High levels of remarriage and repartnering mean that a substantial share of children live in a stepfamily (i.e., children residing with one biological or adoptive parent and the parent’s spouse or partner) (Manning, 2016). Using recent data from the 2010 and 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS), we find that nearly one in ten (9%) children were living with a stepparent at both time points (Figure 1: FP-17-16).

This profile, the second in a series on children’s family structure in 2016, focuses on children living in a stepfamily. We distinguish between children living in cohabiting stepfamilies and married stepfamilies. Just over half (55%) of children in stepfamilies were living with a biological parent and their/his/her spouse and 45% were living with a biological parent and his/her cohabiting partner (Figure 1).

Parental Educational Attainment

- In 2016, children in stepfamilies typically lived with a biological parent who had some college education.
- Children who lived in married stepfamilies had parents with higher levels of education, on average, than children in cohabiting stepfamilies. Specifically, one-third (33%) of parents in married stepfamilies had at least a Bachelor’s degree compared with 22% of cohabiting stepfamilies.

Racial & Ethnic Composition

- The racial/ethnic composition of children in married and cohabiting stepfamilies was similar in 2016.
- Slightly greater shares of children in cohabiting stepfamilies were Black (16%) or Hispanic (28%) than children in married stepfamilies (11% and 22%, respectively).

Measures of Poverty

- Most children living with stepparents were living above the poverty level in 2016.
- The share of children living in poverty with cohabiting stepparents (46%) was three times higher than those living with married stepfamilies (12%).
- Using the supplemental poverty measure (S.P.M.)—which accounts for both cohabiting parents’ incomes and noncash benefits—and is represented by the dotted line—we find the percentage of children with cohabiting stepparents living in poverty in 2016 was halved, from 40% to 20%.

Health Insurance Coverage

- Almost all children (96-98%) living in stepfamilies had health insurance in 2016.
- Children living with married stepfamilies most often were covered by private insurance (72%), whereas only 46% of children living with cohabiting stepfamilies had private insurance.

Data Source:


References:


Suggested Citation:


National Center for Family & Marriage Research

Family Profiles: Original reports summarizing and analyzing nationally representative data with the goal to provide free, latest findings for U.S. families. These profiles examine topics related to the NCMPR’s core research themes. http://www.bgusg.edu/nrf/index.html

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