



## Residential Moving and Maternal Stress

Moving to a new home can be stressful. For some, the change of residence is a happy or welcome occurrence but for others it may be a direct result of another stressor: loss of job, unpaid bills, divorce, or an abusive partner.

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) ask mothers about the presence of stressors, including moving to a new address. This Brief explores patterns of residential moves and associated stressors.

The most commonly reported maternal stressor in PRAMS was moving (40.6%). Among those mothers who reported moving in the 12 months prior to delivering their two-year-old, 32.0% had not moved again by the time TOTS was administered

(two-years postpartum), 50.7% had moved 1-2 more times and 17.3% had moved 3 or more times (Figure 1). Mothers who did not move before delivery were significantly less likely to report moving in TOTS.

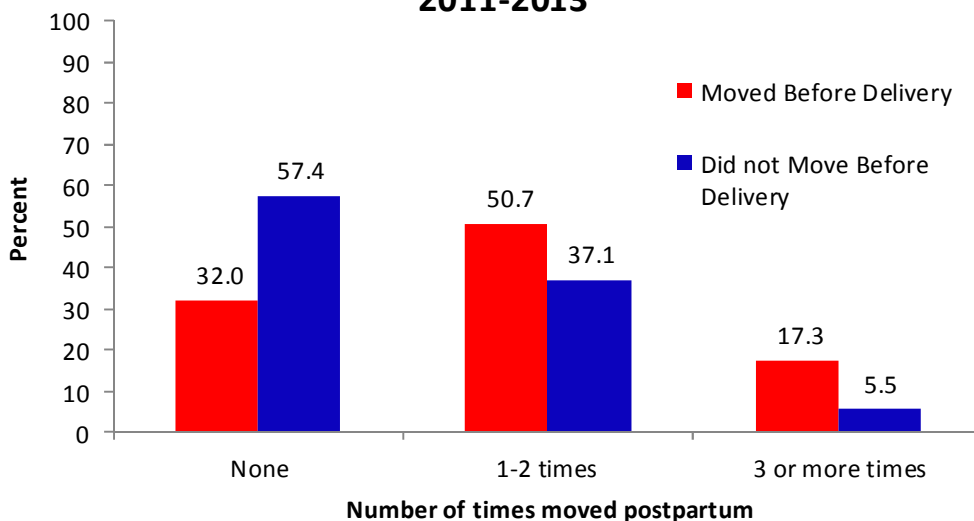
Experiencing stressors during the toddler's second year of life was associated with moving. For mothers who did not move before delivery, 16.2% had 3 or more stressors compared to 32.7% of mothers who did move.

When broken down by those who moved and didn't move after the toddler was born, the pattern continues. Among mothers who moved before delivery and then moved again after pregnancy, 38.9% experienced 3 or more stressors, compared to 10.8% of mothers who did not move either before delivery or after (Figure 2, see Page 2).

### In Oklahoma:

- 40.6% of new mothers reported moving before the birth of their child.
- Among those women who moved prior to delivery of their baby, 17.3% had moved another 3 or more times after the two-year-old was born.
- Mothers who moved at least once since the delivery of their toddler were more likely to experience 3 or more stressors, compared to women who did not move after delivery.

**Figure 1. Numer of Times Moved at Two-Years Postpartum, by Moving Status Before Delivery, TOTS 2011-2013**



**Figure 2. Number of Stressors Experienced by Postpartum Moving Status, Among Mothers Who Did and Did Not Move Before Delivery, TOTS 2011-2013**

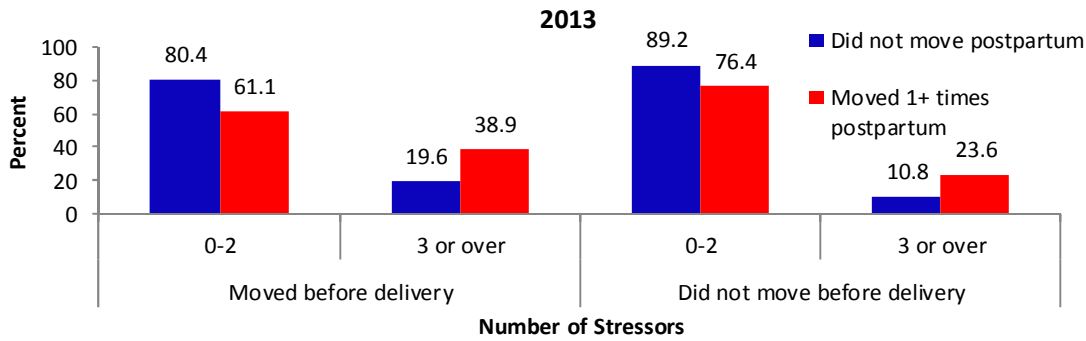


Figure 3 displays the stressors experienced in the 12 months prior to the toddler's second birthday among mothers who moved before delivery. Among those who moved in TOTS, stressors related to financial pressures, such as unpaid bills, job loss, no telephone, and food shortages were more prevalent.

Housing instability, when coupled with other stressors, can have a deleterious impact on a child's health and cognitive development.<sup>1</sup> Moving several times over a relatively short period potentially impacts the ability of families to find medical care and medical homes, receive timely immunizations, and creates challenges in follow-up for public health interventions and health

surveys, including PRAMS and TOTS.

Due to the nature of the survey questions, it is unknown if the move happened before or after the occurrence of the financial and relationship stressors, only that they are highly correlated. The issues of housing and those stressors related to changing residential locations need to be reviewed more in-depth in order to better understand how they relate to social determinants of health in the state.

**Reference:**

1. Park JM, Fertig AR, Allison PD. Physical and Mental Health, Cognitive Development, and Health Care Use by Housing Status of Low-Income Young Children in 20 American Cities: A Prospective Cohort Study. *AJPH*. 2011;101 (Suppl 1):S255-S261.

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) is a two-year follow-back survey to the Oklahoma Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey.

Mothers with live infants who respond to the PRAMS survey are sent a TOTS survey the month their children turn two-years-old. TOTS is a mixed-mode surveillance system. Two mail surveys are sent in an effort to gain participation followed by telephone surveillance for non-respondents.

The unweighted response rate for 2011-2013 data was 73.4% (n=5,318; excluding women ineligible to complete TOTS). Data were weighted to represent the two-year-old's birth cohort for those years. Prevalence rates were calculated using the Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Test.

Special assistance for this Brief was provided by: Shannon Gormley; Binitha Kunnel, MS; Alicia M. Lincoln, MSW, MSPH.

Funding for TOTS is provided by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, MCH Title V Block Grant.

The TOTS Brief is issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), as authorized by Terry Cline, PhD, Commissioner of Health. Docutech printed 1,200 copies in September 2015 at a cost of \$348. Copies are available for download at [www.health.ok.gov](http://www.health.ok.gov)

**Figure 3. Postpartum Stressors by Moving Status, Among Mothers who Moved Prior to Delivery, TOTS 2011-2013**

