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FP-18-01 Grandchildren Living in a Grandparent-Headed Household

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Over the past few decades, changes in family patterns have increased the diversity of children’s living arrangements, including a gradual increase in children who are living in their grandparent’s households. This profile updates FP-13-03 to examine trends in the proportion of children living in a grandparent-headed household and whether those children have a parent present in the household (e.g., three-generation arrangements), including a gradual increase in children who are living in their grandparent’s household. Focusing on the child’s perspective, this profile also examines the age distribution and poverty status of coresident grandchildren by the presence of a parent in 2015. Data for 1940-2000 are drawn from the Decennial Census, and data from 2010 and 2015 are based on the American Community Survey.

### Trends in the Proportion of Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household

#### Figure 1. Percentage of Minor Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household, 1940-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Parent Present (Three-Generation)</th>
<th>No Parent Present (Skipped-Generation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 1940-2000 Census of Population; 2010-2015 American Community Survey.

Since 1970, the percentage of children living in a grandparent’s household has more than doubled, reaching 8% in 2015. One in twelve children lived in a skipped-generation household.

### Age Distribution of Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household by Presence of Parent

#### Figure 2. Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households by Presence of Parent, 1990-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Parent Present (Three-Generation)</th>
<th>No Parent Present (Skipped-Generation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6 years</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-17 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

#### Figure 3. Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households by Presence of Parent and Age Groups, 2015

- Among those living in a grandparent’s household, children with a parent present were younger than those with no parent present.
- Among coresident grandchildren with a parent present (three-generation) in a grandparent-headed household, over half (57%) were aged 6 or younger. Only 30% were aged 6 or younger among those without a parent present.
- Coresident grandchildren with no parent present (skipped-generation) in a grandparent-headed household were most often aged 7 to 12 (37%).

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

### Economic Disadvantage Among Children Living in a Grandparent’s Household by Presence of Parent

#### Figure 4. Economic Disadvantage Among Minor Children Living in Grandparent-Headed Households by Presence of Parent, 2015

- Children living in a three-generation household fare better economically than their counterparts living in skipped-generation households.
- Nearly twice as many children in skipped-generation households were living in poverty (32%) than children in three-generation households (17%).


### References


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**National Center for Family & Marriage Research**

**Family Profiles:** Original reports summarizing and analyzing nationally representative data with the goal to provide the latest analysis of U.S. families. These profiles examine the link between family structure and demographic factors, economic well-being, health, education, and social support.

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