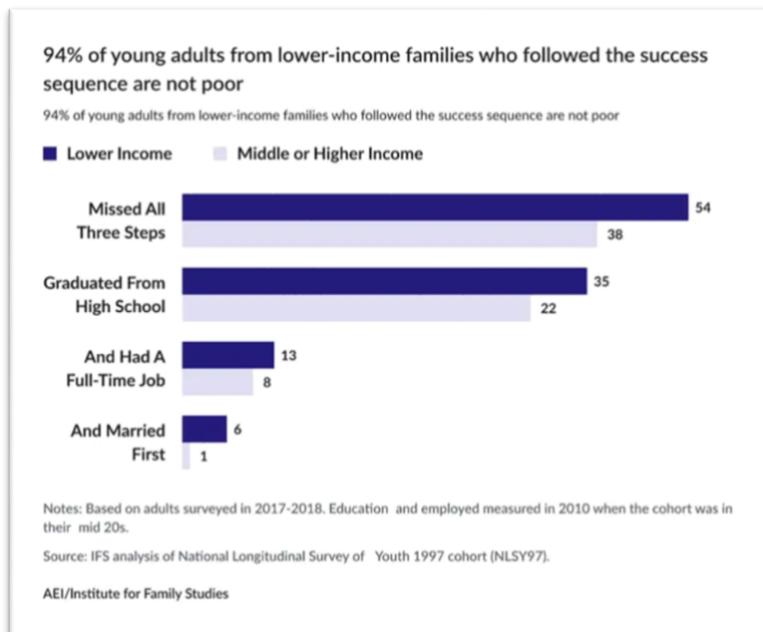


Fact Sheet: The Power of the Success Sequence

The “[Success Sequence](#)” is a proven formula to help young people succeed in America. It involves three basic steps: 1) get at least a high school degree, 2) get a job, and 3) get married before having children.

Overall Value of Success Sequence for Young Adults

- [97%](#) of men and women who follow this sequence are not poor as young adults.
- [86%](#) of men and women who follow the sequence end up in the middle or upper class as young adults.
- Young adults who follow the sequence have [52% lower odds](#) of being highly distressed compared to those who do not.
- Those who followed the sequence are [4 times more likely](#) to be living in an intact family as young adults.



Value of the Success Sequence by Race/Ethnicity and Income

- [94% of young adults from poor families](#) who follow the sequence are not poor as young men and women.

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- [More than 95% of black and Hispanics](#) who follow the sequence are not poor in young adulthood.

Unique Value of Marriage for Reducing Poverty and Increasing Family Stability

- Those who marry before having children are [60% less likely](#) to be poor than those who have children before marriage, even after controlling for employment status, race, ethnicity, family, and childhood poverty status, among other factors.
- Those who marry before having children are [139% more likely](#) to be middle/upper class than those who have children before marriage, after controlling for employment status, race, ethnicity, family, and childhood poverty status, among other factors.
- Those who marry after having children are almost [twice as likely](#) to be divorced, compared to those who marry before having children.
- [A Mathematica study](#) finds that marriage is a statistically significant predictor of family stability for young adults.

Note: The IFS Success Sequence analysis noted above is based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 cohort (NLSY97). The NLSY97 follows the lives of a national representative sample of 8,984 American youth (with black and Hispanic youth oversamples) born between 1980 to 1984. This cohort is also considered the oldest group of Millennials. The survey started in 1997, when the sample of respondents were ages 12 to 17. The interviews were conducted annually from 1997 to 2011 and biennially since then.

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