statistiche report

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BIRTHS AND FERTILITY OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION | YEAR 2026

Births and the average number of children per woman continue to decline

Births continue to decline: in 2025, there were 355,772 births, down by 3.8% over 2024 (-14 thousand units).

According to provisional data, there were 196,864 births in the period January-July 2026, a decrease of 1.1% compared with the same period in 2025 (-2 thousand).

The average number of children per woman reaches a new all-time low: in 2025, it stands at 1.14 (down from 1.18 in 2024). The provisional estimate for the period January–July 2026 shows a fertility rate of 1.13.

The fertility rate among women with a **high education** is lower (1.09 children per woman) and occurs later in life (average age at childbirth of 34.9 years) than among women with a **low education** (1.58 children and 29.7 years).

Also in 2025, **Sofia** and **Leonardo** are the names parents prefer for their children.

In 2025, 7.3% of newborns were given **double surnames**, one from each parent. The percentage was 6.7% in 2024..

1,07

Average number of children per woman with Italian citizenship in 2025

1,74 for foreign women

32 years

The mean age of mothers at the birth of the first child

31,9 years in 2024

44,1%

Percentage of births outside marriage

+0,9 percentage points over2024

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Around 14 thousand fewer births in 2025

In 2025, there were 355,772 births residents in Italy, six per 1,000 inhabitants. Compared to 2024, the number of births decreased by 3.8%, about 14 thousand fewer births. Since 2008, the year with the highest number of live births in the 2000s (over 576,000, nearly 10 births per 1,000 inhabitants), the decline has been 38.3%, representing an overall reduction of over 220 thousand births.

According to the first provisional data for the period January–July 2026, the number of births continues to decline, although at a slower rate than the decline recorded in the previous year. In the first seven months of the year, there were 196,864 births, about 2 thousand fewer (-1.1%) than in the same period of 2025 (198,975 births).

In recent years, the decline in births has been partly driven by the decrease in the number of potential parents, who themselves were born from the 1980s onward, a period during which the decline in fertility became increasingly pronounced. Women who are currently between the ages of 30 and 40, an age group that accounts for over 65% of current births, were born between 1985 and 1995, a period during which the average number of children per woman fell from 1.45 to 1.19, the lowest figure of the last century. However, the current decline in births is also the result of an increasingly low tendency to have children. In 2025, the average number of children per woman falls further, reaching 1.14 and marking a new all-time low, following the previous low in 2024 (1.18).

The number of births to both Italian and foreign parents is declining. Births to Italian parents, which account for more than three-quarters of total births (77.4%) and are equal to 275,330 in 2025, are down by 4.8% over 2024 and by 42.6% over 2008. Births to foreign parents, totaling 49,002 in 2025, are down by 3.1% compared to 2024 and by 38.7% compared to 2012, the year in which the highest number was recorded. Births to mixed-nationality couples (Italian father/foreign mother or foreign father/Italian mother), numbering 31,440 in 2025, increased by 4.2% compared to 2024 and by 11.8% compared to 2012.

In 2025, the number of both first and subsequent order births continues to decline. The number of first children amount at 174,842, down by 3.7%; the number of second children (127,479) is down by 4.8%; and the number of third and subsequent order children (53,451) is down by 2.1%. The decline in first- and second-born children is more pronounced in the Mezzogiorno: the number of first-born children falls by 5.3% (compared with -2.3% in the North and -3.9% in the Centre), and the number of second-born children by 5.5% (-4.3% in the North and -4.6% in the Centre). The trends observed in 2025 are consistent with the pattern that has been in place since 2008, when, alongside the decline in second-born children (-41.1%), a significant reduction in first-born children (-38.6%) also began.

The challenges in realizing all or part of reproductive plans are linked to a variety of factors, including longer periods of education, the precarious conditions of youth employment, and difficulties in accessing the housing market. These are accompanied by challenges in conciliating work and family life, as well as the choice to postpone or renounce to parenthood in order to focus on alternatives to having children.

MAIN INDICATORS OF BIRTHS AND FERTILITY. Years 2008, 2013 and 2018-2025

	2008	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Births	576,659	514,308	439,747	420,084	404,892	400,249	393,333	379,890	369,944	355,772
Birth rate	9.7	8.5	7.3	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.4	6.3	6.0 (a)
First order births (a) %	49.4	48.9	46.6	47.7	47.5	46.6	48.9	49.1	49.1	49.1
Births to at least one foreign parent (%)	16.8	20.4	22.0	22.0	21.8	21.5	20.9	21.3	21.8	22.6
Births to both foreign parents (%)	*12.6*	*15.1*	*14.9*	*15.0*	*14.8*	*14.2*	*13.5*	*13.5*	*13.7*	*13.8*
Births to mixed couples (%)	*4.2*	*5.3*	*7.1*	*7.0*	*7.0*	*7.3*	*7.4*	*7.8*	*8.1*	*8.8*
Births to both Italian parents (%)	83.2	79.6	78.0	78.0	78.2	78.5	79.1	78.7	78.2	77.4
Births outside marriage (%)	19.7	26.0	32.3	33.4	35.8	39.9	41.5	42.4	43.2	44.1
Total fertility rate	1.44	1.39	1.31	1.27	1.24	1.25	1.24	1.20	1.18	1.14 (a)
Total fertility rate Italian women	1.33	1.29	1.22	1.18	1.17	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.11	1.07 (a)
Total fertility rate foreign women	2.53	2.09	2.03	1.99	1.89	1.87	1.86	1.82	1.81	1.74 (a)
Mean age at childbirth	31.0	31.4	32.0	32.1	32.2	32.4	32.4	32.5	32.6	32.7 (a)
Mean age at childbirth Italian mothers	31.6	32.1	32.5	32.6	32.7	32.8	32.9	33.0	33.1	33.2 (a)
Mean age at childbirth foreign mothers	27.5	28.5	29.0	29.1	29.3	29.7	29.5	29.6	29.7	29.8 (a)

(a) Estimate.
Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

Children born to foreign parents is declining, children born to mixed couples is rising

During the first decade of the 2000s, the increase in births to couples with at least one foreign partner was a particularly significant phenomenon, contributing to the overall recovery in the number of births during that period. In the following decade, however, the trend changed and a decline was observed, causing this category of births to fall from 108,005 in 2012 to 80,942 in 2023. In the last two years, this trend appears to have stabilized, so much so that from 2024 to 2025, the number of births to at least one foreign parent fell from 80,761 to 80,442, accounting for 22.6% of total births.

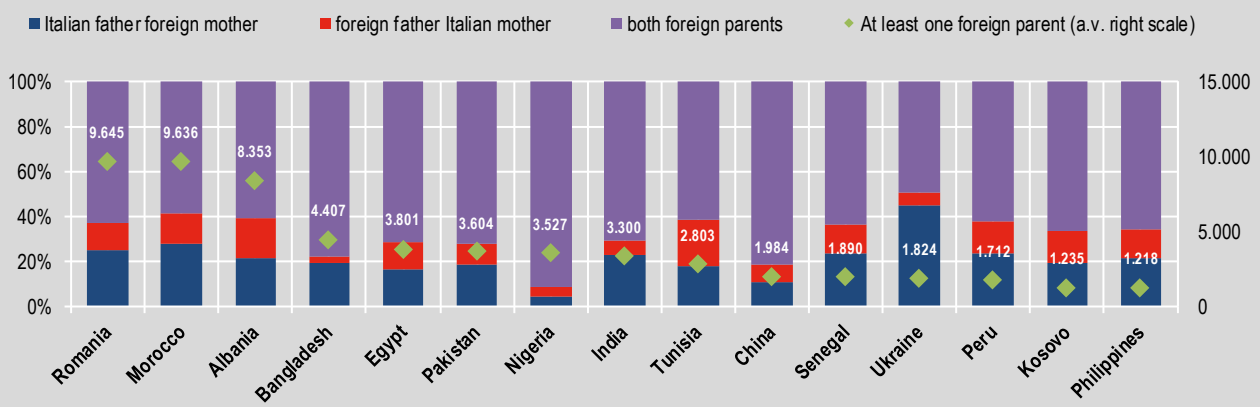
Recent data on children born to mixed-nationality couples (Italian father/foreign mother or foreign father/Italian mother) and children born to parents who are both foreign nationals highlight some differences. Births to mixed-nationality couples, which account for 8.8% of the total, increase by a further 4.2% in 2025 compared to 2024 (31,440 births versus 30,168), confirming a trend of growth that has been ongoing since 2020. The increase observed over the past year is particularly pronounced for children born to mixed-nationality couples where the father is foreign (+11.0%), while it is slight when the mother is foreign (+0.9%). Births to parents who are both foreign nationals, which account for 13.8% of the total, decline to 49,002 in 2025 (down from 50,593 in 2024), marking a 3.1% decrease. The decline in births among couples with Italian parents is more pronounced, at -4.8%.

There is a higher incidence of births to mixed-nationality and foreign couples in the Centre-North, where the foreign population is more stable and deeply established. In 2025, the share of these births out of the total stands at 31.2% in the North and 24.7% in the Cenre, while in the Mezzogiorno it amounts to 10.0%, well below the national average (22.6%).

Considering only children born to parents who are both foreign nationals, the pattern remains similar: in the Mezzogiorno, although the percentage has increased since 2024, it remains lower than elsewhere (6.1% compared to a national average of 13.8%). In the North, the percentage of foreign-born children is 18.9%, while in the Centre it is 15.2%. For the first year, Liguria is the region with the highest proportion of foreign-born children relative to the total (21.8%), followed by Emilia-Romagna (21.6%) and Lombardia (19.4%). In Central Italy, Toscana stands out (17.8%), while in Mezzogiorno, the percentage ranges from a low of 4.4% in Sardegna to a high of 10.0% in Abruzzo.

Taking into account the specific nationality of the parents, the most common among foreign nationalities is Romanian (9,645 children born in 2025 with at least one parent of that nationality), followed by Moroccan (9,636) and Albanian (8,353) (Figure 1). As regards the composition of the parental couple, significant differences are observed in terms of homogamy. For example, amongst Nigerian nationals, in 91.2% of cases both parents hold that nationality, compared with 8.8% of cases where only one partner holds it. The proportion of same-nationality couples is also particularly high amongst Chinese parents (81.4% of cases). Conversely, the lowest proportion of same-nationality couples is recorded for Ukrainian citizenship (50.4%), most often involving a couple where the mother is Ukrainian and the father is Italian (44.6%). Conversely, in the opposite scenario – where the father is a foreign national with an Italian partner – the nationality with the highest proportion of mixed-nationality births out of the total is Tunisian (20.2%).

FIGURE 1. BIRTHS WITH AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN PARENT FOR THE TOP 15 COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP. Year 2025, absolute values and percentage composition (a)



a) The 15 countries of citizenship refer to the countries with the highest number of births to at least one foreign parent in Italy.
Source: Rilevazione delle nascite

44.1% of births occurs outside marriage

The number of births to unmarried couples in 2025 stands at 156,874. Compared with 2008, this figure has risen by a total of over 43 thousand, but in the last year – as in the two previous years – it has fallen by 1.8%, although this decline is less pronounced than that for births within marriage. The number of births within marriage, in fact, fell by 5.4% compared with 2024, standing at 198,898. The proportion of births outside marriage thus continues to rise: in 2025 it stands at 44.1%, up 0.9 percentage points on 2024 and up 24.4 percentage points on 2008. In particular, the proportion of children born to parents who have never been married is rising (from 36.9% in 2024 to 38.0% in 2025), whilst the proportion of births to couples in which at least one parent has been previously married continues to fall, albeit slightly (from 6.2% in 2024 to 6.1% in 2025).

For the first time, in the Centre, one in two children is born outside marriage (50.1%) In the North, this proportion stands at 43.1%, whilst in the Mezzgiorno– although it continues to record the lowest level – it has risen to 42.3%, following an increase of 2 percentage points. The differences between the different areas of the country therefore continue to narrow, with the Mezzogiorno now very close to the figure for the North.

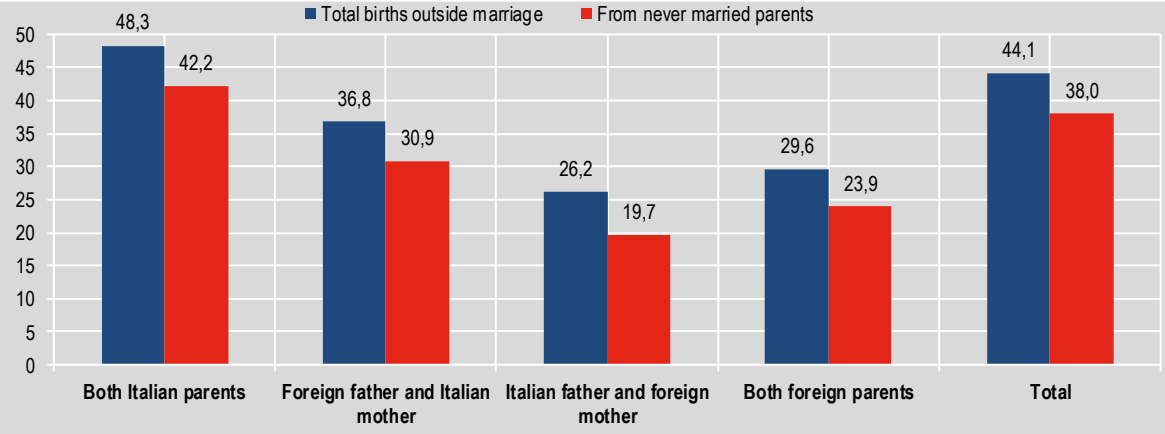
Sardegna remains the region with the highest proportion of births outside marriage (59.4%), followed by Lazio (51.7%). In the Mezzogiorno, the highest proportion is found in Abruzzo (49.9%). The lowest proportions are recorded in Basilicata (33.0 %) and Calabria (35.7 %).

The proportion of children born outside marriage continues to be higher amongst parents who are both Italian (48.3% in 2025). Amongst mixed-nationality couples, the proportion of children born outside marriage is higher in cases where the father is a foreign national (36.8%) than in those where the mother is a foreign national (26.2%). For children born to parents both of foreign nationality, the proportion born to unmarried couples stands at 29.6 per cent, a full 18.7 percentage points lower than the proportion observed among children born to Italian couples (Figure 2).

The trend of having children outside marriage amongst younger people is continuing, a sign that the ways in which younger generations plan and form families are changing. For mothers aged up to 24, the proportion of children born outside marriage stands at 62.4%, whilst for those aged between 25 and 34 it is 44.5%. However, if both partners in the couple are Italian, these figures rise to 78.7% and 49.5% respectively. For those aged 34 and over, the proportion of children born outside marriage stands at 39.7% for all couples and 42.2% for couples where both parents are Italian.

Births outside marriage mainly involve couples where both parents are unmarried (86.2% of the nearly 157 thousand births outside marriage in 2025), confirming an increasingly widespread trend of not considering marriage a necessary condition for having children. Among mothers aged up to 24, for example, the proportion of births to parents who have never been married accounts for 57.9% of the total, compared with 39.6% among those aged between 25 and 34 and 31.5% among mothers over the age of 34.

FIGURE 2. BIRTHS OUTSIDE MARRIAGE BY PARENTS' CITIZENSHIP. Year 2025, percentage values.



Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

The fertility reaches a new all-time low, the average age at childbirth rises to 32.7 years

The average number of children per woman continues to fall in 2025, standing at 1.14, a figure lower than the 1.18 recorded in 2024, which in turn had already fallen below the previous all-time low of 1.19 set in 1995. It is therefore currently well below not only the so-called replacement threshold of 2.1 children on average per woman, which would ensure generational replacement, but also the figure of 1.44 recorded consecutively over the three-year period 2008–2010, the highest level of the new millennium.

Fertility is falling amongst both Italian and foreign women. The average number of children per woman amongst the former is falling from 1.11 in 2024 to 1.07 (it was 1.33 in 2010). For foreign women, fertility is estimated at 1.74 children per woman in 2025, down from both 2024 (1.81) and 2010, when it was still above the replacement threshold (2.31). However, fertility among foreign women remains at high levels and the difference with Italian women remains stable.

The decline in fertility in 2025 is uniform across the country. The Centre continues to be the region with the lowest fertility rate, at 1.07 in 2025 (down from 1.11 in 2024). This is followed by the North, where the average number of children per woman falls from 1.19 to 1.15, and the Mezzogiorno, with a figure of 1.16 (1.20 in 2024). Sardegna remains the region with the lowest fertility rate and the only one with a rate below one (0.85, down from 0.91 in 2024). The Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, on the other hand, retains the highest fertility rate, at 1.54, up from 1.51 in 2024. The only other region to show an increase is Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste, which rises from 1.05 to 1.11. The Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen is followed, some way behind, by the Autonomous Province of Trento (1.24) and Sicily and Campania, both with a fertility rate of 1.22.

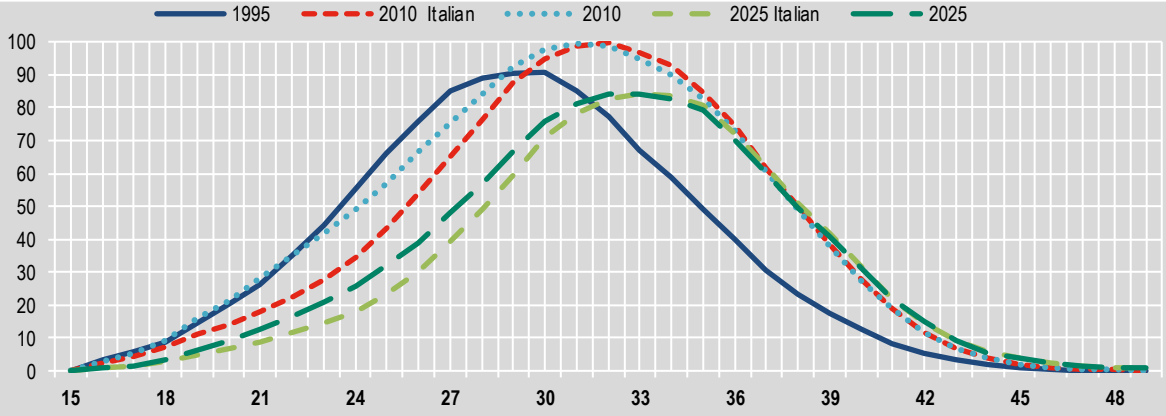
According to estimates based on the first provisional data on births for the period January–July 2026, the fertility rate continues to fall, albeit very slightly. In the first seven months of 2026, the average number of children per woman is estimated at 1.13.

The mean age at childbirth registers a slight increase in 2025, rising from 32.6 years in 2024 to 32.7. Compared with 1995, the increase is almost three years. The average age at first childbirth reaches 32 years for the first time, an increase of around four years compared with 1995, when it stood at 28.1 years. The shift towards having children at an increasingly later age is evident from the analysis of fertility rates by mother's age over time. Compared with 1995, fertility rates are higher among women aged over 30 and lower among younger women (Figure 3).

The trend towards later childbearing affects both Italian and foreign women. In 2025, the mean age at childbirth for Italian women is 33.2 years (33.1 in 2024), whilst for foreign women it rises to 29.9 years (29.7 in 2024).

The postponement of childbirth continues to be more pronounced in Centre and North Italy, where the average age at childbirth is 33.1 and 32.8 years respectively. The Mezzogiorno follows with 32.4. Basilicata, Sardegna and Lazio are the regions with the highest average age at childbirth (33.6 in the former and 33.2 in the latter two), whilst Sicilia remains the region with the youngest mothers (31.8 years in 2025, a slight increase over 2024).

FIGURA 3. AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES. Years 1995, 2010 (Italian and total) and 2025 (Italian and total) (a), values per 1.000 women.



(a) Estimate.
Source: Istat, Rilevazione sulle nascite

The completed fertility for the generations born in the mid-1970s is 1.44

Period fertility, measured as the average number of children per woman in a calendar year, summarises the reproductive behaviour of different generations and is influenced by phenomena such as the postponement or recovery of reproductive choices, which may also be linked to the historical and economic context. Fertility by birth cohort, on the other hand, measures the tendency of different generations to have children, thereby highlighting underlying changes in reproductive choices.

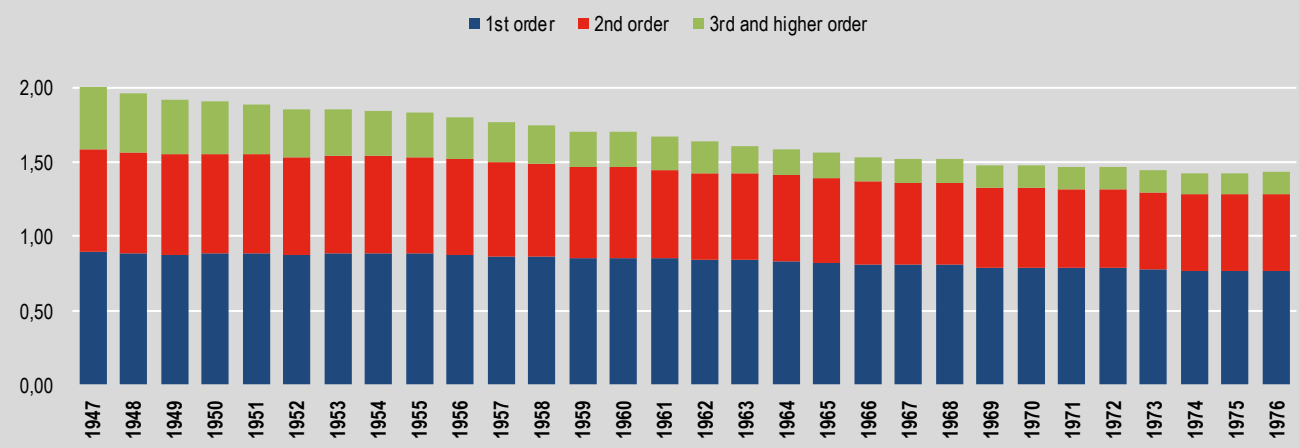
The analysis by generation reveals a picture of a steady decline in fertility, without the fluctuations observed in the analysis by period. Whilst women born in 1947 had 2.01 children per woman – a figure not far from the replacement threshold – those born in 1976 (who turned 49 in 2025, effectively ending their reproductive years) recorded a final number of children of 1.44 per woman. What has declined most significantly across the generations is fertility for third and subsequent births (from 0.42 to 0.16 children, Figure 4), whilst the proportion of women who had no children by the end of their reproductive life has increased. Among women born in 1947, one in ten is in this situation, whilst in the 1976 cohort, the figure rises to almost one in four women without children (23.0 per cent). This increase, on the one hand, reflects the challenges associated with having children; on the other, it suggests the emergence of lifestyle choices that may involve alternatives to parenthood.

The tendency to postpone the decision to become parents until an increasingly later age, already highlighted in the analysis by period, is also evident when the data are examined by generation. For women born in 1947, the average age at childbirth was 26.9 years, whilst the average age at the birth of their first child was 24.8 years. For women born in 1976, by contrast, the average age at childbirth was 31.4 years, with the first child born on average at 30.0 years.

The postponement of childbirth contributes to a reduction in the completed fertility of the generations. Indeed, the longer people delay becoming parents, the shorter the timeframe available for realising their family plans, with the result that they more or less voluntarily decide not to have any further children after their first.

The trend amongst younger generations to have fewer children, and at an increasingly later age, is widespread across all areas of the country and reflects a process of downward territorial convergence in reproductive behaviour. For women born in 1947, the difference in fertility rates between those living in the Mezzogiorno (2.43 children per woman) and those living in the North (1.76) stands at 0.67 children. Moving on to the 1976 cohort, this difference falls to 0.14 children, reflecting the fact that women living in the Mezzogiorno have a fertility rate of 1.52, whilst those in the North have a fertility rate of 1.38.

FIGURE 4. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WOMAN BY BIRTH ORDER. Generations 1947-1976.



Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

Lower and later fertility among women with a high education

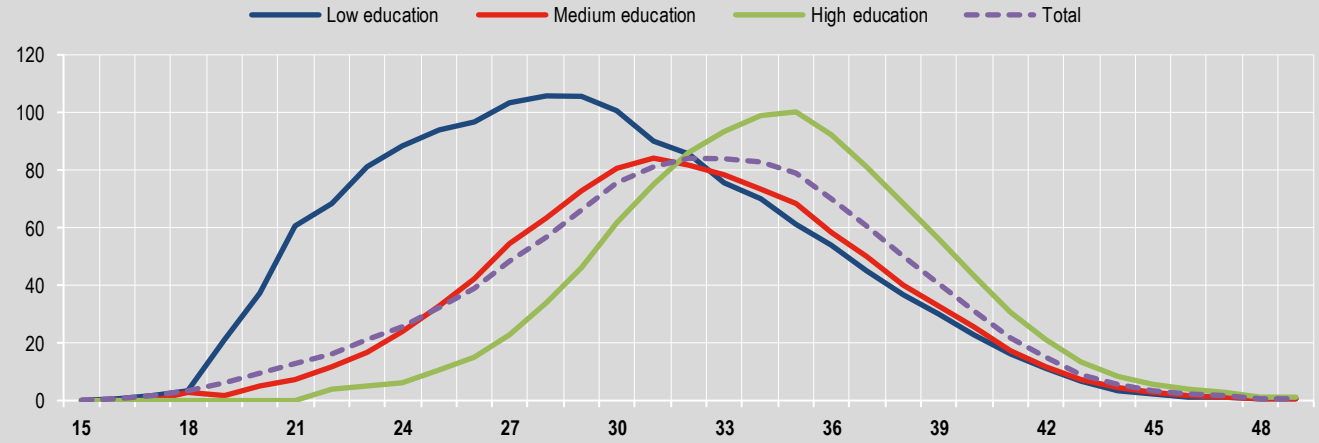
In our country, the ongoing postponement of parenthood and the trend towards having fewer children are part of a broader picture characterised by the postponement, in people's lives, of a series of events characterising the transition to adulthood. The increasing length of time spent in education and the difficulties faced by young people in accessing the labour market and the housing market contribute to delaying their independence from their family of origin, whilst also having a significant influence on the postponement of parenthood. Women's greater investment in education and work may lead to an increase in the opportunity costs of having a child, particularly where there are difficulties in reconciling work and family life and inequalities in the distribution of family care responsibilities, leading to a further redefinition of family plans. Analysing fertility by mothers' educational attainment allows to identify differences in the reproductive behaviour of groups of women characterised by different life courses and educational backgrounds.

An analysis of data by educational attainment for women who have had children, available from 2023, shows that, in Italy, the women with the lowest fertility rates are those with medium and high education. In 2025, with a total fertility rate of 1.14, the average number of children per woman among those with medium education is estimated at 1.06 and that among those with high education at 1.09. Women with low education, on the other hand, have a fertility rate of 1.58. A decline in fertility is observed over time across all categories, though it is more pronounced for women with low education (-0.08 children from 2023 to 2025) and for those with medium education (-0.10). The fertility rate of women with high education, on the other hand, remains more stable over the three years under consideration (-0.03 children). Partly due to this slight difference in the intensity of the decline, the gap between the fertility rates of women with low education and those of women with high education narrows from 2023 to 2025.

The reproductive calendar also varies according to educational attainment. Women with low education have, on average, children before the age of 30 (29.7 years in 2025, 29.6 in 2024 and 29.5 in 2023). Women with medium education have an average age at childbirth of 32.5 years (it was 32.3 in 2023 and 2024), whilst those with a high education have an average age of 34.9 – the highest – confirming that the greater investment of time in education can lead to a postponement of motherhood. This observation is confirmed by an analysis of age-specific rates: the rate curves for women with a medium education and those with a high education are shifted further to the right along the axis and concentrated within a narrower age range (Figure 5).

The gap in fertility rates between women with high education and those with low education is evident across all geographical regions. However, in the Centre-North it is smaller than in the Mezzogiorno. For example, in 2025, in the Centre, the difference stands at 0.40 children between women with low education and those with high education, whilst in the Islands it rises to 0.61 children. In the latter area, in fact, this is influenced by the extremely low fertility rate amongst women with high education (1.00 in 2025, compared with a maximum value of 1.13 recorded in the North-East).

FIGURE 5. AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES BY MOTHER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION. Year 2025 (a), values per 1.000 women



(a) Estimate.
Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

Parents' preferences regarding the choice of their children's names remain stable

The most popular male name chosen by parents continues to be Leonardo, which retains the first position it achieved in 2018. Edoardo and Tommaso confirm their second and third positions on the podium, respectively. Francesco, on the other hand, having already dropped out of the top three in 2023, has climbed one place compared with last year, rising from sixth to fifth place (Figure 6).

Compared with 2024, the top four positions in the list of female names remain unchanged, with Sofia in first position, Aurora in second, Ginevra in third and Vittoria in fourth. In fifth position, Beatrice has replaced Giulia, who has dropped to sixth place compared with last year.

Leonardo, who in 2024 ranked first in as many as 12 regions, in 2025 leads only in part of the North (Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste, Lombardia, Emilia-Romagna and the Autonomous Province of Trento); in Veneto, it shares the top position with Tommaso, and in Friuli-Venezia Giulia with Edoardo. The latter ranks first in Piemonte and Liguria, whilst Noah retains the leading position in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen. Edoardo also tops the list in almost the whole Centre Italy, with the exception of Umbria, where Tommaso ranks first. In Mezzogiorno, Campania, Puglia and Calabria all see the same name confirmed in first place (Antonio in Campania, Francesco in Puglia and Calabria). Changes, however, have taken place in Molise, where Mattia has taken the first place; in Abruzzo and Sardegna, with Edoardo; in Basilicata, with Francesco; and, finally, in Sicily, where Giuseppe has regained the first place it previously held.

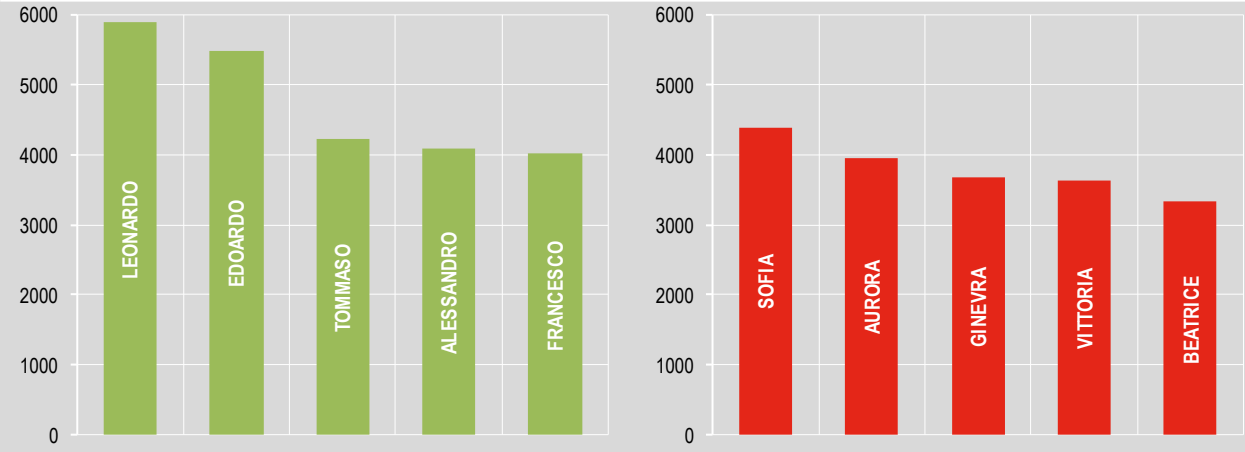
Among female children, Sofia is the most popular name in Sicily and in all the North regions, with the exception of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen (where Emma is in first place), the Aosta Valley/Vallée d'Aoste (Amelie) and the Autonomous Province of Trento (Alice). The situation is more varied in Centre-South Italy, where Ginevra is in the first position in Umbria, Lazio and Molise (with Sofia), Matilde is the top name in Tuscany, Vittoria in Campania and Beatrice in Sardinia. Aurora ranks first in Marche and Abruzzo (with Sofia), whilst Giulia is the first in Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria.

Foreign-born male children are mainly called Adam, Rayan, Amir, Muhammad and Liam, but also Leonardo and Matteo. Among foreign-born female children, as with Italians, Sofia is the most common name, followed by Sara and Amira.

The preferences of foreign parents vary according to their nationality. Looking at the top four nationalities by number of children born to foreign nationals parents, the tendency to choose a name that is common in the host country remains pronounced within the Romanian community. Indeed, among the most common names for males are David, Leonardo, Matteo and Luca, whilst for females they include Sofia, Amelia, Emma and Sofia Maria. Among Albanian parents, by contrast, there is a confirmed preference for names from their country of origin when it comes to sons (Amar, Liam and Aron), though this is less pronounced in the case of daughters (Luna, Emily and Amelia).

Parents from Morocco and Bangladesh continue to choose names more closely linked to the traditions of their country of origin. Moroccan male children are mainly called Adam, Amir and Rayan; Moroccan female children are mainly called Amira, Nour and Sara. Parents from Bangladesh mainly choose the names Anas, Ayan and Ayman for their sons, and Anabia, Ayesha and Sara for their daughters.

FIGURE 6. THE FIVE MOST COMMON MALE AND FEMALE NAMES AMONG BIRTHS. Year 2025, absolute values.



Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

Births with double surnames common among first-born children and unmarried couples

In 2025, births registered with both the father's and mother's surnames accounted for 7.3% of the total, an increase of 4.9 percentage points compared with 2020. Whilst an increase was observed across all geographical areas, the phenomenon remains more prevalent in the Centre-North: here, in 2025, the figures stand at 8-10% (10.2% in the North-West, 8.0% in the North-East and 9.0% in the Centre), whilst in the South and on the Islands, the proportion of births with double surnames is 3.5% and 4.2% respectively.

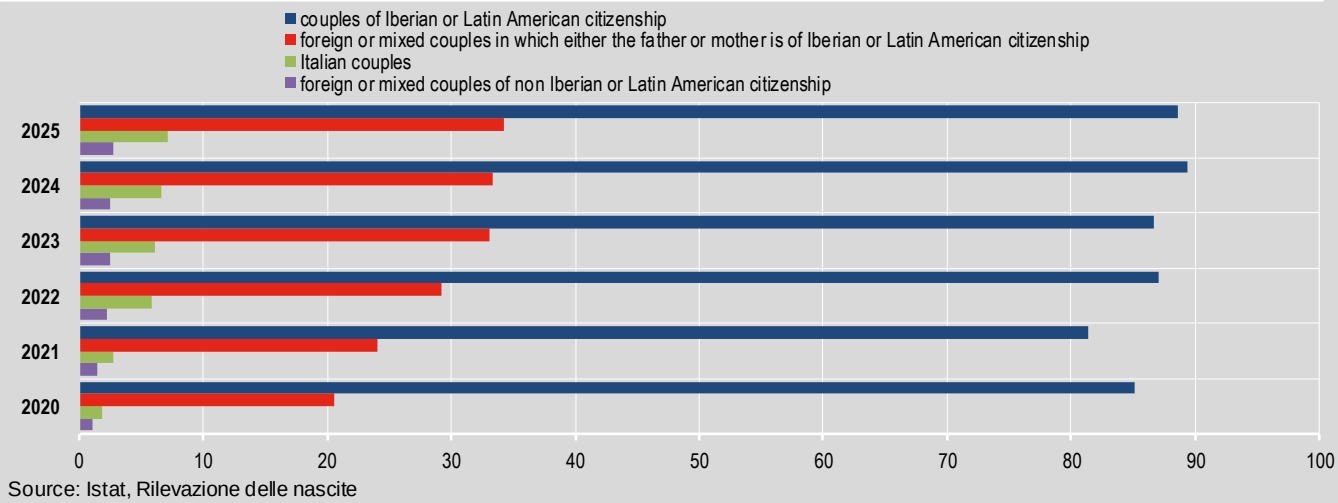
The share of children born with a double surname continues to be higher amongst first-born children (9.3% in 2025, up 6.4 percentage points on 2020) than amongst second-born children (6.0%) and third and subsequent order births (3.4%). This difference can be explained by the fact that parents of first-born children are more free to take the opportunity to give their child a double surname, compared with those who, having already had other children before the legislative change (Constitutional Court sentence No. 286 of 21 December 2016), prefer not to create a break in the family line.

Married couples are more likely to continue the tradition of giving their children a single surname. Only 6.0% of children born in 2025 to such couples have a double surname (5.3% in 2024). Among unmarried couples, however, the proportion rises to 8.9% for parents who have never been married and to 8.7% for parents who were previously married (in 2024, both figures stood at 8.5%).

There are also differences depending on the type of couple – that is, whether they are Italian, foreign or mixed. In the case of the foreign population, for example, the choice of a double surname may be influenced by the legislation and cultural traditions of their countries of origin, which, moreover, vary from one country to another. The highest proportion of double surnames is found among children born to mixed couples consisting of an Italian mother and a foreign father (15.2% in 2025), but in the opposite scenario – a foreign mother and an Italian father – the figure drops to 7.1%. Among children born to Italian couples, the proportion stands at 7.2%. Finally, couples in which both parents are foreign give their children a double surname in only 5.8% of cases.

A separate section should be devoted to couples in which at least one parent holds Iberian or Latin American citizenship (Spain, Portugal and Central and South America). In particular, in 2025, when both parents come from these countries, the proportion of children born with a double surname is 88.6%, whereas if only one parent holds such citizenship, the figure falls to 34.2% (Figure 7). In these countries, in fact, the rule of double surnames applies, meaning that children are required to take the first surname of both parents. For this reason, even when deciding to live in Italy, these parents tend to maintain this tradition and, indeed, amongst them, the proportion of children born with double surnames was already high well before the legislative intervention.

FIGURE 7. BIRTHS WITH DOUBLE SURNAME BY PARENTS' CITIZENSHIP. Years 2020-2025, percentage values.



Source: Istat, Rilevazione delle nascite

Glossary

Average number of children per woman (or total fertility rate): sum of specific fertility rates calculated by relating, for each childbearing age (15-49 years), the number of live births to the average annual female population.

Births outside marriage: births to parents who are not married to each other.

Birth rate: ratio of the number of live births for the year to the average population, multiplied by 1,000.

Births to at least one foreign parent: total number of foreign births plus births to mixed couples.

Births to mixed couples: births with Italian citizenship who have one Italian parent and one foreign parent.

Citizenship: legal bond between an individual and a State, required and documented for the exercise of rights and subjection to particular duties.

Completed fertility: the average number of children per woman, as represented by a single generation of women, follows the same computational logic as the total fertility rate, but is based on longitudinal data rather than a calendar year.

Fertility rate by age (age-specific fertility rate): the ratio between the number of live births to women aged between x and x+1 and the average number of resident women of that age in a year.

Foreign-born: births to parents who are both foreign nationals.

Foreign resident: a person with foreign citizenship or who is stateless.

Mean age at childbirth: the mean age at birth of mothers expressed in years and tenths of a year. The indicator is calculated for the female population in the ages 15-49 years, weighted according to the distribution of age specific fertility rates.

Resident population: persons who are normally resident in a Municipality, even if they are absent because they are temporarily present in another municipality or abroad.

Metodhological note

Normative framework

The national normative framework refers to:

Law 24 december 1954, n. 1228 “Ordinamento delle anagrafi della popolazione residente”.

D.P.R. Decree of the President of the Republic 30 May 1989, n. 223 “Approvazione del nuovo regolamento anagrafico della popolazione residente”.

Law 27 October 1988, n. 470 “Anagrafe e censimento degli italiani all'estero”.

D.P.R. Decree of the President of the Republic 6 settembre 1989, n. 323 “Approvazione del regolamento per l'esecuzione della legge 27 ottobre 1988, n. 470, sull'Anagrafe ed il censimento degli italiani all'estero”.

At European level:

Regulation (EU) n. 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on “European demographic statistics”.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) n. 205/2014 of 4 March 2014 on “laying down uniformed conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council on European demographic statistics, as regards breakdowns of data, deadlines and data revisions”.

The data collection is part of the official statistics information, as it is included in the National Statistical Programme.

Description of sources

The systematic collection of births among the resident population is carried out through the National Register of the Resident Population (ANPR) administrative system.

Complementary sources are:

Provisional estimates of demographic and social indicators;

Permanent census of population and housing;

Intercensal reconstruction of the resident population by age, sex and municipality, years 2002-2019;

Reconstruction of the demographic balance, years 2001-2018.

Survey design, population, unit of analysis and unit of measurement

The collection is exhaustive and takes place annually. From 2020 onwards, the reference year for the collection is the year of the event; in previous years, the reference year was the year of registration in the Population Register.

The survey units are the Population Registers of Italian municipalities where live births are registered as residents.

The analysis units are live births (in Italy or abroad) residing in municipalities following registration in the Population Register at birth.

Data collection

Currently, all data is collected electronically, through the accounting of individual models relating to birth registrations acquired through notifications sent by Italian municipalities to the ANPR (National Register of Resident Population) system.

The variables are, for the birth, name, gender, place of residence and birth, citizenship, birth order and marital status of parents (births to married or unmarried parents) and, for the parents, citizenship, marital status and age.

Classification systems used

Two Istat classifications are used:

The classification of municipal codes (Istat codes with 6 numbers with provincial and municipal code): https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/6789

The classification of foreign countries (Istat codes with 3 numbers) for the unique coding of foreign citizenships: https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/6747

Data elaboration techniques and tools

The variable 'birth order', not being directly measured, is estimated based on the variable 'number of minor children' reconstructed using municipal registry lists (LAC).

Output

For the study of demographic determinants of births, data are published on live births by age of the mother, by age and citizenship of the mother, by birth order of the child, by foreign country of citizenship of the foreign-born child, and by citizenship of the parents. The information provided is produced through numerous classifications of live births, including with respect to various socio-demographic variables of the parents (age, marital status of the parents).

For the study of the demographic determinants of fertility, the commonly used indicators are: age-specific fertility rates, total fertility rate, mean age at childbirth (cfr. Glossary). These are calculated in relation to the total, but also by order of birth or the mother's nationality.

Confidentiality

In compliance with regulations on statistical confidentiality and personal data protection, the basic data collected during the process may be made available to users who specifically request it and released in anonymous form.

Dissemination and timeliness

At the end of the data collection process, the results are published annually in final form in the Statistical Report entitled "Births and fertility rates of the resident population".

The main results are available on the datawarehouse I.Stat at http://dati.istat.it/ and on the thematic site Demo at http://demo.istat.it/.

Some of the data can also be consulted on the Eurostat website in accordance with European Regulation 1260/2013 on demographic statistics.

Annual overview data are published in the Annuario statistico italiano and in the Istat publication "Noi Italia": http://noi-italia.istat.it/.

For the various dissemination channels, the time between the reference year of the investigation and the dissemination of the results is approximately 11 months.

Territorial detail

The data are collected at the municipal level. Statistics are available at national, geographical distribution, regional and provincial levels. Only some statistics are disseminated at the level of provincial capitals.

For technical and methodological information

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