

Table 11 summarizes the pattern of family formation since 1941.

11.—Percentage Distribution of Legitimate Live Births, by Order of Birth, 1941-66
(Exclusive of Newfoundland)

Year	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th and Later Children	Total
1941.....	32.7	21.8	13.5	32.0	100.0
1951.....	26.7	25.8	17.6	29.9	100.0
1956.....	25.2	24.3	18.3	32.2	100.0
1957.....	25.6	23.9	18.3	32.2	100.0
1958.....	25.4	23.8	18.2	32.6	100.0
1959.....	24.8	24.0	18.2	32.9	100.0
1960.....	24.5	23.8	18.5	33.1	100.0
1961.....	24.1	23.6	18.5	33.8	100.0
1962.....	24.0	23.7	18.4	33.9	100.0
1963.....	24.3	23.6	18.5	33.6	100.0
1964.....	25.0	23.8	18.3	32.9	100.0
1965.....	27.1	24.3	17.6	31.0	100.0
1966.....	29.9	25.5	16.9	27.6	100.0

Birthweight.—Excluding Newfoundland, information on birthweight of newborn infants has recently become available from provincial records of birth. These data, in addition to their usefulness in calculating the average weights of newborn infants, are of importance from the public health and medical points of view in throwing light on the number of immaturely developed foetuses that are delivered alive. According to criteria recommended by the World Health Organization, infants of 5½ lb. or less at birth are considered 'immature' and hence exposed to a much greater risk of dying than those over this weight. Weight at birth depends on a host of maternal factors, most of which are not included in the birth records, but some information is available on the age of the mother and length of pregnancy before delivery.* Analysis of this information shows that (1) there are variations in average weight according to the age of the mother, (2) women under 20 and over 35 tend to produce higher proportions of immature infants, so that the late 20s and early 30s would appear to be the ideal ages for motherhood, and (3) almost all infants of less than 28 weeks gestation are delivered 'immature' according to the definition. The average single male infant born at full term weighs about 7½ lb. at birth and the average female about 4 oz. less.

Stillbirths. †—The 4,429 stillbirths of at least 28 weeks gestation that were delivered in 1966 represented a ratio of 11.4 for every 1,000 foetuses born alive. As is evident from Table 12, the stillbirth rate has been decreasing steadily and has been cut by more than half over the past quarter-century. Although the variations between provincial rates have never been wide, rates in some provinces have been reduced more than in others. The stillbirth rate among unmarried mothers has been consistently higher than that among married mothers but the difference is narrowing.

* Obtainable from the Vital Statistics Section, DBS.

† Stillbirth figures given here refer only to foetuses of 28 or more weeks gestation which "showed no sign of life". Up to the end of 1963, only foetuses delivered after at least 28 weeks pregnancy which showed no sign of life were required to be registered with the provincial authorities; as of Jan. 1, 1964, all provinces (except Newfoundland) provide for the compulsory registration of all stillbirths of 20 or more weeks gestation, a 'stillbirth' being defined as "the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother, after at least 20 weeks pregnancy, of a product of conception in which, after such expulsion or extraction, there is no breathing, beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or unmistakable movement of voluntary muscle". A available data for stillbirths of 20-27 weeks pregnancy are not shown here but are obtainable from the Vital Statistics Section, DBS.