



Family Profile No. 33, 2025

## Number of Children Living in Households Headed by Same-sex & Different-sex Couples, 2023

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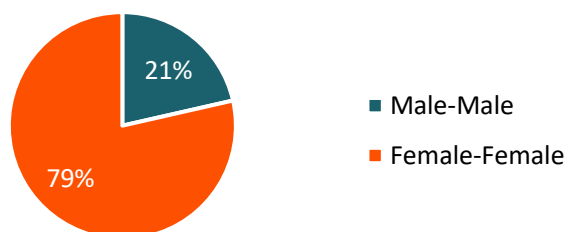
As same-sex marriage has become legal nationwide and acceptance has grown, many sexual minorities are now coming out earlier in life and forming families within same-sex relationships rather than through prior different-sex partnerships ([Gates, 2015](#)). In 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau updated the American Community Survey's (ACS) household roster to identify same-sex and different-sex married and cohabiting couples directly ([Kreider & Gurrentz, 2019](#)), providing new opportunities to enumerate same-sex couples in federal data.

Drawing on the 2023 1-year American Community Survey estimates from IPUMS USA ([Ruggles et al., 2024](#)), we provide the most recent estimates of the number of children living in households headed by same-sex and different-sex couples, using the revised roster. We define children as household members under age 18 who are neither the household head nor their spouse or partner. This definition reflects social parenting, and we use it because the ACS household roster only records the relationship of each household member to the household head, which can be particularly limiting for studying the children of same-sex couples ([Baumle & Compton, 2014](#)). This Family Profile is an update of FP-15-04 ([Payne & Manning, 2015](#)), focusing on children as the unit of analysis. For estimates of couples as the unit of analysis, see FP-25-07 ([Julian, 2025](#)). Find our other Family Profiles on same-sex couples [here](#).

### Children Living in Households Headed by a Same-Sex Couple

- In 2023, approximately 380,000 children in the U.S. or about 0.69% of all children were living in a household headed by a same-sex couple.
- Among those children living in a household headed by a same-sex couple, about one-fifth (21%) lived in a household headed by a male-male couple, and 79% lived in a household headed by a female-female couple.

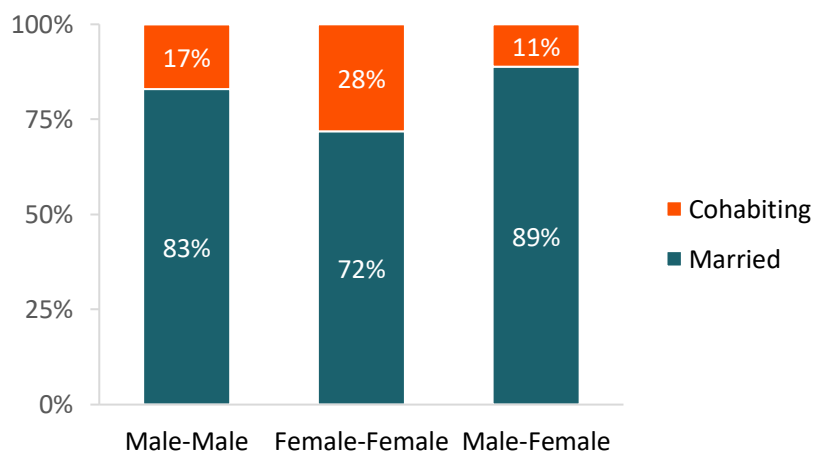
Figure 1. Percentage of children living in households headed by same-sex couples, by couple sex composition, 2023



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates 2023 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, <http://www.ipums.org>

### Union-type and Sex Composition

Figure 2. Percentage of children by couple sex composition and union type, 2023



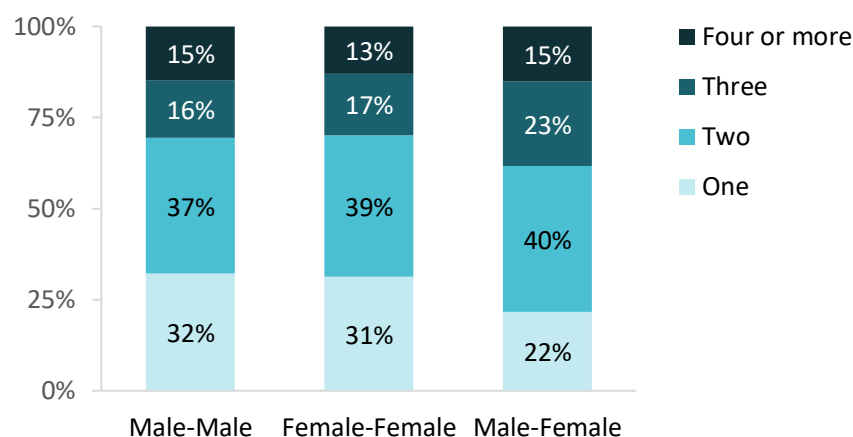
- Among children living in households headed by a couple, most lived with a married couple, regardless of the couple's sex composition.
- A greater share of children living in households headed by a same-sex couple (26%) lived in cohabiting households compared to those living in households headed by a different-sex couple (11%).
- Among children living in a household headed by a same-sex couple, a greater share of those living with female-female couples (28%) were in cohabiting households than those living with male-male couples (17%).

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates 2023 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, <http://www.ipums.org>

## Other Children in the Household

- A greater share of children living in households headed by different-sex couples had another child in the household than those living in households headed by same-sex couples.
- Approximately 32% of children living in households headed by male-male couples and 31% living in households headed by female-female couples were the only child in the household. In comparison, just 22% of children living in households headed by male-female couples were the only child.

Figure 3. Percentage of children by couple sex composition and total number of children in the household, 2023



Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates 2023 from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, <http://www.ipums.org>

## Data Sources:

Ruggles, S., Flood, S., Sobek, M., Backman, D., Chen, A., Cooper, G., Richards, S., Rodgers, R., & Schouweiler, M. (2024). IPUMS USA: Version 15.0 [Dataset]. IPUMS. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>

## References:

Baumle, A. K., & Compton, D. R. (2014). Identity versus identification: How LGBTQ parents identify their children on Census surveys. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(1), 94–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12076>.

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Kreider, R. M., & Gurrentz, B. (2019). Updates to collection and editing of household relationship measures in the Current Population Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/SEHSD-WP-2018-30.pdf>.

Payne, K.K., & Manning, W.D. (2015). Number of children living in same-sex households, 2013. *Family Profiles*, FP-15-04. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/FP/FP-15-04-children-ss-couple-hh-2013.pdf>.

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