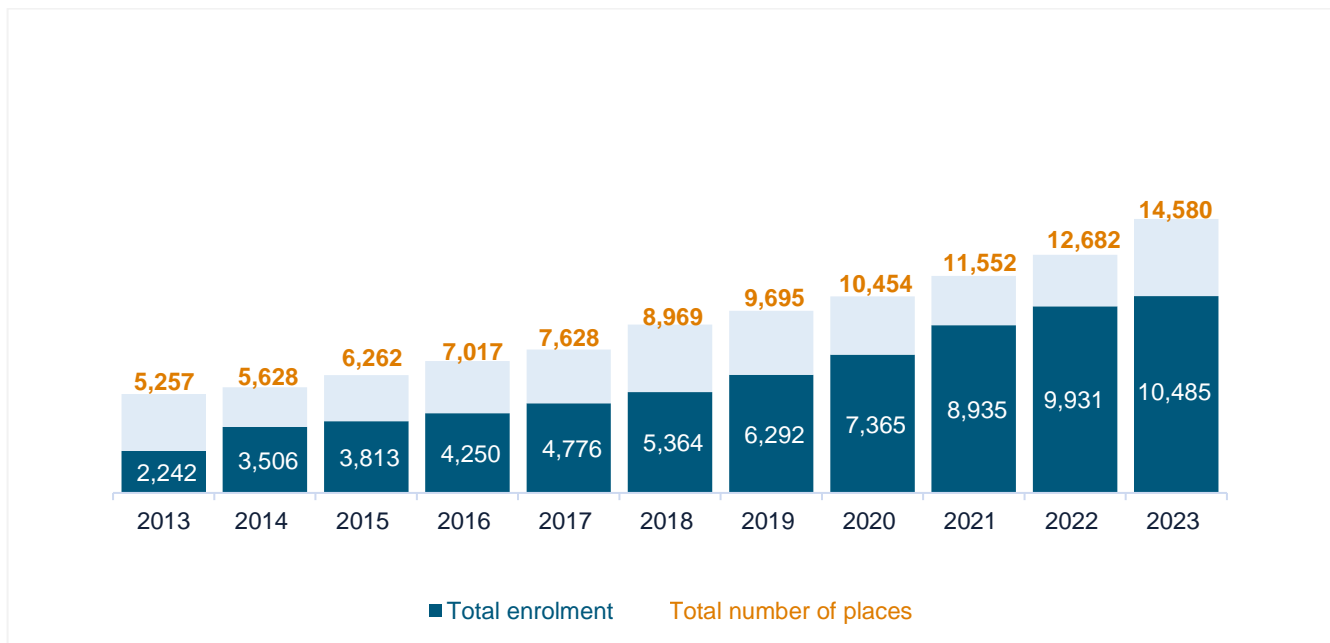
D. EARLY CHILDHOOD

D1. ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY PRESCHOOLS

Full-day infant care places increased nearly threefold over ten years, while median fees¹¹ and out-of-pocket expenses¹² declined

The number of full-day infant care places increased from 5,257 in 2013 to 14,580 in 2023, to cater to growing demand (Chart 16).

Chart 16: Total Number of Places and Enrolment for Infant Care



Source: Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

¹¹ Refers to median fee for infant care programmes across the entire sector, before GST and excluding subsidies.

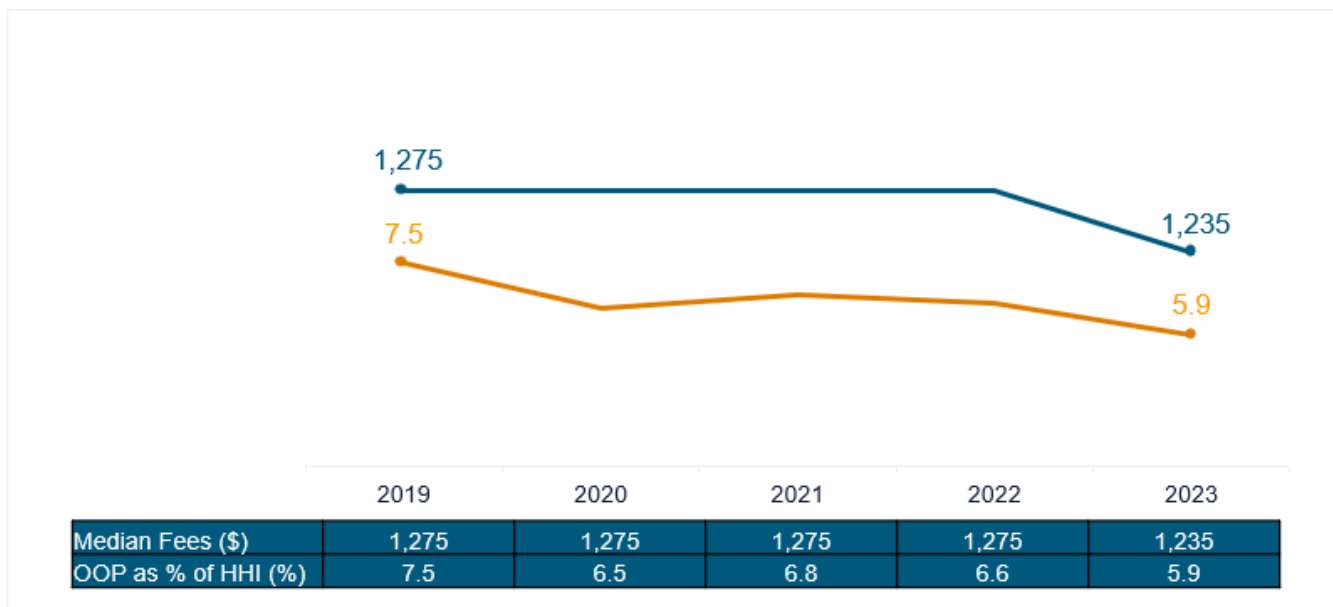
¹² Refers to amount families pay after factoring in Basic Subsidy, and Additional Subsidy (if applicable).

The Government has also ensured that preschool remains affordable by providing subsidies to parents of Singapore Citizen children and imposing fee caps at Government-supported Anchor Operator (AOP) and Partner Operator (POP) preschools.

The income ceiling for Additional Subsidy was raised from \$7,500 to \$12,000 in 2020, and Additional Subsidy amounts were enhanced across all eligible income tiers. To further enhance affordability of preschools, AOPs and POPs are provided with funding to adhere to fee caps set by the Government. AOP and POP full-day infant care fee caps were recently lowered in 2023.

As a result, median fees in the preschool sector have been kept stable. The industry median infant care fee for SC children decreased from \$1,275 in 2019 to \$1,235 in 2023 (Chart 17). Furthermore, families' out-of-pocket expenses have reduced in the past five years. A median-income household¹³ with a child attending full-day infant care in an AOP centre would spend 5.9% of their household income on preschool in 2023 compared to 7.5% in 2019.

Chart 17: Median fees and Out-of-Pocket Expenses for AOP as a Percentage of Median Household Income for Infant Care



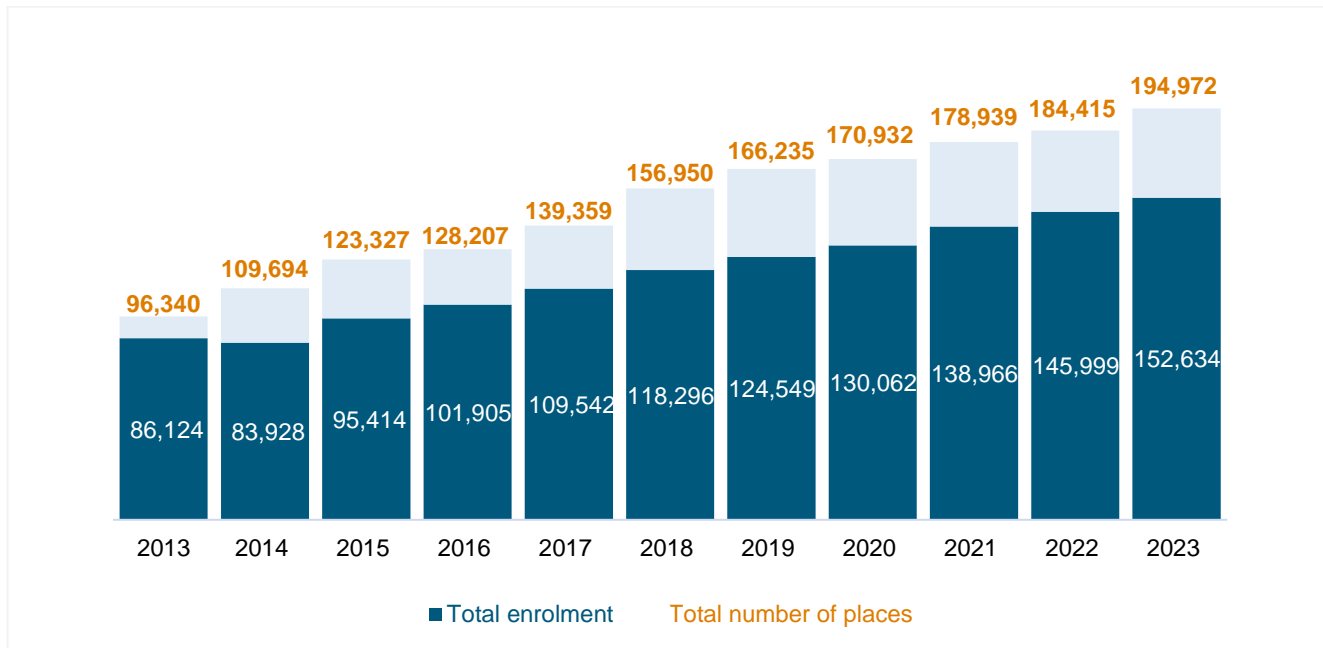
Source: ECDA, MSF

¹³ Income of the "median-income household" is derived based on ranking citizen households with at least one child aged 0-6, by their monthly household income from work, excluding employer CPF contributions.

Similarly, full-day childcare places more than doubled, with similar decreases in median fees and out-of-pocket expenses

The number of full-day childcare places increased from 96,340 in 2013 to 194,972 in 2023 (Chart 18).

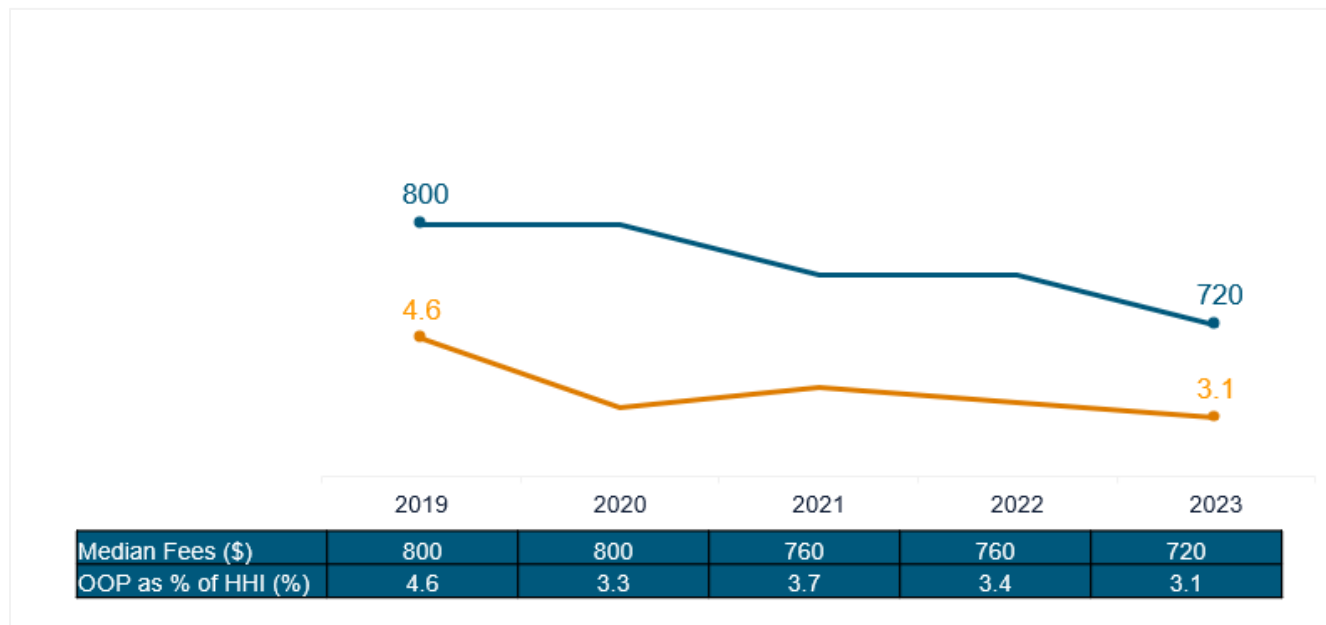
Chart 18: Total Number of Places and Enrolment for Childcare



Source: ECDA

AOP and POP full-day childcare fee caps were recently lowered in 2023 as well. The industry median childcare fee for SC children has hence decreased from \$800 in 2019 to \$720 in 2023 (Chart 19). With fee cap reductions and the aforementioned subsidy enhancements, families’ out-of-pocket expenses have likewise decreased. A median-income household¹⁴ with a child attending full-day childcare in an AOP centre would spend 3.1% of their household income on preschool in 2023 compared to 4.6% in 2019.

Chart 19: Median fees and Out-of-Pocket Expenses for AOP as a Percentage of Median Household Income, for Childcare



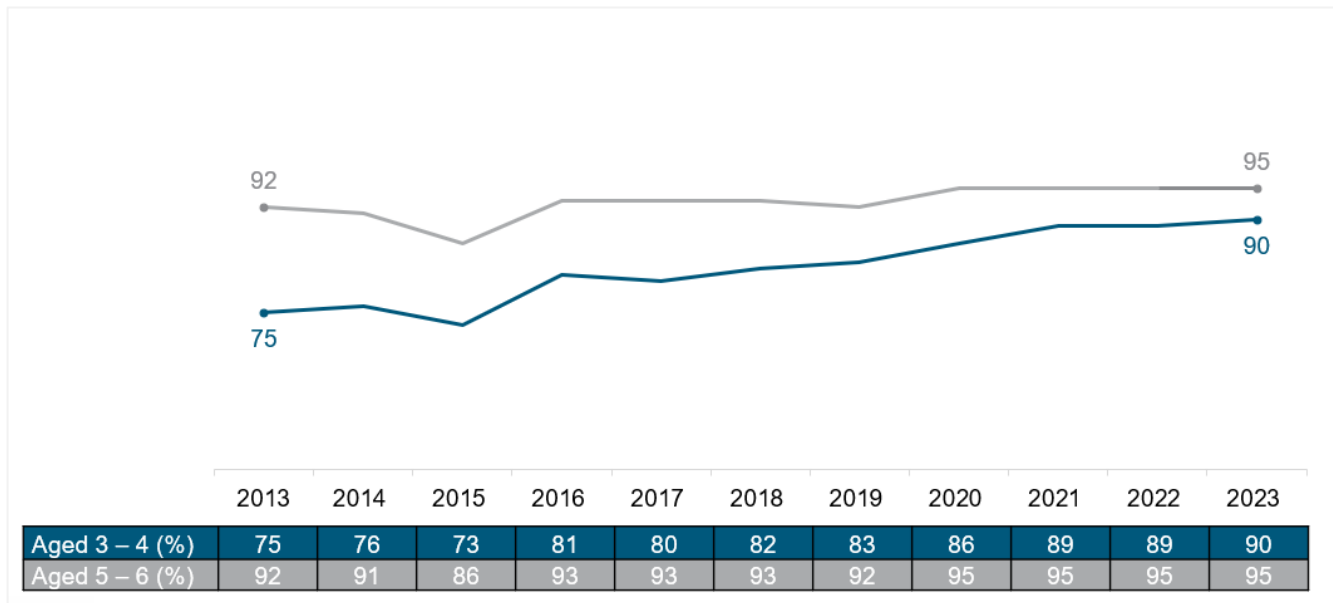
Source: ECDA, MSF

¹⁴ Income of the “median-income household” is derived based on ranking citizen households with at least one child aged 0-6, by their monthly household income from work, excluding employer CPF contributions.

Increase in Cohort Enrolment Rates

With more dual-income families and greater recognition of the importance of early childhood care and education, the enrolment rate¹⁵ of children aged 3 – 4 years increased from 75% in 2013 to 90% in 2023 (Chart 20). The enrolment rate of children aged 5 – 6 years also rose over the last 10 years and remained high at 95% in 2023.

Chart 20: Cohort Enrolment Rates of Singapore Citizen (SC) Children (Per Cent)



Source: MSF

¹⁵ The Cohort Enrolment Rates for 2022 and 2023 are based on MSF's preliminary estimates.

D2. YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

A child may be identified to have developmental needs when they do not meet developmental milestones in social-emotional, physical, speech, sensory or cognitive domains within an expected age range. Examples of developmental needs are Speech and Language Delay, Global Developmental Delay (GDD), and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Early Intervention (EI) is the multidisciplinary support provided to a child with developmental needs to maximise their development in the early years. Medical professionals assess the level of EI support required and a suitable EI programme for each child. EI Educators and Allied Health Professionals (e.g. Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists) work together to support the child holistically under the suitable EI programme.

The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) supports children requiring low levels of EI support in their preschools via the Development Support-Learning Support (DS-LS) and Development Support-Plus (DS-Plus) programmes¹⁶. Children requiring medium to high levels of EI support can enrol in Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC), provided by Social Service Agencies (SSAs), or EIPIC-P, delivered by appointed private providers. ECDA is also piloting the Inclusive Support Programme (InSP) in a few preschools, which aims to strengthen inclusion by providing both early childhood education and early intervention within a preschool setting.

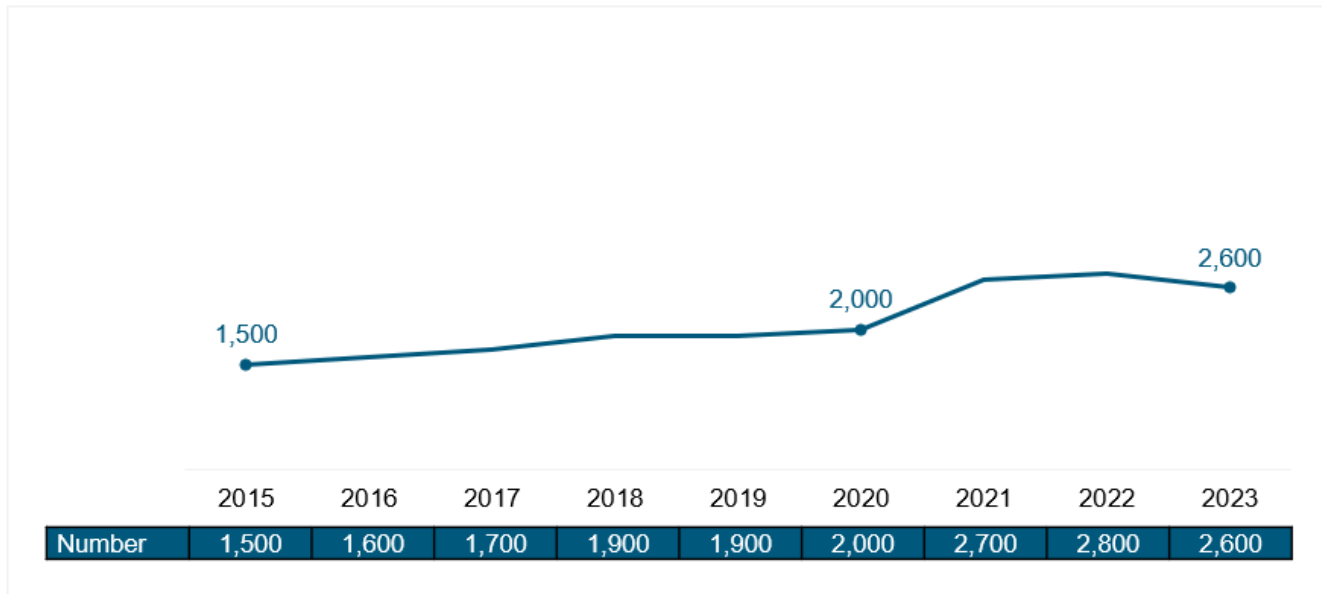
Multiple educational pathways are available to support children with developmental needs as they transit from preschool to schooling age. Based on their learning needs, some may go on to mainstream primary schools while others are best supported in Special Education (SPED) schools.

¹⁶ Learning Support serves children assessed to need support with literacy, language, fine motor or social skills, Development Support serves children assessed to need therapy support. Development Support Plus serves children who have made progress under the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children and now require low levels of early intervention support.

Increase in number of referrals for early intervention...

The number of referrals for EIPIC in 2023 was 2,600, almost a twofold increase from 1,500 in 2015. The annual number of referrals a year increased substantially from 2020 (Chart 21). This is due to greater parental awareness and earlier detection through hospitals' child development programmes.

Chart 21: Number of Referrals for EIPIC



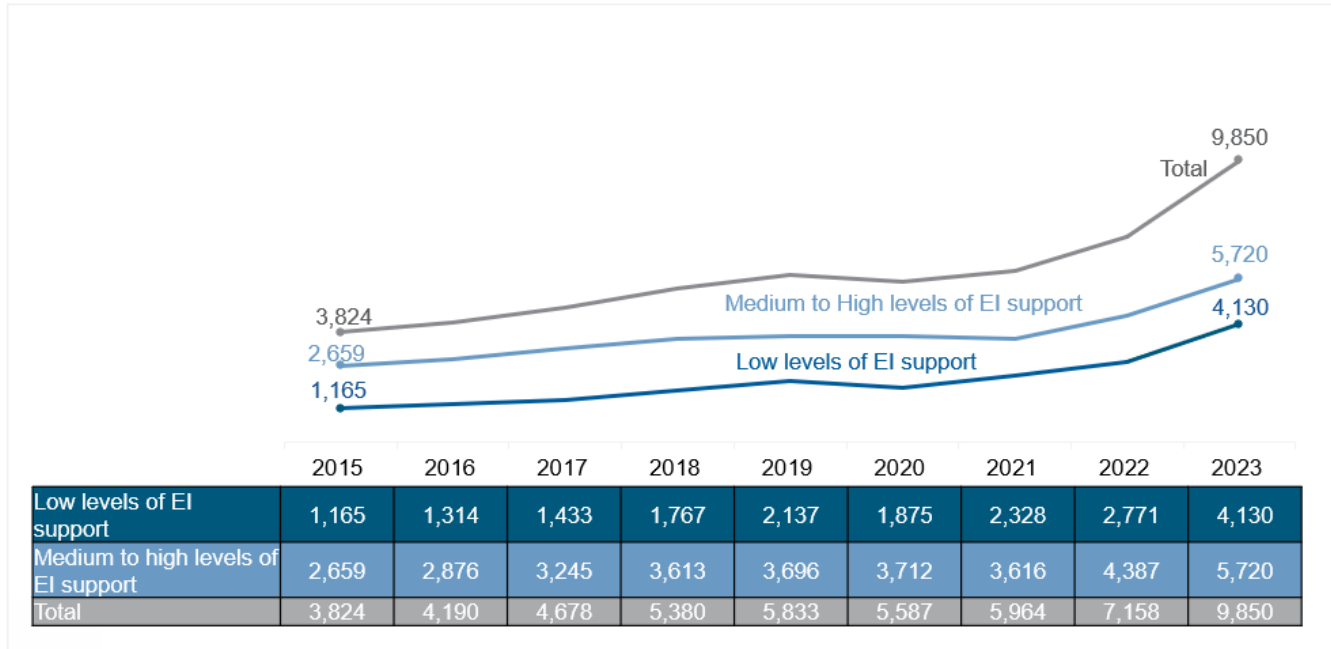
Source: ECDA

Note: Data prior to 2015 is not available, figures are rounded to nearest 100.

... resulting in more children served in Early Intervention (EI) programmes

The number of children requiring low levels of early intervention support served in EI programmes increased from 1,165 in 2015 to 4,130 in 2023 (Chart 22). The number of children requiring medium to high levels of early intervention support served in EI programmes increased from 2,659 in 2015 to 5,720 in 2023.

Chart 22: Number of Children Aged 0 – 6 served in EI Programmes



Source: ECDA

Note: Data prior to 2015 is not available



SUPPORTING CHILDREN REQUIRING MEDIUM TO HIGH LEVELS OF EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORT

To ensure that children can enrol in EI programmes and receive timely intervention, ECDA has rapidly increased the supply of places by expanding capacity in current early intervention centres, launching 2 new early intervention centres and appointing 13 new *EIPIC-P* centres in 2023. In 2023 alone, 1,100 places were added, increasing capacity by 26% from 2022. ECDA has also made early intervention services more affordable by lowering out-of-pocket expenses over the years and extending transport subsidies to children served in early intervention programmes.

ECDA has prioritised placement for older children (five to six years old) to ensure that children receive at least one year of early intervention before they transit to primary school. ECDA will also be launching *EIPIC-Care*, a six-month training programme to empower caregivers to support the development of younger children (two to three years old) at home.

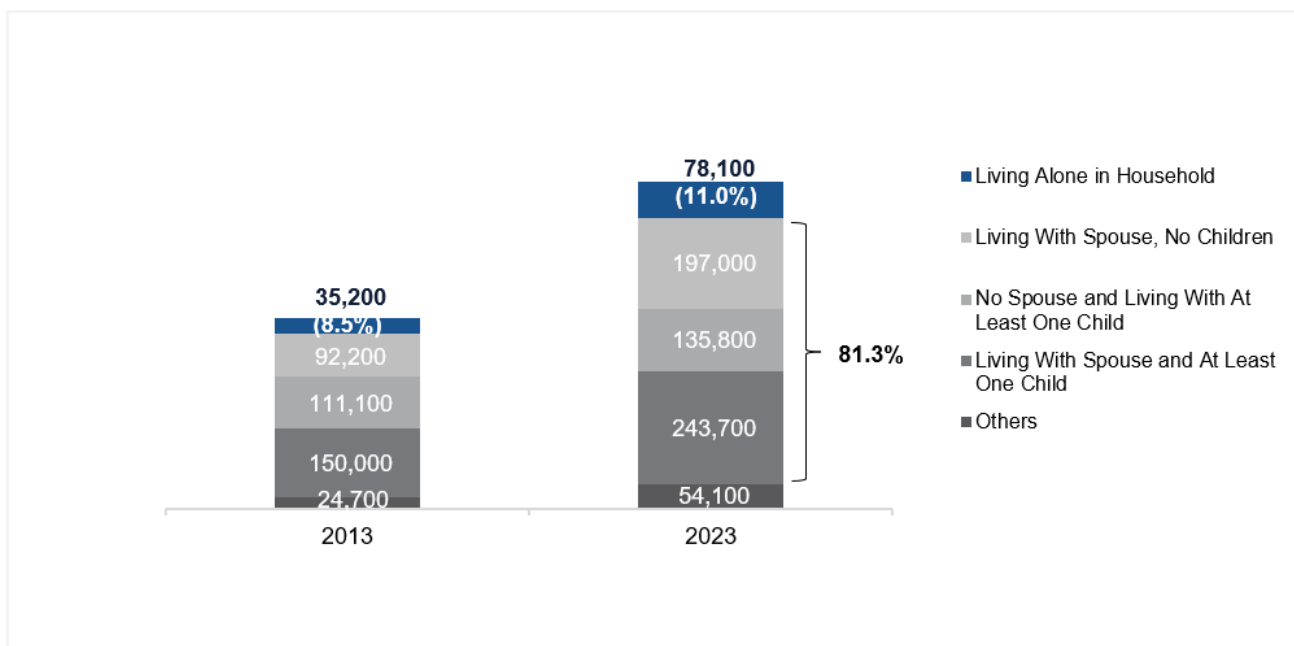
E. FAMILY TIES AND RESILIENCE

E1. FAMILY TIES

More elderly residents living alone

The number of residents aged 65 and above living in resident households increased from 413,100 as of 2013 to 708,700 as of 2023. More than 80% of these elderly residents¹⁷ continued to stay with their spouse and/or child(ren) in 2023 (Chart 23). The number of elderly residents living alone in households more than doubled from 35,200 in 2013 to 78,100 in 2023.

Chart 23: Living Arrangement of Elderly Residents in Resident Households¹⁸



Source: DOS

¹⁷ A married elderly couple aged 65 and above will be counted as 2 under the 'Living with Spouse and At Least One Child' and 'Living with Spouse, No Children' categories.

¹⁸ Data on living arrangement for 2013 and 2023 are as declared by survey respondents of the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey. The presence of spouse/children is based on those living in the same household. Resident households refer to households where the household reference person is a Singapore citizen or permanent resident.

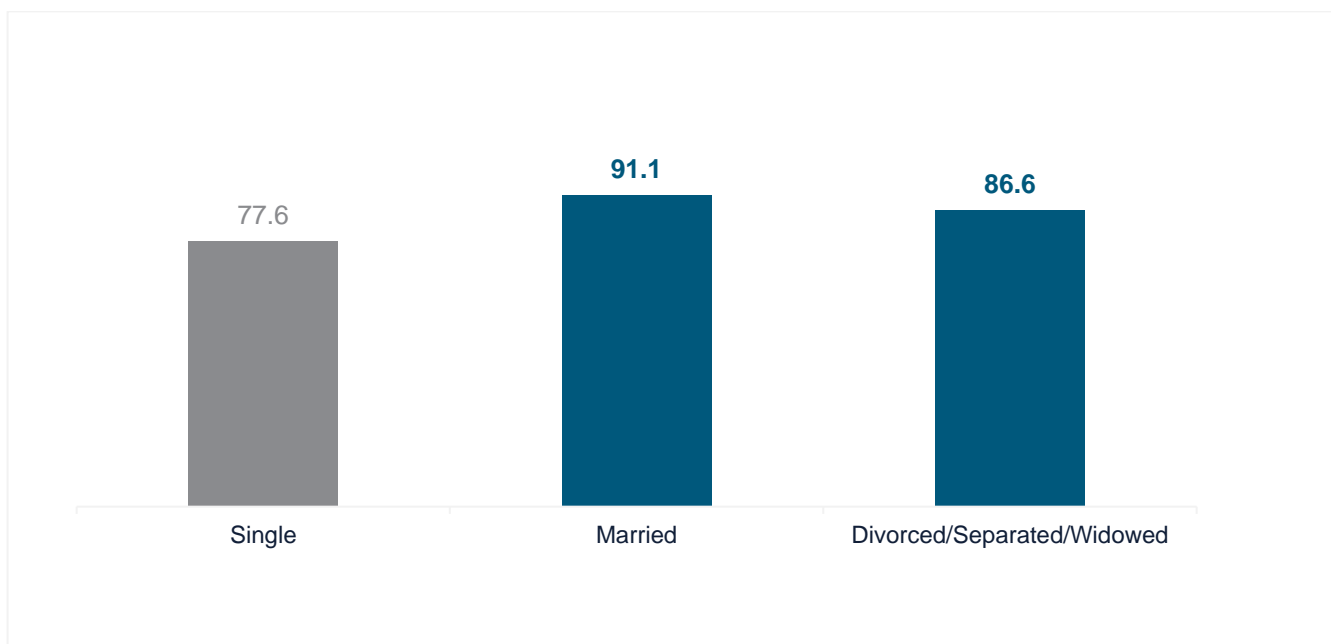
Family continues to be the key line of support for the majority of seniors

Based on an MSF survey on families conducted in 2023, the majority of respondents aged 65 years old and above (82.5%) reported that they will turn to their families for help when they need physical support such as caregiving or assistance with running errands. Findings also showed that the majority of respondents aged 15 to 64 years old (93.1%) agreed that it is their responsibility to take care of their parents.

Families have close ties

The same survey found that the majority of respondents reported that they have a close-knit family (86.0%). The proportion of respondents who reported having a close-knit family was higher among married (91.1%) and divorced/separated/widowed (86.6%) compared to those who were single (77.6%)¹⁹ (Chart 24).

Chart 24: Proportion of Respondents Who Reported They Have a Close-knit Family (Per Cent)

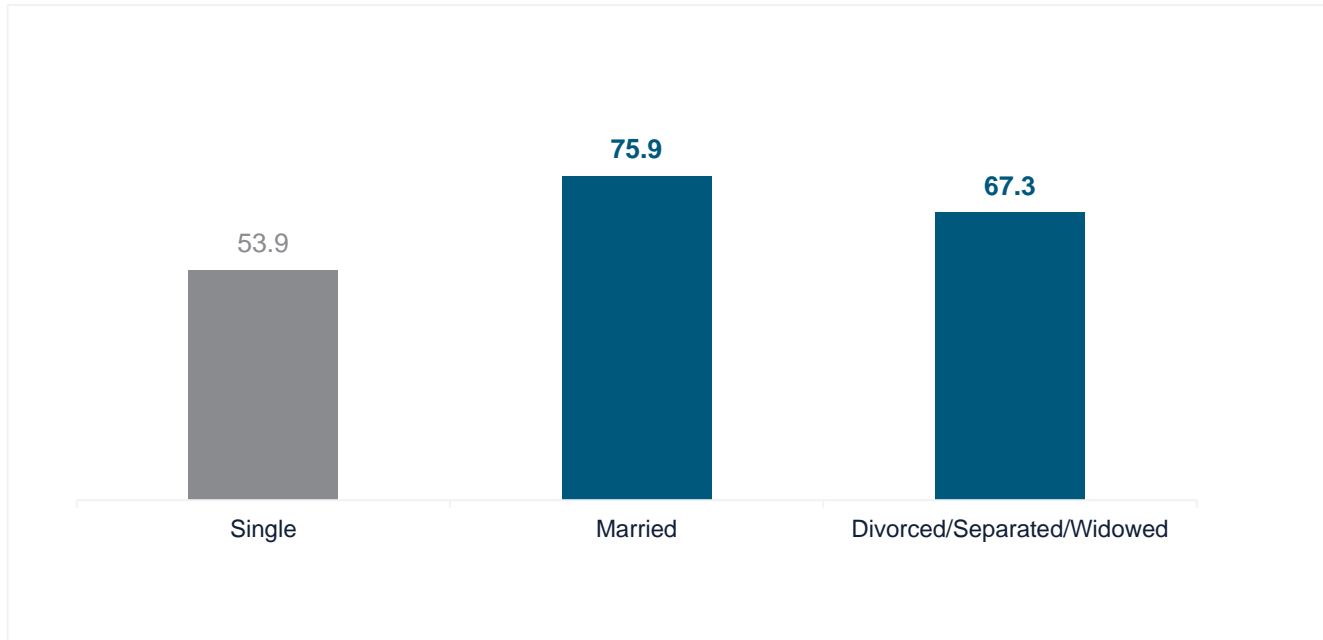


Source: MSF

¹⁹ The differences in proportions between singles and other marital statuses are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Majority of respondents also reported maintaining close ties with family members outside of their immediate family (67.5%). By marital status, a higher proportion of married (75.9%) and divorced/separated/widowed (67.3%) respondents reported maintaining close ties with family members outside of their immediate family as compared to the singles (53.9%)²⁰ (Chart 25).

Chart 25: Proportion of Respondents Who Reported They Maintain Close Ties with Family Members Outside of Immediate Family (Per Cent)



Source: MSF

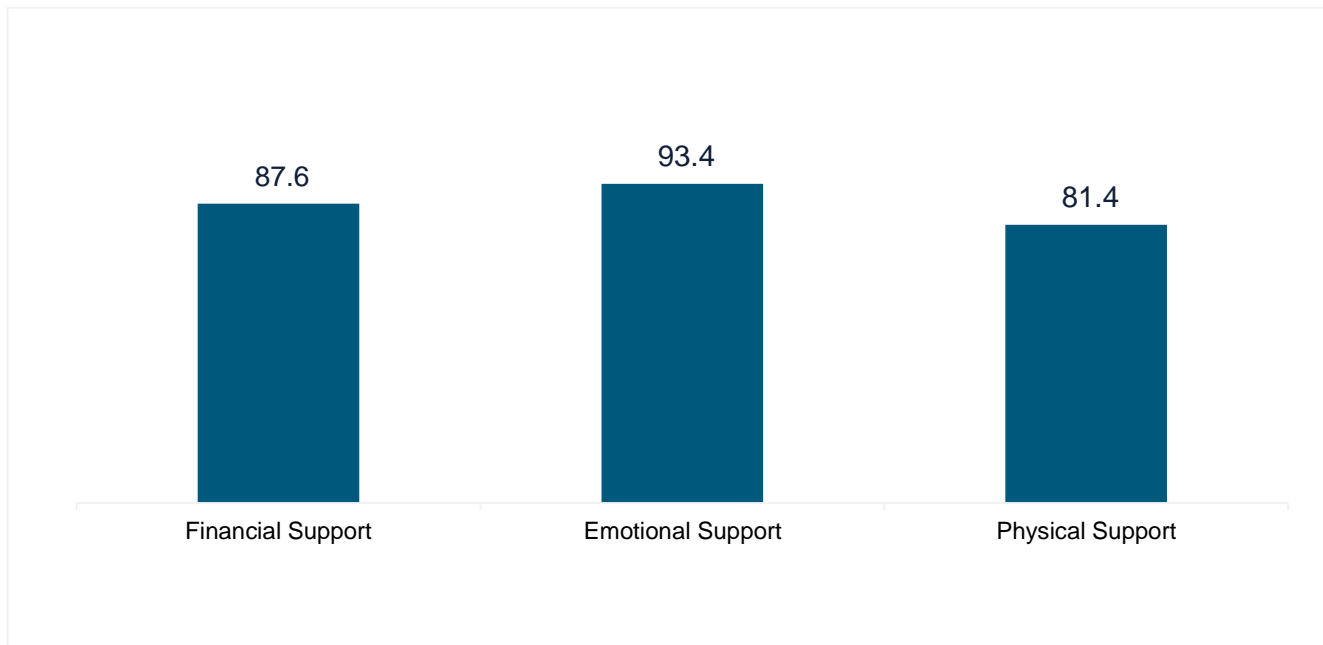
²⁰ The differences in proportions between singles and other marital statuses are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

E2. CAREGIVING IN FAMILIES

Families continue to be the key support for caregiving needs

Families play a pivotal role in providing caregiving and emotional support. From the 2023 MSF survey on families, the majority of respondents reported that they will provide (i) financial (87.6%) and (ii) emotional (93.4%) support if their family members needed it. Findings also showed that 81.4% of respondents will provide regular physical support to family members should they need help with Activities of Daily Living (Chart 26).

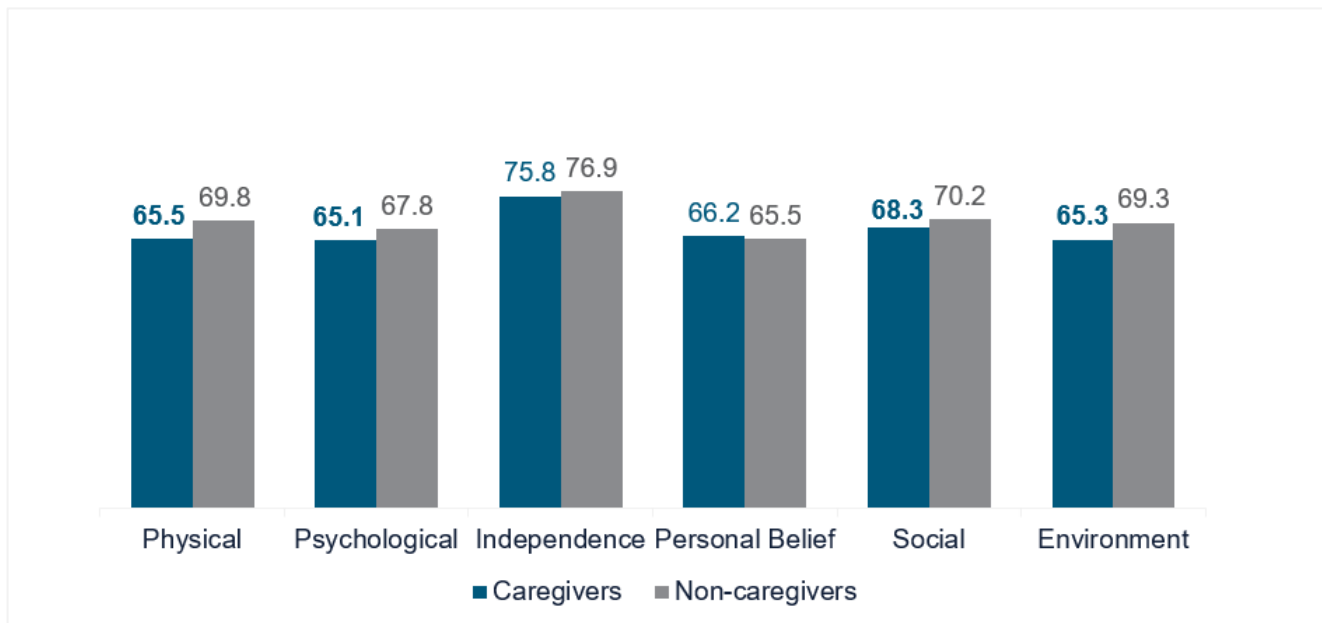
Chart 26: Proportion of Respondents Who Will Provide Financial, Emotional and Physical Support (Per Cent)



Source: MSF

Based on National Council of Social Service (NCSS') 2022 Quality of Life Study, caregivers reported a slightly lower overall quality of life compared to non-caregivers. Specifically, they scored lower in the domains²¹ of physical, psychological, social and environment²² (Chart 27).

Chart 27: Domain Scores of Caregivers vs Non-Caregivers



Source: NCSS' 2022 Quality of Life Study

²¹ For more information on the Quality of Life domains, please refer to NCSS' publication on Understanding the Quality of Life of Caregivers

²² The differences in mean scores are statistically significant at p<0.05

E3. FAMILY RESILIENCE



WHAT IS FAMILY RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to challenges and adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. The concept of family resilience, as conceptualised by clinical psychologist, Dr Froma Walsh, extends beyond seeing individual family members as potential resources for individual resilience to focusing on risk and resilience in the family as a functional unit.

Under the Walsh Family Resilience Framework, family resilience is defined as the capacity of the family to recover from adversity, by emerging stronger and more resourceful, to manage stressful events and forge transformative personal and relational growth. There are three key domains of family functioning under Walsh's framework: family belief systems, organisation patterns, and communication and problem solving:

1. Family belief systems: ability to make meaning of adversity and keeping a positive outlook
2. Organisation patterns: ability to maintain flexibility, maintain connectedness and draw from social and economic resources
3. Communication and problem solving: ability to approach adversity with clarity, support each other and openly express emotions

A resilient family makes for better individual well-being and stronger communities. It is important that we continue our efforts in nurturing resilient families.

Families reported moderate to high family resilience score

The 2023 MSF survey on families found that 85.9% of the families reported moderate to high²³ family resilience scores, which means that these families would generally be able to recover from challenges together as a family. In particular, 25.1% of all families reported high²⁴ family resilience scores and are likely to be more adept at working together to recover from challenges.

Of the three domains that underlie the overall resilience score, families with moderate to high family resilience scored the highest in the communication and problem solving (mean score 3.83) domain, followed by the family belief systems (3.80) and organisational patterns (3.74) domains²⁵ (Chart 28).

Chart 28: Mean Family Resilience Scores of Families Who Scored Moderate to High Family Resilience, by Domains



Source: MSF

²³ Families with moderate to high resilience scored 3 and above (out of 5) on the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire

²⁴ Families with high resilience scored 4 and above (out of 5) on the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire

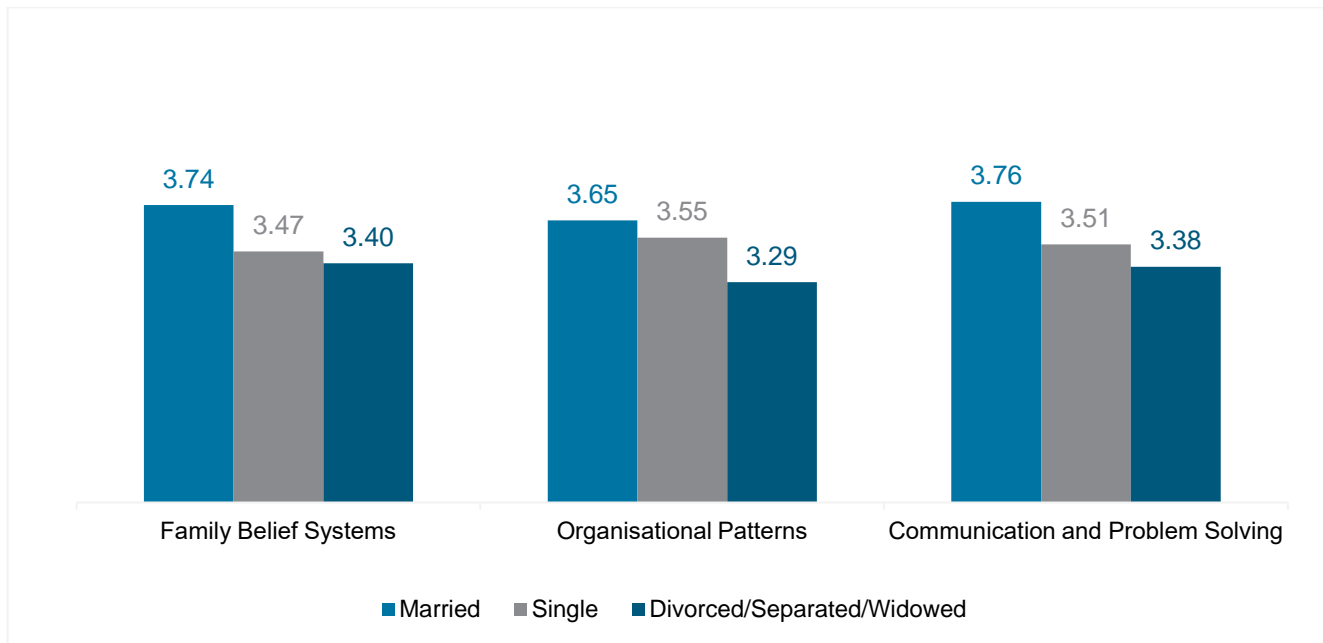
²⁵ The difference in the mean scores are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Married respondents less likely to report lower family resilience score

The same survey on families also found that, by marital status, a lower proportion of married respondents (8.6%) reported low²⁶ family resilience score compared to divorced/separated/widowed (24.0%) and single (20.8%)²⁷ respondents.

Similarly, by domains, married respondents scored higher across all domains as compared to single and divorced/widowed/separated²⁸ respondents.

Chart 29: Mean Family Resilience Score by Domains and Marital Status



Source: MSF

²⁶ Families with low resilience scored below 3 (out of 5) on the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire

²⁷ The differences in the proportions are statistically significant at p<0.05.

²⁸ The differences in the mean scores are statistically significant at p<0.05. The difference in the mean scores between divorced/separated/widowed and single is statistically significant at p<0.05 for organisational patterns but not for the other two domains.

F. MARITAL DISSOLUTION

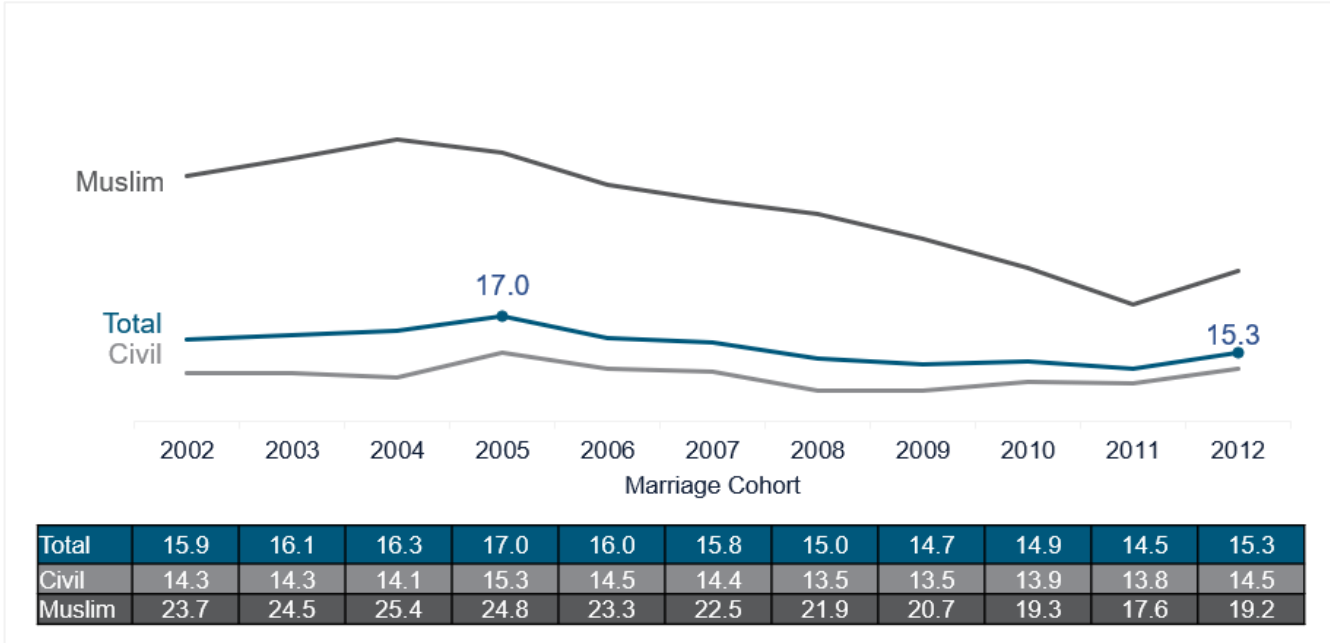
F1. MARRIAGE STABILITY

Marriage cohorts from 2006 have seen lower dissolution rates

Compared with the 2005 marriage cohort, the 2006 to 2012 marriage cohorts have lower dissolution rates before the 10th anniversary (Chart 30). The cumulative proportion of marriages that dissolved before the 10th anniversary declined from 17.0% for the 2005 marriage cohort to 15.3% for the 2012 marriage cohort.

The most significant improvement was seen in the fall in dissolution rates for Muslim marriages. While the rate for Muslim marriages remained higher than that of civil marriages across all cohorts, the gap has narrowed significantly for more recent marriage cohorts.

Chart 30: Cumulative Proportion of Dissolved Resident Marriages before 10th Anniversary (Per Cent)

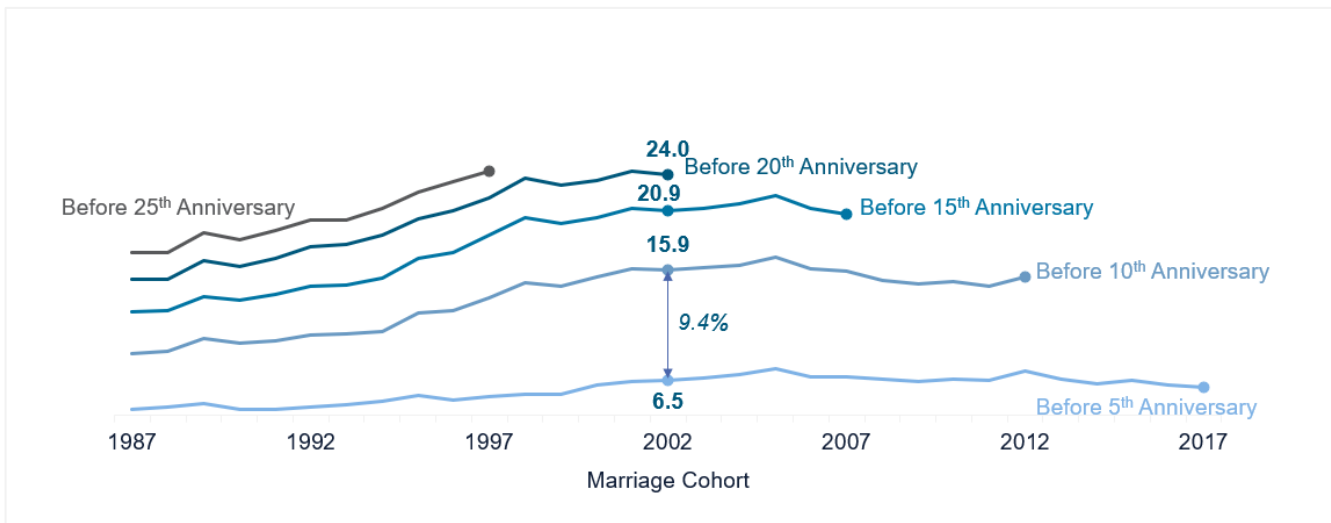


Source: DOS

Highest proportion of dissolved marriages from 5th to before 10th marriage anniversary

The proportion of marriages that dissolved was highest when marriages progressed from the 5th anniversary to before the 10th anniversary (Chart 31). As marriages progressed to the next marriage duration milestone, the increases in dissolution rates at each subsequent 5-yearly interval were smaller. For example, 6.5% of the 2002 resident marriage cohort had dissolved before the 5th anniversary. Another 9.4% of this marriage cohort ended their marriage before their 10th anniversary, bringing the total proportion dissolved by then to 15.9%. Subsequent increases were smaller, bringing the total proportion dissolved among the 2002 marriage cohort to 20.9% and 24.0% before the 15th and 20th anniversaries respectively. This suggests that it is crucial to support marriages in the early years to build a strong foundation to withstand future challenges.

Chart 31: Cumulative Proportion of Dissolved Resident Marriages Before 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th and 25th Anniversary (Per Cent)



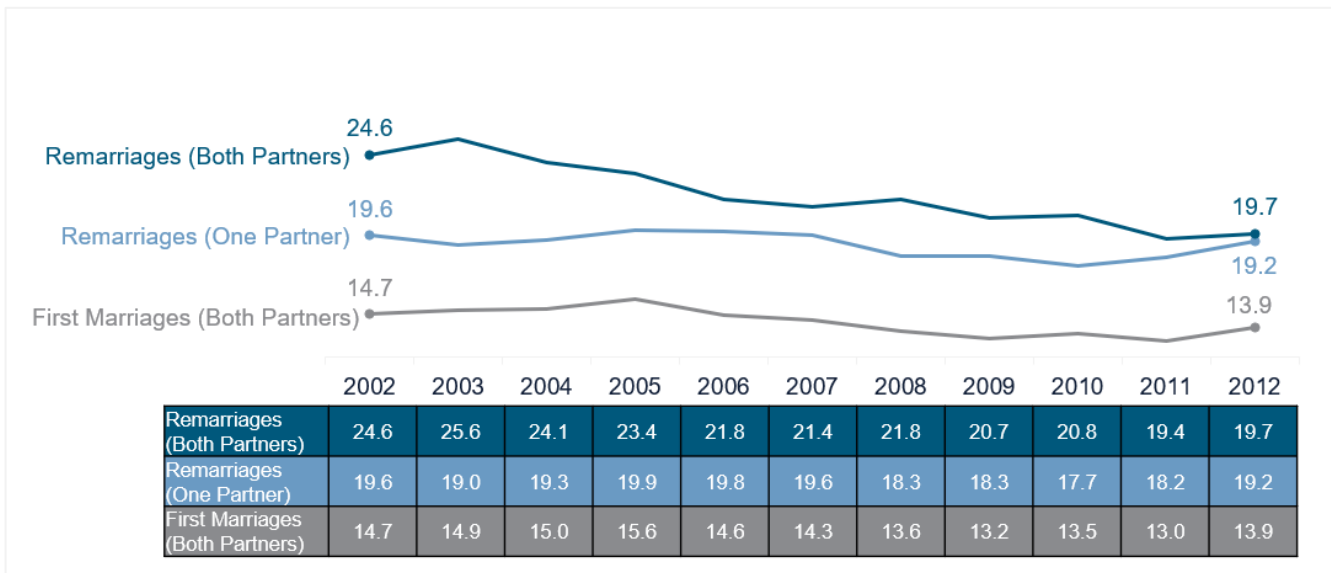
Source: DOS

F2. PROFILES WITH HIGHER DISSOLUTION RATES

Higher dissolution rates among remarriages and those who married at 20 to 24 years

Based on dissolution rates before the 10th anniversary, couples who had both been married previously had the highest proportion of dissolved marriages, followed by couples where one partner had previously been married (Chart 32). For example, 13.9% of the first marriages in the 2012 resident marriage cohort had dissolved before their 10th anniversary compared to 19.2% of remarriages where one partner had previously been married and 19.7% of remarriages where both partners had been married previously. Similarly, 14.7% of the first marriages in the 2002 resident marriage cohort had dissolved before their 10th anniversary compared to 19.6% of remarriages where one partner had previously been married and 24.6% of remarriages where both partners had been married previously. Nevertheless, the difference in dissolution rates between first marriages and remarriages for both partners had narrowed gradually, particularly from the 2003 marriage cohort.

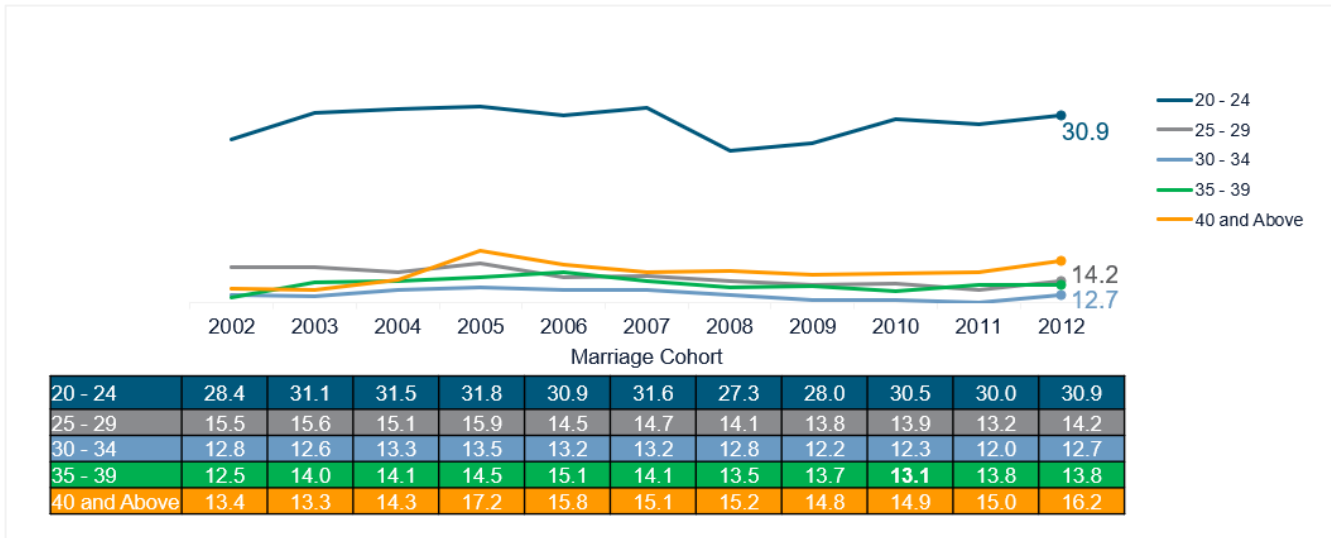
Chart 32: Cumulative Proportion of Dissolved Resident Marriages Before 10th Anniversary by Marriage Order (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

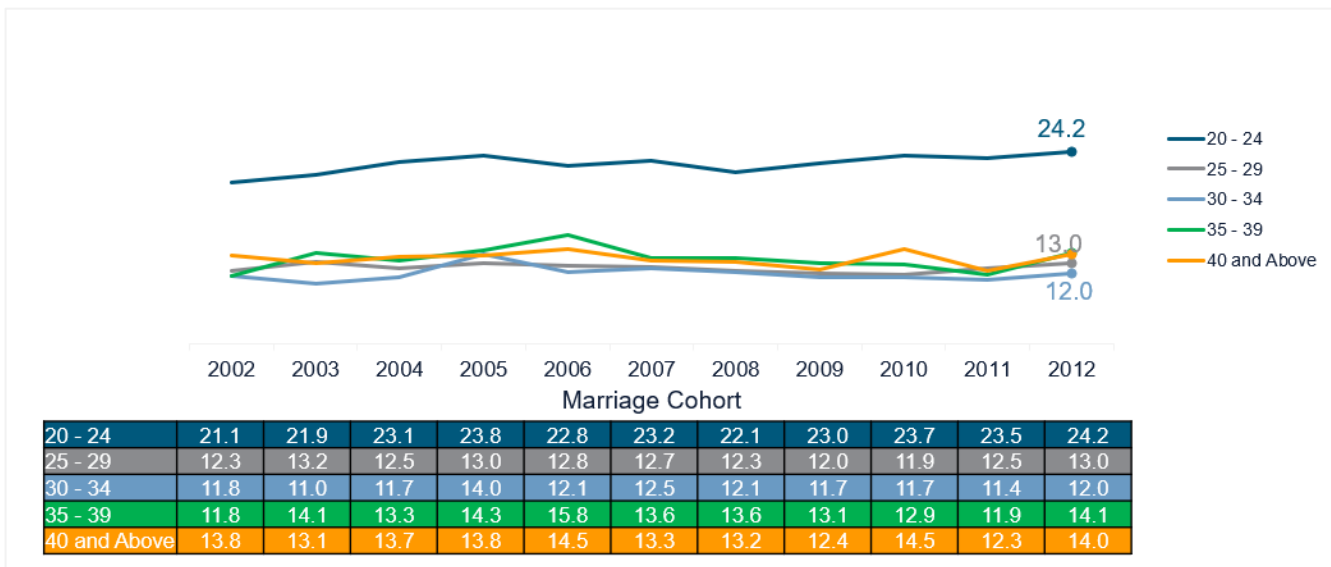
Based on dissolution rates before the 10th anniversary, dissolution rates for marriages involving males who married at ages 20 to 24 years are consistently the highest (Chart 33a). For example, 30.9% of the 2012 resident marriage cohort involving males who married at ages 20 to 24 years had dissolved before their 10th anniversary compared to 14.2% of marriages involving males who married at ages 25 to 29 years and 12.7% of marriages involving males who married at ages 30 to 34 years. A similar trend was observed for females (Chart 33b).

Chart 33a: Cumulative Proportion of Dissolved Resident Marriages Before 10th Anniversary for Males by Age Group at Marriage (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

Chart 33b: Cumulative Proportion of Dissolved Resident Marriages Before 10th Anniversary for Females by Age Group at Marriage (Per Cent)



Source: DOS

G. CONCLUSION

Singapore has done well in journeying with families across different life stages and circumstances. Families have greater access to affordable and quality preschools and increased marriage stability. More fathers are involved in caring for their children, and more employers are offering flexibility to help working parents balance their childcare needs. Most Singaporeans also feel that their families are strong and resilient, and report having a close-knit family.

At the same time, we need to step up efforts to enable Singaporeans to realise their marriage and parenthood aspirations, including encouraging more marriages and births, and stabilising the median age of first marriage. We will continue to make preschools more affordable, strengthen our support for children with developmental needs, and care for our seniors. Employers can continue to empower their employees to make full use of parental leave provisions and flexible work arrangements to manage their family commitments. With these efforts, families will become even stronger and more resilient.

The Government will continue to support:

- Employers and co-workers doing their part in workplaces;
- Individuals choosing to make family our priority;
- Community partners to celebrate and uplift families.

Together, we will create a Singapore that is Made for Families.