Single parents on the rise

Joyce Tillison tells her daughter, Britney, to wash her hands before preparing an after-school snack. Tillison juggles her schedule between work, school, and raising her teen-age daughter.

Census figures show single parents are raising more inner-city children, while married couples and their children continue moving to the suburbs.

Brett Seeger wakes his oldest son, Jeffrey, and makes sure the baby-eyed 10-year-old is at the table around 6 a.m. He then gets dressed and hits the road for his job as air traffic control manager at Metro Airport.

Before he leaves, his wife, Kim, takes over. She makes sure Jeffrey finishes eating, then gets his brother, Andrew, up and ready for school.

Kim works part time as a computer instructor at LSU, so on some days their youngest, Kayla, goes to daycare.

The Seegers' busy lives revolve around their children, like many families in this new Ascension Parish subdivision.

"It's a real nice neighborhood, and I can look out the door and see six or seven houses where my children can play right here on our cul-de-sac," Brett Seeger said.

Joyce Tillison, the Seegers and 23,347 other households in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area helped bring about some significant changes in the past 10 years, Census 2000 figures show.

A growing share of inner-city children are being raised by single parents, while the suburbs continue to fill with married couples and their children.

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By TOM GUARISCO

Joyce Tillison, a single mom, is at one end of a parenting spectrum that is reshaping Baton Rouge and the surrounding area.

Each weekday morning, she steps out the door of her North Baton Rouge home before the sun rises. She doesn't eat breakfast with her teen-age daughter, who is still fast asleep.

But around mid-afternoon, the single mom picks up Britney from school and takes her home to their working class neighborhood of brick houses in Glen Oaks, north of Airline Highway.

Tillison supports her all girl family with her salary as a clerical worker, and she is enrolled at LSU to become a teacher.

"I'm alwaysrippin' and runnin','" she said.

Some evenings, Tillison studies on the front steps, keeping an eye on Britney as she visits with kids in the neighborhood.

"It's not that I don't trust her," Tillison said. "I worry. That's just a mother's job.

The other end of the parenting spectrum belongs to families like the Seegers, who live 20 minutes southeast of Baton Rouge in Prairieville.

On weekdays, they eat their breakfast in shifts.

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Advocate staff photo by Sharon Stabiley

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Percent of children in single-parent households

Single parents are more prevalent in inner-city areas of Baton Rouge than the map at left shows, according to figures from the 2000 U.S. Census. The percentages on the map below show parish-wide figures for each of the four parishes in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan area.

Overall numbers for four-parish area

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Advocate map
Who's raising children?

Parents

Although she attends college, Joyce Tillson carries her job as a typist at Otterbein Medical Center on Summerville Drive. She often starts her day at 5 a.m. to make time for her coursework.

Deirdre Parsons, a former Baton Rouge pediatrician, says that children who live with only one parent are generally more resilient than those who live with two parents. "The studies show that children who live with only one parent are generally more resilient than those who live with two parents," Parsons said. "They tend to do better at least when they get older." Parsons added that despite the challenges, exposed to violence and sexual abuse.

Some of the resources can be found on the website of the National Center for Children in Poverty, which offers a range of resources and programs to help children and families.

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Advocates for Children

Kim Seeger helps her kids ride their riding daughter, Kayla, along as another neighborhood child follows on a scooter. Seeger and her husband chose their neighborhood so their children would have other kids to play with, and so they could attend public school in Ascension Parish.

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Parents

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Single parents remain in the majority as children continue to grow in the 1990s. There were 10,000 chil- dren in the parish last year in single parent homes, according to the Louisiana Department of Health and Human Services. Single parents now account for 40 percent of the children in the parish, up from 30 percent in 1970. In the 1970s, single parents accounted for 20 percent of the children in the parish.

The effect of single parenthood on the health of a child raised by a single parent.

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Source: Associated Press

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## Parents

**CONTACT PERSONS:**

- Grandparents
- Other relatives

**Relations:**

- Siblings
- Cousins

**Activities:**

- Sports
- Music
- Arts
- Volunteering

**Resources:**

- Libraries
- Internet

**Community:**

- Neighborhood
- School
- Church

**Challenges:**

- Time management
- Financial constraints
- Health issues

**Support:**

- Family
- Friends
- Community organizations

**Goals:**

- Education
- Career
- Family

**Resources:**

- Financial aid
- Scholarships
- Grants

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## Single mother, father households

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For Steve Harris, single father sometimes boils down to making

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