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FP-14-14 Grandparenthood in the U.S.: Prevalence of Grandparenthood Among Adults Aged 50+

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Approximately 64 million adults are grandparents (FP-14-12), and substantial differences exist in older versus younger grandparents’ racial/ethnic status, educational attainment, and relationship status (FP-14-13). This profile is the final* installment in the NCFMR’s most recent series on grandparenthood and examines what share of adults aged 50+ is a grandparent according to sociodemographic characteristics.

The majority (60%) of adults aged 50 or older are grandparents. A slightly larger share of women (63%) is a grandparent compared to men (57%).

*Additional NCFMR resources on grandparents can be found at Resources by Topic -- the Grandparents link. The page includes two additional profiles on grandparents (FP-14-12, FP-14-13) and two other profiles on children’s co-residence with grandparents (FP-13-03, FP-12-18) in addition to other data resources.

**Race/Ethnicity and Grandparenthood**
- Black and Hispanic adults are more often grandparents than other racial/ethnic groups. Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) Black and Hispanic adults aged 50+ are grandparents.
- Six in 10 (59%) White adults 50+ were a grandparent in 2009.
- Asian adults 50+ report the lowest share who is a grandparent, about 1 in 2 (52%).

**Educational Attainment and Grandparenthood**
- As levels of education increase, the share of adults aged 50+ who is a grandparent steadily decreases.
- Over three-fourths (76%) of adults 50+ without a high school degree or GED are grandparents, whereas less than half (43%) of college educated adults 50+ is a grandparent.
Relationship Status and Grandparenthood

- Grandparenthood is most common among widowed persons, reflecting in part the age distribution of grandparents. Approximately 8 in 10 (78%) widowed persons aged 50+ are grandparents.
- Grandparenthood is least common among never married adults—only 14% never married adults 50+ are a grandparent.
- Approximately, 6 in 10 married (62%) and separated/divorced (59%) adults 50+ are grandparents, whereas almost half (47%) of cohabiters 50+ are a grandparent.

Figure 3. Share of Adults 50+ Who Is a Grandparent in 2009, by Relationship Status

- Married: 62%
- Cohabiting: 47%
- Widowed: 78%
- Sep/Div: 59%
- Never married: 14%

Source: SIPP, 2008 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module