Over the past few decades, changes in family patterns have increased the diversity of children’s living arrangements, including a gradual increase in children who are living in their grandparent’s households. This profile updates FP-13-03 to examine trends in the proportion of children living in a grandparent-headed household and whether those children have a parent present in the household (e.g., three-generation household). Focusing on the child’s perspective, this profile also examines the age distribution and poverty status of coresident grandchildren by the presence of a parent in 2015. Data for 1940-2000 are drawn from the Decennial Census, and data from 2010 and 2015 are based on the American Community Survey.

**Trends in the Proportion of Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household**

[Figure 1. Percentage of Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households, 1940-2015](https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-01)

The share of children living in a grandparent’s household remained stable from 1940 to 1950 but declined from 5.8% to 3.2% between 1990 and 1970. Since 1970, the percentage of children living in a grandparent’s household has more than doubled, reaching 5% in 2015. One in twelve children lived with a grandparent in 2015.

**Age Distribution of Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household by Presence of Parent**

[Figure 3. Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households by Age and Presence of Parent, 1990-2015](https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-01)

Among those living in a grandparent’s household, children with a parent present were younger than those with no parent present. Among coresident grandchildren with a parent present (three-generation household), over half (57%) were aged 6 or younger. Only 35% were aged 6 or younger among those without a parent present. Coresident grandchildren with no parent present (skipped-generation) in a grandparent-headed household were most often aged 7 to 12 (32%).

**Economic Disadvantage Among Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household by Presence of Parent**

[Figure 4. Economic Disadvantage Among Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households by Presence of Parent, 1990-2015](https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-01)

Children living in a three-generation household fare better economically than their counterparts living in skipped-generation households. Nearly twice as many children in skipped-generation households were living in poverty (32%) than children in three-generation households (17%).

**Suggested Citation:**