

# Housework nearly equal between boys and girls

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

While women still do nearly twice as much housework as men, the division of labor between boys and girls doing household chores is nearly equal, according to a recent University of Michigan study.

The researchers studied change in housework as well as "marketwork"—work done for pay outside the home—between 1983 and 2015. This kind of core housework is the daily drudgery of washing dishes, sweeping and vacuuming, and doesn't include housework done by a cleaning service or home activities such as gardening and child care, says study author Frank Stafford, a professor of economics and research professor in the Survey Research Center at the Institute for Social Research at U-M.

In 1983, [married men](#) completed 6.4 hours of such housework, and 40.1 hours of marketwork. In 2015, they completed 7.8 hours of housework, and 40.4 hours of marketwork. Married [women](#)'s hours of participation in the workforce rose from an average of 19.1 in 1983 to 28.2 hours in 2015, and their hours of housework fell from 26.9 to 15.4 hours.

"In the old days, when young people got married, women radically increased housework substantially and decreased marketwork. It was the reverse for men. Now, it's not quite such a dramatic reallocation," Stafford said. "Women still do more, but not as much additional housework upon marriage as they did previously."

In fact, the total number of hours of housework declined from 1983 to 2015. Married couples did 33.3 hours of housework in 1983 compared to 23.2 hours in 2015. Stafford says technology has something to do with it. Instead of washing dishes by hand, families more often use dishwashers now. More families buy prepared foods.

Fewer overall housework hours also shows up for kids in these families as well. In 2002, [teenage boys](#) did 21.4 minutes of housework per day, while girls did 40.5 minutes of housework per day. But the amount of housework done by boys compared to girls has become relatively equal. In 2014, boys did 26.8 minutes of housework per day, while girls did 30 minutes.

It's likely, say the researchers, that boys' and girls' more equal division of household labor will continue into adulthood, continuing the long-term change to a more equal division of labor between men and women.

The total work hours—market hours plus housework hours—for both men and women remained relatively the same between 1983 and 2015. In 1983, married men spent 46.5 hours doing market and housework. Married women spent 46 hours both working outside the home and in the home. By 2015, married men spent a total of 48.2 hours working, while [married women](#) spent a total of 43.6 hours working. The proportion of housework hours fell, which means by 2015, more time was dedicated to work that brings money into the family.

"Total work has remained stable," Stafford said. "We're seeing this movement toward higher value marketwork and away from routine [housework](#). From this shift we have greater economic contributions by women and substantial economic growth."

**More information:** Change and Continuity in Housework: U.S. Men and Women. [www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018 ...hFSSmg1hmSrVcMESbGEM](http://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2018...hFSSmg1hmSrVcMESbGEM),

Provided by University of Michigan

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