Grandparenthood is more common among older adults (aged 65 and older) than those in midlife (aged 40-64). Using data from the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), this profile updates FP-14-13 comparing midlife grandparents to those at older ages across demographic characteristics. The SIPP is a nationally representative household-based survey and is designed to provide comprehensive family and social information on individuals and families. Because the SIPP gathers information on all individuals who lived in a surveyed household, and directly asks respondents if they are a grandparent, it is one of the few surveys that identifies non-resident grandparents. This is the fourth in our series on grandparents in the U.S.

Prevalence of Grandparenthood by Age

- About one-third of adults aged 40 to 64 were grandparents, representing about 34 million adults.
- Approximately 3 in 4 older adults (aged 65 and older) were grandparents. This represents 34 million grandparents.

In 2014, 68 million adults aged 40 and over were grandparents representing just under half (46%) of the total population in that age group.

Race/Ethnicity of Grandparents by Age

- Midlife grandparents more often belonged to a racial/ethnic minority group than older grandparents.
- Roughly, one-third of midlife grandparents and one-fifth of older grandparents belonged to a racial/ethnic minority group.
  - Comparable shares of midlife grandparents were Black or Hispanic (15% and 16%, respectively). Only 3% of midlife grandparents were Asian.
  - Similarly, a comparable share of older grandparents were Black or Hispanic (8% and 9%, respectively). A small proportion of older grandparents were Asian (4%).
- Whites comprise a higher proportion of older grandparents compared to midlife grandparents (79% and 66%, respectively).

Source: NCFMR analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014
The education differences among midlife and older grandparents were modest. Nearly one-quarter of older grandparents (23%) had at least a college degree in contrast to less than one-fifth (18%) of midlife grandparents. Similar shares of midlife and older grandparents had less than a high school education (17% and 19%, respectively).

Midlife Grandparents

- Bachelor’s+
- Some College
- H.S./GED
- <H.S.

Older Grandparents

- Bachelor’s+
- Some College
- H.S./GED
- <H.S.

Midlife Grandparents

- Never Married
- Div/Sep
- Widowed
- Cohabitng
- Married

Older Grandparents

- Never Married
- Div/Sep
- Widowed
- Cohabitng
- Married

Data Source:

References:

Suggested Citation: