



Grandchildren: Living in a Grandparent-Headed Household

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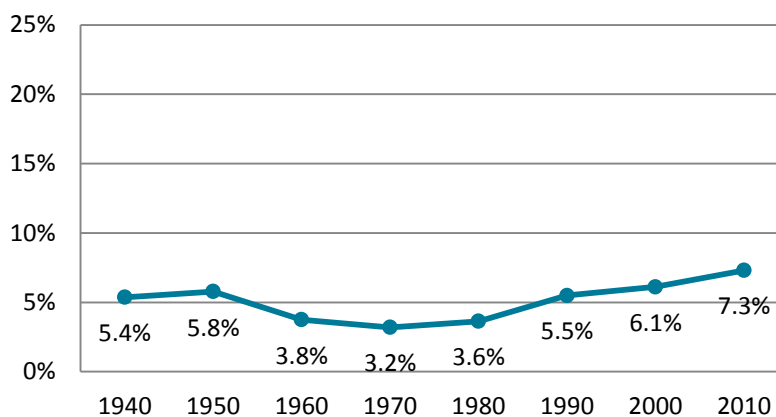
Child outcomes are shaped in part by family structure and complexity. With decreasing marriage rates (FP-9-01), a decline in the proportion of people who ever marry (FP-10-01), rising cohabitation (FP-10-07), and a fragile economy (FP-11-01), children are living in diverse family structures and households. These family structures range from adoptive families (FP-11-03), to cohabiting families (FP-11-07), to multigenerational families. Using the 2010 American Community Survey and Integrated Public Use Microdata Series USA, this profile examines multiple characteristics of coresident grandchildren living in a grandparent-headed household and compares those who have a parent present in the household to those who do not¹.

¹Note: Generally, these household types are referred to as “three-generation households” and “skipped-generation households,” respectively. However, this profile aims to capture the perspective of individual children rather than households. Therefore, this profile does not include children living with a grandparent when the grandparent is not the householder.

Historical Trend

- From 1940 to 1950, the percentage of children living with a grandparent remained relatively stable. The percentage declined between 1950 and 1970 from 5.8% to 3.2%.
- The percentage of children living with a grandparent is currently at a 70-year high of 7.3%, having more than doubled since 1970 (3.2%).
- Among coresident grandchildren, nearly one-third (29%) are living in their grandparent’s household without their mother or father (not shown).

Figure 1. Percentage of Children (Under Age 18) Living with a Grandparent Householder, 1940-2010



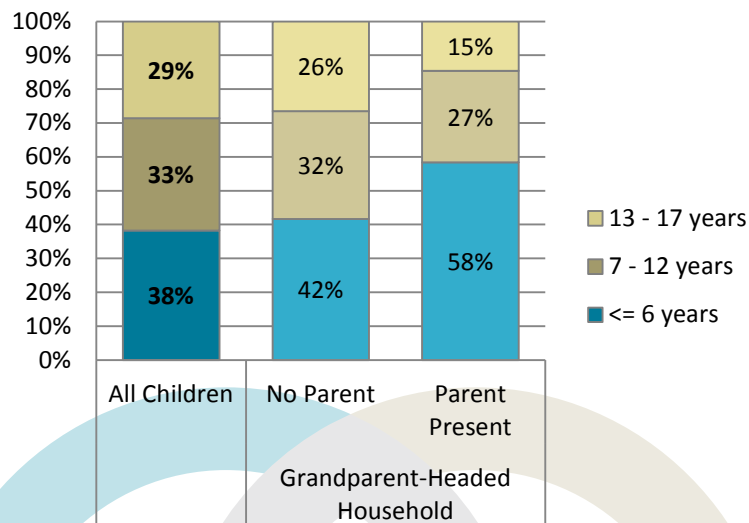
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1940-2000, and American Community Survey, 2010, 1-Year estimates

Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR’s core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Age Distribution of Coresident Grandchildren by Presence of Parent

- On average, coresident grandchildren with a parent present in the household are 2 years younger than those without a parent present (6.2 years and 8.2 years, respectively) (not shown).
- There is little age variation between all children and coresident grandchildren without a parent present in the household.
- Coresident grandchildren with a parent in the household are relatively young. Nearly three-fifths (58%) of coresident grandchildren with a parent present in the household are age 6 or younger versus just 42% with no parent present.

Figure 2. Age Distribution of Children by Residence in Grandparent’s Household and Presence of Parent

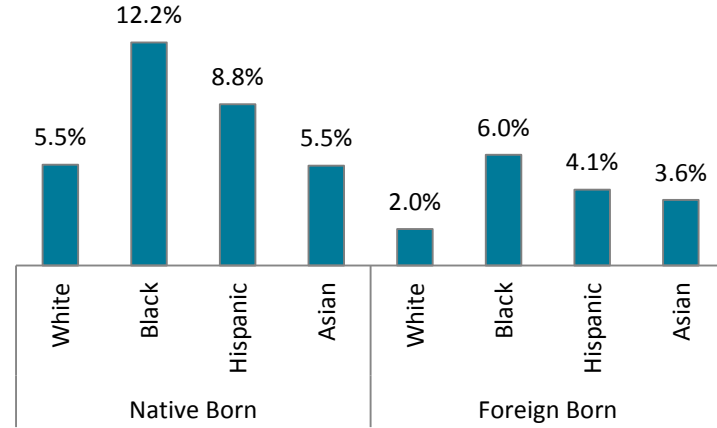


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Variation by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity of Children Coresiding with a Grandparent

- Native born Black and Hispanic children are the most likely to live with a grandparent (12.2% and 8.8%, respectively).
- Only 5.5% of native-born Asian and White children live with a grandparent, less than half the proportion of Black children.
- Among all races, foreign-born children are less likely to coreside with a grandparent.

Figure 3. Percentage of Children Coresiding with a Grandparent by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

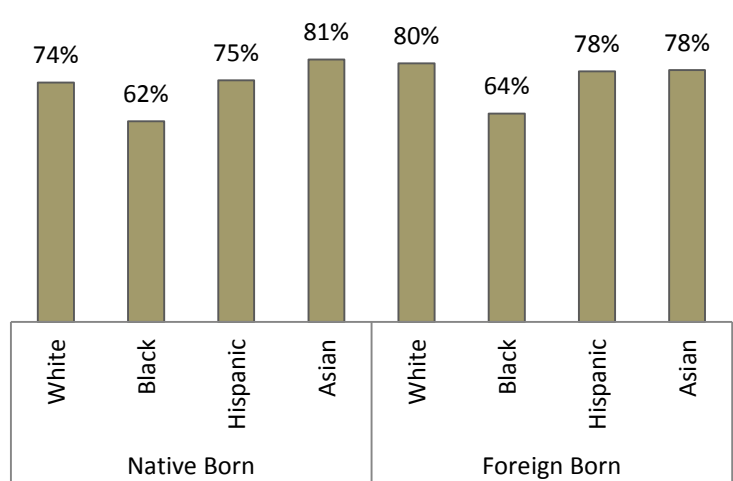


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Race/Ethnic Variation in the Presence of a Parent Among Coresident Grandchildren

- Among White, Black, and Hispanic coresident grandchildren, foreign-born grandchildren are slightly more likely to have a parent present in the household than their native born counterparts. The reverse is true for Asian coresident grandchildren.
- Native-born Asian and foreign-born White coresident grandchildren are the most likely among all races to have a parent present (81% and 80%, respectively).
- Black coresident grandchildren, regardless of nativity, (62% native born, 64% foreign born) are the least likely to have a parent present in the household.

Figure 4. Percentage of Children Coresiding with a Grandparent with a Parent Present by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

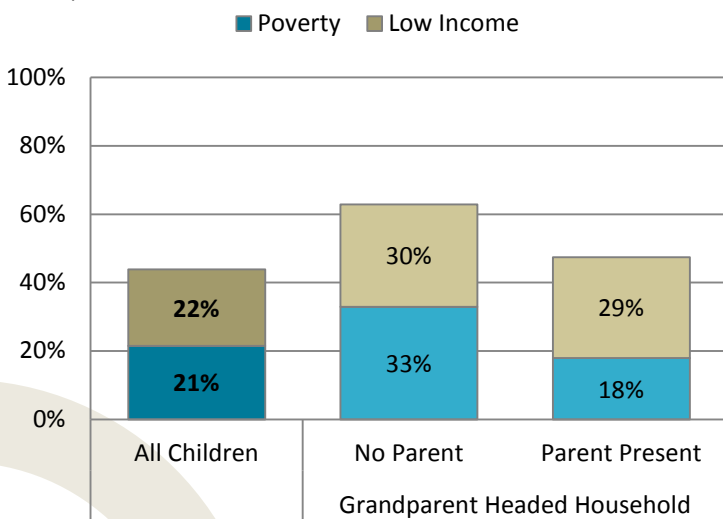


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Poverty/Low Income Status of Coresident Grandchildren by Presence of Parent

- On average, coresident grandchildren are more likely to live in an economically disadvantaged household than all children.
- One-third of coresident grandchildren without a parent present live in poverty (33%), whereas less than one-fifth (18%) with a parent present are poor. There is no difference by presence of parent in the proportions of coresident grandchildren living in low income households (both about 30%).
- Coresident grandchildren with a parent present are slightly less likely to live in a poor household (18%) compared to all children (21%). However, they are more likely to live in a low income household (29% vs. 22%).

Figure 5. Poverty and Low-Income Status of Children by Residence in Grandparent's Household and Presence of Parent



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Sources:

1. Ruggles, S., Alexander, J. T., Genadek, K., Goeken, R., Schroeder, M. B., & Sobek, M. (2010). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

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