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FP-12-15 Demographic Profile of Same-Sex Parents

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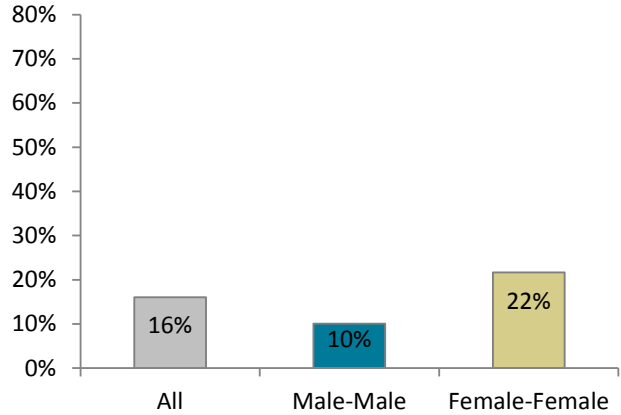
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Demographic Profile of Same-Sex Parents

Although same-sex couples (particularly male-male couples) are less likely to have children than opposite-sex couples, an increasing number of children live in same-sex couple households (Gates & Ost, 2004). This profile combines the 2010 American Community Survey 1-year population and housing records to present a demographic snapshot of same-sex parent households in the United States. The ACS is an ideal survey for estimating the small population of same-sex parents, given the large ACS sample size (Lofquist, 2012). The focus of this profile is on same-sex parent households, however, supplemental comparisons of opposite-sex parent households are also discussed.

- About 1 in 6 (16%) same-sex couple households include children (biological, step, or adopted).
- Male-male households (10%) are half as likely as female-female households (22%) to have children present (Figure 1).
- In contrast, 41% of opposite-sex couple households have children present (not shown).

Figure 1. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple

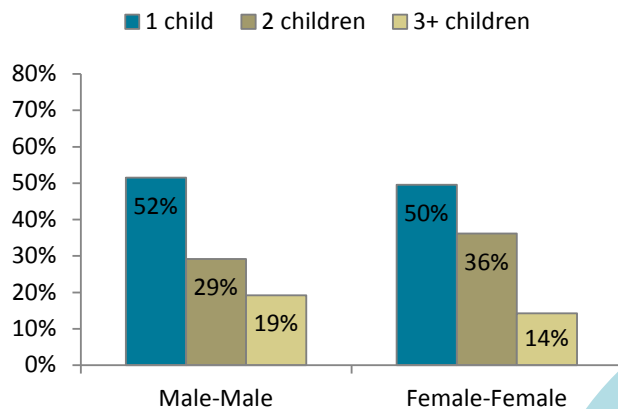


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Number and Age of Children Among Same-Sex Parents

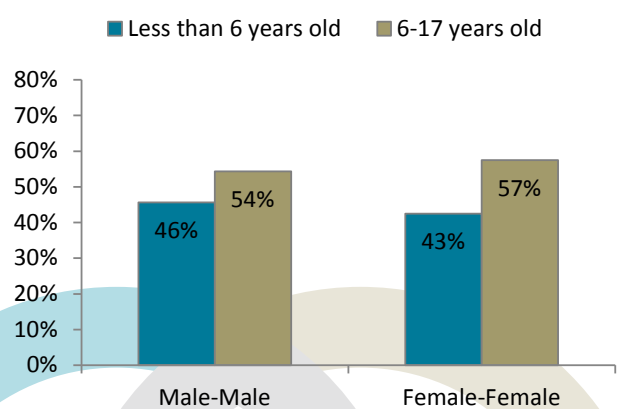
- Around half of same-sex parents (52% male-male and 50% female-female) have only 1 child in the household.
- Twenty-nine percent of male-male parents report having 2 children in the household compared to 36% of female-female parents.
- Slightly more male-male parents (19%) report having 3 or more children in the household than female-female parents (14%) (Figure 2).
- Only 39% of opposite-sex parents have 1 child in the household, 39% have 2, and the remaining 22% have 3 or more children in the household (not shown).
- Similar proportions of male-male parents (46%) and female-female parents (43%) report that their youngest child is less than 6 years old. (Figure 3).
- The age distribution is similar for opposite-sex parents: 46% have a youngest child less than 6 years old, while the remaining 64% report their youngest child is 6 to 17 years old (not shown).

Figure 2. Percentage of Same-Sex Parents by Number of Children and Sex of Couple



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Figure 3. Percentage of Same-Sex Parents by Age of Youngest Child and Sex of Couple

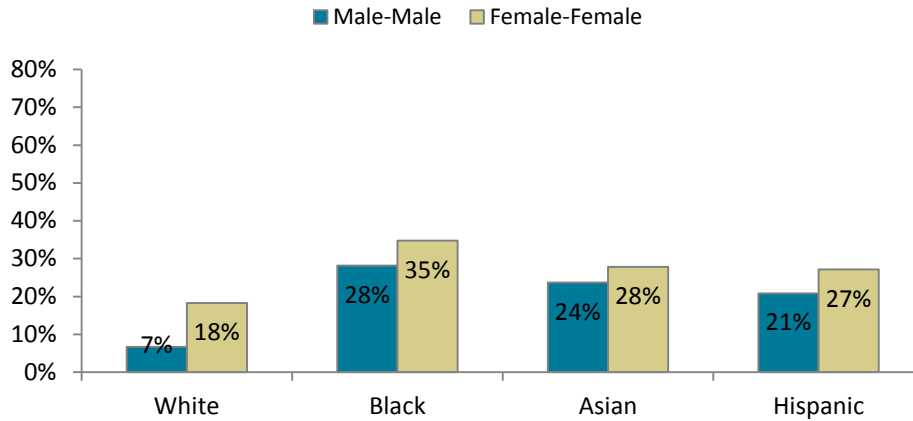


Family Profiles examine topics related to NCFMR's core research themes. Data are presented at both the national and state levels using new data sources. Written for both researchers and broad communities, these profiles summarize the latest statistics on U.S. families.

Race/Ethnicity and Presence of Children in Same-Sex Households

- Fewer White same-sex couples report having children in the household than non-White same-sex parents. Only 7% of White male-male couples have children in the household (Figure 4). Similarly, fewer White opposite-sex couples (35%) have children in the household than their non-White counterparts (45-60%) (not shown).
- The presence of children in same-sex couple households is highest among Black female-female couples (35%). Among opposite-sex couple households, the presence of children is highest among Hispanic couples (60%) (not shown).

Figure 4. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple and Race of Household Head

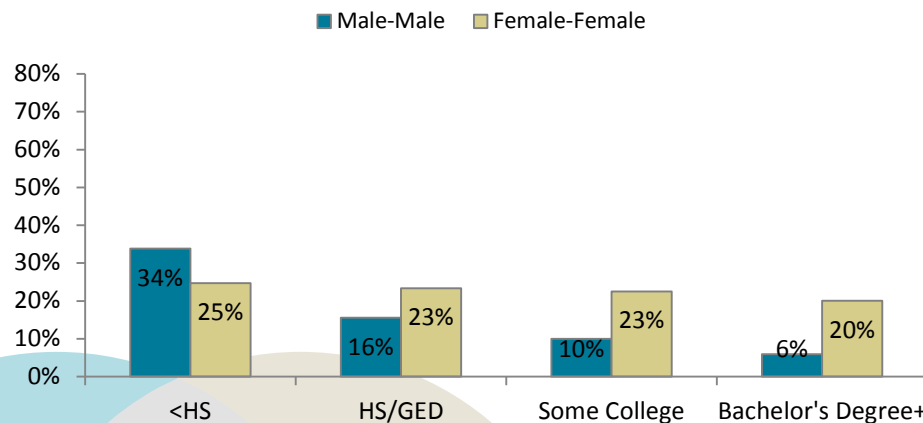


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

Education and Presence of Children in Same-Sex Households

- Similar proportions of female-female couples (20% - 25%) report having children in the household, regardless of education.
- There are stark educational differentials in the presence of children in male-male couple households. Among male-male couple households with low educational attainment (household head has less than a high school education), 34% have children. Comparatively, only 6% of male-male couple households in which the household head has at least a Bachelor's degree have children.
- An education gradient in the proportion of opposite-sex couple households with children does not exist. Yet a greater proportion of opposite-sex couples with a Bachelor's degree (43%) report having children in the household than their same-sex couple counterparts (13%).

Figure 5. Percentage of Same-Sex Couple Households with Children by Sex of Couple and Education of Household Head



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, 2010

References

- Gates, G., & Ost, J. (2004). *The gay and lesbian atlas*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Press.
- Lofquist, D. (2012). *Proceedings from PAA 2012: Same-sex couples' consistency in reports of marital status*. San Francisco, CA.

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