Living Arrangements of Children 1996

Household Economic Studies

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By Jason Fields

What's in this Report?

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS

Children live in a variety of family arrangements, some of which are complex, as a consequence of the marriage, divorce, and remarriage patterns of their parents. In addition, one-third of children today are born out-of-wedlock and may grow-up in single-parent families or spend significant portions of their lives with other relatives or stepparents. This report examines the diversity of children's living arrangements in American households. The data are from the household relationship module of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), collected in the fall of 1996, and update a 1994 study that presented estimates from the 1991 SIPP panel of the number of children growing up in various family situations.[1]

As in the earlier survey, detailed information was obtained on each person's relationship to every other person in the household, permitting the identification of many types of relatives, and parent-child and sibling relationships. This report describes family situations beyond the traditional nuclear family of parents and their children and includes discussions of extended family households with relatives and nonrelatives who may contribute substantially to a child's development and to the household's economic well-being.

This report also examines the degree to which children are living in single-parent families, with stepparents and adoptive parents, or with no parents and in the care of another relative or guardian. Of special interest in this report are new estimates of children living with unmarried cohabiting parents (either with both of their biological parents who are not married to each other, or with a parent and an unmarried partner who is not the child's biological parent — see definitions box for descriptions of these terms).

The statistics in this report are based on national-level estimates of children (individuals under 18) and their living situations from August through November 1996. These findings pertain to all children, regardless of the child's marital or parental status. The estimates represent the living arrangements for children averaged over this 4-month period.

[1]Stacy Furukawa, *The Diverse Living Arrangements of Children: Summer 1991*, Current Population Reports, P70-38, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1994.

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Some major findings of this report include the following:

- There were 71.5 million children under 18 years of age living in households.[2] The majority of these children (50.7 million) lived with both parents. Only 3 percent of these children (1.5 million) lived in unmarried-couple families (parents who were not married to each other).
- Among the 18.2 million children living with only one unmarried parent, 1.8 million lived with their father.
- There were 10.3 million children who lived in an extended household containing at least one person (of any age) other than a member of their nuclear family (parents and siblings); 4.1 million of these children lived in extended households with grandparents. An additional 1.3 million children were living with their grandparents in households without any parent present.
- Of the 1.5 million children living in households with adoptive parents, 47 percent lived with two adoptive parents.
- Seventeen percent all of children (11.8 million) lived in blended families in 1996. Of these children, 4.9 million lived with at least one stepparent.
- There were 15.3 million children living in households with no brothers or sisters present. Among the 56.2 million children living with siblings, 9.5 million lived with at least one step- or half-sibling.

[2]The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual (population) values because of sampling variation, or other factors. All statements made in this report have undergone statistical testing and meet U.S. Census Bureau standards for statistical accuracy.

Definitions

Children are individuals under 18 years old. This differs from the definition of children used in other reports because it includes householders and spouses of the householder (0.2 percent of children). These children are included so that the living arrangements of *all children* can be discussed.

Adopted children are determined by the reporting of the survey respondent alone and not by any administrative records.

A *traditional nuclear family* is defined in this report as a family in which a child lives with two married biological parents and with only full siblings if siblings are present. No other people are present in the household under this definition, not even close relatives of the family.

Cohabiting parent-child families are those in which the child's parent is living with at least one opposite sex, nonrelated adult. This additional adult may or may not be the biological parent of the child.

Blended families are formed when remarriages occur or when children living in a household share one or no parents. The presence of a stepparent, stepsibling, or half-sibling designates a family as blended.

An *extended family household* is a household where a child lives with at least one parent and someone outside of their nuclear family, either relatives or nonrelatives.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN — AN OVERVIEW

Many factors influence the diversity of children's living arrangements. These include parental divorce, remarriage, out-of-wedlock childbearing, cohabitation of unmarried parents, the growth of multigenerational families, and parental mortality. Immigration may also influence the type of household and family that children grow up in if families sponsor and provide housing for their immigrant relatives and friends. This is especially important in the analyses of the living arrangements of Hispanic children,[3] as Hispanics constitute a major component of new immigrants to the United States. Both cultural factors and demographic characteristics of the population and family patterns influence racial differences in current and future family structure.[4] Throughout this report variations in living arrangements of children are shown by race and Hispanic origin.

In 1996, 71 percent of the 71.5 million children under age 18 lived in two-parent households, about 25 percent lived in single-parent households, and the remaining 4 percent lived in households without either parent (see Table 1). A large majority of White non-Hispanic (79 percent), and Asian and Pacific Islander (84 percent) children lived with two parents,

[3]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Based on the 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation (Wave 2), 5 percent of the Black population under 18 years, 15 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native population under 18 years, and 4 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population under 18 years were also of Hispanic origin.

[4]S. Philip Morgan et. al. "Racial differences in household and family structure at the turn of the century," *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 98, January 1993. Pages 798-828.

Table 1.
Living Arrangements of Children by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(In thousands)

Living arrangements	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children	71,494	56,212	46,657	11,631	1,073	2,578	10,428
Living with —							
Two parents[2]	50,685	43,466	36,837	4,397	667	2,156	7,112
Both married to each other	49,186	42,333	36,110	4,126	605	2,123	6,627
In a traditional nuclear family[3]	39,746	34,859	30,132	2,985	395	1,507	5,024
One parent	18,165	11,131	8,632	6,320	345	369	2,870
Mother only	16,340	9,599	7,274	6,088	320	333	2,689
Father only	1,825	1,533	1,358	232	25	36	181
Neither parent	2,644	1,615	1,188	915	62	54	445
Grandparents only	1,266	637	501	571	34	24	143
Other relatives only	688	447	272	199	19	22	183
Nonrelatives only	622	622	383	122	9	8	105
Other arrangement	69	46	32	22	-	1	14
At least 1 stepparent	4,902	4,066	3,556	649	94	93	563
At least 1 foster parent	313	224	153	86	2	2	75

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

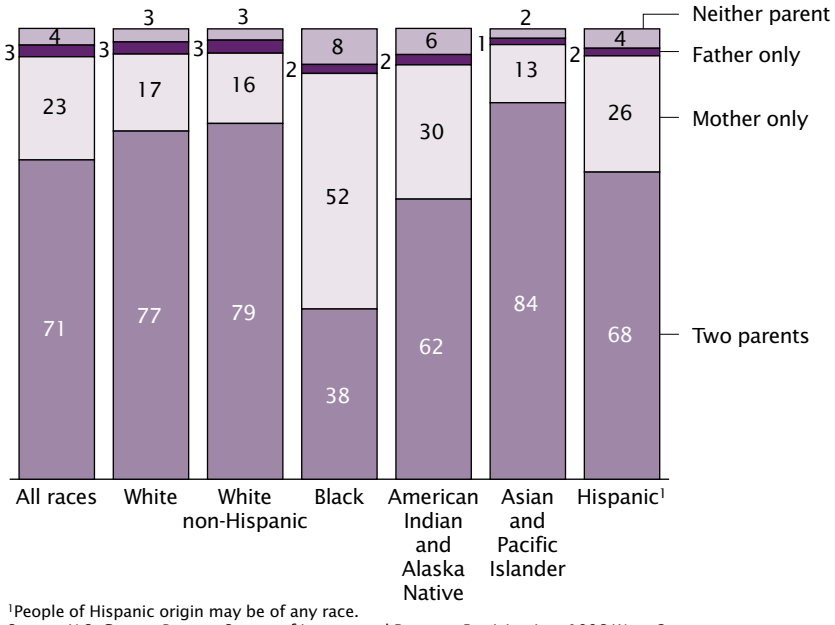
[2]In the SIPP data children identify both of their parents regardless of their marital status. This means that both married and unmarried parents are included in this category in this table. This represents a difference from the CPS because only married parents are recorded in two parent households. Correspondingly, there are more children in two parent households in the SIPP, and more in single parent households in the CPS.

[3]Children in a traditional nuclear family live with both biological parents and, if siblings are present, with full brothers and sisters. No other household members are present.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2.

Figure 1.
Children by Presence of Parents: Fall 1996

(Percent distribution)



[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

more than twice as high as the proportion for Black children (38 percent) and well above the proportion for Hispanic children (68 percent). A much higher proportion of Black children lived with a single parent (54 percent) compared with children of other groups: 19 percent of White non-Hispanic children and 28 percent of Hispanic children lived with only a single parent in 1996 (see Figure 1).

In 1996, 4.9 million children lived with at least one stepparent. In addition, 2.6 million lived with neither of their parents; this figure included 0.3 million children living with one or more foster parents. Only 49 percent of foster children are White non-Hispanic, while Black and Hispanic children each represent about 25 percent of foster children. Relatives, usually grandparents, cared for

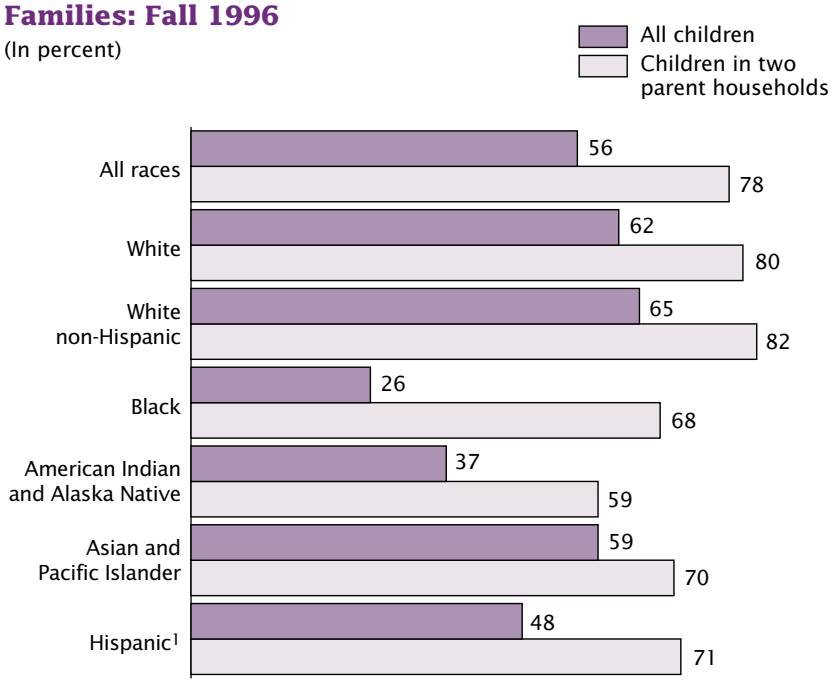
the majority of children living with neither parent. Higher proportions of Black children lived with their grandparents (62 percent) than either White non-Hispanic or Hispanic children (42 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

THE TRADITIONAL NUCLEAR FAMILY

The discussion of the turmoil and changes in the American family that preoccupied academic journals and the popular press during recent decades continues.[5] However, data for the 1990s indicate that the rapid increase in the proportion of children growing up in a single-parent household may have leveled off.[6] Data from the SIPP show an increase in the proportion of children living in traditional two-parent nuclear families (see definitions box) from 51 percent in 1991 to over 56 percent by 1996. The symbolic importance of the traditional family rests in its compactness and a historical concept of home. Mother and father and their biological children function as a single unit without any other individuals (other relatives, in-laws, or nonrelatives) living with them on a daily basis. Fifty-six percent of all children and 78 percent of children living with two parents were living in traditional nuclear families in the fall of 1996 (see Figure 2).

A smaller proportion of all Black children lived in traditional nuclear families (26 percent) than children in other racial/ethnic groups (65 percent of White non-Hispanic children, 58 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children, and 48 percent of Hispanic children). The difference in the proportion in traditional nuclear families is due primarily to the difference in the propensity to live with both biological parents.

Figure 2.
Children Living in Traditional Nuclear Families: Fall 1996
(In percent)



[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

Among children in two-parent families,[7] the difference between Black and White non-Hispanic children living in traditional nuclear families (68 percent and 82 percent, respectively) persists, though the difference is not as large as among all children. However, the percentage of Black children in traditional nuclear families (68 percent) is similar to the percentages for Asian and Pacific Islander children and Hispanic children (70 and 71 percent, respectively) in comparable families. All of these proportions are significantly higher than the percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native children in traditional nuclear families (59 percent).

CHILDREN LIVING WITH TWO PARENTS: BIOLOGICAL, STEP-, AND ADOPTIVE

In 1996, about 50.7 million children lived with two parents, of whom 88 percent (44.7 million) lived with their biological mother and biological father (see Table 2). An additional 9 percent (4.7 million) lived with a biological parent and a stepparent, usually with a biological mother and stepfather (3.7 million). Just over 2 percent of children living with two parents (1.3 million) lived with either two adoptive parents or a combination of an adoptive parent and a biological or a stepparent.

Stepparents and adoptive parents are an increasingly important component of the two-parent family. In 1996, 5.2 million children lived with one biological parent and either a stepparent or adoptive parent, up

[5]Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Birth Dearth*, Pharos Books, New York, NY, 1987.
[6]Kenneth Bryson and Lynne Casper, *Household and Family Characteristics: March 1997*, Current Population Reports, P20-509, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1998.
[7]The percentage of children in a traditional nuclear family of those children living with two parents is higher than the percentage in a traditional nuclear family of all children; this is simply a factor of the change in the denominator for these calculations.

Table 2.
Children Living With Two Parents by Their Biological, Step, and Adoptive Status by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(In thousands)

Characteristics of parents	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children living with two parents[2]	50,685	43,466	36,837	4,397	667	2,156	7,112
Living with[2]—							
Biological mother and father	44,708	38,539	32,496	3,656	538	1,976	6,476
Biological mother and stepfather	3,723	3,099	2,693	505	58	61	435
Biological father and stepmother	1,004	854	761	105	26	19	113
Adoptive mother and father	702	534	496	45	35	88	38
Other combination	548	440	389	86	10	12	51
Adoptive mother and biological father	37	29	25	8	-	-	4
Adoptive mother and stepfather	23	20	20	-	-	3	-
Adoptive father and biological mother	479	388	341	78	7	6	47
Adoptive father and stepmother	9	3	3	-	3	3	-

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Includes mothers and fathers not currently married to each other.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

from 4.5 million in 1991. Among children in two-parent families, about 91 percent of Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander children live with both biological parents, higher than any of the other race groups shown on Table 2. Black (83 percent) and American Indian and Alaska Native children (81 percent) have the lowest percentages.

Among the 702,000 children living with two adoptive parents in 1996, a disproportionate percentage were Asian and Pacific Islander; making up 13 percent of adopted children, but only 4 percent of all children. In addition 548,000 children lived with one adoptive parent and a nonadoptive parent (biological or step). Most of these children (87 percent) were living with their biological mother and an adoptive father; the adoptive fathers were, in all likelihood, initially stepfathers. Often, living arrangements of children are simply dichotomized by whether children live with only one or with both parents. These statistics illustrate that even among children raised by two parents, a considerable variation exists in the blending of parental origins either as biological, step, or adoptive parents.

CHILDREN LIVING WITH UNMARRIED PARENTS

Out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce among parents often results in children living with an unmarried parent for significant portions of their childhood. A 1984 study estimated that almost half of children under 16 would someday live in a single-parent household.[8] Data from the SIPP can be used to profile the living arrangements of children who live with their unmarried parent.

Table 3 shows that in 1996, 19.7 million children (28 percent of all children) lived with unmarried parents. It is particularly striking that 57 percent of Black children lived with unmarried parents. Regardless of race, however, 83 percent of children with unmarried parents resided only with their mother (16.3 million).

The rapid increase in cohabitation among adults over the past several decades[9] has led to significant proportions of children living with parents who are cohabiting with partners. In 1996, there were 3.3 million children living with an unmarried parent and the parent's partner, representing about 5 percent of all children or 17 percent of children living with unmarried parents (see Figure 3).

Hispanic and American Indian and Alaska Native children were as likely as White non-Hispanic

[8]Larry L. Bumpass, "Children and Marital Disruption: A Replication and Update," *Demography*: Vol. 21, No. 1, February 1984. Pages 71 – 82.

[9]Lynne M. Casper, Philip N. Cohen, and Tavia Simmons. *How Does POSSLQ Measure Up? : Historical Estimates of Cohabitation*, Working Paper Series No. 36. Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1999. By definition, all of the children living with two biological unmarried parents live in a cohabiting couple household. Under the definitions used in previous data collections, these children would most likely have been recorded as living with a mother only and an adult nonrelative. These differences in definition of a cohabiting household could account for some of the observed differences between 1996 and 1991 in these proportions; additional comparisons with earlier cohabitation estimates are not shown.

Table 3.
Children Living With Unmarried Parent(s) by Presence of Other Adults and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangement	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children living with (an) unmarried parent(s)	19,663	12,264	9,358	6,591	407	402	3,355
Children living with cohabiting parent(s)[2]	3,285	2,529	1,883	597	104	55	760
Percent of children living with unmarried parent(s)	16.7	20.6	20.1	9.1	25.6	13.7	22.7
Living with mother, not father[3]	16,340	9,599	7,274	6,088	320	333	2,689
With female other adult relative[4]	2,782	1,373	976	1,222	77	110	470
With male other adult relative[4]	1,822	1,055	711	639	36	92	405
With female adult nonrelative[5]	303	219	197	69	-	15	26
With male adult nonrelative[5]	1,498	1,155	957	286	34	22	234
Living with father, not mother[3]	1,825	1,533	1,358	232	25	36	181
With female other adult relative[4]	284	244	181	32	5	3	63
With male other adult relative[4]	168	149	100	13	6	-	54
With female adult nonrelative[5]	288	241	200	40	7	-	41
With male adult nonrelative[5]	25	17	14	6	-	2	4
Living with both mother and father[3]	1,499	1,133	727	271	62	33	485
With female other adult relative[4]	64	56	24	2	2	6	31
With male other adult relative[4]	24	19	6	5	-	-	12
With female adult nonrelative[5]	139	117	68	22	-	-	53
With male adult nonrelative[5]	47	25	12	11	12	-	20

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Includes children living with: (1) their mother and an adult male nonrelative who is not their father (1,538,000); (2) their father and an adult female nonrelative who is not their mother (292,000); and (3) with their mother and father who are not married to each other (1,499,000).
[3]Sub-categories are not mutually exclusive, and the parent(s) may be biological, step, or adopted.
[4]The category other adult relative does not include siblings.
[5]Only includes adult nonrelatives who are not married spouse present.

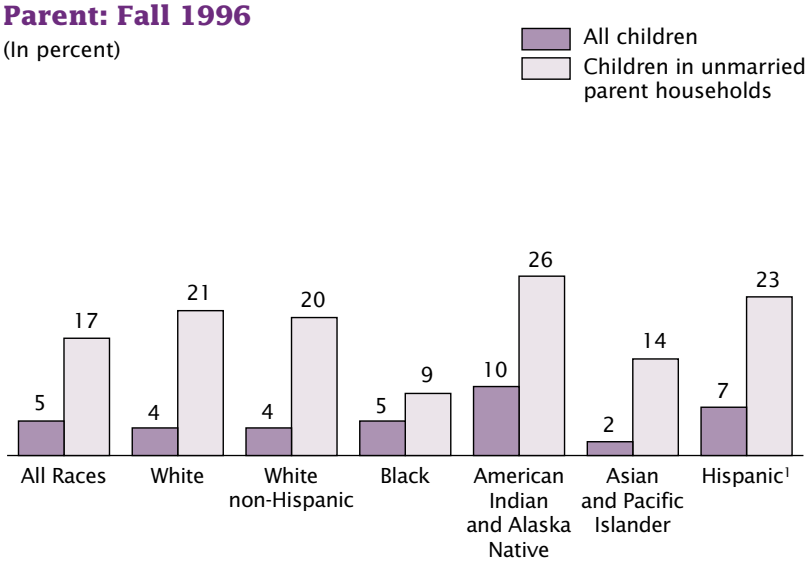
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

children to live with a cohabiting parent (23 percent, 26 percent, and 20 percent respectively of children living with unmarried parents). One reason Hispanic children may be this likely to be in families with cohabiting couples, especially if their parents were born outside the United States, is that consensual unions have historically been more common as precursors to formal marriages in Latin American countries. In fact, among the 760,000 Hispanic children living in unmarried-couple families in 1996, 64 percent resided with both their mother and father, in contrast to 38 percent of White non-Hispanic children and 45 percent of Black children in comparable households.

Only 9 percent of Black children who lived with an unmarried parent also lived with a cohabiting parent, a proportion significantly lower than that of any other race group shown in Figure 3, except Asian and Pacific Islander children. A much higher proportion of Black children are living with unmarried parents (57 percent) than the child population as a whole (28 percent). Difficulty in measuring shorter, occasional, or transient unions that may be considered cohabiting relationships could make the proportion of children in this living arrangement artificially low. Also, characteristics of the marriage market and labor market that have contributed to high proportions of Black mothers remaining single, may be just as salient when they make decisions about forming cohabiting unions.

As mentioned, most children who lived with an unmarried parent were more likely to live with their mother than with their father. Only 1.8 million children (9 percent of children living with unmarried parents) lived with their father without their mother present, including 288,000 children (16 percent) who lived with

Figure 3.
Children Living With a Cohabiting Parent: Fall 1996
(In percent)



[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

fathers who were cohabiting with an unmarried partner. If the fathers who were cohabiting with the children's mothers are included (1.5 million), there were 3.3 million children who lived with their unmarried fathers in 1996 (17 percent of children living with an unmarried parent).

Among those children living with their unmarried fathers, which children were most likely to reside with both of their parents? In 1996, 73 percent of Hispanic children living with their unmarried fathers also lived with their mothers, compared with 54 percent of Black children and 35 percent of White non-Hispanic children.

The overall pattern of living arrangements of children with unmarried parents clearly indicates that women are the primary or custodial parents of children who are not living in married-couple families, and that most unmarried mothers do not live with the father of their children. In all likelihood, these circumstances arose from marital disruptions where the mother became the custodial parent or when the child was born out-of-wedlock and the parents did not marry or choose to live together. However, in the instances where children are living with their fathers, it is more common that their mothers are also living with them in an arrangement functioning as a family.

CHILDREN IN BLENDED FAMILIES

Blended families typically are formed when remarriages occur and when stepparents enter the household accompanied by their children from previous unions, thus creating stepparents and stepsiblings among the children in the newly formed family. Blended families are also formed, for example, when a remarried parent has a child with his or her new spouse, thus producing a new brother or sister who is a half-sibling to a child from a previous union.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of children who were in blended families by race and the number of parents they were living with. The most striking feature is the high proportion of Black children (20 percent) living in blended families (about 20 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children were also in blended families, but this level was not significantly different from either White non-Hispanic or Black children). High rates of out-of-wedlock childbearing[10], differences in the marriage market, marital fertility, child custody, and other family formation behaviors may all be factors contributing to higher rates of children living in blended families.

By far, the largest source of blending in children's families was the presence of half-siblings. In 1996, 7.8 million children lived with at least one half-sibling (see Table 4); 11 percent of all children and 66 percent of children in blended families lived with half-siblings. In addition, 79 percent of Black children and 76 percent of Hispanic children in blended families lived with half-siblings, compared with 61 percent of White non-Hispanic children.

Living with a stepparent is the next largest contributor to children living in a blended family — 7 percent of all children, and 42 percent of children in blended families, lived with a stepparent. Stepparents were more commonly found living with White non-Hispanic children in blended families (47 percent) than with Black children (27 percent) or Hispanic children (36 percent).

[10]See the National Vital Statistics Reports for data on births and trends in childbearing among unmarried women, teenagers and the general population. For example see Stephanie Ventura, et. al., *Births: Final Data for 1997*, National Vital Statistics Reports: Vol. 47, No. 18, Hyattsville, MD, National Center for Health Statistics. 1999.

Table 4.
Children Living in Blended Families by Composition of Family and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children	71,494	56,212	46,657	11,631	1,073	2,578	10,428
Children living in a blended family	11,798	8,929	7,521	2,375	221	272	1,575
Percent of all children	16.5	15.9	16.1	20.4	20.6	10.6	15.1
Type of blended family—							
Number							
Stepparent only	2,311	1,948	1,714	275	51	37	253
Stepsibling only	1,040	736	661	159	40	105	78
Half-sibling only	5,708	4,025	3,205	1,526	83	75	932
Stepparent and stepsibling	684	596	556	64	11	12	45
Stepparent and half-sibling	1,662	1,329	1,116	264	33	36	243
Stepsibling and half-sibling	148	102	99	42	4	-	3
Stepparent, stepsibling and half-sibling	246	193	171	46	-	7	22
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Stepparent only	19.6	21.8	22.8	11.6	23.1	13.6	16.1
Stepsibling only	8.8	8.2	8.8	6.7	18.1	38.6	5.0
Half-sibling only	48.4	45.1	42.6	64.3	37.6	27.6	59.2
Stepparent and stepsibling	5.8	6.7	7.4	2.7	5.0	4.4	2.9
Stepparent and half-sibling	14.1	14.9	14.8	11.1	14.9	13.2	15.4
Stepsibling and half-sibling	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.8	1.8	-	0.2
Stepparent, stepsibling and half-sibling	2.1	2.2	2.3	1.9	-	2.6	1.4

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

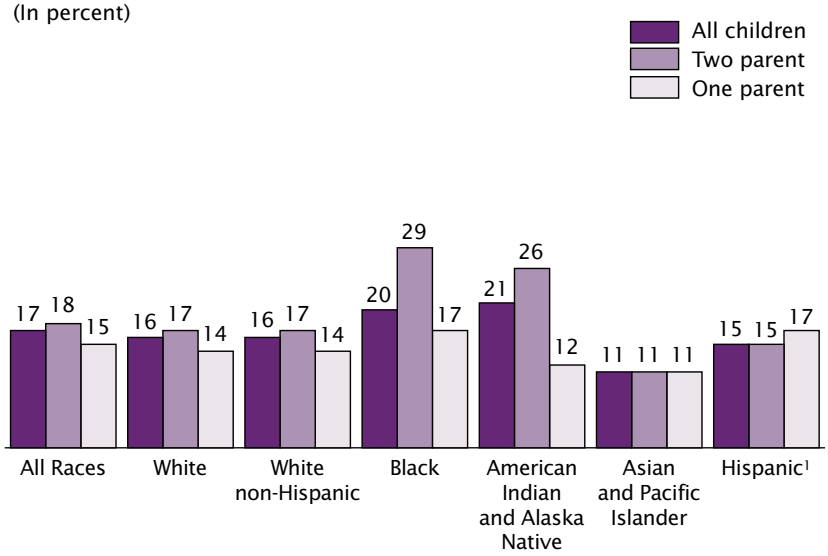
ADOPTED CHILDREN

The number of adopted children rose from 1.1 million in 1991 to 1.5 million in 1996. It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of adopted children, as some parents may desire to keep this information confidential.[11] SIPP estimates rely on the relationships reported by the respondent — administrative records are not used. This collection method could lead to missed actual

[11]Data from the National Survey of Family Growth provide estimates of adoption during the 1980's and 1990's, and indicate that reporting of adoptive status is reasonably accurate in the SIPP. Anjani Chandra, et. al., *Advance Data: Adoption, Adoption Seeking, and Relinquishment for Adoption in the United States.* Advance Data from the Vital and Health Statistics: No. 306. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 1999., and Christine Bachrach, et. al., *Adoption in the 1980's*. Advance Data from the Vital and Health Statistics: No. 181. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 1990.

Figure 4.
Children Living in Blended Families: Fall 1996

(In percent)



[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

adoptions, confusion between step- and adopted parents when a stepparent adopts their stepchild, and the inclusion of informal adoptions, where no legal adoption actually exists.

Because of the small number of adopted children and the difficulties in accurately measuring them in the SIPP, only very basic information is presented in Table 5. White non-Hispanic children represent the majority of adopted children — they are also represented in a slightly larger proportion among adopted children than among all children. Black and Hispanic children are underrepresented in the population of adopted children relative to their distribution in the total population.

Only 16 percent of adopted children lived with a single parent compared with 25 percent of all children. In 1996, 84 percent of adopted children lived with two parents — 47 percent lived with two adoptive parents and 35 percent lived with one adoptive parent and a biological parent. Adoptions by stepparents are most likely the majority of the adoptions in this last group and are an important and distinct component of the total picture of adoptions.

Table 5.
Adopted Children by Race and Ethnicity and Living Arrangements: Fall 1996

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Adopted children	1,484	100.0
Race and Ethnicity		
White	1,143	77.0
Non-Hispanic	1,027	69.2
Black	192	12.9
American Indian and Alaska Native	47	3.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	102	6.9
Hispanic[1]	119	8.0
Living arrangements		
Two parents	1,250	84.2
Two adoptive parents	702	47.3
One adoptive and one biological	515	34.7
One adoptive and one step	33	2.2
One parent	234	15.8
Mother only	182	12.3
Father only	52	3.5

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

CHILDREN WITH SIBLINGS

Most children (79 percent) lived in households with at least one sibling (see Table 6): 11 percent lived with a half-sibling and 3 percent with a stepsibling. Black children were most likely to live with no siblings in the household (25 percent),[12] but were also most likely to live with at least one half-sibling (16 percent). Asian and Pacific Islander children were the least likely to live with a half-sibling (5 percent).

In 1996, 27.7 million children (39 percent) lived with one sibling; an additional 24.3 million lived with two or three siblings (34 percent). These figures reflect the relatively

[12]The identification of siblings, in part, depends on the presence of parents. When two siblings are living in the same household with no parents present, they may fail to be identified as siblings or in the correct category of siblings.

Table 6.
Children by Presence of Siblings by Type of Relationship and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(In thousands)

Presence of siblings	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children	71,494	56,212	46,657	11,631	1,073	2,578	10,428
Living with at least one sibling	56,187	44,549	36,664	8,702	873	2,064	8,634
Living with only full-siblings	46,700	37,568	30,857	6,601	703	1,829	7,312
Living with at least one stepsibling	2,117	1,628	1,486	310	55	124	147
Living with at least one half-sibling	7,764	5,648	4,590	1,878	119	118	1,200
Living with:							
No siblings	15,307	11,663	9,993	2,929	200	515	1,794
1 sibling	27,678	22,641	19,723	3,718	282	1,037	3,185
2 siblings	17,142	13,681	11,136	2,625	296	540	2,776
3 siblings	7,145	5,330	3,914	1,365	184	266	1,511
4 or more siblings	4,224	2,898	1,891	994	111	221	1,162

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

higher levels of fertility in the United States compared with other industrialized countries, and the patterns of immigration and fertility among subgroups of the population.[13] Hispanic children and American Indian and Alaska Native children live with two or more siblings 52 percent and 55 percent of the time respectively, proportions much higher than for any other race/ethnic groups. Forty-three percent of Black children and 40 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children lived with two or more siblings, while only 24 percent of White non-Hispanic children lived with this many siblings.

THE EXTENDED FAMILY HOUSEHOLD

Extended family households are households where a child lives with at least one parent and someone outside of the nuclear family, either relatives or nonrelatives. Examples of these other people include stepparents, non-biological siblings, grandparents, other relatives and nonrelatives. Many interrelated economic, cultural, and structural factors are involved in the creation of extended households. Affordability and availability of housing and employment force some families to double-up to save on housing costs. In addition fundamental cultural differences in family formation and household building behavior may be factors.[14] On entering the United States, immigrants often live with sponsoring relatives and friends until they are able to support their own household; thus, extended families may be more prevalent among Asian and Pacific Islander children and Hispanic children who compose the majority of new immigrants to the United States.

Structural differences, such as the likelihood of living in a single-parent household, also play significant roles in forming extended and nonparental household situations. Children born in single-parent households are more likely to experience spells of living with other relatives than are children born in two-parent households as the absence of parents may require additional economic and child support assistance.[15]

In 1996, 10.3 million children (14 percent of all children) lived in extended family households, up from 8.0 million in 1991 (see Table 7). As in 1991, White children in 1996 were least likely to live in extended family households compared with children of any other race. In 1996, about 12 percent were living in extended households compared with levels of 22 percent to 24 percent for children of other races or Hispanic origin.

The majority of extended households are formed by the presence of an additional relative (see Figure 5). Of the 10.3 million children living in extended families, 7.2 million (70 percent) had only other relatives as extended household members. Of children living in extended families, Asian and Pacific Islander children were most likely to live with relatives only (91 percent). White non-Hispanic children were more likely to live in extended family households with only nonrelatives (37 percent) than were children of other races.

Sharing resources and providing support are two of the reasons that an extended family household might be formed. Partly for those reasons, children in single-parent households are more likely to also be in extended households. Children living with only one parent in 1996 were nearly 4 times as likely to be living in an extended household than were children in two-parent families (33 percent versus 9 percent). Among children living in one-parent households, higher proportions of children (regardless of race or ethnic group) lived in extended households than among kids in two-parent households. White non-Hispanic children in two-parent households were the least likely to have been living in an extended family household (6 percent).

In households extended by the addition of nonrelatives only, or by nonrelatives and relatives, children were more likely to live with one parent than two compared with households extended by relatives only, where children were as likely to live with one parent as with two parents. For White non-Hispanic children in single-parent households, relatives were as likely as nonrelatives (15 percent each) to be included in the household. For the other race groups in comparable households, relatives were much more likely to be included in the households than nonrelatives were. This suggests that support systems for single-parent White non-Hispanic families depend less on the immediate presence of relatives in the household than do families of other races and ethnicities.

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[13]Amara Bachu, *Fertility of American Women: June 1995 (Update),* Current Population Reports, P20-499, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1997. See Table 4.

[14]Steven Ruggles, "The Origins of African-American Family Structure," *American Sociological Review*, Vol 59 (February 1994). Pages 136-151.

[15]Jason M. Fields, *Child Fosterage in American Households*, Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore, MD, 1998. Structural factors, like prior living arrangements, significantly effect the likelihood of a child living without their parents. Children born in single-parent households are more likely to experience spells of living with other kin instead of their parents compared to children born in two-parent households.

Table 7.
Children Living in Extended Households by Relationship of Household Members to Child and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(In thousands)

Living arrangements	Total		Presence of parents			
			Two parents		One parent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All races	71,494	100.0	50,685	100.0	18,165	100.0
Living in an extended household	10,292	14.4	4,347	8.6	5,945	32.7
Relatives only	7,232	10.1	3,512	6.9	3,720	20.5
Nonrelatives only	2,618	3.7	719	1.4	1,898	10.4
Relatives and nonrelatives	442	0.6	116	0.2	327	1.8
White	56,212	100.0	43,466	100.0	11,131	100.0
Living in an extended household	6,764	12.0	3,211	7.4	3,553	31.9
Relatives only	4,390	7.8	2,509	5.8	1,881	16.9
Nonrelatives only	2,045	3.6	591	1.4	1,454	13.1
Relatives and nonrelatives	329	0.6	111	0.3	218	2.0
Non-Hispanic	46,657	100.0	36,837	100.0	8,632	100.0
Living in an extended household	4,700	10.1	2,051	5.6	2,649	30.7
Relatives only	2,751	5.9	1,496	4.1	1,255	14.5
Nonrelatives only	1,746	3.7	479	1.3	1,267	14.7
Relatives and nonrelatives	203	0.4	76	0.2	127	1.5
Black	11,631	100.0	4,397	100.0	6,320	100.0
Living in an extended household	2,659	22.9	579	13.2	2,080	32.9
Relatives only	2,090	18.0	483	11.0	1,607	25.4
Nonrelatives only	469	4.0	95	2.2	375	5.9
Relatives and nonrelatives	99	0.9	2	-	98	1.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,073	100.0	667	100.0	345	100.0
Living in an extended household	255	23.8	113	16.9	141	40.9
Relatives only	190	17.7	92	13.8	97	28.1
Nonrelatives only	58	5.4	21	3.1	37	10.7
Relatives and nonrelatives	7	0.7	-	-	7	2.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,578	100.0	2,156	100.0	369	100.0
Living in an extended household	615	23.9	444	20.6	171	46.3
Relatives only	562	21.8	428	19.9	134	36.3
Nonrelatives only	45	1.7	13	0.6	33	8.9
Relatives and nonrelatives	7	0.3	3	0.1	4	1.1
Hispanic (of any race)	10,428	100.0	7,112	100.0	2,870	100.0
Living in an extended household	2,284	21.9	1,247	17.5	1,037	36.1
Relatives only	1,790	17.2	1,080	15.2	709	24.7
Nonrelatives only	355	3.4	131	1.8	224	7.8
Relatives and nonrelatives	139	1.3	36	0.5	103	3.6

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

Relatives in Extended Families

Simply providing estimates of the number of children living with or without relatives in extended households masks the diversity present in these households. Table 8 presents data on the different types of relatives living with children (these counts are independent and not mutually exclusive with the exception of the three grandparent subcategories — i.e., a person living with a grandmother, an uncle and an aunt is counted separately in each of those categories). The most commonly mentioned relative was grandparent(s) — about 4.1 million children were living with one or both grandparent(s) in addition to one or both of their own parents. Other relatives was the next largest category; this includes more distant relatives, cousins, and responses that lacked enough specificity to be classified into more distinct categories. As in 1991, uncles and aunts are represented in similar proportions (23 percent and 25 percent respectively), as are nieces and nephews (7 percent each).

Differences in the types of relatives living with children are obviously related to the size of the house-

Table 8.
Children Living in Extended Family Households With Relatives by Type of Relative Present and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(In thousands)

Living arrangements	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children in extended families[2]	7,674	4,719	2,954	2,189	569	1,929
Number of different types of relatives:						
1 type	4,851	3,184	2,122	1,161	379	1,117
2 types	1,787	980	607	638	115	412
3 types	860	448	192	338	59	318
4 or more types	176	107	32	53	17	82
Living with at least one —						
Grandparents	4,107	2,506	1,773	1,192	331	774
Grandmother and grandfather	1,557	1,033	762	334	153	278
Grandmother only	2,165	1,182	802	799	144	408
Grandfather only	385	291	209	57	34	88
Uncle	1,799	1,078	494	559	120	661
Aunt	1,923	1,133	557	609	159	677
Nephew	518	243	122	246	8	137
Niece	543	206	106	322	12	109
Brother-in-law	47	35	14	-	-	21
Sister-in-law	90	80	27	10	-	57
Other extended relative	2,696	1,650	947	724	222	799

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
[2]Individual categories add to more than the total because children may live with more than one type of relative.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

hold: children in larger households have a higher likelihood of living with different types of relatives. Of children living in extended families with relatives, 63 percent lived with only a single type of relative (see Table 8). Seventy-two percent of White non-Hispanic children lived with only a single type compared with 53 percent of Black children. At the opposite end of the scale, Hispanic children in these households were more likely to live with three or more types of extended family relatives (21 percent), compared with Asian and Pacific Islander children and White non-Hispanic children (13 percent and 8 percent respectively), but were not significantly different from Black children (18 percent).

Multigenerational Households and Children With Grandparents

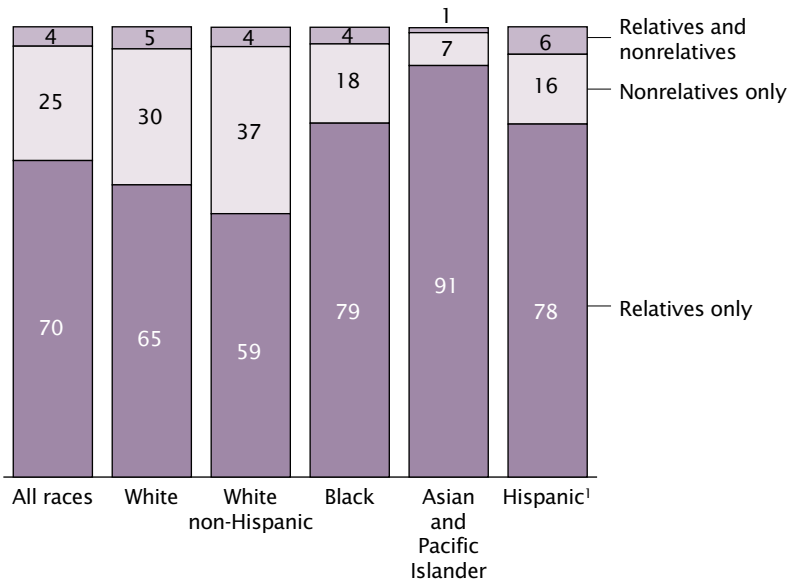
In 1996, 4.2 million children lived in multigenerational households (see Table 9). Nearly all of them, 4.1 million children, lived in households with a parent and grandparent. Virtually all the remaining children in multigenerational households lived with their parent and own child (94,000).

In addition to the 4.1 million children noted above, there were an additional 1.3 million children living with a grandparent, without a parent present, yielding a total of 5.4 million children living with at least one grandparent (see Table 10). When children live in households with grandparents — who themselves are often dependent on the householder (the child's parent) — family budgets may be strained, and children may have to share their parents' time and resources with their grandparents, especially in situations where their grandparents may require additional care. Children and grandparents are also likely to benefit from this situation in many ways. The growing number of children in this situation has prompted recent studies on the well-being and characteristics of these children and their families. Children living in grandparent-maintained households were more likely to be in poverty, without health insurance, and receiving public assistance.[16] As in 1991, the most

[16]Kenneth Bryson and Lynne M. Casper, *Coresident Grandparents and Grandchildren.* Current Population Reports, P23-198, Washington, DC, U.S. Census Bureau, 1999.

Figure 5.
Children Living in Extended Family Households by Presence of Other Relatives and Nonrelatives: Fall 1996

(Percent distribution)



[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

common living arrangement was when the child was living with a grandparent and a single mother — 2.3 million children, or 43 percent of children with grandparents in 1996. In the vast majority of these instances, the grandparent was the householder (1.9 million children), probably representing the situation when a single parent and child moved into the grandparent's home and were dependent on the grandparent for providing housing and other support.

An additional 1.6 million children, or 30 percent of children who lived with a grandparent, also lived with both parents. The grandparent was the householder in less than half the cases. Most likely, when a child lived with both parents and a grandparent, the grandparent moved into their child's household and was dependent on their grandchild's parents for assistance.

Overall, only 5 percent of White non-Hispanic children lived with one or more grandparents compared with about 15 percent of Black and Asian and Pacific Islander children. The different scenarios of the type of grandparent-grandchild household children live in illustrate the different dynamics of extended household formation for different racial and ethnic groups in the United States. More than one-half of Black children who lived with grandparents lived in households with single mothers and grandparents, a proportion greater than any of the other groups shown in Figure 6. Another one-third of Black children who lived with grandparents had neither parent living with them. These children lived with their grandparents under conditions characterized by a significant degree of out-of-wedlock births, marital disruption, or the absence of both parents from their daily living arrangements.

Table 9.
Children Living in Multigenerational Households by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children living in multigenerational households	4,201	2,554	1,797	1,233	334	802
Percent of all children	5.9	4.5	3.9	10.6	13.0	7.7
With parent and grandparent	4,103	2,502	1,769	1,192	331	774
With parent and own child	94	49	23	41	4	28
Other	4	4	4	-	-	-

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

Table 10.
Children Living With Grandparents by Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(Numbers in thousands)

Living arrangements	All races	White	White non-Hispanic	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic[1]
Children living with at least one grandparent	5,373	3,143	2,274	1,763	354	918
Percent of all children	7.5	5.6	4.9	15.2	13.7	8.8
Presence of parents						
Two parents	1,591	1,149	799	168	256	356
Grandparent is the householder	679	541	380	98	25	167
Mother only	2,306	1,171	844	1,001	75	364
Grandparent is the householder	1,893	1,003	746	787	49	274
Father only	210	185	130	23	-	55
Grandparent is the householder	175	150	118	23	-	33
Neither parent	1,266	637	501	571	24	143
Grandparent is the householder	1,235	627	495	559	15	139
Percent of children living with grandparents and —						
Two parents	29.6	36.6	35.1	9.5	72.3	38.8
Mother only	42.9	37.3	37.1	56.8	21.2	39.7
Father only	3.9	5.9	5.7	1.3	-	6.0
Neither parent	23.6	20.3	22.0	32.4	6.8	15.6

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.

[1] People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

In contrast, the majority (72 percent) of Asian and Pacific Islander children who lived with grandparents also lived with both their parents. Another 21 percent of these children lived with their mother and only 7 percent lived with grandparents with no parent present. In the vast majority of cases where these children lived with both parents and a grandparent, the grandparent was probably dependent on the parents for assistance. Only 10 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children in multigenerational households with two parents present were living in households where the grandparent was the householder (see Table 10).

Both White non-Hispanic children and Hispanic children were about as likely to live with both parents and a grandparent as they were to live with only their mother and a grandparent (about 37 percent each). For both groups the grandparent was the householder about 48 percent of the time when children lived with two parents. These statistics suggest that while many children live with grandparents, the role of the grandparent as either the principal household provider or as a dependent elderly relative is likely to be very different among children in different race groups.

HISTORICAL TRENDS

Today's family and household structures are not unique and may be put in a useful context by comparing them with family and household structures since the late 19th century. Based on decennial census data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series,[17] the Current Population Survey, and the 1996 SIPP, Figure 7 presents parent-child living arrangements for the period from 1880 through 1996 (See also Internet Table 2 for additional years of data not included in Figure 7).

While family and household structure has experienced some sizable changes, it also shows some remarkable stability. From 1880 to 1970, the distribution of children's living arrangements changed very little. The proportion of children who lived without parents declined from 6 percent in 1880 to about 3 percent in 1970. During this same period, the proportion of children who lived with their mothers only increased from 8 percent to just 11 percent.

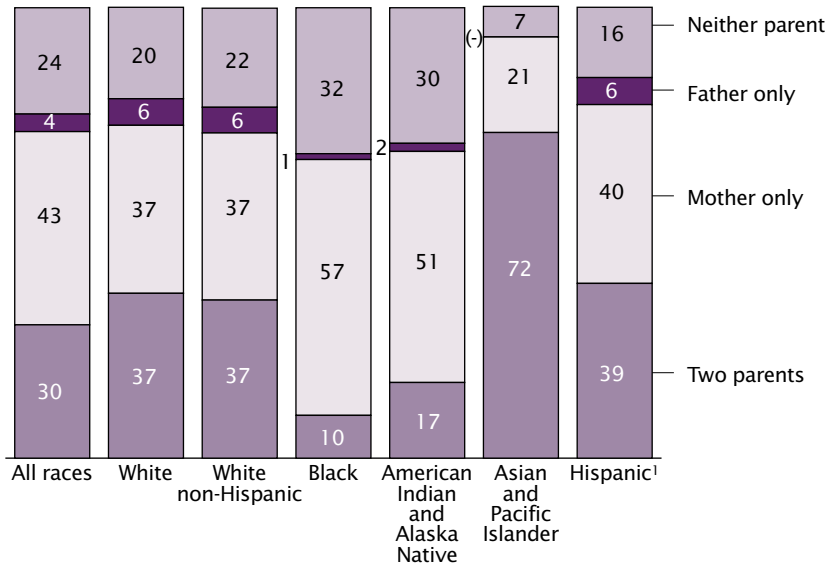
More dramatic shifts in living arrangements have occurred since 1970. Children began living with only their mothers at a much higher rate — between 1970 and 1990 the proportion of these children living with only their mother doubled (11 percent to 22 percent). Since 1990, the changes in children's living

[17] Steven Ruggles and Matthew Sobek et. al. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 2.0*, Minneapolis: Historical Census Projects, University of Minnesota, 1997. *www.ipums.umn.edu*

Figure 6.

Children Living With Grandparents by Presence of Parents and Race and Ethnicity: Fall 1996

(Percent distribution)

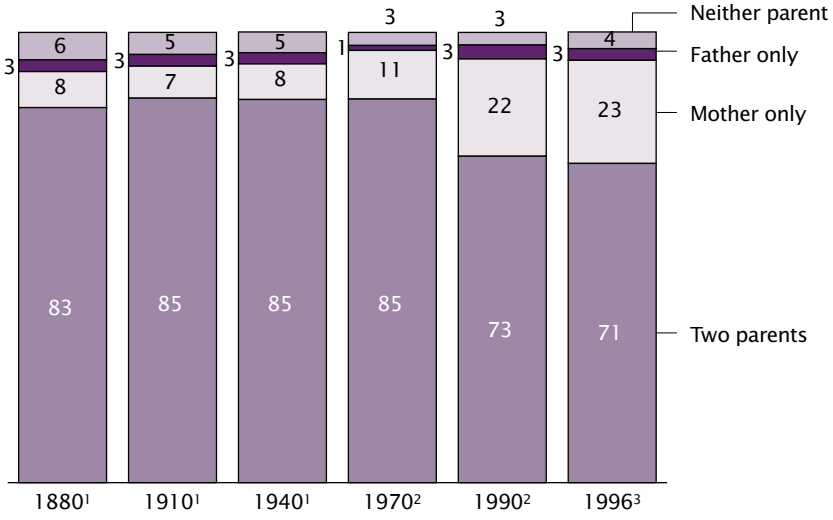


[1]People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.
Note: - Represents zero or rounds to zero.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Wave 2.

Figure 7.

Historical Living Arrangements of Children: Selected Years, 1880 to 1996

(Percent distribution)



[1]Data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 2.0 made available by the Historical Census Projects.
[2]U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.
[3]U.S. Census Bureau, 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation, Wave 2.

arrangements have leveled off. Changes in the proportion of children living with only with their fathers increased from 1970 and 1990, but to levels that are not historically different from those recorded 100 years ago.

Earlier in the century, migration and mortality led to more children being raised by a single parent, while later in the century, divorce and out-of-wedlock births have led to the same end. The middle of the 20th century is a unique period in the demographic history of the U.S. population. This period is marked by increased fertility that led to the Baby Boom, and by high proportions of children living with both parents.

The diversity of children's living arrangements continues to be an important avenue for research. Whether the changes that occurred through the middle of the century will reverse, continue their previous trend, or whether they have reached a new equilibrium for the foreseeable future remains to be seen.

SOURCE OF DATA

The estimates in this report come from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), and are based on data collected from August through November of 1996 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The SIPP is a longitudinal survey conducted at 4-month intervals. Although the main focus of the SIPP is information on labor force participation, jobs, income, and participation in federal assistance programs, information on other topics is also collected in topical modules on a rotating basis. The data highlighted in this report come primarily from the core and the household relationship topical modules in the second interview (wave) of the 1996 SIPP panel.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the U.S. Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process—including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

The SIPP employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources. Estimates for small subpopulations (less than 200,000 estimated persons) should be interpreted with particular caution.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact John Boise, Demographic Statistical Methods Division, at 301-457-4221 or on the Internet at john.l.boise@census.gov.

MORE INFORMATION

A copy of this report is available from the Population Division's Statistical information Office, 301-457-2422. The report, as well as two detailed tables, is also available on the Internet (www.census.gov); search for children's data by clicking on the "Subjects A-Z" button and selecting "children" under "C."

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CONTACTS

For additional living arrangements or children's family information, you may contact the author of this report in Fertility and Family Statistics Branch, on 301-457-2465. You may also contact the author of this report by e-mail.

Jason Fields —
jason.m.fields@census.gov

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of its data and reports. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write to:

Chief, Population Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

or send an e-mail inquiry to:
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