2018

FP-18-04 Grandparents' Characteristics by Age

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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.

**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 grandchildren 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 smaller proportion of older grandparents were Asian (4%).
- Whites comprise a higher proportion of older grandparents than midlife grandparents (76% and 66%, respectively).

**Educational Attainment of Grandparents by Age**

- The education differences among midlife and older grandparents were fairly 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).

**Relationship Status of Grandparents by Age**

- The majority of grandparents were married, with 67% of midlife grandparents and 60% of older grandparents.
- Midlife grandparents were more often divorced or separated (18%) than their older counterparts (12%).
- One-quarter of older grandparents were widowed compared to only 4% of midlife grandparents.
- Fewer grandparents were cohabiting or never married compared to midlife grandparents, representing a lower proportion in a cohabiting relationship (5% versus 2%) or never married (5% versus 1%) than older grandparents.

**Prevalence of Grandparenthood by Age**

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

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