

THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN IN 2005

Health care professionals, school planners, and child-care providers look to U.S. Census Bureau statistics on children to decide if new facilities or services are needed. Census Bureau data on children's living arrangements help researchers study how different types of family situations contribute to a child's well-being. Information on the living arrangements of children is collected in the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

Parents in the Household

In 2005, 73.5 million children under age 18 lived in the United States—representing 25 percent of the country's civilian noninstitutionalized population.

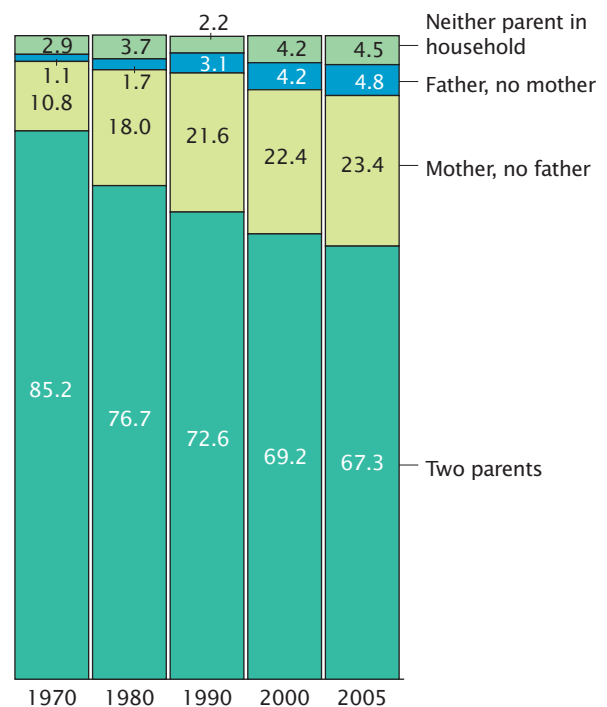
In recent decades, the percentage of children living with both parents has dropped, while the percentage living with a single parent has increased (Figure 1). In 2005, 67 percent of children lived with two parents, while 23 percent lived with only their mother and 5 percent lived with only their father. Another adult was present in the household for about 2 out of every 5 children living with a single mother and 3 out of every 5 children living with a single father. No parents were in the household for 5 percent of all children.¹

In 2005, 8 percent of all children under 18 lived in households where at least one grandparent was present. Eleven percent of children under 6 lived in a household with a grandparent, compared with 8 percent of those aged 6 to 11 and 6 percent of those aged 12 to 17. The majority of children living with grandparents were in households where the grandparent was the householder (68 percent). Three out of every five children living in a grandparent's household had at least one parent present in their home.

¹ The ASEC numbers in this chapter differ from ASEC estimates prior to 2001 in that they are based on an expanded sample and use Census 2000-based population controls using administrative records on factors such as births and deaths. These changes have been implemented to improve the reliability of the survey results. The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text and figures) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

Figure 1.
Living Arrangements of Children for Selected Years: 1970 to 2005

(Percent distribution)



Note: Numbers may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2005.

Words That Count

Children are all people under age 18, excluding those who maintain households, families, or sub-families as a householder or a spouse.

Parents are not limited to biological parents but include stepparents and those who adopt their children. Foster parents are considered nonrelatives.

Single parents, for the purpose of this report, include people who may be married but not living with their spouse, as well as other divorced, widowed, or never-married people.

Living Arrangements by Race and Hispanic Origin

In 2005, about half of Black children lived with a single mother. Sixteen percent of non-Hispanic White children and 10 percent of Asian children lived with a single mother. Among Hispanic children, 25 percent lived with a single mother.² Regardless of race or Hispanic origin, about 4 or 5 percent of children lived with a single father.

Black children were more likely than children in the other groups to live in a grandparent's household.

² Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group such as Asian may be defined as those who reported Asian and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Asian regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). This report (text and figures) shows data using the first approach (race alone). Use of the single-race population in this report does not imply that this is the preferred method of presenting data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.

In this report, the term "non-Hispanic White" refers to people who are not Hispanic and who reported White and no other race. The Census Bureau often uses non-Hispanic White as the comparison group for other race groups and Hispanics.

Data users should exercise caution when interpreting aggregate results for the Hispanic population or for race groups because these populations consist of many distinct groups that differ in socioeconomic

characteristics, culture, and recency of immigration. In addition, the CPS does not use separate population controls for weighting the Asian sample to national totals. Data were first collected for Hispanics in 1972 and for Asians and Pacific Islanders in 1987. For further information, see <www.bls.census.gov/cps/ads/adsmain.htm>.

Living Arrangements and Income

In 2004, 14 percent of children in two-parent families lived in households with an annual income below \$30,000.³ Thirty-nine percent of children living with a single father, 62 percent living with a single mother, and 59 percent living without either parent were in households with incomes below \$30,000.

Because Hispanics may be any race, data for Hispanics overlap with data for every race. Based on the total male and female children surveyed in the CPS ASEC, 4 percent of single-race Black children and 1 percent of single-race Asian children were also Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population, the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population, and the Two or More Races population are not shown here because of their small sample size in the ASEC.

³ Income data are for the previous year. For information on household income by family type, see the chapter on money income; and for information on children and adults in poverty by household type, see the chapter on poverty.

Child Care Arrangements (Winter 2002)

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) describe and contrast care arrangements for preschool- and grade-school-aged children in 2002.⁴

Preschool Child Care

In a typical week during the winter of 2002, 63 percent of the 18.5 million children under age 5 were in some type of regular child care arrangement.⁵ These preschoolers were more likely to be cared for by a relative (40 percent) than a nonrelative (35 percent), although 11 percent received care from both. Twenty-three percent of preschoolers were cared for by a grandparent and 3 percent by siblings. Fourteen percent were cared for by their fathers and 4 percent were cared for by their mothers while the parent was at work or school.⁶

Other relatives cared for another 7 percent of children in this age group.

About one-quarter of preschoolers were cared for in organized facilities. Six percent were in nursery or preschools and 13 percent were in day care centers.

Before- and After-School Care

A little over half of children aged 5 to 14 were in child care arrangements in 2002. Relatives were important care providers. Fathers, grandparents, and other relatives, including siblings, each

⁴ The data in this report are from reference month 4 of the fourth wave of the 2001 panel of the SIPP. The data were collected from February through May 2002. The population represented is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States.

⁵ Since some children are in more than one type of arrangement, the total number of arrangements exceeds the number of children.

⁶ Information on child care by the mother or father was collected only for the time when the designated parent was working or attending school.

accounted for about 13 percent of child care for this age group in 2002.

Grade-school-aged children were less likely to be cared for by nonrelatives than younger children. Five percent of children this age were in organized facilities, 3 percent were cared for by nonrelatives in their own home, and 5 percent were cared for by nonrelatives in the providers' homes.

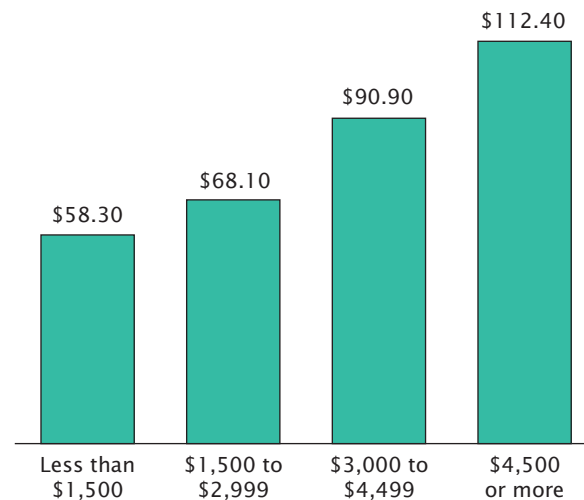
A very high percentage of children were in school (94 percent) and some (16 percent) participated in enrichment activities such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- or after-school programs.⁷ In addition, 15 percent of grade-school-aged children cared for themselves on a regular basis without adult supervision.

The Cost of Care

Of the 32.9 million mothers who lived with at least one child under age 15 in 2002, 29 percent reported they made cash payments for child care—with payments averaging \$92 per week. Mothers who were not employed were less likely than those who were employed to pay for child care, 13 percent compared with 37 percent.⁸ They also paid less for care than employed mothers, \$73 per week compared with \$96 per week.

Mothers with two or more children were more likely to make a child care payment than mothers with only one child. On average, mothers with one child paid \$75 per week, compared with \$114 for those with two or more children. The amount paid for child care increased with family income (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Weekly Child Care Payments by Monthly Family Income: 2002



Note: Average expenditures per week in 2002 dollars among people making child care payments.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2001 Panel, reference month 4 of the fourth wave.

⁷ Enrichment activities were included if they were considered part of the child care arrangements.

⁸ Employed mothers do not include self-employed mothers.

A Child's Day: 2003

Data from the SIPP highlight a variety of indicators about children's experiences at home.⁹ Among other things, the SIPP provides information on families eating meals together; parental praise, conversations, and play; reading to children; and television rules.

Meals With Parents¹⁰

More than half of children under age 6 ate breakfast with at least one of their parents every day of the week. Those who lived with married parents were more likely to have this meal with a parent than were children who lived with an unmarried parent. Among children living with married parents, 61 percent ate every day with their mother and 30 percent ate every day with their father, compared with 50 percent of children living with an unmarried mother and 41 percent living with an unmarried father.

In a typical week, children under 6 years old were more likely to eat dinner (79 percent) than breakfast (57 percent) daily with a parent. Among children living with married parents, 81 percent had dinner with their mother every day, while 64 percent had dinner with their father this often. Seventy-five percent of children under 6 living with an unmarried mother ate dinner with her every day, while 66 percent of those living with an unmarried father ate dinner with him this often.

Older children were less likely to eat meals with their parents than younger ones. Among children aged 6 to 11, 37 percent had breakfast with a parent every day and 73 percent had dinner with a parent this often.

In a typical week, 24 percent of children aged 12 to 17 ate breakfast with a parent every day and 58 percent of them ate dinner with a parent this often. Among teenagers living with unmarried parents, eating breakfast and dinner together was more common if they lived with their father rather than their mother.

Praise, Conversation, and Play

During the week, 91 percent of children under age 6 were praised at least once a day and 72 percent were praised three or more times a day. When chil-

dren this age lived with married parents, mothers were more likely to bestow praise frequently than fathers—74 percent and 63 percent, respectively. Among children living with unmarried parents, 69 percent of those living with mothers received praise three or more times a day, compared with 57 percent of those living with fathers.

For children under 6 years old, 72 percent were talked to or played with for 5 minutes or more, three or more times every day. Among children of married parents, mothers were more likely than fathers to talk to or play with their children this frequently.

About half (51 percent) of children aged 6 to 11 were praised by a parent three or more times a day, compared with 37 percent of children aged 12 to 17. Forty-nine percent of children aged 6 to 11 and 41 percent of those aged 12 to 17 were talked to or played with three or more times a day.¹¹

Reading to Children

During 1 week in 2003, children aged 1 to 2 were read to an average of 7.8 times, while those aged 3 to 5 were read to an average of 6.8 times.

The extent of reading to children was related to the parent's educational attainment, among other things. Among children aged 1 to 2 whose parent did not complete high school, 23 percent were never read to, compared with 4 percent for those whose parent held a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree.

Television Rules

Of the 60.8 million children aged 3 to 17 in 2003, 58 percent had parents who imposed three types of television viewing rules: the types of programs children could watch, the time of day they could watch, and the total number of hours they could watch.

Parents have been more likely to impose TV rules recently than they were in previous decades. In 1994, 54 percent of children aged 3 to 5 had all three TV rules, compared with 67 percent in 2003. For children aged 6 to 11, the share with these three rules grew from 60 percent to 68 percent in this time period. Among those aged 12 to 17, the percentage was 40 percent in 1994 and 44 percent in 2003.¹²

⁹ The data in this section are for 2003 and are taken from the SIPP 2001 Panel.

¹⁰ In this section, the term "parent" refers to the designated parent, defined as the biological, step, or adoptive parent, or some other person acting as the child's guardian who was the respondent to the SIPP questionnaire. In married-couple families, the mother was usually the designated parent. In single-parent families, the parent living with the child was the designated parent. When neither parent was in the household, a guardian was the designated parent.

¹¹ There is no statistical difference between the percentage of children aged 6 to 11 who were praised and the percentage this age who were talked to or played with frequently.

¹² The percentage of children with all three television rules was not statistically different for children aged 3 to 5 and those aged 6 to 11 in 2003.

Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support (2003)

In 2004, an estimated 14.0 million parents had custody of 21.6 million children whose other parent lived somewhere else, according to the April 2004 supplement to the CPS. Of all custodial parents, 83 percent were mothers. Among all children under age 21 living in families, 27 percent had a parent living somewhere else.

Poverty Levels, Employment, and Dependence on Public Assistance

Between 1993 and 2003, the proportion of custodial parents and their children living in poverty fell from 33 percent to 24 percent. The 2003 poverty rate was higher for households maintained by custodial mothers (26 percent) than those maintained by custodial fathers (13 percent), as shown in Figure 3. Among custodial parents who were employed full-time, year-round, the poverty rate was 7 percent.

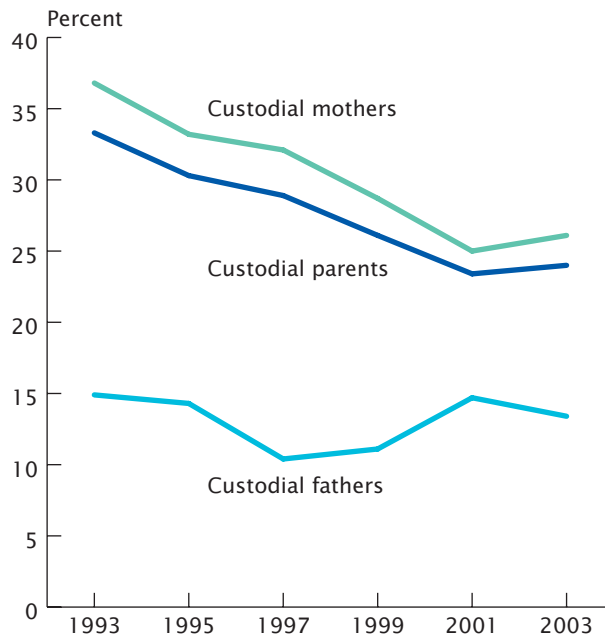
Between 1993 and 2003, the proportion of custodial parents employed full-time, year-round increased from 46 percent to 54 percent. About 28 percent of custodial parents worked part-time or part of the year. As employment rates increased among these parents, dependence on public assistance decreased, from 41 percent to 30 percent.

Child Support Awards

Custodial mothers were more likely than custodial fathers to have child support awards, 64 percent compared with 40 percent. About three-quarters of custodial parents with awards received at least some of the child support that was due. Forty-five percent received all payments and another 31 percent received some payments, but not all that

was due. Among those who were due support, the average amount received in 2003 was \$3,600 for custodial mothers and \$2,800 for custodial fathers.

Figure 3.
Poverty Status of Custodial Parents: 1993–2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2004.

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

For more detailed information, consult the following Census Bureau reports: *Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002* (P20-547) by Jason Fields; *Living Arrangements of Children: 2001* (P70-104) by Rose M. Kreider and Jason Fields; *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 1997* (P70-86) by Kristin Smith; *A Child's Day: 2003 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)* (P70-109) by Jane Lawler Dye and Tallese Johnson; and *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2001* (P60-225) by Timothy S. Grall.

Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>. Click on "Subjects A to Z." Click on "F" and select "Families / Households and Families Data," "H" and select "Households and Families Data," or "C" and select "Children."

Contact the Census Bureau's Demographic Call Center toll-free at 1-866-758-1060.

E-mail <ask.census.gov>.

For information on the accuracy of the estimates, see Appendix A.