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FP-18-03 Prevalence of Grandparenthood in the U.S.

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In 2014, approximately 62 million adults aged 50 and older were grandparents, according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). 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. In this profile, we identify the prevalence of grandparenthood among adults aged 50 and older and examine their demographic characteristics including race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and current relationship status. This profile, an update of FP-14-14, is the third in our series on grandparents in the U.S.

Overall, 58% of adults 50 and older in the U.S. are grandparents.

Race/Ethnicity and Grandparenthood

- Among adults aged 50 and older, a greater percentage of Blacks and Hispanics were grandparents than those of other racial/ethnic backgrounds in 2014. Roughly three in five Black and Hispanic adults were grandparents.
- Asian adults had the smallest share who reported being a grandparent (49%).

Figure 1. Grandparenthood by Race/Ethnicity, 2014

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2014
Educational Attainment and Grandparenthood

The prevalence of grandparenthood decreased as educational attainment increased.

- Among those aged 50 or older in 2014 without a high school diploma/GED, three-fourths were grandparents.
- Being a grandparent was least common among those who had at least a Bachelor’s degree (43%).

Relationship Status and Grandparenthood

- Being a grandparent was most common among widowed adults, at 78%. This is not unexpected because the widowed are more often older.
- Similar shares of married and divorced/separated adults were grandparents (59% and 57%, respectively). Slightly less than half (46%) of cohabiting adults age 50 and older were grandparents.
- Never married adults had the smallest share who reported being a grandparent, at only 19%.

Data Source:

References:

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